

dive was only one hour. Turneffe atoll dives had huge schools of fish, a ray or two, a turtle or two, a shark, maybe a remora. Generally great diving and good crew. Food was quite good especially for being at the bitter end of the supply chain.

### **Turneffe Island Lodge, July 2002, Judy Kiracofe, Farmingdale, NJ.**

Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 60 to 100 Feet. Water: 83 to 84 F. Third trip to Turneffe Island Lodge. New beach cabanas are very nice! The staff is helpful and friendly. The food is great — 2nds no problems. You set up your tank and from that time on it will be on the boat ready to go — just bring your mask and fins. After each dive you're back on land for the surface interval — very nice! It's a great place to go with a spouse who doesn't dive — they can fish on the flats or deep sea fish or just relax! The new pro yachts are nice for the transfer from Belize City to the lodge 30 miles off the coast. They have someone meet you at the airport and they drop you back at the airport in plenty of time to catch your flight out.

## **BERMUDA**

Despite Bermuda's pricey, elegant hotels and British manners, it's not a decent dive destination, even for beginners. Reefs are thin and there's sparse fish life. . . . 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. . . .

### **Fantasea Divers, September 2002, Vic Bary/Maureen Strazdon (vbary@yahoo.com) Cranford, NJ.**

Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 30 to 50 Feet. Water: 84 to 92F, choppy. Fantasea is a well run, responsive organization operating out of a major hotel. Friendly staff asks for suggestions before choosing a site and sets up equipment for second dive. 40' boat was never overcrowded. Local divers who have bought a season program augmented paid staff. They tally divers before boat leaves dock and after every dive. No storage facility for diver-owned or rented equipment (have to charge out fresh rented equipment each day). Dive staff could do more in the way of helping divers up onto dive step. Once you're on board, they are very helpful. No separate rinse tank for cameras. Inexperienced divers threw everything imaginable into one rinse barrel. (Ph: **441-236-1300 or 441-295-0460; e-mail info@fantasea.bm; website www.fantasea.bm**)

## **BONAIRE**

In 1999, hurricane-driven waves damaged, even destroyed, many of Bonaire's beautiful shallow coral gardens, ruining snorkeling in many places. 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. 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. . . . The dive industry is thoroughly organized with many excellent operators and lots of places to rent tanks or book boat dives. . . . Savvy divers rent a vehicle to shore-dive the island (reserve 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 most hotels (and so you don't get stuck if your hotel chef is on leave). There's overnight film processing, good gear rental, and repair facilities. . . . Everyone speaks English. . . .

**Black Durgon Inn, October 2001, Michael Stanfields (freedomcycle@prodigy.net)**

**Grandview, MO.** Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 59 to 100 Feet. Water: 81 to 82 F, choppy. We have been to Bonaire 10 times and find it more appealing every trip. Most dives were near or past Willemstoren Lighthouse and before Sorobon. The entry and exit conditions are only for confident divers. Like diving a whole different island. Sharks, eagle rays, sting rays, green morays on almost every dive. A pod of dolphins came in so close at 65 feet that my wide angle lens had trouble focusing. Currents unpredictable. We did drift dives with someone picking us up

down the beach. Large sting ray let his wing be gently touched. Free swimming green morays on six dives. A guide is recommended for your first dive in this part of the island. (Fax: 599 717 8846; e-mail [bkdurgon@bonairelive.com](mailto:bkdurgon@bonairelive.com); website [www.blackdurgon.com](http://www.blackdurgon.com))

**Bonaire Dive & Adventure (formerly: Sand Dollar Dive & Photo), Sand Dollar Condos, January 2002, Julie & Adrian van der Kroef, Newtown, CT.** Vis: 50-100 ft. Dives logged: Adrian: 697. Julie: 269. Dive restrictions enforced: recreational limits. We celebrated our 10th anniversary of scuba diving and enjoyed 10 perfect days of diving! The New Year's Eve celebration was exuberant with the island was alive with firework displays up and down the west coast. The natives take this holiday seriously and set off loud and colorful displays for three days before New Years. We signed up for a 1/2 day underwater fish identification and behavior course with Jerry Ligon the biologist and naturalist. it opened our eyes to new sights and taught us about fish behavior and reproduction. The course included a guided dive that furthered the learning. We dove every night (on the same reef), and were thrilled with the variety of critters and the ease of the shore diving right at the Sand Dollar resort. We spent an afternoon in a rented diesel, stick shift, four door pickup truck driving through the Washington Slagbaai National Park. At the suggestion of the park ranger, we choose the 'long route', which was a 2-1/2 hour drive

around the perimeter of the park that included some incredibly beautiful vistas of the ocean and shoreline. Although we enjoy “adventure,” driving on the roads in this park was more than we expected. After 2-1/2 hours of bumping along terribly maintained dirt roads that were poorly marked, we were more than relieved to find the exit signs! Salida! Whew! (Ph: (599) 717-2229; e-mail [info@diveandadventure.com](mailto:info@diveandadventure.com); website [www.discoverbonaire.com/dive](http://www.discoverbonaire.com/dive))

**Buddy Dive Resort, October 2001, Betty Kjellstrom (Bann@MTCO.com) Marseilles, IL.** Vis: 50-150 ft. Water: 84-86 F. Logged dives: 725. Tide charts should have been consulted. Afternoon diving at Angel City and other places not to be considered — at least on the days we tried them. Difficult to enter and exit from shore. ALM lost luggage coming home. Not found for four days. (Ph: 866-GO-BUDDY or (599-717) 5080, e-mail: [info@BuddyDive.com](mailto:info@BuddyDive.com); website [www.buddydive.com](http://www.buddydive.com))

**Buddy Dive Resort, October 2001, Pat and Charlie Nash (c.nash@verizon.net) Virginia Beach, VA.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 60 to 100 Feet. Water: 82 to 85 F, choppy no currents. Our second trip. The first time was a week plagued with equipment problems. Only through the efforts of Murphy did we salvage a week of diving and videography. All our equipment held up, no camera flooding, and the diving was excellent. The night dive on the town pier was the low point. It is a

wonderful site and Buddy Dive took 15 of us to view it. So did about six other dive shops! It was really, silty, and dangerous. The night dives at Buddy’s were great and the 0530 Yawn Patrol was interesting. We had a flat on our Drive and Dive Pickup for which we were billed an extra \$10. Housekeeping was improved from a year before as was the condition of the resort. The top of the reef is still pretty well devastated with nothing much to see above 20 feet. Once you drop over the edge it improves quickly. The resident octopus, the sea horses, and the frogfish were interesting sights. Slagbaai National Park: pack a lunch and some spare water and enjoy an off-gassing day before you go home. ALM service remains awful. We were booked on the 0930 flight that was eliminated from the schedule while we were there. We were booked on the 0730 flight so we showed up plenty early. We finally left -- at 0930. Right on schedule!

