

# Sodwana Bay Reef Guide

## Reef Guide

### 2 MILE REEF

27°33'28" S 32°41'10" E

Simon's Cave

Wayne's World

Pinnacles

4 Buoy

Arches

Coral Gardens

Caves and Overhangs

Antons

Chain

Stringer

B

Cat

Deep Sponge

Garden Route

Grand Central

Pick n Pay

Smarties

Spots and Stripes

Two Buoy

Roonies

Hopscotch

Bikini

Mellow Yellow



# Sodwana Bay

Sodwana's coral reefs are some of the most southern in the world. Average water temperatures vary between a maximum of 28°C between March and April, and a minimum of 20°C between August and September.

This guide gives details on each site, including topography and interesting sea life to look out for.

Tick off the sites as you dive them. How many have you visited?

KEY	
Dive Certification	<input type="checkbox"/> AOW
Max Depth	<input type="checkbox"/> 13m
Dived	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Photo Opportunity	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Jesser Point

 n/a  1m 

This rocky ledge shelters Sodwana Bay from the relentless action of the waves. At low tide large pools open up, becoming safe enough for non-divers to swim and snorkel. The rock pools provide shelter to various marine creatures, especially for juveniles. Convict surgeonfish, Moray eels, Rays, Lionfish, and a host of other interesting critters can be found.

## Quarter Mile

 0W  13m 

Just off Jesser Point, Quarter Mile offers a colourful shallow dive. Stingrays, Turtles, and Giant guitarfish are common sightings here. Its exposed nature also presents opportunities to spot Mantas and Whalesharks passing by.

In summer (December – February), the female Ragged-tooth sharks congregate here to gestate. This gives divers an exciting experience with these docile animals.

## Stringer

 0W  13m 

It consists of two close rocky outcrops, surrounded by sand. Large game fish frequent this area, which doubles as a nursery for juvenile fish. You are likely to come across large and small critters such as Frogfish, Anemonefish, Ghost pipefish, Rays, Moray eels and all three types of Sea turtles. Look closely for Paperfish and the juvenile Emperor angelfish. Mantas often pass by and can be resident for several weeks. This is a truly world class dive on days when a strong current is not present.

# 2 Mile

This is the largest reef complex in Sodwana, over 1.8km long and 900m wide. There are many options for divers of different abilities. It has amazing topography allowing dives to flow from one site to another.

## Northern 2 Mile

### Wayne's World 0W 16m

A slightly deeper dive, and relatively flat, this site can be ideal for a drift dive or rougher conditions. Suffice to say, a large variety of soft coral can be found, with amazing colour on this dive. Look out for the turtle cave, where one is often found sleeping.

### Simons Cave 0W 17m

Keep a lookout for the shy Royal angelfish hiding in the small gullies and under overhangs. If the current and surge allow there is a swim through about 5m long, where Whitetip reef sharks are known to rest. This reef has large colonies of anemones, and Raccoon butterflyfish often school here. The hard and soft corals make it colourful and varied.

### Pinnacles 0W 12m

Named for a group of pinnacles which are fun to swim through, you will find an array of fish like the Zebra seabream. Paperfish have been seen on the edges of the small sand patches dotted along this route. A feature on this route is known as the Old Woman Pinnacle, which rises up to 5m.

### 4 Buoy 0W 12m

All around the sand patch you will find groups of fish hiding under overhangs and in swim-throughs. Pass under the big overhang to a cleaning station and a Honeycomb moray eel. Carry on through gullies with 3m ledges. Small crevices, windows, and overhangs play home to nocturnal fish such as Soldierfish, Squirrelfish, and Porcupinefish. On the sand you can look for the juvenile Rockmover wrasse and Bluespotted ribbontail ray.

### Cat Reef 0W 18m

Game fish are commonly seen coming through from the seaward side. The diversity of hard and soft coral provides shelter for small fish like Chocolate Dips, Sea Goldies and juvenile Butterflyfish to name just a few.

## Central 2 Mile

### Coral Gardens

0W

13m



Coral Gardens is known for the variety of hard and soft corals that carpet the reef. Its flat topography makes it ideal for drift diving in a strong current. Combine it with Grand Central for a beautiful dive. Brightly coloured Nudibranchs are plentiful and sighted easily by observant divers.

### Arches

0W

13m



This site consists of ledges with boulders that form arches in a variety of shapes and sizes. One arch in particular, at the beginning, is large and quite spectacular. While going through you will see a large school of Pencilled surgeonfish. Between the large overhangs schools of Bluebanded snappers, Trumpetfish and the occasional Black Beauty snapper are spotted.

### Deep Sponge

A0W

32m



Deep Sponge lies parallel with 2 Mile but 500m further out to sea. A lovely deep dive that offers divers massive vase shaped sponges and interesting marine life. Game fish are common over and around this area. A good option when a strong surge is present on 2 Mile, however, only open to advanced divers.

## Southern 2 Mile

### Caves & Overhangs

0W

16m



Caves and Overhangs offer incredible coral formations consisting mostly of Plate and Staghorn corals, which together with the rocky substrate form numerous small caves and swim-throughs. The fish life is abundant, and almost anything can be seen which makes this site a very dynamic and colourful dive.

### Chain

0W

17m



This reef attributes its name to a ships anchor chain that lies across it. The chain has become part of the reef and is now difficult to spot. This reef has beautiful topography and is not dived often; therefore the corals are still in very good condition. Chain has a vast number of Carpet anemones, while the elusive Razor wrasse and Ribbon eels have been spotted on occasions.

