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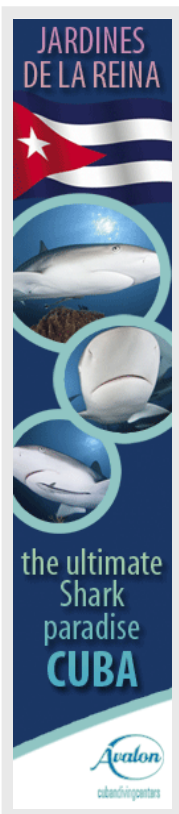
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06.12.10

Divers can help with new Maldives conservation project



Scuba divers have been offered the opportunity to take part in a conservation project taking place in the waters surrounding the Maldives archipelago.

Unlike many conservation projects, this new operation has been setup specifically to allow qualified recreational divers - rather than just scientists and biologists - do their bit for the marine environment.

Co-ordinated by Biosphere Expeditions, the award-winning not-for-profit conservation organisation, and the Maldives Marine Research Centre, the project will see holidaymakers collect important data on the corals, fish and invertebrates. The area's whale shark population will also be monitored.

All divers who lend a helping hand will be guided by marine scientists from the Maldives, UK and Germany who will train and oversee their work.



Diver collecting data

The study will ensure informed conservation decisions can be made by the Maldivian government and non-governmental organisations.

Dr Matthias Hammer, biologist, Reef Check trainer and Executive Director of Biosphere Expeditions, said: "The coral reefs of the Maldives archipelago and the fish populations that live amongst them are extraordinarily diverse and rich. They are also in a relatively pristine state and having both these factors together is quite rare

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