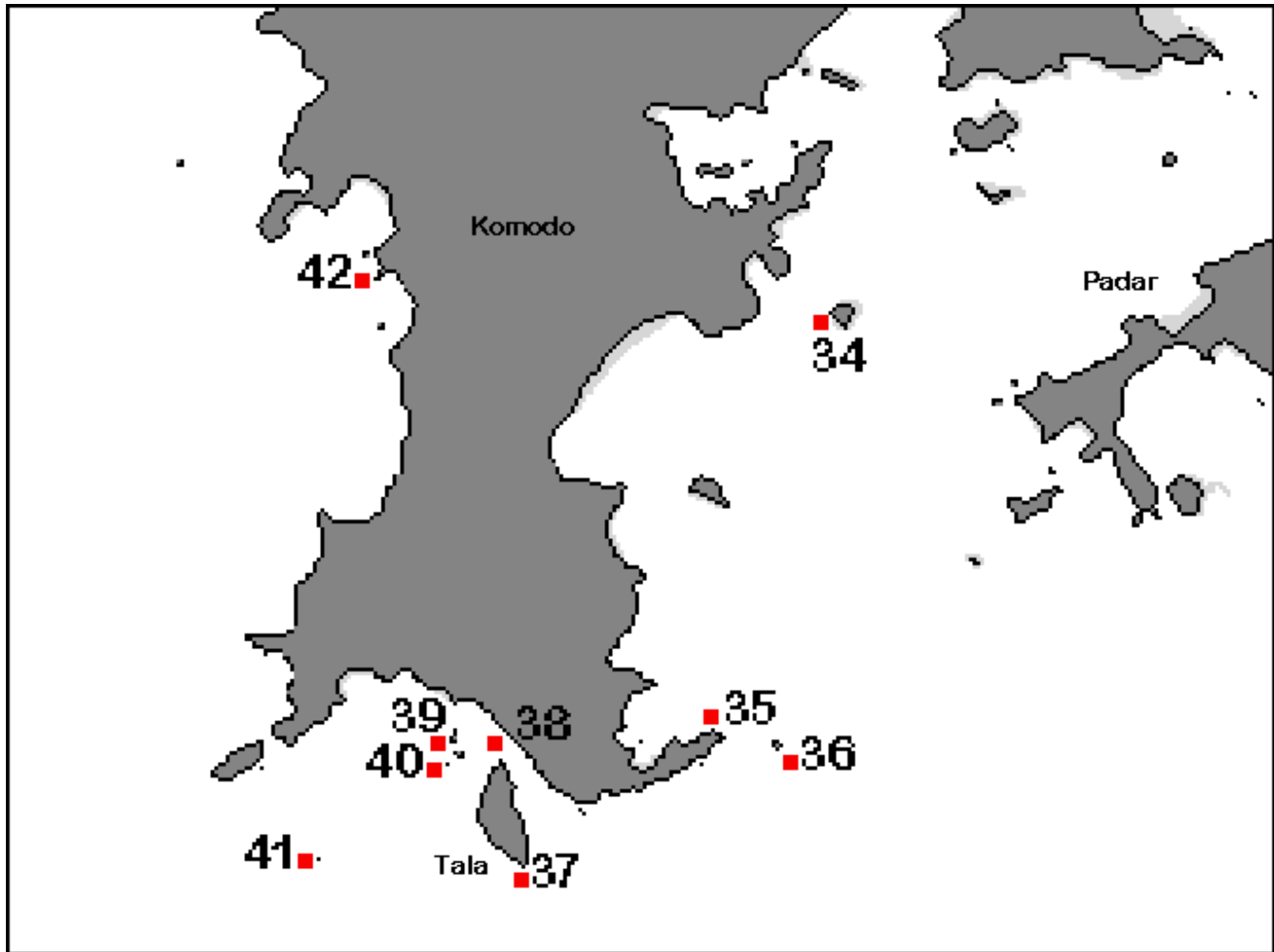


Diving the Southwest of the Komodo National Park (= South Komodo island)

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34. Pulau Indihiang - 35. Tanjung Lelok Sera - 36. Batu Gaja - 37. The End of the world - 38. German Flag (Toro Bendera) - 39. Manta Alley (Manata Point) - 40. Twins - 41. Langkoi Rock - 42. Broken Hill

The water in the south of Komodo usually is much colder (21° to 26°C) than in the north. Diving in the south is best during the northwest monsoon, October to April. Some dive sites can be inaccessible because the seas are too rough. Visibility is sometimes not so good (10-15m) because the water is very rich in plankton.

