



Manta Ray Entanglement Protocol

*Conservation through
research, education, and collaboration*

- The Manta Trust



MALDIVES MANTA
CONSERVATION
PROGRAMME

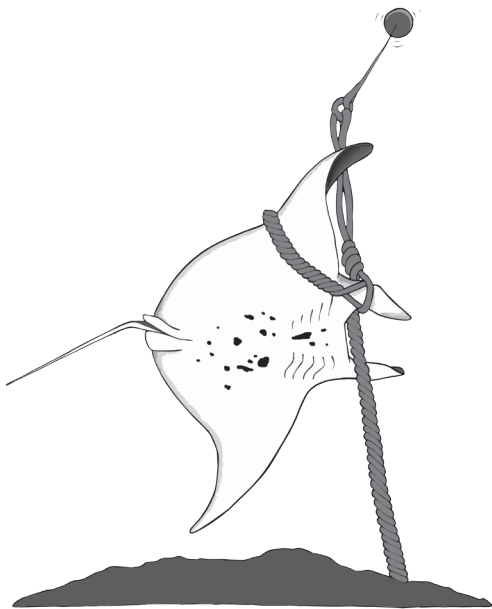
ALIVE MANTA RAY ENTANGLEMENT PROTOCOL

This document provides guidelines on how to proceed in the case of an alive manta ray entanglement in fishing lines, nets, or moorings.

In this situation, the highest priority is to free the manta ray.

STEP 1

Assess the scene. If you encounter a live manta ray which is entangled in fishing line, a net, or a mooring line, assess the scene quickly. Let the boat crew know about the situation and ask them to keep an eye on the manta ray from the surface.



STEP 2

Disentanglement and freeing of the manta ray. If possible, have someone assist you in the water. Use a dive knife or other cutting tool to rid the manta ray of the net, line or rope as quickly and as safely as possible. Remove any freed line, net or rope from the water to avoid pollution and take pictures of the discard. In case of a mooring line entanglement, try to help the manta as much as possible to free itself by moving the line. Avoid pulling the manta by its tail or cephalic fins as this may cause

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injuries. Rather handle the manta by its pectoral fins, but be careful to avoid injury from the ray, which may be distraught.

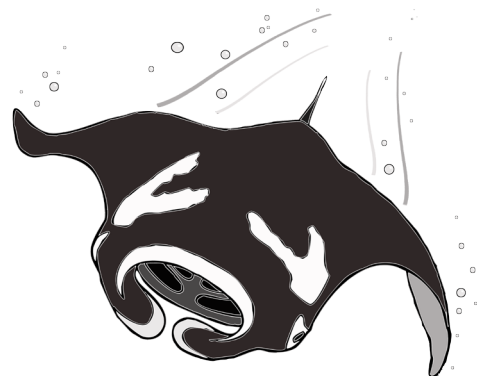
STEP 3

Collect data. If time and situation allow, take pictures and videos of the encounter. Try to get a photo identification of the manta's ventral spot pattern.



STEP 4

Report. Report your encounter to the Manta Trust (info@mantatrust.org), providing pictures, videos, and an incident report detailing the encounter and any measurements taken. Also include pictures of the line, rope or net if possible.



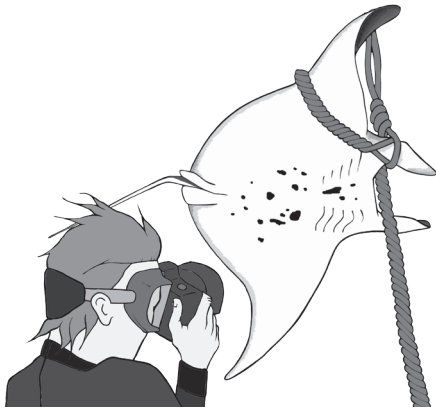
DECEASED MANTA RAY ENTANGLEMENT PROTOCOL

This document provides guidelines on how to proceed in the case of a deceased manta ray entanglement in fishing lines, nets, or moorings.

In this situation, the highest priority is to collect as much information as possible.

STEP 1

Assess the scene. The dead animal might attract predatory fish (sharks), so ensure that it is safe to get into the water with the manta. Take pictures/videos of the entanglement and the manta ray in order to understand how and why the entanglement occurred. Try to get an identification picture of the manta's spot pattern on the branchial area.



STEP 2

Disentanglement and data collection. If it is safe to get into the water, try to disentangle the manta ray. If you have freezer facilities and storage room available, bring the deceased manta back to shore and await further instructions from the Manta Trust experts (info@mantatrust.org). If this is not possible, document the deceased manta as thoroughly as possible (e.g. measure disc width, record any injuries, sex, maturation status, etc.). Take a tissue sample (i.e. a piece of the manta's pectoral fin – approximately the size of a pencil eraser). Store this sample in a sealed container inside a freezer and await further instructions from the Manta Trust experts.

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STEP 3

Report your encounter to the Manta Trust by providing pictures, videos, and an incident report detailing the encounter and any measurements taken.

STEP 4

Tissue Samples. Check with your resort/dive operator/marine centre if there is a possibility to store a deceased manta (large enough freezer necessary). This could be very useful for autopsies and further insights into manta ray biology and anatomy. If no facilities are available to store the whole manta, take tissue samples and preserve in freezer or lab-grade (95%) ethanol.



STEP 5

Disposal. Contact the Manta Trust before discarding – we may be able to collect the specimen. If the deceased manta was encountered close to tourist areas, bring it out to deeper waters to avoid it being washed up on resort beaches.