

Tanzania Marine Conservation and Diving

Crystal clear waters host a wealth of marine habitats and wildlife, making this a perfect location to learn to scuba dive and explore this pristine and magical underwater world.

Tanzania's coast is home to some of the most spectacular diving in the world. The crystal clear waters host a wealth of marine habitats and wildlife making this a perfect location to scuba dive and explore this pristine and magical underwater world.

The vivid, multi hued coral reefs support a dazzling array of tropical reef fish and provide rich feeding grounds for turtles, rays and other marine creatures whilst the deep blue offshore waters support sharks, dolphins and whale sharks, as well as vast shoals of cruising pelagics.

Dive and snorkel to explore this pristine seascape and you'll discover and possibly help to map extensive areas of undamaged coral, find healthy populations of multicoloured fish, see turtles and marine mammals and learn to recognise a huge diversity of inter tidal animals from tiny hermit crabs to pastel hued anemones.

On shore apart from relaxing on the island's perfect, undeveloped beaches you may have the chance to work in the lush mangrove forests, unique ecosystems which straddle water and land. You'll learn about the activities of the traditional fishermen as well as discovering and reporting which marine organisms are being sustainably harvested and which are being dangerously depleted.

The work you carry out will be rewarding and exciting and hugely beneficial to the Marine Park's conservation efforts, as well as being amazing fun! At the end of the day you will gain immense satisfaction from knowing that you have helped to save this precious marine wilderness, protecting it for future generations.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- Help to monitor & conserve coral reefs and observe rare African marine wildlife
- Earn your PADI Advanced Open Water certificate
- Make lifelong friends as you snorkel and dive in the crystal blue tropical ocean

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- Intermediate level of English

FAST FACTS

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|-------------------|---|
| Location | Mafia Island, Tanzania |
| Activities | Dive and snorkel to locate & map coral reefs Dive and snorkel to study the various coral reef communities Discover & record living organisms Dive and snorkel to do underwater visual census of reef |

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| | &commercial fish Assess algal &coral reef cover to determine the extent of coral bleaching &damage Line intercept transects for benthic life &indicator invertebrate species Record observations of the feeding habits &behaviour patterns of a range of marine life Study the impact of dynamite fishing on the corals reefs Report the effects of global warming on marine communities Observe the impact of a marine park on the health of the ecosystem and associated organisms |
| Transport | Airport pick-up from Dar es Salaam can be arranged at extra cost and first night hostel accommodation in Dar es Salaam can be arranged at extra cost (£40/\$60) (optional) Airport pick up available from Mafia Island Airport Transfer to camp from Mafia Island Airport |
| Accommodation | Communal camp near to the beach |

WHAT DOES THE PROJECT DO?

Migrating Humpback Whales & Whale Sharks

Mafia Island is about as close as you can get to the quintessential Indian Ocean tropical paradise. The tiny island of about 40,000 is a friendly, laid-back place that has long been praised as a diver and sea angler's paradise.

Mafia's luxuriant mangroves, luminous sea grass beds and dazzling coral reefs play host to a multitude of tropical reef fish, thorny and spotted seahorses and four species of graceful and gentle sea turtles. Offshore there are dolphins and rays and the deeper waters are a regular stop off point for migrating humpback whales and giant whale sharks. You could experience all this when you join the Frontier camp on Mafia Island and learn to dive in the crystal clear, immaculate waters of Tanzania's exclusive Marine Park.

If you are joining this project between November and January then you may have the opportunity to conduct surveys on the transient whale shark population. You may be recording details of sightings and monitoring returning whale sharks. Volunteers may also have the opportunity to conduct awareness raising activities with tourists visiting Mafia Island.

Dynamite Fishing Damaging Coral

Threats to the coastal environment on and around Mafia Island are on the up as unregulated tourism is on the increase and the level of the local population is rising. Increasing competition for food means that artisanal fishing techniques such as seine-netting become inadequate and inefficient, encouraging use of less discriminate catch practices such as dynamite fishing. Other threats include the over harvesting of octopus and sea cucumbers and the over collecting of shells and corals for the expanding marine curio trade.

Swim with Dolphins, Rays & Turtles

Your underwater exploration will involve you in mapping the incredible biodiversity of the coastal area and marine habitats. While diving you will locate and record spectacular coral reefs and survey dazzling reef fish and turtles. If you are there at the right time of year you may even observe marine mammals.

