



CONSERVATION

through Research, Education & Collaboration



IMPACT REPORT
2020



The New Year has arrived, and I think I speak for all when I say, it is good to see the last of 2020. Although the pandemic is still very much with us, I am optimistic that there is now light at the end of the tunnel.

The events of the past year have significantly altered the way the charity is able to operate. Virtually all field work has ceased globally, and tourism activities ground to a halt at all our affiliate project locations worldwide. A dozen staff from our Maldivian Manta Ray Project left the Maldives, and many of them had to take unpaid leave. Many of our project leaders, their families, and colleagues have fallen ill to this virus, and sadly several manta research and conservation colleagues in Indonesia and South America have died. Therefore, until the World is fully vaccinated, it will not be possible for the Manta Trust and our affiliate's operations to get back to full strength, and for some, sadly this may never be possible.

In the last two years, with assistance from the Manta Trust, many other mobulid experts and NGOs, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) have undertaken reassessments of most mobulid species for their Red List. Thanks to greater knowledge of these species' life history and the threats they face, these assessments are the most comprehensive to date. However, unfortunately they have resulted in the up-listing of the threat status for nearly all. The most recent of these is the reassessment of the oceanic manta ray from Vulnerable to Endangered. As mobulids continue to move in a worrying direction along this threat list status, the need for increased conservation efforts is greater than ever before.

However, despite these challenges, I have been greatly encouraged by donations from the general public and the continued financial support from many of our corporate partners. More importantly, I am proud of our Manta Trust family; for working harder than ever, quickly adapting our operations to meet these recent world changing events. The core team and our operations have continued to find new ways to connect with our audience and partners online, raise funds, and generally ensure the charity remains functional and effective.

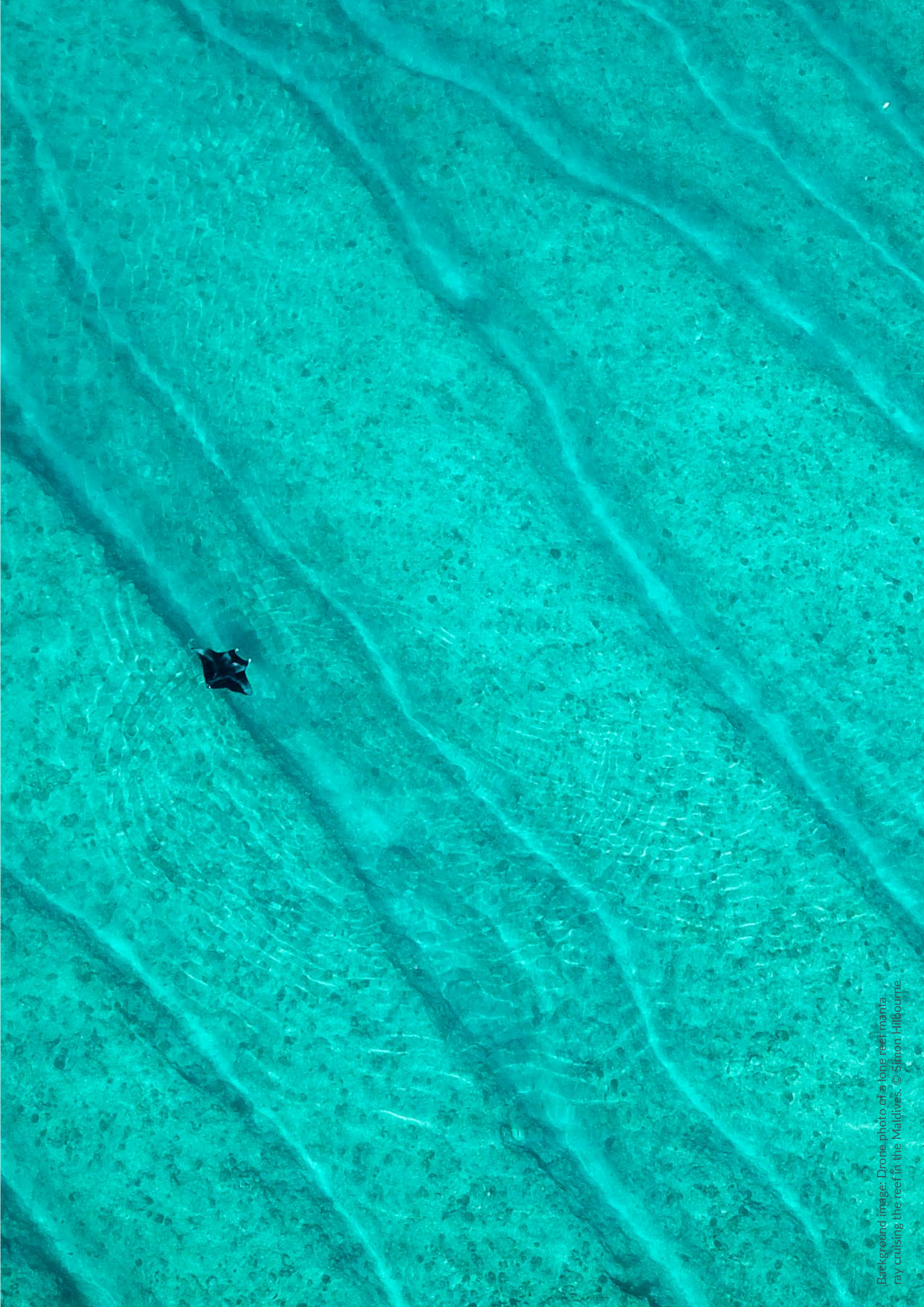
This would not have been possible without such a dedicated, passionate, and hardworking group of colleagues, and without the equally dedicated affiliate project leaders who have continued to strive for the protection of manta rays despite these challenging times. And for that, I am extremely grateful.



