

## AFRICA

Any trip to Africa is best coupled with an inland safari. Timing your trip so that it coincides with animal migrations as well as the best diving season is a complicated affair; check with a specialist . . . . The diving off the coast of Kenya and Tanzania is hit-and-miss. Better diving is found around Pemba Island and off the coast of South Africa.

### Kenya

**Martin, Peponi Hotel, Lamu, February 1999, Mary Helen Crowe, Hoover, AL.** Vis: 35-45 ft. Water: 80-82 degrees. Martin (German divemaster and owner) has great motor and sail-powered dhow with a large shaded deck. We made two dives at Mwamba Kitau, an outer edge of island shelf, one hour sail. We went to the Fish Bowl a 6 underwater amphitheater filled with schools of medium sized fish and a huge 6 ft. free-swimming green moray. On second dive, current was stronger but saw a sailfish at 50 ft. The owner, Lars of Peponi, born in Kenya, had seen one there years ago. Very cool.

**Aqua Ventures, Ocean Island Lodge, Malindi, February 1999, Mary Helen Crowe, Hoover, AL.** Vis: 30-40 ft. Water: 80-82 degrees. Dive restrictions enforced: not real deep — 70 ft. Went with Steve Curtis (e-mail [aquav@africaonline.co.ke](mailto:aquav@africaonline.co.ke)) of Aqua Ventures on two dives. Dive good, also good post dive fish id. Saw

octopus, lionfish, scorpion fish, morays, leaf fish and kingfish. Much better dive operation than German owned one that we dived with earlier in week. Steve is very safety oriented, only four divers on our dive as opposed to 12 on a small boat at other operation. At Hemingway's at Watamu. (254 254-12232420; Fax 254 254-12232266)

### **Aqua Ventures, Ocean Sports, July 2000, Pat Bridges, Nashville, TN.**

Vis: 35-40 ft. Water: 82 degrees. Kenya. Watuma. Made one dive, by my guess is typical of any dive run by Aqua Ventures in a country where most services are "uneven" at best. My \$39 (U.S.) included a \$5 Marine park fee, boat, 1 tank, and all equipment. All new, top-quality gear from a spacious, well-stocked rental room. After a relaxed but through orientation, owner Steve Curtis led us to the boat while the two boat hands toted gear. Safety is stressed. A well-run outfit! There was a bit of a current even at our carefully timed low-tide entry, but the 35 ft. vis was no problem: so much to see in the reef area. Unicorn fish, octopus, lion fish, crocodile fish, bird wrasse and dozens more. I would not go back just for the diving, but if you ever find yourself on Kenya's coast after a 2-week safari (could happen!), Steve Curtis' Aqua Ventures is just the way to recover from the dung and dust and get back to neutral buoyancy!

### **South Africa and Mozambique**

**Infinite Dive Ventures, Aliwol Shoal and Punta d'Oura, February 2000,**

**John Gulliver, Fastra Frolundo, Sweden**  
([john.gulliver@ebox.trinet.se](mailto:john.gulliver@ebox.trinet.se)) . Vis:  
30 to 100 feet. Water: 78 to 84  
degrees, choppy, surge. Dive your own  
profile? Yes. Dive restrictions: time  
sometimes. Infinite Dive Ventures  
organize packages for groups accord-  
ing to their requirements. The tour  
starts with a couple of days at Aliwol  
Shoal (csa); lots of sharks. Accommo-  
dation at a dive lodge and ends with 4-  
7 days at Punta d'Oura, Mozambique.  
Excellent tropical diving, accommoda-  
tion in permanent tents with proper  
beds, communal ablutions. All  
transfers, border fees, visas are  
included. This is adventure diving.

**Kelp and Coral, Capetown, Unkomaas  
and Sodwana, June 2000, Bob  
Puschinsky, ([puschinsky@aol.com](mailto:puschinsky@aol.com)),  
Seabrook, TX.** Vis: 50-75 ft. Water:  
67-73 degrees. Not many fish but a  
few of many varieties — all exception-  
ally large and friendly. Great Whites  
from caged boat out of Capetown  
(Gansbaai and Mossel Bay) Outstand-  
ing dive/tour operation. Self contained  
cooking by tour operator — terrific  
lodging. Diving alternating with safari  
to see unbelievable views of large  
animals (big 5+). Very reasonable  
priced trip. Kelp and Coral on Internet  
and goes to A Demons Beach launch  
dive boat for each dive — can be  
exciting on launch and return.

