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Golden Emperor 2



Golden Emperor 1



South Moon



Photo: Andrew Slater

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Front cover image: Jane Morgan ([www.morganreefphotography.com](http://www.morganreefphotography.com))



### Letter from the Editor

October!? Where did the time go? Since the launch of BLUE five months ago, we have reported on plenty of action in the Red Sea. In fact, 2009 seems to have marked a year of diving firsts for many in Egypt's waters.

It was a logbook success for me, certainly, with my first hammerhead (finally), whale shark and sailfish encounters. And it has been equally exciting on the surface seeing the launch of BLUE magazine, which is in print for the first time for Dive 2009 show visitors.

A highly unusual diving-related-first also happened to me a few weeks ago at September's Project AWARE International Clean-up Day. An impromptu applause and cheers from a crowd of beach-dwelling tourists for the divers surfacing from the underwater clean-up of Shark's Bay.

Judging by the enthusiasm, anyone would have thought us divers were Jedi fighters returning from an intergalactic battle. Well, I suppose if you constitute plastic waste, cigarette butts and old rope as the Dark Side of the Force, then, yes, we Storm-trooperd those bad boys good and proper. Enough to leave Darth Vader quaking in his non-biodegradable plastic boots, I'm sure.

But all of the bizarre sci-fi heroic references aside, that moment demonstrated the importance of those events which are often so well supported by the Egyptian watersports community. Raising awareness among the general public is the key to combating environmental destruction of any kind.

Picking up just one plastic bottle or bag from the reef is likely to save a marine animal life or two, but preventing these dangerous objects from ending up there in the first place saves even more. That's where highlighting and educating everyone about the consequence of carelessly discarding rubbish comes in. Find out more in our full clean-up report on page 9 and 10.

BLUE Issue Three is packed with reasons why our environment is worth all the fuss. Check out top tips on increasing pelagic encounters in Red Sea Life (page 36-38); the beauty and adrenaline rush of deep south dives (page 23-27); heading to new frontiers in Talking Tech, (page 22); the first in a new series of Insider's Wreck Guides, starting with the Thistlegorm (page 16-18); plus essential skills to capturing this all on camera in Class Shot (page 34-35); and much more. It's this incredibly diverse and beautiful underwater environment that leads so many scuba-clad Jedi to give their time to worthwhile marine conservation causes.

So, to all us ocean-dwellers looking to do our bit for the marine environment and enjoy more heart-thumping dives in 2010 in a Red Sea galaxy not so far away, dare I say...

May The Force be with us!

*Charlotte*

Charlotte Boan  
Editor, BLUE



## Letter from the Chairman...

Dear readers

The end of the year is approaching and CDWS will be travelling in force across Europe to promote Egypt's diving and watersports industry at all the major industry shows over the coming months. The first stop on our tour is the UK dive show in Birmingham, which also sees the first-ever printed edition of BLUE. It is a great opportunity for us to share all that the Red Sea has to offer visitors of many diving interests and also promote the achievements and objectives of the CDWS. I look forward to meeting with visitors throughout the weekend in the Red Sea Zone.

Since the first CDWS member zone featured at the UK dive show in Birmingham last year, much work has been done to raise standards of service and safety throughout the diving industry in Egypt.

The CDWS hopes to have completed the full audits of all dive centres and safari boats operating in the Red Sea by early 2010, ensuring all those that pass meet the newly adopted ISO standards. This is the biggest challenge for the CDWS, but one that is vital to quality improvement.

Other work to improve standards includes the launch of training schemes, many more of which will be introduced in 2010. None of these would have been possible without the support, both financially and technically, from the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, particularly the head of its training unit Mr Hussein Badran.

There are many projects planned to improve safety and greater protect our marine environment, but these depend greatly on the support of all our members. At the CDWS, we do not have the resources to make all the improvements we would like to see for all, such as the creation of safer confined training areas. We need more help from volunteers. If you or staff members at your dive centre wish to participate in any future projects then please email the CDWS via [blue@cdws.travel](mailto:blue@cdws.travel)

We need the support of everyone to make the Red Sea one of the best places in the world for diving, in terms of safety, service and marine environment preservation and protection. I strongly believe, however, that the will is there among all those who are part of this industry and we can all work together to make this happen.

Happy and safe diving,

**Hesham Gabr**  
Chairman of the Chamber of Diving and Watersports

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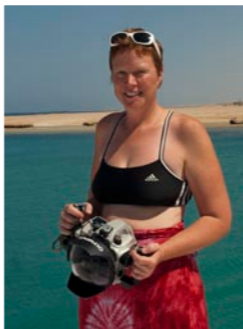
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## contributors

### Karin Brussaard

Dutch underwater photojournalist Karin Brussaard travelled to the deep south of the Egyptian Red Sea with regular dive buddy Linda Engels to check out the best of the action this summer. Read about their lucky big animal encounters and see the pictures, starting on page 23. Karin was 'forced' to learn to dive by her brother in 1997, but lucky for her (and him), she fell in love with the sport. A few years later she began taking underwater photographs. Today she dives around the world with Linda and files regular reports for diving magazine Dkkyng. The 37-year-old has visited the Red Sea seven times and says it has so much to offer divers. 'The amazing visibility and the most beautiful colours surprise me again and again,' she says. 'In fact, each time I visit the Red Sea I feel like a little child looking at something for the first time.'



### Cath Bates

New regular BLUE contributor Cath Bates shares her love for technical diving in the Red Sea and what's on offer to those who decide to deepen their underwater adventures in Talking Tech, page 48. An instructor of nine years experience, Cath has dived in the UK, New Zealand, Caribbean, the Mediterranean and Malaysia. She has worked in Sharm el Sheikh for the past five years as an open water and more recently technical diving instructor. Why does the 35-year-old love the Red Sea? 'That one area can have so much diversity, ranging from coral gardens to wrecks dripping in life, still astounds me after five solid years of working here,' she says. 'I even love the seasonal differences in the water. My most memorable dives here include 13 hammerheads patrolling the Lara and three big boy black tip sharks cruising at Anemone City. After 45 minutes we remembered we didn't have gills.'



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## ISO chiefs inspect CDWS

A delegation of inspectors from the ISO recreational diving standards development team visited Sharm el Sheikh to inspect the work of all the CDWS auditors in the first of series of annual checks. The visit at the end of September marked the near-completion of the first auditing phase of dive operations throughout Egypt and the beginning of the re-audits for 2010.

Dr Peter Jonas, director of certification of Austrian Standards and manager of the EUF (European Underwater Federation) certification body, arrived with Martin Denison, who is the EUF certification body auditor and chairman of ISO working group for recreational diving services, to spend two days with all CDWS auditors to check up on re-audit visits and to inspect their work. Shadowing all the auditors at two Sharm-based dive centre re-audits, the inspectors evaluated and gave feedback about the CDWS team. They also shared the results of a recent audit feedback survey of dive operations.

'Congratulations, this is a good picture,' Dr Jonas told the team. 'Overall the results [of the survey] are very satisfactory.'

In 2008 the CDWS board commissioned the team of independent auditors to inspect diving centres and safari boats and ensure these met ISO standards EN 14467 / ISO 24803.



Denison, who deals with all CDWS auditor training and follow-up assessment visits said: 'ISO is the world's leading developer of standards. ISO standards are designed to be adopted worldwide. Standards were developed because we [divers] perceived a need for them. The standards came from the industry.'

Despite repeat auditor visits of up to eight times of some businesses to ensure they met standards, more than 30 operations in the Red Sea have now lost their license and been black-listed.

'Quality pays and standards help to ensure quality is there,' Denison added. 'The job of the auditor is not to go in and close centres down, but to go in and then pass the ISO standard. In many countries compliance with standards is not compulsory, but things become difficult when there is an accident. Officials look at the standards in these cases. Standards make the market fairer - help the consumers and help dive operations.'

Denison also outlined the details of two new ISO standards in nitrox training and introductory dives, full details of which will be sent out to CDWS members.

For more information about the standards see the CDWS website [www.cdws.travel](http://www.cdws.travel)

## Online clampdown on illegal operators

CDWS has teamed up with one of Europe's leading diving websites in a bid to clampdown on the promotion of illegal dive businesses trying to operate in Egypt. The online community of [www.Taucher.net](http://www.Taucher.net) will now be able to see which centres or operations are legal CDWS members or blacklisted among those featured on the website's listings.

CDWS chairman Hesham Gabr said it was vital that visitors to the Red Sea booked only through those operations that have passed the ISO auditing standards and have all the appropriate licensing. With the new system of labelling those listed, online readers can also find out more about the CDWS and its internationally recognised standards for safety and service.

The CDWS hopes to team up with other online dive community portals in the near future to help raise awareness about legal and rogue operators.

Diese Seiten werden von der CDWS unterstützt!

Die Kammer für Tauchen und Wassersport (CDWS) ist das erste und einzige öffentliche Organ in Ägypten, das ins Leben gerufen wurde, um Sporttauchen und Wassersportaktivitäten allgemein zu reglementieren. 2007 gegründet, sieht die CDWS es als eine ihrer Hauptaufgaben an, alle Tauchsporteinrichtungen und Angebote den international gültigen Standards der European Underwater Federation (EUF) anzupassen. Weitere Infos gibt es hier.



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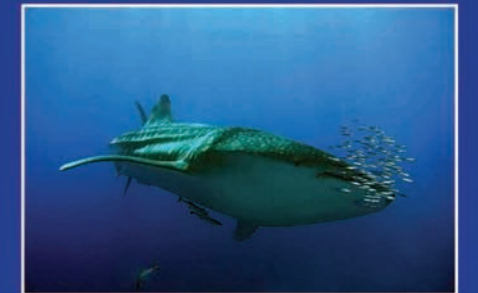
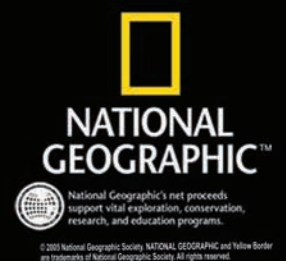
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# Underwater world cleans up



Divers across Egypt headed out in force to clear reefs of many tonnes of discarded waste for Project AWARE annual clean-up day, which is part of a global event. The 2009 International Clean-up Day is traditionally well supported by Red Sea operators who often lead the way in encouraging staff and guests to donate underwater time to collecting waste and recording data.

This year plastic shards and cigarette butts were singled out by Project AWARE as being among the most dangerous garbage threat to the health of marine ecosystems. The organisation said it estimated that about 4.5 trillion cigarette butts are thrown away each year, and many of these find their way into the earth's waterways, oceans and into fish and bird food chains.

Cigarette butts were found to be big offenders by volunteer divers collecting rubbish from the jetty of Shark's Bay in Sharm el Sheikh. Much of the waste was thought to have been discarded overboard by boat traffic.

Organised by dive centre Shark's Bay Umbi Village and joined by other guests and staff from Sinai Scuba, Colona Divers in Sharm and the CDWS, the Shark's Bay clean-up day saw everything from hundreds of plastic bottle seals to tyres and ropes being lifted by divers. All participants were treated to free beverages, lunch and cake at Umbi Village for their efforts.

**BLUE** received the following clean-up reports from CDWS dive centres:

Liveaboard operator blue o two had divers from all three of its boats doing their bit for the clean-up. MY blue Horizon divers lifted waste from The Aquarium dive site off Hurghada. Around 10 kg of rubbish was collected by the 20-strong team, including fishing line, electric tape, nets, newspaper, clothes, cable ties, and broken mask and fin straps. Between 30kg and 40kg of waste was removed by another team of 20 by M/Y blue Fin. The divers were operating at The Barge site, near Small Gubal Island, Hurghada.

Completing the clean-up of a further 5kg to 10kg of rubbish at nearby Abu Hashish dive site was a 16-diver team on board M/Y blue Melody ([www.blueotwo.com](http://www.blueotwo.com))

Aquarius Diving Club brought together 40 volunteers from its Red Sea centres to help with the effort on the shore as well as below the surface. The most common items found by its divers were fishing lines and plastic bags.

Aquarius Diving Club spokesperson Rehab El Gindy said: 'We had teams cleaning at Ras Umm Hesiwa in Makadi Bay where they collected six bags of trash, mostly made up from plastic bottles. Teams went to Palm Beach on the unused land next to the hotel, where we found enough plastic bags to keep Metro (Egyptian supermarket chain) in business for ten years.'

'Also, we went to Giftun Island and only found 15kgs of total rubbish which we were really surprised at, especially when you consider the amount of people that visit the national park on a daily basis.'

The dive centre said it is hoping to enrol the help of around 100 divers for



African Divers



blue o two



Colona



Shark's Bay



Dive Point



Euro Divers



Desert Divers



Dive Point



Aquarius

the 2010 International Clean-up Day. ([www.aquariusredsea.com](http://www.aquariusredsea.com))

Hurghada-based Colona Divers reported on similar plastic waste stories to other dive centres by filling six dive crates with discarded rubbish from a surface clean up of the Magawish Swiss Inn Resort, where the dive centre is located. ([www.colona.com](http://www.colona.com))

Dive-Point, located in the southern part of Hurghada, collected an astonishing 400kg of rubbish topside and underwater near its Coral Beach Hotel resort. A total of 15 guests joined its staff to pick up many plastic bags and bottles, as well as old ropes, cans, three canisters of oil and old engine parts. ([www.dive-point.com](http://www.dive-point.com))

In the Sinai resort of Nuweiba a team organised by African Divers also collected an impressive 400kg haul of rubbish from beaches and underwater sites in the area. It estimated that 1km of fishing line was cut off some of the most frequently dived reefs in the area.

'The rubbish was mostly plastic bottles and bags, but also shattered glass, metal tins, polystyrene and some building rubble,' said African Divers managing director Daniel Pikarski. ([www.africandiversnuweiba.com](http://www.africandiversnuweiba.com))

The Dahab Environmental Support Centre organised two clean-ups of its local area with the help of instructors and guides from many CDWS centres. It cleaned up rubbish blown on to the reefs and shores around the Laguna following the holiday of Eid, which coincided with the Project AWARE official date. ([www.dahab-info.com/vr](http://www.dahab-info.com/vr))

Euro Divers gathered together a 50-strong team at Club Med El Gouna and Grand Hotel Hurghada to remove more than 200kg of debris from the dive sites of El Sawa and Magawish. ([www.euro-divers.com](http://www.euro-divers.com))

Dahab-based Desert Divers marked the Project AWARE day and the last day of Ramadan on the 19 September by cleaning up Wadi Gnai (a desert valley 15km south of Dahab) in preparation for the Big Feast. The southern area is popular with divers. Dive clothing company Seven Tents funded the rubbish truck to pick up around 500kg of rubbish from the valley. At sunset, everyone who took part shared their last Ramadan breakfast in traditional Bedouin style. Read more about Desert Divers' contributions to the environment in Green Team, page 20-21.

Last year 390,881 volunteers from 110 countries participated in Project AWARE's International Clean-up Day. Data collected by divers during International Clean-up Day is reported in the Ocean Conservancy's Marine Debris Index demonstrating data collected and tallied by volunteers worldwide. Underwater data is also used in a special report on marine litter by the United Nations Environment Program, called Marine Litter: A Global Challenge.

'When divers go out as volunteers and collect data, as well as the trash itself, they are having an impact in the long run in finding a solution to the problem,' said Jenny Miller Garmendia, director of Project AWARE. [www.projectaware.org](http://www.projectaware.org)



## International Tourism Day

CDWS member dive centres teamed up to promote Red Sea diving at the first ever International Tourism Day to be held outside of Cairo. The popular diving destination of Sharm el Sheikh was chosen to host the Ministry of Tourism event to promote all sectors of the Egyptian tourist industry, including the CDWS and its members.

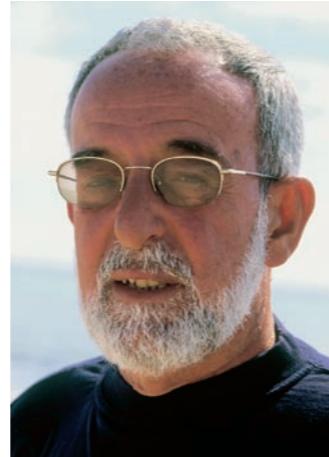
As well as special diver training and dive holiday package deals, the event on 27 September reinforced the message to tourists about the importance of diving only with CDWS member centres. The CDWS stand in the show tent at Naama Bay was represented by members including Ocean College, Lucky Divers, Sinai Divers, Camel Dive Club, Subex, Sinai Scuba and Dahab-based Club Red.

The day also featured a procession from Ghibli Raceway to the Ghazala hotels, live street entertainment along the main strip and ended with presentations by the mayor of Sharm. Special diving tourism awards went to Diving & Discovery, Mina Dive C Forum, Royal Evolution, Typhoon and Extra Divers.

## Tributes paid to Red Sea pioneer

Tributes have been paid to Guido Cherif, a hugely popular figure and pioneering Red Sea liveaboard operator, who died aged 62 after a long illness.

Abd El Megeed El Cherif, who was widely known as Guido, was the owner of the famous Coral Queen liveaboard, regarded as the best of its kind when it was launched in 1996. The Coral Queen remained a favourite, particularly with visiting UK divers, until its demise at Shaab Sataya in 2005.



Cherif worked as a military policeman before joining a successful family owned textile firm in Alexandria. He sold up his side of the family business when his passion for diving was ignited during a trip to Sharm el Sheikh in 1984.

Describing the man as a 'legend' HEPCA said in its statement: 'Through this boat [MY Coral Queen] Guido showed to the entire industry the true warmth of Egyptian hospitality. Guido was committed to giving back to his local community and over the years many of the crew came from local tribes for training onboard.'

Hossam Helmy, owner of Red Sea Diving Safari, said: 'He was a real friend, a true gentleman and a genuine person. We spent together there many months diving and exploring sites, and he helped me personally with setting up our speedboat fleet that serves all the Red Sea Diving Safari bases throughout the South. God bless him. We will miss him.'



## Diver tracking system

Emperor Divers has announced it is to install a diver tracking system on all its liveaboards by the end of the year.

A device on a divers' arm about the size of two cigarette boxes is able to activate an alarm and send out a location signal which can be picked up by all boats installed with the Seasafe system. This was tested accurately within an 18km-range of a diver according to the Egypt-wide operator.

Although cases of missing divers are rare, Emperor Divers said incidences do happen, particularly in remote areas in the south where there are often strong currents.

[www.emperordivers.com](http://www.emperordivers.com)

## First woman to 100m

Russian freediver Natalia Molchanova has become the first woman to reach 100m in the constant weight discipline after diving to 101m at the September championships in Sharm el Sheikh. She beat the record of 96m held by Dahab-based British freediver Sara Campbell, who has yet to be recognised for breaking 100m following a series of minor shallow water black-outs in competitions.

## Red Sea CCR cave course



The first ever complete closed circuit rebreather (CCR) cave diver course in the Red Sea is set to launch at the end of November. PURE, the technical arm of the Sharm el Sheikh-based dive centre Red Sea College is running the TDI (Technical Diving International) course between 29 November and 13 December this year.



