

September

SEPTEMBER
2011
TORTUGA
2011



Another
Monthly Edition of
St.Sometimes

DIVING IS IT!

We set out for a three day diving trip. It was all about scube. Six divers, two dive masters, one instructor/trip-boss, two captains, two deck hands. Oh, and a twelve year old - the trip boss's son.

THE BEACH LIFE

White sand, bring everything with you type of camping, crystal clear aqua waters, mosquitos, sand fleas, tents, no toilets, all on a semi-deserted island.

TRAGEDY AT SEA

What do a severe Caribbean storm, a sunken boat, diving, lost beer, and dwindling drinking water supplies have in common?

Answer: Tortuga 2011

UW PHOTOS



Top To Bottom Fishes

Adult Spotted Drum - we see a lot of these down here in VZ. This is an adult.

Sardine Cloud - What an awesome sight this is. Also a frequent event at some of the dive sites, swimming through a cloud is

It all comes down to Diving, diving, and more diving.

Venezuela celebrates a holiday weekend in honor of the local virgin. Every town and city has a virgin statue. So a few of us decided to go diving. We arranged for a dive trip to an island 3 hours north of Puerto La Cruz (out in the Caribbean) - Turtle Island - La Isla Tortuga.

The diving wasn't even in my top 100 dives, but I am the eternal optimist! The best part of the diving was Being with friends. There were four of us were gringos from CIPLC: Matt & Stacy, Linnea and I. Then there were some other divers from multiple places: Jose (Venezuela), katelyn (Australia), Ha (Vietnam) and her husband Leonardo (Italy) - the met in Paris so both were speaking French. Nancy is French Canadian so she

leads divers in French, Spanish, and English. Ha and Leonardo communicated with most of us in Spanish rather than English. And...it turns out they live right near me in the same apartment complex.

The best diving turned out to be the final two dives. It all came down to the amount of fish around. We saw the most on the last day.

The most fun part of the diving for me was the pleasure of having Linnea as my dive partner. Linnea had only been on five or so dives prior to this trip, but it was difficult to tell. She is definitely a natural. Night diving was even a breeze for her. As far as I know. It is rare to dive with a novice that is skilled enough to allow me time with my camera. I kept my eye on her while I took some wonderful shots. Best of both worlds!



Only IF... there hadn't been a storm, the story would have been like this...

The beach was beautiful white. The aqua blue waters gave the island a feel of the Caribbean paradise from a Hollywood Movie. The cloudless skies and the intense heat drove us into the shallows between dives, while our crew cooked meals for us and caught fresh fish for the evening meal.

This was every bit a deserted island location for a pirate movie or episode of LOST.

We only had the supplies we brought with us. Fresh water was scarce and the supply of

beer was even more scarce. (I should have brought my own supply!) It was total camping. Tents, campfires, and bug spray all came together with a dive boat, multiple dives, dive gear, and scorpion fish hunting. My dive cameras came in handy but battery life and digital space became issues for the first time since I was on safari in Africa. I couldn't just plug in the battery charger and I couldn't protect my laptop enough to include it in the trip.

All of this fun in the sun seems too good to be true. Behold, "the rest of the story!"

Remember I wrote "*limited supplies*"?



Linnea had a rough time adjusting ...not!

BEACH LIFE



Two Salva Vidas - where is my Boat Drink?

Since diving was the main focus of this trip, and we had limited space for bringing all of our supplies, I didn't even bother to bring drinks. We sure could have used some Boat Drinks. Floating in the aqua water, walking on a white Caribbean beach, and sunny island time are all key components of a Buffett song. But I wasn't prepared with the beverages. Next time!

DON'T BE CRABBY!



The Excitement of a Tropical Storm and its Aftermath...

The storm hit. My tent fell on top of me. One of our boats was sunk and pushed up on the beach by 10 ft crashing waves. Supplies floated several football fields away. The fuel tank, weighing several hundred pounds, was washed out of the boat and down the beach. And the only case of beer for the trip was smashed on the rocks!

So what did we decide to do the following morning? Stay and dive some more. Some people were crabby. Some were upset. Some amazed. And some

people, like me, were simply indifferent. I didn't care either way. The best idea would have been to leave. We didn't have enough water and the possibility of another storm sinking our other ship was nothing short of likely. Pictures above: (L) the crab population was second only to the mosquito and no-see-um populations. (Top R) we had to salvage fuel, food, water, the O2 kit, and these two coolers full of misc food. (Bottom R) My tent was the only tent that fell during the storm. Was it me, or the tent?

Male suada
Quis Dolor
Set Ipsum

LOREM IPSUM	1:00 AM	4:00 AM	6:30 AM	10:00 AM
	<p>The Storm Washes over the island. Waves sink the supply boat. My tent (the only) falls on me. I continue sleeping until 4:00 am - soaked.</p>	<p>I wake up before the sand flees arrive. I put up my tent again and see the beached, sunken boat. I assist 8 other people salvaging.</p>	<p>Finally, the sunken boat is righted on the beach. Teams of two search for food and supplies washed down the beach or out to sea.</p>	<p>We head off for a morning dive with shortened supplies of water, ice, food. Along the way to the dive site, we salvage</p>

DIVING IN VENE...

Somewhere between great diving and “whatever” diving.

Don't look a gift horse in the mouth. Be thankful for what you've got. It's easy to be picky when you have the Caribbean right outside of your door. Our diving “window”

Good Days and Not So Good

It seems like diving around here is hit or miss. There is a lot of fishing going on in Venezuela. That and the temperatures really limit Venezuela for its diving. We can only dive between May and December. During the other

months, the winds drive in cold waters and decrease the visibility.

For some reason, the dives that we DO go on are rich

experiences. I have taken a lot of quality UW photos here in

Venezuela and will continue to take them. Diving is diving.

Chinese Shark Boats!

Yes, every time we leave the dive shop, we pass by four or



Super Star
Matt Judd took
this shot.

five Chinese Shark Fishing vessels - the not so small kind! I don't feel like starting a campaign against anything in this country. It would not be safe-as a teacher here.



Bahia Divers! <http://www.bahiadivers.net/home.htm>



ST.SOMETIMES NEWSLETTERS

These newsletters have been written on and off since 2000. It is now 2011. The goal has always been to write once a month, but there are a lot of missing issues. None the less, the issues are numbered not as written, rather according to the month. Once in a while, I might go back and write a missing issue. However, the website is a great alternative. There are videos, blogs, stories, and more on the website. Enjoy.

READ MORE ON THE WEB

<http://itre.us/ssw13>

FIND ME ON THE SOCIAL SITES

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Dedicated to all of the sunken ships
on La Isla Tortuga.