

HELMET DIVING OR UNDER SEA WALK

Helmet Diving/Under sea walk is a recreational activity recently established in A&N Islands as in other popular beach destinations of the world. Here a person walks on the sea floor at a maximum depth of 7 meters with the assistance of an overhead helmet and a hose connected to a free flow supply of fresh compressed air provided from the air compressor or cylinder found on a pleasure craft or platform and goes on a guided tour on the seabed to view the marine life in its natural habitat. No swimming skill is required.

An underwater guide with scuba dive equipment always guides the helmet divers along the trails while on sea walk besides a surface swimming monitor using masks, snorkels and fins follows the helmet divers and watches the overall well being of participants and renders assistance as and when necessary. Air supply monitor ensures that the required air supply is maintained at all times and that a reserve air supply is always readily available.

Under sea walk facility is available at North Bay beach near Port Blair and also at Elephant beach at Havelock



DO'S:

- Find out about safe swimming or diving area from Tourist Information Center, Local Tour Operators and Forest Department Staff. Do not swim in Protected Areas to avoid dangerous animals.
- Look for the safety sign boards. They help you to identify potential dangers.
- Ask a lifeguard on duty for some advice on swimming conditions like local currents, tides, visibility, and the presence of dangerous marine creatures etc. Swimming conditions can change quickly, so seek prior advice from a lifeguard before entering in water in an unpatrolled area.
- Get a friend to swim with you so that you can look out for each other's safety and get help, if needed. Children should always be supervised by an adult. Avoid swimming in the dark.
- Raise your hand up for help if you get into trouble in the water. Stay calm and wave your arm for help.

DON'TS:

- Do not dangle your arms or legs in the water during boat rides.
- Do not swim under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Shiny jewellery or bright colored clothes resemble fins of small fishes and may attract predatory fishes. Avoid such accessory or clothing while swimming.
- If you have an open wound, please avoid swimming. Many predatory fish are attracted to blood odour.
- Avoid diving or swimming amongst school of fish. This may attract predatory fishes.
- Avoid night swimming or diving.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Tourist Information Centre: Directorate of Tourism, Andaman & Nicobar Administration, Port Blair, 744101, 03192: 232694 / 232747(F), www.andamans.gov.in

The Chief Wildlife Warden: Andaman Nicobar Islands, Van Sadan, Haddo, Port Blair, 03192: 233270

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS (STD CODE 03192)

| | | | |
|--|--------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| G.B. Pant Hospital, Port Blair | 233473 | Fire Brigade (Havelock) | 282400 |
| Police Control room, Port Blair | 232100 | Divisional Forest Office (Havelock) | 282350 |
| Primary Health Centre & Ambulance Service (Havelock) | 282382 | Manager- Dolphin Resort (Havelock) | 282411 |
| Police Station (Havelock) | 282405 | Police Station (Neil) | 282602 |
| | | Primary Health Centre (Neil) | 282627 |

The Diving Destination

ANDAMANS



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DIVE SITES NEAR SOUTH ANDAMAN

MAHATMA GANDHI MARINE NATIONAL PARK, WANDOODOR: Scores of colorful varieties of coral reef and fishes can be witnessed in the park. They include Clownfish, Butterfly Fish, Surgeon Fish, Angel Fish, Parrot Fish, Bat Fish and Groupers. Whitetip Shark, Hammerhead Shark, Manta Ray and Blue Fin Jack could also be spotted at times. More than 50 types of corals have been identified in the fringing type of coral reefs in this park. Some distinct coral varieties found here are Acropora, Pocillopora, Montipora, Leptoseris, Fungia, Portia, Tubipora and Gorgonians to name a few.

CINQUE ISLAND: One of the best dive destinations in the island, it has clear emerald water with a visibility of up to 80 feet. A deep dive here offers a kaleidoscopic variety of marine life, including black coral and sighting of sharks. It is the ideal stretch for the experienced diver.

NORTH POINT: This site at Cinque Island is mostly highlighted by sponges and small corals and offers good diving because of the abundance and diversity of fish life. Southeast reef at Cinque Island is a good site for novices. The southeast part of the reef consists of hard and soft corals and these are very dense on the rocks down to about 16 metres.

FISH ROCK: This site near Passage Island offers an extremely kaleidoscopic dive. The topography consists of rocky slopes, boulders and drop-offs, featuring large fans of corals and sponges.

BALA REEF: This reef spreads on the western side of Little Andaman Island over 4.5 sq. kms. and is supposed to be one of the ideal sites in the Andamans for corals of vibrant colors.

