



DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

JUNE 2007, VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2

SUBIOS
UNDERWATER FILM & IMAGE FESTIVAL

THE DOW CHEMICAL
COMPANY
DOW SUPPORTS EDA

DUBAI WHALE SHARK
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EDA CRAMP VOLUNTEERS
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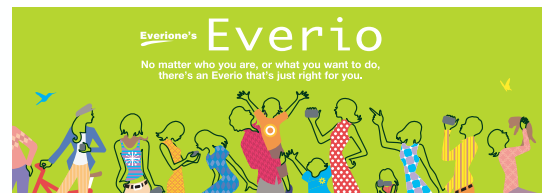
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DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Please note that EDA's magazine, "Divers for the Environment" includes articles written by individuals whose opinions, whilst valid, may or may not represent that of EDA. It is hoped that the magazine can become a platform for individuals to voice their opinion on marine and diving related issues. You are welcome to submit an article for the next issue of "Divers for the Environment" released in September 2007. Send all articles/comments to Head Office: diving@emiratesdiving.com.

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A LOAD OF THANK YOU'S



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Thanks to the Newsletter Committee, this June issue is the outcome of our members' ideas and contributions. You may notice that we feature a lot of destinations in this issue (Egypt, Jordan, Philippines and Greece). These are great places for you to spend your summer vacation. However, we do plan to focus on some local destinations in future issues, especially those that topped the survey of the favorite dive spots of EDA members.

I would also like to thank again our members, supporters and most importantly, our sponsors for the Gala Dinner. Without your support, the event wouldn't have been a success. Do read about the interesting stories shared by some of the winners in this issue.

CRAMP (Coral Reef Awareness and Monitoring Programme) volunteers, thank you for giving up your time to get trained for the Eco Diver package. We look forward to supporting you as you do the actual surveys and provide the much-needed data about our reefs, particularly in the frequently dived spots in the UAE.

Dive businesses that have always supported EDA, thank you for renewing your registration. We look forward to your cooperation and recommendations as we find ways and means to further promote the UAE diving industry.

I have to say that I'm amazed with the outpour of support for the Alvin Appeal. This is the first time that EDA is helping out in a fund-raising activity like this and we are just so glad to have some generous souls among the diving industry. Thanks to all of you. I'm sure Alvin, his family and friends are very grateful for your help.

I would also like to mention here about the World Environment Day, the United Nations flagship environmental event that is celebrated every year on the 5th of June in more than 100 countries around the world.

The purpose of World Environment Day is to focus worldwide attention on the importance of the environment and stimulate political attention and action. The event seeks to give a human face to environmental issues; empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development; promote an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues; and advocate partnership, which will ensure that all nations and people enjoy a safer and more prosperous future.

The theme for World Environment Day 2007 - **"Melting Ice: A Hot Topic!"** - reflects the impact that climate change is having in all regions. As sea levels rise, inhabitants of low-lying islands and coastal cities throughout the world face inundation.

I hope you can at least try to implement some tips in the **"DO'S AND DON'TS TO HELP THE PLANET"** article in this newsletter so you can make your day **GREEN** as we all must think and act like **"Every day is an Environment Day"**.

Think clean, think green and with a positive energy, restore to Nature what you borrowed.

Eco Regards,

Ibrahim N. AlZulbi

Ibrahim N. Al-Zu'bi



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THE DOW CHEMICAL COMPANY SUPPORTS EDA



The Dow Chemical Company is proud to support the Emirates Diving Association (EDA). Through our 2015 Sustainability Goals we are committed to strengthening our relationships with the communities where we operate, continuing to improve our product stewardship and innovation, and reducing our global footprint. The triple bottom line of

economic success, environmental progress and corporate citizenship underpins everything we do at Dow.

EDA's mission to preserve the marine heritage of the UAE mirrors Dow's commitment to operate sustainably – protecting what is precious to our neighbours and our wider global community.

Dow's sponsorship will enable ten volunteer divers to qualify for the Coral Reef Awareness and Monitoring Project (CRAMP).

The divers will conduct routine, standardised surveys that will yield important, baseline data for the east coast of the UAE, giving EDA an accurate impression of the reef's health over time. The survey design is a standardized, scientific method of observation and recording in accordance with surveys carried out internationally, under the guidance of Reef Check.

The research, results of which are sent to California, will position EDA and Dubai at the forefront of marine conservation. Plans are being made to train additional teams in the UAE and Oman, allowing a greater scope of West Asia's reefs to be monitored. This method of surveying is easily learnt and accessible to all.

Dow has been committed to the Middle East for more than 30 years and its India, Middle East and Africa headquarters are based in Dubai. Dow is excited about working alongside EDA to assist in its efforts to monitor and preserve the local marine environment.



FIND OUT MORE AT:
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ATLAS BEATS ODDS TO WIN EPIC DHOW RACE

FEATURE **ZARINA KHAN**

(Reprinted from Emirates Today, May 27, 2007 issue)

A dhow called the Atlas won first place in yesterday's 17th annual Sir Bu Naair long distance race.

The boat – which was awarded a total of 400 points – was skippered by Ahmed Rashid Al Suiwadi.

It is owned by Faraj Bin Buti Al Muhairbi.

The race began at 7.30am and the Atlas crossed the finishing line at the end of the 49-nautical-mile course at 12.15pm. The regatta had 93 participants, who started the race at Sir Bu Naair and ended up at Dubai International Marine Club.

Second place went to the Ghazi, owned by Khalifa Ali Maizer Al Rumaithi and skippered by Ahmed Saeed Al Rumaithi, with 300 points.

Third place, with 225 points, went to Khalifa Rashid bin Shaheen's Al Zeer, which was manned by Mohammed Rashid bin Shajeen.

The dhow is presently being used for fishing, pearl diving and tourism.

(EDA Editor's Note: The Atlas owner, Mr. Faraj Bin Buti Al Muhairbi, is currently the chairman of EDA.)





COMMERCIAL FISHING BOATS IN ABU DHABI

H.H Sheikh Hamdan Bin Zayed Issues Decree
on Commercial Fishing Boats in Abu Dhabi



In a bid to preserve the UAE's marine heritage, a decree was issued on 18 April, 2007 forbidding commercial fishing boats from operating in Abu Dhabi waters, without the boat owner on board.

The decree was issued by H.H Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi and is effective immediately. A period of 3 months will be given to owners of Tarads, while 6 months will be given to owners of Lashes, to carry out the necessary arrangements to comply with this decision. The decision emphasizes compliance with Article (31) of Law No. 23 for 1999 pertaining to the Protection and Development of Marine Resources of the UAE.

However, the decree takes into consideration that the boat owner may be an elderly person, a widower or children who have inherited ownership of the boat from a deceased parent. Therefore, the decision states that only in these cases may the Nokhatha (Captain) or a close relative substitute for the boat owner on board.

The participation of foreign fishermen and the non-involvement of national boat owners in fishing activities has directly contributed to the problem of over-fishing and irresponsible fishing practices.

The purpose of this legislation is to ensure the preservation of and sensible utilization of the fish resources in the emirate and to develop a responsive and well regulated policy and institutional environment for the fishery sector consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

By issuing this decree, the Government hopes to encourage UAE national fishermen and allow them the opportunity to become active partners in the conservation, protection and sustainable exploitation of the fishery resources. These efforts are also aimed at establishing that commercial fishery is being carried out in a manner respectful of the environment.

For further information, please contact:

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AL MASAOOD TO LAUNCH THEIR FIRST MARINE ONLINE SHOPPING SITE IN THE UAE

Al Masood Marine is launching an online shopping website specialising in marine products and services. The first of its kind in the UAE to offer a dedicated service for marine products, this site will feature thousands of products for marine sport enthusiasts such as scuba divers, sailors and those interested in fishing.

Also on offer will be sailing gear and clothing, personal watercraft, marine furniture, technical equipment for boating, boat car products, spare parts, books and marine luggage.

Customers can have their products delivered to them door to door, saving time and frustration. This is made possible with Al Masood working in partnership with TNT courier services and the 3D secured Emirates Bank's Network International MIGS payment gateway system for reliable service.

Andrew Wagner, General Manager of Masood Marine is excited by the new retail concept and says, "We have seen and experienced the difficulties of everyday shopping and recognized the need for a quality and reliable way to give our customers more time doing what they love to do. This Internet site and the products available will let people have more quality time on the water and less in the car looking for parking."

If you would like to check out the website,
log on to www.masoodmarine.com

FIRST BATCH OF EDA CRAMP VOLUNTEERS FINISH TRAINING

FEATURE **VESELA TODOROVA** PHOTOGRAPHY **BARBARA LANG-LENTON**

If you are concerned about what the UAE is doing to help the global community in the area of marine conservation, read on, you are in for some good news.

Reef Check, one of the world's leading marine conservation organisations, is now up-and-running in the UAE. The organisation monitors the conditions of the reefs in more than 80 countries around the world and its arrival here means that information about the well-being of local reefs will now reach Reef Check scientists. This will help the global effort to protect marine habitats.

The organisation relies heavily on volunteers to carry out regular studies of the local marine environment and send the data on to its headquarters in Los Angeles in the USA. Earlier this year, eight diving instructors working with the Pavilion Dive Centre in Dubai were trained to perform the surveys and, more importantly, to teach students to do so. The instructors are already gathering data for Reef Check and plan on doing at least two surveys per year.

In addition, eight EDA members from the Coral Reef Awareness and Monitoring Programme (CRAMP) Committee were trained last month as part of the scheme. The experience, the volunteers said, has enhanced the way they experience diving.

"It gave me a better understanding of the environment," said Jasmine, from the Philippines. "You become so much more aware of what is going on in the water."

Besides learning about key local fish and coral species and reading about how reefs sustain themselves, the students had to work on their diving skills as only divers with excellent buoyancy can perform the surveys.

For some of the volunteers, this meant having to work hard to master these skills.

"The first time I met the group I felt so insecure because everyone was a Dive Master or a Master Diver," said Jasmine, who had only done six dives before signing up for the training.

"The training was tough... but I felt I had to go through it as I did not want to give up," said Jasmine.



Nizar, from Lebanon said: *"The course material was wonderful and the knowledge shared was priceless... I see diving in a totally new way now. I laugh at myself when I remember how I used to dive and just glide over corals without paying much attention to them... It has opened my eyes to the marine environment in such a great way, which I know will affect me for many years to come."*

Leena Abbas, CRAMP Coordinator, said: *"I am very happy with the great response and dedication received from the volunteers who committed their free time to complete the Coral Reef and Monitoring Program. We now have a strong base to start doing the surveys and have ongoing support to achieve our goals of protecting our marine environment and educate residents and children in the UAE"*.

"I hope we continue this successful initiative and contribute to the conservation of our coral reefs in order for all of us to continue enjoying diving."

But the initiative will not stop here. The organisers are now putting together a programme, Tawasul (the Arabic word for 'reach'), which will teach children how to dive and be part of the Reef Check effort. The idea to get youngsters involved belongs to Ernst Vanderpoll, Course Director at the Pavilion Dive Centre, who came up with the concept after a visit to the island of Sipadan in Malaysia.

"The people on the island were totally dependent on the ocean for survival," said Vanderpoll. "But they did not know how to manage it in a sustainable way. They would catch as many fish as they can and would not understand why the fish was disappearing."

After an impromptu EDA clean-up on the island, Vanderpoll realised how important it is to engage children in conservation activities.

"I realised that the future of our planet depends on the kids that are growing up now," he said. "The kids playing in the rock pool with a mask and snorkel today might be tomorrow's leaders, doctors and successful entrepreneurs."

This is why Vanderpoll and the EDA are trying to get local schools to each adopt a reef, which the children, after proper training, will study and care for.

"If we as volunteers can create environmental awareness in the youth of today, we will be able to change tomorrow," said Vanderpoll, explaining that diving can reshape a person's relationship with nature. "You are no longer a stranger to the marine world and its creatures. You are acquainted with them and you become their voice."

"The future depends on having healthy oceans, lakes and waterways, not only to visit as divers, but also to keep the earth's ecosystems in balance."

The organisers said they hope to see the project start with the beginning of the next school year when the EDA volunteers who received the training this May will act as mentors to the students.

"Environmental issues and community development go hand in hand," said Vanderpoll. "I believe that if we get children involved, their parents will follow."



Photos courtesy of EDA - Ernst Vanderpoll and other EDA members interacting with the local children after the impromptu clean up in Malaysia



EWF-WWF RELEASES BI-ANNUAL REPORT ON SOUTHERN ARABIAN GULF CORAL REEF STUDY

The Emirates Wildlife Society (EWS) in association with World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), recently released the fourth Bi-annual Report (01-July 2006-31 December 2006) for the three-year project "Coral Reef Investigations in Abu Dhabi and Eastern Qatar".

The main purpose of the project is to study the distribution, diversity, abundance, composition and health of the coral reefs and associated habitats in selected areas of the coastal and marine waters of Abu Dhabi and Eastern Qatar. The overall goal of the project is to utilize the collated information to develop a conservation and management plan for the Southern Arabian Gulf coral ecosystems.

The report presented a synopsis of the main project activities, technical issues and key findings at the end of project's second year of implementation. Major emphasis has been placed on training on site, field work, production of draft management master plan, sustained capacity building, initial accuracy report for mapping products and the completion of a fine-scale mapping for Bu Tinah and Ras Ghandah which confirmed the presence of extensive, biologically important coral reef resources in offshore islands and banks of Abu Dhabi and Qatar.

NOTE: The "Coral Reef Investigations in Abu Dhabi and Eastern Qatar" project is sponsored by Dolphin Energy Ltd. in association with WWF and its UAE Partner, EWS. The implementation agencies are Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) and Supreme Council for Environment and Natural Reserves (SCENR), Doha. Technical advisors to the project are from the National Coral Reefs Institute, Florida, USA.



Photos courtesy of EWF-WWF



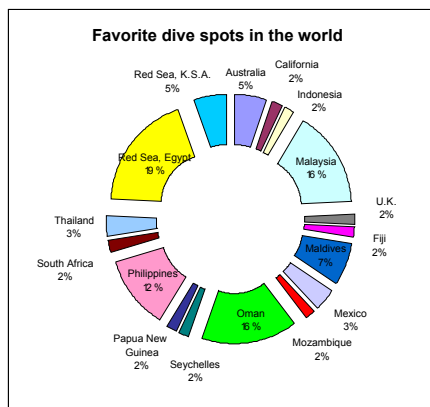
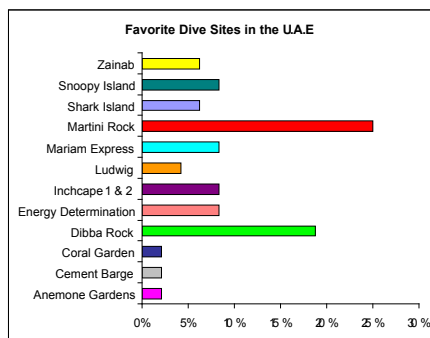
THE OVERALL GOAL OF THE PROJECT IS TO UTILIZE THE COLLATED INFORMATION TO DEVELOP A CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE SOUTHERN ARABIAN GULF CORAL ECOSYSTEMS.

DOLPHIN **دولفين**
ENERGY **للاتاقة**

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WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE DIVE SITE?



EDA recently ran a survey among its members to determine their favorite dive spots, both inside and outside of the UAE. Our objective was to feature your favourite dive sites in succeeding issues of the newsletter and highlight the beauty of the marine environment.

We hope that the survey results could also help us in raising awareness on areas that need preservation and protection in the UAE.

Martini Rock came out as the overall favorite. This was mainly because, as one member explained, *"It is easy to reach, full of life and varies every dive; even after more than 120 dives on this side, it is still interesting"*.

Running a close second was Dabba Rock. This was quite expected as it had been declared a marine reserve since 1995 and EDA, in cooperation with the Dibba Marine Environment Research Centre, had stepped up efforts in further preserving the site by adding artificial reefs.

Coming in third were the favorite shipwrecks of EDA members: namely, Mariam Express (the newest), Energy Determination (*"... not for the inexperienced or faint-hearted..."* as Underwater Explorer put it) and Inchcape 1 & 2 (*"Fred"*, the resident giant moray eel of Inchcape 1 had been cited as one reason).

It must be noted though that a significant number of EDA members cited Musandam as their UAE choice, perhaps forgetting the fact that technically, it is located in Oman. Out of curiosity, we tallied the votes and Musandam came a close second to Martini Rock. We are not sure though if there would

be some major changes if we specified early on that Musandam could be included among the choices. However, in the interest of EDA members, we have decided to focus strictly on UAE dive areas.

