



SEA BRAGGIN'

St George Scuba Club Newsletter

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Holmes and Flora Reefs, GBR - Rob Chenery

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Pulau Perhentian Island, Malaysia - Tong Zheng

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MIKE BALL MACRO

No Minke Whales but loads of tropical critters

At the 2012 Blue on Tour film festival evening in Sydney a number of great trips were on offer, including a week's diving on the renowned Spoilsport. When Mike Ball got up to draw the prize he decided to get cheeky with the host (diver and channel nine news presenter, Cameron Williams). In no time at all Cameron had talked Mike into offering a second trip – serendipitously for us as we won it!

The trip was a four-day fly/dive trip to Osprey Reef. Unfortunately rough conditions and mechanical issues prevented us from getting out to Osprey but we did get to do a series of relatively unexplored sites which made some of the crew happy. The boat was also half empty, which meant loads of room for setting up cameras, getting into gear, and most importantly that not everyone ate the vegetarian fare before Rox got there.

The first dive was at Challenger Bay after a night's steam from Cairns. Even in 26 degrees Rox froze and had to upgrade to a hired 5ml. Hello the tropics: Maori wrasse, a yellow flat worm Pseudoceros





dimidiatus, two small banded red pipefish *Corythoichthys amplexus*, and loads of huge sea cucumbers. It took a while to adjust visually to the hard coral seascape of the Reef as opposed to the soft coral environments of South East Asia (having last dived at Tulamben); we had to tell ourselves to see the biodiversity for what it was and not to think of the GBR as being barren.

The second dive of the day - Pixies Pinnacle - was superb. We went in first and dropped down above Jules the amazing videographer, and began the clockwise ascent through giant trevally and schools of chevron barracuda (but no sharks though). We also saw a very shy mantis shrimp and a *Notodoris minor*... The Pinnacle standing clear made a lovely topographical dive in great viz.

The last dive of the day had mad currents – some of the staff reckoned that the Cod Hole hadn't been this challenging in years, due to the weird culmination of an outgoing king tide and the Cod Hole being at the mouth to the open ocean, with building easterly seas crashing over the top of the reef. We saw no cod but did see a huge solo bumphead parrotfish and a really curious, adolescent Maori wrasse.

Day two consisted of five dives on three sites. The best by far were the sorties on The Two Towers, and the night dive on Gotham City. The Two Towers necessitated a figure of 8 diving pattern so even we couldn't get (really) lost [although I still did. Rox]. The site is made up of two sloping towers with a fast moving channel in between and loads of yellow snapper across the sloping hard coral reef. We found two turtles, wahoo, spotted eagle rays, dogtooth tuna and high up in the blue hung an ever-vigilant huge school of chevron barracuda. This time we had more shark action; squat grey reef sharks along with a whitetip snaking through the overhangs halfway up the reef. [Which can be quite surprising when shooting in macro mode...].

The night dive on Gotham City was eerie beyond belief; the pelagic predators below the boat (Giant and Blue Trevally, Red Bass and Snapper) were well trained in the benefits of following a torch's beam. We were first in the water and as we descended down the mooring line the fish joined us swimming in and out of our limited vision; it felt

like we were part of the school.

When we arrived at the reef a couple of whitetip reef sharks joined the hunt. The fish used our torch beams as hunting aids, darting past inches away from our masks in the gloom, which is pretty freaky when you have no peripheral vision. We gave up looking for fish life and focussed on the tiny critters safe from the hunters everywhere. Amazingly, despite getting very close, none of the fish actually touched us.

We were supposed to get to Osprey Reef overnight, but an exhaust failure meant we stayed within the Reef, in pretty big seas. We started the day before breakfast at The Snake Pit. We were first in and did a big swim past an olive sea snake to an amphitheatre surrounded





by hard coral towers. We spotted five spotted eagle rays at 30m, and other big fish stuff. The second dive, at the Archway, featured an orange spearing mantis shrimp which was a bonus and apparently very rare for the GBR.

We did a drift dive as the third of the day and our last dive of the trip turned out to be macro heaven. The Stepping Stones comprised two large bommies surrounded by a moonscape of smaller ones, encrusted in hard coral and Crinoidea. Speaking of crinoids, Jason happened to turn into macro man and found a crinoid cling fish, a crinoid shrimp, *Chromodoris roboi*, and also an amazing white shrimp on the hard coral which looked like a Decepticon [from Transformers; 1980s pop culture reference – Rox].

