

19 April 2019

Hi All, I hope you are all fit and well.

To get your minds off the latest Brexit madness! (I bet you'll all be voting for Nigel soon...)

Just to keep you posted on our latest-

I finally managed to do a dive for the first time!

Through some American friends, George and Jennifer, we met Will and Wendy in Bequia. Will is a diving instructor in St Croix USVI during the season (November until April)

Will got all animated when I told him I was scared almost to the level of panic attack and palpitations just thinking about diving. He said he likes a challenge and vowed to get me diving ...Will was true to his word.

We had a morning pool session to learn (and try out) all the signs & techniques... already agh- Help! - but I did it !!

Then Will was very nice and invited Jean-Luc to come along for the afternoon dive under the pier in Frederiksted.

It was scary and once I panicked and had to come back up, but then it was beautiful...

Apparently before the hurricane you could hardly swim between the pillars the corals were so huge.

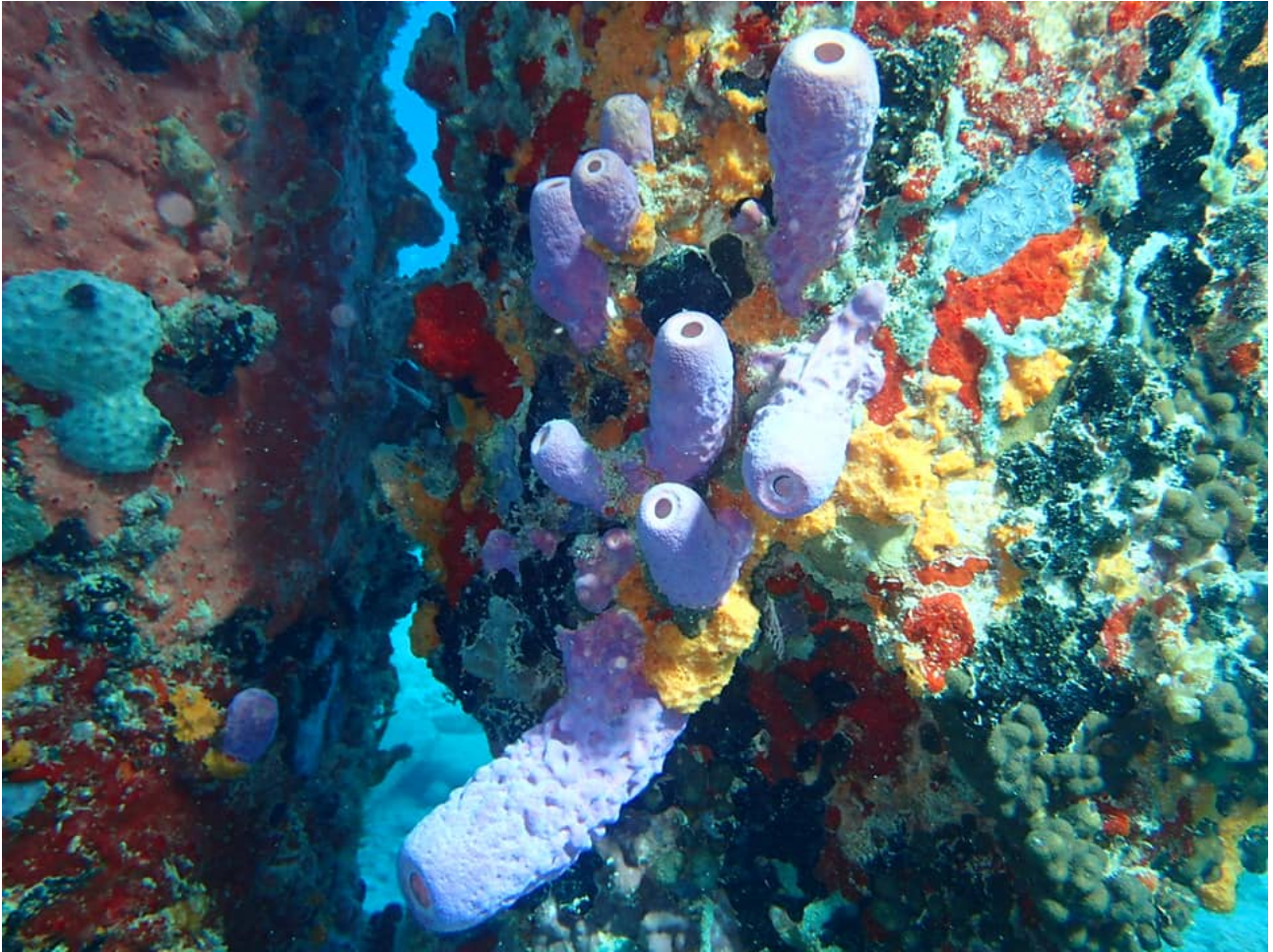
So an enormous thank-you to Will and Wendy for this wonderful experience.

