



VOLUNTEER

programs

IN MADAGASCAR

LAST UPDATED: AUGUST 2018



VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

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A B O U T U S

The Madagascar Research and Conservation Institute (MRCI) is a Government approved institute undertaking environmental research, community development and education. Our research centre, Turtle Cove is the heart of MRCI and the base for all our programs. We are located on Nosy Komba ('Lemur Island'), also known as Nosy Ambariovato ('Island surrounded by rocks'), adjacent to a pristine white beach and clear blue waters allowing volunteers easy access to swimming and snorkeling on our home reef.

Directly opposite us on the Island of Nosy Be sits world famous Lokobe Forest Reserve, as well as the base of CNRO (Centre National de Recherchés Océanographiques) with whom we partner on marine research and education. Our programs range from marine and forest conservation to environmental education, teaching English and construction in remote villages. We aim to actively contribute to the conservation of the unique flora and fauna of Madagascar both in and out of the water through long term monitoring and species-specific projects in collaboration with a range of international partners.



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VOLUNTEER
Marine
CONSERVATION



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MRCI's Marine Conservation Program works both independently and in collaboration with oceanographic organisations to gather vital raw scientific data through a number of initiatives. Volunteers receive comprehensive training to prepare them to undertake research-based activities at sea. This involves identification training for marine wildlife, including turtles, fish, corals and invertebrates. They are also taught methodology of coral baseline surveying, a key skill in marine conservation as a universal approach to monitoring the state of coral reefs.

To participate on the Marine Conservation program, volunteers must have both Open Water and Advanced Open Water Dive Certification to survey. PADI diving courses can be completed with us in Madagascar at our MRCI Diving School. It is best if you complete the e-learning portion of your PADI training prior to coming to Madagascar as access to wifi is limited. If you apply for the Marine Conservation project in Madagascar, please specify whether you require any dive training. Visit our MRCI Dive School page for more information on our PADI courses. Please note, this project has a minimum duration of 4 weeks to allow sufficient time to complete the dive and marine research training required to participate on the project.

All marine conservation volunteers are **required to bring** the following items to Madagascar, as these are not available for purchase on the island of Nosy Komba:

- Log book
- Dive compass
- Waterproof watch
- Snorkel & mask
- (with tempered glass)
- Surface marker buoy (DSMB)
- Reel (a small finger reel is adequate)
- Wetsuit (long or short, 3mm minimum)
- Fins (open heel & booties are recommended)
- PADI crew packs and /or Manuals for the relevant course(s)

Community

Educate the local community about environmental issues, conservation and the protection of biodiversity and marine resources.

We work to protect the marine ecosystem in Madagascar in collaboration several scientific partners and oceanographic organizations to gather vital raw data through numerous initiatives, including:

Reef Surveying

Monitoring the biodiversity, health and growth of the reef system surrounding Nosy Komba through fish, invertebrate and coral surveys using scuba diving equipment.

Nudibranch Research

Determine the species density and biodiversity of nudibranchs in the area as well as associated substrates.

Beach Clean Ups

Help save the lives of marine animals that are caught in and/or eat marine litter. Remove synthetic, damaging material from the ecosystem. This data is collected to monitor waste across the Indian Ocean for an international research project run by the University of Cape Town.

Artificial Reef

Continue construction of artificial reef structures. Increase the coral reef size and health in the area through reef regeneration by coral propagation and litter removal.

Marine Protected Area

Thanks to years of hard work by MRCI staff and volunteers, Turtle towers, the home reef at Turtle Cove, became a marine protected area in November 2016. Volunteers are now working to monitor the impact of the protection on marine life.

Explain the importance of the protected area to local fishermen and area tourists and stop them fishing within the MPA

Turtle Monitoring

Continue work to establish an estimated inventory of turtles using the reef surrounding Nosy Komba. The identification of individuals within a population is the preliminary step in the ecological study of a species. Establish an annual population census through snorkel surveys and visual monitoring. Determine the frequency & population strength of the varying species of turtle that visit the area. During the nesting season, monitor breeding and protect nests from any disturbance.



VOLUNTEER

Turtle

MONITORING

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MRCI's Sea Turtle Monitoring Program has been established to identify and develop Safe Turtle Breeding Zones in North Western Madagascar. MRCI has successfully, with the support of the local community, implemented a "Safe Turtle Nesting Zone" on Nosy Komba Island. As part of this initiative, MRCI have employed security personnel to provide 24 hour monitoring of this nesting zone to ensure the safety of the turtles and their eggs.

MRCI volunteers will assist in identifying nesting areas by visiting remote beaches on islands surrounding the island of Nosy Be. This program gives volunteers the opportunity to get up close to these beautiful creatures whilst helping to ensure the health and survival of the species into future.

