



# *Sea Braggin'*

**MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

***- DECEMBER 2010 - Edited by Ray Moulang -***

***INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE ARE DIVE REPORTS FROM :..***

**Michael McFadyen; John Conolly; Eddie Ivers  
and Andrew Moulang**

**A BIG THANK YOU GOES TO THEM.**



Blue Hole Exit- Palau

By John Prior

# ***What's On - DECEMBER - 2010 -***

| <b>WHEN</b>                     | <b>WHAT AND WHERE</b>   | <b>CONTACT</b>  | <b>WHEN</b>                   | <b>WHAT AND WHERE</b>                   | <b>CONTACT</b>                                  |
|---------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------|---|---|
| <b><i>Saturday<br/>4th</i></b>  | <b><i>Deep Dive<br/>SS Tuggerah/ SS<br/>Undola from Yowie Bay</i></b> | <b><i>Michael<br/>McFadyen<br/>9545 5596</i></b>        | Sunday<br>12th                | Boat Dive Blue Fish<br>Point / Rose Bay | Peter Flockart<br>9371 0265                     |
| <b><i>Sunday<br/>5th</i></b>    | <b><i>Club Christmas Party<br/>Kurnell</i></b>                        | <b><i>Natasha and<br/>Digby Naude<br/>9799 9785</i></b> | Wednesday<br>15 <sup>th</sup> | <i>Club Meeting<br/>Rowers Club 8pm</i> | <i>Jason Coombs<br/>President<br/>9345 4599</i> |
| <b><i>Saturday<br/>11th</i></b> | <b><i>Boat Dive<br/>Middle ground</i></b>                             | <b><i>Dave Casburn<br/>9527 6279</i></b>                |                               |   |   |

## **What's On - JANUARY - 2011 -**

| <b>WHEN</b>                             | <b>WHAT AND WHERE</b>  | <b>CONTACT</b>                                  | <b>WHEN</b>               | <b>WHAT AND WHERE</b>                                   | <b>CONTACT</b>                    |
|---|--|---|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Monday 3<sup>rd</sup><br/>To 9th</i> | <i>Great Barrier Reef<br/>Big cat Reality</i>                  | <i>Mike Scotland<br/>9521 7720</i>              | <i>Saturday<br/>22nd</i>  | <i>Boat Dive<br/>Barrens Hut</i>                        | <i>Dave Casburn<br/>9527 6279</i> |
| <i>Saturday<br/>8th</i>                 | <i>Deep Dive<br/>SS Tuggerah/ SS<br/>Undola from Yowie Bay</i> | <i>Michael<br/>McFadyen<br/>9545 5596</i>       | <i>Wednesday<br/>26th</i> | <i>Australia Day<br/>Dive and BBQ<br/>To be advised</i> | <i>Jason Coombs<br/>9345 4599</i> |
| <i>Wednesday<br/>19th</i>               | <i>Club Meeting<br/>Rowers Club 8pm</i>                        | <i>Jason Coombs<br/>President<br/>9345 4599</i> | <i>Saturday<br/>29th</i>  | <i>Boat Dive<br/>Marley Point</i>                       | <i>Ron Walsh<br/>0409 225 683</i> |

## **Philippines Trip**

A flyer is being prepared for this trip by Dive Adventures.

Depart Saturday 12th February arrive back Saturday 26th February.

Sydney - Manila - Cebu - Legaspi - Manila - Sydney.

Thresher Sharks, mantas, Whale Sharks

Indicative is as follows:

13 nights / 14 days

Malapascua (6 days) 18 - 24 dives, Ticao Island (3 days) 9 dives, 2 days snorkelling with the whale sharks. All accommodation, transfers, airfares including Excess baggage for Cebu - Legaspi leg, nitrox at Malapascua, all brekkies, full board Ticao, Lunch and dinner at Malapascua -- allow say \$100.00.

