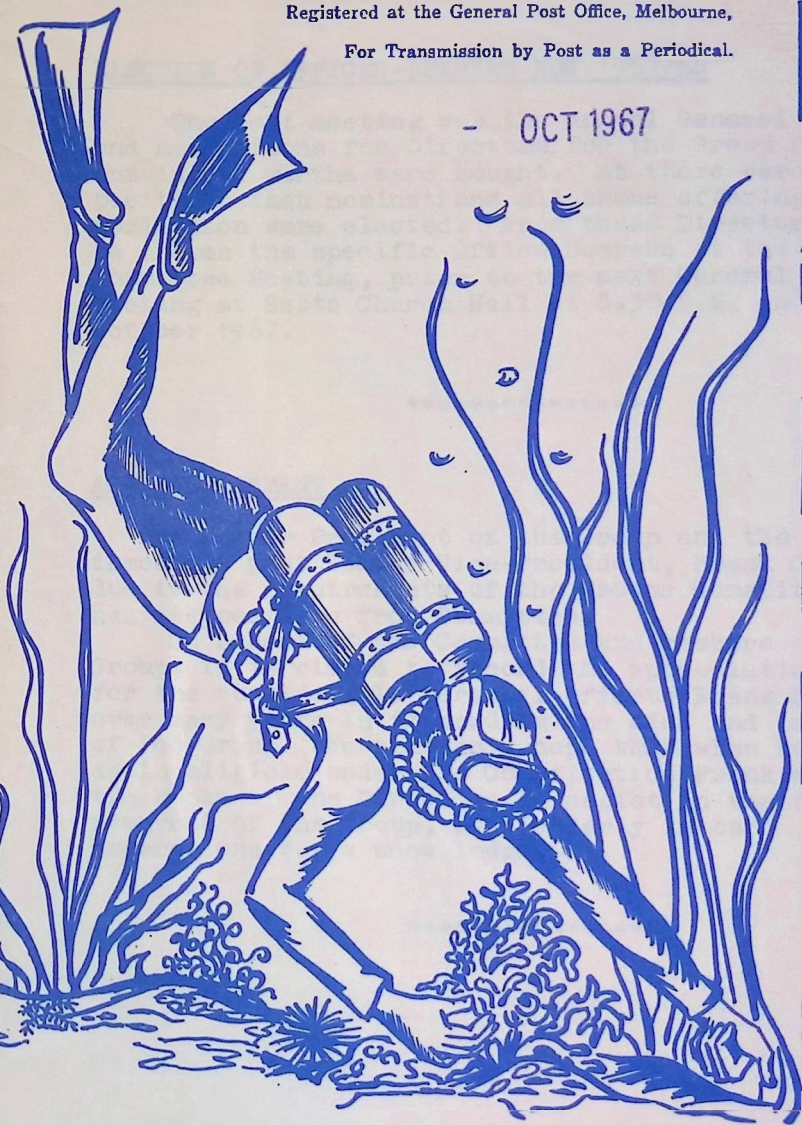


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- OCT 1967



FATHOMS



VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

PAC

ELECTION OF OFFICER-BEARERS FOR 1967/68

The last meeting was the Annual General Meeting and nominations for Directors for the Group for the ensuing 12 months were sought. As there were more positions than nominations all those offering for nomination were elected. From these Directors will be chosen the specific Office-Bearers at the next Committee Meeting, prior to the next General Meeting at Scots Church Hall at 8.30 P.M. on 20th October 1967.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A former President of the Group and the retiring immediate past Senior Vice-President, Frank Coustley, due to the requirements of the Groups Constitution, has stepped down from Committee.

On behalf of the Committee and members of the Group, it is wished to record the appreciation of all for the considerable personal efforts Frank has made over many years in forwarding the aims and interests of the Group. We sincerely hope that when he is again eligible under the Constitution Frank will rejoin the ranks of the Directors to assist in the future progress of the Group, particularly in our asperations for a snow lodge.

OUTINGS PAST

September 24th - Ricketts Point. Two boat loads of divers took off about 11.45 a.m. over calm sunlit waters anticipating good clear water diving - with collection of plenty of scallops and abalone. However visibility was down to 5 ft - abalone were small and the scallops non existant. A couple of members tried the rod and line method for fish - without success.