The Sea Turtle Monitoring Program runs during nesting season from October to March each year, when turtles come ashore to lay their eggs. The main objective and focus on our Sea Turtle Monitoring Program is to collect and record species, nesting and size related data for estimating population dynamics and nesting distributions in North Western Madagascar.

Currently large numbers of turtle eggs are being plundered on many of the remote beaches, and hatchlings and fully reproductive turtles are shockingly being harvested for the souvenir trade. Due to the already naturally low survival rate of turtle hatchlings, this is having devastating impacts on population numbers.



Identifying and implementing protection measures for these breeding sites is paramount to safeguarding the species in this area. With the collaborative effort of our volunteers, who play a vitally important role in assisting to achieve our goals, MRCI will continue to strive to protect endangered sea turtle species in their natural habitat as well as to promote public awareness by further collaborating with local communities and national authorities.

OUR PRIMARY GOALS ARE:

To safeguard the nesting sites from dogs and wild pigs who dig up the nests destroying the turtle eggs

To map and identify beaches used as nesting sites.

To identify species diversity and numbers.

To engage and establish a relationship with the local communities enabling us to include them in our conservation efforts.

To monitor and remove plastic waste and other harmful products from the beaches.

OUR LONG-TERM GOALS ARE:

To increase the size of the conservation area by proclaiming more beaches safe turtle nesting zones

Volunteers are met at the Nosy Be International airport upon arrival and, weather permitting, transferred via boat to MRCI's Turtle Beach camp in the village of Ampo

agna, which is situated on a pristine white beach lined with Coconut and Fir trees, on mainland Madagascar. Volunteers will be accommodated in basic beach bungalows with solar power lighting, flush toilets and cold water showers.

Volunteers are met at the Nosy Be International airport upon arrival and, weather permitting, transferred via boat to MRCI's Turtle Beach camp in the village of Ampogna, which is situated on a pristine white beach lined with Coconut and Fir trees, on mainland Madagascar. Volunteers will be accommodated in basic beach bungalows with solar power lighting, flush toilets and cold water showers.

IN ADDITION TO PERSONAL ITEMS VOLUNTEER NEED TO BRING:

- sleeping roll mat or hammock
- mosquito net
- sleeping bag or sheet
- sleeping pillow
- snorkelling gear
- Red light torch (flashlight)

Volunteers are given a tour of camp followed by an orientation and a health and safety briefing.

Volunteers are trained in species identification, equipment usage and data collection protocols to prepare them for the hands-on work to come. Volunteers will also receive information on our goals and how to best assist us in achieving them.

Once training has been completed, volunteers are placed in the field. Volunteers are divided into groups and, accompanied by a MRCI staff member, are dropped by boat at various locations of interest to conduct the survey work.

Volunteers will also participate in small community based construction initiatives in local villages which aims towards establishing good relationships with their inhabitants to further the conservation goals.

Two species of turtle are monitored; the critically endangered Hawksbill Sea Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and the endangered Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*).

Sadly, population numbers of both species are in decline with harvesting of eggs, hatchlings and adults being the primary threat. Hawksbill turtle numbers have fallen by as much as 80% in the last 10 years, and the annual number of nesting female Green Sea Turtle species has declined by up to 67% over the last 3 generations. This has left both species at high risk of extinction if nothing is done to safeguard their future.

The Green Sea turtle is the most widespread and well-known species in tropical and sub-tropical waters. They are the largest of the hard-shell turtle species and can grow up to 120cm in shell length and can weigh over 136kg.

