



## Sophie's Presidents Message

Another month has gone, the year is flying by! It seems like White Island was only yesterday but then I realise it was already in last month's newsletter. Since then there has been quite some progress. Read on to hear more about the club dives and pool trainings, about the forthcoming trips and training and also other watery adventures some of our members have been up to.

**We want volunteers** to organise dive trips, from local dives to further afield. Make the most of it, the water is cooling down. The silver lining is that it will be night dive season soon, and we hope to have weekly or fortnightly night dives running if there is interest (We know Pete will be out there night diving a lot). And as usual, let us know what you think, what you want, this is your club...

### Club dives and pool training

The first club dive of the month was cancelled due to foul weather. It seems to have been a recurring theme this summer somehow. Seaweed was quite unfortunate too, and most activities were cancelled that same weekend. A couple weeks later the club dive was finally a success. We visited **Whitirea park** thanks to an unabating southerly that week. Last time I visited Whitirea park was for the Christmas BBQ, where howling winds and freezing conditions were on the menu. Not so this time, we had lovely sunshine, hardly a breath of wind and about 5m visibility. Whitirea is quite a tranquil dive, with small shallow reef interspersed with sandy bottom with our usual following of blue cod and spotties. We were lucky to see a raft of unusual fish for that area (because it's been overfished so much and because the reef is quite small or maybe because the visibility is not usually that good?): a few blue moki (not nearly as big as in the reserve), tarakihi, butterfish (!), marble fish (!!), scarlet wrasse... An hour long lazy dive was followed by Jane's yummy chocolate cake celebrating her 100th dive just short of a year of diving. What an achievement! And most of the 100 dives were in Wellington - Congratulations Jane!



Welly Says "No" to Diving by Pete

We also had two pool training sessions on consecutive weeks (due to demand). A range of activities were carried out, some freediving training was had (and what looked like lots of fun playing around), as well as general practice and more full on skills training. There were even SMBs released whilst buddy breathing and masks off... Pretty impressive. As always Dive Ski were very accommodating in sharing their pool with us. Remember, if you want to practice skills, or want to try different gear before buying etc, let us know.

### Training and Club trips

The committee has approved sponsored training for GUE fundamentals, nitrox and wreck courses for this year.

- Fundies will be held at the end of March, made solely of WUC divers and led by Jamie Obern from TechDiveNZ
- The plan for wreck and nitrox is to couple them with a club trip to the Lermontov, to be run end of September or early November. It is expected the theory and some of the practice will be held in Wellington and the rest of the practice on the Lermontov trip. The plan is to have a three day trip, fly there and back (low altitude so no deco time required, and no ferry).

**Please register your interest early to avoid disappointment.**

Other trips in the pipeline include another Kapiti trip, a trip (or two) to Nelson to dive the Riwaka resurgence, another Poor Knights trip in April, and maybe another White Island trip in June. Register your interest if you want those trips to go ahead, and as always, send us your ideas for new trips and activities.

Happy diving

Sophie

### Club Meetings

Next meeting: **6:30pm, Tuesday 27 Mar 2012** at the Thistle Inn

### Club Website

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

### Contact us

[wellington.underwater@gmail.com](mailto:wellington.underwater@gmail.com)

## Diving at Rottnest Island, Western Australia

story and images by Serena Wilkens

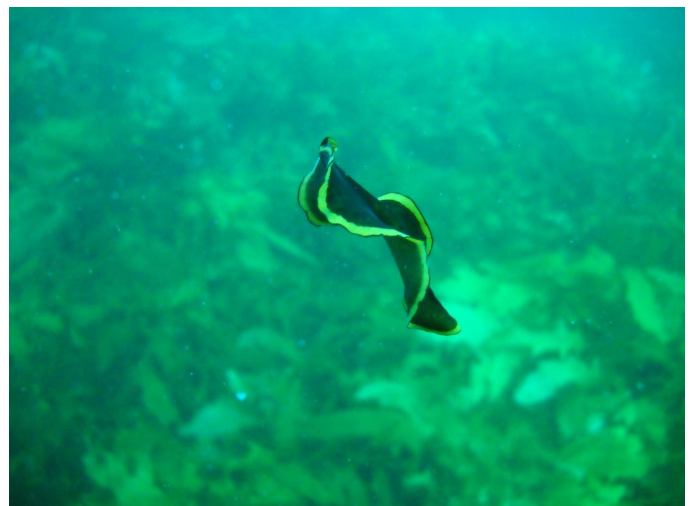
Part of my wonderful and rewarding career as a marine scientist means I get to work in exotic locations such as the Fremantle Fishing Boat Harbour! And although the biofouling on the fishing vessels was not quite what I had imagined a tropical dive site to be like...my two dives at Rottnest Island certainly made up for it.



