

Manatee Flipper Activity



Objective

Understand adaptations that allow manatees to live in their aquatic environment.

Materials

- Oven mitt, mitten or paper bag
- Fork
- Pencil
- Paper

Getting Started

Place all materials on a table in front of you

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Step 1

Put your oven mitt, mitten or paper bag over one of your hands. It's okay if it's too big. Flex (close) the hand that is not covered. It's easy to do, right? Now try to flex the hand that is covered. It's not as easy, right? Optional: cover your second hand with an oven mitt, mitten or paper bag, too, for the next step.

Step 2

Are you ready to use your “flippers?” Try to pick up the fork in front of you with one or two of your covered hands.

Could you pick up the fork? _____

Was this easy or difficult to do? _____

Would you be able to feed yourself this way? _____

Based on your observations, how do you think manatees use their flippers to eat? _____

Step 3

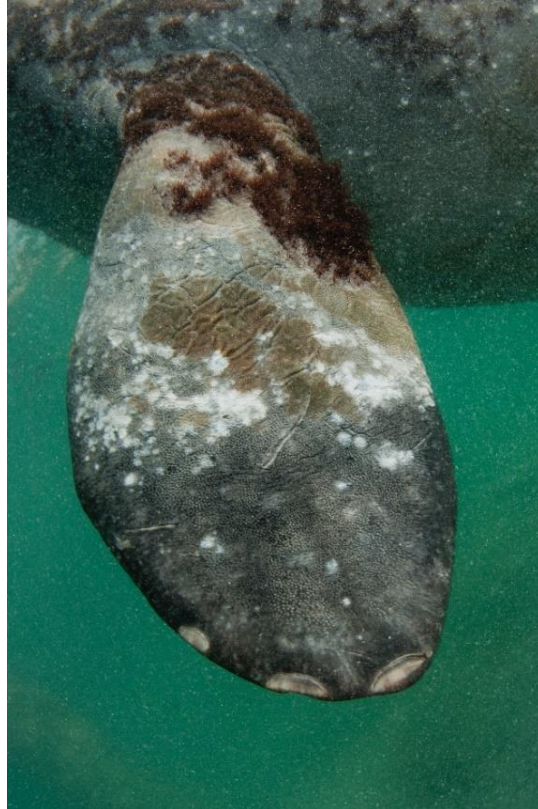
Try to pick up the pencil in front of you.

Is this difficult or easy to do? _____

If you can pick up the pencil, try writing your name on the piece of paper with it.

Were you able to write your name? _____

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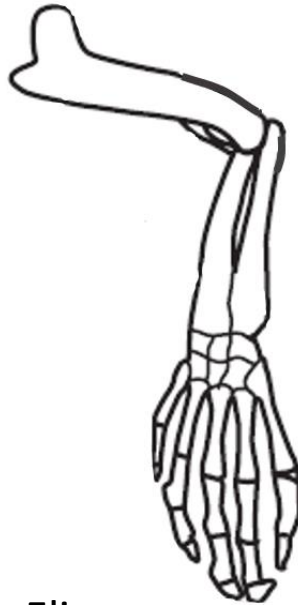
Step 4

Look at your bare hand and compare it to the photo of the manatee flipper you see above.

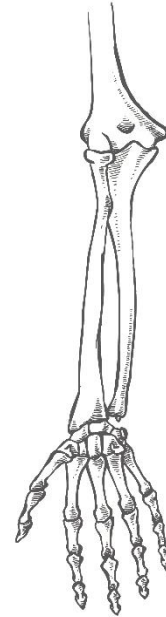
What are some similarities? _____

What are some differences? _____

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Manatee Flipper



Human Hand

Step 5

Look at the two images above. These show the bone structures of a manatee flipper and a human hand.

What are some similarities? _____

What are some differences? _____

If manatees had fingers instead of flippers, how do you think it would affect how they swim? _____

Would you swim better if you had flippers? _____