

# Halmahera and the Northern Moluccas, Indonesia

## Itinerary - 12 Nights

### Wasai to Bitung

- **Embarkation: Wasai Harbour, Waigeo Island at 17:00**
- **Disembarkation: Bitung Harbour, North Sulawesi at 10:00am**
- **Arrival Airport: Domine Eduard Osok (Sorong) Airport (KNG)**
- **Departure Airport: Sam Ratulangi International Airport, Manado (MDC)**

For your convenience, a free transfer will be provided between the domestic airports and the Indo Siren yacht on the day of embarkation and disembarkation. Upon arrival in Sorong, a Siren Fleet representative welcomes you at the airport and arranges your onward transfer.

When flying in on embarkation day, it is imperative that your flight arrives in Sorong before noon! Depending on what time your flight arrives, we can organise for you to use the day facilities at the Swiss Bel hotel. Pick up time is at 13.00hr for the 2-hour ferry ride to Waisai, where you embark the Indo Siren.

Disembarkation is at 10.00 in the morning at Bitung Harbour. The transfer to Manado airport takes approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes.

### Bitung to Sorong

- **Embarkation: Bitung Harbour, North Sulawesi, time is flight dependant**
- **Disembarkation: Sorong Harbour, West Papua at 10:00am**
- **Arrival Airport: Sam Ratulangi International Airport, Manado (MDC)**
- **Departure Airport: Domine Eduard Osok (Sorong) Airport (KNG)**

Upon arrival in Bitung, a Siren Fleet representative welcomes you at the airport and arranges your free onward transfer. The transfer from Manado airport takes approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes. Disembarkation is at 10.00 in the morning at Sorong Harbour. The transfer to Sorong airport takes approximately 30 minutes.

### **Marine & Port Fees:**

- 200 USD per person

Marine park fees can be paid in advance, or on board.

### **Minimum dive certification and experience:**

Divers are required to have **Advanced Open Water** certification\*, or equivalent, with a **minimum of 50 logged dives**.

\*Advanced Open Water courses can be completed on board.

Guests who do not fulfil the minimum certification and experience requirements may be denied participation in some or all dives. We have 3 permanent dive guides on board to enable small dive groups of 5-6.

It is a mandatory requirement for all divers to have insurance which covers scuba diving activities, including emergency evacuation and recompression chamber costs.

Participation in this liveaboard itinerary is subject to acceptance of our Terms & Conditions as outlined here: [www.masterliveboards.com/terms-conditions](http://www.masterliveboards.com/terms-conditions).

### **Number of scheduled dives:**

- Up to 42

This itinerary involves some long distance travel and, whilst we attempt to ensure the number of dives we have scheduled is fulfilled, bad weather can hinder the yacht's ability to reach a specific dive site in good time.

While we wish to show you the very best diving possible, a number of factors determine which route the yacht takes and which dive sites we are able to visit. Weather, tides, currents and how many other dive vessels are at a particular site all play a part in the Cruise Director's decision of where the Indo Siren is heading to.

**Safety and dive briefings are conducted in English. If you, or any of your group do not speak or understand English, please contact us.**

The following is an example of the day-to-day itinerary.

Day 1: Embarkation followed by introductions, boat and safety briefings, dinner. The vessel will generally depart port at some point through the evening to be ready to dive first thing on day 2. There is no diving planned on embarkation day.

Day 2: Breakfast followed by a check dive, and up to 3 subsequent dives, as outlined below.

Days 3-11: Your Cruise Director will schedule up to 4 dives per day; 3 day dives and either a sunset or a night dive. A typical diving day is scheduled as follows:

- Light Breakfast followed by a briefing & Dive 1

- Full Breakfast, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 3
- Snack
- Briefing for Sunset or Night dive
- Dinner

Day before disembarkation:

For your last full day on board, we are able to schedule 3 dives\* before the boat cruises back to port, where it will remain at anchor overnight.

Disembarkation day: Following breakfast on board, disembarkation is scheduled between 8:00am and 10:00am.

\*We kindly request that guests check their flight departure times to ensure that they leave a minimum of 24 hours between their final dive and their flight home.

Following is a sample of dive sites which we may visit during your time aboard Indo Siren.

The safety of our guests is paramount and we always do our best to offer diving at alternate locations, should we be unable to visit those sites listed below.

Guests are welcome to suggest preferred dive sites to the Cruise Director. He/she will be happy to accommodate guests' wishes, providing it is possible and the schedule allows for it.

Dive sites we visit include but are not limited to:

## The Dampier Strait

Fast drift dives and big fish schools characterize the sites in the Dampier Strait. Numerous dive sites are clustered together providing a variety of "Big Fish" dives with currents and more relaxed dives where smaller creatures can be found and photographed. Your dive team will check currents and choose sites based on the optimum conditions each day.