## Freediving with oceanics

Red Sea freediving champion Federico Mana enjoyed a unique encounter off the local reefs of the Egyptian resort of Sharm el Sheikh when training this August. The 34-year-old was training at the Tower dive site in the late afternoon when a 2m oceanic white tip shark appeared.

Swimming close to Mana, the oceanic white tip stayed for 20 minutes in the water in depths of between 3m and 10m at the freediving descent line.

'If you are able to become part of the sea I think that sharks will get closer to you, as it is not scared you are not too nervous.'

He believes there is no reason to fear sharks and that feeding, touching and using camera flashes around the animal are usually the reasons why an oceanic white tip may show aggressive behaviour.

'In the Red Sea I have dived with tiger, oceanic white tip and grey reef sharks and never had a problem. That day, the oceanic came so close to us.'

The Italian-born freediver recently broke the national record in the constant weight with fins discipline by reaching a depth of 100m in Sharm el Sheikh (see a full interview in Freediver Focus page 34).

## Taba underwater photography workshops



Taba Heights is launching a series of underwater photography workshops led by Stuart Philpott, who has two decades of experience of the diving in the area. The PADI digital underwater photographer level one and two week-long courses are scheduled to begin 25 January, 26 April, 12 July and 18 October 2010. For more information and details of package holiday deals, see [www.longwoodholidays.co.uk](http://www.longwoodholidays.co.uk)

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Volunteer divers from dive centres across the Sinai resort of Dahab successfully removed 86 tyres near to the popular dive site of Eel Garden. Organised by marine conservation group Red Sea Research, the tyre clean-up took a day to complete.

Red Sea Research divers surveyed the site in the four weeks prior to the 3 August clean-up. Coral growth on three tyres was removed and relocated in a suitable and safe area. Tyres have been used as foundations for artificial reefs in some parts of the world; however, studies have shown that unless an artificial reef is properly planned and managed it can become more of a pollutant than a benefit for marine life.

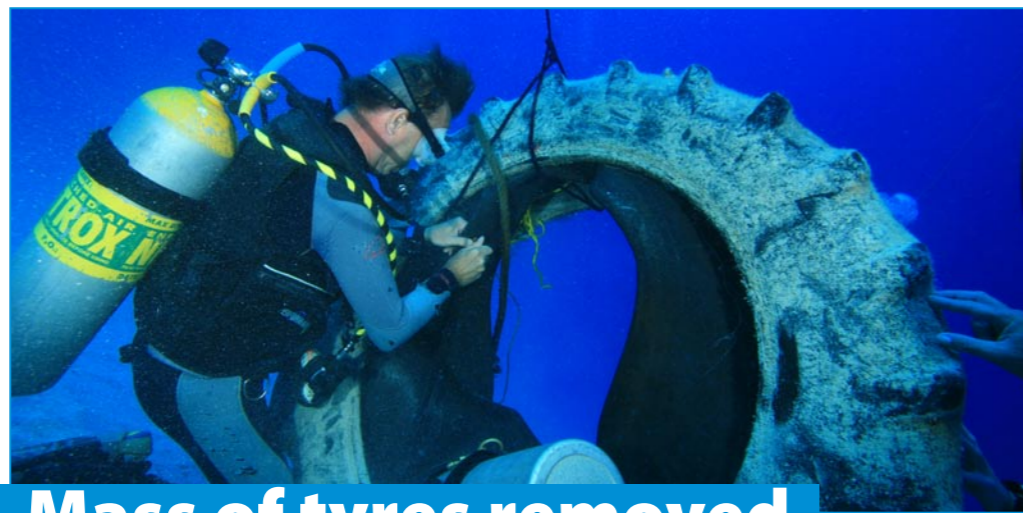
Red Sea Research said the tyres, which ranged from bike to tractor tyres, had been dumped by unknown persons near Eel Garden with no plan in place to create an artificial reef.

'Tyres were all placed in rows to allow for easy extraction,' said Red Sea Research. 'Two divers went into the water and placed a buoy line in the vicinity of the tyres. With the loaned use of a dive boat from Sinai Divers, 14 volunteers, two camera men and boat crew moored next to the buoy line approximately 40m off the Eel Garden Reef.'

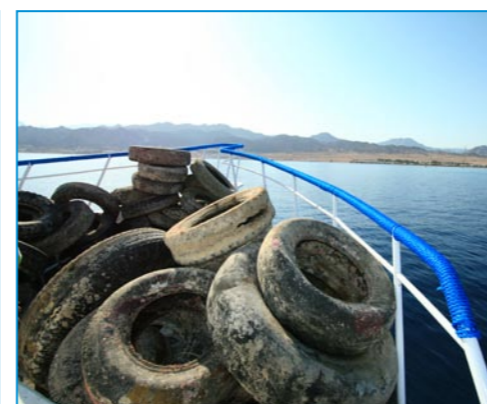
The South Sinai Marine Protectorate supplied permits, support, transportation and also arranged the disposal of the tyres.

Dive centres that took part in the clean-up included Sinai Divers, Fantasea, Fantaseatec, Blue Realm, Club Red, Orca Dive Club and Dahab Divers.

Photos: Rich Carey



## Mass of tyres removed



### European shark petition



Photo: Karin Brussaard

The petition is launched each year to coincide with European Shark Week, held in 2009 between 10 and 18 October. Signatures will continue to be collected following this week.

To find out what you or your business can do to participate, see the website [www.europeansharkweek.org](http://www.europeansharkweek.org).

The Shark Alliance is appealing for everyone across the world to sign its Shark Plan petition calling for the EU shark finning ban to be strengthened. Fishing in the Mediterranean has seen the greater destruction of shark species than in any parts of the world.

### BleachWatch appeal



Red Sea based environmental group HEPCA (Hurgada Environmental Protection Conservation Association) is appealing for divers to take part in new coral watch initiative, supported by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Kuoni Travel. As part of BleachWatch Egypt, regular dive visitors will be able to take short informal training in order to report on the health of the reefs.

HEPCA said: 'The training will give you insight into marine and coral ecology and will be an invaluable way to contribute and support the health of your favourite dive sites.'

The group is also looking for volunteers in the diving industry throughout Egypt to be trained to teach the BleachWatch training to other divers.

[www.hepca.com](http://www.hepca.com)

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Photo: Andrew Slater

### Volunteer appeal for safe areas

CDWS chairman Hesham Gabr has echoed the appeal for volunteers he made at the recent open forum meeting with members in Sharm el Sheikh on 15 August. He said the organisation needs volunteers to lead groups in monitoring designated diving zones to increase safety in dive training as well as conservation efforts.

The creation of safety zones in the Lagoon area in Dahab had to be put on hold in August because of a lack of response from volunteer divers.

Sinai Divers owner and manager Rolf Schmidt is also looking for volunteers in the Sharm area to help to survey areas around the resort where clear diving zones can be marked. These areas include the busy site at Ras Katy, where a number of glass bottom boats operate close to diving areas.

If you or your centre wishes to participate in future projects, email: [blue@cdws.travel](mailto:blue@cdws.travel)



### Work Permits

As a result of meetings between CDWS and the Minister of Labor it is now a lot easier and cheaper for foreign diving staff in Egypt to secure a work permit.

As from 1 November all non-Egyptian diving staff submitting CDWS applications or renewals will be required to have or be in the process of applying for a work permit (submitting the receipt of application).

As all CDWS memberships are due for renewal at the end of the year, it is recommended that all non-Egyptian diving staff speak to their managers about arranging their application for a work permit.

### Career Opportunities

There are a number of roles within the CDWS available to suitable candidates within Egypt, including branch managers, technical inspectors and executive secretaries. For more information email the CDWS office at [jobs@cdws.travel](mailto:jobs@cdws.travel).



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## Showtime!



CDWS members will once again feature in one of the main exhibition attractions at the UK Dive 2009 show at the Birmingham NEC on 24 and 25 October 2009. The Red Sea

Zone, which is supported and part-funded by the Egyptian Tourist Association, will include diving operations throughout Egypt such as Orca, Ocean College, Flowers of Sinai, Fantasea Red Sea, Divers United, Dive Point, Coraya Divers, Camel Dive Club and Bella Safaris.

Operation representatives will be on hand throughout the weekend to advise the British diving public about diving in the Red Sea. Many will also be offering exclusive show visitor discounts (see box).

The first printed editions of **BLUE** magazine will also be available free to visitors at the show. More than 300 exhibitors taking part in the autumn event together with high profile diving speakers and presentations throughout the weekend.

Elsewhere, visitors can take a break from walking the halls in the presentation theatres where top marine-life and wreck gurus have been lined up to share news and images of their often-extreme activities. As well as the Red Sea Zone, there are two diving pools, Sharks In Focus gallery, the Caribbean Village, Asia-Pacific Showcase, PADI Village and British Isles Experience. Top speakers lined up for the weekend are shark diver Mark Addison, Sea Shepherd's Captain Paul Watson, BBC Oceans' Paul Rose, film-maker John Boyle, and wreck experts Teresa Telus, Innes McCartney and David Mearns

Underwater photographers can attend the show's Digital Clinic for a useful exchange of views and tips with the experts.

Tickets to Dive 2009 cost £7.50 if booked in advance at [www.diveshows.co.uk](http://www.diveshows.co.uk), or by calling the ticket hotline on +44 (0)208 977 9878. On the door tickets cost £10.50. Under 14s go free. For more information about Dive 2009, and an up-to-date speaker programme, visit [www.diveshows.co.uk](http://www.diveshows.co.uk).

### Exclusive BLUE reader show ticket offer

Dive 2009 organisers are offering **25 pairs of free tickets** for **BLUE** readers to win. All you need to do to win tickets worth £21 is answer this question:

**'Which BBC Oceans star is speaking at Dive 2009?'**

Simply click on this link <http://www.divernetextra.com/xtra/blue-comp.html> and enter your answer and your details. Everyone who has given the correct answer will be entered into the draw.

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For more information see: [www.coraya-divers.de](http://www.coraya-divers.de)

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\* per person sharing a twin room, single supplement applies.  
For terms and conditions, and more offers, see [www.cameldive.com](http://www.cameldive.com)

**Divers United, Sharm el Sheikh**

Divers United is offering two-for-one price deals on PADI Advanced Open Water, PADI Rescue Diver and PADI Project AWARE Specialty. For more information about Divers United courses, see [www.elite-diving.com](http://www.elite-diving.com).

**Flowers of Sinai, Sharm el Sheikh**

Single and two person deals on its liveaboards Tiger Lilly and Snap Dragon on specific dates throughout 2009 and 2010. Exclusive show prices start from £300 for one person £560 for two persons and £4,480 for the full boat to be booked for six night safaris. Prices are subject to dates and availability.  
For more information about Flowers of Sinai, see its website [www.flowersofsinai.com](http://www.flowersofsinai.com).



# Insider's Wreck Guide: *Thistlegorm*



All images by Andrew Slater

The Thistlegorm is one of the most famous dive sites in the world and has been described many times over as the ultimate wreck dive. Experienced Red Sea-based diver and the author of the definitive guide to the history and story of the Thistlegorm wreck, **John Kean**, starts the insider wreck guide series with a tour on this special sunken structure.

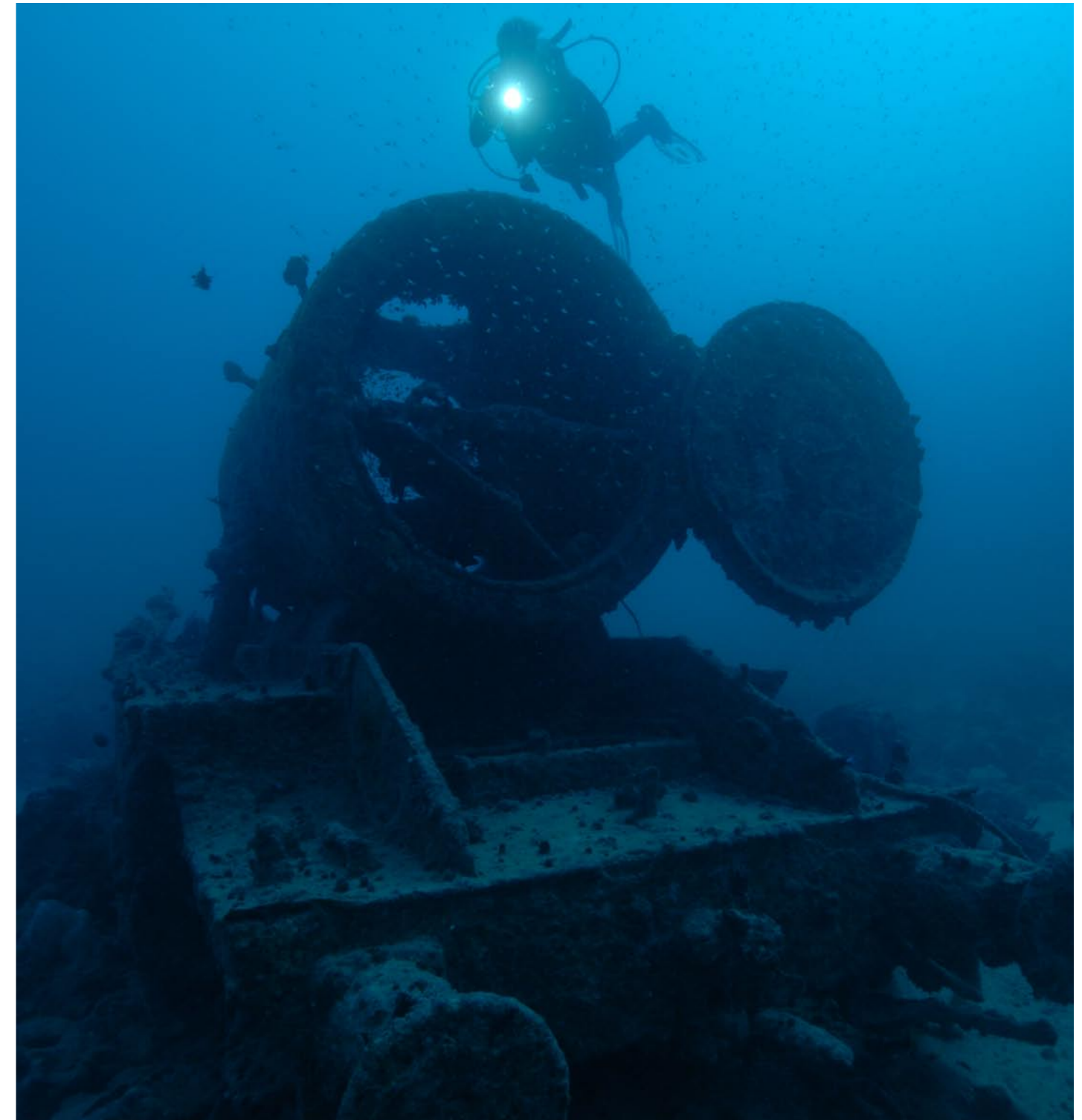
In April 2010, the SS Thistlegorm will be 70-years-old – still a relative youngster compared to some of its Red Sea counterparts, such as SS Dunraven aged 133, the Carnatic aged 147 and the Numidia, which turned 108 this year.

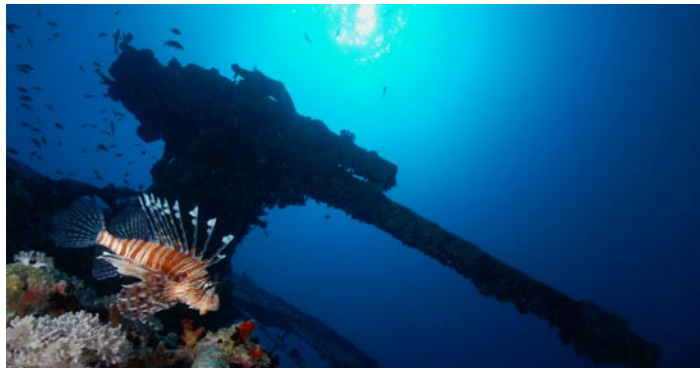
Diving the Thistlegorm remains a unique Red Sea experience. For some, the bow is the big attraction as it sits upright pointing out into the blue as if it were still in business. The stern is also high on the must-see list for new visitors. It is here that you can witness greater detail and a well-preserved area of the wreck.

Many divers ask what is the best route to follow to get the best of the Thistlegorm. But sometimes the answer simply is, 'your own'. The allure of this great wreck will often beckon you in many different directions and perhaps you may wish to venture where your curiosity takes you. Others, not wishing to miss a good thing, prefer the guide's choice. However, if you do your homework in advance and read up on the wreck then you'll arrive armed with a list of all the top attractions,

The Thistlegorm can be divided into three areas. The outside perimeter of the ship has recently thrown up a few interesting items of wreckage such as previously unseen sections of railway engines, masts and decking - a bit 'off-piste' and not for the novice because of current and depths.

The external structure of Thistlegorm is easy to navigate. It is both a dive in itself and also a nice stop after visiting the deeper or more enclosed parts of the wreck. Thistlegorm is 126m long and while it can be covered in one dive, currents and air consumption may





clip a diver's wings on days with challenging conditions. Over two dives, I often find that I can cover the stern area and the upper decks from bow to mid section. The 'trolley dash' method may leave you disappointed (and breathless), as it's unlikely you'll get everything in. There are other ways to re-create the underwater supermarket experience by circumnavigating the wreck at 30m searching for dropped items of diving equipment or 'shopping' as some of the local dive guides call it.

By far the most interesting and spectacular area of Thistlegorm is inside among the cargo holds. It is here where hundreds of tonnes of Second World War armaments and supplies are stored and still highly visible after 68 years underwater. Well protected from the outside conditions, much of the cargo represents a time trap or underwater museum. What can a diver see? Trucks, cars, rifles, Wellington boots, live shells, motorbikes, aircraft parts and much more. Rising up from the holds involves ascending from around 24m to about 20m where you can swim around the deck. Towards the bow decks are located



four railway tenders still bolted to the floor. A visit to the bow is a must. Here you will get the 'big ship feel' where 4,998 tonnes all converge into one small triangular shaped point. At 14m you can use it as a 'deep stop'. It's not always possible or advisable to swim over the wreck at 6m as the currents and visibility rarely permit it. A short swim at around 9m or 12m, however, often provides a satellite view of the ship before the inevitable calling of the mooring line.

Consider also using a twin-set. Advanced nitrox or decompression divers often enjoy longer bottom times and extensive multi-level diving on the Thistlegorm. They frequently enjoy dives that are three times longer than a recreational diver and still surface with ample gas in reserve.

However long your dive may be, a visit to Thistlegorm is still a special treat. I hope you enjoy it as much as I have.

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"...Bursting with never-seen-before photography...this book features eyewitness accounts of Thistlegorm's final moments. Detailed descriptions of the wreck today complete this book, making it a must for any Red Sea wreck fans."

