



# DEVIL RAY ADVENTURE IN **SANTA MARIA**

13<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>  
September 2019

from  
£1,245 pp\*

## BACKGROUND

**Dive the waters of Santa Maria in the Azores - one of the only places to encounter squadrons of sickle-fin devil rays.**

Picturesque Santa Maria is the most south easterly island in the Azores - a Portuguese archipelago in the north Atlantic, sitting half-way between Europe and North America. Known as the 'Sun Island' for boasting warmer, calmer weather than the rest of the archipelago, Santa Maria's waters are home to a range of dive sites suitable for all experience levels. The majority of the local dive sites are protected by a marine park, and several of its offshore volcanic sea mounts provide exceptional opportunities for more experienced divers to encounter pelagic species.

All manner of ocean giant can be regularly encountered around Santa Maria - including oceanic manta rays, dolphins, sperm whales, and even whale sharks. However by far the biggest draw is the unique seasonal aggregation of sickle-fin devil rays, that gather around the sea mounts of Baixa do Ambrósio and Formigas.

# SANTA MARIA



## TRIP LEADER

**Danny Copeland**

Danny Copeland is a marine conservationist and underwater multimedia specialist. Born and raised in North Wales, his work has taken him diving on media and conservation projects across all seven continents. A passionate advocate for our oceans, he collaborates with world-leading marine scientists and NGOs, and has spearheaded initiatives that have furthered the conservation of several sharks and rays. Aside from a passion in creating underwater 360VR content, Danny has worked alongside BBC cameramen, assisted photographers on assignment for National Geographic, and contributed to filming several productions - including the award-winning Netflix documentary, Chasing Coral.



**MANTA CATALOG  
AZORES**

## CHARITY PARTNER

**Manta Catalog Azores (MCA)**

Founded in 2012 and a partner of the Manta Trust, MCA is a research and conservation project that aims to develop our understanding of the manta and devil rays found in the Azores and the Eastern Atlantic - a region where little data exists. Aside from principally studying the sickle-fin devil rays, MCA is working with local stakeholders to develop sustainable tourism in Santa Maria around these charismatic animals.



## CONSERVATION & EDUCATION

Santa Maria is special in that it's one of the few places in the world where sickle-fin devil rays can be regularly and predictably encountered. Why huge squadrons of these large rays (>2m/6.5ft) visit Santa Maria during the summer months remains a mystery.

In support of local research efforts, Danny will be running workshops on how to take and submit ID photos of the devil rays we encounter. He will also be offering informal educational talks most evenings, offering guests further insight into devil ray science, the island's history and its wider marine ecosystem. Local devil ray biologists will also join guests on dives and give live demonstrations of how scientists collect tissue samples for genetic analysis - a novel opportunity for guests to engage with the local conservation efforts, and see their research in action.

## THE RESORT

Hotel Praia de Lobos is ideally located in the centre of Villa do Porto, offering traditionally decorated rooms equipped with air-conditioning, and en-suite bathrooms. Facilities include a restaurant, bar, and a communal living room to socialise with fellow guests. Complimentary WiFi internet access is also available in public areas. It will serve as the base of operations for the trip, with guests being picked up each morning for the day's activities, before returning in the evening for educational talks and optional group dinners in the surrounding town.

## BOOKINGS

All bookings are handled through Dive Worldwide - an award-winning ATOL-protected travel agency based in the UK, who specialise in diving itineraries to far-flung places.

For more information on the itinerary and how to secure your place on this ocean adventure, please email Danny Copeland via: [danny@dannyunderwater.com](mailto:danny@dannyunderwater.com).

## \*INCLUSIONS & OPTIONS

The price of £1,245pp excludes international return flights, however these can be arranged if desired at an additional cost. For example, return flights from the UK will cost £1,845pp, and include x1 night in Lisbon at the end of your trip, ahead of the final flight home. The base price also includes x7 nights in Santa Maria with daily breakfast, a group BBQ meal, x10 boat dives including dives around Baixa do Ambrósio, an offshore dive trip to Formigas (weather permitting), an island tour, dive tanks and weights, and all transfers. Finally, the price also includes a donation to the trip's charity partner.