

# SHAPE Sub Aqua Club (SSAC) 2014: A Year In Review

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△Hurghada, Egypt - Dolphins

By the time you read this, I will have already returned from another great trip with SHAPE Sub Aqua Club (SSAC). January 23rd through February 5th we will be in Phuket, Thailand for scuba diving on a Chinese sailing vessel called The Junk. This will be followed by a few days in Cambodia exploring the famous Temple of Angkor Wat, and then a few more days in Northern Thailand at Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai visiting The Golden Triangle. But, for now, I'd like to share with you a review of the outstanding places we went to and exciting things we did in 2014. I try to keep the SHAPE community apprised of the scuba trips through articles in the SHAPE Community Life, but 2014 really got away from me and I find that I have not kept up. So, here is a short overview. In April 2014, forty-two SSAC members went to Sipadan-Kapalai Resort in Bor-



△Hurghada, Egypt - Divers



△Cairo, Egypt

neo, Malaysia. This was my second trip to this paradise consisting of open air huts perched on stilts over a sea-covered sandbank. Diving was diverse from schools of Bumphead Parrotfish the size of men to Nudibrachs the size of a small child's fingernail. Many of us were fortunate enough to see a Blue-Ringed Octopus and a Flamboyant Cuttlefish. The scuba diving trip was followed by trek up Mt. Kinabalu where we spent two days covering a distance of 8.72km and experiencing an elevation change from 1,866m to 4,095.2m. It was a grueling two days which elicited more than a few groans from many members, but it also created lasting memories and provided all of us with a great sense of achievement.

September 2014 saw eighteen SSAC members in the southern part of Egypt's Red Sea near the port of Marsa Alam for live-aboard scuba diving. Scuba diving the Southern Red Sea is considered a bit demanding, with the big draw to this area being the Brother Islands. In an exposed location in the middle of the Red Sea, these two islands are vulnerable to the whims of

nature, especially the prevailing winds, making for challenging diving conditions. However, the rewards were certainly worthwhile. Not only were the wall dives filled with stunning underwater scenery, the area provided a great opportunity to see a variety of large pelagic fish such as Hammerhead Sharks. Our days were filled with exhausting yet exhilarating diving! We then headed inland for The Nile (no scuba diving), where we spent five days cruising from Luxor to Aswan, visiting such sites as Edfu, High Dam of Aswan, Abu Simbel, and Valley of the Kings.

And if that wasn't enough, we then stopped over



△Hurghada, Egypt - Cowtail Stingray



△Hurghada, Egypt - Cuttlefish



△Hurghada, Egypt

in Cairo to see The Giza Pyramids, The Great Sphinx, and the Egyptian Museum.

November 2014 we were back in Egypt, but this time in the Hurghada area of the Red Sea. This was the seventh



△Edfu Temple, Egypt



△Borneo, Blue Ring Octopus

time we have taken this specific trip in what we now refer to as the Annual Hurghada Trip and it was, by far, SSAC's biggest trip yet with 47 divers and 19 family members. For a lot of new divers, this is the culmination of recently learned scuba skills and is, by way, a very nice reward to having tak-



△Borneo - Flamboyant Cuttlefish

In addition to these trips, SSAC conducted four Basic Open Water Diver courses, one Master Diver course, one Advanced Open Water course, and one Nitrox course in 2014. It was a busy, yet exciting and adventurous, year and 2015 is working out to be equally exciting with our trip to Phuket, Thailand at the end of January, the Philippines in April, and Egypt in November.

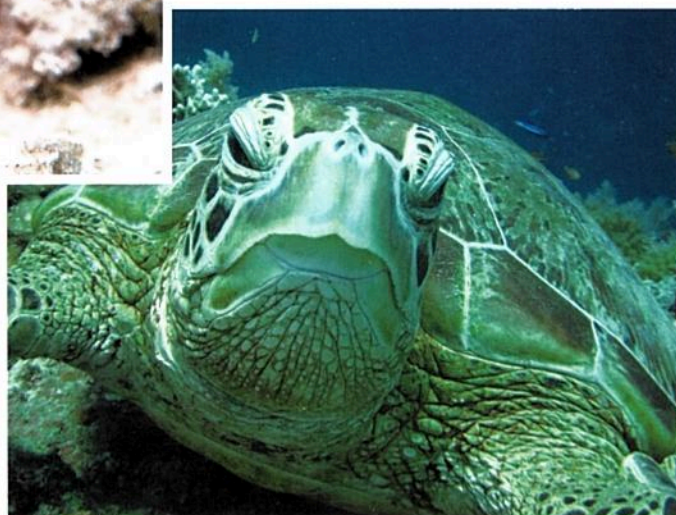
en their open water certification dives in a Belgian lake or quarry. During this trip, 19 divers completed their Advanced Open Water certification and 17 divers completed their Nitrox certification. Even though I have scuba dove in the Red Sea ten times, it still continues to amaze me. This trip was no exception. We were treated to a small pod of dolphins swimming within arm's length. We also saw a group of six Eagle Rays (the most I've seen together is two) and a Cowtail Ray, which I've never seen before.



<△Borneo - Ribbon Eel



△Mt Kinabalu, Borneo



△Borneo - Turtle

If you are interested in more information on our trips or in scuba certification, please contact us at [shapesubaqua@yahoo.com](mailto:shapesubaqua@yahoo.com) or visit our website at [www.shapesubaqua.com](http://www.shapesubaqua.com). We welcome Shapians of all scuba certification levels and ability.