



REEFDOCTOR

CREATING SUSTAINABLE FUTURES



RESEARCH ASSISTANT & DIVEMASTER PROGRAMME GUIDE



Introduction to the Research Assistant & Divemaster Internship

Our Research Assistant and Divemaster Internship is on offer for those looking to make a significant time commitment to Reef Doctor. This position allows people with a keen interest in tropical marine conservation, but with limited experience, to gain their first steps in this exciting, yet demanding field. We offer 6-month internship positions, suitable for both non-divers and qualified divers.

Expeditions run three times a year with spaces available for six interns per expedition.

Following an intensive science training period (first 3 months) and Divemaster certification, interns become valuable members of our team, helping core project staff with the marine research and conservation programme, volunteer dive and science training, and general camp management duties.

This position allows interns to utilise their own experiences and qualifications to concentrate on particular Reef Doctor activities, from marine research and management to education or socio-economic development work. Each internship can be tailored to individual interests, experiences, and to future career and personal development requirements.

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





Who Joins?

We recruit interns from all walks of life as long as they are over the age of 18. All we ask is that you are reasonably fit and healthy; you will need to pass a diving medical before arrival.

No prior skills are required, just a general enthusiasm to commit to becoming an integral member of our team.

This programme is suitable for a wide range of people including:

- Those undertaking a gap year.
- Those who wish to train and work as a Divemaster within a marine conservation organisation.
- Those who wish to devote a significant amount of time to learn about marine science and actively participate in marine research, conservation, management, and/or community development work.
- Marine and environmental science graduate students who wish to gain extensive, practical field based experience to further their career.
- Those who are on sabbatical leave.
- Those who are looking for a new career path.

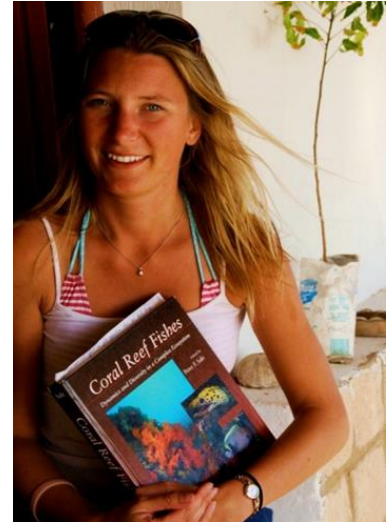




Internship Training

The first **3 months** of the internship includes the following training and activities:

- ReefDoctor orientation: introduction to all of our projects, the local area, and basic camp management protocols.
- PADI dive training; Open Water, Advanced Open Water, EFR, and Rescue certification (if required).
- A diverse range of lectures on marine science.
- Intensive marine habitat surveying training: species identification (fish, invertebrate, and benthic, up to an advanced level), coral reef surveying techniques, fish length/biomass estimates, seagrass identification/monitoring, and data management.
- Training on our coral restoration and artificial reef initiatives.
- Participate in our coral reef and seagrass surveys (subject to passing our exams).
- Marine science guide training; our science officers will help you become competent coral reef guides to enable you to be able to pass on your knowledge to our EcoDivers and Research Assistant volunteers, helping to train them to become members of the surveying team.
- Malagasy (local dialect) language lessons.
- Turtle tagging and release.
- Basic training in aquaculture monitoring and maintenance.





Divemaster Training

Your Divemaster training will begin after your first 3 months at Reef Doctor, following completion of the core science training. On average this course will take around **1–2 months** to complete. The aims of the programme are as follows:

- Develop diving skills, rescue skills, and professional-level dive theory knowledge.
- Gain competence and experience as a certified dive assistant, develop dive management and supervision abilities, and learn how to conduct PADI programmes.
- Develop the knowledge, attitude, judgment, and skills necessary to become a working PADI professional.



The basic structure of the PADI Divemaster course is as follows:

- Knowledge Development.
- Water Skills.
- Practical Application.





Knowledge development

Mainly conducted through independent study using the Divemaster crew pack:

- Divemaster manual - nine Knowledge Reviews.
- Encyclopaedia of Recreational Diving.
- Diving Knowledge Workbook.

