Lorenz Mäder

Founder of Wakatobi Dive Resort

Lorenz Mäder, the founder of Wakatobi Dive Resort, worked in consort with local leaders and village elders to establish the Collaborative Reef Conservation Program. The program was designed to motivate the people living in the Wakatobi region to take an active role in protecting the marine ecosystem. Gaining regular payments and alternative employment in the resort the villages realized that it is a smarter economical use of their natural resource to let sections of the reefs be untouched for the tourist to enjoy looking at the fish. With proper management jointly with the dive resort, there is more for everyone from tourism than from just fishing, especially in a special location like Wakatobi.

When was the protected area established?

The Collaborative Reef Conservation Program began as a pilot project launched in 1997, which turned 6 km of reef into an effective no-fishing sanctuary. As the success of this project was shown, the protected zone was extended, and today covers more than 20 km of reef.

Where is the protected area located (within Indo and specifically in relation to the community) and how big is it?

These privately sponsored reef sanctuaries lie within the later confirmed Wakatobi Marine Reserve in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. The National Marine Park area was recently designated as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, and is recognized as one of the most bio-diverse marine ecosystems on earth. Currently, the program includes 17 communities around Wakatobi Dive Resort and covers 20 km (12.5 miles) of the best-protected reef structures within the National Marine Park.

Why did your team decide to establish the protected area?

We believe in a solid integration of conservation into our business model and accept that keeping intact the marine environment as the

Lorenz Mäder, founder of Wakatobi Dive Resort - Photo by Marco Fierli

Wakatobi dive resort and house reef – Photo by Didi Lotze

Reef Scenic at Wakatobi – Photo by Walt Stearns

Diver with Cuttlefish at the nearby site Pockets - Photo by Walt Stearns

foundation of our business and the enjoyment of our guests is an integral part of a sustainable dive operation.

Because year after year Wakatobi Dive Resort is sticking to this commitment, it has earned the trust and the endorsement of a large majority of the population, of the village elders and island leaders. We don't know a more effective and cost efficient model for reef conservation in this environment.

Why did the community agree to establishment of the protected area (what benefits do they receive)?

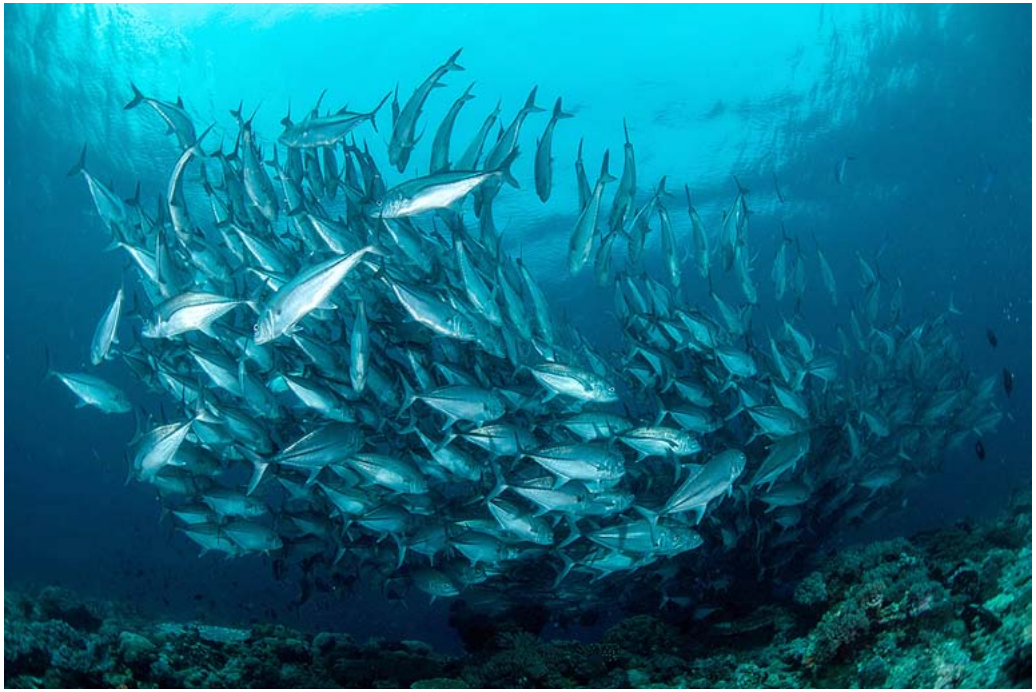
Over the years substantial investment has gone into keeping the reefs shielded from destructive fishing methods. Every month each of the 20 villages obtains a cash amount in form of a 'reef lease' payment into their communal budget. This amount is meaningful enough to motivate them to keep outside intruders away from their revenue generating "prime underwater real estate" and convinces them, and all community members, to stick to the agreed upon respective non-fishing zones. For that purpose it has to be a multiple of the potential fishing yield as you can easily imagine. In addition, the village nearest to the resort obtains its electrical power supply from the resort.