We categorised international diving sites on a per country basis but made an exception on the unanimous pick - the incomparable Red Sea which was cited for the spectacular diving it offered both in Egypt and in Saudi Arabia (particularly Jeddah).

Tying in at second place were Malaysia and Oman. Malaysia was chosen for its world famous sites like Sipadan and Mabul while Oman was cited because of Musandam and Daymaniyat Islands.

Philippines, with its 7,107 islands, was the third choice for EDA Members. Particular areas mentioned were the provinces of Batangas (Anilao), Palawan and Mindoro.

EDA would like to thank those members who took the time to answer the survey. With your help, the EDA Newsletter Committee now knows which areas to focus on as destinations in future issues of the newsletter. (Coincidentally, this issue of the newsletter contains articles about diving at Martini Rock (with whaleshark), Egypt and Philippines, so we have already taken the first step).

MOST FAVOURED DIVE SPOT IN THE UAE



MOST FAVOURED DIVE SPOT IN THE WORLD



OTHER FAVOURITE DIVE SPOTS IN THE **UAE**

Dibba, Mariam Express, Energy, Determination and Inchcape 1&2



Photo courtesy of Beach Club Diving Centre - Energy



Photo courtesy of Sharjah Wanderers Dive Club - Dibba



Photo courtesy of Freestyle Divers - Inchcape



Photo courtesy of Freestyle Divers - Inchcape

OTHER FAVOURITE DIVE SPOTS IN THE **WORLD**

Malaysia, Oman, Philippines



Photo courtesy of PDA - Malaysia



Photo courtesy of Tony Galustian - Daymaniyat Islands



Photo courtesy of Kathleen Russell - Philippines

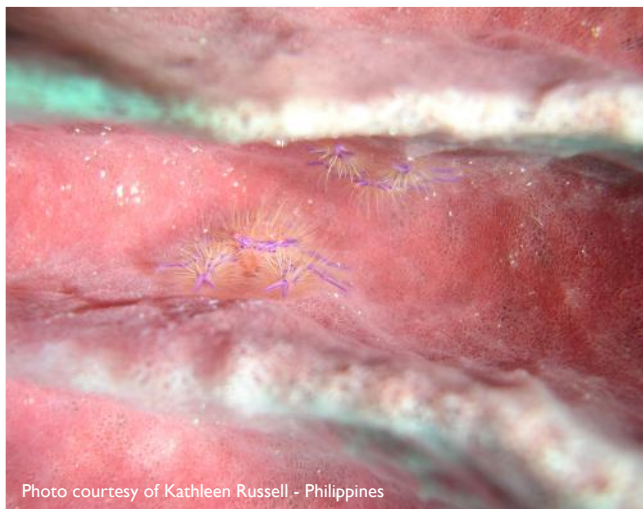


Photo courtesy of Kathleen Russell - Philippines

SUBIOS

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY EMMANUELLE LANDAIS



Beau Vallon Beach, Mahe

For underwater photographers and film makers among you, Subios is an underwater film and image festival that could be of added incentive for you to choose the Seychelles as a scuba destination this year.

Held every year for almost two decades, Subios - which stands for Sub Indian Ocean Seychelles - attracts amateurs and professionals from the environmental, diving and filming world to promote healthy oceans and marine life.

Their ethos is that by promoting clean seas, abundant sea life and living corals through photography and film, everyone, including people who never put their head underwater will work harder to keep oceans alive.

The festival has remained relatively small and cozy despite starting 18 years ago. Events include introductory dive sessions for school children across the islands and video presentations are held every night for a week in different parts of Mahe, the main island of the Seychelles.

The theme of Subios this year was Our Ocean Cousins: The Cetaceans, such as dolphins, whales and porpoises. Researchers

Genevieve and Christopher Johnson spent five years traveling the world monitoring sperm whales and using acoustics to track them down. The research mission was done aboard a ship, The Odyssey, where they were able to record clicks and codes of different species of whales. In five years they traveled 87,000 nautical miles and went to 72 countries. The couple presented their film for the competition.

According to Genevieve there are around 80 species of cetaceans. *"The main threats to whales and dolphins is pollution and specifically plastic. Cetaceans face more threats today than at the height of whaling. There is no place on earth that is immune to plastic pollution. The second biggest threat is chemical pollution which has been unavoidable since the industrial revolution,"* said Genevieve.

During the research trip Genevieve and her team monitored the toxicology of the species and carried out the first baseline study on the levels of synthetic contaminants throughout the world's oceans.

"A lot of byproducts get into our oceans and have a huge impact. But what is interesting to see is not just how polluted whales are but what

is happening to us as well. The Inuit people are the most polluted people on the planet – their food source are marine mammals and these are contaminated. It affects them directly," she said.

The most recently extinct cetacean is the Chinese river dolphin, called the Baiji, said Genevieve. *"It was officially declared extinct in March this year. It used to live in muddy rivers and was almost totally blind. This is really terrible news,"* she said.

International and local guest speakers took to the podium night after night in different locations and gave very engaging talks on different areas of expertise or showed spectacular footage from around the globe.

One of these was John Boyle, a renowned underwater filmmaker who presented his video on strange and fabulous, often rare creatures encountered in Papua New Guinea. John won the jury's award for his video, La Sezon Kreol – the Creole Season.

David Rowat, of whale shark tagging fame in the previous newsletter, is one of the founders of Subios and also gave presentations on Whale Sharks in the Seychelles and hawksbill turtles.

OPENING CEREMONY

Seychelles are actually trying quite hard to protect its oceans and control fisheries, even if more efforts are always welcome. The Vice President, Joseph Belmont highlighted some of the efforts during his opening speech.



"Through the activities of Subios, our children are made aware of the need of keeping the ocean clean and free of destructive practices such as shark-finning, the killing of turtles, over fishing of certain species leading almost to extinction, the dumping of chemical and toxic waste, and man-made activities that pollute, frighten and/or harm the species."

"Today I wish to reiterate that Seychelles, together with its international partners, will continue to be in the forefront in its quest to further mitigate these challenges. We all have the duty of protecting the marine environment upon which our survival rest," said Belmont.

He added that Seychelles have played a significant role in the protection of cetaceans ever since the Indian Ocean Whale Sanctuary was created in 1979.

"In our waters marine mammals are fully protected under the Fisheries Act of 1986. At the last Indian Ocean Commission (COI) meeting held in February this year Seychelles submitted a proposal to have a coordinated approach to Cetacean research and ecotourism exploitation in the region."

"This idea was endorsed by all the COI countries and as a result a first workshop to develop the proposal further will be held in July this year in Madagascar. It is hoped that the project will not only provide updated information on the Indian Ocean Whale Sanctuary but will also allow proper research to be conducted on the tourism, and revenue generating potential of our ocean cousins," said Belmont.

THE COMPETITION

All entries need to be submitted at least several weeks before the festival. During Subios itself, only voting takes part, of which the general public votes for the best photo and best film.

Slightly surprising however was the small amount of entries with only fifteen photographs to choose from. Some of them were submitted by the same photographer and all of them were labelled with the artist's name.

The overall winner in my mind was Elisabeth Fideria who took home the most trophies. Elisabeth is originally from Holland but has been based in Seychelles for many years and runs the Big Blue Divers dive centre with her Seychellois husband Gilly Fideria.

Elisabeth won first prize for her photo Hawksbill at Sunset rocks and third prize for her photo Whale Shark at Marianne voted by the jury.

She won Best Image shot in Seychelles for her photograph Two Stingrays at Biter and the public's choice award for best photo, again for Hawksbill at Sunset Rocks.

Elisabeth has been taking part for a number of years in the competition while her husband Gilly is actively involved in running introductory scuba sessions for schoolchildren.



Despite being a sea-loving nation, the Seychellois people are not avid divers and scuba diving is something seen as an activity for tourists. The cost of getting certified is also a deterrent, although snorkelling is quite popular.

A big part of Subios this year was also to bring more awareness about sharks and dispelling myths of aggressive, flesh seeking monsters.

INTRO DIVES

I caught up with Marisa Pierre, 27, a technology and enterprise teacher at Beau Vallon Secondary School at the municipal open air Olympic swimming pool at the local sports ground where days before the Seychelles national football team was beaten by Tunisia in the Africa's Cup.



Marisa and six of her best pupils were waiting for their intro dive with Gilly. The students aged 11 and 12 had never tried a regulator for size or experienced breathing underwater – but they had heard of Subios.



Tarik Josita, 12, said he learnt to swim when he was 7 and to him Subios was all about 'our ocean cousins'.

"Subios is about mammals that live in water like dolphins and whale sharks. I like swimming. I like the sea. It is important. I am only scared of sharks but I like dolphins. The sea is exciting and you have to protect it and the animals," said Tarik.

His buddy Benjamin Hoareau, 11 said he goes to the beach two or three times a week with his family and he swims in the ocean. *"I go with my dad's boat and we go snorkelling sometimes. Whale sharks are my favourite animals and I have seen them from the boat. It was a lot bigger than me," he said.*

Waiting on the side of the pool for their turn to try the scuba equipment for the first time, Tarik and Benjamin didn't take their eyes off the kids going before them and exchanged nervous glances as they saw them submerged and travel the length of the pool, guided by Gilly.



DIVING DESTINATIONS

According to Marisa, their teacher, if you say Subios to children they think about anything to do with the ocean. *"They know about coral reefs and sea life and endangered species, even though they've never gone diving. Most of them know how to swim. When you grow up here you are surrounded by the sea so they have to,"* she said.

Marisa said a lot of extra curricular clubs exist in schools based on the natural world, whether it is the ocean or the mountain and wildlife. *"All teachers have a responsibility to organise clubs. Ever since Subios has started kids have been involved,"* she said.

"The films on show teach us how to care for the marine environment and like it, and how not to harm creatures or be frightened of sharks," she said.

WRECKS

If you fancy taking your chances for Subios 2008, now is the time to start planning that trip of a lifetime. Next year's theme is Wrecks as Ocean Habitats. According to winner Elisabeth Fideria, there are just three wrecks - the Twin Barges Wreck and the Dredger Wreck, the Ennerdale Wreck - considered as dive sites.

The Twin Barges Wreck are two barges that were used during the Seychelles Airport

reclamation project. After completion the barges were left there instead of going back to Holland by the company who completed the reclamation project.

The Barges were purposely sunk in February 1989 and are both laying upright in the Beau Vallon Bay area, in the north of Mahe opposite the Bel Ombre Harbour, in 12 to 23 meters of water. It is an excellent spot for beautiful and easy night dives, as it is in an area with usually little or no current.

The Twin Barges offer a variety of marine life such as morays, lionfish, puffer fish, porcupine fish, scorpion fish, but also leaf fish, and a small version of crocodile fish can be found on the wreck.

The Dredger Wreck shares a similar history as the Twin Barges, and was sunk in October 1989. The dredger lies in the North of Mahe opposite Danzille north, on its side in 18 to 26 meters of water. There is always a huge amount of Yellow Snappers present, and the wreck often attracts schooling jacks, turtles, rays, and sharks. The usual inhabitants like moray eels, scorpion fish, porcupine fish, puffer fish, lion fish, lobsters, and boxfish to name a few are always present.

The Ennerdale Wreck was a British Auxiliary

Tanker that provided the Seychelles with oil in the 60s and 70s. The Ennerdale came upon un-chartered rocks on June 1st 1970 and was badly damaged, although the oil spilled was quickly dispersed by the current, the remainder was taken from her after which she was bombed from helicopters. Her midship is unrecognizable but her Aft and Bow are now resting on the starboard side and provide an adventurous Wreck Dive. Although the wreck is now slowly falling apart there are still some areas that are stable and where the wreck can be penetrated. The Ennerdale lies in open ocean in the vicinity of Mammelles Island about 8 nautical miles of the north of Mahe.

The depth range is 12 to 30 meters and most of the dive is usually spent at a depth of around 24 meters. From October to December especially large Groupers exceeding a length of 2 meters can be seen around the wreck. There is also a lot of activity in the form of schooling Jacks, Fusiliers, schooling Barracudas, Eagle Rays, Sting Rays, Bull Sharks, but also Hawksbill Turtles, Giant Moray Eels and Scorpion Fish.

For more information on the competition you can visit www.subios.com and for details on Seychelles as a destination www.seychelles.travel



Silhouette Island



View from the Marina Wharf Hotel



Mahé



La Digue rock formation



Market colour



Hammock on Silhouette



Emirates

EMIRATES AIRLINES

As a first class destination, flying to Seychelles in first or business class is really the icing on the cake. Flying with Emirates, you can expect canapés or mixed nuts to accompany your aperitif and a choice of delicious meals prepared by Emirates' master chefs are offered to passengers. All meals are served on bone china and tables are laid with fine linen and a flower arrangement. Special dietary meals are also available for order when making reservations. However the most appreciated service is the chauffeur driven car which picks you up from home to take you to the airport and drops you home on your return, to keep the holiday feeling alive as long as possible.

Emirates currently operates four non-stop flights per week between Dubai and Mahe Island, using the modern Airbus 330-200 aircraft in a two-class configuration offering 27 Business and 251 Economy Class seats.

Passengers can sit back and relax in the wide-bodied Airbus 330-200 aircraft with Emirates' state-of-the-art entertainment system. Each seat, regardless of class, has a personal video system with a high-definition screen and touch controls. Emirates TV and Radio guide offers up to 18 video and 26 audio channels. Personal stereo headsets are also available and passengers have a wide selection of interactive computer games to choose from.

In addition to the airline's mainstream entertainment system, a video library of up to 50 titles is also available to First and Business class passengers, thus ensuring that even if sleep is elusive, passengers will never be short of something to do.

SCHEDULE

FLIGHT	DAYS	DEPART	ARRIVE
EK705	Tues, Sun	DXB at 02:10	SEZ at 06:50
EK706	Tues, Sun	SEZ at 08:15	DXB at 12:45
EK 707	Fri, Sat	DXB at 10:20	SEZ at 15:00
EK708	Sat, Sun	SEZ at 01:00	DXB at 05:30

BOOKINGS

Emirates Call Centre: 04 214 4444

Website: www.emirates.ae

CONTEST RESULTS

RESULTS FOR **PHOTOGRAPHY** **AND VIDEO** CONTEST



CATEGORY	NAME OF ENTRANT	NAME OF ENTRY	PRIZE
3rd Prize	Elizabeth Fideria	Whale Shark at Marianne	1 trophy sponsored by STB
2nd Prize	Justin Spray	Whale Shark	1 trophy sponsored by STB
1st Prize	Elizabeth Fideria	Hawksbill at Sunset Rocks	1 trophy + 1 return ticket to participate to an underwater festival sponsored by STB

BEST IMAGE SHOT IN SEYCHELLES

Elizabeth Fideria	Two Stingrays at Biter	1 trophy sponsored by Development Bank of Seychelles + 1 return ticket to participate to an underwater festival sponsored by STB
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JURY AWARDS FOR IMAGE

Danny Van Belle	Who am I?	1 trophy sponsored by STB
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PUBLIC CHOICE'S AWARD FOR PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Elizabeth Fideria	Hawksbill at Sunset Rocks	1 trophy sponsored by STB
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VIDEO CONTESTS

3rd Prize	Danny Van Belle	The World of Echinoderas	1 trophy sponsored by STB
2nd Prize	Edward Snidjers	Seychelles fish on the rocks	1 trophy sponsored by STB
1st Prize	Leandro Blanco	Clown Fish	1 trophy + 1 return ticket to Seychelles to participate in SUBIOS 2007 sponsored by STB.

JURY AWARDS FOR VIDEO

John Boyle	La Sezon Kreol	1 trophy sponsored by STB
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PUBLIC CHOICE'S AWARD FOR VIDEO CONTEST

Leandro Blanco	Clown Fish	1 trophy sponsored by STB
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BEST VIDEO SHOT IN SEYCHELLES

Edward Snidjers	Seychelles fish on the rocks	1 trophy + 1 return ticket to Seychelles to participate in SUBIOS 2008 sponsored by STB.
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Whale Shark with fish - JUSTIN SPRAY

Hawksbill Sunset Rock - ELIZABETH FIDERIA

Best Image Shot - Two Stingrays at Biter - ELIZABETH FIDERIA

Jury Awards - Who am I - DANNY VAN BELLE



Whale Shark at Marianne - ELIZABETH FIDERIA



LIVEABOARD EGYPT

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **JOANNA THORNTON AND IVÁN RAMOS**



narrowed the itinerary as we did not want to spend an extra week that we did not have. The decision process meant abandoning two of the three safe shots and going strong in first place was the not-so-well-known places of St Johns Reef and Fury Shoal, combined with Elphinstone and Marsa Alam.

