

# Wakatobi Indonesia 2013

October 16-October 31

Route: Vancouver BC—Hong Kong—Bali; aboard Cathay Pacific

Departure Day:

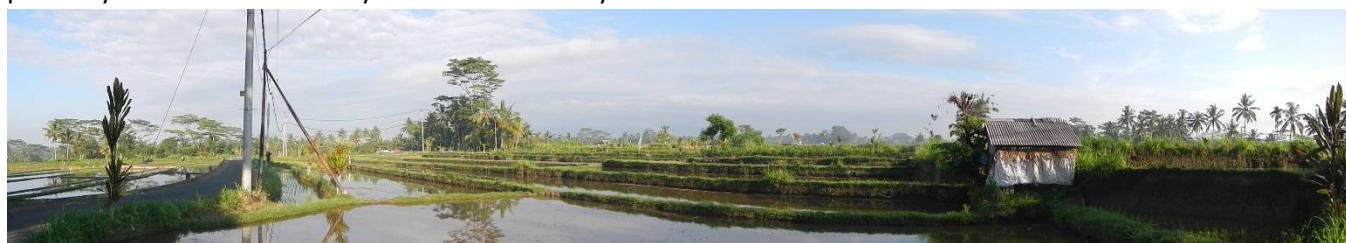
The majority of the group departed Anacortes and made it across the border with no issues. The check in at Cathay Pacific had no lines and neither did security, so pretty smooth sailing so far. One note was that they never weighed or checked the size of the carry-ons and allowed 2-50lb bags free for check-in. Both flights left on time and the arrival in Bali was seamless. The group was met by a Wakatobi representative who took care of all



the visa's on arrival and fast paced the group over to baggage claim. Bali has just built a new terminal and just started using it 2 days ago. Once you exit there are 3 banks available for money exchange and the rate was good. I of course was waiting on the other side of the doors for the group to arrive since I had been traveling in Bali for several weeks already. Our driver and bus are waiting to load everyone up and our guide is once again Jack who we had on our last group trip here. It is about an hour or so bus ride up to our hotel in Ubud called Alila Resort. Once we arrive we are greeted with cold towels and a cool beverage. Once everyone has their keys they jet off to their rooms and we will meet up for dinner at 7:00 pm. Dinner is served Balinese style with lots of different dishes brought out and you just serve yourself. A little fruit for dessert and the group is starting to fade from the long trip. Tomorrow's tour will begin at 9:00 am so time to get a little sleep.

Day 1

Woke up nice and early this morning around 6:00 am after Bob had a full night of rest and is starting to feel human again. We grab our cameras and decided to use a couple of the hotel bikes to ride up the driveway and shoot photos of the rice paddies. I probably should have opted for the helmet and I was wearing my flip flops, probably not the smartest way to start out the day.



Fortunately, I didn't kill myself. Time for a little breakfast and then we are off and touring. Jack picks us all up at 9:00 am and we start out by visiting the batik factory (Bali Bidadari Batik), which you have several ladies out front demonstrating how they make the batik. You can even have them do a pattern on your clothes and the wax contains a dye so when you go home and remove the wax the design should stay. Pretty clever, next time



we are going to bring our logo and have them do it on a shirt for us. Lots of shopping opportunities inside where everyone gets all their goods. Here you negotiate for about a 10% discount, they were really not going to go any lower. Next stop was the silver factory (Krisna Yuna), again outside they have people demonstrating how they go



through the process of making beautiful silver jewelry. Again, another shopping opportunity inside and here you can negotiate about a 30% discount. Third stop is the woodcarvers (Daging Woodcarvers), where they are sitting



outside carving the wood and telling you all about the different woods they use. Most of it is carved out of Mahogany, Ebony, Crocodile, and Hibiscus wood. The intricate detail on the carvings is amazing. Everyone loads up on lots of great items and here you can negotiate down to about 40-50% off. With all of these

places the more you buy the better the discount becomes. We are starving so we get to the restaurant for lunch which is crispy duck, quite good considering the first time we had tried it, it was terrible. A few cold beers to