October 1st - Anonyma Shoal. This dive somehow followed only a week after the Ricketts Point dive and on the actual date apparently no-one turned up. However 4 members turned up with one boat on the 8th October and found conditions the same as on the 24th. If this confuses you - How do you think your Editors feel? Right - foolish.

OUTINGS FUTURE

October 29th - Shaq Rocks. This is an excellent diving area at Mount Martha. The Rocks are about 100 yds offshore and although the intervening depth is approximately 10 ft the seaward side of the reef drops away to 30 ft. The reef is large, very colourful and usually has a variety of fish - suitable for the fry-pan. Large Flathead frequent the sand stretch between the shore and reef. Meet at Mt. Martha Post Office at 11.a.m.

November 12th - Cape Schank. Low water is at 11.30 a.m. so to take advantage of slack water meet at the car park at 10.00 a.m. This is excellent diving country and there is a wreck to be located - one diver attending claims to know its location.

There are excellent barbeque facilities for a steak burn after the dive.

November 25/26 - Weekend. Gold dive in the Thompson River at Walhalla. Further information at the next meeting.

Extracts from Australian Fisheries Development Conference Canberra, February 20/22 1967.

Scallops

There are several species of scallop in Australian waters but the major fisheries are based on Pecten alba and P. meridionalis in Port Phillip Bay Victoria and in the waters off the eastern half of Tasmania respectively. Scallop resources are especially subject to natural fluctuations, the presence of fishable stocks on any particular scallop bed in any year being dependent upon success of the settlement of juveniles in previous years. In some years there may be a total failure of settlement in particular areas. Ocean surveys have shown the ~~existence~~ existence of substantial beds on which only dead shell are present. The commercial exploration of the Victorian beds in late September 1963 led to the development of a fishery which produced 10,700 short tons (live weight) in 1964/65. Production in Tasmania during the same period amounted to 1450 short tons (live weight), 250 short tons (live weight) were landed in Queensland in 1964/65. (Amusium balloti)

Problems differ in these three States. In Victoria the resource is readily accessible but is subject to increasing effort. In Tasmania, the stocks are relatively inaccessible and there is the further problem of fishermen transferring effort to the more

lucrative crayfishery. In Queensland, the scallop fishery is merely an alternative to the more profitable prawn fishery.

Abalone

Although a number of species are harvested Notohaliotis ruber provides the main fishery which extends around the south-eastern coastline of Australia. Production from this fishery, which began in 1964, was estimated to be approximately 1450 short tons (live weight). However no information is available as to the size of natural stocks in Australian waters but most, if not all, species of abalone are relatively long lived and take as much as five or six years to grow to fisherable size. Thus, severe reduction of stocks would not be difficult to bring about.

Resource research is a primary requirement in view of the vulnerability of abalone and that interim management measures should be introduced to safeguard the fishery.

It was recognised, however, that the resource is protected to some extent by the lack of land access to many areas and by the limited number of divers available.

A uniform code of handling and processing procedures should be introduced to ensure a quality product before the industry expands further. As provision of access roads could not be economically justified it is recommended that sales tax exemption should be granted on 4 wheel drive vehicles used by fishermen (as primary producers). It was also a recommendation that consideration be given to abalone culture.

EDITORS COMMENTS - Scallops

Whilst it is accepted that under natural conditions shortage of scallops can occur, it cannot be overlooked that the reported increasing effort

required by fishermen in Port Phillip Bay is in no short measure due to the very heavy fishing which has been permitted to occur over the past 4 years - over 90 working boats registered for scallop dredging. Apart from depleting existing stocks such intensive working of so limited an area must also affect the settlement of juvenile scallops for future years. To an outside observer, it appears that the fishermen have reaped a quick bountiful harvest of dollars at the expense of stabilizing supplies over a long period of years. Limiting the number of boats now may be "closing the gate after the horse has bolted."

Abalone

It is stated that lack of road access and the limited number of divers available is to some extent protecting the fishery. However since this report, if divers rumours can be given any credence, the number of divers, attracted by the attractive pay, are increasing. Further, large faster boats can effectively clean an extensive area out without land transport. Dr R.F. DILL, (Scripps Institute of Oceanography) who has worked for 20 years in under water research, is reported in the "Sun" 25/9/67 as stating he had seen large populations of fish wiped out by people who worked without a program and without knowing what they were doing. He instanced two examples in America namely Abalone and Lobster. America now buys lobster (crayfish) from us and also I would say abalone now. West Australian fishermen, in trying to reap the dollars, could endanger the crayfish of West Australia, as they have been taking undersize crays for years at the risk of heavy State penalties.

