

the safari group and the dive guide. Meals were well-prepared and plentiful, mostly Asian/Filipino cuisine. Apo Island is a marine reserve. Sanctuary fee is not included in the cost of the trip. No dive gloves allowed. This was some of the best diving on the trip. Slight current, 50- to 60-foot visibility, water temperatures 82-84 degrees. Lots of big schools of big fish (surgeon fish, banner fish, etc.). A turtle or two on every dive, ribbon eels. The only dive with strong current was at Coconut. One-and-a-half hours in calm seas from Apo Island to Siquijor Island (also a marine reserve and sanctuary fee is not included in the dive package). We spent two nights at the Coco Grove Resort. It's a beautiful resort spread over a large area. Two swimming pools. Grounds are lush, tropical vegetation, well-maintained. The cottages are set back from the beach, so you have garden views, not ocean views. Has electricity and hot/cold running water. All meals were served family-style for the safari group. Food was predominantly Asian/Filipino dishes. Meals were well-prepared and plentiful. Only three dives around Siquijor, as we made dives around Apo on the day we left for Siquijor Island and made a dive at Balicasag Island when we left Siquijor Island en route to Panglao Island. Visibility was 50 feet, slight current, water temperature was 81 to 83 degrees. We saw blue ribbon eel, snake eel, banded pipefish, ornate ghost pipefish, porcelain crabs, plus all the "usual stuff."

## SOLOMON ISLANDS

While difficult to get to, the Solomons are classic jungle islands with beautiful reefs and excellent fish life.

**Gizo Hotel, Uepi Island Resort, March 2006, Mark and Gini May (mvmay@comcast.net), Sandy, UT.** Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 75 to 100 Feet. Water: 75 to 80 F, choppy. The Solomons are rarely visited by Americans but a lot of Aussies and Kiwis visit. This was by far the best diving we have done in 22 years since certification. We stayed a week at the Gizo Hotel on the island of Gizo and a week at Uepi Island Resort on Morovo lagoon. The Gizo Hotel is very basic and makes a Motel 6 look lux. Uepi Island Resort was nice, but not as fancy as one would expect on Fiji or in Hawaii. The Solomon Islanders are great, though; they don't see many Americans so are very friendly and interested in us. The diving is fantastic; with over 900 islands, dive sites are everywhere. At Gizo we took off in the morning and had a dive, went to an uninhabited island for lunch and swimming, then went for our afternoon dive. One lunch was on Kennedy Island where JFK and crew swam after their PT boat was cut in two. WWII history is everywhere and we did our first wreck dives there on ships and a P-38 and a Hellcat.

## TONGA

**Dive Vava'u, The Moorings charter, August 2007, Mike Binnard, Belmont, CA.** Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 30 to 80 Feet. Water: 76 F, no currents. Vava'u is a pretty ideal sailing environment. The weather was good, the navigation is easy, and the islands are great. Anchoring is easy, because the water is so clear and you can see exactly what you're doing. The only trouble we had was that VHF radio contact is a little less reliable than advertised. "Sailingbird's Guide to the Kingdom of Tonga" is the best refer-