



International Scuba News

Remember to visit our website!
www.internationalscuba.com

Upcoming Lake Weekends:
April 12-13
April 26-27

Upcoming Trips:
Roatan April 19-26
North Carolina May 23-27

Bringing in the New Year

The diving season is fast approaching; some of us have already gotten already wet. Are you ready? Is your gear serviced? Have you been in the water lately? If any of these answers are no – please come see us. The pool is always open for your refreshers and we typically can have your gear back in a couple of days.

We've got lots going on this year. Our swim lessons kick off on March 31st. We've been to Cozumel twice already and are heading to Roatan in April.

Watch the web site as changes are happening daily. We are upgrading with the plans to have commerce available by summer.

- Patti Stewart

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North Carolina Wreck Diving with RedWetandBlueDiving.com

What do you think about diving within the US but in warm salt water? There are tremendous numbers of wrecks off the east coast that we recreational divers can check out.

Come see and touch one of only 3 diveable German U-Boats sunk in WWII and the ONLY one in clear, warm, gulf stream waters, along with many of their unwitting victims. Or come safely face-to-face with the most feared of all

animals: SHARKS!!! You'll not only live to tell about the encounter but you'll want to experience the THRILL over and over again.

This unique diving experience has until recently been enjoyed mostly by a handful of lucky East Coast divers who have for years known about the crystal clear waters of the Gulf Stream flowing off the coast of North Carolina.

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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 there certification in January and February:

Open Water/Junior Open Water:

Michael Padgett
Lawrence Reimann

Advanced Open Water

Fred Evans
Erin Reynolds

Specialty Diver

Mark Hayhurst	Boat
Walter Hodges	Boat
Mark Hayhurst	Deep
Jeff McNutt	DPV

Brian Divine	DPV
Mark Hayhurst	DPV
TK Laux	Drift
Ralph Mahon	Drift
Mark Hayhurst	Drift
Walter Hodges	Drift
Ralph Mahon	Dry Suit
Mark Hayhurst	Dry Suit
Casey McNutt	Enriched Air
Mark Hayhurst	Night Diver

Assistant Instructor

Ralph Mahon	Darrell Gardner
Walter Hodges	
Dutch Waddell	
Curtis Powell	

Common Dive Practices

Just as you should have a healthy respect for the mountains, you should have a healthy respect for the seas. In the mountains, the weather can change in an instant and turn a beautiful day of hiking into a survival story. Similarly, a beautiful day of diving can instantly turn chaotic if some common dive practices are not followed. For instance, we may underestimate the importance of a dive briefing, knowing your buddy's experience level, and staying close to your buddy in the event that they may need your assistance. It is easy to take these simple dive practices for granted.

Could deviating from a dive plan be dangerous? A dive briefing is just a little extra information, right? Not necessarily! My wife, Susan, and I were on our first boat dive of the day with mostly advanced divers on board. Three of the divers, including Susan, were less experienced. This was an advanced dive through a tunnel system of coral starting around 100 feet and ending around 130 feet. We had a dive briefing and were split into two groups. Group one, the advanced group, would go through the tunnel system and come out of an opening in a wall at about 120 to 130 feet. Group two, the less experienced group, would go over the coral reef of the tunnel system at about 100 feet and meet group one down current.

It seemed that everything was going as planned as group one entered the coral tunnel system with our dive lights. There were adjacent tunnels that led in different directions and I remember thinking, "it's a good thing the divemaster knows where he is going." Then I saw group two's divemaster in an intersecting tunnel holding his group back until we passed. According to the dive briefing, he wasn't supposed to enter the tunnels since he had less experienced divers. I probably gave him a dumbfounded look as he motioned for me to go ahead.

Upon exiting the tunnel, my buddy, Patti, dropped about 10 feet below me to watch a barracuda while I slowly drifted along the wall. As I waited for Patti to catch up with me, I saw a pair of yellow fins go back into the tunnel. I must have had a small case of nitrogen narcosis because I knew that something was wrong, but I didn't put two and two together. Shortly thereafter, unexpectedly, I saw Susan floating ghostly toward me with the current when she shouldn't have been there in the first place. At this point I focused on her since I didn't see her buddy, Mark. I gave her the OK sign and she returned it. However, it was obvious to me that she also had a case of nitrogen narcosis and maybe a little stress. This was the first time that she had been that deep and in an overhead environment. Mark caught up with Susan and signaled to me that he would take care of her. I signaled OK and swam against the current to get back to Patti. I instinctively took care of my wife; however, I left my buddy in the process. For a short time Mark and Patti were without buddies. Fortunately, nothing happened to either of them. Later, I would get the whole story of what happened on this dive—and what could have happened. We did our safety stop, ended the dive, and the boat picked us up.