**Marine Dynamics, Kleinsbaa,  
August 2000, Al and Dee Hudson,  
Premier Dive Travel, Caledonia, MI.**  
Vis: 20-40 ft. Water: 70-73 degrees.  
Partly cloudy, 70s Wetsuit: 5-7 mm or  
Drysuit. Restrictions enforced for

diving: "Keep all body parts in the  
cage!" Great White Shark Cage  
Diving is an extreme adventure and  
adrenaline rush when the sharks were  
active. There were some lazy times,  
maybe even boring, aboard the boat  
waiting for the action. Dived four  
days, saw Great White Sharks every  
day, but only two days were they  
hanging around long enough to have  
divers in the cages. On our fourth day  
we had eleven, eight to fourteen ft.  
Great White Sharks. Sometimes, three  
to five were circling the cage and boat  
at the same time. Our dive guide,  
Michael, would bring the great whites  
out of water with bait and hold their  
noses with his hand! This action  
continued for three hours nonstop!  
Photographers could use 10 to 20 rolls  
of film on this day easily. The tank of air  
is kept on the deck of the boat and a  
double set of second stage regulators is  
placed into the round cage from the  
boat. The cage has floats tied to it, so the  
very top of the cage is at sea level. The  
divers are fully submerged inside the  
cage. The round cage has an opening all  
around that is large enough to photo-  
graph easily through, but supposedly not  
big enough for a Great White Shark to  
get in. Marine Dynamics made sure that  
everyone had an excellent experience.  
When our Great White Shark encounters  
were not to the standards we expected,  
they scheduled an additional day of  
shark diving at no additional charge.  
Jean-Pierre Botha, Marine Dynamics  
owner, made sure we were well-taken  
care of. Same dive operator as used by  
National Geographic Explorer. Adding a  
week of a wild game safari in an African  
Bush Camp is "icing on the cake."

**Whaler Dive Center, Shark Dive Center, Kelp and Coral (soon changed to Close Encounters), August 2000, Harry Cure (cure@onramp.net), Fort Worth, Texas.** Vis: 25 to 45 Feet. Water: 62 to 71 F., choppy surge currents. Dive your own profile: yes. Dive restrictions: None, except request not to exceed no deco limits of computer. We dove at Allowa Shoals with the "raggletooth sharks" (we call them sand tigers) in great numbers. Close encounters with numerous sharks to 12 feet. Not much reef, but lots of large fish and rays. Whaler diver Center very professional operation. Dove with Great Whites in cage at Mossman Bay. Four Great Whites to 15 feet. Could reach out in and touch from cage? Visibility very poor to 15 feet. Boat old and musty, but Bob the Shark Dive Center operator very knowledgeable on shark behavior. Sodwana Reef is covered with rich colorful hard corals, only great barrier reef and Micronesia have better. Lots of marine life. South Africa diving is not for beginners. Current, strong surge, and colder than tropical conditions exist. Diving is from large "Avon" type boats that must go through heavy surf to get to dive sites, but for advanced divers worth the effort. (27 039-973-1562, 27 039-973-1563; Fax 27 039-973-1564)

## INDIA

**Bangoram Beach Resort, January 1999, June Reinisch (jmrr@idt.net) and Leonard A. Rosenblum, Brooklyn, NY.** An atoll of the

Lakshadweep Islands in the Arabian Sea off the southwest coast of India. You get there by international carrier to Madras, New Delhi or Bombay then by an Indian domestic airline to the city of Cochin. The Casino Hotel of Cochin runs the resort and will make the arrangements to fly from Cochin to the main island of the Lakshadweeps and from there it is an hour boat ride to the resort. The atoll has only two islands, the larger one has only the hotel, the other is uninhabited. Food is either good Indian cuisine or fair continental food. The rooms are simple but clean with private bath. The diving is excellent. Most is done on the outer side of the atoll walls, which is one long reef. Large sharks lie every 15 feet along the sandy bottom. Morays of 6 feet or more are not unusual. A wide variety of fish are seen daily, as well as several species of ray. Water is crystal clear and warm. Visibility endless. Little or no fishing has ever been done and the only divers are from the resort. The rental equipment is good. The German dive master is excellent. Snorkeling in the lagoon is fun with a 7-foot moray living in a little wreck.

## INDONESIA

Indonesia is a dive hot spot that unfortunately provides few choices. . . . While Bali's culture is fantastic (especially if you get away from the coast), the diving's not as spectacular as in other parts of Indonesia. . . . On Bali's east Coast the *Liberty* wreck at Tulamben is a favorite among fish