Discover Swahili Culture

Through participating in environmental awareness raising in local schools and community activities, you will experience the cultures and lifestyles of local peoples.

The time of year that you visit the project will greatly affect the type of work you are involved in as much of our research is heavily dependent on the season.

WHAT WILL I BE DOING?

The marine research and conservation programme is run in association with the Mafia Island Marine Park. The project provides the local communities and government bodies with the information they need sustainably to manage this priceless marine ecosystem and preserve it for future generations. To gather the data needed you will dive, locate and map the extensive coral reefs and study the various communities existing on them.

Living and working in an internationally recognised marine protected area will give you access to a fantastic array of wildlife and ecosystems. You may have the opportunity to dive on habitats untouched by destructive fishing practices and help monitor the success of a variety of conservation methods. The data collected on our commercial fish surveys aids the marine park in maintaining the most up to date and dynamic management plans for the future of the region so that we can be confident that Mafia Island will remain a stunning destination for future generations.

You will explore and record the living organisms that inhabit the luxuriant mangrove forests, dense seagrass beds and productive inter tidals in the area. To do this you will use a range of newly learned research skills and scientific techniques including: underwater visual census of reef and commercial fish such as trigger fish and parrot fish, assessment of algal and coral cover to determine the extent of coral bleaching and damage and line intercept transects for benthic life and indicator invertebrate species such as nudibranchs. You will observe the feeding habits and behaviour patterns of a range of marine life. You may even get to study the impact of dynamite fishing on the corals reefs, report the effects of global warming on marine communities or observe the impact of the marine curio trade on endangered marine invertebrates.

Whilst diving, you'll see an extraordinary array of animals from turtles to sea cucumbers and unicorn fish and spiny urchins to octopus. When you sail out each day on the Frontier boat to distant dive sites you may even be accompanied by dolphins. You may have the unique opportunity to swim or snorkel with whale sharks if visiting sites further afield. By the end of your project you will be expert at identifying many species of coloured and patterned reef fish as well as being an experienced and competent diver. Those joining the project for a short period of time may not be able to participate in a full range of project activities. Some project activities are seasonal.

You'll get immense satisfaction from having made a valuable contribution to the conservation of this untarnished marine wilderness. You will return home with the new friends you've made and a wealth of incredible photos, videos, stories and memories.

You'll find your team to be a fun, dynamic mix of ages and experiences with members who all share a passion about travelling in developing countries and saving endangered marine life. Your staff will be young, friendly individuals who are highly experienced in their field many of whom may also have volunteered on a Frontier project earlier in their career.

For further information about Frontier marine conservation work see the publications section of this website.

DIVING OPPORTUNITIES

Check out our video on [Frontier Gap Year TV](#) from Frontier-Tanzania, showing you our volunteers diving.

Sample Itinerary*

7:00 - Breakfast!

8:00 - Dive duty

9:00 - On the boat for survey diving or dive training

14:00 - Return to camp. Wash dive kit and hang up to dry

14:30 - Lunch

15:30 - Write up data

16:30 - Invertebrate identification lecture

18:00 - Dinner time

19:00 - Chill out time

**This itinerary should only be considered as an example of the kind of activities and timescales to expect. Actual itineraries may vary depending on the season and the requirements of the project.*

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ARRIVE?

We can arrange an airport pick up for you at Dar es Salaam Airport and a local private driver will escort you to a local hostel where you can spend your first night relaxing and recovering from your journey. These costs are extra and you can pay our local representative US\$68/\$60 directly. The following day you will return you to the airport in time for your internal flight on the eight seater light aircraft to Mafia Island. Please ensure that you book your flight well in advance. Once on Mafia Island you will be met by Frontier staff at the airport on Mafia and transferred by vehicle to the marine conservation project camp site at Utende. We can provide you with detailed instructions on how to reach the Mafia Island camp if travelling independently.

It is possible to reach Mafia by ferry but sailing times can be very unpredictable, the journey might be rough and it can be tricky with no knowledge of Swahili. If you choose to travel by road and ferry you need to transfer to the port town of Nyamasati, 90 km south of Dar from where you can catch the ferry, approximately a 6-hour trip, to the town of Kilindoni on the western side of Mafia Island. Once on the island you will be met by the Frontier marine field staff either at the small harbour town of Kilondoni or at the airport on Mafia and transferred by boat or vehicle to the project camp site.