Nothing serious happened on this dive, but it's what could have happened that bothers me. Evidently, the well-meaning divemaster of group two attempted to briefly take his divers in and out of the tunnels. However, he deviated from the dive plan and lost two of his divers by bringing them too close to group one. It is sometimes hard to tell whom to follow when you bring two separate groups that closely together. Now I know the yellow fins that I saw going back into the tunnel belonged to the divemaster who was looking for his lost divers. Susan and Mark stopped, looked around, and saw Patti at the end of the tunnel. They made a wise choice and took the sure way out by following Patti instead of risking getting lost in the tunnel system by attempting to find the divemaster. To Susan, Patti looked like a savior. Susan swam so fast to Patti that she left Mark behind in her own current. Instead of "eat my dust"; she says, "eat my current." It took a while for Mark to catch up with her, which explains why she was alone when I reached her. Every strange thing that I saw was now making sense. Furthermore, these divers were not used to the effects of nitrogen narcosis or being in an overhead environment at that depth, which could have caused them to ineffectively problem solve or even panic. If you have a problem while scuba diving remember to stop, think, and act, as did these divers. It prevented one mistake from turning into a more serious situation.

This dive proved to be uneventful because the fairly new divers remembered to *stop, think, and act*. They also made a decision to take the sure way out of the tunnel system by following someone they knew and trusted. Fortunately, nothing happened to my buddy when I was preoccupied with my wife's safety. Considering this, I plan to always buddy up with my wife if we are in the water at the same time. This way I will not be tempted to leave my buddy, even for a short time, to take care of my wife in the event of a problem. To make a safer dive, try to know your buddy's experience level and if he or she is comfortable with the conditions of the dive. Furthermore, these problems could have been avoided all together if the dive plan was followed. I'm sure that we have all heard of the practice to "plan the dive, dive the plan". Granted, you can't foresee all possible problems; however, you can follow some common dive practices and be more prepared by considering and planning for possible problems. These common dive practices are in place for a reason.

For another example of the importance of following some common dive practices, read the article "Diving Into Complications" in the March/April issue of "Alert Diver."

-Ralph Mahon
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Photo Tips — *A Matter of Extremes*

Looking for more impact in your images? Perhaps all your photos have a certain sameness to them. Underwater photos that have the most impact are those at the extremes, either macro (close-up) or wide angle scenes.

A “normal” lens, one that gives us a view similar to what our eyes see is considered to be 50mm. Most underwater cameras come with a standard lens of 28-35mm. This actually equates to 37-44mm because of the magnification factor from being underwater. While this may be normal on land, the underwater world isn't quite normal. Most of the fish and other life we see underwater are considerably smaller than objects we photograph on land. These standard normal lenses aren't very useful underwater.



Macro or close-up lenses allow us to get closer to the subject, allowing us to fill the most of the frame with the subject. If you have to search the photo to find the subject, you are too far away. It also eliminates much of the unwanted inventory in our photo that distracts the viewer from locking on to the primary subject.



Reef scenes or very large subjects require a wide angle lens to provide an angle of view that gets everything into the frame. On land we can move back to get more into the frame, but underwater we are very limited as to how far we can back up because of the lack of light. Even the most powerful strobes will only reach about 5 feet out to light our scene.

Most underwater camera systems have either interchangeable lenses or macro/close-up attachment lenses that will allow you to move to the extremes. Try one out and I think you will find your results far more pleasing.

- George Vincent

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Travel — *Join us for some fun and sun*

At International Scuba, we offer a number group travel experiences. I wanted to give some benefits and correct some common misunderstanding about group travel.

- **Research and planning are done for you.** For a number of dive destinations the research can be daunting. We do the research and planning to make the trip as hassle free as possible.
- **Security and Peace of mind.** By traveling on a group trip, prepayment covers all the major expenses, so that money concerns on the trip are minimized. We have either visited a destination many times or have the appropriate contacts at the destination so we are familiar with the local hotels, dining, dive operators, dive sites, transportation, etc.
- **Time Savings.** In today's world, your time is at a premium. With a group trip the planning, phone calls, emails, and general research have already been done for you.
- **Traveling with experts.** All of our group trips are led by instructors. If you are new to diving, this allows you to gain experience without having to venture out completely on your own. The instructors are there for you. You get ask questions, get assis-

tance, and even get additional training while on your vacation.

- **Free Time.** This is perhaps one of the biggest misunderstandings of group travel. We do not force you to do everything as a group. Basically we will let you know what time to meet the boat, what is available if you would like to participate in a group activity, but nothing is forced. If you want to spend the day sunbathing instead of diving, that is great.
- **Price.** Often because of group rates, we can offer lower price than you can often get on your own.
- **Comaraderie.** You will meet other people with the same interests as you. Many friendships have been developed on group trips. Its also nice to share tricks, techniques, and experiences during and after the trip.

-Brian Divine

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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 we dive.

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Creature Feature – *Horse-Eye Jack*



Horse-Eye Jack – *Caranx latus*

Silvery. Usually have dark tips on dorsal and upper yellow tail fin. Often a small black spot at upper end of gill cover. Common to occasional Florida, Bahamas and Caribbean.