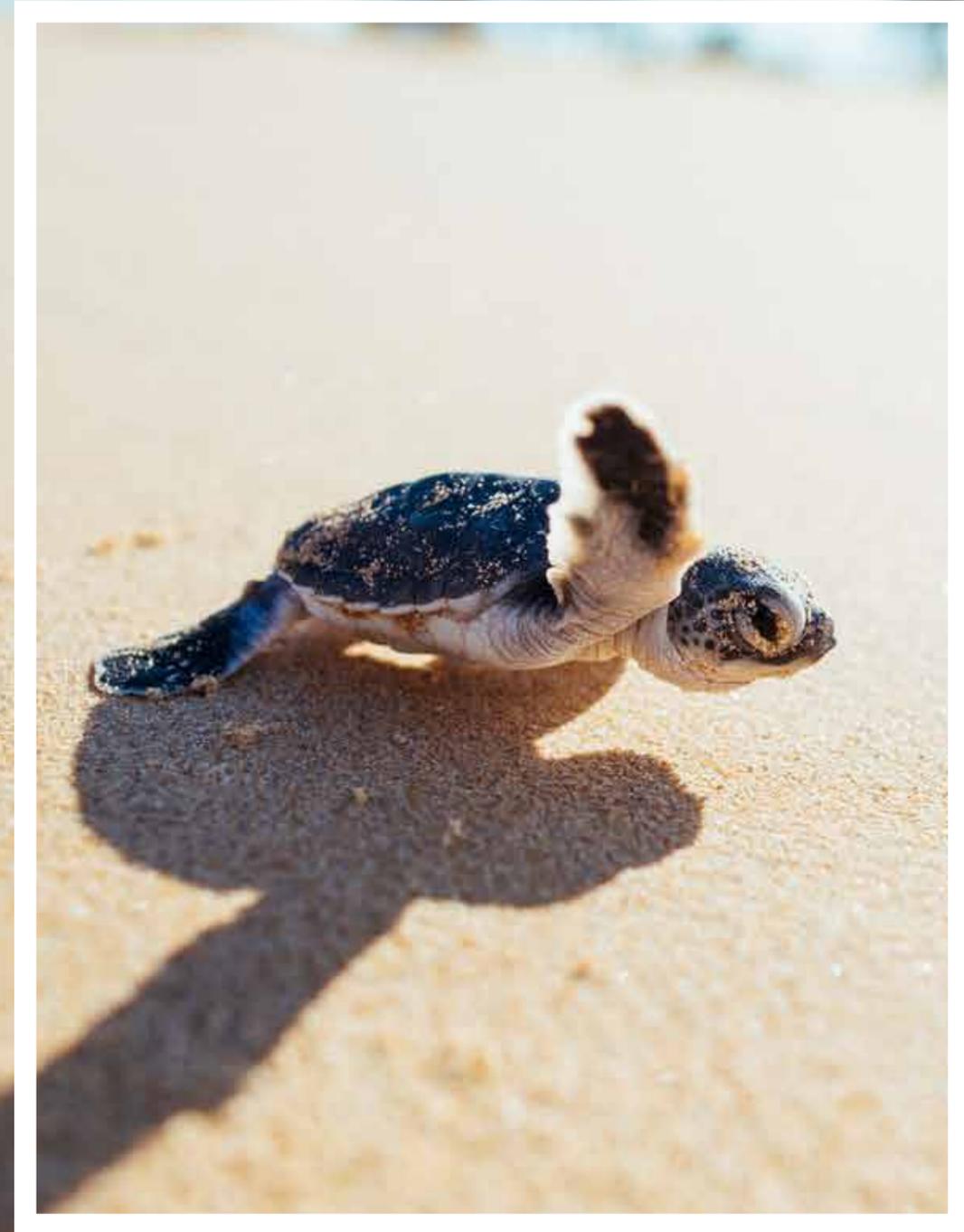
The name Green Sea Turtle derives from the colour of their fat, rather than the colour of their shell. The colour of their shells can range from a yellow/green to a reddish/brown to sometimes almost black.

Hawksbills Sea Turtle species are also found in tropical and sub-tropical regions. Adult Hawksbill Sea Turtles can grow to 90cm in shell length and can weigh up to 91kg. The Hawksbill Sea Turtle is named for its pointed, sharp bird-like beak. The shell of the Hawksbill Sea Turtle has a “tortoise shell” colour that ranges from dark to golden brown, with streaks of orange, yellow, brown and black. This is the only sea turtle that has overlapping scutes on the top shell (similar to roof shingles).

The basic volunteer beach patrol protocol when a turtle is found is:

- Species is identified
- Carapace is measured
- Flippers are checked for calluses or notches (these indicate that the turtle has been previously tagged)
- Photographs are taken
- GPS location point is recorded

Volunteers spend their final few days back at MRCI’s Turtle Cove base camp on Nosy Komba Island completing data entries and debriefing.





VOLUNTEER
Island
OUTREACH

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THE SPIRIT OF MALALA

In an effort to extend MRCI's community and conservation reach beyond Nosy Be and Nosy Komba, volunteers are transported aboard our research vessel, the Spirit of Malala, and spend 10 days visiting several of Madagascar's remote islands and villages. Through MRCI's Island Outreach program volunteers are involved in a range of initiatives such as teaching, small construction projects and scientific monitoring.

Many of these island communities in Madagascar have very limited basic resources. MRCI's Outreach Program aims to assist these local communities with access to education, resources and basic first aid assistance. We work with a local doctor who serves these remote villages. Donations such as much needed medical supplies are another welcome way volunteers can help.

Volunteers will visit the local schools and hand out donations of essential school supplies and sporting equipment as well as provide impromptu English lessons. They will also assist our forest and marine programs by participating in daily turtle, dolphin and bird surveys to identify changes in habitats and species populations. You can enjoy your free time by exploring the tropical islands, snorkeling in the turquoise waters or by joining in on a fun game of beach soccer with the village children.

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ISLAND OUTREACH POINTS OF INTEREST

CNRO

Volunteers start the program by visiting the Centre National de Recherches Océanographiques (the Oceanographic Research Institute of Madagascar) in Nosy Be, where they will receive a short introduction to marine conservation by one of the institutes leading Malagasy marine researchers followed by a fascinating tour of the marine museum, which has a large collection of specimens covering all aspects of marine life and its evolution in Madagascar.

