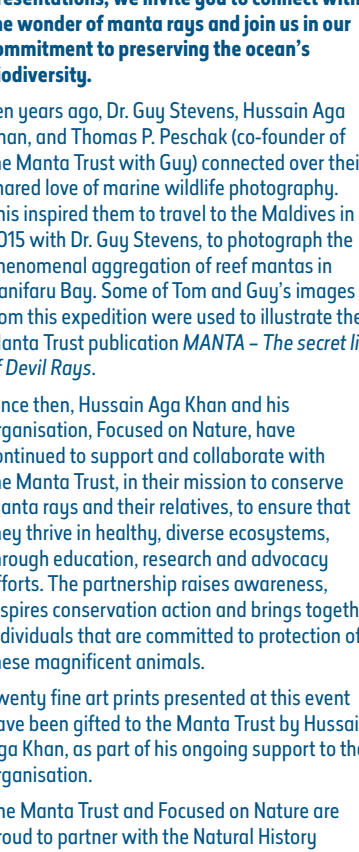


An Evening with Focused on Nature and the Manta Trust

at the Natural History Museum, London
TUESDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WORLD MANTA DAY
The Power of Storytelling in Manta Conservation



KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Hussain Aga Khan

PHOTOGRAPHER, CONSERVATIONIST AND STORYTELLER

Steve Backshall

BAFTA AWARD-WINNING WILDLIFE EXPERT, NATURAL HISTORY TV PRESENTER, AUTHOR, AND MANTA TRUST PATRON

Followed by a Cocktail Reception and Silent Auction



The Manta Trust and Focused on Nature

Through captivating photography, powerful storytelling, and inspiring keynote presentations, we invite you to connect with the wonder of manta rays and join us in our commitment to preserving the ocean's biodiversity.

Ten years ago, Dr. Guy Stevens, Hussain Aga Khan, and Thomas P. Peschak (co-founder of the Manta Trust with Guy) connected over their shared love of marine wildlife photography. This inspired them to travel to the Maldives in 2015 with Dr. Guy Stevens, to photograph the phenomenal aggregation of reef mantas in Hanifaru Bay. Some of Tom and Guy's images from this expedition were used to illustrate the Manta Trust publication *MANTA – The secret life of Devil Rays*.

Since then, Hussain Aga Khan and his organisation, Focused on Nature, have continued to support and collaborate with the Manta Trust, in their mission to conserve manta rays and their relatives, to ensure that they thrive in healthy, diverse ecosystems, through education, research and advocacy efforts. The partnership raises awareness, inspires conservation action and brings together individuals that are committed to protection of these magnificent animals.

Twenty five art prints presented at this event have been gifted to the Manta Trust by Hussain Aga Khan, as part of his ongoing support to the organisation.

The Manta Trust and Focused on Nature are proud to partner with the Natural History Museum, London, as a world-renowned centre of research, with a mission to promote understanding of the natural world and our place in it, the Natural History Museum aligns perfectly with the mission for this evening—to connect you with the majesty of manta rays and to illustrate the power of storytelling in their conservation.

Programme

6.45 to 7.00pm

Guests arrive and proceed to the Attenborough Studio

INTRODUCTION

Rebecca Carter
Manta Trust Director of Conservation Programmes

VIDEO

Dr. Guy Stevens and Thomas P. Peschak
Introduction by the founders of the Manta Trust

WELCOME REMARKS

Paul Jackson
Chair, Manta Trust Board of Trustees

PRESENTATION

Hussain Aga Khan
Photographer, Conservationist and Founder, Focused on Nature

PRESENTATION

Steve Backshall
BAFTA award-winning wildlife expert, natural history TV presenter, author, and Manta Trust Patron

A CONVERSATION

Hussain Aga Khan and Steve Backshall
Moderated by Rebecca Carter

ABOUT THE MANTA TRUST

Jasmine Corbett
Manta Trust Media and Communications Manager

COCKTAIL RECEPTION & SILENT AUCTION IN THE ATRIUM

Hussain Aga Khan

Hussain Aga Khan's photography underpins his passion for wildlife and ecosystems, and he uses this medium to inspire people to fall in love with nature and to encourage behavioural change around the exploitation of natural resources.

Multiple photographic expeditions over three decades have led to the development of extraordinary archives, covering various geographical areas and habitats and many diverse species.

Through his numerous exhibitions, publications and talks, Hussain Aga Khan has created a global platform to raise awareness around the protection of threatened species and ecosystems. He established his conservation organisation, Focused on Nature, in 2014, to support global conservation, advocacy and research efforts to protect biodiversity and habitats.

