

Aldora Adventures

Aldora Divers continues to expand the horizon of diving opportunities in Cozumel beyond the traditional confines of the Marine Park. As of March 15, 2014 we now can offer serious possibilities for discovery and excitement for the very experienced diver...that is Aldora Adventures.

As you may know Aldora opened up diving on the eastside of Cozumel several years ago and has allowed its divers to explore very interesting and pristine sites, and do so when no others in Cozumel can dive at all.

More recently Aldora opened its Polar Express service, which offers the opportunity to enjoy pristine dives to the north- west part of the island which has proven very popular, especially with those who wish to partake in underwater hunting.

Aldora Adventures is another big leap forward in excitement and exploration.

It started with the discovery of large Caribbean Reef sharks that seem to be in a catatonic state, while remaining stationary in a cave. Such as the semi mythical “Cave of the Sleeping Sharks” that once existed near Isla Mujeres. That is behavior that these sharks physiologically should not be able to do.

Subsequently Aldora has been able to locate four more such locations nearby and has identified several other areas of interest that deserve more exploration. We can guaranty that the sun will come up tomorrow, but we cannot guaranty that the sharks will be there, even though we have seen them on all 25 trips to the area. However we can guaranty that those fortunate to visit the area will enjoy a spectacular and unique diving experience.

Thus Aldora Adventures will now provide guided services to these areas, but only for the most experienced and capable divers. The reason is that these locations are well north of the tip of Cozumel Island and out in the open ocean where waves and currents can be strong, and little support or help can be available, other than what Aldora itself brings along. The following will describe the equipment and procedures that will be utilized.

Equipment

The boat used will have redundant engines and electrical systems, as well as communication radios that can also display GPS coordinates of each diver's location when on the surface.

The boat will also carry extensive first aid equipment and large oxygen tanks, that is as well as all standard safety equipment, and of course the boat will receive much greater preventive maintenance attention and only leave port if in tip top condition.

Each diver will be issued a Nautilus UW GPS/Radio with which to communicate and signal the position to the boat and in emergency mode broadcast to the Mexican Coast Guard. Each diver must also have their own SMB and means of deploying it while underwater. Each Diver will be given a Jon line and Reef hook and briefed on their use.

All divers must be Nitrox certified and use Nitrox tanks to be provided for most dives.

Divers

All divers must be disciplined and have demonstrated to Aldora that they have great buoyancy skills, confidence, and fitness with the ability to swim against currents for extended periods. In addition they must have demonstrated to Aldora that they are capable of safely deploying the SMB while underwater.

No cameras or video equipment will be allowed to protect both the divers and keep the environment pristine. Each diver will be given a professionally produced DVD of the dive sites and sleeping sharks.

General Procedures

Each dive group will consist of a maximum of 4 divers and two dive guides. The initial drop will be by one DM who makes sure that the location is correct, that the currents are not crazy and then return to the surface where the rest of the group will descend together.

BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF STRONG SWIRLING CURRENTS, IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT THAT THE GROUP STAY IN CLOSE CONTACT DURING THE ENTIRE DIVE

Once at the bottom each diver will be checked at a place some distance from the Shark Cave to make sure that all have adequate air supplies, are comfortable and ready to proceed. One DM will then enter the cave to make sure that it is occupied by a shark. That is while one DM stays with the group outside.

Then, one at a time a diver will enter the cave with the DM, being careful not to disturb the shark, and certainly getting no closer to the shark than is the DM. After a short period the diver will return to the group and the others will take their turn.

After viewing the sharks, the group will then explore the rest of the reef, looking out for the frequent squadrons of spotted eagle rays, pristine corals and sponges. Given that all of this dive will be a flat profile at depth the dive time, even with Nitrox, will be in the order of 45 minutes or less.

During the entire dive one DM will have a float on the surface to aid the boat captain in following the group;; that is unless the boat is anchored.

AGAIN, IT IS VITAL THAT THE GROUP STAY TOGETHER, ESPECIALLY DURING THE ASCENT.

Each trip will include 3 dives and include lunch and water, basically taking the entire day.

The cost will be \$197 per diver plus taxes but there is no Marine Park fee. Weather will determine if we can safely make such trips, and the go/no go decision can be made on an hourly basis.

Keep in mind that as of March 15, 2014 we have had only 2 months of exploration, and not everyday. We know that Caribbean Reef sharks are usually found here but not always do we find them sleeping. However, even without sharks all of these sites offer absolutely pristine excitement.

Identified Dive Sites

El Puente (the bridge)

The El Puente site is where we first encountered a sleeping shark. The max depth is 106 ft with an average of about 90 feet above the coral, thus nitrox 32 will be used for this site. The area where we found the shark is more like the underpass of a freeway, not so much a cave, thus the name El Puente

Arches

The Arches reef is where we found another sleeping shark, but the shark is not the only interesting thing there. One rainbow shaped arch is at least 30 ft at its base, but only about 3 ft in diameter. No one has been able to explain how coral could grow in such a fashion. The maximum depth is 92 ft.

La Loma (the Hill)

The La Loma formation is much like a mound or small hill. A sleeping shark can be seen here under a ledge of the coral head, not in a cave. We have seen large schools of Eagle Rays here but that may be seasonal.

El Puente Dos

El Puente Dos is a deep dive with a very long and dark cave in which we have always seen sharks sleeping. Given the very strong currents at El Puente Dos this site must be restricted to only the very advanced divers. Max depth 100 ft.

La Guarderia (Day Care)

La Garderia is a shallower dive with milder currents and a max depth of 74 ft. Here you will find massive schools of both reef fish and pelagic varieties with low profile coral as a base.

Lamomia Reef

Lamomia Reef is much the same as La Guarderia but slightly shallower.

There remains a number of other sites that offer promise and we will be exploring them to add to this list.

Aldora Divers