



Fathoms

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2021

Cover photo:

Up close and personal
with a Great White!

- by Greg Richards.



VSAG DIVE TRIP, MV RODNEY FOX, SA
VSAG ROAD TRIP TO RAPID BAY, SA
VSAG EWENS PONDS DIVE TRIP, AND MORE.....

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www.vsag.org.au

Vsag Club Meetings Now on Zoom



Our next club meeting, is scheduled for :

Tuesday, 20th April, 2021 at 8pm.

Download the zoom.us app and click on join meeting. Enter meeting ID and password which will be emailed prior to meeting time.

Looking forward to seeing everyone!



Fathoms

Est. 1954

Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group, Inc.

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NOTICES

VSAG Committee meets at 7 p.m. every 2nd Tuesday of the month
(except in January)

All Members Welcome



**VSAG Monthly meetings are at 8 p.m. on the
3rd TUESDAY of each month
Via Zoom**

**Download the zoom.us app, click on join meeting
and enter the meeting details, which are emailed out
prior to meeting.
See you there!**

VSAG on Facebook

Did you know VSAG now has a Facebook page? Check it out at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/vsag.divers/> and 'Like' us.



UECWA our sister club in Western Australia is pleased to offer reciprocal diving arrangements to VSAG members.

Underwater Explorers Club of Western Australia

Postal Address
PO Box 382, Melville WA 6956

Email: info@uecwa.com.au

Meetings
Esplanade Hotel
The Esplanade, Fremantle, WA
Boat
Port Coogee Marina
Chieftain Esplanade, North Coogee, WA

We are delighted to announce that we have now established another relationship with an interstate club that will allow you to dive with them if you wish to and vice versa.

The club is the Tas Uni Dive Club. You can check them out at : www.tudc.org.au



Your VSAG Committee 2020–2021

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HOGAN ISLAND DIVE TRIP



Photo by Stuart Cousines

HOGAN ISLAND TRIP

26-30th December, 2020

By Ian Scholey.

I have wanted to join Grant Callow and crew for a trip down to Hogan Island, ever since they joined VSAG and talked about it. It has never been possible for me, due to work and the unreliability of the schedule with the weather. As soon as I retired, I talked to Grant at the first opportunity and the plan for this trip quickly came together.

Just back from the club trip to South Australia, I was home for just Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, before throwing my gear into the car and heading over to Port Welshpool for a Boxing Day departure. Grant's self built boat is 6.5m long and we filled every bit of it with supplies, camping gear, dive gear, a compressor, a dinghy and enough fuel for doing our fills and getting home again. The five

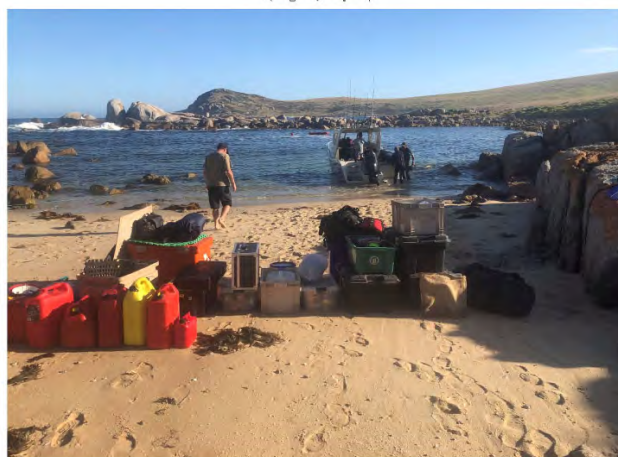
man crew of Grant, myself, Mike Mosseveld, Wolfgang Obst and Stuart Cousins were squeezed into any remaining space and we set off on schedule. The departure time is critical, to ensure that there is enough water in the bay at Hogan, to get the boat into shore to allow unloading.

We punched our way across the shallow water of Port Welshpool in quite choppy conditions. Grant handled the boat expertly and his eyes were on our speed and fuel consumption. Fortunately, once we got away from shore a little more and into deeper water, the conditions improved slightly and we had a more comfortable ride. With Wilson's Prom in view for the first part of the trip, it felt very comfortable. I have to admit, it felt like a much more serious endeavour, once we were in the open waters of Bass Strait with no land in sight. Eventually, the Hogan Group of Islands appeared on the horizon and I breathed a sigh of relief. We

pulled into the anchorage at Hogan after a two hour and fifty minute/90 km trip.

This was Grant's 32nd trip down to Hogan Island and it's fair to say, that he and Mike have got their routines down pat. The boat was quickly tied up at the mooring and the process of getting the gear off-loaded was in full swing. Everybody has to pitch in to, first, get stuff off the boat onto the beach and then onwards up the hill to the campsite. Grant's hut provides a welcome centre piece to the camp and is the perfect refuge from the elements if necessary. It is well equipped with dried food supplies, pots and pans and a gas stove.

First job was to get our tents pitched. Most of the crew have their usual spots, leaving Stuart and I to select our spots. Stuart opted for Rowan Salger's prepared site, now complete with a resident Penguin as a near neighbour. I found a piece of flat ground close to the hut, to keep the crawl from bed to the kettle for a cup of tea as short as possible. With tents pitched, we were given a quick tour of the vicinity by Grant. Most important was the old cattle trough, which has been connected with pipes to the Island fresh water spring. With Grant's last visit being over 12 months ago, the trough had a couple of inches of sludge in the bottom of it, so it had to be drained, cleaned out



*Unloading on Hogan Island
- by Stuart Cousins*

and allowed to refill before we could utilise it.

With the sun going down, we were sitting down having a well earned cuppa when, to our surprise, two sea kayaks, crewed by 3 very tired looking paddlers, rounded the headland and pulled up onto the beach. They quickly introduced themselves as three brothers from Melbourne, who were on their way to Tassie from Wilson's Prom. It wasn't a surprise they looked tired, as the paddle from Refuge Cove had taken them 8 hours. I couldn't help thinking, rather than me.

It's amazing what Grant Callow can cook up on a gas stove and open fire. In the splendid isolation of Hogan Island, where there is no power, no people, no trees and very little of anything else, bar rocks and grass, I was expecting to rough it, at least a little bit, on the catering front.



Lambers brothers Kayakers

Nothing could be further from the truth. We ate like kings even before we supplemented our supplies with Crayfish, Abalone and fresh caught fish.

We shared with the kayakers, who couldn't quite believe it, when presented with a Lamb Roast. According to Grant, nothing attracts Kayakers like his Lamb Roast. That said, these boys were keen for Crayfish, but sadly for them, they had departed when we finally caught ourselves one. Of course we sent them a picture of it so they could enjoy thinking about it when they next made land at Deal Island.

The island is home to a colony of Fairy Penguins and you are basically camped right in the middle of the colony. After dark they start to come in and the squawking starts. It pretty much goes on all night, but I found it easy enough to fall asleep with that noise and the ocean waves as the soundtrack.

Day Two

We woke up late on day two and after a brekky of egg and bacon rolls, we decided to have a relaxing morning and start our diving in the afternoon.

We sat around chatting, fished from the beach and did a bit of gardening around the hut to amuse ourselves. The Hogan Group is a small group of Islets with Hogan Island being the largest at 3km long by 1 km wide. Nothing is too far away, so boat trips to the various dive sites are short.

The weather conditions weren't great, so our options on day one were limited. Grant and Mike's knowledge of the area is excellent and they picked a dive spot perfect in the conditions. With Wolfgang staying behind to fish and a non-diving Grant at the helm, we headed out to East Islet to dive on a spot called Mike's Lost Cave

Dive 1 : Mikes Lost Cave, East Islet

Max Depth: 23m

Water Temp: 16 degrees

Dive Time: 45 minutes

With Mike leading the way, we headed down into crystal clear water. The territory is interesting but at first glance nothing special. The huge boulders are stacked up on each other and covered in substantial amounts of Kelp. You need to know where you are going and Mike led us into the



Fishing from the beach on Hogan Island

gaps between the boulders, which create fantastic swim throughs and passages. Inside these, the dive site comes to glorious life with every inch of rock covered by sponges, corals and Zoanthoids. It really was just an explosion of colour, as my lights illuminated things. The thing I noticed was the size of the fish-life. All of our local species are there but they are so much larger in these waters, presumably due to the limited fishing that goes on here. Hanging at 5m doing our safety stop, we were surrounded by a soup of Comb jellies.

Back at camp, we set about the various jobs that needed doing. While I filled tanks, the work started on the evening's meal. We started with marinated Abalone, followed by Fresh fish cooked in Miso broth from the Kayakers supplies and finished up with delicious roast lamb and salad in pitta bread. With such delicious food on offer, the first bottle of Red was

opened and quickly despatched. With the wind picking up, we had already added extra pegs to the tents to make sure they stayed put. The good news was, that the forecast for the next day was looking much better for diving.

Day Three

Waking up early we were once again treated to eggs and bacon to go with the coffee. As we loaded the dive gear onto the boat a small issue of a punctured dinghy caused a slight delay but a bit of sticky tape was a good enough temporary fix not to delay things too long. With a full crew on board, we headed out on flat calm seas to Long Islet for our first dive of the day.

Dive 2 : The Boulders, Long Islet,

Max Depth: 26m

Water Temp: 16 degrees

Dive Time: 45 minutes

With Grant's promise of each dive being better than the last, I headed down looking forward to something pretty special. I wasn't to be disappointed and once again, every inch of space between the stacked Boulders was covered in growth. The Boulders create a maze of tunnels and swim throughs and we explored at a leisurely pace. We found a sleeping Draughtboard Shark, who faced with my camera, bolted for it, only to quickly change its mind on an

escape direction when faced with Mike, Grant and Stuart coming towards it down the passage. Draughtboards can be a bit dopey and this one bumped straight into me trying to get away from us. Stuart is a Crayfish virgin and after easily grabbing one he must of thought he'd crossed that one off his list but sadly, he caught a feisty one and before he could bag it, it broke loose and escaped to fight another day.

Back at camp we found the Kayakers packing their gear up and getting ready to head off on the next stage of their paddle. About two in the afternoon, they set off on their expected 8 hour trip to Deal Island. Knowing they would arrive after dark, they went for it anyway, with the weather forecast over the coming days deteriorating. We were carefully watching the forecast as well and a departure on 30th December looked necessary, to avoid a long stay on the Island.

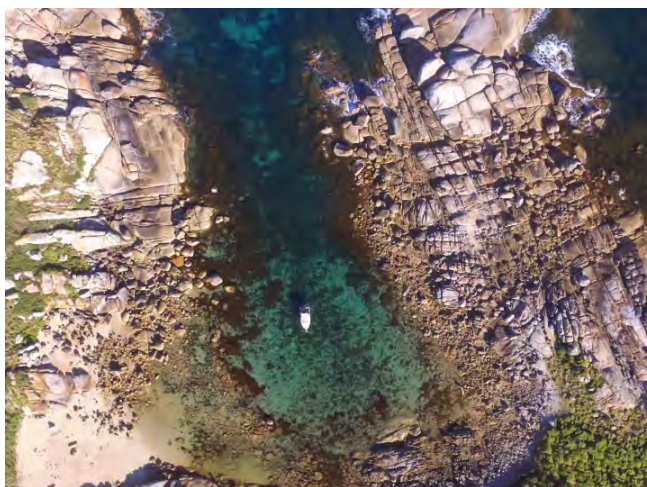


Photo by Stuart Cousins.

In the afternoon we headed out again for our next dive.

Dive 3 : The Canyon, East Islet

Max Depth: 24m

Water Temp: 16 degrees

Dive Time: 46 minutes

This dive was my personal favourite. The highlight of the dive is a sensational canyon with sheer sides, once again, covered in growth. The bottom is covered with small boulders and slabs and as I entered the canyon and descended, the first thing I noticed was a good sized cray. Placing the camera down carefully I made a grab and as usual missed and looked at the feeler left in my hand. The little bugger had backed under a slab and was just out of reach. With Grant joining the hunt and covering the front, I tried to get it from the other end. Once again I got a hold but this time just got a leg. The Cray was now in the middle just out of arms reach from both ends and despite our best efforts we couldn't get it. I hate leaving them behind when you have damaged them but we didn't have a lot of choice. As usual I was slow, as I snapped away with the camera. I lost the others for a while but found them eventually. As they swam towards me, Grant held up a lovely Crayfish with a smile on his face. With dinner sorted, we completed our safety stop and headed home.



Photo by Stuart Cousins.

Clearly, we were gutted for the Kayakers that they had missed the Crayfish feed, so to make them feel better, we sent them a lovely picture of our steamed beauty before we tucked in.

Grant, Stuart and I went on a drift wood hunt, walking some distance down the Island, leaving Mike to fill the tanks. We found a bit but not a huge amount. I took the opportunity to snap some Penguin shots as we headed back to camp. Dinner was late but oh so good. After polishing off the Cray, we were served huge Ribeye Steaks and veggies by Grant. Stuffed full, we slept well, despite the Penguin chorus.

Day Four

Conditions on the water were getting better and better and today it was flat tack. Also flat tack was the dinghy, so some proper repairs were necessary before we could head out to dive. Not that it delayed us much, as usual Grant and Mike skilfully sorted it and we were good to go.

Dive 4: Swim-through, East Islet,

Max Depth: 26m

Water Temp: 16 degrees

Dive Time: 41 minutes

More excellent territory, more fantastic colour and more fish than you could shake a stick at. I should have known Grant was joking, when he said to me that the swim through wasn't that colourful.

Dive 5: The Pinnacle, East Islet,

Max Depth: 25m

Water Temp: 16 degrees

Dive Time: 48 minutes

This site is exposed to some strong currents, so we timed our afternoon dive to slack water. The Pinnacle is just away from the Islet and drops from 5m down to about 30m. Starting deep we circled the Pinnacle at various depths heading off into cracks and passages to explore as we went. Despite wanting to save some air for a quick 3rd dive, we still

managed our longest dive of the trip, which is an indication of how good this dive is.

Dive 6: Round Islet

Max Depth: 19m

Water Temp: 16 degrees

Dive Time: 17 minutes

We had saved 70 bar in our tanks for a quick splash at Round Islet, which is home to a seal colony. With Mike staying on the boat with Wolfgang the rest of us splashed in and headed down. The seals weren't in the mood to interact and we only caught an occasional glimpse as one flew past in the distance. Grant led us around the Islet to an overhang at 19m. Under the overhang were a dozen sleeping Port Jackson's. Unusually, there was a small Draughtboard Shark tucked up against the biggest PJ. With limited gas, we didn't stay too long, before heading back to the boat.

Our final evening on the Island was a good one with Roast Chicken and veggies on the menu as well as the last bottle of Red.

Day Five

After an excellent nights sleep, we had a quick breakfast, before getting stuck into the business of packing up camp, cleaning up the hut and loading the boat. We had things packed up and the boat fuelled by mid morning. I don't think any of us were ready to leave but

with some nasty Southerlies forecasted for the next week, we had little choice than to call it a day. Conditions for the return crossing were superb and the much lighter boat, together with minimal swell, made for a very quick trip. We made it back in an hour and 35 minutes and we were back in Port Welshpool in time for a Fish and Chip lunch.

For me, Hogan Island really lived up to the hype. It is a beautiful spot and it's easy to see why it has such an appeal for Grant and Mike. If you get the chance to go, do what you have to do to make it happen, you won't regret it. I know that I will be a return visitor at some stage, should I be lucky enough to get the opportunity. Here's to magnificent Isolation and fantastic diving - what more could you ask for?

- Ian Scholey. ❖



Photo by Stuart Cousins.

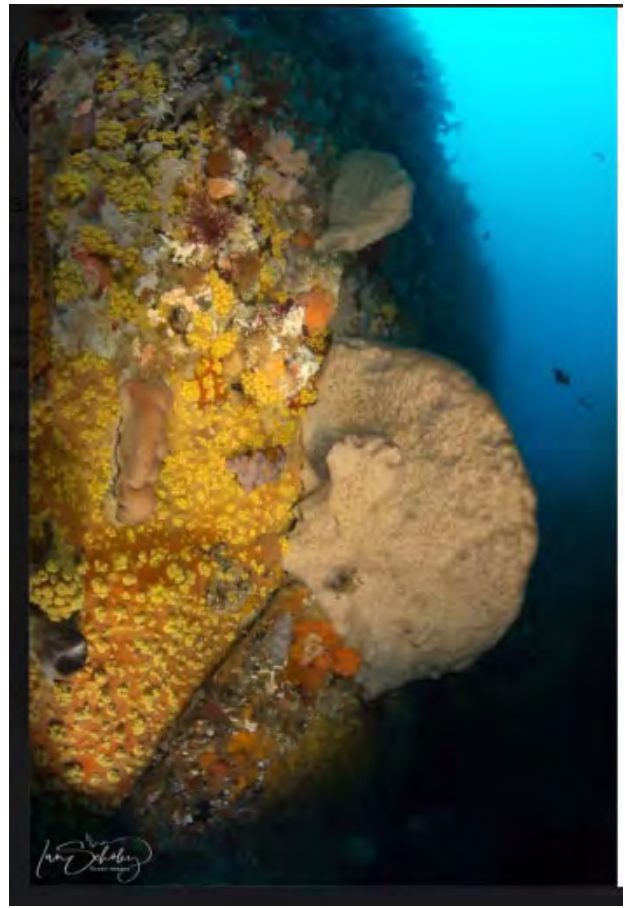
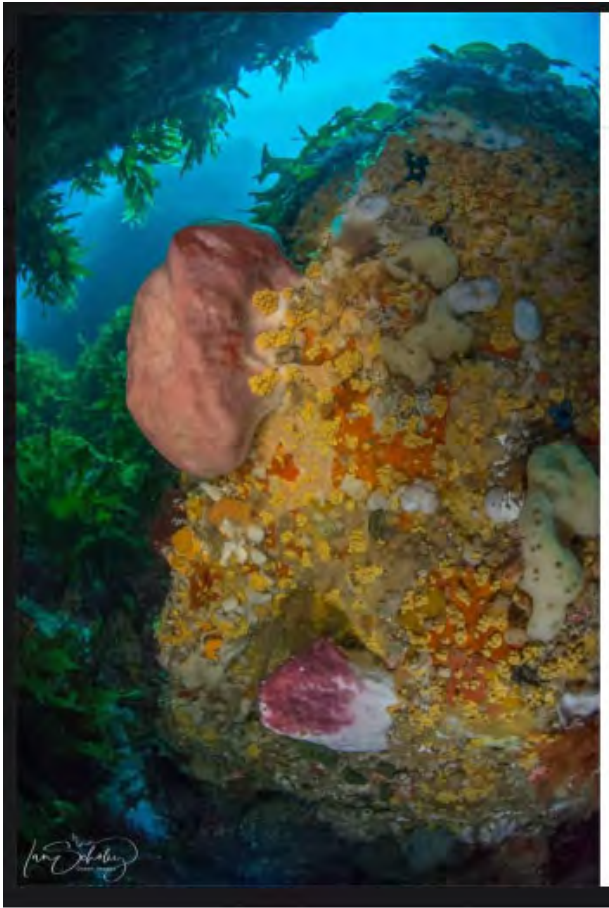
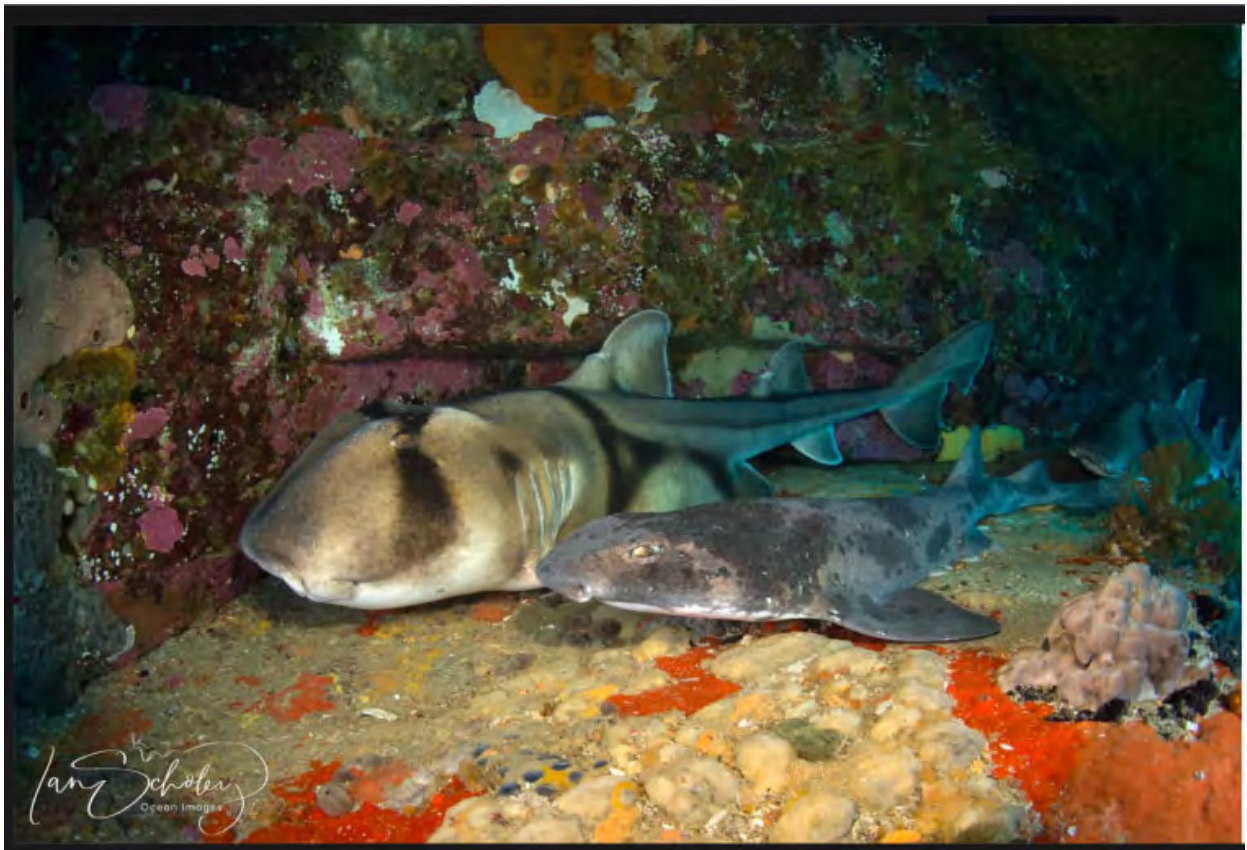


Photo by Stuart Cousins.



