

BELIZE

APRIL 11-18, 2015

Anacortes Diving Adventure Team



Toli, Carol, Margie, Brendan, Dave, Bela, John, Crystal, Gene

Josh, Mike, David, Ken

Kelley, Kristi, Kristen, Bob

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Route: Seattle—Los Angeles—Belize City

Return route: Belize City—Dallas—Seattle

Departure Day

Our drive to SeaTac was uneventful until we decided to park. As we rolled into the parking lot that we have been parking in for years it has cones blocking the entrance. Oh boy, this doesn't look good. The guy comes out and asks us if we have a reservation and of course we have never made one, ever. They are completely full due to spring break. Holy &^%* we never even thought about it. Ok, off we go to look for any parking lot that has available space, good thing we have plenty of time. We find some room at SeaTac Park thank goodness! Check in and security was a breeze so we decide to go to Anthony's for a nice dinner since we have spare time. It's packed, so we have to wait 10 minutes for a seat. After getting our drinks, my wine was the wrong color so off he goes to find the red color and when it comes it is sloshed all over the glass and there is a nice big lipstick print on the side. Yuck. While we wait for the waiter to come back another person is coming around to tell us all the gas has been shut off in the airport so now they don't know when it will come back on to cook our order. Wow, this just isn't happening for us tonight. We pay for the beer and get the hell out of there, obviously just some bad juju tonight. We grab a sandwich and make our way to the gate. Oh well, sometimes it goes smoothly and other times it doesn't. Our flights were good, on time and not too much turbulence. We arrive in Belize City at 6:00 AM, quickly clear customs and get to the luggage carousel before the luggage came out. The luggage starts to trickle out and then shuts off. This is never a good sign. Sure enough the belt is broke and about 20 minutes later they start tossing our luggage through the hole from outside. Pretty funny, but as it's winding down Crystal is missing a bag. We have to go to the Delta counter, make a claim yadda, yadda, yadda. We finally make it outside to greet our driver Cornell who loads the 4 of us up and we take a quick 20 minute drive to the



marina. We load on the boat for the short 20 minute ride to the resort. Once we arrive the staff takes care of all your luggage, you don't lift a thing. You just go to the office and fill out a little paperwork. We arrived super early so we had a nice breakfast, while the other folks arriving later in the day were welcomed with a nice refreshing drink. Today is a lounge around and do nothing day, since after flying the red-eye you are always pretty beat up. The group slowly trickles in throughout the day. By 5:00PM they entire group has arrived so we





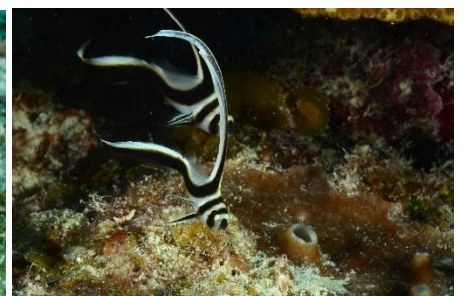
have a quick dive briefing on what tomorrow will bring us. Tonight there is a big bonfire and beach BBQ for dinner. The wind is howling so the fire was pretty interesting, yet never got out of hand. The BBQ had everything from pork, chicken, lamb and seafood to corn on the cob and a fresh salad. There was even a chocolate cake/flan. Everyone is pretty tired from traveling all night so bedtime is super early. Nighty, night, see you in the morning.

Day 2

The group is up early and everyone is at breakfast at 7:00 AM. This of course overwhelms the kitchen and slowly a meal starts to show up one at a time. Most people did not get breakfast until 8:00 AM. No worries, it is day 1



and it always takes an adjustment. We load on the boats around 8:15, analyze our Nitrox and off we go. It is about a 20 minute ride out to the 1st dive site of the day and did I mention the wind is blowing hard again today?



