



February 2014

Published every two months

Welcome to 2014

It's already two months into 2014, which is actually quite a scary thought – 18% of the year gone already!! The Christmas holidays are almost a distant thought. I hope you had a pleasant festive season and managed to get some good diving in. With the variable weather, finding the right place to dive round Wellington proved a challenge at times.

But the benefits of diving our coastline became apparent one weekend when diving was not good on both coasts, so tried a dive round the wharves in the harbour. That revitalized my latent interest in marine archeology. There are interesting spots round the harbour where you can find items from our history. There are also many wreck sites along our coastline, some quite recent but most historical.

As divers, preservation of the ocean is a key concern. Encouragingly, there are increasing opportunities for our young people to become environmentally aware. The coming Seaweeek, from 1st to 9th March, an annual event of the NZ Association of Environmental Education (NZAEE) is worth taking note of – see links on "Upcoming Events" and information on the FoTMR Seaweeek photo competition in the newsletter.

As usual, we have lots on, and you are welcome to get involved. Just make contact via our email address.

One last point – diving is a serious sport – respect that and stay safe.

Next Club Meetings

Tuesday 18th March SPECIAL

6:30 pm Reading Cinema
to view Taputaranga Marine Reserve photo display

Tuesday 29th April

Last Tuesday of the month
6:30 pm Thistle Inn

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Membership Renewal

Membership cards have been sent to financial members. For those who have yet to renew – please fill out membership renewal or new member form and pay your subscription (cash on a club activity, cheque or bank transfer to WUC - details on the form).

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Want more information?

If you want to know more about any of the articles in the newsletter, or just want to contact us, then email:

wellington.underwater@gmail.com

Upcoming Activities

Club meetings

- **18th March (Tue): 6:30pm** meet at the Reading Cinema, Courtenay Place, where the FoTMR photo competition entries will be displayed. After viewing the photos we'll find a place nearby to eat and socialise. Note – this is **a week before** the normal meeting day.
- **29th April (Tue): 6:30pm** at Thistle Inn

Club Dives and Activities

March

- **1st Mar (Sat), Photo dive & intro to Light Room:** This will be a photo dive followed by an introduction session on Lightroom software; for members with cameras. Please register your interest via the Club email address to be kept up-to-date on meeting location and time. This event will allow photographers an opportunity to enter photos in the FoTMR photo competition (weather dependent) – entries close 5th March. See later article.
- **6th Mar (Thu), Sundown Snorkel at Island Bay (Seaweeek)** – Come along for a snorkel in the marine reserve or participate as a volunteer introducing snorkelers to this special part of Wellington.

March / April

- **Try Sidemount Diving** – ever wondered how it feels to dive with sidemount setup? Join us for a pool session and give it a try.
- **Try Scooter Diving** – scooter diving is a fun adventure (see Sue's article about the scooter safari) – just give it a go on a try dive. Register your interest now.

May

- **4th Sun** – Pool Session (5m pool, 11am–1pm)

As usual club shore dives will be advertised by email on short notice. Club members receive free tank fills on sea dives and discounts on gear rental on club dives!

More Upcoming Events, Trips & Courses

- **Seaweeek 1st – 9th March:**

Seaweeek is the annual flagship event for NZ Association for Environmental Education (NZAEE). There are lots of activities around Wellington.

See this link for details on local activities:

<http://seaweeek.org.nz/events/wellington/>

The Sea Week theme this year is:

"Our fragile, finite taonga – be alert to the fragility of the marine environment and its treasures. *Kia mataara! Tiakina te au o te moana, he kōpīpī tōna*"

- **15th – 16th March: GUE NZ at Northland Dive:**

Wreck and Tech dives in the BOI – join WUC members heading up North

- **GUE fundies class: 26th – 30th March**

At the time of writing there was a space left on the next GUE fundies class here in Wellington. Two club members are booked on this course already. Financial club members participating in the course can apply for one of the ten 50\$ training vouchers available for the club year. Date: March 26-30th (Wed/Thurs evenings, all day Fri/Sat/Sun)

Dive Trips 2014

- **6th – 12th April 2014: Fiordland 7 day liveaboard.** Now full – email us for a place on the waiting list.

Keen to learn diving or know someone who wants to start scuba diving? Let us know and we look at organizing a **PADI Open Water Dive Course**. If you are interested in an **Advanced Open Water Course** or any other training let us know as well. There are still 50\$ training vouchers available this club year.