Rox won the boat photo competition with a photo of a whip goby at this site. The third prize in the comp was a *nembrotha nudibranch* also found at this site. The three prize winners were macro shots – not really what you think of when imagining the diving on the northern Great Barrier Reef. Clearly it's a well kept secret.

Of course in the days leading up to our arrival they had seen minke whales underwater and as soon as we left they saw them again en masse. Never mind, I guess we just have to start planning the next trip. We'd like to give a special mention for our Trip Director, kiwi Lisa Russell and her crew for their great service and infectious enthusiasm. We are still trying to lose the pounds after 4 days of Levi's scrumptious food.

And most importantly a big "Thank you" to Mike Ball for the very generous prize and to the organisers of Blue on Tour, including Barry and Belinda.

Roxanne Fea and Jason Coombs





DOLPHIN ENCOUNTER

On Sunday 9 June I took Le Scat out for a dive. We were going out the day before but it was too windy so we delayed the dive by a day. We ended up at Barrens Hut and The Split. Diving with me was Gary Perkins and Stephen Huxford. We started the dive by going along The Split to the north and then back along the sand edge to the boat and then south to the Barrens Hut part of the site. The visibility was about 20 metres or so and it was a very nice dive, with lots of one-spot pullers and silver sweep over the reef.

This was Stephen's first dive here so I took him to The Tunnel. We swam through, with me leading and Gary following at the rear. After I exited at the top of the shaft at the back of The Tunnel, I turned around to see how Stephen was going. As he came up level with me he excitedly pointed off to my left. I looked and saw a very large dolphin. The dolphin appeared to be swimming very slow but at that moment it flicked its tail and took off out of sight. This is the first dolphin I have ever seen underwater in over 3,450 dives. Unfortunately, Gary did not see it as he was still coming up out of the swim-through.

A pretty special event.

KELLY'S BACK IN THE WATER

As most members know, Kelly had an emergency appendectomy on 2 June. Even though it was key-hole surgery, she was in a lot of pain for quite a while afterwards and all heavy lifting and exercise was banned for six weeks. On Saturday 6 July Kelly decided she would dive. We took Le Scat out of Yowie Bay with Les, Tim Kennedy, John Crawford and Bob Trudgeon on board. Kelly was exempted from loading and unloading the boat. After all the rain of the past couple of weeks, we were hoping that the clear water we encountered on the Wednesday was still around.

We decided to dive Pizza Reef and anchored first go. However, once the ladder was down it was obvious there was a very strong current. Our ladder was almost fully floating on the surface. My guess was that it was about 1.75 knots. Luckily we got the anchor up without too much effort. We then moved to Barrens Hut. I decided to test the current before we anchored by stopping and seeing what happened. Well, we were not going to dive here either, the boat was moving south at 3 km/h according to the GPS. This is about 1.5 knots. As the fastest you can swim in scuba is 2 knots and even then only for a minute or so, we were not diving here either.

As there was still a bit of swell around, closer to the shore was not a good alternative. We decided to head back to Six Fathom Reef, which is straight off Oak Park but inside Jibbon Bommie. There was no current here so we anchored. Les decided to stay on board, so Bob, Tim and John headed down to await Kelly and I (none of them had dived this spot before). Kelly decided to sit on the rear transom with her feet on the ladder. Les and I helped her into her BCD and then pushed her into the water. This was also Kelly's first boat dive with her new drysuit and the heavy undergarment. She needs to work out her weighting with all the gear that she plans to use when we dive Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands, Scotland, in early August.

When we reached the bottom we found that the visibility was very good, perhaps almost 20 metres. With the others, we headed out west to the deeper sections of the reef. This part of the reef has changed a lot since I last dived here in February last year. A lot of sand appears to have been removed, uncovering other sections of reef. This is a really nice part of the dive site, with very good and colourful sponge life. We headed back to the anchor and I spotted an eastern blue devilfish out in the open. However, once Tim tried to take a photo it dashed back into a hole.

A bit more exploring and it was time for Kelly and I to ascend (the others having gone up earlier). Back at the boat after our safety stop, Kelly removed her weights and passed them up and then took off her BCD which was then pulled aboard. This made it very easy for her to get back on the boat without straining her stomach at all.

