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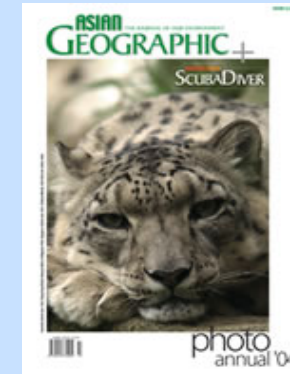
Announcing
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In the current issue (Nº 20) October/December 2004

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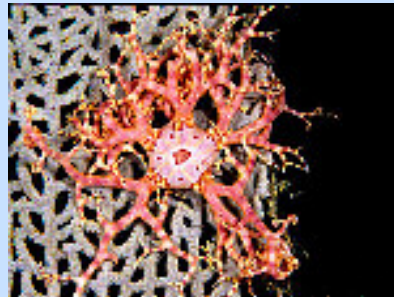
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Editorial

The BAY of HONDURAS. By *The Author* Geographer to His Majesty.



Bay Islands Bounty

Story & Photos by Bernardo Sombra



The Bay Islands are just off the north coast of Honduras ([Map](#)), nevertheless are geographically and culturally distinct from the rest of Central America.

Well known for its bio-diversity the Bay Islands' reef supports a very high percentage of all the hard coral, gorgonian and sponge and fish species found in the Caribbean.

In my opinion, what makes this destination a unique and obligatory diving place in the Caribbean is the micro universe of creatures that inhabit inside the reefs. It is true that one can find eagle rays, sharks, turtles, big schools of horse eye jacks, wrecks and, with a lot of luck whale sharks, but nothing compares with the tiny multicolor and out-of-this-world shaped creatures hiding on the reefs. Knowing before hand the behavior and habitats of each creature is the key to success in finding them. Any well informed and meticulous diver could empty his air supply in just a dozen square meters as the quantity of colorful nudibranchs, gobies, and blennies together with peaceful sea horses and spectacular decorator crabs filling the islands' reefs seems almost infinite.

Approximately 30 miles long and no more than 2 ½ miles wide Roatán is the largest of the island group and it's here where most of the tourism activity and dive operators are located. There are more than 90 dive sites and some, like Mary's Place and West End Wall, need to be dived at least two times to be appreciated in their full magnitude.

Guanaja is the second largest island and it is reported that this was the island Christopher Columbus discovered on July 30, 1502 during his fourth and last trip to the Americas. Happily the reefs that surround this island have been declared a marine reserve some years ago.

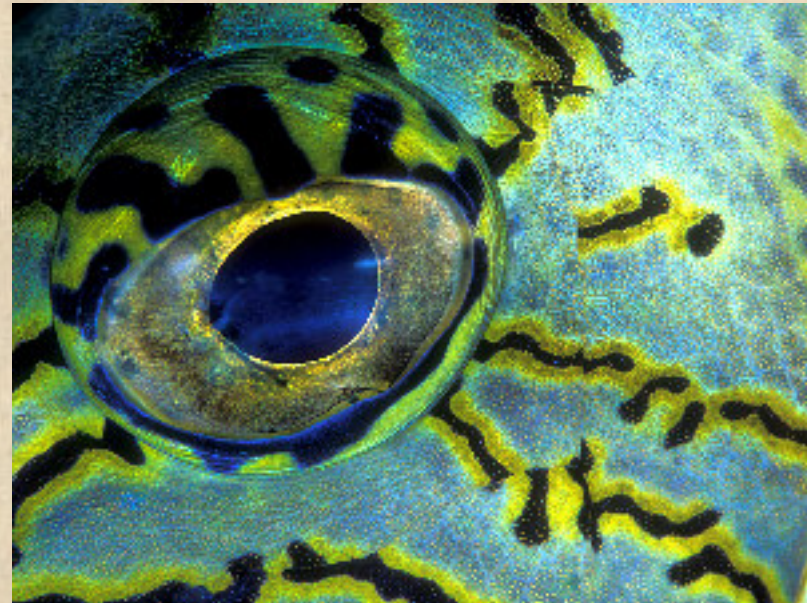
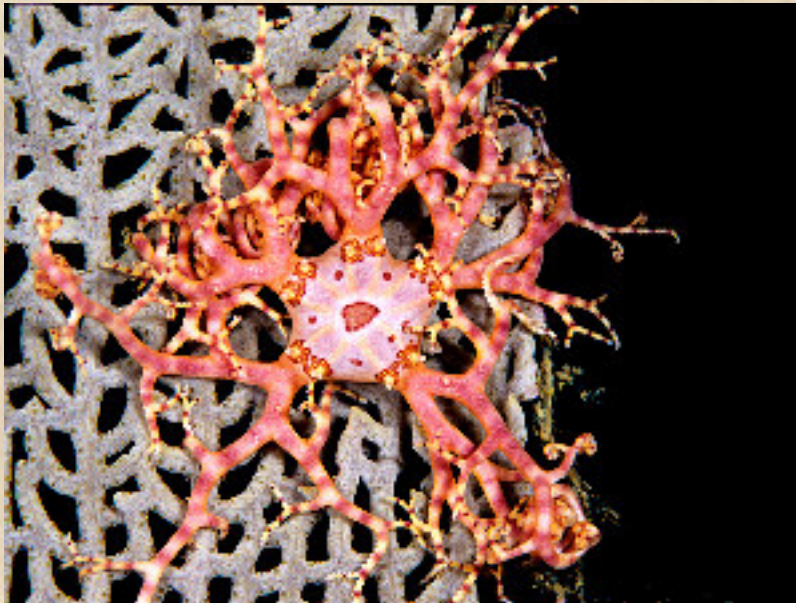
Cayos Cochinos (Hog Islands) are probably one of the best options to dive in the Bay Islands.

