

ATTRACTIONS OUT OF TOWN

Hawaii Beach is located at Kampong Bakam, a 15 minute drive from Miri. The entrance is in the village next to the bus stop, and a wooden footbridge leads to the palm-fringed beach. Picnic and barbecue facilities can be provided for a small charge.

Amateur geologist will be fascinated by the **Airport Road Outcrop**, a raised outcrop of layered laterite and other soft rocks that clearly illustrate how the surrounding land was formed and how Miri rose from the sea over the last 10-15 million years. Just get your taxi driver to make a brief stop on the way to or from the airport.

The **Miri Crocodile Farm** at Kuala Baram, 24km from Miri, is home to more than 1,000 estuarine crocodiles and false gharials, and also features a snake house and a small zoo. The farm is fully CITES registered. Open daily 9am to 6pm.

The **Luak Bay Esplanade**, 11km south of town, has an attractive white sand beach, making it a popular spot for picnics and barbecues, and probably the best spot in Miri to enjoy the spectacular tropical sunsets.

Further down the coast towards Bekenu are a number of attractive casuarina-fringed beaches – **Bungai Beach**, **Sibuti Beach** and **Peliau Beach** – that are ideal for picnicking. There are around an hour's drive if you have your own transport, or take Miri Bus No. 13.

DIVING

Miri is fast becoming a popular dive destination, due to an abundance of pristine patch reefs that make up the Miri-Sibuti Reef Marine Park, lying at depths from 7 to 30 metres with average visibility ranging from 10 to 30 metres. There are also some interesting wreck dives. The best time to dive is from March to August, but diving is available all year round.

The diversity and accessibility of corals and other marine life on the reefs is amongst the best in the region. Hard and soft corals cover the entire reefs, with abundant gorgonians, sea-whips, anemones, sponges and crinoids. Angel fish, butterfly fish, fusiliers, groupers, stingrays, trigger fish, parrot fish, wrasses are among the numerous reef species that can be seen and over 40 species of nudibranch have been recorded.

Miri Dive Sites

All the sites listed below are just a short boat ride from the city (Times given in brackets). All descriptions are courtesy of Tropical Dives.

Eve's Garden (15 min): A shallow reef of just 7-12 meters carpeted with soft corals such as leather corals, elephant's ear and dead man's fingers. Giant anemones and clown fishes inhabit the reef, along with schooling yellowtail fusiliers and angel fishes.

Anemone Garden (30 min): One of the most interesting reefs with a depth range of 10 to 16 meters, with hard and soft corals, anemones and their symbiotic clown fishes, bubble corals, anchor corals, colourful dendrocyphus soft corals, feather stars, giant clams, nudibranchs and schooling yellowtails.

Sea Fan Garden (30 min): This unique 16 meter deep reef provides an excellent environment for an amazing variety of gorgonian sea fans, sea whips and schooling batfish.

Tukau Drop-Off (50 min): An exciting drop-off reef (20-40 meters) with a vertical wall. Schooling jacks, barracudas, napoleon Wrasses, yellowtail fusiliers and large groupers are always present, and sharks and trumpet fish are occasionally seen.

Grouper Patch (1hr): Giant groupers inhabit this reef of 15-18 meters depth. Spinny lobsters are also present together with yellowtail fusiliers and other schooling fishes.

Santak Point (45min): The average visibility here is 30 meters or more. Large gorgonian fans of 2 meters in size are all over the top of the reef at 21 meters. The reef edge drops to 35 meters.

Atago Maru Wreck (15min): A WWII Japanese wreck just off Lutong. The 100 meter ship sits upright with the top deck just 10 meters below the surface. Most of the hull is covered with cave corals. A large moray eel has made its home here and travelly, jacks and barracudas are frequently seen.

Batu Belais Reef (35 min): A picturesque reef covered with gorgonian trees and seafans. Batfishes are common among the long swaying sea whips – a photographer's heaven.

Sunday Reef (35 min): Large hard corals make up this richly inhabited 11-16 meter deep reef, populated with anemones, clown fishes and nudibranches.

Sri Gadong Wreck (1 hr 10 min): A small 30 meter cargo ship sits on an 18 meter sand bottom. The whole wreck is teeming with life; jacks, yellow grunts, batfish and barracudas circle the wreck while giant groupers swim in and out of the cargo holds.

Contact **Tropical Dives**, a division of Seridan Mulu Tour and Travel Services, for further details and packages. Lot 273, Brighton Centre, Jln Temenggong Datuk Oyong Lawai, 98000 Miri. Tel: 415582 Fax: 412469 E-mail: info@tropical-dives.com Website: www.seridanmulu.com