



EDA
جمعية الإمارات للغوص
Emirates Diving Association

ISSUE I VOL. 2
FEBRUARY 2006

DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

TOURISM MALAYSIA



Malaysia
Truly Asia

MALAYSIA BORNEO

FROM CORALS, TO JUNGLE, TO MOUNTAINS



MAF Supports Local Diving Heritage

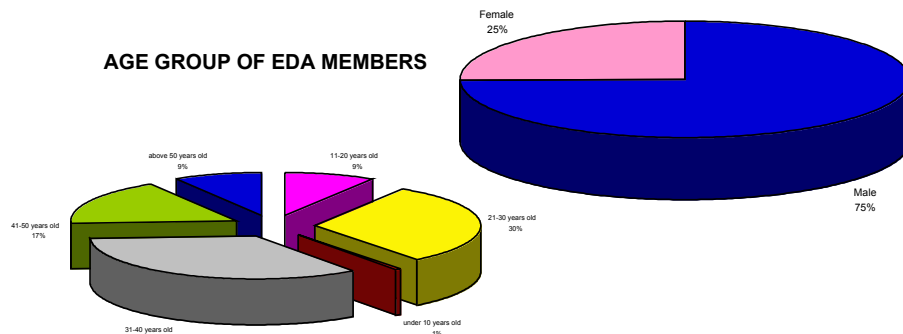
Plus! Ford Grants, Marine Environment, Equipment Choices, The Nature Network, Truly HDV and more

ANOTHER YEAR FULL OF SUCCESS

GENDER OF EDA MEMBERS



AGE GROUP OF EDA MEMBERS



Dear Members,

It really took me some time to write an opening article for this issue, as I was going through the huge amount of interesting articles submitted by our members which seems to make my job more difficult in writing my opening article for the 1st newsletter issue for this year; but as usual, EDA members always inspire me. I decided to dig some EDA membership numbers and share it with you.

As you can see from the chart, MALES are still the dominant gender in EDA at 75%; Sisters: YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING!!! You can also tell the EDA is a fairly young organization with more than 60% of the members aged between 20-40 years. There were 551 members in the year 2005, I hope that we will double this number this year.

Our members are still interested in protecting the environment and the diving heritage of the UAE. I think we should add Environmental diving to EDA's name, as our members are environmentally aware and responsible divers, JUST AN IDEA!!! As you all know, EDA is a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) accredited non-profit organization consisting of a handful of volunteers sharing a common goal, a love for the sea. We have set our goals with the best intentions in mind. Nevertheless we have understood the controversy surrounding an environmental subject and are willing to listen and share thoughts. Therefore, we call on those concerned individuals; organizations and agencies with a similar or common interest to come forward, suggest, share a thought or even lend a hand. We need your help and you can definitely make a difference.

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

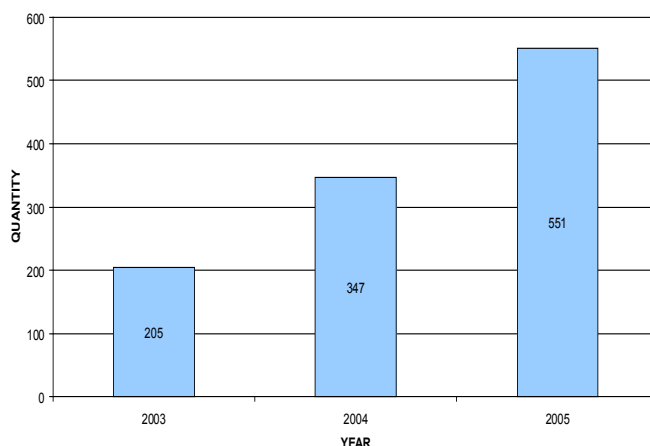
Mahatma Gandhi

Eco Regards,

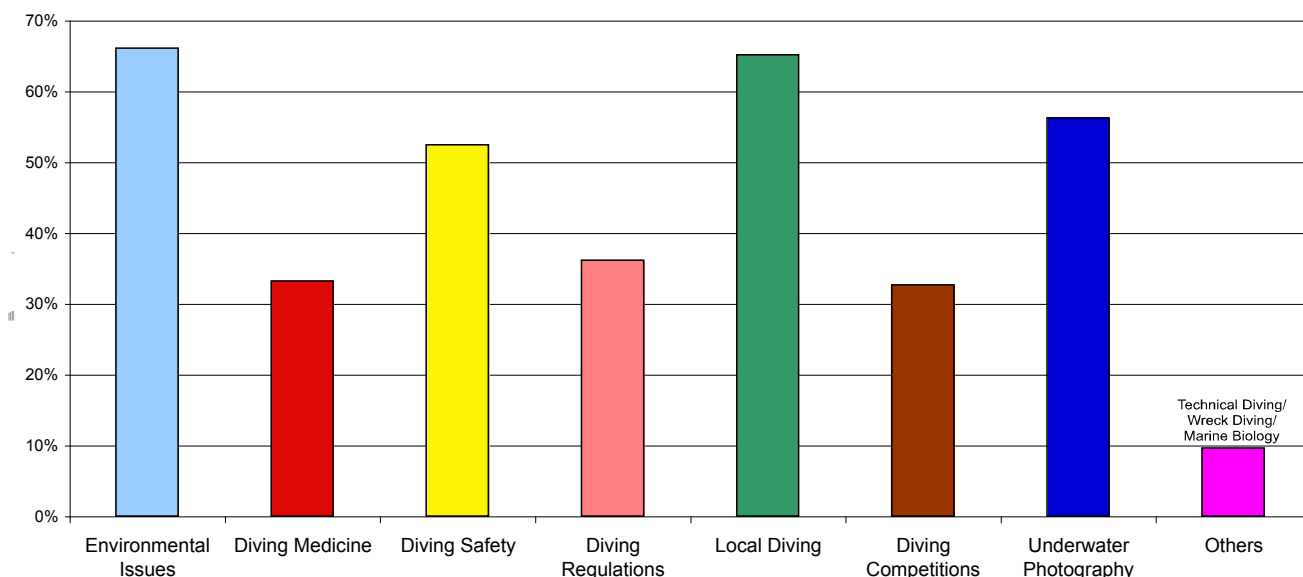
Ibrahim N. Al-Zu'bi

West Asia Coordinator,
UNEP YouthXchange Project
Director of Environment Dept.
Emirates Diving Association

GROWTH OF EDA MEMBERSHIP



INTERESTS OF EDA MEMBERS





EDA

جمعية الإمارات للغوص
Emirates Diving Association

CONTENTS

EDA DIRECTOR	2
EDA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS	4
THE NATURE NETWORK	5
MARINE ENVIRONMENT	6
MAJID AL FUTTAIM	8
EQUIPMENT CHOICES	9
A TRASHY STORY	13
FORD GRANTS	14
ECO MEDIA PROJECT	15
ECOCEAN PROGRAM	15
TO LIVE AND DIVE IN MALAYSIA	16
PART 1	
MALAYSIA BORNEO	19
PART 2	
TRULY HDV	22
FIRST TIME DIVER IN SIPADAN	26
DON'T SHAKE THE SMALL THINGS	27
THE PIED PIPER OF MABUL	28
EDA AROUND THE WORLD	30
UPCOMING EVENTS	31

DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Please note that EDA's newsletter, "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 newsletter 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 May 2006. Send all articles/comments to Head Office edadiver@emirates.net.ae.

EDA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2005-2008

With reference to the Federal Law No. 1 for the year 1972 and the Federal Law No. 12 for the year 1972 and the Federal law No. 25 for the year 1999 and the Prime Ministry decision No. 155/11 for the year 2005 and the By Laws of EDA, HH Sheikh Nahayan Bin Mubarak Al Nahayan, Minister of Education and the Chairman of the General Authority of Youth & Sports Welfare approved the Board of Directors of the Emirates Diving Association for the new term 2005-2008.

CHAIRPERSON



Mr. Faraj Butti Al Muhairbi

An established businessman and a dedicated pearl (as well as SCUBA) diver who has been involved with the sea for the last 45 years, in positions ranging from dhow boy to pearling vessel captain. He started doing post pearling-era dive expeditions, which he continues to do annually, mostly in the western coastal areas of the Emirates, where oyster beds are found in abundance, despite the offshore human and industrial activities. Faraj focuses his observation on the condition of oyster beds, on which he is an expert. His message has always been "If the oysters are healthy, the sea is healthy and we are all going to feel it. If the oysters are sick, the sea is sick and we are all going to feel it".



VICE CHAIRPERSON

Mr Essa Al Ghurair

A businessman who has been diving for many years. He is well known underwater by his unique 'yellow' fins, a very experienced diver and keen photographer, PADI Dive Master and CMAS Instructor.



HEAD OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Mr. Omar Al Huraiz

An experienced PADI Dive Master and CMAS Instructor, a computer enthusiast and an army officer who strongly believes in defending the seas.



THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Mr. Jamal Bu Hannad

An avid diver who descends from a family of seafarers and sea merchants. Jamal has a strong commercial background due to his involvement in various businesses in the country. He also has good organizational leadership abilities, which

prove to be extremely valuable for a non-profit organization like the Emirates Diving Association.



HEAD OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Mr. Mohd Al Salfa

An experienced PADI Dive Master and CMAS Instructor from a very well-known Seafaring family. His good analytical and innovative capabilities and experiences are of extreme value to the EDA.



FINANCIAL DIRECTOR

Mr. Khalfan Khalfan Al Muhairi

A Law Enforcement Officer and experienced diver who cares greatly about the sea. Often to be found in the EDA Office, involving himself in the Association's operation.

TECHNICAL ADVISOR

Mr. Ahmed bin Byat



Technical Adviser and a Scuba Diving Trainer, a rapid rescue and first aid Instructor. PADI Dive Master and CMAS Instructor. Divers Alert Network Oxygen Instructor. Member IDRS. Trainer Basic Life support for professional EMP, sports medicine, Instructor Automatic Defibrillator, EMP.



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NATURE NETWORK AND EMIRATES DIVING ASSOCIATION JOIN HANDS ON YOUTH CONSERVATION

The UAE's student run environmental program – The Nature Network, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that signified its partnership with the Emirates Diving Association on the 15th of January 2005 at the Heritage & Diving Village, Shindaga. The partnership cemented collaboration between both parties for a succession of joint environmental activities, events and projects based in the UAE.

The UAE's marine environment is under constant threat from human activity such as coastal development and pollution and is known to support many species whose populations have declined in recent years. The UAE boasts large populations of dugong, marine turtles, and with 8 species of dolphins and 4 species of whales in surrounding waters, presents a truly diverse habitat. The Nature Network and Emirates Diving Association plan a range of joint activities for the coming year such as field trips, diving courses and awareness projects dealing with the conservation of the marine habitat.

Marc James, founder and director of The Nature Network said; "Our partnership with EDA represents a good step forward for youth to learn more about marine conservation and interact through meaningful conservation programs. There is a lot of work to be done to bring the environmental challenges the country faces to the forefront of the decision makers and these students have an excellent opportunity to spread awareness across the network (Nature Network), amongst their friends, communities and as the new leaders of tomorrow, make the change themselves".