### Manta Sandy

The 2 large bommies situated in the middle of a sandy bottom at just 18m (60ft) attract many manta rays for cleaning, with a variety of shades, even all-black mantas, distinctive to Raja Ampat have been seen here. Divers rest on the bottom and watch the show. The reef itself has many smaller creatures with dragonets and various pipefishes. Therefore, in case the mantas are not performing their show, there is still plenty to look at and discover.

### Cape Kri

One of the most well-known sites in the Dampier Strait, the variety of reef fish is astounding. Scribbled filefish, harlequin sweetlips, bump head parrotfish, pinnate batfish, hawk fish and

Napoleon wrasse are all commonly seen. Whilst black tip reef sharks, turtles and pipefish are all regular suspects as well.

### **Blue Magic**

A long finger-shaped reef sloping down at the points with hard and soft corals, sea fans and black coral bushes, where schools of jacks and barracuda hover about. Manta rays and wobbegong sharks make for an exciting dive, whilst, for the keen eyed, pontohi pygmy seahorses can be spotted.

### **Sardine Reef**

Swarms of fusiliers, snappers and sweetlips, schools of bumphead parrotfish and banner fish, barracuda and trevally all make this site a very fishy dive. Rock mover wrasse, dragonets and jaw fish are amongst the smaller fish species seen here whilst white tip and black tip reef sharks can also be spotted.

### **Mike's Point**

As we approach the tiny island known as Mike's Point, eagles can be seen resting in the treetops. Underwater, the site offers varied topography with one side full of overhangs and crevices whilst the other has "steps" dropping down to the deep with a field of whip corals adorning the slope. With the right current this site is superb and the island can be circumnavigated in one dive seeing sweetlips, batfish, jacks, Spanish mackerel, grey reef sharks and wobbegong sharks.

## **Penemu and Yangeffo Islands**

Located west of Gam these mushroom islands are surrounded by turquoise seas full of pristine coral. These islands provide a range of dive sites for us to choose from, including:

### **Melissa's Garden**

A shallow flat reef with beautiful staghorn corals. Trevally, black tip reef sharks and wobbegong sharks along with orangutan crabs and spiny lobsters are amongst the common sightings.

### **Mayhem**

This is a superb site for some larger fish sightings and there are so many varieties here including barracuda, mackerel, trevally, tuna, Napoleon wrasse and bump head parrotfish, as well as eagle rays and wobbegong sharks.

### **Citrus Ridge**

A stunning reef named after the carpet-like orange, pink, yellow and green soft corals that cover the entire area. Gorgonian fans shelter pygmy seahorses, jawfish bob out of their ground holes, wobbegong sharks rest lazily amongst table corals and harlequin sweetlips can be found tucked into the many bommies that are dotted over the reef.

## Misool Islands

There are numerous small islands surrounding the second of the Four Kings, Misool, including Daram, Farondi, Boo, Wayilbatan, Kalig and Warakaraket to name just a few. Each offers some of the most dramatic underwater scenery of the region, from steep walls with huge gorgonian fans to gentler slopes with hard and soft corals. We have a variety of dive spots that we can choose from:

### Andiamo

Thick schools of sardines and fusiliers cruise over the colourful soft corals, where we can find wobbegong and epaulette sharks hiding. Yellowtail and chevron barracuda form schools along the reef whilst reef octopus and numerous nudibranchs can be found.

### Boo Windows

Comprised of two rocks that stick up from the eastern edge of the island of Boo with a saddle formed between them. Prone to currents, diving can be quite exciting as it attracts trevally and schools of dog tooth tuna. Back near to the surface the tides and water have eroded some holes in the rocks, creating swim-throughs that make for great photography opportunities. Pickhandle barracuda, snapper, grouper, napoleon wrasse, turtles, batfish and rabbit fish are often seen in the waters surrounding the islands.

### Gorgonian Passage

Situated in the channel that runs between Wayilbatan and Wayil islands, has huge sea fans in which a variety of pygmy seahorses can be found including Bargibanti and Denise. We also see many types of sweetlips here and some smaller creatures such as peacock mantis shrimp and juvenile convict fish.

### Nudi Rock

Marine life from big to small can all be seen at this stunning site. Black tip, white tips, grey reef sharks and dog tooth tuna can all be seen cruising by whilst hiding amongst the corals are cowries, nudibranchs, porcelain crabs and mushroom coral pipefish.

### Karang Bayangan aka Magic Mountain

One of the best dive sites in Indonesia; a dome-shaped seamount with a finger-shaped rocky outcrop densely covered with Gorgonian fans and Soft corals. You can dive alongside enormous schools of Fusiliers, Surgeonfish and Batfish circled by Dogtooth Tunas, Giant Trevallies, Grey Reef and Whitetip Reef sharks. On top of these incredible encounters, a cleaning station for Oceanic & Reef Mantas could possibly make this dive one of your best dives ever!

