
Papua New Guinea

An overview of anchorages used by s/v Field Trip

Mark Silverstein - January 9, 2018



Mortlock Islands, PNG

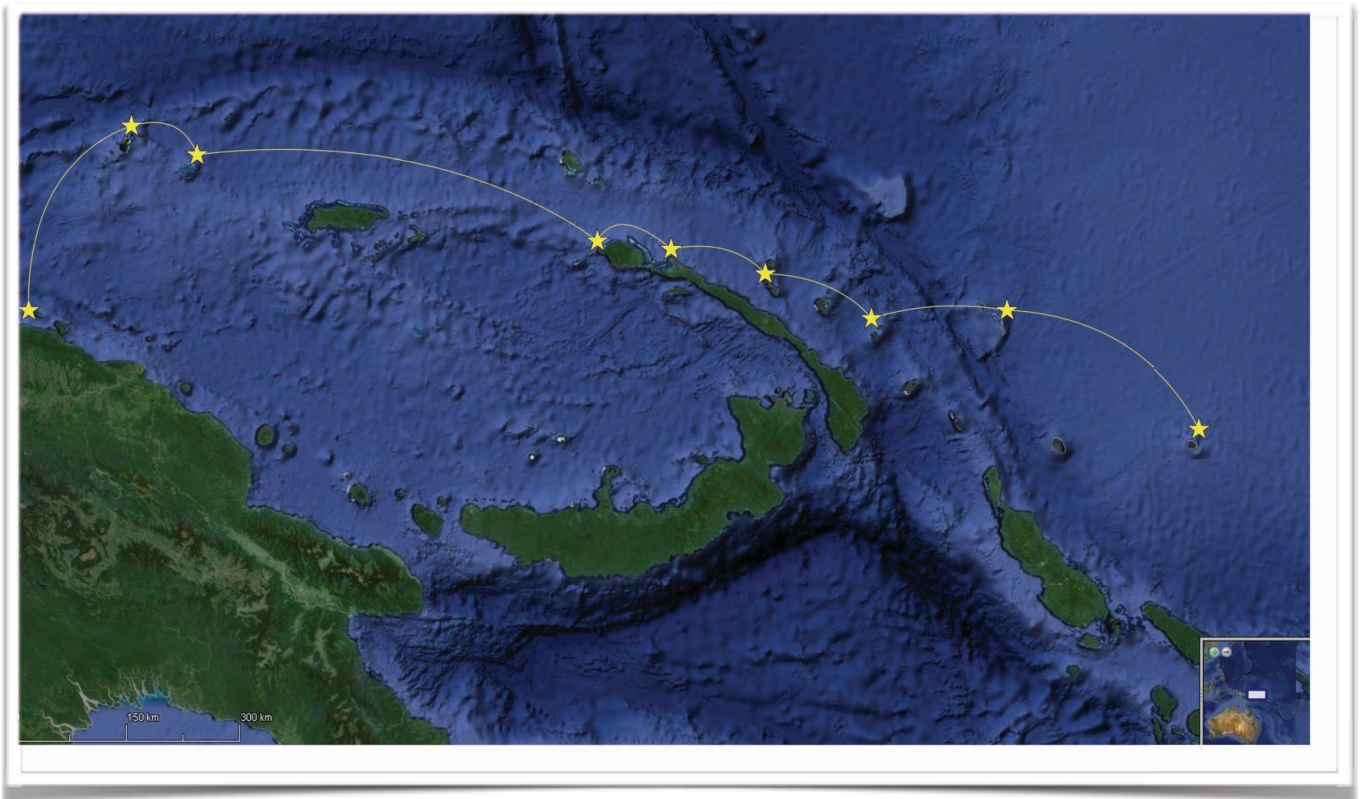


Introduction

Papua New Guinea can be challenging in some areas primarily due to safety. There are places where cruisers are just not safe, and we decided to stay off the beaten path and go far away from the main towns and islands. This strategy proved very successful and rewarding as we met some of the best people and made some long lasting friends. PNG has been one of our favorite sailing destinations. We spent about five months sailing the outer islands.

