

Seacology in the Bahamas

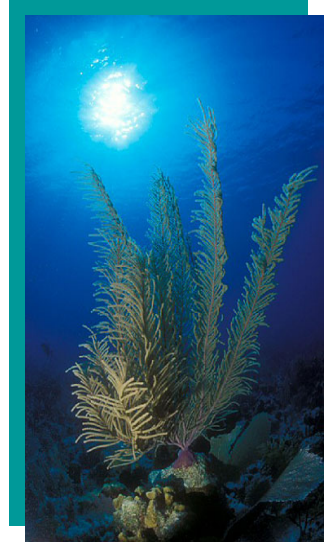


Enjoy a Seacology expedition exploring the reefs, wrecks, and wildlife found around the Bahamas, where we will be diving in Mayaguana, Samana Cays, San Salvador, and Conception Island.

May 5 – 12, 2012

About the Bahamas

Located just east and south of Florida and comprised of more than 700 islands covering 1,000 square miles of ocean, the Bahamas remain an enigma. Many have visited, but few comprehend their enormous expanse. Even fewer have a clear idea of the topographical variety of dive sites and wide range of marine life offered by such a vast area. From blue holes to sheer walls, mysterious caves and historic shipwrecks, from shallow Elkhorn coral forests to open ocean organisms both great and small, the Bahamas offer something for beginning and experienced divers alike.



More than 5% of the world's coral is found in the Bahamas. Much of the water in the islands is less than 20 feet deep, allowing enormous spans of intricate reef systems. Walls abound, as well; some of the tops begin from 50 to 100 feet below the surface, and plunge to many thousands of feet. The huge area covered ensures that nearly everything found in the southern Atlantic finds its way to the Bahamas – sharks of all kinds, humpback whales, several species of dolphins, whale sharks, eagle rays and arrays of smaller creatures too numerous to list. This area offers a wide selection and variety of diving experiences, matched with an exploratory journey through an island nation spanning more than 1,000 square miles of some of the clearest waters in the world.

Diving in the Bahamas

The Southern Bahamas provides divers a wide range of marine life and a topographical diversity. From blue holes to walls, swim throughs to wrecks, Elkhorn coral forests to coral reef heads teeming with life, these special trips offer divers a truly unique experience. The richly productive shallow banks provide a perfect environment for juvenile nurseries, and the deep water of the Atlantic and Gulf Stream provides a perfect habitat for pelagic species. All of this biodiversity creates a dense and varied fish population found few other places in the Caribbean. Some of our stops may include:

Mayaguana, the easternmost island in the Bahamas, contains deep reefs with swim throughs and walls home to myriad fish and friendly marine life, such as the Wahoo.



Remote **Samana Cay** includes a long shelf of coral pillars where larger fish and rays congregate.

Containing between 15 and 20 moored dive sites, **San Salvador** offers unusual formations including a double drop off, swim through caves and tunnels, huge elephant ear sponges, wire coral, and even the rare whip coral shrimp, usually found only in Indo-Pacific waters.

Conception Island is the site of numerous well known dives with beautiful topography and wildlife, along with an exciting shipwreck to explore.

Visiting a Seacology Project in the Bahamas

Our trip will include a stop at **San Salvador Island**, where Seacology is funding a project to protect the endemic San Salvador iguana, a globally endangered reptile with only 500 individuals



remaining in the wild. A small island in the Bahamas, San Salvador contains diverse marine and terrestrial habitats home to many native species, several of which are threatened.

With a population of just 1,000, the island's inhabitants include several local groups seeking to boost conservation efforts in the area. Seacology is partnering with these

groups to fund an iguana head-starting facility to protect this rare reptile, which is typically orange to brown in color and boasts a crest of spiny scales down its back.

Extensive habitat destruction on San Salvador has put the iguana's population at grave risk. These iguanas are vital in keeping island



mosquito populations in check, which multiply exponentially and are often debilitating in the absence of these reptiles. The San Salvador iguanas also serve a critical purpose in island plant restoration as seeds are randomly dropped from their waste. We will visit the Seacology-funded breeding facility to meet with iguana experts and see these spectacular endangered species for ourselves.

About the Vessel

Our home during this trip will be the *M/V Turks & Caicos Explorer II*, a modern dive boat that is the flagship of *Explorer Ventures*. The *Turks & Caicos* is newly-refurbished with deluxe lodgings and world-class dive equipment.

The dive deck includes a bathroom, individual gear bins, camera table, recharging station, air and nitrox filling stations, tank racks, freshwater showers, and rinse station for scuba and camera equipment.



The *Turks & Caicos* comfortably accommodates 20 passengers in 10 double staterooms with ensuite facilities and privately controlled air conditioning. When not diving, relax in the air-conditioned main salon or large sundeck, both furnished with lounge areas. The inner salon also holds a TV and other media equipment and a full video library. The outside deck also provides access to a large, awning-covered flybridge with wet bar, barbeque, and plenty of seating.

With friendly staff, excellent and varied meals, and quality facilities, our time on the *Turks & Caicos* will be fun and relaxing, furnishing an unforgettable Caribbean experience.



Sample Expedition Itinerary

- May 5 Leave dock in *Provo* in the evening and transit overnight to *Mayaguana*
- May 6 Dives in *Mayaguana*, including Radio Rocks, Todd's Tower, and Abi's Reef. Overnight transit to *Plana Cay*.
- May 7 Several dives in *Plana Cay*. Overnight transit to *Samana Cay South*.
- May 8 Explore various dive sites in *Samana Cay*. Overnight transit to *San Salvadore*.
- May 9 Dives in *San Salvadore*, including Devil's Claw (a drift dive), Pyramids, and Bamboo point. Overnight transit to *Conception Island*.
- May 10 Diving near *Conception Island*, including Chutes and Ladders and Missing Link.
- May 11 Transit to *Emerald Bay Marina*.
- May 12 Disembarkation

Note: The itinerary above is subject to change based on local conditions.



Reserve Your Spot

Join Seacology on this terrific opportunity to explore the Caribbean Sea. We will depart from Providenciales on May 5, 2012, and disembark in George Town, Great Exuma, on May 12, 2012.

The cost of this extraordinary dive trip includes the 8-day, 7 night cruise aboard the *Turks & Caicos Explorer II*, all meals, activities onboard, scuba diving, village visit, private ensuite facilities, and \$100 per person donation to *Seacology's Carbon Offset Fund*.

Upper Deck Stateroom:

Double occupancy - \$2,700 per person

Single occupancy - \$5,000 per person

Lower Deck Stateroom:

Double occupancy - \$2,500 per person

Single occupancy - \$4,800 per person

These prices do not include international airfare, personal expenses such as phone calls, laundry, and gratuities.

Reservations can be made with a deposit of 50% of the per person cost. Payments can be made by check, payable to **Seacology**, or by credit card. A 4% surcharge will apply for those paying by credit card. These deposits, less a \$300 per person cancellation fee, are 100% refundable up to December 1, 2011, after which they are nonrefundable. The final nonrefundable balance will be due by February 1, 2012.

Checks should be mailed to:

Seacology

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Seacology is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the environments and cultures of islands around the world. Seacology works directly with indigenous island communities to establish marine and forest reserves, while providing crucial humanitarian support.

Learn more at www.seacology.org