

Pictures from Sharm November 2009

Real deja-vu for 2009, Not only did we return to Sharm but we also used the Snapdragon, the same live-aboard we used in 2008. The party consisted of Richard Vivian, Ken Blay, Tim Dews, Keith Walter, Emrys Kirkman and Paul Taylor on his first Red Sea trip and a first live-aboard. Not quite such a good itinerary as 2008, we did not make it to Abu Nuhas and we seemed to spend the whole of the first day in the Ras Katy. Ras Umm Sidd area, which was ok but something we have done many times before and is really day boat territory. This seemed to put the whole week back a day resulting in only a couple of dives at Tiran. We also did dives at Stingray Station and the Alternatives, both just beyond Ras Mohammed. Shallow scenic dives, again ok but no real substitute for Abu Nuhas. We also dived the Thistlegorm 3 times, First dive was a late afternoon dip in a strong current and very poor viz. We did an internal exploration on this dive as it was better viz inside and was out of the current. Paul was in heaven having achieved a personal goal of diving the Thistlegorm. A night dive on the Thistlegorm was also offered but we all decided to skip it as we were scheduled for an early morning dive there anyway. Those guests who did the night dive reported current still strong and viz still poor.- we did not miss much. What a difference a day makes- next morning we had virtually zero current and the best viz I ever remember on the Thistlgorm. You could easily see the railway engines from the deck. So good that we did another dive before moving on. The Ras Mohammed dive was also a good one. Sammi, our dive guide started us at Anemone City and we did the deep blue crossing before hitting the wall at Shark Reef - awesome. Main theme of the holiday this time seemed to be Morays and we even got them free swimming several times. A baby cuttle fish also provided some excellent picture opportunities, don't think we have seen one in the Red Sea before. Having trashed my Canon Powershot 540 last November, this year I came with 2 cameras (both obtained on Ebay at ridiculously low prices). Managed to complete the whole week with a functioning underwater camera set-up -cracked it. We stayed in the Tropicana Hotel for our last night, better than the Tiran Hotel I thought. Flights were by Thomas Cook from Bristol. No major problems apart from the lack of leg room.

There was one sad event whilst we were in Sharm, the dive boat Coral Princess sank in 1000m of water on its way to Tiran at about 4am. Sadly a Spanish couple were not recovered and are presumed drowned. This boat was moored next to us at the Thistlegorm and its picture is included below. There seem to be serious doubts about the sea worthiness of this boat and the competence of the crew, when we left the skipper was in jail pending an enquiry. It also raises general questions about safety on live-aboards. Following a series of incidents a few years ago, dive safety is taken very seriously and a major part of dive briefings, but boat safety, life rafts etc are never mentioned in my experience. I think we will see a change in this area once the enquiry into the Coral Princess is concluded if not before.

Ras Katy - 19M	Temple PM and Night Dives 18m	Ras Ghozlani - 30M
Stingray Station - 25M	Beacon Rock PM & Night Dives	Dunraven - 30M
Shag Rock, Kingston - 26M	Shab Abu Danaba - 15M	Thistlegorm (3 times) - 30M
The Alternatives PM & Night Dives	Small Passage - 23M	South Lagoon PM & night dives
Tiran, Jackson Reef (twice) - 30M		



