



**February 2016**

## **Welcome to our Newsletter**

Well, 2015 had a very fast and wet end with WUC members wrapping it up in style: participating in the E2E Clean-up on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November and the 24-hour Dive hosted by Dive & Ski HQ on the 28/29 November 2015. As well, WUC is now bragging about its two brand new scooters!

The E2E was successful yet again and we had a good turnout of helpers. The WUC members also played their part with Geoff and Scott in the water and Marlene and Mike on the surface. It is our hope to see more members there this year.

The 24-hour dive was a little less supported than in previous years and we are calling on all members to please support this event again this year. WUC members Mike, Sue and Geoff were in the water with Marlene taking top side photos. Marlene was also lucky enough to win the 2<sup>nd</sup> prize in the raffle and Mike won a spot prize. They are both rather chuffed about that.

The New Year is now also officially in full swing with the first month of the year already behind us. Have a look through the newsletter at some of the diving over the past few months.

2016 is promising to be a great year, especially with the wonderfully warm weather we have been experiencing in recent weeks. There are already a number of trips planned – what's on the boil at the moment is in the newsletter. If you know of any other events, please let us know.

### ***Next Club Meeting:***

#### **Club Breakfast & dive**

***Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> February, 10 – 11am***

***@ Chocolate Fish, Shelley Bay***

**The breakfast will be followed by a dive**

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

Sea Week is coming up soon – there is plenty to get involved in (see page 2). You may like to join in some of the activities as they could enhance your diving experience.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter and have a wonderful 2016. Be safe out there and remember to have fun!

## Upcoming Activities

For more information on the following activities, please see our regular emailed news bulletins or visit our website [www.wuc.org.nz](http://www.wuc.org.nz).

### Club meeting

- **Breakfast & dive – Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> Feb.**  
Meet at Chocolate Fish at 10:00 – 11:00am for breakfast or coffee. One tank dive to be arranged at breakfast. Register interest by email so we can keep you posted.
- The **Island Bay Community Snorkel day** is on the same day.

If you're keen to help out (e.g. the afternoon session after breakfast or the morning session before an afternoon dive) get in touch with Sarah (see note below).

### Planned Club Dive trip

#### White Island diving – planned WUC trip

- Jane is investigating a trip to White island with several days on a live aboard boat for up to 12 people. The boat has a compressor. The dates have not been set, but we are looking for expressions of interest.
- The cost is likely to be \$650 to \$850 for the boat, plus travel costs and food. Once arrangements are firmed up, we'd expect a deposit to confirm your place.
- At this stage we would like to gauge Club members' interest. If there are not enough Club members, then other clubs will be approached.

### Other Activities

#### Sea Week 2016 in Wellington (27<sup>th</sup> Feb – 6<sup>th</sup> Mar)

Seaweeek is New Zealand's annual national week about the sea. The theme will be "*Toi ora te Moana – Toi ora te Tangata* – Healthy Seas, Healthy People". There are lots of Seaweeek 2016 events happening in Wellington and details of new events will be added as the organisers receive them.

#### Events in Wellington:

- Streams and Stormwater – daily 27 February to 6 March 2016
- Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet / Books to Pre-schools – 27 February to 6 March 2016
- Community Snorkel Day – Whitireia Park – Saturday 27 February 2016
- Moa Point Treatment Plant Tour – Tuesday 1 March 2016
- Moa Point Treatment Plant Tour – Friday 4 March 2016
- Annual Open Day at the Victoria University Coastal Ecology Lab (VUCEL) – Saturday 5 March 2016
- Community Snorkel Day – Whitireia Park – Saturday 5 March 2016
- Marine Metre Squared – a citizen science project

More details at:

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

#### Support your Seaweeek's Ocean Champion

The Friends of Taputeranga Marine Reserve Charitable Trust is running for the title this year.

There is a stiff competition this year .....