Includes instructor led presentations, quizzes, and final exam.



Water Skills

Five Stamina Exercises:

- 800 m snorkel.
- 400 m swim.
- 100 m inert diver tow.
- 15 min tread water.
- Equipment exchange.



Plus 25 Basic scuba and skin diving skills (Skill Circuit)



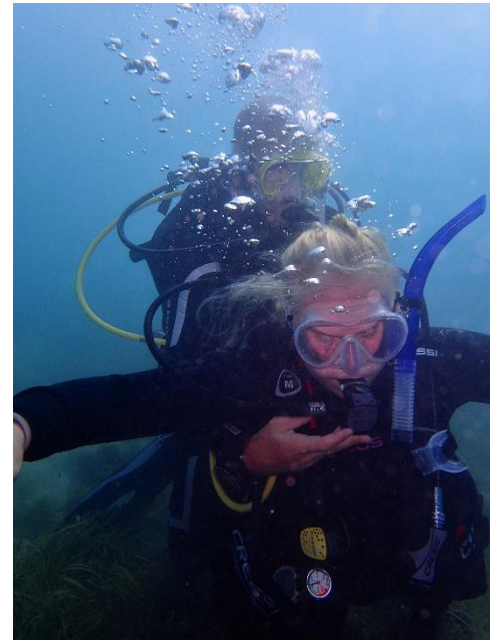


Practical Application

- Dive site management and set up.
- Mapping Project.
- Dive Briefings.
- Search and Recovery Scenarios.
- Diver Rescue.
- Deep Dive scenario or Deep Specialty.

Workshops in conducting and assisting with:

- Scuba Review.
- Skin diving and Snorkelling Supervision.
- Discover Scuba Diving.
- Discover Local Diving.
- Open Water Diver Course.
- Advanced or Rescue Courses
- Guiding Certified Divers.





Following Your Core Training

As a trained Intern, you will become an integral member of our team; your responsibilities and activities will include:

- Support our science team with their core research programme (coral reef surveys, coral nursery maintenance, coral transplantation, artificial reefs, seagrass surveys, mangrove replanting, fisheries catch monitoring, data entry, tree nursery work and reforestation etc.).
- Support our Dive Officers in the daily operation of the dive shop and diving schedules (tank filling, dive shop maintenance etc.).
- Assist with volunteer and Malagasy IHSM student's dive and science training.
- Assist with data analysis and report writing.
- Support our Fisheries and Aquaculture team in various activities such as fisheries catch monitoring and sea cucumber/seaweed farm maintenance.
- Participate in our community education initiatives such as adult English lessons, Kids Club, and Junior Reef Doctors.
- Help create information packages/leaflets/posters etc. to relay our projects, findings and news to the local stakeholders, NGOs, government ministries, and institutions.
- Assist with fundraising activities.
- Help to create Reef Doctor's newsletter and update our blogs.





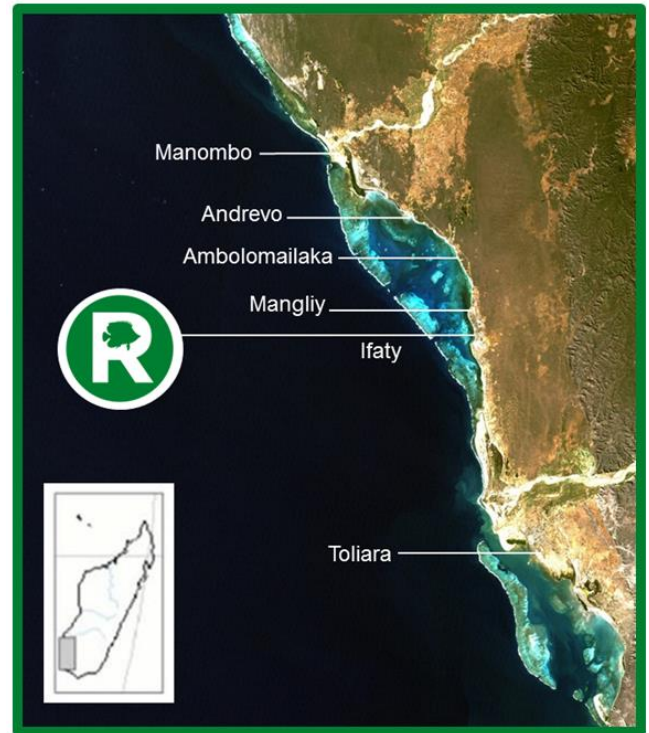
Further information can be found in the programme schedule provided upon application.



