

# Rare Animals of Louisiana



## Manatee

*Trichechus manatus*

**Rarity Rank:** SZN/G2

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure



### Identification:

- Large, docile, barrel-shaped aquatic mammal
- Head small, flattened in profile
- Upper jaw extends beyond lower jaw, nostrils placed on top of snout, with stiff bristles around mouth
- Lacks external ears
- Front limbs modified into rounded flippers that are much more flexible than those of cetaceans
- Hind limbs absent
- Tail large, spatula-shaped. Adults may reach 4 m (13 ft) and 1,000 kg (2,205 lb)
- Generally restricted to rivers and estuaries although manatees may enter salt water when traveling from site to site
- Found in waters with dense submerged aquatic beds or floating vegetation
- Herbivorous; eats a variety of aquatic plants

### Habitat:

- Marine open water, bays, and rivers
- Generally restricted to rivers and estuaries although manatees may enter salt water when traveling from site to site
- Often found in waters with submerged aquatic beds or floating vegetation

### Food habits:

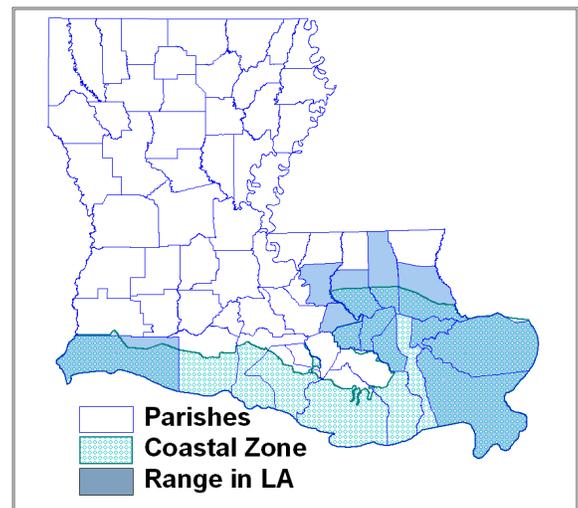
The manatee is herbivorous and eats a variety of aquatic plants

### Range:

- FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC
- Found along the northern Atlantic coast of South America, the Caribbean coast of South and Central America, and the Greater Antilles north of Florida

### Reproduction:

- Males reach reproductive maturity between 9 and 10 years but are able to mate at 2 years
- Females can reproduce at 4 or 5 years but are most successful after 7 to 9 years
- Calves remain with mothers for 2 years



Range based on occurrences in Natural Heritage database

# Rare Animals of Louisiana



- For the most part one calf is born at a time though twins have been reported
- Calves can consume plants after 3 weeks

## ***Threats:***

- Collisions with boats and barges
- Death due to flood-control structures
- Poaching and vandalism
- Habitat loss
- Pollution
- Harassment by boaters and divers
- Natural factors such as unusually cold weather and outbreaks of red tide may also influence population levels.

## ***Beneficial Management Practices:***

- Public education programs
- Protection against harassment
- Enforcing no wake zones in areas with manatees

## ***LA River Basins:***

Pearl, Pontchartrain, Barataria, Mermentau, Calcasieu, Sabine



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Funding provided by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program

For more information, please visit our Web pages at

[www.wlf.la.gov/wildlife/louisiana-natural-heritage-program](http://www.wlf.la.gov/wildlife/louisiana-natural-heritage-program) or call 225-765-2811

[www.BTNEP.org](http://www.BTNEP.org) or 1-800-259-0869