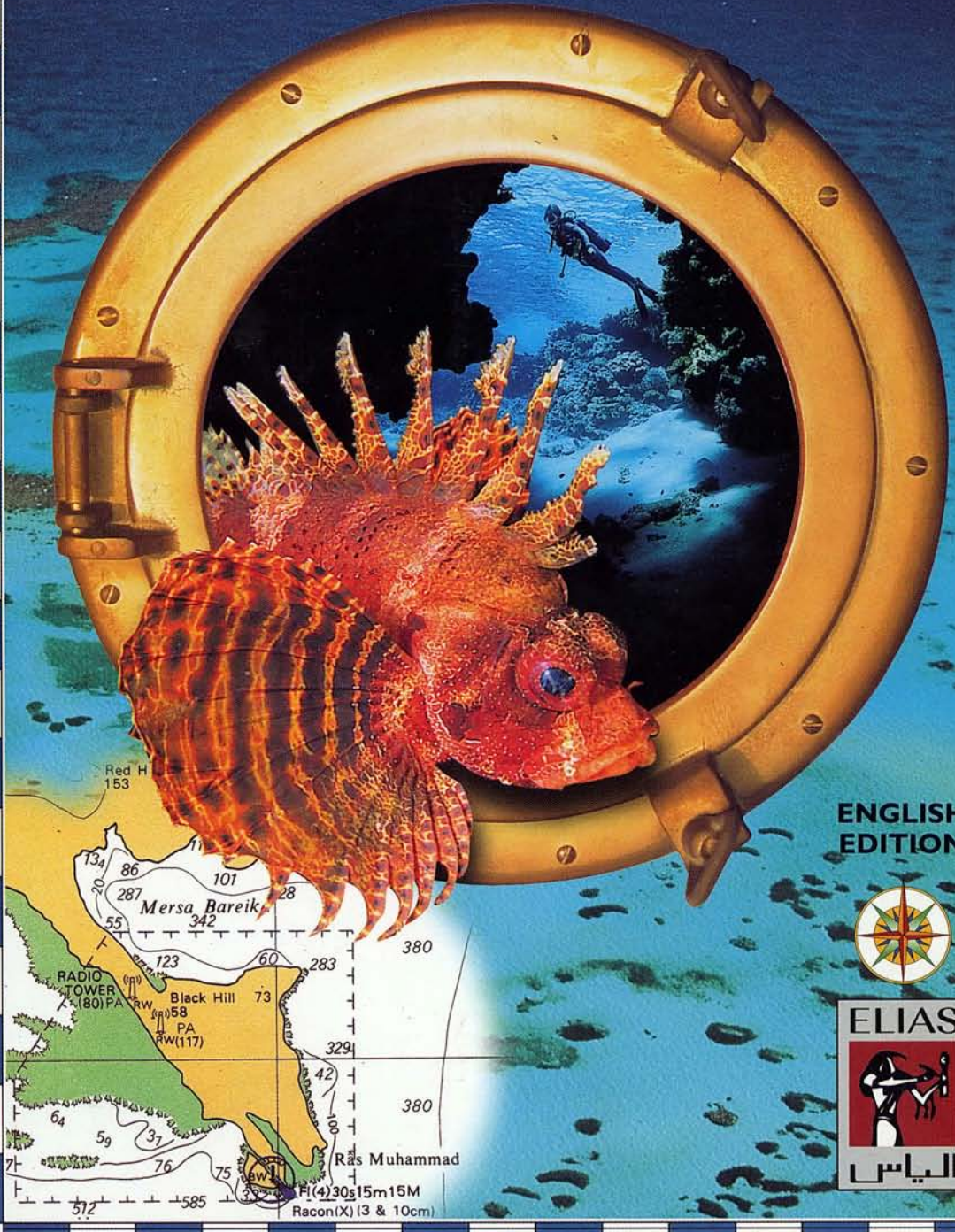
# SHARM EL-SHEIKH

## *Diving Guide*




ENGLISH EDITION

ELIAS

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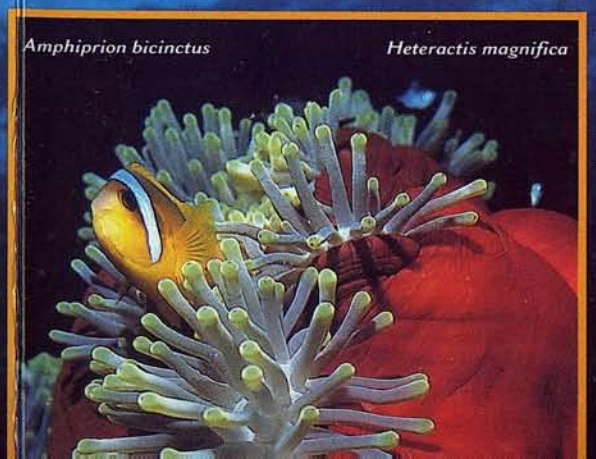
N
EL-TOR
Ras Mohammed National Park
Hyperbaric Medical Center
Check point
SHARM EL-SHEIKH
NAAMA BAY
DAHAB
Airport
Nabq Protected Area
Shora el-Manqata
Wadi Kheza (Wadi Kid)
Wadi Umm Adawi
El-Ghargana
Nabq Check point
Ras Atantur
Wreck of Maria Schroeder
Wrecks of Hedaroma and Million Hope
Wreck of Kormoran
Wreck of Lara
Wreck of Lullia
Entrance gate
Visitor center
Sharm el-Sheikh
Sharm el-Maya
Marsa Bareika
Marsa Ghazlani
Ras Mohammed
Ras Za'atar
Jackfish Alley (Stingray Station)
Eel Garden
Shark Observatory
Anemone City
Yolanda Reef
Shark Reef
Ras Katy
Temple
Ras Umm Sid
Paradise
Turtle Bay
Amphoras
Pinky Wall
Tower
Sodfa
Naama Bay (Marsa el-Aat)
Near Garden
Middle Garden
Far Garden
Coral Bay (Marsa Umm Mureika)
Shark Bay
White Knight
Ras Bob
Ras Nasrani
Ras Ghamila
Gordon Reef
Thomas Reef
Woodhouse R.
Jackson R.
Tiran Is.
SHARM EL-SHEIKH
DIVE SITES
0 1 2 3
nautical miles
Key to Symbols
Local dive site
Not local dive site
Harbour or jetty
Lighthouse Beacon
Mangroves
Oasis
Wreck




Cheilinus undulatus


Amphiprion bicinctus
Heteractis magnifica


Aetobatus narinari

# SHARM EL-SHEIKH

## *Diving Guide*

ALBERTO SILIOTTI


English Edition

ELIAS
الياس

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## KEY TO SYMBOLS

Diving site
Mooring
Lighthouse - Beacon
Wreck
Buoy

**Access** by boat by car

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Difficulty** | ✔ | easy (Open Water Diver) |
| | ✔✔ | medium (Advanced OWD) |
| | ✔✔✔ | hard |
| **Current** | ✔ | weak |
| | ✔✔ | medium |
| | ✔✔✔ | strong |
| **Natural Scenery** | ✔ | not very interesting |
| | ✔✔ | interesting |
| | ✔✔✔ | spectacular |
| **Fauna Interest** | ✔ | low |
| | ✔✔ | medium |
| | ✔✔✔ | high |
| **General Interest** | ✔ | low |
| | ✔✔ | medium |
| | ✔✔✔ | high |

**Other Characteristics**

drift dive
deep dive
interesting site for photographers
interesting site for reef
reef fauna
pelagic fauna
snorkeling site
morning dive
afternoon dive
night dive

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# How to Use This Guide


Name of site

GPS bearing (Global Position System)

Photograph of site to help you locate it

Features and attractions of the dive

Brief description of the dive

Useful information and warnings

Classic dive recommended

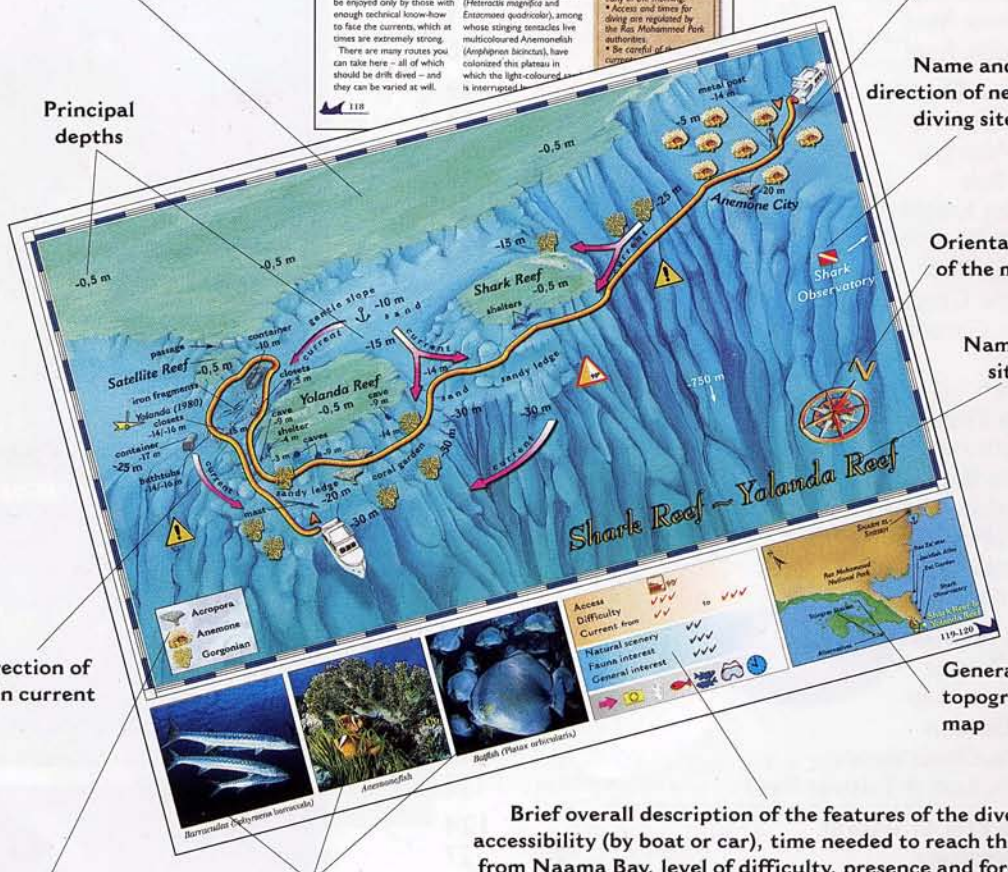
Axonometric relief map of diving site

Name and direction of nearest diving site

Principal depths

Orientation of the map

Name of site




Direction of main current

General topographical map




Main types of stony and soft corals

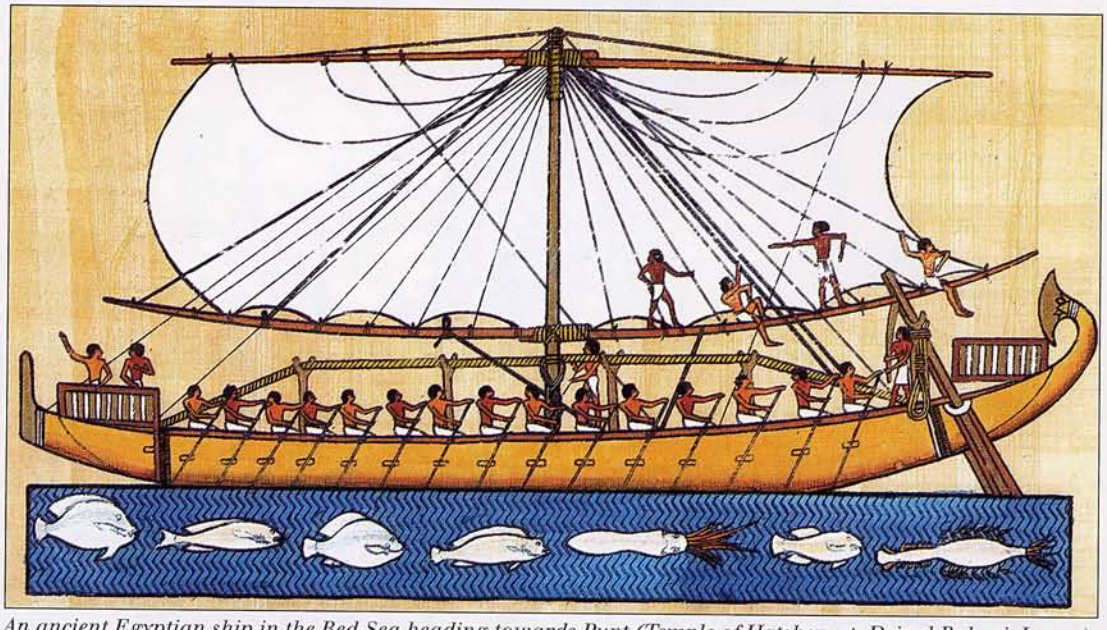
Photographs of characteristic fish or special underwater structures of the site

Brief overall description of the features of the dive: accessibility (by boat or car), time needed to reach the site from Naama Bay, level of difficulty, presence and force of currents, judgement of the dive, symbols of features of the site (deep dive; drift dive; dive for photographing; a great number of madrepores, reef fish, pelagic fauna; area suitable for snorkeling; site recommended for morning, afternoon or night dives)

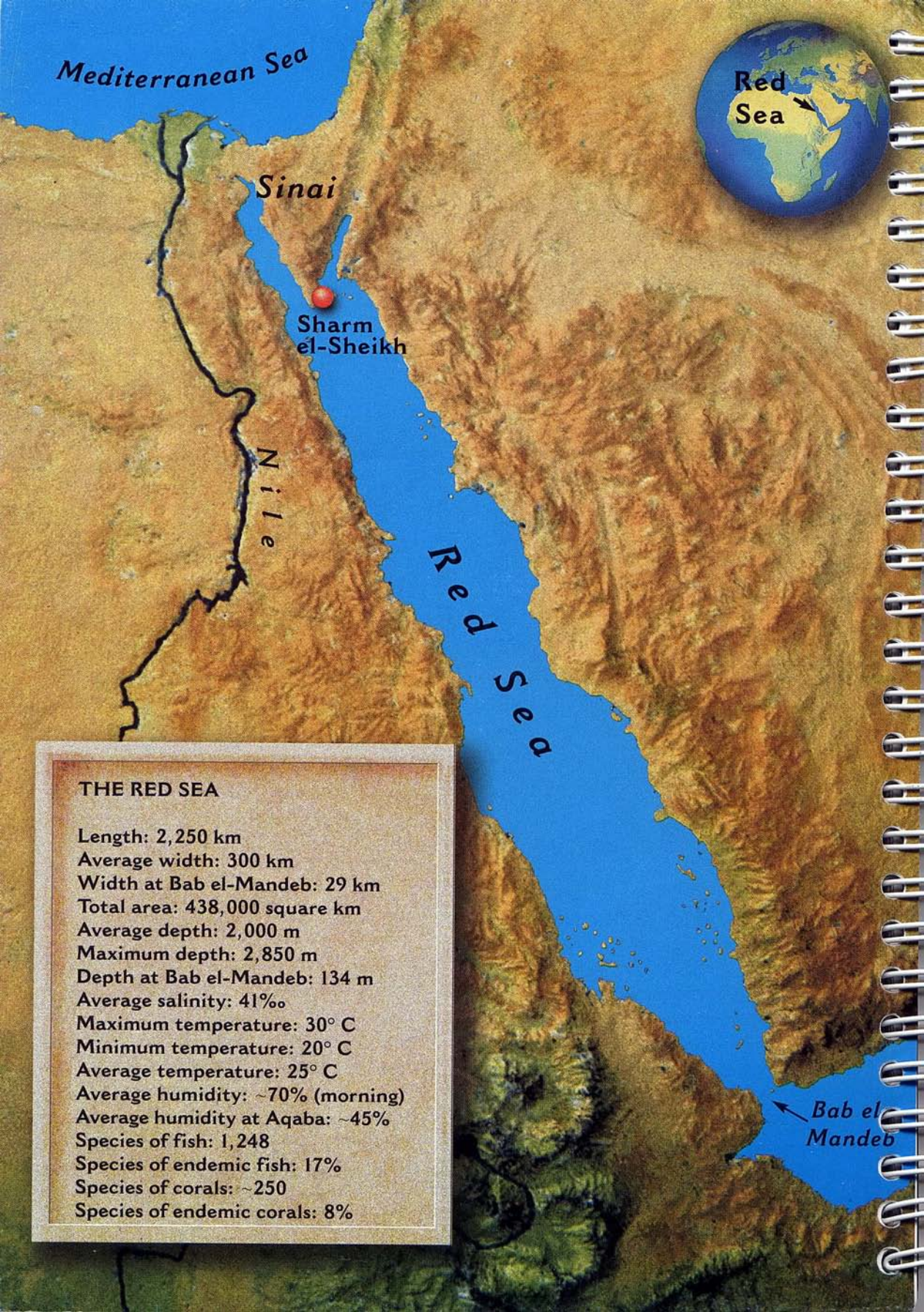
# INTRODUCTION

Establishing the origin of the name "Red Sea" with certainty is no easy matter. In ancient times the great Greek historian Herodotus (490-424 BC), the Greek geographer Strabo (64 BC-AD 21) and the Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79) all called it the "Erythraean Sea", perhaps referring to the mythical king *Erythras*, which in ancient Greek means "red". According to another theory the adjective "red" refers to the colour of the water which, under particular conditions, takes on a reddish hue because of the proliferation of an alga called *Trischodesmium erytraeum*. A third theory is that the name "Red Sea" derives from the fact that its coasts are composed of rocks that often have a reddish colouration because of their high iron oxide content. The ancient Egyptians, who regularly crossed the waters of this sea to get to the mysterious "Land of Punt" (a region that was probably located near the Gulf of Aden) to stock up on incense, cinnamon, precious hides and other exotic products, called it the "Great Green".

The Red Sea was an important trade route to the East Indies from ancient Roman times, and in the 7th century AD innumerable caiques and dhows transported thousands of Muslim pilgrims to Mecca. However, only in recent times has this sea begun to be studied from a scientific standpoint. The first naturalist who made a systematic, in-depth study of the fauna in this sea was the Danish botanist Peter Forksal, who in 1767 identified 59 species of fish. Forksal's paper was published only posthumously, in 1775. He was followed by the German naturalists Christian Gottfried Ehrenberg and Friedrich Hemprich, who made an expedition in 1820-26, Karl Ruppel (1826-28) and Karl Klunzinger (1863-75). These scientists laid the foundations for our present-day knowledge of this truly extraordinary sea – which Jacques Cousteau called "the corridor of marvels" – created by the ongoing separation of Asia from Africa and now considered an ocean in the process of formation.



*An ancient Egyptian ship in the Red Sea heading towards Punt (Temple of Hatshepsut, Deir el-Bahari, Luxor)*

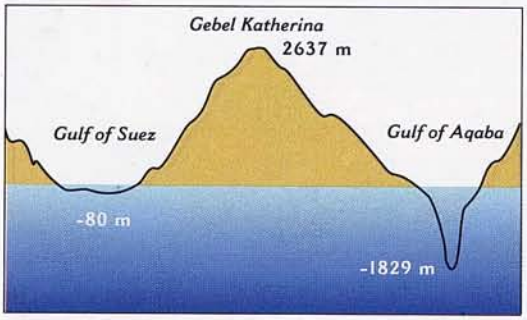



## THE RED SEA

Length: 2,250 km
Average width: 300 km
Width at Bab el-Mandeb: 29 km
Total area: 438,000 square km
Average depth: 2,000 m
Maximum depth: 2,850 m
Depth at Bab el-Mandeb: 134 m
Average salinity: 41‰
Maximum temperature: 30° C
Minimum temperature: 20° C
Average temperature: 25° C
Average humidity: ~70% (morning)
Average humidity at Aqaba: ~45%
Species of fish: 1,248
Species of endemic fish: 17%
Species of corals: ~250
Species of endemic corals: 8%

# THE RED SEA

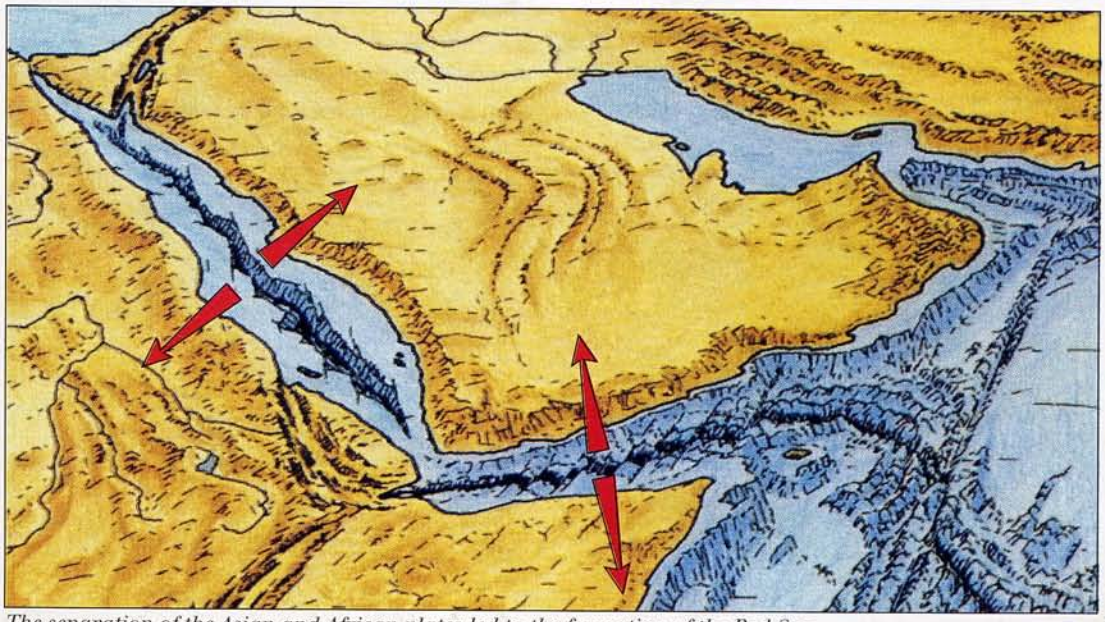
About 25,000,000 years ago, during the Oligocene epoch of the Tertiary period, a series of tectonic movements disrupted the surface of the Earth and led to the formation of the Alps and the Himalaya mountains. In that period the African plate and Asian plate began to separate, creating an enormous rift which for the most part was filled in with the waters of the ocean. This was how the Red Sea was born, a body of water with wholly peculiar features which in about a hundred million years will become an actual ocean. In fact, the tectonic movement separating Asia from Africa is continuing to this day, at a rate of about 5 millimeters per year, which in the geological scale of time means that in one hundred million years the Red Sea will be as wide as the present-day Atlantic Ocean. This sea is narrow and elongated, bordered by mountains with an average height of 1,000-1,500 meters and with some peaks such as *Gebel Katherina* and *Gebel Musa* (or *Mount Sinai*) that are more than 2,500 meters high. It has a




*The profile of the Red Sea between the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba, with the Sinai peninsula and Gebel Katherina in the middle*

deep bottom with a wide, longitudinal, median sea-floor trench which on a level with Suakin is 2,850 m deep (the *Suakin Trench*). The Red Sea is connected to the Indian Ocean by the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb, "the Door of Lamentation", a passage only 29 kilometers wide whose floor rises abruptly to only 134 meters below sea level, thus limiting the water exchange with the Indian Ocean.

About 5,000,000 years ago, in the Miocene epoch, which marks the end of the Tertiary period, the bottom of Bab el-Mandeb rose, thus

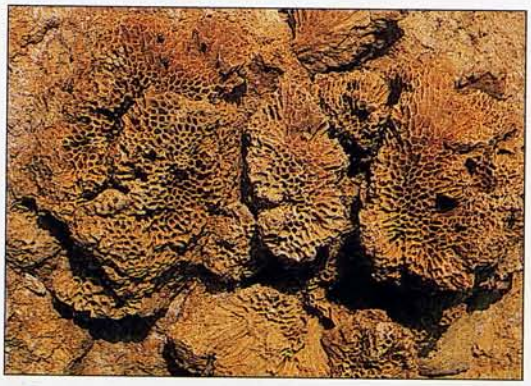


*The separation of the Asian and African plates led to the formation of the Red Sea*

*The Ras Mohammed promontory consists of the remains of a fossil coral reef that emerged due to a change in the coastline after the last glacial period (Würmian period)*

isolating the Red Sea basin, and because of the effect of rapid evaporation its waters became more and more salty and warm, hence unsuitable for life. Fortunately this isolation did not last long: the floor of Bab el-Mandeb lowered again and the former link with the Indian Ocean was opened again. However, the momentous glaciation activity during the Quarternary era gave rise to the formation of huge ice sheets in the two hemispheres, causing a general lowering of the sea level all over the globe. The waters of the Red Sea were at least 100 meters lower than the original level and links with the ocean were once again interrupted until about 10,000 years ago, when with the end of the last (Würmian) glacial stage the seas rose again, but without reaching the preceding levels. The eventful geological history

*Along the coasts of Sinai, especially around the Ras Mohammed cape, you can see fossil corals that are just like the present-day ones*

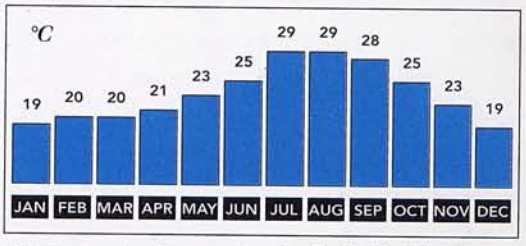


of the Earth had an enormous impact on the development of the fauna in the Red Sea and its splendid and world-famous coral reef, which only after the last rise of the sea level began to become the luxuriant marvel we know today.

## Physical Features

Because of the high air temperature and aridity of the regions around the Red Sea, its evaporation rate – about 200 cm per year – is a crucial physical factor.

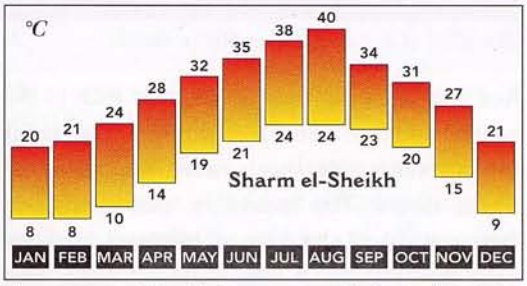
The lack of freshwater from rivers (the Red Sea has no influents) and the limited water exchange with the Indian Ocean, which is just enough to compensate for the loss due to evaporation (it has been calculated that 900 billion cubic meters of water evaporate every year in the Red Sea), causes a strong increase in salinity, which is the highest of all the seas on Earth: 38 ‰ (parts per thousand), which




*Average water temperature in the Gulf of Aqaba*

becomes 41‰ in the Suez and Aqaba gulfs, as opposed to the average ocean level of 35 ‰ . Due to the dry air and action of the wind, there is a marked difference (10°C) between the summer and winter water temperature here, especially in the northern part of the Gulf of Aqaba. However, the really distinguishing feature of the Red Sea is that the lower the depth of this basin, the higher the water temperature: at 1,000 meters below sea level it is 21°, a temperature about 15 degrees higher than that in the rest of the world at that depth. As a matter of fact, the adjacent Indian Ocean registers a water temperature of 6-7° at the

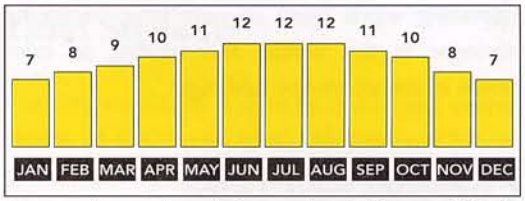
same depth. The cause of this unusual phenomenon is that along the deep intercontinental rift valley, which continues on the floor of the Red Sea as the deep median trench mentioned above, the warm layers of the Earth's mantle are in contact with the water and therefore heat it: recent oceanographic surveys have ascertained temperatures of 30-63°C in the so-called *Atlantis II Trench*.



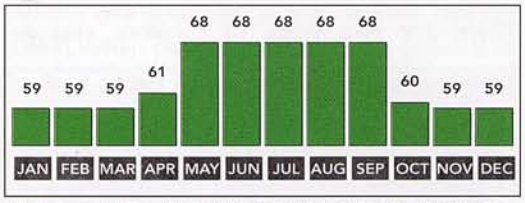

*Average monthly air temperature (min. and max.)*

## The Climate

In general the Red Sea climate is hot and dry and, because of its latitudinal configuration, has characteristics that vary from area to area. But on the whole the temperature ranges from 22° to 30°. As far as the Suez and Aqaba gulfs are concerned the maximum temperatures are in the June-August period (45°) and the minimum (never below 15°) are in January and February. The air humidity level is higher in the summer and decreases in the winter months: the average humidity recorded in this area ranges from a




*Average hours of sunshine per day in Sharm el-Sheikh*

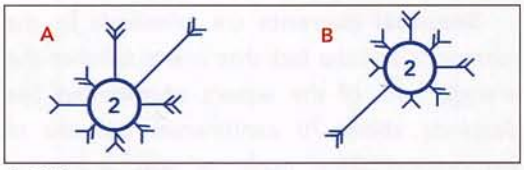



*Average values (%) of humidity in the Gulf of Suez*

minimum of 59% in winter to a maximum of 68% in summer.

## The Winds

The seasonal activity of the winds is especially evident in the central and southern sections of the Red Sea, moving northeast in the winter and southwest in the summer due to the influence of the monsoons. As for the northern area of the sea, in particular the Gulf of Aqaba, the

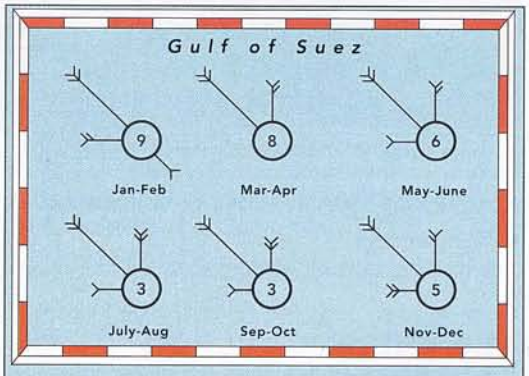



**A** -*NE monsoon*
*(November-March)*
**B** - *SW monsoon*
*(May-September/October)*

prevailing winds blow all year long, becoming stronger in the winter and tending to calm down in the afternoon and night.

## Currents and Tides

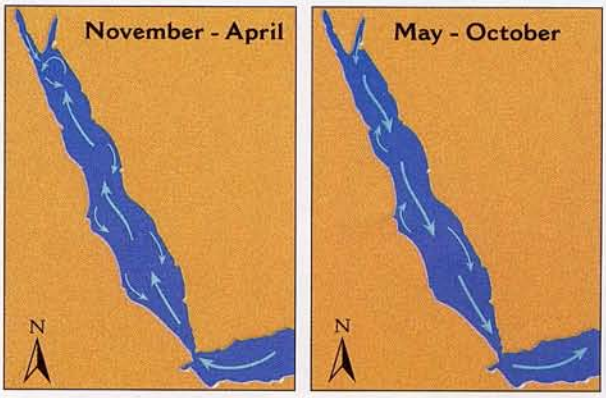
There are two types of currents: seasonal currents and tidal streams.



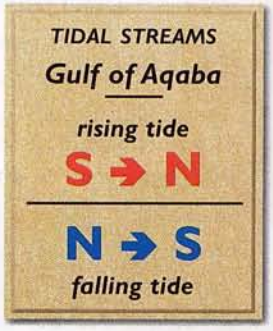

*The arrows indicate the direction of the wind. The shaft length is directly proportional to the total number of times the wind has been recorded blowing in this direction. The number of feathers indicates the average force of the wind on the Beaufort scale and the number in the circle the percentage number of days with a calm wind*

**Seasonal currents** are influenced by the monsoons and the fact that in the summer the average level of the waters of the Red Sea descends about 70 centimeters because of evaporation. This mass of lost water is compensated during the winter by the influx of water from the Indian Ocean. Seasonal currents therefore move in a N-NW direction in the winter months (November-April) and in the opposite direction in the summer months (May-October) and it is reckoned that a period of 20 years is needed for a total renewal of the waters of the Red Sea. In the northern Red Sea these currents are weaker than in the central-southern sector, and here the **tidal streams** become much more important to scuba divers. The maximum tide amplitude (*spring tides*) of this type of currents is about 180 centimeters in the Gulf of Suez and around 100-120 cm in the southern part of the Gulf of Aqaba, with an average surface and running water speed of about 1.5 knots which, in certain cases, can even attain 5-6 knots, equal to 9-11 km per hour. It is therefore absolutely necessary to be well aware of the tidal streams before diving, especially in those areas in which this type of current becomes strongest, such as in the Strait of Tiran and the Strait of Gubal.

