

but we stayed for 63 minutes at 56 feet. The ray stayed for awhile then left and a couple more came and then left. After an hour surface interval in which we were given a towel to dry off, tea or water to drink with apple slices and banana bread we returned to the same spot but no rays appeared. We did see two large hump head wrasse, a small shark and many small tropical Fish (butterfly, blemmies, tangs, small parrot, surgeon and a bay pipefish). Bob and The reefs have a variety of coral from lettuce, brain, staghorn, cabbage, plate and pillar to mention a few. They also have a wide variety of marine life, clown fish, anemones, feather dusters, lionfish, leaf fish, wrasse, sharks, eels and turtles, pink skunk clown fish, a baby white tip shark and trigger fish which attached my fins when I stumbled in their nesting area. Night dive: a burrowing crab, several lionfish, nudibranch, starfish, black long spined urchin, slugs, sea cucumbers, hermit crabs, banded coral shrimp and other types of shrimp.

Yap Divers, Manta Ray Hotel, August 2001, Harry Cure, Jr. (harry@curelawfirm.com) Fort Worth, TX. Vis: 60-100 ft. Water: 83-84 F, choppy, surge. Logged dives: 1,500+. Some of the best hard corals I have seen. Mantas in large numbers on almost every cleaning station dive. Lots of sea life. The Manta Ray Hotel and Yap Divers provides great service and a wonderful experience.

NEW ZEALAND

Poor Knights

Dive Tutukaka, Pacific Rendezvous, May 2001, Wayne Batzer

(wbatzer@prodigy.net) Kailua, HI. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 75 to 100 Feet. Water: 64 to 65 F, calm choppy. If anything, better than described in last year's Undercurrent article. The dive boats are quite comfortable, with hot showers. They had steel tanks as an option. The briefings were quite complete, and sea life from small to large was exceptional. The volcanic arches, tubes and caverns of the Poor Knights are beautiful, above and below the surface. I brought my own gear, but the rental equipment appears first rate and well maintained. Pacific Rendezvous was excellent for lodging, the Schnappa Rock restaurant (next to Dive! Tutukaka) has super seafood and a nice selection of New Zealand wines. Several of New Zealand's best photographers use this operation regularly and seem quite pleased. **(Ph: +64 9 4343 867; fax +64 9 4343 884; e-mail info@diving.co.nz; website www.diving.co.nz)**

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Some of the world's finest diving is in this land just north of Australia whose most consistent feature is its unpredictability. . . . It's a dream destination for live-aboards with unique critters on a big scale: big fish, big coral, big distances, and muck diving. It's also a naturalist's paradise with beautiful topography: mountains covered with snow in July shade, steaming jungles, butterflies as big as birds, walking-stick insects a foot long, and splendid Birds of Paradise. Most

rain comes in heavy afternoon downpours. . . . If you're into wrecks, check with the live-aboards that make trips to Rabaul. . . . After traveling this far, take a week to stay in some of the fine lodges like Karawari or Tari (even though they want top dollar) to visit indigenous, primitive, wild-and-woolly cultures that are among the most interesting on the planet. The people are divided into hundreds of frequently-sparring tribes speaking hundreds of languages. Witchdoctors on the outer islands maintain the old value systems, yet go to Christian services on Sundays, and men from the stone age, covered with colored mud, mingle in airports with business people in suits and ties. . . . Women should not travel alone in PNG. Port Moresby is an unsafe city, although the big hotels are fine; but use Moresby for changing planes and daytime shopping at the superb giant crafts market. . . . If you have to lay over in Port Moresby, consider Loloata Island Resort (011-675-325-1369 or e-mail loloata@daltron.com.pg), a diver's alternative 25 minutes from the airport Malaria prophylaxis is still essential. English and Pidgin English (helicopter: "Mixmaster blong Jesus") spoken. . . .

