Madagascar Mangrove Conservation Project

Discover, monitor and assess the huge variety of Madagascar’s exotic and rare species as you trek through remote regions of this hugely exciting island with Frontier-Madagascar.

Escape to Madagascar – the magical island which is home to some of the world's most spectacular and least explored tropical forests, white sand beaches and coral reefs. The crystal clear waters host a dazzling array of pristine marine habitats and support a huge diversity and abundance of marine creatures. The tropical forests support a huge diversity of rare and endemic creatures, from lemurs to venomless snakes and chameleons.

The vivid multi-coloured corals and luxuriant sea grass beds provide rich feeding grounds for an extraordinary array of colourful reef fish, rays, sea urchins, anemones, octopus and even sea turtles, while barracuda, sharks, dolphins, migrating whales and shoals of pelagics cruise the deep blue waters offshore. You can explore this exquisite, unarnished underwater world as you swim and snorkel off the island of Nosy Be. Meaning ‘Big Island' in Malagasy this location certainly lives up to its name.

Snorkel off the island's dazzling white sand beaches, swim among the clouds of tropical fish in every colour of the rainbow and wander along the empty shores. Let the vibrant culture and friendly communities warmly welcome you. Swim and snorkel to explore this pristine seascape and you'll discover extensive areas of undamaged coral, healthy populations of multicoloured fish, see turtles and marine mammals while you learn to recognise a wide 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 will have the chance to work in the lush mangrove forests' unique ecosystems, which bridges the land and the ocean.

Mangroves represent a critical coastal ecosystem that have an incredible impact on our lives. They help in preserving biodiversity as nursery grounds for many marine and coastal species and fisheries. They contribute in protecting coastal communities against extreme weather events such as hurricanes and stabilise coastlines by reducing soil erosion.

In Madagascar, mangroves occupy a huge range of climatic and environmental conditions along the western coastline. Nine mangrove tree species have been recorded on the territory. Each of them is fundamental to the sustainability of the marine and terrestrial ecosystems in Madagascar. For this reason, the Frontier Madagascar project is focused in pursuing Mangroves conservation and preservation, contributing to the restoration of the deforested areas.

Your days will be eventful; the work will be challenging, rewarding and fun. Your discoveries will be of huge benefit to the conservation of these mangrove forests and you will gain immense satisfaction from knowing that you have helped protect these precious natural resources for future generations. The results from your investigations will supply vital information on the Madagascan coastline to enable the sustainable management of natural resources in the region and the protection of the marine wildlife.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- Help to preserve Madagascar's marine and coastal biodiversity
- Mangrove surveying
- Make lifelong friends and return with incredible stories, photos and memories
- Expand your experience in tropical marine and coastal conservation field work
- Environmental education days in the local schools and community groups

Discover, monitor and assess the huge variety of Madagascar’s exotic and rare species as you trek through remote regions of this hugely exciting island with Frontier-Madagascar.
Swim and snorkel off the beach to locate, and explore, the crystal clear Indian Ocean
Discover the effects of global warming on marine communities

FAST FACTS

Location:
The Island of Nosy Be, Madagascar

Transport:
Airport pickup is available on the first and third Monday of the month. Alternative start dates possible, additional £50 applies for pickup, please speak to an adviser.

Accommodation:
Beach camp

What does the project do?

The aim of Frontier-Madagascar Mangrove Conservation Project is to better understand the marine resources of the island of Nosy Be. Mangroves provide a vital buffer against storm surges caused by cyclones and are an important part of the coastal ecosystem. We conduct scientific baseline data surveys of reef areas, mapping the sea grass beds and mangrove fringes of the region. Once a long term data set is obtained, patterns of resource use can be identified and work with local communities can begin to build awareness of the value and vulnerability of their marine environment.

Mangrove forests are an integral marine ecosystem, providing a number of vital ecological services including: carbon sequestration, protection from erosion and nutrient cycling. Despite the benefits provided by mangroves to humans such as timber and fish, mass deforestation continues to threaten their numbers and thus it is vital that we provide education on how to monitor and where possible, replant these species.

