



Clearwater

Dhahran Dive Association Newsletter

March 2007
"Whale Shark Edition"

A WORD FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Radi Adzemovic, President 2007

The DDA is looking forward to another year of beautiful dives. Many of us have already planned our dive trips and could not imagine a new year without spending time hovering beside coral heads, photographing clown fish, watching dolphins race the dive boat, having a great breakfast after a refreshing and beautiful 7a.m. dive, seeing raw video footage within hours of it being taken, testing new equipment, upgrading photography equipment and skills, watching turtles and trevali, bat fish and barracuda, anemone and antheas. Some new trips have been organized this year. Monthly day trips from the Bahrain Yacht Club will be available for us to enjoy. I had wanted to join the first ever Maldives live-a-board trip this month and still hope to go on it in the future.

Several members are pursuing advanced diving certifications. Consider joining them. There are great instructors here in Dhahran.

The 2007 DDA Photography contest will be a new way to share our experiences and talents. We can't wait to see the photos and video clips that will be submitted. Hopefully, the DDA will host our first Underwater Art Show in the fall. We look forward to awarding lots of prizes in many categories.

A new year of dinner presentations is being organized. Our dinner presentations are an excellent place to meet divers, hear about recent trips, see superb footage and catch up with DDA activities. Sign up as a member and get your **DDA log book** - hot off the press.

This year we have already had a great time at the SAEA FunFest, are attempting to get a DDA office, have planned some new and exciting trips, and have been in contact with the Abqaiq and Ras Tanura Dive Clubs. The board has been busy working to make the DDA a great resource for the membership and for our communities.

Dive often. Dive safely. Join us for our monthly dinners. Take beautiful photos. Get a new certification. Enjoy the Clearwater. Have a great 2007 dive season.

Radi Adzemovic



DDA MONTHLY MEETINGS

DDA monthly meetings are held on the last Monday of the month at Ad-Diwan, Room 1, doors open at 6:00pm with a catered buffet dinner and door prizes.

DDA Members: SR 40
Non-members: SR 50
Children: SR 25

Our next Monthly Meeting is:

- **Monday, April 30th** (the last Monday of the month) - to be held in Ad-Diwan, Room 1 @ 6.00pm. Colin Knight will present "Manta City and the Coral Gardens of the Maldives."



DDA Photo Competition:

See page 20 and get snapping!

The Whale Shark In Our Back Yard

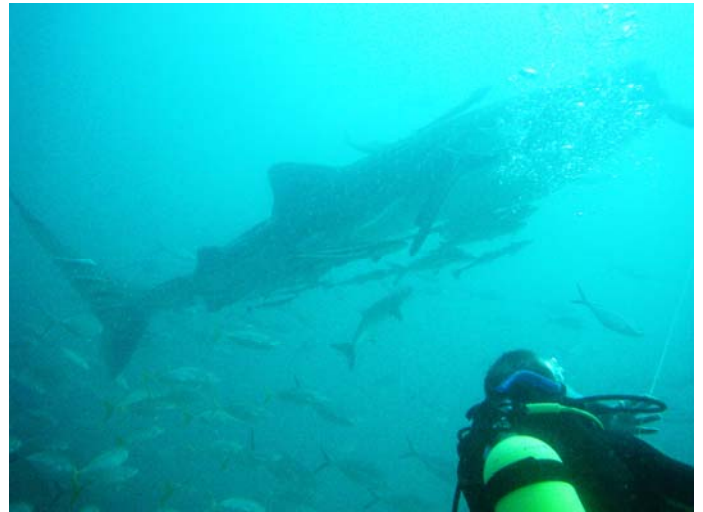
by Sean Rahati and Mihir Sapru

On a warm September morning, Mihir Sapru and I eagerly boarded the dive boat taking several people to Abu Thalma Island, 20 Km northeast of Bahrain. These trips, graciously organized by Dave Gruno of the DDA, rarely venture out so far to Abu Thalaat, often impeded by high winds and rough seas. But Mother Nature smiled upon us that day as we boarded the small open-air dive boat. After nearly two hours of pounding against the waves we were on location.

All five dive teams geared up, jumped in and eventually headed in various directions. It was a shallow dive, no more than 45 feet, with visibility to perhaps 50 feet. Twenty minutes into the dive, as I casually looked at the various familiar undersea attractions, I looked ahead at my dive buddy Mihir. Judging from the look on his face as he stared over my shoulder, my immediate thought was to not turn around and meet my Maker with closed eyes as my fate was about to unfold. But curiosity triumphed and I fearlessly turned to see what had grabbed Mihir's gaze and awe. It took a few seconds for my brain to process the shape that I saw swimming no more than twenty feet from me.



It was a whale shark, perhaps as big as the ill-fated A-380, but more likely 15-20 feet long. Definitely a baby, as I have seen pictures of whale sharks from the Galapagos trip that dwarfed this one (and which my fellow DDA divers have experienced). Nevertheless, it was an awesome sight to watch this amazing creature, with beautiful shapes and patterns on its body, gently swim around us in a slow circle for the next five minutes. Her/his (could not tell) eyes were so small that I had to search to locate them among the spots covering its head and body. What was infinitely more amazing was that Mihir actually had an underwater camera, and he had even brought it along! As he snapped the pictures with his excitedly shaking hands, the visitor swam in gentle circles, apparently enjoying the bubbles and occasionally rubbing against my buoy tether.

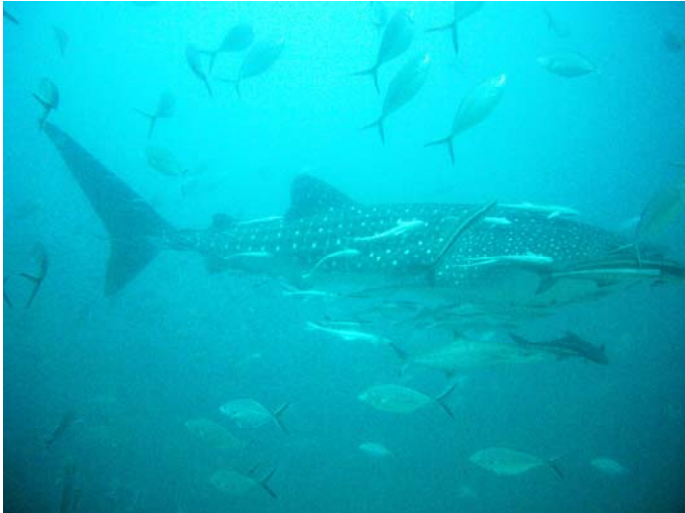


Once the excitement subsided and our heartbeats slowed a bit, we enjoyed watching the beautifully surreal creature swim gently around us. We occasionally looked into its eyes and, at times, were close enough to touch (though we never did). It was like enjoying a perfectly-aged, very rare French non-alcoholic beverage! Eventually our giant friend grew weary of us and slowly began to swim away with his entourage, who were following their host on his visit to a shallow cleaning station.

