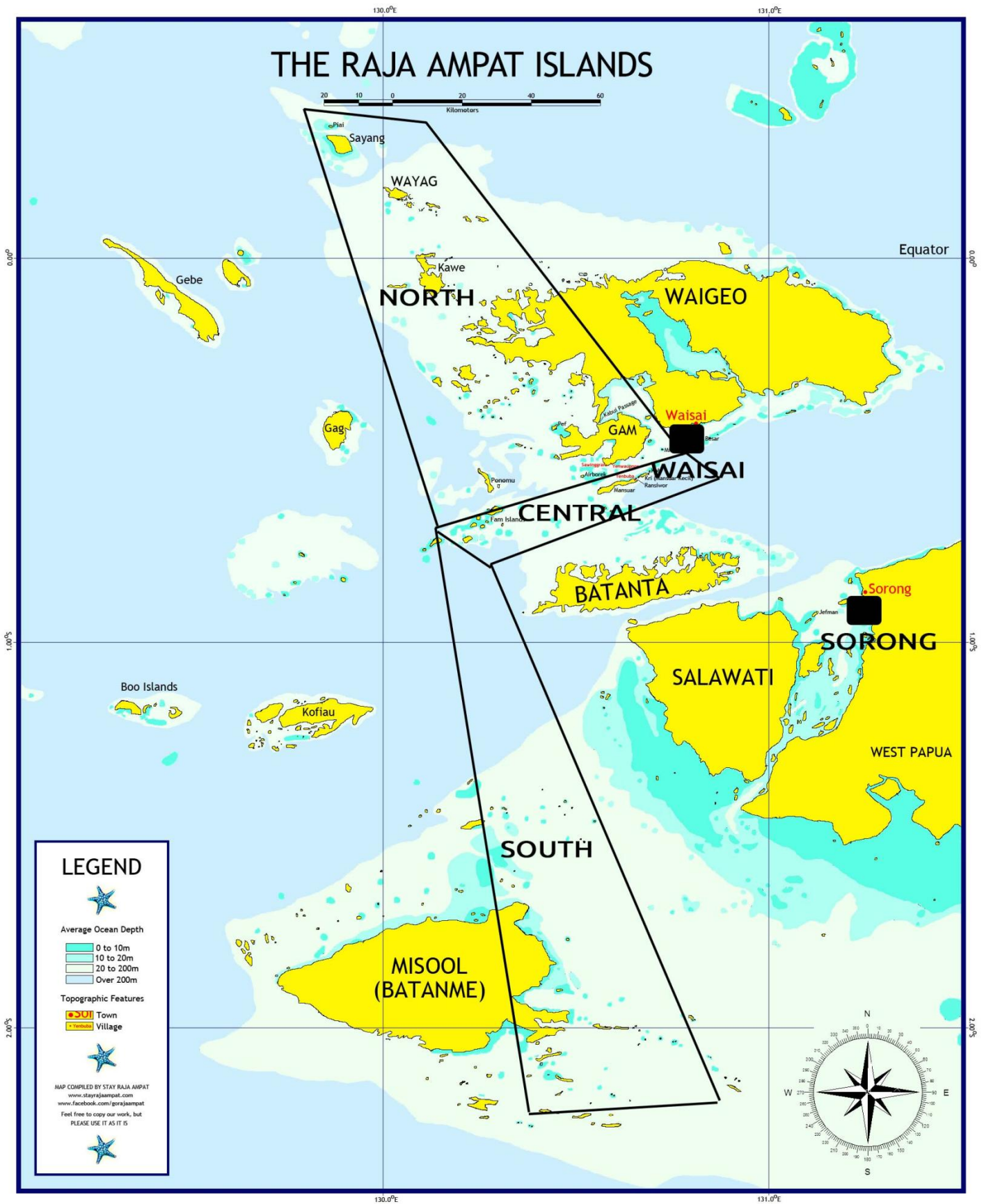


Raja Ampat (north+central) 11 nights/12 days





Cruise Summary

Raja Ampat, or the *Four Kings*, is an archipelago comprising over 1,500 small islands, cays, and shoals surrounding the four main islands of Misool, Salawati, Batanta, Waigeo and the smaller island of Kofiau. The Raja Ampat archipelago is the part of Coral Triangle which contains the richest marine biodiversity on earth. Raja Ampat is the place where coral species reach 75% of all known species and fish nearly 1,300 species. Raja Ampat is also a paradise for bird watchers. The Raja Ampat islands are a truly natural phenomenon with enormous biological diversity.

On this trip we concentrate on the northern part of Raja Ampat.

After Batanta and crossing the Dampier Strait, we reach the west coast of Gam and Waigeo. We are continuing with North-West course over Wake Island to Wayag.

Our way back with southeast course leads us to Fam Island, Mansuar Island and Kri Island. After crossing the dampier strait, we return to Sorong.



Day-1

Your flight will arrive in Sorong, coastal city in the eastern Indonesian province of West Papua. Sorong is the gateway to Indonesia's Raja Ampat Islands.

Day 2-12

If possible we offer 3-4 dives daily. When crossing only 1-2 dives a day can be scheduled. We reserve the right to change the itinerary or specific agreed services, if force majeure, unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances require us to do so.

Some of the destinations on our journey:

Sorong

is a coastal city in the eastern Indonesian province of West Papua. Its only land borders are with Sorong Regency. It is the gateway to Indonesia's Raja Ampat Islands, species rich Coral reef islands in an area considered the heart of the world's coral reef biodiversity. It also is the logistics hub for Indonesia's thriving eastern oil and gas frontier. Sorong has experienced exponential growth since 2010.