### Antons



0W

16m



Antons' large profile makes it popular with divers. Nutrients are carried and pushed onto the reef by a predominantly north-south current, where large schools of fish hang. Slingers, Christies and Humpback snappers enjoy the feast. Don't miss the Slender Bardman on the northern sand patch. Meanwhile, look for the Sea Apple, a relative of the Sea Cucumber. The Giant moray also make a pleasant surprise. Large pelagics like Bigeye kingfish are often seen hanging near the surface in large bait balls. Large organisms like Turtles and Manta rays are also found feeding around the reef.

## Out to Sea of 2 Mile

### Hopscotch

A0W

25m



A series of small scattered ledges provide interesting topography where the elusive Ribbon Eel and Frogfish can be spotted. Schooling Coachman and many shoals of Goldies add colour to this site. Bombies and Turbinate coral can be enjoyed as you look for the tiny critters that make this an interesting dive. Don't just keep your head in the reef; you'll miss the Mantas, Sharks, and large game fish.

### Bikini



A0W

22m



Bikini is a macro photographer's playground. Try spotting the Ghost and Scribbled pipefish, Garden eels, or juvenile Boxies. This delicate reef is an important cleaning station, packed with Durban Dancers, Banded Boxer, and other cleaner shrimps. This attracts many adult and juvenile Moray eels (including Black Cheek, Starry, and Geometric morays). Don't miss one of the bigger visitors, who regularly make use of the cleaning facilities. Look overhead to spot Sharks, Turtles, Rays, and Manta's which are often seen here.

### Mellow Yellow

0W

19m



On the southern end of Bikini, it's named after the large shoals of yellow fish found there. It is a narrow reef with gullies, overhangs, and small ledges, where Paperfish and various cleaner shrimp can be spotted. Juvenile Palette surgeonfish and Twobar Humbugs hug the large table coral. Octopus and Mantis shrimp are other special additions to the site.

## 5 Mile

### Pothole

AOW 23m 

The 4m diameter pothole contains a variety of interesting marine life. Carefully enter to explore the 3m ledge and low overhangs surrounding you. You may spot the Bar-tail moray and crustaceans. While waiting your turn, also look round the outside edge of the pothole, keeping your eyes open for Sharks, and Marbled electric rays. Continuing south from the big pothole, follow a route which takes you amongst a series of ridges which are surrounded with life.

### Hotspot

AOW 32m 

Discovered by spear fishermen looking for game fish which lurk in the deep waters, it consists of a ledge which provides a great patrol area for big game fish in search of prey. Various crustaceans can be found along the bottom. See what is using the Black Tree coral as shelter. Lionfish are sometimes spotted on the small pinnacle just off the ledge. Sharks, Potato bass, and various Rays (e.g. Eagle rays, Manta rays) may accompany you on your dive.

### Ribbon



AOW 19m 

It consists of two small reef systems similar to Stringer, and attributes its name to the uncommon Ribbon Eel found around its edges. A special feature is the red coloured tentacles of one Magnificent anemone. Devil firefish and large Scorpionfish are sighted regularly. Large, diverse groups of fish are abundant and because of this, large predator fish such as Barracuda, Kingfish and a variety of Sharks make a appearance. This is a very interesting dive offering great opportunities for photographers.


## Snappers

AOW 25m 

This newly discovered reef is named after the large amount of Snappers schooling there. Blue Banded, Dory, Humpback Snappers are but a few found amongst the big shoals. Diving along a small ledge, look out for: Paperfish, Moray eels, Cleaner shrimp and juvenile Boxfish. Numerous Black corals are dotted along the ledge with a large 2m Whip coral, making this dive site unique.

## 7 Mile



AOW 24m 

This is the most popular of the further reefs and is listed as one of the world's top dive sites. Most dives will be lead at a depth no deeper than 20m to ensure a longer bottom time. What makes this reef so popular is its ability to produce the biggest variety of fish species including Blacktip reef sharks, schools of pelagic fish, huge Moray eels and plenty of Turtles. With the number of fish species, spectacular drop offs and coral formations, abundant soft coral life, and the chance to sight some incredibly large fish, 7 mile is not to be missed.

## Ramsey's




OW 18m 

This pristine reef is named after Dr. Ramsey who conducted research regarding coral growth on the Maputaland reef complex. It's a great opportunity for open water qualified divers to explore a reef further than 2 mile. Ramseys is home to lots of juvenile fish – the juvenile Emperor angelfish is a great example of the differences between its adult form.

One dive route is the ledge that runs inshore varying from 1-4 m high. Numerous Devil firefish, a variety of Moray eels (e.g. Starry Moray), Tube anemones, and Pipefish make this a fantastic and unique dive. Otherwise, whilst diving over the reef you will find stunning topography similar to Caves and Overhangs, with enjoyable swim-throughs. It is another reef that offers great photo opportunities.

## 9 Mile



AOW 22m 

As one of the furthest sites in the Sodwana reef complex, the highlight is the huge Green Tree coral. It stands about two and a half metres high, and is surrounded by hundreds of Goldies. It forms a unique feature amongst all the reefs in Sodwana Bay. This is a great multilevel dive, with a spectacular system of swim-throughs, overhangs, and caves. The crevices play home to Moray eels, and Tube anemones. Potato bass and Brindle bass are often found relaxing under overhangs. Keep your eyes open for Sharks and the hidden surprises such as Frogfish, Scorpionfish, and colourful Nudibranchs.

### Contact Information

#### Reservations

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