

Dive Report



Six members of the dive section recently took part in a dive charter trip out to Rottnest Island. Many thanks to Daz for organising the trip and for managing the logistics around bookings, etc.

On Saturday 22nd October, 3 car loads of divers and dive gear met at the Fremantle Fishing Harbour for 8am, with Daz and Graham chatting up the friendly locals quayside before the charter team arrived with the gear for the day. Once the necessary paperwork was squared away, we joined the other charter divers and loaded our gear onto the boat, a decent sized catamaran and settled down for the trip out to the island.

We anchored off Nancy Cove in Salmon Bay on the south side of the Island sometime around 9:30am. The weather was overcast but warm, a light breeze was blowing but sea conditions were calm. Once the anchor was set and the skipper had run through the dive site briefing, we kitted up in 3 pairs, Steve & June, Daz & Graham and Mike & Colin and entered the water. The boat had a superb rear deck which gave excellent easy access to and from the water which on entry was a brisk 18 degrees. Once the obligatory gasping and temperature acclimatisation was completed, we descended onto the dive site.

Visibility was good, with plenty of interesting ledges, overhangs, nooks and crannies to explore. There were quite a number of crays around as well as mantis shrimp, big eyes and the odd Sambo lazing on the bottom. Maximum depth for us on this dive was 20m. We were in the water about 50 minutes and both came up on about 50 bar of air so a good dive all round.

The skipper decided to move the boat for the second dive, so after some difficulty lifting the anchor (a diver eventually went down with a bag to retrieve it), the BBQ was fired up for lunch and we made a short trip eastwards to the new dive site. Lunch was bbq chicken with salad in a roll, with the option of a snag as well.

At around 1pm, we got ourselves organised and into the water for our second dive. The skipper advised us in the briefing that there were 3 ledges at 18m, 22m and 34m to explore dependent on certification and/or energy level. We cruised between the first two spotting more crays, a good sized Dhufish and the usual array of wrasse, big-eyes and other smaller fish. We saw a beautiful Lion fish along one ledge which was great to watch for a while. It had an air of arrogant superiority about it as if knowing it was something we would not be trying to touch or handle. There were a few abandoned cray pots around some with rope attached but no marker buoys – best avoided at all costs! Needless to say with the passage of time devoid of crays too!

As we made our ascent and safety stop at 5 metres, fist-sized objects came floating past and were eagerly investigated and broken up by the friendly wrasse that seem to follow divers, on arrival at the surface the source was found to be the Japanese diver who was vigorously losing his lunch over the side eeeuw!

Once back on deck, we packed away our gear and headed onto the top deck for a cuppa and a de-brief whereupon we learned that a diver had been killed by a shark off the north west of the island. A timely reminder of the respect we should afford the ocean at all times and to never dive alone.

On the cruise back to Fremantle, we saw a pod of dolphins which is always a pleasant finale to a dive trip. To put the shark attack in perspective, a quick scan of Google (a known source of top quality factual material), tells me that on average in Australia over the past 50 years, 1 person per year has been killed in a shark attack; this is compared to an average of around 87 people per year killed by drowning in water sport related activities.

Once back on land, we stopped in for a refreshing ale at the Little Creatures Brewery and a bit of banter before heading home.

Thanks to all for your company, to Daz once gain for organising the trip and to Mike for partnering this rookie on the trip!