A successful return to diving for her.

Michael McFadyen



Club Membership Renewal

Membership of St George Scuba Club will expire on 30 June 2012.

To renew, please go to <http://www.stgeorgescubaclub.org.au/memberrenewal.php> where you can complete an online form. Transfer your membership fee of \$25 to the club's account (details on that page) before you submit the form, as you need to enter the payment details in the form. Once you have submitted the form, it is transmitted by email to the Treasurer and Webmaster to update the club's records. If you became a new member in the past month and paid the full \$25 fee, your membership will continue to June 2014.

It is preferred if you can pay by this method rather than paying in cash at a club meeting. If you have a balance owing from a trip please advise the treasurer as this can be transferred to pay for the membership fee. Note that there is no longer a paper-based form and payment cannot be made by mail.

You must renew by 31 July 2012 to retain membership of the club.

The club returns benefits to members each year through subsidising trips, providing BBQ's and free boat dive days and more. Members need only attend one or two events to receive a return on their \$25. Please support your club by renewing early.

NOTE: If you have not paid by 30 July, your membership and access to website, facebook, email and Newsletter will be cut off.

Also, after 9 months of bank visits, phone calls and tears we now have an EFT facility on our Club account. Some rules apply:

- * EFT is limited to \$1000 (you will still need to get a cheque for amounts above \$1000)
 - * Members must give the Treasurer a minimum of 1 weeks notice. This is to ensure the Treasurer and a second signatory is available.
 - * Members must email the Treasurer the BSB, Bank Name, Account Number and Account Name. The Treasurer will 'cut and paste' this information into the bank online transaction.
 - * If a member provides incorrect information, the member accepts full responsibility. The Club will not make an additional payment from the Club funds for a member's error.
- Any questions about EFT should be referred to the Treasurer.

Any queries, contact the Treasurer, Kelly McFadyen

treasurer@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au



The Eyes Have It - can you identify these critters?

Image 1



Image 6



Image 11



Image 2



Image 7

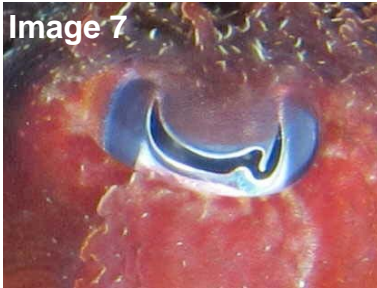


Image 12

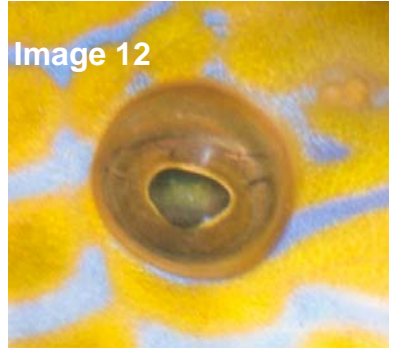


Image 3



Image 8



Image 13



Image 4



Image 9



Image 14



Image 5



Image 10



Image 15



Answers on page 18

SEA BRAGGIN'

Christmas in July Saturday 27 July 2013

Tickets will be available to those on the list at the June and July meetings, so bring your money with you. Tickets can be purchased by cash or a cheque made out to the St. George Scuba Club.

If you are paying into the St. George Scuba Club account by electronic transfer, please reference your deposit with the word "Xmas".



Christmas in July \$30 per head

DATE:
Saturday 27th July

TIME:
6.30pm for 7pm Dinner

*Bookings close
Monday 22nd July*

**TRADITIONAL XMAS
2-COURSE DINNER**
with all the trimmings

**PLUS Complimentary
Glass of Wine**
entertainment by
'SWEET TALK' duo

**RAFFLES
LUCKY DOOR
PRIZE**

plus
special visit from
Santa

Club Heathcote

24 Oliver St. Heathcote NSW 2233

Contact Les Caterson Ph 9520 9421 Mob 0427 369 511
Lescat2@bigpond.net.au



THREE NIGHTS ON RUM RUNNER TO HOLMES AND FLORA REEF

24 June

I took up the invitation from the organiser of Queensland Uni Scuba Club for a 3-night trip to the Outer GBR on Rum Runner – a 20m Motor Sailing Schooner, built in 1984, and with a nearly indestructible fibreglass hull. The boat will accommodate up to 16 guests in twin bunk and 4-share bunk cabins. As typical with sailboats,



the cabins are not spacious or very private; they are for resting and sleeping, more or less catering for back-packers.

