



# AFRICAN MANATEES

## FUN FACTS

African Manatees are aquatic mammals belonging to the order Sirenia. They can live in both fresh and saltwater. These secretive creatures are rarely seen in the wild.

despite being absolute giants that are estimated to weigh up to 400 kg (or 882 pounds). They inhabit nutrient-rich rivers, lakes, estuaries, and coastal waters along West and Central Africa, from Mauritania to Angola (~5000 km of coastline). They have also been documented as far as 3,620 km inland, in the Niger River.

They are mostly solitary creatures that move slowly and have a gentle demeanor. The strongest bond is between a mother and her calf, which can last up to two years. Larger groups also form for feeding, socializing, traveling, and mating. They spend most of their time grazing and resting in shallow waters no deeper than 5 meters.

The diet is mostly herbivorous; however, people have observed them in the wild eating fish and mollusks (marine and freshwater clams and mussels). This is a unique feature only seen on African manatees.

In the wild, they can live at least 39 years, probably more, although scientists have yet to document it.

Unfortunately, like the other species of Sirenians, they are threatened with extinction. The biggest threats to African manatees are poaching for their meat, as bycatch in fisheries, entrapment in and behind dams, and habitat loss. NGOs and government agencies across West and Central Africa work to preserve their habitat, enforce laws against hunting and illegal trade, generate awareness, and conduct research to understand better this species' ecology and behavior.

## SCIENTIFIC NAME

 Trichechus  
Senegalensis

## GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION



## GEOGRAPHICAL RANGE

 West Africa

## PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTIC

 Max Length: 450 Cm

## DIET

 Omnivore

 Extant (Resident)  West Africa

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Vulnerable

        