Seaweed 2014 Photo Competition

Friends of Taputeranga Marine Reserve (FoTMR) photo competition

www.taputeranga.org.nz

FoTMR invites entries of your best images from the Taputeranga Marine Reserve. Entries should be submitted to enquiries@taputeranga.org.nz to be eligible for a prize and have your images displayed at Reading Cinema, Wellington.

Rules:

1. All photos to be taken within the reserve (above or below the surface)
2. All photos must be submitted as .jpg files via email to: enquiries@taputeranga.org.nz Maximum size 2.4 MB.
3. There are three sections: Professional, Adult, Under 16. There are 3 prizes in each section. Members of the Friends Trust are welcome to enter, as well as the general public. Enter up to 5 images each.
4. Photos must be submitted by 5th March and all entries will be displayed at the Reading Cinema from 8th to 22nd March.
5. The judge's decision is final and prize winners will be notified by email.
6. All entrants agree that their submissions are free of copyright (i.e. entrants must own the copyright of the image(s)) and these may be used for future promotional or other events by FoTMR without fee or payment (with appropriate accreditation where possible).

Get together your best photos of sea critters, habitats or seascapes and get them entered before

5th March!

Christmas get-together

A small group met at Shelley Bay in December to celebrate the festive season. We had intended doing a dive beforehand, but conditions meant that didn't go ahead.



WUC beanies and T-Shirts travelling



A well traveled WUC merino beanie makes it to Scott Base ☺

Summer at Northland Dive – photos by Nicole & Sophie



Summer at Northland Dive – by Sophie

A few days in Northland dive over Christmas

Shortly after Christmas Jo and I joined Nicole at Northland dive for a few days of diving for me, and open water course for Jo. Unfortunately the latter proved unfeasible as the sea conditions were not conducive to "confined water". Jo was then limited to snorkelling, hiking, kayaking, and generally making the most of the area while I was diving.

I did three lovely days of diving, mornings on/in the wreck of the Canterbury and afternoons on the reef. The divers were a mix of different Auckland clubs, a couple tourists and Nicole and I from the club. Everyone was lovely and the operation run really smoothly by Shane and Julia, our most welcoming hosts. I dived nitrox, so had the added bonuses of being less tired and getting more bottom time on the wreck.

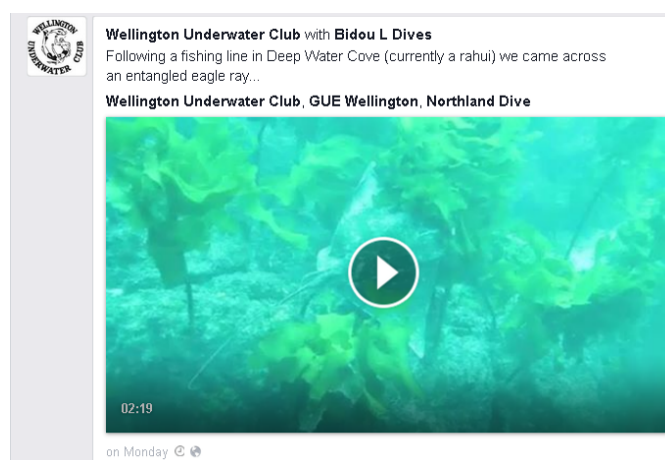
The wreck is in very good condition, with lots of cutouts to make it light, fun and safe. My three wreck dives there involved lengthy visits of various parts of the inside of the wreck, ably led by my Auckland buddies, who had lots of experience on this wreck. The dives invariably finished with fish and macro photography on the outside of the wreck, which was teeming with life. It's lovely to see the wreck has become a refuge for so many fish species, both inside and outside.

The three reef dives were equally lovely, with some great fish life and very interesting terrain. We have a few visits of eagle rays, large schools of fish and plenty macro candidates including two rare species of flatworm (they were much prettier than their name suggests). The last dive of my trip was made all the more exciting by us finding an eagle ray foul hooked in the wing and wrapped tight against sea-weed. Its release involved a couple dozens bars of my tank, some delicate knife work and trying to avoid the tail during release while Nicole was busy filming the ordeal. The ray and I were lucky: he was released with little line left (yes he was a he) and I didn't get stung :-)) let's hope it survives to see another few years. The saddest thing about the story is that it happened in a rahui, which is a legal no-take zone. There should never have been people fishing there and even less fishing gear left to create more damage.

