

THE REEF SEEKER



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BREXIT AND DIVING

How will Brexit (the vote in Great Britain to leave the EU) affect diving? Good question and it's something with lots of variables.

On the surface, you might be inclined to say "Nothing will change" since the UK is not exactly a hotbed of diving locations nor do they have all that many divers that they send to other parts of the world. However, the initial fallout from Brexit, even though it may not fully take place for as much as two years, has already been felt as an estimated \$3 TRILLION of value disappeared from the world economy overnight. That will likely have an effect on people who are planning vacations.

On the other end of it, there are certainly a number of dive operators who price their wares in Euros. The Euro fell 4% overnight and has seemed to stabilize as I'm writing this (evening of June 30) but you never know. Right now, it's 1 Euro = \$1.11 USD. But you can go back a year or two and it was \$1 Euro = \$1.40 USD. Big difference. So you might find that

some places that base their rates on Euros raise them a bit to compensate for the fall of the Euro against the dollar. In other words, the Brits may have just made your next dive vacation a bit more expensive.

Needless to say, it's a situation in great flux but we'll do our best to keep our eyes peeled and let you know if we see anything.

SHARK WEEK

I'm very disappointed in the Discovery Channel and the way they've handled Shark Week 2016.

This was a golden opportunity for them (as it is every year really) to help educate a public that's jittery about sharks. It's generally believed that there are 60-100 MILLION sharks killed every year, many of them to end up as the main ingredient in shark fin soup. Discovery has a great opportunity to let people know what happens when sharks are removed from an ecosystem or about the barbaric practices that are hurting sharks.

Instead, it seems that almost all of their shows this year are about Great White Sharks, and it seems that most (if not all) of the shows imply a sense of danger. This will have a net effect of making people more wary, not less, of sharks and perhaps make them less likely, not

more likely, to want to support actions that protect sharks which, in turn, make for a healthier ocean overall. Really too bad.

On the other hand, it also seems that half of their Great White shows are based at Isla Guadalupe so it's one last chance to remind you of our August 1-6 trip to that island to observe these majestic animals up close. We have sold the Reef Seekers spots but I know that there are still spots left on the Ocean Adventures portion as well as spots the boat had saved for itself to sell.

So the point is that if Shark Week has you hankering to see what the Great White Fuss is all about, we can likely accommodate you. Just give us a call at 310/652-4990 and we'll work out the details.

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN YAP

As you will see on page 3, we have a fabulous trip planned next year for Yap (which as you may already know, is one of our favorite places to go dive). In fact, we think this will be sooooo popular, that we're offering it twice in 2017.

The general thought is that it's a 13-day trip with 10 days of diving in Yap. We call it "Yap Immersion" because we really want to immerse you in everything that

makes Yap such a special place to dive and to visit. Yap's got Manta Rays, Mandarinfish, sharks, scenic reefs, marvelous macro, historic ties to World War 2, Stone Money, wonderful people, and is just a fabulous place to spend time.

They've also got our partners in crime, Bill Acker and Manta Ray Bay Resort (aka MRB), which is absolutely one of our favorite places to stay. Now granted, there aren't THAT many choices on Yap but MRB would be a top-notch facility no matter where it was. The rooms are lovely and unique, the staff is wonderful (I still marvel at how they learn everyone's name within a day of your arrival), and the location is perfect, being right on the edge of the bay. You couldn't ask for a nicer place to spend your non-diving time.

Speaking of diving . . . we will do up to 24 dives that will include manta dives at the cleaning stations, a shark feed, a Mandarinfish dive, macro dives, reef dives, and wall dives. We will also include a Manta ID program (you'll get a PADI specialty card) which will teach you the ins and outs of manta identification. We'll build on that with what I'm calling "The Manta Project" which is simply that we will track with photos all of the different mantas we see over the course of our time there. (Sometimes we have one at a cleaning station, but sometimes we get seven or eight or more. And without photos to document the different markings, they start to all look alike.) And because a lot of this ID-ing is enhanced by the photos, we also be including photo workshops and critiques throughout the week. The best plan is to do the dives on nitrox, which is included

in the trip package, and for those of you who are NOT nitrox-certified, we'll include a NAUI Nitrox course at no extra charge (other than materials costs).

