

# Maldives Sea Turtle and Marine Conservation

*Journey to the breathtaking Maldives and join this rewarding conservation programme working with sea turtles and helping out on a range of community development initiatives.*

The Maldives is in the Guinness Book of Records as the world's flattest and lowest country, with the average height above sea level being only 1.5 metres. Despite this the Maldives is also one of the most mountainous countries in the world courtesy of its volcanic origins. This may not be obvious unless you take the plunge beneath the surface of the Indian Ocean as most of the volcanic mountains are submarine creating an incredibly diverse and thriving marine ecosystem.

The waters around the Maldives are abundant in rare marine species of biological and commercial value, with the tuna fishing industry being one of the main sources of income for the country. The Maldives has an amazing array of sea life, with stunning corals and over 2,000 species of fish, ranging from Reef Sharks, Moray Eels, and a wide variety of rays; Manta Ray, Stingray and Eagle Ray.

The Maldives consists of approximately 1,190 stunning coral islands and atolls stretching in a north-south direction. The pristine white sand and crystal clear turquoise waters make the country a popular tourist destination but few local islands have seen development at the same pace. Local islands are still developing and many are lacking infrastructure and access to basic amenities. In the past infrastructure development was focused on the capital island Male, forcing islanders to travel to the capital for health care and other important services such as schools, banks and shops. On this project you can get involved in a number of community initiatives to help preserve the Maldives unique marine ecosystem and work with helping to develop the local community.

On Naifaru, a local inhabited island located in Lhaviyani atoll, you will help in a community-based sea turtle sanctuary and assist in the care and maintenance of the turtles currently living at the center. Turtles come into the centre from a number of different sources; some are rescued from the illegal pet trade, others are injured from being entangled in ghost fishing gear and require rehabilitation. The turtle centre aims to rehabilitate each sea turtle with the hope of eventually releasing them back into the wild. Volunteers help out with everything from feeding and cleaning to taking the turtles for rehabilitation swims in the ocean.

Volunteers will also help out on various projects including monitoring our coral gardening efforts, and assisting in educating the local community on conservation issues within the Maldives. We also run a clownfish breeding programme which aims to replenish some of the clownfish population on the reefs surrounding our island. The longer you stay at the project the more you will experience and learn from an extremely talented and knowledgeable group of marine conservationists.

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- Help preserve sea turtles and coral reefs
- Work on awareness raising initiatives with local communities
- Discover this island paradise and other surrounding islands

## PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- Minimum age of 18 years
- All placements are dependent upon the submission of an up-to-date CV
- Applications must be received no less than 2 months prior to intended departure date
- A valid up-to-date Criminal background check\*
- Copy of University Degree Certificate or proof of current university enrolment\*

(\*Note – these are only required if the volunteer intends to stay for longer than 30 days, or wants to join our teaching, medical, or sports programme)

## FAST FACTS

<b>Location</b>	Maldives
<b>Activities</b>	Data collection and research Feeding sea turtles Beach patrols Snorkelling Coral reef surveying Island hopping Youth development through sports Educational Workshops
<b>Transport</b>	Airport pick-up at an extra cost
<b>Accommodation</b>	Volunteer house / volunteer guest house

## WHAT DOES THE PROJECT DO?

Currently, there is a strong need for the development and implementation of conservation programmes throughout the Maldives and an even stronger need for volunteers around the world to become educated and involved in promoting more sustainable practices within the communities.

In our marine centre we work on a range of projects such as sea turtle husbandry, collecting fish and coral data, planning and implementing awareness programmes for the community and schools, occasionally extending our coral garden which has been laid around the island of Naifaru and arranging trips to nearby islands where we collect broken corals to bring into our conservation project. This presents a unique opportunity for tackling the direct anthropogenic causes of reef degradation by incorporating local involvement in the transplantation and monitoring process and by running educational sessions for local adults and school children

There also is a large focus on sea turtle conservation in Naifaru, as many surrounding and uninhabited islands serve as hatching sites for various species of sea turtles every year. Sea turtles are currently endangered and sadly face threats both in the ocean and on land by human activities, such as poaching and entanglement in fishing nets. It is our goal to provide each and every sea turtle with the best possible chance of survival in the wild.

Whether you are helping to feed and clean our rescued turtles or watching as we release them back into the ocean, this programme will give you an unforgettable hands- on experience which you will

always treasure!

It is projects like this one, and many others which relate to the beautiful marine habitats surrounding these islands, which we hope to keep running with the help of locals and our wonderful volunteers.

Some may say that a small amount of people can't change the world, but they can change one tiny island at a time.

A big part of the success of our community turtle programme is due to the extra activities that run through our community conservation centre. This includes conservation clubs, environmental awareness campaigns and beach clean ups. Our volunteers play a vital role in each of these activities and we could not do them without help from international volunteers.

## **WHAT WILL I BE DOING?**

Each morning we feed the sea turtles in the centre and also those in our sea station a mixture of fish, tuna fillets and sea grass.

