

MANATEE OBSERVATION FOR DREDGING ACTIVITIES
BERTH 26, PORT SUTTON TERMINAL CHANNEL
Tampa Port Authority, Florida



DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

This project entailed monitoring for Florida manatees (*Trichechus manatus latirostris*) while dredging operations were taking place at Berth 26 in the Port Sutton Channel. The Tampa Port Authority had purchased a pneumatic offloader, a state-of-the-art offloader for dry powdered cement, and was in the process of constructing the necessary infrastructure as well as dredging the berth to a depth of -34 MLW to accommodate incoming vessels. Two Scheda scientific observers were positioned so that they could view all dredging activities, and if a manatee were observed, contact was made with the dredging crew in order to immediately cease dredging operations. Approximately 400 manhours were spent observing in accordance with permit requirements, although no manatees were observed in the area. Incidental sightings in the Port Sutton Channel included bottlenose dolphins, cow nose rays, and large schools of fish (particularly jacks and mullet). Dolphins were observed almost every day ranging from a single dolphin to a pod consisting of three to four individuals.