Back on board, we gleefully told the story to all who would hear and proudly presented the photos as evidence. Reaction was disbelief, excitement and even accusations that we had

downloaded the photos from Google prior to the trip! It seems many had dived these waters for years in the hope of seeing a whale shark and here we were running into one on our very first Gulf dive (no, Half Moon Bay does not count).

Sean Rahati



The Approach: from Mihir's vantage point

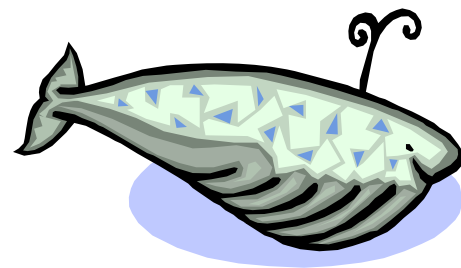
What Sean forgets to mention here is the part where we screamed like children and swam frantically to the surface...just kidding. It was indeed a warm September morning and after dropping into a slight current, we drifted along in about 40 feet of visibility.

About 20 minutes into the dive, I found myself ahead of Sean looking around and wondering if we were moving in the right direction. Not much to see other than the mass of nondescript coral beneath us. I turned to see how far behind Sean was and I noticed a curious hazy white cloud behind and slightly above him. It looked like an eerie white fog coming out of the abyss and moving ominously closer towards him. As this fog closed in behind him, it began to split apart into two swirls of schooling fish. It was a curious sight and I began to reach for my camera to take a picture of this fascinating scene, when I noticed a large white shape emerging slowly from the center of the cloud. The swirling mass of fish parted to reveal a massive oval mouth.

The white fog was about to engulf poor Sean by now, but as the two swirling clouds of fish parted further, the massive white object became more pronounced. My first thought was the white underbelly of a manta ray, which made me reach to pull out my camera while trying to grab Sean's attention, but as the object drew closer, now almost directly above my unsuspecting dive buddy, it moved slightly up and to the right, revealing a long majestic brown body, covered with unmistakable white spots. Now, I was frantic!

Sean must have finally noticed my eyes bulging out of my mask, as I screamed into my mouthpiece, desperately trying to get his attention. The massive shark slowly cruised past him and toward me, when I finally remembered the camera in my right hand, and began to snap shots as quickly as I could. The huge fish drifted past me, so close that I could not fit its body or even its head into the picture frame. I tried to put some distance between us so I could take a decent picture, but then I saw his eyes staring curiously at me as he slowly moved by and a calm sense of peace washed over me and I stopped worrying about my camera and simply enjoyed watching this majestic creature encircle us, then slowly move away and disappear into the abyss with its cloudy entourage.

Mihir Sapru



CREATURE PROFILE FEATURE

Bizarre deep-sea creatures imaged off New Zealand



Vestimentiferan worms - a type of tube worm widely seen at the methane seeps - were sampled from the "Builder's Pencil" site. Builder's Pencil, which covers 180,000 square metres, is one of the largest seep sites in the world.



The furry filaments on this hermit crab's claws are thought to allow it to feed off the energy-rich chemicals from the seep.



Glass sponges and tube worms poke through the seafloor.

The weird and wonderful creatures living by methane vents in the southwest Pacific have been photographed for the first time (see images above).

The deep-sea communities live around methane seeps off New Zealand's eastern coast, up to 1 kilometre beneath the sea surface. A team of 21

researchers from the US and New Zealand spent two weeks exploring the area.

"It's the first time cold seeps have been viewed and sampled in the southwest Pacific, and will greatly contribute to our knowledge of these intriguing ecosystems," says Amy Baco-Taylor from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in the US.

Cold seeps are areas of the seabed where methane or hydrogen sulphide gas escape from stores deep underneath. Like hydrothermal vents, the gases support unique life forms that can convert the energy-rich chemicals into living matter in the absence of any sunlight.

Sheer extent

Animals living around methane seeps off Chile and Japan have been observed before, but not near New Zealand. "The seeps here are remarkable in the sheer extent of their chemosynthetic communities," says Baco-Taylor, whose team visited eight such sites between 750 and 1050 metres beneath the surface.

They used sonar to map the seafloor and to detect plumes of water rich in methane, then lowered a video and stills camera system over each site.

This allowed them to record images of tube worms between 30 cm and 40 cm in length as they emerged from beneath limestone boulders. They also recorded corals, sponges and shell beds covered with various types of clam and mussel.

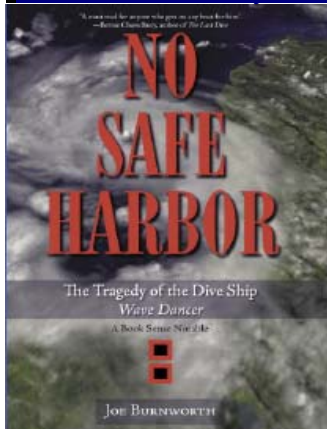
The expedition was led by scientists from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the University of Hawaii at Manoa in the US, and New Zealand's National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research.

To see this article in full, including video footage, visit:

<http://www.newscientist.com/channel/life/dn10653-bizarre-deepsea-creatures-imaged-off-new-zealand.html>

Book Review — by Colin Knight

"No Safe Harbor" by Joe Burnworth



<http://www.nosafeharbor.com>

I read about the Wave Dancer tragedy in various news reports and in *Undercurrent* magazine. Having now read this book about the events leading up to the disaster, I feel I am in a better position to make decisions that could affect my safety on a dive boat. I recommend this to all divers. You are welcome to borrow my copy.

