

# Are Manatees Out of Danger?



*Leigh Haeger*

There's good news for manatees. For some time, manatees have been in danger of dying out. Now some scientists in Florida say the number of manatees has increased and the sea mammals should no longer be considered endangered.

## What's a Manatee?

Manatees, or sea cows, live in Florida's warm coastal and inland waters. Manatees are grayish brown and weigh between 1,000 and 1,500 pounds. They can grow to be more than 12 feet long.

The sea mammals are herbivores, or plant eaters. To get to plants, hungry manatees have sometimes hauled themselves out of water. They eat between 32 and 108 pounds of plants each day. That means they spend most of their time looking for food.

## Speedboats vs. Manatees



NOAA

A posted sign warns boaters that manatees are in the area.

High-speed boats are one of the major threats facing manatees. Manatees are slow swimmers. They have trouble getting out of the way of a roaring speedboat. As a result, speedboats have often slammed into manatees, injuring or killing the sea creatures.

Government officials in Florida have passed laws to protect manatees from harm. They have posted speed limits on waterways where manatees live. They have also posted signs that warn boaters when they are in an area where manatees live.

The laws seem to be working. The population has increased to about 5,000 manatees. If the laws continue to be enforced, the number of manatees should continue to grow, the scientists say.

Despite the increase in the number of manatees, the animals are not completely out of hot water. The scientists say that if manatees are not protected, their numbers could decline in the future. Some say the numbers may decrease by 50 percent during the next 45 years.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. According to the passage, what are considered the biggest threat to manatees?

- A sharks
- B speedboats
- C oil spills
- D fishermen

2. In the passage, speedboats were a danger to manatees. How was this *problem* solved?

- A Laws were passed to protect manatees from speedboats.
- B A giant aquarium was built for the manatees to live in.
- C Manatees were moved to a place with fewer speedboats.
- D Manatees were taught how to swim faster to get away from speedboats.

3. The author says that if manatees are not protected, their numbers could decline in the future. What action is best supported by the passage?

- A encourage boaters to bring plants to feed the manatees
- B relocate the manatees to a place with less boats and people
- C give speeding tickets to boaters that do not obey the laws
- D take down the signs that show where the manatees live

4. Read the following sentence: "Now some scientists in Florida say the number of manatees has increased and the sea mammals should no longer be considered endangered."

In the sentence the word **endangered** means

- A helped
- B threatened
- C protected
- D taught

5. The main idea of this passage is that

- A people's actions have made the manatees extinct
- B there are too many manatees in Florida
- C speedboats are dangerous and should be made illegal
- D manatees were helped by the laws meant to protect them

6. Why are speedboats a danger to manatees?

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7. How would speed limits on waterways help manatees?

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8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Laws were passed to protect manatees \_\_\_\_\_ manatees were endangered by speedboats.

- A until
- B so
- C although
- D because

9. Answer the questions based on the sentence below.

In Florida, speedboats threatened Manatees that could not swim away from them fast enough.

What speedboats

(did) What? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**10.** Read the vocabulary word and definition below and complete questions 10a, 10b, and 11.

**Vocabulary Word:** enforce (en · force): to make people obey something, such as a law or a rule.

**10a.** Read the five sentences below and underline the word **enforce** in each sentence.

1. The police enforce the law by making the cars obey the speed limit.
2. The teachers post rules and enforce them so that all students can learn.
3. Sandals were not allowed at work, but the manager did not enforce the rule and did not say anything.
4. The dad found it hard to enforce the bedtime that the mom had set for the kids, and allowed the kids to stay up late.
5. If the government wants people to follow their laws, they must find ways to enforce them.

**10b.** Which person enforces the law?



**11.** If a teacher sends a student to the principal's office for cheating, is she enforcing a rule? Why or why not?

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## Teacher Guide &amp; Answers

**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 850

**Passage Text Structure:** Problem/Solution – the writer poses a problem and suggests possible solutions

**Passage Summary:** The passage “Are Manatees Out of Danger?” addresses the problem of the declining manatee population in Florida. As a solution, Florida’s government passed laws to protect manatees from high-speed boats.

