



Albany is the centre of the South Coast region and has many spearing opportunities suited to levels of all ability. Boat diving opens up the islands and areas of more remote coastline, a 4WD and some time to explore the coast is also well worth the effort, but there are also many shore dives in and around Albany that will get you a feed and may produce some welcome surprises.



Boat dives in Albany usually centre on Michaelmas and Breaksea Islands that are prominent as the seaward edge of King George sound. Launching at Emu Point takes you passed Skippy Reef and Gull Rock on the way. Good ground of all depths can be found around these islands with the North sides providing the shallower more protected areas.

Island diving produces all the local species as well as increasing the chances of encounters with pelagics. Schools of Samson Fish are common with Yellow tail kingfish becoming more common further out.



Large boats can venture out to **Eclipse Island** and once again the Northern side of the Island provides shelter from swell and shallow water with conditions rapidly becoming more demanding on the seaward side of this spectacular island. Whilst out of the sound there are many opportunities to explore the rugged coastline, the many rocky bays are often hit by swells and are difficult to anchor in but are worth a look on the right day.



Beach launching from Two Peoples Bay opens up ground toward Mt Manypeaks, which dominates the coastline to the East, numerous bays and rocky outcrops are worth investigation here. To the South from Two Peoples Bay is Coffin Island, large seal colonies can be found here year round and protected spots in most winds.

Launching at Cosy Corner gives access to **Tor Bay**, the boat ramp here is for the experienced only as short shore breaks often pick up quickly and the track to the ramp is steep and slippery 4WD. Please get some advice from the dive shop before launching here. Tor Bay does offer numerous small islands and nice coastline out toward **West Cape Howe**.



Conditions rapidly get more difficult once the protection of the bay is left. West Cape Howe, the most Southerly point on the mainland, is spectacularly rugged.

Common pelagics include small Southern Blue Fin Tuna up to around 6 kg, Australian Salmon in schools measured by the tonne, as well as bonito and Mac Tuna. Well worth jumping in on a massive school of salmon if you are not claustrophobic.



The Former HMAS Perth is lying out from the old whaling station, this is an excellent freedive (or SCUBA) with the deck at 22 metres. This is a NO TAKE site for line and spear fishers. A permit is required to use the moorings, get one from South Coast Diving Supplies and they'll give you the heads up on the vis as they dive it most days.

Albany has an outstanding Sea Rescue Squad based at Emu Point, they are there for a reason. South coast chop is often contained by rocky cliffs and is short and hard, and there is no protection from heavy South West weather once outside the bays. Sea Rescue operates on VHF 82 (and 88 on the old 27meg) they welcome visiting boats logging in and simply request a mobile phone number from non members. Their call sign is VMR610 and they keep a 24 hour watch.

Shore dive opportunities using a standard vehicle can be very rewarding. Areas around King George Sound include Mistaken Island, accessed by a short gravel right turn off Quaranup Rd. Continue on Quaranup Rd to Whalers Cove, there is a snorkel trail here in close but venturing a little further out may bring rewards. Murray Road Boat ramp near the old Whale Station is a good spot to get in and explore. **Queenies**, fox fish and blue groper, all of good size can be found with patience in most spots.



There are many access points to the exposed south coast along Torrindup National park, the most visited being the Gap and natural Bridge, all of these points can offer good diving on the right day but more often are battered by swell and have strong currents, combine this with **difficult access off the rocks** and these areas are only for the experienced and then only on good days.



Two Peoples Bay offers good shore diving on both sides of the bay, access off the rocks from the Little Beach car park and look out for passing pelagics as usual reef species such as **fox fish**. Vehicle to the other side of the bay is via homestead this turn is after the town on Many Peaks South Coast Highway, a long drive from but access to the Betty's Beach area makes worthwhile.



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Mutton Bird Beach is about 20kms west of Albany, directly below the car park is Shelter Island, good ground can be found all around the island and to the east, this area does pick up the swell so pick your day to get safe conditions and vis.

A 4WD opens up West Cape Howe. Dunksys is a

popular freediving spot with some nice swim throughs and occasionally visited by pelagics due to its proximity to deep water, schools of Short Sun-Fish have been sighted here on occasion.



The west side of **West Cape Howe** offers good ground but is rarely accessible due to its ability to pick up the smallest swell and the difficulty of access to the water.

These are just a few of the spots around Albany, further west takes you to Cheynes Beach and Bremer Bay, well worth exploring by boat or 4WD. Heading east there is excellent coastline for 4WD from Denmark onwards. With Walpole a paradise for boaters on low swells. Albany can be a frustrating place for a spearo, but when the weather is right, those who can will drop everything and go diving, and often it is well worth the wait. Local conditions make a big difference to site selection, so get some advice before diving from the local dive shop, Gary at South Coast Diving Supplies is spearo friendly has quality gear and will happily tell you all the spots that I haven't mentioned here!

Weather information for Albany can be best found here:

http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/averages/tables/cw_009500.shtml

and for average wind direction and speed:

http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/averages/wind/selection_map.shtml

South Coast Diving Supplies,
84B Serpentine Rd,
Albany, W.A.,
Australia

Phone/Fax: 08 9841 7176

Mobile: 0417 188 725

whale@divealbany.com.au

<http://www.divealbany.com.au/>

