



REEF DOCTOR

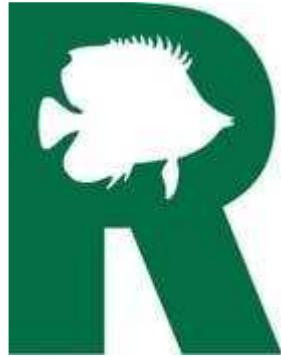
RESEARCH EDUCATION
CONSERVATION



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The ReefDoctor Eco-Diver Programme Guide

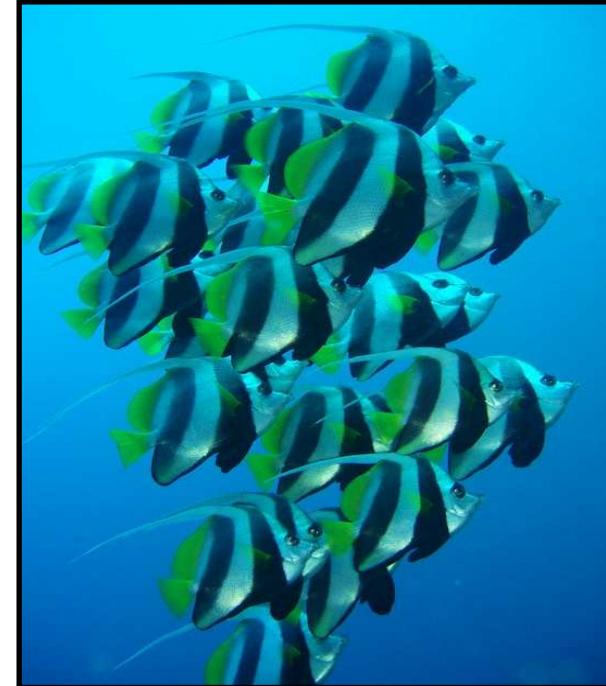




An Introduction to the Eco-Diver Programme

The ReefDoctor Eco-Diver Program has been designed for those who can only join us for a limited period of time. It is a great opportunity to utilise scuba dive training in order to learn about one of the most extensive barrier reef systems in the world and to see conservation and community development in action.

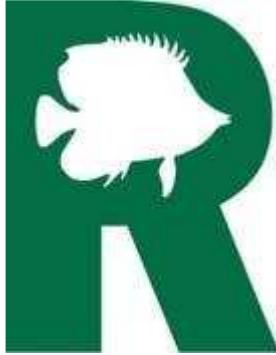
As a ReefDoctor Eco-Diver you will be PADI dive trained, acquire coral reef underwater identification skills and gain first hand experience in the workings of a marine conservation NGO.



Waking up to the sandy beaches in front of our project site makes an idyllic lifestyle, as does watching the sun set over the lagoon each evening. The conditions aren't five star, but living simply, next to a traditional Malagasy fishing community is an incredible life experience.

Expeditions run each month from February to December for 3, 4 or 5 weeks, with spaces available for 4-6 people per expedition month.

Divers and non divers are both welcome. If you have never dived before the Eco-Diver program can train you to PADI Open Water and PADI Advanced Open Water levels. If you are already certified to PADI Advanced Open Water or above you can jump straight into the 'Eco-Diving'.



Who joins?

At ReefDoctor we believe that everyone should have the opportunity to volunteer. We take people from all walks of life as long as they are over the age of **18**. All we ask is that you're reasonably fit and healthy; you'll need to have passed a diving medical before your arrival. (medical forms provided by ReefDoctor upon signing up for the programme).



No prior skills are required, just a general enthusiasm to learn more about the marine environment.

The Eco-Diver programme is suitable for a wide range of people including:

- Those who wish to learn how to dive.
- Those completing a gap year.
- Marine and environmental science undergraduate students who wish to gain practical field based experience during their vacation periods.
- Those who desire a diving holiday with a difference.

A low volunteer to staff ratio ensures that our staff are able to devote more time to you and allows you to get the maximum possible out of your stay,



Eco-Diver Training

On joining the ReefDoctor Eco-Diver Programme you'll receive 2-3 weeks of dive and science training. If you are already dive certified to PADI Advanced level (or equivalent) you will receive 1-2 weeks of science training.

Upon arrival your initial training includes a short spell to get used to the life here, a background to Madagascar, its culture and its customs, an orientation trip to city of Toliara and the local village of Ifaty, and an introduction to the work of ReefDoctor and it's project site.