Financial director and board member of the Emirates Diving Association, Brigadier Khalfan Khalfan also added; "The Emirates Diving Association is proud to participate in the Nature Network's youth activities and invite the students to contribute in the reef monitoring projects, clean ups and other initiatives we conduct in the diving community. Working with the Nature Network, we strengthen our cause for marine conservation in the UAE and ensure that tomorrow's youth are aware of their

role as responsible and environmentally conscious members of the community".

As part of their corporate social responsibility programme, meUNIVERSITY, meBANK's tailored banking program for university students, sponsors community initiatives like the Nature Network, presently reaching students of all ethnicities across 9 universities in the UAE.

The Nature Network, now celebrating its first year in operation, brings together students from various universities and colleges wishing to take action to protect the UAE's fragile ecosystem. The UAE environment is constantly under threat in the wake of a rapidly developing country and an institutional framework that is still taking shape. Every effort should be made to raise awareness and advocate actions that will contribute to reducing the ecological footprint of the UAE.



Marc James and Mr. Khalfan Khalfan Al Muhairi

MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Written by Attorney, Jaber Al Ansari
Al Tamimi and Company Advocates and Legal Consultants
Member of the Emirates Diving Association

This is considered among the new topics in the legal systems of the Arab world and is regarded as one of the newly devised studies in comparison legal systems. There are a number of researches released in relation to the right to have a clean and balanced environment or what is known as third generation human rights which are rights based on social cooperation and requires joint regional and international efforts.

The United Arab Emirates became prominent in this matter through the efforts made to preserve the marine environments and the issuance of many federal and local legislations and regulations that aim to protect the marine environment and its natural resources and protects the coasts and beaches from pollution. This care and dedication demonstrated by the country in the protection of the marine environment is a part of the culture and human heritage of the country and the gulf area in general because the marine environment contributes vitally in the provision of nutritional security.

Federal Decree number (20) for the Year 1979 in relation to approval of the Kuwait Regional Agreement for cooperation and protection of the marine environment against pollution guarantees the extent of the cooperation of the country and its efforts to preserve the marine environment regionally and globally, by annually celebrating with the world the global environment day with vital and regular dedication.

On the internal scale, federal law number (24) for the year 1999 in relation to the protection and development of the marine environment encourages all, whether individuals or organizations, to present their best efforts along side the country to protect and develop the marine environment which is stipulated under Article (2) of the aforementioned law which states that this law aims to achieve the following purposes:

- 1** Protection of the environment and preserve its quality and natural balance.
- 2** Fight all kinds of pollution and avoid any damages or negative impact whether immediate or that may occur in the future as a result of the economic, agricultural, industrial or architectural development projects or any other development programs that aim to improve the quality of life and to coordinate with the committee and the concerned authorities and concerned entities in the protection of the environment and the preservation of its quality and natural balance and to establish environmental awareness and the principals of fighting pollution.
- 3** Development of natural resources and preservation of biological diversity in the country's region and to exploit it in a manner that would benefit the present and future generations.
- 4** Protection of the society and health of humans and other



living organisms against all acts and activities harmful to the environment or that hinder the legitimate use of the environment.

5 Protection of the environment in the country against harmful activity being carried out outside the country's territory.

6 Executing the obligations regulated under international or regional agreements related to the protection of the environment, fighting pollution, and preservation of natural resources

approved or joined by the country.

Cooperation, care and effort for the good of the public shall bring good results that will participate in the existence of a balanced marine environment for the present and future generations through the correct understanding of some of the definitions that are an application of the above mentioned law where: the marine environment represents the sea and what it contains of natural resources, plants and fish and other marine life in addition to what is above it, i.e. the air, and what is constructed in it such as stationary or mobile construction or projects up to the economical borders of the country.

Environmental Protection means the preservation of its elements, essence and natural balance and the prevention, minimization or elimination of pollution and preservation of natural resources – those that are not man made – to ration use thereof and protect all marine life therein, particularly endangered species, and work to develop these elements and make them thrive. In relation to the term “development of marine environment”, this means the policies and procedures put in place to satisfy the continuous needs for the development of the country socially, culture wise and economically. That the goals and principals are met for which this law was put into effect, the most important part of which is the improvement of natural elements of the environment and the preservation of the biological diversity, present, future, historical, archeological and natural heritage of the country.

It is noticeable that the legislator explained the terms mentioned in the law in accordance with its context to make it easier for those whom the law addresses to understands the contents of its provisions which came to fulfill the objective that was the cause of laying down this law which regulates all relationships between all parties whose actions are related to the subject and objectives of the law.

We find it important to open this topic and even more important, to apply it in the protection and development fields where we find generous support and kind directions to establish the Federal Environment Committee and the Environment and Natural Habitat Research and Development Committee in Abu Dhabi and the Marine Environment Research and Development

Centre and the Emirates Society for the Protection of the Marine Environment in Dubai and the Environment and Natural Preservations in Sharjah and the Friends of the Environment Society and the Emirates Diving Society that contribute in many of the local, Arab and international efforts with its principal of "Diving for the Environment".

In order for this environmental resource to remain living and a source of luxury in a renewed and continuous matter in the midst of the developments under way in the United Arab Emirates in all industrial, architectural and agricultural fields, it is necessary to take the environmental factor into consideration in all stages of planning and development which is what the legislator demonstrated in Article Nine in the Second Chapter of the afore mentioned law in relation to the Environment and Continuous Development. It states that "all concerned entities, especially those in charge of economical and architectural planning and development, must take into consideration the elements of environmental protection and fight pollution and the exploitation of natural resources when setting up plans for economical, social development and when constructing and executing such plans".

It is also worth mentioning that the purpose of protecting the aqua environment in general and the marine environment specifically from pollution is to achieve the objects detailed under Article (17) of the same law:

- 1 Protect the coasts and beaches and ports of the country from the hazards of pollution in all its shapes and forms.
- 2 Protect the marine environment and its living and non-living natural resources by preventing pollution of any kind, minimizing it and controlling it.

In order to ensure the application of the provisions of this law and its executive decisions, Article (69) in the chapter of Liability and Indemnification against Environmental Damage, the Judicial Apprehension Division, states that the Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs and Awqaf shall issue a decision together with the Minister of Health to appoint employees of the Committee. Concerned authorities will have the capacity of judicial apprehension officers in the area of inspection of establishments and premises to ensure the observation of the law. Those who have been granted the capacity of judicial apprehension from the Committee and concerned authorities, employees may record any breach of this law and refer the offender to judicial authorities in accordance with the applied procedures in the country.

Finally, more effort must be made to spread awareness of the aims of protecting and developing the marine environment and instill this awareness in the future generation and in school curriculums, media and support participation in local environment contests so that we may all become aware that the safety of the environment is everyone's responsibility.

The importance of the education of all the authorities concerned with enforcing the law must be emphasized and a generation of experts to lend a hand in all new offenses and issues open for discussion before the Attorney General and Courts must be created as a necessity.

Al Qudra

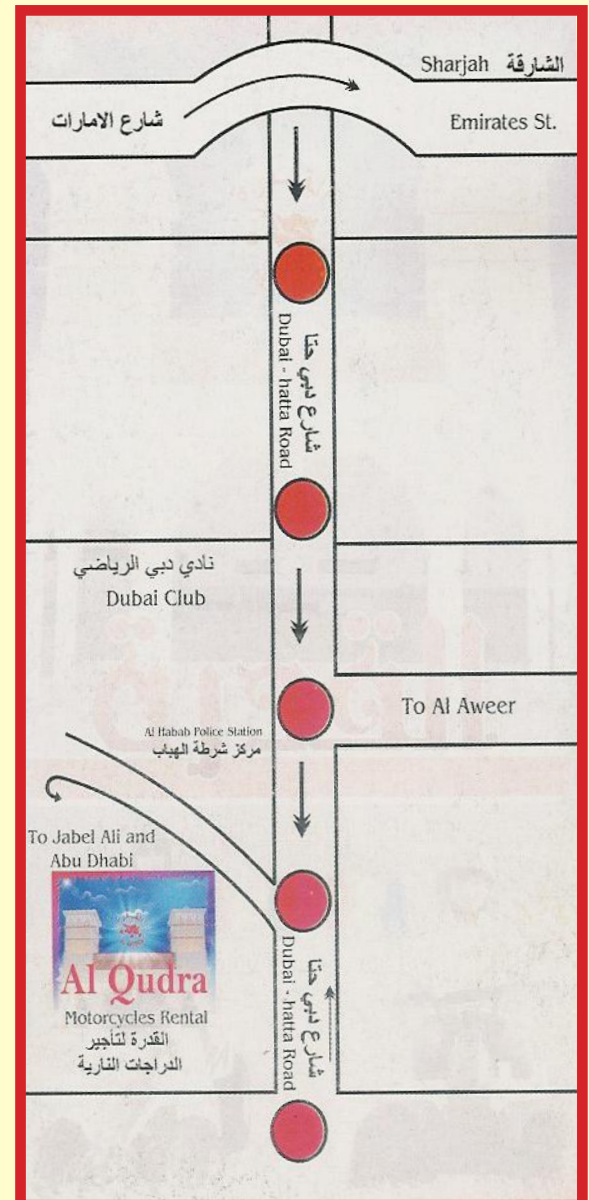
Quad Bike Rental

Al Qudra is Offering
EDA Members 35% Discount
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MAJID AL FUTTAIM STRENGTHENS COMMITMENT TO LOCAL DIVING HERITAGE



ماجد الفطيم
MAJID AL FUTTAIM

MAF to provide financial support to Emirates Diving Association

EDA IS ONE OF THE LEADING MARINE CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS IN THE COUNTRY

In an effort to raise environmental awareness throughout the Emirates, Majid Al Futtaim (MAF) will provide financial support in 2006 to the Emirates Diving Association (EDA), as part of its ongoing commitment towards sustainable development throughout the UAE.

For its fourth consecutive year, MAF has partnered with EDA to further promote the marine ecosystem in the Gulf as well as restore and protect the UAE marine resources. "Our association with EDA reflects our dedication to preserving the local environments in which we operate," stated Mr. Francois De Montaudouin, CEO of Majid Al Futtaim Group. "We take pride in positioning ourselves at the forefront of environmental activities that enhance marine development throughout the Emirates."

EDA is one of the leading marine conservation organizations in the country. A representative of 'Ocean Conservancy' in the UAE, EDA was founded by the late President of the UAE, H.H. Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who recognized the importance of diving and the need to protect UAE marine life from further destruction and pollution. The late President firmly believed in maintaining the local marine environment while promoting the growth and development of the UAE.

Through a network of local volunteers, EDA seeks to engage the public in a series of activities which include coral monitoring, turtle tagging, beach cleaning projects, and pearl diving awareness trips. Furthermore, EDA takes pride in promoting and preserving the local diving heritage while enhancing environmental education to diving and non-diving communities in the UAE.

In addition to supporting the EDA, MAF is an active member of the UAE Environment Group, another driving force in enhancing environmental awareness, eco-knowledge and capacity building for environmentalism.

As one of the leading private companies in the country, MAF is committed to remaining a central component of the ongoing success of all EDA projects. "Our involvement with EDA revolves around our ability to make the public recognize and understand the various environmental issues surrounding them," continued Mr. De Montaudouin "We aim to contribute positively to the advancement of development throughout the country, sustaining the legacy of the UAE for future generations."



