
DIVE LOG

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire

HEY! WHERE'S EVERYONE GOING?



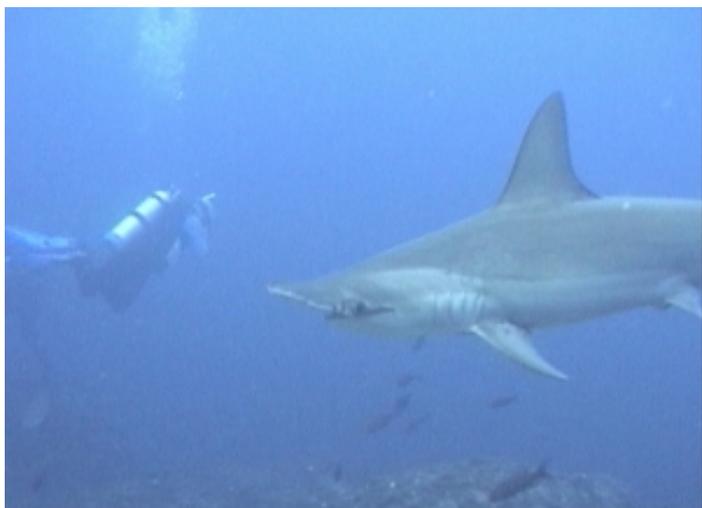
Used Tank Auction

At the June 18 meeting it was decided by the membership that the 8 cylinders which were donated to us by Jim Davis would be auctioned off to the highest bidders at the August 6, 2001 meeting. All those wishing to participate must be club members. (That means dues currently paid up to date) All of the tanks being put up for bid will require a Hydro inspection which is the responsibility of the buyer. In the event a tank doesn't pass the hydrostatic test the auctioned price will be refunded by the club. The cylinders, varying in capacity and type(steel/alum), will be on display at that meeting for your inspection.



On the cover

Kerry Hurd treats us to some video clips from his recent trip to Cocos Island off Costa Rica where *he* got to see hammerheads firsthand. Read his account of this adventure on page 4



**DOES ANYONE KNOW
WHERE OUR "LIVE
FREE AND DIVE"
STICKERS
DISAPPEARED TO?**



The Newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire

Editor: Gary Thuillier

Submissions

Editorial contributions may be e-mailed to Diveknits@aol.com

Submissions can also be sent on paper or PC floppy to:

Gary Thuillier

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New Boston, NH 03070-0372

Please include a brief byline and author contact information with your submission. Submission shall automatically constitute an expressed warranty by the contributor that the material is original and is in no way an infringement on the rights of others. While no compensation is paid for published submissions, a byline indicating the source of an article will always be provided. Authors grant *Dive Log* and United Divers of New Hampshire first print rights to the submission. *Dive Log* and its editors reserve the right to edit all materials as needed. The opinions stated in the articles in *Dive Log* are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the United Divers of New Hampshire or the editors of the *Dive Log*. For further information, please contact Gary Thuillier @ (603)487-3001

Subscriptions

Subscriptions to *Dive Log* are included in the UDNH membership fees. Non-members may subscribe to the newsletter for \$15/year. Subscription inquiries should be addressed to Gary Thuillier as well.

Advertising

Rates for a full year placement (6 bimonthly issues) range from \$75 to \$360, depending on placement size and location. For detailed information on advertising in *Dive Log*, contact Don Eva at (603) 672-5608 or dpeva@aol.com

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Website:

Newsletters and other current info are available at our website: <http://www.udnh.org>, graciously hosted by Jake & Linda Richter.

From the editor

Look to the back issues of your "Dive Log" and notice the same few names of those contributing information and stories for each newsletter. To them, I say **Thank You** for all your work. As for myself, I'm fresh out of ideas or the time to put any that I may have down in print. I gladly took on the job of editing this bi-monthly and have enjoyed it thoroughly up until now. The bottom line is, the editor is supposed to do just that, **edit**, not write half of the material. There was a time when I had a good deal of fun putting this all together and though I still find it very rewarding it is just too much to fit into my schedule.

It was always my goal to have each 'Dive Log' ready for publication before the first of the month of issue. Here it is, July 2 and I still have 4 empty pages to fill with who knows what. In fact, this is one of the reasons I'm speaking out now. **This piece is a filler!!** Unfortunately there is only so much junk I can (or care to) put into this publication and I actually feel guilty about subjecting my readers to the crap I'm writing right now. Someone has to pick up where I'm leaving off. Call it a 'cop out' if you like but I can't do it alone and no longer wish to have the responsibility of getting this newsletter out in time, something we owe to our advertisers. I'm not going anywhere and will be happy to help the next person or group of people who decide to take this position on. It is not all that time consuming providing you have the free time and a fast computer, neither of which I have.

