

Colourful Side of Life



the survival of the stunning and enthralling marine life in Maldives over the years.

Due to these reasons Maldivian government, NGOs and the resorts/hotels/liveaboards in Maldives have been focusing on the conservation of endangered marine life by targeting on the limitation of human-caused damage to marine ecosystems and on restoring damaged marine ecosystems.

As a result, capturing, killing or trading of some of the species protected under the law are punishable under the law of Maldives; protected species include black coral, all types of turtle, giant clams, triton shell, Humphead Wrasse/napoleon wrasse, berried and small lobsters, dolphins, whale shark and whales.

With the passing of the Decentralization Act in October 2010, the importance of decentralizing environmental protection and conservation, and integrating it into development decision making is increasingly being realized.

The Government is also demonstrating its commitment to international obligations, playing an active role in the Convention on Biological Diversity and the climate change negotiations. While Maldives contributes less than 0.01% of the global emission of greenhouse gases, it is at the frontline of the predicted impacts of climate change and sea level rise. Maldives has expressed the priority of reaching carbon neutrality by 2020.

The inauguration of the Baa Atoll UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2012 was the country's first international site designation, and provides a model of how enhanced environmental management can be achieved at atoll level, with great potential for replication nationally. Therefore, the time is ripe to make a step-change for biodiversity conservation as a basis for sustainable development.

Do and Don'ts in the ocean

By following these simple instructions you can help to preserve the marine environment for future generations.

- Do not step on coral
- Don't stir the sediment; as you swim try not to create sediments and small debris which upsets habitats and cover corals.
- No chasing or touching marine wildlife; take only photos.
- Don't feed fish.
- No littering.
- No gloves.
- Do not collect dead or alive marine life.
- Do not anchor on coral reefs.

Diving and snorkeling should not missed a single day here in Maldives; explore the breathtaking sceneries and vibrant reefs hidden beneath the surface of the water.



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Introduction about Diving & Snorkeling

Almost two-third of the earth is covered by the sea. Yet, unlike the aquatic organisms that have either the capacity to obtain oxygen from the aquatic environment or the natural means to live in an aquatic world, humans do not have a natural faculty of traversing and surviving in the underwater marine environment. Hence, humans require an artificial breathing apparatus in order to venture into the underwater world: Diving and Snorkeling.

The Maldives are the white-sand, palm-fringed castaway islands of your imagination. The water is so clear you can see the brightly colored fish from your lounge. Dive, snorkel, sail or simply sit back and soak it all in.

With a welcoming culture and some of the finest liveboard dive boats and luxury resorts on the globe, Maldives offers a vast breadth of marine life for both dive enthusiasts and those who prefer to float along the surface.

Most holiday resorts and hotels in Maldives have dive centers with professional guides, instructors or marine biologists who offer different types of diving and snorkeling excursions.

The house reefs around the islands/resorts are home to different species of marine creatures; yet you can choose to join a boat trip to dive sites in other islands, where you can either dive or snorkel.

Conditions in Maldives

Maldives offers some of the most spectacular snorkeling and diving in the world because of the abundance of coral reefs in the region, as well as extremely clear and warm waters.

However, dives in Maldives are characterized by strong currents. Depending on the location, the period of the month and the hour of the day you can have from modest to intensive current which is why you drift dive almost all the times and very seldom you have to come back to the entry point.

While diving is very good by world standards even near the city of Male', visibility and the chance of encountering large pelagic increases as you head to the outer atolls.

Currents vary considerably, with generally little inside the atolls but some powerful streams to be found on the sides facing the open sea.

Diving is possible throughout the year but rain, wind and waves are most common during the season of the southwest monsoon

which lasts from April to November (heaviest rainfall and storms recorded in June to August). The best time for scuba diving is from January to April, when the sea is calm, the sun is shining and the visibility can reach 30m.

During the rainy season, afternoon showers occur with frequency. In the case of a tropical storm or cyclone, fortunately, the Maldives is not in a cyclone belt as other countries; only 11 cyclones have caused bad weather in the Maldives in over 128 years.

Decompression chambers can be found in Bandos in Male' Atoll, Kuredu in Lhaviyani Atoll, Kuramathi in Alifu Atoll and Shangri-la in Addu Atoll.

Diving and snorkeling in Maldives can be experienced either by staying on liveboards which allows you to experience different diving sites in few days, or by staying in a resort/hotel and go for daily diving excursions.

USP's of our underwater beauty

House reefs and nameless number of dive sites are the key selling points for many of Maldives' resorts.

Maldives has become a famous tourist destination because the underwater beauty differentiates it from other holiday destinations. Given that 99 percent of the country is water with 1 percent of land, the country is astonishingly, a diver's paradise.

There are in fact over 2000 coral reefs which make up the flora of this underwater city with more than 2000 species of fish.

Tourism is relatively recent here -- really, it all started for the Maldives in 1972 with just 2 resorts. It has grown to over 80 resorts today. It's the lowest country in the world (yes, it's in the record books) with an average altitude of only about 5 feet above sea level. You're going to get fabulous lagoons protected by coral reefs and other atolls, and gorgeous beaches with its immense underwater beauty.

The Maldives underwater offers you a chance to experience bliss like never before as the sun's rays illuminate the crystal clear waters.

All the resorts/islands have their own private house reefs and close by dive sites that offer you unmatched experiences of underwater photography, snorkeling and diving.

