



Raja Ampat In Review

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**RAJA
AMPAT
RESEARCH &
CONSERVATION
CENTRE**
I N D O N E S I A



**PAPUA
DIVING**

RESORTS
KRI ECO - SORIDO BAY



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Hello and Welcome to Raja Ampat!

We trust that you will have a good and meaningful time here with us and that all the work that you get to do will be beneficial not only to the world of tourism, but also to the natural environment we are living in and to help protect it.

Raja Ampat Research & Conservation Centre:

The RARCC is the non-commercial, non-profit side of Papua Diving and since 2009 has been registered as an independent non-profit organization with its own Board of Directors in the Netherlands. In October 2015 we have officially become an independent registered foundation, or “Yayasan.”

The RARCC engages indigenous communities in the deployment of financial self-reliant projects and small businesses which stimulate conservation and protection for the present and future generations of the Raja Ampat archipelago.

Papua Diving Resorts:

Max Ammer’s first resort, Kri Eco Resort, opened in 1994 and was the very first dive resort in Raja Ampat. Kri Eco Resort is a 10-minute walk at low tide, just around the corner from Sorido Bay Resort. It hosts a maximum of 24 guests.

Sorido Bay Resort opened in 2004 and accommodates a maximum of 18 guests. The resorts were built by owner Max Ammer together with local people, using local materials.

For more information about the resorts, please visit www.papua-diving.com



The Raja Ampat Archipelago

In 1860, Alfred Russell Wallace wrote in his book *The Malay Archipelago* that “*this region enjoys a climate more uniformly hot and moist than almost any other part of the globe, and teems with natural productions which are elsewhere unknown*”, referring to the regions we know now, as Malaysia and Indonesia.



Wallace, A. R. (1896). *The Malay Archipelago*. Macmillan

During his travels in the Malay Archipelago, he discovered many new species of which some endemic to this part of the world. Not only above but also underwater seems to be teeming. Parts of this region nowadays are being titled ‘Coral Reef Paradise’, National Geographic (2010). Zooming into this area, also known as the Coral Triangle, we find the Raja Ampat.

The Raja Ampat is located northwest off the tip of the Bird’s Head Peninsula on the island of New Guinea, in Indonesia’s West Papua province. This archipelago comprises over 1,500 islands with four main islands named Batanta, Misool, Salawati, and Waigeo, and lots of smaller islands like Fam and Wayag. In total the area encompass more than 46,296 km² of land and sea. The name of the archipelago comes from a local mythology tale about a woman who finds seven eggs. Four (Empat/Ampat in Indonesian) of the seven eggs hatch and become kings (Raja in Indonesian) that occupy the four main islands. The other three eggs become a ghost, a stone, and a woman. This tale may be inspired by the period when the region was under influence of the North-Moluccan sultanates of Ternate and Tidore, who ruled the Raja Ampat by means of Rajas (regents) for a period of at least 400 years

The Raja Ampat is famous for her unprecedented biodiversity in flora and fauna. It harbours the richest reefs with coral and fish on earth. Scientists have discovered unknown species during the last few years. Worthy of mentioning is the Denise’s Pygmy seahorse (*Hippocampus Denise*) described in 2003, the Epaulette shark (*Hemiscyllium Galei*), discovered in 2006, and most recently in 2013 several new species of the rainbow

fish were found in the Kumawa region, of which one species is newly described as *Melanotaenia Sneiderii*. Furthermore the islands are famous for their insect species and endemic bird species, such as the wonderful Birds-of-Paradise.

According to McKenna, Allen, and Suryadi, “*the centre of coral biodiversity*”, in their Rapid Assessment Program called ‘A Marine Rapid Assessment of the Raja Ampat Islands, Papua Province, Indonesia’ conducted in 2002. Knowing this it might not seem to be a surprise that in 2001 Dr. G.R. Allen set the world record for fish diversity during a single dive at 283 species on Cape Kri, located in the center of the Raja Ampat. This is the reef right in front of the office of the Raja Ampat Research & Conservation Centre. Continuing the work of conservation and education proves to be successful, as in 2012, Dr. G.R. Allen repeated his 2001 dive, and broke the record of that time by 91 species to 374 different species of fish counted in a single dive!