In less than a week, 14 of us club members and 2 other friends will be on our way to St. Maarten where we will board a boat for one full week of diving off Saba, St Kitts,

and Statia. I am quite sure there will be photos and stories galore and will be delighted to submit my share to the new 'Dive Log' staff. I know you're out there somewhere.

Sincerely



Gary D. Thuillier
former editor

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- Doug Bennett, President



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INSTRUCTIONS

RENTALS

Cocos Island - May 1-15, 2001

photos and text by Kerry Hurd

Before my trip to Cocos Island, I could honestly tell people I had never seen a shark while diving, I had never seen a turtle while diving, and I had never been seasick.

Those statements are no longer true.

I arrived in San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica, on the evening of Tuesday, May 1. I met my fellow travelers at the hotel. Two of them I knew from before. One was Ross Kniffen, who runs Aquatic Excursions and put this trip together. He is also the former owner of Aquatic Specialties in Merrimack. The other person I already knew was Bruce Wadleigh, who was my instructor for Basic and Advanced Open Water Certifications. We were to be traveling on the MV Sea Hunter, a 115-foot long dive boat, with two camera tables, individual lockers, a salon, dining area, and smaller video viewing room.

We were picked up the following morning by Sea Hunter personnel and brought to the dock in Puntarenas, about 2 1/2 hours away. As soon as we were on board with our luggage, we left the dock, since the tide was high. And so we began our 30-hour boat ride to Cocos Island. We had plenty of time to set up camera gear, test equipment, and watch videos. We were also treated to three square meals a day, with great variety, terrific taste, and nice presentation.

The seas generally travel from west to east on the Pacific side of Costa Rica, and so we were heading into the waves. The ride wasn't bad, but the motion got to me enough, and I became seasick. The entry in my journal describing it says "very unpleasant." I don't know if it was any consolation, but I wasn't the only one.

We finally arrived at Cocos Island in the early morning of May 4. It was an odd feeling when the boat finally stopped. Everyone was eager to get in the water. Diving is done from two pangas (fiberglass skiffs about 23' in length), and so everyone gets to perfect backrolls. Getting back on the panga after a dive is relatively easy with a ladder and the crew's assistance. I was part of the Gold Team, along with nine other divers. The other panga held the Blue Team, also consisting of ten divers. Each panga had its own driver, plus a dive guide who swapped every other day.

Once we put BCs on our tanks, we didn't need to touch them the entire week. The crew moved them from the main ship to the panga and back, and the tanks would be refilled in place on the pangas. Nitrox is available, and was used by almost everyone. The mix for the first dive (at 8 a.m.) was 32%, as it was for the second dive (at 11 a.m.). The dive (at 3 p.m.) had a 36% mix, and then back to 32% for a potential night dive, and the following morning.

The diving is generally deep, usually 65 to 120 feet. There can be strong currents and very strong surge, as was the case on

almost every dive. I sometimes found it difficult and frustrating. I brought my video camera on every dive and it can be challenging to get a decent shot while being constantly pushed and pulled back and forth. The surge is worse when shallower, but it was often strong even at depths of 50-60 feet.

Visibility was usually 60-70', but was reduced to about 40' during a couple of the dives. Water temperatures were about 78-80 degrees above the thermocline. Below the very easily seen and felt thermocline, it felt like the temperature dropped more than 5 degrees. I would then get used to the cooler temperature, so that going above the thermocline felt like entering very warm water. Air temperatures were 74-80 degrees, day, night, when it was cloudy, when it was sunny, and when it was raining. It was kind of odd having the temperature change so little. The air was also humid, so that everything took a while to dry.

There are three scheduled dives a day, with seven days of diving, giving most divers 21 dives. Night diving is not popular at Cocos - there are very few corals, the octopi are out during the day, and the same fish are seen as during the day. There were only two night dives during this week, and I did both of them. One night dive was very fun, with a maximum depth of 41 feet, along a sandy/rocky border. That was when I saw my largest crab in Cocos. But all of the other life was basically the same as seen during day dives. The other night dive was around Viking Rock, and so was very similar to the day dive done earlier. We hit about 65', and saw the same life. However, there were some cup corals (also known as flower corals) out, which I referred to as "dandelion" corals, since they were bright yellow and looked similar to the above water flowers.

So what else did I see? Well, there were parrotfish, soldierfish, bluefin trevallies, Moorish idols, black durgons, scrawled filefish, Mexican hogfish, Pacific burrfish, Pacific boxfish, and Pacific Creole-fish. I saw huge schools of big-eyed jacks (probably several thousand in the school). I saw several eels, normally speckled, but also one snowflake. There were all sorts of trumpetfish, including bright yellow ones. I also saw a few



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cornetfish. And I finally saw turtles! It was common to see one or two on a dive. The ones I saw were the Pacific sea turtle. However, the other group (the Blue Team) got to see a Hawksbill.

