

November 2016

Nautilus SCUBA Club Newsletter



Dive Trips
Club Meetings
Guest Speakers
Trip Reports

Cairns QLD Australia

<http://www.nautilus-scuba.net>

E: editor@nautilus-scuba.net

Local dive trips and get together information

*Please note that the news letter does not publish prices on trips offered

November 2016						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Club meeting



Calypso - Port Douglas
Club Christmas dive trip
Contact:
dive-coordinator@nautilus-scuba.net

Don't forget the festivities after the dive.

DECEMBER 2016						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

No Club meeting in December



For our December club Trip we have provisionally reserved 12 places on Tusa 6 on Sunday 11th.

Tusa does not reserve a spot until payment has been made in full.

To pay and book, or for more information, call Tusa directly on 4047 9120. You will need to be at E Finger of Cairns Marina at 7:40 for an 8:00 departure.

Remember to tell them you are a Nautilus member.

Once you have booked, please let the dive co-ordinator know so he can keep track of who is going.

dive-coordinator@nautilus-scuba.net

NB Tusa allows unguided diving, and they also have Nitrox tanks on board (subject to availability).

Special dives will be organised in addition to the regular monthly day trips, these could be with Reel Cray-Zee, Rumrunner, and could be day trips or weekend trips to the reef or the Yongala. Better watch your emails for future announcements.

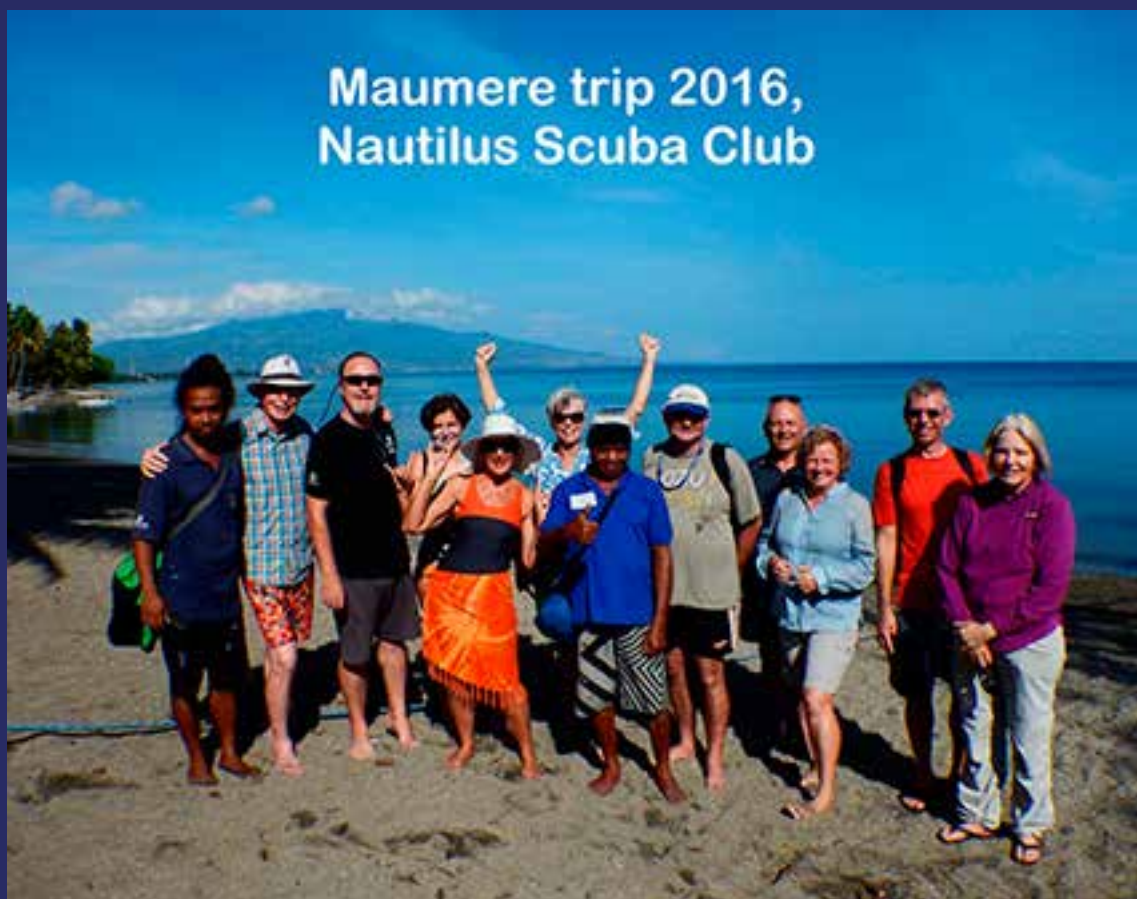
November Club Meeting Wednesday 30th From 7pm... Junior Eisteddfod Hall 67 Greenslopes Street, Cairns

