



# Who is the Liveaboard Diver?

By **WAYNE B. BROWN**



**T**he liveaboard scuba diver. Are they different from lake divers, shore divers, day boat divers? While we all share a passion for this great sport, how we get wet is a road that can be mapped, with detours of course!

The majority of liveaboard scuba divers can be grouped by age, based on geographical locations—mostly by continent or large regions of our world. Liveaboard scuba divers are at the stage in their passion where they want as many dives as possible, or at least the opportunity for them, every day of their scuba vacations. They have also realized the cost of an all inclusive liveaboard vacation that includes every meal and every day and night dives is actually less expensive per dive than land-based resort or day boat operators.

Of course, there is the comfort factor that, once experienced, becomes a major factor in their future diving vacation decisions. You can see it about halfway through the week when they are

enjoying the hot shower after a morning dive and know a hot snack awaits in their choice of either a sun lounge or the air-conditioned salon. They start talking about how they should have made this leap eons ago and asking which liveaboard should they do next.

## North America

The age when a typical North American starts testing the liveaboard waters is when they are in their late forties. They are now coming into the time when they have the funds and time to enjoy a scuba-filled week and their children are off starting their own lives. When the North American diver gets into their mid-fifties, we see them adding on additional days to their week-long scuba liveaboard and touring the local culture and historical sites. Once they are into their sixties, it is extremely rare that an additional tour or even a second week onboard is not part of their planning. The North American diver enjoys diving in all types of warm water seas, not just where 'big animal encounters' are

the main attraction. They are just as happy with watching the territorial attitude of a sailfin blenny as seeing a majestic eagle ray glide by.

## Asia

Contrast that with our youngest set of liveaboard divers, from Asia. The Asian liveaboard diver is late twenties to early thirties. They have an enormous sense of adventure, due to either not being able to travel previously or their country has advanced economically to the point that leisure travel has become an option. Very few add on additional tours or even extra days for a little R&R. Their passion for scuba however is no less, and watching them underwater seeing new species and colourful coral fields brings a smile to my face every time. Most are extremely excited about sharks and sharks seem to be their main focus on every dive.

## Europe

European liveaboard divers are in the middle of the pack. They are mid-thirties to early forties. They rarely take less than a two-week holiday and it is not unusual for a three week vacation to be the norm. They are aghast that North Americans routinely only take a week off at a time! The European diver is more likely to be a step above a novice underwater photographer or videographer. They enjoy everything from macro to whale sharks but prefer them set in the very colourful reefs of soft corals, like Indonesia and the Red Sea.

I (and sure a lot of you) do not fit into one of these moulds but I wanted to give an insiders view of who the 'typical' liveaboard diver is. As you can see, it is as diverse as our underwater world and that is why I love this business so much! Getting to be onboard as much as possible; diving, chatting, and swapping stories with other passionate scuba divers fills my adventurous spirit every time. [ ]

Diversity isn't just confined to marine life. Liveaboard diving attracts divers from all walks of life

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