



South Africa  
**Crystal  
Divers**  
[www.crystal-divers.co.za](http://www.crystal-divers.co.za)



# Prepare for what will undoubtedly be, the greatest adventure of your life!

**The ultimate Ocean Experience is waiting to unfold before your very eyes...**

The trip consists of 3 days diving on the Aliwal Shoal, prior to leaving for the Wild Coast to dive the Sardine Run. Like any expedition, a dive trip of this magnitude required some preparation time. In these three days, we will make it our business to ensure you are fully prepared to embark on the adventure of a lifetime. You will arrive at the Wild Coast ready to dive, and having remedied any of those little diving related set-backs that we all know, can ruin a trip.

The Aliwal Shoal in itself, is enough to keep any diver happy. With hundreds of pristine dive sites spread across the 1.5km wide, 5km long shoal. The shoal is also home to over 1200 different species of fish, some of which are endemic to the shoal and found no where else in the world. Also making the Shoal their seasonal home, are a range of apex predators. Oceanic Black Tip sharks, Grey Nurse and Tiger Sharks are three of the main attractions on our baited shark dives. Along with the sharks, you will also encounter dolphins, turtles, stingrays and a variety of smaller wonders of the sea.

You will then be transported to Port St. Johns, where you will spend the 6 days experiencing some of the best diving that the world has to offer. While diving the Sardine Run, we will be following dolphins, whales, seals, penguins, sharks and birds chasing bait balls formed by hundreds of thousands of sardines, red eye and anchovy. This phenomenal congregation of predators occurs annually from May to July.

We offer a boat based adventure for everyone, whether a diver or non-diver. All nature lovers, bird watchers, photography enthusiasts, dolphin and whale enthusiasts, snorkelers and scuba divers will thoroughly enjoy this incredible event of nature, which has been likened to the land based "Wildebeest migration of the Serengeti" and the marine equivalent of this has since been called....

**"The Greatest Shoal on earth".**

Take a minute to peruse the finer details of our sardine run package and book your spot today. join us for an experience of a lifetime in the most beautiful and scenic place of Port St. John's, Wild Coast, Transkei, the gateway to magnificent the Sardine Run

## Sardine Run Dates:

24 June – 6 July

2 July – 14 July

10 July – 22 July

**Contact us today to book your next adventure!**



STEVE WOODS  
UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY

# Diving the Aliwal Shoal

The Aliwal Shoal is a rocky reef which is the remains of an ancient sand dune approximately 5km off the coast of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The reef is inhabited by many kinds of hard and soft corals and a variety of tropical and subtropical fish species. This abundance of food makes the reef a paradise for a variety of shark species and cetaceans

Aliwal Shoal is home to the Tiger Shark, Oceanic Black Tip, Dusky, and Ragged Tooth shark (Spotted Sand Tiger). Join us for a reef dive where you will see the Ragged tooth, who return annually to the Shoal every winter. These ferocious looking sharks are actually incredibly placid, and provide excellent subjects for underwater photography.

You can see these sharks up close and personal on our baited shark dives. We chum the water to create an odour corridor that attracts the sharks from smaller Oceanic Black tips to their much larger brothers.

# Diving the Sardine Run

Nature rules our days as we spend most of our time at sea following the action as dolphins and sharks work together to separate the sardines into bait balls. The birds, dolphins, sharks and whales are all enjoying this feast and are most entertaining to watch from above or under the water.

This fantastic event attracts species like:

Humpback Whales, Bryde's Whales, Bottlenose Dolphin, Common Dolphin, Dusky Sharks, Bronze Whaler Sharks, Oceanic Blacktip, Sharks, Game fish like Sailfish, Tuna etc. Seals, Cape Gannets, Albatros and much more

The action is amazing and you are often surrounded by hundreds of sea creatures and of course millions of sardines and red eyes which make it a spectacular expedition.

## Typical Day on the Sardine Run

Breakfast at 7am, Kit – up and Dive Briefing

We launch about 7:45am from the Umzimvubu River in Port St. Johns and travel north or south depending on the updates received on where the sardine action is.

Crew will start looking for all types of action, from whales, dolphins and ocean birds to the little silver sardine type action. Sardine activity is usually sighted from large flocks of cape gannet sightings or by the more trusted large pods of common dolphin activity.

Our communication network with others is vast and we are also in communication with the Natal Sharks Board members that conduct regular areal flights.

Once the sardines are located, our experienced crew will determine whether the bait ball is fast moving, necessitating snorkel viewing, or more static, whereby we can go straight into scuba gear. Most of the interaction will happen while snorkeling. Most likely we will not use more than one (1) tank per day.

We enter the water many times during the day, it just depends how fast or slow the action is moving.

Break for a spot of lunch out at sea.

Generally back at 3pm to shower and chill. Relax while downloading photos or you can opt for sight- seeing or nature walks.

Enjoy dinner at the restaurant and if you're not completely tired by your days activities, then you can have a drink at the bar. After all this, relax, sleep and get ready for another action packed day.