wash it all down with and back to touring. We are were headed to the holy water temple and along the way traffic has come to a standstill as there is a procession in the street for the festival that is happening today. Jack asks us if we would like to get out of the bus and go take pictures of everyone dressed up, and in a blink of an eye we are all out on the street. This procession is very big and they

make a stop at each temple in town and do a blessing. This particular town has 3 temples and while the blessing is taking place the procession just sits down in the middle of the street, bringing everything to a standstill. It is amazing to be walking along with all of the people to observe them in their traditions. Finally the procession takes a right and leaves the main street so finally our bus can get through and



we all jump on board. This has probably taken us a good hour to get through and we haven't even made it to the temple yet. We finally reach the holy water temple and it is a natural spring that feeds through the different



pools and you can come and bath in the water. You have to have your legs covered, so they have sorongs that you rent so you can enter the temple and wander around. It is really getting late in the afternoon and we decide that our final stop will be the terraced rice fields. Back on the bus we try and take the road to get there and it is





closed due to construction, so we make our way to another field. It is beautiful and we are literally there at sunset. It is past 6:00 pm now and this has to be the longest tour day we have ever done. The traffic has been terrible today, mostly in part to all the processions that just stop traffic dead in the street. We finally arrive at the resort and it is 7:00 pm! Several people have massages as the rest of us have dinner and do some final packing. Tomorrow starts early as the bus will be pulling out at 6:00 am sharp. Can't wait to get to Wakatobi!!

## Day 2

The pounding rain woke me up around 1:00 am, thank goodness for earplugs! We were up before the 5:00 am alarm went off so we just got up and finished packing and made our way up to reception to meet the group. Jack was already there with the bus and luggage trucks as we prepared to go to the airport. The resort made us all box breakfasts which was really nice that we ate on the bus. Our travel time to the airport was about an hour and Jack was very surprised we made it that fast. However, having known Jack I knew we would be really early because that's the way he likes to run things. I certainly appreciate that and of course our group is always early which makes our job even easier. Upon arrival our Wakatobi representatives were waiting for us as they handled all the luggage and take over from here on out. We enter the domestic terminal and are directed through security and to the private waiting lounge where coffee and food are available at no charge until our flight departs. Shortly before 9:00 am Stjin comes and gets us and walks us directly through the gate onto the bus and onto our charter flight. This is a private flight for Wakatobi guests and staff only, I think 29 people total of which 20 is our group alone. It is now a 2 ½ hour plane ride over to the island where there will be waiting cars



to take us to the boats. We finally arrive at the resort and for every room there is a representative that walks you through all the details of the resort, room, camera room, dive gear area and Nitrox station. After that if you



would like to get your checkout dive out of the way, then you are given a time to meet a guide to take you out on the house reef. You do need to perform 2 skills, mask clearing and air sharing with your buddy and make sure your weights are correct. The house reef is really good as the first thing I spot when I dropped off the edge was a Sea Krait in 10 feet of water. A big Sea Turtle, Napoleon Wrasse, Nudibranchs, Robust Ghost Pipe fish and much more. Congratulations to Linda who hits her 600<sup>th</sup> dive, way to go Linda! The cold beer alarm is sounding so we quickly jump out of our gear and make our way to the jetty bar to watch the sunset. Top it off with a wonderful dinner, then a few of us go to the media room for a talk on fish life to learn more about the reefs and habitat. Ok, can barely keep our eyes open during the presentation so time to call it a day. Great start to day 1.

