

chicks that were everywhere. P.S. Great diving, but no longer operating.

NEW ZEALAND

Dive North, April 2002, Jose Kirchner, Carmichael, CA. Experience: 25 dives. Vis: 30 to 60 Feet. Water: 64 to 68 F, calm. April is early fall, as warm as the water will get all year. This east side of North Island is sheltered from winds normally. Bay of Islands is picturesque, diving has lots of swimthroughs, caverns and interesting topography, and very fishy — schools of small to medium fishes, pelagics on occasion. “Hole in the Rock” is fabulously fishy — but keep your depth, as huge tourist jet boats speed through here. Bay of Islands is a great place for critter diving and photoggers /videographers. Accessible is the wreck of the famed (Greenpeace) *Rainbow Warrior*, sunk by French agents at dock in Auckland and re-sunk here for divers. Dive boat is 23 ft *Lady Gail* partial-cover catamaran w/head, speedy and fairly comfortable for seven divers. Dive operator is a young eager couple, small waterside shop. Much of their business is from a nearby tourist kiosk. Though they are pleasant and helpful, to the point of serving hot soup during the surface interval, we were told the Warrior was not accessible due to high seas. Others dove it that day, and we suspect they didn’t want to go there due to the small number of divers or because there was no dive ladder this trip, requiring entry using the outboard motor fin (forgotten?), tricky with swell. The operation

is small, and mixes divers of all experience levels and snorkelers. Dive guides provided, but they allowed us to do our own thing on our own time lines, with decent briefings. US \$50 two tank dive (tanks and weights), air only, 10% discount if booked directly. Dive trips depart Paihia central wharf about 7:30, return about 2:00 P.M.. Trips to the *Rainbow Warrior* just over an hour each way, second dive is on a reef. Other dive areas 30 minutes. Dive North Bay of Islands Ltd. <http://www.bay-of-islands.co.nz/diving/divenorth.html> P.O. Box 361, Paihia, Bay of Islands New Zealand Phone: +64 9 402 7079; Fax: +64 9 402 5969 Email:divenorth@xtra.co.nz. Alternative dive operator would be Paihia Dive <http://www.divenz.com/> P.O. Box 210 Paihia, Bay of Islands New Zealand Phone+64 02 7551,Fax +64 02 7110 divepaihia@xtra.co.nz (Ph: +64 9 402 7079; e-mail:divenorth@xtra.co.nz; website www.divenz.com)

Dive! Tutukaka, Poor Knights Dive Centre, Pacific Rendezvous, Jose Kirchner, Carmichael, CA. Vis: 20 to 80 Feet. Water: 64 to 68 Fahrenheit, Repeat experience with Dive! Tutukaka. The diving is world class. The Poor Knights, 40 minutes offshore, have spectacular topography, caverns and swimthroughs. Fish include some warmer and cold water varieties (cooler water and warm Coral Sea currents mix here), colorful kelp thickets and great macro. Fish are protected, and tame rays to larger pelagics, and tiny triplefins. Stingrays breed here. Unseasonable winds merely meant we dove the “other

sides” of the islands. A few years ago, we wrote in their guest book, “Kaleidoscopic fish swarms. Rich tapestries of color on the walls. A pleasure to dive with a well-organized crew in splendid sanctuary” and we still agree with that. Jacques Cousteau loved it before they protected it, and it’s fishier and even better now. Two great wrecks available now as well, with dedicated wreck boat from Dive! Tutukaka — nearby HMNZS Tui, originally a US hydrologic and submarine spy vessel, and the HMNZS *Waikato*, a frigate, purposely-sunk for divers thanks to the work of Jeroen Jongejans, Dive Tutukaka owner. A dive destination well worth a week. Dive Tutukaka! Personnel are friendly, enthusiastic and competent, with several well-equipped fast boats. Head and warm water showers, hot beverages and soup dispensed. Larger boat takes kayakers, snorkelers, dive students, experienced divers (who can do their own thing). Dive operation has grown rapidly (30% per year last two years), so our advance e-mail booking was lost! Operation seems a bit hurried and impersonal at times. Confirm your booking to be sure, it’s all the way to Auckland NZ and four hours by car. Two tank dive with tanks and weights, about US\$65; single tank wreck dive with t&w, about US\$30. (A good wreck day is one wreck, lunch at Schnappa rock for s.i., second wreck for dessert.) Pacific Rendezvous is a collection of fully furnished comfortable cottages and condos on a scenic head overlooking the Pacific and Poor Knights in the distance, with rinse and fish cleaning facilities,

laundry, pool. No restaurant, full kitchen facilities. We took some meals at friendly Schnappa Rock restaurant (3 miles in Tutukaka), excellent food and wines with moderate prices. Great prices too, from US\$40 per night. April is early Fall, uncrowded and economical low season — yet sunny and with the warmest waters of the year for here. Dive Tutukaka! Poor Knights Dive Centre Marina Road, Tutukaka RD3, Whangarei, New Zealand Ph: +64 9 4343 867, Fax: +64 9 4343 884 <http://www.diving.co.nz/> e-mail: info@diving.co.nz Pacific Rendezvous Resort Tutukaka, Whangarei, New Zealand Phone +64 9 4343 847 Fax +64 9 4343 919 <http://www.oceanresort.co.nz;> pacific@igrin.co.nz (Ph: +64 9 4343 867; e-mail info@diving.co.nz; website www.diving.co.nz)

Pacific Hideaway, January 2002,
Kirk Faryniasz. My dives: 165. Sunny, calm and flat. Wetsuit you bet 5 mm with hood. Visibility 30 to 50 ft. Gareth and Rees Jones were outstanding in providing information before the trip. Suggested hotels etc. No dive shop but they work off the boat. Very safety conscious and ready to accommodate all levels of divers. We were advanced and master. Teamed us up with a veteran NZ diver. The water was the coldest we ever dove in at 60-70 F. The hood and 5 mm helped keep us warm. The dives were full of good life. Poor Knights Islands off limits to fishermen and the life is abundant. Saw mantas, kingfish, grouper, snapper all very large. Six moray eel varieties can be found and we saw

three. The nudibranchs were spectacular and were big. They even had a green and gold (I named it the Green Bay Packer nudibranch). Lion fish, trumpet fish, turtles and long-nosed butterfly fish were around. The operation overall was outstanding and the NZ dollar to US dollar exchange rate made this a bargain that could not be passed up. They also make soup on board, yummy! Website: www.divenz.co.nz (e-mail rees@divenz.co.nz; website www.divenz.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 fre-

quently-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, a diver's alternative 25 minutes from the airport. . . . Malaria prophylaxis is still essential. English and Pidgin English (helicopter: "Mixmaster blong Jesus") is spoken. . . .

Loloata Island Resort, December 2001, John Sommerer (john.sommerer@jhuapl.edu) **Silver Spring, MD.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 20 to 50 Feet. Water: 82 to 85 F, choppy. Nice resort, great service and a nice and knowledgeable owner. Pleasant accommodations near Port Moresby, with no security concerns. Prompt and painless airport, hotel transfer service. Aggressive flies a bother in outdoor areas, including dining; get the A/C rooms, despite the longer walk to meals. Wildlife on island a treat, though I never saw the resident tree kangaroo, and the crested pigeons will beat on you if you approach too closely. Large day groups from Moresby can make you