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**OCEAN**  
MYSTERIES

# Ocean Mysteries – Manatees

## Activity Pack

3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### Episode Description:

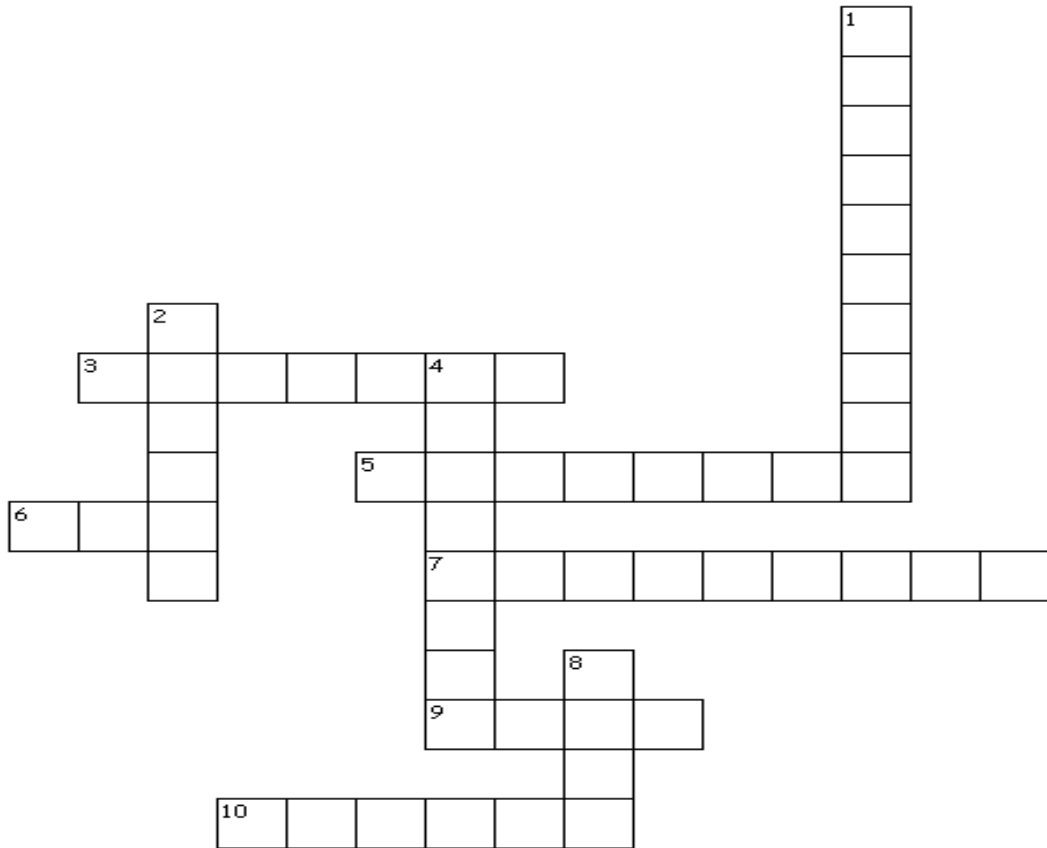
Long ago, sailors reported seeing mysterious creatures swimming through the oceans that they believed to be mermaids. It is now thought that what they were actually seeing were manatees. Even though these animals can measure up to 13 feet they are extremely gentle. Join host Jeff Corwin as he explores the world of the manatee. He'll swim alongside them, examine their unique characteristics, and explore how intelligent they are.

*The following activity pack has been designed to support the Ocean Mysteries programming being aired on ABC affiliate stations. The goal of this resource is to provide educators with continued learning opportunities beyond the featured episode.*

### Contents of this activity pack include:

- 🐠 *Manatee Crossword*
- 🐠 *Manatee Word Search*
- 🐠 *Stand by Your Manatee Story*
- 🐠 *Manatee Fun Facts Sheet*
- 🐠 *Manatee Resource Guide*
- 🐠 *Lesson and Curriculum Links*

- Word Bank**
- Manatee
  - Two
  - Mermaids
  - Elephant
  - Ten
  - Tail
  - Rivers
  - Propellers
  - Eating
  - Lips
  - Herbivore
  - Streams



**Across**

3. A large aquatic mammal that eats only plants and is also known as a sea cow is a \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Ancient sailors thought manatees were \_\_\_\_\_ because they seemed to have the head of a woman and a tail like a fish.
6. A manatee can eat \_\_\_\_\_% of its body weight every day.
7. An animal that eats only plants is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Manatees have a flat paddle-shaped \_\_\_\_\_ at the end of their body.
10. Manatees can be found in saltwater bays, canals, estuaries, coastal areas, and slow moving \_\_\_\_\_.