CORRUPTION ROCK: This Rock juts out between Chidiyatapu and Rutland Island. The dive site is on the western side of the rock and is made up of big underwater boulders.

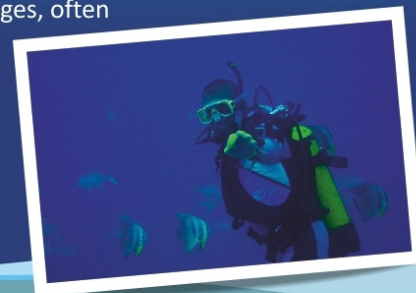
RUTLAND ISLAND: The shallow waters near this island have a good representation of many smaller fish and corals, which offer a good spot for training in open water diving. A shipwreck site also lies here.

SNAKE ISLAND: This is off Carbyn's Cove Beach. The site has awesome rock faces and spectacular dive capes. Marine life around here includes generally Trigger fish, Grunts, Goatfish and Rays.

HAVELOCK ISLAND: This island is approximately 50 Km away from Port Blair by location. It possesses a spectrum of largely unexplored dive sites which are wealthy in underwater marine life.

Diving in Andaman and Nicobar islands is exceptional. The coastal belt surrounding the islands is the abode of one of the richest coral reef ecosystems in the world. The distinction is that here the coral reefs and underwater formations are untouched by human activities. The best season for diving is considered between December to May.

Many of the islands are surrounded by reef fringes, often several hundred meters wide and separated from the shore by a lagoon of even width. Divers can also come across steeply undulating hills of raven volcanic lava, which adequately constitutes some unusual diving.



DIVE SITES AROUND HAVELOCK ISLAND

MAC POINT has mostly hard corals. Dugongs have been sighted in its vicinity.

AQUARIUM is a fringing reef crowded with lots of 'Fish Traffic'. Usually clear visibility and has mainly hard corals.

BARRACUDA CITY is basically suitable for inexperienced divers which offer tons of fish and at times turtles as well. It has a blend of hard and soft corals.

TURTLE BAY is a pleasant dive site for easy diving not exceeding 14 metres. Rays are found in the sand below as well as turtles.

SEDUCTION POINT is a huge rock with a variety of aquatic life. The shallow area is abundant with Stag horn corals and its inhabitants, including Napoleons.

LIGHTHOUSE is a larger dive site affording equal opportunity for any kind of dive. It is also perfect for night dives. It has a huge variety of soft and hard corals.

THE WALL is a gigantic submerged rock. The Wall drops down to a maximum of 55 meters and is active with marine life. Dense forests of soft corals and the added schools of fish encircling them makes for a memorable dive.

PILOT REEF is a high block of pristine hard corals. At the bottom, at about 24 meters, 'Canyons' stretch out and Leopard and Whitetip sharks could also be encountered.

MINERVA LEDGE is an even bigger block of hard corals. A congregation of fish and normally clear visibility and the high possibility of viewing sharks makes it attractive.

TIPS FOR DIVE TOURISTS

Dive only in the areas opened and permitted for Scuba Diving by the A&N Administration.

- Do not stand or walk on coral reefs.
- Do not break live coral or collect dead corals.
- Do not enter the National Parks without valid permission.
- Do not dive with unqualified or unregistered dive operators as it may be perilous to your life. Avail the services of Scuba Dive Operators duly registered with Directorate of Tourism, A&N Administration who follow set guidelines for diving and certification from approved agencies like PADI, CMAS, NAUI, BSAC or SSI.

Registered Scuba Dive Centres

M/s GOLD INDIA DIVERS: Gold India Beach Resort, Havelock -5, (M) 993322384,
E-mail : goldindiadivers@hotmail.com

M/s LACADIVES: C/o ANET (Andaman & Nicobar Islands Environment Team), North Wandoor, Port Blair, (M) 9679532104,
E-mail : reservations@lacadives.com,
Website : www.lacadives.com

M/s PLANET SCUBA INDIA PVT. LTD: "Andaman Dive Academy", No. 2, Foreshore Road, P.O. Haddo, Port Blair, Tel: 080-41573939/25213366,
(M) 09901700500,
E-mail : mr@planetscubaindia.com

M/s BAREFOOT SCUBA: S.No. 420/1, Govindnagar, Havelock-3, A&N Islands, Tel: 09474263120
E-mail : dive@barefootindia.com,
Website : www.diveandaman.com