- Dr Bill Ballantine
- Avon-Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Trust
- Young Ocean Explorers
- Friends of Taputeranga Marine Reserve Charitable Trust
- Xtreme Zero Waste
- Friends of Waitara River
- Professors Liz Slooten and Steve Dawson

Information on nominees:

<http://seaweeek.org.nz/ocean-champion-2016-nominees-2/>

To cast your vote follow the link below:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1MHqBUC3hKIsXyKtKxLZSHAr2HCZC9IfWa5qsox3PAb4/viewfor>

# UPDATE ON 2015 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM was held on 30 August 2015 at Spruce Goose and was well attended. Some of the main points from the meeting:

## **Elected Committee:**

- Chair – Mike Johnston
- Treasurer: Sue Nelson
- Secretary: Nicole Miller
- Members: Jane Harkness, Geoff Infield, Rob Edwards
- Seconded to the committee Marlene Marx (who agreed to be assistant secretary), Mike Penfold

Other positions: Webmaster - Scott Holland

**Fees:** These have not changed:

- New members - \$30.00
- Renewing members: \$35.00 (\$45 after 30 Nov 2015)
- Students: \$30.00

## **Awards:**

- Most improved diver – Geoff Infield

## **Photography competition**

- Wellington Underwater: Mike Johnston – Triplefin on kelp
- Underwater anywhere: Nicole Miller – Diver in giant kelp (California)
- Topside: Karl Majorhazi – photo of rebreather diver
- Video Clip (new category): Geoff Infield – Reflecting bubbles

There was good participation – 13 members submitted 52 photos and 8 video clips. Here are the detailed results:

| Category    | Place | Subject            | Name    |
|-------------|-------|--------------------|---------|
| UW WLG      | 1     | Variable triplefin | Mike J  |
|             | 2     | Octopus            | Mike J  |
|             | 3     | Rock lobster       | Nicole  |
|             | SM*   | Jack mackerel      | Nicole  |
|             |       | school             |         |
| Topside     | 1     | Diver              | Karl M  |
|             | 2     | Waves (mono)       | Karl M  |
|             | 3     | Reef flat          | Annette |
|             | 4     | Sunset with people | Mike J  |
|             | SM    | Sunset             | Sea R   |
| UW anywhere | 1     | Diver in kelp      | Nicole  |
|             | 2     | Fish and coral     | Annette |
|             | 3     | Octopus eye        | Mike J  |
|             | 4     | Blue eel           | Jane    |
|             | SM    | Seal spiral        | Nicole  |
| Video Clip  | 1     | Bubbles            | Geoff I |
|             | 2     | Weddell seal       | Sophie  |
|             | 3     | Conger eel         | Geoff I |

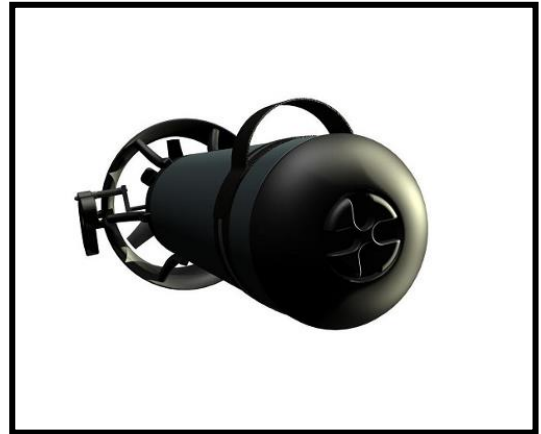
\* SM means 'special mention'

## The Underwater Scooters are here!

After a lot of investigation and planning we have purchased two Halcyon HDV R-14 scooters. They arrived just before Christmas and have undergone testing. They will soon be available for use by Club members who have received a scooter dive certificate.

The planning has involved setting up booking and payment systems, producing maintenance and operating procedures and developing training protocols. The aim is to have a Club member trained up as a trainer.

The main requirement for Club members who wish to rent the scooters is to receive the training. We are currently organizing the first scooter training course and are looking at getting the more experienced club members certified first to have a group of mentors for the other divers. The first training session will be held over the weekend 13/14 February for these club members. Arrangements about further training sessions will be advised by email notices and on the Club website. If you are keen, please let us know so that we can make sure you get the information.



If you want to see what you can do with scooters, get experience and excellent local knowledge check out the video of Rob Edward navigating to the F69, captured and edited on video by Rob Wilson.

HMNZS Wellington F69 - Shore dive from Rob Wilson on vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/152864837>

This picture is a sample of the vimeo.

## Educate to Eliminate – by Mike Johnston

Wellington City Council sponsor an annual harbour clean-up around Taranaki Wharf, aimed at promoting marine conservation and the need to keep the harbour clean. The event was on Saturday 24 November and wasn't just confined to a clean-up. There were lots of topside activities on the wharf.

WUC had a group of members doing a variety of activities:

- Geoff Infield in the water with Scott Holland in kayak backing him up as surface support – between them they brought ashore a lot of trash.
- Marlene Marx working on the back of the truck as surface support for the heavy lift team – that was very hard work and messy - a job well done and appreciated.
- Mike Johnston doing surface support, helping to save some critters (such as a little octopus) and taking lots of photos.
- Rob Edwards brought his gear trailer.