Where We Work

We work in the Bay of Ranobe, South West Madagascar, a semi-enclosed lagoon extending from Morombe in the north to Toliara in the south. The bay is protected from the open ocean by an extensive fringing/barrier reef system creating a shallow lagoon, 32 km long and 8 km at its widest point. It consists of a diverse range of marine and coastal habitats including: barrier reefs, patch reefs, reef flats, extensive seagrass beds, and mangroves. The coral reefs in this region form part of the world's largest barrier reef systems, the Toliara Barrier Reef Complex.

These ecosystems, however, are under enormous pressure from a variety of anthropogenic stressors such as over-exploitation, climate change, and sedimentation. Collectively, these stressors are causing widespread degradation to the marine habitats within the Bay of Ranobe and compromising resource availability for the local communities. This is why we are here; please do not expect world class diving on pristine reefs (although the exterior dive sites where we go fun diving are relatively healthy and offer a great diving experience), instead you will be actively contributing to researching, conserving, and restoring degraded reefs.





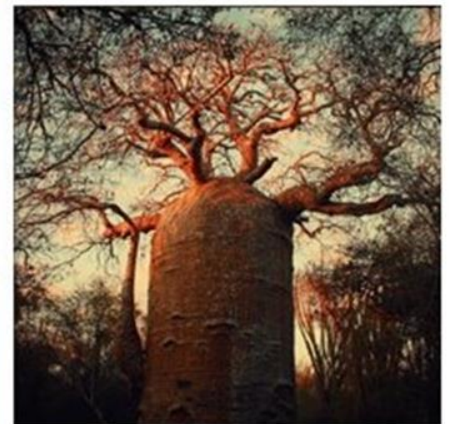
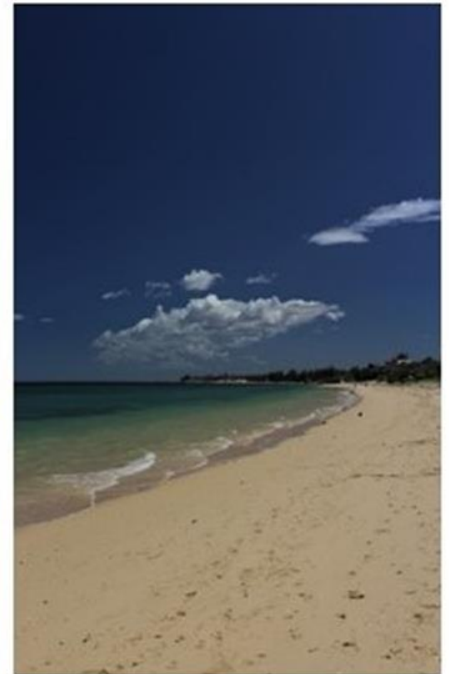
Our site is located on the periphery of Ifaty village in the south of the Bay, 27 km north of the main provincial town of Toliara. Ifaty is a small and traditional Malagasy fishing village; there is no mains electricity or running water, and, like in the other 12 villages in the bay, life there is very basic.

The region we are located in is very arid and desert-like. Behind Ifaty village is the Spiny Forest, considered one of the most unique and endangered habitats worldwide. The Spiny Forest is known for its high rate of endemism; 95% of its plant species are found nowhere else on Earth! It contains a wide range of desert plants such as cacti, shrubs, baobab trees, tamarind trees, and the infamous spiny octopus tree. This habitat also supports many animals including regionally endemic lemurs and tortoises.