**Buddy Dive Resort, December 2001, Bob & Susan Parker, Punta Gorda, FL.** Experience: 101- 250 dives. Choppy no currents. 10th trip to Bonaire. It’s our favorite place because of unlimited shore diving. We use the boats only when it’s too far. Karpata is our favorite, followed by Ol Blue. After the dive, we drive through Rincon and stop at Keeshan Snack for lunch or a cold drink. The place may not look like much but the food is good and plentiful. Try the Spanish pork or chicken. Buddy’s 3-D (dive, dine, and drive) ran out of vehicles but arranged for a brand new

pickup from Budget at the airport. The package includes a one bedroom condo with fully equipped kitchen, CATV. Rooms are neat and spacious. We normally stay two weeks.

### **Buddy Dive Resort, February 2002, Ron Larkin, Champaign, IL.**

Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 30 to 60 Feet. Water: 79 F, choppy. Good for beginners but currents and wind-driven surge made shore entry and exit a challenge even for the physically fit. Boat dives in the package helped. A few large reef fish accompany divers, presumably to grab fish flushed by humans, especially at night. Besides these, we saw few creatures that were large enough to look good on a dinner plate. Locals fishing from small boats off the reefs confirmed the reason. Turtle slide show was superb. Friends left items in locked vehicle and had them stolen, which explains broken glass on the ground at every dive site parking lot. Excellent basic vehicle rental included in the package. Birding not bad but desert habitat affected by feral goats grazing. Signs of hurricane damage still visible and NE dive sites not recommended because of damage. E side of the island not diveable in Feb. Zeezicht was the best restaurant we found. Supermarket well-equipped but we wished we had brought small amounts of items one cannot finish in a week such as detergent and spices. Beginners found the night dive at Town Pier claustrophobic but colors of sponges, etc., wonderful. Buddy's staff helpful but did not know how to say "I don't know" when asked a tough question.

### **Buddy Dive Resort, June 2002, Gary DeBarba, Southington, CT.**

Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 60 to 80 Feet. Water: 78 to 81 F, calm, choppy. Although I had used Maduro Dive Travel before, they were initially unwilling to book us on any airline other than Air Jamaica. After I called Bonaire Tourism, Maduro was willing to book on American Airlines with a Dutch Caribbean Airlines connection between Curacao and Bonaire. Our group was split between Connecticut and Chicago and the Chicago contingent was booked on flights with only a 45-minute plane change in Miami. Although AA knew they were in the Miami Terminal on their way to our gate, they were unwilling to hold the plane. They missed the flight by less than ten minutes. American put them up in Miami overnight and flew them to Bonaire on their own flight the next day rather than on another airline the same day. Buddy Dive resort was clean and modern and the staff was friendly and accommodating. We rented a 3-bedroom, 3-bath condo that was clean and comfortable, with a/c and plenty of hot water. Breakfasts were eggs, pancakes, French toast, bacon, omelets, cereal, juices and fruits. The lunches were very good, with a wide selection of salads, burgers and sandwiches. Great restaurants on the island. Richard's is superb. The diving was very good. The dive boats would try to accommodate requests for dive sites, but they tried to stay around Klein Bonaire. I frequently requested sights around Karpata or 1,000 Steps, but was usually told it was too rough or other

boats were already there. Some Klein sites were outstanding. We booked eleven boat dives with the idea of taking the morning two tank boat. This boat ran only two of the six days. The other days it either didn't run or was booked by a private group. We were still able to take the two separate single-dive boats each day, leaving time for shore diving in the afternoon. The beach diving was standard Bonaire diving easy access and most spots were very good with little hurricane damage. The dive staff was friendly and accommodating. They were able to fill our requests for turtles, seahorses and a frog fish. The tipping situation was low-key, and the staff was happy to receive even contributions of beer and wine!

### **Buddy Dive Resort, July 2002, Fiona Rattray, Toronto, ON.**

Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 50 to 80 Feet. Water: 78 to 80 F, calm, surge, no currents. Staff at Buddy Dive and Resort was helpful and friendly. Good selection of gear and true 24/7 diving available. Great variety of non-dive activities: mangrove snorkel, kayaking, bicycling. We did only shore diving, and used the drive-through fill station. All fills were 3100# except one at 2800#. We left the windows down on our Toyota Hilux and always returned to find our clothes, mini-first aid kit, coffee mugs, water, shoes just as we had left them. Saw turtles, wahoo, tarpon, lots of bait fish, stingray, octopus, plus the usual tropicals in abundance. Took a resort rebreather course from Walt at Rec Teck Scuba — great — fish came

right up to you since there are minimal bubbles from the semi-closed rebreather. Restaurant association now publishes a guide to restaurant hours and locations that is helpful. Minimal mosquitoes. Flew Dutch Caribbean (formerly ALM) from Miami to Bonaire; minimal airport transfer hassles and our luggage arrived with us.

**Buddy Dive Resort, August 2002,  
Bill Choppe (billchoppe@aol.com)  
Modesto, CA.** Vis: 125-175 ft. Water: 80-82 F. Dives accrued: 875. Dive restrictions enforced: 100'. Excellent staff. Boat captains would go to requested dive sites but otherwise would tend to repeat sites. Computer terminal is available for \$15/hour. Rooms are well equipped with tv, phone and a/c. There were six of us in a 3-bedroom apartment and were not crowded.

### **Buddy Dive Resort, September 2002, John White, Arnold, MD.**

Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 60 to 100 Feet. Water: 82 to 80 F, calm. Our second trip to Buddy Dive the first having been in '99 before the Island was hit by the surge. There is still a noticeable change in the 0' to 30' zone, not enough to avoid Bonaire, there is life returning. The Town Pier Dive is worth doing, however though visibility was good, getting enough light for good pictures was an issue. It would have been nice to have had the proper transformer for one charger. Dive shop's transformer blew out the first day. The Island is on 127v 50c AC so some chargers (those not marked for 50/60c) only provide partial charge (60-70%).