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## How Green Is Your Team?

Supporting the local community and promoting eco-friendly tourism is just as important for the environment as clean-ups and coral surveys, according to the owners of a Dahab-based diving centre. BLUE meets EU sustainable tourism grant recipients Desert Divers.



Growing up in deep in the Sinai desert, Bedouin dive centre owner Said Khedr, 35, has developed a special relationship with the nature of the area above and below the water. It was more than 15 years ago when he ventured from his desert home to become Dahab's first Bedouin to learn to scuba dive. He remembers the area was little more than a palm covered desert beach fringing Red Sea reefs in those days.

Although much has changed considerably in Dahab for Said – now an owner of one of the town's main diving centres and a father of three – his passion for the environment around him has never wavered. As a result, his centre Desert Divers has always been highly active in environmental initiatives both underwater and topside.

With the support of the local community and guests, Desert Divers organises a number of desert and reef clean-ups each year. Following a mass clean-up from the Blue Hole to Ras Abu Galoum – a popular diving area that can only be accessed by camel – the centre was presented with a PADI Project AWARE Award. More than 30 guests and locals took part in the 2006 event, removing more than 1,500kg of rubbish, mostly by camel.

Desert Divers has been organising clean-ups in parts of Dahab several times a year since it opened in 2002 and also participates in the worldwide Reef Check initiative ([www.reefcheck.org](http://www.reefcheck.org)). Said's team helps to maintain the number of signs around dive sites that educate divers and non-divers about the importance of protecting the marine environment. Guests are always encouraged to take part in all the events and this approach has attracted a growing band of repeat visitors to Dahab.

Desert Divers also supports a number of initiatives at helping to promote and protect the unique desert environment and support local businesses and Bedouin communities. As a result of its efforts in this area, it was awarded an EU grant in 2006 to promote sustainable tourism in the Sinai.

The EU South Sinai Regional Development Programme (SSRDP) was

set up to manage grants that help protect the cultural and natural resources of the region and better the living conditions of local communities, particularly Bedouin.

'Dahab gave me something, so I wanted to give something back,' says Said. 'I wanted to work with the whole environment: mountain, desert and sea.'

In seven years Desert Divers has developed a number of tours that incorporate desert excursions, camel diving trips and more recently rock climbing. With the grant, the centre has been able to expand this further. All of its excursions are organised together with the communities within Dahab, which Said says not only educates visitors about the environment but also ensures the ecosystems and culture are better protected.

The grant has been used to fund marketing for eco-tourism and buy equipment, as well as help to subsidise training courses for Egyptian and Bedouin climbing and diving guides.

'The people who find us are more active holiday makers,' says Said. 'They mix diving and desert adventure with a love for Dahab, the Sinai and the Bedouin life. Our objective is to expand and promote Desert Divers eco-adventures, in partnership with and for the benefit of Bedouin communities. The project focuses on camel diving safaris, deep desert safaris and rock climbing – all of which bring income to Bedouin in remote areas who might otherwise be forced to forsake their way of life to make a living.'

Said's wife, Tanis, says they keep a track of all salary payments made through the eco-adventures. 'Within three years a greater amount of money will have been paid back into the communities as salaries than the grant we were awarded by the EU,' she says. 'That is why such initiatives are so important.'

Both Said and Tanis believe it is vital for the health of the environment to educate people about the ecosystem and promote less commercialised, more 'culturally authentic' excursions in the

'does the tourism you support exploit the area or does it help it?'



Sinai. The growth of eco-tourism will only help promote better environmental practices, they say, as well as encourage more tourists who are interested in protecting the marine and topside environments to visit.

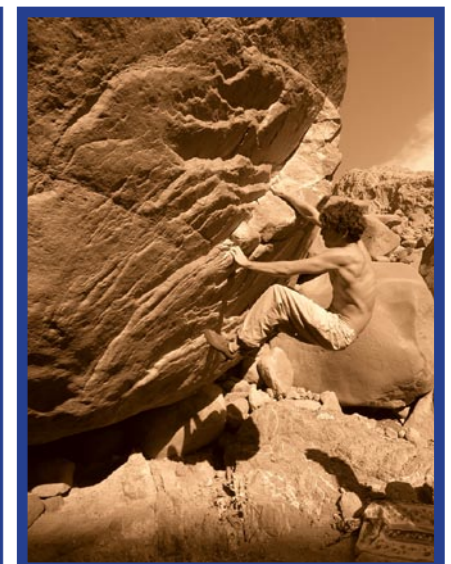
Realising the couple's passion for the environment and the community, and the energy their team is prepared to give to eco-friendly and sustainable initiatives, it is hard to argue against such work having a positive and significant impact.

'To bring eco-tourism, you need the environment to be protected,' Said explains. 'You have to ask yourself the question: does the tourism you support exploit the area or does it help it?'

[www.desert-divers.com](http://www.desert-divers.com)

**Are you part of a green team in Egypt's diving and watersports industry?**

Email your eco-credentials to [blue@cdws.travel](mailto:blue@cdws.travel)



## Far from the diving crowd...

Getting away from the recreational diver crowds and reaching the parts that few divers explore around the Egyptian Red Sea, technical diving is becoming increasingly popular among visiting divers. Red Sea-based technical instructor **Cath Bates** looks at some of the treats on offer underwater in Egypt for those who take the extended plunge.

As a busy TDI (Technical Diving International) instructor, I have come to see a pattern in who is to become my next client. Most of my students are usually instructors looking for their next fix or repeat visitors who are in search of that pinnacle dive. For those who aren't put off by the twin-set dive deck-huggers and want to see what else the Red Sea can offer, technical diving offers unique underwater experiences.

A one and a half hour dive on the Thistlegorm; a two-tank scooter ride across the saddle to Woodhouse Reef; the wall of Shark Observatory looming up like a moon landing; and then there's the back of Jackson Reef where the mast of the Lara impregnates the Bombay Sapphire gin blue. Here you have the best chance of seeing the resident scalloped hammerhead schools at depth. When surrounded with curious and majestic hammerheads, you know that diving doesn't get much better.

The eerie light of Thomas Canyon is a triumph for any newly qualified decompression procedures diver. Passing under the first arch and watching your bubbles skim the boulder is a beautiful sight. Looking around, you then realise that for another rainy day there is another 45m plus to be achieved. In the Ras Mohammed National Park, the Jackfish Alley satellite reef drop off is a hive of pelagic activity at its the corner. Marlin, mantas, grey reefs and a hammerhead have all been spotted by our deco divers here this year. And no matter what season on Jackfish, there is always a satisfying freefall to be had into the crack of the reef's canyon.

The walls and drop offs of the Northern Red Sea offer an impressive argument for why an increasing number of divers are deciding to turn

technical. However, the mental challenge of tech is also appealing to experienced divers searching for the 'what next?' Planning and executing the bottom time, gas requirements and decompression stops can be somewhat more rewarding than just plopping in for an hour or until you reach 50 bar. Equipment configuration requires care and attention, not always in the manner of an obsessive train-spotter, but you do need to get it spot on for reasons of discipline and organisation.

Many course skills stem from the cave diving community. These can be tough and humbling but teach us to respect the deep and its potential dangers and to recognise our limits within. Yes, us instructors are going to whip your butt into shape, but this is your life-support and it can feel pretty lonely surrounded by all that blue.

Decompression is not a dirty word. Just imagine not having to keep up with the group or having that pre-drift dive rush to the back platform. It's a world where the only bubbles for the first 30 minutes are yours and your guides', where you don't get your hair caught in your snorkel, where the fish come to check you out, and where you can accept the invitation as a deep crevice calls. As TDI says 'We surface only because we must!'

One of my fellow instructors loves the thrill of a 20m per minute descent (not a necessity but fun all the same). Another hasn't had to buy dive accessories for a year since he knows the best equipment store is at 45m (below those popular entry and exit points). We even have an advanced trimix-qualified videographer whose 140m housing receives plenty of attention from the private DVD technical market.

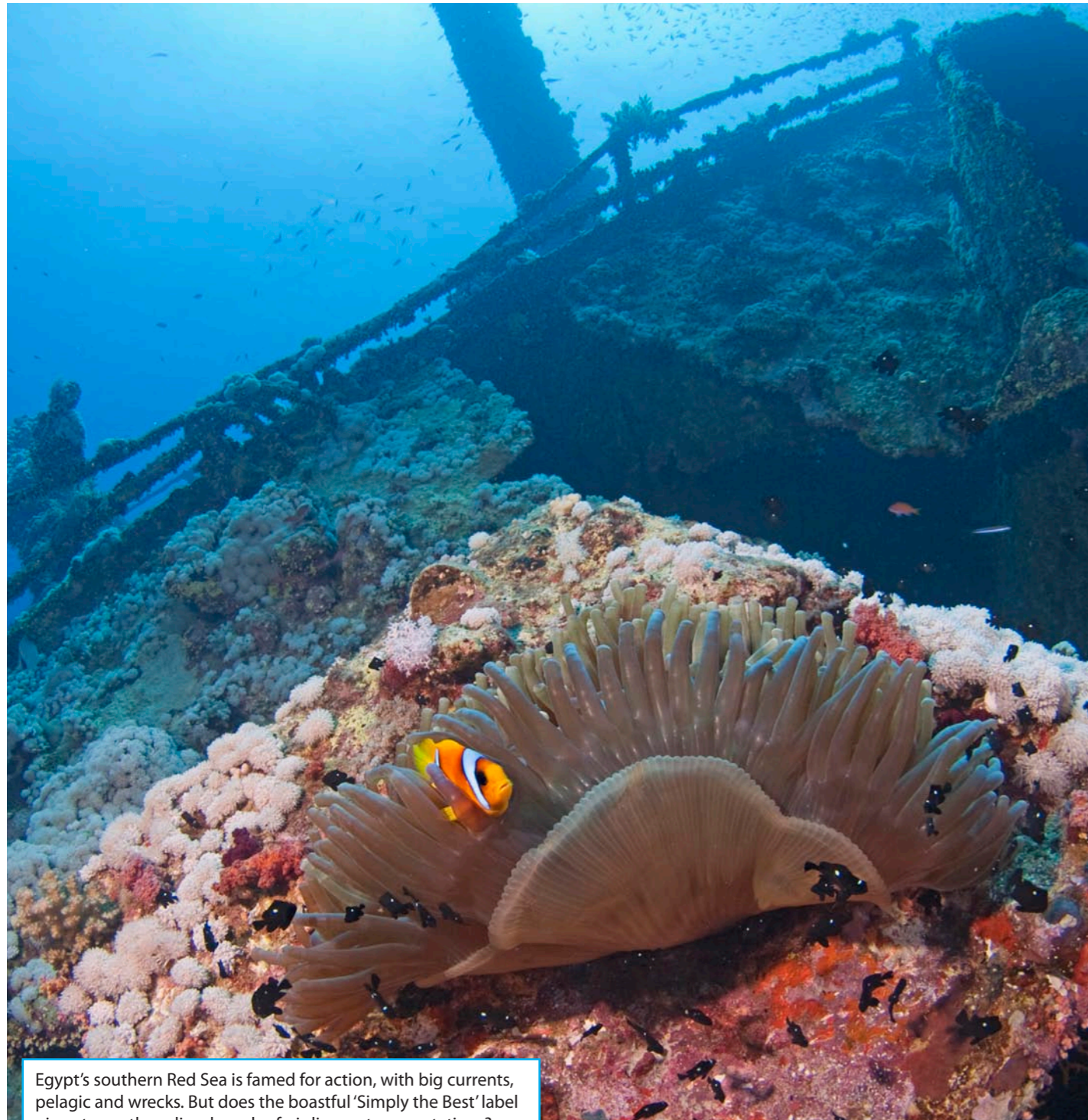
The main reason we tool ourselves with tech – in the words of Captain Kirk's log – is simply to go where fewer divers have been before.

Cath Bates is part of the technical team at Camel Dive Club in Sharm el Sheikh ([www.cameldive.com](http://www.cameldive.com)).

Photo: Andrew Slater

## High 5 of the Deep South





Egypt's southern Red Sea is famed for action, with big currents, pelagic and wrecks. But does the boastful 'Simply the Best' label given to southern liveaboard safaris live up to expectations? Report and photographs by **Karin Brussard**.

Describing anything as 'simply the best' raises a high bar for a diving trip as well as an eyebrow for a seasoned underwater traveller. Nonetheless, it is hard to put together an argument for why you should use any other term for a week of diving along the reefs of the Brother Islands, Daedalus and Elphinstone in the deep south of the Egyptian Red Sea. Our home for the week, Emperor Fraser, is one of many liveaboards within Egypt to have recently completed the CDWS audit for safety and high standards.

Our trip begins at Port Ghalib near Marsa Alam, the southern most port in the Egyptian Red Sea.

### Big Brother

We begin on a high note. The first dive on Big Brother brings us two whale sharks. Not the really big ones, but 3m to 4m is more than a promising start. Our guides, who have been working in the Red Sea for the last two years, say this is the first time they have seen a whale shark around the Brother Islands.

For our first pre-dive breakfast everyone is in a very cheerful mood, waiting in anticipation for what else Big Brother has in store. Next dive and a 1.5m-long Napoleon wrasse is in an affectionate mood, trying to kiss all in our group. Napoleon wrasse are a common sight around here and appear very curious, particularly this attention seeker. A diver trying to shoot footage of the vibrant reef wall with his camera is gently touched on the back by the wrasse who is stopping short of saying the words 'Hey! Shoot some video of me instead of



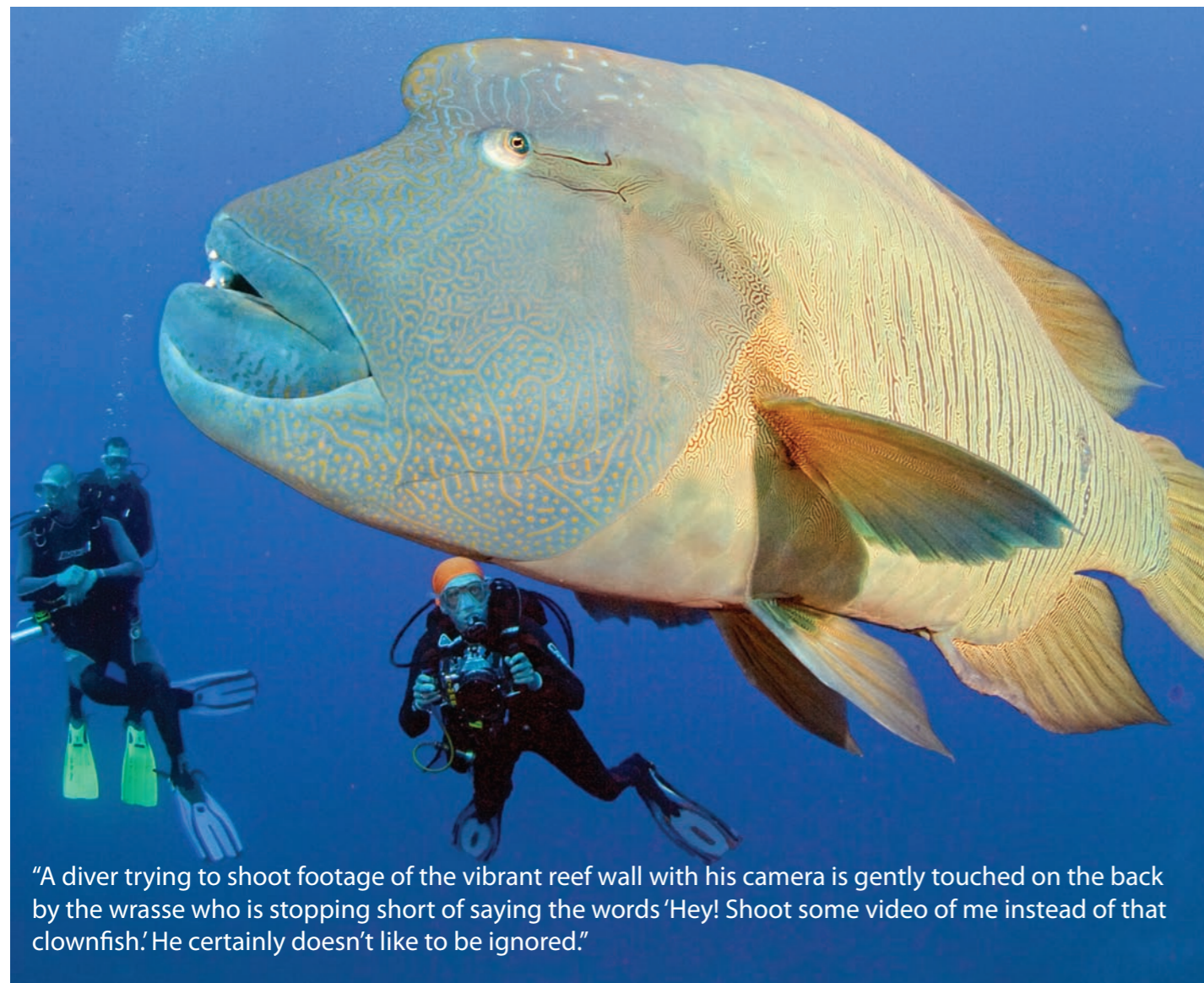
"I am more than delighted at seeing the incredible soft coral cover over the west wall, the barracuda being cleaned, the jacks, tuna and the Napoleons."

that clownfish.' He certainly doesn't like to be ignored.

A dive that should not-be-missed is the wreck of the Numidia. This English-owned vessel struck the reef on its maiden voyage in 1901, broke into two parts and sank. The largest section of the wreck clings vertically to the reef wall, from depths starting from 14m to 80m. Looking at the position of the wreck, you feel that this large vessel could at any moment fall to deeper water on one last journey. Luckily, for our dive it holds position and we enjoy the incredible soft coral cover which has taken over the wreck, as well as the vast number of glassfish. Just as our thoughts turn to venturing inside the wreck, an oceanic whitetip shark appears. There is no contest – I much prefer a shark to a wreck. Like the Napoleon, our oceanic friend is very curious. Making some very close moves, he follows my exhaled bubbles to the surface and then comes back for more.

### Small Brother

We have barely finished dinner before we hear the crew shouting 'Shark, shark!' I wonder how they manage to see a shark in the dark, but then I see they have turned on some big spotlights on the deck. In this light we can easily see the unmistakable white dorsal fin of an oceanic whitetip shark. Close to the reef is a bait ball of snappers, which reflects the boat's light. The shape of the bait ball changes from a circle to an oval shape, then back again. The movement of the snappers tells us when our shark is getting close. But at that moment, they seem to lose their nerve and suddenly the bait ball falls apart. Now it is just the individual snappers swimming. When the danger heads off, they gather together once again. Watching parts of the snapper bait ball drifting in the water, it seems this may not be the best survival strategy. The fact that night diving is forbidden within marine parks, we have to stay on the deck watching this feeding



"A diver trying to shoot footage of the vibrant reef wall with his camera is gently touched on the back by the wrasse who is stopping short of saying the words 'Hey! Shoot some video of me instead of that clownfish.' He certainly doesn't like to be ignored."

frenzy. Although, being in the water at night with a shark having dinner would never be a sensible plan.

