



MANTA  
EXPEDITIONS

# GIANTS AT THEIR BEST

# ISLA DE LA PLATA

23 August  
1 September  
2024 (9 nights)

2,590 USD\*  
per person

Isla de la Plata is a small island off the coast of Manabí, Ecuador, and is part of Parque Nacional Machalilla. On the island, there is a large diversity of animal species, but it's underwater that this site delivers its best...it's here in fact that the **largest oceanic manta ray population** has been recorded and the **biggest individuals** measured!

Unknown to most, Ecuador shares the largest known population of oceanic manta rays (*Mobula birostris*) in the world, with many individuals frequenting the waters off Isla de la Plata. This location represent an unparalleled opportunity to study this iconic and typically elusive species. During the months of August and September oceanic manta rays visit this region in large numbers. It is in fact not uncommon to record **30-40 individuals during a single day** of diving! What makes this site even more special is the size of the animals observed...they have been reported to be the largest of our planet!

Manta rays are not the only attraction here. At this time of the year between 400 and 2000 **humpback whales** migrate to the area to give birth and mate, offering the breathtaking experience of encountering these elegant giants on route to the dive sites and listening to their enchanting singing while diving!

Finally, the dive sites around Isla de la Plata hosts a large population of **green turtles** which can be regularly encountered along with various species of reef fishes, mooray eels, enormous stingrays and with some luck the elusive **sunfish** too!

The expedition will also include a day visit and **hike on Isla de la Plata**, a birdwatching paradise with thousands of nesting frigates and boobies as well as a **joungle tour** in search of toucans, howler monkeys and many other joungle inhabitants!



**MANTA EXPERTS**

During this Manta Expedition, one member of Projecto Mantas Ecuador and one Manta Trust scientist will be present for its entire duration, offering everyone the opportunity to interact and learn from leading manta experts.



The presence of manta scientists will enhance your experience in a number of ways:

- motivate and inspire you, by learning about the marine ecosystems you will be exploring
- gain access to an accumulated wealth of knowledge and expertise, providing you the opportunity to become actively involved in cutting-edge scientific research.
- offer you an educational and much more rewarding experience by making your underwater encounters more personal, and by involving you first-hand in marine research and conservation.
- be environmentally aware and proactive and become an active member of an initiative which stands to have strong implications for the on-going persistence for manta rays worldwide.

A core focus of the expeditions is to enthuse and educate divers in marine conservation issues and the environment surrounding them. Through a series of activities and presentations on topics covering local marine species and habitats led by our experts, you are sure to leave with an increased awareness of the threats facing our oceans and, perhaps more importantly, how you can help.

Using the knowledge of the Projecto Mantas Ecuador and the Manta Trust scientists you will gain a brand-new perspective to diving and experiencing the underwater world; by understanding what you see you will gain a better appreciation and love for the ocean and its creatures.

**Projecto Mantas Ecuador** was founded by Michel Guerrero in 2010 to conduct focused research to assist in the conservation management of Ecuador's oceanic mantas. The PME has been instrumental in securing higher level of protection for mantas in the region. The team is conducting a diverse suite of research on the Ecuadorian mantas in order to develop further conservation plans, and have established collaborations with the Ministry of the Environment and the Department of Fisheries to aid in its progression and eventual implementation.

**CITIZEN SCIENCE - GET INVOLVED!**

This region represents an unparalleled opportunity to study this iconic species and better understand why Isla de la Plata is such a critical habitat for oceanic mantas. On this expedition, you'll have the opportunity to experience and **participate in cuttingedge conservation research** to protect one of the ocean's most majestic animals.

Manta Trust scientists will be deploying tags, collect biopsy samples and photographic identification images of the mantas encountered throughout the expedition - a task that guests are welcome and encouraged to participate in. All new manta rays will be added to the regional database and guests will be invited to name these new mantas. The data gathered will be crucial in developing effective management and conservation strategies for these increasingly vulnerable animals.

**THE MANTA TRUST**

A UK registered charity, the Trust's mission is to **advance the worldwide conservation of manta rays** and their habitat through robust science and research, by raising awareness and providing education, influence and action. The Manta Trust was formed in 2011 to co-ordinate global research and conservation efforts for these amazing animals, their close relatives and their habitat. The charity has a number of research projects worldwide, incorporating population data, research on manta movements, and genetic analyses - to name a few - in order to better understand the general ecology of manta and mobula rays.



**VICTOR HUGO & EXPLORAMAR DIVING**

**Victor Hugo** is a beautiful hotel that offers comfortable rooms complete with WiFi, air conditioning, private bathroom and hot water. The hotel also has a beautiful bar and restaurant with a wide selection of local and international food. **Exploramar diving** is the most experienced and trusted diving company in Ecuador; a 5 star PADI dive centre with over 20 years of experience in the Machalilla national park, Isla de La Plata and the Galapagos islands. One of the core aspects of their operation is to inspire, respect and care for the marine environment in Ecuador and Galapagos, through education and transformative experiences.

**BOOKING**

To reserve your place on this Ecuador Manta Expedition, please send an email to Niv Froman via [info@mantaexpeditions.com](mailto:info@mantaexpeditions.com).

\* Price is for 9 nights trip and includes return transfer Guayachil Airport to Puerto Lopez, 6 full day private boat trips to Isla de la Plata, 2 guided dives per day, accommodation in twin or double room with breakfast, lunch on diving days, Municipality tax, guided tour of Isla de la Plata and guided jungle tour. Price does not include international flights, dinners and crew gratuities.

\*\* The expedition will host a maximum of 8 guests.