VSAG South Australian Road Trip

VSAG SOUTH AUSTRALIA ROAD TRIP

By Ian Scholey.

As soon as we were out of lockdown, plans were hatched for for a diving road trip to South Australia in December 2020. The plan was to depart Melbourne on Monday 7th December, and spend the 8th December - 12th December on the Yorke Peninsula, diving at Edithburgh Jetty and other spots. Then from 13th December - 20th December 2020 on the Fleurier Peninsula diving at Rapid Bay, Second Valley, Victor Harbour, ex HMAS Hobart and Kangeroo Island. Then on 21st December, travel back to Melbourne via Ewan Ponds / Piccaninnie Ponds

We had a compressor with us for fills, so no need to run into Adelaide this time.

Travelling were Dave Geekie, Pam Dagley, Peter and Judy Beaumot and Ian and Sue Scholey.

09.12.2020

The VSAG South Australian Roadtrip was off to a flying start. We had already notched up 1000km but

were now safely at our first stop on the Yorke Peninsula. We did two dives at Edithburgh Jetty this morning. There are huge schools of fish under there and a heap of macro life. On dive one, I found one of the things we were hoping to see - a cute little Prickly Anglerfish.

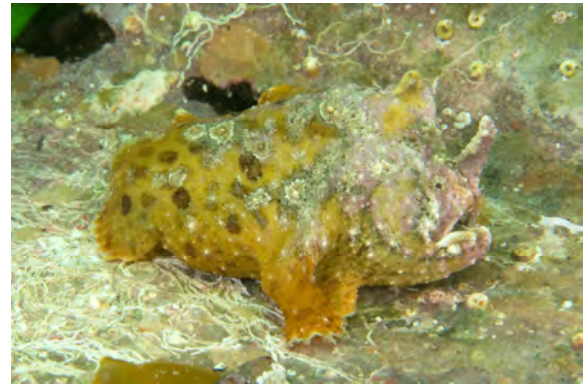
We headed back there that evening, after a BBQ, to try and find a Pyjama Squid. Edithburgh is supposed to be one of the best places to see them so fingers crossed.





10.12.2020

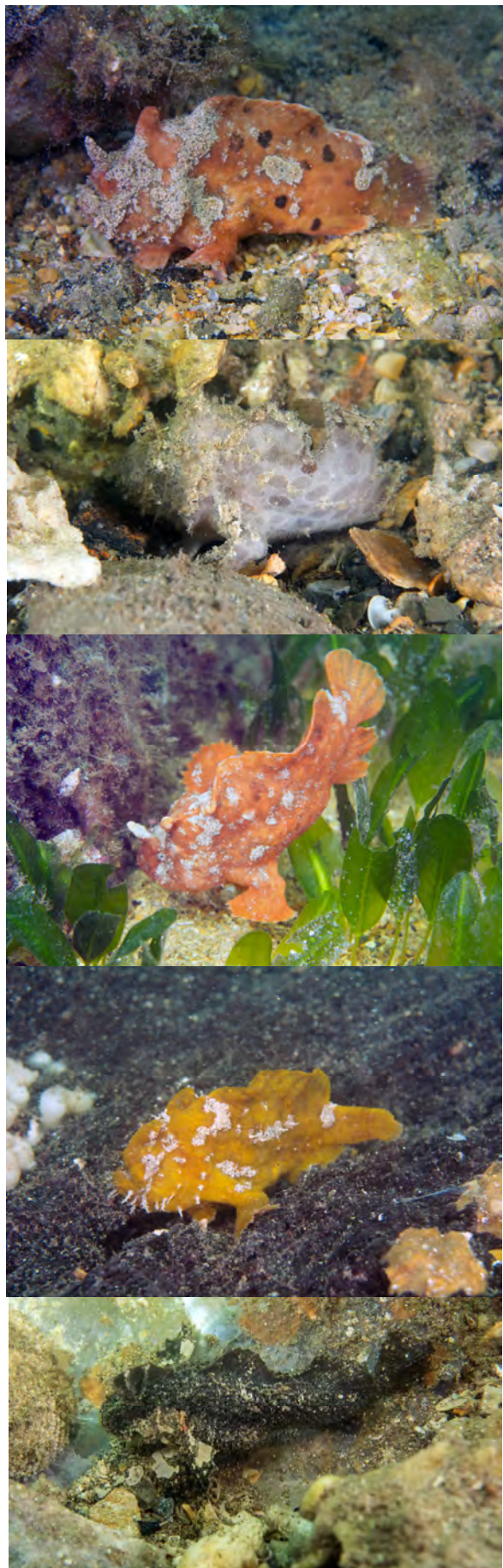
The weather was playing up a bit, with winds from the South East blowing out Edithburgh today and possibly for the rest of our stay. So, off to Port Hughes we went. We had a great dive in calm conditions and outstanding vis. I seem to have my eye in for Anglers finding two today. I'm loving the colour variations - looking for a black one now to complete the set. Tomorrow we are heading to Point Turton.



12.12.2020

After a couple of days of strong Easterlies forcing us across to the western side of the Yorke Peninsula, the wind dropped right off today. We headed back to Edithburgh Jetty for a morning dive. The group is now getting real good at finding Anglers. Today we found Cream, White, Black, Orange and Yellow coloured individuals. I also found three different species of Octopus and several Cuttlefish. The one thing that is alluding me is the Pyjama Squid. Peter Beaumont found one but it had disappeared when he took me to the spot. Their eggs are absolutely everywhere so there are plenty there. Heading back for a night dive tonight so hoping for better luck before we head off to Rapid Bay tomorrow.





13.12.2020 Edithburgh Jetty

We did our night dive at Edithburgh last night. I found my first Pyjama Squid at the bottom of the entry point and then saw another 6 in the first 10 minutes of the dive. During our two hour dive, we easily saw 20 plus. There was lots of other cool stuff about including yet more Anglers, Octopus, Nudibranch and a huge selection of crabs.

No diving for the group today, as we relocate to the Fleurieu Peninsula for part two of our road trip.



13.12.2020

We are safely at Second Valley. No diving today and the wind has picked up again here. The good news is that the Northerlies should be good for a dive at The Bluff, Victor Harbour tomorrow.

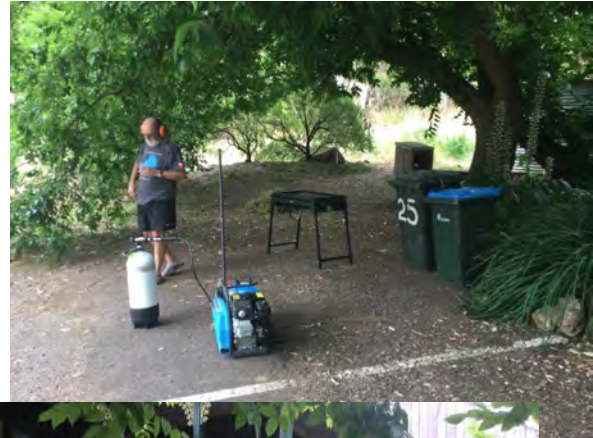
We are going to take a look there and see if we can get in, as it supposed to be a fantastic dive. Apparently, it's the best place in SA to see Leafy Sea Dragons and there should be Sea Lions as well.

Yesterday was a great day's diving, dominated by Cephalopods. Here is a selection from the two dives.



14.12.2020

Conditions at the Bluff, Victor Harbour were excellent this morning. There were heaps of Crayfish and the first Leafy was found by David Geekie. We are staying at the Second Valley Cottages and Lodge. If anyone is looking for diver friendly accomodation options, a stones throw from Rapid Bay, then we highly recommend this place. They couldn't have been more helpful with getting us set up for diving.



14.12.2020

Still finding those Anglers. Here are todays from Rapid Bay.



14.12.2020

Something for the Cray Bashers in the club - you guys would like The Bluff at Victor Harbour.



14.12.2020

Found one, thanks to local diver, Woodsy, for the inside info on where to find it.



Looking for a local contact for air support or dive site advice at Rapid Bay, give Nathan Barrett a call. <https://www.facebook.com/nathan.barrett.186>



Is this one size?



16.12.2020

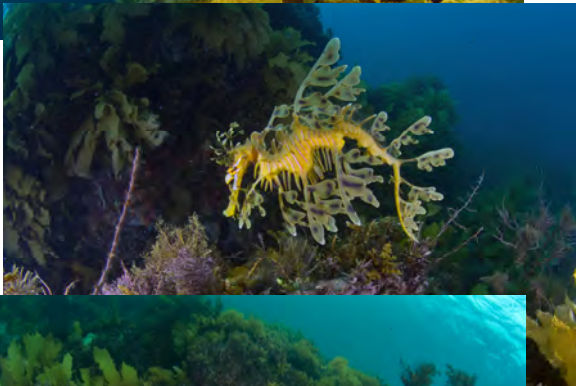
Another great fill station!

18.12.2020

After a few days of Angler chasing, we are now focused on Dragons. We found one at Rapid Bay but the best spot so far, seems to be the headland at Second Valley. David Geekie and I went looking yesterday afternoon and found two. With a wide angle lens on this morning, I went back and took some different snaps. The group consensus is that Second valley is a better dive than Rapid Bay. There is some very nice territory and loads of fish, especially Blue Devils. Peter Beaumont, David Geekie and Pamela Dagley were even treated to a Dolphin there yesterday.

Sadly, David and Pam head home tomorrow. Peter Beaumont and I will do a few more dives before heading off on Monday, to hook up with Walter Medenbach and Arthur Kokkinos for some dives at Ewens Ponds on the way home.





An interesting find at Edithburgh Jetty the week before last. With the aid of Google I managed to identify it as a Tobacco Knife from circa 1890-1900. At the time Edithburgh was the 3rd busiest port in Australia. Given where it was found we are thinking it came from one of the ships docked there. The blade has rusted away but the thing is in good shape considering how long it has likely been down there.



The road trip is moving on to Port Macdonell. Crossing the Murray River at Wellington



We are back from the SA road trip. There is some good news re Airfills at Rapid Bay with a new business opening in Second Valley, offering Air Fills and Cylinder hire. I have a supply of cards and buy 4 get 5th fill free cards, that I came back with. If anyone would like one for future use, drop me a line with your address and I will post them out to you.

- Ian Scholey. ❖



EWENS PONDS

VSAG 2020 EWENS PONDS SOUTH AUSTRALIA DIVE TRIP

By Arthur KOKKINOS

**DIVERS: Walter MEDANBACH
and Arthur KOKKINOS**

Day 1:

Dive Site: Ewens Ponds (Dive 1)

I always had Ewens Ponds on my diving bucket list. Finally, after a very long time and countless efforts to dive this location, the time had come. Walter and I had responded to Ian's invite to join him and Peter Beaumont in diving this unique dive location. We had planned to leave early morning around 9.am. After 6 hours of driving and 460 kilometres completed, we finally arrived at Ewens Ponds. My first impression of the ponds was not what I expected. I soon realised the beauty was not above ground but what lay underneath. Ian and Peter were already geared up and ready to enter the Ponds. They were scheduled an hour before our booked time of 5 pm.

Ewens Ponds Conservation Park is a series of three water-filled limestone sinkholes, each around 10 to 12 metres deep. They are interconnected by a series of shallow channels

ranging from 2 to 4 metres deep. The park is 8.4 kilometres from the nearest town of PORT MACDONNELL. And 25 kilometres south of MOUNT GAMBIER.

The dive plan was to enter Pond #1 and then dive each pond, spending roughly 20 minutes in each pond. We entered the water at 5.58 pm nearly an hour past our allotted time. We were the only divers on location with Ian and Peter already in the water. Our delay was due to us going to the Port MacDonnell Foreshore Tourist Park and booking in for a night's stay and then driving to the mouth of the channel and investigating the location for our planned challenge of snorkelling the channel from the 3rd pond to the ocean mouth after completing our first dive. Walter and I were keen to attempt this challenge and we were confident that we could accomplish this feat before our scheduled 9pm night dive with Ian and Peter.

We were all geared up and, with my camera in hand, we walked to the floating pontoon. I didn't know what to expect, I was over excited and anxious to get into the water. Walter had already dived Ewens pond in the past and he had briefed me as much

as he could. All I wanted to do was to get in and explore this natural wonder. Walter entered first and I soon followed. This was my first ever fresh-water dive and let me tell you, it lived up to its reputation. Once the fine silt sediment settled near the pontoon, visibility improved and the dive was in full swing. We slowly descended to the bottom and with ease we controlled our buoyancy and dived the full perimeter of the 1st pond. Water Temperature was a warm 16 degrees. I was completely captivated with all the beautiful natural surroundings, from top to bottom there was fine white silt resting and the rock walls and ledges had a number of small freshwater galaxiids hiding. There were a number of odd, pouched lamprey swimming in and out the various small openings and from underneath ledges. It was beautiful just observing the clarity and gentle swaying of the bright green plants and grasses that were all around us. The size of the pond was huge and the visibility was crystal clear at around 30 plus metres. I took many photos trying to capture the excitement that I was feeling. We were only in the first pond and it was more than I expected. With Walter leading the way, we then followed the channel, effortlessly, we were moving with the current through a horticultural chamber. We were surrounded by bright green grass,



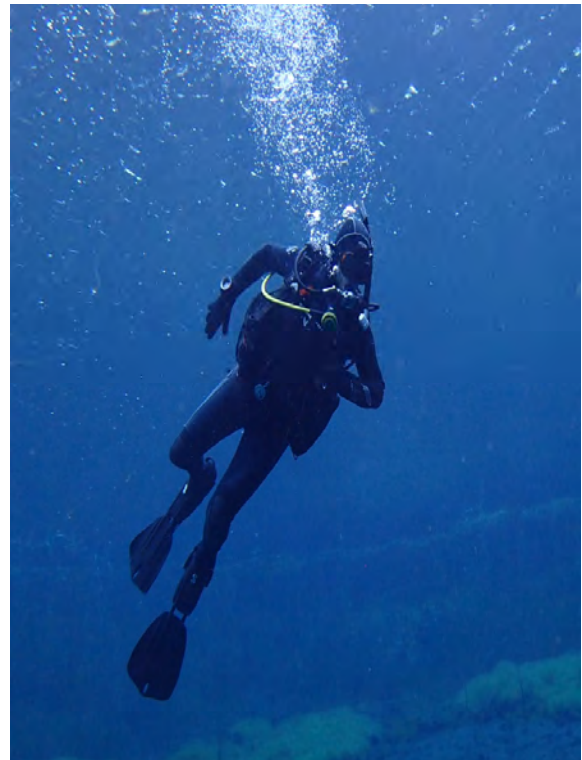
Walter and Arthur standing in front of Pond #1 carpark location.



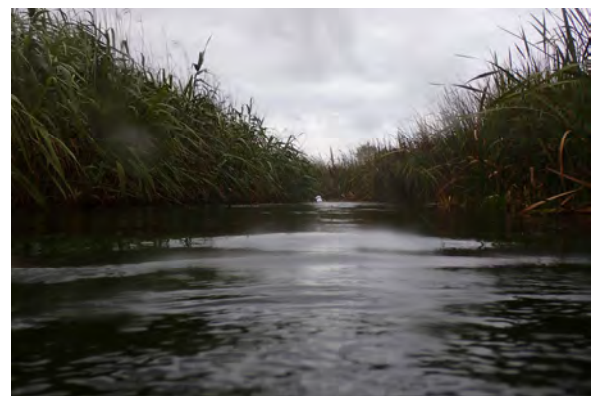
Arthur KOKKINOS and Walter MEDANBACH diving in the first pond.



plants, tea trees and weed trees that extended from the bottom all the way to the surface covering both walls from both sides. The first channel is about 50 metres long and is completely full of these plants. As you approach the second Pond, the current gives you a slight push over a ledge and within seconds you are free falling into another crystal-clear pond with more activity than the first. The fish life improved with a few more galaxiids spotted and a few scattered Australian Grayling, Pygmy Perch and River Blackfish. Visibility was still amazing and the rock formations around the perimeter included large rock walls and numerous ledges. In the centre of the Pond there were a few freshwater springs but as like in pond #1 the springs were not visually prominent. After taking a few more photos and diving around for the third time Walter signalled to start diving towards the second channel. This channel is 125 metres long and full of bright green weeds, grass and tea trees exactly like the first channel. Whilst diving in the channel and moving with the current, it actually felt like you were flying. It was motionless diving without finning. After drift diving for around 10 minutes towards pond #3 I saw Walter dive over the edge and completely disappear from my view. As I approached the ledge, all I could see was a very steep drop out into a



Walter in Pond #2.



*The Channel leading to Pond #3,
Walter MEDANBACH in the distance.*



*The freshwater vegetation in the
channels is absolutely spectacular.*

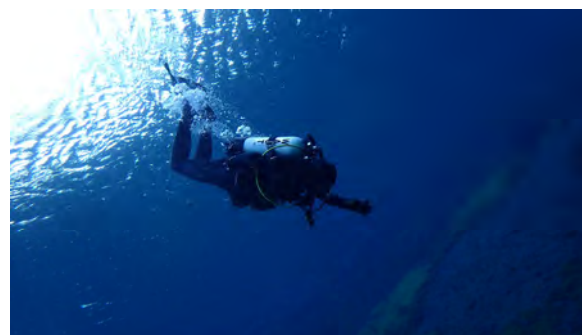
huge opening. The entrance to Pond #3 is an experience that I will never forget. The moment you dive out over that ledge and view the bottom of the pond you actually lose yourself in the immense spectacular beauty of the whole pond formation. I slowly descended to the bottom and dived to the centre of the pond. I spent a bit of time looking right around in amazement, in total appreciation of mother nature. We explored the small cave opening located at the very bottom of the Pond. We entered and looked all around, enjoying the contoured layout of the inner surface. Visibility was excellent. We were able to dive on opposite ends of the pond and still have a clear sight of each other. The springs at the centre of the pond were visually incredible to witness. They were continuously pumping out fresh water.