All up cost \$2950 - \$3000 minimum 8 divers

**See Mark Ridsdale for more details.**







# Thresher & Whale Sharks PHILIPPINES

15 Days / 14 Nights ex. Sydney **\$2950-\$3000**

*This package is based on group rates with a minimum 8 divers - exact price will be reviewed with final numbers*

**Malapascua & Donsol 12th - 26th Feb 2011**

## Includes:

- Return low season flights ex. Sydney to Cebu & from Legaspi - with Philippine airlines - Conditions apply
- 1 nights twin/double share Accommodation in Cebu
- Return Transfers to Malapascua by road (air con Van/Car) and Private boat
- 6 nights twin/double share accom - Tepanee Resort
- Breakfast daily in Malapascua
- 15 Dive package in Malapascua includes - Tanks Weights and Dive Guide with Thresher Shark Divers
- Bonus Special \*\*\* Free Nitrox \*\*\* Free Wi-Fi \*\*\*
- Sunset Cruise for the Group on the last day
- Flights ex. Cebu to Legaspi - with Cebu Pacific air
- Return Transfers, Legaspi to Donsol and to Ticao Is.
- 4 nights at Ticao Island in a beachfront Cabana
- All Meals at Ticao
- 9 Dive pkg at Ticao - Tanks Weights & Dive Guide
- 1 night twin/double accom Elysia Beach Resort Donsol
- 2 x Whale Shark Interaction
- 1 night twin/double share accom at Venezia Hotel - Legaspi
- Australian departure and applicable airline taxes (approx. \$380 & subject to change)



**NOT INCLUDED: \*\* departure/terminal fees in Philippines \*\*  
Meals (unless specified) \* Travel Insurance \* Spending Monies  
Conditions apply. Prices Subject to change without notice.  
\$300 Deposit required to secure a spot!**

**DIVE**  
ADVENTURES

YOUR DIVING HOLIDAY SPECIALIST

**SYDNEY** Lic. No. 27A 003537  
PH:(02) 9299 4633 FAX:(02) 9299 4644  
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PH:(03) 9646 5945 FAX:(03) 9646 8589  
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FOR BOOKINGS AND MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT



St George Scuba Club



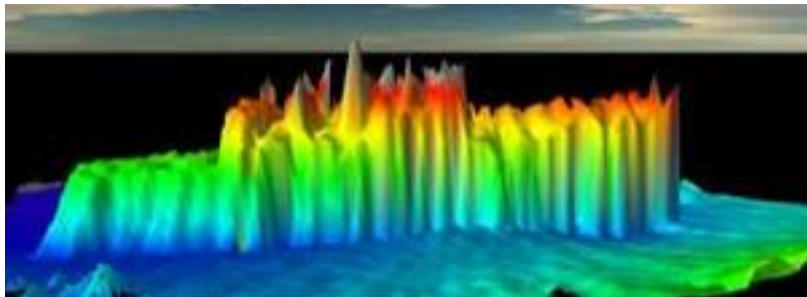
**MARK RIDSDALE Mob: 0419 243 717**

Email: msrconsulting@aol.com

## NEW ZEALAND TRUP

### Friday 11th to Monday 21st MARCH 2011

Dive the **HMNZS Canterbury** and the **Rainbow Warrior** in the warm waters of the **Bay of Islands** for three days. Stay on a farm with all accommodation and meals included.



The HMNZS Canterbury, a 113 metre Leander Class frigate, was scuttled in 38m of water and is sitting perfectly upright.



Since the Rainbow Warrior was sunk in 1987, she has become a living reef, covered in Jewel Anemones. She's 42 metres long and sits on a white sandy bottom at 26 metres.

|  |              |             |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| All diving, accommodation and some meals | \$AUD        | 1276        |
| Car Hire                                 | \$AUD        | 167         |
| Air Fare - purchase your own             | \$AUD        | 431         |
| Optional -1 night Airport hotel          | \$AUD        | 150         |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>\$AUD</b> | <b>2024</b> |

All prices approx depending on exchange rate & numbers

Dive the **Poor Knights** Islands, the **HMNZS Tui** and **HMNZS Waikato** wrecks from **Tutukaka** for four days. Water temperature expected to be 19-22° in March. Stay at either the Tutukaka Holiday Park in self-contained cabins or at the Oceans Resort, both a short walk from the Dive Shop, Marina and Restaurants.



The ex-HMNZS Tui and ex-HMNZS Waikato were sunk in 1999 and 2000 respectively. The Waikato rests upright at 29 metres, and the Tui sits at 32 metres.



23 kilometres off the north east coast of New Zealand, the Poor Knights Islands are washed by a warm current that sweeps down from the Coral Sea.

