



International Scuba

What's Happening?

Remember to visit our website!

www.internationalscuba.com

Upcoming Lake Weekends:

Mar 12-13	May 7-8
Mar 26-27	May 21-22
Apr 9-10	Jun 4-5
Apr 23-24	Jun 18-19

Upcoming Trips:

Mar 17-18 Flower Gardens
Mar 12-19 Bonaire
Apr 11-18 Akumal
May 21-28 Belize

Upcoming Classes:

Adv. OW	3/12,3/26,4/9,4/23
EFR	4/5,5/3,6/7,7/5
Rescue	3/17,4/21,5/26
Nitrox	3/15,4/19,5/17,6/21
DAN O2	3/8,4/12,5/10,

Howdy everyone:

I want take this front section to promote a couple different groups activities.

First off, Suzanne and I are being locked up for MDA on Wednesday the 16th. We are in need of your assistance to help us get out of jail. Here is a link that you can grab the donation form from and assist us (<http://www.internationalscuba.com/MDAWANTED.doc>). I don't usually ask for monies but you don't want your favorite two dive shop ladies stuck behind bars for too long or have a kiddo miss their summer camp.

The Water Dogs Dive club is having a Buoyancy Clinic on March 20th. The entry fee is \$20 which is covering pool rental and instructor's time. If you haven't been wet in a while and want to have some real fun, come on out. Where: LISD Natatorium - 1776 Timber Creek Rd. Flower Mound from 3-6 pm.

Next on the list is the Single Divers Group. Who are sponsoring a Happy Hour Spirit Grille, Irving April 1st - April Fools Day! No foolin! Starting at 6:30 and going until everyone's gone! (Spirit Grille - 4030 N Macarthur Blvd Ste 112.

Scubadillos are hosting their 7th annual Crawfish Boil on April 10th at Winfrey Point—White Rock Lake. It is \$25 in advance and \$35 after April 3rd. There will be silent auctions and door prizes and count on the usual fun and friendship.

- Patti Stewart

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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 their certifications: **If you have hit a milestone please send me an email.**

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Open Water/Junior Open Water

Bill Duba
Julie Eldridge
Chad Meyer
Michelle Ficklin

Advanced Open Water

Diana Cowden
Simon Warner

PPB

Enriched Air

Pepper Strong

DAN / PADI O2

Provider

Adventure Diver

Kevin Ewing
Mary Ewing

Navigator

Photographer

Rogerio Bachega

Boat

JT Cowden

Divemaster

TK Laux
Dave Allen

Deep

Dave Allen
JT Cowden

Drift

JT Cowden

EFR Instructor

Mike Gibbens
Ron Kennedy
Brad Warner

Milestones

25 Dives

30 Dives

40 Dives

50 Dives

John Eriksen
Brenda Eriksen

60 Dives

80 Dives

100 Dives

500 Dives

Carnival Time!

It was 6:00 AM on Friday February 11th and we were standing in line at DFW airport preparing to board our charter for Cozumel. When you think of Cozumel, is your first thought “oh, another typical 4-day all inclusive dive trip hosted by International Scuba and Travel for You Incorporated”?

Well we did stay at Hotel Cozumel! We did have some fabulous dives with Dive Paradise that included close-up sightings of spotted eagle rays, sea horses, turtles, a nurse shark, a large green moray eel and splendid toadfish. However, the similarities with the other Cozumel trips ended there! You see every year Cozumel celebrates Carnival with parades and other street festivities. It's kind of like a family oriented Mardi Gras or festival. On Sunday evening the majority of the group headed into town for a night out at Prima's. Of course there was nothing typical about this night. The Prima's evening started out with a toast to the Birthday girl (Suzanne), a fantastic meal, and ended with one of Dive Paradise's outstanding Dive Masters (Jamie) giving lessons on napkin folding. But the fun didn't stop there, oh no! We proceeded to the waterfront in time to watch the parade and enjoy some local refreshments.



When the parade was over we headed to Carlos and Charlie's where some danced the night away.

If you still have a doubt in your mind whether or not we had a good time, just ask any of the other 22 people that went with us and then call Tami at Travel For You Incorporated to reserve your spaces for Carnival 2006. Ready or not, here we come!

- John
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It's Sand! It's Barren! It's a Desert! Or Is It?

I've often been asked what my favorite place to dive is. That is such a difficult question. I like them all, from fresh to salt, warm to cold. I don't compare them, just enjoy them. What I do like now and again is the unusual.