What special marine life is found in the protected area (reefs, wrecks, macro, sharks, big stuff)?

The Coral Triangle - as this region is also called - is defined by Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, and home to more than 605 coral species, at least 2,000 varieties of fish, and an even greater number of invertebrate species. Everything from reef sharks, rays, whales and turtles to crocodile fish, cuttlefish, stonefish, nudibranchs, shrimps and crabs, and precious pygmy seahorses are found within the Wakatobi reef system.

What changes and improvements have you seen in the protected area since it was established?

Overall the protected reefs are in better shape than before the sanctuaries have been established. They have turned into a huge



School of jacks on the House Reef - Photo by Wade Hughes

Divers on the wall - Photo by Walt Stearns

sheltered breeding area and there is so much fish, the fisherman now catch more fish swimming out at the fringe of the protected area than they caught before in the entire area. Most locals understand now the benefit of reef resource management, which includes more income for the fisheries.

What is the importance of the protected area to your dive operation?

The protected reefs include some of the world's most pristine and beautiful marine ecosystems and are therefore the most important business asset, which also provides the financial means to sponsor the resort's conservation initiatives.

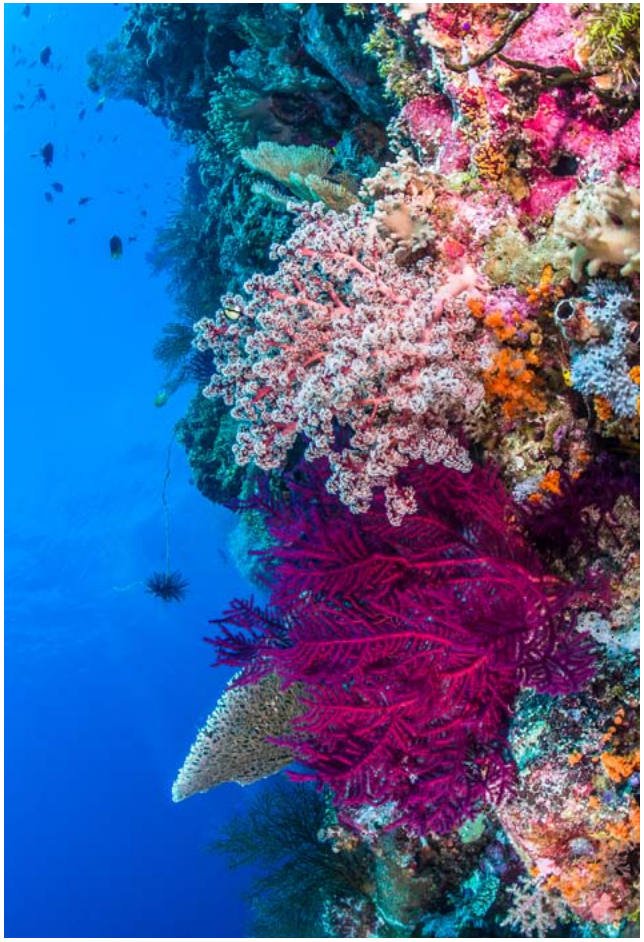
What challenges have you faced in establishing and maintaining it?