<http://www.wavedancermemorial.com>: *"It was the biggest maritime disaster in Belize's recent history. It was the largest recorded recreational scuba diving death toll ever. And yet, too many questions remain unanswered. What is the true story of the M/V Wave Dancer tragedy?"*

On Monday evening October 8th, 200, Hurricane Iris slammed into the coast of southern Belize causing mass destruction of the country's infrastructure and banana crop. She also capsized a luxury yacht carrying 20 members of the Richmond Virginia Dive Club who were in Belize for a week of rest, relaxation, and scuba diving.

Of the nearly two dozen boats that sought shelter from the storm at Big Creek Harbor, only one sank; the M/V Wave Dancer, owned and operated by Peter Hughes Diving." Seventeen divers and three crew members, parents, grandparents, friends, sons, daughters, young and old, most trained and experienced in handling all types of underwater emergencies, drowned in 12 feet of water when the Wave Dancer capsized and flooded."

From an Amazon review by Teresa Mars, wife of one of the victims, Ray Mars: *"Every traveller, on a ship of any kind, diving or not, needs to read this book. This book gives every reader the feeling of actually being there; you will feel as though you can see every aspect of the boat itself, giving a clear picture of the events."*

View Big Creek Harbor on Google Earth at 16°30'49.92"N 88°24'16.53"W



DIVE COURSES

See page 14 for a list of course instructors.



Why Some Divers Want to Work In Nuclear Reactors

Radiation Is an Issue And the Pay Isn't Great:

Mr. Pickart's Burst Suit

David Harner pulled on a fitted Lycra outfit with thin tubes snaking around his body carrying cold water. He attached pencil-thin monitoring devices to his thighs, biceps, chest and back. Co-workers helped him into a red rubber suit and a helmet attached to an oxygen line. Mr. Harner then lowered himself into a pool of warm water that had the faint, distant blue glow of fuel rods.

"Not everyone would want to jump in a nuclear reactor," Mr. Harner says. "It's a definite breed."



Underwater Construction Corp.

Mark White, of Underwater Construction Corp., emerges from maintenance work at a nuclear plant.

Harner, 33 years old, belongs to a small corps of men and women who make their living in the underwater world of

nuclear-power plants. Many first took up diving as a hobby, then attended commercial diving school. John Paul Johnston, executive director of Divers Institute of Technology in Seattle, says "the high-tech guys" are drawn to nuclear diving, rather than to other sorts of work, like offshore oil rigs.

Mr. Harner, whose father worked at a Michigan nuclear plant, started diving in muddy rivers where he could see little. Then, he was sent into the crystal-clear water of a reactor. There, he says, he was struck by how much he could see, including the numbers on the fuel rods about eight feet beneath him.

Mark White, 40, chose diving about 18 years ago rather than follow his father into the Ohio coal mines. He thought mining was a dying industry -- and too dangerous. "When you're 22 years old, and you can try something new and daring, it catches your imagination," says Mr. White, who dives and manages projects for Underwater Construction Corp., the largest nuclear diving company.

Divers are in great demand these days. Power companies need them to maintain many of the world's 442 nuclear reactors. They're also called on to repair ageing bridges and water tanks. And oil companies need them to fix offshore platforms damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

That has done little to increase pay for nuclear divers, who start at salaries of about \$30,000 a year. Experienced divers certified for specialized work can make close to \$100,000. Offshore divers make still more but have to live on a ship for months at a time.

Nuclear reactors range in size, from 35 feet to 70 feet tall, and 14 feet to 20 feet wide, depending on the type of technology. They are enclosed in steel-reinforced concrete structures. During operation, boiling water reactors are partially filled with about 60,000 gallons of water that circulates to cool the fuel and also turns into steam to power the turbine. Pressurized reactors hold 35,000 gallons of water during operations. When the reactor is shut down for refueling and maintenance, the vessel and secondary pools, also called the cavity, are filled with more than 500,000 gallons of water that further cools down the reactor and acts as a guard against radiation.

Measure of Radiation

The nuclear divers measure assignments not only by the minute, but by millirems, a measure of radiation exposure. Diver Michael Pickart received about 450 millirems during a project last fall inside an Arkansas nuclear reactor's cavity. That's more than the average person's annual exposure to natural radiation -- 300 millirems according to the Nuclear Energy Institute. An X-ray delivers about 40 millirems.

At the Arkansas plant, Mr. Pickart, 30, replaced underwater stainless-steel tubes. In an underwater chair, the former construction worker cut and threaded new cylinders. He says he tries not to think about the risks.

"If you ever slipped out of the chair, it could ruin your day," he says. He hastens to add that plant workers would swiftly pull him to the surface by the cords attached to his suit.

Divers aim to keep exposure below 2,000 millirems a year, the limit set by most power companies. (The government allows individual divers to be exposed to 5,000 millirems a year.) When they near the maximum, divers are barred from nuclear plants, which typically pay better than other jobs. After his work in Arkansas, Mr. Pickart got a mix of assignments. On a November job in Illinois, he worked primarily in a less-radioactive pool.

A dive is aborted at the first sign of trouble. Last year, David Klassen was forced to surface after a few minutes when dosimeters showed he was receiving too much radiation. The 28-year-old

former Southern California scuba instructor had been working on a reactor dryer in Morris, Illinois, which removes excess water from the steam that powers turbines.

Mr. Klassen says he later learned that his dosimeters had malfunctioned. The work "never lets you get too relaxed," he says.

The divers' equipment is the product of improvisation and experimentation. Conventional wet suits, which keep divers warm in cold water, aren't practical. The water in a nuclear plant is too warm, sometimes exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

Vulcanized Rubber

Instead, nuclear divers wear a suit made of vulcanized rubber, which keeps them dry. To stay cool, they wear so-called cold suits, like the one Mr. Harner donned, developed for space walks in the 1960s. Including the special helmet, the gear can weigh about 100 pounds. That's more than twice as heavy as the gear commonly worn by recreational divers.

Before a project begins, plant technicians measure radiation in the pool. Divers wear as many as a dozen dosimeters -- on their knees, arms, chest, back, feet and hands -- to track exposure. On the refuel floor, generally five stories up, workers monitor the dives and follow the real-time radiation readings on computers.

Mr. Pickart's cold suit burst on a recent job, dousing the dosimeters with water and causing them to short out. His dive quickly ended. "There's no way to monitor you," he says, if the dosimeters fail. "They're not going to leave you down there to get cooked."