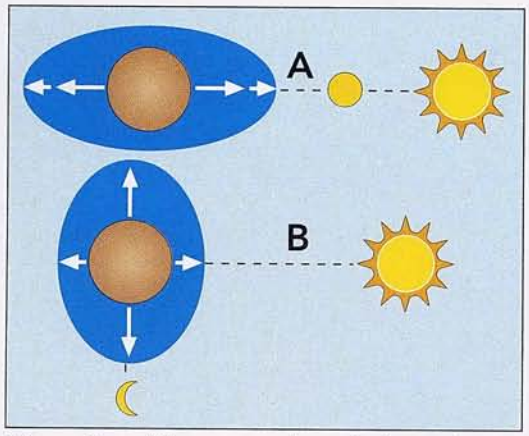
*Seasonal currents in the Red Sea*




*The effect of low tide at Ras Mohammed*




If you want to calculate the force and direction of tidal streams you must check the so-called "Tide Tables" published annually by hydrographic institutes in several countries. In general these tables list the times of the tides measured at Suez. In order to be



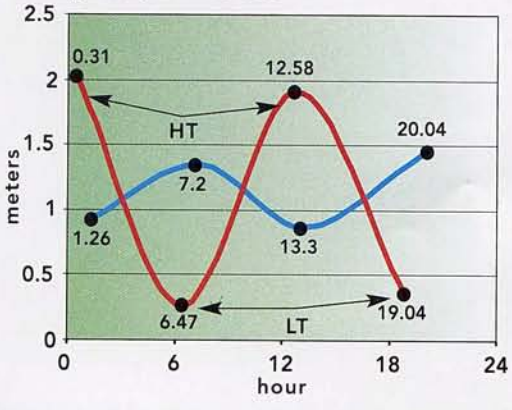

*The position of the moon and sun during spring tides (**A**) and neap tides (**B**)*

applied to the Sharm el-Sheikh area and the southern portion of the Gulf of Aqaba, these data must be amended by adding a coefficient that takes into account the time it takes the tidal wave to reach the area in question.

In the case of Sharm el-Sheikh this coefficient is equal to -5 hours and 30 minutes (-6h30' in summer during daylight saving time). So to find out the exact time of high tide you must subtract either 5h30' or 6h30' from the time listed in the tide table.

Knowing the exact time of high tide is of the utmost importance in order to be able to swim past the coral reef without any problems when making a shore dive.

*An example of the movement of a spring tide (red line) and a neap tide (blue line) which occur in two different days of the month.*
**HT**= *high tide;* **LT**= *low tide*



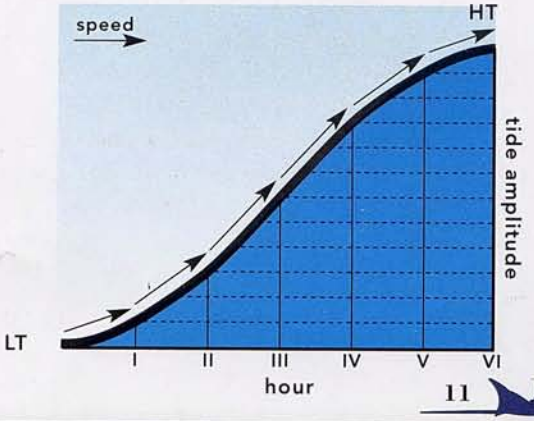

# Tidal Streams

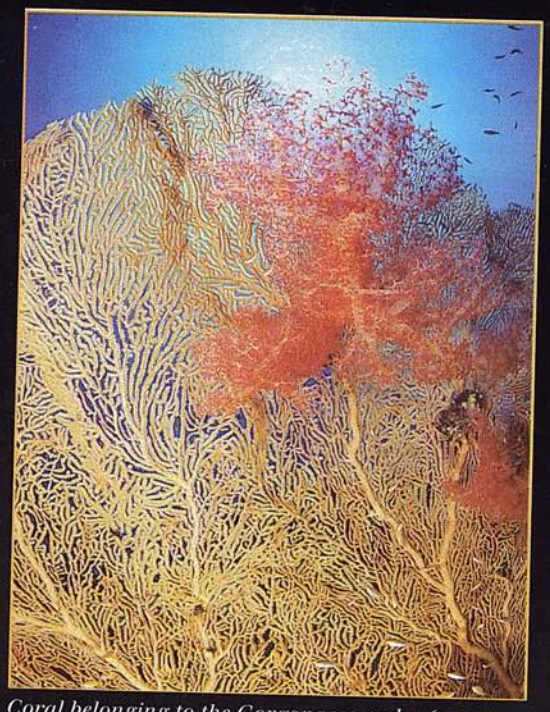
The tide amplitude is directly connected to the phases of the moon: when the moon is full or new its gravitational attraction is added to that of the sun, since the two are on the same axis and the tide amplitude is at its highest (**spring tides**). When on the other hand the moon is in the first or last quarter its axis is perpendicular to that of the sun and their respective gravitational attractions are opposed: in this case the tide amplitude is minimum (**neap tides**).

The speed at which the sea level increases or decreases follows a precise mathematical law and is totally independent from the tide amplitude. Therefore, depending on the time, it is possible to determine not only the exact height of the sea level but also the speed of the current by applying the so-called "rule of twelfths", which describes a sinusoid correlating the time to the tide increasing.

| *time* | *tide increasing* |
|---|---|
| 1st hour | +1/12 |
| 2nd hour | +2/12 |
| 3rd hour | +3/12 |
| 4th hour | +3/12 |
| 5th hour | +2/12 |
| 6th hour | +1/12 |

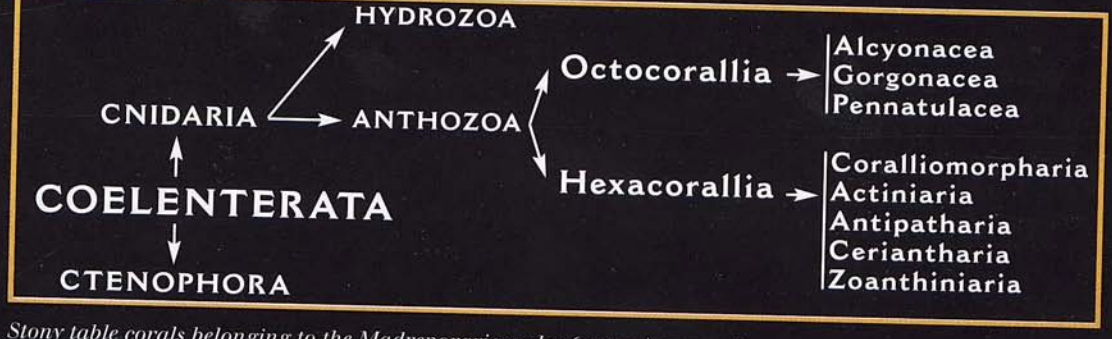
*The speed of the tidal streams according to the "rule of twelfths".*
**HT**= *high tide;* **LT**= *low tide*





*Coral belonging to the Gorgonacea order (genus* Subergorgia*)*

*A soft coral belonging to the Alcyonacea order (genus* Dendronephthya*)*

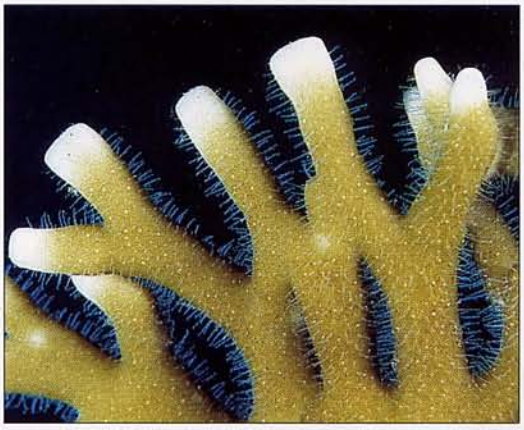



*Stony table corals belonging to the Madreporaria order (genus* Acropora*)*

# THE CORAL REEF

The coasts of the Red Sea are bordered by an extraordinarily long coral reef (it has been calculated that it extends for more than 2,000 kilometers) which is mostly a fringing reef. It should be pointed out that speaking of "coral" in the Red Sea is slightly inaccurate, because historically this term indicated only Mediterranean Red coral (*Corallium rubrum*), which belongs to the Gorgonacea order.

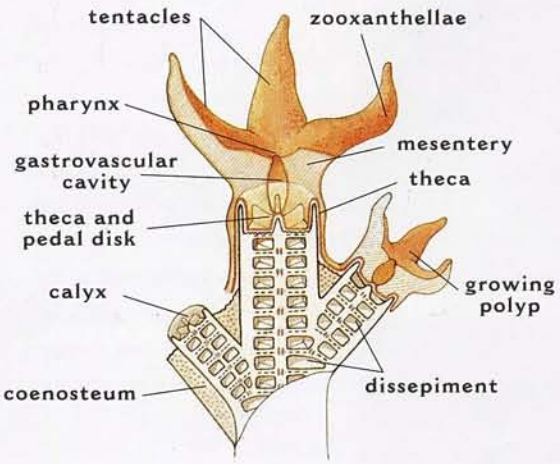
Corals are marine organisms that belong to the Coelenterata and, more specifically, to the *phylum* Cnidaria. Only since 1726, thanks to the French physician André Peysonnel, have they been recognized as animals. The basic element of the Coelenterata is the *polyp*, which has different anatomical parts such as the mouth, the mesenteric cavity and the mobile tentacles with special cells called *nematocysts* which secrete an irritating substance. This characteristic is quite evident in the Hydrozoa coelenterates, which have smooth calcareous skeletons and polyps with extremely thin tentacles, such as the so-called "fire corals" belonging to the genus *Millepora*.



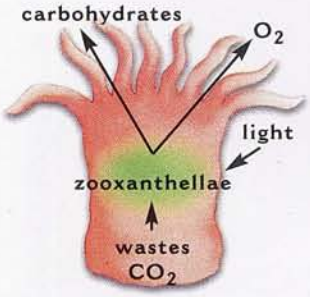
*"Fire coral"* (Millepora dichotoma)

particular anatomic feature is what mostly divides corals into two large subclasses: the *Octocorallia* and the *Hexacorallia*.

*Section of a stony coral polyp*




Coral polyps live in symbiosis with special unicellular algae called *zooxanthellae*, which supply the former with nutrient substances thanks to their photosynthesis activity.




The number of tentacles a coral polyp uses to eat with, by directing food towards its gastrovascular cavity, can be 8 or 6 (or a multiple of 6), and this

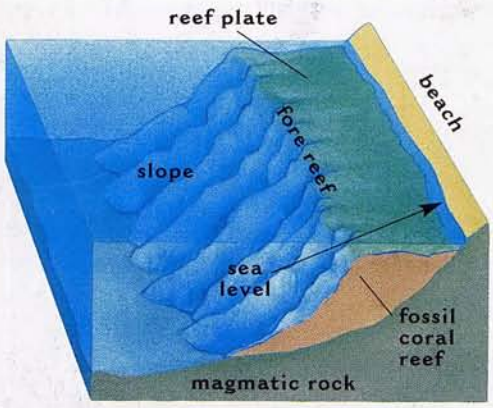
Coral polyps usually live in colonies of millions of organisms in the intertropical zones from 32° N and 30° S and at a depth of from 50 centimeters to 50 meters. In order to grow they need an average water temperature of 30-20 °C that in any case must never be lower than 18°, and salinity levels of 30-40 per thousand.

The large family of corals includes **soft corals** and **stony corals** (or madrepores). The former belong to the subclass of the *Octocorallia*

and include the Alcyonacea and Gorgonacea, while the latter, which are part of the *Hexacorallia* (a sub-class that also includes the Actiniaria), are characterized by their hard calcareous exoskeletons and can be considered the true reef-forming corals. They are also known as "hermatypic corals", term that in Greek means "barrier builders".

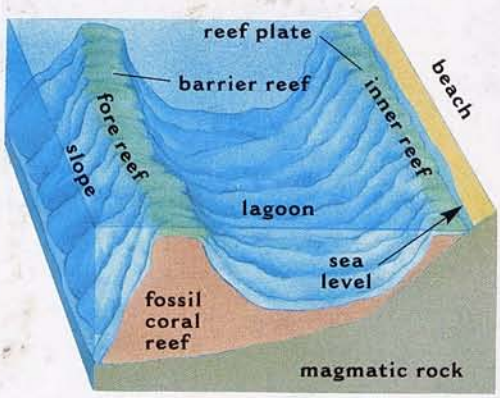
Coral reefs have complex and diversified structures which can be summarily classified into three main categories:

**a. fringing reefs**, typical of the Red Sea, are coral plates, which may vary greatly in size, connected to the coastlines : they are in the form of fringes that grow towards the sea;



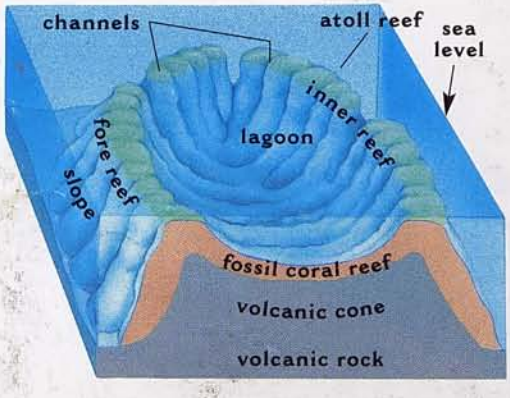

*An example of a fringing reef*

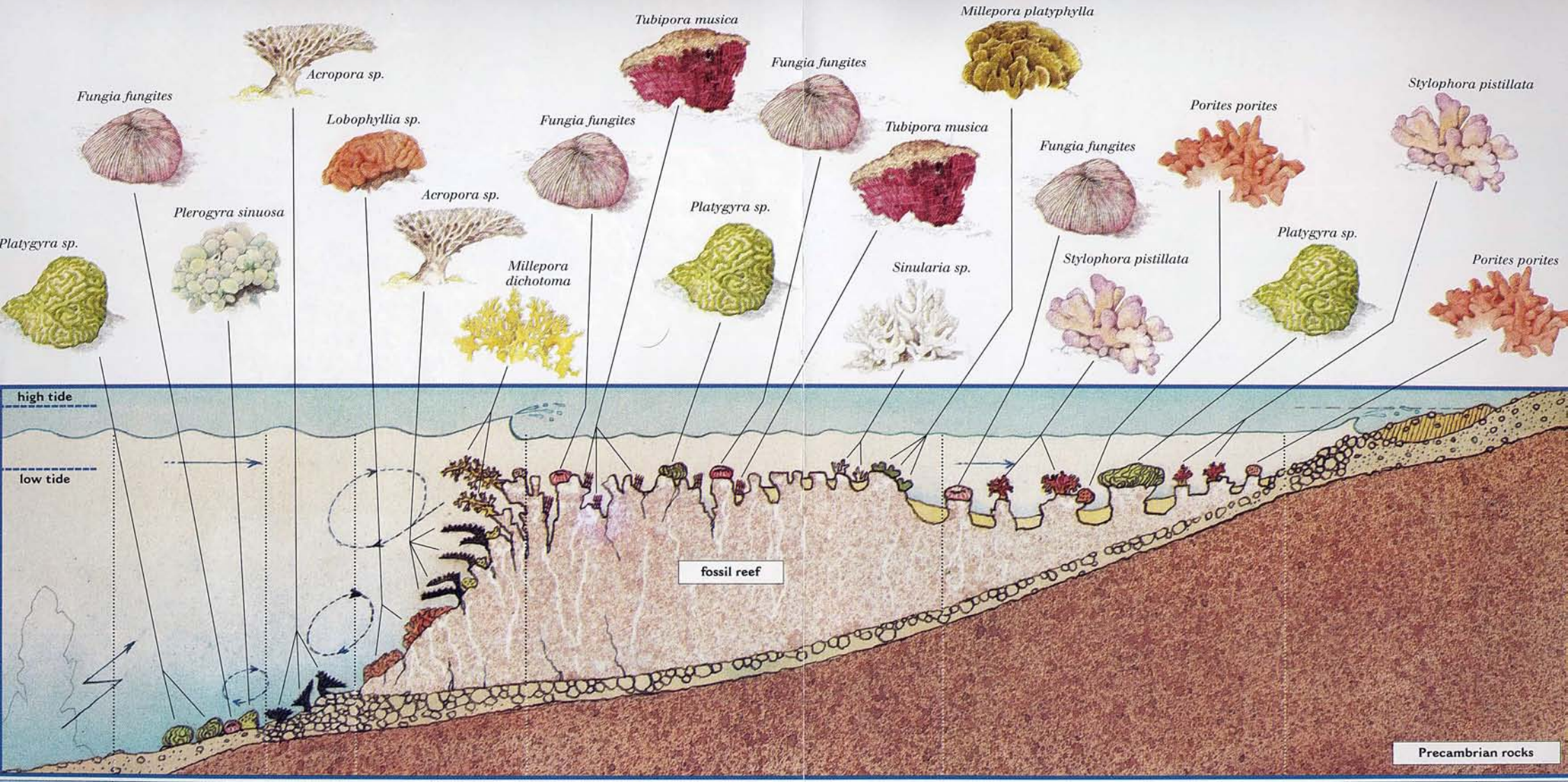
**b. barrier reefs**, considered an evolutionary phase of fringing reefs, are separated from the coast, with a lagoon in between;




*A typical example of a barrier reef (Ras Ghamila, north of Naama Bay)*

**c. atolls** generally lie far from the coast and are characterized by a reef surrounding a lagoon. This type of reef, according to Charles Darwin's theory, originally lay around a volcanic cone that later sank, forming a round inner lagoon interrupted by one or more openings that communicate with the open sea. This theory was demonstrated in the 1950s through offshore oil drilling in the Enewetak Atoll (Pacific Ocean). In the Red Sea the only important example of this type of coral formation is in Sanganeb, in Sudan.






| -5/-20 m | -4/-10 m | -3/-8 m | -0.5 m | -0.3/-0.8 m | -0.5/-1 m | -0.5/-2 m | -1.5 m | -1 m | -1 m | - |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ← 40÷50 m → | ← 6÷10 m → | ← 10÷15 m → | ← 1÷2 m → | ← 20÷30 m → | ← 1 m → | ← 20÷40 m → | | | | |
| coast floor with rocks | fore reef | detritus | reef slope | reef plate | | lagoon or channel | laguna o canale | | | |
| isolated *Porites* & *Acropora* | brain corals | *Acropora* area | *Lobophyllia* area | *Acropora* & *Millepora* area | *Tubipora musica* area | *Millepora platyphylla* area | *Stilophora pistillata* area | *Nerita* area | *Tetraclita* area | *Littorina* area | mollusk & shellfish area |



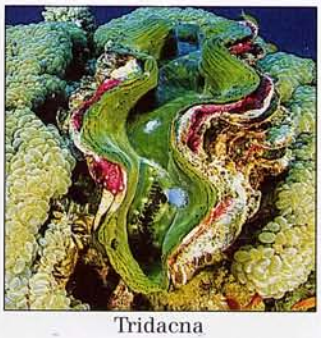
*Distribution of stony corals, soft corals and Hydrozoa in the fringing reef*


Acropora sp.
bophyllia sp.
Porites solida
Porites lutea
Favia sp.
oved mosaic coral
Corallo mosaico
Acropora sp.
Acabaria sp.
Galaxea fascicularis
Plerogyra sinuosa
Grape coral
Madrepora uva
Tubipora musica
Organ-pipe coral
Corallo a canne d'organo
rbinaria mesenterina
Salad coral
Corallo lattuga
Juncella sp.
Whip coral
Corallo a frusta
Subergorgia hicksoni
Gorgonian sea-fan
Gorgonia a ventaglio
Tubastrea sp.
Antipathes sp.
Black coral
Corallo nero
hyseris speciosa
Stylophora pistillata
Paramuricea sp.
Red gorgonian
Gorgonia rossa
Pocillopora verrucosa
Raspberry coral
Madrepora lampone
tichophora violacea
Millepora dichotoma
Fire coral
Corallo di fuoco
Fungia sp.
Mushroom coral
Madrepora fungo
Sarcophyton sp.
Stalked alcyonarian
Corallo cuoio
Lithophyton arboreum
Broccoli soft coral
Corallo broccolo
Dendronephthya sp.
Millepora platyphylla
Favites sp.
Platygyra sp.

# Marine Fauna

Red Sea fauna includes a great number of sponges, organisms belonging to the *phylum* Porifera, with an extraordinary variety of shapes and colours that should not be mistakenly considered corals. Sponges effect a strong filtering action on sea water, which enters their central cavity by means of a series of pores on their body wall, where special ciliate cells absorb the food they need; the water is then expelled. An average-sized sponge can absorb over 100 liters of water per day. Sponges are crucial to reef formation, as they help to consolidate their structures or create cavities with the corrosive property of the acids they secrete. There are also many Mollusks in the Red Sea. These are divided into the Lamellibranchia, whose shell consists of two valves (as in the large *Tridacna*), and the Gastropoda, which can have either a single shell like the Triton and the *Conus* (which shoots small poisonous darts to catch its prey) or no shell, as in the case of Nudibranchia such as *Hexabranchus sanguineus*, commonly known as the "Spanish dancer". Then there are many Echinoderms, which include sea urchins, sea lilies or crinoids, sea cucumbers and starfish, among which are the Crown of Thorns starfish, common name of the *Acanthaster planci*, which feed mostly on coral polyps and can even jeopardize the very survival of the coral reef should they proliferate indiscriminately.

*Sponge*



Tridacna

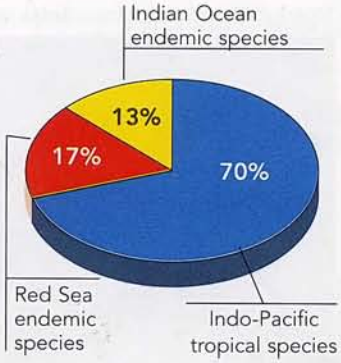
*Crinoid*

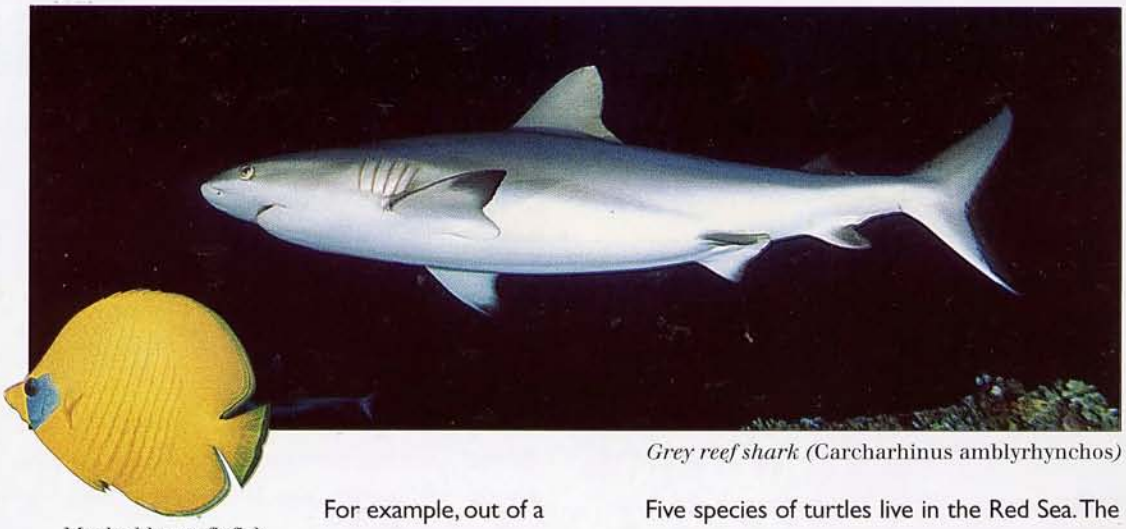
*The "Crown of Thorns" starfish* (Acanthaster planci)

The other major typical fauna in the Red Sea consists of the fish, which can be classified anatomically into two large categories: the cartilaginous Chondrichthyes (such as sharks and rays), and the bony Osteichthyes, which comprise all the other genera of fish. 1,248 species of fish have been identified in the Red Sea, 17% of which are endemic, that is to say, they do not live in other seas.

*A typical example of the Nudibranchia is the Spanish dancer* (Hexabranchus sanguineus), *which is seen here resting on a coral of the genus* Porites

*Distribution of fauna in the Indo-Pacific region*





*Grey reef shark* (Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos)

*Masked butterflyfish* (Chaetodon semilarvatus)

For example, out of a total number of 14 known species of butterflyfish (*Chaetodontidae* family) in the Indo-Pacific region, 7 are endemic in the Red Sea. We can also classify the fish by their habitat: there are *reef fish*, which of course live around the coral reef, and *pelagic fish*, which prefer to roam in the open but frequent the reef because of the abundance of food there.

*A Goldbody trevally* (Carangoides bajad)

Typical representatives of this latter category are the *Sphyraenidae* (a family that comprises barracuda), as well as the *Carangidae* (Jackfish or Trevally) and the *Lethrinidae* (Emperors).

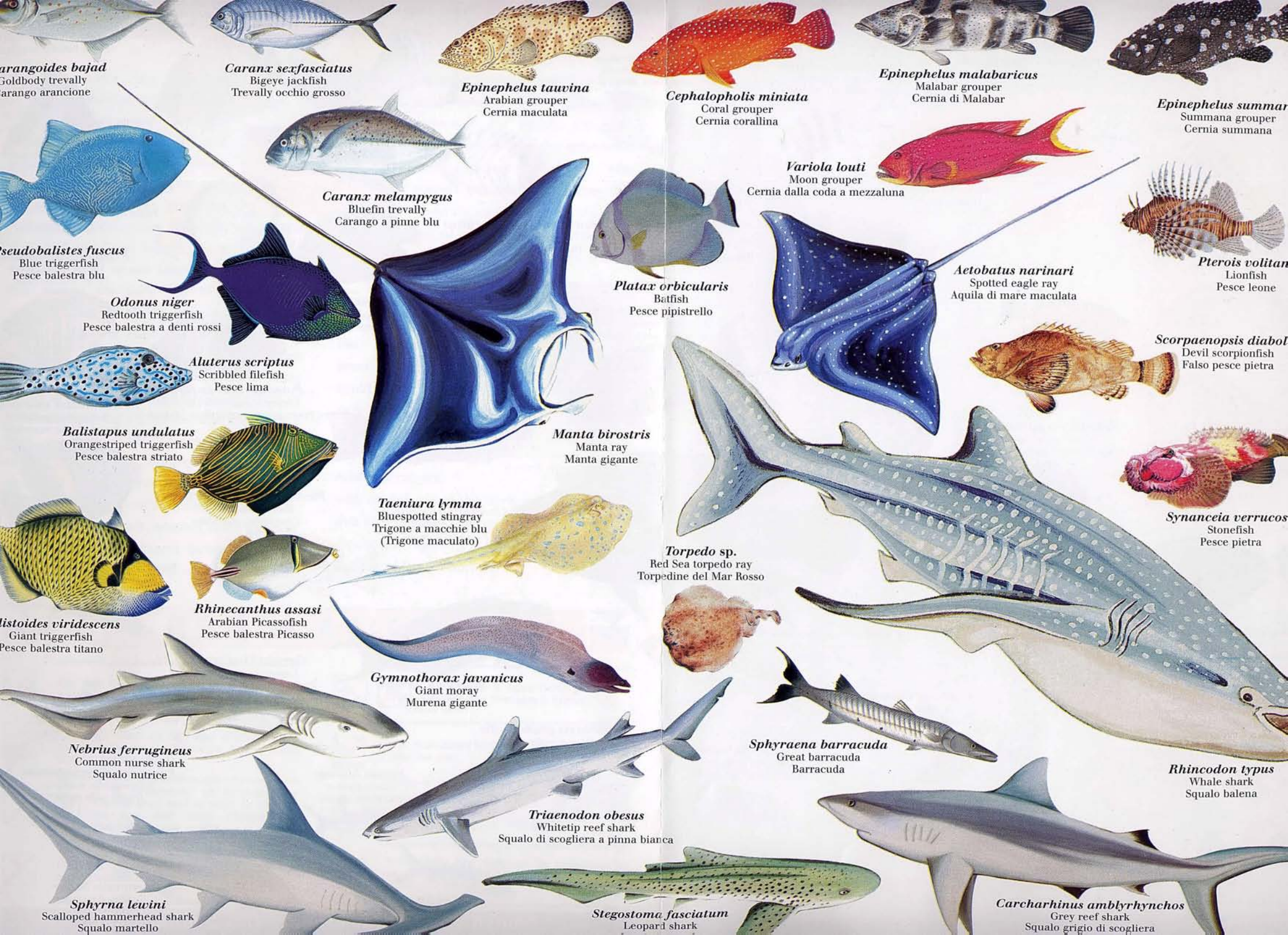
Five species of turtles live in the Red Sea. The most common are the hawksbill (*Eretmo-chelys imbricata*), which is no more than 90 centimeters long and has a pointed beak, and the Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), which is much larger.

Other typical fauna here are the dolphins, which are represented by a dozen species. The most common are the Bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) with its truncate beak, the Common dolphin (*Stenella longirostris*), which generally lives in large schools, and the Grampus (*Grampus griseus*) with its characteristic round head.

*The Sergeant major* (Abudefduf saxatilis), *one of the most common reef fish*

*Hawksbill turtle* (Eretmochelys imbricata)

*Bottlenose dolphin* (Tursiops truncatus)

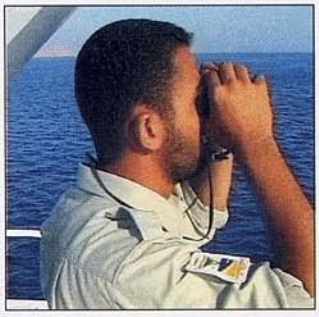

arangoides bajad
Goldbody trevally
Carango arancione
Caranx sexfasciatus
Bigeye jackfish
Trevally occhio grosso
Epinephelus tauvina
Arabian grouper
Cernia maculata
Cephalopholis miniata
Coral grouper
Cernia corallina
Epinephelus malabaricus
Malabar grouper
Cernia di Malabar
Epinephelus summar
Summana grouper
Cernia summana
Caranx melampygus
Bluefin trevally
Carango a pinne blu
Variola louti
Moon grouper
Cernia dalla coda a mezzaluna
Pseudobalistes fuscus
Blue triggerfish
Pesce balestra blu
Platax orbicularis
Batfish
Pesce pipistrello
Aetobatus narinari
Spotted eagle ray
Aquila di mare maculata
Pterois volitan
Lionfish
Pesce leone
Odonus niger
Redtooth triggerfish
Pesce balestra a denti rossi
Aluterus scriptus
Scribbled filefish
Pesce lima
Scorpaenopsis diabol
Devil scorpionfish
Falso pesce pietra
Balistapus undulatus
Orangestriped triggerfish
Pesce balestra striato
Manta birostris
Manta ray
Manta gigante
Taeniura lymma
Bluespotted stingray
Trigone a macchie blu
(Trigone maculato)
Synanceia verrucos
Stonefish
Pesce pietra
Torpedo sp.
Red Sea torpedo ray
Torpedine del Mar Rosso
listoides viridescens
Giant triggerfish
Pesce balestra titano
Rhinecanthus assasi
Arabian Picassofish
Pesce balestra Picasso
Gymnothorax javanicus
Giant moray
Murena gigante
Nebrius ferrugineus
Common nurse shark
Squalo nutrice
Sphyraena barracuda
Great barracuda
Barracuda
Rhincodon typus
Whale shark
Squalo balena
Triaenodon obesus
Whitetip reef shark
Squalo di scogliera a pinna bianca
Sphyrna lewini
Scalloped hammerhead shark
Squalo martello
Stegostoma fasciatum
Leopard shark
Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos
Grey reef shark
Squalo grigio di scogliera


rapriacanthus guentheri
ssfish (Red Sea dwarf sweeper)
Pesce vetro
Pempheris vanicolensis
Cave sweeper (Hatchetfish)
Pesce accetta
Abudefduf saxatilis
Sergeant major
Pesce sergente maggiore
Fistularia commersonii
Cornetfish
Pesce trombetta
Chromis caerulea
Bluegreen chromis
Castagnola azzurra
Pesce farfalla filamentoso
Masked butterflyfish
Pesce farfalla mascherato
Heniochus intermedi
Red Sea bannerfish
Pesce farfalla bandiera
mphiprion bicintus
Red Sea anemonefish
sce pagliaccio bifasciato
♂
♀
Anthias squamipinnis
Scalefin anthias
Anthias
Chaetodon paucifasciatus
Crown butterflyfish
Pesce farfalla coronato
Chaetodon lineolatus
Lined butterflyfish
Pesce farfalla striato
Dascyllus trimaculatus
Domino
Damigella domino
Siganus stellatus
Stellate rabbitfish
Pesce coniglio stellato
Pomacanthus imperator
Emperor angelfish (adult)
Pesce angelo imperatore (adulto)
Pygoplites diacanthus
Royal angelfish
Pesce angelo reale
Iyripristis murdjan
Whiteedged soldierfish
Pesce soldato
Scarus gibbus
Red Sea steepheaded parrotfish
Pesce pappagallo camuso
Priacanthus hamrur
Common bigeye
Occhio grosso
Acanthopagrus bifasciatus
Doublebar bream
Orata del Mar Rosso
Cetoscarus bicolor
Bicolour parrotfish
Pesce pappagallo bicolore
Pomacanthus imperator
Emperor angelfish (juvenile)
Pesce angelo imperatore (giovane)
Pomacanthus maculosu
Arabian angelfish
Pesce angelo maculato
Zebrasoma xanthurum
Blue sailfin tang
Pesce chirurgo dalla coda gialla
rgocentron spiniferum
Sabre squirrelfish
Pesce scoiattolo spinoso
Cheilinus undulatus
Napoleonfish
Pesce Napoleone
Plectorhynchus gaterinus
Blackspotted grunt
Grugnitore maculato
Naso unicornis
Bluespine unicornfish
Pesce unicorno
canthurus sohal
Surgeonfish
esce chirurgo sohal
Thalassoma klunzingeri
Klunzinger's wrasse
Tordo di Klunzinger
Paracirrhites forsteri
Forster's hawkfish
Pesce falco di Forster
Thalassoma lunare
Moon wrasse
Tordo lunare
Oxycirrhites typus
Longnose hawkfish
Pesce falco a scacchi rossi
Arothron diadematus
Masked pufferfish
Pesce palla mascherato
Arothron stellatus
Blackspotted pufferfish
Pesce palla stellato
Monotaxis grandoculis
Bigeye emperor
Imperatore occhio grosso
Lethrinus nebulosus
Spangled emperor
Imperatore iridescente
Caesio lunaris
Lunar fusilier
Fuciliere lunare
Parupeneus cyclostomus
Yellowsaddle goatfish
Triglia coda gialla
iodon hystrix
mon porcupinefish
Pesce istrice
Ostracion cubicus
Cube boxfish
Pesce scatola cubico
Cociella crocodila
Crocodilefish
Pesce coccodrillo
Caesio suevicus
Suez fusilier
Fuciliere di Suez
Lutjanus bohar
Twinspot snapper
Dentice bimaculato

# RAS MOHAMMED PARK

In 1983 the Egyptian government, through law n. 102, founded the *Ras Mohammed National Park*, which is officially called the "Ras Mohammed Marine Protected Area". This park originally comprised the Ras Mohammed promontory, the coral reefs and the Tiran islands, for a total area of 97 square kilometers. The aim of the park was to protect this complex and absolutely unique ecosystem, which counts over 1,000 species of fish and 150 species of corals. Subsequently the protected area was enlarged to take in the areas of Nabq (north of Naama Bay), Ras Abu Galum (south of Nuweiba) and St. Katherine, thus reaching a total of about 6,300 square kilometers of territory. In 1998-99, this park area was once again extended to embrace the Taba district and the entire Egyptian coast of the Gulf of Aqaba.

