



Sophie's Presidents Message

Can you believe it's already two months into the year? At least February has seen club divers make the most of the "summer" and got onto some fabulous trips and adventures.

Check out the accounts and photos from a trip to White Island, another trip to Northland, club dive and an article on basic diving skills.

Join us on Tuesday 28th to hear the stories that come with the photos, and also to find out what training will be subsidised this year.

It's also great to see that people are taking full advantage of the free fills on club dives, we're onto card three at Dive Ski and part way through our large card with Island Bay Divers.

I hope you make the most of summer and get out diving lots. If you're diving in the Marine Reserve, why not try your hand at some photography and enter your best shot for the seaweek photo competition, there's fantastic prizes to be won.

More details of all this and more below, so keep reading!

Happy diving
Sophie



2 spot demoiselles at Poor Knights by Pete

White Island 2012 by Sherri

I recently clocked up my 50th dive during a live-aboard at White Island. This was a WUC and DiveSkiHQ combined trip. Our home for the 4 days and 4 nights was the MV Ma Cherie, a 40 ft launch built in 1961, lovingly owned and competently skippered by John Baker (JB) – you can find his home page here: [Baker Marine Charters](#).

Claire from DiveHQ took care of the catering and what a magnificent effort that was! "Preparation is the key".... with a little help from JB while we were blowing bubbles at sites like – Volkner Wall, The Fumerole, Laisons Reef, Centre Spire and many others.



Ma Cherie by Sherriann

So with tummies and dive sites catered for all the rest of us had to do was dive and take photos... hundreds of photos were taken in an effort to capture the 'perfect shot'. (continued...)



Sherriann lands an Albacore!

Club Meetings

Next meeting: **6:30pm, Tuesday 28 Mar 2012** at the Thistle Inn

Club Website

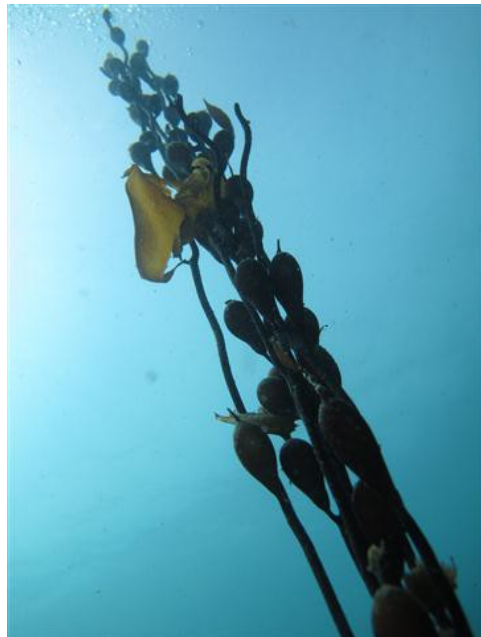
<http://www.wuc.org.nz>

Contact us

wellington.underwater@gmail.com

Did you know?

The magic -1 Sherriann talks about in her White Island article is an exposure compensation of -1. The canon series of compacts lets you set the exposure compensations for non manual photos. In Manual you need to move the light meter manually to -1 by manually adjusting the settings. It's popular with underwater photographers because it brings out the blues and of course, allows a slightly faster shutter speed making it a bit easier to get beasties on the move!



Kelp on club dive by Pete



Ocean Cleaners on club dive by Pete

White Island Continued...

Some of the trip highlights were:

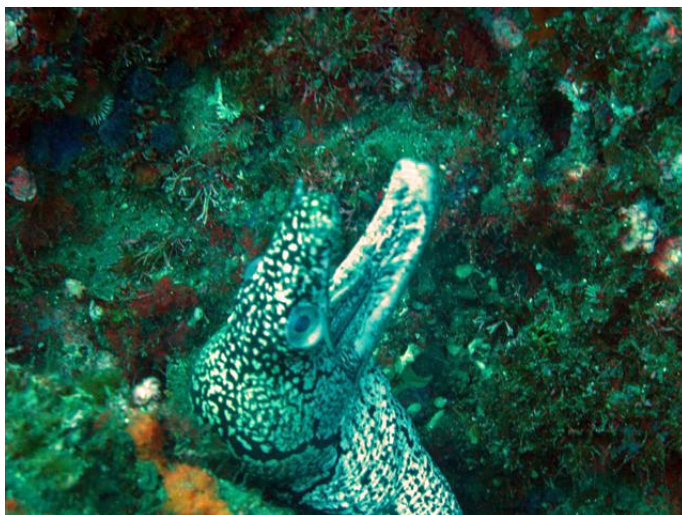
- ✓ Compiling our list of fish species we could identify a grand total of 55 species! A pretty good effort!
- ✓ A brief visit onto the volcano complete with hard-hats and wet t-shirt safety masks
- ✓ Catching a couple of Skipjack and Albacore Tuna
- ✓ Visiting the memorial plaque of "Lockie", a young sailor from the area who was lost at sea
- ✓ Water temperature consistently at between 19.4 – 20C
- ✓ And for me, my gratitude for the generosity of other divers who are always happy to help with zipping and un-zipping drysuits, ripping fins off as I bob about on the ladder, passing cameras up – and down, and answering my questions – even though it's the third time that day! And, of course, all the tips and tricks on dive gear and underwater photography, especially '-1' the optimum setting for underwater!