1. According to the passage, what are considered the biggest threat to manatees?
  - A sharks
  - B speedboats**
  - C oil spills
  - D fishermen
2. In the passage, speedboats were a danger to manatees. How was this *problem* solved?
  - A Laws were passed to protect manatees from speedboats.**
  - B A giant aquarium was built for the manatees to live in.
  - C Manatees were moved to a place with fewer speedboats.
  - D Manatees were taught how to swim faster to get away from speedboats.
3. The author says that if manatees are not protected, their numbers could decline in the future. What action is best supported by the passage?
  - A encourage boaters to bring plants to feed the manatees
  - B relocate the manatees to a place with less boats and people
  - C give speeding tickets to boaters that do not obey the laws**
  - D take down the signs that show where the manatees live
4. Read the following sentence and answer the question below: “Now some scientists in Florida say the number of manatees has increased and the sea mammals should no longer be considered endangered.”

In the sentence the word **endangered** means

  - A helped
  - B threatened**
  - C protected
  - D taught
5. The main idea of this passage is that
  - A people’s actions have made the manatees extinct
  - B there are too many manatees in Florida
  - C speedboats are dangerous and should be made illegal
  - D manatees were helped by the laws meant to protect them**
6. Why are speedboats a danger to manatees?

**Suggested answer:** Speedboats are dangerous because manatees can’t get out of their way fast enough, so the boats hit manatees, which can injure or kill the animals. [paragraph 4]

7. How would speed limits on waterways help manatees?

**Suggested answer:** Because manatees are slow swimmers, they can't get out of the way of fast moving boats. If the boats have to move slower in certain areas, the manatees might be able to get away from them and not be injured or killed. [paragraph 4]

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Laws were passed to protect manatees \_\_\_\_\_ manatees were endangered by speedboats.

- A until
- B so
- C although
- D **because**

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

In Florida, speedboats threatened Manatees that could not swim away from them fast enough.

What? speedboats

(did) What? **threatened manatees**

Where? **In Florida**

Why? **manatees could not swim away from them fast enough**

10. ReadWorks recommends that you teach this vocabulary word to the whole class out loud using the four steps listed below.

**Vocabulary Word:** enforce

**Step 1:** Introduce the word

- a. Teacher writes the word on the board and divides it into syllables: (en · force)
- b. Teacher says: "This word is enforce. What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "enforce."]

**Step 2:** Provide a child-friendly definition

- a. Teacher says: "Enforce means to make people obey something, such as a law or a rule."
- b. Teacher says: "In the passage, the laws protecting manatees need to be enforced, so that the manatee population can continue to grow."
- c. Teacher says: "What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "enforce."]

**Step 3:** Practice the word

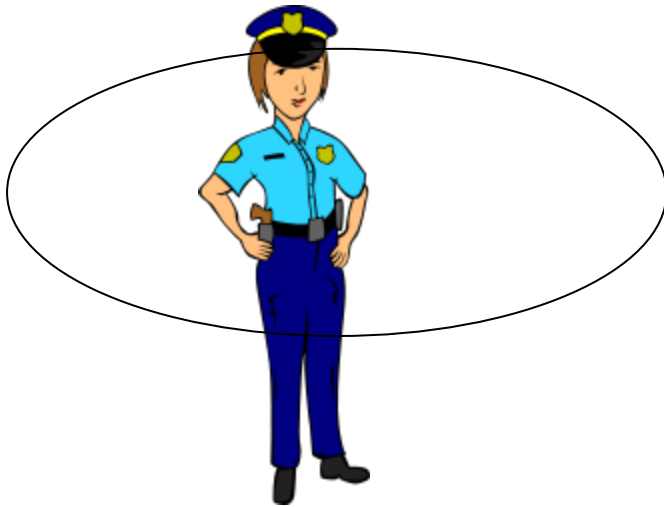
Teacher provides examples and additional opportunities to repeat the word. Read the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence out loud to your students. Begin reading it again and when you come to the vocabulary word prompt students to say the vocabulary word out loud. Then, finish reading the sentence out loud to your students.

- 10a.**
1. The police enforce the law by making the cars obey the speed limit.
  2. The teachers post rules and enforce them so that all students can learn.
  3. Sandals were not allowed at work, but the manager did not enforce the rule and did not say anything.
  4. The dad found it hard to enforce the bedtime that the mom had set for the kids, and allowed the kids to stay up late.
  5. If the government wants people to follow their laws, they must find ways to enforce them.

**Step 4:** Check for student understanding

This step can be completed as a whole class activity or as an independent practice.

- 10b.** Which person enforces the law?



- 11.** If a teacher sends a student to the principal's office for cheating, is she enforcing a rule? Why or why not?

**Suggested answer:** Yes because she is making sure that the "no cheating" rule is upheld by punishing someone who is not following it.

*Suggested Additional Vocabulary:* endangered, hauled, threats, despite