I also saw several rays. The most common was the marbled ray (sometimes one or two, and other times a dozen or



more). Eagle rays were also occasionally seen (I only saw three of them). I was very happy to see a couple of mobula rays and manta rays. They are similar to each other, but the mobulas are usually smaller (8 to 10 feet across vs. 15 to 20 feet), and brownish on the top, while mantas are black. They are very fleeting creatures, and so the diver needed to be quick to spot one. The Blue Team was fortunate enough to have two dancing mantas for several minutes! (The Gold Team had "only" two or three single mantas viewed. Could I be jealous of the Blue Team?) It is amazing how graceful rays are, and also how quick. With a couple of slow, gentle beatings of their wings, they can zoom out of sight.

And so that leaves sharks. Did I see any? Oh yes. What kind? There were white tips, black tips, silkies, silvertips, and



hammerheads. The white tips were the most common, and I would usually see more than a dozen or two on a dive. They were generally 3 to 5 feet in length, often resting on a sandy area at the

bottom. (As an aside, these are white tip reef sharks, not to be confused with oceanic white tips.) I saw only a few black tips, with the majority being at a bait ball. Most of the silkies I saw were also part of the bait ball. The average size for each of these types was 4 to 5 feet or so.

I saw the silvertips at a site called Silverado (gee, I wonder how it got its name?). At the start of the dive, there were three of them, seemingly on a carousel. They traveled in a circle over an outcrop, being cleaned. They were females, and probably pregnant, judging by their girth. They were later joined by a couple of smaller silvertips. The larger ones were probably 6-8 feet in length, and the smaller ones about 4 feet.

Cocos Island is known for its schools of hammerheads.



The best time of year to see huge schools is generally July through October. I was very pleased to see some nice schools - groups of a couple of dozen or so. Some dives, however, I would see a single hammerhead, or a group of three or so. They are very beautiful and unique animals, and I couldn't help but stare at them as they circled around being cleaned. Unfortunately, they are rather skittish. We were instructed to hang closely onto the rocks and let them swim by us. We were to "become part of the rock." Even so, we rarely got encounters closer than about 30 feet. They were usually seen as shapes materializing out of the distance into their characteristic shape, then veering off again into the blue. They are impressive creatures, as I found all of the sharks to be. Average lengths of the hammerheads were probably in the 7 to 10 foot range. And the Blue Team (yes, them again) got to witness a huge school go overhead. There were probably more than a hundred in that school.

Dive sites included Manuelita Island, Viking Rock, Dirty Rock, Dos Amigos Grande, Dos Amigos Pequeno, Shark Fin Rock, Punta Maria, and Alcyone. All of the sites were good, but for the most consistent action (that is, the site most likely to get plenty of hammerheads) was Alcyone. It is about 75 feet at its shallowest, and so we had to keep a close eye on no-decompression limits. But

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we did see a lot there! There were several sea stars of various shapes, sizes, and colors. There were a few eels. And it was at



Alcyone that I saw all four of the octopi I saw on this trip - and it was on one dive! What strange and amazing animals! They generally sat in one place, near a crevice. They weren't bothered by the divers, who would come up to investigate and take a photo or two.

I had heard that the crew of the Sea Hunter would take excellent care of the passengers, while diving or not. Well, that was an understatement. All of the crew were outstanding! I have nothing but praise for them. They did so much, from freshly baked pastries and freshly cut fruit in between dives (and even hot cocoa on the

rainy days!), to the knowledge and abilities of the dive guides and panga drivers; from the willingness to help out anywhere to the creatures carved out of fruit in the dining room every day; from repairing equipment to helping carrying luggage; and from doing our laundry to keeping the cookie jars filled. This was a luxury dive trip!

What about my fellow passengers? Many of them had been on trips together before, and knew each other already. However, they eagerly welcomed the "newbies," and so we all had a great time.

The trip back was with the waves, and so was very smooth. No one had any motion problems on the return. We viewed videos, recounted our exciting dives, rinsed and dried our gear as best we could, and packed.

After the dive trip, half of the group stayed in Costa Rica for further exploration. We stayed at a hotel with a view of Arenal, an active volcano. It was fun sitting on the balcony at night, and watching the red glow and occasional red hot rocks thrown from the volcano. We took a hike through some of the rainforest and a lava field. We also spent a few hours white water rafting. We were glad to see more of the country than just the airport and a hotel.

So was it worth the time and the money? Well, at the beginning of the week, I was thinking no, because of being seasick, thrown around by currents and surge, and doing deep dives. However, I started getting used to the diving by the middle of the week, so that by the end of the week, I could say that yes, it was worth it. And do I want to go back?

