

DIVELOG AUSTRALASIA

Celebrating 31 years

INCORPORATING SPORTDIVING MAGAZINE



**WIN A
mares**

**SMART Dive
Computer**

FULL DETAILS ON PAGE 6

Number 364 •

NOVEMBER 2018 - \$4.95

www.diveelog.net.au



Available on the iPad
App Store

Find us on 



Australia's Newest Online Dive Store
Saving You Time & Money This Christmas

www.divein2scuba.com

AUSTRALIA'S ONLY SCUBA DIVE MAGAZINE Print, App & Online

DIVELOG AUSTRALASIA

INCORPORATING SPORTDIVING MAGAZINE

www.dive-log.net.au

PUBLISHER AND EDITOR~ Barry Andrewartha barry@motpub.com.au

PRODUCTION/ART DIRECTOR~ Vikki Ryan dive-log@motpub.com.au

ADVERTISING COORDINATOR~ Leanne Wylie ads@motpub.com.au

SUBSCRIPTIONS/BOOKS ~ Leanne Wylie subscribe@motpub.com.au

Dive Log is published by Mountain Ocean & Travel Publications Pty Ltd
ABN 68 006 642 422
PO Box 355, Upper Beaconsfield, Victoria, Australia 3808
Tel: + 61 3 5944 3774 dive-log@motpub.com.au www.dive-log.net.au

EDITORIAL AND PHOTOGRAPHIC CONTRIBUTIONS

For editorial guidelines email dive-log@motpub.com.au

Text should be submitted on disk or emailed no later than the 1st of the month. Material submitted will not be returned unless it is accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope. All photos should be a copy of the original.

Dive Log Australasia and the publisher Mountain Ocean & Travel Publications assume no responsibility for loss or damage of material sent by contributors or advertisers.

The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of Mountain Ocean & Travel Publications and its editors.

REPRODUCTION OF CONTENTS No part of the contents of this publication may be reproduced without the prior written consent of the publisher.

Follow Us On:



COPY DEADLINES

DECEMBER 2018, ISSUE #365

NEWS/EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING: 31ST OCTOBER 2018

DISTRIBUTION: 1ST DECEMBER 2018

EMAIL CONTRIBUTIONS: dive-log@motpub.com.au

REACHING THE ASIA/PACIFIC'S BIGGEST
SINGLE DIVER READERSHIP!

OUR COVER PHOTO

For this issue of Dive Log we have a stunning image of a LEAFY SEADRAGON taken at Rapid Bay, South Australia by regular Dive Log contributor DAVE BAXTER.

Hi Barry,

Just wanted to say it's great to have DiveLog available in print. I like the compact size too.

For many divers like myself DiveLog has been a staple. Every time I'd get an air fill or jump on a liveboard I would make sure to grab the latest copy.

The magazine covers just about every aspect of our sport and does a great job of keeping divers informed about dive operators and destinations, marine life and equipment to name just a few of the subjects covered.

The fact that such a professionally presented and widely distributed magazine openly offers amateur photographers and writers the opportunity to submit their work with the potential to be published really makes DiveLog a magazine by dive people for dive people.

So thank you to all the staff at DiveLog and indeed the contributors both professional and amateur, for helping make

EDITORS DESK

OVER the years every business faces competition and publishing a magazine is no different. What is different for a dive magazine publisher is often other countries!

Over the years magazines from New Zealand and Asia have attempted to expand sales and advertising revenue from the Australian market. The latest attempt at expansion comes from a British magazine with an Asia-Pacific edition, they are targeting Singapore, New Zealand and Australia.

We are happy to say that our publication, Dive Log Australasia just keeps going with more than 30 years of informing the diving community with 80 pages every month - 12 issues every year with articles from around the world aimed specifically at Australian divers and the Australian dive scene.

Whether you read Dive Log as a print magazine, or online at www.dive-log.net.au or you subscribe to the amazing iPad App, we know you will enjoy reading Dive Log. November is another issue packed full of great reading thanks to our regular contributors.

Many Australian dive clubs/shops have the print issue posted to their club/shop every month.

For a chance to WIN an OrcaTorch go to page 6 and tell us 'Where You Get Your Dive Log Fix' either print, online or iPad app.

Welcome to the November issue of Dive Log - we hope you enjoy your Australian Dive Magazine.

Best wishes

Barry Andrewartha
Publisher and Editor

DiveLog what I consider to be the best and most informative dive magazine in print.
Rick Mead.

• Hi Rick, every month Dive Log is published via print, online and iPad app - 80 pages packed full of great reading directly aimed at Australian Divers - thanks so much for your support and email .

