

Fiji Shark Conservation

Live on Frontier's purpose built beach camp in the south Pacific and get involved with the conservation of these beautiful, vital and yet most misunderstood animals of the sea.

The Fijian archipelago lies scattered lazily in the blue waters of the Pacific Ocean, bathed in the radiant antipodean sunlight. Its towns and villages are veritable melting pots of cultural influences.

Fiji's shores are fringed with picture-perfect palm trees, and the azure waters that surround the islands are inhabited by an array of marine creatures; over 1,200 species of fish including clownfish, triggerfish, blue tangs, 10 species of shark, 12 species of whales, dolphins, turtles, anemones, soft coral and much more.

Enjoy sun drenched days and warm nights of delectable food cooked in a traditional underground oven. Fiji will enchant you with its chilled out "Fiji time" lifestyle, its heavenly beaches and surrounding mountains of rainforest– the perfect paradise location for your Frontier adventure!

This project is ideal for anyone with an interest in these endangered and misunderstood animals. Join us on our Fiji Shark Project, helping to determine the diversity and behaviour of these iconic, yet endangered species. Work with us on assessing the factors that are putting these species under threat, from overfishing, to pollution and habitat destruction. Help us assess the status and health of reef sharks in Fiji . The aim of this project is to increase understanding of their population dynamics and behaviour, both locally and internationally, to strengthen local and international protections for these species and to raise awareness among the local community regarding the importance of sharks.

Project Highlights

- Survey sharks to help us learn more about their ecology and protect them
- Swim in tropical waters with 1000's of fish from 100's of different species.
- Live on a secluded island
- The chance to interact with villagers and gain a cultural experience like no tourist can.
- Dive at sites with spectacular coral
- Swim in waters frequented by species of shark and get the chance to study their diversity and behaviour.

FAST FACTS

Location	The South Pacific Island of Beqa, Fiji
Activities	Learn how to Scuba dive Dive with various species of shark in a safe environment Study the diversity of local shark populations through underwater census techniques Help raise awareness regarding the importance of sharks with local communities in Fiji. Scuba diving

	<p>Dive with several species of shark in a safe environment</p> <p>Study the diversity of local shark populations in Fiji</p> <p>Working with local communities, raise awareness regarding the importance of sharks within Fiji</p> <p>Dive and snorkel to study the various marine life living on coral reefs that are essential for healthy shark populations</p> <p>Explore the mangrove forests&productive intertidal areas</p> <p>Survey the diversity and behaviour of a range of marine life, with a focus on shark species</p> <p>Study the impact of artisanal fishing on sharks and coral reefs</p> <p>Determine the effects of global warming on marine communities</p>
Transport	<p>Free airport pickup and transfer to the island is provided for volunteers arriving on the first Monday of each month. For volunteers arriving on different days airport pickup, transfers to the island and accommodation for the first night can be arranged at an additional cost.</p>
Accommodation	<p>Communal cast away style beach camp in the jungle, a few minutes walk from the bay</p>

WHAT DOES THE PROJECT DO?

Sharks are critical to the functioning of our ecosystems, regulating the natural balance in their role as top predators. Shark populations are under great threat from fishing, persecution, habitat destruction and climate change. The aim of the Frontier-Fiji Shark Conservation Project is to increase the understanding of shark populations around the island of Beqa, where data is known to be deficient, this information is vital for successful management strategies and shark conservation. We are determining the amount of species present, the abundance of those species, their behaviour and the structure of the populations. This information is vital in understanding the health of the local shark population and how at risk they are from certain human and environmental threats. In addition to scientific data collection Frontier is working with local communities to raise awareness regarding the importance of sharks and help them to make informed decisions regarding the management of their coastal ecosystems for the protection of sharks.

To achieve this mission, we conduct scientific surveys on reefs occupied by sharks, investigating their population assemblage in relation to the marine habitat to better understand their population dynamics, behaviour and to better protect the species locally and internationally. Once population levels are determined and we have identified the factors contributing to either a decline in or enhancement of shark numbers, this information can be fed back to marine experts to assist in successful management strategies and we can we can increase our work with local communities; building awareness of the value and vulnerability of local shark populations and working to increase protections.

WHAT WILL I BE DOING?

The marine research and conservation programme is run in association with The University of the South Pacific. The work aims to provide the local stakeholders, research organisations and government bodies with the information they need to design and implement management plans for

the future protection of shark populations and their habitat around Beqa island and lagoon.

To gather the data needed you will be diving in areas known to be frequented by sharks and studying their diversity and behaviour (if necessary you will learn to dive first). You will explore the surrounding coral ecosystems to determine what factors are contributing to changes in the shark population, such as, availability of food, pollution levels and the health of the coral reefs. To do this you will record the diversity of many fish and marine invertebrate species, assess diversity and cover of coral species, alongside recording various environmental factors. The aim is to better understanding the population dynamics in the area and increasing protections of these endangered and poorly understood species. Frontiers scientific research techniques involve roaming survey dives and line intercept transects for assessment of fish, invertebrate species as well coral diversity. In addition to working with the local shark populations you will also get the chance to carry out surveys on many ecologically and commercially important species of fish and invertebrate, from colourful little nudibranchs to the exploited snappers and groupers, you will be part of surveys assessing the general health of marine habitats, all being of great importance to local shark populations. The type of field work underway will depend on the time of year and the content of the research program when you join up and how long you are joining for. With so much to learn it's worth noting that those joining for only a few weeks will be training most of the time and may not get to do a lot of surveying.

