

Pelorus Island Dive Trip

NQUEC conducted its' first Pelorus trip for 2008 over the May long week end. I headed up to Taylors Beach Friday night with Jessica and my cousin Lianne and we meet the boat and the rest of the group at the Dungeness boat ramp at 6am Saturday morning.

The wind was threatening to pick up as the morning progressed so Craig and his crew had us away at about 6:30am. The trip over was rough and some canopy reconfigurations were required to keep the water out. However, the high tide was ideal and it allowed us to unload the boat very close to our site "Camp NQUEC". We had the camp assembled quite soon and people were preparing for a dive by 9am.



Most divers headed left from the beach towards the southern end of the island to dive the edge of the reef as a miniature wall dive. The visibility was a little disappointing and divers reported an unusually strong current.

After breakfast Jim, Derek, Amanda and I decided on a second dive in the opposite direction. We walked up the beach and entered the water near the Remote Area Dive camp site. We swam towards the first point, where we had found good structure on the last trip in 2007.

This area has small but interesting swim throughs and overhanging formations in about 15m. There seemed to be more fish here and the visibility was also slightly better. We found some good size coral trout, schools of yellow tail fusilier, juvenile red emperor and even a barramundi

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cod. During the return swim we found a large toad fish, a cornet fish and some very colourful nudibranchs.



That afternoon we filled tanks, collected some firewood and set our selves up for Saturday night.

Derek, Amanda and I took advantage of the evening high tide and entered the water for a night dive at about 7pm. We swam out to the edge of the reef in front of the camp site and turned right towards the northern end of the island. We found a very inquisitive cornet fish in shallow water that seemed fascinated by our lights. Things became really interesting when we came into the shallows towards the end of the dive. I found a large crayfish and at the same time Derek and Amanda found a large crab.

That night we dined in typical NQUEC style, had some drinks and enjoyed the peacefulness of the island. Ken continued to defy gravity in his trusty captains chair and the new members were introduced to S.A. camp chair warming.

Sunday started with another fine morning and Jessica and I geared up for an early dive. This time we headed left from the beach and moved along the wall at about 12m. There were plenty of small fish around but the reef seemed to be covered in a layer a particles. This may have been caused by rain as Taylors Beach and surrounds received some rain during the previous week.

After lunch Gary, Mike, Jim and I walked in for a second dive in the same area after deciding to give the coral head at the start of the reef wall a further inspection. We found what appeared to be a series of plastic crates stacked up and anchored at the corners with star-pickets. Near the first of

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these experiments Gary and I found a large green moray eel at the top of a small stone column.

Some of us snorkelled the reef during the low tide that afternoon. The tide had exposed large areas of soft corals and two giant clams were left just below the water line.



Sunday night was another calm evening with a big high tide and Mike, Jim, Jessica and I entered the water near the creek mouth for a night dive. This time we saw more fish and the bottom was covered with tiny reflections from the eyes of cleaner shrimp. We found a squid in the shallows and two crayfish sitting opposite in the same hole.

During Monday afternoon Kens' chair had finally given in, but was re-engineered with tape and cable ties. After a couple of unexpected collapses the decision was made to retire the chair in the camp fire that night. After we returned from the night dive the deed was done and a shrine created to enhance the occasion.



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Mondays weather was also fine and we took the opportunity for one last days diving. Large tides had produced a strong current running up the beach towards the point at the northern end of the island.

Gary, Mike, Jim, Jessica, Derek, Amanda and I headed off for a dive. We planned to move down the sand slope from the large coral tree in order to find a patch of detached coral. We didn't find the coral and I made a wrong turn resulting in a lengthy surface swim! Gary and Mike made no such navigational errors and found the ascent up the sand slope quite pleasant.

We packed up camp by 2pm and we waited for the boat whilst emptying our eskies and reflecting on the trip. We were pretty lucky with the weather over the weekend, which was very welcome after rough conditions during the first few months of this year. We did get rained on whilst loading the boat but we had a fairly smooth return trip.

All in all NQUEC had another successful Pelorus trip. Thanks Steve for once again transporting all the club equipment, and a special thanks is extended to Fritz Quintemeyer for servicing our tanks and compressor. We wish you a speedy and full recovery.

For those that missed out this time, they'll be another Pelorus trip in August.

