



# Marvelous Manatees

## K-3 Classroom Activities

### Manatee Musical Chairs

#### OBJECTIVE

Students will learn factors that affect manatee populations.

#### BEFORE CLASS PREPARATION

Before playing this game, prepare the index cards by printing a threat to the manatees on each card with the marker. These can be repeated as many times as necessary to make enough cards to hang on the back of each student's chair. The threats include:

boating accidents

cold weather

poaching

fishing line

boat propellers

flood gates

crab traps

habitat destruction

fishing hooks

trash

#### ACTION

1. This game is played like musical chairs. Make a double row of chairs, back to back so they're facing both directions. There should be enough chairs for every student. Place an index card on the back of each chair, facing down so the students can't read it.
2. Explain that the students are going to pretend that they're manatees swimming in their habitat. The chairs represent this habitat. While there are enough chairs for everyone to sit on, the manatees' habitat is safe.
3. Lead the students in a discussion about factors that make the manatees' habitat unsafe. Explain that on the back of each chair there's an index card with a habitat threat written on it.
4. Explain that this game is played like musical chairs. Tell the students that you're going to play a tape of them singing the manatee song (or another musical selection).

While it's playing, the students will march around the chairs. When the music stops, they need to quickly find a seat.

5. The first time the music stops there should be enough chairs for every student. Have the student standing in front of one of the chairs on the end remove the index card from the back. Read the index card to the class. Explain that this threat has entered the manatee's habitat. Ask the students if they think all of the manatees will still be safe with this threat in their habitat. Have the students describe what they think could happen to the manatees because of this threat. To show how the manatee's habitat is affected, remove the chair that had the index card on it.
6. Point out that there will no longer be enough chairs for every student to sit. This signifies the loss of a safe place for the manatees to live. Since there are no longer enough chairs, one of the students will be left standing when the music stops. This student represents a manatee that has died as a result of the threat in its environment. This student must stand or sit on the sidelines.
7. Play the game until only one student is left. Discuss the implications represented by this game. Ask the students to describe what happens if there are too many threats in the manatees' environment.

### MANATEES

(to the tune of "This Old Man")  
(italics indicate hand motions)

Manatees, big and gray  
*spread arms out to sides indicating large size*  
Eat plants and grasses every day  
*hold both hands up while opening and closing*  
Swimming slowly through the waterway  
*move arms like oars on a boat*  
Manatees swim in the bay.  
*make large circle with both arms*

Manatees, swim real slow  
*move arms like oars on a boat, like manatees swim*  
Boats much watch out where they go  
*put one hand over eyes to indicate searching*  
With their agile flippers manatees will steer  
*hold hands out in front*  
And grab food to pull it near.  
*bring hands up to mouth*

Manatees, must stay warm  
*hug yourself*  
In the water where they roam  
*move arms like oars on a boat*  
Take a breath, and surface when they have  
to breathe  
*breathe in deep and stretch neck upward*  
Air is what they really need  
*move arms freely through the air*

### MATERIALS

- Chairs (one for each student)
- Index cards (one for each student)
- Marker
- Tape
- Tape recorder
- Tape recording of students singing the manatee song (left) or another musical selection