



DIVE & SAIL
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Cināmon
VELIFUSHI
Maldives

VAAVU ATOLL

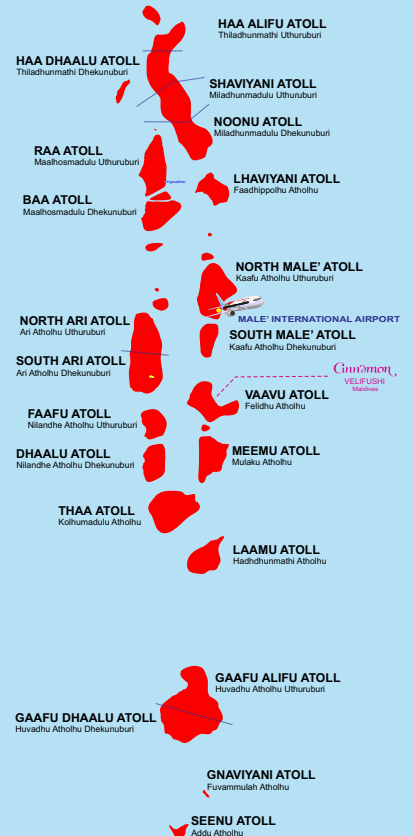
Felidhu Atolhu



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MALDIVES



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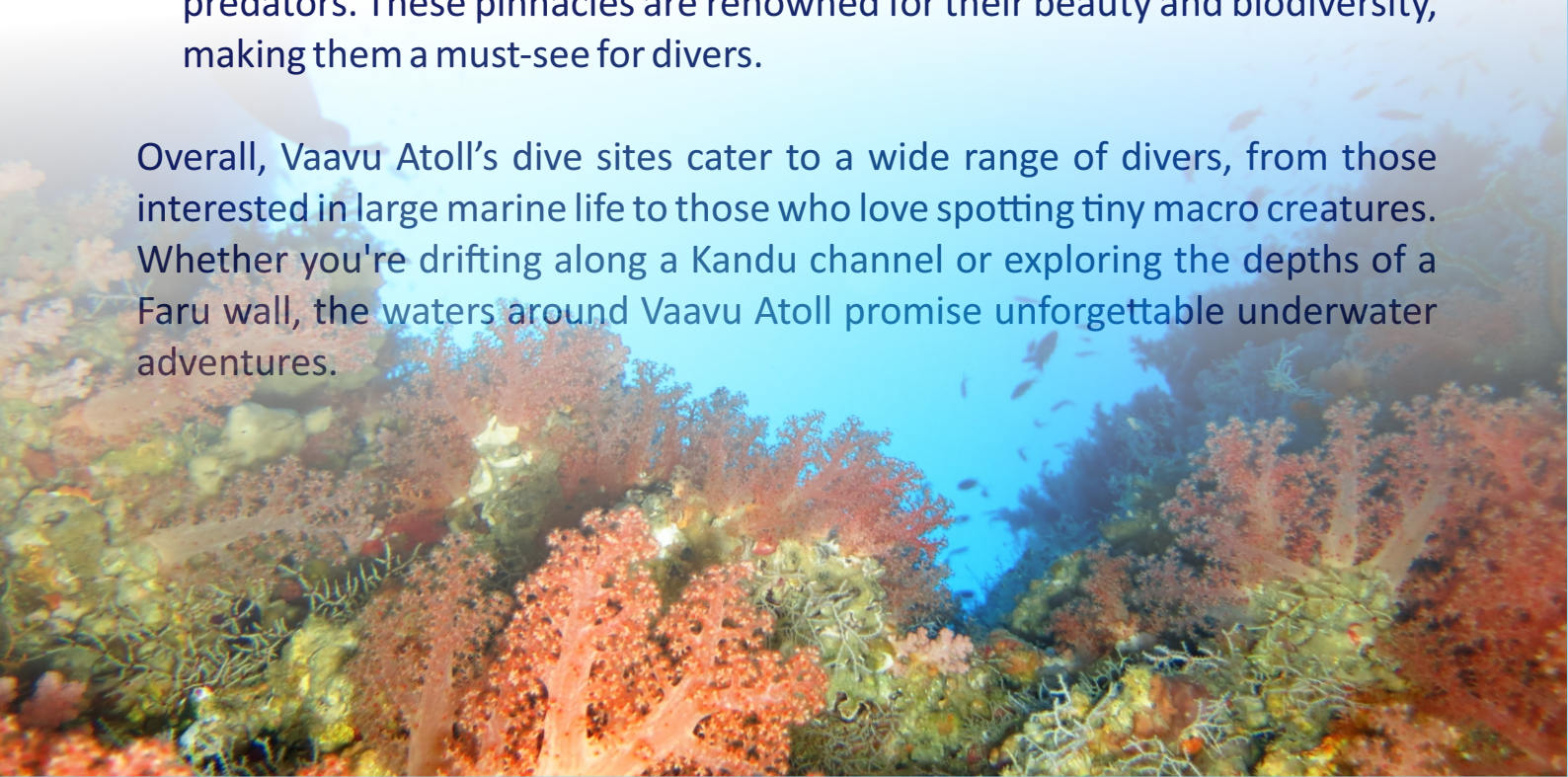
Simply the best

The dive sites around ***Dive & Sail Velifushi*** by Cinnamon Hotels are among the best in the Maldives, offering a diverse range of underwater experiences. Vaavu Atoll, known for its rich marine biodiversity, is particularly famous for its pelagic species, but it also offers incredible opportunities to encounter both large creatures and macro life. Divers can explore a wide variety of creatures, from the tiniest nudibranchs and frogfish to majestic ocean giants.

The two most common types of dive sites in Vaavu Atoll are:

- **Kandu:** These are channels that typically involve drift dives along the walls. Kandu dives offer a thrilling experience as the currents guide divers through the channels, often resulting in encounters with larger pelagic species such as sharks, rays, and schools of fish.
- **Faru:** These are wall or barrier reefs that can be explored as wall dives or drift dives. Faru dives feature dramatic underwater landscapes, including steep reef walls that attract both large predators and colorful reef life. The combination of vertical walls and currents makes for exciting and dynamic diving experiences.
- **Thilas:** are small, submerged pinnacles resembling underwater mountains, typically located a few meters below the surface. Divers can explore around these structures, which often host vibrant marine ecosystems. Thila dives can experience moderate currents, attracting a diverse array of marine life, including schools of fish, colorful coral gardens, and sometimes larger predators. These pinnacles are renowned for their beauty and biodiversity, making them a must-see for divers.

Overall, Vaavu Atoll's dive sites cater to a wide range of divers, from those interested in large marine life to those who love spotting tiny macro creatures. Whether you're drifting along a Kandu channel or exploring the depths of a Faru wall, the waters around Vaavu Atoll promise unforgettable underwater adventures.



01. VELIFUSHI HOUSE REEF



Distance: Velifushi Arrival Jetty
Level: Beginners to All Levels

Type: Wall
Current: Light to Small – can be Strong

Just in front of our Dive Centre, this dive site offers an exciting wall experience. The reef begins at a depth of 3-5 meters and drops steeply to over 30 meters. It is teeming with vibrant fish life, including Moorish Idols, eagle rays, Napoleon wrasse, turtles, tunas, jackfish, white tip reef sharks, nurse sharks, lobsters, and shrimps.

At night, the reef comes alive with lobsters scuttling along its surface, and occasionally, nurse sharks gather for a mesmerizing display. In addition to the crustacean parade, you'll encounter feather stars unfurling their tentacles, swaying in the current, with their claw bases gently crawling over the corals.

On a night dive, you may witness green and rosy Tubustrea coral polyps extending from their calices, reminiscent of delicate flowers. The underwater world transforms into a fireworks display as fish larvae and worms dart in the beam of your torch. For a magical experience, muffle the light against your chest and watch as bioluminescent plankton sparkles in response to the friction of your hands.

This dive site features a vibrant and healthy coral reef, brimming with incredible marine life. In the deeper areas, you'll find stunning corals and a diverse range of fish, including blue-striped snappers, humpback snappers, longnose hawk fish, leaf fish, and an array of anemones. Schools of jackfish and bannerfish add to the dynamic underwater scene, while sergeant majors patrol the reef. This is an ideal location for those seeking a colorful, thriving ecosystem teeming with life at every depth.

02. DHIGGAA REEF



Distance: 2 minutes from Velifushi

Level: Beginners to All Levels

Type: Drift

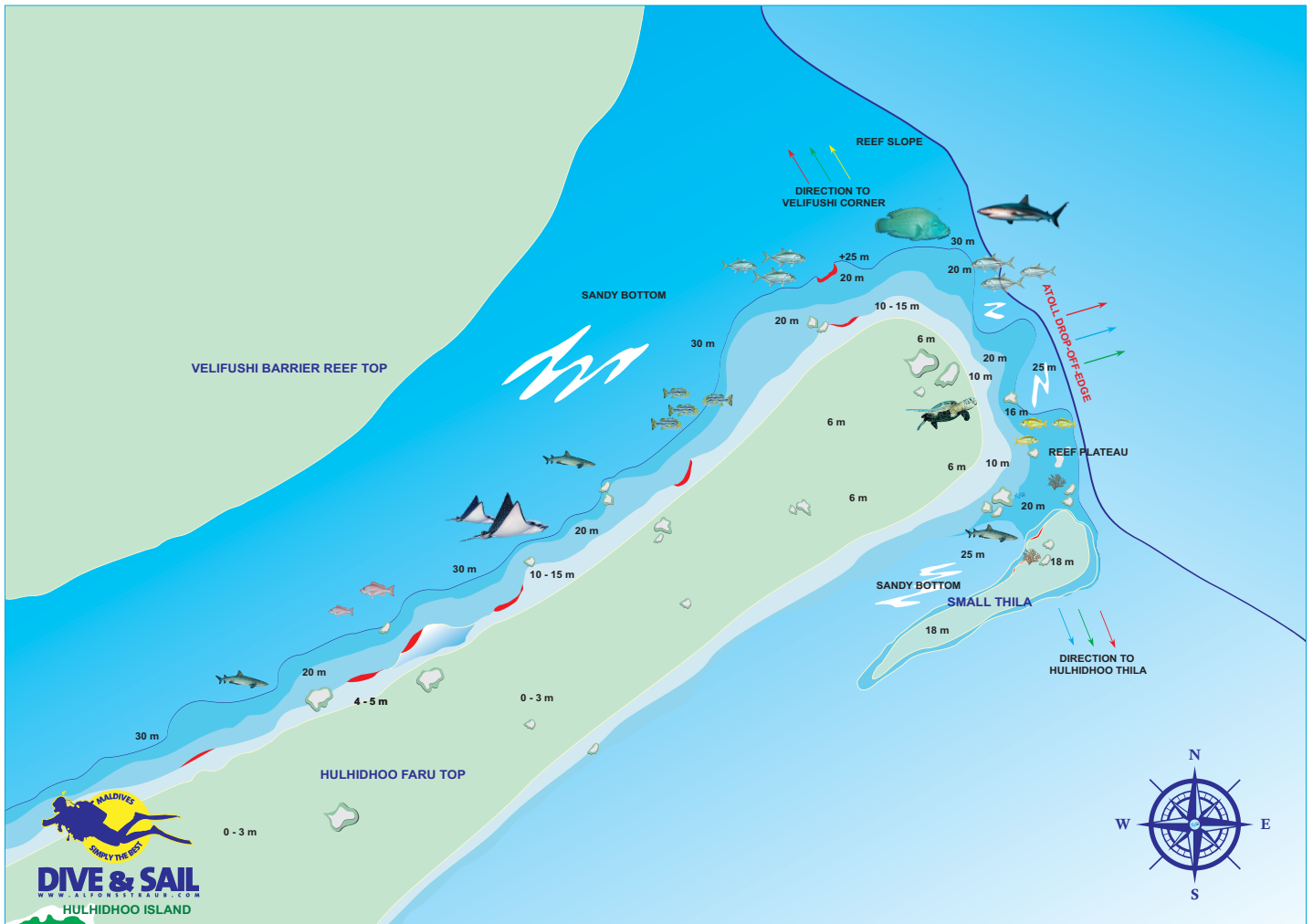
Current: Small to Strong - can be very strong

Dhiggaa Reef is renowned as one of the best dive sites, ideal for divers of all skill levels. This stunning location offers a blend of vibrant hard corals and an abundance of fish species, allowing divers to drift along the reef in peaceful tranquility. The recommended diving depth ranges between 5 to 16 meters, as this is where divers can find small overhangs on both sides of the reef, adding to its charm.

The north side of Dhiggaa Reef stands out, particularly for macro photography enthusiasts. Inside these overhangs and along their surfaces, divers can discover a variety of fascinating creatures, such as glassfish, lobsters, and even larger marine life like napoleon wrasse and white-tip reef sharks. The currents here tend to be moderate or strong, but divers can simply drift with the flow, avoiding the need to fight against it.

With its rich biodiversity and the opportunity to glide effortlessly with the current, Dhiggaa Reef is a truly remarkable diving experience.

03. HULHIDHOO KANDU



Distance: 5 minutes from Velifushi

Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Wall and a Kind of Channel

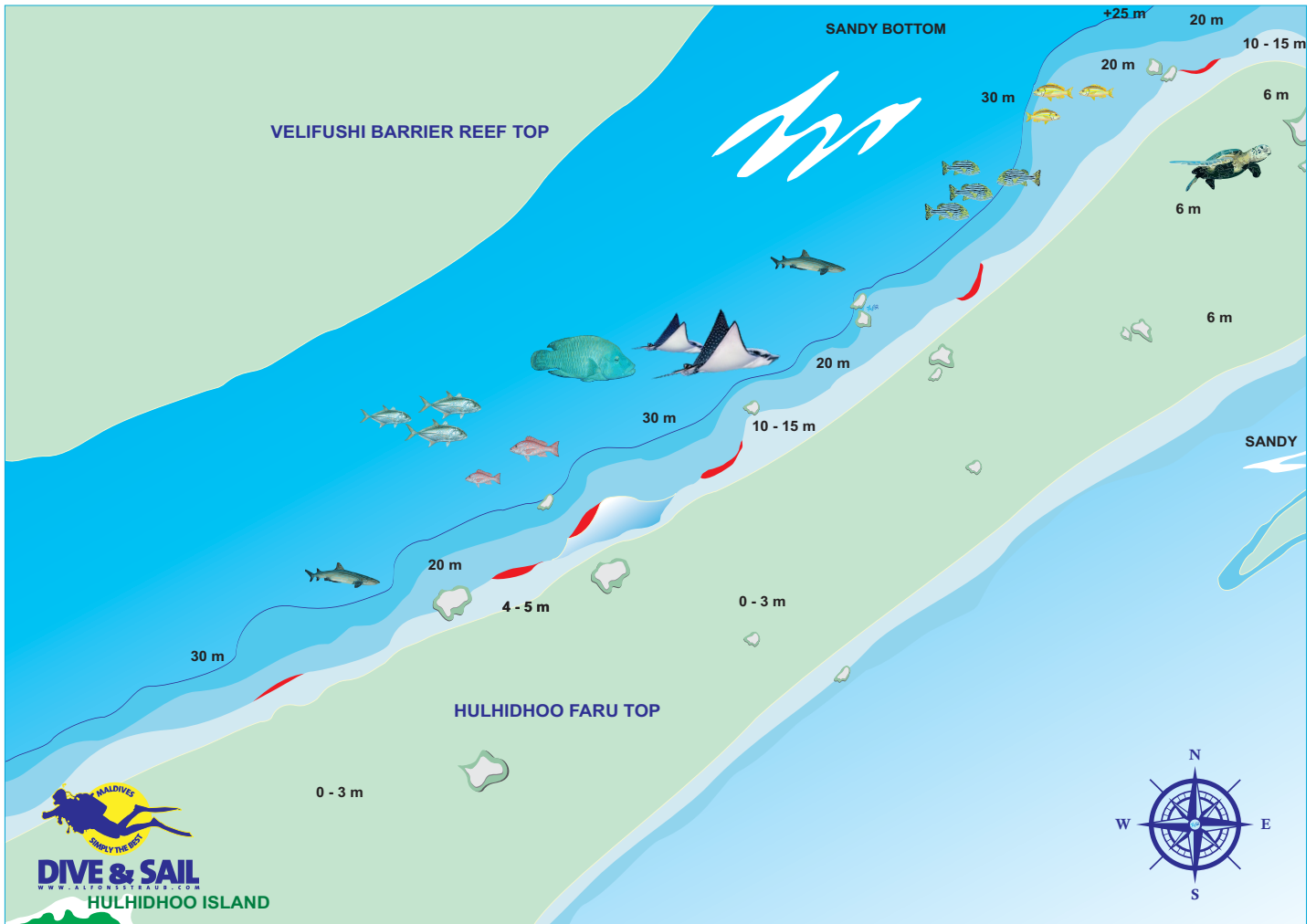
Current: Small to Strong - can be very strong

Hulhidhoo Kandu is a fantastic dive site teeming with marine life, especially when the northeast monsoon brings in a strong eastward current. When the current is moderate, the site is suitable for divers of all levels, though the deeper sections with small pinnacles are more appropriate for advanced divers due to their depth and complexity.