Hello Barry and Crew,
I have read a past issue of DiveLog and thought you might like to know the genus of *Manta* was changed to *Mobula*. ie. *Manta alfredi* = *Mobula alfredi* (The members of the genus *Manta* were found to consistently nest within the *Mobula* species and consequently the genus *Manta* is placed onto the synonymy of *Mobula*.)
Cheers Gary

• Hi Gary, thanks so much for sharing your knowledge with us. As always great to have you on board again!

Shades of Blue:

DIVING THE CENTRAL ATOLLS OF THE MALDIVES

By Michael Salvarezza & Christopher P. Weaver Eco-Photo Explorers <http://ecophotoexplorers.com>

AZURE. Indigo. Turquoise. Aqua. Sapphire. Cobalt. There are seemingly innumerable shades of the color blue...and every single one of them seems to be on display in the Maldives! Standing on the deck of the luxury Maldives liveaboard that was to be our home for the next week, we gazed out across a patch of the South Male Atoll and tried to count the different shades of blue we could see. We stopped at seven...not because we couldn't count more colors but because the ship's bell had rung, indicating it was time for the next dive briefing.

From the air, the Maldive Islands appear very much like a set of small stones flung across a wide expanse of the Indian Ocean. Each of these tiny specks of sand are surrounded by a fringing coral reef, creating the idyllic postcard perfect tropical island vistas prized by the resorts that have been built on many of these islands. The islands themselves are part of the coral reef systems of the various atolls that comprise the Maldives, atolls that have become legendary in the world of diving: Ari, South Male, Felidhoo, Malaku and Baa to name just a few. While land based diving from the resort islands can be very rewarding, the best way to explore the vast ocean wilderness of the Maldives is by liveaboard dive vessel.

Shortly after our arrival into Male, we met the dive boat and began steaming south to the South Male Atoll. Our objective for this trip was an exploration of the central atolls of the Maldives. Within a few

hours we pulled up to our first dive site, Velassaru Giri, a massive coral outcropping off Velassaru Island. This was to be our "checkout" dive.

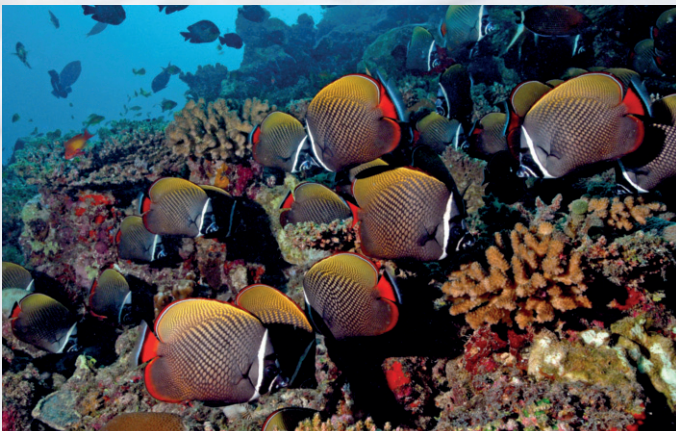
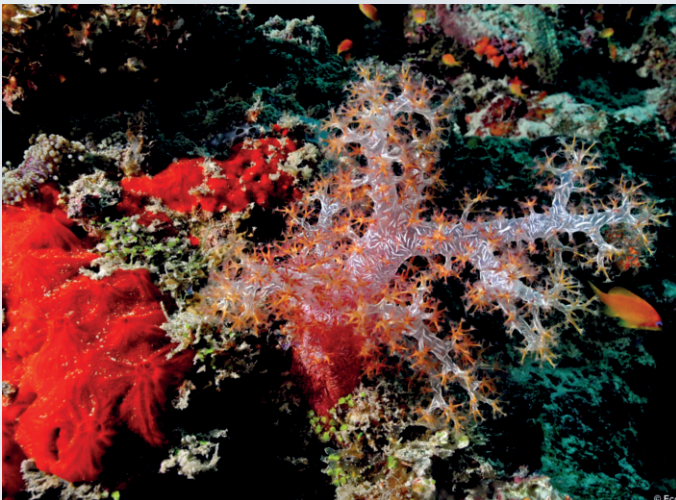
We quickly climbed aboard the diving Dhoni, a dedicated dive tender used by the liveaboard to bring divers to and from the dive sites, and prepared for the dive. After a few minutes travel to the site and a giant stride entry we were on the reef.

Here, we were immediately impressed with clouds of Anthias darting in and out of the hard coral outcroppings of the site. We also noticed countless Redtooth Triggerfish alongside the coral wall, each of them daring to stray only inches from the safety of a crevice in the coral into which they would quickly hide upon our approach.

For a "checkout dive", this was not bad!