Pete Humphris and Rob Wilson (WUC members and former WUC Committee members) were in the water doing the heavy lift – this year they sported 99 Crew and Sea Shepherd banners. There were also groups from the dive shops around Wellington, including Dive and Ski, Island Bay Divers and Dive Wellington.

Geoff Infield's was keen to make sure WUC was represented in the water, so braved the conditions. While it was an OK day weather-wise, I note Geoff came out commenting that the oil in the water did not taste very good and upset his regulator. The bad taste turned out to be fuel from the petrol tank of the motor bike that was pulled up.

I was concerned that the harbour would be contaminated from the rain the afternoon before. Street runoff contaminates the harbour and the Council's guidance is to stay out of the water for 48 hours after rainfall events. Fortunately, the down pour the day before, although intense, was brief and had relatively little impact on the harbour.

Overall, the event was good to be involved in – a different approach by the new organisers, profiling conservation issues and very PR-oriented to catch people passing by on the wharf – face painting, photo displays, presentations, even a band.

While the clean-up picks up the physical trash (which is important to do), the stuff that is doing the subtle damage to the water quality of the harbour is not seen – i.e. microplastics, nasty chemicals from street run-off, not to forget the oil that was on the surface on the day. It's pleasing to see that that one of the events for Sea Week that is coming up in March is "Streams and Stormwater" (see page 2) – the contamination from streams and stormwater can really badly impact the harbour.

Over page is a photo collage of what was involved in Educate to Eliminate



## Educate to Eliminate – photos



Clockwise from top left: a topside scene – helpers saving marine life brought to the surface; a crab with eggs that was saved; the WUC team of Scott and Geoff (the diver); Scott delivering trash to the wharf-side; Geoff found a long white pipe on the bottom; Marlene doing the dirty work (literally); a trail bike that was brought up; members of the public examine some critters saved from the debris; a pile of trash from the bottom; a pygmy octopus saved from the trash. Centre: Geoff entering the water – a giant stride.



## DIVE & SKI'S 24 HOUR DIVE – by Mike & Marlene

Dive and Ski ran the annual 24 hour dive at Scorching Bay over the weekend 28/29 November 2015. A lot of divers are rostered to stay under water for 24 hours from 3:00pm on the Saturday. Dives are sponsored by businesses and individuals to support Wellington Volunteer Coast Guard. Over \$4,000 was raised for the Coast Guard. Over 30 divers recorded more than 100 hours of diving. WUC divers participated – Mike Johnston, Sue Nelson and Geoff Infield - and Marlene took topside photos.



Clockwise from top left: camp site and Dive HQ; a great sunset for those who dived at dusk; Sue and Mike leaving the water after an afternoon dive; divers leaving the water and DOC's Project Jonah doing dolphin rescue training in the background.



Critters seen during the 24 hour dive: mating crabs (left) and a camouflage crab

## Members Trip Report – by Geoff Infield

### Mikhail Lermontov, Port Gore, October 2015

The Mikhail Lermontov is a 175m long Russian cruise ship which sank on 16th February 1986 after harbour master Don Jamison decided to guide her between Port Jackson and the lighthouse beacon on Walker rock. She rests on her starboard side in 37m close to the shore in Port Gore, just minutes from the Lermontov Lodge.

30 years later she's still completely intact including props and is one of the most easily accessible natural wrecks on earth for divers of all levels, with just 14m of water above her port side.

Unlike deliberately sunk ships, the Lermontov has all the hazards of a natural civilian wreck; ceiling and wall panels have turned to fine silt exposing miles of wiring and plumbing and waving lights, at least one diver in the past was stopped exiting a deep corridor via the pool undressed, without weights and clutching only his bailout after becoming entangled in a hessian-like wall fabric. Internal walls have collapsed, anything not bolted down has headed to starboard, huge lounge chairs bolted to the floor are like silt bombs, there are no holes cut in the hull, and it's just gorgeous! I highly recommend making TDI Advanced Wreck your first Lermontov dive - better still, toss in combined Advanced Nitrox and Deco Procedures and make a week of it!

The Labour Weekend trip was led by Chris Clarke of Dive Wellington and operated by GoDive Marlborough whose superb Lermontov Lodge overlooks the bay. It's a nice 2.5 hour drive from Picton, becoming unsealed and eventually farmland. The accommodation is excellent as is the food, and the facilities great with an easy going atmosphere. Be sure to watch a few Aquaman episodes on VHS and forget about cell coverage for a while.

