

operation with a strong emphasis on customer service. Divemasters are friendly, knowledgeable and flexible in accommodating divers of all experience levels and helpful before, during and after each trip. Dived from their boat, South Seas II, out of the Waianae Boat Basin on the leeward side, about 45 minutes from Waikiki. Logged eight dives, including the Mahi wreck, Makaha Caverns, aircraft remains, Land of Oz and Black Rock Cave. Ocean Concepts has six shops around Oahu and will pick-up divers from many Waikiki hotels. Upon arrival at their Waianae shop, Mahi Divers, they whisk your gear to the boat while divers enjoy fresh fruit and juice and receive a pre-dive brief.

Ocean Concepts manager, Jim Byrem, provides thorough brief touching on everything from boat and dive safety to seat assignments and weather conditions, stressing customer satisfaction. When you get to the boat, your tank, BCD and regulator are ready to go and later swapped out by the crew during the surface interval.

Rental rigs include computer. Cameras — only fresh water rinse tank. Boat seating in shade or sun, as you choose.

Octopi, triggerfish, moray eels, Moorish idols, other tropicals and large and small sea turtles. I came across rare frogfish, leaf scorpionfish, horned helmet conch, trident's trumpet, brittle star and a flight of six eagle rays. One dive site almost had to be changed because a humpback whale and her calf were loitering around the mooring buoy. Whales were still in the area when we surfaced after our dive. Another day the

U.S. Air Force was doing over-water parachute exercises; quite a show.

Huge sandwiches and drinks during the surface interval and fresh pineapple after the second dive. \$65 for a two-tank dive. **(Ph: 800-808-DIVE or (808) 677-797 or (808) 682-2511; fax (808) 682-1031; e-mail info@oceanconcepts.com; website www.oceanconcepts.com)**

**Ocean Concepts Scuba, Hilton Hawaiian Village, July 2001, Paul Bayard (pbayard@cfl.rr.com)**  
**Winter Park, FL.** Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 40 to 60 Feet. Water: 75 to 80 F, calm no currents. The entire experience was a real treat. When I asked them what I should bring on the boat with me they said your bathing suit and a towel. They took care of the rest. Super divemasters. Very knowledgeable of the area. Everybody friendly. Probably not too exciting for the professional UWP but for beginner and intermediate it would be excellent subject matter.

## **JAPAN** **Okinawa**

**U.S. Military Bases, Kyle O'Malley, Le Center, MN.** Vis: 30-70 ft. Water: 60-75 F. Dives logged: 200+. Diving on Okinawa is a different angle than your usual Resort Reports. If you have relatives or friends serving with the U.S. Military there it is an affordable and really uncomplicated trip — otherwise it would be too expensive through the Japanese resorts and hotels. The Marine and Air Force bases have hostel facilities for visiting relatives. Dive gear

can be rented for almost nothing from the base MWR facilities. They also have good map packets of the dozen of divable spots around the island. Diving is really fun, unsupervised, pack-your-gear-in-a-van-and-go-do-your-own-thing diving from shore. Coral reef surrounds entire island, swim to outer wall can be anywhere from 30 meters to 300 meters. Not much for big fish but hundreds small tropicals each dive, almost always see sea snakes, pretty good shell collecting opportunities. East/West side spots on island — usually one side is calm and divable.

## Tokyo

**Tokyo Scuba Club, July 2001, Ed Leiter (ehl@jax.org) Bar Harbor, ME.** Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 40 to 60 Feet. Water: 65 to 70 F, currents. I always wanted to dive the Izu peninsula (2-3 hours by train from Tokyo), but had never succeeded in hooking up with someone who could tell me how to do it (the PADI diving society was worthless in this regard). A colleague sent me the email of “Tokyo Scuba Club”, the personalized dive tour business of Patric Schwandt (patric@tokyoscuba.com). He took 3 divers out of Tokyo in his Subaru van on a Friday evening for the diving weekend. in Koina, a tiny fishing village near Izukyu Shimoda on the Izu Peninsula. Accommodations were in a simple (but very comfortable) Japanese ryokan (where the Japanese food was fantastic!). Since I arrived into Narita airport only on Saturday morning, Patric emailed this jet-lagged traveler exact instructions as to how to navigate Japanese trains and buses to get to

Koina. Patric rents tanks (2 dives/day) from a local dive shop and also organizes a clean, fast fishing boat to take divers to nearby Mikimoto Island. The 2 dive sites I saw had rocky bottom, and large quantities of fairly large Alcyonarian soft corals. Fish were not plentiful, but were interesting (had never seen many of them before). We saw eagle rays, large morays, and a tuna. The hotel was just across the street from the harbor where the fishing boat awaited you. However, things are at floor level in Ryokans, so they are not really conducive to spreading out lots of camera gear. (Ph: +81-426-70-2769; fax +81-426-70-2768; e-mail info@tokyoscuba.com; website www.tokyoscuba.com)

## KIRIBATI (CHRISTMAS ISLAND)

Christmas Island is 1300 miles due south of Hawaii, about a 3-hour flight, but across the International Date Line. It's the world's largest coral atoll, 45 miles long and between 7 and 25 miles wide, although lagoons make up nearly 2/3 of that area. The island was named after the day in 1777 when Captain James Cook first happened upon it, but it remained uninhabited until the 1950s, when the British chose it as the site for their nuclear weapons development and induced a small Micronesian work force from the Gilbert Islands to relocate there. The British pulled out, leaving behind a few Micronesians and a great deal of debris. Today the island's 4400 residents are citizens of the Republic of Kiribati (pronounced cure-a-BOS).