



Contact us: WellingtonUnderwater@gmail.com

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WUC AGM 2012 – 25 August 2012

The 2012 AGM is upon us. Book the evening of Saturday 25 August in your calendars. We'll provide details of the venue next month. As per previous years, the AGM is a great time to catch up over food and drinks. It's also the time we celebrate the past year, and we appoint the committee. If you're keen to be on the committee (or can be coaxed to), don't be shy and send us an email. The more help we have, the less work we have and the more active the club can be.

The AGM is also a prize-giving time. As per last year, we have a number of competitions running and trophies to distribute. If you were the lucky recipient of a trophy in 2011, please bring it along or arrange for someone to collect it in advance of the AGM. Competitions are as follows:

- Most improved diver
- Best underwater photography this year within Wellington area
- Best underwater photography this year outside of Wellington area
- Best topside photography

Up to three photos per person are allowed, they need to be emailed to the club by 18 August. Any

nominations (and reasons) need to be emailed by the same time. The competitions are only open to club members. Below are a couple of last years winners.



Special points of interest:

- **Next Meeting:** Tuesday 26 June 6:30PM at the **Thistle Inn**, Mulgrave Street
- [Website](#)
- [Facebook](#)

We Need Help!

The club is growing, and we are organizing more activities than before. The committee is being stretched out and we're looking for help. It could be organizing club dives now and again, club trips, pool sessions, social activities, helping get

the newsletter out, helping with the accounts, posting on Facebook, updating the website, or any other ideas you might have. We're also coming close to AGM time (25 August), and we would love to see some more people join the

committee. The time commitment is only as much or as little as you are prepared to provide, and we have a great time. So please, get in touch and help out. Thanks in advance from the committee.

Club Shore Dive in Scorching Bay

It's been a windy old time in Wellington. Saturday 9 June was no different. After days of howling southerlies, it was a howling northerly with a big swell on the south coast. So the club divers decided on a nice slow start to the day. We started in style with breakfast at Scorch-o-rama before getting ready for diving. By the time we hit the water in Scorching bay, the sun



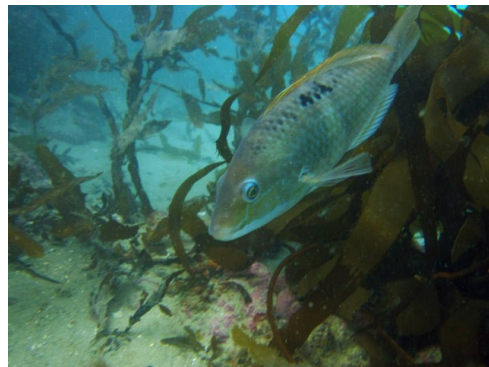
was shining and the winds abating. And other divers were on their surface interval. What timing!

Visibility was actually quite good, and the rays of sunshine in the weed spectacular. We did a lazy and cold 50 minutes dive. Highlights were three conger eels (but not George), lots of tarakihi and blue moki.

Notable absentees were seahorses and decorator crabs. Or maybe we

didn't have the right masks on.

In conclusion, Wellington diving rocks, even when the conditions don't look so flash, don't let it deter you...



Picton Dives

WUC is planning on joining Brent at GoDive in Picton on one of his new monthly weekend trips in the Marlborough sounds.

A typical dive day could go out to Long Island Marine Reserve and Moturara Island reef or to the Wellington Bay sea caves and one other Cook Strait site followed by a scal-

A typical dive day could go out to long Island Marine Reserve and Moturara Island reef

lop dive on the way home. The cost of each days diving will be \$115.00 with divers supplying their own air, kit and lunch. If

everyone wants to dive further out i.e. Cape Jackson, the Rangitoto wreck or Waihi Point an additional charge of \$25.00 per day will apply to cover the extra fuel and engine hours.

Accommodation can be arranged at about \$35 per night, and the Saturday night would usually see BBQ and socializing.

