



The Straight & The Narrow

DIVING TOUR operator blue o two are now giving guests the opportunity to visit the pristine coral reefs of the Straits of Tiran onboard their luxury Red Sea liveaboard fleet. Blue o two is the first operator to offer the Straits of Tiran safari from Hurghada.

Only accessible by boat and located in the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba in the Northern Red Sea, the Straits of Tiran are famous for their strong currents carrying plankton and other nutrients to the area. These nutrients provide a rich food source for the corals and reef fish, therefore attracting large pelagic predators such as jackfish, barracuda and tuna. Divers will also have a very good chance of seeing sharks as they are often in the area.

The straits are made up of four main reefs that form the top of an underwater bridge. These reefs, named after British cartographers (Jackson, Woodhouse, Thomas, Gordon), are world famous for their extraordinary diversity of corals.

Company Director, Jason Strickland says: "The Straits of Tiran offer some amazing diving and so in response to much interest from our guests, we are very pleased to be able to offer this new safari."

Jackson Reef is the most northerly reef and on its northern edge



There's great diving in the Straits of Tiran



MY Blue Fim for top class Red Sea diving

lies the wreck of a freighter serving as a stark warning to ships in the narrow straights. Dives are usually conducted from the moorings on the south side which is sheltered from the main swell and currents. Moving northwards you will come across a forest of spectacular Gorgonia fan coral at about 20 to 30 metres as well as many different kinds of reef fish. This site can also be done as a drift dive heading from the mooring towards the east with the reef on the left where it is mostly wall diving with excellent corals.

The longest reef of the four (Woodhouse) in the Straits of Tiran is home to reef sharks and Eagle Rays, it is dived as a drift dive usually from south to north. Jumping at the southern part of the reef is a wall to about 30m covered with coral from the surface all the way down. There is a canyon going along the reef at about 25m which spreads out into a coral garden with sand alleys.

Thomas Reef is the smallest reef in the Straits and diving here is governed by the weather as there are extremely strong currents. The ends are vertical walls with a large plateau at about 25m on the south eastern side. This plateau often has sleeping sharks on the sand patches and the colourful coral has a fence of Gorgonia fans at the end.

And lastly Gordon Reef - the most southerly reef of the four has a different topography from the others offering both a shallow plateau area and drop offs. A huge variety of reef fish and big schools of groupers can be seen here and on the sandy bottom at 4 to 5 metres there is an eel garden area along with coral encrusted drums. The top of the reef, with its lighthouse, is also home to the wreck *Lovilla* which sits almost parallel to the wreck on Jackson Reef.

During the week the boat will also visit Brother Islands, well known as one of the best dive sites in the Red Sea, offering divers breathtaking underwater scenery, wall diving, wreck diving and an abundance of marine wildlife.

For more information visit www.blueotwo.com

Learn From The Best

JEFF GOODMAN, director and award-winning cameraman is to lead a series of workshops aimed at improving the art of underwater video production at the fantastic Southern Dive Village Marsa Shagra.

Marsa Shagra's location lends itself perfectly to the surroundings needed and marine life desired to complement such an exciting workshop. Unlimited diving enables unlimited opportunity to capture the diverse

and wonderfully colourful marine life on Sharga's extensive house reef.

The week long workshops will be held at Marsa Shagra the weeks departing November 26, February 3 and April 7.

Five to 10 guests will be able to learn from one of the best underwater cameramen in the industry.

Please contact Oonasdivers for prices and fact sheet. www.oonasdivers.com