On the non-diving side, we'll take one day off from diving to do a full island tour that will include delving into Yap's role in World War 2, and giving you a sense of the history of the people, which also includes the unique Stone Money that forms part of their culture. On our final day (non-diving to out-gas before the plane ride home), there will be a morning kayak tour of the mangroves for those interested, followed by an afternoon visiting a local village.

You probably all know by now how much I enjoy going to Yap, and I think this will be a fabulous trip. We're also scheduling this for July (usually we go in March) because the winds have died down then and that means that all the dives sites on both sides of the island should be accessible, as well as it should be the time of the calmest waters and the smoothest rides. Everyone will get a double-occupancy Ocean View room (single supplement available if desired), breakfast daily, all the

stuff I just mentioned and more, airport transfers, and crew/staff tips. Not included are lunches and dinners (figure another couple of hundred bucks) and also not included is airfare (generally around \$1800-2100).

Cost of the "Immerse Yourself in Yap" package will be \$2,995 which I think is a really good deal, especially when you consider everything you're getting. (Of course, I might be a bit prejudiced about this.) The other thing I like - and you will too - is that we're setting this up as a 12-divers max trip. So no big cattle calls to deal with. And even with 12, we'll likely do it as two boats of 6 most days, with me on one boat and Bill on the other. The goal is to give you a really great and unique experience and find the best diving possible on every given day. If this might be of interest to you, print it out page 3 and stick it on your refrigerator as a reminder. And if you have any questions about this (or want to sign up), feel free to contact me directly via e-mail or phone. And to be clear, this is for NEXT year, 2017. So this also means that we can set up an easy monthly payment plan for you if you'd like to spread out the \$2,995.

2016-17 DIVING VACATIONS

August 1-6 • Guadalupe

Isla Mujeres • SOLD OUT!!

Maldives • November 2-18

July 2017 • Yap Immersion



JOIN REEF SEEKERS DIVE CO. & MANTA RAY BAY AND IMMERSE YOURSELF IN YAP NEXT YEAR (2017)

Special 13-day trip (10 days in Yap) includes:

- Ocean View double-occupancy room
 - Breakfast daily
 - Up to 24 dives total
- Manta cleaning station dives
- Manta ID class (sanctioned by PADI)
 - Manta ID project
 - Mandarinfish dive
 - Shark feed
 - Photo workshop
 - Full-day island tour
 - Reef dives
 - Wall dives
 - Macro dives
- Nitrox (training for those not certified)
 - Kayak the mangroves
 - Visit a Stone Money bank
- Village tour showing native life in Yap
 - Departure day late checkout
 - Airport transfers in Yap
 - Dive & hotel staff tips

Two trip dates to choose from:
July 7-19 or July 21-August 2, 2017

\$2,995/diver - limited to 12 divers max/trip

CALL 310/652-4990 TO SECURE YOUR SPOT

**Reef
Seekers**
DIVE COMPANY
BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA

**Manta Ray Bay
RESORT
& Yap Divers**
mantaray.com

SMART FOREIGN TRAVEL

Needless to say, as someone who frequents foreign airports, the events that unfolded in Turkey are a bit unsettling. And even a bit more so when you realize that we'll be going through that airport in November as part of our Maldives itinerary. But you don't need to do this kind of travel blindly.

The U.S. Department of State has a thing called STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program). It's a free service that allows U.S. citizens traveling abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Prior to your trip, you'll receive information about your destination. And while you're on the trip, the feds can contact

you in case of emergency, civil unrest, natural disaster, or whatever.

Again, it's a freebie but you have to enroll each trip individually. You can't just do your travel sked for the year or anything like that. To find out more &/or to register, use this link: <https://step.state.gov/step/>.

HORRIBLE REALIZATION

As I'm preparing this July newsletter, I discovered something horrible: I never sent out a newsletter on June 1. But I don't know which is worse: That I forgot to write it, or that no one e-mailed to ask, "Hey, where's my newsletter?"



HAPPY JULY 4

I don't know why, but it feels weird that the Fourth of July is on a Monday this year. It's almost like we don't get an "extra" day, even though it's still a three-day weekend. Hopefully you have a fabulous Fourth planned where it's to go diving, or hang at the beach and watch fireworks, or something. Whatever your plans, have a blast.

PICTURE PAGE - Red, White, & Blue fish

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2016)



**Red
Coral Grouper**



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WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM



**Blue
Damselfish**



**Red
Squirrelfish**



**White
bellies of sharks**



**Bluefin
Trevally**