MAF and EDA 2003



MAF and EDA 2004



MAF staff on a Pearl Dive Trip



MAF underwater

EQUIPMENT CHOICES

BY SCUBA DUBAI



WETSUITS

In winter when the water is cold the only way to stay warm in the water is to wear a wetsuit. A warm diver is a happy diver! In the UAE we are lucky that the water is still warm enough to dive in the winter as long as the diver has enough thermal protection to keep warm. However a suit that fits badly can give almost no thermal protection at all. If you have never worn a wetsuit before, read on. If you are not sure whether to rent or to buy a suit, read on.

THE RIGHT FIT FOR COLD WATER SUITS

A cold water suit for the UAE means a 5 mm neoprene suit for most people. Very active divers and diving professionals may need semi-dry suits or drysuits.

When a diver wears a cold water wetsuit for the first time, the chances are that they may not like it! A good cold water suit is a very tight fit (except for drysuits) as it should let in only a small amount of water which your body heat will warm up to. If the suit is too loose, cold water will continually flush through the suit, displacing the warm water and not keep you warm. It is important that the seals, in particular around the neck, are tight but not painful. And yes – it may take time to get the suit on. Suits with “dry zips” need help to do the waterproof zip up.



**5mm One Piece Suit
for cool waters**



**Semi Dry 6.5 mm Suit
with seals & “dry” zip**



**Trilaminate Dry Suit
with built in boots & “dry zip”**

THE RIGHT FIT FOR WARM WATER SUITS

Warm water suits are much easier to fit and wear. They do not have to be tight, but they should cover your arms and legs to prevent sun burn on the surface, and jelly fish stings underwater.



**2.5 mm Shorty Suit
Warm, arms & legs unprotected**



**0.5 mm One Piece Suit
Minimal warmth & great sting protection**

THE RIGHT THICKNESS

The thicker a wetsuit is, the warmer it will keep you if it fits properly. However suits are less flexible the thicker they get. Consider the option of layering several thinner suits to get the required warmth, rather than one thick suit which makes you feel clumsy and stiff.

How thick a suit you want obviously depends on where you will be diving, and also depends upon what type of diving you will be doing.

Based on the water temperature, a general recommendation is:

Above 30°C
26 – 30°C
20 – 30°C
15 – 24°C
Below 15°C



Use a lycra or 0.5 mm suit, this is only for sun/jelly fish protection
Use a 0.5 mm suit or 2.5 mm shorty suit for a little warmth
Use a 3 mm one piece suit, possibly adding a lycra suit or shorty for extra warmth
Use a 5 mm one piece suit, with a lycra suit or shorty. Consider using a hood
5/7 mm semi-dry suit or dry suit

The above recommendation can only be used as a rough guideline as tolerance to cold varies from person to person. Generally you will need to add more protection if you are female, thin, doing several repetitive dives, low activity or decompression dives, or if you just get cold easily.

THE RIGHT SUIT FOR YOU

Each diver should determine what thickness or style will best fit their needs based on recommendations from instructors or local dive store professionals. If your suit is too warm, you can flood it to cool off, but, if you begin with insufficient thermal protection all you can do is shiver or stop diving!

SUIT DESIGNS

Most modern wetsuits are a one piece, full length steamer style suit with a back zip. These come in a variety of thicknesses – 0.5mm for warm water, 3mm for cooler water, 5mm for cold water.

A good value option is to buy a 0.5 mm suit for the summer and a 3 mm or 5 mm for winter. When the water gets cold simply wear both suits to get extra warmth. A shorty style suit also works for the summer and can be put on top of a 3 or 5 mm steamer in the winter. However it does not offer protection on arms and legs against jelly fish.



In winter if a 5 mm suit does not offer enough warmth then the way to go could be towards a dry-suit. Dry-suits will keep a diver warm and are great for keen divers who dive repeatedly. However they are not the same to operate as a wetsuit and it is an excellent idea to do a dry suit course before diving in the suit. Divers Down is planning to run dry-suit courses soon. Ask them for details about their dry suit courses. (**Divers Down – Tel: 09 2370299**).

If the expense of a dry-suit is too much, then the easiest method to stay warm is to add a hood. A diver loses about 25% of his body heat from his head when immersed in water. Wearing a hood makes a huge difference between being chilled and being toasty warm on a dive. Like wearing a wetsuit for the first time, a hood feels unnatural and restricting. After a couple of warm dives you will get used to it and welcome it.

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT WETSUITS

“I feel that I am choking across my throat when I try the suit on. Do I need a bigger size?”

The answer is that you probably do not need a larger suit, even though you feel uncomfortable. Confused? Well the correct fit can easily be checked. The neck seal may feel very tight when you are standing up in a vertical position. When you are diving you will be in a horizontal position and the fit will be completely different. The best way to check a suit for this fitting problem is to lie face down on the floor with your arms by your side, in the same position you are in when you dive. If the neck seal feels tight now, then it does not fit and you do need another size or suit design. If there is no pressure on your neck now, then the suit fits. Just keep the suit unzipped until you are ready to get into the water.

“The suit hurts a bit, but it will stretch once I am in the water, right??”

Ummm no. Remember – tight is good, but pain is bad. If the suit actually hurts you then it is unlikely that it will stretch enough when you are in the water to prevent any pain. If a tight fit means that your hands swell, or your arms hurt at the elbow or upper arm then the suit does not fit you. Ditch it and go for a better fit.

“I am struggling to get my suit on. How can I make it easier?”

The answer is that a bit of struggling when putting a suit on is generally a good sign as it means that the suit is tight and therefore will keep you warm. There are however a couple of things you can do to make putting the suit on easier:

- Wear a lycra suit or 0.5 mm neoprene suit underneath. The wetsuit will slide more easily over the undersuit than over cold, bumpy, (and maybe hairy) human skin. The undersuit also adds an extra thermal layer, keeping the diver warmer.
- If conditions will allow you, put the wetsuit on in the water. The water in the suit will allow you to slide into it without any difficulties.

“My wetsuit smells, what can I do?”



A small minority of divers take the extreme option of warming their suits the “natural” way. This does give a few moments of wonderful warmth, but can result in a tell-tale smell later. Damp neoprene that has stayed wet over a couple of days (think of repeated use on a diving trip) can also result in bad smelling neoprene. This smell is caused by bacteria which are not always removed by normal washing. A specialist product may be needed, such as “Sink The Stink”. This is a small capsule of concentrated deodorising liquid which will kill all nasty, smelly bacteria and make the suit fresh and lovely again. At DHS 5.00 a capsule or DHS 35.00 for a 4 oz bottle, it is a great stand-by product to have, or to gift to a smelly friend. Most specialist dive shops stock this.

“Should I buy or rent a wetsuit?”

In UAE waters a diver will normally need a wide selection of wetsuits as the water temperatures range from a high 33°C + in July / August and to less than 21°C in January / February. In the summer months a suit is not needed for warmth but is needed for protection against jelly fish stings and sunburn. If you dive extensively and live to dive, then buy every wetsuit that you will use. This gives you the flexibility to dive at short notice. If you cannot dive as often as you want (and in the UAE how many people get the time to dive regularly?) then consider renting a suit for the time period that you dive least and buy a suit for the water temperature when you dive most. A good guideline is:

- Buy a summer wetsuit (a thin lycra suit or a 0.5 mm neoprene suit) for protection against jellyfish, coral burn, sun burn, nasty scratchy things. This is a good value buy as it will act as an undersuit later in the year.
- Buy a 3mm suit or a 5mm suit if you dive enough to justify the cost, do not want to rent a wetsuit that someone else has used or secretly fancy yourself in neoprene.
- Rent a 3mm suit or 5mm suit for when the water gets cold. Renting allows flexibility regarding the wetsuit thickness (rent a 3mm in November; then a 5mm in January) and is very affordable when compared to the cost of buying a suit. Ensure that the suits are cleaned between rentals to get rid of smells from previous users who have warmed the suit the “natural way”. Any decent dive centre or rental operation will maintain a high standard of cleanliness, especially where wetsuits are concerned.

If you have problems finding a wetsuit to fit you, come to Scuba Dubai and make an appointment to see the wetsuit fitting specialist.

“IF WE CANNOT HELP YOU, THEN WE WILL FIND SOMEONE WHO CAN”

SCUBA DUBAI

Ground floor, Block C, Trade Centre Apartments, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai.

Showroom: 04 331 7433

OPEN

Saturday 9 am – 8.30 pm (open through out)

Sunday – Wednesday 9 am – 1 pm / 4 pm – 8.30 pm

Thursday 9 am – 7 pm (open through out)

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Uwatec Computers

Ikelite Auto 35 Underwater Housing and Camera

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Sunday - Wednesday

9 am - 1 pm

4 pm - 8.30 pm

Thursday

9 am - 7 pm

Friday

Closed

Location

Ground Floor

Block C

Trade Centre Apartments

Sheikh Zayed Road

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Remember - if we cannot help you, then we will find someone who can

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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Facsimile: (04) 331 0680

Email: info@scubadubai.com

Postal address: P. O. Box 51753

Dubai



A TRASHY STORY

By Paul Sant



Happy New Year and here is to a better year in 2006 for the environment. Oh no hold the front page, Eid came and went leaving behind the normal aftermath.

Why is it, that people have to come armed with plastic bags, cups, plates, nappies and an endless list of all other PVC items? Only to then leave it all behind on the beach, grass, sea and trees (the infamous plastic bag trees of Korfakkan). Maybe it is the "I don't live there attitude", or the "well everyone else throws it on the floor". Who knows, but the litter bugs themselves. Ok I have gone on enough, but hey this is my 5th year of mess, and it has been getting worse every year.

Why am I so upset? Well other than the obvious eye sore, where do you think most of the rubbish ends up? You got it, "Hi guys and welcome to Martini Bag, today we will see some plastic bag fish and if we are lucky, some choking turtles"! The sea is full of rubbish after every public holiday as is my home town, Korfakkan. People come to the East coast for its beauty, not its rubbish, yet they are intent on leaving it behind for us to clean up.

For this reason, I am going to give those people some free tips on saving the environment:

- Buy and take a cotton bag shopping.
- Pack your own shopping bags. (You will use a ¼ of the amount)
- Buy a picnic basket with plates and cups.
- Bring a couple of rubbish bags (one for you and one for the people next to you).
- Use the bins provided.
- Don't throw cigarettes on the floor.
- Participate in Clean Up Arabia everyday of the year.
- Recycle.
- Clean up after others, guilt works, if not tell them!

Just some ideas. Here is to a cleaner year.

DIVERS DOWN
www.diversdown.tk

HI GUYS AND
WELCOME TO MARTINI
BAG. TODAY WE WILL
SEE SOME PLASTIC
BAG FISH AND IF WE
ARE LUCKY, SOME
CHOKING TURTLES!

EMIRATES DIVING ASSOCIATION



is granted US\$5,000 to train and educate divers on the conservation of the UAE's East Coast coral reefs.

EDA WILL USE THE GRANT TO TRAIN AND EDUCATE DIVERS ON CONSERVATION



Grants Winners

Emirates Diving Association (EDA), has been awarded US\$5,000 from Ford Motor Company, Conservation and Environmental Grants programme for the year 2005.

EDA will use the grant to train and educate divers on the conservation of coral reefs on the UAE's East Coast. This is the second time EDA has won a Ford Grant.