Jacques Cousteau ranked the Poor Knights as one of the top ten dive sites, anywhere. UK "Dive" Magazine ranks them the "best sub-tropical diving in the world".

**Maximum 12 divers**

Contact **Shelley Breuseker** for more details

\$200 deposit to club to secure your place

shellsb@bigpond.net.au

## ***Proposed Great Barrier Reef trip over New Year 2011***

### ***Preliminary expression of interest***

I am planning a trip to dive on the Big Cat Reality out of Bundaberg for 5 days of diving. At this stage, I have not decided on the exact dates. It will either be the trip on departing Mon Dec 27 around 6 p.m. or the Mon 3 Jan for 5 days of diving. I did this trip last January. It does a circuit of the Capricorn Bunker reefs from Lady Musgrave Island, to Lady Fairfax, Llewellyn Island and finally Lady Elliot Island. Last year we did 21 dives including 4 night dives.

We saw plenty of Manta rays at Lady Elliot Island.

The diving is excellent and totally changed my view of the GBRMPA. The fish life is wonderful especially the numerous coral trout and coral cod. The protection of the area by the reef authority has really made these reefs come alive and has been a great success.

We did have perfect weather and I decided that the trip earned a 9/10 for quality.

There are a couple of reality checks with the dive operation.

Diving is strictly controlled.

However, as long as we fit in with the system, they go out of their way to give you maximum dives, up to 5 a day.

The food is good basic wholesome food. It is not gourmet but there is always lots of fresh fruit, salads and is plentiful.

You sleep in 2 x 12 bed bunk rooms with very little privacy.

NO sleeping in your birthday suit! However, after 5 dives each day all you want is somewhere to crash.

It is a little tough on couples as there is no privacy.

Next problem is that it costs \$100 to hire tanks and weights for the trip.



The last challenge to overcome is transport. I drove to Bundaberg. It is 17 ~ 18 hours. You can fly. There are still cheap airfares about. You could fly to Brisbane and hire a car and drive the 5 ~ 6 hours to Bundaberg. The wharf is 20 + klms out of Bundaberg town and from the airport. I am going to drive again, probably stopping at Wooli on the way back for a few days. Having said all of that, it is a great trip with excellent diving and I thoroughly recommend it. That is why I am going back.

The cost is \$1500 plus reef tax of ~\$20. [www.bigcat](http://www.bigcatreality.com) reality.com

If you are interested, we need to move soon to secure the booking.

My contact details: ph 9521 7720

Mob 0415 158 168

Email [mikescotland@optusnet.com.au](mailto:mikescotland@optusnet.com.au) [scubamagic@hotmail.com](mailto:scubamagic@hotmail.com)

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Tafe holidays are here!! From 16-12-10 till the 23-1-11  
Contact me if you wish to do a boat dive day.  
John B.

## **Dive Bali - Komodo - Bali 2012**

Dive trip being organised for 18-25 August 2012 sailing from Bali - Komodo, diving all the way!

Excellent diving - usually about 22 dives in total and small group diving. Accommodation - all cabins have en-suite, food is plentiful and comprises of both western and Thai food and there is a Thai masseuse on board. Check out the website for more details.

[www.mermaid-liveaboards.com](http://www.mermaid-liveaboards.com)

Prices will vary depending on exchange rate etc (its payable in Euros!!), but we have been offered a great deal. Club discount rate: 30% discount for 9 or more persons, 16 or more - same rate and 1 FOC, 20 or more - same rate and 2 FOC (all boat charter) Even with just the club discount, it means based on current exchange rate and 2011 prices, will be approx \$2000 per person.

Flights - about \$800 - \$1000 return - people will be booking these themselves. Some people may want to stay before and after for more diving at other spots such as Candidasa, Tulamben or Nusa Pendida - or you may just want to chill round the pool with a cocktail. Again, this is something you can organise yourselves - maybe even meet non diving partners there!

I have provisionally booked for 10 people and will need to know who is interested - a few people have already expressed interest in going.

Will be asking for deposits to secure positions and will let you know how much.

I can bring along the DVD I have of the trip to a meeting if anyone interested. Photographers especially - this is macro heaven.....