We've included our anchorages from this trip, along with some lessons learned about clearing in and out of the country. Our route was rather simple as you can see below. We started from the Solomons, clearing out of Noro, and then sailed via Rancador Reef (Solomon Islands) and then direct to the Mortlocks (our first unofficial stop in PNG).

We cleared into PNG at Kavieng, and cleared out of PNG in Vanimo. This allowed us a longer stay (90 day visa given on arrival) as we too almost two months to get to Kavieng from Noro. We had no issues in Kaveing clearing into PNG, and it was the easiest clearance we've ever done in over six years of cruising.



Map of Field Trip route through Papua New Guinea



PNG Clearance

Kavieng

Clearing into PNG was simple in Kavieng. There are only two stops you must make to completely clear into the country, and you don't seem to need to make the stops in any particular order based on our experience.

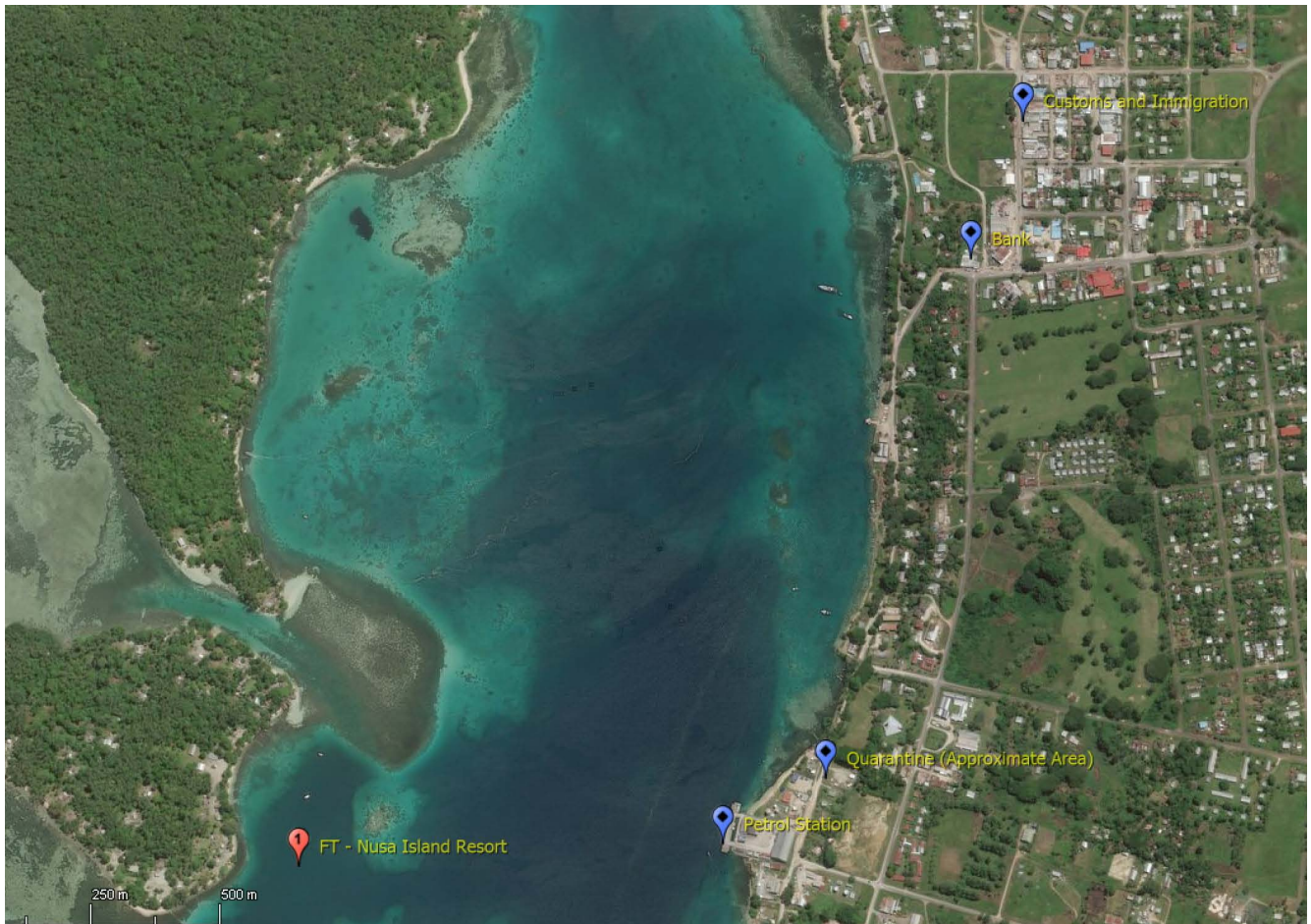
Quarantine is a small building diagonal from the fuel station near the market. We've placed a marker on the map below of approximate location. It's an easy walk from the market area where we left our dingy. You will turn to the right and walk down the road from the market. The office is on the left off the main road. It is not easy to see, but it's there if you look.