Marauding Sandagers Wrasse by Sherri



Blue Moki by Sherriann



Gaping Moray by Sherriann

Thanks to all aboard for a great trip, I'm already planning the next one!
Sherrian Barr

Hear Jonathan Watts lessons from China

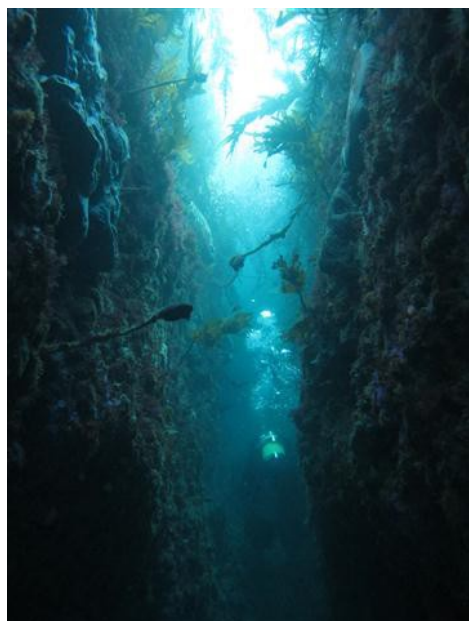
Come along and hear Jonathan talk about the development of China on the Tibetan Plateau, Hydro Dam construction (and collapse), deforestation and the demise of the baiji – the Yangtze dolphin. New Zealand faces similar critical environmental challenges and we must learn from the Chinese experience.

Jonathan will give public evening lectures in:

- Auckland – Thursday 29 March
- Taupo – Friday 30 March
- Wellington – Monday 2 April
- Christchurch – Wed 4 April
-

Tickets @ \$35 each are available from www.eventfinder.co.nz

Proceeds from the lecture will be given to the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand.



Breaker Bay Swimthrough by Pete

Club Dive by Sophie

For once the weather gods were with us on our club dive: a perfect Wellington day with sun, slight southerly breeze, and decent visibility on the south coast. So we went and checked the marine reserve at the snorkel trail.



Cray nest by Pete

Divers and snorkelers joined in. It's fabulous to see the huge benefits of the marine reserve already, with cray nests, paua, lots of blue moki, blue cod and all sorts of other creatures. We collectively took many pictures and enjoyed a sunny lazy dive. We followed on with a lovely BBQ in the sun, with accounts of what we saw (or missed), and how wonderful life can be. So why not join us next time, **Sunday 4th March**. Let us know that you're coming so we can let you know of the dive site (usually chosen a couple days prior to the dive). The dive will be followed by hot drinks and BBQ. See you there!



Welly Vis! by Pete

Northland Dive Trip by Phil

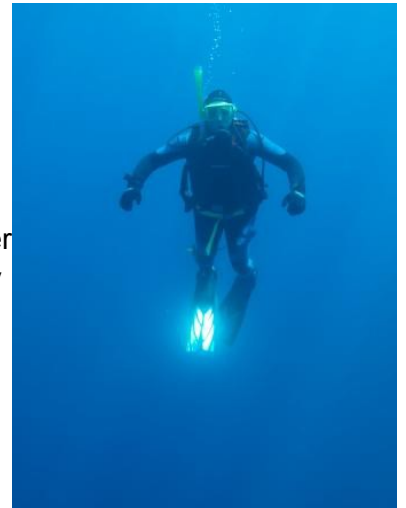
After a not so good forecast had turned out to be correct for the beginning of the week we headed out of Tutukaka on Lady Jess. It was now Tuesday and the drive up from Wellington had gone well but we had been met with 2m swells with wind whipping up the sea on top. Monday had seen us tied up all day in the marina.

We were now beating our way out to the Poor Knights through seas a bit lower than the day before but the cylinders and dive gear were moving about heaps on the deck keeping Roger and Richard busy trying to keep them from moving too far too fast. After an exciting trip we came in to the shelter of the Knights for our first dive about half way between Rikoriko Cave and Nursery Cove. It was great to be back in the water here teaming with life and good viz which was to get better as the week went on.

After the dive we headed up to the Bay of Islands where we caught a few Snapper for dinner and settled down for a calm night in Omakiwi Cove.

After a night of sleep only broken by the low volts alarm on the house batteries we headed out for a dive just in from Deep Water Cove, the home of HMNZS Canterbury.

The diving in the Bay of Islands isn't as good as the Poor Knights but there is still plenty to see including Red Moki, Moray Eels, Nudibranchs and a Painted Moki. The painted Moki is the first I have seen and a neat looking fish. In the afternoon we dived for Scallops and got enough for a good feed for dinner.



Roger in the Deep by Phil



Long Finned Boar Fish by Phil

because of the great viz and I found myself at 34m taking a photo of a Long Finned Boarfish.

The fish life around Serpent rock is amazing with schools of Kingfish buzzing through, huge Snapper and great schools of Trevally.

The last dive at Red Barren Caves was another typical Poor Knights dive. We came across a great school of fish, mainly Snapper, which were keen on heaps of small Krill in one patch.

The last dive over we headed back to Tutukaka where we had a look at the holed navy barge that had run aground just after leaving Tutukaka after taking part in the Waitangi day celebrations. They made quite a mess of it!

The next day we dived two dives out near Cape Brett where I had a chance to try a few different things with my camera. While this was good it was a good reminder I really know very little about my camera.

The last night was spent in Whangaruru Harbour in preparation for a run to the Poor Knights again for two last dives.

The sea was now very different to Monday. We had a lazy swell, no wind and a clear blue sea.

One dive that is not often possible is Serpent Rock. We pulled up and there was a bit of swell around it but we could see the rock 27m below. The bottom around the rock is much deeper with one of the shallowest Black Coral trees at about 45m, according to others who have seen it.

We decided to stick to shallower depths which wasn't easy



Painted Moki by Phil

Fundamental Skills of Recreational Diving by Pete

What are the key skills you need to conduct safe open water level SCUBA diving when you first walk out of a shop with a nice shiny new plastic credit card sized ticket? Here is my first cut at the practical skills you should walk away with:

- **Navigation skills** – A student should be able to competently do a reciprocal course using a compass and natural navigations aids (terrain, angle of the sun etc). This takes time to truly master and should be part of your standard diving activity even if you are not leading.
- **Air Management** – This means planning and managing your air and no decompression limits before diving and checking in with your buddies regularly throughout the dive so you end up on shore (or boat) with the agreed reserve. Do you know what your air consumption is like? If you are going to do a dive to 20m your air will last 1/3 of the time that it would if you were laying on the surface – remember that from your OW training? You can actually calculate air consumption in more detail and this can help especially on the deeper dives where you might have compulsory safety stops and take time to actually get to your safety stop depth.
- **Buddy team skills** – This is not solo diving with another person – can you actually assist with an out of air situation midwater? Navigate home if your buddies compass breaks? Help them in any of the little things that can happen? You cant if you are not trained or are 15m away and just checking there are still bubbles over there.
- **Buoyancy** – A student should come off the open water course able to hover – thats one of the final compulsory tests in the PADI open water – it states “Hover using buoyancy control without kicking or sculling” - so if you are kicking or sculling to keep yourself in the water column you havent got the basics and should not pass the course. But much more important than that is if you do get the buoyancy you will enjoy diving much more as you are not concerned about sinking or unmanaged ascents and can spend more time enjoying the diving.
- **Trim** – after buoyancy is managed trim will help you by reducing resistance in the water.
- **Situation Awareness** – This starts before the dive and completes after you have left the water. Are the conditions ok for you to make the planned dive? Is your buddy comfortable with it? Is your gear up to the dive? While diving: Are you ok? Is your buddy doing ok? Are they relaxed and enjoying or looking stressed – saucer eyes peering at you through a mask is a give away as is riding your fins. Are there currents? What adjustments do you need to make for navigation for current? Is it too strong for your comfort? What is the terrain like? Are you keeping to your planned bearings? Is your gear tidied away – an octi dragging along the bottom may not be usable in an emergency and will damage marine life – not to mention increase risks to you with the possibility dangling gear getting entangled.
- **Sustainability** – believe it or not our oceans are under threat. New Zealands world class fisheries system is founded on an economic model, not ecological. Want to test it – dive in the marine reserve and see how the crayfish are recovering in just three years.
- Lastly – pick your instructor – you are trusting them with your life! Ask questions like:
 - When was the last time they did training for themselves to maintain and improve their skills?
 - When was the last time they undertook a dive like the one they are teaching or leading you on?
 - How many of those types of dives have they done in the last year or two?
 - When was their last dive in the conditions you are about to learn to dive in?
 - What are the training ratios of students to instructors? Its simple, the more students there are the less individual time you can get.
 - How do you manage 'mastery' in skills? e.g. if you have trouble mask clearing will they see it once and pass you or break it down and repeat it until you can reasonably expect to replace your mask in the event of it being kicked off/flooded during a dive without undue anxiety.

Note: I have not picked on all the skills that make the complete diver – just the ones in my opinion that are most important for entry level recreational diving. This article is designed to get you thinking about your diving and is not in any way a replacement for formal dive training.

Upcoming Activities

| When | What | Cost |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| March 2012 | clean up for seaweek | Just your time and choice to care |
| 04, 4 March 2012 | Club Dive – best site on the day | No cost, and free fill! |
| Wednesday, 7 March 2012 | Pool Training, Refresher, Gear Try | Members Free, Non Members \$20 |
| 29 March to 2 April | GUE fundamentals course | \$850 |
| 14-15 April 2012 | Te Awaiti Weekend | |
| Tuesday, 24 April 2012 | Trip to Poor Knights, 4 day live aboard + Travel | \$795 + travel, includes 10 Dives |
| 11-18 August | Nuie | \$2885 including 10 dives, whale watching, not meals |



Jewel Anemones, Kapiti Island by Pete