

Sea of Dreams

Photos by the author unless otherwise stated.
Sergeant Majors feeding on JBL marine pellets.
Photo by Elliot Carter

Continuing their adventures (part one in the last issue), Iggy Tavares and Elliot Carter came from Arusha Game Park to Zanzibar for part two of their expedition with JBL...

Elliot Carter, winner of the *Tropical Fish* – JBL competition and I had thoroughly enjoyed the first part of the JBL Tanzania Expedition in Arusha Game Park, where we had seen giraffes and zebras, caught frogs and snakes, seen and photographed chameleons, lizards and scorpions, caught some fish in a stream and tested the water at these locations using the extensive JBL water testing kit. Before we knew it three days had flown by and we were on the Precision Air plane from Kilimanjaro Airport to Zanzibar.

Nungwi, Zanzibar

Arriving in Zanzibar, we were transferred by several mini coaches to north eastern Zanzibar, Nungwi area which took about an hour. We stayed at the Amman Bros lodges just off the beach. It was lovely and hot, but humid. That evening we had a talk about snorkelling and diving by Heiko Blessin at the Africa Dive Centre (ADC). Buffet dinner

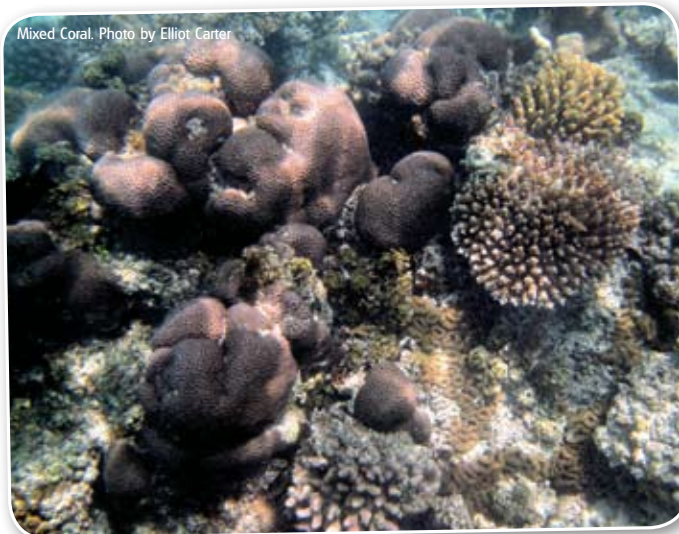
at the large beach front Fish King Restaurant with Rudi Ruelle and his group of snorkellers was fun. The buffet dinner included grilled tandoori chicken, spicy octopus or squid, grilled fish, rice, pasta, vegetarian curry, chips, salads with some squid or fish, dessert (cake, etc) beer, coke. As the tide was out, we took a night-time walk on the beach where we saw small beach crabs as well as larger multi-coloured crabs on the large rocks under the restaurant.

Following a breakfast of fruit and Spanish omelette, we headed for the ADC with our snorkelling gear on Monday 15th February. Two boats were available for snorkellers that took us to reefs around Tumbatu Island about an hour away. There were some great reefs here with some corals rising almost to the water surface with a water temperature of 27°C. The large, colourful hard corals heads were surrounded by plenty of fish, some forming large shoals such



as the blue/black striped Sergeant Major damsels. There was wealth of colourful fish here from other colourful damselfish to the more exotic butterflyfish (Oval butterflyfish, Chevron butterflyfish, etc) usually swimming in pairs, while triggerfish (Picasso triggerfish, Clown triggerfish, etc) were usually single. It was good to watch one or two shoals of Moorish Idol swimming around the reef. There were lots of various clownfish species in anemones that needed a little dive down to get close to, where some Green filefish were also spotted. Many species of wrasses and other colourful fish sped around the reef too quickly to be identified. Lurking near the bottom were some metre long Trumpet fish as well as other predatory fish such as Moray eels poking their heads out of their lairs.

