

Turtle encounters are one of the hallmarks of diving Hawaii.



Hawaii

Scores are in on the dive operators of the Aloha State.

I T'S HARD TO BELIEVE that a U.S. state could be so remote that it's among the world's most isolated landmasses. You know what that means—an exotic destination where you won't need a passport and where there aren't any language barriers or unfavorable exchange rates. Though they don't have the colorful coral reefs common elsewhere in the Pacific, the rugged green islands of Hawaii—Oahu, Maui, Molokai, Lanai, Kauai and the Big Island—do have unique underwater structures punctuated by lava formations and tubes, and some excellent wreck dives. What's more, you'll find one-quarter of the marine life is endemic—like Heller's barracuda, milletsed butterflyfish and Achilles tang—and tons of dive choices, from land-based to live-aboard. And to help you make your choice, *Scuba Diving* readers rated their favorite Hawaii dive operators and live-aboard.

Dive Operators

MAUI

Ed Robinson's Diving Adventures

S C O R E S

OVERALL	STAFF	BOATS & FACILITIES	VALUE
86.9	98.6	80.3	81.8

TEL (800) 635-1273

E-MAIL info@mauiscuba.com

WEB www.mauiscuba.com

READERS SAY: "Ed Robinson's was the most professional operation I have ever dived with, and I've dived with a lot. Diving in Maui differs from other dive destinations in that most of the dive operators meet you at the

Kihei boat ramp near Wailea and depart from there. Ed Robinson's offers coffee and muffins at the ramp, coffee, fruit and sodas on the boat for between dives, and decent sandwiches, chips, etc., for three-tank trips. **J.K., Lake Orion, Mich.** "Very experienced divemasters—almost zero staff turnover year after year, and thus very knowledgeable about dive sites. They offer a predictable schedule for trips to neighboring islands. Two days a week, they have an advanced-diver-only three-tank trip." **M.K., Germantown, Wis.** **>>>THE DIVING:** Two- and three-tank boat trips, sunset and night dives, gear rental, instruction. **>>>BOATS:** 1 boat, 32 feet, 12 divers; 1 boat, 30 feet, 12 divers. **>>>FAVORITE DIVE SITES:** Molokini Crater, Lanai (Cathedrals), La Perouse. **>>>RESORT ON PREMISES:** No.

compare: gracious, knowledgeable, skilled and entertaining. Everything about this dive outfit puts them in a class of their own, including the value, the service, the expertise and the passion these folks put into their day-to-day work." **E.H., Buffalo Grove, Ill.** "We've used Jack's Diving Locker on two occasions and were very satisfied with our experiences. We took our Rescue Diver class on our last trip and were very pleased with our instructor and course work. They also do the best manta ray night dive ever." **K.L., Cheyenne, Wyo.** **>>>THE DIVING:** Two-tank boat diving daily, sunset night dives, one- and two-tank guided shore diving, nitrox, gear rental (masks, fins and snorkels), instruction. **>>>BOATS:** 3 boats, 38 feet, 12 divers and 4 snorkelers; 1 boat, 23 feet, 6 divers or snorkelers. **>>>FAVORITE DIVE SITES:** Garden

>>>READERS SAY: "The outstanding personality of the owners of Kona Honu Divers, along with their staff and their willingness to make every dive one to remember, made our trip great. The night dive with the manta rays is one of those dives that we will remember the rest of our lives." **P.Z., Douglas, Wyo.** "Kona Honu's boat is so spacious, they could load up with 20-plus divers easily, but they don't. Dive guides are friendly and well-informed. And the fresh pineapple in between dives was particularly tasty." **T.B., Santa Monica, Calif.** **>>>THE DIVING:** Two-tank boat trips daily, manta ray night dive, nitrox, gear rental, instruction. **>>>BOATS:** 1 boat, 46 feet, 18 divers. **>>>FAVORITE DIVE SITES:** Turtle Pinnacle, Suck 'em Up and Manta Heaven. **>>>RESORT ON PREMISES:** No.

