

rest of the dives. Yap Divers were lax about checking/testing tanks prior to dives. Guides seemed bored and so were we. I would not bother to go to Yap again. We were told other dive operations on the island chase the mantas so they are not as visible as they once were. Good food at the hotel restaurant, hotel was clean but smelled musty, damp and many of the rooms were tired-looking. A new section was just renovated but we weren't in it. My husband was here two years ago and never saw a manta. Three days of diving and zilch. He was year at same time of year.

NEW ZEALAND

Dive Tutukaka, March 2007, Roger Cooper (rcooper@aga.org), Washington, DC. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 30 to 50 Feet. Water: 21 to 22 C, calm, surge. New Zealand is said to have more divers per capita than any other country and the diving at Poor Knights Islands (on the East Coast of the North Island) helps you understand why. Poor Knights is a series of volcanic peaks some miles off the east coast of the North Island. It is a complete sanctuary — no boats are allowed to land on the islands and the animal life is totally protected — something like the Galapagos without the people. We encountered huge stingrays cruising the channel and tunnel between two islands. They looked like battleships but swam like eagle rays. Also saw large schools of fish, eels, scorpionfish, etc. A large manta ray that passed below me just after I surfaced. I believe it was Cousteau who said that the Poor Knights offered “the best sub-tropical diving in the world.” Air at a lovely 79 degrees in early March (end of their summer).

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Some of the world's finest diving is in this land just north of Australia. While there are several dive lodges with excellent diving, it's a dream destination for live-aboards. Unique critters abound. Muck diving is great for macro photographers and there are plenty of sites with big fish, big coral and brilliant coral. It's also a naturalist's paradise with beautiful topography: volcanoes, steaming jungles, butterflies as big as birds and walking-stick insects a foot long, and splendid Birds of Paradise. Most rain comes in heavy afternoon downpours. Take a week to stay in fine lodges like Karawari or Tari to visit indigenous, still primitive cultures, among the most interesting on the planet. Port Moresby is an unsafe city, although the big hotels are fine, as is a cab trip to the superb giant crafts market. Loloata Island Resort, which has fine diving, is 25 minutes from the airport and they'll arrange round-trip transportation. Malaria prophylaxis is still essential. English gets you by everywhere.

Loloata Resort, March 2007, Nannette and Bill Van Antwerp (nannettev@gmail.com), Valencia, CA. Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 15 to 80 Feet. Water: 82 to 84 F, choppy. Loloata Resort on Bootless Bay is on a small island about 30 minutes by car, then 15 minutes by boat from Port Moresby. The resort itself has 21 rooms, 15 without air conditioning and 6 with. We had a deluxe queen bedroom that was a good 5-minute walk from the main lodge where we had breakfast and dinner. The grounds of the resort were rustic with several dozen wallabies freely roaming