My first dive in all 3 Ponds was a truly captivating dive experience. A big thankyou to my dive buddy, Walter. With his previous experience diving Ewens Pond, he navigated a perfect dive plan, making this dive truly enjoyable and completely unforgettable.

We exited the water 65 minutes later and hurriedly made our way back to the cars. We took our gear off and quickly made our way back to pond #3 with our mask, snorkel, fins and camera. As planned, we entered Pond



Walter MEDANBACH ready to descend into pond # 3.



Walter in Pond #3.



Water springs centre of Pond # 3

#3 and followed the channel all the way to the ocean mouth.

After snorkelling for 90 minutes, we made it to the ocean mouth (refer to snorkelling the channel article for further details). We eventually made our way back to the car park just as the sun set. As planned, we geared up for our planned night dive entering the water almost 90 minutes past our schedule time. We entered the water with our torches and now we were exploring all 3 ponds in complete darkness. Walter had assured me that this night dive was going to be absolutely, out of this world. He was not wrong!!! We entered Pond #1 at 10.54 pm. As we descended to the bottom, it truly felt like I was an astronaut out in the middle of space. The bright lights from our torches were strong enough to light up the whole area of the pond and we were able to see a large portion of the pond at night. The light was like a magnet to many fish nestled on the bottom with a number of odd, pouched lamprey laying still and resting or waiting for food to swim by. A number of freshwater crayfish were also spotted, bravely walking from one hiding spot to another. At night, the fish life increases dramatically. Diving at night is totally a different experience, especially at Ewens ponds. We decided to explore all three ponds and the challenge in trying to find



A ghostly looking algae growth.



A freshwater crayfish looking for some food.

the channels made this dive even more exciting. Walter and I had circumnavigated Pond #2 a few times trying to locate the channel leading to pond # 3. Working our way through weeds and grass we searched the whole perimeter. It was difficult and in total darkness we found it almost impossible to find the channel opening. We dived back to the centre of the pond. We stayed focused and did not panic. We used our compass and a few natural markers such as the ledge from the first channel as a guide. We then were able to locate the second channel. Diving the second channel at night towards Pond #3 is an experience that I will never forget. Everything comes alive, the plants, fish life and the colours are so much better during the night. We entered Pond #3. Freefalling down to the bottom and then stopping within 30 cm from the silt floor. With our torches on wide-angle we explored the whole pond. It truly felt like we were in a deep cave. Our lights were beaming all over the place and wherever we looked there was fish life, freshwater crayfish, and many pouched lamprey, which resemble eels, laying on the bottom motionless almost everywhere we looked. After 40 minutes of superb diving, we exited the water and made our way back to the car park. The walk back is 250 metres and at night it is much more difficult, especially when using



A few freshwater bream were also spotted.



Walter ascending out of Pond #3.

your torch as a guide. Diving Ewens Ponds during the day and night is a unique and amazing experience. Definitely put this dive location on your dive bucket list.

- Arthur Kokkinos. ❖



Walter MEDANBACH and Arthur KOKKINOS exited the water from Pond #3.



Track leading back to the car park from Pond #3, it is 250 metres long.



EWENS PONDS POND #3 TO OCEAN MOUTH

VSAG 2020 EWENS PONDS SOUTH AUSTRALIA DIVE TRIP

By Arthur KOKKINOS

**DIVERS: Walter MEDANBACH
and Arthur KOKKINOS**

**Snorkelling the FULL
LENGTH of the channel (via
eight-mile creek)**

**From Pond #3 to the ocean
mouth**

Over the years, I have spoken to many divers who have dived Ewens ponds and I have only come across one person who has snorkelled the full length of the channel, from Pond #3 to the ocean mouth. From their account, it sounded like an excellent way of experiencing the maximum beauty of this amazing natural wonder. I was convinced It was a must do activity if I ever went to Ewens Ponds. Prior to leaving Melbourne, I had mentioned it to Walter. He also showed interest in attempting the challenge. We were now on a mission. This is our story.

Once we completed our first dive of Ewens ponds, we immediately exited the water and went to the car park, we dropped off most of our gear and hurriedly made our way back to Pond #3. We only had our mask, snorkel, fins and camera. The plan was to follow the third channel, snorkel the entire route all the way out to the ocean mouth. We geared up, entered the water and snorkelled towards the southern end of Pond #3. The channel was quite easy to find. As we entered the channel, we were faced with two directions. After a minute of searching we took the LEFT passage. We soon realised that we were on the right track because we could feel the current slowly pulling us along down the channel. The channel is similar to the first two channels, with similar vegetation growth and in some sections, a lot wider, up to 5 metres in width. In many sections we were powering through thick underwater grass, weeds and dense reeds. In some sections it was so full of reeds it was like diving through a grassy jungle with no clear vision of what's ahead. The fish life is in abundance, with crayfish everywhere and large schools of freshwater bream swimming up and down the channel.

We finned comfortably with the current, gliding our way forward. We had the pleasure of witnessing an abundance of birdlife using the creek for their food source. This was another highlight of this adventure. We passed a family of swans, numerous groups of ducks and a variety of native birds all within a metre away. The distance from Pond #3 to the Ocean mouth is about 4.5 kilometres. As we got closer to the ocean mouth, the water temperature dropped by a couple of degrees and the visibility got a little murky due to the depth getting shallower. After 1 hour and 30 minutes of drift-diving, we finally got to our destination. We safely managed to exit the creek about 10 metres from the ocean mouth. Extreme caution needs to be practiced here, due to the strong



From Pond #3 the third channel leading to the ocean mouth. Take the left route all the way to the ocean mouth.



Eight-mile creek channel meeting the ocean mouth.



Inspecting Eight-mile creek channel as it meets the ocean mouth.



current, where the freshwater meets the ocean. The depth is only 50 centimetres deep with many scattered rocks on the creek bed. You need to be extra careful once you go under the bridge and be prepared to make your way safely to the embankment. When we finally exited the water and took off our fins, mask and snorkel, we high fived each other, proud of our achievement. We were exhausted but the adrenaline was still pumping. We had achieved our goal. We now had to walk all the way back to the car park and gear up for our night dive. The road back to Ewens Ponds was a long way away, close to 6 kilometres. Walter wanted to explore a shorter route, cutting at least 4 kilometres off the walk and saving at least 40 minutes. On the way back, we walked along Eight Mile Creek Road, then we turned left onto Peacocks Road. We walked for 2.3 kilometres past the first left hand bend, until we came to the first right hand bend. At this location there is a steel farm gate leading onto the Ewens Ponds conservation park land. There is a large private farm house to the right side. We jumped the fence and walked through the scrub, following the electric barbed wire fence around past the farmhouse. We followed the fence through some dense scrub land. The grass was waist high and we were unable to see clearly in front of us. At this point I



Peacocks Road on the way back



The gate leading to the fence.

was getting a bit worried but I kept following Walter. To Walters credit, he was confident in leading the way, having memorised a few light pole markers as a guide. We were in waist high grass and had to duck under some twisted fallen trees. The track through the shrub is about 250 metres long and takes about 15 minutes. Walter had perfectly navigated our way back to Pond #3. We walked right into the main pathway leading back to the carpark. We were 1 hour late for our scheduled night dive with Ian Scholey. Ian started getting a bit distressed when he was unable to locate us and seeing our car at the car park unattended. It was dark and Ian kept calling me but I was unable to swipe the phone on, due to all the



The house with the electric barbed wire fence leading to the path.



Getting ready for the long walk back after snorkelling for 90 minutes to the ocean mouth.



This electric light pole was a marker that Walter used to guide us back to the pathway. It is directly parallel to the walking track..





On the way back, be careful of the cattle using Peacocks road.



The pathway leading to Pond #3. To the left of the wooden railing is the track coming back where the electric barbed wire fence is located.



The track is only 4 metres long, leading straight onto the main pathway.



The main pathway leading back to the car park. Walter conducting a site assessment.

PICCANINIE PONDS

VSAG 2020 EWENS PONDS SOUTH AUSTRALIA DIVE TRIP

Snorkelling Piccaninnie Ponds

**DIVERS: Walter
MEDANBACH and Arthur
KOKKINOS**

By Arthur KOKKINOS

On day two of our trip to Ewens Ponds, we booked in a time to snorkel Piccaninnie Ponds, which is located 18.2 kilometres from Ewens Ponds. I've heard about this place and always wanted to dive this location. Unfortunately, you are not allowed to scuba dive Piccaninnie Ponds, unless you have a cave diving certification. You can snorkel it instead, without a weight belt. Walter had booked an 11.00 am timeslot online. There is a small fee payable. We were both anxious to get into the water and explore this natural wonder. In the carpark, there is



Pointing to the cave location.



*Walter resting before entering
Piccanninie Ponds .*

a small shelter with tables to gear up. Within minutes we were entered the water with camera in hand. Water temp was a nice 18 degrees and the visibility was around 10 metres. It was not the best, due to the microscopic particles floating all around the pond. The cause of this was due to the algae build up, growing at an alarming rate. While we were Snorkelling and exploring the pond, we noticed the algae build-up growing on most of the weeds and long grass, from top to bottom. In some areas of the pond, the algae has completely taken over.

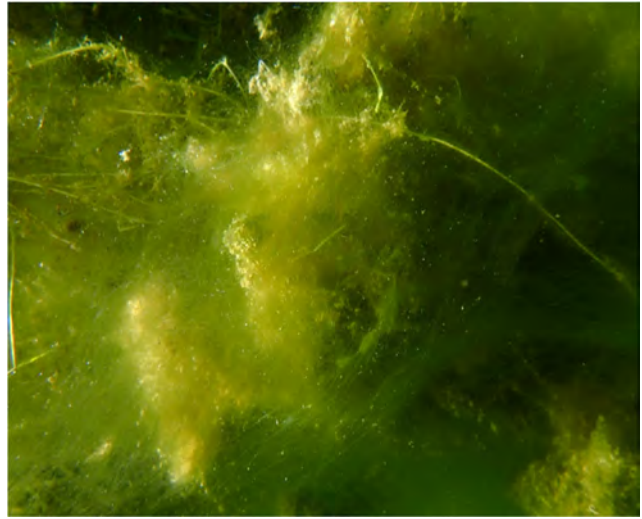
We slowly snorkelled above the main underwater canyon which is the main entrance to the underwater cave. To get to this location, you need to snorkel about 25 metres on a slight right angle away from the pontoon. This section is absolutely breath-taking. I can only imagine how nice it would be for the cave divers, diving deep inside the



Snorkelling Piccaninnie Ponds.



limestone cave network. I tried to free-dive down as deep as I could to get a closer look of the cave opening. Reaching at least 10 metres deep, I could see the cave opening, which is located under a huge ledge. The cave opening leads into a chamber, called the Cathedral. The drop-off between both walls is a sheer vertical formation and looking up, seeing the light bounce of both sides of the canyon, is a sight I will never forget. It is absolutely stunning. As I came back to the surface, I saw a number of short-finned eels resting on small ledges and a number of very small spotted galaxias swimming around. In this location of the pond, the visibility was crystal clear and we were able to see down as far as 20 metres. Snorkelling above this formation is certainly an exciting experience and one that I will cherish for a very long time. We completed our dive after almost spending 80 minutes in the water. We had exceeded

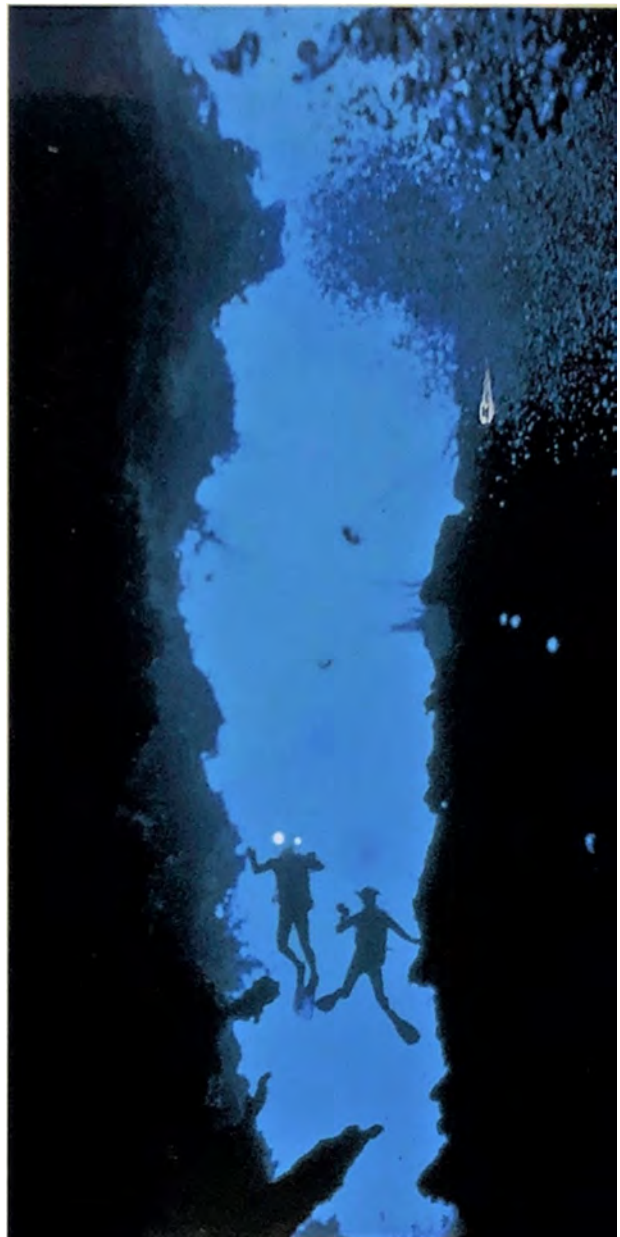


Algae has formed over many plants.



our limit by 20 minutes. It's not hard to get easily side-tracked by the immense beauty of this underwater forest.

Our trip was over. We packed our gear, loaded the car and started our journey back to Melbourne. Along the way we stopped at Port Fairy for a BBQ lunch at APEX Park. The surf beach at Port Fairy is absolutely stunning and with Moyne River running adjacent to the ocean leading out to Bass Strait, makes this place a very popular tourist destination. A few hours later we made a tourist stop at Warrnambool. We spent an hour at Tower hill, which is an inactive volcano. Within the large crater is a large lake and many walking tracks. The size of this place is huge and walking on the numerous tracks was an excellent way to finish off this trip. Within this reserve we also saw many Koalas, Emus and Kangaroos hopping all over the place. Walter was quite thrilled to see



Above the canyon looking towards the cave entrance.

a live representation of our Australian Coat of Arms.

- Arthur Kokkinos. ❖



Our Stop for a BBQ lunch at APEX Park, which is located on the beach side of Port Fairy.

Emus grazing at Tower Hill Warrnambool.



Shark Ate My Hat, Dad!

Shark Ate My Hat, Dad!

Date: Wed 13-Sun 17 Jan 2021

Location: Neptune Islands, South Australia

Operator: Rodney Fox

VSAGers: Ian Scholey, David Flew, Greg Richards, Leo Maybus, Jeff Saunders, Michael Kakafikas, Dylan Smith and Matthijs Smith.

While lockdown made me start to think that a double dive on Redboats was a liveboard, our inveterate Travel Co-ordinator, Ian Scholey, had no hesitation in putting together a Club trip to dive with the Great Whites in South Australia, as soon the borders opened up.

And, so it was, eight VSAGers found themselves applying hand sanitizer on the docks in Adelaide before boarding the MV Rodney Fox, a chunky steel tub that was to be our home for the next four nights. We steamed overnight from Adelaide to the South Neptune Islands. Topside conditions were a little too lively to contemplate a dive with the Australian sea lions at Hopkin's Island. After a morning of unsuccessful baiting, we steamed 2 hours to the North Neptune Islands to



find two other operator's day boats already there. Needless to say, the shark action started straight away.

I was in the first group into the topside cage. This was quite an experience. The cage continually rocks back and forth, banging against the boat, and we never seemed to have quite enough weight to keep on the floor. I seem to recall tequila can have a similar effect – just before you black out. On top of that, you are having to bob your head back and forth to peak through the perpetual curtain of manic GTs. However, when all of these factors lined up, you got to see the most magnificent animals in all their brutal glory. They are solid and they seem to just glide through the water. Until they accelerate and then it's over before it has even begun.

As qualified divers, we were also able to go in the 'bottom cage'. In this, we used scuba (rather than the hookah set up in the surface cage) and the cage was lowered by crane. We all did a 10-15m dive on the first day. Second day, it was too choppy for the cage. The third day however, we were taken down to 22m. Now we got to see these incredible predators from below, as they buzzed the cage. Quite a different perspective and something that is only available with Rodney Fox.



Surface Cage



MV Rodney Fox

The other main activity was shark spotting from the top deck. The sharks are lured to the boat using tuna chunks as bait. The art is to lure them to the cage but get the bait out of their way before the catch it. The spotters try to guide the baiter as to where to throw the bait and how quickly to pull it in. So there is a chorus of “11 o’clock, 5 metres, 4, 3...pull, pull, pull!!!!”. However, accidents happen. These are fast beasts and they occasionally get the bait. The boat has to record and report all the bait catches.

While spotting, I got two magnificent bait catches. I did not realise how good the video was until I got home and could slow it to ¼ speed. Only then could you see the teeth, and the eye. After watching each other’s videos on Facebook, Greg Richards and I realised we had both videoed the same bait catches; myself from above, and Greg from in the cage. I put these together in an Over & Under video that I have only watched 3,853 times.

There are two other highlights from the trip. The first was Gigi, our French cook who made probably the best food I have had on a liveaboard. Tres magnifique! I will never forget the sight of him in his dive gear, having just jumped out of the shark cage to attend to his slow roasted loin of lamb with creamy garlic scalloped

potatoes (actually, now that I think about it, maybe this was why I was so floaty in the cage).

The other was my son making Club history. As most of you know, VSAG is one of the longest running dive clubs in the world and its members have been instrumental in developing the technology and the sport. However, in all that time, I believe that my son is the first VSAGer to have his Club cap eaten by a Great White Shark. That’s got to be a claim to fame.

As usual, this was another fun trip and an experience I may have never gotten around to organising for myself. A lot of fun on the boat with the usual VSAG banter and good times.

-Matthijs Smith. ❖



French Chef, Gigi

UP CLOSE & PERSONAL WITH A GREAT WHITE

Photos by Greg Richards



VSAG NEPTUNE ISLANDS LIVEABOARD

VSAG NEPTUNE ISLANDS LIVEABOARD.

13-17th January 2021

A group of 8 headed off to South Australia to join the MV Rodney Fox, for a Livaboard trip down to the Neptune Islands for some Great White Shark cage diving. Rodney Fox is the only operator who offers diving in a bottom cage, alongside the usual surface cage. We left Port Adelaide at 16.00 on Wednesday and arrived at our first stop in the South Neptunes at 10.00am the following morning. After a fruitless few hours trying to attract the sharks, we relocated to the North Neptunes. The sharks were on the scene almost immediately and we did the first of our bottom cage dives.

The following day the weather wasn't suitable for the bottom cage, so we did surface cage dives only. Again, there was plenty of shark action.

On our final day, we did two more rounds of bottom cage diving before



*Home for the next 4 days.
Everyone made it here.*



heading back to port, arriving mid morning the following day.