Dr. Guy Stevens
CEO & Co-founder

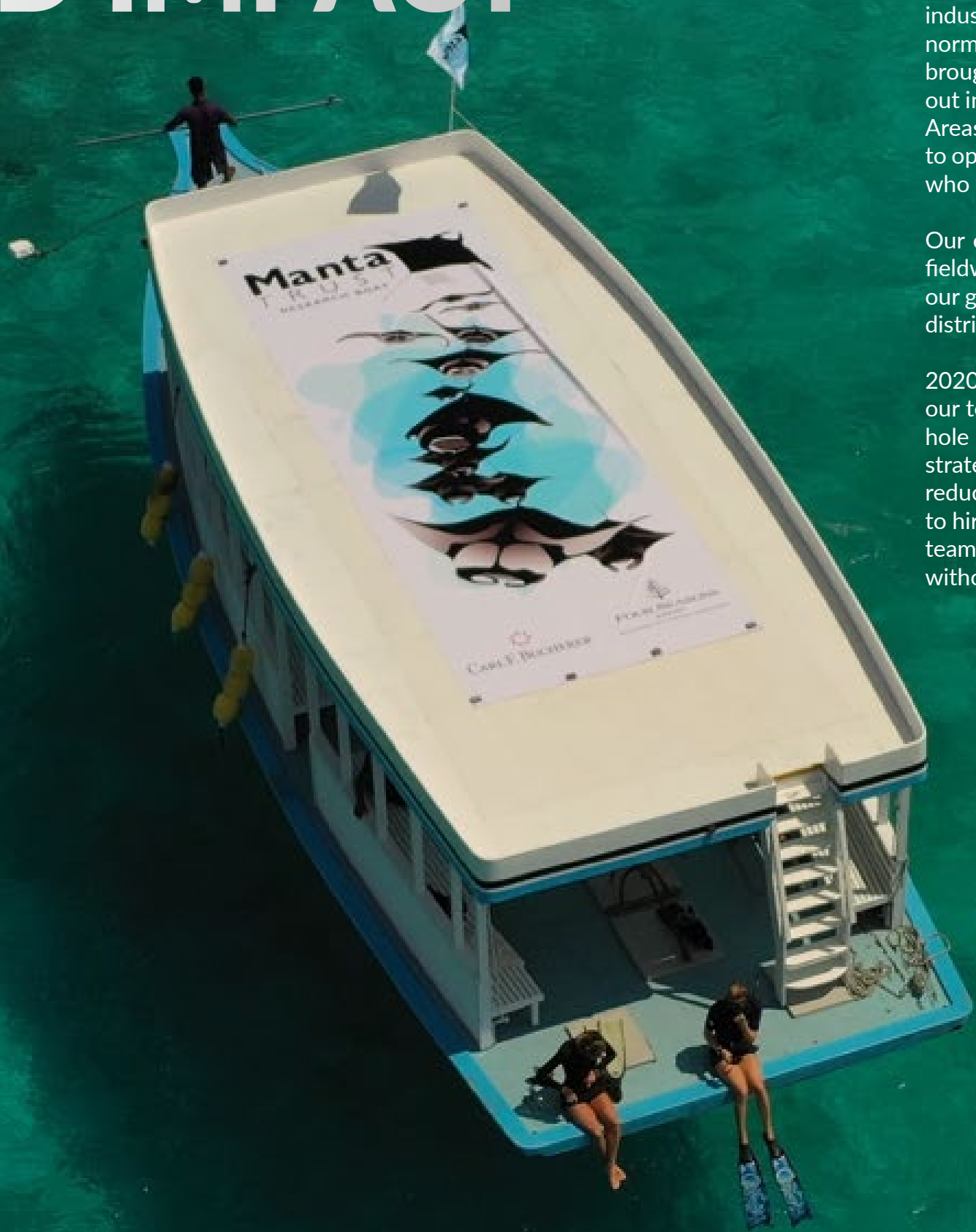
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Background image: Drone photo of a lone reef manta ray cruising the reef in the Maldives. © Simon Hillbourne

COVID IMPACT



The COVID-19 crisis greatly affected our operations over 2020 and its growing and far-reaching impact continues to threaten the efforts of our core staff and affiliate projects. Our global network of small but crucial projects relies heavily on funding from commercial partners in the tourism industry which has been hit hard by the current global movement restrictions, and many grants that normally fund conservation projects are being redirected to humanitarian aid. Mobulid research was brought almost to a complete halt in 2020 as our scientists around the world were unable to get out into the field. Similarly, many rangers have been unable to carry out patrols of Marine Protected Areas, leaving mobulid populations and vital habitats vulnerable to fisheries, which have continued to operate throughout the pandemic. Our thoughts are with the members of our global manta family who have been personally affected by COVID-19, losing friends and family.

Our core team were quick to adjust when global lockdowns and travel restrictions halted all our fieldwork, refocusing our efforts on trialling new online education initiatives and offering support to our global network. In April we ran an emergency funding appeal, raising nearly £16,000, which was distributed amongst our affiliate projects most affected by the pandemic.

2020 was set to be a disaster for our Maldivian Manta Ray Project as, for the first time in 15 years, our team were unable to get into the field to collect data. If this had continued it would have left a hole in our records that would impact our ability to assess the long-term trends in the life history strategies of this population and the short-term impacts of the global pandemic and the subsequent reduction in tourism activities in the Maldives. However, Carl F. Bucherer made a generous donation to hire a dedicated research boat for the final three months of the 2020 Baa Aoll manta season. Our team were able to get back into the field and for the first time, observe manta rays in this region without the distraction and disturbance of tourism.

\$15k

Raised and distributed to our affiliate projects in response to COVID-19



Through the generous support of Carl F. Bucherer we were able to hire a research boat in Baa Atoll, Maldives to avoid losing out on key population monitoring data during a unique opportunity when tourism was uncharacteristically low.



In response to global lockdowns, we transitioned our focus to online education and awareness activities.



The Manta Trust also took the opportunity to complete and publish a number of peer reviewed scientific papers.

