



## MARINE LIFE AWARENESS

To many people the words “powerboat racing” and “going green” might seem to be at odds but, through its Marine Foundation charity and selected partnerships such as with the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center, Powerboat P1 is committed to safeguarding and restoring the marine and coastal environment by raising awareness, enhancing knowledge and changing behaviour. Within motorsport there is rapidly increasing sensitivity to the environment and P1 has developed a corporate environmental policy and implements effective programs as an integral part of its business strategy. The Discovery Center tells the story of Tampa Bay’s vast and complex estuary - its history and recovery and the pivotal role of the Tampa Bay Watch in that effort.



Photo credit: City of St. Petersburg





### Partnership

This Labour Day weekend, the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Centre is partnering with Powerboat P1 at its Grand Prix event here in downtown St. Petersburg to raise awareness and enhance understanding about the value of marine life.

As powerboat racing teams and jet ski riders from around the country arrive for the inaugural St. Pete race event, P1 and the Discovery Center are kicking off the weekend with a preview of the races and a meet-and-greet at the Center on Friday afternoon. Children and fans have the opportunity to meet some of the drivers, view the powerboats and learn more about the importance of the local conservation of marine life. The session will be filmed and broadcast as part of P1's live streaming of the race action over the weekend.

Powerboat P1 works closely with its registered charity, P1 Marine Foundation, an organization committed to the protection and improvement of the marine environment. The foundation focuses on reducing the environmental impacts of race events and continuously operating in an environmentally responsible manner. Its mission is to enhance understanding of the importance of marine life through research, education and raising awareness of serious threats to our oceans and its wildlife through effective partnerships.

Throughout the race weekend, P1 will implement its marine animal monitoring program which involves observers being assigned specific locations on boats, on land and in a helicopter to monitor the race area for wildlife. The observers report sightings such as dolphins, manatees and turtles and they have the authority to stop the racing if necessary.

[Tampabaywatch.org](http://Tampabaywatch.org)



### Habitats and Wildlife

Despite its urban setting, Tampa Bay hosts a wide variety of habitats – from freshwater springs and subtropical hardwood forests to beaches, dunes and extensive seagrass beds – that are home to more than 200 species of fish and some of the most diverse colonial waterbird nesting populations in North America. More than two dozen species of nesting herons, egrets, ibis, gulls, terns and shorebirds have been documented. The Tampa Bay estuary has the largest royal and sandwich tern nesting colonies, the most nesting American oystercatchers, and the largest brown pelican rookeries in Florida. In addition, it is home to at least five species of insect-eating bats, beach-nesting sea turtles, resident dolphin pods, and up to one-sixth of Florida's West Coast manatee population during the winter months.



### Mixing fun and learning

Located on St. Pete Pier, the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center is the only marine environmental experience in downtown St. Petersburg. It seeks to increase the public's awareness of the fragile nature and importance of Tampa Bay as an environmental resource. Education is infused in the Center's interactive exhibits and features hands-on experiences presented in a family-friendly way that inspires visitors to discover how they can make a positive impact in the community. These experiences include an exhibit gallery that tells the story of the history of the largest open-water estuary in Florida and the role Tampa Bay Watch has had in its recovery. Exhibits include touch tanks, interactive displays, video presentations and tours.



Photo credits: Visit St. Pete/Clearwater

[p1marinefoundation.com](http://p1marinefoundation.com)