The shallow part, particularly at the main corner of the reef, is vibrant with diverse species like bannerfish, oriental sweetlips, and schools of jackfish. Divers may even encounter a hawksbill turtle here. In stronger currents, it's also possible to spot grey reef sharks and white-tip reef sharks, adding an exciting element to the dive.

While the coral life is average in some areas, the channel section and the corner of the reef stand out with large coral blocks. The top edge of the reef is covered in beautiful table corals, many of which are recovering from coral bleaching, contributing to the ongoing restoration of this ecosystem. Hulhidhoo Kandu offers a varied and rewarding experience, with a mix of marine life, coral formations, and the potential for thrilling shark encounters.

04. HULHIDHOO NORTH



Distance: 1 minute from Velifushi

Level: Beginners to All Levels

Type: Wall / Drift

Current: Small to Medium - can be strong

Hulhidhoo North, located on the northern side of Hulhidhoo Island, is a sister dive site to Hulhidhoo Kanduu. This dive site features a beautiful hard coral reef wall, making it perfect for a drift dive. The reef top begins at a shallow depth of 3 to 4 meters, descending into a deep wall that reaches depths of 28 to 30 meters.

The long, vertical wall at Hulhidhoo North is versatile, offering great dive opportunities for both incoming and outgoing currents. Between depths of 6 to 16 meters, divers can explore numerous small overhangs. As you drift along, you might discover fascinating marine life hidden in these overhangs, such as nurse sharks, stingrays, or baby white-tip reef sharks resting in the shadows. While drifting, take a moment to look into the deep blue or toward the surface—there's a high chance of spotting eagle rays or adult white-tip reef sharks. Hulhidhoo North is also known for rare sightings of whales, with two recorded encounters in the past. This site offers an exciting and varied diving experience with a mix of beautiful coral, diverse marine life, and the thrill of possible large animal encounters.

05. THINADHOO KANDU



Distance: 10 minute from Velifushi

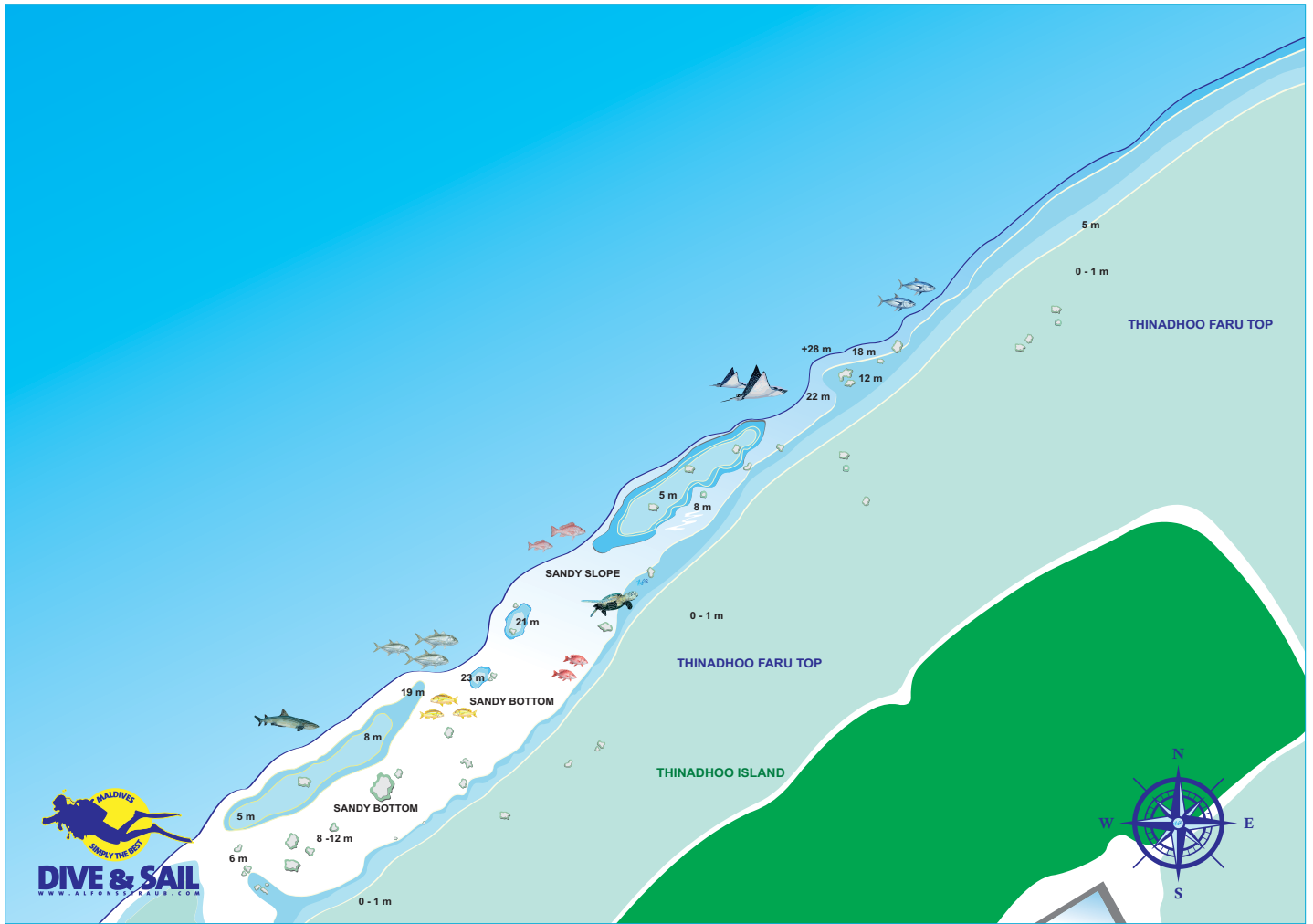
Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Kind of a Channel

Current: Small to Medium - can be strong

Thinadhoo Kandu is a captivating dive site located on the northeastern side of Thinadhoo Island, positioned along the main barrier reef. This channel becomes particularly thrilling during the northeast monsoon, when the current flows into the atoll. The reef top in this area ranges from 6 to 10 meters deep, sloping gradually into the channel between Thinadhoo and Hulhidhoo. The channel's edge drops steeply to around 26 meters, where divers can spot small coral blocks. These structures attract a variety of marine life, including grey reef sharks, eagle rays, stingrays, and an abundance of Indian bannerfish. During the safety stop at about 5 meters, divers may observe nurse sharks, lobsters, or turtles searching for soft sponges beneath the coral blocks. This site is suitable for divers of all levels, though if the current is strong, it's advisable to have some experience with drift diving to ensure safety and enjoyment.

06. THINADHOO GONI



Distance: 08 minute from Velifushi

Level: Beginners to All Levels

Type: Drift Kind of a Channel

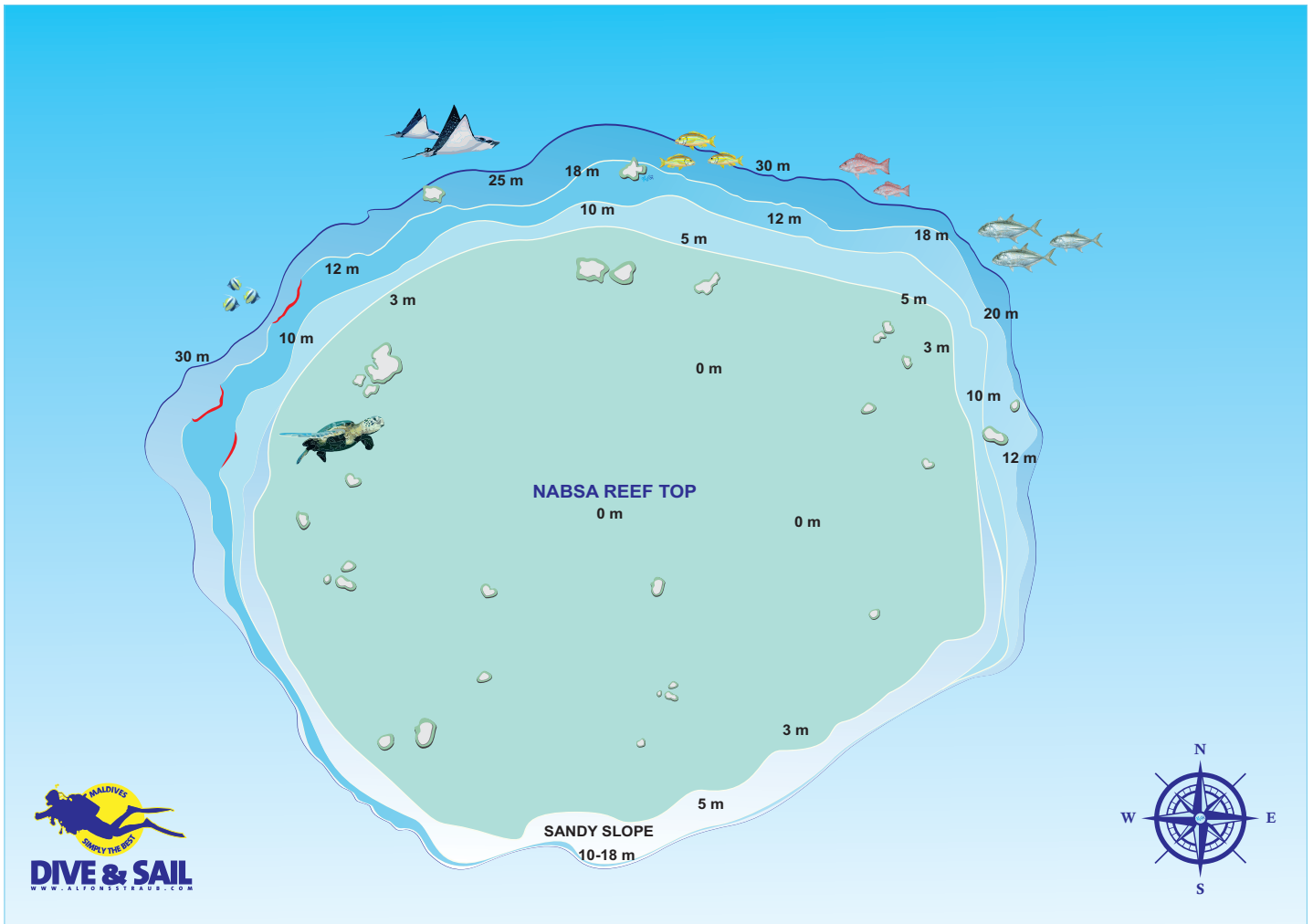
Current: Small to Medium - can be strong

Thinadhoo Goni is a spectacular dive site, named for its unique shape and the local island Thinadhoo. The term "Goni" refers to the curved area of the reef, where the main wall bends toward the blue ocean. This site features some of the most vibrant and diverse coral reefs, including expansive table corals in a range of colors. The reef wall curves to the north into a channel, where the depth drops from 5 meters to 19 meters, forming a narrow pinnacle. Between the main reef wall and the "Goni" area, there is a sandy bottom ranging from 4 to 9 meters, dotted with 3 or 4 coral blocks.

This area is ideal for divers looking for an exciting experience before heading to the main part of the reef, especially when the current runs along the right shoulder. As divers drift along, they may spot a small coral block at 23–24 meters deep, surrounded by black coral bushes. These blocks are teeming with life, including glassfish, anthias, and even baby white-tip reef sharks hiding beneath the small coral blocks that rest atop the main coral formation.

However, it's important to note that the very top of the reef experienced some damage from high water temperatures between April and July 2024. Despite this, Thinadhoo Goni remains a favorite among divers, especially those who enjoy vibrant, aquarium-like coral environments.

07. NABSAM

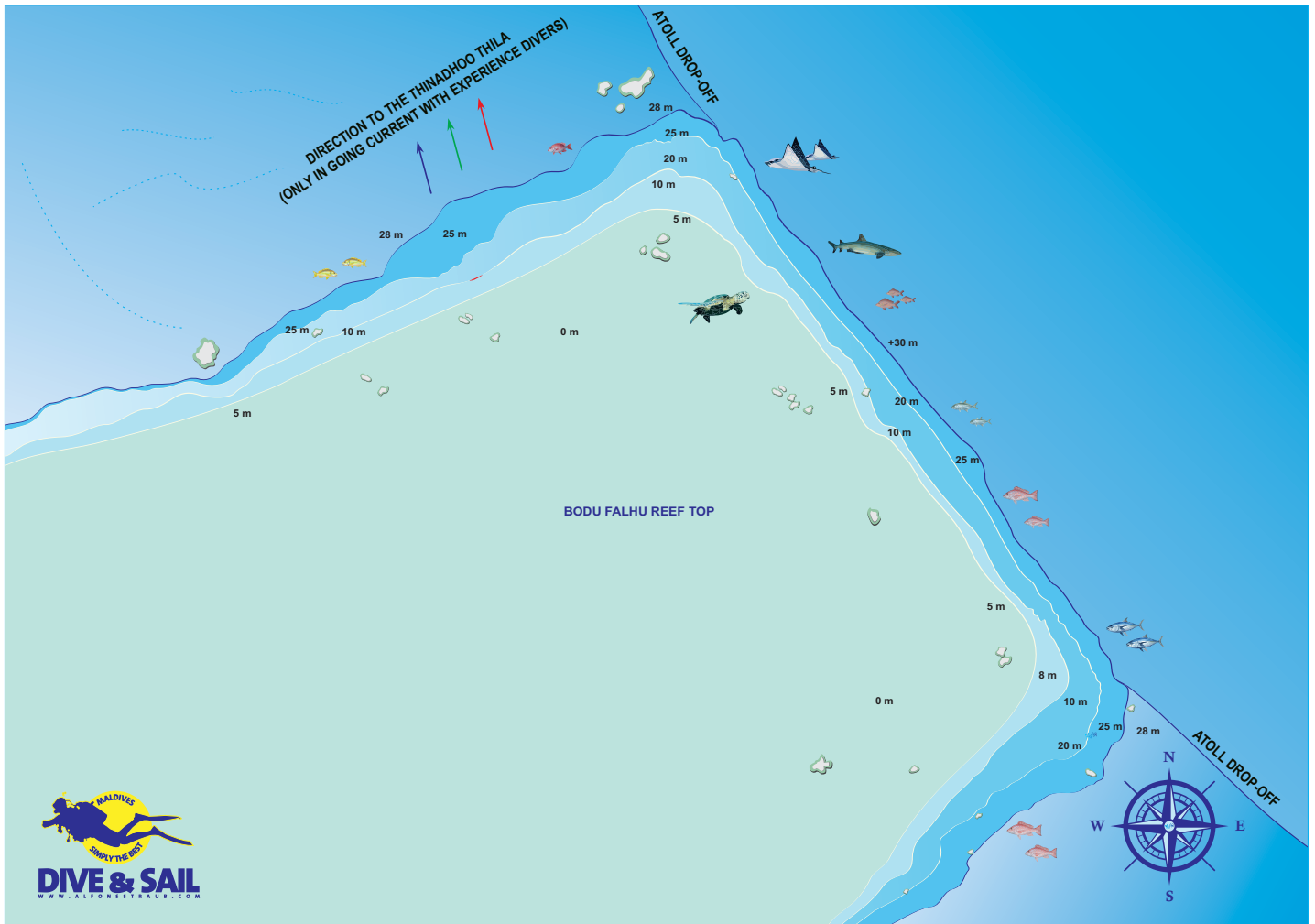


Distance: 25 minute from Velifushi
Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Giri
Current: Small to Medium

This dive site in Vaavu Atoll offers a unique and tranquil experience compared to other sites in the area. Unlike many locations in Vaavu, which are subject to strong currents, this particular spot is located inside the atoll and is well-protected from the current. This means divers can enjoy a relaxed, current-free dive, making it ideal for those seeking a calm and picturesque environment. The dive site features a vibrant and healthy coral reef, stretching from the very top to a depth of 18 meters. The most breathtaking and abundant coral life can be found on the northern side of the reef. The reef begins at just 3 meters deep, and the slope gently extends down to around 28 meters. The area is covered with small coral blocks, creating a perfect habitat for a variety of marine life, including anthias, Indian bannerfish, fusiliers, and even the occasional turtle. For divers seeking a serene and immersive underwater experience, this site is a perfect choice. It offers the beauty of an underwater aquarium, showcasing incredible coral formations and diverse fish life, all without the challenges posed by strong currents. It truly stands as one of the best dive sites for both beginners and seasoned divers in Vaavu Atoll.