I was buddied with Dave Bristol who dives with almost identical sidemount gear to me and happily we both wanted to start with less adventurous dives until we got more experience without a guide.



*Geoff on the wreck*

For first timers you can't go past the Bolshoi lounge right up at the bow. It's both one of the loveliest parts of the ship and one of the safest to dive, with plenty of ways in and out. The upstairs half is a curved mezzanine floor, and there's plenty of light streaming through large windows. A permanent guideline runs between the bow entrance (32m-ish) diagonally up to the windows on the port side beside the bow line mount at 14m.

The Wintergarden is another easy yet lovely dive, along the port side looking down into lots of rooms (including the cinema) which you can easily poke your head into. The bridge is a little cramped but is open top and bottom so you can choose your direction and there's plenty to see, and like the crew mess below it has excellent natural light. In contrast the Nevski bar and Fiesta lounge felt a bit dark and messy with little to see to me.



## Members Trip Report – continued

Despite being pitch black the engine room was awesome. Easily accessed via a large open vent on top of the ship forward of the pool at 26m with a traverse line taking you to the cylinder heads at the same depth before leading you along (physically "up") a gangway to the bunker room door. Don't stray without a reel, and watch out for silt.

### Day 1

#1 (29m, 56mins) Props, stern and a leisurely swim along the port side to the Bolshoi lounge

#2 (32m, 46mins) Bridge, engine room to check that Pete Mesley's guys hadn't removed the line, Wintergarden

### Day 2

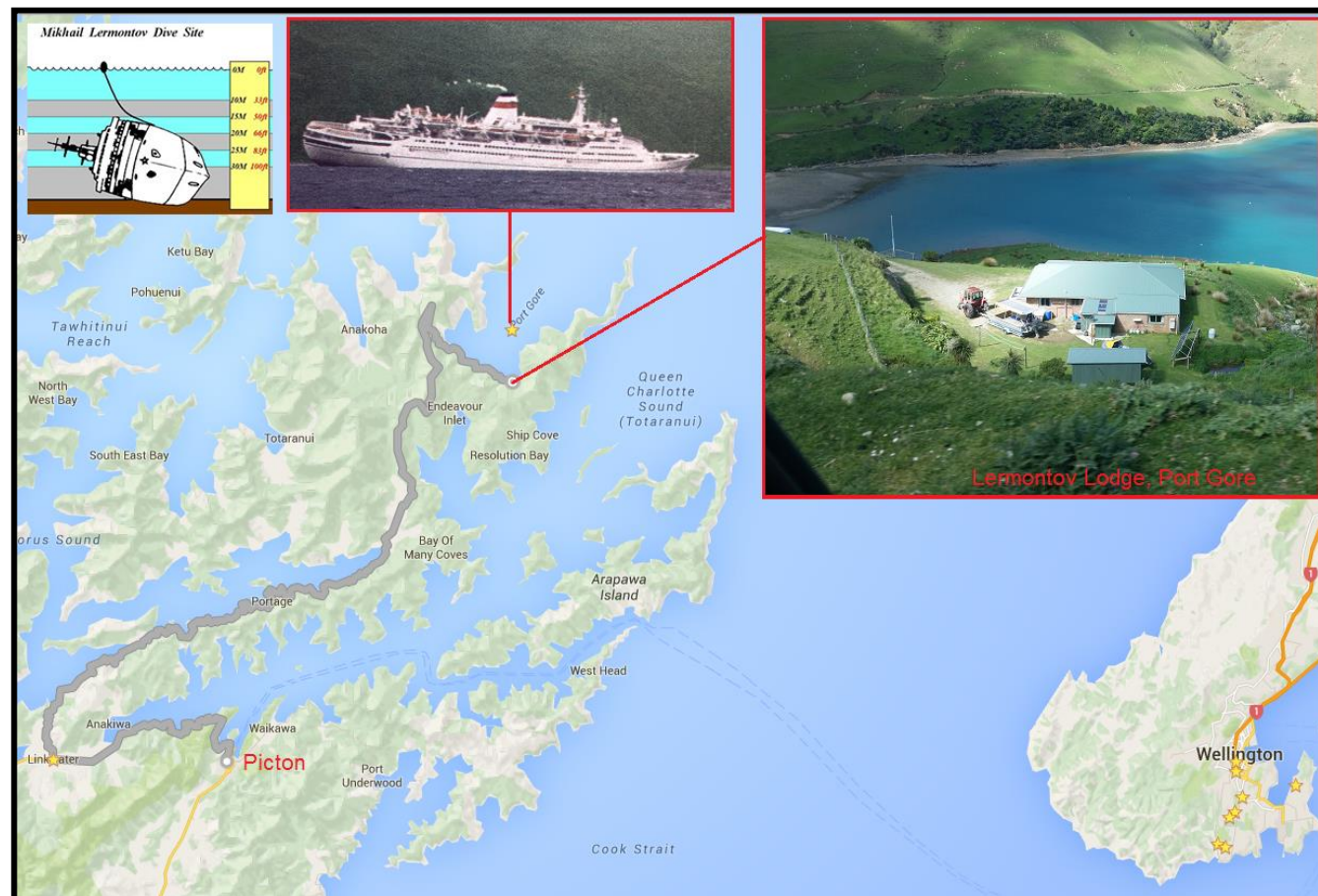
#3 (32m, 55mins) Engine room, via the vent at 26m, exit via the bunker door, then hit the Fiesta lounge and bow

