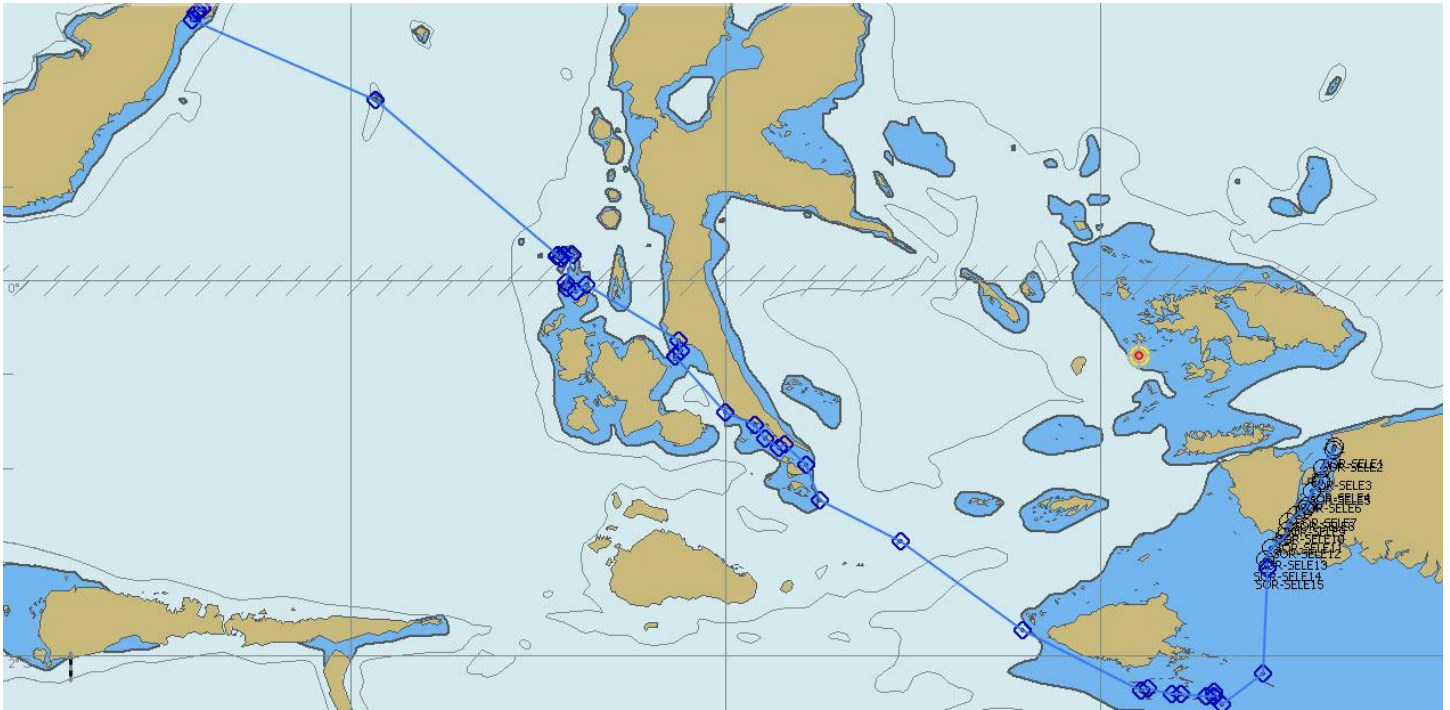


## Raja Ampat South & Halmahera Adventure 12 nights/13 days



### 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 are cruising with south west course to Misool, one of the major Island of Raja Ampat and later we will set course north west to Halmahera.

### **Halmahera**

is the largest island in the Maluku Islands. It is part of the North Maluku province of Indonesia and Sofifi, the capital of the province, is located on the west coast of the island.

The island of Halmahera, and its main neighbors of Morotai in the north and Bacan & Obi

in the south, sit right in the path of the Indonesian Throughflow – the phenomenal force of nature and life-source of the Coral Triangle.

Studies by Conservation International indicate that northern Indonesia, from Sulawesi to the western part of Papua, has what is probably the highest marine biodiversity in the world.

