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International Scuba News

Remember to visit our website!

www.internationalscuba.com

Upcoming Lake Weekends:

April 26-27

May 10-11

May 24-25

That time a year again—YEA!!!!

Time to get wet. Andrea and I along with 9 other folks are heading to Roatan this weekend for a week of awesome diving. There have been whale shark sightings and even maybe an elusive hammerhead. Several of you know that I am in search of hammerheads. Some of us last summer were lucky in Grand Cayman but I was not one of them.

We are planning 2 Flower Garden and North Carolina trips this summer. We know that many folks are a little leery

about traveling too far outside the US and there is a funds issue.....

Join us for great seminars on NC and read all about Flower Gardens at www.flowergarden.nos.noaa.gov.

If you want to stay even closer to home, join us at the lake for a fun weekend of diving. We go every other weekend beginning 4/25.

- Patti Stewart

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North Carolina Wreck Diving Seminars

Come see us Thursday April 17th or April 24th at 6:45 or Saturday April 19th at 3:45 for all the details concerning this great US diving destination

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 March:

Open Water/Junior Open Water:

Ace Garner
Becca Turnbull
Lindsey Baney
David Duse
John Wendell
Bryan West
Brad Jowers
Ken Hoggard
Lindsey Baney
Bruce Strickland

Skin Diver

Hannah Johns

Emergency First Response/AED

Robert Lovell



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Wetsuit to be or wetsuit not to be...that is the question

As previously seen but worthy of another run

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. I'll try to keep to the basics in this piece.

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

Featured Equipment - Deepoutdoors BCDs

Harmony Series BC. These are gender aware single tank integrated bladder (back inflate to the novice) were developed with a focus on both design and peace of mind. The company uses a special technology—DRI-Fusion where the 2 fabrics are fused together that result in a web that is stronger than the original fabrics.

The Tranquility (weight integrated, 40 lb lift) and Serenity (34 lb lift) are specifically designed for female divers with an adjustable sternum strap and shorter torso length. Both have trim pockets.

The Integrity (weight integrated, 40 lb lift) and Unity (34 lb lift) for male divers offer a longer torso length and shoulder straps for a more comfortable fit. Both have trim pockets

Due to the back inflate bladders, both the men's' and ladies' jackets offer little to no restrictions on the front. You can customize the jacket with different styles of pockets either vertical or horizontal ordered separately.



Fun Diving Season

Spring is here. For all those WWW's (warm water wussies), the water is warming up. It's time for some local diving.

Most of us are independently wealthy, so we can't seem to head to warm tropical waters every month, or every other month for that matter. But the desire to dive is always there. Well, look no further. Clear Springs is a mere 60 minute drive away (50 minutes for Patti).

Nothing keeps your skills up to par like diving. I know that the more I dive, the easier it becomes. The shop schedules a lake weekend every two weeks and YOU are invited to join us.

It's a great opportunity to meet people, relax and have fun. Want to go diving on another weekend? Need a buddy? No problem. I plan to do a lot of fun diving at Terrell this summer. If you would like to go, and would like a buddy, give me a shout, or better yet, an e-mail. I'll be happy to join you. Besides, I have lots of toys to play with and gear to try. If I can't make it, there's bound to be someone else headed out there.

- George Vincent

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West Coast Diving – Puget Sound, Washington

Many of you have been to the Seattle area. A number of others have thought about it. When you think of Seattle, a number of things come to mind including the Space Needle, Pike's Place Market, fish being tossed through the air, Mount Rainier, rain, looking out over the Puget Sound, Microsoft, and many other things. One thing most people don't think about is diving. --- I'm here to tell you that diving in the Puget Sound is something that must be experienced. Yes its cold water diving, but if you dress appropriately, you hardly notice. The life that you see is very different than the tropics. I had the opportunity to dive there a few weeks ago, and if I have the chance to do it again I wouldn't hesitate.

I met the boat at a marina just south of Seattle. Like all good dive boats, I was greeted and given the orientation to the boat. Unlike most tropical dive boats, most of it is enclosed. We all put our dry suits on before we got on the boat so we were ready. The ride out to the sites is short. As we go out to the first site, we get our briefing. A 100 ft dive to a site called KVI. This site has a number of poles lying on the bottom. A perfect area for creatures to hide.

We descend to an area that is about 25 feet deep and follow the bottom contour from there. Pretty soon we see the poles. The first things I notice are Plumose Anemones. These are much larger than anemones I have seen in the Caribbean. They are upright on stalks about 12-18 inches high. They are snow white and dusty orange. As we descend down the bottom I notice little dust plumes on the bottom. So I slow down and notice dozens of shrimp on the bottom. They are nice eating size. Too bad I don't have a net and some cocktail sauce. One of my dive buddies (there were three of us on the boat) calls me over and we look under some rubble. About 2 feet in I see a tentacle. Cool, I've seen octopus before. Then I realize the sucker on the tentacle is the size of a silver dollar. I follow it up to the head I realize its head is the size of an entire Caribbean octopus. That cold water make the critters big. The octopus had no interest in us, but didn't mind the voyeuristic divers. Pretty soon our computers were telling us it was time to come up. On the way up I saw a strange looking fish with that I later found out was a rat fish. It's in the same family as the shark and ray. It was only about 18 inches long, but fun to look at.

