



Dive Cape Town

5th – 9th April 2012

R3770 p/p sharing

Terms and Conditions apply.

QUALIFICATION NEEDED: PADI Open water or equivalent - PADI Advanced Open Water advised due to more challenging dive sites.

Pisces Divers

Pisces Divers is a **PADI Five Star IDC dive centre** situated in Glencairn, near Simonstown, at the beginning of the finest stretch of scuba diving sites to be had in Cape Town. They are minutes away from a wide range of excellent shore dive sites or from their launch site to deeper reefs and wrecks with their dive boat.

Being so close to the sea, they offer dives daily. There are a huge variety of dive sites within close range, from shallow shore entries with kelp forests to deeper wreck and reef dives.

Many divers are drawn to Cape Town to see Seven Gill Cowsharks - these can be reliably seen year round, as well as several other pelagic and reef shark species. Snorkelling and scuba diving with Cape Fur Seals is another hugely popular choice.

Cape Town has a wide range of dive sites – shallow and gentle shore entries in sheltered coves all the way to deep reefs and wrecks way out to sea and off Cape Point.

There are sites that Pisces Divers visit regularly and new sites will appear from time to time as they explore and discover more.

One of the pleasures of diving in Cape Town is the relatively rare privilege of being able to do excellent dives right from the shore.

Boat diving gives a diver access to the deeper sites and they get you there comfortably on our fully equipped 8m Superduck RIB. There are three launch sites for boat diving: Miller's Point, Hout Bay harbour and OPBC in Granger Bay.



Diving Cape Town Reefs

Diving in and around Cape Town offers one a huge range of possibilities: from interesting wrecks and kelp forests to coral gardens and deep reefs.

The Western Cape is the smallest complete floral kingdom in the world and this diversity is mirrored underwater with the unique positioning of the peninsula at the junction of two major ocean currents. The Atlantic is cooled by the Benguela current coming up from the southern Atlantic and bringing with it water rich in micro-organisms. This accounts for the huge kelp forests found on the Atlantic as well as the fish, seals and whales which feed on the smaller animals. The False Bay is influenced by the tail end of the warmer Mozambique current which moves Southwards down the East coast of Africa. This results in slightly warmer water and different marine life - more invertebrates and colourful sponges.

The Cape has so many reefs and wrecks that we simply don't have space to describe them all here. Instead of listing the commonly dived sites, we have included some unusual sites which, in our opinion, are more interesting:

We will be staying at the Glen Lodge and Pub www.theglenlodgeandpub.co.za

Diving In False Bay

Pie Rock Reef

Pie Rock is so named because of a strange rock formation looking very much like a huge pie with a slice missing. This is a new site we have discovered and has become one of our favourites. The topography is very interesting, with small caverns, pinnacles and walls covered with life. The fish life at this site is also unusually good and photographic opportunities abound! A MUST DIVE site!



Roman Rock Lighthouse

Take a tour around the lighthouse - underwater. Marine life is abundant with colourful invertebrates and reef fish typical of False Bay. Playful seals may be encountered. The area to the West and North of the lighthouse has the best reef terrain and there is a large cave about 150m to the north of the rock. Depth is 5m to 20m as long as you stay within 150m of the lighthouse rock.

Caravan Reef

A reef in 3 parts; the central part is a shallow area at around 10m with amazing terrain. The rocks form numerous interleading swim-throughs with the occasional sand patch covered in shells. The Eastern part has walls from 8 to 22m which are covered in invertebrate life. Feather stars, sponges and soft corals grow in abundance. The Northern section is a bit deeper (max 25m) and there are many brass gunnery shells dating back to 1942 lying about. It is safe to remove these as souvenirs as long as you check that they are completely empty. It is close to the launch site at Millers Point and only a 2 or 3-minute boat ride, yet this site is very seldom dived.

Rambler Rock

The Rambler Rock Reef consists of massive granite rock outcrops 600m southeast of Roman Rock lighthouse. It is seldom dived and a great site to explore. There are vertical walls around the pinnacles, which drop from 10m to 22m. These walls are great for photography. All around the pinnacle is a large area of broken reef and sand from 20m to 25m. There are 2 other sections of Rambler Reef, one to the north and one to the south, which are a bit deeper at 30m. Much of this reef remains completely unexplored so one never knows what you might find when diving there.

