



For further information contact:
Matthew Armand, (800) 348-2628
Wayne Hasson, (877) 348-2628

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Aggressor Fleet and Peter Hughes Install New Moorings in Belize

Aggressor Fleet and Peter Hughes Diving made another giant stride this summer in the live-aboard companies' ongoing effort to preserve and protect the natural diving environment of the Caribbean. Working together in Belize aboard the *Belize Aggressor* in September, Aggressor's Captain Wayne Hasson and Peter Hughes installed six new Helix moorings, known as the best anchoring system in the dive industry, and created five new dive sites representing some of the area's best diving.

"Over the past several years, Aggressor and Peter Hughes have helped to install public moorings donated to governments around the world and have invested over \$70,000 combined for these installations. These efforts are part of our continuous commitment to care and respect the reefs and dive sites that we all enjoy, and ensure that they are preserved and protected for many years to come," said Hasson, who worked over 40 hours underwater with Hughes performing drilling work for the installation project.

These new moorings were provided by Helix Moorings and are regarded as some of the best anchoring systems in the dive industry. The Helix looks similar to a giant auger bit and screws into the sand and rubble bottom, sinking down to depths of eight to ten feet before locking itself down. The two-inch solid galvanized steel shaft is then connected to the ground tackle and buoyed overhead representing a permanent mooring stronger than any other mooring of its type. There is no need for underwater concrete as in other type moorings, which will eventually crack around the pins and pull out. One Helix mooring can withstand several thousand pounds per square foot, making these moorings very safe in rough sea conditions. Helix moorings also are not susceptible to stress of tropical storm surge, which has caused concrete moorings to break away and require replacement.

Representatives of the Belize Audubon Society, Marine Fisheries Department and Port Authority provided valuable assistance to Hasson, Hughes and Aggressor crew members both topside and underwater during the installation of the moorings, a task that proved to be quite labor-intensive. A hydraulic drill head weighing nearly 200 pounds had to be hulled up and down for every mooring, along with other heavy, bulky equipment that had to be taken down with lift bags.

"It's a whole lot of work but well worth it," said Hasson, "especially considering the awesome new dive sites that were created."

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The Aggressor crew along with the Belize government representatives gave names to these new dive sites dedicating one to Wayne Hasson and one to Peter Hughes. The new sites include "Wayne's World," "Peter's Peak," "Nurse Shark Alley," "Julie's Jungle," and "Long Caye Drop." All of these sites offer both deep and shallow opportunities on the edge of an incredible wall and symbolic of most diving in Belize, teeming with marine life.

Several other mooring sites were replaced and or repaired during this week of work, and plans for future combined efforts of the Aggressor Fleet and Peter Hughes Diving are underway.

"We're always looking for a few extra volunteers on these work weeks. Assistants are selected at random, so get your bid in to make a contribution on the next project, but be ready for some hard work along the way" explained Hasson who brought along Caesar Matos and Sean Meiman from Miami. "Both of these fellows earned their keep and enjoyed helping for the sake of protecting the environment."

For more information on Helix moorings, contact Dave Merrill at (603) 654-2412 or e-mail: dmerrill@tellink.net.

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Photo attached