

Flat Rock Club Dive Sat 13 Mar 04

John Kelley

Well, the Club dive on this day turned out to be a beauty. Why? Because conditions were pleasant – wind, current, and sea – and it was in a different place. But it's Flat Rock you say. Yes, but the dives were in the NW and Northern areas of Flat Rock – a place that seems to be rarely dived by the Club.



Christine & Longfin Bannerfish



Linton & Christine & fan coral

The first dive was interesting and perhaps the highlight was the 3m Shark Ray that cruised by. Its dorsal fins stand so high and sharp that it cuts an impressive silhouette. It was a bit too far into the murkiness for a good photo. Another fish was at the other end of the size scale. It was the tiny Pyjama Cardinalfish tucked deep in the coral branches but of a striking colour pattern and with a huge eye.



Pyjama Cardinalfish



Netted Sweetlip under ledge

For the second dive we tried Manta Bommies but, because it was too rough, returned to the Northern area of Flat Rock. We dived in about 18 metres near a small wall with some fan coral and a lot of fish. The wall dropped off gently to 25-30 metres on the sand. A leopard shark cruised by. Some divers went further around to the north and swam with a Shark Ray and a number of leopard sharks and captured some good digital images.

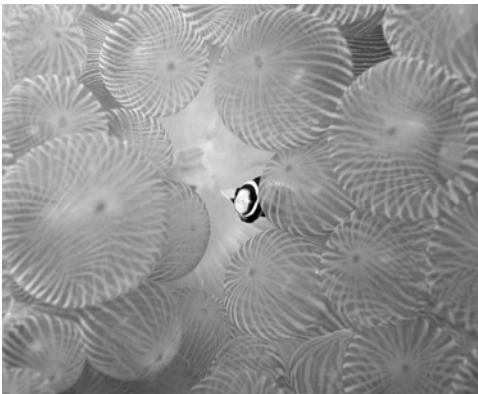


Linton in limbo



Red Firefish

Christine pointed out the very tiny Saddleback Anemonefish. There are a number of Anemonefish and we have all seen many of them. This one is so strikingly pretty with its black, white and yellow trimmings and so cute. It's smaller than the bulbous ends of the anemone in which it bravely hides and looks out.



Saddleback Anemonefish

I thought the Saddleback Anemonefish had made my day but a small school of Golden Travelly in their silver splendour with their contrasting yellow fins (probably late juveniles) made it a difficult choice. Trigger fish, Zebra fish, Fire fish, lobsters and a Cake Urchin with its blue test and orange spines (what do they use all these colours for?) kept adding to the tally of photos in the digital. It must have been a yellow day for me as the large Tall Fin or Teira Batfish (*Platax teira*) had their bland silver grey bodies set off by bright yellow pectoral fins. The fins looked out of place as though some child in that well known children's game, "Pin a pectoral on the Platax", had pinned the wrong coloured fins on the batfish!



Clam and burrowing Matha's Sea Urchin



Christine, Feather Stars & Spiky coral

It is certainly a place that's worth more diving.