



VOTE YES FOR MANTA RAYS

PROPOSAL 46

This proposal is sponsored by Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador, and is broadly supported. The CITES Secretariat and TRAFFIC recommend adoption; the IUCN believes it satisfies criteria for Appendix II; the FAO Expert Panel reports that these low productivity species are highly vulnerable, any increase in fishing mortality would probably have a profound effect on populations, and Appendix II listing is likely to result in further regulation and monitoring of this trade.

Appendix II listing for the genus *Manta* is necessary to ensure that international trade does not continue to threaten the survival of these species. Appendix II listing will complement national management measures to ensure that fisheries are kept to sustainable levels, improve data collection and help protect the contribution these species provide to coastal communities from tourism activities.

QUICK FACTS

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1. Manta rays are severely threatened by increasing demand for manta ray gill plates; those who stand to gain from the market in gill plates have generated the demand.
2. Manta ray populations targeted by fisheries have been decimated by an estimated 56% to 86% over 6 to 8 years.
3. Coastal communities in developing countries benefit most from global tourism for manta ray watching, which is estimated at over US\$140 million annually.
4. Foreign traders get the bulk of the benefits from the global retail market for manta gill plates, which is estimated at about US\$5 million; 99% of manta gill plates end up in a single location in China.
5. A dead manta ray's gill plates are worth US\$40 to \$200 to the fisherman and as much as US\$3,000 to the trader, yet a live manta ray can contribute tens of thousands of dollars per year to a local economy over its long lifetime of about 40 years.
6. Female manta rays take 8-10 years to sexually mature, and may give birth to only one pup every two to five years, which leads mantas to have extremely low reproductive rates and high vulnerability.
7. Manta rays are also exceptionally vulnerable to fisheries because they group together in large numbers to clean and feed, do not fear humans and sometimes play with them.
8. Manta rays are magnificent, graceful, gentle giants that are harmless to humans and have become icons for those who love the ocean and who pay to visit it.
9. Manta ray gill plates can be easily identified with a simple visual ID guide and distinguished from other species of fish. DNA tests are also available.
10. Manta rays are recognized by the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species as endangered species needing protection and a growing number of countries have legally protected them. Yet no existing management measures regulate the international trade in manta products and no regional fishery management organizations (RFMO) regulate manta landings.



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