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[www.internationalscuba.com](http://www.internationalscuba.com)

**Upcoming Lake Weekends:**

- January 17-18
- January 31-Feb 1
- February 14-15

**Upcoming Trips:**

- Jan 31—Feb 1 Flower Gardens*
- Feb 20-23 Cozumel
- Mar 13-20 BVI
- April 10-15 Belize
- May 15-21 Turks & Caicos
- June 5-6 Flower Gardens
- July 3-4 Flower Gardens
- July 17-24 Cayman Brac
- And much much more!

Howdy everyone:

Hope the holidays haven't gotten the best of you. You might even be ready for football to be over. I won't go that far but I am certainly ready for the dive season to kick in.

We have a terrific group of advanced divers heading to Cozumel this weekend. Should be a blast. Next month we will head back to Cozumel for Carnival. Please join us for a Caribbean Mardi Gras and still manage to get 7+ dives in.

We have 4 spots left for the Flower Gardens at the end of the month and we would love to have you.

We talked with Jeff and Casey last week and they have signed up for another year. Take a minute and send an email to them some time [jeffandcaseymcnett@hotmail.com](mailto:jeffandcaseymcnett@hotmail.com) they would love to hear from you.

Finally, for those of you who didn't make it to the open house—stop by as we have made lots of changes. We are growing!

Well, I am one of the advanced divers heading to Cozumel this weekend so I will see all of you soon.

Have a great weekend and Hope to see you soon.

- Patti Stewart  
[Patti@internationalscuba.com](mailto:Patti@internationalscuba.com)



*Amanda Rickman and Cathy Robinson with Brian and I during the Assistant Instructor program in November. They are now instructors*

## The World of Divers Continues to Grow

The number of certified divers in the world continues to grow and International Scuba continues to contribute to that growth. We would like to congratulate and thank all those divers who completed their certification in November:

**Open Water/  
Junior Open Water:**

Farid Ali  
Susan Gutknecht  
Bill Gutknecht  
Lindsey Anderson  
Zach Mayer  
Joe Miller  
Reagan Rorschach

**Rescue Diver**  
Richard Thomas

**Assistant Instructor**  
Amanda Rickman  
Cathy Robinson

**Oxygen Provider**  
Richard Thomas

**Search & Recovery**  
Stan Rosenfield  
Steve Hale

**Emergency First Responder**

Amanda Rickman  
Richard Thomas

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## SCUBA Really is For Everyone

I was going to write about the fun we had at the Polar Bear dive on New Years Day. (For those of you who weren't there, we all had a good time.) Instead of writing about that, I thought I'd share about another experience I had over the weekend.

I had the privilege of doing a Scuba Review with a lady on Saturday. She hadn't been diving in about 10 years, and was going on a cruise that was stopping in Cozumel. She thought it might be fun to go on a dive while she was there. She was also on the final stages of physical therapy for her foot, so she wanted to see if she could swim with gear. For someone who not blown bubbles for about 10 years, she did exceedingly well. Just a couple reminders and she was off. Now so far this isn't very unusual. We do reviews like this fairly often. What made this memorable was that Martha is well past retirement. She was telling me stories of growing up in Florida during World War II. Doing the review with Martha is a reminder not to judge a book by its cover. She is as comfortable in the water as someone a fourth her age. I always new that scuba was for anyone, but this experience proved it to me.

As we talk to people we tend to share our passions with them. For those of you who share your passions with your retired friends or relatives remember you are never to old to try something new, or get back into something you once loved. There is no upper limit to diving, as long as a medical condition does not prevent it.

One other thing to remember, if on your dive trips you see someone older, talk to them. They probably have some interesting stories to share, whether it be about diving or just some of the things they have experienced.

- Brian Divine  
Brian@internationalscuba.com



## The Water Dogs SCUBA Club bonds a community of divers

The lakes may be good enough for their mascot Gus... a high energy black lab, but members of the Water Dogs SCUBA Club have their sails set for better visibility. Only a year old now, the Lewisville based club is the brainchild of seasonal divers seeking to connect with others who share their passion... SCUBA diving in blue water. The club's 2004 dive calendar includes: Utila, one of three Bay Islands of Honduras, and one of the best places in the world to dive with whale sharks. As well as La Paz Mexico, sitting next to the Sea of Cortez, and dubbed the world's aquarium by Jacques Ives Cousteau.

The club has a Videographer, and not long after your blue water diving vacation is over, you get to re-live it watching a DVD compilation of all the sites and sounds that made your dive vacation memorable.