**Captain Don's Habitat, September 2001, Bill Rupp (3000wfr@msn)**  
**York, PA.** Vis: 75-110 ft. Water: 80-83 F. Dives logged: 75. Unlimited 24/7 diving through Don's. No hassles! Accommodating staff overall. Shore diving better than boat. More freedom. Northern "Bopec" sites, especially bordering the preserve were some of the most pristine coral/walls one can dive. LaDania's Leap North to Karpata was also a great dive. The Windjammer (@ Bopec) over-rated. Deep dive with masts (tops) at 200! Thermo-cline kicks in around 130'. Not for beginners. Great weather. (Ph: **011-599-717-8290; e-mail: Bonaire@HabitatDiveResorts.com; website [www.habitatdiveresorts.com/BonaireHome.html](http://www.habitatdiveresorts.com/BonaireHome.html)**)

**Captain Don's Habitat, March 2002, Ray Haberman (RHaberman@msn.com)**  
**Naperville, IL.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 80 to 100 F. Water: 79 to 81 F, calm no currents. Warm sun, nice breeze, warm water, good visibility, lots of good healthy coral, sponges, and fans. Plenty of small coral creatures to keep you busy for hours. Only large fish was a 6' tarpon that hung out by the resort. Capt. Don's is diver friendly. Rooms are clean and comfortable. He has the best restaurant (Rum Runners) on the island. Boats are clean, fast and well organized. Only do a one tank dive in the am, a one tank dive in the PM with a night dive thrown in a couple nights a week. The unlimited shore diving is just that. They have a knowledgeable camera shop at the

dive shop. They can help with most problems.

**Captain Don's Habitat, April 2002, Debbie Pasich, San Diego, CA.**  
Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 80 to 100 Feet. Water: 78 to 80 F, calm. No currents. True diving freedom. 3 daily boat dives, unlimited shore diving and a few scheduled night boat dives. Always full tanks available for shore dives and the dive sites are marked along the road with the name of the sites painted on brightly colored yellow rocks. Captain Don's requires a check-out dive unsupervised by staff -- simply is a shore dive whereby you have an opportunity to check your gear and buoyancy. Underwater we saw typical Caribbean fare with sightings of turtles, morays and seahorses and one spotted eagle ray. Rare sighting of a large pod of pilot whales! Otherwise it was juvenile everything; tiny file fish, trumpet, spotted drums and the list goes on. There is still evidence of the 99 hurricane driven waves but the reef is coming back and the diving is good. The dive staff is good with most of the staff providing good dive briefings on boat dives. During the dive briefing they would recommend depth but gave you the freedom to dive your own profile. All boat dives were single tank dives but combining the frequency of boat departures with the proximity of the dive sites you could do one dive, switch tanks and go out again (making for perfect surface intervals!). The staff offers assistance when requested otherwise they consider you a responsible diver. When shore diving do not

leave anything of value in the car, roll down the windows a bit and lock the car. a couple of unlucky travelers had their car window punched out with the cost of repair coming in at \$587 (with a \$500 deductible!). The resort had comfortable rooms with nice quiet air conditioners. The food was good, not great. They have a nice size fresh water swimming pool and the grounds are well maintained. The staff was friendly with some staff showing a great sense of humor. Except two women who were downright surly. The climate was relatively arid which helped to keep down the mosquito population.

**Captain Don's Habitat, April 2002, Charles Stewart, Kennewick, WA.** Vis 50-100 ft. Water: 76-79 F. Found a myriad of life in the crevices and hollows of the coral rubble. On several shore dives, a huge 6-ft. tarpon followed us along the reef, cruising in the dark at maybe 100-130 ft. More came up at night to entertain us during dinner at the Rum Runners. Captain Don's true to their slogan as "the home of diving freedom." Diving from their shore facilities was convenient 24 hours a day. On boat dives, we were advised about the best depth and direction to see the most and stay safe, but we were responsible for our own dive profile. The dive staff was unfailingly friendly and extra helpful. One day when the boat reservation board was full, they happily staged a second boat and crew for just three of us! The accommodations for two couples were excellent in the "oasis cottages." Our two- bedroom, two

bath cottage included a full kitchen, living room and wraparound covered porch where we could enjoy the fish pond, fountain, and transplanted tropical flowers. Two large (at least 2-ft. long) iguanas made the rounds. Excellent breakfast buffet. We were concerned to encounter divers (two different sets) with cameras and strobes who apparently could not control their buoyancy. They clung to, bounced off and even kicked the coral and sponges while trying to get pictures. Our American Air and American Eagle flights were good. We had no hassles, no luggage problems and good connections from and to Portland, Oregon. On the return we were advised to be at the Flamingo Airport 2 hours before our 6 AM flight time. This turned out to be one half hour before the agents arrived! The Customs facilities at Puerto Rico are nice and spacious and the process was most efficient. (The long walk was welcome exercise between flights.)

**Captain Don's Habitat, August 2002, Cyd Allred (callred@hotmail.com) Las Vegas, NV.** Experience: 26-50 dives. Vis: 80 to 100 Feet. Water: 79 to 81 F, calm. Captain Don is truly a unique character! His slide show is not to be missed. The resort is wonderful for and to divers. We were a group (40+) and they handled all our requests with ease and professionalism, even getting a baby-sitter for one couple that had a 2-year-old. My room was the most inexpensive they offered, a Superior Villa room — terrific room. The view from my upstairs window was

beautiful. The little refrigerator was nice. No microwave, TV or phones in these rooms. Always a variety of tank sizes filled, just sign one out and go shore diving. The dive operation staff, from the dive shop to the rental desk to the boat staff, was always helpful. The diving was wonderful, boat dives and all the shore diving one could handle. Even on the boats you dive your own profile. Habitat has a photographer taking photos both above and under water. Thursday evenings there is a slide show and the week's slides are displayed. 1000 steps was excellent with a variety of fish life, Lenora's Reef had a lot of good color and the Habitat House Reef, La Machaca was a great dive too; saw sea horses there more than once. At Jeff Davis Memorial site that we saw a huge eel swimming. I used my digital with an Ikelite housing. The restaurant is good, though a wider selection for lunch and dinner would have been nice. Monday evening is a great Bar-B-Q buffet. One evening part of our group went to Richard's for seaside dining at sunset and truly excellent food.

**Carib Inn, August 2001, Edward Clapp (edward.clapp@alum.mit.edu)**  
**Corte Madera, CA.** Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 60 to 100 Feet. My third trip to Bruce Booker's Carib Inn. It's a small hotel, with just 10 rooms, and the clientele seems largely repeat customers, hard to make a reservation. There's no bar or dining room, though there are restaurants within easy walking distance and the

rooms all have a microwave and refrigerator. It's beautiful diving; the coral's still magnificent and fish plentiful. It's also easy diving Bruce's philosophy is that you're certified, know what you're doing, and their job is to let you know what's down below, help you get your tank on, and help you back on the boat. They offer to lead you, but don't push it and expect you to manage your own air and bottom time. Two boat dives a day, with an occasional night boat dive, and shore diving off the hotel is lovely, so you can get in a night dive any time you want. I averaged about 150 minutes of bottom time a day with just the boat trips. I didn't get below about 80 feet, but did get that deep on the morning dives. If you choose to rent a car, there's superb shore diving. [www.caribinn.com](http://www.caribinn.com), gives enough detail to let you know what to expect. Visibility wasn't the clear 100-200 ft. I'd seen there before. I would prefer a boat with shade. One boats has a roof over a small part of it but the other is open. They're family oriented so if the boat you're on has either a student diver or snorkelers, you may find the selection of dive sites limited.