As I had not been to Holmes reef, 240Km directly East of Cairns, I decided to go with my regular buddy Peter. As it turns out we had glorious 26deg weather with crystal clear water at 25deg while Sydney was pelted in rain.

The reef was showing evidence of past cyclone damage but was otherwise healthy. We did not witness a huge variety of species but we witnessed a particularly interesting Silver Tip Shark feeding frenzy. I have included pictures

of the vessel, dive location and a Red and Black Anemone Fish that I don't believe I have seen anywhere else.

The Rum Runner is available for charter and was a bit of a squeeze with 14 dive customers but is economical for club charter to any part of the GBR in reach of Cairns.

Rob Chenery





EAST TIMOR

Ultimate Dive Expedition

19 - 31 August 2013

13 Days / 12 nights Ex Darwin

Diver from **\$2,090** per person

Price Includes: (Non Diver - \$995)

- Return flights ex. Darwin to Dili flying with Air North
- Return airport transfers in Dili
- 12 nights twin share bunk room air conditioned guest house accommodation at The Dive Guest House (shared kitchen and bathroom) - Dili, Sat TV, Internet Connection, swimming pool
- Breakfast daily at the Castaway Bar
- Half Day Dili city tour
- 22 Dives (6 shore local dives, 10 shore Dili surround dives and 4 boat dives and 2 complimentary night dives) Includes: tanks, weights, dive guide services, & transfers
- Australian Departure taxes (Value: \$240.00 - subject to change

Cost Does Not Include:

- Travel Insurance & Personal spending monies and Excess Luggage Surcharges
- East Timor Entry visa USD 30.00 (subject to change)
- East Timor departure tax USD10.00

Room Upgrade:

Upgrade to Twin Share (1 x Queen + 1 x Single) - additional \$92 per person for 12 night stay

Conditions Apply:

Prices are subject to change without notice due to fluctuations in exchange rates.

Booking Requirements:

To secure your place on this expedition, you will need to complete a booking form and return it together with a non refundable deposit amount of \$300.00 per person.

Booking Reference # S12695

Date : 06/11/12

FOR BOOKINGS AND MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

DIVE
ADVENTURES
YOUR DIVING HOLIDAY SPECIALIST

www.diveadventures.com.au



Contact: Paul Pacey
Mobile: 0431 691 173



Timor Dive Trip 2013

We will be diving with Dive Timor Lorosae (DTL).
Check out their website at: www.DiveTimor.com

We will be staying in the guesthouse, which is located alongside the dive shop right on the beachfront in Dili. Above the accommodation is the Castaway bar and restaurant. The complex has its own pool. It is located in Dili itself so it's a short walk to other restaurants, shops, markets, etc.

The four boat dives will be to Atauro Island - see the DTL website for details.

We have also arranged with DTL that we can have an optional third dive per day, which will be at Pertamina Pier. This is one of the best muck dives in East Timor. If we choose to do a third dive, the dive operator will supply a driver to take us to the Pertamina Pier (a 5 minute drive) and wait for us to do our dive before transporting us back to our accommodation. These additional dives are \$25 per diver.

The trip is limited to 8 divers.

Contact Paul Pacey for more information or to book.

Contact Paul Pacey
Paul.Pacey@iinet.net.au or 0431-691173



MONTAGUE ISLAND SEAL DIVES

June Long Weekend

Narooma is a small fishing town, located 346 km south of Sydney. Once arriving at the wharf you board the dive boat, which is actually a charter boat with a fly bridge. It is very comfortable, holding 18 divers or more, it has plenty of shelter, an inside cabin and the fly bridge not only gets you away into the fresh air but it gives you the best vista of the island coming up. We travelled 8km SE to the northern end of Montague Island to find Australian



Fur Seals.