Outside of diving, the atmosphere at the lodge was lovely, and great diving camaraderie was shared. We were staying in our little camper, so had little issues with the storm that hit us on the second night...

However, we missed out on shark action (we saw one from the boat), sunfish seen before (see Nicole's photo on the previous page) and after our trip, and orca seen after we left. We'll be back.

Watch the video of the eagle ray rescue online:



www.facebook.com/pages/Wellington-Underwater-Club/231703176891615

(post from the 18th Feb)



WUC members over the bow of the Canterbury Wreck

What WUC Members have been up to this Summer...



WUC members participating in fundraising during the 24h dive in December

Greta Point Clean Up – by Rob (photos by Lorraine Driskel)

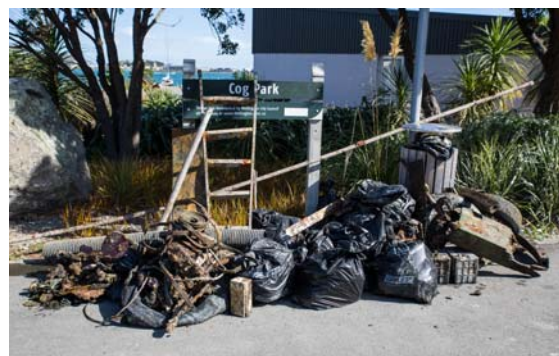
Greta Point was a dive I had been itching to do for no other reason than to have a look at some of the stuff that had fallen into the ocean over the years at the wharf.

To my horror it was a hell of a lot worse than I had imagined, in the recent club dive alone I found numerous items ranging from two car batteries to a full size metal ladder trussed to the wharf piles at about 3m.

So I thought... "We must make an effort here..." - before I knew it we had a team of divers from VUCEL (Victoria Uni) and a few others ready for action. This sort of terrain is very silty and the few spaces for dedicated divers capable of managing their buoyancy and trim so as not to destroy the already super soft sea floor - one wrong hand or foot and the vis was at zero - had gone in a blink.

The wind had changed to a 20knt southerly just as the divers hit the water so the visibility and the surface conditions were challenging. But everybody stepped up to the plate and dug deep into the silt to bring up 28 bags of rubbish and four car tires, two cell phones and more glass bottles than I have ever seen come up on any clean up dive. It was just unreal.

The sea floor was littered in junk from all runs of life and sadly we didn't get even a half of it. So we will be striking back at this sleeping giant and chip away at the beast lift bag by lift bag.



Poor Knights Scooter Trip – by Sue (photos by Nicole)



Rugby has the 7s, netball has Fastnet, cricket has Twenty 20, now diving has scooters.

Nicole & I flew to Auckland for a weekend diving at the Poor Knights with Jamie who provided the scooters and Kevin the skipper of Mazurka. Saturday morning we left the marina for a very rough 2 hour crossing to the Poor Knights. Apart from Kevin who enjoyed the roller coaster ride, I think everyone else was pleased to arrive and moor up in calmer water.



I had been told that scooters are idiot proof and so they are. Attach it to yourself via a long cord, switch it on, set the

speed and pull the trigger and it tows you along. Take your hand off the trigger and it stops. Turning was done by using your fins as rudders. At first (*this was just on the test dive around the anchor line*) my diving skills were forgotten, no buoyancy control, didn't look at my air or compass or buddies and very soon I was racing along with no one in sight. And its great fun

Eventually I got the scooter and myself a bit more organised but couldn't stop myself from finning. When underwater it's instinctive to kick. The scooters are neutrally buoyant and do just float in the water next to you when you let them go to take a photo or two. At one point when I realized

the attachment to the scooter had become undone while taking a photo I looked around and there was no scooter in sight. I was thinking 'Jamie is not going to let me back on the boat without a scooter' so what do I do now. My buddy helpfully pointed above my head and there was the scooter just hanging there, thankfully.

Over the weekend I did 4 dives with the scooters and 2 dives without them. So the advantages of diving with scooters include:

- It is fun and easy to get the hang of it
- It enables you to explore further in less time
- It is good for lazy divers like me who find it hard work to fin in strong currents
- and its great at the end of a dive - the scooter will tow you back to the boat

Disadvantages

- None really, although it is very easy to lose your buddy so you need a dive plan and to keep checking behind and beside you
- Cost, as they are expensive to buy but cheap to rent for the day - we paid \$50/day

Other points

- They need recharging after a dive which takes about 1.5 hours or 4 hours if the battery is fully run down
- They are also quite heavy (I could just lift and carry it but not far) so I won't be travelling with them

I would definitely do it again. In fact we are already looking at another weekend and I can recommend this as a fun adventure.



