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## LIVE-ABOARDS

### CANADA

***Nautilus Explorer*, December 2001, Sami Laine ([sami@kelpdiver.com](mailto:sami@kelpdiver.com)) Santa Clara, CA.** Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 40 to 80 Feet. Water: 42 to 45 F, calm currents. Fourth trip on the boat, an excellent operation, outstanding value. Crew is courteous and fun, as long as you don't endanger yourself or others; safety conscious. ISO Quality Certificate. Main boat is excellent: functional, clean and nice, not flashy. Staterooms have adequate space, top deck suites comfortable. Many invisible upgrades have increased comfort: more sound insulation, new silent hydraulic pump for winches. Food is good home cooking, could use more non-meat options (fish, vegetable dishes, etc.) and more imagination. Dive "skiff" is huge and outstanding: good ladders, spacious gear stations, fast. Runs to dive sites are short, just enough time to gear up; be ready to splash and you can maximize the bottom time that is limited to 50 mins. New year in BC equals cold water, proper drysuit setup a must. Thorough dive briefings. Nitrox, Argon and large steel tanks available (request in your reservation). Read the "What to Bring" section of reservation package, as you need to

bring own towel and toiletries. Very large camera table, separate charging station with stable power (110v) and plentiful outlets, onboard E-6, galley has built-in slide table and power outlets for your own tables or laptops. Two TVs in lounge for video review. (Ph: 888 4 DIVE BC; e-mail [mike@divebc.com](mailto:mike@divebc.com); website [www.divebc.com](http://www.divebc.com) )

***Nautilus Explorer*, April 2002, Nikki Mahan, Bellevue, WA.** Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 40 to 60 Feet. Water: 46 to 51 F, surge, currents. We did an exploratory trip to the Hakai Pass area; most of the dives were very good. We were buzzed by a huge stellar sea lion at 60 feet, cool! Browning Wall was the most spectacular area with incredible red, purple and hot pink soft corals and of course the Irish Lords, decorator crabs, war bonnets, grunt sculpins. The six wolf eels at Dillon Rock are amazing. Many huge octos were out playing. The dive off Nakwato Island with the 20 knot current, to see the long necked goose barnacles, is always great. This is truly some of the best diving in the world. Mike and Mary Ann Lever have one of the best live-aboard operations I've been on. Mike's dive briefings and knowledge of the dive sites is the best. The boat is comfortable and accommodating. I have to mention Jud and Carrie as two of my favorite all time crew members.

### COLOMBIA

***Sea Hunter*, June 2002, Nikki Mahan, Bellevue, WA.** Experience:

501-1000 dives. Water: 81 F, choppy, currents. Malpelo was outstanding. We had over 500 silky sharks checking us out on a safety stop. Moray eels are everywhere, sometimes three or four in one hole. We saw eagle rays, a few hammerheads and many other fish. The currents are very strong. Malpelo is not for a timid, out of shape diver. Cocos Island was beautiful. We were there two years ago and didn't see nearly the same number of hammerheads this time. Black October took its toll at Cocos. We saw a manta ray, sailfish, many huge white tips, octos and 20 or 30 hammerheads on any given dive. Eagle and marble rays are everywhere. The currents are not as strong as Malpelo, but are still right up there. The crew couldn't be better. (Ph: 011-506-289-7334 or 011-506-228-6535; e-mail [booking@underseahunter.com](mailto:booking@underseahunter.com); website [www.underseahunter.com](http://www.underseahunter.com))

## COSTA RICA

### Cocos Island

**Okeanos Aggressor, October 2001, Karie Jones, Shelby Twp. MI.** Vis: 40-80 ft. Water: 72-78 F. Dives logged: 140. Dive restrictions enforced: no open water drifting, four dives one day, depth depends on site. The diving is absolutely phenomenal for schooling hammerheads, uncountable numbers of white-tipped reef sharks, turtles, eagle rays, manta rays, dolphins. Every dive is a thrill! Accommodations are a little outdated, rooms need updating, but the crew makes up for it! The trip is for advanced divers, often wavy with ripping currents. (Ph: 800-

348-2628 or 985-385-2628; e-mail [info@aggressor.com](mailto:info@aggressor.com); website [www.aggressor.com](http://www.aggressor.com))

**Okeanos Aggressor, November 2001, Homer Rector, Foresthill, CA.** Vis: 30-50 ft. Water: 68-78 F. Logged dives: 700+. Dived using 32 percent Nitrox. Diving was great, service and crew excellent. The boat could use a major refurbishing and the rubber boats are tough to get into for weaker divers. I recommend it for experienced divers looking for big fish.

**Okeanos Aggressor, January 2002, Bill Schlegel (schleggg@aol.com) Jefferson City, MO.** Total dives: about 600. Nice accommodations in San Jose. Connections from there to the Okeanos, about three hours away in Punta Arenas, were expedient. We went right onto the boat. Not much in Punta Arenas and it's a potentially rough town. Some confusion as to if there would be enough Soda-Sorb on board for the re-breathers. Seven out of 18 did all their dives with Drager Dolphins, a much higher percentage than usual and requiring more than the standard supply of CO2 absorbent that the Okeanos carried. There initially wasn't enough for all, even after multiple phone calls to *Aggressor* central in Louisiana the previous weeks to make arrangements. Understood that we had to obtain more from the *Sea Hunter* at departure. So, a word of caution: The people at the *Aggressor* home office are not technical about diving and you may need to pay special attention if you or your group needs something special. The Okeanos is close to 30 years old.