#4 (29m, 50mins) Bolshoi lounge again, cinema (it's seen better days to be honest), & the bridge (top to bottom)

### Day 3

#5 (28m, 45mins) Nevski bar (found smokes!) then the Bolshoi lounge followed by the crew mess.

#6 (22m, 44mins) Wintergarden entering various doors, the bridge from bottom to top and the bow



*Location map with the road highlighted.  
Inset top right is the lodge, the boats are launched from the beach at left, far below.*

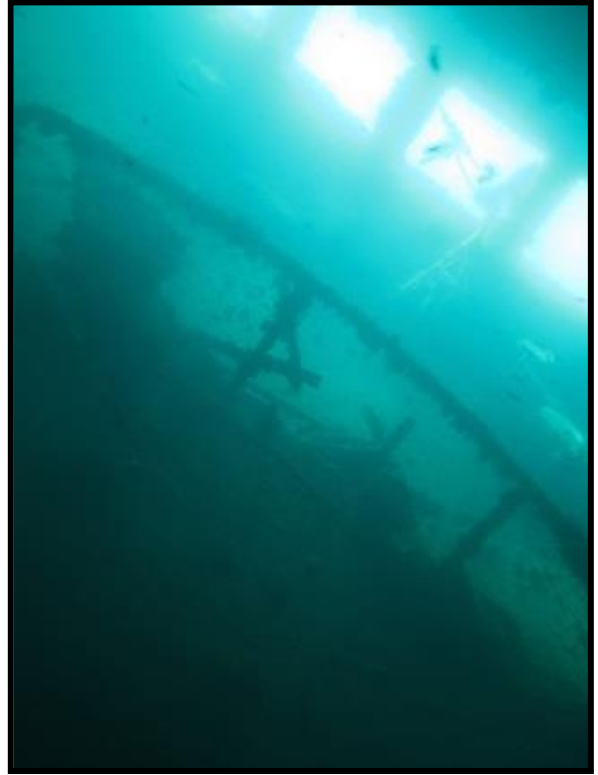
## Members Trip Report Photos – continued



*Port Prop*



*Bolshoi lounge upper exit on port side 14m*



*Bolshoi Lounge*



*Wintergarden*

Here's a collection of shots from dives over the Christmas period. Some are from shore dives and others are from a boat dive. There appears to be only one operational dive boat available for use with dive companies in the region at the moment – meeting the requirements of the new compliance legislation has been challenging apparently.

I'm not going to say where the following shot of this crayfish was taken except that it was in a Marine Reserve – just to make sure no one is tempted to do some harvesting. Believe it or not, some of the public do poach in the Marine Reserve.



If you see anyone poaching from the Marine Reserve, there is a DOC hotline – details on the last page.

It was good to see a DOC ranger around the South Coast over the Christmas period, checking that divers knew they were in a Marine Reserve and that they could not take anything.

### Elsdon Pipeline

I find the scenery at Elsdon Pipeline impressive. There are always inquisitive blue cod to provide entertainment as well.





## Out and About round Wellington – by Jane and Karl

Jane and Karl were entertained by blue cod at Elsdon Pipeline



### South Coast boat dive

#### Owhiro Bay Quarry

A dive to 17 metres. Good viz. In addition to the nice landscape, a notable feature for me were the two species of nudibranch – Jasons and Clown.