Photos courtesy of Steve Woods Photography



# Accommodation!

The first 4 nights of your Sardine Run package is spent at the Blue Marlin in Scottburgh and then we transfer to Port St Johns River Lodge, a 4 Star accommodation for 7 nights, South Africa's best kept secret. Last night we will spend at Blue Marlin for easier transport to the airport.

Both based on Dinner, Bed and Breakfast per person sharing.

During our dive days at Port St. Johns, we have arranged for very tasty lunch packs to enjoy out at sea.

## Getting here

Our package includes all transfers and transport that you will require during the Sardine Run in South Africa.

When you arrive at Durban Airport, we will meet you and transfer you to Crystal Divers SA at the Blue Marlin Hotel (approx. 80kms) where we will overnight. The following days, you will do 4 reef dives on the Aliwal Shoal and one baited shark dive before we transfer you on day 5 to Port St. Johns.

Flights to Durban – King Shaka International Airport (KSIA/DUR)

There are many daily flights to Durban Intl Airport everyday, some are direct international flights (Emirates via Dubai).

There are daily flights to Durban between Johannesburg (JNB) and Cape Town (CPT)

Flights from the UK and Europe are generally cheaper when flying direct into Johannesburg (JNB) and get a connecting flight with

Kulula - [www.kulula.com](http://www.kulula.com)

Mango - [www.flymango.com](http://www.flymango.com)

SAA – [www.flysaa.com](http://www.flysaa.com)

## Transfers

The package includes all the transfers from Durban Airport to Port St. Johns

You can arrive at anytime and we will arrange a transfer for your flight.

The return transfer will be from Blue Marlin Hotel to Durban International Airport.

Should you require additional accommodation, we can arrange it for you.

Any other transfers required are not included but we can help you arrange it for you as well.



# PACKAGE and COSTS for the Sardine Run Adventure!

Duration: 13-days / 12-nights

Season: May, June and July only

Starts: Durban, South Africa

Ends: Durban, South Africa

**Dates: Contact us for availability**

3-days (4 reef dives and 1 baited shark dive) at Aliwal Shoal

6-days Sardine Run diving Port St. Johns, South Africa

Day 1: Arrive Durban Airport – Transfer to Scottburgh and overnight at the Blue Marlin Hotel

Day 2: 2 x dives Aliwal Shoal

Day 3: 2 x dives Aliwal Shoal

Day 4: 1 baited shark dive Aliwal Shoal

Day 5: Transfer to Port St. Johns — Overnight Port St. Johns (5-6 Hour bus ride)

Day 6: Full day Unlimited Sardine Run Diving

Day 7: Full day Unlimited Sardine Run Diving

Day 8: Full day Unlimited Sardine Run Diving

Day 9: Full day Unlimited Sardine Run Diving

Day 10: Full day Unlimited Sardine Run Diving

Day 11: Full day Unlimited Sardine Run Diving

Day 12: Transfer back to Aliwal Shoal and overnight at Blue Marlin

Day 13: Airport Transfer to King Shaka (Durban) International Airport

## Package costs

Diver Package – per person sharing: 4450\$ USD

Non-Diver Partner – per person sharing: 4250\$ USD

**EARLY BIRD Discount 5% – Book and pay deposit before 1:st of December 2016**

## What's included?

- 4 reef dives and 1 baited shark dive
- Welcome pack from Crystal Divers SA
- 12 Nights accommodation
- Transfers to and from airport and accommodation and to Port St. Johns.
- Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner with a lunch pack at sea for 6 dive days
- 6 Sardine Run Dive Days at Port St. Johns
- Cylinder and Airfills
- Weight belt and Weights
- Diver permits
- Highly qualified team of Skipper and In water guide/ boat guide

## What's excluded?

- Dive Gear {Can be Hired} - Equipment rental of BCD, Regulator, Wetsuit, Fins, Mask,& Snorkel.  
We have a full range available should you require equipment.  
Kindly notify us up front to secure your equipment needs
- Additional land based activities
- Items of personal nature
- Beverages
- Gratuities
- Taxes / flights
- Passport / visas
- Personal Insurance

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What are the passport requirements?**

You must be in possession of a full passport valid for at least 6 months beyond the date of proposed departure. A visa is issued on arrival in South Africa

## **Why Port St. Johns?**

Port St. Johns is well situated on the Umzimvubu River and is rated by dive operators as the best place to be based for the Sardine Run.

We do a river launch there and not a beach push-in launch each day, which is safer and allows our clients to get comfortable with safety procedures prior to entering the surf zone.

## **What should I bring?**

The area is very casual, evening and early mornings are cold so you will need trousers, windbreaker, fleece, hoodie, gloves and jackets. During the day the weather is warm so you will need shorts, T-shirts, and a windbreaker. Shoes or sneakers, sandals, towels, suntan lotion, sun glasses is necessary too. You will also require personal items like shampoo, toothpaste, aspirin, etc.

