

MALDIVES REEF EXPEDITONS

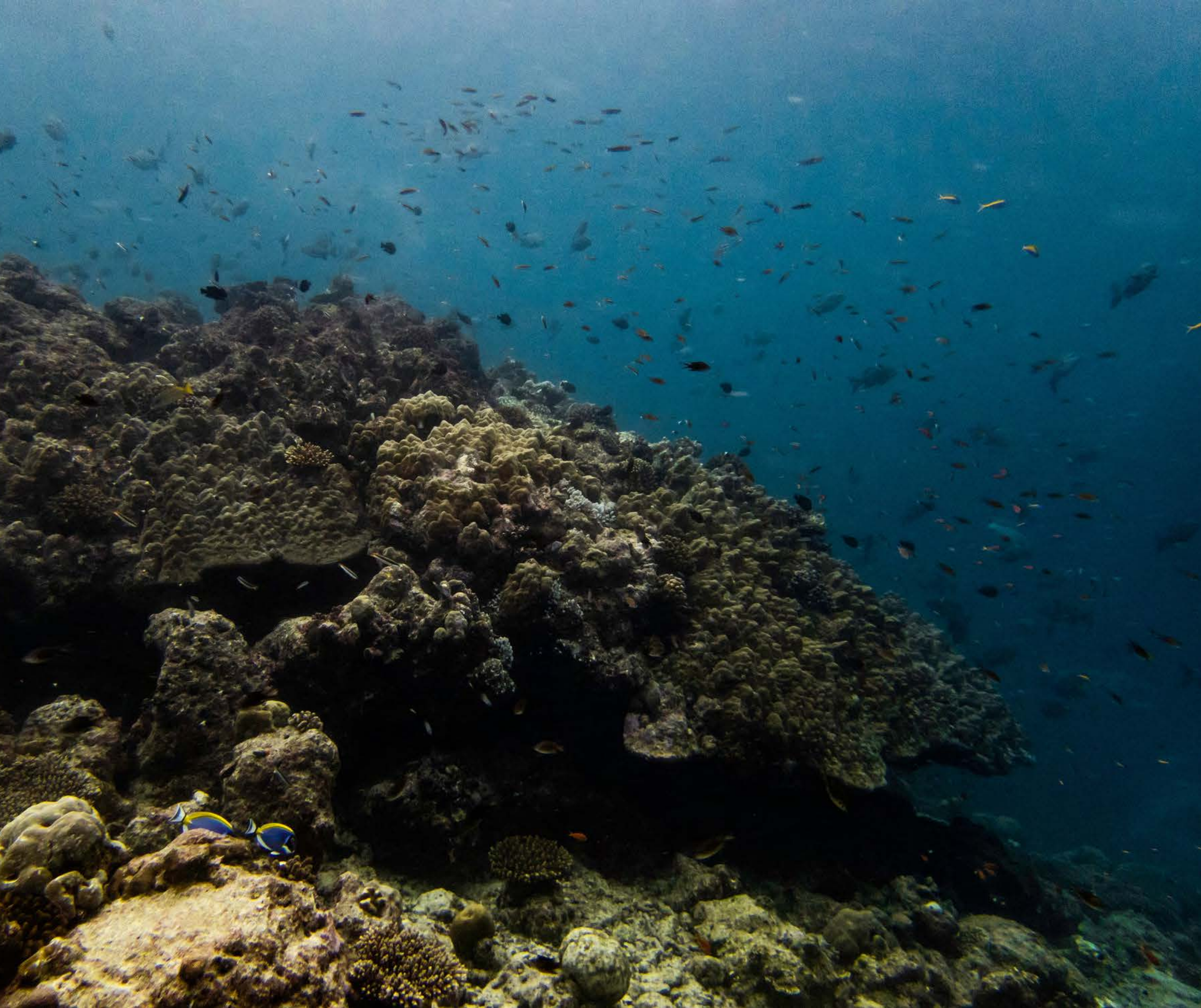
SOUTH ARI MPA 2022

22/05 - 01/06



HOSTED BY





WHAT IS MALDIVES REEF EXPEDITIONS?

This expedition is the start of the Maldives Reef Expeditions which is going to be an ongoing project by Save The Beach Maldives to assess the most ecologically and economically important coral reefs of the Maldives. The data collected during the expeditions will be analyzed and used for driving policy-making and for pushing for management plans and protection of these significant reefs of the country.

WHO ARE WE?

SAVE THE BEACH MALDIVES

Save the Beach Maldives started as a grassroots youth movement to conserve the beaches of Villingili' from coastal development and plastic pollution.

Registered as an NGO in 2014 now our focus has broadened to coral restoration and monitoring. Save the Beach Maldives has successfully done several coral restoration projects and thanks to its different partnerships, it has been monitoring coral reefs around the country.

