

RAY OF HOPE EXPEDITIONS 2024



Sea of Giants

January 11th - January 19th

Join Andrea and Janneman on an exclusive trip offshore Mexico to the Revillagigedos Archipelago and experience the pelagic splendor of the eastern Pacific.

Expedition

The Revillagigedos archipelago is one of the most important marine megafauna aggregation sites in the eastern Pacific. Located 250 miles to the southwest of the southern end of the Baja Peninsula, the volcanic island group, made up of Socorro, San Benedicto, Roca Partida and Clarion, is extremely remote and boasts some of the best diving in the Pacific.



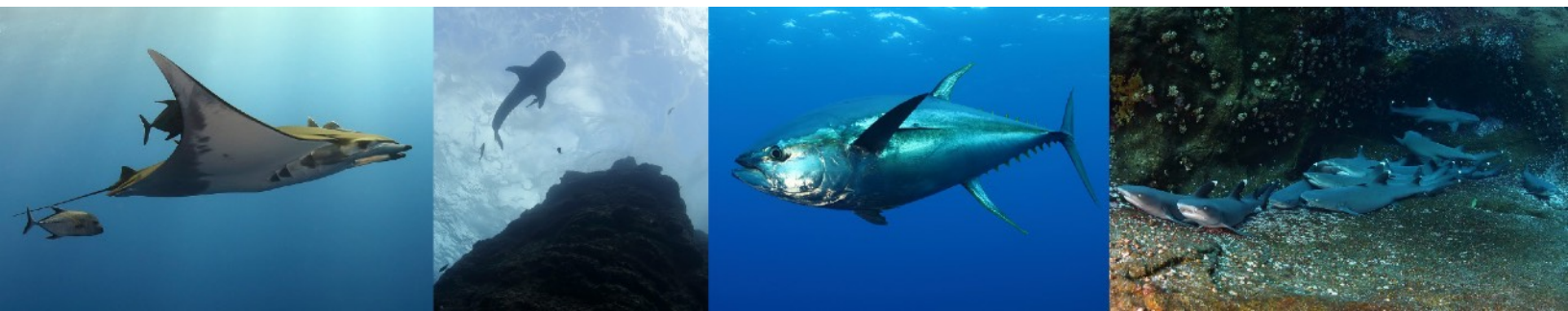
Protected as a marine biosphere since 1994, the island group remains relatively pristine. It is now a UNESCO World Heritage site, a Mission Blue 'Hope Spot' and the area protected around the islands exceeds 150,000 square kilometers. Divers can expect to have consistent encounters with megafauna from humpback whales, giant oceanic manta rays and hammerhead sharks to dolphins, sea turtles, tuna, even an occasional whale shark. The clear warm water with its distinct indigo-colour will delight seasoned divers and offer incredible photographic opportunities.

Rated as one of the top marine megafauna dive sites in the world, the draw of this destination is not just the variety of species to be seen but the quality of the up-close encounters with megafauna. This is one of Andrea's favorite destinations to study the behaviour of giant ocean manta rays and it is one of the only locations left to experience schooling hammerheads in the hundreds.

Guests join these trips to spend time with Andrea and Janneman, seasoned explorers, marine researchers and photographers. Get involved as our team sets camera traps, performs visual transects with drones (personal drones are welcome) and tests new photographic gadgets. Guests will of course be tasked with taking identification photos of each individual encounter we have with mantas and these ID's will be uploaded to Manta Matcher (www.mantamatcher.org), the global online database for manta rays. Hands on citizen science coupled with exciting underwater photography and media work will have you leaving Mexico feeling inspired and proud of your contribution.

With sheer rock faces, strong current and drift dives in the blue, the dives sites are not for the faint hearted. While the conditions can be extraordinarily good this is NOT a location for beginner divers and we recommend advanced divers only.

Our trips are designed for divers looking to participate in something a bit more challenging and stimulating than your average dive trip. We recommend that you brush up on your diving skills and be in good health in order to capitalize on the experience, but mostly we encourage you to come with a positive attitude and sense of adventure. We specifically limit the number of participants on our expeditions to ensure our guests get the most out of our trips, have the best possible encounters with wildlife and are able to take advantage of one on one time with our experts. Get ready for an experience of a lifetime!



