

DIVE LOG

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire



Blue Whale Tail near Les Escoumins

Photo by Jean Stefanik

Experience the differences...soon!

by Jean Stefanik

Just imagine...fog enshrouding everything. Mist hangs from every branch, drips at the slightest touch or breeze, but there is no breeze. The air is cool but perfectly still. Plans for some are to go diving, but I'm choosing the whale watch today.

We drove and drove and drove to get here. Starting after work and driving as long as we could placed us exhausted two hours south of Quebec City - we rested and then met a Quebec diver for breakfast in the city, then continued our journey another three hours to Les Escoumins. It's a very long drive for a weekend, even a 4 day weekend. As we were driving, I remember thinking, why do I keep doing this? Do I forget how long the drive is because a year has gone by? Is it worth it?

But now I am forgetting all that driving. I look out onto the foggy St. Lawrence River and all I see is fog. A foghorn bellows periodically and everything is still. The air is clean and crisp. I sign up for the morning whale watch, but they tell me the captain may not go because the fog is so thick. We wait and watch the river. By the shore I can hear whales -probably Minke - but cannot see more than 200 feet. But they are there!

The Captain speaks in French - there are no guarantees. It is safe enough to go, and he will try by going slowly to where whales were seen yesterday -he has the coordinates and can navigate in the fog with his electronics. Anyone who wants to still go can. Most people leave, but there are about 8 who, like me, are still willing.

The water is flat calm - foggy, and there is brightness overhead - we choose optimism because it might clear. We don our survival suit jackets, gloves, and woolen hats provided, and walk down the dock to the impressive inflatables. (On another trip I remember looking over the dock and watching naked sea butterflies gracefully gliding through the water - and I didn't even have to dive to enjoy them!)

We motor for about 10 minutes, slowly, and then we stop. The Captain turns the engine off, and we wait quietly. The water is like glass, fog surrounds us, the sun is trying to break through but can't quite - it is magical. Then all of a sudden... pshhhhhhhhh! We all point in the direction of the blow. The captain very slowly motors in that direction. Then we see it - a blue whale emerges from the fog and passes by - disappearing into the fog. We wait. Another blow. And another. The ocean is alive and we are experiencing the magic of a multi-sensory - 360 degree experience impossible to reproduce in any theater. For two hours we continue to alternately motor slowly, stop, listen, and have our patience and persistence rewarded.

The fog lifted, and I opted for another whale watch. It wasn't the same. We saw many more whales - some white belugas came near the boat - we cannot approach them by law, and don't, nearly all operators are honorable. More blue whales, lots of Minke whales. This whale watch was so different from the morning, I went a third time (buy two, get one free offer). More whales -different spot on the river - just as different an experience.



The Newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire

Editors: Lea Nichols
Gary Thuillier

Support: Don Eva

Submissions

Editorial contributions may be e-mailed to COMPTUS@aol.com or FAXed to 603-487-5513. Submissions can also be sent on paper or PC floppy to:

Lea Nichols
342 Lyndeboro Road
New Boston, NH 03070

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 Lea Nichols at (603) 487-2726.

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 Lea Nichols 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.strokeofcolor.com/udnh>, graciously hosted by Jake & Linda Richter.

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That night at the Auberge (Diver's Hotel) we exchanged stories - the divers told of colorful vistas underwater, creature common north of Eastport Maine only, and of chilling water - this is definitely drysuit territory. The water might hit 45 degrees on a warm day, but the upwelling thermoclines which make for such lushness underwater keep the temperature of the deeper water closer to 40 degrees. I've tried drysuit diving here, and I wetsuit dive in New England and elsewhere - it is spectacular but too cold for my preferences. I respect and admire those who dive here - there is a sense of safety and collegiality which permeates everything, and encourage anyone interested to give it a try.

The next morning I again choose the whales. I want to try for closer shots of blue whales and belugas - trying to enrich my slide show inventory. We head out - I am recognized by the captain and crew as a "serious" whale watcher. We exchange stories of whale watching around the world. I feel at home on the water with the wind in my face. We come across more minke whales and then a pod of blues. Spread out over a few miles, we see whales in all directions, some between us and the shore where the divers are about to go in the water. They must hear the blows too.

A pair of blues blow almost simultaneously about the length of a football field away from us, and leisurely go under, but are heading in our general direction. We wait, engine off. After about 6 minutes people are quiet. I softly comment to the person next to me, "Wouldn't it be great if they surfaced near us?" Within a minute there was an incredibly loud "Whooooooshhhhhh" about

15 FEET!!!!) from the raft. Up came the first blue, heading right for us. We all jumped and squealed with adrenalin flowing. Then another "Whoooooosh" - the other blue right next to the first. The two whales went under and on either side of the raft so close we could see the blue patches of their mottled skin. They seemed within inches of the bottom of our hard-hulled inflatable. They kept moving under us - and kept moving - remember blue whales are the largest mammal ever to have lived on Earth - bigger even than any dinosaur. They are usually 80-100 feet long as adults, and we were in a 20 foot inflatable. Awesome is an understatement. No one got any photos - they were too close. It happened too quickly, and then they were gone.