**Carib Inn, November 2001, Mark Hayward, State College, PA.**  
Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 50 to 100 Feet. Water: 82 to 84 F, calm. The guys handling the tanks/weights are helpful and friendly. The divemasters are uniformly helpful, knowledgeable, and good humored. Many have been at the Carib Inn a number of years. Divemasters accommodate guests despite whether guests are shore

divers or boat divers. Thoughtfulness is a trait that runs throughout the Inn from Bruce himself to the housekeepers. 9-10 rooms. Most guests are repeat visitors and friendly. Pleasant and low-key resort. We like the variety Bonaire offers -- the canyons of Karpata in the north, the double reef system in the South, the black coral off Klein. We dived Mi Dushi (Klein) an area that was badly damaged by Lenny's storm surge in '99. Badly damaged above 30 ft., the reef was in relatively good condition at greater depths. Explosion of fish. All over Bonaire, we saw enormous numbers of juveniles. Bodes well for future.

**Carib Inn, June/July 2002, Ed Kenney (bimjel@ywave.com)**  
**Rainier, WA.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 70 to 150 Feet. Water: 78 to 81 F, choppy no currents. My plan was to wake up early and drive an Avis rental truck with a tank rack up to the northern sites. If the entry was reasonably safe for a solo diver, I went in. If not (3 days) I drove to a site south of town for my first dive of the day. In the middle of the day I'd drift snorkel a northern site with my wife or catch the water taxi at the Nautica Marina downtown for the short trip to Klein Bonaire. In the afternoon I dove the always-calm Calabas II reef in front of the Carib Inn, where 4:00 p.m. seemed to be a time of high activity on the reef for big and small critters alike. At night, I dove Calabas again or hired a guide for \$20 to dive the famed Town Pier, where I saw my 1st 2 seahorses. Don't leave your car at the northern sites without someone in it.

My wife read or did cross stitch while I dove. The day we snorkeled together from Weber's Joy to 1000 Steps to visit one of the best stretches of shallow coral remaining after Lenny, someone cut the line leading to our gas tank. Another mistake I made was not wearing my wetsuit for snorkeling at Klein Bonaire. The prevailing wind blows squadrons of jellyfish into the shallows. Fortunately most were the stingers that only last for a few minutes. Also, there's only a couple lean-to's on Klein that provide shade so having the water taxi pick you up quickly is usually a good idea! Bruce Booker's Carib Inn was near perfect for us: inexpensive, informative, efficient, maid service everyday, convenient storage lockers and complete diving freedom. If I didn't want to dive solo, there was always somebody who wanted to get wet. If equipment malfunctioned (in my case a Scubapro reg. yoke) Bruce had it fixed immediately. Though I didn't do the boat dives, DM's Larry, Kitty and Linda answered every question. Rishi and Edward gave us 3000 psi tanks. We cooked our own food in our more-than-adequate kitchen, but for an inexpensive breakfast or lunch Luigi's downtown is good. The best meal we had was the mahi mahi and shrimp at Richard's on the beach at sunset. The worst we had was at the Plaza Resort for the 4th of July celebration. This was my first diving not only in Bonaire, but in the Caribbean. My favorite site by a long shot was Karpata, with its steep buttresses, life-filled grooves and brightly lit shallows. I liked the 60-80

foot sections heading north best and the viz was considerably over 100 feet. But even the most featureless site I dove on Bonaire (Windsock right at the end of the airport runway when the wind forced me out of the northern sites) had almost as many fish and invertebrates as Karpata. There were tarpon, barracuda and reef squid -- 3 things I saw on almost every Bonaire dive -- and the sensational honeycomb and scrawled cowfish, scribbled filefish, hallucinogenic juvenile yellowtail damsels, French angels, awesome juvenile French angels, rock beauties, huge scorpionfish, peacock flounders, lettuce leaf nudis, flamingo tongues -- all the colorful, flamboyant reef denizens I came to see. Even a spotted eagle ray. No turtles or queen angels like Karpata, but still a terrific dive. In no other part of the world have I seen so many swarms of juveniles. (Ph: 599-717-8819; e-mail [Info@CaribInn.com](mailto:Info@CaribInn.com); website [www.caribinn.com](http://www.caribinn.com))

**Divi Flamingo, October 2001, Clare Petosa, Manasquan, NJ.** Experience: 25 dives. Vis: 80 to 100 Feet. Water: 80 to 82 F, calm, no currents. Our jeep was broken into and our camera stolen. It wasn't like we weren't warned. Keep the windows down and minimum in your vehicle and you'll be fine. Bring a cooler with you for food so you don't have to trek back into town to eat. (Ph: 800-367-3484 or 599-717-8285; e-mail [divibon@bonairelive.com](mailto:divibon@bonairelive.com), website [www.divibonaire.com](http://www.divibonaire.com))

**Divi Flamingo, October 2001, Clare Petosa, Manasquan, NJ.** Experience:

51-100 dives. Vis: 50 to 75 Feet. Water: 80 to 86 F, calm. An incredible amount of freedom. I wish I had planned my diving days better -- we could have made better use of our time traveling between dive sites and had more down time.

**Divi Flamingo, April 2002, Jim Culp, Iva, SC.** Vis: 40-60 ft. Water: 81-82. Dives logged: 120+. Contrary to reports, Bonaire is still great diving. Yes, there was/is some significant damage to the shallow (less than 30') corals due to hurricane Lenny's storm surge but it is recovering and there are still plenty of sights to see. Divi Flamingo offered comfortable, spacious rooms, easy access to cylinders for shore diving day or night, convenient gear storage and two fresh water pools. Food in the restaurant was good but service rather slow (2-3 hours for dinner). Dive Divi had speedy, spacious, boats (although wet riding due to spray) and friendly, helpful staff. Pepe (our boat captain) was super and he plays a mean saxophone too!

