

Nautilus SCUBA Club Newsletter



Cairns QLD Australia

April 2019

Editor: Phil Woodhead

Dive Trips
Club Meetings
Guest Speakers
Trip Reports



WET

Local dive trips and get together information

April 2019						
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29	30					

Club meeting

Junior Eisteddfod Association at
67 Greenslopes Street, Edge Hill.
Starting with a BBQ at 7pm

This month's guest speakers will be Peter Hays and Phil Woodhead, giving you info on the up coming Nautilus Underwater Photo Competition,

For upcoming dive trip information keep an eye on your emails or visit the Nautilus website



Next club dive will be on TUSA T6 on May 12th departing from Cairns, please visit the website for more information.

Anilao trip 17th through 25th May.

The club meeting will be on the 29th May usual venue.



EXHIBITION

Mating Mandarin Fish by Kevin Coombs, winner CGLR Macro 2018

NAUTILUS SCUBA DIVE CLUB

UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

WED 26 JUNE - THU 1 AUGUST

Over the years, this competition has delivered stunning images of marine life and underwater landscapes which are, as one judge once described, of National Geographic quality.

Categories include Macro, Wide Angle, Portrait and Behaviour. This year, new categories, Life of the Reef (images taken only on our Great Barrier Reef), and Portfolio have been added.

Judges Gary Bell and Mark Spencer, both with decades of experience

and have earned some of the most prestigious awards in the diving photography / video industry.

Competition winners will be announced on the awards night and their work will then be displayed at the Visitor Centre.



AWARDS NIGHT: 6.30pm, Wednesday 26 June
COST: Free **VENUE:** Tank 4
WINNING ENTRIES DISPLAY: 28 June - 1 August
COST: Free **VENUE:** Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre
OPEN: 8.30am to 4.00pm weekdays, 8.30am to 1.00pm weekends
INFO: nautilus-scuba.net | social@nautilus-scuba.net

Special dives will be organised in addition to the regular monthly day trips and could be day trips or weekend trips to the reef or the Yongala. Better watch your emails for future announcements.

UP COMING TRIP

Walindi, PNG Club Trip

15 – 22 September 2019

(7 nights/15 boat dives) – flying with Air Niugini

Max 16 pax (7+1, 14+2 FOC discounts)



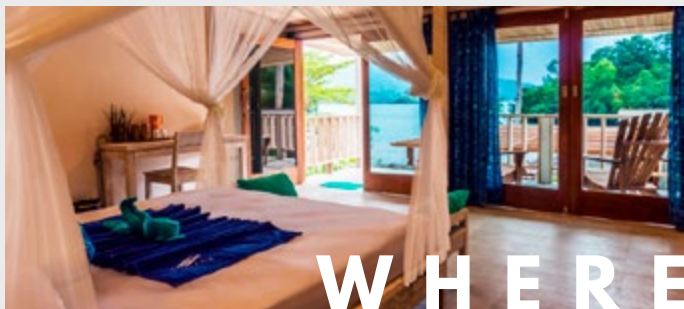
Deposit of \$400 to the Club account will confirm your spot on the trip.

To sign up or for more info, contact Akiko, Overseas Trip Coordinator via email:

overseastrips@nautilus-scuba.net.

(Photo credits: Colin Tonazzi: barracuda photo: Terry Cummins)

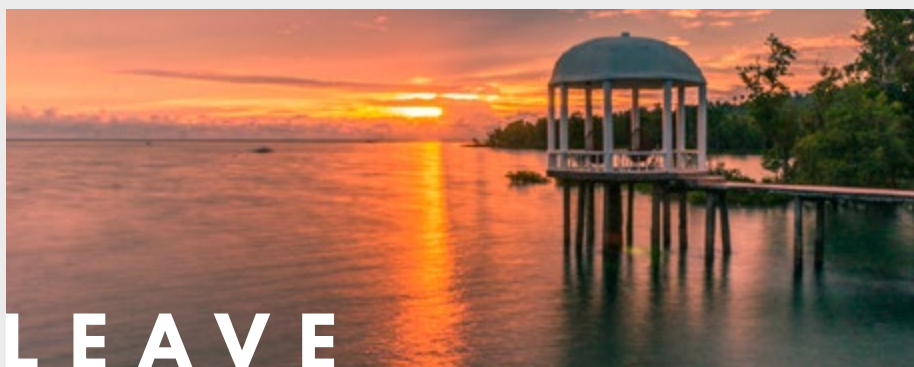
UP COMING TRIP



WHERE



GUESTS



LEAVE



AS



FRIENDS

NAUTILUS SCUBA CLUB NORTH SULAWESI THU 14 - TUE 26 NOVEMBER 2019



Diveplanit

Your *new* personal dive travel agent

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DIVERSION



DIVE TRAVEL

Stay / Dive Package includes:

- 5 nights in Thalassa Manado
- 5 nights in Thalassa Lembeh
- Full board meal plan
- All airport & resort transfers
- 18 dives
- Unlimited house reef diving

Flights with Singapore Airlines
AUD 1199 with overnight flights or AUD 799
with stopovers in Singapore (not included)

Diving with the Fur Seals at Montague Island, New South Wales

Authors: Sam Aird and Andrew Watson

Photographs: Sam Aird

I really, really hate cold water. But, we knew a chance to dive with fur seals was way too good to miss! New semi-dry wetsuits meant no excuses, and so we headed down to Montague Island, off Narooma, south coast NSW. This place is renowned as an amazing spot to dive with not just one, but two different seal colonies: the Australian Fur Seals and the New Zealand Fur Seals.

We spent our day with Underwater Safari's in mid-November last year and had an absolute blast. On-board their bright red Gemini Waverider, it took no time at all to get to our dive sites. Admittedly, I was anxious to jump in the 'freezing' water and kind of hoped the boat ride would take longer, but it didn't. We had very little time to think about what 19 degrees would feel like ... '3, 2, 1 GO' Francois instructed as we rolled off the boat.



Montague Island



Australian Fur seals at 'Aquarium', Montague Island

gestures, coming in very close to make eye contact and then woosshhh their quick recoils left traces of what looked like a shimmer stream of shooting stars. A few seals decided to show off by bending their bodies in all directions or by swimming in loops play biting each other. Apart from the obvious baby seals, all of them looked similar in size. Then suddenly, looking up at Andrew photographing a few seals playing at the water's surface, another massive seal body jumped in off the rocks ... SPLASH! This seal was probably twice the size of the others. This guy had to be the alpha male of the colony. As we later found out, in any seal colony there can be 1 dominant male to around 40 females.

On our second dive, we encountered the New Zealand fur seal colony. There were fewer seals this time but fabulous to dive with them nonetheless. Our safety stop was around Turtle Rock – a pretty spot with kelp and fish sparkling in the shallows. Our time was spent here poking around in the kelp and rocky crevices. We saw cuttlefish, Port Jackson sharks, pink

'Aquarium' was our first dive site. After plunging into the water, we were instantly captivated by the swaying kelp forest. This is quite a different experience to diving our usual tropical reef spots: different textures, softer looking flora, no crunching on coral sounds, changed colours and tones, and mystery in the blue beyond – who knows what was out there!

The seals were curious but a little cautious at first. Once they knew it was safe to play, more seals joined us... they were just like puppy dogs - inquisitive and cheeky. Long whiskers, big eyes, cute ears, and shiny noses made them all too cute. Some seals made slow playful



Cuttlefish at 'Aquarium', Montague Island

Diving with the Fur Seals at Montague Island, New South Wales

Authors: Sam Aird and Andrew Watson

Photographs: Sam Aird

moon jellies, a pair of old wife fish, lots of rocky-shore molluscs, crimson-banded wrasse, sea urchins, and a blue groper. Unfortunately, we were just outside the grey nurse shark season, but these can be seen too around late November and through the summer months.

All in all, both dives were very easy-going; and vis was around 10-15m. We had 3 other divers with us, which made for lots of freedom to look around at a comfortable pace. Our wetsuits did just fine and they'll be perfect to use again in our tropical winter, perhaps during the Minke Whale season. On the trip back to the Narooma Harbour, 2 humpback whales were spotted! The calf gave us a great show breaching out of the water several times. Our guide, Tammy, from Montague Island Discovery Tours commented on how close they were to the coast just outside the Narooma break-wall. And of course, where there are whales there are dolphins too. Wow, a special day indeed.

Special thanks to the crew at Underwater Safari's, Clover (who gave us lots of info before our dives), Francois (our skipper), and Scott (our guide) for 2 fantastic dives. We hope to be back soon to explore some more of this amazing bit of coast! ■■■

Links:

Diving with Underwater Safaris

<http://underwatersafaris.com.au/>

Whale watching with Montague Island Discovery Tours

<https://montagueislandtours.com.au>

Montague Island Nature Reserve

<https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/montague-island-nature-reserve>

Montague Island Historical Lighthouse Settlement

<https://montagueisland.com.au.html>



Glass House Rocks, Narooma



Crested Terns, Montague Island

Trip Report

Spirit of Freedom Cod Hole Trip - March 2019

Ross Thomas

Lucky me, I jagged a prize in the 2018 Nautilus Photo Competition being a 3 day dive trip on MV Spirit Of Freedom. Having travelled on SOF before I was thrilled.

I had originally planned to do this trip last year, but a run 20 -25 knot forecast winds had me chicken out !

So biting the bullet, I booked the trip for early March and fortunately the weather gods were kind.

