

DATE August 22, 2022 RELEASE NUMBER 48/22

Outrigger Kona Resort & Spa to Host World Manta Day Festival – Sept. 17

Family friendly festivities range from coastal cleanup and educational talks to manta movie premiere

KONA, HAWAII – The sapphire sea fronting [Outrigger Kona Resort & Spa](#) is one of the few places worldwide to witness the grace and beauty of manta rays year round. In celebration of these majestic creatures, Outrigger Kona Resort & Spa is hosting a festival for World Manta Day alongside its nonprofit partner, [Manta Pacific Research Foundation](#) on Sept. 17.

The day starts with a coastal cleanup at Kailua Pier in downtown Kona from 9 a.m. to noon then continues at Outrigger Resort & Spa with meet and greet in the Keauhou Rooms from noon to 1 p.m. followed by an engaging lineup of “Manta Talks” from local and international expert divers and scientists. There will also be manta-themed crafts for kids and adults. The day concludes with a premiere of a short film, “Mission Manta,” which was produced in 2021 in front of the property.

Free and open to the public, World Manta Day at Outrigger Kona Resort & Spa provides an opportunity to learn more about these loved sea animals and meet with Keller Laros, president and founder of Manta Pacific Research Foundation.

Laros had his very first encounter with the manta rays of Kona back in 1985 when he became a scuba instructor through the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) and began leading the iconic, manta ray night dives. This past June, 37 years later, Laros logged his 14,000-scuba dive with the manta rays at Outrigger Kona Resort & Spa.

Every night, the majestic creatures swim a few yards from the resort to feed on plankton, providing visitors a unique chance to watch them from the manta viewing deck, or even better – through an official scuba or snorkeling tour. Outrigger recently partnered with leading nonprofit [Manta Pacific Research Foundation](#) to further encourage education on and protection for manta rays as part of its global Outrigger’s ZONE (OZONE) ocean conservation initiative.

While these incredible animals can be found in other parts of the world, snorkeling with them in Kona is especially memorable because the manta dives are held at night, which serves as optimal viewing. Laros has worked to bring awareness to these sea animals and manta rays are now protected in the State of Hawai’i due to the efforts of Manta Pacific Research Foundation.



“I feel extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to be in the ocean with manta rays several nights per week year after year. The grace and beauty of these gentle giants are captivating as these manta rays have a sense of their surroundings and innate intelligence that is truly remarkable,” said Laros. “They are charismatic creatures that evoke awe in all of us. My goal is to continue to combine passion with purpose and dedicate my life to research, education and conservation concerning manta rays and their marine environment.”

This partnership between Outrigger and Manta Pacific Research Foundation is one facet of Outrigger’s global OZONE program. This initiative serves to provide enriching experiences for guests, hosts and the local community while simultaneously ensuring that Outrigger properties actively do their part to protect its oceans and help them thrive for generations to come.

The 22-acre [Outrigger Kona Resort & Spa](#) is commemorating its one-year anniversary with savings up to 50% for Outrigger DISCOVERY members. Outrigger’s [DISCOVERY](#) loyalty program is free to join and provides special perks, exclusive rates, benefits and rewards. Travelers can book these unprecedented savings now through September 30 with travel dates through December 31, 2023. Travelers can take advantage of this exclusive limited-time anniversary sale now by calling 1-866-326-6803 or visiting www.outrigger.com/kona using promo code ‘1YEAR.’

Schedule of events at Outrigger Kona Resort & Spa

1:00 – 5:30 p.m. // Manta and Marine Life Talks:

- 1:00 p.m. Manta Ray Taxonomy, Anatomy & Life Cycle – Keller Laros, Manta Pacific
- 1:30 p.m. Manta Ray Cognition – Csilla Ari D`Agostino, Ph.D., U of South Florida & Manta Pacific
- 2:00 p.m. Little Plankton Talk – Jenna Hancock - Fair Winds Cruises Naturalist
- 2:30 p.m. Manta I.D. – Each is Unique and Special – Keller Laros, Manta Pacific
- 3:00 p.m. Dynamic Coloration – Csilla Ari D`Agostino, Ph.D., U of South Florida & Manta Pacific
- 3:30 p.m. Manta Rays in Hawaiian Culture
- 4:00 p.m. Not Devils Of The Deep – Corey Nevels – U of Hawai’i Institute of Marine Biology
- 4:30 p.m. Manta Ray Taxonomy, Anatomy & Life Cycle – Keller Laros, Manta Pacific
- 5:00 p.m. Manta Ray Cognition – Csilla Ari D`Agostino, Ph.D., U of South Florida & Manta Pacific
- 5:30 p.m. Manta Ray Genetics – Mark Deakos

6:00 – 7:00 p.m. // Mahalo Reception at Manta Point – Pupū and Cash Bar

7:00 – 7:30 p.m. // Screening of Film “Mission Manta” with creators Nikki Brito and Morgan Eason

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ABOUT OUTRIGGER HOSPITALITY GROUP

For nearly 75 years, Outrigger Resorts and Hotels has charted a journey of discovery – expanding from Hawai’i 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 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](#).

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