



## **Manta Rays Highlight Guest Experience at Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort & Spa**

Picture a large, shadow-like creature gliding like an acrobat through crystal clear ocean waters. Strangely shaped, yet hauntingly beautiful and graceful, one cannot help but crave to learn more. What is it you have seen? You have seen a manta ray, the largest of the ray species, reaching wing spans of more than twenty feet and weighing as much as 2,000 pounds.

Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort & Spa has partnered with local manta ray expert James L. Wing and Fair Wind Ocean Guides to educate visitors about the world-famous Keauhou Manta Rays while the remarkable creatures roam their familiar feeding grounds fronting the resort.

Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort & Spa has long been one of the preferred feeding areas for these mysterious and amazingly beautiful creatures. Guests are able to observe the mantas most evenings from the lanai (balcony) of oceanfront rooms or from a special viewing area near Manta Ray Bar & Grill on resort grounds. Several evenings during week just after sunset (time is seasonally adjusted), knowledgeable manta experts offer a complimentary “Manta Talk” about current manta studies on behavior, habitat, and research. They answer questions, provide photos, and share what is little is known about Manta Ray.

For those who want a more “up close and personal” encounter with these enchanting creatures, the resort, through Fair Wind, offers a “***Manta Experience***” which departs from nearby Keauhou Bay that takes guests into the water for a nighttime snorkel or SCUBA dive excursion to the site near the resort, just five minutes offshore. Additionally, guests can observe underwater video of the manta rays at any time day or night on a dedicated in-room channel.

A manta ray is a fish with no bones and is a relative of the shark. Unlike the shark, however, the manta ray has no teeth. Manta rays are filter feeders. This means that instead of catching their prey with teeth, they filter the water through their large mouths, which contain a complex system of filters. As one of the largest fish in the ocean, it is interesting to note that their diet consists of some of the smallest: Plankton.

As the youngest island geologically and the largest in the Hawaiian Island chain, Hawaii's Big Island offers an endless list of activities for the visitor. The water surrounding Keauhou is crystal clear and averages a warm 79 degrees. Snorkel enthusiasts and SCUBA divers alike marvel at the abundant and colorful marine life. Thirty percent of the fish species found in Hawaiian waters are found nowhere else in the world. The manta rays frequenting the waters adjacent to the resort are just one species among the marine life with stunning mosaic colors and playful motions creating a rhapsody, which fascinates, reinvigorates, and inspires visitors. Among the many exciting and interesting activities one can choose from, watching manta rays perform their own rhythmic ballet so near the surface of the ocean is often recounted as the highlight of many vacations.

Media interviews with and underwater images by James Wing are available. Please contact Sheraton Keauhou Bay's Public Relations Representative Vicky Kometani, [vicky@current-events.com](mailto:vicky@current-events.com).