Carol

## **Truk trip for 2011.**

Some trip points to note:

- The price does not include our Club discount (approx 10%) or our Free of Charge land base component for every 8<sup>th</sup> diver. The total discount cannot be determined until we finalized numbers.
- The prices are based on 95c US. The quoted price will not change unless there is a fluctuation of more than 2c either way. If the dollar goes through the roof, you can pay the balance in full to take advantage.
- The price does not include Sydney/Cairns/Sydney flights or accommodation in Cairns.

You need to organize this yourself (best to wait and watch for specials).

- We request that you take out a travel insurance policy that covers your diving activities.
- There is a 2 week option. • Truk is a third world country and as such you should adjust your expectations.
- The trip is not suitable for non divers.- The trip is suitable for experienced divers.

There is a maximum of 16 spots for this trip (8 are already pre-reserved), so please book on sooner rather than later to avoid disappointment.

To book you must contact me to: 1. Check availability; and 2. To get a booking form which you will need to complete and send to Sharon at Dive Adventures with your deposit.

Please give me a call if you have any questions (particularly if you have not been to Truk before).

Many thanks, Kelly.

# **- Club Dive Weekend to South West Rocks -**

**Friday 4<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 6 February 2011 – with the option of staying until Monday**

2 nights and 4 dives

\$306.00 – accommodation at the house

\$265.00 – accommodation at the bunkhouse

3 nights and 6 dives

\$450.00 – accommodation at the house

\$390.00 – accommodation at the bunkhouse

These prices include the 10% club discount

and will be a bit less depending on how many divers we get.

A deposit of \$50 needs to be paid to Mark to secure your spot.

Contact Jo Edney for information on 0451 459 909 or [n2narcosis@bigpond.com](mailto:n2narcosis@bigpond.com)



## **- Recent Club Happenings -**

### **- SS Tuggerah – 13 and 21 November by Michael McFadyen -**

On Saturday 13 November Le Scat and DownUnder set off to dive the wreck of the SS *Tuggerah*.

On Le Scat were Kelly McFadyen, Sheila Baldock, Ron Walsh, Jo Edney and myself.

On DownUnder were Dave Casburn, John Prior, Nancy Scoleri and Gary Perkins. A strong NE wind was forecast for later in the morning, so it was always going to be a touch and go thing to get there.

The wind was about 10 knots as we left Port Hacking and we had a fairly good run down to the wreck's location off Wattamolla. Ron managed to put the anchor onto the wreck first go but Dave's crew had problems. Meanwhile, Max Gleeson also arrived. Dave had lots of problems hooking the wreck and Max ended up anchoring the opposite end of the wreck than we did.

Kelly, Sheila and I went first. The water was very dirty on the top but at about 18 metres it cleared up. It was a hard swim to the bottom as there was a bit of a current. Once we reached the wreck the visibility was very good, about 20 metres. It was also very cold, 14.4°C according to my computer. We were anchored on the bridge next to the boiler and there were a lot of fish hanging over the engine area as normal. We headed to the prop before coming back along the bottom of the hull.



Forward of the boiler, Kelly found a pineapple fish, the first one we have seen on the *Tuggerah*.

We went to the bow area and then came back to the boiler. We decided to only do a 15 minute bottom time as the NW wind was making the boat bounce around a bit and we thought it would be uncomfortable doing too much decompression. Ron and Jo entered the water as we arrived back at the boat.

As expected, it was a bit bumpy doing deco. While here, Dave's anchor rope ended up catching on our anchor rope and coming back past us. I attempted to pull the anchor up and over ours but it was too heavy. It was good to get out of the water.

As mentioned, Dave still had not anchored. Once Ron and Jo finished their bottom time, they released the anchor and this gave Dave room to get on the wreck. It took them eight goes I was later told, I am glad I did not have to pull up the anchor each time!

Dave reported that their dive was just as good as ours (Nancy did not dive as she was by this time feeling a bit seasick).

On Sunday 21 November Le Scat headed off again to dive the *Tuggerah*. On board was Kelly, Nancy, Gary, Mike Scotland and myself. The seas were almost perfect, with virtually no wind. As we travelled down the coast we saw the Aquatic Explorers boat ahead. I tried to beat them to the wreck but we arrived about 15 seconds after them. We let them anchor before we tried. We hooked in first go but as I was about to put on my BCD, I noticed we had moved. Damn! We anchored again.

