

Volume 21
Issue 4

DIVE LOG

July/August
1996

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire

And the Shark Bites...



Photo by Jake Richter

President's Corner

by Rick Bardsley

Greetings! As you all may know, Phil Morrison, our club president, stepped down at our meeting on June 3, 1996. His time was going to be split between our organization and another. This was an impossible task to accomplish in being fair to both organizations. His decision to step down from our club came as quite a surprise, seeing how I'm now THE PRES. We thank him for all his time and contributions to this club. Good luck Phil, we hope to still see and dive with you at club activities.

On this note, I would like to extend a warm welcome from the dive club to our new vice president Gary Thuillier. He is a good complement to this board, already bringing to it some fresh ideas at our last officers meeting.

Making License Plates Ain't Just for Prisoners Anymore

After July 1st, a bill signed into law by Gov. Steve Merrill will allow "affinity groups" to apply for special plate designs. Affinity groups are defined as an organized group of individuals sharing a common interest. What this all means is that we as divers can submit a petition to have special plates with a dive flag or some such design on it. The petition must have at least 300 names to be considered. Currently the people in the Department of Safety don't have enough information on what needs to be done because the law is too new. Jake Richter will be getting more information on the exact procedure to see if this is feasible, since at a recent meeting the response in favor of a NH Diver license plate was very strong.



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The Newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire

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Linda Richter

Submissions

Editorial contributions may be e-mailed to dive@strokeofcolor.com or FAXed to 603-432-0817. Submissions can also be sent on paper or PC floppy to:

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12 Heritage Lane
Derry, New Hampshire 03038

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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 Linda Richter, 603-432-0234.

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Viking Defect Product Recall

Courtesy of Discover Diving

Trelleborg Viking, Inc. has announced a voluntary recall of Viking Sport Dry Suit Air Inlet Hose Assemblies purchased by consumers in North America between January 1, 1982 and March 31, 1988 (the "subject hose assembly"). A potentially hazardous problem may exist with the seating of the subject hose assembly to the air inlet valve which may result in a free flow of air into the dry dive suit. If this occurs during a dive, use of the subject hose assembly could be dangerous to the safety of the diver.

All consumers are warned not to dive with such hose assemblies. Failure to heed this warning may result in serious injury or death to the user. Trelleborg Viking will replace all subject hose assemblies at no cost to the owner. Subject hose assemblies will either have no marking at all, or will have a combination marking consisting of letters and numbers, the first of which will be A, B, or C, and the second which will be a letter from A through L. The third letter or number is of no concern for identification. The marking will appear on the end of the subject hose assembly at the point of connection into the first stage regulator. Hotline at (800) 344-4458

N.E. Locations Word Search by Sue Lepore

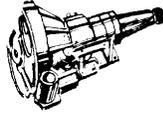


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San Diego Shark Diving

Article & Photos by Jake Richter

When you tell people that you're going on a shark dive, you usually get one of three reactions:

- 1) Disbelief from people who think you're making the whole thing up and ignore you or worse, start watching you warily, thinking you're going to do something foolish and upset their routine.
- 2) Incredulousness, somewhat similar to the disbelief of the above item, but thinking you're serious, and crazy. These people tend to be big fans of the Jaws series of movies and books. Then they get nonchalant when you tell them there's a shark cage involved.
- 3) Excitement, usually only if the other people you're sharing your plans with are divers, or don't believe in the hysteria Jaws caused.

In my case, I was excited when I discovered that a recent trip to San Diego, and more particularly, a free Saturday at the end of my conference there, would coincide with the first shark dive of the season with San

Diego Shark Diving Expeditions, and its proprietor, Paul Anes.

Several friends of mine had recommended checking out his operation, and at a recent dive conference I helped out at, Marty Snyderman (a well known underwater photographer and videographer) echoed that sentiment.

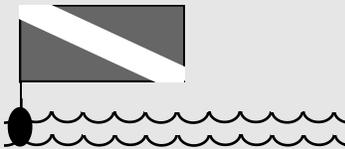
I called Paul, reserved a spot on the dive, and anxiously waited six weeks until I actually made it to San Diego.

The author's conference I attended in San Diego was interesting, but nothing truly exciting. I was hoping the shark dive would turn out better.

April 27th

The night before the dive, I checked out my gear, lubed the O-rings on my camera housing (I wasn't about to do the dive without proof I was there), and packed my now heavy gear case. I had brought my only cold water dive protection with me, namely my Viking dry suit, and had already faced derision from folks who said that was overkill for California waters.

On the morning of April 27th, I put my gear case on a



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pair of luggage wheels and made my way to the hotel lobby. As it turned out, my hotel was less than a half mile from the harbor where the boat we'd be on was docked, and since there was no taxi in sight, I decided to hoof it. Upon making it out onto the path to the harbor, I was faced with an ill omen - thousands of people walking right towards me. There I was, a sole person, facing an on-rushing tide of humanity. I struggled my



The HydroDiver, with shark cage mounted on the rear of the boat

way through the human cattle herds only to discover the harbor I had found was the wrong one, and that I needed to go another half mile with wheeled cart and case dragging behind me. I finally made it to the boat, the HydroDiver, and finally discovered that the mindless lemmings I had to fight my way through were sacrificing themselves for a Walk for Life charity event.

The HydroDiver

Upon arriving at the scene of our imminent departure, I found a large cage (with no discernable shark tooth marks) attached to the back end of the HydroDiver, and everyone waiting for me, as usual.

After being introduced to my "bait-mates", and loading my gear on board, we departed under the care of Capt. Jim Stickler.

The place where we would start chumming the waters with fish blood and guts was about 12 miles out from shore. It didn't take long to get there, and our first course of business was to get suited up for a trial run at getting in and out of the cage and making sure we were properly weighted, before any sharks actually showed up.

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The Cage

The shark cage is designed to float about 10 to 15 feet below the water, about 20 to 30 feet from the boat. Unlike many east coast shark cages, where you have to hop in the top, the opening on this cage is in the "back". The cage has a maximum capacity of three divers.

Now, you may be wondering why anyone in their right mind would swim 25+ feet in shark infested waters to get to a cage underwater, when sharp teeth lurk everywhere. Well, San Diego Shark Divers has added a new twist to the whole experience - they offer trained handlers who wear an extra piece of insurance, namely a chain mail suit, impervious to the penetration of shark teeth, but not necessarily a way to prevent bruises and small scrapes. The handler escorts each diver to and from the cage, keeping sharks away until the diver is safely secured.

Getting Chummy

Anyhow, after we made sure all we knew the proper cage commuting procedure, and were properly weighted (a little heavy to avoid spending much time on the surface), it was time to start chumming the waters. While Paul prepared some whole fish for hand feeding the sharks, all the chum used to create blood slicks to attract the sharks was actually preprocessed and frozen. I was surprised to learn that there are three companies in the San Diego area that specialize in making buckets of chum just for shark diving and fishing.



Paul Anes preparing fish for bait and hand feeding of sharks

Being told that the first sharks usually appear an hour or two after chumming commences, we entered a pool, selecting 15 minute chunks of time in which we thought the first shark would come up and play. We were all wrong. The first shark showed up barely 15 minutes after the first ladle full of blood and gore was showered upon the surface of the water. Mind you, it wasn't a big one, just a two and a half foot blue shark. A three footer joined him minutes later.



Small blue shark taking the bait

Soon thereafter it was time to get suited up. Watching Paul don his chainmail was quite fascinating. His company owns two of the \$7,000 chainmail suits, and while they're custom made, they still don't fit all that well. Paul, and his fellow handler Dennis Alba, had quite a time getting him into the 18 pound suit. Ultimately, the tried and true remedy of duct tape was used to force a snug fit. By the time he and the rest of us were dive-ready, a half dozen more blue sharks had appeared.



Paul putting on his chain mail suit

Sharks Ahoy!

After Paul got in the water, I was quick to follow, escorted by him, of course. The water was a balmy 66 degrees, and visibility was well over 60 feet. I felt overdressed in my dry suit, but was later thankful for not being wet or cold. A couple more divers followed, and we were in the midst of shark soup.



Yours truly (in center) in the cage, with sharks all around.

First Paul, and later Dennis, started hand feeding sharks right in front of us. We had been warned that if a shark tried to get into the cage with us, that we should bonk them on the nose, and they'd back right out. They were right.

I was amazed by the voracity of the sharks. One moment, they'd slowly be circling around the cage and the handler, the next they'd lunge in at the fish in his hand, attempting to swallow the fish whole, including the handler's hand.



Dennis Alba hand feeding a hungry shark

My first time in the cage passed quickly, taking a mere 50 minutes and one roll of film. An hour later I popped down for another 40 minutes, and another roll of film. Time seemed to stop while I watched the sharks lazily swim by, circling the cage in the apparent hope that the yummy treats inside might come out and feed them. They tested the cage with their noses. The metal of the cage disrupts their sensory equipment, located in their noses.

Toward the end of the second dive, I counted 16 sharks circling the cage, with the smallest at just over two feet, and the largest a sizable 7 footer. When I left the cage under Dennis's capable guidance, I had to bonk several sharks on the nose to keep them away from me. What fun!

My biggest regret during the shark dives was that I couldn't go outside the cage to get better pictures - the opening in front of me wasn't large enough to comfortably fit my housing and strobe through and still be able to look in the viewfinder.

The Fish Story

Perhaps the greatest irony of the day was that as soon as we had gotten out of the water, a pod of dolphins showed up to play with the sharks, and not long after, a bunch of seals joined the fray. If we had only stayed in the water a few minutes more, and I had not run out of film... In any event, the appearance of these mammals certainly gave us a great topic for conversation over Mexican food and margaritas that night.

I've been told that later in the summer, the more aggressive Mako sharks turn up, and occasionally they'll also see Mola-Molas (also known as ocean sunfish).

Would I do this again? Absolutely - it was worth every penny. I think the dives I did were a spectacular way to interact with and observe these natural predators. And San Diego Shark Diving Expeditions really runs a safe and eminently enjoyable operation. If you find yourself in the San Diego area, give Paul Anes a call at 619-299-8560.





Ten Ways a Diver Can Protect the Aquatic Realm

1 Dive carefully in fragile aquatic ecosystems, such as coral reefs.

Although, at first, they may look like rocks or plants, many aquatic organisms are fragile creatures that can be killed by the bump of a tank, knee or camera, a swipe of a fin or even the touch of a hand. It is also important to know that some aquatic organisms, such as corals, are extremely slow-growing. By breaking off even a small piece, you may be destroying decades of growth. By being careful, you can prevent devastating and longlasting damage to magnificent dive sites.

2 Be aware of your body and equipment placement when diving.

Much damage to the environment is done unknowingly. Keep your gauges and alternate air sources secured so that they don't drag over the reef or bottom. By controlling your buoyancy and taking care not to touch coral or other fragile environments with your body, diving equipment or camera, you will have done your part in preventing injury to aquatic life.

3 Keep your diving skills sharp with continuing education.

If you haven't dived in a while, your skills (particularly buoyancy control) may need sharpening. Before heading to the reefs, seek bottom time with a divemaster or instructor in a pool or other environment that won't be damaged by a few bumps and scrapes. Better yet, take a diving continuing education course such as PADI Scuba Review, the PADI Advanced Open Water Diver course or a PADI Specialty Diver course.

4 Consider your impact on aquatic life through your interactions.

As every diver soon learns, very few forms of aquatic life pose a threat to us. In fact, some creatures even seem friendly and curious about our presence. As we become bolder and more curious ourselves, we may even feel compelled to touch, handle, feed and even hitch rides on certain aquatic life. However, our actions may cause stress to the animal, interrupt feeding and mating behavior, introduce food items that are not healthy for the species or even provoke aggressive behavior in normally nonaggressive species.

5 Understand and respect underwater life.

Through adaptation to an aquatic environment, underwater life often differs greatly in appearance from life we are used to seeing on land. Many creatures only appear to look like plants or inanimate objects. Using them as "toys" or food for other animals can leave a trail of destruction that can disrupt a local ecosystem and rob other divers of the pleasure of observing or photographing these creatures. Consider enrolling in a PADI Underwater Naturalist course.

6 Resist the urge to collect souvenirs.

Dive sites that are heavily visited can be depleted of their resources in a short time. Collecting specimens, coral and shells in these areas can strip their fascination

GARY CARBONNEAU

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and beauty. If you want to return from your dives with trophies to show friends and family, you may want to consider underwater photography.

7 If you hunt and/or gather game, obey all fish and game laws.

You may be among the group of divers who get pleasure from taking food from the aquatic realm. If you engage in this activity, it is vital that you obtain proper licensing and become familiar with all local fish and game rules. Local laws are designed to ensure the reproduction and survival of these animals. Only take creatures that you will consume. Never kill anything for the sake of killing. Respect the rights of other divers who are not hunting. Avoid spearfishing in areas that other divers are using for sightseeing and underwater photography. As an underwater hunter, understand your effect on the environment.

8 Report environmental disturbances or destruction of your dive sites

As a diver, you are in a unique position to monitor the health of local waterways, lakes and coastal areas. If

you observe an unusual depletion of aquatic life, a rash of injuries to aquatic animals, or notice strange substances or objects in the water, report them to local authorities, such as the local office of the Environmental Protection Agency or similar organization in your country.

9 Be a role model for other divers in diving and non-diving interaction with the environment.

As a diver, you realize that when someone tosses a plastic wrapper or other debris overboard, it is not out of sight, out of mind. You see the results of such neglect. Set a good example in your own interactions with the environment, and other divers and nondivers will follow suit.

10 Get involved in local environmental activities and issues.

You may feel you can't save the world, but you can have a great impact on the corner of the planet in which you live and dive. There are plenty of opportunities to show your support of a clean aquatic environment, including local beach clean-ups and attending public

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hearings on matters that impact local coastal areas and water resources. Know all sides of the aquatic environmental legislative issues and make your opinions known at the ballot box.

Can You Answer These Questions? Take this quiz to test your knowledge of the diver's role in the aquatic realm. (True or False)

1. Most underwater life is similar in form and function to life on land, so if it doesn't look or behave like an animal, it probably isn't one. T F
2. Some aquatic animals grow at an extremely slow rate; for example, a branch of coral can take decades to develop. T F
3. Buoyancy control is one of the most important diving skills, not only for safety but to avoid damaging delicate aquatic organisms, as well. T F
4. Underwater hunters should not be concerned with learning about their effect on the marine environment, since it is usually minimal. T F

5. As a diver, you should consider yourself a valuable source of information about changes and disturbances to the areas you dive. You should make your observations known to public officials and environmental groups. T F

How did you do? Look inside this brochure to learn more about your role in preserving the aquatic realm. To find out even more about the aquatic realm and its inhabitants, ask your PADI Instructor and Dive Center about the PADI Scuba Review, PADI Advanced Open Water Diver course, Underwater Naturalist Specialty course and Improve Your Scuba series.

Answers: 1) False 2) True 3) True 4) False 5) True

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Scuba Diver Lost at Fort Foster

by Linda Richter

Fort Foster? We all think of Fort Foster as an easy dive, a good place to start out the season. And yet, a scuba diver never made it back to shore on Sunday June 9th.

The first details we heard were: Timothy O'Connor of Penacook and David Bradish were diving off the coast of Fort Foster in approximately 11 feet of water. The two men appeared to have trouble getting to shore. Bradish made it out and got a local resident to call for help on their cell phone around 3:45 PM. Within minutes a Coast Guard boat began a search of the area, joined by a Coast Guard helicopter and several volunteer divers soon after. They believe O'Connor became caught in a current. The search was called off on Tuesday.

What went wrong here? How can we prevent such an unfortunate accident from happening to us? At the end of our June 3rd meeting, we discussed issues noticed at recent club dives, which, put all together, might make one of us another statistic. Here are a few:

✘ The breakdown of the buddy system in our cloudy waters - Either diving alone or losing track of your buddy underwater but continuing the dive anyway is not the safe way to dive. Set up a plan with your dive buddy to surface after a specific time limit should you lose each.

✘ Lack of preparation, no pre-dive check or regular maintenance of gear - Always check your gear for general wear and tear, even items which were fine when you stored them in the fall could be dangerously deteriorated now, especially rubber and plastics. Also, regular gear checkups by your local dive shop can catch internal problems on regulators or get manufacturer recalls or repairs taken care of.

✘ Not learning your buddy's communication signals before entering the water - sure, to me, rubbing my belly means lobster, but what would you think I meant? Maybe you'd think I was hungry. Although not a serious miscommunication example, a quick review of the basic hand signs like "low on air" or "cold" would make diving safer and more fun. It's always best to review signs when you can verbally clear up any misconceptions.

✘ Lack of a dive plan - location, time, tides. Plan your Dive and Dive the Plan. Knowing the local

geography, currents, and tides can save you a long hard swim back. Make sure that good ol' buddy of yours has the same plan.

✘ Forgetting basic safety rules. Yeah, what do I do if...? Sounds silly that an experienced diver might not remember what to do in an emergency situation.

Thankfully these things don't happen often so we don't get the opportunity to practice or review our skills. For many divers, when was the last time your mask was whisked off your face underwater? Actually, Jake is my usual mask stealer, but I'm talking about really losing your mask. If panic set in this could be life threatening so remember to Stop, Think, Get Control, and Act.

So back to our lost diver. What is the proper procedure for getting out of a current? The textbook answer is to swim perpendicular to the current until you exit the current then swim to shore. Is that applicable to our waters, most specifically to our tides? Could diving at a different time to take advantage of the tide rather than fight it have prevented this accident?

And if the diver made it to the surface (as the newspaper suggested) why wasn't he able to wait for help safely? Did he drop his weight belt, properly inflate his BCD, and use a snorkel for surface swimming if he ran out of air?

More information revealed at our June 17 meeting proved out some of my speculations. Apparently the two divers had not been diving in several years. One diver had a horsecollar inflatable and the other had no inflation device at all. Ironically, the diver without the inflation device is the one that survived - he dropped his weight belt. Both divers were trying to surface swim back to shore against a current. They were separated by a rock outcropping in the water and said "I'll meet you on the other side". One diver never made it. We may never know exactly what happened to this unfortunate diver. The grim medical facts usually reveal drowning as the ultimate cause for death. But the real cause just from the little information we have can easily be attributed to diver errors - lack of proper equipment, possible lack of planning, and incorrect handling of the situation at the surface.



Lobster Raffle!

The UDNH Annual Lobster Raffle is coming your way! At the June 17th Club Meeting, UDNH Lobster Raffle Tickets were distributed for all Club members to sell (and buy), and such tickets will continue to be available until early August. Individual tickets are \$1, with a booklet of 6 tickets available for \$5. The Grand Prize for the Raffle is a gift certificate for **20 Pounds of Live'n Kicking Lobster** from a local seafood shop (a non-lobster eating winner can redeem the certificate for any other type of seafood the shop offers). Proceeds from the raffle go towards offsetting the costs of the Annual UDNH Club Banquet. *Raffle drawing will occur on Sunday, August 11, at the Jay Lewis Picnic.*

The Weirs Gets a Cleaning From the Bottom Up

Several UDNH members - Gary and Sue Thuillier, George Hiltz, Jim Frederick, and Dave Denoncourt - joined the Winnepesaukee River Clean-up project along with a bunch of other volunteers for a day of picking up the trash. The group of about eight divers scoured the area beneath the docks for any kind of garbage they could find - bottles, cans, rope, etc. They found no kitchen sink but they did find a 100lb park bench and an 18 foot inflatable boat. Over the course of the day, they managed to fill **two** dumpsters!

The next clean-up is scheduled for behind the Lakeport Dam on July 13th. Another clean-up is scheduled for August 10th at a location yet to be determined. Times are 9am to 3pm, lunch is provided, as are free air fills. Anyone interested in giving a hand can call Jan Hooper with Belknap Country at 603-528-8713; Jack Head, Winnepesaukee River Clean-up, at 603-524-8030 (evenings); or Mike Evleth at 800-300-4328 (days), 603-968-3521 (evenings).

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1996 Meetings and Events

July 1 - Meeting

- Ed Burke of Aqua Ventures will be discussing dive safety and what to do to remain in control during unusual dive conditions. Open pool time follows.

July 6 - Dive

- First Monthly Magical Bus Ride. Meet at the Mall of NH for a group trip to Fort Williams State Park in Maine. Picnic area and restrooms available. Other pickup points along Rt 101 and 95 North can be arranged. \$10 fee per person to cover bus rental. Max. 25 divers. Contact Gary Thuillier to reserve space.

July 7 - Dive

- Dive the Pintas wreck with Lea Nichols. See Lea at an upcoming meeting, or call him at 603-487-2726 for details.

July 13 & 14 - Dive Weekend

- Dive Lake Champlain near Burlington, Vermont and spend the night with a host family before diving again the next day. Contact Ken Anderson for details.

July 15 - Meeting

- Jake Richter will be presenting a slide show of his trips to Bonaire this year. Open pool time follows.

July 20 - Event & Dive

- The New England Aquarium Dive Club invites UDNH members to join them at their annual picnic, being held this year at Ft. Getty in Jamestown, RI. Local diving includes several options. Cost is \$5 per person. Contact Dick Whitehouse at 617-469-9529 for details.

August 5 - Meeting

- Speaker Annie Borden and Karen Hambleton of Portsmouth Scuba will discuss underwater archaeology. Open pool time follows.

August 11 - Event and Dive

- Annual Jay Lewis Club picnic at Great Island Commons near Portsmouth. Enjoy hamburgers, hotdogs and other picnic mainstays and the company of other club members and friends. Plan for a softball game, frisbee, some diving, and the drawing for the lobster raffle. A donation of \$5 per person is requested. All donations go to the Jay Lewis Fund, used to help promote diving in New Hampshire.

Meet and Dive at the Mall?

On the first Saturday of each month plan to meet at the Mall of NH, near the locked gate on the Lechmere side at 9am. The dive site will be determined at the time. Dates are:

- July 6
- August 3
- September 1



Club Meetings

Meetings are held the first and third Mondays of each month, except for January, November, and December, and when a meeting might interfere with the Independence Day or Labor Day holidays. 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 7:15 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 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 1996 in the United Divers of New Hampshire are \$25/individual or \$40/family. Dues are not prorated for members who join later in the year. To join, please contact Jake Richter, 603-432-0234.

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 - 1996

President	Rick Bardsley	603-673-8539
Vice President	Gary Thuillier	603-487-3001
Treasurer	Linda Richter	603-432-0234
Secretary	Jake Richter	603-432-0234
Dive Coordinator	Ken Anderson	603-672-4444



United Divers of New Hampshire
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Forward and Address Correction Requested



Dive Log is the 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.

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