Expedition Guides

Andrea Marshall

Dr. Andrea Marshall is a world-renowned expert on manta rays and a National Geographic Explorer. Andrea, dubbed the 'Queen of Mantas' in 2009 by the BBC in the Natural World documentary by the same name, was the first person in the world to receive a PhD on the ecology of these mysterious animals.

Today Andrea oversees global research on manta rays as the principal scientist of the Marine Megafauna Foundation's manta ray program and co-manages MMF's threatened species program in Mozambique. MMF is a not-for-profit organization which spearheads conservation efforts for our ocean giants across the world through rigorous research programs and the application of sound management practices.

Andrea is also a professional underwater photographer writing her first book on the Bazaruto Seascape of southern Mozambique.

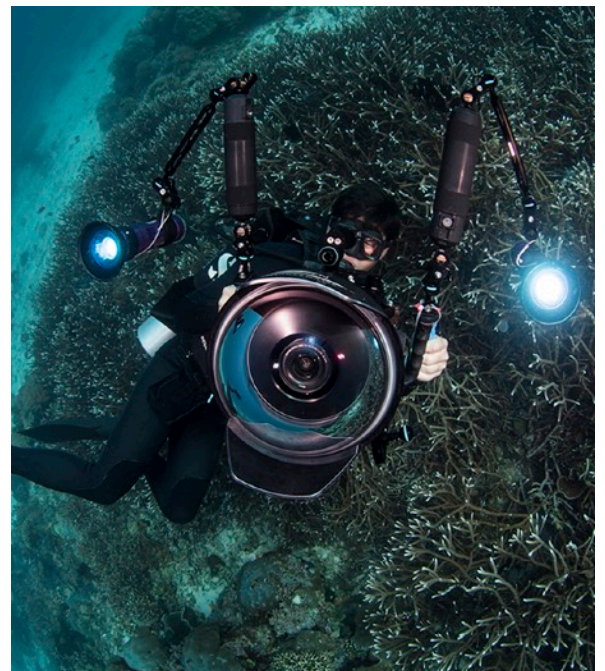


Janneman Conradie

Janneman Conradie is a marine conservationist specializing in aerial surveillance and technical diving. Using these specialist skills he helps MMF teams to monitor and capture data in some of the most remote and challenging environments on the planet. Janneman also over-see's project logistics for many of MMF's field expeditions ensuring their teams are using the most efficient and state of the art technologies to execute their research.

As professional underwater and aerial cameraman, Janneman always has some type of camera in hand. He has filmed with some of the best in the business and worked on projects with the likes of National Geographic and the BBC. Most recently he has been filming for the new Netflix documentary series Oceans.

In addition to being one of our expert guides, he is onboard to help participants learn more about the technical side of taking photos and videos for fun and for science.



Guest Researcher

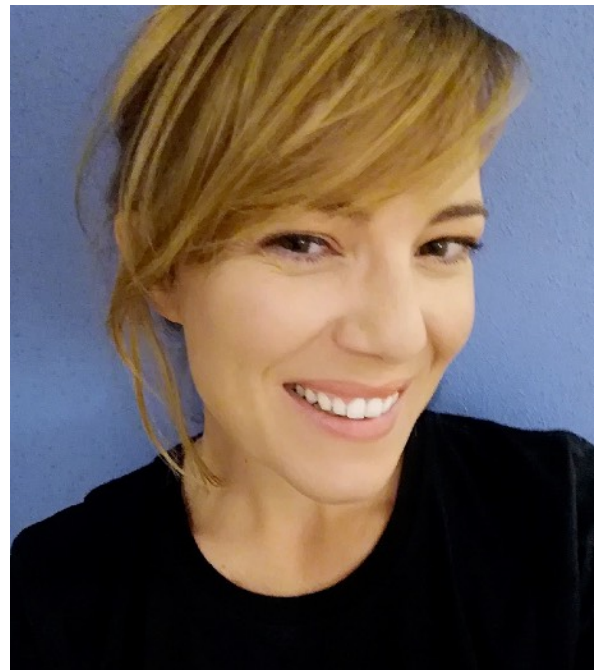
The Marine Megafauna Foundation are privileged to be partnering with Pelagios Kakunjá, a local Mexican non-profit organization created in 2010 by Mexican scientists Dr. Mauricio Hoyos and Dr. James Ketchum. The main goal of the organization is to study and encourage the protection of sharks and manta rays in Mexico, many of which are globally endangered, due to unsustainable or illegal fishing practices. In addition to supporting a plethora of student research projects in partnership