CONSERVATION

Background image: Atlantic manta ray and Longhorned Pygmy Devil Rays feeding together, Mexico. © Guy Stevens



CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENTS



CONSERVATION STATUS OF MOBULIDS



Oceanic Manta Ray
Mobula birostris
IUCN Red List Population Trend
↓ DECREASING



Reef Manta Ray
Mobula alfredi
IUCN Red List Population Trend
↓ DECREASING



Atlantic Manta Ray
Mobula cf. birostris
Not currently recognised by the IUCN Red List



Sicklefin Devil Ray
Mobula tarapacana
IUCN Red List Population Trend
↓ DECREASING



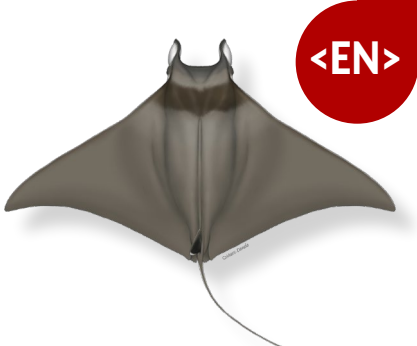
Spinetail Devil Ray
Mobula mobular
IUCN Red List Population Trend
↓ DECREASING



Bentfin Devil Ray
Mobula thurstoni
IUCN Red List Population Trend
↓ DECREASING



Longhorned Pygmy Devil Ray
Mobula hypostoma
IUCN Red List Population Trend
↓ DECREASING



Shorthorned Pygmy Devil Ray
Mobula kuhlii
IUCN Red List Population Trend
↓ DECREASING



Munk's Pygmy Devil Ray
Mobula munkiana
IUCN Red List Population Trend
↓ DECREASING



Longhorned Pygmy Devil Ray
Mobula eregoodoo
IUCN Red List Population Trend
↓ DECREASING



East Atlantic Pygmy Devil Ray
Mobula rochebrunei
Not currently recognised by the IUCN Red List

<EN> = Endangered **<VU>** = Vulnerable

OCEANIC UPLISTING

As a result of their conservative life history traits, sparsely distributed small populations, and the continued pressures from targeted and bycatch fisheries, populations of oceanic manta rays (*Mobula birostris*) have continued to decline. In 2020 this charismatic species was uplisted from 'Vulnerable' to 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Data collected by Manta Trust researchers and affiliate projects around the world helped contribute to this important reassessment.

Background image: Black morph oceanic manta ray in Mexico. © Guy Stevens

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Despite the halt to global tourism, we continued to develop our '[How to Swim with Manta Rays](#)' sustainable tourism initiative so operators will be prepared once travel restrictions ease.



A printable version is now available in 10 languages.



A film version is now available in 5 languages.

Background image: Snorkeller and reef manta ray in the Maldives. © Guy Stevens

RESEARCH



Background image: Split shot of an oceanic manta ray in the Maldives.
© Simon Hilbourne