08. BODU FALHU



Distance: 12 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Drift / Wall

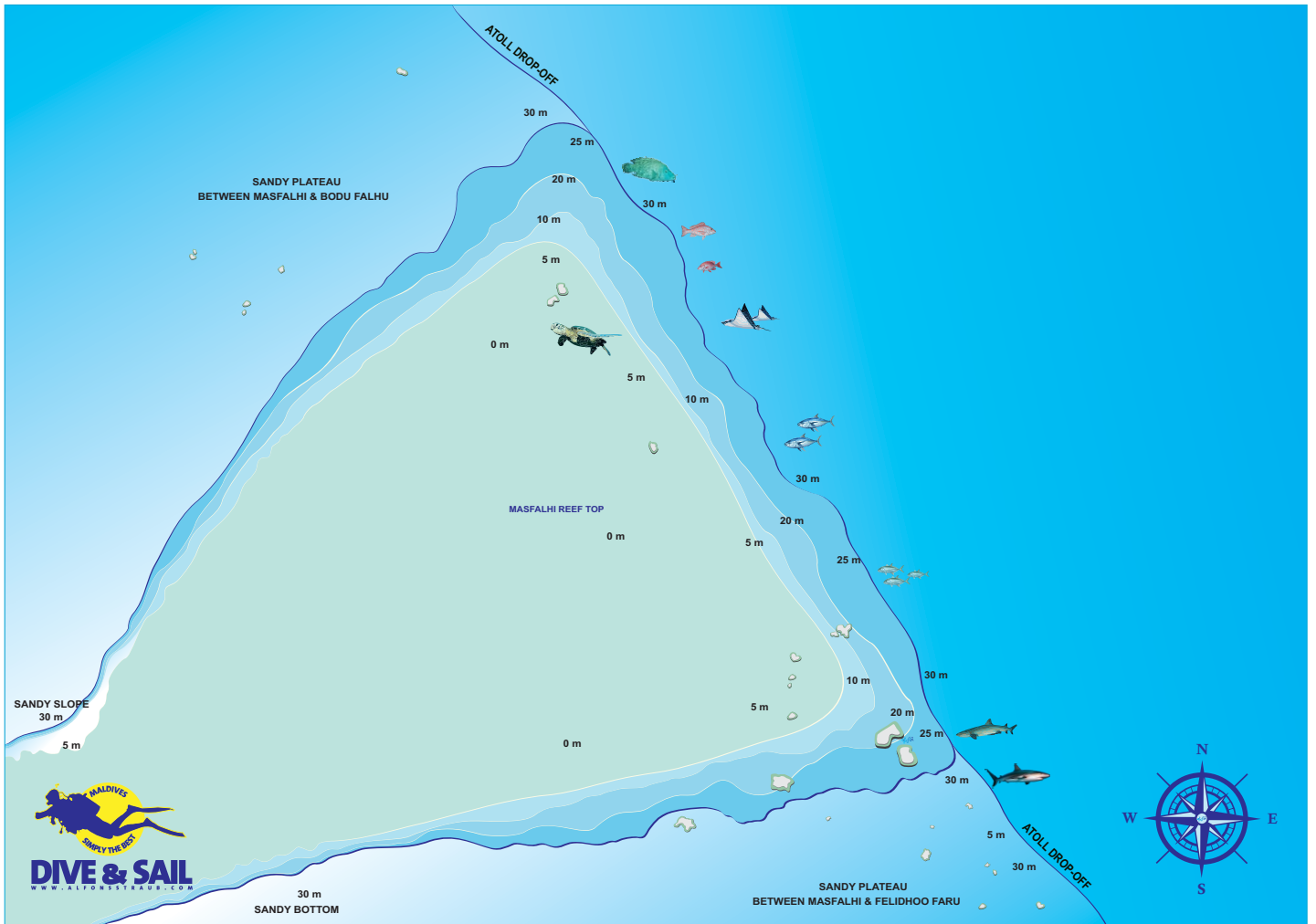
Current: Small to Medium

Bodu Falhu, known as the "big lagoon," offers an exceptional diving experience, particularly along its East side, including the South-East and North-East corners. These areas are renowned for their stunning underwater landscapes and rich marine life. The reef's top begins at a shallow depth of around 3 meters and gently slopes down to about 6 meters, after which it drops vertically to depths below 30 meters.

The reef is completely covered with vibrant hard corals, creating a beautiful and colorful underwater environment. Anthias fish schools gracefully move across the reef, putting on a captivating show for divers and snorkelers alike. Batfish are also frequently seen gathering in groups, seemingly eager to interact with divers. Hawksbill turtles are common visitors to the area, and divers may often encounter them, especially during their safety stop.

During the North-East monsoon season, drifting into the channel area increases the chances of encountering larger marine species, including grey reef sharks, white-tip reef sharks, and eagle rays. On rare occasions, divers may spot oceanic manta rays or schools of mobula rays, adding to the thrill of diving in this exceptional location.

09. MAS FALHI



Distance: 12 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Drift / Wall

Current: Small to Medium

"Masfalhi," derived from the Dhivehi language, refers to a fish fillet, specifically describing how the shape of the reef resembles a fish that has been cut along one side from the tail to the head. This dive site is located near Bodu Falhu, offering similar underwater views and experiences. The standout feature of Masfalhi is the reef formation at the top, as well as the narrow channel at the Southeast corner, positioned between the local island of Felidhoo and the main barrier reef. The reef top and slope in this area are rich with vibrant coral life, providing an exciting drifting experience as divers glide through the channel, moving between the two sides. The site is known for sightings of grey reef sharks, white-tip reef sharks, schools of batfish, unicorn fish, anemone fish, and various multi-colored species of fish, making it a diverse and visually stunning spot for underwater exploration.

10. FELIDHOO BEYRU



Distance: 15 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Drift / Wall

Current: Small to Medium

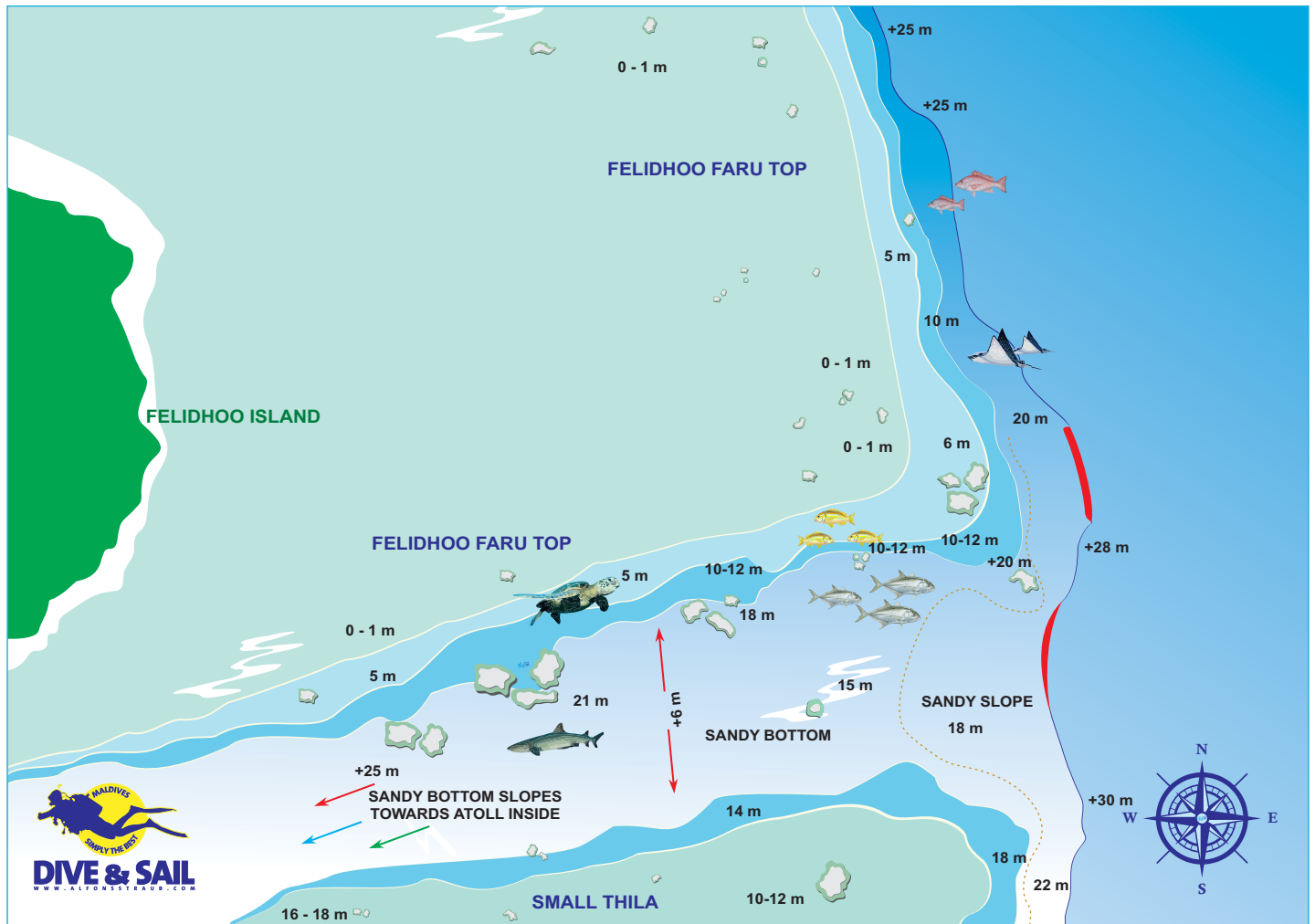
Felidhoo Beyru is an exceptional dive site located at the outer reef of the Felidhoo Island, part of the Vaavu Atoll in the Maldives. This dive site is renowned for its vibrant and healthy coral life, making it one of the few outer reefs in Vaavu where divers can enjoy flourishing marine ecosystems.

The reef starts at a shallow depth of 2 to 6 meters and gently slopes down to about 30 meters before a dramatic drop-off into the depths, reaching over 200 meters. The reef top and wall are abundant with healthy hard corals, gorgonian corals, and whipped corals, creating a stunning underwater landscape.

Marine life here is diverse and abundant, with sightings of various fish species, including fusiliers, rainbow runners, and Indo-Pacific sergeant fish. Dog-tooth tunas are often seen hunting baitfish, while anthias and barracuda swim around the reef. The site is also frequented by larger species such as turtles and eagle rays, often spotted gliding gracefully past the reef.

Felidhoo Beyru offers a peaceful and vibrant dive experience, ideal for divers looking for a relaxing yet immersive underwater adventure surrounded by thriving marine life.

11. FELIDHOO KANDU



Distance: 15 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Drift / Channel

Current: Small to Medium - can be strong

Felidhoo Kandu, located on the southern side of the local island Fedhoo, is a stunning and relatively shallow channel in Vaavu Atoll. The channel's depth ranges from 19 to 23 meters at the edge of the drop-off, sloping up towards the inside of the channel at around 15 meters, and then gently descending to 27 meters with a sandy bottom.

As you drift through the channel, if the current allows, you can spot a narrow, long pinnacle between 12 and 17 meters in depth on the southern side. This pinnacle is home to a variety of marine life, including nurse sharks or baby white-tip reef sharks that sometimes rest peacefully beneath the coral blocks at the pinnacle's tip.

The main channel walls, located between 14 and 20 meters, are adorned with beautiful coral blocks teeming with vibrant marine life. Expect to see Maldivian anemonefish, glassfish, and banded cleaner shrimp, along with larger species like stingrays, eagle rays, and even the occasional spinner dolphins passing through the channel.

Felidhoo Kandu offers an excellent dive for all experience levels, providing an opportunity to explore diverse underwater landscapes and enjoy encounters with both small and large marine creatures in a breathtaking environment.

12. KUDA KANDU



Distance: 25 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Drift / Kind of a Channel

Current: Small to Medium - can be strong

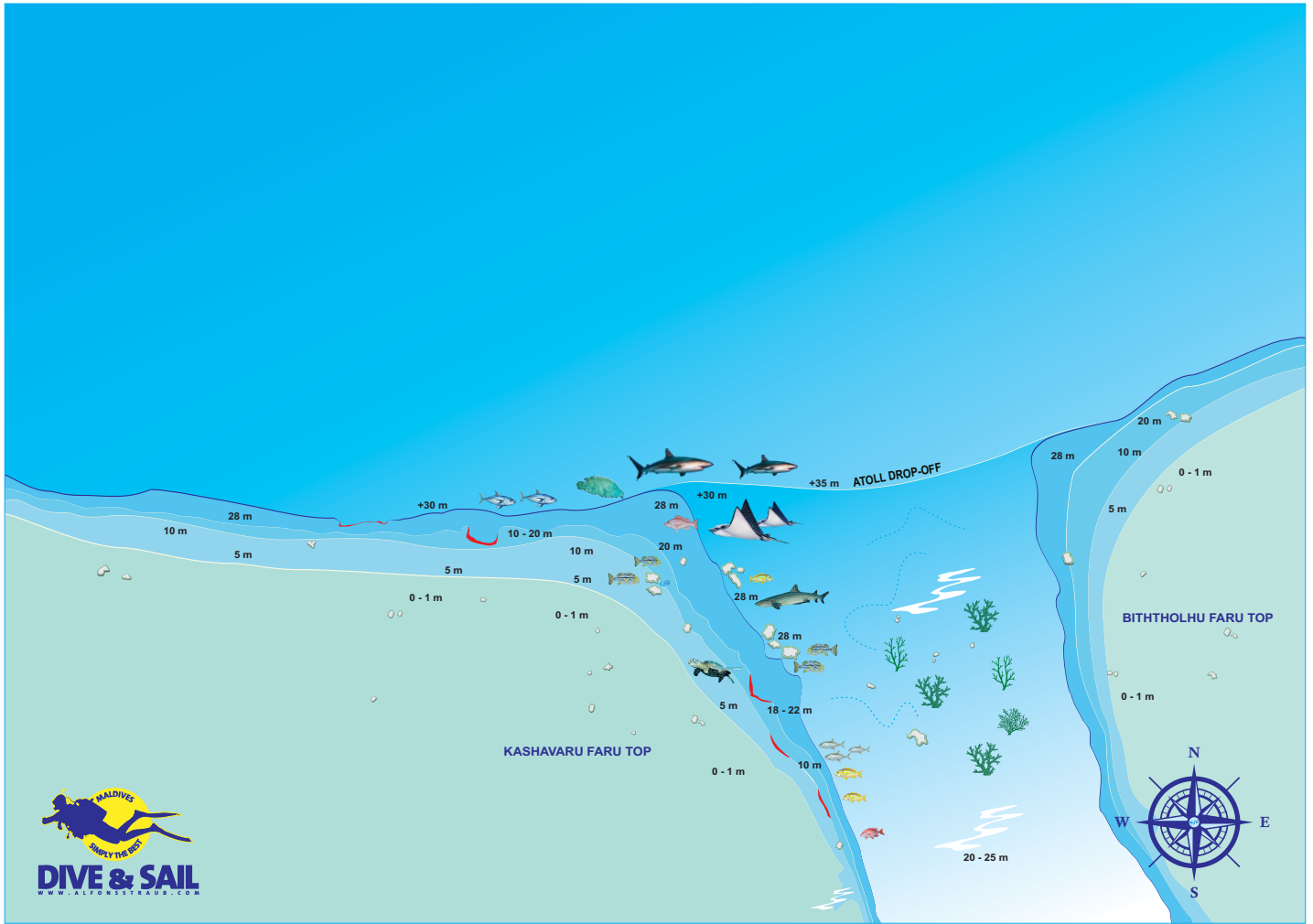
Kuda Kandu, which means "Small Channel" in the local Dhivehi language, is a picturesque and narrow channel located south of the local island Keyodhoo in Vaavu Atoll. This dive site is known for its abundant marine life, particularly in the shallower depths between 5 and 18 meters, where vibrant coral reefs thrive.

For more advanced divers, the deepest part of the channel, located at the northeastern corner, offers an exciting challenge, especially during the North-East monsoon. This area provides a high chance to spot white-tip reef sharks and even eagle rays as they glide through the waters.

In the middle of Kuda Kandu, the sandy bottom lies at depths between 22 and 28 meters. While drifting through the channel, it's worth keeping an eye on the sandy floor, where you might encounter white-tip reef sharks or stingrays resting peacefully during the day.

Kuda Kandu is an exceptional dive site, offering divers the chance to experience a rich underwater ecosystem, dramatic channel currents, and the possibility of encountering fascinating marine species. It's a must-visit spot for those exploring the beautiful waters of Vaavu Atoll.