The divers, mostly in their 20s and 30s, sometimes travel as a small team to plants as distant as Taiwan and Korea. They live on daily room-and-board allowances of as little as \$55 and often share motel rooms to save money.

In the fall, more than a dozen divers from Underwater Construction, in Essex, Connecticut, bunked for one to three weeks at the Wingate Inn, in Joliet, Illinois. Underwater Construction has been working on nuclear plants since the 1970s. The divers were divided into groups of four to eight for projects at two nearby nuclear plants.

Kyra Richter, 37, recently quit Underwater Construction after three years to work, in operations, at a nuclear plant. Diving is "what I love to do, but there's no future," she says, adding that the dives would get harder as she gets older.

Ms. Richter also says she was paid less, and given less interesting assignments, than male divers. On one recent assignment, she remained "on deck" holding divers' safety cords for more than a week, rather than diving.

Michael Pellini, Underwater Construction's Vice President and co-owner, acknowledges the industry can be rough for women. The company has five women divers among its 250 employees. Mr. Pellini says he had not heard about Ms. Richter's experiences. "We want to make sure we are treating everyone equally," says Mr. Pellini, who himself started diving in 1981.

Daniel Vollrath, who is 25, joined Underwater Construction last year after five years with the U.S. Coast Guard. He chose inland diving over offshore diving because it means less time away from home. More important, he likes the weightless feeling of hovering in a reactor pool, tethered by a "lifeline" of cords providing air, communications, and radiation readings. It is, he says, "the closest thing to being an astronaut."



I know the following article was in the last edition, but I make no apologies for repeating it. On a recent dive trip I suffered motion sickness for the first time. It wasn't fun. It won't do any harm to refresh our memories on how to deal with this annoying problem!
(Ed.)

MOTION SICKNESS

Article summarized by Colin Knight

The following summary is from an article in the 'Alert Diver', the magazine received by members of the Diver's Alert Network, (DAN), which many DDA members subscribe to. DAN membership benefits include medical assistance in the event of a diving emergency world-wide and travel assistance, extendable to family members. Middle East residents can join DAN Europe.

Alert Diver articles are available on-line at: www.daneurope.org

"Seasickness results when the eyes are seeing one thing while the balance organ (the semicircular canals) detects another - your movement up and down. The brain gets confused, figuring out why your eyes tell it you are stationary, but your inner ear tells your brain you are moving. Other factors can compound the problem. Vomiting may make you feel better, but the symptoms will not resolve until the inner ear acclimates to the motion or you use another form of treatment.

Seasickness tends to diminish after a few days without treatment. Generally, the more time you spend on a boat, the less severe the sickness becomes. When some individuals become acclimated to the motion, readjusting once they're back on land may take some time.

How can you avoid motion sickness?

Positioning - If the boat is rocking bow to stem, seek out a spot in the middle of the boat for the least movement. A lower cabin may be more suitable than a top deck outer cabin. And remember, **the smaller the boat, the larger your potential for sickness**, as smaller boats tend to rock more quickly.

Fix on an object - Look beyond the boat: use the horizon as a reference point. This helps your brain to adjust more easily to the unstable environment. Avoid focusing tasks like reading, setting up equipment and writing.

Fresh air - If you're feeling ill, nothing worsens it like diesel fumes. Find a spot away from the flames, where fresh air blows. Keep a reference point by looking at the horizon.

Keep something in your stomach - Stay well hydrated before and during your trip. Sip water, juice or sports drinks, but avoid carbonated drinks, alcohol and caffeine. If you are nauseated, don't drink lots of water since it will create an unpleasant sensation of sloshing in your stomach. Eat saltines or bread to absorb stomach fluids.



Some Remedies for Prevention

There is no cure for motion sickness, but a plethora of medications, devices, procedures and herbal remedies are touted to alleviate its symptoms. If you have discovered a safe system that works, stick with it. The article discusses many remedies, but the following information about **the patch** is reproduced since many DDA members use it successfully.

"Many divers have used **Transderm Scop** (the patch with scopolamine as its main ingredient) to relieve seasickness. With few reported problems, this patch releases the drug slowly through the skin. It can be very effective against motion sickness for as long as three days. Since the medication affects the central nervous system, however, it can have side effects that may impair your ability to dive safely. The most common side effects are dry mouth and blurred

vision. Fingers that contact the medication side of the patch and touch the eye will cause the pupil to dilate. After handling the patch, wash your hands thoroughly. Other side effects, more common in children and elderly people, may include hallucinations, confusion, agitation or disorientation. The dosage is fixed and cannot be altered by cutting the patch. You can get SCOPACE, a tablet form of scopolamine, by prescription. Taken an hour before travel, each dose will last up to eight hours. Benefits of the tablet over the patch can include a faster onset, flexibility with dosages and fewer side effects.

I hope you have memorized the above ☺



STRANGER THAN FICTION?

Future Newsletters will include an item that seems too strange/amazing to be true. Your task is to expose the hoaxes is this REALLY a photo of a giant squid – or maybe a scene from a Disney movie?

GIANT SQUID LANDED IN JAPAN



December 22, 2006—Like pulling a shadow from the darkness, researchers in Japan have captured and filmed a live giant squid—likely for the first time—shedding new light on the famously elusive creatures.

Tsunemi Kubodera, a scientist with Japan's National Science Museum, caught the 24-foot (7-meter) animal earlier this month near the island of Chichijima, some 600 miles (960 kilometers) southeast of Tokyo (see [Japan map](#)).

His team snared the animal using a line baited with small squid and shot video of the russet-colored giant as it was hauled to the surface.

The squid, a young female, "put up quite a fight" as the team attempted to bring it aboard, Kubodera told the Associated Press, and the animal died from injuries sustained during the capture.

Giant squid, the world's largest invertebrates, are thought to reach sizes up to 60 feet (18 meters), but because they live at such great ocean depths they have never been studied in the wild.

Kubodera has spent three years searching for the creatures, and his team scored a coup in 2004 when it used a remote underwater camera to take the first-ever photographs of a live giant squid.

The capture may be a sign that giant squid are more plentiful than had been thought, Kubodera said, and the event could help open up more fruitful research into the poorly understood animal.

"Now that we know where to find them, we think we can be more successful at studying them in the future," he said.



