

Dugong FAQ

for children

**What are the little hairs
on the nose of a dugong?
What do they do?**

They are sensory bristles. Dugongs have sensitive bristles that cover their upper lip that help them graze by detecting food (seagrass).



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**How do dugongs
sleep? Do they close
their eyes?**

Dugongs don't sleep in the same way humans do. They sleep in short bursts, where they are resting but not completely unconscious. Their eyelids droop, but don't fully close.



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**What are the main threats
to dugongs?**

Dugongs face a number of threats, including (1) hunting (illegal and traditional), (2) being accidentally caught in fishing nets (this is called 'bycatch'), (3) habitat loss (seagrass is a dugongs favorite food, so if seagrass beds are destroyed, they won't have much to eat), and (4) boat strike (when a boat runs over or hits a dugong).

**Do dugongs have
mental disorders?**

There has been no research suggesting that dugongs have mental disorders.

**Who swims faster,
a dolphin or a
dugong?**

A dolphin does. Dolphins usually swim around 5 km per hour, but can reach speeds of up to 40 km per hour when chasing prey. Dugongs swim slower than 10 km per hour.

**What sounds do
dugongs make?**

Dugongs make a range of sounds to communicate with their calves, and others in their group. Most noises sound like chirps, barks, or whistles.

**Do dugongs get mad?
Are they dangerous
to people?**

Dugongs are known to be shy, gentle animals, but they can be startled by humans who come too close. They are not dangerous if you do not frighten them by trying to touch or swim with them.

**What should we do
if we see a dugong
nearby?**

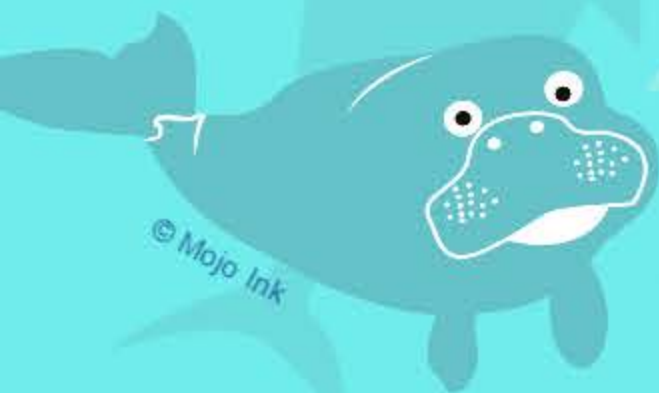
You can quietly watch the dugong but do not approach the dugong, or get into the water to swim with it. Never feed, touch, or bother a dugong.

**Who stays underwater
for longer: a dolphin or
a dugong?**

A dolphin does. Both dolphins and dugongs swim to the surface to breathe air. Dugongs can stay underwater for up to 6 minutes but generally breathe every 2–3 minutes; dolphins stay underwater for anywhere between 5 and 20 minutes.

**How far can
dugongs see?**

Not very far. Dugongs have poor eyesight because their eyes are very small. Their eyesight is similar to yours when wearing goggles underwater.



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