Nosy Mamoko Island

This island is at the southwest end of Ampasindava Bay. The small, unspoiled forest ends in sandy white beaches with excellent opportunities for swimming and snorkeling in the bay to explore the delicate coral reefs. This traditional island still has a Queen as head of their population (which includes a troop of lemurs living amongst the villagers & a 100 year old tortoise).

Russian Bay

The name of this fascinating area dates back to the Russo-Japanese war of 1905,

when a Russian warship anchored in the bay. Instead of attacking passing Japanese ships, the crew enjoyed Madagascar so much, they decided not to wage war or to return to Russia. The ship was kept hidden, but emerged twice to trade with pirate vessels from the Mozambique Channel. It finally sank years after running out of fuel. The last of these Russian sailors died in 1936 and their graves can still be visited today. The spectacular marine life in the bay offers superb snorkeling and diving. Whales and whale sharks are common in the bay from October to December and there is an abundance of lemurs, birdlife and reptiles in the tropical forest with a choice of hiking trails.

Ankazoberavina Marine Reserve

Ankazoberavina, whose name means "island with big-leaved trees", is a Marine Reserve that lives up to its name with a forest of large trees and mangroves which is home to some species of lemur, flying foxes and chameleons. The snorkeling here is outstanding with spectacular coral formations teeming with tropical fish and resident turtles.

CONTINUED

ISLAND OUREACH POINTS OF INTEREST

Nosy Antsoha

This little-known island is so small that it is used solely as a lemur rehabilitation centre and safe-house. It is currently home to six lemur species. This private island has a tropical rainforest and is one of four large lumps of silver basalt that makes up “Les Quatres Freres” (The Four Brothers) which also includes Nosy Betalinjona, Nosy Beangovo and Nosy Betanihazo.

Nosy Iranja

The Nosy Iranja Archipelago consists of two islets (Nosy Iranja Be and Nosy Iranja Kely) linked by the now world famous sandbar at low tide. The clear waters offer excellent snorkeling and swimming. Nosy Iranja Be is the larger of the two and home to an abandoned lighthouse that was designed by Gustav Eiffel (best know for designing the Eiffel Tower and the Statue of Liberty). There is also a small village of fishermen on the island. Nosy Iranja Kely has large sandy beaches that are important breeding sites for both the Hawksbill and the Green Sea Turtle. With its lush vegetation, it is home to a large diversity of birdlife & coconut crabs.

Baramahamay River

Lush hills behind sunny, white beaches are the main features of Baramahamay River. Visitors to this remote area may even spot the extremely rare Madagascan fish eagle feeding off fish basking in the river. The villages are reknown for their blacksmiths, boat builders and honey. Honey and even crabs can be purchases from villagers in their pirogues. There is a small primary school in the village that volunteers contribute towards running.

Nosy Tanikely

Nosy Tanikely draws both bird enthusiasts and snorkelers alike. The crystal-clear waters are perfect for viewing the amazing variety of marine life. At low tide, one can walk all the way around the island, during which you may spot lemurs, flying foxes and white-tailed tropical birds.



A person is seen from behind, walking across a narrow suspension bridge made of wooden planks and ropes. The bridge is set against a backdrop of a dense, lush green forest. The scene is framed by a white border. There are decorative horizontal bars in shades of green and blue at the top and bottom, and vertical bars on the left and right sides.

VOLUNTEER
Forest
CONSERVATION

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MRCI's Forest Conservation Program involves long-term monitoring of the forest and its endemic wildlife on Nosy Komba. We study the diversity and abundance of species to identify changes in forest dynamics, populations, habitat health and identify potential localised threats. To assess biodiversity, we use a variety of field survey techniques including: Species ID, behavioural monitoring and comparisons, population assessments, pitfall traps, transect surveys and active forest searches both during the day and at night, as well as visual and vocal identification of birds, and potential for mist netting. For invertebrates on Nosy Komba, we aim to create an inventory of butterfly and moth species.

Our main survey sites are located on Nosy Komba, a volcanic island. There are no roads and the paths through the forest are not always well trodden. They can be steep, rocky and muddy depending on the season. Reaching the survey sites involves climbing over rocks and up steep mountain trails, therefore a good level of physical fitness and a willingness to handle the mud and rain is required.



Forest volunteers will receive training on species identification, conducting field surveys, equipment set up and data collation. Volunteering on the forest conservation project is a rare opportunity to experience one of the world's most unique ecosystems and encounter the iconic creatures for which Madagascar is famed. We have three ongoing long-term projects as follows, however personal projects/university studies are welcomed:

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Reptile Survey

We use two different methods, each focusing on different niches. In transect surveys, volunteers walk along set 250m transects using visual search to identify all reptiles and amphibians. During plot searches, volunteers actively search through a pre-defined plot looking for more cryptic species. In addition to the intensive transect and plot searches, we sometimes use pitfall traps to study ground dwelling reptiles and amphibians. Most surveys happen during the day however we carry out weekly night walks for nocturnal species using the same methods. We survey reptile populations in the following habitats: open plantation, coffee plantation, shrubby forest, closed canopy forest, primary forest.