However a significant indicator of Halmahera's potency is the 2005 rapid survey that Dr. Gerry Allen, the celebrated coral reef fish authority, conducted in the south-western part of Halmahera and over 37 hours underwater at 28 locations, he recorded a total of 803 species of reef fish – compared to the 828 species he recorded in Raja Ampat during a similar survey conducted over 60 hours in 2001.

**This comparison clearly indicates that Halmahera has a marine biodiversity that is comparable to, and possibly better than, Raja Ampat!**



At the altitude of Ternate Island we will set course west, crossing the Moluccas Sea. On the half way we will stop at the small island Gureda, located in the middle of the North-Maluku Strait. With a little luck, we will be able to see whales on their journey to the South. Continue northwest to North Sulawesi and to our destination Bitung at the southern end of Lembeh Strait.

## **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.

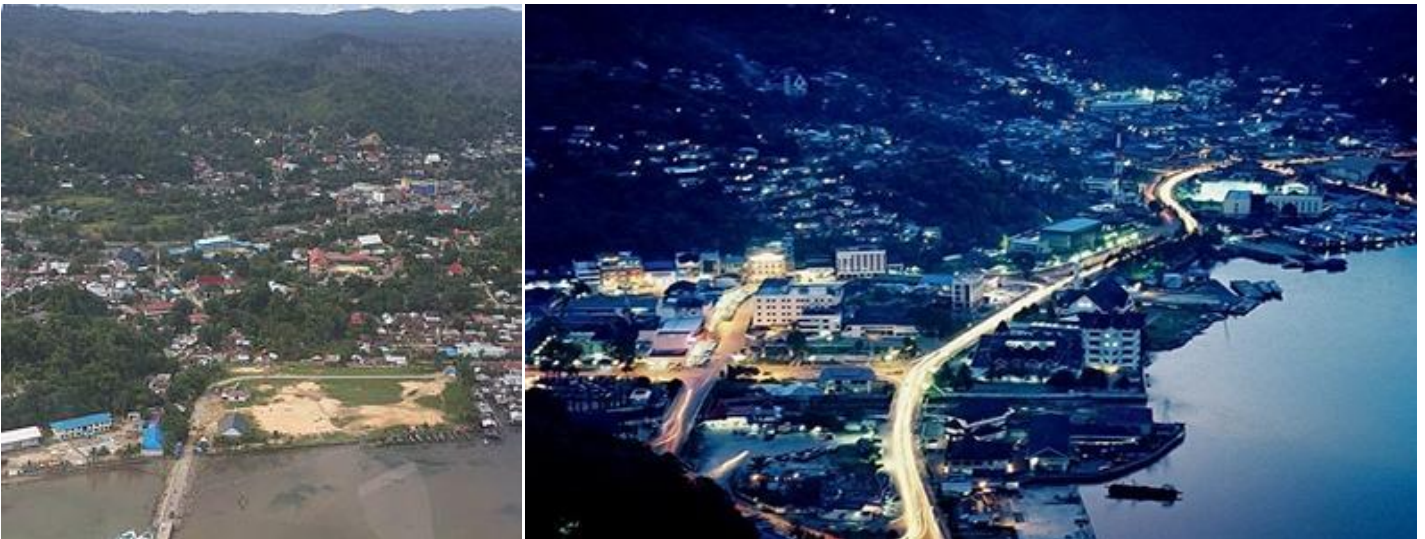
## **Day 2-12**

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.