Loloata Island Resort, October 2000, Ken Deaver, Billings, MT. Vis: 30-100 ft. Water: 77-81 F. Dives logged: 447. Dive restrictions: 130 ft. deep, 3-5 min safety stop. Great

service, accommodations and diving in a relaxed, comfortable setting. Excellent combination of seamount, reef, wreck and muck diving. Virtually guaranteed — rhinopias (scorpion fish), pygmy sea horses, ghost pipefish, mantis shrimp. Great nudibranchs, pipe horses and swarms of reef fish — large and small. Great opportunities for land attractions in New Guinea and Loloata is an excellent place to stay between trips to the Highlands and Sepik River. Resort was a quiet, family atmosphere. Loloata is snorkeler-friendly. Only limitations were occasional choppy water in afternoon, coolish water and not enough time for shore dives and muck dives which were quite good. It's cheap and much more comfortable than staying in Port Moresby. (Ph: 675-325-8590 or 675-325-1369; fax 675-325-8933; e-mail Loloata@Loloata.com; website www.loloata.com)

Loloata Island Resort, November 2000, John Bambridge, West Hills, CA. Vis: 15-30 ft. Water: 78-86 F. Dives logged: 232. Dive restrictions: None. Early rainy season and winds resulted in rough diving and terrible visibility. Dive masters had us in high seas and strong currents in several directions with no supervision or advice. Made it back one time with pressure gauge on 0. Resort tried to charge for dives already paid for, necessitating a closer look at their records.

Loloata Island Resort, April 2001, Michael Waring, Pilborough, West Sussex. Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 10 to 15 Meters. Water: 30 to 31 Celsius, calm. A must for any diver

who has a few days prior or post a PNG live-aboard. The diving is very good with many critters (Merlin's scorpion Fish, miniature seahorses, frogfish) and some good reefs like bommie with many reef Fish and also pelagics. The accommodations are basic with about 6 rooms air conditioned and the food plain but good. Charming and helpful staff under the management of Dik, the owner and Olinda the GM.

Loloata Island Resort, April 2001, Mel Cundiff (cundiff@colorado.edu) Boulder, CO. Vis: 50 ft. Water: 83 F. Dives logged: 1200+. I have dived at Loloata on 5 different occasions; excellent accommodations, food and diving. For a layover in Port Moresby, it provides a very safe and secure location on an island only 25 minutes from the airport.

Tufi Dive Resort, October 2000, Ken Deaver, Billings, MT. Vis: 30-200 ft. Water: 82-86 F. Dives logged: 447. Dive restrictions: None, safety stops encouraged. The resort has been extensively renovated with new bungalows and dining facilities, new boats and equipment and is becoming one of the best resorts in the world. It is also the land base for the Telita live-aboard. The facilities and view are beautiful and the diving is spectacular. The diving combines protected fjords, open water seamounts, shallow reefs, wrecks and muck dives. The Tufi dock is a world-class muck dive. New sites are being explored regularly. Virtually guaranteed — schools of barracuda, trevally and sweetlips. Even a snorkeler got photos of an eagle ray

and a hammerhead. Simply the best visibility I've ever seen. Food, accommodations, service and dive operation excellent. Very comfortable, quiet setting with casual atmosphere and friendly people. Good opportunities for hiking and visiting land attractions. Resort is snorkeler friendly. Staff is still exploring and setting up new dive sites. There are so many spots and kinds of dive in the area that the opportunities will take years to explore. (Ph: 675-641-1438; e-mail info@tufitelita.com; website www.tufitelita.com)

Tufi Dive Resort, May 2001, Rosemary Gutwillig rustyatbay@aol.com) Greenport, NY. Vis: 40-80 ft. Water: 84-86 F. Dives logged: 158. Dive restrictions enforced: 130'. As you reported, the owners have made a million-plus dollar renovation. The result is beautiful. The main building is a traditional round house supported by tree trunks — the central one almost 30 feet high. It's designed on an indoor-outdoor plan with bar, dining and barbeque areas. The bamboo guest bungalows are deluxe, with balconies overlooking the fjord. There is adjustable A/C, new rattan Furniture and a very modern bathroom. All construction has been meticulous. The menu is set (no choice) but the food is delicious. Always beginning with a great soup. Our dinners were crayfish, barracuda, porkchops, pasta. Lunch on board or in the dining room was cold meats and salads. Pineapple and papaya available. And a good selection of wine and the hard stuff plus the very nice local