Kelly and I went first and this time there was no noticeable current and the water was very clean on the top. At about 35 metres I noticed the anchor come free and start slowly dragging across the sand. Kelly and I rushed to the bottom and reattached it to the wreck. After a short rest to catch our breath, we looked around. The visibility was about 15 metres and the water a lot warmer than last week at 16°C. We were anchored on the collapsed hull side of the wreck so went over to the main section. Here we encountered Jessica McInnes (in her day glow orange dry suit) and Phil Goodman. They were on the Aquatic Explorers boat. Kelly and I then went to the prop before going all the way back to the bow. Here I found a pineapple fish.

The conditions were so good, we went back to the boiler and after 18 minutes bottom time, we swam across from the top to the anchor line. Gary, Nancy and Mike entered the water a short time after we arrived back at Le Scat. It was certainly a lot more comfortable on deco this week! The others also reported a good dive.

Remember, regular deep wreck dives for suitably experienced and equipped members are conducted using member boats and charter boats.

## **- Recent Thursday Night Dives by Michael McFadyen -**

After a period where many night dives had to be cancelled due to bad weather, we have had some good ones lately. On 21 October seven members dived Bare Island Deep Wall. This was done as a drift from the back of the island. Visibility was very good and two pygmy pipe horses were seen. The next week saw five members dive Shiprock. Visibility was good. The dive on 4 November was cancelled due to thunderstorm but a couple of members still dived Shiprock. The next week we were back at Bare Island and five divers braved the low tide to dive the eastern part of the island. Visibility was good and lots of things were seen.

Thursday 18 November saw a record 10 members (for this season) at Bare Island. The seas were millpond so we went off the western corner towards the Isolated Reefs. However, the visibility was very poor, so much so that we all ended up separated. Four of us went out to Isolated Reef 2 where Ron found two pygmy pipe horses. He headed back from here as he had a leaky regulator. Bram, Gary D and I continued on.

Four dwarf fire fish were seen, as well as many small squid. Despite the visibility, we had a good dive.

Night dives are held every Thursday night, the location decided each week based on tides and weather conditions. If you are not on the night diving email list, email Michael and you will receive the weekly email advising of the dive location.

## **- Galapagos. A Diving 'Experience'. Are the worst dive operators in the world here? -**

I had been looking forward to the Galapagos for 9 years. They were the reason I began diving in 2001. I was going there as part of a planned South American tour, and I figured Scuba Diving would give an added dimension to my visit there.

Well I learnt to dive, but two weeks before our planned departure to South America, September 11's events in New York and then Ansett going belly up 3 days later, wrecked those plans.

The diving I embraced with a passion and kept on with it.

So now, 500 dives later, I was finally getting there. Toni and I stayed on the main Island, Santa Cruz in the biggest city, Puerto Ayora. This is the centre of the Galapagos dive Industry and there are more than 20 operators. I did 3 double dives.

The first was the most disastrous. A prominent centre of town operator, **Albatross Dive**, caught my eye and I booked a trip to the 'Gordon Rocks', a renowned Hammerhead shark area.

It is difficult to report this and not show too much negativism.

First problem was the inferior diving equipment. Many suits were poorly fitting and tatty with stuck zippers. The boat was too small and inadequately set up. There was no fixed ladder to climb back on board and there were not enough proper racks for gear. After the first dive, there was gear all over the floor and there were no overhead grips to assist movement on a tossing boat. One German girl, who was experienced (she worked on a dive boat out of Cairns for 3 months once) during the safety check at the start, protested her gear was faulty and could get no sealing with her mask, was shouted down and told she was incompetent.

The dive site was challenging for the inexperienced. Constant SE swells bounced off two huge rocks creating messy waves where we did our entry. No anchors or lines are allowed. You descend 20m to a saddle between the two rocks and the DM leads you from there. Problem was they had allowed a diver with only 7 dives to dive with an experienced group. It took the DM more than 10 minutes to get him down to 4 of us waiting at the bottom. This diver then used his air in 13 minutes. The DM, who's Occy was supplying air to the stressed diver, then indicated for all of us to return to the surface. So a 40 minute dive became a 13 minute dive. We saw some fish but certainly no hammerheads or mantas.

Lunch was back next to the mainland. I think we saw more fish there eating food scraps than at the dive site. A young sea lion also kept us amused. Second tanks were a problem as most did not have more than 180 bar.