The plateau on the north side of Small Brother offers the best opportunities for seeing sharks. At the moment we arrive at 30m, we see two scalloped hammerheads cruising past. They seem to be just as surprised as we are, and promptly swim away from us into the blue. In the summer months, the current here is often more gentle than the other seasons, so we are lucky to be able to stay in the same place without too much effort. Another hammerhead shows up, then a couple of grey reef sharks swim underneath us.

Two zodiacs are employed to take us to the dive sites. However, they can't carry all divers at once so the different groups of divers are in the water seeing different things at different times. One group spots a tiger shark on their dive, the other a thresher shark. While I unfortunately miss both of these spots, I am more than delighted at seeing the incredible soft coral cover over the west wall, the barracuda being cleaned, the jacks, tuna and the Napoleons. Underneath the boat I even discover two oceanic triggerfish – a species rarely seen this far north in the Red Sea.

### Daedulus

After two days on the Brothers Islands, the Emperor Fraser sails south to Daedalus. The top of this reef can only be seen at low tide. From a distance, the only evidence of Daedalus is a 33m-high black and white lighthouse. With high expectations of a site I had heard so much about, we roll off the zodiac and begin our descent. On first

impressions, Daedalus seems a bit boring when compared to the Brothers. The thermocline at 55m, compared to the Brothers' 30m, making it more difficult to see hammerheads. Also, there are no signs of the oceanic white tips we had become so accustomed to seeing.

Two full days diving later, however, Daedulus shows us its true beauty. Not just hammerhead sharks, but grey reef sharks, tuna measuring up to 1.5m in length and many large jacks of a comparable size. Even three sailfish rush by us. And the treats are not just found in its blue water. The reef is completely covered with anemones which house an amazing amount of clownfish.

### Elphinstone

The week is drawing to a close and we only have one opportunity in which to dive the famous Elphinstone Reef. Although known for its strong currents, we want to dive above the south plateau to try to see oceanic whitetips. Our luck is in – there is hardly any current and we get the go ahead to dive. The rest of the divers decide to stick to the original plan of diving the north plateau. They enjoy a good dive complete with an encounter with a large tiger shark. While we miss that one, we still get to see three different oceanic white tips. One shark is accompanied by a pilotfish which looks as if it is glued to his nose.

We remain calm as the sharks move in closer. Then, just when I think our encounter is close enough, one of the oceanic white tips looks deep into my eyes and swims off to the left of me. Waiting for the shark to turn back to us, I see a school of large jacks approaching. In

"As soon as we descend to the sea grass, we spot a giant turtle. Although they can reach lengths of up to 1.5m, spotting them in this sand scattered visibility is not easy."



"We have barely finished dinner before we hear the crew shouting 'Shark, shark!'"



the centre of the school is yet another oceanic whitetip. He doesn't seem to like being chased by fish half the size of him, but it is as if he is too afraid to swim out of the school.

### Ras Shona

The week ends in the bay of Ras Shona. On both sides of the bay are beautiful coral gardens, but we stay on the sea grass covering the sandy bottom below. Sea grass is the preferred diet for turtles and dugongs. The most famous bay for seeing a dugong in this part of Egypt is Abu Dabab. Unfortunately fame comes at a price. The dugongs were badly injured recently by boat propellers and the site was subsequently closed to protect them. In Ras Shona there are no resident dugongs, so boats are permitted to venture outside of the bay.

As soon as we descend to the sea grass, we spot a giant turtle. Although they can reach lengths of up to 1.5m, spotting them in

this sand scattered visibility is not easy. The turtle doesn't seem to be bothered by my buddy getting close to take pictures. He's eating and is concentrating on grabbing as much sea grass as possible. After a short while he swims away from us towards the surface for air. We continue our sea grass search and soon spot two turtles enjoying lunch together. There is not much else to see here. But it was the turtles we came to see and we return to the boat satisfied from our quest at the end of our weeklong trip.

But as the kit is packed away, we still have one more surprise in store. In the bay a dugong appears at the surface to breathe for a short while before diving under the surface.

For a full list of legal operating liveaboards in the Red Sea see the CDWS website [www.cdws.travel](http://www.cdws.travel)

# WIN!



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**To enter:** simply visit [www.seaqueens.com](http://www.seaqueens.com) and tell us from which resort their Golden Route itinerary departs from. Send your answer by email to [blue@cdws.travel](mailto:blue@cdws.travel).

**Closing date:** 30 November 2009

*\*prize does not include flights, Ras Mohammed National Park entry fees, dive equipment or tips for the crew.*



Sea Queen Fleet



### My Scene

## Desert camping

Egypt's resident watersports professionals report on their favourite short breaks.

My older memories of camping are: rain, damp, soggy and if at the seaside, sand in sandwiches, oh, and rain. England born and raised. My newer memories of camping are: no rain, stars (shooting and Milky Way inclusive), warm breeze, oh and sand in my sandwiches. Sharm reborn and residing. Once when camping in the desert, a strong wind came up in the evening. Putting our well-prepared campsite into quite a state, with bedrolls, sleeping bags, tents, beef burgers, running amok through the valley and over the granite Sinai Mountains. We set off with our torches to round up the essentials, never did find the beefburgers (those desert foxes are fast) or bedrolls, and the wind died as suddenly as it came up. An hour later, laying staring at the stars, we saw a white robed apparition walking towards us. Quickly sitting up and checking the empty beer bottles, we were hailed a friendly greeting by a Bedouin man.

He had spotted frantic torchlight from his camp and was concerned for us. We explained about the wind and our frantic search for the beefburgers! and he advised us not to wander too far and get lost. Bidding us a cheery goodnight and clutching a bag of marshmallows, that was all we had left, he vanished off into the darkness.

The next morning we looked to see where his camp was. I'm not great at judging distances, but I can tell you that guy walked miles to check on our welfare. It's just great here for camping – you just need a sturdy vehicle, a bit of Boy/Girl Scout in you, a love for the stars and, oh, extra beef burgers.

Carrol Flowers



# The Really Good Dive Guide

Following on from his series on what makes a good dive guide, experienced underwater photo-journalist **Brendan O'Brien** looks at what he believes marks out the good from the exceptional.

Recently I joined a group of dive guides for a night out in Hurghada where unsurprisingly the conversation revolved around diving. We shared experiences and jokes before we got onto a subject that stumped us all, 'What qualities make for an exceptional dive guide?' We could all agree on the basics – excellent diving and rescue skills, the ability to lead and risk assess dives, passion and enthusiasm, and of course, the ability to work long hours for little financial recompense. But we still couldn't agree on what qualities made for an exceptional dive guide. After much debate the best we could do was, 'The top tips you pick up along the way – the ones that aren't in the training manuals.'

That's the thing about 'exceptional' – it's a quality that's hard to describe but easy to spot when you experience it. Perhaps I'd find it on the next day's diving.

My guide for the day was really keen; his briefing was spot on and he helped me get my equipment on in a non-condescending way. Once underwater he put a lot of effort into finding things for me to see, which turned out to be most of the Red Sea's 'ugly' fish. This was

all well and good, except that I'm not really interested in 'ugly' fish – what I get really excited about are the colourful fish you find in and around shallow coral heads.

The numbers of stonefish and frogfish had genuinely excited my guide, however, I didn't have the heart to tell him that what had thrilled me were the lionfish, anthias and glassy sweepers against a colourful backdrop of corals and sponges – if only he had asked me what I wanted to see prior to the dive. I guess this is the first quality that goes into 'exceptional', the ability to ask pertinent questions about what the customer wants, listen to the answers and then go out of their way to make their requests a reality.

**The numbers of stonefish and frogfish had genuinely excited my guide, however, I didn't have the heart to tell him that what had thrilled me were the lionfish, anthias and glassy sweepers against a colourful backdrop of corals and sponges – if only he had asked me what I wanted to see prior to the dive.**

Shortly after our first dive the guides started to plan for the second – they discussed which sites were their favourites and then came to a decision. Their choice was a site they believed would please their customers and indeed it did. What would have made it exceptional would have been a few simple questions about what type of dive we wanted followed by providing a site that met these needs. I know it's not possible to please everyone, but the exceptional guides I've dived with in the past have always gone out of their way to try.

My second dive was similar to the first with lots of ugly fish, but at least I was spared the guide I saw in another group of divers – he looked bored and showed no interest in his group except to ensure they were following him.



Photo: Andrew Slater

I started to think of other examples when dive guides had demonstrated what I considered to be really poor qualities. There was the guide in Australia who insisted on asking everyone how their dive was followed by a rather annoying and repetitious reply of, 'Fantastic!' Apart from her briefing that was pretty much all she said to her customers. And in Roatan, off Honduras, common practice among the guides was to take customers on Disney-style tours of the island's sites complete with tame morays and groupers. Years of fish feeding had created a reef full of marine life that would come close to divers to be stroked and petted. The guides had no interest in providing a genuine quality service; quite simply, they were chasing big tips from wealthy Americans.

As we returned to Hurghada, I watched the guides as they clustered around the wheelhouse. Some of the customers were sharing their experiences and filling out their logbooks, while others took the journey as an opportunity to relax in the sun.

What was missing was the sense of camaraderie that comes from sharing in an adventure and the glue to bind it all together, to bring about this feeling, was keeping up with the latest gossip in the wheelhouse.

The day's diving had met with all the expected high standards, but what was missing were the communication skills that would have made the whole experience exceptional. The guides didn't ask questions about what their customers wanted, they didn't involve them in the planning process and they didn't help them reflect on the day's highlights. Pitching your communication at the right level to achieve this is a balancing act; some are naturals while for others I believe it to be a quality that can be learnt by being genuinely interested in the customer's needs and how to provide for them. People with these qualities are remembered and asked for by customers – the ultimate measure of an exceptional dive guide.

## Your Views

What do you think makes a good or exceptional dive guide? Email us your thoughts in less than 200 words to [blue@cdws.travel](mailto:blue@cdws.travel)



Photo: Andrew Slater



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# Deep in the Sinai

Interview with Red Sea record breaker Federico Mana

There are few places in the world to have seen as many freediving records set as the waters around the South Sinai. Countless world-class freedivers have trained, competed or even lived in and around the Egyptian Red Sea resorts of Dahab and Sharm. Not only do these waters offer warm, clear, deep and current free conditions directly off shore, here the tried and tested freediving success recipe of merging yoga, relaxation, meditation and the ocean is widely practiced.

Federico Mana is the latest in a long line of freedivers who have crafted their competitive skills in the Red Sea and eventually gone on to enter the record books. In August this year in his former hometown of Sharm, Federico set three Italian freediving national records.

The 34-year-old is the first Italian national to reach 100m in the constant weight with fins and 93m in the free immersion discipline (where competitors are not allowed to swim but must descend and ascend by pulling on a vertical guide rope only). He has also held the national record of a 90m in the constant weight without fins discipline since July 2008.

Federico was the first-ever resident freedive instructor in Sharm. He lived in Egypt for six years until the birth of his son Lorenzo in 2004. Although he moved back to Italy to bring up his son with his wife, Antoinette, he comes back to Egypt to train each year. A town that remains his 'spiritual home', Sharm is the place where he met his scuba instructor wife; the sponsor support to help him compete professionally; and most recently his entry into freediving's exclusive '100m club'.

He admits a freediving career was not the obvious path for a child who grew up near the mountains in Italy. The young Federico only came close to the ocean during his summer holidays. But despite only a few weeks contact with the sea a year, he developed from an early age his skills of breath-hold swimming underwater.

'My father used to take me to the seaside at the Cote d'Azur,' he recalls. 'I was given a spear gun at the age of 12 and I began to learn to freedive. It wasn't really fishing, more just swimming with the gun. My father spent a lot of time on the rocks looking for his son. Only when my lips were blue did I know it was time to go back to shore.'

His love of the ocean stayed with him throughout his childhood and teens and when old enough he learned to scuba dive. But, he says, freediving has always been his sport of choice. 'Scuba diving is about looking around yourself, while freediving is about looking inside yourself.'

A qualified optometrist, Federico worked in eyesight rehabilitation in Italy while training to be a freediving instructor in his early Twenties. He was very successful in his career, but his passion for the ocean eventually took over and he moved to the Red Sea. 'I feel alive in the middle of nature, although I don't think my parents quite understood that at the time,' he says. 'It was hard for them to see how sport could be work.'

It was in the Sinai where he took up yoga to improve his freediving techniques. He studied hard in this discipline and its breathing techniques and by 2004 was a qualified Hatha yoga teacher. Among his many students in Sharm is CDWS chairman and owner of Camel Dive Club, Hesham Gabr. Seeing his potential in freediving, Camel Dive Club became his major sponsor, allowing Federico to compete competitively.

As well competing, he still teaches yoga and freediving courses in Italy working this around his demanding training schedule.

"Dory is singing the song 'Just keep swimming, just keep swimming.' I sing this to myself as I ascent as it really makes me smile."

## What does it take to be a competitive freediver?

The freediving I do is very physical. In the constant weight with without fins you are swimming breaststroke. To go down you need your mind, to come back you need your body. The mental aspect is very important. That's why unlike most sports, freediving athletes tend to be older.

## How do you prepare yourself for competitions?

From November to April, I work in the pool and the gym for aerobic work, building up the muscle. I also do a lot of yoga to keep muscles flexible.

From April to May, I work less in the gym and more and more in the water on static apnea (non-swimming breath hold underwater). Then I start going into the sea. In freediving you have to enjoy what you do.

In July and August I stop with the gym and work only in the sea in Sharm at the Only One Apnea Centre. A few dives a day, such as a warm up and a deep one.

## How did you feel when you broke the national records?

I am very proud of the record, but perhaps more proud about the way I did it. In freediving you need to grow up slowly to get good results. I have never had a black-out. I never push my limits. When I saw World Champion freediver Martin Stepanek break 120m in competition in the constant weight it opened a new window for me. Until that point, I had only reached 90m. After that moment, however, I started to think it was easy to go to 100m. It is important not to lose yourself in the competition of the sport. In 2003 I made the mistake of focusing only on my depth and I started to lose the enjoyment. You have to freedive because you enjoy the sea and feel part of it.

This year was wonderful. The sea was with me all the way.

## What goes through your head when you are competing?

When I go down I only think about how to equalise. After 50m you can't make any mistake

– if you miss an equalisation you have to turn. When I reach the bottom, I have done 30 per cent of the work. The hardest part is to come back – it's very long. While I know diving is very serious, I always think about what makes me smile on my way up. My four-year-old son has watched Finding Nemo 20 times, so I know it very well. There is a part in it where Nemo's father and Dory are swimming. Dory is singing the song 'Just keep swimming, just keep swimming'. I sing this to myself as I ascend as it really makes me smile.

## Do you think your son Lorenzo will be a freediver like his father?

He was in the water 29 days after he was born. Now he is a natural. The other day he dived down to 3m to catch a mask. For him equalising is a natural instinct. For children everything is so natural. When teaching yoga, I started looking at how babies do everything. They breathe properly, they bend down with straight backs, and they are extremely flexible. When you are an adult you lose this. I believe freediving and yoga brings you back to this and switches on your nature again.

## Favourite marine creature?

I love sharks and manta rays, but the octopus is my favourite marine creature. It adjusts to its environment. It can go anywhere and change its form – much like when we are in the sea, we have to adapt to the environment. It's the sea that makes all the rules and we have to respect and adapt to those.

## What's next for you?

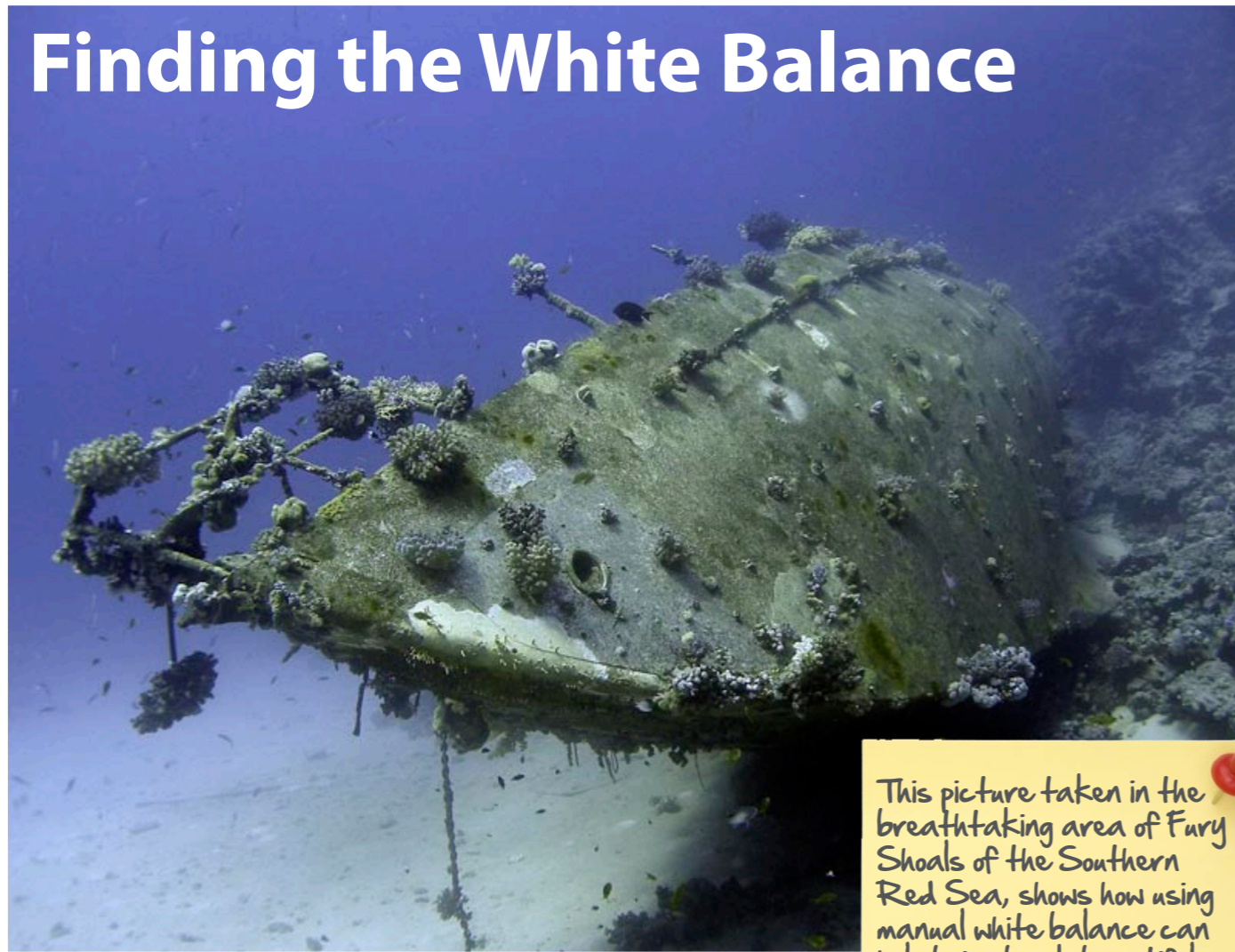
The world record is a dream, but as I said, freediving is not a fast discipline. I will not be at the championships in the Bahamas, but I am focused on the world championships in Japan next summer.