MEXICO PASSES SHARK FINNING BAN: NEW PROTECTIONS FOR GREAT WHITE, WHALE AND BASKING SHARKS & MANTA RAYS

Underwatertimes.com News Service
Article submitted by James Vandervyer



A great white shark in the waters off Guadalupe Island.
Photo credit: Shark Diver / Patrick Douglas

San Diego, California (Mar 3, 2007) In a surprising move, the Mexican government has recently published sweeping new regulations and protections for sharks, including a shark finning ban, an extension of the moratorium on new commercial shark fishing permits, and extensive protections for great white sharks, whale sharks, basking sharks and manta rays.

Patrick Douglas, CEO of Shark Diver, a commercial white shark cage diving company operating out of San Diego, welcomed the move. "Mexico has taken a real leadership position here" says Douglas. "The rest of Latin America is watching what Mexico does with great interest now. This is good news indeed".

In the past few years, Mexico has been recognized as one of the few places on the planet where large congregations of Great White sharks appear each year at Isla Guadalupe. Along with Whale shark aggregations in Holbox, destination tourism with these shark species and others is growing.

Captain Mike Lever owner of expedition dive vessel MV Nautilus Explorer was thrilled with the news. "The people of Mexico afford us a great

privilege in allowing us to dive with the white sharks at Guadalupe Island. The enactment of Mexican rules for responsible shark and ray fisheries is incredibly good news and really bodes well for the survival of these magnificent animals. Our hats are off to all of the scientists who helped make this happen".

The new rules and regulations came after 10 years of debate and the broad support of researchers, scientists, conservations groups, eco-tour operations and local citizens.

...Just DDA It !!




MALDIVES TRIP REPORT

October 2006
by Colin Knight

In October 2006 over the Eid holiday, twenty three divers and family members visited the Maldives, which has become a diving hotspot between Europe and Asia. The Maldives consist of 26 coral Atolls south west of southern India and Sri Lanka. They have some of the best diving facilities in the world. Daily flights using Emirates or Qatar airlines take just a few hours.



Manta Circus (Mike Reilly)

Bandos Island Resort offers excellent facilities for divers and family members including Nitrox, a hyperbaric chamber and a modern medical center. Much of the infrastructure on the island has been completely rebuilt over the last few years, including the dive shop, reception, restaurants and swimming pool. The latest accommodations are two storey luxury detached villas with whirlpool Jacuzzi baths. Bandos has an excellent house reef with a wreck, enabling you to snorkel or dive any time of the day or night. It is only 20 minutes boat ride from the airport.

The dive shop offers two dives on the morning boat trip and one in the afternoon, giving the opportunity to visit many of the more exotic reefs in North Male Atoll. The usual plethora of coral reef life was seen during the week: Green and Hawksbill turtles, Giant, Honeycomb and Golden moray eels, Manta rays, eagle rays and stingrays, Sweetlips, Napoleon wrasse, Butterflyfish, Surgeon fish, Barracuda, Emperor Angelfish, Clowne and Titan Triggerfish, Gray reef, Whitetip and Blacktip sharks. Other creatures of note were octopus, cuttlefish, lobster on night dives on the Bandos house reef, and many dolphins on the surface.



Pufferfish, Night Dive (Colin Knight)



Blacktip Shark (Paul Catley)



Bannerfish (Paul Catley)

Maldives diving is ideal for recently-certified divers who wanted to broaden their experience. After a couple of days our 'novices' were confidently diving all the sites and enjoyed themselves. It is also an excellent introduction to drift diving, where the current takes you along the reef and you can enjoy the scenery with little effort. The top side was relaxing too, with the sunset bar by the dive shop a popular gathering place after the afternoon dive.

Trip participants:

Colin and Sue Knight, Bill Kasischke, Andrew Corley, Abdullah Al-Saleem, Mahdi Al-Ali, Suzanne Roat, Paul Catley, Donna Driscoll, Michael Reilly, Sean Rahati, Vera O'Hagan, Karen Goudie, Konstantin & Ute Divivier & family, David, Beth & Mallory Minchau, Baptiste, Sandra & Julie Messie, Thierry & Daniele Heitz.



Surgeonfish (Mike Reilly)

Full details are available on the web site:
www.divebandos.com

Dhahran Divers are entitled to discounted hotel and dive rates at any time – contact Colin Knight for details.

You can view photos on:

<http://www.colindiver.smugmug.com/Maldives%20October%202006>

The next trip will be over the Aramco Holiday 11-18 October 2007 (2 L days) - you are welcome to join us for some of the most exotic diving in the world. Some of the October group have already signed up for the trip. Contact colin.knight@aramco.com for details.



Clam in Bandos Wreck, Night Dive (Colin Knight)

DIVE HUMOUR



This is even funnier when you realize it's real! Next time you have a bad day at work, think of this guy. Rob is a commercial saturation diver for Global Divers in Louisiana. He performs underwater repairs on offshore drilling rigs. This is an E-mail he sent to his sister. She then sent it to radio station 103.2 on FM dial in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, who were sponsoring a "worst job experience" contest. Needless to say, she won.

Here's the email :

Hi Sue,
Just another note from your bottom-dwelling brother.

Last week I had a bad day at the office. I know you've been feeling down lately at work, so I thought I would share my dilemma with you to make you realize it's not so bad after all. Before I can tell you what happened to me, I first must bore you with a few technicalities of my job. As you know, my office lies at the bottom of the sea. I wear a suit to the office. It's a wet suit. This time of year the water is quite cool. So what we do to keep warm is this: We have a diesel powered industrial water heater. This \$20,000 piece of equipment sucks the water out of the sea. It heats it to a delightful temperature. It then pumps it down to the diver through a garden hose, which is taped to the air hose. Now, this sounds like a darn good plan, and I've used it several times with no complaints.

What I do, when I get to the bottom and start working, is take the hose and stuff it down the back of my wet suit. This floods my whole suit with warm water. It's like working in a jacuzzi.

Everything was going well until all of a sudden, my butt started to itch. So, of course, I scratched it. This only made things worse. Within a few seconds my butt started to burn. I pulled the hose out from my back, but the damage was done. In agony I realized what had happened.

The hot water machine had sucked up a jellyfish and pumped it into my suit. Now, since I don't have any hair on my back, the jellyfish couldn't stick to it. However, my butt was not as fortunate.