Dive Training

PADI Open Water training schedule:

- Open Water Book Work/Knowledge Reviews (x 5)/Quizzes (x 4)/Exam (x 1)
- Confined Water Dives (Hotel Nautilus or Bamboo Club Pool)
- Confined Water Dive (lagoon dive)
- Open Water Dives x 4



We hope to complete your open water in the first week though this does depend on how quickly you complete the skills and exams, open water dives and the weather, number of volunteers etc. The advanced course training will start at the end of this first week and usually continues into the 2nd week.

PADI Advanced Open Water Course training schedule:

- Adventures in Diving Book Work/Knowledge Reviews (x 5)
- Checkout Dive (If Open Water Diver certification received outside of ReefDoctor)
- Naturalist Dive
- Peak Performance Buoyancy Dive
- Navigation Dive
- Search and Recovery Dive
- Deep Dive
- Proficiency Dive(s) (Proficiency before certification)





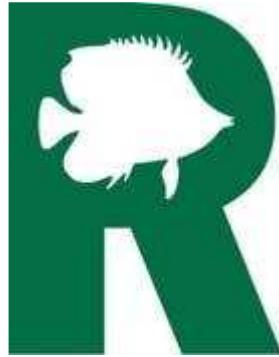
Science Training

Eco-Divers will receive lectures on the following:

- Introduction to ReefDoctor's Marine Research, Conservation and Management Programmes.
- Introduction to Coral Reefs.
- Introduction to Scientific Diving.
- Species Identification. The Eco-Diver programme trains you in the underwater identification of commercially important reef species and coral reef health indicator species (fish and invertebrates).



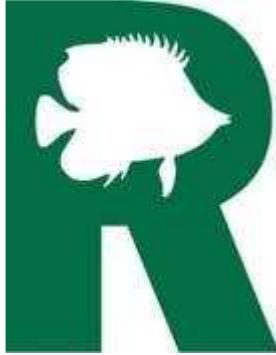
The marine species identification learning process commences following dive certification (or straight away for those already qualified). It begins on land (with computer and literature based learning) and, as your identification skills develop, you'll go on snorkel and scuba trips with ReefDoctor's science staff to practise observation and recognition.



Following your training.....

- Eco-Dives; diving with newly acquired marine knowledge and advance your learning of coral reef systems under the guidance of our marine experts. Eco-Diver volunteers usually undertake 20 to 25 dives a month (weather dependant). Night dives can also be arranged (at an additional cost).
- The training of marine science and environmental undergraduate students (or any quick learners who wish to progress further in their marine science learning!) can be fast tracked to undertake ReefDoctor's coral reef surveys during their time with us (providing they pass our species identification tests) .
- Fisheries catch monitoring at the ReefDoctor Weigh Station.
- You will also have the opportunity to assist the ReefDoctor team in their core research, management and conservation projects such as maintenance work in the coral nursery, participate in local community education and outreach projects.
- For those that wish to take part in a cultural exchange programme, we can arrange for you to live with a family in the local village of Ifaty for one day/night or longer, gaining a unique insight into the Vezo culture.
- Explore the local area; the popular beach resort of Mangily, the Spiny Forest, take a pirogue trip across the Bay or visit one of the local National Parks (at volunteers own expense).

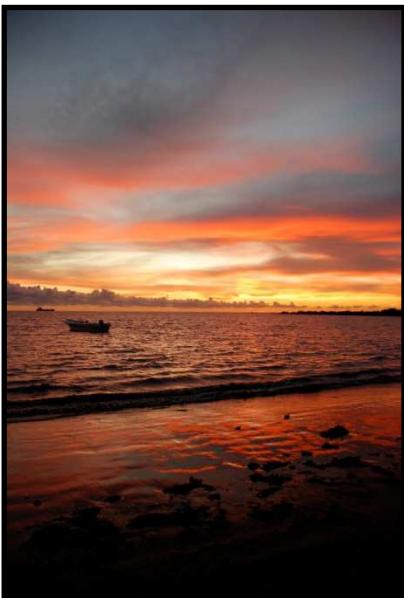




Daily Life

Our working week runs from Monday to Friday. Fun dives occur on Saturdays, and Sunday is a non diving day.

