



THE DIVE SPOTS

of Southern Africa

The Dive Spots of Southern Africa



Johan Boshoff • Amilda Boshoff

South Africa • Mozambique • Zimbabwe • Namibia



THE DIVE SPOTS of Southern Africa

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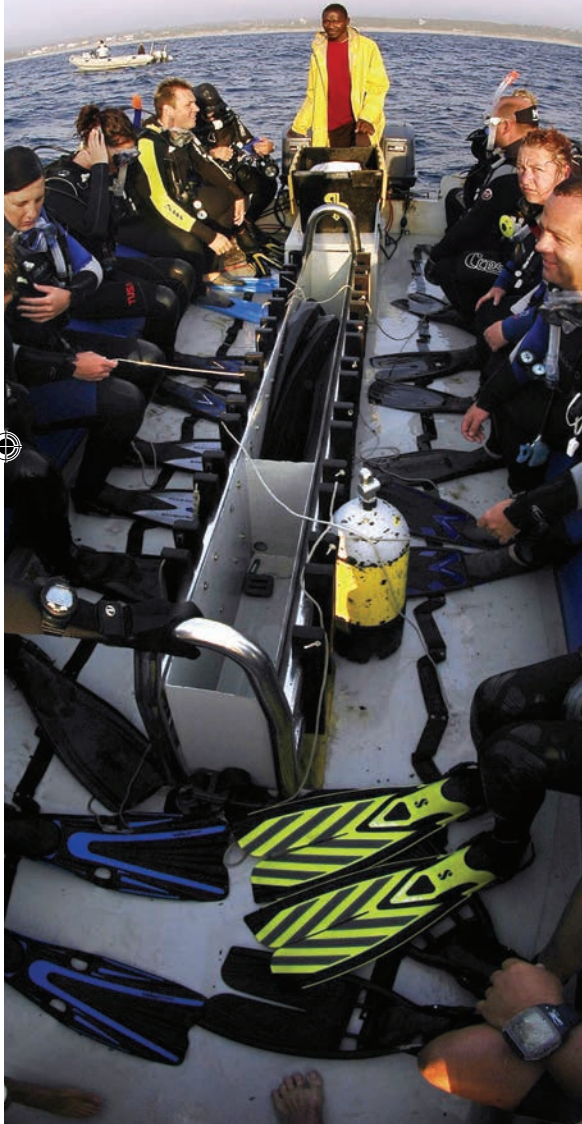
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How to use this book

The sub-regions

The dive spots of southern Africa are divided by country, namely South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Namibia. The first section in this book is dedicated to South Africa, with the dive spots separated by the following provinces; KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape, the Western Cape, Gauteng, North West, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape.

The next section focuses on Mozambique, broken up into Maputo, Inhambane and the Cabo Delgado Province. The last two sections investigate Zimbabwe and Namibia.

Within each provincial subsection, the dive sites are identified, showing exactly where they are located and how the different dive spots rate. Information is also given on the dive destination and on the general diving in the area. Specific information on dive sites includes location, accommodation and the facilities at the dive site.



The maps

The main maps illustrate where and in what country the dive site is situated. Each dive site will have a map to show all the best dive spots at the specific dive site. Please note that the maps are not on scale and should not be used for navigation.

The dive spot descriptions

Each dive site that is listed will be accompanied by a number of icons that will give specific information about the dive spot at a glance. Icons include the type of diving and the ratings of each dive spot.

Scuba diving
Snorkelling
Boat entry
Shore entry
Wreck dive



The star rating system

Top dive spot



Highly recommended



Good



Average



Poor



Other features of the book

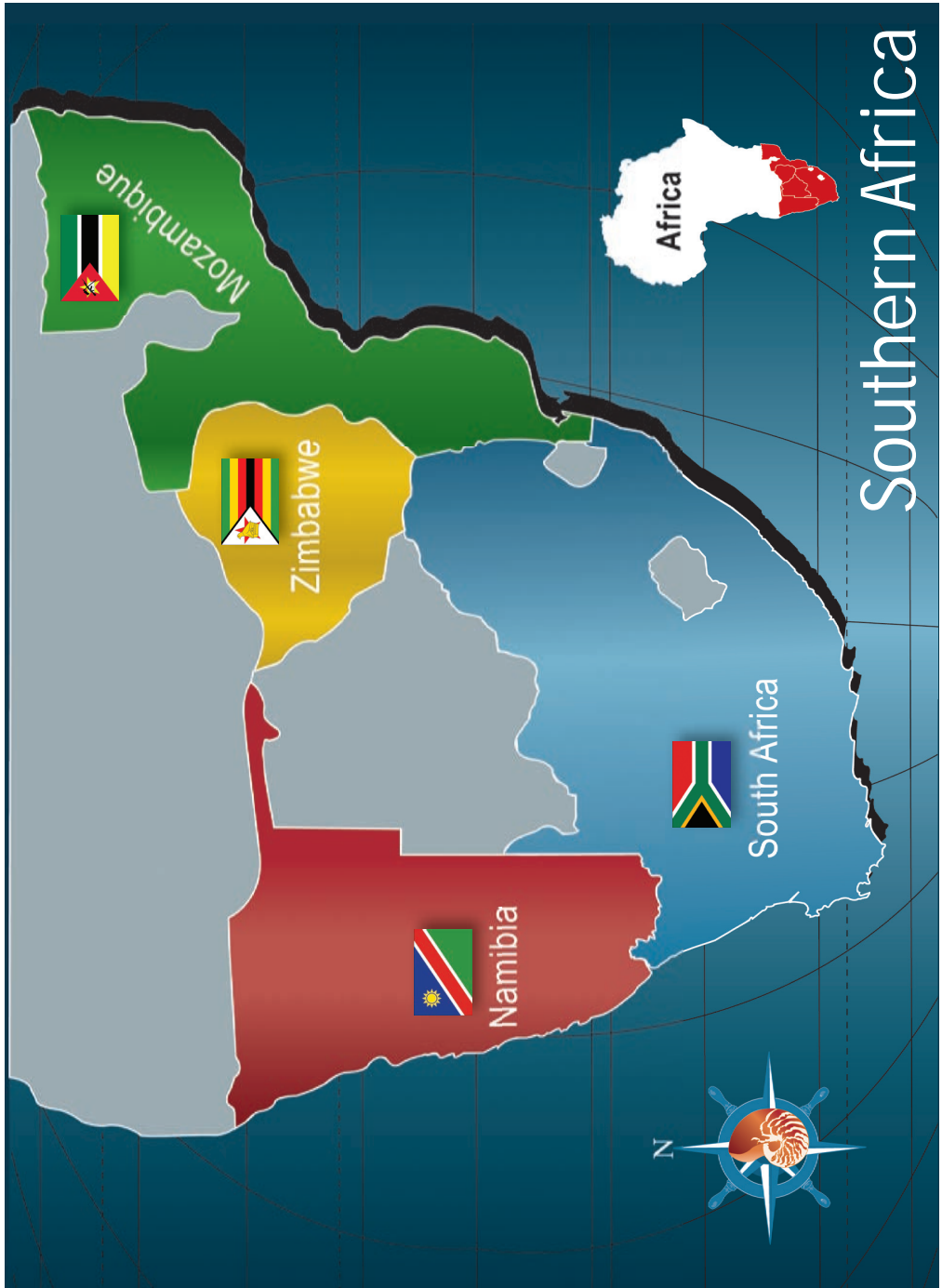
- Each province is colour coded to make searching for dive spots easier – the colours featured on the contents page are used throughout the book.
- General information is also given about the countries that are covered in this book.
- All the best spots are listed at every dive site.
- Only dive sites that have dive charters have been included.
- A section on medical information and what to do in emergencies is also included.
- For any more information, visit www.thedivespot.co.za



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Andrew Woodburn





Shipwrecks of southern Africa

Shipwrecks of the south

Southern Africa is one of only a handful of places in the world where there are a variety of shipwrecks to dive. It all started in the 15th century when Portuguese explorers rounded the southern tip of Africa and bravely took on the rugged and extensive coastline of southern Africa. All of this was done to find a trading sea-route to the East.

King João (John) II of Portugal was determined to find a sea route to India via the southern tip of Africa. Europeans wanted to trade directly with India and the other parts of Asia, bypassing the



overland route through the Middle East with its expensive middle men. On October 10, 1486 the king appointed Bartolomeu Dias as the head of an expedition to sail around the southern end of Africa. After Dias entered what we now know as Walvis Bay on his map, a large storm hit and he lost sight of the coast. He thus sailed around the southern tip of Africa without even realising it.

Once it had become clear that India could be reached by sailing north up the coast, he turned back. It was only on the return voyage that he discovered the Cape of Good Hope in May 1488 and he named it the the Cape of Storms.

For more than 500 years, thousands of ships from 37 different nations used this route to get to the East, stopping over for fresh food and water in the Cape of Storms until the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. The canal linked the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea allowing direct trade with the East. Its opening in 1869 negated the need for much of the ship traffic around the southern tip of Africa.

Ships from all over the world, including Portugal, Holland, England, France and India reached their final destination on the bottom of



our oceans. And today a variety of ships from fishing, whaling, mining, agricultural and war ships can be found in our waters.

Even traces of pirates in our waters have been found. In the 1700s, the Sainte Marie Island became the port of registry of more than twenty

vessels, and the place of dwelling of more than 1 500 pirates. Today you can visit a cemetery, which is the place for the eternal rest of adventurers of the southern seas. One of the funerary stones carries a well known emblem – a skull and two crossed tibias.

Wrecks in our waters were often the result of bad weather, bad seamen or collisions with pinnacles rising from the sea bed. In the years that ships have circumnavigated Africa, archival research has already identified more than 2 700 vessels known to have been lost along our coast. It is estimated that further research will raise the number of known casualties closer to the 3 000 mark.



Southern Africa's historical shipwrecks therefore represent a fragile, non-renewable resource that is of immense national and international archaeological and cultural significance, and which must be carefully managed to ensure its long term survival.



In terms of the Wreck Laws:

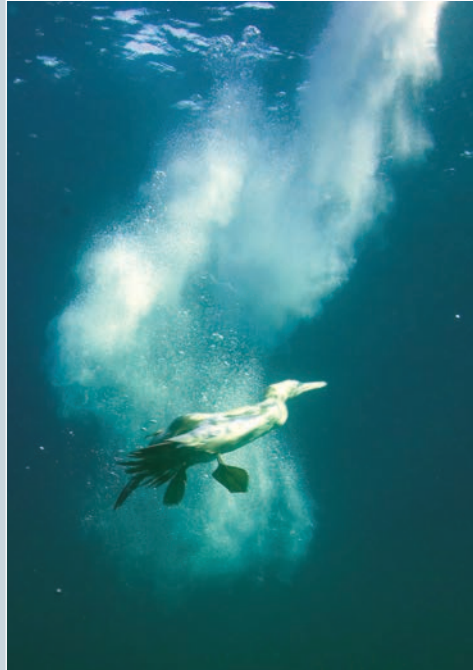
- Shipwrecks older than 60 years are offered blanket protection and cannot be disturbed in any way without a special permit.
- Wrecks are protected in South African territorial waters and adjacent zones – up to 24 nautical miles offshore.
- Wrecks are defined as archaeological sites and they belong to the nation.
- Penalties for disturbing a wreck site without a permit include heavy fines and imprisonment.

Sardine Run

Every year, between the months of June and July, something spectacular occurs in our oceans. Sardines make their way up our coast in various large schools from the Western Cape before disappearing into the deep close to Durban in a spectacular occurrence known worldwide as the Sardine Run.

The Sardine Run can be divided into three stages. The first stage begins in the Port Elizabeth area, where the sardines come off the Agulhas banks. Because the banks are very deep, it is almost impossible to see them while diving and the sardines do not often venture close to the surface.

The second stage is the best one for experiencing the natural migration of the sardines and diving with them and their predators. This stage takes place in the former Transkei – now the Eastern Cape. The continental shelf is very close to land and the waters close to shore are very deep, making it easy for predators to trap the sardines



Franco Banfi



and bring them up to the surface. Here you could get the chance to dive with the dolphins, sharks, whales and birds feasting on these bait balls.

While spending the day on the boat looking for the pockets of sardines, you will more than likely see a number of dolphins, including the Bottlenose, Common, Humpback, Spinner and Spotted varieties. An assortment of birds will also join you in looking for the sardines. A sure-fire sign that you have found the location of a sardine bait ball is the prevalence of Cape gannets. These birds will fold their wings back like F16 fighter planes before diving into the water after the sardines. This is a sign for you to get ready to enter the water.

Once your head is under the water, you will find yourself immersed amongst thousands of sardines, with countless dolphins and sharks feasting on them. The dolphins start their attack from the bottom, pushing the sardines up with their bubbles and noise. In between the birds swimming past you at around 10 metres, you will find sharks attacking the sardines, swimming

straight through them to take bites out of the pocket. As soon as the sardines split, the birds attack again from the top and the dolphins from the side. Not many sardines can survive this attack, and, when the last one in the bait ball is gone, the action moves on to the next ball.

You may also be lucky enough to see migrating Humpback whales, although they are not part of the feeding frenzy. If you are really lucky, you could see a Brutus or Minkie whale taking a big bite out of the bait ball. Southern right whales and Pilot whales are also commonly seen in the ocean while driving from one dive site to another.

The third and final stage of the Sardine Run occurs in the area between the old Transkei and Durban where the sardines get trapped in the shallow waters and can be found in the surf or just beyond the back line. During this stage the sardines often wash up on the beach and the conditions are not usually good for diving. After swimming all this way, the sardines that survive will then return to deep waters.

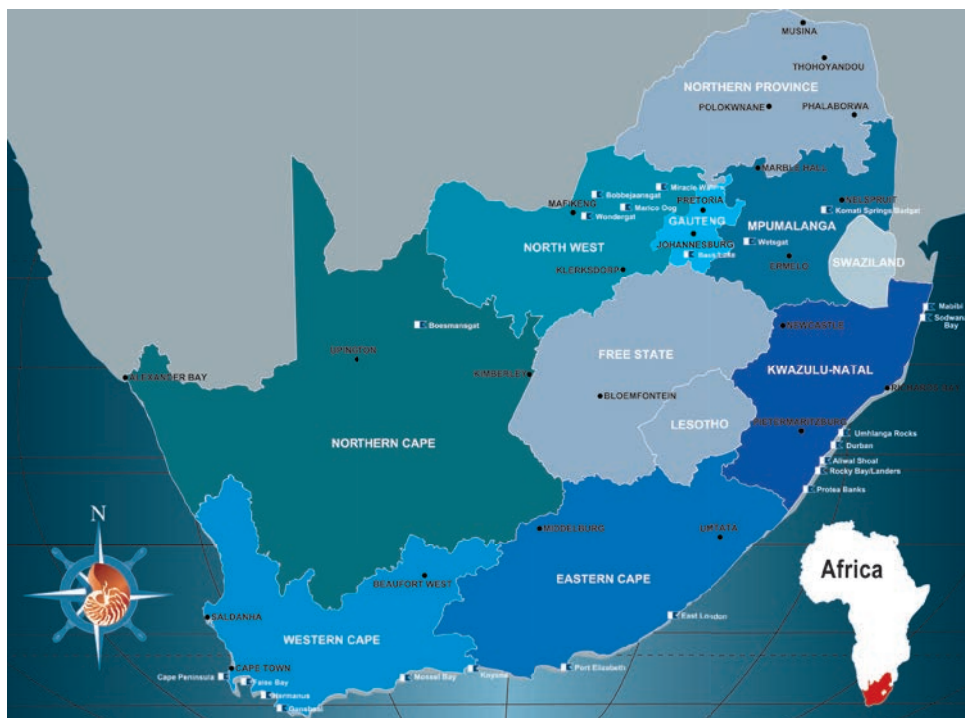
If you have not experienced it, it is almost impossible to describe what happens on the Sardine Run. This yearly experience is unique to southern Africa and if you have any interest in diving whatsoever, you have to dive the Sardine Run at least once.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters for the Sardine Run, visit www.thedivespot.co.za





South Africa



South Africa

On the southernmost tip of Africa lies a country with a land area of slightly more than 1,2 million square kilometres. South Africa measures some 1 600 kilometres from the north to the south and approximately the same from the east to the west. Neighbours include Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia to the north. In the interior, one will find Swaziland and the small mountain rich country of Lesotho, completely surrounded by South Africa.

Its long coastline stretches for more than 2 500 kilometres, starting with the Atlantic Ocean at the border of Namibia around the tip of Cape Peninsula and north to the border of Mozambique on the Indian Ocean.

South Africa's territory includes the Marion and Prince Edward Islands, nearly 2 000 kilometres from Cape Town in the Atlantic

Ocean. Several rivers run into the sea along the coastline, but none provide useful, natural harbours. The coastline itself, being fairly straight, provides only one natural harbour in the Atlantic Ocean, at Saldanha Bay, north of Cape Town. Other man-made harbours now exist at Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban and Richard's Bay.

Discovery

South Africa was first discovered by Jan van Riebeeck and the 90 men who landed with him in 1652 at the Cape of Good Hope, under instructions by the Dutch East India Company to build a fort and develop a vegetable garden for the benefit of ships on the Eastern trade route. In the early 1700s independent farmers called trekboers began to push north and east.

As a result of developments in Europe the British took the Cape over from the Dutch in 1795. Seven years later the colony was returned to the Dutch government, only to come under British rule again in 1806.

The discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1884 in the interior encouraged economic growth and immigration, intensifying the subjugation of the natives. The Boers successfully resisted British encroachments during the First Boer War (1880-1881) using guerrilla warfare tactics, much better suited to local conditions. However, the British returned in greater numbers without their red jackets in the Second Boer War (1899-1902). The Boers' attempt to ally themselves with German South-West Africa provided the British with yet another excuse to take control of the Boer Republics.

The Boers resisted fiercely, but the British eventually overwhelmed the Boer forces, using their superior numbers, improved tactics and external supply chains. Also during this war, the British used controversial concentration camps and scorched earth tactics, forcing whole families into crowded tents and burning their houses. Crops were burnt and all livestock slaughtered to demoralise the resisting Boers.

The Treaty of Vereeniging specified full British sovereignty over the South African republics, and the British government agreed to assume the £3 000 000 war debt owed by the Afrikaner governments. Many blacks saw the British victory as the hoped-for opportunity to put all four colonies on an equal and just footing, but the treaty left their franchise rights to be decided by the white authorities. The ex-Boer republics retained the whites-only franchise. The African National Congress (ANC) had come into being in January 1912, in Bloemfontein, in an act of unity joining an educated elite, the rural classes and tribal structures.

With the inspiration of the October Revolution in Russia, the post-war period was marked by strike action. In 1918, a million black mine workers went on strike for higher wages and 71 000 did the same in 1920 – the latter strike successfully extracting a wage increase. Between

those strikes, 1919 saw the formation of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of South Africa and the convening of the SA Indian Congress. In the same year Smuts became Prime Minister. If official (white) South Africa was taking its place in the wider world as a result of the First World War, the ANC was beginning to see itself as part of the wider African efforts





South Africa

against colonialism in Africa.

The 1950s were to bring increasingly repressive laws against black South Africans and its obvious corollary – increasing resistance. Reaction was swift: the following year 156 leaders of the ANC and its allies were charged with high treason. The longest trial in South African history was to lead to the acquittal of all accused in 1961.

South Africa's isolation increased in 1961 when, following a white referendum, South Africa became a republic and Verwoerd took it out of the Commonwealth. Umkhonto we Sizwe (The Spear of the Nation), emerged with acts of sabotage against government installations. Originally formed by a group of individuals within the ANC, including Nelson Mandela, it was to become that organisation's armed wing.

A new stage of international pressure began when the UN General Assembly called on its members to institute economic sanctions against South Africa. Mandela, in the meanwhile, had travelled through Africa making contact with numerous leaders. Going underground on his

return, he was arrested in Natal in August 1962 and received a three-year sentence for incitement.

In July 1963 a police raid on the Rivonia farm Lilliesleaf, led to the arrest of several of Mandela's senior ANC colleagues, including Walter Sisulu. They were charged with sabotage, Mandela being brought from prison to stand trial with them. All were sentenced in 1964 to life imprisonment and taken to Robben Island.

PW Botha, who became Prime Minister in 1978 after Vorster's retirement, tried to co-opt the coloured and Indian population in the early 1980s with a new constitution establishing a Tricameral Parliament, with separate houses for these groups. Among the other organisations in the spotlight at this time were the trade union body Cosatu and Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha, the latter involved in bloody conflict with pro-ANC factions.

In February 1990, De Klerk lifted restrictions on 33 opposition groups, including the ANC, the PAC and the Communist Party, at the opening of



Parliament. On February 11, Mandela, who had maintained a tough negotiating stance on the issue, was released after 27 years in prison.

South Africa's first democratic election was held at the end of April 1994, with victory going to the ANC in an alliance with the Communist Party and Cosatu. Nelson Mandela was sworn in as President on May 10 with FW de Klerk and the ANC's Thabo Mbeki as Deputy Presidents. In the second democratic elections in June 1999, the ANC marginally increased its majority and Thabo Mbeki became President.

The rainbow nation

South Africa is the whole world in one country with a desert that turns into a colourful carpet of flowers in spring or a ski slope of snow in winter high in the Drakensberg mountains. Visitors can see the 'Big Five' in one of the world's most recognised national parks or simply try to make sense of the country through some of the numerous heritage sites.

The south-western area of the country has a Mediterranean climate, with wet winters and hot, dry summers where winds can blow intermittently virtually all year round.

Further north and to the east, especially where a drop in altitude beyond the escarpment gives the Lowveld its name, temperatures rise and the Tropic of Capricorn slices through the extreme north of South Africa.

There are only two major rivers: the Limpopo, a stretch of which is shared with Zimbabwe, and the Orange which runs with a variable flow across the central landscape from east to west, emptying into the Atlantic Ocean near the Namibian border.

The country has a warm to hot climate, making it one of the best year-round destinations in the world. Most provinces enjoy a summer rainfall with occasional afternoon thunderstorms. Snow sometimes occurs, especially on the mountain peaks. Some areas have such mild winters that visitors will never guess that it is winter at all.

South Africa has a population of 47,4 million (2006) where the largest provincial population is in KwaZulu-Natal, with 9,9 million people and the most sparsely populated, with just over a





South Africa

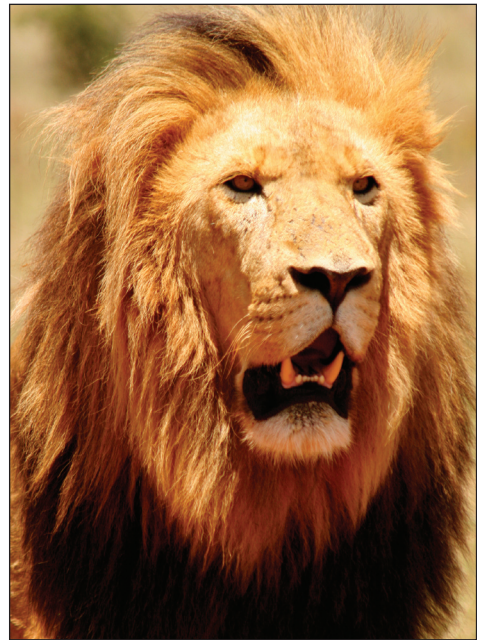
million people, is the Northern Cape. Slightly more than 50% of South Africa's population lives in urban areas.

South Africa is often called the 'Rainbow Nation', a term coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and later adopted by then President Nelson Mandela. Diverse people, cultures and groups include Nguni Sotho-Tswana, Tsonga, Venda, Afrikaners, English, Coloureds, Indians, Khoi and San and immigrants from Africa, Europe and Asia. The largest religion in the country is Christianity.

South Africa is a multilingual country. Besides the 11 officially recognised languages (Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga), scores of others – African, European and Asian are spoken. English is generally understood across the country, being the language of business, politics and the media.

The legislative capital of the country is Cape Town and the administrative capital is Pretoria. The biggest city in South Africa is Johannesburg.

South Africa's wildlife and plant life South Africa boasts well over 200 mammal species, the best known of which are the famous 'Big Five': Elephant, Lion, Rhino, Leopard and Buffalo. The Kruger National Park alone has over 9 000 Elephants and 20 000 Buffalo. Other quintessentially African animals include the Hippo, Giraffe, Kudu, Wildebeest and Zebra, all frequently seen in South Africa's conservation areas.





South Africa is also home to 112 freshwater fish species, a mere 1,3% of the world total. South Africa nonetheless has one river-dweller that still rules some stretches of rivers, estuaries, lakes and pools, exacting an occasional toll on human life – the crocodile.

The country is also home to well over 100 species of snake. While almost half of them, including the python, are non-venomous, others, such as the Puffadder, Green and Black mamba, Boomslang and Rinkhals are highly poisonous.

Birders from around the world come to South Africa to experience the great variety of African birds, both migrants and endemics. Of the 850 or so species that have been recorded in South Africa, about 725 are resident or annual visitors, and around 50 of these are endemic or near-endemic.

South Africa's large areas of semi-desert scrub and grassland might suggest a certain poverty of plant life. Aside from the fact that a tract of pristine grassland can hold up to 60 grass species,

nothing could be further from the truth.

There are five major habitat types in South Africa: fynbos, forest, Karoo, grassland and savannah. Some 10% of the world's flowering species are found in South Africa.

Travelling tips

Getting to South Africa is very simple when one considers the vast quantity of daily international flights and direct connections to Johannesburg and Cape Town. O.R. Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg is the major airport in South Africa and is the hub for 55 airlines from all 7 continents.

All visitors to South Africa must be in possession of a valid passport, but for many countries, visas are not required up to a maximum number of days.

The electricity supply is 220/230 volts AC 50 HZ. Most plugs have 3-pin or 2-pin.

Non-residents are permitted to drive with a driving licence issued and valid in their own country, provided it bears the photograph and signature of the holder and is in English.

All major credit cards can be used in South Africa, with American Express and Diners Club enjoying less universal acceptance than MasterCard and Visa. In some small towns, you may find you'll need to use cash.

Health tips

A yellow fever inoculation and certificate from travellers over one year of age coming from an infected area, is an official requirement.

Malaria is found only in the Lowveld of Mpumalanga (including the Kruger National Park) and Limpopo (north-eastern areas and near the Zimbabwean and Mozambican borders) and on the Maputaland coast of KwaZulu-Natal (north-east as far south as the Tugela River). Malaria risk is highest between the months of October and May. Although the incidence of malaria is rare, it would be best to take adequate precautions if you choose to visit these areas. In addition to malaria prophylaxis, insect repellants and mosquito nets can be effective.

Medical facilities in cities and larger towns are



South Africa



Rian Bester

world class, but one will find that in rural areas the clinics and hospitals deal with primary health care needs.

High-quality tap (faucet) water is available almost everywhere in South Africa, treated so as to be free of harmful micro-organisms. In any area other than informal or shack settlements, water is palatable and in most areas it is safe to drink straight from the tap.

South Africa has one of the highest rates of HIV in the world.

Safety

Crime in South Africa is on a par with the rest of southern Africa – it can be a problem, but by taking the usual sensible precautions you should

be safe;

- Never leave luggage unattended.
- Store valuables in the hotel's safety deposit box.
- Keep the door of your hotel, B&B room or chalet locked at all times.
- Always avoid ostentatious displays of expensive jewellery, cameras and other valuables.
- Do not carry large sums of money.
- At night, steer clear of dark and isolated areas.
- Find out about trouble spots at a destination.
- When driving, keep car doors locked and wind the windows up.
- Lock valuables in the boot of the car.
- Never give strangers a lift or pick up hitchhikers.

Diving in South Africa

South Africa's coast attracts thousands of local and international divers each year to witness the amazing underwater world of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans.

With its variety of dive sites, divers can dive from kelp forests to tropical reefs. South Africa is rated as one of the best dive sites in the world for a number of reasons – where else can you dive wrecks and free dive with Tiger sharks in one day? The amount of dive operators and reefs that South Africa has to offer makes diving affordable and allows easy access to the dive spots.

The Indian Ocean, on the east, is warmed by the Mozambique or Agulhas Current which flows down from the tropics, while the Atlantic, on the west coast, is cooled by the icy Benguela Current which comes up from the Antarctic and brings plankton providing rich fishing grounds. The east coast has the north-to-south Mozambique/Agulhas Current to thank for its warm waters. These two currents have a major effect on the country's climate, the ready evaporation of the eastern seas providing generous rainfall while the



Benguela Current retains its moisture to cause desert conditions in the west.

A large variety of marine life can be seen on the coast line, including sharks, Whale sharks, turtles, dolphins, reef fish and coral gardens. Heading down the coast, the underwater fauna and flora change gradually until, once you've reached Cape Town, diving is done in chilly but beautiful kelp forests.

South Africa's seas are rich in fish species. Perhaps the most awesome of these is the Great white shark, but this is only one of more than 2 000 species, comprising 16% of the world's total. Various line fish, Rock lobster and Abalone are of particular interest to gourmets, while pelagic fish (Sardines and Pilchards) and Hake have large-scale commercial value.

Other aquatic reptiles of note are the sea-roaming Loggerhead and Leatherback turtles. Their protection is the focus of major community conservation efforts at their nesting grounds on the northern KwaZulu-Natal shoreline.

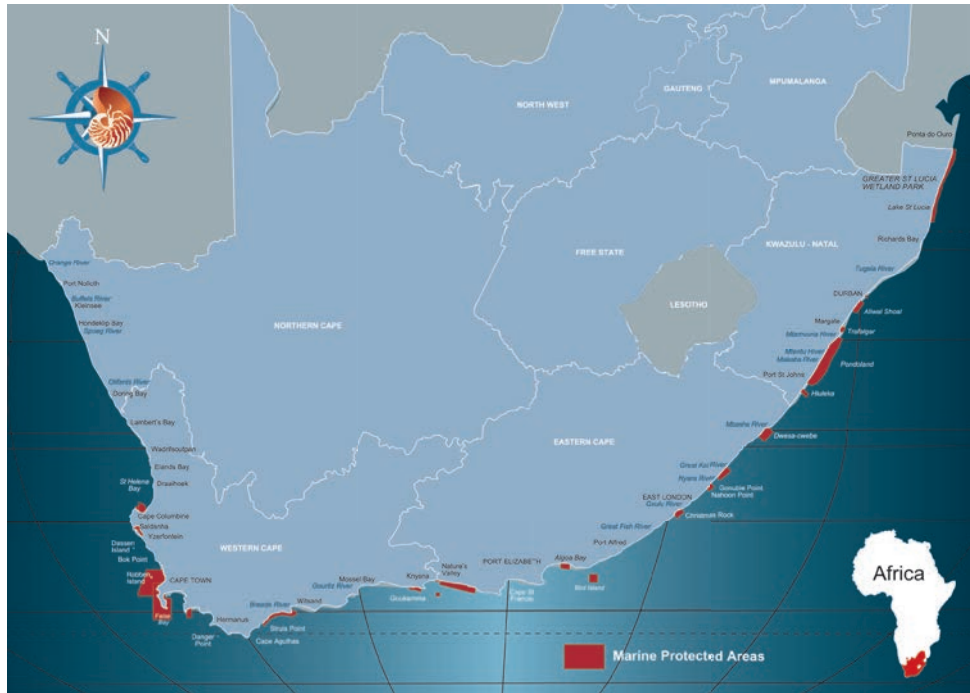
Of the eight whale species found in South African waters, the most frequently seen by humans is the Southern right whale. This imposing creature comes into coastal bays to calve, allowing for superb land-based viewing.

For scuba diving enthusiasts, the possibilities are endless: there are coral reefs with brightly-coloured inhabitants that enjoy the warm Indian Ocean, the wrecks of dozens of ships that struck rock along the treacherous Cape south coast, and the icy waters of the Atlantic West Coast that offer a completely different scuba diving experience.





South Africa



Marine Protected Areas

In June 2004, the Marine and Coastal Management (MCM) of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism promulgated regulations which declared four new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), namely, Aliwal Shoal, Pondoland, Bird Island and the Table Mountain National Park.

South Africa has protected almost 18% of its entire coastline from unregulated activities such as diving, while the World Parks Congress demanded that by 2015, countries must protect 20% of their marine area from fishing.

There are several existing MPAs, such as Sodwana Bay and Greater St. Lucia Wetland Park, but the new MPAs are unique in that the regulations associated with them are specifically aimed at sport diving. Divers will be required to hold a permit to be allowed to dive in certain MPAs.





Aliwal Shoal

The Aliwal Shoal MPA has a diverse variety of fish which is a very popular attraction for scuba divers, fishermen and spear-fishermen. Many endangered species of endemic reef fish are found on the shoal, as well as breeding Ragged-tooth sharks. The MPA serves many different functions, including the conservation of the unique reef fauna, control of user-conflict and the development of a world renowned diving site for the area.

Pondoland

The Pondoland MPA lies adjacent to some of the most rugged and beautiful coastlines. It is a transitional area for marine biodiversity with elements of both tropical and temperate systems. The area also includes a range of marine and coastal habitats, with substantial estuaries being fully protected for the first time. The Pondoland MPA is South Africa's largest, stretching along 90 kilometres of coastline and extending approximately 15 kilometres out to sea.

Bird Island

The Bird Island Group MPA is a group of islands in the Algoa Bay off Port Elizabeth and lies adjacent to the Greater Addo Elephant National Park. Bird Island is home to thousands of gannets and penguins.





South Africa



Daniel Parker

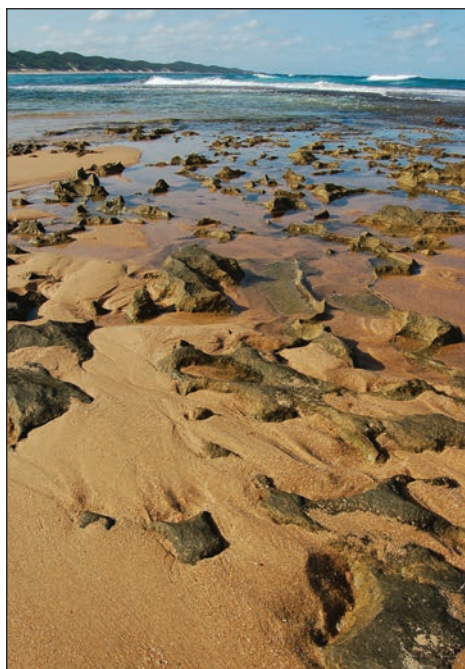
Table Mountain

The Table Mountain National Park MPA includes all of the coastal waters around the Cape Peninsula, from Mouille Point in the west to Bailey's Cottage in the east. This is one of the most diverse and productive stretches of coastline in South Africa. The Cape Peninsula is also rich in marine species endemic to southern Africa, some of which are even endemic to this change-over region. The shores of the Cape Peninsula are one of the great tourist attractions of Cape Town as well as being one of the most spectacular sites for scuba diving.

Managing protected areas

Marine and Coastal Management (MCM) is the regulatory authority responsible for managing all marine and coastal activities in South Africa and shares the management of its 19 marine protected areas with the South African National Parks.

In addition to fishing and diving, Marine and Coastal Management manages and monitors our coastal resources. These include our sensitive estuaries, diverse sea birds such as the African





Francco Banfi



black oystercatcher, Damara tern and gannets, dune systems and fishing harbours. MCM is also responsible for monitoring and preventing marine pollution. South Africa manages its coast and marine zones in an integrated way.

Marine and Coastal Management employees carry out research on more than 200 species of fish each year so that they can advise MCM and the Minister of Environmental Affairs and

Tourism on the amount of fish allowed to be harvested by commercial fisheries. They also regulate the use of vehicles in the coastal zone – vehicles may not be used on any beach without the written authorisation of MCM. All boat launching sites must also be licensed in terms of these Regulations.

Diving permits

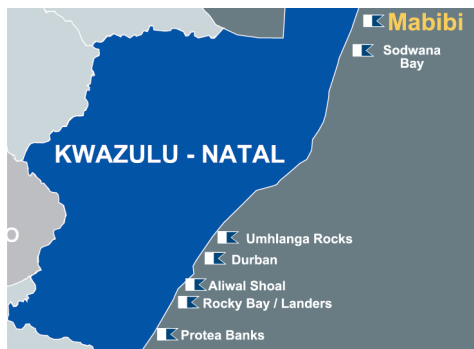
From 2007, individuals are required to obtain an annual permit from a Post Office to dive in the new MPAs. It is the same blue form as that which is used for recreational angling, spearfishing, bait collecting and crayfishing, and is available at a minimal cost.

Many Post Offices do not have the forms in stock, and they may issue you with a green form, but what is important is that there is a receipt attached to the permit which you receive. If you do not want to take the original with you, in case it gets wet, a certified copy of this form will be accepted.

If you are diving from a boat, you need to have the permit on the boat, and if you are diving from shore, you may keep the permit in your car. For more information, visit www.deat.gov.za.



Mabibi and surroundings



Mabibi and surroundings



Mabibi is located in north-eastern KwaZulu-Natal between Sodwana Bay and Kosi Bay (southern Mozambique border); it forms part of the Maputaland Coastal Forest Reserve. The climate on the north coast is mostly tropical, causing mild weather in winter and hot summers.

Summer land temperatures: 20-35°C.
Winter land temperatures: 18-25°C.

Accommodation:

In this area there are only two lodges with dive charters. Dives can be booked at surrounding lodges and campsites can also be used.

Shops and service stations:

There are no shops in the area. The closest shops and service stations are in Mbazwana or Kosi Bay where diesel and petrol are available.

Health and medical services:

Malaria is a small risk, but the taking of the appropriate prophylactics is advisable – speak to your physician or pharmacist for the best options. Ask the locals about drinking the tap water, but it is advisable to rather drink bottled or purified

water. The closest clinic and hospital is in Mseleni.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Leatherback and Loggerhead turtle hatchlings from October to February
- Cashew nut factory
- Visit Lake Sibaya and Musi Pans
- Cultural tours
- Hiking trails
- Snorkelling
- Variety of water sports

Diving:

The coast on the north of Sodwana is situated in a World Heritage site called the Maputaland Coastal Forest Reserve. With only two boats launching in this area it is unspoiled with a variety of marine life. It is best to plan dives for early in the day because the wind usually picks up in the afternoon.

The dive spots are mostly situated on coral reefs with a variety of soft and hard coral. An assortment of sceneries can be expected here with gullies, swim-through's and pinnacles.

Marine life mainly consists of tropical reef fish and pelagics, but during October to February each year, migrating whales and Whale sharks frequent the area. From November to January, Ragged-tooth sharks are also found resting in the warm Indian Ocean waters.

Summer water temperatures: 21-27°C.
Winter water temperatures: 19-24°C.

Launch site:

There are two launch sites which are usually easy to launch from with manageable waves. The launch area near Rocktail Bay called Island Rock has a lagoon-like area where the boat can be anchored and launched from. The other one is a straight surf launch from a protected bay. This launch area doesn't have any facilities; it is a clean, undeveloped beach. The wearing of life jackets is compulsory with every launch from the beach.



This reef can best be described as a rock in a doughnut formation. There are ledges on the inside as well as the outside of the reef with sand in the middle. It is difficult to find the reef, hence its name.

This is an amazing reef, because at first it seems very quiet until you start looking under the ledges; Loggerhead turtles sharing a cave with a big Honeycomb moray, numerous cleaning stations with Dusky sweepers hanging about and Black cheek morays keeping guard in almost every hole. Cleaner shrimps are plentiful, including Durban dancing shrimps and Banded cleaner shrimps. Other fish life includes Wolf cardinals, Bigeyes, Ember parrotfish, Clown triggers and schools of Coachmen. Moorish idols are also a common site on this reef. The coral life consists mostly of sponges, hard corals and seaweed. Sharks have been sighted here on occasion – the most common being Tiger sharks, Spotted ragged-tooth sharks, Zambezi sharks and Blacktip sharks. Other fish commonly seen here include Paperfish, Scorpionfish, Devil firefish and numerous Potato bass.



Pineapple Reef



Average depth: 14m

Maximum depth: 18m

This reef starts out with a sandy patch and continues with a big rounded part consisting of various ledges, caves and holes. It continues

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Gear rentals
- Dive training
- Speciality courses

DIVE SPOTS

Elusive



Average depth: 14m

Maximum depth: 19m





Mabibi and surroundings



main reef building up across a sand patch to the south. Coral is plentiful, especially Thistle coral with hundreds of Goldies swimming amongst the corals. Some of the eel species can be found here, as well as numerous tropical fish. On flatter sections of the northern part, octopus, Paperfish and Ghost pipefish have been found. Potato bass are often found on this reef under ledges and near cleaning stations. Nudibranchs and Cowrie shells are bountiful, specifically the Eggshell Cowrie with its magnificent black mantle and white and orange spots. This is a good reef to look out across the sand for game fish, rays and many different turtles. Female Loggerhead turtles are often seen resting under the ledges here, especially during the nesting season as the reef is close to shore. Blacktip sharks are regularly seen as well as Tiger and Tawny nurse sharks.

Pantry Reef



Average depth: 11m

Maximum depth: 14m

further down in the form of a ribbon with sandy patches in between the rock formations. The marine life on this reef consists of a school of Yellowspotted kingfish, Parrotfish, Masked coachmen and the beautiful Longnose butterflyfish. There are lots of juveniles on this reef as well as Banded pipefish. Be on the look out for Green turtles, Potato bass and Blacktip reef sharks moving in from the sand and around the area with lots of fish activity. The coral on various parts of the reef is prolific with a canvas of beautiful spring colours varying from pink Fleshy coral to the well-known Table coral. The reef is best dived with minimal current.

Different varieties of hard coral and soft coral are found at Pantry Reef with enormous fish species, such as Barracuda, Jobfish, Seapike and cod a common occurrence. A variety of eels are also found here as well as rays and turtles. Two resident Potato bass are found here, and along with the colourful tropical fish, these inhabitants make this an exquisite dive site. Rays are commonly seen in the summer months on the

Aerial Reef



Average depth: 10m

Maximum depth: 15m

This reef has a smaller northern section with the



edge of the reef lying on the sand or gliding past the divers. This reef is best dived with minimal current.

Island Rock



Average depth: 10m
Maximum depth: 12m

This reef is a long drift-type dive with coral and rocky outcrops further north. As you head south, little ledges and build-ups appear. This is a very interesting and diverse dive site which cannot be dived when the sea is rough, or if there is a swell present due to its proximity to the shore and the main rock – Island Rock. There are many sandy areas, caves and overhangs further south to explore. Large pinnacles also form further south. Common finds here are a full variety of reef fish on the rocky outcrops; the occasional shark encounter has taken place here with Blacktip reef sharks, Tiger sharks and even a Great white sighted here. There is often plenty of ray activity, especially Spotted eagle rays. One of the main reasons for such superb goings-on here is that this is the first large reef system within a kilometre radius, which would naturally attract plenty of life. Both hard and soft coral are found on the reef. The main highlight of this site is that it is the resting place of the pregnant female Ragged-tooth sharks in the summer months. Between late December and March each year, up to 30 sharks have been sighted at any given time. It is also not uncommon to see the odd game fish passing by in the midwater. This site is usually used for boat-based snorkelling trips.

Blood Snapper Reef



Average depth: 47m
Maximum depth: 50m

Descending down to the bottom, one gets the feeling that it is a lengthy journey to meet the Blood Snappers of this reef. The reef is fairly small – only 100m in diameter and only seven minutes of bottom time – thus limiting your time to explore this far off land. The reef has ledges on the one side with the odd pinnacle before it slopes off to the sandy bottom. This reef hosts very large numbers of Blood snappers, Jobfish, cod, Yellowback fusiliers and Slingers to name just a few. There are also very big Starfish on the reef and the coral life on this rocky reef consist more of hard coral than the soft colourful coral of the shallower reefs. If you are looking for game fish, this is definitely the spot. The locals often come across Hammerhead sharks, Tiger sharks and big Potato bass on this reef. This reef is recommended for divers trained to dive deeper than 40m and is best dived when there is minimal current.



Hang Ten Reef



Average depth: 10m
Maximum depth: 12m

This is a lovely dive to do with a small group of divers. The focal point is a large rocky outcrop surrounded by sand where all the life in the area



Mabibi and surroundings

congregates. This dive features various rays, including the Marbled electric rays which live under the ledges and huge Honeycomb stingrays which line the outskirts of the reef are often seen swimming in from a distance across the sand. There are a couple of large Potato bass that live on this reef as well as a Honeycomb moray eel. Game fish are often spotted in the distance as well as a pretty curious Remora/sucker fish. Giant kingfish (Ignoblis) are often seen sitting under one of the ledges, a very special sighting. Another feature of this reef is a huge shoal of Spadefish that sit mid-water on the northern side and face into the current as they feed on plankton. This is a very active dive site with schools of fusiliers and snappers around the reef. It is a great dive for people who have not dived in a while and want a shallower dive to get 'back into the water'.



Gogo's



Average depth: 14m

Maximum depth: 18m

The name of this particular reef means 'old woman' in Zulu and it was named after the incredible amount of Old Woman Angelfish found playing in the bubbles going up to the surface. This large reef looks like humps of rock scattered on the ocean floor with golden sandy patches surrounding the coral laced rock formations. As one moves further south, the main reef starts to form features such as gullies, crevices, overhangs and swim-through's. There is an abundance of fish life on this reef wherever you look. An array of tropical fish life immediately catches the eye and the resident Potato bass, nicknamed Tyson, should make an appearance somewhere along your dive. Turtles are a very common sighting, with Loggerhead, Green turtles and Hawksbill turtles having been sighted on a very regular basis. Trumpet fish are common here, along with large Tiger cowrie shells and

various Scorpionfish. The coral life on this reef is in very good condition with various kinds of hard and soft coral. Small Sea fans as well as orange Jointed hydroids are also visible. This is an excellent dive due to the abundant coral and marine life.

Brewers Garden



Average depth: 14m

Maximum depth: 18m

Brewers Garden is a very wide reef that narrows to become a ledge and then widens again the further south you go. Heading from north to south, there is an abundance of both hard and soft coral. Tropical fish life is incredibly abundant and the reef boasts many caves, overhangs and ledges – enough to keep any diver busy for a long time. Game fish are sometimes sighted here along with the resident Potato bass and the coral on this site is in pristine condition. When there is a very strong north to south current present, this site is



used as the starting site moving south towards Yellowfin Drop.

Yellowfin Drop



Average depth: 14m

Maximum depth: 18m

This reef has the most beautiful ledges, overhangs and small caves where turtles rest during the day. There are also various sand patches in and around the pieces of scattered reef along with numerous pinnacles. Honeycomb moray eels and Potato bass are regulars on the reef as well as various types of turtles. In the mid-water one can usually find an array of fish, such as Masked Coachmen, Pufferfish, Zebras, Butterflyfish, Threadfin butterflyfish, blue Triggerfish and big Spadefish. The size of the fish in this area gives

the impression that the fish aren't often disturbed and don't seem to mind having divers around. A Grey reef shark occasionally makes an appearance and Honeycomb stingrays are usually found on the sand patches. The coral on this reef is mostly undisturbed and varies in colour and consistency. Some of the rocky parts of the reef are laced with Leather coral as well as Pimple coral. Other corals include Fleshy soft coral, Plate coral and purple Thistle coral. This reef is best dived when there is a minimal current.



Rian Bester



Mabibi and surroundings

Coral Alley



Average depth: 14m
Maximum depth: 18m

Coral Alley is a ledge continuation from Yellow Fin Drop heading south. One of the main features on this site is a large reef outcrop underneath which one will find enormous Painted crayfish – a guaranteed sighting. Diving the deep sea side is more interesting, especially where the reef drops off onto the sand and small pinnacles form with interesting life around them. The reef then turns inshore and two large caves are found before coming to an abrupt end and flattening out further south. Marine life is abundant, along with the presence of hard and soft coral. The soft coral includes Anemones, Fleshy soft coral, Branching soft coral, multicoloured Thistle coral and waving Pulse coral. Some of the rocky outcrops are covered in soft grey Leather coral and other parts in Lobed soft coral. This coral garden is a feast for the eye with all of the different textures and colours. Turtles are often spotted in this area whilst eels are a common sighting – the likes of Geometric and Black-cheek being more readily sighted than Honeycomb morays. Common reef fish such as Triggers, Coachmen, Butterflyfish and Damsels can also be seen on this reef. Coral Alley is best dived when there is minimal current.