## **Are the cylinders DIN or A-clamp (international)?**

We use 12- liter steel cylinders which can be both A-clamp or DIN so will suit all divers

## **What are the average depths of the dives?**

The depth of the dives varies from around 8 metres to 20 meters depending on the dives. Most of our dives are drift dives and we do sometimes have strong currents.

## **What wetsuit thickness is suggested?**

Most divers seem to favour 5mm to 7mm wetsuits during the Sardine Run. If you feel the cold, a 5mm shorty to go over your wetsuit, gloves and a hoodie is a good idea.

## **Electrical Adapters**

Most international adapters DO NOT work in South Africa. Make sure you buy some at the airport.

## **What medical precautions should I take?**

No compulsory vaccinations are required.

Medical travel insurance is always a good idea for South Africa.

## **What are the average temperatures?**

Daytime Temperatures : 10- 25 °C

Night time Temperatures: 6 – 12 °C

Water Temperatures: 18 – 21 °C

## **What are the general climate conditions?**

June & July: Sardine Run takes place in the winter in South Africa

The mornings and late afternoons are generally cold, so dress accordingly

The weather is generally calm but we have some winter storms which can make the sea rough.

**Will I get seasick?**

Dives are all done from RIB's. Some people do feel a bit seasick if they surface earlier than the main group and have to spend a while on the RIB. There are several medications available if required.

**Are tips required?**

Tipping is optional. The normal amount is 10% at restaurants etc.

Tips for the dive team and lodge staff are also optional.

**Can I come on a trip without a buddy?**

Many of our guests travel on their own, we dive in a group so it's fine.

**What currencies are used?**

The local currency is South African Rand [ZAR] which is easily available at ATM's, Banks etc. When paying your final bill we can accept payment in USD, Euros or British Sterling. (EFT's only)

**What is the situation with food and water?**

Drink lots of water (tap water is safe to drink) to avoid dehydration. There is no reason why you should become ill but often the change in food and environment can cause illness. A combination of too much sun and alcohol can also cause problems. Wash any vegetable or fruit before consumption.

**What time zone is South Africa?**

South Africa: GMT +2 hours

**How much spending money do I need?**

The only spending money you will require is for land excursions, beverage, snacks, souvenirs, tips etc. Most places accept credit cards and there are cash machines available in most places

**How is the internet connection?**

The internet connection is not the best so we recommend getting a local sim card with 3G at Aliwal Shoal. We are happy to assist you getting the right sim card for your phone or iPad.





## Booking:

Main Contact:

Full Name:

Email address: (please check!)

Telephone/Mobile Number: (will only call when email doesn't work)

Comments or Questions:

Number of Divers

Number of Non Divers

Rooms required:

Single rooms \_\_\_\_\_

Twin Rooms (2 single beds) \_\_\_\_\_

Double Rooms (Double bed) \_\_\_\_\_

Airport Transfer required?

Other transfers?

## Booking Conditions:

We will confirm availability by email and send you all the booking information

To Confirm your booking, we require 20% non- refundable deposit paid before 1:st January 2017.

Final payment is required 6 weeks before the start of the package

We accept credit card payments and bank transfers

## Contact us

Address:

180 Scott Street,  
Scottburgh,  
KwaZulu-Natal, RSA

Phone:

+27 (0) 79 885 8339 (mobile)

+27 (0) 978 3361 (office)

info@crystal-divers.co.za

## Cancellation Policy

The Sardine Run is Uniquely Challenging. Our cancellation and booking policy reflects these challenges and we would ask that you read this carefully and fully understand it prior to committing.

## BOOKING POLICY

Deposit: Potential Explorers will only confirm their booking on payment of a 20% non-refundable deposit.

Full payment. Full payment must be completed 6 weeks prior to the expedition launch. Failure to make this payment will result of forfeiting the deposit and allowing Crystal Divers SA to offer your spot to a new guest.

## GUARANTEE POLICY

It is vital to all Sardine Run Adventurers to understand the realities of the Sardine Run, and as such, Crystal Divers SA can offer NO GUARANTEE of any sightings. Past record indicates a 40-50% possibility of divers experiencing bait balls (sardines, red eye or anchovy) with predators, and 100% of expeditions have resulted in sightings of dolphins, gannets, whales and sharks.

## BAD WEATHER POLICY

First Bad weather day. If Crystal Divers SA deem that the weather is not suitable to venture to sea on a given day, then no refund will be given. On that day, Crystal Divers SA will provide you with a landtour instead.

Subsequent Bad Weather Days. Crystal Divers SA will only cancel a day trip to sea if conditions are unsafe to the wellbeing of the vessel and passengers could be compromised. In these conditions, Crystal Divers SA will partially refund petrol costs.

Client chooses not to go to sea. If one or more clients choose not to proceed to sea for any reason whatsoever, Crystal Divers SA will NOT refund the guest(s). Crystal Divers SA will still launch for any guests wishing to proceed to sea.