### Wreck dive on F69 -

#### HMNZS Wellington

Some of the marine life amongst the superstructure of the wreck, now under water for 10 years. Saw about 10 Jasons nudibranchs.



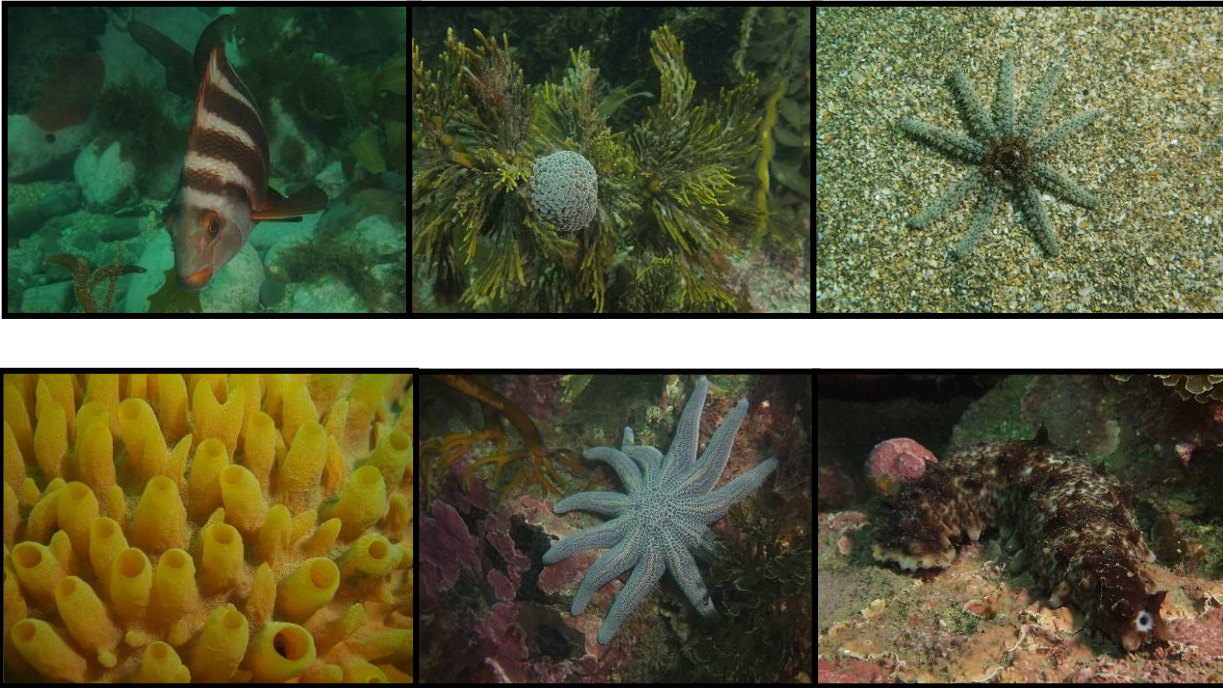


## Out and About round Wellington – by Mike J

### Whitireia Park

A group of us humped our gear over the saddle at Whitireia Park and dived round the rocky headland back to the car park.

It was a good dive, interesting landscape and the viz was OK on the day. However, the absence of diversity of the marine life is quite noticeable. In the past I've seen nudibranch, octopus, stingray and sea horses all in one dive, but not this time. The park is very popular and it's good to see so many people enjoying the water. But there are probably too many people taking from that area. I saw just one legal sized paua at 8 metres and well off shore – outside the range of the local divers.



### Rocky Bay

This site is not far from Whitireia Park. It's a popular site and I often see divers out there spearfishing and snorkellers gathering paua. There's a little bit more to see in terms of diversity of marine life but still I feel there is less than before – at least on 1 Jan 2016, when Sue and I dived there.





### Club subscriptions

WUC subscriptions are due 30<sup>th</sup> November.

Current fees are:

- Membership Renewal - \$35 (\$45 if received after 1<sup>st</sup> Dec)
- Student Membership Renewal - \$30
- New Members pay \$30 for their first year.

### 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.

Email [wellington.underwater@gmail.com](mailto:wellington.underwater@gmail.com) for more info.

### World Oceans Day: 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016

This annual event is to raise global awareness about issues facing the ocean. The theme this year is 'healthy oceans, healthy planet' – promoting prevention of plastic pollution.

Information about what's on will be available nearer the date.



### What to do if you see poaching in the Marine Reserve

Friends of the Taputeranga Marine Reserve (FOTMR) advise what to do if you see poaching in the Marine 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.