

East Papua “True North” Expedition November 2016

In late November 2016, your Club chartered the “True North” an exquisite 32 passenger cruise ship to explore eastern Papua New Guinea. Locations visited were isolated and to see another vessel was rare, our visitors were usually travelling in dug-out canoes.



Our experiences included both snorkelling and diving on coral reefs of extraordinary biodiversity in some of the clearest waters members have experienced. Water temperatures of 30C plus were a welcome change to the southerners. Specimens were photographed to complement the Museum’s research. Fishing parties set out each day both for the larder and research. Spanish mackerel over one metre in length and large coral trout were welcomed by our two star chefs, while images of fish ear bones were taken for data basing.

Grim evidence of the savage fighting in World War 11 in shallow water provided snorkelers ready access to tanks, a submarine and fighter aircraft. The ship’s helicopter took parties to the Kokoda memorial, a most moving experience.

Our two scientists, the charismatic Professors Steve Donnellan and Greg Rouse conducted a series of talks on diverse subjects that packed out the lounge before dinner. These talks were as diverse as coral bleaching, PNG- a centre of agricultural innovation, methane seeps in the ocean depths, and bone-eating worms off Kangaroo Island. Further pop-up talks occurred as opportunities arose during on-shore expeditions, and village visits provided insights as diverse as witnessing the school curriculum to dancers with inherited headdresses carrying bird of paradise plumes.

“True North” has already been booked for a cruise to the north coast of West Papua in late October 2018 to continue our research with a focus on whale sharks. For further details please refer to <https://www.northstarcruises.com.au/cruise/png/whale-sharks/> Expressions of interest are invited, please call the Office.

Ant Simpson
Expedition Leader