

Trip Report for stay at Gallows Point Nov/Dec 2007

Dear Caribbean Friends,

We were at Gallows Point, Unit 3D from November 28 through December 20th. We enjoyed so many of the island's offerings including very many snorkeling adventures. We photographed and identified 114 fish (not counting corals and sponges) which are posted in our website: www.doppstein.com, then click Family Links, then Photo Album, then the first item is St. John 07. The quick link, doppstein.com/SJ07 will be active for some months. Rather than giving a day-by-day trip report, below are the highlights.

Some comments about the photographs: Camera – **Olympus stylus 790 SW** with underwater case set to scene “underwater”. Most fish are photographed in Macro mode, which means I was less than 3 feet from them. Looking under ledges is where many interesting fish hide such as the Spotted Drum and Glass eye snapper. To find an octopus or an eel, look for the entourage of Grouper Hind and Cony. The Octopus that are in their home are found by finding the “Octopus’s garden” of discarded shells. Dive down and peer into the nearest hole in the coral and you may well see it looking out at you. All photographs are shoved through Photoshop. Once there, under Image-Adjustment-Levels, run the "Auto" feature and that removes any color that washes across the entire picture (like too much green). If the fish is in a cave or heavy shadow, use Image-Adjustment-Shadow/Highlight which flattens the contrast. Never, ever adjust colors – only contrasts.

If **Michelle from the Beach Bar** last year is reading this, we missed you and are happy for you! Best wishes on your new adventure.

Best Snorkeling:

Salt Pond: We snorkeled the "Salt Pond" in the far SE end of the island and it was spectacular. We were way out there with our dear friends David and Cheryl. We spotted a bunch of Grouper poking around a rock – a sure sign of an Eel or Octopus.. so we investigated and there was a spectacular Octopus there. We watched him (or her) for an hour or more. He found a Lobster which the Nassau Grouper stole from him only to drop the Lobster long enough for it to rocket to surface – actually breaking the surface and then skittering along the surface of the water like a skipping stone. I had no idea a lobster could do that! The series of pictures of this event are the first set in the “Reef” set of our pictures, including the lobster in mid-air! Also saw many other fish and rays there.

Gallows point: We saw Eels, Octopus, Fred the huge Barracuda, nurse shark, Spotted Drum, Pudding wife, many Parrotfish, Flounder, Slippery Dick, Wrasses, Squirrelfish, Barbfish, several Jacks, Barred Hamlet, Trumpet fish, lobster among many others. Rarely we saw a hawksbill turtle and a ray passing through. Probably $\frac{3}{4}$ of all the fish in the collection were seen at Gallows.

Frances Bay: Many Cero Mackerel, Tarpon, silversides, yellowtail snappers, Green turtles.

Caneel Bay: One of the best reefs you can get to easily (On the right as you look out). Hawksbill turtles, octopus, rays, flounder and a dolphin came in to play with the people. Many others including the baby spotted drums no larger than Wisconsin mosquitoes.

Long Distance (www.sailcoralbajstjohn.com): Went with Robin and Rick of the "Long Distance" to Flannigan's Island where we saw so many spectacular fish including Rock Beauties (never got a picture of them), Spanish Hogfish, hawksbill turtle, Blue Chromis and so much more. The second time we went to Hurricane hole among the coral-covered mangrove roots and saw HUGE Queen angels, Porcupine puffers, grey snappers, starfish and the enormous conch (are protected so people don't kill them!). Robin gets in the water with you and guides you to the best places and identifies fish as you go.

Wayward Sailor (www.waywardsailor.net): This year Captain Phil was not available while we were there. Last year he took us to wonderful snorkeling and we would have booked him if we could have.

Best Food

La Tapa: Excellent food by any standards. Starters were well prepared and delicious. Bob had Short ribs which had been prepared rather like Oso Buco the first time there and in a mushroom – onion sauce the second time. Both wonderful. Sharon had muscles that were delicious. Staff is professional and friendly. It was fun to

Lime Inn: Lobster and whole snapper both excellent. Very busy and still service was professional and friendly. Wonderfully friendly and competent staff.

Fish trap: Had a huge deep fried Red Snapper for the two of us that was spectacular. The French fries are seasoned and delicious. Nice staff.

Uncle Joe's Barbeque: Finger licking delicious ribs and chicken. This place is a dump and an absolute delight.

Roma Café: Everything we have had there is very good and the staff is energetic, nice and efficient and reasonably prices.

Sundog Café: (in Mongoose Junction): Lunch was well done and interesting as well as delicious.

Banana Deck: Tasty lunch menu. Nice folks and good view. Relaxing.

Beach Bar: The food here is really very good. Not what one might expect unless you have been there before. Delicious tuna appetizer.

Worst Food

Ocean Grill: Small portions, high prices, slow staff.

Morgan's Mango: Very rude staff. Never got to the food after being treated extremely rudely upon arriving so turned and left as she rolled her eyes.

Rhumline: We like hot food, but this was on fire. It was so hot, it masked the flavor of the food. They brought lemon and lime to soften the heat and it helped, but then the food was very citrus. If you like extremely hot food, you will like this place. Nice wait-staff.

Enjoy the adventure!

Bob Dopp and Sharon Stein