Customs and Immigration are in the same building. They have moved in the past year to a new location that is on the main street where the larger grocery stores are located. We've also included this on the map. You will need to go past a guard of sorts and walk up a lot of stairs to the very top of the building. Here you will find both customs and immigration. They will ask of your previous port clearance and stamp your passports. Note, that you **MUST** get a port clearance from Kavieng to your next port. In our case it was Vanimo, and we got this clearance the day before we left for 'Vanimo', while make a lot of stops along the way. We had no issues and it took 15 minutes for both customs and immigration.

Vanimo

If it wasn't for the fact that we needed visas for Indonesia and could only get them in Vanimo, we would have skipped this stop. Vanimo is not safe for overnight stays. Two vessels in 2017 were robbed at gunpoint, one being a large 60+ foot monohull that was robbed at night by multiple men. If you plan accordingly, you can get your visa in the same day (you need to have cash, and paperwork filled out ahead of time if possible). You can email the embassy requesting details for the visa. As of this writing you did NOT need a sponsor letter for a tourist visa (180 days) in the Vanimo office.

Clearing out was simple, but you must make stops and immigration and customs. Both of which are in different locations and can take some time. The airport houses immigration and customs is a bit away. The immigration officers gave us a ride to customs. Very nice folks and easy, just time consuming.



Kavieng Map

Provisioning

The providing is not terrible in Kavieng. There are two main stores, both located on the same road as Immigration and Customs that have decent provisions. If you continuing walking past the I&C office (see map) you will find several decent stores, some with good western products. This was our only stop for provisioning in PNG, so we stocked up as we would not be seeing any provisioning until we arrived in Sorong, Indonesia some 4 months later.

Safety & Security

The bottom line is we kept everything locked and stowed at night when in Kavieng. We always raised the tender, and made sure there were not loose items on deck. We never had an issue, and felt safe in PNG with the exception of Vanimo. Vanimo had a different vibe, and it was possible this was due to the bad reports we received from others and we were happy to get out of there in a timely manner.

Anchorage

We use an app on our iPad to keep track of all our anchorages. It allows us to rate the locations for lots of items and add images. The list on the next several pages is simply a

The screenshot shows an iPad app interface for 'Field Trip Log 2016_8'. The main screen is titled 'Anchorage Details' and displays information for 'Mai Island'. The interface includes fields for Name, Country, Latitude, and Longitude. Below these are input fields for Arrival Date (10/4/2017), Departure Date (10/11/2017), Days (7), and Total Days Anchored (Z). The 'Anchorage Ratings' section features five categories: Overall Rating (5 stars), Comfort (4 stars), Holding (4 stars), Wind Protection (3 stars), and Swell Protection (3 stars). There are also sections for Provisioning, Fuel, Water, Dinghy Dock, Internet Ratings, and Cellular Data, each with radio button options for Yes/No. At the bottom, there is a 'Comments' field with a text entry, a 'Photo' field with a small image, and a 'Chart' field with a map.

printout from the app of the anchorages. The ratings scales are 0-5, with 5 being the highest. Since most of the locations were remote, we had literally no cellular service the entire trip....which was nice. With few exceptions, the anchorages were all in sand, and in reasonable depths.

We've also included a GPX file that has all these anchorages, plus their descriptions and some of the primary dive sites we dove along the way. We'll include this as well on our blog (svfieldtrip.blogspot.com).

