

on the island. All of our dives were conducted in and around the bay, so boat rides were usually between 5-15 minutes and we always returned to the shop between dives for our surface interval. Soufriere is a small fishing village without much in the way of accommodations or restaurants, near the southwestern end of the island, about a mile from Scotts Head. The town is not particularly attractive, with make-shift shacks and abandoned or neglected buildings and chickens and dogs freely roam. There are no sandy beaches as the shoreline is composed of smooth stones. The closest town within walking biking distance is Scotts Head, and it was similar. We did not find the people in this area to be overly friendly to tourists. Many people stay in hotels in the larger city of Rouseau about 20 minutes north of Soufriere. We stayed in the upper apartment at NID's Galette Cottage on the bay. The cottage was nice, similar to a small lake cabin here in the States, with a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and den, and a covered porch overlooking the ocean. There is no A/C, but the windows and the louvered panels in the bedroom and den allowed for plenty of cool air. The road between Soufriere and Scotts Head runs about 5 feet behind the cottage, so you do get traffic noise and the waves at night can also be quite loud, so you may want to bring earplugs. The dive shop provided us with bicycles to travel back and forth from the shop to the cottage, 4-5 minutes. The dive sites consisted of walls and pinnacles for the deeper dives, and scattered coral heads in the shallower areas. There were some macro critters, but not as many here as

other places like Bonaire. We found one juvenile seahorse and one adult, but the frogfish were nowhere. We didn't see any large animals (no turtles or sharks, etc.) but there were schools of small fish, and always large schools of black-bar soldierfish in the swim-throughs at Scotts Head Pinnacle. Among the most common fish during the day were parrotfish, damselfish, drums, chromis, longsnout butterflyfish, trumpetfish, trunkfish, scorpionfish, grunts and squirrelfish. We saw few angelfish, and only occasional butterflyfish other than the longsnout. On the night dives, we saw numerous lobsters and crabs of many varieties and occasionally squid; no octopus. Our favorite dive sites included Scotts Head Pinnacle, Condo, Crater's Edge and the Abyss. NID has 3 covered pontoon boats (1 large and two medium-sized), allowing for smooth rides to the dive sites, most of which are between 5 and 15 minutes from the dock. The divemasters set up our gear each day and took our gear between the boat and the dive shop, which is located just a short walk across the street from the dock. Our main divemasters during the week were Wefee and Oscar. Tony took us on one night dive and Simon dove with us on our last day. Selwyn served as our boat captain most days. All of these guys were great — they let us go at our own pace but also pointed out interesting fish, critters, etc.

GUADELOUPE

Guadeloupe, a French island with not much English spoken, has never been on the map of American divers. Jacques Cousteau wrote glow-

ingly about diving here in the 70's, and while divers do report some very good dives, it's been 30 years since Jacques visited and fish life has declined just as it has throughout the Caribbean. Nonetheless, the island has unique charm, especially if you speak French.

La Dive Bouteille, August 2005, Allen A. Smith, North Miami, FL. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 50 to 80 Feet. Water: 77 to 82 F, calm. Make sure your traveler's checks are in Euros! One has to wade out to the boat. "Le Sec Pate" is a scenic spectacular: as good as the best of Cozumel. Several pinnacles rise from the depths to ~50 feet. They are covered in colorful sponges and deep sea fan. They support many colorful tropicals. "Les Antoinnes" isn't as good, but it's still a nice shallow dive. Divemaster went out of his way to accommodate the UWP in our group.

HONDURAS

All dive resorts are in the Bay Islands: Roatan, Utila, Cayos Cochinos, all home to aggressive no-sees — some people have serious allergic reactions. Those who are unprepared — meaning without DEET — may find their vacations ruined. The diving features nice walls, offshore sea mounts, and excellent coral and gorgonians, although few large fish. Whale sharks are common near Utila roughly February through May and boats from Roatan are chasing them too. Some Roatan resorts have easy beach diving. The rainy season is

October through February, and can disrupt the diving. Spanish is spoken on the mainland, English on the Bay Islands. Classic Central American jungles and Mayan ruins inland make great mainland trips. Malaria protection is advised.

Roatan

Anthony's Key, February 2005, Kenith J Dunbrook, Fairview Park, OH. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 100 to 150 Feet. Water: 77 to 79 , calm. We were delighted with our divemaster (Greg) and boat captain (Tyronne), but had a terrible dive with a substitute group. This is a professional and well run organization, but some inept leaders on other boats. They were willing to adapt profile and location to those aboard and staying at the resort. Some outside/non-guests were allowed on boats and were a distraction with personal agendas and rude, mostly photography objectives. We stayed in contact with divemaster and kept to a reasonable profile. Typically you are assigned to a specific boat and crew for a given week, which is good. Very helpful with entry and exit as a friend had some back problems and they were considerate. Searched for and found many unique creatures (seahorses, etc.) with their help. Large green moray came out among us, turtles, some large fish (grouper) and many small and varied colorful reefs. Good, but not great marine life. An open water dive with Dolphins is a feature dive in 60' and was natural and enjoyable with fun interaction. Varied divers experience levels, but mostly ok — new monitored. Resort, efficient and well run, all