13. GOLDEN WALL (Kashavaru Kandu)



Distance: +35 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Advanced Level (**NITROX** Highly Recommended)

Type: Channel Dive

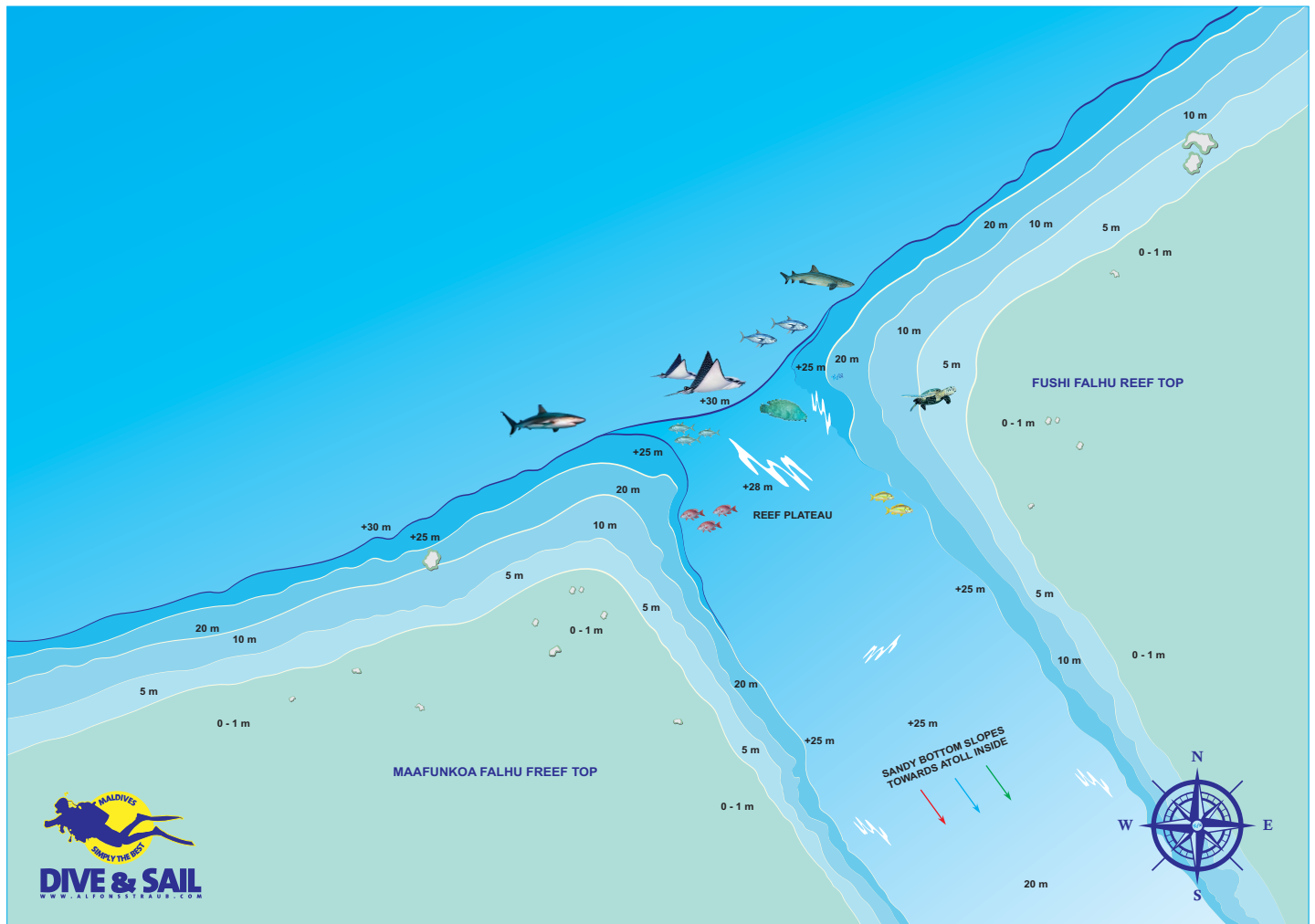
Current: Small to Medium - can be Strong

Golden Wall, or Kashavaru Kandu, is a renowned marine protected area in the Maldives, established in 1995 by the government to preserve the area's diverse marine life and enhance its appeal for diving. This stunning dive site is particularly favored by liveboards and divers exploring the Vaavu Atoll. The main attraction of Golden Wall is its magnificent wall, blanketed in soft corals, with smaller overhangs located between 6 and 12 meters deep. These overhangs are adorned with vibrant sea fans and gorgonian corals, creating a breathtaking underwater landscape.

In the channel between 23 and 28 meters, divers can discover coral blocks, some of which are covered in soft corals, while glassfish, oriental sweetlips, and various other species swim around. The site is home to a range of marine life, including batfish, grey reef sharks, white-tip reef sharks, eagle rays, and hawksbill turtles. These species are particularly common when the current flows toward the Atoll's inner regions.

Golden Wall is best suited for advanced divers, especially those experienced with drift or current dives, as the current can be challenging. However, when the current is mild, open water divers can also enjoy the site, but it is essential to consult with the dive guide for appropriate recommendations. Given that most of the dive is conducted below 20 meters, it is highly recommended that divers have a NITROX certification to optimize their safety and enjoyment during the dive.

14. BEDHDHI KANDU



Distance: 45 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Channel Dive

Current: Small to Medium - can be strong

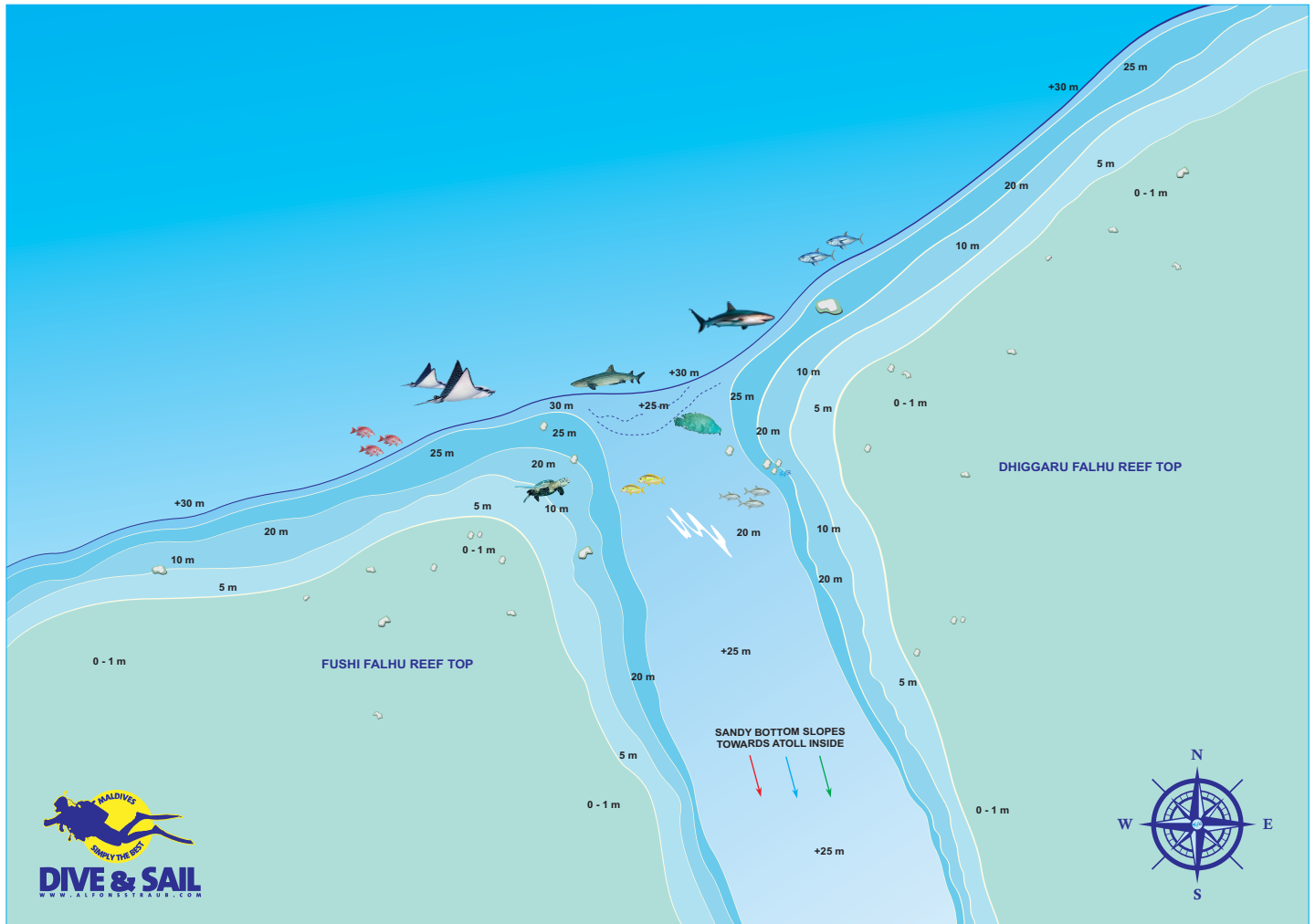
Bedhdhi Kandu, is a fascinating dive destination. Its unique geographical formation, where two barrier reefs are connected, creates a narrow and closed channel. This type of environment, especially with the influence of the North-East monsoon, offers divers an exciting current to experience, making it especially suitable for those who enjoy drift diving.

The channel itself is renowned for its abundance of hard corals, which are typical for many channels in the Vaavu Atoll. These corals provide a stunning backdrop to the dynamic marine life that thrives in this area.

The narrowness of the channel means it's not particularly difficult to traverse, but patience can reward divers with thrilling encounters. It's wise to wait at the channel's corner before making the crossing, as this gives divers the best chance to witness an impressive display of marine life, including various types of sharks, eagle rays, schools of jackfish, tunas, fusiliers, and even Indian bannerfish. Some lucky divers might even experience playful batfish that chase bubbles in a fascinating display of behavior.

This makes Bedhdhi Kandu an ideal site for both experienced and adventurous divers who enjoy a mix of natural beauty, marine life encounters, and exciting currents.

15. FUSHI KANDU



Distance: +35 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Advanced Level (**NITROX** Highly Recommended)

Type: Channel Dive

Current: Small to Medium - can be Strong

This stunning channel is a must-visit dive site, particularly during the North-East monsoon when the current flows from east to west, creating ideal conditions for an unforgettable drift dive. As you glide through the water, you'll be surrounded by beautiful coral blocks and vibrant multi-colored fish, making it a visual feast. For Advanced Divers with experience in currents, the site offers the perfect opportunity for a thrilling drift dive.

When diving here, it's essential to keep an eye on your depth to stay within the safe limit of 30 meters. To avoid exceeding this, it's best to level off around 25 meters, staying in the middle of the water column as you drift with the current. This ensures you can enjoy the dive without risking any safety concerns.

During the North-East monsoon, the site offers the chance to encounter a wide array of marine life, including grey reef sharks, white-tip reef sharks, majestic eagle rays, and the awe-inspiring Napoleon wrasse. While crossing the channel, be sure to look towards the blue depths or even above you, as large pelagic species may occasionally pass through the area. Although sightings of these creatures are rare, they add an extra layer of excitement to the dive, making it an even more rewarding experience for divers.

16. FOTHTHEYO KANDU (Hurahu Kandu)



Distance: +85 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Advanced Level (**NITROX** Highly Recommended)

Type: Channel Dive

Current: Small to Medium - can be Strong

Foththeyo Kandu, also known as Hurahu Kandu, is a remarkable and protected dive site located in the heart of Vaavu Atoll, Maldives. Declared a marine protected area since 1995, this site offers an extraordinary underwater landscape formed through natural processes. The site is situated in a unique channel that connects the northwest corner of Foththeyo Faru with the northeast corner of Fushi Faru. In the middle of the channel lies a small reef (or thila) that gently links these two areas.

The channel features a variety of overhangs at depths ranging from 16 meters to 30 meters, all adorned with vibrant soft and hard corals. Divers will find themselves exploring breathtaking underwater formations. One of the highlights is a massive overhang around 26 meters deep, located near the northeastern corner of Fushi Faru. This is a great spot for those who enjoy exploring overhangs, as it is frequently home to baby white-tip reef sharks and stingrays.

As you dive through the channel, keep an eye on the blue ocean as you might encounter pelagic species such as hammerhead sharks, grey reef sharks, eagle rays, and schools of blue-striped snappers and jackfish. The biodiversity here is impressive, making it a perfect dive site for those seeking exciting encounters with marine life.

Due to the depths and challenging currents, this dive site is suitable for divers with an advanced certification level and prior experience with currents. Most of the dive takes place below 18 meters, and divers are encouraged to have a NITROX certification for a longer, safer dive and to fully appreciate the site's beauty. Foththeyo Kandu is particularly ideal for early morning or full-day dive trips, offering an unforgettable experience for those with the right qualifications and dive experience.

17. VELIFUSHI CAVES

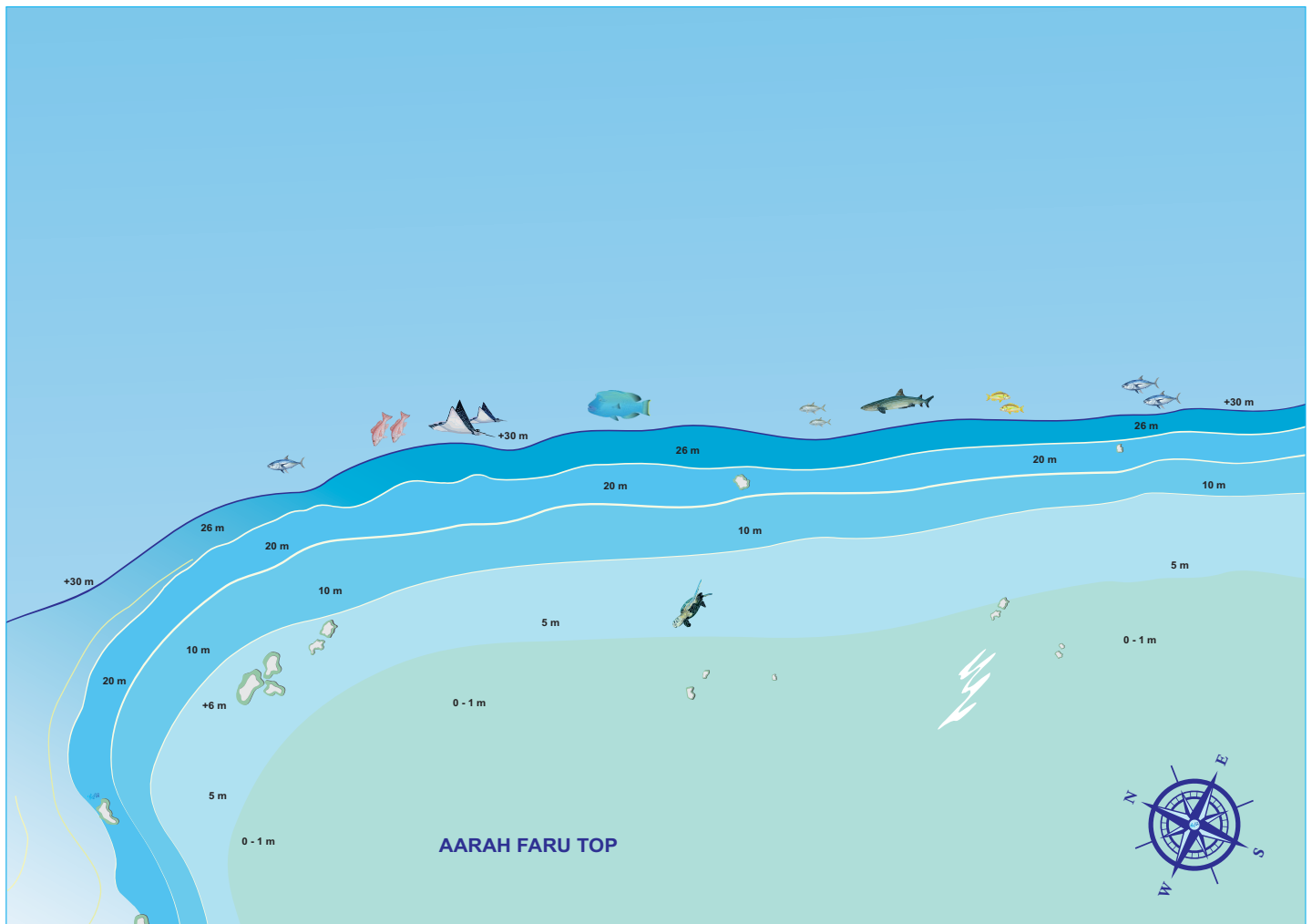


Distance: 5 Minutes from Velifushi
Level: Advanced Level

Type: Wall / Overhangs / Drift
Current: Small to Medium

Velifushi Caves is a unique dive site located on the east side of the main barrier reef, just a 2-minute boat ride from Velifushi. While the Maldives doesn't have true caves, the site is named "Caves" because of the two large overhangs that create cave-like features. The first overhang begins at a depth of around 20 meters, where divers can easily swim through and emerge at approximately 26 meters. The second overhang follows closely after the first and is even larger and wider, offering an exciting opportunity to explore further. To dive at Velifushi Caves, you need an Advanced certification or higher, as the site requires good control and awareness due to its depth and features. It's an ideal dive for those seeking a unique cave-like experience within the Maldives. After exploring the caves, you can ascend slowly and head toward the main wall of the site. This area is home to a wealth of marine life, including eagle rays, napoleon wrasse, white-tip reef sharks, and Hawksbill turtles, which are often seen searching for food in the area. Velifushi Caves offers an exciting and memorable dive experience for those with the right certification.