WHERE WILL I BE STAYING?

Check out our Camp Tour video!

During the project you'll live on our marine camp at Utende on the east coast of Mafia Island, where you will have an authentic and memorable living experience. The Frontier marine camp was constructed by local craftsmen using traditional building techniques and local materials.

Camp life is very simple, unsophisticated and fun. You will be staying in communal bandas, huts made from makuti (woven palm leaves), poles and mud, and sleeping on beds constructed from wooden poles, your "shower" will be a jug or a bucket of water and you cook over a charcoal stove so prepare for the basic, unencumbered lifestyle! On occasions you may stay in a "satellite camp", usually a mosquito net pitched on a beach.

As well as the diving and marine conservation work you may help with the community outreach and environmental awareness work in the local villages, scientific data entry and daily camp maintenance, taking turns to cook, tidy and clean the camp, rinse dive kit, prime hurricane lamps, collect water and help with a wide variety of other essential camp duties.

WHAT WILL I BE EATING?

Camp food is simple and nutritious and consists largely of rice, vegetables and beans all of which are purchased locally in order to help support the local economy. Luxuries such as chocolate, biscuits, peanut butter and drinking chocolate can be purchased in Kilindoni but tend to be very expensive, so make sure you stock up before heading to the field! Part of your role on camp will be to help with the cooking, so get your cookbooks out now and start practising! Also, with luck you'll be invited to local parties and festivals – a great way to integrate with the local communities in the nearby villages and absorb the local culture.

COSTS

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|----------------|------------|
| 1 week | US\$ 1,545 |
| 2 weeks | US\$ 1,895 |
| 3 weeks | US\$ 2,095 |
| 4 weeks | US\$ 2,445 |
| 5 weeks | US\$ 2,945 |
| 6 weeks | US\$ 3,345 |
| 7 weeks | US\$ 3,495 |
| 8 weeks | US\$ 3,795 |
| 10 weeks | US\$ 4,145 |
| 20 weeks | US\$ 6,645 |
| Extra week | US\$ 395 |
| Christmas Week | US\$ 445 |

PADI Open Water and Advanced Open Water training US\$1,402 PADI Advanced Open Water training US\$620 (at least PADI Advanced Open Water training necessary for marine surveying)

DEPARTURE DATES

First and Third Monday of every month.

Alternative dates may be available upon request.

DURATION

You can join this project for a minimum of 1 week

CHRISTMAS OFFER

This project is available for the special price of US\$425 per week over the Christmas period. Placements starting on the 24th or 31st of December 2018 are eligible for this price, subject to availability. Please apply using the orange button below and then tell your volunteer advisor that you wish to take part over Christmas.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

- Pre-departure support & documentation
- Travel & medical advice & documentation
- Equipment advice
- Discounted medical kit
- Free Frontier t-shirt
- UK residential briefing weekend including food, accommodation and training (extra cost applies)

In-country

- Airport pickup in Dar es Salaam and transfer to hostel (extra cost US\$22/\$20)
- First night hostel accommodation in Dar es Salaam (extra cost US\$22/\$20)
- Transfer to airport for connecting flight to the island (extra cost US\$22/\$20)
- Airport pick-up at local airport on Mafia Island and transfer to the camp (extra cost US\$7/\$6)
- Camp accommodation near beach
- Accommodation upgrades available in local lodge (extra cost applies)
- 3 meals per day provided on project sites, 6 days per week. 2 meals provided on Sunday
- Local orientation
- Project training
- Dive training courses available to PADI Dive Master
- Project & group diving equipment
- FREE use of Frontier project dive equipment, including tanks, BCDs, regs, weights, compressor
- 24-hour in-country & international HQ emergency support & back-up
- Free park & reserve entrance fees (usually \$20 per person per day) & research permits if applicable
- Dive training courses run monthly starting on the first Monday of the month. Dive training to PADI Open Water or PADI Advanced Open Water (depending on the duration of your stay) price includes PIC cards, PADI membership and use of Frontier project equipment and diving equipment, including tanks, regs, BCDs, weights, compressor etc
- Discounted further dive courses: PADI Emergency First Response (US\$221), PADI Rescue

Diver (US\$595), and PADI Divemaster (US\$1,275) qualifications

- CoPE qualification available depending on length of stay

AIRPORT INFORMATION

Nearest airport(s): Mafia Island (MFA)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Mail us on 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.