

SCUBA News

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Just one day left to enter our prize draw to win a fabulous map of the best diving sites in the world. The draw is only open to SCUBA News subscribers so [send us an e-mail now](#) with *World Dive Map Draw* as the subject. [More details here.](#)

This month we've a guest article on diving Belize and training the local wildlife to eat lionfish.

I hope you find the newsletter useful - you can download a pdf version [here](#).



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What's New at SCUBA Travel?



Reasons for Diving Mexico

From the cenotes and caves of the Yucatan, to the Caribbean reefs and the lonely, wild Pacific coast - discover the best places to dive in Mexico.

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Back in Time to PNG's Unspoilt Seas

The diving in Papua New Guinea is spectacular - with waters jam-packed full of fish. Expect walls, reefs and ghostly wrecks.

[Learn More...](#)



Diving Qualifications Compared

We now compare 46 diving training agencies (who knew there were so many?) and give help on moving from one agency to another.

[Learn More...](#)

Letters

St Lucia

Best dives in St Lucia? Would love your recommendations

Thanks

Katie Terry, via Twitter

We think those in the Soufriere marine reserve and the Daini Koyomaru wreck. Do you have any suggestions for your favourite St Lucia dive sites? Contact news@scubatravel.co.uk and we'll pass your message on or reply on [Twitter](#).

Diving Placencia Belize - What you Need to Know before you Go

An article by Tab Hauser

In the southern part of the friendly country of Belize lies a beach town with a knack for cheap happy hours, inexpensive good food as well as plenty of water based things to do. Placencia is a two street village that is about laid back as you can get. It is located at the end of a long peninsula with miles of beaches.



Down here there are no chain or high rise hotels, Starbucks or KFC's. There isn't even a traffic light. What you will find are a few small upscale hotels along with mostly comfortable middle level efficiency type rooms or cottages. Here you will find good restaurants run by locals or a few ex-pats who decided to stay after being here a season.

Getting Wet

While Placencia's prime activities seem like laying out at the beach and the beach bars, there are things to do for those that like to get wet. This includes snorkelling, diving, fishing, paddle boarding and kayaking. The scuba diving and snorkelling are world class being on the world's second largest coral reef system. To see the reef, people arrange tours to take them to the reef islands overseen by the park's department or to a privately run island with a lively beach bar.

For divers or snorkellers no visit to Placencia is complete without taking a boat to Silk Caye and Laughing Bird Caye. We had arranged to do both islands over two days with the Sea Horse Dive Shop located on the dock at the end of the road. The reasons we chose them included the speed and size of the boat and they do small groups. We liked the fact they were able to beach their boat verse the bigger ones that have you shuttle in. Our group maxed out at six divers which means everyone is in the water fast and no one waits long in the boat when divers come up. There were three snorkellers with us that day. We also picked Sea Horse because they are also a full service tour office that we used for our jungle cruise. (The more you book with one company, the better the discounts)



Silk Caye

Our first outing to Silk Caye took one and a quarter hours to go 22 miles off shore to the outer reef. It can be a bouncy ride so if you are prone to sea sickness wear your patch or take the medicines that work for you. Once we were near Silk Caye the water smoothed out and we saw a picture perfect petite palm and sand fringed island. If you ever fantasized about being marooned on a tropical desert island with that someone special for a day, this is the place. Once at the island the snorkellers departed while the divers took the plunge nearby at North Wall. Fifty minutes later the divers joined the snorkellers on the beach for lunch and a swim followed by another dive at White Hole. The snorkellers were guided around the island seeing fish, rays and different coral.



Loggerhead Turtle

Diving here is easy as we followed our dive master Henry. This allowed us to concentrate on seeing the sea life. Along the way Henry would spear the occasional lionfish and try to coax anything down below to eat it. lionfish are an

evasive species here with no natural enemies. The local sea life is not familiar with lionfish and has no desire to eat them. Henry speared several lionfish keeping it on his spear to attract attention. By his second lionfish a five foot nurse shark sensed the injured fish and swam past me to have a look and take the snack. Another lionfish was waved near a hole where a large green moray eel showing its sharp teeth grabbed it in one bite. Getting sharks, eels and other species used to eating lionfish will help the reef system.

Our dive had us swim on a wall that started at 60 feet looking down to the abyss. Here we saw a lot of soft and hard coral and many tropical fish. Our White Hole dive had a pretty queen trigger fish and additional nurse sharks follow us around. From the second dive the boat gathered everyone for a snorkel near Silk Caye where the fisherman clean their catch. Here we saw more sharks and a large loggerhead turtle. It was an exciting swim before the ride back to town.



Laughing Bird Caye

The next day we boated over to Laughing Bird Caye. This Caye has the advantage of being about half the distance as Silke Caye. Laughing Bird Caye is another little picture perfect island but is three times the size of Silk measuring 1.8 acres. This place has a shady area with hammocks and lounge chairs. Here I split my time between diving and snorkelling. The snorkellers saw rays, large parrot fish and coral.

Placencia Village

Placencia is a rustic looking village with two streets. The vehicle street goes to the docks at the end passing a few food markets, restaurants, shops and tour offices. You can park at the very end and walk west to two bars that hang over the water. The other street is really a walkway that the local web sites call the narrowest street in North America. This street runs adjacent to the beach. Here you will find various shops, cottages and small hotels along with a couple of popular beach bar / restaurants.

by Tab Hauser

<http://www.tabhauser.com/>

[You can read the full article here.](#) It tells of other things to do besides diving - jungle walks, chocolate factory, waterfalls, where to eat and drink - everything you need to know to prepare you for your trip.

World-Class Diving at the Galapagos

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Diving News From Around the World

Our round up of the underwater news stories of the past month. For breaking news see our [Twitter page](#) or [RSS feed](#)

[Weird and wonderful animals discovered in deep sea](#)
NOAA Ship Okeanos Explorer returns from the
Mountains in the Deep:



Boaty McBoatface submarine records successful maiden voyage

Robotic submersible probes depths of up to 4,000m near Antarctic Peninsula to obtain unprecedented data on how mixing ocean waters affect climate change



A million bottles a minute: world's plastic binge 'as dangerous as climate change'

A million plastic bottles are bought around the world every minute and the number will jump another 20% by 2021, creating an environmental crisis some campaigners predict will be as serious as climate change.



Ailing Coral Reefs May Get Help From Tiny Partners

Research suggests high-tolerance microorganisms could be key to long-term coral survival



U.N. to Tackle Ocean Health and High Seas Protections

Many people may be aware of the evidence linking climate change to shrinking glaciers, sea level rise and erratic weather, but unaware of a growing body of science also tying warming temperatures to dramatic shifts deep in the ocean.



Marine Reserves help mitigate against climate change

Scientists say reserves can help marine ecosystems and people adapt to five key impacts of climate change: ocean acidification; sea-level rise; increased intensity of storms; shifts in species distribution, and decreased productivity and oxygen availability.

Oil-exploration airguns punch 2-kilometre-wide holes in plankton

The seismic sound blasts made by airguns searching for new oil reserves under the ocean floor can kill large swathes of plankton, the basis of the marine food chain,



leaving the ocean dotted with plankton holes.

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