Selected by an independent panel of nine regional environmental experts, EDA's project was one of the 14 projects that won a Ford grant. More than 60 applications were submitted from around the region, all vying for a share of the US\$90,000 available this year. Since its inception in the region in 2000, the Ford Motor Company Conservation and Environmental Grants have funded 68 projects with cumulative grants worth US\$510,000.

The Grants awarded this year ranged from US\$5,000 to US\$10,000. Winners were presented their respective grants at a special presentation ceremony held recently in Dubai in the presence of senior Ford Motor Company management from Detroit and Ford, Lincoln and Mercury dealers, VIP customers and NGO's.

At the ceremony, Jim Benintende, Managing Director of Ford Middle East said, "It's been amazing to discover the dedication of people who, for little or no reward, offer time and expertise to the cause of preserving the environment. The Grants help foster that spirit and we applaud those efforts by exposing them to a wider audience and letting people know what these dedicated individuals are doing to preserve natural resources and cultures for future generations."

Established in 1995, Dubai based Emirates Diving Association (EDA) was set up to help protect marine life in the UAE. One of their goals is to help people understand the importance of the marine environment through educational campaigns that will help spread awareness.

The GCC/Levant Ford Motor Company Conservation and Environmental Grants provide financial support to ongoing projects from individuals and non-profit groups working for the natural environment, environmental education and conservation engineering in the GCC, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.

More information about the Ford Motor Company Conservation and Environmental Grants can be found at:

www.ford-environmentalgrants.com
(the programme's bilingual website)

EDITOR'S NOTES:

The recipients of the 2005 Ford Motor Company Conservation and Environmental Grants for 2005 (GCC/Levant Chapter) are:

- Public Survey on the Environment in the Arab World (Stage 2), submitted by the Environment and Development (Al Bia Wal Tanmia) magazine, Beirut, Lebanon, in the category of Environmental Education.
GRANT AWARDED: US\$6,000
- Re-introducing Gazelles in Jordan's Ajloun Nature Reserve, submitted by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, Amman, Jordan, in the category of Environmental Education.
GRANT AWARDED: US\$7,000
- Protection of Exposed Roots in Trees, and Preventing the Erosion of Soil in Mountainous Areas, submitted by Tarek Mohammed Amin Al Abbasi, Riyadh, KSA, in the category of Natural Environment.
GRANT AWARDED: US\$10,000
- Study and Protection of Marine Turtles on the Syrian Coastline submitted by Mohammed Juny of the Syrian Nature Protection Society, from Lattakia, Syria, in the category of Natural Environment.
GRANT AWARDED: US\$5,000
- Environment News Website, submitted by Abdul Hadi Al Najjar, Homs, Syria, in the category of Environmental Education.
GRANT AWARDED: US\$5,000

- "Recycling" Comedy Play, submitted by Hussein Tubayshat, Mahmoud Saymeh and Ahmed Al Koufahi, from Amman, Jordan, in the category of Environmental Education.
GRANT AWARDED: US\$5,000
- Teachers Capacity Building Workshop on Ecological Footprint, submitted by the Emirates Environmental Group, UAE, in the category of Environmental Education.
GRANT AWARDED: US\$7,000
- Awareness Campaign for School Students in Tyre Coast Nature Reserve submitted by the Tyre Coast Nature Reserve, Lebanon, in the category of Environmental Education.
GRANT AWARDED: US\$5,000
- Zoo Education as an Approach in Carnivore Conservation submitted by Mounir R Abi-Said, Lebanon, in the category of Environmental Education.
GRANT AWARDED: US\$10,000
- Reef Monitoring Project submitted by the Emirates Diving Association, UAE, in the category of Environmental Education and Natural Environment.
GRANT AWARDED: US\$5,000
- Water Conservation Pilot Project (Re-use of Gray Water in Landscaping) submitted by Tareq Ghazi Al-Zabet, Qatar, in the category of Conservation Engineering.
GRANT AWARDED: US\$10,000
- Field Guide to Flora of Jabal Al Arab submitted by Chikhali Mwaffak, Damascus, Syria, in the category of Natural Environment.
GRANT AWARDED: US\$5,000
- Nature Encyclopedia for Children submitted by the Bahrain Natural History Society, Bahrain, in the category of Environmental Education.
GRANT AWARDED: US\$10,000



EDA receives the Cheque from Jim Benintende, Managing director of Ford Middle East

“ECO MEDIA PROJECT” EMP

Eco Media Project is part of the EDA Program to Certify Media Personnel to be more Eco Friendly and Environmentally Oriented.

EDA would like to congratulate **EMMANUELLE LANDAIS**, Staff Reporter, Gulf News, for being the First Certified PADI Open Water Diver as an Eco Media Diver:



Emmanuelle Landais

ECOCEAN BEGINS PROGRAM IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



Brad Norman Founder of ECOCEAN with EDA staff

The Emirates Diving Association aims to conserve, protect and restore marine resources in the U.A.E. by understanding and promoting the marine environment and promote environmental diving.

ECOCEAN gave a presentation to more than 60 EDA members in Dubai in November. Several media representatives were in attendance and an article in each of the Emirates two daily newspapers highlighted the whale shark project and the involvement of stakeholders in the region to assist international whale shark conservation.

Several whale shark sightings have been recorded recently in Gulf waters (including the Dubai Marina) and submitted to the ECOCEAN Library. EDA have indicated their strong support to work with ECOCEAN to develop a broader public awareness and whale shark monitoring program.

For more information, visit: **www.whaleshark.org**

TO LIVE AND DIVE IN MALAYSIA

By Ayman Dunseath, Editor of Facilities Management Magazine

You haven't dived until you've dived at Sipadan, just off the north-eastern coast of Malaysian Borneo. Twenty members of Emirates Diving Association were invited by the Malaysian Tourism Board to test the waters. Ayman Dunseath sheds light on his experience.



Ayman Dunseath, Editor of Facilities Management Magazine

"We pride ourselves on our tolerance and respect for each other's religions and ethnicities," says Ruth, a protestant Indian Malay dressed in an elegant turquoise sari. Her husband Eddie is of Chinese descent and is casually dressed in slacks, trainers and a short-sleeve shirt - only his white dog collar gives away his clerical vocation. Sat next to me at the Christmas Open House 2005 event in Kuala Lumpur's Negara Stadium, the couple would make an odd spectacle in most countries, except here, perhaps, in Malaysia.

'Truly Asia' is what the Malaysian Tourism Board keeps insisting the country is. On first impressions, the federation certainly lives up to the slogan. Beyond Ruth and Eddie is a veritable sea of diversity. As a microcosm of the country's overall social composition, Malays (65 per cent), Chinese (25 per cent) and Indians (seven per cent) form the majority of the 5,000 strong crowd. Islam is the dominant religion, with some 60 per cent of the population being Muslim, while Buddhists (20 per cent), Christians (nine per cent) and Hindus (six per cent) make up the rest.

"We all celebrate the four major religious festivals in Malaysia," Ruth continues. "Christmas, Eid Al Fitr, Diwali and the Chinese New Year are all public holidays." A true model of religious integration if ever there was one, I thought. Or a nation of 25 million slackers! Either way, I wasn't complaining.

But I wasn't in Malaysia to integrate, slack off or complain - though I made time for a bit of each - I was there to dive! Those kind folks at the Malaysian Tourism Board (I do feel this report will need to be updated next year) sponsored 20 Emirates Diving Association (EDA) members on a Malaysia Mega Familiarisation trip, anchored by a breathtaking scuba experience.

Comprising more than 13 nationalities, the group battled fatigue and near insanity on the three planes, bus and boat it took us to get to the spectacular tropical island of Mabul. In fact, 'spectacular' isn't anywhere good enough for it. Appearing as a tuft of lush green between shades of azure blue above and dark indigo below, the palmed paradise demanded a redefinition of our transportation from 'speedboat' to 'heavenly chariot'.

Mabul, however, was not the focus of our dive quest, but rather the much smaller island of Sipadan eight nautical miles away. Rising out of the clear Celebes Sea some 30 kilometres off the east coast of Sabah in Malaysian Borneo, Sipadan is rated as one of the world's top dive sites by anyone and everyone worth their salt who has dived there. Described by renowned oceanographer and filmmaker Jacques Cousteau as 'an untouched piece of art', Sipadan was referred to by one of EDA's more experienced divers, Peter, as the 'pearl of the Pacific'.

This was not simply another exotic diving trip. To go to Sipadan, you have to be chosen.

Sipadan lays claim to being Malaysia's only deep-water oceanic island. It was formed by living corals growing on top of an extinct undersea volcano, which rises six hundred metres from the sea bed. Lying five degrees north of the equator, Sipadan is one of the richest marine habitats in the world. More than 3,000 species of fish and hundreds of coral species call it home.

As a designated world heritage site, all dive resorts were requested by the Malaysian government to move from the island by the end of 2004 in order to preserve a balanced land and marine ecosystem. Hence our stay in the stilted chalets of Sipadan Mabul Resort (SMART) on Mabul Island.

What makes Sipadan uniquely special is the close proximity to the shore of a cornucopia of life that exists in remarkably clear water alongside fantastic drop-offs. Fortunately, most of the good stuff can be found pretty close to the surface. When you're not bewildered by the schools of jacks, barracuda or massive hump head parrot fish swimming around you in military unison, you're enchanted by the tens of green and hawksbill turtles lazily gliding here and there. Or simply hypnotised by the millions of technicoloured reef fish.

At one point, we saw a bat fish seemingly flirting with a green turtle. Later on, a typically aggressive trigger fish chased a giant hawksbill turtle out of its territory

before giving us bubbling onlookers the eyeball. And there was plenty more to cross off on a diver's wish list: napoleon wrasse, giant clams, mandarin fish, mimic octopus, cuttle fish, frog fish, giant groupers, harlequin ghost pipe fish, lion fish, trumpet fish, scorpion fish, blue spotted ray, moray eels, gobies and bobtail squids to name just a few. It's the closest I've ever been to feeling like being in a giant aquarium.

To be honest, I had no idea what the names of these various sub aqua creatures were before this trip. As far as my marine life parlance went, I could describe only small, medium and large fish in a wide variety of shapes and colours. But alas, Sipadan broke me. I felt compelled to learn the names of these glamorous new friends of mine, though I did stop short of playing 'name that fish' with dive junkies Bitar, Hanif, Mike and Ernst in the evenings on a resort DVD.

But if there's one fish I do know about, it's the shark. "You guys up for diving at 5.30 tomorrow morning to catch a look at the hammerhead sharks at Sipadan?" asks Ibrahim Al Zu'bi, EDA's Environmental Department Director on the first night. I laugh heartily, enjoying the camaraderie that inevitably develops when you travel with a close-knit bunch of divers. But I laugh alone. A relative novice to the art of getting tanked up underwater, I was not expecting to have to leave the warmth of my bed at such a dark, ungodly hour to actually go in search of sharks to swim next to. 'We're on holiday aren't we?' I protested in vain.

Hours later, we absorb an incredible sunrise as our heavenly chariot speeds us to shark-infested waters near Sipadan. The water is surprisingly warm. As it happened, we only got a glimpse of a hammerhead at around 35 metres down but saw plenty of white-tipped sharks at shallower levels. Debunking the media shark hype was certainly a fulfilling experience for me. At around one to two metres in length, they didn't seem particularly menacing and, thankfully, weren't interested in us. Their graceful manoeuvring in the water was a sight to behold. As long as I kept an ample amount of flesh – namely my dive buddies Fatma and Maher – between me and any shark we encountered, I was a happy diver!

