

Publication: The Horn Book Magazine

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Date published: July 1, 2011

The Manatee Scientists: Saving Vulnerable Species
[Scientists in the Field] by Peter Lourie Intermediate
Houghton 80 pp. 4/11 978-0-547-15254-7 \$18.99

The reliably excellent series brings us yet another high-quality title featuring scientists at work, here attempting to understand and protect the manatee. The three worldwide species of the mammal are threatened by human actions, including hunting, pollution, and recreational boating. We meet scientists Fernando Rosas in Brazil, John Reynolds in Florida, and Lucy Keith in West Africa, and accompany them on their investigations of manatees in the field and in captivity. Rosas and colleagues raise Amazon manatees, learning critical information through long-term observations of the mammals in their care. Reynolds studies Floridian and Caribbean manatee populations using observations from the air and advises on their conservation as chair of the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission. Keith pieces together information from hunters, collects bone and tissue samples from manatees across West Africa, and is working hard to establish a collaborative scientific network across sixteen countries. Each profile captures not only the science and

politics of animal conservation but also the dedication and passion these scientists clearly feel for their chosen profession. Telling much of the story are Lourie's many photographs of the manatees in their various habitats, the scientists and their collaborators, and the children and adults in the communities that interact with the manatees. Particularly remarkable are the details visible in the crisp underwater shots of the manatees in Crystal River, Florida. Extensive additional information, including species profiles, further facts and resources, evolutionary origins, and a glossary, round out the text. DANIELLE J. FORD