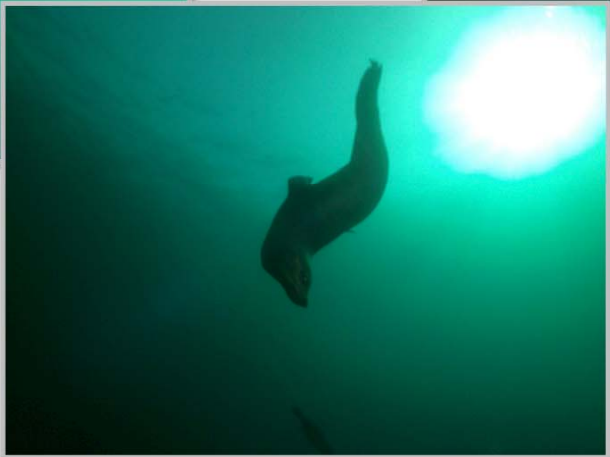
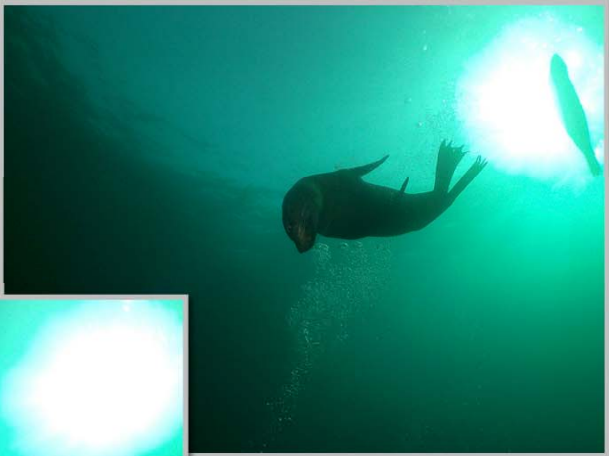
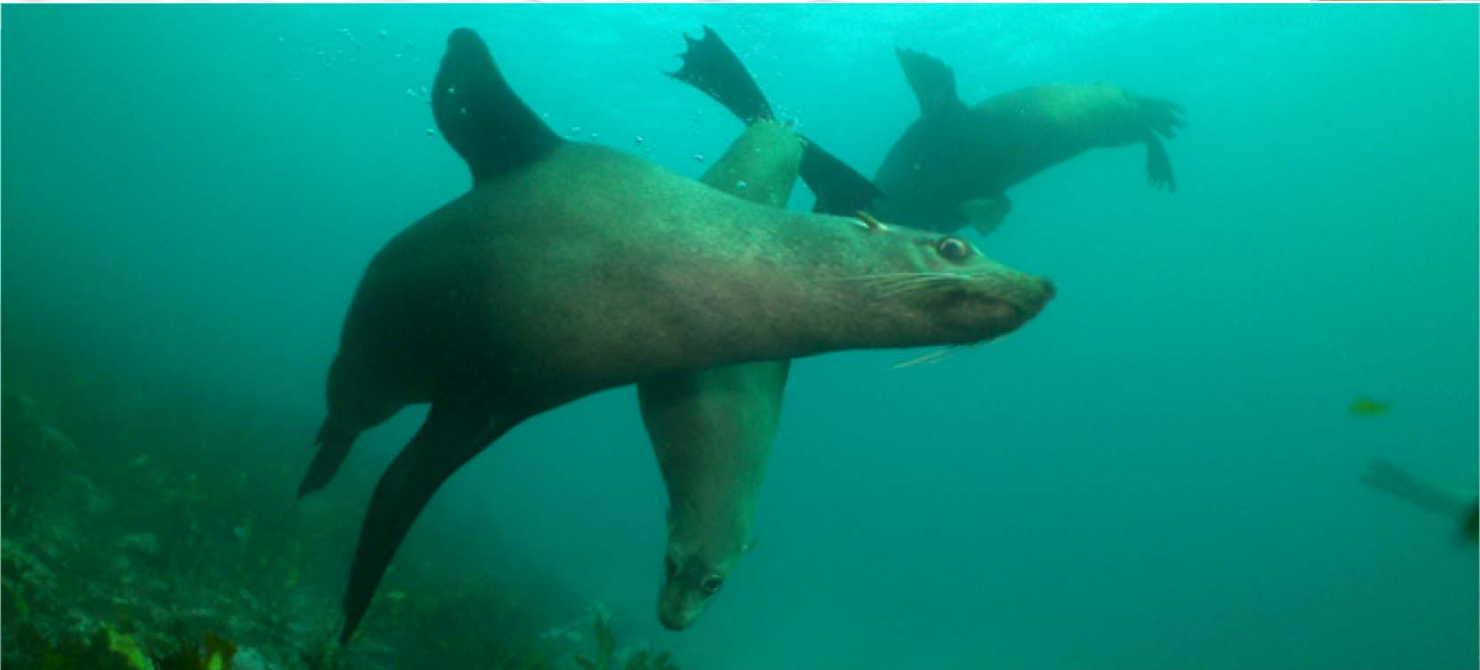
The playful seals get excited when boats moor and divers start to get in the water. Then, play time is on. The seals are inquisitive, curious and sometimes over playful. The females are temperamental when strobes flash and I found they tried to bite them, which is a little confronting. On our dive, the pups were the best fun but all in all, it is a great dive. You usually get to play with them between 8 and 24m depth, but the trick is NOT to follow them into