Photos mostly by Wendy.

French Angelfish - juvenile, later they lose the stripes & keep the yellow dots



Tube sponges and corals growing again after being devastated by Maria 18 months ago



Will has to keep me down as I tend to keep heading back up...



Christmas tree worm



We are not sure if this seahorse is still alive -





The Yanks refused our CBP Roam entry application in St Croix. We did it whilst still in Martinique. There was no explanation given. When we called for clarification the girl didn't know why, but said we had to clear in in St Thomas as St Croix is no longer operational. We decided against submitting another application & dumped the CBP Roam app!

We actually cleared in in St John, USVI but didn't stay as it was \$26/ night for a mooring buoy- it's nearly all a National park, very beautiful. We found a very pretty free spot just in front called James island. We saw our first hawksbill turtle with 3 huge French angelfish around her, picking up the bits she dislodged from the coral. Spectacular! Up until now we'd only seen green (sea grass eating) turtles.

There were also huge Spotted Eagle rays jumping in the bay...amazing.

It took us 4 days to get to St John from Martinique- 2 days no wind. Beautiful starry nights and shooting stars, enormous Jupiter and Scorpio, an amazing flashing Canopus. Wow! After a few days in James Island, Christmas cove, we headed down to St Croix.

From there we went to St Thomas to clear out of the USVI's. That was a place...a Freeport. OMG sooo weird. It's like a ghost town with loads of traffic & hardly any people...until a cruise liner comes in. Then all the flash oldie worldie 'Little Switzerland' shops come to life all at once. They've taken over the old town area just behind the seafront & it's Louis Vuitton, Rolex, Gucci- but mostly it's gold, diamonds and precious stones, some silver. Most of the gold stores I didn't like anything, but those were the 'cheap' ones. Some of the designer stuff was sublime.

There was also a lovely clothes store with Batik dyed nice basic designs, beautiful colours & not expensive enough.. then I saw it's made in Indonesia. They also carried a wear in the water anti UV line made in Tortola- it's not swimwear though. A special fabric that dries real quick. The line is called Hiho.

From St Thomas we went to the much acclaimed Culebra which, yeh, it's nice but you anchor in a huge inlet where it's kind of murky water, well maybe I'm exaggerating but it ain't clear by any means. For once we didn't even go check the anchor! The island is famous for it's beaches & it's true, Flamenco beach is divine... but it's a long walk under the baking sun! Ok, there's a bus ...but it's \$3, which makes our round trip \$12! We hitched a ride & got the bus back. The beaches are lovely though, nice snorkelling. Forests of mauve sea fans I'd never seen before.

Now we're in Vieques, Bahia de la Chiva, a deserted bay which comes alive during the day with locals who come by car & animate the beach. Yesterday afternoon a huge motor yacht came and anchored 20 metres behind us. The bay is enormous..... weird.



Today we are all alone (as yet).

This morning we found a forest of green sea fans on our snorkelling outing..

This is a mauve one - and a green one



The plan is to head for the Bahamas in a few weeks. We were going to skip them but if we do, our timing gets all messed up. Our 6 months in the States runs out 29 September....& it's still hurricane season so we can't head south. So, we have to leave the States soon & re-enter to get another 6 months. The boat gets a year...then she has to leave for 2 weeks & then 'maybe' can get another year. If she comes back in, her running year is still valid. It can't be renewed until it's run out. Who the hell makes up all these rules that fight against each other?

Next stop Puerto Rico.. but on the way we're stopping in some other deserted bays with phosphorescent water here in Vieques. It sounds interesting.

Big hugs,
Let me know your latest-
Jan xxx