Because a number of the divers had been spooked by the conditions at Gordon Rocks, the DM decided to do the second dive along the shore next to where we had lunch. We saw little and then the same inexperienced diver ran out of air again in 13 minutes. This time the DM put the air-short diver with one of the paying divers and indicated for them to ascend. The chosen diver had no computer or watch, so could not time their deco. Explanation after for that was 'He's an experienced diver so he could judge it'. The DM continued on with the rest of us, but we saw little in the rest of the dive. There was no marine growth along the shore.

We then had an arduous 1 hour trip back to port. The seas were not big, but the boat was so small and underpowered it was quite rough, and lack of adequate rails made movement difficult.

I tried to get my money back, or at least another dive trip, but was given the run around. The owner/boss of the company could not be found, although I strongly suspect that one of the people I spoke to back at the office was him. Very dodgy. I then researched the operators and found that 4 had good histories.



Dive 2 was with **Sub-Aqua**. We drove to the Northern side of the island and their boat took us to an area called Seymour Island Channel. The boat was top quality and it was well set up. Only one hitch. On the first dive I kept rising to the surface and after a while I realised the air valve in to my BCD was leaking, so I continued the dive with my finger on the air release button. There were plenty of fish and the DM got excited when we sighted several 1.2 m long black tipped reef sharks. But no hammerheads.

The second dive was manic. We went in to the water on the SE corner of the island and did a drift dive northwards, 40 m out from the shore. Initially the current was around 2 -3 knots, but by the time we reached the NE corner, we were rolling along at an incredible 10+ knots. There were many fish but it was a matter of 'here they come, there they go'. But again no hammerheads. Fortunately, the boat skippers are quite skilled at following big drifting groups. We finished up more two kilometres north of the island in very open seas.

The third operator was **Iguana**. We went out to the Gordon rocks and this time the gear was good and the boat reasonable. Got rigged up and then came the apology. There were 8 divers but only 6 weight belts. This, despite everyone being outfitted the day before. So they split us in to two groups of 4. Well the first group saw a dozen hammerheads, but they are very timid it seems, so by the time the second group got their weight belts, they were all gone. I was in the second group. After lunch near the shore, we went back to the Gordon Rocks. One of the ladies in my group then announced that her second tank had only 100 bar. That was not so bad, but it turns out they had no spare. This was despite there being plenty of empty racks, as it was a 12 diver boat. Again the first group saw three hammerheads, but us, none. Plenty of fish though and a baby sea lion did tricks around us.

So I travelled 16000 km to see Hammerheads and Mantas, and still haven't seen one in 6 dives. You could say I was rather disappointed.

Conditions were quite good. We were there in the rainy season, when light rain falls in the morning. It was supposed to be cold, but the water was a pleasant 18C, and big seas are rare. I was told by the DM that visibility is not great, even in the warmer water months. It is unusual to get better than 10 m vis, which surprised me when you think how good vis you can get in Equatorial waters North of Australia.

Obviously there is great diving in the Galapagos, but they have a problem with slack operators. And they are not cheap. \$160 per double boat dive. There are also the Dive Yachts and these cost around \$3000 for a 5 day cruise + diving costs. It is difficult to pin down operators to an exact cost. There is also a National Park fee of \$US100 to enter the Galapagos.

Iguana told me there was an attempt by the local authorities to regulate the industry in 2009, but it met with stonewall resistance and cries of 'you will put hundreds out of work'.

If I had two of the better operators, goodness only knows how bad most of them must be.

And beware. Toni and I both got food poisoning. Half way through our week there, Toni could not get out of bed for a whole day. Mine hit me the day we left. Not fun on an aeroplane. We met 3 people in our Quito hotel that got food poisoning on the Galapagos and were flown back to Quito for hospitalization.

The Tortoises and Iguanas are great though.

John Conolly

Insert from our E-mails lately.

On 24/11/2010 3:00 PM, Ken R wrote:

All

Anyone up for a dive Friday or Saturday

Ken R.

Reply from another recently north bound club member.

Ken,

Friday is good for me..

Oh,

I forgot to mention the new local dive spot is Julian rocks. Not much to see today, Manta Ray heaps of Sharks and the usual suspects. Pretty warm to :-)  
25m vis the last couple of days.....

Shaun

## **- Solitaires Island Club Trip - 7<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> November 2010**

After an early start we arrived at Wooli about 4pm.