After having worked our lower backs off in the office during the winter, we had only one requirement for the liveaboard, we did not envisage ourselves coping with the standard survival-experience liveaboard boat. We definitely needed some pampering and the diving had to be combined with scrumptious food and comfortable relaxing afternoons and evenings, all in all, a nice well-equipped yacht with a good service-oriented crew. Yes, we were wearing our spoilt brat masks and prima-donna treatment was to be had for the occasion.

After a few days of enquiries we eventually booked with Blue Planet Liveaboards. Communicating with the owner of the organisation, we booked and confirmed our places and transfers via email and could only then start looking forward to and getting excited about our imminent trip to the Red Sea. The route was to take us on a 400-kilometre round trip from Port Ghalib to the deep south where the whole coastline is a coral barrier that slopes down to a big plateau; it is a place many reefs and submerged coral formations outline the coast - we would have six uninterrupted days of diving aboard the MY Blue Seas, a 37.2-metre luxury yacht built in Alexandria, the expertise of Italian yacht makers. We crossed our fingers and hoped that what looked on paper like a great trip would stand the test and not disappoint.

Referring to the wild elephants that we were in pursuit of, a guide in the deep jungle of Malaysia once told us that they are there and probably very close, but we probably would not be privy to seeing them through the melange of trees, leaves and branches. That has always been my feeling regarding diving in our waters from Musandam to Muscat. We know that the large pelagic fish are there and they are possibly very close, but to actually spot one is a completely different story. Armed with hope, you dive a 'rays' dive site and the only ones you see are those coming from the surface on a sunny day, and on another day you could be at a coral reef dive site enjoying a school of juvenile yellow-fin barracuda hovering over some boulders when you could be gifted with five eagle rays swimming in formation barely 15ft away, or a large shark, or a manta ray, or whale shark... then all too soon they disappear from view, lost in the thick plankton soup that the East Coast waters tend to be. Our waters are a bit like the jungle - full of life but for divers, it is difficult to spot the larger animals.

From time to time we get the need to dive elsewhere in order to fix the matter, submerging yourself into dive sites where the level of visibility forces you to summarise the corresponding logbook entry as 'max viz'.

So, having suffered from lack of visibility syndrome for a few months, combined with Ivan's life-long 'hammerhead' ailment (do they really exist? tsk, tsk) we decided to treat ourselves to a visit of the Red Sea. Having frequented the Red Sea at some absolutely top-notch shore destinations such as Sharm El Sheikh, Dahab, Aqaba, El Gouna, Hurghada

and Makadi Bay, we decided to try something completely different this time. It was going to be the deep south, where the promise of underdeveloped hospitality facilities opened the window to some off-the-beaten-track dive spots. Don't get me wrong, Ras Mohammed, the wrecks of Thistlegorm and company, plus the Straits of Tiran are awesome and extremely worth 1,000 visits each (if you have not been there, you are seriously missing out) but we wanted to have an entirely new dive experience.

The deep south is so vast that we soon scrapped the idea of a land-based vacation and were looking at liveaboards. We further



Just before midnight of Friday, March 30 we arrived via Egypt Air to Hurghada and were met by one of the two dive guides who would accompany us on the cruise. We were the final guests to board; a party of 16 from the UK had arrived earlier in the day and they were already tucked up in their cabins busily dreaming about the tepid crystal blue waters and the abundance of fish in the Red Sea. We unpacked our dive gear and were given a tour of the yacht and a safety briefing by our German/Egyptian dive guide, Foad, before retiring to rest our weary heads in the spacious and luxurious double cabin on the upper deck (the big white bathrobes were a nice touch).

After a restful sleep we gathered outside on the main deck for the 8am briefing where we were informed of the safety procedures, the outline of the planned dive route, followed by introductions of our crew and fellow divers. This was followed by a sumptuously huge breakfast (Ivan got carried away ordering fried eggs with the full English... before changing gear and tucking into the yummy pancake pile then the fresh fruit, and the rest of the breakfast buffet). Seated in the large dining area, we watched the yacht setting sail to start our Red Sea dive adventure.

The yacht had a capacity of 20 divers; we totalled 18 so there was no chance of being overcrowded. Of course, unless you charter the yacht, you never know who is going to be accompanying you on your adventure. Our fellow divers were a bunch of characters (all Scots with the exception of one Welsh and one Pole) from Hamilton Dive Club who would usually spend their weekends donning their drysuits and going in search of marine life in the freezing cold waters of the North Sea - this was going to be a delightful change for them diving in 5mm wetsuits in water temperatures of 23 degrees! For us however, we figured we might notice a slight difference in the water temperature so left the 0.5mm wetsuits at home and equipped ourselves with 5mm ones.

With the sun blazing high in the sky, we departed Port Ghalib en route for our check dive at Abu Dabab (4). I had never dived in a 5mm wetsuit before so was glad to do the check dive to determine how much weight I would need so as not to be left bobbing around on the surface, missing out. Red Sea diving is in a league of its own. It is like diving in a fish tank - an abundance and huge variety of marine life teamed with the vivid colours of the corals and, as soon as I descended and gazed around in awe at the seemingly endless clear blue waters, I knew I was going to have a fantastic trip.

Sharm, where a coral garden lies on a plateau at 25m. We spotted a massive 1.5m napoleon wrasse coming from the abyss to swim by us. There were also some very large snappers, small napoleons, groupers a torpedo ray and a school of juvenile barracuda and the list goes on... and on... What a dive!

We cruised southwards moving at a fair speed of knots through the slightly bumpy waters so that we would be at St Johns ready bright and early for what the next day had in store for us. Which was... guess what... to begin again with the 3-4 dive-a-day routine. Marvellous!



After the wake-up call at an unearthly hour of 5am, with one eye open I dragged myself from under the warm duvet, wrapped myself in the fluffy white bathrobe and sleepwalked to the briefing area where a lovely hot cup of coffee was put into my hands as we looked at the artistic dive-site drawing on the whiteboard and listened to the details on what to expect from Habili Ali, a coral outcrop growing from the deeps, apparently good for sharks and pelagic life. We were warned, however, that the current could be strong. Thirty minutes later, we found out how true those words were as we fought a sudden and strong current. We were going to give up the fight, turnaround and head home until our guide, Aladin, spotted a shark cruising round the corner, so we finned like maniacs those last 40ft until we managed to follow the shark round the corner

where we found shelter from the current. All well worth the extra effort as waiting for us were sharks, tunas, barracudas and napoleons! What a half an hour we had! The mid-morning dive at Habili Gafar proved to be interesting but difficult to spot from the zodiacs as the seas were getting choppy.

After lunch, the 'Marine Life Must See' list was put together - it included, but of course was not limited to, a Spanish dancer (no, not Ivan ;-)), dolphins, sharks, green turtles, humphead parrotfish and large napoleons. Ivan, of course, added the elusive hammerhead (do they really exist in real life or are they only in movies???) and I desperately needed a manta shot for the album. The work of fulfilling the list was then put into the hands of the dive guides - a fair test!!

In the afternoon, we dived at Gota Sha'ab

Finally in the afternoon, we sailed to Big Gota at St Johns, a good dive that also offered some nice protection to the yacht. No need to have a rough dinner and night! And how was the afternoon dive? Well, it started with some tunas

DIVING DESTINATIONS

in the distance but the currents were strong so we decided to turn around and drift back to the yacht. On our way, we saw napoleons (as common as groupers in these waters!) and the now 'normal' massive coral gardens and huge sea fans. As we were beginning the safety stop, we came across a large hawksbill turtle having its afternoon tea, totally oblivious to our close proximity (probably male as we all know the relationship between men and food!). Then a three-metre-long moray eel decided to emerge out of a cave and swim around us! When it seemed that the dive was over and as I watched Aladin take some pictures of a huge napoleon some ten metres below us, Ivan saw something big swimming in the deep blue distance. Was it a very large tuna? No, larger... a shark maybe... Wait a second, that fish is far too wide to be a shark. He started to swim slowly towards it, trying to work out what it was. The image crystallised as it drew closer letting us see it clearly... a MANTA!!! A quick check of the air gauge, the dive computer in front of my mask and off we were in a crazy chase! 30 seconds later we were swimming together. Magic! What a creature - effortlessly 'flying' where we struggle to swim. Just for this dive, Ivan was glad of the option of renting 15-litre tanks instead of the standard 12-litre ones!

That night, as some played cards and others watched a DVD, read books or chatted with a glass of grape beverage in their hands, we all shared the same satisfaction and happiness on our faces.

I will not elaborate on the rest of the dives, but will only say that they were absolutely mesmerising and as a token, I will only tell you that the following morning after the dive at Big Gota we went to Small Gota. For me, it was probably one of the best dive sites in St Johns. In just one dive, we saw 20 tunas, uncountable three-metre-long eels, a school of barracudas, sardines, huge napoleons, a school of jacks with 2 GTs (déjà vu from Sipadan), grey reef sharks and again another manta! I do not mention the off-the-scale corals, anemones and reef fish because that is a given in the Red Sea.

Over the next few days, we dived in lagoons, caves, by vertical drop off walls and terraced walls. St Johns and Fury Shoal definitely came out to the test victorious and left us with an urge to revisit as the area is vast and we'd only managed to explore a fraction of it.

On the penultimate day, we sailed further north to Elphinstone. This current-ripped outcrop in the middle of nowhere tends to attract large fish coming from the abyss to feed. The site is not difficult as it is a standard drift dive although you need to be careful not to lose the end of it and be washed away. The plan was to get in the water early to have a last chance of spotting some large sharks and indeed by 6:08am, we were descending at the northern tip. As we were reaching our 40-

metre limit, checking our gauges but also forcing our eyesight to scan through the mass of blue light-stripped landscape, it finally happened... blue... the big blue... a mass taking shape in the big blue... Wait... wow... a hammerhead! Yes, unmistakably a hammerhead!!! Ivan's eyes were as big as saucers, a big grin spread across his overawed face as the shark swam left and then right, turned to face us and then turned its tail and disappeared into the distance, its shape getting lost in the big blue. I must admit that a sight like that was just breath taking. The rest of the dive was a memory of the prior ones with numerous schools of fish, reef and grey sharks, napoleons and the whole troupe of sea life that had become common over the past few days.

It is difficult to say much about the following dives of the day after such an experience. We were fortunate to dive again at Elphinstone but unfortunately, we were not gifted with another hammerhead experience, although a pod of dolphins came by to cover the gap. The rest is as per the known script.

In the afternoon, we cruised to Marsa Abu Dabab, a shallow sandy and grassy bay home to some dugongs or 'sea cows'. Whilst we were onboard waiting for the last tanks to be refilled, we saw them swimming towards the shallow bay. It was mayhem, everyone could not wait to get into the water to swim with them and take photos. The day had been fantastic but with the forces of nature, of course, we had to expect some disappointment along the way. The crew were in the zodiac cleaning the side of the yacht so they abandoned their tools to take us to be in closer proximity to the dugongs but by the time we managed to get into the water, the dugongs had left the bay and only came back just as we finished our dive... grrrrrr! What we did see were some enormous green turtles with oversized remoras on their shells. They were an extremely friendly bunch and far too busy munching on the sea grass to bother about us. We also had the opportunity to see a guitar ray, second of its kind in my diving experience, but definitely we will have to return to search out the sea cows. Finally for the night dive, we moved to Marsa Shouna where we were gifted with Spanish dancers and a sea snake.

That night the party was on and for some of the Scottish bunch, it rocked on until dawn the next day. Others (us included) called it a night at a semi-decent hour as we wanted an early morning dive in Marsa Shouna to spot some shallow reef life. Foad informed us that the north part was popular with large crocodile fish whilst the south side was popular with bat fish and some host turtles. We had the opportunity to verify how accurate his comment was.

It had been an intense but fantastic dive trip where the long and difficult 'Marine Life Must See' list had amazingly been completed lock

stock and barrel. The excellent crew and the chef went overboard (well, not literally!) for the last meal with enough food to feed an army, finishing off with a wedding-sized cake - we were well and truly spoilt!

The trip was excellent, the diving was absolutely fantastic, the yacht was superb and the eight crew members made our lives as easy as possible. Diving knowing that once you send your SMB up to the surface one of the two zodiacs will appear almost immediately to pick you and transport you back to the yacht helped us to get the most out of each dive and day with minimum time wasted. Finally, our dive guides, Aladin and Foad proved to have an immense and accurate knowledge of the Red Sea and were very well versed with where to dive given the weather conditions of each moment.

We are glad we chose this liveaboard with the route around the deep south. We came back with 100's of underwater photos plus many great memories that we will have to compliment one day with a new Must See list: The Brothers, Daedalus and you sneaky dugong... we'll be back to snap you!



WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A LIVEABOARD

From our experience here are the key elements to help to make your trip a successful one:

- Plenty of deck space for the number of guests. You do not want to bump into each other every 30 seconds for seven days straight! A dhow is fun but a relaxing week-long liveaboard trip needs muuuuch more space than that.
- Large outdoor and indoor communal areas
- Enough zodiacs (RIBs) for everyone. Most of our dive sites required a short trip from the yacht mooring point to the drop area - you do not want to waste time waiting for the zodiac to come back and pick up the second batch. It is also good for safety reasons to always have a zodiac close by, especially in locations with strong currents or in the open sea. We had two RIBs for 18 of us.
- A fast yacht. This will determine how quick you can move between locations and how long the trips will take.
- Large water tanks and desalination facilities: we all want hot showers after a day's diving... and diving at least three times a day does not help to reduce water consumption. I cannot imagine how angry I would get if there is no water for a hot shower after a full day of diving.
- A/C in common areas and cabins. It can get warm in the day... and a hand fan is not an OK solution.
- Generators: these days we all carry mobiles, digital cameras and computers and guess what, we tend to want to charge them at the same time.
- Air compressors. And this was the only slight problem that we had. The yacht had 3 200l/min compressors but one broke down and could not be repaired, so we had to manage with 'just' two. Having a complex mixture of air and nitrox divers and the majority of us on 15-litre tanks, the experience showed us how important this feature was. We had to wait a couple of times to get all the tanks filled. Maybe in those 40 minutes of waiting time, a whale shark swam by...
- A professional crew that will be able to fix and maintain the yacht without disturbing the divers' routine. I.e. one of the zodiacs had a puncture that required attention and a yacht propeller was changed. On both occasions, the crew fixed the problems in less than an hour whilst we were either diving or having our munchies. Also the cabins were routinely

cleaned and tidied whilst we were out diving causing us no disturbance at all. The chef always prepared varied and abundant menus. All in all, a good crew makes a huge difference.

- Safety equipment: check what kind of communication, navigation, first aid (from sea-sick tablets and ear drops to proper emergency gear), life rafts and fire systems the yacht has. The adventure should be underwater not on the surface.
- Entertainment: yep, on top of that book you brought along to read on the sundeck, it is always nice to have some TV/DVD facilities, stereo and books available. We had two lounge areas with TVs and DVDs and some books that predictably included diving and marine life titles. Great!
- Finally our yacht offered two bar areas where you could help yourself to soft drinks, coffee, tea, biscuits, crisps, etc. Grape and yeast-based beverages were also available for a charge. I thought this was most convenient. We got into the routine of emerging from the water, changing into dry clothes (the bathrobe did the trick many times), grabbing a coke or a cuppa and chat until a crew member rang the bell to call us for a meal or the next briefing session.

OUR ITINERARY DAY 1

Dive 1 Abu Dabab
Dive 2 Gota Sha'ab Sharm

DAY 2 ST JOHNS

Dive 1 Habili Ali
Dive 2 Habili Gafar
Dive 3 Big Gota
Dive 4 Big Gota (night dive)

DAY 3 ST JOHNS

Dive 1 Small Gotta
Dive 2 Caves
Dive 3 Dolphin Reef/Satay South (Fury Shoal)

DAY 4 FURY SHOAL

Dive 1 Shaab Maksur (aka Old Mansur)
Dive 2 Small Abu Galawa
Dive 3 Shelingat (Wadi Gamal)

DAY 5

Dive 1 Elphinstone
Dive 2 Elphinstone
Dive 3 Marsa Abu Dabab
Dive 4 Marsa Shouna (night dive)

DAY 6

Dive 1 Marsa Shouna (N)
Dive 2 Marsa Shouna (S)

GLOSSARY

Marsa: means wide (as in 'open') bay. It is usually small with a shallow sandy bottom, ideal for anchoring boats.

