



# Discover Socorro Island

**Last update September 2010**

*"Mantas and more Mantas!!"*

## Club Cantamar



In 1983, the Aguilar family moved to La Paz with the sole purpose of starting a service oriented business. Being a scuba diver since 1965, it was just the natural move for Fernando, beginning operations with a 22' panga (Baja 1, still in operation), and an old 40 hp outboard engine, but with the Cantamar Project in mind as the family goal. After several years of persistent dreaming and planing, construction started in 1994 with a boat ramp, a small office building and the compressors house with the tank filling station, which in turn gave

place to the actual Hotel Cantamar Beach Resort & Marina, the family's dream come true. Also Club Cantamar is the only Dive Resort in Mexico fitted with a decompression chamber in premises, and the operation is in charge of Fernando Aguilar Sr., after exhaustive training in the University Of Southern California (USC), in Catalina Island.

After careful planning and a lot of dreaming, the Aguilar Family decided that the Sea of Cortez was a very limited boundary, and the natural expansion happened towards some of the best dive areas in the world, as follows :

## Socorro Islands

The real name of this cluster of islands is Archipelago de Revillagigedo, but because of the difficulties posed to pronounce all that for a non-Spanish speaking person, we will refer to them as Socorro Islands. Socorro is just one of the 4 islands located 220 miles SW of Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, which are known worldwide as the "Mexican Galapagos" .



The 4 islands are : San Benedicto, Socorro, Roca Partida, and Clarion, the first one located at 220 nautical miles SW from Cabo San Lucas, the second one 40 miles West of San Benedicto, the next one 70 miles West of Socorro, and Clarion 150 miles WSW of Roca Partida.

There are only a few places on Planet Earth where you can dive and most likely interact with giant mantas, and Socorro is one of them. This group of volcanic islands attract large concentrations of fish, which in turn attract predators and large pelagic animals such as Mantas, Whale sharks, Humpback Whales, Dolphins, etc. and is so remote that only long range boats such as “Sea Escape” can reach comfortably.

Sharks are also a common sight around these islands, where Reef White Tips, Galapagos, Silkies, Hammerheads, Silver Tips, and Tigers are frequently observed in a given dive, besides enormous schools of Jacks and Yellow Fin Tuna.

## THE GIANT MANTA



The largest member of the ray family, the manta looks like a giant bat. It has been known to leap out of the water, occasionally destroying small fishing boats.

The manta ray is found both inshore and offshore in the warmer oceans. Although mantas can be found on the seabed, they spend much of their time feeding near the ocean's surface. Large species of ray, such as the manta, tend to be solitary, although they

are often accompanied by pilot fish and remoras.

Manta rays bear live young. The single fertilized egg develops inside the mother. The gestation period is unknown. It appears that mantas do not breed until their winglike pectoral fins reach a length of 13-15 feet. There is no specific breeding season: males and females mate year round. The newborns are fairly large, weighing 20-30 pounds, have fins that span 4 feet, and can generally protect themselves from predators. Manta rays feed mainly on shrimp and plankton, although they will occasionally eat small fish such as mullet. The manta's gill arches help it to feed by operating as a filtration system. During aspiration, water is sucked in through the mouth and pumped out through the gill slits. The plankton that is sucked into the manta's mouth along with the water is caught by the gill arches and siphoned into its stomach. When mantas encounter a shoal of fish, they quickly move in to feed, swallowing as many fish as they can.

The manta ray has long been regarded by fishermen as dangerous. Stories of mantas killing scuba divers and deliberately jumping onto small boats are numerous, but unsubstantiated. However, the manta's habit of circling small boats can be frightening to those aboard. And, although mantas do occasionally jump onto boats, the damage they cause is thought to be accidental. In the process of leaping out of the water, done

possibly as an aid in giving birth or for sport, manta rays have wrecked small boats, earning them the name devilish.

#### KEY FACTS

##### Size

Length: 10-16 ft.

Span: 14-20 ft

Weight: Estimated at up to 3,000 lb.

##### Breeding

Sexual maturity: when winglike pectoral fins reach a length of 13-15 feet.

Mating: year round.

Gestation: Not known.

Number of young: 1.

##### Lifestyle

Habit: Large specimens solitary; smaller fish may move in shoals of five or six in food-rich areas.

Diet: Mainly shrimp and plankton; occasionally small fish such as mullet.

Lifespan: Not known.



## Our Live Aboard

SEA ESCAPE is a 110 ft aluminum vessel originally built as a crew boat and servicing the oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico, rebuilt and operated as a sport fishing liveaboard in Biloxi, Mississippi, she is again refurbished as part of the Cantamar Fleet covering two of the most exciting dive destinations in the Pacific Ocean : Guadalupe Island from August to October, and Revillagigedo Islands (Socorro) from November to April. This is a family owned and operated company and we know what it's like to be on vacation. We take pride in what we do, you not just a diver to us, you are a member of our family, so, come join us on our fully air conditioned private staterooms, nice galley, a huge living room and lots of space in the stern for the diving gear that make SEA ESCAPE the perfect vessel for your next dive vacation.



# Itinerary

Fly to Cabo San Lucas (Mexico) the day before your departure date for an overnight hotel stay. We can help you make hotel reservations if you let us know in advance. Please note accommodations in Cabo are not included in the package.

## Day 1

“Sea Escape” departs around 10:00 a.m. Our friendly staff will pick you up at your hotel at 8:00 and drive you to the pier. It takes about 24 hrs navigation to the first island, so, you have plenty of time to catch up on your reading, or watch movies on the 42” flat screen, or simply take advantage of this long journey to take a nitrox class, which will surely increase your bottom time on your dives at Socorro island.