Coachman's Ledge



Average depth: 13m
Maximum depth: 21m

The name says it all – Coachman's Ledge, which is further south than Coral Alley, is a spectacular ledge with an abundance of Coachmen fish. Where Coral Alley ends off abruptly, a diver would travel south across sand patches until a small ledge starts to appear. Heading further south, the main ledge appears, the Coachmen being the first thing that divers will notice before the ledge begins. The Coachmen appear in huge numbers and live just off the reef where it drops off. Big shoals of Bluebanded snappers are common sightings along with Surgeonfish and Parrotfish families. There is plenty of hard and soft coral on this site with one of the more interesting coral features being the Contoured coral which cascades down the edge of the ledge to the



sand. Also have a look out for Clams with the most amazing coloured mantles. This ledge has cleaning stations all over it, with a wide variety of shrimps including the Blue-banded shrimp with their abnormally long white antennae. Many juvenile Emperor angelfish also hide under the Contoured coral.

Solitude



Average depth: 18m

Maximum depth: 24m

As the name suggests, this reef is found towards the end of all the reefs near Rocktail Bay on the way to Mabibi. It is a huge lump of rock on the sandy floor of the Indian Ocean, like a cake on a big plate. There is another smaller rock inshore of Solitude and finger-like extensions that carry on inshore for some distance. Bluebanded snappers and fusiliers are usually seen along the reef and on one side of the reef you will find a



small cave-like swim-through where Giant kingfish (Ignobilis) are often seen. On the sandy area near the cave, one usually finds Razor wrasse playing around in the sand. The reef also has a few Green coral trees with swarms of Goldies and Dominoes swimming in and out between the branches. Amongst one of the ledges, a Black cheek moray can usually be found on his post and rays are often encountered on the sand next to the reef. The reef doesn't have all that much coral, but it makes up for it by having interesting Starfish, such as a Crown of Thorns usually only seen at deeper reefs. The presence of Cushion stars and Whip coral is also a highlight. Some parts of the reef are covered with Leather coral and colourful sponges can also be seen. This is a very interesting reef with vast amounts of fish life.

Regal Reef



Average depth: 12m

Maximum depth: 14m

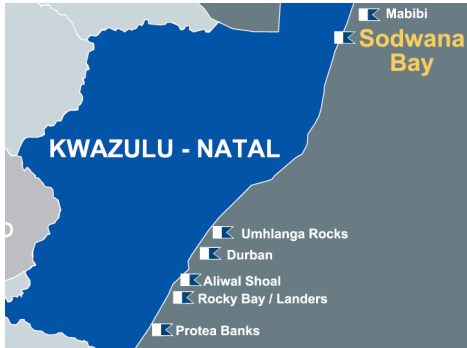
Regal Reef, which is named after the resident Regal angelfish that reside there, is an impressive reef to say the least. It has brilliant collapsed reef features, overhangs, caves and pinnacles. Due to its depth it has to be dived when the sea is calm, without big swells. One fins along, and then disappears over the edge of a collapsed feature into the 'hole' down below. Beardman (Tasselfish) are always seen in these collapsed features, resting and staying in large shoals. There are two swim-through's on Regal Reef, one being smaller than the other and thus suitable for the experienced diver only. The reef and coral formations are what make Regal Reef spectacular. Fish life is not as abundant as at other sites but the coral is brilliant. The reef is rather wide and seems to keep going for some distance. There are plenty of sandy areas around for divers to check their buoyancy prior to going onto the reef. Nudibranchs and turtles are common sightings, with the fish life tending to favour the smaller reef fish.



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Sodwana Bay



Sodwana Bay

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Sodwana Bay is situated in one of South Africa's Marine Protected Areas approximately 500 kilometres north of Durban on the north coast of KwaZulu-Natal and approximately 120 kilometres from the southern border of Mozambique. The climate on the north coast is mostly tropical with mild temperatures in winter becoming hot in summer. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 20-35°C.

Winter land temperatures: 18-25°C.



Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in Sodwana Bay and its surroundings – camp sites, self-catering chalets, lodges, B&B's and dive camps are all available. There are quite a number of dive lodges in the Parks Board.

Shops and service stations:

There is a shop and petrol station in the Parks Board as well as similar conveniences just outside Sodwana in Mbazwana. There are local dealers, a grocery store and a hardware shop as well as a post office. Diesel and petrol is available in Sodwana and Mbazwana.

Health and medical services:

Malaria is a small risk, but the taking of the appropriate prophylactics is advisable. Speak to your physician or pharmacist for the best options. Ask the locals about drinking the tap water, but it is advisable to rather drink bottled or purified water.

There is a general practitioner in Mbazwana and a clinic/hospital at Mseleni. There is also a first aid room at the Parks Board in Sodwana to treat minor ailments.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Leatherback and Loggerhead turtle hatchings from October to February
- Cashew nut factory
- Visit Lake Sibaya and Musi Pans
- Cultural tours
- Horse trails
- Quad bike trails
- Hiking trails
- 4X4 Trails
- Micro light flights
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Snorkelling
- Curio shops
- Fishing
- A variety of water sports



Sodwana Bay

Diving:

The dive spots are mostly on coral reefs with a variety of soft and hard coral. A host of different sceneries can be expected here with gullies, swim-through and pinnacles – the site is also noted for its technical diving. The reefs here provide dives from Open Water to Trimix dives.

It is best to plan dives early in the day because the wind usually picks up in the afternoon. The sea then becomes very choppy and visibility is lowered. Visibility is usually good throughout the year but is notably better in the winter months.



Marine life mainly consists of tropical reef fish and pelagics, but between October and February each year, migrating whales and Whale sharks frequent the area. Between November and January, Ragged-tooth sharks come and rest at Quarter Mile Reef. Night dives can be arranged and must be booked in advance but nothing can be guaranteed if the conditions are not conducive to diving.

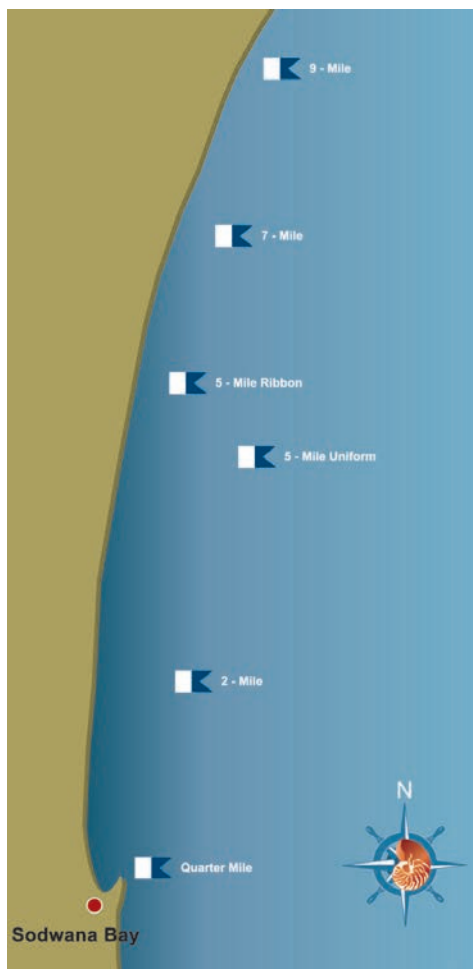
Summer water temperatures: 21-27°C.

Winter water temperatures: 19-24°C.

Launch site:

Sodwana Bay is located in a Marine Protected Area, thus visitors have to pay a gate fee, per person, per day, to access the beach. If you visit the parks of KwaZulu-Natal regularly, it is advisable to buy an annual Rhino Card which will save you a lot of money on entrance fees.

The launch site at Sodwana Bay is protected by big vegetated sand dunes on the landside and helps to yield strong winds. The surf launch is usually quite easy with small waves but it shouldn't be underestimated. Parking is available and the beach is within walking distance. Ablution facilities, a beach shop and a take away shop are available right on the beach. The wearing of life jackets is compulsory with every launch from the beach.



Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills
- Trimix fills
- Gear rentals
- Equipment sales
- Dive training
- Speciality courses

DIVE SPOTS

9 - Mile Reef



Average depth: 18m
Maximum depth: 25m

The dramatic scenery of Nine Mile offers drop-offs, pinnacles and big coral trees. A few swim-through's and overhangs add to the experience for the adventurous diver. This reef hosts the only species of free-swimming Nudibranchs in Maputland which can be found on the drop-off along with Black coral, Green-wire corals and Gorgonian sea fans.

The coral tree is home to a number of species of small reef fish, including Sea goldies and Damselfish. You can also expect to see an abundance of tropical fish, hard and soft coral, sponges, Moray eels, large schools of pelagic fish, Potato bass, turtles (Hawksbill, Loggerhead, Green and Leatherback) and, depending on the time of year, whales (Southern right and Humpback), Whale sharks and dolphins. Due to its distance from the launch site, this reef is not dived as often as the more accessible ones and is in excellent condition.

7 - Mile Reef



Average depth: 14m
Maximum depth: 20m

Just imagine – a rocky mountain on the ocean floor; large overhangs with deep caves in which anything could be lurking... The scenery here is breathtaking, especially on days when the water is crystal clear and the visibility almost endless. The most beautiful of all is the little green coral tree on one of the ledges, a landmark on this reef. An encounter with Potato bass, Honeycomb moray eels and Leaf fish can almost be guaranteed. The coral life on this reef consists



mostly of leather and hard coral. Sponges are also to be seen. The fish life includes yellow Trumpetfish, Coachmen, Moorish idols, Kingfish, Knifejaws, snappers, fusiliers and much more. This is an excellent dive to book next time you visit Sodwana.

5 - Mile Ribbon Reef



Average depth: 15m
Maximum depth: 20m

This reef looks like a string of rocky formations placed in a ribbon-like pattern and has large sand patches on which rays camouflage themselves. The reef has an abundance of fish life and many juveniles can be seen hiding beneath the table coral and in the crevices. Many different species



Sodwana Bay

of Triggerfish, Blue-and-yellow fusiliers, Big eyes and Kingfish were seen on different parts of the reef. Spotted rockcod, Boxfish, a Round ribbon-tail ray and Green turtles are often seen. The coral life consists mostly of extensive beds of Stag-horn coral, huge Plate corals and various soft corals such as Thistle coral, Fleshy soft coral and Anemones, with Two-bar clownfish standing guard. The reef is mostly untouched and is suited for the more advanced diver. This reef is truly different from Two Mile Reef in the sense that there are more game fish and the fish in this area are relatively tame.

5 - Mile Uniform Reef



Average depth: 22m

Maximum depth: 30m

This reef is quite flat with wide patches of scattered coral and sand patches around them. It takes its name from the way the shape of the Contoured coral resembles a lettuce with thousands of leaves spread out in a uniform pattern. This reef is a kingdom of juveniles, with Chocolate dips in their thousands, small Triggerfish, Damsels, Soldierfish and various types of Goldies everywhere to be seen. There are also Potato bass, Butterflyfish, Tiger angels and Coral beauties hiding under the coral formations. Although this is a deep reef, it is just



as exquisite as the shallower reefs and its unique beauty is definitely worth visiting.

Quarter Mile Reef



Average depth: 9m

Maximum depth: 12m

Quarter Mile Reef is located just outside the bay. This is where the pregnant Ragged-tooth sharks spend their time from December to March, before leaving for Aliwal Shoal. Ragged-tooth sharks are a big attraction for scuba divers and aren't nearly as aggressive as they look. Quarter Mile Reef has huge rocky boulders that look as though they were scattered on the ocean floor.





There are various large sandy patches in and around the reef, and as a result, this reef can only be dived on days when the sea is flat and there is no strong current or surge, due to the amount of sand. Quarter Mile is buzzing with activity and marine life includes big Potato bass and

Honeycomb moray eels. There are big orange wall sponges with Bearded scorpionfish and various types of Nudibranchs in different sizes. Angelfish, Kingfish, Snappers, Goldies and the regular reef fish found in tropical waters are also to be seen here. In some of the overhangs and small caves you will find Cleaner shrimps busy in the cleaning station. Big Green turtles also frequent the area.

Simon's Cave



Average depth: 13m
Maximum depth: 17m

This reef has overhangs, gullies, ledges and a cave big enough to swim through. The reef also has big sand patches between parts of the reef and has a large quantity of fish life, allowing divers to swim through schools of fusiliers,



Sodwana Bay

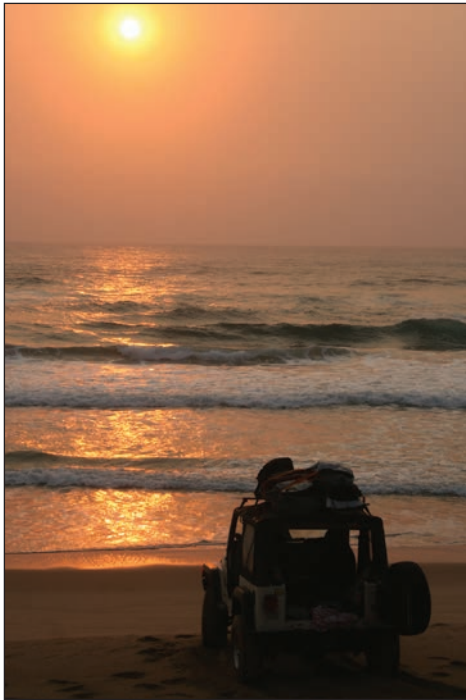
snappers and in particular, big black Knifejaws standing guard in the opening of the cave. Various fish species are found in the area which include Goldie's, Seabreams, Damsels and Royal angelfish. On the outside of the cave is the most beautiful coral life in pastel colours, from peach Fleshy coral to Yellow sponges, Whip coral and everything in between. The hard coral consists of Table coral, Staghorn coral, Plate coral and Spiky coral. Various species of Nudibranchs in different sizes and colours are regularly seen on the reef.

This reef only has a few small rock formations, but it is covered with the most beautiful coral. The reef is mostly flat with small sand patches. There is an extensive variety of small marine life on this reef, including schools of Spadefish, Old-woman angelfish, Nudibranchs, Coachmen and Fire gobies standing guard in front of their minute caves. Pepper eels and Geometric morays have also been spotted in this area. The coral life includes huge peach-coloured Fleshy coral, Anemones, Turbinate, Plate and Staghorn coral.

2 - MILE REEFS Wayne's World



Average depth: 14m
Maximum depth: 17m



Pinnacles



Average depth: 13m
Maximum depth: 16m

Pinnacles consists of large underwater rock formations with the pinnacle itself only six metres from the surface of the water. There are also lots of gullies and boulders in this area which are surrounded by sand patches. A variety of hard and soft coral is found on this reef, but in some shallower parts of the reef some broken coral is found. This area is coloured by Fleshy soft coral, Clustered finger coral and various colourful Thistle coral. Whip coral and Anemones are also found here. Various species of tropical reef fish are found here. Nudibranchs as well as Moray eels can also be seen lingering about the reef.

Four Buoy



Average depth: 9m
Maximum depth: 13m

Four Buoy is situated next to Pinnacles on 2-Mile Reef with boulders and gullies surrounded by huge sand patches. Four Buoy is almost the

central point of 2 - Mile Reef. A variety of hard and soft coral is found here with smaller fish species found between the coral and in small crevices. A great array of tropical reef fish, as well as Potato bass, Nudibranchs and various clamshells are seen regularly.

Deep Sponges



Average depth: 28m
Maximum depth: 30m

This is a rather flat reef with a few Sponges, Starfish and rock formations. The marine life encountered on this reef includes game fish, Pufferfish, Boxfish, Triggerfish and Clown triggers. The few rocks here are covered in marine growth with very few corals to be seen – mostly sponges and Whip corals. This is a dive spot for advanced scuba divers.

Coral Gardens



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 16m

If coral is what interests you, then this is the dive to do. The reef is flat, but thousands of spectacular coloured hard and soft corals are to be seen with a variety of juvenile fish, including wrasse, butterfly, angel and surgeonfish hiding in and under the coral. This is a relaxing, scenic dive for all levels of divers.

Caves and Overhangs



Average depth: 10m
Maximum depth: 15m

This popular dive site consists of big, blocky boulders covered in coral with sandy patches in between. The excellent light penetration and shallow depth have created a beautiful underwater garden with a magnificent range of coral and invertebrate life. The marine life encountered on this reef includes Potato bass, Scorpionfish, shrimps, eels and rays. Short-spine pufferfish as well as Flounders have also been spotted here. The coral life includes various types of hard and soft corals, sponges and Anemones. Tiger cowries and other shells add to the beauty of this reef.

Roonie's Reef



Average depth: 26m
Maximum depth: 32m

This reef has deep overhangs and gullies surrounded by sand patches, and it was the only reef in Sodwana where one yellow and two red Thorny seahorses (*Hippocampus histrix*) were found. Varieties of hard and soft coral can be found but one of the reef's stand out features is the huge black coral tree with the resident Longnose hawkfish. A number of cleaning stations with Cleaner shrimps can also be found here. Reef fish are common in the area with sweepers and Cardinal fish in the caves and overhangs.





Sodwana Bay



Anton's Reef



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 16m

This is one of the best dives in Sodwana. On this reef one usually finds various gullies, a long swim-through and boulders surrounded by sand patches. Numerous varieties of coral, including Fleishy soft coral, Table and Spiral coral, as well as colourful Sponges are a feature of the area. Arrays of reef fish are found on Anton's Reef with cleaning stations in the caves and under the overhangs. Various rays and eels are also found on a regular basis.

Chain Reef



Average depth: 14m
Maximum depth: 16m

This is a dive at a mostly untouched reef where you will find marine life that isn't commonly seen elsewhere. The area is quite flat but still has some caves and overhangs. Guitar sharks are spotted in this area amongst tropical reef fish. Round ribbontail rays and Tropical flounders are also seen on the sand patches between the coral reefs. Divers will encounter different kinds of Nudibranchs and Peacock mantis shrimps.

Bikini Reef



Average depth: 15m
Maximum depth: 22m

This is a relatively flat reef with a few hollows on the side and some drop offs, all of which are situated in a huge sand patch. The reef life here is very interesting with cleaning stations in some of the hollows and Garden eels in the sand patches. The coral consists mostly of hard corals, although there are some soft coral, but not as much as on some of the other reefs. Various tropical reef fish are found here and others, such as Scorpionfish, Lionfish, rays, fusiliers and Reef sharks are often sighted on this reef.

Stringer Reefs



Average depth: 11m
Maximum depth: 16m

The reef is divided into two parts by a large sandy patch, and when the visibility is good, you can see the one part from the other. The one is a large, rounded reef with scattered rock surrounding it and the other a smaller, rounded reef with steep drop-offs on the one side and quite a few ledges and caves on the other side. Marine life encountered on the dives includes Green turtles, Electric ray, Bearded scorpionfish, Potato bass, boxfish and rockcod. Reef fish such as Parrotfish, damsels and Coachmen also frequent this area. The coral on these two parts consists of more hard than soft coral. Cleaning stations are often seen with various types of Cleaning shrimps ready for duty. Big cushion starfish and Feather starfish are also plentiful. Juvenile Angelfish are common on this reef.

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Durban and Umhlanga Rocks



Durban and Umhlanga Rocks

GARMIN (WGS84)
 Umhlanga S29 43.514 E31 05.153
 Durban S29 51 22.6 E31 01 50.1

chalets, lodges, back packers, B&B's and guest houses.

Shops and service stations:

Like any major city or town in South Africa, a variety of shops are available. Diesel and petrol are also readily available.

Health and medical services:

There are world-class general practitioners, clinics and hospitals in this area.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Snorkelling
- Curio and coffee shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

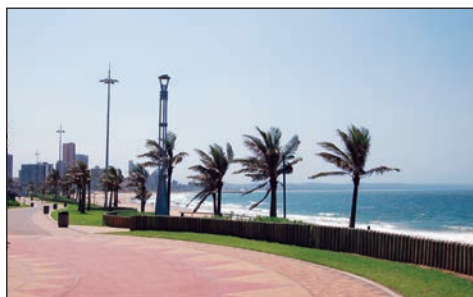
Durban is situated in the centre of all the dive sites on the south coast of KwaZulu-Natal, with Umhlanga Rocks just 17km north of Durban. The climate on the north coast is mostly subtropical to tropical and it is usually mild in winter and hot in the summer. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 17-30°C.

Winter land temperatures: 11-25°C.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in Durban, including camp sites, hotels, self-catering



Diving:

Durban and its surroundings have never been a popular diving destination, and, as a result, dive operators have come and gone over the years. But today the dive spots still offer a variety of reefs and wrecks and some of the best dives that you can find in the area. The art of diving here lies in choosing the right time – the conditions are reasonably good throughout the year but the best time to dive here would be between November and February.

Durban seems to be a halfway house between Sodwana Bay and Aliwal Shoal and only divers





that are looking to dive something different come to this area to dive. A number of deep and shallow wrecks as well as reefs at different depths are to be found in this region. Almost every dive and dive spot is planned according to the weather.

Tropical reef fish in the area includes Razorfish, Paperfish, Tiger angels and schools of Coachmen are now observed on almost every dive. On the wrecks and on the deeper dives one tends to encounter the pelagic fish such as cuda, shad and various types of tuna. Ragged-tooth sharks are also commonly found in the area with some making themselves at home on a number of the reefs. With the annual sardine run, many of the larger fish species start making an appearance and a number of shark species can be seen. There are always bigger species to be found if you choose the season well, including Whale sharks, dolphins and the Humpback whale.

Summer water temperatures: 20-25°C

Winter water temperatures: 15-20°C

Launch site:

There are two ways to launch in Durban; a nice relaxed launch from Durban harbour or a surf

launch off the Durban beachfront. The only way that you can launch from Umhlanga Rocks beach is by going through the surf. The wearing of life jackets is compulsory with every launch from the beach.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills
- Trimix fills
- Gear rentals
- Equipment sales
- Dive training
- Speciality courses

DIVE SPOTS

Fontaya



Average depth: 24m

Maximum depth: 27m

The Fontaya, an old Mozambican trawler that was sunk in 1970, is an excellent penetration wreck. She is also one of three artificial reefs that were created in order to enhance recreational fishing off the KwaZulu-Natal coast. The vessel is 35m long, 8m wide and 13,5m high and lies on the sand off the coast from the Umhlanga Rocks lighthouse. On the sand, one often finds large rays and Guitarfish, while the wreck is home to the Harlequin goldie (Conneli). There are large shoals of Karenteen, Pinkies and Blacktail that congregate on the bow of the wreck that can



Durban and Umhlanga Rocks

reduce visibility to zero. Schooling bait fish and pelagics can also be found on this wreck. The danger here is that you can easily become disorientated and lose your buddy. There is a toilet on the bridge, which makes for a memorable photograph.

The T-Barge



Average depth: 24m

Maximum depth: 27m

The T-Barge was originally a T-shaped barge with three cranes and it was sunk for an artificial reef in 1970. She is one of three artificial reefs that were created in order to enhance recreational fishing off the KwaZulu-Natal coast. It boasts a multitude of Cauliflower corals, crayfish and Goldies. On the sand, one often finds large rays and Guitarfish. The wreck is home to the Harlequin goldie (Conneli), a Goldie found only on wrecks in KwaZulu-Natal. A large colony of cleaner shrimps occupies the stern of the wreck and it is not uncommon to see Paperfish and Pineapple fish. There are normally large shoals of Karenteen, Pinkies and Blacktail that congregate on the bow of the wreck. Schooling bait fish and pelagics can also be found on this wreck. A torch and a pair of gloves are recommended equipment for this dive.



presence of pelagic fish and sharks make it a good place to dive (this was a popular site and feeding ground for sharks).

Outer Anchorage



Average depth: 25m

Maximum depth: 30m

Outer Anchorage used to be the 'No. 1' fishing ground in the old days, thus the peculiar name. It is a deep lying reef with boulders scattered about on a sandy bottom. Anchor chains form interesting patterns on the rock formations. The

Amphitheatre



Average depth: 27m

Maximum depth: 28m

Amphitheatre is part of the reefs on Outer Anchorage reef and is covered in ships' anchors and other damaged ship parts. Here you will find

caves and overhangs with a huge amount of fish. In the last few years many Ragged-tooth sharks have made this reef their home and are often spotted here on the dives. Tropical reef fish are also seen on this reef.

Artillery Reef



Average depth: 23m
Maximum depth: 26m

Artillery Reef is part of the reefs on Outer Anchorage reef and it was named after the amount of ammunition found in this area. One can still see 50mm and 88mm canon shells lying on the seabed. As it is part of the Outer Anchorage reef there are overhangs, caves and ledges populated by tropical reef fish.



Vetch's Pier



Average depth: 3m
Maximum depth: 6m

Vetch's Pier is a man-made marine structure that curves outwards for about 500m. It was a failed £160 000 attempt by Captain James Vetch to build a breakwater, but today it is better known for the large crayfish, eels, octopuses and small tropical reef fish which divers encounter here. Be wary of Scorpionfish and Lionfish, and, due to its shallowness, this dive site has a heavy surge. Vetch's Pier is an ideal place to see a nursery for marine life.



Stuart's Wreck



Average depth: 22m
Maximum depth: 27m

This wreck was named after Stuart Donkin who discovered it. The wreck is a 30m vessel that looks like a tug boat, and after examining the damage on the stern, it seems to have been an accidental sinking. Reef fish and bait fish can be seen on this wreck, and for those observant diver, Paperfish can be found. This wreck is also home to a number of rays and Guitar sharks.



Durban and Umhlanga Rocks

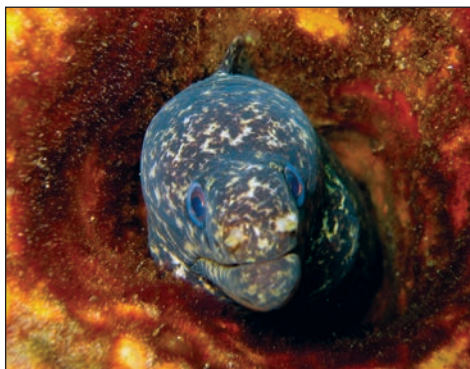
Blood Reef



Average depth: 12m

Maximum depth: 20m

This reef was named after the colour of the water in the earlier years when there was still a whaling station in the area and the blood was pumped into the water. This is one of Durban's best known dive sites with a variety of reef fish guaranteed to be found here.



Caves



Average depth: 10m

Maximum depth: 12m

This is possibly the best and most exhilarating dive site off the Durban coastline. The dive consists of an undersea bed cave system which runs for approximately 80m adjacent to the shoreline. Situated on Blood Reef, it is a shallow reef with holes in the bedrock that have been eroded to form a cave with a vault-like appearance. Collapsed sandstone formations have formed various caves and gullies. The boiling effect created by the blowholes on the reef makes it easy to spot just beyond the breaker line. Caves is a very interesting reef to explore.

Cooper's Wreck



Average depth: 20m

Maximum depth: 33m

This mysterious wreck is believed to be a whaler boat that was sunk around 1940. The wreck sits upright on the sand in 33m of water off the Cooper Lighthouse in Brighton Beach. The badly rusted hull is approximately 35m long and is covered with tangled fishing lines. This wreck is home to an abundance of tropical fish, rays and beautiful shells. Beware, because a thriving population of Stinging hydroids can leave you with a nasty experience.



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uShaka Marine World

GARMIN (WGS84) **S29 52.173**
E31 02.722

uShaka Marine World, located on the shore in Bell Street, Durban, was developed out of a vision to create a world-class entertainment and tourism destination for the city. uShaka Marine World incorporates fresh and sea water, natural materials and the mammoth recreation of a 1920s cargo shipwreck. It is the 5th largest aquarium in the world by volume of water.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in Durban, including camp sites, hotels, self-catering chalets, lodges, back packers, B&B's and guest houses.



Shops and service stations:

Like any major city or town in South Africa, a variety of shops are available. Diesel and petrol are also readily available.

Health and medical services:

There are world-class general practitioners, clinics and hospitals in this area.

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Hiking trails
- Curio and coffee shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

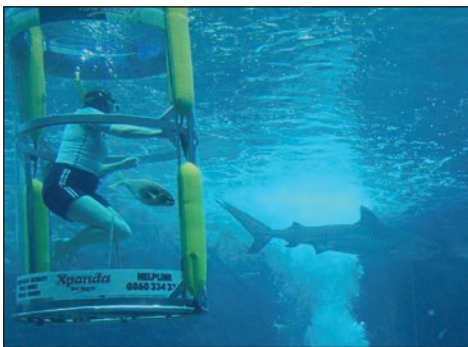
Diving:

The main attraction for scuba divers at uShaka Marine World is the fact that you are allowed to dive in the aquarium. It is a once in a lifetime opportunity to dive in a fish tank with tropical fish and get up close and personal with Eagle rays, Guitar sharks and Pompano to name just a few. Whether it's your 1st or your 50th, a dive in the aquarium is a dive that will awaken or reignite your passion for diving.



There are two tanks in which you can dive, the Lagoon and the Open Ocean Tank:

The Lagoon has an abundance of fish from Rainbow wrasse to a large shoal of Batfish. All in all, there are 67 different species to keep you entertained. Scuba diving here, you have the opportunity to explore the nooks and crannies of the man-made wreck of the 1920s cargo ship – there is a vintage World War II Willy's Jeep, an old, rusty treasure chest and a small Hound shark amongst other reef fish.



The Open Ocean Tank is your second option. Here you will encounter, amongst others, Guitar sharks and rays – the giant Round ribbon tail named Marilyn weighs in at 270kg – and Eagle rays, ranging in size from the adorable to the breathtakingly huge, peering into your mask! One thing to remember is that for your safety, as well as that of the inhabitants of the tank, the Open Ocean Tank is reserved for certified divers only.

For those interested in experiencing the underwater world without having to take a scuba diving course, uShaka Marine World offers the Ocean Walker – a dome shaped 'hat' that rests on your shoulders with an oxygen supply from above. You walk like an astronaut on the ocean floor in the Open Ocean Tank as the fish swim past you, undisturbed by your presence. It is a safe method for non-divers to experience the underwater world. Remember: no currents, no waves and loads of fun.



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Aliwal Shoal



At the beginning of 2005 Aliwal Shoal became a Marine Protected Area. It is situated approximately 50 kilometres south of Durban off the small town of Umkomaas on the south coast of KwaZulu-Natal. King Shaka Zulu named the area Umkomanzi, which can be literally translated into, ‘The watering place of the whales’, when he saw a number of cow whales and calves which were basking in the shallows a short distance out to sea from the river mouth. It is said that the whales swam up the river mouth to give birth, hence the name Umkomaas. The climate on the north coast is mostly subtropical, with mild winters and hot summers. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 17-30°C.

Winter land temperatures: 11-25°C.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in the nearby cities and towns, including camp sites, hotels, self-catering chalets, lodges, back packers, B&B's and guest houses.

Shops and service stations:

Like any major city or town in South Africa, a variety of shops are available. Diesel and petrol are also readily available.

Health and medical services:

There are world-class general practitioners, clinics and hospitals in the area.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Hiking trails
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Curio and coffee shops
- Fishing
- Golf
- Variety of water sports



Diving:

With it now being classed as a Marine Protected Area, permits are necessary to dive on the Aliwal Shoal. These permits can be obtained at your nearest post office or at some dive charters. The Aliwal Shoal is a 1,5km wide fossilised sandbank and reef five kilometres off shore from Umkomaas



Aliwal Shoal



and on the inner edge of the Mozambique current. The shoal runs in a north to south direction and, due to the warm waters, visibility is usually excellent. It was named after the Aliwal, a ship that sailed from London in September 1849 and was nearly wrecked here.

The shoal offers a variety of dives, including open water, advanced, shark and wreck diving. Although the boat ride could be long, it is always a good dive every time you go out. There are two wrecks that can be dived near the shoal, namely the Produce and the Nebo.

The shoal is best known for the Ragged-tooth sharks that are found there in the winter months at Raggie's Cave and Cathedral. Between June and November you are sure to see Ragged-tooth sharks as they congregate on the shoal to mate. It is not uncommon to find 15 to 150 of these ferocious-looking but docile animals on a single dive. In summer you have every chance of seeing huge Tiger sharks and Hammerheads. Depending on the conditions, the best dives are Cathedral, Raggie's Cave, Shark Alley and a number of other spots. The Sardine Run also passes by this area annually and is well known for the tumbling swirls of sardines mixed with sharks, birds and dolphins.

Summer water temperatures: 20-25°C.

Winter water temperatures: 15-20°C.

Launch site:

There are two types of launches; one from the river mouth where a boat takes you out to the ocean and the other a beach launch where the divers have to push the boat to the water and

jump in as soon as it is deep enough. Which launch you use is dependent on the weather and the tide – like a lucky packet, you never know what you are going to get. The wearing of life jackets is compulsory with every launch.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills
- Gear rentals
- Equipment sales
- Dive training
- Speciality courses

DIVE SPOTS

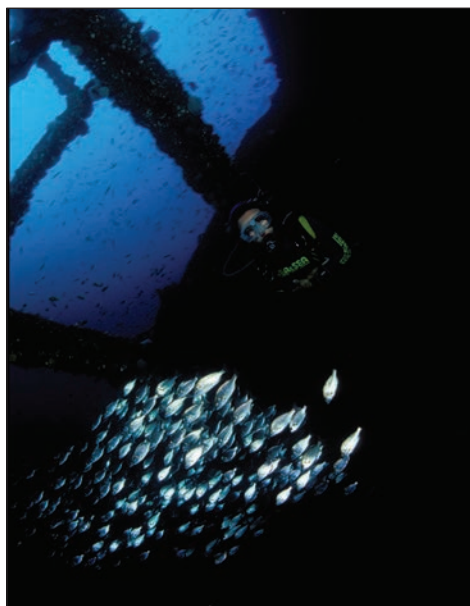
The Produce



Average depth: 24m

Maximum depth: 32m

The Produce is an old cargo vessel that was carrying molasses and was travelling from Durban, heading south when it struck the





pinnacles on Aliwal Shoal in 1974. There were no lives lost as a rescue party launched from the Umkomaas River managed to reach her and saved all the people on board. It is 119m long and lies facing north. She has come to rest on her starboard side and her back is broken leaving her midship very flat and scattered. Her propeller has been salvaged, however, her spare prop can still be seen on her bow. There are a number of swim-through's for the more experienced diver and it is advisable to take a torch on this dive as light does not penetrate all the swim-through's.

A host of very shy giant Brindle bass about 3m long and 1,5m wide could be seen, as well as Harlequin goldies all around the wreck; they are endemic to the wreck and can only be found on her and the Nebo. Scorpionfish and Stonefish are regularly found on the wreck, camouflaged and blended into the scenery. Manta rays and game fish can also be spotted in the big blue if the visibility is good. The coral on this wreck consists of more soft than hard coral. Some of the soft coral found here includes, Fire coral, Whip coral, Green fern coral, Polyp coral and yellow Turret coral.

The Nebo



Average depth: 18m

Maximum depth: 26m

The Nebo is reported to have been carrying





Aliwal Shoal

materials for the Van Staden's River Bridge back in the 1800s when she was sunk due to incorrect loading. She was very top heavy and when she encountered rough seas she simply went belly up and sank. The wreck, which is over 100 years old, is broken into two main parts. If the visibility is good or you have an experienced dive master, it is a simple navigation exercise to get from one part to the other.

One regular fish species found swimming in and out of the wreck on this reef is the Natal catfish. Harlequin goldies, which are endemic to this area, are also seen on the wreck. Round ribbontail ray, Sharpnosed stingray and Greyspot guitarfish are just a few visitors in the sand around the Nebo. squid and Scorpionfish are also found lingering about with schools of fusiliers, tuna and Hammerhead sharks. Keep an eye out for game fish patrolling the area. Soft coral, such as Green Fern coral, different colours of Polyp coral and Green and Yellow turret coral are found on this wreck. The different dive sites on the Aliwal Shoal have something to cater for everyone's taste – including the shark fanatics.



Northern Pinnacles



Average depth: 11m

Maximum depth: 17m

Divers need to thank the pinnacles for all the wrecks that are available to dive on Aliwal Shoal. Here, with pinnacles standing out from the bottom to as much as six metres from the surface are gullies, caves, overhangs, swim-through's and big holes in the reef. This is a relaxed, enjoyable dive because it is rather shallow, with more time to explore the beauty of the reef and inspect the coral and marine life.

North Sands



Average depth: 15m

Maximum depth: 17m

This is a huge sand patch on the northern part of the Aliwal Shoal which is surrounded by various other dive spots. This area is known for the great amount of Round ribbontail rays found buried underneath the golden sand and under the edges of the surrounding reef. Guitar sharks are also a common sight in the summer months. Be on the lookout for Sole hiding underneath the sand with just their eyes sticking out. For the inquisitive





diver, the sand patch has lots of old shells as well as old shark's teeth. Game fish are normally found in the vicinity.

Manta Point



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 22m

At Manta Point huge rock formations are found with caves big enough for Ragged-tooth sharks to fit in, and overhangs and ledges with clouds of fish hiding underneath. Swim-through's and gullies are also on the list of interesting landscaping in this area. Ragged-tooth sharks are regularly seen in November, usually found patrolling the gullies and caves in this area. Schools of tropical fish are also found, along with an array of hard and soft coral on the edges of the reef. There are parts of the reef that look as if it has been draped with Leather coral with bits of sea grass in between and a sea urchin here and there. This is a great multi-level dive.

Chunnel



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 17m



Expect to find a cave full of sharks and tropical fish on this dive, but be aware that not a lot of light penetrates the cave, making it quite a frightening dive. Chunnel, which is near Raggie's Cave, was named as such because it is a waterway where sharks constantly move. The marine life in this area consists mainly of Ragged-tooth sharks which patrol the area. Turtles have been spotted as well as Sand sharks and Ribbontail rays in the sand patch nearby. Raggie Scorpionfish are also common in the area. The fish life includes Wrasse and some tropical reef fish. Coral is not that plentiful on this reef.

Raggie's Cave



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 19m

This area has rock formations with a great amount of caves, overhangs, gullies and swim-through's. Big caves, where you can easily fit in a couple of scuba divers, are often also inhabited by Ragged-tooth sharks. The coral life consists mainly of hard coral with fewer reef fish to be found. In the gullies and crevices the juvenile fish hide during the day with False stonefish and Scorpionfish also commonly found in this area. Shark's teeth can be found inside the cave and



Aliwal Shoal



Rian Bester



sandy bottom and it is a favourite place for Ragged-tooth sharks swimming to the outside ledge. Between the scattered rocks in the sand you can find shark's teeth, and in all the caverns in the walls, reef fish hide from the sharks. Scorpion fish are commonly found here.

also in the surrounding sand patches. This dive site is known worldwide for the Ragged-tooth sharks that populate the reef.

Tiger Cove



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 18m

Tiger Cove is part of the inside edge of the reef and is basically a big overhang that forms a cave at the bottom of the wall. It is named after the great amount of Tiger cowries found in the area. Along the wall you will find big green Fern coral, Black coral, Whip coral and various other soft coral. Goldies and other juveniles usually form a big cloud around the Black coral. Be on the lookout for Raggie scorpionfish and False

Shark Alley



Average depth: 16m
Maximum depth: 20m

This part of the reef has rock face walls with a



stonefish as they are camouflaged so well that you really have to look carefully to spot them. Other regular visitors on the sand patch include Guitarfish and various rays. Guineafowl moray eels and beautiful Nudibranchs also occupy space on this reef.

Inside Edge



Average depth: 15m
Maximum depth: 23m

Inside Edge is a wall stretching three to six metres high, with ledges, caves and overhangs. Most of the activity is found along the side of the wall – the one side features a big sand patch with scattered rock formations. Along the wall there are various soft corals with Goldies and other juveniles usually forming large clouds around the Black coral. Be on the lookout for Raggie scorpionfish and False stonefish as they are camouflaged so well that you really have to look carefully to spot them. Other regular visitors on the sand patch include Guitarfish and various rays. The regular tropical fish are found amongst the coral and crevices. Guineafowl moray eels and beautiful Nudibranchs also occupy space on this reef.



Outside Edge



Average depth: 16m
Maximum depth: 26m

The Outside Edge runs from the north to the southern part of the shoal with the wall on the seaside of the shoal. There are different dive spots on this edge, such as Raggie's Cave, Cathedral and Sharks Alley. Some other caves and overhangs can also be found on this edge. Tropical fish are found here as well as turtles, and the coral includes hard and soft coral which creates amazing landscape scenes. Always keep an eye out for game fish swimming by in the midwater.

Cathedral



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 27m

Here you can explore a cave surrounded by a crater-like rock formation with Ragged-tooth sharks swimming in and out patrolling their territory. The rest of the reef onwards is a plateau with the edges dropping five to ten metres at some places. The main attraction at Cathedral is obviously the Ragged-tooth sharks with all sizes coming in and out like planes on a busy landing





Aliwal Shoal

strip in the summer holidays. Some of them are tagged and under constant surveillance with tracking systems that are placed near the caves to monitor the migration of these incredible sharks.

South Sands



Average depth: 14m
Maximum depth: 18m

This area is a sand patch surrounded by reef with scattered rocks peppering the sand. The reef life is rather quiet when you first approach, but underneath the rock there is a great deal of activity. Reef fish hide in the crevices away from the predators and Boxfish, Pufferfish and even Crayfish can be found if you take the time to look. Sand sharks and various kinds of rays are seen on a regular basis on this sand patch. On the reef patches you will find Leather coral, Yellow turret coral and Thistle coral in various colours. A wide range of Nudibranchs are also found here. Don't forget to look around for other game fish visiting the area, especially when schools of tuna pass by.



Eel Skin



Average depth: 13m
Maximum depth: 19m

At this reef you will find shattered rock formations with a wall on the side full of caverns and overhangs. The scenery on this dive is one of the best on the shoal; you will also see a wide variety of starfish in all colours, shapes and sizes. Cleaning stations are to be seen in the small caverns and False stonefish, Peacock manta shrimp, Pufferfish and Boxfish are just some of the species seen on this dive. Coral consists mostly of soft coral – Green fern coral with clouds of Goldies, and Nudibranchs on the rock formations are a must see. Don't forget to be on the lookout for game fish lurking just off the reef. If you can, bring a camera along on this dive as there are many opportunities to take amazing photographs.

Howard's Castle



Average depth: 17m
Maximum depth: 21m

This dive has channels with walls of reef on either side and within these walls are overhangs and swim-through's. The channels have a few sand patches where you can find interesting ocean life. Coral life is few, but hard coral, such as Leather coral, Porous coral and sponges are found. Soft coral such as Thistle coral and the bright yellow Dead-man's finger coral are found in the crevices. Fish species include Flute mouth fish, Trumpetfish and Devil firefish. Also be on the lookout for the shy Mantis shrimp hiding in crevices Game fish are always in the vicinity and Tiger sharks are regular visitors on the shoal.



Tiger shark diving

Tiger shark diving is a big blue dive done just off the coast at Scottsburg on the southern coast of KwaZulu-Natal. This is one of only three known sites in the world where the diver can interact with one of the top three apex predators in their natural environment without a cage.

Launching from the beach off Umkomaas, it takes approximately half an hour in the boat to reach the dive site. Once you are at the dive operator, a detailed briefing is given as well as numerous safety tips. Although this dive makes use of baiting techniques, it mimics the natural feeding pattern as closely as possible and does not at any stage induce a feeding frenzy.

The dive takes place in approximately 20m of water where the dive operator places a bucket of chum floating 10m under the surface. Divers then stay a good distance from the bait and wait for the sharks to arrive. Sightings of the Tiger sharks cannot be guaranteed, however, some of the operators will have an 80% strike rate throughout the year.

This dive is never boring though, as the Black tip sharks and the abundance of fish life around keep you entertained while you wait for the Tiger sharks to make an appearance. Sometimes other visitors join the party, and Hammerheads, Whitetip reef sharks, Raggies, Dusky sharks and even Great whites have been spotted. This is a must for the shark adrenalin junkie!

For more information about accommodation and dive charters, visit www.thedivespot.co.za



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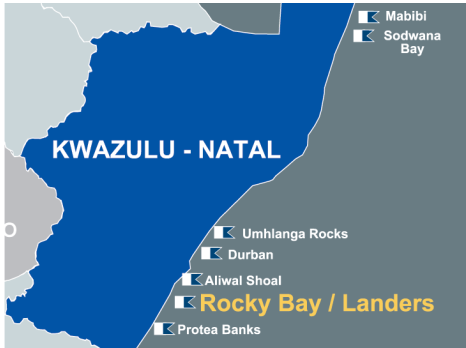
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Rocky Bay / Landers



Rocky Bay / Landers

GARMIN (WGS84) **S30 20.126**
E30 44.050

The town of Rocky Bay, which has its own small, exclusive beach, can be found approximately 16 km south of Umkomaas just past the town of Scottsburg. During World War I, a whaling station was built here and the breakwater built by the whaling company was known as Rocky Bay Pier. The landing ramp is still in use by boats and the remains of the old whaling station are still visible on Rocky Bay. The climate on the north coast is mostly tropical with mild winters and hot summers. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 17-30°C.

Winter land temperatures: 11-25°C.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in the nearby cities and towns, including camp sites, hotels, self-catering chalets, lodges, back packers, B&B's and guest houses.

Shops and service stations:

Like any major city or town in South Africa, a variety of shops are available. Diesel and petrol are also readily available.

Health and medical services:

There are world-class general practitioners,

clinics and hospitals in the surrounding areas.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Curio and coffee shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

Diving:

Rocky Bay is one of the best kept diving secrets on the South African coast. Much like Aliwal Shoal (and just to the south of it), a group of reefs lie between two and four kilometres offshore across Rocky Bay. Because the dive spots are a





Rocky Bay / Landers

little bit deeper and range from 20m to 40m, it is advisable to have an advanced qualification. Like the Aliwal Shoal, Rocky Bay is also fossilized sand dunes with drop-offs, gullies and overhangs.

With only a few dive operators in this area, the reefs are untouched and an abundance of reef fish are likely to be seen. This was a popular fishing spot for fisherman to catch the large game fish and a number of shark species are commonly seen on the reefs.

Summer water temperatures: 20-25°C.

Winter water temperatures: 15-20°C.

Launch site:

The launch is done from Rocky Bay landing ramp; a surf launch in a small protected area. The wearing of life jackets is compulsory with every launch. There are no dive related facilities at this launch site.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills
- Gear rentals
- Dive training
- Speciality courses



DIVE SPOTS

Half Acre



Average depth: 17m

Maximum depth: 23m

This area has huge boulders and gullies that are connected to a flat piece of reef. The boulders look as if they were dropped from heaven. It is recommended that divers stay in a close group as the rock formations on this reef can cause the divers to lose sight of the dive master. Coral on the reef is made up predominantly of soft coral. Surfaces are covered with seaweed with lots of Nudibranchs in and between the crevices. Tropical fish roam around freely and be on the lookout for crayfish in small caves and overhangs. Natal catfish, Batfish, Trumpetfish and Idols are common sightings. Game fish are always in the vicinity.

Cowrie Reef



Average depth: 19m

Maximum depth: 25m

Big boulders are scattered around at this dive spot with sand patches in between. A few ledges with overhangs and small holes in the reef are present where Triggerfish hide and sleep. This reef lives up to it's name because there are quite a number of different species of cowrie shells on this reef sitting next to or on the big sea sponges. Coral life consists of soft coral such as Dead-man's finger, various colours of Polyp coral swinging in the surge, Black coral trees and Green fern coral with clouds of Goldies swimming around it. Also be on the look out for Nudibranchs in various colours and sizes. Hard coral consists of Smooth horned coral and Leather coral. In the sand patches in between, flounders are found hiding underneath the sand.