MAUI

Lahaina Divers

S	C	O	R	E	S
OVERALL	STAFF	BOATS & FACILITIES	VALUE		
90.5	97.6	92.3	81.5		

TEL (800) 938-3483

E-MAIL info@lahainadivers.com

WEB www.lahainadivers.com

>>>READERS SAY: "We've dived with Lahaina Divers for the last few years and they've always paid utmost attention to diver safety. The staff is friendly and provides a high level of customer service, both in the shop and on the boat. They use Newton dive boats, which are simply the best, in my opinion." **M.D., Crystal Lake, Ill.** "This operation consistently seeks out the best diving conditions every day. They have a positive attitude, treat experienced divers with respect and help newer divers in a supportive way. Lots of attention given to educating divers on what was seen." **R.L., Brentwood, Tenn.** **>>>THE DIVING:** Four dives daily, twilight and night dives, unlimited shore diving with some packages, nitrox, gear rental, instruction. **>>>BOATS:** 2 boats, 46 feet, 24 divers. **>>>FAVORITE DIVE SITES:** Molokini Crater, Lanai (Cathedrals) and Turtle Reef. **>>>RESORT ON PREMISES:** No.



Jack's Diving Locker's boats received a thumbs up from our readers.

THE BIG ISLAND

Jack's Diving Locker

S	C	O	R	E	S
OVERALL	STAFF	BOATS & FACILITIES	VALUE		
90.1	98.7	95.3	76.5		

TEL (800) 345-4807, (808) 329-7585

E-MAIL dive@jacksdivinglocker.com

WEB www.jacksdivinglocker.com

>>>READERS SAY: "The staff members—from the people behind the register to the dive guides to the boat captains—were beyond

Eel Cow, The Dome, Turtle Heaven and Turtle Pinnacle. **>>>RESORT ON PREMISES:** No.

THE BIG ISLAND

Kona Honu Divers

S	C	O	R	E	S
OVERALL	STAFF	BOATS & FACILITIES	VALUE		
93.6	95.6	92.3	92.9		

TEL (888) 333-4668, (808) 324-4668

E-MAIL john@konahonudivers.com

WEB www.konahonudivers.com



Milletseed butterflyfish are endemic to Hawaii.

MAUI Maui Dive Shop

S	C	O	R	E	S
OVERALL	STAFF	BOATS & FACILITIES	VALUE		
81	86.1	84.2	72.7		

TEL (800) 542-3483, (808) 875-0333

E-MAIL scubadiving@mauidiveshop.com

WEB www.mauidiveshop.com

>>> READERS SAY: "Maui Dive Shop has a friendly, knowledgeable staff that appear to really enjoy sharing the experience with you. The equipment rentals were first-class. My husband and I make an annual pilgrimage to the Hawaiian Islands and while the Big Island is our favorite, we always make time for a trip to Maui.

We can't help but return time and again to the Molokini Crater, and I can think of no one better to go with than the Maui Dive Shop." *M.M., Kodiak, Alaska.* "Maui Dive Shop provides fruit and deli sandwiches and hauls your BC and tank to the back of the boat for easy entry. The dive boats are large and well-equipped and the dive groups are kept to about six divers per divemaster. They also try to keep the more experienced divers together." *S.L., El Dorado Hills, Calif.*

>>> THE DIVING: One-, two- and three-tank boat trips daily, beach diving, night dives, gear rental, instruction. **>>> BOATS:** 1 boat, 60 feet, 60 snorkelers; 1 boat, 48 feet, 24 divers; 1 boat, 32 feet, 13 divers; 1 boat, 32 feet, 24 snorkelers.

>>> FAVORITE DIVE SITES: Molokini Crater, Lanai (Cathedrals), St. Anthony/Carthaginian wrecks. **>>> RESORT ON PREMISES:** No.



Scuba Shack's staff scored a chart-topping 99.1.

MAUI Scuba Shack

S	C	O	R	E	S
OVERALL	STAFF	BOATS & FACILITIES	VALUE		
95.2	99.1	97.1	89.2		

TEL (877) 213-4488, (808) 879-3483

E-MAIL wetanku@maui.net

WEB www.scubashack.com

>>> READERS SAY: "The team is enthusiastic, funny and helpful. We own our own gear, but they have such great gear for free that we left most of ours at home. The prices were lower than any place else in Maui and included gear while other companies didn't. They provide drinks and snacks, and they load, check and adjust gear for you. They are also very good at dealing with a variety of skill levels. We'd definitely recommend this outfit to friends." *J.G., Pomeroy, Wash.* "Scuba Shack said they were all about valet diving, and they truly were. They have a small operation, but their attention to detail is what sets them apart from bigger companies. I would recommend them to anyone, from beginner to old pros." *S.J., Glen Allan, Miss.* **>>> THE DIVING:** Two two-tank boat trips daily, unlimited shore diving, night dives, nitrox, gear rental, instruction. **>>> BOATS:** 1 boat, 40 feet, 12 divers. **>>> FAVORITE DIVE SITES:** Molokini, Makana Landing and Red Hill. **>>> RESORT ON PREMISES:** Two perthouse units available at Kamaole Sands.