Photographer's Reef

This reef is considered by many experienced Cape divers and by us to be the best shallow reef in False Bay. It is only 300m off Boulders beach (Penguin Central) and is from 5m to 15m deep. It has stunning deep cracks, caves and holes with lots of corals and ferns. Divers should take care not to venture into cracks that are too narrow to swim through without touching the sides. Also, take care not to lose your buddy when exploring the maze of inter-leading cracks. The small caves are quite safe to enter and most have a few entry/exit points.

Castor Rock

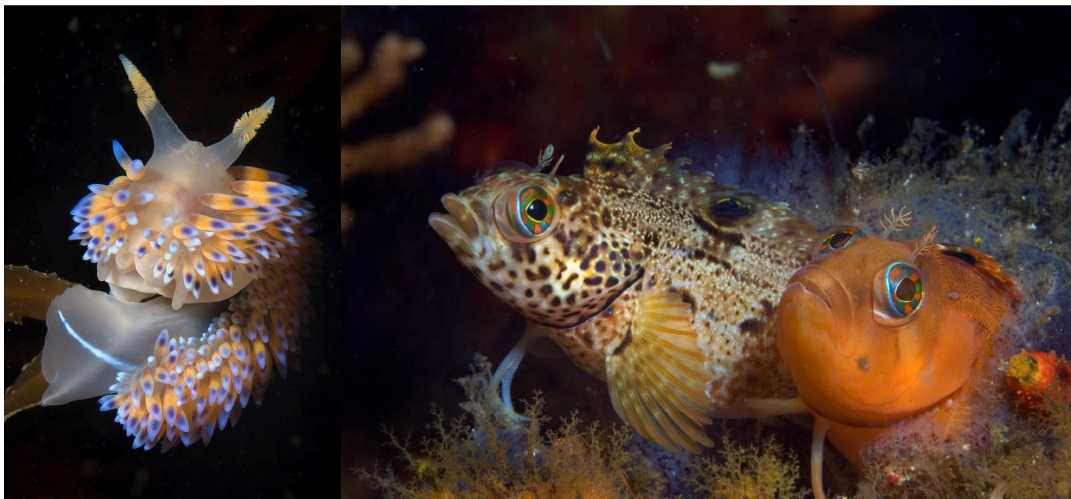
Castor Rock is a large reef about 300m to north of Roman Rock. The area is huge and the terrain is very varied. Depth is 8 to 25m. It is seldom dived and one can find bid Lamp Urchin shells which you may collect as long as you are absolutely sure that there is nothing living inside.

Batsata Rock

Sometimes referred to as Smits reef this site is very highly rated and must be in the top 5 Cape reefs. It is a true multilevel dive and divers can start their dive at between 20m and 30m and slowly follow the reef up to 6m. Apart from the colourful reef life and interesting terrain you might also get to see big stingrays and schools of yellowtail here.

Fish Hoek Reef

Fish Hoek has its own reef right in the middle of Fish Hoek Bay. It is a large area of flat reef with plenty of fish-life and there is a good chance of encountering stingrays and some of the resident cuttlefish and shy-sharks. The sea fans here grow to very impressive sizes and make for great photo opportunities. Depth is 8m to 15m.



Diving Atlantic Reefs

Atlantic Reefs are dived mainly in summer from October to February with an average water temperature of about 13°C and average visibility of about 10m. After some south-easterly wind the visibility can be up to 20m but the temperature then drops to around 10°C. We recommend diving in dry-suits or good quality 7mm, 2-piece wetsuits and bring a torch to show up the rich colours.

Seal Island

A dive with the Cape Fur Seals at seal Island near Hout Bay is an absolute must for visitors to the Cape. Depending on the time of year there are between a few hundred and a few thousand seals crammed onto the island. We dive right next to the island in only 5m of water. Divers just stay on the bottom in one spot and observe the seals darting all around. Young seals are very inquisitive and will come right up to your face. This dive is a great chance to photograph seals so remember to bring your camera!

Tafelberg Reef

This is a very big reef (600m long) south of Vulcan Rock 1 mile off the Sentinel at Hout Bay. Depth and scenery are dependent on where you go but it is all between 10 and 30m and much of it is unexplored.