GUEST SPEAKER

This months meeting will feature feedback on the recent club trip to Maumere on the island of Flores in Indonesia.

Mark Gibson will share his video from the trip while Rigo will entertain us with his unique presentation style while recanting his observations regarding this trip.

There will also be information regarding two international dive trips being planned for next year. These world class dive destinations look like being available at prices rarely seen.



Trip Report from Club dive on November 13th on-board T6, Cairns

Copy: Colin Tonazzi
Images: Colin Tonzazi

Hello fellow scuba enthusiasts.

Just sit right back and you'll hear a tale, a tale of a fateful trip. That started from this tropic port aboard this tiny ship.

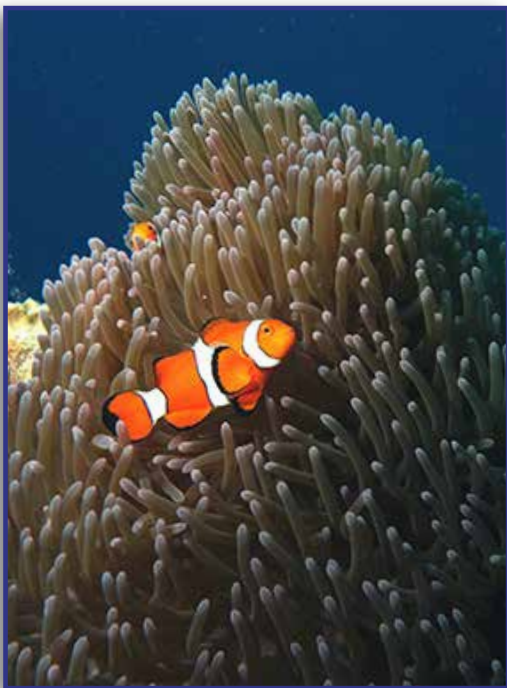
Oops. That may be the theme from a popular tv series..

Now.. Recently I was present during a discussion where the topic was trip reports. In particular, what the content should be? Should it be just a factual account? Or an attempt to entertain? Let's try both..

The facts were.

Date: 13/12/16

Vessel: Tusa T6



Location: Hastings Reef.

Weather: Fine. <10 knots breeze.

Number of Nautiluses: Approximately 15.

Dive 1:

17.9m for 50mins @ Wildside. 15-20m Vis / 28 degrees.

Dive 2:

15.8m for 55mins @ Wildside. 15-20m Vis / 28 degrees.

Dive 3:

17.2m for 53mins @ Blue Lagoon. 10-15m Vis / 28 degrees.

So there you have it. The factual account.

I shall now try to fill in the blanks.

There was a total of 58 paying customers on T6. As most club members brought their own dive equipment and some had cameras, this made for a rather cosy dive deck.

Unfortunately I cannot list all members who attended. It was a mixture of the usual suspects and some who I had not met prior. What I can say is that it was a lovely group of people. It was especially good to see the 'Cairns Reef Fish Geek' who has returned from his yearly term in Florida.

Also, we had cake. Not one, but two cakes. Our committee member and dive trip coordinator Rigo was celebrating his 70th birthday. Happy Birthday Rigo

Underwater. The Vis only ok. The water temperature was warm enough, however board shorts and sharkskin top may not have been the smartest choice.

Some exciting underwater species included a shark, turtle and quite a few Harlequin Sweetlip getting cleaned by the cleaning fish. There were also many Nemo Fish including some in a blue anemone.

For the macro enthusiasts, an eagle eyed female member who acted as a spotter for the photographers found an Orangutan Crab and an Anemone Shrimp.



