

MARINE LAB MALDIVES



BANYAN TREE
VABBINFARU



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VABBINFARU

LIVING

OUR

SUSTAINABILITY

CULTURE

THE FIRST IN THE MALDIVES

Keeping natural attractions pristine serves a bigger purpose – protecting the planet. Hence, we have employed science-based approach to track changes, implement efficient operations and deploy awareness programmes to provide an adaptive frameworks.

In 2004, Banyan Tree Maldives Lab officially opened its doors, serving the twin-island: Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru and Dhawa Ihuru. It became the very first resort-based facility in the Maldives, designed for fieldwork conducted by visiting scientists, as well as to promote marine conservation and sustainable livelihoods in local communities.

MARINE TALK

Tuesdays and Fridays - 4:45pm

One of the main goals of the Marine Lab is to educate guests about local marine ecosystems. Four times a week we host a 20–30 minute Marine Talk where we provide information about the coral reef ecosystem, the modern threats that they face and how we can help to reduce them. This also touches on some of the conservation projects that we undertake in the Marine Lab.



CITIZEN SCIENCE

Tuesdays - 10:30am

Twice a week, we snorkel around a section of the island to record different species and keep track of the local populations on our house reefs. We record 3 different categories of marine life: megafauna, groupers and butterflyfish, such as reef sharks, nurse sharks, eagle rays, turtles, trevallys, peacock groupers, crown of thorns starfish and racoon butterfly fish.

SEE FISH SNORKEL SAFARI

If you fancy a change of scenery then the see fish snorkel safari is perfect for you. Once a week we travel by boat to a nearby reef to explore different environments exhibiting unique communities of marine life, different to those on our house reefs. We encourage you to engage with us in spotting megafauna, groupers and butterfly fish to help monitor the health of the surrounding reefs and aid conservation efforts here at the marine lab.



NIGHT SNORKELLING

The experience is like no other as you will witness the magical glow of bioluminescent plankton as you move through the water, surrounded by unique nocturnal marine creatures in their natural habitat. Megafauna activity increases as sharks come out to hunt and giant trevallys use the light from your underwater torch to catch prey.

USD **55** / guest

*Not recommended for beginner snorkellers

*Upon request

GUIDED SNORKEL

The exclusive opportunity to explore the reefs with one of 2 types of professional guides. Choose a marine biologist who will explain details about the vibrant coral reef ecosystem, highlighting different organisms of interest along the way. Great for intermediate snorkelers. Beginner snorkellers may require a snorkel lesson with the Dive Centre.

USD 50 / guest

*Upon request



SAVE THE REEF

Wednesdays - 10:30am

It is essential for us to keep the reef clean of predators that consume corals so that we can increase their chances of survival and protect the reef. The two predators that we remove are the crown of thorns starfish (COTS) and the pincushion starfish (PINS) which feed on coral polyps leading to substantial loss of coral across the reef. They are known as 'corallivores' due to their diet consisting mainly of coral.

CORAL NURSERY

Restoring the coral on our reefs is one of one of our main projects that we undertake here at the Marine Lab. Coral rope nurseries are an effective way to provide a second chance to any fragments of coral that break off from the main structure. We collect these fragments also known as coral recruits, and attach them to rope nurseries usually 10 metres long and 2 metres wide.



ELECTRIC REEFS

To further support restoration/conservation, we have established 3 'electric reefs' spread across both islands. This concept involves combining technology with ecology, resulting in more effective conservation. An electric reef is a large metal framework connected to a low voltage power source, which creates a localised electronic field increasing calcium deposition on the metal.



REEF MONITORING

Consistent monitoring allows us to spot outbreaks of coral diseases sooner and identify which factors might be responsible for the occurrence. This allows us to respond more swiftly to outbreaks in an attempt to reduce the spread of a disease. Collecting this information allows us to implement targeted conservation efforts. Using our data we can collaborate with local authorities and organisations to allow for more effective delegation of marine protected areas and for implementing more sustainable fishing practices to better protect the reefs.





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