



MANTA RAYS OF MOZAMBIQUE

PROTECTING THE LARGEST RAYS IN THE OCEAN



Manta Ray Facts

Manta rays are the largest rays in the ocean, with wingspans measuring over 7 meters. Unbelievably, these gigantic rays can weigh up to 2,000 kg!

Like all sharks and rays, their skeleton is made out of cartilage not bone.

Amazingly, mantas have the largest brain of any fish relative to body size.

There are at least two different species of manta rays found worldwide.

Manta alfredi



Manta birostris



Despite their enormous mouths, manta rays feed on tiny planktonic organisms, which they strain through their highly modified gills.

Manta rays can have over 1,000 teeth on their lower jaw, which are used during mating.



Manta rays give birth to live young after a 12 month gestation period. Despite being capable of reproducing annually, mantas typically only give birth every 2-3 years. A single, fully functioning, offspring is produced (occasionally they have twins) with approx. a 1.5 meter wingspan.

Because of their life history traits manta rays are extremely vulnerable to fishing pressure and are currently listed on the IUCN redlist of endangered species (www.iucnredlist.org) as vulnerable to extinction.



Contributing Photos

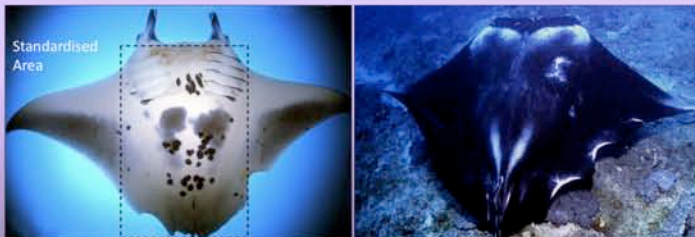
You can help with the local research efforts!

The more photographs we have of manta rays along this coastline, the larger our database will grow. Increased sighting records allow us to effectively monitor and protect the local populations.



To contribute to the ongoing database please give copies of your manta ray photos to your dive centre with the date & location of your dive in the photo title.

To be useful, we need images where the belly of the manta ray can be seen, as this is how we identify individual rays. Photographs of the standardised area (see below) allow us to see the ray's unique spot pattern as well as determine its sex.



Photos of the dorsal surface (or back) of the manta can also be useful sometimes in identifying individuals, particularly if they have unique scars or shark bite injuries (see above).

Code of Conduct

In the interests of safe-guarding these magnificent animals, AMAR and your dive centre are proud to promote the protection of manta rays along this coastline by supplying divers with a Code of Conduct.

Please listen to your pre-dive briefings to better understand how following these simple rules will ensure that you minimise impacts on manta rays and maximise the quality of your diving experience.

Manta Rays Along Our Coast

Population estimates of *Manta alfredi* off the coast of Inhambane exceed 1,500 individuals.

Both species of *Manta* occur off the coast of Mozambique. The Inhambane province is one of the few locations worldwide where both species can be seen on a single dive.

The majority of manta sightings occur on shallow, inshore reefs between Pomene in the north and Zavora in the south.

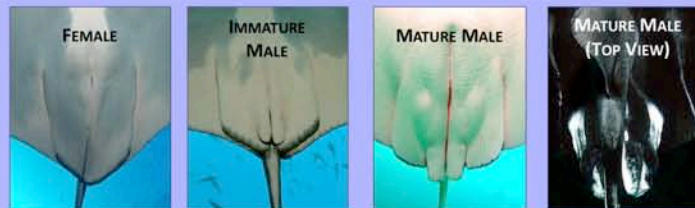
More than 75% of manta rays observed locally have bite mark injuries from predatory sharks including bull sharks and tiger sharks

Tagging studies have shown that many individuals are highly resident to the immediate area and may use local cleaning stations on a daily basis.

Southern Mozambique has been identified as a breeding and birthing ground for manta rays, with mating taking place in the summer months.



♀ Differentiating Between Sexes ♂



For more information on the Mozambican Manta Ray Project please visit www.marinemegafauna.org or alternatively contact Dr. Andrea Marshall directly at andrea@giantfish.org.

