

Maldives itineraries: Project Shark: Maldives...

The aim of 'Project Shark' is to highlight the global issues facing sharks, with a Maldivian focus, as well as enjoying some of the most exciting dive sites the Maldives have to offer.

Qualifications needed:

There is no minimum dive qualification, however the channel dives on this itinerary are more suited to experienced divers who should ideally be a **PADI Advanced Open Water** or equivalent.

Route: North Male - South Male - Felidhu - Meemu - South Ari - North Male

The aim of 'Project Shark' is to highlight the global issues facing sharks, with a Maldivian focus, as well as enjoying some of the most exciting dive sites the Maldives have to offer. Project Shark in the Maldives also includes a special focus on manta rays as they are a highlight of this destination and closely related to sharks.

ROUTE: North Male - South Male - Felidhu - Meemu - South Ari - North Male

The week will involve close encounters with sharks, manta rays and whale sharks (although these sightings cannot be guaranteed!) with the possibility to observe them in their natural habitat and donate vital information to local Maldivian marine research organisations.

You will be joined on board for the duration of the safari by our experienced blue o two Project Shark trip host, Dr Elke Bojanowski.

Founder of the 'Red Sea Sharks Trust', experienced dive guide and marine biologist, Elke Bojanowski Ph.D, began the Longimanus Project in October 2004 and since this date she has been actively collecting underwater photographs and video-clips of Oceanic Whitetip Sharks for catalogue, review and analysis. Since 2012 the project has expanded to become Red Sea Sharks (www.redseasharks.org) and increased its scope to include Grey Reef and Silky Shark catalogues and monitoring for many shark species.



The week will offer the opportunity to:

- Learn about the biology and behaviour of sharks within the Maldives
- Learn and develop skills in marine biological studies; collecting data and species identification
- Learn about globally endangered marine species and what we can do as divers to ensure their protection
- Enjoy fantastic diving on some of the most unique dive sites in the world
- Experience potential close encounters with sharks, manta rays and whale sharks progress.

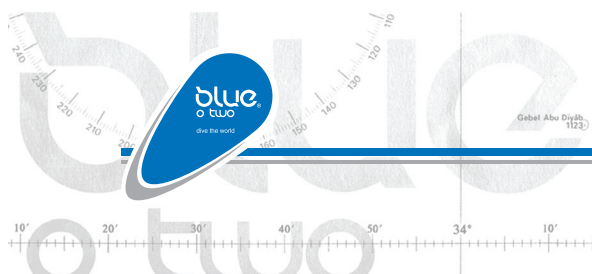
Expertly run:

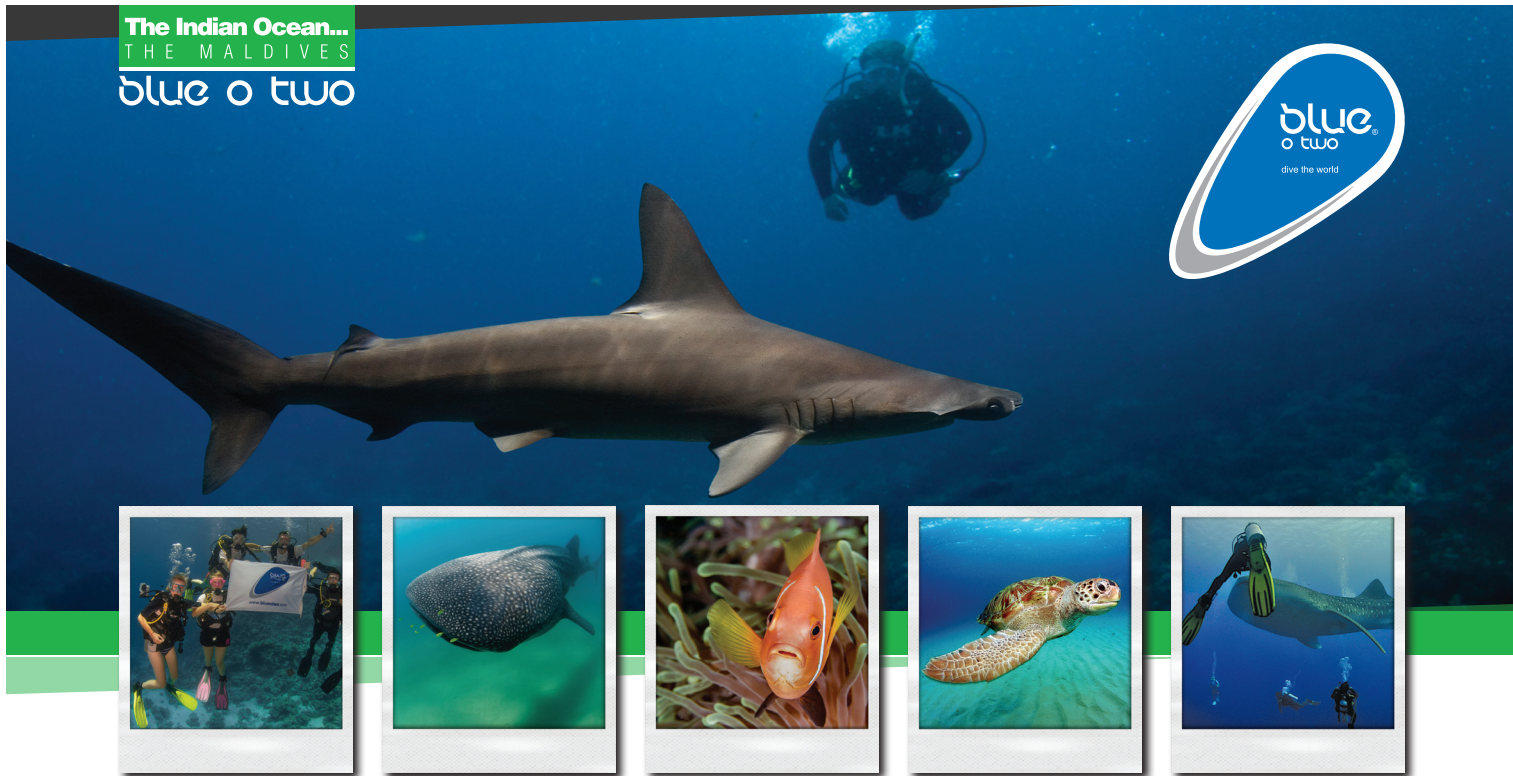
Project Shark is delivered by our resident marine biologist Dr Elke Bojanowski, who will conduct seminars giving divers the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the biology and behaviour of sharks. There will also be a chance to learn about globally endangered marine species and what as divers we can do to aid their protection.

