



### **ERIC Reef Check EcoExpeditions guidelines**

As the official coral reef monitoring programme of the United Nations, Reef Check empowers divers through its EcoDiver training course to conduct in-water coral reef surveys, collect, collate and submit data to a global database on reef health. The Environmental Research Institute Charlotteville (ERIC) is an organisation of sustainable development experts with decades of experience in the southern Caribbean. With a long-term goal of establishing an integrated community and ecosystem-based approach to resource management in Northeast Tobago, ERIC undertakes a multi-faceted work programme to assess the status of natural resources and ecosystems, engage and capacity build with the local communities, and develop and promote sustainable tourism practices for alternative livelihood generation. With an on-site team boasting four Reef Check EcoDiver Trainers, three of whom are marine biologists, two are experienced PADI scuba instructors and two Divemaster trainees, ERIC is uniquely placed as the only Reef Check Training facility in the southern Caribbean.

An important component of the work programme at ERIC is to establish a baseline and subsequent on going monitoring of the coral reefs of Northeast Tobago, a regionally significant area due to the diverse range of ecosystems that in turn support a globally valuable level of biodiversity. This biodiversity includes 51 at-risk species, 30 endemic species, 18 migratory species, such as leatherback sea turtles and manta rays, and 16 [CITES](#) registered species, as well as the IUCN listed, critically endangered [hawksbill turtle](#) and the EDGE-recognised [Montastraea coral](#). While life operates at a noticeably slower pace than the rest of the country with small traditional fishing villages and intact natural environments, the coral reef monitoring programme at ERIC will help to facilitate the formation of effective reef management plans.

Working alongside the marine biologists at ERIC on a one or two week [Reef Check](#) EcoExpedition, you will attain your [EcoDiver](#) certification before carrying out daily Reef Check surveys in the area. The training course combines classroom-based theory and knowledge development as well as in-water training sessions, giving you all the skills required to confidently and accurately identify Atlantic and Caribbean indicator species and conduct in-water transect surveys. In addition to Reef Check survey dives you may get the chance to take part in further exploratory research dives to help build a comprehensive understanding of the status of the local reefs and other keystone species and ecosystems.

Beyond scuba diving surveys you could get the opportunity to visit a tropical forest or take part in marine bird monitoring at one of the largest colonies of magnificent

frigatebirds in the Caribbean. From April until July it may also be possible to take part in a turtle patrol at one of the last intact stable hawksbill turtle rookeries in the region, monitoring nesting sea turtles and maintaining a deterrent presence against poachers. To round off your experience at ERIC, our team of marine biologists will also deliver twice weekly evening lecturettes on various topics of ecological and conservation interest, as well as work with you to finalise data entry and submission to Reef Check.

As the only operator of [Reef Check EcoExpeditions](#) in the Caribbean we offer you a truly unique opportunity to work with a team of dedicated and committed marine biologists in an area with some of the best coral reefs in the region. You will meet experts in the field and witness participatory resource co-management in action, all whilst enjoying an area of Tobago that continues to embody and retain its traditional and pristine nature.

**Start dates:** second and third Tuesday of every month

**Expedition size:** 4 to 6 participants, with individuals encouraged to apply

**Price:** one week US\$ 699, two weeks US\$ 1,099

**Pre-requisites:** Certified diver, certified Reef Check EcoDiver (or see Optional extras to complete the course at the beginning of the expedition), moderate fitness level

**Inclusions:** airport transfers, all expedition diving (ten dives planned per week), twice weekly evening lecturettes, farewell beach BBQ

**Optional extras:** Reef Check EcoDiver course US\$ 199, terrestrial field trip (for previously certified EcoDivers or two week expedition members only) US\$ 100, equipment hire (one week US\$ 120, two weeks US\$ 199), night dives US\$ 75, turtle patrol US\$ 25

**Payment:** please note a 25% deposit is payable upon registration via Paypal (not including Paypal charges) with the balance payable one Expedition Day One

**Accommodation:** Charlotteville and Speyside offer a range of choices to suit all budgets including self-catering guesthouses to more upmarket options, from US\$ 50

**Flights to Tobago direct:** British Airways, Condor, Iberia (codeshare)

**Flights to Tobago via Trinidad:** Aero Tuy, American Airlines, British Airways, Caribbean Airlines, Liat, Surinam Airways, United Airlines

For more information visit [www.eric-tobago.org](http://www.eric-tobago.org) or email [ericexpeditions@eric-tobago.org](mailto:ericexpeditions@eric-tobago.org)