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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)

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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](#)