Sharm: 'Sharm' means a crack or cut in Arabic and is a V-shaped opening in the reef table with the widest point pointing out to sea. It is an 'enclosed' bay.

Ras: Cape

Shaab: A reef that breaks the surface.

Habili: A submerged reef that almost reaches the surface (0.5-1m underwater).

Gota: The same as the Habili but the top of the reef will be 5-7m below the surface.

Erg: An erg is a pinnacle of coral.

Aruk: (plural Erg) Group of pinnacles.

Abu Galawa: 'Galawa' means pools and 'Abu' father; so any large reef with pools inside is referred to as 'father of pools' or Abu Galawa.



EGYPT AND JORDAN

FEATURE **VANESSA NANTY** PHOTOGRAPHY **TEMPO HOLIDAYS**

Being located in the UAE, practically at the 'centre of the world', we are spoilt for choice for amazing and better still, accessible travel experiences. And we all know that we should be taking full advantage of this opportunity to see as much as we can. I dread the day when traveling from home will mean 7hr+ journeys again!

As divers, it's even better for us. A mere five-hour-flight away sit the practically unexplored dive sites of the Indian Ocean. But even closer to home are some of the world's most talked-about diving destinations along the Red Sea.

In this issue, we're going to look at two must-dive destinations in the Middle East – Egypt and Jordan. The diving in these destinations is considered amongst the world's best and they are also perfect for those of us who have family members who are non-divers. After all, we need to make sure that when we come out of the water, we're not faced with a grumpy and bored lot!

EGYPT

Land of the pyramids and pharaohs; a country rich in heritage; home to one of the region's most bustling cities, Egypt is just one of those destinations we all need to tick off on our must-do travel list.

About 481km south of Cairo is the world-famous summer and winter resort destination, Sharm El Sheikh. In the Sinai Peninsula, Sharm El Sheikh is the most accessible and developed tourist resort community, with international hotel complexes offering state-of-the-art amenities; casinos, nightclubs, golf courses, health and beauty spas and much more. Boredom is an unknown term in Sharm El Sheikh, where visitors can enjoy a multitude of land and sea activities, from outstanding diving and snorkeling, windsurfing to horse and camel riding.

The most spectacular diving sites are within the Ras Mohamed National Park. This park was declared a protected zone in 1983 and has since become an important feature in the economic development of South Sinai. Ras Mohamed National Park authorities describe the coral reef ecosystems found in the National Park as "recognized internationally as among the world's best, due its diversity of flora and fauna, clear, warm waters devoid of pollutants, their proximity to shorelines and their spectacular vertical profile. The reef exists as an explosion of colour and life in stark contrast to the seemingly barren desert adjacent to it." Check out the park's Eel Garden, named for its population of shy garden eels which apparently can stretch up to 20metres.

This site can be approached by boat but also by land and because currents here are usually weak, it's an excellent one for beginners.

But there are also outstanding dives within the Straits of Tiran; a narrow sea passage between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba with the island of Tiran lying to its east. The strait is made up of a number of reefs, all named after English geographers who made the first nautical charts of the region. The Thomas Reef's east wall plunges dramatically to great depths with a mass of brightly colored soft corals. The west wall is darker with overhangs and caves but is a great drift dive with sightings of trevally and tuna in the blue and schooling reef fish close to the reef.

I could keep describing the amazing sites in this destination, but that might spoil the surprise for first timers. Really, it's something that just needs to be done!

Tempo Holidays recommends The Four Seasons Hotel in Naama Bay, prices starting at USD121 per person per night, or the Crowne Plaza Hotel starting at USD55.00 per person per night. Dives will have to be booked directly with the dive centers; however, pricing is available from Sinai Blues for those interested.



Crowne Plaza, Egypt



Steve Reynolds, Egypt



JORDAN

Not too far from Sharm El Sheikh, lies tantalizing Jordan and for us divers, our stop will be in the 13th century Red Sea resort of Aqaba. This year-round resort was once the main port for shipments from the Red Sea to the Far East. Today it is considered Jordan's aquatic playground, perfect for snorkeling, diving, windsurfing, and para-sailing and much more, with an average water temperature of 23 degrees Celsius.

The Gulf of Aqaba offers divers the chance to experience a unique marine ecosystem which includes 110 species of soft corals and 120 species of hard corals, brightly colored fish, rare marine life forms and encounters with manta rays, turtles and dolphins. All this, combined with the Gulf's depth and its isolation of sea currents, minimizing turbulence and improving visibility, makes it one of the most rewarding scuba diving and snorkelling spots in the world.

For those in the family who don't dive, now is the time to learn! If you still don't feel ready, then Aqaba's rich history will keep you very busy. The history dates back to the 4th millennium BC and of special interest among the ancient and medieval archaeological sites are the early Islamic city-Ayla; the Aqaba Fort, built by the Mamluk Sultan Qansweh El-Ghuri at the beginning of the 16th century; the world's oldest church and a very fine museum at the historical residence of Sharif Hussein bin Ali, great grandfather of King Abdullah II, containing a collection of artifacts collected in the region. If these aren't of interest to you, then there are plenty of restaurants, craft shops, and excursions to places such as the breathtaking Wadi Rum to keep your days filled up.

Tempo Holidays recommends The Movenpick Resort with prices starting at USD111 per person per night. Dives will have to be booked directly with the dive centers; however, pricing is available from the Royal Diving Club for those interested.



We're so close to these amazingly unique destinations, it would be a crime to return home to say I've never dived either of them. I suggest we all get planning; summer's just around the corner!

For more information or to book, contact Dean on d.hopkins@tempoholidays.com or call him on 04 341 5730.

EDA MEMBERS IN THE PHILIPPINES UNDER THE SURFACE: A VISIT BACK HOME

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **MARC ANTHONY & MYLYN VILORIA**



Mention Philippines, and images of vast tracks of tropical forests, mountains, caves, beaches and marine wilderness come to mind. We have been away from home for over 2 years prior to this trip and have not dived here for almost ten years. This time, we had the chance to go around and experience the rich culture and of course, diving in our country.

The Philippines is the second largest archipelago in the world. It consists of 7,107 tropical island and islets set in deep blue waters that contain some of the richest marine life systems on earth. The islands' strategic position, separating the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean, with the Celebes Sea to the south, is reflected in its history as a regional trading center, battleground and cultural meeting point. Off the eastern shores lies the Philippines Trench, one of the world's deepest points reaching up to 10,500m below sea level. The irregular, rugged coastline extends 35,000km with numerous natural harbors, white sand beaches and 34,000 sq. km of coral reefs.

The country's most outstanding feature is its people, a mixture of Malay, Chinese, Spanish and American. Filipinos have been described as having emerged from 350 years of covenant and 50 years in Hollywood – a fascinating blend of east and west with spontaneous love of pleasure. They comprise 111 cultural and linguistic groups.

5-STAR DIVE SITES IN SOUTHWESTERN, CEBU

The island of Cebu is known as the "Queen City of the South" and is considered the oldest and second busiest metropolis in the Philippines. Cebu really does provide almost everything - from a classic tropical paradise,

sun-scorched white sand, a turquoise sea to a variety of water and inland sports and activities. Almost all the resorts offer diving with great commitment to marine conservation.

Often overlooked in favor of northern dive sites, Cebu dive sites remain relatively unpopular, serviced by only 18 dive centers. We had the privilege of diving with the only local dive operator, "Nelson Diving School". Our first dive was Pescador Island – highly recommended as it is considered a 5-star wall dive site. The island is, in fact, a large pinnacle rising out of the open water with plenty of healthy coral ledge, vertical wall with overhangs and crevices with gorgonian sea fans, black coral and large barrel/tube sponges in between. The famous Pescador "Cathedral" is an open top funnel where shafts of sunlight enter at around noon. The fish life includes just about everything you would expect to find in the area. Whale sharks, schools of hammerhead sharks and manta rays have been seen here between January to March. Our second dive, Kasai Wall – is a large area with series of coral arches and is one of the best sites for macro enthusiasts. The site, which has a sloping ledge before a vertical drop, is also considered as a house reef for nearby dive operators and is the place where discover scuba diving and entry-level training are being conducted.

A WEEKEND DIVE TRIP TO ANILAO, BATANGAS

Batangas is a province of the Philippines located on the southwestern part of Luzon island that is closely bounding Metro Manila, the Philippines' capital. It is one of the most popular tourist destinations near Metro Manila. Most towns in Batangas are famous for their crafts such as hand embroideries and knives, as well as sausages. One popular town is Taal which is one of the two most culturally preserved sites of the Spanish colonial era in the Philippines. The province has many beaches and is famous for its excellent diving spots. Some of the more notable ones are Anilao, Matabungkay, Punta Fuego and Laiya.

The close proximity of Anilao, Batangas to Manila has made it a popular center for day or weekend trips for divers and other water sport enthusiasts. Most of the diving consists of coral slopes or steps of small drop-offs and coral gardens among sandy patches. Some

marine sanctuaries have been set up in the area and most of the sites have fixed mooring buoys. Here, we dived with Aquaventure Reef Club.

Our first dive was in The Cathedral – this is more popular than the one in Cebu as this is considered a Marine Park Sanctuary. The site itself resembles a roofless cavern consisting of two large sea mounts between which is a stone cross blessed by the late Pope John Paul II and planted by the former President of the Philippines in 1983. When the current is slightly running, there are colorful sponges, feather stars and soft corals everywhere. The fish that pester you to be fed includes almost everything imaginable. Our second dive was in The Koala – a good dive site for novices and underwater photographers. With so many micro- creatures, small fish and anemones in and around soft corals, stony corals and coral boulders, you may overlook your dive time as you swim around. The gradual slope of the site is also good for snorkeling while doing your surface interval from your previous dive.

SPOILT FOR CHOICE

Perhaps the best thing about our trip to Philippines is its diversity. From food to culture, beaches to shopping malls, swimming to diving, there is always something for everyone. As for diving, this is one of the main drawcards in Philippines – it has a little bit of everything but you still never know what you're going to see.



DIVERS DOWN

EASTER TRIP 1st - 11th APRIL 2007

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **PAUL A. SANT**

LOCATION:

Puerto Galera, Mindoro Philippines

I flew in from Dubai on the 1st of April with six guests (Peter Brett, Jens El Accad, Kevin Gleeson, Lauren Gleeson, Louise Gleeson, and Jaun Paul Jacobs) while four others (Steve Lamb, Becky Greenhalgh (now Lamb), Beverly Humphreys and Alison Weston) were already at the resort of Atlantis so they could finalize the wedding arrangements. The flight and transfer went smoothly and I broke a new record with the onboard flight movies.

We arrived at the harbour ready for a one-hour boat ride to the island and a soft comfortable bed.

The trip was all about diving and the resort of Atlantis was set up just for this. It was nice to be in a hotel that understood divers' needs, from having its own dedicated photo/video room to a fantastic bar and restaurant. For most of us, diving started on April 3; however, the odd die-hard started on April 2. Originally we were on a 14-dives package, but after the first dive, most opted for unlimited diving as they loved the marine environment they saw.

The dive sites were close to the resort and we reached them on small fast boats that take no more than six divers. In general, the sites are wall dives with a lot of hard and soft corals. In front of the resort are a few wrecks and plenty of options for muck diving with little critters

Nitrox courses were offered in the resort and of the six new Nitrox divers, all appreciated the extra bottom time it allowed. We completed two advanced courses and four semi closed rebreather courses (SCR). The latter was a great course and for Jens and Peter, it also meant lying in a cave with White Tip Reef Sharks. (Divers Down will have SCR in the shop soon, so keep checking for the course and rental prices.)

We had a day trip on another island and the whole day was fantastic, the diving was breathtaking and the beach was wonderful. We also had a trip to the waterfall and played human rafting, including finding the odd boulder!

The highlight of the trip was Steve and Becky's wedding on a sandy beach with a sunset backdrop. This was a beautiful day and the evening was topped off with a buffet (including a whole spit roasted pig) and a French wedding cake. Congratulations to them both from all of us at Divers Down.

The trip ended too soon and the journey home began with the payments. Thanks to Atlantis, this proved to be painless and everyone was surprised at the great value the whole experience had been.

We left with fond memories and a desire to return ASAP. Next time, Divers Down will have Technical diving on offer, including intro to Tech and Advanced Nitrox. Get in touch to find out more, or keep an eye on the newsletters. Once again, a big thanks to Mat, and the Atlantis team, for a professional service and a fantastic diving holiday.



PAUL A. SANT

Master Instructor 620277

General Manager

DIVERS DOWN

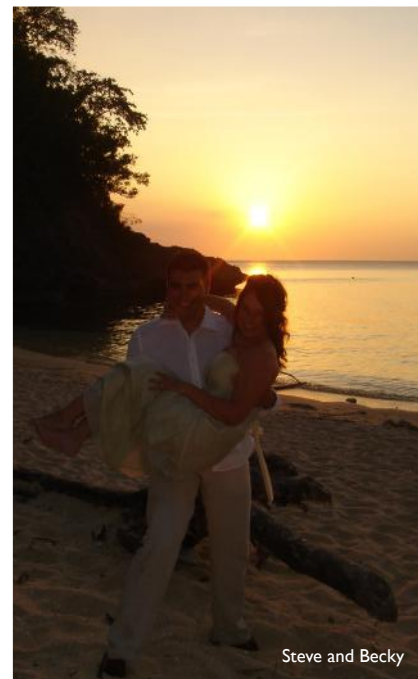
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Steve and Becky



FREEDIVING FOR SPONGES

FEATURE SARA-LISE HAITH



“IN MY OPINION, IT IS AN ITEM TO DIVE FOR”

Sponges are the most inanimate of animals in the sea. They lack nervous and muscular cells, and are not composed of tissue or organs, but of individual cells. For hundreds of years, sponges have been taken from the sea by many different nations and used as part of a daily cleansing routine. In Japan and the Philippines, sponges are a symbol of longevity.

The magnificent Venus' flower basket sponge is considered a symbol of marital fidelity and it is the custom in some Asian cultures to give a bride and bridegroom a section of this sponge to wish them a long and happy marriage.

It is many people's opinion that the best sponges are harvested from the southeast Mediterranean Sea. When sponges first became objects that people owned is yet not known. But, in ancient writing (Plato, Homer) the sponge was mentioned as being commonly used for bathing. At about the same time, sponge diving developed in Kalymnos – an island in the southeast of Greece.

The Greeks believe that the small island in the Aegean Sea was the centre of the sponge-diving industry. Although sponge diving has been a profitable business for many Greek islands over the last centuries, Kalymnos appears to be the central location for sponge diving. The islands' water sources have proved to be very suitable for the growth of sponges, because of the warm temperatures.

Currently, sponge diving is the oldest profession of the island. In the beginning of sponge diving, it was called “skin diving”. The traditional diving method used on the island is called skandalopetra, named after the marble or granite stone used by divers to get them quickly to the bottom of the sea.

Sponge divers would set out in a small boat, carrying a cylinder-shaped object with a glass bottom from which the ocean floor could be viewed for sponges. When one was spotted, the diver would jump overboard, often naked, carrying the skandalopetra. Weighing between eight and 14 kilogrammes, the stone has rounded edges and a hydrodynamic shape. A long rope is tied through a hole at one of its edges, and unrolled during diving and rolled up during the ascent of the sponge diver. Through this hole a small rope was tied to the shackle bone of the sponge diver so that he could free his hands without missing the skandalopetra and his connection with the boat.

Until the decade of 1960, a lot of sponge divers were using this ancient skandalopetra diving method. The diver would cut the sponge loose from the ocean floor and place a net around it to lift the sponge up to the boat. The diver could usually dive to about 30 meters and remain underwater for three to five minutes. This method of diving can be compared to today's Freediving Variable Weight Discipline, in which the diver descends with a weight or sled, and surfaces by swimming or pulling themselves up a line, having released the weight at depth.

In the early 19th century, sponge diving earned many people a lot of money, and in the mid 1800's, Kalymnos had several merchants that were very wealthy. Then, in 1865, the sponge business boomed further with the invention of the standard diving suit, called the skafandro. This meant that divers could stay down much longer and go down to deeper depths. The divers soon discovered that the larger, better quality sponges could be found at about 70 meters of depth.