Visitors to this park, whether scuba divers or not, are required to observe certain regulations laid down by a committee of experts in order to safeguard both the marine and land environments. These rules of behaviour are logical, and even normal and obvious, for responsible and conscientious divers who respect the environment they use. Naturally, such respect should grow out of conviction and certainly not out of fear of the severe punishment applied to transgressors.



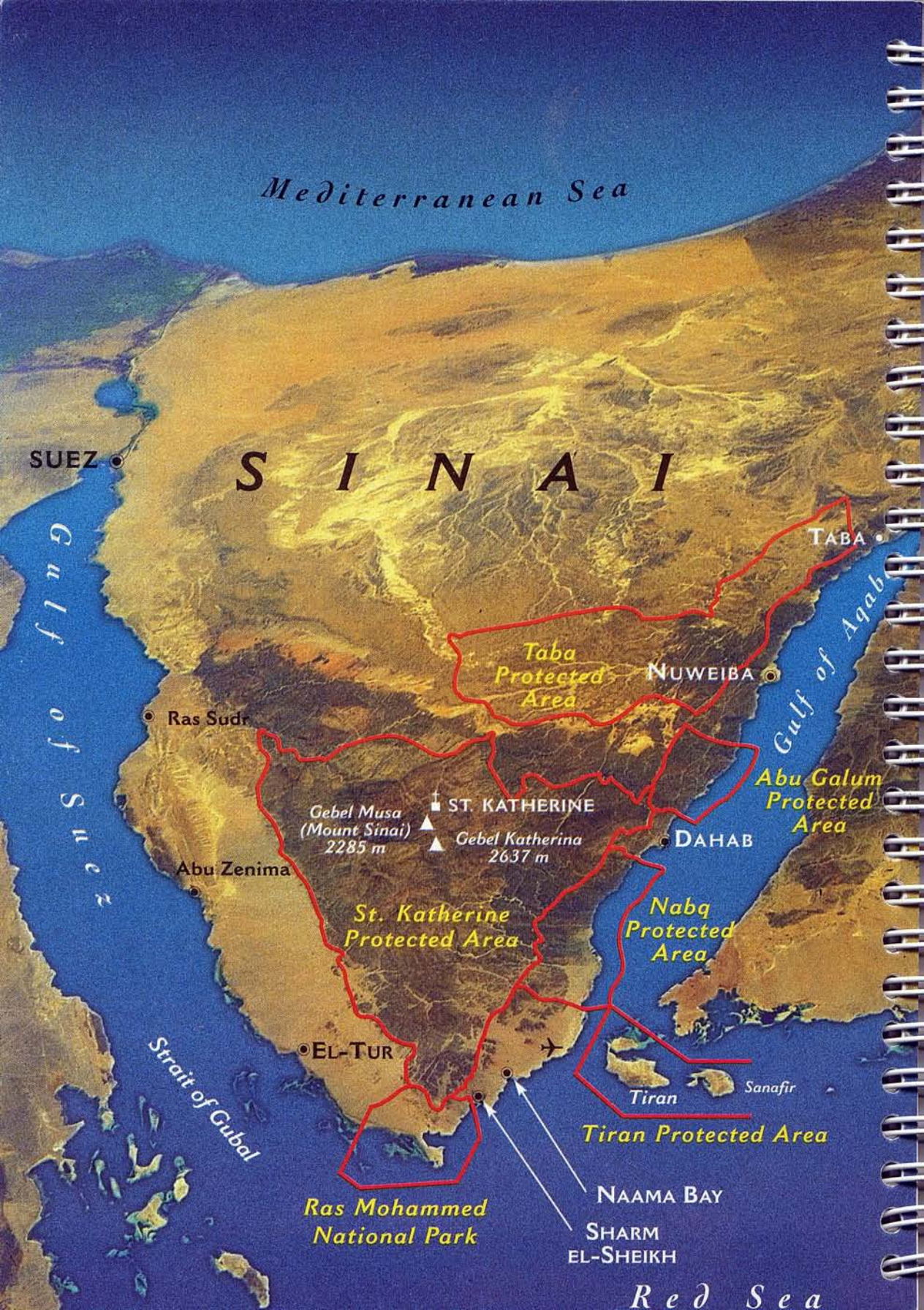
*A park ranger*

Control of the protected areas and the application of park regulations are entrusted to the Ras Mohammed Park rangers, who carefully guard the territory and make sure that all diving boats respect the complementary regulations regarding access to diving sites and the use of fixed moorings.

## REGULATIONS

- Do not touch or break any corals or shells.
- Do not collect or damage any material, either living or dead (corals, shells, fish, plants, fossils, etc.).
- It is prohibited to access any closed area and to walk or anchor on any reef area. Please use marked access points.
- Fish feeding is prohibited as it upsets the biological balance of the reef.
- Fishing and spearfishing are not allowed in Protected Areas.
- It is prohibited to throw refuse of any kind into the sea.
- Access to diving areas is recommended at designated access points only. This reduces damage to reef areas.
- Offenders are subject to prosecution according to the terms of Law 102 of 1983.

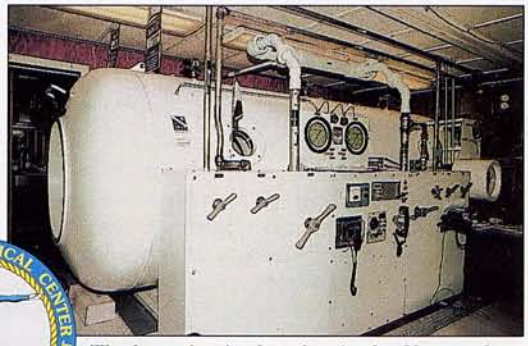
**Take nothing with you - Leave nothing behind**


Mediterranean Sea
SUEZ
SINAI
TABA
Gulf of Suez
Gulf of Aqaba
Taba Protected Area
NUWEIBA
Ras Sudr
Abu Galum Protected Area
Gebel Musa (Mount Sinai) 2285 m
ST. KATHERINE
Gebel Katherina 2637 m
DAHAB
Abu Zenima
St. Katherine Protected Area
Nabq Protected Area
EL-TUR
Strait of Gubal
Tiran
Sanafir
Tiran Protected Area
NAAMA BAY
SHARM EL-SHEIKH
Ras Mohammed National Park
Red Sea

# SCUBA DIVING IN SINAI

Safety is the most important part of any dive, and scuba divers would do well to remember that most accidents are caused by dives that are too deep and by resurfacing that is too rapid.

Another point to bear in mind is that in the Red Sea recreational scuba diving absolutely must not be done at a depth of over 30 meters. Furthermore, always make sure that a first-aid kit and a tank of oxygen are in your boat and that you have the telephone number of the **Hyperbaric Medical Center** in Sharm el-Sheikh, which has highly specialized physicians who must be contacted immediately in case of emergency.



*The hyperbaric chamber in the Sharm el-Sheikh Hyperbaric Medical Center*


*The limits of scuba diving in the Red Sea*

This center has a state-of-the-art hyperbaric chamber with two *Bauer K 15 E* air compressors that was brought from the United States in 1993 and installed near the Marina Travco harbour in the event of accidents.

**Hyperbaric Medical Center**
**Tel. 660 922/3**

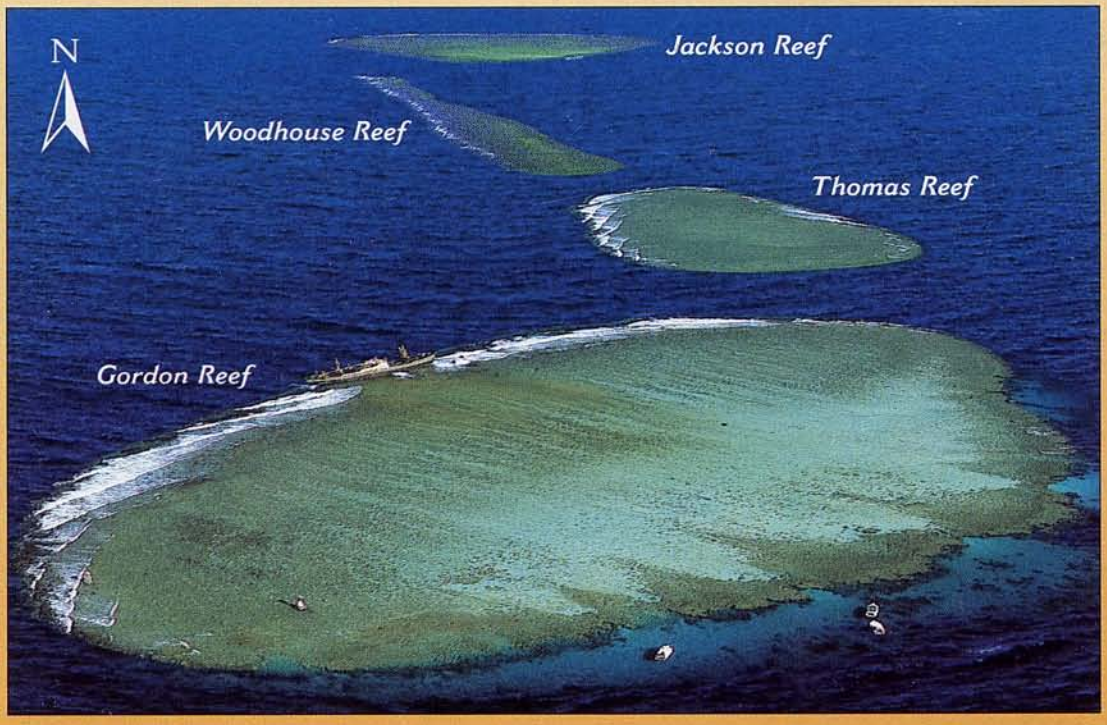
# STRAIT OF TIRAN

The Strait of Tiran lies at the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba and is delimited to the west by the coast of Sinai and to the east by the island of Tiran. In the middle of this canal are four coral reefs lying in a northeast-southwest direction that were named after the 19th-century English cartographers who drew the first nautical map of this region – **Jackson Reef**, **Woodhouse Reef**, **Thomas Reef** and **Gordon Reef**. These reefs divide the strait into two canals: to the east is the so-called *Grafton Passage*, which is used exclusively by ships going northwards, while to the west is the *Enterprise Passage* for ships heading south. East of the island of Tiran and the nearby island of Sanafir – both part of Saudi Arabia but granted to Egypt for military defence – the configuration of the canal floor makes navigation impossible.

On a level with the Strait of Tiran, the Gulf of Aqaba passes from an average width of 10-12 to 2.4 miles, while the floor ranges from a depth of 1,270 meters to only 71 meters in Grafton Passage and 250 meters in Enterprise Passage.

This particular configuration of the strait reduces deep water exchange between the Gulf of Aqaba and the rest of the Red Sea on the one hand, causing an increase of salinity and temperature, while on the other hand it gives rise to an increase in the speed of the tidal currents and the average height of the waves moved by the wind which, chanelled by the tall mountains of Sinai and Saudi Arabia, is in turn subject to acceleration. The peculiar topographical arrangement of these reefs and the presence of prevailing winds coming from the north, which are stronger in the morning and calmer in the afternoon, means their western and northern sides (or "outside") are much more exposed to the action of the waves than the eastern and southern ones, which are "inside" and sheltered.

The strong currents characterizing the Strait of Tiran transport great quantities of plankton and other nutrient material every day, thus supplying a great deal of food to the corals and hence to the reef fish, which in turn are eaten by the large pelagic predators such as barracuda, jackfish, tuna and above all sharks, which are always present in this zone. Consequently, scuba divers in the waters of Tiran are sure to see not only an infinite number of corals but also rich fauna, both reef and pelagic. However, they must always be careful of the wind, tides and currents here, which will condition the time, place and type of dive.



# Strait of Tiran

# Jackson Reef

N

Kormoran

Laguna Reef

Lara wreck
1985

-0.5 m

beacon
(red)

remains of old
light beacon

current

current

fire corals

-5 m

-6 m

mooring

sand splits

mooring

small rocks

-16 m

-20m

-25 m

coral
garden

-10 m

-8 m

sand

-14 m

sand

coral garden

B

-30 m

Woodhouse Reef

-20/-25 m

-28 m

A

-30 m

buoy

-30 m

red anemone

-75 m

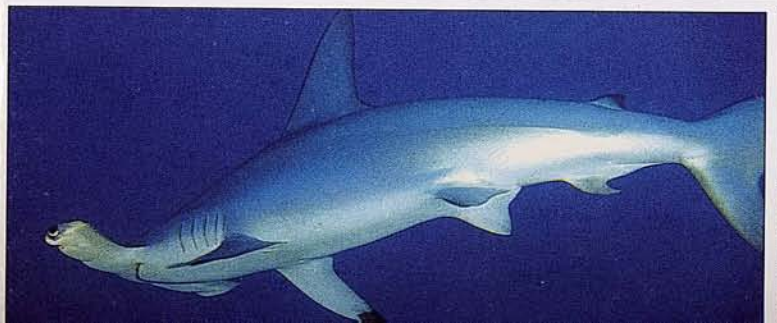
Anemone

Gorgonian

Turbinaria

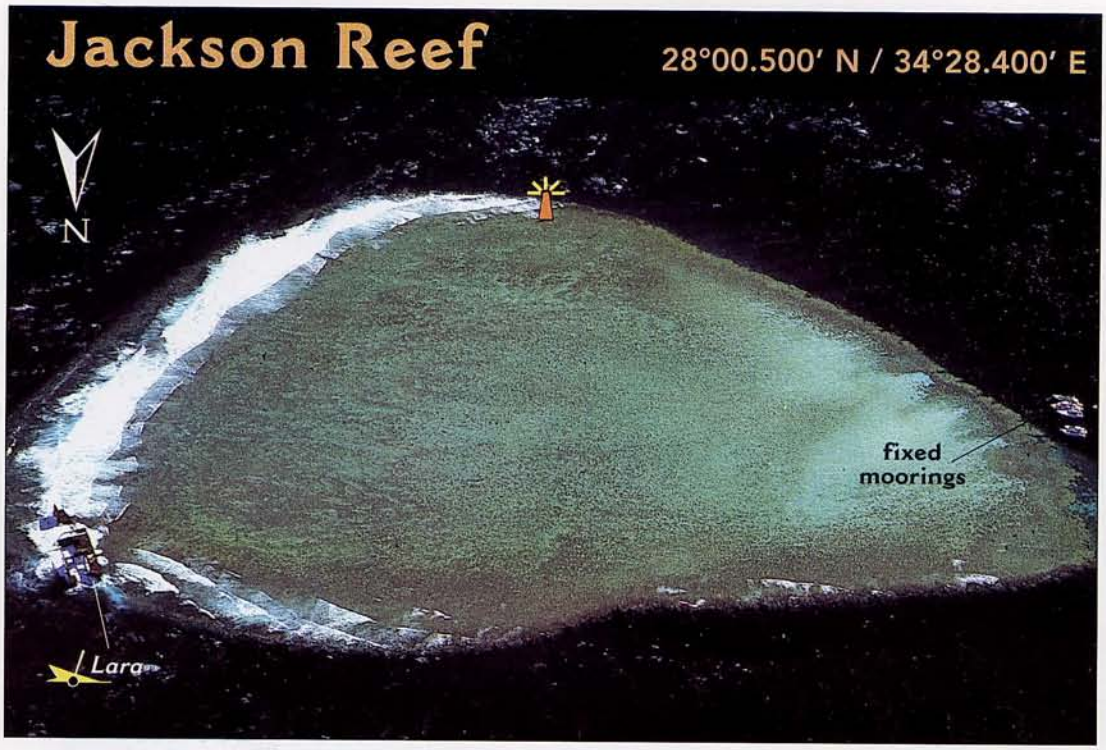



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 85' | |
| Difficulty | ✓✓✓ | |
| Current from | ✓ | to ✓✓✓ |
| Natural scenery | ✓✓ | |
| Fauna interest | ✓✓✓ | |
| General interest | ✓✓✓ | |



# Jackson Reef

28°00.500' N / 34°28.400' E




This is the northernmost reef in Tiran and is known for the wreck, partially demolished in 1996, of the Cypriot merchant ship *Lara*, which sank here in 1985. Diving here usually begins on the southern side, which is sheltered from the waves and wind and where there are a large metal buoy, a fixed mooring (*shamandura*) – which is not far from the reef – and two other mooring points on the reef at water level: here the wall, cut through by some splits, descends steeply to the sandy floor (-50 meters).
Going westwards (dive **A**), you will see some gorgonians and a splendid red anemone at a depth of 28 meters. This is followed by a plateau that is connected to Woodhouse Reef by a saddle.

The southwestern corner of Jackson Reef, where numerous fire corals (*Millepora dichotoma*) can be seen, is subject to the currents, which can be extremely violent.
If conditions are right (especially when the tide is ebbing), it is possible to drift dive on the eastern part of the reef (dive **B**).
Here, about 15 meters down, is a sandy ledge that sinks into the abyss to the north. It is quite easy to spot turtles (*Eretmochelys* sp.) and large pelagic fish in this zone. Among the latter are Whitetip reef sharks (*Triaenodon obesus*), Grey reef sharks (*Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos*) and Hammerhead sharks (*Sphyrna lewini*), which are especially numerous from July to September.

## Features

- *An abundance of pelagic and predatory fish.*
- *Turtles and sharks can be observed.*
- *You can make different types of dive.*
- *Suitable for snorkeling and stopping for lunch.*

## Comments

- *Diving difficulty varies according to conditions of the sea.*
- *Currents may become very strong.*
- *This site is often crowded.*

# Kormoran

28°02.000' N / 34°29.600' E

In August 1984 the *Kormoran*, built in 1963 in the Rostock shipyards (Germany), was coming from Aqaba with a cargo of phosphate when an error in navigation caused it to hit the reef bordering the island of Tiran (*Laguna Reef*). The impact was tremendous and the vessel, which at the time had been renamed *Zingara* and was part of the fleet of an Italian shipping company, the "Compagnia Montemare di Navigazione", lost almost all of its bow, two large cracks opened on its left side and the superstructure was irreparably damaged. Now scuba divers at Sharm el-Sheikh can enjoy the new and interesting experience of going to see this wreck, which is still relatively unknown. A few minutes from the North Laguna beacon, lying on the bottom at a rather shallow depth, the Kormoran, which is about 80 meters long, is easy to find because its stern is partly above the surface. There is no difficulty in diving here, but it must be done when the sea is calm to ensure good visibility. The best conditions for a dive are usually in the afternoon, when the tide changes and the current is at its slowest. The stern, propeller, motor, rudder and winch on the deck are well preserved and the name of the ship on the bow side is still clearly legible.

## *Features*

- *The only dive onto a wreck suitable for OW divers.*
- *The wreck is easy to reach and spot.*
- *Some parts of the ship are really well preserved.*
- *Interesting views for photography buffs.*

## *Comments*

- *Dives must be made in a calm sea, preferably in the afternoon.*

# Kormoran

-0.5 m

bow

deck

engine

-3 m

anchor-winch

-4 m

-6 m

propeller

mast

stern

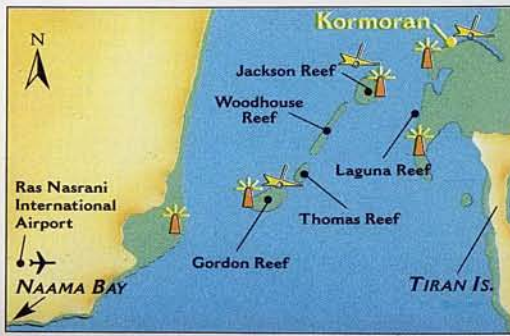
-12 m

**KORMORAN**

**Type of ship**: merchant
**Construction date**: 1963
**Length**: 82.4 m
**Width**: 12.7 m
**Tonnage**: 2,733 t
**Date of shipwreck**: 22 August 1984
**Depth** : 0-12 m
**Accessibility**: easy



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 105' | |
| Difficulty | ✓ | |
| Current from | ✓ | to ✓✓ |
| Natural scenery | ✓✓ | |
| Fauna interest | ✓ | |
| General interest | ✓✓ | |



# Laguna Reef

N

entrance channel

-25 m

-8 m

-12 m

North Laguna beacon (green/white)

iron marker

-5 m

North Laguna

-12 m

Tiran Is.

Johnson Point

-30 m

-0.5 m

1 mile

-6 m

South Laguna beacon (green)

-8 m

-12 m

-5 m

-45 m

-0.5 m

South Laguna

-10 m

-25 m

-9 m

-0.5 m

rising tide

currents

falling tide

-19 m

plateau

-0.5 m

-9 m

-13 m

-20 m

entrance channel

main entrance channel

Gorgonian

Acropora

Jackson Reef

© Geodia (1998) © Elias (1999)


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 95′ | |
| Difficulty | ✓✓ | |
| Current from | ✓ | to ✓✓ |
| Natural scenery | ✓ | |
| Fauna interest | ✓✓ | |
| General interest | ✓✓ | |

# Laguna Reef

27°59.900' N / 34°29.700' E


The western side of Tiran island is bordered by a madreporic formation standing over a splendid coral lagoon with an average depth of 10-12 meters.

A transverse stony coral wall divides the lagoon in two parts – *North* and *South Laguna* – which are both marked by a beacon. South Laguna, the larger of the two, is the best mooring point in the region and offers safe shelter from any unfavourable sea conditions. Its marvellous turquoise waters are a truly unforgettable sight. You can access South Laguna by going round its beacon.

The outer side of Laguna Reef is an interesting diving site in the area between the North Laguna beacon (which is green and white) and the South Laguna one (green). This area is strongly influenced by tidal currents which will determine the southerly or northerly direction of your dives, which should be made preferably in the afternoon. South of the South Laguna beacon, at a depth of 15-25 meters, is a wide plateau with large table corals (*Acropora* sp.) that narrows gradually in a northward direction, becoming a steep wall rich in reef fauna that swims among numerous species of stony and soft corals and some gorgonians. Near North Laguna there is another plateau with many colonies of table corals and fire corals.

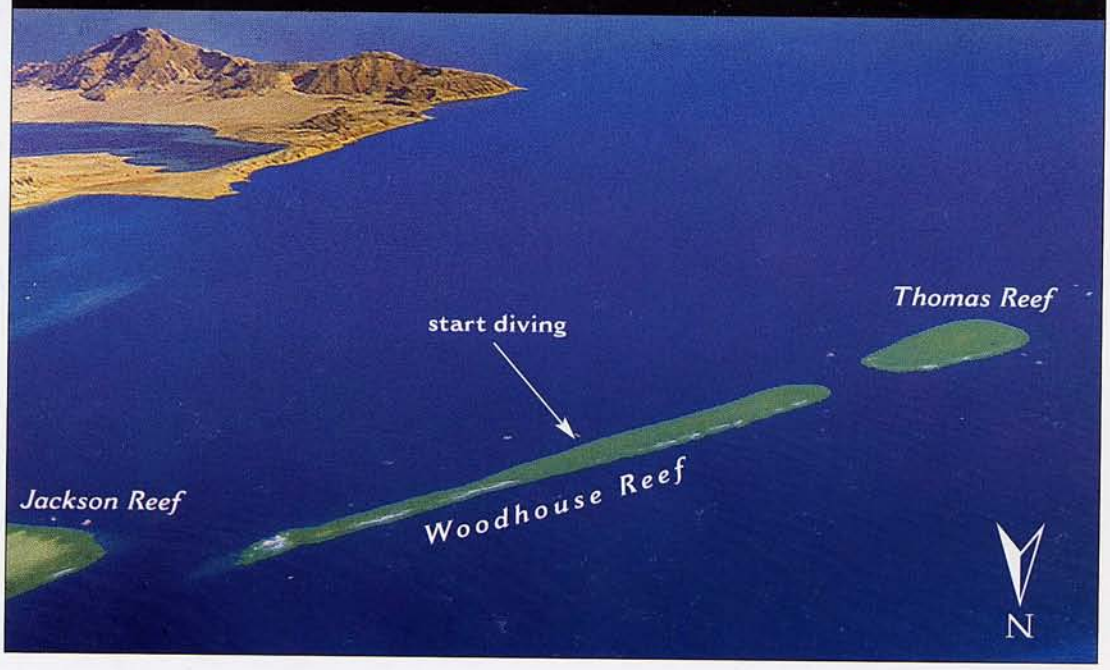
## Features

- *Rich in coral and reef fauna.*
- *Possibility to observe Leopard sharks and White-tip reef sharks, especially on the plateau in front of the South Laguna beacon.*
- *A good alternative when the other sites in the strait are too crowded.*

## Comments

- *Dives should be made only in suitable weather conditions.*
- *Carefully note the direction of the current before diving.*

# Woodhouse Reef 28°00.100′ N / 34°28.000′ E




Located between Thomas Reef and Jackson Reef, Woodhouse Reef is narrow and long and thus offers no shelter at all to boats and has no fixed moorings.
Consequently scuba divers in this spot must make a drift dive – and this must be done only in good weather. The best time is usually the morning.
The most interesting part of the reef, which is 0.75 miles long, is the northern half of the eastern side, with a canyon that opens out at a depth of 30 meters and runs parallel to the main axis of the reef until it reaches a sandy ledge. This latter widens northwards and rises for 14 meters, leading to the saddle that connects the Woodhouse and Jackson reefs. For the entire route the water is remarkably clear and it is quite easy to see jackfish, sea turtles, sharks and a great many corals, both stony and soft, including some colonies of black coral (*Antipathes* sp.) that are at a depth of about 22-26 meters.
It is advisable to end your dive before the saddle, especially when there are waves and currents, because you may come upon a dangerous, powerful eddy; in fact, many local scuba divers have nicknamed this point "the washing machine", which can be crossed only in the best weather conditions.

## Features

- *One of the best sites for observing sharks (Whitetip reef shark, Grey reef shark, Leopard shark and Hammerhead shark), Spotted eagle rays and sea turtles (*Eretmochelys *sp.).*
- *An abundance of corals.*
- *The marine environment is beautiful, especially around the canyon.*

## Comments

- *Begin the dive after having passed the mid-way point of the reef.*
- *Avoid venturing far into the canyon.*
- *Be careful of the current, which tends to get stronger towards the northern end of the reef.*

# Woodhouse Reef

N

often whirling currents

Jackson Reef

-28 m
saddle

sandy road
-14 m

-30 m

-20 m

canyon

corals

-30 m

satellite reef

current

-0.5 m

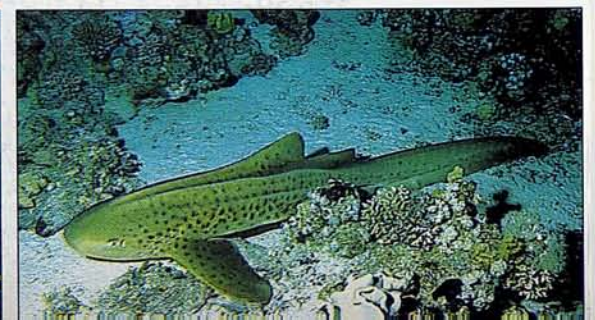
-20 m

-30 m

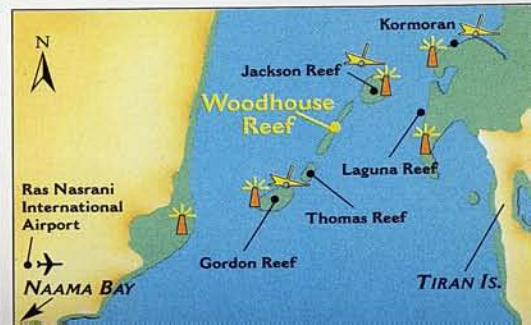
Thomas Reef

-20 m





| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 80' | |
| Difficulty | ✓✓✓ | |
| Current from | ✓ | to ✓✓✓ |
| Natural scenery | ✓✓ | |
| Fauna interest | ✓✓✓ | |
| General interest | ✓✓✓ | |



# Thomas Reef

N

current

cave
-25 m

gorgonians and
whip corals

-0.5 m

corals

-12m

-30 m

-10 m

Gordon Reef

current

splits

Woodhouse Reef

-20 m

-50 m

canyon

coral garden

-20 / -25 m

-35 m

plateau

-30 m

sandy ledge

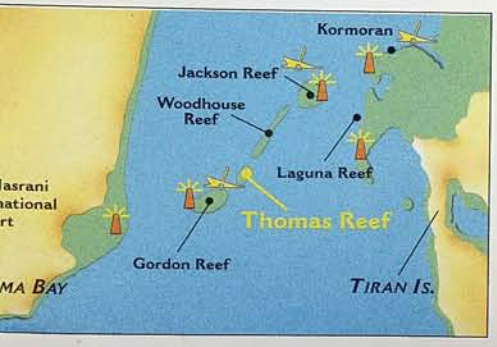
-28 m

-30 m

current

Gorgonian

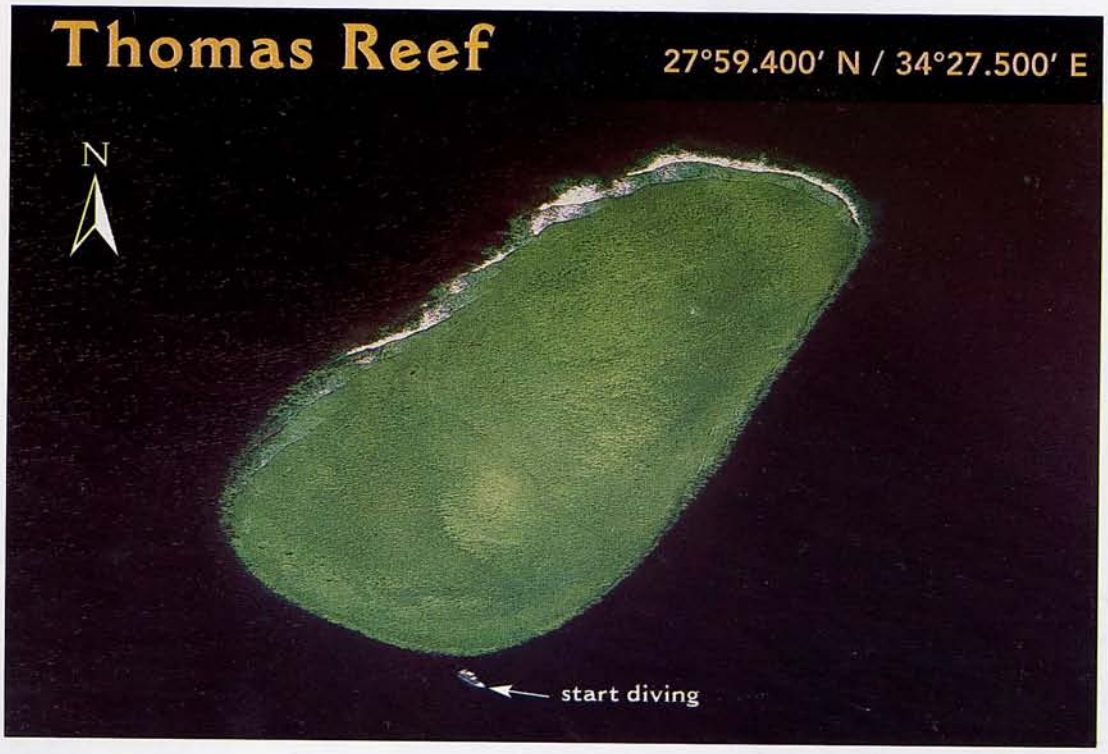





| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 80′ | |
| Difficulty | ✓✓✓ | |
| Current from | ✓ | to ✓✓✓ |
| Natural scenery | ✓✓✓ | |
| Fauna interest | ✓✓✓ | |
| General interest | ✓✓✓ | |

# Thomas Reef

27°59.400′ N / 34°27.500′ E




This reef is one of the most spectacular diving sites in the northern Red Sea. The lack of mooring points makes drift diving necessary: the southern corner of the reef is the classic starting point for your underwater itinerary, which continues along the eastern side where the wall, rich in multicoloured coral, descends to a sandy plateau that begins at a depth of about 25 meters and has a slight incline. Here you can see large Alcyonarians (*Dendronephthya* sp.), impressive gorgonians and colonies of black coral, among which are the striking large Antipatharians with their characteristic spiral shape. At a depth of 35 meters a splendid and extremely deep canyon opens out, running parallel to the reef and crossed by a series of impressive arches.

