
lism (AGE) has been fairly constant, the percentage of decompression illness cases in computer divers increased by 45 percent from 1987 to 1991 (381 cases). This trend may simply reflect increased computer use in the diving population; however, they note that the trend for computer divers is "to dive significantly deeper and longer."

Dr. Max Weinmann of the Harper Hospital in Detroit, Michigan, also expressed his concerns: "*Undercurrent* heralded the lifting of the Queensland [Australian government] limit of three dives per day virtually with the fervor of getting rid of a Fascist rule.

"Now, concerning the finding that 35 percent of divers with DCS did not have any identifiable symptoms, it is of profound concern that instruments are being introduced which are creating computer-literate but

table-illiterate divers, who, when the devices fail (and they do fail), are totally incapable of making appropriate adjustments.

"They are diving four, five, six times a day, and they feel that they have a license, since the

In a sense, live-aboard divers are doing a throughout-the-day decompression.

computer tells them it is okay, to embark upon much more aggressive dive profiles and thus put themselves at risk.

"The majority of divers attribute muscle aches and pains to over-aggressive exertion. And, on examination, subtle neurocognitive deficits are often missed.

"So I think we are under-diagnosing decompression sickness. Divers are presenting themselves late, if at all. It is a profound worry that the computers are being used so freely."

Bone-Kill Demon Diving

While all divers are concerned with bends, few consider the longer-term effects of bone necrosis, the slow death of bones found in working divers who have made thousands of dives. A serious disease, it has appeared in heavy-diving scuba instructors and recreational divers.

Whether increased bottom time causes bone necrosis is still open to speculation. But Edmonds worries about bone necrosis in computer divers who have been inadequately decompressed.

"We'll see about this in a few years," he says.

Ben Davison

The Good, the Bad, and the Just Plain Ugly

Readers report on dive destinations near and far

Reader reports are in for the '97 edition of the *Travelin' Divers' Chapbook*. It's new, it's improved, and it's bigger than ever. Just as soon as I dot all the i's and cross all the t's on 300 more pages, it will be mailed; you'll probably get it after Thanksgiving. Here's most of the bad and the ugly. Next time you'll see more of the good.

Kathy Sours (Peoria, Illinois) was not pleased with **Cha Cha Cha Dive Shop on Cozumel** (November 1995). It could have been because her "divemaster was

forever preaching safety, but underwater, when he wanted you to move over, he would grab and jerk you quite suddenly. Once he grabbed my hand away and my mouthpiece went sailing off." Or it could have been because "he took another diver's arm and pushed it under an overhang of coral. Unfortunately, a spotted eel was under there and it bit her. Back on the boat he offered no first aid or apology." Maybe it was just because "when filling out our logbooks, Edmundo would sometimes refuse to tell us the

names of the reefs." I guess some divers are just hard to please. (011-52-987-2-23-31)

Lesley Hand (Lafayette, California) also thought he should have gotten an apology when he was diving from **Galapagos Aggressor** in November 1995 and one of the inflatable operators ran over him in the water: "Never received an apology nor an explanation." To add to the insult, he had "reserved a camera with multiple lenses and a close-up kit in advance, but they

only had one wide-angle lens and they would develop film only after I shot four rolls; impossible to make corrections. My worst of five *Aggressor* boats.” (800-348-2628 or 504-385-2416)

Steven Goldstein (Sacramento) was equally dismayed with the *Colona V in the Red Sea* last year (July 1995). “Fourth and worst live-aboard. Broken windows, one of three air conditioners worked, one functioning generator needed work, often no electricity. The 220V fried my conversion equipment. Full bar advertised — didn’t exist. Food boring and repetitive. Showers frequently backed up. The captain was unpleasant, dictatorial and staff indifferent.” Anyone been aboard recently? (Most dive travel agents book this boat.)