The sandy beach outside the Reef Doctor site stretches northwards for miles. After an hour's walk you'll reach Mangily the main beach and diving tourist destination in the region. This region is also an important area for Humpback Whales. Every year (July–Sept), approximately 7000 of these majestic mammals migrate from the Antarctic to breed in the coastal waters off southern Madagascar.







ReefDoctor Site & Facilities



Our compound is situated on a sandy beach with beautiful views of the Bay of Ranobe. This enclosed area is made up of one main house, eight brick bungalows, eight interconnected single volunteer huts, one dormitory, kitchen/dining area, dive shed, and utility room for the dive compressor and generator. The main house is used as a work area for all volunteers. A generator provides electricity for the compressor, pumping water to the house and bungalows, lighting, charging appliances, and computer/internet use.

Next door to this compound is land belonging to the University of Toliara. Here there are three interconnected single huts (to sleep 6 people in total) and two double huts. This is usually the main staff and intern accommodation. Our newly-refurbished community classroom from which we run all our community education programmes, is also located on this site. Our aquaculture offices are located on the opposite side of our compound on a separate property.





All volunteer and intern huts are built from locally-sourced wood and reeds with a cement floor. Showers are taken in enclosed wooden shower stalls using water from the on-site well. There are two wooden stalls housing hygienic drop toilets on both accommodation sites.



For an additional cost (£200 per month, £6.66 a day), volunteers/interns may upgrade to one of the beach front brick bungalows complete with en suite shower and toilet.

We provide meals three times a day, seven days a week. All of our meals are cooked by our Malagasy chefs who serve up a mix of Western/Malagasy cuisine, consisting of the staple Malagasy diet of rice and beans, fresh vegetables, fish, meat, and fruit. We source all of our food locally to generate revenue for local communities. Our drinking water is locally sourced, delivered via traditional zebu cart, and treated on site.







Daily Life

Working as an intern means you will be following the working times of our core staff. The staff working week runs from Monday to Friday with a half a work day on Saturdays. Fun dives occur on Saturdays; you will be assisting the dive officers with this.

The working day can start early (between 5–7 am) as we are dependent on the tide for taking the dive boat out. We break for lunch at 12 noon, after which you are expected to be back at work by 1.30 pm. The working day finishes at around 5 pm, though like all staff you will always be on hand to help out with any required work or volunteer assistance. Dinner is at 6 pm before the sun sets - a sight that'll have you running for your camera every night and then it's time to rest and relax under the stars. In addition to diving and other Reef Doctor project activities, you will be expected to get involved with the day to day running of the camp.

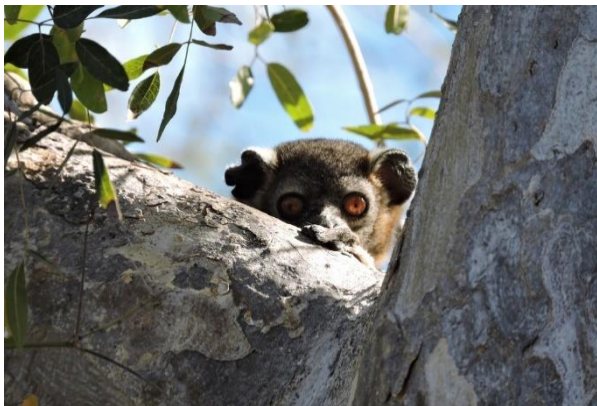
As a working intern, you will also be allowed to take 14-days holiday for the opportunity to explore this fascinating and beautiful country. Upon signing up to the programme, all interns will have to sign a standard work agreement which will outline the working/holiday entitlements, accommodation, equipment provision etc.





Weekends

You are free to do as you wish at the weekend (after assisting the dive officers with fun dives on Saturday morning); simply relax in the peaceful surroundings on site, go into town for shopping, take a pirogue trip, walk to the popular beach resort of Mangily, visit local parks such as the Spiny Forest, or take a long weekend to go further afield in order to visit one of the regional national parks.