Whilst diving, you'll see an extraordinary array of animals in addition to several species of shark; from turtles to manta rays, sea cucumbers to feathery starfish, spiny urchins to octopus and jellyfish. When you motor out on the Frontier boats to distant dive sites you may even encounter rays, humpback whales or flying fish. By the end of your project you will be expert in identifying several species of shark and will have knowledge regarding their ecology and conservation. You will also be able to identify vast numbers of colourful and patterned reef fish, marine invertebrates and coral, as well as being an experienced and competent diver. Although the work is intense and challenging you'll get immense satisfaction from contributing to the conservation of these iconic, yet endangered species. You will return home with the new friends you've made and a wealth of fascinating 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 sharks, saving endangered marine life and travelling in developing countries. Your staff will be young, friendly individuals who are experienced in their field and many have volunteered on a Frontier project earlier in their career.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ARRIVE?

An airport pick-up service is offered to volunteers arriving on the first Monday of the month only, whose flights land before 2:30pm local time. All other volunteers must make their own way to the project site. We will provide you with easy to follow instructions prior to your departure to enable you to plan your journey. If you are arriving into Fiji before the first Monday of the month but wish to travel to the project site with the main deployment group on the first Monday of the month, the overland arrival meeting point is at Nadi international airport arrivals hall. Please make sure that your intended arrival/travel plans have been arranged and confirmed with the project field staff a minimum of 1 week before your project start date.

If you are travelling to a marine project on Beqa island, you will only be able to travel to the island on the same day if your flight arrives before 9am on the Monday (due to limited boat timetables). However, you are more than welcome to spend one night with us at our homestay family in Suva, or you can choose to stay in Nadi or Suva for a night, in preparation for your journey to Beqa the next morning.

You will travel from the airport along the Coral Coast of the Island of Viti Levu to the town of Navua. Following this you will take a local boat for the one hour journey to the spectacular and famous south Pacific island of Beqa.

If you are an independent traveller arriving on any other date you are welcome to join the project on any Monday, (please discuss your intended arrival date and duration of stay with our travel advisers, especially if you need to book a dive training course, to confirm availability), and please be aware that you will need to organise your own transfer between Nadi and Suva and first night hostel accommodation in Suva at a cost of US\$42/\$40. We will arrange for you to transfer from Suva to Beqa the following day at your own cost where our field team will be ready to welcome you to the Frontier house and camp. Again, you must confirm your exact arrival time/date with in country staff at least 1 week before arrival.

WHERE WILL I BE STAYING?

During the project you'll live in our simple but comfortable timber frame house on a cast away camp on the south Pacific island of Beqa. We aim to provide you with an authentic and memorable living experience. The Beqa house and camp has been constructed by local craftsmen, using traditional building techniques and locally sourced building materials. The camp is situated five minutes away from the shore through the rainforest. Camp life is very simple, unsophisticated and fun. You will be staying in communal house near to the local communities. Your "shower" consists of a pipe that runs into the house from the local stream and runs 24 hours a day. The camp has a western style bucket flush toilet and camp style gas hobs to cook on. Prepare for the basic, cast away, virtually footprint-less lifestyle! On occasions you may have to travel further from your beach camp to reach a distant dive site, and then you might stay in a "satellite camp", usually a mosquito net pitched on a beach.

As well as the diving and marine conservation work you may be asked to help with the scientific data entry and will need to help with daily camp maintenance, taking turns to cook, tidy and clean the camp, rinse dive kit, and help with a wide variety of other important and essential camp duties.

FRONTIER CAMP LIFE

WHAT WILL I BE EATING?

Camp food is simple and nutritious and consists largely of rice, split peas, pancakes, flatbreads, , pasta and fruit, all of which are purchased in-country or made on camp in order to help support the local economy. Luxuries such as sweets, biscuits and drinking chocolate have to be brought over to the island from Suva, so make sure you stock up before heading to the camp! 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 feasts and festivals – a great way to integrate with the local communities in the nearby villages and absorb the fabulous and welcoming local culture.

Some local dishes to look forward to include taro, taro leaves, breadfruit, sweet potato, cassava, and cassava chips, coconut and fabulous shellfish and seafood. A delicious Fijian speciality is a lovo feast, which is a meal cooked in a hole in the ground – unusual but very tasty!

COSTS

1 week	US\$ 2,045
2 weeks	US\$ 2,495
3 weeks	US\$ 2,795
4 weeks	US\$ 3,245
5 weeks	US\$ 3,845
6 weeks	US\$ 4,295
7 weeks	US\$ 4,695
8 weeks	US\$ 4,945
10 weeks	US\$ 5,695
20 weeks	US\$ 8,595
Extra Weeks	US\$ 495
Christmas Week	US\$ 445

PADI Open Water and Advanced Open Water training US\$1,156, PADI Advanced Open Water training US\$561 (at least PADI Advanced Open Water necessary for marine surveying)

DEPARTURE DATES

First and third Monday of the month.

Alternative dates available on 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
- 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

- All field camp accommodation & food
- Local orientation & comprehensive project training
- Project equipment & camp diving equipment
- Research materials
- 24 hour in-country support
- International HQ emergency support & back-up
- Airport pick-up for first Monday of the month arrivals (an airport pick up service is available for alternative arrival dates at extra cost)
- Internal ground transfers and first night hostel accommodation for first Monday of the month arrivals
- Boat transfer to the Island of Beqa
- Diving projects: Dive training courses available. PADI Open Water (US\$595), PADI Advanced Open Water (US\$561). Courses available year-round, subject to availability. Course costs include PIC cards, PADI membership & use of Frontier project equipment and dive equipment (tanks, weights, BCDs, REGs etc), personal dive kit, (wet suit, fins, mask, snorkel etc) not included, recreational dives, speciality dives available at extra cost
- Dive kit is available for hire locally

AIRPORT INFORMATION

Nearest airport(s): Nadi (NAN)

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.