Guppy sitting on a piece of coral at Ras Mohammed



Spiny Lion Fish at Ras Katy



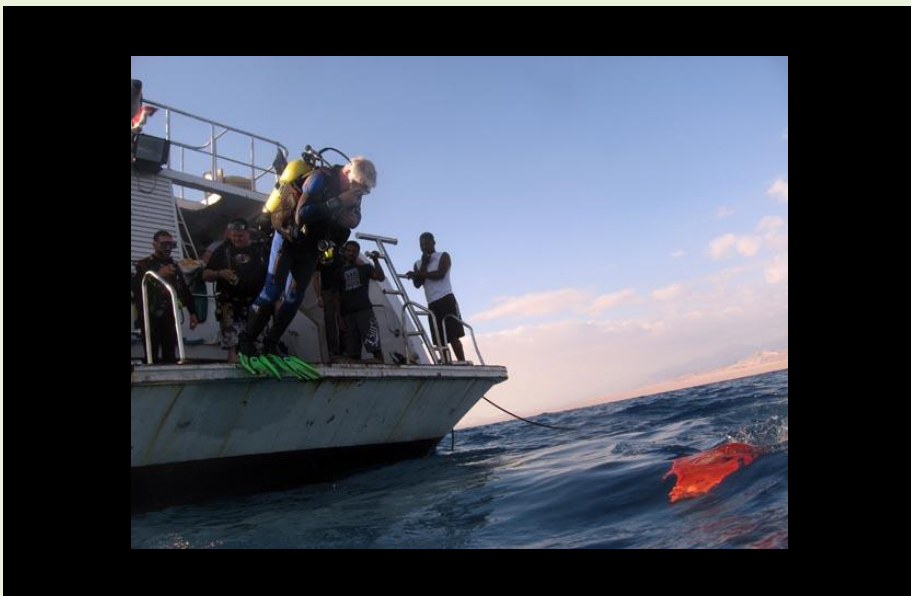
Moray on night dive at The Alternatives



Pipefish at the Alternatives



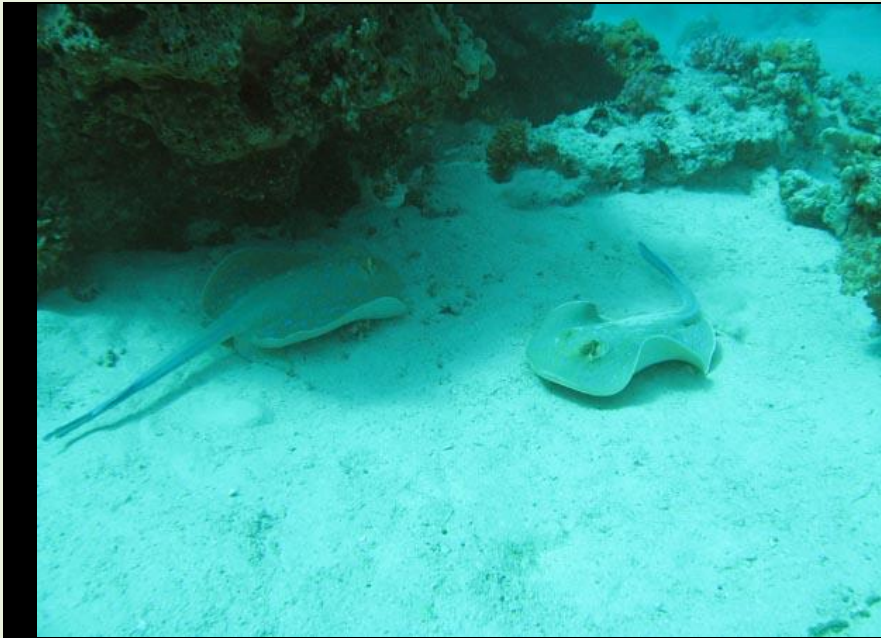
Pufferfish fully inflated, obviously thought we were a threat



Ken about to enter the water - the Red blob is Tim's fin



Nice soft coral at Ras Mohammed



Blue Spot Rays dancing at Ras Katy



Our only Turtle, found on the reef near the Dunraven
Pretty Coral block at Stingray Station



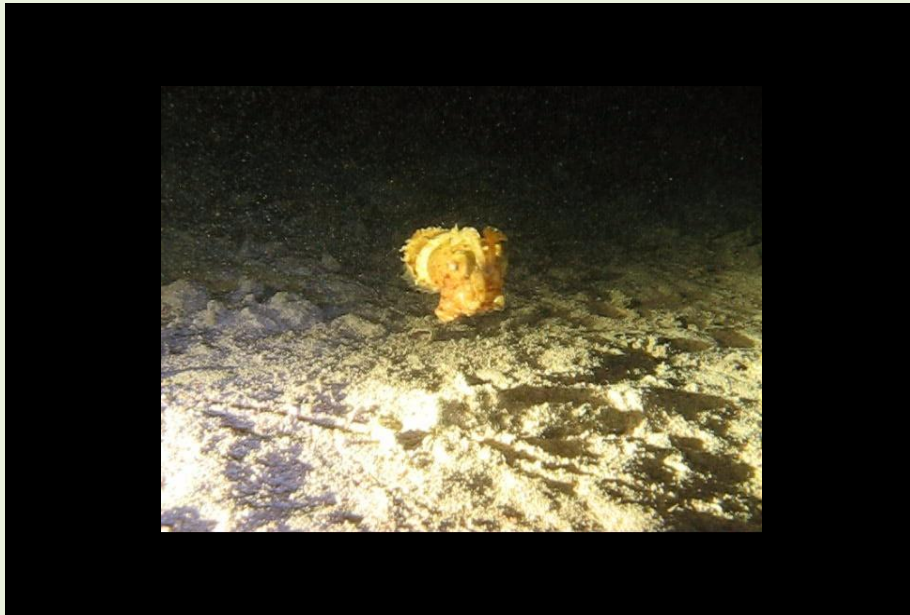
Two Box fish playing on the reef wall at Jackson



The top mounted boilers of the Kingston



Coral and misc fish at the Kingston



Pretty multicoloured angel fish at Ras Ghazlani



A baby cuttle fish found at South Lagoon during a night dive

The check dive at Ras Katy



Pretty Coral block at Stingray Station



Antheas at Ras Mohammed



Not sure what these small green fish are called, Always hard to get a good picture as they dive into the coral as you approach. These



