



International Scuba

Did you Survive Relatives, Turkey and Football?

Can you believe it is time for Santa. Seems like only yesterday we were wearing shorts and pop firecrackers. This year has flown by. It seems like Thanksgiving is just a blur and yet it was last week. Time to holiday shop.

I can honestly say that I am 95% done with my shopping. I don't think Brian can say that. I have packages to ship to California and to the USS Enterprise so I have to be done early.

We have some great new stocking stuffers and just cool gift ideas. Remember a gift certificate will make a diver very happy.

Just a reminder, if you haven't been in for a while you should stop by. We are face lifting the front of the store and having a blast doing it. We will have several more phases of the face life to do prior to a **December 13th Open House**.

We will have several of the local dive clubs present so you can get to know more divers and about their organizations. We will have a technical diving area

set up for those of you who are ready to dive outside the box.

We are also going to showcase some of our trip destinations for 2004. Don't be surprised if you see part 2005 already posted. We want to add some exotics to the board.

Have a great weekend and Hope to see you soon.

- Patti Stewart
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Photo by
Phil and Wendy Fox -
Turtle on Maui

Remember to visit our website!

www.internationalscuba.com

Upcoming Lake Weekends:

December 13-14 Terrell

Upcoming Trips:

Jan 16-19 Cozumel

Jan 31-Feb 1 Flower Gardens

Feb 20-23 Cozumel

Mar 13-20 BVI

April 10-15 Belize

May 15-21 Turks & Caicos

July 17-24 Cayman Brac

And much much more!

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 April:

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

Inside this issue:

It's Wetsuit Time	2
Dive Travel—Big Discounts at the Open House	2
Go Where others only Dare to Dream—Cave Diving	3
Featured Item - Sealife DC310	3
Creature Feature— Flying Gurnard	4

December 13th Open House 10-4

Great Sales!
Good Food
Fantastic Stories

It's Wetsuit Time

Finding the right suit for you

I get a lot of questions regarding wetsuits and their proper use. There is no one "right" answer for everyone. It depends on several factors, some of which are water temperature, type of diving, budget, and of course, fit. Fashion is starting to play a larger role, as consumers have demanded more colors and patterns from the manufacturers.

What is a wetsuit made of: Form-fitting exposure suits are usually made of foam neoprene rubber (wetsuits) or spandex-like materials (skins), sometimes with fleece added. The skins sometimes make donning a thicker wetsuit easier due to their slick outsides.

What they do: Exposure suits trap a thin layer of water between the suit and your skin to insulate against heat loss. Even warm water can rob your body of heat 25 times faster than air. The thickness and type of exposure protection you need depends on dive conditions. A thicker suit will keep you warmer. Thin suits made of Lycra provide little thermal insulation but do help protect from scrapes and stings. There are a lot of questions about dry suits as well. The goal, as the name implies, is to keep you dry underneath the outer shell of the suit. Your thermal protection is supplied by wearing warm undergarments, similar to a ski suit or fleece underwear. Your head and hands will get wet, requiring you to wear a dry suit hood and gloves.

What to look for: Fit and comfort. Exposure suits should fit snugly without restricting movement or breathing. Reject any suit that's too loose, however. Gaps at the arm, leg, crotch and neck allow water to circulate and defeat the suit's ability to prevent heat loss. No matter how good a deal you think you're getting, if the suit doesn't fit you properly you are not going to be warm. And we all know that once you get cold underwater, there isn't much you can do to warm up but end the dive and dry off.

Accessories: You might also think about adding a hood and gloves to increase your comfort level. Even a 3mm beanie makes a huge difference when diving in temperate waters. Gloves can be found in different thicknesses ranging from 1mm to 7mm.

Cost: Wetsuits and skins range from \$80 to \$550. Dry suits can cost from \$500 to \$2,400. Some divers like to layer a shorty wetsuit over their full suit to add a layer of warmth. If you have the budget for it, then having both a full and a shorty can really extend your diving season.

My advice: As long as a wetsuit fits correctly it will do the job. If you're going the budget route, your choices will usually be limited to basic models. Bright colors and graphics aren't necessary but do make you more visible to other divers. And it never hurts to be seen.

Temps (F)	Thickness	Type of Suit
75-85	1.5mm	Neoprene, Lycra, Xpedition suit
70-85	3.0mm	Neoprene, Beanie
65-75	5.0mm	Neoprene, Gloves, Hood
50-70	6.5mm	Neoprene, 5mm Gloves, Hood
35-65	9.5mm	Neoprene, Dry suit, Gloves, Hood

- Jeff McNutt

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Travel—Big Discounts on Trips at the Holiday Open House December 13th, 2003—Driving it Home (sorry for the repeat)

One Day Only!! Save big on all 2004 trips. We have been working hard to give the shop a super new look. Come by the shop on Dec. 13th and see the new Travel Center, along with all the other great changes. We should be able to book any travel on the spot, whether it is a group trip or an individual booking. I am very excited about the new full-service booking opportunities for "You."

Sign up for any 2004 trip and get **GREAT SAVINGS!!**

\$50.00 pp discount for any \$200 deposit*

\$100.00 pp discount for any **FULL PAYMENT***

We will also have a drawing for 2-\$200 Gift Certificates during the day, **YOU MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN!**

2004 FABULOUS TRIPS cont'd

July 17-24
August 6-9
August 21-28
August 27-30

Cayman Brac
Cozumel—Family: bring the kiddos
La Paz, Baja Mexico
North Carolina Wreck Diving
September TBA
Aruba



Cayman Brac Resort



Cayman Brac
Russian Frigate



Cozumel—Magic
Sunset, formerly known as Brisas formerly known as Costa Club, formerly known.....