It took years of steady support and communication to establish solid trust and motivate the majority of the local population. By today compliance with the rules in the sanctuaries is 95 to 99% depending on how close the reef section is to the resort and patrol posts. Also it was not easy for a small private business to maintain steady reef lease payments through all economical downturns. Still, the business approach proved to be by far the most successful and economical conservation approach in the area.

Any other comments?

A point that we are taking on board is that we will more carefully explain to our guests what we are doing in conservation without being too serious for a holiday setting. As many interests need to be balanced, conservation is a serious matter and has more to do with drawn out negotiations and attention to detail and management than with putting hope in changing habits by preaching to and educating adults. It is neither romantic nor achieved by putting out a few catchy slogans. That is why we prefer to just do it rather than speak about it and let our guests enjoy their precious holidays without being bothered by the complexities involved in keeping the marine environment pristine.

If a guest shows an interest, we are always delighted to go deeper and explain. We find that it is often those



Hard and soft corals on the wall - Photo by Wayne MacWilliams

among our guests who are themselves professional communicators, or have built their own companies, who are intrigued by this successful and effective conservation approach and take the time to understand more. Either way, anyone who comes to Wakatobi endorses conservation through his or her enjoyment, and that is the way we believe it should be.

Wakatobi Dive Resort is located in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia in the remote Wakatobi

Reef Scenic– Photo by Warren Baverstock

archipelago (formerly called TukangBesi islands) on the edge of Indonesia's Banda Sea, 1,070 kilometers Northeast of Bali.

High season/low season:

There is no unsuitable period or season for diving in Wakatobi. The climate is drier than in other parts of Indonesia, and the location is quite protected by the surrounding reefs and islands.

Wakatobi is one of the most arid regions in

Sunset at the Wakatobi Jetty Bar overlooking the house reef drop off – Photo by Walt Stearns

Indonesia with sunshine most days and air humidity can be as low as 65 60 75%. For 90% of the year, air temperatures range between 26 - 30 degrees Celsius (78.8 - 86 Fahrenheit).

The overall water temperature range is ideal for coral growth and there is no coral bleaching. The warmest water is found in October - ranging 28 to 30 C (82 - 86 F), and the coolest fall in the latter half of August with a minimum of 26 degrees Celsius (78 degrees Fahrenheit). March until May average 28 degrees Celsius (82.4 degrees Fahrenheit); June averages 27 C (80.6 F); July 26 C (78.8 F); September is between 26 - 27 C (78 – 81 F) from November until March the temperature averages 28 - 29 C (82.4 F- 85 F).

Underwater visibility is mostly between 20 m and 50 m, with an average of 35 m or 100 feet. There are no rivers or lakes bringing sediments, therefore visibility is not affected by rain.

www.wakatobi.com

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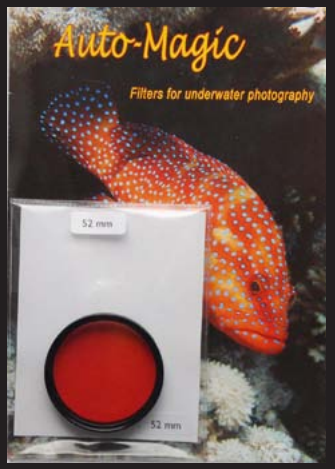
Magic filters are now available in 3 options. Original Magic for use in blue water with DSLR and compact cameras with Manual White Balance, Auto-Magic for compact cameras in automatic point and shoot mode. GreenWater Magic for use in green water with DSLR and compact cameras with Manual White Balance. Prices start at just £19.



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