## Day 3

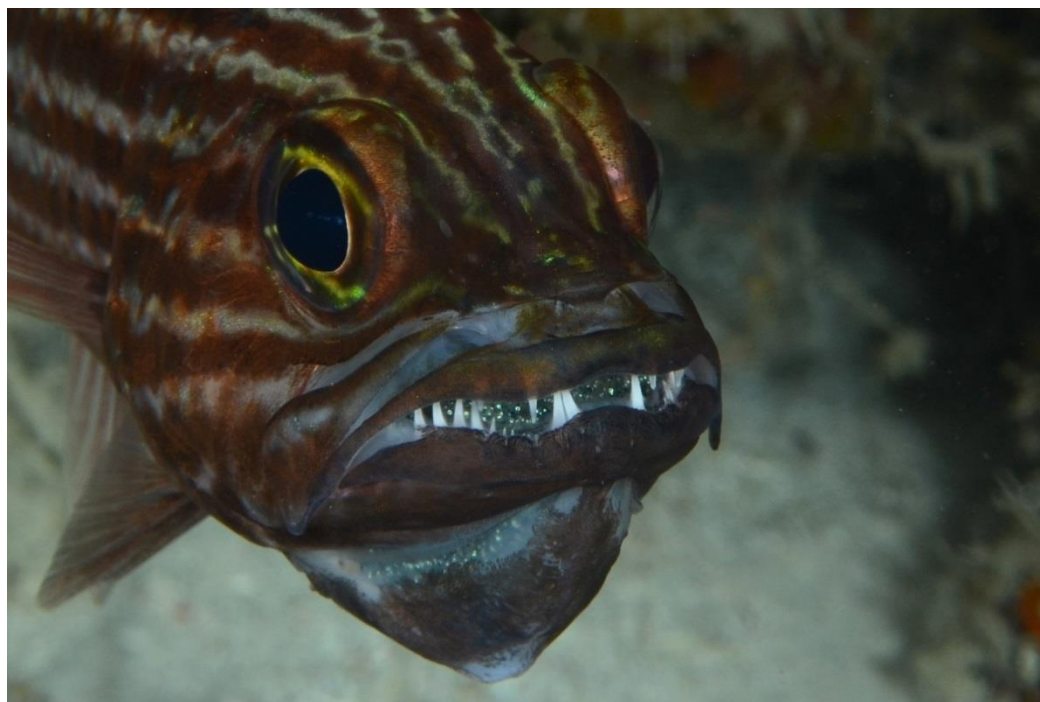
Up early for breakfast at 6:30 am and on the boat by 7:20 for the departure. After getting the dive briefing we split into 4 different groups and jump in the water. Dive 1 has beautiful cabbage corals and lots of fish including a real nice school of Barracuda. This is also Peggy's 500<sup>th</sup>



dive! Congratulations Peggy! Dive 2 was just as good with a Crocodile Flathead, lots of nudis, and pufferfish laying around everywhere. Back to the resort for lunch, a bit of camera work and then the boat departs at 2:15 pm for the 3<sup>rd</sup> dive of the day. This dive had Turtles, Sea Kraits and wonderful batfish that came right up to you. On the way back several of us decide to do a house reef dive before it gets dark so we jumped in and drifted the wall in a nice slow paced current. There was also a “behind the scene tour” that many folks went on and we even made it back in time for the manager’s cocktail party. Another incredible dinner, a little camera work and now I really can’t keep my eyes open. Good night.

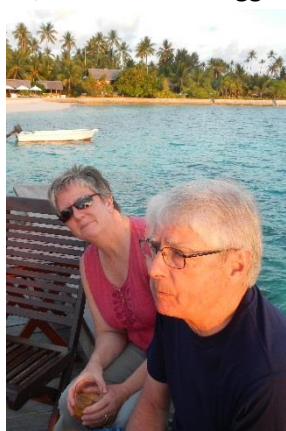
#### Day 4

Another beautiful day in paradise with sunny skies and azure blue waters. Departing at 7:30 am we are on our way to Pinki’s Wall which is a dive that can be done with either macro or wide angle. The best choice this



morning was macro as the sun doesn’t really come over the edge until the end of the dive. We were looking for Pygmy seahorse, bubble coral shrimp, orangutan crabs, nudis and anything else nice and small. Second dive today was the Zoo, which is one of my top dive sites here. We found Scorpion Leaf Fish, Sea Krait, Hairy squat Lobster, Mushroom coral pipefish, nudi’s and a Tiger Cardinal fish with a mouthful of eggs. After lunch our third dive of the day was Roma, which has to be a #1 dive here in Wakatobi. The fish life is so abundant at times you can barely see to the other side of the