Batanta – the smallest of the “4 Kings”

is one of the four major islands in the Raja Ampat Islands in West Papua province, Indonesia. Its area is 453 km² and its highest point is 1184 m. The Pitt Strait separates it from Salawati, while the Dampier Strait separates it from Waigeo. Tourism is largely restricted to those staying at Batanta's single resort. This actually makes it an interesting choice for those keen to experience an undeveloped island with raw nature and people largely still not affected by mainstream tourism. The Batanta dive sites are classic “muck dives.”





Arborek Island

The island, which gets its name from a type of fruit that grows on it, is located at the western end of the Strait where it enters the Halmahera Sea.

It is a long thin island that runs east to west, with a large fringing reef and it sits right in the path of the Dampier Straits currents which split around the island at its eastern point and flow strongly around it's sides.

On the northern side of the island are two quite large wooden jetties just in front of the small village, and the rich waters of the Strait swirl around them creating a mini-ecosystem on the wooden structures.

Rich patches of vibrant soft corals have grown on the vertical piles of the jetty and resident schools of jacks and batfish patrol in between.





Wofoh Island

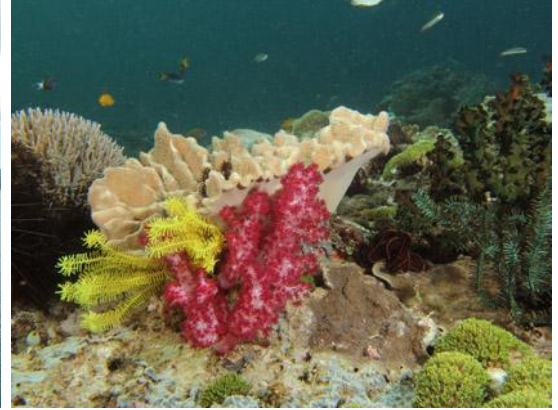
is an uninhabited island off the south-western coast of Waisai, an island in eastern Indonesia's West Papua province.

Wofoh is a great place for adventurers and explorers as it is uninhabited and undeveloped. This peaceful and quiet island is covered in lush vegetation and offers an abundance of natural scenery, as well as lots of high-quality diving spots in the waters surrounding it.



