

DATE July 25, 2022 RELEASE NUMBER 38/22

Outrigger Maldives Playing Important Role in Manta Ray, Whale Shark and Turtle Conservation



[Clockwise from top left] Outrigger Maldives Maafushivaru Resort, manta ray, green sea turtle, whale sharks, and, in the center, the resort's marine biologist Lynn Jula Kessler with coral fragments for a nursery project

MALE, MALDIVES – Outrigger Maldives Maafushivaru Resort is playing a key role in gathering and sharing information on whale sharks, manta rays and sea turtles with conservation groups in the Maldives.

The tracking and reporting process, led by the resort's marine biologist, Lynn Jula Kessler, shows that populations of whale sharks and manta rays in the South Ari Atoll around Outrigger Maldives are stable or doing well. However, there is more concern about critically endangered sea turtles, which often get ensnared in fishing nets traveling between their nesting grounds in Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

On whale sharks, Outrigger Maldives is cooperating with the Maldives Whale Shark Research Program. Kessler and accompanying resort snorkeling guests collect data on whale shark sightings, noting any injuries, some of which are caused by collisions with boats.

This September, Kessler and Outrigger will join the #GentleToGiants initiative being run by the whale shark research team. The campaign aims to secure commitments from tourism businesses to adhere to whale shark encounter guidelines.

“Many of the whale sharks spotted in South Ari Atoll are juvenile males five to eight meters in length,” says Kessler. “The waters around here are like a boys’ high school for whale sharks,” she says.

Kessler also sends information on manta ray sightings to the Manta Trust, an NGO founded to protect manta rays globally. By sending underwater images of mantas to the trust, conservationists can track new pregnancies, injuries and overall population trends. Manta rays are classified as endangered. They are protected by law in the Maldives, which has the biggest recorded population of manta rays in the world.

“No matter how often I encounter manta rays, they always amaze me,” says Kessler. “Besides being unbelievably graceful, they are also very curious and intelligent. They can often be observed interacting with snorkelers and divers which makes the encounters even more magical.”

Kessler gives presentations twice a week to Outrigger guests on manta rays, whale sharks, turtles, marine life and coral reef preservation in the South Ari Atoll.

In July, she conducted coral planting, assisted by guests, adding frames of new coral beneath a jetty at the resort to encourage the breeding of young corals and fish species.

Marine conservation and awareness building are a key part of Outrigger Maldives resort operations, all of which align with [Outrigger’s ZONE](#) (OZONE), the company’s long-established global marine conservation and environmental care initiative.

Outrigger would like to hear from journalists who are interested in the OZONE project, marine conservation and sustainable guest activities.

###

ABOUT OUTRIGGER MALDIVES MAAFUSHIVARU RESORT

Discover a unique Island Experience in the Indian Ocean offering small island charm with contemporary architecture and bespoke finishing touches. In the pristine South Ari Atoll, the 5-star Outrigger Maldives MAAFUSHIVARU Resort is a 25-minute seaplane journey from Male. It offers 81 villas in five distinct styles plus four restaurants, bars and cafes, a spa, a library lounge, boutique, airport lounge and transfers. The resort features a fully equipped PADI and SSI dive center, island excursions, movie and documentary nights and vow renewals for couples. It has its own in-house marine biologist. She leads marine discovery trips, a coral regeneration project, and gives presentations in the evening. More at [Outrigger.com](#)

ABOUT OUTRIGGER HOSPITALITY GROUP

For nearly 75 years, Outrigger Hotels and Resorts has charted a journey of discovery – expanding from Hawaii to premier resort destinations including Fiji, Mauritius, Thailand and The Maldives. The privately held hospitality company invites guests to ‘Escape Ordinary’ with authentic Signature Experiences and the [Outrigger DISCOVERY loyalty program](#). Outrigger’s multi-branded portfolio includes Outrigger® Resorts, OHANA Hotels by Outrigger®, Hawaii Vacation Condos by Outrigger®, Kapalua Villas Maui, and its newest addition, Honua Kai Resort & Spa Maui while also managing select properties from top international hotel brands including Embassy Suites® by Hilton, Best Western® and Hilton Grand Vacations®. Find out more at [Outrigger.com](#) or visit @OutriggerResorts on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

OUTRIGGER MEDIA CONTACTS, ASIA & EUROPE

Ken Scott | ScottAsia Communications | Mobile: (+44) 7949 077959 | Email: kens@scottasia.net
Anchalee Sriwongsa | ScottAsia Communications | Mobile: (+66) 91 806 0484 | Email: ann@scottasia.net

NORTH AMERICA

Monica Salter | VP Global Communications & Social Responsibility
Outrigger Hospitality Group | Tel: (+1) 808-921-6839 | Email: monica.salter@outrigger.com