Fern Reef



Average depth: 18m

Maximum depth: 24m

At Fern Reef, rock wall formations form ledges and gullies with sand patches surrounding the rocky reef. This is still an unspoilt part of the shoal that isn't dived a lot, thus the coral here is mostly unbroken and a wide variety of hard and soft coral can be seen. As far as marine life is concerned, expect to see schools of Kingfish passing by, curious Potato bass, Bonitos, Hammerhead sharks, fusiliers, juvenile Clownfish, Boxfish and Scorpionfish.

Butchers



Average depth: 18m

Maximum depth: 25m

Boulders, rocks with big crevices and gullies are some of the characteristics of this reef north of Landers. The reef has a wall-like formation that is approximately 6m high. Tropical fish such as



Trumpetfish, Geometric moray eel, Natal catfish, Speckled shrimpfish, Batfish and False stonefish are just some of the marine life one will encounter on this reef. A resident Loggerhead turtle that sleeps in one of the many caves and overhangs can usually be seen. This reef is also known as the 'Juvenile Nursery'. Many species of hard and soft coral can be found on this reef.

Landers



Average depth: 21m

Maximum depth: 31m

Landers consists of a big pinnacle, large boulders, crevices and huge gullies with small sand patches in between the reefs. This is one of the most scenic dives that you will find. Big caves and overhangs are common with the reef teeming with Nudibranchs and tropical reef fish. Game fish and dolphins are a common sight on this reef with Humpback whales being seen in the vicinity. Soft coral such as Dead-man's finger, Thistle and Branched black coral are but some of the coral found on this reef. On this reef look out for the big Green coral tree and rare eels while huge clouds of goldies can be seen in the branches of the Black coral.

Outside Landers



Average depth: 20m

Maximum depth: 28m

Outside Landers is a wall-like reef that runs from north to south. On the ledge you will find pinnacles which make a good enclosure for marine life and which stand out a couple of metres above the rest of the reef. The boulders create nice swim-through's and gullies. As this is one of the deeper dives there tend to be thermo



Rocky Bay / Landers

clines here and there, yet you may still encounter Bluefin kingfish, while tropical fish can also be seen. A school of Batfish has been spotted as well as fusiliers and Ragged-tooth sharks – Nudibranchs and crayfish peeping out of the holes. Coral life, like most of the other reefs in this area, consists more of soft than hard coral. Whip coral, Purple and White thistle coral, Lettuce coral, Sea urchins and much more can be seen on this reef.

Sea urchins in almost every corner you look. Polyp coral, White and Pink thistle coral and Green Fern coral are amongst the highlights on this untouched reef. The fish in this area, obviously not used to having divers around, were very inquisitive. These included, amongst many others, big Moorish idols, snappers, Triggerfish, Model tobies, Boxy's and Tiger angelfish.

Charred Reef



Average depth: 23m

Maximum depth: 36m

At Charred Reef, rock formations form a wall with small ledges and gullies with sand patches surrounding the rocky reef. White kingfish roam this area and are keen on inspecting new visitors. Devil firefish were seen floating in the gullies together with Redfang triggerfish. Moorish idols and snappers were just a few of the tropical fish seen on this reef. Different sizes and types of Nudibranchs are commonly found on the reef between the coral, of which Polyp coral, Dead-man's finger coral, sea urchins and Whip coral in different colours can be seen.



Umzimai Wall



Average depth: 23m

Maximum depth: 40m

Huge boulders, with big crevices, scattered rocks and gullies to swim through are features of Umzimai Wall. On the inshore side there is a wall almost 20m high with ledges and a cave on the northern side. There are big Black coral trees, amazing long curled Whip coral and big





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Protea Banks



Protea Banks



Protea Banks is situated near a town called Shelly Beach, approximately 160km south of Durban. The town name was derived from the many shells that are found on the shore. Shelly Beach is home to the well-known small craft harbour, and today this harbour is the focal point from which many and varied ocean activities take place. The climate on the south coast is mostly tropical, with mild winters and hot summers. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 17-30°C.

Winter land temperatures: 11-25°C.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in the



nearby cities and towns, including camp sites, hotels, self-catering chalets, lodges, back packers, B&B's and guest houses.

Shops and service stations:

Like any major city or town in South Africa, a variety of shops are available. Diesel and petrol are also readily available.



Health and medical services:

There is a general practitioner, clinic and hospital in the surrounding area.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Quad bike trails
- Hiking trails
- 4X4 Trails
- Micro light flights
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Curio and coffee shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

Diving:

If you always want to see the bigger things that the ocean has to offer, this site is for you. Protea Banks is situated 7,5km straight out to sea off Shelly Beach. A fossilised sand dune reef lies in an east to west direction along the coast between 27m and 40m, and is approximately 6km long



and 800m in width. There are two distinct areas on which all the dive charters focus – southern and northern pinnacles. Ranked amongst the top shark and game fish dives in the world, Protea Banks offers you a variety of sharks and pelagic on almost every dive.

Protea Banks offers an exceptionally exciting specialty shark dive for locals and international visitors. During the summer months the Bull shark (Zambezi) makes the banks its home. Hammerheads are often seen overhead – not just one or two, but in their hundreds. Guitar sharks, Coppers and Blacktips frequent this reef, while a fortunate few get the privilege of seeing the elusive Tiger shark. In the winter months the Ragged-tooth sharks congregate on Protea to mate. Aside from the sharks, a vast number of game fish such as Barracuda, Snappers, Tuna, Yellowtail, Kingfish and Potato bass to name but a few, can be spotted on the dives.

Other different species that you can encounter on the dive are the Humpback whale, Spotted eagle ray, Manta ray, Devil ray, Whale shark and Brindle bass.

Diving here is normally a multi-level drift dive (no current, no sharks) where a couple of minutes are spent on the reef followed by a drift in the big

blue to see all the mid-water sharks and pelagic fish.

Summer water temperatures: 20-25°C.

Winter water temperatures: 15-20°C.

Launch site

The launch is done from the Shelly Beach ski boat club. A surf launch is done from the beach in a small protected area. The wearing of life jackets is compulsory with every launch, as well as beaching. Facilities at the launch site include showers and toilets and the ski boat club hosts a small kiosk that provides takeaway food.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills
- Gear rentals
- Equipment sales
- Dive training
- Speciality courses

DIVE SPOTS Play Ground



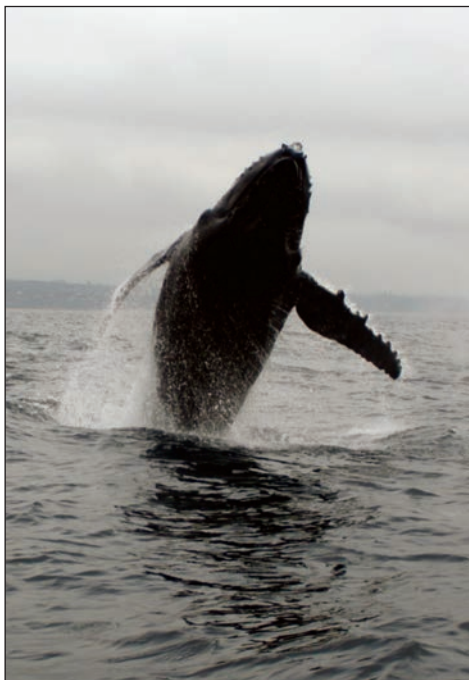
Average depth: 34m

Maximum depth: 40m

The Play Ground derived its name from the numerous features that look like they were carved out of the rock. These features include ‘whale’s tale’, ‘whale’s fluke’, ‘the clown’s head’ and a big swim-through called ‘the dragon’s mouth’. This area is renowned for game fish such as Tuna, Brindle bass and Geelbek. Other marine species that are found in this area include, crayfish, Moorish idols, Rubberlips and Redfang triggerfish to name just a few. There isn’t much coral on this fossilised sand dune but there are various types of Anemones, Deadmans fingers, Starfish and scattered Black coral trees. On all of the dive spots you may encounter Zambezi (Bull), Ragged-tooth (June to November), Blacktip, Tiger and schooling Hammerhead sharks depending on the season.



Protea Banks



Star Cave



Average depth: 32m

Maximum depth: 37m

Star Cave is also situated in the northern pinnacle area and is a cave in the shape of a star with two distinct chambers inside. Each cavern has a hole to the outside and each of the chambers is about the size of a standard garage. The caves are normally utilised by resting Ragged-tooth sharks between June and November. Other shark species that are normally encountered in the area include Zambezi (Bull), Blacktip, Tiger and schooling Hammerhead sharks depending on the season. The main attraction is the sharks, but other interesting fish species such as Kingfish, Snappers, Rubberlips, Moorish idols and Redfang triggerfish are worthwhile seeing.



Northern Cave



Average depth: 33m

Maximum depth: 35m

Northern Cave is situated near the northern pinnacle of Protea Banks and is known as a good spot for game fishing. Here you will find a large cave and a ledge where sharks rest and dwell during the day. This reef doesn't have a lot of soft coral, but palmate sea fans can be seen. The hard types of coral such as Whip coral, Plate coral and Porous coral are found in this area with lots of sea grass all along the bottom. Game fish are the big attraction of this reef, with Kingfish, Barracuda and Redfang triggerfish likely to be seen, while you may also encounter Zambezi (Bull) shark, Ragged-tooth (June to November), Blacktip, Tiger and schooling Hammerhead sharks depending on the season.

Southern Cave



Average depth: 30m

Maximum depth: 32m

Southern Cave is situated in the southern pinnacle area of Protea Banks. It is a rugged reef area that has lots of rocks and holes in the reef. This area is home to the Zambezi shark (Bull) which is what Protea Banks has become famous for. From October to May, some very large





Zambezi sharks can be encountered here. Scalloped hammerhead sharks are also seen shoaling at this time and they often come past in as many as several hundreds at a time. Hunting packs of Great hammerheads check out the divers and Blacktips playfully dart in and out of the diver's vision. There are also occasional visits from Copper, Mako and White sharks. According to the locals, April and May are the best months to encounter Tiger sharks in the area. The main attraction is the sharks, but other interesting fish species, such as Kingfish, Snappers, Rubberlips, Moorish idols and Redfang triggerfish can also be seen.

found on this ledge, including Moray eels, Nudibranchs, crayfish, Starfish, Snappers, fusilliers, tuna, Kingfish and Potato bass. You might encounter Zambezi (Bull) shark, Ragged-tooth (June to November), Blacktip, Tiger and schooling Hammerhead sharks depending on the season.

Lord of the Rings



Average depth: 30m

Maximum depth: 32m

Inside Ledge



Average depth: 30m

Maximum depth: 32m

This site has a ledge that houses a cave. It runs from 30m to almost 45m but is only dived to 32m according to dive protocol and the qualification of the group divers. Abundant marine life is

Lord of the Rings is a very striking feature on the reef. It is a big rock almost 4m high which has holes everywhere and looks like it was placed on a sandy bottom almost like a statue. Marine species that are found in this area include crayfish, Moorish idols, Rubberlips and Redfang triggerfish. There isn't much coral in the area but there are various types of Anemones, Deadmans finger, Starfish and scattered Black coral trees. On all of the dive spots you might encounter Zambezi (Bull), Ragged-tooth (June to November), Blacktip, Tiger and schooling Hammerhead sharks depending on the season.





Protea Banks

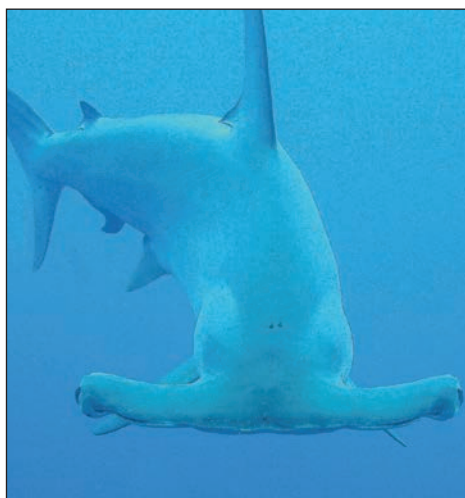
The Village



Average depth: 30m

Maximum depth: 32m

The Village is an area on the reef with lots of 'hills', causing it to look almost like a small mountain range with large outcrops and a big overhanging rock. An abundance of marine life is found in this area, including Moray eels, Nudibranchs, crayfish, Starfish, snappers, Fusilliers, Kingfish and Potato bass. Hard coral such as Staghorn, Leather and Whip coral can be seen on the hard surfaces of the reef and soft coral like Sponges and Sea urchins are found in the crevices. You might encounter Zambezi (Bull), Ragged-tooth (June to November), Blacktip, Tiger and schooling Hammerhead sharks depending on the season.



sharks are a common sight in this area. Hard coral such as Staghorn, Leather and Whip coral can be seen on the hard surfaces of the reef and soft coral like sponges and sea urchins are found in the crevices. An array of game fish is readily spotted on this reef. On all of the dive spots you might encounter Zambezi (Bull), Ragged-tooth (June to November), Blacktip, Tiger and schooling Hammerhead sharks depending on the season.

Kingfish Gully



Average depth: 30m

Maximum depth: 32m

Scattered rock formations and an overhanging rock are home to large shoals of Kingfish, Yellowtail, Kaakap, Sea pike tunny, Potato bass and many more species. Between October and November, Humpback Whales can be seen playing in the deeper parts of the Protea Banks, while large schools of Smooth hammerhead



Sand Shark Gully



Average depth: 38m

Maximum depth: 40m

Doing a drift dive, the current takes the divers to a large sandy patch called Sand Shark Gully. It lies at a depth of exactly 40m and is home to the Giant guitar shark. At times they are seen lined up like planes at an airport, 50 to 60 of these magnificent creatures. On this dive spot you might also encounter Zambezi (Bull), Blacktip and schooling Hammerhead sharks depending on the season.

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Baited shark diving

Baited shark diving

Protea Banks, one of the most famous spots for shark diving in the world, is the location for a baited shark dive that is not for the faint hearted.

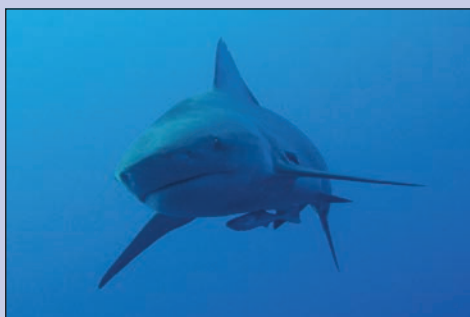
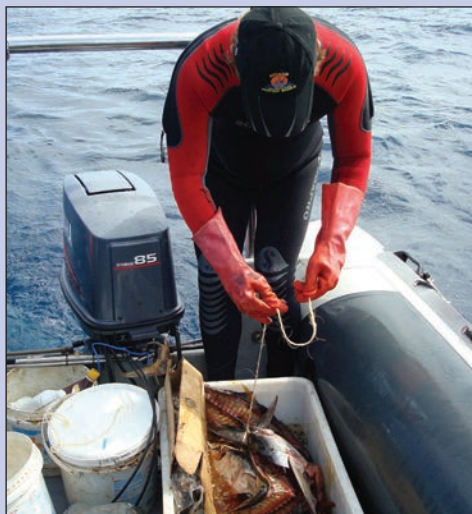
Your dive will start with a shark briefing, an explanation of the code of conduct and tips on how to behave around the sharks. After the boat ride to the banks, a bait bucket is set to a depth of 8 metres and is held up by buoys. A number of different species of shark will pick up the scent and follow it to its origin. Most of the fish oil from the slick settles on the surface and therefore the shark is often visible as it approaches.

The boat stays at a safe distance from the bait to ensure that the shark is not disturbed until it is

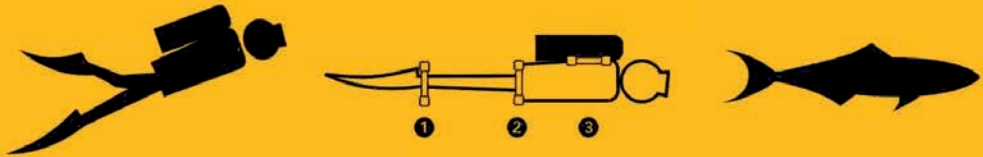
entirely focused on the food source. The boat then slowly approaches the baiting station where people can clearly observe the sharks. Divers then enter the water as quietly as possible and swim slowly towards the bait bucket. A safe distance is kept from the bucket to observe the inquisitive sharks that swim in and examine the bucket. As the sharks swim between them, the divers, as well as the bucket, will be drifting with the current.

The one difference between the Tiger shark diving in Aliwal Shoal and the baited shark diving in Protea Banks is that on Protea, a number of different species of shark are likely to be seen. Zambesi (Bull), Scalloped hammerhead, Great hammerhead, Blacktip and Tiger sharks are expected sightings, while Dusky and Copper sharks are sometimes also seen.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters, visit www.thedivespot.co.za



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East London



East London

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East London, affectionately known as Buffalo City by the locals, is situated 1 000km from Cape Town on the south east coast of South Africa. Situated in between the Nahoon River in the north and the Buffalo River to the south, East London is home to the only river port in South Africa. The climate in the Western Cape is typically Mediterranean and is usually warm and dry in the summer and mild and moist in the winter. Rain is frequent during the winter months.

Summer land temperatures: 16-28°C.

Winter land temperatures: 10-18°C.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in the cities and towns in and around East London,

including camp sites, hotels, self-catering chalets, lodges, back packers, B&B's and guest houses.

Shops and service stations:

Like any major city and town in South Africa a variety of shops are available. Diesel and petrol are also readily available.

Health and medical services:

There are general practitioners, primary healthcare clinics and a hospital in this area.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Quad bike trails
- Hiking trails
- 4X4 Trails
- Micro light flights
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Curio and coffee shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

Diving:

As East London is the fourth largest city in the country and the only city that has a river





harbour, wrecks can be found all over this area. A variety of dive sites are present, from shallow to deep dives, and dive sites with wrecks lying in deeper waters to wrecks that you can walk around. The reefs range from pinnacles to walls with caverns and caves. The diving here is mostly weather dependent with a lot of rain together with strong winds which usually lower the visibility which can range from 4 metres to 14 metres. The reefs in this area are tropical with a variety of fish, other marine life and sharks frequently found around the dive sites. The coral life includes various types of hard and soft corals.

Summer water temperatures: 16-23°C.

Winter water temperatures: 14-19°C.

Launch site:

There are a variety of entries for the dive spots in East London. Most of them are shore entries but some of the dive sites can only be reached by boat. The boat launches will be from the closest harbour or from the closest launching ramp to the dive spot.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills
- Gear rentals
- Equipment sales
- Dive training
- Speciality courses

DIVE SPOTS

Gonubie Point



Average depth: 5m

Maximum depth: 10m

Gonubie Point is a smallish reef mostly for novice divers. The coral life includes various types of hard and soft corals, sponges and urchins. The reef is covered with marine growth and invertebrates can be seen on this dive. This is an interesting dive for any level of scuba diver. This site can also be used for night diving.



East London



Wagon Wheels/Reef 200



Average depth: 15m
Maximum depth: 30m

This is a large reef with a big flat section consisting of pinnacles and small caves. The coral life includes various types of hard and soft corals and sponges while the reef is covered with marine growth and invertebrates. Basket starfish are abundant and as one goes deeper the protected tree-like pink coral makes an appearance. Medium sized fish such as Blacktails, Strepies, Romans and Janbruins can be seen.

Nahoon Bay



Average depth: 10m
Maximum depth: 18m

Various reef fish can be seen on this site where three pinnacles rise up from the ocean floor. There are spectacular ledges and caves on this reef with small marine life hiding under the overhangs. The coral life includes various types of hard and soft corals, sponges and urchins.

Nahoon Reef



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 30m

Nahoon Reef has an abundance of caverns and caves that host many small and big fish. Juvenile Ragged-tooth sharks are often found at this dive spot. The coral life includes various types of hard and soft corals.

Three Sisters



Average depth: 8m
Maximum depth: 15m

Three Sisters is regarded as one of the best dive spots in East London. Here divers can see spectacular pinnacles and ledges, while the coral life includes various types of hard and soft corals, sponges and urchins. The reef is covered with marine growth and various corals and invertebrates can be seen. Marine life from Ragged-tooth sharks to the smallest of Nudibranchs and big game fish are frequent sightings on this reef and its surroundings.

The SS King Cadwallon



Average depth: 6m
Maximum depth: 8m





Rian Bester

The King Cadwallon was a British crew steamer that burnt out and sank in 1929 after catching fire on its voyage from Durban to Adelaide. Its bell and other parts of the wreck can still be seen in the East London Museum. Underwater, its boiler can still be seen and it is still in a good condition. The wreck is covered with marine growth with tropical fish species usually found in and around this wreck.

farmers remain in this region. She lies opposite the entrance to the Kennaway Hotel off the shore. Remains to be seen include the hull-ripping which extends from the rocky shoreline onto a sandy bed starting just behind the wave action.

Lady Kennaway Wreck



Average depth: 3m

Maximum depth: 5m

Lady Kennaway, a three masted, square rigged barque ran aground on a sand spit in the Buffalo River Mouth in 1857. The ship was transporting a cargo of single Irish women to help the





East London

Valdivia Wreck



Average depth: 3m
Maximum depth: 5m

The Valdivia was a cargo ship that was carrying a cargo of 40 000 tins of paraffin which ran aground on the rocks along the Esplanade at East London in 1908. Its cargo was spewed along the Esplanade and the Eastern Beach. All that remains to be seen of the ship are a few metal plates.

Quanza Wreck



Average depth: 2m
Maximum depth: 3m

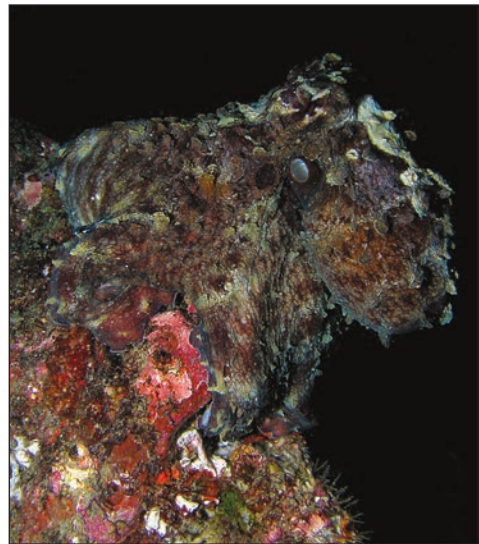
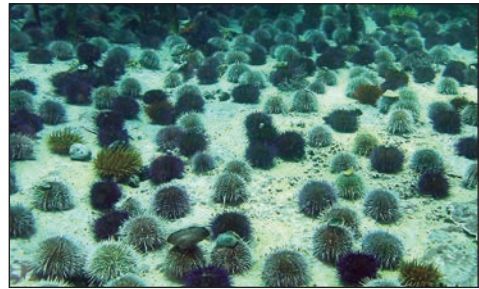
The Quanza Wreck lies in front of the swimming pool on the Orient Beach on the left entrance of the gully. Her steel prop can be seen in the middle of the gully out of the water at low tide. One can follow the prop shaft to the remains of the hull which can be found just below the water line at low tide and then continue on seaward to find the anchor chain exposing itself in the sand.

The SS Oranjeland



Average depth: 8m
Maximum depth: 12m

The Oranjeland was a Coastal Cargo Ship carrying a shipment of granite that ran aground exiting the East London harbour. Her hull and deck was cut down to about 5m below the surface which has created an artificial reef with lots of nooks and crannies. The seaward side of the wreck offers a sandy bottom, whereas the landward side is noted for patch reef and remnants of the wreckage. Basket starfish, Big eye, Silver and Black steenbras, Red romans, Blacktails, Strepies and Janbruins can be seen.





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Port Elizabeth



Port Elizabeth

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Port Elizabeth, also known as Nelson Mandela Bay, is located 763km east of Cape Town. It is regarded as the 'official' gateway to the scenic Eastern Cape Province and the world renowned Garden Route. It is sometimes also referred to as the 'Friendly City' or the 'water sport capital of Africa'. The climate is typically Mediterranean and is usually warm and dry in the summer and mild and moist in the winter. Rain is frequent during the winter months.

Summer land temperatures: 16-28°C.

Winter land temperatures: 10-18°C.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in the



cities and towns in and around Port Elizabeth, including camp sites, hotels, self-catering chalets, lodges, back packers, B&B's and guest houses.

Shops and service stations:

Like any major city and town in South Africa a variety of shops are available. Diesel and petrol are also readily available.

Health and medical services:

There are general practitioners, clinics and a hospital in this area.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Quad bike trails
- Hiking trails
- 4X4 Trails
- Micro light flights
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Curio and coffee shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports
- Golf





Diving:

Port Elizabeth has two main diving areas – the Bay itself and the Wild Side, which lies to the west of Cape Recife. Diving conditions in Port Elizabeth are greatly influenced by seasonal changes. The Bay is a transition zone between the warm current that runs down the east coast and the cold current that runs down the west coast – this creates two distinctive dive environments on each side of the coastline. Winter is the best time to dive Port Elizabeth where you will encounter an average visibility of 5m-8m in the Bay and between 10m-15m on the Wild side.

The rocky reefs are covered in soft corals, sponges and sea fans. Due to the nutrient rich water that feeds the reefs of the Wild Side, the growth of false and hard corals is prolific. The Noble coral that grows here in abundance is in fact the only hard coral in southern Africa that grows in cold water. The dramatic rock formations of the reefs make for interesting dives for all levels of scuba divers, with depths ranging from 5m to 40m. A wide variety of sharks, including Raggies, Pyjama, Leopard, Dusky and Bronze whaler sharks can be seen all year round, although summer months are the peak season. Dolphins, Humpback, Bryde and Southern right whales are regular visitors to the Bay.

Summer water temperatures: 16-23°C.

Winter water temperatures: 14-19°C.

Launch site:

There are a variety of types of entries at Port Elizabeth. Some of them are shore entries but most of the dive spots can only be reached by boat. The boat launches are done from the closest harbour or from the closest launching ramp to the dive spot.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills
- Gear rentals
- Equipment sales
- Dive training
- Speciality courses

DIVE SPOTS

Evan's Peak



Average depth: 20m

Maximum depth: 40m

This is one of the most spectacular dive sites in South Africa, having been internationally rated in some publications as one of the top ten cold water dive sites in the world! Although this reef starts with depths of 14m it tapers down quickly to depths of 40m. There are spectacular drop-offs with abundant fish life and magnificent soft corals. Swim-through's, gullies and an awesome topography are only a handful of the attractions that you can expect to see at this wonderful reef.





Port Elizabeth



Slipway



Average depth: 2m

Maximum depth: 8m

This is one of the safest dives to do as the reef is safely embedded in Algoa Bay. It derived its name from the fact that it used to be a steel ramp that was used to launch tugs (fishing vessels). Divers can freely dive on the outside of the steel framework, where the reef covered portholes provide the most beautiful framework for the abundant sea life. Large Red-bait pods and mussels encrust the shallower structures; the observant diver may also spot octopus, crayfish, Gully sharks and plenty of reef fish. Due to the safety factor, this reef is also perfect for night diving from the shore.

Bell Buoy



Average depth: 3m

Maximum depth: 18m

This is one of Port Elizabeth's novice diver treasures. The actual buoy used to be anchored off Roman Rock, but has been moved further out in later years. Large red bait pods in the shallower regions, with overhangs, pinnacles and arches are a few things to look forward to when doing this dive. Masses of sponges, sea squirts, gorgonians, corals, hydroids and anemones can be seen on every metre of this reef – a wide range of migratory and resident fish life is an added bonus. The world famous amphitheatre and shark gully is home to a large number of Raggies in summer – an absolutely spectacular site.

Haerlem Wreck



Average depth: 18m

Maximum depth: 21m

The Haerlem is a navy frigate, scuttled in 1987 to form an artificial reef for diving. The wreck is home to a large number of Pyjama and Leopard catsharks as well as the shy Batfish. The deck is broken in two with big Cob usually seen inside the hull. On top of the deck the average depth is about 18m and 21m at the stern. This interesting wreck lies close to Bell Buoy and, due to the protection of the bay, it is a very safe wreck dive.

Riy Banks



Average depth: 11m

Maximum depth: 40m

Riy Banks is a very popular fishing area with an abundance of fish, game fish and sharks. Pinnacles rising from the ocean bed reach to within ten metres of the surface. Large fish and soft corals characterise this truly magnificent reef. The remote location often has good visibility and appeals to the more adventurous and experienced diver. Riy Banks lies in the form of a horse shoe, with deep drop offs, gullies and swim-through's in addition to the pinnacles ranging from 16m-35m. Game fish such as Yellowtail, Ragged-tooth sharks and Bronze whaler sharks are frequent visitors in summer. Sightings of dolphins and whales greeting you on the way to this reef are added bonuses.

the sand patch. Due to the narrow gullies and the number of sharks in such close proximity, this can turn out to be a really exhilarating dive. It is best to dive this site on a calm day.

Fort Raggie



Average depth: 6m
Maximum depth: 16m

This dive site is located 200m from the wreck of the Patti on Thunderbolt Reef. Sharp, needle-like pinnacles are scattered around the dive site, some of which reach up to within 2m of the surface which can create an occasional break and strong surge. At the beginning of the reef, a big sunken sand patch dominates with gullies spreading out in different directions – with a little imagination this feature resembles a fort. During the summer months, large male Raggies patrol

Avalanche Reef



Average depth: 22m
Maximum depth: 28m

Avalanche is undoubtedly one of the best 'temperate water' reefs in South Africa. Hard and soft corals fight for space on this reef with a multitude of sea fans and sponges. Avalanche is about the size of two football fields and has walls and pinnacles rising from 28m up to 17m. Of course, the reef teems with fish – game fish are often spotted along with the occasional shark.

Gasmic Gorge



Average depth: 18m
Maximum depth: 28m

Gasmic is Avalanche's little brother, lying closer in shore. The site consists of a huge gorge about 4m wide and 30m long. The bottom of the gorge consists of sand and crushed coral shale and has





Port Elizabeth



every metre of this reef and Red-bait pods cover the top of the main pinnacle. On the western side the wall has a sheer drop of 10m to the bottom of pearly white sand and shale. The dramatic topography of the reef is intensified by the brightly coloured growth on the wall. This site is a favourite amongst divers practicing macro photography.

Vital Link



Average depth: 12m

Maximum depth: 22m



This reef, which is in pristine condition, lies west of the Noordhoek Ski boat club – it is the furthest west of all the reefs and is seldom dived. The two main gullies run in an east to west direction, giving protection against the swell. Yellow tail and other game fish frequent the reef, with big Miss Lucy's spotted on occasion. Prolific coral growth makes this one of the most colourful reefs that Port Elizabeth has to offer.

big ripples around 30cm in height. The walls on either side of the gorge are sheer and rise to about 18m and are covered with hard and soft corals. On the southern wall you will find a medium sized cave that is usually full of fish with the occasional Horsefish to be found there. The reef surrounding the gorge is very impressive with a number of gullies and walls covered in marine growth. Reef fish are also abundant on this reef.

Scotsman's Reef



Average depth: 11m

Maximum depth: 21m

Scotsman's is one of the best open water dive sites on the Wild side. Hard and soft corals cover



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Knysna



Knysna

GARMIN (WGS84) **S34 02 20.0**
E23 02 50.4

What makes Knysna so unique? Firstly, it nestles on the banks of an estuary where the sea seeps through a narrow gap between two rocky promontories known as ‘The Heads’, and secondly, it is surrounded by natural forests. Knysna Lagoon is one of the few places along the coast, and also in the world, that supports an oyster hatchery. Knysna is situated approximately 500 kilometres from Cape Town. The climate in the Western Cape is typically Mediterranean and is usually warm and dry in the summer and mild and moist in the winter. Rain is frequent during the winter months.

Summer land temperatures: 16-27°C.

Winter land temperatures: 8-18°C.



Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in Knysna and its surrounding towns, including camp sites, hotels, self-catering chalets, lodges, back packers, B&B’s and guest houses.

Shops and service stations:

Like any major city and town in South Africa, a variety of shops are available. Diesel and petrol are also readily available.

Health and medical services:

A general practitioner, clinics and hospitals can be found in the area.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Quad bike trails
- Hiking trails
- 4X4 Trails
- Micro light flights
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Curio and coffee shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

Diving:

The unpredictability of the southern Cape weather and its sea conditions is one of the biggest influences on not only the diving conditions, but also on the dive sites themselves. The natural cycle of storms and huge tidal shifts means that sand is constantly shifting, continually opening up new parts of reefs and wrecks.

The beginning of summer brings strong south easterly winds and lots of rain flushing sediment and nutrients into the estuary and the sea. This means a lot of fish, but also cold and murky conditions. The three or four day spells of south easterlies are interrupted by two to three days of south westerly winds, which bring warm and clear conditions with spectacular diving. It is not unusual to start the day with 16°C, zero visibility water, changing to 21°C water with 12 metre



visibility as the high tide comes in. As summer progresses, good conditions become more regular with the best diving to be had between January and April. Winter conditions are generally good, albeit colder, with temperatures ranging between 11°C and 18°C – perfect for a 5mm wetsuit and a hoodie!

Depths range between 12m and 22m, putting most sites within the capabilities of Open Water

Divers. There are, however, more difficult and challenging sites for the more advanced divers.

Sea life is abundant, ranging from the elusive Knysna seahorse to huge schools of reef fish, game fish, cephalopods and various shark species including Raggies. You will also find colourful hard and soft corals, huge Sea fans, Basket stars and giant Wall sponges. On all sites in the area are various colourful Nudibranchs to be found. Warm summer currents also bring tropical fish from the north into the estuary. These tropical fish unfortunately die as the temperature of the water drops as winter approaches.

Summer water temperatures: 16-23°C.

Winter water temperatures: 14-19°C.

Launch site:

Most sites are easily accessed from the shore or via an exciting boat ride through the famous Knysna Heads (this is only to be attempted by experienced skippers with local knowledge). The wearing of life jackets is compulsory with every launch from the beach.





Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills
- Gear rentals
- Equipment sales
- Dive training
- Speciality courses

DIVE SPOTS East Cape Reef



Average depth: 18m
Maximum depth: 25m

This site lies off East Cape Point, roughly 200m off shore. The reef consists of a series of ridges running parallel to the coastline, forming various



gullies, caverns, drop-offs and overhangs. The tops of the ridges are usually covered by Red-bait pods and hard, soft and leathery corals are found as one goes deeper. Large red and yellow sponges are also commonly found. Game fish are found here as well as rays, Raggies and other sharks. This is a big reef suitable for exploration on repeat dives.

Bruce se Bank



Average depth: 20m
Maximum depth: 30m

Bruce se Bank is a large reef with delicate soft and hard corals where a host of big game fish, Rockcod and other species can be encountered. This reef is rarely visited due to its distance from the launch site, thus it is still relatively unspoilt. The best time to dive Bruce se Bank is during high tide. It is highly recommended that only experienced divers visit this site.

Longdrop



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 18m

This dive spot has a pinnacle that is approximately 25m in diameter at its base, gradually rising to a point with many cracks and holes where you will find a variety of marine life. Most divers go down and circle the reef a couple of times on a dive.

Renee's Reef



Average depth: 15m
Maximum depth: 24m



This is a site consisting of three reefs that are separated by sandy patches and which run parallel to the coastline. The reef is covered with corals, Sea fans, Basket stars and an abundance of urchins. A host of cracks and crevices can be found where crabs and lobster are likely to be seen. This site is susceptible to strong surges.

Mewstone Rock



Average depth: 4m

Maximum depth: 7m

This site is located on the seaward side of The Heads. Too many boats to mention have been wrecked on this rock, thus some wreckage is strewn around the area. This site can only be dived half an hour before high tide until half an hour after, and only when the sea is very calm, as there are several dangerous blinders and strong currents. If you want to do a shore entry, park your car at Coney Glen and follow the footpath to the sea. When conditions are right, this site is well worth a visit.



Paquita



Average depth: 14m

Maximum depth: 18m

The Paquita, a German iron sailing barque of 484 tons, sank at The Heads on October 19, 1903 under sand ballast, after unloading creosote at Thesen's Jetty. It is believed that she was the victim of a failed attempt at claiming insurance fraudulently. There are two big anchors and the ribs to be seen, while parts of the hull and masts are still recognisable. Most of the wreck lies scattered over a reef, with the bow and anchors lying on sandy patches. The surrounding reef can also be dived as a drift dive on an incoming



tide, with Basket stars, Sea whips and fans in abundance. The reef is covered in colourful coral and sponges and big schools of juvenile fish surround the reef and the wreck. Also common are Shysharks, octopus and Pipefish. The Paquita is remarkably well preserved for a wreck of her age. This site should only be dived half an hour before high tide, and it is also suitable for a night dive.



Knysna



Featherbed Bay



Average depth: 8m
Maximum depth: 12m

Featherbed Bay is a sandy reef with the scattered wreckage of the Magnolia to be found on the seaward end of the bay. One thing to remember on this dive is to take your surface marker buoy, as this bay is a popular fishing and boating area.

Pinnacle



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 20m

This site lies approximately 800m west of The Heads. The Pinnacle is about the size of a double garage with a cave at the bottom. The top of the reef is covered in Red-bait pods while the rest of the reef is covered with hard corals, white 'cauliflower' soft corals and red, yellow and orange sponges. Basket stars can be seen clinging to sea fans and Pyjama sharks can be found sleeping in crevices. Be aware of treacherous currents and blinders in the area around the pinnacle.

Thesen's Jetty



Average depth: 5m
Maximum depth: 11m

This is a junkyard dive with an artificial reef. Although it is a polluted dive, the seahorses make it worth the effort. One can see small tropical fish on this dive, and if you look really hard you might be able to see some Nudibranchs. After recent floods, the seahorses here have become very scarce. This site is suitable for night dives under the Thesen Island jetty.

The Fairholme



Average depth: 10m
Maximum depth: 13m

The Fairholme caught fire off Cape Agulhas on its way from Calcutta to New York with a cargo





of Jute. This British iron ship of almost 2 000 tons drifted a considerable distance until it came to rest in its present position on April 1, 1888. Its ribbed remains and metal plates can still be clearly seen between big boulders about 100m off shore. It lies in a north-south direction with the bow pointing roughly to the south. Small fish swim around the rusty remains and Sea fans, Basket stars and Tubeworms grow on the wreck. As the bottom of the area consists mainly of uneven shallow rocks, the sea is usually very rough and dangerous. Therefore, the Fairholme can only be dived when the sea is very calm and flat, usually when the Berg wind blows.



Christmas and New Year



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 18m

This is an easy dive where one usually encounters huge schools of fish. It is also one of the sites that virtually guarantees sightings of young Ragged-tooth sharks as well as Shysharks. This shallow dive is ideal for less experienced divers.

Dagleish Bank

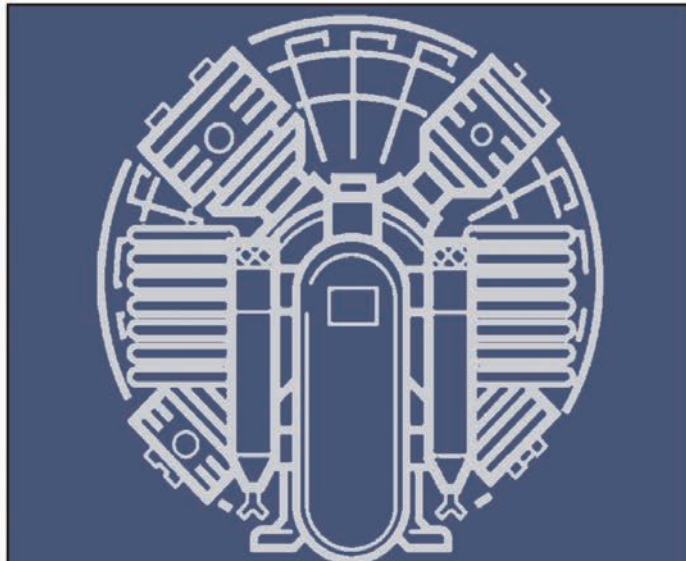


Average depth: 28m
Maximum depth: 50m

This reef is covered in colourful hard and soft coral and hosts a multitude of big game fish. It is rarely visited because of the distance (approximately 16km from The Heads), making it an unspoilt reef. The presence of strong currents and its depth have also helped to keep its pristine appearance. It is highly recommended that only experienced divers who are not prone to seasickness visit Dagleish Bank.

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Mossel Bay

GARMIN (WGS84) **S34 10.893**
E22 08.165

Mossel Bay lies on the southern coast of South Africa halfway between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. Back in 1488 the explorer Bartholomew Dias anchored in the Bay of 'St Blaize' – 'Aguada de São Bras' as it was originally known. Mossel Bay was then developed as a busy export harbour for wool and ostrich feathers. The climate in the Western Cape is typically Mediterranean and is usually warm and dry in the summer and mild and moist in the winter. Rain is frequent during the winter months.

Summer land temperatures: 16-27°C.

Winter land temperatures: 8-18°C.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in and around the town, including camp sites, hotels, self-catering chalets, lodges, back packers, B&B's and guest houses.

Shops and service stations:

Like any major city and town in South Africa a variety of shops are available. Diesel and petrol are also readily available.

Health and medical services:

There are general practitioners in this area, along with the Bayview Hospital.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Quad bike trails
- Hiking trails
- 4X4 Trails
- Micro light flights
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Curio and coffee shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports
- Golf

Diving:

With all its soft corals, Mossel Bay has some of the most colourful dive spots on the coastline. On the dives you will witness a wide variety of Gorgonian fans with Basket stars entwined in the branches and wall sponges up to 6 metres. Here you can dive anything from normal reefs to walls, all with a diversity of marine life including, seals, whales, penguins, dolphins and the occasional Great white shark. The visibility is not always the best due to the fact that Mossel Bay is still part of the Cape of Storms area – you are likely to experience an average of 5 metres but some days it can be as good as 20 metres. All dives here are dependent on the weather.

Summer water temperatures: 16-23°C.

Winter water temperatures: 14-19°C.





Mossel Bay

Launch site:

There are a variety of types of entries at Mossel Bay – most of them are boat entries and at some dive spots a shore entry can be done.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills
- Gear rentals
- Equipment sales
- Dive training
- Speciality courses

DIVE SPOTS

Mitch's Reef



Average depth: 5m

Maximum depth: 9m

A short boat ride will enable you to discover the deeper side of this reef without running low on air. On this reef Orange sponges grow up to 3m in length with banks of sea grass and various colourful Sea fans also to be seen. Many Nudibranchs and large Red romans can be found all over this reef and don't be too surprised if a seal comes up to you for inspection. Mitch's Reef is suitable for all levels of diver.

Santos Reef



Average depth: 2m

Maximum depth: 7m

This reef forms the western border of Mossel Bay's main swimming beach. A short boat ride leads to a beautiful garden of Featherworms, Sea fans, Red-bait, octopus and abundant schools of Blacktail. On the edge of the reef, 'Sanddollars' can be found. Even though there is a wreck on the reef it is hard to consider it as a wreck dive because everything is covered in sand. The

Galera sank here on August 25, 1892 during a south-easterly gale.

Dollosse



Average depth: 5m

Maximum depth: 6m

This whole dive is around concrete structures that were placed in the water to strengthen the harbour wall. Large Red bait pods, anemones, Blacktail, Doublesash butterflyfish, crabs, crayfish, octopus and Cuttlefish can be seen in this area. Also keep an eye out for small juvenile fish hiding between the crevices. Divers should be aware of ski-boats using the Municipal & Yacht Club slipways and are advised to take a local guide when first attempting this dive.

Butterfly Wall

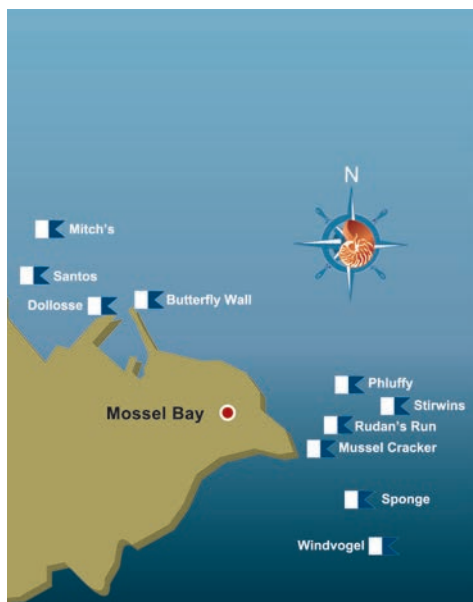


Average depth: 5m

Maximum depth: 8m

During summer months, a variety of tropical fish which are brought in by the warm Aghulus





stars, making this one of the Mossel Bay's top dive sites.

Stirwins Reef



Average depth: 18m

Maximum depth: 22m

This new reef was named after the late Steve Irwin. It has huge boulders that form a haven for the Cape knifejaw's cleaning stations while Red romans swim around freely and huge Pyjama and Shysharks lie in the crevices. Large 1,5m Palmate sea fans sway in the surge and False lacy coral can be found in bunches all over the reef along with the most beautiful colourful sponges. Don't forget to look for huge Eagle rays across the sand.

Current can be seen on this dive. Large Sea fans, yellow sponges and large, colourful anemones are also prevalent. This area is also the home of the famous Longsnout pipefish that was thought to have been extinct for many years. Shovelnose crayfish can often be found around the reef. This is a very relaxed dive that can normally only be dived when conditions are too rough to dive other areas.



Phluffy Reef



Average depth: 14m

Maximum depth: 17m

Phluffy is a newly discovered reef, named after the local dive shop owner Sue Walmsley by two local spear fishermen who bumped into it one day while out stalking game fish. The reef is awesome with some of the finest corals found along the Garden Route. Reef fish can be found in abundance while large Sea fans boast Basket





Mossel Bay

Rudan's Run



Average depth: 10m
Maximum depth: 12m

This reef is located north of Mussel Cracker Reef at a depth of 12m and features gullies with rocky outcrops. Pyjama sharks are always in the area and most of the local marine life is found here in abundance with large Red-bait pods, sponges, sea stars and many varieties of fish. Rudans Run is best dived on a very flat day.

Mussel Cracker Reef



Average depth: 5m
Maximum depth: 8m

Shore entries are possible on very flat days, although this reef is best dived from a boat. Large Mussel Crackers can be found in this area when in season, hence its name. The reef has a silver colouration and is the favourite hideout of Cat sharks, Knifejaws, shellfish and large Red romans.

Sponge Reef



Average depth: 22m
Maximum depth: 25m

This scattered, yet beautiful reef, with large sponges that are visited regularly by Red romans, lies at a depth of in 25m. This is a superb dive for the advanced diver who appreciates the microscopic life on reefs. Sponge Reef is situated at Cape St. Blaize and is thus only accessible by boat.

Windvogel



Average depth: 18m
Maximum depth: 33m

This is a spectacular reef for the advanced diver. It includes drop offs from 3m to 20m with a maximum depth of 33m. With strong currents and a blinder pinnacle this is not your average dive! Caves, gulleys, large fish, sharks and seals are the order of the day. Exquisite colour abounds on the rocks and in the crevices, so don't forget your torch. Also have a lookout for fish such as Zebras, Hottentots and Shysharks. This reef is only accessible by boat, as it is also situated at Cape St. Blaize.





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Gansbaai and surroundings



Gansbaai and surroundings

GARMIN (WGS84) **S34 34.933**
E19 21.042

Danger Point Peninsula lies exactly mid-way between Cape Point and Cape Agulhas, 160 kilometres from Cape Town. It is the southernmost point of Africa. Life in Gansbaai is very much associated with the sea and the fishing industry.



The climate in the Western Cape is typically Mediterranean and it is usually warm and dry in the summer and mild and moist in the winter. Rain is frequent during the winter months.