**Lagoen Hills, 2002, No Name.** My wife and I were met at Flamingo airport and escorted miles inland to the rental apartments of Lagoen Hills. We were traveling east, away from Kralendijk, then onto an unlit road filled with modest houses and shabby looking dogs and goats. We turn into the complex and the first building was a drive-thru air station! Lagoen Hills is associated with Toucan Divers as is The Plaza Resort. Could be called Toucan Divers East (goat division). The view of Kralendijk lit up at night

and we could make out the lit up rigging of a cruise ship in the harbor several miles away! Houses and bungalows surrounded a charming pool. Number 52 bungalow isn't usually rented, as it's privately owned and surrounded by metal fence so that wandering goats won't make supper out of the plantings. Inside were a spacious kitchen and a bathroom with a washer and two bedrooms with air. Most important a huge porch in back to dry our gear, watch the sunsets in our huge cactus strewn backyard, and amazing amount of stars. Also a safe big enough to contain wallets, a mini disk system and a digital videocam. The price: \$110 per night. We stopped at the Cultamara supermarket for our breakfast, lunch and dinner groceries. After eating a thin turkey club at one resorts and paying 10 dollars, some supermarket lunch meats did not seem that bad. I bought local fish next to Richard's. This lady sells it for the fishermen. The place is run down, but the dolphin was cold and only six dollars for 2lbs. A little white wine, scallions, garlic and butter and we were in business. Another night I bought chicken and barbecued it in a small hibachi in the back yard. Lagoen Hills is five minutes out of town and if you are planning to dive some southern sites like Helma Hooker and Pink Beach, surprisingly, we were just as close to the southern dive sites (five minutes) as the northern resorts such as Buddy's. When diving the Northern sites such as Of Blue and Karpata, we had an advantage. Because the road is one way leaving Karpata, you have to make the long drive back thru Rincon.

Lagoen Hills is on that same road back, so we got home quicker. We had several memorable dinners. Richard's has the best sunset view. And the steak and fish were outstanding. Escargot was very good. Capt. Don's does the best calamari I have ever had, light with a delicious mustard sauce. Barbara's or Barbara Anne's is a few blocks north of Kralendijk and for \$15 you can get "baby back ribs and a satay chicken with the peanut sauce — delicious and quick takeout. Rendezvous restaurant: Not to be missed is the conch chowder that they serve more like a creamy New England clam. Order the lamb. The sauce is a work of art. From now on I search out moderate priced condos or apartments, places. I don't need to pay extra to see the ocean, when I see it shore diving anyway. (Ph: + 31 252 37 34 95; e-mail [info@lagoenhill.com](mailto:info@lagoenhill.com); website <http://www.lagoenhill.com>)

**Lions Dive Resort, May 2002, Sandra Walzer, Prescott, AZ.** I had not done any diving for three years, so was feeling a little insecure, especially since I am 64 years old. All of the staff at Bon Bini were helpful, accommodating, patient and encouraging. The gear I rented was topnotch, including a weight integrated BCD. Bonaire's diving is awesome. This was a timeshare exchange and not as nice as some I've stayed at in the Caribbean, however, I think that was due to the manager who leaving in June. The restaurant, like the dive shop, was on site, but not part of the resort. The food was excellent. (Ph: **866-LIONSDIVE or 599-717-5580**,

**e-mail:** [info@lionsdivebonaire.com](mailto:info@lionsdivebonaire.com);  
**website** [www.lionsdivebonaire.com](http://www.lionsdivebonaire.com))

**Lions Dive Resort, June 2002, Dave Andel, Athens, IL.** Experience: 26-50 dives. Vis: 75 to 100 Feet. Water: 79 to 81 F, choppy no currents. Excellent shore diving, easy access all over the island. At the Town Pier, we did a transition dive. Excellent visibility, coral, and marine life. After sunset it got crowded, but still great. Lions Dive was clean and Spartan, upgrade to the Royal rooms, the Regency rooms are small dark and cramped. Rooms were kept clean, beach towels provided. Every meal was excellent! The chef Kirk Gosden creates an exceptional meal, lobster night was the best. Bon Bini Divers was adequate. They need a larger boat, with 16 people in the group the boat was small, cramped, and you couldn't move around; compared to the Buddy Dive and Capt. Don Habitat boats. Their drive up air station for shore diving was the best feature; could check out two tanks at a time. On most dives the dive master and Capt. stowed equipment on board, gave a good description of the dive site and profile, and helped you get off your tank and BC when you got out of the water. They did not point out critters or anything else, they did not try to get to know the group. All three of the operations are independent of each other, so it takes time to coordinate. Seahorses at the Town Pier, turtle at Bachelor Beach, and excellent marine life and coral!

**Lion's Dive, August 2002,  
Bob-Pat Thompson**

([scuba\\_thompson@juno.com](mailto:scuba_thompson@juno.com))  
**Hatfield, PA.** Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 50 to 60 Feet. Water: 80 to 82 F, choppy. Lion's Dive facilities are good, clean, recently redone. Staff friendly and helpful. Dive shop operators/dive masters were cooperative, friendly and helpful. Boats were adequate but had small or no dive platforms — only ladders. Gear storage convenient, could hang dive suits in wet room that was locked most of the time. Customers are issued keys to access these areas. Night diving easy, tanks readily available. We had a good time.

**Photo Tours, November 2001, Pat Aderman ([pat\\_aderman@juno.com](mailto:pat_aderman@juno.com))**  
**Irvine, TX.** Vis: 80-120 ft. Water: 84 F. Logged dives accrued: 125. Dive restrictions enforced: limits of computer. American Airlines connections through San Juan are to be avoided whenever possible. Upon landing in San Juan the area serving the commuter flights to the islands was a mad house due to a couple of canceled flights. The gate personnel announced they were only handling certain flights and others would be called at the appropriate time. Many to the lounge as there was no seating at the gate. Fifteen minutes before scheduled flight time I returned to the gate, though my flight had not been called, only to be told the flight was already closed and boarded. The airline was totally unhelpful. I managed to get to Bonaire the next morning on my own. My diving gear was not there according to the representatives there. When it arrived,

three days later, it had been systematically pilfered by the baggage handlers somewhere. They helped themselves to over \$1400 worth of gear. Three months later I am still fighting with the airline over my claim. Phototours was great! When I explained the situation they furnished me with complete gear at no charge. Ronald advised that was their standard policy as it was bad enough not having your own gear without having to pay rent. Phototours normally does two tank boat dives in the morning to Klein Bonaire or around the main island. If you are diving with them daily they furnish you unlimited tanks for shore diving. Their "Pink Dive Bus" is parked all day at one of the popular shore dive sites on the north end each day. The schedule is available at the shop. In five days of diving I may have covered a third of the prominent dive sites. It would take a month of 3-5 dives a day to cover all the sites on and around Bonaire. There are far too many to describe. There are good guide books available so that any competent divers can do most of the sites without a guide. The night dive under the City Pier is a must do but requires a guide and permission from the authorities. Phototours normally does this once a week. The Salt Pier also requires permission but Phototours obtains this and parks the "Bus" there on days when it is available. The "Hilma Hooker" wreck is a good dive with a resident school of tarpon. Visibility was always great and the water about 84 F. The island people are friendly. US Dollars are accepted everywhere and Dutch

Guilders. While it is not a party island, there are plenty of restaurants, bars and shops for between dive activities. There are accommodations available in a wide range of prices. Car rentals are reasonable, a four-door pick up was \$180 for a week. (Ph: +(599-717) 3460; e-mail [info@BonPhotoTours.com](mailto:info@BonPhotoTours.com); website [www.bonphototours.com](http://www.bonphototours.com))

**Photo Tours, Caribbean Court, 2002, Mimi (ltlmi@aol.com) Los Angeles, CA.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Excellent dive shop that pays attention to every individual customizes dive package to fit the needs and ability of each diver. Have dived with many local operators on the island. PhotoTours is the only one to which I return. They were helpful in finding inexpensive lodging close by the shop. And they brokered the sale of my scuba pro split fins for the full asking price, taking only a 10% fee. Nice folks.