reef. Unfortunately today the current is running and the visibility has dropped tremendously. Still we are able to see schooling Barracuda, Black, Red toothed Triggerfish, Black Durgeons and Saron shrimp, Leaf Scorpionfish,



and the giant rose of cabbage coral. Back at the dock, we take a quick shower and head out to the jetty bar to celebrate Peggy & Russ’s Birthdays today and watch a spectacular sunset. Shortly after dark we start to see a green fluorescent glow in the water all over the place. Bob the bartender tells us it is



shrimp at the surface of the water. The entire bay is lite up, amazing as we had never seen this before. Time for another wonderful dinner, followed by 2 birthday cakes made of chocolate. Chalk up another day of diving and looking forward to see what tomorrow brings us.

#### Day 5

Flat calm and not a breath of wind this morning. Can't wait to see what the diving has in store for us today. Three more dives today in which we saw several large Cuttlefish and Pufferfish. The second dive which was Fan 38 West was gorgeous with lots of soft corals and large sea fans. Our third dive was the house reef in the afternoon where there was the largest Barracuda that I have ever seen. Made me nervous just being close to those sharp teeth! The last dive today was our boat night dive where we had ventured over to do the Zoo dive site. Here we saw Pygmy cuttlefish, Crocodile Flatheads and Nudibranchs. Bob and I did a Fluoro dive and I tried



some new camera settings and got some decent results. The Moray Eel and Lizardfish were probably the coolest things along with the Tiger Flatworm. Back to the dock for a nice dinner and then off to bed as we get to do it all over again tomorrow.

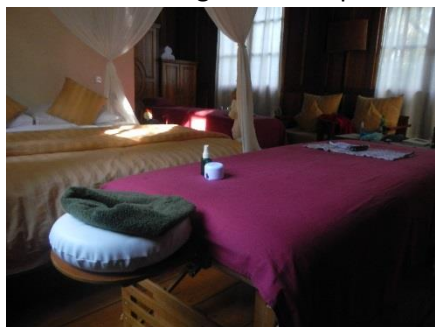
#### Day 6

Just another sunny day in paradise! The weather this trip has been amazing, with only a few black clouds passing



by every now and again. Same old story today, dive, dive, eat, dive, eat, sleep; it's just so hard to take. First dive today was a bit of rippin' current. Some of the groups sailed down the reef while others hung on to take pictures. It was a bit crazy at times with a few up and down currents, certainly made for an exciting morning. The other 2 dives were a bit more mellow with plenty of turtles, a few pygmy seahorse (of course most of us were shooting wide angle), crocodile flatheads and more fish than you can imagine. A few people saw a couple of sleeping baby sharks on the reef as well. The 3<sup>rd</sup> dive is

over and Bob and I grab a couple of cold Bintang beers and make our way to our bungalow for a 90 minute massage this afternoon. Then we are having a private dinner out on the point to celebrate many missed anniversaries together. The private dinner out on the point was magnificent! A must do for any special occasion.



Out on the horizon was a spectacular lightening show and the stars out tonight are the most you will see anywhere in the world. Pretty amazing day.

## Day 7

Today is another wide angle day with beautiful reefs with tons of soft coral, seafans and tons of fish life. On the



second dive we had a treat of 3 cuttlefish all grouped up together and the water today was flat calm.

Attempted to do a lot of over under shots, so we'll see how those turned out. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> dive we are back to the resort for tank analyzing and then the Fluoro-dive briefing for the next couple of days of night diving. We will get plenty of opportunity to shoot more fluoro critters in the next couple of days. After that, Jerry & Terrie invited us over for beers in their villa to see the sunset and Scott made good use of their infinity pool to stay nice and cool while enjoying a cold Bintang. The Villas are incredible with their glassed in showers and a couple of them have infinity pools and direct access to

the beach for swimming. Time for dinner as we all make our way to enjoy another fabulous meal from the kitchen. A full day of diving tomorrow so everyone heads to their rooms and it is only 8:15 pm. What's up with that? We would never be caught going to bed this early, but then again 4 dives a day makes one very sleepy.