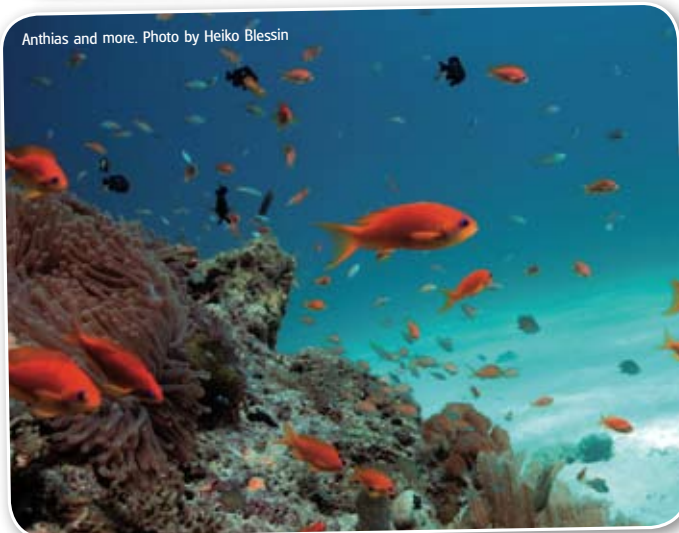
Mixed Coral. Photo by Elliot Carter



Blue Ribbon. Photo by Heiko Blessin



Anthias and more. Photo by Heiko Blessin



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moved to another site just 20-minutes boat ride away, where the reef falls sharply away on one side. Coming up from the deeper side were large shoals of fish including the Silver moony fish (*Monodactylus argenteus*) that make passage but did not scatter as I swam into the shoal.

An abundance of marine fish

One group of snorkellers, including Elliot, took the one and a half hour boat ride to Mnemba Atoll Marine Reserve. Here they were met by a small pod of bottlenose dolphin including two young calves that swam up to the boat and allowed Elliot and others to snorkel with them! At Mnemba Atoll the variety of coral was very diverse with phenomenal visibility, a true coral garden that the locals call 'The Aquarium'.

In the shallower water, one got a great close-up view of the reef, with beautiful Brain corals, smaller Xenidiidae (pulse corals),

a huge five-metre diameter Plate coral with excellent opportunities to watch tiny Anemone crabs, shrimp and blennies peering out from their hiding places. Other corals included a huge six-metre diameter Plate coral (*Montipora* sp.), Brain corals, *Acropora* sp., Elegance coral, Mushroom corals, Pulse corals and more. There was a fantastic variety of fish here such as Emperor angels, Skunk and Clarkii clownfish, Valentini gobies, Regal tangs, Cleaner wrasse, Sergeant Major damsels, Skunkfish, Trumpet fish and Moray eels plus many more. There was also a wealth in invertebrates all over the reef. A truly unforgettable sight!

Divng experience

40-divers with recent PADI certification or the equivalent led by Heiko Blessin took the opportunity to do various dives over the two days off the coast of Zanzibar. They left a little earlier in the mornings than the snorkellers ▶

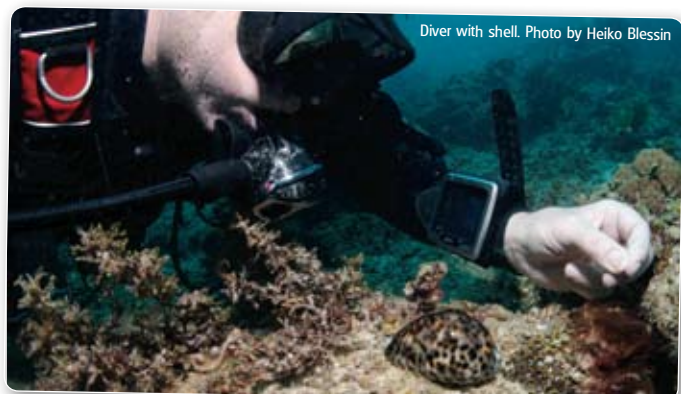


Trumpet Fish. Photo by Elliot Carter

Feeding frenzy

On Tuesday 16th February after a tepid shower and breakfast, half the group took the 30-minute boat journey from ADC to reefs just off the coast of Zanzibar. Here large shoals of Sergeant Major damsel went into a feeding frenzy when some JBL marine

pellets were placed in the water. Shoal of other fish that were a bit more reserved about approaching the side of the boat did not get a look in on the food. At this site there were more large beautiful hard corals in a range of colours as well as many beautiful marine fishes. We then