Hussain Aga Khan is a board member of Mission Blue, a member of the Jane Goodall Legacy Foundation's Council for Hope, of the National Geographic Hubbard Council and of The Wild Dolphin Project's scientific advisory board. He is a partner of the Shark Conservation Fund, an Ambassador for the Natural History Museum, London, and one of *Mareviva's Cavalieri Per Il Mare* (Knights for the Sea).

He has published four books, *Animal Voyage* (2004), *Diving into Wildlife* (2015), *Fragile Beauty* (2022), and *The Living Sea* (2022).

Steve Backshall

Steve Backshall is a familiar face and household name, perhaps best-known for his phenomenal series *Deadly*. The most recent, *Deadly Mission Shark* for CBBC inspires children to become shark ambassadors.

An all-action hero, Steve has led overseas expeditions and explored some of the most incredible places on the planet. He recently travelled across the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans filming *Whale* for Sky TV, a groundbreaking programme tracking our most iconic, yet threatened, species.

He has also appeared in series two of *Our Changing Planet* for BBC One, an ambitious seven-year series documenting six of the planet's most threatened ecosystems.

His most recent book, *Deep Blue* published in 2023, is a blend of memoir, travel, and marine and environmental science that takes us on a tour of the many worlds of aquatic life.

Steve has been a powerful voice for sharks and has many years, particularly in changing people's mindsets behind their unfortunate reputation, and raising awareness of the fisheries threatening them with extinction.

Rebecca Carter

Rebecca Carter is the Director of Conservation Programmes for the Manta Trust and has spent the last five years managing core operations at the heart of the charity as well as supporting 30 affiliated research and conservation projects around the world.

A lifelong obsession with sharks was her motivation from a young age to make a positive difference to the oceans, and this passion quickly grew to encompass all marine species and habitats when she learnt to scuba dive. Whilst working at the London Aquarium in 2011 Rebecca first connected with Guy Stevens, organising several fundraising events for the charity and designing some of the Manta Trust's first merchandise. In 2016 she took a sabbatical to volunteer as a researcher for the Manta Trust in French Polynesia, coming face to face with manta rays for the first time. This incredible experience inspired her to pursue a career in the charity sector where she could directly contribute to vital marine conservation efforts. Joining the Manta Trust in 2017 as Head of Fundraising and Communications was a dream come true and Rebecca feels privileged to be a part of such a passionate and collaborative global network making a difference for these threatened species.

Paul Jackson

A graduate of Kingston University, Paul has a BA (Hons) in Social Science majoring in EU Economics and Politics, and an MSc in Charity Finance from South Bank University.

Paul is currently Group Chief Executive of the Hospital Saturday Fund, a grant making charity founded in 1873. Today, using the profit generated by HSF Health Plan, its trading arm in the UK, Ireland, and Malta, the Fund makes donations to medical charities and individuals in medical need. In 2024 alone, donations totaling £2.25m were granted.

Formerly, Paul was a Trustee of The Freshwater Habitats Trust, the Together Charitable Foundation, and the Association of Charitable Organisations. In 2019 Paul was awarded the Freedom of the City of London, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the charity sector.

Paul's fascination with fish was sparked as a child and, inevitably, a love of sharks and rays followed as he pursued his scuba diving hobby. Paul's holidays are spent exploring the oceans of the world. In August 2011, fate played a hand when Paul visited the Maldives and spent time on Guy Stevens' research boat in Hanifaru Bay. A week of observing and snorkelling with mantas made up Paul's mind; he was determined to use his knowledge of the charity sector to help protect these magnificent animals. In December 2011, Paul was appointed Chair, and he registered the Manta Trust with the Charity Commission. Paul is passionate about supporting the Manta Trust and governing the charity as Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Jasmine Corbett

Jasmine Corbett is a passionate media and communications specialist, marine biologist, and award-winning underwater photographer, who plays a pivotal role in promoting the conservation efforts and research initiatives of the Manta Trust.

With a background in marine and natural history photography, she has spent the past decade immersed in marine conservation and research initiatives in South and Southeast Asia. Her experience includes managing marine conservation projects, working in underwater photography, and teaching scuba diving.

During her time as a marine biologist in Baa Atoll, Maldives, she had a transformative experience witnessing cyclone feeding manta rays in Hanifaru Bay, sparking her enduring passion for working with these majestic creatures. Having previously overseen operations at one of the Maldives Manta Conservation Programme's research bases in the Maldives, she now serves as the Manta Trust media and communications manager.