Critter of the Month

Last month's critter was an unknown tube anemone (cerianthid). We have been trying to find it again, but the weather is against us, and both Kapiti trips have been cancelled. We'll try again so keep an eye out for a call for volunteers.

In the meantime Nicole has been busy finding more unusual critters, this time a sea star in White Island. Annette got a great shot and so we could forward it to the specialists. Apparently it's a Kermadec seastar *Ophidiaster kermadecensis*,

which has not been recorded much since the 1920s, although Dennis Gordon has seen it in the Hauraki Gulf. Not quite a new species, but still a special one.

So if you see anything unusual, try to take a picture and mental note of where, when, how deep and what habitat it was in, and send it to us. You might just have stumbled upon the latest unknown species.



NZUA AGM

The NZUA AGM was held in Auckland at the Western Underwater Club rooms. They did a great job of hosting with a display on the Titanic and catered the Friday evening nibbles, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and the dinner themselves. The line-up was impressive and very tasty. Even the vegetarians were catered for.

Mike Penfold and Phil Young represented the Wellington Underwater Club and Bruce Carter attended as well. Bruce also put Mike and I up on his boat Lady Claire in the West Park Marina. A very comfortable and warm place to stay, thanks Bruce.

The attendees were all the usual culprits so it was great to catch up with everyone and find out what was happening around the country.

The AGM kicked off and a lot of the initial discussion was around the constitutional changes that needed to be made to bring the constitution in line with reality.

While it was agreed a reasonable number of things have to change it has to be done correctly so they retain their tax free status and don't jeopardise their main funding stream. A lot of the funding of NZUA

comes from a grant from PADI. This is an agreement which was sorted out years ago when PADI wanted to take the PADI franchise back to turn PADI into the business they

now run.

Other items on the agenda were the re-establishment of the Mini Dippers program which was a program for youngsters to learn how to snorkel. It has now been updated and made into a NZQA module which schools can use within their curriculum. It is pool based but once they have done the course the kids are ready to go on to the Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) program that is used in the Taputeranga Marine Reserve.

Spear fishing NZ seems to be taking the lead for NZUA in some quota issues about Paua which the commercial fishers are wanting to change.

Mike Percy has done a lot for the conservation side of things in the last year. He has been re-establishing contacts in the marine community so NZUA are recognised and able to have a say when issues arise. A lot of effort has been put in by Mike and if there is an issue that

needs more backing he is a good one to get involved.

Finally there was the election of officers. Shane Wasik stepped down as president and has been replaced by Tony Kuiumdjian. Julian Waters and Steve Boundford have

remained and Cameron Smith has been co-opted onto the board as well.

Just before the AGM was wrapped up the request for a

club to host next years meeting went out with a request that it be in Wellington in 2013. At this stage WUC is looking at hosting the meeting which will be a good opportunity for anyone who is interested to attend the meeting and meet divers from around the country.

Once the formal bit was over we had a talk from John Scott on diving the SS Thistlegorm with photos and video footage which was great. This was followed by a talk from Jo (Floppy) Halliday who works with an organisation called Whale Rescue who travel to re-float Whales and dolphins who have stranded.

As I mentioned earlier the dinner was great and the Leo Ducker and Wyland trophies were awarded. The Leo Ducker award went to Rex Gilbert who has been involved in the NZU for many years and for a long time has been the accident reporter. Rex is the one who puts the articles in the back of the Dive NZ magazine so we can read about the incidents and learn from difficulties others have found themselves in.

The Wyland award went to Jo (floppy) Halliday for her past and on-going work to save cetaceans.

It was a good weekend which also included 1650km of motor-cycling from Wellington to Auckland, on to Whangarei to see Mum & Dad. Then back to Wellington via Taupo for the night.