## **Misool**

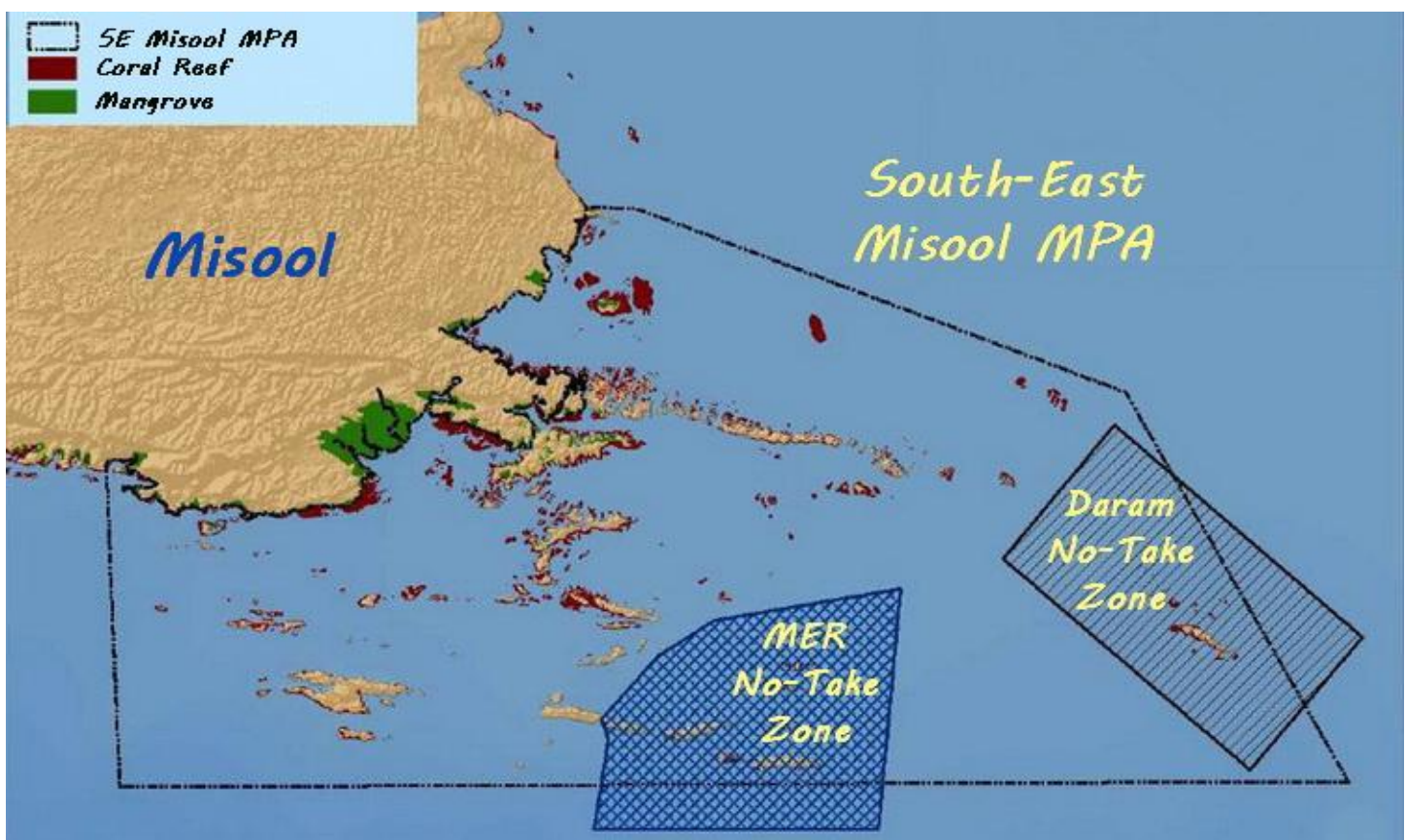
formerly spelled Mysol (Dutch: Misoöl), is one of the four major islands in the Raja Ampat Islands in West Papua. The inhabitants speak the Biga language and Matbat language, as well as Indonesian.



The reason the reefs in the south-east of Misool are so incredibly rich is their relative location to the deep waters of the Ceram Trough and the upwelling of nutrients created as the Indonesian Throughflow makes its way south to the Banda Sea.

Misool island is known for its soft corals, shallow mangrove areas, reef fish, mantas and pelagic species, which will make for some excellent wide-angle photography. Some sloping walls with colourful soft coral carpet also become houses for some small critters, from ghost pipefish to harlequin shrimp and pygmy seahorses. Misool also has at least three ponds with unpoisoned jellyfish, all in Misool area.

There is also No-Take-Zone which expanded to a total 465 square miles (twice as big as Singapore ) in 2010, initiated by the owners of Misool Eco Resort in 2005.