MALDIVES WHALE SHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME

The Maldives Whale Shark Research Programme (MWSRP) is a research-based conservation charity and NGO dedicated to studying the whale shark and fostering community-focused conservation initiatives in the Maldives and the greater Indian Ocean. We are predominantly based in South Ari Atoll researching and collecting data at the South Ari Marine Protected Area, a place known for its unique year-round aggregation of whale sharks. The area also has the highest sight-fidelity making it the closest thing our whale sharks could call home.

SOUTH ARI MARINE PROTECTED AREA



At the South end of the Atoll, the South Ari Marine Protected Area (SAMPA) was declared a protected site in 2009. It consists of the southern epipelagic reef fringe from where the reef breaks to 1km seawards, starting from the south-eastern island reef of Dhigurah to the western island reef of Rangali. It is known to be one of the most unique whale shark aggregations in the world, with one of the highest sight-fidelity and being a year-round aggregation. Although even after 13 years since declaration the area remains unregulated without any management plan for the MPA. The area is very popular for divers and snorkelers, operators from multiple neighbouring atolls travel for hours on speedboats to the area just to swim with the whale sharks.



WHY SAMPA

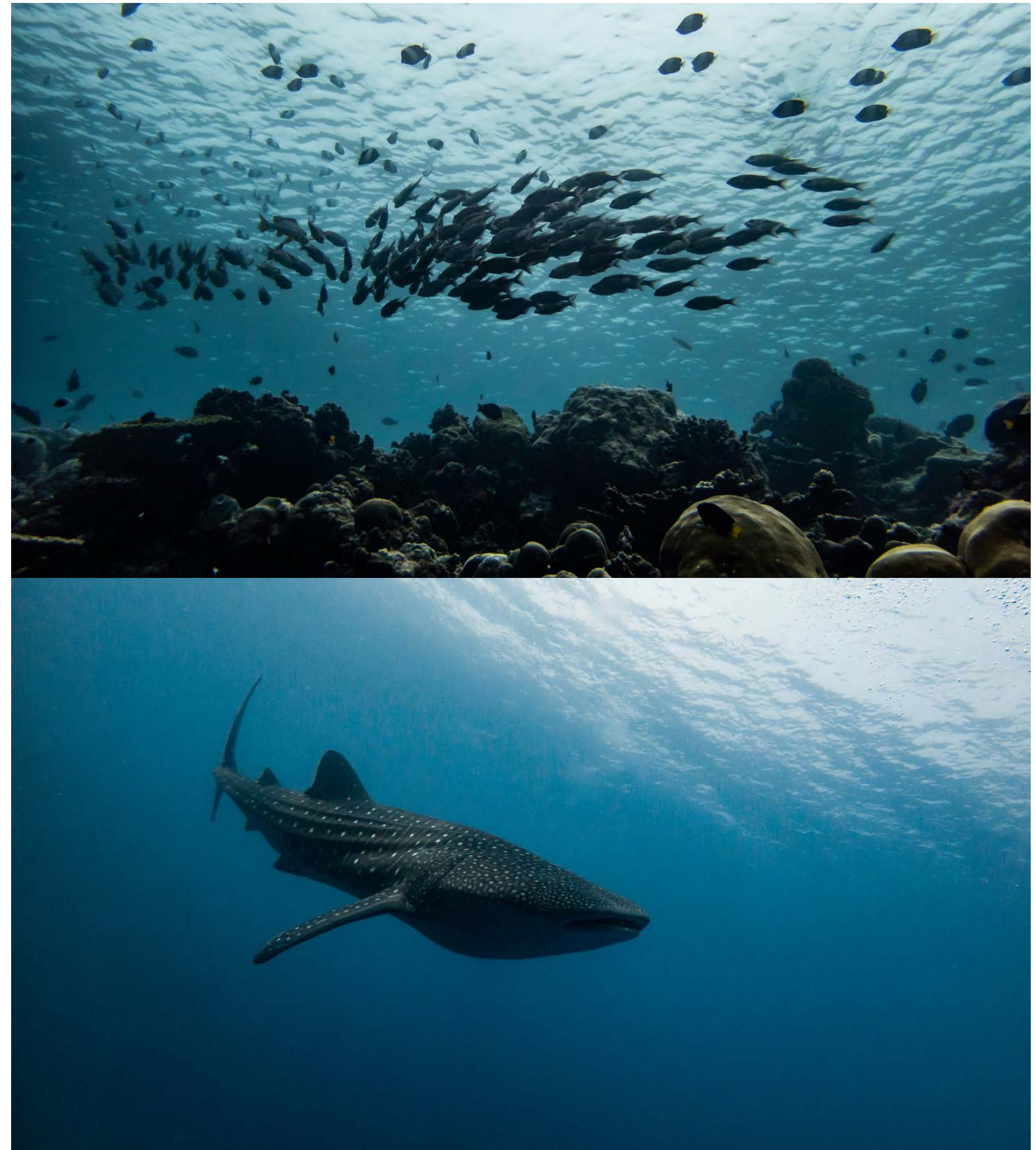
- Significant biodiversity
- Reports of high recovery rates from the 2016 mass bleaching event.
- Assumption of high productivity of the reef due to the presence of large megafauna species including whale sharks, manta rays, turtles, and dolphins
- Economical importance of the area for eco-tourism



RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Participants will be trained and certified as Reef Check EcoDivers in the first couple of days of the trip. A course designed to teach you everything you need to know to conduct full-scale Reef Check surveys. You will learn about marine conservation issues, the role of citizen science, as well as how to identify key indicator fish, macro-invertebrates, and substrates for assessing coral reef health. Once trained up we will begin conducting surveys at 17 unique dive sites chosen in the MPA.

During the expedition, we will also be collecting valuable data on megafauna species including whale sharks, mantas, turtles, cetaceans and many more. These data will be shared with relevant scientific and conservation NGOs and researchers. And of course, we will be teaching everyone how to collect these data and take identification photos of these animals.



WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

We are looking for applicants who have a passion for marine life conservation and have a scuba diving license equivalent to Advanced Open Water. Given this is a survey expedition, we will need people who are happy to learn on the go, chip in, and work hard. We are hoping to put together a team of people sharing a spirit of adventure and the desire to have a real impact on marine science and conservation effort in the Maldives.



MEET THE TEAM

IRENE

MARINE BIOLOGIST
SAVE THE BEACH MALDIVES



After completing her master's degree, Irene has been working as an in-field marine biologist in different tropical areas. She is now Save The Beach Maldives's Project Manager and the Resident Marine Biologist.

BEYBE

PRESIDENT, CO-FOUNDER
SAVE THE BEACH MALDIVES



Conservationist and ocean advocate, Beybe is the president of Save the Beach Maldives. He is also a Reef Check trainer and the Reef Check coordinator for the Maldives and also he is the ambassador for MBRC the Ocean to carry out cleanup programs throughout the Maldives.

BAS

LEAD IN-FIELD COORDINATOR
MALDIVES WHALE SHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME.



After a big career change from insurance to conservation, Bas joined MWSRP on a short internship in early 2017, becoming such an integral team member that his transition to In-Field Coordinator was immediate and seamless. He is currently the Lead In-field Coordinator of MWSRP.

VESSEL AND CREW

For this adventure, we will be hosted by EcoPro Divers onboard their 4* luxury diving liveaboard Moonima. We think this is the perfect vessel for all the operations during the expedition. It is a spacious boat with lots of outside space for relaxation and a great indoor salon perfect for presentations and data entry. The cosy standard cabins and beautiful deluxe cabins will ensure you are recharged and ready for each day. The boat is also fitted with a beautiful outdoor dining area to enjoy the views of the turquoise lagoons while enjoying the food.

The Captain and crew are of course vastly experienced but it is the efforts EcoPro Divers make to mitigate impacts that go beyond the norm. Details such as the provision of non-toxic shower gel and shampoo in the cabins, minimising single-use plastics where they can actually offer reusable water bottles and reducing bottle waste by offering draft beer supplement the key focus of minimising direct environmental impacts by ensuring everyone is well briefed and adheres to good dive practices.



An aerial photograph of a small boat with a white canopy and a green hull, carrying several people, moving across a vast expanse of deep blue ocean. In the lower right quadrant, a large, dense school of fish is visible, appearing as a dark, textured mass against the water's surface. The water's color transitions from a deep navy blue to a lighter, turquoise hue towards the top right of the frame.

THE ROUTE

We will leave from Male' and cruise our way to South Ari on the first or the second day depending on weather conditions and other variables. Once we reach South Ari we will be mooring at 3 different locations best to access our survey sights. But as you know when you are at sea nothing can be set in stone so we will be flexible. The day before the last day we will start cruising back to Male' for our farewell.

DETAILS

Dates: 22nd May - 01st June

Cost: Rates for this expedition starts from 3.300.00 USD per person based on twin sharing in a standard cabin. Single occupant cabin rates are available on inquiry and subject to availability.

Upper deck cabin 200 USD per person

It's important to note that all proceeds over and above running costs will go directly to the charity's Save The Beach Maldives & MWSRP

Apply

To request an application form for a position aboard Maldives Reef Expedition - SAMPA 2022 or to ask further questions, please send us an email at savethebeach.villingili@gmail.com

Included:

- 12% tax
- Full board
- Drinking water from the dispenser, Nescafe, tea, snacks
- 2-3 dives per day (not on arrival/departure day)
- Tanks, weights and, nitrox
- Reef Check EcoDiver Certification
- Group transfer for arrival & departure, airport - Male'

Excluded:

- 6 USD pppd green tax
- Alcohol and soft drinks, Lavazza coffee
- Dive rental equipment
- Internet