Swimming underwater with friends is a great way to spend a Sunday.

En route back to Cairns we washed down our cake with XXXX Gold or Tooheys New..

Thank you to all who attended for

the wonderful company, thanks also to the crew of T6.

That is all.□

Maumere reconnaissance dive trip.

The full report. October 2016.

Unauthorised version. All rights reserved.

In the dying days of the Dutch colonial power at school in the Netherlands we had to learn the topography of the Dutch Indies. "Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, Sumba, Flores, Timor," we incanted with the whole classroom like a holy prayer the islands east of Java. At the time I never thought that I would ever see these Islands with their magically sounding names, but now we live in Cairns Bali is around the corner and on the 21st of October 2016 I landed in Maumere, Flores, in the good company of my dive buddies Lyn & Malcolm, Asa & Paul, Caroline, Ro, Mark, Alex and of course my Jannemieke.

We stayed at Sea World Club, in separate small Indonesian style two person houses, with our meals in the restaurant. As Dirk of Diversion Dive Travel could not vouch for our dive operator, we took it as a reconnaissance trip. Aircon, good beds, good bathrooms with showers. Maumere lies on the Bay of Maumere, with some islands protecting the bay from the ocean. The weather was good, most of the times a bit cloudy and with on some days rain, heavy rain, in the afternoon, as this is already in the rainy season. But enough circumstantial talk.

This is all about diving. Maumere is a famous diving site, but it is said that the reef has been severely damaged by dynamite fishing and by a devastating tsunami in 1992, when more than 10,000 people died here. We did not see many signs of devastation. The reefs and coral gardens are very diverse and quite spectacular. The visibility was often very good, 30 meters plus, sometimes dropping to 15, and the water temperature 29 to 31 degrees.

We motored out to different dive sites on somewhat rusty boats, one much faster than the other, but even so it took between one or two hours to arrive, so we were glad to have something to read. The whole dive operation is not exactly what one would expect, but all the staff are very friendly and helpful and our dive master, Rio, is a nice guy. We went out on two boats, the "large" boat and the small one. The 3 couples, Malcom and Lyn, Paul and Asa, and Jannemieke and I, took the large boat. The first day we found out that the small boat was twice as fast, which made it possible for the divers to do an extra muck dive after returning to the dive shop. We considered a schedule of boat swapping, but in the end we all stayed on the boats we happened to be on at our first dive day. After the first day we tried to leave 30 to 60 minutes earlier with the large boat, and thankfully everyone agreed, including our dive master and crew. But it never happened. A wise lesson again. You can't change the system. It confirmed my second main law of human behaviour: "Status quo rules". You might wonder what the first law is. But this is a trip report, not a treaty on human behaviour, so I will not bore you with it.

As it turned out, our beloved club members on the fast boat developed a habit of laughing, shouting and jeering at us when they passed us at full speed. We on the slow boat could not care less about this immature display of falsely supposed superiority. We were quietly confident in our knowledge that some people feel superior just because of some coincidental difference that can in no way be ascribed to any real merit. We chose not to talk about it.

I noticed again that Indonesian people are very friendly and try to be helpful, but they are not active communicators. Our dive master did not volunteer much information about the dive sites or the dive plan, apart from telling us to keep the wall to our left side or right side. There is some language barrier, but Jannemieke can find her way pretty well in Bahasa Indonesia. So it is more a cultural thing.

As I said, the dive operation is still somewhat undeveloped. The diesel engine of our large boat failed a few times. There is no communication on board with the other boat, apart from mobile phone, no two way radio, no epirob. There is no oxygen and no first aid kit (but in our case three doctors and a nurse) on board. The crew seems not to be trained to look after the divers in the water. They apparently don't look at any weather forecast, which especially worried Caroline.

We asked about their training, and we were told that there is no money for extra training. So Malcolm and Lyn had a long chat with the manager, Martin, to give him some tips for improvements. These were gratefully accepted. The manager is relatively new and tries to change many things for the better. So we hope that the whole dive operation will get more up to scratch.

