

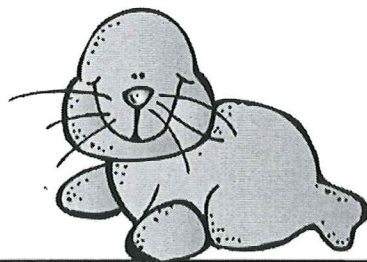
Manatees

Manatees are known as the “cows of the sea.” These unique mammals graze on grass a lot like you would see a cow in a field grazing on grass. They can be anywhere from ten to thirteen feet in length. Females are usually larger than males. One of the largest manatees weighed 3,650 pounds. Manatees’ body shape looks similar to a very large seal. The color of a manatee ranges from gray to brownish-gray. Algae may grow on manatees. Algae changes parts of their skin color green or brown. They have small flippers on the front. Its tail is paddle shaped. Its tail is very strong to propel it when it swims. It has teeth that are continually being replaced.

The diets of manatees are made of mostly plants. That is because manatees are herbivores. Manatees eat turtle grass and shoal grass. They also eat mangrove leaves and algae. They have large lips. The lips help it get its food into its mouth. Manatees are considered pests in Sierra Leone in Africa. They each eat planted rice from the fields. Farmers do not like that.

Swimming in shallow rivers, manatees can be found in many different habitats. They can be found eating in bays and coastal waters. They have also been seen in estuaries. The temperature needs to be above sixty-four degrees. Manatees do not like cooler waters. Manatees are found in warm waters around the world. They do not dive deep in waters. The deepest a manatee has been seen is only thirty-three feet. Manatees are not quick swimmers. They can move to up to twenty-four miles per hour. They usually coast to about five miles per hour.

Manatees give birth and provide milk to a calf. A manatee is a mammal. They can have twins. It is rare to see twins. Calves stay with their mother for a few years not for nutrition. Calves stay with their mother to know where to find food. They will need to know where to travel. They need to know where to rest. Calves begin nibbling on plants as early as a few weeks from birth.



Manatees

1. What are manatees also known as?

2. Why did the author write this passage?

3. What could you name paragraph two?

4. Why do people compare manatees to cows?

5. Using text evidence, if you were to explain what a manatee looks like to someone who cannot see, how would you describe one?

6. What would happen if the waters around a manatee were fifty-four degrees? What would the manatee do?

7. Where could I find a manatee?

8. Describe the relationship between a manatee and its calf.

9. Use context clues to define the word range from paragraph one.

10. Use context clues to define the word herbivore from paragraph two.

11. Why do manatees have large lips?

12. Why don't manatees swim very deep? (Inference)