Summer land temperatures: 16-27°C.

Winter land temperatures: 8-18°C.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in the cities and towns, including camp sites, self-catering chalets, lodges, Back packers, B&B's and guest houses.

Shops and service stations:

Like any major city or town a variety of shops are available. Diesel and petrol are also readily available.

Health and medical services:

There is a general practitioner in this area while clinics and hospitals can be found in Hermanus.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Quad bike trails
- Hiking trails
- 4X4 Trails
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Curio and coffee shops
- Fishing

Diving:

The biggest diving attraction at Gansbaai is the cage diving with Great white sharks where the boats launch from the slipway at Kleinbaai. However, the coastline also has many varied and interesting dive sites. As the weather can be unpredictable and changes rapidly, it is always prudent to allow for a few extra days in your schedule. Your patience is rewarded when conditions improve and you are presented with crystal clear visibility which reveals a variety of marine life. During the summer months (September to March), the prevailing south-

easterly winds create Atlantic up wellings which move cold water into the bay. In the winter the north-westerly winds cause the Mozambique Current to swirl into the bay causing the visibility to improve with the influx of warm tropical water.

The rocky reef dive sites around the Gansbaai area offer a range of dive experiences from shallow dives or snorkel sites for novices to challenging deep wreck dives for the more experienced divers. A must is Shark Alley in between Dyer Island and Geyser Rock. Geyser Rock is home to some 60 000 Cape fur seals which play in the shallow waters of the alley. As the depth is only 5 metres, this is an excellent introduction to diving or snorkelling with large marine animals.

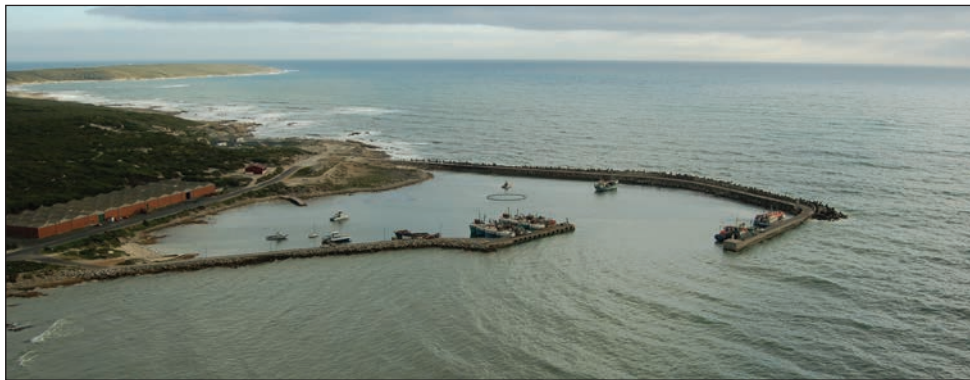
Of the other marine creatures commonly encountered, many are species of smaller sharks. Spotted gully sharks (*Triakis megalopterus*) can grow to 1,7 metres and can often be seen patrolling the kelp forests around Danger Point looking for crustaceans, fish and other smaller species of shark. Of these, the Pyjama shark or Striped catfish (*Poroderma africanum*), is unmistakable in its uniform of striking black longitudinal stripes which run the length of its body.

Summer water temperatures: 12-20°C.

Winter water temperatures: 8-15°C.

Launch site:

There are two launch sites at Gansbaai; the boat either launches from the closest harbour or from





Gansbaai and surroundings

the closest launching ramp to the dive spot. The two choices are Kleinbaai or Gansbaai harbour.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Gear rentals
- Dive training
- Speciality courses

DIVE SPOTS

Camera Reef



Average depth: 16m
Maximum depth: 20m

This reef, which is only accessible by boat, lies east of Geyser Rock. It is known as Camera Reef because of the number of cameras which have been lost there by film crews trying to film Great white sharks! The reef is a submarine broken ridge that extends from Geyser Rock towards Quion Point and Great white sharks have often been spotted in this area.

Shark Alley



Average depth: 3m
Maximum depth: 5m

This is a shallow dive suitable for novice divers and snorkellers, where the calm conditions and



little or no current mean that you are guaranteed visibility of at least 5m. Shark Alley is located between Dyer Island and Geyser Rock – around 8km off shore. The seals are delightful to dive with but divers should not attempt to touch or tease these animals as they have a very powerful bite. These marine mammals are the clowns of the ocean and this dive should not be missed – the playful seals often come and nibble on your fins and blow bubbles at you! In November the bull seals return from foraging at sea and clamber back onto Geyser Rock to mate.

Roman's Reef



Average depth: 15m
Maximum depth: 25m





Rian Bester

Just two miles west of Dyer Island lies Roman's Reef. This is a hot spot for many of the predatory fish found in the area, including the Red romans. Also found on this reef are hard and soft corals, crayfish, White stumpnose, Steenbras, and South Africa's national fish, the Cape galjoen. The prevalent currents mean that this is normally a drift dive.

slip quietly into the cage and remain at the surface until instructed to go down. It is imperative to listen closely to the bait handler as he will tell the divers when the shark is within their field of view. It is a simple breath-holding dive as the noise of scuba bubbles tends to scare the sharks away. This once in a lifetime opportunity to see Great white sharks is therefore not restricted to qualified divers. For those who choose to stay dry there are superb photographic opportunities to be had from the observation deck on board.

White Shark Cage Diving



Average depth: 3m
Maximum depth: 3m

During this experience, the cage is kept at the surface and secured to the side of the boat. Divers

Birkenhead Wreck



Average depth: 25m
Maximum depth: 35m



Gansbaai and surroundings



There are many wrecks around Dyer Island and Danger Point, but the most famous is the HMS Birkenhead which went down in 1852 after striking the reefs off Danger Point. Many of the men lost their lives as the women and children escaped in the life rafts, thus coining the phrase 'women and children first'. Those that perished fell prey to the sharks which became known as Tommie sharks – so called as the British soldiers who lost their lives were known as 'Tommies'. Nowadays these sharks are better known as Great whites!

The wreck can only be dived in slack water and with no swell. It can be a challenging dive as the visibility is often poor and conditions can deteriorate rapidly. Birkenhead Wreck can only be accessed in the summer months as the winter swells make the area very dangerous, however, due to its historical notoriety and inaccessibility it is a sought-after dive for the experienced diver.

Danger Point



Average depth: 5m

Maximum depth: 10m

Strong currents and treacherous reefs give this peninsular its name. It is possible to dive or snorkel in the kelp beds around Danger Point as the depth is around 5-10m and, when the conditions are good, visibility could be 10m or more. Of particular interest are the high numbers of Spotted gully sharks which patrol the area. With sunny conditions it is magical to dive amongst the fronds of kelp.





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White shark cage diving

White shark cage diving is done from a small town named Kleinbaai, just 4 kilometres from Gansbaai. The actual dive takes place approximately 12 kilometres offshore from the Kleinbaai harbour at two islands, Dyer Island and Geysers Rock, which are situated next to each other.

The unique six metre deep channel between Dyer Island and Geysers Rock has earned international fame and recognition as one of the most successful areas in the world to view the Great white in its natural environment.

The half day trip begins when the boat is anchored and the dive masters chum the waters to attract the sharks. In the winter months the water visibility is better, and your chances of seeing sharks is higher, yet there is a very good chance of seeing sharks the whole year around.

Although they are called the 'White shark dives', it is not strictly a dive – you wear a wetsuit to protect you from the freezing waters of Cape Town and are submerged in a steel cage to view



these magnificent predators. The cages differ from dive operator to dive operator, with some utilising four men cages and others using cages that accommodate up to eight people at a time.

This area is rich in sea life and has an abundance of other wildlife species, such as Cape fur seals, Cape gannets, Cape cormorants, Jackass penguins, whales and dolphins.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters, visit www.thedivespot.co.za





Hermanus



For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Quad bike trails
- Hiking trails
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Curio and coffee shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

Hermanus

GARMIN (WGS84) **S34 25.071**
E19 14.198

Hermanus lies about 115 kilometres south east of Cape Town. From July to November, the town is the heart of the whale route. Hermanus is famous for the fact that it is the best land-based whale watching venue in the world. The whale species seen most frequently along the Overberg coastal areas is the Southern right whale. The climate in the Western Cape is typically Mediterranean and is usually warm and dry in the summer and mild and moist in the winter. Rain is frequent during the winter months.

Summer land temperatures: 16-27°C.

Winter land temperatures: 8-18°C.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in the town as well as in the surrounding areas, including camp sites, hotels, self-catering chalets, lodges, back packers, B&B's and guest houses.

Shops and service stations:

Like any other city and town, a variety of shops are available. Diesel and petrol are also readily available.

Health and medical services:

There is a general practitioner, clinic and hospital in the area.

Diving:

With several dive spots around Hermanus, diving is popular with dives varying in depth from 9 metres to 40 metres and visibility ranging from 4 metres to 12 metres. Reefs are accessible by boat or by shore entries. A Marine Reserve, stretching from Kraal Rock in Walkerbay to Rietfontein and 500 metres out to sea from the high-water mark, makes this area full of marine life as no marine animals may be collected or disturbed in this reserve. Various reef formations can be found, from gullies to walls and pinnacles to boulders.



Being in the Cape, you are guaranteed sightings of crayfish and Abalone. A reported 32 species of hard and soft corals, including Gorgonians, Seapens and Sea whips, are another highlight. A large variety of sponges, including spectacular giant orange Wall sponges, are found in this area. The marine life that could be encountered comprises of Horsefish, Shovelnose lobsters,



octopus, Cuttlefish, Klipvis, Shysharks, Pipefish, Basket stars, Feather stars, Starfish and numerous Nudibranchs. Also be on the lookout for seals, Cat sharks and Pyjama sharks that often come and join the divers in this area.

Summer water temperatures: 12-20°C.

Winter water temperatures: 8-15°C.

Launch site:

Most of the dives here are done from the new harbour. There is a dive shop located near the launch site and the necessary ablation facilities are close by. A small tuck shop with snacks caters for those common hunger pangs. Some of the dive sites can be reached by doing a shore entry.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills
- Gear rentals
- Equipment sales
- Dive training
- Speciality courses

DIVE SPOTS

Old Harbour



Average depth: 10m

Maximum depth: 17m

This is a very attractive reef with steep drop-offs and big boulders scattered along the wall. Numerous species of hard and soft corals, including Gorgonians, Sea fans and Sea whips are to be found along with a large variety of sponges, including spectacular Giant orange wall sponges. Horsefish, Klipvis, Shysharks, octopus, Cuttlefish, Pipefish, Nudibranchs, huge Red-baits, Strawberry anemones, Basket-stars, Feather stars Shovelnose lobsters, and Starfish are just some of the sea life one will find. In this area you are guaranteed sightings of crayfish, abalone, kelp and sometimes seals! The harbour isn't used anymore so boat traffic isn't a problem. The Old Harbour shouldn't be dived when there is a big swell as the waves could bump divers into rocks and walls.





Hermanus

The Old Harbour Wall



Average depth: 9m

Maximum depth: 14m

This dive spot, which is flat at the top, looks like a ledge with high walls. Scattered rock creates a floor with crevices for crayfish to hide in. It makes for an enjoyable dive with a swaying kelp forest to swim through, but beware of the surge when you come around the corners in some areas. There



are various species of Nudibranchs true to cold-water conditions, along with Blue hottentot fish and Fransmadam. Seals have been spotted here, and in breeding season, whales like to bring their offspring to this area. Be on the lookout for Sea swallows, a sub species of the Nudibranch between vast amounts of Blue bottles when the wind blows from the sea. The Sea swallows feed on the Blue bottles and store the venom to protect themselves. Also to be seen are giant orange Wall sponges, often with tiny black and turquoise Nudibranchs scattered all over them. Starfish and yellow Elegant Feather Stars are in abundance. This is one of the easier shore entries on the Cape coast.

Gearing's Point



Average depth: 10m

Maximum depth: 18m

The reef starts near the surface and surges can be expected in the shallows. You are guaranteed sightings of Shyshark, Abalone, kelp and other invertebrate life such as crayfish and crabs. Divers are encouraged to remove any garbage that they come across, as in some parts this reef looks like a junkyard with bottles, tires and nets lying around.



Boiling Pot



Average depth: 10m

Maximum depth: 23m

Boiling Pot is a narrow ledge with two distinct pinnacles. There are numerous species of hard and soft corals, including Sea whips, Sea fans and Gorgonians. Here you will also find a large variety of sponges, including giant orange Wall sponges, as well as Horsefish, Klipvis, octopus, Cuttlefish,



Franco Baruffi

Shysharks, Pipefish, numerous Nudibranchs, huge Red-baits, Strawberry anemones and Starfish. You are guaranteed sightings of crayfish, Abalone, kelp and sometimes seals. The name Boiling Pot is derived from the bubbling that can sometimes be seen in between the rocks due to the surge. Diving is not recommended at these times.

and Barrel sponges. Being in the Cape, you are guaranteed sights of crayfish, Abalone, kelp and sometimes even inquisitive seals! Be on the lookout for Cape octopus, Shysharks, Pipefish and Starfish. The sheltered nature of this spot means that it can be dived in almost all but the worst conditions. This is a popular spot for dive training.

Preekstoel



Average depth: 10m
Maximum depth: 15m

Preekstoel has a flattish ledge that tops out at about 8m and a small wall that drops to around 15m below the surface. On this reef you will find numerous colourful species of hard and soft corals. There are also a large variety of sponges, including spectacular giant orange Wall sponges

Blowhole



Average depth: 8m
Maximum depth: 10m

This area has big boulders of smooth rock scattered around with sand patches in between. Sweeping kelp is found all along the edges of this popular dive spot and the area is buzzing with crayfish hiding in the crevices between the big boulders. Here you will find different varieties of



Hermanus

Nudibranchs, and be on the lookout for juveniles such as Sole and rays hiding in the sand amongst the rocks. The Longsnout pipefish is a common sight, but some Doublesash butterflyfish, one of the few tropical fish found in these cold waters, are also to be seen. While swimming in between the kelp with the sun shining through the water, you have to look carefully to see the Shysharks hiding under the kelp leaves. Klipfish and Red romans are quite common in this area but beware of urchins hiding under the sand.

Rietfontein Reef



Average depth: 7m

Maximum depth: 10m

Rietfontein Reef, also known as Tamatiebank, is a broken reef with a lot of sand gullies. The reef is rather flat on top. In between big crevices and some of the drop-off's you will find that it is deeper than the rest of the reef. Lots of kelp fill up the space between the crevices and make it a great place for crayfish and Shysharks to hide. This reef has a lot of activity, ranging from Shovelnose lobsters to octopus, and Abalone and even Gully sharks like to hang about in this area. Dusky sharks, Klipfish and numerous Nudibranchs have been found on this reef. Waving kelp and big Orange sponges make it a



very beautiful dive with different Sea-pens and Starfish decorating the reef in spectacular colours. Be on the lookout for Ghost Nudibranchs sitting on the Orange sponges. This is a really nice dive but beware of the surge that can sometimes be very strong.

Hakskeen



Average depth: 18m

Maximum depth: 26m

This reef is made up of a pinnacle that is at some places very close to the surface. It has steep drop-offs with a large sand gully separating the shallow and the deep pinnacle. The reef is home to a large crayfish population and the kelp helps them to hide from the outside world. There are a great number of Red-bait growing on this reef, together with Featherstars, Bright coloured sea fans, Wallsponges and various Nudibranchs that can be seen all along the reef. Fish such as Klipfish, Rocksucker and Knysna sandgobies are found in this area. This is a dive for the advanced diver and it has a really exciting wall to dive.

Table Top



Average depth: 23m

Maximum depth: 40m

This reef has a large portion that is flat with drop-off's along the sides. The first is a drop-off to 22m and then one to 40m which is quite spectacular. Along this reef there are the most beautiful pink and white Noble coral and Featherstars waving in the surge. Also found on this reef are Red-bait, Sea fans, bright orange Wallsponges and different species of Nudibranchs living amongst the soft and hard corals. Fish species encountered in this area include Puffadder

shyshark, Leopard catshark, Longsnout pipefish and the common Speckled klipfish. Seals are also frequently seen on this beautiful reef which is best dived on a day with full sunlight.

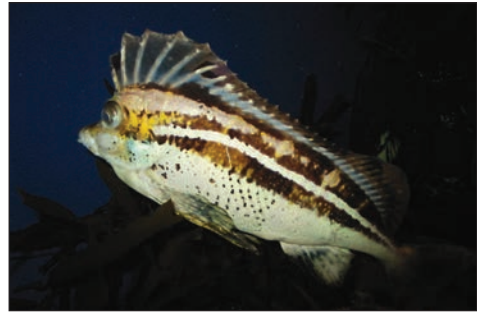
Skulphoek



Average depth: 20m

Maximum depth: 36m

This is an extensive reef that has big flat bare areas with spectacular drop-offs that are drenched in pink Cold-water coral. Here you will find a large variety of sponges and numerous species of hard and soft corals, including Gorgonians, Sea fans and Sea whips. Horsefish, Shovelnose lobsters, octopus, Cuttlefish, Klipvis, Shysharks, Pipefish and numerous Nudibranchs are common. Bright coloured Anemones and Brittle stars cover big areas of the rock surface. Being in the Cape, you are guaranteed sightings of crayfish, Abalone and kelp. This reef is normally calm and without any surge because of its depth.



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False Bay

GARMIN (WGS84) **S34 06.995**
E18 49.798

The southern side of the Cape Peninsula is called False Bay – the name comes from early navigators who used to think that they could sail through the bay to Cape Town and that the Peninsula was merely an island. The bay is 35 kilometres across and runs south to Cape Point and then back up to Cape Hangklip. The climate in the Western Cape is typically Mediterranean and is usually warm and dry in the summer and mild and moist in the winter. Rain is frequent during the winter months.

Summer land temperatures: 16-27°C.

Winter land temperatures: 8-18°C.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in the



The Die Spots of Southern Africa

cities and towns, including camp sites, hotels, self-catering chalets, lodges, back packers, B&B's and guest houses.

Shops and service stations:

Like any major city and town in South Africa a variety of shops are available. Diesel and petrol are also readily available.

Health and medical services:

There are general practitioners, clinics and hospitals in this area.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Quad bike trails
- Hiking trails
- 4X4 Trails
- Micro light flights
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Curio and coffee shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

Diving:

False Bay offers the diver such a variety that it is difficult to classify this coastline as any particular 'type' of diving. Dive sites range vastly in bottom composition depending on where in False Bay you choose to dive. It fluctuates from rocky terrain characterised by the steep cliffs on the western side of False Bay through to sandy bottoms on the eastern side. A number of sites on both sides of the bay are distinguished by vast, dense and beautiful kelp forests that house any number of creatures such as Pyjama sharks, Leopard catsharks and Puffadder shysharks.

Kelp forests act as a filter for dirty water so divers will often experience mediocre conditions until entering the kelp whereupon the visibility improves dramatically. The Gordons Bay, Rooiels and Simonstown sites boast spectacular Sea fans in bright oranges and reds which sway in the surge – another defining characteristic of dive



False Bay



conditions in the Cape.

The friendly Cape fur seal will often make an appearance on your dive. It might just be a fleeting glimpse but more often than not, your new dive buddy will hang around for some time. The sheer curiosity of the younger ones will have them diving in and out of your group and often imitating your movements. Be sure to keep your fingers well out of harms way as they have been known to bite.

Divers will seldom see bare rock as every nook and cranny on the reefs are carpeted by sea anemones of all colours imaginable. Furthermore, Feather stars in various hues of orange and brown vie for space with soft corals in pinks and purples, making it a difficult, yet very rewarding task to spot the many Nudibranchs endemic to this region.

Box jellyfish are abundant throughout the Cape waters and a dive in Gordons Bay will seldom go by without a sighting of the Root-mouthed jellyfish.

The Rooiels dive spots are typified by very large Orange sponges whereas Smitswinkel Bay, accessible via a boat launch from Millers Point in Simonstown, is renowned for its fantastic wreck diving. All the wrecks lie beyond basic Open Water qualifications so Advanced certification is a must for divers wanting to explore scuttled navy vessels from yesteryear.

The eastern side of False Bay is predominantly dived during the summer months due to the strong south-easterly winds which blast the dirty

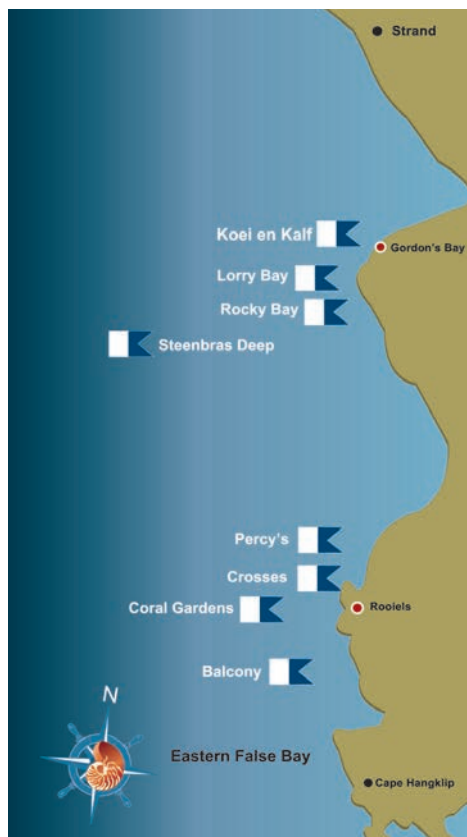
surface water out of the bay. In contrast, the western shoreline is a winter dive destination when the cold frontal winds create cool, yet very clear conditions. Although, the unpredictable nature of Cape Town often allows a respite from these rigid guidelines, allowing divers to enjoy unseasonably great diving along both shorelines.

Summer water temperatures: 12-20°C.

Winter water temperatures: 8-15°C.

Launch site:

There are a variety of types of entries at False Bay. Most of them are shore entries although some of the dive sites can only be reached by boat. The boat launches will take place from the closest harbour or from the closest launching ramp to the dive spot.



Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills
- Trimix fills
- Gear rentals
- Equipment sales
- Dive training
- Speciality courses

EASTERN FALSE BAY DIVE SPOTS

Balcony



Average depth: 7m

Maximum depth: 14m

This dive spot is suitable for all levels of experience. The area has vast kelp forests and is also a nursery for Pipefish. Spectacular pinnacles rising from the ocean floor which are covered in multicoloured Feather stars, big sponges, anemones and the most beautiful Nudibranchs are a must see. Short spine urchins in vast colours line the ocean floor and Starfish with their arms stretched out create a beautiful underwater portrait.

Coral Gardens



Average depth: 7m

Maximum depth: 29m

The entry for this dive spot is not the easiest of shore entries as the diver needs a lengthy swim over kelp and rocks, but it is definitely worthwhile. Here you will find magnificent coral walls and a big gully to satisfy your curiosity for the underwater world. Stunning coral clad vertical walls are everywhere and seals are often there to share your dive. The gully is a haven for Pyjama sharks and huge crayfish that peep out of the holes. The soft corals are really a feast for the eye – when the



visibility is clear and the sunlight streams through the water the colours are ignited.

Crosses



Average depth: 10m

Maximum depth: 21m

This reef is formed by big rock boulders with deep crevices in between the rocks – there is one overhang that forms a cave big enough to park a car in. Look out for the Cape octopus hiding in the crevices, trying to camouflage themselves from predators. There were various Nudibranchs on the bright orange coloured Sea sponges and the coral life on the rock formations included Encrusting ascidian, Red-chested sea cucumbers, Pot-hole urchins, Striped brittlestars, Red starfish and the most beautiful Sinuous sea fans in a vivid yellow colour.

Percy's



Average depth: 10m

Maximum depth: 17m

Percy's consists of big smooth rocks all along the shore line that form a nice reef that is not too



False Bay

deep and is fairly comfortable for the openwater diver. kelp grows on the rocks with the tops swaying in the surge and Puffadder shysharks camouflage themselves between the kelp leaves. Sargassum fish are also to be seen amongst the kelp as well as a Fransmadam looking for something to eat. The coral life in this area is bright and beautiful when the sun shines through the water. The rock formations are mostly covered by seaweed, False plum anemone, Cauliflower soft coral and Palmate sea fans waving in the surge.



Rocky Bay



Average depth: 12m

Maximum depth: 24m

This site can be seen from the road on the way to Rooiels. When the sea is flat and calm and the conditions are right, especially after a strong south-easterly, this can be an exciting, adrenalin-filled dive. The reef is covered in Feather stars, big sponges, anemones and other colourful invertebrates. Lots of fish, such as Galjoen, Janbruin, Roman and crayfish are to be seen on a regular basis along with the always amazing Basket stars attached to bright red and orange Sea fans. Also keep an eye out for Shysharks and small Pipefish.



array of anemones, colourful Short spine urchins, Starfish, Sea fans and numerous bright orange Wallsponges. One of the highlights of this dive is a 17m pinnacle starting at 17m which is covered with brightly coloured corals. There is an abundance of fish life present, such as Romans, Hottentots, Shysharks and other varieties of local fish.

Steenbras Deep



Average depth: 7m

Maximum depth: 30m

This is an open ocean dive which is only suitable for experienced divers. Since this is the open sea the fish are bigger than those found near the coast which makes for an exciting dive. This is a colourful reef with various Nudibranchs, an

Lorry Bay



Average depth: 8m

Maximum depth: 12m

Named after the truck wrecks that litter the ocean and the edge of the water, Lorry Bay is a small



bay which can be seen from the road on the way to Rooiels. This is an interesting dive due to all the wrecks, but it is also a very satisfying marine life dive as Pipefish, Feather stars, sponges and anemones are all inhabitants in this area – crayfish and small fish species are also seen on a regular basis. It is suitable for novice and advanced divers alike, and it is also a great place to practice macro photography. This site is best dived in the summer when the south-easterly cleans and flattens the sea.

Koei en Kalf



Average depth: 7m

Maximum depth: 13m

This site is named after the large and small adjoining rocks that are found above the water at low tide. Koei en Kalf can be a very difficult shore entry with a steep climb down to the waters edge, thus it is best dived from a boat. This is a colourful reef with various Nudibranchs, an array of anemones, colourful Short spine



urchins, Starfish, Sea fans and numerous bright orange Wallsponges. There is an abundance of fish life such as Romans, Hottentots, Shysharks and other small varieties of local fish. The conditions at this reef are better than others because of its sheltered position, yet it is still best dived after a south-easterly wind – during a south-westerly the dive site can experience a number of surges which compromise the visibility. This site is an absolute must for novice and experienced divers alike.

WESTERN FALSE BAY DIVE SPOTS Kalk Bay Harbour Wall



Average depth: 4m

Maximum depth: 6m

At the Kalk Bay Harbour Wall the ocean floor is littered with tires, fishing line and fishing nets, yet the occasional seal and small fish can be seen amongst the litter. It is a great place to practice buoyancy for the newly qualified divers and it is also a great dive to practice your underwater photography. A giant stride is normally done from the harbour wall.



False Bay

Sunny Cove



Average depth: 7m

Maximum depth: 10m

The rocky reefs here are full of marine growth but they are not as colourful as the other dive sites in the area. This is a popular spot for night diving with numerous small fish hiding in the sea grass. This site is sheltered in the bay and is often diveable even in blowing winds. Sunny Cove has easy entry and exit points that make it easier for the less experienced diver to come and enjoy the dive.

Quarry



Average depth: 7m

Maximum depth: 10m

This reef, which consists of rocky gullies, is situated near Glencairn opposite the quarry on the mountainside. A variety of Sea fans are found here along with Feather stars, numerous reef fish and beautiful Nudibranchs. Typical False Bay marine life can be found on this reef. On the coral itself, be on the lookout for various types of Nudibranchs, octopus and Hermit crabs hiding in their shells.



The Clan Stuart



Average depth: 6m

Maximum depth: 8m

After a south-easterly gale on November 21, 1914, a 3 500 ton British Turret Steamer carrying coal lost its anchors and sank. Most of the ship is broken up but the engine block and propeller shaft are still visible. This wreck lies scattered over the ocean floor, almost totally on a bed of sand, and is in some places totally covered by weeds and kelp. Nudibranchs such as the Janolus Capensis are widely found on this wreck as well as Rippled klipfish, Pipefish and lots of Sandgobies which are barely visible on the sand. Brittle starfish, Stephenson's sea cucumbers and Cape urchins are in abundance. This is a casual shallow wreck dive but take note that the scattered metal

on this wreck can influence your compass and thus your sense of direction.

Roman Rock



Average depth: 15m
Maximum depth: 25m

As it isn't often dived, Roman Rock is rather unspoilt and the sea life is abundant. The marine life here includes, amongst others, playful seals that from time to time come to mingle with the divers. The regular fish life and the invertebrate life includes beautiful Seastars, Basketstars, Brittlestars and Feather stars, and, if you look closely, the most beautiful Nudibranchs. Urchins, anemones and bright coloured Sea fans can also be seen at this spot.

The A-Frame



Average depth: 5m
Maximum depth: 9m

This part of the reef has, once again, large smooth boulders that at one part form a swim-through in the shape of a big 'A'. There are also some big crevices where fish hide during the day. On some of the sand patches near the rocks we found a few Longsnout pipefish, Klipfish, Blennies and Sandgobies camouflaging themselves from predators. In almost every hole or crevice you will find either an octopus or a crab looking for something to eat. Along the sides of the walls are the most beautiful Gasflame nudibranchs, colourful Starfish and bright orange Sea sponges. Sea anemones are present in various colours and seals often come by to say hello. This dive can keep you really busy so remember to keep an eye on the time.

Boulder's Beach



Average depth: 6m
Maximum depth: 9m

This area is true to its name as a lot of boulders can be found under the water surface. A few caves and overhangs that form small hollows for fish to hide in are also a highlight. Along the shoreline you will find a kelp forest to swim through to get to the seaside of the boulders. Boulders Reef is situated in a penguin reserve and is thus host to the Jackass penguin. Seals are also seen in this area, swimming amongst the kelp. Fields of Cape urchins line the smooth rock and together with brightly coloured Starfish form an amazing sight. In one of the caves we found four Pyjama catsharks resting until feeding time at night, while in some of the seaweed we found egg cases of the Dark shyshark which take a few months to hatch. A wide variety of Nudibranchs can also be found amongst the coral life.





False Bay



Spaniard Rock



Average depth: 8m

Maximum depth: 12m

Spaniard Rock is covered in brightly coloured sponges and is frequented by marine life such as big Brittlestars, Feather stars and brightly coloured Cape urchins. The site gets its name from all the yellow, orange and red colours that you see on this dive which are reminiscent of the Spanish national flag. You will also encounter lots of reef fish on this site, while Klipfish, Pipefish, Shysharks and Nudibranchs are also commonly seen in this area.

SAS Pietermaritzburg



Average depth: 16m

Maximum depth: 22m

This shipwreck lies upright in the sand and is still in very good condition – on a clear day with good visibility it makes for an excellent dive with a somewhat eerie feel. This is an excellent location to do wreck penetration as it is not too deep and the wreck is fully intact. The wreck houses abundant marine life and is a safe haven for many species of fish, such as Janbruins, Hottentots and Romans. The odd seal makes an appearance from time to time and colourful Nudibranchs and anemones are also seen on this lovely wreck. The best time to dive the SAS Pietermaritzburg is in the winter months. The ship was formerly known as the HMS Pelorus and it led the invasion of the Normandy in World War II. In 1947 the South African Navy bought and used this vessel before sinking it in 1994 to create an artificial reef.

Miller's Point



Average depth: 7m

Maximum depth: 18m

The scenery at Miller's Point consists mainly of walls and gullies with patches of kelp everywhere. This reef has the typical False Bay marine life with bright colours – the rocks are covered with colourful Sea urchins and beautiful anemones. This site is in a protected area and the water is usually clear and calm. Miller's Point is a very popular training dive site.



Pyramid Rock



Average depth: 8m

Maximum depth: 12m

This area is characterised by a pyramid shaped rock that sticks out of the water about one metre high. The big submerged rocks and swim-through's make it a very interesting dive. A pristine kelp forest, just a few metres off the beach with long tunnels and caves to explore around the pyramid-shaped rock, makes this site worth diving. There is usually a bit of surge running at this site except in extremely flat conditions. Close to shore many of the Whelks and Sea snails familiar to seashore rock pools are found as part of the abundant and colourful invertebrate life. There are many big reef fish and the terrain between the rock and the exit point is covered in kelp that often shelters small octopus and small Shysharks.



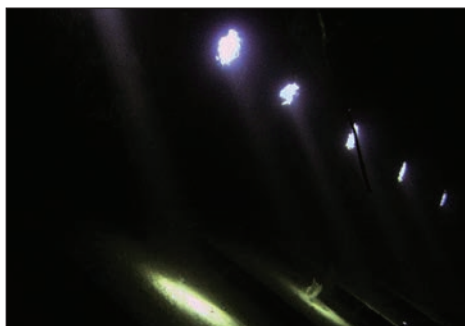
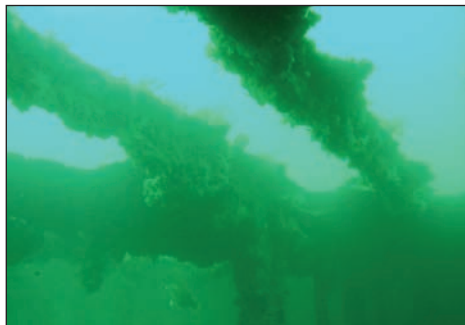
Pope's Nose



Average depth: 7m

Maximum depth: 13m

This reef has big boulders of smooth rock with large crevices and a nice swim-through formed by an arch in the rock just above the ocean floor. Kelp is found in between and on the rocks with sand patches between the boulders. You are greeted by clear blue water with a kelp forest to swim through before you get to the Pope's Nose where there are rows and rows of colourful Cape urchins, dark Brittlestars, Feather stars and various shapes and colours of Starfish. The Dark shyshark can be found amongst the kelp – they are curious and playful – and fish such as the Red roman, Zebra, Rocksuckers and Steenbras are also found in this area. On a sunny day this reef looks like a





False Bay

fairyland and because it is quite shallow, the light penetration brings out all the colours creating a feast for the eye.

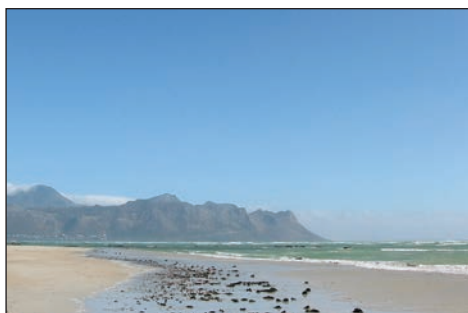
Outer Castle



Average depth: 15m

Maximum depth: 25m

Apart from the cave at this reef there is also a really great swim-through which you have to time right otherwise the surge can shoot you out like a bullet. The reef is covered in typical False Bay marine life, including large rays and Gully sharks. The reef is alive with colours and some deep fish such as Yellowtail can be seen passing by. This spot is usually calm after a north-westerly wind has blown and flattened the sea.



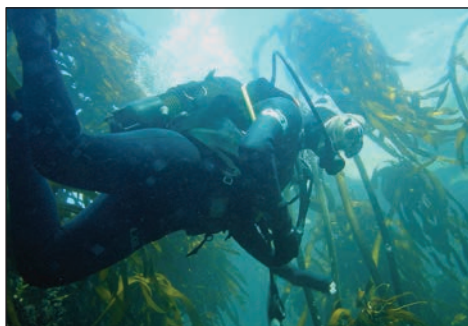
Whittle Rock



Average depth: 20m

Maximum depth: 35m

At this site a large pinnacle called Whittle Rock rises to within 3m of the surface. The reef is almost unspoilt, as the area is not dived too often. The invertebrate life is very colourful and this site teems with deep-water fish, such as Yellowtail, Roman and Stumpnose that often attract large sharks. Quite a few divers have spotted inquisitive Great white sharks cruising past.



Castle Rocks



Average depth: 6m

Maximum depth: 11m



Wille van Heerden

This area has big, smooth boulders with crevices big enough to swim through as well as a few sand patches between the heaps of boulders. This is a very nice dive spot which has beautiful scenery on a sunny day. Two of the smallest shark species have been found on this reef, namely the Leopard catshark and the Dark shyshark. Amongst the kelp we spotted Speckled klipfish, Horned rockskippers and Blennies, but also keep a lookout under the ledges for peculiar looking Rocksuckers. This is one of the spots where the Doublesash butterflyfish can be found, along with the most beautiful coloured anemones and Cape urchins.

through's. On top of all that, the underwater scenery is enough to take your breath away. A resident colony of friendly and inquisitive seals tends to follow the divers around as they explore the abundance of colourful sponges and soft corals. Some of the typical False Bay marine life includes octopus, Pipefish, Janbruin, Klipfish and Shysharks.

Partridge Point



Average depth: 15m
Maximum depth: 20m

This site has a sandy bottom with a magnificent maze of gullies, overhangs, caves and swim-

Batsata Rock



Average depth: 18m
Maximum depth: 30m

Batsata Rock has very nice underwater scenery with pinnacles and gullies that slope down to 30m, making it an ideal multi-level dive. A shallow flat rock surface makes it easier for the underwater photographers. The rocks in this area are covered with lush and colourful marine growth and fish are in abundance. The coral



False Bay

and marine life found here is typical of False Bay. Batsata Rock is located on the southern end of Smitswinkel Bay.

Smitswinkel Wrecks



Average depth: 20m

Maximum depth: 37m

The five wrecks in Smitswinkel Bay were purposefully scuttled by the Navy in the early seventies to form an artificial reef. All the wrecks lie at a depth of over 30m, making them sites for experienced divers. Nitrox training is an obvious bonus and, if qualified, penetration is an option on some of the wrecks. There are two rigates; the Good Hope and Transvaal, two trawlers; Oratava and Princess Elizabeth, and the diamond dredger, the Rockeater.

The SAS Good Hope is identical to the Transvaal except for the fact that she has a helipad at her stern. Several large blast holes in her sides from the explosions that sunk her are also visible. The Good Hope also has a vessel lying off to her side – the fishing trawler Princess Elizabeth. There is extensive coral growth on the Good Hope which supports plentiful aquatic life.

The MV Rockeater was used for diamond prospecting and off shore drilling in Namibia. She was scuttled in the early 1970s to form an artificial reef. This is a challenging dive for the more experienced diver due to its depth and the fact that it lies more than 200m from the other wrecks. One of the best parts of the wreck is entering the deck below the main deck and looking up at the shafts of light penetrating the many holes in the upper deck.

The MFV Oratava was formerly an I&J fishing trawler which was scuttled in the 1970s. The Oratava lies off the stern of the SAS Transvaal – she is somewhat disorienting to swim through as she lies slightly on her side. The wreck is still very much intact and has



some very exciting swim-through's for divers to explore.

Lying close to the Good Hope in Smitswinkel Bay, the MFV Princess Elizabeth was scuttled in July 1983. She was a fishing vessel built in England and sold to I&J in 1969. The Princess Elizabeth is a wooden ship which makes for a really nice dive, especially for those interested in wreck penetration.

On all these wrecks you can encounter photogenic lobsters hidden in convenient holes in the masts, a variety of Nudibranchs curled up amongst the soft carpets of corals and a host of sponges. These wrecks, covered with mauve, red and white soft corals, Sea fans and anemones, are really a feast for the eye when a light source is applied. Starfish are common in the area and the superstructures are heavily encrusted with Hydroids, sea cucumbers, Sea squirts and Tube worms. Resident fish in this area include Galjoen, Catsharks, Hottentots, Janbruins, Romans and Strepies.



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Cape Peninsula



Cape Peninsula

GARMIN (WGS84) **S34 02.103**
E18 21.000

Lying at the south-western tip of Africa, the Cape Peninsula is on the Atlantic side of South Africa. This area is well known for the beautiful harbours, the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront and Robin Island. A spectacular view of the Cape Peninsula can be seen from the world famous Table Mountain. The climate in the Western Cape is typically Mediterranean and is usually warm and dry in the summer and mild and moist in the winter. Rain is frequent during the winter months.

Summer land temperatures: 16-27°C.

Winter land temperatures: 8-18°C.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in the cities and towns, including camp sites, hotels, self-catering chalets, lodges, back packers, B&B's and guest houses.

Shops and service stations:

Like any major city and town in South Africa a variety of shops are available. Diesel and petrol are also readily available.

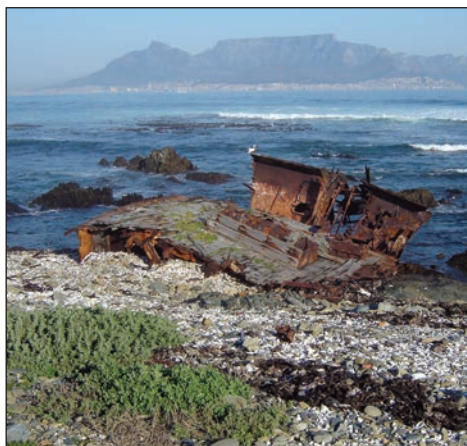
Health and medical services:

There are general practitioners, clinics and hospitals in this area.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Quad bike trails
- Hiking trails
- 4X4 Trails
- Micro light flights
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Curio and coffee shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports



Diving:

'The Atlantic Side', as the local calls it, is a totally different diving experience to the rest of southern Africa. In 2007 the area from roughly Muizenberg in False Bay to Green Point on the Atlantic side was declared a Marine Reserve, thus meaning that the whole of the Cape Peninsula is a protected zone. Scuba divers therefore need a dive permit to dive this area.

With the cold Benguela Current moving in a northerly direction to the equator, the water is colder on this side of southern Africa. Here you can experience anything from diving kelp forests, to reefs and also wrecks. The visibility is all dependent on the weather and can range from

just 1 metre up to 20 metre. The rule of thumb is that the better the visibility the colder the water, so if you are diving in nice warm waters, expect poor visibility. This dive site offers dives for both the beginner and the more advanced diver, while some of the dive sites have shore entries and others can only be dived by boat. You can often find seals, whales, penguins, dolphins and sharks on the dives.

Summer water temperatures: 12-20°C.

Winter water temperatures: 8-15°C.

Launch site:

There are a variety of types of entries in the Cape Peninsula. Most of them are shore entries although some of the dive sites can only be reached by boat. The boat launches will be from the closest harbour or from the closest launching ramp to the dive spot.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills
- Trimix fills
- Gear rentals
- Equipment sales
- Dive training
- Speciality courses

DIVE SPOTS

The Katzumaru



Average depth: 25m

Maximum depth: 32m

The Katzumaru which sank in 1972 in the Hout Bay Harbour mouth is an oriental trawler which is still virtually in tact and easily accessible. She lies on a stark sandy bottom on her starboard side at a 45 degree angle at a depth of 27m on deck and 32m on the sand. This wreck makes for a good wreck training dive. There are a lot of fish and other marine life typical of the Atlantic Ocean on this ship and large fish often visit the area. Seals are present and fish such as Hottentots,



Steenbrashes, Galjoen and other fish species are plentiful. There are hard and soft corals and colourful Nudibranchs to see all over the wreck while Shortspine urchins as well as colourful anemones are also seen. Keep an eye out for various Chitons, colourful sponges and other invertebrates. A torch is needed for this dive, and because of her depth, this is a dive for more experienced divers.

The Astor



Average depth: 25m

Maximum depth: 33m

In April 1997, the Astor, a lobster catcher (27m long and 340 tons) was going to be scrapped. Cape Town divers saw this as an ideal opportunity to extend an existing artificial reef system within the protected environment of Hout Bay. She was cleaned, freed of oil and sunk by August 1997. She now lies peacefully, 20m to the north of the Katzumaru in 33m of water, providing a thrilling



Cape Peninsula

penetration dive in relative safety. Shortspine urchins as well as colourful anemones and an abundance of fish are seen on this wreck. Large fish are also known to visit this area.

Vulcan Rock



Average depth: 19m

Maximum depth: 30m

Vulcan Rock is a large and deep pinnacle about 2km off shore from Hout Bay. It rises to the surface and drops off to over 30m – furthermore, a large tunnel can be found at the bottom of the pinnacle. This site can be very clear but also icy cold. It is often successful as a drift dive and is generally reserved for the more experienced diver due to the depths you can reach and the current



which is often present. At 19m one can see the open cave. Large fish often visit this area and seals are present most of the time. Deep water Cowries and curious crayfish are everywhere to be seen.

The Boss



Average depth: 20m

Maximum depth: 25m

This boat dive takes you to what was once the largest floating crane in Africa. While being towed during a storm, the towline broke and she drifted helplessly onto the rocks. Stuck on the rocks with most of the crane above water and big pieces of the super structure lying around the wreck, she makes an interesting dive. This is a great 2-tank dive, as the Oakburn lies partly under the Boss 400 wreck. Plenty of fish and other marine life can be seen, with large fish often visiting this area and Great whites known to have been sighted here. This site can only be dived on calm days as it is in an exposed position.

The Oakburn



Average depth: 19m

Maximum depth: 25m

On 21 May 1906, the Oakburn, a 3 865 ton British Steamer hit the rocks of Maori Bay during thick fog. She was on a voyage from New York to Sydney carrying a cargo of railway equipment, sewing machines, musical instruments, glassware, oil and paper – two lives were lost. The wreck is partly broken up, but there are still sections of the bow and engine that are recognisable. Many artifacts can still be found lying around on the site. Large fish and seals can be seen along with the hard and soft corals on this wreck.



The Maori



Average depth: 15m
Maximum depth: 23m

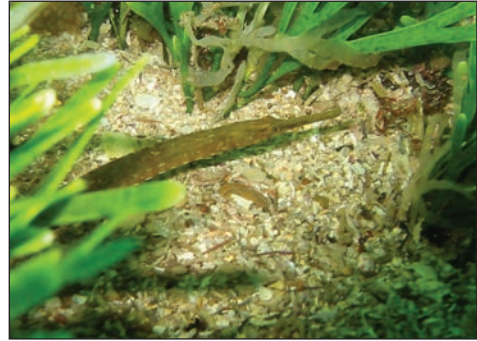
This wreck lies close to shore between Sandy Bay and Vulcan Rock. The Boss 400 crane lies about 20m from the Maori. The Maori, a 5 317 ton steamship sank on August 5, 1909 with a cargo of crockery and water piping. It was on its way from London to New Zealand when it was wrecked after striking a rock in thick fog. The wreck is covered in coral and this is a beautiful dive when the visibility is good. On the sea floor there is a vast amount of scattered porcelain dating back to 1909. Nudibranchs in the most spectacular colours are found on this wreck and don't get a fright if a curious seal swims by to have a closer look at you.

The Romelia



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 25m

The Romelia was a Liberian oil tanker that was on route to a Taiwanese breaker's yard together with the Antipolis. She floundered on Sunset Rocks on July 29, 1977. Both ships were in tow



when the cable snapped in one of Cape Town's notorious winter storms. The ship has interesting portholes and fittings to swim and peer through. This site is cold and clear after a south-easterly wind has blown. The surge can be very strong on the southern side and there is a strong suction through a hole on the northern side of the wreck, so this site should only be dived when conditions are perfect and it is also therefore not recommended for novice divers. Dense kelp forests can be found around the Romelia and you are likely to see colourful invertebrates, Shysharks, Hottentots, Janbruins and Romans. Other small fish also like to gather in the kelp for protection, while various Starfish, anemones and urchins line the bottom of the seafloor.

Coral Gardens



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 18m

As this site is not often dived and lies within the marine reserve it is relatively unspoilt and the marine life is prolific. This site is filled with hard and soft corals amongst the fields of Cape urchins and beautiful Sandy anemones in a vast array of pastel colours. Fish such as Hottentot, Galjoen and other species are plentiful. Chitons, colourful sponges and other invertebrates as well as Nudibranchs can be seen at this magnificent site.



