

INDONESIA 18 - 29 SEPTEMBER 2005

At the end of September, 16 club members took the long journey via Singapore, to North Sulawesi in Indonesia. We finally made it to the beautiful resort, a little tired and hungry! After a briefing from resort staff we made it to our rooms. Feeling slightly more energetic, several divers could not wait until the morning and went on a shore dive to explore the house reef!

Early the next morning, 2 boats took us on the journey to Bunaken National Park, a marine reserve run by the WWF. The area is volcanic and the Islands covered by dense rainforest. The quiet reserve boasted a huge assortment of marine life, in clear warm water.



For the following week, the resort boats took us to the numerous dive sites around the park Islands, for 2-3 dives each day. The knowledgeable dive guides pointed out some fantastic critters on the sheer coral walls. On each dive there was something new to be seen, including black tip reef sharks, huge turtles, spotted rays, octopus, seahorses (including rare pygmy species), crocodile fish, box fish, puffer fish, moray eels, pipefish, squirrelfish, scorpionfish, frogfish, stonefish, lionfish, napoleon wrasse and hundreds of clownfish! Phew – the list goes on! That is just the fish, not beginning to mention the hundreds of different hard and soft corals! We also encountered 5 fantastic giant clams, which had some of us in fits of giggles! Unexplained currents and notorious ‘whirlpool dives’ were also experienced by some of the group! The non-divers joined us on the boats and were not disappointed as we saw some dolphins on the way to the dive sites, and they were kept entertained by the surface interval shopping, a new experience for many of us as some local ‘floating shops’ brought goodies aboard and Triton Divers willingly spent a fortune on shell jewellery, wooden games, t-shirts and sarongs (for both sexes!!). I imagine we made some Bunaken residents very rich during our stay!!

Other activities included a trip to the shopping mall, where the ladies of the group got rather a lot of unwanted attention from local men!! A trip to a fish restaurant followed, where we totally confused the staff due to a slight language barrier!! We finally received numerous dishes of unidentified food! Again, an unforgettable experience! Late nights out were had by the ‘boys’ of the group, who located a pool bar and nightclub. Many of the details of these outings are not suitable for publishing in the newsletter, but I understand that a good time was had by all!



Towards the end of the trip, we took a couple of excursions to Lembeh Straits for some ‘muck diving’ with plenty of strange critters lurking in the volcanic sand, and to Bangka Island to see some fantastic soft corals and pygmy seahorses. On the day before departure some of the group took a trip to the volcano for some serious trekking, followed by some browsing at a local market (bat wings and field rats included!)

All were in agreement that the holiday was fantastic, with good accommodation and food, lovely weather and amazing dives.

Congratulations to Maz Redman for completing the Open Water course during the trip, and to Hannah Johnson and Toby O’Keefe for becoming Advanced Open Water divers. All that is left to say is ‘Terima-Kashi’ to all for a good time!!