

# Dive sites around the Visayas

Here is a selection of some of our most popular dive sites that we like to visit during our trips to the Visayas.

## "THE CARS", DAUIN NORTH, DAUIN

Between 25-30m (80-100ft), car parts as an artificial reef are attracting porcelain crabs and different kinds of shrimps amongst the many weird and wonderful creatures found at this site. A true macro critter playground.

## LIGHTHOUSE, CABILAO ISLAND

Sloping walls full of huge elephant ear sponges and gorgonian fans. This is a great place to dive with large green turtles. Giant frogfish can be spotted resting on sponges and numerous cowries hiding amidst the stunning hard coral garden. Often, we can see schools of surgeon fish and big-mouth mackerel. Drift along the wall and as you ascend towards the shallows a sandy plateau dotted with gorgonian fans is the place the stop and look for pygmy seahorses. The dive ends at a stunning hard coral garden where pipefish, cowries, cuttlefish, commensal shrimps, nudibranchs, squat lobsters and orangutan crabs are amongst a few of the commonly seen critters. Occasionally some stronger currents can be experienced!

## DIVER'S HEAVEN, BALICASAG ISLAND

Typically, with stronger currents than most dives during the trip, Diver's Heaven is a character site of Balisage with a steep reef wall, many overhangs with soft corals, sponges & sea fans. The main attraction of this beautiful dive site is the green sea and hawksbill turtles in the shallow waters. The reef top edge is a nice habitat for schools of colorful damsels and anthias and when lucky also for giant frogfish.

## CAMBAQUIZ, CABILAO ISLAND

A fantastic spot where we often make night dives. A gently sloping reef and sandy bottom to 20m – soft corals and sea pens can be found dotted over the sand; also, a great site for sightings of bottom dwellers. The grassy top is a favorite crab hide out.

## BLACK FOREST, BALICASAG ISLAND

Once famed for its black coral, here is where we encounter schools of jacks, long-jawed mackerels, red tooth triggerfish and different kinds of fusiliers.

## TONGO POINT, MOALBOAL

Schools of razorfish, crocodile needle fish, purple and threadfin anthias are to be found while reef squids and spade fish are making their way home. Green sea turtles and hawksbill turtle is also commonly seen here.

## PESCADOR ISLAND, WESTERN CEBU

Just 30 minutes away from Moalboal this island is a perfect place to explore the dramatic steep walls and the colorful and lively reef top. Zillions of damsels, anthias and chromis are darting around while schools of fusiliers, red tooth triggerfish, surgeonfish, long jawed mackerel, juvenile convict fish and big-eyed trevallies are filling the blue. Pescador Island is also home for a couple of giant frogfish. The big cave on the northwest side of the island is a nice gimmick to the dives.

## PANAGSAMA BEACH, WESTERN CEBU

Along with the millions of sardines, performing an underwater ballet, giant frogfish might be found together with reef top pipefish and ringed pipefish.

#### SAN MIGUEL, DAUIN

Another critter wonderland! When it is the right season, this is the place to find all your favorites. Painted frogfish, varieties of ghost pipefish, cockatoo waspish are just a few of species you may encounter.

#### COCONUT POINT, APO ISLAND

An often-fast paced drift brings divers over the sloping coral reef wall. Along the way giant trevally, blackfin barracuda, big school of big-eyed trevally and plenty of sea snakes can be encountered.

#### ROCKY POINT WEST, APO ISLAND

Just beyond the chapel opposite the marine park warden's office, Rocky Point West offers some of the most stunning hard corals to be found in the region with endless patches of leather corals on the top. The steep reef walls support numerous colorful reef species – pyramid butterfly fish and red-toothed trigger fish are here in their hundreds, frogfish, cuttlefish, banded sea snakes and hawksbill turtles are amongst the common sightings.

## Malapascua Dive sites

The following sites will also be visited during our Malapascua extension.

#### MONAD SHOAL, MALAPASCUA ISLAND

Is one of the few dive spots in the World where the shy pelagic thresher sharks may be seen on a daily basis. Divers rest at approximately 25m (90ft) on the sandy bottom to watch the sharks' approach and be cleaned. Other visitors to the shoal include manta, devil and eagle rays. Diving with Nitrox is recommended to enjoy extended bottom time.

#### CHOCOLATE ISLAND

This little island has the typical topography around Malapascua area. The shallow tops full of soft corals and algae are home for different kinds of nudibranchs. The shallow bottom of maximum 16 m (50ft) around this island is the perfect spot for odd shaped bottom dwellers like bearded scorpionfish, devil scorpionfish and dwarf cuttlefish but also, many different kinds of sea stars, sea urchins with their urchin clingfish inside, black velutinid and ringed pipefish can be found.

#### WHITE TIP ALLEY, GATO ISLAND

As the name suggests this dive site provides an almost guaranteed sighting of white tip reef sharks that enjoy their rest on the sand tucked under rocks and coral biomes. Other species found here include scorpion fish and seahorses. Pygmy seahorses may also be found too as well as whip coral shrimps which cling to the colorful whip corals adorning the overhangs of the island.