Anchorage Name: Mortlocks

Arrival: 7/22/2017

Lat: S4°45.4765'

Rating: 5

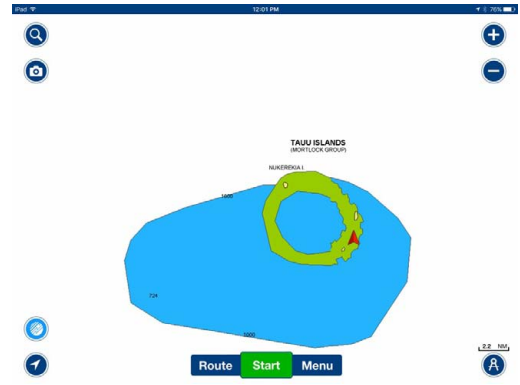
Lon: E157°01.8203'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

Outstanding village and outstanding people. One of our top two places in the South Pacific. Very friendly and the diving in the NE pass was great. We could have spent many more weeks here, but we had to leave.

The people here are Polynesian, and because of their distance from the mainland they get a supply ship about once maybe twice per year. So anything you can bring to help like medicine, kids clothes, etc would be appreciated.



Anchorage Name: Bird Island Mortlocks

Arrival: 8/3/2017

Lat: S4°42.3786'

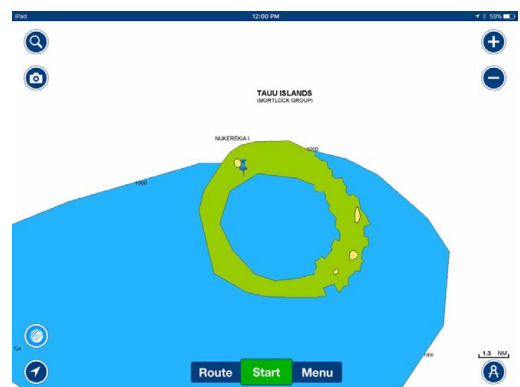
Rating: 4

Lon: E156°56.3313'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

This island has a ton of birds. It is a sanctuary, and you must get permission from the village to come here and anchor. We stayed here from three nights and enjoyed the beach and the kids liked the sandbars during low tide.



Anchorage Name: NW Pass Mortlocks

Rating: 4

Cellular Data: 0

Arrival: 8/6/2017

Lat: S4°43.0304'

Lon: E156°55.8150'

Comments:

This was a good spot for staging our dives.



Anchorage Name: Nuguria Island

Rating: 3

Cellular Data: 0

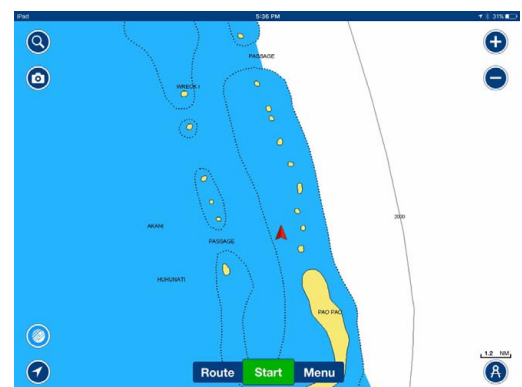
Arrival: 8/9/2017

Lat: S3°20.3908'

Lon: E154°40.5798'

Comments:

This was also a Polynesian island that was similar to the Mortlocks, but they are closer to civilization so they had a lot more stuff. We were here for almost a week.



Anchorage Name: Boang Island

Arrival: 8/17/2017

Lat: S3°22.5858'

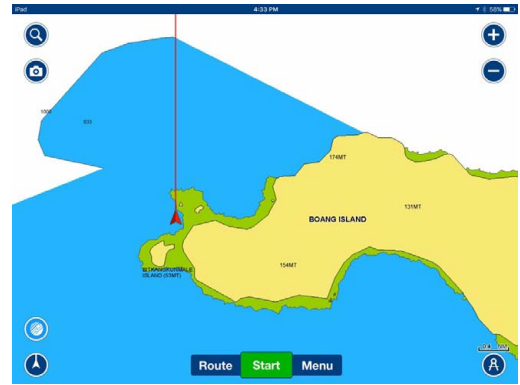
Rating: 4

Lon: E153°14.8440'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

This was a very nice village. We really enjoyed the village and the chief. It is basically the chief's family that lives on this side and they were extremely nice. They had a meal for us ashore, and we walked with them to the market one day. The diving here was actually good and the water crystal clear.