Burton E. Fineberg found that Dive BVI offered a unique dive trip while he was staying at Little Dix Bay in August 1996 — wreck diving on his dive boat. “The boat was a 31-foot Bertram Sport Fisherman; seven divers, captain, and divemaster. Took 10 minutes for divers to get into the water and drift line was only long enough for three people; the rest of us bobbed in the water. Everyone aboard went down, leaving the boat unattended. Twenty-five minutes into the dive, I saw what

looked like our dive boat sitting on the bottom of the ocean. I thought I was imagining the whole thing, but then I saw something float out of the boat. Once on the surface, some divers decided to go back down to retrieve their belongings. I inflated my BC and bobbed in very rough seas. After 10 minutes, I was picked up by a boat that had been anchored at a close site. We

“Twenty-five minutes into the dive, I saw what looked like our dive boat sitting on the bottom of the ocean.”

were later told that the bilge pumps were left on when we all entered the water and no one remained on the boat to watch what was happening. I have been diving in Cozumel, Caymans, Bonaire, Curacao, Hawaii, Ft. Lauderdale, and Aruba, and they all left someone on their boats.”

Harry T. Edwards judged the **Club Med on San Salvador in the Bahamas** “the most overrated dive operation in the world. Club Med Columbus Isle is not a serious

dive operation. Rather, it is more like a cattle-car operation, with divemasters herding divers onto and off boats like beef going to market. The mission seemed to be to pack as many divers as possible onto the boats (which usually carried 35–50 divers on every dive trip), and then to keep calling out names to make sure no one got lost along the way. Almost no attention is paid to things that make scuba diving fun. The hotel facilities are beautiful, albeit poorly managed in several areas. However, the Club Med Columbus Isle dive operation is fine only for beginners, or for Club Med ‘groupies’ who see scuba diving as just another activity (like volleyball, or tennis, or bike riding, or a glass-bottom boat tour), but it’s not for serious divers.” (800-258-2633 or direct at 345-331-2000)

Doug Hook (Toronto) was irritated with the short fills and poorly maintained tanks at **Divi Flamingo on Bonaire** in June 1996. His best fill was 2,900 psi, his worst 250. However, that was minor compared to losing his camera equipment, which was stolen from his hotel room. (800-367-3484 or 607-277-3484)

Ginny Z. Berson (Oakland, California) reports from her May 1996 trip to the **Sand Dollar**: “When you pick up your rental car, the first thing you get is the The Club. On night shore dives many rental cars were broken into. Police do not even make up a report; too much paperwork, they say. Our room, along with three others we were diving with, were broken into. Money, cameras, and dive equipment are what they want. One day, eight out of ten people on our dive boat had cars or rooms robbed!” (609-298-8270 or 011-599-78738)

I’ve been printing the fact that crime is running rampant on Bonaire and Curaçao for the past

How to Work the Chapbook

Water’s owner and operator, he whipped out his copy of last year’s *Travelin’ Diver’s Chapbook* and read off other divers’ complaints about his depth restrictions. Mitch, surprised, said that he had not meant for his restrictions to be absolute. He talked it over with his divemasters (Dave and Carl), and they eased off the limits somewhat, giving Dan a little more diving freedom. J. Q.

Subscriber Dan Lanier of Atlanta, diving with Blue Water Divers on Grand Turk last December, discovered that computer diving was permitted, but with some restrictions. Dan says that while discussing those depth restrictions with Mitch, Blue

year and a half. It has not gotten any better. In addition to rent-car and room break-ins, I've received reports of people being knifed on the street and in hotel rooms. It looks as though the police are not that interested in doing anything about it. It may take a decline in tourism to make them take notice.