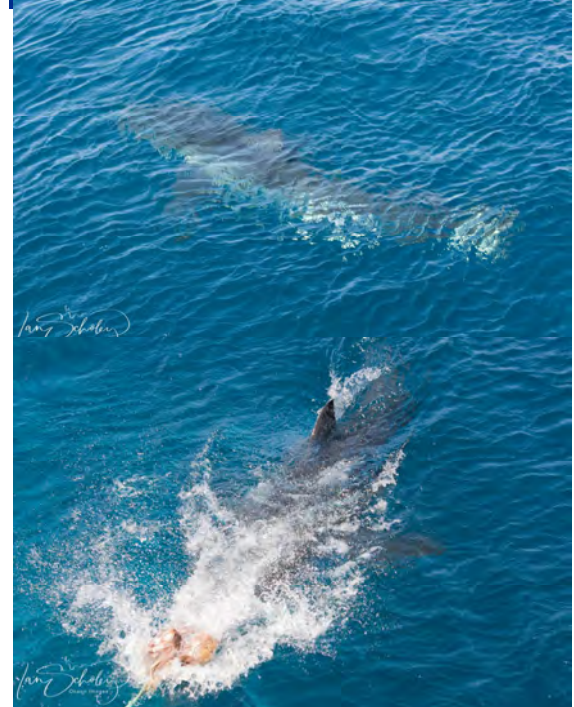
Photography wasn't easy in the cages, as they bounced about all over the place, the water was dirty with burley and there were constant schools of Trevelly in the way but between us, we got worthwhile stuff.

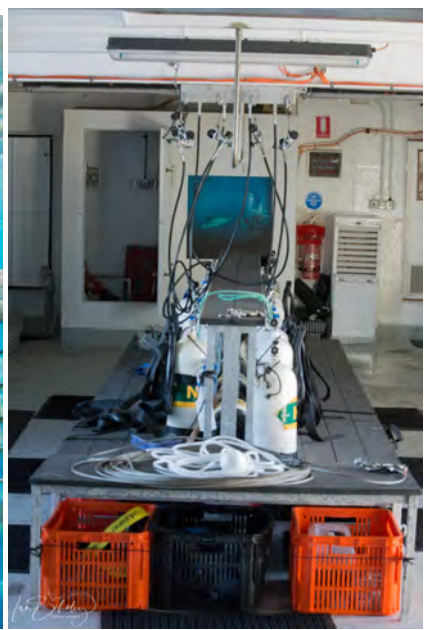
Aside from the sharks, the highlight of the trip was a VSAG cap getting blown off of Dylan's head and being immediately swallowed by a shark when it hit the water.

Travelling were: Ian Scholey, David Flew, Matthijs Smith, Dylan Smith, Greg Richards, Leo Maybus, Mick Kakafikas and Jeff Saunders.

- Ian Scholey. ❖









CAPE CONRAN

CAPE CONRAN

January, 2021.

Coming up to Australia Day weekend, I received a call from Peter Galvin to see if I would be interested in travelling up to Cape Conran, as part of a small exploration dive, as part of a potential future VSAG dive over the Australia Day Weekend. Rowan Salger and Peter had been discussing the idea and this phone call was part of getting a small crew together to dive on a marine sanctuary, called Beware Reef.

The Diver Guide, put together by the members of the Friends of Beware Reef, goes on to explain that,

“Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary encompasses a series of pinnacles of granite rock rising 30 metres off the sea floor, with only a small section at its northern extremity rising some two metres above sea level”. And that “The reefs that lie below the surface are rich in marine life and habitat, with a unique mix of both warmer and cooler temperate species, due to its location between the Eastern Australian current flowing from the north and a cooler westerly current flowing through Bass Strait.”



*Beware Reef
(friends of Beware Reef)*

In addition to the unique habitat, the sanctuary also contains the remains of three ship wrecks:

The S.S Auckland - wrecked in 1871,
The Ridge Park- wrecked in 1881,
and,

The steam trawler, Brolga - wrecked
in 1926.

One of the main purposes of the trip was to check out the nearest boat ramp at Cape Conran, as it was reported to be more of a difficult ramp for larger boats with tides, nearby rocks and sand/kelp adding to the challenges of entry and exiting.

The VSAG team assembled for the weekend included the following:

On Stroker - Peter Galvin, Ian Scholey, Tony Hood and Rowan Salger

On Dire Straits - David Geekie, Brian Heatherich, Mike Mosseveld and Leo Maybus.

Arriving at the organised motel just outside of Orbost on the Friday, we all met at the local Thai place for dinner and to discuss the plans for the following day. Although the Thai had a lot to be desired, the conversations with other VSAG members were most enjoyable, as plans were laid for an early start the following morning and we headed back to prepare the boats for a potentially early start on the Saturday.

Saturday morning

We arrived at the Cap Conran boat ramp and discovered that, although some local boats were going out, the conditions were not right for us to go out, with a deep swell. According to some of the locals who decided not to go out, it was a better day for surfing than for diving.

After checking out the remains of the camp spot that had been burnt out during the 2019 fires, we headed back to the motel to decide what land-based activities interested everyone.

David Geekie, Peter Galvin, Rowan Salger and myself decided to explore some of the road up and around the



Peter, Ian and Leo assessing the conditions.

Snowy River, as we had not explored this part of the Victorian High Country previously.

After an hour or so of travelling through regenerating burnt bush from the 2019 fires, we emerged into some beautiful valleys which had, in part, missed the main fires, although a number of houses had still been lost and some rebuilt. We made it to Bonang, with the hope of finding a pub and a meal. The closest we got was a General store that looked like it served its last customer in the 1950's.

Front of the General Store





Side of the General Store.

Peter and Rowan decided to head back to the Motel, while David and I continued on traversing the Snowy loop, which brought us back to base just as the others were leaving for dinner at the local pub, which ended up being a significant step up from the previous night's dinner.

Plans for the following day were discussed and there was some hope that the conditions would improve to launch the boat.

Sunday

Another early day and a great sunrise was on offer, as we headed down to the boat ramp for a 7am start.

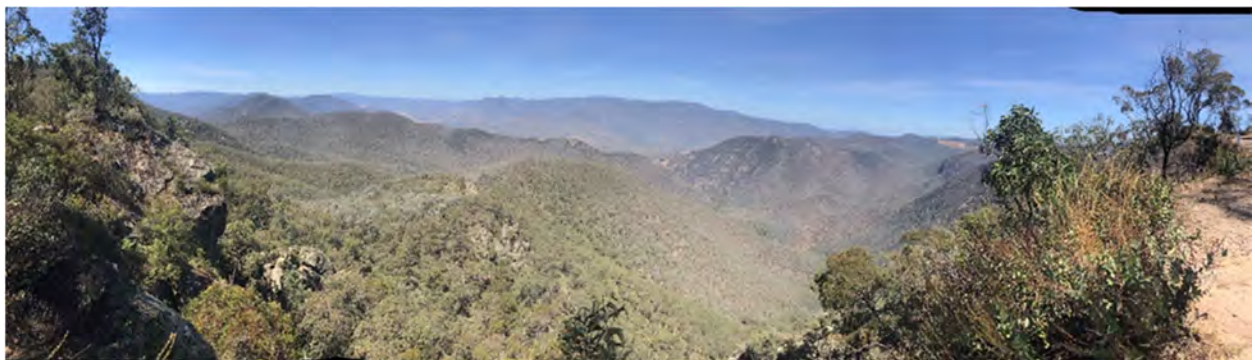
Compared with yesterday the activity at the ramp provided some assurance of better conditions to launch.



Arriving at the Boat Ramp.

Although busy, as most of the other boat owners seemed to be locals, or at least experienced at launching there and, as a consequence, it did not take long for us to launch and be on our way.

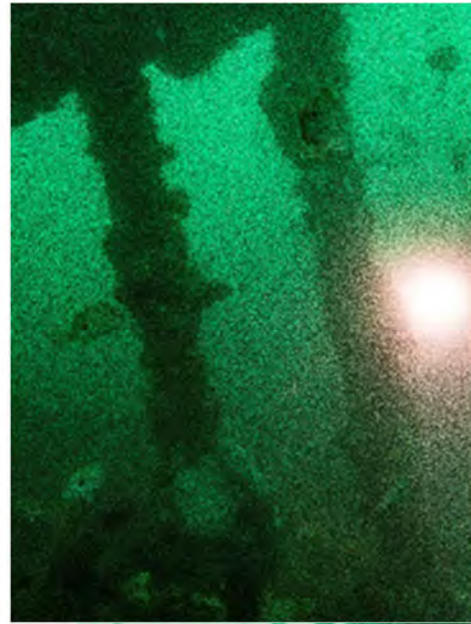
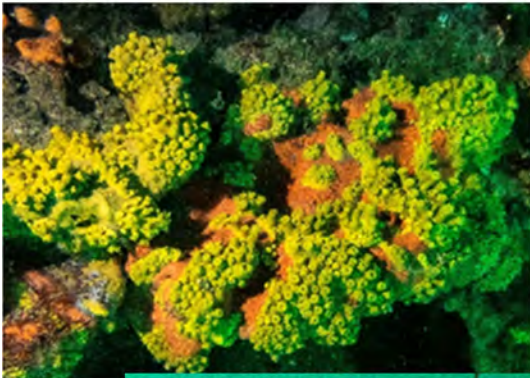
The first dive was on the S.S Auckland and the first ones in were to be Leo, Ian and myself.



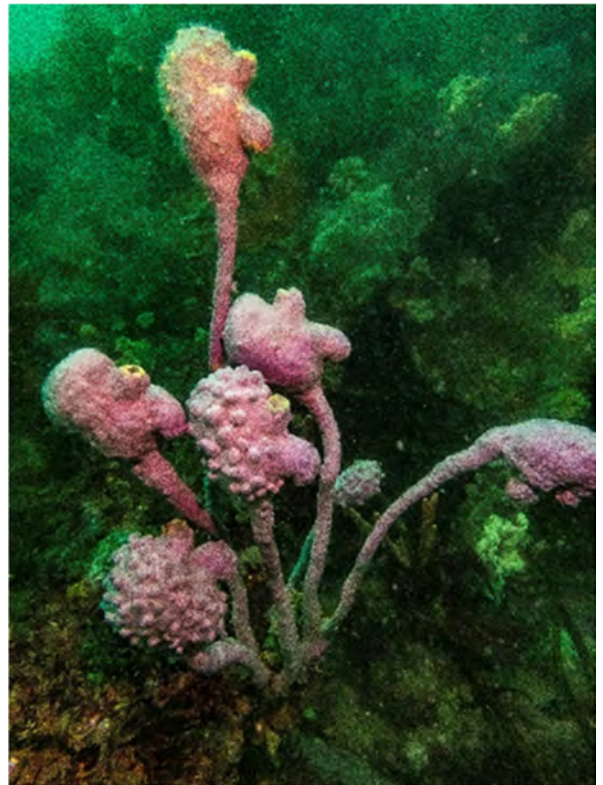
The Snowy River Drive.

Although Ian's briefing mentioned two sections of the wreck, Leo and I spent the entire time on the bow of the boat and the amazing marine life that had developed since the ship's sinking. Although the visibility was pretty average, regardless, it was a great dive, with the wreck still having a lot of character to explore and the fish life was superb.

SS Auckland Photos



Beware Rock and its Seal Colony.





After a very enjoyable dive, we returned to the boat for David and Mike to dive the same location, while Peter and his boat went to explore other parts of the reef.

Both Mike and David returned, having enjoyed their dive on the wreck.



David and Mike returning from a successful dive.

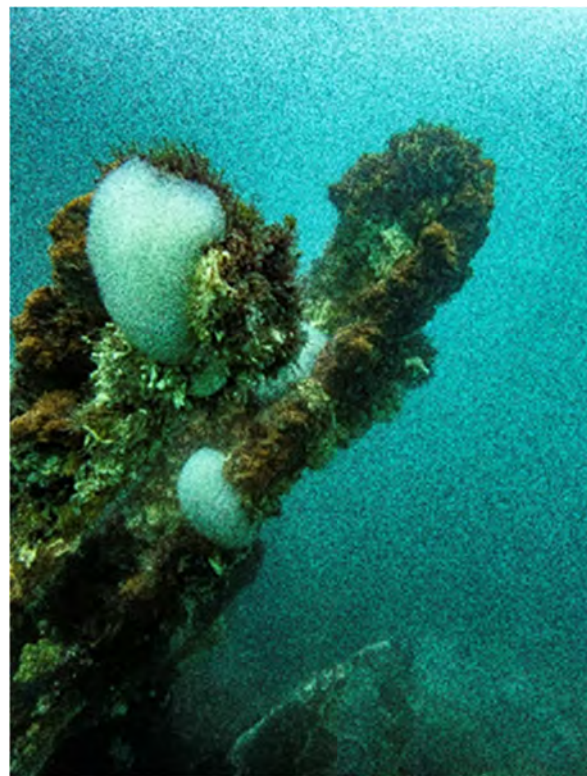
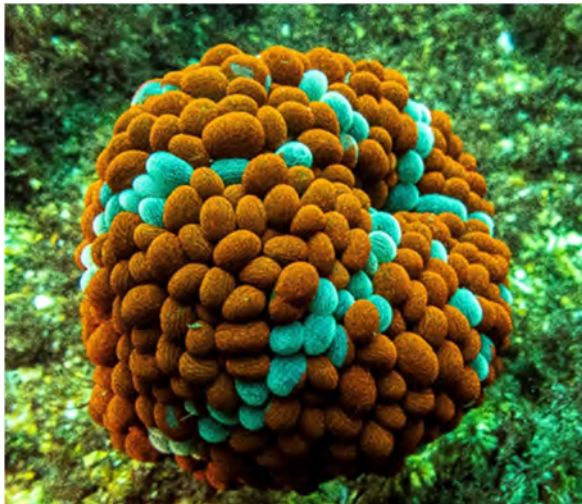
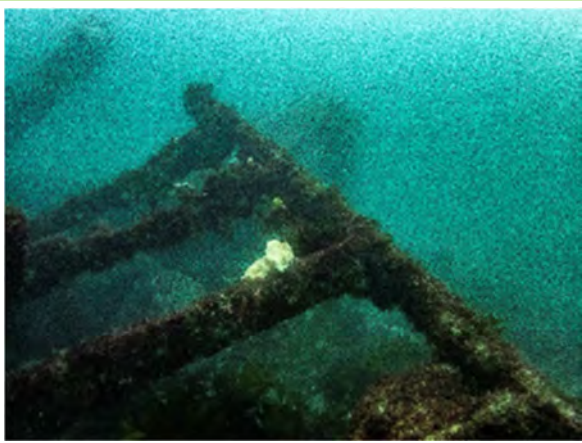
After a break and a discussion on the next dive, we decided to dive on the site of the second wreck the Ridge Park.

This was a completely different sort of wreck with panels of wreck being strewn across the site of the wreck and you were often rewarded when you poked around amongst the remains.

Ian also joined us for this dive.

The Ridge Park Photos







After we all had completed a successful second dive, we all headed back to the boat ramp and the motel and once we had cleaned up and packed away, headed off to Marlo Motel for dinner. This pub was absolutely heaving with visitors. Unfortunately, Ian had other diving commitments the following day and

would be unable to join us for a dive on the Monday.

Leo was also unable to join us on the Monday for a dive due to other commitments.

Monday

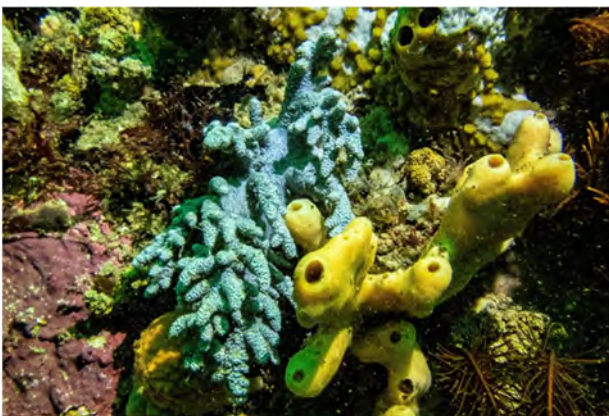
Another day and another early start, as we again headed back out to the Boat Ramp, which was a lot quieter than the previous day.

We kitted up and launched without incident and headed back to Beware Reef for another day's diving.

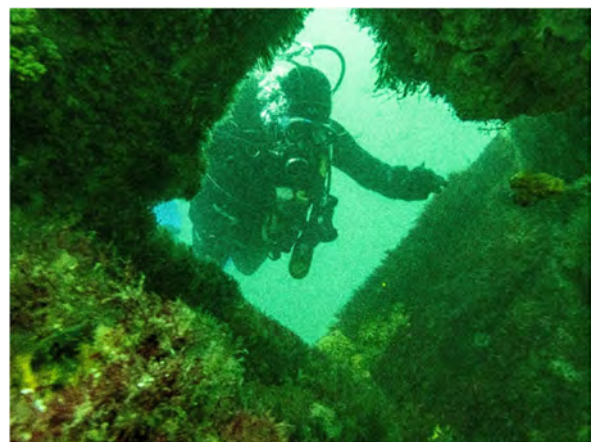
This time Mike and I buddied up and after a review of the currents and weather, decided to again dive the Ridge park, as it was more sheltered from the prevailing weather.

Again, another nice dive with Mike, where we think we actually dived past the Ridge and onto the SS Auckland. We did pass one local on the way, but he was not giving away any secrets.

Ridge Park and Auckland Photos



The local we met on the way, who was not giving away any secrets.



Mike exploring the Wreck





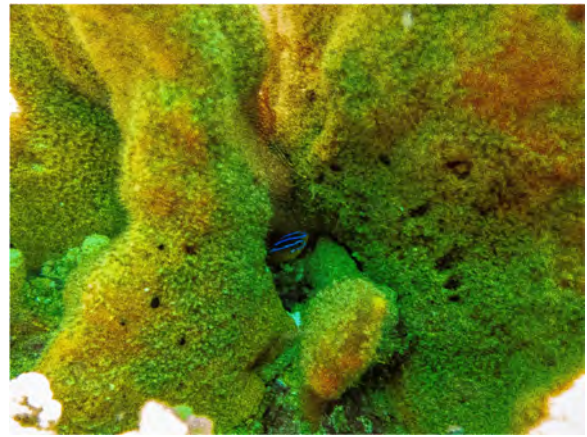
Upon surfacing, we did find that we had drifted very close to the rock itself and we needed to swim out to ensure that Dire Straits did not become the fourth wreck on the reef.

After our dive, the second team went down and again had a successful dive, while we watched them from above.

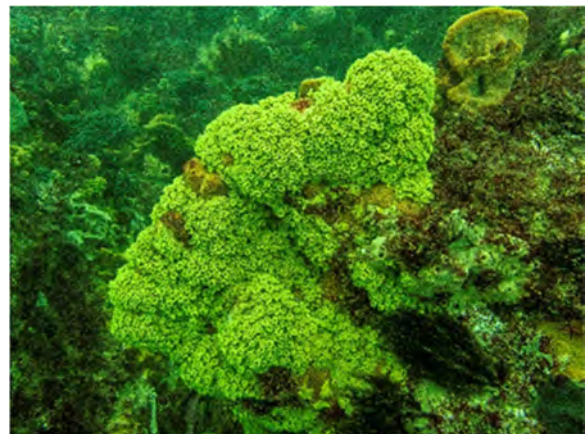
Once both dive groups had recovered from the first dive, we headed out to find the pinnacles and Mike and I went down for further investigation. Due to leaving in the sun, my camera was not functional until towards the end of the dive and only managed to take a few unmisted photos.

What really struck me on this dive, was the damage that the black sea urchins were making. The first part of the dive was along bare rocks, other than urchins, who had eaten all life away.

After some time amongst bare rocks, we turned around a corner and life emerged, where the urchins had yet to attack and devour the reef. It was almost like a line drawn in the sand, between exposed rocks with sea urchins and healthy reef.



This little fish protected within its surrounding coral and with a cleaner shrimp keeping it company.



