

s/v Soggy Paws: Kavieng, Papua New Guinea – Kavieng Activities

Boar: 2005 St Francis 44 MK2 Catamaran,
Draft 3.5'

Home Port: Melbourne, FL, USA

SSCA Members Since: January 1992

19 February - 4 March 2019 (Part II of II)

Below, in Part II, is cruising information extracted from the blog of s/v Soggy Paws with some modifications. It covers a portion of our 11 month, 7000 nm trip in 2019 from the



[Google Maps Link to Kavieng](#)

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Philippines southeast through eastern Indonesia, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the Solomon Islands and return. The rudder repair, described in an earlier Bulletin article, was not the only thing we did during our two weeks in Kavieng.

Things to do

[Nusa Island Retreat Resort](#), adjacent to the anchorage, caters to surfers and fishermen. We saw their boats going out around the islands in the early morning. If you want to go through them, they can probably arrange any activities you want and their website has a few suggestions.



The Anchorage at Kavieng,
with Nusa Island Retreat ahead of the boats

There is a hike on the adjacent island to some WW2 relics and guns. After getting specific directions from the resort, we did this on our own, paying a 5 Kina fee (Current Exchange about \$1 USD = 3.5 Kina) to the person on the beach for access.

There is a “van tour” possible down the highway along New Ireland’s east coast (see resort website for a description and their costs). With 4 boats traveling together, we were able to arrange our own day trip by hiring a van.

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Diving

Dave was really keen to dive some of the World War II wrecks around Kavieng. We had planned to dive with our friends, Jase and Jolene, who were temporarily running the primary dive operation in Kavieng ([Scuba Ventures Kavieng](#)) were we thought we could negotiate a multi-dive group rate as a package deal.

Often dive operations will offer a "cruiser rate" as they know most of us are unemployed and on a tight budget. Plus most cruisers are experienced divers and usually have their own gear. It's a no-brainer in our opinion, if the dive boat has space and is already going out, adding another self-sufficient diver is almost "free money".

Compared to most of SE Asia, diving is shockingly expensive in Kavieng. There are two dive operators in the area—Scuba Ventures Kavieng in Kavieng town, and [Lissenung Island Resort](#), about 5 miles west on its own island. Trying to get a “deal” we inquired of Scuba Ventures about a package for 4 of us diving with our own gear. They quoted us their “deal” rate of K350 (approximately \$100 USD) for a 2-tank dive per person, but offered to knock a little off that rate if we committed to a 6-dive (or more) package, for each person. We decided to look for a less expensive alternative and eventually found something more budget friendly.



Dave and Craig in our Local Dive Boat

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A couple of our divers were on a really tight budget. So we contacted Clem from [Clem's Place in New Hanover](#) (our previous stop) to see if he knew of a local dive guide in Kavieng. Everyone already had all their own gear, so we just needed a guy who knew where the dive spots were and boat big enough for 4 divers. It turned out that Clem was in Kavieng when we were, waiting on something to come into Kavieng, and he offered to round up a friend with a boat and take us diving.



Dave Checking out a
Japanese E-13A Jake Float Plane
in only 30' of water.

The first price we got from Clem was amazingly cheap and seemed too good to be true. It turned out to be not quite a complete price. After we added the price for a few necessities (like a boat, fuel, dive gear for the guide, and tank fills) our cost per diver was about half what Dive Kavieng offered us as their best discount. Sue on s/v *Ocelot* spent 3 days in fervent text message negotiations with Clem via WhatsApp, and finely got things nailed down.

So our divers (Dave, Craig from *Berzerker*, and Jon and Sue from *Ocelot*) were able to do a few days of discount diving in an open boat and a local dive guide who didn't speak much English. I'm sure our experience would have been MUCH better and easier with Scuba Ventures, but it was OK taking the budget approach, and more importantly met the budget restrictions of everyone.

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Tip: It's challenging buddy-boating with people who have different interests and budget than you do. We all managed to make it work, 4 boats cruising in company for 3 1/2 months, but it was ticklish at times! But the rewarding camaraderie and help was worth the effort—what cruising is all about.

Another thing we managed to work out was a day trip down the coast of Kavieng on the Boluminski Highway to see a few local sights. **Editors Note:** The Boluminski Highway is a vital 365km road in New Ireland linking Kavieng in the north to Namatanai in the south.

We were still waiting for the rudder to finish drying and wanted to see a little more of New Ireland (the long PNG island that Kavieng is on). This trip I got to go on, as it didn't involve getting my leg wet, and I was starting to feel better.