* Discount is not available on the Flower Garden Trips. Discount does not apply to previously booked reservations. \$50 and \$100 discounts are only available with deposit paid on 12/13/03.

Go Where Others only Dare to Dream - Cave Diving

Last month we featured an article on cavern diving - a recreational level certification that is also the first step in cave diving. Cavern dives and cave dives are both considered "overhead environments" and require special training before you are qualified to enter a cave. Cavern divers remain within sight of the cave entrance, always diving in daylight. Cave divers however, leave the "light zone" and penetrate the dark passageways of the cave itself. Imagine traversing through an aqueous world filled with fragile stalactites and stalagmites formed over thousands of years. Ancient fossils are found imbedded within the limestone walls as you silently glide by. Small, rugged passageways lead into large, cavernous rooms with beautiful, arching thresholds that only Mother Nature can design. No doubt about it, cave diving is intense and not for everyone. Yet it is an incredible experience that with the proper training can safely take you to rare parts of the underwater universe.

Although cave diving is classified as technical diving, you can experience Intro to cave diving with slight gear modification and a minimum Rescue level certification. Intro Cave divers are required to stay within sight of the permanent main line that original surveyors placed in the cave. Apprentice and Full cave divers learn to make "jumps," "gaps" and "traverses" requiring the diver to tie his own reel to the main line and traverse through an unmarked area to tie into another line - a more advanced skill. These courses can be taken separately (recommended) or combined into one. Each course takes 3-4 days minimum, diving in at least two different cave systems.

Intro Cave requires modifying standard recreational gear. Fin and mask straps are taped into place to avoid catching on lines. Aluminum 80 tanks are fitted with a Y or H valve allowing two independent air sources in an emergency. The primary regulator is attached to a seven-foot octopus hose for easier air sharing and the backup second stage is worn on a bungee around the neck. As with cavern diving, a minimum of three lights are required along with primary and safety reels. All equipment is streamlined and

placed close to the body to avoid damaging the delicate cave environment and prevent entanglement on a line. As a cave diver advances to Apprentice, he or she must first learn to dive with double cylinders, using a wing-style BC. Nitrox certification can also be helpful.

Cave training takes all the basics learned in Cavern (reels, rule of thirds, buoyancy, communication skills, emergency procedures) to the next level. A calm, problem solving mind-set is practiced through task loading drills which help a diver learn to resolve emergencies as they arise since a direct ascent to the surface is not possible. Accident analysis is studied and divers learn that the number one cause of cave diving accidents is lack of training, followed by failure to run a continuous guideline, not following the rule of thirds, diving beyond depth limits and not carrying three sources of light. Could cave diving be for you? Check it out, cave divers are actually some of the most highly skilled and well trained divers in the scuba world. The training is excellent, focusing on safety, awareness, equipment preparation and expert diving ability. And the cave divers playground? an ancient paradise second to none. Come by and see pictures of some of Florida's and Mexico's most magnificent caves at our Dec 13 Open House. You too might be intrigued!!

*-Kathleen Garrett
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Featured Product – Sealife DC310

Strive for Perfection: Advanced Dive Camera!

On your quest for exceptional shots you can easily navigate through the menu of options, change exposure modes, take movie clips, set flash options, adjust resolution, control light sensitivity (EV) and more. This high mega pixel "PRO" camera is ideally suited for use with external flashes and macro and wide angle lenses.



The new ReefMaster 3.3mp digital camera has Land & Sea Exposure modes, one button operation, and a quick review function. Three exposure modes for external flash: macro, standard, and far. Here are some of the features:

- 3.3mp ccd sensor
- 8mb on-board memory
- SD card compatible
- 1.6 inch LCD color monitor
- 2x and 4x digital zoom
- Movie JPG capable
- Fully rubber-armed
- Advanced-Dive control system
- Tested to 200ft (60m)

Great holiday gift idea. Smartly priced, add a strobe.

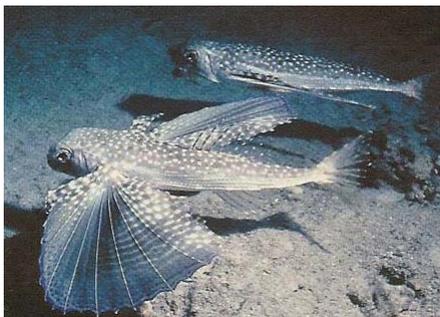


Please visit our website. We do our best to keep it up to date. Let us know what you think about the site and the newsletter. An important part of our success has been the friendships developed among customers and staff. That's part of why

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Creature Feature – Flying Gurnard



Dactylopterus volitans

Family: Dactylopteridae

Size: 6–14 inches

Depth: 1–35 feet

Distinctive Features: huge, fan-like pectoral fins that often have brilliant, iridescent blue line and dot markings. Shades of gray to yellow-brown body with white spots.

They inhabit sand, coral rubble, and sea grass areas, often near shallow patch and fringe reefs. Normally fold pectoral fins against sides. If alarmed, spread pectorals and swim away. When foraging, “walk” about on finger-like spines of lower pectoral fins, which are used like hands to turn over rubble.

They are shy to divers and will swim away when approached.