## Day 2

Arrive around 8:00 a.m. to San Benedicto island, first dive will be after breakfast, testing buoyancy, new dive equipment and/or cameras has to be done in a shallow, well protected dive site. 3 to 4 dives are done depending on weather conditions.

## Day 3-6

Visit most of the dive sites in the Revillagigedo islands which includes Socorro island among others, spectacular schools of hammerhead sharks, giant mantas, yellow fin tuna, skip jacks, white tip sharks, silkys and Galapagos sharks are commonly encountered while diving.

## Day 7

After doing 3 dives we start the 24 hrs journey back to Cabo San Lucas, with plenty of time to compare your adventures, digital photos and video. So when you arrive home you can show them to your family and friends.

## Day 8

Arrival at Cabo San Lucas is estimated around 5 p.m. One of our vans will take you to your hotel.

# Trip Info

## PACKAGES

Our trip length is 8 days 7 nights & 6 days diving. We also offer 10 and 12-night combo trips. All trips include all meals and snacks included as well as beverages including soft drinks, beer, and wine with dinner (any other alcoholic drinks are extra)

8 DAYS/ 7 NIGHTS & 6 DAYS DIVING ..... \$2850 PER PERSON

## PRICE INCLUDES

Ground transportation from your hotel to the pier in Cabo San Lucas  
Accommodations in double stateroom with a/c and bathroom  
All meals and snacks while aboard  
All soft drinks and water  
Wine and beer in limited quantities  
Use of large capacity tanks  
Weight belts

## NOT INCLUDED

Airport transfers  
Hotel accommodations before and after the trip  
Rental dive equipment.....\$23 usd per day for the full set of dive gear  
Nitrox.....\$120/ week (optional)  
Park and port fees.....\$85 p/p  
Tips for the crew.....5% to 10% of the cost of the trip (mandatory)

## UPON YOUR ARRIVAL

After presenting your valid passport to Mexican Immigration officials and receiving your temporary Mexican tourist visa (do not lose this visa as you will need to turn it back in upon your departure from Mexico), you will proceed to the baggage claim area to pick up your bags from the carousel.

Once you have your bags, you must submit the Customs form. You will notice that Mexican Customs at the Los Cabos airport make random search by asking you to push a button connected to what looks like a traffic light. A red light means they'll check your bags and a green light means you may proceed. Please be respectful at all times to all Mexican officials. Please check with your airline for their specific weight restrictions.

## SUGGESTED GEAR & CLOTHING

Besides your normal dive gear, one dive computer per diver as well as a "safety sausage" are now required on all of our dive trips. This will ensure that you and your dive companions fully enjoy your scuba experience with us. We absolutely recommend

wetsuits on all of our trips. Water temperatures range from 70F - 82F at Socorro Islands. Gloves, knives or dive lights not permitted unless attached to cameras. Night dives at Socorro, are not permitted as part of the rules and regulations from the Mexican government in declaring the islands a Reserve of the Biosphere.

Although the staterooms on Sea Escape are comfortable, there is limited storage space so please pack light. The dress code is extremely casual: a few T shirts, a few pairs of shorts, one pair of pants, bathing suits and a windbreaker/sweatshirt is all you will need. The evenings can get chilly during the winter months at Socorro. We suggest packing in a soft duffle bag for easy luggage storing.

Don't forget your hat, sunglasses and biodegradable sunscreen. Feel free to bring your own books, CD's and DVD's

### **Climate**

The Sea Escape visits the islands between November and April. This is also an ideal time to see both manta rays and humpback whales. Manta Rays and most species of shark are resident at the islands throughout our Nov – April.



### **Visibility, Water Temperatures & Currents**

Visibility is usually very good up to 40 metres. Visibility is unlikely to fall as low as 10 metres, but if it does then we can move to an alternative dive site. Currents vary from calm to medium. Water temperature: 28C in November dropping to 21C in February and then rising back up to 25C by May.

**MENU** - Our meals consists of a variety of healthy & nutritious foods including fresh fruits, veggies and meats. The cuisine reflects the Mexican culture and most dietary needs can be accommodated with advanced notice.

### **TOUR GUIDES**

Our Divemasters are well trained and know the area very well, which insure that you will experience the most on each and every dive.



### **SHIP CREW –**

The crew, formed by a Captain, engineer, chef , 3 deckhands and divemasters are onboard to operate the vessel and make sure of the safety and well being of the group. They bring with them many years of sailing experience in the Pacific Coast and the Sea of Cortez and offer the warmth and kindness that reflects the beauty and hospitality of the people of Mexico.

# Booking Terms and Conditions

Individuals: 33% deposit required within 10 days of making reservation. Final payment due 60 days prior to departure. Cancellation fees are as follows:

No penalty if cancelled 9 months before departure.

10% of charter rate if cancelled 6 to 9 months before departure.

30% of charter rate if cancelled more than 90 days to 6 months before departure.

50% of charter rate if cancelled more than 60 to 90 days before departure.

No refunds within 60 days of departure.

Groups: 10% deposit required within 14 days of making the reservation. Additional 30% required 180 days before departure. Final payment is due 60 days before departure. Cancellation fees are as follows:

No penalty if cancelled 9 months before departure.

10% of charter rate if cancelled 6 to 9 months before departure.

30% of charter rate if cancelled 60 days to 6 months before departure.

No refunds within 60 days of departure.