The working day can start early (between 5-7 am) because we are dependant on the tides for taking the dive boat out, typically diving occurs in the morning only. We break for lunch at 12 noon, after which we take a break for the hottest time of the day. We start again at about 2pm with land based project work.



Our days finish at around 6pm as the sun sets – a sight that'll have you running for your camera every night. Dinner is at 6:00 pm and then it's time to rest and relax. Some nights you'll want the early night but on others you might wander in to the village for music and dancing.

Diving, work, and play are our main mainstays. Our schedules have plenty of time for work, fun and relaxation. After all there is no point visiting such a unique place as Madagascar without taking some time to enjoy it!

At the weekends you are free to do as you wish; simply relax in the peaceful surroundings on site, go to Toliara for shopping, walk to the popular beach resort of Mangily, or take a long weekend to go further afield in order to visit one of the national parks.



Local Area

We work in the Bay of Ranobe, SouthWest Madagascar. The bay is protected from the open ocean by an extensive fringing/barrier reef system creating a shallow lagoon, 32km long by 8km wide, containing a series of patch reefs, seagrass beds and mangroves. The ReefDoctor site is located on the periphery of Ifaty village in the south of the Bay, 27km north of the main provincial town of Toliara. This is a small and traditional Malagasy fishing village; there is no mains electricity or running water, and life there is very basic.



Behind Ifaty village is the spiny forest, considered one of the most endangered habitats worldwide. The flora of our region consists of dry weather plants such as cacti, shrubs, baobab trees, tamarind trees and the infamous octopus tree. The white sandy beach outside the ReefDoctor site stretches northwards for miles. After an hour's walk you'll reach the main tourist destination for the region, Mangily.



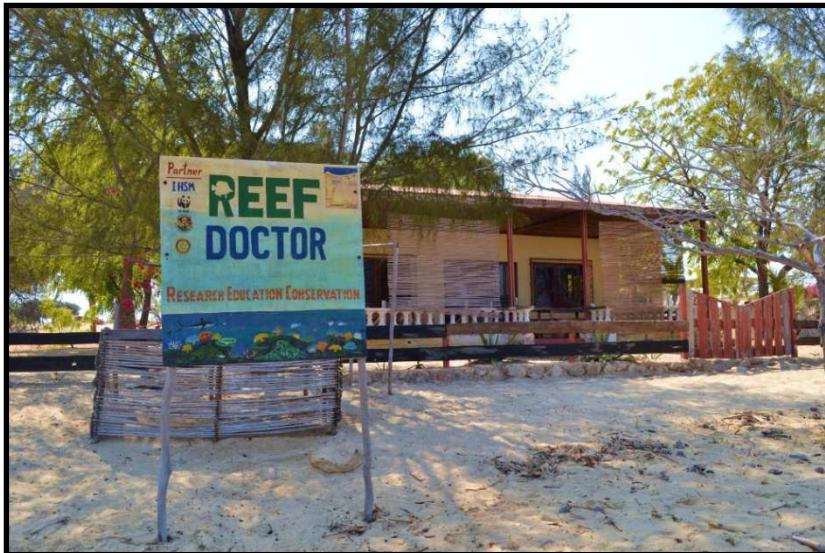


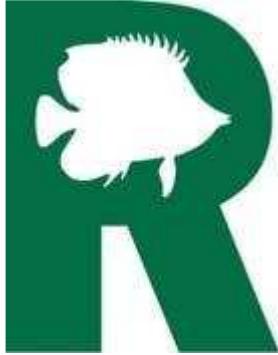
ReefDoctor Project Site

The ReefDoctor compound is situated on a white sandy beach with beautiful views of the Bay of Ranobe. The enclosed compound is made up of one main house, 8 brick bungalows, a volunteer dormitory, kitchen area, dive shop and utility room for the dive compressor and generator. The main house is used as an office for all volunteer and staff work. A generator along with solar panels and a wind turbine provides electricity for the compressor, pumping water to the house and bungalows, lighting, charging appliances and computer/internet use.

Volunteers sleep in a newly built wood and reed roofed beach hut with cement floor. The communal hut has dividers for privacy and plenty of windows for staying cool. Showers are taken in two enclosed wood shower stalls using water from the well. There are two wood toilet stalls housing hygienic drop toilets. For an additional cost (£200 per month, £6.66 a day), volunteers may upgrade to one of the beach front brick bungalows complete with en suite.