Not only was the weather good, but also the passenger numbers. The boat was not fully booked for the Cod Hole section of the trip which provides for plenty of elbow room on the dive deck.

Day 1:

Friendly greetings, briefings, gear setup and lunch filled the 2 hour steam out to Norman Reef for the checkout dives.

With camera gear at the ready, I'm off with Instructor Massa and a Japanese guest.

Massa must have "Steve Austin - 6 Million Dollar Man" eyes. His ability to spot the tiny critters is amazing.

One of note is what I first thought to be just a tiny tuft of floating algae.

Ah no....on closer inspection it was something a whole lot more exotic.



At the end of the first check-out dive there are a few skills to be demonstrated so the dive crew can assess your ability for future dives. Manual inflation of the BCD on the surface, inflation and display of the safety sausage and displaying the supplied LifeLine beacon. Safety first folks !

A second dive on Troppo's unguided wrapped up the dive day.

Then an overnight steam up the reef to the Ribbons had us moored by midnight and gently rocked to sleep by gentle swells.

Day 2:

The day starts with a 1st breakfast of fruits, cereals and juice, then first of 5 dives for the day.

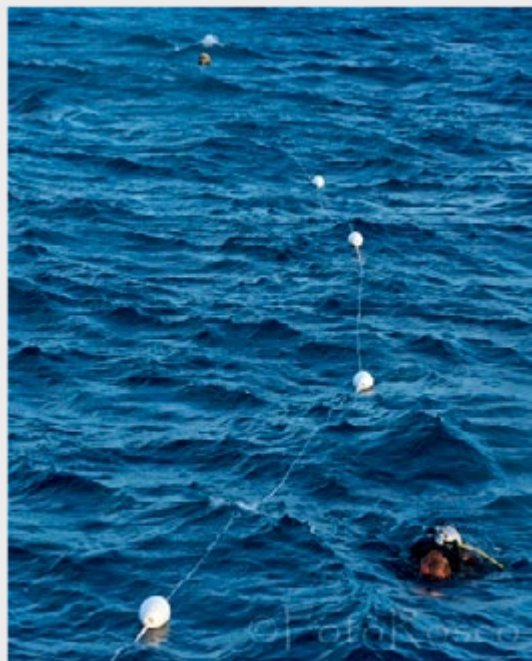
For those who have experienced SOF, you would know what this pic means...

Yes...Stevens Bommie. A favourite pinnacle on the GBR for many. It delivered again.

This time for me a Lacey Scorpionfish

That excitement over, then it's time for 2nd breakfast and all that u-beaut cooked stuff we love and need after a dive.

Then it was off to Clam Gardens.



Having seen the clams before, it was time to investigate other areas of the site. So it was down to the scattered bommies and outcrops under the boat. It turned out to be Shrimp city !!!

They were everywhere, big healthy populations of hinge beak and red striped cleaner shrimps hiding under ledges and in tiny caves.



Lunchtime followed then another steam off to a site I haven't visited before called Google Gardens.



This place is alive with top quality corals. I didn't venture far at all there was so much to investigate. A shy Mantis Shrimp provided some entertainment for a while

Afternoon tea followed with some tasty treats from the galley. Thanks Rueben and Elias.

Next was Challenger Bay. Bigger fish here. Photo friendly sweetlips and maybe a few too many Titan Trigger fish !! But this was also a site familiarisation for the night dive.

Seems the best thing to do between dives is eat...so it's dinner time.

Then the night dive, and thank goodness for the red LED's on my video light.

The crustaceans come out to play at night and the red LED light seems not to scare them so much.

Found an interesting Marbled Break Back shrimp with very hairy arms.



After dive was dessert....those lads in the kitchen just keep delivering the goods !

A short steam to the overnight mooring and a very calm night ensured a good sleep.

Day 3:

Up early again for 1st brekky, then another tag line set out to Lighthouse Bommie.

All the usual suspects hanging around this fantastic pinnacle, and throw in some sea snakes & octopus for good measure.

2nd breakfast goodness followed, whilst steaming to the Cod Hole.

Having done the Cod Feed before I excused myself from those activities and went in search of the pygmy seahorse. Chef Rueben ended up guiding me to the sea fans where the seahorse was reported to be hiding.

But still I couldn't find it and had to be shown. Thanks again Rueben Even with the corrective lenses in my mask, I could only just see the tiny blob which was the seahorse.

After each pic, I had to spend time relocating my shy new friend, who spent his time hiding behind the polyps. Out of approximately 20 pics, maybe 1 pic was useable. I'll capture your image properly next time my friend.....



The next dive site was something special. A "secret site" called Black Coral Bommie.

Only visited by SOF when passenger numbers are low. A smaller bommie rarely visited and the excellent condition of it's corals confirms this.