Dive 1 went good after a few weighting issues we are all underwater and enjoying the sights. The diving here is super easy, no current, and good visibility. Once we are back on the boat though this is where the trouble

begins. Well, the wind is blowing and now we are going to sit out here for our surface interval. There is nowhere to hide so of course people start to get seasick. Once one starts, a few more always jump on the bandwagon. The group is diving on 2 separate boats and I guess Bob was having the same fun as I am on this boat. We make the surface interval short and quickly move to the next site. A lot of fish feeding going on and most everyone jumps back in for the second dive just to get the hell off the boat. A short hour later we are speeding back to the



resort ready to devour lunch. Well, most everyone is up for some lunch but a few are no shows. We lose a few for the 3rd dive today, but that's ok, there is plenty more diving for the rest of the week. Dive 3 was the best dive, with a little deeper reef structure, lots more fish, several morays and grouper. Bob's boat even got to see a nice Eagle Ray. Back at the dock the dive crew takes all your gear and washes it and hangs it up to dry. You just don't touch a thing...this is the way vacation should be. Time for a nice shower and a cold beverage somewhere on the beach. Crystal's bag finally showed up this morning so she is a happy girl to get all her dive gear back. A nice dinner out on the porch and then probably another early evening of some incredible star gazing.

Day 3

So I forgot to mention the coffee ninja that delivers a tray of coffee or tea and fresh squeezed orange juice to your room in the morning. I have no idea what time they come, but you never hear or see them. When you wake up it is always there so you can enjoy a nice cup while sitting on your porch watching the morning sunrise. Today seems to be an extremely windy day, the worse one yet. This should make for some interesting diving, not so much the diving, but the getting on and off the boat safely. Breakfast ran much smoother this morning since we pre-ordered the night before. Everyone was fed and done eating by 7:30 giving you enough time to get all your stuff together before jumping on the boat. As we head out for the dives the waves are big, so much so that we take a wave over the bow which comes through the front window and drenches the captain. Mmm, should we really be out here? I ask Selvin the Captain and he says "We've been out here in worse" I'm not really sure that made me feel any better. After we anchor up we quickly get our gear on and get in the water. Down below is the easy part as we enjoy our hour long dive. The hard part is getting on the dive ladder. It goes pretty smooth and no one got injured so all is good. We decide to tuck behind the reef for a surface interval as now the seas are about 6-7 feet. We debate on whether we should do a second dive and the funny part is we cannot even see the other boat. They are way out on the reef and I can't imagine how rough it is out there. We decide to go for it, but the visibility has dropped considerably. Ken and I had a great encounter with a Scrawled Cowfish today. As we were swimming along the Cowfish swims right up to me and I notice that it has a small Remora



stuck to it. It then swims from me to Ken, this is very odd behavior for a Cowfish since normally they are very skittish and just swim away. Ken can actually pet the fish. So the Cowfish turns away from Ken and comes back to me and I start running my hand over it to try and get the Remora off of him. Obviously this is what the Cowfish is wanting since he is literally sitting in my hand while I try and shoo away the Remora. It finally works and the Remora takes off to look for a less annoying place to live. Then the Cowfish just slowly swims away. That

was amazing as Ken and I have a good laugh underwater. We also had a nice big Loggerhead Turtle swim right toward me as if I wasn't even there. Come to find out that apparently they have terrible eye sight so that would explain the "run in". We survive another boarding of the boat safely so back to the resort for a little lunch. Some of the other group went on a snorkel tour today and had a great time even though it was rough out there. Bob's boat came back and they also had a wild ride and had a cruise ship full of snorkelers get dumped on them during their surface interval break. But they did have a bit more excitement when Bob had to jump in to assist someone and his mask shattered into a million pieces and cut his face up. Lesson here is to never dive in the



water face first with a frameless mask. After lunch we all get put on Bob's boat since they have the best ladder for rough water and back out to the end of the reef for a nice dive. The visibility was much better out here and this was also Kristi's 50th dive, way to go Kristi! The ride back was super-fast since this boat does about 32 knots. Time for some cold ones and a little relaxing on the calm side of the island. The weather reports are saying tomorrow will be a better day and the wind will lay down. We will just have to wake up in the morning and see what Mother Nature is going to deal us for the day. We had a wonderful dinner of Filet Mignon tonight, and some Chocolate Mousse to top off the evening.

