

The Guy Joseph

Ocean Award

2013

South Male' Atoll, Rep. of Maldives



Maldives Internship Proposal

Background Information

The Maldives is an island archipelago comprising of over 1,200 islands spreading from north to south over 200km. The country now has close to 200 tourist resorts operating; bringing over 1 million tourists per year. This high number of visitors is creating a higher and higher environmental impact on the local ecosystems every year. The technology and investment in green technologies to deal with increasing environmental impact is currently not available in the Maldives.

Unfortunately the Maldives is a fragile and vulnerable ecosystem; most islands are less than 1m above sea level and are vulnerable to any changes in weather patterns, ocean currents and of course sea level rise. Coral reefs form protective barriers around the atolls but can only protect the islands from so much. As the global weather pattern changes and storms become more frequent and violent across the Indian Ocean, many of the local reefs are becoming degraded and prone to disease. This weakening of the reefs leaves many of the islands unprotected to storm surges and extreme high tides, which can cause flooding and water damage.

In 1998 the global weather phenomenon El Nino dramatically increased the sea temperature causing widespread coral bleaching across the coral reefs of the Maldives. As much as 80% of the coral on the reefs was severely damaged, some beyond repair. Since the devastating bleaching event, and the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami, many artificial reef projects have been started to repair the damaged reefs. The 1998 bleaching event was the turning point in the health of the Maldives coral reefs.

Nautilus Initiative is a marine conservation consultancy established in 2011 based in the Maldives. We work with resorts to promote sustainable use of the fragile marine ecosystem amongst tourists and locals. Our projects include educational snorkelling and scuba diving trips, weekly local marine life presentations, artificial reef construction and reef health surveys. Our primary base is at Taj Exotica Resort & Spa in South Male' Atoll. Here we work alongside Ocean Dive Centre operating educational snorkelling trips, weekly marine life presentations and an artificial reef project.

The 'Coral Garden Project' is an artificial reef project which relies on sponsorship of individual 'gardens' by guests of the resort. During their stay they have the opportunity to work alongside our reef team to create their own coral reef which is planted at our house reef in an attempt to increase diversity levels and healthy coral growth. The sponsors are then sent a monthly newsletter and quarterly personalised updates on their 'garden'.

The Maldives is often thought of as luxury destination for those wealthy enough to afford it. However in reality a visit to a local island can leave many in shock at the level of underdevelopment throughout the country. The first democratic elections were held in 2008; since then the health care system has undergone many improvements however the basic infrastructure is still lacking across the country. The education system is also in desperate need of improvement; many teachers are foreigners working for charities or government aid programs and to study any higher than high school (age 18 – although many leave before that age, especially girls) the family must pay for the child to study abroad. As a result from few individuals achieving university level qualifications, many higher level jobs go to foreigners with better qualifications.

Aim

To introduce young local people to marine conservation ideas that will impact and protect their local area, as well as introduce them to life working at a resort; giving them some much needed experience in a work environment. To give them a PADI Divemaster qualification which will allow them to gain employment after the internship has ended.

Main Objectives

- To increase knowledge of the marine environment surrounding them and on a more global scale.
- To educate on the methods involved in creating and maintaining an artificial reef.
- To enhance presentation skills with a weekly presentation on local marine life and marine conservation hot topics.
- To give experience in working in a Maldives resort.
- To complete the PADI Divemaster course.

Basic Outline

The internship will be spread over twelve weeks and will include the following activities:

- Artificial reef monitoring – the intern will be taught how to care for the current artificial reef project in place, as well as how to plant new artificial reefs and update the sponsors of the current reefs. They will also be taught basic coral biology and reproduction science.
- Snorkel trips and reef health surveying – the intern will be introduced to basic marine life identification (for example common reef fish and turtles) and invited to run daily snorkelling trips which help to educate guests in correct coral reef use and marine life. The intern will also be taught some basic survey techniques which are in line with the government surveys conducted on local reefs.
- Weekly marine life presentation – the intern will be given the opportunity to design and present their own presentation on local marine life and marine conservation hot topics one night a week to the resort guests. This will be done alongside our resident marine biologist. Presentation skills, including safety briefings, will also be taught to the intern which can be used in their future career.
- Mini project chosen by intern – a small project will be conducted towards the end of the internship using some of the techniques taught throughout the internship. The project topic will be of the interns choosing and will be conducted solely by them. This project will allow them to put together everything they have learned and apply it to a marine project and report.
- PADI Divemaster Course – we will conduct a PADI Divemaster course which is the first professional level diving certificate and allows the candidate to work in the dive industry as a guide or teaching assistant.

Preliminary Budget

Item	Cost	Frequency
Divemaster teaching materials	\$150	Initial outlay
Uniform	\$50	Initial outlay
Pocket money	\$80	Monthly
Food/Accommodation costs	\$3	Daily

There are two options regarding the accommodation of the intern; one is they can remain on the resort island with a charge of \$3 per day for food and accommodation. The second option is they can travel each morning from Male' to the resort and back again in the evening (this option will have no cost associated).