Items of Interest

Club subscriptions

The AGM confirmed the following subscriptions:

- Membership Renewal (received by 30th Nov 2013) - \$35
- Membership Renewal (received after 1st Dec 2013) - \$45
- Student Membership Renewal - \$30
- New Members pay \$30 for their first year.

Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR)

This is a group of volunteers that introduces kids to the marine environment. The focus of the programmes is to create positive practical outcomes, using the knowledge gained to create a conservation action that benefits our marine systems.

The program needs helpers, so if you are interested, please contact:

Liz Gibson, Program Facilitator

Island Bay Marine Education Centre, Wellington

lizgib@hotmail.com

Ph: 0220378460

EMR volunteers also introduce snorkelers of any age to the marine reserve on community days and special occasions.

Club Items for Sale

Prices

Woollen Beanie	– \$14.00
Merino Beanie	– \$29.00
Embroidery and T-Shirt	– \$19.00 (m/f)

Also, we have the WUC logo set up for embroidery and can order T-shirts, jackets or other clothing for club members or you can get the logo on your own piece of clothing or accessories.

What to do if you see poaching in our Marine Reserve

The Friends of the Taputeranga Marine Reserve (FoTMR) advise in their newsletter what to do if you see poaching in the Reserve.

Basically, the answer is to record details of the activity (i.e. when, where, what, who and how) and phone the DOC hotline.

DOC Hotline: **0800 DOCHOT (0800 362468)**

DOC duty officers have been asked to contact the callers who report poaching and provide an update on the response taken.

A copy of the Incident Reporting is attached at the end of the newsletter. Let us know if you want to distribute information about the marine reserve in your neighbourhood.

UW Identification Slates



New from the FoTMR: Underwater slates for identification of the common marine critters of the marine reserve.

Thanks to Malcolm Francis for the photos, composition and production. Available in useful A5 size and in waterproof plastic, to take with you as you dive or snorkel. Find them at local dive shops at a good price.

Marine Reserve Compliance - Essential Recording of Information

DOC Hotline number is : 0800 362 468

DOC Hotline and daytime calls to the DOC Office:

All duty officers will call back callers with details of the response taken. This includes daytime and after hours calls. Note that some callers choose to remain anonymous.

Note: The Department encourages communities to be watchful over Taputeranga Marine Reserve. However, we advise that members of the public should not engage with suspected offenders if they feel that they are compromising their safety. Remember: When, Where, What, Who, How (the "Why" will be established later)

- **When** - Date and time of incident
 - Has incident finished, if so, how long ago
- **Where** - Place of incident
 - Name of the bay/boat ramp,
 - Area within the marine reserve
 - Any easily identifiable landmarks close to incident site
- **What** took place -
 - Diving, line fishing, net Fishing, commercial/recreational cray pots, dredging
 - Is illegal activity still continuing?
 - What is happening NOW?
- **How** – did it happen
 - Description of any boat/boat trailer/vessel/vehicle
 - Vehicle and/or trailer registration numbers
 - Vessel names and/or MNZ (Maritime New Zealand) survey numbers
 - Colour, size, type (of boat –commercial/recreational)
 - Make, model of car
 - Did they set a net, what were they using as markers for the net (buoys/milk bottles/tubes)
- **Who** - was there
 - How many people, sex, age, ethnicity.
 - Description of how they were dressed and/or equipped
- **Photographs can also be very useful, but remember not to put yourself in a situation where your safety feels compromised.**

DOC Incident Recording Sheet

(Take advice from DOC as to where this form should be sent after it has been completed and how to pass on photographs or video.)

Date / time of incident _____

Has incident finished: yes / no. If so, how long ago? _____

Where is/has the incident taking/taken place? Name of bay, boat ramp, beach, any identifiable landmarks, use Taputeranga Island as a reference point

What took place/is still taking place? - diving, fishing, netting, etc.

How: what fishing equipment, boat and/or resources were/are being used, (brief description if possible)

Who – how many people, sex, age, ethnicity, clothing and equipment

Description of vehicle, boat and trailer

Vehicle and/or trailer registration number/s _____

Make, model, colour of vehicle _____

Boat or other vessel
name _____

Description of vessel: colour, size, type _____
