Cape Verde Expedition 2013

Situated off the North West Coast of Africa are these group of islands.

These are places of desert and ocean.

Our ship for the expedition is called the Tortuga, a splendid tall ship with all the commodities you can think of to be able to work in good conditions, we also have two speed boats for easy access to dive places and land places.

What is happening is caused by the climate change and the massive fishing. Also massive tourism in some parts as tourists come here to flee from the cold. They are from Britain, Norway, Sweden and Finland.

On diving we have been able to see that there are no pelagic species, turtles because of the treatment they have received. They have long gone. Maybe some odd one on migration.

We have seen puffers or balloons, trigger fish, flute some very rare, trumpets, surgeons, the coral species have also had a battering.

There is no decompression chamber here, the nearest one is in Senegal, 500 Km in distance.

Water and petrol are exclusive items, like treasure.

The group of people with who we are working are Capeverde Diving. Bob and Ramiro are awesome. As we all say everyday: no stress here.

On the pier today we caught people with illegal fishing and finning.

Huge sandstorm and apparently it is coming for more. The height of the waves, very thin sand that gets everywhere and strong winds demand for very good navigational skills but also you must be a little crazy. It is the only way to do all in the right way eventually.

Underwater as on land this is a place of barren sand, salt and knife cutting rocks. Many wrecks talk for themselves. The water is at a good 22. That is very positive.

The taste of water going into our dried mouths makes you realize the real value it has and give thanks for all we have. Something so simple yet so essential for life. We also use it with sugar to give us glucose and cure. Our material as our bodies is receiving a good beating but the moral is very high and that is the most important thing.

Here some of the last turtles remaining on the planet come to lay their eggs at night. That is what makes it an imperative place to preserve. Coral bleaching is also happening very fast. We have been able to protect some areas persuading the locals and the authorities

Then there is the exploitation of children as in all these kind of countries. That is even more imperative for governments to act upon, and what do they do, the same , nothing. That is why we must do all that we can. We have provided some with clothing, food, water and medicines but some adults prefer some tobacco to the rest. Tobacco is always a good currency to have.

A good place we have found where there was plenty of plankton and nutrients. Then some great encounters with a zebra pipe fish which is extremely rare nowadays and a huge ray. But it has come at a price as we have been lost at sea during 25 min. because of the huge currents and waves.

With the strong currents a reel is a must that we are using, as are double units. Have you ever heard of sea nettles? I tell you they exist they are tiny, semi transparent and the pain they inflict is unimaginable. One of my fingers has had blisters and pain for four days now.

What is also a concern is that of classes. But people here always have a smile for you. Many are interested in what you say, they also explain what is going on. Simple.

This is not only a place for diving, windsurfing and surf are at the top of the list. But dangerous as underneath is cutting stone so Sharp you could use it as a scalpel. Personally tested.

The caves are also very interesting as they are full of different species and nudibranchs like the pink clavelina and cleaning shrimp, which give you a free pedicure if you put your fingers in front of them and they feed from it, that use them as a safety place from the few predators there are, mainly rays and morays. It combines perfectly.

Buracona, the blue eye is an example.

But this is a place for serious diving, professional diving with many a skill being aware about drifting in the middle of a vast nowhere

The different islands had been a hideout for pirates and corsairs and you can still smell that in the air. Some islands are windwards, others leewards. Navigatonal skills are a must here, we even have some local coins which picture a tall ship and are called escudos as in pirate times. In some places there are still fortresses with their cannons.

Places with lush vegetation, others barren wastelands where people and their animals try to adapt to the difficult conditions. Places like Pedra da Lume, Terra Boa make you think of the Californian deserts with different kinds of cactus. In other parts the sugar cane plantations and churches take up the land. The strong wind is with us every day all the time, it catches the ships sails and we really move at a very fast speed from island to island. On land we have been able to get some things and have even sent a couple of postcards which I find great in these days of messaging and mailing. As I always say, in nature you can find everything you need as we are nature. But globalization tends to push people away from this and it does. They have already began many constructions of new resorts and hotels causing damage to the liquid element. Some identify themselves more with somewhere like Jamaica than with the African Continent to which they belong. But they know they are African with a majority of Catholic.

Here there are no riots or conditions of violence. The law as to call it is NO STRESS and is on many signs. They like to take things easy.

What really stroke us was the state of the corals, no wonder they are in third place of endangered species. And the one day we were out on the reef gearing up to dive and I saw a dark grey fin sticking out of the water. Now I've been working with sharks all my life, they are one of my specialities with cetaceans and large mammals. I couldn't believe it what was it doing around there as they have never had this species there. So I told them all to wait and I went in, water was quite murky with poor visibility due to a storm the night before, but then suddenly I saw it, a great white in front of me, I took a picture, quite blurry due to the conditions, stayed watching it as it was watching me and then swam off. The rest of the people couldn't believe it.

About the author

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