## Day 8

A little cloudy this morning but flat calm and Congratulations to Jerry and Terrie who are celebrating their wedding anniversary today. We are going to dive the Blade; It is a knife edge mountain ridge that rises up from very deep and comes just to the surface. In some places it is probably only 10 feet wide, and has the most interesting



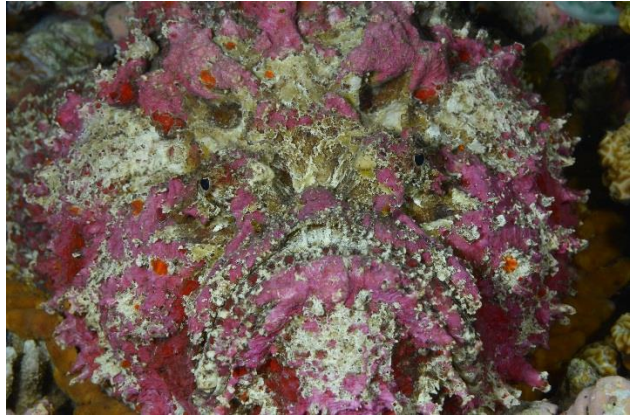
topography. This dive is usually a great wide angle dive site but as we descend the water is a bit murky and on the green color side. It can also be done as a macro dive as there are Pygmy Seahorse and blue Ribbon Eels to shoot. Very little current this morning so it did still make for a great dive. Second dive once again wonderful soft corals and lots of wide angle opportunities. The skies have turned gray but so far no rain and it is still very calm



out. Third dive is Turkey Beach, where they usually spot lots of Turtles and the group did see a few along with that giant Barracuda that hangs out on the house reef. Plenty of Nudibranchs here and much more small stuff. Group 1 is Fluoro-diving tonight and there are 8 of us total and we just go down the beach a ways to a close by site. We had lots of stuff fluorescing, I think we saw 5 Moray eels, a tiny crab in an anemone that was orange and a Mantis Shrimp cleaning himself. Really time for a hot shower and dinner as it is nearing the 9:00 pm hour and there's no one left awake.

#### Day 9

At 4:00 am we awoke to the sound of pouring rain on the roof, shortly followed by lightning and very loud thunder that shook the bungalow. Oh well, who needs sleep anyway? The storm was quite intense and lasted until the morning. It has continued to come down in buckets all during our first 2 dives and as I sit here waiting



for lunch it is pouring once again. This reminds me of when we were here in January, only I think the temperature might be a bit warmer. Might as well do a house reef dive this afternoon and then we are scheduled for our night dive tonight. I think I am going to go plug in my electric shirt for the night dive tonight, I think it might be a bit chilly. The night dive was great, lots of life on the Waitti Ridge. At the very end of the dive we found a huge Stone Fish sitting out on the coral rubble in 15 feet of water. Great way to finish off the day since we have been cold and wet all day long with the rain.

#### Day 10

A break in the clouds today and we have some sunshine with grey skies, but we will take it considering yesterday was just miserable with rain. Our first dive today was Roma and this time the visibility was much better so you could see all the incredible fish life. We searched for quite a while for a Frogfish and just had no luck finding it.



Plenty of Leaf Scorpionfish, Saron Shrimp, Nudibranchs and even a Blue Ribbon Eel. Second dive was Fan 38 East with beautiful soft corals and Sea Fans, even had a small green Turtle sleeping on a shelf. After lunch we make our way back to the other island to dive Galaxy. The clouds have moved back in but at least it isn't raining. Finally, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> dive I find Mary waiting for me by a piece of soft coral and there it is...the soft coral crab I have been looking for this entire trip. Thank you Mary for waiting patiently for me to show me that! This truly has to be one of my favorite little critters underwater. On the way back to the dock we have an

engine go down so we are a bit slow returning from the dive. We only have about 45 minutes before we leave for the night fluoro-dive so we have a snack and finish up logbooks before taking off. This is our second group of



Fluoro divers and we go back to the same divesite of Dunia Baru. Bob and I really want to find the Spearing Mantis Shrimp as we heard from the first group that saw one that it glows a nice orange color. Well, we didn't have any luck with that but we did have many Scorpion Fish and they fluoresce a beautiful red color. Really great dive with lots of critters and when we get back on the boat we notice all these trails of color in the water. It was the fluorescent shrimp we had seen previous from the dock that were leaving these fluorescent contrails all over in the water. It was absolutely incredible to see. We turned on our NightSea lights

and a million little feeder fish came to the surface and were eating all the stuff. The stars are out bright tonight for our last night dive of the trip. We phone in our drink order to Bob at the bar, but bartender Bob has stepped away so luckily we got Peggy who fulfilled the order for us. Bob had a tray of drinks waiting for us when we got back to the dock. Absolutely a fantastic night.

