

The Story of the Sirenians

OBJECTIVE

Students will recreate a manatee's environment and create a story about it.

MATERIALS

- white poster board
- white construction paper
- copies of Animal Cut-out sheets (enlarged if possible) pages 14-15
- paper and pencils
- crayons
- glue
- felt (any color)
- velcro (hook side)

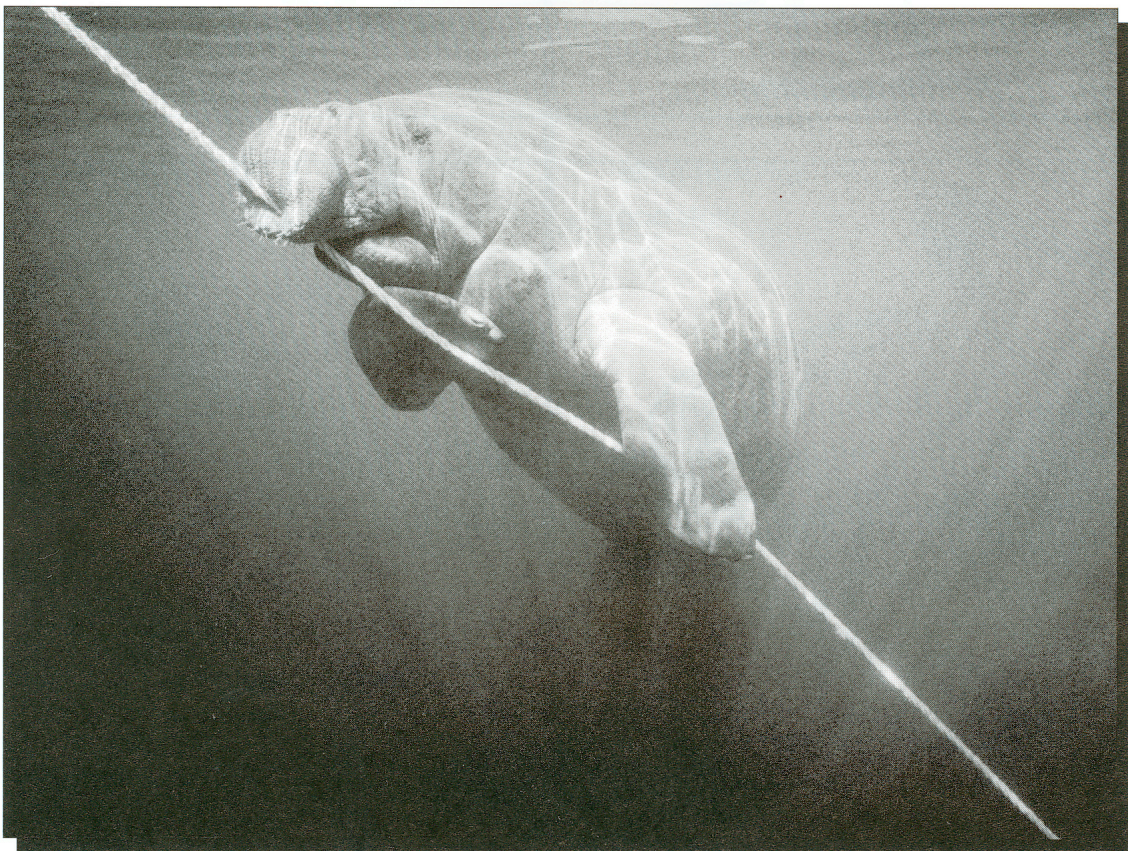
ACTION

1. Before starting this activity, create a felt board for the students by covering the poster board with felt. Attach the felt to the poster board with glue.
2. Lead the students in a discussion about the manatee's environment. What are some things that are found in a manatee's environment? As the students name things like water, trees, plants, and other animals, write them on the board. Have the students copy these items on a sheet of paper. Do the manatees use these things to survive in their environment? If so, how? Manatees eat plants like hyacinths that float on the surface and eel grass that grows along the bottom of rivers and streams. They use overhanging trees for shade and sometimes even eat the leaves that dip into the water.
3. Ask the students if there are any other animals found in the manatee's environment. Manatees share their environment with various types of wading birds like herons and wood storks. Turtles, alligators, river otters, and many types of fish are also found in the same places as manatees. Mammals like raccoons and white-tailed deer are found along the rivers' edges. List these animals on the board for the students to copy.
4. Have the students bring magazines to class that have pictures of rivers, streams, estuaries, bays, beaches, and plants growing around water. They should also look for pictures of animals that are found in the manatee's environment. Put all of the magazines on a table or in one area of the classroom where the students will be able to look through them.
5. Divide the class into groups of two or three students. Review the list of things found in a manatee's environment. Instruct the groups to look through the magazines to find and cut out pictures of these things.
6. Hand out Animal Cut-out sheets. Allow students to color the pictures and cut them out.