the blue. They'll leave you there! 30m down. If you stay about 15m, maybe less, they will come to you.

There is not much else in marine life, apart from Port Jacksons and bull rays. However, on this dive, there was a turtle, and if you look at St George's Facebook site to see the footage of Tim Kennedy's seal dive you will see the turtle at the end.

Happy Diving, Tim Kennedy







Great Barrier Reef and Yongala Liveaboard – “Kalinda”
10 – 16 November 2013
Ex Townsville

Come and have a great week's diving on the Great Barrier Reef, including the wreck of the Yongala. Diving for six days, with up to four dives per day. Sail from Townsville on Sunday evening, giving us a chance to fly up on Sunday (or earlier if you wish). Arrive back on Saturday, after a couple of dives in the morning. We will then overnight in Townsville and you can make your way back to Sydney on the Sunday.

Costs (ex gst) are:

- Trip cost \$1,000 per person, share cabin
- Airfares approx \$350-\$400 return Sydney – Townsville – Sydney via Jetstar
- Saturday night accommodation, approx \$130 for share accommodation
- Reef taxes etc. approx \$100, depending on number of days on Yongala (anticipate a maximum of two).

Optional extras could include a few days on Magnetic Island or try to win the cost of your trip back at Townsville Casino (or not).

To secure your place please pay a deposit of \$200 to the club account as soon as possible. Email the club treasurer and Ian Roffey when you do. Min of 10 required to secure this trip and there will be a maximum of 16 to make the trip reasonably comfortable.

First in best dressed for boat accommodation.

Contact Ian Roffey Ian.Roffey@team.telstra.com



SEA BRAGGIN'