The reef top at Stingray Station - need les to say we saw no sign of any Stingrays

were bolder than normal



A solitary Bannerfish at Temple, normally they are in pairs



Batfish at Temple



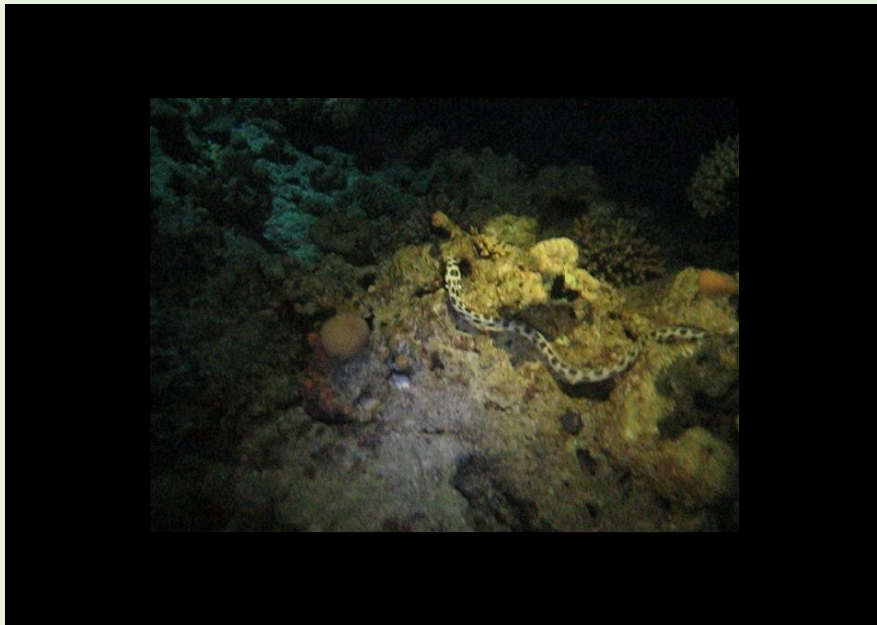
Butterfly fish at Temple



Clownfish at Temple



Fusilier Fish at Ras Katy



Spotted Snake Eel at Temple night Dive

Lionfish at Temple



Large Pufferfish at Temple



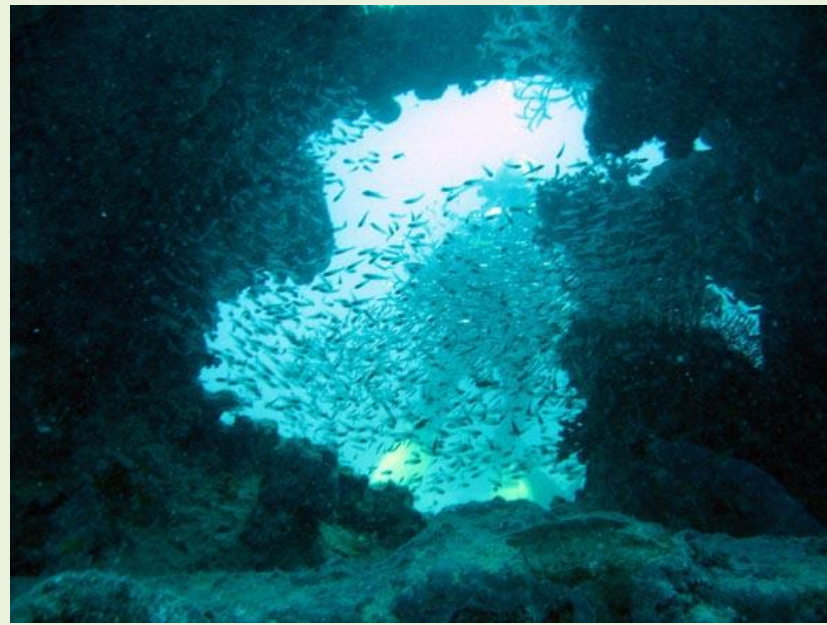
Shoal of Squid at night



Emrys taking a picture of the glassfish inside the smoke box



The railway engine on the starboard side of the Thistlegorm



The glassfish that Emrys had just taken a picture of



Me on the bridge at The Thistlegorm, The boat on the extreme right of the picture is the Coral Princess which sank less than 24hours later en-route to Jackson Reef



The 'Team' swimming over the remains of the Yolanda at Ras Mohammed



Moray at Ras Mohammed being approached by Captain Nemo



Coral Grouper at Ras Mohammed



One huge Napoleon at Ras Mohammed



Ken swimming through the deck of the Kingston, always beautiful corals and alive with colourful fish