These critical remarks should not let you think that we did not have a lot of enjoyment and fun on our dive trip, because we certainly did! The food was good, the beer comes in big bottles (Bintang besar), and we enjoyed an (often free) unlimited supply of Arak, a local brew out of rice related to gin. It is served out of a large Bintang beer bottle, which is refilled without you having to ask. Arak has a taste of tropical herbs which have been sourced straight out of nature and just a whiff of puke. It burns in the throat. The taste and the burn reminds the regular drinker of the end of the night before and in that way creates an enjoyable feeling of continuity and thoughts of the vastness of the universe, where everything is connected to everything. We noticed that the Arak helped us to expand our mental abilities, so we could cover multiple major issues of world importance in our conversation with amazing and splendid new insights. We were able to combine common knowledge, science, philosophy and religion in all encompassing concepts, like the future development of drones combined with facial recognition and high powered darts. Or the influence of future gen technology on the naval submarines that Australia ordered in France and French culture.

But what about the diving? The dives were "wonderful, terrific" (Malcolm), "cruisey" (Lyn), "I saw two fishes I have never seen before" (Alex), "long, long, lovely long" (Ro), "I love my new Nikon point and shoot" (Rigo), "I shot my best under water picture ever" (Jannemieke), "nice temperature" (Paul), "mind expanding" (Mark), "I don't trust the weather" (Caroline), "absolutely lovely" (Asa). Beautiful coral gardens with especially beautiful soft corals. We saw only one spot with major bleaching, and from time to time a crown of thorns. A high diversity of fish and other critters. Not many big fish though and we spotted only very few pelagic fish. Long dives of 80 minutes and over. Ro had a record dive of 135 minutes. By the time she surfaced, completely happy and relaxed, her dive buddies on the small boat were worried sick. They had not been able for some time to spot any bubbles indicating that there was still a diver in the water. Luckily there was no safety equipment or communication on board, otherwise they would probably have contacted well there is nobody really to contact out there who can be of any help. So all good. Ro will be nominated for the human scrubber award.

I had taken my new compact all weather point and shoot camera, the Nikon AW130. I saw Asa using it when we did our Palau trip and it made me slightly jealous. As a typical male I don't deal very well with feelings, so I bought it on sale by JB Hifi. It goes to 30 meters depth without a housing. I was amazed with the results. The small flash works really well and the battery lasted easily 3 dives. If you're a novice under water photographer, or if you want to keep things simple as I do, this camera is the way to go. It sells for under A\$ 400.

On the Wednesday Jannemieke organised with the help of a local long term, more or less stationary, tourist, Kurt, a fantastic Japanese style dinner in a local warung (simple Indonesian eatery) which ended in a round of arak and some stunning impersonations of fishes and other animals by the members of our club.

The last day before we left we did a bus tour to the three coloured lakes. These are crater lakes, high in the mountains. It was a long day, from 5am to 5pm, riding a bus. After some doubts about the long drive, everybody came, and they were right. It was a pleasant trip. The journey was beautiful, some of us came well prepared with eye shades and bed pillows and slept very well. The lakes, light blue, dark blue and green, were quite stunning in spectacular surroundings. On the way back we had a good meal with fresh fish right from the sea at a beachside eatery. With a large beer we paid \$7 per person. How good is that! Once home we took our dinner on the beach and gorged on freshly caught and yummy cooked lobster.

Diving Maumere 2016

On Monday we started on our way back, flying to Denpasar in the morning and further on to Cairns at night. We decided to have a good farewell meal. Asa came up with a highly recommended restaurant on trip advisor: Kayumanis. Well, it was really fantastic. After a cab ride through super busy Denpasar, going through old streets with traditional houses we arrived in a beautiful restaurant, with superior and friendly service and an absolute luxury look with the quality of the food to match. Selamat makan! Cheers. A beautiful conclusion of a lovely diving trip.

Would we recommend this trip?

I found the Indonesian landscape and atmosphere, with the friendly Indonesian people a big bonus in itself. We virtually did not see any European looking tourists. But considering the low safety standards at Sea World Club, I would probably not recommend it. They promised to improve on this and I think they will. We in Australia are very safety aware, in my own opinion sometimes maybe a bit obsessive. I find it incomprehensible that there is not yet a pool safety fence around all of Australia to prevent the kids falling into the sea. But I should not make light about safety. Would I like to come back to Sea World Club in Maumere and dive? Oh yes!