7. Hand out a piece of white construction paper, crayons, glue, and velcro to each group. Have them draw a manatee, color it, cut it out, and glue a piece of velcro on the back. Then have them glue velcro on the backs of the magazine pictures and the Animal Cut-out sheets.
8. Instruct each group to write or create a short story about a manatee and its environment. Explain that they're going to tell their story to the class and use the felt board to show the actions as they read. They'll need to decide who's going to tell the story and who's going to put the pictures on the felt board.
9. Have each group read their story to the class.

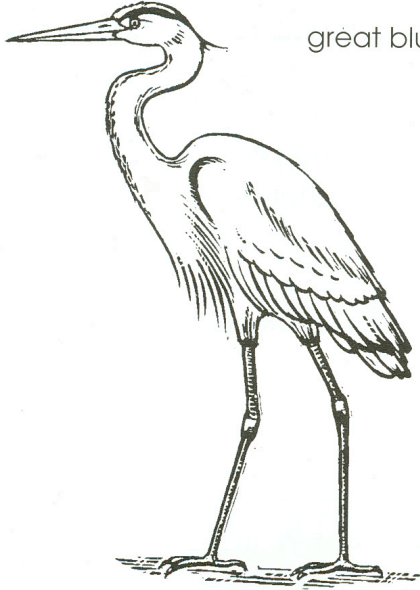
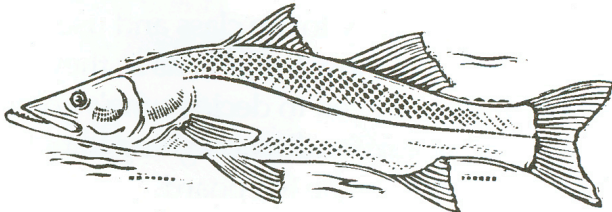
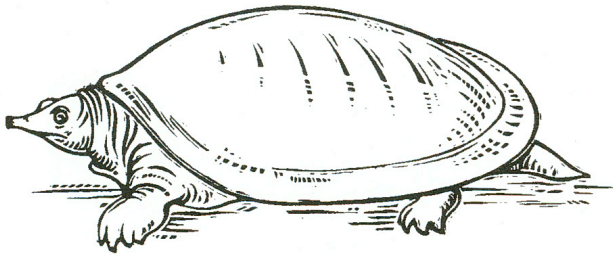
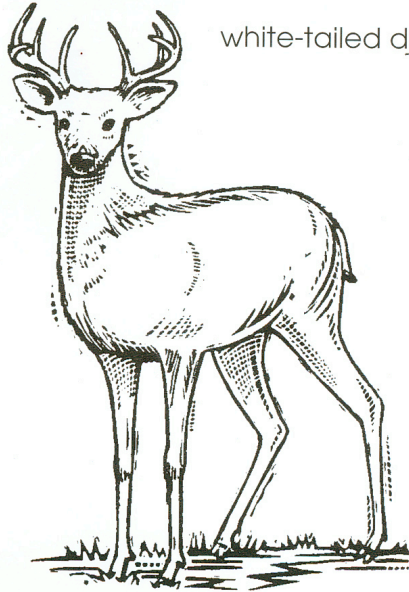
DEEPER DEPTHS

Include human-related threats to manatee survival. Allow students to draw pictures of speeding boats in areas where manatees live, discarded fishing line, and pollution. Have the students incorporate these threats into their stories.



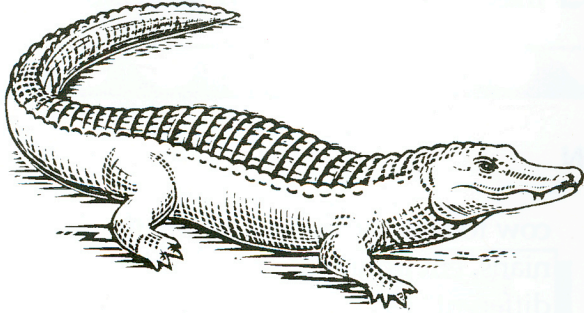
Manatees have been observed making contact with ropes, buoys, logs, rocks, and scuba divers.

Animal Cut-out Sheet

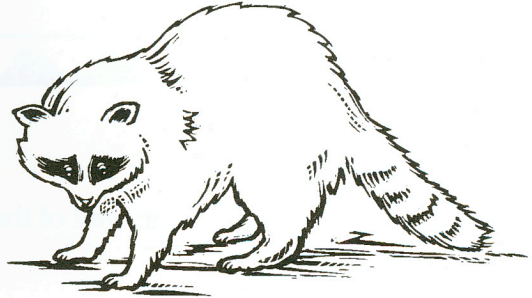
 <p>great blue heron</p>	 <p>snook</p>
 <p>soft shell turtle</p>	 <p>white-tailed deer</p>

Animal Cut-out Sheet

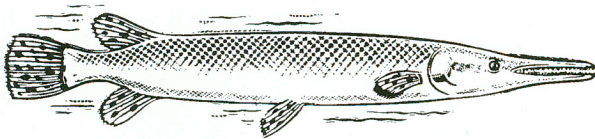
American alligator



raccoon



alligator gar



wood stork