Black Lemur ecology

(*Eulemur macaco macaco*)

We study 3 groups of lemurs, all located in closed canopy forest close to villages and human presence. We focus on the lemur's relations with their habitat, home range and group size. We also hope to estimate the lemur's tolerance against habitat fragmentation and disturbance. In addition to this, we conduct behavioural comparisons between wild and habituated populations at the local lemur park.

Bird Survey

We conduct bird population surveys on the coast, in plantations and in the forest. Point counts are conducted where birds are identified both visually and vocally. This survey allows us to study the seasonal occupancy, habitat preferences and provide updated data on the endemic bird species present on Nosy Komba.

Agroforestry and Reforestation

In partnership with several local villages, an agroforestry project is under development. During our current phase, you visit different plantations and farmers on the island and help with harvesting, weeding or planting. The aim is to learn techniques of sustainable agriculture and make good connections with the local farming community. Through this, we gain knowledge to apply to our own agroforestry plot and deepen connections within the community. In addition, we work to decrease the invasive plant species, *Lantana camara*, from various parts of the island, including within our own agroforest plot. Once removed from an area, we plant tree saplings from our newly constructed plant nursery on camp. Expect to spend some time in our reforestation nursery making planters, weeding and watering as well as some time in the forest collecting seeds.



VOLUNTEER

English

TEACHING

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Volunteers will have the chance to teach English classes to students in small village schools on the islands of Nosy Be and Nosy Komba, alongside delivering classes to adults and the local communities too. Volunteers also provide classes to the staff members at the Oceanographic Research Institute on Nosy Be, where they will assist in establishing a good working knowledge of English, enhancing their ability to communicate ideas and collaborate research findings internationally.

Volunteers are also paired up with staff members at our Turtle Cove base to help improve their level of English, this is a great way for volunteers to pick up some Malagasy in return. Volunteers will be briefed on all the teaching placements on arrival, and provided with basic training to help equip them for teaching the local communities.

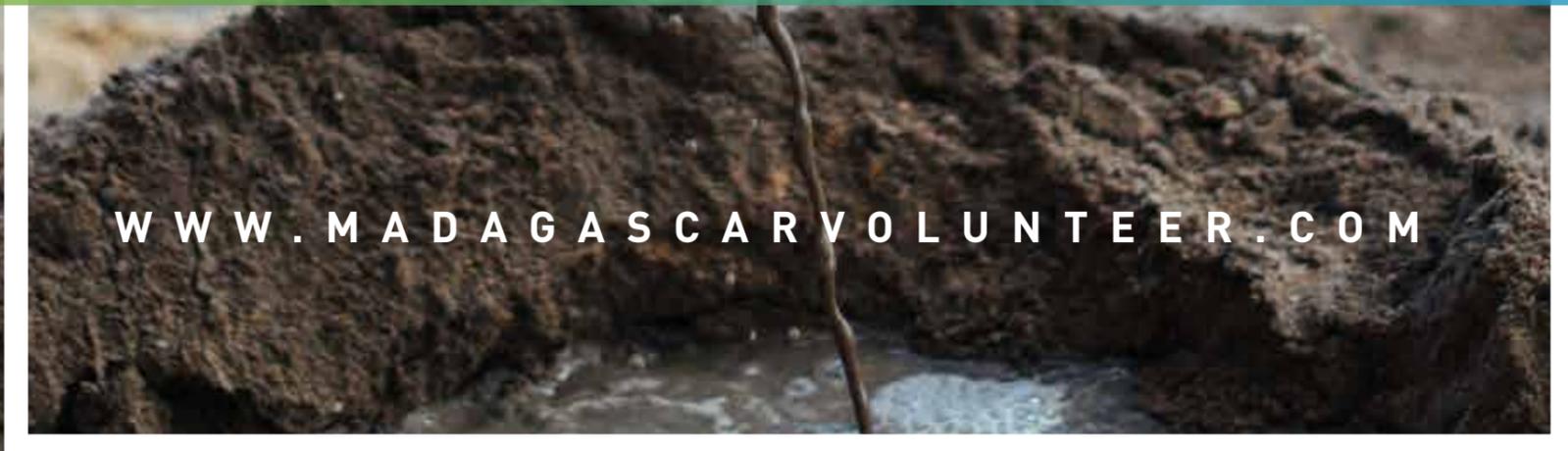
Due to the demand of English teachers on the island, volunteers may find themselves working in all locations during their volunteer week. Teaching volunteers should be prepared to hike along forest trails to reach the local villages, some hikes will also require volunteers to scramble over rocks.