PULAU PERHENTIAN, MALAYSIA

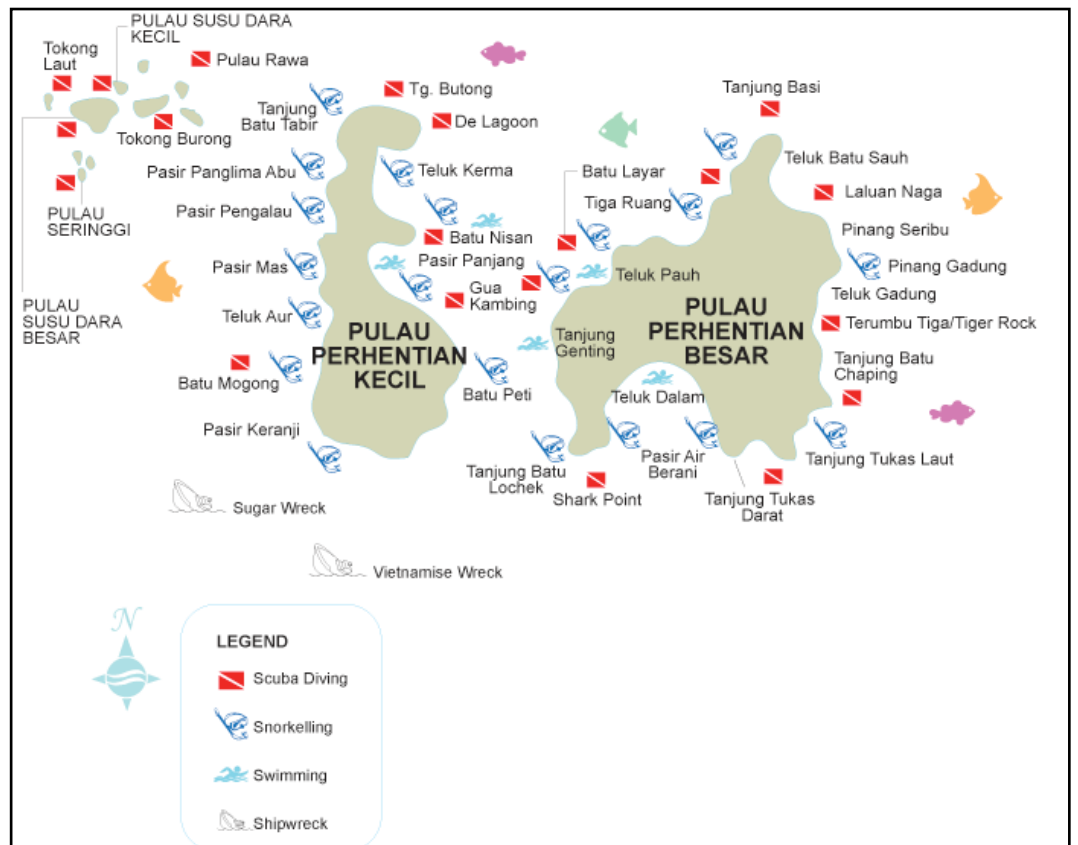
I've just come back from a trip to the Perhentian Island in Malaysia. This is a very popular destination for both domestic and regional holidaymakers. I'm afraid that not all of you are familiar with this place, so I'd like to give a brief introduction about it.

There are two islands - one is Perhentian Besar (big island) and the other one is Perhentian Kecil (small island). The easiest way of getting to the islands is by flying to the nearest city, called Kota Bahru. It is a one hour flight from the nation's capital - Kuala Lumpur. After arriving, you need to take a taxi for 50-60 minutes to Kuala Besut, the place where the jetty is located. Then you take the ferry to the island. If you book your tour as a package, I believe every resort or dive centre can arrange all this transportation for you.

In terms of diving, this place offers a series of easy dive sites for beginners to intermediate level divers. There are more than 20 dive sites around the islands. To be honest, not all these places are very good considering the negative impacts of increasing tourists. However, some of them are very good.

The best two dive sites are Sugar Wreck (at least 30-40 minute boat from the islands) and Tokong Laut (Temple of the sea). This is an underwater pinnacle. I dived this once and it was magnificent. Heaps of big eye snappers and groups of sardines and very healthy coral, mild current though. Moreover, you can always see one or two groups of diamond fish in De Lagoon and sometimes groups of yellow tail barracudas.

In Vietnamese wreck, the current is strong on one side of the wreck (always). However, you can see very colourful soft coral on this side as the current brings foods and helps the soft coral to grow. Inside the wreck, you can find several large size barracuda sleeping in it. If you look closely, you can sometime find stonefish hidden in the soft corals.



SEA BRAGGIN'

Batu Layar is another good dive site. The reef is generally healthy and fish life is prolific. However, there were too many novice divers. The local government sunk three police patrol boats in 2012 near Batu Layar, which created a new dive site called Police wrecks. It is clearly so fish and corals will start to grow in these boats. There were not too many attractions but I found a small yellow box fish inside the wreck, which was very interesting.

Regarding the dive shops, I used Water Colour Dive Centre. It's located in the big island and faces to the strait. It's a good dive shop I have to admit as they put divers' safety as their first priority. The DM checked all your gear, did the safety check patiently for every dive. Even if you think you are an experienced diver, you can never guarantee you will never make any mistakes.

Although it was a bit time consuming, I think this is a plus. (Not many south-east Asian dive centres do this). I dived three dives a day for three days, plus one dive on the first day. But if you are not too rushed, two dives a day is



best. Usually the morning dive is the best one, offering the best visibility of the whole day. I paid around \$20 a dive (excl gear but incl tanks and weights). Overall, I spent five days four nights on the island, the package included all meals, drinks, dorm bed with a/c (but you get the whole room), 10 dives and all transports from the airport and back to the airport. All together it was around 1120 MYR (less than 400AUD according to today's exchange rate). A good diving trip at a very affordable price.

