

Bermuda Reef Life

(and an Hd app)

By Ron Lucas

At 32.20 degrees North and 64.45 degrees West, little Bermuda is a group of islands totaling about 22 square miles approximately 900 miles north of the Bahamas/Turks & Caicos, the nearest and north most points in the Caribbean. It's location is considered Mid-Atlantic. It is only 640 miles from the USA. Politically we are a self governing British Overseas Territory (like the Falklands).

Bermuda is sub tropical with water temperatures determined primarily by the Gulf Stream and seasonal weather patterns. We enjoy a long tropical summer as the Bermuda (sometimes called the Azores) High settles into place. The ocean warms up in mid summer to around 84 F degrees or 28 C. In winter the Bermuda High dissipates, the Gulf Stream is somewhat moderated and we are influenced by colder air and water coming from the North West. Water temperature January through March can sink on some days to around 66 F degrees or 19 C. We do not have frosts or snow in Bermuda in winter but it can be fairly cool if the wind blows from the North, whereas in summer air temperatures can touch 90 F or 32 C. We can dive year round, but this is weather dependent and fine settled weather occurs mainly May through December. Although Bermuda is known as an insurance/reinsurance centre it does offer superb topside tourism e.g. St. Georges is a World Heritage Site.

We have a huge reef system based on our original land mass when Bermuda was much bigger



Astood Cove. This is a typical South Shore cove offering excellent swimming and snorkelling. Nikon D70s, 18-70 mm kit lens ISO 200, f10 , 1/400 sec



Madiana Boilers

A classic Bermuda wreck view. The 345' passenger steamship Madiana sank in 1903 en route from New York to the West Indies when she struck a reef in heavy seas. All the crew and passengers were rescued. Nikon D70s in Ikelite Housing, Tokina 12-24mm and Ikelite DS125 & DS160 strobes, ISO 200 f13 1/30.



Bermuda Aquarium Museum & Zoo

This is the entrance to BAMZ, the most visited attraction in Bermuda. The support Charities funded development of the app. Bermuda Zoological Society stock photo, camera unknown ISO 400, f5.6 at 1/500



Black Grouper and Butterflyfish. Probably the largest common Grouper in Bermuda Waters the butterflyfish give an interesting perspective. Nikon D70s in Ikelite Housing, 18-70 kit lens and Ikelite DS125 strobe, ISO 200 f6.3 - 0.67 exp comp at 1/160h



Rock Beauty - This very shy angelfish usually gives just one opportunity to take a photo when it turns to glance at the camera before disappearing into the reef. Nikon D70s in Ikelite Housing, 18-70 mm kit lens and Ikelite DS125 strobe, ISO 200 f4.5 - 0.67 exp comp at 1/80.

because sea levels were lower. The reefs feature spectacular hard corals. One could dive a lifetime and not see it all. There are mini-walls, a dense reef platform and spectacular breakers to explore. Most of the diving is suitable for divers of all experience levels. Bermuda also has very deep diving but this has to be prior arranged with a dive operator.

We share our reef species with

the Caribbean but some do not like our winter water temperatures and are not found here. For this reason we also do not have the pretty Azure or large Barrel sponges. We do have other sponges, soft corals and beautiful sea fans. However, we are not really a macro photographer dive centre e.g. there are only 2 know nudibranchs - both unique to Bermuda.



Green Turtle Released after Tagging - The 43 year old Bermuda Turtle Project monitors the health and size of the turtle population in Bermuda. Each year over a two week period researchers and interns net and catch turtles who are weighed, have blood samples taken etc. and then released. Nikon D90 in Ikelite Housing, ambient light, kit 18-105mm lens, ISO 200, f11 at 1/125 sec.

On the other hand we do offer a great range of diving and are the wreck capital of the mid Atlantic and Caribbean with over 150 divable and often historic wrecks. Our reefs are in excellent condition and have not suffered anything like the same ravages of global warming and coral disease as other parts of the world - probably because of our varied water

temperatures. Our beaches are world famous for their fine pink sand.

Our fish tend to be larger and without a doubt we have the greatest number and variety of parrotfish who are a protected species in Bermuda and help keep the corals in good shape. We also have some endemic fish. There is extensive seasonal and all year round protection areas for



Yellowhead Wrasse - In Bermuda this wrasse has evolved with unique coloration and is known locally as a Redback. Nikon D70s in Ikelite Housing, 18-70 mm kit lens and Ikelite DS125 strobe, ISO 200 f6.3 - 0.67 exp comp at 1/80.



Sand Tile Fish - This one found a partner in its reflection in the dome of my housing. Nikon D70s in Ikelite Housing, 18-70 kit lens and Ikelite DS125 strobe, ISO 200 f8 - 0.67 exp comp at 1/1250th sec

many food species and spawning sites. Green turtles who are also protected arrive as youngsters from the Caribbean on the Gulf Stream and feast on our turtle grass. When they approach adulthood they head back to their breeding locations. We are also visited by large numbers of migratory humpback and other whales, January through early May.

