

# U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

## Questions and Answers

### *When can we see the manatees?*

The best time to see wild manatees at Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge is from December-March. The weather is at its coolest, and the manatees are the most concentrated around the warm water springs that they depend on for their survival. Captive manatees may be viewed year round at the Homosassa Springs State Wildlife Park, located 7 miles south of Crystal River on US Highway 19.

### *How do I swim with the manatees?*

You can arrange a guided manatee snorkel tour through one of the many commercial dive shops in the town of Crystal River or you can arrange to rent a boat and go on your own. The refuge currently does not provide tours.

### *Is it OK to touch a manatee?*

It is OK to touch a manatee with one open palm if the manatee approaches you first. Observe manatees from the surface of the water and at a distance. Manatees on the bottom are likely to be resting or feeding and should not be disturbed.

### *How big do manatees get?*

Manatees can grow up to 12 feet and weigh up to 3500 lbs.

### *Why do manatees come to Crystal River?*

Manatees depend on the warm water (72°F) springs in Kings, Bay, Crystal River for their survival. Manatees cannot survive in waters below 68° for extended periods of time. They will die of hypothermia.

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## Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge

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