

#9111 ENDANGERED SPECIES: MISSION TO SAVE THE MANATEE

ALLEGRO PRODUCTIONS
1999
Grade Levels: 5-10
15 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Explores the nature, habits, and habitats of manatees, one of earth's most gentle creatures. Explains how they are endangered and how they are nursed back to health after accidents with boats.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Life Sciences

- Standard: Understands relationships among organisms and their physical environment
 - Benchmark: Knows that an organism's patterns of behavior are related to the nature of that organism's environment (e.g., kinds and numbers of other organisms present, availability of food and resources, physical characteristics of the environment)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To explore the nature and habits of the manatees.
2. To observe scientists and conservationists nursing wounded manatees back to health.
3. To observe scientists tracking the movements of the manatees via NASA satellites.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Today, scientists are able to go beneath the waves and study the manatee in its natural habitat. They are also able to view manatees from space, using satellites to track the migration of these creatures through coastal waters. Programs to preserve and protect manatees make it possible to rescue injured animals and restore them to health before returning them to the wild.

This video explores the nature and habits of the manatees.

Because manatees inhabit the same coastal areas as humans, they are often involved in boating accidents, colliding with the hulls of boats and being wounded by propellers.

While they can't always prevent these incidents, scientists and conservationists are able to nurse wounded animals back to health at facilities.

After stricken manatees have recovered, they are returned to the wild where no boats are allowed. Transmitters, attached to their tails, send a signal to NASA satellites allowing scientists to track their movements.

VOCABULARY

1. herbivore
2. marching molars
3. migrate
4. microscopic
5. satellite
6. thermal springs



AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Why do we need to learn about manatees?
2. How have we learned so much about manatees?
3. What are *marching molars* and how do they work?
4. What does *endangered* mean, and what are we doing about it?
5. What are some of the ways that the space program helps manatees?
6. Compare manatees with other marine mammals, such as seals, dolphins, and whales.
7. Discuss "survival of the fittest" and how this relates to the manatee.
8. Discuss the ecosystem and how each part is necessary to its proper function. Ask students to think about what role the manatee might play.
9. Discuss high-speed boating and the ways that it impacts the environment.

Applications and Activities

1. Locate Florida on a map and trace the Crystal River to its source.
2. Have students research and discuss other endangered species and the methods used to protect them.
3. Arrange a visit to a nearby aquarium to see manatees and other marine mammals.

RELATED RESOURCES



Captioned Media Program

- Manatees #7755



World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.



- **SAVE THE MANATEE CLUB**

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

Presents several topics on this sea cow. "Manatee Info," "Mortality Statistics," "Manatee Tracking," "Manatee Protection Tips for Boaters," and more.

- **MANATEES**

<http://www.buschgardens.org/infobooks/manatee/home.html>

A SeaWorld Education Department resource, presents contents such as "Habitat and Distribution," "Physical Characteristics," "Senses," "Behavior," and many other topics on the manatee.

- **MANATEES IN PERIL: CAN FLORIDA'S REAL MERMAIDS SURVIVE?**

<http://www.discovery.com/news/features/manatees/manatees.html>

From the Discovery site, click on the "Learn About Manatee Anatomy" icon to read briefs about certain parts of the manatee body; read the article on "Wonderfully Wild" manatees; click on more dispatches such as "Disappearing Habitats," "The Scar Catalog," and others. View a live video of a manatee going about its daily life.