When they're not diving in blue water, they stay very active in social events such as: the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Greenville Avenue St. Patrick's day Parade, underwater Easter egg hunts, SCUBA Rodeos, and the Lewisville Lake Chili Cook-off.

The Water Dogs meet the first Sunday of every month, at the Lewisville Recreation Center. If you would like to learn more about the Water Dogs SCUBA Club, please feel free to visit our website at... [www.waterdogsscuba.com](http://www.waterdogsscuba.com), or call the Water Dog President (Gayla Snell) at 972-434-0585.

By Brian Snell  
VP/Webmaster



## Travel - Acapulco

While vacationing in Mexico City over the holidays, one of my side trips was to go to Acapulco for some Pacific Ocean diving. Ever since the early age of 9, after watching the Elvis movie "Fun in Acapulco," I had wanted to see the city of Acapulco. It was all I imagined and more, since not only was I able to take in the culture, I was also able to go dive a new place.

The place was Roqueta Island on the western side of Acapulco Bay. Roqueta Island is a National Park about 20 acres in size with huge rock formations, trees, walking trail, etc. It has a sheltered cove with 20' of depth where people can "Discover Scuba." Certified divers can venture deeper obviously, and that's what we did.

Our first dive started in the late afternoon, on the Pacific side of the island. We kept the high side of the sloping bottom to our right as we swam around the island in a clockwise direction, passing boulders the size of busses, more electric blue sea urchins than I could count, and starfish of every shape, size, and color. Thank goodness for the Divemaster being there. He spotted a small seahorse in the sand. About 2 inches tall, all by itself. With no grass, rocks, or other cover, the little guy looked so vulnerable. Further on around the island, we found a small spotted moray, doing whatever it is that morays do. At 12 inches in length, he looked like he would be a great pet. But, I know better than that. We hovered 3 minutes at 15' for our safety stop, and had the show of a lifetime as several Goatfish (I think) rummaged through the sand for food. It's interesting to watch the "pecking order" of these critters.

After our surface interval, we planned to go to 50'. What a treat! I had been hoping to do a night dive. We did a transition dive. Starting at dusk, and finishing in the dark. We swam along over huge sand ripples, they looked more like speed-bumps than ripples, past more boulders, and beside a large school of what resembled the Caribbean 4 eye butterfly fish. At one point we encountered several swordfish bill remnants. Apparently the deep-sea fishermen had been cleaning their catch in this area. Another small moray graced us with a glimpse. Then air supply dictated we begin our safety stop. From 18' down we could see an almost full moon through the small surface waves. It was at this point in time that I decided I must return here someday soon, to discover more about this enchanting place.

My charter was with Acapulco Scuba Center. I took a chance by booking "sight unseen" with them on the web. Great fortune was with me that day. ASC is a top notch operation. Our Divemaster, Isidoro, took the extra steps to make my diving experience unique, and when I return to Acapulco someday, I plan to dive with him again. Visit [www.acapulcoscuba.com](http://www.acapulcoscuba.com) is all you need for more info.

- Curtis Powell  
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## Featured Product – Dry Suits

Why dive dry?

Imagine all the amazing places we can dive...the tropics of the Caribbean...lost wrecks in the Great Lakes...or the kelp forests of Catalina. And imagine that you can make these dives anytime of year, in any temperature! Now imagine that you can dive comfortably, easily and most of all warmly! So how can you gain this flexibility in your diving? By making sure you have year-round exposure protection that will keep you comfortable in any climate.

Comfort is a desire of all divers. As divers, when we dive outside our "comfort zone," enjoyment and motivation gradually decrease and we stop diving. Cold is a key factor that affects a diver's comfort. And the cold does not have to be bone chilling to affect us. Symptoms can be as simple as loss of motivation and energy. Every diver has a different comfort zone and the fact is that wetsuits provide a more narrow comfort zone with little room for adjustment. Wetsuit performance is impacted by fit, diving depth, and changing environmental demands. As a result many wetsuit divers are on the edge of their comfort zone, often resulting in discomfort and fatigue (or worse...avoiding some chilly, yet amazing dive locales!)

Drysuits consist of a shell suit that is worn over insulated garments, which provide warmth. This approach allows divers to adjust the level of insulation for their own personal needs. Your insulation may be a t-shirt and shorts in 72° water and

long underwear or sweats in sixty-degree climes. Or you may prefer a thick fleece or Thinsulate undergarment that will keep you warm at forty-degrees. Unlike wetsuits, a drysuit will maintain its insulation at depth. Increased depth means increased pressure and with a drysuit's insulation



system it means we get warmth and comfort at all depths. With wetsuit diving, compression means decreased insulation. A wetsuit offers 1/2 its original insulation at 33 feet, 1/3 at 66 feet, and merely 1/4 at 99 feet. No current wetsuit system allows a diver to make the individual adjustments required to maintain comfort and performance with changing depth.