beer. One snazzy 40' boat. Very fast, powered by two 225 hp outboards. Enclosed bow, open stern. Set up for 12 divers with double bench seats facing forward (like a bus). Wells for 12 tanks with shallow gear trays underneath. Tank for cameras. No table, but carpeted vee area in bow. We two were the only guests aside from two Telita passengers who dived with us while the live-aboard was having a propeller change. We did spend one day diving off Telita, and it is a beautiful boat. The drawback is no en suite bathrooms — but otherwise is excellently appointed) The diving was spectacular. (Three boat dives plus a shore night dive are offered everyday. Whitetips and silvertips were seen on every dive, and a few sharks the Australian divemaster, Wayne, called black whalers. crocodilefish, coronetfish, lionfish, giant dams. Clouds of smaller reef fishes. Squadrans of jacks, trevallys and barracudas. Many nudibranchs. And the daily evening shore dive off the jetty invariably provided mandarinfish, cuttelfish, morays, and the resident Spanish dancer. The corals and sponges are healthy and gorgeous. Cyclone Pinnacle — a gem at about 85'. Small and perfect. Covered with lovely white corals and supporting thousands of circling reef Fish. There are only 3 weekly flights from Port Moresby.

Tufi Dive Resort, Papua New Guinea, September 2001, Des Paroz (des@paroz.com), Sydney Markets, NSW. Experience: 501-1000 dives, Vis: 10 to 40 Meters. Water: 27 to 29 C. Muck diving in the fjords (right at

the wharf) was spectacular. Other fjord diving had excellent coral growth. Boat diving exposed, so take precautions if you're prone — it does get bumpy. Accom and food superb — fresh lobster and seafood almost every meal. Get the deluxe rooms — its well worth the extra. Staff goes out of their way to help. Little plane from Port Moresby, it can get bumpy. Don't forget your anti-malarials No processing. Limited photographic supplies, so take your own.

Walindi Plantation Resort, October 2000, Ken Deaver, Billings, MT. Vis: 20-80 ft. Water: 87-93 F. Dives logged: 447. The base for the Febrina live-aboard. A few resorts may have more sharks or mantas and a few may offer more small critters but no place can offer such a variety of top quality diving for everything. Great accommodations, superb service at resort, dive operation and Walindi Photo. Many top photographers and scientists visit Walindi for diving and conferences. Land attractions are excellent. Resort is snorkeler friendly. Virtually guaranteed — ghost pipefish, pygmy barracuda and trevally. Probably the best diversity of diving anywhere with great seamounts, shallow reefs, island fringing reefs, wrecks, sand and muck dives and more sites being added regularly. Seas calm, minimal currents, reefs and gorgonians spectacular, and photo opportunities unsurpassed. Only limitation is longish boat rides. (Ph: +675-9835441; fax +675-9835638; e-mail info@Walindi.com or Max@Walindi.com; website www.walindi.com)

Walindi Plantation Resort, October 2000, Roger Roth, Cincinnati, OH.

Walindi Plantation is safely nestled in a jungle atmosphere with comfortable cabanas. Each has its own bathroom, refrigerator, coffee/tea maker and table along with comfortable beds. plenty of storage for clothes and laundry is done daily by the Walindi staff. Electricity is 240, with adapters available at Walindi Photo Services, where Tammy Peluso runs the full service shop with still photography and Peter Manz is the video pro. Meals are delicious and served in the dining hall around the fresh water pool and bar. A gift shop is also on the premises. Divers are asked their favorite types of diving and what they expect to see while visiting Walindi so that these wishes can be accommodated. There are a number of dive boats available, so different dive sites can be visited and choices can be made by the divers as to what type of diving they want to do and how long they want to stay out. The divemasters are wonderfully adept at finding and pointing out whatever the divers have requested to see in their mid-upper 80 degree waters with visibility ranging up to 150'. Dive gear is loaded each morning by the staff and cleaned each afternoon. Boat rides 10-60 minutes and lunches are provided on the boat. When diving some of the reefs and bommies around Kimbe Bay, divers can expect to find some regular creatures like the eels, parrotfish, snappers, and wrasses normally found in these IndoPacific waters. The divemasters will also point out the harlequin ghost pipefishes, sailfin

