

# Manatee Facts

## West Indian Manatee *Trichechus manatus*

**Length:** 12 plus feet

**Weight:** over 3,500 pounds

**Color:** gray to gray-brown

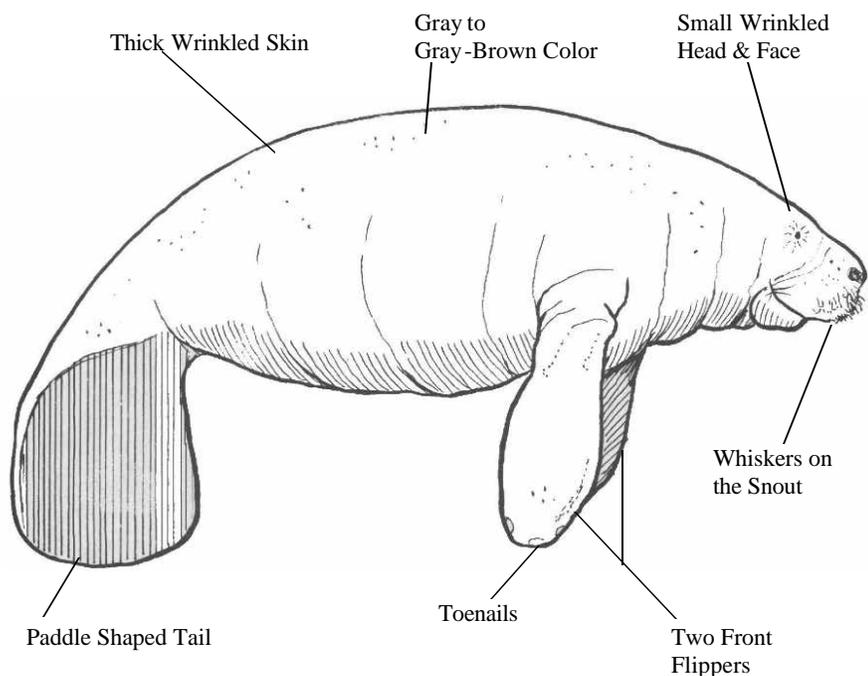
**Food:** 100 pounds of aquatic plants a day

**Reproduction:** One calf every 2 to 5 years

**Range in US:** North Carolina to Texas, mainly Florida

**Location:** Rivers, canals, estuaries, saltwater bays, & occasionally the open ocean

- ◆ Manatees only have molars to grind their food.
- ◆ Manatees chew two times per second.
- ◆ Manatee teeth are constantly being replaced as they wear down and fall out.
- ◆ The intestine of an adult manatee can measure 130 feet long.
- ◆ Manatees only breath through their nostrils.
- ◆ Manatee can hold their breath for up to 24 minutes.
- ◆ Manatee lungs are 2/3 the length of its body.
- ◆ A manatee cannot turn its head sideways, it must turn its whole body.
- ◆ It takes 13 months for a manatee to be born.
- ◆ Calves spend two years with their mothers learning the migration routes.



## Manatees are Mammals

Manatees breath air and have hair like all other mammals. They look like a relative of dolphins and whales but manatees are more closely related to elephants.

## Little Mermaid?

When the Spanish Explorers reached Florida they thought the Manatees were mermaids.

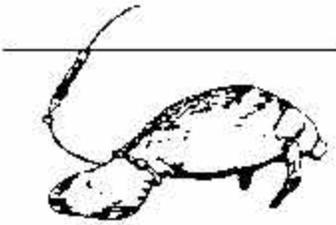
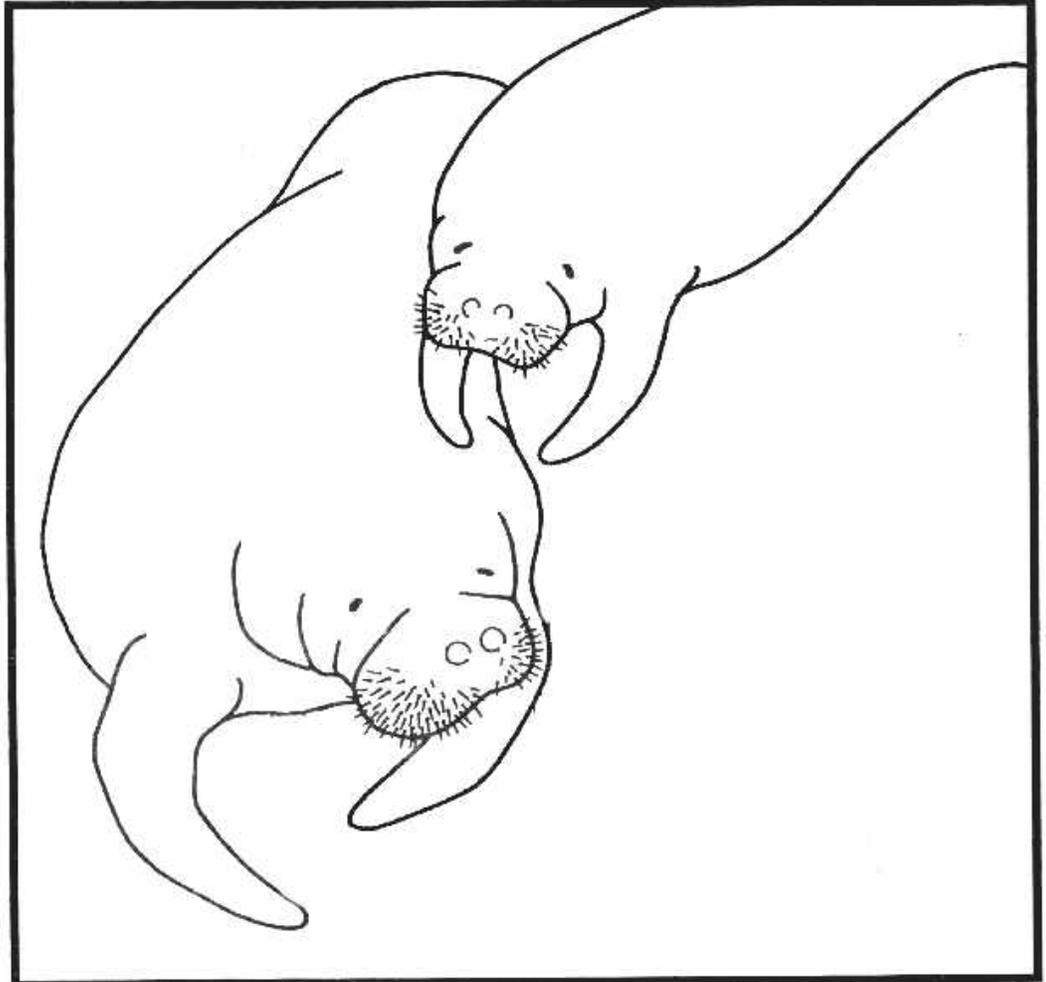
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Manatees like warm, shallow water with lots of plants to eat.

Manatees are slow swimmers.

For a good habitat manatees need:  
Food, Water, Shelter, & Space.

Color the picture so the Manatees have a good habitat.



**Word Bank**

Red Tide	Elephants	Boats
Threatened Species	Food	Mammals

- 1 Because manatees have hair and are warm blooded they are considered \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Manatees need up to 100 pounds of aquatic vegetation a day for \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ are the closest living relative to the manatee on land.
- 4 Since there are fewer than 2,000 manatees left they are considered an \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are the biggest killers of manatees in Florida.