Diver with shell. Photo by Heiko Blessin



contamination which hopefully will be picked up by the JBL water test kit. Light measurements were taken here and also in Kigoma.

Local attractions

While in Zanzibar, I took several walks along the beach, looking at various crafts, including oil paintings done with house paints on canvas and interacting with the local Zanzibarians, which was fun. On one occasion, some young boys had marine coral fish laid out on a small mat on the beach that they had caught using home made spear guns as they snorkelled in the nearby reef. The fish include Moorish Idols, angelfish, Goatfish and damsels. I also watched an older man coming out from the sea with several octopuses attached to a rope. A little further down, another man was sitting on a wall skinning a pile of pufferfish. Hopefully he was removing the poison properly or there would be a few zombies walking about that night.

On our last day in Zanzibar, Wednesday 17th February, we went

on a rather interesting guided walking tour of a spice plantation. Here we were able to see various raw spices such as cloves, pepper, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and even tamarind. Our senses were awoken by the concentrated oils of ylang-ylang, vanilla and lemon grass that many of us purchased. Here we enjoyed fresh coconut milk, and plenty of fresh fruit such as mangosteen and star fruit as well as mangoes, papaw and pineapples. Later we took a guided tour through the narrow, winding streets of Old Stone Town passing the house where Freddy Mercury (Queen) was born and then going on to see the Anglican cathedral, the Old Arab Fort and much more.

Off again...

Later that afternoon, we took the 20 minutes Precision Air flight in the afternoon from Zanzibar to Dar es Salaam on where we stayed overnight in the very nice Hotel Mediterraneo located on the beach. Here I had a lovely dinner of stuffed squids as a starter followed by a great pepper steak washed down with Tusker beer. Early the next morning, we took an Air Tanzania flight to Kigoma,

You can follow our final adventures in Lake Tanganyika in *Tropical Fish Magazine* next month. Visit www.jbl.de/?lang=en for more information on JBL. **FIN**



The reefs were teeming with popular aquarium fish from damsels and clownfish to butterflyfish, angelfish and the ever popular tangs, just to mention a few

in smaller speed boats that got them quickly to their dive sites. The diving sites included the reefs surrounding Mnemba Island for multilevel diving at Tumbatu, Wattabomi and The Aquarium. Leven Banks with its stunning reef table was another great dive site that they visited. During the dives, they were able to observe the natural behaviour of many of the popular aquarium species swimming in beautiful coral reefs.

The reefs were teeming with popular aquarium fish from damsels and clownfish to butterflyfish, angelfish and the ever popular tangs, just to mention a few. Among the many tang species seen, Powder blue tang were quite common but one had to be lucky to see Regal tangs. Taking a closer look for tiny critters, it was

possible to find Emperor shrimps and very colourful nudibranchs, among the dozens of other small difficult to identify creatures. And even during their ascent they were not bored, since dolphins and turtles that were not very shy came close enough to say hello. It was also possible to see large barracuda, Dogtooth tuna, Napoleon wrasse, groupers and Moray eels.

JBL testing

At various snorkel and dive locations, sea water was collected for extensive testing later on the beach. A little worrying was that some dive sites had slime algae growing, which is unusual since this kind of algae is not usually found on coral reefs. This could be due to some kind of human

› Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Heiko Blessin, Rudi Ruelle and Elliot Carter for their contributions to this feature.

