

AFRICAN MANATEE

(*Trichechus senegalensis*)

IUCN Red List: **Vulnerable**

Current Population Trend: **Unknown**

Estimated Number of Mature Individuals: **10,000**

Estimated Number in Guinea: **Unknown**

Existing breeding populations in Guinea: **Yes**

Protected status in Guinea: **Yes**

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Status of the African manatee in Guinea

Very little is known about the African manatee in Guinea, including its distribution and abundance, the impact of threats, or genetic diversity. Despite the species existing along the coast and in both the Gambia and Niger Rivers and their tributaries, there are currently no dedicated research or conservation efforts anywhere in the country. Human development along the coast and in larger towns in Guinea impact manatee populations primarily through poaching for food. Habitat loss due to agriculture, particularly for rice, has reduced both coastal and riverine African manatee habitat in Guinea. Cutting of mangroves for firewood and coastal development have also reduced and destroyed significant manatee habitat in Guinea. Dams on the Niger and Konkoure Rivers and Fatala Estuary in Guinea may entrap or exclude manatees from important habitat.

Conservation Project Objectives

Little is known about Guinea's African manatees, and this is the first dedicated research and conservation project in Guinea to focus on African manatee. Guinean researchers will be trained in African manatee research and conservation techniques, while also conducting a threat assessment of all manatee habitat use areas of the country. Biological samples will be collected opportunistically and analyzed to provide the first information about manatee population genetics, feeding ecology and habitat use in Guinea. Threat assessment results will be shared with wildlife law enforcement and we are working with them to encourage enforcement of laws to protect the species. Education programs as well as TV, radio, newspaper and other media announcements will raise awareness of the need to protect the manatee.

Conservation Partner:

