
DIVE LOG

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire



Bahamas photos by the crew of
the Aqua Cat



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

Editor: Karen Marion

Submissions

We welcome your input. Your stories, photographs, educational information, and other editorial contributions are what make this newsletter tick. Contributions may be e-mailed to Karen at karen@gryffin-designs.com. Submissions can also be sent on paper, CD-ROM, or PC floppy to:

Karen Marion
4 Wildwood Lane
Amherst, NH 03031-2107

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 Karen at (603) 423-9055.

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My Extremely Scary Shark Dive

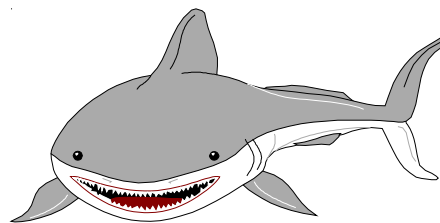
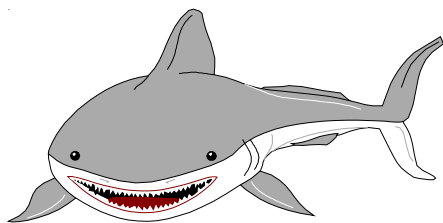
By Stephen Cantelli

After living this experience, I realized that this was not quite as scary as it seemed when it was happening. My first shark dive ever took place on April 23, 2003 at about 11:30 a.m. on the Aqua Cat. We had a dive briefing on what to expect, how deep to go, how far away to stay from the sharks and lastly, **Don't Touch Them**. Then the divemaster Christine told us we needed to sign a waiver. Even up to that point, no problem. My fear did not hit until I got on the dive deck to gear up and that's when it hit, **FEAR!** I even went to Bob Gamache and said that I wasn't sure if I could do this. He said, "c'mon, lets go this will be great". Well, not one to say no, I geared up, went down to the water and jumped in.

After retrieving my camera from Mark the other divemaster, I proceeded to let the air out of my BC. I couldn't descend. I tried everything to descend. I squeezed my BC. I tried a kick to dive down. Nothing would work. I looked at Mark and said I can't go down and shrugged my shoulders. He said wait, ran up to the dive deck and came back with 5 pounds of lead. He handed it to me and I put it in my BC. I once again tried everything to descend. Still no luck. I said to Mark, "this isn't going to work, I'm going to get out". He said, " No your not, you can't miss this". I knew I was hyperventilating and full of air. He ran back to the dive deck again and came back with another 5 pounds. This did it, **Success**, I was descending. Ever so slowly. Once I got to 10' I headed to the bow of the boat and could see the divers and the **SHARKS**. Oh my God, I thought. It's do or die.

As I approached ever so slowly I could see the mayhem of the sharks, divers, groupers and other fish all kind of in a circle. As I got closer, I heard the briefing in my head, "Stay away from the sharks". I was shocked, there was Bob Gamache right next to a shark and the sharks were coming within 1' to 2' of divers. What was that the divemaster said, "**Don't Touch Them!**"! Did anyone mention it to the sharks I thought? I headed in now getting more excited to be in the action. It was now more exciting then scary. I started clicking off photos. As I clicked I got more relaxed and realized I could get better photos. I forgot that I was moving closer. I got within 6' of the chum line before realizing it and once realizing it, I kicked hard to get out of there. I found a spot to hover at about 25' and 25' away from the chum line. What a great show. As I clicked away I realized the sharks were swimming in circles and then it happened a 7' caribbean reef shark was heading right at me. **FEAR** again. Now what do I do? I couldn't move quick enough out of it's way so I just leaned to the left and it went right by.

After the dive, I was asked if I wanted to go again. The club was doing a second Shark dive. I was still breathing hard and said, NO. Even now, I'm not sure if I will go again. I guess I will see on the next trip.



Beginner's Corner

by Jacqueline Small

As vowed at the end of the 2002 dive season, this spring I got into the pool at Atlantic Aquasport Dive Shop in Rye, NH to practice skills and check out my gear. After a long winter respite, I was determined to begin overcoming the difficulties and fears I'd experienced last season and to establish limits that would enable me to feel safe and comfortable. My husband Michael accompanied me and Ericka Stevens was kind enough to work with me. She is an excellent instructor—knowledgeable, attentive, patient and very encouraging. In fact the whole staff there rallied around me, eager to assist with equipment and to support my efforts. After just a couple sessions I felt confident of my capabilities and ready for open water.