Data collection, research and education are key aspects of our programme so expect to play an active role in all centre activities, including children's marine conservation classes (this may also take place on other islands in the atoll so expect a little island hopping). Qualified volunteers may also involve themselves in helping out with English improvement classes at the center for the islands small children.

Activities like these are vital to our programme as it increases community numbers participating in our centre activities and really helps to educate the islands inhabitants in matters concerning marine conservation and environmental matters.

If you are more drawn towards the community development side of things, then you should consider joining one of our other programmes. We currently run four additional programmes on our islandm including Teaching and Medical placements, Community Development and Sports Coach. These initiatives aim to empower the local population and are a unique opportunity to form international friendships and bonds for everyone involved. You will work closely with the community, lending your skills and enthusiam to where ever it may be needed. Volunteers will have the opportunity to use their experience and knowledge in a variety of ways, which will benefit both the local community and the volunteer themselves.

In order to join the Teaching, Medical or Sports placements, we will need to apply for a business visa on your behalf. In order to do this, volunteers will need to provide the following documents :

- Bachelor's degree (scanned copy of your degree certificate)
- Police check (less than 12 months old with no convictions)
- Medical (we will provide the forms)
- Colour scan of your passport (minimum 300dpi)
- Passport sized photo with white background (minimum 300dpi)
- Vetting form (we will provide the form)

Itineraries will be varied and should be discussed with your Volunteer Coordinator before arrival, so that we can make the necessary preparations for your trip. For more information on any of these programmes, get in touch!

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ARRIVE?

You need to arrive at Male International Airport on a Wednesday or a Friday, where you will stay for one night before catching the ferry in the morning. Our local partners will organise for someone to meet you at the airport, a hotel for the night and a transfer to the jetty in the morning (approximately USD\$100).

## WHERE WILL I BE STAYING?

You will be staying in our shared volunteer house which is basic, but clean and comfortable. You will likely be in a shared room of 2-3 people (same sex) with an en-suite bathroom and AC. The volunteer house also has a small sitting room and kitchen with access to a washing machine, kettle and WIFI.

## WHAT WILL I BE EATING?

Volunteers have breakfast together with a local family, an ideal opportunity to get to know more about local island life. Lunch and dinner are provided at an extra cost at a local café where volunteers choose from a wide menu, meals also include a variety of soft drinks. Typical dishes on the menu include rice or noodle dishes, sandwiches, traditional foods, chicken and chips, a variety of curries and more.

Volunteers are provided with 3 meals a day in a restaurant next to our marine centre. There is a variety of food available, including options to suit restricted diets such as vegetarian or vegan. Typical dishes on the menu include curries and rice, local flatbread (roshi) with traditional breakfast foods, sandwiches, burgers, chips, pasta and lots more.

Traditional Maldivian food can be spicy but milder than the food found in some neighbouring countries. Sweet, sour, hot and spicy savoury dishes are popular including dishes made of smoked fish, grated coconut, lime juice, onion and chilli. Seafood is a major part of the Maldivian diet with local specialities including kulhi boakibaa, a type of fishcake, keemia, fish rolls and masroshi, small pancakes stuffed with fish. Maldivian's have a sweet tooth and there is no shortage of cakes available throughout the islands such as huni hakuru folhi, a cake made of grated coconut, sugar and flour. A cup of kalhu sai, black tea is the usual choice to wash down these snacks. Should you want to eat something from a little closer to home there are many international restaurants available in the tourist resorts which we may visit on our day off.

## COSTS

2 weeks	US\$ 2,045
3 weeks	US\$ 2,745
4 weeks	US\$ 3,445

## Dates and Costs

**The project start day is Thursday or Saturday**, but you will need to arrive the day before (your

Volunteer Coordinator can help you book a hotel for the night). The ferry leaves for the island at 8am on Thursday or Saturday morning. Your project will finish on a Thursday or Saturday and you should schedule your flight for Friday or Sunday.

**This project is available all year-round!**

## **Duration**

2 weeks +

This project is available throughout the Christmas period

## **WHAT'S INCLUDED**

### **Before you go**

- Your project payment is financially protected under the UK Package Travel Regs 1992
- Pre-departure support from dedicated Volunteer Coordinator
- Travel & medical advice
- Access to travel experts and flight partners
- Equipment advice
- Discounted medical kit
- Free Frontier t-shirt

### **In-country**

- 3 meals a day included
- Accommodation
- Visas
- A representative will meet you at the airport and arrange transport to the hotel (taxi fee not included)
- Transfers to and from ferry arranged by a representative (taxi fee not included)
- Local orientation
- Project training
- In-country emergency support
- 24-hour international HQ back-up

## **AIRPORT INFORMATION**

Nearest airport(s): Male (MLE)

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Call us on 020 7613 2422 (UK) / 1 949 336 8178 (US)

Mail us on [info@frontier.ac.uk](mailto:info@frontier.ac.uk)

Check out our social media here:

*Project details were correct at the time this document was generated. Price, dates and other details are subject to change. Please see our website for current details for this project.*