We completed our dive and surfaced to find that the weather conditions had turned and that the boats needed to make haste back to the boat ramp before conditions worsened any further.

We got back to the ramp without incident and quickly made it ashore, where we were greeted by members from Fisheries who were interested in our activities for the day and if we had anything to declare, before moving onto the next boat that had landed.

We packed up and got back to the motel, where we gave all our gear and boats a good clean down and prepared for the journey home the following day.

After such a good impression from earlier in the weekend, we again ate at the Motel in town and decided we would call into a VSAG member, Frank Kleintitz, that many of the older members had got to know over the years, who lived in Metung.

Amongst his toys, he had built a pretty impressive slot car racetrack and we all revisited our childhoods and had a go racing each other around the track.

As we still had quite a journey in front of us and were concerned with the level of traffic, which ended up being quite light, we headed off back to Melbourne, with the adrenaline from the slot car racing still in our veins.

All up, it was a highly successful weekend and due respects and thanks go to the instigators and organisers for the trip. Although a possibility for a wider VSAG event is possible, the general conclusion appears to be that it would have to be a last-minute call, depending on emerging conditions, which may make it difficult to organise for people, who may have other commitments that they need to balance.

Since our expedition, it is understood that the government is currently looking to invest in the Cape Conran boat ramp. Any improvements in the boat ramp would significantly improve the ability to plan a weekend for a wider VSAG party to attend.

- *Brian Heatherich.* ❖



*Go on, you
know you
want a go,
Tony!*

Arthur's Dive Book Review #3

By Arthur Kokkinos

As I was growing up, early in my childhood years, there were 5 Icons of SCUBA DIVING that inspired me to pursue Scuba Diving and explore the underwater world. Ben CROPP, Geoff NAYLOR, Jacques COUSTEAU and Ron and Valerie TAYLOR. They each had a life full of underwater adventure and excitement. I will never forget seeing Valerie TAYLOR for the first time on television. I was 12 years old, she was diving in a bright pink wetsuit on the Great Barrier Reef. Valerie was patting a very large potato cod and all these other fish were circling her. She was beautiful and looked like she was having the time of her life. After seeing this footage, I was hooked. I wanted to be a scuba diver. Valerie TAYLOR and her husband Ron were pioneers in underwater filming and photography and within a few years, after their first documentary, they were in high demand for their underwater filming exploits. This book takes you back to Valerie's early days, when she was a keen spearfishing enthusiast, spearing many fish and catching



crayfish. She worked as an illustrator, as a model, then becoming a successful actress. Finally, Valerie met Ron where her life changed forever.

In the early 60's, Valerie joined the local spearfishing club where she met Ron Taylor. They paired up and both won numerous national and international spearfishing titles. They soon became inseparable and dived together for the next 40 years, circling the globe many times over.

They made many diving documentaries and were in high demand for their experience in capturing underwater footage of many different species of sharks. They invented the first metal mesh suit to protect them from shark bites. Valerie never backed down from a challenge and was the test diver for the suit. She risked her life many times over to prove the strength and safety of the mesh suit. On one occasion, Valerie was viciously attacked by a shark and was rushed to hospital. She was lucky to survive. Valerie and Ron built up an enormous reputation throughout the world and for many years they worked on many movies and documentaries, such as the classic movie Blue Water White Death, Jaws and Blue Lagoon, to name a few. Valerie has achieved so much in her life and whilst reading this book, my respect and admiration for her grew ten fold. Her detailed description of her adventures and her honest account of all her relationships, makes this book an interesting read. Valerie also has an impeccable reputation and, possibly, an unmatched passion for conservation and sea life protection. She has worked tirelessly, protecting the Great Barrier Reef and many sea life species. She has lobbied hard and strong, writing to many politicians, convincing them to change the laws and getting a number of areas



Valerie with a nice crayfish during her spearfishing days.



Ron and Valerie TAYLOR the Male and Club Spearfishing Champions.



Valerie testing the Steel Mesh suit against a Shark bite.



Valerie TAYLOR playing with an eel. One of her many underwater friends.



Steven SPIELBERG, Roy SCHIEDER, Richard ZANUCK, Valerie and Ron TAYLOR during the filming of JAWS.

protected from the ever increasing fishing industry. Her passion for diving also opened the door for her 2 nephews. Under her strict guidance and mentoring, both have become professional scuba divers, working as instructors and as successful underwater film makers. Valerie has also battled breast cancer and then had to look after Ron who was diagnosed with depression and then with advanced leukemia. After Ron passed away, Valerie turned to art, writing articles for the many dive magazines located around the world and when her health permits, travels the world and scuba dives with her much loved nephews. Truly an incredible person and an inspiration to many. One day, I would love to meet Valerie TAYLOR and just listen to her speak about her many dive adventures. As a matter of fact, I might give her a call and ask her to come and speak at one of our club meetings. Now, that would be something to look forward to!

Overall, this book is an excellent read and I highly recommend it to all of you. There is something in this book for each and everyone of you. Adventure, love stories, historical accounts, interesting facts, personal achievements, hardships and obviously tonnes of scuba diving stories.

My book review rating, another 10/10.

- Arthur Kokkinos. ❖

Abalone Pioneers

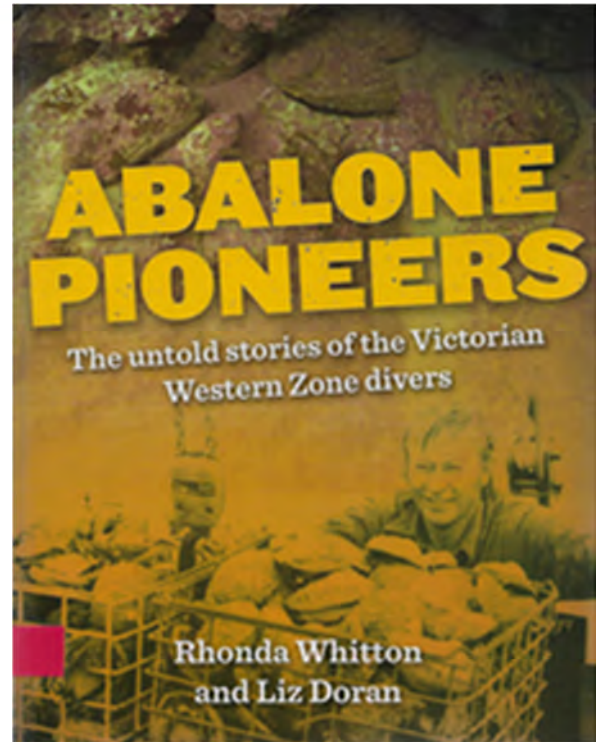
BOOK REVIEW

ABALONE PIONEERS

By Rob Kirk

Fans of Abalone Wars on 9Rush might be interested in this little gem I found at Croydon Library. Essentially, a history of the Western Abalone Divers Association (WADA), the book covers the development of the Abalone industry from a bunch of itinerant cowboys in the early 1960's, to a highly regulated professional industry. It tells the story through interviews with many of the original divers, their deckhands, their wives and Co-Op staff. Whilst some of these come across as "tall tales but true", almost to the point of hero-worshipping these characters, it's a good read nevertheless.

In the earliest days, divers could catch good quantities of abs on snorkel from the shore. One of the divers relates how he started back in 1966 in Port Philip Bay, at sites such as Half Moon Bay and the Cerberus! However, overfishing of local reefs on SCUBA soon forced divers to go deeper and further afield, using boats and SCUBA and eventually hookah and the lack of knowledge about



Decompression Sickness resulted in a lot of the early divers getting badly bent. Some divers relate how they smoked marijuana to relieve the pain of DCS symptoms and immediately felt better when they went back into the water! As divers became aware of the facts and the science behind DCS, they developed methods for accelerated decompression on oxygen, as is evidenced by this photo. Clearly they felt they needed just a little bit more O₂ than they'd get in the standard OxyViva!



The prevailing methodology for weather prediction was such that if one diver went out, the rest would follow, so there are plenty of anecdotes of near-death experiences

from going out in rough weather and, of course, they also relate plenty of encounters with the inevitable Great White Sharks!



Before the WADA Co-Op was formed and a processing plant was established in Warrnambool, the nearest facility to process the abalone was in Footscray. After a heavy day's diving, the divers would have to drive there from the Western District to deliver their catch. There was no refrigeration - the abs would just be in plastic rubbish bins in the back of the ute. As you can imagine, this was a little problematic in summer and many catches were unsellable by the time they got to Melbourne.

In just a few years there were too many divers taking too many abalone and the Victorian Government moved towards conservation of the Fishery by introducing a licencing system that was separate to the standard Commercial Fishing Licence. In 1966 the price of a Commercial Fishing Licence was \$6. By 1968 this escalated to a separate \$200 Abalone Licence and the Fishery was closed to new entrants. The Abalone Licence Fee was then based on a percentage of the value of the previous year's catch across the entire Industry in Victoria, and in 1970 the government introduced Zoning and a Quota Management System.

In 1984 they embarked on a consolidation program, to effectively halve the number of divers. That meant that to continue as an Abalone

Licence holder, you had to buy out another existing Licence Holder. To enter the Industry as a new diver, you had to buy TWO existing Licence holders out. Now, the figure quoted in this book for 1984 was \$180,000 to buy one existing licence, plus a \$10,000 Transfer Fee to the government. That meant that if you wanted to enter the Industry as a new diver in 1984, you'd be up for \$380,000 before you even bought any diving gear or a boat!

To put that into perspective, what was a standard 3 bedroom dogbox house in outer suburbia selling for in 1984? \$60,000? \$70,000? So you can forget all those tall stories you heard back in the 80's about guys buying Abalone Licences in pubs for \$50 and a slab of beer!

I quite enjoyed reading this book and, whilst based in a different State and totally unrelated to Abalone Wars, I reckon it makes a very informative comparison piece to the TV series.

- Rob Kirk.. ❖

Cowes Jetty

Shore Diving Phillip Island during a Pandemic *Part 2 Cowes Jetty. A Pictorial Essay.*

By Peter Mosse

The Covid 19 pandemic meant many different things to different people. I was lucky, I guess, to be living in regional Victoria. But then again, it wasn't a question of working from home for me, but no work at all! Most of my work is interstate assessing drinking water supply systems.

Involuntary retirement had arrived!

OK, so boats were out, but I could still access the coast, legally at times and other times, not so legally. But I had to do something to save my mind.

I had dived Cowes Jetty once, decades ago when it was the site of the Victorian Underwater Federation's (VUF) SCUBA Championships. I remember there was much more current than we had anticipated and one of our team members from the Melbourne University Underwater Club (MUUC) got swept into a pylon while wearing a blackout mask and ended up with sea urchin spines in her forehead.

Despite the current and urchins, I actually won the Victorian Titles that year. The prize was a Drager tank with a DIN valve. No one in the diving game, at that stage, knew the first thing about DIN valves. They were strictly industrial. So I exchanged the tank as part payment for a Nikonos II camera. And there started my long term interest in underwater photography!

Cowes Jetty, like all the piers and jetties on Phillip Island, is current prone. The best time to dive it is the slack water at high tide. It can also be dived at low tide but at high tide, entry from the lower level platform at the far end of the jetty is really easy, particularly with cameras and lights. Also, the deeper water makes the swim back to shore under the jetty much more pleasant.

The tide tables suggest the high and low water at Cowes Jetty are 50 minutes later than the same tide at Point Lonsdale. The 50 minute allowance seems a bit long at times. I plan to get to the jetty and be ready to enter at the time of the Point Lonsdale tide. Watch the water, watch the

drifting weed, to help judge when to enter. The tides at Cowes aren't as critical as at Newhaven and San Remo Jetties and you can plan about a 1 hour dive, 30 minutes before the change of tide and 30 minutes after. But don't leave it too late to swim back. The current can sweep you out from under the jetty and then out over the shallow sand and along the coast. Yes, there is a ladder to access the low platform at the far end of the jetty, but it would be a pity to miss the photo opportunities along the long leg of the jetty on the swim back.

It is a fairly long walk from the car park and out along the jetty, so try to go at times which increase your chances of getting the closest carparks. First thing in the morning is best, if the tides work and over autumn, winter and spring there are less people. Avoid the summer school holiday period! You will be very lucky if you can get a park.

Wind conditions can impact on the dive, not so much under the deeper section of the jetty but the shallower section and in particular the approach to the exit beaches on either side of the jetty can be rough and tumble. In general, avoid any NE to NW winds over about 12 knots. Also avoid very strong E and W winds.

While walking out along the jetty, look carefully at the prevailing surface conditions, and consider the wind

forecast and decide which beach you will exit on. An onshore wind can quickly push you on to rocks. It is seldom dangerous, but just something to be aware of.

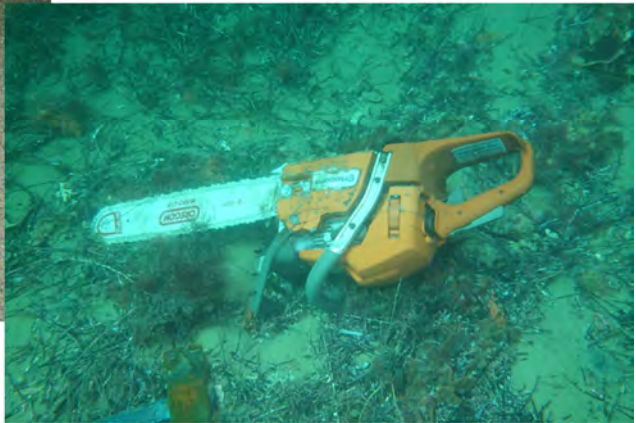
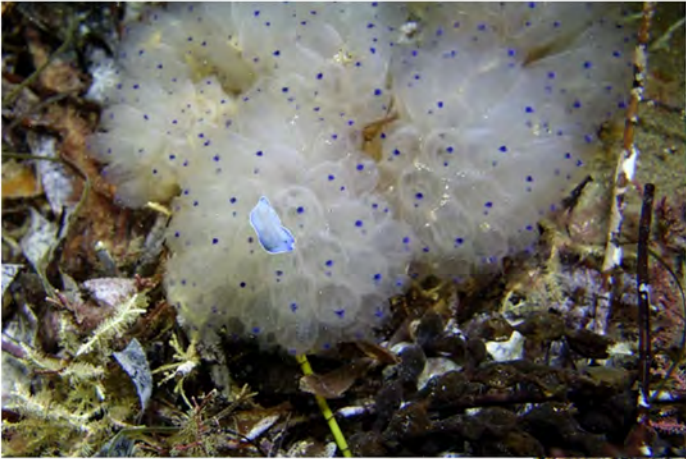
The best diving is under the jetty itself. There is pretty much nothing if you swim out from the jetty in either direction.

The photos below will give you some idea of what sea life can be found. Of course, there is also the odd chainsaw, log splitter, bicycle and other miscellaneous human debris!

Cowes Jetty is well worth several dives!

- Peter Mosse. ❖





“WE’VE NEVER HAD A PROBLEM BEFORE” CAN BE A PROBLEM

“We’ve Never Had a Problem before” Can Be A Problem.

- *Dave Yarin*

The hours ticked down to launch time, and Roger Boisjoly had the weight of the world on his shoulders. It was January 1986, and the highly respected rocket engineer and thermodynamicist at Morton Thiokol was pleading with his supervisors and NASA to postpone the launch of the space shuttle Challenger on that unusually cold Florida day.

Icicles extended for hours from the shuttle and the launch platform, and NASA had never before launched in such cold weather. In fact, it was 15 degrees colder on this day than on any prior shuttle launch.

Boisjoly presented hard data and evidence to support his point – that the O-Rings on the shuttle’s solid rocket boosters would fail, leading to an explosion, the loss of the Challenger and the astronauts on board. Boisjoly had written a memo less than one year earlier about the clear evidence of the O-Ring failure following a prior launch, and he was concerned that the extreme cold temperatures on the morning of 28



The space shuttle Challenger, seconds before it exploded. Photo: NASA; CC Wikimedia

January would lead to a disaster. Other Morton Thiokol engineers had also expressed concerns about the O-Rings in a memo written seven years before the Challenger launch.

How did NASA incorporate normalisation of deviance into their decision-making processes?

NASA and Morton Thiokol convened a teleconference in the hours leading up to the launch, and NASA pressed Morton Thiokol for data to prove Boisjoly’s concern. This was an odd shift for NASA personnel, who historically required their engineers and contractors to have evidence that launching was safe; but now, they asked Morton Thiokol to prove why the launch wasn’t safe.

In the teleconference, Boisjoly described the data from previous launches that showed O-Ring failure,

and at one point, a pause in the discussion gave him hope that his concerns were being heard. Suddenly, however, Thiokol senior management asked the engineers to leave the room, and Boisjoly's heart sank. He knew this meant that senior management wanted to go over the engineers' heads and recommend launching to NASA.

Not only was Boisjoly dismissed from the room, but his warnings were dismissed as well. He sat in his office and waited while the countdown commenced, believing that the O-Ring failure would cause immediate explosion after the rocket engines ignited on the launch pad. Boisjoly was temporarily relieved, however, when the Challenger lifted off without incident. But 73 seconds into the launch, as Challenger went "throttle up", he was inconsolable when the shuttle exploded. Employees came to talk to Boisjoly, but he found himself so stunned that he was unable to speak. The months and years that followed led to depression and his inability to work.

There were so many questions he wanted to address about the explosion of the shuttle and the loss of the seven astronauts on board – most importantly, "Why didn't they listen?"

What Boisjoly didn't realise at the time was how much he was up

against. He had more than just his Morton Thiokol superiors and NASA supervisors to convince; he was also fighting a battle against human nature.

He had all the right data, all the correct technical explanations – he had even identified the very problem that would cause the shuttle to explode. But on the cold January day, it was understanding social psychology that could have been his best weapon.

"Why didn't they listen?"

Let's start with the social psychology phenomenon known as the 'normalisation of deviance'. In laypersons' terms, it describes a situation in which an unacceptable practice has gone on for so long without a serious problem or disaster that this deviant practice actually becomes the accepted way of doing things. As far back as 1979 (two years before the first shuttle launch and seven before the Challenger exploded), engineers warned of concerns with the O-Rings.

The Rogers Commission that investigated the Challenger explosion highlighted the history of concerns with the O-Rings that went back to 1979, and included a copy of a Morton Thiokol memo that indicated that the design would be best used for unmanned space travel.

In a 1979 Morton Thiokol memo, an engineer wrote that he believed the O-

Ring rocket design should be used with unmanned rockets, as he was concerned about their failure. Burn-through and the resulting erosion of the O-Ring had been documented on several past flights. But in the absence of an explosion prior to the Challenger launch, NASA actually came to accept the failure of the O-Rings because no disaster had occurred.

The same social psychology phenomenon would rear its ugly head 17 years later at NASA. When a large piece of insulation struck the shuttle Columbia orbiter just after a 2003 launch, several NASA engineers expressed concern that a hole could have been opened in the shuttle wing.

NASA management dismissed the concern by saying that insulation had fallen off on multiple prior launches without harm to the shuttle occurring. A NASA engineer pleaded with his superiors to take a picture of the orbiting shuttle as he was concerned that the foam insulation that had hit the shuttle upon take-off had caused serious damage to the wing. His warnings were ignored, no picture or thermal imaging was performed on the Columbia orbiter during flight, and the ship disintegrated upon re-entry.

Impact to your company

Business leaders should take notice of the lessons learned from the two

shuttle disasters. the normalisation of deviance is one of the most dangerous aspects of human nature in preventing disasters.

If an unexpected and undesirable event is taking place in your organisation, investigate and understand it thoroughly.

