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## **Flagship species for conservation: Mantas, leatherbacks**

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In West Papua's Kepala Burung (Bird's Head) seascape, conservationists are working with local scientists to protect some of the world's most endangered marine species. Marine Megafauna Foundation (MMF) and University of Papua (UNIPA) have started a collaborative research program on two "flagship" species of marine megafauna — manta rays and leatherback turtles.

Bird's Head is in the heart of the coral triangle — the global epicenter of marine biodiversity. But this region, like the rest of Indonesia is highly threatened by human activities.

Recently highlighted at the Indonesian Shark and Ray Symposium on March 28 to 29, manta rays (plankton filter feeders) and leatherbacks (feed on jellyfish), are suffering from extreme level of marine pollution problems in Indonesia and the rest of Asia (both plastic pollution and chemical pollution from industry and agr...