ReaderRatings

» **READERS SAY:** "Their 48-foot boat is awesome, with a ton of space on it. The divemaster really knew his way around as we got to go through a lot of swim-throughs. Seasport Divers is one of the most professional operators I've ever dived with. They have great rental gear and a top-notch dive shop. I would definitely recommend these guys." **D.E., Laguna Beach, Calif.** "The dives were well-briefed and the divemasters took special pride in pointing out underwater

sights (especially frogfish). This is the third time I have dived with Seasport and on each occasion, I've had a positive experience." **R.E., Granger, Ind.** » **THE DIVING:** Two two-tank boat trips daily, three-tank boat trips to Ni'ihau twice weekly, daily shore dives, night dives, nitrox, gear rental, instruction. » **BOATS:** 1 boat, 48 feet, 18 divers; 1 boat, 32 feet, 12 divers. » **FAVORITE DIVE SITES:** Sheraton Caverns, Brennecke's Ledge, Vertical Awareness (Ni'ihau). » **RESORT ON PREMISES:** No.

KAUAI

Seasport Divers

S	C	O	R	E	S
OVERALL	STAFF	BOATS & FACILITIES		VALUE	
93.2	96	94.4		89.2	

TEL (800) 685-5889

E-MAIL info@seasportdivers.com

WEB www.seasportdivers.com

NOTE: Scuba Diving readers and web users rated their experiences at dive operations and on live-aboards in a variety of categories on a scale of one to five. Overall scores represent the percentage of fours (very good) and fives (excellent) awarded. A minimum number of responses was required for a dive operator or live-aboard to be included in these ratings. Changes or improvements may have been made since the operator or live-aboard information was gathered and may not be represented here. To rate your recent dive experiences, go to www.scubadiving.com/readerratings.

DAVID FLEISHMAN

TWO DIVERS DISCOVERING A NEW SPECIES OF RAY.



THERE'S NO WONDER the latest ray in the Princeton Tec arsenal stands apart. The Shockwave LED features three Maxbright LEDs combined with proprietary optics for unprecedented brightness - 9 watts of brute power with two modes of illumination. Strong? Like bull seal. It is engineered to be impact resistant and waterproof to 100 meters.

POWER 170 Lumens, 9 Watts
LAMP 3 Maxbright 3 W LEDs
BURN TIME Low 20h, High 12h

BATTERIES 8 C Alkaline
WEIGHT 1075 g / 38 oz



Princeton Tec
WWW.PRINCETONTEC.COM

BE BRIGHT.

Live-Aboard

Kona Aggressor II

S C O R E S

OVERALL	STAFF	BOATS & FACILITIES	VALUE
93.1	95.8	83.3	100

TEL (800) 348-2628

E-MAIL kona@aggressor.comWEB www.aggressor.com

>> READERS SAY: "We had an enjoyable week aboard the Kona Aggressor II. The boat holds 74, but we had only nine for the week, which was nice. Most days, we did five dives. The divemasters were great and good at finding the unusual." E.A., Wheaton, Ill. "This was my second trip on the Kona Aggressor II in 2005. Both experiences were fantastic. I would highly recommend this trip." S.M.,

Readers gave the Kona Aggressor II a perfect score for value.



Santa Rosa, Calif. "The itinerary of the Kona Aggressor II, to the Kona coast is the best diving in Hawaii. The chef is awesome—we had the best food we've ever had on any live-aboard. The entire crew was very helpful." J.A., Platte City, Mo. **>> THE DIVING:** Five-and-one-half days of diving, up to five

dives daily. **>> BOAT:** Specs: 80 feet long, 28 foot beam, six staterooms, 14 passengers. **>> CRUISE AREA:** Kona coast on the Big Island of Hawaii. **>> DEPARTS FROM:** Kailua-Kona Bay. **>> FAVORITE DIVE SITES:** Never Never Land, Au Au Crater and Paradise Pinnacle.



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