Madagascar Turtle Conservation

Join us for a unique opportunity to protect and study sea turtles along Madagascar's northwestern coast. The program is based on the islands of Nosy Komba and Ampohana, where particpants can gain hands-on conservation experience, meaningful community engagement, and the opportunity to directly contribute to long-term marine conservation research.

Sea turtles in Madagascar face serious threats, including egg poaching, harvesting for the souvenir trade, polluted beaches, and habitat degradation. With naturally low survival rates for hatchlings, even small conservation efforts make a measurable difference. Through population monitoring, protecting vulnerable nets, collecting research data and promoting conservation education – we can improve population resilience and ensure the future survival of these beautiful species!

In the nesting season, from November to April, you will be assisting us in determining and monitoring the key nesting sites, nesting behaviour, nesting population size, and any temporal changes in nesting population size or distribution. In the off-nesting season, from May to October, you will be assisting us in establishing areas of turtle activity, identifying population size and re-establishing nesting beaches. When tides allow, you will also be conducting seagrass surveys, turtle watches and beach cleans.

This extraordinary program not only allows volunteers to witness these magnificent creatures up close but also provides a unique volunteer opportunity with turtles that contributes to the long-term health and survival of these species.

Snapshot

- **Start Dates :** Sunday prior to the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month, year-round
- **Pricing** Australian Dollars
    - **1 week AUD $1,395**
    - **2 weeks AUD $1,895**
    - **3 weeks AUD $2,395**
    - **Additional weeks AUD $500**
- **Minimum Age :** 18
- **Fly In / Out :** Nosy Be (NOS)
- **What's included**: All meals, accommodation, activities, arrival transfer
- **What's not included**: Flights, travel insurance, tourist visa (from US $11), departure transfer (up to $15)
- **Accommodation:** 3-4 share bunk room accommodation. Single / double room upgrades available on request
- **Meals:** 3 delicious Malagasy meals daily, vegetarian available

Itinerary

Volunteers will be stationed at Nosy Komba, a volcanic island nestled in the Mozambique Channel, surrounded by vibrant seagrass meadows, coral reefs, and mangroves. The program also extends to Ampohana, a quaint coastal village featuring untouched nesting beaches that are essential breeding grounds for sea turtles.

At Nosy Komba, volunteers participate in activities such as in-water surveys, habitat monitoring, marine debris removal, and conservation education. The adjacent fringing coral reef is a no-take marine protected area, making it an ideal location for research and conservation efforts.

In Ampohana, the focus shifts to nesting turtle research, nest protection, and the restoration of coastal habitats. Volunteers carry out beach patrols, monitor the success rates of hatching, and work with the local community to advocate for sustainable conservation practices!

Activities depend on the time of year, where **November to April** is nesting season and **May to October** is off-nesting season. Please see the following pages for activity descriptions.

Nesting Season Activities

NIGHT BEACH PATROLS - these patrols help determine nesting frequency and habitat use patterns of Green and Hawksbill turtles.

NEST PROTECTION & RELOCATION - assist qualified staff in determining whether a nest requires relocation and help carefully move eggs to a safer area while maintaining natural incubation conditions.

NEST EXCAVATIONS & HATCHLING SUCCESS SURVEYS - crucial for understanding hatchling survival and nest health.

HATCHLING MONITORING & RELEASE - monitor hatching events and ensure that hatchlings safely reach the ocean. Any disoriented or weak hatchlings may require temporary assistance to prevent mortality.

TURTLE NESTING OBSERVATIONS & DATA COLLECTION - this data is shared with conservation organisations such as the Olive Ridley Project and Wildlife Conservation Society to contribute to global turtle conservation efforts.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS & ANTI-POACHING PATROLS - engage with local communities to raise awareness about the importance of protecting nesting turtles and their eggs.

Off-nesting Season Activities

ACTIVE TURTLE SURVEYS - participate in snorkelling-based turtle surveys, collecting data on species, size, activity, and habitat use.

SEAGRASS SURVEYS - a vital part of the marine ecosystem as well as the main diet for green sea turtles, it is therefore incredibly important to understand the role it plays in our marine ecosystem.

ARTIFICIAL REEF CONSTRUCTION & CORAL PLANTING - design, construction, and maintenance of artificial reefs to restore marine habitats.

DATA ENTRY AND ANALYSIS - all participants assist with data entry and analysis. Accurate and timely data entry is a critical component of our conservation and research projects.

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING & LECTURES - workshops and discussions relating to turtle biology, physiology, and behaviour, marine ecology and conservation strategies, waste management and ocean pollution, reef restoration techniques, climate change, El Niño, and human impacts on marine ecosystems, etc.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - The future of Madagascar's turtles ultimately depends on the people who live here. We are involved in teaching the local community about environmental issues both on a local and global scale. We strive to engage with the local people and provide education about protecting their environment. We are always looking for new ways to inspire people to conserve wildlife that shares the island.

BEACH CLEANS & ECO-BRICKS - all trash collected during our routine beach cleans will be turned into eco-bricks, a vital activity to fight against ocean pollution and upcycled materials to use in various construction projects on and off camp.

BAMBOO STRAWS - to provide alternatives to plastic at restaurants and hotels around the island.

MALAGASY LESSONS - bi-weekly lessons run by our amazing local staff, one of the most enjoyed activities on camp.

Accommodation

Facilities at the ocean-front camp compound on Nosy Komba island include a main house, staff accommodation, and dining area, along with ten cold water shower and flush toilet units. Traditional meals are served in the large dining area, and our camp is powered by solar energy.

Participants stay in one of 12 traditional same-sex bungalows, sharing with up to 5 others in bunk-room style accommodation. You will need to bring your own bedding, mosquito net and towels. Lockable storage boxes are available in each hut to store small valuables. Private rooms are available on request, subject to availability for an additonal AUD $400 per week for a single or $250 per person per week for a twin / double.

Camp is eco-friendly with solar-powered lighting throughout. There are no charging facilities for electronic devices; participants are encouraged to bring a solar panel and battery pack to keep devices charged. Wi-Fi is not available on camp, however, there is Wi-Fi access in the neighbouring village of Ampang, about a half-hour hike from camp. Most participants purchase a local sim card on arrival along with data, this allows you to stay connected at all times.

Participants can either do their own laundry or pay one of the local staff to do it for them.