Whether diving off the jetty at Mabul or by way of a short boat ride to Sipadan, we packed in two to five dives a day over three days, depending on how hard core a



EDA Divers with the ECO Flag

diver one was. We became so accustomed to the sharks and turtles around Sipadan that on our last dive we ignored them completely and went in search of some of the smaller, more elusive creatures. About a 10-minute boat ride from Mabul in another direction is Kapalai Island, now a sand bar which is host to a water village-style resort.

Kapalai offers some of the world's best 'muck-diving'. Yup, that means diving in muck, or sandy sea beds – and is not a clean-up dive, which some of the others had already undertaken the day before. (I had opted out of that dive as a result of my right ear attempting to tune in to a distant short-wave radio station every time I tried to equalise – divers will understand).

For the more seasoned diver, and there were quite a few of these specimens on the trip, small is beautiful. Rare is even better. With the help of the eagle eyes of SMART dive masters Jasni and Peter, we were introduced to a long horn cow fish, a spinney sea horse (no relation to the shop) a spotted duckbill, leaf scorpion fish, sea moths and harlequin ghost pipe fish among other minuscule organisms that I simply couldn't see at all but I nevertheless nodded with affected interest.

It must be said that at times it can get pretty congested underwater with 'schools' of divers all milling around the same small area of this vast ocean. It gets worse when many of them are carrying cameras and video equipment and then

vie for the best angles to 'shoot' their game. At one point in Kapalai I counted 12 divers hovering around in one place. Japanese, French, Arab and Australian cameras were clicking, flashing and zooming in on God knows what. Could Michael Jackson have sunk to such depths to get away from the landed paparazzi?

As if by some form of dolphin-like extra sensory perception, fellow diver Alistair turns to me and points to three words he has just written on a note pad: blue ring octopus. Astonishing! I think to myself. How did he manage to write that 15 metres below the sea! Perhaps I could start writing articles down here.

Back on the boat, Alistair informs me what a rare privilege it was to see this octopus. It's the first he's ever seen, and, as a dive instructor himself, he's scoured a fair bit of the world's oceans. Ernst, another of our dive gurus, has more than 6,000 dives under his weight belt and says in awe: "I've seen things today that I've never seen before." Guess I'm lucky then, though I could never admit to these guys that I still get a buzz out of swimming over other divers' bubbles.

Back at the resort, the ever-friendly SMART staff are preparing our final supper. SMART is one of four dive resorts on Mabul, an island that takes just half an hour to walk around and that also includes a water village of 2,000 Filipinos (including 800 kids). Managing Director Robert Lo tells me about how he brought some divers to Sipadan many years ago and was

sufficiently inspired to take diving lessons himself. Not long after, he set up SMART in 1993 on Mabul Island – partly because there was more land there and partly because of the huge resident labour force. In addition, Sipadan had been a disputed territory between Indonesia and Malaysia until the World Court ruled in favour of Malaysia in 2003.

Today, Malaysian soldiers have a camp on Sipadan and much of the tiny island is out of bounds to divers, which is fine because we're more interested in the water than the land. I remember something Ruth in Kuala Lumpur told me about terrorist kidnappings on Sipadan and how I should be careful not to wander off alone. Lo laughs. "What you read in the news is very different from what actually happened," he explains, referring to an incident in 2001 when 10 foreign tourists and 11 resort workers were seized from a diving resort on Sipadan by Abu Sayyaf rebels.

The unofficial version of the kidnapping, Lo says, is that it was nothing to do with conventional 'terrorism' or 'Islamic fundamentalism' but rather a revenge attack on a particular resort owner who had apparently mistreated his Filipina workers. It was a one-off incident that had spiralled out of proportion but was eventually resolved without any hostages being killed. "The key is to respect and treat other people well," Lo continues, with a subtle dig at the owner who hadn't. "I have a wonderful relationship with the villagers here. Most of our staff are from there. The villagers always tell me that if anyone comes to cause the resort trouble, the whole village will back us up."

The only backing up on display tonight is of hundreds of fish images from various divers' cameras onto Georgio Ungania's laptop. He and Natascia Radice are the official documentary makers of the trip. Meanwhile, Siobhan Leyden, a professional radio announcer, managed to conduct several interviews via a live radio link up with Dubai. The wonders of technology...

Later on, under a canopy of stars, fishy tales and USB devices are being swapped over a beverage or two on the Jetty Bar. 'Did you see this? Did you see that? It was amazing! It must have been seven feet long! Say that again, my ear's blocked!' And as the night wears on, we join in with the locals to sing a traditional Mabul song: "One plus one is two, two plus two is four, four plus four is..." And so on. Now that's what I call integration. I wonder if Ruth and Eddie know this Borneo ballad. Malaysia, truly amazes ya.



Barracuda



White Tip Reef Shark



White Tip Reef Shark



EDA Members visiting the KLCC

FROM CORALS, TO JUNGLE, TO MOUNTAINS IN MALAYSIA BORNEO

By Sarah Naarden, EDA Asia Pacific Correspondent

Seven adventurous EDA (Emirates Diving Association) Members embark on an eco tour in Sabah after world-class diving in Sipadan with a team of 20. Through the rainforests of Sakau, heading west to Sepilok and the granite cliffs of Mt Kinabalu, they encounter magnificent wildlife on a 6-day road trip. Tourism Malaysia announces that it is the first tour of its kind undertaken by a group from the UAE.

Following the tales of Sipadan in Part 1, Sarah Naarden, EDA Asia Pacific Correspondent, accounts their jungle adventures in Part 2.



Sarah Naarden, EDA Asia Pacific Correspondent

"You will be travelling through the region where my grandfather's tribe made head-hunting activities," claims Bobby Weslee, our 28-year-old Malaysian guide from one of the indigenous tribes of Sabah. He continues: "In recent history, manhood would be demonstrated by capturing another's head and then presenting it to the family of their future brides."

Darkness approaches as the tour heads toward the Kinabatangan River, the longest river in Borneo and the richest area for rare wildlife species. Warily, we enter a green, wooden, man-made, safari boat and head towards the Sakau Rainforest Lodge. It is the only way in and the only way out of the lodge nestled deep in thick, rainforest. Anticipation is as thick as the airy mist lingering around the dark edges of the river.

Relief is sighed when greeted on the boat jetty by Jonathan, a friendly, red-headed and freckled environmental student from Manchester. He came to the resort in the hope of saving wildlife from the degradation of the rainforests. Little did he know his

duties would be chasing butterflies with a net and capturing exotic species to exhibit in an insect exhibition. "To kill is to protect" may seem a strange mantra. It goes with the philosophy "we conserve what we know". In actual fact, the lodge is leading the way in Malaysia with its green policy initiatives, sustainable construction, tree planting and wildlife research programmes. Ten years of environmental awards are displayed on its walls as testament to its commitment to tourism projects.

Luminous-yellow tropical butterflies flutter through the open-plan indoor/outdoor space. Creating a tropical ambiance, the walls and ceilings are decorated with traditional Sarawak carvings and batiks. We are handed customary batik sarongs to dress in and await the ritual gong to announce dinner is ready. Set against the pitch-black river edge, our candle-lit dinner of river shrimps is accompanied by a jungle symphony. Comprising of bird and insect mating sounds, it is the type of background music you normally hear on a meditation CD. We read National Geographic magazines like true wildlife nerds. It is minutes before the countdown to the end of 2005.

Back on the mainland, the remaining 13 of the 20 EDA dive team members are showering in their designer bathrooms in the pampered luxury of Kuala Lumpur's Maya Hotel. In the heart of the metropolis, the Maya stands apart from other conservative beige hotels. Opened in September 2005, the sophisticated day spa, restaurant and bars will soon be photographed and flood the pages of the Hip Hotels coffee table book series. After days of wearing wetsuits, the KL dive team glam up to hit the city's night scene. The end of 2005 is marked with a colourful explosion of fireworks against the back drop of the famous Petronas Twin Towers. Inspiration for an all night dancing frenzy.

Meanwhile, the Borneo team head for bed at 12.10 am. The start of 2006 is marked with a 5am boat safari. Intense preparation is made to prevent dreaded blood-sucking leeches from latching onto exposed flesh. Many a story can be said about the orifices that leeches have been known to crawl into. Poor Bobby made our eyes water when he told the story of a leech, his underpants and his inability to urinate one time after a trek. With this knowledge, we came armed in layers of Tiger balm, toxic repellents, tobacco in socks, salt in trouser pockets, trousers tucked into socks, and gumboots. It was probably a good thing it was dark as we were not a pretty sight.

Through dawn mist the jungle green safari boat sets off over the still glass-like river for an intense bird-watching session, binoculars and all. Hornbill birds, eagles, kingfishers and graceful oriental

darters glide through a crimson sky. Sunbeams hit the trees with glimpses of silver leaf monkeys emerging for their first day of the new year. After returning for breakfast, de-leeching, a nap and nature walk, we venture off for the sunset safari. Proboscis male monkeys - or, as we affectionately named them, promiscuous monkeys - sail through the trees and momentarily pause on a branch. We catch a glimpse of their phallic-like noses and compare them to the more beautiful ski slope-like noses of the females. The type of nose desirable in Michael Jackson's cosmetic surgery clinic.

A wildlife ranger passing on another boat signals to our guide and we race to spot a herd of wild pigmy elephants. Hiding in the crops of the local farmers, we creep through the grass like David Attenborough and sneak up to catch a glimpse of these wonderful creatures, which stand a little under 1.8 metres tall. A Malaysian Truly Asian Discovery Channel moment.

Hyped with jungle fever, we set out for the night safari to see alligators. After a long, pitch-black, moonless journey, we spot in the beam of a flashlight a few owls, a man-sized iguana and a nocturnal jungle mouse. Disappointed that we had not completed our Big 5 at this stage, we return only to find an alligator's eyes peering from the waters within metres of the lodge boat jetty.

Early the next day we depart Sakau and head for Sepilok by land via limestone bat caves. Wondering why there were no tourists to be seen, it became obvious as we entered the caves. The putrid stench of bat urine with hundreds of cockroaches lining the cave walls was like visiting Dante's hell, or at least the set of a Black Sabbath music video.

After screaming and squirming on the journey back from hell, we were blessed with a rare sighting of a male orang-utan. It was the first time our driver Tommy had spotted one in the wild after 10 years in the eco-tourism business. Tommy had once driven timber logging trucks for a living.

It was disheartening to drive through endless landscapes of new plantation palms knowing that they had replaced ancient rainforests. The once crystal clear rivers were now a murky brown due to muddy run off that is not absorbed by a forest floor. Remnants of the logging industry could be seen on the river edge. In the past, this river had been a sea of logs awaiting transportation and transformation. People on the other side of



the world know little of the biodiversity destroyed to make the timber floor boards and high-end furniture they are sitting on. A biodiversity that once sustained a healthy population of Borneo orang-utans. Now a protected endangered species, the orang-utan and some of the remaining forests in Sabah are under stringent conservation laws.

No longer can we play ignorant to the existence of exotic timbers that once surrounded us. We must become environmentally aware consumers. No longer should we believe that there are enough hippies chaining themselves to trees to stop logging. We can all do our bit to promote eco-tourism and help create more jobs for people such as Tommy, who was left stranded

when the logging stopped. Taking a more proactive role, we could be voicing concern for Malaysia and other areas of the world, such as the Amazon rainforest, which is following a similar tragic predicament.