Di's Cracks

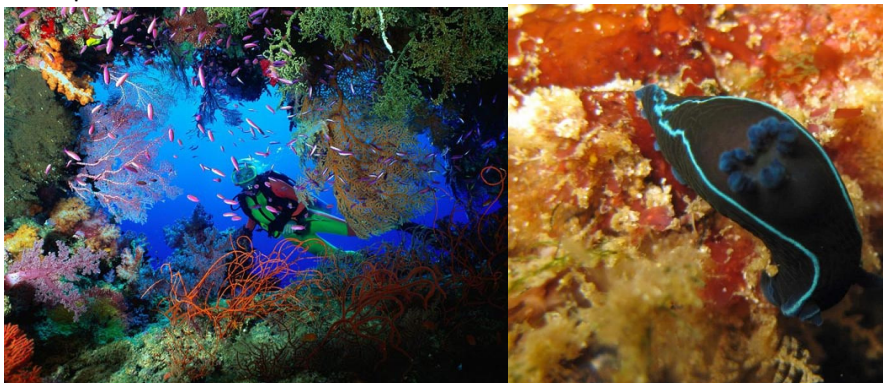
This is part of the Vulcan Rock reef to the north of the rock. It has amazing caves and deep cracks to get into at about 24m. There is the possibility of getting deep (39m) to the north of the reef and then looking at the caves and cracks. Stunning and colourful corals and fish life are a highlight. This is a dive for advanced divers only.

The Salad Bowl and Yacht wreck

The Salad Bowl is at the southern end of Tafelberg Reef. There is a yacht wreck at 32m with beautiful reef above it from 30m to 15m. There are anemones of various pastel colours, basket stars, and hard corals in every colour from deep purple to bright yellow. One can follow a route that starts at 35m; move over the yacht wreck and up to 15m. The reef is seldom dived and is completely unspoiled. This is a dive for advanced divers only.

Die Josie

There are times when the south-easterly wind is too strong to allow us to get to the other Atlantic Reefs. In conditions like this we head out to Josie, which is a sheltered reef near Hout Bay under the Chapman's Peak Mountains. Depth is 7m to 17m.





Diving Cape Town Wrecks

The Cape waters are littered with thousands of shipwrecks, recent and ancient, on the shore and in deep water. Common wreck dives are the Maori, the Astor, the Katsu Maru, the Smitswinkel Bay wrecks, the Pietermaritzburg, and the Clan Stuart. As with reef dives we are most interested in diving some of the lesser known wrecks and we have even discovered a few over the years. Listed below is a selection of our favourites:

SAS Gelderland

The SAS Gelderland, a navy Ford class seaward defense patrol boat was scuttled in 1988. She was 40m long but is now only about 25m as the navy blew the bow section right off when scuttling her. The stern and mid-ships sections lie intact and upright on the sand at 35m. She is surrounded by huge boulders with some great reef life and a pinnacle which rises to 12m is fairly close by. Unfortunately the superstructure and her funnels are gone and most of the hull has filled with sand. Keen wreck divers will find plenty to keep them busy as she has not been dived since her sinking. She was found by Pisces Divers in November 2004 after a few dives spent looking for her and is now one of our favourite Atlantic deep dives.

Ark Rock Barge

A small wreck that is ideal as an introduction to wreck diving. There is the option of penetrating the side compartments very safely or one can just enter the main hold, which is open upwards. Max depth is 11m. It is very pretty and can be done in only 15 minutes.

Brunswick

This English East-Indiaman ran aground in 1805. She was of wooden construction and all that remains now are sections of her hull timbers and some copper sheeting that used to cover the timber. The wreck is of significant historic importance and the area has been well surveyed by marine archaeologists. Divers' interested in marine archaeology will find the story of her wrecking and discovery by divers very interesting. Absolutely nothing may be removed from the site. It is an easy shallow dive and there are lots of interesting critters living around the wreck. Depth is 5m to 8m

Glencairn Barge and Reef

The intact wreck of a barge lays 500m off the Glencairn quarry. It was used during the construction of the Simon's Town harbour to transport rock from the Glencairn quarry to Simon's Town. The wreck is shaped like a landing craft and is completely open on top. There are great swim-throughs between the

various compartments. The best thing about this wreck is that it is surrounded by very pretty reef with numerous large ferns, small sharks and fish-life.

SAS Good Hope

There are 5 wrecks in Smitswinkel Bay, 2 frigates, 2 trawlers and a diamond-mining vessel. Most of the Cape dive operators go here every weekend and they are somewhat over dived. The Good Hope is the best of the 5 and it has much to offer. There are plenty of penetration possibilities for those accordingly trained and the wreck is covered in marine growth. Max depth is 34m with the main deck at about 28m. Nitrox is highly recommended

Lusitania

A Portuguese passenger liner weighing 5557 tons wrecked on Bellows Rock off Cape Point in 1911. She later slipped off the rock into deep water next to the rock where she still rests today. This is certainly the most adventurous and thrilling of all the Cape's dives. Conditions need to be near perfect to do this dive as any swell causes massive crashing waves over Bellows Rock. The wreck lies between 32m and 40m but it is so close to the rock that the decent and ascent need to be done at an angle to avoid the swirling white water around the rock. Only divers that have demonstrated a high level of competence, regardless of dive qualifications, are allowed to accompany us on a Lusi expedition. Nitrox is a definite requirement.

