

Turneffe Island Lodge, March 2000, Larry and Fawn Lovecchio, Ignacio, CO. Saw the unusual (Toadfish, Batfish) as well as the interesting (loggerhead and hawksbill turtles, large grouper, several eaglerays, and a half dozen reef sharks in the Blue Hole). The corals are healthy with large barrel sponges. Turneffe Island Lodge is a nice, though not luxurious resort on its own private island close to good diving. The service and dive operation are excellent and the food is very good. Water 81 degrees and flat seas during our March visit. No trip to Belize is complete without an inland excursion and there's plenty to do though our favorite is the Lamanai Outpost Lodge (www.belizenet.com/lamanai.html) on the New River Lagoon that has received accolades including "best resort."

Turneffe Island Lodge, July 2000, Jerry Van Zante, Yukon, OK. Vis: 50-100 ft. Water: 80+ degrees. Very good diver's (and fishing) resort, not fancy but fine except for low water pressure/showers. Food was excellent. Both resort and dive staffs were outstanding with dive staff of Stacy, Bo, Rick and Marcel doing great job on somewhat shorthanded basis. Most of dive sites were very good to excellent (Front Porch, The Zoo and Elbow) although water conditions not always great. Many eagle and string rays as well as large turtles.

Turneffe Island Lodge, April 2000, Kimberly Dule (dulekm@earthlink.net), San Ramon, CA. Vis: 100 ft. Flight out of Miami back to SFO was delayed four

hours and then AA would not provide accommodations or taxi service or apologize! We landed at 3:30 a.m.! From SFO we didn't know that the fastest way to get to Belize was thru Houston. Great island owned by private US family. No bad surprises only pleasant. All meals taken care of, dives only 5-10 minutes away (except Blue Hole). Three dives a day. Unbelievably beautiful. Small dive groups. Highly recommended — \$1400 for whole week, including tanks.

Turneffe Island Lodge, May 2000, Bonnie Winsbro and Victor Cain, Oak Ridge, TN. Vis: 50 to 100 feet. Water: 78 to 80 degrees, choppy. Dive your own profile. Dive restrictions: within set max depth and request to stay within sight of divemasters on drift dives. The quality of reef and fish, abundance and diversity, have diminished since our first two visits to Turneffe Island in 1989 and 1991. But the Elbow is always a thrill to dive, we dove it 3 times in a week, with one being breathtaking. Lots of eagle rays and large turtles. Food, service and accommodations excellent.

BERMUDA

Despite Bermuda's pricey, elegant hotels and British manners, it's simply not a tropical dive destination, even for beginners. Reefs are thin and there's sparse fish life, although wreck divers can find dives to get excited about here. . . . From January to March, the average high is 68 degrees,

the low around 58. Summers are balmy, waters chilly. Bermuda's in the hurricane zone, around the same latitude as Charleston, South Carolina. . . .

BONAIRE

In 1999, hurricane-driven waves damaged, even destroyed, many of Bonaire's beautiful shallow coral gardens, ruining snorkeling in many places. While the tourist industry has done a fine job of keeping potential travelers ignorant of the damage, our readers here provide a detailed report. Still, Bonaire is a diver's island par excellence, with easy diving that's especially well-suited to beginning divers or those returning to the water after a long dry spell. Bonaire boasts superb year-round weather, with lows around 74° at night and daytime highs around 89°. Expect some rain from October–January, but, since Bonaire lies outside the hurricane belt, dives are rarely canceled. There's arid cactus-covered terrain topside; on the leeward side, expect calm seas, little or no current, and water temperatures in the low 80s most of the time. . . . The dive industry here's thoroughly organized with many excellent operators and lots of places to rent tanks or book boat dives. Although the island's been heavily dived the last two decades, its unusual coral formations harbor a wide range of tropicals, excellent guides to point out

unique critters (although there are few sharks or pelagics), and shore diving in front of every hotel. . . . Savvy divers rent a vehicle to shore-dive the island (reserve these ahead of time, or you may be out of luck, and don't leave valuables in your car). . . . The southern end of the island is often rough, but worth diving when conditions are favorable. . . . Avoid meal plans to take advantage of the many restaurants within walking distance of each hotel (and so you don't get stuck if your hotel chef is on leave). There's plenty of overnight film processing, good gear rental, and repair facilities. . . . Everyone speaks English. . . . Because of the terrible service of near-bankrupt ALM airlines, there is an excellent chance your luggage will be delayed and your trip will be delayed one way or the other by as much as a day.

Bonaire, January 2000, Mike Chambers, Strongsville, OH. I am puzzled over the silence and lack of information concerning the effects of hurricane Lenny on Bonaire. I realize the Bonaire Board of Tourism and Operators will downplay things somewhat. I was there this past New Year to ring in the new millennium. 25' under Salt Pier at Midnight ringing it in! I shore dived all week from north to south making 21 dives. If you just dove from Margate Bay and south, you wouldn't find much damage. The same goes for Karpata, 1000 Steps and Ole Blue. Some sand has been