Kalymnos sponge ships began sailing the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. They sailed as far as Libya, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, and they stayed at sea for at least six months.

Today, the people of Kalymnos still operate family-owned sponge factories and still uphold the skandalopetra method of diving by staging local competitions called The Skandalopetra Freediving Games to promote their diving heritage and to revive the skandalopetra dive as a freediving athletic contest.

This diving tradition can be compared to the very interesting pearl diving history of the UAE, where similar techniques were used to retrieve oysters from the waters of the Arabian Gulf. Recent news of pearl auctioning in the UAE of the famous Arco Valley pearl, a 575 carat pearl from 12th century Mongolia shows it still to be a lucrative trade in luxury items, where it is estimated to raise up to US\$8 million.

FREEDIVE TRAVEL!

FEATURE **SARA-LISE HAITH**

For 14 days in August 2007, divasindubai.com in association with World Class Freediving Instructor, and the author of 'One Breath', Emma Farrell will be leading her third annual freediving summer school on the sponge diver's island of Kalmynos in Greece. Combining stunning diving with incredible trips, film shows, the chance to try the ancient freediving technique of 'Skandalopetra', and the best of Greek hospitality, whether you come for one or two weeks, this will be the holiday of a lifetime.

For beginner, intermediate and advanced freedivers, the Freediving Summer School in Kalmynos, Greece is an unbelievable introduction to the sport and continued development for those with some freediving or spearfishing experience.

Led by Farrell, and her team of AIDA instructors, the courses cover pool work, classroom theory, open water diving, and recreational freediving at wrecks and volcano craters. Not only is there incredible diving and tuition on offer, but we will also take you on trips to explore the stunning geography and history of the 'sponge diver's island', and there will be the chance for you to not only dive for treasure, but try the ancient freediving method of 'Skandalopetra'!

THE COURSES

There are a number of options available to you: AIDA * / ** / *** / **** courses run Sun-Wed and Wed- Sat and AIDA Instructor courses run Sun- Sat between 19th August and 1st September 2007. Please see Timetable for trips and activities!

Beginners Course (AIDA */)** with Additional Training Days and Trips (7 days, including flights and accommodation for 9 nights, excursions and course.) **AED 8600**

Beginners and Intermediate Course (AIDA */ + ***)** (7 days, including flights, accommodation for and courses) **AED 8600** (No excursions included, but you can extend your stay and do activities and diving for another week at extra cost.)

Advanced Course (AIDA **)** with Additional Training Days and Trips (7 days, including flights and accommodation for 9 nights, excursions and course.) **AED 8600**

Intermediate and Advanced Course (AIDA * + ****)** (7 days, including flights, accommodation for 9 nights and courses.) **AED 9700**

(No excursions included, but you can extend your stay and do activities and diving for another week at extra cost.)

AIDA Instructor Course (7 days) AED 14600

(including flights and accommodation for 9 nights, and course. No excursions included, but you can extend your stay and do activities and diving for another week at extra cost.)

Advanced and Instructor Course (AIDA ** + Instructor)** with Additional Training Days and excursions (14 days including flights, accommodation for 9 nights, excursions and courses.) **AED 16250**

Week of training and excursions but no certification courses (only for certified AIDA * freedivers and higher) AED 8250** (includes flights, accommodation for 9 nights, diving and excursions.)

At the end of the course students will obtain an AIDA (International Association for the Development of Apnea) qualification depending on performance during the course.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

The package on offer is probably the most comprehensive available. Included in your course fee is:

- Expert tuition from World Class Instructor Trainer Emma Farrell, Dubai Ladies' Freediving Champion Sara-Lise Haith, and their team of AIDA instructors

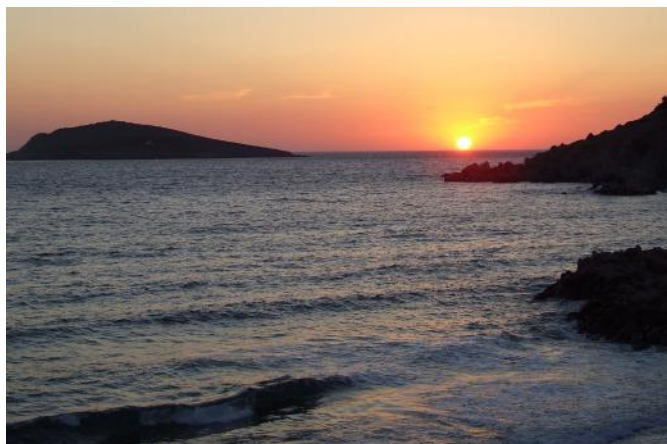
- Pool and Open Water Training in Kalmynos, Greece
- Trips, events and parties during your course (where applicable)
- FreeDiving Manual
- Pool Training & Dry Practice Course Materials
- AIDA Certification as *, **, ***, **** FreeDiver/Instructor (depending on performance)
- Certificate showing you have completed the course
- Flights
- Accommodation
- Prices subject to fluctuate due to flight costs

FLIGHTS AND ACCOMMODATION

Flights and accommodation are included in the package. The hotel of our choice for accommodation and training, is the Kantouni Beach Hotel. It is a handsome complex of apartments, garden, sun terrace and swimming pool with a bar, set in a peaceful location right on an unspoilt sandy beach, nestling below spectacular mountain scenery. A feeling of privacy and seclusion is combined with a warm, friendly atmosphere and a sense of space, with open views out to sea and the nearby islet of St. Kiriaki. I urge you to book ASAP as this is peak holiday season and flights will book up fast!

What are the performance requirements and prerequisites?

There are no minimum requirements for people to attend this course aside from being at least 16 years of age and being able to swim. You also will need to complete a medical form.



For more information and to take advantage of this fabulous opportunity to learn FreeDiving and take part in the Freediving Summer School in Kalymnos please contact Sara-Lise Haith on sara@divasindubai.com



KALYMNOS FREEDIVING TIMETABLE 2007

DATE	Morning events	Afternoon Events	Late Afternoon/ Evening Events
Sunday 19 th August			Freediving Classroom theory
Monday 20 th August	Breathing and Yoga, followed by Static and Dynamic Apnea		Evening meal on island of Telendos
Tuesday 21 st August	Open water and recreational freediving at wrecks and volcano crater	Visit to Kefala Caves, famous for crystals, stalactites and stalagmites	
Wednesday 22 nd August	Open water and recreational freediving at wrecks and volcano crater, meet at Port	Rock Diving Competition	Freediving Classroom theory
Thursday 23 rd August	Day trip to island of Pserimos to dive wreck, laze on white sand beach and visit secluded bays	Day trip to island of Pserimos to dive wreck, laze on white sand beach and visit secluded bays	Local music and dancing festival at Arginonda
Friday 24 th August	Open water and recreational freediving at wrecks and volcano crater	Dynamic Apnea, Kalymnos Olympic Pool	Talk by American filmmakers, slide show of Aegean sponge divers 100 years ago, and documentary about modern day sponge diving at Tarpon Springs
Saturday 25 th August	Open water and recreational freediving at wrecks and volcano crater	Static apnea	Bazaar of local produce and products, followed by Greek music and dancing, free wine and souvlaki
Sunday 26 th August		Barbarossa's Underwater Treasure Hunt for Children	Freediving Classroom Theory
Monday 27 th August	Helmet Suit diving demonstration, Skandalopetra demonstration and masterclass, depth training and Fuskis eating	Helmet Suit diving demonstration, Skandalopetra demonstration and masterclass, depth training and Fuskis eating	Dinner at Emborios and Ouzo Party

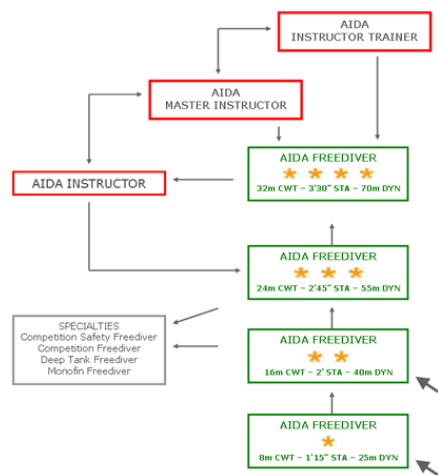
DIVING DESTINATIONS

I often have queries from people about the courses and so have compiled a list of Frequently Asked Questions. If you have a query that is not covered below, please do not hesitate to email Sara-Lise on sara@divasindubai.com.

I've never freedived before. Is the */** course suitable for me?

Yes! The course is designed to take people with little to no experience of any form of diving. The only thing we ask is that you know how to swim! On our previous courses we have had students who have done scuba diving, some who have done a little snorkelling and many who have never ventured any deeper than their local swimming pool.

What freediving courses are available by the AIDA training agency?



Do I have to be fit? Are there any physical prerequisites?

No! You do not have to be super fit to freedive. The most important thing is to be relaxed! If you book on a course then we send you an information pack which contains, amongst other things, some advice on breath holding practice that you can do before the course but this is entirely optional. Remember that Annabel Briseno started freediving in her fifties and is now a world champion as well as a grandmother!

What do I need to bring to Greece?

You will need to bring your own freediving equipment. A list of what you will need and the best places to get them will be supplied to you by the course organizer when you book.

Do I receive confirmation of my booking or some kind of ticket?

You will receive an email confirmation with all the details.

What does the price include?

The price includes the following:

- Expert tuition from World Class Instructor Trainer Emma Farrell, Dubai Ladies' Freediving champion Sara-Lise Haith and a team of AIDA instructors

- Pool and Open Water Training in Kalymnos, Greece

- Trips, events and parties during your course

- A Manual of Freediving

- Pool Training and Dry Practice Course Materials

- AIDA Certification as *, **, ***, **** FreeDiver/Instructor (depending on performance)

- Certificate showing you have completed the course

- Return flights Dubai – Athens – Kalymnos

- Hotel nights according to package of choice

My child is really keen on learning to freedive. Can they come on a course?

At present, only people over the age of 16 may gain an AIDA qualification, however we do teach children under very restricted circumstances. If you are interested in finding out more, please email Sara-Lise Haith at sara@divasindubai.com

I only want to come for one week. Is that possible?

Absolutely! You can come for as little or as long as you like.

My partner / family are coming too. Is there anything to keep them amused?

Yes! The summer school takes place during the 2007 international diving festival on Kalymnos and there are many trips arranged throughout the 2 weeks for scuba divers and non divers alike. In addition, Kalymnos has beautiful beaches, churches, museums, walking, and is internationally renowned for its climbing. The children's underwater treasure hunt and the rock diving competition are also great events for kids.

What is the student/ instructor ratio and how many people are on each course?

In pool sessions, the maximum amount of students per instructor is 8. In open water, this number drops to 4.

What qualifications do the instructors have?

All instructors are AIDA qualified instructors, who are trained in first aid and cpr and have many years of experience in teaching and diving. Emma Farrell is one of the world's leading freediving instructors and is one of only a handful of instructor trainers in the world. We pride ourselves on the quality and experience of our teaching staff and know that we are offering the very best tuition available.

Where exactly is Kalymnos?

Kalymnos is a short boat ride north of Kos in Greece.

How do I get around Kalymnos?

Kalymnos is a small island and we would recommend either hiring a bike, sharing car hire costs with the other students, or using taxis. All options are reasonable. There is an island bus service in operation and the municipal authority also hope to have a tourist bus service operational by the beginning of summer.

What is the food like?

The food is wonderful and you can also self cater if you like. The studios and apartments at the accommodation we have booked have a fridge and basic cooking facilities. There are a wide range of restaurants within short walking distance of all accommodation and you can feast on island specialities such as 'Mermizelli' Salad, Octopus balls, Galacta Burrico and Saganaki cheese... We will also be going on a Fuskis trip.

When is the last day I can book on a course?

A week prior to 19th August, however it may be difficult for divasindubai.com to secure your flight by then, and you will have to pay in full.

When do I need to pay the balance?

At least 3 weeks before the start of your course.

Can I get my deposit back?

No.

I've done loads of freediving already. Can I come on the trips and training days but not take a course?

Yes! However you must be a minimum of an AIDA *** Freediver.

I'm scared of water/ depth/ - how confident do you have to be to take the course?

Our Course Organiser, Emma Farrell suffers from a fear of water and depth yet started freediving and soon overcame her fears! It obviously helps if you feel at ease already, however our instructors are adept at calming any fears you might have and making sure that students feel safe and secure and learn at their own pace.

Why should I do this course? What will I get out of it?

Every student has different reasons for doing a course with us but we like to pride ourselves on offering a completely unique week professionally run. Every person will come away with different things, but the summer freediving school and what we offer on Kalymnos is unique in all the world!

If you'd like to practise freediving, or take a course before you travel to Greece, Sara-Lise offers courses in Dubai and also from Diver's Down Dive Centre in Khor Fakkan.

CAN YOU BE A RESPONSIBLE PET OWNER?

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY DR. KATRIN JAHN

An Abu Dhabi-based veterinarian is warning pet owners to think twice before buying a terrapin turtle as a pet.

Katrin Jahn from the British Veterinary Centre says that due to lack of commitment and understanding from owners, only one of every 100 terrapins imported in the capital survives.

Here is Katrin's story about why divers should think twice before adopting these cute creatures, or any other exotic animals, as pets.

KATRIN'S STORY

Since moving to Abu Dhabi, I have come across a variety of exotic species ranging from Hyacinth Macaws, cheetah cubs and boa constrictors to tiny baby aquatic turtles. Also known as terrapins, these turtles are no bigger than a one dirham piece.

Although it is thrilling to be in contact with and treat such beautiful animals, this is often mixed with an element of sadness at the medical conditions these creatures develop simply due to their owners' lack of information and experience regarding the animals' proper housing, feeding and other needs.

A large number of the turtles we see are hatchlings or juveniles, which you can tell by the length of the shell. They tend to come to us in waves depending on the arrival of the latest imported batch. It is estimated that of these hatchlings, only 1 in 100 survives.

The aquatic turtles that are most commonly brought to us are fresh water turtles, or terrapins, which are native to the United States.

When they first arrive in the UAE's pet shops, they are tiny, cute and very active making them extremely entertaining for children and adults alike, especially considering the popularity of the Ninja Turtles cartoon characters.

What most people don't know, however, is that turtles grow quickly to quite a large size and can live for 30 to 50 years. The bigger they get, the more costly and complicated the aquariums and set-ups that they need. All of a sudden, this cute ornamental pet has turned into a big time-consuming and expensive problem.

This is why, in many cases, these creatures are abandoned. Recently, we had one terrapin brought to us by a person who found him in one of the city's water fountains!

Hatchlings and juvenile terrapins are primarily carnivorous and will eat live fish

and earthworms as well as commercial turtle pellets every day. As they grow older, they will eat more plant matter and feed only two to three times per week.

These little turtles often develop a host of medical problems.

One of the most common issues is a lack of vitamin A due to an incorrect diet and stress. This causes the turtle's eyes to swell up as they are not producing enough mucus. The animal stops eating because they can't see. Thus, a vicious cycle begins.

As the turtle becomes weaker it can develop infections of the respiratory tract such as pneumonia, which is almost impossible to treat in an animal weighing only six to eight grams.

Despite our best efforts, we end up losing many of these hatchlings, which is very sad and frustrating and is the reason why we need to address the bigger problem of the mass import of these turtles. We urge people not to support this trade unless they are serious and experienced exotic pet owners who are aware of everything involved in owning a pet turtle.

Furthermore, baby terrapins can pose a threat to the children that handle them as they can carry and pass salmonellosis to them. For this reason, a law was passed in the United States in 1975, which forbids the sale of pet turtles smaller than four inches.

"IN SUMMARY, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR ANYONE WHO IS CONSIDERING KEEPING TURTLES OR TERRAPINS AS PETS TO INFORM THEMSELVES EXTENSIVELY AND TO BE PREPARED FOR THE CARE AND ATTENTION THEY WILL NEED. GET READY TO BUY WATER FILTERS, UNDERWATER HEATERS, SPECIAL FOOD, A LIGHT TO BASK UNDER AND AND..."

However, if you're well informed, committed, have lots of space and about 30 to 50 years – I'm sure they'll make very rewarding pets!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

EDA member Katrin Jahn has been living and working as a veterinarian at the British Veterinary Centre in Abu Dhabi since June 2006.