with Universities across the globe, as an organization, Pelagios Kakunjá, which means 'Pelagic Protection', aim to continuously provide technical information for the development of regional management and national conservation strategies for sharks and rays in Mexico. We are grateful to be helping support some of their current manta ray studies in the Mexican Pacific.



Madalena Cabral

Madalena Cabral is a Portuguese PhD candidate, born in South Africa, and now living in Mexico. Madalena has been conducting marine field research since 2014. She currently holds a Masters degree in Ecology and Environmental Management. She began her career studying coral reef ecology in Thailand and over the years has worked as research coordinator in both Mexico and Honduras. Most recently Madalena has been conducting a doctoral thesis, in collaboration with Pelagios Kakunjá, on giant oceanic manta rays in the Revillagigedos Archipelago. She recently published a paper on the population dynamics of these oceanic manta rays in the Mexican Pacific using citizen science and photo identification. She is currently working with satellite telemetry data which will provide new insight on the distribution range and movement ecology of these manta rays visiting and using this offshore island group. She will be attempting to satellite tag mantas on our expeditions as well as collecting routine IDs of the individuals being seen on our visual transects.



Expedition Vessel

We have chosen to run this particular expedition aboard the famed Nautilus UnderSea. The UnderSea first entered service in 1968 as an oceanographic research vessel. Over time this amazing ship became one of the most famous dive boats in the world as the support boat for the James Bond Movie 'License to Kill', the platform for the Deep Rover mission with Dr Silvia Earle and the expedition vessel for IMAX adventures around the South Pacific. It was rebuilt in 2017, the hull was stretched out to 105 feet, a new superstructure was erected, an extended sun deck was fitted, and a stability system was installed.

Guests will motor to the archipelago in style with spacious, comfortable cabins complete with air conditioning and large en-suite bathrooms with showers. The boat has plenty of lounge space and sundecks. Indoor and outside deck dining is available and divers will be treated to gourmet cuisine prepared by a qualified chefs, with both local and international dishes available. Special diets can be catered for on request.

The vessel is completely outfitted for diving with a massive dive deck, private kit up areas, space for cameras and nitrox filling capabilities. It even has a freshwater hot tub to soak in after a long day of diving.



1 Triple Stateroom

Main deck. 2 bunk beds, with 1 of the bunks for extra storage. Ensuite with private shower and individually-controlled air conditioning.

6 Staterooms

Lower deck. Upper and lower beds. Configuration varies between the 6 staterooms. Ensuited with private showers and individually-controlled air conditioning (A,B,C,D,E & F).

ADA Compatible Stateroom

Adjacent to the dive deck. Wheelchair friendly. Twin beds. Huge window! Ensuite with private shower and individually-controlled air conditioning (Rosario).

1 Premium Suite

A large premium suite on the sun deck can be configured into two full beds or one large bed. Flat screen TV, multiple windows, ensuite, plenty of storage space, individually-controlled air conditioning and easy access to the hot tub (Emerald).

Expedition Itinerary

January 10th- We always recommend that participants arrive in Cabo San Lucas a day early to ensure that their luggage arrives and they do not miss the boat departure the following day. Once the boat leaves there is no way to come back or to transport late arrivals out to the islands. The airport is approximately 45 minutes away from town and a local taxi can take you to any number of hotels in the Cabo San Lucas area. Guests should organize their own accommodation but we can provide recommendations on request.