Strict instruction was given by the dive team to ensure our buoyancy was "on-point" to protect this precious site.

Sadly the current made a thorough investigation difficult, but the top of the bommie rivalled, or even bettered the Cairns local "Clown Fish Bommie" for it's variety of anemone fish.

Then it was off to the Snake Pit for the last dive of the day.

There I was down on the bottom sorting out my camera and then out of nowhere appears Skipper Tim. He stops, ensures he has my full

attention, then starts gesturing slow flapping wings, then holds up 6 fingers and points over yonder.....

Right...forget this camera stuff for now. Off to the wall to find those mantas....but no luck.

Others fared better than me, and one brought back photo proof..... grrrr....next time !

So for the "Cod Hole" portion of this trip, all the diving is done.

It's was off to the calm waters of Watsons Bay at Lizard Island to moor up for the night and enjoy the top deck BBQ.

But the show aint over yet.... Swimming around the boat was a fantastic collection of giant trevally, various sharks and a giant groper.

Day 4:

After another night of good sleep, it's time to say goodbye's then tender over to Lizard Island for a quick historical tour/walk, then catch the flight home to Cairns.

The Hinterland Aviation Cessna Caravan takes the scenic route along the coast. It's a flight where you really experience "Where the



Rainforest Meets the Reef". Fantastic.

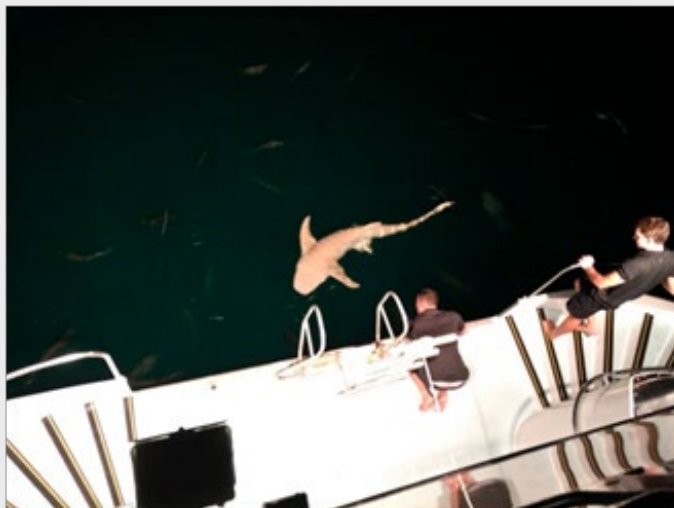
The wrap-up...

Do yourself a favour jump on a liveaboard and go visit those parts of the reef less visited.

Many thanks to: Spirit of Freedom for donating the prize of this 3 night Cod Hole trip.

Nautilus Scuba Club and their sponsors for encouraging and promoting Underwater Photography via the annual photo competition.

The Crew and Dive team aboard Spirit of Freedom for a fantastic trip.



A day at Cape Tribulation by Sarah Luthy

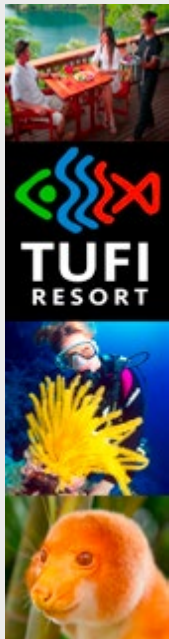
I recently had an overseas visitor from Europe and decided to go and spend a few days at Cape Tribulation to try out the snorkeling with Ocean Safari.

We went out on a Monday for their morning tour. The trip out was a 25 minute exciting ride in a large inflatable dingy where it picked us up directly from the beach. Usually they have 25 on the boat but as it was low season and a week day, we were a small group of 8 with 3 crew. Most of us sat on the side of the dingy hanging on as we rode over the waves. For those less adventurous there were seats that they could relax on.

We arrived at a small cay and as we jumped in the water there were 100's of small <1cm creatures which on first inspection I assumed to be jellyfish. But then I saw they had wings which they were flapping to move through the water. They were sea butterflies! I had never seen (or heard of) these creatures before. They are a type of sea snail that swims through the water. In fact, what looked like their wings was actually their adapted feet which they flap to swim around.

The water was lovely and clear with about 15m visibility. There were many stingrays and a few turtles who swam right up next to us, schools of batfish, lovely colourful coral and plenty of giant clams. There was a short break before moving to the next site which was equally beautiful. Basically, it was about 2 - 3 hours of snorkeling and I would definitely recommend it as an alternative to the massive tourist boats of Cairns. My relative was so thrilled at the encounter with the turtles which are pretty much guaranteed on this reef. I would definitely send my visitors up there next time.

Supporting the Nautilus Scuba Club



MV CHERTAN Milne Bay



PARTING SHOT