Tong Zheng





For Sale

Twin shell membrane suit with rear shoulder entry zip \$200.00

- Size large (owner is 177cm tall, 91kg, 107cm chest, 104cm hips) but would suit height down to 172cm
 - Apeks inflation valve on chest, Apeks non-adjustable dump valve on left arm
 - Factory option reflective tape on shoulders
 - Factory option thigh pocket on left leg
 - Built in knee pads, Size 11.5 hard boots, 2" webbed waist belt
 - Neck seal in good condition Waterproof inner shell zip in perfect condition
- **Wrist seals need replacement****
- **Non-waterproof outer shell zip seized but does not affect integrity of suit****
- **Boots show wear on heels from shore diving but does not affect integrity of suit****

Includes inflation hose, bag & beeswax zip lube blocks. Will include #100 polar-fleece under suit if required.
Last service 2011 by DKG Drysuits Victoria and stored unused since then.
This is a simple robust 'bag' style suit and just requires new wrist seals after extended unused storage to be ready for use again.



Extreme brand boat jacket for sale \$25

- Weatherproof hooded zip-front jacket
- Size extra-large
- Made of 1.5mm soft neoprene with 2 pockets
- Excellent condition, rarely used and been in extended storage.
- Great for surface intervals and boat ride home



Can be inspected or tried on at Penshurst / Hurstville. Email for more pictures.



Contact Anthony Cowan

0404 034 542

anthony.cowan@macquarie.com

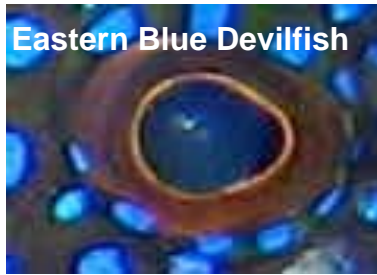


The Eyes Have It - can you identify these critters?

Pufferfish



Eastern Blue Devilfish



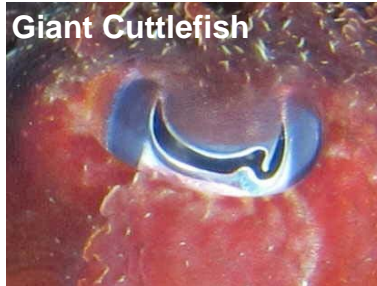
Blue Groper



Sea Perch



Giant Cuttlefish



Mosaic Leatherjacket



Parrotfish



Turtle



Crocodile fish/flathead



Pufferfish



Ray



Spotted Moray



Weedy Seadragon



Sea Horse



Red Indianfish



Thanks to Carole Harris, Wayne Heming and Natasha Naude for images



WHAT'S COMING UP?

WHEN	WHAT/ WHERE	CONTACT	WHEN	WHAT/ WHERE	CONTACT
Sat 13 July	Shore Dive and BBQ Kurnell	Paul Pacey paul.pacey@iinet.net.au	Sun 14 July	Boat Dive Minmi Trench	Jason Coombs j.combs@unsw.edu.au
Wed 17 July	Club Meeting Rowers on Cook Club	Jason Coombs j.combs@unsw.edu.au	Sat 20 July	Boat Dive Marley Point	TBA
Sat 27 July	Boat Dive Middle Ground	Nancy Scoleri nancyscoleri@yahoo.com.au	Sat 27 July	Xmas in July Heathcote Club	Les Caterson Lescat2@bigpond.net.au
Sun 28 July	Shore Dive Kurnell	Eddie Ivers eddieivers@iprimus.com.au	Sat 3 August	Boat Dive Bondi Wall	Ian Roffey ianroffey@gmail.com

CLUB COMMITTEE

President	Jason Coombs	9345 4599	President@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Vice President	Peter Flockart	9371 0265	pjiflockart@speednet.com.au
Secretary	Digby Naude	0403 896 985	secretary@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Treasurer	Kelly McFadyen	9545 5596	treasurer@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Assistant Secretary/ Treasurer	David Casburn	0405 186 184	dcasburn@iinet.net.au
Webmaster	Michael McFadyen	9545 5596	webmaster@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Newsletter Editor	Natasha Naude	0410 074 677	newsletter@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au

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If you don't mind, please don't insert a copyright symbol and your name into the image files.