There are no translations available.

The coral wonderland of Lapus Lapus

Dr. Janja Ceh (Coral Microbial Ecology, Murdoch University, Western Australia).

Reef building corals have been forming the largest living structure on the planet over the past 200 million years. Often referred to as ‘the rainforests of the ocean’, coral reefs are amongst the most diverse ecosystems on earth. Not only are they ecologically and economically important- everybody who has been lucky enough to encounter their mesmerizing variety of colorful and wondrous organisms will agree that coral reefs are one of nature’s masterpieces.

However, with the alarming rates of coral degradation caused by human impacts including overfishing,nutrient enrichment, the physical destruction of coral reefs (e.g. dynamite and cyanide fishing) and the effects of global climate change it becomes more and more challenging for the recreational diver to find an attractive diving destination.

Coral bleaching events have become more and more common and the recent 2010/2011

La Nina eventand its associated significant rise in sea surface temperature have caused

an irretrievable loss of hard coral coverage on many reefs in the Indo-Pacific region,

including top diving destinations in Australia, India, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

As a coral scientist I have encountered events of coral bleaching in several countries over

the last years; therefore the healthy hard corals around the tiny, laid back island

of Malapascua (right at the Northern tip of Cebu Island) came as a real surprise to me.

Particularly the coral coverage and species richness in the coral gardens of

Lapus Lapus on the Northern side of Malapascua never cease to astonish.

Hard corals as well as soft corals along with anemones, sponges, tunicates, etc.

are thriving and macro highlights like mantis shrimps, nudibranches and the tiny

and fascinating pygmy sea horses can be encountered in nearly every dive.

Like in most places in the area local fishing practises along with population growth

and increasing popularityas a tourist destination are directly associated with environmental

challenges and certainly add a need for responsible and sustainable development of the island.

However the corals of Malapascua seem to be minimally impacted by the consequences

of climate change and together with several conservation efforts in place

(e.g. full-time patrols of the Gato Island marine sanctuary

to prevent illegal and destructive fishing practises, buffer zones along

cleaning stations frequently visited by thresher sharks), the island is likely to become a

success story in marine conservation and preservation.

Several diving resorts around the island offer their services, however the main diving activity seems be to revolving around the ‘Ocean Vida Beach and Dive Resort’ with its’ attached 5-star Dive Center ‘Sea Explorers’ and funky little bar.

An eclectic mix of incredibly friendly and competent staff provides all-round service and entertains with live music.

For further information visit www.ocean-vida.com