### **Notable Dive Sites in Misool**

Misool area has approximately 20 dive sites, which include Lonely Rock, Gampi, Yilliet, Boo Island, Fiabacet, Blue Hole and Killer Cape, Kaliq Channel, Sepele Rock, Three Sisters Rock, Nampale and Warokaraket, etc. However, some notable dive sites are Boo Island, Fabiacet, Farondi, Gamfi, and Kaleidoscope.

### **Boo Rock (Boo Island)**

Another southern favorite is Boo island, a beautiful vibrant reef that hosts a wealth of marine life including stunning soft corals, octopus and green turtles.

With depth of 3-30 meter, Boo Rock is located between two small rock east of Boo, and

Boo Point East is located in Eastern point of Boo Island. This dive site is also known as Boo Angel Window, with slope and steep slope contour. Here you can see some Snapper, Fussilier, Barracuda, Sweetlips, Butterflyfish, Angelfish, Grouper, Damselfish, Anthias, Batfish, Wrasse, Parrotfish, Surgeonfish, Triggerfish, Boxfish, Pufferfish, Porcupinefish, Gobies, Moray eels, Eels, Scorpionfish, Flathead, Blennies, Dragonet, Gorgoniands, Barrel Sponges, Commensal Shrimps, wide variety of Nudibranchs, Unicornfish, Surgeonfish, some Octopus and Green Turtles.



### **Fabiacet**

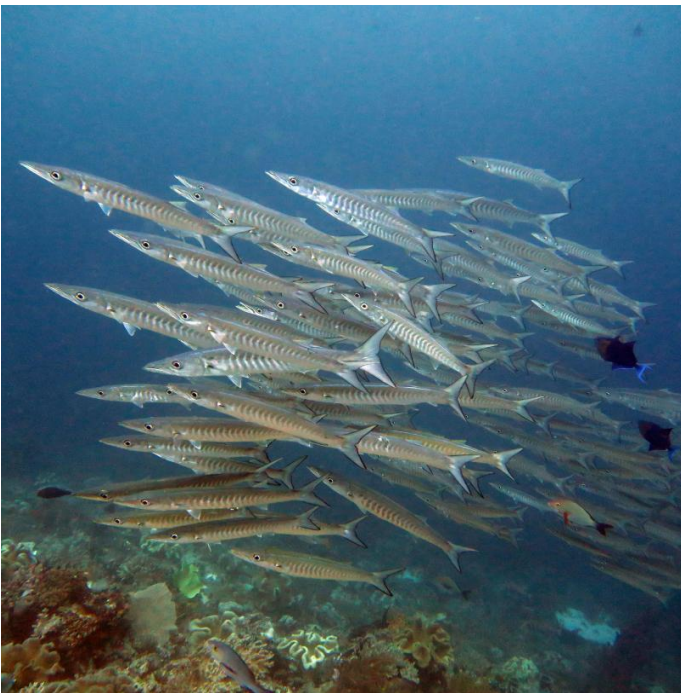
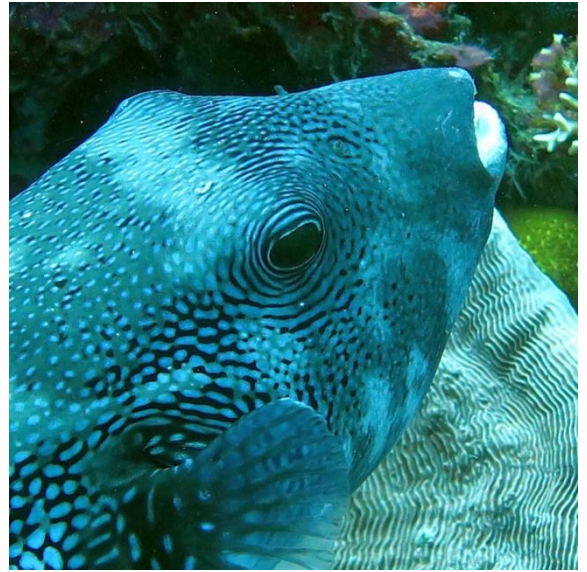
is many diver's dream reef.

