

## In memory of the manatees <sup>[1]</sup>

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### Calificación:



By Liz Yanira Del Valle / Special for El Nuevo Día [endi.com](http://endi.com) <sup>[2]</sup> Forgetting is prohibited. The incident reviewed recently in the local press as an “isolated one”, the death of five manatees in the Bay of San Juan hit by an unknown boat, scandalized everyone that in one way or another fight to preserve the life of this endangered marine mammal. It seemed that the educative campaign brought by the tender story of Moisés, the manatee, had the same fate as many issues in the country: the annals of the forgetfulness. The melody written by composer/singer Tony Croatto dedicated to Moisés went: “Today when reflecting on it, I realized a manatees place is the sea. I want him to return to his world, but I feel the great grief, that for being so friendly, some irresponsible being, by badness or abuse, can kill him”. Swimmers, boat operators, fans of aquatic sports and other inhabitants of the Island must understand that in the water there are living organisms, and that that water is precisely their permanent habitat. According to the scientists and specialists involved in the case, its probable that at the time of the accident the five animals were about to mate. The union finished in a mortal tragedy for four males and one female. State and federal governmental agencies investigated the fact and announced that they are working on an inter-agency plan “to protect the manatees”. The Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DRNA), the Caribbean Stranding Network (RCV), the partnership for the Estuary of the Bay of San Juan (CEBSJ), and federal agencies such as the Fishing and Wild Life Service and the Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are investigating the August 16th incident. Doctor in biological oceanography and director of the RCV, Antonio Mignucci, explained

that annually several aerial censuses are made to consider the amount of manatees. Of those that live in the Estuary, the scientist cannot estimate any numbers. “They come and go into the Estuary of the Bay of San Juan, coming from Toa Baja, Loíza, Carolina and of the area of the capital. They go to take fresh water to the mouth of the Puerto Nuevo river. They journey from a place to another one”, added simultaneously as he described how painful this event is for him. “It is terrible, because in an average year we deal with five to 12 manatee deaths by natural causes or accidents. This event where five manatees were killed in one day, which would be about 1.5% of the total population in the Island, that fluctuates 300 to 350 individuals. For Mignucci, which has been working in favor of the species for years, in addition it is necessary the revision of the navigation laws, to establish a minimum speed for all the boats that transit the area. On the other hand, Nilda Jiménez, marine biologist of the Fishing Laboratory of the DRNA, indicated that these events call to the responsibility of all. “These animals live all over the coast of Puerto Rico. We have a few left and each one of us can contribute to that they are not extinguished. I think that boat drivers have as much responsibility as people that drive cars. Much more if you are sailing in the coast. It is necessary to remember the nature that lives in the sea and the swimmers who surround to us”, she indicated.

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