When I scratched what I thought was an itch, I was actually grinding the jellyfish into my butt. I informed the dive supervisor of my dilemma over the communicator. His instructions were unclear due to the fact that he, along with five other divers, were all laughing hysterically. Needless to say I aborted the dive. I was instructed to make three agonizing in-water decompression stops totaling thirty-five minutes before I could reach the surface to begin my chamber dry decompression. When I arrived at the surface, I was wearing nothing but my brass helmet.

As I climbed out of the water, the medic, with tears of laughter running down his face, handed me a tube of cream and told me to rub it on my butt as soon as I got in the chamber. The cream put the fire out, but I couldn't go to the bathroom for two days because my butt was swollen shut.

So, next time you're having a bad day at work, think about how much worse it would be if you had a jellyfish shoved up your butt.

Now, repeat to yourself, "I love my job, I love my job, I love my job."

Whenever you have a bad day, ask yourself, is this a jellyfish bad day?

May you NEVER have a jellyfish bad day!!!!





DIVE COURSES ON OFFER:

➤ **Adel Al-Bassam:** 873-7696/Cell: 055861940/email: adel.bassam@aramco.com

PADI Open Water, Advanced, Rescue, Emergency First Response/CPR/First Aid, DAN Oxygen Provider; Dive Master Courses ongoing. Can be tailored to meet your specific needs, Refresher classes anytime. Specialty courses please enquire. Please call for details.

➤ **Lope J. Caacbay:** Home tel. 861-1573 or Mobile 058108699, email: lope.caacbay@aramco.com

PADI Master Instructor/ IDC Staff and EFR Instructor No. 600175. **IANTD** Advanced Nitrox Instructor No. 2796. **IDEA** Instructor Trainer. Year round training on PADI recreational to extended range diving/IANTD courses. Don't hang up that gear, we can still train all year round! Flexible class schedule to accommodate participants' needs. Call for more details. For further reading about IANTD, visit: <http://www.iantd.com>

➤ **Randy Demaree:** 878-8521 or 873-9089

PADI Open Water and Advanced Open Water, Rescue and Dive Master, Emergency First Aid/CPR, DAN Oxygen Provider. Other courses: PADI Deep Diver, Boat Diver, Underwater Naturalist, Wreck Diver. Courses can be tailored to meet your specific needs -- please call for details. Refresher classes anytime.

➤ **Ibrahim K. Al-Haidan** (874-1257) Mobile: 050 581 9642 /email: ibrahim.haidan@aramco.com

- Basic Open Water Diver/Open Water Diver
- Advanced Open Water Diver
- Master Diver
- Assistant Instructor
- Nitrox Diver, Scuba Master Diver and Medical First Aid 1 and 2.



Courses can be conducted in both Arabic and English and can be tailored to meet your specific needs. Refresher courses available anytime and for Specialty Courses, please call for details.

➤ **Colin Knight** (874-0726/878-1022/Cell: 050 101 4874 /email: colin.knight@aramco.com

PADI and DAN course dates will be set up to suit you.

- Open Water courses – schedules set up to suit the student's needs.
- Advanced Diver courses conducted during Red Sea trips
- Rescue Diver / Emergency First Response Course / DAN Oxygen Administration
- DAN Hazardous Marine Animal Course (new)
- Specialty courses in the Red Sea & Half Moon Bay (*U/W Navigation, Search & Recovery, U/W Photography, Boat/Wreck Diver, U/W Naturalist, Multilevel Diver, Deep Diver, Night Diver, Peak Performance Buoyancy*)
- Nitrox courses run anytime.
- Dive Master Course- academics & water skills can be started immediately.

➤ **John Nilsen:** 878-3839/email: john.nilsen@aramco.com **NAUI** Scuba Diver (entry-level) through AI/DM.

➤ **Rene Seco:** 873-0547 or 878-1296/email: reynaldo.seco@aramco.com

PADI Courses can be tailored to suit specific students' needs.

- Open Water course
- Advanced Diver course conducted in Half Moon Bay and during Red Sea trips
- Rescue Diver/Emergency First Response Course/DAN Oxygen Administration

- Specialty courses in the Red Sea and Half Moon Bay (U/W Navigation, Search & Recovery, U/W Photography, Boat/Wreck Diver, U/W Naturalist, Multi-level Diver, Deep Diver, Night Diver, Peak Performance Buoyancy).
 - Nitrox Courses – run anytime
 - Dive Master Course – academics and water skills can be started immediately.
- Please enquire.

➤ **Sheryl Wright:** 878-2796/email: sheryl.wright@aramco.com **PADI** Open Water, Advanced, Rescue, Dive Master, Emergency First Response and Refresher courses. Female only classes are also available on request.

➤ **Farid Zoldjalali:** Home 875-1845 or Mobile 0504984166, email: Farid.Zoldjalali.1@aramco.com **PADI** Open Water, Advanced, Rescue, Emergency First Response/CPR/First Aid, Dive Master courses are ongoing. Courses can be conducted in both Arabic and English and can be tailored to meet your specific needs. Refresher courses can be arranged anytime. For Specialty Courses, please call for details.

2007 DDA BOARD MEMBERS

We are proud to present to you the 2007 elected board members. These board members are a dedicated volunteer team who are there to ensure that all the DDA members' needs are met.

Board Positions	Contact Person	Contact Number
President	Radi Adzemovic	874-6022
Vice-President	Sheryl Wright	874-6107
Treasurer	Farid Zoldjalali	873-6707
Secretary	Sean Rahati	873-4672
Membership Director	Lorrie Burns	877-6105
Membership Director	Anthony Murdoch	876-7237
Air Station Director	Rene Seco	873-0547
Air Station Director	David Gruno	874-5696
Equipment Director		
Equipment Director		
Training Director	Adel Bassam	873-7696
Dive Activities Director	Hana Bubshait	874-5466
Social Activities Director	Aida Rouhana	877-8173
Clearwater Editor	Vera O'Hagan	874-7232
Member at Large	Debbie Nanninga	877-6108
Website Coordinator	Fred Vouk	874-7956
Marine Life Awareness Coordinator	Dr. Abdulrazack Amir	877-3524