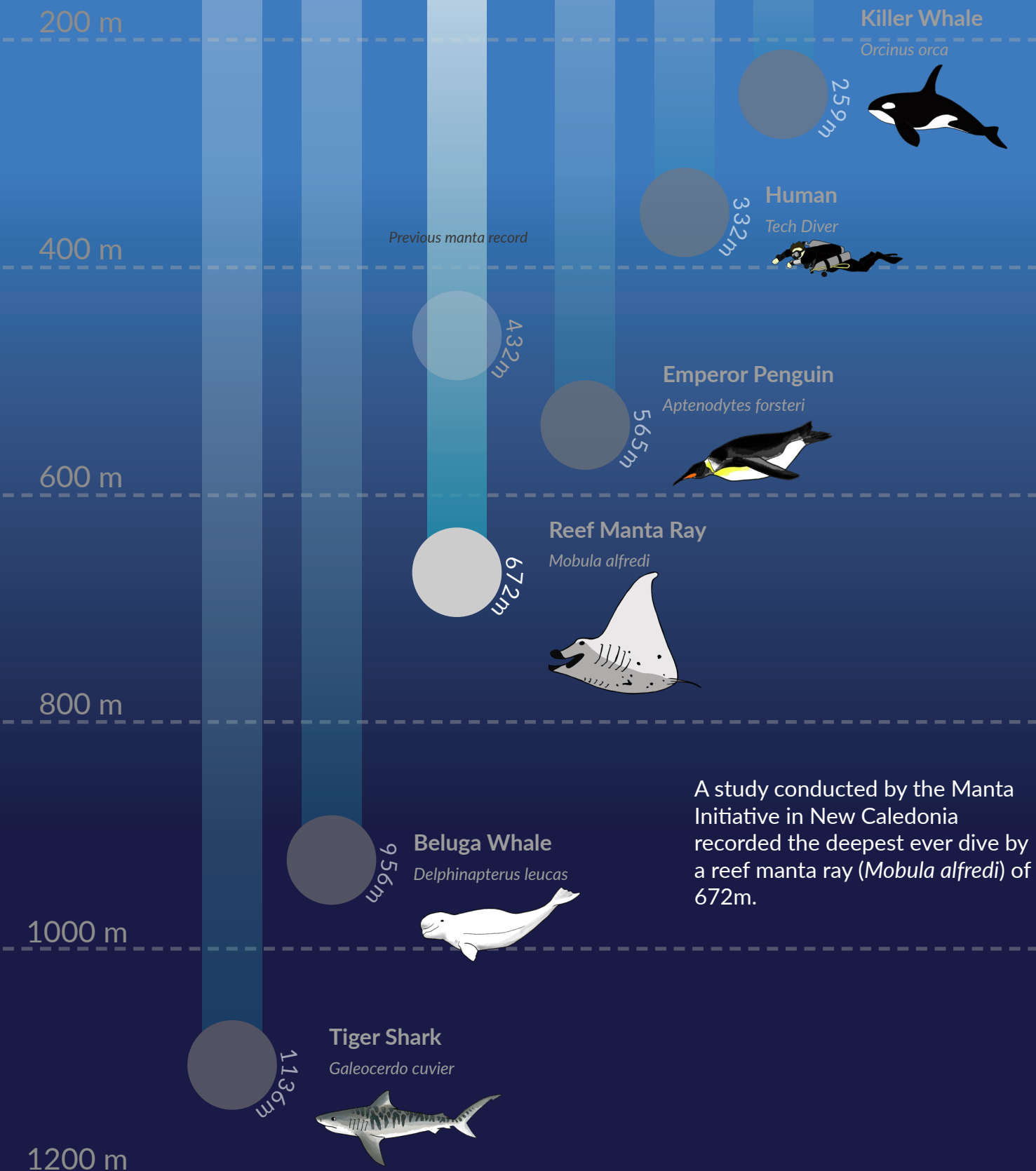
5,000th MANTA RAY



The Maldivian Manta Ray Project, the founding project of the Manta Trust, identified the 5,000th manta ray in the largest known population of reef manta rays in the world. This marks an important milestone in the conservation of this species and is a testament to the continued dedication of our researchers in the Maldives and the support from local dive centres, tour operators, marine biologists, and citizen science tourists.

Background image: The 5,000th reef manta ray identified in the Maldives. © Beth Faulkner

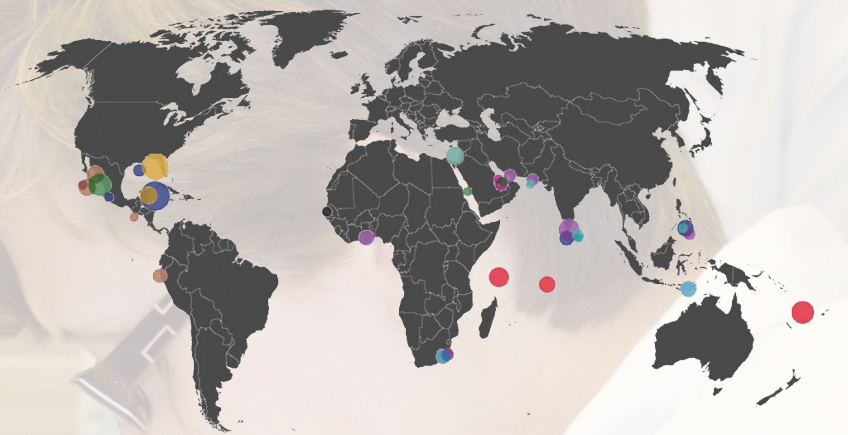
DEEP DIVING MANTAS



A study conducted by the Manta Initiative in New Caledonia recorded the deepest ever dive by a reef manta ray (*Mobula alfredi*) of 672m.

GENETICS

A study published in 2020 by the Manta Trust was another milestone achievement in mobulid genetics. Collaboration between numerous research groups around the world meant this study was the largest genetic analysis of the mobula genus including 119 samples from all nominal species across 19 different locations.



The paper refuted the previous merger of *Mobula kuhlii* and *Mobula eregoodoo*. Our study suggests instead these two should be distinct species, thus resurrecting the Longhorned Pygmy Devil Ray (*Mobula eregoodoo*).



The same study built on previous work and provides additional support for the putative third species of manta ray; the Atlantic Manta Ray (*Mobula cf. birostris*).



We have continued our investigations into the presence of a currently unrecognised species of mobula; the East Atlantic Pygmy Devil Ray (*Mobula rochebrunei*). In 2020 we made significant break throughs in the search for this species in West Africa thanks to the support of the African Marine Mammal Conservation Organization.



PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

The Manta Trust network of affiliate projects utilized the break in field work activities brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic to focus on publishing recent work in scientific journals.

11
peer-reviewed
papers published

- 1. The geographic distribution of reef and oceanic manta rays (*Mobula alfredi* and *Mobula birostris*) in Australian coastal waters.**
[Amelia J. Armstrong](#), [Asia O. Armstrong](#), Michael B. Bennett, Frazer McGregor, Kátya G. Abrantes, Adam Barnett, Anthony J. Richardson, Kathy A. Townsend, Christine L. Dudgeon
Journal of Fish Biology
- 2. Diving behavior of the reef manta ray (*Mobula alfredi*) in New Caledonia: More frequent and deeper night-time diving to 672 meters.**
[Hugo Lassauce](#), Olivier Chateau, Mark V. Erdmann, Laurent Wantiez
PLOS ONE
- 3. The giant devil ray *Mobula mobular* (Bonnaterre, 1788) is not giant, but it is the only spinetail devil ray.**
Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, [Guy Stevens](#), [Daniel Fernando](#)
Marine Biodiversity Records
- 4. Gone with the wind: Seasonal distribution and habitat use by the reef manta ray (*Mobula alfredi*) in the Maldives, implications for conservation.**
[Joanna L. Harris](#), Peter K. McGregor, Yvonne Oates, Guy M. W. Stevens
Aquatic Conservation
- 5. Regional Movements of Reef Manta Rays (*Mobula alfredi*) in Seychelles Waters**
[Lauren R. Peel](#), [Guy M. W. Stevens](#), Ryan Daly, Clare A. Keating Daly, Shaun P. Collin, Josep Nogués and Mark G. Meekan
Frontiers in Marine Science
- 6. Predicting mobulid ray distribution in coastal areas of Lesser Sunda Seascape: Implication for spatial and fisheries management**
Mochamad Iqbal Herwata Putra, [Edy Setyawan](#), [Betty J. L. Laglbauer](#), [Sarah Lewis](#), Dharmadi Dharmadi, Abraham Sianipar, [Isabel Ender](#)
Ocean and Coastal Management