Rigo



PNG Milne Bay 14th – 24th of October 2016

Well, what a trip we had! Members of our dream team were as follows:

Akiko ... our fearless leader, diplomat, entertainer, Trivia Specialist and mermaid.

Judy wise beyond her years, a beautiful soul, loved by all and a whole lot of fun.



Shey and Colin..
funny, entertaining (pool pony races was one of the highlights), insane muck diving addicts and superstar photographers.. though Shey needs to remember to always pay attention to her surroundings so as not

to lie on Scorpion fish and Sea Urchins while trying to get that perfect shot!

Jake . who made up the third of the muck diving addicts and superstar photographers.

Gilbert who joined different teams at different times and improved his air consumption dramatically as time went on NOT a muck diving addict ☺.

Tim and Sue the only ones to find the Blue ringed

her lack of desire to revive someone while on holiday... fair enough

And me.... first trip with a tropical dive club I was stunned to watch the rest of the team gear up putting on not one but several layers including gloves and hoods while I pulled out my shorty. I did end up with two layers as well but stuck to bare legs.

Day 1 and 2

We all met at 4 o'clock on Friday morning at the Cairns Airport and off to Port Moresby it was!

It all just seemed to be going way too smooth to begin with. Flights were on time (both international and domestic), customs cleared, visas issued, no luggage missing and an airport staff member, as organised, waiting for us at the international terminal to ensure a swift transfer to the domestic terminal which turned out to be unnecessary as we arrived with plenty of time to spare and no dramas along the way. So far so good. We arrived safely in Alotau around lunchtime and were greeted by Rob and some of his crew who took us straight to the MV Chertan to freshen up and unpack. Departure was going to be just after midnight to get to the first dive site early Saturday morning. Keen as everyone was, dive gear was set up promptly, with a couple of divers commenting they only had about 50 bar in their tanks. Word from the crew was, 'we'll do it later, no problem....'

And later it was going to be. Turns out the air compressor had broken down and without air we were not going to do a whole lot of diving. For a little while though we did consider taking up freediving.

Rob did have a spare air compressor that had only recently arrived from the US and watching his team wrangle this incredibly heavy and awkward piece of equipment into the boat and down nothing more than a stepladder into the engine room was an experience in itself. With sheer determination and a 'can do' attitude they somehow did it. OHS has definitely not yet found its way to PNG which simplifies certain things, like who needs steel cap boots when you have thongs.

Sadly the effort turned out to be in vain as the new compressor proceeded to

blow up the starter motor. So the chase was on for a new starter motor. Which somehow was found but it turned out not to be compatible with the new compressor either..... !

By now we were well into Saturday and a departure



Octopus and were also lucky enough to find the Sea Moth we all wanted to see.

Sarah my awesome dive buddy and roommate, who taught me so much about being a better buddy and more 'conservative' as Judy put it, although Sarah assured me the primary reason for wanting to keep me safe was

anytime soon not looking likely. It gave us plenty of time to get to know each other and observe some of the local wildlife, well dogs and cats living on barges around us and there was a trip to the local market and ice cream was had by some.

In the end the suggestion was made to go diving right there in the wharf and all except me did. And who would have thought apparently this Nawae Jetty was a great muck dive site with lots to see In Akiko's rating system (which took us all trip to understand)



it scored 2 stars, the highest she will award!! She and Sarah loved it so much they went back for a night dive. The divers found lots of nudibranchs & lots of juvenile fish e.g. juvenile harlequin sweetlips, juvenile angel Fish, lots of crabs and shrimps of all kinds, including 4 lobsters, garden eels, a school of razor fish, huge estuarine stonefish, devil scorpionfish and a snowflake moray eel. The night dive revealed lots of lobsters and crabs scurrying around in the open, blue-eyed stingfish, geography cone hunting, a sand coloured snake eel looking creature that Rob thinks is a Scheele's conger eel and lots of NUDIS.

Back on deck departure was now going to be 1.00 AM Sunday morning but when we woke up the next morning we still hadn't left Alotau and the mood was sinking. To be honest, I do not know exactly how Rob did it but in the end, somehow, they managed to resurrect the old compressor during the night and after some final touches the next morning we were on our way for a trial run to the **Mascootta**

Wreck nearby. Rob just wanted to give the compressor another run after our next dive before heading further out to sea.