### Day 11

Last day for diving. We have 2 dives this morning and then gear cleaning and packing. The skies are blue and it is going to be a hot one today, perfect for our last day. We dove Malabea which was a beautiful wall dive and found a very small Peacock Mantis Shrimp about 2 inches long. It was very enthralled with our muck sticks and



wanted to take them home as he kept tugging on them. The second dive was Dunia Baru which is a critter dive and here we found the white Pontohi Pygmy Seahorse. After diving the crew take all your dive gear and wash it and then hang it out to dry while you go and have some lunch. Then after you have eaten you can spend the rest of the afternoon relaxing and

packing up your stuff. We met out at the Jetty Bar for sunset and then the dive guides Sonja and Isabel came out for drinks. Then again tonight when it was dark the blue fluorescing started in the water and pretty soon we had fluorescent contrails all through the water. It was completely lit up like the Milky Way. Sonja says she has never seen it like this before and will try and find out more information about it and let me know tomorrow before we leave. Sonja gave the group great compliments about how wonderful and easy our group was and it was a



pleasure for them to guide us. So much so that she said she would love to be our guide again on another trip in the Solomons when we go. That has to be the best compliment we have ever gotten. Thank you everyone for being such a wonderful group! Time to finish packing as tomorrow we have to leave, at least it isn't super early so that is really nice.

### Day 12

Last day in Wakatobi. Time for the final pack and luggage out by 7:30 am and then going for breakfast. Bob and I were the only one in the restaurant as everyone has already eaten and gone. We enjoy the last beautiful view of



the crystal clear blue water and sunshine. It is a picture I hope to remember in my mind all through the Northwest winter. After setting our credit cards on fire by settling up our tabs they pull in the Pelagian



Liveaboard and after everyone departs they take us on a tour of the vessel. It takes 10 passengers, so it is very personalized service. The boat is beautiful and the rooms are quite big with the exception of the standard room. The master suite is giant and takes up the entire bow of the boat! Apparently the service is incredible so says the group that has just departed the boat. Maybe next time we will look into maybe doing a trip out on the boat as well. Back to the resort and the staff reports that the plane is running about 20 minutes behind schedule so we wander around a bit longer and take a look at the small baby turtles that they are raising in a pen out back. Apparently these baby Turtles

went towards the woods instead of the water and the staff found them wandering around in the back. Before the monitor lizards could eat them all, they put them in a pen to raise them to a larger size to then release them in hopes that more will survive. Maybe on day the reefs will be teeming with green & hawksbill Turtles like Borneo. Our flight to Bali was uneventful and we have our faithful guide Jack and driver waiting to take us to the Holiday in Baruna for the last couple days of our trip. The hotel is nice with a big pool which we promptly grab our suits and jump in for happy hour drinks. Time for some food before most of us can't see straight anymore. Most of the group wanders down the street to the Barong Waru Café for dinner. The main road sidewalk is under some major construction so we opt for the beach boardwalk for the walk home. It's been a long day so it's time for bed, oh my, it's only 9:30 pm.