Geography

Located half a degree South of the Equator, the Raja Ampat islands have a hot tropical climate. Raja Ampat is on Eastern Indonesian Time (GMT +9). There is a South-Eastern monsoon that sets in during the latter part of May, ending in October.

The People

Raja Ampat had a population of 42,507 at the 2010 Census; the latest official estimate (as at January 2014) is 49,048. Within the Raja Ampat the indigenous communities consist mainly of Papuans, with more and more “straight-hair” Indonesians from the West settling the area, farming and establishing tourism. The Papuans are the native people of the mainland of New Guinea and neighbouring island consisting of Papua New Guinea and the Indonesian provinces Papua and West Papua. Nowadays it is approximated that there are nearly a thousand different Papuan tribal groups and around 800 different languages, making this part the most linguistically diverse area of the world. In the Raja Ampat the people do not only speak Indonesian, but also their local Papuan language, Biak Papuan (originating from Biak, 750km to the East), and Batheo.

It is commonly believed that the Maya clan was the earliest people to settle Raja Ampat, as well as Papuans from the mainland (Bird’s Head) and from Biak islands.

An important consequence of the Moluccan contacts to the Maya was the introduction of the Islam religion: in the Raja Ampat archipelago, only the Maya villages are Muslim. Today, the Maya number between 4,000 and 5,000 people, half of which live on Misool, the other half evenly divided over the other three main islands.

The other primary religion is Christianity (Protestant, Roman Catholic), however many people are Animistic, general superstitious, or mix animistic beliefs with Christianity. Generally, Muslims and Christians coexisting harmoniously despite their different beliefs.

Traditionally, the original groups built their houses on poles. When the villages were constructed on the coast or near a river, they were built on the water, or on poles above the ground.

Transportation

There are no navigable rivers of importance on the islands of Raja Ampat; the ocean is the exclusive way of transport. The few islands that are inhabited are sparsely populated, along the coastlines, with a growing population. The local people had little contact with the outside world until the 1950s, and still travel primarily by canoe (“prahoe”) – most un-motorized, unless getting from village to village. As a result, even today roads and graded tracks are very few and there are no cars, except at the government centre of Waisai on South Waigeo.

Education

In Raja Ampat, there are several small elementary schools located in some of the larger villages, including:

“SD” or Grades 1-6

“SMP” or Grades 7-9

There are a few high schools located in Sorong and Waisai, which some of the children move to the larger towns to attend. Several children do not attend high school or college. There are a few colleges located in Sorong that offer basic programs such as computer, administration, and nursing; however the education received is arguably similar to a high school education offered in a Western country.

The quality of education is greatly influenced by classroom limitations and the level of commitment by the teachers. Often times the schools are closed due to a shortage of teachers. The education conditions in Raja Ampat is significantly lower than other parts of Papua and Indonesia.

Another type of school growing in popularity in Waisai and Sorong are Muslim schools called “Pondok Pesantren” are available for boys, offering an education exclusively in the teaching of the Koran, Arabic, and in more modern schools offering courses in mathematics, geography, and English.

The Culture

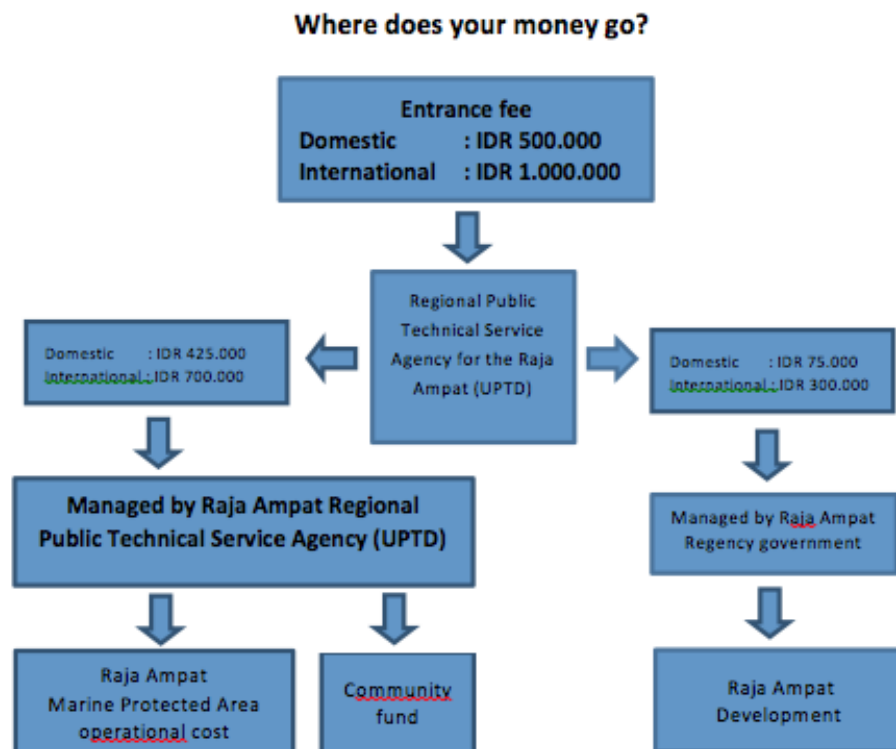
Raja Ampat has a mix of Papuan and Indonesian conservative cultures, with a combination of both Muslim and Christian religions and we ask that you are considerate to both religious groups. For both men and woman, please be sure to be dressed in “modest attire” ... what does this all mean? Speedos and bikinis alone are not appropriate and we ask that you cover up well enough. Think along the lines of board shorts, fishermen shirts, rash guards, sarongs – This will double as protection from the

sun also. There is no such thing as a nudist beach here in Papua, so please keep those practices in your own country and respect that you are in someone else's land. When you are introduced to someone, a handshake with a very gentle grip is a common way of greeting, for men as well as woman. Kissing a person on the cheek is totally foreign and inappropriate to them here, please be respectful of their habits.

The Government

In May 2007, with the collaboration and support of Regent Marcus Wanma, Indonesia's Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries Fredy Numberi, the Raja Ampat government declared a network of seven Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) that covers nearly 1,200,000 hectares and approximately 45% of Raja Ampat's coral reefs and mangroves. Effectively implemented, these MPAs should ensure the long-term health and sustainability of Raja Ampat' marine ecosystems.

The Marine Park fee that every tourist is required to purchase before entering Raja Ampat, ideally funds the management and enforcement of these MPAs by BLUD's UPTD CTF Marine and Fisheries Agency, used to set zoning, surveillance (patrols) increasing public awareness for conservation, encouraging sustainable tourism activities, and increasing economic benefits for local communities.



About Kri Island

We do share the island with some other people and we ask that you respect them and the work they are doing. The RARCC has many projects underway and in some areas of work it may be dangerous. You will note the wood-working, construction, and fiberglass work areas; we will gladly show you around and introduce you to our staff. Please do not work with any power tools or equipment you find on the premises without permission. Do respect their work area and when working there, leave it as clean as when you found it.

Wildlife Encounters on Kri Island

There are several species of birds on the island including: Parrots, Lorikeets, Cockatoos, Kingfishers, Kookaburras, Hornbills, Butcher Birds, Pigeons, Sunbirds, Honeyeaters, Swallows, and Wagtails, scrub fowls, Egrets, White headed Shell ducks, Frigate birds and Fish Eagles, to name a few. If you would like to have an extensive list, composed by Jared Diamond during his stay with us please let us know.

It is also possible to see flying foxes, bats, a large variety of insects, including butterflies, grasshoppers, spiders, fireflies, Monitor lizards, geckos, hermit crabs, and varieties of cuscus, coconut crabs and perhaps a tree Kangaroo.



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