Cape Peninsula



Justin's Caves



Average depth: 12m

Maximum depth: 18m

This is a very exciting dive with large underwater caverns, overhangs and beautiful swim-through's for both advanced and open water divers. This is a great night dive but the entry and exit points are very tricky – also note that the surge can be very strong through the caves when a swell is running. Justin's Caves is usually dived in summer when the water is clear, but cold. You might want to take a torch with to bring out the colours of the corals and anemones on the ceilings and walls of the caverns. Many Hottentots and other small fish are present, along with some small harmless bottom-dwelling sharks. Crayfish are quite abundant and Cuttlefish have also been seen here so keep your eyes open. Shoals of small fish can usually be seen swimming through the dense kelp forest.

The Antipolis



Average depth: 10m

Maximum depth: 12m

The Antipolis is a great shore entry dive site ideal for Open Water divers, as it offers a real wreck experience at a shallow depth. The Antipolis is a 25 000 ton Greek tanker that broke the tow during a storm in 1977. She was on her way to be scrapped and is now lying largely broken up on the reef surrounded by a kelp forest. The wreck is shallow and accessible with the surface visible at all times – you really get the feeling of being inside the bowels of a shipwreck. In good visibility, the sunrays filter through the turquoise water into the engine room giving divers a magical sight. There is also a sunken bulldozer to see and many large crayfish about. Beware of being sucked into holes when the swell is present.

Geldkis



Average depth: 12m

Maximum depth: 22m

Geldkis is a rock off the shore from Sandy Cove which involves quite a swim. The dive site is on the outer side of the rock or around the blinder, which breaks a few metres out to sea from the rock. You can also just dive around the rock if you prefer – there is still plenty to see and not everybody cares to swim this far in the Atlantic's cold water. On the rock you can find colourful anemones and many species of Nudibranchs while crayfish can be found in the crevices. Octopus and Shysharks can also be found hiding all over the reef. There is also the possibility that you will see rays and Cuttlefish in this area.

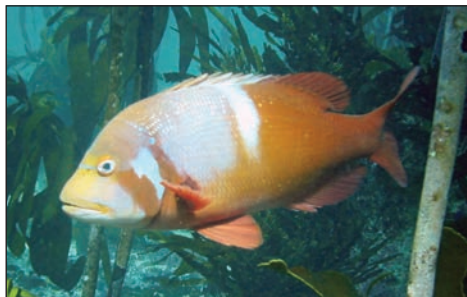
Clifton Rocks



Average depth: 10m

Maximum depth: 15m

This dive is situated just off one of the most popular beaches in South Africa – the site is about 75-100m from the Fourth Beach. Colourful marine growth dominates on and around the rock and there are dense patches of kelp. This area also falls within the marine sanctuary, which means lots of crayfish. The marine life here is interesting and prolific but not particularly colourful. The kelp cover is thick; many species of invertebrates cover the rocks and hordes of crayfish hide in deep holes. This site is sheltered from even the strongest south-easterly wind.



Lion's Paws



Average depth: 18m

Maximum depth: 26m

This site is ideal if you are looking for something fairly deep. There are two large pinnacles tapering to small islands which stick out above the surface – these make for a very nice dive with wonderful overhangs and caverns to explore. The two sites are very similar and have very colourful scenery and there is a lot of fish and other marine life on both of the dive sites.



The Schuilenberg



Average depth: 7m

Maximum depth: 10m

The Schuilenberg was wrecked in 1756 while carrying provisions from Table Bay to False Bay.



Cape Peninsula

The only remains of the wreck are three cannons that are partly buried in sand. This is not a particularly colourful or scenic dive but you may enjoy the historic aspect of the site. The cannons are shallow enough to be snorkelled, and this may be a better option since it is quite a mission to get to the site with all your scuba gear. Marine life isn't particularly colourful and is mostly dominated by kelp, Hottentot, Roman and crayfish. The sea has to be calm with no surge if you want to dive this site, as the wreck lies in the surf.

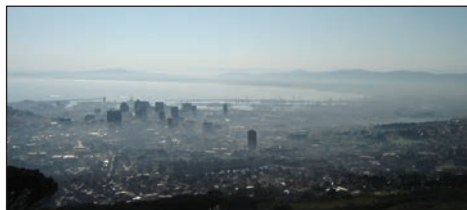
SS Seafarer



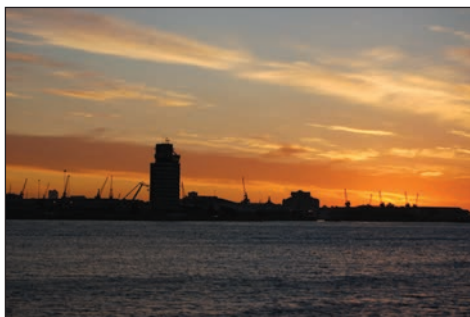
Average depth: 5m

Maximum depth: 8m

The Seafarer was an 8 000 ton Safmarine freighter that was wrecked during a storm in



1966. The ship broke up quickly and most of the cargo was lost and came to rest on the seabed. Although the propeller shaft is still visible, most of the fittings were removed shortly after the wrecking. Seals can be found on this dive along with fish and Nudibranchs. Shortspine urchins as well as colourful anemones and Chitons can also be seen on this wreck.



The RMS Athens



Average depth: 5m

Maximum depth: 7m

The RMS Athens was a mail steamer which was wrecked in 1865 during a great gale storm with the loss of the whole crew of 29. The ship broke up rapidly when it hit the reef with only the engine block visible the next day. The marine life here is interesting and prolific but not particularly colourful. The kelp cover is thick; many species of invertebrates cover the rocks and hordes of crayfish hide in deep holes. Shortspine urchins as well as colourful anemones are also seen on this wreck. This site is quite shallow and as a result the surge can be quite strong.



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Two Oceans Aquarium

Two Oceans Aquarium

GARMIN (WGS84) **S33 54.450**
E18 25.063

The Two Oceans Aquarium is situated at Cape Town's Victoria & Alfred Waterfront and is a spectacular aquarium that is really worth a visit.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in Cape Town, including camp sites, hotels, self-catering chalets, lodges, back packers, B&B's and guest houses.

Shops and service stations:

Like any major city or town in South Africa, a variety of shops are available. Diesel and petrol are also readily available.

Health and medical services:

There are world-class general practitioners, clinics and hospitals in this area.

For more information about diving at this site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Quad bike trails
- Hiking trails
- 4X4 trails
- Micro light flights
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Curio and coffee shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

Diving:

The Two Oceans Aquarium has three different dives to offer; a kelp, shark and a copper hat dive.



The kelp dive incorporates a live kelp forest in a huge glass tank complete with the waving of the kelp in a man-made surge. There are rocks plants and a vast amount of fish life in this tank. In the kelp forest you will find big White steenbra's, Pyjama sharks, Red romans, Leopard catshark, Herrings, Spotted Grunter, Fransmadam, Red stumpnose and Scotsmen to name just a few. The resident penguins who live in the aquarium get to swim in this tank on a regular basis and they enjoy swimming amongst the fish and kelp. The water in this tank is approximately 15°C, thus a hoodie and gloves are advisable.

The shark dive takes place in the shark tank and you will know how the fish feel when everybody



stares at them from the other side of the glass wall! In this tank there are a couple of Ragged-tooth sharks, various species of rays, Tuna and even turtles together with other tropical fish species. The tank is warmer than the kelp tank and is guaranteed to have excellent visibility. With this dive, a group of divers together with two dive masters are in the tank. The divers are allowed to stand on their knees while the fish and sharks swim amongst them. The dive masters always have an eye on the sharks and the divers to make sure that everything goes well.

The copper hat dive also takes place in the shark tank and takes you back almost 50 years in time. It is an amazing experience for any scuba diver and gives you a whole new perspective on how diving has evolved.

This is one of the only sites in southern Africa that can guarantee good visibility and good diving conditions. The dives are never deeper than five metres.



Bass Lake



Bass Lake



Bass Lake is situated approximately 20 kilometres south of Johannesburg in a little place called Henley-on-Klip – a leisurely 30 minute drive from the hustle and bustle of the city. The climate in this area is delightfully mild with cold winters and warm summers. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 15-30°C.

Winter land temperatures: 5-20°C.

Accommodation:

Camp sites are available at Bass Lake, but a variety of accommodation is available in the nearby cities and towns. Camp sites, hotels, self-catering chalets, lodges, back packers, B&B's and guest houses are all easily accessed.



Shops and service stations:

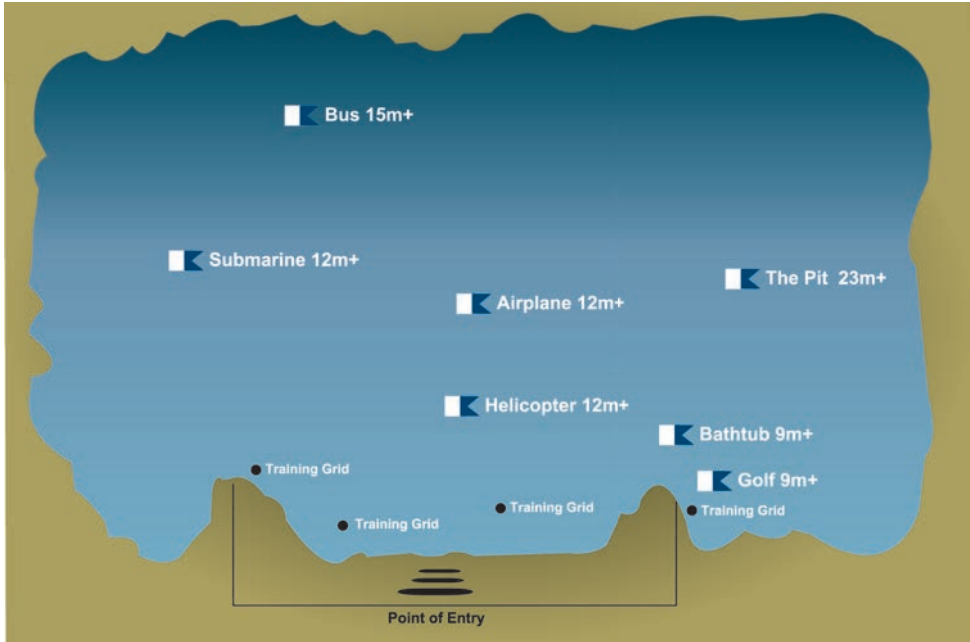
There are no shops and service stations at this dive spot, although a restaurant is available. Shops and service stations are available in the town of Henley-on-Klip.

Health and medical services:

The closest clinics and hospitals are located in Johannesburg.

For more information about diving at this site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za





Diving:

Bass Lake is an old mining hole with layers reminiscent of steps that go deeper with every layer reached. It also has big crevices going



through the bottom making it deeper in some places – up to a maximum of 25 metres. The bottom of the hole is covered in grass with some parts featuring a deep, powdery silt. To make it more interesting, a bus, airplane, cars and even an old helicopter have been positioned within the hole to mark certain places. The markers on the surface of the water indicate what you will find underwater. As its name implies, bass form the majority of the fish at this site. The hole is mostly used for the training of new scuba divers and testing of equipment. The dive is rather safe with no surge or currents. The hole is surrounded by grassy banks where your kit and car will be secure.

Summer water temperatures: 16-23°C.

Winter water temperatures: 13-20°C.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills
- Gear rentals
- Equipment sales



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Wondergat



Wondergat is one of the most beautiful natural wonders to dive in southern Africa. It was created thousands of years ago through the collapsing of the roof of a dolomite cave and is situated 60 kilometres north of Lichtenburg on the road to Mafikeng. The climate in this area is usually cold in winter and warm to hot in the summer. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 15-30°C.

Winter land temperatures: 5-20°C.

Accommodation:

Camp sites with electricity and ablution facilities are available at Wondergat.

Shops and service stations:

There are no shops and service stations available on this dive spot. Shops and service stations are located in the town of Mafikeng.

Health and medical services:

The closest clinics and hospitals are located in Mafikeng.

For more information about diving at this site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

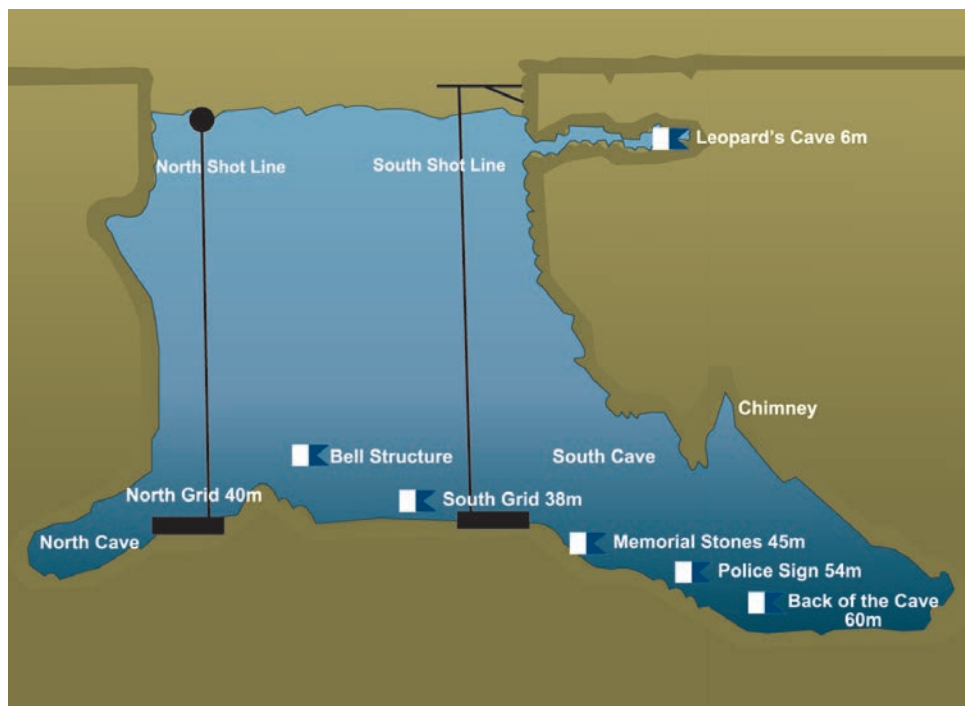
Diving:

Situated at an altitude of approximately 1 440 metres above sea level, one will find an unbelievable natural dolomite sinkhole. It was formed thousands of years ago, when the roof of a water-filled cavern caved in and left a magnificent hole filled with water. In the early 70s the deepest point at this dive site was more than 70 metres – today it is only 58 metres.





Wondergat



Wondergat is a location for the advanced and higher qualified divers because the bottom of this hole is approximately 36 metres (first stop). There are two buoy lines; a north and south grid from where one can descend. The north grid is approximately 38 metres deep and the south grid 36 metres deep. There is also a white bell chamber at the bottom that has an interesting slogan on it



– try to remember the whole slogan...

When venturing into the cave to the memorial stones and to the taskforce board, it is better to descend from the south grid as it is the closest – this saves on bottom time. Torches are always recommended as the bottom can be very dark when you reach the grid. The entrance to the cave is approximately five metres from the south grid and guide ropes connect the different areas of the hole for safety reasons. If you are diving here for the first time, it is best to do so with someone who has dived here before and knows the hole quite well, as the depth and darkness can be unnerving for a first time visitor.

Summer water temperatures: 16-23°C.

Winter water temperatures: 13-20°C.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills



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Marico Oog



Marico Oog

GARMIN (WGS84) **S25 47 033**
E026 21 616

Between Mafikeng and Koster is a small dive site that was formed by a natural spring which produces crystal clear, cool water and is home to the most beautiful water lilies. The climate in this area is usually cold in winter and warm to hot in the summer. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 15-30°C.

Winter land temperatures: 5-20°C.



Accommodation:

Camp sites with electricity and ablution facilities are available at Marico Oog.

Shops and service stations:

There are no shops and service stations available on this dive spot. Shops and service stations are available in the town of Koster.

Health and medical services:

The closest clinics and hospitals are located in Koster.

For more information about diving at this site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Diving:

This natural spring feeds the Limpopo River and produces an incredible 200 000 litres of water per hour. What makes this pool so exquisite is the fact that the water is crystal clear and the visibility is often in excess of 20 metres. The natural





surroundings give the impression that you are swimming in a fairytale pond. Lush plant life covers most of the pool, notably the floating water lilies with their stems that trail away lazily to the bottom. The bottom of the pool is covered with a broad-leaved plant that gives the impression of swimming over a lush green carpet.

Various species of fish are found hiding amongst

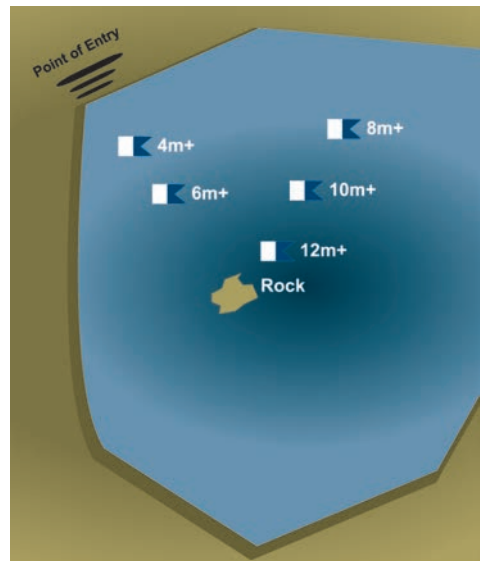
the stems of the water lilies, such as bass, kurper and the Marico 'gillemlentjie'. If you are in luck, you may even spot one of the fresh water eels that live in the pool. Entry to the pool is via a passage cut between the reeds and water entry is attained using a ladder to ensure that the bottom surface isn't disturbed. The pool consists of parts that vary in size as well as in depths, with the maximum depth being 16 metres and an average depth of 8-10 metres.

A feature of the dive site is a cave at the north end of the rock that presents a swim-through for the brave and trained! This clear pool makes a night dive a must but only for small groups who have their buoyancy well under control. At the wall directly south of the grid you will find miniature shrimps at night if you look carefully. For the underwater photography enthusiasts – don't forget the cameras! The most scenic pictures can be taken here.

Summer water temperatures: 16-23°C.

Winter water temperatures: 13-20°C.

Diving facilities in the area:
There are no diving facilities on this site.





Miracle Waters



Miracle Waters

GARMIN (WGS84) $S\ 25\ 40\ 49.1$
 $E\ 027\ 45\ 33.6$

Miracle Waters is located on the site of a former chrome mine. It is situated just eight kilometres outside of Brits and is one of the most popular inland dive destinations in South

Africa. The climate in the North West Province is usually cold in winter and hot in the summer. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 15-30°C.

Winter land temperatures: 5-20°C.

Accommodation:

Chalets and camp sites with electricity and ablution facilities are available at Miracle Waters.

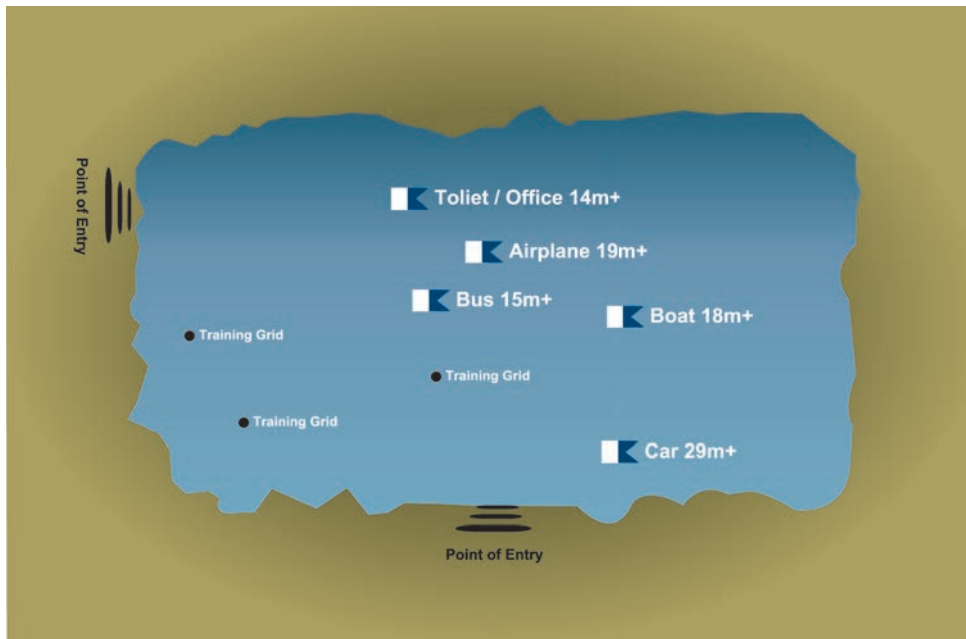
Shops and service stations:

There are no shops and service stations at this dive spot, although a restaurant is available. Shops and service stations are available in the town of Brits.

Health and medical services:

The closest clinics and hospitals are located in Brits.

For more information about diving at this site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za





Diving:

Miracle Waters is an altitude dive approximately 1 500 metres above sea level. It attracts divers of all levels, from people doing their first open water dives in a calm and well mapped environment, to technical divers who come to perfect their advanced skills and develop the team skills needed for complex wreck or cave dives.

The old open cast chrome mine is filled with an underwater spring and has a maximum depth of 33 metres. With visibility up to 10 metres and with five training platforms, it is the perfect place

for the training of beginners.

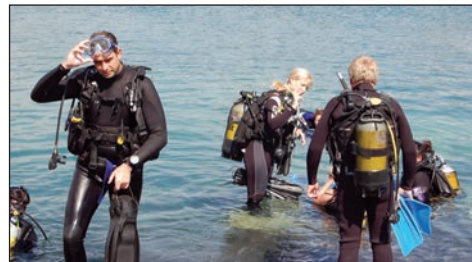
Numerous bass and various species of Kurper are found in the shallows, while a bus, airplane, yacht, car and various other items have been added to the dive spot for divers to view. The markers on the surface of the water indicate what you will find underwater.

Summer water temperatures: 16-23°C.

Winter water temperatures: 13-20°C.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Gear rentals





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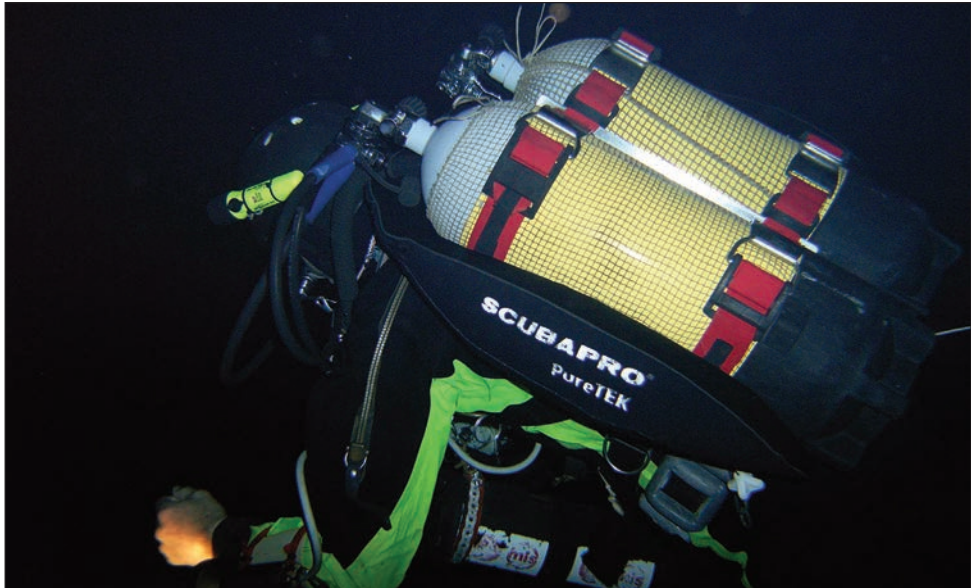
Bobbejaansgat

This underground dolomite cave is situated three hours from Johannesburg and approximately 40 kilometres north of Wondergat on a game farm just north of Ottoshoop. It was formed thousands of years ago through the collapsing of its roof. The site is not accessible to the general public from the main road and permission from the owner is necessary to dive this site.

On the northern part of the game farm is small trail that leads you down a steep slope over rocks

to where you can see vertical dolomite rock formations narrowing.

Getting down to the pool is not easy due to the near vertical rock walls that are between 15 and 40 metres high. There is an old truck chassis cemented to the rock on the eastern side of the hole and it is possible to lower your gear down with a rope. The alternative way down to the water is from the southern side of the sinkhole along a footpath. It leads you down the steep slope where you will need a rope to support





Bobbejaansgat



yourself while climbing down the rock face.

When the roof of the sinkhole collapsed, the falling rocks were jammed between the sidewalls halfway down. This now forms a small 'island' when water levels are lower. When the 'island' breaks the surface, it splits the pool into two sections, a small pool to the west and a larger pool to the east. The water surface is approximately 10 metres x 40 metres, with a large portion of the pool under the cave roof.

Diving down and swimming over the 'island' takes you down into the huge main chamber that is 10 metres to 15 metres in width, 48 metres in depth and 120 metres in length. Some smaller caves with unknown dimension lead out from the main chamber to the north.

For more information about diving at this site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Diving facilities in the area:
There are no diving facilities near the site.

Komati Springs/Badgat



Komati Springs/ Badgat

GARMIN (WGS84) **\$25 56.058**
£30 42.648

Komati Springs was formally known as Badgat, and is situated 25 kilometres from Badplaas and almost 300 kilometres from Johannesburg. Komati Springs was an old Asbestos mine that flooded and was rehabilitated in 2002. The climate in this area is usually cold in winter and warm in the summer. Rain is frequent during summer.

Summer land temperatures: 15-30°C.

Winter land temperatures: 5-20°C.

Accommodation:

Camp sites with electricity and ablution facilities are available at this site.



Shops and service stations:

There are no shops and service stations available on this dive spot. Shops and service stations are available in the town of Badplaas.

Health and medical services:

The closest clinics and hospitals are available in Nelspruit.

For more information about diving at this site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Diving:

The hole is an oval shaped old asbestos mine that was flooded in 1985. Concrete and steel steps lead you to the waters edge. The maximum depth is 55 metres in the main hole with overhangs and





Komati Springs/Badgat



minshafts leading off the main hole between about 9 metres and 25 metres. The cave areas are only for trained cave divers to enjoy the tunnels of the old mine. There are a number of tunnels running off the main shaft that bottoms out at over 109 metres with various levels at 18 metres, 25 metres, 38 metres, 47 metres and 68 metres.

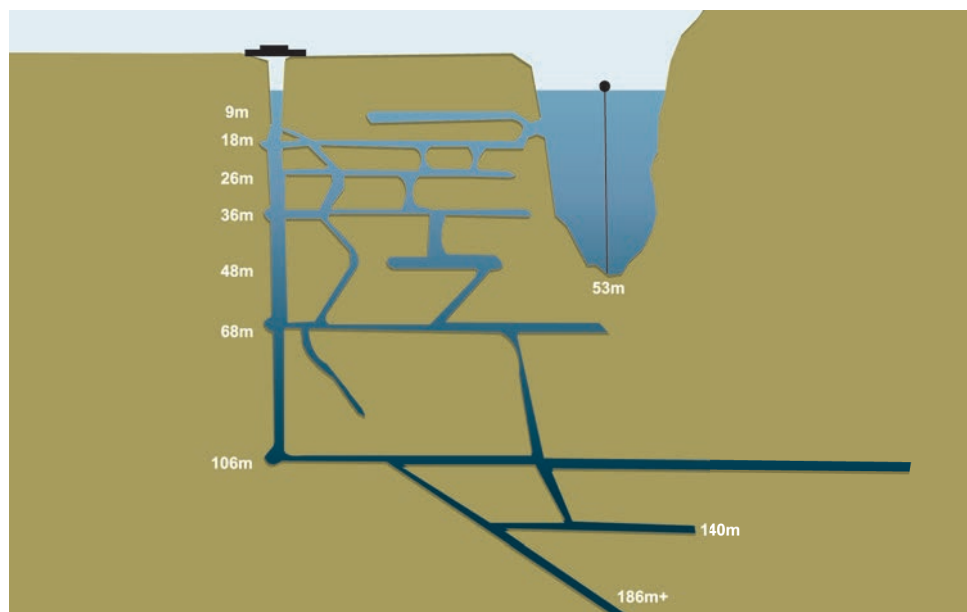
The visibility, which ranges from 8-12 metres, improves with depth and has been known to be unlimited in winter. Water temperatures at depth in winter rarely fall below 18°C and in summer the surface temperature rises to a maximum of 24°C.

Summer water temperatures: 16-24°C.

Winter water temperatures: 15-20°C.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills
- Trimix fills
- Gear rentals
- Equipment sales
- Dive training
- Speciality courses





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Wetsgat



Wetsgat

Just east of Pretoria lies a dolomite cave which only a handful of technical divers have dived – with the only clue being a small crack in the ground it would never lead you to think that there is a cave to dive. It is a technical diving venue which does not have any access to daylight while you are diving. Wetsgat is on a private property

and is not open to the public.

Getting down with your equipment is a tricky task – you need to slide down a steep 15 metres gravel slope to the small rocky entrance to the cave. Once the equipment is at the entrance of the cave, divers can enter through the small rock opening and climb down some slippery boulders. Here the equipment can be stacked inside the entrance of the cave and from there it can be carried further down the dark cave until you get to the water.





like crystal, but walking from the rocky cave floor on to a muddy bottom will cause silt to drift up. The borehole pipe is the reference point from where the reel line is attached. From the main chamber the cave goes down in a south-eastern direction. You swim past some big boulders at 12 metres, and at about 30 metres from the borehole pipe you enter the next chamber and follow a steady decline. The bottom is very rocky with lots of silt – buoyancy is vital to keep your fins well off the bottom. The roof is not very stable and you may experience some falling rocks due to the bubbles loosening the roof.

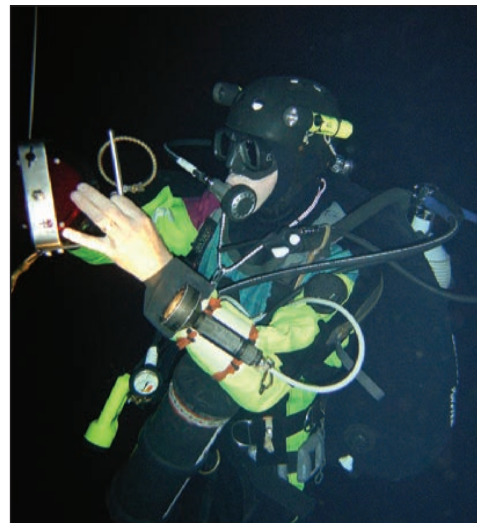
The second chamber is about 40 metres by 20 metres and slopes down to about 38 metres. From this chamber you change direction, moving slightly into a more easterly direction. The cave floor now slopes down much steeper and it is best to do regular tie-offs. The third and last chamber is smaller with the roof coming down and meeting the floor at the end of the cave at a depth of 48 metres. At this point you are 150 metres from the borehole pipe.



Diving facilities in the area:
There are no facilities on this dive site and it is only for trained cave divers.

The cave is very hot with high humidity and absolutely no natural light. In the darkness you kit up and then start your dive. The chamber is quite large – 40 metres by 40 metres – and the roof's distance from the floor or water surface ranges between 1m and 15m. Water covers 80% of the chamber, leaving only 20% dry cave floor for you to kit up on.

A gentle slope leads to the opposite side of the chamber where a borehole pipe enters the cave roof and goes down into the water. The water is





Boesmangat



Boesmangat

GARMIN (WGS84) **S27 55.307**
E23 38.498

Boesmangat, a natural dolomite sinkhole 1 550 metres above sea level, can be found 55 kilometres south of Kuruman. The sinkhole is the second deepest cave in the world and

many world records have been set there for cave diving. It is one of the best known inland dive sites in the world with depths of up to 300 metres. The climate in this area is desert-like with cold winters and very hot summers. The little rain that does fall in this region occurs during the summer months.

Accommodation:

Camp sites with no facilities are available at the site. Accommodation is also available with all the necessary facilities on a nearby farm.

Shops and service stations:

There are no shops in the area. The closest shops and service stations are located in Danielskuil where diesel and petrol are available.

Health and medical services:

Ask the locals about drinking the tap water, although it is advisable to rather drink bottled or purified water. The closest clinics and hospitals are located in Kuruman.



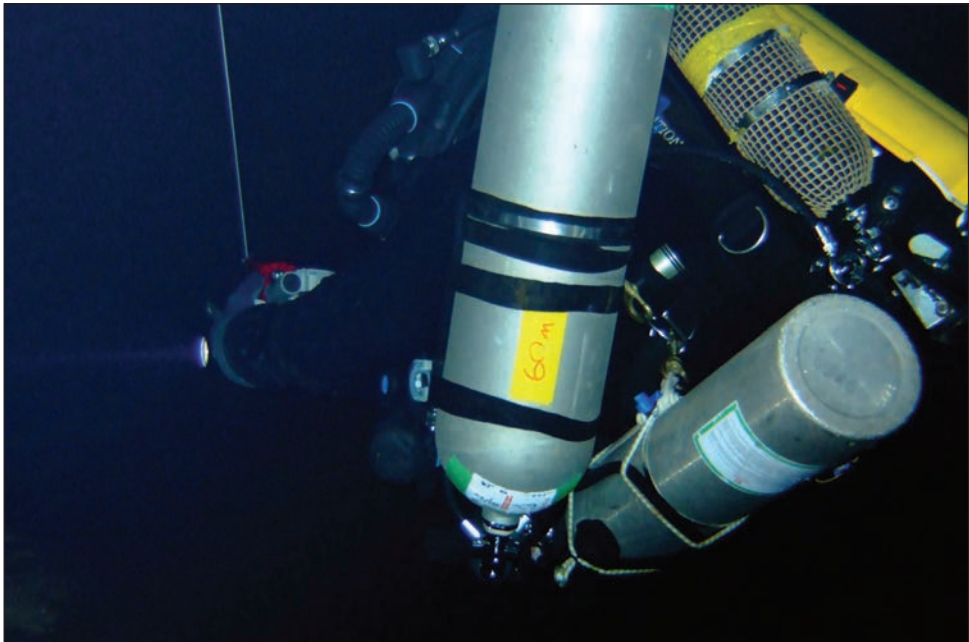
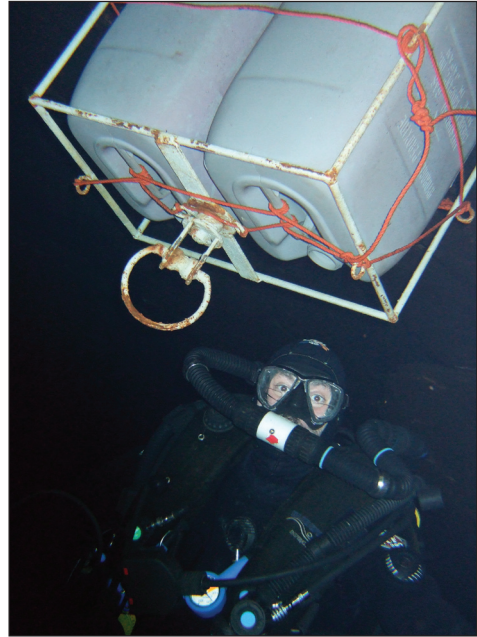
Diving:

Boesmangat is the largest natural cavern of its kind in the southern Hemisphere with limited light penetration up to 50 metres. The sinkhole is only to be dived by qualified divers with caving and sinkhole training and experience. Getting down to the water requires an almost vertical 100 metres climb down the mountain with all your diving kit to a small puddle of water. Under the green duck weed that covers the surface you will find crystal clear water.

On entering the water, a small crack will take you down in the chamber where it opens up to depths of almost 300 metres. Believe it or not, the chamber is the size of five rugby fields. With the roof of the cave 50 metres deep there are a number of smaller caves to explore in the shallower parts.

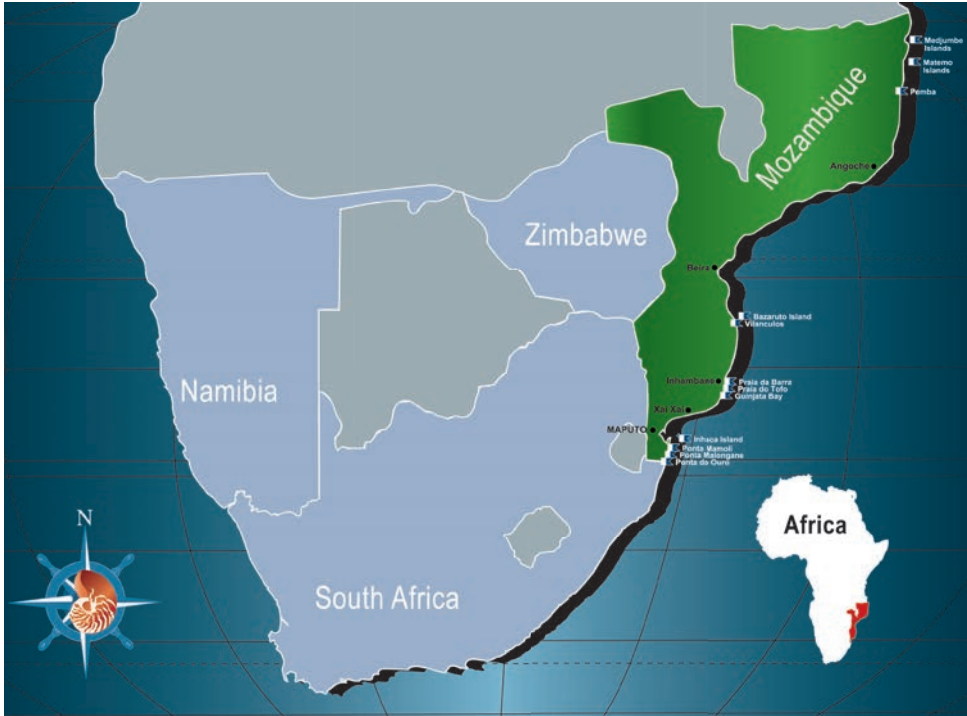
For more information about diving at this site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Diving facilities in the area:
There are no diving facilities on this site.





Mozambique



Mozambique

Mozambique is situated on the east coast of Africa with a coastline that stretches for approximately 2 500 kilometres. The country is bordered by South Africa and Swaziland to the south, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi to the west and by Tanzania to the north. The 300 kilometre channel between Mozambique and Madagascar is called the Mozambique Channel and hosts a variety of small islands.

Mozambique as a unified entity did not exist until the country was declared a Portuguese colony in 1752. Before then the area was a collection of separate kingdoms, with the country's two largest rivers, the Zambezi in the north and the Limpopo in the south, providing natural boundaries between the communities of Makua, Maravi, Yao, Thonga and the Shona.

In 1982 an anti-communist movement began a

series of attacks on the Mozambican infrastructure. In November 1990, after eight years of war, a democratic constitution was adopted. Now peaceful Mozambique remains a very poor country, having not recovered from Portuguese colonialism, great disinvestment following independence and two protracted civil wars. Nevertheless, with its sandy palm beaches and coral reefs, it still qualifies as one of the most beautiful places in Africa.

Most of the population of Mozambique lives off the sea and more than 60% of the population lives along the coast. Mozambique has a population of over 16 million and this is made up predominantly of ten different ethnic groups. The distinct local style consists of a blend of African, Arab and Portuguese influences and provides a refreshing contrast to the other

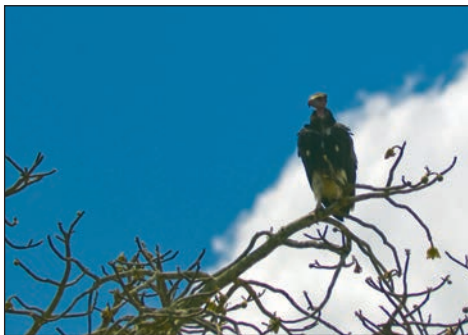
countries in the southern African region. The diversity in the country can be seen from Maputo's modern, bustling city streets and pulsating night life to the colourful markets and small fishing villages which dot the coast.

Of the cultural traditions imbued in colonial times, the remnants of a Mediterranean charm lives on. Food is in the Afro-Portuguese style and contrasts favourably with the British culinary tradition prevalent in the other countries in the region. The official language of Mozambique is Portuguese, but this is spoken only by the quarter of the population that has received school education. Portuguese is the language of the Mozambican education, business and legal systems.

Amazingly, approximately 60 other languages and dialects are spoken in Mozambique, all of which are of Bantu origin. Around 40% of the Mozambican population living north of the Zambezi speak the endemic Makua-Longwe dialects. Tsonga dominates south of the Limpopo and Tonga and Shona are spoken in the central region. Some people in the northern coastal regions also speak KiSwahili, a simplified Bantu language with Arabic influences.

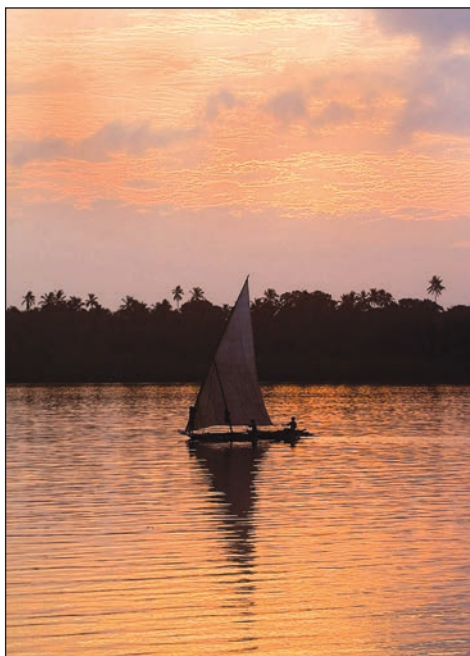
Mozambique has a warm, tropical climate. The average temperature in the country is 28°C, and the weather along the coast is sunny and warm, even in midwinter. Summer, from October to April, is rainy, humid and very hot. The cooler and drier winter months, from April to September, provide the most comfortable period for travel.

Temperatures and rainfall patterns vary greatly between the regions of the country. The areas





Mozambique



along Mozambique's north-eastern coast are the hottest and most humid in the country, while the high altitude regions in the Nampula and Niassa provinces are the coolest. Conditions along the coast can be oppressively hot and humid, while inland the cooler nights relieve the heat of the day. The country's northern parts receive almost twice as much rainfall as the southern provinces, where severe and prolonged droughts have occurred. The rainy season runs from October to March in the south, but it starts and ends about six weeks later north of the Zambezi.

Mozambique's capital city, Maputo, boasts interesting colonial architecture and is the best place to enjoy Mozambique's famous LM prawns. Sunny skies, endless beaches and clear waters teeming with marine life make Mozambique the perfect beach holiday destination.

Mozambique wildlife and plant life

Most of the designated wilderness areas in Mozambique are very remote. The wildlife numbers have been drastically reduced mainly due to the scars that the civil war left on the region. Between 1988 and 1990 the Zambezi Delta's elephant population fell from 1 500 to just 300, and in approximately 20 years before 1990, the buffalo population fell by 90%. In the last ten years other animal species have experienced declines of between 80 and 90% and some have been hunted to extinction. The large herds of game happily rumoured to exist in the far north of Mozambique are almost inaccessible, while the conservation lands set aside for visitors are almost depleted of wildlife.

Mozambique's birdlife was relatively unaffected by the civil war, though environmental degradation from industry's continual encroachment upon ecology remains a serious threat. Of southern Africa's several hundred bird species, around 30 have been recorded only in Mozambique or are concentrated there. In addition, some species reported in northern Mozambique do not appear on southern African checklists and are recorded as vagrants.

Most of Mozambique's vegetation is brachystegia woodland, a type of savannah that

covers approximately 70% of the country. Beach vegetation consists of dense scrub-brush and impressive palm groves. The country's floodplains and marshes (particularly the enormous Zambezi Delta) are covered with thick alluvial grasslands and stands of *Borassus* palms. The rain forests on the slopes of Mount Gorongosa and the highlands of western Zambézia, and the dry lowland forests of Cabo Delgado and Dondo, constitute the very little true forest that exists in Mozambique.

Travelling tips

There are numerous private minibus operators and reliable public transport companies throughout the southern and central regions of the country, such as Maputo, Gaza, Inhambane, Sofala and Manica. But, if you are thinking of driving all the way to the top of the country, you need to think again. Driving up to Inhambane is still possible and the roads are fine, but after that it is recommend that you fly.

Non-residents are permitted to drive with a driver's licence issued and valid in their own country, but a Mozambican driver's license is

required if you will be staying in the country for more than six months. There are also a number of airlines that fly to all the major towns in Mozambique.

South African passport holders do not need a visa when entering Mozambique if the stay is for less than 30 days. Other passport holders do need a valid visa which should be obtained prior to





Mozambique



your visit. Please note: if the period issued on our visa is exceeded, a fine of R500 per day will be charged.

Mozambique's local currency is the Metical, however, the US dollar and the South African rand are widely accepted. It is advisable to carry cash or Traveller's cheques as credit cards are not widely accepted. Be very careful when changing currency on this side of the border and even more so when entering Mozambique. You will be swamped with locals eager to exchange their money and many tourists have lost large sums in the resulting confusion.

The electricity supply is 220/230 volts AC 50 HZ with most plugs being 3-pin or 2-pin.

All major credit cards can be used in Mozambique, with American Express and Diners Club enjoying less universal acceptance than MasterCard and Visa. In some small towns you may find you'll need to use cash.



Health tips

Malaria is prevalent throughout Mozambique with higher risks between October and May. It would be best to take adequate precautions if you choose to visit Mozambique. In addition to malaria prophylaxis, insect repellents and mosquito nets can be effective.

There are private clinics, hospitals and pharmacies in most large towns, but you may need the help of someone who speaks Portuguese to communicate your needs. It is recommended that you carry a good supply of medicines as well as a comprehensive first aid kit. Doctors expect cash payment, so ensure that your medical insurance covers your trip to Mozambique.

Tap water is available but it is recommended that you drink only bottled water. Avoid eating food which has not been cooked or peeled.

Safety

Crime in Mozambique is on a par with the rest of southern Africa – it can be a problem, but by taking the usual sensible precautions you should be safe;

- Never leave luggage unattended.
- Store valuables in the hotel's safety deposit box.
- Keep the door of your hotel, B&B room or chalet locked at all times.
- Always avoid ostentatious displays of expensive jewellery, cameras and other valuables.
- Do not carry large sums of money.
- At night, steer clear of dark and isolated areas.
- Find out about trouble spots at a destination.
- When driving, keep car doors locked and wind the windows up.
- Lock valuables in the boot of the car.
- Never give strangers a lift or pick up hitchhikers.

Diving in Mozambique

With the Agulhas Current that flows down the 2 500 kilometres coastline which is scattered with endless coral reefs and tropical beaches, Mozambique is a delight for scuba and snorkel divers. With hundreds of kilometres of untouched, pristine coast, Mozambique is one of the few

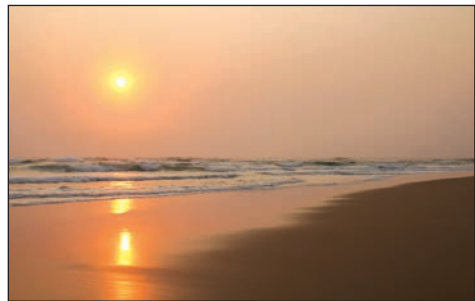
unexplored pleasures of the Indian Ocean and hosts a dazzling array of marine life. The world renowned Bazaruto Archipelago is part of this pristine coast line.

Mozambique competes with other top class dive destinations, and due to the large expanse of coastline, it is unique in that it is not overcrowded with tourists.

With the warmer waters in the Indian Ocean, the water temperatures range from 22°C in winter to 31°C in summer and visibility is usually between five and 35 metres, with an average year round visibility of 20 metres.