At the northeastern corner of the reef you may come upon a very strong counter-current. If you can get past this point and conditions are favourable, you can go around the entire reef. This will allow you to explore the northern wall, which has some nice shelters and splits, and the western one, where you will see many crevices and caves, lovely gorgonians and a wealth of fauna consisting of sea turtles, reef fish (Angelfish, groupers, Surgeonfish) and pelagic fish (tuna, barracuda, etc.).

## *Features*

- *An extraordinary, grandiose marine environment.*
- *You may come upon an exceptional array of fauna, with large pelagic fish, especially the Whitetip reef shark (*Triaenodon obesus*).*

## *Comments*

- *Diving here is only for experienced divers because of the possibility of strong currents.*
- *In general the morning is the best time for diving.*
- *Avoid venturing far into the canyon.*

# Gordon Reef

27°59.200' N / 34°27.000' E


Gordon Reef is known for the wreck of the *Lovilla* (also named *Lullia*), which ran aground on the northern end in September 1981. The fact that there is a fixed mooring (*shamandura*) on the southern side and a wide and rather shallow (10-24 m) plateau that fans out in a southwesterly direction, makes this diving site safer than the preceding ones. A red and white beacon lies on the southwestern corner. The first dive (**A**) starts off from the mooring point and winds in an easterly direction and then northwards along the eastern side of the reef. Halfway along this side you can see many metal drums scattered at a depth of 10 to 20 meters. From here you can either double back to the starting point or make a drift dive and proceed north (dive **B**); in this case you will come across a rather small sandy plateau on which some Garden eels (*Gorgasia sillneri*) live. On the third dive (**C**) you can explore the vast plateau that extends in a southwesterly direction. After reaching the sand-filled depression with a vaguely circular shape that is known as the "Amphitheatre" or "Shark Pool", you will pass by a mass of cables and metal bars. From here you can go back to the starting point either by heading towards the reef or, after crossing a zone filled with fire corals (*Millepora dichotoma*), by drift diving along the western side of the reef.

## *Features*

- *The opportunity to observe various species of coral, small Nudibranchia mollusks and, with a bit of luck, Whitetip reef sharks, Hammerhead sharks and Spotted eagle rays.*
- *This site is suitable for snorkeling.*
- *Safe mooring sheltered from the wind.*

## *Comments*

- *Beware of the current at the southwestern corner of the reef, near the beacon, as it could make it hard to return to your boat or even prevent you from doing so.*

# Gordon Reef

N

Lovilla (Lullia) wreck 1981

-0.5 m

remains of old beacon

beacon (red/white)

Thomas Reef

B

-10 m

barrels

snorkeling area

current

-20 m

A

-10 m

-30 m

-28 m

snorkeling area

current

-11 m

fire corals

sandy road

The Amphitheatre

-10 m

-13 m

sand plateau

C

-190 m

current

-20 m

wreck fragments

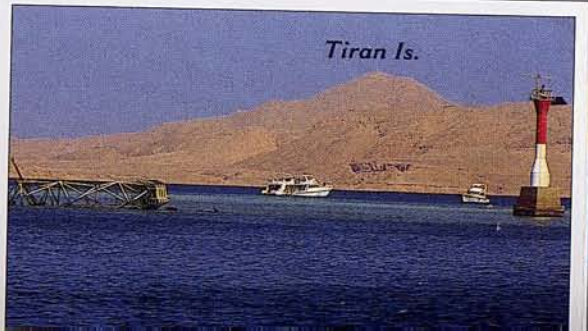
-33 m

Ras Ghamila

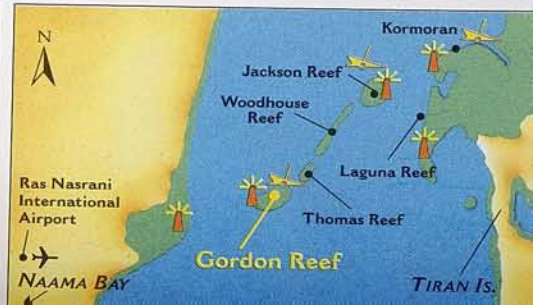
-50 m

Gorgonian






| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 75′ | |
| Difficulty from | ✓✓ | to ✓✓✓ |
| Current from | ✓ | to ✓✓✓ |
| Natural scenery | ✓✓ | |
| Fauna interest | ✓✓✓ | |
| General interest | ✓✓✓ | |




W E
Magnetic variation
2°40' E (1998)
Navigation times from Naama Bay
Ras Ghamila 70'
Ras Nasrani 60'
Ras Bob 58'
White Knight 55'
Shark Bay 30'
Far Garden 20'
Middle Garden 15'
Near Garden 10'
Sodfa 15'
Tower 20'
Pinky Wall 22'
Amphoras 23'
Turtle Bay 35'
Paradise 36'
Ras Umm Sid 38'
Temple 43'
Ras Katy 45'
Sharm el-Sheikh
TRAVCO
Hyper-baric chamber
Sharm el-Maya
SHARM EL-SHEIKH
Ras Katy
Temple
Ras Umm Sid
Paradise
Turtle Bay
Amphoras
Pinky Wall
Tower
Sodfa
Near Garden
Middle Garden
Far Garden
jetty for diving boats
NAAMA BAY
Marsa el-Aat
Coral Bay (Marsa Umm Mureika)
Shark Bay
White Knight
Ras Bob
Ras Nasrani
Ras Ghamila
Ras Nasrani International Airport
Gordon Reef
Thomas Reef
scale 1 : 90,000
1 cm = 0.9 Km
0 1 2 3 4 5
kilometers
35 - Seti Sharm
34 - Farana King Snefru Resort
33 - Reef Oasis Hotel
32 - Golden View Hotel
31 - Royal Paradise Resort
30 - Queen Sharm
29 - Iberotel Grand Sharm
28 - Sharm Reef Hotel
27 - The Ritz Carlton
26 - Dreams Beach Hotel
25 - Tower Club
24 - Club Reef
23 - Sharm Club
22 - Iberotel Lido
21 - Halomy Sharm Hotel
20 - Helnan Marina Sharm
19 - Mövenpick Jolie Ville
18 - Ghazala Hotel & Gardens Village
17 - Hilton Fayrouz Hotel & Sharm Dreams
16 - Novotel Sharm el-Sheikh
15 - Marriott Beach Resort
14 - Sonesta Beach Resort
13 - Sofitel Beach Resort
12 - Hyatt Regency
11 - Sheraton Hotel
10 - Sheikh Coast - Coral Bay
9 - Jolie Ville Mövenpick Golf Resort
8 - Holiday Inn
7 - Pyramisa Hotel
6 - Shark Bay Resort
5 - Four Seasons
4 - Le Meridien
3 - Coral Beach Montazah
2 - Baron Hotel
1 - Conrad International Resort
Local Dives
Ras Ghamila → Ras Katy

# LOCAL DIVES

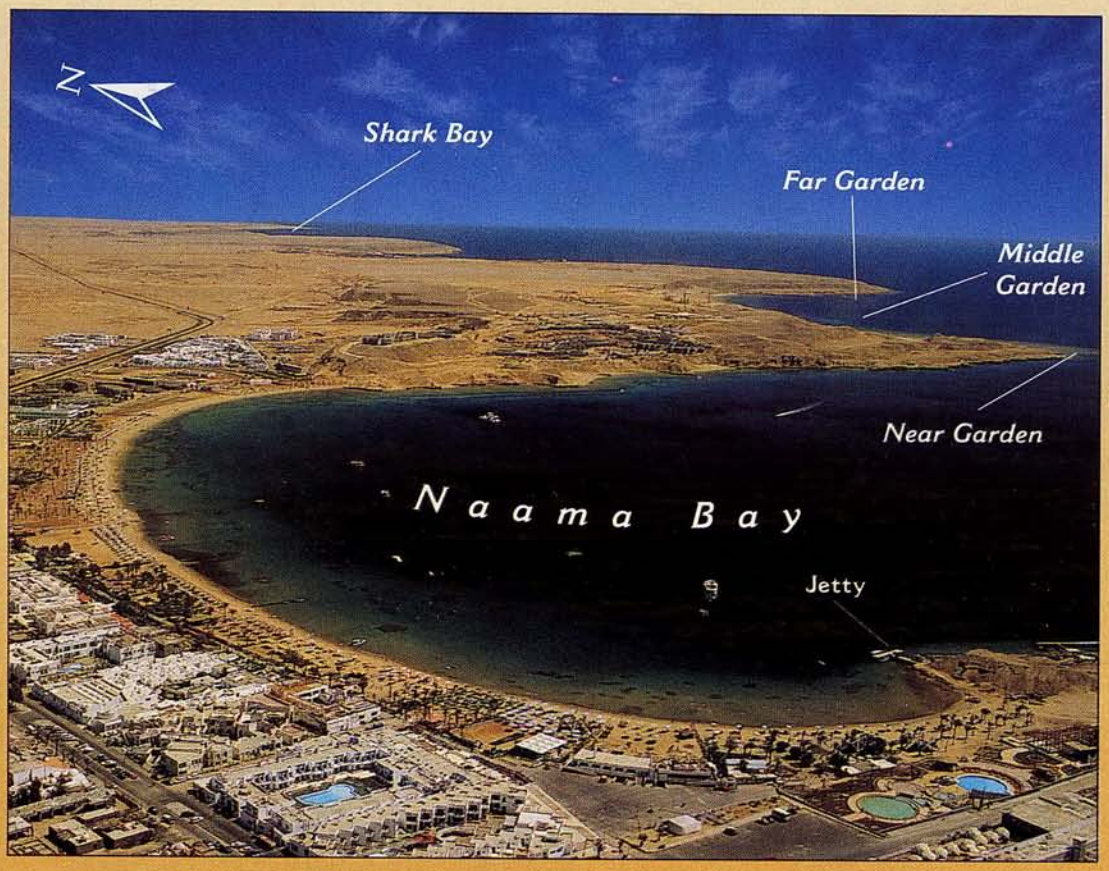
This generic name covers all the diving sites north and south of Naama Bay between the Strait of Tiran and the town of Sharm el-Sheikh.

Starting off from Naama Bay – a famous resort of international tourism – which has one of the two jetties that diving boats usually set off from (the other, called Marina Travco, is southwest of Sharm el-Sheikh), you can reach the seventeen diving sites – called "local" because of their proximity to one another – after a boat ride that may take anywhere from 10 to 70 minutes.

North of Naama Bay, the modern name for the splendid bay originally called *Marsa el-Aat*, situated at the outlet of the *Wadi el-Aat*, there are eight diving spots on a 7.5-mile stretch of coast. **Ras Ghamila**, the farthest one, lies almost directly opposite Gordon Reef; **Ras Nasrani** is on a level with the international airport; the others, which follow a short distance from one another, are **Ras Bob**, **White Knight**, **Shark Bay**, **Far Garden**, **Middle Garden** and **Near Garden** (which corresponds to the northern tip of Naama Bay).

South of Naama Bay are nine diving points: **Sodfa**, **Tower**, **Pinky Wall**, **Amphoras**, **Turtle Bay**, **Paradise**, **Ras Umm Sid**, **Temple** and **Ras Katy**. The last-mentioned site corresponds to the northern end of Sharm el-Maya bay.

Generally speaking, besides their vicinity to Naama Bay, the above diving sites have other features in common due to their position, sheltered from waves and strong currents, and to the configuration of the fringing reef, which has found an ideal ecosystem for its growth in this stretch of coast. Diving here can be effected by divers at all levels and, in good conditions, you can observe many genera of madrepores, innumerable varieties of Alcyonarians and an almost complete range of reef fish, from the small *Anthias* to the large Napoleonfish (*Cheilinus undulatus*), and from the multicoloured Butterflyfish to Parrotfish, Orange-striped triggerfish and Surgeonfish.



# Ras Ghamila

27°58.800' N / 34°26.200' E


The name "Ras Ghamila", which is not on official maps, is used by divers to indicate the tongue of the reef that juts out eastwards and on which is the green beacon that marks the western end of the Strait of Tiran. All the ships that come down from the ports of Aqaba and Eilat must pass by this beacon as well as the red and white one on Gordon Reef.

The madreporic reef of Ras Ghamila separates a vast and rather shallow sandy lagoon from the sea and is crossed over by a small natural canal that is sometimes used by local fishermen.

Ras Ghamila is an interesting place for a fine drift dive that is not too difficult. The classic dive, which must be followed in any case when the tide is swelling, begins immediately after you have passed the *Conrad International Resort* area; from this point you dive onto a vast sandy plateau with a slight incline, staying at a depth of about 15 meters, and then continue in a sort of gliding motion northwards, parallel to the edge of the reef at a level with the beacon. On the gentle slope of the reef, which descends to an average depth of about 8 meters, there are many large colonies of *Porites* coral and some Giant triggerfish (*Balistoides viridescens*) often pass by, while on the plateau there are large *Acropora* corals, around which schools of pelagic fish swim.

## Features

- *The dives here are usually easy and pleasant and allow you to observe many madreporic colonies and mixed fauna, both reef and pelagic.*

## Comments

- *You need not venture far from the slope of the reef to observe coral formations and the reef and pelagic species that move around the plateau.*
- *When you are close to the beacon, go straight to the open sea to facilitate your return to the boat. The current may be strong.*

lagoon

mainland

beacon (green)

channel

-0.5 m

-8 m

-9 m

Gordon Reef

Ras Nasrani

-14 m

-14 m

-15 m

Acropora

Porites

current

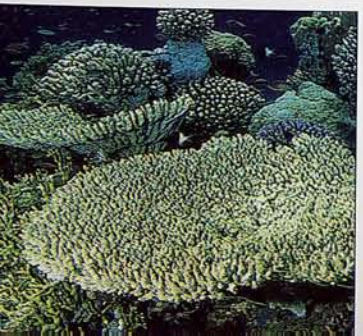
-25 m

-29 m

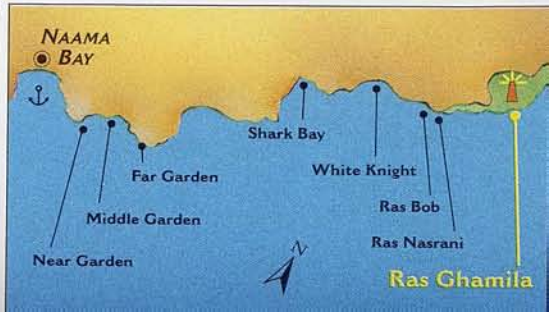
# Ras Ghamila

-25 m





| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 70' | |
| Difficulty | ✔✔ | |
| Current from | ✔ | to ✔✔ |
| Natural scenery | ✔ | |
| Fauna interest | ✔✔ | |
| General interest | ✔✔ | |



first bridge

water tank

second bridge

walking paved road

beach

beach

-0.5 m

-6 m sand

Ras Bob

-18 m

-12 m
red anemone

-0.5 m

-25 m

-27 m

-20 m

-30 m

Ras Ghamila

sand

N

Ras Nasrani

90°

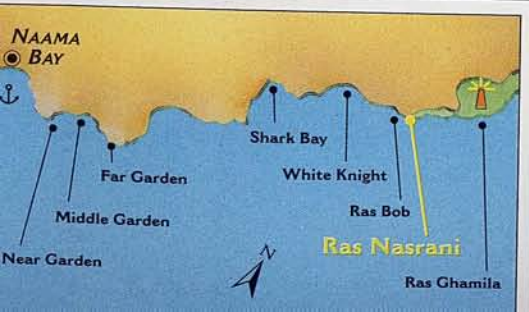
current

Anemone

Gorgonian

Porites

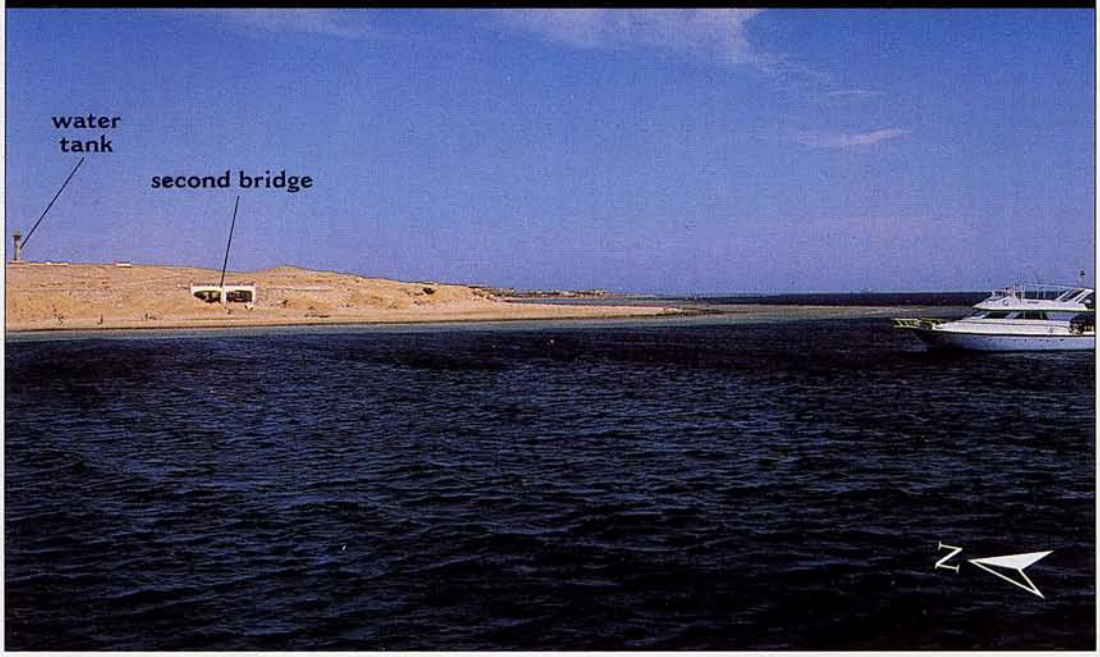





| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 60' | 11 km |
| Difficulty from | ✔ | to ✔✔ |
| Current from | ✔ | to ✔✔ |
| Natural scenery | ✔✔ | |
| Fauna interest | ✔✔ | |
| General interest | ✔✔ | |

# Ras Nasrani

27°57.750′ N / 34°25.000′ E




The name of this locality means "Christian cape" in Arabic. It lies 11 kilometers north of Naama Bay and immediately south of Ras Ghamila. Ras Nasrani can also be reached by land: take the road leading to the *Baron* and *Conrad International* hotels and go down towards the beautiful white sand beach before a large water tank situated on the promontory to the left of the road. However, the classic dive is usually made from boats, either drift dives or circling loop dives. The diving is done from a small sandy plateau that begins at a depth of about 6 meters, where a sand flow originates. At 12 meters' depth you can see a lovely example of red anemone. Then you head northwards towards the cape, taking advantage of the current, which ranges from weak to moderate and tends to get faster near the headland. After you have passed some large gorgonians located at about 20 meters' depth, you will come upon large colonies of mushroom-shaped *Porites* coral heads; these become even more numerous beyond the cape. The dive goes through the zone between the reef slope, which has many small shelters studded with multicoloured Alcyonarians, and the drop-off situated about 30 meters away. Ras Nasrani is the ideal spot to observe the bivalve mollusk *Tridacna* sp., being the area with the highest population density of this creature in the entire Red Sea.

## Features

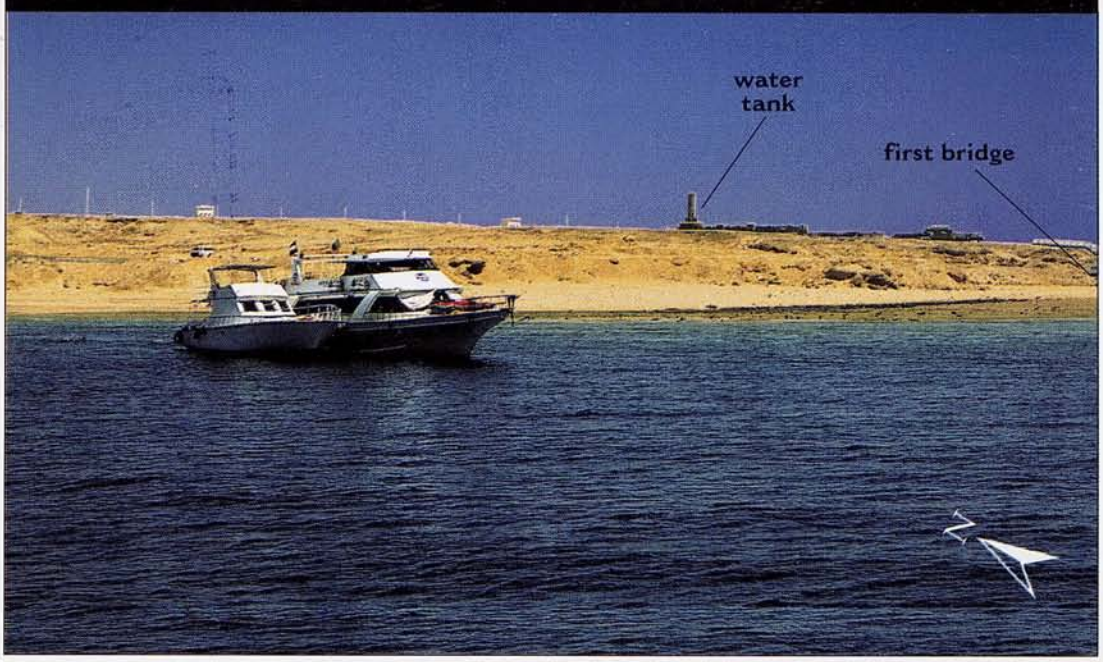
- *Easy diving which will allow you to observe pelagic fish such as tuna, Jackfish and barracuda.*
- *A good spot for night diving, during which you can see a great many Nudibranchia mollusks such as the* Hexabranchus sanguineus *(Spanish dancer).*

## Comments

- *The current may become very strong around the cape.*

# Ras Bob

27°57.800' N / 34°24.800' E




Do not bother looking for this name on nautical maps, since even the locals are not familiar with it. It was coined recently by some diving instructors at Sharm el-Sheikh to indicate the southernmost part of Ras Nasrani as a tribute to the underwater cameraman Bob Johnson, who worked for years in this area. Ras Bob is sheltered from the waves and wind and usually has weak currents.

The classic dive is made from your boat, moored at the *shamandura* on a stony coral pinnacle, at a depth of 20 meters. The dive runs northeast at a depth of from 15 to 20 meters until you reach the pre-established point of return, which you will effect by skirting the small reef ledge. There are many small bays with a light-coloured sand floor on the edges of which you will see numerous small caves and gullies in rather shallow water (4-8 meters' depth). Crocodilefish (*Cociella crocodila*) and Bluespotted stingrays (*Taeniura lymma*) often rest on the sand of the inlets. Snorkelers can skirt the reef both east and west of the fixed mooring to explore the marvellous configuration and admire the many corals, both stony and soft.

## *Features*

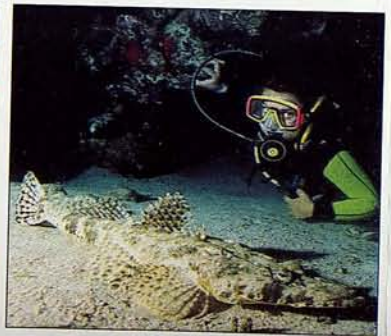
- *Easy diving in a sheltered spot, with mixed reef and pelagic fauna. Suitable for all diving levels.*
- *Very interesting for snorkelers.*

## *Comments*

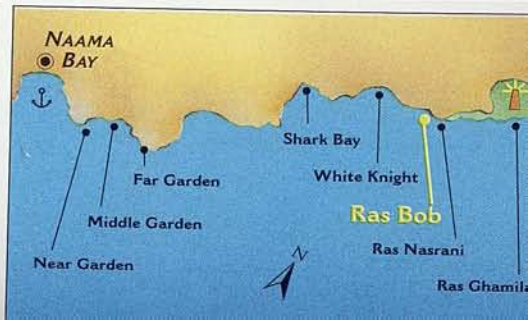
- *The most interesting part of this site is at a depth of 4-12 meters.*

stairs
first bridge
beach
beach
beach
-0.5 m
-0.5 m
Ras Nasrani
caves
cave
cave
-6 m
-8 m
-12 m
sandy ledge
-20 m
-14 m
-12 m
-20 m
-20 m
-22 m
N
current
White Knight
Acropora
Ras Bob
© Geodia (1998) © Elias (1999)

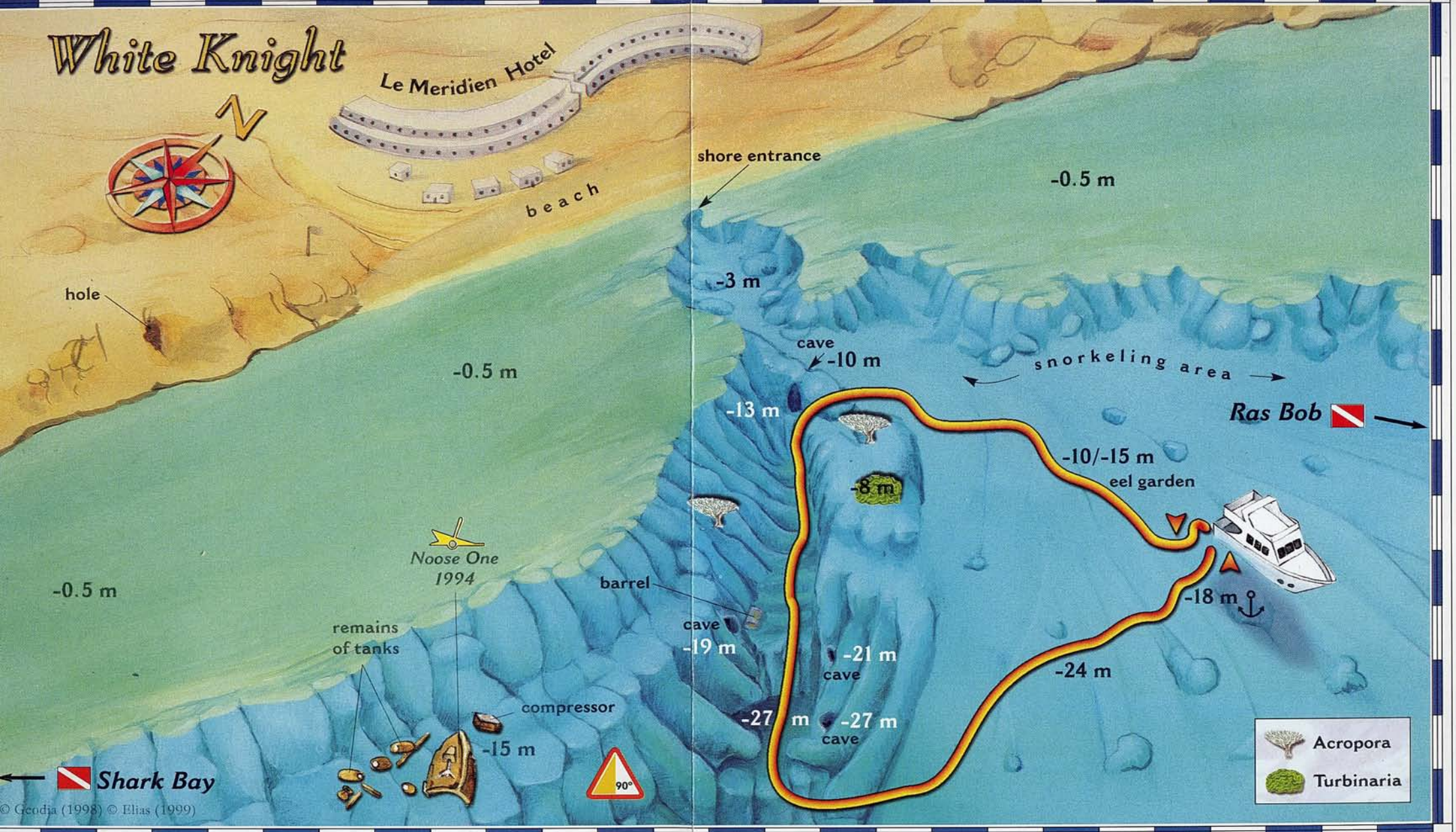
Lined butterflyfish



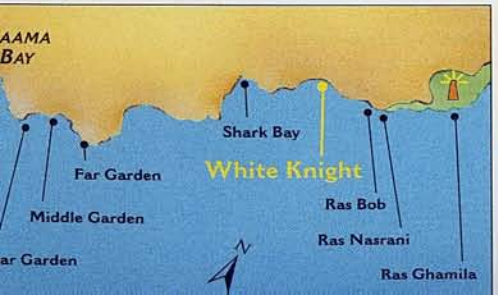
| | |
|---|---|
| Access | 58′ |
| Difficulty | ✔ |
| Current | ✔ |
| Natural scenery | ✔✔ |
| Fauna interest | ✔✔ |
| General interest | ✔✔ |



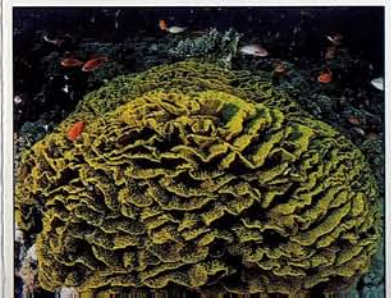
# White Knight





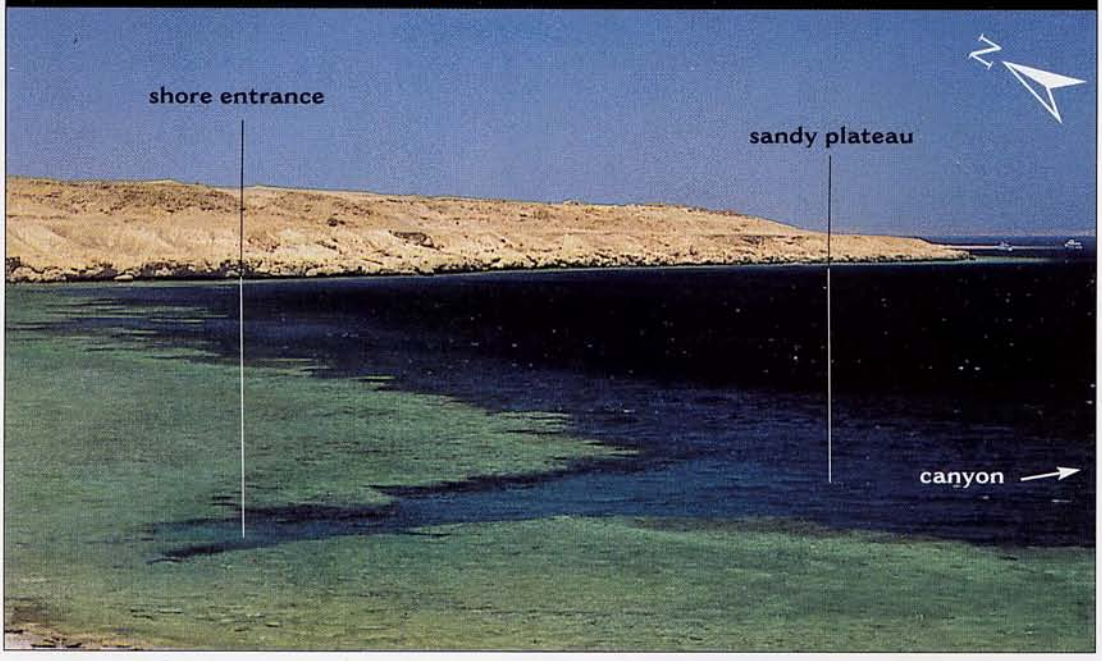




| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 55′ | |
| Difficulty | from ✔ | to ✔✔ |
| Current | ✔ | |
| Natural scenery | ✔✔✔ | |
| Fauna interest | ✔✔ | |
| General interest | ✔✔ | |



# White Knight

27°57.400' N / 34°24.000' E




White Knight is a small bay bordered by a rather well developed reef with a large crevice that opens onto a sandy plateau from 6 to 18 meters deep. Here there is a mooring point (*shamandura*) near a colony of Garden eels (*Gorgasia sillneri*). On the southwestern side of the bay, at a depth of 8 meters, is a beautiful canyon with a sandy floor that descends to a depth of 38 meters. The eastern side of this canyon is composed of two stony coral buttresses on which you will see a large *Acropore* formation and serpentine Salad coral (*Turbinaria mesenterina*). Next to the entrance of the canyon is a tunnel that begins at 10 meters' depth and opens into the canyon at 13 meters. If you descend to 19 meters you will see a metal drum that marks the opening of a cave, while at 21 meters on the opposite side there is another cave. Lastly is a small ledge at 27 meters over a precipice which is a veritable sand flow that inspired the name given to this site a few years ago – "Wichita Falls". On the left-hand side of this ledge is the entrance to a third cave which, surprisingly, runs steeply upwards. From the overhang you can go both northwards, doubling back to the starting point, or to the southwest to see the wreck of *Noose One*, a diving boat that sank in 1994 after a fire and that lies upside-down at a depth of 15 meters.

## Features

- *A grandiose, spectacular marine environment.*
- *You can observe interesting madrepores.*
- *The site is rather well sheltered from the wind and waves.*
- *Manta rays (*Manta birostris*) may be seen, especially in summer afternoons.*

## Comments

- *Avoid going below the maximum depth allowed in the canyon (30 m).*

# Shark Bay

27°56.700' N / 34°23.200' E


Contrary to what one might expect, this bay is not frequented by sharks but only by crowds of tourists attracted by the lovely sand beach that borders the entire bay. It seems that the name "Shark Bay" derives from the fact that local fishermen once came here to unload the sharks they had caught.