None if it, however, would be possible without my sponsors: Camel Dive Club, Imperial Bulldog, Benti Sub, Freestyle Company and TS Lenti a Contatto. I have to thank everyone who has helped and supported me, particularly my very understanding wife.

[www.Federicomana.com](http://www.Federicomana.com)



# Finding the White Balance

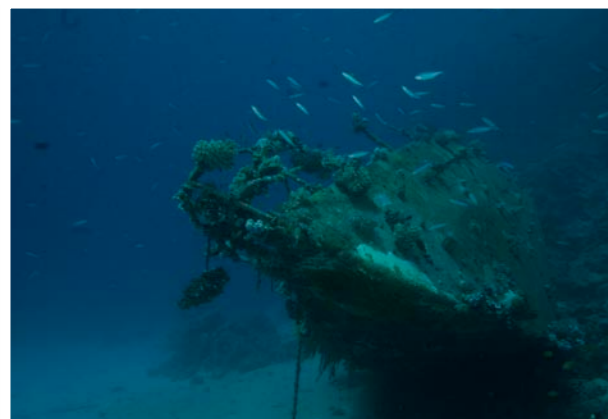


This picture taken in the breathtaking area of Fury Shoals of the Southern Red Sea, shows how using manual white balance can help bring back beautiful colour into underwater photographs such as the Gotaya Soraya wreck here.

BLUE's compact camera expert **Maria Munn** explains how learning to use your manual white balance brings out the vibrant colours in your underwater shots.

Getting to grips with all your camera's different controls can be extremely daunting when you start out. Nevertheless, it is worth taking the time to learn those basic features designed to instantly better your photographs. One really useful tool that most compact cameras have helps restore colours and gets rid of a blue cast. This is the camera's manual or custom white balance feature, which is found in the menu functions. When using this function, however, always remember to keep your built-in flash switched off otherwise you could end up with extremely pink subjects.

## Setting the balance



the same yacht with no manual white balance

Keeping the sun behind you while on the deepest part of your dive – but where there is still available light – simply point the camera at a white subject, such as a white slate, and calibrate the camera. You will notice immediately that the blue colour cast will have disappeared. Always remember, however, to recalibrate your camera's white balance every 5m when you change depth to allow for the light change. I usually use the white balance feature on my camera on dives between approximately 5m and 20m, depending on the available light around me.

The manual white balance tool can be really useful for photographing wrecks with a wide-angle lens as well as shy subjects that are not so keen on the use of flash. Be aware that the top half of the photograph may be too pink if you are too close to the surface when using the white balance.

If you have a Canon compact, there is an excellent feature that is found in its main camera settings which enables you to calibrate your camera's manual white balance with one touch of a button. This means throughout the dive you simply press one button every time you change your depth.



Photo: Emanuelle Daniisi

Using manual white balance has really helped to bring out the colour of this photo of the famous dolphins often encountered in the Abu Nuhas area.



Using the Exposure Compensation Mode when taking a picture with manual white balance has helped to enrich the colours of the coral and also to make the blue background darker.

## Vivid colour

Another useful tool to really enhance the richness of your colours underwater is the Vivid tool, which for those who have Canon or the Nikon Coolpix cameras is found in the function menu. Other cameras may also have this tool, but it is also called Saturation. Those with Nikons have an extra Vivid option on their cameras. This is especially useful when photographing the beautiful reefs and coral overhangs throughout the Red Sea and helps to make the blues really rich and deep.

## Filters

For those cameras that do not have a custom white balance option in menus, such as Sony or Olympus MJU cameras, a red filter can be added. These either fit on the port of the camera's housing, or in the case of Magic Filters, are easily cut to size to fit inside the housing. Again, these are best used with lots of ambient light – always remember to shoot with the sun behind you for the best results.

## Video

Finally, don't forget that either filters or custom white balance can be used with the Video Option on your compact to help replace the colours that are lost underwater. Videos are a fantastic way of capturing superb diving memories and sharing them with your friends and family.

Whichever option you decide, always remember to get as close as possible to your subject and always remember to protect the reef habitat around you. Don't forget to drop me an email if you have any questions. Wish you all happy and safe snapping.



Forgetting to recalibrate your white balance every 5 minutes can result in pink subjects and also remember to keep your flash switched off, otherwise you will end up with even extra pink subjects

## Exposure

Using the Exposure Compensation feature (+/-) on your camera can also help to darken the blue background of a reef or wreck scene. After setting your camera's white balance, simply use the minus setting and you will automatically see a richer blue colour. This can also be really useful when photographing the beautiful sunrises or sunsets that Egypt is so famous for as it makes the orange or pink hues much more vivid.

Maria runs tailor-made Underwater Photography Trips for Digital Compact Cameras for all levels in Nuweiba, Egypt with Emperor Divers. Find out more: [www.oceanvisions.co.uk](http://www.oceanvisions.co.uk)

# The Pelagic Lottery

Photos by Dan Beecham and the Save Our Seas Foundation library



spring and autumn months offer the best chance for adrenaline filled encounters in this area with the possibility of encountering a wide variety of larger species of shark and ray.

**Glance at any Red Sea marine life guide or chat to regular underwater visitors and you know that if you are lucky to be on the right dive, there is a good chance of encounters with some of the world's most spectacular pelagic. But is there a trick other than sheer luck to better your chances of seeing the big stuff? Save Our Seas correspondent Owen Bruce reports.**

The incredible variety of macro critters in the Red Sea will always have a special allure of their own, but more often than not it is the bigger animals that give divers, particularly new divers, that adrenaline buzz. It is the chance experience that brings tens of thousands of divers each year to Egypt's many premier dive locations. More than 40 species of shark are present in Red Sea waters along with many larger rays, including both species of giant manta rays and their eagle, spotted and marble relatives. Dolphins and turtles are also regularly seen.

Nevertheless, such encounters are not guaranteed – often it's a case of the old diving cliché of 'Being in the right place at the right time.' But what exactly is the right place and time for seeing the larger pelagic visitors such as sharks in Egyptian waters?

As an underwater cameraman with the Save Our Seas Foundation, I regularly travel as part of a large film crew to distant exotic locations. With the expense and logistics involved, we cannot afford to draw a blank in our search for the animals or behaviours we are on location to film – in what is often a tight time frame for filming. Dive tourists visiting the Red Sea can adopt the factors we take into

consideration to increase their chances of an encounter with a larger marine creature. Divers are always at the mercy of nature and the elements but research into your destination, the style of diving you will be doing and of course where and when you visit are all vital in maximizing your chances of success in the so called 'pelagic lottery.'

## Water temperature

Timing your visit with the correct water temperature is essential. The Red Sea water temperature stays relatively constant year round, however, the slight fluctuation has a big impact of the movements of marine creatures – either causing them to stay in the warmest areas or actively seek out a food source found in specific conditions. Sharks and rays in particular will also move vertically in the water column depending on these factors and this will play a big part in whether or not they are visible to recreational divers at any given time.

In the northern Red Sea in the summer months, increased water temperatures see an increase in general productivity of the reef; cooler nutrient rich water rising from the depths mixes with the warm surface water replenishing the reefs after the longer cooler months. This boost of energy provides the reefs inhabitants with an optimum window in which they can feed and breed. This increase in life brings the larger pelagic species such as sharks closer to the reef.

Whale sharks and manta rays use the warm water in another way. These species have been shown by satellite tagging to dive to extreme depths, presumably in search of greater resources of plankton. Mantas are shown to reach 200m while whale sharks can go to well beyond 1,000m. After such long deep dives the huge



whale sharks are regularly seen in the summer months cruising aimlessly right at the surface for long periods of time.

filter feeders will return to the warm surface waters to heat up. This explains why mantas and whale sharks are regularly seen in the summer months cruising aimlessly right at the surface for long periods of time.

During the summer months the southern Red Sea is generally less productive for sightings of larger species. The resident shark and ray populations usually head for deeper slightly cooler water as the high summer sun heats the surface water to an uncomfortable level. As a result, spring and autumn months offer the best chance for adrenaline filled encounters in this area with the possibility of encountering a wide variety of larger species of shark and ray.

## Open space

For large pelagics in the vast empty open space of the central southern Red Sea, deep offshore reefs such as Elphinstone and those of the Brothers Islands form huge underwater landmarks towering up from the depths like coral skyscrapers. Hammerhead sharks will congregate at such features in great numbers during the day before dispersing at night to hunt squid in the depths. These schooling sharks are thought to use sea mounts as a refuge point in the open ocean. Their heightened senses detect the increased geomagnetic signature of the reefs and this attracts the sharks in large numbers. The reefs also offer a source of resident prey species for the large transient predators, such as the elusive thresher shark and manta rays that also provide work for resident cleaner fish.

## Deep water

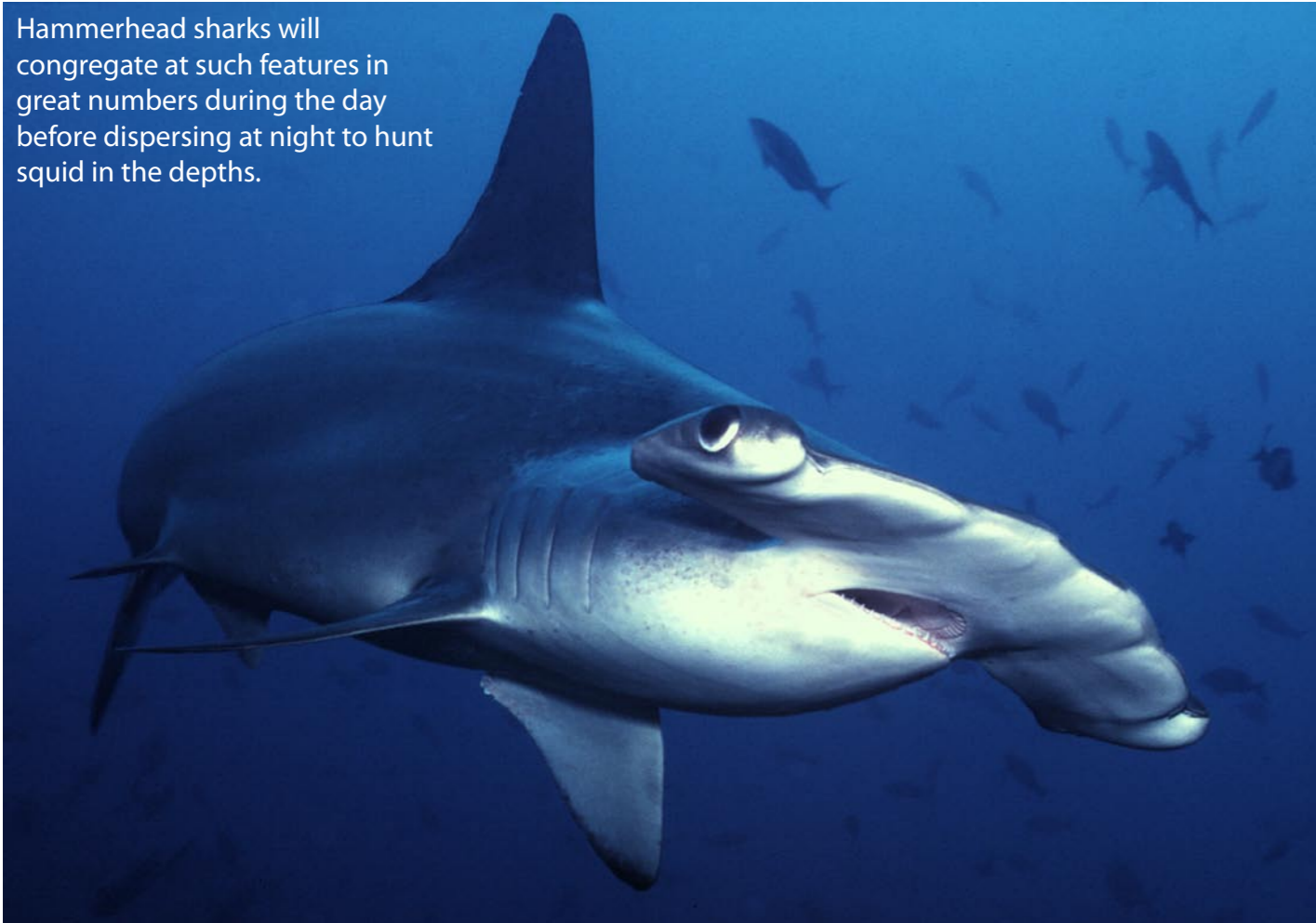
Other sites in the north, particularly Ras Mohammed and Tiran, are

famed hotspots for the bigger visitors. These areas have extremely deep water and strong currents. The reefs of Tiran act like a huge bottleneck for marine life. Gordon, Thomas, Woodhouse and Jackson reefs lie in the centre of the Strait of Tiran. South is the main body of the Red Sea and north is the Gulf of Aqaba, both of which are extremely deep – up to 1,800m in some areas.

The Red Sea is less affected by tides than more temperate seas, but these still greatly influence marine life. The tide in the Red Sea moves on a central axis due to the narrow channel connecting the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean limiting the flow of tidal movement in and out of the Red Sea. When it is high tide in the northern Red Sea, it is low tide in the south and vice versa. This tidal movement, negligible as it may seem when we are lying on the beach, causes huge movement of water particularly through the Straits of Tiran. Water from the south (or north) must rise up from depth, squeeze through the strait and between the central reefs before flowing down into the depths on the other side. This results in notoriously strong currents, but also makes this area a hotspot for marine life.

Ras Mohammed on the tip of the Sinai Peninsula also is an area subject to huge volumes of moving water. But, instead of a bottle neck, a huge mix of currents occurs here. Water from the deep, from the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gulf of Suez, all collide here on the vertical walls of the famous Shark and Yolanda reefs. Water flowing out of the shallower Gulf of Suez is highly saline which makes the water denser and causes the strong down currents on Yolanda reef. This giant cauldron of moving, turbulent current acts like a magnet to marine life. Coral and plankton flourishing in the sunlight as well as a

Hammerhead sharks will congregate at such features in great numbers during the day before dispersing at night to hunt squid in the depths.



constant supply of nutrient rich water, provide the basis for the entire food chain above. At the top of this foodchain are the large pelagics all divers love to see; the sharks and planktivorous manta rays and whale sharks. They will seek out this area during the warmer months to take advantage of this summer food bonanza.

#### Current affairs

Currents and tide are controlled by the movement of the moon and always run strongest at the full and new moon phase of the lunar month. Even in Red Sea, with its relatively low tidal range, the same applies. If you match your dive calendar with the lunar calendar, you will find your success greatly increased.

Prevailing current is essential in dictating where and how to dive, but also plays a hugely important part in determining what you are likely to see on your dive. Know your limits, but the stronger the current, the more you will see. Strong current can concentrate marine life into a small area, such as where a current hits a reef and splits or a corner of a reef where the flow of water is increased and is forced past the outcrop of rock. The favourite hangout of schooling hammerheads is usually in the blue straight out from this split or concentration of current. This is where your skill as a diver becomes essential; being able to control your buoyancy and stay calm in a strong current is not only safer and more enjoyable but gives you an increased chance of seeing something special by keeping you in the right place for as long as possible.

Certain species always school in areas of increased current; the current split on the east end of Shark Reef in Ras Mohammed is a perfect example and when the current is running this area will generally afford you the best chance of seeing something larger so, without holding onto the coral, it is often a good idea to hang out here (or in similar areas) for as long as possible.

#### In the know

Once in the correct general location and at the correct time of year, the challenge of finding that exciting encounter has only just begun. There is no substitute for local knowledge. Having a good guide from a credible dive operation with extensive experience and understanding of his or her area is invaluable in ensuring you are in the right place at the right time for that encounter of a lifetime. Being able to read the current comes from experience and an understanding of the fish you can see.

#### Human threat

With the constantly increasing rate of global fishing, particularly shark finning, our chances of seeing larger marine animals whilst diving are diminishing quickly. More than 90 per cent of global hammerhead, tiger and oceanic whitetip sharks populations have declined.

Illegal fishing still continues. However, the Red Sea is a place with a good chance of big encounters and CDWS is working to help stamp out illegal fishing in Egypt.



Save Our Seas Foundation (SOSF) is a non-profit organization that implements and supports scientific research and educational projects focused on the marine environment. It aims to learn more about the role that marine species, particularly sharks and rays, play in maintaining a healthy ecosystem. It hopes to educate the public about the need to save our seas, especially the consequences of removing sharks and rays from the world's oceans, to support natural marine resource preservation and to conserve the marine realm. For more information on SOSF or to make a donation please visit [www.saveourseas.com](http://www.saveourseas.com)

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# TABA

The Egyptian Red Sea's most northerly resort, Taba offers excellent snorkeling opportunities accessed by boat and shore. BLUE looks at the resort's top three snorkel spots.

Pharaoh's Island



## Pharaoh's Island

Reached by dayboat, Pharaoh's Island lies 8km south of Taba. It is the site of Salah El Din Castle. The castle is a crusader fort built in 1115 to levy taxes on Arab merchants and to offer protection to travellers traveling from Jerusalem to St Catherine's Monastery. It was conquered in 1170 and was abandoned soon after. Surrounding the castle are some excellent spots for snorkellers to explore. The reef wall is encrusted in beautiful soft and hard coral in depths of between 1m and 12m.

Taba is famed for its frogfish which can be seen by a good eye from the surface. Lionfish and clownfish can also be seen here in good numbers. The sheltered nature of the water here has attracted a diverse range of macro life.

## The Fjord

A naturally stunning area situated in its own cove, the Fjord is sheltered from any Sinai breezes. Here you will find a giant fresh water well which is surrounded by beautiful coral pinnacles at depths of around 4m to 10m. These vibrantly coloured coral pinnacles are

covered in glassfish and other life. A resident green turtle is often spotted by snorkellers.

## Taba Heights

An excellent snorkel site accessed by shore, the Hyatt Regency house reef is situated at the northern end of Taba Heights. The coral gardens here meander along the coastline from depth of 12m to 1m. Octopus, moray eels, clown fish, nudibrachs, parrot fish and puffer fish are among the fish that frequent this site.

Special thanks to Taba Heights for its help with this feature: [www.tabaheights.com](http://www.tabaheights.com)



## Explore the Natural Luxury Taba Heights, Sinai

Located just hours from Cairo on one of the Sinai Peninsula's most beautiful spots, Taba Heights invites you to explore the Red Sea's most acclaimed dive sites paired with an array of sports and adventure options.