I would like to talk about one of the unusual areas I like to dive that most people just gloss over as they go from reef to reef - the sandy areas. At first glance this part of the ocean floor looks barren, and lifeless. One might even say boring. Nothing could be further from the truth. Will you find the colorful fishes and coral there, not very often, but it is far from lifeless.

One of the first things that will catch my eye is a hermit crab inching along the sand. If you approach quietly and gently and get down to their level, you will see them nibbling on the debris on the bottom. You can also see how they pull themselves along. Looking a little further you may see what looks like coral rubble. Just a pile of dead coral pieces sitting. The peculiar thing about it is that there is little or no sand on it. Let's investigate. Hey take a look, there's a bunch of little juvenile fish in there. A lot aren't much bigger than a dime. They dart in and out of the rubble. I can watch these little guys for quite a while.

Let's look a little more and in the right places, we may find what looks like individual stalks of grass in a flat area. As we approach, the grass stalks start getting shorter, eventually they disappear into the sand. Hey wait a minute, that's not grass, its garden eels. They like to hover above their holes with their tails still in the ground and pick at the little stuff that floats by (a good dinner for a garden eel). You have to be very patient to get one to come up very close to you but as you leave they will appear very quickly.

If we're lucky we may see some larger fish such as large puffers, lobsters that are trekking from reef to reef, flying gurnards, jacks and other open water fishes. But lets take a closer look. Stop right

where you are and look down at the sand. There are dozens if not hundreds of small fishes. They are all about the color of the sand which is why we usually miss them. They range from blennies, to gobies, to small lizard fish, to shrimps.

Hey look over there, it's my favorite fish of them all, a tile fish. See the one, it's long and thin, mostly white but has some bright yellow along its fins. These guys are incredibly flexible and fluid. It's almost like they have no bones. They just kind of wave in the current. Approach slowly because they will duck into their holes if you startle them, but you can get surprisingly close if you are patient.

As you look around the sand you may see some holes about the size of a half dollar. If you look in these (please no fingers) with your flashlight you may get a glimpse of a creature. These are mantis shrimp. They are shy so you need to use patience to get them to come out. Instead of claws, they have more of a hammer that they will literally bash their prey with at lightning speed.

That's probably enough of a tour for now. Look some more you'll be surprised what you see. For another treat try a sea grass bed and take a look at what is there, or a night dive on the sand.

A good place for this is off the Hotel Cozumel dock. There are small reefs, but take a look at the sand and see what you can spot, you may be surprised.

Happy diving,

- Brian Divine
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Pre-Season SCUBA Gear Check-up!

Hey Divers!! Can you believe it!!! Spring is right around the corner and it's time to start thinking about dragging your SCUBA gear out of the closet for another fun filled dive season. But before you get too anxious to jump in the water, we'd like to recommend you bring your gear in for it's annual service.

REGULATORS, BCDs & COMPUTERS

If you purchased your regulator and/or BCD from us, ask us to see if you are eligible for the parts warranty from the manufacturer. In some circumstances the manufacturer will cover the cost of the parts kit and leaving you responsible for the labor. As a reminder, Annual/Yearly Service is required on your:



BCD



Regulator's 1st stage, 2nd stage and octo . Computer (battery change)

For most gear, the Annual Service turnaround time is 3 days to a week – sometimes quicker – HOWEVER; don't wait until the last minute to bring it in or Murphy's Law will mysteriously take effect...

TANKS



If you own a tank, remember, tanks must have a visual inspection every year and be hydrostatically tested every 5 years. If your tank(s) don't have a current Visual Inspection Sticker and Hydro Date you won't be able to get them filled – ANYWHERE. Visual

Inspections are typically completed within 3 business days. A Hydro may take as long as 1 – 2 weeks so please check those Hydro dates and get them to us early.



SAVE-A-DIVE Kit



While you are digging through that gear bag you should also check your "Save-A-Dive" kit. Do you remember if you used anything out of it last season? Better check it now...

WHAT? You don't have a Save-a-Dive kit??? Well, guess what??? We just happen to have a few in stock just waiting for you. For those of you who do, here's what you should have in that Save-a-Dive kit. We also have all these "piece-parts" as well as the pre-packaged Save-a-Dive kits.