18. VELIFUSHI BEYRU



Distance: 5 Minutes from Velifushi

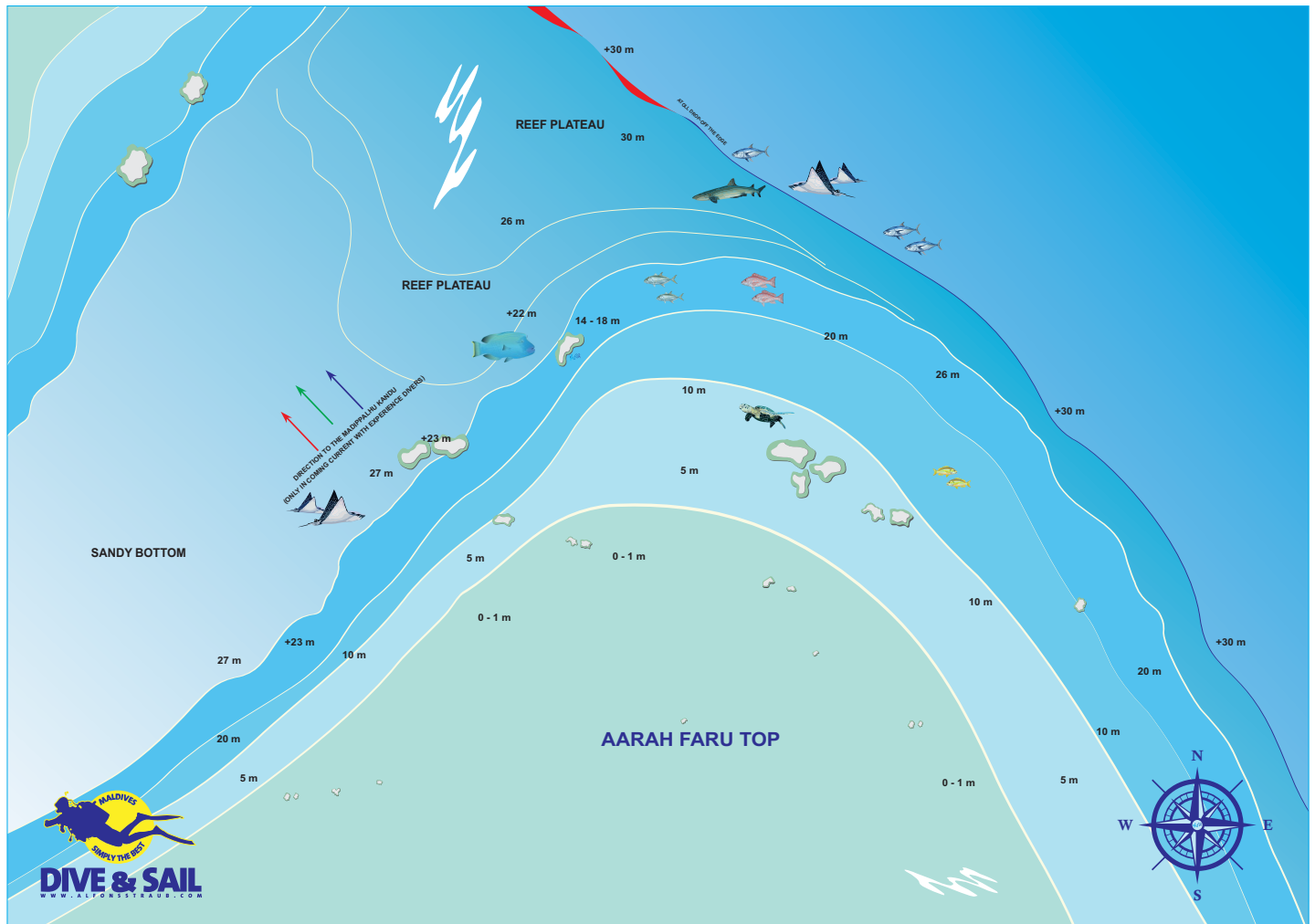
Level: All Level

Type: Wall / Drift

Current: Small to Medium

Velifushi Beyru is a stunning hard coral reef located in Vaavu Atoll, known for its vibrant marine life. The reef begins at a shallow depth of just 2 to 5 meters, then gently slopes down to over 60 meters before dropping off into the deep ocean floor, which extends beyond 500 meters. The reef stretches for about 800 meters from one end to the other, making it a long and diverse dive site. One of the best features of Velifushi Beyru is the calm currents, which make it an ideal spot for divers of all levels. The reef's edge, extending down to 18 meters, is home to beautiful corals and a variety of fish, including anthias, rainbow runners, giant potato groupers hiding under rocks, sergeant majors, damsel fish, parrot fish, fusiliers, and even dog-tooth tuna. Hawksbill turtles are also frequently spotted here, along with many other fascinating creatures of the underwater world. During your safety stop at the edge of the reef, it's a great opportunity to search for octopuses or stonefish hiding in the rocks. However, it's essential to deploy your safety buoy during this time to ensure you are visible to any passing boats and to stay safe. Velifushi Beyru is suitable for both beginners and experienced divers, offering an excellent dive experience with abundant marine life and breathtaking coral formations.

19. VELIFUSHI CORNER



Distance: 10 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Kind of a Channel

Current: Small to Medium - can be strong

Velifushi Corner is a beautiful, sloping and curved section of the Velifushi barrier reef, located on the northeast side, between Madippalhu Faru. It is an exceptional dive site that can be explored year-round. During the North-East Monsoon, when the current flows inward into the Atoll, the corner becomes especially lively. It attracts large pelagic species, such as dogtooth tuna, schools of eagle rays, humpback snappers, oriental sweetlips, rudderfish, red snappers, barracudas, Moorish idols, and Indian bannerfish. Unicorn fish, too, often hover near divers, seemingly enjoying the bubbles released above.

On three different occasions, divers have been fortunate to spot the magnificent and harmless ocean giant, the whale shark, and even manta rays. The coral formations are also remarkable, especially the beautifully structured coral blocks found between 18 to 25 meters deep. With mild to moderate currents, this dive site is suitable for open-water divers as well as experienced divers.

20. MADIPPALHU



Distance: 10 Minutes from Velifushi

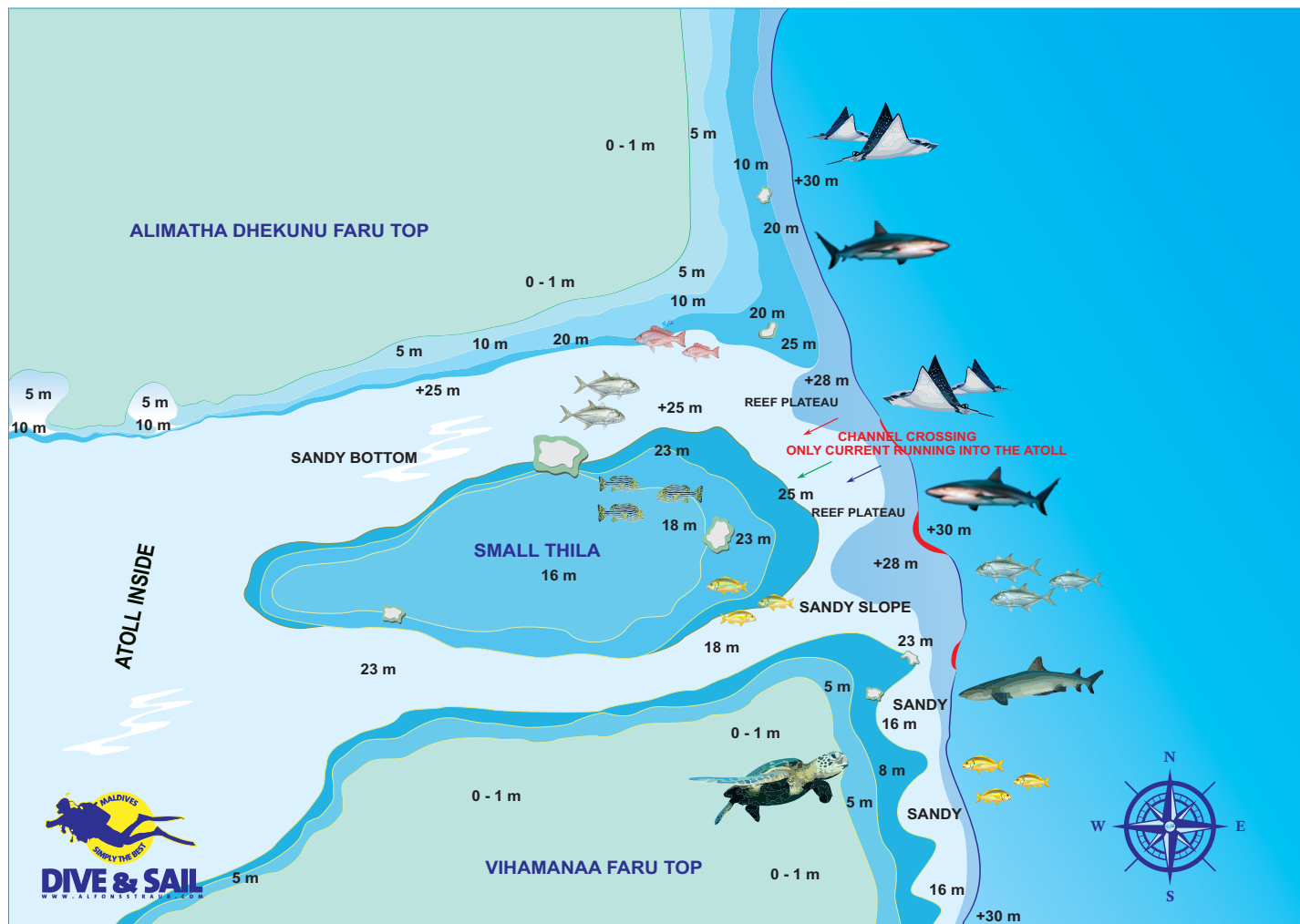
Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Kind of a Channel

Current: Small to Medium - can be strong

Madippalhu derives its name from the massive Madippalhu Faru barrier reef. It is considered a sister site to Velifushi Corner, as the ocean current flows from east to west, allowing divers to cross the channel and encounter large pelagic species. However, diving here requires an Advanced Open Water certification due to the strong currents and the need for excellent buoyancy control. When the current is mild or weak, crossing the channel is not recommended. Because the depth exceeds 40 meters, divers must be cautious and ensure they level off at a shallower depth, ideally not deeper than 28 meters, to manage no-decompression time effectively. If you're not comfortable with crossing the channel or if you're less experienced, the main wall of Madippalhu provides a fantastic alternative. Here, divers can often spot hawksbill turtles, nurse sharks, eagle rays, anemone fish, dogtooth tuna, and even large schools of barracuda. It's an ideal spot for less experienced divers who prefer to stay at shallower depths while still enjoying vibrant marine life.

21. BODU MIYARU KANDU



Distance: +50 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Advanced Level (**NITROX** Highly Recommended)

Type: Channel

Current: Small to Medium - can be strong

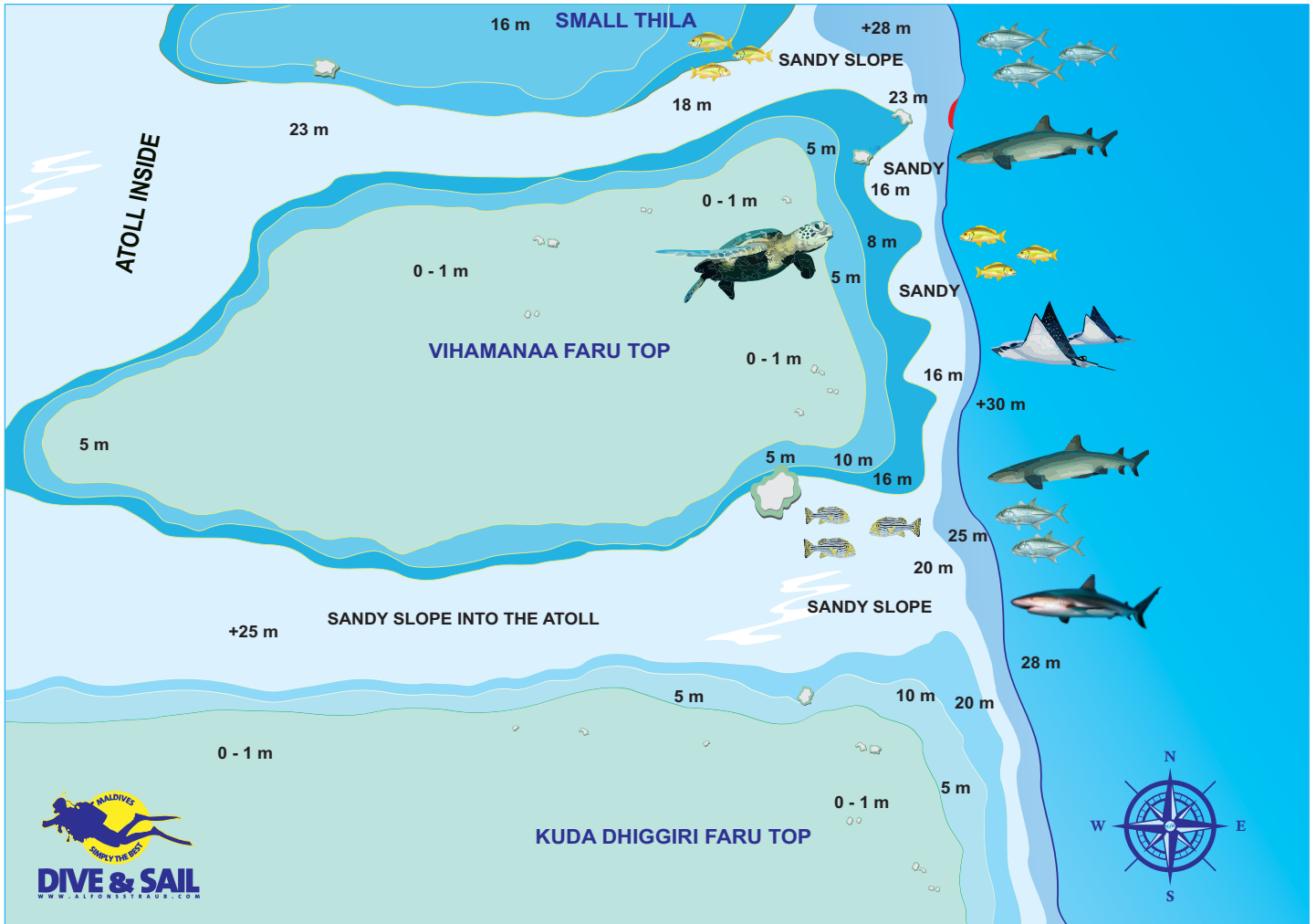
Bodu Miyaru Kandu is a captivating dive site in the Maldives, sharing similarities with the famous Miyaru Kandu, but with its own unique features. While the channel is visually stunning, its main distinction lies in its remarkable reef formation. Unlike Miyaru Kandu, Bodu Miyaru Faru is characterized by a beautiful reef plateau that drops steeply to about 30 meters towards the south, leading towards Vihamanaa Faru, and further on to the Dhevana Kandu. Additionally, between Bodu Miyaru Faru and Vihamanaa Faru, there's a unique pinnacle or reef plateau that drops into the atoll, ranging between depths of 16 to 22 meters, offering divers a mesmerizing view.

During the dive, divers are advised to be vigilant, as the current can be strong. It is considered safe to dive during the North-east monsoon when currents flow east to west, but the conditions can become treacherous during other times when the currents are unpredictable, potentially carrying divers far into the open ocean.

The dive site itself begins with a gentle slope from the reef, starting at depths of 5 to 8 meters, which gradually drops into the channel. One of the highlights of diving here is the abundance of marine life, including grey reef sharks, white-tip reef sharks, eagle rays, schools of barracuda, jackfish, and other pelagic species. The combination of these incredible creatures, along with the stunning underwater landscapes, makes Bodu Miyaru Faru a truly remarkable site.

As with many other deep channels in Vaavu Atoll, the site is best suited for advanced divers with drift diving experience. Nitrox certification is highly recommended due to the depth and the extended bottom times that may be involved.

22. DHEVANA KANDU



Distance: +45 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Advanced Level (**NITROX** Highly Recommended)

Type: Channel

Current: Small to Medium - can be Strong

Miyaru Giri or *Hiraveri Giri* is (among the dive sites of the west end of Raa atoll) formed in a unique formation where dives of three different methods can be enjoyed and this site overflows with beauty. This site is suitable for open water divers and above. However, one thing to be reminded is that it could be tricky in the case of strong ocean current and in the case of moderate current species such as grey reef sharks and eagle rays wander around the coral blocks deep in the site. Hence, it's vital that divers possess the qualification of advanced deep diving and Nitrox diving.

