

BRAZIL

Fernando de Noronha, January 2005, Terry Anderson, College Station, TX. Experience: 400 dives. Vis: 80 to 120 feet. Water: about 82 F. Agua Claris on Fernando and Seagate in Olinda. I read the August 2001 issue of Undercurrent (full review) and decided to go. Plan long in advance for Fernando since government controls the number of tourists on this lovely, crime-free island. Conditions near-perfect for both sides of island, with vis at 80 to 120, a water temp of 82, air at 80s to low 90s; I dove with Agua Claris, two in morning and two in afternoon, which usually takes out 12 divers but puts them in beginner and advanced groups. DMs excellent, let us dive our computer profile, and always had someone on the boat who spoke English. Atlantis Divers might have the cattle car approach, and Noronha Divers is for beginners; all prices are similar. International crowd of divers, and everyone is friendly. Night life is restaurants. Airport now has credit card cash machine: I took enough cash and kept it in my room safe at Pousada Tia Zete (\$50 USD night with breakfast). I asked for the best dive sites and Agua Claris delivered. Pedras Secas (dry rocks) four times on ocean side of island and other sites there to see the nurse and Caribbean sharks, turtles, lobsters, rays, and eels. At the north point we dove the lovely wall, cruising at 120 ft with schools of fish above. To and from the Cabeco do Sapata, [South Point pinnacle] we saw hundreds of dolphins, (not allowed to dive with them). At Cabeco we dove to 140' and went through a tunnel to come out

on a 9-foot sleeping pregnant shark; it was either a Bull or what they call a Bico-Fino (Big Fin), a type of sand shark. We eventually we ascended to 90 feet see her mate, a 10-foot fat boy, swim to her. The island boasts seven different types of sharks, and I felt lucky to see three. Whale sharks are rare with a couple sightings a year, often off Sapata. Fish life is good but not like schools in Indonesia or parts of western Caribbean. Nevertheless, the diving is interesting. People are friendly and a lot like to try English. I went to Seagate in Olinda, next to Recife. Olinda is a lovely restored town, a world heritage site, and Recife means "reef," so this is wreck diving. One of my new Brazilian friends from Fernando asked me to go with him; he translated. We did two wrecks, and both had heavy currents topside but at 70 feet were calm and interesting, with sleeping nurse sharks and a toad like creature with four legs that they called a "batfish." Diving was less than \$50 for the two dives, and everyone was friendly. Only six on the boat with two DMs. Web sites for both Agua Claris and Seagate are on-line.

CANADA

Ontario

Dive Tech, Ontario, August 2004, Mort Rolleston, Arlington, VA. Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 30 to 45 Feet. Water: 68 to 70 F calm, currents. You go here (1000 Island Park area of St. Lawrence River near Brockville Ontario) to dive wrecks. In August for 4-5 weeks each year the normally frigid St. Lawrence River warms to 70 degrees and divers

flock here. The water was 68-70 degrees (plenty warm with a wetsuit) and the six wrecks we dove in three days were unique. Three were old 19th century wooden schooners, which normally disintegrate by this time in salt water, but the cold, fresh water has preserved remarkably well. Even the metal freighters we dove were old (all pre WWI, I think). Everything we dove were real wrecks after they struck a shoal. You can see the damage on the wrecks and the results of the not so graceful sinkings. Water had 40 feet of visibility, thanks to the gazillions of zebra mussels (which are on everything!). Some bass, sunfish/brim, walleyes, and a few other species, many of which were not shy about checking us out. The current was pretty strong, but not out of control (did have to go up and down the anchor line -- hanging like a flag!). One dive we drop in, and fly by the wall/wreck and rapidly go downstream until we run out of air, where boat picks you up). Some dives required "advanced" certification (maybe three of six). We stayed at a fishing lodge close to where the 1000 Island bridge crosses over the river from US. Two days we cast off from a park in a west edge of Brockville. The third, we cast off from our own dock where we were staying. We also went to visit the "castle" on Heart Island across the river in NY (impressive!). The last wreck we dove was in NY waters (had to go through customs at Heart Island before we went there -- which was kind of funny). Went into Brockville proper a few times to poke around and eat -- seems like a nice, quiet town. We did hear some freighters out in the shipping lane underwater

while we were diving -- they make a ton of noise!

Limestone Divers, July 2005, Paul Williams (pwwdiver@yahoo.com), Madison Township, PA. Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 35 to 50 Feet. Water: 50 to 60 F, calm. The Cap'n would rather dive than drive the boat. His love of the lake and history are right out there. His knowledge of diving the wrecks goes back decades. The boat is a fast, all-aluminum inboard with an all-important head. It is not strictly dry suit diving, but if you wear a wetsuit, you'll be sorry. Our five days we covered most of the most interesting wrecks. They treated us as responsible adults regarding depth and time. The captain denied us one distant wreck due to deteriorating conditions. Safety and enjoyment were paramount. Oxygen on board. Stop at a supermarket and bring lunch. The drive to the first site is 30 minutes. Kingston is a picturesque college town. The downtown area offers much in the way of food from sidewalk cafes to pubs to ice cream vendors. Strolling to walk off a meal was a distinct pleasure.

CROATIA

Diving Center Shark, Medulin, September 2005, David Schwab (schwabd@bunt.com). Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 10 to 20 Meters. Water: 16 to 23 Celsius, calm, no currents. 3* hotel was inexpensive, but good. Diving was expensive, also good. . . not so much for the life in the water, but for the great wrecks and services provided by the dive center. We must have arrived at the low season, because