This little wreck was well worth a visit with a tasselled wobbegong resting on the wreck deck and plenty of fish life all around.

We certainly experienced firsthand what it means to

run a dive charter in PNG and I can only pull my hat off to Rob and his team for the way they handled the first couple of days with a group of frustrated divers waiting to get going. 'Stoic' was the word that came to my mind as Rob & Co, with limited resources, after two days finally somehow managed to get a broken down air compressor system going again.

Once at sea it was all about the diving and Rob, his wife Molly and the rest of the crew couldn't have been more accommodating. It was also wonderful to see Seb back in the water for the first time since his accident, especially for the people that were there last year but I believe Akiko will give an update on Seb herself.

Day 2,3 and 4 (Muck dives)

From the Wreck we **Samarai** the south we had dives over 2 nights at Wharf as



Mascootta went to **Island** in east where several 2 days and the Main well as the

Government Wharf and from here we also visited the Gona Bara Bara (manta & muck diving) site.

There were certainly lots to see here amidst the pile of rubbish underneath the jetties: many different kinds of anemone fish (tomato, skunk, pink, false western, etc.),



an unusual blue anemone, cockatoo waspfish, mandarin fish, a juvenile crocodile fish, yellow margin and bar-tail morays, and reef octopi, to name a few. The night dive presented some fimbriated & undulated moray eels, the famous Milne Bay epaulette (walking) shark scurrying around, Cuttlefish, banded Sole, and of course, NUDIS!

Day 3

Gona Bara Bara (manta cleaning station)

We sadly only caught a glimpse of the mantas, they did not seem to enjoy our company and the viz was poor. We had much more luck with all the macro stuff – spider crabs, orangutan crabs, squat lobsters, Donald duck shrimps, commensal shrimps, and the highlight being a green long-tailed ghost pipefish and Yes, NUDIS!

Day 4, 5 & 6 were spent out in the

Little China

Moderate to strong current. Abundance of beautiful pristine corals, both hard and soft. Whitetip Shark cruising, Denise Pygmy Seahorse in the sea fan as well as blue-spotted Sting Ray sitting on a ledge, 2 x Lobsters situated in a mirror image inside a crevice, Oceanic Triggerfish, Potato Cod Grouper, Maori Wrasse and a general abundance of reef fish and NUDIS.

Day 5

Tanyas's Reef (Reef dives)

Strong current but once crossed to the lee side, manageable. Vibrant, healthy corals and a multitude of fish from Anthias, Moorish idols, Fusiliers, Wrasse to larger pelagic fish such as Giant Trevallies, Spanish Mackerels, etc. We also saw a Crocodile Fish, Green Turtle, Milne Bay Epaulette Shark sleeping underneath a coral ledge in the shallows, Scorpionfish of various colours, Giant Moray Eel, Cuttlefish and NUDIS.

During this dive Sarah and I wanted to practice inflating our safety sausage under water. It all became a bit of a circus with strings tangled etc. and Akiko tried to signal to us that, given the strong current, we should abort the effort. Now, if you know the signal for 'abort' and 'strong current' that would be fine but Sarah and I were not familiar with either, so we thought we were in some serious trouble with Akiko ready to punch our lights out. Judy thought watching it all unfold was one of the highlights of her trip.

Cobbs Cliff and Wahoo Point (Reef Dives)

Rob said Cobbs Cliff can be a 'surprise' dive site where they'd previously encountered unexpected visitors such as Humpback Whales, Tiger Sharks and Killer Whales! No surprises for us, but saw a Whitetip Shark, Crocodile Fish, Giant Moray Eel and a Denise Pygmy Seahorse in a sea fan and of course NUDIS. Moved to the north shore of the mainland, protected from the currents to Wahoo Point. Not too much to see here but well worth it, as a pair of Leaf Scorpionfish were found and we did see NUDIS.

Day 6

Wahoo Point

Everybody went back to see the pair of Leaf Scorpionfish from yesterday, including Rob and Molly, but they had moved away from their original spot. Rob eventually found the white one, then Junior saw the second yellowish green one nearby. We also saw a Reef Octopus, Severin Pygmy Seahorse, Orangutan Crab, Malabar Cod Grouper, Mappa Pufferfish and NUDIS.

