

Trip Report: Mayor Island, 6th September 2009

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New dive spots are always exciting, so when we were given the chance to dive Mayor Island we jumped at it. Located 22 nautical miles out from Tauranga and with a marine reserve established in 1993 the island offers some enticing possibilities.



Unfortunately the trip didn't go entirely to plan, and felt a bit like the Agatha Christie play 'And then there were none'. Five of us were supposed to be on the trip, but at the last minute Matt had to work. Then Sylvia woke on the Sunday morning with a really bad cold and cough. Three of us made it on to the boat, but when Chris tried to descend his sinuses were completely blocked. James and I did manage the first dive, but as James exited the boat for dive 2 he managed to catch his reg hose and tear it open. That just left me wondering what disaster was about to strike and ruin my dive. Thankfully a quick kit swap meant that James was back in the water and we had a nice relaxed dive.

Our first dive spot was Boulder Bay, which is located on the western side of the island. Named for the huge boulders that are scattered around on the sandy bottom the site initially looked pretty barren. However, once you started to investigate all the cracks and gaps underneath and between the boulders it was clear that the marine life was just shy.

For our second dive we had planned to cruise along a wall in the marine reserve, but the swell was too big, so we settled for a more sheltered spot just on the edge of the reserve. Interestingly, although many fishermen seem to object to reserves and claim that they don't do any good, all the cray pots were lined up as close to the reserve as legally possible! Certainly once you got underwater you could tell that we were by the reserve as there was a lot more fish life.

So the verdict after our first trip to a new location – we are definitely going back. The diving on this particular visit was not outstanding, but with such a large swell we were very limited and couldn't do any of the pinnacles or walls. There is lots of room on the boat, both inside and out and the BBQ on the way back was excellent. We may even organise a live-aboard trip as there are 9 bunks down below. Many thanks to Tony and Nicki the new owners of Dive HQ Tauranga for organising everything and for the skipper and crew of the MV Enterprise for making it a very relaxed and enjoyable trip.

Finally – talk about the world being a small place. The skipper has a picture hanging on the cabin wall of a yacht moored up in London, right next to where I used to live. It is the first time I've seen my old house in 3 years.