

Trip Report: Rainbow Warrior, 13th April 2009

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Having spent three relaxing days in the far north, it seemed a perfect idea to break the journey home with a couple of dives on the Rainbow Warrior. Shane and Julia from Northland Dive obliged, by offering to pick us up from Matauri Bay and give us the chance of two dives on the Warrior. We were joined for the day by Mike, Tony and Chris.

The history of the Warrior is well known, and after being sunk in Auckland Harbour in 1985 she was towed to her final resting place in Matauri Bay. She's just a short boat trip from the shore and is lying in about 25m of water, a perfect depth to extend your bottom time using enriched air nitrox. The wreck is fairly small, only 40m in length which makes it relatively straightforward to fully explore the wreck in one or two dives.



When we arrived at the mooring, another boat was already putting divers in to the water – it was certainly going to be busy on the wreck. But one of the advantages of having training in decompression diving is that it's easy to plan dives that extend recreational limits – after twenty minutes or so, most divers had surfaced and just a few of us remained to explore the wreck in peace. The ship lives up to its name in that she is now covered by a multicoloured display of encrusting life, seemingly dull until you pass a torch over the hull which allows the true colours to be seen.

After finishing our deco on the first dive, we headed to a nearby beach for lunch provided by Northland Dive and a chance to talk about our dives and plan the second dive of the day. With most charters only offering one dive on the Warrior, we expected to have the wreck to ourselves which certainly helps when it comes to planning penetration dives. It was a great opportunity to spend some time in the more murky regions of the interior, and some took the opportunity to practice their line/reel use around the more confined sections of the interior of the stern of the ship.

Others preferred a more straightforward dive, with the main goal being taking photographs rather than penetrating the wreck and there were plenty of worthwhile subjects, both natural and models willing to pose for that perfect shot!

The day was a perfect end to an Easter weekend, an opportunity to revisit a special part of New Zealand's history; and again great diving with a great group of people.