In case you don't get to see orang-utans in the wild, part of the tourist circuit is to stop at the Sepilok orang-utan rehabilitation centre. The centre was set up to aid stranded orang-utans found in the plantations, lost without food or found held as pets and mistreated by local people. The programme restores the health of these orphans and encourages them to return to the wild by only partly supplementing their diet.

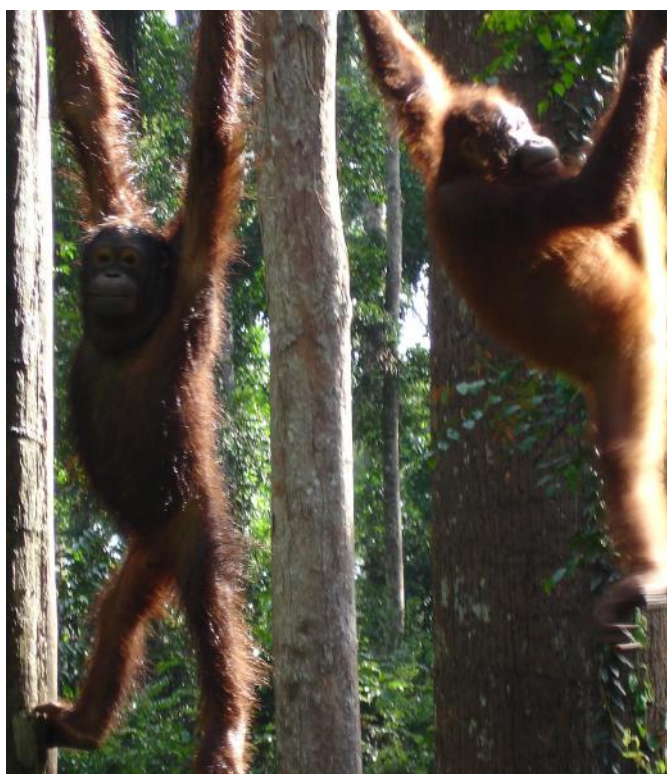
The daily feeding time in the jungle gives us the opportunity to witness a few families of all generations crawl along a rope to a platform of bananas. In this instance, the sun comes out after hours of rain and steam arises from the platform, outlining the silhouette of their orange hair standing on end. Mothers pose with babies in yoga-like positions. Teenage boys race each other to get to the end of the rope first while grandfather looks on shaking his head. Considered to be 96% human with their intelligent eyes, body language and relationship bonds, it is easy to see why we are obsessed with photographing them.

Another one of Sabah's most photographed moments is reaching the summit of Mount Kinabalu, the tallest mountain in South East Asia. Unfortunately, we were unprepared to climb its granite cliffs and withstand its freezing temperatures. Some of us watched jealously with Mount Kinabalu blues as other fit walkers headed off for the adventure. The four-kilometre hike in the mountains above the clouds of the Masilau nature resort was a rewarding enough challenge for us.

On the serious hiker's circuit, wearisome travellers treat themselves to a spa and massage at the natural Poring hot sulphur springs. A primitive set up compared to the luxury of Dubai day spas, but nevertheless, a much-welcome treat after being trapped in a mammoth tropical downpour while walking the wobbly 40-metre-high tree-top canopy bridge. Upon our descent, the stairs had turned into a teeming cascade of muddy water. With boots filled with water, rain ponchos and drenched clothes, we emerged like contestants of 'Survivor', the reality TV show.

As a kid I saw Rafflesia, the world's largest flower, in a National Geographic magazine. An endangered species unique to Borneo, we were lucky enough to encounter one in full bloom near Poring. It was the first time I felt like I could be nowhere else in the world. Most of the time travelling through the varied terrains of Sabah, we were reminded of many other regions of the world. The alpine terrain felt like we could be trekking in the Swiss Alps. The boat safari reminiscent of Amazon forests, and the rich marine life resembled some of the top dive sites in the Maldives or Australia. You get the sense that Malaysia's diverse natural terrain has a little piece of every part of the world in it, as does its international capital city.

KL stands proud as a modern international metropolis with a strong sense of heritage. It is a city that stands for multiculturalism and religious tolerance. A city that has grown and will continue to grow at a sustainable rate with the right balance of infrastructure and green spaces. A city where expats and visitors can experience fine grain urbanity against the backdrop of towering architectural wonders. Streets are lined with Spanish Tapas, Vietnamese, Chinese, Indian, and French al fresco dining. A city where you can shop all day amongst fascinating gem shops, tropical modern home wares and Malay designer boutique fashions. All that with the added bonus of foot massage dens being open until 3 am to soothe tired shopping feet. You get the sense that it is a city that can inspire and evolve, grow and breathe. KL, a city that is a micro-cosmos of its country. A treasure chest that can be visited and revisited, revealing hidden gems every time you return.



TRULY HDV

Emirates Diving Association teams up with Tourism Malaysia on an environmental mission on the paradise island of Sipadan. Georgio Ungania and Natascia Radice discover Malaysia through high-definition video (HDV) and Final Cut Studio editing software. Georgio elaborates.

A TRULY CHALLENGING DOCUMENTARY

As an EDA member, I was asked by long-time friend Ibrahim al Zu'bi, EDA's Director of Environment & Research, to go on a trip to Malaysia with 19 other EDA members and produce a documentary about the mission.



The biggest challenge was time. According to the schedule, the documentary had to be ready a week after our return to Dubai. As the documentary would have to be transferred to 35mm at a later stage, the temptation to go HD was irresistible. And as the deadline was so close, we had to come up with solutions to minimize the post-production time. Here is how we did it.

UNCONVENTIONAL CREW

Having to plan and produce the documentary in such a short amount of time, I could not direct it myself so I called in Natascia Radice, a London based director who I knew from previous projects. We started designing our production strategy via email 10 days before the actual departure to Malaysia.

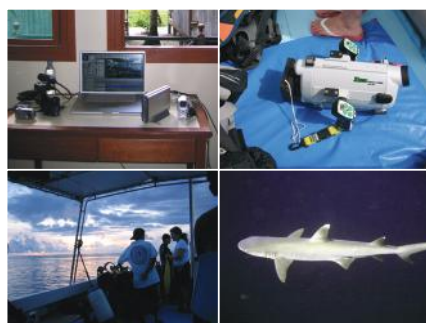


Apart from Natascia and I, there was nobody else involved directly in the production. And as it was a non-profit project, there was no budget to hire cameramen or other crew members so

we had to rely completely on ourselves and on the other divers.

Fortunately, we had extremely experienced underwater videographers on board. This meant that we could focus on out-of-water shooting while leaving underwater footage to them. Living in a truly digital age, we also knew that pretty much everybody nowadays owns a DV camera or a digital camera. So we asked all the participating divers to bring their own technology to Malaysia. We thought that if two eyes are better than one, then 15 cameras are definitely better than two...

LOTS OF PRE-PRODUCTION DUE TO LACK OF TIME FOR POST-PRODUCTION



Pre-production planning was the key to the success of the documentary. We had no other choice but to carry with us a mobile editing station so that we could physically edit each day's material overnight. As Natascia and I are two truly devoted Apple fans, and as the documentary was to be shot in HDV, the choice of editing software was natural: Final Cut Studio.

Apart from being HD, native Final Cut Studio comes with very handy applications such as Live Type and Motion, which we used intensely for the opening and end sequences and for the subtitling. Also, as we both edit with this application, if one of us falls asleep in front of the monitor, the other can keep on editing...

The main editing station was a Powerbook 17 equipped with 2GB of ram and an

external 300GB firewire hard drive. The whole mini-studio was really light to carry and it took us literally two minutes to set it up in all the various hotel rooms and locations we travelled to during the 10 days of the trip.

To optimize the timings, I had the opening sequence already created on Motion. The only thing we had to do was replace the dummy stills and clips with the ones recorded on site.

ISHOOT

Regarding the soundtrack, we researched and chose the songs and music beds we wanted to use prior to departure as we wanted to use our Ipods in a new and experimental way. Music



editing and sound design are stages typical of the post-production process. Wanting to minimise time spent in post-production, we decided to equip whoever was shooting with an Ipod playing the track that would be used on that particular

scene; it was kind of like shooting a live event somehow.

Natascia and I knew in advance what kind of feeling we wanted to add to the footage so having the music playing in our headphones helped us synergise our camera movements. Of course, until Apple comes out with a waterproof version of the Ipod, we will have to limit its usage to dry land...

THE DIGITAL HUT

The majority of the scenes were shot in Mabul and Sipadan, two deep-water oceanic islands known worldwide for their underwater wonders. Other scenes took place in Kuala Lumpur during a Christmas Open House event hosted by The King and Queen of Malaysia together with the deputy prime minister.

Mabul island played host to our Smart



Resort headquarters. Here, we stayed in very comfortable, basic wooden huts that were well-equipped with electrical sockets. To Natascia and I, that was even more important than having hot running water...

One hut was reserved for the mobile editing station and was immediately labelled "the digital hut". Here, we had all the computers and an incredible amount of chargers for all the batteries and adaptors and so on. At the end of each day, we digitized all the tapes to hard disk and transferred the hundreds of digital photographs to the Ibook for photo retouching.

To gain time, we decided not to log and capture each tape but to download the whole content and do the logging at a later stage. The Sony HDR camera works perfectly in tune with Final Cut, as each time you paused the recording on the camera, an individual clip appears in your bin in Final Cut.



dinner before immediately getting started on logging and editing the footage. We used headphones, of course, so as not to disturb the well-deserved rest of our fellow divers...

DIVERS ON A MISSION

One of the most exciting and rewarding aspects of the documentary was the coverage of the clean-up event that took place on Mabul island. With the help of local authorities, EDA organised a beach clean-up in which local kids were taught how vital the preservation of the environment is for their own future and for the future of the local tourism business.



One of our divers, Siobhan Leyden, is a talk show host at Dubai Eye Radio and she managed to conduct a live radio report of the clean up. A section of her report will certainly be included in our full-length documentary.

Ernst Van Der Poll, another EDA member, is from South Africa and was heavily involved in the organization of the clean up. He is planning fund-raising events with NGOs all over the globe to equip the island with at least one medical clinic and improve the villagers' access to drinking water. When it comes to environmental commitment and charitable events management, I've never seen people more driven than scuba divers. And Ernst and Ibrahim are so focused that I am sure they will meet their targets in a very short time.

POST-PRODUCTION

Once back in Dubai, we had a few days to finalize the documentary as it had to be shown to the public in a week's time. We recorded some links with Ibrahim in his EDA office in order to enhance the continuity of the documentary and to better explain the connections between the scenes of the various locations.

Most of the editing was already done on site. What was left was some color correction, which was performed

using a dual G5 with Final Cut Pro; we could have also used the G4 laptop for color correction, but we needed extra processing power to cut down the rendering timings.



As we wanted to integrate some very interesting clips shot in DV, we used the same G5 to convert the footage into HDV format, which we imported into the timeline of our main Final Cut Studio project. The very last stage was the recording of the voice over, performed by Siobhan Leyden, and the final mix and sound design on a Pro tools HD station. An HD DVD was burnt using DVD studio Pro. As the projection was due to happen on an amazing Sony KDE50 plasma screen, I personally tested some samples of the final renders on the monitor to check the colour matches. The result was really impressive.