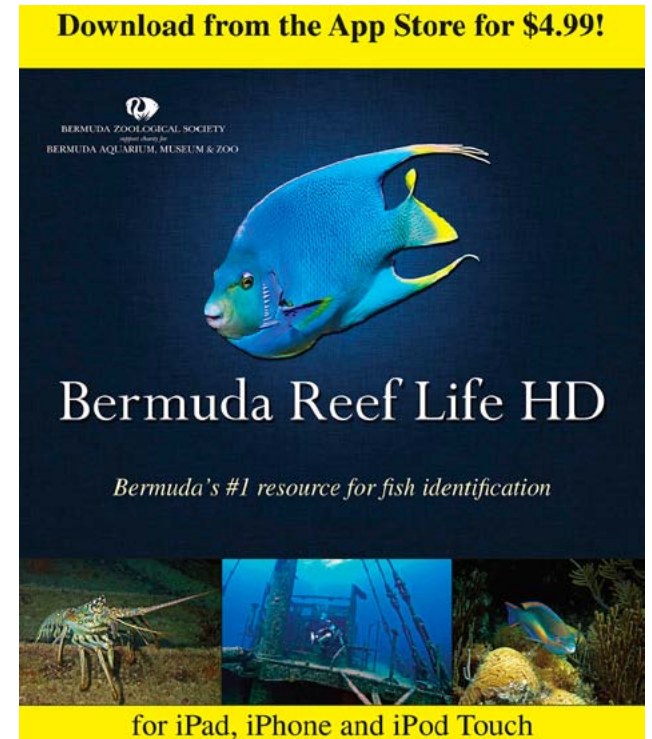
The five star Bermuda Reef Life HD app gives a comprehensive look at Bermuda underwater. It features over 240 high definition images divided into 14 sections showcasing the beauty and diversity of Bermuda beneath the surface. Descriptions for each photo are revealed by tapping on the screen. In addition to fish and other marine life there are photos of favourite reef and wreck sites. A Buoyed Site Map has pop up photos and descriptions and there is also a Map of Marine Protected areas

with related information. The Search feature assists in identifying marine life and learning about dive sites. The Slide Show feature is a great way to view photos on your iOS device or port to a larger screen.

The publishers are Bermuda Zoological Society and Atlantic Conservation Society, the not for profit organisations that support the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo. All underwater images were donated by Ron Lucas and all revenue goes towards the Charities work. Publishing an Android version is being considered.

The app can be used as an introductory Bermuda Reef ID guide and has been endorsed by Anna and Ned DeLoach of REEF who regularly visit Bermuda.

It does not feature the many other species in our waters who do not frequent our reefs such



<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/bermuda-reef-life-hd/id577943581?mt=8>

as Marlin, Tuna, Wahoo and pelagic species and sharks. Reef Sharks are rarely seen in Bermuda waters.

The app will be of interest to Divers, Snorkelers or indeed anyone interested in Marine Life. Children of all ages especially love it.

All underwater photos in this article are from the app.



Ron Lucas

www.uwpmag.com

Wakatobi

by Wade Hughes

Wakatobi: it's not an eco-resort

It was raining heavily. That vertical torrential tropical rain, with warm drops the size of glass marbles. We were in a parade. Four or five cars and small SUVs, traveling in stately line down the village road on Wangi-Wangi. We'd landed minutes before on the Wakatobi private airstrip, and were being ferried down to the port for boat transfers to the resort, or to its dive yacht, Pelagian. Close in, on both sides of the road, distorted and blurred by the rivulets of water sluicing across the windows, we could see the rows of neat, and not so neat, cinder block homes. A few of the residents sat deep in the shelter of their verandahs and watched us pass.

I didn't see any For Sale signs, and an internet search after we'd returned home only offered properties in Wangi Wangi in Australia. But I did find one "Tidy single family home" for sale in Southern Sulawesi for about seventy million Indonesian Rupiah –or about €5000. Back in our informal little motorcade, there were at least a dozen underwater camera systems, paid for with discretionary disposable income, each costing more than that.

Discretionary disposable income is critical for the success of the Wakatobi venture. The fish and marine creatures in the area depend on it. But so do the local people.

We based ourselves at the resort and so, in many instances over three weeks, dived offshore from numerous local villages, frequently close enough to hear the melodic calls to prayer lilting across the water from the local mosques.

Until the Wakatobi resort took

The other side of the coin

For guests, life on Wakatobi island moves at a more leisurely pace. It is strongly connected though with the day to day realities of life in the village and the reefs. Leica M9P. Summicron 28mm ASPH f2.500/11. ISO80.