The 09 meters coral blocks which are extended from the south west of the main reef near the south of the reef are very incomparable blocks of corals. A width of 01-02 meters and a depth of about 11 meters are seen between the main reef and the coral blocks and appears as if it's a beautiful road one can walk on. Blue-striped snappers and oriental sweet-lips around the entire site appear as if they are bodyguards. One thing to be noted is buoyancy needs to be controlled well when proceeding in this area. Soft and hard corals and other marine species in this dive site are very wonderfully awesome marine creatures. Species such as Eagle rays, napoleon, grey reef sharks, white-tip reef sharks, sting rays, school of jack fishes and giant travellies are common marine species spotted frequently in this site.

23. ALIMATHA KANDU



Distance: +45 Minutes from Velifushi

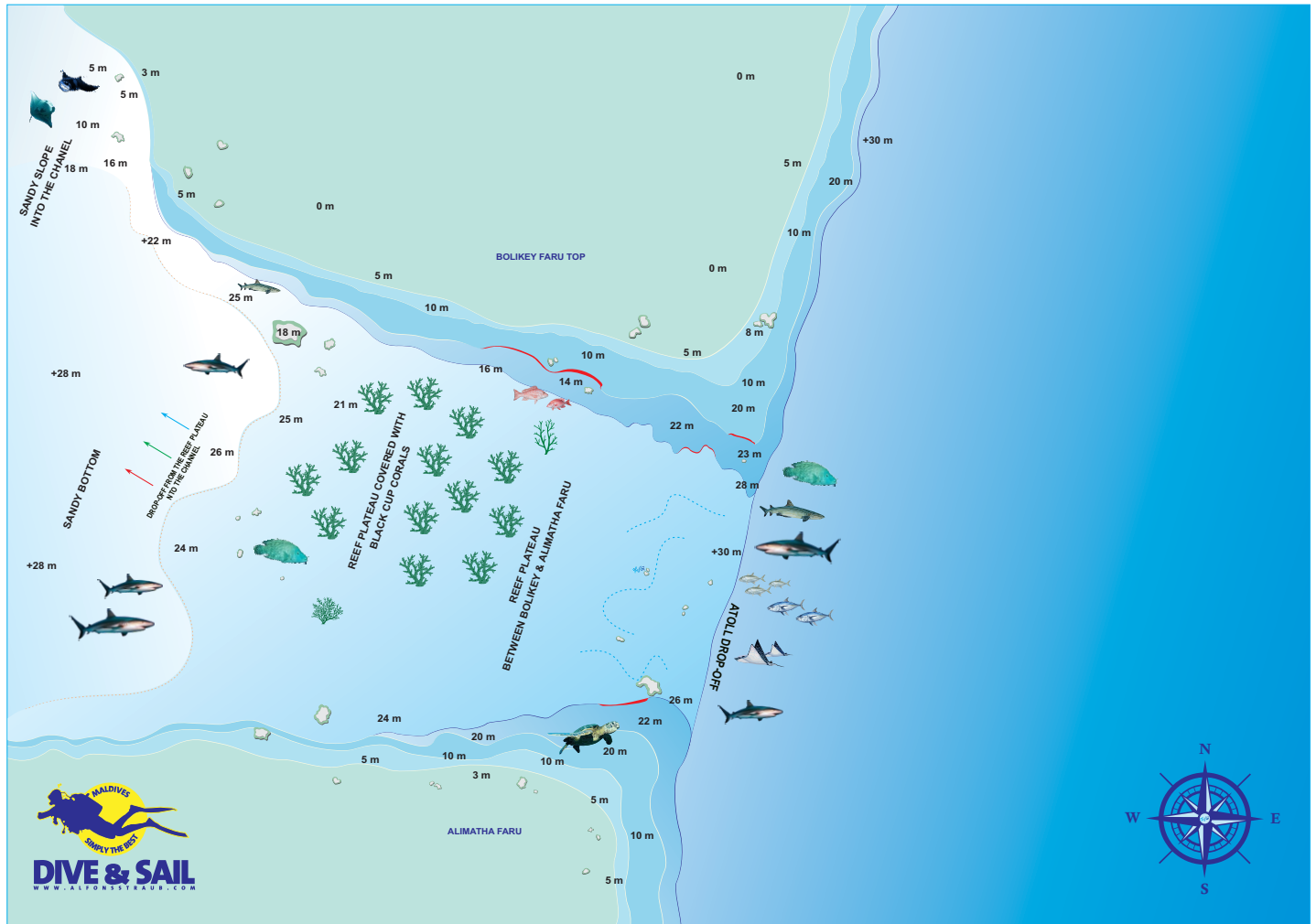
Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Drift / Kind of a Channel

Current: Small to Medium - can be strong

Alimatha Kandu, located on the southern side of the Alimatha resort, is one of the most famous dive sites in the Maldives. It attracts liveaboard divers as well as those staying at local hotels and resorts, all eager to explore the vibrant underwater world of the Maldives. Alimatha Kandu is a top destination for divers seeking to encounter diverse marine life and large pelagic species, including nurse sharks, grey reef sharks, eagle rays, and, during the southwest monsoon, even manta rays. The site features a shallow channel near the Alimatha Jetty, which offers great diving opportunities. A long and narrow pinnacle further from the main wall holds a variety of surprises, including large schools of rudderfish, tuna, emperor fish, and blue-striped snappers. The pinnacle's top reaches a depth of about 10-12 meters, and the sandy bottom between the pinnacle and the reef sits at around 14 meters, with a few scattered coral blocks. If the current is not too strong, it is an ideal spot to kneel or lie horizontally on the sandy area and wait for a nurse shark to approach. While doing so, it's important to avoid touching live corals or letting your fins disturb them, as a mark of environmental respect. After spending some time here, it is highly recommended to drift along the main wall of the Alimatha barrier reef. Whether drifting with the reef on your right or left shoulder, depending on the current, this part of the dive offers stunning underwater views. This dive site is perfect for certified divers, especially those with an Open Water certification or higher. To witness the full spectacle of the site, it is best to dive in the afternoon. Alimatha Kandu's channel is truly a must-see spot during your time in Vaavu, offering a unique and unforgettable dive experience.

24. MIYARU KANDU



Distance: +50 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Advanced Level (**NITROX** Highly Recommended)

Type: Channel Dive

Current: Small to Medium - can be Strong

Miyaru Kandu is a premier dive site in Vaavu Atoll, renowned for its stunning underwater ecosystem and status as a Marine Protected Area (MPA) since 1995. This designation helps preserve the area's rich marine life, making it a must-dive destination for experienced divers. Due to its depth and strong currents, Miyaru Kandu is best suited for advanced or higher-level divers.

One of the unique aspects of Miyaru Kandu is its position as the only channel in Vaavu Atoll that experiences both the Southwest and Northwest monsoons, offering divers the opportunity to encounter a diverse range of marine life year-round. The channel is home to sharks, which are present throughout the year, and offers thrilling encounters with these majestic creatures. However, the site's strong currents, especially during an incoming east-to-west current, can make crossing the channel difficult. For safety reasons, it's advised that divers avoid attempting this when the current is strong.

During the dive, divers may find themselves anchoring themselves with just two fingers, clinging to dead coral as they watch the "shark show" unfold. Alongside the sharks, other marine life such as eagle rays, barracuda, and Napoleon wrasse can be seen in the current. For those who manage to cross the channel, there's a chance to witness a school of jackfish moving gracefully in search of bait, adding to the site's spectacular nature.

Most of the dive occurs between 20 to 28 meters in depth, so divers should be mindful of their no-decompression limits. Due to the depth and challenging nature of the dive, Nitrox is highly recommended. Certified Nitrox divers will have extended bottom time, allowing them to make the most of their dive and safely explore the channel's depths. Without Nitrox, the limited bottom time can make it difficult to navigate the entire channel, especially if air supplies run low.

In summary, Miyaru Kandu offers an exhilarating dive experience for seasoned divers, with the potential for extraordinary shark sightings, dynamic marine life, and strong currents that demand skill and preparation. The dive is not for the faint of heart, but for those who are ready, it provides one of the most unforgettable underwater adventures in Vaavu Atoll.

25. MANTA POINT



Distance: +50 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Drift / Kind of a Channel

Current: Small to Medium - can be strong

Vaavu Atoll is known for its natural beauty and diverse marine life, but it lacks a dedicated cleaning station for manta rays. However, the atoll offers several spots where manta rays are occasionally sighted during the southwest monsoon season. One such location is the Vaavu Manta Point, a stunning shallow site located within the atoll's inner lagoon, in the Bolikey Falhu area. This lies along the massive barrier reef to the north of Alimatha.

Vaavu Manta Point is a prime spot for manta ray enthusiasts, as these majestic creatures often visit the area to feed on plankton, their primary food source. The site features small, shallow reef formations near the main barrier reef, locally referred to as "Giris." These Giris are found just below the surface, extending down to a depth of about 15 meters.

Manta rays are most frequently observed here when the current flows strongly from west to east, bringing an abundance of plankton. Divers and snorkelers flock to this area to witness the mesmerizing sight of manta rays gracefully gliding through the water. However, due to the strong currents, this site can be challenging. It is crucial to follow the instructions of your guide throughout the dive or snorkeling trip for safety.

Even if manta rays are not present, Vaavu Manta Point offers plenty to explore. The sandy bottom and coral blocks are home to a variety of marine creatures, including octopuses, turtles, and the occasional white-tip reef shark.

26. MEDHU KANDU



Distance: +60 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Advanced Level (**NITROX** Highly Recommended)

Type: Channel Dive

Current: Small to Medium - can be Strong

The Medhu Kandu dive site takes its name from the main barrier reef, Medhu Faru, located south of Dhiggiri Resort. This site offers an exhilarating experience but requires specific conditions and advanced diving skills.

To dive at Medhu Kandu, an incoming current (from east to west) is essential. The dive typically starts either at the north corner of Bolikey Faru or the south corner of Medhu Faru, depending on the current's direction. Checking ocean currents beforehand is crucial to ensure a safe and enjoyable dive.

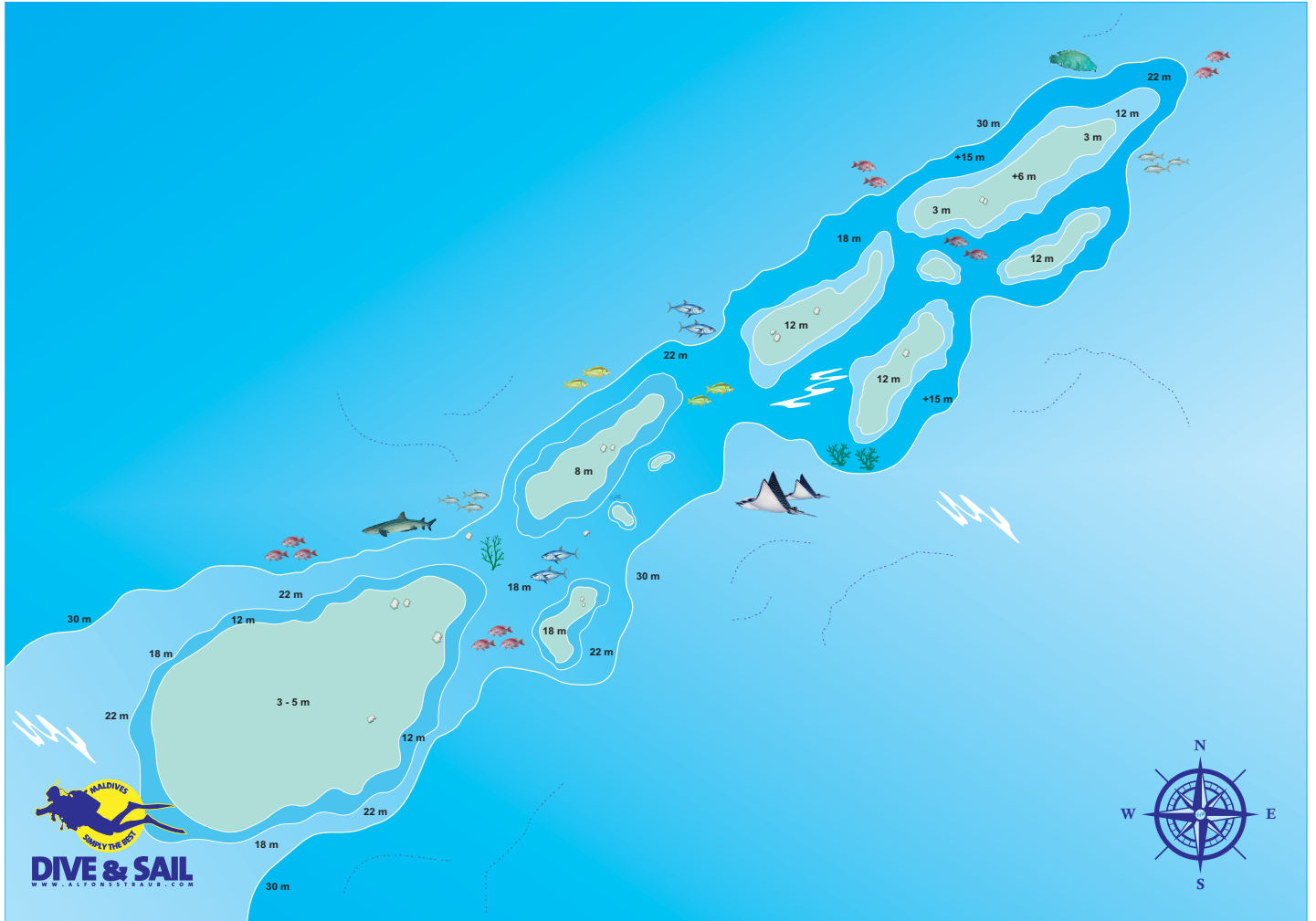
The dive site spans a depth of 18 to 28 meters, with certain areas dropping beyond 30 meters into the channel, providing a mix of accessible and more advanced diving zones. The site showcases a captivating underwater landscape adorned with hard corals and striking coral blocks, creating a vibrant and visually stunning environment. Divers can expect frequent encounters with grey reef sharks, eagle rays, Napoleon wrasse, large schools of jackfish, barracuda, and a remarkable variety of other marine species, making for an exhilarating and unforgettable dive.

Maintaining proper buoyancy is essential, as the dive takes place along the edge of a steep drop-off or channel, with depths exceeding 30 meters. Any lapse in buoyancy control can lead to challenging and potentially hazardous situations, emphasizing the need for focus and precision throughout the dive.

Being Nitrox Certified is strongly recommended to maximize bottom time and ensure safety, as the majority of the dive takes place below 20 meters. An Advanced Diving Certification and experience with strong currents are essential for safely navigating the site's dynamic conditions, ensuring a confident and controlled dive. Always adhere to the instructions of your dive guide to ensure a safe and controlled dive, especially in challenging conditions where attention to detail is critical for safety.

When conditions align, Medhu Kandu becomes a truly rewarding dive site, offering divers the chance to encounter incredible marine life and explore stunning underwater landscapes. It is a must-visit for experienced divers in search of an adventurous and unforgettable underwater experience.

27. THILA BARI



Distance: +65 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Thila Dive

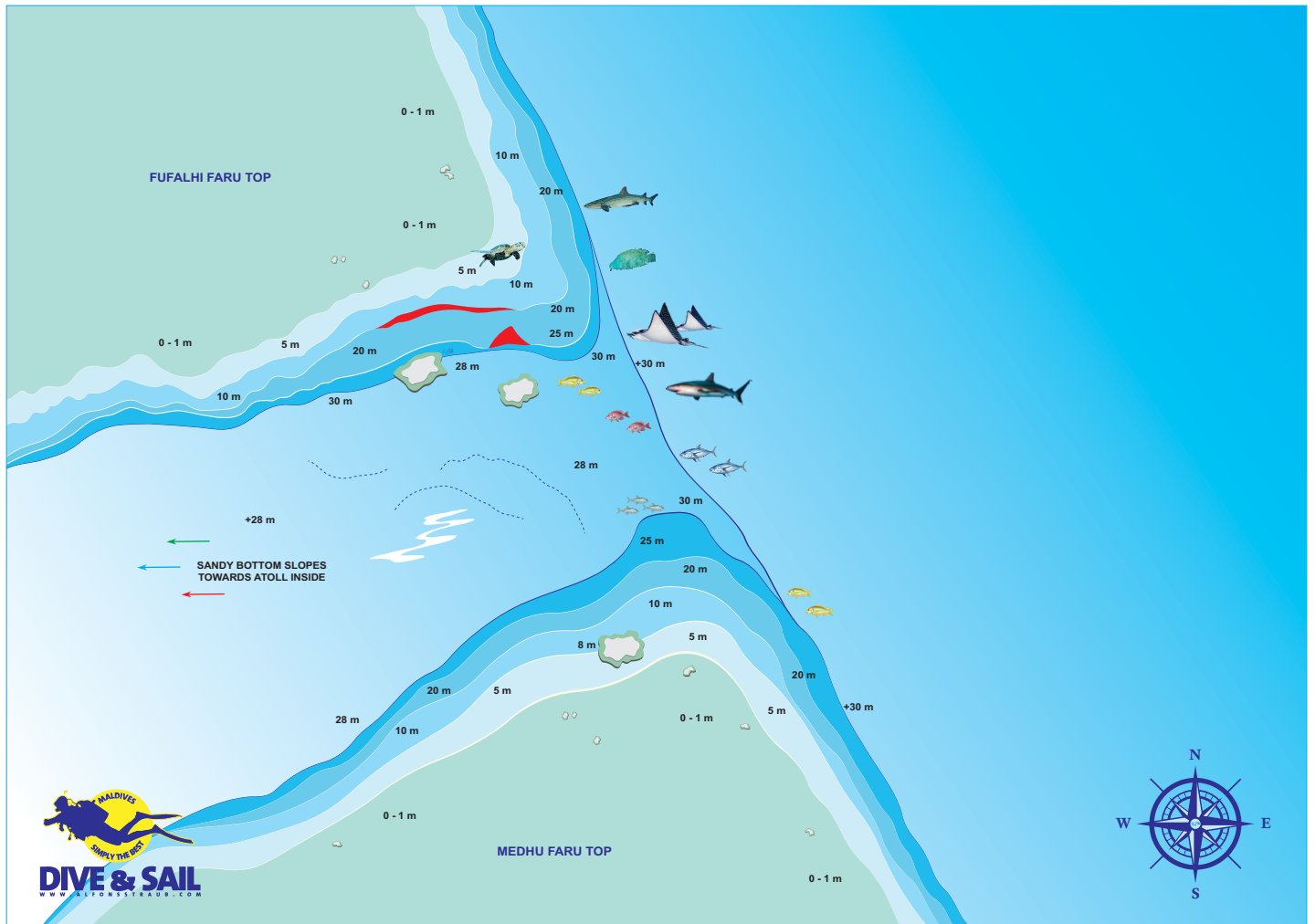
Current: Small to Medium - can be strong

Thila Bari is a series of narrow thilas arranged in a queue within the interior of Dhiggiri Kanduu. These thilas are predominantly covered with hard corals, including beautiful table corals, though some areas are still recovering from the El Niño event of 1997–1998, which significantly impacted coral life in the Maldives.