At the northern part of the bay is the *Shark Bay Resort*, with a diving center and a first-rate restaurant featuring fresh fish cooked in the traditional Bedouin manner. The southwestern side of the bay is occupied by the *Pyramisa Hotel* and is open only to hotel guests. Shark Bay is easy to reach by car via a paved road.

There is an entrance fee at the Shark Bay Resort beach, from which you can dive directly into the water. Those who want to dive from boats can moor at the *shamandura* in the bay. The classic dive runs through some large madreporic formations that rise from the sandy floor – where you can see Crocodilefish, Scorpionfish, Torpedo rays and Stonefish – and it ends at the deep sandy canyon on the southwestern side of the bay. After following the canyon for a depth of 30 meters, head west at 18 meters to explore a sandy plateau and the reef ledge, which has a remarkable variety of stony and soft corals (Alcyonarians).

## *Features*

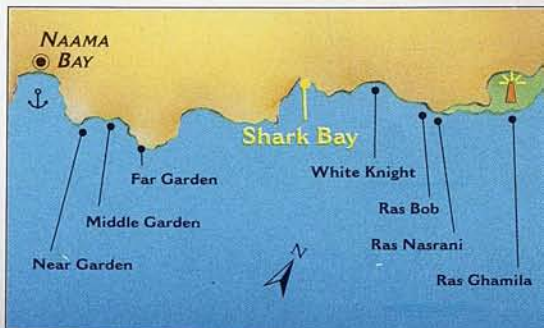
- *A perfect place for beginners or inexperienced divers and for check dives.*
- *You may see Manta rays, especially during the summer.*
- *Very good night diving, when you can see many Gastropoda, Echinoderms, Lionfish and calamari.*

## *Comments*

- *The bay is often very crowded.*
- *Because of widespread plankton the water is sometimes murky (especially in summer).*
- *The sandy floor is not very clean in several points.*
- *During your night dives you can observe the rare* Conus textile *cone shell.*

Pyramisa Hotel
road
Marine Police
diving center
restaurant
Shark Bay Resort
shore entrance
beach
beach
sand
-5 m
-6 m
-0.5 m
-8 m
-10 m
-14 m
-13 m
-0.5 m
snorkeling area
sand
White Knight
-30 m
canyon
coral garden
sandy ledge
-18 m
sand
sand
90°
-40 m
Shark Bay
© Geodia (1998) © Elias (1999)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 30′ | 5,5 km |
| Difficulty from | ✔ | to ✔✔ |
| Current | ✔ | |
| Natural scenery | ✔✔ | |
| Fauna interest | ✔ | |
| General interest | ✔✔ | |



# Far Garden

coral heads
coral heads
-0.5 m
small rock
Porites
cave with glassfish
-0.5 m
often strong current
snorkeling area
cave -7 m
-9.5 m
-5 m
cave
-13.5 m
-14 m
-14 m
A
B
-19 m
-20 m
Middle Garden
-25 m
90°
-35 m
90°
The Cathedral
current
-45 m
Acropora
Gorgonian
© Gcodia (1998) © Elias (1999)


| | |
|---|---|
| Access | 20' |
| Difficulty | ✓✓ |
| Current from | ✓ to ✓✓ |
| Natural scenery | ✓✓ |
| Fauna interest | ✓✓ |
| General interest | ✓✓ |

# Far Garden

27°55.000′ N / 34°21.500′ E


Far Garden is situated in the northernmost part of a splendid bay just north of Naama Bay. Because of the many madreporic formations and their configuration, Far Garden is considered a veritable underwater garden. It differs from the other localities in the bay, since there is a series of large madreporic pinnacles located between the ledge along the reef and the drop-off, which becomes gradually steeper in an eastward direction. Here you can make both a circling loop dive (dive **A**) or a drift dive (**B**). The first dive allows you to explore the pinnacles, which are about thirty meters from one another and feature an extraordinary outcrop of both stony and soft corals. They are frequented by a great number of reef fish, small scalefin *Anthias*, Lionfish (*Pterois volitans*), Suez fusiliers (*Caesio suevicus*) and Sergeant majors (*Abudefduf saxatilis*).

Continue east until you reach a cave – the entrance of which is crowned by a colony of *Porites lutea* coral – that opens out at 5 meters' depth and houses a large school of Glassfish (*Parapriacanthus guentheri*). An alternative, if weather conditions are favourable, is to make a drift dive from this cave, descending diagonally to 30 meters' depth, where you will see, from above, the top of a majestic and vast overhang known as "The Cathedral" that opens out at a depth of about 45 meters and penetrates the reef for a dozen meters. From this point you can begin resurfacing by skirting the headland.

## Features

- *This site is usually sheltered from waves and wind.*
- *A wealth of corals and reef fish.*
- *Many Scorpionfish (Scorpaenopsis sp.) and Nudibranchia mollusks, which can be seen mostly at night.*
- *A suitable site for snorkeling.*

## Comments

- *The current, which generally runs eastwards, tends to get stronger the closer it is to the headland.*
- *Do not dive too deeply, especially in the vicinity of "The Cathedral".*

# Middle Garden

27°54.750′ N / 34°21.000′ E


As its name implies, this site lies in the central part of the bay between Far Garden and Near Garden, more or less on a line with the impressive *Hyatt Regency* complex. Totally sheltered from wind, waves and currents, Middle Garden has a fixed mooring point just opposite the central section of the hotel. Dives are made onto a vast sandy plateau that is from 6 to 10 meters deep; from here you can go northeast, keeping the reef to your left and then descending to a maximum depth of 14 meters, where you will see the drop-off. After having gone a few dozen meters, the plateau narrows, giving rise to a beautiful avenue of white sand bordered by madrepores. Experienced divers who have a good reserve of air can go as far as a group of three madreporic pinnacles situated at precisely the mid-way point between Middle and Far Garden: because of its fixed mooring this site is used as a diving point in itself that many instructors call "Middle - Far Garden". An alternative is a drift dive heading southwest towards Near Garden; naturally, this can be done when the tide is ebbing and the current is favourable.

## Features

- *Rather easy diving suitable for beginners and for check dives.*
- *An ideal spot when the sea conditions are not optimal elsewhere.*
- *Here you can see Spotted eagle rays (*Aetobatus narinari*) and Manta rays (*Manta birostris*) in the summer.*

## Comments

- *Since this site is fine for a lunch break, the* shamandura *is often crowded with many boats, especially in the late morning hours.*

Hyatt Hotel

beach

-0.5 m

sandy road

snorkeling area

-6/-8 m

sand

-14 m

Far Garden

- 8 m

-9.4 m

-0.5 m

N

-11 m

-15 m

sandy road

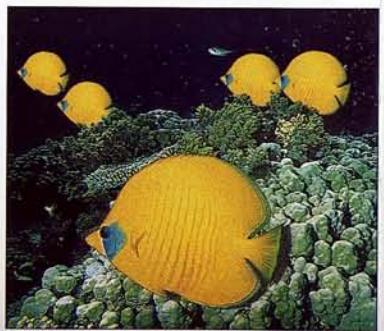
Near Garden

Porites

-35 m

# Middle Garden





| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 15' | |
| Difficulty | ✔ | |
| Current | ✔ | |
| Natural scenery | ✔ | |
| Fauna interest | ✔✔ | |
| General interest | ✔ | |

# Near Garden

beach

N

-0.5 m

NAAMA BAY

-0.5 m

soft corals

-15 m

-18 m

coral garden

-12 m

dead area

sand

-4 m

soft corals

-21 m

-19 m

-16 m

sand

-10 m

Middle Garden

coral garden

sand gentle slope

sandy road

shelter with glassfish

-18 m

-24 m

-14 m

ridge of pinnacles

Gorgonian

Porites

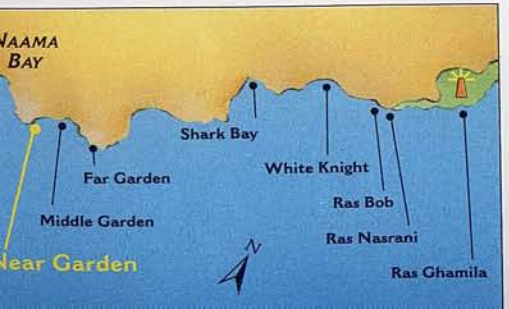
Turbinaria

current

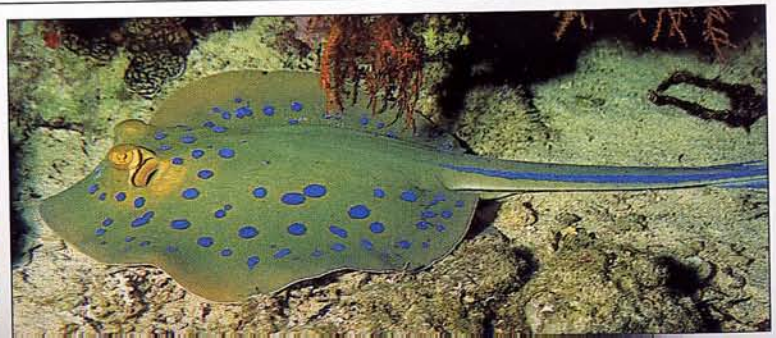
-30 m

-42 m



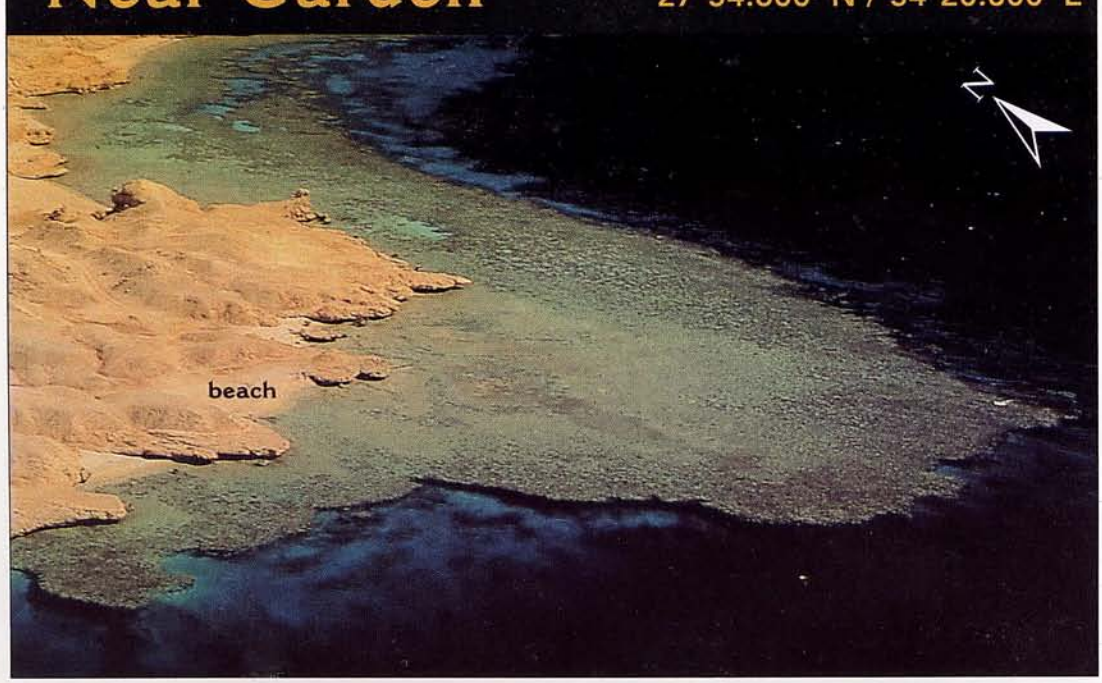



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 10' | |
| Difficulty | ✔ | |
| Current from | ✔ | to ✔✔ |
| Natural scenery | ✔✔ | |
| Fauna interest | ✔✔ | |
| General interest | ✔✔ | |



# Near Garden

27°54.600′ N / 34°20.800′ E




This is the diving site closest to Naama Bay and the most southerly of the "Gardens". Unfortunately, because of the excessive number of divers and the debris deposited on the corals during the construction of the hotel complex above it, this locality has lost much of its original allure. Near the reef is a vast whitish area with a great number of dead madrepores, often called the "dead area". Despite the above disadavantages Near Garden still remains a good alternative for afternoon and night dives. Diving begins from a boat moored on the *shamandura* fixed to the bottom at 15 meters' depth. Descend onto a sandy plateau at about 15-20 meters that is bordered on the edge of the drop-off by a series of stony coral heads, and then proceed to a beautiful chain of pinnacles running in a northwest-southeast direction that become deeper and deeper. After passing this underwater ridge, go northwards to explore the numerous gullies in the reef by crossing a narrow passageway between two madreporic formations inhabited by a colony of Glassfish (*Parapriacanthus guentheri*). During your dive you will come upon many Bluespotted stingrays (*Taeniura lymma*), Napoleonfish (*Cheilinus undulatus*), Orangestriped triggerfish (*Balistapus undulatus*) and Red-toothed triggerfish (*Odonus niger*).

## Features

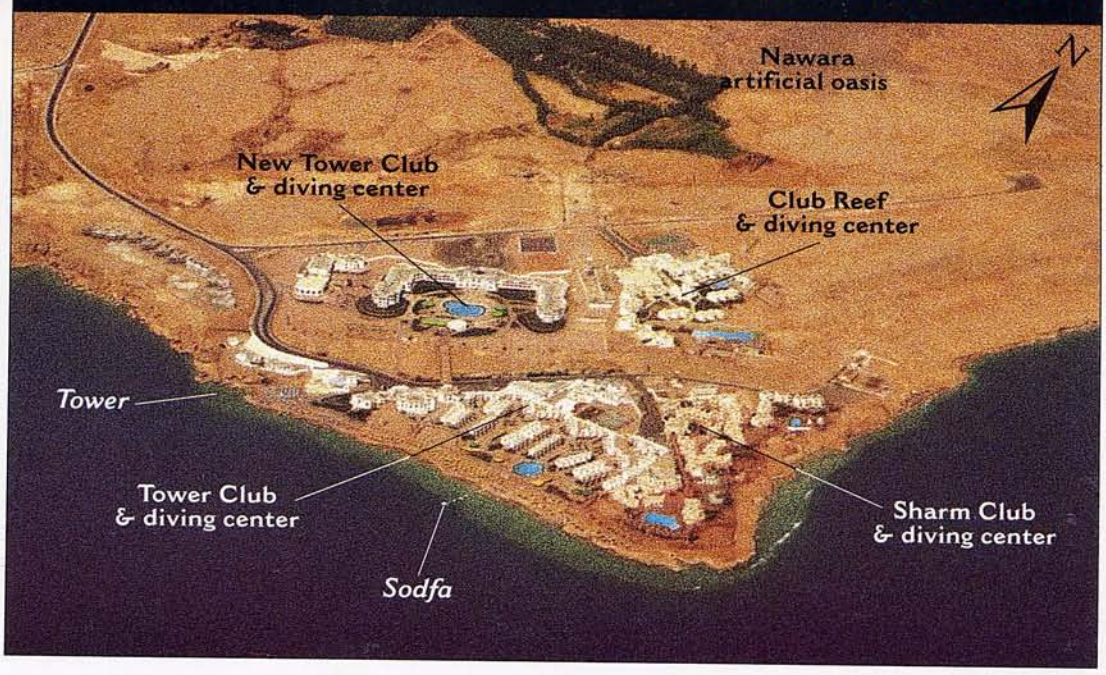
- *Easy diving that allows you to observe many species of multicoloured Alcyonarians, sponges and a fairly wide variety of corals.*
- *A suitable site for night dives and snorkeling.*

## Comments

- *Beware of the many glass-bottom boats that pass near the reef without any regard whatsoever for divers.*

# Sodfa

27°54.000' N / 34°19.500' E




This site is immediately northeast of the much better-known and more popular Tower, on a level with a small promontory jutting into the sea, on which four large tourist villages have been built: the *Tower Club*, *Sharm Club* and, behind these two, the *New Tower Club* and *Club Reef*.

You can dive directly from the Tower Club area, which can be reached by taking the paved road that begins a short way from the Mobil gasoline station between Naama Bay and Sharm el-Sheikh. The beach in this tourist village has a floating jetty which is, however, only for Tower Club guests; this is the reason why dives are usually made from a boat and are therefore of the drift variety. Dive opposite the floating jetty. The classic dive goes along the sandy slope at an average depth of about 15 meters, between the reef ledge and the drop-off at 25 meters' depth.

On the sandy slope with the coral pinnacles and near the drop-off, you will see some large gorgonians at a depth of 20-22 meters.

If the current is going in the right direction and is strong enough, you can reach the Tower canyon, about 700 meters away.

## Features

- *An easy dive that allows you to observe many species of coral, both soft and stony, and a wide range of reef fauna.*
- *This site is less frequented than Tower.*

## Comments

- *Before making your dive, check the direction of the current: if it is going northwards (flood tide), change the direction of your dive.*

Tower Club
diving center
beach
shore entrance
-0.5 m
NAAMA BAY
snorkeling area
-0.5 m
snorkeling area
-7 m
gentle slope
-9 m
-16 m
coral garden
shelter
sand
-14 m
-25 m
-25 m
-25 m
Tower
Acropora
Gorgonian
90°
current
-80 m
Sodfa
© Gcodia (1998) © Elias (1999)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 15' | 4 |
| Difficulty from | ✔ | to ✔✔ |
| Current | ✔ | |
| Natural scenery | ✔ | |
| Fauna interest | ✔✔ | |
| General interest | ✔ | |

Tower Club

Sodfa

beach

shore entrance

shelter with glassfish

-12 m

pinnacle

-0.5 m

fossil coral tower

entrance/exit hole

pinnacle

-30 m

canyon

cave

-18 m

gentle slope

cave

-0.5 m

-12 m

Pinky Wall

shelter

-25 m

-10 m

sandy ledge

-16 m

-20 m

Tower

cave

-32 m

Acropora

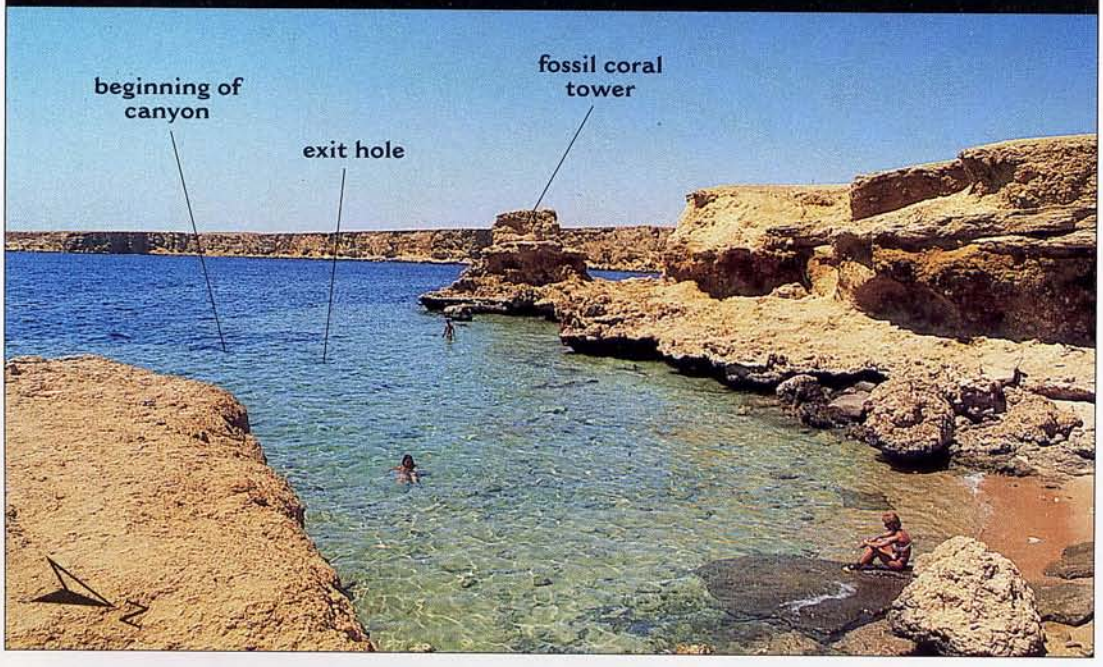
Gorgonian




| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 20' | 4 km |
| Difficulty from | ✔ | to ✔✔ |
| Current | ✔ | |
| Natural scenery | ✔✔✔ | |
| Fauna interest | ✔✔ | |
| General interest | ✔✔✔ | |

# Tower

27°53.300' N / 34°19.600' E




Tower is a spectacular diving site characterized by a deep canyon whose walls descend vertically for over 120 meters. It is accessible from the land, at the *Tower Club* tourist village.

The classic dive begins at the small beach in the bay by the large fossil coral tower the site was named after. Diving from a boat is made easy because of a *shamandura* (mooring point).

If you dive from the shore, after having swum past the reef ledge that borders the bay and extends for a few dozen meters, you will find yourself over the deep canyon, with its crystal-clear waters. By keeping the reef to your left and descending for 15 meters, you will soon reach the edge of a large, slightly inclined sandy plateau that runs at a depth of 12-25 meters and that has some coral pinnacles. You return by doubling back on the same dive, but this time swimming upwards at 12-5 meters to explore the crevices and caves, one of which has a school of Glassfish (*Parapriacanthus guentheri*). Before resurfacing, you should explore the two interesting large caves at the beginning of the canyon towards the beach, at about 5 meters' depth: they are populated by Lionfish, Glassfish, Bigeyes (Priacanthidae) and Cube boxfish (*Ostracion cubicus*). By diving from a boat you also have the opportunity to make a drift dive towards Sodfa.

## Features

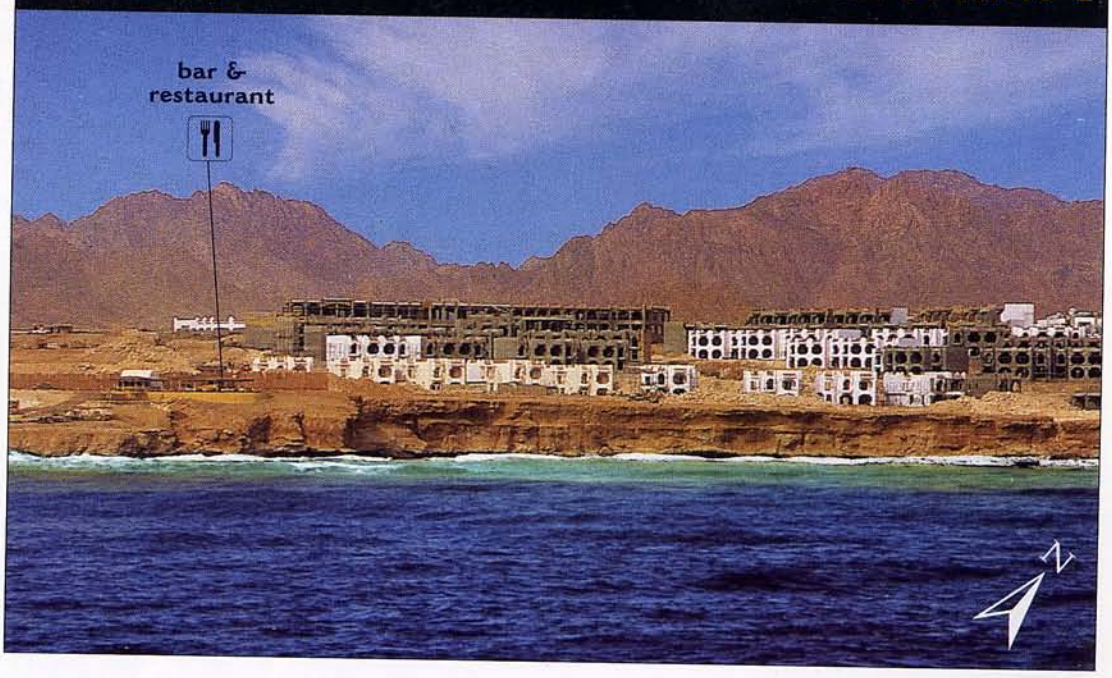
- *A strikingly beautiful underwater landscape.*
- *Rich in reef fauna, with many Parrotfish (*Scarus *sp. and* Cetoscarus bicolor*).*
- *Various pelagic predator species.*
- *A suitable site for snorkeling and night diving.*

## Comments

- *If you dive from the land make sure the tide is not low, because you may damage the reef.*
- *Be careful of your depth in the canyon.*
- *A depth of 5-20 meters is the most interesting for observing fauna.*

# Pinky Wall

27°52.250′ N / 34°19.400′ E




This is the first of a long series of diving sites between Tower and Ras Umm Sid. Strangely enough, despite the sheer beauty of this wall dive site, which was named after the multitude of pink Alcyonarian corals, there are very few guides who know Pinky Wall and take divers there. It is accessible from land, via the artifical beach in the *Reef Two* tourist village about one kilometer south of Tower. If you arrive by boat you will have to make a drift dive, since there is no mooring. The configuration of the reef is quite different here from the other sites because the coral platform that generally follows the shoreline is very narrow and the steep wall, which is mostly studded with soft *Dendronephthya* sp. Alcyonarians, immediately plunges precipitously for a depth of more than 180 meters. You must dive by keeping the reef to your left and at an average depth of about 15 meters, because this is where you will see the largest concentration of soft Alcyonarian corals. Moving northeast you will note some majestic gullies in the steep vertical wall that follow one another in sequence, giving the impression of organ pipes. If current conditions are favourable you can double back with a drift dive in the opposite direction and go as far as the Amphoras site.

## *Features*

- *An impressive marine landscape that is unusual for the Sharm el-Sheikh diving sites.*
- *Extraordinarily rich in multicoloured Alcyonarian corals.*

## *Comments*

- *Dive only when the sea is calm.*
- *Be careful of your depth.*

Reef Two beach

P
parking

bar &
restaurant

shore
entrance

-0.5 m

exit hole

-0.5 m

cave

Tower

-5 m

-10 m

cave

-15 m

Amphoras

cave

-16 m

-30 m

-30 m

90°

90°

-26 m

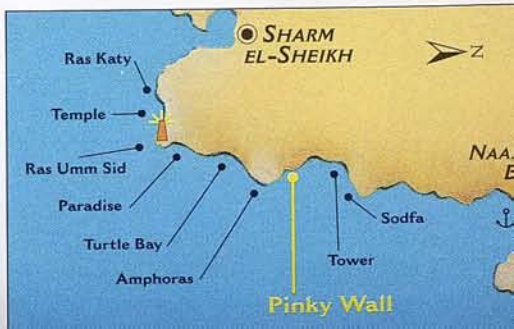
-180 m

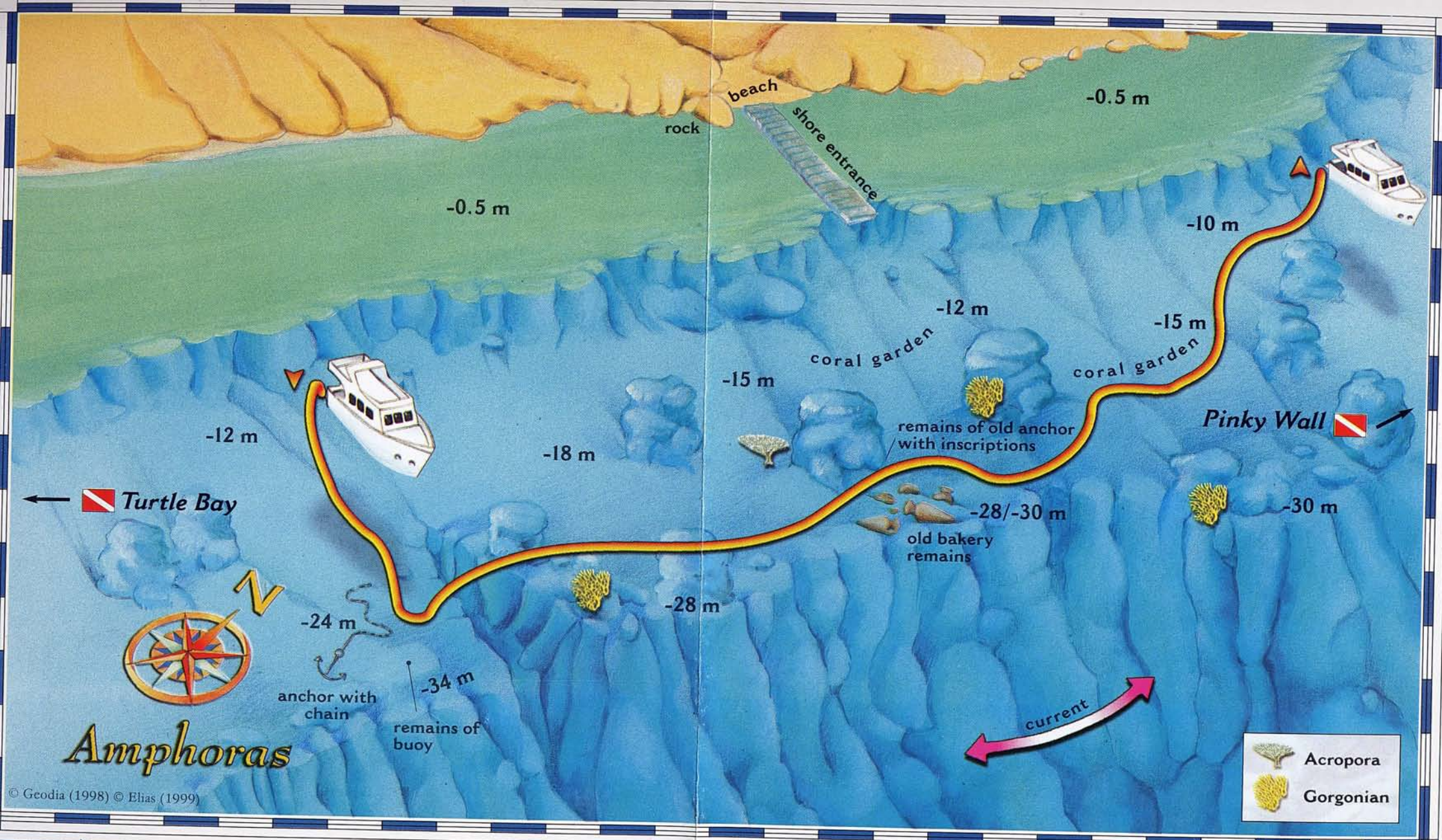
Gorgonian

# Pinky Wall



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 22' | 4,5 km |
| Difficulty | ✔✔ | |
| Current | ✔ | |
| Natural scenery | ✔✔ | |
| Fauna interest | ✔✔ | |
| General interest | ✔✔ | |







| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 23′ | 5 km |
| Difficulty | ✔✔ | |
| Current from | ✔ | to ✔✔ |
| Natural scenery | ✔ | |
| Fauna interest | ✔✔ | |
| General interest | ✔✔ | |

# Amphoras

27°52.000' N / 34°19.430' E


The name of this site derives from 17th-century shipwreck of a Turkish vessel with a cargo of amphoras containing mercury. Amphoras lies southwest of Tower, on a line with the northern tip of the *Ritz Carlton* hotel, and is also accessible by land.

The topography is quite simple: there is a sandy slope that begins at a depth of about a dozen meters and has some coral pinnacles of various shapes with a crust of a huge number of multicoloured Alcyonarians belonging to *Dendronephthya* genus, that create a sort of magnificent garden. Glassfish (*Parapriacanthus guentheri*) swim among the red Alcyonarians and above all in the crevices. At a depth of 25-28 meters, firmly stuck into the reef, you can still see the stock of the original anchor of the ship with inscriptions as well as fragments of the amphoras from the wreck (which has virtually disappeared).

A few dozen meters to the south, at a depth of 24 meters, you will discover a large, more recent anchor with a long chain. Some beautiful large gorgonians lie in the deepest section of the slope, towards the drop-off, at about 30 meters' depth.

## Features

- *Alhough there are not many, the remains of the Turkish vessel cargo are interesting.*
- *The multicoloured Alcyonarians are beautiful.*
- *The most interesting part lies at about 20 meters' depth.*
- *Site suitable for snorkeling.*

## Comments

- *Sometimes the local current can be strong and visibility may be limited.*
- *Finding the fragments of amphoras is not easy, so you must look around carefully.*

# Turtle Bay

27°51.800′ N / 34°19.200′ E


This site lies immediately south of Amphoras and its topographical conformation is quite similar: a slope with an average incline of 30° that runs at a depth of 9-25 meters and on which some coral pinnacles stand.
The classic dive is a drift one both northwards and southwards, depending on the direction of the current – even though the latter is more frequent. After a descent to the edge of the drop-off, situated at a depth of about 25 meters (at the beginning of a vertical wall that goes down about 110 meters), you go back up on the slope, circling and exploring the low coral towers, among which there are some gorgonians at a depth of 10-18 meters on a line with two of the largest pinnacles. In the northernmost part of the dive you cross an area rich in madrepores and Alcyonarians that form a sort of "coral garden" on the edge of which are large serpentine Salad corals (*Turbinaria mesenterina*) and some large and mushroom-shaped coral heads made up of colonies of *Porites* sp. A mooring point (*shamandura*) allows you to make a circling dive.
Snorkelers will be able to observe beautiful and varied reef fauna on the ledge that descends for 6 meters and is a continuation of the reef outcrop that borders the beach.