*Turtle, remora, and barnacle
Common on Wakatobi reefs, hawksbill turtles can seem almost indifferent to human intruders. One swam so close it grazed my shoulder. This one cruised past on the house reef carrying three freeloaders.*

Canon 5D3 Nauticam. Canon EF 100mm F2.8 L IS USM Macro, 100/ f5.6 ISO 200. Manual exposure.





The Village - The value of beauty: Photographs by Robyn Hughes; Canon EOS7D, Canon 18-135. 500/f11. ISO 400.

It's a village like many thousands of others. Remote and isolated, dependent on local natural resources for almost everything from building materials to food, unable to easily share in the benefits of education, health, and opportunity that can be found in the more developed world. It's a stark reminder that while aspiration and opportunity might be universally distributed, opportunity it not. Yet the people in villages such as these are often the unpaid custodians of eco-systems that have great value in the natural scheme of things. Sustainable management of such eco-systems is often a challenge and one not always overcome; people must eat, and they must feed their kids. At Wakatobi, clear-eyed economic management is connecting this custodianship with a market that is willing to pay for it. It takes time, aspects of life can still be tough, but the interconnection between those who live here, and those who come to observe, is creating a circle of goodness that, in the end, benefits everyone

shape, and became a conduit for well-heeled international divers to visit and revel in their splendour, the reefs we visited were the natural fishing grounds for the local villagers. Outrigger canoes still go out to fish. Patches of the reefs still bear the scars of dynamite fishing.

But today, the reefs are being

harvested differently. They are approaching sustainable exploitation, simply because their economic value has been amplified, and more equitably distributed. The Wakatobi model is quite simple. It's the same, in principle, to the game parks in Africa. It reflects some of the characteristics of successful degraded

farm-land recovery programs in the US and Australia. And, of course, it is similar in many respects to a number of other marine park based resorts.

What makes this model successful is that economics, not conservation, heads the agenda. Improvement of the economic and social well being of the people

who depend on the reefs for their livelihoods is the principal objective. Conservation of the reefs and the biodiversity they harbor and support flows as a natural outcome of the focus on economics.

The economic engine, of course, is the revenue delivered by the incoming guests of Wakatobi resort.



A signal blenny puts out his silent but highly visible call for companionship. (Silent to human ears, that is. To other blennies,...who knows...?) Canon 5D3 Nauticam. Canon EF 100mm F2.8 L IS USM Macro 100/f16. ISO 200. Inon strobes. Manual exposure.

Guests pay the resort, the resort pays for local goods, services, and jobs, invests in substantial education and training programs, pays for electricity and maintenance for the village on the resort island. In return, the locals protect the reef, learn and adopt sustainable fishing practices. From all this, the resort turns a profit, new opportunities and choices open up for local villagers and their kids, pressure

comes off the reefs, natural abundance returns, and attracts the next batch of guests who want to dive in Eden. And so it goes. The openness of the local population to embrace new ideas, Wakatobi's foresight management skills, and the discretionary disposable income earned in a thousand vocations round the globe, all connect here.

It does require significant



Anything but lady-like, two demoiselles go lip to lip to assert ascendancy. Canon 5D3 Nauticam. Canon EF 100mm F2.8 L IS USM Macro 100/f13 ISO 200. Inon strobes. Manual exposure.

portions of those incomes to gain entry into this circle of mutual benefits. Wakatobi offers high levels of comfort and service, as well as supporting the various educational and social programs required to maintain its business model, so its not inexpensive. This perhaps serves as an indicator of the true value of natural resources and the real costs of conserving them.

But, spend one afternoon with the people and kids of the local village. Take one dive on a deeply undercut wall, draped with soft corals, sea fans, massive, sagging ancient sponges, and alive with hosts of fish. Do that, and it becomes clear. Wakatobi is not an eco-resort. It's far more than that.

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Ikelite housing for a Canon 5D MKII, Ikelite 8" dome port (no scratches) for a Canon fish eye lens, Ikelite ports Canon 17-40mm and a macro 100mm IS lens. I am based in Scarborough, U.K. £1100 ovnoroaminrobin@hotmail.com

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For sale – Aquatica housing 5D, 8 inch dome, dome shade and canon 5D body

Aquatica housing 5D, 8 inch dome, dome shade and canon 5D body including 2 spare batteries and spare charger for sale £1600 + p&p.Housing:Aquatica 5D housing - good to 90m, 8" optical acrylic dome port - some minor scratches but not visible in photos, 8" dome shade / guard, for wide angle lenses, Spare O ringCameraCanon 5D, 3 Batteries, 2 Chargers, StrapAll for £1600+ p&p, will accept paypal, or cashPlease feel free to ask any questionThe equipment has not been used for a while but I have just upgraded to a canon 5D mark II package so have this for sale.I am based in London and if you wish to come round and have a look/examine the equipment prior to parting with your money we can arrange that.

Email: martin.abela@hotmail.co.uk [Ref:c145]

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