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The Coral Sea makes Marine Ocean Conservation History

The Gillard government has just announced its intention to create the world's largest marine reserve in the Coral Sea, including the world's second largest highly protected zone at more than 500,000 km². It is an historic moment for ocean conservation in Australia and globally. The proposed Coral Sea Marine Reserve is part of a national network of marine reserves put forward by the Commonwealth government.

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Almost all of the Coral Sea Marine Reserve will be protected from destructive trawling and the entire area will be protected from mining, including oil and

gas exploration and development. Australian Environment Minister Tony Burke said that he had listened to the calls for more reef protection. He has increased the number of reefs protected from 2 to 7. This is not as much as the Protect Our Coral Sea Campaign had wanted: 18 spectacular coral reefs are still not fully protected.

At some places fishing is allowed so many of the big ocean-going fish like sharks and giant trevally that patrol the reef edges can still be caught. Long line fishing is still allowed in the southern Coral Sea. The government missed a rare opportunity to zone this area free of long lin-

ing, as proposed by the Protect Our Coral Sea campaign. Still, the announcement will establish the world's second largest marine national park – the size of Spain!

In a few weeks the Australian government will enact a 60 day public consultation period when once again there will be a chance for the public to have its say.

<http://www.protectourcoralsea.org.au/>

<http://www.projectaware.org/update/big-win-australia-dives-new-marine-reserves>

WUC Pool Training

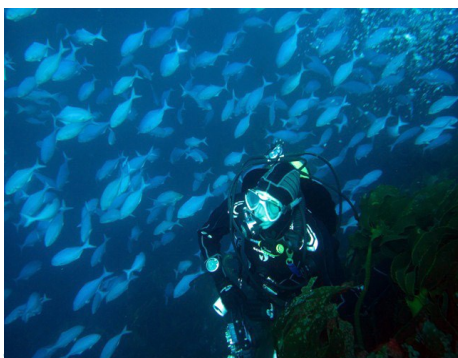
Last weekend ten divers and a swimmer all enjoyed training in the 5m pool in at Kilbirnie Pool complex.

WUC really supports pool training, practice and gear trials in a pool and organise a number of pool sessions through the year.



White Island Trip

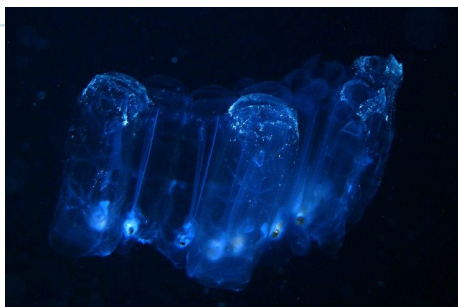
Planing a dive trip over Queens Birthday weekend is a bit of a lottery and with no swell, no wind and a sunny day the weather for our trip to White Island couldn't have been better. We started our dives



with a real highlight - Laison's reef - a big rock rising from the depths of over 100 metres to 15 metres below the surface. Big schools of blue maomao and demoiselles surrounded us along the wall which was covered in a colorful array of anemones.

The next site (Diadema Rock) wasn't less spectacular, a pinnacle rising from 60+ metres to 5 metres below the surface, and I went for a little snorkel to check out the fish activity around the top. Annette and I descended soon after in great visibility to around 30 m and found ourselves in a huge gash on the side of the pinnacle. Lord Howe coral fish seemed to compete with speckled and mosaic morrays, scorpionfish and diadema urchins for space all around Diadema Rock. In between all of them, I spotted an unusual bright yellow star fish which turned out to be a rare visitor from the Kermadec Islands (check the critter of the month). We finished our dive day with a night dive at Lockie's Memorial. Sandy patches and overgrown boulders offer a habitat for a huge variety of fishes and other critters.

