

DUGONG

Dugong are found in Australia, New Caledonia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Sadly, they are extinct in a lot of their former range.

DUGONG TOURS

Dugong can live for up to 70 years. They only start to breed when they are over 7 years old and they have a single calf once every 2.5 - 7 years.

Dugong are very charismatic and people love them! Tourists come from around the world to see dugong in the Pacific Islands and this ecotourism can be a sustainable source of income.

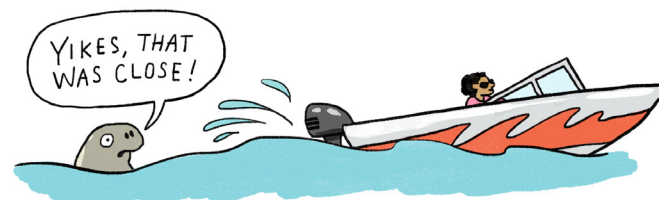
Dugong rely on shallow waters and seagrass beds for food and habitat. They can eat up to 40kg of seagrass a day!

A remora fish cleaning up the dugong's dead skin and poop

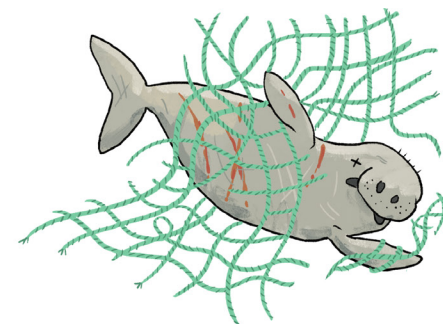
We need to learn more about where dugongs live and monitor their population, but most importantly we need to protect and restore the seagrass beds. They are important for lots of species - not just dugong! Seagrass beds are nurseries for baby fish and shellfish, they purify the water, and they also absorb CO₂ - which helps to slow down the impacts of climate change.

THREATS TO DUGONG

Dugong get hit by boats going too fast, which can injure or kill them. There need to be safe speed zones in dugong habitat to protect them.



Dugong get caught as bycatch in fishing nets, which drowns them because they need to breathe air. Big set-nets catch whatever swims into them, and if they are left unattended, many non-target species can die. Nets should always be watched so that dugong can be quickly released.



Sediments running off the land from coastal development and deforestation makes the water murky, and kills the seagrass beds that dugongs rely on to survive. Sometimes this run-off can contain herbicides and other toxins from agriculture and urban areas, which are also bad for the environment.

