



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

Southeast  
Regional Office

### About the Species:

**Size** (wing span):  
average (13-16 feet);  
max (26 feet); at birth  
(~6 feet).

**Life span:** Up to 40  
years

**Range:** Tropical and  
sub-tropical waters,  
nearshore and  
offshore.

### Threats:

- Harvest for international Asian medicine trade;
- Bycatch.

### More Information:

[www.fisheries.noaa.gov/  
species/giant-manta-ray](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/giant-manta-ray)

### Contact:

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# Giant Manta Ray Handling and Release Procedures

*For Commercial and Recreational Vessels*



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The giant manta ray is protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. They should not be targeted by fishermen and must be released in a manner that will promote their survival after any interaction.

### Follow these procedures to safely release giant manta rays:

- Keep the manta ray in the water.
- Use the leader or net to maneuver / hold the manta ray at boat side.
- Do not gaff, cut off the tail, lift, drag, or carry by cephalic lobes (“horns”), gills, or mouth.
- Allow water to flow over the gills by positioning the ray so the current flows into its mouth.

### Hook and line release:

- Remove the hook using a dehooking device. If removing the hook would cause danger to yourself or the ray, cut the hook or cut the leader close to the hook to minimize any trailing line.

### Net release:

- Cut away netting using a knife or cutting tool. Remove and disentangle as much netting as possible. Do not throw the netting remains overboard.

[Report Discards to Applicable Logbook Program](#)