



Biodiversity Cruise

Travel over 1,100 nautical miles of biodiverse Banda Sea!

In April/May 2017 Pindito offering the first "mini" Biodiversity cruise. The 11 nights cruise starts in Ambon and ends in Maumere. The diving will be around Flores, Alor, East Timor and as well in the Banda Sea. Details can be deviated from the regular Biodiversity cruise description!

This trip takes you through the various geological formations of Indonesia. Visit volcanic islands and islands which are derived from coral reefs but also the fantastic "Raja Ampat", which is an absolute highlight for every diver. Along different evolutionary lineages and major migration routes of large mammals such as whales and dolphins, this trip guarantees diversity and variety above and below water.

The Banda Sea, with its spice islands played an important role in history in the 15th to the 17th Century. For centuries the indigenous people traded with nutmeg and thus came into the focus of the Europeans, because this special seasoning was found only on these islands. The islands were first colonized by the Portuguese before the Dutch took over the colony in fierce fighting. Meanwhile, the islands are again visited by sailors, fishermen and divers, especially due to the extraordinary world of fish. Because many remains of the colonies are still visible, this area is especially exciting to visit.

The region of West Papua is also called "Raja Ampat", which literally means "United Kingdom". The area has over 1,500 islands. The four main islands are Misool, Salawati, Batanta and Waigeo. Pindito knows this region already since 1992. In fact, she was the only liveaboard dive cruise in "Raja Ampat" until 2001. Nobody knows the underwater world as good as our crew. Even many caves above water have been discovered by the crew of Pindito.

Itinerary

Pindito puts great importance to plan the best possible tour for their guest. When planning the route, many factors play an important role. The most important factor is the weather. Since there can be storms in the tropics at any time, Pindito might change routes and itineraries at short notice.

Starting off in Maumere on Flores Island the trip goes to Sorong, West Papua (or vice versa). From Flores we travel to East Timor, past the islands of Alor and Wetar. If the weather cooperates, the route continues towards the Banda islands, past the famous Snake Island Gunung Api. In rough weather the alternative route is via Romang, Termang, Seroea and Manuk. Koon and Misool are the last stops before we travel through the Dampier Strait to Sorong.

Flores, Alor and East Timor

The port of Maumere is an amazing and diverse dive area. Discover various pipefish and seahorses, frogfish, scorpion fish, various, countless colorful nudibranchs, as well as barracuda and batfish. The Pindito crew calls this dive site "blue water muck diving"!

For lovers of lush vegetation Alor cliffs and slopes offer great variety. Mainly pipefish and nudibranchs of all colors move about here. The north coast of Alor has much current and you can expect plenty of big fish. The west coast of Wetar offers beautiful places with drop-offs, colorful reefs and many fish. Occasionally visits big pelagic fish are possible. Along the northern coast of Wetar a look at the blue ocean can get dolphin and whale encounters who are seen regularly!

The terraced hillside at the Romang archipelago appears overgrown and invites divers for watching giant sea fans, soft corals and sponges. In the blue you see Napoleons, reef sharks and tuna, backed by beautiful reefscapes. Night dives are very interesting with Spanish dancers, various shrimp and the rare bobtail squids. Edi discovered a diving area around the islands Termang during the transfer of tour 2003. From the top of the reef until well into the depths is a seemingly endless growth in all shapes, colors and sizes to be admired. Since very few divers visit this area it is very untouched and attracts mainly large fish and schools of fish.

Pantar is the second largest island in the Alor archipelago. Here we can visit some village where both Christians and Muslims live together. The Christian villages lie mainly in the interior of the island, the Muslim villages are along the coast. A highlight is the local market. From fruit to meat, fish and clothes this market has it all. The inhabitants of the island are very nice and happy to have visitors who are called affectionately "long noses".

Seroea & Manuk

Seroea, another volcano rising from the Banda Sea is situated far into open sea. Darwin might have run its research on evolution here as well. Despite lower biodiversity on land, the walls below the sea are amazing. The night dive surprises many with shrimp and crabs. Especially the shy Saron shrimp can be observed frequently. Sharks, mackerels, tunas and barracudas are seen in the blue.

A highlight is the Snake Island Gunung Api. Here in 2008, the second part of the movie "Edi's paradise" was filmed. During night dives it is especially exciting to watch the snakes.

Banda Neira

Banda Neira is the main island of "Banda Islands", which are part of the Maluku archipelago. The "Banda Islands" consists of 10 small volcanic islands. Visit the old fortress of the Dutchman on Banda Neira, or climb a volcano can all be part

of our program. Over 20 years ago lava flowed into the sea and formed a hard-coral garden in this "short time".

The reefs here excel through their unique underwater fauna in all colors and shapes. Large schools pass by and the macro world is ever present. With a little luck at dusk dives, the mating ritual of the mandarin fish can be observed. The coral gardens in the lava units with their 5-meter-wide plate corals are just a small sample of what you can see here.

Koon

A famous dive site which the Pindito lovingly calls "Sh.. place". Everything a diver could wish for can be seen in this canal, which flows towards the Banda Sea. It guarantees a unique school of fish spectacle; Giant groupers, large Schools Baraccudas, snapper, surgeon fish, sweet lips in the midst of beautiful coral. Many a photographer despaired at this place, because you often do not know where to look first and. The sometimes violent currents cannot guarantee the best visibility, but it is a big chance to see large fish such as manta rays, sharks and even mobulas.

Misool

Diving in the endless maze of the islands of Misool is a very special treat for any diving career. It is paradise for macro enthusiasts, but encounters with larger fish such as manta rays are often possible. Misool is one of the most biodiverse regions in the world with fish, corals, sponges, soft corals, shrimps, crabs and countless nudibranchs and other invertebrates. Huge shoals of sardines are a definite highlight. Soft corals and sea fans (diameter of 3-4 meters) in all sizes and colors dominate the underwater landscape.

One of Pindito's special places is called "Vrenelies Gärtli". It is a legendary dive site that has it all, because of its very diverse landscape. Overhangs, huge caverns with swimthroughs, lush steep walls with all kinds of corals are found here.

There is also plenty to do on land. With a unique speedboat ride you will explore the beautiful scenery. Crystal clear, turquoise water awaits you as well as a variety of exotic tropical plants such as orchids and even carnivorous plants.

The Dampier strait

The Dampier strait separates the "Vogelkop" (Birdshead) Peninsula from Waigeo and Mansuar. The name comes from the Dutch colonial times. It refers to the shape of the peninsula on the map, but it is also a paradise for many rare bird species.

Here the Pacific Ocean meets the Halmahera Sea, with an explosion of marine life as consequence. With regular strong currents, big fish feel especially comfortable. Manta rays, reef sharks, different schools of mackerel, tuna and barracuda are seen again and again. Even dolphins and whales (Bryde's whales, pilot whales) keep spending time in the Dampier straight Since May 2011, we

offer a special Whale & Macro tour that combines the macro-diving with whale and dolphin watching. This tour is accompanied by a marine expert in whale and dolphin behaviour.