Deacon's Reef (Reef dive)

One of the best dive sites in Milne Bay! We went along the wall first, then through Coral Bommies and swim throughs by the wall with sun rays beaming down. Lots of colourful fish, including Anthias and various Wrasse. It seemed for a moment that Sarah's dream of finding a seahorse (not a pygmy seahorse, we did see them) on this trip had finally come true as Akiko took a photo of something tiny that looked like a seahorse but when she excitedly asked to see the photo later, it turned out to be..... you guessed it a NUDI. We saw lots of Nudis and looking at the book of Nudis Rob has there are many more to see yet ☺.

Day 7, 8 and 9

Lawadi, Deacon's Reef and Barracuda Point

Here we anchored for the rest of the trip with access to all 3 dive sites at any time, offering some of the best muck and reef dives in Milne Bay. It was open deck for the duration of rest of our stay with our awesome local dive

guides, Junior and Jacob, always happy to take us out if we wanted a guided dive. We would dive either straight off the Chertan or have the dinghy drop us off and we would either make our way back to the Chertan – sometimes a whole 2 hour trip! or, if needed, the dinghy would come pick us up. On one of our self-guided dives Sarah and I almost climbed aboard the wrong liveaboard anchored not far from ours.

Lawadi itself had much to offer for the avid photographers amongst us such as the

harlequin ghost pipefish, leaf scorpionfish, painted frogfish, tiger cowry and much to everyone's delight a little, black frogfish and a pair of harlequin shrimps. On the very last day a robust ghost pipefish and an orange frogfish were the discovery of the day. I must say that some of the most exciting things for photographers appear to be so small, I don't know how they even find them. I often couldn't see what we were looking at and had to check out others' photos once we got back on board. A highlight for me was the giant moray eel being cleaned by several cleaner wrasse and cleaner shrimps and he really didn't seem to enjoy it that much ☺.

Lawadi is also where Tim and Sue found the blue ringed



octopus. The dive from the west end of Lawadi started at a river mouth and all my FNQ dwelling dive buddies had some reservations about crocs but none were sighted.

Lawadi offered many other things such as a beautiful coral garden somehow appearing out of the muck and brimming with life. Anemone seemed to be at a premium with many and big anemone fish fiercely protecting even the smallest of homes. We also found a napoleon snake eel, and I spotted a reef octopus so perfectly camouflaged, an awesome sight and a free swimming banded eel on a mission back to his home under a rock. Always a great sight is the huge bumphead parrotfish.

On the dive from Deacon's Reef back to Lawadi (which we did twice as it was so beautiful) we were rewarded with some beautiful scenery, stunning swim throughs and lovely corals. We found harlequin ghost pipefish, a lone Great Barracuda, and a huge bait ball of fusiliers forever shapeshifting as five giant trevallies chased them around.

Sarah and I also bumped into Tim and Sue who had just found a sea moth. What an unusual creature. Looks like a baby bird fallen out of a nest, it even moves like one. As we stayed quite shallow during a lot of these dives, air consumption was low and the dives just went forever, not that I could ever match the air consumptions of my dive buddies. Not just Akiko, but Sarah and Judy too seemed to turn into mermaids under water, and although I didn't dive with Shey, word is, she holds the record for the longest muck dive on this trip with 135 minutes.

Barracuda Point was another great drift dive back to the Chertan. My request for the day were, sharks, mantas and dolphins. And believe it or not, we came close with a pod of dolphins spotted on the way over and a school

of devil rays down at 30 m, absolutely stunning to watch hanging out in the blue and later up near the reef ledge, and some grey reef sharks to top it all off. We also saw a school of barracudas and a maori wrasse and a huge variety of small anthias which are my personal favourite.

All of these sites offered a variety of.... NUDIS Of course!

I only went on one night dive this trip. It actually started at dusk and turned into night with not much to report but others went quite a few times and stayed down there forever.

We left Lawadi heading for Alotau and home after a last early morning dive which rewarded us with a baby hawksbill turtle and a couple of grey reef sharks, as well as the usual Well, one becomes rather spoilt after so many wonderful dives!