**Down**

1. Manatees are slow moving animals so they are very vulnerable to the \_\_\_\_\_ of boats.
2. Manatees will spend half their day sleeping and the other half \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The manatee's closest relative is the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Manatees use their \_\_\_\_\_ to grasp and gather food like seaweed, mangrove leaves, turtle grass, and algae into their mouths.

## Across

- 3. Manatee
- 5. Mermaids
- 6. Ten
- 7. Herbivore
- 9. Tail
- 10. Rivers

## Down

- 1. Propellers
- 2. Eating
- 4. Elephant
- 8. Lips

# Manatee Word Search

## Student Sheet

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D K O X N Z X U H G V L L U U  
I W P I Y M T E K J O M K A D  
F A Q F A V R S T H K Y U D J  
B Q Z J Q B G F R I S M T I O  
X M N U I D N A R E S B Q R I  
P H E V L O Y J G F P E K O D  
Y Z O R E L L E P O R P T L A  
L R V D M K X S W N B A I F D  
E H M U K A G H I R T Z I L X  
H Y B F F W I S L I S A Y V F  
M A N A T E E D B V Z C G U X  
F I K R D A B A X E I D S H I  
W H J U C Q H C D R I P M E V  
Q C K O Y A D G D S R T S V O  
G A W Z I U I S P I L O C X U

FLIPPERS  
HERBIVORE  
MERMAID  
SEACOW

FLORIDA  
LIPS  
PROPELLER

HABITAT  
MANATEE  
RIVERS

D K O X N Z X U H G V L L U U  
I W P I Y M T E K J O M K A D  
F A Q F A V R S T H K Y U D J  
B Q Z J Q B G F R I S M T I O  
X M N U I D N A R E S B Q R I  
P H E V L O Y J G F P E K O D  
Y Z O F E L L E P O R F T L A  
L R V D M K X S W N B A I F D  
E H M U K A G H I R T Z I L X  
H Y B F F W I S L J S A Y V F  
M A N A T E E D B V Z C G U X  
F I K R D A B A X E I D S H I  
W H J U C Q H C D R I P M E V  
Q C K O Y A D G D S R T S V O  
G A W Z I U I S P I L O C X U

# Stand By Your Manatee Story *Student Sheet 1*

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Have students as a group or individually come up with the following words. Then, insert the words into the attached story and read aloud.

1. Plural noun (animal) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Noun \_\_\_\_\_
3. Plural noun \_\_\_\_\_
4. Plural noun \_\_\_\_\_
5. Noun (body part) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Verb \_\_\_\_\_
7. Plural noun (body part) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Number \_\_\_\_\_
9. Number \_\_\_\_\_
10. Verb \_\_\_\_\_
11. Verb (ends in "ing") \_\_\_\_\_
12. Verb (ends in "ing") \_\_\_\_\_
13. Adverb \_\_\_\_\_
14. Verb \_\_\_\_\_
15. Noun \_\_\_\_\_
16. Verb \_\_\_\_\_
17. Noun \_\_\_\_\_
18. Adverb \_\_\_\_\_

# Stand By Your Manatee Story

## Student Sheet 2

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Manatees are sometimes called sea \_\_\_\_\_ because of their diet. They are

1. Plural noun (animal)

herbivores, meaning that they don't eat \_\_\_\_\_. Instead, they prefer to munch on

2. Noun

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Manatees have a flexible \_\_\_\_\_ that helps them

3. Plural noun

4. Plural noun

5. Noun (body part)

\_\_\_\_\_ their food, and large flat \_\_\_\_\_ for grinding up plants. Just like cows,

6. Verb

7. Plural noun (body part)

manatees are large and generally slow-moving. They can grow up to \_\_\_\_\_ feet

8. Number

long and weigh up to \_\_\_\_\_ pounds.

9. Number

Because they are mammals, manatees must \_\_\_\_\_ air. They can hold their breath

10. Verb

for about 20 minutes while \_\_\_\_\_, but if they are \_\_\_\_\_ they must breathe

11. Verb (ends in "ing")

12. Verb (ends in "ing")

more \_\_\_\_\_. When a manatee goes underwater, its nostrils \_\_\_\_\_

13. Adverb

14. Verb

automatically to keep the \_\_\_\_\_ out.