Exploring Madagascar

As an intern, you are entitled to 14-days holiday for the opportunity to explore this fascinating and beautiful country. However, because there are so many unique places to visit, we also recommend scheduling in extra time and budget to explore more this amazing country after your time with us.





Safety

Ensuring your safety at Reef Doctor is our top priority. There have been no serious incidents at Reef Doctor during the 13 years 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 under an hour. We focus heavily on accident prevention; providing safety information, training, and advice to all volunteers and staff when they arrive.

We have conducted a full risk assessment of our Ifaty site, and created rules and procedures designed to promote safety and good hygiene in all aspects of our daily life. We keep standard first aid and diving medical supplies on site, and all of our staff are trained in the provision of emergency first aid and what to do in diving emergencies.

Due to 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 specific rules and regulations created by ourselves for operating in this area. All rules and regulations are enforced at all times by the dive officers and boat captains. A copy of our dive regulations is given to each person entering our camp, and training in our emergency procedures is completed before working diving commences.





All of our diving equipment is serviced regularly and meets the necessary diving safety standards. Oxygen and first aid equipment is taken on every dive with emergency drill practices conducted monthly for staff and volunteers. We keep a 75 L and 15 L oxygen cylinder on camp and have two 5 L tanks for use on our dive boats.

Our main buildings and facilities are enclosed within a 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. We keep the following ready for emergency use at all times:

- VHF radios, one base station in camp and one on each dive boat.
- Mobile phones, one in camp and one in each boat.
- Emergency first aid materials (neck and leg braces, spine board, bandages etc.).

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 on the plan on arrival.





South West Madagascar Climate

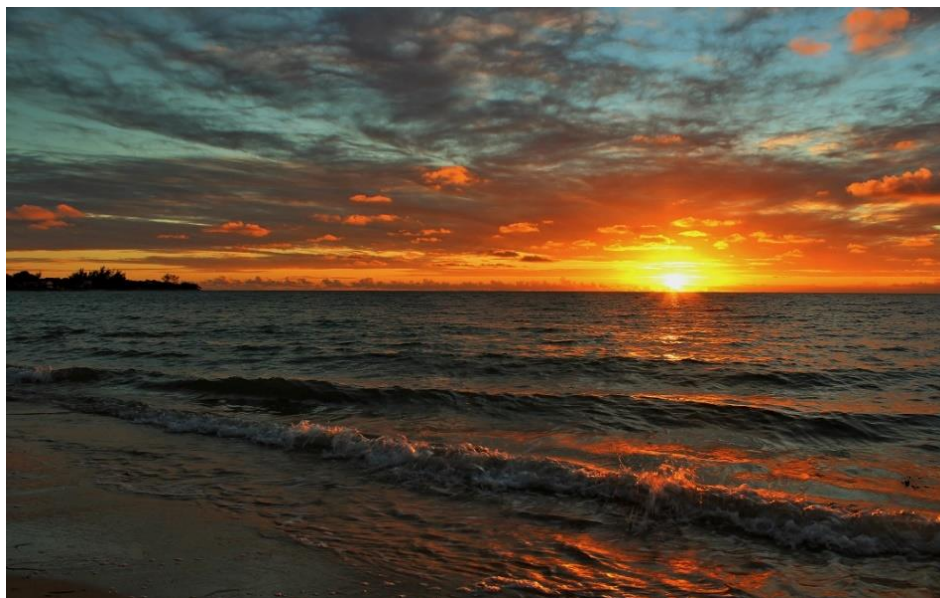
Month	Season (according to European seasons)	Malaria Risk	Average Day Temp °C	Average Night Temp °C
January	Summer (cyclones)	High	36	33
February	Summer (cyclones)	High	40	35
March	Summer	High	38	30
April	Autumn	Medium	35	28
May	Autumn	Medium	30	20
June	Winter	Low	26	17
July	Winter	Low	23	15
August	Winter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



Research Assistant & Divemaster Internship Start Dates 2020

Unqualified divers	PADI Open Water & Advanced (or equivalent) qualified divers
14 th January	21 st January
10 th June	17 th June
7 th October	14 th October

N.B. These dates are when the programme commences so you need to arrive at our site ideally the day before. This means arriving at the capital Antananarivo two days before the start date.