The absence of a disaster doesn't mean that one won't occur. Perhaps you've merely beaten the odds up till now, but statistics will catch up with you eventually, and the result could be tragic. If you find yourself or an employee explaining away known risks by saying, "we've done it this way before without problems", then your organisation may be succumbing to the normalisation of deviance.❖

This article first appeared in the SmartBrief on Leadership <<http://bit.ly/1zG7qNe>> on 24 October and was reproduced in the Engineers Australia journal in November 2014. Dave Yarin is a compliance and risk management consultant to senior management and directors of large and mid-sized companies. <daveyarin.com>

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BUBBLES & LEAKS

BUBBLES AND LEAKS

By Peter Mosse

As chance would have it, one of my dive buddies and I both recently experienced problems with a free flowing second stage regulator. The events were separated by a few days and several hundred kilometres! I was eventually able to control mine after quite some time. My buddy however had less luck, and his initial moderate free flow event became a torrent of free flowing air which he was unable to control. The result was a rapid buoyant ascent exposing him to all the associated risks of possible pulmonary barotrauma and potential head injuries.

The problem with SCUBA diving is that the air we need to take with us underwater to allow us to breathe, generally has to be stored under pressure. In order to use it, we firstly need to reduce the pressure in a controlled way and then access it via a mouth piece. This process requires a number of valves, O ring controlled connections and flexible hoses.

Assuming the tank doesn't have holes in it, nearly all the problems come with the valves and connections.

Leaks under water are troublesome. The consequences range from mild to serious. A small stream of bubbles coming from a hose or regulator is a nuisance, and can be irritating for some non-critical activities such as taking photographs. Slightly more serious consequences are when the loss of air results in shortening the length of the dive. Serious consequences include rapid depletion of the air supply, rapid uncontrolled buoyant ascent, missed decompression, possible pulmonary barotrauma and the possibility of getting hit by a boat.

Such serious events are usually associated with some degree of panic. Panic can be described as "blind uncontrolled terror filled responding"! Something you really don't want to happen while you are underwater. There are ways to manage panic, but most involve stopping what you are doing, calming yourself by taking a few deep slow breaths, determining an appropriate response and then putting those responses into action. The letters in the word STOP are useful here in the context of air leaks.

Stop what you are doing

**Think about what is happening
and what needs to be done**

**Organise yourself and an
appropriate response**

**Proceed with your reasoned
actions.**

The trouble with many air leak and free flow situations, is they can happen very quickly and you just don't have much time to figure out what is happening and take appropriate action!

In what follows, I have considered a range of leak scenarios, what might have caused them and suggested actions under four different headings.

1. Minor Second Stage Regulator Leaks
2. Moderate to Major Free Flow Second Stage Regulator Leaks
3. First Stage Regulator Leaks
4. SCUBA Feed Leaks

Minor Second Stage Regulator Leaks

1. Symptoms: *Both second stage regulators leak slowly.* After the regulator is purged, the leak stops for a short time and then gradually builds up again.

Most likely Cause: Leaking first stage valve seat.**Most Appropriate**

Actions. Get the regulator serviced by a well-respected service agent without delay.

2. Symptoms: *Only one of the regulators leaks,* and the leak continues even after the regulator is purged.

Most Likely Cause: Grains of sand, grit or corrosion interfering with the second stage valve or the lever height on the second stage valve needs to be adjusted.

Most Appropriate Actions:

- After the dive, place the regulator in a bucket of warm soapy water with a mild detergent or shampoo mixed in it. Make sure the dust cap is secure.
- Agitate the regulator in the water. Press the purge valve multiple times. This will allow the water into the valve area. Ensure the first stage is kept elevated above the second stages. This will minimise the possibility of water being able to pass into the first stage.
- Fully rotate all second stage purge adjustment levers or knobs and any second stage valve adjustment knobs (Figure 1). Be sure to move all the knobs or levers through their full range of movement while the second stage is in the hot



Figure 1. Three regulator second stages showing different air flow adjustment systems. The red arrows show venturi adjustment knobs and lever, while the yellow arrow shows a second stage valve adjustment knob. The regulator on the right has no adjustments.

soapy water. If full movement is not possible, the regulator should be serviced.

- Rinse the regulator with clean tap water, pressing the purge and fully exercising all other valves or knobs.
- Connect the regulator to a tank and pressurise the regulator. Purge the regulator underwater several times to clear out any water in the second stage valve.
- If the regulator continues to leak, have it serviced by a qualified regulator technician.

Moderate to Major Free Flow Second Stage Regulator Leaks

1. Symptoms: A large to very large amount of air free flowing from the regulator. This can be quite violent.

Most Likely Cause: The venturi is uncontrolled.

Most Appropriate Actions:

- Quickly switch to your spare regulator. You must be able to access this quickly at all times. This requires you to know where it is at all times!
- Virtually at the same time, use two fingers or thumb or the heel of the palm of your hand to close off the opening of the regulator at the mouth piece.
- At the same time if possible, switch the venturi control to



Figure 2. A tightly bent second stage LP hose. The bend is sufficient to completely stop the flow. If not, squeeze harder.

the Surface or Pre-dive setting and repeat closing off the opening of the regulator at the mouth piece.

- If this fails to control the flow, quickly bend the Low Pressure (LP) hose supplying the regulator as tightly as possible (Figure 2).
- If the flow has stopped, slowly unbend the hose.
- If the flow repeats, commence emergency breathing with your buddy, keep the hose clenched and ascend. Get your buddy to turn off the regulator at the tank. You should develop a pre-arranged hand signal for this!
- After the dive, thoroughly wash the regulator and exercise all control knobs/levers as described above.

- Have the regulator serviced by a qualified regulator technician. Explain to the service technician what happened to the regulator.
- Hose manufacturers generally recommend not folding hoses back on themselves. Certainly this is good advice for general use, however, in an emergency, you need to weigh up the consequences of not controlling a free flow. Rapidly emptying tank! Running out of air! Decompression illness or pulmonary barotrauma! It's a lot easier to replace the hose if necessary.

Inflating Surface Marker Buoys (SMB)

There are several ways to inflate an SMB. One of the most common is to place a second stage regulator into the opening of the SMB and pressing the purge button. The advice commonly provided is to never use your primary regulator but rather your spare regulator.

Either way, what is wrong with that?

Obviously, it can cause a major free flow event. So if that occurs, you are now in an awkward position, trying to manage your buoyancy, and the SMB and the reel and line and not get tangled and needing to manage a free flow event. This is a “task overload”

situation with an associated high risk of a rapid ascent or descent.

The question you need to ask yourself is do you have the most appropriate SMB. Perhaps consider purchasing one with an oral inflate!

As a result of my recent free flow experience, and writing this article, I am organising to trial an SMB with oral inflate capability.

First Stage Regulator Leaks

A first stage leak will startle you and at first you won't know what is happening. It is happening behind your head!

The most common first stage leak is with yoke regulators where the O-ring becomes unseated or pinched or is damaged.

Regardless of the cause, there isn't much you can do. Find your buddy and commence emergency breathing. Get your buddy to turn off the offending first stage. Make a careful ascent.

After the dive, try to establish where the leak came from.

- Before taking the regulator off, see whether the O-ring is bulging around the side of the regulator 1st stage
- After taking the regulator off, check to see if the O-ring looks old and worn. Does it

have any obvious crud on it, or signs of perishing (small cracks) or wear?

Either way, replace the O-ring with the correct sized O-ring. See your dive service centre. Unfortunately there may be several O-rings that sort of fit! Not Good Enough! Get the correct one.

Also clean the O-ring channel on your tank valve and DIN valve on your DIN regulator. Using a cotton bud dipped in vinegar, wipe the groove repeatedly. If there is a lot of built up material, try to position the tank and regulator so you can let some vinegar sit in the groove without letting any run into the tank or back into the regulator. After 3-5 minutes, depending on how badly the metal is fouled, remove the vinegar and wash repeatedly with water again taking precautions to stop water running into the tank valve or first stage.

High Pressure SPG Hose Leaks

A leak in a HP hose is a bit like a first stage regulator leak. There isn't much you can do about it. But, the good thing is that the actual internal diameter of the hose is quite small and only allows a relatively small amount of air out. It will still seem like a lot, but you may well have time to keep breathing and return to the surface, but make sure your

buddy is with you since you may need to start emergency breathing.

SCUBA Feed Leaks

These can be quite scary since with air entering the BCD, you can find yourself rapidly ascending. A rapid ascent has many risks:

- Missed decompression.
- Pulmonary barotrauma.
- Being hit by a boat.
- Banging into an overhead structure (jetty beam, rusted sharp sections of a wreck).

Symptoms: BCD starts to inflate. This may be associated with a sound of air movement but not necessarily.

Most Likely Cause: The inflator O-rings have become stuck or the Schrader (tyre tube) valve in the inflator hose has failed.

Usually such a leak will have been preceded by the inflator button becoming harder to press and slow to spring back, and the diver hasn't heeded the warning signs. So be warned. *Don't ignore developing symptoms.*

Most Appropriate Action: *Before You Even Get In The Water*

- Ensure that the inflator hose fits easily onto the male part on the inflator. Unfortunately not



Figure 3. A range of different BCD inflator fittings.

(Photograph credit, simplyscuba.com)

all hoses fit all BCD fittings! It would be nice if they were all standardised. But they are not. Figure 3 shows the huge range of inflator fittings.

- So you may have to shop around. Also some hoses are poorly made resulting in a very tight fit. The problem with a poorly fitting hose, and in particular a tight fit, is that the first and really only response to a leaking inflator hose and inflating BCD is to **remove the hose...Very Quickly.**
- So...
- Get the right sized hose. You may actually have to go to a dive shop rather than ordering on line so you can test the fit.
- Make sure you can connect and disconnect the hose with one hand. Remember you have to push the hose toward the inflator at the same time as you pull back on the spring loaded collar. Many divers don't realise this. So the action is push hard and then pull back the collar.
- After every few dives, place the BCD inflator in a bucket of warm soapy water with a mild detergent or shampoo mixed in it.

- Repeatedly press the SCUBA feed and oral inflate buttons and work the spring loaded collar backwards and forwards a few times.
- Rinse thoroughly with clean tap water.
- Connect.
- If it continues to leak, have it serviced by a qualified regulator technician.

To help the fittings connect and disconnect, you can put a small amount of O-ring grease on the four little ball bearings you will find inside the end of the SCUBA feed hose. The easiest way to do this is to use a toothpick, but remember only a little bit on each one.

If you are embarking on a dive and you have reservations about the BCD connection in any way, **DO NOT CONNECT** it. If you are happy to do so, proceed with the dive and just orally inflate and deflate your BCD. But this is skill that requires practice, so practice it regularly.

As well as considering the SCUBA feed, think about the various dump valves on your BCD. Inflate the BCD, then check the operation of all the valves, oral inflator, shoulder dump and rear dumps. If these are stuck in any way, immerse the whole BCD in hot soapy water, let it soak for a while and then repeatedly open and close

the dump valves. Remember, that in most modern BCDs, pulling on the BCD hose itself activates a dump valve. On my last two BCDs this method of releasing air from the BCD has been painfully slow. I prefer to use the oral inflate button and make sure the end of the BCD hose is above my body.

Most Appropriate Action:

In The Water

If the BCD inflation system fails with air entering the BCD, the only way to prevent a rapid, unplanned trip to the surface is to disconnect the SCUBA feed as quickly as possible.

The problem with all the other suggested actions you may have been told, or found on the net or YouTube, is that they take time, time you DO NOT have.

Servicing and Hose Replacement

Sometimes it is tempting to look at your regulator and think it “looks OK” and put off replacing oldish hoses, getting it or your tank valve serviced or getting your BCD inflator serviced.

But think about it. Why invite being involved in a very scary event. My buddy who I mentioned at the start of this article is a very experienced ex FAUI Instructor. He described his experience to me as being a pretty bad scare!

Service your regulators and replace hoses. One useful but not always reliable test is to bend the hose right next to the metal fitting connecting it



to the first stage. If it flattens in any



Figure 4. Examples of damage to a second stage LP regulator hose that should have been replaced a long time ago!

With Miflex and other flexible hoses, if the nylon braiding is worn, replace the hose. The manufacturer's instructions for use of these hoses clearly states "if there are more than six loose threads in the same area on the outer layer of the hose, replace your hose".

And don't keep the old hoses as a spares. Dispose of them.

Hose Protectors and Hose Position

Beware of hose protectors. The protectors prevent easy inspection of this vulnerable area of the hose. Sure you can slide them off to look, but without one you can check the hose before every dive rather than when you remember, which usually isn't very often. Hose protectors can cover a multitude of sins. For this reason I prefer to not use hose protectors and simply make sure whenever the regulator is stored between dives, the hoses are gently coiled and not hanging down with the weight of the regulator placing stress on the joint.

Second stage hoses can be badly knocked when a diver enters an overhead environment such as a cave, "lobster grotto" or part of a wreck. Repeated knocks will weaken the hose fitting and abrade the hose material. Arrange your regulator and hoses to be as streamlined as possible and not sticking upwards. They should be preferably directed downwards or horizontally (Figure 5).



Figure 5. The regulator top image has the hoses directed upwards. The regulator bottom image has the hoses directed as horizontally as possible. Nobody says the first stage body has to be vertical. Sure it looks nicer but unexposed hoses are better.

If you are the sort of diver that likes poking around in overhead environments, and your regulator won't allow you to reroute your hoses, buy a new one and make sure it has a DIN fitting. Repeated knocks on the knob on a yoke regulator invite a first stage leak. This cannot happen with a DIN valve.

Avoiding Leaks and Bubbles: Be Prepared

It is too easy to jump in the water and have a good dive without thinking of what could go wrong. Make sure you minimise the chances of it going wrong.

- Look after your equipment.
- Inspect it regularly.
- Service it regularly.
- Don't ignore things that don't seem right or you know are not right.
- Think about how things could go wrong and correct them. If you are not sure, talk to someone experienced. Use the internet but be careful, there is a lot of misinformation out there!

Case Study

For years I carried a small reel attached to a ring at the back and bottom of my BCD. Why not, that's where I have

carried all sorts of things whilst cave diving!

One day, after diving in the ocean and back on dry land, I was taking my weight belt off and it got caught in the handle of the reel. It was stuck! I couldn't get it free. If that had happened in the ocean during an incident where I had decided to ditch my weight belt, I probably wouldn't have survived. A dangling weight belt in the water is VERY hard to manage and tends to pull you down and you cannot kick effectively! In the old days of instructing, we used to have students practice ditching their gear. On more than one occasion a student managed to get the weight belt caught around their knees and without help they probably would have drowned. Hence the reason why it is important to ditch your weight belt at arms distance from your body and preferably not on top of your buddy.

Why had I made this mistake?

I quickly figured it out. I realised that in cave diving you never plan to take your weight belt

off! In the ocean you may need to.

I have since changed how I carry my reel.

- If during a dive you note that something wasn't quite right. Make a note of it as soon as you can, AND follow up and fix the problem as soon as you can!

Avoiding Serious Consequences: Practice

Drills are a good way to get yourself prepared to handle most situations. They provide you with pre-rehearsed solutions to deal with incidents in an effective and timely manner. Some relevant drills are listed below.

- After having ensured your BCD inflator hose is the correct one and that the spring loaded collar is clean and lubricated, practice removing your SCUBA feed on dry land and underwater. Make sure you can do it with one hand.
- On dry land (and you can also do it underwater), initiate a free flow and control it. It is usually quite easy to start a free flow by simply setting a regulator with a venturi on the Dive position and pushing the purge. Air will usually start to flow violently. Once this happens, control it. And

practice the bent hose to convince yourself how effective it is. Usually placing your fingers or thumb or palm of your hand over the second stage regulator opening will stop the flow, but be prepared if it doesn't. Expect the unexpected!

Then try it all again underwater in a shallow, safe location.

For those of you with a regulator with no adjustments, it may be more difficult to initiate a free flow but the good thing is that it is also less likely that you will experience a free flow underwater while diving.

- Practice using all of your dump valves. You need to quickly know where they are.
- Practice controlling your buoyancy by only using the oral inflator for your BCD. In the event that you need to disconnect the low pressure inflator hose, being familiar with this technique will allow you to continue using your BCD.

Take the opportunity to check your equipment and add a few drills every time you dive.

- *Peter Mosse*. ❖

ARCH ROCK

ARCH ROCK

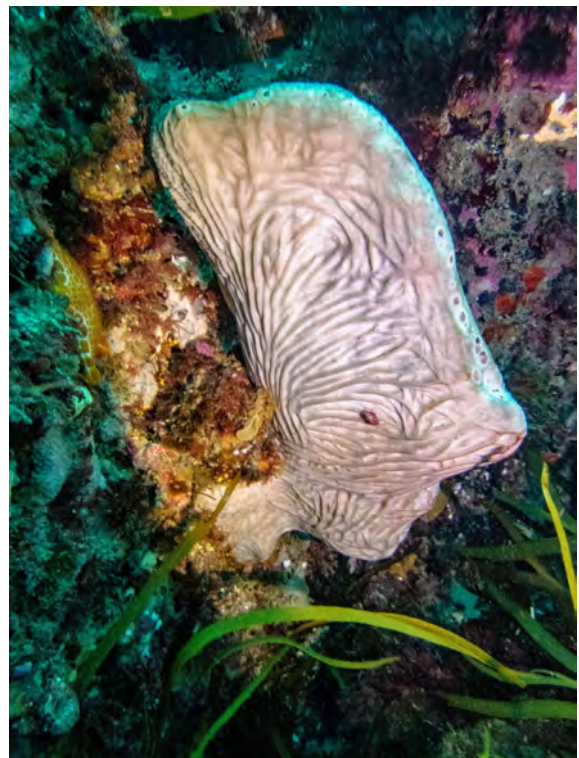
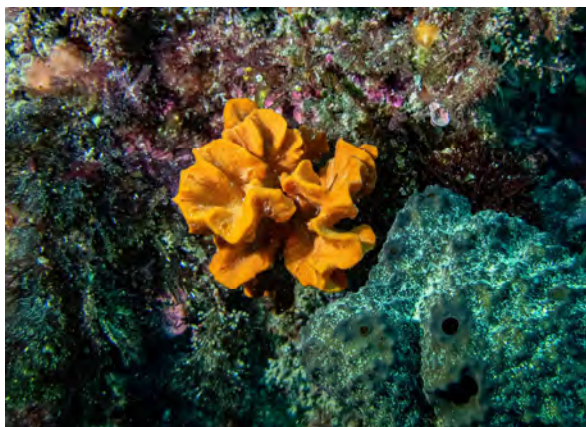
10th January, 2021

On board the Stroker with Peter Galvin, Tyson and Frank, who managed the hooker. A few other VSAG guys where on the Mistress with Angus. While Peter and Tyson went after crays and Abs, I focused on being the spotter and taking photos. A few of the better photos from the day.

- *Brian Heatherich.* ❖



Peter Galvin





ARCH ROCK

11th January, 2020

We had a great day diving for crays down at Arch Rock today on Mistress. Peter Galvin was also out on Stroker and competition was fierce for cray of the day. Mike Mosseveld took the honours with a 3.6kg monster. Surface conditions were ideal but the surge wasn't great causing reduced visibility when sand was disturbed. Water was 17c. The surprise of the day was bagging an Eastern Rock Lobster. None of us had encountered an Eastern RL before in Victorian waters and was wondering if anyone else had?

- Rowan Salger. ❖



RICKETTS POINT

12th November, 2020

Whilst the restrictions over the past few months have been hard, the 25km bubble limitation over the past few weeks has encouraged Marc and I to explore a few dive sites that we've not really spent any time at before, including Jawbone, Crystals (Williamstown) and Ricketts Point.

We're loving Ricketts Point, shallow but so much to see - here is a fiddler ray that was happy to hang around for quite a while. We also did a night dive here and the bioluminescence was out of this world!