Besides boosting my comfort level, these exercises revealed some gear changes that needed to be made. I discovered that I'd gained a few pounds and that my wet suit had also shrunk. It was so tight that I had difficulty breathing. So after experimenting with a properly fitting suit, we replaced my clunky 7mm Farmer Jane with a trim 5mm Scubapro one piece. It has made a world of difference in my overall comfort and ability to descend and control buoyancy. Because of the old suit's increased capacity for buoyancy, it had been an exhausting battle to descend and to remain down. I have now been able to reduce my weight belt from 22 lbs. to about 14lbs.—a major relief for my narrow hips.

I'd also been nagged by a constantly flooding mask that we realized was just too big for me. That has also been replaced by a trim snugly fitting model. I have a new larger hood that slips on smoothly unlike my old one I used to mash my poor head into. Finally, I dispensed with my "high tec" snorkel replacing it with an old-fashioned simple design Michael dug out of his gear treasure chest.

As of this writing we've only been out on two dives, our first in a lake where the surface water was bathtub warm. At 20' however it was a different story. We were slammed with a wicked thermocline where the water temperature was in the low 40s. Needless to say I didn't hang around there too long.

Our second dive was at good old Nubble Light in York, Maine—the site most familiar to me. It was a beautiful day, warm and sunny and the cove was flat calm. Unfortunately the water was very cold—only 43 degrees, so I could tolerate just 15 minutes under water. But I am happy to report that in that short quarter hour, I was able to experience success—a smooth descent and seemingly effortless buoyancy control—not to mention recapturing the joy and awe of being a part of the underwater world. Yeah!

Working out regularly for several months has paid off too as I have no trouble hiking up and down the rocky path loaded with gear—another change for the better!

Although I am entering my 4th season as a certified diver, I still consider myself very much a beginner. With every experience, both good and bad, I am learning—and the most profound lesson thus far has been that scuba diving cannot at any time be approached cavalierly. It is crucial to realize and accept one's limitations and never be afraid to say "This just doesn't feel right. I'm not diving today." I am also fortunate to have a support system of competent and knowledgeable friends, fellow divers who sincerely have my best interest at heart.

From the Editor

Hi all,

Greetings to all, and thanks to the many contributors who sent articles in response to my urgent plea for material! I was so thrilled to get more articles and photos than I could fit in this issue. I was also thrilled to see a theme develop, with three articles, all spontaneously offered, featuring beginner's issues and impressions.

For all of you who contributed the fabulous material that did not make it into this issue, never fear, there will be a new issue in the works any day now. I really have to catch up ... you might notice that this is the May/June issue, and it's already nearly the end of July. I'm hoping with so much material in the queue, to get the next issue out before the expiration of its date!

And if you have an idea in mind, or photos sitting around ... please send them! Do not hesitate! The more material I have on hand, the more likely each issue will come out in a timely fashion.

Happy diving,

Karen



Photo of shark in the Bahamas by the crew of the Aqua Cat

Newbies

by Don Belcourt

This article is about new divers. Many who will read this are "old timers" and may have forgotten some aspects about their first few diving experiences. I'm fortunate that I am reminded of my first dives every time I take new divers out for their checkout dives. You don't make a lot of money teaching Scuba but what you get from their experiences is priceless.

Once we get them down on the bottom and they shake out some of their worries about where they are, they find the greatest fun and interest in the most commonplace (to us) critters they find. When I pick up a rock crab and let it walk all over my glove and arm, they want to try it! Of course they become so enthralled with the environment that it's hard to get their attention when it's time to move off. Hey! Look over here. We're leaving now!! The divemaster has to go shake them and signal to look over to me. "Don't worry" I try to say to them. "We'll be back for more!"

Look over there. A tiny flounder about two inches long! Then I think "Wait till they see a keeper"! We'll move over to a lobster trap where we can usually find some interesting things to look at. Their first face-to-face encounter with a lobster (of any size) is breathtaking. You should see how they keep their distance when I hold up a Sea Raven for their viewing pleasure. We found a beautiful yellow one last weekend and they were so excited that it was all that they could talk about after getting to the surface.



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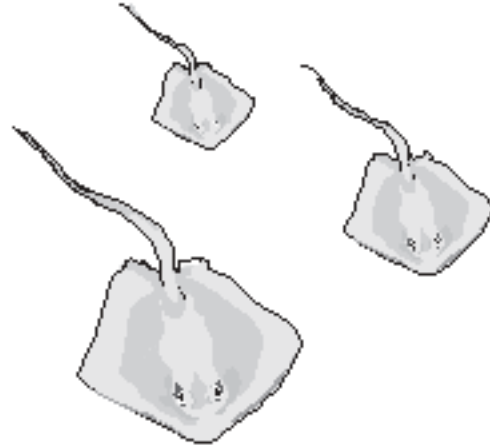
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Wednesday Night Fireworks Dives @Hampton Beach!