Tank o-rings	Fin Strap	Tie-wraps
Snorkel Keeper	Buckles (fins)	Silicone Grease
Mask Strap	Mouthpiece	SCUBA Tool*

* It includes a Crescent Wrench, a Flathead and Phillips Screwdriver and 2 Allen Wrench(s) that fit your regulator's port plugs.

FIRST-AID KIT



Just as with your Save-a-Dive kit, you should check your First-Aid kit – Now is a good time to check the expiration dates on the over the counter pain medicines, antibiotic ointments, eye drops/wash. Even if it is just in a "Zippy Bag" you should have some sort of First-Aid kit, not just with your dive gear but also in your car... you never know when you'll need that band-aid!! Wondering what should be in that First-Aid Kit? Well here's a list of things to consider.

Protective Barriers—gloves & mouth	Sterile Gauze Pads and Rolls	Aspirin, Advil, Tylenol
Band-Aids of various sizes	Wet Wipes	Triangular Cloth—Sling
Antibiotic Ointment	First Aid Adhesive Tape	Sinus Meds—if necessary
Alcohol Wipes	Scissors & Tweezers	Prescription Meds—if necessary

So, gather up your gear and bring it on down to the shop for it's annual service. And while you're at it take some time to look around the shop for those items you need to re-stock your Save-a-Dive kit.

If it's been a while since you've been in the water, remember we have SCUBA Review classes every Thursday at 6:00 PM and we go to Clear Springs SCUBA Park every other weekend, rain or shine. Give us a call and let us know the date if you want to do a SCUBA Review and/or that you will be joining us at the lake.

Dust that gear off and join us whenever you get the chance!! The next lake weekend is March 26th.

- Suzanne
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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

CD Corner — Master SCUBA Diver Rating

Howdy Divers,

I thought I would steal some of Sport Diver's ideas concerning the Master SCUBA Diver rating article.

From time to time folks will say "I don't want to go professional but what else can I do". That is an easy answer for me. Here are my questions to the diver.

- *What specialties have you taken lately?*
- *Did you complete your Advanced Open Water?*
- *Have you done Rescue?*
- *Do you have 50 dives?*

The answers will vary but if most of them are "yes", then I say why don't you go for Master SCUBA Diver. That is the highest recreational certification you can have. The best way to describe this rating is: you are a well rounded diver with several underwater interests. Several of the other training agencies have similar certifications but often the number of dives isn't the same. Here's how PADI differs;

Let's count the basics: Open Water is 4 dives and Advanced Open Water is 5 dives. You will have 9 dives right off the bat to begin specialty training in preparation for Rescue Diver. Somewhere along the way of doing specialties you completed your Advanced Open Water. The 3 elective dives you did in this program is what you started your specialties with. See you are already on your way. Think about it, if you do 5 specialties and all of them had 3 dives each, that racks up 15 before you know it. Not all specialties have 3 dives required, several have 2 dives while several have 4 dives.

With regards to Rescue Diver, you need 20 dives to begin that program. Remember that we tell novice divers that it takes roughly 20 dives to get your act together—well....

Now that I have totally confused you—let me clear things up for you. In order to become a Master SCUBA Diver you need:

- *Rescue Diver*
- *50 Dives*
- *5 Specialties*

Now, at International SCUBA, we have created an awesome black t-shirt with gold printing that denotes you as an MSD. Look around at the lake next time or on a trip—you will see several of those shirts being proudly sported.

So what are you waiting for—come go diving with us.

Hope to see you soon,

*- Patti Stewart
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Creature Feature — Garden Eels



So, you are cruising along in the sand and thinking what a cool little patch of turtle grass and all of a sudden the grass disappears, they are Garden Eels. These little guys are extremely shy and withdraw quickly into burrows when approached.

They range in length of 8-15 inches and can be found at depths ranging from 15 to 200 feet. Many that we see are brownish or even yellow.

They gather in small colonies on sand flats and extend the head and upper part of their body from the burrows. They continuously move in graceful wave-like motions to catch drifting plankton. To the untrained eye, it they look like grass. They can be found mostly in the Caribbean, Bahamas, and occasionally in Florida along both coasts.

Here is a neat little tidbit of information. The full range of this species has yet to be established and any sightings outside the areas listed should be reported to REEF at www.reef.org.

So as Brian mentioned in his article, don't think horrible thoughts when you end up in sand and not a coral reef. Practice your buoyancy and breathing and see if you can get these little guys to pop back up. You will have to be very very still.