VOLUNTEER

Community

DEVELOPMENT



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Madagascar Research and Conservation Institute's Community Development Program consistently strives to improve the lives and living conditions of the people in our communities. We achieve this by maintaining existing community infrastructures and building much needed new facilities. Each project undertaken by MRCI is carefully planned and sanctioned by the community leaders. The key focus of each project is the development of infrastructures where the entire community benefits as a whole. Running water and sanitation issues are addressed as well as educational facilities which afford students the opportunity to receive an education in a functional classroom environment.



Forest volunteers will receive training on species identification, conducting field surveys, equipment set up and data collation. Volunteering on the forest conservation project is a rare opportunity to experience one of the world's most unique ecosystems and encounter the iconic creatures for which Madagascar is famed. We have three ongoing long-term projects as follows, however personal projects/university studies are welcomed:

The absence of roads and motorised vehicles on Nosy Komba means that the local inhabitants face the daily challenge of crossing near impassable terrain to reach other nearby villages. Rainy season makes many of these routes even more difficult to negotiate. We assist communities by identifying these areas and building pathways and bridges to make these precarious routes easier to navigate.

This also allows tourists to access these villages and we are currently devising a strategy to assist the community to attract more tourists. Once the projects have been identified and approved by MRCI and the community leaders, work begins with MRCI sponsoring a portion of the funds required.

Volunteers assist not only with the physical labour required to complete the projects, but also with initiating additional fundraising campaigns. These fundraising efforts are invaluable, without which we would not be able to achieve our goals. A seemingly small contribution can make a noteworthy difference.

All our building materials are locally sourced and purchased from local suppliers. Volunteers work alongside the community members using traditional building methods. A healthy positive attitude is all that is required to participate in this program and is needed to overcome the many challenges faced in developing these communities. The reward is in knowing that you have made a significant impact in a community that will embrace you as one of their own.

Assisting communities through building and construction will lay a foundation that will encourage the local community to continue with your efforts after your volunteer work abroad has come to an end.



VOLUNTEER
sample
SCHEDULE

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This schedule is a guideline and it will vary widely depending on the project, tides, and other contributing factors.

Volunteer work on each program will vary, and generally each program has morning and afternoon activities. After dinner each day, we have hold a briefing to go over program activities for the following day.

Please note that there will be varying amounts of down time during the listed morning and afternoon program activities which is dependant on the day and project.

VOLUNTEER SAMPLE SCHEDULE

05:00-07:00

Breakfast time on camp which is prepared by our in-house kitchen staff

06:00-08:00

The start of morning project activities

12:00

Lunch time on camp which is prepared by our in-house kitchen staff

14:00

The start of afternoon project activities

16:00-17:00

Usual conclusion of project activities for the day

18:00

Dinner time on camp which is prepared by our in-house kitchen staff

18:45

Board Briefing, where we go over the activities for the following day



ACCOMMODATION &

FAQs

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Our research centre, Turtle Cove, is built into the steep slopes of Nosy Komba as a multi-level compound overlooking the spectacular coral reef below. Climb stone stairs up from an idyllic beach to main house and take in the stunning view of the ocean extending far across to Lokobe Forest Reserve on Nosy Be. Main house accommodates senior staff members and serves as a meeting place and hangout for volunteers during the day. Large decks line the front of main house complete with hammocks, bean bags and benches. There is also a

work area for volunteers, shelves for materials, resources and our library, and lockable storage boxes for each hut to secure small valuables. Volunteers should also bring a padlock to secure personal items in their luggage when not in use.

From the back of main house, follow more stone steps up another level to a separate kitchen and dining hut nestled among vibrant gardens. On this middle level as well as up another level sit a series of locally built bungalows that serve as volunteer

sleeping quarters. Volunteers can expect to share a hut with four to six other volunteers, and will need to bring their own towels, mosquito net and bedding for bunk beds. Also on these two levels are several bathroom facilities equipped with running water, flush toilets and cold water showers.

Turtle cove camp is eco-friendly with solar powered lighting throughout. There are no charging facilities for electronic devices; volunteers are encouraged to bring a solar panel and battery pack to keep their devices charged. Charging ports are available in the neighboring village of Ampang, about a half hour hike from camp. We do have an onsite generator for staff use, though volunteers are welcome to charge small devices (no laptops) from this if there is space. Bear in mind that in an effort to go green, use of the generator is minimal, sometimes only once per week or less.

Also keep in mind that we are dependent on the sun for most of our power and rainfall for our water, so conserve power and water as much as possible during your stay.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND USEFUL THINGS TO TAKE NOTE OF

INTERNET:

Wi-Fi is not available on camp, however there is Wifi access in the neighboring village of Ampang, about a half hour hike from camp. Volunteers will also have opportunity to access Wifi over the weekends in Ampang village or on the neighboring island of Nosy Be.