Anchorage Name: Tabar Island

Arrival: 8/24/2017

Lat: S2°52.1625'

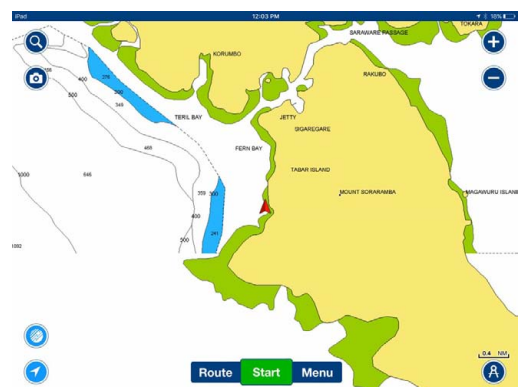
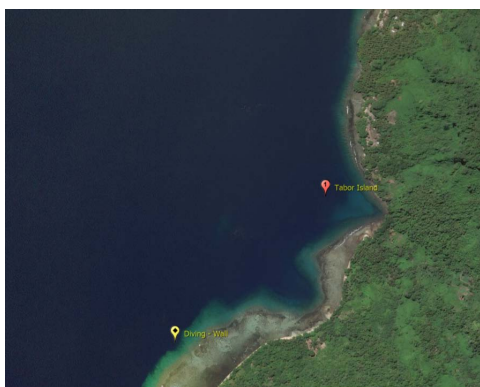
Rating: 3

Lon: E151°57.0126'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

Just OK. The diving was good but the people while nice were a little all over us and seemed to be a little overbearing at times.



Anchorage Name: Nusa island resort

Arrival: 8/29/2017

Lat: S2°35.1332'

Rating: 4

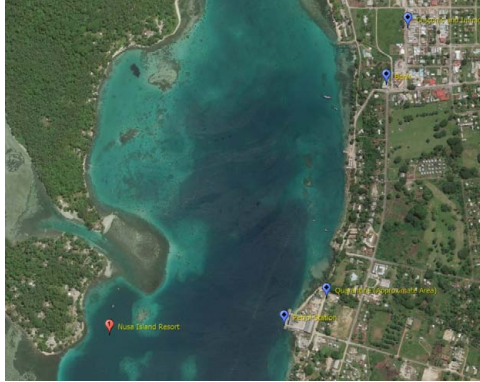
Lon: E150°46.8813'

Cellular Data: 5

Comments:

This was a great little anchorage with a very friendly welcome by the Nusa Resort. It is an easy dinghy ride across to the town. We left our dinghy on the beach by the market and had no issues.

See map photo for general locations of banks, customs, immigration and quarantine.



Anchorage Name: Tsoi-Lik (silvertip reef)

Arrival: 9/5/2017

Lat: S2°25.3552'

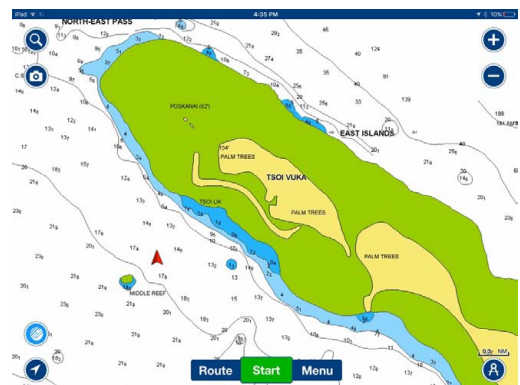
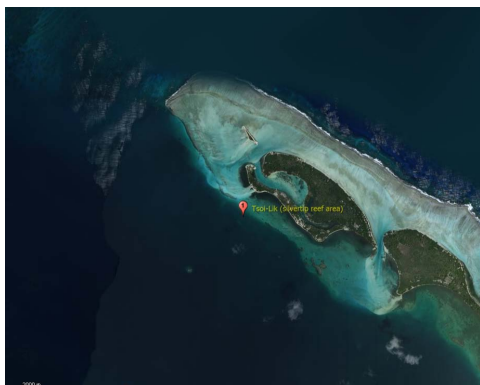
Rating: 2