- Bobbi. O'Riley ❖

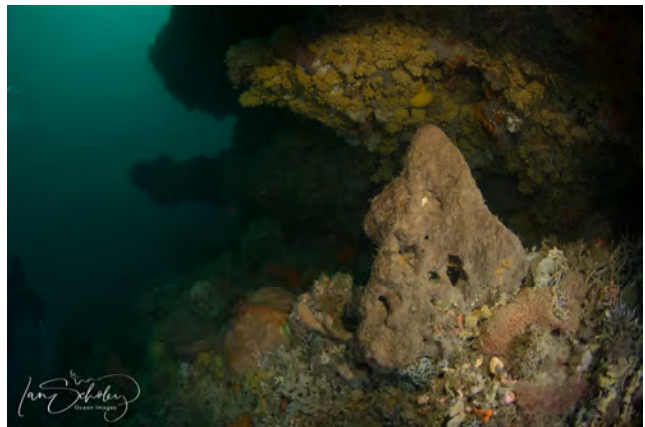


RIP BANK

10th January, 2021.

Chris Porter and I headed out on #Redboats this morning. It's amazing how quickly conditions can change. On Tuesday we had fantastic vis in the rain, while today it was awful in the sunshine. It was a real challenge to take a decent snap so the camera didn't get much action. Instead I concentrated on enjoying the dive and dealing with the weird and wonderful things the current was doing. There were some quite strong down currents over the wall which required a bit of concentration until the slack kicked in. The vis was pretty grim. We had a plan for a maximum depth of 45m and a run time of 55 minutes and hit the surface having executed it perfectly. The territory was good and we enjoyed the dive despite the vis.

- Ian Scholey. ❖

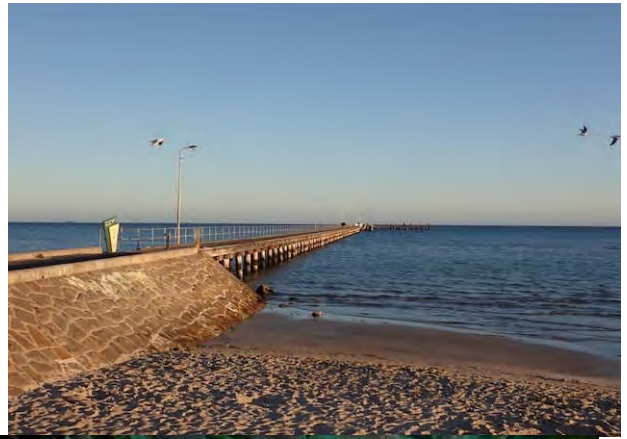


RYE PIER

8th January, 2020

Rye was absolutely mesmerising this morning. Every January it turns on a spectacular show, with streams of junior leather jackets, and an abundance of everything. Spent a lot of time with a couple of friendly octopuses. So lucky to have this on our doorstep.

- *Matthijs Smith.* ❖

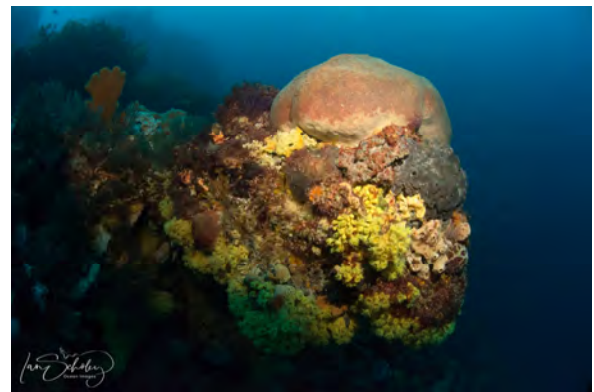
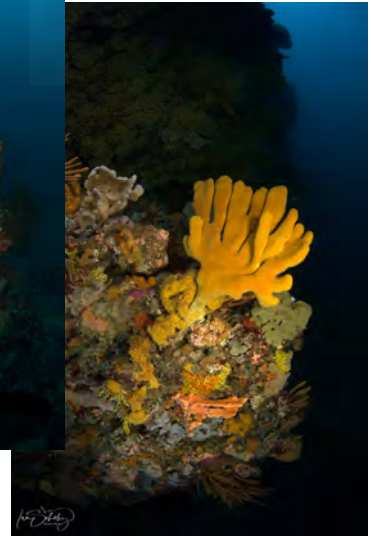


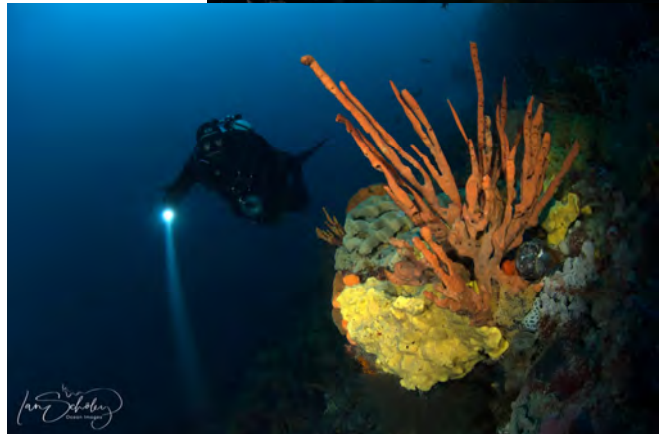
THE LINKS

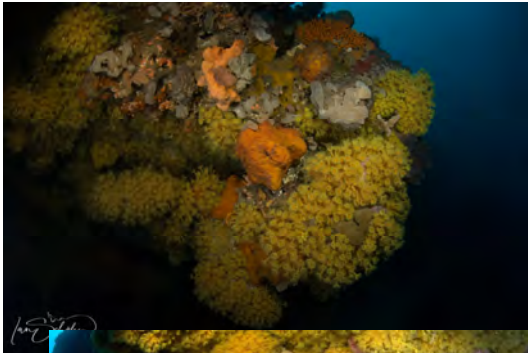
5th January, 2021

I have to admit, I was not that enthusiastic when my alarm went off at 5.00am and I looked out of the window. But I got up and in the pouring rain, drove down to Portsea for the 7.15am #Redboats boat. We were trying for Captain Nitros Drop-off but shipping put paid to that and Luke English explained Plan B was The Links. Buddy Chris Porter and I have dived the wall a time or two but neither of us could remember diving this site. We were warned to watch our Deco due to the fast outgoing tide at the end of slack, so kept our depth to a max of 36m to give us a decent run time without too much deco. We were first in and descended onto some really very nice territory. It was a really good dive, making getting up well worth while. We ran for just short of an hour, hitting the surface well away from the Rip as requested. After all of my recent travel, it was good to be back on our magnificent dive sites.

- Ian Scholey. ❖







FLINDERS

10th January, 2021

Perfect conditions at Flinders.

Photos by Mark Howells.



CAPE WOOLAMAI

CAPE WOOLAMAI PHILLIP ISLAND

Sunday, 10th January, 2021.

By Arthur Kokkinos.

Today was a well-attended dive day with four boats launching from Newhaven.

Peter GALVIN'S Boat: STROKER had Rohan SALGER, Brian HEATHERICH, Tyson SMALLMAN (a guest from the La Trobe University dive club), and the ever reliable deckhand Frank Van Pert.

Angus STUART ADAMS Boat: MISTRESS had Arthur KOKKINOS, David GEEKIE, Mike MOSSEVELD and deckhand Dave SIMPSON.

Peter BEAUMONT'S Boat: TOUCANS had Peter ALTIS

Tony HOOD'S Boat: GOOFY 2 had Rowan SALGER

All boats departed at different times, with Peter BEAUMONT doing a double dive on the pinnacle and the George Kermode ship wreck. The three other boats spent the day diving for crays, abalone and fish.

DIVE:1

First dive of the day was at Cape Woolamai. After finding a nice place to drop the anchor, Angus and I immediately geared up. Surface conditions were superb, there was no swell and no wind, it was a very hot day and the sun was releasing high levels of UV Rays. We entered the water on a Hookah set up, while Mike and David dived with tanks. Angus and I frantically started our hunt for crays, searching in every hole and opening. We both spotted some small crays that appeared to be undersize. Leaving them to live another day, we continued our hunt. We reached a depth of 23.5 metres and encountered minimal current. Visibility was not the best, at around 5 to 6 metres. After 40 minutes of diving, we had our bag limit of 5 Abalone each and a number of fish in our catch bag. We had no crays on this dive.

Mike and David did a lot better, coming up with a decent sized cray.

DIVE:2

After nearly one and half hours of surface interval, we decided to go to another location. Since conditions

were excellent, we opted for a shallower dive near a Bommie, located in one of the many inlets located around Cape Woolamai. We anchored close to the cliff face and within minutes we were geared up and in the water for our second dive. This dive was absolutely amazing. There was hardly no swell and reaching a depth of around 12 metres, we were able to dive comfortably. We entered many small sized canyons and openings without being tossed around. Visibility was excellent, at around 10 to 15 metres and water temp was a warm 18 degrees. The underwater vegetation and fish numbers were full of colour and life. Many schools of bream, pike, leatherjackets, wrasse, sweep and hundreds of small fish were in healthy stocks.

After diving for almost 65 minutes we decided to end the dive. On this dive we sighted a number of undersized crays. None were big enough to bring home. We only managed to get a few fish.

Overall a very successful day organised by Peter GALVIN, with every diver on every boat managing two dives. Divers on STROKER and GOOFY 2 did really well, bagging out on crays and getting a number of sweep.

A big thankyou to Angus for taking us out today. It was a fantastic day of diving, regardless of what we didn't catch.

- Arthur Kokkinos. ❖



After the dive having a de-brief and coffee at Newhaven Bakery.

*Mike MOSSEVELD, Brian HEATHERICH, Angus STUART ADAMS,
David GEEKIE, Arthur KOKKINOS, Frank VAN PELT, Peter GALVIN,
Tyson SMALLMAN, Rowan SALGER, Dave SIMPSON.*

PORTARLINGTON

PORTARLINGTON PIER AND ARTIFICIAL REEF

Sunday, 24th January, 2021.

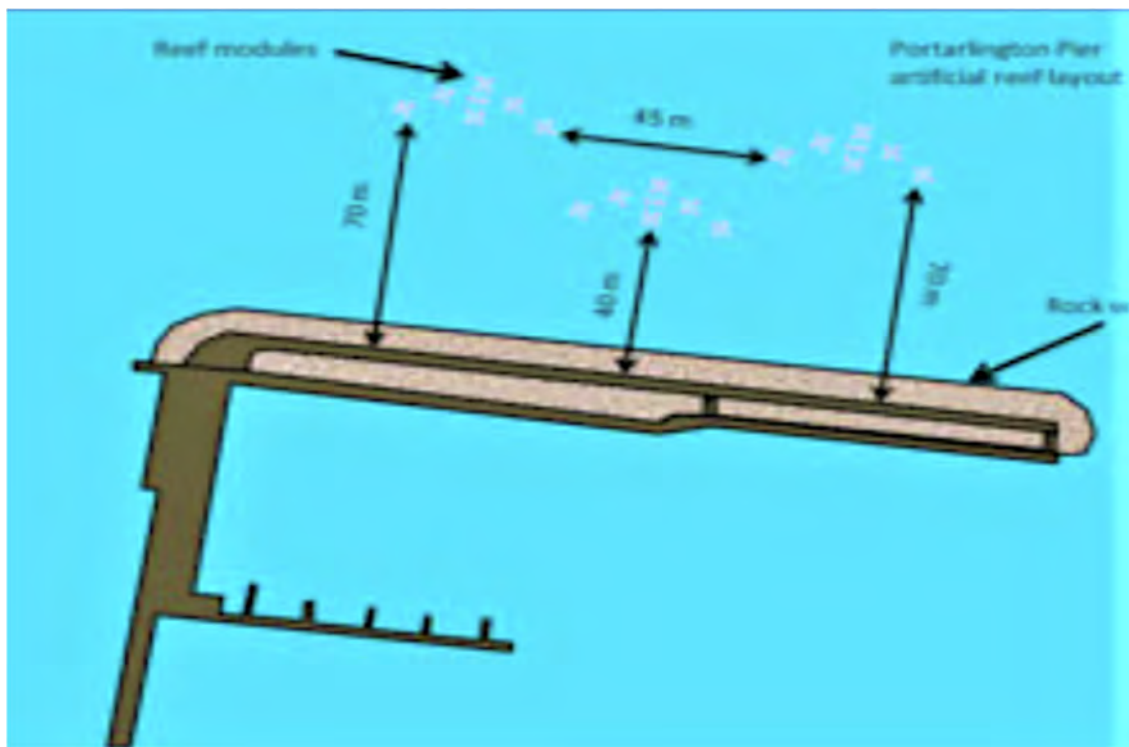
By Arthur Kokkinos.

DIVERS: Arthur KOKKINOS, Claudio PLUCHINO, Aaron (Guest Diver)

Today was very hot day with the temperature reaching 38 degrees. Two divers answered my call for a shore dive at Portarlington pier and the artificial reef. The dive plan was to dive the full length of the pier and then dive out and around, along the large rock wall. Once reaching the middle section of the Rock wall, a

short 10-minute dive heading north close to 90 metres in distance would bring us to the artificial reef. When Portarlington harbour was upgraded back in 2012, an artificial reef was constructed opposite the rock wall to enhance fish life in the area. Over the years sea life has prospered and many species of fish have migrated along the stretch of this artificial reef.

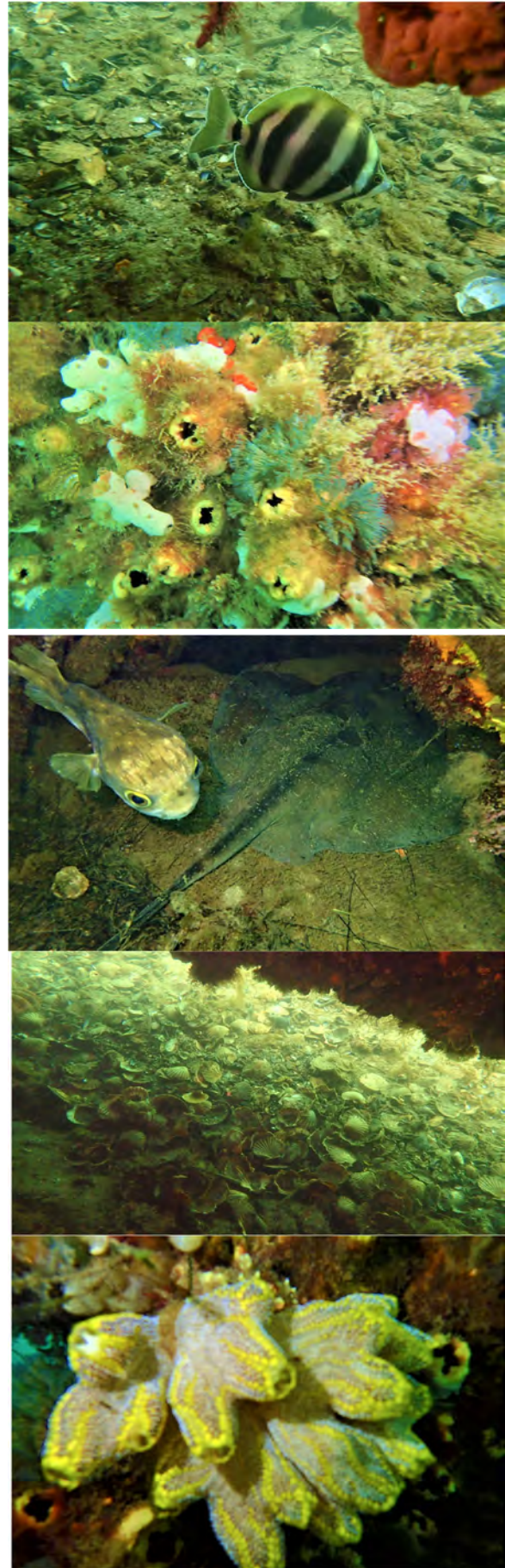
By the time we geared up and made our way to the water, the beach was almost full of people. We slowly had to navigate our way around the sun bathers to get to the water. We entered the water at 11:08 am at high tide. In single file, we dived the full



Portarlington Pier rock wall and the Artificial reef located about 90 metres out.

length of the pier staying at a depth of around 4 to 5 metres. It is better to do this dive on a high tide to get good depth for your dive. At the halfway mark, the pier is covered with huge concrete walls that were erected when the harbour was upgraded. This section has no natural light and for about 50 metres you definitely need your torch to guide yourself through. It actually feels like you are doing a night dive. As we approached the end of the pier we hit the rock wall at a depth of around 8 metres. In this location, fish life is actually surprisingly very healthy with many schools of fish living under the pier. Large schools of Snapper were everywhere and amazingly, none of them were biting any of the bait dangling from the many fishing rods above. As we circled this area, one by one we exited a small opening in the bottom left hand corner. This led us out and around to the open front of the rock wall. We kept diving along the wall staying at a depth of around 5 metres for the rest of the dive. About halfway along the wall we took a north direction towards the artificial reef. After diving for about 10 minutes, covering about 90 metres, we hit the artificial reef.

To be honest, I was little disappointed with what we encountered. The size of the round objects forming the reef were quite small and not what I expected. The



artificial reef is made up of little round objects smaller than a car tyre. They are spread out from each other sitting about 5 metres apart. All of them have openings from both sides to encourage plant growth and fish migration.

We dived around exploring the reef taking many photos. After spending at least 20 minutes exploring the whole reef we finally made our way back towards the end of the rock wall. We safely entered the small opening leading back to underneath the pier. We dived all the way back to shore stopping many times to take a closer look at the many discarded scallop shells scattered along the concrete wall. There were many small stingrays and a large school of snapper circling us.

Overall this dive was really enjoyable and all three of us really had a great time exploring the outer perimeter of the rock wall and successfully finding the artificial reef. When diving this area extreme caution needs to be followed, due to the heavy traffic of Jet skis and from people fishing. A dive flag needs to be visible at all times when diving out to the artificial reef.

- Arthur Kokkinos. ❖



Stingrays placidly swimming past



Straight after the dive on the fore-shore. Guest diver Aaron from St Leonards, Arthur KOKKINOS and Claudio PUCHINO.



Having a dive debrief and enjoying a nice refreshment after the dive.



Home: Covered
Car: Covered

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DAN Membership Costs Less than AUD\$6* per month
Be Prepared. Join *the Experts* in Dive Accident Management.

www.danasiapacific.org

*DAN Membership provides up to US\$150,000 Worldwide Emergency Evacuation Coverage. DAN Dive Injury Insurance is additional.

Rock Lobster Tagging Program

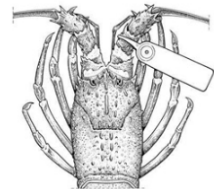
Tagging of recreationally caught rock lobsters commenced on 1 July 2017

Tags are free and can be ordered online or collected from selected Victorian Government Offices.

<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/fisheries/recreational-fishing/tagging-of-recreationally-caught-rock-lobsters>

To Create an account, Order/Report/Transfer tags please visit:

<https://lobstertag.agriculture.vic.gov.au>



Save the Rays

REPORT ILLEGAL FISHING ACTIVITY

<https://vfa.vic.gov.au/recreational-fishing/ray-protection-fishing-rules>

You can report illegal fishing activity to 13 3474.

Ray protection fishing rules



We are making changes to ray, skate and guitarfish fishing rules.

These new rules commence on **Tuesday 7 November 2017**.

The new rules:

1. Prohibit the take or possession of sting rays, skates or guitarfish greater than 1.5 metres in width;
2. Reduce the combined daily bag limit for rays, skates and guitarfish from 5 to 1, which are smaller than 1.5 metres in width;
3. Prohibit the take of these species within 400m of any pier, jetty, wharf or breakwater;
4. Require these species to be landed whole so they can be measured by Fisheries Officers.



An education and awareness program will be conducted to educate fishers about these new rules.

SafeTrx

Coastguard have an excellent app that allows you to register your boat trip with them and allows them to track you, using the GPS in your phone.

How it works:

You register your trip, together with your latest return time. If you go an hour past this, without notifying

them, the wheels are set in motion to find you. Firstly, they will try and ring you or your nominated contacts and then, go from there.

Great tool for extra safety. Details can be found on the coastguard website:

www.coastguard.com.au/SafeTrx

BOAT RAMPS

Better Boating Victoria has been working with boating asset managers to remove all fees and make it cheaper and easier for all people to get out on the water.