Located deep within the atoll, Thila Bari can present challenges for divers during strong currents. However, during periods of good visibility and manageable currents, this site offers an incredible opportunity to explore the entire area and enjoy its thriving marine ecosystem without significant difficulty.

The thilas are teeming with oceanic fish life, making it a delightful experience for divers. Common sightings include emperor fish, giant trevally, humpback snappers, schools of blue-striped snappers, eagle rays, and a variety of other reef fish. The combination of vibrant marine life and stunning coral formations makes Thila Bari a rewarding dive site, especially for those seeking a peaceful and picturesque underwater adventure.

28. DHIGGIRI KANDU



Distance: +65 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Advanced Level (**NITROX** Highly Recommended)

Type: Channel Dive

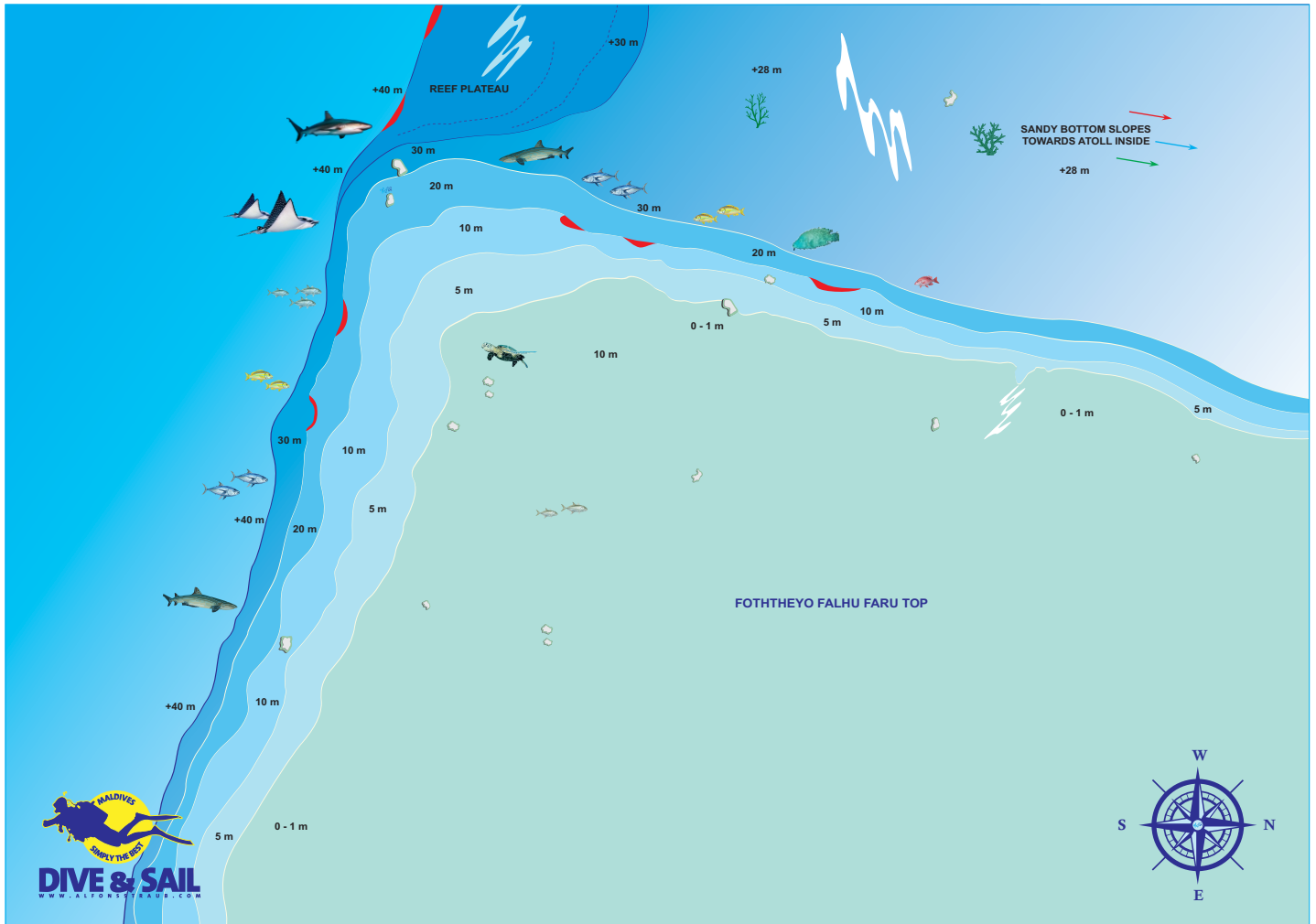
Current: Small to Medium - can be Strong

Dhiggiri Kandu is a prominent dive site located on the eastern side of Vaavu Atoll, positioned between the southeastern corner of Fafulhi Faru and the northeastern corner of Medhu Faru. As one of the primary channels leading into Vaavu Atoll from the east, it is renowned for its deep and dynamic underwater environment dominated by hard corals.

The channel's walls begin at a depth of 5 meters and plunge to around 28–30 meters, creating a dramatic underwater landscape. This dive site is best explored when the current flows eastward into the atoll, as it enhances the activity of marine life. Divers often position themselves at one of the channel's sloping corners to witness spectacular shark encounters or the bustling activity of eagle rays, napoleon wrasse, and schools of jackfish.

Due to the strong currents and depth involved, Dhiggiri Kandu is recommended for advanced-level divers with experience in handling challenging currents. It is also highly advisable to use Nitrox to maximize bottom time and safety during the dive. This thrilling and rewarding dive site is perfect for those seeking an adventurous and action-packed underwater experience.

29. BATHTHI CORNER



Distance: +80 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Drift / Kind of a Channel

Current: Small to Medium - can be strong

Baththi Corner, situated on the east side of the local island Rakeedhoo and at the southwest corner of Foththeyo Faru, offers a stunning diving experience. This dive site is particularly ideal when the current flows into the atoll (from south to north). The corner is adorned with vibrant hard corals, gorgonian corals, small coral blocks teeming with glass fishes, and intriguing overhangs at various depths.

Marine life is abundant, with frequent sightings of white-tip reef sharks, eagle rays, Napoleon wrasse, dog-tooth tuna chasing bait fish, fusiliers, and a diverse array of other marine species.

When diving at Baththi Corner, strong currents can be a factor. It's crucial to follow your dive guide's instructions closely and be prepared to deploy your safety balloon before beginning your ascent. The site promises an exhilarating experience for divers who respect its challenges and marvel at its underwater beauty.

30. RAKEEDHOO KANDU



Distance: +80 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Advanced Level (**NITROX** Highly Recommended)

Type: Channel Dive

Current: Small to Medium - can be Strong

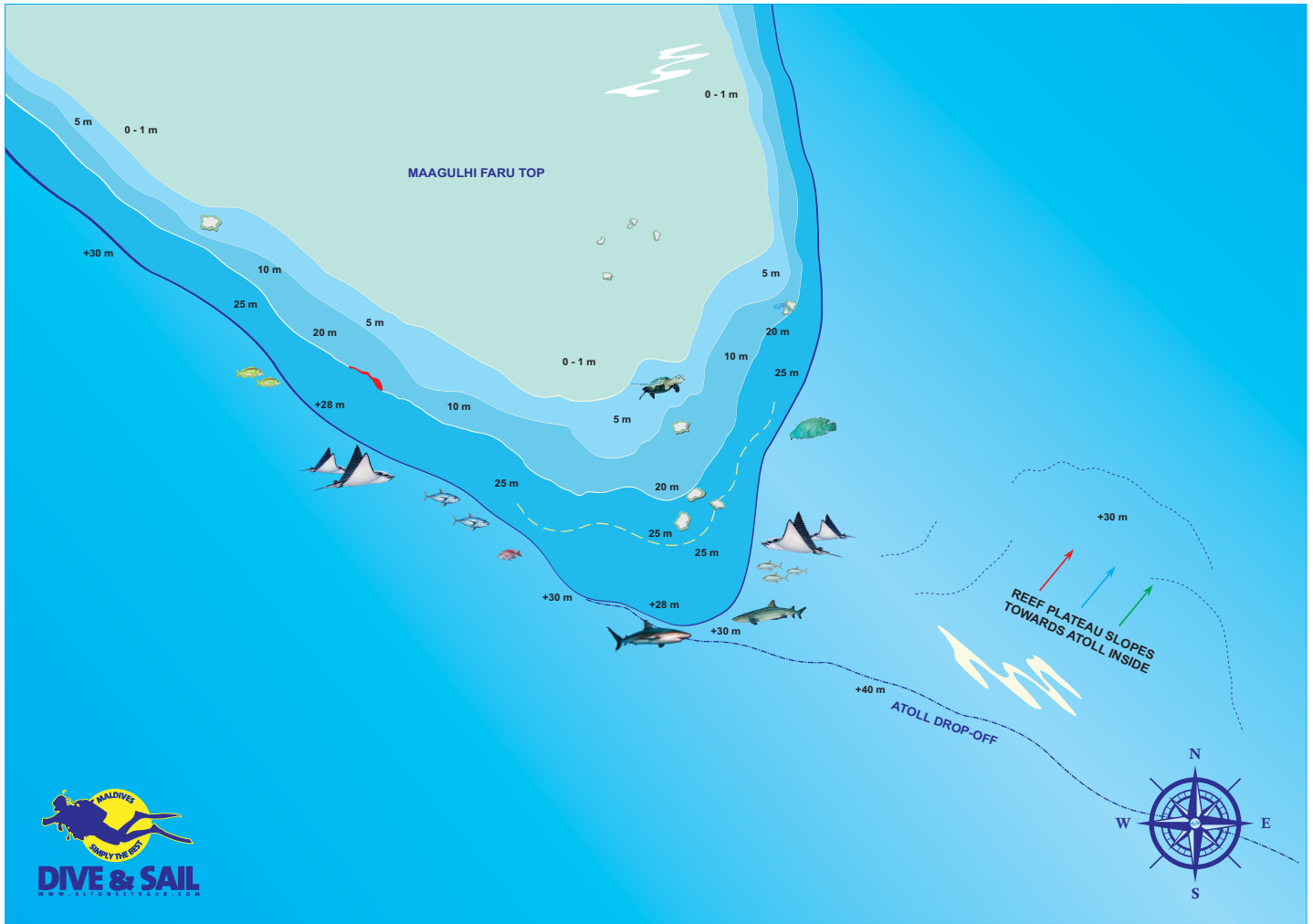
Rakeedhoo Kandu is a renowned dive site, particularly popular among liveboard divers traveling to Meemu Atoll or other southern atolls. This channel dive is celebrated for its breathtaking underwater formations and vibrant coral life, making it a highlight for divers exploring the Maldives.

This site is best suited for diving when the current flows into the atoll, similar to Baththi Corner. Attempting to dive here during an outgoing current can be extremely challenging and potentially dangerous, particularly when the current is strong. It is essential to plan your dive accordingly and adhere to the guidance of your dive leader for a safe and enjoyable experience.

The main wall of Rakeedhoo Faru gently slopes into the channel on its southern side, forming a staircase-like structure with small overhangs at depths of 20-30 meters. Beginning your dive with the reef on your left shoulder offers an excellent starting point, showcasing the vibrant reef tops. These are adorned with massive, colorful table corals, gorgonian corals, whip corals, and small coral blocks teeming with oriental sweetlips, creating a visually stunning and immersive underwater experience.

As you drift into the channel, it is highly recommended to pause at the corner area. This spot often serves as a hotspot for marine life, offering the chance to encounter grey reef sharks, eagle rays, Napoleon wrasse, dog-tooth tuna, fusiliers, and many other fascinating species. Taking time to observe this bustling underwater activity can transform your dive into a truly spectacular and unforgettable experience.

31. MAAGULHI KANDU



Distance: +85 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Advanced Level (**NITROX** Highly Recommended)

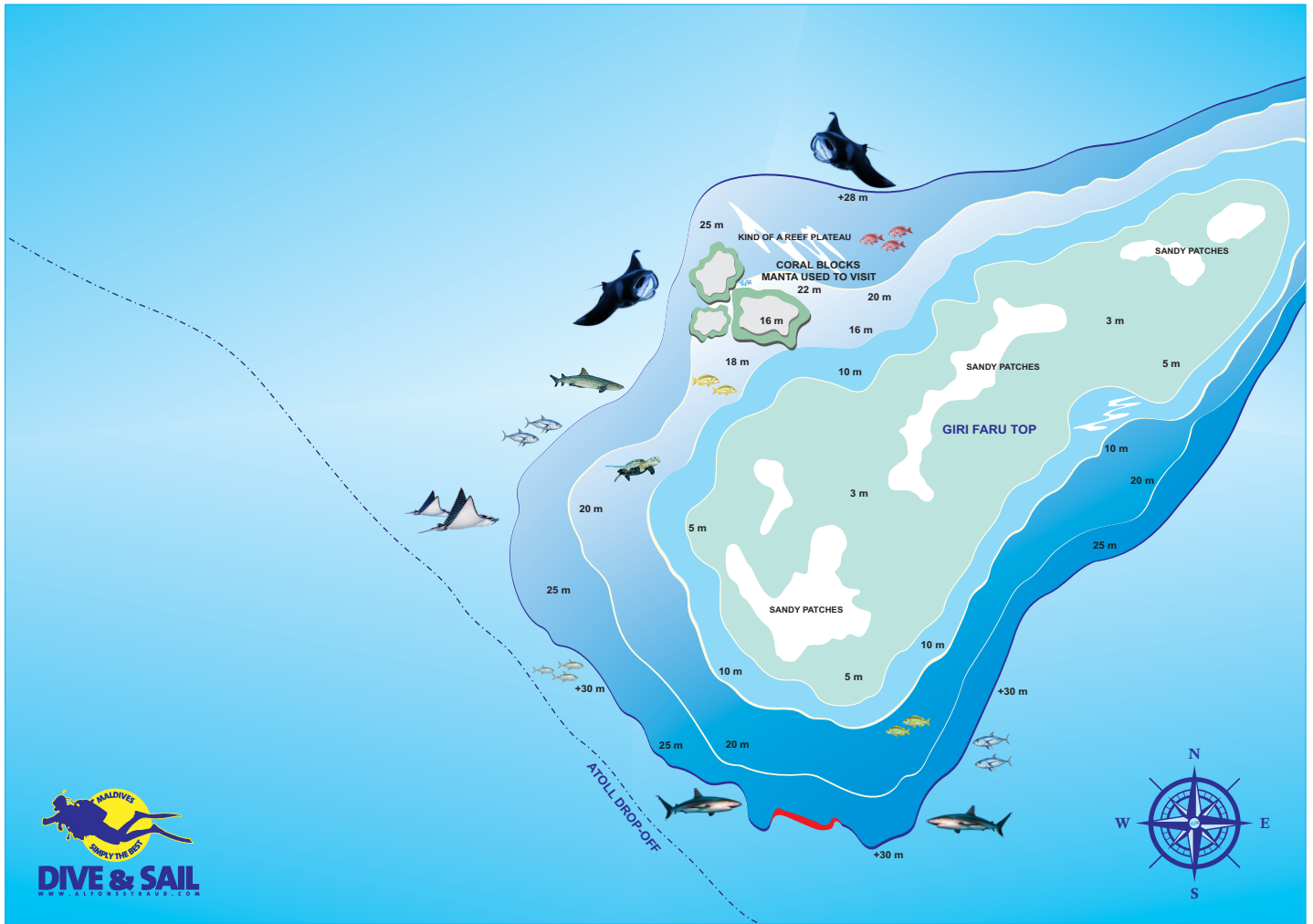
Type: Drift / Kind of a Channel Dive

Current: Small to Medium - can be Strong

Velifushi Corner is a beautiful, sloping and curved section of the Velifushi barrier reef, located on the northeast side, between Madippalhu Faru. It is an exceptional dive site that can be explored year-round. During the North-East Monsoon, when the current flows inward into the Atoll, the corner becomes especially lively. It attracts large pelagic species, such as dogtooth tuna, schools of eagle rays, humpback snappers, oriental sweetlips, rudderfish, red snappers, barracudas, Moorish idols, and Indian bannerfish. Unicorn fish, too, often hover near divers, seemingly enjoying the bubbles released above.