**Photo Tours, Caribbean Court, May/June 2002, Bob & Carolyn Smith (ruby07\_17@hotmail.com) Swansea, MA.** Vis: 70-100 + ft. Water: 80-81 F. From Lenny the shallows suffered major damage (which actually makes entries and exits easier), and there is evidence of destruction in only a few areas in deeper water. High winds did not hamper diving. Shore dives in the south were relatively easy entries/exits. We went by boat to the North. We saw an abundance of fish life, scorpion fish, balloon fish, all the beautiful tropicals. 3 green turtles and one hawksbill, an eagle ray hung around the top of the reef and gave us

plenty of time to admire it, and a pod of about 30 dolphins, several of which came within 20 feet of us while meandering by. The corals and sponges were beautiful and looked healthy. We dove with Photo Tours, who, as usual, were friendly and accommodating. Caribbean Court is a great place to stay, with 1- 3 bedroom condos, always clean, quiet, and well equipped. American Airlines through San Juan is the best route we've found so far, although the flight leaving Bonaire is at 6:00 AM, which is torture when you've been living on "turtle time."

**Plaza Resort, October 2001, Sally and Vic Johnson, Panama City, FL.** The week for the annual coral spawning -- a certain number of days after the full moon, warm water and time of night. On October 8 Toucan Divers loaded up three boats of divers. At 10:30 PM eggs and sperm rose from the coral into the water column in quiet wonder. During one shore dive our truck was "searched" but nothing was taken. We had left nothing in value and made sure the windows were left open. ALM handled the heightened security situation well. There were several checkpoints and strict procedures. Plaza Resort and diving with Toucan Divers was pleasant as usual. The rooms were clean and spacious. The staff was gracious -- both hotel and diving operation. Divemasters and captains did a professional job and were punctual and efficient. Filled tanks set out three places around the resort for boat and shore diving. Boats had

ice water and warm towels ready. (Ph: 599 717 2500; e-mail: [reservations@plazaresortbonaire.com](mailto:reservations@plazaresortbonaire.com); website [www.plazaresortbonaire.com](http://www.plazaresortbonaire.com))

**Plaza Resort, October 2001, Diane Gauss, Bagdad, KY.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 60 to 250 Feet. Water: 78 to 84 F, calm choppy. Last year Buddy Dive did not live up to their promotions, but the Plaza Resort and Toucan Divers far exceeded expectations and promotions. Air Jamaica flights were never on time regardless of weather and connections. In-house photo shop.

**Plaza Resort, October 2001, Willis Flower (ffhwff@aol.com) Linwood, NJ.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 100 to 150 Feet. Water: 81 to 84 F, calm no currents. Toucan Diving a first rate operation. Safe, friendly, helpful, knowledgeable divemasters. Can dive own profile. Boats (usually) not crowded, slow but generally in good condition. Well-equipped dive shop. Photo shop but somewhat marginal service and facilities. Plaza resort is about as upscale as Bonaire gets. Friendly, prompt service, nice rooms, good amenities, good food, nice beach and pool. Lots of good restaurants in town (It Rains Fishes, Richard's, Rendezvous, Lions Den and Capriccios rains some nights with some sprinkles or clouds some mornings. Sunny and warm (hot) in the afternoon. Unlimited shore diving. No large animals, though we did see dolphins, a couple of large morays and an eagle ray. Great coral, sponges and small stuff (Seahorses, flamingo tongues, file clams, etc.) relaxing,

friendly and the Dutch influence makes it unusual and interesting.

**Plaza Resort, October 2001, Marcus L. Baines (scuba100@msn.com)**

**Windsor Heights, IA.** Vis: 50-100 ft. Water: 80-84 F. Logged dives: 50. Dive restrictions enforced: we were shore diving. The Plaza Resort was outstanding. The rooms are large and well air-conditioned. Check in went quickly and front desk personnel were friendly and quick to answer questions. Food was good at Topsy Seagull and Richards. Toucan Diving was the best operation I have encountered. Shore diving from hotel beach was good. Shore diving throughout the island was outstanding. Damage from Lenny was evident but not a show stopper. Snorkelers in our group found Bonaire good for encountering sea life.

**Plaza Resort, January 2002, Susan Clegg (clepa@aol.com) College Station, TX.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 45 to 80 Feet. Water: 78 to 80 F, choppy, no currents. Lots of evidence of Mitch's destruction from several years ago. Most sites had coral rubble, particularly above 30'. Lots of sand even at depth. Sites in National Park were destroyed. We did a dive at Boca Slagbaai that looked like a moon scape; little live reef, although the fish life was normal. We wanted to cheer on every tiny piece of coral we saw. Dives at Salt Pier (day and night -- not worth doing 2); long swim out and not as much encrustation as at Town Pier. Food expensive, particularly at resort. Richard's excellent, horrible service at Den Lamen liked Capriccios. Did not

feel the need to tip dive staff as we did all gear setup and breakdown, and never followed the dive master. Dive shop did lend me a reg when my high-pressure hose blew. Lockers at dock to store gear. Easy to drive up and pick up tanks. No need to sign anything and could take as many tanks as you wanted. Rinse tanks on boats; frequently saw divers rinsing masks, not corrected until we told them not to. No table on boat. Photo shop on site.

**Plaza Resort, February 2002, Reza Gorji (reza@gorji.com) Jamesville, NY.** Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 50 to 150 Feet. Water: 79 to 80 F, calm. Third trip back to Bonaire. Used AA to get to Bonaire. Service excellent. Dive shop fabulous. Accommodations the best. Will take a mosquito net to Bonaire next time to be used when sleeping. Better than spraying with bug spray and inhaling it. I recommend a 5 mm wetsuit during the winter months. Almost everyone on the dive boat was getting cold during the two 1-hour boat dives. Obviously this is subject to individual variability. Definitely a hood if doing 3 mm. Dive shop is first class. Computer divers given "breathing room" to make full use of the multilevel diving possible in Bonaire. Luciano the divemaster was outstanding and great sense of humor. A professional diver. A full plate of scuba continuing education available for the aspiring diver. Problem: You got to be at the airport three hours before the flight. The friendly police check ALL luggage and then help you close the suitcase. For a 7 AM departure, I had to be wake up at 3

AM to be there at 4. Watch out for the sleepy donkeys when you travel that early. Thank you *Undercurrent* for great service to the diving community.

