

Queensland's Top 10 Dive sites

With warm, clear waters teeming with marine life, accessible, year round diving and the world's largest coral reef, Queensland is a scuba divers paradise, offering some of the best underwater adventures on earth.

For more information on diving in Queensland, visit www.divingqueensland.com.au.

Cod Hole (Ribbon Reefs) Tropical North Queensland

Made famous by internationally recognised underwater photographers Ron and Valerie Taylor who were the first to publicise this site

- Large potato cod (6-30kg) are friendly, since they have been fed for the past 20 years
- Fish feeds are done by Divemasters
- See clouds of cod like Maori wrasse, red bass, emperor and many other species
- Drop to the sandy floors area between the bommies, where you can see the fish feeding from above
- See 150kg cod or wrasse sucking and biting at the food
- Other marine life includes average coral cover, anemones, whitetip reef sharks, giant clams, schools of pyramid butterflyfish, Solomon's sweetlip, cleaning stations and feather stars
- Accessed via Cairns or Port Douglas with a number of local tourism operators visiting this site offering diving and snorkelling

Osprey reef (Coral Sea) Tropical North Queensland

One of the most spectacular dive sites in the world. Offering a diverse range of shark life all year round and pristine soft coral unlike anything you have ever seen before.

- North Horn site is best known for its resident population of White tip reef sharks
- North Horn has been used as a shark feeding site for 15 years
- The silvertip and grey reef shark, potato cod, morays and many smaller species are familiar with humans
- Undersea Explorer now study the sharks, they are identified and monitored periodically
- Natural underwater amphitheatre allows divers to sit 20m deep to watch the shark feed
- View whitetip reef sharks, grey reef sharks, silvertips, dogthooth tuna, giant potato cod and seasonal schooling scalloped hammerheads
- Big soft coral trees deep on Western wall
- Fantastic pelagic action, including three-spot dart, dogthooth tuna, rainbow runners and mackerel
- See pelagic octopus, pleurobranch, nautilus, crabs, shrimps and sleeping fish
- Accessed from Cairns or Port Douglas with a number of local tourism operators visiting this site

Yongala Wreck (Townsville)

The SS Yongala is known as one of the worlds top wreck dives and certainly one of Australia's best dive sites due to the prolific variety of marine life.

- The wreck is 110m long and is one of the most intact historic shipwrecks, sinking in 1011 with loss of all aboard
- Giant Queensland gropers hang beneath the stern while schools of trevally and cobia congregate around the depths of the wreck.

- Queenfish, barracuda, turtles, sea snakes, eagle rays and clown fish are just some of the other incredible life inhabiting the coral encrusted structure.
- A number of dive operators in Townsville visit this site, located off Cape Bowling Green (south of Townsville centre)

Wheeler Reef (Townsville)

- Platform reef perched close to the continental shelf drop off.
- Perfectly circular in shape, is a truly magnificent example of marine biodiversity at its best.
- There are crevasses to explore and isolated bommies surrounded by beautiful white sand stretching off into the depths of the Coral Sea.
- Spectacular formations of plate, branching and soft corals in brilliant colour are teaming with a myriad of tropical life. Garden eels, lagoon rays, large shovel-nosed rays and shrimp with their co-host gobies are dotted around the seabed. Huge grouper stack up in cleaning stations with spotted, lined and giant sweetlip.
- Coral trout of all species, butterfly and angelfish, emperors and snapper are all plentiful. Large schools of mackerel and trevally, dart, chevron and giant barracuda all abound.
- Giant morays and reef sharks add to the sample of life awaiting the diver at Wheeler.
- Rated as one of the best night dives on the reef, moray eels, epaulette and white-tip sharks, bull rays, as well as a myriad of shrimps and other crustaceans all await to be discovered by divers who like the dark!

Bait Reef (Whitsundays)

Bait Reef is one of the best known and most spectacular locations on the Great Barrier Reef.

- An "oasis" for all sorts of tropical marine life, with turtles and manta rays common sights.
- Coral gardens, underwater canyons, swim throughs and dramatic walls provide a range of terrain to explore.
- An ideal location for snorkelers and scuba divers. Snorkelers can explore the shallow gardens on top of the reef.
- Beginner divers, are escorted by the instructors around the reef formations at around 10 metres (30 feet).
- The more experienced divers can investigate the canyons and walls at "Stepping Stones".
- This site is accessed from Airlie Beach (mainland) or Hamilton Island

Hardy Reef (Whitsundays)

- Hardy Reef, which is a 'patch reef' on the Great Barrier Reef and all dives are conducted along the 70 metre reef wall.
- Divers can expect to see a large variety of soft and hard corals and many species of 'people friendly' fish will follow and surround the divers – sergeant majors, tusk fish, surgeon fish and fusiliers to name a few.
- The Reefworld pontoon is located here, with guided diving, snorkelling and overnight stays available.

Heron Island (Central Queensland)

- Accessed from Gladstone in Central Queensland
- The island is a richly vegetated coral cay with an established resort, research station and marine range base
- Important nesting ground for Green Turtles (October – March)
- Shore and off-shore snorkelling and diving can be undertaken from dozens of locations within 15 minutes of the island.

Lady Elliot Island, Central Queensland

- The island is the most southerly in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, 85km north east of Bundaberg. There are 19 dive sites nearby, three highlights being Coral Gardens, Light House Bommie and Maori Wrasse Bommie
- Coral gardens is an excellent night diving site with all types of marine life
- The Light House Bommie is home to Manta Rays and Cleaner Wrasse, batfish, stingrays, and turtles
- Maori Wrasse Bommie takes its name from the family of Wrasse which frequent the area. Reef sharks are also often seen patrolling the nearby reef wall.
- Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort is located on the beach front, and offers diving, snorkelling, and reef walks for guests.

Wolf Rock (Sunshine Coast)

- Wolf Rock consists of four volcanic pinnacles rising from 40 metres that provides fantastic swim through dives, vertical gutters and overhanging ledges to explore
- Black coral trees, spiky soft corals, hard corals, gorgonians and spiral sea whips are found here.
- Fish life includes trevally, cod, coral trout, perch, mackerel, batfish, leopard shark and home to several giant Queensland Gropers.
- Located off Double Island Point, Sunshine Coast, specialised dive companies visit this site.

Ex- HMAS Brisbane

- Queensland's newest ship wreck, located off Mooloolaba on the Sunshine Coast, this ex-royal Australian Navy destroyer served in the Vietnam and Gulf Wars before being sunk in July 2005.
- The vessel has been kept in it's original condition (where possible) and is now sitting upright on the ocean floor, 28 m down.
- Access holes allow passage into the forward engine room, boiler room and other parts of the ship's interior
- There is already a large amount of marine life on the wreck, including sponges, crustaceans, urchins and corals.
- Only Certified divers can access the site through a licensed dive tour operator

Other sites worth visiting:

- Opal Reef (Outer Reefs) Tropical North Queensland
- Hastings Reef (Outer Reefs) Tropical North Queensland
- Norman Reef (Outer reefs) Tropical North Queensland
- Agincourt Reef (Outer reefs) Tropical North Queensland
- Milln Reef (Outer reefs) Tropical North Queensland
- Woongarra Marine Park (Bundaberg)
- Magic Mountain (Sunshine Coast)
- Manta Ray Bommie (Brisbane)

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