


Best Practice Code of Conduct

Manta Ray Tourism Interactions

	Conduct	Explanation
M	MAKE a quiet entry	Splashing and loud entries into the water may scare the animals away. This is important at both cleaning stations and feeding aggregation sites.
A	ADHERE to minimum distance	Very close approaches can startle mantas as they may perceive you as a threat. Do not approach manta rays closer than three metres. However, mantas are curious and often approach you. If this happens remain still and observe!
N	NEVER CHASE	Manta rays have excellent vision, however they have a blind spot directly behind them. Therefore, do not approach a manta from the back because this may startle and scare the animal away. It is best to approach mantas slowly from their side allowing the animal to see you while it can maintain a clear path of travel ahead. Never chase after a manta ray. If you stay still they often come back for a closer look at you.
T	NO TOUCHING	Like you and I, mantas appreciate their personal space. The majority do not like to be touched. In some locations touching may also lead to a fine.
A	ALERT and CALM	Manta rays are gentle, graceful and calm animals, but they are alert to your presence. They can sense your demeanor and will react accordingly. Therefore, the calmer you remain the closer the manta is likely to approach you. So, try to stay calm and avoid sudden movements when around mantas.
R	REST and REMAIN still	While SCUBA diving with manta rays at cleaning stations you should position yourself to the side and remain close to the seabed. This allows mantas a clear swimming path over the cleaning station. Divers and freedivers should never swim directly onto or over the cleaning station. In some locations specifically designated areas have been defined for SCUBA divers to observe the cleaning mantas. Snorkellers among a group of feeding manta rays should remain still and allow the feeding animals to manouvre around them.
A	AVOID obstructing	Divers should never swim up into the path of an approaching manta and freedivers should never swim directly down in front of an approaching manta. Mantas may also be disturbed by cameras that are held in front of their faces. If diving is allowed at manta feeding sites divers should try to position themselves to the side of the main feeding aggregation to avoid creating a “curtain of bubbles” that can disperse the manta’s planktonic food and create an artificial barrier for the feeding animals.
Y	Enjoy YOUR experience!	Mantas have the largest brains of all fish and are thought to be one of the most intelligent marine animals. When you look into the eye of a manta ray it is probably just as interested in you as you are in it. So seek direct eye contact and enjoy this unique encounter, and if you respect these simple guidelines the manta rays will be much more likely to enjoy the encounter as well!