Alyui Bay

The clump of islands in the sheltered western bay of Waigeo offers a dazzling array of macro critters, one Raja Ampat's best muck sites. Walls full of seemingly electrifying fire clams, tiny shrimps & crabs, and a colorful array of nudibranchs. The nearby jetty of a pearl farm* offers more opportunity to spot magnificent macro critters such as ghost pipefish, blue ring octopus, and bobtail squid.



Kawe Island



Waiag Island

Wayag islands are Raja Ampat's best - the icon of Raja Ampat.

The Pulau Wayag seascape of conical karst islands is Raja Ampat's poster child. You won't see a tourism promotion or magazine article about Raja Ampat that doesn't feature the islands and their surrounding sapphire seas. The crystal clear waters around Wayag Island appear like unreal windows to various types of flora and fauna that live underwater.

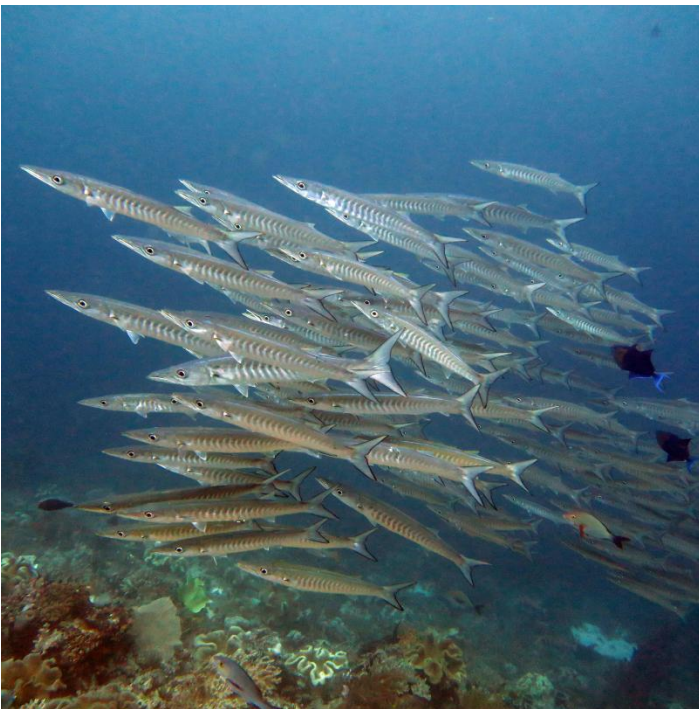
In October 2013 Wayag's traditional owners closed public access to the islands. Although some travellers still manage to make the journey, visiting Wayag has remained difficult ever since.



Fam Islands/Penemu

These islands are the very definition of paradise. White limestone cliffs plunge into the sea. Ultramarine blue lagoons are nestled next to monumental pinnacles and untouched beaches. There are many places that claim to be this beautiful, but this is the genuine article. Fam Island has some of the most beautiful coral gardens and walls in Raja Ampat, combined with stunning viewpoints on land.

With a little luck we can see the walking shark here. Yes, you can read it right now. The incredible epaulette shark is not only a perfect swimmer, but it can also "walk" between coral heads at low tide, along the seafloor, and even on land when needed. For that reason, it is often called the "walking shark."



Piaynemo is the correct local spelling of the name of the island marked on most maps of Raja Ampat as "Penemu". Penemu is about 60km (~40 miles) west of Waisai and has a karst island seascape almost indistinguishable from that of Wayag.



Dampier Strait

Physically the Strait is the large passage of water between the islands of Gam & Waigeo in the north and Batanta in the south, which takes its name from the English explorer-adventurer William Dampier who first charted the area in the 17th century.

The Strait is the principal channel through which the nutrient-rich waters of the Indonesian Throughflow pass through on their way south and the deep basins of the Banda Sea.