Our luxury accommodation was 2 spacious units at Stan Youngs Dive Shop & Lodge over the road from the jetty where Kraken & Erebus are moored.

Dinner on Sunday night was a Chinese banquet at the local Bowlers Club.

“The Kracken” Stans Dive Charter Boat,

Skippered by Mick Christian

Built in 2008 at Yamba, a 10 ton alloy purpose built charter boat that as Mick says “is the only one of its kind”.

Powered by two 300hp Suzuki outboards with a top speed of over 30knots, comfortably cruising to North Solitary Is in 20 minutes, after powering over the dangerous and shallow Wooli bar with ease.

Despite the bad weather down south, at Wooli conditions were good with clear sunny days and only a slight NE swell

7 Days of diving, 12 Divers, we were all feeling positive and looking forward to a week of awesome diving



Brian with The Kracken  
By RayM

Trip Leader- Peter Flochart --- Scribe- Eddie Ivers

Club members diving - Phil Rose, Phil Short, Ray Moulang, Bob Walker, Debbie & Grant Cook, Carol Martin, Martin Mueller, Rob Trudgeon, Ian Rolfe, Eddie Ivers, and Brian Byrnes

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November

**Day 1.**

Dive 1 Mackerel Run to Canyons

21m, time 66 minutes

Sighted a Obscure Hypselodoris,  
Flower Urchin, Black Coral tree  
Also sighted was a huge flathead,  
large Estuary Cod comfortable  
with being photographed by  
everyone.

Dive 2 Bubble Cave

21m, time 66 minutes

Dinner was 3 Roasts prepared by  
Debbie, Grant & Bob

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> November

Day 2 Dive 1 Elbow Cave

19 m time 82 minutes





**Dive 2** The Trail 18 m time 67 minutes  
Dinner prepared by Brian,  
a gigantic Antipasto entree followed by delicious  
Spaghetti Bolognese

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November

**Day 3** Dive 1 Fish Soup 19m, time 58 minutes

Today Pimpernel Rock dive was Plan A as the  
seas had flattened slightly Phil Goodman  
volunteered to test the current and decided that it  
was too strong to dive.  
Fish Soup was Plan B.

Ian & I swam down through the slot and  
encountered strong surge and current and decided  
on returning back around the island, sighted lots  
of Morwong, Kingies, a school of Jewies, a big  
Cod, and lots of other schooling reef fish

Dive 2 Bubble Cave 21m, time 65 minutes  
Here the gutters were carpeted in a rich layers of  
Anemones, sighted a Dwarf Lion fish &  
Various Nudies.





Debbie located an Ornate Ghost Pipefish which was visited repeatedly on later dives and photographed extensively.

An Egg Cowrie was also sighted.

Dinner on Wednesday night was a BBQ & Salad by Peter.

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> November

**Day 4** Dive 1 Mackerel Run & Canyons

21 m time 66 minutes

Swam up to the shallows, and explored the sink holes & swim through s

Next entering a gutter we swam threw an endless undulating mass of Anemones with numerous species of clown fish. Found a Zebra Lionfish resting on a plate coral

Dive 2 Elbow Cave Drift

(AKA St George Star burst pattern dive)

19m, time 65 minutes

Sighted a Large Turtle in a cave surrounded by Sweetlips, walls of Bullseyes.



Outside the cave was a large Wobbly lying in ambush. Schooling Blue Tang in the shallows, and a large pregnant female Wobbly.

Dinner was Curries cooked by Ian

**Day 5** Friday 12<sup>th</sup> November Dive 1  
Drift dive South point of the island to the Elbow Cave 19m, time 66 minutes

We sighted a Large Marbled Bull Ray, lots of Wobbies in the Sink Holes, ledges and overhangs, 2 Blue spotted rays in a sink hole mating and stirring up the silt

Phil & Carol also sighted 4 Scolloped Hammerhead sharks out in the blue water.



Closest photographic proof of Hammerhead Sharks seen here on left.



Dive 2  
Elbow Cave again, 15m time 65 minutes

Dived at the same mooring and sighted a Turtle, a Spanish Dancer in the Sink Hole, and a Lionfish out hunting, Also sighted a huge Bull Ray minus its tail accompanied by about 6 Cobia.

We dined out at the local Hotel on Friday night and meet up with Mick and his family. Lucky Phil won a meat tray & a seafood platter.