Lon: E150°24.5832'

Cellular Data: 1

Comments:

They wanted 100 kina for anchoring. We left as this was a crazy price to pay for anchoring. Some of the larger boats do pay this fee we've been told, but overall we think this is way too much money.



Anchorage Name: Dunung Island

Arrival: 9/6/2017

Lat: S2°22.2488'

Rating: 5

Lon: E150°07.2681'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

Great place with nice man Clemens who runs Clem's place and his brother junior. 8k per dive on wreck. The wreck dive here is HUGE. You will need to probably have Clem or someone show you where the dive is as it can be hard to find. Regardless, it's a very good dive even if visibility is a little poor at times.

Note that Clemens is an SDA. They won't dive on Saturday.



Anchorage Name: Ao island dive

Arrival: 9/9/2017

Lat: S2°27.8590'

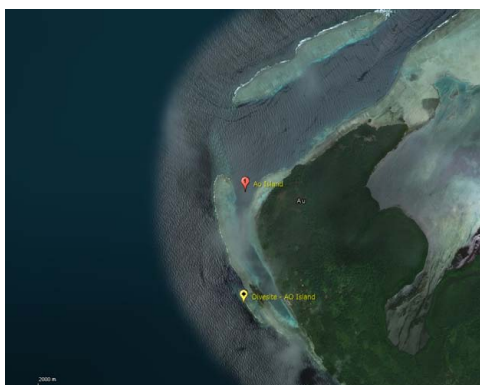
Rating: 3

Lon: E149°56.4516'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

Ok place but did not get a great vibe from locals. Almost a little creepy.



Anchorage Name: Luff island night

Arrival: 9/13/2017

Lat: S1°33.4248'

Rating: 4

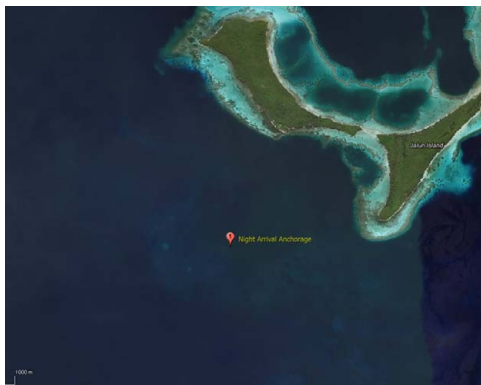
Lon: E145°00.1872'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

This is a GREAT place to anchor if you plan on arriving at night. It was easy entry, no obstacles anywhere near and very easy. We normally never arrive at night, but based on this approach and the very wide pass we made the arrival just after dark with no issues, and would recommend this for anyone who may be missing a light arrival.

Note that there are shallow reefs about 300-400m to the west of this anchorage, so take this into account when arriving if you do come in here at night.



Anchorage Name: Luff Island Anchorage

Arrival: 9/14/2017

Lat: S1°30.9276'

Rating: 3

Lon: E145°04.7831'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

This is a very deep (20m+) anchorage so the swing is tough given the reef. We were here for two nights and then moved farther out. This was not our favorite village. We felt like they were trying too hard to be nice and frankly we just did not click with them. We spent most of our time diving in the other areas, and only spend 3-4 days here.