Why join this itinerary?

Encounters with endangered species allows divers to add a greater purpose to their Maldives holiday, so anyone who has an active interest in the preservation of the marine environment and its inhabitants would enjoy this itinerary. However, important to bear in mind is that as well as learning from experts about marine bio-studies within the Maldives, divers will enjoy exciting diving with possible encounters with some of the largest pelagic animals on the planet.

During this trip, you will be able to play a part in adding to valuable research efforts by the 'Manta Trust' who work towards the conservation of manta rays worldwide. Throughout the week, you will record your sightings for identification and submit them to existing Maldivian marine life charities, including The Manta Trust.





Sample itinerary:

****PLEASE NOTE**** the itinerary below is just an example of the route taken and the order and dive sites are not guaranteed. All dives sites are subject to weather conditions and the final route taken is at the absolute discretion of the captain and dive guides.

Day 1: North Male

Day 2: South Male

Day 3: Felidhu

Day 4: Meemu

Day 5: South Ari

Day 6: North Male

Itinerary highlights:

Guraidhoo Kandu South:

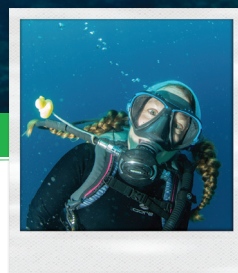
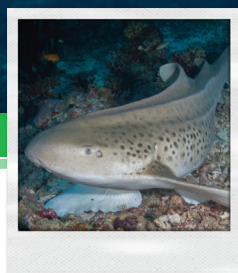
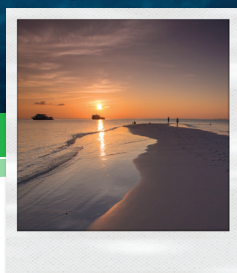
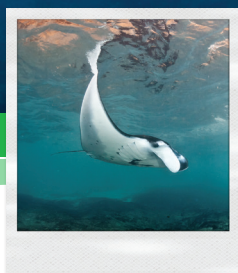
Since the eastern side of the channel is open ocean, large predatory fish can regularly be spotted here. This site is famous for sightings of sharks, schools of eagle rays and the occasional sail fish and hammerheads. The best condition to do the dive is when the current is flowing into the atoll. The dive begins on the outer reef following the current into the atoll. Most of the pelagic species can be observed on the eastern side, where the reef drops off into the deep ocean. At the end of the dive in the channel, along the reef you can find overhangs with plenty of soft coral growth and small fish.

Rangali Madivaru:

Madi means "ray" in Dhivehi. Between the months of December and April this is a superb manta ray cleaning station. As with many good manta points, the reef slopes down gently from its top at 8m (25ft) to the atoll floor at 30m (100ft). Although there are many cleaning stations along this 1km reef, the area where the mantas are most active is midway along the northern side. A deep basin, almost 100m (110yd) across has formed in the coral and as the currents flow out of the atoll, the waters eddy in the basin. This attracts the mantas, which hover gracefully in the current.

Maluku Kandul:

The north east is peppered with submerged pinnacles covered predominantly in soft corals, whilst the west will see you surrounded by jacks and snappers. Keep an eye open for sharks and rays at 30m!



Private guides:

If you are not too comfortable diving independently in a buddy team, or this will be your first trip to the offshore marine parks and you're not a super-experienced diver; why not give yourself peace of mind and book an expert **blue o two** private guide for the trip? They will be there every step of the way to make sure you get the best out of your diving!

Courses:

Want to explore these stunning dive sites for longer? Then why not complete your **PADI Enriched Air Diver (Nitrox)** speciality course whilst on your trip? You can also learn how to make the most of the currents by completing your **PADI Drift Diver** speciality course onboard. Contact our expert travel team today for more information.

Itinerary map:

