



## Klein Bonaire Dive Sites

Klein Bonaire is the flat, little uninhabited island off the central west coast of Bonaire that is a paradise for snorkelers and divers, and also a popular destination for day-trippers.

Every day, boats carrying beachgoers and divers head out to visit the 26 marine park sites on the island. Many just head to **No Name Beach** to laze in the white sand and soak up the rays. Others enjoy the deep dives in the channel between the islands, or the beautiful corals off the western end of Klein.

Snorkelers use the moorings here and go to some of the very rewarding sites in the protected bay areas, where coral is thick and the water clear.

This island is now a reserve and a sea turtle hatchery. Sea turtles use the beaches of the island to make nests and lay eggs. Thus, only a small portion of the island and its beaches are open for public use, and the rest is set aside for turtles and to let the natural flora and fauna grow.

This island has a rich history in the diving world and was once privately owned. In 1939, German dive pioneer Hans Has explored and photographed it. In 1966, American John Bogart bought the island for \$15,000. He and Bonaire's scuba pioneer, Capt Don Stewart, intended to develop Klein Bonaire. The island was overrun with goats, so Capt Don organized the 'Great Goat Round Up.' The past 33 years have now been goat-free and the natural flora has been able to make a comeback.

More recently, other development plans surfaced, and in 1996 a group of concerned citizens – led by longtime Bonaire naturalist Dee Scarr – met to save the island.

Money was raised from various sources (mostly private and through help from the Dutch government) to buy the island and give it back to na-

ture, to ensure healthy reefs, turtle and waterfowl nesting grounds would be open and native plants and animals could thrive.

The government of Bonaire has plans for the island to become one of the Antilles National Parks, whereby it will remain untouched forever. However, the remainder of the money necessary to pay for it and formalize park management must now be raised.

Divers mostly dive here in the mornings but afternoon and night dives here are excellent.

<i>Klein Bonaire Dive Sites</i>		GOOD SNORKELING	NOVICE	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
<b>A</b>	NO NAME BEACH	•	•		
<b>B</b>	EBO'S REEF			•	
<b>C</b>	JERRY'S REEF		•		
<b>D</b>	JUST A NICE DIVE		•		
<b>E</b>	NEAREST POINT		•		
<b>F</b>	KEEPSAKE		•		
<b>G</b>	BONAVENTURE	•	•		
<b>H</b>	MONTE'S DIVI	•	•		
<b>I</b>	ROCK PILE	•	•		
<b>J</b>	JOANNE'S SUNCHI	•	•		
<b>K</b>	CAPT DON'S REEF		•		
<b>L</b>	SOUTH BAY	•	•		
<b>M</b>	HANDS OFF	•	•		
<b>N</b>	FOREST	•	•		
<b>O</b>	SOUTHWEST CORNER	•	•		
<b>P</b>	MUNK'S HAVEN	•	•		
<b>Q</b>	TWIXT		•		
<b>R</b>	SHARON'S SERENITY		•		
<b>S</b>	VALLERIE'S HILL	•	•		
<b>T</b>	MI DUSHI	•	•		
<b>U</b>	C H ANNEX / YELLOWMAN		•		
<b>V</b>	CARL'S HILL		•		
<b>W</b>	EBO'S SPECIAL		•		
<b>X</b>	LEONORA'S REEF	•	•		
<b>Y</b>	KNIFE		•		
<b>Z</b>	SAMPLER	•	•		



A blue parrotfish, accompanied by a jack, swims over the reef

## A NO NAME BEACH

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 6-80ft (2-25m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



It is the one site on Klein Bonaire where there is actually a beach dive. There are a bunch of moorings in the shallows in depths of 6ft to 16ft, with most in 10ft of water. The Samur mooring is off in 180ft,

and is for a private sailboat that goes there for day and sunset dinner cruises.

Divers and snorkelers can explore the corals and many hand-fed fish that live in the sandy shallows. Some come right up hoping to be fed some sort of handout.

Due to the sand, it is not heavily overgrown with coral, even on the slopes. So most divers prefer other Klein sites with denser growth. It is a good intro-dive, or good for someone taking classes. There is a sandy bottom, so flounder, some rays and other sand-dwellers, like goatfish, can be seen.

## B EBO'S REEF

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 20-120ft (6-37m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Intermediate or novice with guide



Around the corner to the south from the mellow **No Name** is Ebo's Reef, a favorite of divers and a very photogenic reef for underwater photo buffs. Don't meet your buddy at the bottom of the mooring, as it sits off the channel in 140ft of water. The slope here is steep and full of loose sand and coral, with scattered corals and also some areas of heavy growth.

Expect a lot of fish life here. The scattered reef provides habitat for a great number of fish. Many of these are juveniles like tiny boxfish and reclusive ones like spiny puffers.

As the reef faces the open channel between Klein and the main island, there are lots of fusiliers, clouds of chromis, jacks and parrotfish. This reef and the next one over, **Jerry's**, are known for their sponge life. Big elephant ears and tube sponges can be found here. Look also in the deeper parts for black coral. There is usually a current running over this reef and crinoids feed in the current, as do the soft corals.

A colorful barred hamlet



## C JERRY'S REEF

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 15-130ft (4.5-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



This reef also has the base of the mooring buoy down deep in 130ft of water and has similar terrain to **Ebo's**, with some beautiful black coral trees and amazing stands of rope sponges, purple tube sponges and the orange elephant ear sponges.

The site was named after a local photographer, Jerry Schnabel, who used to prefer this reef to do wide-angle photos with the nice sponges here. So wide-angle shooters, take note; if it is good enough for the pros, it must be a good spot. It is also excellent for fish photos and macro.

This site also has many juveniles and a lot of cleaning stations with the beautiful scarlet lady shrimps. There are purple-tipped anemones with Pederson shrimp on board, and this site also has black feather crinoids.

Look for masked gobies on the sponges. Flamingo tongues can be found clinging to sea plumes in the shallows and blacktip sharks have been seen, albeit rarely, in the shallows here as well.

## D JUST A NICE DIVE

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 20-130ft (6-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



This site is currently closed to diving and snorkeling.



**E NEAREST POINT**

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 20-130ft (6-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



Before the northern dive hotels were built, this was the closest Klein dive site from Bonaire, hence the name, which has stuck for years. The mooring here also falls into deep water, but the boat usually swings in over the reef due to the wind.

The top of the reef is attractive, with lots of hard corals and schools of goatfish, snapper and chromis. Dropping down over the edge at about 30ft, the reef is famous for large elephant ear sponges. But there are also impressive stands of purple and bright yellow tube sponges, some rope sponges and lots of gray candelabra sponges. Just drift down over the fairly sheer slope and enjoy the fish life. Currents are normally mild, but can be strong at times.

The reef itself has a nice selection of hard corals. Deeper down you will find plate corals and areas of ship corals. Black coral also grows in the deeper reaches on the reef. As the dive ends, enjoy the coral near the drop-off, where sea fans can be spotted. The area closer to the land is sandy and may have a ray or two. The water on this reef is normally extremely clear, and you can see the boat clearly from 100ft.



Creole wrasse are found on most Bonaire reefs

**F KEEPSAKE**

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 20-130ft (6-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



This site is currently closed to diving and snorkeling.

**G BONAVENTURE**

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 20-130ft (6-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



This is a beautiful dive at reef top and over the sloping wall. The mooring here sits in 20ft of water. The inner flats are sandy and the outer flats to the drop-off have nice coral growth, including clusters of sea rods, sea fans and vase sponges.

Dolphins have been seen hunting for food in the sand in these shallows. From here to **Forest** dive site, this costal area is considered good snorkeling by the marine park.

Over the reef, the coral cover becomes competitive with star and finger corals and some plate corals. It is a very fishy reef with a hidden cleaning station among the rods and sea whips. Look for tiger grouper, trumpetfish, barred hamlets, rock beauties, blue tangs, honeycomb cowfish, lots of stoplight parrotfish and curious French angels.

Explore the soft corals and sea fans in the sandy upper reef while decompressing, and look for flamingo tongues on the bases of the sea plumes. The reef top also has a few very well formed candelabra tube sponges.





## Sea Turtles



The people of Bonaire love sea turtles. They even have some that are tagged and have been given names, and the local newspaper prints updates on the tagged turtles' progress. Sea turtles, including their nests and eggs, are protected by both local and international law, as they face extinction worldwide. Nearly all Caribbean turtle populations are severely depleted.

Klein Bonaire's sandy beaches are nesting grounds to hawksbill and loggerhead turtles. Bonaire also has green sea and lunker leatherback turtles in its waters. Divers are asked to report sea turtle sightings and look for the turtles with tags on their front flippers. Report forms are available at local dive shops. As the beaches on Klein Bonaire are nesting areas, visitors are asked to avoid walking through the dunes or any area that is marked off, as this is where turtles make egg nests.

There is an organization called the Sea Turtle Club of Bonaire that can provide information. The phone number is ☎ 599-717-8399. The sighting network is very successful and visitors are encouraged to participate.

## H MONTE'S DIVI

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 20-120ft (6-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



Divi is the local name for a tree which sits on the shore of this site.

The reef top near the beach has large brain corals and numerous blue chromis that make the reef come alive with their electric blue colours. Divers can get right to the drop-off as the mooring is in 30ft of water and the slope drops off sharply. Look for various angelfish, multiple species of parrotfish, surgeons and even Nassau grouper. Lizardfish or sand divers like to rest on the plate corals found down about 50ft to 60ft along this reef.

Sponges here aren't particularly large, but there are plenty to see, including bright red rope sponges, tubes sponges and some orange elephant ears. This reef has some excellent growths of smooth flower coral. In the shallows you may see a lot of sea plumes with flamingo tongues on them. Also, look in the sand for live sand dollars.

## I ROCK PILE

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 20-110ft (6-24m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



This site is named after a rock pile on the beach. Below the sea, the reef is good for snorkelers and divers who enjoy lots of poking around in the shadows. The sand is almost as white as snow and the brain corals and sea plumes make this a



A hermit crab pokes from its shell

beautiful site to explore. The mooring is fairly shallow here and the corals below the boat can be appreciated by snorkelers or adventurous kayakers.

This reef is good for eels, both spotted and green. Sea turtles have also been observed and there is nice star and boulder coral.

The next few sites are getting into the normally calm and protected part of the island, and they are good for night dives. Look for big channel-clinging crabs in the reef. The light illuminates the bright red shells of these creatures as they venture out of their daytime hiding places. Octopuses scour the reefs as well. There

are some nice yellow line arrow crabs in the sponges. This is an interesting spot for night exploration where you don't have to go very deep and there is a good variety of marine life.

## J JOANNE'S SUNCHI

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 15-130ft (4.5-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



The local joke is that all of the reefs with female names were past girlfriends of the charismatic Capt Don, and apparently Joanne was memorable for her *sunchi* (kiss). It's a pretty name, whatever the origin, and the reef below is nice as well.

The corals here are diverse. Head down the mooring in only 15ft of water and have a good look at the upper reef with various sponges, sea fans and sea plumes mixed in with small corals.

The drop-off has black durgons, chromis and wrasses swimming along the reef. The sandy channels heading down to the deep water break the reef up. The sponge life is also good here. Sea turtles are also seen along this stretch of reef.



A queen parrotfish bites the reef

**K** CAPT DON'S REEF

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 15-130ft (4.5-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



The top of the reef is shallow where the mooring is, but it's mostly sand. Sometimes this nice white sand is referred to as sugar sand. When the corals get thicker near the drop-off, they have some beautiful formations and interesting residents including French grunts, purple-tipped anemones with commensal shrimp and swaying sea fans. The sand is home to peacock flounder.

This reef has a series of points and ridges and some interesting sponge life. Many spots have beautiful settings of tube sponges along with the orange elephants ears. The elephant ear sponge is often highlighted by beautiful fairy basslets. Some of the hard corals, in the 60ft and below range, have been overgrown with some coralline algae. Wire corals, sea rods, sea plumes, rope, tube and vase sponges all populate the slopes.

The reef has a series of points and valleys; the points being good places to look for fish life, as the gentle currents roll over the reef. There are gray angels, bicolor damsels and marauding wrasses.

Tucked into a south bay, this is also an excellent night dive. Look for frogfish in the rope sponges.

*A scarlet lady shrimp cleans a smooth trunkfish*

**L** SOUTH BAY

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 23-120ft (7-37m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



This is a nice upper reef that is quite landscaped, leading some divers to describe it as an aquarium. The shallows are good enough for a long shallow dive, and also for snorkelers. At this site, you'll see lots of white sand, scattered corals and lots of small fish.

There is a chance to see bigger fish here including Nassau and tiger groupers over the drop-off. Horse-eye jacks, barred jacks and an occasional barracuda coast in.

Sponges and hard corals make up an interesting terrain down the slope. This can also be a pleasant night dive.

**M** HANDS OFF

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 20-110ft (6-37m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



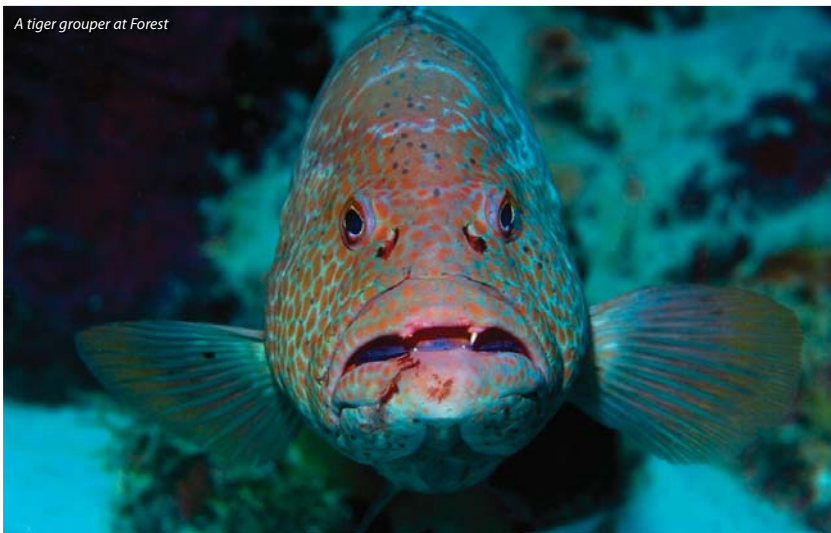
The mooring here is in shallow water and divers tend to enjoy the dense coral growth that runs all across the reef flat and down the slope to about 120ft.

The sponge life is worth seeing as there are big, orange elephant ear sponges and nice tube and candelabra sponge formations. It is a good reef for macro-photographers and wide-angle as well.

Look for gray and French angels, groupers and wrasses. There are a lot of cleaning stations here, so look for fish lined up to get a cleaning. Since so



A tiger grouper at Forest



many things come out of the coral here at night, this is a good place to go after dark.

## N FOREST

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 20-110ft (4.5-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



This little rocky peninsula is considered to be one of the premier sites at Klein Bonaire. It is one of few sites close to a sheer drop-off in Bonaire and there is a forest of black coral trees that give it its name.

This is a popular dive, and dive boats jockey for position to get to the mooring first. Talk your guide into leaving early so you can be first to the mooring and be sure not to miss this site.

This site is a good place to look for sea turtles and is also famous for its elephant ear sponges. There's a small cave that may hold a grouper or two

along the steep reef. Lots of coral-cover make this a great place to poke into the recesses and look for cleaning stations. This site is also very fishy and schooling fish like grunts, chromis and even jacks come around all the time.

It is on the tip of the southwestern corner of Klein and wind can sometimes be a major factor here, making it hard to get to the mooring and stay on the mooring. But if conditions are right, this is one of the must-do dives for a Bonaire trip.

## O SOUTHWEST CORNER

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 22-130ft (7-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



This reef created a buzz in 2005 when a big loggerhead turtle was found swimming here and was tagged by conservation volunteers. Aside from being a good spot to see sea turtles, hawksbills

being more common than loggerheads, this is a healthy reef flushed by currents that run around the point.

The mooring sits a bit away from the shore in 22ft of water. While not tabbed by the park as a snorkeling site, snorkelers do like the coral growth in close to shore. The reef has sea fans and also sea rods and large sea plumes. Schooling grunts and male and female stoplight parrotfish are seen here.

The slope isn't as extreme as **Forest**, but it still has lots of life and is very fishy. Divers have seen some immense green morays here. Watch the currents; they can get strong from **Forest** over to **Munk's Haven**.

## P MUNK'S HAVEN

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 20-110ft (4.5-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



Another good dive flushed by currents, black durgons and other mid-water fish, making for an interesting reef for fish lovers. The mooring is in 20ft of water and while the park does not recommend this site for snorkelers, many snorkelers and shallow divers love the reef top here. There are many soft corals up top and scattered coral heads.

Over the reef, the corals get bigger and the formations and competition for space makes for some nice coral heads with lots of spaces for barber pole shrimp and other cleaners. Look for tiger groupers and down deep for the large Nassau grouper that are sometimes seen here. This is another good site for turtles.

Divers must keep an eye on the current at times, and the directions of the guide. When they get strong, divers have been known to drift from here to

**Forest**, covering three dive sites at once as they whisk around the point. This is a rare occurrence, but you still need to be aware while you're diving.

## Q TWIXT

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 30-130ft (9-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



This site is currently closed to diving and snorkeling.

A Pederson cleaner shrimp awaits action



**R SHARON'S SERENITY**

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 18-110ft (5-34m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



Sharon's Serenity is close to **Southwest Corner** and has a similar dive profile. The mooring is in 18ft of water with some hard and soft corals in the shallows and then sloping down. Currents aren't too much of a worry, but they can pop up.

This coastal area was hit by storm waves from Hurricane Lenny in 1999, and this side of Klein suffered the most damage. At one time, Sharon's Serenity had plenty of elkhorn and staghorn corals in the shallows and a variety of soft corals, however these have somewhat thinned out now. If you had not been here before the hurricane, then

you won't know the difference. New corals are starting to grow and the rubble possibly holds a greater variety of fish than before. Sometimes these ocean disturbances change the nature of the reef and that can be to the diver's benefit when new species move into new areas.

Brain corals, lobed star corals and other hard coral formations can be found along the drop-off and this is a favorite spot for small tropical and hawksbill turtles.

**S VALLERIE'S HILL**

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 20-130ft (6-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



This site is currently closed to diving and snorkeling.

Sea rods along the wall





Sponge life at Klein Bonaire is very healthy



## T MI DUSHI

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 20-130ft (6-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



This is a good place to look for rubble at the den of an octopus, and then see if the creature is around. Seahorses have also been found in the shallows on this reef. With the mooring in 20ft of water, this is a good dive for all diving levels. The shallows have hard corals including staghorns and some finger corals. The reef top has many juveniles in the shallows.

Over the reef, look for sponge-life such as orange-yellow branching vase

sponges. There are also smaller purple tube sponges here with small gobies inside. Hard corals along the reef include great star coral, mountainous star coral and hill coral.

Some flower corals are also found at Mi Dushi. This is a good Valentine's Day dive, as *Mi Dushi* is Papiamentu for 'my sweetheart.'

## U CH ANNEX / YELLOWMAN

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 20-130ft (6-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



This site is currently closed to diving and snorkeling.

## V CARL'S HILL

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 20-130ft (6-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice

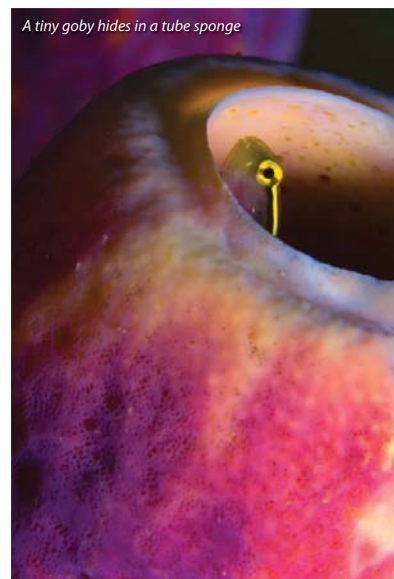


This site is named after Carl Roessler, an accomplished underwater photographer and the man who is given much credit for starting live-aboard diving and properly organized dive travel. He made many of the first visits to what are now diving's hot spots, and when he dived at this site a few decades ago, he was given a little bit of Bonaire.

There is a true vertical wall on this site that divers truly enjoy – adorned in hard and soft corals, tube sponges, tubastrea coral and lots of other colorful marine life. While cruising this wall, look up through the clear water through the corals and you can see the sky. The wall runs from about 25ft to 80ft and is worth a nice, slow swim to take in everything that lives here.

This wall is a great spot for any type of underwater photography. Look for blue parrotfish, cruising jacks, groupers and a barracuda or two. Seahorses have been reported in the shallower parts of the reefs.

A tiny goby hides in a tube sponge



## W EBO'S SPECIAL

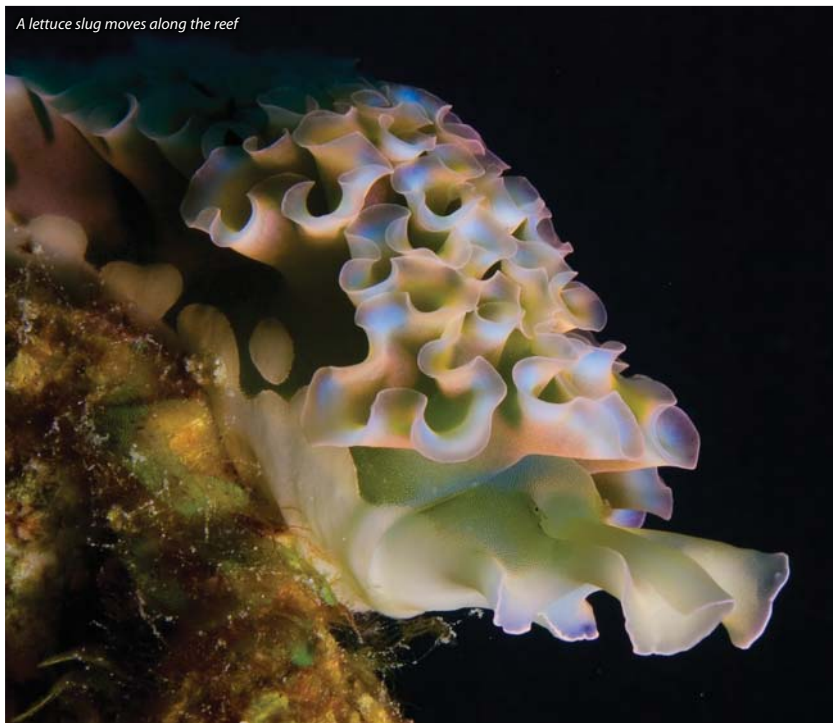
**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 17-120ft (5m-37m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



Considered one of the best sites in this area, it is named after one of the local pioneers and ambassadors of the Bonaire diving scene, Ebo Domacasse.



A lettuce slug moves along the reef



In fact, he is considered so special to Bonaire diving that he has not one, but two dive sites at Klein Bonaire bearing his name. **Ebo's Reef** and **Ebo's Special** pay homage to a guide known for his quiet and relaxed ways and an unselfish dedication to building the industry. He was awarded the reef names, according to Capt Don Stewart, 'as a sign of respect and love from other guides, as well as from his divers.' And the legacy continues, as one of Ebo's sons is currently a high-placed government official on Bonaire.

This reef has a collection of hard corals and something special in the form of a small cave that holds occasional groupers or nurse sharks, plus coneys and tiger groupers. There are some cleaning stations here in the 45ft to 65ft range active with chromis and queen parrotfish.

Both **Ebo's Special** and **Leonora's Reef** have shallow moorings and snorkelers like to explore the reef areas of both sites.

### X LEONORA'S REEF

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 16-130ft (5-40m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



If you want lettuce sea slugs, you've come to the right place. This is a wonderful site for macro and fish life with good coral cover and some huge coral heads. The large amount of lettuce slugs and the chance to see other nudibranchs may be due to the aftermath of

Hurricane Lenny, which stirred up the area and allowed some algae to grow on damaged corals. This is a real bonanza for macro buffs as the critters are plentiful.

There are also great opportunities to shoot some slender filefish that like to hide in the branches of the sea plumes and other soft corals. Bristleworms also like to crawl in the branches of these plumes.

The hard coral is in the 40ft to 60ft area and below. Look also for rope sponges, gobies crawling around tube sponges and squirrelfish hiding in the corals.

### Y KNIFE

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 20-100ft (6-30m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



This site was closed for a long time and re-opened by the park in 2006. Currents are normally negligible to mild, and diving can be done from the buoy at 20ft down to 90ft to 100ft.

There is good coral cover on the reef at this site. Butterflyfish species such as the banded butterflyfish can be seen, and four-eye butterflyfish can also be found. Look out for rock beauties, gray angels and – if you're lucky – queen angelfish.

The upper reef area is good here with schools of grunts. The soft corals also provide cover for some juveniles like narrow trumpetfish that blend in good camouflage.

Keep an eye out for hermit crabs carting along a shell. If you wait long enough, the crab will tire of hiding from you and come out. The crabs are usually bright red and make very good photo subjects.

### Z SAMPLER

**Location:** Klein Bonaire  
**Depth:** 28-110ft (9-34m)  
**Access:** Boat  
**Range:** Novice



Divers like this spot as it gives a sample of most everything one might find on Bonaire and Klein. This site is good for day and night diving and the deep mooring buoy gets the diver right over the reef and ready to see the marine life. Since it is near the daytripper sites, the fish here have been fed and they may follow you around. If you think a French angel likes your new dive gear, you're probably wrong – it wants a piece of bread.

At night, divers have reported sleeping sea turtles and a huge loggerhead was even seen here at one time. This site is good for lobsters and crabs at night as well, and frogfish are also found on the reef. Look in the bigger holes and deep water for large Nassau grouper.

This is one of those dives that every level of diver seems to enjoy and can be rewarding for macro photographers.

Flamingo tongue shell with mantle out



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