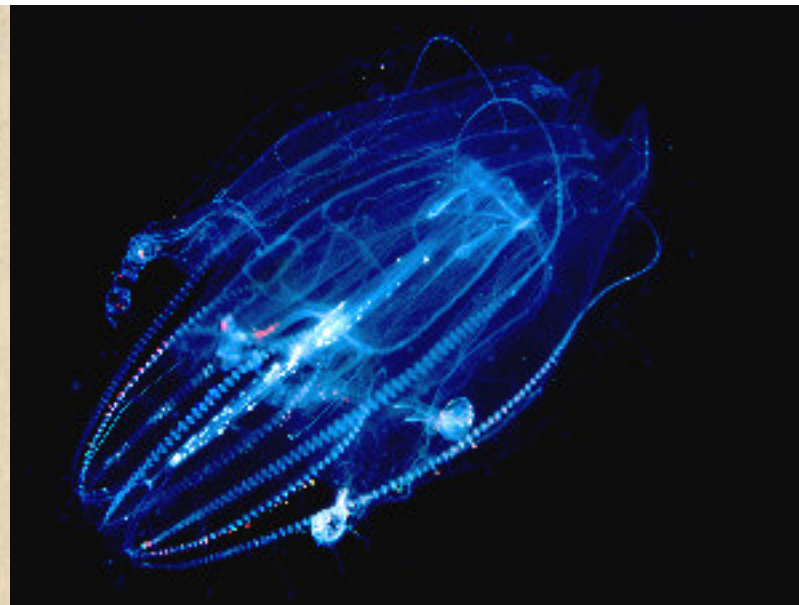
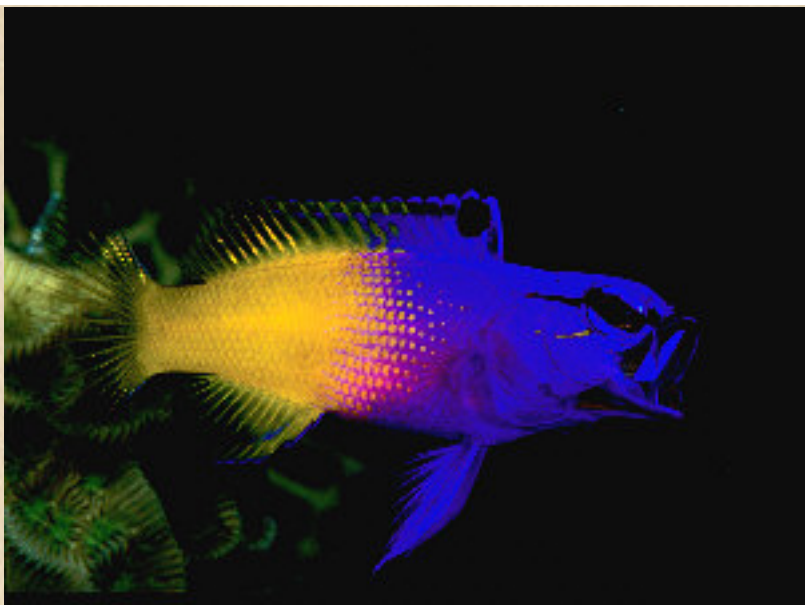
Lying between Roatán and the mainland, this is one of the "must dive" places if you are on a live-aboard. This small group comprises two main islands, Cochino Grande y Chochino Pequeño, and 13 cays of various sizes. Two spectacular places are located here, Toon Town I and II. These colorful dive spots oblige underwater photographers to have their eyes glued to the reefs searching in every coral head, sponge, sea fan or little hole for the tiny but marvelous creatures that inhabit here. A camera with extreme macro capabilities is workhorse in this place. I've particularly used a 105mm with 2X tele-converter plus a close-up diopter 60% of the time.

On the other hand, Utila stands out as one of the few places in the world that afford divers a good opportunity for diving with whale sharks. May, June and July are the months that offer the best probability of finding a whale shark. Even so, these opportunities are scarce and dive operators are not always happy to spend the day looking for them.

[About BERNARDO SAMBRA](#)

[BAY ISLANDS SLIDESHOW \(3 Min.\)](#)





The BAY of HONDURAS. By *The Astronomer* Geographer to His Majesty.

