

### ***Barbados - Sea Creatures***

Barbados` reef system is endowed with a healthy and vibrantly coloured reef system. When visiting the island, scuba divers can expect to encounter an abundance of sea creatures.

Blessed with a variety of hard and soft coral formations, the surrounding waters host a plethora of sea creatures and colourful fish life. Shoals of small to medium sized tropical fish include angel and butterfly fish, blue chromis, black durgelon, spotted drum and squirrelfish. Rare finds include delightful sea horses and brightly coloured frogfish. Larger species such as amber jacks, tarpon and barracuda can also be found in the north-west.

For crustacean enthusiasts, a night dive is certain to amuse and amaze. During the day such creatures are hard to spot as they hide at the back of holes or under rocks. As the sun sets, crab and lobster exit their well hidden haunts to scavenge and feed off the ocean floor.

Reefs are divided by deep sand channels. While there might not be a lot of coral to see, keep an eye out for stingrays which often lie partially buried and camouflaged by the sand. Southern sting rays and spotted eagle rays are commonly seen with the occasional manta sighting which is a real treat. While generally unconcerned by divers, stay a good distance away and never swim above the rays to avoid being hit by their venomous tail spine.

For more experienced divers, shark sightings generally occur around the Eastern and Northern parts of the island in the colder Atlantic Sea waters. During the day, sharks are generally found further out to sea however they are known to come closer to shore for night feeding. Nurse sharks are sometimes seen around Tropicana, a fringing reef running along the west coast and almost unheard of in the southern waters. Whale shark sightings are rare. When they do happen, it`s generally in the months of \*\* and \*\* around the

For the more slippery variety, rocks and crevices are home to several variety of moray eel such as the spotted and the reticulate moray. Much resembling a garter snake, goldspotted or broadband eals can be found curled along the sand or underneath rocky patches. Smaller varieties – such as the garden eal – are in abundance. Look for them peeping out of the sandy bottom like individual blades of grass when diving shallow waters.

Almost impossible to miss are the teams of gentle hawksbill turtles that are present year round. For an almost guaranteed sighting, make sure to visit `The Boot`, a popular southern reef dive at a depth of 50 to 130 ft. Friars Craig – another popular dive spot lies at a depth of 45 ft – is also a well known turtle-spotting location. The wreck is located just north west of Asta reef along a sandy channel. On certain days, up to a dozen or more turtles have been known to linger around the fragmented wreck.

See our links below for more dive related information.

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