On three different occasions, divers have been fortunate to spot the magnificent and harmless ocean giant, the whale shark, and even manta rays. The coral formations are also remarkable, especially the beautifully structured coral blocks found between 18 to 25 meters deep. With mild to moderate currents, this dive site is suitable for open-water divers as well as experienced divers.

32. GIRI KANDU



Distance: +80 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Open Water or Higher

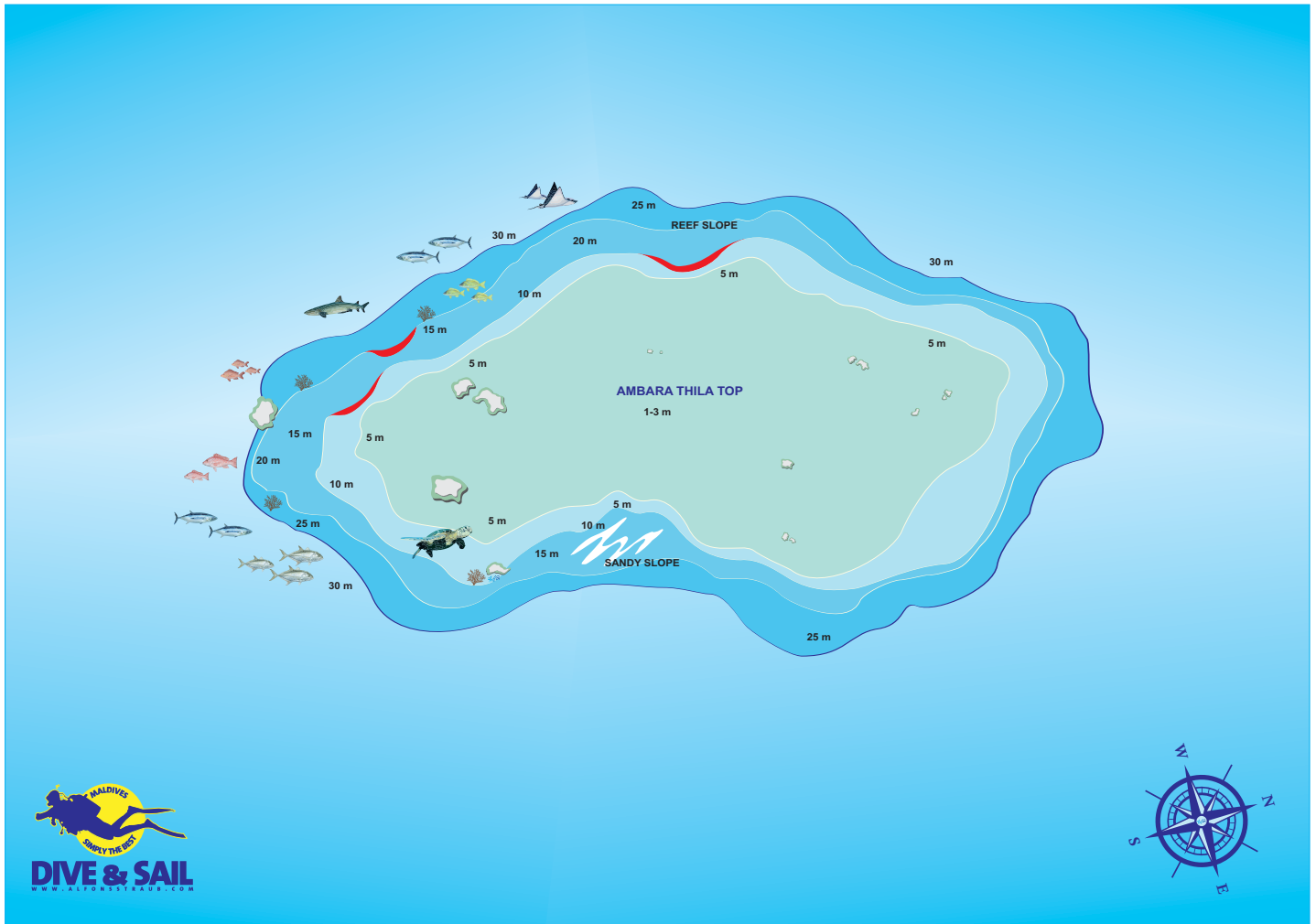
Type: Kind of a Channel

Current: Small to Medium - can be strong

Velifushi Corner is a beautiful, sloping and curved section of the Velifushi barrier reef, located on the northeast side, between Madippalhu Faru. It is an exceptional dive site that can be explored year-round. During the North-East Monsoon, when the current flows inward into the Atoll, the corner becomes especially lively. It attracts large pelagic species, such as dogtooth tuna, schools of eagle rays, humpback snappers, oriental sweetlips, rudderfish, red snappers, barracudas, Moorish idols, and Indian bannerfish. Unicorn fish, too, often hover near divers, seemingly enjoying the bubbles released above.

On three different occasions, divers have been fortunate to spot the magnificent and harmless ocean giant, the whale shark, and even manta rays. The coral formations are also remarkable, especially the beautifully structured coral blocks found between 18 to 25 meters deep. With mild to moderate currents, this dive site is suitable for open-water divers as well as experienced divers.

33. AMBARA THILA



Distance: +70 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Thila Dive

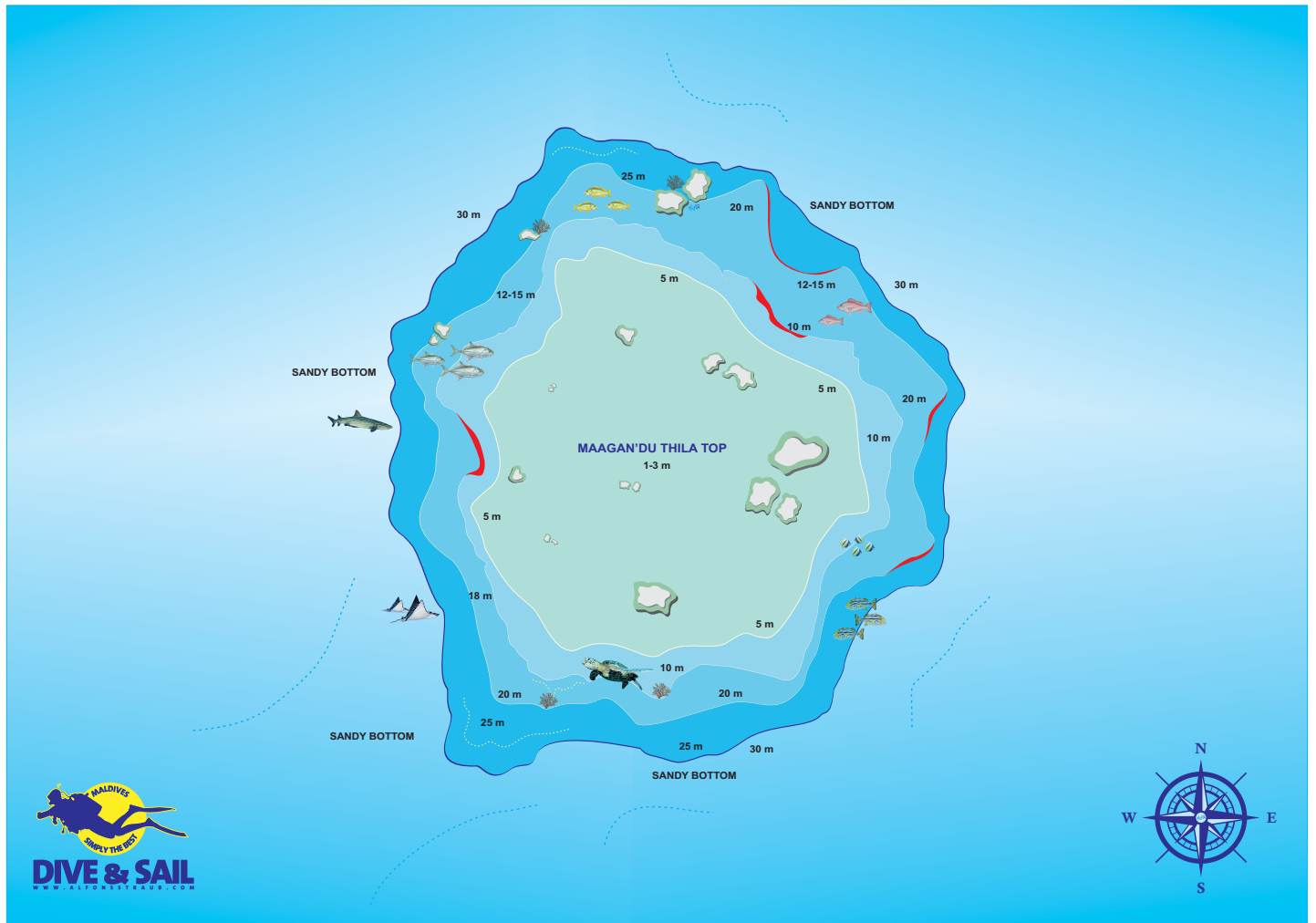
Current: Small to Medium - can be strong

Ambara Thila is a small underwater pinnacle, measuring approximately 54 to 63 meters in length, with its reef top starting at just 3 to 5 meters below the surface. This dive site, located in the southern part of the Vaavu Atoll, is particularly popular among liveaboard divers.

While the entire reef offers an enjoyable diving experience, the best and most recommended route is from the southwest corner to the west side. This section boasts vibrant coral life, coral blocks, and small overhangs teeming with marine activity. The top of the reef is adorned with stunning coral formations, particularly table corals, which make for a visually striking dive.

Ambara Thila is suitable for divers of all experience levels. Common sightings include tunas, napoleon wrasse, and turtles. For those with a keen eye, black coral bushes may reveal hidden treasures like ghost pipefish or frogfish resting peacefully on sponges. If you have the opportunity to visit this site, it is undoubtedly a worthwhile and memorable dive destination.

34. MAAGAN'DU THILA



Distance: +75 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Open Water or Higher

Type: Thila Dive

Current: Small to Medium - can be strong

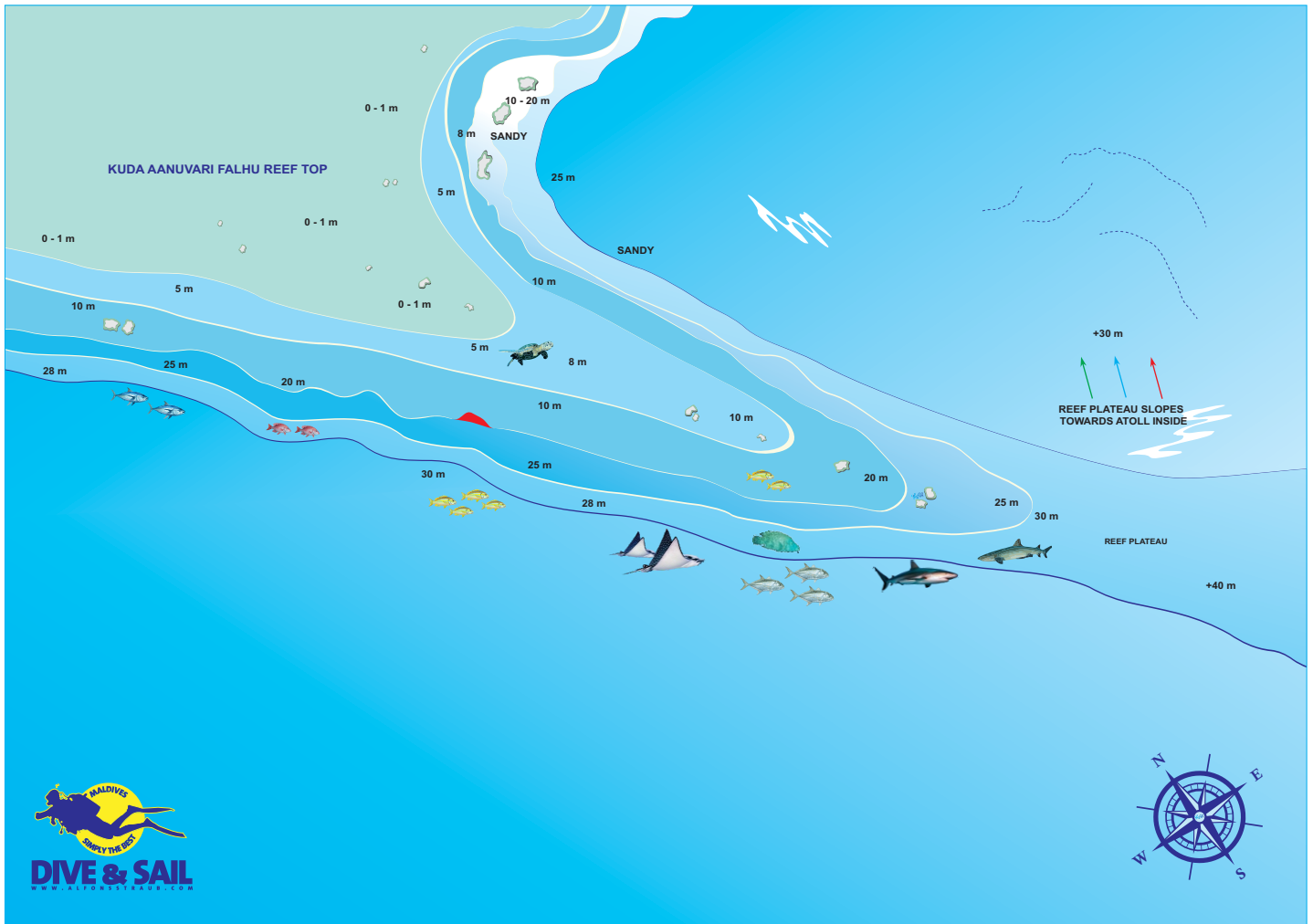
Maagan'du Thila is a small but spectacular underwater pinnacle located northwest of Ambara Island. The dive site is named "Maagan'du Thila" in the local Dhivehi language due to the abundance of Maldivian anemonefish that thrive on its southeastern side.

The top of the reef starts at just 3 meters, with the edge of the reef plateau at 4 to 5 meters, before sloping gently to depths of 28–30 meters. Divers can explore the entirety of the thila, but it's best to proceed calmly and take time to fully appreciate its beauty, as rushing through may cut the dive short in just 25 minutes.

The northwest side of the thila is especially noteworthy, with coral blocks draped in black coral bushes. Common marine life includes tuna, fusiliers, glassfish, turtles, eagle rays, and rainbow runners. During a good fishing season, the entire thila may be surrounded by dense schools of silver sprats, creating a mesmerizing underwater spectacle.

Maagan'du Thila is a fantastic addition to any full-day dive itinerary, offering an unforgettable experience for divers looking to explore vibrant marine ecosystems and unique coral formations.

35. AMBARA KANDU



Distance: ++85 Minutes from Velifushi

Level: Advanced Level (**NITROX** Highly Recommended)

Type: Drift / Kind of a Channel Dive

Current: Small to Medium - can be Strong

Ambara Kandu is a magnificent channel located on the western side of Vaavu Atoll, offering a unique dive experience. The channel's formation stands out compared to others in Vaavu, with the dive centered around the finger-shaped southwest corner of Aanugandu Falhu reef. The main reef begins at 5 meters and slopes gently toward the channel, creating a picturesque underwater terrain.

Ambara Kandu shares similarities with Bathala Maagaa Kan Thila in North Ari Atoll, making it a favorite for divers seeking diverse and vibrant marine life. The optimal dive route is with the reef on your left shoulder, diving when the current flows westward into the atoll. This setup allows divers to fully appreciate the channel's beauty and its bustling marine ecosystem.

When the current is strong, Ambara Kandu comes alive with activity. Sightings often include grey reef sharks, white-tip reef sharks, eagle rays, napoleon wrasse, and schools of mackerel scads. Dogtooth tuna chasing baitfish adds an exhilarating touch to the dive. This channel is a must-visit for those eager to witness dynamic underwater action and stunning marine biodiversity.