Day 4

Woke up to howling winds again this morning, really don't think it is any less than yesterday, oh well. Breakfast went great again and we were at the boats in plenty of time. I think we are just used to traveling in big waves so now it doesn't seem to be such a big deal. The fast boat takes off and our boat is left in the dust, but we did have 2 dolphins play in our wake as we left the resort, awesome. It takes us longer to get out to the dive site

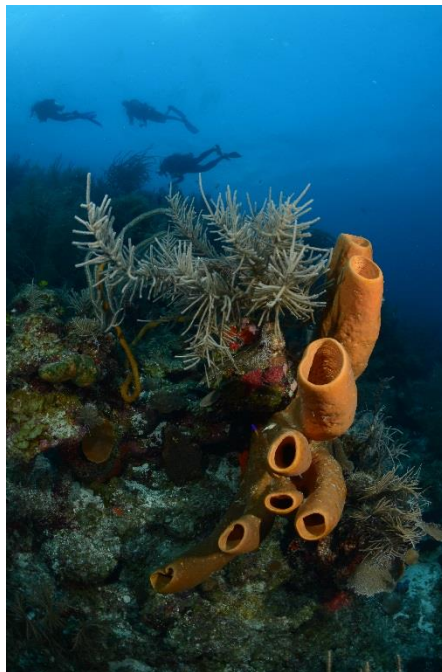
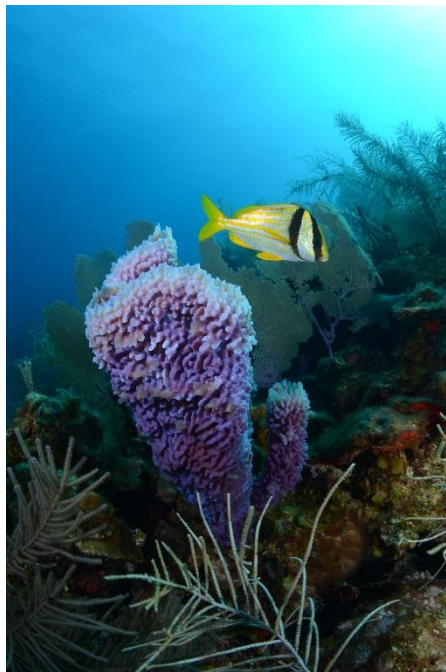


today but it was worth it for the better visibility on both dives. Once we are in the water it is very easy diving with lots of soft corals and nice sponges. Bela hits her 100th dive today, congratulations! Back at the resort for lunch today and we have a local Belizean dish called Chimole or Black dinner which was a black soup base with a hard-boiled egg, fried meatball, squash and had a little bit of spice. Back out for the 3rd dive and yes, it is still rough. Nothing to exciting, the other boat did get to see an Eagle Ray and of course try their hand at spearing some of the Lionfish. Josh got his in 3 tries, Kristi took 7 before finally getting her kill and Toli is 0 for 3. Back to the resort for some cold beverages before sunset.

Day 5



Gorgeous sunrise and more wind again today. After a nice breakfast we are back on the boats for more diving. This morning marks Toli's 50th dive, congratulations Toli! Bob and I have switched boats today so we can video and shoot the group that we haven't been able to dive with yet. Josh has attached a go-pro video camera to the end of one of the spear guns to get a different perspective when shooting the Lionfish. I try and shoot Freddy shooting the Lionfish and of course he misses all 3 of them grouped together. The weight of the camera makes the spear not go straight...so he says. We did have a couple of nice Eagle Rays come cruising by the edge of the reef.



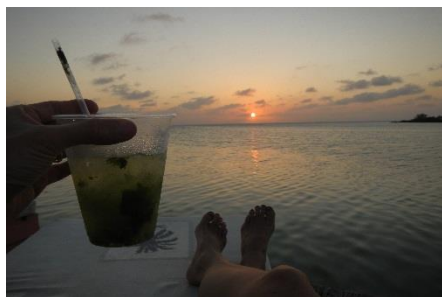
Bob's boat had a nice treat of a good size Nurse Shark laying on the bottom, this is Brendan's first shark and everyone was pretty excited. They also had an interesting encounter with a Remora. First it attached itself to Bob's chest and after he plucked it off, it decided to stick to David's leg for the remainder of the dive. Back to the resort for lunch and a little relaxing before jumping back on the boat for the last dive today. We are all on one boat this afternoon because several people aren't doing the 3rd dive. We did have a couple more Eagle Rays come by and then at the safety stop there was a giant Loggerhead Turtle hanging out. Another great day in the books, so back to the resort to relax before dinner. Sunset tonight was a no show with too many clouds on the horizon. So back to the bar before dinner. Big Surprise dessert tonight for John's Birthday! Happy Birthday John! Tonight is the big Hermit Crab races, so everyone



