

Florida Manatees

by Mikayla Shuler

My name is Mikayla Shuler and I am nine years old. I live in Palm Beach, Florida and I swam with manatees. I think that I am a very lucky girl to go on a manatee snorkeling trip. I am also lucky because I got to take an underwater camera and housing on loan from Nauticam on the trip with me. They sent me with a Sony RX 100. It came in a really cool backpack with a charger, pump, SD card, and a dome. My dad helped me put the camera together and showed me how to use it.

We went to Crystal River FL for a weekend to snorkel with manatees. Some of the places we went to snorkel are: Three Sisters, Jurassic, and Kings Bay. Three Sisters did not have great visibility. It was like chocolate milk. And Jurassic didn't have great visibility. It was also murky. However Kings Bay had great visibility. It was crystal clear. I did get to see manatees at all three springs.

I also snorkeled Rainbow River in the afternoon. It was so clear and the current just carried me to the boat. I saw fish, two turtles, gar fish, and lots of river grass. I also saw big holes in the bottom of the river where



Me (left) and my friend Livi

the sand was bubbling from the spring water coming in. I could also see lots of birds in the trees above me while I was snorkeling and I really liked the aningas.

My first reaction with the camera was that it was really heavy on land. When I got in the water it was lighter but still a little heavy. I also couldn't pull the trigger because my fingers couldn't reach the trigger well. If I get to use the camera again I would like to not have that trigger and just use the one on the camera. But I did get to take some photos with the camera.



© Andrea Whitaker



I really enjoyed my trip. Something that was awesome was that my dad and I were swimming in Three Sisters and we couldn't see a manatee come up and flip us over. During the manatee trip I got to see a pregnant manatee. I also got to see a mating herd when I was on the boat at Three Sisters. It was very cold, but the boat gave us hot chocolate when we got out of the water. And we had hand warmers too.

This was my first time using an underwater camera and housing, and my first blog that I've ever written. I really like photography and taking pictures of my adventures. I would like to learn more about photography. I hope that Nauticam will let me

write for them again and let me use a camera again.

To learn more about the amazing underwater attractions in Florida, please contact Pura Vida Divers.

www.puravidadivers.com

Mikayla Shuler



Issue 127/54

live! WETPIXEL



Over 200 episodes of discussion, news and information for underwater image-makers

<https://www.youtube.com/c/Wetpixel-live>