- 7. Phylogenomics and species delimitation for effective conservation of manta and devil rays**
[Jane Hosegood](#), [Emily Humble](#), Rob Ogden, Mark de Bruyn, Simon Creer, [Guy M. W. Stevens](#), Mohammed Abudaya, Kim Bassos-Hull, Ramon Bonfil, [Daniel Fernando](#), Andrew D. Foote, Helen Hipperson, Rima W. Jabado, Jennifer Kaden, Muhammad Moazzam, [Lauren R Peel](#), [Stephen Pollett](#), Alessandro Ponzio, Marloes Poortvliet, Jehad Salah, Helen Senn, [Joshua D. Stewart](#), Sabine Wintner, Gary Carvalho
Molecular Ecology
- 8. Motivations for compliance in Peruvian manta ray fisheries**
Lucie Guirkingier, [Stefany Rojas-Perea](#), [Isabel Ender](#), Mark Ramsden, Charley Lenton-Lyons, Jonas Geldmann
Marine Policy
- 9. A review of a decade of lessons from one of the world's largest MPAs: conservation gains and key challenges.**
Graeme C. Hays, Heather J. Koldewey, Samantha Andrzejczek, [Martin J. Attrill](#), Shanta Barley, Daniel T. I. Bayley, Cassandra E. Benkwitt, Barbara Block, Robert J. Schallert, Aaron B. Carlisle, Pete Carr, Taylor K. Chapple, Claire Collins, Clara Diaz, Nicholas Dunn, Robert B. Dunbar, Dannielle S. Eager, Julian Engel, Clare B. Embling, Nicole Esteban, Francesco Ferretti, Nicola L. Foster, Robin Freeman, Matthew Gollock, Nicholas A. J. Graham, [Joanna L. Harris](#), Catherine E. I. Head, Phil Hosegood, Kerry L. Howell, Nigel E. Hussey, David M. P. Jacoby, Rachel Jones, Sivajyodee Sannassy Pilly, Ines D. Lange, Tom B. Letessier, Emma Levy, Mathilde Lindhart, Jamie M. McDevitt-Irwin, Mark Meekan, Jessica J. Meeuwig, Fiorenza Micheli, Andrew O. M. Mogg, Jeanne A. Mortimer, David A. Mucciarone, Malcolm A. Nicoll, Ana Nuno, Chris T. Perry, Stephen G. Preston, Alex J. Rattray, Edward Robinson, Ronan C. Roche, Melissa Schiele, Emma V. Sheehan, Anne Sheppard, Charles Sheppard, Adrian L. Smith, Bradley Soule, Mark Spalding, [Guy M. W. Stevens](#), Margaux Steyaert, Sarah Stiffel, Brett M. Taylor, David Tickler, Alice M. Trevaill, Pablo Trueba, John Turner, Stephen Votier, Bry Wilson, Gareth J. Williams, Benjamin J. Williamson, Michael J. Williamson, Hannah Wood & David J. Curnick
Marine Biology
- 10. Natural history of manta rays in the Bird's Head Seascape, Indonesia, with an analysis of the demography and spatial ecology of *Mobula alfredi* (Elasmobranchii: Mobulidae).**
[Edy Setyawan](#), Mark V. Erdmann, [Sarah A. Lewis](#), Ronald Mambrasar, Abdi W. Hasan, Sabine Templeton, [Calvin S. Beale](#), Abraham B. Sianipar, Rafid Shidqi, Hendrik Heuschkel, Orgenes Ambafen, Muhamad Izuan, Mohammed Fakhri Praselia, Hidayati Azizah, Ismu N. Hidayat, Defy N. Pada, Andreas Muljadi, Rebecca Pilkington-Vincett, Cerutti-Pereyra Dharmadi
Journal of the Ocean Science Foundation
- 11. Immature individuals dominate elasmobranch fisheries of the Bali Strait**
Sara Tabea Winter, Fahmi, Didik Rudianto, [Betty J. L. Laglbauer](#), [Isabel Ender](#) and Colin A. Simpfendorfer
Marine and Freshwater Research

EDUCATION



ONLINE LEARNING

During the evolving global pandemic situation, the Manta Trust diverted its education and outreach activities to a digital format by launching a webinar series, online kids clubs, and book club.



28 [webinars](#) with 43 speakers
2,000 viewers from 72 countries
98.5% positive enjoyment feedback from viewers

All webinars were recorded and uploaded to YouTube for continued impact.



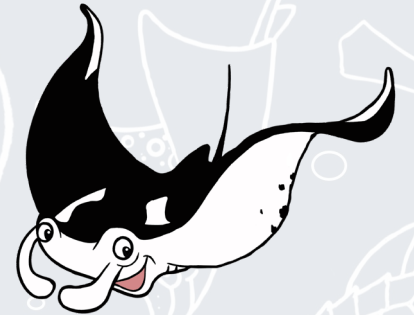
In 2020, the Manta Trust launched a [Book Club](#) to share our book and film recommendations for anyone interested in the oceans or conservation.

9% social media following growth to over **103k**

We launched a digital [Kids Club](#) to continue our education initiatives. This included

18 weekly

manta and ocean themed kids club activities following the round the world adventures of Marvin the Manta; perfect for lockdown ocean education.



Before the pandemic, the Maldivian Manta Ray Project were able to run part of our Moodhu Madharusaa (Ocean School) programme encompassing:

- 25** students
- 3** modules (marine ecology, coral reefs, and marine megafauna)
- 8** hours of snorkelling
- 28** hours of activities including mock research conferences, marine centre tours, and student to teacher classes*

*We are very grateful to Blueyou Consulting LTD, the REWE Group and followfood GmbH for providing funding for the snorkelling sets for our Ocean School Programme.

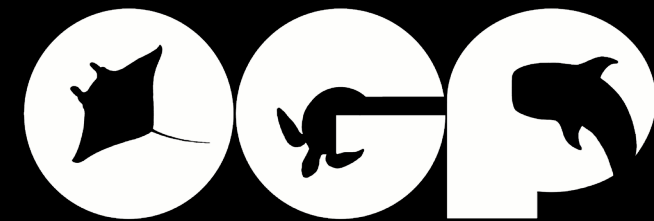
Background image: Education and outreach events at a local school in the Maldives. © Nicole Pelletier

WORLD MANTA DAY

The Manta Trust conceptualized and launched the first ever World Manta Day on September 17th 2020. A day dedicated to celebrating manta and devil rays, and highlighting the risks they face.

2,600 posts across Instagram and Twitter with a potential reach of **9 million**

33
global research and conservation
organisations celebrated World Manta Day!