The moon was up and we covered our torches and watched schools of fish go by against the back light of the moon - a fantastic experience. Next morning we headed out to dive on an old lava flow. The reef there stretches out from the island and drops away along a wall at the end of the reef to 40 metres. Big kingis were checking us out while we were watching the volcanic features. Slowly coming up along the reef we took pictures for a college science experiment and the skipper Rubrik's cube at different depths showing the difference in



color absorption. With a bit of air left in our tanks we explored the fumaroles in Champagne Bay. Gas bubbles escape from cracks in the rocks over a huge area and with rocks and plants covered in white algae it feels indeed like diving in another world. During the surface intervals we were talking about the human and natural history of White Island and the Volkner Rocks, how the volcanic activity relates to the movement of the tectonic plates around NZ and which volcanic features are visible on the dives. So diving the 'Fumarole', a huge archway opening up into a wide tunnel leading up to the top of the reef, was even more impressive. Later on, during the night dive in Works Bay I was following a sting ray over the sandy bottom. Small gravel closer to the island and fine gravel and silt on a gentle slop without

further visual reference was like diving on the moon. Along a small wall with a few boulders we saw little leatherjackets, conger eels, shrimps and a tiny spanish lobster out and about.

Early on the next day we went over to the Volkner Rocks. We descended down to about 30 metres in an area with huge boulders and made our way slowly around the rock at the Central Spire. On the other side, huge schools of fish were feeding on the plankton in the current against spectacular light. After a cooked breakfast we finished our dive trip with a dive at Red Snapper Rock. A school of huge blue moki didn't take much notice of us when we passed by. What a great dive weekend.

Special thanks from Annette and I to the Auckland divers Francois, Biddy, Veronika and Malachy for all the organizing and the great food



and company and to John and Dylan for the great time on board, spectacular diving and ever new sites and features to discover.

White Island Trip Images



Activites

Upcoming club meetings

Tuesday, June 26, 18:30, Club meeting
Tuesday, July 31, 18:30, Club meeting
Saturday, August 25, 18:30, **Club AGM**
Tuesday, August 28, 18:30, Club meeting

Upcoming club shore dives around Wellington

Sunday, July 1, 10:00, Club shore dive
Sunday, July 15, 10:00, Club shore dive
Sunday, August 5, 10:00, Club shore dive
Sunday, August 19, 10:00, Club shore dive

Upcoming club trips

28-29 July (Sat/Sun) Dive the Riwaka resurgence and D'Urville Island, tbc
2-4 August (Thu-Sat) Poor Knights photographic live-aboard
27-30 September (Thu-Sun) Dive the Lermontov

Dive trips in 2013

February or March 2013, Fiordland trip, tbc
July 2013, Vanuatu trip, tbc

There will also be pool training and night dives, as well as potentially camping and diving trips depending on interest and organizers. As usual, [email us](#) if you are interested in any of these trips.

The big bouncy castle at Moa Point

Have you seen it? The big bouncy castle that appeared offshore Moa Point last month?

Have you wondered what it was?

We'll wonder no more. After serious investigation, we found out that it is a trial tidal energy generator run by IRL. And they generously gave us the details of the set-up. See the attached PDF for all the information about where, how, why, when etc.



Conger eel at Scorching Bay

Should the club buy dive gear for rental?

As discussed in a previous article, the committee is considering buying technical gear available for rent by members at reduced price. The rationale is that it's gear that's too expensive for individuals to use, and not readily available in Wellington, yet in demand. There are more and more GUE divers in the club, and divers generally interested in deep dives or cave dives. But none of us does such dives often enough to warrant buying the kit.

We are proposing to buy two twin sets with regulators, back-plates and wings: basically all you need to do double tank dives, for you and your buddy. We are also considering buying extra single tanks, and extra wings so that people can try back plate and wing configuration on single tanks, and so people can hire club tanks when going to Kapiti for example.

There is more than enough money in the club to do this and still keep a large nest egg for any future costs or investments. Rental costs would be kept minimum but sufficient to pay for the maintenance of the gear. We would like

to know what you think. Do you support this or not? Email us.



Alan hovers in Kilbirnie Pool