

# Manta Bommies

Club Dive - 21 Feb 04

John Kelley

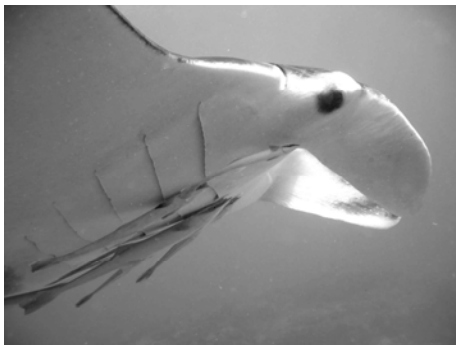
The day started off with some doubt. Yes it was the weather again – 20 kts later in the day and NW to NE. “Let’s have a look” seemed to be the general consensus. We left Manly harbour on time and hit a rough Moreton Bay. The waves were up and we slogged across until it was a little calmer towards the South Passage bar. Within sight of the last buoys we heard the unpleasant sound of the oil alarm. Yes we were definitely short of oil. We tried to press on at a slow speed in the decision that we would re-oil at Amity Point as it was definitely closer than Manly, especially if we headed straight across the sand banks on this high tide.



Matti & Mantas

The theory was fine but in practice it was not to be. The irritating alarm persisted when ever we changed our angle which was fairly frequently in the wave-filled Bay. Ash unbolted a few things and tilted the oil container to get the last few drops through the intake. It worked a treat and we motored boldly into Amity Point to find a shop and oil. Matti and Phil headed off on this task mainly because Matti was the only one aboard with money (single). They returned with oil.

We motored off around the corner undeterred by the loss in time or the impending 20 knoter to come. Alan negotiated the bar which was remarkably flat and wobbled DIVER1 across to Manta Bommies. It was a little like a washing machine at the Bommies but calmer than last week when I was a little concerned with the big rollers. We anchored, a couple of times, I think for practice and to demonstrate to the other boats in the area that it wasn’t a fluke.



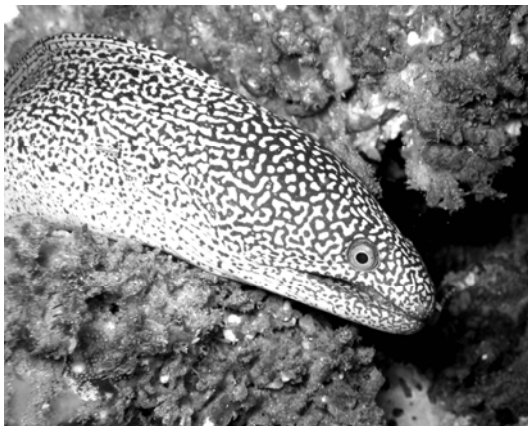
The diving was great. The Mantas were around and they were friendly. They drifted over the top of me and everyone else like a huge plane banking on a final approach to land - slow and easy with minimal flap. The various body of accompanying fish stayed with them. Pilot fish

wiggled like fury at their mouth and the lazy sucker fishes latched on for a free ride underneath or wherever - half a dozen suckers on one Manta. Some divers saw a bunch of Leopard Sharks and Shovelnose rays.



There was plenty to see other than the big stuff and we all spent a lot of time with our heads stuck in little nooks and crannies.

Some of us doubled up for a second dive in the same place and it was well rewarded. A number of Leopard sharks although we missed the shovelnose rays.



White-speckled Moray



Phil

I was going to say going home was a breeze but that was the very problem – there was a breeze and a fairly stiff one. The bar was kind and we motored through most of the Amity channel although at one point we took a little short cut and deepened the channel. This was accompanied by a small rise in my anxiety levels. Much relieved (me that is) and well done Alan for clearing the bar, we zoomed across flat water until we hit the middle of the Bay where again it was wave-filled and demanding. Despite the oil delay we were virtually on the ETA that Phil told the Coast Guard when we left Manly harbour in the morning – how did you do that Phil? Thanks to Phil and Alan for delivery and return, especially return.

