

## Project Manta

*Scuba dive in search of critical information about the gigantic, threatened manta ray.*

The Manta ray has long been a creature of myth and legend, historically feared for their size and power. They were worshipped by the Peruvian Moche people and sailors believed they could sink boats by pulling on the anchors. The Manta has had many fearsome names over the years, including the “Australian devilray”, “great devilfish”, “sea devil” and “diable de mer”.

In reality the Manta is actually a placid creature, and - unlike other rays - doesn't even have a stinger. But it's not surprising they've been so misunderstood. These large fish are seldom seen and difficult to study, and we still know little about them. Few aquariums are large enough to hold them, and they're classified as "Near Threatened" in the wild by the IUCN.

Earthwatch scientists are working to develop the Manta Identification Database, which will help to identify and track individual rays. This information will be used to better understand the Manta ray's behaviour and environmental needs, significantly improving species and habitat management plans.

Earthwatch Australia is an environmental not for profit that brings individuals, like you, together with leading scientists to help resolve environmental questions through field research.

Here's your opportunity to become a citizen scientist by joining Project Manta.

You'll be involved in photographing, filming and recording rays in their natural habitat, whilst enjoying some fantastic diving off the tropical coastline of Lady Elliot Island.

The cost of joining the expedition includes return flights from Lady Elliot to Hervey Bay, food, accommodation, hire of research vessel, dive equipment and dive master and - most importantly - the research contribution that allows this important exploration to happen.

If you are keen to get involved in the above mentioned expedition and help make a difference then we want to hear from you!

**The next Project Manta expeditions run from June 20 - 27 and September 12 -19, 2015. The 8 day trip costs \$2,995.00 per person, strict diving requirements apply. To find out more about this opportunity please see [au.earthwatch.org/expeditions/project-manta](http://au.earthwatch.org/expeditions/project-manta) or contact Kate on 03 9016 7590.**

Citizens and scientists working together for a sustainable planet.