Sure it's a lot of work and trying to keep them focused on performing their skills can be quite a chore. Sometimes just getting them down takes a lot out of us. But it's worth it. I loved being a Divemaster and as an Instructor, I continue to keep my love of diving shining with each dive I take with Newbies. During each of my classes I tell them about our club and encourage them to "come check us out". So when they do, forget the tech talk. Ask them about their first experiences and they will help you remember your first dives. You'll get to share the same thrills that I do every weekend when we do outdives.

Don Belcourt



The New Diver

By John Magruder

Last year around this time I finished my Open water certification. Over the past year I have completed the Advanced course and I am mostly through the rescue diver Certification. I joined the Club in order to be around other people who share my new found passion for diving. I have indeed found that group of people. I have enjoyed diving with several members of the club in many different locations and under many different conditions. Divers are quick to share and quick to help. The great thing about being a new diver is every dive is a new challenge and I have learned new skills from each dive. At this point in my dive life no dive spot is boring, the water is not too shallow (except Fort Foster), too cold, too much of this or too little of that. If it's deep enough to stay under, it's a great dive spot. Divers are a group of people who are quick to share what they know. It has been good so far, and I look forward to more dives with different people in different places.








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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 2003 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 - 2003

President	Stephen Cantelli	(603) 772-9906
Vice President	Adam Baker	(603) 895-9561
Treasurer	Jim Mayo	(603) 895-4090
Secretary	Don Eva	(603) 672-5608
Dive Coordinator	Brandy Derickson	(603) 436-6424
Dive Log editor	Karen Marion	(603) 423-9055

Useful Information

Weather

Current marine weather for New England can be accessed online at nws.fsu.edu/buoy/

Tides

Tide information for New England can be accessed online at www.maineharbors.com

Club Events

United Divers event calendar can be accessed online at www.udnh.org/calendar.htm



Plaice Cove Shore Cleanup

By Stephen Cantelli

First I would like to thank all of you that participated in this effort. I would like to thank particularly Maria Brown and Alex Brown of the Lyndeborough Girl Scouts. They drove from Wilton to Hampton to help us. I also want to especially thank that blonde waitress and Kennedy's at Hampton Beach for my vanilla frappe in May and for putting up with all of us every month. It was my intent when suggesting the cleanup at Plaice Cove to help the environment and MAYBE involve the club and the Boy and Girl Scouts in a fun and educational event. As some things go this was not one of my best ideas, it appears.

We started the shore cleanups at Plaice Cove on January 18, 2003 and it was 16 degrees with snow on the ground. The second cleanup scheduled for February was cancelled due to the temperature in single numbers. The last three, March, April and May were 29, 47 and 58 degrees, very BALMY.

The Marine Conservancy had requested us to note specific items as part of this cleanup effort. They were looking for these specific items to track whether the debris came from ocean going sources (cruise ships, fishing, etc.) or land sources (medical, commercial, private, etc.). We cleaned the same 1 ¼ mile section on all four occasions.

The items found were at times humorous. The January cleanup joke was "the prom dress" and "underwear". On the April cleanup there was found "pink underwear" and last was May with "fuzzy dice" and "proctology rubber gloves". You had to be there.

The total cleaned up for our 4 months of pick up included:

- Lots of rope/fishing line
- Condoms
- Rubber & cloth gloves.
- Lobster traps/ whole and pieces.
- Metal beverage cans.
- Balloons.
- Plastic Bags (mostly ice bags).
- Shotgun shells.
- Many pieces of foam (both food and commercial float types).
- Dog ball.
- Spark plug.
- Fan belt.
- Sneaker
- Disney sleeping bag.
- 2 Rugs.
- The prom dress.
- Underwear.

This filled approximately 25 trash bags.

We also found:

- A live baby eel (returned to the wild).
- A dead Skelpin.
- A dead seagull.

As stated at the beginning of this article, this is sad to say but May was our last shore cleanup at Plaice Cove. We are canceling because of lack of interest. However, I would like to invite the club and Girl Scouts for an underwater cleanup at Plaice Cove on Saturday, July 12 at 8:30 a. m. for an early bird dive. High tide is 10:45 a. m. This way we can beat the tourists. See you there.



The cleanup crew. Photo by Stephen Cantelli