MOBILE PHONES:

Volunteers can bring their mobile phones and purchase a local SIM card and credit for calling and data upon arrival. If their phone's SIM is locked, they have the option of purchasing a local phone. This is great for keeping in touch with local staff, other volunteers and loved ones at home. Once you have purchased a SIM card and data package, you can access the internet via cell service in most places on Nosy Be and Nosy Komba, including camp. With enough credit loaded on, you can make both domestic and international calls. The country code for calling Madagascar is +261.

VISAS:

Most nationalities can get a visa upon arrival to the airport in Madagascar. You can purchase either a 30, 60, or 90 day visa. There is no ATM or credit card machine at

the airport on Nosy Be so you will need to bring enough cash to pay for your visa when you land. Due to its structure, this program is classified as a tourist trip. Volunteers participate on project for three months or less, work an average of three to five hours daily (not full time), and do not receive any pay or free accommodation or meals in compensation for work. That qualifies these types of trips as "tourist" trips, therefore, we recommend you select "tourism" as your reason for travel on your visa. Other visa types may be available, however they are often unnecessary, expensive & time consuming.

Duration:

Volunteers can apply to join the Teaching, Community Development and Forest conservation program for a minimum of 2 weeks up to a maximum of 12 weeks. Volunteers can join the Marine Conservation program for a minimum of 4 to up to a maximum of 12 weeks. The Island Outreach program runs for 2 weeks starting the first Monday of the month during which time volunteers will spend 9 nights (10 days) aboard our research vessel, The Spirit of Malala. Volunteers can participate in the Outreach program as a stand-alone project or combine it with

time on other programs.

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS:

On camp, three meals per day are provided seven days per week. Each meal is prepared by our on-site cooks using traditional Malagasy cooking methods using fresh, locally grown, seasonally available produce. Most meals have a rice base with beans and vegetables on the side (or over rice). Fruit and vegetables served will change depending on the season and availability of local produce. Some meals will include fish/seafood, beef (zebu), or chicken. Meat, when part of a meal, is typically prepared with a sauce, cut into small pieces, and served over rice. In addition to bananas, breakfast usually consists of either baguettes and jam, eggs or crepes.

There is a vegetarian option for all meals. Due to logistics and the limitations of our remote location, we cannot provide a vegan option. Vegans can help themselves to the vegetable-based foods prepared, but will also need to supplement their diet with foods purchased off camp. If you have special dietary requirements, please let us know. We will do our best to provide accordingly, however you should not expect to eat as you normally do at home. Bear in mind that you are volunteering in a remote region of a developing country and flexibility is necessary.

WEATHER/ CLIMATE:

The weather here in Northwest Madagascar is hot and humid year-round. There are only two seasons: wet season, typically spanning from November to April, and dry season from May to October. Wet season is hotter and more humid with additional rainfall. On average, the coolest and driest month is August, October is the hottest month and January is the wettest month. Average daily temperatures year-round range from a high of 31.0o C to a low of 20.0o C.

VACCINATIONS, SUN PRECAUTIONS & DEHYDRATION:

Volunteers are expected to have their own health insurance. Vaccinations are not typically required to enter Madagascar, however this may vary depending on your travel path. We recommend consulting a travel doctor about vaccinations and medications. Recommended vaccinations for Madagascar include: yellow fever, tetanus, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, typhoid, and rabies.

In addition, we recommend carrying preventative agents with you including sun screen, after sun lotion, mosquito repellent, rehydration supplements, anti-malarial medications, and anything else recommended by your doctor. There is access to good, fairly priced medical care here in country if needed. Due to the hot, humid climate, it is incredibly important to



drink enough water. We have filtered drinking water available on camp; just be sure to bring a good reusable bottle.

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS & CONDITIONS OF THE STAY:

Typical Day: See sample schedule listed under “Volunteer Sample Schedule”.

LAUNDRY:

A hand washing laundry station is provided on camp with a clean water tap, concrete work surface for scrubbing, and buckets. Volunteers will need to purchase their own laundry soap (available on neighboring Nosy Be) and can either do their own washing, or pay one of the local kitchen or care taker staff to do it for them. Typically, it costs 10,000 MGA (~\$3.30 USD) per bag of laundry, plus soap.

ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES:

The most common type of wall plug in Madagascar is the typical European rounded two-prong plug (Type C) and the rounded two-prong plug with a hole for the male grounding pin (Type E). Voltage is 20V and the frequency is 50Hz.