What that physically means is that the huge volume of water that is heading south through the Strait is forced into a smaller area and when that happens there is only one possible result – the water flows much faster producing possible strong currents the Dampier Strait is known for.

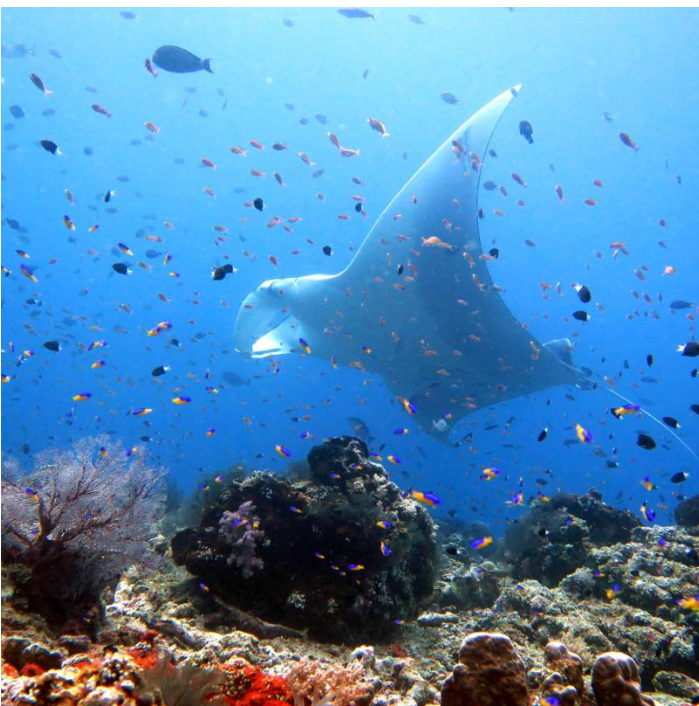
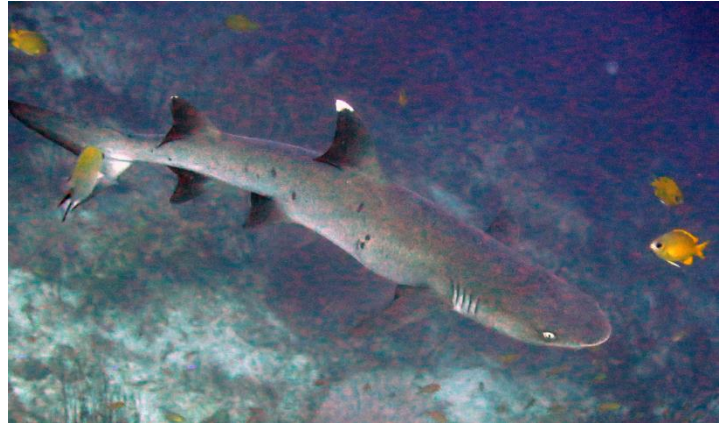
Mioskon

This small island is located on the northern side of the Dampier Strait. A superb site with numerous bommies densely coated in soft corals. The island is oval shaped and rises up from the surrounding sandy seabed plateau at 20-25m and its south-east tip faces in to the predominant current that flows through the Strait. On the shallow plateau reef is a good chance to spot large wobbegong sharks.



Mansuar & Kri Island

This site is where a world record fish count was made on the house reef. 284 species recorded on a single tank dive of 60 minutes, by Australian Dr. Gerry Allen. There are numerous reefs here where not just the diversity is evident, but also the quantities are surprising. Sharks are seen on most dives, a rarity in Indonesia. Kri island in Raja Ampat is where the fishes are to be found. Diving these sites is a sensational and very rewarding experience!



Day 11:

Final day of diving - our trip ends at the port of Sorong.

Day-12

Check-out after breakfast or lunch, depending on your return flight time.

We say good-bye to our guests and wish them farewell.

The MARI crew will organize the transfer to the Airport and assist at check-in for onward



flights.