Scott Cook (South Lake Tahoe) was not robbed, but was dismayed by the cats at **Captain Don's** during his February 1996 trip: "Cats at resort are allowed in the eating area and sometimes jump on the tables. Wild cats are not good for a destination that prides itself on bird watching." (011-599-7-8290)

Of course, crime isn't limited to Bonaire and Curaçao. Col. Darrell L. Meader (Fort Wright, Kentucky) had his room broken into and robbed at **Treasure Island Resort on Grand Cayman** during his April 1996 trip. "Room safe is a joke; they have a bar to slide in and can open it without a code." He also felt ripped by Hertz, who "overcharged, and for a car we had ordered three months in advance for an 8:00 pickup — didn't deliver it until noon. Lost dive time, and the car was a disaster." (800-872-7552 or 345-949-4456)

Another reader had his room broken into at **Plantation House on Bequia** during a June 1996 trip. "Owners and managers are horrible — they refused to let us use air conditioning, even after the break-in (the only way to survive with windows closed for safety), without paying extra." Another problem at Plantation House is that Bob Sachs (Dive Bequia) has been evicted. (Dive Bequia can be reached at 809-458-3504.)

Romeo's Resort on Roatan seems to have ticked off a few divers during 1995, but I haven't heard anything since October 1995. I wonder why? Most of the things that bothered guests were

like "no running water and power outages. To flush toilets, we had to go downstairs to the pool to fill our pail with water to put in toilet" (Doreen Jeffey, Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, October 1995), or as Carol Risdall (Rapid City, South Dakota) pointed out, "the pool was full of algae, filters did not run. On one night dive we went out without boat lights. On another dive the

"To flush toilets, we had to go downstairs to the pool to fill our pail."

boat hull was filled with water and the bilge didn't work." But Patrick Wilstrom (Brasstown, North Carolina) is the guy I want to travel with: "Water and electricity intermittent at best. An interesting cost-saving technique: had only one battery to be shared between both boats and the resort bus. We loved the diving and laughed our way through the inconveniences." Written in the true dive travel adventurer's spirit. (800-535-DIVE or 011-544-45-11-27)

OK, maybe just a couple from the good stuff, just so we don't forget that most of the time things do go right.

Probably not a common occurrence (I sure didn't see one when I was there), but it made Colorado Springs resident David Benson's trip to **Rum Point Inn in Belize** a success: "Small whale shark as curious about us as we about her. Larger one kept its distance. Seemed to think it a great game to push me through the water backwards as I held her chin with a straight arm. She

would take a mouthful of water (and that's a lot of water) and spit it at me, pushing me from two feet to a yard further in front. Immediately she would come up and we would start again." If you want to try to duplicate this experience, David was there in July 1995. (800747-1381 or 504-465-0769)

Jim Parkhill (McAllen, Texas) went to Thailand's Andaman Sea in March aboard the *Fantasea* to see whale sharks. He was not disappointed. "An encounter with an enormous pod of pseudo orcas pursuing a large school of sailfish was the dive experience of a lifetime. A fascinating variety of marine life: leopard sharks, guitar sharks, blacktips, marble rays, ribbon eels, mating cuttlefish, seahorses, banded sea snakes, schooling barracuda, and a whole lot of macro critters. Divers are free to dive their own profiles." I consider the *Fantasea* one of the better bargains in live-aboards. (dive travel agent or 076-340088)

Want to take the kids on the next trip? M. J. and Bill Roachie (Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania) liked **Small Hope Bay Lodge on Andros** in the Bahamas in August 1995. "Relaxation, family atmosphere, good folks and fun. Breakfast, wall dive (deep), shallow dive, lunch, afternoon dive (40-50 feet), home by 3:00, dinner at 7:00. Wall diving is terrific, sponge and coral life healthy and varied. All Caribbean tropicals in varied sizes. Turtles, rays, sharks (14-foot hammerhead), eels, octopi seen regularly. Good place for kids — took our six-year-old." Gary Auset, of Fergus Falls, Minnesota, agrees (February, 1996). "Terrific spot for daughter's first saltwater dive. . . . Great family resort. Miles off beach. They treat you like one of the family. (800-223-6961 or 809-368-2014) ■