Jasmine seamlessly combines her passions of manta ray research and conservation with compelling storytelling and content creation, effectively raising awareness about the critical need to safeguard manta rays and their marine environments.

Silent Auction Catalogue

A silent auction of a special collection of Hussain Aga Khan's limited edition photography gifted to the Manta Trust.

1. **Glider**
Hanifaru Bay, Baa Atoll, Maldives, July 2015

2. **Ghostly**
Hanifaru Bay, Baa Atoll, Maldives, July 2015

3. **View of a manta's gills during the mass feeding that happens at Hanifaru, where up to 250 mantas visit the bay at a time**
Baa Atoll, Maldives, July 2015

4. **Chain-feeders**
Hanifaru Bay, Baa Atoll, Maldives, July 2015

5. **"Manta moment" or "the look"**
Hanifaru Bay, Baa Atoll, Maldives, July 2015

6. **Chain-feeding**
Hanifaru Bay, Baa Atoll, Maldives, July 2015

7. **Manta shifting right**
La Paz, Mexico, August 2018

8. **Distance swimming partner (we had 15 minutes together!)**
La Paz, Mexico, August 2018

9. **Sleek - with companions**
La Paz, Mexico, August 2018

10. **Alien spaceship on the move at The Boiler**
The Revillagigedo Islands, Mexico, February 2021

11. **An oceanic manta ray rises to the surface, followed by jacks**
The Revillagigedo Islands, Mexico, February 2021

12. **Fly-by**
The Revillagigedo Islands, Mexico, February 2021

13. **Beautiful oceanic, cephalic lobes folded**
The Revillagigedo Islands, Mexico, February 2021

14. **Manta belly!**
The Revillagigedo Islands, Mexico, February 2021

15. **Cephalic lobe, eye, remora and all**
Isla de la Plata, Ecuador, September 2021

16. **Barber fish falling away like golden nuggets as an oceanic departs a cleaning station**
Isla de la Plata, Ecuador, September 2021

17. **"Manta all flapped up..." or "Manta light"**
Bora Bora, French Polynesia, August 2022

18. **Magical manta about to rise over my head at Eagle Rock**
Raja Ampat, West Papua, Indonesia, March 2023

19. **Spotty belly!**
Bora Bora, French Polynesia, August 2023

20. **One of the nicest views...**
Bora Bora, French Polynesia, August 2023

About the Manta Trust

Founded in 2011 by Dr. Guy Stevens and Thomas P. Peschak, the Manta Trust is a global leader in manta ray conservation, with a mission to understand, safeguard and advocate for the enigmatic creatures that captivate divers and photographers worldwide, and which are sadly threatened with extinction. Through a combination of scientific research, education and community engagement in collaboration with a global network of affiliate projects, the Manta Trust strives to ensure a sustainable future for manta rays and the marine ecosystems they inhabit.

With a commitment to scientific excellence and innovation, and through groundbreaking research on manta and devil ray populations, their behaviour, and their habitats, the Manta Trust seeks to unravel the mysteries of manta rays and to develop conservation strategies that will protect them for generations to come.

Beyond engaging with local communities, stakeholders, and policymakers, the Manta Trust works to promote sustainable fishing practices, reduce bycatch, and establish marine protected areas that safeguard manta and devil ray habitats. Education and outreach initiatives encourage individuals to become champions for marine conservation, fostering a sense of stewardship and responsibility for the oceans.

About Focused on Nature

Focused On Nature was established by Hussain Aga Khan in 2014, to support global conservation, advocacy, and research efforts that protect threatened and endangered species, safeguard biodiversity and preserve habitats. Through photography and education initiatives, Focused on Nature raises awareness around the necessity and urgency to protect fragile and threatened ecosystems around the world. Focused on Nature collaborates with globally renowned conservation organisations to support responsible stewardship of wildlife and wild spaces around the world.

About the Natural History Museum, London

The Natural History Museum is a world-class visitor attraction and leading science research centre, with a vision of a future where both people and planet thrive, and a mission to create advocates for the planet.

The Natural History Museum harnesses its collections, research and reach so that individuals can be sufficiently informed, confident and motivated to make wise decisions, get involved, and use their influence and actions to make a positive difference to the global future.

By 2031, the Natural History Museum will prioritise strategies that will secure the future of its collections, transform the study of natural history, and, through its Urban Nature Project, create welcoming, accessible and biologically diverse green spaces in the centre of London. All of these to create a resilient and sustainable organisation engaging and involving the widest possible audience.