The marine life throughout the year is incredible, ensuring that you can witness the same wonders all year round. The majority of the Whale shark sightings will occur between October and July. After that, from July to the beginning of October, you will find Humpback whales in the area. Bottlenose dolphins are known to frequent the area for most of the year.

Mozambique is a favourite amongst divers as those of all experience levels are guaranteed great diving.





Ponta Malongane and Ponta do Ouro



Ponta Malongane Ponta do Ouro

GARMIN™ (WGS84)

Ponta do Ouro S26 50.551 E32 53.239

Ponta Malongane S26 47.386 E32 53.280

Ponta Malongane and Ponta do Ouro are situated on the southern tip of Mozambique. Ponta do Ouro is approximately 10 kilometres north of the Kosi Bay border post with Ponta Malongane just five kilometres further north. From the border post there are numerous small sand roads to the destination of your choice. The climate in southern Mozambique is tropical, with mild winters and hot summers. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 20-35°C.

Winter land temperatures: 18-25°C.



Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in both Ponta Malongane and Ponta do Ouro, including camp sites, self-catering chalets, lodges, B&B's and dive camps. There are also quite a number of dive lodges.

Shops and service stations:

There are local dealers in town that can provide for your basic needs, although it is advisable to rather stock up on the South African side. Diesel and petrol are available in this area.

Health and medical services:

Malaria is a small risk and it is therefore advisable to take the appropriate prophylactics. Speak to your physician or pharmacist to find the best options for you. Ask the locals about drinking the tap water, though it is advisable to rather drink bottled or purified water. The closest clinics and hospitals are located in Kosi Bay.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Leatherback and Loggerhead turtle hatchlings between October and February
- Cultural tours
- Quad bike trails
- Hiking trails
- 4X4 Trails
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Snorkelling
- Curio shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

Diving:

Ponta do Ouro and Ponta Malongane both make use of the same dive spots and you can book a dive charter from both destinations to take you to the reefs. Note that some of the reefs are closer to the two different launching sites. The dive sites already discovered cater for all dive certification levels and vary in depth from 10m to 40m.

With a civil war which lasted over 26 years,



Francis Dekker

there was no diving in the region, therefore, scuba diving in this area now constitutes some of the best diving in southern Africa. The reefs along this area are known for the beautiful coral, the invertebrates and the game fish that frequent the area, as well as Whale sharks, Hammerhead sharks and big Potato bass.

Turtle season runs from October to March and, depending on the species, eggs are laid above the high-water mark on the beaches from October to December. Hatching takes place from December through to March. Regular sightings of Bottlenose and Humpbacked dolphins are also highlights here. Diving is very popular throughout the year.

Summer water temperatures: 21-27°C.

Winter water temperatures: 19-24°C.

Launch sites:

The launch sites for Ponta Malongane and Ponta do Oura are protected by big vegetated sand dunes on the land side which helps to block strong winds. The surf launch is, weather depending, usually quite easy with small waves. The wearing of life jackets is compulsory with every launch from the beach. Most of the dive camps are within walking distance from the launch site.



Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills
- Gear rentals
- Dive training
- Speciality courses



Ponta Malongane and Ponta do Ouro

DIVE SPOTS

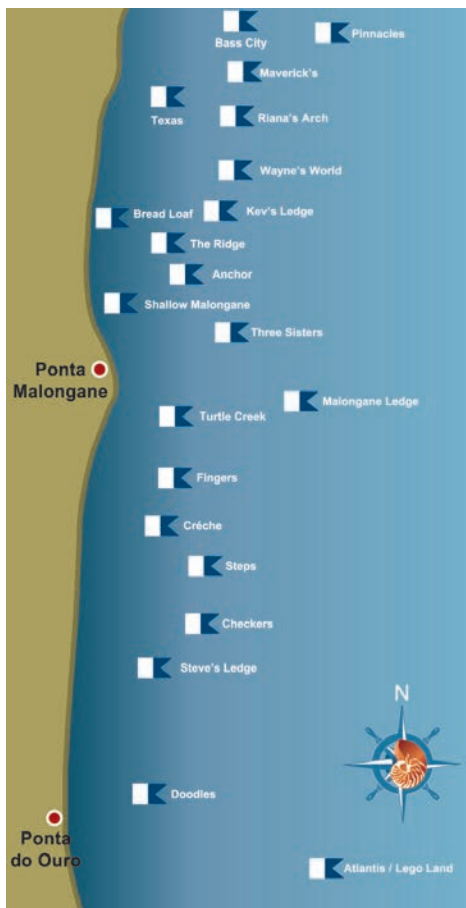
Bass City



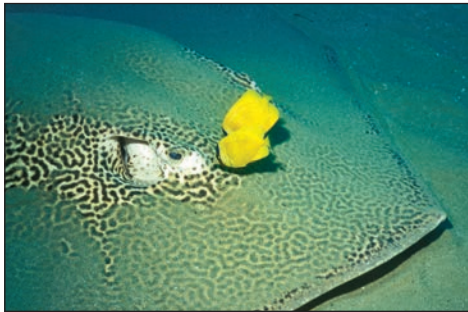
Average depth: 20m

Maximum depth: 23m

This reef, a series of five rocky outcrops covered with forms of algae, attracts a vast amount of marine life. Appropriately named with the number of bass and basslet varieties found, Bass City is an awesome dive loved by those wanting to see lots of fish. The star attraction is a big Potato bass who accompanies divers down to the reef and remains with them for the duration of the dive, lapping up the special attention. Lionfish and eels are everywhere and a wide variety of rays are found. Batfish and Dusky sweepers swarm like bees sometimes making it difficult to see any reef below. Boxfish in bright yellow with black spots, Garden eels, Tropical flounders and



shrimp cleaner stations are in abundance. Frogfish, Pipefish, Red anemones and Paperfish to name but a few, make for an exceptionally interesting dive. A special highlight is a most unusual Harlequin shrimp with 'sandwich pack' Starfish close at hand to snack on. Leopard shark and the occasional Zambezi have also been sighted on this reef. Beautiful Starfish as well as Feather stars are also found here. The coral life in this area mostly consists of small plants, seaweeds, sponges and Whip coral. There isn't as much coral as on the other reefs, but this reef is exclusively for the fish lovers.



Pinnacles



Average depth: 28m
Maximum depth: 45m

Diving on the edge of a continental shelf with sharks! On some days there are hundreds of Hammerheads, Zambezi and Dusky sharks, as well as large game fish and Manta rays in the area. Look out for a large Potato bass keeping a watchful eye on the pinnacles. With a limited bottom time one will do a great part of the dive as a big blue. Always remember to check your surroundings as you never know what will come to inspect the divers in the water. Summer is the ideal time to dive this reef and it is also best to do this dive early in the morning if you want to observe the sharks. For experienced, advanced divers only.

Maverick's



Average depth: 25m
Maximum depth: 28m

Maverick's is one of Ponta's deeper dives. In the middle of the sand is an awesome pinnacle rock that is 20m across and 30m long. The reef life includes numerous game fish passing by, turtles sleeping under the ledges and beautiful coloured

Nudibranchs. Reef fish such as Butterfly, Batfish, Damsels, Anemone fish and Trumpetfish are residents on this reef. Beautiful Starfish as well as Feather stars are also found on this reef. The coral life in this area consists mainly of small plants, seaweeds, sponges and Whip coral. This reef is for advanced scuba divers only.

Riana's Arch



Average depth: 18m
Maximum depth: 24m

Your dream of swimming through an awesome arch with a rich and spectacular variety of fish is possible on the northern side of Kev's Ledge. Reef fish such as Butterfly, Batfish, Damsels, Anemone fish and Trumpetfish are resident on this reef. Beautiful Starfish as well as Feather stars are also found here. The coral life in this area consists of small plants, seaweeds, sponges and Whip coral. This reef is for advanced scuba divers only.





Ponta Malongane and Ponta do Ouro



Texas



Average depth: 10m
Maximum depth: 16m

As the name indicates, this is one of the larger reefs. For the adventurous diver, central to this reef is a large gully with a swim-through, overhangs and arches. The marine life on this reef includes turtles, Scorpionfish, rays, eels and soft corals. Plate corals are found in abundance with Christmas tree worms in bright colours. Other regulars on this reef include Wrasse, Butterflyfish, Knifejaws, Surgeons and Triggerfish to name just a few. This dive is suitable for all levels of scuba divers.

Wayne's World



Average depth: 20m
Maximum depth: 24m

If you want to explore and see ledges, sand gullies, plate coral and a variety of fish life, especially rays and Scorpionfish, then this is the reef to dive. It is a prospect not to be missed as there are huge amounts of fish life – Black cheek moray eels, Honeycomb morays, Lionfish and large rays are just some of the examples. Also have a lookout for Fire coral, numerous Rock cod and green Paperfish. The presence of Frogfish, Pipefish, Red anemones and Leaf fish makes for an exceptionally interesting dive. Leopard shark and the occasional Zambezi have





been sighted and large Speckled snappers and Blue emperors cruise in the distance. Due to its depth, this reef is suitable for advanced scuba divers only.

Nudibranchs have been found on this particular reef, probably due to the many different kinds of coral found here. Dolphins aren't uncommon in this area and have been spotted playing near the reef.

Kev's Ledge



Average depth: 22m
Maximum depth: 24m

The many and varied crevices of this 6m rocky ledge are yours to explore with their wide and varied marine life. It is similar to a wall dive and the reef life includes the numerous game fish passing by, turtles sleeping under the ledges and beautiful coloured Nudibranchs. Reef fish, such as Butterfly, Batfish, Damsels, Anemone fish and Trumpetfish are residents on this reef. This is a dive spot for advanced divers.

The Ridge



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 16m

The Ridge is a ledge approximately 4m high with plenty of magnificent corals. The marine life is plentiful and you have a chance to spot large schools of Kingfish as well as turtles, Scorpionfish, rays, eels and soft corals. Plate corals are found in abundance with Christmas tree worms in bright colours. Other regulars on this reef include Wrasse, Butterflyfish, Knifejaws, Surgeons and Triggerfish to name just a few. The cave on this reef is definitely worth a visit. This reef is suitable for all levels of scuba divers.



Bread Loaf



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 14m

This reef hosts a vast amount of small caves, overhangs and even a few rock formations that look almost like pinnacles with huge plate coral growing out from the side making it look like a genuine table where you can be seated. The reef is encircled by sand and has a few sand patches in between. Bread Loaf is like a coral garden with a great amount of different types of hard and soft coral – a feast for the eye. The marine life on this reef tends to be quite shy and hides in the cracks and crevices. A big Marbled electric ray camouflaged under the sand in one of the sand patches was spotted, as well as Anemone fish, Coachmen, Triggerfish, Rockcod and emperor fish. Various species of





Ponta Malongane and Ponta do Ouro

Anchor



Average depth: 18m
Maximum depth: 21m

Not only do you get the joy of exploring the anchor on the southern end of Kev's Ledge that gave this reef its name, but also two parallel ledges with an abundance and variety of reef fish. The reef life includes numerous game fish passing by, turtles sleeping under the ledges and beautiful coloured Nudibranchs. Reef fish such as Butterflyfish, Batfish, Damsels, Anemone fish and Trumpetfish are residents on this reef. Beautiful Starfish as well as Feather stars are also found on this reef. The coral life in this area consists mainly of small plants, seaweeds, sponges and Whip coral – beautiful coloured soft corals and Anemones are prominent.



Shallow Malongane



Average depth: 11m
Maximum depth: 14m

This is a flat reef with scattered pieces of rock formations that have a lot of holes and ledges. Sand patches are found along the edges of the reef and in between certain parts of it. Once again, the very territorial Redfang triggerfish directed traffic on the ocean floor – they sometimes keep you out of a certain part of the reef. Hawksbill turtles, octopus and a great number of Nudibranchs can be found on this reef. The common reef fish and lionfish were spotted along with a vast amount of Eggshell cowries sitting on the sponges and soft coral. The coral in this area consist of Soft fleshy coral in soft pastel colours as well as some hard corals. Anemones with Clownfish are to be seen and sometimes it looks like the Dominoes also keep watch over the Anemones. There is more than enough to keep you busy and interested on this reef.

Three Sisters



Average depth: 19m
Maximum depth: 25m

This reef looks like a big rock placed in the middle of a huge sand patch. The reef has a ledge on the one side and flattens to the other side – the wall along one of the sides is almost 3m high. The resident Potato bass was on his post and kept a suspicious eye on all the visitors to this reef. The fish life consists largely of Goldie's, Rockcod, Chocolate dips, Dominoes, Kingfish and big schools of Coachmen. This reef is known for the Garden eels found at the foot of the reef. The coral life on this reef is unspoilt and consists of both hard and soft coral. Black coral is found

on this reef with the rare Longnose hawkfish sometimes spotted here. This dive spot is for the advanced diver and is very beautiful when the sun's rays penetrate the deep water and light up the rocky reef.

Turtle Creek



Average depth: 16m
Maximum depth: 21m

This is a reef which is scattered with pieces of rock formations surrounded by sand patches. The reef is covered with both soft and hard coral around the ledges and caverns. A variety of marine life such as Kingfish, Triggerfish, Surgeons, Batfish and schools of other reef fish are likely to be seen. The name of this reef was derived from the numerous sightings of different turtles that can be seen on a dive.

Malongane Ledge



Average depth: 45m
Maximum depth: 55m

As this reef is beyond the level of recreational divers it is mostly dived by advanced divers. It is not commonly dived. The reef consists of ledges



with sand gullies. Soft and hard coral can be found here but look out for the huge Plate coral and Fire coral. Large rays are usually seen on this dive on the sand and Moray eels, Scorpionfish and Frogfish can be seen on the reef. Leopard sharks and the occasional Zambezi shark have also been sighted here.

Fingers



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 14m

This reef is made up of numerous gullies, crevices and sandy patches. It is a dive not to be missed where there is a huge amount of fish life present – Black check moray eels, Honeycomb morays, Lionfish and large rays are just some of the examples. If you want to explore and see pinnacle rocks, sand gullies,





Ponta Malongane and Ponta do Ouro

Plate coral and a variety of fish life, then this is the reef to dive.

Crèche



Average depth: 12m

Maximum depth: 14m

Crèche is a shallow reef with various sandy patches which received its name due to the abundance of juvenile fish that can be seen here. Apart from the wide variety of juveniles found on the reef, also have a look out for Honeycomb moray eels in the crevices, Paperfish and Green turtles. Crocodile fish camouflage themselves in the sandy patches and various reef fish, such as Bannerfish, Triggers and Butterflyfish are amongst the regular inhabitants of this reef. This dive is ideal for student and novice divers or for those who would like to dive a shallow reef.

Batfish, Damsels, Anemone fish and Trumpetfish are common sightings on this reef, with beautiful Starfish and Feather stars also found here. The coral life in this area consists of small plants, seaweeds, sponges and Whip coral. Beautiful coloured soft corals and Anemones can be expected.

Checkers



Average depth: 16m

Maximum depth: 19m

Big blocky boulders covered in coral with sandy patches in between make up this reef. The marine life encountered here includes the odd-shaped Frogfish, Ribbon eels, Potato bass, Scorpionfish, Mantis shrimp, Paperfish and beautiful Spotted rays. The coral life includes various types of hard and soft corals, sponges and anemones. It is an interesting dive for any level of diver.

Steps



Average depth: 12m

Maximum depth: 18m

This reef allows you the chance to experience paradise under the sea, with beautiful corals, Moray eels, tremendous gullies and overhangs along with a wide variety of reef fish. Butterfly,

Steve's Ledge



Average depth: 15m

Maximum depth: 17m

If you want to explore and see ledges, sand gullies, plate coral and a variety of fish life, especially rays and Scorpionfish, then Steve's





Rika Kezse

Ledge is for you. There are huge amounts of fish life on this reef, with Black check moray eels, Honeycomb morays, Lionfish and large rays some of the highlights. Also have a look out for Blue spotted rays, Potato bass and the very well camouflaged Paperfish.

of Blue spotted stingrays frequent the area. This area also has the most beautiful shells occupied by Hermit crabs and Heart urchin shells, which are very fragile and are seldom seen unbroken. This reef also has its own resident Potato bass and eels that are found here on a regular basis, whilst a Whitetip reef shark has been seen here a number of times.

Doodles



Average depth: 14m
Maximum depth: 18m

This is quite a small reef which consists of several scattered rock formations. The bigger part has a wall on the one side that is almost 2m high and flattens to the other side. Three huge Honeycomb rays were spotted nestling in the sand – you can't help but be in awe of these big, round, flat creatures. Devil fire fish were spotted hanging around looking like fairies with their featherlike fins and an octopus was seen peeping out of one of the holes. Round Ribbontail rays and a couple

Atlantis



Average depth: 35m
Maximum depth: 48m

Atlantis is one of the deeper reefs, with a reef structure that is reminiscent of a sunken underwater city with huge square boulders and Whip coral growing out of the crevices. Green coral trees are the Highlights of this dive, with swarms of small fish and the numerous Triggerfish, Potato bass and other reef fish that frequent the area.



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Ponta Mamoli



Ponta Mamoli

GARMIN (WGS84) **\$26 42.422**
£32 54.075

Situated on the southern side of Mozambique, Ponta Mamoli is approximately 22 kilometres from the Kosi Bay border post and 10 kilometres from Ponta Malongane. There is a small, clearly marked dirt road leading to the destination from the border post. The climate in southern Mozambique is tropical, with mild winters and hot summers. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 20-35°C.

Winter land temperatures: 18-25°C.

Accommodation:

There is only one lodge that operates in this area, namely the Ponta Mamoli Lodge.

Shops and service stations:

There are no shops in the area. The closest shops and service stations are located in Ponta Do Ouro where diesel and petrol are readily available.

Health and medical services:

Malaria is a small risk, so therefore it is advisable to take the appropriate prophylactics. Speak to your physician or pharmacist to find the best option for you. Ask the locals about drinking the tap water, although it is advisable to rather drink

bottled or purified water.

The closest clinics and hospitals are located in Kosi Bay.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Leatherback and Loggerhead turtle hatchlings from October to February
- Cultural tours
- Horse trails
- Hiking trails
- 4X4 Trails
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Snorkelling
- Curio shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

Diving:

This is one of the best preserved dive sites on the southern side of Mozambique. With only one boat launching in the area, the reefs are relatively untouched and are home to a multitude of fish life.

Its exclusivity, coupled with a diversity of marine animals to observe and a varying underwater topography, makes this dive site very special. The reefs are in close proximity to the launch site, ranging from shallow dives of 10 metres to deeper sites up to 40 metres. All the reefs are packed with hard and soft coral, in turn creating an abundance of schools of reef fish





Ponta Mamoli



such as Snappers, Big Eyes, Unicorns and Fusiliers. On the reefs you will also find Flame goatfish, Giant anglerfish, Paperfish, Frogfish and if you know where to look, a Pineapplefish. This site will also offer you the 'big things', like Devil rays, Potato bass, rays of all varieties, Morey eels and all the 'small things' such as Nudibranchs and shrimps. Mainly during the summer months, schools of Hammerhead sharks and Zambezi sharks can be seen on some of the sites. Turtles can be seen nesting from November to February and Humpback whales are common from July to November. Dolphins are frequent visitors on dives throughout the year, and the chance of a Whale shark encounter is not entirely out of the question. This dive site offers exclusivity to divers on unspoiled reefs.

Summer water temperatures: 21-27°C.

Winter water temperatures: 19-24°C.

Launch site:

The launch site is protected by a bay. The surf launch is usually quite easy with small waves, but as always, this is weather depending. The wearing of life jackets is compulsory with every launch from the beach. The launch site is within walking distance of the lodge.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Gear rentals
- Dive training
- Speciality courses

DIVE SPOTS

Boulders



Average depth: 25m

Maximum depth: 30m

Characterised by large boulder-type rocks rising out of a flat sandy bottom resembling an asparagus patch with scores of Garden eels, Boulders is one-of-a-kind. Sightings of the rare Longnose hawkfish hiding in the yellow Branched corals are almost guaranteed. The clear blue ocean boasts schooling fish of great variety,



shapes and sizes. Special mention includes the Malabar bass – easily confused with the Potato bass – enormous Honeycomb moray eels and Marbled electric rays which are frequently found in this area. The Emperor snapper is a new addition to the area, as is the Yellowfin soldierfish, hiding under one of the ledges. A ship's anchor and length of chain adds to the magic of this exceptional dive. A 'forest' of giant yellow tree-like Branched corals topped with waving Feather Stars, bright Purple sea fans and coral twigs never fails to impress divers.

G-Spot



Average depth: 17m

Maximum depth: 23m

Frequently raved about by visiting divers, G-Spot is an amazing dive site comprising of two large



amphitheatres carved into the reef and interlinked by a richly abundant section referred to as 'Scorpion Fish Alley'. The diamond-eyed Paperfish is always hiding in a dark spot, almost afraid to be seen. Below one of the ledges, a resident Potato bass usually hangs about in the water, and on top of one of the ledges, a Guineafowl moray eel sticks its head out as if greeting the divers. If you are interested in Nudibranchs, there are quite a few in bright luminous colours like orange, purple, white and red to be found on this reef. In the midwater, a school of Bluebanded snappers roam about and Angelfish and Moorish idols are to be seen in the vicinity. Rays, including graceful Eagle rays, Nurse sharks and turtles are frequently encountered. The coral life on this reef is in very good condition with various kinds to keep you busy, such as Table coral, Plate coral, Thistle coral, Brain coral, Pimple coral, Leather coral, Finger coral, Lobed soft coral and Leather coral to name just a few.

Amphitheatre



Average depth: 15m

Maximum depth: 19m

Amphitheatre is a sand patch encircled by coral and rocky walls with ledges and crevices inhabited by groups of Big eye. Reef life is rich with prolific





Ponta Mamoli

corals and an intriguing spectrum of invertebrates. This is Gobic and Partner shrimp territory where focused divers will be richly rewarded with a wonderful demonstration of the special relationship between these two creatures. Trumpetfish are reasonably common along with all the Angelfish species and juvenile Emperor angelfish. For those with sharp eyes, sightings of Painted anglerfish, Paperfish and Scorpionfish have been recorded. Long-range drift options from the Amphitheatre are numerous in moderate to strong currents. Devil rays and Mantas have also been spotted on occasion.

Paradise



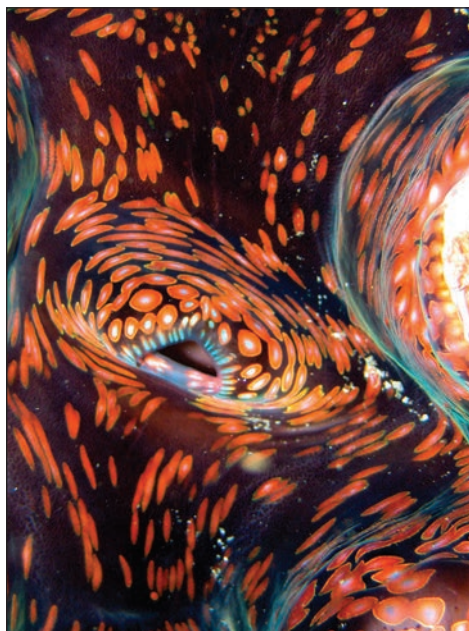
Average depth: 10m

Maximum depth: 14m

Paradise is situated next to an extensive sand patch. This is a discreet selection of extensive reef for an easy and relaxed ‘settling in’ dive, particularly where a strong current is prevalent. Rising out of the sand is a ridge followed by an amazing reef system that never appears to end. Moving out to sea, divers are engulfed in a coral paradise with rugged topography – towers, holes and overhangs adorned with an impressive array of invertebrates and fish. The shy Blue razor wrasse is frequently sighted in this area as well as a number of different Butterflyfish species.



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Turtles and rays predictably take sanctuary in the protected potholes where Cleaner shrimp stations are found with two huge resident Honeycomb moray eels. Divers can encounter the very shy Pineapple fish under one of the ledges. On one dive, a Golden moray eel stuck its head out from under one of the corals – this particular Moray was the first one of its kind spotted at Ponta Mamoli.

Mushroom



Average depth: 8m

Maximum depth: 14m

Enormous Plate corals, Turbinate corals with ‘fields’ of Staghorns and Leather corals, all in immaculate condition, create the backdrop for this scenically spectacular shallow reef. Jutting pinnacle rocks and an impressive ‘mushroom’ formation are interspersed with gullies and

overhangs. Flame goatfish and Snappers grace the setting while Kingfish often come around and surprise the divers. Painted rock lobsters, clams and a plenitude of anemones inhabited by aggressively defensive Two bar and Nose striped anemone fish add to the appeal of this unspoiled reef.

Idols



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 15m

Idols is located quite close to the bay at Ponta Mamoli. This reef is a series of rocky outcrops interlaced with sand patches with fish and coral completing the picture. On the sand patches, look out for big Sharpnose stingrays lounging on the sand. This area is known for all the various types of Nudibranchs and Flatworms found on and around the reefs, as well as the oversized Porcupinefish usually found underneath one of the ledges. Various reef fish, such as Parrotfish, Idols, Masked coachmen, Pufferfish and Scorpionfish are in abundance. Also keep an eye



out for eels, such as the Geometric moray, and Lionfish that are also found in this area. Coral such as Fleshy soft coral, Lobed coral, Table coral, Mushroom coral and Pulse coral are found. For its size, this is a really busy reef.

Playground



Average depth: 8m
Maximum depth: 12m

This reef is extraordinarily rich in diversity with an abundance of marine life. Playground offers an idyllic shallow dive – a real treat in good conditions. This reef has various overhangs with the central focus a large cave which provides the perfect resting place for pregnant Ragged-tooth sharks between the months of December to March. Congregations of Fusiliers, Big eye, Stumpnose, Soldierfish and Beardman are commonly seen, with big Chubbs darting in and out of rock cavities and tunnels. Huge Honeycomb stingrays, Sandsharks and Nurse sharks often visit the reef together with Kingfish and King Mackerel. For macro connoisseurs, a myriad of fascinating invertebrates are on hand – the master of disguise, the octopus, as well as an impressive variety of colourful Nudibranch and Eggshell cowries.

Pinnacles



Average depth: 28m
Maximum depth: 45m

Diving on the edge of a continental shelf with sharks! On some days there are hundreds of Hammerheads, Zambezi and Dusky sharks, not to mention large game fish and Manta rays. Sometimes you will be able to see the large Potato bass that keeps a watchful eye on the pinnacles.



Ponta Mamoli



With a limited bottom time you will do a great part of the dive as a big blue. Always remember to check your surroundings as you never know what will come to inspect the divers in the water. Summer is the ideal time to dive this reef, and it is best to do this dive early in the morning if you want to witness the sharks. For experienced, advanced divers only.



Fish Basket



Average depth: 17m
Maximum depth: 21m

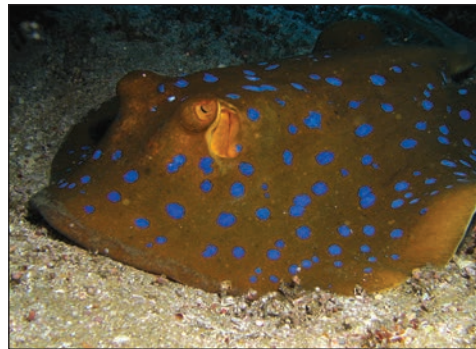
The scenery at this reef is similar to that seen at Bass City – a huge bean-shaped rock that has scattered rock around it with sand in between. There is not much coral growth on this reef but the fish life is plentiful. Schools of Dusky sweepers, Glassies and Snappers are common sightings, and around the main rock all sorts of rays can be seen. On the reef you will find small overhangs with cleaning stations and a number of Leopard moray eels which frequent these waters. This area is well known for its game fish and, if you are lucky, you could find a Guitar shark on your dive. This is one of the few places in Mozambique where you have the chance of spotting Seahorses and juvenile Frogfish.

Bass City



Average depth: 20m
Maximum depth: 23m

Made up of a series of five rocky outcrops covered with forms of algae, this reef attracts a vast amount of marine life. Appropriately named with the number of bass and basslet varieties found, Bass City is an awesome dive loved by those wanting to see lots of fish. The star attraction is a big Potato bass who accompanies divers down to the reef and remains with them for the duration of the dive, lapping up the special attention. Lionfish and eels are everywhere and a wide variety of rays are found. Batfish and Dusky Sweepers swarm around like bees often making it difficult to see any reef below. Boxfish in bright yellow with black spots, Garden eels, Tropical flounders and shrimp cleaner stations are in abundance. Frogfish, Pipefish, Red Anemones and Leaf fish make for an exceptionally interesting dive. A special highlight is a most unusual Harlequin shrimp with 'sandwich pack' Starfish close at hand to snack on. Leopard shark and the occasional Zambezi have been sighted here whilst beautiful Starfish as well as Feather stars are also found on this reef. The coral life mostly consists of small plants, seaweeds, sponges and Whip coral. There isn't as much coral here as on the other reefs, but this reef is exclusively for the fish lovers.





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Inhaca Island



Inhaca Island

GARMIN (WGS84) **S26 01.096**
E32 56.716

Inhaca is a small island approximately 37 kilometres east of Maputo. The island is surrounded by other small islands and has a small local village. There are two ways to get to this island – you can fly from Maputo or take a ferry from Maputo harbour (the ferry doesn't do daily trips). The climate in southern Mozambique is tropical, usually mild in winter and hot in the summer. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 20-35°C.

Winter land temperatures: 18-25°C.

Accommodation:

There is only one lodge that operates in this area.

Shops and service stations:

There are no shops or service stations on this island. It is advisable to take everything you need from the mainland.

Health and medical services:

Malaria is a small risk and therefore it is advisable to take the appropriate prophylactics. Speak to your physician or pharmacist to find the best options for you. Ask the locals about drinking the

tap water, although it is advisable to rather drink bottled or purified water. The closest clinics and hospitals are located in Maputo.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Snorkelling
- Curio shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

Diving:

Top class diving is available at this southern Mozambican island, with wrecks, pristine coral reefs and the sightings of various pelagic fish species available for both beginners and advanced divers. Diving is done around both Inhaca Island





and some of the smaller surrounding islands. With visibility between 10 metres and 30 metres and the fact that you are the only divers in a 100 kilometre radius, Inhaca offers some of the best coral reef diving in the Mozambique Channel.

While visibility is not always as good as on the offshore reefs, marine life is still varied and plentiful. The fish life is virtually untouched and the reefs are unspoilt because of the low dive volumes. The diving is tide dependent and the best time to hit the waters is when tides are at their highest (you can then catch the tide on its ebb and drift a kilometre or more along one of the reefs). A fascinating experience for scuba divers is exploring the many shipwrecks in the waters. The coral life consists more of hard corals such as Staghorn, Plate coral and Green coral trees. There are also large schools of Moonies, Moray eel, Potato bass, Barracuda and Kingfish. Dolphins, whales, Whale sharks and Manta rays are also popular visitors during the summer

months and game fish in the area include Marlin, Sailfish, Tuna and Dorado.

Summer water temperatures: 21-29°C.

Winter water temperatures: 20-25°C.

Launch site:

The launch is done in front of the lodge followed by an easy boat ride to the dive spot. Surf launching is not required.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Gear rentals
- Dive training
- Speciality courses

DIVE SPOTS

Baixo Danae



Average depth: 16m

Maximum depth: 20m

This reef lies about 50 minutes from the lodge. Due to it being far out to sea and a double tank dive, it is reserved for more experienced divers. Baixo Danae is the name for the area and it has a selection of dive sites. The distance from shore means that the sites are rarely dived and have remained wild and untouched. It provides spectacular dives and there are many overhangs, swim-through's, caves and gullies to explore. There are also two sunken ships called the 'Boiler'





Inhaca Island

and the 'Wreck'. Very little is known about them which makes the sites even more interesting to explore. The chance of seeing Manta rays is very good while sharks, dolphins and turtles frequent the waters. The reef consists mainly of hard coral species which can withstand the currents and provide shelter to many tropical fish. From August to October the waters are full of migrating whales and the odd Orca has been spotted in the area. Baixo Danae is definitely a place worth diving.

Cockburn Shoal (Lighthouse)



Average depth: 14m

Maximum depth: 16m

Strong currents mean that this is another site only for advanced and experienced divers. The reef was formed in 1965 when a lighthouse sank during bad weather. This reef provides an excellent dive with large schools of fish swimming around and a huge resident Brindle bass that won't let you out of his sight. There are usually plenty of Kingfish, Barracuda, Surgeonfish, fusiliers, snappers and Bannerfish colouring the stunning blue water.



Hotel Reef



Average depth: 6m

Maximum depth: 11m

This reef is a five minute boat ride from the hotel and is often used for beginners and resort training courses. It is reasonably flat and the rocks are covered in marine growth, while the sand patches in between provide ample hiding spots for small tropical reef fish. Lobsters and Moray eels are easily spotted, but you will have to look a lot harder to find the Seahorses. The reef has more hard coral than soft and is home to various





and many other tropical reef fish. 'China' is the local name for Spadefish and for two months every year the reef is filled with thousands of them. The best time to dive this site is during high tide.

Coral Gardens Reef



Average depth: 7m

Maximum depth: 15m

Coral Gardens lies approximately ten minutes from the hotel and is similar to the Hotel Reef in that it is a favourite for beginner divers. The reef itself is a fairly easy and relaxed wall dive that is almost 400 metres long. It is covered with colourful soft and hard corals and plays host to many tropical reef fish. During a dive you will spot Surgeons, Damsels, Triggers, Goldies, Puffers, Banner fish and the ever-playful Parrotfish. Octopus and lobsters can be found hiding in crevices along the wall and Green turtles are often seen gliding through the waters.



Starfish and big-shelled slugs. The best time to dive this particular reef is between the tides.

Santa Maria Reef



Average depth: 14m

Maximum depth: 22m

This reef is approximately 35 minutes from the hotel and is reserved for advanced and experienced divers. The strong current that is present at some spots along the reef subsides as you move further along. The reef consists of a wall with big rocks covered in hard corals and a sandy bottom sloping down beyond 20m. Schools of reef fish, turtles, Eagle rays and Sand sharks have all been spotted in the area and the immaculate corals are home to Moonies and Kingfish. This reef should be dived at high tide or neap tide.

Banco de China



Average depth: 15m

Maximum depth: 20m

After a 15-minute boat ride from the hotel you will come across this reef that is strictly reserved for advanced divers. The currents are fairly strong and unpredictable and experience is required. The reef consists of big rocks with a sandy bottom and many caves and overhangs which mean the chance of coming across cleaning stations is a fair possibility. It offers stunning game fish viewing and an incredible variety of species such as Painted frogfish, Brindle bass, Green turtles, Surgeonfish, Barracudas, Ribbontail rays





Guinjata Bay



Guinjata Bay

GARMIN (WGS84) **S24 04.267**
E35 29.757

Guinjata Bay is situated approximately 25 kilometres south of Inhambane and 550 kilometres from Maputo. Just before you reach the town of Inhambane you take a dirt road for 20 kilometres which leads you to Guinjata Bay. It is possible to either drive or fly directly to Inhambane. The climate in this part of Mozambique is tropical, with mild winters and hot summers. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 20-35°C.

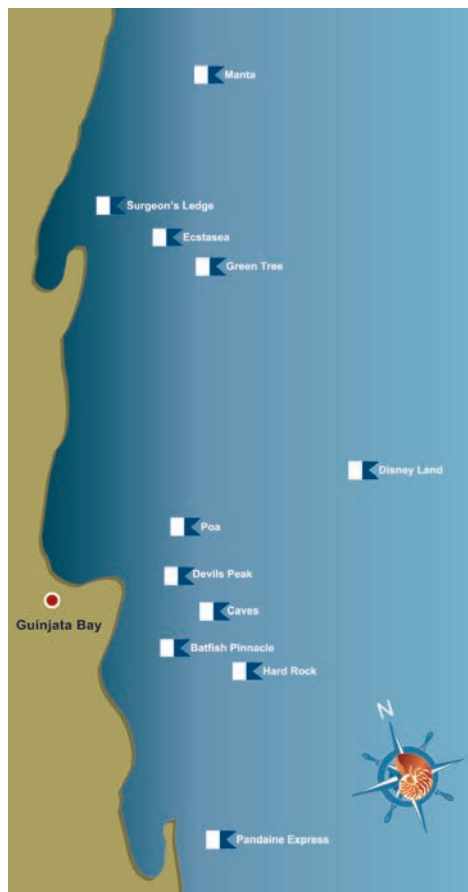
Winter land temperatures: 18-25°C.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in the Guinjata Bay area, including campsites, self-catering chalets, lodges, B&B's and dive camps.



Shops and service stations:
There are local dealers as well as diesel and petrol in Inhambane.



Health and medical services:

Malaria is a risk and therefore it is advisable to take the appropriate prophylactics. Speak to your physician or pharmacist to find the best options for you. Ask the locals about drinking the tap water, though it is advisable to rather drink bottled or purified water. The closest clinics and hospitals are located in Inhambane.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Quad bike trails
- Hiking trails
- 4X4 Trails
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Curio shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports



Diving:

For many years, Guinjata Bay was known for its great fishing grounds, but few people knew about the beautiful coral reefs. The area is rated as one of the world's top 10 dive sites and is a playground for Manta rays. When diving on Manta Reef, the graceful Manta's send a clear message – we are just visitors in this great ocean! The enormous rays can have a wingspan of up to 6m and a weight of up to 3 000kg! It's a great privilege to dive with the Manta rays and it is important to

remember that we should merely observe them and not disturb nature. We need to protect our dive sites as best we can.

Whale sharks can be spotted almost all year round, but the waters are heavily populated during the Mozambique summer months (end of October through to February). This dive destination has something for everyone, from big pelagic to small shrimps and is a haven for the underwater photographer.

Guinjata has some of the best-kept reefs and the variety will keep you captivated during your stay.

Summer water temperatures: 23-28°C.

Winter water temperatures: 20-25°C.

Launch site:

The launch site is protected by a bay. The surf launch is, weather depending, usually quite easy with small waves. The wearing of life jackets is compulsory with every launch from the beach. The lodges are within walking distance of the launch site.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Gear rentals
- Dive training
- Speciality courses

DIVE SPOTS

Manta Reef



Average depth: 18m

Maximum depth: 25m

This is a large reef featuring two ledges, running south to north. On the sea side is a dive spot known as Pinnacles and on the shore side a spot known as Manta Canyon. Between these two sites is a tabletop with a couple of Manta ray cleaning stations. The pinnacles reach up from the ocean floor to a depth of about 16m and feature rock formations, caves and swim-through's. The scenery on this reef is one of the



Guinjata Bay

most majestic in southern Africa as the reef lies untouched and unspoilt. The reef is situated in the main current and sightings of Manta and Devil rays are common. Three cleaning stations for Mantas have been identified and they flock to these stop-offs on a regular basis. Whale sharks, Whitetip reef sharks, Bow-mouth Guitar sharks and various pelagic fish are also seen in these waters. Vast shoals of reef fish, Honeycomb moray eels, Marbled electric rays and Triggerfish can also be spotted on this reef. Spanish dancers have even been seen swimming in broad daylight.

Surgeon's Ledge



Average depth: 13m

Maximum depth: 19m

The north side of this reef is flat, while the south side consists of large boulders, deep gullies and white sand patches littered with broken shells. This reef could easily be called 'Starfish Reef' due to the large numbers of starfish in every colour, shape and size imaginable. The small caves and overhangs provide protection for Red-fanged triggerfish, Pufferfish, Moray eels and Crayfish, while Greyspot guitarfish and Flounders can be found along the sand patches. Tropical reef fish, including Surgeonfish and game fish, are frequently spotted passing by. Other interesting creatures found along this reef include



Crocodile fish and the rare Longhorn cowfish. The coral life consists of an array of corals such as Thistle coral, Sea urchins, Whip coral, Smooth horned coral and Sea anemones. The reef is quite far from Guinjata Bay, but it is well worth diving.

Ecstasea



Average depth: 20m

Maximum depth: 30m

This reef has a plateau with steep ledges and deep crevices, as well as scattered rock formations and arches that form nice swim-through's. The ledge runs north to south and gradually deepens, reaching 55m in some spots. Triggerfish can be seen taking quick naps in some of the big hollows and the plateau is home to a cleaning station where Mantas pass along like giant flying carpets. Right on the edge of the plateau is a wall almost 5m high which is filled with fascinating creatures.





Andrew Woodburn

Various types of Nudibranchs, big Honeycomb moray eels and Devil rays pass by, while tropical reef fish play around on the reef. Scorpionfish and Crocodile fish lie camouflaged against the reef, and be on the lookout for Marlin passing by in the blue mass above.

different tropical fish. Various Manta rays, Devil rays, Barracuda, Yellow fin tuna and even Blue marlin have been spotted during dives. The marine and coral life on the reef is untouched and well preserved. Game fish can be expected in the midwater, so it is important to keep your eyes open. A variety of filter feeders are found on this reef, as well as many species of Sea urchin, Palmate sea fans, brown Smooth-horned coral, Leather coral and blue-yellow Sea apples.

Green Tree



Average depth: 19m
Maximum depth: 31m

When you dive at Green Tree you will be greeted by a wall 10m high, covered in green coral trees that will take an entire dive to explore. It is littered with gullies and caves which are home to the most interesting creatures. On a good day, one can view just about the entire ledge and its amazing scenery. There are more than 35 Green coral trees surrounded by Goldies and schools of

Disney Land



Average depth: 21m
Maximum depth: 36m

This is a rather flat reef with scattered rock formations grouped together. Deeper ledges and caves can be found near the ocean floor, waiting to be explored. When approaching this reef,



Guinjata Bay



divers must be on the lookout for large schools of tropical fish hanging around in the midwater. Big Honeycomb moray eels are also found lingering in the reef crevices and Green turtles are popular visitors to these waters. Corals include various colours of Whip coral, huge Green tree coral, sponges and Turret coral. Starfish of different colours, shapes and sizes can be spotted all along this reef. Quite a number of White-barred rubberlips, Blue-banded snappers and Old woman angelfish were also encountered on the dive. The odd Devil firefish also makes an appearance, just hanging around the rocks. Kingfish are always in the vicinity and take a good look in and around the Green coral trees, where Longnose hawkfish and the shy Shortspine porcupinefish hide from predators. Sharks have also been encountered on previous dives.

Poa Reef



Average depth: 15m

Maximum depth: 20m

This reef is shaped like a bread loaf and is surrounded by scattered rocks. The overhangs and caves are the homes of many interesting marine creatures and beautiful coral life. The reef has plenty to offer and the dive will be filled with a wide range of small marine animals such as Nudibranchs and shrimps. Paperfish and Painted anglerfish can be found hiding in the small caves and overhangs, while round Ribbontail rays can be spotted hiding under overhangs or camouflaged in the sand. Corals include purple Thistle coral, Pink-lobed soft coral, brown Leather coral, Mushroom soft coral and vast numbers of Sea anemones with Twobar anemone fish seen popping in and out as they protect their territory. This reef provides a relaxing dive but always be on the lookout for Whale sharks and game fish passing overhead.

Devil's Peak



Average depth: 14m

Maximum depth: 21m

This reef has two large boulders with a canyon running through them which provides a spectacular view of the reef. Although it is relatively close in, Manta and Devil rays are spotted frequently. There are large numbers of Cowrie shells, Crocodile fish and various kinds of Anglerfish resting in the holes on the reef. Cleaning shrimp in their thousands can be spotted along this reef. It is definitely the dive to take if you want to explore new marine life.



Caves



Average depth: 12m

Maximum depth: 16m

Caves is a dive spot with a large cave in the rock formation of the reef. It is quite long and has holes in the ceiling where light penetrates to light up the cave. A variety of sea life is found in the

cave which makes dives enjoyable as there is plenty to see and do while enjoying the amazing scenery. Schools of Longfin batfish can be found regularly, while Triggerfish, Crocodile fish and various types of rays are found nestling in the sand patches. Devil firefish and Scorpionfish are also residents of this reef along with various tropical reef fish such as Butterflyfish and Angelfish. The coral in the cave is predominantly hard coral, although a great number of urchins and Anemones are found here.



Batfish Pinnacle



Average depth: 12m

Maximum depth: 16m

This site lies 6m below the surface and is fairly flat with a pinnacle in the middle. The flat area is full of small gullies with a few sand patches in between. Schools of Batfish are a common sight around the pinnacle, while Triggerfish can be found taking a nap in the hollows. A number of Scorpionfish lie hidden and it takes a keen eye to spot them. Kingfish, Trumpetfish, Flutemouth fish and various kinds of Nudibranchs can also be seen. Whip coral, Staghorn coral, Plate coral



Guinjata Bay



Matthew D Potenski

and Fleshy coral cover the reef and it is a breathtaking sight to watch the tropical fish swimming around the pinnacle.

Hard Rock



Average depth: 14m
Maximum depth: 21m

Two big boulders surrounded by scattered rocks form this site, before the reef starts scattering away with sand patches filled with the most interesting sea creatures. One sight of particular interest is the wall-to-wall sea anemones that host Two-bar anemone fish. The outer edge regularly produces sightings of pelagics and larger rays resting in the sand. Divers should also be aware of numerous Devil firefish and Scorpionfish that lie camouflaged against the rocks.

Pandaine Express



Average depth: 17m
Maximum depth: 35m

Pandaine Express is a ledge that runs north to south, with a wall that starts at 4m and rises to 12m as the reef gets deeper. On this ledge you will find blowholes with caves and overhangs. This reef is known as the Pandaine Express as there is normally quite a strong current present. The wall hosts numerous Devil firefish, Honeycomb moray eels and Crocodile and Scorpionfish that lie camouflaged between the rocks. Pelagics can be spotted regularly, as well as large numbers of Cleaner shrimp. Porcelain, Natal and the shy Hermit crabs are also found along this reef. Corals include Gregorian sea fans, Leather coral, Whip coral, colourful Thistle coral and plenty of Sea anemones.



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Praia da Barra and Praia do Tofo



Praia da Barra and Praia do Tofo

GARMIN (WGS84)

Praia da Barra S23 48.840 E35 32.189
Praia do Tofo S23 51.283 E35 32.715

Praia da Barra and Praia do Tofo are both situated on a huge estuary just off the town of Inhambane. You can either drive or fly to Inhambane, which is situated 500 kilometres north of Maputo, and from there drive approximately 20 kilometres to Praia da Barra and Praia do Tofo. The climate in southern Mozambique is tropical, with mild winters and hot summers. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 20-35°C.

Winter land temperatures: 18-25°C.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in both Praia da Barra and Praia do Tofo, including campsites, self-catering chalets, lodges and dive camps.

Shops and service stations:

There are local dealers in Inhambane where diesel and petrol are also available.

Health and medical services:

Malaria is a small risk, so therefore it is advisable

to take the appropriate prophylactics. Speak to your physician or pharmacist to find the best option for you. Ask the locals about drinking the tap water, although it is advisable to rather drink bottled or purified water.

The closest clinics and hospitals are located in Inhambane.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za





Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Horse trails
- Quad bike trails
- Hiking trails
- 4X4 Trails
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Snorkelling
- Curio shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

Diving:

Praia da Barra and Praia do Tofo dive the same dive spots. You can book a dive charter from either of these destinations to take you to the reefs. Some of the reefs are closer in proximity to the two different launch sites. These dive spots offer world class diving in clear warm waters and cater for all levels of diver. Some of the dive spots are close to land while others are very far out to sea with the land only visible as a tiny speck. Underwater you will be greeted by a variety of

reef structures from flat reefs to coral bommies and spectacular swim-through's to gullies. The reefs are full of colourful tropical fish such as Angel, Butterfly, Surgeonfish and graceful Moorish Idols. Large yellow Trumpetfish and Triggerfish are found on most reefs. With Manta ray, Whale shark, Loggerhead and Leatherback turtle sightings guaranteed pretty much all year round, an added bonus is the probability of Humpback whales in the area during the months of June to October. This diving destination can be dived all year round with visibility up to 30 metres.

Summer water temperatures: 23-28°C.

Winter water temperatures: 20-25°C.