34. Pulau Indihiang: This island lies in the Linta Strait which separates Rinca island from Komodo. The best dive is in the east, a steep slope covered with small corals and sponges. There are some very interesting tunicates (*Neptheis* sp.) growing here. Instead of covering rocks with their colonies, they form a colony that looks like a grape with a stem. There are often whitetip sharks, jackfish and trevallies.

35. Tanjung Lelok Sera: This dive site, in the southern part of Komodo close to the open sea towards Sumba, is very nice indeed. Here the water is much colder than in the north. You can dive along the coast towards the eastern edge but the best places are several submerged huge rocks with canyons between them that lie a distance from shore. Currents were very fierce and we had to keep to the lee side of the rocks but fish life is so rich there, Napoleon wrasses, sweetlips, snappers, groupers and a lot more.

At this place one of my worst fears nearly came true – getting lost at sea! We were on the pinnacles and realized, that we couldn't swim back to the main reef but had to ascend from the top (17m) directly to the surface. Even when we ascended we felt the tug of the currents and the pinnacles rapidly receded from us. When we surfaced we realized, that the three of us were already in the middle of the strait between the mainland of Komodo and a small island, Batu Gaja, and were rapidly pushed out to the open sea south towards Sumba. Actually the boatman was in the process of picking up the other half of our group which hadn't made it to the pinnacles and didn't see us surface. We were swept about a kilometer and a half out and were rescued after a long, long hour - believe me, that's a long time in cold waves and you get really scared when you can't see the boat anymore!

When we came back on the boat we realized, we were picked up close to the dive site with the name of **The End of the World (No. 37)** which lies close to Tala island. This dive site is a sheer wall of black rock that goes down to about 100meter. Next to it is **German Flag (No. 38)**, also called **Toro Bendera**, a reef slope with blocks of rock and a lot of whip corals in the deeper areas. This is also a good place for mantas.

36. Batu Gaja: This is a sharp edged rock formation and the diving takes place in the calmer area between these formations because as soon as you dive too close, the water turbulence such as downcurrents and whirls are just too much. We saw a huge grouper (about 2m), several turtles, rainbow runners and a large group of bumphead parrotfish.

39. Manta Alley (Manta point): We dived early in the morning and just before the high tide, when there was little current and the light was just beautiful over the coral reef. We stayed in shallow water all the time and just floated a couple of meters below the surface. Immediately the manta rays appeared swimming close to the surface and then swept past us several times. At one point a manta swam directly towards me, did a flip and passed me so close, that I could have touched it. After about half an hour they all disappeared and we continued our dive by looking at all the small stuff you find here also. The reef is beautifully covered and large schools of yellow snappers are everywhere. We also encountered some sharks and turtles and just before we surfaced, a manta came back as if to say goodbye to us!

40. Twins: The dive site consists of two rocks with a channel between. This dive site is only for experienced divers since there can be strong currents, surge and the water can be quite cold. Lots of large fishes like sharks, mantas, eagle rays, jacks and trevallies.

41. Langkoi Rock: This is a remote pinnacle to the south of Komodo in the open sea. Its top is about 5m deep with a second smaller pinnacle rising to about 28 meters to the south. Lots of current, swells and down currents but also lots of large pelagics like trevallies, tunas, rays and even hammerhead sharks have been spotted here. Similar to No 18 (Castle rock) but with colder water.

42. Broken Hill: this is a small island on the west side of Komodo island. Mainly visited by liveaboards starting from Sape or coming from southern Komodo. I don't know this dive site, but it is supposed to be a pinnacle with a nice coral area nearby.

