

Florida Manatee

Behavior:

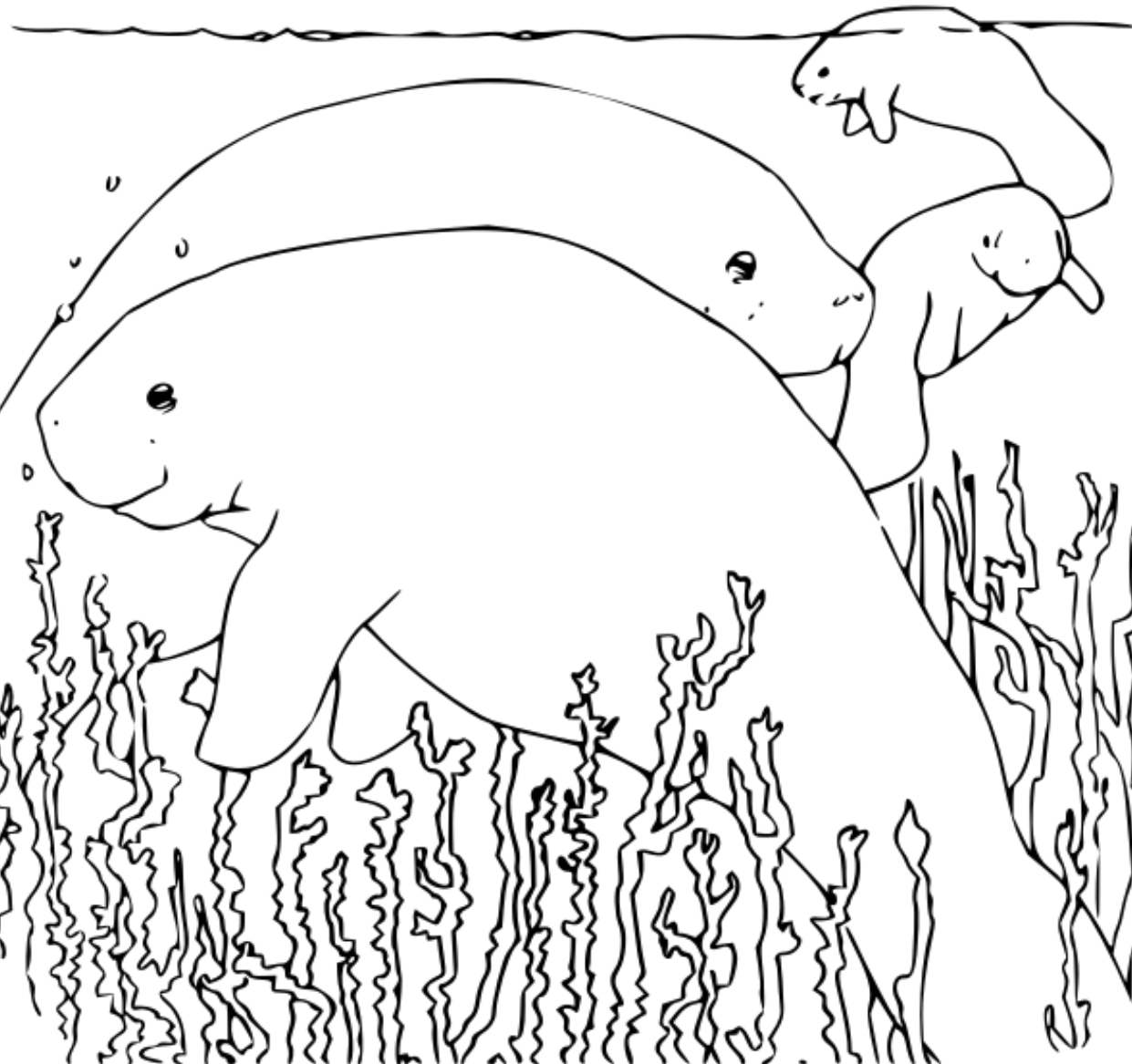
Manatees are not territorial animals and will usually swim alone or in pairs. If you do see a group of manatees, it's usually where an abundance of food is or a warm area. A group of manatees are called an aggregation. Manatees are warm-blooded and need water temperatures of at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit.

Identification:

Manatees are large marine mammals with flippers, powerful flat tails, snouts, and fingernails. That's right, fingernails! Despite their nickname of sea cow, they are actually more closely related to elephants. Although they have the reputation of being slow and graceful swimmers, they can swim up to 15 MPH in short bursts if needed.

Habitat:

Seas, rivers and oceans along the coast of Southern and Eastern United States but a few have been found near the Bahamas.



Diet:

They are herbivores and prefer sea grasses in the ocean and freshwater vegetation when in rivers. They will also eat algae.

Size:

Range in size from 8 to 13 feet and can weigh 440 to 1,300 lbs.