OCEAN GIANTS PROGRAMME

In September 2020, we took over responsibility for the Ocean Giants Trust Scholarship, renaming it the Ocean Giants Programme. In collaboration with Plymouth School of Biological and Marine Sciences, we are now working to prepare the next generation of marine researchers and conservationists for the challenges ahead, and in the process provide assistance to four fantastic marine research and conservation NGO partners: The Manta Caribbean Project, Sea Sense, LAMAVE and Sea Search. To do this we are:

- Linking each OGP Scholar with a partner NGO so they can take direct responsibility for several aspects of the real workings of a living charity throughout their studies at Plymouth.
- Creating a close network of field practitioners and academic research specialists.
- Building local capability in partner NGOs through Scholar fundraising efforts and with the help and support of the faculty and facilities of Plymouth.

This year we have seven Scholars on the programme who are working hard to raise funds for their partner NGOs and hope to do in-country placements with them in 2021/22 if travel restrictions are lifted. The Manta Trust core team have been overseeing the programme delivery as well providing specialised training for the Scholars on several key aspects of charity management from fundraising to media and communications.



STUDENTSHIPS

Throughout 2020, the Manta Trust has continued to support higher education by supervising and providing field assistance and financial support for students.

7 ongoing PhD projects supported

5 MSc projects completed

NIV FROMAN

PhD Candidate at the Department of Veterinary Medicine, University of Cambridge
The reproductive ecology of the manta ray: life history factors limiting population growth.



HUGO LASSAUCE

PhD candidate at the University of New Caledonia
Characteristics and spatial ecology of the Reef Manta Ray (*Mobula alfredi*) population of New Caledonia.



JOANNA HARRIS

PhD candidate at the University of Plymouth
Investigating the movement and foraging ecology of reef manta rays (*Mobula alfredi*) in the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT).



ANA SOBRAL

PhD candidate at the University of the Azores
Filling the gap: study of the ecology of data-poor pelagic elasmobranchs in oceanic islands in the Atlantic.



BETTY LAGLBAUER

PhD candidate at the University of the Azores
Mobulid ray feeding ecology and sensory biology.



DANIEL FERNANDO

PhD candidate at the Linnaeus University
Characterization of Sri Lanka's mobulid ray fisheries.



ASIA HAINES

PhD candidate at the University of Queensland
The Spatial Ecology of Manta Rays: Movement, Habitat Use and Connectivity.



SAM MATTHEWS

University of Plymouth
Temporal Variations in Tourism Activities at a Key Marine Protected Area in the Maldives (2010-2019).



LOIS FLOUNDERS

University of Plymouth
The impact of the IOTC fisheries on mobulid rays: status and interactions, data availability, and recommendations for management.



ELSPETH STRIKE

University of York
Variations in sub-lethal injuries to manta rays in the Maldives.



AIMEE NICHOLSON-JACK

University of Bristol
A hitchhiker's guide to manta rays – Patterns of association between *Mobula alfredi* and *M. birostris* and their symbionts in the Maldives.



LOTTE KRUGER

University of Rostock
Using remote cameras to uncover the hidden habits of reef manta rays (*Mobula alfredi*) in the Maldives.



MEDIA COVERAGE & EVENTS

The Manta Trust's work was featured in the Forbes, Hakai Magazine, National Geographic, Divernet, Smithsonian Magazine, The Times, Scuba Diver Mag, DeeperBlue, Mongabay, Kuoni, Duiken, Kind Traveler, DIVER magazine, Earth.org, and BSAC Scuba Magazine among others. Additionally we have been invited on a number of podcasts including Tree's a Crowd and Conservation Tribe.

Though we could not attend as many events as usual in 2020, Manta Trust staff were still able to run stands at InterDive Friedrichshafen, InterDive Frankfurt, Salon International de la Plongée Sous-Marine and virtually attend Scuba Digital. Plus, we were delighted to be invited by Carl F. Bucherer to speak at their special event during Geneva's Watch Show.

COLLABORATION

CAMPAIGNS

STOP FUNDING OVERFISHING

The Manta Trust put it's name to the Stop Funding Overfishing campaign, and although the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14.6 was missed, significant progress has been made with the World Trade Organization discussions, and the Manta Trust will continue to support a push to end subsidies to fisheries involved in illegal, unreported, and unsustainable practises.

Throughout the Maldives, seagrass is often seen in a poor light. The Manta Trust joined the 'Protect Maldives Seagrass' campaign in order to help raise the profile of these important and vulnerable marine ecosystems, and to encourage resorts and businesses to protect seagrass beds rather than destory them.

#Protect Maldives SEAGRASS

HOW TO SWIM WITH MANTA RAYS

By collaborating with tour operators around the world, we are promoting sustainable tourism interactions with manta rays. It is easy to disturb manta rays whilst they are feeding and cleaning, however it is also easy to prevent this by following some simple and straightforward guidelines.

The '[How to Swim With Manta Rays](#)' code of conduct is available as a film in five languages and in print format in ten languages.

Impacts from targetted and bycatch fisheries remain the largest threats to manta and devil ray populations globally. That is why the Manta Trust has been collaborating with [Fish Free February](#) to raise awareness of the impacts of commercial fisheries and encourage the general public, where possible, to reduce their seafood consumption and choose more sustainable options.