Rottnest Island is one of the premier diving locations approximately 18 km off the Western Australian coast, near Fremantle, easily accessible by boat, ferry etc. It is a beautiful island, rich in natural, aboriginal, maritime and penal history (and you can read all about it at [www.rottnestisland.com](http://www.rottnestisland.com)). However, for me it was the marine life which was the overriding attraction. I booked a two dive charter with Perth diving Academy on their boat the Lionfish IV and we headed off for a sunny day (as in 36 degrees!) on the water. Depending on the weather, there are more than 200 individual dive sites to choose from and each offers plenty of critters and warm water. The vessel is very well appointed, with snacks, lunch and all you can drink, hot showers and a huge lower deck for gearing up. During the lunchtime break they anchor in a calm bay for a spot of snorkelling, which to be honest was as good as the diving, particularly with the dolphins frolicking nearby (and NZ sea lions too which was a nice taste of home).

The two dives were both reasonably shallow (between 8 and 20m), rocky reef with dense Ecklonia (large seaweed) forests. When I first descended I was struck at how similar it looked to parts of the Wellington South coast, particularly with the kelp forests. But once you start exploring and getting in amongst the swim-throughs, cracks, crevices and small caves, you really start to notice the warmer water species such as corals, sea squirts and beautiful sponges...and the odd wobbegong!

Both my dive sites were similar in terms of marine flora and fauna, but equally as pretty. There were beautiful solitary ascidians (sea squirts), lace coral, starfish and sponges galore and two Spanish dancers (nudibranchs) also swam by. Although I didn't see any, apparently lots of shark sightings around this island for those more adventurous divers... Overall a fantastic day out and I would recommend the dive company too, professional and most importantly, good food!





## More of Serena's Images from Rottneest Island



## Kapiti Club Dive

by Sophie

Two dives were completed near the south end of Kapiti last Sunday either side of the sheltered beach. One of the dives had a fair amount of current, something you learn to deal with in Wellington conditions. Following are some of the photos from the trip.







**Kapiti Trip Image by Sophie**

### Why Nitrox? By Pete

Standard air fills are approximately 21% oxygen and 79% nitrogen. As you know the decompression limits are defined by the amount of nitrogen that builds up in your body. Increase the amount of oxygen and reduce the amount of nitrogen and you can increase your bottom times at moderate depths.

So simply put, nitrox allows you to dive at moderate depths for longer without exceeding your no decompression limits. For those that are comfortable doing decompression then it reduced the amount of decompression significantly.

e.g. If you wanted to dive the Lermontov its normal to do much of the dive in the 18-25m range. You exceed the no decompression limit at 25m in just 29 minutes. If you do the same dive on 32% oxygen or EANx32 then you can treat the dive as if you went to just 20m giving you a no decompression limit of 45 minutes. Do repetitive dives at moderate depths and the benefits are huge.



**Alan in the front row helping out - Well done Alan!**

The wind is due to swing north on Wednesday eve and may provide us with the opportunity to help some of the remaining schools have a snorkel in the marine reserve before the season ends.

With the bad weather and delays I appreciate why I haven't been inundated with offers of help but I'm hoping (actually begging) that you may be able to spare some time on **Thursday or Friday from 9.30 - 12.30 at the Island Bay Surf Club**. As usual, this is weather dependant but I'm crossing everything that the weather gods deliver us a reprieve (and a metre or two of visibility).

#### **Dates are:**

**Thursday - Berhampore School. Island Bay Surf Club. 9.30-12.30.**

**EMR Coordinators: Zoe/Charlie**

Volunteers: Jane (\*\*need 4 more volunteers for snorkelling\*\*\*)

**Friday - Island Bay School (monitoring programme). Island Bay Surf Club. 9.30 - 12.30.**

**EMR Coordinators: Zoe/Charlie**

Volunteers: Christian, Jane (\*\* need 4 more volunteers for snorkelling\*\*\*)

Please o please - if you can help then let me know! I need you.

Look forward to hearing from you :)

**Zoe**

**Ph 021 707 881.**

## Upcoming Activities

### Wellington Underwater Club dive Trips, training and special events

Please register your intention for trips asap to make sure they run [wellington.underwater@gmail.com](mailto:wellington.underwater@gmail.com)

When	What	Cost
Wed, 21 March 2012	Pool training, refresher, gear try	Members Free
Thu, 29 March 2012	5 day GUE fundamentals course	\$850
Fri, 13 April 2012	Dive weekend in Te Awaiti	tbc
Tue, 24 April 2012	4 day liveaboard trip to Poor Knights + travel days	\$795 + travel, includes 10 Dives
Sat, 11 August 2012	1 week diving/holiday in Niue	\$2885 including 10 dives, whale watching, not meals
Spring 2012	3 Days Lermontov Trip	To be advised.



Brittle Star from Kapiti by Sophie