**Plaza Resort, February 2002, Vic Bary & Maureen Strazdon (vbary@yahoo.com) Cranford, NJ.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 40 to 60 Feet. Water: 73 to 83 F, choppy. Very good hotel, but none can match the defunct Harbour Village. Diver operation is well-staffed with competent, friendly people. Efficient operation with new rental equipment that included a computer on SPG console. One (self-led) familiarization dive from shore must be made at beginning, then unlimited shore diving thereafter. Lockers and several separate gear and camera rinse tanks. 4-5 large boats (four with no shade area other than cabin). All dives posted on bulletin boards with names of dive purchasers or dive package purchasers automatically added to board. Offered choice of dive sites, hotel bath towels on boats, freshwater rinse and water on all boats, fresh fruit on some dives. Great operation. Fresh water rinse tank for photography equipment available on each boat and at dock. Cameras were handed to divers once in water and retrieved at ladder at end of dive.

**Plaza Resort, March 2002, Pam & Bruce Dunlap, Bourbonnais, IL.** Vis: 75-100 ft. Water: 79-81 F. Dives logged: 250+. Dive restrictions enforced: 100' max, but after a couple of dives do what you want. This was our fourth trip to Bonaire, and third time at the Plaza. A nice vacation

location with dependable weather. Not a lot of big critters, but great diving on this island marine park. The dive staff is attentive and professional.

**Plaza Resort, April 2002, Linde Hall, Tigard, OR.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 80 to 180 Feet. Water: 81 to 82 F, calm. Diving was excellent. Toucan was great. They messed up on our package (scheduled us on one tank afternoon dive instead of two tank morning). When we brought it to their attention, they made it right by scheduling us on a boat by ourselves! We had a skipper and divemaster for just the two of us. Shop is well run with a large staff, lots of items for sale and people always helpful and friendly. Our second day, Ebbe asked if we wanted to do the Town Pier night dive. He takes divers at 9:00 in the evening after the early evening rush. We had the whole place to ourselves. It was an incredible dive. Saw octopus, clams, crabs, lobster, sea horse, eels. The orange corals were beautiful. Ebbe was professional and a lot of fun. Charged us \$20 US each. Toucan has separate photo shop for developing, classes and video.

**Plaza Resort, July 2002, Rhonda Bloshock, Atlanta, GA.** Water: 78-84 F. Dive restrictions enforced: 130 ft. Plaza Resort left much to be desired. I received my messages days after they were left. The grounds smelled like partially treated sewage. There were not enough places to buy water and snacks. The room was air conditioned well, large and comfortable. Our dive leader, Randy Terrell from Atlanta, GA. was excellent. I had

never walked more than 5 ft. with a full load of scuba gear, so the shore entries were difficult for me. Once underwater it was lovely.

**Plaza Resort, September 2002, Bob Rollin, Saratoga, CA.** Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 50 Feet. Water: 82 to 84 F, calm. Very nice accommodations. Staff friendly and efficient. Decent simple lunch at the beach bar. Menus at other resort restaurants not exciting. Resort is 20-30 minute walk from town. Two good restaurants close, Old Inn (Indonesian) and Richard's, also the Garden Café (Lebanese) in town. Boats limited to 12 divers. Additional boats as needed. Boat dives reasonably priced. Dive-masters friendly and helpful. Mostly went to Klein, perhaps because it was close. House reef was decent. My computer died on and the dive shop lent me one. I ended up buying a simple Suunto at the Caribe Inn for \$200. Both DCE flights to/from Curacao were on time.

**Toucan Divers, Belmar Apts., November 2001, David Frank, Freehold, NJ.** Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 60 to 80 Feet. Water: 84 F, surge. Fifth trip to Bonaire and the first not staying at Sand Dollar that had seriously declined and failed to rebuild post Lenny. Many Sand Dollar staff -- Luis, Lino, Annette -- working at Toucan at Plaza Resort. The boats were well run and rarely crowded. Destination was by popular vote usually. This was a problem as the group usually wanted to go to Klein Bonaire Reefs less lush. Saw much more carelessness among divers at

Plaza than the Sand Dollar crowd. The small shop at Belmar Apts was excellent, tanks available 24 hrs, nice house reef (not an official BMP site and therefore guests only) but had to go to Plaza Resort for boats. The apts. are pretty far south, great if you want to spend a lot of time diving that end of the island from shore, but farther from restaurants. (Ph: 800-766-6016 or 781-821-1012; e-mail [info@plazaresortbonaire.com](mailto:info@plazaresortbonaire.com); website [www.plazaresortbonaire.com](http://www.plazaresortbonaire.com))

**Toucan Divers, Lighthouse Beach Resort, March 2002, Barry Clegg, Minneapolis, MN.** Experience: 101-50 dives. Vis: 80 to 100 Feet. Water: 78 to 80 F, choppy. Lighthouse Beach Resort is a complex of privately owned town home units, about 3 miles south of the airport. \$1,200/week for three people, \$400 each, for two bedrooms, three baths, a living room, a full kitchen, a pool, and our own beach, all nice, much nicer than any dive resort on the island. We bought the "all the air you can breathe" package from Toucan Divers (at the Plaza resort) with the Nitrox option for an additional \$200. Toucan was accommodating (all the resorts have similar packages for non-guests). The Nitrox facility was excellent and there was always a good supply. The tanks had an average of 3000 psi. You need a car. Lighthouse Beach is 5 miles from town. We bought groceries at the Cultimara downtown, not exactly a luxury supermarket, but they have what you need and an excellent bakery and produce section. Most of the sites can be dived by a couple of divers and

a pickup truck. Theft from cars is way out of hand. The local thieves wait till you go under and plunder your car. It's much worse now than even last year. The car rental companies tell you to leave no valuables in your car and leave it unlocked, for fear that the thieves would break glass if you leave the doors locked. We followed that advice and had things stolen 3 times (2 5-year -old cheap Timex watches, a couple of grubby wet pairs of shorts, similarly grubby T-shirts and a baseball cap -- not exactly a treasure trove). One group near us didn't get the word and lost two cameras and four dive lights. I intentionally wadded up my shorts and t shirt and tossed them on the floor of the car in the dirt. The thieves took them anyway and I drove home in my bathing suit. The powers that be in Bonaire need to hear the message. It wouldn't take many busts to cut this problem way back but the authorities are indifferent. Buy the collision damage waiver on the rental car and lock the doors. If the rental car companies have to pay for enough broken windows, maybe they will put pressure on the police to crack down. We got bumped off American Airlines to San Juan. We were one of the last in line though we got there two hours early. American only has one flight a day and they had no other way to get us to our destination that day. We got an extra day on American at a beachfront dive resort (with meals and a ticket voucher). If you want to leave when scheduled, get there at least 2 1/2 hours early.