FISH FREE FEBRUARY

Background image: Launch event for our latest collaboration with Carl F. Bucherer, © Carl F. Bucherer

AFFILIATE PROJECTS

1. Hawaii Association for Marine Education and Research (HAMER) <i>Hawaii, USA</i>	5. ConnectOcean <i>Costa Rica</i>	10. Seychelles Manta Ray Project <i>Seychelles</i>	14. Thailand Manta Project <i>Thailand</i>	19. Micronesian Conservation Coalition <i>Yap & Guam, Micronesia</i>
2. French Polynesia Manta Project <i>French Polynesia, France</i>	6. Proyecto Mantas Ecuador <i>Ecuador</i>	11. Maldivian Manta Ray Project <i>Maldives</i>	15. The Mobula Project Indonesia <i>Eastern Java, Indonesia</i>	20. Initiative Manta en Nouvelle-Caledonie <i>New Caledonia, France</i>
3. Pacific Manta Research Group <i>Mexico</i>	7. Peru Mobulid Project <i>Peru</i>	12. Chagos Manta Ray Project <i>Chagos, UK</i>	16. Indonesian Manta Project <i>Indonesia</i>	21. Manta Watch New Zealand <i>New Zealand</i>
4. Manta Caribbean Project <i>Mexico</i>	8. Megafauna Marinha do Brasil <i>Brazil</i>	13. Blue Resources Trust (Mobula project) <i>Sri Lanka</i>	17. Raja Ampat Manta Project <i>Raja Ampat, Indonesia</i>	22. Manta Project Fiji <i>Fiji</i>
	9. Manta Catalog Azores <i>Azores, Portugal</i>		18. Manta ID Palau <i>Palau</i>	



The Manta Trust Pacific Network was created to coordinate research efforts and enhance collaborative momentum across the many projects operating in the Pacific region, and to provide remote support to the community during the COVID pandemic. The bi-monthly meetings quickly proved very successful, with an average of ~10 attendees per meeting from locations such as Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, New Caledonia, Fiji, Guam and French Polynesia. Each meeting included updates from each project, followed by a talk from one of the affiliate projects, where the group can learn about, or advise on, the research being conducted.

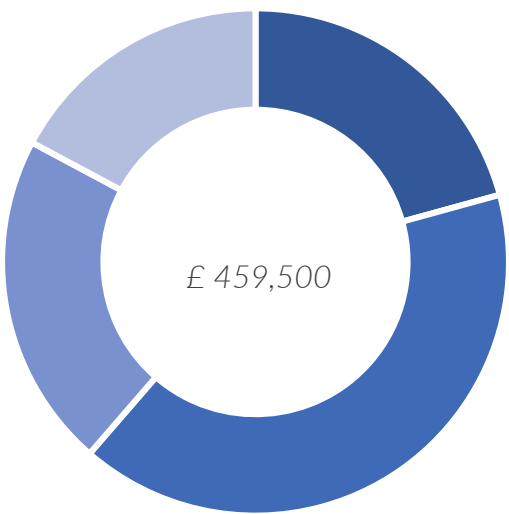
FINANCES

The unprecedented impact of the Covid-19 pandemic inevitably set back many of our initiatives and fundraising efforts in 2020; bringing the operations of our resort and tourism partners to a halt, restricting our ability to travel and meet potential funders, redirecting grants to humanitarian aid and reducing the ability of many of our dedicated supporters to donate as much or as often as they have done previously. Despite these challenges, we managed to secure funding not only for the Manta Trust's core operations, but also to support several of our affiliate projects which were hit hardest by the pandemic. We are extremely grateful to all the grant giving bodies, sponsors, and donors who have continued to support vital research and conservation efforts around the world for mobulid rays during such a challenging year.

Please note that the following figures are approximate and have not be independently examined. For detailed financial information please view our [Financial Statement for 2019-2020](#) which has undergone independent examination.

INCOME

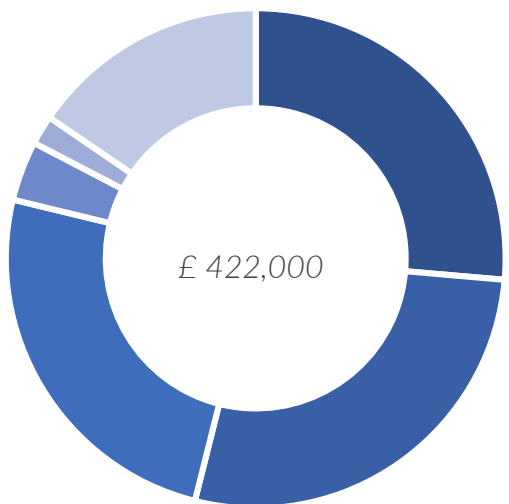
2020



- Partnership with Maldives Resorts
- Trusts & Research Grants
- Public Donations & Fundraising
- Corporate Social Responsibility Funding

EXPENDITURE

2020



- Maldivian Manta Ray Project
- Operations & Overheads*
- Research & Conservation Projects
- Education & Outreach Programme
- Studentship Programme
- Research Expeditions

*Our staff are one the greatest conservation tools at our disposal. Our core team is only small, but its influence is far reaching; as an umbrella organisation, we not only support our own Maldivian Manta Ray Project, but also coordinate activities for, provide expert guidance to, fundraise for, and encourage collaboration between 25 affiliated projects worldwide. Charities are often criticised for spending funds on their operations and overheads; making it difficult for charities to maintain a highly skilled core operational team and pay them a fair wage ([We highly recommend watching this short but powerful TED Talk on the topic](#)). So, we are especially grateful for the incredible support our core team has received from several progressive sponsors and donors over the years, without whom we could not continue our work.

MOVING FORWARD

Despite the achievements in research and conservation of mobulid species as well as our continued efforts to generate funds, raise awareness, change mindsets and influence laws, there is still a lot of work to be done. This is where we need the help of all our supporters.



Manta and devil rays are still being caught and killed in their tens of thousands by targetted and bycatch fisheries around the world. Our affiliate projects are continuing to monitor fishery sites throughout Peru, Sri Lanka and Indonesia.



Populations of manta and devil rays continue to decline and their assessed levels on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species continue to move closer to extinction as we uncover more about these species.



The seizure of 330kg of mobulid gill plates at Hong Kong airport in October 2020 was a stark reminder that the trade of manta and devil ray gill plates is still rife despite protection through the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

As we move on from the disruption caused by the global pandemic into 2021 and return to more normal fieldwork conditions, our dedicated team will continue to work hard to push forward with our conservation efforts so that these enigmatic, gentle giants of the ocean are around for generations to come.

