



The award-winning conservation group Blue Ventures offers unique school expeditions to Madagascar – one of the most biologically diverse places known to man

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Adventure | Conservation | Education

Students will see wildlife that exists nowhere else on Earth. They will live alongside nomadic villagers who survive off the sea. And they will learn first-hand how conservationists work to protect threatened coral reefs, mangroves and other habitats that sustain life on Earth.



For more than four years, Blue Ventures has brought hundreds of people from around the world to join our **conservation expeditions** to the southwest coast of Madagascar, home to the fourth largest continuous coral reef system in the world.

Madagascar has been designated a “**hotspot**” for its vast biological diversity. Scientists say 6,000 marine species are known to live off the shores of Madagascar, but this represents only a small fraction of the underwater diversity yet to be discovered. Madagascar is also the only place you can find **lemurs** in their natural habitat. And the country is home to famous baobab forests where trees can live to be 1,000 years old and grow more than 10 metres in diameter.

Blue Ventures is now offering mini-expeditions to help schools

meet curriculum requirements on the environment and conservation. These **10-day trips** will take students through national park areas where they can **hike through canyons, swim beneath waterfalls and spot lemurs jumping through trees overhead.**

Students will visit Blue Ventures’ conservation research site in the remote fishing village of Andavadoaka – population 1,200 – located along the southwest coast of Madagascar. In 2007, Andavadoaka won the prestigious Equator Prize award from the United Nations for its work with Blue Ventures and other conservation groups to protect local marine resources.

Students will learn snorkelling and fish identification. They will **explore coral reef** areas where they can spot brightly coloured

angel and butterfly fish, endangered sea turtles, spotted stingrays, giant lobsters and fluorescent corals.

Students will stay in an eco-friendly lodge with seaside cabins, located adjacent to Andavadoaka. They will ride in traditional dug-out canoes called “pirogues” and learn how the nomadic Vezo people rely on the sea for food, transport and cultural identity. They will also see first-hand how conservationists are working with local villagers to create a vast reserve that will span 700-square kilometres, benefit 25 local villages and protect coral reefs, mangroves, sea grass beds and other threatened habitats.

It is a once-in-a-lifetime adventure for students to experience cultures and habitats most never have the chance to see.

Blue Ventures bring groups of students and teachers to Madagascar for two-week expeditions. The trips build student confidence, give real-life examples of conservation in action and help schools meet curriculum requirements. Trip activities can be tailored to your school's needs.

Example itinerary



Days 1-3: Arrive in Madagascar capital Antananarivo. Spend night in the historic city of Fiaranatsoa ("Place of Good Learning"). Travel to Isalo National Park to see waterfalls, sandstone rock formations and lemurs. Spend night in port city of Toliara.



Day 4: Arrive in fishing village of Andavadoaka, population 1,200. Safety review and tour of conservation project site. Swim test (in preparation of snorkeling activities.)



Day 5: Seminar on local habitats, environmental threats and conservation strategies. Tour of Andavadoaka and meeting with village elders to discuss local Vezo culture and customs.



Days 6-8: Classes on region's fish and corals. Snorkeling lessons and excursions to point out marine species.



Days 9-10: Tour of the spiny forest and baobab trees. Lessons on flora and fauna, mapping and surveying techniques. Lessons in Malagasy language. Visit local school and meet Vezo children.



Days 11-14: Depart Andavadoaka for Antananarivo. Stops in Toliara and Ranomafana National Park where visitors can see lemurs, chameleons and fossas, Madagascar's largest predator, in pristine primary rainforests.

Costs

For groups of 10 students with one school representative and a Blue Ventures guide:

- £975 per person
- Includes all meals, accommodation and activities for 14 nights. Price excludes, drinks and snacks, visas, insurance and carbon offset payments
- Airfare on Air France or Air Madagascar will be separately and can be arranged with Blue Ventures' preferred Travel Agency, Wexas Travel, or direct with Air Madagascar
- Prices as of 23rd October 2008 and may be subject to change.
- For groups of 10 students or more, school representatives pay only their airfare, visa and carbon offset fee

Why Blue Ventures?

For more than four years, Blue Ventures has led hundreds of people from around the world on expeditions to Madagascar.

Our on-site staff of 15 includes a certified medic. All are trained in safety, conservation and local culture. As a member of the **Year Out Group**, we adhere to strict codes of safety and conduct. Our expeditions and field activities adhere to the British Standard BS8848.

Blue Ventures' expeditions have been recognised by some of the world's leading tourism and conservation organisations.

In 2005 Blue Ventures became the first European organisation to win the **SEED Award** sponsored by the UN and the World Conservation Union for the most innovative and entrepreneurial partnership for sustainable development.

In 2006, Skal, the world's largest travel and tourism organisation, named Blue Ventures winner of its **International Ecotourism Award**. Blue Ventures was "**Highly Commended**" by the Responsible Tourism Awards in 2004, 2006 and 2007. In October 2007, National Geographic Traveler Magazine named Blue Ventures one of its "**Top 50 Tours of a Lifetime.**"

As a not-for-profit organisation, you can be assured that our work and revenue directly benefit communities and nature.

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