All of our meals are lovingly cooked by our chefs Victor and Azy who serve up a unique mix of Western/Malagasy cuisine, which consists of the staple Malagasy diet of rice and beans, fresh vegetables, fish, meat, and fruit. Coffee and tea are brewed every morning and the local traditional rice tea is served with each meal. Our drinking water is locally sourced and treated on site (bottled water is available but expensive and we try very hard not to contribute to the growing amount of plastic waste in Madagascar).





Camp Safety

Ensuring your safety at ReefDoctor is our top priority. There have been no serious incidents at ReefDoctor during the decade it has been operating in Madagascar. Whilst our project site is in a semi-remote location, hospital care is readily available in Toliara which can be accessed within an hour. We focus heavily on accident prevention; providing safety information, training and advice to all research assistants and staff when they arrive.

We have conducted a full risk assessment of our Ifaty campsite and created rules and procedures designed to promote safety in all aspects of our daily life. Due to our semi-remote location we have easy access to the medical care available in Toliara. We keep extensive medical supplies on site and all of our staff are trained in the provision of emergency first aid.

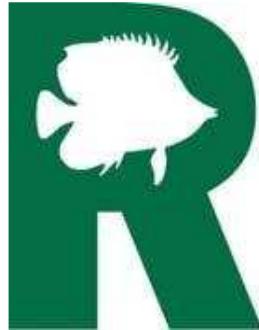
Because of our semi-remote location we have introduced a series of safety procedures designed to minimise risk at all times. All of our diving is run under the strict guidelines laid down by PADI International with additional rules and regulations created by us for operating in our area. All rules and regulations are enforced at all times by the dive officers and boatman. A copy of our dive regulations is given to each person entering the ReefDoctor camp, and training in our emergency procedures is completed before working diving commences. All scuba regulators are serviced annually in the UK. Our dive tanks are inspected by qualified staff on site using the most advanced visual inspection equipment available, we are the only NGO in Madagascar with this equipment. Oxygen and first aid equipment is taken on every dive with emergency drill practices conducted monthly for staff and volunteers. We keep a 75L oxygen cylinder on camp and have two 10L tanks for use on our dive boats.

ReefDoctor's buildings and facilities are enclosed within a secure compound which is guarded at night by three local security personnel.

Working in a remote location means that we need to ensure that when help is needed we can contact the right people quickly. For communications we keep the following charged and ready for emergency use at all times:

- VHF radios, one base station in camp and one on each dive boat;
- two mobile phones, one in camp and one in each boat;
- an emergency phone in camp.

For our emergency plan and evacuation procedures, we liaise with the Divers Alert Network (DAN) in Europe and South Africa. Our evacuation plan is reviewed monthly to ensure that information is correct and training is up-to-date. All volunteers and staff receive training with the plan on arrival.



Ifaty Seasons



Month	Season (according to Europe seasons)	Risk of Malaria	Average Temp. C Day	Average Temp. C Night
January	Summer (cyclone)	High	36	33
February	Summer	High	40	35
March	Summer	High	38	30
April	Autumn	Medium	35	28
May	Autumn	Medium	30	20
June *	Winter	Low	26	17
July *	Winter	Low	23	15
August *	Winter	Low	23	15
September	Spring	Low	25	20
October	Spring	Low	25	25
November	Spring	Medium	30	28
December **	Summer (cyclone)	Medium	32	28

* Flight discounts ** Diving discounts

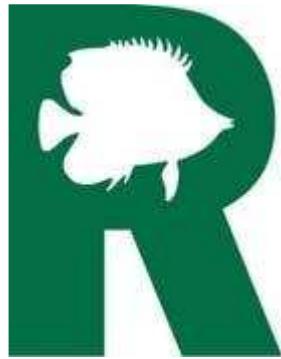


Expedition start dates

Unqualified divers	PADI Open Water and Advanced (or equivalent) qualified divers
1 st February	8 th February
1 st March	8 th March
1 st April	8 th April
1 st May	8 th May
7 th June	15 th June
1 st July	8 th July
1 st August	8 th August
13 th September	21 st September
15 th October	23 rd October
1 st November	8 th November
1 st December	8 th December



N.B. These dates are when you need to arrive on site in Ifaty, please allow extra time to get here (depending on flight times 1-2 days, from the capital Antananarivo)



Eco-Diver Programme Fees

Duration	Non-certified divers	Open Water certified	Advanced certified
3 weeks	£1,050	£950	£850
4 weeks	£1,400	£1,300	£1,200
5 weeks	£1,750	£1,650	£1,550