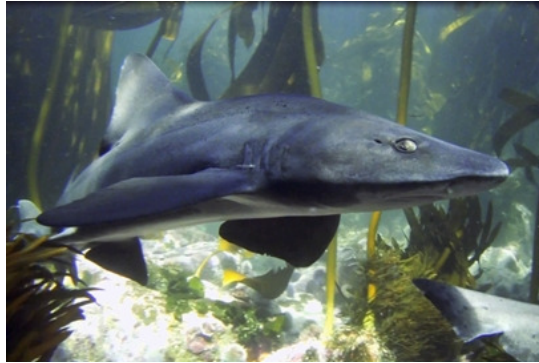
Seven Gill Cowshark

The Seven Gill Cowshark, or Spotted Cowshark, is a prehistoric apex predator which we have been fortunate enough to see regularly enough at one location to be able to confidently guide dives there with an 85% chance of success. The Cowshark is a social feeder and can be observed in large groups of up to 18 individuals. We have seen females attain three meters in length while males are slightly smaller. Distinctive features include their seven gill slits and the absence of the front dorsal fin.



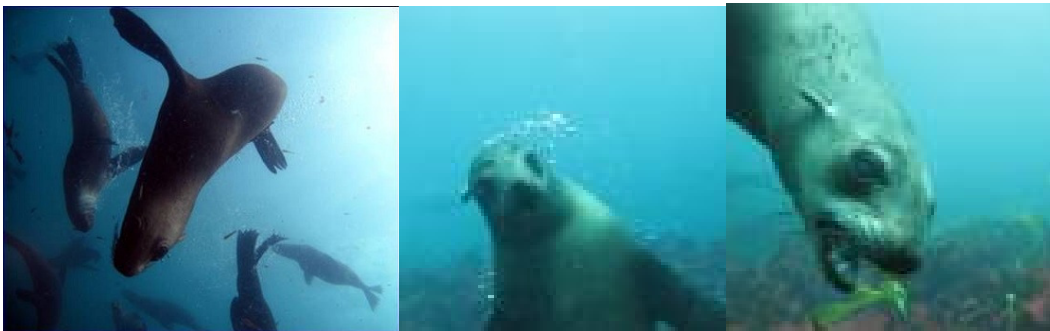
Pisces Divers position the boat in a channel approximately 12m deep where we descend on to a sandy bottom and wait for the Cowsharks to approach us. They swim slowly up and down the channel, which runs roughly north/south and they pass at arms length from the divers as we kneel on the sandy bottom to observe them. It's a great opportunity for underwater photographers and by the end of the dive; you will recognise the individuals by distinctive bites, scrapes or colouration.

It is quite common to see Spotted Gully sharks in the water at the same time – they have a large dorsal fin and completely different swimming pattern to the Cowsharks, so one can't confuse the two species. The Gully's are more "frisky" in comparison to the more lazy Cowshark style of movement and are much more timid. They can be readily observed in the really dense kelp beds and are best seen while free diving. The Gully shark attains a maximum size of around 1.7m.



Cape Fur Seals

The Cape Fur Seals are a fascinating marine mammal that is curious and playful enough to approach divers and groups will often put on a display of underwater "hydrobatics" and make mock charges at divers before swerving away at the last moment. They live in colonies which can range from a few hundred individuals, such as the one at Partridge Point, to huge colonies like Seal Island in False Bay or Duiker Island off the Sentinel in Hout Bay – where they can number in the tens of thousands.



It can be lots of fun to dive or snorkel with the seals, as they often loll at the surface, warming their flippers in the sun or congregating in groups waiting to head out to sea to hunt for fish. They also make great photographic subjects – if you are quick enough! We often plan launches to dive with the seals – it's usually a later dive in the day, such as the 1130 or 1400 launch because they are most often at shallow sites.

Price Includes:

- 4 nights accommodation at the Glen Lodge and Pub
- English Breakfast with a coffee, tea or juice
- 4 boat dives and 1 shore dive
- Transfers from the airport to the lodge (Return)
- Cylinder and weights

Not Included:

- Transportation or flights to Cape Town
- Gear Hire
- Nitrox
- Lunch & dinner