We got back on board and got our tanks switched out. Once that was done, hot drinks, sandwiches and soup were ready for us. Love being taken care of. Our next dive is a site called China Wall. We follow the descent line down. As the bottom comes into focus, I see what looks like a pile of snow. Now its cold water diving, but it was 50 degrees. A bit warm for snow. We descend a little further and I realize we are seeing more of the white anemones. We go along the wall, really more of a large rock formation at about 90 feet. As we go along we see a number of fish in the cracks and pretty soon Owen (one of my dive buddies) signals that he sees a nudibranch. I'm expecting something a couple inches. This thing is the size of a dinner plate. He later tells me it is a lemon nudibranch. They tend to get that big in that part of the world. (On the third dive I did see a couple normal size nudibranchs so they do have small things too). A number of large Ling Cod were in the area as well. Hmmm, deep fried in a light batter, malt vinegar it would make for good fish and chips. I guess that sandwich didn't last long. After a 30 minute dive there we do our safety stop and back on board. The second helping of soup sure tasted good.

Our third dive was to a place they call Pixie Sticks. It was a place an old bridge was so all the piling came down and look like a giant game of pixie sticks. Unfortunately the current was a bit stronger than anticipated so we missed the site. We did a drift dive on this one so no matter. We still found a good amount of structure for creatures to hide in. On this one we found a wolf eel. Ugly creatures, but pretty docile. They have tough mouths. Their favorite food is sea urchins. This was just ready for us to go away. It was his nap time. This was a good dive as well. Coming up we were right by an island that was forested. Being used to seeing sand and palm trees, and coming up waiting for the boat a hundred yards from a pine forest was definitely a new experience for me.

On the way back to the marina, I found out that Owen normally has a camera with him, but decided not to on this trip. If you want to see some pictures from this area (as well as many others) check out his website at www.owenlloyd.com.

If you get the opportunity I highly recommend diving in this area. I think you will find it worth your while.

• 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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Florida Diving - Saving Turtles?

Jim Abernethy Scuba has an excellent reputation in West Palm Beach for finding the best dive areas for the conditions of the day. We visited dive sites teeming with life. Reefs were located between 50 and 60 ft. Wrecks were the habitat for giant grouper, schools of fish, spotted eels, and 6 ft rays. Keith and I happened upon a scorpion fish blending into the edge of one of the wrecks we visited. We saw a huge green moray eel, porcupine fish, queen angels, huge parrot fish, high hats, a red eyed lizard fish and schools and schools of other fish. Some of our favorite sites were the reefs at the Breakers, The Corridor, and the wreck at Amaryllis and many more. From the surface we watched a hammerhead shark tangle with a spinner shark. We were glad to be on the boat as opposed to in the water when they decided to go 8 rounds in the water! The visibility was between 35 and 50 ft. and the temp. was between 71 - 77 degrees. The current usually ran north and was easy to maneuver. The most exciting part of the weekend was being a part of a turtle rescue. Jim, who was our captain, dive guide and video photographer, was able to capture a large hawksbill that had fishing line wrapped around its flipper. Apparently there had been several reports from divers regarding the physical condition of this turtle. The front flipper had shrunk to less than half the size of a normal flipper. When they reached down to get the turtle out of the water the flipper fell off

back into the water. Immediately they went into first aid treatment by stuffing the whole with a T-shirt and securing it with a weight belt. Jim called the Marine Rescue Center to let them know about our friend. They were at the dock when we got there. After unloading the boat they were able to put our turtle on a back board and strap him down. The next morning we found out he had a good prognosis and had been named "Alpha." How appropriate for a "new beginning." He is also their #1 Hawksbill turtle. About 8 months from now you will be able to see a documentary on Alpha, his rescue, and his life at the Marine Rescue Center.

I don't think we can say enough about this fine group of captains, instructors and dive masters! They took great care of us as well as the life we saw on the reefs and wrecks. They were courteous, helpful, humorous and just plain good divers and guides! We thoroughly enjoyed our weekend and would do it again in a heartbeat. So let's go diving!!!!

- - Karen Smith
- Divemaster Remote

Creature Feature – Lettuce Leaf Sea Slug



Lettuce Leaf Sea Slug – *Elysia crispata*

Numerous skin ruffles on back resemble leaf lettuce. Color extremely variable. Common Florida, Bahamas and Caribbean.