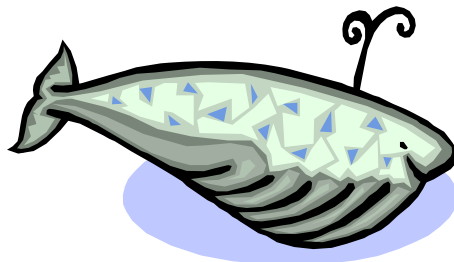
2007 DDA MEETING/SOCIAL SCHEDULE

<i>Meeting Date</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Guest Speaker</i>	<i>Topic</i>
Monday, March 26 th	Ad-Diwan, Room 1		Welcome Dinner Demo of new website (Alfred Vouk)
Monday, April 30 th	Ad-Diwan, Room 1	Colin Knight	Manta City and the Coral Gardens of the Maldives
Monday, May 28 th	Ad-Diwan, Room 1	Hana Bubshait	The most beautiful place in Saudi Arabia?
Monday, June 25 th	Ad-Diwan, Room 1	James Stephens	
Monday, July 30 th	Ad-Diwan, Room 1	John Weatherburn	
Monday, Aug. 27 th	Ad-Diwan, Room 1	James Stephens	
Monday, Sept. 24 th	Ad-Diwan, Room 1		
Monday, Oct. 29 th	Ad-Diwan, Room 1	Arthur Gregory	Red Sea Geoscience Excursions to Umm Lujj and Rabigh
Monday, Nov. 26 th	Ad-Diwan, Room 1		ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



GET YOUR NAME IN PRINT!
SEND IN YOUR DIVE ARTICLES
TELL US YOUR STORY!!

HELP! *Email to vera.ohagan@aramco.com*

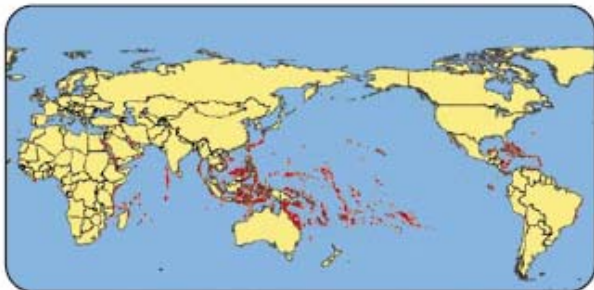


Protect coral reefs

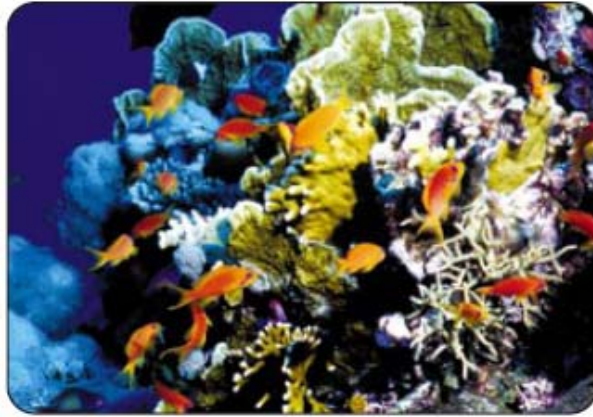
Coral reefs are the largest structures built by living organisms. The living part of the reef, a relatively thin skin over hard skeleton, contains many species of corals whose bodies are made of millions of polyps. These polyps form the skin of the reef which secretes an external skeleton made of limestone. Coral skeletons come in all shapes and forms, and with the living tissue of the coral, produce dazzling arrays of shapes and colors.

Inside the living tissue, corals harvest tiny algae which use sunlight and the process of photosynthesis to make food that is shared with the coral animal. In return, the coral animal provides its waste products as nutrient to the algae which use them for food production. This very intimate relationship, known as symbiosis, and the recycling of nutrients, is the driving force behind the construction of the enormous coral reefs. It also explains why corals live very close to the sea surface, and can (and need to) live in nutrient-poor oceanic environments.

The coral animal increases in size by adding new skeleton on top of old skeleton, where the coral tissue recedes and abandons the old part of the skeleton.



Locations of coral reefs (in red) around the world.



Therefore, when one observes a large head of coral, such as a brain coral, one ought to appreciate that the external living part of the coral colony extends only a few centimeters below the surface. The remaining portion is simply limestone. It is the process of accumulation and compaction of coral skeletons, with the help of other organisms that cement things, which create the majestic reefs we see in places like the Red Sea.

Only tropical rainforests can boast a larger biodiversity than coral reefs, which are home to many thousands of species of animals and plants, from the miniscule goby fish to the large predator sharks. Therefore, it is all the more concerning that corals are very sensitive to disturbance, whether natural or man-made. Corals bleach and die when seawater temperature rises above average for a few days or weeks. Corals are extremely sensitive to nutrient enrichment be it from agricultural run-off or sewage discharge to the sea. Dredging and filling operations produce heavy loads of sediment in the water, which can easily overwhelm the clearing ability of the coral polyps, eventually smothering and killing corals.

The message is very clear: Coral reefs are natural treasures and resources. They are centers of biodiversity – immense in size yet extremely sensitive – we should do everything in our power to protect, not only for their beauty but for the health of the marine environment.

Yusef H. Fadlala, Environmental Engineering Division, EPD.

DDA 2007 DIVE SCHEDULE

DDA Dive Activities Director, Hana Bubshait announces the following dive trips to help you plan early. For further information contact Hana by email: hana.bubshait@aramco.com, or the relevant trip leader (see contact list below). **To sign up for any of these dive trips contact the trip leader directly.**