Some divers have the impression that drysuits are more difficult to don and remove. Yet actually, drysuits are no more difficult than a wetsuit. In fact, because a drysuit fits loosely, it is actually a little easier than stuffing yourself into a wetsuit. And while the neck and wrist seals require some care to get on and off, that's about as hard as it gets. And what about the cost? The initial up-front cost is more than the typical wetsuit, yet as with any investment the price of the item is only one part of the equation. Most drysuits will last so much longer than a wetsuit that the effective cost of the suit is much less. Just as with any item that depreciates, the cost should be divided by the number of uses the item returns. Economics don't take into consideration the increased degree of comfort achieved by the drysuit diver. Imagine all of the different things in our lives that we could actually do without but, because we want to be more comfortable, we decide to get them anyway. And imagine the incredible flexibility a drysuit can offer – you could be spending your weekends diving in the amazing, pristine lakes all around Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas or diving with seals and whales off La Paz, Mexico.

So come on in and give drysuit diving a try! Why dive dry...why not?

Kathleen Garrett  
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## Photographer's Corner – Defying Conventional Wisdom

I've had the opportunity to shoot with some professionals. One thing I learned was that each had his own style of shooting. One of the very first bits of advice I received was to experiment and find the style and technique that works best for you. I refer to this as defying conventional wisdom. Sometimes it works, while other times it means repeating the mistakes of others. On a recent trip, I found it did indeed work.

One advantage often cited for digital photography is the ability to evaluate your shot and shoot again, repeating the process if necessary until the shot is satisfactory. I've always felt that this was a weak argument for the advantage of digital. First, the shot you are trying to get is usually not there forever. One can't always get the subject to cooperate. Secondly, trying to evaluate whether the shot was any good by looking at a little LCD screen is quite unreliable. LCD screen output varies from camera to camera and how well you can see it can be greatly affected by ambient light. The true results may be quite different from what you see on the screen. Lastly, in my case the digital camera itself often forces me to re-shoot because of the lack of automatic strobe control.

Having said all that, the ability to carefully review the results after a dive (via a laptop) allowed me to adjust my shooting. While in Galapagos I was shooting entirely wide angle. Unlike most wide angle situations, this was action photography, sharks and sea lions. After my first dive with sea lions, I realized that none of the images were in focus. Indeed, these creatures moved so quickly one could barely fire the shot off in time. While most fish shots are close enough that the strobe or strobes will freeze the action, the seal lions were generally at the limit or beyond the reach of the

strobe light. Shooting my normal camera settings resulted in a slight blurring of their ever moving head.

I knew I had to crank up the shutter speed, but also new that trying to adjust settings while the action was going on was next to impossible. I decided to set my camera to its maximum shutter speed while still using strobes and set the camera to shutter priority, which lets the camera choose the aperture. This was a foreign concept to most underwater shooters. Conventional wisdom for most underwater photography has us using either aperture priority or full manual. I discussed the idea with a couple of other photographers. They just stared at me as if I had suggested hand drawing the sea lions on an etch-a-sketch. I was undeterred and tested the setup on the next dive. It worked, or at least worked better than any other technique I had tried. This eliminated the shoot, adjust and shoot again mentality and allowed me to just fire away. So, the ability to evaluate results quickly from the digital files, combined with a willingness to try something new can lead to better results.

**George Vincent**  
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*Please visit our website. We do our best to keep it up to date. Let us know what you think about the site and the newsletter. An important part of our success has been the friendships developed among customers and staff. That's part of why*

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## **Creature Feature – Banded Jawfish**



Banded Jawfish, *Opistognathus macrog-nathus*, Male incubating eggs. Occasional South Florida, Bahamas, Caribbean.

**Size:** 4-6 1/2 in.—max 8 in.

**Depth:** 3-25 ft

**Distinctive Features:** Light tan head with only indistinct, unpatterned markings. Not heavily mottled as many others. If the body is exposed, can be distinguished by. Several blotches along sides, blotch on outer half of dorsal fin starting behind sixth spine.

Inhabit areas of coral rubble, rocks and sand. Individuals excavate burrows by mouth and line holes with stones. Usually sit in burrows with heads protruding. Males incubate eggs in their mouths.