

# MALDIVES

- ARI & BAA ATOLLS -

23 - 30  
September 2019  
(7 nights)

2,160 USD\*  
per person

## 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.

[Baa Atoll](#) is off the main route for the majority of dive liveboard 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.

[North Ari Atoll](#) is famous for some of the richest and most spectacular dive sites of the Maldives. Ari Atoll also hosts the second largest manta population of the country and we will have chances of finding mantas aggregations and night feeding events in specific sites.

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 Research & Admin Officer, Simon Hilbourne.





## MALDIVES

### TRIP LEADER

### TAM SAWERS

As far back as Tam can remember she has always had a passion for nature and all things waterbound. Growing up along the Eastern Cape Coast of South



Africa, Tam was lucky to have been exposed to the natural beauties along this untouched coastline. Fulfilling the lifetime ambition to conserve this environment and the wildlife therein, she pursued a BSc Honours degree in Zoology at Rhodes University in South Africa. Setting solid foundations, her university education gave way to fantastic opportunities providing her with first-hand experience as a scientific research assistant aboard the Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, a Norwegian Research Vessel monitoring fish stocks along the West Coast of Africa.

Now equipped with an advanced diving certification and backed by a greater understanding of the devastation that wrack the worlds' oceans internationally, Tam was drawn to York University in the UK where she cemented her education in the field of marine conservation by pursuing a Master's Degree in Marine Environmental Management. This provided her with the opportunity to fulfil a research placement in the Maldives with the Manta Trust in 2014, answering to a childhood dream of one day swimming amongst some of the most exquisite megafauna that grace the worlds' oceans. It is here that she was first acquainted with the majestic manta rays. Her utter amazement and appreciation for these great creatures has led her on a fast track path to pursue a career focussed on the conservation of these endangered species.

Having initially taken up the role of Global Database Manager, Tam now serves as the Project Leader for the Manta Trust's worldleading Maldivian Manta Ray Project (MMRP). In her role, Tam manages the Manta Trust's founding project from a resort island in Baa Atoll, collecting as many ID photographs of manta rays as possible.

Throughout the expedition, Tam will be providing lectures and informal talks on manta ray and whale shark research and conservation. In addition, Tam will conduct general presentations on marine biology, with a focus on the diverse and productive marine ecosystems of the Maldives.



### CITIZEN SCIENCE - GET INVOLVED!

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 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 CONTE MAX | LUXURY & WELLBEING

Back in 2004, the Maldives did not offer many boats that boasted the same comfort and standard for non-divers as the country's various island resorts. With the launch of the Conte Max that year, the concept of a cruise that combines the rejuvenating experience of diving in the Maldives, with the wellbeing of an on-board ayurvedic spa, was born.

Since its launch, the Conte Max has become one of the best-known and best-loved boats amongst those that regularly visit the Maldives. At 33m (108 ft) in length, she offers eight elegant and comfortable cabins, each with their own spacious en-suite bathroom and air-conditioning. Scuba diving excursions are delivered by a traditional Maldivian dhoni that accompanies the main vessel. If taking a break from the underwater world, the Conte Max offers three sundecks, a bar, two restaurants, onboard WiFi, and TV + CD/DVD player facilities, with a wide-collection of music and movies on offer to help you relax. And of course, there is the Massage Centre, with an onboard Indian masseur offering Ayurvedic treatments to help you unwind.

### BOOKING

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

Payment and booking for this Manta Expedition will be handled by our trip partners, Luxury Yacht Maldives. Trip costs for this 7-nights expedition in full board accommodation and three dives / snorkelling excursions per day.



\* Cost does not include Hanifaru park entry fee (30 USD per person), Green Tax (6 USD per person per day) and Crew Tip (min, 8 USD per person per day) to be paid onboard.