Thank you to everyone for letting me part of such a wonderful experience, it's been a privilege to dive with such seasoned divers, I learnt so much and had a fabulous time. Great trip with a great bunch of knowledgeable and fun people. Hope to do it all again with you somewhere, sometime!! ☐



..... And One Year On: Seb's Progressed!

– by Akiko Murakami

This time last year, I wrote, "What a difference a month makes!" I was referring to the near miraculous recovery that Seb had been making following a serious (non-dive related) accident on board Chertan, in which he had sustained severe leg injuries, thought to cripple him for life or worse... (Sebastian or 'Seb' / 'Seba', was one of the local dive guides on our Chertan trip last October.)

Fortunately, we had our resident medical experts, Malcolm McDonald and Lyn Kerr, on board, who managed to rescue Seb and got him airlifted to Alotau Hospital, where surgery began immediately on arrival. One year on and a whole lot of surgeries and physios later, I'm pleased to say this time, "What a difference a whole year makes!!!"

Last year's trip participants who participated again this year (that's Tim & Sue, Judy and me) were hoping to get a glimpse of Seb this trip, maybe at the airport on his crutches, still making slow but steady progress. So what a surprise it was to see him on board Chertan instead as one of the boat crew!

Seb greeted us with a big smile, standing without support, and told us that this was the 3rd trip he was joining... though not yet back as a dive crew. He said his left leg was still weak and at times painful, and that he still had rods holding his bones together, though

they should come out eventually. He seemed in good spirits and determined to get back in the water. That's the attitude!

So as the days progressed and trip participants excitedly talked about our dives and our amazing new finds, Seb seemed to have been secretly hatching his own plot. Once we got to Lawadi, our last shallow dive site spot, I saw Seb in the water performing his in-water physios. Surely that would be the most that he could do...

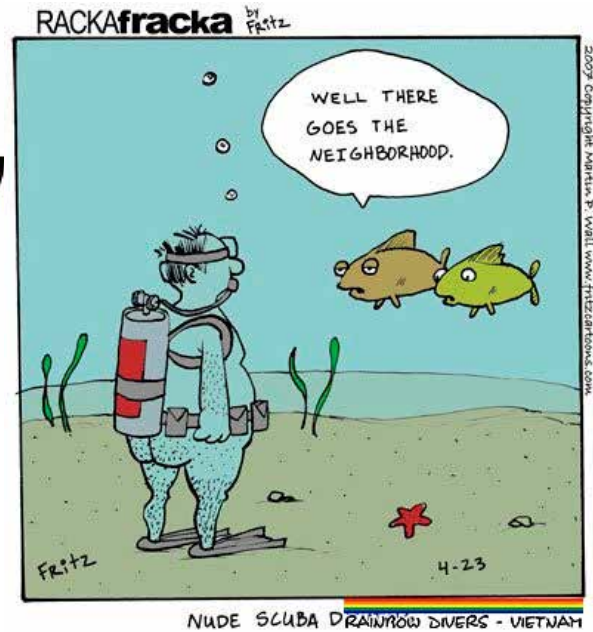
Well think again! Seb was back in the water, yes, with his full dive gear, on the final day of our dives! This was his first ever dive since his accident a year ago. And what's more, within 5 minutes of getting in the water, he found a new harlequin ghost pipefish, which he happily pointed out. So I guess it's safe to say that you can still keep your mojo even if you're out of the water for a whole year! Seb did say that he still needed to get his leg strength back, as otherwise, he'd keep going round and round in circles in one spot... or maybe that's the key to finding ghost pipefish!?

Finally, both Rob (Chertan owner & captain) and Seb wished to convey their thanks to the Nautilus Club for supporting them during the ordeal (the Club managed to donate a new medical kit to Chertan and raise PGK 2000 for Seb, his wife and their 4 young children, through raffles and donations from individual members).□



THINGS YOU MAY OR MAY NOT NEED TO KNOW

The Nautilus Scuba Club 2017 Calendar
now available to order at the club meetings



NUDE SCUBA DRAINOW DIVERS - VIETNAM

Supporting the Nautilus Scuba Club



LISSENUNG ISLAND RESORT
Kavieng • Papua New Guinea



DIGITAL DIVER
• take only pictures, leave only bubbles •



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