## Features

- *A quiet, uncrowded site, ideal for the high season.*
- *A wealth of soft and stony corals.*

## Comments

- *Dive only when the sea is calm.*
- *You may come across a local current.*

# Turtle Bay

beach

-0.5 m

-0.5 m

-4 m

-9 m

-17 m

-17 m

-6 m

coral garden

snorkeling area

Amphoras

-10 m

-7 m

-14 m

-20 m

-25 m

-15 m

-25 m

-25 m

90°

current

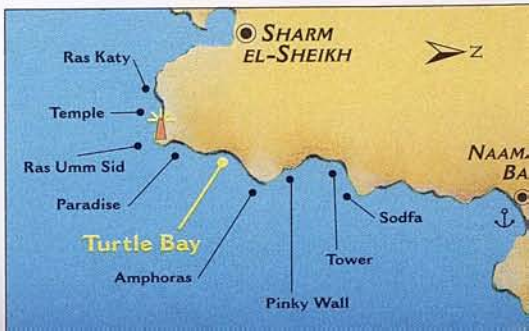
Paradise

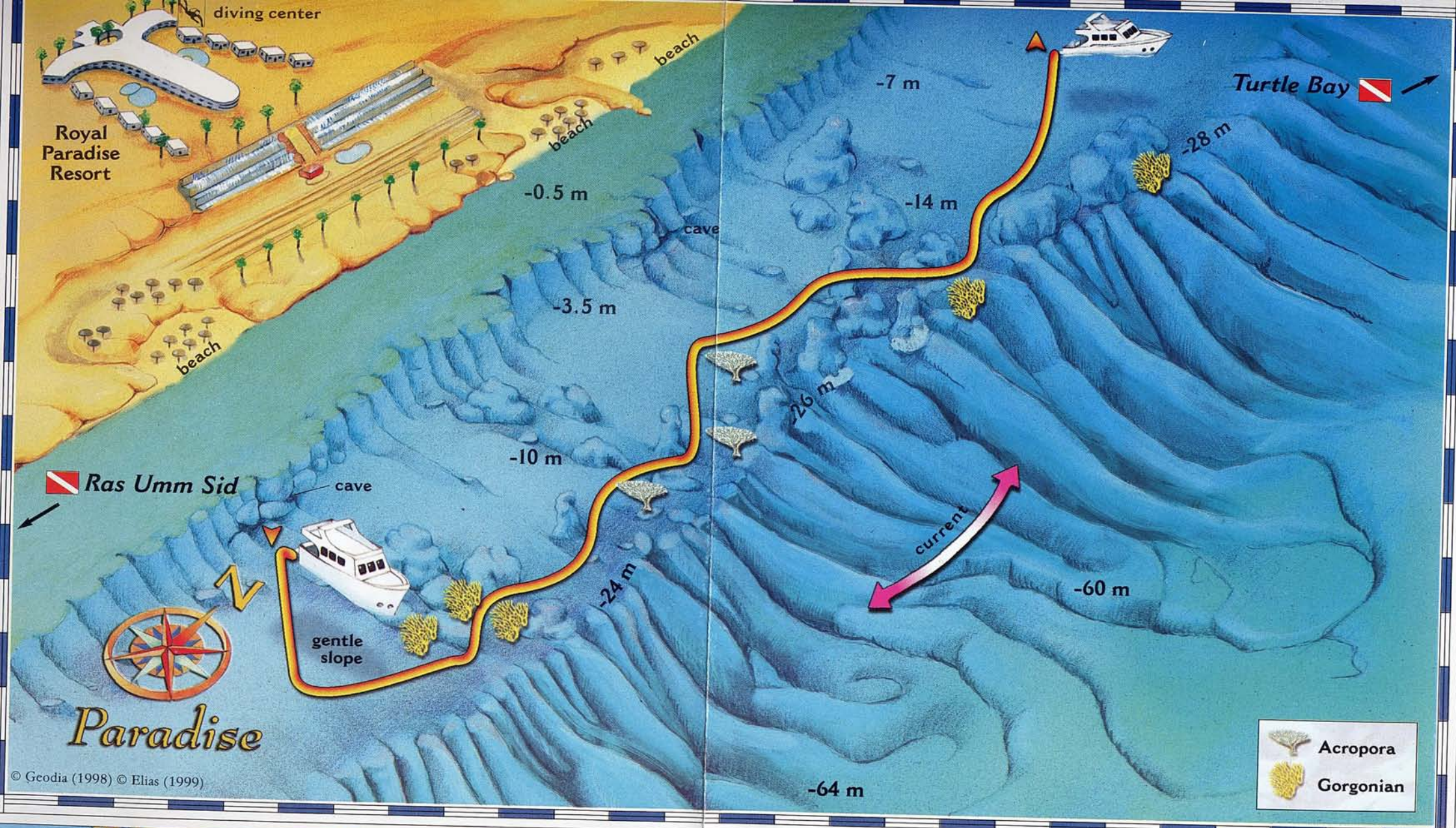
Gorgonian

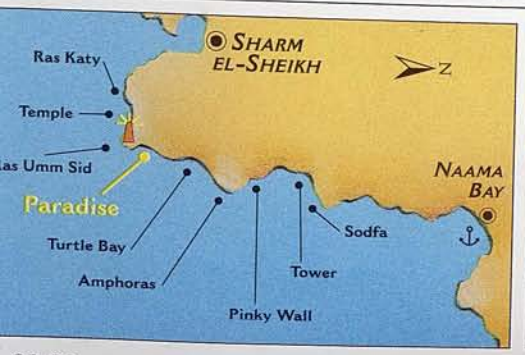
Turbinaria



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 35' | |
| Difficulty | ✔ | |
| Current from | ✔ | to ✔✔ |
| Natural scenery | ✔ | |
| Fauna interest | ✔ | |
| General interest | ✔✔ | |






| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 36' | 7,5 km |
| Difficulty from | ✓ | to ✓✓ |
| Current from | ✓ | to ✓✓ |
| Natural scenery | ✓✓ | |
| Fauna interest | ✓✓ | |
| General interest | ✓✓ | |

# Paradise

27°51.000′ N / 34°19.100′ E


Although its conformation is similar to Amphoras and Turtle Bay and, indeed, is common to this entire stretch of coast, Paradise differs in the taller coral pinnacles that rise on the slope between the reef ledge and the drop-off.
Here these towers look like sculpture pieces with a variety of hues due to the growth of red, pinkish and yellow Alcyonarians (genus *Dendronephthya*).
The overall effect is a magnificent environment that is unique in its kind.
This site extends between the two small beaches on a line with the *Royal Paradise Resort*. Access can be gained from the shore by asking permission from the diving center there. However, the classic dive is a drift one to the south from a boat. After descending for 24-28 meters, near the drop-off area and keeping the reef to your left, you can glide through the pinkish pinnacles that are sometimes crowned with *Acropora* sp. Other larger table corals grow on the bottom, from which some gorgonians also break loose. By going through this superb marine landscape you will be able to admire a host of reef fauna, from Parrotfish to the large Napoleonfish, swarms of Butterflyfish and the ever-present *Anthias*, not to mention some beautiful morays that dwell in the gorges of the pinnacles, especially in the southern-most part of the dive.

## Features

- *Easy diving without any problem.*
- *A varied and colourful landscape.*
- *Large areas of soft coral growth.*
- *A wealth of reef fauna.*
- *Suitable for night diving.*

## Comments

- *Check the direction of the current.*
- *The best time for your dive is at ebb tide when the current, which runs south, is fastest.*

# Ras Umm Sid

27°51.000' N / 34°19.000' E


Ras Umm Sid is the name of the promontory with a high lighthouse that marks the beginning of the Strait of Tiran on the western coast. The diving site, easily accessible by land, is immediately east of the lighthouse, opposite the famous Italian restaurant *El-Fanar* and the *African Divers* center. It is renowned for the extraordinary proliferation of gorgonians (*Subergorgia hicksoni*) that create a veritable forest here, the most beautiful in all the northern Red Sea.

Access from the beach, which is facilitated by a small metal ladder, is possible only when the tide is high enough to allow you to swim past the reef platform, which is quite extensive here. The classic dive – whether you choose to dive from the shore or from a boat – is a descent to 25 meters, where you pass through the famous gorgonian forest, and then an ascent to the plateau at 14 meters' depth. Here, among numerous coral pinnacles covered with Alcyonarians, there are several reef fish, Lionfish (*Pterois volitans*) and Parrotfish (*Scarus* sp.). From this point, if you have dived from the shore you can return shallow, keeping the reef to your right at a depth of 5-6 meters to explore the gorges, in particular a small cave populated by a colony of Glassfish (*Parapriacanthus guentheri*) and Hatchetfish (*Pempheris vanicolensis*). If you have a boat you can continue in the direction of Paradise.

## Features

- *A splendid gorgonian forest.*
- *Rich in reef and pelagic fauna (Jackfish, barracuda, tuna).*
- *An interesting night dive during which you can observe Parrotfish sleeping in their lair.*
- *Excellent for snorkeling.*

## Comments

- *There may be strong currents, especially near the cape.*
- *It is high tide when the rocky bluff on the reef is almost completely covered by the water.*

# Ras Umm Sid

Paradise

Golden View Resort

lighthouse

African Divers

P parking

El-Fanar restaurant

parking P

beach

stairs

-0.5 m

shore entrance

entrance/exit hole

snorkeling area

caves

-5 m

90°

-0.5 m

gentle slope

-14 m

-25 m

current

-25 m

-14/-35 m

gorgonians

-25 m

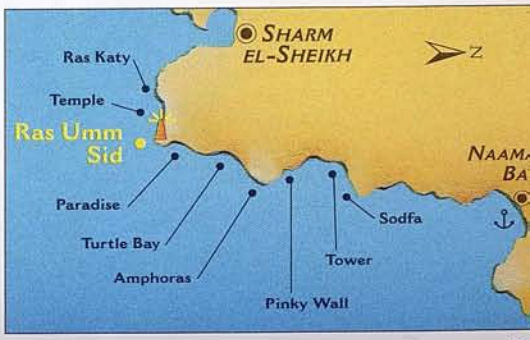
Temple

Acropora

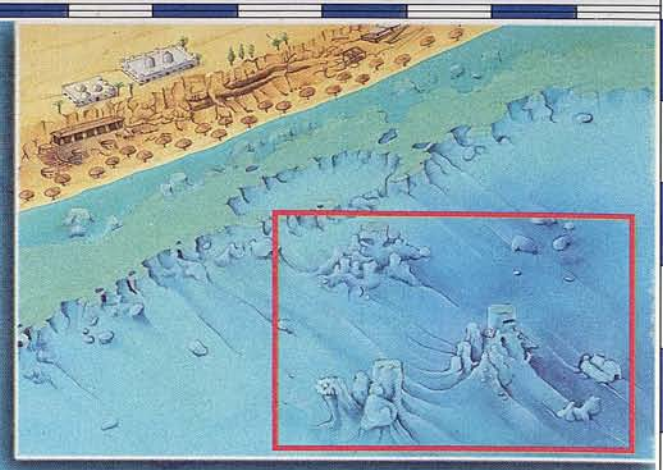
Gorgonian



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 38′ | 8 km |
| Difficulty | ✓✓ | |
| Current from | ✓ | to ✓✓ |
| Natural scenery | ✓✓ | |
| Fauna interest | ✓✓✓ | |
| General interest | ✓✓✓ | |



# Temple



-0.5 m

-4 m

-6 m

-10 m

-0.5 m

Ras Katy

Ras Umm Sid

sand

-12 m

-14 m

sand

-15 m

-2 m

-19 m

results of
1995 earthquake

sand

-24 m

Gorgonian

Porites




| | |
|---|---|
| Access | 43' |
| Difficulty | ✔ |
| Current | ✔ |
| Natural scenery | ✔✔ |
| Fauna interest | ✔ |
| General interest | ✔✔ |

# Temple

27°51.000′ N / 34°18.600′ E


This site lies in the middle of a large bay between Ras Umm Sid and Ras Katy that is bordered by a tall cliff of fossil coral on which two large tourist villages have been built – *Farana King Snefru* and *Reef Oasis*.
On a vast sandy plateau at a depth of 6-24 meters there are three coral pillars that resemble the columns of an ancient temple, hence the name given to this site by the first divers in the early 1970s. Two moorings at either side of the largest pillar, which touches the surface, make it easy to tie up your boat, which is made even easier by the total lack of wind and waves in this sheltered bay. Temple is one of the most popular sites in this area because it guarantees easy diving without any technical problems in any weather condition. Although it has certainly suffered from overcrowding, the site is still rather interesting and is particularly suitable for night dives. Furthermore, the presence of many species of Butterflyfish, Parrotfish, Lionfish, Angelfish and especially Arabian angelfish (*Pomacanthus maculosus*) and some Napoleonfish, is virtually guaranteed. Since Temple is rather small, you can explore the site choosing your own diving route.

## Features

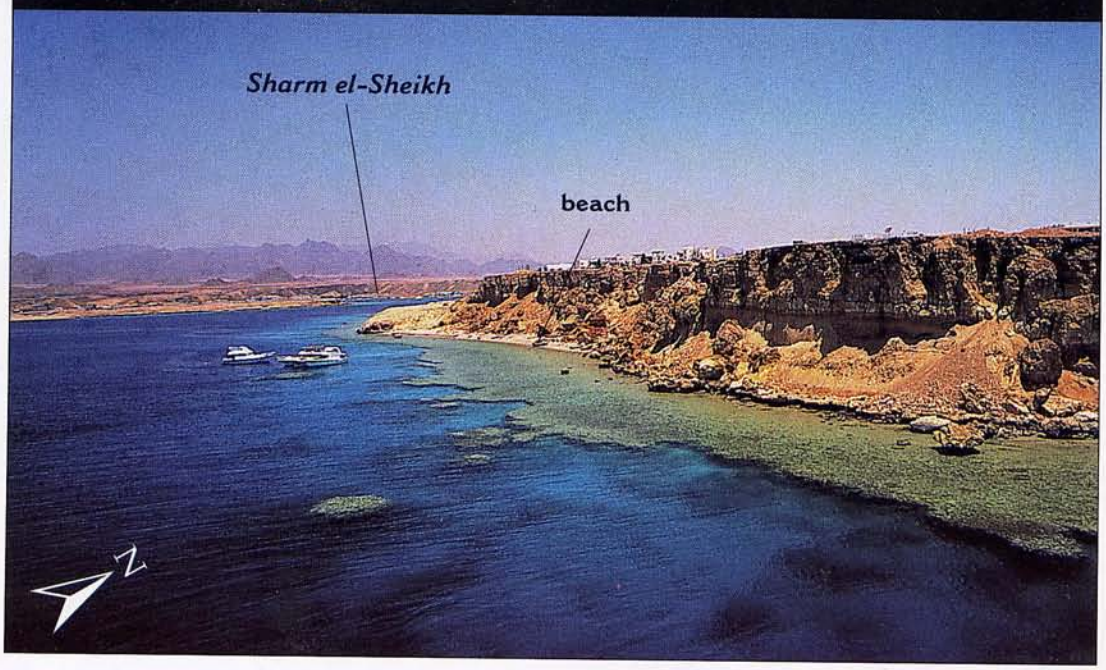
- *Easy dive: a site suitable for check dives and relatively inexperienced divers.*
- *An interesting underwater landscape rich in stony and soft corals.*
- *Excellent for night dives and snorkeling.*

## Comments

- *During night dives you should have a compass to get back easily to your boat.*
- *Do not get too close to the Triggerfish, especially during the nesting period, as they may attack you.*

# Ras Katy

27°51.000′ N / 34°18.200′ E




Ras Katy is a few hundred meters west of Temple and in some respects has a similar configuration. Boats usually moor from the bow side at the *shamandura*, which is located near a large outcropping coral pillar. Since this site is well sheltered from prevailing winds you can moor there without any problem. Dives are made at the coral pinnacle that rises on the sandy, slightly inclined plateau, from an initial depth of about 5 meters to 16-18 meters, at a point on line with the drop-off, where there are some gorgonians. While exploring the plateau you will see two more coral pinnacles a few dozen meters from one another that are filled with Alcyonarians with numerous specimens of *Lithophyton arboreum*, or Broccoli coral. These pinnacles are a favourite haunt of abundant and varied reef fauna, especially *Anthias* and Butterflyfish (the genera *Chaetodon* and *Heniochus*). In the crevices along the walls of the pinnacles you will see Glassfish, Lionfish and Bigeyes, while along the sandy bottom there are Crocodilefish (*Cociella crocodila*), Bluespotted stingrays (*Taeniura lymma*) and some Scorpionfish (*Scorpaenopsis* sp.). Sometimes, when the tide is rising, you may come upon a rather strong local current that will allow you to make a drift dive to Temple (about 400 m away), going over numerous coral formations and large Acroporidae.

## Features

- *Easy dives suitable for beginners and check dives.*
- *Rather rich reef fauna in an interesting underwater environment.*
- *This site is recommended for night dives and snorkeling.*

## Comments

- *Diving is best in the afternoon.*
- *Beware of the Triggerfish during the nesting period.*

beach

-0.5 m

Temple

-5 m

snorkeling area

-5 m

-16 m

-18 m

-8 m

-0.5 m

-3.5 m

-12 m

-10 m

-16 m

-16 m

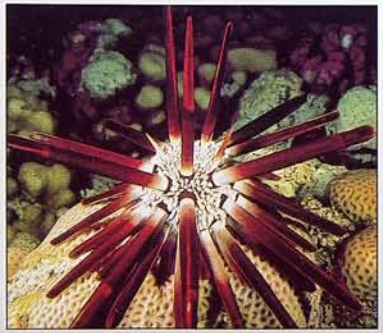
Acropora

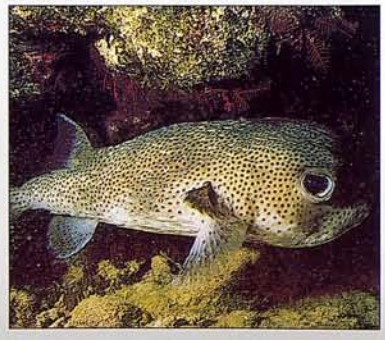
Gorgonian

current

# Ras Katy







| | |
|---|---|
| Access | 45' |
| Difficulty | ✔ |
| Current | ✔ |
| Natural scenery | ✔✔ |
| Fauna interest | ✔ |
| General interest | ✔✔ |


Sharm el-Sheikh
Marsa Bareika
Salt Lake
Alternatives
Stingray Station
The Quay
Suez
Beach
-75 m
Hidden Bay
Aqaba
Beach
Shark
Observatory
Beach
Main
Beach
Yolanda Bay
Ras Za'atar
-283 m
Jackfish Alley
-329 m
Eel Garden
Ras
Mohamme
Shark
Observatory
Anemone City
Shark Reef
Yolanda
Yolanda Reef
Mangrove Is.
Ras Fanar
Mangrove
Channel
most southern
point of Sinai
27° 43' N
34° 15' E
avigation times
from
Naama Bay
as Za'atar 65'
ckfish Alley 70'
el Garden 75'
hark Observatory 85'
olanda Reef &
hark Reef 90'
N
W
E
Ras Mohammed
-796 m
Mangrove
Magnetic variation
2°40' E (1998)

# RAS MOHAMMED

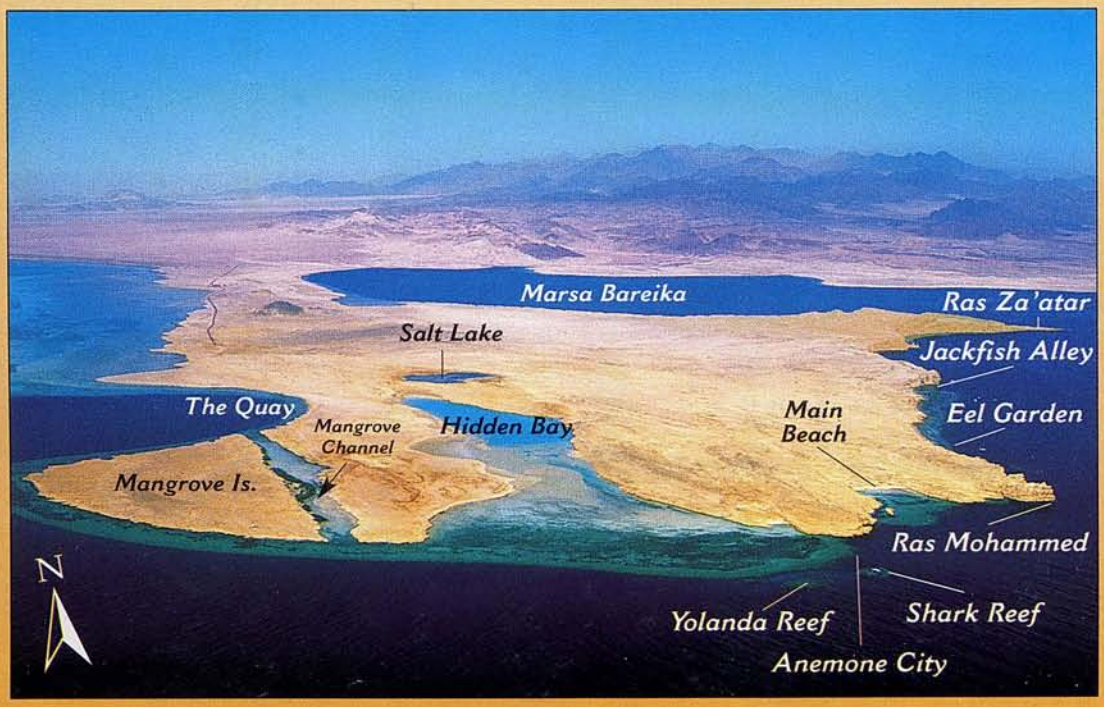
South of Sharm el-Sheikh the coast is totally deserted, with no shelter, for more than a mile, up to the small bay named *Marsa Ghazlani*, where the **Ras Mohammed National Park** begins.

This is followed by another bay, *Marsa Bareika*, which is much larger and deeper. It penetrates the land for 2.8 miles, forming the *Ras Mohammed peninsula*, which extends southeastwards into the Red Sea for almost 5 miles and separates the gulf of Aqaba from the Gulf of Suez.

The eastern coast of the Ras Mohammed peninsula is composed of a tall fossil coral reef that is interrupted for a few dozen meters by the only accessible beach in the area, *Aqaba Beach*, and ends at the Ras Mohammed headland – "Mohammed's Cape" in Arabic, because its profile is like the bearded one of the Prophet. The rocky spur is about 50 meters high; on top of it is the *Shark Observatory* balcony.

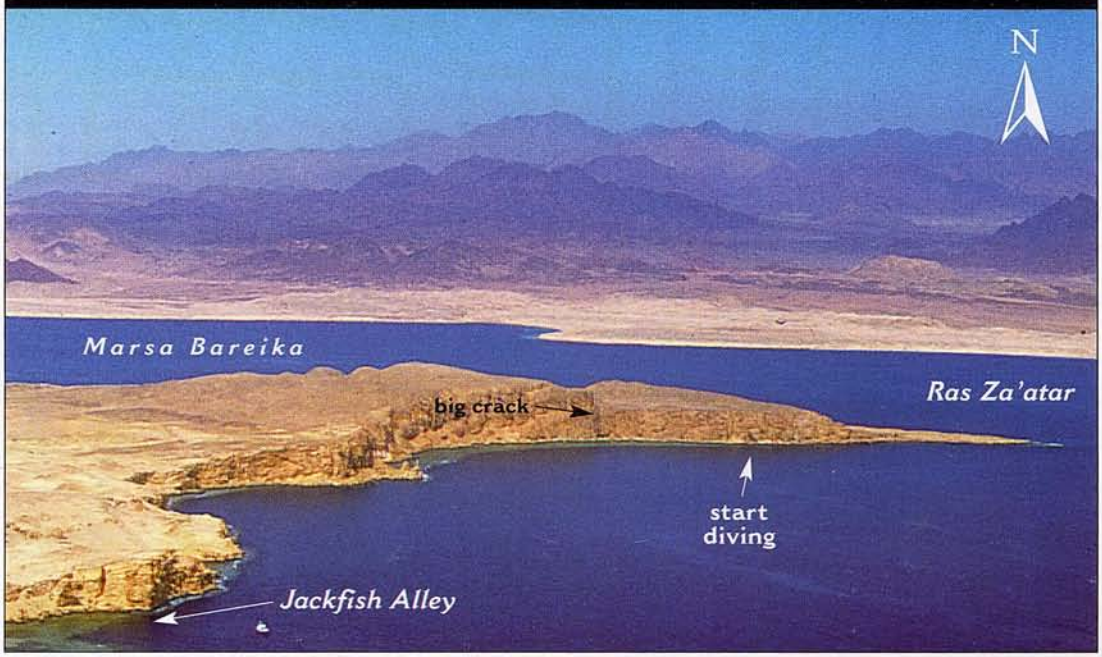
On the southern side of the peninsula there are three beaches – *Shark Observatory Beach*, *Main Beach* and *Yolanda Beach* – the sandy, shallow *Hidden Bay*, whose mouth is completely blocked by a long coral reef, and *Mangrove Island*, an islet with a small beacon, separated from the rest of the peninsula by the *Mangrove Channel* with its numerous mangroves (*Avicenia marina*). The western side of the peninsula is low and sandy, and its sole attraction is the only mooring, which is well sheltered, in the area on a level with the half-submerged remains of an old jetty known as *The Quay*.

Because of its geographic position the Ras Mohammed peninsula is a privileged area distinguished for the strong, massive currents that transport large quantities of plankton and other food that give rise to an extraordinary growth of stony and soft corals and attract large schools of both reef and pelagic marine fauna. Given the great abundance of food, barracuda, Jackfish, tuna and sharks swarm in these waters, offering divers the chance to make extremely interesting and exciting dives, especially from June to August. The classic diving sites begin at the southern tip of Marsa Bareika, known as **Ras Za'atar**, and continue along the eastern coast with **Jackfish Alley**, **Eel Garden** and **Shark Observatory** (also known as *Ras Mohammed Wall*), and at the southern end of the peninsula with **Anemone City**, **Shark Reef** and **Yolanda Reef**.



# Ras Za'atar

27°46.000' N / 34°15.200' E




This is the steep rocky promontory, 9.6 miles from Naama Bay and 5.9 miles from Ras Umm Sid, that delimits the Marsa Bareika inlet to the south and plunges almost vertically into the Red Sea. The lack of a *shamandura* means you have to make a drift dive that skirts the cape. This may be done in both directions, depending on the current; the most frequent moves northeast, with the reef on your left. Since the most interesting part of the dive is around the headland, it is important to start your dive past the large crevice that can be seen on the coastline. After descending for 28-30 meters to observe some lovely gorgonians and colonies of black coral (*Antipathes dichotoma*), it is a good idea to go up to about 15 meters' depth to investigate the reef wall, which is full of life and studded with red and pink Alcyonarians. While there, do not miss the spectacular wide split (preceded by a similar but less impressive one) that begins precisely at this depth and narrows towards the surface, becoming a true chimney. In these recesses you will see the typical inhabitants of gullies and crevices such as Lionfish, Glassfish and some large Malabar groupers (*Epinephelus malabaricus*). Once past the tip of the wall, turn into Marsa Bareika bay, where there is a partly sandy slope with many coral pinnacles that create a coral garden frequented by a great number of reef fish and even some sea turtles.

## Features

- *A splendid wall covered with multicoloured Alcyonarians.*
- *On a level with the chimney further north there is a spectacular landscape.*
- *In the blue there are many schools of Jackfish and barracuda hunting for prey.*

## Comments

- *Keep at a depth of 15 meters to avoid missing the chimney.*
- *The current may get stronger around the cape.*

big crack

chimneys

caves

-15 m

splits

-25/-28 m

Jackfish Alley

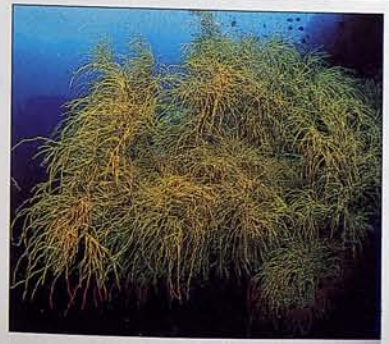
current

Acropora

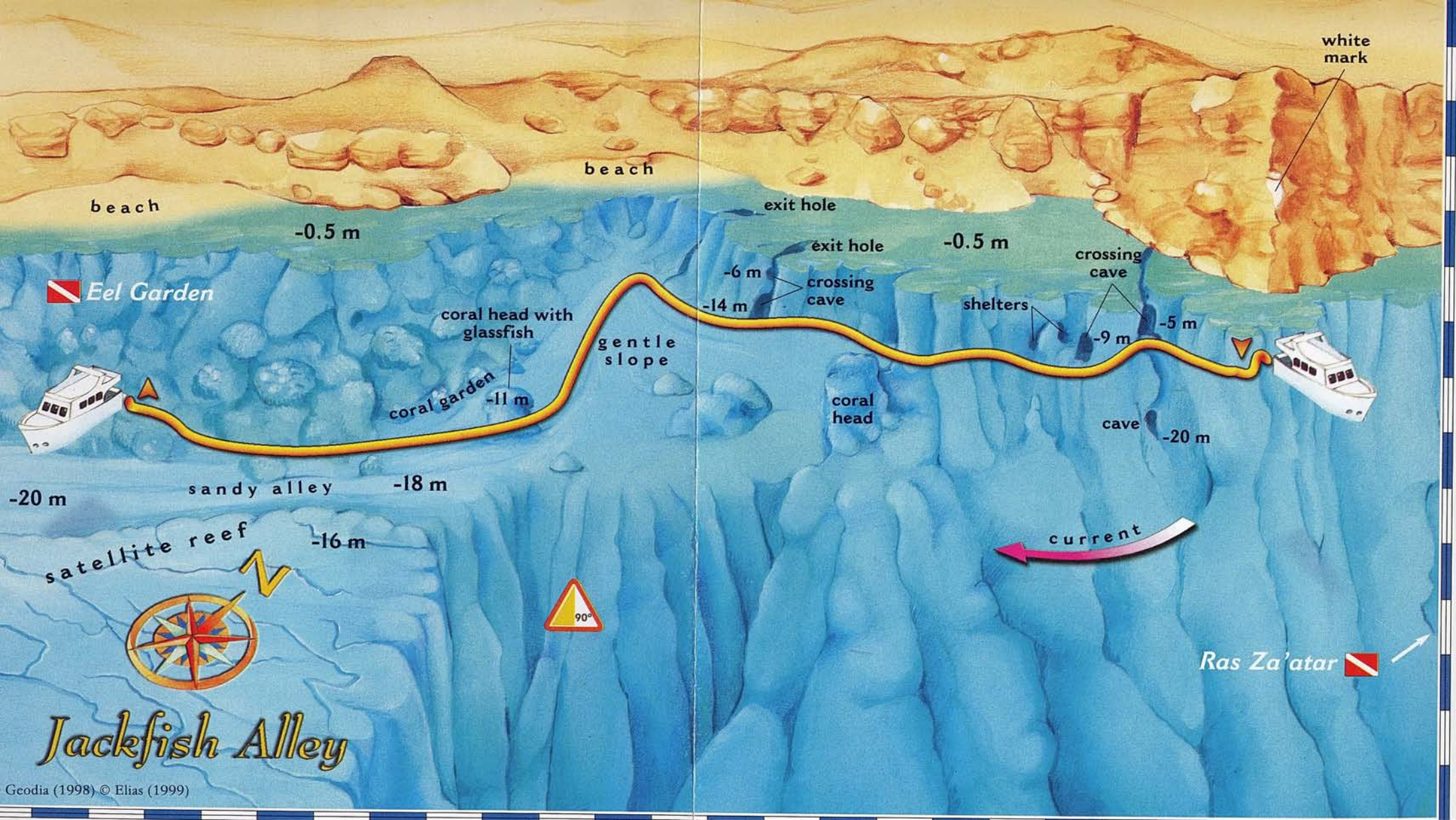
Gorgonian

# Ras Za'atar





| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 65' | |
| Difficulty | ✓✓ | |
| Current from | ✓ | to ✓✓ |
| Natural scenery | ✓✓ | |
| Fauna interest | ✓✓ | |
| General interest | ✓✓ | |





| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 70' | |
| Difficulty | ✓✓ | |
| Current from | ✓ | to ✓✓ |
| Natural scenery | ✓✓✓ | |
| Fauna interest | ✓✓ | |
| General interest | ✓✓✓ | |

*A cave at Jackfish Alley*

*Glassfish*

*Jackfish (Carangidae)*

# Jackfish Alley

27°46.000′ N / 34°15.400′ E


The name of this site derives from the wide sandy "road" between the coral ledge bordering the coast and a parallel satellite reef that is often frequented by jackfish and other predators. Jackfish Alley, which was originally known as *Fisherman's Bank*, is south of Ras Za'atar. You will have to make a drift dive; the place where you will start it (**A**) is easy to spot owing to the white mark on the cliff. After descending for 5 meters you will immediately see the large entrance to the first cave, which penetrates the reef for about 40 meters and from which you exit, keeping to your left at a depth of 9 meters. Proceeding to the southwest, with the reef on your right, you will come to a large coral outcrop beyond which, at 14 meters' depth, there is another cave that runs upwards and has a wide exit hole at 6 meters. This is the home of a myriad of Glassfish. A little further south there is a sandy bay that must be crossed in a southwest direction in order to see, at 11 meters' depth, another coral outcop swarming with life and populated by another colony of Glassfish. From here, continue to proceed southwest and, once past a zone rich in madrepores, at 18-20 meters' depth you will be at the sandy "alley" this site is named after. Whitetip reef sharks and Manta rays, as well as Jackfish, Triggerfish and Bluespotted stingrays, have often been spotted in this area.