Launch site:

Praia da Barra's launch is done in front of the lodge. Occasionally a surf launch through small waves is required. Praia do Tofo's launch site is protected by a bay. The surf launch is usually quite easy with small waves.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Nitrox fills
- Gear rentals
- Dive training
- Speciality courses by prior arrangement

Amazon



Average depth: 20m

Maximum depth: 28m

This reef consists of a big rock formation with a wall along the one side and a flattened area on the other side with big gullies, hollows and crevices where a great variety of marine life can be found. On the reef itself big Honeycomb moray eels are found in the big crevices. Green turtles are often found sleeping underneath the overhangs and Manta rays with a wingspan of around six metres are seen flying through the water like magic carpets. Always be on the





Praia da Barra and Praia do Tofo



lookout for game fish passing by, such as grey Stumpnose and Barracuda. On the reef you will discover numerous Green coral trees with Painted surgeonfish hiding in between. Clouds of Goldies also surround the coral and in the crevices you will see tropical fish swimming in and out, hiding from predators. Whip coral, pink Thistle coral and Anemones are found all over this reef. This is a magnificent dive site which makes the long ride out worth your while.



busy performing their duties. In the midwater you could find Manta rays, Devil rays and Bull rays. There are also luscious green Whip corals and circular big Plate corals to be seen, along with Pink fleshy coral and Orange sponges.

Coloseum



Average depth: 23m
Maximum depth: 30m

This reef forms a huge amphitheatre with a wall around the side almost 10m high and ledges that drop down in layers. On this reef you could find huge Honeycomb morays and Guitar sharks on the sand. Potato bass and a colourful array of reef fish can be found, and in the midwater, Devil rays or Mantas are often seen. Also keep an eye out for game fish passing overhead. This reef is rich in both hard and soft coral in various colours and types.

Office



Average depth: 18m
Maximum depth: 27m

This reef has a flat part on the northern side and further on there is a part that consists of a few small caves and overhangs. A wall is also found which consists of hollows and crevices where small fish hide during the day. A Manta cleaning station on the flat part of the reef where Manta rays do a flyby and get cleaned by all the Cleaner wrasse is a highlight of the reef. Big Honeycomb moray eels and Shortspine porcupinefish are usually found resting in the crevices. The reef fish in this area are peaceful and aren't scared of divers. Great amounts of Rubberlips, Potato bass, Triggerfish, Goldies and wrasse are regularly spotted in the area. In the small hollows look out for Dancing cleaning shrimp and Banded shrimp

Anchor Bay



Average depth: 7m
Maximum depth: 10m

Being a shallower dive, the sun shining from above makes this an excellent site for underwater



photography. This reef consists of scattered rock formations, yet it is rather flat with sand patches in between. It is also known as Crèche Reef due to the amount of juvenile fish wherever you look – the bigger variations are present but it is the young ones that draw the attention. In the holes and under the rock crevices there will be a lot to keep you busy, for example Pufferfish, Blue spotted rays, octopus, Pepper eels and even a couple of Stonefish. Some of the encounters include Lizardfish, Boxfish, Clown triggerfish and all the other tropical reef fish seen in the warmer Mozambican waters. The coral consists mainly of Staghorn coral, lots of Porous corals, Sea sponges and colourful Anemones which are ever present.



Buddies



Average depth: 8m

Maximum depth: 10m

This reef consists of two rock banks that have a strip of sand in between separating the reef in some places. This is a nice dive for the beginner and is excellent for a night dive because it is close to shore and is relatively shallow. The tops of the reefs are broken but in between the crevices the reef is blossoming. There are lots of juvenile reef fish and some rare fish found in the small caves and overhangs. White paperfish, Brown rockmover wrasse and various kinds of Stonefish can be seen camouflaging themselves on the reef. Peacock mantis shrimp are seen in broad daylight and at night different kinds of crayfish, sea cucumbers and rare Tropical flounders are more than likely to be seen between the rocks. The coral is mostly broken, but to make up for that there are various kinds of Anemones and Polyp coral.

Barra Lagoon



Average depth: 3m

Maximum depth: 5m

Barra Lagoon is a sandy slope with patches of grass growing on it. The visibility is not normally great (between five and eight metres), but it more than makes up for this with its prized offering – seahorses well camouflaged between the sea grass. The area is basically a nursery for all sorts of strange and wonderful sea critters such as juvenile Broad barred and Devil firefish, Longhorn cowfish, Emperor angelfish, Paperfish and Pipefish. This area is shallow enough to spend the whole day exploring.



Praia da Barra and Praia do Tofo

Mike's Cupboard



Average depth: 12m

Maximum depth: 15m

This reef has small caves, overhangs and even a few arches with swim-through's. Some parts of the reef look like boulders stacked on top of each other with sand patches in between. This is a really busy reef with schools of Bluebanded snappers, Coachmen, Angelfish, Trumpetfish, Kingfish and Tuna passing by. In the holes you will find brown Paperfish hiding behind rocks and Scorpionfish, Crocodile fish and Lizardfish camouflaging themselves. The small caves are home to a whole lot of Banded shrimp and a big Pufferfish hiding from everyone. The coral on this reef consists of Whip coral in various colours, beige Fleshy soft coral, purple and white Thistle soft coral and lots of Lobed soft coral. Plate coral, Porous coral and Smooth-horned corals were also seen throughout the dive. This is an excellent reef for macro photography.

coral and Plate coral. The soft coral includes Porous coral, Anemones, Thistle coral and Fleshy soft coral. Be on the look out for schools of game fish passing by in the midwater.



Sherwood Forest



Average depth: 20m

Maximum depth: 30m

This reef looks like a huge rock formation planted in the middle of the sea floor with a few scattered rocks placed here and there. It has some ledges that form overhangs around three metres in diameter. There are also some blowholes situated on the one side of the reef. On top there are holes that host a number of Green coral trees, with Goldies swimming in and out. The one part of the reef tends to flatten to the southern side. This is one of the deeper reefs in the area, but it hosts the most amazing scenery which has to be experienced first hand. Huge Honeycomb moray eels, Black cheek morays and even Manta rays make an appearance on occasion. Blue spot rays, Devil firefish, Rockcod, Coachmen and a great variety of tropical fish can be seen here. Fire Gobies, as many as twelve together, have been seen huddled together in one spot. The coral ranges from Plate coral, Whip coral and Leather

Salon



Average depth: 18m

Maximum depth: 30m

Salon is a flat reef on top with ridges along the eastern side. There are some small overhangs that form small caves. This is a deeper dive for the more advanced diver. On the reef itself there is very little sea life, but on the sides along the edges most of the tropical fish hide in the hollows and small caves – the Triggerfish, especially, can be found sleeping in the hollows. Round Ribbontail ray and a Banded cleaner shrimp were seen in one of the many overhangs. Various types of Starfish and small crabs can be found on this reef, while the coral in this area consists of various kinds of hard coral such as Staghorn



coral to colourful Sea sponges. Soft corals include Anemones, Thistle coral, Palmate sea fans and Fleshy soft corals in various colours. Don't forget to keep an eye out for game fish passing through in the midwater.

Gaints Castle



Average depth: 21m

Maximum depth: 31m

This reef consists of a big wall almost four metres high with drop-off's that lead to sandy areas. All along this wall is a ridge that is rich in marine and coral life. Big rock formations add to the scenery of this reef. Diving this reef is a wonderful experience with a great variety of tropical fish to be seen. The rare Weedy scorpionfish often makes an appearance and amazingly blends in with the surroundings, while the reef also has a great variety of starfish species. Big Green coral trees are present where Goldies and Longnose hawkfish hide from the predators. On the plateau Manta rays surprise you with a graceful posture in flight. Under the ledges you will find Durban dancing shrimp waiting to perform their cleaning duties. In the crevices and hollows there are Triggerfish and different species of Moray eels. On this reef the coral is mostly untouched, from Porous corals to different species of hard and soft corals in a variety of colours and textures. Always keep an eye out in the midwater for game fish passing by.

Simon's Town



Average depth: 14m

Maximum depth: 18m

This reef has a really nice topography with deep gullies and holes that head off in all directions.

Huge pillars of rocks rise up eight metres from the ocean floor with a variety of marine life and colourful corals. Goldies and Wrasse are found all around as well as large shoals of Snappers, Fusiliers and Big eyes, Lizardfish, Flutemouth and Goatfish to name just a few. Look out for shoals of game fish such as Barracuda and Kingfish and Whale sharks when in season.

Chamber of Secrets



Average depth: 16m

Maximum depth: 21m

This reef is shaped like a horseshoe with eight metre walls on either side. On the sand part in the middle it is 21m deep with an average dive depth of 15m on the top of the reef. In the sandy





Praia da Barra and Praia do Tofo



found on this reef include Crocodile fish and Longhorn cowfish. Coral life consists of an array of corals such as Thistle coral, Sea urchins, Whip coral, Smooth horned coral and Sea anemones. This is truly a magnificent dive.

Manta Reef



Average depth: 18m

Maximum depth: 25m

This is a large reef running from south to north which features two ledges. On the seaside you will find a dive spot known as Pinnacles and on the shore side a spot known as Manta Canyon. Between these two sites is a tabletop with a couple of Manta ray cleaning stations. Pinnacles reach up from the ocean floor to a depth of about 16m and features rock formations, caves and swim-through's. The scenery is one of the best to be seen in southern Africa as the reef lies untouched and unspoiled. The reef is situated in the main current and sightings of Manta and Devil rays

area it is likely that you will see Bluespotted and Whip-tail stingrays. Morays occupy the areas under the ledges and overhangs and you will more than likely see Trumpet and Surgeonfish all around the reef. There is also an abundance of different reef fish to see on this dive.

Krakatoa Reef



Average depth: 13m

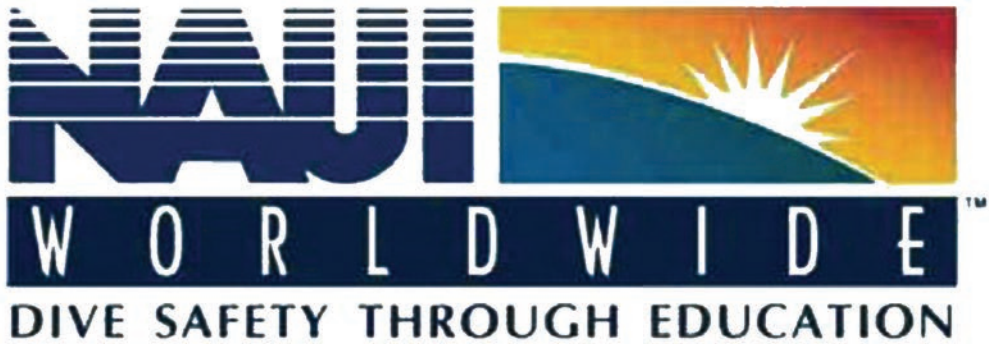
Maximum depth: 19m

The southern side of Krakatoa Reef has big boulders, deep gullies and a big rock arch with a nice swim-through. White sand patches in between the scattered rocks are covered with shells and other sea creatures lingering and watching the divers. In the small caves and overhangs you will encounter Redfanged triggerfish, Pufferfish, Moray eels or crayfish hiding away. Greyspot guitarfish and Flounders are usually found in the sand patches. Tropical reef fish are found here and game fish can be spotted passing overhead. Other interesting fish



are common. Three cleaning stations for Mantas have been identified and they flock to these stop-offs on a regular basis. Whale sharks, Whitetip reef sharks, Bow-mouth guitarsharks and various pelagic fish are also seen in these waters. Vast shoals of reef fish, Honeycomb moray eels, Marbled electric rays and Triggerfish can also be spotted on this reef. Even Spanish dancers have been seen swimming here in broad daylight.





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Vilanculos



Vilanculos

GARMIN (WGS84) **S21 59.707**
E35 19.126

Vilanculos is a coastal town 750 kilometres from Maputo. The town is on the mainland opposite the Bazaruto archipelago. You can drive to Vilanculos but flying there is a much better option. The climate in southern Mozambique is tropical, with mild winters and hot summers. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 20-35°C.

Winter land temperatures: 18-25°C.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in the area, including campsites, self-catering chalets, lodges, B&B's and dive camps.

Shops and service stations:

Like any city and town, a variety of shops are available. Diesel and petrol are also readily available.

Health and medical services:

Malaria is a risk so it is therefore advisable to take the appropriate prophylactics. Speak to your physician or pharmacist to find the best options for you. Ask the locals about drinking the tap water, although it is advisable to rather drink bottled or purified water.

There is a general practitioner, clinic and hospital in this area.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Quad bike trails
- Hiking trails
- 4X4 Trails
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Snorkelling
- Curio and coffee shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

Diving:

Diving in this area occurs mostly around the Bazaruto archipelago just kilometres away from the shore. With some dive spots far from the



launching site, a day trip is normally done which includes two dives. Some of the dives are done on the southern point of Bazaruto and some on other islands such as Cabo Sao Sebastian in the south.

All the sites here are unique and breathtaking in their own way. The corals and topography of the reefs are beautiful with an abundance of tropical reef fish, Devil rays, Eagle rays, Batfish, eels and different types of turtles to be seen. Game fish are regularly spotted passing in midwater and you could also see Humpback whales, dolphins and Whale sharks on your dives. The mystical Dugong is also sometimes seen, but they are elusive and very shy. The fish do not seem to mind the divers – they just go about doing what they do. An abundance of different types of Surgeonfish as well as Butterflyfish are likely to be seen. Blacktip reef sharks are also a common sight on some of the reefs. The reefs are in pristine condition.

Summer water temperatures: 23-28°C.

Winter water temperatures: 20-25°C.

Launch site:

The launch is done in front of the lodge, where you walk out a few metres to the boat which is waiting in the calm, shallow waters. There is no surf or big waves to launch through, making it quite an easy drive to the dive spot.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Gear rentals
- Dive training
- Speciality courses by prior arrangement

DIVE SPOTS

2-Mile Reef

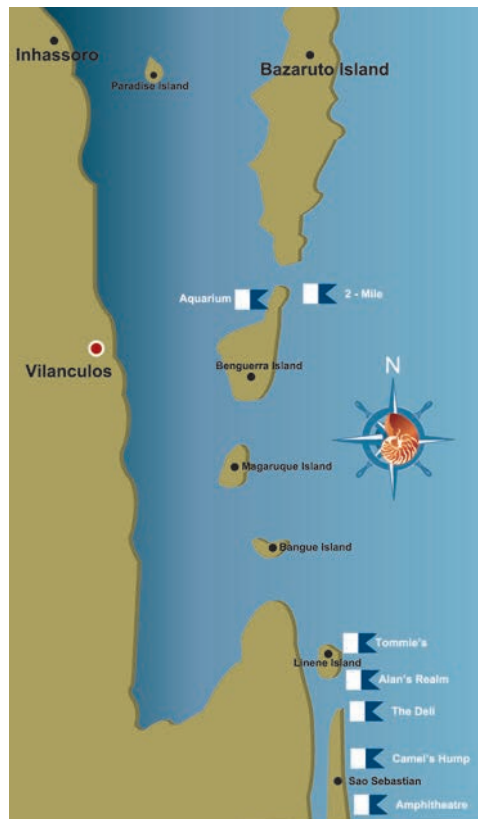
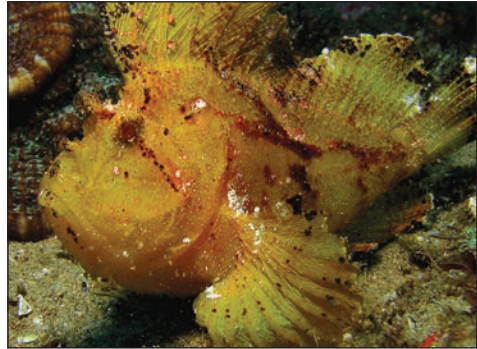


Average depth: 9m

Maximum depth: 21m

There's a good chance of seeing Honeycomb morays, Cow-nose rays and huge Potato bass and camouflaged Groupers keeping a watchful eye

over a myriad of reef fish at 2-Mile. Check overhangs and caves in the walls of the reef as you often encounter one of the six species of turtle hiding out there. Black-tip reef sharks,





Vilanculos

pelagics, Eagle rays, Devil rays and even a Brindle bass were spotted on a single dive. The coral consists of both hard and soft coral, notably beautiful Green coral trees.

Aquarium



Average depth: 5m
Maximum depth: 9m

This is a great snorkelling site and an ideal training ground or a place to just take it easy and watch the life on the reef pass you by. It is best encountered at low tide and offers a complete cross-section of reef life, from fields of Staghorn coral in the shallows to a curious octopus deeper down. This site is used for checkout dives and is a nice area for underwater photography.

caves to keep you busy. Mantas have been spotted on a regular basis, and there are a lot of cleaning stations manned by Cleaner shrimp. Hard corals dominate the coral life.

Alan's Realm



Average depth: 26m
Maximum depth: 37m

Drop down through the blue, passing schools of game fish including Barracuda, Kingfish and Prodigal sons. This site has it all, from large pelagics and curious Groupers to colourful Nudibranchs and huge Morays – all set amongst branching Green corals. Other visitors to this reef include Eagle rays, Manta rays, Guitarsharks, Snappers and Halfbeaks. The coral life includes Black coral, very long Whip coral and big Green coral trees. What's the catch? The currents can rage so you need to make a negative decent straight down and must be a confident advanced diver to dive at this site.



Tommies



Average depth: 8m
Maximum depth: 15m

This is a rocky hump-shaped reef with many hiding places for Morays and Crustaceans. It is also an ideal area for Scorpionfish. You have a good chance of seeing one or more of the species of turtle that reside in the Bazaruto Archipelago, and there are swim-through's, overhangs and





The Amphitheatre



Average depth: 16m
Maximum depth: 40m

Sweeping semi-circular rock walls provide the backdrop for big sharks, Mantas and Stingrays. Big shoals of Redfang triggers and Yellowtail snappers smother the walls of the reef and giant Honeycomb morays nestle in the rock with lots of Goldies around the crevices. Great scenery, colourful corals and caves on the side of the wall complete the picture. Groupers and pelagics such as King mackerel, Wahoo and Blood snappers are regular visitors to this reef.

The Deli



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 24m

The Deli is a large expansive reef which is flat in some areas with lots of gullies in between the coral where Honeycomb morays can be found. It is a good spot for sightings of game fish, Manta rays and sharks. Redfang triggers, big Groupers, Green coral trees, Whip coral, sponges and cleaning stations are found all along the reef.

Camel's Hump



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 40m

One side of Camel's Hump features a wall with caves and an abundance of Scorpionfish and Morays. There are very big potholes on the floor next to the wall which one can enter for a closer look at the walls. A multitude of Snappers and Big eyes will probably be found in the vicinity. The reef swings around in a semicircle one way and also forms a swim-through. Divers often encounter rays or turtles in the small area of the reef. The other part of the reef goes along in 'fingers' and is populated by Redfang triggers, Damsels and Surgeons. You may also see Manta rays and Whitetip reef sharks on this dive.



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Bazaruto Island



Bazaruto Island

GARMIN (WGS84) **\$21 31.463**
E35 28.999

Bazaruto Island is one of the biggest islands to be found in the Bazaruto archipelago, measuring approximately 37 kilometres in length and seven kilometres in width at its widest point. The island is situated 30 kilometres from Vilanculos. The archipelago was declared a National Park in 1971 and contains a wide diversity of ecosystems, including pelagic waters, coral reefs, white sandy beaches, tidal flats with associated grasslands, freshwater lakes, swamp forests, savannah grassland, vegetated bush and spectacular sand dunes on the eastern strip of the island. The only way to get to this island is by airplane. You can either drive to Vilanculos and then take a plane to Bazaruto, or fly to Vilanculos and then take a connecting flight to the island. The climate in



southern Mozambique is tropical, with mild winters and hot summers. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 20-35°C.

Winter land temperatures: 18-25°C.

Accommodation:

There are only two lodges that operate on the island.

Shops and service stations:

There are no shops or service stations on the island. It is advisable to take everything you need from the mainland.

Health and medical services:

Malaria is a risk and therefore it is advisable to take the appropriate prophylactics. Speak to your physician or pharmacist to find the best options for you. Ask the locals about drinking the tap





Bazaruto Island



water, although it is advisable to rather drink bottled or purified water. The closest clinics and hospitals are located in Vilanculos.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Hiking trails
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Snorkelling
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Gear rentals
- Dive training
- Speciality courses by prior arrangement

DIVE SPOTS

12-Mile Reef



Average depth: 30m

Maximum depth: 44m

Diving:

The dives at Bazaruto Island are all between 12 metres and 30 metres and are within five minutes boat ride from the shore. Exclusivity is the name of the game here; there are no other scuba divers or boats on the reefs. The reefs are pristine with an abundance of sea life. During winter months the visibility can reach beyond 30 metres with crystal-clear blue water. Divers here might encounter Manta rays, Spotted eagle rays, Blacktip reef sharks and Zambezi sharks to name but a few. The archipelago is also an important area for feeding Dugongs and nesting Leatherback and Loggerhead turtles. Marine animals to see in the area in the summer months include dolphins, Humpback whales and Whale sharks.

Summer water temperatures: 23-28°C.

Winter water temperatures: 20-25°C.

Launch site:

The launch is done a short drive from the lodge in a lagoon area where the boat is ready and waiting in the water. The launch itself has a bit of surf, depending on the tide.

This very big reef is 19km due north of the island. The reef consists of four sets of ridges starting at 27m and dropping off to 44m, with big caves and overhangs all the way down. There are big schools of game fish, and it is a good area to see Hammerhead and Silvertip sharks. Big Brindle and Potato bass are often encountered. The current is strong and only drift diving is possible. The site requires a one-hour boat ride and is only for experienced and advanced divers.

Brindle Bass



Average depth: 14m

Maximum depth: 18m

This is a very scenic dive with lots of caves, overhangs and swim-through's. There is usually a strong current and it is best to dive this reef at the turn of the high tide. As the name suggests, it is a



good site for Brindle bass and big schools of Snappers, Kingfish and Eagle rays are also often seen. Turtles rest under the overhangs and there are lots of soft corals such as Thistle coral, which look like small forests of trees.



Manta Ray Reef



Average depth: 14m
Maximum depth: 18m

This is a flat coral reef with a drop starting at 12m and ending at 18m. This reef has very little current and features lots of Plate coral and Sea anemones. Brindle bass, Green turtles, Jobfish, Neon fusiliers and big schools of reef fish are common and, in the summer months, there is a good chance to see Mantas and Whale sharks. Manta Ray Reef is an easy dive for beginners.

Potholes



Average depth: 10m
Maximum depth: 13m

This is a flat reef with five sets of potholes approximately 20m apart – each pothole measures around 20m in radius. The top is at 5m and the inside of the potholes goes down to 13m.

The dive is very scenic, with lots of caves and overhangs in the potholes. It is a good area to find Reef and Nurse sharks, while turtles and rays can be seen on a regular basis. This dive can only be done at low tide.

Rainbow Runner Reef



Average depth: 21m
Maximum depth: 27m

The reef consists of big sandstone boulders covered with colourful corals and big Green coral trees. There are lots of game fish overhead in the current, including schools of Tuna, Barracuda, Kingfish, Spotted eagle rays and some Zambezi sharks. Also keep an eye out for Stingrays hiding in the sand patches. In between the rocks you





Bazaruto Island

might find big Moray eels and Brindle and Potato bass. This is an advanced dive for experienced divers. Due to the strong currents you need to get on to the reef very quickly.

Turtle Ridge



Average depth: 12m

Maximum depth: 14m

This small flat reef starts at 9m and drops off to 14m. It is a very easy dive with little current. There are good sightings of Green turtles and big schools of reef fish, among them Parrotfish and Snappers. The reef hosts large amounts of Sea anemones and various Moray eels. This dive is excellent for beginners and photographers.

Greek Temple



Average depth: 14m

Maximum depth: 18m

This is a relaxed, scenic dive. The whole area looks like an old temple that is broken down with caves, overhangs and reef fish darting in and out of the holes. It is a good area to find turtles and Electric rays. The reef has very little current and is good for beginners, advanced divers and photographers alike. It is best dived at low tide.



2-Mile Reef



Average depth: 9m

Maximum depth: 21m

There is a good chance of seeing Honeycomb morays, Cow-nose rays, huge Potato bass and camouflaged Groupers keeping a watchful eye over a myriad of reef fish during this dive. Check overhangs and caves in the walls of the reef as you often encounter one of the six species of turtle hiding out there. Blacktip reef sharks, pelagics, Eagle rays, Devil rays and even a Brindle bass were spotted here during one single dive. The coral consists of both hard and soft corals and beautiful Green coral trees.



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Pemba



Pemba

GARMIN (WGS84) **S12 57 49.5**
E040 30 17.1

Pemba is the northernmost spot from which you can dive off the mainland in Mozambique. It is possible to drive there, but in all likelihood it would take you almost three days. It is approximately 240 kilometres south of the Tanzanian border, so flying would be your best option. The climate in northern Mozambique is tropical, with mild winters and very hot summers. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 20-35°C.

Winter land temperatures: 18-25°C.

Accommodation:

A variety of accommodation is available in the cities and towns around the area, including camp sites, hotels, self-catering chalets, lodges, back packers, B&B's and guest houses.

Shops and service stations:

Like any city and town a variety of shops are available. Diesel and petrol are also readily available.

Health and medical services:

Malaria is a risk so therefore it is advisable to take the appropriate prophylactics. Speak to your physician or pharmacist to find the best option

for you. Ask the locals about drinking the tap water, though it is advisable to rather drink bottled or purified water.

There is a general practitioner, clinic and hospital in this city.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Cultural tours
- Hiking trails
- Dolphin and whale watching
- Snorkelling
- Curio shops
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

Diving:

The dive sites are all fairly nearby and are generally within a 15 minute boat ride from the shore. Specific sites can only be dived during certain tides, but there are more than enough options to choose from to suit your needs and dive qualifications. There are few problems with the current at this dive destination and the average visibility is around 15 metres. Diving at Pemba is generally exclusive, thus the chances of



bumping into another dive group are fairly slim.

The dive sites are pristine, with an extensive variety of hard and soft corals, an abundance of tropical fish species, four species of dolphin and the most beautiful Nudibranchs. Whales are often spotted from August to October and there have been occasional Sunfish sightings, which must have been spectacular! One great advantage of diving in Pemba is the fact that they have seahorses in their tropical waters.

Summer water temperatures: 25-30°C.

Winter water temperatures: 22-27°C.



Launch site:

The launch to the dive sites is from the marina, only metres away from the dive centre itself, so there is no need to push boats into the water. It is then an easy ride to the dive spots.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Gear rentals
- Dive training
- Speciality courses by prior arrangement

DIVE SPOTS

Sailfish Tree



Average depth: 16m

Maximum depth: 46m

This site is located past River Mouth and is, at one hour from the launching site, one of the

farthest away. The reef is one of the best coral and fish dive sites around and the wide range of marine life won't disappoint. The dive starts on a coral bed and turns into a wall that drops down to about 46m. This is a great dive site to spot some huge Napoleon wrasse and game fish.

River Mouth



Average depth: 3m

Maximum depth: 24m

About an hour from the marina lies a reef in the mouth of the Tari River. It consists mainly of huge boulders the size of an average house where large Potato bass and giant Napoleon wrasse hide while shoals of game fish pass overhead. The site is packed with an array of tropical reef fish although the coral is sparse. It is only possible to dive at this site when it is high tide, due to the flow of the river greatly affecting the visibility.





Pemba

Beach Reef



Average depth: 7m

Maximum depth: 17m

This, one of the newly discovered reefs, is situated a little further up the coast from Willy's



Reef, making it about 20 minutes in the boat from the marina. The reef itself is best described as a gentle slope with a diversity of marine life, such as Butterflyfish, Pufferfish, Angelfish and various Triggerfish. The coral life consists mostly of soft coral but hard coral can also be seen.

Willy's Reef



Average depth: 10m

Maximum depth: 16m

This reef has a two to three metre high ridge on the one side which slopes down to a depth of 16m. Big Orbicular Batfish, small Blue-spotted rays and Floral morays have all been spotted amongst the hoards of tropical reef fish. Pods of dolphins are often encountered during the boat ride out to the reef.

Playground



Average depth: 4m

Maximum depth: 12m

This reef has huge overhangs and caves where Dusky sweepers, Goldies, shrimp and Firefish congregate. Crayfish are plentiful in the area





and camouflaged Scorpionfish await their prey. Unfortunately, this reef can only be dived during good weather conditions due to its proximity to cliffs. There is a resident pod of dolphin living in the region and they are always eager to come and investigate when divers are around. The popular Playground reef is approximately 20 minutes away from the marina.

gurnards and Scorpionfish. Various small reef fish hide in the Contoured coral, dashing in and out playfully. Another favourite of this dive site is the 'Valley of a Thousand Anemones', where we believe Nemo is still hiding from the press.

Ponta Saide Ali



Average depth: 2m
Maximum depth: 21m

This reef sits just around the corner from Playground. It has a huge bank of Clubhorn and Contoured coral that slopes from two metres all the way down to about 21 metres in depth. Divers can marvel at the sight of Flying

Boabab Rocks



Average depth: 5m
Maximum depth: 18m

This reef is made up of a string of boulders and rocks lying on a sandy slope. It is an abundant reef with tropical fish and beautiful coral life to amaze you throughout the dive. Crocodilefish, numerous rays and Flounders have been spotted in the sandy area along with the beautiful shells which cover the tranquil ocean floor.



Pemba

Penguin Shoal



Average depth: 8m

Maximum depth: 18m

Almost at the centre of the bay lies a reef consisting of large banks of Clubhorn, Contoured and Brain coral. It also boasts a spectacular Whip coral forest and some of the biggest crayfish in the area. Juvenile reef fish are spotted hiding in and under the hard corals along with a host of other smaller fish and crustaceans.

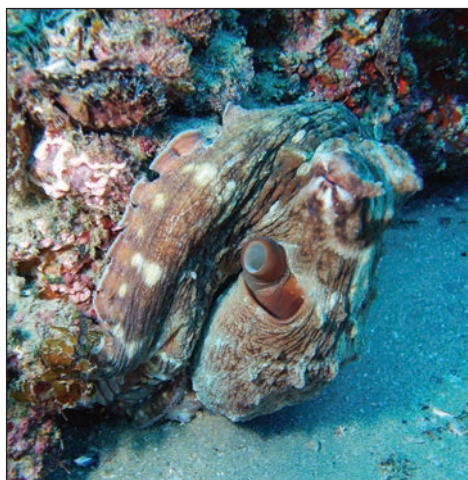
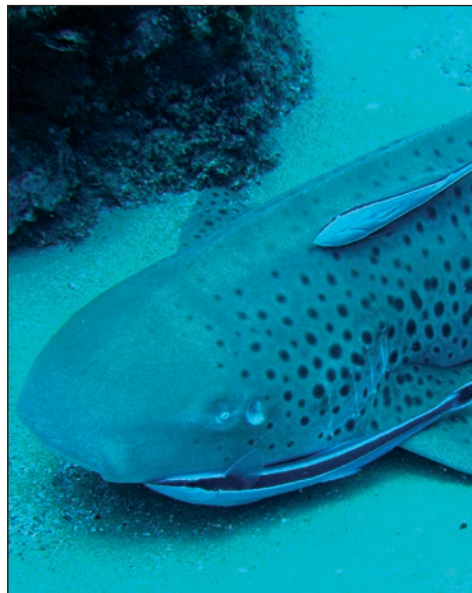
The Ranch



Average depth: 5m

Maximum depth: 8m

The Ranch is not a reef as such, but rather a sandy slope with patches of grass growing on it.



This spot is situated next to the port and it takes about 25 minutes to get there. The visibility is not normally great (between five and eight metres), but it more than makes up for this with its prized offering – seahorses. This is seahorse territory in Pemba and the dive has many other treats in store for divers – the area is basically a nursery for all sorts of strange and wonderful sea critters. Be sure to bring the camera along because tiny Anglerfish as well as baby Dwarf lionfish can be found hiding in the grassy beds. This area is shallow enough to spend the whole day exploring.

The Gap



Average depth: 12m

Maximum depth: 40m

The Gap is an area where the continental shelf comes very close to the land. It is approximately 600 metres offshore and you have an almost sheer drop off from 16m down to anywhere between 80 and 120m. Game fish swarm to this area and it makes for a rather beautiful wall dive with exquisite coral and sea fans.

Pyro Banks



Average depth: 5m

Maximum depth: 15m

This is a shallower reef where sea grass patches cover the one side and a wide selection of corals can be found on the deeper side. Small reef fish frequent the area but Paperfish in various colours



seem to be resident in the area. There is also a cleaning station on the reef hosting Durban dancing shrimps and Banded shrimps with their long white antennae. Razorfish are always found in the grassy patches and it wouldn't be strange to find seahorses here as well.

Farol Ledge



Average depth: 6m

Maximum depth: 16m

Situated just off the lighthouse at Ponta Maunhane and about 25 minutes away from the hotel is Farol Ledge. It is jam-packed with coral and a wide variety of tropical reef fish. There are many small underwater bays along the rock ledge, with cleaning stations and ample hideaways for crustaceans dotted all over. The reef is quite long and divers could do two separate dives to cover the entire site.



Matthew D Potenski



Matemo Island



Matemo Island

GARMIN (WGS84) **S12 11 49.5**
E040 33 42.7

Matemo Island, which is situated north of Pemba, is one of the islands in the Quirimbas archipelago. This island is surrounded by others which are home to local fishing villages and luxury lodges. The only way to get to this island is via airplane. The island measures eight kilometres in length and three kilometres in width. The climate in Northern Mozambique is tropical with mild winters and hot summers. Rain is frequent during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 20-35°C.

Winter land temperatures: 18-25°C.

Accommodation:

There is only one lodge that operates on the island.



Shops and service stations:

There are no shops or service stations on the island. It is advisable to take everything you need from the mainland.

Health and medical services:

Malaria is a risk and therefore it is advisable to take the appropriate prophylactics. Speak to your physician or pharmacist to find the best options for you. Ask the locals about drinking the tap water; although it is advisable to rather drink bottled or purified water. The closest clinics and hospitals are located in Pemba.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Dolphin and whale watching
- Snorkelling
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

Diving:

The main attraction of this part of the world is definitely the diving. The water sport activities centre is right on the beach, meaning no driving to the launch site. Most of the diving is done around the surrounding islands. The coral reefs surrounding the island of Matemo are bordered to the east by the coastline of northern Mozambique and to the west by the Mozambique Channel. These waters hold an astounding diversity of marine species and are all within close proximity to the resort. Dolphins are often encountered in the waters around the island and on journeys to and from the dive sites. Humpback whales on their annual migration are frequently sighted between August and October.

The reefs are pristine and untouched, with clear visibility and exquisite coral formations. The diversity in marine life and coral life makes this an underwater heaven for video recording and photography.

Summer water temperatures: 25-30°C.

Winter water temperatures: 22-27°C.

Launch site:

The launch is done in front of the lodge, where you walk out a few metres to the boat which is waiting in the calm, shallow waters. There is no surf or big waves to launch through, making it quite an easy drive to the dive spot.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Gear rentals
- Dive training
- Speciality courses by prior arrangement

DIVE SPOTS

Rolas



Average depth: 5m

Maximum depth: 7m

This site has numerous coral formations that have their own mini ecosystems. The white sandy bottom is home to Blue spotted rays, Flounders and Partner gobies. On this reef you will find Whip coral almost 4m long – a most unusual sight in waters this shallow. Fish species found in these waters include Wedge-tail triggerfish, Barred moray, Goatfish, Boxfish, Surgeonfish and Crocodilefish. This is also a great site for macro photography due to the depth and light.



The Die Spots of Southern Africa



Marlique Reef



Average depth: 24m

Maximum depth: 27m

This reef is made up of two small reefs that are divided by 20m of sand – the first sits at about 27m and the other at 24m. This reef has massive sea cucumbers and various types of Starfish. Both hard and soft coral can be found in the shallower parts, but in deeper waters you will only find the hard corals. Fish species found include Anenome fish, Valentine's toby, Circle-spine surgeonfish, Emperor angelfish, Butterflyfish, Blue spotted stingrays and various types of eels. On occasion, bigger fish such as Potato bass and Napoleon wrasse have been spotted.



Matemo Island

Rush Hour



Average depth: 16m

Maximum depth: 30m

On this site hard corals form a reef bank down to 22m. Spotted and Honeycomb morays hide in their coral shelters, while the waters are also home to Ribbon eels and Blue spotted stingrays. Large schools of Blue banded snapper and fusiliers will keep you company during your dive. The occurrence of schools of Barracuda, Kingfish and other pelagic game fish gave this site its name.



Cocoons



Average depth: 16m

Maximum depth: 18m

This reef is quite flat and was named after its abundance of giant Barrel sponges. Turtles are occasionally seen here, as well as beautiful Paperfish. These reefs are home to many types of Triggerfish, Surgeonfish and other tropical reef species. A number of cleaning stations manned by Cleaner wrasse, Durban dancing shrimp and Boxer shrimps are also found here. Big eyes and Eagle rays also frequent this reef.



Drop Off



Average depth: 15m

Maximum depth: 45m

This is a great adventurous dive, not always suitable for beginners due to strong currents during tidal changes as it lies in the channel. The visibility here is not as good as at the other sites,



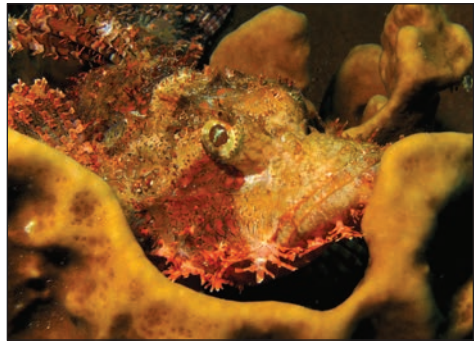
but sightings of 60kg Brindle bass, massive schools of Kingfish, Beardman and Barracuda make it an exciting excursion. Whip corals and large Green coral trees make this a very interesting dive.

The Wreck



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 19m

This site can only be dived during high tide and when sea conditions are extremely calm. The wreck is about 30m long and time has taken its toll by breaking up the vessel. Surrounding the wreck are schools of Rubberlips, Surgeons, Snappers and Dusky sweepers. Kingfish and the odd Green jobfish have been spotted around this wreck. It is also a great snorkelling spot, but only when the weather permits.



Ibo Point



Average depth: 12m
Maximum depth: 18m



This is a wall dive on the north-western side of Ibo Island. The wall starts high on the one side and slopes down to create a drift dive like no other. It can also be dived as two different sites as the wall is deep enough on the one side for an advanced dive up to 25m. This dive site has excellent corals which play host to many species of reef fish. Mantis shrimp, Nudibranchs, Hermit crabs and Cleaner shrimp can be found here. Dolphins frequent this point and are regularly spotted on the surface. Sightings of Barracuda, Kingfish and Napoleon wrasse are not uncommon and Marlins have even been spotted on this shallow ledge.



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Medjumbe Island



Medjumbe Island

GARMIN (WGS84) **S11 48 59.1**
E 040 36 15.7

Medjumbe Island is part of the Quirimbas archipelago and is the northernmost island that can be dived in Mozambique. The only way that you can get to the island is by air – a 45-minute flight from Pemba. Interestingly, Medjumbe Island is the smallest island that can be dived from in southern Africa.

Summer land temperatures: 20-35°C.

Winter land temperatures: 18-25°C.

Accommodation:

There is only one lodge that operates on the island.



Shops and service stations:

There are no shops or service stations on the island, so it is therefore best to take everything you need from the mainland.

Health and medical services:

Malaria is not a worry on the island. Ask the locals about drinking the tap water, but it is safer to rather drink bottled or purified water.

The closest clinics and hospitals are located in Pemba.

For more information about accommodation and dive charters at this dive site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Activities in and around the area:

- Dolphin and whale watching
- Snorkelling
- Fishing
- Variety of water sports

Diving:

The coral reefs surrounding Medjumbe Island are one of Mozambique's best-kept secrets. Bordered by the northern Mozambique coastline and the Mozambique Channel, these waters hold an astounding diversity of marine species with all the reefs within close proximity to the island. This island features phenomenal vertical drop-offs, some up to 400 metres. These walls are abundant with coral covered caves and tropical fish ranging





Medjumbe Island

from Goldies to enormous Napoleon wrasse and game fish, including Kingfish, Barracuda and Spanish mackerel.

Dolphins are often encountered around the island, as well as to and from the dive sites. Humpback whales on their annual migration are frequently sighted between August and October.

Summer water temperatures: 25-30°C.

Winter water temperatures: 22-27°C.

Launch site:

The launch is done in front of the lodge, where you walk out a few metres to the boat which is waiting in the calm, shallow waters. There is no surf or big waves to launch through, making it quite an easy drive to the dive spot.

Diving facilities in the area:

- Air fills
- Gear rentals
- Dive training
- Speciality courses by prior arrangement



DIVE SPOTS

The Wall



Average depth: 20m

Maximum depth: 800m

North of Medjumbe Island lies an over 800m deep and 7km wide channel called 'Laura's Leap'. This channel is flanked on the southern side by a vertical wall from which divers can experience the feeling of flight as the wall gives way as it plunges from 16m to the deep blue abyss below. This wall also features numerous overhangs and ledges for divers to explore. Grouper and schools of Sweetlips, Barracuda, Slinger and Pufferfish are found in the caves, as well as various cleaning stations manned by Durban dancing shrimp. Giant gorgonians filter the rich waters from the side of the wall and look like nets trying to prevent a fall into the abyss. Out into the blue waters, larger



species such as Napoleon wrasse, turtles and sharks are often seen. This is a world class dive that rivals any wall dive on the continent.

Sambi Sambi



Average depth: 10m
Maximum depth: 40m



This reef starts at 10m and slants dramatically on the eastern side down to over 80m. Lettuce leaf and other hard corals cover the slope in which juveniles and other small reef fish hide. The majestic Napoleon wrasse are usually found here and Chinese grouper also frequent the area. Graceful and shy Leopard sharks as well as Green and Hawksbill turtles are also regulars around the reef.

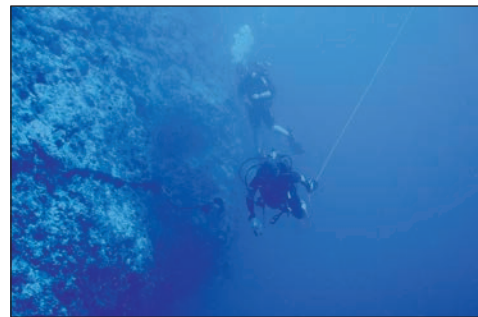
Brereton Contours



Average depth: 9m
Maximum depth: 23m



This reef consists of contours, gullies, outcrops and overhangs which form gentle ridges, with the wall gently sloping down from 9m to 23m. Lots of Devil firefish, Palette surgeonfish, Goldies, turtles and Paperfish are found in





Medjumbe Island



these waters. Unspoilt hard coral species, as well as Anemones and other soft coral colour up the reef together with the tropical reef fish. The top of the reef is exposed at low tide, warming the water significantly and creating a beautiful ambience. This reef is also ideal for macro photography due to the varied depths and the fact that there is almost no surge or sand patches creating backscatter. A reef to really enjoy!

as larger species such as Kingfish, Barracuda and Jobfish pass by overhead searching for food or a quick stop at one of the cleaning stations. Nudibranch and Mantis shrimp are spotted all over the reef and make for great photographs.

Not Pinnacles



Average depth: 16m
Maximum depth: 20m

This reef features an extensive coral plateau. Soft coral varieties dominate the area in a wide array of colour and texture. Vibrant Angelfish, Butterfly fish and Anthias, as well

Joe's Ridge



Average depth: 9m
Maximum depth: 14m

Joe's is a fringing coral reef that forms ridges interspersed with sandy patches. Here in the azure waters you will find resident reef fish such as Sweetlip, Pufferfish, Angelfish and Triggerfish. Turtles will often make a stop here on their way out to the deeper waters and Barracuda have also been spotted patrolling the area.

The Finest

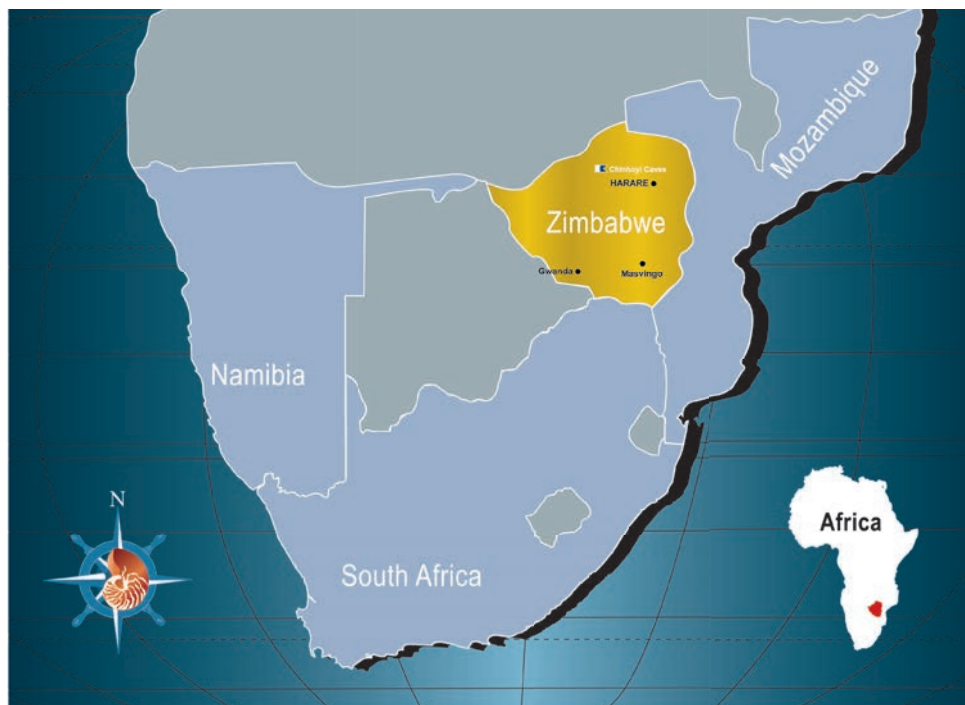
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Zimbabwe



Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe offers a variety and diversity of attractions, such as the Victoria Falls, three national parks and Lake Kariba, an inland sea that is over two hundred kilometres long and measures forty kilometres at its widest point. Zimbabwe, a landlocked country in south-central Africa, is bordered by Botswana on the west, Zambia on the north, Mozambique on the east and South Africa on the south. The country has a total land area of 390 580km² with a population of 12 236 805 (2006).

The first British explorers arrived in Zimbabwe in the 1850s, and the influx of foreigners led to the establishment of the territory Rhodesia, named after Cecil Rhodes. In 1923, European settlers voted to become the self-governing British colony of Southern Rhodesia with Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Nyasaland (now

Malawi). Southern Rhodesia (also known as Rhodesia) chose to remain a colony when its two partners voted for independence in 1963.

In 1980 the country held multiracial elections which Robert Mugabe won. Mugabe then established a one-party socialist state, but by 1990 he had instituted multiparty elections and in 1991 deleted all references to Marxism-Leninism and scientific socialism from the constitution.