Back on shore my friends were carrying gear, talking about depth, gorgeous anemones, visibility, colorful sponges, temperature, and "not-so-dry" drysuits, and said to me, "you're going again???" I said, "Definitely!!!!" and told them my story. Just as each dive is different, each whale watch is an adventure - just showing up is 90% of making the most of an opportunity.

My sixth 4 hour whale watch in 2 days I thought had to go pretty far to beat this previous one. But having seen belugas earlier in the morning, and such variety the day before, I thought - go for it - I'm here and going home soon.

(continued on next page)

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INSTRUCTIONS

RENTALS

Divers Invade Hermit Island

by Karen Marion

Twenty-seven members, family and friends invaded Hermit Island, off the coast of Maine, for a three day weekend of sun, fun and watersports. One might expect divers to dive on a camping trip, and we did. But there was as much kayaking, hiking, sailboarding, barbequeing, canoeing, snorkeling and sailing as there was diving.

Hermit Island is beautiful! After a bit of confusion about sites, we set up tents and set out to explore the island. The sites we had were mostly wooded with a view of an inlet, but there are ocean sites as well. I shared a site with Jean Stefanik and after a drive round the island to get our bearings we headed to Sailboat Beach for a relaxing afternoon. Jean walked the trails while I got in my kayak and paddled around the island. I saw a pair of baby seagulls as well as cormorants, great blue herons, adult seagulls and terns. The scenery is lovely there and the wave action made for an exciting and fun day on the water.

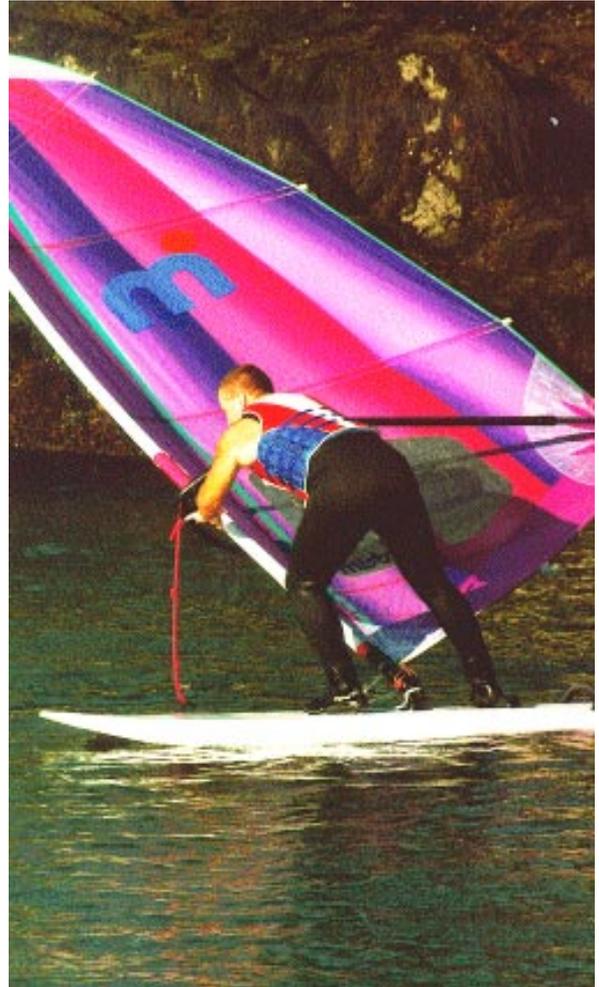
Saturday morning several folks went out to Joe's Point for a dive while others went back to Sailboat Beach to settle in for the day. We had a couple of kayaks, a canoe, Lee and Elsbeth's sail-thingy, and numerous divers in the water at various times. It was another fine day! After a dive and a snorkel I spent most of the remainder of the afternoon kayaking. Don Eva and I paddled around the point where we saw a mother Eider Duck and her dozen or so chicks. On the way back Don got to tow Ken in after his sailboard ran away with him. Meanwhile I paddled over to watch Ron helping Bob, who'd had the same problem. Those pesky sailboards!

The diving was good, but not exceptional. Visibility was about 15 feet. I didn't see many fish, but did get to see my first Lumpfish which was quite cute. I only saw a few lobster, but the crab population was booming, and there were many sea stars. Jean saw several small anemones as well.

Kudos to Jean and Tom Trembly and their friend Brenda for cooking up a fine feast on Saturday night. There was lobster, fish, steak, hot dogs, hamburgers, corn on the cob, potatoes, and more. It was a fitting end to a fabulous day.

Sunday everyone packed up and some folks moved out. Others of us met at the boat landing for several hours of boating, lunch and visiting. We put in my kayak, Lee and Elsbeth's sail-thingy, and Ron and Jean's Zodiak. We took turns trying them out. I also got a special treat when some folks (not with the club) let me try out their hand-crafted wooden kayak.

All in all a very nice weekend!



Shawn Matte in one of his few upright moments

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Karen Marion & Joe Mann

Hermit Island ScrapBook

P photos by Lea Nichols

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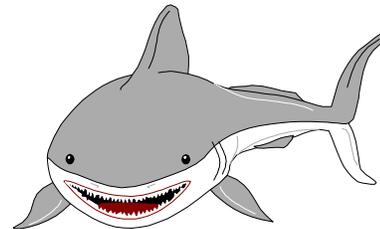


Jean Stefanik

The following tide times are for the weekends in Sept. & Oct. 1998, based on tables at Boston, MA. You should figure in approximately 15 minutes later for Portsmouth, NH to Portland, ME.

When diving midweek add roughly one hour to each day. *CAUTION* For dives which require strict adherence to slack times use published tide tables for that specific area. (times are corrected for Daylight Savings Time)

Sat Sept. 12	L-10:31	H-4:48
Sun Sept. 13	L-11:30	H-5:49
Sat Sept. 19	H-11:14	L-5:12
Sun Sept. 20	H-11:53	L-5:54
Sat Sept. 26	L-9:32	H-3:42
Sun Sept. 27	L-10:18	H-4:29
Sat Oct.3	H-9:36	L-3:44
Sun Oct.4	H10:25	L-4:36
Sat Oct 10	L-9:13	H-3:27
Sun Oct.11	L-10:09	H-4:26
Sat Oct.17	H-10:05	L-4:08
Sun Oct. 18	H-10:46	L-4:51
Sat Oct. 24	L-8:18	H-2:26
Sun Oct. 25	L-8:00	H-2:08
Sat Oct. 31	H-7:13	L-1:24
Sun. Nov. 1	H- 8:06	L-2:20



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Saturday 7 AM to 6 PM Closed Wednesday and Sunday.



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 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 1998 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 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 - 1998

President	Mike Griffin	603-598-0151
Vice President	Tom Tremblay	603-625-8459
Treasurer	Gary Thuillier	603-487-3001
Secretary	Don Eva	603-672-5608
Dive Coordinator	Ken Anderson	603-622-8224
Ass't Dive Coord.	Ron Mann	603-883-9015

*Meeting schedule: 7:15-8:15pm - meeting & presentation ,
8:30-9:20- pool time, 9:20-9:30 - Hot Tub!*

Meetings and Events

September 5-7 (Labor Day Weekend) Newport, RI dive trip. Contact Jean Stefanik 603-647-1063 for details.

September 19 National Coastal Cleanup Contact Gary Thuillier @ 603 -487-3001

September 19 Cape Cod Weekend Contact Gary Thuillier @ 603 -487-3001

October 24 Seamark98 - New England Aquarium @ 7 PM Contact Tom Tremblay @ 603 625-8459

November 21 Annual UDNH Banquet Contact Tom Tremblay @ 603 625-8459

January 1999 Catch the Wave annual multi-club party

More Dives & Activities in the works! Contact Ken Anderson - 603-622-8224 for details.



Bob Lacz ponders the meaning of warm beer

TECH TIPS

Tech Tips is a column for members to share their knowledge, ideas and/or inventions. All submissions welcome.



Who needs weights?

You just found a great deal on a used scuba tank at a yard sale. Its out of Hydro and has no VIS stickers on it but it's full of air. Do you take it for a dive before having it inspected? I HOPE NOT!!! We found such a deal, cracked the valve and drained it then gave it a preliminary inspection. This being a steel 72 it had about one inch of rust on the bottom.

The point being: Rust as you all know is the process of oxidation, and that requires the use of Oxygen. So, in order to get that amount of rust in a tank full of 21% O2 how much breathable air do you suppose is left? That's right, ZIP!! Like anything else in life, if you're not sure of what's in it maybe you should pass it up.

Gary Thuillier

Equipment Mart

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Viking Sport Dry Suit Size 02

Both suits little used and in good condition with under garments, \$450 ea. Contact Lea Nichols @ 603 487-2726



Don Eva rescues Gary Thuillier's canoe while tying himself in knots.

DIVE LOG

United Divers of New Hampshire
P.O. Box 4176
Manchester, NH 03108-4176

Forward and Address Correction Requested

DIVE LOG

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.

In This Issue:

- Tech Tips
- Hermit Island Weekend
- Eliot, ME Weekend
- Les Escoumins Whale Watching
- Weekend Tide info
- Dive/Activities schedule