CONCLUSIONS

It has been a true pleasure working on this EDA project. The cooperation of all the participating divers was essential to the success of this production. On the technical side, it was challenging but rewarding as we experimented on so many new techniques that I will certainly implement in my future projects.

Final Cut Pro has been the perfect platform because it never crashes the host computer, even when it is a G4 processor handling a huge amount of HD material. In addition, its HDV native feature saved us a lot of time as we could play the clips in real time immediately after importing them on our timeline.

On the next EDA project, I would like to install Pro Tools LE on the travelling laptop so that I will literally be able to finalize the product before catching the flight back home to Dubai. Truly amazing.

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EQUIPMENT

HARDWARE

Powerbook 17 100/2GB

iBook 14 80/1GB

Lacie 800 pmcia Firewire Card

Maxter 300 GB Firewire Drive

Sony HDR HC HDV

Sony DCRVX1000

JVC GR DV

Canon Powershot S50

3 Sony DSCP200

Manfrotto 350 MVB Tripod

Ipod Nano 2GB

Ipod Mini 4GB

Ipod Shuffle

SOFTWARE

Final Cut Studio

DVD Studio Pro

Pro Tools

NATASCIA RADICE



DIRECTOR

GIORGIO UNGANIA



**PRODUCER
UNDERZ PRODUCTION**

RATEB JOUDEH



**PRODUCER
UNDERZ PRODUCTION**

IBRAHIM AL ZU'BI



**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
EDA**

KATHLEEN RUSSEL



**VIDEOGRAPHER
AL MASAOOD**

SIOBAHN LEYDEN



**VOICE OVER PRODUCER
DUBAI EYE**

SARAH NAARDEN



**ASIA PACIFIC
CORRESPONDENT - EDA**

ENRNST VAN DER POLL



**INSTRUCTOR
PAVILION DIVE CENTRE**

AYMAN DUNSEATH



SCRIPT WRITER

Al Boom Diving

LIVEABOARD

TO THE SIMILAND AND SURIN ISLAND,

THAILAND

There are still a couple of spaces left for the April dive trip to Thailand.

We have rented the boat, "Le Mahe" for 5 days / 5 nights, departing from Phuket on the evening of 7th April.

The price for the boat trip is Dhs 3,000 per person including transfers from Phuket. There are up to 4 daily dives, accommodation, food and soft drinks, park entrance fee, etc.

Not included are the flights Dubai – Phuket (we obtained a good deal with Thai Airways). Accommodation in Phuket before or after the trip, equipment rental (if needed) and items purchased from the ship's bar.

"Le Mahe" can accommodate 12 divers + crew and is seen as a "good value for money" boat.

For more info, please contact Kent on: **050 344 2338** or on Email: **info@dubaidivers.com**

Dubai Divers site, **www.dubaidivers.com** will also welcome info, photos and articles from any members of the Dubai Diving community. It also contains a discussion forum that divers can use to exchange views, buy/sell equipment etc.

GO PRO!



Instructor Development

IDC Part Time	10th Feb Every Friday for 6 Weeks
IDC Full Time	17th – 27th May
Staff Instructor	15th - 27th May
IE	28th & 29th May

Divemaster & Assistant Instructor Courses on Demand

The Pavilion Dive Centre
The Only Instructor Development Centre in Dubai

Divecenter@jumeirah.com Tel: 04 4068828



*EDA Hooded
Sweatshirts now
available!*

FRONT



BACK



DHS 100

*First come, first
served, limited stock!*

FIRST TIME DIVER IN SIPADAN

By Natascia Radice, Film Director



Natascia Radice

I came to Sipadan as a water phobic film director from London, and I left a proud diver or at least with all the intentions of becoming one soon!

There I was on the boat with all the divers, filming them jumping in the water, adjusting their equipment and feeling somehow jealous. The big blue always made me nervous as much as the creatures living in it. Since I was a kid, I attempted many times to learn to swim and become confident and comfortable in the water, but anything deeper than my height was just too scary for me. Everyone was in the water ready to go deep down with turtles and amazing species of fish. Looking on into the water, so clear, so beautiful and inviting, made me sad I was not a diver...

Balquiss our Tourism Malaysia representative for the trip was on the boat too, she had not finished her PADI in time so she could not dive. She looked at me and asked, "Do you want to snorkel with me?"

I had to think about this decision. The thought of being in open water gives me palpitations, but I was privileged enough to be in one of the best diving destinations in the entire world.

I looked at Balquiss and said, "Why not, I feel like it's time for a challenge and I jumped in the water with her. She had to hold my hand as I was so nervous. I was overcoming my fears when all of a sudden I started focusing into the water. I felt like a little kid completely overwhelmed and excited, no longer scared. I also forgot that my pale mozzarella skin had no sunscreen on and got very burnt.

That night I couldn't sleep. I was too proud and too happy for what I had done and I didn't know that a bigger challenge was waiting for me.

One of the EDA members, Ernst Van Der Poll, a Diving Instructor of the Pavilion Dive Centre in Dubai, asked me if I wanted to do a Discover Scuba experience in the resort pool to get a feel of what it is like to breathe underwater. I trusted him and

after he promised me that I would be ok, I was ready to take my first underwater breath. It was weird at first, I could not remove my regulator and I was telling him I wanted to go up and out! He was excellent! Not only did he calm me down, but he demonstrated to me how to remove the regulator so many times with endless patience until I was ready to do it! Before we went in the pool he said, "remember there is no safer place than next to me and if anything is wrong we'll try to fix it underwater first and get out as our last option". Not only was he right, but he made me feel very confident.

Scuba discovery done! Another tick for my challenge list! I thought that was it. I was happy and proud but when you are out on an EDA trip pushing your limits, more comes your way. Ernst looked at me and said, "You did very well, are you ready to now go in the open water by the jetty? I will take you down to 12 metres to have a look at the small inhabitants of the sea." I am sorry I don't have a picture of my face when he said that, because I was anything but excited, however as proud as I am, I just looked back and said, "Of course I am ready. Lets go!" I almost fell with the first step I took because my knee was so shaky. I could hardly move.

To cut the story short: I DID IT!!! I dived for almost 30 minutes and it was weird, beautiful, peaceful and extremely exciting! That was just the beginning. The following day, we were back at Sipadan and after I finished filming our last day's sequence, Ernst asked me if I wanted to dive around the drop off and take a look at the real sea life!

I swear that there are no words sufficient enough for a full explanatory description to the feeling of seeing 5 huge turtles swimming so elegantly and so close to me! I saw so many different species of fish my head was spinning for hours after I came out of the water.

That night I had the best dream ever. It was quiet and I was diving with all the turtles and I was confident and happy that nothing would have happened to me!

I am now signed up to do my PADI certificate in March and I have to hugely thank Ernst for his teaching, patience and for the confidence he gave me, and also all the EDA divers that were on this trip because they are an amazing bunch of people, and I can't wait to say that I am one of them!

Thanks EDA!!!

“DON’T SHAKE THE SMALL THINGS”

MACRO PARADISE ON MABUL AND KAPALAI ISLAND

By Kathleen Russell, Videographer, Al Masood Marine and Engineering
EDA Abu Dhabi Committee Coordinator



Kathleen Russell

Not too long ago, scuba divers would enthuse and photograph the largest and most spectacular denizens of the sea like the whale shark, the graceful movements of manta rays and schooling pelagic like barracudas, big eye jacks and bump head wrasses. Nowadays divers seek with the same enthusiasm the macro marine life known as macro diving or “muck diving.” It is here the divers can discover the amazing colors, bizarre forms and even the most obscure of these macro critters. In northern Borneo, both Kapalai and Mabul Island are a macro diver’s paradise. Sometimes barely visible to the naked eye (bring that magnifying glass along), one can find the pygmy seahorse the size of a single rice grain camouflaged in the sea fans. Other amazing encounters are the colorful array of nudibranchs, small cowries located on soft coral branches and multitude of tiny invertebrate species.

On this trip, sponsored by Tourism Malaysia and Emirates Diving Association, I was privileged to have similar finds. Just off the shallow waters of Mabul, our dive master, Jasni pointed out the amazing rituals of the colorful mating mandarin fish hiding timidly in the coral debris. Also well hidden are the harlequin shrimp and Holthius’ reef lobster, colorful whip coral shrimp, the tiniest 2cm blue ringed octopus, stumped-spine cuttlefish, a small school of shrimpfish, mushroom-coral pipefish, garden eels and juvenile harlequin sweetlips. Other photogenic animals include the family of frog fish known as angler fish, which are extremely well camouflaged and can mimic the color and shape of their general perch. The list of macro critters is endless, as I spend most of my bottom time exploring a small area of the shallow reef, dead coral rubble, swaying soft coral branches and the undersides of other marine invertebrates like sea fans, barrel sponges, anemones and sea cucumbers. Next time you take a plunge, take a closer look at what seems like ordinary sandy bottoms, marine debris or even simply muddy bottoms and with great amazement you will find a whole new macro world in the sea.

Happy muck diving!



Flatworm



Mantis Shrimp



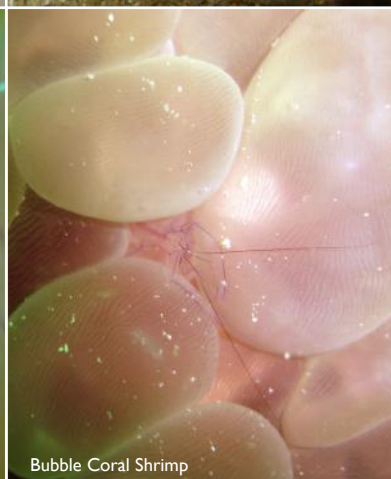
Cowrie Shell



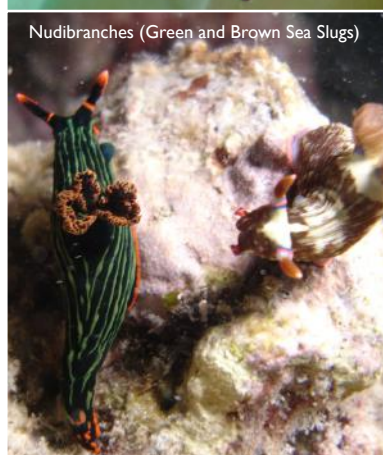
Flamboyant Cuttlefish



Anemone Shrimp
Photo: Alistair Russell, PADI Instructor



Bubble Coral Shrimp



Nudibranchs (Green and Brown Sea Slugs)



Hermit Crab

THE PIED PIPER OF MABUL

By Siobhan Leyden, Presenter/Producer 'Siobhan Live'
Dubai Eye Radio 103.8 FM



Siobhan Leyden

In addition to four dive resorts, the tiny Malaysian island of Mabul is home to an immigrant Filipino fishing village of nearly 2,000 people. Siobhan Leyden recounts how EDA members undertook a fun beach clean up to instill environmental awareness in the 800 children living there.

Buses, boats and planes delivered us all to Mabul Island. Despite falling off elbows and looking like a team of nodding dogs from the rear window of the minibus, we arrived safely. I must have been still reeling from sleep deprivation as I found myself looking out for Tatoo from Fantasy Island on the boardwalk to welcome us ashore. I was met, however, by an evening sea breeze, clear blue seas and honey-colored floury sand. I had landed in paradise.

