

# NORTHERN GREAT BARRIER REEF CONSERVATION EXPEDITION

2-9 DECEMBER 2023



Great Barrier  
Reef Foundation

# THE GREAT BARRIER REEF IS ONE OF THE MOST PRECIOUS AND BEGUILING PLACES ON THE PLANET

Experience the Reef like never before, over eight nights, alongside marine researchers and conservationists who have dedicated their lives to protecting and restoring this natural wonder.

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation and True North are delighted to invite you to a once in a lifetime Reef Expedition across the northern most tip of the Great Barrier Reef.

Just 20 guests will travel aboard the True North II vessel for this inaugural conservation expedition, sailing south from the Torres Strait Islands to Cairns. You will snorkel and dive through diverse coral reefs, witness untouched and remote marine environments.

True North is a trusted brand delivering activity-based itineraries designed to satisfy the world's most discerning travellers. The vessel is purpose built to access remote wilderness areas.

The Expedition has been timed so the journey mimics the movements of some of the Reef's most majestic animals. We will follow the tracks of green sea turtles, visit their nurseries, tag whale sharks, and search for the illusive Omura whale from the skies.

The Expedition has been co-curated by Hayley Baillie, a diver, passionate underwater photographer, and Great Barrier Reef Foundation Board member, Richard Fitzpatrick, a marine biologist and Emmy Award winning cinematographer who has been uncovering the mysteries of whale shark movements across the Great Barrier Reef, and Dr Mary Bonin, a marine scientist from the Great Barrier Reef Foundation.

Other experts will join the Expedition, providing insights and knowledge of the Reef, its unique biodiversity and cultural history and most importantly, the ground breaking work being undertaken to ensure its future.



*Join us on-board for  
the adventure of a lifetime!*





# PROPOSED SCHEDULE

This is a sample itinerary only. Prevailing conditions, local arrangements and indeed, what we discover on the day, may cause variation.

## 2 DEC THURSDAY ISLAND

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Start your adventure in the northernmost tip of the Great Barrier Reef at Thursday Island in the Torres Strait Islands.

The Torres Strait is a vast geography that is home to beautiful islands, seagrass meadows, pristine and rarely visited coral reefs and the world's oldest continuous culture.

Our adventure will commence with a unique cultural ceremony and Welcome to Country with Traditional Owners, as we acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Sea Country of the Northern Great Barrier Reef which we will be travelling through on our voyage and their special connections to this majestic Sea Country. We will then set sail and visit Cape York at sunset.

## 3/4 DEC RAINE AND MOULTER CAY

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Wake in the backdrop of the tropical waters of the Raine Island National Park.

Over the last six years the Great Barrier Reef Foundation has led a conservation program to restore this critical turtle nesting area and seabird habitat. The qualified and experienced crew will be on-hand to personally introduce everyone to the delights of this remarkable place.

Dependent on conditions, the trip may include a visit to Raine Island which has been transformed from a former guano mine to a thriving turtle nursery through the world's largest effort to restore a critical green turtle nesting site. On a single night, tens of thousands of turtles make their way onto the beach to nest.

There may also be an opportunity to contribute to scientific knowledge as we search from the skies for the illusive omura whale aggregation which has recently been discovered.

## 5/6 DEC WRECK BAY AND WHALE SHARKS

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Wreck Bay is a beautiful site for exploring caves, ledges and bommies, and swimming amongst corals, clown fish, turtles and gropers.

Spend the morning with researchers who are tagging whale sharks or jump in a helicopter in search for whale sharks, Omura whales and Oceanic manta rays from the sky. Once tags are applied you will be able to snorkel with the whale sharks. Today we will showcase some of the technologies that are being used to research large marine mammals,

helping to guide management and conservation decisions being made by Reef managers.

Divers are in for a treat! Afternoons will be spent moored up behind Wreck Bay where there are numerous spots for snorkelling and diving.

## 7 DEC SANDBANKS NATIONAL PARK

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By now you will be addicted to the Great Barrier Reef!

Today we will snorkel and explore reefs as we visit Sandbank No.8. known for the beautiful coral reefs, vibrant fish, turtles, and reef sharks that live below the surface.

The Sandbank is also a vital nesting site for turtles and seabirds. Adventurers will be able to view the turtle nesting sites and witness one of the great marvels of the natural world as thousands of baby turtles start their lives in the sands and waters of this part of the Reef.

## 8 DEC LIZARD ISLAND

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This morning we will wake to see Lizard Island, which is surrounded by beautiful fringing reefs teaming with marine life.

As well as snorkelling and diving to see marine life under the water including the giant clams of the Clam Gardens, guests will be able to tour the Research Station. The Research Station is a world-leading supplier of on-reef facilities for coral reef research and education and is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year since it was founded by Frank Talbot.

Lizard Island was the ground zero for the bleaching events of 2016, which saw as much as 40% of corals in nearby waters show signs of bleaching, alongside an invasive Crown of Thorns outbreak which devastated the local coral populations.

The Island has become a key site for restoration activities and scientists from all over the world have been pioneering solutions to replanting heat tolerant corals at scale and how to best respond to Crown of Thorn starfish outbreaks. Optional Lizard Island Resort stay.

## 9 DEC ARRIVE INTO CAIRNS

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The True North II will make its way to Cairns for disembarkation by 10am.



Great Barrier  
Reef Foundation

# WE HOPE YOU CAN JOIN US FOR THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME

Let the Reef showcase her vastness and rich biodiversity, while inspiring you to explore the unique role each of us has in protecting this precious place for future generations.

Cost per person: from \$20,000 – price does not include airfares to Cairns, helicopter rides, and optional stay on Lizard Island. Bookings will be subject to True North's Terms & Conditions.

For further information please contact:

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