Special rates for joining in December (windy season):

Duration	Non-certified divers	Open Water certified	Advanced certified
3 weeks	£850	£750	£650
4 weeks	£1,200	£1,100	£1,000
5 weeks	£1,550	£1,450	£1,350

10% discount on all expeditions joining between June-August if your flight is over £1,200



Services included in these expedition costs:

- Airport pick-up in Toliara and transport to the ReefDoctor site in Ifaty
- Arrangement of hotel in the capital city Antananarivo, if required, includes free pick up by hotel from airport.
- All meals, Monday-Sunday.
- Filtered water, coffee and tea.
- Lodging: with bed sheets, pillows and mosquito net provided.
- First-aid medical care.
- Electricity for charging cell phones, laptops, etc. and limited internet connection.
- Dive training: PADI Open Water and Advanced dive certification included in the costs for all expeditions.
- Project equipment and educational materials: dive slates, paper, pens etc., all required for your working activities.
- Dive equipment, including: Buoyancy Control Device (BCD), full regulator set, weights and tanks.
- Occasional excursions to help some of our conservation partners in the area, such as HONCO (mangrove conservation and re-plantation) and HO AVY (forestry re-plantation of the famous spiny forest).
- Science training: level of training will vary according to the expedition duration, dive certification and progression of the individual.
- Pre-departure support and pre-departure guides: advice on flights, equipment, Madagascar, medicinals, vaccines, insurance etc.
- UK based support/communication throughout the expedition for the volunteers's friends and family.
- Fuel, equipment and in-country personnel to make this all happen!

Services NOT included in the expedition costs:

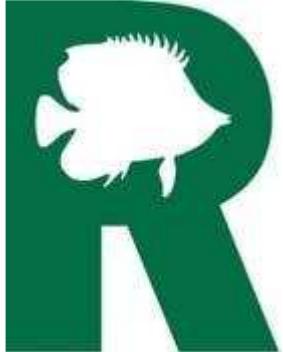
- Round-trip airfare and visa.
- Diving, travel and medical insurance and cost of vaccines.
- Filling in the ReefDoctor standard recreational dive medicals (forms provided by us to be filled in by a medical professional which they can charge you to fill in so try your family doctor who should do this for free).
- PADI dive instruction manuals and PIC cards: all participants in the dive training courses MUST purchase their own manuals, as per PADI International Rulings May 2006, and bring these materials with you. PADI PIC-cards are required to process each level of all PADI courses we offer – you can buy these PIC cards from local dive shops or from us for an extra fee of £25 (29 Euros) per PADI course.
- All volunteers must bring their own wetsuit, mask/snorkel, fins and booties, time piece and/or dive computer, weight belt.
- Any personal excursions (often groups of volunteers plan excursions to nearby national parks or other areas of interest).
- Anti-malaria drugs.



Why choose ReefDoctor?



- 98% of your expedition cost goes directly into our conservation work and the local economy.
- Our core staff are professionals in their respective fields, their knowledge and experience will be passed on to you throughout your ReefDoctor training.
- Malagasy culture is vibrant and memorable. During your stay you'll experience it first hand; through getting to know ReefDoctor's local Malagasy staff members, visits to Ifaty village, staying for a few nights with a local Vezo family or from participating in our social development projects.
- A ReefDoctor expedition attracts people from all walks of life and all over the world, you will make new friends with whom you will share memorable life experiences.
- Our work is part of a larger, global effort. It helps develop understanding of marine resource management in developing countries and contributes scientific information to a much wider conservation community.
- Our programmes are designed with the community at their heart; our work is directed at helping local communities develop and grow while conserving their unique resources. A ReefDoctor expedition is all about making a difference and you'll be contributing to helping us fulfil our long term ecological and social objectives in the Bay of Ranobe.
- As a ReefDoctor volunteer you'll learn new skills, walk away with new experiences and a whole new level of scientific knowledge and ultimately you'll have contributed to helping protect threatened marine ecosystems and the future livelihoods of the Vezo people.



**To apply for the EcoDiver programme
please visit our website**
www.reefdoctor.org/apply-now

For further information or any
questions:

- Email: volunteer@reefdoctor.org
- speak directly someone from our
UK headquarters:
+44 (0)7866250740
- Skype username: reefdoctor





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