We retired to our beach side, stilted, wooden bungalows and enjoyed the sleep of a lifetime. Five fabulous dives and two days later the great outdoors was no longer so alien to us indoor urbanites and it was time to look around on land. Intrigued and curious to understand more about the island, its history, people and infrastructure, a couple of the crew took a leisurely half-hour evening stroll - as that's how long it takes to walk the whole way around Mabul Island. The ecosystem has had its fair share of invasions over the years with mobs of divers descending on the sites, destructive fishing practices, rubbish drifting from the mainland and rudimentary waste disposal methods.

An intimate connection exists between life above and below the ocean. Evidence of this delicate symbiotic relationship becomes all the more clear as we meander along the dust track through the village and pass the rather tumbled down wooden stilted houses hugging the shoreline and the fishing boats moored for repairs. This village is dependant on the sea for its survival.

Even the smallest of villages have stories to tell. And so one

evening, we sat down - myself and Ernst and Balquis - with Haji Mohamed Yusuf Bin Jalal, the head of the village. A proud yet quietly authoritative man, he arrived on the island in 1974 at the age of 18 or 19, a refugee from neighbouring Philippines. Back then, there were only five houses and one boat. 'Virgin territory' he called it, with a smile, where the fish were plentiful and life was peaceful.

As more refugees arrived and the numbers of 'gypsy fishermen' - as they are called due to their nomadic trade - increased, the village also expanded. The locals grew rich enough to buy more boats and to experience a relatively good living. Haji gesticulates grandly as if reeling in lines heavy with fish saying, "Back then, we could fish 100 kilos an hour." From the impressionable age of seven or eight, boys would learn their trade and earn a living. This was and still is a tradition passed on from father to son.

Haji is father to five children who I'm sure are never short of a friend to play with as there are more than 800 children among the 1,700 inhabitants. He has maintained his position as village chief for 18 years. He did want to resign but the villagers insisted in voting him back to serve another term. The responsibilities of such a position are to represent the people and their needs and to attend regular meetings on the main land with the political branch of the governing party; officials do also visit the island to find out what can be done to improve island life.

The biggest ongoing challenge for him is to set up a fully functioning clinic on the island. As it stands, patients have to travel 45 minutes by boat to the mainland so this really is an essential requirement not only for the islanders but also for the tourists. Repeated requests have been made, he tells us, but they have yet to be fulfilled.

A request that was granted, however, in 1986 was for a school which teaches the Malaysian education curriculum. Although only a basic request, it did take a year to be passed. Today, the school is quite impressive from the outside with numerous painted classrooms. However, they do seem slightly inadequate in view of the number of children. Haji also informed us that the school is short of seven teachers.

When the students reach 12 years, they can transfer to the mainland high school where they stay in hostels or are accompanied by a family member. However, without a Malaysian ID card, the children are denied this opportunity. We discover there are anywhere between 200 and 600 children without these IDs. Those 'without' can attend 'religious schools' on the island which teach Arabic. How an ID is acquired and why there are so many villagers who do not have one are questions we did not find answers to, but I'm sure it's another challenge on Haji's list.

After an hour or so of talking and getting to know each other, Ernst spoke about the Tawasul or Outreach Project. This initiative aims to cultivate environmental awareness and interests, to promote environmental education and to ultimately pass on essential skills and abilities to others through various projects.



Ernst has already been involved in a number of initiatives in his home country of South Africa and further afield in Africa but for this tiny island, a beach 'clean up' was proposed.

Now, there is always a fine balance to manage in matters of this kind where 'outsiders' volunteer themselves in 'goodwill' projects. It is important to tread carefully without stepping on the toes of those you intend to help and then being perceived to be imposing ones own ethics and ideologies on others in the belief that it is the right and only way.

But Haji listened intently, smiled broadly and agreed to the proposal. We were all to meet the next day at 4pm.

"Environments know no borders," Ibrahim told me passionately as we began our walk through the village for the clean up, bags in hand. "It's also about having fun, something small from us to them." First stop at the village 'supermarket' to buy sweets, pens and marbles as a reward for the children. Precariously perched on stilts, so you could see the water below through the gaps in the planks, the store is an absolute cornucopia of just about everything imaginable. It is owned by the ex-village chief, who also arrived on the island in 1974. We walked together into the heart of the village surrounded by hundreds of beautiful, laughing kids happily gathering up scraps of plastic and paper from the dust track, and practicing their few lines of English along the way. I walked on ahead and caught up with Ernst who, like the Pied Piper of Hamelin, was gathering children around him with his infectious enthusiasm. "Environmental education is essential," he says, "to plant the seed so kids can understand how ecosystems work and how daily living can be affected." This is just the beginning, an ice breaker. There are more projects in mind."

We all made our way to the shore as the sun was beginning to set to see a huge pile of rubbish that had grown by the water's edge: sweet wrappers, plastic bottles, rags, all mashed up together. Small hands continued to pick through the colourful debris and so enthusiastic was their approach they were even picking up wood and coconut shells. They learnt fast though and were soon making the distinction between what was biodegradable and what was not.

Rewards were plentiful for the kids at the end of the clean up and the sweets and crisps disappeared with lightning speed, stuffed up jumpers, stashed in bags and shoved in mouths. After the singing, laughter and chatter of so many, the sunset brought silence and peace. Some kids made their way home, some stayed and accompanied us back through the dusky village but fell back as we entered our resort.

"It's a small start," contemplated Ibrahim, "but this will grow into a bigger feat and we hope to be back with more ideas." Ernst was quietly contented with the outcome and was already mentally working on the next project to provide big painted bins and to create a centralised rubbish collection point. "Let's hope the small seed will grow into something stronger and will be passed on to the next generation," he says. Let's hope indeed.

Even small steps leave imprints. The sea cannot be insulated from the land or from man and vice versa. I hope we did make a difference that day and I look forward to hearing more about the next projects.

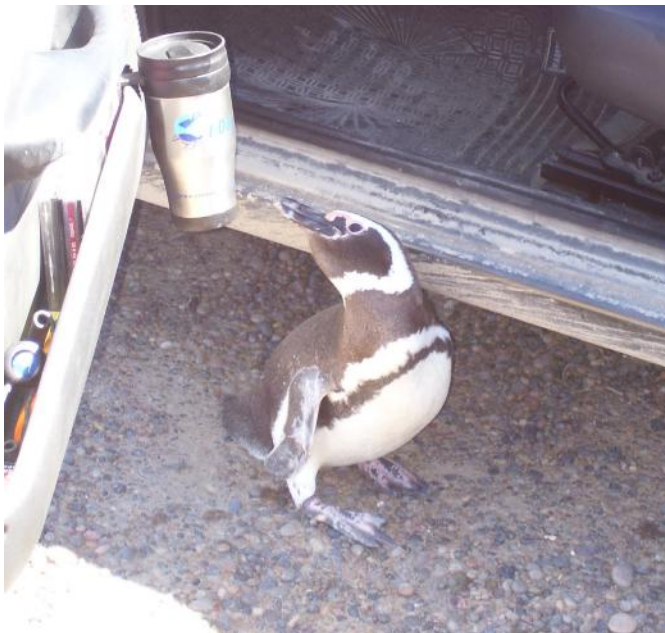
EDA AROUND THE WORLD

1. EDA visited the Discovery Dive Center in Thailand in November 2005. Mr. Khalfan Al Muhairi, EDA's Financial Director visited the dive center.



Mr. Khalfan with EDA publications at the Discovery Dive Centre in Thailand

2. EDA's member in Argentina, Ms. Marina Mansilla Hermann sent us this photo of Punta Tombo (in the province of Chubut in Patagonia, Argentina), the worlds biggest reserve of Magallanic Penguins (outside Antarctica) who was having a lot of fun with the EDA mug!!!



Punta Tombo

3. 15 of EDA's members visited Maldives in November 2005, one of the World's best dive sites, joined by Mr. Essa Al Ghurair, EDA's Vice Chairman and other EDA Board members. The team provided EDA's library with amazing underwater photos.



EDA Members at Dubai Airport on their way to the Maldives



EDA in the Maldives



EDA underwater in the Maldives



UPCOMING EVENTS

MONTHLY MEMBER TALKS

Monthly Member Talks is a discussion series on topics that EDA believes will be of interest to its members. Led by individuals who are experts in their respective fields, the talks aim to provide members the opportunity to gain knowledge whilst interacting with each other and the speaker.

The Fourth Meeting of Signatory States to the IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU (SS4), to be held in Muscat, Oman, from 11-14 March 2006. Among other things, the meeting will discuss the detailed preparations for the region-wide 'IOSEA Year of the Turtle' campaign, which will be launched on 1 March 2006.

The conference will be preceded, on 9-10 March, by a meeting of the IOSEA Advisory Committee and will be followed up on 15 March, by an optional excursion to a world-renowned turtle nesting beach at Ras-al-Jinz.

For more information:

<http://www.ioseaturtles.org/>

U.A.E YOUTH HOSTEL ASSOCIATIONS

As part of EDA's mission to facilitate for their members, we would like to announce that EDA is a member of the U.A.E Youth Hostel Association. The Membership consists of Special Discounted rates for staying at any of the 4 locations (mentioned below). For you to use the services provided by EDA & U.A.E. Youth Hostel, you are kindly requested to follow these 2 simple steps:

1. Contact the U.A.E Youth Hostel & check availability as per your Dates (numbers and locations mentioned below).
2. Contact EDA's Office and we will Fax/Email a copy of the Membership card which needs to be presented at the Youth Hostel (EDA: Tel. 04 393 9390, working hours from 8:30am till 3:00pm).

U.A.E Youth Hostel Association Locations:

Dubai, Sharjah, Fujairah and Khorfakan

DUBAI Tel: 971 4 298 8151

Tel: 971 4 298 8161

SHARJAH Tel: 971 6 522 5070

FUJAIRAH Tel: 971 9 222 2347

KHORFAKAN Tel: 971 9 237 0886

EDA members Go Green: EDA will be offering a special Shopping/ Beach Cotton Environmental Bag for 15 dirhams only.



STOP USING PLASTIC BAGS AND HAVE YOUR OWN GREEN BAG



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

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PADI Assistant Instructor, Project Coordinator

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Erna Magbanua

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Ally Landes

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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Email: edadiver@emirates.net.ae, projects@emiratesdiving.com

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

WITH HEARTFELT SORROW, WE OFFER OUR SINCERE CONDOLENCES TO:

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan

President of the UAE, Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces and Ruler of Abu Dhabi,

His Highness Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

Ruler of Dubai,

Their Highnesses Supreme Council Members and Rulers of the Emirates,

Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

Deputy Ruler of Dubai, Minister of Finance and Industry,

Sheikh Ahmad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

Deputy Chief of Dubai Police and General Security,

The honourable Al Maktoum family

and the people of the United Arab Emirates.



ON THE SAD DEMISE OF

HIS HIGHNESS SHEIKH MAKTOUM BIN RASHID AL MAKTOUM

Vice-President, Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai

We pray to Almighty Allah to keep Sheikh Maktoum's soul in peace and let him live in paradise along with martyrs and grant us patience.

We belong to Almighty Allah and unto him we return.

Chairman, Board of Directors, Staff and Members of Emirates Diving Association - EDA