If we are to conserve our abalone industry how is the time to protect it - not after it is wiped out. Dr Dill goes on to warn us to be wise now or we will create havoc in the sea. Its bountiful resources must be ~~xxxxx~~ nurtured, fishermen, who are

commercially biased, should ^{not} decide on how much should be taken from the sea, this should be decided by scientists after detailed study.

THE RINGED OCTOPUS BITE - EMERGENCY ATTENTION

In past months we have all read of the death of a young man in N.S.W. from the bite of the ringed octopus (*Octopus maculosus* "Hapalochloena maculosa") and as this marine creature is common around our popular beaches, a description of this colourful little creature and emergency treatment in case of a bite from same appears appropriate at this time.

Octopus maculosus rarely exceeds 10 c.m. in length and is found in all Australian coastal waters. When resting it has dark brown ochre bands over its body and tentacles with blue circles superimposed in these bands. When the animal is disturbed, angry or anoxic, the colours darken dramatically, the blue rings become iridescent peacock blue. The brilliant and variable colour together with its small size make identification of the species easy, but also unfortunately, these same features make it attractive to passing humans particularly children.

The toxin extracted from the salivary glands affects neuro-muscular junctions and nerve conductivity. Complete and rapid cessation of all voluntary muscle activity, including the diaphragm, which is essential to breathing, and death is purely respiratory, heart failure follows. However the heart continues to beat in a near normal manner for a long period after the onset of paralysis. The toxin has been shown to have no direct effect on the human heart.

SYMPTOMS

The victim generally is unaware of any actual bite but symptoms of intoxication occur within five or ten minutes of the live octopus being placed on the skin. Symptoms begin with weakness, numbness about the face and neck combine with difficulty in breathing and progress rapidly to paralysis. The heart continues to function until anoxia becomes severe.

TREATMENT

There is no specific antitoxin or antivenene yet available - treatment consists of effective artificial respiration which may have to be maintained for a considerable time, possibly 3 or 4 hours before any spontaneous respiratory efforts were observed. Artificial respiration must be commenced immediately and maintained and medical treatment sought when artificial respiration with assistance of oxygen may be obtainable.

This attractive but dangerous little creature is easily recognised and therefore contact with it should be avoided - which is after all the surest safety method.

AN APPEAL

The Club has for some years been receiving monthly copies of the American Skin Diver Magazine which are available on loan to any member wishing to read them, either current issues or old issues. However, the time has come to have the large number of early issues bound into volumes to protect them and also a more suitable way of lending them. However to complete the first volumes we need to replace certain missing issues. We would greatly appreciate if any members could make available any of the following missing numbers :-

1961 - - - - SEPTEMBER
1964 - - - - FEBRUARY
1965 - - - - JULY
" - - - - AUGUST
" - - - - OCTOBER
" - - - - NOVEMBER

If you can assist by making all or any of these issues available to the Club please contact Peter Matthews or any member of the Committee - please check if you have these to spare.

OVERSEAS NEWS

U.S. Diving Deaths

At least 86 Americans drowned whilst diving in 1965. Newspaper reports, studied by Daniel P. Webster of the Public Health Service's Division of Accident Prevention, revealed that accident peaks occurred from May to September, during weekends, and at ages from 21 to 25. Thirteen victims were under 18. Florida, with 21 fatalities, and California, with 19, led 28 States in the number of victims. Of the 85 people concerned, 26 were skin divers (24 male) aged 11 to 49, and 60 were scuba divers (58 males) aged 14 to 59. Almost half died in oceans, gulfs and bays, inland waters came next, and 3 occurred in swimming pools.

Causes were mainly violations of safe diving practices, including diving alone, not diving in pairs, diving in adverse conditions, and lacking or failing to use emergency equipment. Lack of equipment or defective equipment was related to 23 deaths. Exhaustion was the most frequent cause.

SO PLAY SAFE - DIVE SAFELY