PADI Divemaster manual and accompanying underwater slates will be purchased in Male' at a cost no higher than \$150, any remaining balance will be used to buy items for the project run by the intern.

The intern's uniform will consist of a pair of shorts and t-shirt for office duty and a rash guard and board shorts for in water activities.

The 'Pocket money' is to be used by the intern to help them maintain our high grooming standards, including haircuts and the purchase of toiletries. It may also be put towards their daily travel costs if they choose not to stay on the resort island.

Time line

The internship will be conducted over a 3 month period starting at the beginning of July 2013 and ending September 2013.

Week One	General orientation of the dive centre, resort and local area (including coral reefs and marine life). Weekly presentation introduced. Accompany resident marine biologist on daily snorkelling trips.
Week Two	Conduct snorkelling trips to local reefs under supervision of resident marine biologist. Introduction to artificial reef project and weekly presentation design started. Evaluation and appraisal conducted by resident marine biologist and dive centre manager.
Week Three	Conduct snorkelling trips without direct supervision. Maintenance and cleaning of artificial reef conducted under supervision. Weekly presentation shown to dive centre staff for feedback.
Week Four	Weekly presentation conducted to guests under supervision of resident marine biologist. Maintenance and cleaning of artificial reef without direct supervision. Evaluation and appraisal conducted by resident marine biologist and dive centre manager.
Week Five	Continuation of duties. All theory for Divemaster certificate completed.
Week Six	Basic report on status of artificial reef project completed by intern under supervision of resident marine biologist. Evaluation and appraisal conducted by resident marine biologist and dive centre manager.
Week Seven	Mini-project outlined.
Week Eight	Mini-project started. Evaluation and appraisal conducted by resident marine biologist and dive centre manager.
Week Nine	Continuation of duties. Divemaster certification completed. Intern is now able to

	guide qualified divers with indirect supervision and act as a teaching assistant during diving courses.
Week Ten	Draft mini-project report submitted. Evaluation and appraisal conducted by resident marine biologist and dive centre manager.
Week Eleven	Final work carried out for mini-project.
Week Twelve	Presentation of mini-project conducted by intern to dive centre staff.

Recruitment Process

The internship will be advertised to local school graduates living in the Male' area (close proximity to the resort island), any applicants will be asked to provide proof of school certificates including a good grasp of science and English. The internship is subject to the good behaviour of the intern and can be withdrawn at any time should there be any misconduct on the part of the intern.

News of the internship will be spread initially through word of mouth; by contacting local schools and dive centres who may have recently conducted a Rescue Diver certification to locals. If no suitable candidates are found through this method, the internship will then be advertised in the local paper and on www.job-maldives.com (a local job-hunting website).

Initial applicants will be assessed through their application forms (see application pack) and certificates. They will then be contacted by phone – if a large volume of applicants meet the requirements, phone interviews will be conducted by the resident marine biologist and dive centre manager. Those who are found suitable from the phone interviews will then be invited to the resort for a formal interview and to see the dive centre facilities. If only a small number of applicants are suitable from the application packs the stage of phone interviews will be skipped and they will be invited directly to the resort for interview. The final successful applicant will be chosen with regards to attitude towards the role, enthusiasm and appearance.

Evaluation and Monitoring

At the beginning of the internship both the intern and the operation will set 3 aims each party hopes to achieve by the end of twelve week internship. These aims will be revisited at the half way point to make sure the internship is on track to meet them; if not activities will be adjusted to ensure the aims are met.

Each week a blog will be written by the intern describing the activities they have taken part in during the week past as well as an overview of any new techniques or knowledge they have gained. This blog will be available on the internet for supporters of Guy's Trust and guests of the resort to follow.

Every two weeks the progress of the intern will be evaluated by the resident marine biologist and dive centre manager. During this evaluation any issues that have arisen will be discussed and corrected. This meeting will also provide the intern with the opportunity to voice any thoughts they may have on the running of the internship.

At the end of the internship a report will be written by the intern detailing all they have accomplished including new techniques and knowledge. They can also include their opinion of the internship and how it can be improved in the future. A second report will be written by the resident

marine biologist and dive centre manager detailing any successes and any short comings of the internship. Suggestions for future improvement will also be discussed in the report.

If the intern is found to be a hard worker and enthusiastic to the role they may be given the opportunity to become a full time staff member at the dive centre. This contract offer is subject to the suitability of the intern for the role and the successful completion of the internship and PADI Divemaster certification.

However if the intern is not selected for further employment after the internship we will continue to remain in contact to assist them in seeking work or further study elsewhere.

We aim to have the internship reported in a local newspaper and local magazine however this will be arranged after the start of the internship. Travel agencies may also be contacted to spread the word about the internship and the work that Guy's Trust is doing.