Originally from Germany, she spent the last five years working in Britain, both in general practice and as a university lecturer in anesthesia, her particular area of interest.

Katrin's diving career began in 2002 while she was on holiday in the Maldives.

"I just couldn't resist all those nice fish," says Katrin, who since then has dived in Thailand, Crete, Cuba and the Red Sea.

Last year, she completed the PAD1 Divemaster course at the Camel Dive Centre in Sharm El Sheikh. A recent EDA member, Katrin is enthusiastic about getting involved in community and research projects.

"I am very interested in helping to promote the dive industry in the UAE and would love to play a part in some of the scientific programs the EDA currently has running," she says. *"I have some experience in data collection and have written a few scientific papers in the last years."*



DR. KATRIN JAHN

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DUBAI WHALE SHARK TAGGING STUDY

FEATURE **STEVE KAISER**



Among the world's most intriguing and precious marine creatures, the whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) is truly unique. This cosmopolitan species of shark is the world's largest fish, attaining lengths of over 13 m (45 ft). Whale sharks are found in tropical and warm temperate waters in all the world's oceans, including the Arabian Gulf. It is a spectacular, polka-dotted animal, inspiring awe in boaters and swimmers who encounter it. Rather than being a dangerous predator, the whale shark feeds primarily on plankton and other small marine animals by straining them out of the water using either ram-feeding or suction-feeding, typically in surface waters.

Research and conservation projects on the whale shark are desperately needed now, as there is growing concern about the worldwide status of this species. The whale shark is currently listed in Appendix II of CITES and the IUCN Red List and enjoys protected status in a number of countries, including the U.S., Mexico and Australia, but there is evidence that in some places their numbers are dwindling. Fisheries targeting whale sharks as food still exist in some parts of the world, including the Philippines, Indonesia and India, but the tide is turning away from consumptive uses of whale sharks and towards more resource-friendly interactions with this species, including ecotourism. Although these sharks' large size and slow swimming behavior at the surface should make them relatively easy to observe, opportunities to study this species

are actually fairly rare and sporadic, due to their wide and unpredictable distribution. In recent years, however, a number of sites around the world have been discovered where whale sharks aggregate, typically for feeding purposes. These sites include Ningaloo Reef off Western Australia and the Seychelles Islands in the Indian Ocean, the Gulf of California in Mexico, and, in the Caribbean Sea off Honduras, Belize and now Mexico in the Yucatan. Research at each of these sites around the world has revealed some predictability in the sharks' presence and has led to conservation plans for these rare but gentle giants in the wild.

Over the last few years interactions with these animals in the UAE have become an annual occurrence with juvenile animals showing up in the early spring to middle summer. These individuals are highly visible when they wander into the Marinas and Ports but what do we really know about these animals? The goal of our project, therefore, is to reveal some of the mysteries about the biology and behavior of these whale sharks that are transiting thru Dubai waters. The results of which could have ramifications for whale sharks within the Gulf, and possible worldwide.

RESEARCH

Questions being addressed:

- When do the whale sharks appear and when do they leave?
- What size and sex are they?
- What are their behaviors at the site?

- What is the health and general condition of the sharks at the site?
- What is the water chemistry (temperature, salinity, oxygen, turbidity) when the whale sharks are there? What other physical-chemical aspects of the site can be described?
- Where have these animals been before they come to the site, and where do they go when they leave the site?
- How repeatable and predictable are the visits? Are the same individuals showing up in Dubai each year?
- What is the relationship between these animals and other aggregations seen in Kenya, Seychelles Islands, Australia and other areas?

2007 GOALS

- a. Documentation of sharks. Beginning in May and extending through September 2006, on-water surveys using several vessels will be conducted on a weekly basis to encounter whale sharks in the area and document sizes, sexes, behavior and general distribution. Behavioral observations will include swimming speed and direction, numbers of animals in groups, time on/near surface, and special behaviors including feeding or courtship behavior. GPS and photo documentation will be used in the on-water surveys. Natural (e.g. spot patterns) or acquired (e.g. scars, fin cuts) markings of sharks will be noted and documented for individual identification.

WHALE SHARK - GETTING MY OWN ONE!

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **PETER MAINKA, EDA ABU DHABI COMMITTEE MEMBER**

Packing all my dive gear and things and going to Khorfakkan is one of the "usual" exciting things I do on the weekends.

I have been diving in Khorfakkan for some time but I still regard Martini Rock as the most popular and interesting place to dive. This time, it was not going to be a particularly eventful dive as I had some students to teach. I was planning for some very conservative dives.

Upon reaching Khorfakkan from Abu Dhabi, we found out that we had the best conditions for open water diving with calm seas, no wind, no current and excellent visibility.

I took my excited students out for their first open water dive and we completed all the required skills without encountering any problems and enjoyed a tour near the rock seeing the usual plethora of marine life.

During the surface interval, the 7 Seas Divers' boat that we were on, moved over to Martini Rock. I suggested to my dive buddy that we have a look at this place. She was excited to make a short dive. She had missed the earlier one because she had been on boat duty.

Gearing up and doing our buddy checks, we descended slowly down Martini Rock, enjoying the colourful scenery. I discovered a giant marvellous cowry shell in the rocky crevice. I showed it to my dive buddy, Wilna. She acknowledged this interesting find and got ready to take a picture of it. Prepping the camera took some time as she needed to get a good shot without damaging any of the soft corals surrounding us.

As I was waiting for my buddy, I felt a sharp pinch on my bottom. I turned around and was not sure what I saw. Was it a big shoal of... what? No, this was a huge dark mass moving towards us. I have seen this before once in my life but never here, not at Martini Rock. It was a beautiful whale shark – right here, on this most popular dive site on this calm diving day. We were ecstatic!

The whale shark, *Rhincondon typus*, was slowly swimming towards us, passing by and turning off at Martini Rock. As luck would have it, my camera was set to "close up." Perhaps I can take a picture of its eye. It was not immediately ready to take a picture of something that big. Moving slowly along its side without touching the shark, I eventually shot the side and tail section just as proof. I feared nobody would believe us.

The whale shark stayed for a few minutes while we followed from a distance. It was a young one, about four to six metres long. Finally, we

made our ascent to make a safety stop, feeling elated by what we had just experienced. While we were hovering at five metres to finish this amazing dive, our gentle giant came cruising back, this time swimming around close to us. The encounter lasted for several minutes and luckily, I still had some exposures left in the camera. I got the chance to take pictures from the front, up, down, right and left side. Finally Wilna signalled to me that she was low on air and we had to leave our friend.

On the surface, we started shouting and signalling to the boat manager to get ready for a whale shark. Although there was not much hope for him to be fast enough (Wilna was diving with his equipment), he prepared himself and got into the water. I had some more air left and we got down into the shallow and there it was, still circling around the higher peaks of Martini Rock. Thanks to the good visibility, we could easily spot it from a distance so the other divers were able to see the Whale shark also.

Thanks to EDA and their newsletters, I was able to submit the pictures needed for whale shark identification to ECOCEAN at: www.whaleshark.org.

ECOCEAN and the Shepherd Project www.shepherdproject.org are organisations which are running a Whale Shark Photo-identification Library. They are using information about whale shark encounters to assist scientific research and global conservation initiatives of this endangered species.

Some days after this remarkable dive at Martini Rock, I got the film developed, had the colour slides digitized and submitted all my data to ECOCEAN. They make it very easy for you. They have an online data form where you can enter all the relevant data.

In my case, they registered the information under "Encounter: 248200663636". They informed me that this whale shark has never been registered before and they will let me know me if anyone else sees my whale shark again. You can even go one step further and adopt a whale shark; either the one you encountered or others. In doing so, you support these scientific organisations and actively assist in marine life conservation.

"ONE LAST THOUGHT – EVEN IF YOU DIVE AT A SITE OVER A HUNDRED TIMES, NEVER SET OUT WITH LOW EXPECTATIONS. YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN."



GENTLE GIANTS

THE ENCOUNTER YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WAITING FOR

FEATURE **RUTH STEPHENS, PADI COURSE DIRECTOR**



My very first experience with a whale shark was in Australia, on the Great Barrier Reef, 25 years ago. I was assisting marine biologists with their research on crown of thorns. The mother ship was anchored 100 miles offshore and a few of us were on a zodiac. Suddenly, one of the biologists shouted "Whale shark", grabbed his mask and jumped overboard. Everybody else followed including myself (whenever I heard the word "shark", you couldn't hold me back).

I saw this huge animal in the water and I followed it immediately. I wanted to touch it and I actually managed to do so. I even held onto it for a few seconds but then it disappeared. Everybody was very upset because I scared it away.

Well, this is not the way to approach whale sharks. If you want to encounter a whale shark you have to do it right... and we can show you how to do that.

Whale sharks, often called "Gentle Giants", are found throughout the world in tropical and warm-temperate seas. They are actually true sharks and are the largest fish in the sea.

They can be as large as 12 meters. Their mouth is huge but they mainly live off plankton, that's why they have such large gill slits. The whale shark's gills have two functions: In addition to extracting oxygen from seawater, the gills filter the tiny planktonic organism on which the shark feeds. When a whale shark is feeding, it pumps large volumes of water over its gills and out its gill slits. The shark's gills have very fine gill rakers which function as sieves and strain plankton from the water.

A lot of divers want to experience encounters with these wonderful gentle giants and they travel around the whole world to do so. You don't need to go that far as here in the Seychelles, we find large congregations of whale sharks from August to the end of October. In just 4½ hours, you will arrive in Mahé, the main island of the Seychelles and after a 45 minute boat ride or 15 minutes by helicopter,

you will arrive on our paradise island, called Silhouette. Please refer to the December 2006 issue of the EDA newsletter where you can read our article about the island, Labriz and the Eco Center.

We, the Eco Center, organize Whale Shark Encounters for you. As the whale sharks are usually found around Mahé, we take you on a 45 minute boat ride and this is where the ADVENTURE starts. We will give you a detailed briefing on how to find them and how to interact with them in the water. The exciting part of the trip starts with "spotting" them. Everybody is involved in the search. We look for an area in the sea where it looks like the water is boiling. This is where you find large schools of fish called fusilier that feed on krill, which are large planktonic organisms. Krill is whalesharks' favourite food as well and that's why you will most likely spot them there.



If we are lucky to find them, we can lower ourselves quietly into the water without splashing and snorkel with them. Snorkelling is preferred because you are quicker in the water and you can manoeuvre around more easily. You will also be able to spend a long time in the water watching these beautiful creatures glide gracefully through the water.

The most amazing thing to see is when they surface and open their huge mouths to filter in the plankton. If you see them descend, don't waste your energy following them. Just wait and look around and they will most likely surface right in front of you. The first time I saw one come right at me, I was nervous and I didn't know where to move. I was basically face to face with that big mouth! But don't worry... they will not swallow you.



Another fascinating sight is seeing remoras attached to whale sharks. A remora is a fish that is shaped like a little shark. It has suction cups so that it can attach itself to larger fish such as whales, sharks and mantas and get a free ride. Remoras are also referred to as suckerfish because they eat the food leftovers and clean the animals of parasites.



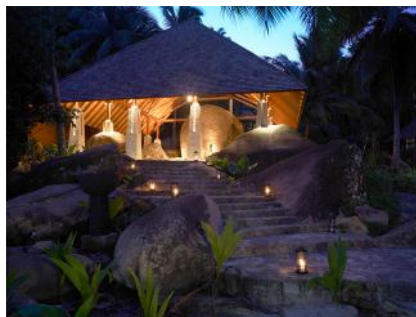
It is a wonderful and unforgettable experience to swim with these gentle giants but we also need to make sure that we interact in a responsible way to ensure that the whale sharks are not unduly disturbed and can be enjoyed repeatedly in the future.

Little is currently known about them and their activities, or their population size. Here in Seychelles, we have a whale shark monitoring programme run by the Marine Conservation Society Seychelles (MCSS), which helps to increase our education and awareness of these creatures.

During your holiday on Silhouette, you will be able to do a lot of other activities apart from whale shark watching. Our Eco Center offers daily dive excursions to different locations around Silhouette and North Island where fish life is abundant. Our dive sites are untouched and you will not see other dive boats around you.

You can also rent water sports equipment or for a change, go hiking or take jungle tours in our fantastic nature trails around the island. We also have a large retail shop where you can buy equipment (in case you forgot to bring your own) or souvenirs for your friends. ►

After a full day of activities with Eco Center, you might also want to try the Spa for relaxation. The "Aquum Spa" at Labriz is a very unique and beautiful sanctuary. It is built right into the granitic rocks and the rainforest, blending right into nature.



Enjoy staying in one of Labriz' luxurious and spacious villas. You can sample a variety of international and creole cuisine by dining in our different restaurants.

For more information, please visit
www.labriz-seychelles.com and
www.eco-center.biz

If you are able to visit us during Whale Shark Season, see our offer in this magazine.

We have a special offer for individual EDA Members: 10 % off all activities except boat rides, PADI course materials and certification cards.

eco
 Center
**Watersports
 & Nature Tours**
 Silhouette - Seychelles

DO'S AND DON'TS TO HELP THE PLANET

ENERGY SAVING AT HOME

- People all over the world are taking measures to reduce the greenhouse gases emitted as a result of the way they live.
- Using less energy not only helps the planet, but also saves money on household bills.
- Turning the heating thermostat down, and the air conditioning up, by 1.5°C (3°F) saves around 1 tonnes of CO₂ (carbon dioxide) a year.
- An energy-efficiency refrigerator could save nearly half a tonne of CO₂ a year, compared with an older model.
- Insulating windows, doors, and electrical outlets and adding more insulation to the attic and basement reduces energy consumption.
- Compact fluorescent, spiral light bulbs are 75% more efficient than standard light bulbs.
- Energy Savings on the Road.
- Walking, cycling, using a car pool or taking public transport, all produce fewer emissions than those emitted by a single person in a car.
- Choosing the most efficient car available, such as a hybrid gasoline-electric model, and keeping any car well maintained, will reduce emissions.
- Sharing a car and avoiding short journeys by car, saves energy.
- Keeping tires optimally inflated uses less fuel and cuts down emissions.
- Driving at 5mph below the speed limit over an 8-mile commute to work saves 350 kg of CO₂ per year.
- Reducing Garbage.
- On average a person throws away 10 times his or her body weight in rubbish per year. One kilogram sent to landfill produces 2kg of methane. The simplest way of reducing this burden is to buy and waste less unnecessary packaging.
- Recycling paper, glass, aluminum, steel and other materials to produce "new" materials, can make energy savings.
- Using both sides of the paper and recycling it can save 2.5kg of greenhouse gases for every kilogram of paper used.

BECOMING CARBON NEUTRAL

After reducing emissions as much as possible, people become carbon neutral by "offsetting" the rest. They purchase "carbon credits" to channel their money into projects leading to a reduction in emissions. With details of the activity or fuel use to be offset, the organization calculates how many carbon credits need to be bought. Cost of credits varies, but is around \$10/£7.50 per tonne of CO₂.

ADVOCATING CHANGE

Individuals can encourage larger communities to act on climate change.

For example:

- Workplaces and schools: encourage co-workers or fellow students to adopt strategies that reduce missions;
- Companies and governing bodies: lobby management to invest in energy conservation measures, or renewable energy;
- Pressure groups and local government representatives: advocate local action. See Cities for Climate Protection programme: www.iclei.org/co2/;
- Corporations: encourage evaluation of their contributions to the greenhouse effect and point them to the many success stories and available toolkits;
- Government: lobby ministers to take actions to reduce emissions and plan adaptation options.

Source: *The Atlas of Climate Change – Mapping the World's Greatest Challenge*

PLANNING TO CONQUER GREATER HEIGHTS: HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

FEATURE **DR. ROGER HAW**

PROFILE OF THE AUTHOR:

Dr. Roger Haw has more than 20 years of experience in the area of customer service. He is a founding member of Ansted University, a founder of Ansted Social Responsibility International Awards (ASRIA) and the Director of Director of SRW Social Responsibility World of RecordPedia book (the First kind of World Book of Records focused on Corporate Social Responsibility practice aspect.



**“IF YOU HAVEN'T
WRITTEN GOALS FOR
YOUR LIFE... NOW IS THE
TIME TO DO SO”**

(This is the second part of a three-part article on goal setting. The last part of the article will appear in the September 2007 issue.)