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# Can you identify these tiny Red Sea residents?

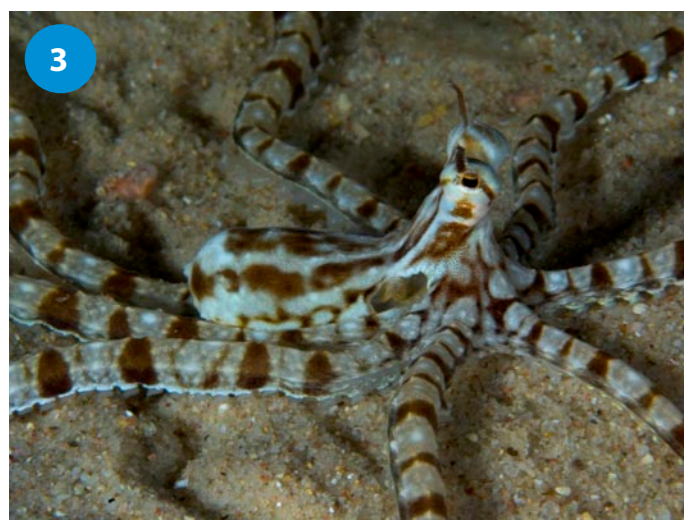
All photographs by Jane Morgan  
answers on page 63

## Have your say

This is your Red Sea watersports community magazine and we want to hear from you. Share your views with others in the industry, email: [blue.magazine@cdws.travel](mailto:blue.magazine@cdws.travel). Letter should be no more than 200 words. Letters may be edited for reasons of space or clarity.

## Celebrity look-a-likes.

Do you know a watersports professional working in Egypt who looks like a famous celebrity? Send your pictures to [blue@cdws.travel](mailto:blue@cdws.travel)



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## I Heard a Rumour That...



Rumours, rumours, rumours, you'd have to have your head buried in the sand underwater not to hear a few when living Egypt's hot spot diving destinations. To help us filter out some of the best and funniest community rumours stories, our resident gossip guru reports in their own unique style straight from the divers' mouth.

There's a rumour that the fish/mammals are more prolific and bigger this year. Well it seems that way to me, because with each story I'm told, the number of sharks, whale sharks, mantas and dolphins seen grows, and so does the size of the animals in question. Is it because I'm office bound and they just want to tease me? Well excuse me, but when I was diving every day, hammerheads numbered 50 at a time and the whale sharks were double the size. Come to think of it, the Sakaras were bigger as well!

I remember quite some years ago, we heard a rumour that there were mantas and hammerheads off Shark Reef in the Blue. So five of us instructors hired a boat and off we went. Leaving the wonderful Shark Reef behind us, we all searched out in the blue. Someone thought they saw something, but alas, the rumour didn't turn to fact. So we turned back to the reef. Around 15 minutes later, we all (instructors don't forget) grabbed our compasses. Another 15 mins later, we heard a boat above us and put up our SMB's up and surfaced after a safety stop. Back on the boat our captain said: 'Five instructors in the water, washing machine currents, I knew exactly where you would be. Did you see anything?'

But I'll tell you one thing... I have been snorkelling with mantas this year, the divers have been playing with dolphins and seeing hammerheads on the back of Jackson. I've seen the photos and that's a fact!

# Sharks Bay

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# A Critical Look at Chamber Dives



Diving medical expert Dr Anke looks at the range of uses of hyperbaric chambers other than that of treating decompression illness and gives her verdict on the controversial practices of deep dry diving training and nitrogen washouts.



Dry dives in hyperbaric chambers are used to medically treat dive accidents – the only known cure for decompression sickness. Alternatively chambers are used for Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) for various conditions linked to microcirculation problems (blood vessels carrying to arteries, capillaries and veins), insufficient perfusion (delivery of blood) of body tissues, infections (in places which have little or no oxygen) and gas embolism.

Chamber dives are also carried out to investigate equalisation problems within a dry environment, offering the possibility to test the airways and sinuses after functional or traumatic disorders. Diving equipment can also undergo tests before being taken underwater.

## Diver training and narcosis tests

Another function of dry dives is to assist with diver training. Training dives can be carried out in a safe, controlled environment from depths of up to 50m. The use of the chambers for deep dive training for sports divers in depths of 40m to 50m has been the subject of debate by the German Society for Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine. The society said approving such training was very much dependent on the goal of the chamber dive and the depth.

One of the approved goals for this type of diving, according to the society, is to test the individual symptoms of increased nitrogen partial pressure. More commonly known as nitrogen narcosis, the symptoms are highly variable. As the symptoms often resemble those of alcohol intoxication, the dangers while being underwater are obvious. That's why a safe way of testing narcosis tolerance is a deep dive in a chamber, which is performed in controlled conditions under medical supervision. The limit of such dives for recreational sport divers in the Red Sea is 40m, a depth most training agencies set as a limit.

However, while one can say these types of dives play a decisive role of assessment, chamber dives do not entirely represent in-water dives. The nitrogen saturation during a chamber dive is not comparable with the saturation underwater.

Firstly, the higher temperature in the chamber reduces the solubility of nitrogen in the tissues (according to Henry's Law). Secondly, no muscle

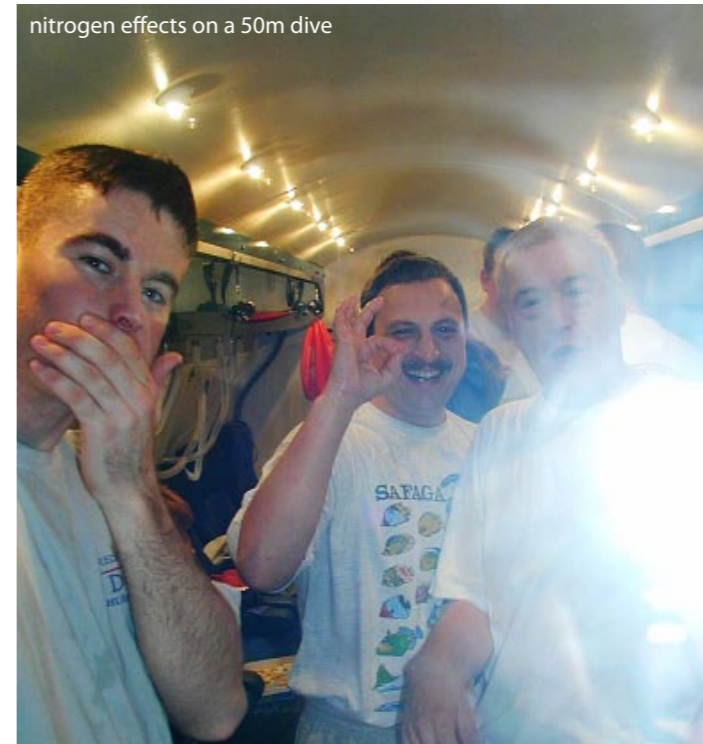
movement is required when comfortably seated in the chamber and you are more likely to maintain a resting heart and breathing rate, which reduces the nitrogen uptake significantly. So, looking at this model, even the smallest of symptoms of nitrogen narcosis within chamber conditions would be much more pronounced in the water. What this tells us clearly is that a single successful deep dive in decompression chamber is not a free-ticket to perform this in open water.

## Nitrogen washout warning

Dive professionals will often undergo a 'nitrogen washout' in the chamber, also known as 'nitrogen clean-up'. Divers will be given hyperbaric oxygen sessions or treatment to clear their bodies of excess nitrogen. This usually involves a chamber dive with one or several cycles of 100 per cent oxygen inhaled through a mask – usually conducted between 6m and 15m.

The Maximum Operating Depth (MOD) during a hyperbaric session does not adhere strictly to the usual scuba diving recommendations, as oxygen in this case is used as a 'medicament' and must only be applied under the strict supervision and attendance of a hyperbaric specialist.

nitrogen effects on a 50m dive



Use of 100 per cent oxygen as a medicament is the catch here as it comes with risks and side-effects which do not justify the questionable benefits of a 'nitrogen washout' as a preventative measure. Such side-effects of oxygen I explore in Health Matters (BLUE Issue One).

Dive guides and instructors with high residual nitrogen saturation are not suffering from decompression sickness nor are they hyperbaric patients. No diver needs a washout unless they have the symptoms indicating the need to undergo a chamber dive. Would anyone take antibiotics in the absence of an infection?

## The verdict

Chamber dives with oxygen (HBOT – Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Treatment) are an effective method to cure various diseases including the decompression

sickness and air embolism in divers. Beside that, chamber dives are performed for diver training (according to strict guidelines), testing of dive equipment, dive medical diagnostics and investigations.

If a diver wants to undertake a chamber dive: just for the experience; to overcome the fear of a decompression chamber; or even just for the fun, it should be performed only to a shallow depth without oxygen.

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Somewhere for every diver...

# DAHAB

A hippy-styled holiday destination in the Sinai Peninsula, Dahab remains a favourite haunt for diving and windsurfing enthusiasts as well as those in search of a

mellow part of the world to relax. The former Bedouin fishing village offers an extremely laid back atmosphere in a beautiful setting of golden desert mountains and vibrant coral reefs. There are generally three types of diver who visit these waters. Technical divers and freedivers come here for the depth and shelter of spectacular sites the Blue Hole and the Canyon, while the remaining crowd are generally recreational divers seeking hassle-free shore diving in calm waters. The Blue Hole and Canyon are the signature dives of Dahab. World-famous, the Blue Hole has seen many a mono-finned freediver descending to record depths and tank-heavy techies venturing through its deep coral arch to the open sea. The 50m-wide hole offers little in the way of life in the shallow waters, so often acts as an entry and exit point for recreational divers wishing to explore the life-encrusted sloping reef outside. The classic dive to get the most from the Blue Hole starts at The Bells, 100m north of the hole, where you descend a small crack in the reef table. From here you descend 18m down a long chimney, which ends at a small cavern that slopes out at around 28m to the blue. The life on the outside of the Blue Hole is stunning and often provides encounters with larger fish, such as barracuda. The dive ends inside the Blue Hole, which is

accessed by crossing the stunning coral encrusted saddle at a depth of around 6m. The Canyon is accessed though a crack in the coral table. The site takes its name from the long, narrow canyon, which runs north to south from the reef to depths of around 50m. For more current action and the chance to see more of the big animals typically found in sites around Sharm el Sheikh, Gabr El Bint can be reached by boat or camel. Less talked about sites of Dahab not-to-be missed include The Islands, which is like entering a secret garden of colourful hard and soft corals and macro life. Other more secluded sites, which offer surface intervals on the mellow and spacious beaches in the south, are Three Pools, Moray Gardens and Umm Sid. The variety of dive sites can usually be dived at any time of the day depending on wind conditions, so offer a freedom and flexibility for those looking to include more topside activities in their holiday. There is a lot more on offer topside in Dahab than most Sinai destinations with; perfect windsurfing and kitesurfing conditions; a thriving community of yoga teachers offering classes; many types of alternative health and wellbeing treatments; as well as desert excursions, rock climbing, camel safaris and a chance to experience real Bedouin culture. The main hub of activity is along the beachfront strip in the centre of the town, starting from Assalah. Hotels range from 5-star luxury around the lagoon to basic backpacking lodgings. Accommodation is generally excellent value for money and there are lots of fantastic restaurants and bars in which to spend your evenings.





# Judging by the cover

photo: Andrew Slater

One of diving's most powerful organisations has been presented with a new set of standards which, if approved later this year, look likely to drive dive insurance companies to offer clearer policies for diving. **Charlotte Boan** reports.

A team of finance experts have put forward proposals to the European Underwater Federation (EUF) to set minimum standards and requirements for diving insurance cover in a bid to combat confusion over cover. If the standards are agreed on, insurance companies will have to meet the proposed benchmarks for diving cover to be recognised as an EUF-recognised insurer.

Proposals include promoting greater clarity, particularly in the exclusions of cover, as well as immediate payment of treatment to prevent any delay in medical action for conditions such as decompression illness in chambers (see a summary on page 49).

Over the last two years insurance expert and diver Klaus Krutzfeldt and finance expert and Danish diving instructor Stig Lyngby conducted a mass survey of insurance cover provided in diving, from commercial business to personal travel insurance cover. It was the first time that such an extensive survey had been carried out. Their findings highlighted a need for clearer policies, the pair said, particularly in areas of exclusions for cover.

'The EUF has seen a great number of cases where there has been lack of cover and this is unacceptable for divers,' Lyngby explains. 'Unfortunately there was no commonality between all the problems. However, it is clearly unacceptable when you have situations where someone has worked in the diving industry for many years and

suffered permanent disability through an accident, but is not covered because of technicalities.'

Diving insurance is a highly complex market, particularly as the sport involves many different training agencies and is subject to many different laws nationally and internationally. Dive centres face particular problems trying to get clear answers from insurance companies on cover when looking at depth and qualification recommendations, as reported in the last issue of BLUE (Deep Undercovered?).

With a strong background in both finance and diving, Lyngby and Krutzfeldt were approached by the EUF to see if a standard set of policies could be set in order to protect its members, from professionals to standard recreational divers.

'We are not here to attack anybody,' insists Lyngby. 'In our work for the EUF we had to come up with a minimum policy framework as an EUF diving insurance standard.'

example of provisions and exclusions:

Provisions:

- Recreational diving is carried out in accordance with guidelines and diving practices
- Death / disability has to occur within 365 days after the accident.
- Age limit 70 years (extra costs and approval by insurance company up to 75 years)

Exclusions:

- War and terrorism
- Radioactive contamination
- Self inflicted injuries
- Alcohol, drugs, exposure to exceptional danger
- Any mental disorder
- Any pre-existing conditions
- Intentional diving beyond education and experience
- Diving against medical advice

COVER PROPOSALS PROFESSIONAL	
Cover for Instructors and Diveguides	
Health cover (when travelling abroad)	Desired Cover
Inpatient treatment	100% at least up to 1.000.000 €
Outpatient treatment	100% at least up to 100.000 €
Medicines and bandages	100% at least up to 25.000 €
Pain-killing dental treatment	100% at least up to 15.000 €
Transport to the nearest hospital	100% at least up to 100.000 €
Home transport	100% at least up to 150.000 €
Hometransport (mortal remains) or burial costs	up to 10.000 €
Emergency covers – Dive accident	
Search, rescue and recovery	up to 15.000 €
Decompression chamber treatment	100% at least up to 150.000 €
24 h helpline	yes
Special Assistance Services (incl. dive and hyperbaric doctor services)	yes
Extra Hotel costs in case of ongoing outpatient treatment	up to 4.000 €
Loss of equipment during recovery	up to 2.500 €
Accident covers – for all accidents 24/7 worldwide	
At work, in spare time and including all kinds of diving	
Accidental death	minimum 50.000 €
Higher death cover	available on request
Permanent Accidental disability	
Option 1	up to 150.000 € lump sum payment
Option 2	up to 300.000 € lump sum payment
Option 3	up to 500.000 € lump sum payment
Improved disability standards	yes
Cover in case of overexertion	yes
Toxication caused by gas, steam etc.	yes
Cover of typical diving injuries	yes
Cover in case of drowning, freeze to death, suffocation	yes
Disability caused by infections through animal and insect bites	yes
Extra covers	
Cosmetic surgery and compensation for tooth injuries	up to 5.000 €
Instant benefit in connection with serious injuries	up to 10.000 €
Liability and legal assistance dive accident ( sectorial cover)	
Liability persons	minimum 1.500.000 €
Liability things	minimum 1.500.000 €
Legal assistance	minimum 15.000 €

Summary of cover proposal (professional)

'We had to survey the market. This had never been done before, so it took a lot of work. From this we then had to develop a set of standards and minimum requirements of cover that would represent the diving community's interest, but also be realistic. It was vital we found insurance companies that would offer such cover, otherwise it would not work.'

There was little consistency found in what insurance companies offered and the pricing, according to the researchers.

Krutzfeldt, an insurance broker of 20 years who is also managing director of Baltic Finance in Scandinavia, says: 'There's different cover everywhere at different prices. There are so many loopholes. The easiest way to remove loopholes is to help people understand their insurance. The main problems are in the exclusions.'

A major part of the researchers' proposals is to stipulate that all exclusions to the cover are written clearly at the beginning of the policy. They wanted it to be made clear that anything that is not stipulated in the exclusions should then be covered by insurers.

'The cornerstone is the understanding of what your cover offers,' explains Lyngby. 'A big clean up is needed and we need the standard. Underwriters don't know about diving. If we [EUF] believe as diving experts insurers should pay up, we should be telling them.'

'What is better for the industry: the small guy against the big guys or the Federation against the big guys?' However, both deny that forcing the hand of insurers will increase the cost. Krutzfeldt says it is likely that this move will have the opposite effect and force costs down.

'If there is a standard set out by a recognised governing body within the sport, underwriters are likely to see the cover as less of a risk,' he says. 'Currently there are only a few insurers around which have expertise in the diving market.'

Lyngby agrees the involvement of the EUF in creating a set of standards will increase understanding throughout the industry, such as building a profile of an average diver. The greater the understanding of the sport he says, the less it will be seen as a risk for insurers to cover.

'I believe it will increase competition and prices will come down,' he explains. 'When you have a monopoly in such areas, service tends to be lousy and price too high. I would welcome as much competition as possible to encourage better pricing and better standards.'

Following a consultation period, the EUF standard for dive insurance looks likely to be in place in 2010.

# KITESURFIN'

## COME ON SAFARI RED SEA

Egypt's climate, sea and wind conditions (many places experience at least 300 windy days a year) make it an ideal holiday destination for kite and windsurfers. But the attraction is not all about wind and sea, as now Egypt's watersports operations are leading the way in adventure kitesurfing trips. **Charlotte Boan** reports.

A rapidly increasing number of centres in Egypt's wind sport hotspots are offering specially tailored adventure trips aimed at taking kites where few have surfed before.

For many years divers have been heading out on safari boats and camels to get to some of the secluded dive sites to avoid crowds and experience more of the unique and less widely explored parts of the Egyptian Red Sea. Now kitesurfers are packing their boards and kites in their travel packs and venturing into the desert or heading on excluded island-hopping safari boat trips.

'Why not combine the sport with travel? You don't have to stay in one area,' says Gunnar Palmer, an experienced kitesurfing teacher in Dahab who offers camel desert and surf trips. 'Kitesurfers have small equipment, which can be carried by backpack, so it's easy to move around. This gives you a chance to kitesurf in some great places away from the crowds and to see more of the desert. It's perfect, unless you have a family and want to stay in one spot.'

Gunnar is one of a few to have started tailored trips south and north of Dahab, from one day to three-day excursions. Kitesurfers usually travel by camel to certain desert areas, where they can stay overnight and kite back to Dahab the next day depending on the wind conditions. All luggage is carried on land by camel.

'Doing a trip like this you can enjoy the full experience of being on holiday in the Sinai,' he says. 'You can even bring your snorkels and check out the reefs when not kitesurfing.'