Micks' mum also won a seafood platter and gave it to us to share on the boat.



Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November

**Day 6** Dive 1 & 2

Today we dived the gutters again around the Elbow and Bubble Cave where our photographers encountered a Porcelain crabs, Blue Lined Ellysia, Black Spot Jorunna, Splendid Chromodoris, Spanish Dancer, a huge Estuary Cod, Shovel nosed Shark, Lionfish, as well as a couple of resident wobbies near the exit of the Elbow Cave

A Seafood Platter during a Surface Interval, that's a hard act to beat?

**Day 7** Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November Dive 1

A strong windy night caused the blue water from earlier days to be replaced by cooler, green murky water. Anemone Bay was very dirty looking so we decided on a Mackerel Run drift dive, during this dive

we were continually buzzed by a big school of Kingies, sighted 1 Grey Nurse Shark, a Shovel Nose Shark, a big Wobby, a little Coral Cleaner Shrimp and a few Splendid Chromodoris. Dive 2 Last dive for our trip was at the Elbow Cave mooring, we sighted a Huge Estuary Cod, 2 smaller wobbies hanging out near the exit of the cave, and a cute little Red Cod hiding in soft coral. We were very fortunate to have 7 days of good weather, 20m viz, and 21 degree water. Our gourmet cooks, Debbie, Grant, Brian, Ian, Carol & Peter deserve a big thank you, I am sure some came home few pounds heavier. Thank you Peter for organizing this wonderful week of diving at North Solitary Is. Pimpernel Rock awaits our 2011 return trip.



## **- Stockton Dive and Drive Club Weekend –**

By Andrew Moulang



We started at Swansea to dive the bridge and at around 10am on Saturday morning with just 3 – 4 wheel drives.

Bram in the XS Beema, Ron in his Prado and me in my new LUX.

We jump in the water after a coffee at the café at about 10:30 just as the tide slowed down, we swam towards the bridge to find the current was still up but that didn't stop us swimming through huge schools of massive Bream, Blackfish, Whiting and Puffer Fish.

We stopped to take the odd photo with a shopping trolley or two and we managed to

loose Bram along the way, only to find him again after he had buddied up with another group of divers.



The viz wasn't all the best with a max of about 8 metres and the temperature wasn't that bad either.

After washing the gear and packing it up we headed up to Lavis Lane just outside Stockton Beach to pick up our permits then down to the usual tyre deflation stop then down to the dunes through a new and improve entrance with some annoying speed humps.



© Ron Walsh

We made our way through the dunes to the beach and lunch at the Signa Wreck ahead of usual time.

Ron and I started to motor away only to hear a plea for help over the radio as Bram was bogged on the beach. As Ron went to help him stopped to pick up a stump for some extra fire wood. It took about five snatch straps pulls with onlookers saying Bram was brave for bringing the Bema out. After a successful recovery we went back into the dunes for a bit of a play.



We went south as far as we could then headed north, stopping at the Tank Traps that were barely visible. While we were on our way looking for the camp site Bram came down a hill which was a bit steeper at the bottom than he thought and he did a bit of a nose dive.

As I came down the same hill I could see some broken bits of plastic and a spotted trail of radiator fluid. We all stopped the damage to find some decent panel damage and a busted radiator.

We filled the reservoir back up and gingerly drove out to the servo and called BMW which sent out a tow truck after unloading it, we stuff it all into Rons and my trucks.

The X5 limped onto the tow truck and we were back on the dunes with Bram in my car and his mate in Rons.

After arriving at the campsite we set up camp for the night.

Ron had a lovely camp oven roast while the rest of us had some steak and stuff.

We woke to some beautiful weather with the sun shining, had some breaky, we packed up shop and went down for a swim, then back to the dunes for some



challenging hills but there was one that was more difficult as Ron got bogged just at the top. So we jumped out and tried to dig him out but it didn't work so I chucked a youee only to get bogged myself with my back left wheel up in the air and the front dug down to the axle.

We dug the tyres out and the guys jumped on the tray and I was away.

I reversed up to Rons truck. I got him out in one shot and we were away again, by then it was time to make a start for the exit. We went to Port Stephens for some tucker and that was a great weekend.

Thanks Ron and Bram and his mate for coming along.

## The Committee is:

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