START WITH BABY STEPS

I always share about the need to first **VISUALIZE** your dream/goal in order to set yourself to **DO...** and accomplish results in all its glory and excitement

However, many confess that it takes a lot of discipline to **DO IT!** “ We know we should, but...” is always the response. And it is difficult if the task looks too big.

We just need to start with the Baby steps... one at a time. This lessens the fear of failure and creates small, but positive waves of energy towards achieving your ultimate goal.

PLANTING SEEDS OF WEALTH

Each one of us is creating our life anew every single day. In other words, our position today is the result of all the decisions we made in the past. You can only do what you are and what you are is determined by what you think about every single minute of every single day.

Think about this: If you continue to plant tomato seeds, can you expect a great oak tree to grow?

Most people plant seeds (thoughts) in their mind every day of lack, limitation, want and fear and then wonder why these trees grow to become their reality. Why? because the seed you planted was the central theme of your sentence.

Now, try this exercise, grab a pen and write down the top 20 things that you're going to achieve. And ask yourself whether the seeds you're planting are truly going to create the reality you're after. Then start creating a rich mind... Dare to Dream!

Remember this: you're creating a new self, becoming someone different. So change your way of doing things. Second, feed your dreams in your subconscious. Lastly, watch everything materialise in front of you. Your new reality will unfold right before your eyes.

Start planting the seeds of wealth now...

MAKE EFFORT

The most powerful and cost effective, productive way you can take your business to greater heights is to identify and continually communicate and market your current and past customers.

You may have invested hundreds or thousands of \$\$\$ running a huge newspaper advert hoping to get in many more new customers, when in fact you only succeeded in getting dozens of readers to do business with you.

But, do you know you already have the most cost effective, direct access to the single best source of future business available to you? Try intelligently and systematically working and reworking your existing customer database over and over again...

Contact your customers by letter, phone or in person, acknowledging their importance.

Explain to them the 'reason why' they should be interested in the product or service you're **NOW** offering - lead them into **ACTION!**

Tell them what to buy, how to buy and why they should do it **NOW**. Keep refining in explaining all these points until you can confidently express them in a manner that people will respect, believe and respond to!

Adjust your offers to reflect your customer's current circumstances... and they'll reciprocate by doing more business with you either now or in the future.

The closer you align yourself with your customers, the more connected, respected, acknowledged and appreciated you make that customer feel, the more they'll buy. It's that simple!

The key here is to Add Value, if possible, with every form of contact.

DETERMINATION

Each one of us is creating our life anew every single day. In other words, our position today is the result of all the decisions we made in the past. You can only do what you are and what you are is determined by what you think about every single minute of every single day.

Be sure to focus your goals, act on them, review and update... on an almost continual basis. Stay alert, be watchful and be willing to adapt with an even more compelling need to succeed in these changing times.

Many of us have the knowledge, but not determined or disciplined enough to apply them. If you're such a person, then do something about it.

**“REMEMBER THIS:
ONLY WHEN YOU'RE
PASSIONATE AT WHAT
YOU'RE DOING AND
DETERMINED IN
DOING IT, DOES IT
TAKE YOU BEYOND...”**

E-MAIL DR. ROGER HAW AT:
bnhaw@tm.net.my

EMMA FARRELL

FEATURE **VESELA TODOROVA** PHOTOGRAPHY **SARA-LISE HAITH**



EDA volunteer Vesela Todorova meets freediving instructor Emma Farrell at a recent EDA Social where Farrel gave a presentation on Freediving to the association's members. Farrel came to Dubai in March-April to hold classes and present her book, *One Breath, A Reflection on Freediving*.

If you are to look back onto Emma Farrell's childhood and early teen years, you would hardly suspect that you have in front of you a future freediving enthusiast and instructor, ranked among the world's best.

"I was never particularly good at sport back at school," said the 33-year-old Brit, remembering how she was rarely among the first to be picked for sports teams and games.

To top it all, Farrell, who now competes in freediving disciplines and has designed the world's first freediving logbook, did not feel comfortable in water.

"I was scared of the ocean... It was such a personal challenge for me," she said.

However, all these reservations were put aside after she watched the film *The Big Blue*. The French director Luc Besson's drama about

freedivers shows a unique relationship between humans and the sea.

"I started dreaming about it (freediving) every night," she said. *"It seemed to be something so peaceful and beautiful."*

This was enough to persuade Farrell to put her fears aside.

"Freediving was just a dream until 2001 when I discovered it was possible to learn in the UK," says Farrell on her website, www.emma-freediver.co.uk. She started training at The Submarine Escape Training Tank (SETT) in Portsmouth, which is normally used to train submarine personnel, teaching them how to escape from the vessels in times of emergency.

In the beginning, she had difficulties equalising and people were telling her she will never be able to freedive. But eventually it all came together and Farrell became an instructor in 2003. She chaired the British Freediving Association (BFA) between 2004 and 2006 and designed the association's logbook. Currently the document is given for free to all BFA members and contains vital information and safety rules.

Farrell said that besides providing relaxation and enjoyment, freediving imposes a healthier way of life.

"It forces you to breathe correctly, to relax and to become very intimate with your own body and with water," she said, adding that the breathing techniques can be used on land to combat stress and anxiety.

It also encourages a healthier diet with many keen freedivers avoiding red meat, dairy, wheat and any other products that are mucus-forming.

"For me, freediving is the most incredible thing. It brings peace and stillness to my frenetic life and makes me incredibly happy," says Farrell on her website. *"My desire is that, through education,*

people's perceptions of freediving can change from seeing it as an 'extreme' sport to viewing it as a peaceful and beautiful way to connect with ourselves and the world around us."

Farrell, who is also a Primary Care (CPR) and Secondary Care (First Aid) instructor, is a judge for AIDA, the international federation for breath-hold diving. Her freediving skills got her a spot on *The Indestructibles* – A BBC show which seeks to discover and explain the great feats that the human body is capable of by featuring people who seem to be able to defy the laws of nature.

Considering how much she has achieved in freediving, it is hard to imagine that Farrell has a career outside of it too. A graduate in Social and Visual Anthropology at Manchester University, she writes and directs films. She is also a trained reflexologist.

HISTORY OF FREEDIVING

People have been freediving for more than 7,000 years, archaeologists believe. The proof is mummified human remains found in Chile. Upon examining the remains, scientists found that the person was suffering from surfer's ear – abnormal bone growth in the ear canal, caused by irritation from the exposure to wind and cold water. The condition is not limited to surfing only and also can affect sailors and divers.

Unlike nowadays, when freediving is mostly about finding your own limits or enjoying the ocean, the first freedivers were motivated by a more trivial reason – food.

The year 1949 is considered the beginning of modern freediving.

"This is the time when freediving stopped being about food or sponges and became about the quest of the human spirit, how deep you can go on one breath," said Emma Farrell.

AIDA, the International Association for the Development of Freediving, is a little over than ten years old. It was established in 1992. The first AIDA World Championship was held in Nice, France, four years later.

Today, AIDA recognises eight official disciplines for world records and keeps track of the records for both men and women.

DISCIPLINE	WORLD RECORD MEN	WORLD RECORD WOMEN
Constant weight without fins Constant weight without fins is the most difficult sportive depth discipline, because absolutely no propulsion aids are allowed to help the diver go down in the water. This category needs a perfect coordination between propulsing movements, equalization, technique and buoyancy.	82 m Name: William TRUBRIDGE Date: 2007.04.11	55 m Name: Natalia MOLCHANOVA Date: 2005.11.0
Constant weight The freediver descends and ascends using his fins/ monofin and/or with the use of his arms without pulling on the rope or changing his ballast; only a single hold of the rope to stop the descent and start the ascent is allowed.	111 m Name: Herbert NITSCH Date: 2006.12.09	88 m Name: Mandy-Rea CRUICKSHANK Date: 2007.04.29
Dynamic Without Fins The freediver travels in a horizontal position under water attempting to cover the greatest possible distance. Any propulsion aids are prohibited. Performances could only be recognized in swimming-pools with a minimum length of 25 meters	183 m Name: Tom SIETAS Date: 2006.08.27	131 m Name: Natalia MOLCHANOVA Date: 2005.12.20
Dynamic With Fins The freediver travels in a horizontal position under water attempting to cover the greatest possible distance. Any propulsion aids other than fins or a monofin and swimming movements with the arms are prohibited	223 m Name: Tom SIETAS Date: 2006.08.28	200 m Name: Natalia MOLCHANOVA Date: 2006.04.23
Static Apnea The freediver holds his breath for as long as possible with his respiratory tracts immersed, his body either in the water or at the surface. Static apnea is the only discipline measuring the duration.	9 min 4 sec Name: Herbert NITSCH Date: 2006.12.13	7 min 30 sec Name: Natalia MOLCHANOVA Date: 2006.04.22
Free Immersion The freediver dives under water without the use of propulsion equipment, but only by pulling on a rope during descent and ascent.	106 m Name: Martin STEPANEK Date: 2006.04.03	80 m Name: Natalia MOLCHANOVA Date: 2006.06.03
Variable Weight The freediver descends with the help of a ballast weight and ascends using his own strength: arms and/or legs, either by pulling or not pulling on a rope.	140 m Name: Carlos COSTE Date: 2006.05.09	122 m Name: Tanya STREETER Date: 2003.07.19
No Limit The freediver descends with the help of a ballast weight and ascends via a method of his choice. No limit is the absolute depth discipline. Going down with a sled, and going back up with a balloon, a diving suit or a vest with inflatable compartments, or whatever other means.	183 m Name: Herbert NITSCH Date: 2006.08.28	160 m Name: Tanya STREETER Date: 2002.08.17

The information used was taken from AIDA's website www.aida-international.org

EDA'S EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

EDA members with their families and friends enjoyed some fun in the sun while celebrating Earth Day at the private beach of the Jumeirah Beach Residence Sales Center.

The adults enjoyed swimming in the sea and the pool while the kids played some environmentally educational games such as a Treasure Hunt (of things that don't belong on the beach) and Animal Search (courtesy of the Endangered Species poster provided by the US Consulate in Dubai).

The event was made possible by Dubai Properties, an EDA annual sponsor. Dubai Properties provided the venue and food while Nomad Ocean Adventures organized the activities.



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OCEAN ADVENTURES
www.discovernomad.com

DIVE MIDDLE EAST EXHIBITION

PHOTOGRAPHY DUBAI INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW & ALLY LANDES

Held for the first time alongside the Dubai International Boat Show, DMEX brought together the leading names from the world of dive equipment and diving destinations.

Building on the rapid rise in popularity of diving in the region, DMEX provided a natural meeting point for divers and marine leisure enthusiasts. With a total of 21 exhibitors participating, this collocation brought together exhibitors from across the UAE and surrounding regions showcasing the latest diving supplies and services.

EDA hosted a series of diving demonstrations from underwater wireless

communication, to underwater photography and a presentation on breathing techniques held by world renowned free diver Emma Farrell.

With the massive potential and synergy of DMEX and DIBS, EDA and DWTC are looking forward to a bigger and more exciting DMEX in 2008.

For more information on DMEX 2008, please contact the DMEX team at:

Tel: +971 4 308 6451 Fax: +971 4 318 8607

Email: boatshow@dwtc.com Website: www.boatshowdubai.com



EDA GALA DINNER

EDA would like to thank its members, supporters and guests who joined EDA in its 6th Annual Gala dinner.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Mini-exhibit from sponsors and dive-related companies
- Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation from Kuwait Oil Company (KOC's) to EDA for its help and support of KOC's artificial reef project and management of marine reserve
- Public acknowledgement of eight EDA members who finished their Eco-diver training for the Coral Reef Awareness and Monitoring Programme and the six Pavilion Dive Centre Independent Instructors who conducted the training
- Introduction of the "Alvin Appeal" fund-raising" activity

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING: ANNUAL SPONSORS:



EVENT SPONSOR:



GRAND PRIZE SPONSORS:



PRIZE SPONSORS:



SPECIAL THANKS TO:

EXHIBITORS

JVC Gulf FZE
The Dow Chemical Company
Thai Airways
Tourism Malaysia
Seychelles Tourism Board
Gulf Reps
Underwater Explorer
Teknodiver Italy
Al Marsa Musandam
Al Masood Marine Sports

ECO-DIVER COURSE GRADUATES

Nizar Fakhoury
Basem Abu Dagga
Hana Abu Samra
Jasmine Pasibe
Vesela Todorova
Kim Chevaullaugh
Mohammad Bahaa Ali
Aamer Hassanally

PAVILION DIVE CENTER INDEPENDENT INSTRUCTORS

Christa Loustalot
Sue Evers
Barbara Lang-Lenton
Desmond Enoch
Paul Carne
Devon Baker

RAFFLE PRIZE ANNOUNCER/ASSISTANT

Basem Abu Dagga
Hana Abu Samra



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING WINNERS:

Amelita Natividad, Emirates Bank
7 night cruise onboard for 2 with Al Marsa Musandam

Sabra Thani, Majid Al Futtaim Group
1 night stay for 2 in Le Meridien Al Aqah including breakfast and dinner

Tony Galustian, EDA Member
Seychelles Dive package

Olga Yarmonava, Le Meridien Al Aqah
Ziad Al Sharabi, Al Marsa Musandam
Borneo Divers Dive package

Mustafa Almasri, EDA member (Abu Dhabi)
Thai Airways ticket

INTERESTING SIDELIGHT

The three winners of the major prizes shared some stories, some of which were exciting coincidences that occurred prior to their raffle numbers being drawn:

Ziad Sharabi – "I had a feeling I was going to win. I kept telling Nina (Gütersloh of Divers Down) 'show me the money' everytime a winning number is about to be announced. I just knew I would win one of the major prizes."

Olga Yarmonava – "I was late and I forgot my ticket. I had to ask Erna of EDA to give me a replacement so I can enter the ballroom. While handing me the ticket, she and her friend joked that I would definitely win the raffle because they've given me the luckiest ticket, the last one for the night. I told them that I've never been lucky in raffles. Inside the ballroom, I found myself seated, not with Thai Airways as I expected, but with an Iranian family of five. They taught me how to concentrate on my number and I witnessed how four of them won prizes for that night! Amazingly, my concentration worked and I won! It was a great gift as it was my birthday the next day. I also want to mention that I've long wanted to learn diving but I just never found the time. Thanks to EDA, I'll get to fulfill one of my wishes."

Mustafa Almasri – "I'm moving to Thailand soon to work for Ban Laem Sai Beach Resort and Spa (<http://www.banlaemsai.com/>) in Ko Samui and was deciding on buying my plane ticket on the day of the Gala Dinner but decided not to do so. I couldn't believe it when I realized that it was my ticket number that won the trip to Thailand. It was an amazing coincidence!"

(Editor's Note: Mustafa has decided to donate his prize to the Alvin Appeal. Thanks, Mustafa!)





SABRA THANI, Majid Al Futtaim Group



TONY GALUSTIAN, EDA Member



MUSTAFA ALMASRI, EDA member (Abu Dhabi)



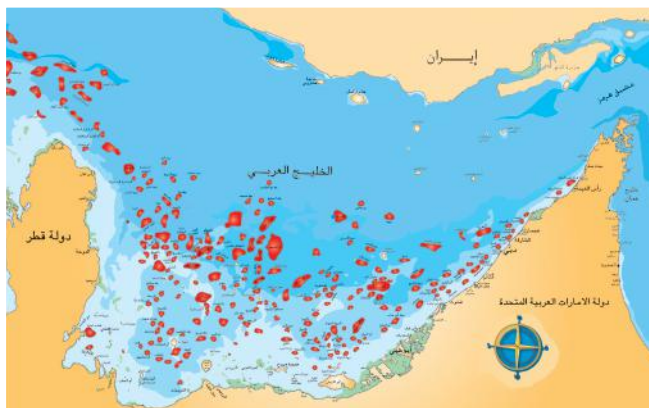
OLGA YARMONAVA, Le Meridien Al Aqah



ZIAD AL SHARABI, Al Marsa Musandam

PEARL DIVING PRESENTATION

PHOTOGRAPHY ALLY LANDES



EDA recently hosted a presentation on diving and the pearl trade in the U.A.E.

Entitled *“The Emirates - the biggest natural pearl diving area in the world”*, the talk was delivered by Capt. Mohammed Khalifa Bin Thalith, the co-author of the Pearl Diving Map of the U.A.E.

Thalith explained in full detail the pearl diving seasons, dive ship crew, navigation and the requirements, process and economic importance of pearl diving during the early decades of the twentieth century.