heads out to round up their best contenders for the race. We mark all the crab shells with numbers and then put them in the circle to see which crab makes it out of the ring first. Wouldn't you know #7 wins twice and that one was mine! I guess I bought myself my own drink. A couple more races and we figure tomorrow night we will run the official heats. Lots of fun and time for bed.

Day 6

Ahh yes, more wind again today. Last dive day and we were hoping for a break in the wind but luck would not be on our side this trip. One advantage of the wind is no bugs and it is not sweltering hot. Today's dives produced



lots of Eagle Rays and another Nurse Shark for Bob's boat. The wind really started to blow after lunch today so the 3rd dive we didn't go too far and we're hoping to see Dolphins. As we were jumping in there were 2 on the surface but they did not stick around to play with us. Not much happening on this dive and the visibility had dropped to maybe 25-30 feet. This was Brendan's 25th dive and a milestone for Gene as he did 3 dives and didn't get seasick all day...yahoo! Time for cold ones at the dock to celebrate a good dive week. After dinner the fun begins as a game of "Kings cup" broke out. It seems like there are a lot of rules for a drinking game but pretty soon it looks like everyone has the hang of it and is spending plenty of time drinking. Looks like fun, but glad I'm not playing.

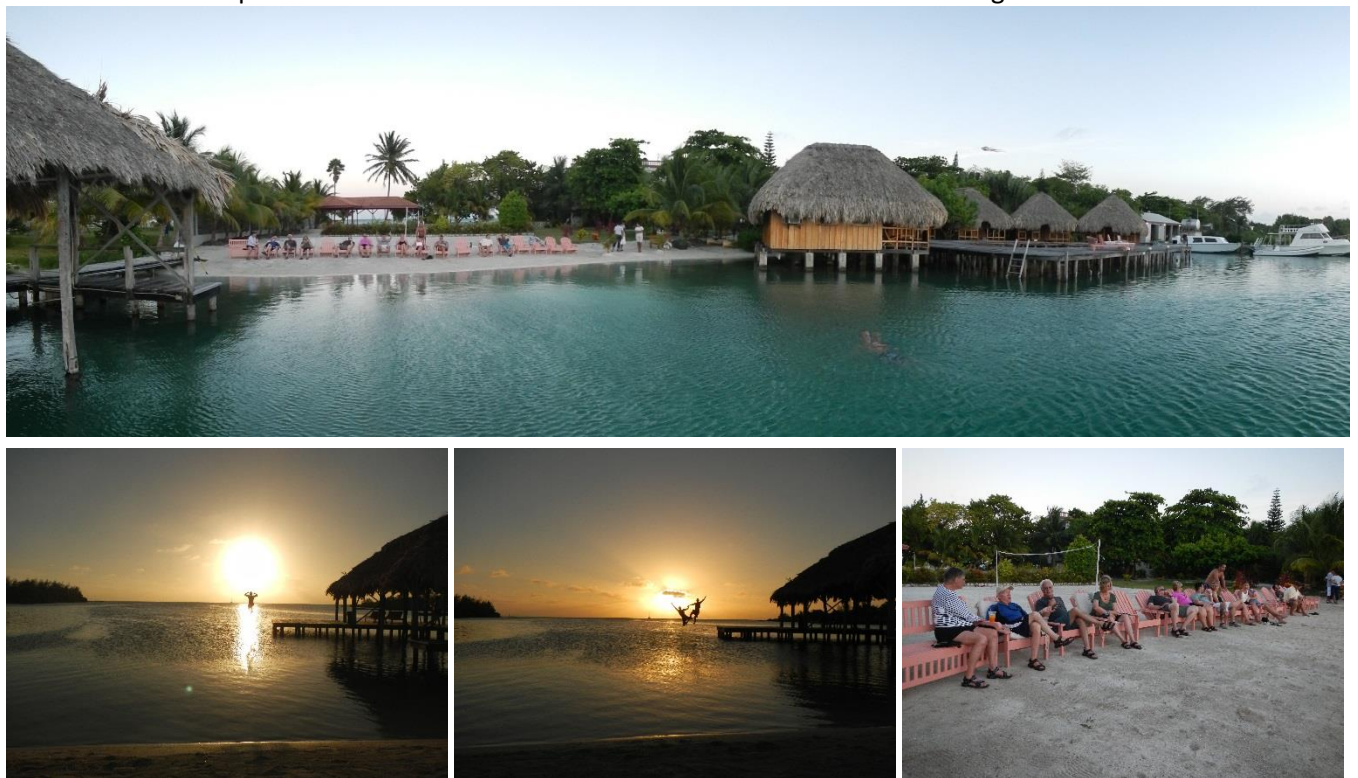
Day 7

Our day off to do nothing today. Most of the group is headed into town to do the zip line and cave tubing tour. They depart at 8:15am and will return around 4:00pm this afternoon. The rest of us take a leisurely breakfast and decided to do a little pre-packing and drying of scuba gear. Then Bob, Ken and I decided to walk the trail to check out the island. A lot of houses are for sale, some need quite a bit of work, others look like they just need to be knocked down. Doesn't seem like a lot of people are actually living in any of these houses, I think we ran across maybe 2 houses that had people in them. Down at the far North end there is a man and his wife that run

the local "Aquarium". So we ventured in and paid \$3 per person to check out his fish tanks holding all of the



