Sawfish Research and Conservation

www.SawfishRecovery.org

1-844-4SAWFISH
What is a Sawfish?
Sawfish are shark-like rays named for their saw-shaped snouts (rostra), which are used primarily for feeding. Like other rays, their mouths and gills are located on the underside of their bodies, and their skeletons are made of flexible cartilage not bone. There are five species of sawfishes worldwide and they now face greater extinction risk than any other family of marine fish. Only the smalltooth sawfish is currently found in U.S. waters.

Decline of Sawfish in the United States
Smalltooth sawfish were once found in coastal waters from Texas to North Carolina. However, fishing mortality and habitat loss led to dramatic reductions in both their numbers and range. Now they are regularly found only in southwest Florida in the area from Charlotte Harbor to the Florida Keys, including Everglades National Park. NOAA Fisheries listed the smalltooth sawfish as "Endangered" under the Endangered Species Act in 2003.

Sawfish Biology and Ecology
Mothers give birth only every other year
Gestation takes about 12 months
Litter size is about 7-14 young
Newborn pups are about 2 feet long
Size at maturity is about 11-12 feet long
Age at maturity is about 7 years
Maximum size is about 16 feet
Maximum age is unknown (likely several decades)
Diet consists of mostly fish, shrimp, and crabs

Safe Release and Viewing Guidelines
Sawfish are protected in the U.S.
It is illegal to harm, harass, and target sawfish.

ANGLERS:
Release sawfish immediately
Never lift them from the water or drag them ashore
Do not use gaffs or ropes to secure
Cut the line as close to the hook as possible

DIVERS:
Keep your distance
Avoid disturbing sawfish
Never touch, chase, or feed them

Data on sawfish encounters help experts track recovery. Please report all catches and sightings:
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