

MALDIVES

- BEST OF SOUTHERN -

1-11 March
2023
(10 nights)

from
3,455 USD*
per person

© Guy Stevens

THE EXPEDITION

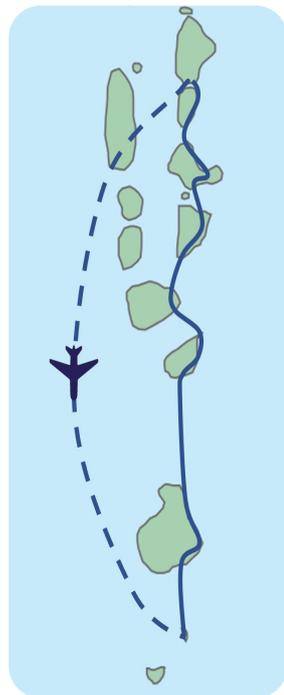
On this expedition we will explore the pristine and remote south of the Maldives, home to the **big pelagics!** Diving through 8 atolls as you move from the south to the north you will experience some of the most stunning and untouched reefs the country has to offer, with the chance to encounter many of the top “must see” marine species such as whale sharks, tiger sharks and mantas.

This trip will also provide us with the great opportunity to gather critical data on the poorly studied manta ray population found in these southern atolls.

At this time of the year **oceanic mantas** aggregate in the southern atoll of Fuvahmulah allowing some of the most breath-taking underwater encounters with the largest rays of our planet! Located just above the equator and distant from any other Maldivian island, the atoll of Fuvahmulah acts as a seamount, attracting large ocean wonderers and hosting a great diversity of marine life!

Throughout our journey we will have the chances to dive with both species of manta rays, but the deep south of the Maldives is also shark territory and here we will have the opportunity to dive in some of the most shark-populated channels where schools of **dozens of grey reef sharks** are typical! **Tiger sharks, whale sharks by night**, the occasional **thresher and hammerhead shark**, schooling eagle rays and resting turtles are just some of the many other attractions we are likely to encounter on this unique expedition.

As we move north diving will also feature stunning reefs covered with soft corals, clouds of schooling fishes, night feeding nurse sharks and much much more...making for a trip that will never cease to surprise and enthuse!



© Simon Hilbourne



© Guy Stevens



MALDIVES

ON-BOARD MANTA EXPERT

As on all Manta Expeditions, a Manta Trust scientist will be onboard for its entire duration, offering everyone the opportunity to interact and learn from a leading manta expert.



The presence of a Manta Trust scientist onboard 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 ongoing persistence for manta rays worldwide.

Collectively the Manta Trust and Manta Expeditions teams possess over two decades of experience working in the Maldives, studying its manta population and marine life and have assembled a vast amount of knowledge and expertise, knowledge you will have access to on this expedition.

A core focus of the expeditions is not only to provide close encounters with manta rays but 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 the Manta Trust expert, 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 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. Ultimately, with the guidance of the Manta Trust researcher you will have the chance to give something back to the ocean which we believe is fundamental considering how much we take from it!



© Simon Hilbourne

CITIZEN SCIENCE - GET INVOLVED!

On this expedition, you'll have the opportunity to experience and participate in cutting-edge conservation research to protect one of the ocean's most majestic animals. Manta Trust scientists will be collecting photographic identification images of all 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 database and guests will be invited to name these new mantas.

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.

Data Collection: The Manta Trust 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.



THE BOAT | M/Y BLUE VOYAGER

M/Y Blue Voyager was built specifically for divers and originally sailed in the Red Sea. She welcomes 26 divers on board with spacious modern comfort, providing the best Maldivian diving experience.

M/Y Blue Voyager is a 37-metre, steel hulled vessel that boasts three roomy double cabins and ten twin cabins and features an indoor dining area, a bar and sky lounge, as well as a Jacuzzi. A shaded outdoor lounge area can be found on the Mid Deck, plus four different sun decks: a viewing deck located at the front of both the Mid Deck and Upper Deck, an open air deck on the Top Deck and an ocean deck at the stern of the boat, all providing comfortable seating and loungers.

The ocean deck is a unique feature allowing guests to relax in the open air while close to the water. On many evenings the flood lights will illuminate the water just off the ocean deck to attract plankton which brings the manta rays and whale sharks.

BOOKING

To reserve your place on this Maldives Manta Expedition, please send an email to Niv Froman via info@mantaexpeditions.com.

Payment and booking for this Manta Expedition will be handled by our trip partners, [Blue O Two](#). Trip costs for this 10-nights expedition include transfer from Male airport to vessel, full board accommodation, BBQ dinner, water, coffee and tea and three dives per day.

* Price is for a standard cabin (twin or double) based on double occupancy. Superior cabin upgrade available at an additional \$125 per person. Cost does not include Green Tax (6\$ per person per night), domestic flights Male-Fuvahmulah (\$263), and crew gratuities. International flight can be arranged on request.