gobies, mandarinfish, tapestry shrimp, tube anemones with their resident Thor shrimp, decorator crabs, and different species of mantis shrimp. One may also find many different sea snails, slugs and flatworms from the larger Triton's trumpet and various cowries, to the tiny nudibranchs less than a quarter of an inch long. Muck diving; numerous shrimp/goby relationships, seahorses, devil scorpionfish burying themselves into the sand, and maybe even a blue-ring or mimic octopus. Anemones with their respective clownfish inhabitants are everywhere. While shooting whip gobies, a school of shrimpfish may swim into the picture, or while concentrating on coral crabs, a curious blenny may jump into your picture. Day tours of the island of New Britain are available. Next door to Walindi Plantation is the Mahonia Na Dari/Guardians of the Sea Nature Conservancy program that Walindi owner Max Benjamin supports for the students of New Britain. Other activities may include native guides taking you for a swim in the hot springs, a visit to a couple of WWII plane wrecks, a hike through the rainforest or to a nearby volcano.

Walindi Plantation Resort, November 2000, Hal Mozer, Bellevue, WA.

Vis: 50-100 ft. Water: 80-85 F. Dive restrictions: None — all divers were using computers. The divemasters and boatman were especially helpful. My wife and I are over 70 year old divers. We never had to lift tanks and our equipment was properly set up for each dive. A ladder was available for

easy exit from the water, after BC and tank was lifted out of the water by the boatman. Divemasters very good at finding small critters for the macro photographers. The tremendous variety of fish and corals made for great wide-angle to macro photography. Several dive sites had reef tops from 10'-30' making safety stops most pleasant. The largest boat was a little uncomfortable for the 30-50 minute rides to most dive sites.

Walindi Plantation Resort, April 2001, Rosemary Gutwillig (Rustyatbay@aol.com) Greenport, NY. Vis: 60-80 ft. Water: 87-89 F. Dives logged: 158. Dive restrictions enforced: 130'. Attractive bamboo bungalows with one double bed; one single (the usual PNG furnishings); fans (no A/C) provided adequate cooling. Central building has comfortable lounge, small bar. Extended dining deck in construction next to pool. Buffet with good choices: chicken, pork, crayfish, mudcrabs; excellent local greens. Fine selection of Australian wines. Local beer also good. Lunches on board dive boats: rice or pasta salads, cold roast chicken, meatloaf. Fresh pineapple and papaya always available. 3 dive boats: small (slow), medium and large. The Australian divemaster, Dale, very fair in assigning boats so all divers get equal opportunity to visit all, including the most distant, dive sites. Never more than 6 divers aboard any one boat. Plenty of room for gearing up. Water, juice and fruit on board. On 2 occasions we landed on Restorf Island for lunch and then did

great shores dives from there: The diving was outstanding. We always saw whitetips or silvertips and turtles; squadrons of barracudas and jacks; clouds of butterflies, anthias, chromis, fusiliers. Plenty of nudibranch sightings. Puffers, lionfish, huge batfish, giant clams, garden eels, cuttlefish. Gorgeous feather stars and feather worms. Beautiful hard and soft corals — especially red sea whips and fans. Spectacular sponges. Magnificent anemones. On the surface we sighted spinner dolphins and pilot whales. Pelted with peppercorn-sized volcanic ash on our first trip out. But that's really something to tell the folks back home and it washes off.

PHILIPPINES

Major dive areas are concentrated around Batangas, Mindoro, Palawan, and the Visayas. . . . Though the reefs here are among the most diverse in the world, supporting more than 2000 species of fish (the Great Barrier Reef, by comparison, supports around 1500), they are also among the most threatened. Up to 70 percent of Philippine reefs are dying or dead. . . . The best diving is in the Sulu Sea, which can only be accessed by live-aboard. . . .

Dive 7000, Batagas, March 2001, Earl F. Stubbe, Lombard, IL. Vis: 40-60 ft. Water: 78-80 F. Dives logged: 360. Dive restrictions: 130. Lots of little critters, good night dives, good shore diving. All you have to do is fall into the water. March, April, May are the best months.