Our dives at Velassaru Island included exciting drifts through the channels in the fringing reef and a dive on an unidentified sunken fishing vessel known as the Kuda Giri Wreck. This picturesque shipwreck lies perfectly upright alongside a coral dropoff, and is an ideal place to observe schools of brilliant red Soldierfish hiding within the wreckage. To reach this wreck, divers first descend along the coral wall and then make a short swim over the sand at about 80 FSW for about a hundred yards. In minutes, the ghostly bow of the vessel emerges from the blue and the wreck comes into view. Divers can swim along the deck, peering into the dark recesses of the cargo holds. For experienced wreck divers, it is very difficult to resist the temptation to venture inside! Once a fishing vessel dedicated to removing marine life from the sea, today the wreck is home to countless populations of marine life.

Divers exploring the Maldives must be prepared for strong tidal currents that flood in and out of the atolls. These currents can be disconcerting for unprepared divers, however they bring with them breathtaking action. At our next stop, Gulhi Island, we dove Miyaru Faru Corner, which is a bend in the coral formation marking the entrance to a channel. After a quick descent to the reef, we were





swept up in the powerful current and immediately began flying over the reef. Our hearts raced as we passed over hard and soft coral colonies, and glimpsed briefly the brilliantly colored tentacles of sea anemones flapping in the tidal flow. These flyovers were nice, but our objective was the actual bend in the reef, where the big action of predators and prey was taking place. We were there in a few moments.

Using reef hooks, we allowed ourselves to float in the water column like kites and watch excitedly as Grey Reef Sharks, Jacks, Tuna and Eagle Rays drifted by in the deep water. When it was time to move on, we simply detached our reef hooks and resumed our "flight" over the reef until we reached an area where the flow of water diminished and we were able to slow down and enjoy the shallow sections of the coral jungle.

Further south, we next visited the reefs alongside Alimatha Island in the Felidhoo Atoll. The memory cards in our cameras were quickly filled to capacity with scores of macro and wide-angle images. For example, we encountered Green Sea Turtles, schools of Oriental Sweetlips and massive clouds of Red Tailed Butterflyfish. But it was the tiny world of macro photography that really came to life here. As we peered underneath coral overhangs dripping with soft coral, we spotted many species of Angelfish and Butterflyfish, all of them featuring dazzling color designs like the bold yellow bands of the Royal Angelfish, or the mesmerizing line drawings of the juvenile Emperor Angelfish. Indeed, these fish can fairly be described as nature's true works of psychedelic art.

Before the boat left this island for its final island destination at Guraidhoo Island, we made a unique night dive at the Alimatha Jetty. Here, as local fisherman clean their fish and discard bits of fish into the water, dozens of Nurse Sharks, opportunistic Jacks and stealthy stingrays congregate for an easy meal. For divers, the action is spellbinding as the Sharks and Jacks patrol searching for food completely unaware of and uninterested in the voyeuristic divers. We remained fairly motionless on a sandy bottom in about 45 FSW and watched as 70-80 Nurse Sharks patrolled above, with countless Jacks slicing through the water column. An occasional stingray would lazily



glide through the group of divers, scouring the sand for food. Although it is somewhat of an artificial dive because the marine life has been conditioned to look for food here, it is still an exciting dive and one that produces smiles of satisfaction every time.

Fierce currents and dizzying arrays of marine life characterized our final dives at Guraidhoo Island.

At a dive site known as Kandooma Beyru, we descended along a dramatic vertical wall to about 120 FSW and then began a brisk drift along the reef, stopping periodically to explore cuts in the wall where we could get out of the current and search for marine life and photographic subjects. Its an interesting sensation to duck into these natural shelters and then turn to peer back out into the blue,

GETTING THERE

The only international airport is located on the main island of Male. It is serviced with direct flights from Doha, Dubai, Colombo (Sri Lanka) and a few other destinations.

Visitors to the resort islands will next board speedboats or seaplanes depending on the location and distance of the resort. Check with your resort for arrangements. Many of the upscale resorts have comfortable lounges at the main airport where visitors can relax while waiting for transfers. Tours of Male can be arranged if the transfer time is longer than a few hours in duration.

Liveaboard dive boats will arrange pickup right at the docks alongside the airport.

A valid passport is required for entry. Visas are not required.

BAGGAGE

Baggage allowances vary for each international carrier so check before you leave. There are strict weight limits on the seaplanes so check with your carriers before departing.

WEATHER

The Maldives has an equatorial tropical climate. December through April is the dry season. February through April is the hottest time of the year, with temperatures in the 80s and 90s Fahrenheit each day. May through November is the rainy season.

CURRENCY

The local currency is the rufiya (Rf) but US Dollars and Euros are generally accepted at all resorts.