## *Features*

- *An extraordinary marine landscape.*
- *Caves with spectacular light effects.*
- *Quite varied reef fauna.*
- *The possibility to see pelagic predators.*

## *Comments*

- *In the first part do not descend more than 5-6 meters or you will miss the entrance to the first cave.*
- *Only small groups of expert divers are allowed to explore the caves.*
- *Carry a torch with you.*
- *Do not explore the caves for too long a time.*

# Eel Garden

27°45.900' N / 34°15.200' E


Eel Garden is situated in front of a small beach south of Jackfish Alley and is accessible by land. On the fossil coral wall dominating the little beach is the last of the three balconies that begin at the Ras Mohammed promontory. Eel Garden is rather well sheltered from the currents, but since it is exposed to prevailing winds and waves, you must pay attention to the condition of the sea, especially if you are diving from the shore. Diving here is easy and the route winds through the sandy, shallow plateau opposite the beach, where there is a small and not very interesting cave as well as an impressive sand flow. The middle section of the plateau is populated by a lovely colony of Garden eels (*Gorgasia sillneri*). This species, which belongs to the Eterongridae family, is endemic and is sometimes more than 80 centimeters long. The eels emerge from the sand for about two-thirds of their length, swaying in the current in search for their favourite food, plankton. Their lairs, which they never abandon, are cylindrical holes dug out of the sand, the grains of which are held together by a special secretion from a gland near the eels' tail. These creatures must be approached with extreme caution, since they are very timid and will slip quickly back into their lairs at the first sign of danger.

## Features

- *The best place to observe Garden eels.*
- *A good site for snorkeling.*

## Comments

- *Do not dive if the sea conditions are not good and especially if there are waves.*
- *It is advisable to approach the eels from the north.*
- *The morning hours are best for taking photos of the eels.*

P parking

beach

second balcony

shore entrance

cave

third balcony

-18 m

garden eels

sand

gentle slope

-23 m

-0.5 m

-26 m

-35 m

current

Jackfish Alley

-0.5 m

Shark Observatory

Gorgonian

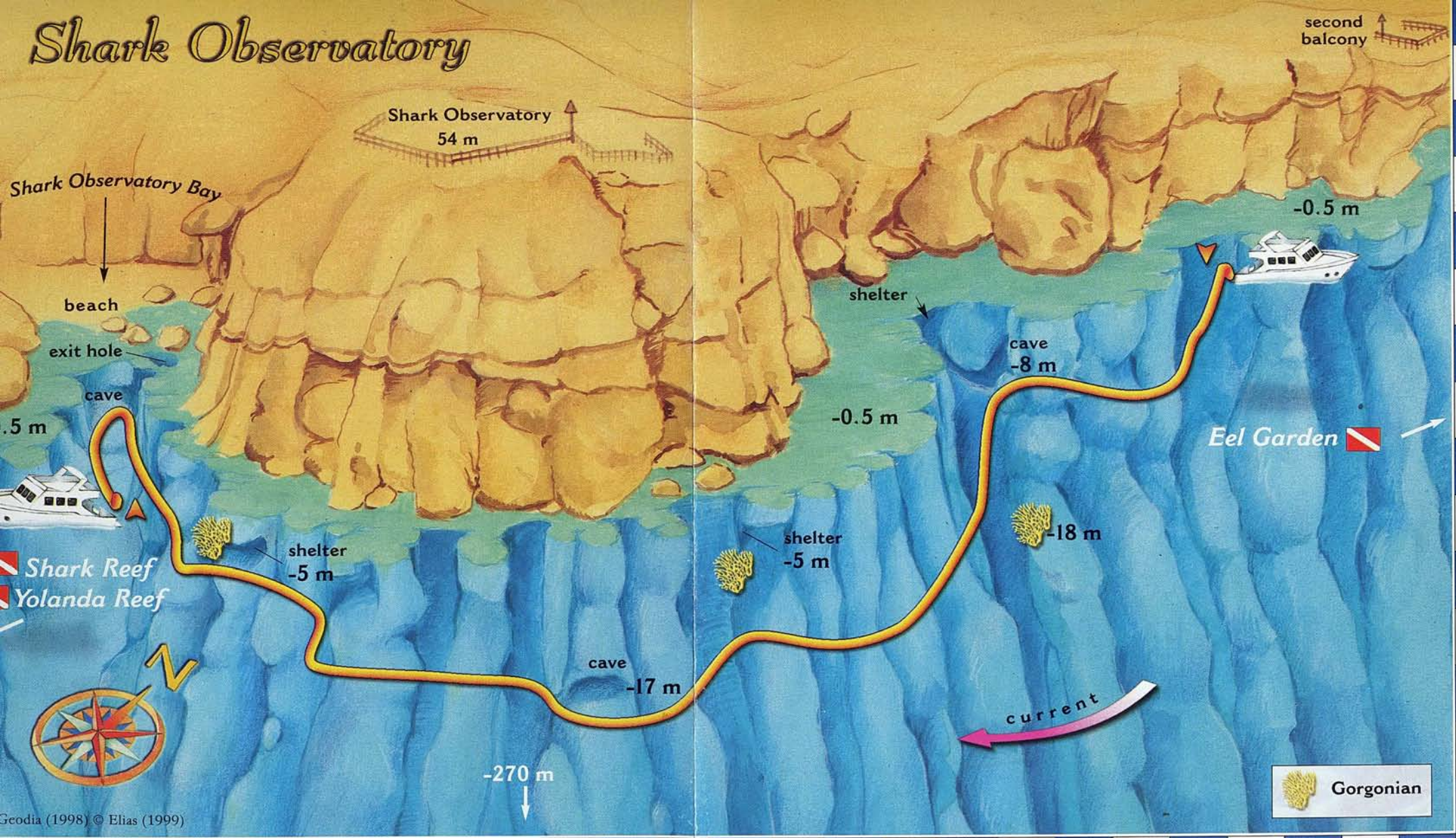
N

# Eel Garden



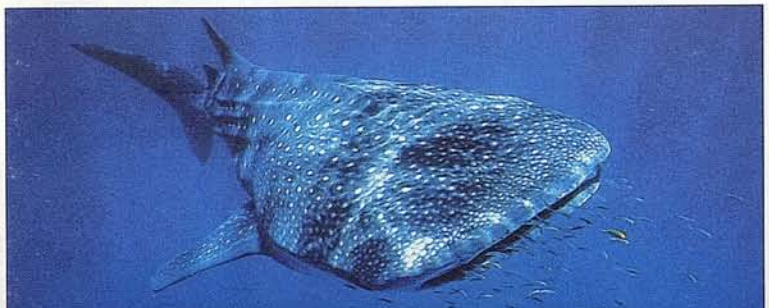
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 75' | 37,5 km |
| Difficulty | ✓ | |
| Current | ✓ | |
| Natural scenery | ✓✓ | |
| Fauna interest | ✓✓ | |
| General interest | ✓✓ | |

# Shark Observatory




Geodia (1998) © Elias (1999)

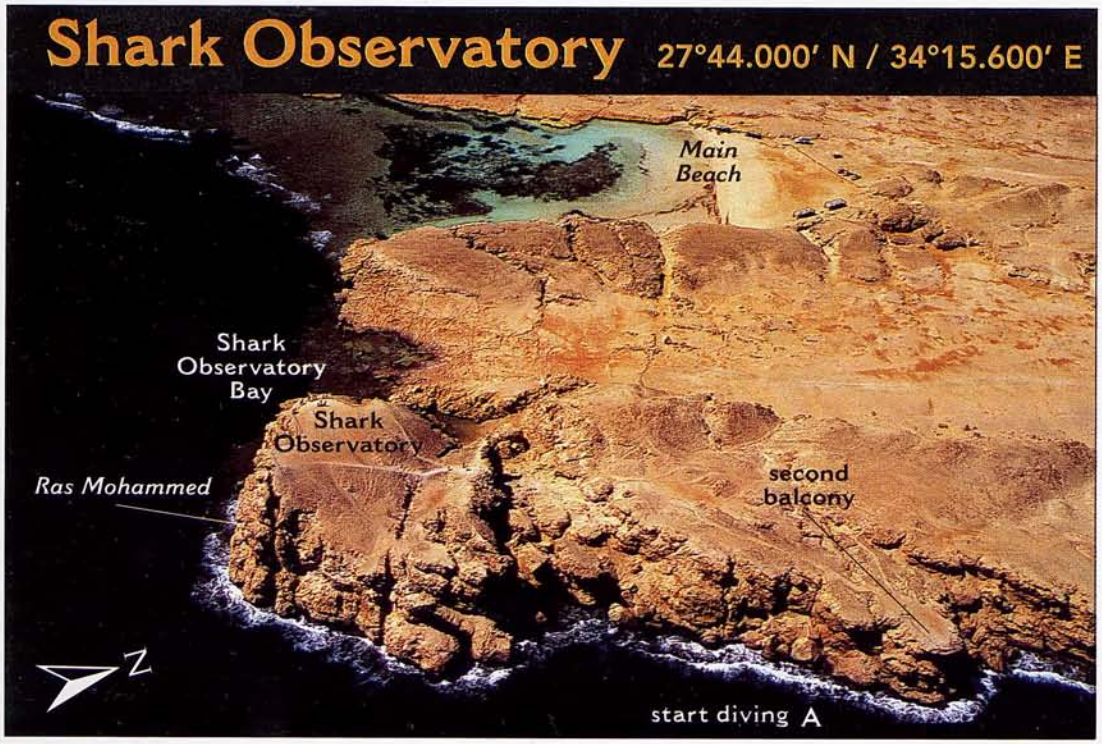

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 85' | 39 km |
| Difficulty | ✓✓ | |
| Current from | ✓ | to ✓✓ |
| Natural scenery | ✓✓✓ | |
| Fauna interest | ✓✓ | |
| General interest | ✓✓✓ | |



*Whale shark (Rhincodon typus)*

*Jackfish (Caranx sexfasciatus)*

# Shark Observatory 27°44.000′ N / 34°15.600′ E




This name indicates not only the first balcony on the top of the Ras Mohammed promontory, but also the diving site that is on a level with that promontory. This is a magnificent wall dive, also known as the *Ras Mohammed Wall*: while looking down into the deep blue, you can admire a grandiose environment and at the same time see large pelagic predators (even some Whale sharks have been seen in this area time and again). Although many divers today dive before Shark Observatory Bay, the classic and more striking dive begins not far from the second balcony on the cliff (**A**). After descending for about 15 meters you can explore the wall on your left, which is rich in Alcyonarians, gullies, shelters and caves swarming with life, without losing sight of the blue, from which Jackfish, barracuda and some sharks might suddenly appear. On a line with the southern corner of the promontory the wall takes a sharp turn westwards and runs towards the small beach under the observatory: here you will see some large gorgonians (*Subergorgia hicksoni*) and, further up, a majestic overhang. Continue along the wall until you enter an extremely beautiful cave that has a large fissure in its top through which light filters. From this opening you can exit onto the reef.

## *Features*

- *Superb marine landscape.*
- *The chance to see large pelagic predators.*

## *Comments*

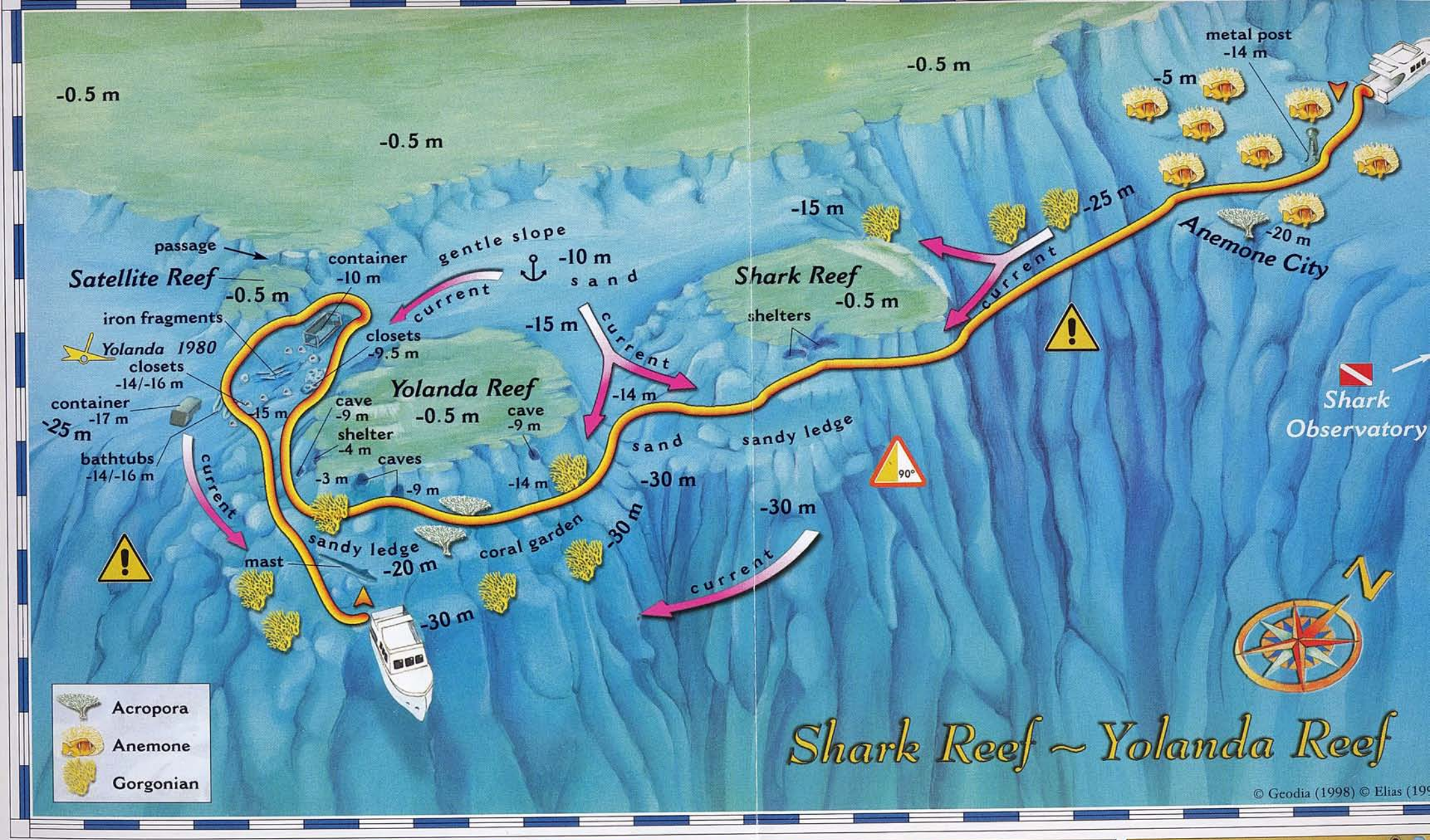
- *Check the direction of the current; it is better to dive when the tide is ebbing.*
- *Stay at a depth of 15-20 meters and go up to 8-5 meters in the last phase of your dive.*
- *The afternoon is ideal for observing the spectacular effects of the light.*

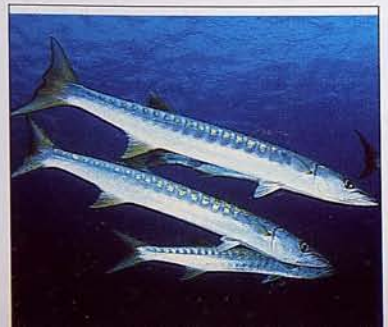
# Shark & Yolanda Reef 27°43.300' N / 34°15.000' E


Shark Reef is the most famous and popular diving site in the Red Sea for the variety of its marine environment and above all for the extraordinary abundance of its reef and pelagic fauna. However, to enjoy this site in all its splendour you should go there in the summer months (especially July). Another point to bear in mind is that the incredible spectacle of schools of hundreds of barracuda, Jackfish and Batfish that appear before your eyes can be enjoyed only by those with enough technical know-how to face the currents, which at times are extremely strong.

There are many dives you can take here – all of which should be drift dived – and they can be varied at will, depending on various factors (weather conditions, speed and direction of the current, technical level of the divers, etc.). However, the most classic and complete dive will allow you to visit not only Shark Reef but the other two sites, Anemone City and Yolanda Reef, in only one dive. The dive begins northeast of Shark Reef on a line with a plateau commonly known as **Anemone City**, which lies at 12-20 meters' depth and juts out like a large balcony over the blue. A large population of sea anemones (*Heteractis magnifica* and *Entacmaea quadricolor*), among whose stinging tentacles live multicoloured Red Sea anemonefish (*Amphiprion bicinctus*), have colonized this plateau in which the light-coloured sand is interrupted by coral formations. On this plateau, at a depth of 14 meters, you will note a sort of large metal post placed in an upright position in the 1970s, it seems, to commemorate a diver who died there.

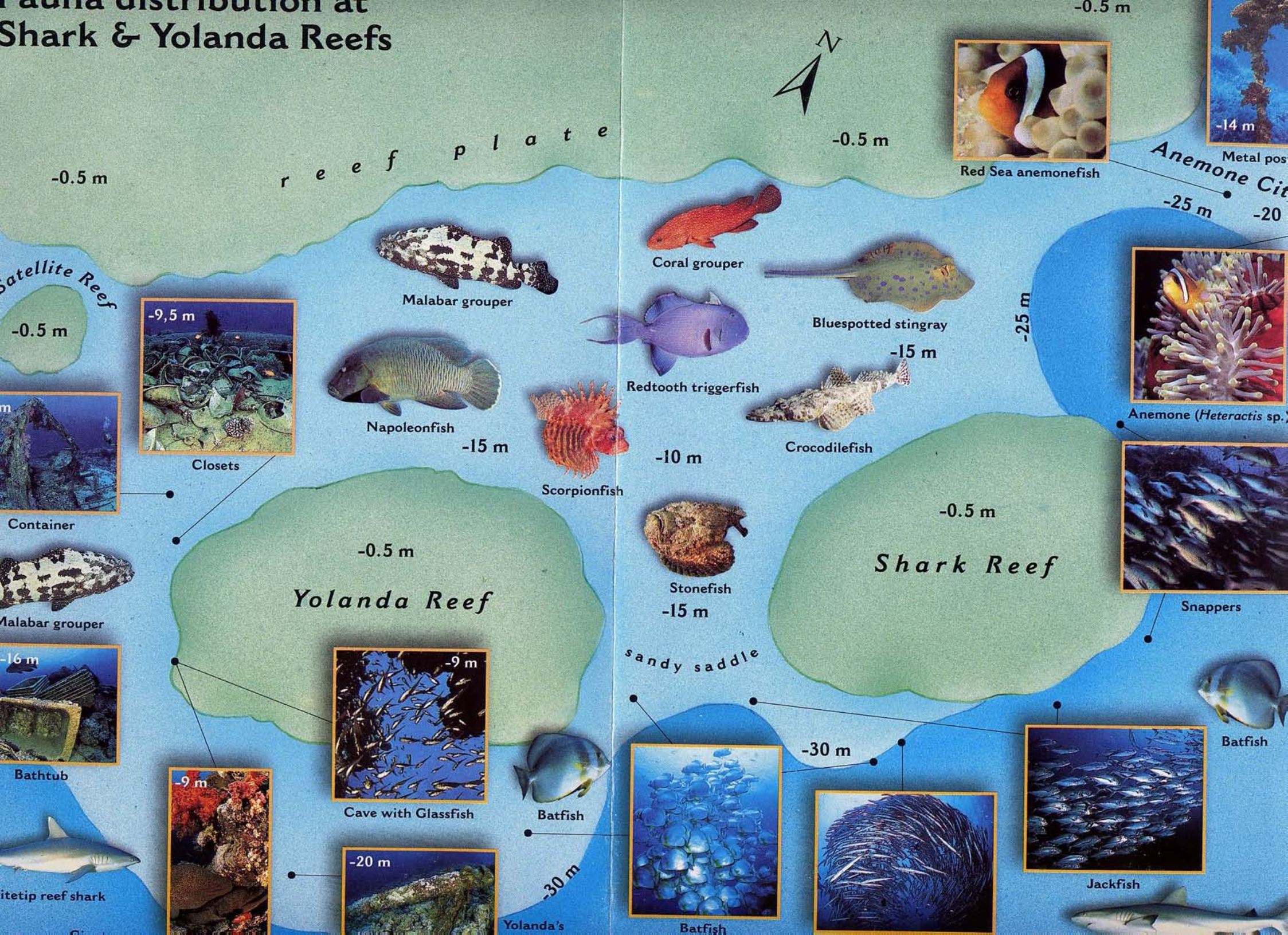
After exploring Anemone City you must swim in the blue for a few minutes at a depth of 20 meters and at a course of 150°, which will lead you directly to **Shark Reef**, clearly recognizable by the unmistakeable profile of some gorgonians. Here there is a wall that descends vertically to an abyss more than 700 meters deep; keeping this wall to your right, you skirt round a coral outcrop. If you observe the blue you will easily spot schools of Batfish (*Platax* sp.), barracuda (*Sphyraena*



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 90' | |
| Difficulty | ✓✓✓ | |
| Current from | ✓✓ | to ✓✓✓ |
| Natural scenery | ✓✓ | |
| Fauna interest | ✓✓✓ | |
| General interest | ✓✓✓ | |

# Fauna distribution at Shark & Yolanda Reefs



# Shark & Yolanda Reef 27°43.300' N / 34°15.000' E

*barracuda*) that sometimes swim in a circle formation, walls of Jackfish (*Caranx* sp., *Carangoides* sp.), Snappers (*Lutjanus monostigma* and *Lutjanus bohar*) and Emperors (*Lethrinus nebulosus*, *Monotaxis grandoculis*, etc.). After going a few dozen meters, you will reach the sandy and shallow saddle that connects Shark Reef and **Yolanda Reef**, whose profile you will see right afterwards.

Now follow the southern wall of this coral outcrop and, after passing by the southern corner, you will see – at 25-10 meters' depth – the remains of the *Yolanda*, a Cypriot merchant ship that sank here on the night of 1-2 April 1980 while on its way to Aqaba: containers, bathtubs, sanitary fixtures, wallpaper, cases of whisky and even a *BMW 320* automobile that belonged to the ship captain. The wreck is always surrounded by large Malabar groupers (*Epinephelus malabaricus*), Napoleonfish (*Cheilinus undulatus*), Snappers (*Lutjanus monostigma*) and Fusiliers (*Caesio* sp.).

The ship – which stood half above the surface in an unstable vertical position since the bow was stuck in the bottom – was pushed by the waves to a depth of 50 meters at the beginning of 1987 and, on 15 March of the same year, sank into the blue during a violent storm.

The dive usually ends after you have finished exploring this area, but if you still have some air left you can continue to circumnavigate Yolanda Reef to investigate the lagoon in the back and the saddle between the two coral outcrops, inhabited by Bluespotted stingrays (*Taeniura lymma*), Scorpionfish (*Scorpaenopsis* sp.), Stonefish (*Synanceia verrucosa*), Napoleonfish (*Cheilinus undulatus*) and Crocodilefish (*Cociella crocodila*). As an alternative you can visit the nearby **Satellite Reef** or explore the area south of Yolanda, where you can see some Grey reef sharks (*Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos*), particularly in December and January.

**YOLANDA**

**Type of ship**: merchant
**Construction date**: 1964
**Length**: 74.8 m
**Width**: 11.7 m
**Tonnage**: 1,907 t
**Date of shipwreck**: 1-2 April 1980
**Date ship sank to the bottom**: 15 March 1987

## *Features*

- *An absolutely exceptional concentration of fauna in the summer.*
- *An extremely varied marine environment.*
- *Vast area for diving.*
- *A variety of dives.*

## *Comments*

- *The site is usually overcrowded. Try to arrive early in the morning.*
- *Access and times for diving are regulated by the Ras Mohammed Park authorities.*
- *Be careful of the currents, which can be violent at times.*

# STRAIT OF GUBAL

The Strait of Gubal connects the Gulf of Suez and the Red Sea and is bordered to the west by the Egyptian coast and to the east by the Sinai peninsula. The Gulf of Suez is much shallower than the Gulf of Aqaba because of its different geological origin; its average depth is about 80 metres.

The canal through which ships pass into the Strait of Gubal – which is much wider than the Strait of Tiran – is flanked to the northeast by two outcrops called **Beacon Rock** and **Shag Rock**, both of which have beacons as well as the wrecks of the *Dunraven* and the *Sara H.* respectively. To the southwest the canal is delimited by the southern tip of the *Shadwan Island* (also known as *Shaker Island* on British maps), which also has a beacon, situated 15.2 miles from the one on Beacon Rock.

The southeastern section of the strait is characterized by the presence of two massive, half-outcropping coral formations (called *sha'ab* in Arabic) that create a coral reef inside which there are shallow lagoons with sand floors.

On a level with the western side of the Ras Mohammed peninsula is *Sha'ab Mahmud*, about 6 miles long and 2.7 miles wide, delimited to the north and south by two smaller *sha'abs* called *Sha'ab Surur* and *Sha'ab el-Utat*. Sha'ab Mahmud consists of a coral reef oriented in a northwest-southeast direction, cut through on its western side by two channels, **Small Crack** and **Big Crack**, and completely open on its southern side. This vast lagoon is navigable and is usually used by the boats going to the diving sites in the Gubal region – which enter and exit via Big Crack or "Big Passage", situated at 27°46.500' N and 34° 03.000' E – because it is well sheltered from the waves.

The second large coral formation in the Strait of Gubal is *Sha'ab Ali*, situated north of Sha'ab Mahmud, extending for 8.3 miles in a northeast-southwest direction and separated from the Sinai coast by a canal with an average depth of 20-25 metres.

Sha'ab Ali is well-known for the famous wreck of the **Thistlegorm** on its eastern side.

It surrounds a lagoon 7-10 metres deep, the entrance of which, marked by a series of luminous buoys, lies on its northeastern side. Diving boats often spend the night in this lagoon so that scuba divers can be at the site of the shipwreck at dawn, thus avoiding the arrival of the many boats from Sharm and Hurghada later in the morning.

# Strait of Gubal

## Navigation times from Naama Bay

| | |
|---|---|
| Alternatives & Stingray Station | 2h |
| Dunraven (Beacon Rock) | 2h 30′ |
| Small Crack | 3h |
| Thistlegorm (Sha'ab Ali) | 4h 30′ |



Naama

Sharm el-Sheikh

-57 m

oilfields

Sha'ab ed-Deqayeq

Sha'ab el-Meqeeda

-18 m

-7 m

-27 m

-20 m

-82 m

Sha'ab Ali

-174 m

Thistlegorm

-860 m

Sha'ab Surur

-69 m

Shag Rock

-70 m

-104 m

-12 m

-5 m

Marsa Bareika

-342 m

-27 m

Sha'ab Mahmud

Sha'ab el-Utat

Ras Mohammed

-402 m

-5 m

-43 m

-609 m

-160 m

-12 m

Small Crack

-79 m

-796 m

-283 m

-530 m

Beacon Rock

-39 m

-31 m

Alternatives

Dunraven

-84 m

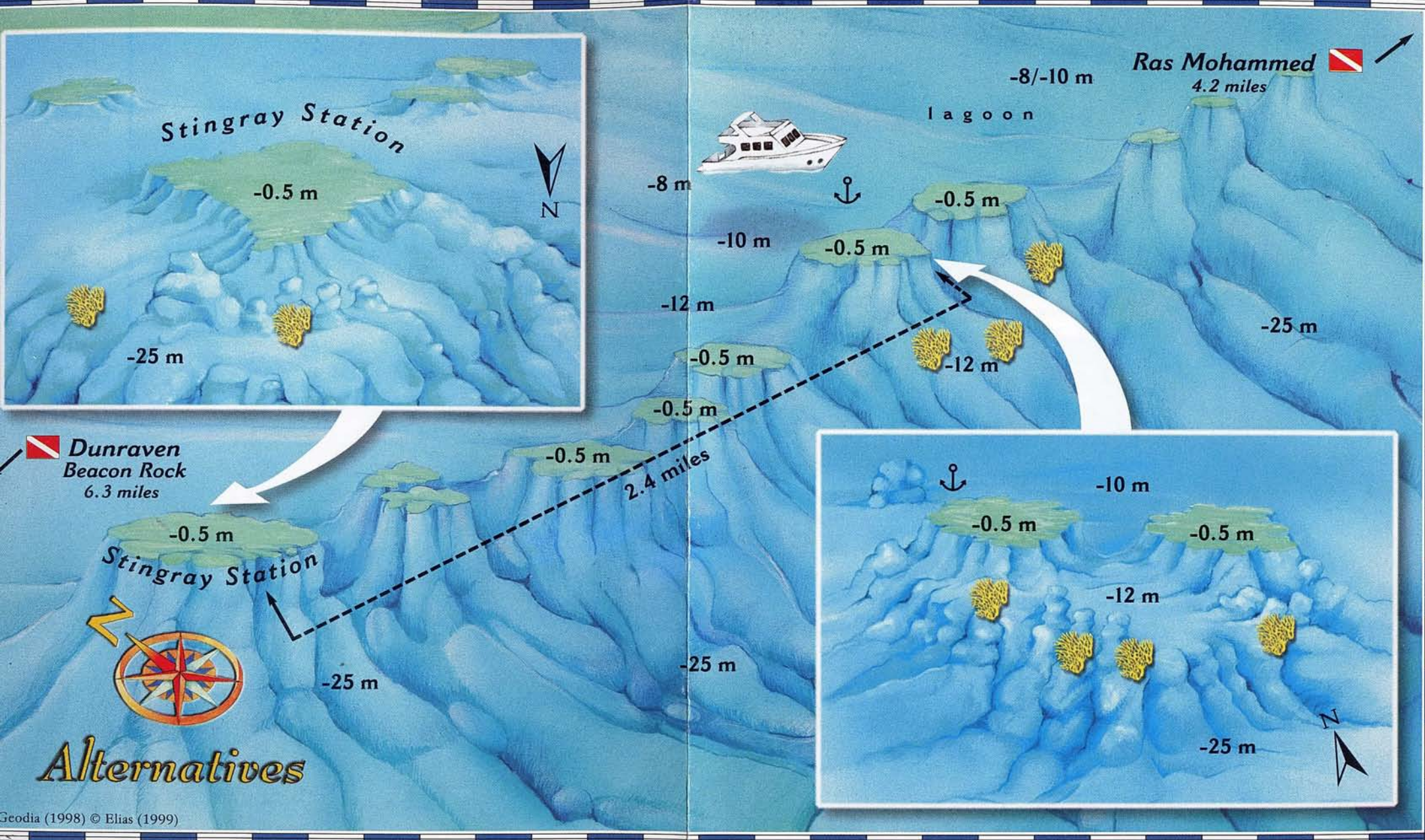
-33 m

-380 m

Stingray Station

W E

agnetic variation



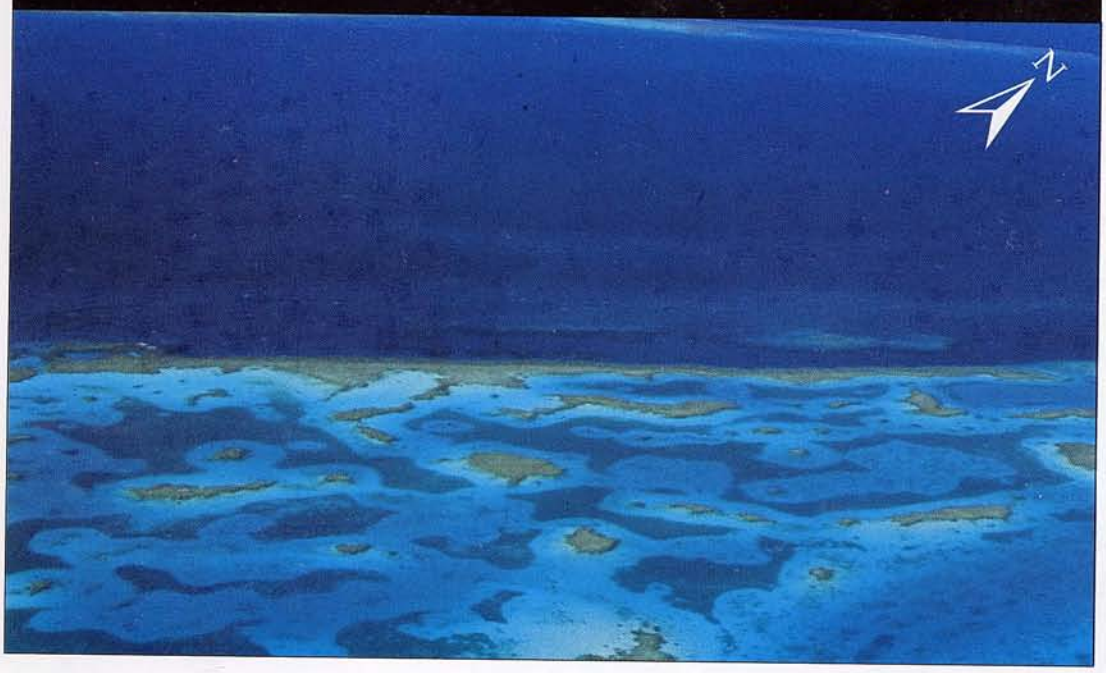




| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 2h | |
| Difficulty from | ✔ | to ✔✔ |
| Current from | ✔ | to ✔✔ |
| Natural scenery | ✔ | |
| Fauna interest | ✔✔ | |
| General interest | ✔✔ | |

# Alternatives

27°43.800′ N / 34°12.000′ E



Three miles west of Ras Mohammed, a series of outcropping coral pinnacles extends east-west for about a mile and a half on the southern edge of *Sha'ab el-Utat*, flanking a large sandy lagoon with an average depth of about ten metres. Local fishermen call this site *Saba Erg* (the "Seven Pinnacles"), while divers have renamed it "Alternatives" because, as it is so well-sheltered, it offers the opportunity to make alternative dives when conditions in the open sea are prohibitive. The classic dive goes around the two middle pinnacles, which are on a line with a fixed mooring. Due to its position this site has tidal currents that greatly influence visibility, which can be quite poor when the current comes from the south, especially if accompanied by wind and waves. If, on the other hand, the sea is calm and the current is either lacking or is coming from the north, you can enjoy Alternatives, which does not offer much as to underwater landscape but is swarming with fauna. Here you can see large groupers (*Epinephelus malabaricus*, *E. tauvina*), Bluespotted stingrays (*Taeniura lymma*), calamari, Nudibranchia and many genera of corals, while the deeper water is the home of Leopard sharks. The north-western part of Alternatives, consisting of a large, roughly quadrangular outcrop, is known as **Stingray Station** because many Bluespotted stingrays gather here, particularly in the spring months.