In August 2002, Mugabe ordered all white commercial farmers to leave their land without compensation. Mugabe's support for the squatters and his repressive rule has led to foreign sanctions against Zimbabwe. Since 2000, Zimbabwe has experienced precipitous hyperinflation – by 2006, inflation had surpassed 1 000%. At the same time, unemployment was estimated to be more than 70%, and according to the World Health

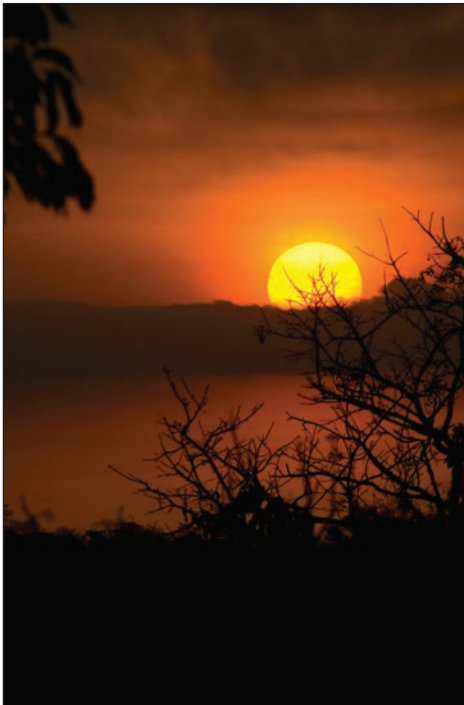
Organization, Zimbabwe now has the world's lowest life expectancy with the country facing severe food shortages.

Descendants of the Shona tribe make up more than 80% of Zimbabwe's population, while the Ndebele make up slightly less than 10%.

Zimbabwe's climate is generally very warm. The temperature rarely exceeds 33°C or falls below 7°C. Nevertheless, temperatures around 30°C are very hot, and are experienced regularly. Zimbabwe's summer runs from November to February with most of the rainfall occurring during summer.

Zimbabwe wildlife and plant life

Zimbabwe's national animal is the sable antelope, but the country is richly endowed with many species of mammal. Poaching has increased in recent years, but is still at manageable levels. Zimbabwe is home to approximately 650 bird species in 71 families.



Savannah covers most of the country, with the rainy summers giving generous assistance to the growth of trees on the plains, which is dominated by brachystegia. There is little true forest in Zimbabwe, however, as only near its eastern border with Mozambique and the savannah northwest of Bulawayo can the land be said to be forested. Baobabs are common in the Zambezi and Limpopo valleys.

Travelling tips

South African passport holders do not need a visa when entering Zimbabwe if the stay is less than 30 days. Before travelling to Zimbabwe make sure that you have contacts on the other side to arrange petrol and changing of currency.

The Zimbabwean unit of currency is the Zimbabwean dollar (Z\$), but foreign currency is widely recommended and accepted, with prices usually being displayed in US dollars.

All major credit cards are accepted at hotels, shops and restaurants, however, please note that



Zimbabwe



certain lodges and restaurants do not accept payment by Diners Club or American Express. Credit cards are not accepted at petrol filling stations.

Major hotels have foreign exchange facilities and most shops, lodges and travel agencies will accept traveller's cheques. Note that hotels usually offer a more favourable exchange rate than banks.

Health tips

Zimbabwe does not have a national health welfare scheme. It is therefore advisable to obtain medical insurance prior to your arrival. It is also wise to take along any medicines which you may require, since you will not have access to pharmacies in many of the areas you may be visiting. Medical services within Harare and Bulawayo are very good, but outside of these areas facilities are scarce. In some parts doctors often expect cash payment.

It is crucial that you obtain malaria prophylactics before entering Zimbabwe.

Avoid swimming in dams and rivers as the water may be infected with bilharzia. Tap water is available but it is recommended that you only drink bottled water. Avoid eating food which has not been cooked or peeled.

Safety

Crime in Zimbabwe is on a par with the rest of southern Africa – it can be a problem, but by taking the usual sensible precautions you should be safe;

- Never leave luggage unattended.

- Store valuables in the hotel's safety deposit box.
- Keep the door of your hotel, B&B room or chalet locked at all times.
- Always avoid ostentatious displays of expensive jewellery, cameras and other valuables.
- Do not carry large sums of money.
- At night, steer clear of dark and isolated areas.
- Find out about trouble spots at a destination.
- When driving, keep car doors locked and wind the windows up.
- Lock valuables in the boot of the car.
- Never give strangers a lift or pick up hitchhikers.

Diving in Zimbabwe

The only place where you are able to dive in Zimbabwe is the crystal clear, deep blue water of Chinhoyi. The caves are a system of limestone caverns and tunnels formed over millions of years by rainwater. This is one of the most beautiful dive sites in the world.

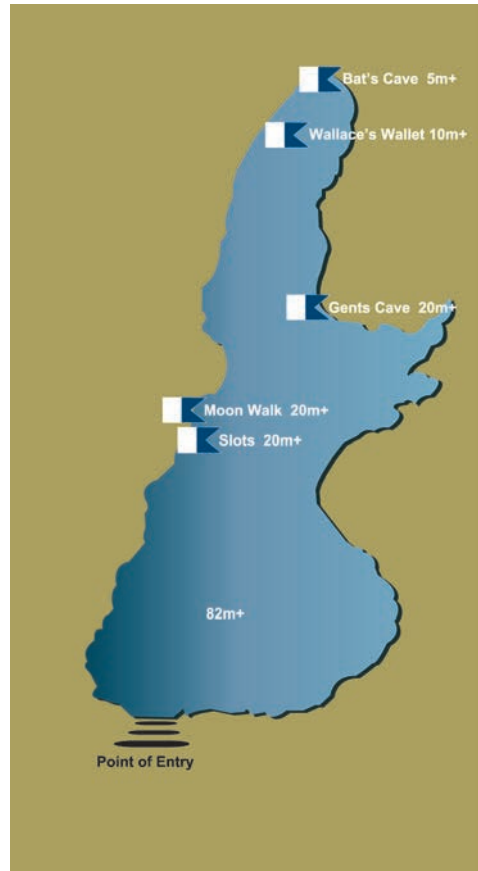




Chinhoyi Caves

GARMIN (WGS84) \$17 21.535
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Chinhoyi Caves can be found just outside the small town of Chinhoyi, 120 kilometres north-west of Harare. The traditional name of the town is Chirrodziva, meaning 'The Pool of the Fallen'. This name originated in the 1830s, when the Angoni tribe surprised the local tribe living near the caves and simply flung them over the cliffs and into the pool. The climate in this area brings cold winters and very hot summers. The little rain that does fall in this region occurs during the summer months.



Summer land temperatures: 20-35°C.

Winter land temperatures: 10-25°C.

Accommodation:

Camp sites with electricity and communal toilets are available at the caves.

Shops and service stations:

There are no shops in the area. The closest shops and service stations can be found in Chinhoyi where diesel and petrol are available.

Health and medical services:

Malaria is a risk, so taking the appropriate prophylactics is advisable. Speak to your physician or pharmacist about the best options for you. Ask



Chinhoyi Caves



the locals about drinking the tap water, although it is advisable to rather drink bottled or purified water. The closest clinics and hospitals are located in Harare.

For more information about diving at this site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Diving:

Crystal clear, deep blue waters make this dive site one of the most beautiful inland dive sites in the world. It is a dive site that caters for everyone from open water divers to the hard core cave and technical divers. The Sleeping Pool is believed to be 172 metres deep but the end of the caves have never been found.

The caves are elongated by a north-south fault zone further complicated by two or more other fracture directions and a weak bedding plane. It consists of a system of limestone caverns and tunnels formed over millions of years by rainwater. The Wonder Hole is a huge cavern where the ceiling collapsed leaving the sunlit Sleeping Pool open, 20 metres down vertical walls. Access to the Sleeping Pool is through an inclined passage leading down man-made steps.

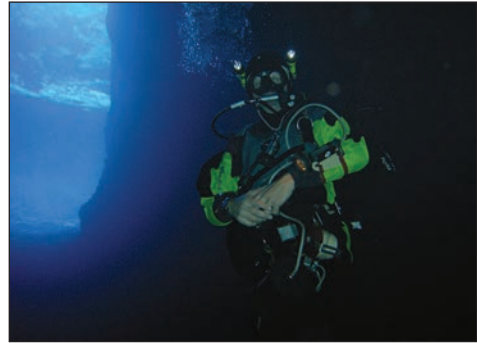
Dark Cave is a tunnel system on the western side of Wonder Hole, leading to the back of Sleeping Pool, where visitors throw coins down



for good luck. Divers can now dive and see the coins, many of which were tossed into the water during the Rhodesian era. Many human bones and remains of animals are visible in Sleeping Pool. On the shallower stops a variety of tropical fresh water fish can be seen.

Bat's Cave

This dive is for technical divers only and it is right at the back of the Sleeping Pool. When the water is high enough, one can swim over the rock at the end of the Sleeping Pool to enter it; when the water is low, you need to climb over the rock to enter it. It is very dark and you need to have the necessary qualifications and equipment to dive it.



Wallace's Wallet

This is at the back of Sleeping Pool where visitors throw coins down for good luck. Divers can see these coins from 3 metres down to 18 metres on the edges of the rock.

Gents Cave

Gents Cave is on the right wall of the Sleeping Pool as you enter the water at a depth of around 8m. Upon seeing the sign you will immediately know that this is Gents Cave! It goes down a very narrow vertical shaft that opens out again into the Sleeping Pool. Divers feeling up to it can go down and re-enter Sleeping Pool again.

Moon Walk

Situated on the left wall of the Sleeping Pool as you enter the water, 'moon walking' is done under an overhang where the rock is quite flat and straight.

Slots

Slots is a series of vertical passages at a depth of 16 metres, leading from the Sleeping Pool with openings at the bottom. It is quite narrow and if you look down a 'slot' you see, through the opening, the bluest water. Going down it, you enter the main pool again.

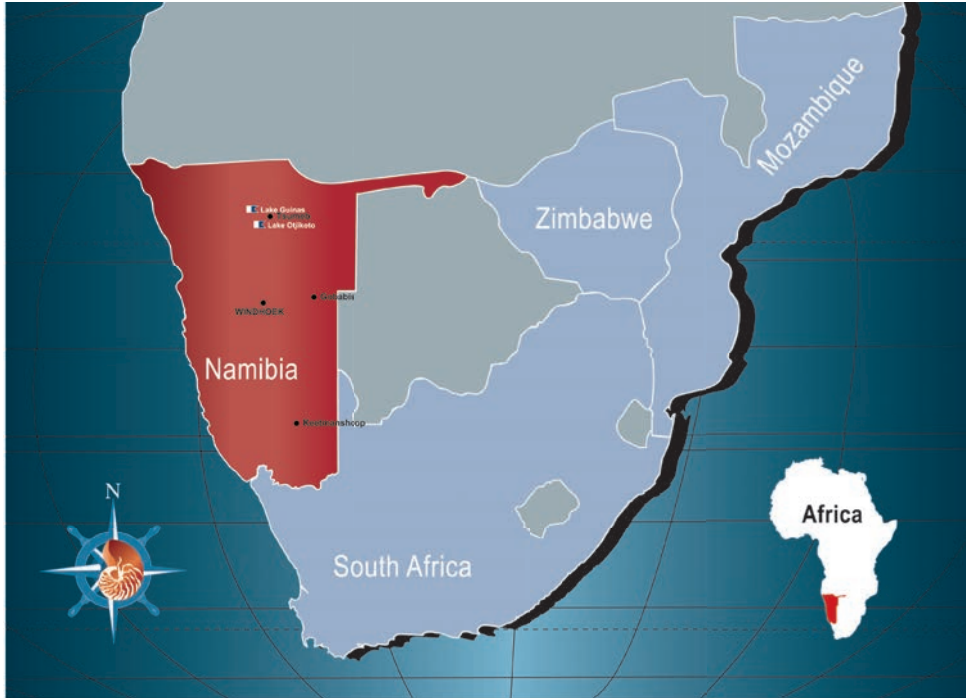
Summer water temperatures: 22-27°C.

Winter water temperatures: 19-25°C.

Diving facilities in the area:
There are no diving facilities on this site.



Namibia



Namibia

Namibia derived its name from the Namib Desert, a unique geological feature renowned for the pristine and haunting quality of its landscape. It is situated on the southwest coast of Africa and has a warm and dry climate with more than 300 sunny days a year. It is bordered on the north by Angola and Zambia, on the east by Botswana and on the south by South Africa.

In the late 15th century, the Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias became the first European to visit Namibia. Formerly called South-West Africa, the territory became a German colony in 1884. Between 1904 and 1908, German troops massacred tens of thousands of Herero, who had revolted against colonial domination. In 1915, during World War I, Namibian territory was taken over by South African forces. In 1921, it became a mandated territory of the League of

Nations, under the administration of South Africa.

South Africa handed over limited powers to a new multiracial administration in 1985. Installation of this government ended South Africa's direct rule, but South Africa retained an effective veto over the new government's decisions. Finally, in 1988, South Africa agreed to a plan for independence. Sam Nujoma, leader of the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO), was elected president, and in March 1990, Namibia achieved independence. In 2004, Germany issued a formal apology for the massacre of the Herero people.

Namibia has a typical semi-desert climate – hot days and cool nights. Winter runs from May to September, with the summer months comprising October to April. Mid-summer temperatures can

rise to over 40°C, while winter days are warm but dawn temperatures may drop to freezing. Along the coast it is cool with low rainfall and fog prevails from late afternoon until mid-morning. The rainy season lasts from October to April with the rest of the year tending to be dry and cloudless.

With a population of just two million (2005) in this huge country, there are thousands of square kilometres that are uninhabited. The official language is English and all documents, notices and directional signs are in this language. German and Afrikaans are also used throughout the country, along with numerous African languages and dialects which fall into two main groups: Bantu and Khoisan.

Namibia wildlife and plant life

Large game species found in Namibia include elephant, rhino, giraffe and buffalo, as well as lion, leopard and cheetah. There are eight endemic mammal species – the black faced impala, gerbils and bats – while the Namib Desert





Namibia



is well known for dune-dwellers, of which there are 30 endemic species.

Endangered mammals include wild dog, black rhino, lion, puku, oribi and waterbuck. There are over 20 species of antelope ranging from the largest, the eland, to the smallest, the Damara dik-dik. A wealth of small mammals, including mongooses and jackals, can be found throughout the country, as well as the less common ant bear and honey badger.

For the enthusiastic birder, the vast variety of resident and migratory birds in Namibia can be exciting. Most bird species favour specific habitats above others and thus Namibia is blessed with a variety of birding destinations where the keen birdwatcher can satisfy their interests by sighting and recording new species.

Namibia has around 200 endemic plant species, 4 300 higher plant species and 422 grass species within the 14 vegetation zones. These range from several variations of desert vegetation to semi-desert, mopane, mountain, thorn bush, highland, dwarf shrub, camel thorn and mixed tree and shrub savannahs and the forest savannahs and woodlands of the north east. A desert plant that

has caused much interest amongst botanists worldwide is the living fossil, *Welwitschia mirabilis*, endemic to the Namib Desert and one of the oldest plants known to man. Lithops, also known as Stone Flowers or Bushmen's Buttocks, are one of the many small succulents that hide in the arid regions, as well as sensitive lichens.

Travelling tips

The national airline for Namibia is Air Namibia, yet British Airways and South African Airways also fly to Namibia. A valid passport is required to enter Namibia. (South African passport holders do not need a visa. Visas are valid up to three months from date of issue for stays of up to three months from date of entry).

International credit cards are widely accepted throughout the country, including most Government rest camps, hotels, shops and restaurants. The currency is the Namibian Dollar (N\$), which is divided into 100 cents. Notes of N\$10, N\$20, N\$50 and N\$100 are in circulation, yet South African notes and coins are also legal tender.

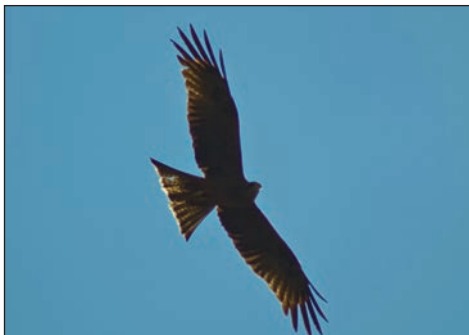
Windhoek offers a selection of fashionable



shops, while local crafts can be bought in some specialised shops, as well as at the Windhoek Street Market.

All water from taps is purified and visitors need have no hesitation in drinking it and electricity is run on 220/240 volts. Outlets are of the round 3-pin, 15 amp variety.

Non-residents are permitted to drive with a driving licence issued and valid in their own



country, provided it bears the photograph and signature of the holder and is in English.

Health tips

Malaria is found in some parts of Namibia with the highest risk falling between the months of October and May. It would be best to take adequate precautions if you choose to visit these areas. In addition to malaria prophylaxis, insect repellents and mosquito nets can be effective.

There are private clinics, hospitals and pharmacies in most large towns of Namibia.

Safety

Crime in Namibia is on a par with the rest of southern Africa – it can be a problem, but by taking the usual sensible precautions you should be safe;

- Never leave luggage unattended.
- Store valuables in the hotel's safety deposit box.
- Keep the door of your hotel, B&B room or chalet locked at all times.
- Always avoid ostentatious displays of expensive jewellery, cameras and other valuables.
- Do not carry large sums of money.
- At night, steer clear of dark and isolated areas.
- Find out about trouble spots at a destination.
- When driving, keep car doors locked and wind the windows up.
- Lock valuables in the boot of the car.
- Never give strangers a lift or pick up hitchhikers.

Diving in Namibia

There are not a lot of places to dive in Namibia. With the coastal region falling on the Atlantic side of Africa, diving in Namibia can be a very cold experience with almost zero visibility. Much of the diving in this country thus occurs at inland dive sites.

In the northern part of Namibia there is a chain of caves and sink holes where you can dive, yet some of them are impossible to dive whilst others are only for technical divers. One of the inland sites that stands out above all the rest is the well known Lake Otjikoto.



Namibia



Lake Otjikoto

GARMIN (WGS84) **\$19 11.700**
€17 33.157

Lake Otjikoto is situated approximately 18 kilometres from the mining town of Tsumeb, north of Windhoek. This site is world renowned for its underwater museum from World War I. The climate in this area is desert-like with cold winters and very hot summers. The little rain



that does fall in this region occurs during the summer months.

Summer land temperatures: 20-40°C.

Winter land temperatures: 10-25°C.

Accommodation:

Camp sites with electricity and communal toilets are available at the lake.

Shops and service stations:

There are no shops in the area. The closest shops and service stations are located in Tsumeb where diesel and petrol are available.

Health and medical services:

Malaria is a risk, so taking the appropriate prophylactics is advisable. Speak to your physician or pharmacist about the best options for you. Ask the locals about drinking the tap water, although it is advisable to rather drink bottled or purified water. The closest clinic and hospital is located in Tsumeb.

For more information about diving at this site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za

Diving:

During World War I, the Schutztruppe, the colonial armed force of Imperial Germany, were outnumbered and decided to throw in the towel in 1915. All the weapons that they didn't want to hand over were dumped into Lake Otjikoto.

The lake has, through the years, become one of the premier dive sites for the locals in Namibia with narrow steel staircases leading to the water.

There are only two areas to dive in the lake – a part of the lake known as The Reef that is shallow

and ranges between 26 metres to 35 metres, and then the deeper part where the cannons can be seen with an average depth of between 45m and 55 metres.

Otjikoto is shaped like an upside down mushroom, with the stem as the entry point and the sides featuring caves and overhangs. On the shallow dive you will encounter dumped features from toilets to Kudu horns, and if you go deeper under the overhang, a small boat can be found.

However, the dive that made Lake Otjikoto famous is the deeper dive to find the cannons. A chain will take you down to the exact spot where the cannons lie with their ammunition scattered around them. The silt on the bottom of this hole is almost 3 metres deep, thus most of the artefacts are buried under the silt. Don't let this discourage you though, as there is still a lot to see. Legend has it that the forces also dumped some gold bullion in the lake which is yet to be found.

Summer water temperatures: 20-25°C.

Winter water temperatures: 18-22°C.

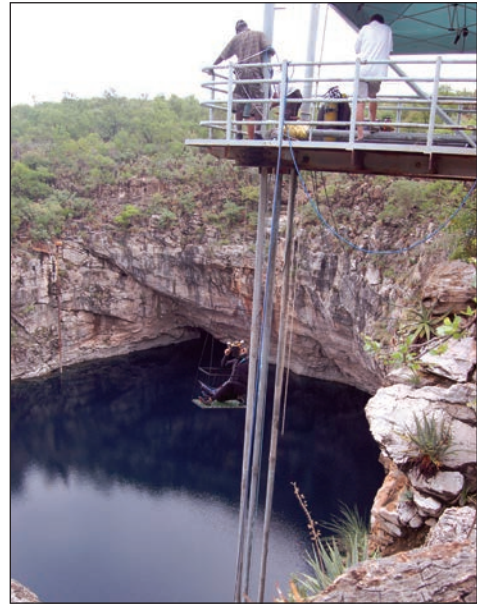
Diving facilities in the area:

There are no diving facilities on this site.





Namibia



Lake Guinas

Lake Guinas is situated 32 kilometres northwest of Tsumeb, past Lake Otjikoto. It is home to Cichlid fish (*Tilapia guinasana*), which are endemic to this lake. The climate in this area is desert-like with cold winters and very hot summers. The little rain that does fall in this





region occurs during the summer months.
Summer land temperatures: 20-40°C.
Winter land temperatures: 10-25°C.

Accommodation:

There is no accommodation available in the area.

Shops and service stations:

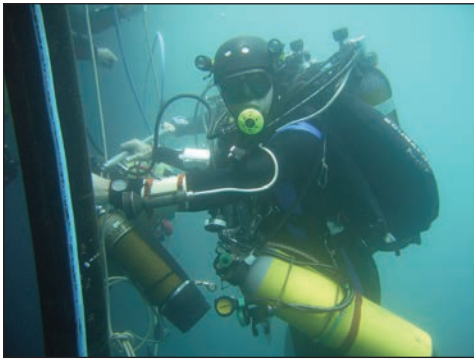
There are no shops in the area. The closest shops and service stations are located in Tsumeb where diesel and petrol are available.

Health and medical services:

Malaria is a risk, so taking the appropriate prophylactics is advisable. Speak to your physician or pharmacist about the best options for you. Ask the locals about drinking the tap water, although it is advisable to rather drink bottled or purified water.

The closest clinic and hospital is located in Tsumeb.

For more information about diving at this site, visit www.thedivespot.co.za



Diving:

The diving at Lake Guinas is only for technical divers. With 30 metres cliffs dropping into the still blue water of the lake below, the only way that you can get down is by climbing down the rock wall or via a small basket that is lowered from a water-pump station platform more than 10 storeys above the water.

The bottom of the lake starts at 110 metres and then slopes down into caves that fall to unknown depths. Visibility up to 30 metres and the possibility that artefacts dating back to the First World War can be found here makes this site very special. The bottom is surprisingly silt free and is strewn with rocks, sloping gently down into the caves.

Summer water temperatures: 20-25°C.

Winter water temperatures: 18-22°C.



Diving facilities in the area:
 There are no diving facilities on this site.



Environmental



Saving sharks before it is too late

Look out into the blue or green waters of the ocean and know that whether they appear tempestuous or tranquil, a war is being perpetrated in its depths. This campaign has the dual distinction of being both one of the most one-sided conflicts ever to occur, yet it is virtually invisible to our everyday lives.

The battle I speak of is the systematic eradication of sharks from our oceans by the practices of modern day fishing. Sharks still inspire fear in most people despite almost three decades passing since *Jaws* first hit the theatres. On average, only five or six people die from shark attacks every year, while it is estimated that at current rates of harvest, humans are killing just over 100 million sharks per year – that's 100 000 000.

Primitive sharks first appeared hundreds of years ago, and their sinuous forms have slipped through the blue while the terrestrial environment witnessed the rise and fall of the dinosaurs and the eventual rise of humankind. Their longevity is a testament to their success as a well evolved

and adapted group of organisms. They have proliferated into every marine environment available, from warm tropical lagoons, to the icy depths of the deep, and they are even found below the polar ice caps.

For millennia sharks have reigned supreme as the top predators in marine ecosystems, serving to regulate and control the entirety of the ocean's ecosystems. However, the ocean has a new supreme predator, one that is not a natural part of the marine ecosystem and, as a result, hunts indiscriminately and unsustainably. We have become the enemy of sharks, and by default, the entire ocean. Oceans need to have sharks to maintain healthy ecosystems, yet after eons of mastery by sharks, the waves are empty.

Why do we kill sharks?

The war on sharks is primarily due to a demand for their fins, which when boiled down form a stringy, gelatinous mass that is included in a bowl of soup. The fin adds no flavour, just texture to basic chicken or pork stock, and can sell for \$100-\$150 US Dollars per bowl in Asian restaurants.

Ordering and eating the soup is a status symbol – the equivalent of having a Ferrari in the driveway. I find it sad that we may effectively eliminate the top predators in the ocean simply to appease our sense of vanity.

Shark fins are so valuable that they have caught the attention of organised crime, and in illegal activity, shark fins are on a par with narcotics and gambling. The usual method for securing shark fins is every bit as brutal as a contract ‘hit’. Since the fins are worth much more than the flesh, the practice of ‘finning’ sharks is still utilised as a way to maximise profit. The shark is landed alive, gaffed (speared with a large hook) and dragged on board a vessel. Once there, several men descend upon the fish with large knives. It takes barely half a minute to hack all the shark’s fins off before they kick the still live carcass overboard. If the shark is lucky it will bleed to death quickly, but the more likely scenario is that without fins, the shark will slowly suffocate as it sinks to the bottom. The fishermen are not concerned with the carcass because it would take up the space in their holds that could be filled with more valuable shark fins.



Shark harvesting occurs in every ocean and almost all the fins are shipped to Asian markets for sale. Even the economics of the fin trade are quite atrocious, as the fishermen who risk life and limb to get the fins make pennies, while the fins pass through several middlemen and eventually reach markets where they command small ransoms. Killing sharks is not good for the oceans, but it also turns out that it is not very good for most of the people who work to kill sharks.

There is one final ingredient to the precipitous decline of sharks, and that is their biology. Sharks are what ecologists call ‘K-selective’ reproducers,



Matthew D Potenski

that means they have small numbers of well developed young that are well equipped to survive and thrive (as opposed to 'R-selective' reproducers who can have thousands or millions of eggs, of which a very small portion are able to survive). Sharks are slow growing, taking many years to reach sexual maturity and be able to reproduce. Finally, their reproductive potential increases with size (age) so that a newly mature mother can have, say two pups, a few years later she is able to have four pups and ten years after that she may have 10 pups. Fisheries usually target the largest individuals first, effectively taking the large, most reproductively viable mothers out of the population.

Sharks have evolved over time without a large amount of predation pressure and these strategies work well in a natural environment. However, when harvesting reduces a shark population it can be disastrous, as the shark population needs decades to be able to recover and bounce back to the original levels. Sharks are being over-harvested and the fishing pressure has not lessened. A study

conducted a few years ago based on catch data acquired from fisheries has shown on average a 73% decline in shark populations in the last 100 years. Sharks are truly on the brink, and without help will be pushed right over the edge and into extinction.

The solution

To effectively defend sharks from slaughter, their biology and behaviour need to be known and incorporated into any conservation plan. This is a bit of a stumbling block, as our knowledge of them is highly incomplete, with even basic life history parameters remaining blank spaces on a fact sheet. Right now, more initiative, effort and funding needs to be devoted to the study of sharks and their roles in the marine ecosystem. If we can truly comprehend the processes occurring in the oceans, then we can set a baseline to measure the extents of the effects of the deletion of sharks from the oceans.

Many groups are already working towards this goal, including The Shark Research Institute (SRI – www.sharks.org) based in the United States. SRI has started a multinational study of several shark species to help fill in the gaps. Biologists use direct observation, tagging and telemetry to determine shark population size, structure and movement patterns. Additionally, SRI played a part in a major shark conservation victory – the placement of Whale and Basking sharks on Appendix II of the CITES (Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species) treaty. SRI attempts to get people involved in shark conservation by running shark expeditions





Matthew D Potenski

to several locations across the globe.

Participants can help a shark researcher to gather data and be truly involved in the process of saving sharks. The average diver can help researchers in new and exciting ways. A great example is the online database dedicated to archiving Whale shark identification based on their spot patterns (which are as unique as human fingerprints). Now any diver with a camera can help research efforts by taking a photograph of the side of a Whale shark and uploading it to Ecocean at www.ecocean.com. As a reward for uploading a Whale shark picture, Ecocean keep you up to date on the status of your Whale shark via email. Once the image is spot mapped and added to the database you will be informed whether you have sighted a shark already in the database or added a new individual. Thereafter, if there are additional sightings of the same Whale shark, you will again be notified by email of the date and location of 'your' Whale shark.

There are many further ways to contribute to saving sharks. The most important way is to boycott shark fin soup and restaurants that serve it. Putting pressure on those restaurants to remove the soup from the menu can be successful. Due to a multitude of voices on an anti-soup petition,

Disneyland Hong Kong subsequently removed shark fin soup from its offerings. Public outcry has also eliminated the sale of shark fins through the popular auction website, Ebay. Nevertheless, these victories must only be seen as a start. Endangered species status and legislative protection of sharks must continue to be championed. Funding for scientific research is becoming harder to secure and private donations keep many projects alive.

Simply changing public perceptions of sharks could pay massive conservation dividends. The negative media image of the shark as a bloodthirsty killer needs to be buried once and for all and replaced with a more enlightened view as an elegant expression of evolution distilled into a graceful package of power and purpose. Stopping the war on sharks will not be easy, but armed with additional knowledge and public support it can be accomplished. The contingent to champion sharks is relatively small, but zealous and determined by the importance of their cause. The word is getting out and the support for sharks is growing, but we are in a race against time, and time is running short.

**By Matthew D. Potenski,
SRI Shark Biologist**

Diving medical emergencies

Divers are constantly exposed to the intrinsic risks of this sport and measures need to be put in place to optimise safety with every dive trip taken.

From the outset of this section of the book the following needs to be made very clear – this chapter does not replace the several great first aid and diving safety courses. It is also not to be regarded as a definitive textbook of diving medicine. We do, however, feel that the practical application of this book means that you might take it along on your travels to various dive sites and therefore, a medical reference section can be handy and make up for the skill and knowledge decay since your last first aid course.

Basic life support

Basic Life Support (BLS), or Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) as most people know it, is a skill that should be kept up and renewed annually. The effectiveness of CPR is already challenged by memory and skill decay and it would therefore be appropriate to encourage you to attend a practical training programme rather than relying on this theoretical section alone. Basic Life Support implies life saving techniques implemented during apparent ‘sudden-death’ or totally unresponsive patients. Advanced Life Support means that by means of medicines and technology, higher-level interventions are implemented by trained personnel to maximise recovery and survival of the patients. Please note that an integral part of BLS/CPR training is the activation or ‘early access’ to the emergency medical services (EMS).

H – Hazards – Ensure that it is safe for you to approach the person in need of assistance.

H – Hello – Assess the responsiveness of the patient through verbal, tactile or sternal rub methods.

H – Help – Contact the EMS.



A – Airway – Open the patient’s airway with the head-tilt, chin-lift method and look for obvious airway obstructions.

B – Breathing assessment – Check for any signs of breathing for up to 10 seconds.

C – Circulation assessment – Do so if trained to by feeling the carotid pulse in the neck for 10 seconds. If not trained to check for the carotid pulse or if it is hard to detect, a non-breathing and unresponsive patient is enough grounds for the commencement of compressions as per American Heart Association guidelines.

Continue doing CPR at 30 compressions to two breaths and re-assess the patient every two minutes or four cycles for any signs of breathing or circulation.

Continue with CPR until:

- The patient responds by coming around.
- The rescuer is too tired.
- The patient is declared dead.
- Someone higher trained relieves you.

In closing, for CPR to be effective it needs to be

done properly and as soon as possible. If an automated external defibrillator is available and someone is trained in its use, it should be implemented promptly as this could greatly enhance the unresponsive diver's chance of recovery from sudden death (no breathing/no pulse).

Pressure related disorders

Decompression illness (DCI)

To add practical value to this section, we will be focusing on what you will feel and, most importantly, what to do when you suspect DCI.

Let's first take a look at what you can expect to feel or feel like when you experience DCI. To provide some structure to the varied symptoms of DCI we will allocate them according to the various systems of the human body.

The body systems and related symptoms (what you as a rescuer will feel or see) are:

Central nervous system

- Cerebrum (Higher brain function) – Confusion, change in personality, impaired memory or cognitive function, below usual mathematical capability, loss of consciousness.
- Cerebellum (Small brain) – Impaired balance and coordination.
- Cranial nerves – Impaired sight, hearing, speech, sensation or function of facial muscles, weak shoulders.
- Spinal cord – Weakness of any skeletal muscles, loss of sensation, inability to distinguish between sharp and blunt, impaired bladder control, paralysis.



Lymphatic system

Swollen and tender glands.

Musculo-skeletal

Painful joints (elbows, wrists etc.).

Cutaneous

Patchy and blotchy skin patterns.

Pulmonary

Difficulty in breathing, coughing up of pink (blood stained) frothy sputum, tight feeling in chest on one or both sides, feeling faint, unconsciousness.

Audio-vestibular

Vertigo (disorientation, nausea, vomiting, staggering gait).

Please take note that these symptoms and signs can mimic a wide variety of medical ailments and despite the impact DCI will have on your diving plans, travel schedule and health, rather be safe and suspect DCI until proven otherwise by someone medically trained. Statistically, what a lot of divers do when experiencing any untoward feelings after a dive is to wait... to their own detriment! Generally, injured divers don't report their symptoms when they first appear, but rather only if the symptoms don't resolve. In fact, on average, only 35% of divers report their symptoms within the first four hours.

This does not include the time taken to get to a recompression facility – the statistics clearly illustrate trends of divers with suspected DCI only arriving at recompression facilities between eight





and 20 hours after the onset of symptoms. Note that in some cases, the access to remote chambers was a contributing factor. These delays don't always bode well for the prognosis of suspected DCI, especially if this happens in a remote diving location.

The sooner a diver reports any symptoms of DCI after a dive and receives oxygen first aid, hydration and ultimately receives recompression chamber treatment, the better the outcome.

Conversely, the longer the delay of implementing these definitive measures, the greater the likelihood of the following:

- More aggressive initial treatment measures being required.
- A greater number of chamber sessions required for the achievement of optimal symptom resolution.
- In some unfortunate cases, the likelihood of the diving physician concluding an injured diver's

hyperbaric oxygen therapy with some unresolved symptoms due to a diminishing therapeutic response (therapeutic plateau). This means that in some cases divers have been sent home with some unresolved symptoms.

Despite this section portraying a dark cloud, there is a silver lining – Divers Alert Network (DAN). Give yourself the benefit of the doubt and let the diving physician on-call make the assessment and diagnosis. Rather sacrifice the dive trip you're on than forfeit many others in the future. Although you might face evacuation and recompression chamber treatment, you are on the best road to optimal recovery and ultimately, a return to diving.

All that you, your DM, Instructor, skipper or dive buddy would have to do if ever faced with a diver suspected of having DCI is the following:

- After checking the ABC's, position the diver in a comfortable position, preferably in the left-lateral or recovery position.
- Administer 100% oxygen via a demand valve or free flow system with an oro-nasal mask as soon as possible for as long as possible.
- Give the diver a sports drink (balanced salt solution) or preferably water at regular intervals. Trained individuals can administer intravenous fluids.
- Call DAN for guidance for any other further first aid measures and to facilitate evacuation to a definitive treatment facility.
- If you are trained and you have time before handing the injured diver over to the next level of care, perform a basic neurological assessment which is a valuable diagnostic and patient monitoring tool.

In the meantime, until the day that you have to deal with your first DCI case you can do the following:

- A good start is to join DAN for your ultimate peace of mind. As an instructor you should sign up your students for the duration of their training and then encourage them to join up after certification.

- Enrol for the necessary diving safety courses to better equip yourself with the knowledge to deal with diving emergencies.
- Compile an Emergency Evacuation Plan for your planned diving destination or, if you are a dive operator, ensure that all your staff members are familiar with the details to prevent confusion (and unnecessary delay) during an emergency.
- Do not place a qualifying dive schedule or diving holiday before your health.
- Last but not least, practice safe diving principles – adopt a zero-defect mindset.

Omitted decompression

If compulsory decompression stops have been skipped, the following is recommended:

- Do not dive again on that same day.
- Have a restful day.
- If available, breathe 100% oxygen for about an hour.
- Hydrate very well – orally.
- Monitor yourself carefully for the onset of any possible symptoms of DCI.

Flying after diving

After much retrospective analysis, experimentation and research projects by experts in the field, the

guidelines are fairly well established. The guidelines used by various diving training agencies are as follows:

- For a single no-decompression stop dive – wait 12 hours before flying.
- For multiple dives over several days – wait 18 hours before flying.
- For compulsory decompression stop dives it is suggested to wait up to 24 hours before flying.
- For deep technical dives (beyond recreational limits) more than 24 hours would be the safest. Please note that for someone with suspected DCI a waiting period of several weeks is advised.

Diving after flying

When arriving at a new diving destination on a tight schedule, the normal inclination is to get diving as soon as possible. If the flight has been very long it is recommended that you wait at least one day to fully recover from the travel weariness and possible dehydration.

General diving problems

Dehydration

This problem deserves some explanation as it is not only a medical problem on its own but also a significant aggravating factor to DCI.



Different levels of dehydration:

Mild – The dehydrated individual will hardly notice the symptoms as the body is compensating quite well and they might only be a little thirsty and fatigued.

Moderate – The body is finding it hard to maintain fluid balances for all metabolic requirements. They will be fairly fatigued and the diver could be quite thirsty.

Severe – At this stage the body is very short of the cooling and lubricating properties that water offers, and several systems could shut down. Symptoms include the level of consciousness dropping, sunken eyes, reduced skin recoil (turgor) and shortness of breath.

Different ways divers can dehydrate:

Alcohol – The reason why beer (or essentially any alcohol) is not suitable for hydration is because alcohol is a diuretic. This means that alcohol (and caffeine too) stimulates urine production in the kidneys. It takes water from your body's cells and bloodstream to produce urine, and if not replaced, this can lead to mild or moderate dehydration.

Perspiration – Excessive perspiration during heavy exertion in hot humid conditions can be exacerbated by the wearing of thermal protection. Wearing a dry suit or thick wetsuit when diving in cold water during hot weather can also bring about excessive perspiration when you linger in the 'hot' suit before and/or after the dive.

Vomiting – This can be caused either by the irritation of the gastric mucosa (stomach) or triggering to vomit by stimulus to the Central Emetic Trigger Zone of the brain due to seasickness.

Diarrhoea – Caused by the intestinal tract drawing water from your body to flush out the colon as a response to the irritated (infected) mucous membranes.

Scuba air – High-pressure compressors remove excess moisture from the air which your body in turn humidifies again for optimal respiration requirements. Over the duration of a dive a significant amount of body fluids can be 'cashed-in' to humidify the scuba air.

Another area of concern for a dehydrated diver

is with suspected DCI. During DCI the bubbles can damage the inner linings of blood vessels, causing fluid (plasma) to seep through the blood vessel walls after which a secondary inflammatory response ensues. That is why it is very important to, apart from administering 100% oxygen, to hydrate the diver very well with a non-alcoholic, non-carbonated and non-caffeinated drink. Ideal hydration fluids are dependent on what's available, whether you are sustaining hydration or recovering from any one of the fluid loss mechanisms mentioned earlier. Obviously the best, cheapest and easiest way to hydrate is with fresh water. For sustained exertion where the aim is to not only replace water lost but also electrolytes, a balanced salt-solution such as one of the many sports drinks available would be sufficient.

Finally, preventing dehydration during recreational diving activities in a warm climate can be as simple as sipping regular gulps of water or your favourite sports drink throughout the day





– and then a bit extra after each dive. So, drink up and help your body and immune system cope better with the onslaught of the strange little bubbles and the dry scuba air.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia can develop rapidly in cold water, and early effects may include crucial loss of judgement and dexterity. Remember that although someone in deep hypothermia may seem to be dead, never make that assumption until the core temperature of the person is warmed to 36,5°C.

Signs and symptoms:

- Excessive shivering
- A cold body
- Numbness in certain body parts
- Blueness in the fingertips and lips
- Loss of coordination
- Irregular and/or very slow heartbeat

Treatment:

- Get the patient into dry, warm clothes.
- Give the patient warm fluids to drink (only if conscious).
- The patient can also be placed in a warm bath and hot water added until a body temperature of 36,5°C is reached. Then dress the patient warmly.
- If the patient is in shock remember to administer oxygen.
- If the patient becomes unresponsive alert the EMS.

- If the symptoms become worse go to the nearest doctor or healthcare facility.

Hyperthermia

Exposure to high ambient temperatures may lead to either excessive fluid loss and heat exhaustion or failure of heat loss mechanisms and ultimately heatstroke.

Signs and symptoms:

- Excessive sweating
- A warm body
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Headaches
- Vertigo
- Fatigue
- Red, dry skin
- A very rapid pulse rate (160-180 per minute)

Treatment:

- Get the patient to a cool area or in the shade.
- Give the patient cool fluids to drink.
- Keep the patient cool in a swimming pool or bathtub.
- If the patient is in shock begin oxygen first aid and start intravenous fluids if available.
- If the patient's symptoms deteriorate, alert the EMS or go to the nearest doctor or clinic.

Seasickness

For some people this is a necessary evil of diving, for some the reason why they don't dive any more or as often as they used to, or to others a slight inconvenience that they manage quite well. This condition and the specific remedy for you should best be discussed with your own GP. What is worth mentioning is that the best solution for motion sickness is to find out how you can best manage this inconvenience by:

- Analysing past experiences to try to determine your specific physical and mental 'triggers'.
- Finding the medication that works the best for you. You should find one that has the most effect with the minimal side effects.
- Do not dive deeper than 30m when you have been taking anti-motion sickness medication.



- ‘Behavioural modification’ – sitting on the most stable section of the boat, kitting up quickly, avoiding certain foods before diving and eating lightly.
- Avoiding alcohol the night before diving.

Drowning, near drowning and Salt Water Aspiration Syndrome

Drowning is covered thoroughly in all Scuba Rescue and First Aid manuals. All we are going to expand on is the one that appears to be the least severe – Salt Water Aspiration Syndrome. Most aquatic emergencies, no matter how severe the predisposing condition may have been, are only concluded on the autopsy table for the cause of death being ‘drowning.’ The cause of the drowning, however, could have been a severe Arterial Gas Embolism or a Stonefish sting causing the person to be overcome by an ‘unstable footing’ and the resultant inability to self-rescue.

‘Drowning’ by definition means ‘dead’. ‘Near drowning’ means that you have been plucked from the clutches of death although you could be in a critical state in an ICU or; walked away from it unscathed after a day in hospital for observation. The least dramatic and less severe condition of getting water into your lungs is Salt Water Aspiration Syndrome. This is where the salt water gets into your lungs by ‘inhaling’ small but frequent and significant amounts by means of a faulty regulator; the sea spray from wind caused by helicopter rotors or very windy surface conditions. The more severe effect might even be delayed as the saline rich sea water in your lungs

‘pulls’ water from your bloodstream into the alveoli, thereby compounding the problem by further hampering gas exchange in the lungs and bloodstream causing a tight chest, coughing and difficult breathing.

If medical interventions aren’t implemented early the consequences could be severe. Even if you were exposed to salt water inhalation and appear to feel fine, consider a thorough medical check-up and when the first symptoms appear, immediately, commence with 100% oxygen first aid and seek medical attention.

Hazardous marine life injuries

This part features the hazardous marine life that you will most likely encounter as a diver and swimmer in the sea. For those of you rooting for the sharks to be at the top position, sorry to disappoint but they are low down on the rankings. Hazardous marine life can be split in two different categories namely: stings and envenomations.

Stings:

These injuries happen when a diver or swimmer comes into contact with marine creatures such as Jellyfish, Stinging hydroids, Fire coral, Blue bottles (Portuguese Man-o-war), etc.

Signs and symptoms:

- Pain or burning sensation on the site of the injury
- Skin rash
- Nausea
- Vomiting

- Shock
- Swelling
- Difficulty breathing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Weakness
- Respiratory distress or arrest
- Cardiac arrest

First aid for stingers:

- Flush the area with salt water to remove stinging cells.
- Remove any remaining stinging cells with tweezers.
- Shave with a razor around the area or scrape with a sharp knife.
- You can also use household vinegar or a meat tenderiser on the wound to break down the stinging cells. (Do not use vinegar on the Man-o-war jellyfish stings).
- Apply hydrocortisone lotion or antihistamine ointment.
- If symptoms become worse, start oxygen first aid and contact the EMS or go to the nearest doctor or healthcare facility.



Envenomations:

These potentially life threatening injuries are extremely rare and normally happen when touching or handling marine animals such as Scorpion fish, Lion fish, Stone fish, Sea urchins or Cone shells.

Signs and symptoms:

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Puncture wound
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Shock
- Swelling
- Difficulty breathing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Weakness or even paralysis
- Respiratory distress or arrest
- Cardiac arrest

First aid for envenomations:

- Remove any objects with tweezers.
- Flush the wound with a saline filled syringe.
- Clean the wound with soap and water then apply a clean dressing.
- Immerse the infected area in hot water as hot as bearable by the rescuer (no more than 45°C) for 60-90 minutes.
- If the symptoms become worse, start oxygen first aid and contact the EMS or go to the nearest doctor or healthcare facility.
- If the patient is in shock administer oxygen first aid and start intravenous fluids ASAP.
- If paralysis of breathing muscles occurs, continue with rescue breathing until the injured diver can be placed on a ventilator.
- Contact the EMS or go to the nearest doctor or healthcare facility.

Emergency contact details

- Ambulance – 10177
(in most urban areas in South Africa)
- Netcare 911 – 082-911
- ER 24 – 084-124
- DAN – 0800-020-111.

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About the authors



Johan Boshoff has dedicated his life to scuba diving and marine life education around all of the world's oceans and is always eager to see what the big blue has to offer.

After Johan learned to dive and had seen God's wonders under the water, he decided to quit his job and to make scuba diving his full-time career.

He started diving in the late 1990s and today holds diving qualifications as a Course Director and a Cave and Trimix instructor. He is also a commercial diver. In 2000 he started a diving company called The Dive Spot to accommodate both training and his mission to dive all the dive spots in southern Africa. In 2008 he completed his journey and personally dived all the dive spots featured in this book. While he was on these trips he also developed a computer programme which hosts more than 3 000 photographs of marine life. This programme, www.marinlife.co.za, helps marine lovers and scuba divers to learn more about the spectacular marine life in and around the ocean.

Johan has been involved with a number of underwater television documentaries for local and international filming crews and is also an accomplished underwater photographer. In addition, he took over the editorship of the local diving magazine, *Divestyle*, in 2005.

Today Johan is still active in the diving industry, providing dive training and operating specialised dive tours.

Amilda Boshoff is a qualified ICU Nursing Sister who has always loved the ocean and all the beautiful creatures in it. During one of her diving courses she went on a trip to Sodwana where she accidentally became caught in Johan's buoy line. A year later they got married on a rubber duck at exactly the same spot where they had met.

She then obtained her instructors qualification and accompanied Johan on the journeys to the dive sites of southern Africa, helping to compile the Marine Life educational CD. Amilda is also an avid shell collector and over the last couple of years she has accumulated a variety of different shells from all over the world.

She is a freelance journalist and is an accomplished underwater photographer, but having a full-time job and being a mother, diving now has to fit in with the rest of her responsibilities. She is in love with the ocean, and scuba diving with her husband completes the love story.

This book is dedicated to our Creator.



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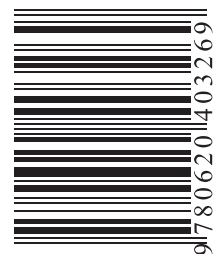
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R=Right L=Left T=Top B=Bottom M=Middle





The Dive Spots of Southern Africa is an indispensable guide for all levels of divers, broadening their horizons on places to visit and dive in southern Africa. Through extensive travel and diving, Johan and Amilda Boshoff bring you valuable information on over 300 dive spots in southern Africa. Important guidelines on each inland and coastal dive destination include accommodation, facilities, travelling tips and dive conditions. Complete with photographs and illustrated maps of each dive site, all reefs are star rated to cover depths, marine life and other essential information for the diving community.



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