With worldwide divers who have claimed that there is no better diving destination that can be compared to Maldives, the island nation offers you the natural beauty of its beaches, the bliss of its tropical life, the perfection of its astonishing culture and its marine life that just cannot be described in words.

We also have the world's first all-glass underwater restaurant

which offers the widest choice of dining in compelling surroundings where you can encounter our marine life while dining.

Types of diving available



Maldives offer different types of dives but quite all the dives are characterized by medium to strong currents, that's actually what makes them so rich in life.

Drift Diving – the most common type of diving in Maldives which is easy and safe when conducted properly and gives divers the opportunity to see more of marine life.

Submarine Diving – With the introduction of Whale Submarine, both divers and non-divers can enjoy the enchanting beautiful coral reefs and magnificent tropical fish from the comfort of a submarine. This incredible adventure takes place aboard the world's largest passenger submarine. Boasting with a 100% safety record worldwide, this is an experience not to be missed.

Scuba Diving – All resorts/liveboards in Maldives offer a range of Scuba diving courses. You will be taken to the most remote and beautiful reefs by a boat equipped with all the dive gears, oxygen kits, scuba tanks and compressors.

Few descriptions of the most famous points and species native to Maldives

Manta Cleaning Station: As the name suggests, at these types of dive sites you will find manta rays between 3.5m and 6m wide cleaning over a large coral block filled with tiny cleaning wrasse. The mantas gracefully hover over the cleaning station, while the cleaning wrasse swim up and nibble away the unwanted parasites. The ballet can last for up to an hour with up to 20 mantas if one is lucky.

Where & When:

January – April: Western Side of Ari Atoll with current flowing from the East, flowing out of the atoll.

June – November: Eastern Side of North & South Male, Baa Atoll and Lhaviyani Atolls with the current flowing from the West out of the atoll.

May & December: These are transition months when the wind and current are changing. This means that the Mantas are moving from one side of the atoll to the other. MV Orion will dive and hopefully encounter Mantas on both the West and Eastern sides of Ari and North Male Atoll in these months.

Thila/Giri: These are Dhivehi words for pinnacle, which can be described as submerged mountains rising up from the floor of the Atoll between 40m – 25m at the bottom up to between 15m and 1m at the top. If the top of the pinnacle is deeper than 4m it is called a Thila; if it's shallower then it is known as a Giri. Due to

their sharp incline, Thila's are hotspots for schooling pelagic coming up to hunt for reef-fish. When the currents are running, Thila dives are exhilarating with a concoction of dog-tooth tuna, jacks, eagle rays, grey reef sharks, trevally and thousands of red-tooth trigger fish, blue striped snappers, and fusiliers.

Where & When:

Year round in Ari Atoll, North Male and South Male Atoll

June – November: Baa Atoll

Kandu/Channel Dives: The Maldives is made up of 26 Atolls; all except 1 have channels which are breaks in the Atoll's outer reef to allow water to flow in and out. The main attractions on Channel dives are the Pelagic species such as Eagle Rays, Dog Tooth Tuna, and schooling Grey Reef Sharks. Sometimes the lucky ones may encounter some rarer species such as Sailfish, Dorado, Great Hammerheads, Silky Sharks and Tiger Sharks. Great care should be taken on these dives and the dive guides should be followed as currents can be strong and at times unpredictable.

Where & When:

December – May: South Male' Atoll, Vaavu Atoll, Meemu Atoll, Thaa Atoll, Laamu Atoll and Huvadhu Atoll

Ari Atoll has the most popular diving sites because of its marvelous marine beauty with the presence of both pelagic fish, colorful reefs and the ease of accessing it. Some of them are; Barabaru Thila- located in South Ari Atoll which are two small round thilas on a plateau, covered with corals and fish. Schools of snappers, tunas, turtles and white tipped reef sharks are often seen here.

Broken Rock- also located in South Ari Atoll, its depth ranges from 12 to 28 meters where the strong currents and protected pockets on the reef have made an ideal environment for an amazing variation of marine life from strong branching seafans and soft coral to schools of barracuda, fusilier, balfish and turtles.

Hukurudu House Reef- located in South Ari Atoll, it is also a perfect dive site for beginners which ranges from 3 – 20 meters deep. You will see a big sandbank with sand eels with the reef wall full of hard and soft corals. Here you can get to observe sleeping sharks and rays, schools of fusiliers and snappers.

North and South Male' Atoll also offer different diving sites including:

Cocoa Corner- located in South Male' Atoll which is the best shark show around Male' Atoll. Here, divers will see heaps of grey reef sharks, eagle rays and schools of jackfish.

Banana Reef- first dive site to be discovered in Maldives, which is located in North Male' Atoll, continues to be one of the most popular. The dive, which ranges in depth from 5 to 30 meters, has several interesting characteristics including pinnacle and some overhangs. You will see a variety of fish including squirrelfish, bannerfish and oriented sweetlips.

The southern end of Maldives, consisting of Huvadhu Atoll, Fuvahmulah, and Addu Atoll is also very famous for the underwater beauty and the flourishing reefs. The region contains world's largest coral atoll which is Huvadhu Atoll.

Conservation approaches used in Maldives

Human activities – hunting, poaching, habitat destruction and accidental capture in fishing gear have tipped the scales against

