

plan on putting it back in for a few days. Green Monkey dive shop was happy to accommodate us. We were in the water within a few hours of landing on the island. (Sea Wolf was even a little confrontational after learning we had decided to dive with Green Monkey, but the Green Monkey boat is much better suited for diving). The water was murky, but Troy at Green Monkey was up-front that the visibility wouldn't be good. We dove for three days. The first two the visibility was poor, but on the third day it cleared up to close to normal. Even with limited visibility we had great diving and on the last day the diving was fantastic. Due to the lack of tourists, the reefs are in perfect condition and the wildlife is not used to human interaction. We saw a pair of 5' stingrays that were content to sit and watch while I was swimming around. I live in Dominica and am used to the smaller fish; compared to Dominica, the fish were larger. Many larger parrot and trigger fish much bigger than the ones I see in Dominica. I didn't see a single trap but I was amazed by the dive guide trying to catch a large lobster we saw for dinner. Troy and Melody run a good operation. They have a good, clean boat and shop. We took our own gear, but our friend rented gear and it was well maintained and in good working order. Our dive guide, Ned, was great, showing us all kinds of critters. We stayed at Bunkum Beach House, owned and operated by Sun. The rooms were large and clean and the pool was a great way to spend the afternoon. She even bought breakfast for us when she found out that we were delayed, because all the grocery stores are closed on Sundays. There are lots of other activities on Montserrat like hiking and the Montserrat Volcano Observatory, where you can get a good look at the

active volcano. Minibuses run regularly and will get you pretty much anywhere you need to go. We used a taxi driver named Winston, a former police commissioner knowledgeable about the island. We were the only tourists on the island.

## NICARAGUA

### Corn Island

**Casa Iguana, December 2006, Wayne Warren-Angelucci (wayne.warren@gmail.com), Rancho Santa Fe, CA.**

Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 20 to 40 Feet. Water: 85 F, choppy. Windy and unsettled. Water choppy and stirred up since diving is shallow at Little Corn Island. Casa Iguana under new management —, basic. Felt that they should be charging less for their accommodations — they were overpriced compared to their competition. Dive Little Corn is owned by Casa Iguana owners. Seemed well run, but hard to tell since there were not many divers in December. Week before I arrived, the 45-minute open 30' 'ferry' from Big Corn Island was not able to run for 6 days because of rough seas. I was booked for 9 days but left after 4 because of poor diving conditions. Would not return to Little Corn because it's too shallow. However, the natives there were friendly.

**Casa Iguana Resort, February 2007, Kyle O'Malley, Le Center, MN.**

Experience: 140 dives. Vis: 30 to 80 feet. Water: 80 F, choppy. Booked the trip on articles from Undercurrent. Those past reports were accurate. Casa Iguana is an inexpensive, no luxuries "eco-lodge" on a fairly remote island on the Caribbean side of Nicaragua. "The cabanas are tin-roofed sheds on raised/stilt floors

built into the jungle, no running water (showers are from an ambient air temp gravity drop tank next to the cabana) and the electricity is as we said in Iraq, “Hadji Podgy” wiring — a somewhat scary combination of solar/generator DC system. You come to realize you won’t actually die without AC (there is always a nice breeze coming off the water only yards away) and placing your poopy toilet paper in a small plastic bag by the toilet is not that big a deal (to avoid clogging the rudimentary septic drainfield the resort employs.) You settle into a more relaxed, natural approach to the day. The diving was mediocre at best; nurse sharks are pretty much a certainty. There were plenty of the usual small reef fish to make diving/snorkeling interesting enough; believe all the larger fish have long ago been eaten by the locals. The diving is easy, inexpensive only \$15 to go on whatever boat dive you chose to do. Also a relaxed, non-structured dive operation; you make the 10-minute walk over to the dive shop side of the island to see if where they are going that morning interests you, and if not, walk back over about noon to see if the afternoon dive looks good. The dive shop takes an impromptu poll of who’s diving and pretty much goes by majority vote. All dives were less than 80 feet, although the recently arrived/new divemasters were exploring different and deeper dive sites. Went fishing every day with the resort fishing boat, an 18-foot open-air panga. They were down to a couple crusty rods/reels and guided by a newly arrived American lad who was still trying to figure things out. His enthusiasm made the trips quite enjoyable even though the fishing was not spectacular. At \$60 (if you doubled up with someone else at the resort it was only \$30), it was a heck of deal;

we always caught a few fish. Mostly barracuda, one day a couple of nice African pompano. Pretty much the daily stringer of barracuda was the evening dinners every day, except one evening the resort bought some locally butchered pork — that was a meal everyone went “hog wild” over after fish every day. Dinners are a “family style” gathering in the main lodge — you will get to know everyone else at the resort and engage in pleasant conversation. The simple social event of evening dinner was the highlight of the day’s entertainment in the “technology free zone” of Casa Iguana. They do have an internet cafe that spools up for a couple hours in the morning/midday for those who cannot let go completely. By the end of the week, the “real world” seemed like it was a million miles away — relaxing. Stayed in Managua on the way in/out, the Camino Real, nice and reasonable prices for the room, and meals at the first class restaurant in the hotel. Did a day trip, private car/guide tour of the local villages outside Managua — the stop at the small, handmade pottery shop was interesting for high quality trip souvenirs. Nicaragua is not touristy, prices were quite reasonable for everything we did, the local air services are easy to get around the country on, and the local people we met were genuinely hospitable to us wherever we went.

## PANAMA

**Scuba Coiba, April 2006, Susan De-Canio, Fernandina, FL.** Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 50 to 100 Feet. Water: 70 to 80 F, currents. Sea life and variety was amazing! Dive sites were far and boat quite uncomfortable — not even cushions on seats. Could be