January 11th- (Boat departure day) The Nautilus invites those who have arrived early for an optional complimentary photo course and warm-up dive at Pelican Rocks (please book with us in advance). In the late afternoon there will be an optional pre-trip briefing, sunset drinks and an early group dinner before boarding for those wanting to join (location TBA). Our boat will leave for the islands at 8:00 pm sharp. Transportation to the boat will be arranged from dinner or from the downtown area.

January 12th- (Travel day) Our expedition will begin with a 22-hour drive out to the Revillagigedo Archipelago giving guests time to set up their gear, prep their cameras and take dive courses.

January 13-17th- The itinerary will be set according to the conditions and animal action but we expect to spend the majority of our time at San Benedicto Island and Roca Partida, both hot spots



for giant manta rays and pelagics. We will also dive the best sites at Socorro Island, where the boat is required to check in with the Mexican Naval Base. If conditions allow, you should expect to have 5 full days of diving.** We will aim to dive 4 times per day. On the single scheduled 3 dive day there will be an option for a spectacular night snorkel with silky sharks. In the evenings guests will be treated to special lectures and those taking dive courses will have time to run through their lessons and take tests. Participants interested in learning more about photography or videography can get one-on-one tutorials with Janneman or Andrea. Citizen scientists wanting to contribute to the local and international database for mantas and whale sharks can edit and share their IDs. Those preferring to relax or enjoy the scenery under the stars are free to do so.

January 18th- (Travel Day)- We will again make the 22-hour crossing back to Cabo San Lucas. Guests can take the day to edit their images, clean their cameras and pack dive gear, shop at the ship's shop and decompress after an incredible week of diving.

January 19th (Departure Day)- We will arrive back to port around 8:30am. Guests can arrange onward transport from Cabo San Lucas, although it is recommended that international flights are only booked from midday to allow for transport time back to the airport and check-in.

***This is a suggested schedule. Opportunistic changes in the itinerary due to conditions, foul weather and/or logistical requirements are at the discretion of the Captain, Cruise Directors and Dive Expedition Leaders.*



Expedition Details

Premium Suite: US \$4,600 per person sharing

Rosario Stateroom: US \$4,250 per person sharing

Standard Staterooms: US \$3,999 per person sharing

Price Includes:

8 day / 8 night Liveaboard Cruise on the *Nautilus UnderSea*

All Food (*breakfast, lunch, snacks, fresh fruit, dinner and desserts*)

Hot and Cold Non-Alcoholic Beverage Selection

Transportation to and from Boat (*local hotels in downtown Cabo San Lucas only*)

Complimentary Backscatter Photo Course and Warm Up Dive at Pelican Rocks (pre-departure)

Research Talks from MMF biologists and One-on-One Photographic or Video 'Coaching'

\$200 Built-in Donation to the Marine Megafauna Foundation

Port Fees (*\$65 per person*) and National Park Fees (*approximately \$375*)

\$375 Nautilus Credit Certificate (*can be used for onboard purchases, such as nitrox, gift shop, and rentals. Can also be used for day trips, courses or workshops at See Creatures in Cabo and with Baja Expeditions in La Paz*)

'Ray of Hope Expedition' Gift

Price Excludes:

International or Domestic Flights

Accommodation in Cabo San Lucas (*if required*)

Nitrox Fills *if desired* (*\$20 per person per day*)

Dive Courses (*Advanced Open Water or Nitrox Classes available on request*)

Dive Gear Rental *if required* (*Nautilus Lifeline Rescue Radios, SMBs, tanks, weights and belts included*)

Alcoholic Beverages

Gratuity (*strongly encouraged*)

Travel Insurance** (dive insurance required, travel insurance is highly recommended)

**** Ray of Hope Expeditions and the Nautilus** take no responsibility for scheduling or itinerary changes due to extreme weather, political situations, disasters, pandemics or other events beyond our control. Travel insurance is strongly recommended. A DAN or comparable diving accident insurance policy is required for unanticipated evacuations or treatments that may not be covered by your regular insurance. Proof of policy is required in advance.