## Pisang Island

An oasis in the middle of the Halmahera Sea, surrounded by deep blue water. Located between the islands of Misool & Papua, the Pisang Island is named for its banana-like shape. We will stop off at **Bantu Anyer, Besar and Kecil**, a steep rocky slope covered in a blanket of

giant Barrel sponges. Here you can make an exhilarating drift dive provided it's the right current. Out in the blue, schooling jacks, blackfin barracuda and rainbow runners can be seen, while back in the shallows there is a hard coral plateau.

## Batjan Island

This is one of the northern Molucca Islands in the Molucca Sea. It is located just southwest of the large island of Halmahera. There are two special dive spots that we will explore in this area:

### Akiko's Neverneverland

This is a truly unique dive site, riddled with diverse topography. It adorns a wall plunging to 40 meters, where spiny lobsters hide in the numerous cracks. Cruising along the wall are schooling jacks, blacktip reef sharks and hawksbill turtle. The shallow plateau is also densely covered with leather corals.

### Tanjung Maragarando

An exciting dive for pelagic and schooling fish. With the right current, this dive brings large schools of jacks, blackfin barracuda, golden bat fish, and fusiliers. From 30 meters, the slope is densely covered with bright yellow soft corals.

## Patantie Strait

Patantie Strait is located between Batjan & Halmahera Islands. Strong currents nurture the dense Soft corals and Gorgonian fan gardens. Numerous protected bays offer interesting night dives opportunity to look for critters such as bobtail squid and epaulette sharks. There are a couple of dive spots we may visit:

### Proco

Sitting in the middle of the channel, this pinnacle extends to a plateau around 25 meters. This area is densely covered with pastel, yellow, and orange soft corals, a wonderful array of colors contrasted by the schools of fusiliers and surgeonfish.

### Batu Jabu

A massive submerged reef where you can drift along rocky slopes covered with hard and soft corals. Aggregations of unicorn fish, fusiliers, snappers, and surgeonfish abound. The shallows feature dense staghorn coral fields packed with shining anthias.

## Guraici and Tamo-Tamo Islands

These islands will generally mark the point in the cruise where we cross the equator and so switch hemispheres. Guraici and Tamo-Tamo are nestled 31 miles west of Halmahera Island and 43 miles south of Ternate and Tidore. There are a few dive spots:

### Renne's Rock

We will dive around a colossal pinnacle, surrounded by extensive plateaus and large bommies. This is a great site to look for grey, whitetip and blacktip reef sharks as well as grazing bumphead parrotfish in the shallows.

### Akejojaru

A wide shallow plateau decorated with a large spread of bommies. This reef drops 60 meters down a steep slope and a dramatic wall down to a white sandy bottom, which reflects light onto the vibrant soft corals. This is a great place to spot blacktip reef sharks, napoleon wrasse, and bumphead parrotfish.

### Tamo-Tamo Pinnacle

Here we will observe an explosion of marine life along a wall of colorful soft corals. Ribbon sweetlips are often seen hanging around the deeper parts of the wall, where grey reef sharks patrol. Dense shoals of fusiliers and surgeonfish, along with giant trevallies, are also common residents of this reef.

## Makian Island

Makian Island is a 6-mile-wide volcano with a mile wide summit crater. Located south of Ternate Island, this is one of Indonesia's most destructive volcanoes. We will be spending a full day muck diving around this fantastic diving spot. Encrusting sponges completely cover underwater pillars where frogfishes, honshu pipefishes and nudibranchs hide. The grey shallow sand plateau is home to a variety of critters waiting to be discovered, including ghost pipefishes, dragonets and diverse cephalopods, such as long-arm octopus, bobtail squid and colorful flatworms.

## Tifore Island

Rising midway between Halmahera and Sulawesi, in the very deep open Molucca Sea, the dive sites around Tifore are mostly plateaus with sheer walls and steep slopes plus great visibility in clear blue water.

### Sago Sago

A massive dive site, where we dive three times following the best entry points depending on the current. On top of a beautiful variety of corals, sponges and topographies, don't forget to look into the blue for big schools of barracuda, jacks, and other surprises.

## Lembeh Strait

Welcome to the macro mecca of Lembeh, which is well known for the volcanic black sand, home to many weird and wonderful critters. This is where "muck diving" all began. Enjoy the variety of rare critters; the good, the bad and the ugly, all playing hide and seek in their homes of the man made debris along the seabed.

Should you have any questions or queries concerning the dive sites or whether this itinerary is suitable for your experience level, please contact our reservations team [dive@masterliveboards.com](mailto:dive@masterliveboards.com) who will be pleased to assist and advise you.