EDA members who are interested to get a copy of the presentation may get in touch with the EDA Office at 04 393 9390.



Capt. Mohammed Khalifa Bin Thalith



ويشترط في الغواص أن يكون خبيراً بقاع البحر وما به من أخطار ،وكيفية تفاديها فقد كان الغواصون أثناء عمليات الغوص يتعرضون لعدة مخاطر مثل التيارات البحرية ،والحيوانات الضارة منها والمفترسة .

وإذا كان الغواص متميزاً ومتمكناً من حرفته فإنه كان يسمى (بريور) أي سمك القرش المفترس وعليهم كان يتنافس النواخذة ويحاولون إغرائهم وشراءهم بأجر اكبر ، والطريف أن أجر الغواص كان لايزيد عن كيس من الأرز ، ونصف كيس من السكر وبعض القهوة ومائة روبية يتركها لأهله قبل الرحيل انتظاراً لما تجود الرحلة من خير بعد ذلك ، والطريف أيضاً أن ملابس الغواص هي فوطة وإزار وخطب وهو عبارة عن قطعة من جلد البقر يلبسها الغواص قي يديه حتى لا ينجرح أثناء التقاط المحار،والشمشول وهو عبارة عن ثياب ضيقة لحماية جسم الغواص من ضربة (الدول) وهو نوع من الرخويات جسمه هلامي شفاف كروي الشكل له شراشيب إذا لمس بها أحدا كوي جسمه. وبالرغم من أنه كان يستعمل الأدوات البدائية المصنوعة باليد إلا أنه كان يعمل كالطود* الشامخ لا يعبأ بشيء فالحياة والابتهاج والروح المعنوية العالية بادية عليه يؤازره نوع من التسليم لإرادة الله بكل شجاعة وطمأنينة .

أما الغواص في الحاضر فهو يستخدم الأدوات المتطورة والمجهزة بأحدث التقنيات ومن هذه الأدوات (النظارة) التي تساعد على وضوح الرؤية و(حزام الوزن) ليساعده على النزول إلى الأعماق و(الحذاء والزعانف) ليسهل عليه عملية السباحة و(اسطوانة الهواء) يمدّه بالهواء،أما(المنظم) فهو ينظم سحب الهواء،بالإضافة إلى(عداد الهواء) الذي يقيس نسبة الهواء في الاسطوانة ،و(عداد قياس عمق البحر). ثم أخيراً (البذلة) لوقاية الجسم من لسعات الحيوانات أو من البرد. فالغوص في الحاضر عبارة عن هواية يمارسها أبناء هذا الجيل لاكتشاف غموض البحر وإحياء تراث الآباء والأجداد وللحفاظ على البيئة البحرية وهذه الهواية ليست نابعة من فراغ بل هي امتداد لتراث الأجداد فتراث أجدادي نبع أمجادي.

● الطود يعني الجبل العظيم ، لسان العرب الجزء الثالث ، ص 270 دار صادر بيروت .



بقلم : عبد الحميد محمد حسن الجسيمي

الغوص بين الماضي والحاضر

للغوص أثر كبير في حياتي فهو أفضل هواياتي على الإطلاق لأنني أكتشف فيه ما لا يراه غيري من عالم عجيب وغريب سبحانه من أبدعه. ولأنه يعلمني الثبات والإصرار في البحث عن الأسرار ، وقد زاد تعلقي بهذه الهواية منذ نعومة أظفاري، عندما كان يصطحبني جدي إلى البحر ويحكي لي قصص الغوص في الماضي وما كانوا يمرون به من صعاب.

فقد كان للغوص أهمية كبيرة في الماضي، حيث كان صيد اللؤلؤ هو المصدر الرئيسي والحرفة الأولى لسكان الإمارات والخليج العربي قبل اكتشاف النفط فقد كان البحر هو عمود نشاطهم الاقتصادي و التجاري.

ونظرا لتلك الأهمية فقد تسابق الغواصون في البحث عن اللؤلؤ في أعماق البحار. متحملين الأهوال و المشقة والمخاطرة بكل شجاعة وقوة.

وهناك اختلاف كبير بين الغوص في يومنا هذا وما كان عليه قبل عشرات السنين. ففي الزمان الأول لم يكن لقدامى الغواصين إلا "الغطام" وهو يشبه الملقط ليمنع التنفس أو دخول الماء إلى الأنف ومعادلة الضغط عند النزول إلى القاع ، ولا يتم نزرعه إلا عند خروج الغواص من الماء .

وعند نزول الغواص إلى القاع يضع رجله اليمنى في حلقة صنعت خصيصا من الحبال تقع مباشرة فوق الحصة وهي عبارة عن حجر أو رصاص يصل وزنه من (10) إلى (14) رطلا لتسرع به النزول إلى القاع فإذا وصل نزرعها من رجله فيسحبها السيب بواسطة الحبل المسمى (الزيين) ويصحب الغواص معه (الديين) وهو عبارة عن السلة المصنوعة من حبال من القطن وبه علة يضعها الغواص في عنقه ليجمع فيها المحار ويكون الغواص ماسكا بحبل يسمى (اليدا) والسيب يمسك به من الماء عندما تصله إشارته وذلك بهز اليدا.

ويقوم الغواص باقتلاع المحار ويضعه في الديين ويمشي على يديه في القاع تاركا رجله مرفوعتين لأعلى وإذا امتلأ الديين أو تضايق نفس الغواص (نبر) أي هز اليدا حتى يسحبه السيب ،ولا تزيد فترة بقاء الغواص تحت الماء عن دقيقة أو دقيقتين .

وبما أن الغواص هو الذي يباشر استخراج اللؤلؤ من قاع البحر لذا فيعتبر أهم شخصية بعد النوخة لأنه يقوم بالعملية الأساسية وهي الغوص، وقد كان للغواص منزلته الرفيعة وسط أهل الإمارات ويلقى من الناس احتراما واهتماما أكثر من باقي العاملين على سفينة الغوص، فقد كان الغواص يأخذ ثلاثة أسهم نفس النوخة.

WE NEED YOUR
**HELP
AND
SUPPORT**

DRAW DATE:
July 05, 2007, 8:00pm

VENUE:
Al Boom Diving, Dubai

Additional exciting prizes will be raffled off to those present so come and join us!

EXTRA PRIZES INCLUDE:

- Round trip ticket to Bangkok, Thailand courtesy of Thai Airways (donated by EDA Gala winner Mustafa Almasri)
- One-night stay (including breakfast) and beach and pool entries at Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort

Alvin Appeal

FANTASTIC PRIZES TO BE WON!

Full Set of Dive Equipment

A total of more than 20 courses and dive trips!



In December 11, 2006, PADI Course Director, Alvin Vestil, was travelling in a taxi from Fujairah to Dubai. Following a tragic accident, Alvin has since been in a coma in RAK Hospital.

In association with EDA, the Alvin Appeal raffle aims to raise funds for Alvin, with all proceeds going to help send Alvin back home to his family.

There are prizes of a total value of \$10,000 to be won and tickets are \$10 each. Draw date is Thursday, July 5, 2007 at Al Boom Diving, Al Wadi Road.

Tickets can be purchased from the following locations:

Al Boom Diving - 04 367 3993 Al Wadi Road, Dubai
Al Boom Diving - 04 367 3993 Al Aqah Dive Centre, Fujairah
Emirates Diving Association - 04 393 9390 Diving Village, Dubai
Emirates Divers - 04 344 5755 Royal Beach Resort, Dubai, Ajman
Scuba Dubai - 04 3507483
Gulf Marine Sports - 04 8740027

For more information visit: www.thealvinappeal.com

METRO MANILA FILIPINO CLUB • PINELINE PRODUCTIONS • PINELINE ADVERTISING



ARE YOU A RESPONSIBLE DIVER?

Complete the following slogan used in the Responsible Diver Campaign.

Never dive deeper than the depth of your _____!

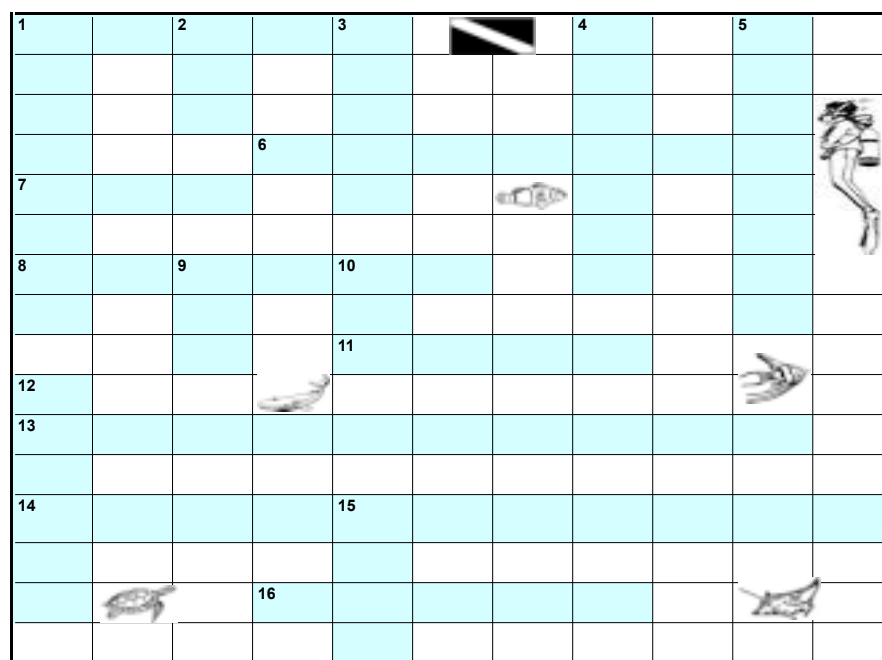
Be aware, check your _____!

Be a reef lover; always _____!

Let's respect it, not _____ it!

Only fools _____ the rules!

SCUBA CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Fluid accumulation in the tissue (diving physiology)
- Dizziness, disorientation sometimes in midwater
- wind blows the side away from the boat is the _____ ward.
- The alignment of the tide-producing celestial bodies produces this type of tides.
- Mussandam is located in this country.
- This principle explains the nature of buoyancy and helps us understand how to control it.
- An abrupt transition between waters of differing temperatures.
- Sometimes divers/snorkellers encounter them in the water. What type of shark is the Rhincondon typus?

DOWN

- Arterial circulation blockage.
- Organisation in the UAE established to promote diver safety and marine conservation.
- Suspension of breathing
- General term to describe the surrounding pressure or temperature.
- The "true" or total pressure exerted at any point and includes the atmospheric pressure.
- This type of current occurs when waves push water over a long obstruction like reef or sandbar characterized by turbid, foamy water moving seaward.
- Emirates Diving Association is what type of organisation?
- This law states that the total pressure exerted by a mixture of gases is the sum of partial pressure of each gas.
- Capital of Seychelles

UPCOMING EVENTS

THE ALVIN APPEAL

5th of July 2007, 8PM, Al Boom Diving

Join EDA members and the Alvin Appeal organizers and supporters in this fund-raising raffle. Those present at the event will have the chance of winning extra prizes.

CORAL REEF PRESENTATION (EDA SOCIAL)

By Dr. Michel Claereboudt, August 2007

Dr. Claereboudt, Coral Reef Biologist from Sultan Qaboos University in Oman and discoverer of the two new coral species recently found off the Omani coast, will give a general talk on corals and coral reefs in the region (including specific species, new species, etc.).

CORAL REEF MONITORING & AWARENESS PROGRAMME (CRAMP)

EDA is looking for a second batch of volunteers to undergo the Eco Diver training course for CRAMP. Interested parties should contact EDA at diving@emiratesdiving.com or call 04 393 9390.

SCHOOL CAMPAIGNS

EDA has teamed up with some dive centers in spreading information on good environmental practices as well as introducing the sport of diving. Interested parties may contact EDA for more information.

CLEAN UP ARABIA

November 2007

Interested groups who may want to hold clean ups in their area to coincide with the main event can contact EDA for coordination.



Chairperson Mr Faraj Butti Al Muhairbi

Vice Chairperson Mr Essa Al Ghurair

The Secretary General Mr Jamal Bu Hannad

Financial Director Mr. Khalfan Khalfan Al Mohiari

Head of the Technical Committee Mr. Omar Al Huraiz

Head of the Scientific Committee Mr. Mohd Al Salfa

Technical Adviser Mr. Ahmed bin Byat

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Email: diving@emiratesdiving.com

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Vesela Todorova

Committee Members

Jestin Jos
Joanna Thornton
Vanessa Nanty
Yousuf Sayed

MISSION STATEMENT

To conserve, protect and restore the U.A.E. marine resources by understanding and promoting the marine environment and promote environmental diving.

LEGISLATION

Emirates Diving Association (EDA) was established by a Federal Decree, No. (23) for the year 1995 article No. (21) on 23/02/1995 and chose Dubai as its base. The Decree stipulates the following responsibilities for EDA.

- To Legislate and regulate all diving activities in the UAE.
- Ensure environmentally respectful diving practices in all EDA members.
- Promote and support the diving industry within the UAE by coordinating the efforts of the diving community.
- Promote diving safety in the commercial and recreational diving fields through standardization of practices.
- Promote and preserve historical aspects of diving within the gulf region and enhance environmental education to diving and non diving communities through EDA activities.

CONTACT DETAILS

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Fax: +971-4-3939391

Email: diving@emiratesdiving.com, projects@emiratesdiving.com

Website: <http://emiratesdiving.com/>



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MARCH 7, 2007

Media Contact: Jennifer Pietro
Tel : USA 310-230-2371
rcinfo@reefcheck.org
www.ReefCheck.org

"Saving Reefs Worldwide"

REEF CHECK DECLARATION OF REEF RIGHTS One million to pledge action to save reefs

Los Angeles, California – The International Declaration of Reef Rights has been announced today by the Reef Check Foundation to promote action to save the world's ravaged coral reefs. A goal of one million signatures has been set, and the Declaration will be presented to the Heads of State of all 101 countries with coral reefs on December 31, 2008, as the culmination of the International Year of the Reef.

Data collected over the past ten years by Reef Check, the world's largest coral reef monitoring organization, show that over-fishing, global climate change, pollution and sedimentation continue to damage the health of coral reefs worldwide. The Declaration asks signers to pledge to take practical action to stop human impacts on coral reefs such as choosing seafood that is caught in a sustainable manner and supporting reef-friendly hotels and tourism operations.

"On a global scale we are winning some key battles but losing the war to save coral reefs," said Gregor Hodgson, a coral reef ecologist and Reef Check Executive Director. "Many of the reefs I enjoyed 30 years ago have lost their living corals and are now sponge and algae reefs. The good news is that in cases where we stop abusing the reefs they can recover naturally."

According to Reef Check, the major problem facing coral reefs is the lack of public awareness about their incredible economic value and the crisis affecting their health. Coral reefs are located underwater, therefore only a fraction of the world has seen them. It is not widely known that the world has been losing about 5% of coral reefs per year over the past decade. Equally poorly known is the high economic value of coral reefs.

The world's largest industry, tourism, depends heavily on coral reefs. Many tropical islands from Curacao to the Maldives are themselves old reefs that are now above sea level, and ground up coral skeletons created many of the globe's loveliest white sand beaches. Reefs protect the coast from storm damage and tsunami waves and are a food source for 500 million people worldwide. Most importantly, perhaps, is the possibility that a coral will save your life or the life of a loved one: more than a dozen new pharmaceuticals are currently being tested based on unique compounds found in coral reef organisms. A powerful anti-leukemia drug already on the market, Cyttara, is derived from a reef sponge, and an anesthetic 10,000 times more powerful than morphine has been synthesized from the reef dwelling cone shell.

Reversing the coral reef crisis is technically simple, but requires that a large number of people worldwide raise their voices and take personal action in united support of this mega-biodiversity ecosystem. Reef Check invites all people to sign the International Declaration of Reef Rights, both to convince governments and international agencies that the citizens of planet

A large-scale photograph of the Terracotta Warriors of Xian, showing numerous life-sized clay soldiers in traditional Chinese armor standing in rows within a dimly lit, earthen excavation site. The soldiers are arranged in a way that suggests they are waiting in a long line, which is the central theme of the advertisement.

Check-in online.

The Terracotta Warriors of Xian have been standing in line since 250 BC. But there's no need to join them. Check-in online at www.emirates.ae

An end to standing in line. Fly Emirates. Keep discovering.

emirates.ae


Emirates