

EVENTS/CAUSES

## Four Seasons dives deep with shark and ray preservation event

October 27, 2015



*Four Seasons Maldives' Blu Beach*

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

The Four Seasons Resort, Maldives is turning its eye to shark and ray conservation by hosting a ministerial symposium.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**  
Plus: Just released  
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246** ▶

The symposium, which took place Oct. 25-26 and was organized by Four Seasons and The Pew Charitable Trust, was attended by ministers of various environmental, marine and wildlife departments in Maldives, Sri Lanka and Seychelles and included speakers from Pew's global shark conservation campaign, professors, scientists and shark attack survivors. The decision to host the convention establishes Four Seasons' environmental consciousness and represents a genuine and dedicated effort to effect change on both a local and global scale.

"It's fantastic to see these governments gather and work together to develop solutions to protect sharks and rays," said Luke Warwick, acting director of Pew Charitable Trusts' Global Shark Conservation. "Through the development of shark sanctuaries, such as the one here in the Maldives, along with international protections and strong legislation wherever sharks and rays are caught, these imperiled species can survive."

### Deep dive

The hotel also serves as the base of the Manta Trust, the world's leading manta ray charity, which began 10 years ago at the hotel and tracks and studies the local ray population. The Marine Discovery Centre, which organizes and initiates reef propagation, educational, research and marine life preservation programs is also based out of the hotel.



*Image courtesy Four Seasons*

In a statement, Daniel Fernando, associate director of the Manta Trust, said, "It is highly encouraging to see Indian Ocean island nations come together to discuss the economic benefits of sustainable shark and ray ecotourism."

More than 100 million sharks are killed annually creating both environmental problems related to the balance of marine life and also cutting into the country's multimillion-dollar ecotourism industry. Research shows that the ecotourism industry generates more revenue per shark than the fins and meat of the animals, meaning they are worth more alive than dead.

At the symposium, Sri Lanka and Maldives announced that they will work to have the thresher shark and the silky shark, respectively, included on Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) protected species list.



*Four Seasons Maldives, manta ray and tourists*

Recently, hotel chains have gotten involved in partaking in patrons' "voluntourism" as a result of an increased tendency, especially among young consumers, to engage in volunteer efforts when traveling ([see story](#)). Organizing a symposium with a clear environmental impact has a similar effect and shows that Four Seasons cares.



*Four Seasons Maldives*

Moreover, having an initiative of interest locally but with global implications suggests that Four Seasons is discerning about getting involved in issues that matter.

Younger consumers are especially concerned with the values of hotels, but by hosting a symposium that has no immediate benefit to the consumer, Four Seasons is able to show that it cares about the cause and is not just putting on appearances.

Affecting change

The hotel chain has previously taken a cause with local implications and extended it globally.

In August, Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts showed that its Canadian roots extend worldwide with a charity initiative celebrating one man's fight to end cancer.

The chain's Hotel Hampshire, located outside London, hosted its eighth Terry Fox Run of Hope, commemorating the 35th anniversary of Mr. Fox's 3,000-mile run across Canada to raise money for cancer research while he was struggling with the disease himself. While hotel chains may be global, honoring their local heritage can help to differentiate their individual brand ([see story](#)).

Other hotels have also looked to the water to make a difference.

For instance, Starwood Hotels and Resorts has been furthering its efforts to reduce water usage across all its properties since August.

Efforts to conserve water will include more efficient irrigation, low-flow faucets, collecting and recycling water and an option for customers to request reduced housekeeping services in exchange for Starpoints, a voucher or a charitable donation. The initiative cements Starwood as a leader in water conservation efforts, emphasizes its global awareness and is likely to appeal to a younger, more environmentally-conscious demographic ([see story](#)).

"It is highly encouraging to see Indian Ocean island nations come together to discuss the economic benefits of sustainable shark and ray ecotourism," said Daniel Fernando, associate director of the Manta Trust.

Final Take

*Forrest Cardamenis, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

---

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.