

THE FLORIDA MANATEE

Girl Scouts of West Central Florida

Protecting our environment and preserving it for future generations is a duty we all share. In Florida, we are able to help protect the Florida manatee. These endangered marine mammals will not survive without the concern and awareness of people who share their habitat.

The purpose of this program is to inform and encourage public awareness of the dangers facing the Florida manatee. This program can serve as part of a total program on environmental issues and the endangerment of other animals. We have a responsibility to protect our world.

RESOURCES FOR EXHIBITS OR MATERIALS: Tampa Electric's Manatee Viewing Center in Apollo Beach (813) 228-4289, Lowry Park Zoo in Tampa (813) 935-8552, Homosassa Springs State Wildlife Park (352) 628-5243, Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge (352) 563-2088, Blue Springs State Park in Orange City (904) 775-3663, Lee County Manatee Park in Ft. Myers, Sea World, Epcot, Mote Marine in Sarasota (941) 388-2451, Parker's Aquarium in Bradenton (813) 746-4131.

***ALL AGE LEVELS:** Know the manatee hot line # for your area to report a manatee being harassed or to report an injured, dead or tagged manatee.

BROWNIE LEVEL: Do a minimum of seven, including the *'d requirements.

1. * Discover facts about the manatee's biological characteristics and habitat. Where does it live? What water depth does it prefer? Why do wild manatees travel to warm water sites in the winter? How much does it weigh? What is its length? What does it eat and how much per day? Do manatees have any natural predators? Draw a poster or display showing what you have discovered.
2. Ask your parents or other adults to read a manatee story or booklet to you at home.
3. Watch a video about manatees or invite a speaker to come to your meeting to discuss manatees. Ask a sister troop to join you.
4. Write and perform a puppet show or skit about what you can do to protect the Florida manatee. Include the following: 1) wear polarized sunglasses while operating a boat 2) slow down and observe all manatee speed zones and caution areas 3) while boating, swimming or diving, do not approach or chase a manatee 4) pole, paddle or use a trolling motor when near shallow seagrass beds.
5. * Make a list of places where manatees can be viewed in the wild during the winter months. Make a list of places where manatees in captivity can be viewed year-round. What is the name of the place in Tampa, FL that has a manatee hospital? Visit a manatee refuge or live exhibit.
6. Create an original song or game to share with others.
7. Keep a scrapbook of newspaper clippings and magazine articles about manatees and related issues. Make a list of three ways that manatees are injured? How do federal and state laws protect them?
8. * Do a project about boating in coastal Florida where manatees live. Draw four waterway signs including 1) idle speed, no wake 2) slow speed, minimum wake 3) no entry, manatee refuge 4) resume normal safe operation. Color the signs using international orange on a white background. Where in

Florida do manatees and boaters use the same water? Make a group of people aware of the manatee's need for protection.

9. Plan and participate in a Girl Scout's Own with your troop. Tell how you feel about manatees. List three things that you can do to help save the endangered manatee. Share your feelings with your family.

JUNIOR LEVEL: Do a minimum of eight including the *d requirements.

1. * Discover facts about the endangered Florida manatee's biological characteristics and habitat. Find out why researchers study endangered species. How does their research relate to people?
2. Read a booklet about Florida manatees. Share what you read with your troop.
3. Know the meaning of the following words and how they relate to manatees. Use at least six of the words in a word search, crossword puzzle, or other word game. You may add more terms.

endangered	aquatic plants	pollution	no wake zone
refuge	sirenia	sea cow	extinct
elephant	manatee calf	scars	migration
mammal	estuary		
4. Watch a movie about manatees or invite a speaker to your meeting. Ask a sister troop to join you.
5. * Make a list of six places where manatees can be viewed in the wild and in captivity, either seasonally or year round. Plan a field trip and visit a manatee refuge or live exhibit.
6. Create a display or skit to interest younger children in learning about manatees. Use puppets, songs, poems, or any other similar creative means of expression.
7. * Which state or national agencies work for the protection of endangered species, specifically the manatees? Visit the web site or write a letter or take a field trip to visit an agency to find out what they do and why. Find out what causes animal habitat loss and how the animals are affected. What can be done to protect or replace food supplies of animals such as the manatee?
8. Keep a scrapbook of newspaper clippings and magazine articles about manatees and related issues. How are manatees injured? How do federal and state laws protect them?
9. Design a project related to boating in manatee areas or make a group of people aware of the manatee's need for help. Include four waterway signs that would be found in manatee habitat.
10. * Discover on the Web or write a letter to two manatee refuge sites. How do they operate? Explain the differences between natural refuge sites (such a Blue Springs State Park or Crystal River) and privately owned business sites such as power plants. Will they have different long-range effects on the manatees?
11. * Plan and participate in a Girl Scout's Own with your troop. Tell how you feel about what you have learned about the manatees plight for survival, always seeking food, water, shelter, space. Share your feelings with your family.

CADETTE/SENIOR LEVEL: Do a minimum of nine including the *d requirements.

1. Compile newspaper and magazine articles on manatees. How are manatees being injured? What

agencies or organizations work to protect the manatee? How is this information useful?

2. * Do a project about boating in coastal Florida where manatees live. Draw four waterway signs including 1) idle speed, no wake 2) slow speed, minimum wake 3) no entry, manatee refuge 4) resume normal safe operation. Color the signs using international orange on a white background. Where in Florida do manatees and boaters use the same water? What are humans' responsibilities toward boating safety, laws, and manatees? Explain the relationships between these three concepts.
3. Do a project to make a group of people (adults and children) aware of the importance of Tampa Bay as a habitat for the endangered Florida manatee.
4. * Research, discuss, and make a poster or fact sheet about why manatees and other animals are on the endangered list. Why do animals become extinct? Will the manatees become extinct? Learn about manatees by searching the Web, reading books, pamphlets, magazines or by watching films. Visit a facility where you can observe wild or captive manatees or invite a speaker to visit your troop. Find out why the facility or the speaker is interested in helping the manatees.
5. * List as many career opportunities as you can find that are related to research or conservation of manatees and other endangered wildlife. Choose one career field. Give a report to your troop as if you were working in the field. Describe what you would be doing and why. Eckerd College or Florida Marine Research Institute, St. Petersburg, web sites are a source for marine biology careers information.
6. Using the manatee as a specific example, explain the relationship between man and wildlife in our shared world. How are our needs interrelated? Learn how habitat loss occurs and how it can relate to extinction. How does habitat loss affect the ecosystem and humans?
7. * Discover what organizations and agencies are responsible for the development and implementation of activities directed toward the protection and recovery of the Florida manatee. What are they doing to lower the manatee's mortality rate? How can you help?
8. * What laws exist to protect the manatees? How are they being enforced? Are new laws being considered? What groups are for and against these laws and why?
9. * Why should humans refrain from swimming with manatees? How could it help the efforts of conservation of the animal? If you can, plan a field trip or campout where you can passively observe manatees first hand. Learn the rules for swimming in waters inhabited by manatees. Discuss what you learned. Share with other Girl Scouts.
10. Design a poster campaign for younger children to introduce them to the manatee's world or help a younger Girl Scout troop work on their manatee patch.
11. Plan and participate in a Girl Scout's Own to share your feelings about the manatees as an endangered species. How do you feel about the responsibilities of people to share the environment with wildlife? What can you do to help now and in future years? Share your feelings with at least one person outside of your troop.