**Toucan Divers/Lighthouse Beach Resort, Bonaire, May 2002, Barry Clegg. Minneapolis, MN.** Experience: 101-250 dives, Vis: 80 to 100 Feet. Water: 78 to 80 Fahrenheit, choppy. Lighthouse Beach Resort is a complex of privately owned townhome units, 3 miles south of the airport. You might pay \$1,200 per week, per person, at a dedicated dive resort for one or two bedrooms, one bath and no kitchen. We paid \$1,200 per week for three people, \$400 each, for two bedrooms, three baths, a living room, a full kitchen, a pool, and our own beach, all nicer than any dive resort on the island. We bought the "all the air you can breathe" package from Toucan Divers (at the Plaza resort) with the Nitrox option for \$200/ person. Toucan was very accommodating, even for non-guests, but all the resorts have similar packages for non-guests. The Nitrox facility was excellent and there was a good supply. The tanks had an average of 3,000 pounds. You need a car. Lighthouse Beach is 5 miles from town. We bought groceries at the Cultimara downtown; they have what you need and an excellent bakery and produce section. Most sites can be dived by a couple of divers and a pickup truck. Theft from cars is a huge problem, way out of hand. The local thieves wait till you go under and plunder your car. It's worse now than even last year. The car rental companies tell you to leave no valuables in your car and leave it unlocked, for fear that the thieves would break glass if you leave the doors locked. We followed that advice and had things

stolen three times (two 5-year-old cheap Timex watches, a couple of grubby wet pairs of shorts, similarly grubby t shirts and a baseball cap - not exactly a treasure trove). Everyone we talked to who was beach diving had a similar experience. More than a few vowed not to return because of this problem. One group near us didn't get the word and lost two cameras and four dive lights. I intentionally wadded up my shorts and t shirt and tossed them on the floor of the car in the dirt. The thieves took them anyway. The powers that be in Bonaire need to hear the message. They are killing the golden goose. It wouldn't take too many busts to cut this problem way back but the local authorities are indifferent. The next time I go, I will buy the collision damage waiver on the rental car and lock the doors. If someone smashes the window (and they probably won't in a populated parking lot), the rental car company will pay the damages. If the rental car companies have to pay for enough broken windows, maybe they will put pressure on the police to crack down. If there isn't some kind of crackdown, I worry about whether beach diving has a future in Bonaire. We got bumped on the flight out (American Airlines to San Juan). We were one of the last in line though we got there two hours early. American only has one flight a day and they had no other way to get us to our destination that day. It worked out great for us. We got an extra day on American at a beachfront dive resort (with meals and a ticket voucher). But if you want to leave

when scheduled, get there at least 2.5 hours early.

**Toucan Divers, Bel Mar Apts., September 2002, Cheryle Cofield, Ranburne, AL.** Vis: 30-60 ft. Water: 80-82 F. Dives accrued: 210. Resort is well-maintained, beautiful landscaping with various flowering plants. Rooms clean, spacious and well furnished. Kitchen facilities include large refrigerator with ice maker and dishwasher. Housekeeping services three times weekly. Resort and dive shop staff courteous, informative and helpful. Dive shop locker area has hangers for dive suits and bc's. Additional gear storage outside room. 24-hour access to tanks and locker; room key opens both areas. Rent a vehicle and shore dive — unless you want to visit sites at Klein, a boat is not necessary. Oceanfront property development is losing more shore sites. Two rinse tanks, one behind dive shop and double tanks on resort pier — all kept clean and filled. Good diving at resort reef easily accessible day or night. Most dive sites suffered from storm of '99, especially in shallow waters. However from Andrea I to Karpata even the shallow water corals did not sustain significant damage and are flourishing quite well. Did not dive national park area on advice of dive shop personnel. Divers in this area indicated long swims with nothing to see until reaching the deeper reef. Sightings included two seahorses (one at Bel Mar and one at Karpata), turtles spotted eagle ray, squid, flounders and schools of small fish. Occasionally, large groupers

were amid the coral. If you're looking for large animals, they are few, but plenty of small, colorful species. Extensive coral bleaching on several sites. Angel City has always been a favorite but was disappointing due to coral damage. Overall, a pleasant experience.

**Wannadive, Eden Beach, December 2001, Carole Schmidt, Chandler, AZ.** Vis: 50-60 ft. Water: 80 F. Dives accrued: 35. We didn't like Eden Beach Resort much. Wannadive dive operation on their beach was great! Must rent a car, we enjoyed the drive and dive shore diving all over the island. People were friendly. Good idea to purchase local directory to shore dive sites with descriptions. Nice hard and soft corals, small schools of fish, turtles, eels. Good for beginners, dive your own profile. Tough to navigate some entry points, gets easier with practice. (Ph: 00 599 717 790 8880; e-mail [info@wannadivebonaire.com](mailto:info@wannadivebonaire.com); website [www.wannadivebonaire.com](http://www.wannadivebonaire.com))

### CAYMAN ISLANDS

Grand Cayman is great for divers seeking familiar surroundings: it's Americanized and crowded, with traffic, Burger Kings, Ramadas, and Hyatts. And it's expensive. . . . There are a seemingly endless number of safe and well-organized dive operations; to the dismay of experienced divers, depth and time limits are generally enforced, though some operations are now responding to the needs of more experienced divers. . . . Avoid

prepaying a dive package so that if you're disappointed with cattle boats or site selection you can switch to someone else. . . . Dive quality is declining due to development, and Seven Mile Beach reefs are beaten up. To avoid crowds, endless youths, and Cayman Cowboys, stay on the North side or the East End, where you'll find the best diving and fewer people. . . . Brac diving is not up to the best of Cayman, but it's more laid back, and Brac outfits make frequent trips to Little Cayman from April to November. Rough water often prevents trips at other times. . . . For Caribbean walls, clear water, and beautiful reefs, Little Cayman is nonpareil, but a dozen dive boats a day can visit a two-mile stretch. Winters can be cool in the Caymans, and the islands are in the hurricane belt. . . .

### Cayman Brac

**Brac Caribbean Beach Village, August 2002, Gene Fochtman, Peachtree City, GA.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 100 to 125 Feet. Water: 80 to 82 F, calm, no currents. This resort has just switched over to Reef Divers II. Two exceptional Captains! Craig (on Little Sister) and Chris (on Big Sister). Both knew all the dive sites, and consistently put us on great walls and reefs. They knew how to make the trips fun besides being educational (they are top notch Dive Masters). RDII give you mesh bags for your mask, fins, etc. Your reg and BC can stay on board! If you want to avoid renting a car, try Billy's