Although he says basic trips can be created for beginners, it is best to have at least enough experience to be able to turn in both directions on the board. 'Some of the trips are not easy,' he says. 'For the longer excursions, you could be kitesurfing for a few hours at a time.'

With the availability of reasonably priced transport and high-standard kitesurfing centres peppered across the region, it is possible to visit a number of destinations within Egypt on one holiday trip. And for those who really want to get away from the crowds and be different,

there are boat safaris offering trips up to a week long. Much like a diving safari, boats travel to all the best riding areas overnight, giving guests the chance to surf all day. All meals are prepared for you, so you can completely relax between kitesurfs.

One of the most established centres in Hurghada says its boat safaris are proving really popular among experienced kitesurfers, as it is bringing back the passion and spirit of kitesurfing of the very early days.

'We were about the first kitesurfers in Egypt,' says Maude des Abbayes of Fun-Kite in Hurghada. 'Six years ago we had this idea of finding an alternative to hotel beaches that were getting more and more crowded. We wanted a product that enabled kitesurfers to share their passion with the same spirit as was there when the sport began: no crowds and unlimited spots in beautiful landscape. The boat cruise was a fantastic alternative.'

Heading out on a wooden Ketch boat, kitesurfers are taken to a variety of places, including nearby islands where the wind conditions are best. However, they always stay clear of the coral reefs to prevent any damage to the environment.

'The best thing about this kind of holiday is that people can share their passion during a week and kite as much as possible,' she says. 'We also get the best wind of the Red Sea in extraordinary and safe spots far away from all kind of constructions perturbations.'

To head out on a kitesurfing safari boat, the general minimum experience level required is competent upwind rider.

### KITESURF GEAR TRAVEL TIP

There are many kitesurf rental centres throughout the Sinai and mainland Red Sea coast where you can hire up-to-date equipment. However, if you plan to travel to a number of destinations, it is worth bringing your own gear, such as two kites, one board, wetsuit or rash vest depending on temperature and sunscreen. If you are planning topside trips through the desert, it is worth noting that the summer months of July and August experience very high temperatures not suited to heavy exertion on land.

**For more information about the various kitesurfing destinations throughout Egypt, see the CDWS website [www.cdws.travel](http://www.cdws.travel)**

Heading out on a wooden Ketch boat, kitesurfers are taken to a variety of places, including nearby islands where the wind conditions are best. However, they always stay clear of the coral reefs to prevent any damage to the environment.



Special thanks to Gunnar Palmer ([www.gpkite.net](http://www.gpkite.net)) and Fun Kite ([www.fun-kite.com](http://www.fun-kite.com)) for their help with this feature.



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Dahab Divers	Dahab Divers Hotel	SSDC 0009 D	www.dahabdivers.com	info@dahabdivers.com	(20) 69 3640381
Daniela Diving Centre	Blue Hole Road	SSDC 0010 D	www.daniela-diving.com	reservation@daniela-diving.com	(20) 12 2253999
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Fish and Friends	Masbat Beach	SSDC 0019 D	www.fishandfriendsdahab.com	info@fishandfriendsdahab.com	(20) 69 3640720
Fun by the Sea Lagona Divers	Tropitel Hotel	SSDC 0020 D	www.lagona-divers.com		
Inmo Divers	Inmo Hotel	SSDC 0022 D	www.inmodivers.de	inmo@inmodivers.de	(20) 69 3640370
Light House	The Lighthouse	SSDC 0023 D	www.dahabdive.com	info@dahabdive.com	(20) 12 2541442
Mirage Divers	El Melil	SSDC 0025 D	www.miragedivers.com	info@miragedivers.com	(20) 69 3641 476
Nesima Divers	Nesima Hotel	SSDC 0026 D	www.nesima-resort.com	reservation@nesima-resort.com	(20) 69 3640320
Octopus World	Lighthouse	SS00125	www.octopusdivers.net	info@octopusdivers.net	(20) 69 3642370
Octopus World	Masbat, Dahab	SSDC 0053 D	www.octopusdivers.net	info@octopusdivers.net	(20) 69 364 2370
OK Club	ELMasbat Beach	SSDC 0029 D	www.okclubdahab.com	info@okclubdahab.com	(20) 69 3642042
Orca Dive Centre	Masbat Beach	SSDC 0031 D	www.orcadivecentre.com	info@orcadivecentre.com	(20) 69 364 0020
Orca Dive Club Dahab	Happy Life Hotel	SSDC 0030 D	www.orca-diveclub-dahab.com	info@orca-diveclub-dahab.com	(20) 10 6466692
Oricana	Oricana Hotel	SSDC 0032 D	www.orcadivecentre.com	info@orcadivecentre.com	(20) 69 3640020
Penguin Divers	Penguin Village	SSDC 0033 D	www.penguindivers.com	info@penguindivers.com	(20) 69 3641047
Planet Divers	Planet Oasis Hotel	SSDC 0034D	dahab@planetdivers.com	www.planetdivers.com	(20) 69 364 1090

Name	Address	CDWS No.	Website Address	Email Address	Telephone
Poseidon ( Mashraba)	Mashraba	SSDC 0035 D	www.poseidondivers.com	info@poseidondivers.com	(20) 69 3640091
Poseidon ( Meridien)	Meridien Hotel	SSDC 0036 D	www.poseidondivers.com	info@poseidondivers.com	(20) 69 3640091
Red Sea Relax	Masbat Beach	SSDC 0037 D	www.red-sea-relax.com	info@red-sea-relax.com	(20) 69 3641309
Reef 2000	Bedouin Moon Hotel	SSDC 0038 S	www.reef2000.com	info@reef2000.com	(20) 69 3640 087
Sea Dancer	Masbat Beach	SSDC 0040 D	www.seadancerdivecenter.com	mail@seadancerdivecenter.com	(20) 69 3640887
Sinai Divers Backpack-ers	Masbat Beach	SSDC 0041 D	www.sinaidivers.com	dahab@sinaidivers.com	
Sinai Divers Dahab	Hilton Dahab Hotel	SSDC 0042 D	www.sinaidivers.com	dahab@sinaidivers.com	
Sub Aqua Dahabia	Dahabia Hotel	SSDC 0046 D	www.subaqua-divecenter.com	dahabeya@subaqua-divecenter.com	(49) 89 384 7690
Sun Splash	Mashraba	SSDC 0044 D	www.sunsplash-divers.com	sunsplash.divers@gmail.com	(20) 69 640932

<b>Sharm</b>					
African Diver Sharm	Luna Sharm Hotel	SSDC 0093 S	www.africandiverssharm.com	info@africandiverssharm.com	(20) 016 55 24601
Albatros Top Diving	Coral Beach Montazah	SSDC 0002 S		albatrosredsea@yahoo.it	
Anar Dive Center	Royal Paradise	SSDC 0003 S		anardive@yahoo.com	
Anthias Divers	Sonesta Beach	SSDC 0004 S	www.anthiasdivers.com	info@anthiasdivers.com	(20) 69 3601420
Aquamarine	Rehana Hotel	SSDC 0005 S	www.aquamarineclub.com	info@aquamarineclub.com	(20) 18 2070605
Aqua Sharm Diving College	Charming Inn Solymar Hotel	SSDC 0007 S	www.aquasharm.com	info@aquasharm.com	(20) 12 2403998
Aquarius Coral Sea	Coral Sea Hotel	SSDC 0008 SM01	www.aquariusredsea.com	coralsea@aquariusredsea.com	(20) 10 692 6126
Aquarius Diving Club	Sheraton Hotel	SSDC 0009 S	www.aquariusredsea.com	sheraton@aquariusredsea.com	(20) 69 3602099
Below 100	Ibrotel Lido Hotel	SSDC 0010 S		hsanyeldin@yahoo.com	(20) 69 3602608
Blue Lagoon	La Perla Hotel	SSDC 0011 S	www.bluelagoonsharm.com	info@bluelagoonsharm.com	(20) 69 3663180
C Fun Divers	Ibrotel Palace Hotel	SSDC 0012 S	www.cfundivers.com	info@cfundivers.de	(20) 69 3663393
Cali International	Cali Building	SSDC 0013 S		calidivingcenter@yahoo.com	(20) 69 3660805
Camel Dive Club at Grand Rotana Resort	Grand Rotana Resort	SSDC 0015 SM01	www.cameldive.com	info@cameldive.com	(20) 69 3600700
Camel Dive Club Royal Grand Sharm	Royal Grand Sharm	SSDC 0015 S	www.cameldive.com	info@cameldive.com	(20) 69 3600700
Camel Dive Club	Camel Hotel	SSDC 0014 S	www.cameldive.com	info@cameldive.com	(20) 69 3600700
Camel Dive Club Laguna Vista	Laguna Vista Resort	SSDC 0016 S	www.cameldive.com	info@cameldive.com	(20) 69 3600700
Colona Dive Club	Amar Sina Hotel	SSDC 0018 S	www.colona.com	sharm@colona.com	(20) 69 366 3670
Coral Dive Club	Mexicana Hotel	SSDC 0019 S	www.coraldivingclub.com	info@coraldivingclub.com	(20) 69 3660740
Deep Vibration	Nesco	SSDC 0020 S	www.deepvibration.com	info@deepvibration.com	
Desert Rose	Dolphin Country Club	SSDC 0095 S		desertrose@mail.ru	
Diamond Dive Club	Kiroseiz Beach Hotel	SSDC 0021 S	www.diamonddiveclub.com	info@diamonddiveclub.com	(20) 69 3666758
Dive Africa Water Sports	Sharm Holiday Hotel	SSDC 0022 S	www.diveafrica.com	redsea@diveafrica.com	(20) 3601 388
Dive For Fun	Sharm Amarein	SSDC 0023 S	www.diveforfunsharm.com	info@diveforfunsharm.com	(20) 107 175 117
Dive In	Renaissance Golden View	SSDC 0024 S	www.divein.net	sharm@divein.net	
Dive In	Grand Plaza Hotel	SSDC 0024 SM01	www.divein.net	sharm@divein.net	(20) 69 371 0510
Diver Professional	Regency Plaza Hotel	SSDC 0025 S		ahmeddiver@yahoo.com	

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Divers International	Sofitel Hotel	SSDC 0027 S	www.diversintl.com	info@diversintl.com	(20) 69 3600865
Divers United	Coral Hills	SSDC 0103 S	www.diversunited.com	diver.united@gmail.com	(20) 127 445 833
Diving & Discovery	Iberotel Fanara Hotel	SSDC 0028 S	www.divingdiscovery.it	ddiscovery@sinainet.com.eg	
Divers' Land	Naama Inn Hotel	SSDC 0105 S	www.diversland.co.uk	info@diversland.co.uk	(20) 12 359 5212
Diving Ocean New Project	Sea Club Hotel	SSDC 0029 S	www.divingocean.com	info@divingocean.com	(20) 10 1754356
Diving World	The Rock Hotel	SSDC 0030 S	www.divingworldredsea.com	sharm@divingworldredsea.com	(20) 69 3660065
Dolphin	Kahramana Hotel	SSDC 0031 S		dive@dolphin_diving.ru	
Egyptian Divers	Blue Reef Hotel	SSDC 0032 S	www.egyptiandivers.com	info@egyptiandivers.com	(20) 69 3600289
Emperor Divers	Bay View Hotel	SSDC 0033 S	www.emperordivers.com	info.sharm@emperordivers.com	(20) 69 360 1734
Extra Divers	Melia Sina	SSDC 0034 S	www.extradivers.info	rasnasrani@extradivers.info	(20) 69 36700002
Go Dive	Lighthouse. Ras Um Sid	SSDC00365		ayman@blueheavenholidays.com	
Grand Blue	Amphoras Hotel	SSDC 0037 S	www.grandblue.it	info@grandblue.it	
Grand Blue (Tamra)	Tamra Hotel	SSDC 0097 S	www.grandblue.net	info@grandblue.it	
Grand Blue	Aloha Hotel	SSDC 0096 S	www.grandblue.it	info@grandblue.it	
Holiday Services	Hilton Dreams	SSDC 0038 S	www.holidaydiving.org	info@holidaydiving.org	
International Diving Travel	Novotel Hotel	SSDC 0039 SM01	www.only-six.com	info@only-six.com	(20) 69 366 3688
Lucky Divers	El Khan Mall, Hadaba,	SSDC 0098 S	www.luckydiverssharm.com	info@luckydiverssharm.com	
Magic Divers	Magic Life Hotel	SSDC 0040 S	www.magicdivers.at	sharm@magicdivers.at	(20) 12 7334509
Marina Divers	Concord El Salam Hotel	SSDC 0041 S	www.marinadiverssharm.com	info@marinadiverssharm.com	(20) 69 3603370
Millennium Divers	Crowne Plaza Hotel	SSDC 0042 S	www.millennium-divers.com	info@millenium-divers.com	(20) 69 3604266
Moon Divers	Falcon Inn Hotel	SSDC 0043 S	www.moondivers.com	info@moondivers.com	(20) 69 3663298
Mr Diver ( Belvedere)	Belvedere Hotel	SSDC 0049 S	www.misterdiver.com	info@misterdiver.com	
Mr Diver	Mariott Hotel	SSDC 0044 S	www.misterdiver.com	mariott@misterdiver.com	
Mr Diver	Nubian Village Hotel	SSDC 0046 S	www.misterdiver.com	info@misterdiver.com	
Mr Diver	Pyramisa Hotel	SSDC 0045 S	www.misterdiver.com	pyramisa@misterdiver.com	
New Tower	New Tower Hotel	SSDC 0050 S	www.sprindiving.it	info@sprindiving.it	(20) 69 3664490
Ocean College Club	Ocean Club Hotel	SSDC 0052 S	www.ocean-college.com	info@ocean-college.com	(20) 693664305
Ocean College	Hilton Waterfalls Hotel	SSDC 0054 S	www.ocean-college.com	info@ocean-college.com	(20) 693664305
Ocean College	Whitehouse	SSDC 0053 S	www.ocean-college.com	info@ocean-college.com	(20) 693664305
Octopus Divers	Noria Beach Hotel	SSDC 0055 S		info@sharmoctopus.com	
Only Six	Turquoise Hotel	SSDC 0039 S	www.only-six.com	info@only-six.com	(20) 12 796 3155
Oonas Dive Club	Oonas Hotel	SSDC 0056 S	www.oonasdiveclub.com	info@oonasdiveclub.com	(20) 69 360 0581
Orbit Divers	Dive Inn Hotel	SSDC 0104 S	www.orbit-divers.net	orbit-divers@hotmail.com	(43) 664 3354878
Pirates Dive Club	Sol Verginia Hotel	SSDC 0059 S	www.piratesdiveclub.com	moody@piratesdiveclub.com	(20) 12 2442148
Pharaoh Divers	Palermo Hotel	SSDC 0058 S	www.pharaohdivers.com	Info@pharaohdivers.com	
Pyramid	Gardenia Plaza Hotel	SSDC 0102 S		m_bange@yahoo.com	
Rasta Divers	Rasta House	SSDC 0060 S	www.rastadivers.com	info@rastadivers.com	
Red Sea Diving College	Naama Bay	SSDC 0061 S	www.redseacollege.com	info@redseacollege.com	(20) 69 3600 145
Red Sea Waterworld	Hyatt Hotel	SSDC 0062 S	www.redseawaterworld.com	reservations@redseawaterworld.com	(20) 69 3620315
Red Sea Waterworld	Ritz Carlton	SSDC 0062 S	www.redseawaterworld.com	rzinfo@redseawaterworld.com	(20) 69 3620533
Scuba Divers Red Sea	Plaza Hotel	SSDC 0063 S	www.scubadivers-redsea.com	sharm@scubadivers-redsea.com	(20) 69 366 44 43
Scuba Dreamer	Dreams Beach Hotel	SSDC 0064 S	www.scubadreamer.com	info@scubadreamer.com	(20) 69 3663992
Sea Soul	Badawia Hotel	SSDC 0065 S	www.seasoul.net	info@seasoul.net	(20) 69 3660316
Sharks Bay	Sharks Bay	SSDC 0067 S	www.sharksbay.com	reservations@sharksbay.com	(20) 69 3600942
Sharm Divers	Halomy Hotel	SSDC 0068 S	www.sharm-divers.com	contact@sharmdivers.com	(20) 10 5533853
Sharm Scuba Service	Sonesta Club Hotel	SSDC 0069 S	www.sharmscubaservice.com	info@sharmscubaservice.com	(20) 012 405 7239
Sharm Scuba Service	Coral Beach Tiran Hotel	SSDC 0069 SM01	www.sharmscubaservice.com	info@sharmscubaservice.com	(20) 012 405 7239

Name	Address	CDWS No.	Website Address	Email Address	Telephone
Sheikh Coast	Domina Hotel	SSDC 0070S	www.sheikhcoast.com	info@sheikhcoast.com	(20) 69 3601713
Shiekh Coast Savoy	Savoy Hotel	SSDC 0071 S	www.sheikhcoast.com	info@sheikhcoast.com	(20) 69 3601713
Sinai Blues	Four Seasons Resort	SSDC0072 S	www.sinaiblues.com	info@sinaiblues.com	(20) 69 3603555
Sinai College	Falcon Hills	SSDC 0073 S	www.sinaicollege.com	info@sinaicollege.com	
Sinai Dive Club	Hilton Fayrouz Hotel	SSDC 0074 S	www.dive-club.com	reservations@dive-club.com	(20) 12 2815210
Sinai Dive Club	Hilton Shark Bay Hotel	SSDC 0075 S	www.dive-club.com	reservations@dive-club.com	(20) 12 2815210
Sinai Divers	Ghazala Hotel	SSDC 0076 S	www.sinaidivers.com	info@sinaidivers.com	
Sinai Divers El Baron	El Baron Hotel	SSDC 0077 S	www.sinaidivers.com	info@sinaidivers.com	
Sinai Rose	Sun Rise Hotel	SSDC 0078 S		moh_zarzour@hotmail.com	
Sinai Scuba	Sun Set Hotel	SSDC 0079 S	www.sinaiscuba.com	info@sinaiscuba.com	(20) 12 2887398
Spirit Divers	Regency Hotel	SSDC 0080 S	www.nautica.pl/egipt/index.php	david@nautica.pl	
Subex Golf Maritim	Maritim Golf Hotel	SSDC 0082 S	www.subex.org	sharm@subex.org	(20) 693 600122
Subex	Maritim Jolie Ville Resort	SSDC 0081 S	www.subex.org	sharm@subex.org	(20) 69 3600122
Sun Shine Divers	Sun Shine Club	SSDC 0083 S	www.sunshine-divers.de	Klaus@sunshine-divers.com	(20) 12 7831388
TGI Diving	Sol Sharm hotel	SSDC 0000 D	www.tgidiving.com	sharm@tgidiving.com	
Tower	Tower Hotel	SSDC 0085 S	www.sprindiving.it	infosub@sprindiving.it	(20) 69 3664490
Vera Sub Queen Sharm	Queen Sharm Hotel	SSDC 0088 S		verasubsharm@tiscali.it	(20) 12 2334240
Viaggio nel Blu	Club Reef	SSDC 0089 S	www.viaggionelblu.com	sharm@viaggionelblu.com	(20) 16 5384700
Werner Lau	Helnan Marina Hotel	SSDC 0091 S	www.wernerlau.com	redsea@wernerlau.com	(20) 69 3600456