Anchorage Name: Luff Outer Anchorage

Arrival: 9/16/2017

Lat: S1°31.3381'

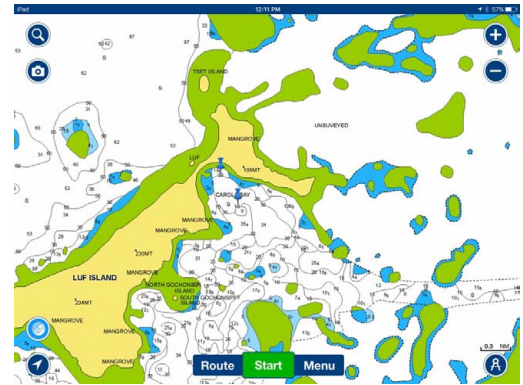
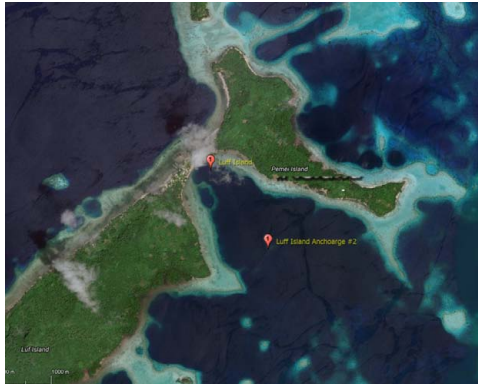
Rating: 3

Lon: E145°05.0831'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

We dropped the hook in about 10 -12m but had plenty of swing room. Overall not too bad but a long dinghy ride to the village.



Anchorage Name: NE Pass Anchorage

Arrival: 9/18/2017

Lat: S1°30.1515'

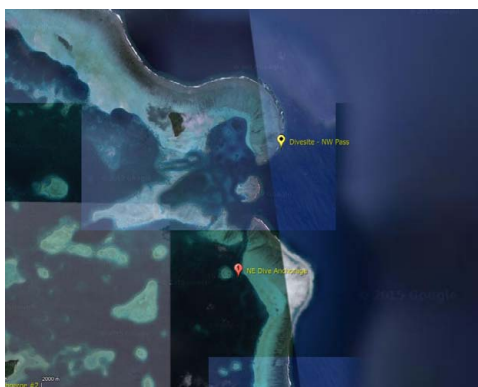
Rating: 4

Lon: E145°08.0751'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

This was a nice spot to stage for diving the NW pass. About 15m.



Anchorage Name: Middle Pass

Arrival: 9/21/2017

Lat: S1°31.8345'

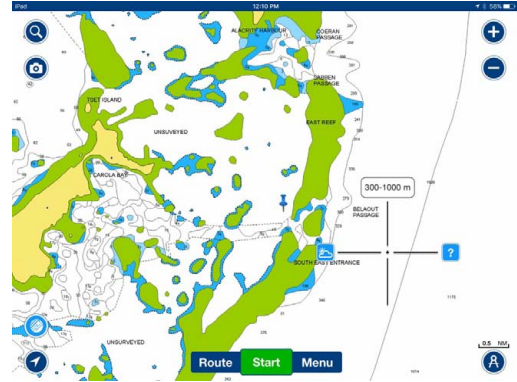
Rating: 4

Lon: E145°07.7585'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

This was our anchorage for the middle pass for diving. The diving here was great and an easy dinghy.



Anchorage Name: Manta Pass

Arrival: 9/24/2017

Lat: S1°32.1460'

Rating: 4

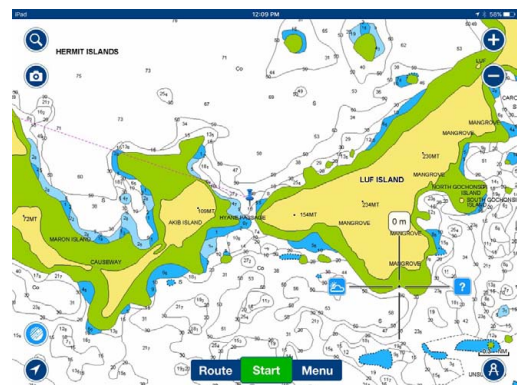
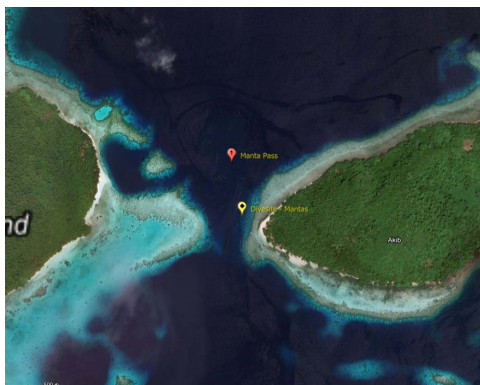
Lon: E145°02.4136'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

Be careful and anchor back in this area as there are lots of mantas and the owner of the area does not want boats anchoring too close. You must go ashore and arrange for swimming with the Mantas. Bob is the guide and a nice guy. There was no charge, but we did give him some trade items as he seemed grateful.