Bearing in mind “The Bonn Challenge”, which aims to bring 150 million hectares of the world's deforested and degraded land into restoration by 2020 globally, volunteering with Frontier Belize you will be able to be an active participant to this process.

What will I be doing?

You will explore and record the organisms that inhabit the luxuriant mangrove forests, dense sea grass beds and productive inter-tidal areas. Madagascar contains around the 2% of the world's mangroves, many of which are suffering or are starting to exhibit signs of widespread degradation and deforestation. For this reason it is extremely important to work for the restoration of this ecosystems, important for animals, plants and humans.

Activities include surveying mangroves, a vital buffer against storm surges caused by cyclones, and an important part of the coastal ecosystem, beach clean ups, and forest restoration work. Collecting scientific data is at the base of a long term going process, that Frontier hopes to take part into, in order to develop local and global awareness on the importance of these ecosystems. Although the
work is intense and challenging you'll get immense satisfaction from having survived and 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 fascinating stories and memories. Working alongside the Malagasy people you will gain an insight into their extraordinary culture. You may even be invited to some of their ceremonies, such as local weddings or the Donia Street Festival. Community work includes environmental education in local schools to explain Frontier's work and accompanying local fishermen to record their catches of fish, sharks and turtles. The data from your investigations will supply vital information on the coastline for the Madagascan national programme.

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 life. Your staff will be young, friendly individuals who are highly experienced in their field and many have volunteered on a Frontier project earlier in their career. Plus, there will be plenty of time to relax under a palm tree and gaze at the sun drenched ocean or laze in your hammock and enjoy the breeze.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ARRIVE?

Volunteers arriving on a Monday will be welcomed by a Frontier representative at Nosy Be airport. From here it's a short taxi or minibus ride from the airport to the centre of the vibrant town of Helville. If you arrive before noon, you will transfer to your project site and be introduced to the Frontier-Madagascar programme on the same day. If you arrive later in the day, you will stay overnight at the Frontier volunteer house in town and get transferred to your project site the following day. You will meet the staff and receive some initial briefings, including an introduction to the conservation programme and techniques used, as well as health and safety lectures, so make sure your medical kit is complete and start reading your safety and medical briefs.

The transfer from Nosy Be to the Frontier beach camp is by the local village boat. Depending on the weather both you and your kit may get wet, so make sure you have sufficient dry bags to waterproof all your belongings and something to waterproof yourself! It is also worth having suntan lotion at the ready as the boat trip can be in the midday sun.

Independent travellers arriving on dates other than weekly on a Monday can arrange a separate airport collection at an extra cost of US$85 by contacting your volunteer coordinator.

At the end of your stay we will transfer those of you who are on the monthly programme back to Nosy Be from the camp in time for you to head back home or continue on your independent travels. If you are joining for less than 4 weeks you will make your own arrangements to return to Nosy Be from where you can continue your own independent travel or return to the UK.

WHERE WILL I BE STAYING?

During the project you'll live on the beach camp in the village of Ambalahonko alongside other Frontier volunteers and staff. We aim to provide you with a unique and memorable living experience. The Frontier camp was built by Frontier volunteers working with local craftsmen, using traditional techniques and locally sourced materials. The camp which is situated in a clearing on the beach has been designed to blend in with the surrounding landscape. Camp life is very simple, unsophisticated and fun.

You will be sleeping in simple communal bandas, local style dwellings and there are outdoor showers with water supplied from the local village. You cook over an open campfire, so prepare for the basic, virtually footprintless, unencumbered lifestyle!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odyEUY5cPIY&list=PL6FBD7E1E77B9D79E&index=7
WHAT WILL I BE EATING?

Camp food is simple and consists largely of rice, lentils, split peas, pasta, tinned tomatoes, potatoes, onions, curry, rolled oats, freshly baked bread, and any fruit or vegetable grown on the land (pumpkin, eggplant, papaya, banana, mango, cassava, bele leaves, etc. depending on season). All food is 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 seafood!

COSTS

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CHRISTMAS OFFER

This project is available for the special price of US$255 per week over the Christmas period. Placements starting on the 24th or 31st of December 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.

AIRPORT INFORMATION

Nearest airport(s): Nossi-Be (NOS)
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.