Background image: Mobula gill plates drying out before export in Sri Lanka. © Simon Hilbourne

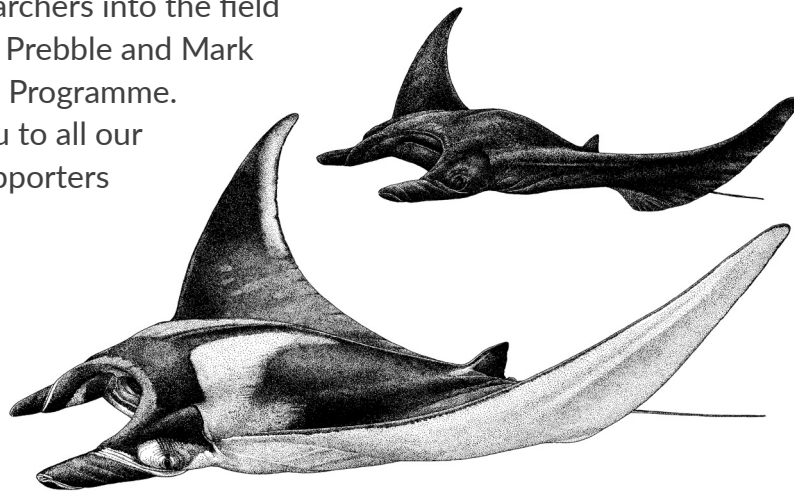
THANK YOU

The success and achievements of the Manta Trust in 2020 would not have been possible without the incredible support of the following groups:



A special mention must go to our Patrons who have been so supportive over the last twelve months, helping us to highlight our special events and using their unique platform to raise awareness of Manta Trust.

Sincere thanks also to our Trustees who are proactive in their participation and a great sounding board for the core operational team as we strive to grow and develop our charity. Thank you to the Action for Mantas Board for their continued support of us and our US-based supporters, to Manta Expeditions for helping to get our researchers into the field and raise donations for our work, and to Andy Prebble and Mark Evans for entrusting us with the Ocean Giants Programme. We would also like to extend a huge thank you to all our Cyclone members, commercial supporters, supporters who adopted a manta ray for themselves or as a gift, those who bought Manta Trust merchandise, donated directly to us of through Action for Mantas, or supported our Big Give Christmas Challenge and Emergency Action Fundraiser in 2020. Without your support, none of this work would have been possible.



All mobulid illustrations © Marc Dando.

Trustees

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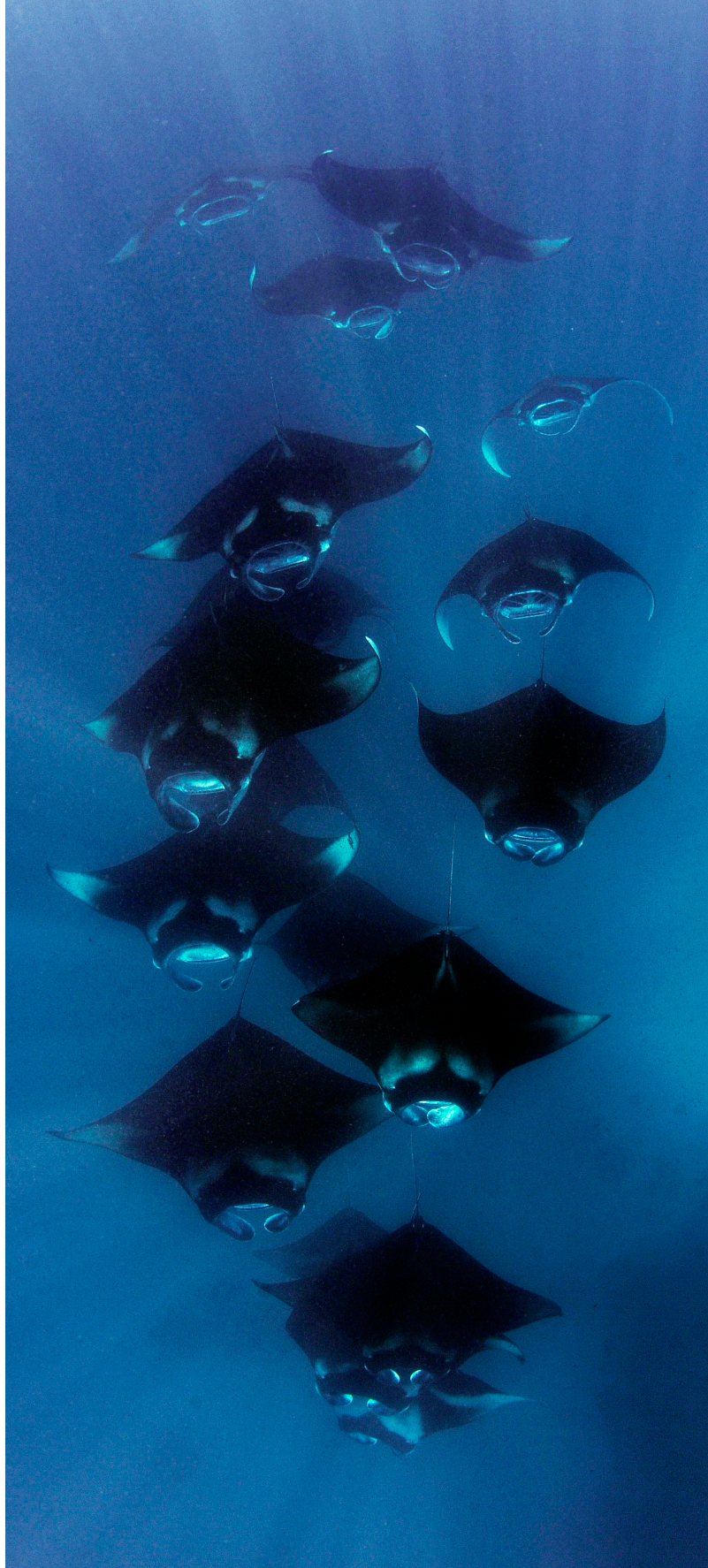
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