NOTE: Please don't plane on your dingy in this area. There are mantas here and Bob will get very upset at you if you plane in your tender.



Anchorage Name: NW Pass Anchorage

Arrival: 9/26/2017

Lat: S1°28.2631'

Rating: 3

Lon: E145°02.5900'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

We spent about 5 days here diving. Decent anchorage, but deep (20m++)



Anchorage Name: SE Pass Anchorage

Arrival: 10/2/2017

Lat: S1°21.9390'

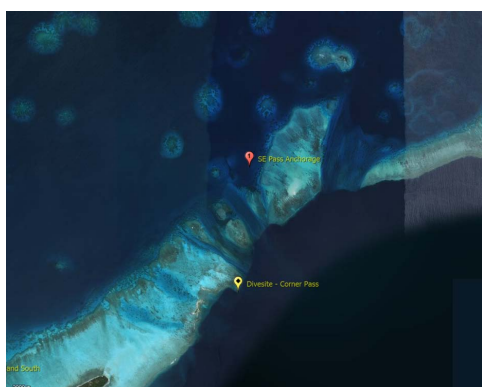
Rating: 4

Lon: E144°14.3150'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

We anchored here for a bit while we snorkeled and dove the pass. It was an average pass and we were not overly impressed with the diving here.



Anchorage Name: Mal Island

Arrival: 10/4/2017

Lat: S1°24.0329'

Rating: 5

Lon: E144°11.5801'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

We loved this location and especially liked the family. Thomas and Elizabeth are great and we became fast friends. Our kids played with their kids and we had a great time here. We hated to leave.



Anchorage Name: Lau Village

Arrival: 10/11/2017

Lat: S1°21.8371'

Rating: 4

Lon: E144°10.8642'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

The people here were very nice and gave us a ride over to the Pataku village across the bay. We spent two nights here. Very nice stop. We highly recommend the Pataku village if you can get the tides right to cross the reef. It was a GREAT experience.



Anchorage Name: Dive Staging

Arrival: 10/13/2017

Lat: S1°20.3171'

Rating: 4

Lon: E144°10.6634'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

We used this as our main spot to dive Ahu Island. Note, diving in the pass was not great, and the diving on along the wall of Ahu is better. See the dive marker.



Anchorage Name: Longan Village

Arrival: 10/15/2017

Lat: S1°13.3369'

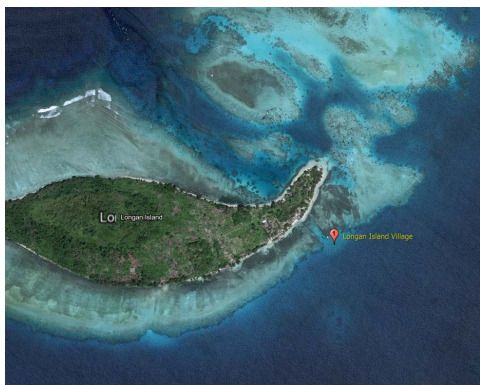
Rating: 4

Lon: E144°17.8848'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

Longan Island village was a nice stop. Some boats spend weeks here alone. They are very friendly and are always wanting to invite you for food. They don't trade (exactly) but are very open to 'gifts' as you will find lots of stuff given to you from their gardens. We also did a great sail on one of their sailing outriggers.



Anchorage Name: Northern Channel

Arrival: 10/17/2017

Lat: S1°10.1421'

Rating: 4

Lon: E144°20.6708'

Cellular Data: 0

Comments:

This was a good place to stage for diving in the pass. You can dinghy over the reef without much issue and the diving here is great with LOTS of fish. There is a lot of current. We dove this three times.