Yes.

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COASTAL CLEANUP 2001

Over the last few years, the United Divers of New Hampshire have eagerly donated their time to *The Center for Marine Conservation* to aid in the annual "International Coastal Cleanup" held each September. In the past we have concentrated our efforts to Portsmouth's Prescott Park fishing piers, taking tons of junk out of the ocean over a 3 year period. Well that spot is looking pretty good right now so this year we plan to move to a new location. Since one of the major goals (obviously beside cleaning up the ocean) is public awareness, we look for a place not only needing a good cleanup but one in which onlookers can see just how much trash has been discarded over the years. The idea is to make as much of a visual impact as possible.

Mary Power, our liason at *CMC*, has set the wheels in motion for us to get wet in Hampton Harbor on September 15. Further plans for this will be discussed at the next meeting on July 16.



Club Meetings

Meetings are held the first and third Mondays of each month, January through November. We encourage potential members to attend a meeting or two to experience our club before joining. The meetings are held at the YMCA on 30 Mechanic St. (off of Elm Street) in Manchester. The meetings start at 7:00 PM. Each meeting consists of a short business portion followed by a variety of presentations and discussions. Immediately following the club has an hour of pool time for swimming, trying out gear, and the occasional game of pool volleyball or underwater hockey. Members and guests often meet afterwards at a local restaurant for food and drink.

Extreme Weather

Meetings will be held if the YMCA is open. You can call them at 603-623-3558. Check close to the meeting time as the front desk often has no advance warning of early closures.

Membership

Annual dues for membership for 2000 in the United Divers of New Hampshire are \$30/individual or \$45/family. Dues are not prorated for members who join later in the year. To join, please contact Don Eva at 603-672-5608

Get in the Swim

After every meeting, the YMCA pool is open to our dive club for an hour of fun and fitness.

Don't wait for the ice to thaw before trying out that new equipment, the pool is the perfect place. Check out the club calendar for special presentations in the pool like dive knife use or trying out a dry suit. So bring a suit and a towel to every meeting and get into the swim.

United Divers of New Hampshire Contact Information - 2000

President	Tom Tremblay	603-625-8459
Vice President	Linda Hurd	603-672-8325
Treasurer	Jim Mayo	603-895-4090
Secretary	Don Eva	603-672-5608
Dive Coordinator	Bob Gamache	

.....

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website.**



Meeting schedule: (winter hours)7:00-8:45pm - meeting & presentation , 8:45-9:30- pool time, 9:30-9:45- Hot Tub!

Meetings and Events

July 7-14, 2001

Saba trip (as if I really had to remind anyone)

July 16, 2001 Meeting

August 6, 2001 Meeting

August 11, Jay Lewis Memorial Picnic

Great Island Common, Newcastle,NH

August 20, 2001 Meeting

Sept. 3,2001 Labor Day NO MEETING

Sept.15, 2001 Coastal Cleanup

Hampton Harbor

Viking “underwear” \$25.00, “underwear hoods” (2), \$10.00each

Henderson men’s Farmer John wet suit size M/L \$125.00 / wet suit hood - large, \$10.00 / ‘Pony Tamer’ mounting-disconnect system for pony bottle,\$25.00/ Wenoka Dive knife,\$10.00

Contact Willis Corson @ 668-5829

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Dive Computer: *Orca Marathon*- excellent condition w/ new battery. \$100. Contact Mike Griffin @ 603-673-9250.

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WEEKEND TIDES

The following abbreviated tide tables are for High Tides only, based on Portsmouth Harbor. This guide is a quick reference only and should not be used for dives requiring exact times for slack tide. More detailed information is available at maineharbors.com.

	Saturday	Sunday
July		1 9:05AM
7	1:48 PM	8 2:26 PM
14	6:06 AM	15 7:01 AM
21	12:33 PM	22 1:26 PM
28	6:37 AM	29 7:43 AM
August		
4	12:46 PM	5 1:21 PM
11	5:01 PM	12 5:49 PM
18	11:20 AM	19 11:59 AM
25	5:35 PM	26 6:15 AM

Weather

Current marine weather for New England can be accessed on the world wide web at NWS.FSU.EDU/BUOY/

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Camera equipment:

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Dive Computer-Orca Edge

Contact Lea Nichols @ 603-487-2726

DIVE LOG

United Divers of New Hampshire
P.O. Box 4176
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Forward and Address Correction Requested

DIVE LOG

Dive Log is the bi-monthly newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire, an organization dedicated to educating divers and expanding the knowledge of diving in the State of New Hampshire and New England



IN THIS ISSUE:

Cocos Island

Newsletter help