This set of pinnacles has a dramatic topography and gets amazing visibility creating a spectacular backdrop for the wide-angle photographer enthusiast. You will find beautiful masses of gorgonians and sponges along the channels and if you keep your eyes on the deep blue, you may spot an occasional Great Hammerhead shark or other pelagic species.

With depth of 20-40 meters, the visibility can be up to 20 meters. Bottom contour consists of drop off, slope, and mixed contour with coral reef as bottom composition. You can see some Snapper, Fussilier, Sweetlips, Butterflyfish, Angelfish, Grouper, Damselfish, Anthias, Batfish, Wrasse, Parrotfish, Surgeonfish, Triggerfish, Boxfish, Pufferfish, Porcupinefish, Gobies, Moray eels, Scorpionfish, Flathead, Blennies, Dragonet here.



Around this island, there are 4 islets which you can dive and become home to large variety of marine creatures. Sometimes, great hammerhead sharks can be found here, coming up to shallower water to check out what divers are doing in the water. With depth of 20-40 meters, the visibility can be up to 20 meters. Bottom contour consists of drop off, slope, and mixed contour with coral reef as bottom composition. You can see some Snapper, Fussilier, Sweetlips, Butterflyfish, Angelfish, Grouper, Damsel fish, Anthias, Batfish, Wrasse, Parrotfish, Surgeonfish, Triggerfish, Boxfish, Pufferfish, Porcupinefish, Gobies, Moray eels, Scorpionfish, Flathead, Blennies, Dragonet here.

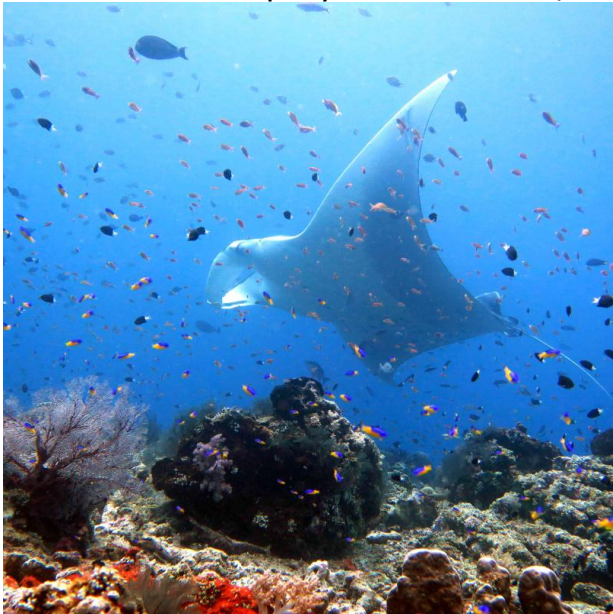




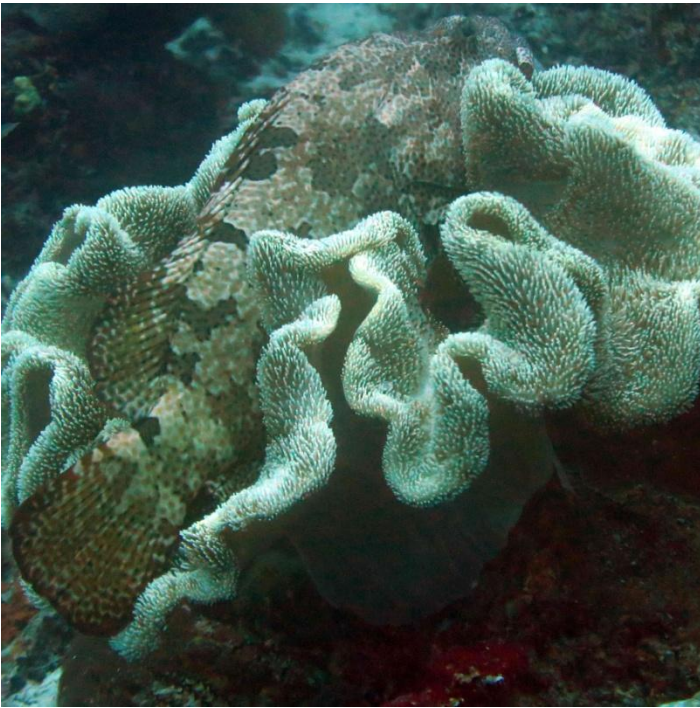
## Warakaraket (Magic Mountain)

The real “magic” to be found is a submerged meridian and well-known cleaning station for Manta Rays. The pinnacle itself is about 7 meters and just 20 minutes away from the resort. In an extremely rare occurrence, smaller reef ‘Manta alfredi’ and giant oceanic ‘Manta birostris’ manta rays report to the same spot for fish to remove parasites from their skin.

