

Fish Rock. Occasionally they may go to another site if the weather is bad. We encountered heavy rain showers every day but not enough to keep us inside, nor enough to stop diving, at least on the first day. The ride to the site is about ½ hour in a fairly small boat. The boat has room for about 8 divers; on my day there were only 4 customers. One dive master went with the 3 certified divers, the other was busy with a student. The crew was helpful but an appreciation of Australian humor would be useful. Fish Rock sits alone about ½ mile offshore. The rock is only about 200 yards or so in diameter. A tunnel opens at 80 ft below the surface and runs through the island, via a vertical chimney in one part, to exit at 40 ft. Before we entered, we spent 20 minutes watching the grey nurse sharks that congregate at Fish Rock in the late summer. There were about a dozen 6 to 10 ft sharks. On the first dive, they kept their distance. On the second dive they approached to within a few feet. The tunnel is completely dark so this was a sort of a night dive. A large wobbegong shark was in the dark recess of the tunnel and did not budge. Near the exit of the tunnel, we moved through a sea of fish. It was a beautiful sight to see the enormous schools of fish silhouetted against the open blue ocean.

CHILE

Easter Island

Orca, March 2006, Edwin L. Granite (egranite@aol.com), Chaddsford, PA. Experience: 1000+ dives. Vis: 100+ feet. Water: 73 F, calm and flat, no currents. One dive with guide – as requested – just guide and me – no other divers. Only had one day here before moving on – good dive operation and guide.

FIJI

For left coasters, it takes about the same amount of time to get to Fiji as it does to the Caribbean: 10 hours nonstop from L.A. Prices are comparable and air packages can include New Zealand/Australia extensions at little extra cost. Fijians are polite, friendly, modest, and religious, so watch your language, and wear nonrevealing clothes to town. Wetsuits are staples year-round; currents add coolness and in some places they're vigorous, so carry surface signaling devices. In September 2004, American Dan Grenier, the former operator of Crystal Divers, disappeared with another diver while leading divers from Bamboo Reef Resort on Nananu-I-Ra. The weather can be stormy June through September; short, heavy showers are possible any afternoon year-round, especially around Beqa Lagoon. The year-round average temperature is 80 or above; nights average 69 degrees in winter.

Beqa Lagoon

AquaTrek, The Pearl South Pacific, June 2006, Sherwood and Judith Smith (sierradeux@comcast.net), Olympia, WA. Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 30 to 60 Feet. Water: 81 to 82 F, choppy. Pearl South Pacific was the venue of the 2006 SPUMS (South Pacific Underwater Medicine Society) meeting. AquaTrek Divers manager, Derrek, was helpful and well organized. (He even attended our airway/resuscitation workshop.) Our group of some 50 divers was split among four boats, and things went pretty well. We did two tank dives every morning in Beqa