Date	Destination	Trip Leader/ Contact	Max Person	Details/Cost (Approx.)
4/19/2007	Bahrain Yacht Club	Hana Bubshait, 874-5466	8	Abu Thalma Reef If possible or local reef/ SR 350
5/17/2007	Bahrain Yacht Club	David R Gruno, 877-3659	8	Abu Thalma Reef If possible or local reef/ SR 350
5/30/2007	Yanbu	Hana Bubshait, 874-5466	18	Details will be announced at a later date
6/20/2007	Sharm El Sheikh	Hana Bubshait, 874-5466	18	Details will be announced at a later date
6/21/2007	Bahrain Yacht Club	David R Gruno, 877-3659	8	Abu Thalma Reef If possible or local reef/ SR 350
7/12/2007	Farasan Banks	Rene Seco, 873-0547	-	Details will be announced at a later date
7/19/2007	Bahrain Yacht Club	David R Gruno, 877-3659	8	Abu Thalma Reef If possible or local reef/ SR 350
8/16/2007	Bahrain Yacht Club	David R Gruno, 877-3659	8	Abu Thalma Reef If possible or local reef/ SR 350
8/29/2007	Yanbu	Hana Bubshait, 874-5466	18	Details will be announced at a later date
9/6/2007	Rabigh- Outer Reef	Rene Seco, 873-0547	-	Details will be announced at a later date
9/20/2007	Bahrain Yacht Club	David R Gruno, 877-3659	8	Abu Thalma Reef If possible or local reef/ SR 350
10/7/2007	Maldives	Farid Zoldjalali, 873-6707	18	One week Liveaboard dive trip/ SR 7400
10/10/2007	Sipadan, Malaysia	Hana Bubshait, 874-5466	18	Details will be announced at a later date
10/11-18 2007	Maldives, Bandos Island Resort	Colin Knight, 874-0726	30	Land-based trip, approx cost SR9000. Option to extend to October 20 th
12/6/2007	Farasan Banks	Rene Seco, 873-0547	-	Details will be announced at a later date

TRIP LEADERS/CONTACTS:

Farid Zoldjalali:	email: farid.zoldjalali.1@aramco.com	Tel: 873-6707/ 050-498-4166
Hana Bubshait	Email: hana.bubshait@aramco.com	Tel: 874-5466/ 0506848004
Bruce Jahnke:	email: bruce.jahnke@aramco.com	Tel: 878-6068
Colin Knight:	email: colin.knight@aramco.com	Tel: 874-0726/ 878-1022
Rene Seco:	email: reynaldo.seco@aramco.com	Tel: 873-0547
David Gruno	Email : david.gruno@aramco.com	Tel : 877-3659

Dhahran Divers Group has been created on Yahoo Groups to enable DDA retirees, members and friends to keep in touch and arrange to dive together again on the great dive sites of the world. To join, use the link on www.seapic.com

Galapagos 2008 Join us for the dream dive vacation of a lifetime. October 23 – Nov 5, one week live-aboard, approx \$7000. Full details via www.seapic.com or contact colin.knight@aramco.com

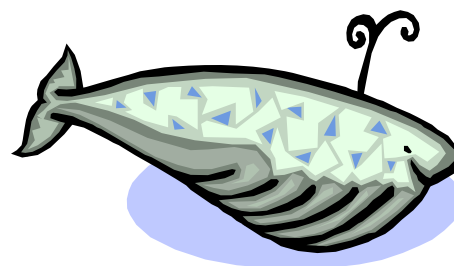


TANK FILL SCHEDULE



TANK-FILL TIMES!

opening April 16th - October 29th
From 4:30 - 5:00 pm
Mondays at the Air Station



The DDA Air Station is located in Building 210 behind the Third Street Pool - entry off Walnut Street (see *location map on website*). For the new 2007 Dive Season the Airstation will open on April 16th and operate until October 29th 2007.

The Air Station will be open every Monday from 4:30pm (16:30).

If you urgently require an air fill you can also contact one of the Air Station Directors (Rene Seco - 873-0547 or David Gruno - 874-5696) or one of the members on the **2007 Air Station Duty Roster** and make some private arrangements.

Membership Reminder

Anyone who submitted their membership 2007 forms with all the required information will be able to pick up their cards at the monthly meeting. We will be there from 5:30 p.m. if you wish to come early. If you have not yet submitted your membership forms, please bring :-

- your signed 2007 membership form
- a photocopy of your current certification cards (front and back)
- membership fee (**100 SAR for single, 300 SAR for family**), and
- your current membership card (if you have one)

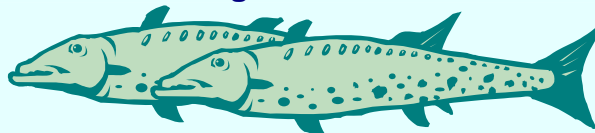
to the meeting so that we can update your card with the 2007 sticker. If you require a **new card** then also include a photo (or you can scan and email it to us separately). Membership cards will be available for pickup at the monthly meeting.

Remember to visit our new DDA website:
www.dhahrandiving.com



"Clearwater" Editor, Vera O'Hagan

Tel: 874-7232, Box 12020 Dhahran,
Email: vera.ohagan@aramco.com



DDA Photo Contest



Debbie Nanninga
877-6108

Radi Adzemovic
874-6022

R U L E S

- The Underwater Photography Contest is open to all DDA Members.
- There will be two classifications: Junior (up to and including the age of 15), and Adult.
- Eligible photos may not have been published before and must be the contestants own work.
- No pool or aquarium shots will be accepted. Photos must be taken of fish, marine animal life or coral reefs. Photos of the RED SEA or Arabian Gulf are preferred.
- Photos will be judged by online voting and finalists will be judged by voting at the November AGM. All decisions will be final.
- New entries will be posted monthly on the website until the contest deadline. Online voting will only be allowed for the duration of each monthly posting.
- Ownership and copyright of all entries remain with the photographer. We reserves the right to publish the winning photos without compensation for educational purposes, including, but not limited to publication on the DDA website, in brochures, educational campaigns, publications in articles regarding the Red Sea, publication for tourism or for future contest promotion. The winning photographs may also be printed and used as a traveling exhibit within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Photos may also be used for a DDA Calendar which will be sold to raise funds for the club. Credit will be given to all winners.

- Contestants are limited to 1 entry per month.
- Please provide general information regarding the photo entry. i.e. author, age, badge number, location, date, camera.
- Winners will be announced at the DDA November General Meeting and also posted in the DDA Clearwater Newsletter and website www.dhahrandiving.com.
- Entries should be received not later than October 31.
- All entries submitted after October 31 will be ineligible for the contest.
- Each contestant must use their badge number as a contestant number. This number must be used on all submission material.
- All photo entries must be high resolution digital images. Digital images must be named in the format : "Badge number - Name – Age - Photo Number " e.g. 111999-alfred vouk – 49 -02
- Images may be optimized (i.e. adjusted while maintaining the integrity of the image), but not altered such that an image does not reflect the actual subject matter.
- All submission material should be sent to: Alfred Vouk, alfred.vouk@aramco.com



That's All, Folks...