

West Indian Manatee

Trichechus manatus



Range: Atlantic and Gulf coast of U.S to Brazil

Size: ♂:370 cm (144 in)

♀:410 cm (162 in)

Weight : ♂: 1400 kg(1000 lbs)

♀: 1400kg (1000 lbs)

Tail: no tail

Habitat: rivers, estuaries
Coastal waters

Estrus cycle: 28-42 days

Estrus length: n/a

Gestation: 360-420 days

Litter:1

Weaning : 18 months

Sexual maturity: ♂: 9 years

♀: 3 years

Social: usually solitary may form
loose groups

Lifestyle: Aquatic both fresh
and salt water

Activity: Diurnal

Food: aquatic plants

IUCN: Vulnerable

Subspecies : 2

Longevity: captive: n/a

wild: 60-70 years

Order: Sirenia Family: Trichechidae

Although the West Indian Manatee is usually a solitary species large groups can be observed where resources are concentrated locally. In the colder parts of its range the manatee will congregate where warmer water is available such as springs, deeper water, areas affected by the Gulf Stream and outflow from industrial plants. Another type of manatee congregation is call an estrus herd. This herd is formed when males congregate around a female in estrus. It is unknown if the males can detect pheromones produced by the female or if it is just luck. Several of the males will breed with the female while the herd is formed, which may last as long as a month

There are two subspecies of the West Indian Manatee: the Florida Manatee (*T. m. latirostris*) and the Antillean Manatee (*T. m. manatus*). The Florida Manatee ranges from the Carolinas around Florida to the Gulf coast as far west as Texas. The Antillean Manatee ranges from the Greater Antilles in the Caribbean to the rivers of Venezuela and the Guianas. The West Indian Manatee will utilize both fresh and salt water environments.

The major threats to the manatee is man. Although protected throughout its range collision with boats and disturbance to the habitat are still problems. In South America the Antillean Manatee is still being illegally hunted for food