## Ain Soukhna

Stella Di Mare	Stella Di Mare Resort	RSDC 0179	www.stelladimare.com	diving@stelladimare.com	(20) 62 3250100
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## El Gouna

Colona Divers	Three Corners Rihana	RSDC 56	www.colona.com	elgouna@colona.com	(20) 65 3580113
Dive Trek	Sultan Bay Hotel	RSDC 0020	www.dive-trek.com	info@dive-trek.com	
Easy Divers	3 Corners Rehana	RSDC 61	www.easydivers-academy.com	elgouna@easydivers-academy.com	
Euro Divers Gouna	Club Med Resort	RSDC 19	www.euro-divers.com	cmelgouna@euro-divers.com	
New Blue Brothers	Ocean View	RSDC 33	www.bluebrothersdiving.de	info@bluebrothersdiving.de	(20) 12 3459362
Orca	Turtles Inn, Abu Tig Mar.	RSDC 83	www.orca-diveclub-elgouna.com	info@orca-diveclub-elgouna.com	(20) 12 2480460
TGI	Sheraton Miramar	RSDC 72	www.tgidiving.com	khaled@TGIdiving.com	(20) 12 2242025
The Dive Connection	Panorama Hotel	RSDC 48	www.diveconnection.com	info@diveconnection.com	(20) 65 3580052
The Dive Tribe	Movenpick Resort	RSDC 27	www.divetribe.com	info@divetribe.com	(20) 65 3580120

## Hurghada

Adventurer	Hurghada Marine Club	RSDC 0168	www.adventurer.pl	biuro@adventurer.pl	(20) 12 7407847
Al Mashrabiya	Mashrabiya Resort	RSDC 0121	www.swdf.de	redsea@swdf.de	(20) 065 344 2375
Al Prince	Sayed Kareem St Dahar	RSDC 0142	www.prince-diving.com	info@prince-diving.com	(20) 12 248 4015
Annette & Jurgen Red Sea Divers	Zahabia Resort	RSDC 85	www.redsea-divers.com	info@redsea-divers.com	(20) 12 2300483
Aquanaut Blue Heaven	Regina Resort	RSDC 0009	www.aquanaut.net	info@aquanaut.net	(20) 65 3440892
Aquarius Diving Club	Royal Azur Makadi Bay	RSDC 0031	www.aquariusredsea.com	makadi@aquariusredsea.com	(20) 65 3590308 ext 5810



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Aqurarius Diving	Marriott Resort	RSDC 0045	www.aquariusredsea.com	marriott@aquariusredsea.com	(20) 65 3446950
Barakuda (JAMES & MAC)	Giftun Resort	RSDC 22	www.james-mac.com	info@james-mac.com	(20) 12 3118923
Black Shark	Ali Baba Palace Resort	RSDC 76	info@blackshark-dc.com	www.blackshark-dc.com	(20) 12 21 82 352
Blue Paradise	14 El Kornesh St	RSDC 0039	www.blueparadise.be	bluepar@hurghada.ie-eg.com	(20) 65 354 4354
Blue Water-Arabia Dive Resort	Azur Arabia Beach Hotel	RSDC 26	www.blue-water-dive.com	info@blue-water-dive.com	(20) 65 3555420
Bubbles Diving College	Villa 17 Hadaba	RSDC 0173	www.bubblesworldwide.com	yehia@bubblesworldwide.com	
Colona Divers	Magawish Resort	RSDC 32	www.colona.com	hurghada@colona.com	(20) 65 3464631
Deep Blue Divers	Sunrise Garden Resort	RSDC 0183	www.deepblue-divers.com	info@deepblue-divers.com	(20) 16 552 0763
Deep Blue Divers	Calimera Golden Beach	RSDC 0163	www.deepblue-divers.com	info@deepblue-divers.com	(20) 16 552 0763
Deep Divers	Sunny Days El Palacio	RSDC 0071	www.deep-divers.com	info@deep-divers.com	(20) 18 912 5125
Deep Dream Diving Club	Public Beach Hurghada	RSDC 0011	www.deepdreams.hu	info@deepdreams.hu	
Dinos	Hospital Street	RSDC 0028	www.dinosdiving.com	info@dinosdiving.com	(20) 65 3545050
Dive In	Sonesta Pharoah	RSDC 0061	www.diveintravel.it	hurghada@divein.net	
Dive Point	Rotana Coral Beach Resort	RSDC 155	www.dive-point.com	hurghada@dive-point.com	(20) 12 3255483
Dive Too	Seagull Resort	RSDC 0153	www.divetoo.net	magdy@divetoo.net	
Dive Training Egypt	Coral Beach Resort	RSDC 155	www.dive-point.com	hurghada@dive-point.com	(20) 12 3255483
Divers Lodge	Intercontinental Resort	RSDC 16	www.divers-lodge.com	office@divers-lodge.com	(20) 65 3465100
Diving World	Le Meridien Hotel	RSDC 0050	www.divingworldredsea.com	hurghada@divingworldredsea.com	(20) 65 3443582
Divers International	Sofitel Coralia	RSDC 0052	www.diversintl.com	info@diversintl.com	(20) 69 3600865
Divers International	Oberoi Sahl Hasheesh	RSDC 0051	www.diversintl.com	info@diversintl.com	(20) 69 3600865
Eagle Ray Divers	Sun & Sea Hotel	RSDC 0014	www.eagleraydivers-redsea.de	info@eagleraydivers-redsea.de	(20) 12 7374129
Easy Divers	Hilton Plaza	RSDC 0021	www.easydivers-redsea.com	info@easydivers-redsea.com	(20) 12 230 5202
El Gaysoom	El Gaysoom Resort	RSDC 0147		ucpaegypt@menanet.net	
El Ghoniemy	Abu Ramada St	RSDC 0052		Ashrafdivervip@hotmail.com	
El Samaka	El Samaka Resort	RSDC 0015	www.el-samaka.de	info@el-samaka.com	(20) 65 465153
Emperor Divers	Hurghada Touristic Marina	RSDC 98	www.emperordivers.com	info.hurghada@emperordivers.com	(20) 12 7372125
Etape Nouvelle	Hawai Resort	RSDC 0095		bluelagoonhr@gmail.com	
Euro Divers	Grand Hotel	RSDC 18	www.euro-divers.com	Egypt@euro-divers.com	
Frogman	Lagouna Beach	RSDC 0105		frogmandiving@yahoo.com	
Funny Divers	In front of Empire	RSDC 0143	www.funnydivers.com	info@funnydivers.com	(20) 12 4193164
Geli & Ute	Le Pacha Resort	RSDC 0129	www.tauchenunterfreunden.de	kontakt@tauchenunterfreunden.de	(20) 65 3 444 150
Golden Dolphin	Shell Ghada Beach	RSDC 0062	www.gdolph.com	info@gdolph.com	(20) 12 3134902
Great Orca	El Princess Resort	RSDC 0166		greatorca@hotmail.com	
Gulf Divers	Beirut Hotel	RSDC 0069	www.gulfdivers.com	info@gulfdivers.com	(20) 65 3550130
Happy Diving	Sayed Korayem St	RSDC 0128	www.happydivingcenter.com	happydivingcenter@yahoo.com	(20) 65 3541807
Hor Palace	Hor Palace Resort	RSDC 0092		pd290761@aol.com	(20) 653 443710
Ilios Dive Club	Steigenberger Al Dau Resort	RSDC 109	www.iliosdiveclub.com	info@iliosdiveclub.com	(20) 65 3465442
Jasmin Diving Sports Center	Grand Seas Resort	RSDC 108	www.jasmin-diving.com	info@jasmin-diving.com	(20) 65 3460334
King Tut	In front of Hilton Plaza	RSDC 0115	www.ktdc.org	kingtutdivers@yahoo.com	(20) 12 2665187
Magic Divers Kalawy	Magic Life Resort	RSDC 70	www.magicdivers.at	kalawy@magicdivers.at	(20) 12 733 4509
Manta Divers	Church St, El Dahar	RSDC 0124	www.mantataucher.com	info@mantadivers.net	(20) 065 3548628
Marine Scuba Diving	Mirette Hotel, Villa n°1	RSDC 0127	www.marinescubadiving.com	info@marinescubadiving.com	(20) 65 3551340
Masters Club	Royal Palace Hotel	RSDC 0068	www.masters-redsea.com	info@masters-redsea.com	(20) 12 7326721
New Dino	El Keyadat El Dahar	RSDC 0131		new_dino@hotmail.com	

Name	Address	CDWS No.	Website Address	Email Address	Telephone
Oxygene Red Sea	Hilton Plaza	RSDC 0021	www.oxygenediving.com	redsea@oxygenediving.com	(20) 12 7372125
Ozone O3	Shedwan Resort	RSDC 0096	www.ozone-o3.com	ozonediving@yahoo.com	(20) 123 919 423
Panorama Divers	Tabia Hotel	RSDC 0132	www.panoramadivers.com	info@panoramadivers.com	
Picasso Water Sport	Desert Rose Resort	RSDC 0106	www.picassodiving.com	info@picassodiving.com	(20) 65 3460615
Pirates Diving Network	Beach Albatros Resort	RSDC 0013	www.piratesdiving.com	albatrosresort@piratesdiving.com	(20) 065 346 1500
PSI	Domina Makadi Bay	RSDC 0064	www.psidiveclub.com	info@psidiveclub.com	(20) 65 359 0356
Red Sea For Tourism Activity & Diving	Sonesta Pharoah	RSDC 0061	www.diveintravel.it	hurghada@divein.net	
Sadko	Infront of Aqua Fun Hotel	RSDC 0112	www.sadko.de	sadko@mtu-net.ru	(20) 12 1384632
Sahara Diving	Sahara Hotel	RSDC 0075	www.dahabdiver.com	hurghada@dahabdiver.com	(20) 10 3436998
Sara Divers	El Amal St, Dahar	RSDC 0111	www.saradivers.com	sara_d@hurghada.ie-eg.com	(20) 65 3549672
Scuba Blue	King Tut Hotel	RSDC 0130	www.sevadivers.com	info@sevadivers.com	(20) 12 9280869
Seafari	Safir Hotel	RSDC 0097	www.seafari-int.com	info@seafari-int.com	(20) 10 1013816
Sea Horse	Corniche, Hilton Plaza	RSDC 35		redseahorse@gmail.com	
Sea Wolf Diving Safari	Anemon Beach Resort	RSDC 0038	www.seawolf-safari.com	info@seawolf-diving.de	(20) 12 7461076
Sharks	Reemyvera Beach Resort	RSDC 0150		info@sharksdivingcenter.com	
Shehab Dive Center	Birgitte Hotel	RSDC 0080		Aladdinsafety@hurghada.ie-eg.com	
Son Bijou	Beside Panorama Hotel	RSDC 0140	www.bijou-diving.com	info@bijou-diving.com	
Stingray	Sinbad Resort	RSDC 0113		stingray_redsea@yahoo.com	
Subex Red Sea	Dahar	RSDC 82	www.subex.org	hurghada@subex.org	(20) 65 3547593
Swiss Stingray	Riviera Village	RSDC 0126	www.swisswellness.net	info@swisswellness.net	
Titanic Diving	Titanic Beach Resort	RSDC 0122	www.titanicdivingcenter.com	info@titanicdivingcenter.com	
Twin Dolphin	Sea Star Beaurivage	RSDC 0138	www.diving-redsea.com	info@diving-redsea.com	(20) 120240508
Voodoo Divers International	Bella Vista Resort	RSDC 0099	www.voodoodivers.com	info@voodoodivers.com	(20) 12 3345766
White Dolphin	South Hadaba beside La Perla	RSDC 0118	www.whitedolphindc.com	info@whitedolphindc.com	

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I Dive	Fourt Arabisc Vil.	RSDC 46	www.idive.it	forta@idive.it	(20) 65 3590213
SADC	Sun Rise Royal Makadi	RSDC 0094	www.subaqua-divecenter.com	sunrise-makadi@subaqua-diving-center.com	(20) 65 3590600
Undersea Adventure	LTI Dana Beach Resort	RSDC 0017	www.undersea-adventures.co.uk	team@undersea.co.uk	(44) 1736 75 1066

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Club Ras Soma Robinson	Club Ras Soma Hotel	RSDC 0088	www.somabay.com	tauchen.somabay@robinson.de	
Orca Dive Club	Abu Soma	RSDC 147	www.orca-diveclub-somabay.com	info@orca-diveclub-somabay.com	(20) 65 3545004

<b>Safaga</b>					
3 Turtles Diving Centre	2 El Shebbab Street	RSDC 37	www.3turtles-redsea.com	info@3turtles-redsea.cin	(20) 10 57 69 512
ABC Dream Divers	El Okby Resort	RSDC 0141	www.abcdreamdivers.com	info@abcdreamdivers.com	
Barakuda Lotus Bay	Lotus Bay Resort	RSDC 0040	www.barakuda-diving.com	safaga@barakuda-diving.com	(20) 65 3253911
Ducks Dive Center	Holiday Inn	RSDC 34		ddcenter@web.de	(20) 653 260100
Dune	Aluminum Marina	RSDC 77	www.duneredsea.com	info@duneredsea.com	
El Yasmin	El Yasmin	RSDC 37	www.3turtles-red-sea.com	info@3turtles-red-sea.com	
Freedom Divers	Tobia Hotel	RSDC 0152	www.freedom-divers.de	office@freedom-divers.de	(20) 12 4369878
Mena Dive	Mena Ville Resort	RSDC 6	www.menadive.com	Center@menadive.com	(20) 65 3 26 00 60
Orca Red Sea	Sun Beach Resort	RSDC 90	www.orca-diveclub-safaga.com	info@orca-diveclub-safaga.com	(20) 65 3260111
Orca Dive Club	Coral Garden Village	RSDC 0090 SM01	www.orca-diveclub-safaga.com	info@orca-diveclub-safaga.com	(20) 653 260111
Sharm El Naga	Sharm El Naga Resort	RSDC 0084	www.sharmelnaga.com	ifo@sharmelnaga.com	
Shams Safaga DC	Shams Safaga Resort	RSDC 5	www.shams-dive.com	shamsdive@hotmail.com	(20) 65 3260044
Toms Diver House	Behind Youth Center	RSDC 0044	www.toms-diver-house.ch	info@toms-diver-house.ch	(20) 12 4222181
United Divers	City Council St	RSDC 0086	www.united-divers-safaga.net	info@united-divers.net	
Volkert	Paradise Safaga Hotel	RSDC 0054		info@enjoy-diving.de	

<b>Quseir</b>					
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Extra Divers	Radisson SAS Resort	RSDC 74	www.extra-divers.de	elqusier@extra-divers.info	(20) 10 6026099
Nemos Water World	Carnelia Resort	RSDC 175	www.divingcarnelia.de	info@divingcarnelia.de	(20) 12 1617120
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TGI	Helio Land Resort	RSDC 0181	www.tgidiving.com	info@tgidiving.com	
TGI	Gorgonia Hotel	RSDC Temp	www.tgidiving.com	khaled@TGIdiving.com	
Water World	Akassia Resort	RSDC 25	www.divingakassia.de	info@divingakassia.de	(20) 122416739
Water World	Flamenco Hotel	RSDC 0196	www.divingflamenco.de	info@divingflamenco.de	(20) 12 1165152

<b>Marsa Alam</b>					
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Barakuda Diving	Lahami Bay Resort	RSDC 134	www.barakuda-diving.com	lahamibay@barakuda-diving.com	(20) 12 2242527
Beach Safari	Beach Safari Resort Marsa Alam	RSDC 0012	www.beachsafari.de	hassanadroub@yahoo.com	(49) 5921 3082711
Blue Heaven Holidays	Marsa Alam Tonduba Bay	RSDC 0049	www.blueheavenholidays.com	info@blueheavenholidays.com	(20) 12 3131157
Coraya Divers	Coraya Resort	RSDC 23	www.coraya-divers.com	info@coraya-divers.com	(20) 65 3750000
Coraya Reef Divers	Resta Reef Resort	RSDC 137	www.corayareefdivers.com	corayareefdivers@gmx.net	(20)16 1854294
Deep South Diving	Awlad Baraka	RSDC 0133	www.deep-south-diving.com	info@Deep-South-Diving.com	(20) 12 3258869
Dive In Sports	Sentido Oriental Resort	RSDC 0190	www.diveinsports.com	info@diveinsports.com	
Diving Ocean New Project	Marsa Alam Tulip Hotel	RSDC 0123	www.divingocean.com	marasa@divingocean.com	(20) 10 1754354

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Emperor Divers	Marina Lodge	RSDC 81	www.emperordivers.com	marasa.alam@emperordivers.com	(20) 12 7372126
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Extra Divers	Brayka Bay Resort	RSDC 24	www.extradivers.info	marasa@extra_divers.il	(20) 10 3071247
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Marsa Alam Divers	Awlad Baraka	RSDC 0157		southrd@starnet.com.eg	(20) 12 2181427
Nakari Divers	Marsa Nakari	RSDC 65	www.redsea-divingsafari.com	info@redsea-divingsafari.com	(20) 122 461656
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Orca Dive Club	Abu Dabbab Hotel- Diving Lodge	RSDC 0043	www.orca-diveclub-abudabab.com	info@orca-diveclub-abudabab.com	(20) 10 1415059
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Samak Marsa Alam	Villa Abd. Aty Abu Zeid	RSDC 0008	www.riff-villa.ch	info@riff-villa.ch	(20) 12 4624 933
Sea World	Holiday Inn	RSDC 0100	www.seaworld-diving.it	info@seaworld-diving.it	(20) 12 7747018
Sprin Diving	Dream Beach	RSDC 180	www.sprindiving.it	dreams@sprindiving.it	(20) 69 3664490
Vera Sub	Alfa Stone Resort	RSDC 0010		verasub@sinainet.com.eg	
Wadi Gimal	Marsa Alam - Shams Alam	RSDC 0004	www.shams-dive.com	wadigimal@shamshotels.com	(20) 12 2444931
Wadi Lahami Divers	Wadi Lahami	RSDC 67	www.redsea-divingsafari.com	info@redsea-divingsafari.com	(20) 122 461656

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Orca Dive Club Wadi Lahmy	Wadi Lahmy Azur Resort	RSDC 198	www.orca-diveclub-wadilahmy.com	info@orca-diveclub-wadilahmy.com	(20) 12 241 7020

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Quick Quick Answers: 1. Shrimp under the gills of a spanish dancer 2. Crocodile snake eel 3. Mimic Octopus 4. Pipe fish



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