



OKEANOS AGGRESSOR I AND OKEANOS AGGRESSOR II

This remote, tropical eastern Pacific island offers underwater thrills found nearly nowhere else on Earth

A voyage to Cocos Island, Costa Rica, is on every diver's dream list, thanks to its big-animal bounty. For starters, it's famous for schools of scalloped hammerheads numbering in the hundreds. That's right, hundreds. Seeing the sun blotted out by so many powerful ancient predators is easily one of the most life-changing experiences a diver can hope to have.

Hammerheads frequent these waters as Cocos Island is the northern point in

what's known as the Golden Triangle, a hotspot where these animals concentrate, migrating between points; the other two are the Galapagos Islands of Ecuador to the southwest and Malpelo Island off Colombia, to the southeast.

So remote—342 miles west of Costa Rica—the volcanic Cocos Island, with its underwater sea mounts and pinnacles, serves as an oasis that attracts leagues of big animals, in addition to the hammerheads. Ten spe-

BOAT SPECS Length/Beam **OAI** 110 feet/24 feet **OAI** 120 feet/27 feet **Passenger-to-Staff Ratio** 22/8 **Staterooms/beds** 11/22 **Bathrooms** Berths have private head and shower, individual climate control and hair dryer **Sundeck** Yes **Food/Beverages** Yes, including local beer and wine



NEED TO KNOW

HOME PORT

Puntarenas, Costa Rica

DIVE SEASON

Year-round

DIVE CONDITIONS

75–86° F average water temps

TRAVEL TIP

If you prefer flatter seas and better visibility, travel December through May. June through December is the rainy season, when nutrient upwellings lure in the big numbers of hammerheads, whale sharks and mantas.

cies of shark are found here, including silky, whitetip reef, silvertip sharks and more.

And of course, whale sharks. During the rainy season, June through December, the waters become thick with plankton, which attract the world's largest fish, spanning 40 feet. This season is also when the largest numbers of giant mantas are seen resting



Aggressor Adventures runs two yachts in Cocos, a bucket-list destination for many divers. Hammerhead aggregations are synonymous with this remote collection of islands in Costa Rican territory, but diving here is a more or less constant parade of pelagics: multiple types of sharks, mantas, tuna and whale sharks galore. The action is non-stop but the remoteness of the location, and amenities like large, comfortable sun decks, let you unwind, recharge and get ready for the next dive's thrills.

at cleaning stations, flying endless loops as they siphon up plankton.

Out here, you'll also witness schools of tuna and jacks descend upon the group like curtains, obscuring the view of the divers to either side.

Bottlenose dolphin sightings are also common mid-dive, and on occasion, so are shortfinned pilot whales and humpback whales.

Moreover, because so many big animals are prevalent in big numbers, divers also get the chance to witness interactions between several species at a single site, which is a unique component of the Cocos experience. At one site, you might witness hammerheads at a cleaning station, while yards away, dolphins feed on schooling sardines.

Of course, as is often said of the ocean, anything can happen, but diving in Cocos is like playing with a stacked deck. It's the type of place where every dive feels like the most thrilling yet.

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GET MORE

Costa Rica is an eco tourist hot spot that is one of Central America's jewels. Volcanoes, cloud and rainforest preserves, white-water rafting, waterfalls, and canopy and zip line jungle tours await adventure-seekers, plus some of the most beautiful beaches in the world. Many regions also offer a hip cultural scene, with coffeehouses and art galleries. The wildlife is amazing: From monkeys to crocodiles, Costa Rica is home to a number of thrilling species. Because the country is dedicated to environmental conservation, Costa Rica boasts a mind-boggling biodiversity, especially its stunning tropical birds; nearly 900 bird species can be found here. Aggressor Travel can arrange your pre- or post-trip land tour.