

January 2010

**TO:** File

**FROM:** Natalie Balcer, Myakka Wild and Scenic River Park Biologist  
District 4 Administration

**SUBJECT:** Myakka Wild and Scenic River Inspection

The river inspection for the month of January took place on the 25th and 26th.

### **Upper River**

The upper river, from the Myakka River State Park Pavilion to Snook Haven was inspected on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010 by Natalie Balcer, Environmental Specialist II and Terry Hingtgen, Environmental Specialist III in kayaks. The inspection began at 8:10 am and ended at 3:30 pm. The weather was windy and sunny with temperatures around 65 degrees.

Wildlife and vegetation observations of interest on the upper river inspection include:

- Sixty-six peninsula cooters were observed sunning themselves from Downs' Dam to Snook Haven
- The constant dead fish smell was encountered along the entire inspection from the recent cold front that killed many exotic fish species.
- Two white-tailed deer were spotted in the marsh before Lower Lake.
- Two Bald Eagles were seen from Deep Hole to Downs' Dam. One eagle was seen chasing an osprey with a fish at Deep Hole
- Two Hundred Twenty-Seven alligators were seen from Deep Hole to Downs' Dam
- A total of 369 Black and Turkey Vultures were observed during the inspection. Some were seen eating the fish remains.
- Three hundred sixty-nine tree swallows were observed from the Park Pavilion to Downs' Dam.
- Three Barred Owls were heard from Deep Hole to Downs' Dam.
- Four Cedar Waxwings were seen near the Park Pavillion.
- A dead hog was seen under the Border Road Bridge.
- Half of a canoe was seen while paddling around the island, near the first of the houses.

The water levels nearly the same as the previous month. Portaging was only required at Downs' Dam, although some water was flowing over the dam. The flow in the river was approximately 90 ft<sup>3</sup>/sec. The water level at the dam gage was 4.1 feet. The Myakka River Gage USGS 02298830 (internet) at the upper lake read 4.35 feet.

### **Activities observed along the river during this inspection:**

A kayaker was seen at Lower Lake and 2 people in a canoe were seen south of Border Road.

**River Blockages:**

There were no blockages to report on this trip

**Lower River**

The lower river, from Snook Haven to the Sarasota/Charlotte County Line was inspected by Natalie Balcer and John Chassey in the Boston Whaler on January 25th, 2010. The inspection began at 9:08 am and ended at 12:10 pm. The weather was sunny with temperatures around 75 degrees.

Wildlife and vegetation observations of interest on the lower river inspection include:

- Dead exotic fish, snook, and tarpon were observed on the lower river due to the recent cold front.
- Thirty-seven Great Egrets and 73 Wood Storks were seen at the rookery south of US-41.
- Twenty Ring-billed Gulls were seen from US-41 to the Charlotte County line.
- One Royal Tern was spotted between US-41 and the Rookery.
- One Sandwich Tern was seen between the Rookery and Charlotte County.
- One Hundred Twenty American Robins were seen between Snook Haven and Ramblers Rest
- One Lesser Scaup was seen between the Rookery and Charlotte County.

A total of 43 crab traps were counted on this trip from US 41 to the Sarasota/Charlotte County line. This was an increase from the 20 traps spotted last month.

**Activities observed along the river during this inspection:**

No boats were observed during this trip.

**River Use by Section Table:**

River Section	River Use
<b>Upper River</b>	
<b>Pavilion to Lower Lake</b>	• <b>1 kayaker at Lower Lake</b>
<b>Lower Lake to Deep Hole</b>	
<b>Deep Hole to Down's Dam</b>	
<b>Down's Dam to Snook Haven</b>	• <b>2 people in a canoe south of Border Rd</b>
<b>Lower River</b>	
<b>Snook Haven to Rambler's Rest</b>	
<b>Rambler's Rest to U.S. 41</b>	
<b>US 41 to Rookery</b>	
<b>Rookery to Co. Line</b>	

**Vegetation Observations:**

**In Flower/Fertile**

*Crinum americanum* – swamp lily

*Quercus* spp - oak

*Salix caroliniana* – Carolina willow

*Shoenoplectus tabernaemontani* – softstem bulrush

*Symphyotrichum carolinanum* – climbing aster

**In Fruit/Seed**

*Schinus terebinthifolia* – Brazilian pepper

*Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani* – softstem bulrush

*Symphyotrichum carolinanum* – climbing aster