local sea life. He had Shrimp, Morays, Stingray, Pufferfish, Lobster, Crabs and a Giant Goliath Grouper. He told us that they release the animals when they get too big for the tank, which was good to hear. Unfortunately for the Grouper he is too tame and can never be released. They have had him for 14 years. Time for some lunch and then off on the kayaks to explore the mangroves. We are paddling the backside of the island because once again the wind is howling. Really? 7 days of blowing wind with not even the least bit of a lull? Could make a person go crazy! The mangroves are really neat to paddle around, lots of wildlife, even though we didn't see a Manatee or a Crocodile. A little pool time and then the rest of the crew arrives back from their great mainland adventure.



Sounds like they all had a great day zipping through the tree top canopy and floating down the lazy river through a cave system. Since this will be our last sunset the staff moves all the chairs to the back beach, packs up the bar and makes us some great Conch Ceviche to watch the sunset. What a perfect way to end the last day here. Back

to the restaurant for dinner and a slow wind down to the evening. Time to finish up some packing before calling it a night. The first group out tomorrow leaves at 8:00am so we will see them at breakfast.

Day 8



The wind blew so hard last night that it woke me up and I thought it was pouring rain. Nope, just more wind. Up at the usual time for our last coffee delivery and relaxing time on the deck as the sun rises. We do some final packing before heading to breakfast and to say goodbye to the first group leaving. It is another beautiful day filled with sunshine and warm temps and it is probably still blowing at 25 knots plus. The first boat takes off at 8:00 am with Crystal, Gene, Margie, Brendan, Dave, Carol, Mike and Kristen. We get the rest of our packing done and spend a little down time sitting on the beach relaxing. Time for a quick shower and our boat departs at 10:00am with Kristi and David. We leave behind Toli, Ken, Bela and John as their

flights don't leave until late afternoon. Check in at the airport was easy, 2 hours gave us plenty of time. Once you are through security know that you had very limited services inside. There are little gift shops to buy water and snacks and of course all those last minute gifts. A nice lunch is out of the question so eat before you enter. Our flight left on time and our only hold up was in Dallas due to a rain/hail front that came through suddenly with 60 mph winds. Held us up for about an hour before we could take off and it was one bumpy ride! Safe travels everyone and we will see you at home.



Bob and I would like to thank everyone for joining us on this trip, we had an incredible time and hope you all did as well. We look forward to traveling with you again in the near future. ~Kelley & Bob