



top: Orangefin anemonefish (*Amphiprion chrysopterus*) in *Stichodactylia*. This fish is hiding deep in it's host anemone. These large anemones are often called 'carpet' anemones. (image Katrina Adams)

above: Green turtle resting on a coral ledge. (image Katrina Adams)

below: School children competing in outrigger canoe races. (image Gil Zeimer)



My first dive was a 10-minute motor to the Trochus Sanctuary Reef at Buoy #38 on the island's west side where the visibility was 30-40 metres. With an hour of shallow bottom time on this and my other dives, we floated along in a mild current, counting the different types of blue, green, orange, purple, white and yellow hard and soft corals.

The second dive a few hundred metres away at Buoy #39 was called Shark Island, near the airport side of Kosrae. It was still tranquil, but with a bit more current. I saw more varieties of tropical fish than I'd seen in two decades of diving in the tropics. The highlight of this dive was a small octopus that I saw climbing over a coral head, seeking shelter with a stick of coral in one of its tentacles. As we watched, it camouflaged itself.

The next day, I went few minutes out of Utwe-Walung Marine Park on the island's southern side to Hiroshi Point at Buoy #15, then to Buoy #16. Another easy, shallow drift dive for any skill level. Close enough for shore dives during high tide and low surf, divers can view large coral heads estimated to be more than 2,000 years old. Visibility today was 20 - 25 metres. I focused my attention on macro critters like the colourful Christmas tree worms, anemonefish eggs, a single barracuda checking me out, and watching parrotfish voraciously attack the coral.

During our surface interval, we putt-putted towards Utwe Village, one of five on the 8,000-person island, to watch the school children compete in outrigger canoe races.

Other popular sites include:

- Walung Drop Off (Buoys 29 and 30). A popular dive and snorkeling site featuring a sometimes-strong current with sheer walls, schools of barracuda, small hammerheads, reef sharks, turtles, giant puffers, and numerous small invertebrates.
- Walung Village Shelf (Buoy 32) is spectacular, often revealing a great variety of fish and always-healthy coral, though there is usually a brisk current and cooler water temps.
- Yela Harbour and Wall (Buoy 36) A deep wall site that's home to dozens of corals and schools of scribbled filefish who are friendly and curious.
- Lelu Current (Buoy 54). Once known as D'Urville Point, this is on a wide reef offering many low-growing coral and is an excellent fishing spot.
- The Blue Hole is, just off the Lelu Causeway. Though visibility varies it can be accessed by foot through the reef or by swimming over