### Day 13

The group is up early for breakfast as we are going White Water Rafting today on the Auyung River. The 3 vans pick us up at the hotel and it is about 1 ½ hr drive up past Ubud to the launching area. It's a nice hot sunny day





which I am grateful for as I can't imagine doing this in the pouring rain. We are split up into 4 rafts or shall I see teams as we know this is one competitive group! Life vests, helmets and paddles in hand we follow our guides



down to the river. Did I mention that there are over 400 steps leading down to the river below? This doesn't really seem like a big deal until I finally reach the bottom and my quads feel like jello! Once in the raft our guide goes over all the safety procedures and we are off. First thing we hit are some rapids and I think Bob almost came out of the raft again! It's been 2 minutes! It will be a miracle if he stays in the boat for the rest of the trip. It is a beautiful trip down the winding river valley with waterfalls and gorgeous scenery. Our guide "Magic" is relentless and keeps our team (Bob, Marle, myself, Jesse & Linda) all paddling with everything we got. If there is a competitor raft company we have

to pass them, not sure why but it seems to be some game the guides play. We splash all the boats we pass and of course get high centered on a few rocks along the way. Half way down we make a small stop to get out and stretch our screaming quads, blistered hands and sore shoulders. Did I say this was fun? Of course it was a blast and we loved it! At the end of the tour we climb out of our rafts and hand over all our equipment and have a nice buffet lunch down at the river's edge while we watch them deflate the rafts, roll them up and then pack them on a woman's head to carry up out of the river valley. These rafts have to weigh at least 100 pounds and we are all amazed how they balance them on their heads. Guess what? Now we have to get ourselves out of the river valley and make the slow climb up the stairs, not sure how many, but certainly not as many as the way down. At the top of the hill we walk to the main building and here they have a shower facility to rinse off and change into dry clothes. Russ, Tracy, Jerry, Terrie & Phil are heading to the Monkey Forest to see all the Macaque monkeys. We warn them not to feed them as they get very aggressive so let some other unsuspecting tourist do it and you can just watch the show. The rest of us go back to the hotel and jump in the pool while we wait for our massage appointment over at the Ramada. They send over a car to pick



us up and drive us to our appointment and then the rest of our group shows up from the Monkey Forest just in time to do their massage as well. There are stories about people getting bit, items being grabbed and one gal in a very glittery dress that the Monkeys were going crazy over. Warning—no shiny objects! Our 1 hour massage was wonderful, but too short. We walk back to our hotel in time for happy hour and our last Bali sunset which was beautiful. Were pretty tired so we just opt to eat dinner at Envoy which is one of the hotel restaurants. The food was ok and pretty much filled the void, however there was a nice little dinner show with twirling battons of fire. I had ordered the molten lave cake and it was gigantic, so be sure

there are at least 2 of you to share it. Most of us can't keep our heads up so we make our way to our rooms and I was surprised to see that it is only 8:30 pm, what a bunch of wimps we are.

Day 14

Ouch. I woke up with very sore quad muscles today, I am certainly feeling all those stairs! Time for a little breakfast and then a little packing. We decide to just lounge by the pool for the remainder of our time since the spa was booked since they only have 4 masseuses. Time to take a shower and meet up with Mike & Liz who are leaving at noon to another hotel as they are staying a few extra days before they could get a flight home. We say our goodbyes and grab a quick lunch before 13 of us leave for the airport. We say so long to the rest of the group who will be flying out at different times and days. The new international airport check-in is very modern



and all went smooth as we arrive at the gate. Always make sure you have your 150,000 Rupiah per person that you have to pay for the departure tax. The airport is still not finished and I'm sure it will be completely different the next time we return here. Our first flight to Hong Kong was pretty uneventful and now we have a 3 ½ layover while we wait for our final flight to Vancouver BC. The flight went great, with no delays and we make our way to customs & immigration upon landing in Vancouver. The only hiccup we encountered on the way home was when we were crossing the border, they asked us if we brought anything back and Bob said "wooden masks". That was a big mistake as then he slapped us with an agricultural inspection and we needed to pull over. It took about 20 minutes for them to tear into a package and check it out before they let us proceed on our way. All in all not too bad as we finally arrived in Anacortes somewhere close to midnight.

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.

Terima Kasih!



# WAKATOBI, INDONESIA

OCTOBER 16-31, 2013

## Anacortes Diving Adventure Team



Linda, Jesse, Bill, Scott, Kathy, Allison, Mary, Lisa, Terrie, Jerry, Liz, Mike  
Marle, Phil, Dale, Peggy, Russ, Tracy, Bob, Kelley