Liz on s/v *Indigo* had been approached by a tourist van operator while waiting for the water taxi. With a little negotiation we managed to hire a big van (but no air conditioning) with a driver and "tour guide" for the day that could take all of us. The normal tour cost for the day trip from the hotel was \$100 USD per person, but we managed to hire the van for the day for about \$35 USD per person, no frills (ie: we bring our own lunch, water, and pay our own admission, if required), to wherever we stopped.

The \$35 USD, per person, is still a little high for a day trip (after our time in SE Asia), but we were to find the Kavieng prices were some of the highest in PNG, because they are so far out on the supply chain.



Our Little Tour Group minus Dave Taking the Photo

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One of the big attractions on the Kavieng Day Trip is Cathy's Eel Farm at Lairabina Village. Sadly, Cathy had just passed away a couple of days before, and the village was preparing for the funeral (to be held the next day). Our guide called ahead and managed to get us an opportunity to see Cathy's eels, as our entry fee is what supports the village. We also got to see the women of the village preparing for the feast associated with a rather large funeral gathering.

The eels were really cool. They are in a clear freshwater stream that runs through the village. Tourists come in and buy the Eel Food (canned tuna, I think it was) and then you can feed it to the eels. You are standing in the stream with these 5-6 feet long and 4-5 inches in diameter eels slithering around your feet. With my infected sores, I didn't dare get in the water, so I was left to take pictures from a safe distance.



These Eels are HUGE!

Another stop we made was at the Treehouse Village Resort. Here is what Lonely Planet has to say about the place: "The Treehouse Village Resort has a series of traditional-style, fan-cooled bungalows on stilts overlooking the beach. Two units are perched up a 200-year-old Calophyllum tree, above the dining room." Sounds cool, but a coastal storm a few months ago kind of beat it up, and it wasn't open.

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One of the Treehouse Resort Houses in a Tree

The people who lived in the Treehouse Resort Community were very friendly, and we spent quite some time talking (or attempting to talk) to them, and taking pictures all around.



Some of the Friendly People at the Treehouse Resort Village

On the way back to Kavieng, we took a refreshing stop at a local swimming hole. This was a beautiful freshwater swimming hole where we yachties enjoyed the fresh water swim, and the locals were doing their laundry.



Doing Laundry at the Swimming Hole

We also made a quick stop at a fruit stand to buy Dave bananas. These ladies were very friendly.



Ladies at the Road-Side Fruit Stand

Of course, on the way back into Kavieng, we had to stop and see what World War II relics there were.



A WWII Japanese 100mm Shore Gun in Front of the Methodist Church

On another day, our crews dinghied over to Nusa Island, the island adjacent to (north of) Nusa Island Retreat and hiked to the blow holes via some more Japanese World War II relics.

During the war there was a significant Japanese presence in Kavieng including over 70,000 Japanese troops, a big base, an airfield, a seaplane base and an anchorage. There are a number of interesting Japanese and US plane wrecks in the harbor and surrounding area. More details are on www.PacificWrecks.com

There was a small per-person fee that goes to the owners of Nusa Island. I was still healing, so did not go, but here are a few pictures from Dave's camera.



One of the Japanese 100mm Shore Guns Rusting in the Jungle

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A Coconut Crab Living Inside a Gun Barrel



A Possible Gun Control "Pillbox"

For more photos of these adventures, click here to check out our [BLOG!](#)

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For many more pictures of the exciting World War II relics we encountered during our travels in PNG and the Solomon Islands, check out Dave's presentation "Exploring the WWII Relics of Melanesia (New Guinea & Solomons)" on our Presentations Page.

<http://svsoggypaws.com/presentations.htm#ww2>

For much more information on cruising in Papua New Guinea, download our free 285-page cruising guide, the Papua New Guinea Compendium, from here:

<http://svsoggypaws.com/files/#sw-pacific>

Next Stop: Rabaul!

Commodores Dave and Sherry McCampbell



The image shows the Waterway Guide logo and navigation menu. The logo features the text "WATERWAY GUIDE" in a large, blue, serif font, with "THE CRUISING AUTHORITY" in a smaller, red, sans-serif font below it. To the right of the logo is a red box with the text "PLUS Ratings & Reviews on Marinas and Anchorages". Above the logo is a yellow navigation bar with icons for Marinas, Services, Anchorages, Bridges & Locks, Nav Alerts, Fuel, and 6 modes. Below the navigation bar is a white box with a list of categories: Marinas, Services, Anchorages & Free Docks, Bridges & Locks, Nav Alerts, Fuel - Diesel, and Fuel - Gas. Below the logo is the text "Proud Sponsor of SSCA" and "Plan your time on the water with". At the bottom is a dark blue banner with the text "www.waterwayguide.com/Explorer" in white and yellow.

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