Research Assistant & Divemaster Internship Fees 2020

Duration	Non-Certified Divers	PADI Open Water Certified	PADI Advanced Certified
6 months	£5000	£4900	£4800





Services Included in the Internship Fees

- Airport pick-up in Toliara and transport to the Reef Doctor site in Ifaty
- Arrangement of hotel in the capital city Antananarivo, if required.
- 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. (limited to weekdays), and internet connection (limited to weekday lunch breaks for personal use).
- Dive training, certification fees, and PADI materials for **ALL** PADI Open Water, Advanced, Rescue, EFR, and Divemaster courses.
- PADI dive instruction manuals and PIC cards for all courses.
- Project equipment and educational materials: dive slates, paper, pens etc., all required for your working activities.
- Dive weights and tanks.
- Occasional excursions to help some of our conservation partners in the area, such as HONKO (mangrove conservation and re-plantation).
- Science training.
- Pre-departure support and pre-departure guides: advice on flights, equipment, Madagascar, medicals, vaccines, insurance etc.
- UK based support/communication throughout the expedition for the intern's friends and family.
- Fuel, equipment, and in-country personnel to make this all happen!



Your financial contribution not only funds your own living and work activities with us, it also contributes to our conservation projects and allows us to employ local staff to support our work.



Services Not Included in the Internship Fees

- Round-trip airfare.
- Visa. Unless the intern can go directly to a Madagascan embassy in their home country, interns need to send their passport and visa application documents (provided by the embassy and from Reef Doctor) to their nearest embassy to get the specific voluntary work visa required. Interns must send the forms using a secure postal service such as Fedex or DHL and provide a return pre-paid envelope or Fedex account information to allow the embassy to send the passport with visa back to the intern. In addition, some embassies require a fee to process the visa and interns will be responsible for this cost as well.
- Diving, travel, and medical insurance and cost of vaccinations.
- Reef Doctor standard recreational dive medicals (forms provided by us to be filled in by a medical professional which may incur a fee).
- All interns must bring their own dive equipment, including: BCD, full regulator set, wetsuit, mask/snorkel, fins and booties, time piece and/or dive computer, and weight belt.
- Any personal excursions (often groups of staff and volunteers plan excursions to nearby national parks or other areas of interest).
- Anti-malaria drugs.
- PADI Divemaster membership fee (£80) - when you return home, you will be required to send off your PADI Divemaster certification forms from us and pay the membership fee to become an active Divemaster and receive your certification card.



Further breakdown of the additional costs will be provided upon application.



Why Become a ReefDoctor Intern?

- On average, **80%–90%** of your internship fee goes directly into our conservation work and the local economy in Madagascar.
- Our core staff are professionals in their respective fields, their knowledge and experience will be passed on to you throughout your expedition.
- Undertaking this programme will give you the ability to go off and work as a fully qualified Divemaster at any dive operation worldwide with extensive coral reef ecological knowledge.
- Become a competent coral reef researcher and acquire first-hand experience in marine management and conservation. You will acquire the ability to teach others coral reef ecology and surveying, skills which can be transferred to future employment.
- Malagasy culture is vibrant and memorable. During your stay you'll experience it first hand; through getting to know our local Malagasy staff members, visits to Ifaty village, visiting surrounding areas to participating in our other education, research and development projects.
- A Reef Doctor internship 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 culture and resources. Our internships are 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 Reef Doctor intern 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 local Vezo people.





Application & Contact Details

Reef Doctor has six intern positions per expedition, three times a year. To find out if you are eligible to become a Reef Doctor intern please download our volunteer questionnaire from www.reefdoctor.org and send it along with your C.V to: staff@reefdoctor.org



For further information or if you have any questions please contact us:

Email: volunteer@reefdoctor.org

Speak directly to someone from our UK headquarters:

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+44 (0)1756 380 198

Skype username: reefdoctor