## Features

- *A sheltered site offering a safe stay.*
- *An abundance of marine life, especially groupers and many genera of corals.*
- *Offers you the chance to see Leopard sharks.*

## Comments

- *It is better not to make dives if the sea is rough and visibility is poor.*
- *Night diving can be effected only in optimal conditions; make sure to bring two torches with you.*

# Dunraven (Beacon Rock) 27°42.200′ N / 34°07.300′ E

This is a small semi-outcropping reef situated 6.9 miles west of Ras Mohammed, with a small beacon indicating the southern tip of *Sha'ab Mahmud*. In 1876 this was the site of the shipwreck of the British steamer merchant ship *Dunraven*, built in Newcastle in 1873 by Mitchell & Co. and bound for Bombay.

The wreck lies upside down at 15-29.5 meters' depth, in two pieces; it was discovered only in 1977 by geologist Arye Keller and underwater cameraman Howard Rosenstein.

The Dunraven was the subject of a memorable BBC documentary film in 1979 and has become a classic site for scuba divers. Since the cargo (timber and bales of cotton) was lost during the shipwreck, when the ship also caught on fire, the wreck looks like a large, practically empty cave. You can access through the three main openings at the stern, midship and the bow. The dive begins from the stern area, where the wreck lies deepest and where you can see some Crocodilefish. After going a few dozen meters inside the hull – populated by large groupers, Lionfish, Scorpionfish and swarms of Glassfish and multicoloured Alcyonarians – is it best to exit through the midship opening on a line with the engine room, so that you can explore the outside of the bow area and above all the nearby coral garden filled with organisms.

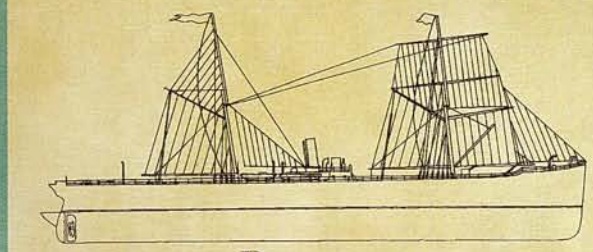
## Features

- *The wreck is much less crowded than the Thistelgorm.*
- *There is a splendid, virtually intact coral garden on the outer slope of the reef above the bow.*
- *Rich in stable populations of groupers, Scorpionfish, Crocodilefish, Alcyonarians and sponges.*

## Comments

- *Dive when the sea is calm and the weather is good.*
- *There is often a current moving north.*
- *Even though visibility may be fairly good, it is advisable to have a torch.*

# Dunraven



Dunraven

Beacon Rock

beacon

rock

-0.5 m

rock

iron fragments

-0.5 m

reef plate

Ras Mohammed
8 miles

**DUNRAVEN**

**Type of ship**: merchant
**Nationality**: English
**Construction date**: 1873
**Length**: 85 m
**Width**: 9.7 m
**Estimated tonnage**: 1,800 t
**Date of shipwreck**: 22 April 1876
**Depth**: 15-29.5 m

-4 m shelter

-5/-10 m coral garden

-15 m

BOW

engine room entrance

propeller

-18.5 m

bow entrance

-24 m

remains of the mast

-28 m

remains of the mast

stern entrance

STERN

-29.5 m

current

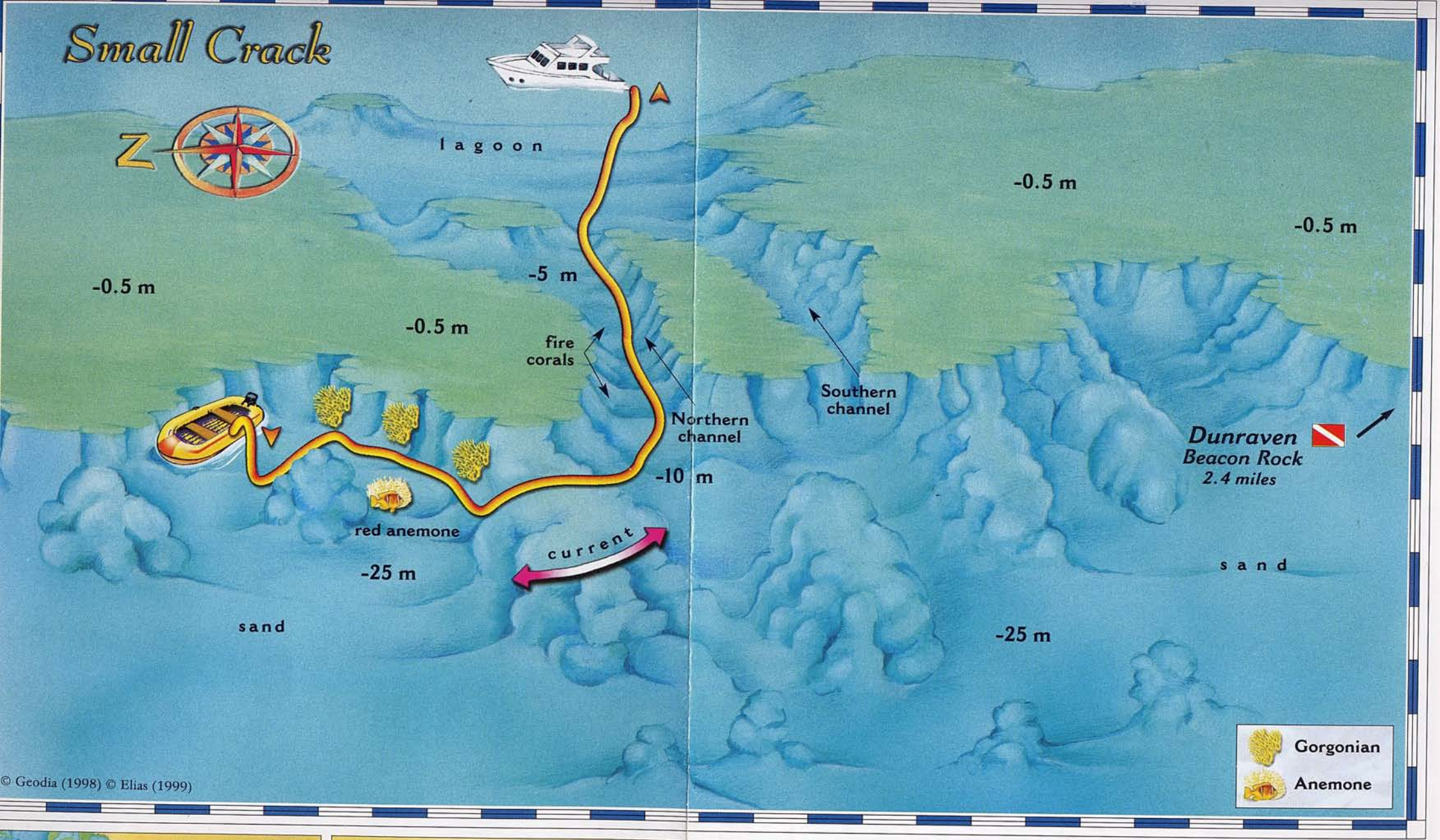
scale 1 : 560
1 cm = 5.6 m

0 5 10 15 20 25
meters



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access | 2h 30' | |
| Difficulty | ✔✔ | |
| Current from | ✔ | to ✔✔ |
| Natural scenery | ✔ | |
| Fauna interest | ✔✔ | |
| General interest | ✔✔ | |

# Small Crack







| | |
|---|---|
| Access | 3h |
| Difficulty | ✓✓ |
| Current from | ✓ to ✓✓ |
| Natural scenery | ✓✓ |
| Fauna interest | ✓✓ |
| General interest | ✓✓ |

# Small Crack

27°43.900′ N / 34°05.900′ E

The long, half-outcropping coral reef running from northwest to southeast that constitutes the impressive *Sha'ab Mahmud* and separates a broad sandy lagoon from the open sea, is breached by two channels known as **Small Crack** (or *Small Passage*) and **Big Crack** (or *Big Passage*). Small Crack, called *Fossma Saghir* by local fishermen, is the more southerly channel. Its central body is divided by a large coral formation into two secondary channels from 5 to 8 meters deep with tidal currents that can become extremely strong. When the tide is flooding and the current it generates moves northwards, you are pushed from the lagoon towards the open sea. If on the other hand the tide is ebbing, the current runs south towards the lagoon: it is therefore preferable to dive then, so that you can drift back to your boat moored inside the lagoon. Obviously a dinghy would be ideal for dives in Small Crack. On the outer reef wall, which descends to a 18-22-meter deep sandy floor, you will see gorgonians, Alcyonarians and large Acroporidae. Often there are sea turtles; Leopard sharks and Whitetip reef sharks may sometimes be seen. In the summer there are schools of barracuda and Jackfish and, near the mouth of the channel, a school of Double-bar breams (genus *Acanthopagrus*). Inside the northern channel there is an abundance of fire corals (*Millepora dichotoma*), which are typical of the areas with strong currents.

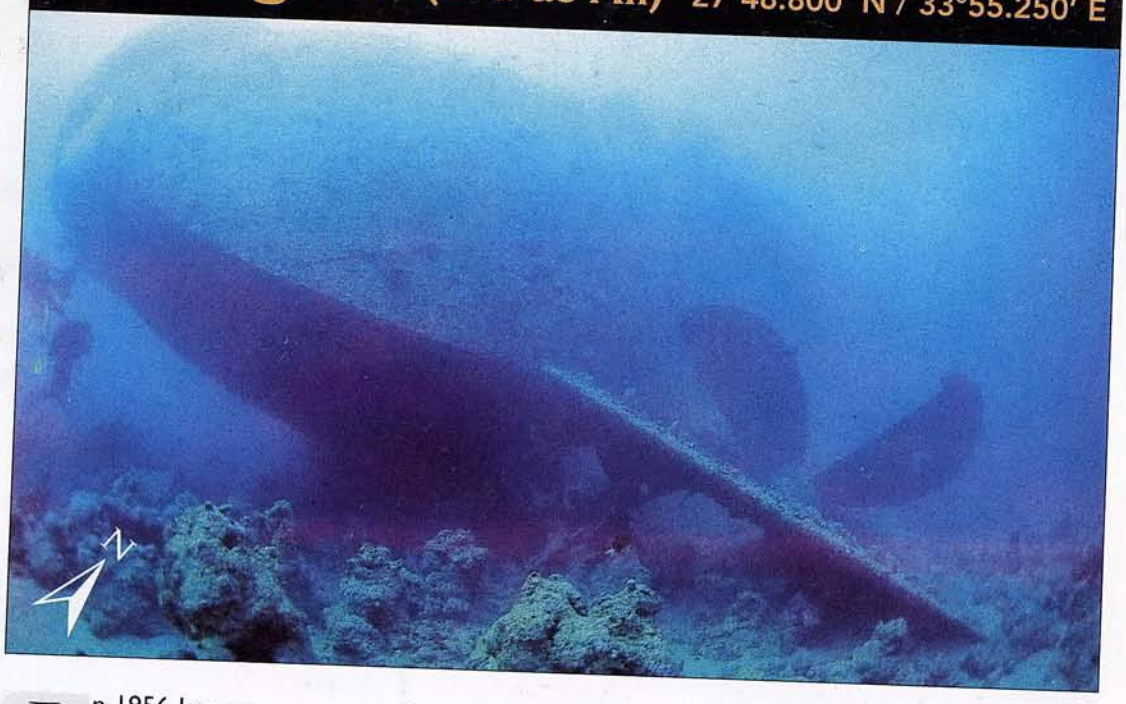
## Features

- *A varied underwater environment rich in different fauna.*
- *A calm site with few divers.*
- *The chance to see Leopard sharks.*

## Comments

- *Check the direction of the current before your dive.*
- *If the current is strong and running northwards, do not dive, especially if you do not have a dinghy.*

# Thistlegorm (Sha'ab Ali) 27°48.800' N / 33°55.250' E



In 1956 Jacques Cousteau, with his mythical oceanographic ship *Calypso*, discovered the wreck of the *Thistlegorm* on the outer wall of the immense reef known as *Sha'ab Ali*, off the western coast of Sinai. This was a British transport ship built in 1940 by Thomson & Sons that was lying at anchor early in the Second World War when it was attacked by a squadron of German bombers from Crete. The Thistlegorm had come from Cape Town loaded with material for the British troops in North Africa (munitions, hand grenades, anti-tank mines, *Lee Enfield MK III* rifles, *BSA* motorcycles, *Morris* automobiles, *Bedford* trucks, two light *MK II Bren Carrier* tanks, two locomotives, two railway freight cars, two tank cars, spare parts, medicines, tires and rubber boots) and was hit by two bombs; it sank for 30 meters in an upright position onto the flat and sandy floor. Cousteau found a ship which, despite the fire that had resulted from the bombing, was virtually intact, as was its cargo. He documented his discovery in some scenes in one of his memorable documentary films so that the public at large would become acquainted with this extraordinary wreck, which is considered the most interesting in the Red Sea and has become a great favourite with scuba divers from all over the world.

The Thistlegorm lies 19.2 miles from Ras Mohammed and 31.2 miles from Naama Bay (about 4-5 hours by boat). Exploration of the ship is usually done in two phases, after having moored your boat either on the fore or aft side of the ship's outer structures. This is often a delicate operation and should be done by guides.

The first dive is made in the morning; it is a general tour of the wreck, which lies in NW-SE position. Begin from the deepest stern area, preferably from the western side in order to see the heavy machinegun and anti-aircraft gun, which are on the deck at -25 meters. Next to this is the huge hole made by the German bombs in correspondence with hold 4, which contained munitions, bombs, the two *MK II Bren Carrier* tanks and the locomotive that now lies at -28 meters, about 30 meters'

# Thistlegorm

HOLD 1: on the upper level there are *Morris* automobiles and *BSA* motorcycles; on the lower one there are *Lee Enfield Mk III* rifles, crates of medicines, rubber boots, tires.

HOLD 2: on the upper level there are *Morris* automobiles and *BSA* motorcycles; on the lower one, *Bedford* trucks, *BSA* motorcycles, *Lee Enfield Mk III* rifles and spare parts for tanks and planes.

HOLD 3: the upper level contains crates of munitions, while the lower one has hand grenades, bombs and anti-tank mines.

HOLD 4

-16 m
anchor-winches
tank car
davit
torpedo
railway freight car
bridge
captain's cabin
blast roof
-17 m
funnel hole
area hit by German bombs
*Mk II Bren Carrier* tank
munitions, bombs
rudder & propelle
BOW
main current
tank car
davit
railway freight car
foremast
-25 m
STE
-28 m
locomotive
munitions
*Mk II Bren Carrier* tank
machinegun
anti-aircraft gun
-33 m

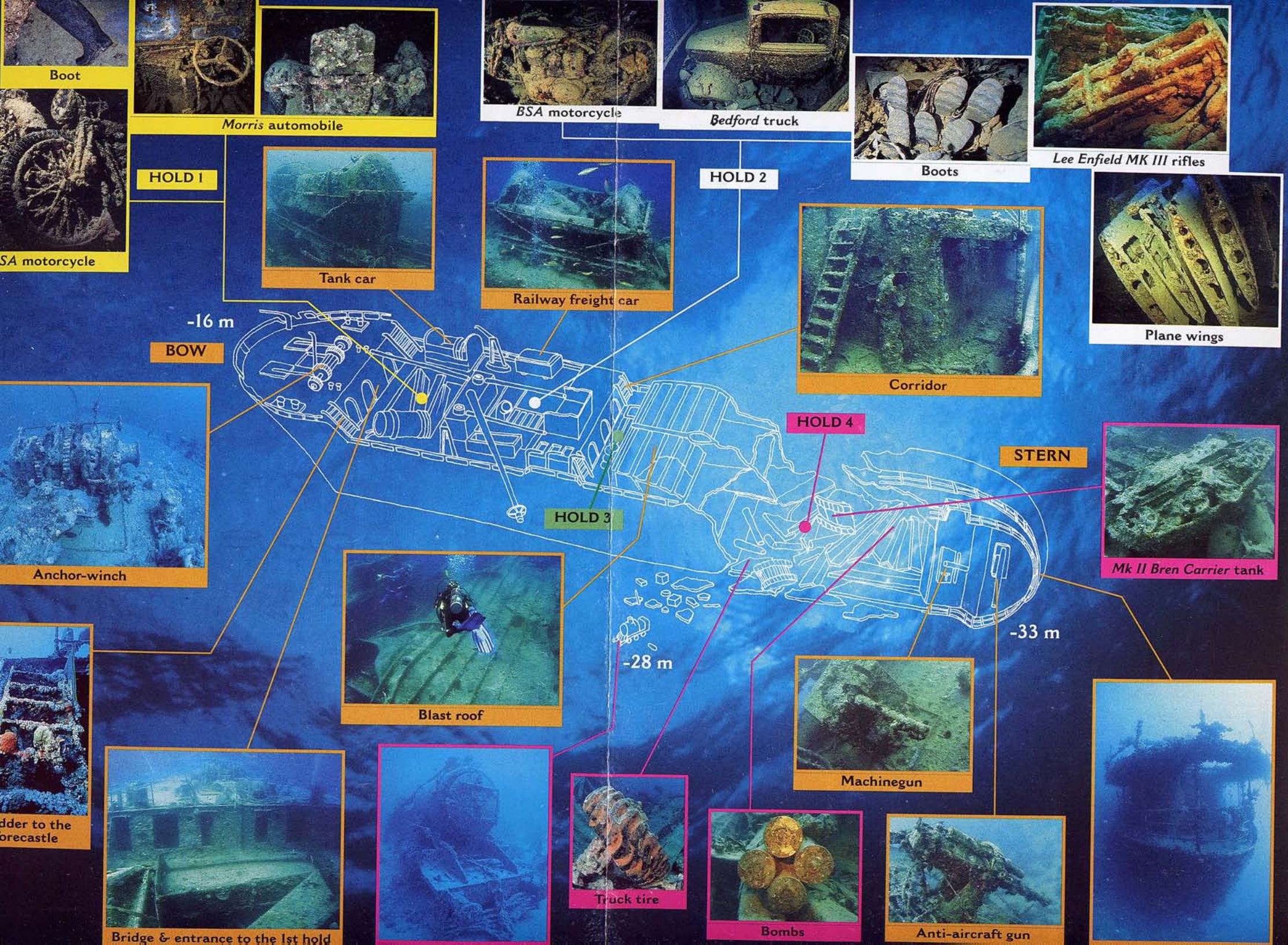
N

scale 1 : 500
1 cm = 5 m

0 5 10 15 20 25
meters



| | |
|---|---|
| Access | 4h 30' |
| Difficulty | ✓✓✓ |
| Current from | ✓ to ✓✓✓ |
| Natural scenery | ✓ |
| Fauna interest | ✓✓ |
| General interest | ✓✓✓ |


Boot
Morris automobile
BSA motorcycle
Bedford truck
Boots
Lee Enfield MK III rifles
SA motorcycle
HOLD 1
Tank car
Railway freight car
HOLD 2
Plane wings
-16 m
BOW
Corridor
Anchor-winch
HOLD 4
STERN
HOLD 3
Mk II Bren Carrier tank
Blast roof
-28 m
-33 m
Machinegun
dder to the
orecastle
Bridge & entrance to the 1st hold
Truck tire
Bombs
Anti-aircraft gun

# Thistlegorm (Sha'ab Ali) 27°48.800' N / 33°55.250' E

distance from the ship. Having done this, proceed along the bridge, which often has a counter-current that is running southeast, and move around to the bow, where at -15 meters you will see the perfectly preserved, large anchor-winch. This first dive is not limited to admiring the ship's structures but also offers views of the abundant fauna living here: schools of Batfish (genus *Platax*) and barracuda, large groupers (genera *Cephalopholis* and *Epinephelus*), schools of Snappers (*Lutjanus bohar*) and Jackfish (genera *Caranx* and *Carangoides*), Butterflyfish (genera *Chaetodon*, *Heniochus*, *Pomacanthus*), Surgeonfish (genera *Acanthurus*, *Zebrasoma*, *Naso*), Crocodilefish (genus *Cociella*), Sabre squirrelfish (*Sargocentron spiniferum*) and Soldierfish (*Myripristis murdjan*) – all of which make the Thistlegorm an artificial coral reef. The second dive is in the afternoon and includes exploration of the inner structure of the ship, the three holds and their cargo. Hold 1, near the bow, is the most interesting: its deepest parts contain crates of medicines, *Lee Enfield MK III* rifles, rubber boots and tires, while the upper section has *BSA* motorcycles and some *Morris* automobiles. Hold 2 is towards midship and its entrance is flanked by two wagons. It also has two sections: the lower one contains *Bedford* trucks and the upper one has more *BSA* motorcycles and *Morris* cars. Immediately astern of the second hold is the partly uncovered bridge leading to the captain's cabin. Heading to the stern you will reach hold 3, which contains mostly crates of munitions and hand grenades; beyond it you will see the funnel hole, astern of which is the huge hole where the fourth hold was, with the two *MK II Bren Carrier* tanks you already saw in the first dive. This ends your dive. However, you really need to make at least 10 dives to completely explore this fascinating wreck.

*Sunderland (Great Britain), 9 April 1940: the launching of the Thistlegorm*

By courtesy of the British Admiralty.

Unfortunately, nowadays there are simply too many divers visiting the Thistlegorm. Their very presence is jeopardizing the fine state of preservation of the wreck's structures, while the air bubbles accumulating against the metal walls are causing rapid corrosion that is endangering their very survival. In the near future severe measures concerning diving – or even closure of the site – will have to be decided in order to safeguard this extraordinary historical document.

**THISTLEGORM**

**Type of ship**: merchant
**Nationality**: English
**Construction date**: 1940
**Length**: 131 m
**Width**: 17.5 m
**Tonnage**: 9,009 t
**Date of shipwreck**: 5-6 October 1941
**Depth**: 16-33 m

## *Features*

- *Extremely interesting dives on a wreck that is exceptional for its historic interest and intact condition.*
- *An abundance of beautiful fauna.*

## *Comments*

- *The site is hard to find if you do not have a GPS.*
- *Difficult dive because of the depth and the current.*
- *Visibility often poor.*
- *Carry a torch with you.*
- *Be careful when visiting the inner structures.*
- *There are almost always too many divers on the wreck.*

# DIVING CENTERS IN SHARM EL-SHEIKH

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***African Divers***<br>*Ras Umm Sid* | Sharm el-Sheikh | +20-12-3131712 | +20-62-660307 | african@sinainet.com.eg |
| ***Anemone Dive Center***<br>*c/o Pigeon House* | Naama Bay | +20-62-600999 | +20-62-600999 | anemone@sinainet.com.eg |
| ***Aqua Active***<br>*c/o Holiday Inn Resort* | Naama Bay | +20-62-602135 | +20-62-602150 | aquaactive@sinainet.com.eg |
| ***Aquamarine Dive Center***<br>*c/o Novotel* | Naama Bay | +20-62-600276 | +20-62-600176 | aquamarine@sinainet.com.eg |
| ***Aqua Vision Diving***<br>*c/o Cataract Hotel* | Naama Bay | +20-62-600619 | +02-62-600187 | aquavision@sinainet.com.eg |
| ***Blue Bubbles***<br>*Khaled Aboustaf Street* | Sharm el-Sheikh | +20-62-660023 | +20-62-660023 | info@bluebubbles.ch |
| ***Blue Sea Diving Center***<br>*c/o Barrakuda Sharm Hotel* | Sharm el-Sheikh | +20-62-660790 | +20-62-660442 | azmeralda@access.com.eg |
| ***Cali Int. Diving Center***<br>*Marine Sports Club* | Sharm el-Sheikh | +20-62-660672 | +20-62-660805 | calissh@sinainet.com.eg |
| ***Camel Dive Club***<br>*c/o Camel Hotel* | Naama Bay | +20-62-600700 | +20-62-600601 | reservations1@cameldive.com |
| ***Camel Dive School***<br>*c/o Camel Hotel* | Naama Bay | +20-62-600700 | +20-62-600601 | reservations1@cameldive.com |
| ***Camel & Dragon***<br>*c/o Iberotel Gand Sharm - Ras Umm Sid* | Sharm el-Sheikh | +20-62-600700 | +20-62-600601 | reservations1@cameldive.com |
| ***Carpe Diem Cruise*** | Sharm el-Sheikh | +39-059-251580 | +39-059-251580 | chansen@tin.it |
| ***The Crab***<br>*c/o Kharamana Hotel* | Naama Bay | +20-62-600660 | +20-62-600205 | ssh1@thecrab.com |
| ***Colona Dive Club***<br>*c/o Oasis Hotel* | Naama Bay | +20-62-602624 | +20-62-602624 | colona@sinainet.com.eg |
| ***Conrad Diving Center***<br>*c/o Conrad International Hotel* | Ras Nasrani | +20-62-670595 | +20-62-601580 | sinai_divers@sinainet.com.eg |
| ***Deep Blue***<br>*c/o Ghazala Gardens* | Naama Bay | +20-62-601893 | +20-62-601956 | sinai_divers@sinainet.com.eg |
| ***Divers Den***<br>*c/o Seti Sharm* | Sharm el-Sheikh | +20-62-660870 | +20-62-600012 | den@sinainet.com.eg |
| ***Divers International***<br>*c/o The Whitehouse* | Naama Bay | +20-62-600865 | +20-62-600176 | info@diversintl.com |
| ***Divers Network***<br>*c/o Mövenpick Jolie Ville* | Naama Bay | +20-62-603200 | +20-62-602033 | hseldin@sinainet.com.eg |
| ***Diving & Discovery***<br>*c/o Marriott Beach Resort* | Naama Bay | +20-62-600190 | +20-62-600188 | ddiscovery@sinainet.com.eg |
| ***Diving World***<br>*Travco Marina* | Sharm el-Maya | +20-62-660065 | +20-62-600344 | diving.world@sinainet.com.eg |
| ***Emperor Divers***<br>*c/o Rosetta Hotel* | Naama Bay | +20-62-601734 | +20-62-601735 | info.sharm@emperordivers.com |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Free Style Water Sports**<br>*Sheikh Coast* | Sheikh Coast | +20-12-2189894 | +20-62-600176 | fsws@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Greta Diving Cruise** | Sharm el-Maya | +20-62-601713 | +20-62-601714 | idt_sinai@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Halomy Diving Center**<br>*c/o Halomy Village* | Naama Bay | +20-62-600682 | +20-62-600134 | |
| **Holiday Service**<br>*c/o Albostan Hotel* | Naama Bay | +20-62-600075 | +20-62-600075 | holiday@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Ocean College**<br>*c/o Ocean Lodge - Ras Umm Sid* | Sharm el-Sheikh | +20-62-663378 | +20-62-663379 | ocean@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Oonas Dive Club** | Naama Bay | +20-62-600581 | +20-62-600582 | oonas@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Orso Diving Club**<br>*c/o Going One Club Reef - Tower Bay* | Sharm el-Sheikh | +20-62-661033 | +20-62-661036 | orsodive@mboxvol.le |
| **Pyramisa Dive Club**<br>*c/o Pyramisa Hotel* | Shark Bay | +20-62-601495 | +20-62-601094 | pyramisadive@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Rasta Divers**<br>*c/o Casa Marina - Ras Umm Sid* | Sharm el-Sheikh | +20-12-2133881 | +20-62-663086 | rasta@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Red Sea Diving College** | Naama Bay | +20-62-600145 | +20-62-600144 | college@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Scubadreamer Diving College**<br>*c/o Dreams Beach Resort*<br>*Ras Umm Sid* | Sharm el-Sheikh | +20-62-660170 | +20-62-660198 | |
| **Sea World**<br>*c/o Tower Club - Tower Bay* | Sharm el-Sheikh | +20-62-660230 | +20-62-661237 | seaworld@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Shark's Bay Diving Center**<br>*c/o Shark Bay Resort* | Shark Bay | +20-62-600942 | +20-62-600944 | umbi@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Sheikh Coast Diving Center**<br>*c/o Coral Bay Hotel* | Sheikh Coast | +20-62-601713 | +20-62-601714 | idt_sinai@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Sinai Dive Club**<br>*c/o Hilton Fayrouz Village* | Naama Bay | +20-62-600139 | +20-62-601043 | dive.club@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Sinai Dive Club**<br>*c/o Sonesta Club Hotel* | Naama Bay | +20-62-601287 | +20-62-601289 | dive.club@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Sinai Divers**<br>*c/o Ghazala Hotel* | Naama Bay | +20-62-600697 | +20-62-600158 | sinai_divers@sinainet.com.eg |
| **SSI EGYPT**<br>*c/o Camel Hotel* | Naama Bay | +20-62-600958 | +20-62-600601 | admin@ssi.com.eg |
| **Sub Maldive**<br>*c/o Helnan Marina Sharm* | Naama Bay | +20-62-600170 | +20-62-600170 | maldive@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Subex Mövenpick**<br>*c/o Mövenpick Jolie Ville Hotel* | Naama Bay | +20-62-600100 | +20-62-600111 | subexssh@intouch.com |
| **Subex Sharm Holiday**<br>*c/o Sharm Holiday Hotel* | Naama Bay | +20-62-601388 | +20-62-660392 | subexssh@intouch.com |
| **Venta Diving Faraana**<br>*c/o King Snefru Resort - Ras Umm Sid* | Sharm el-Sheikh | +20-62-601202 | +20-62-601203 | ventafaraana@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Venta Diving Reef Oasis**<br>*c/o Reef Oasis Resort - Ras Umm Sid* | Sharm el-Sheikh | +20-62-662126 | +20-62-662126 | ventadiving@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Venta Diving Sharm Club**<br>*c/o Sharm Club - Ras Umm Sid* | Sharm el-Sheikh | +20-62-660250 | +20-62-660263 | ventasharm@sinainet.com.eg |
| **Vera Sub**<br>*c/o Queen Sharm Hotel - Ras Umm Sid* | Sharm el-Sheikh | +20-62-662313 | +20-62-662319 | verasub@sinainet.com.eg |

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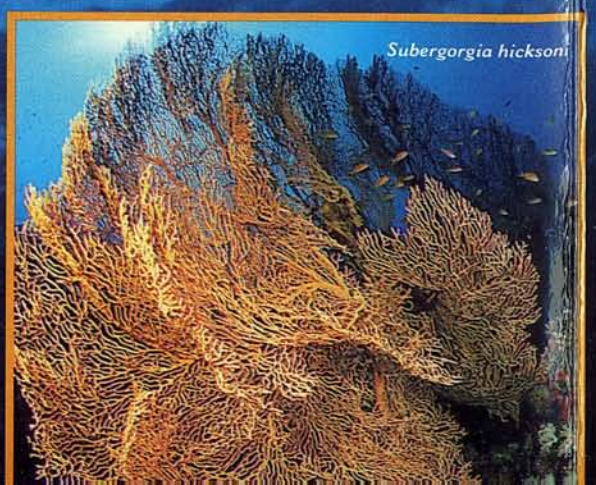
NAAMA BAY
Naama Bay
SHARM EL-SHEIKH
Ras Umm Sid
Hyperbaric Medical Center
Sharm el-Maya
Sharm el-Sheikh
Marsa Ghazlani
EL-TOR
Gebel Khashabi
Ras Mohammed National Park
Marsa Bareika
Ras Za'atar
Ras Mohammed
Sha'ab ed - Deqayeq
Qad Ibn Haddan
Sha'ab el-Utat
Stingray Station
Alternatives
Sha'ab Surur
Sha'ab Mahmud
Small Crack
Wreck of Thistlegorm
27°48.800'N; 33°55.250'E
Beacon Rock
27°42.200'N; 34°07.300'E
Wreck of Dunraven
Sha'ab Ali
Wreck of Sara H.
Shag Rock
STRAIT OF GUBAL
DIVE SITES
0 1 2 3
nautical miles
© Geodia - 1999
Key to Symbols
Local dive site
Not local dive site
Harbour or jetty
Lighthouse Beacon
Mangroves
Oasis
Wreck


Pterois volitans
Latrunculia magnifica


Subergorgia hicksoni


Dendronephthya sp.


*Ras Umm Sid lighthouse*

*Gorgonians* (Subergorgia *sp.*)

*Lionfish* (Pterois volitans)



**Surrounded by deserts and mountains and lying under a shining sun that warms its clear blue waters, which conceal an underwater environment that is absolutely unique in its shapes and colours, the Red Sea has become a paradise for scuba divers from all over the world. Indeed, its coral reef, with more than 1,000 species of fish and 250 species of corals, is considered the most beautiful and varied on Earth. This Diving Guide is the fruit of patient research and study and is a veritable atlas that reveals all the secrets of the sea floors and the most interesting dives in the region of Sharm el-Sheikh, the main Red Sea tourist resort. It is aimed at divers who wish to grasp the principal features of the dives described so that they will become even more fascinating and interesting thanks to careful observation of the fish and the coral reef environment.**