

How I Got That Shot

Like Leaves In The Wind

By Sandra Critelli

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or the third day, we were motoring around Holbox Island in the Gulf of Mexico, trying to find whale sharks, so we could snorkel with them, and photograph them. It was June. I was searching the horizon when I spotted this astonishing "wave" of cow-nose rays. We turned the boat towards the school, turned off the engine, and watched them move past us. There were thousands! They were swimming on the surface, and deep down,

and all going in the same direction. They looked like beautiful leaves moving softly and gently by the wind.

Later I learned that they migrate 10,000 at a time, and are found in the warm currents from Brazil all the way to southern New England. Passive creatures, they can live until about 13 years of age, and can be abundant in the Chesapeake in the summer.

As quickly as they appeared that magic day, the migrating rays disappeared. I felt very fortunate to experience something so beautiful.

Sandra Critelli is a professional photographer living and working in New York City.