CLOTHING:

Casual, modern clothing is perfectly acceptable. While out in the villages, especially for project work, it is advisable to wear conservative clothing that is not overly tight or revealing. Shorts and tank

tops for around camp and weekends are acceptable as long as they provide reasonable coverage. Most volunteers go out dancing and socializing on the weekends, so consider bringing something you like to wear out.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN:

All program staff and volunteers must be able to speak, write and understand English. Our program staff and volunteers come from all over the world and speak a myriad of other languages in addition to English. Locally, our operations staff and the people of Madagascar speak Malagasy and some French. Volunteers have the chance to attend free Malagasy lessons offered on camp and learn more about the language and culture in this beautiful country.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

Volunteers are expected to have their own health insurance. Vaccinations are not typically required to enter Madagascar, however this may vary depending on your travel path. We recommend consulting a travel doctor about vaccinations and medications. Recommended vaccinations for Madagascar include: yellow fever, tetanus, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, typhoid, and rabies.

AIRPORT ARRIVALS:

Volunteers may fly directly into the airport on Nosy Be (airport code NOS), or into the capital city, Antananarivo (Tana for short;

airport code TNR). If you fly into Tana, you can take a domestic flight from Tana to Nosy Be, or travel overland via Taxi Brousse or private car to Nosy Be. We can help arrange your overland transport if needed. This journey can take anywhere from 24 to 72 hours depending on number of stops, weather, road conditions, etc...

AIRPORT TRANSFERS

Your transport to camp, including the taxi from Nosy Be airport (or tuk tuk from port) to Hellville and your first boat to camp are included in the program fee. A staff member will accompany you on the boat from Nosy Be to Nosy Komba and give you a tour of MRCI camp on Nosy Komba upon arrival.

You are responsible to arrange and pay for your own transport back to the airport upon completion of your volunteer program, however we are happy to help you book your transport as needed.

ACCOMMODATION:

Locally built bungalows fitted with bunk beds that serve as volunteer sleeping quarters. Volunteers can expect to share a hut with four to six other volunteers, and will need to bring their own bedding and towels.

INSURANCE:

Volunteers are expected to purchase their own health insurance.



VOLUNTEER
program
FEES

WWW.MADAGASCARVOLUNTEER.COM

PROGRAM FEES

MARINE CONSERVATION

START DATES:

ALL YEAR ROUND

Every first and third Monday of every month

4 WEEKS	\$1,800.00
5 WEEKS	\$2,000.00
6 WEEKS	\$2,200.00
7 WEEKS	\$2,400.00
8 WEEKS	\$2,600.00
9 WEEKS	\$2,800.00
10 WEEKS	\$3,000.00
11 WEEKS	\$3,200.00
12 WEEKS	\$3,400.00

An PADI AOW Certification is required to participate in our Marine Program. Courses can be completed with us in Madagascar

Visit our website for more information on our Dive School:
www.madagascarvolunteer.com/mrci-padi-diving-school/

ENGLISH TEACHING

FOREST CONSERVATION

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

START DATES:

ALL YEAR ROUND

Every first and third Monday of every month

2 WEEKS	\$900.00
3 WEEKS	\$1,075.00
4 WEEKS	\$1,250.00
5 WEEKS	\$1,425.00
6 WEEKS	\$1,600.00
7 WEEKS	\$1,775.00
8 WEEKS	\$1,950.00
9 WEEKS	\$2,125.00
10 WEEKS	\$2,300.00
11 WEEKS	\$2,475.00
12 WEEKS	\$2,650.00

SEA TURTLE MONITORING

START DATES:

OCTOBER TO MARCH

Every first Monday of each of Month

2 WEEK	\$900.00
3 WEEKS	\$1,075.00
4 WEEKS	\$1,250.00
5 WEEKS	\$1,425.00
6 WEEKS	\$1,600.00
7 WEEKS	\$1,775.00
8 WEEKS	\$1,950.00
9 WEEKS	\$2,125.00
10 WEEKS	\$2,300.00
11 WEEKS	\$2,475.00
12 WEEKS	\$2,650.00

The Community Development Program has a surcharge of \$50 per week for the purchase of materials used on projects

ISLAND OUTREACH

START DATES:

ALL YEAR ROUND

Every first and third Monday of every month

10 DAYS \$950.00

* A discount will be applied if you add an additional program when you sign up for the Volunteer Island Outreach Program*



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PURCHASE WITH PURPOSE

Keep your Malagasy memories
fresh with MRCI Merchandise
Available online at Spreadshirt

BUY ONLINE



These designs and more are available on our Spreadshirt Store. The designs come in a number of different options from t-shirts to mugs and much more. The proceeds go towards community development and conservation efforts on and around Nosy Komba Island in Northern Madagascar. Each purchase that is made allows us the opportunity to make a real difference where it really matters.

Available here: <https://shop.spreadshirt.com/MadagascarVolunteer/>

C O N T A C T U S

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MRCI Office

(Madagascar)

- Physical Address -



Home Sakalava
Rue R Tsiomeko
Hellville, Nosy Be
Madagascar

W W W . M A D A G A S C A R V O L U N T E E R . C O M