



MALDIVES

- NORTHERN ATOLLS -

13-23
September 2020
(10 nights)

NOW

\$1,810

& RISK FREE
(book now, pay nothing
for 60 days)

from
~~2,500~~ USD*
per person

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THE EXPEDITION

This expedition has been specifically timed to coincide with the most productive monsoon winds and lunar currents, which strongly influence the movements and feeding habits of reef manta rays. The aim of this trip is to use the knowledge of [Manta Trust](#) experts to find these feeding aggregations and allow the guests to experience the wonder of immersing yourself amongst a feeding frenzy of these gentle giants.

On this expedition we will explore the pristine and rarely visited northern atolls of Baa, Raa and Lhaviyani diving on untouched reefs and looking for poorly studied manta ray populations. A trip designed especially for adventurers looking for something new and rarely offered in the Maldives!

[Baa Atoll](#) is off the main route for the majority of dive liveboards and we will venture into this more northern atoll specifically to seek out the feeding mantas and hopefully a few whale sharks as well. To see several of the world's largest fish feeding amongst dozens of the world's largest rays is something most people will never forget.

Just north of Baa we will venture into [Raa Atoll](#), one of most unexplored atolls of the Maldives regularly visited by mantas and hosting some stunning dive sites. Vertical walls covered in soft corals, gardens of anemones and mantas gliding above our heads are only a few of the marvels of this region.

Before descending back to Malé we will finally visit [Lhaviyani Atoll](#), another spectacular northern atoll. Here sharks, schools of eagle rays, tunas and other large pelagic fishes will be the main characters of our dives with the possibility of encountering more manta rays and dive one of the most beautiful shipwrecks of the country.

While the weather in the Maldives at this time of the year is likely to be more changeable, these monsoonal conditions are [exactly what create the planktonic blooms](#) upon which the mantas and whale sharks aggregate to feed. Furthermore, we can never guarantee these natural events, but we have put together a trip, which maximises our chances of being in the right place at the right time, guided by the expertise of The Manta Trust's CEO and founder Dr. Guy Stevens.



TRIP LEADER

SIMON HILBOURNE



The underwater world has always fascinated Simon from a young age.

His passion for the ocean stems from watching his parents scuba dive in Sri Lanka whilst he floated above on his body board. Simon took up scuba diving and carried that passion through to work as a scuba instructor for a time in Australia, Cyprus and Honduras.

Enrolling at the University of Southampton in the UK, Simon studied marine biology. His Masters dissertation focused on whale shark seasonality in Mexico. Upon graduating, Simon continued to work with whale sharks, this time in the Philippines, before swapping over to study manta rays here in the Maldives.

Simon is an avid underwater photographer and loves to try and convey the beauty of the natural world and the conservation issues it faces through his photography.

Simon joined the Maldivian Manta Ray Project back in 2016 in North Male Atoll, and covered the role of research and administration officer in Baa Atolls since for over two years.

In 2019, developing his fascination for the oceanic mantas of the country, Simon began a research project focused at understanding more about the local oceanic manta populations. In parallel Simon has also taken over the role of Media & Communications manager for the Manta Trust.

© Simon Lorenz



© Guy Stevens



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 Hanifaru park entry fee (20\$ per person), Green Tax (6\$ per person per night) and crew gratuities. International flight can be arranged on request.