15. Noun

When a manatee calf is born, the mother will help it \_\_\_\_\_ for the first time. Also,

16. Verb

because they are mammals, manatee mothers produce \_\_\_\_\_ for their calves to

17. Noun

drink. Because they never leave the water, manatee calves \_\_\_\_\_ learn how to

18. Adverb

swim; it only takes them about an hour!

# Manatee *Fun Facts Sheet*

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- ❖ All manatees are part of the order *Sirenia*: the Amazonian manatee, the West Indian manatee, and the West African manatee.
- ❖ On average, manatees can measure up to 13 feet long and weigh up to 3,000 pounds.
- ❖ Female manatees are usually larger and heavier than male manatees.
- ❖ Manatees feed primarily on aquatic vegetation and algae, making them herbivores.
- ❖ Manatees do not have incisor teeth, only large flat teeth next to their cheeks. To grasp vegetation, manatees use their flexible upper lip, and then grind the plants with the flat teeth in the back of their mouths.
- ❖ Manatees are the only mammals that have continuously growing teeth. As new teeth grow towards the back of their jaw, older teeth push forward and fall out.
- ❖ The paddle-like tail of a manatee is not especially fast, but it does not need to be while grazing for vegetation. Manatees generally swim at a speed of less than 5 miles an hour, but can reach quick bursts of speed up to 15 miles an hour.
- ❖ Natural habitats of manatees include shallow rivers and marshes along the coastlines of the Caribbean, western Africa, and Central America.
- ❖ Manatees can hold their breath for up to 20 minutes at a time. This allows them to sleep in short intervals; sleeping takes up about half of their daily activities.
- ❖ There are many threats to manatee populations because of their need to be near the surface of the water. Boat strikes, fishing gear entanglement, and algal blooms can be very dangerous to manatees.
- ❖ Manatees are migratory animals. The West Indian manatee travels to warm Florida springs in the winter time, and can be found further north in the summer. Manatees are commonly found off the coast of Georgia but can sometimes be found as far north as New England.
- ❖ Manatees can live to be upwards of 60 years old.
- ❖ Female manatees generally only give birth once every two years. Gestation is 12 months then the mother nurses the young for another year until they are ready to find food independently.
- ❖ All 3 species of manatees are considered threatened by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature as listed as vulnerable.



# Manatee Resource Guide

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## Internet Resources:

Defenders of Wildlife

[http://www.defenders.org/wildlife\\_and\\_habitat/wildlife/manatee.php](http://www.defenders.org/wildlife_and_habitat/wildlife/manatee.php)

This site includes information about the biology, behaviors, threats and current status of manatees as well as videos.

The Magnificent Manatee

<http://www.manatees.net/>

This site has taxonomic information about the different species of manatees in the world as well as their close relatives. The site also includes global population information and conservation status.

National Geographic

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/manatee/>

This site includes basic facts about manatees and their behaviors as well as a global range map.

Save the Manatee Club

<http://www.savethemanatee.org/manfacts.htm>

This site includes informational resources as well as conservation information in Florida, as well as interaction tips for boaters and snorkelers.

## Book Resources:

Feeney, K., & McGee, J. F. (2001). *Manatees*. Minnetonka, MN: NorthWord Press.

Lourie, P. (2011). *The manatee scientists: saving vulnerable species*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Books for Children.

Martin, P. A. (2002). *Manatees*. New York, NY: Children's Press.

Wicker, J. L. (2008). *Those magical manatees*. Sarasota, FL: Pineapple Press.

# Lesson and Curriculum Links

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Below is a list of resource materials which contain age appropriate lesson plans and other related classroom curriculum.

RINET

<http://www.ri.net/RIGeo/rigea/earthwatch/manatees/>

This website offers numerous activities including global and local manatee ranges using geographical terms and population data that enable students to graph manatee populations over time. Other activities include themes in conservation, physical descriptions, and contrast and comparisons between similar marine mammals.

Save the Manatee Club

[http://www.savethemanatee.org/cs\\_activities.html](http://www.savethemanatee.org/cs_activities.html)

This website includes an activity sheet with templates to create manatee stickers and sponges, as well as an activity allowing students to create a 3-D manatee habitat poster.