

## 1 Manta Rays

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## 2 Manta Ray

## 3 Manta Ray Facts

- Phylum: Chordata
- Class: Chondrichthyes
- Subclass: Elasmobranchii
- Order: Rajiformes
- Family: Myliobatidae
- Genus: Manta
- Species: *M. birostris*
- Common name: Manta Ray
- The word manta in Spanish means blanket.
- Manta Rays can grow to be 7.6 meters across and weigh up to 6,600 pounds.

## 4 Manta Ray Facts Continued

- Manta Rays can vary in color from black and blue-gray to red brown on their backs and white on their undersides.
- Manta Rays all have their own distinct markings on their body which can even help scientists identify certain rays from other ones.

## 5 Manta ray morphology

- Manta Rays have evolved from being bottom feeders to being filter feeders in the open ocean.
- The "horns" or cephalic lobes on the sides of the rays head are used for directing food into the rays mouth which unlike other rays is located on the anterior edge of its head instead of underneath it and because of these "horns" the manta ray is the only jawed vertebrates to have limbs.
- Because Manta Rays are a filter feeder they can grow to be much larger than other rays.

## 6 Manta Ray Morphology Cont.

- Manta Rays also have a much thicker layer of mucus covering their bodies than other rays and their teeth are almost covered by a layer of skin because they no longer need them.
- The Manta Rays spiracles have also become small and non-functional because they are always swimming in the open ocean but they still have five sets of gills on their underside.
- Their bodies are also in a diamond shape and they use their pectoral fins to "fly" through the water.

## 7 Manta Ray Habits

- Manta Rays are found in the tropical seas around the world usually between 35 degrees north and south latitude.
- Manta rays reproduce by aplacental viviparity and usually give birth to one or two pups which are about 1.2 meters across and weigh around twenty pounds.
- Mantas eat plankton, small fish and crustaceans through filter feeding with their gill rakers.
- Mantas have larger brains than sharks and seem to remember certain parts of reefs where cleaner fish usually can be found and they also remember certain divers and hand signals that the divers give them to stop so that they can rub the rays belly or get a ride.

8  **Predators of Mantas**

- Mantas are prey to mainly large sharks such as the tiger shark but it has been observed in some locations that killer whales also eat mantas
- The mantas natural lifespan is unknown but some scientist believe that it is around twenty-five years.

9  **Works Cited**

- <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/sharks/rays/Mantaray.shtml>
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