Magic Mountain is also a nursery for White Tip Reef Sharks and a love nest for Napoleon Wrasse. Napoleon Wrasse is an enormous, blue coral reef fish that grows over six feet long and has a prominent bump on its forehead. You can find them on the reef scouring for hard-shelled prey like mollusks, starfish, or crustaceans, which is unusual for a fish.







## **Kaleidoscope**

This dive site shows that Raja Ampat does not only have big stuff, as you can encounter a sloping wall covered in a blanket of soft corals with vibrant colours. Some critters in this area are ghost pipefish, pygmy seahorses, nudibranchs, and flatworms. Sometimes, a night dive here can also be stunning.







### **Sagof-Daram Archipelago (Farondi, Balbulol, Daram)**



Located 20 kilometers from Misool Island, this islet of Farondi is one of the favourite dive sites in Raja Ampat due to its unique and distinctive landscape: tunnels, caverns, and colourful walls. It highlights two famous dive spots, which are Goa Besar and Verena's Garden.

The current on this islands can be strong, which also means pelagic fishes around, such as schools of jacks, giant trevallies and yellow-tail barracuda, while some sea snakes, octopus, and wide variety of nudibranchs can also be spotted here. In short, this dive site has healthy reefs, lots of fish life, and more macro than you know.







# Halmahera

## Bacan

There is a quiet anchorage with an excellent muck site in front of a small village, here we can find all the usual classic black sand critters and get plenty of fresh coconuts to make the evening cocktails.

This is an area where mangroves meet deep open ocean reefs, said to have wonderful marine life. Groupers, sharks, Napoleon wrasses, bumphead parrot fishes all have been spotted in large numbers. But a lot is still to discover.

In whole, great area for big fishes, pelagics, beautiful coral gardens and reefs full of marine life. It's also good for critters. And wonderful beaches in the Goraici group...



## Halmahera Strait

A great chance here for big fishes and outstanding pelagic fish action, when currents are performing right. In the mainland of Halmahera is possible to go on shore with the locals for a closer look at the bird life, to see all tropical birds like parakeets, lorikeets and if usually hornbills.



## Tifore Island



Located mid way between Manado in North Sulawesi and Halmahera, in open ocean waters, this island offer great pelagic action, diving an underwater sea mount, we have a chance of grey reef and other sharks, big schools of barracudas, lots of fusiliers, surgeons and dramatic scenery round the giant rocks that form this site.



## **Goraici Island Group**

Having a great dive sites, here we have it all, great fish packed reefs and one of the most pristine hard coral garden which surrounds a whole island. One of the best sites are a coral covered wall where all the big pelagic cruise by off reef, colorful coral packed sloping gardens with black tip sharks all around.

We can spend lots of time within this great area of the Goraichi islands, to dive on more pristine reefs with excellent fish life and reef scenery. Also worth to go in search of critters on the reef slopes. Good for night dives too.



## **Patinti Strait**

These islands are very rarely visited and tourists are very welcomed into this region. We dive on the west side of an island for the big fish, great chances to see reef sharks, big Napoleon wrasses and lots of great schooling fish life. Depending on the current we will dive the north of the island for the reef scenery and best schooling fish action. Great drift dive trough a channel, starting on a huge coral ridge, slowly heading shallower and drifting up along the sandy slope where lots of big fish hang out, also there is a great area for critter hunting. Also a good place for our night dive! We can spend quite a few days in these straits.



**Day-12**

Final day of diving - our trip ends at the port of Bitung (North Sulawesi, near to Manado).

**Day-13**

Check-out after breakfast or lunch time – depends on your 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.