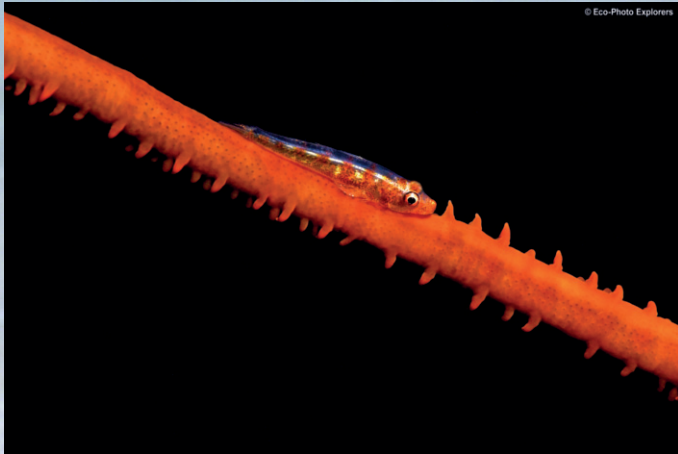
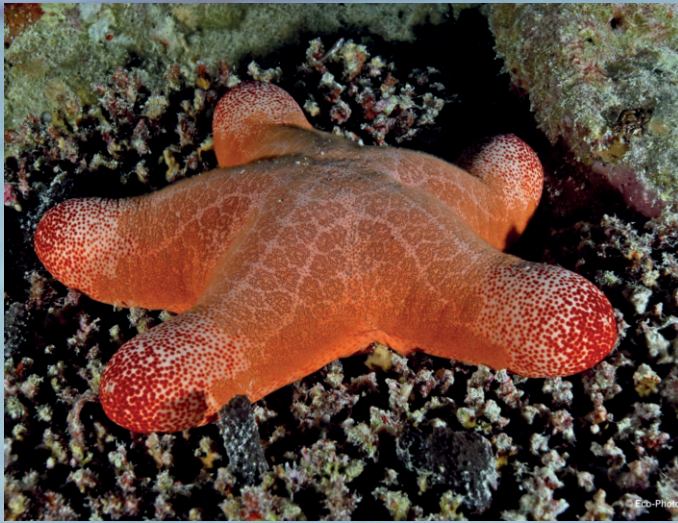
ELECTRICITY

Power voltage used in the Maldives is 220 Volts to 240 Volts (50 Hz). Be sure to double-check your appliance's compatibility before plugging them in. Converters / adaptors are usually available upon request at your hotel front desk.

CUSTOMS

The Republic of the Maldives is a strict Islamic nation. Alcohol, firearms, pornography, pork, narcotics and "idols of worship" are among the prohibited items.

Because of the concern over evangelists spreading their beliefs within the country, attention is paid to religious items. A small crucifix, worn as jewelry, is unlikely to be a problem but a suitcase with several Bibles will likely create concern!



watching divers and the occasional jack or trevally glide by in the current.

Macro photography is a challenge in fast moving water, but careful examination of whip corals and gorgonians revealed the presence of tiny gobies, each perfectly camouflaged to blend in to the host coral they inhabit. But stopping in the flowing water, maintaining neutral buoyancy, and focusing the camera on these tiny subjects while the whip coral or gorgonian they are perched on is flapping in the watery breeze is no small feat!

It was here that we also found a rainbow of large anemones, each with their attendant anemonefish. Green, yellow, white, purple and even day-glo orange were some of the colors of these anemones, causing us to begin referring to the Maldives as the Rainbow Reef!

While many of our dives would begin in deeper water, often the true circus of marine life could be found in the shallows atop the coral heads. Clouds of Yellow Sweepers, Blue and Gold Fusilers, and many schools of snapper and grunt, along with a wide array of reef fish in eye-popping colors, kept us endlessly entertained. On one dive, an army of Convict Surgeonfish rolled over the reef feeding on algae and other detritus in unison while on other dives we encountered Napoleon Wrasse, Titan Triggerfish and the uniquely patterned Clown Triggerfish in the shallows. Indeed, there really is no reason to go very deep in the Maldives because much of the interesting life of these reefs can be found in 40 FSW or less.

Pulling anchor and heading back to Male after a week of spectacular diving, we faced into a freshening wind and watched as Flying Fish took to the air ahead of the boat while dolphins cavorted in the distance. The northern monsoon was upon us and dark clouds hinted at troublesome weather to come. But despite the choppy seas between the atolls, and the growing wind and rain, our dive boat remained a comfortable home on the Indian Ocean. Indeed, there is no better way to become immersed in the ocean world of the Maldives than to experience it from a liveaboard dive vessel, free to roam from atoll to atoll and to discover the wonders that lie beneath the waves in the Maldivian coral jungle.