To find a free boat ramp please visit this link

<https://betterboating.vic.gov.au/>

DIARY DATES

Philippines & Palau—22/05/2021—06/06/2021

JOIN VSAG IN THE PHILIPPINES

22—29/05/2021

EXTEND TO PALAU

30/05/2021—06/06/2021



The destination for next year's club overseas trip is Dumaguete in the Philippines. This will be a great trip to bring the family along, as there is plenty for them to do while we are out diving.

If anyone is interested please contact me for a booking form at:

President@vsag.org.au

While we are in the Philippines, it seems silly not to take the opportunity to extend the trip in Palau. Koror is just a 2 hour flight from Manila and has some of the best diving anywhere.

If anyone is interested please contact me for a booking form at:

President@vsag.org.au





VICTORIAN SUB AQUA GROUP

DUMAGUETE- THE PHILIPPINES

 **8**
DAYS

 **7**
NIGHTS

 **< 12**
DIVES

Join the Victorian Sub Aqua group on this memorable trip to the Philippines, with the option to extend further and dive Palau too! Diving in Dumaguete can take place on either the magnificent Marine Sanctuary of Apo Island or the amazing Dauin Coastline. Find walls densely covered with hard and soft corals, schooling fish, turtles and crystal clear waters. In contrast, the Dauin coastline is home to exquisitely rare macro critters. Spot wonderpus, hairy frogfish, mandarin fish performing their mating dances at dusk and the extremely rare clown frogfish.

FLY

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES & CEBU PACIFIC

Return Flights Melbourne to Dumaguete via Manila
All airline taxes & fuel surcharges

STAY & DIVE

ATLANTIS DUMAGUETE RESORT

7 nights standard room twin share
Breakfast daily
Return airport transfers
10 dives per person
Apo island day trip including 2 dives pp
Oslob whale shark snorkel day trip
Tanks, weights, airfills

UPGRADE OPTION

Eat Sleep Dive package
Includes all meals
Unlimited diving
Free nitrox
Add \$900pp

22—29/05/2021



CONTACT VSAG FOR MORE INFORMATION

ischoley@iinet.net.au | 0439 310 646 | vsag.org.au

ALLWAYS DIVE EXPEDITIONS

res@allwaysdive.com.au | 03 95316818 | allwaysdive.com.au

Lic # 32311



VICTORIAN SUB AQUA GROUP PALAU EXTENSION



8

DAYS



7

NIGHTS



9

DIVES

Following on from diving Dumaguete in the Philippines, come along with Victorian Sub Aqua Group to dive Palau! This destination offers some of the most diverse waters in the world. Its marine ecosystems include barrier and fringing reefs, lagoons, sea grass beds, marine lakes and mangrove forests. Palau's waters boast some of the world's best reefs and concentrations of the most spectacular marine life in the world. Inquisitive sharks, friendly dolphins, manta rays, tuna and barracuda - all are prolific in the rich Palau waters and every dive holds something new and breathtaking. There are dive sites to suit all levels of experience with the two best sites being "Blue Corner" and "Blue Holes". These pristine habitats support some of the world's richest populations of marine life. With over 1,500 species of fish, pelagics, corals and a number of WWII wrecks, Palau should be on every diver's bucket list.

FLY

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES

Return Flights Manila to Koror
All airline taxes & fuel surcharges

STAY & DIVE

PALAU CENTRAL, KOROR

7 nights standard room twin share
Breakfast daily
Return airport transfers

SAM'S TOURS PALAU

8 dives per diver onc Tanks, weights and airfills
Third residual air dive Chandelier Cave
Jellyfish Lake snorkel stop
Unlimited diving on Sam's macro wall
FREE Sam's water bottle
FREE nitrox for certified divers
Excludes :
Dive permits including Jellyfish Lake \$100USD paid locally



30/05/2021—
06/06/2021

CONTACT VSAG FOR MORE INFORMATION

ischoley@iinet.net.au | 0439 310 646 | vsag.org.au

ALLWAYS DIVE EXPEDITIONS

res@allwaysdive.com.au | 03 95316818 | allwaysdive.com.au

Lic # 32311

VSAG Dive and Meeting Calendar TBA

Diving with VSAG:

Each week the nominated Dive Captain will issue an email on or close to the Wednesday advising if there are any boats available and, if known, where the locations.

If you are interested in booking on one of the boats for a dive weekend, you should Email the Dive Captain ASAP after receiving the notification email with the following information:

Full Name;

Mobile Number;

Emergency Contact Information;

Preferred boarding location (if different locations are offered e.g. Sorrento/Queenscliff)

Date/Details of last dive; and

Gear configuration.

Available boat owners will be confirmed by email prior to the weekend.

Dive site(s) and dive day will be determined by the DC in consultation with the Boat Owners, depending on the forecasted conditions.

Dive sites may be adjusted on the day to suit divers and prevailing conditions.

The boat owner and /or one of the divers will prepare and forward a Fathoms Dive Report to: editor@vsag.org.au

You must confirm your intention to dive with the Dive Captain and the boat owner by 6:00pm the day prior to the dive.

Failure to confirm your intention to dive may result in the boat owner allocating your spot on the boat to a confirmed diver and placing your spot on the “standby diver list”.

Additional Information:

Tidal Stream Information for Port Phillip Bay Heads is location here:

<http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/tides/#!/vic-the-rip>

Rates in RED are the maximum forecast outgoing (ebb) tidal rate.

Rates in BLUE are the maximum forecast incoming (flood) tidal rate

Definitions

TBA – To Be Advised

TBC – To Be Confirmed

VSAG Dive and Meeting Calendar TBA. Please note that the calendar is subject to change when circumstances require. – VSAG Committee.

Websites for Tidal Streams & Weather Conditions

Peter Beaumont

Tidal Stream information for Port Phillip Bay Heads is located here:

<http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/tides/#!/vic-the-rip>

Port Phillip Bay winds and temperature information is located here:

<http://www.baywx.com.au/>

Tide information for Cape Woolamai is located here:

<http://tides.willyweather.com.au/vic/gippsland/cape-woolamai.html>

VSAG Dive Equipment Box - Update

VSAG has a private transient equipment box located at:

The Scuba Doctor Shop, 1/49 Peninsula Avenue, Rye VIC 3941.

Equipment that is not in use by VSAG divers and boat owners can now be held in our black storage box.

It currently holds :

◆ 2 Oxy-Sok Oxygen Resuscitation Kits

◆ 1 Oxygen Medical Tank Better Boating Victoria

◆ 1 Oxygen Medical Kit To find a free boat ramp please
visit this link:

◆ 2 Scuba Tanks.

<https://betterboating.vic.gov.au/>

Tidal Streams at the Heads — February 2021

RED italic times are slack water with EBB about to start (Flood Slack) which are the best diving conditions near the Heads. **BLUE** are Ebb Slack.

Times have been adjusted for Daylight Savings

Jan	February					
MON 1	TUE 2	WED 3	THU 4	FRI 5	SAT 6	SUN 7
0:08	0:51	1:32	2:13	2:52	3:32	4:15
6:44	7:13	7:43	8:12	8:43	9:16	9:52
12:57	13:35	14:15	14:57	15:41	16:27	17:16
18:08	19:00	19:53	20:48	21:45	22:47	23:54
MON 8	TUE 9	WED 10	THU 11	FRI 12	SAT 13	SUN 14
5:03	1:07	2:24	3:36	4:36	5:24	6:04
10:36	6:05	7:32	9:15	10:35	11:33	12:21
18:12	11:30	12:39	14:02	15:23	16:35	17:35
	19:16	20:26	21:35	22:38	23:32	
MON 15	TUE 16	WED 17	THU 18	FRI 19	SAT 20	SUN 21
0:18	0:59	1:34	2:06	2:36	3:07	3:38
6:38	7:09	7:35	8:00	8:24	8:49	9:16
13:02	13:39	14:12	14:44	15:15	15:48	16:23
18:26	19:12	19:55	20:35	21:16	21:59	22:47
MON 22	TUE 23	WED 24	THU 25	FRI 26	SAT 27	SUN 28
4:12	4:50	0:48	2:05	3:19	4:15	4:57
9:46	10:18	5:41	7:02	8:56	10:12	11:03
17:02	17:48	10:59	11:58	13:23	14:52	16:08
23:42		18:44	19:51	21:02	22:07	23:03
March						
MON 1	TUE 2	WED 3	THU 4	FRI 5	SAT 6	SUN 7
5:32	6:03	0:39	1:22	2:03	2:43	3:23
11:47	12:29	6:35	7:06	7:39	8:14	8:50
17:12	18:09	13:11	13:53	14:36	15:20	16:05
23:53		19:02	19:55	20:47	21:40	22:35

Tidal Streams at the Heads — March 2021

RED italic times are slack water with EBB about to start (Flood Slack) which are the best diving conditions near the Heads. **BLUE** are Ebb Slack.

Times have been adjusted for Daylight Savings

March						
<i>MON 1</i>	<i>TUE 2</i>	<i>WED 3</i>	<i>THU 4</i>	<i>FRI 5</i>	<i>SAT 6</i>	<i>SUN 7</i>
<i>5:32</i>	<i>6:03</i>	<i>0:39</i>	<i>1:22</i>	<i>2:03</i>	<i>2:43</i>	<i>3:23</i>
<i>11:47</i>	<i>12:29</i>	<i>6:35</i>	<i>7:06</i>	<i>7:39</i>	<i>8:14</i>	<i>8:50</i>
<i>17:12</i>	<i>18:09</i>	<i>13:11</i>	<i>13:53</i>	<i>14:36</i>	<i>15:20</i>	<i>16:05</i>
<i>23:53</i>		<i>19:02</i>	<i>19:55</i>	<i>20:47</i>	<i>21:40</i>	<i>22:35</i>
<i>MON 8</i>	<i>TUE 9</i>	<i>WED 10</i>	<i>THU 11</i>	<i>FRI 12</i>	<i>SAT 13</i>	<i>SUN 14</i>
<i>4:04</i>	<i>4:50</i>	<i>0:39</i>	<i>1:51</i>	<i>3:03</i>	<i>4:03</i>	<i>4:50</i>
<i>9:30</i>	<i>10:18</i>	<i>5:50</i>	<i>7:18</i>	<i>9:02</i>	<i>10:19</i>	<i>11:14</i>
<i>16:52</i>	<i>17:45</i>	<i>11:16</i>	<i>12:33</i>	<i>14:04</i>	<i>15:32</i>	<i>16:41</i>
<i>23:34</i>		<i>18:48</i>	<i>20:01</i>	<i>21:18</i>	<i>22:24</i>	<i>23:18</i>
<i>MON 15</i>	<i>TUE 16</i>	<i>WED 17</i>	<i>THU 18</i>	<i>FRI 19</i>	<i>SAT 20</i>	<i>SUN 21</i>
<i>5:28</i>	<i>0:03</i>	<i>0:41</i>	<i>1:15</i>	<i>1:46</i>	<i>2:15</i>	<i>2:45</i>
<i>11:57</i>	<i>6:00</i>	<i>6:27</i>	<i>6:52</i>	<i>7:17</i>	<i>7:42</i>	<i>8:09</i>
<i>17:37</i>	<i>12:33</i>	<i>13:05</i>	<i>13:35</i>	<i>14:04</i>	<i>14:34</i>	<i>15:06</i>
	<i>18:23</i>	<i>19:03</i>	<i>19:39</i>	<i>20:15</i>	<i>20:51</i>	<i>21:29</i>
<i>MON 22</i>	<i>TUE 23</i>	<i>WED 24</i>	<i>THU 25</i>	<i>FRI 26</i>	<i>SAT 27</i>	<i>SUN 28</i>
<i>3:15</i>	<i>3:46</i>	<i>4:21</i>	<i>5:07</i>	<i>1:01</i>	<i>2:10</i>	<i>3:09</i>
<i>8:38</i>	<i>9:08</i>	<i>9:41</i>	<i>10:24</i>	<i>6:16</i>	<i>7:57</i>	<i>9:22</i>
<i>15:39</i>	<i>16:16</i>	<i>16:58</i>	<i>17:49</i>	<i>11:30</i>	<i>13:06</i>	<i>14:43</i>
<i>22:10</i>	<i>22:58</i>	<i>23:55</i>		<i>18:57</i>	<i>20:18</i>	<i>21:35</i>
March			April			
<i>MON 29</i>	<i>TUE 30</i>	<i>WED 31</i>	<i>THU 1</i>	<i>FRI 2</i>	<i>SAT 3</i>	<i>SUN 4</i>
<i>3:57</i>	<i>4:37</i>	<i>5:14</i>	<i>0:22</i>	<i>1:06</i>	<i>1:49</i>	<i>2:31</i>
<i>10:20</i>	<i>11:10</i>	<i>11:57</i>	<i>5:50</i>	<i>6:27</i>	<i>7:06</i>	<i>6:46</i>
<i>16:05</i>	<i>17:10</i>	<i>18:08</i>	<i>12:42</i>	<i>13:27</i>	<i>14:12</i>	<i>13:56</i>
<i>22:39</i>	<i>23:33</i>		<i>19:00</i>	<i>19:50</i>	<i>20:40</i>	<i>20:29</i>

Tidal Streams at the Heads — April 2021

RED italic times are slack water with EBB about to start (Flood Slack) which are the best diving conditions near the Heads. **BLUE** are Ebb Slack.

Times have been adjusted for Daylight Savings

March			April			
MON 29	TUE 30	WED 31	THU 1	FRI 2	SAT 3	SUN 4
<i>3:57</i>	<i>4:37</i>	<i>5:14</i>	<i>0:22</i>	<i>1:06</i>	<i>1:49</i>	<i>2:31</i>
<i>10:20</i>	<i>11:10</i>	<i>11:57</i>	<i>5:50</i>	<i>6:27</i>	<i>7:06</i>	<i>6:46</i>
<i>16:05</i>	<i>17:10</i>	<i>18:08</i>	<i>12:42</i>	<i>13:27</i>	<i>14:12</i>	<i>13:56</i>
<i>22:39</i>	<i>23:33</i>		<i>19:00</i>	<i>19:50</i>	<i>20:40</i>	<i>20:29</i>
MON 5	TUE 6	WED 7	THU 8	FRI 9	SAT 10	SUN 11
<i>2:12</i>	<i>2:56</i>	<i>3:46</i>	<i>4:49</i>	<i>0:11</i>	<i>1:17</i>	<i>2:15</i>
<i>7:30</i>	<i>8:17</i>	<i>9:11</i>	<i>10:17</i>	<i>6:16</i>	<i>7:45</i>	<i>8:52</i>
<i>14:41</i>	<i>15:27</i>	<i>16:18</i>	<i>17:17</i>	<i>11:42</i>	<i>13:18</i>	<i>14:41</i>
<i>21:19</i>	<i>22:11</i>	<i>23:08</i>		<i>18:32</i>	<i>19:53</i>	<i>21:03</i>
MON 12	TUE 13	WED 14	THU 15	FRI 16	SAT 17	SUN 18
<i>3:02</i>	<i>3:40</i>	<i>4:11</i>	<i>4:39</i>	<i>5:06</i>	<i>0:25</i>	<i>0:55</i>
<i>9:41</i>	<i>10:19</i>	<i>10:53</i>	<i>11:24</i>	<i>11:54</i>	<i>5:33</i>	<i>6:02</i>
<i>15:44</i>	<i>16:33</i>	<i>17:13</i>	<i>17:49</i>	<i>18:22</i>	<i>12:25</i>	<i>12:56</i>
<i>21:58</i>	<i>22:42</i>	<i>23:20</i>	<i>23:53</i>		<i>18:54</i>	<i>19:28</i>
MON 19	TUE 20	WED 21	THU 22	FRI 23	SAT 24	SUN 25
<i>1:25</i>	<i>1:55</i>	<i>2:26</i>	<i>3:03</i>	<i>3:50</i>	<i>4:56</i>	<i>0:01</i>
<i>6:33</i>	<i>7:04</i>	<i>7:37</i>	<i>8:16</i>	<i>9:09</i>	<i>10:27</i>	<i>6:19</i>
<i>13:28</i>	<i>14:01</i>	<i>14:36</i>	<i>15:17</i>	<i>16:06</i>	<i>17:09</i>	<i>12:04</i>
<i>20:04</i>	<i>20:42</i>	<i>21:24</i>	<i>22:12</i>	<i>23:04</i>		<i>18:31</i>
April					May	
MON 26	TUE 27	WED 28	THU 29	FRI 30	SAT 1	SUN 2
<i>0:57</i>	<i>1:49</i>	<i>2:37</i>	<i>3:22</i>	<i>4:06</i>	<i>4:50</i>	<i>0:33</i>
<i>7:36</i>	<i>8:39</i>	<i>9:33</i>	<i>10:24</i>	<i>11:13</i>	<i>12:01</i>	<i>5:36</i>
<i>13:41</i>	<i>15:01</i>	<i>16:06</i>	<i>17:02</i>	<i>17:52</i>	<i>18:40</i>	<i>12:47</i>
<i>19:58</i>	<i>21:10</i>	<i>22:10</i>	<i>23:01</i>	<i>23:49</i>		<i>19:27</i>

Emergency Contact Information

Anywhere on water in Victoria Ch 16 or 88 should be your first choice using Mayday or Pan Pan

VHF Channel 16
27 MHz AM Channel 88

Note: VSAG uses VHF CH 73 and 27 MHz CH 96 for routine communications. Check you are using the correct emergency channel.

VSAG Nautilus will be tuned to Ch 73 (Green button for routine comms) and Ch 16 (Red Button for distress comms)

Speak slowly and clearly

<p>Mayday Call – for grave & imminent danger requiring immediate assistance</p>	<p>Urgency Call – when the danger is not grave or imminent</p>
<p>Distress Call:</p> <p>Mayday, Mayday, Mayday</p> <p>This is: <u>“Boat call sign x3”</u> (Boat owners insert your call sign)</p>	<p>Urgency Call:</p> <p>Pan Pan, Pan Pan, Pan Pan</p> <p>All Ships, All Ships, All Ships (or the emergency service you want to contact)</p> <p>This is: <u>“Boat call sign x3”</u> (Boat owners insert your call sign)</p>
<p>Distress message after contact made:</p> <p>Mayday</p> <p>“2 DIVE 4”</p> <p>Give position-(see GPS for co-ordinates), nature of the problem, number on board plus any other relevant information</p> <p>Over</p> <p>Follow advice given by the emergency agency – DO NOT “Sign off” until told so by agency.</p>	<p>Urgency message after contact made:</p> <p>Pan Pan</p> <p>“2 DIVE 4”</p> <p>Give position-(see GPS for co-ordinates), nature of the problem, number on board plus any other relevant information</p> <p>Over</p> <p>Follow advice given by the emergency agency – DO NOT “Sign off” until told so by agency.</p>

All passengers on a boat should be familiar with the use of marine radio(s) in case of emergency.

Emergency Contact Information

Telephone contacts

Police – Ambulance – Fire : 000

Water Police no longer use the 1800 088 200 number

The new 24/7 No is : 03 9399 7500

DAN International Emergency Hotline: +1-919-684-9111 (from mobile)
0011 1 919684 9111 (from landline)

State Emergency Service (VIC): **132 500 (new number)**

Alfred Hospital Hyperbaric Unit: 03 9076 2269

Alfred Hospital switchboard: 03 9076 2000

Mornington Peninsula Area

Diving Emergency Service: 1800 088 200

Dr. John Roth:
Mornington Medical Group 03 5975 2633

Rosebud Hospital:
1527 Nepean Hwy, Rosebud 03 5986 0666

Frankston Hospital:
Hastings Road, Frankston 03 9784 7777

The Bays Hospital:
Main Street, Mornington 03 5975 2009

Southern Peninsula Rescue: (Sorrento) 0417 038 944

Mornington Bay Rescue Service: 0419 233 999

*Coast Guard (Queenscliff) 03 5258 2222

*Coast Guard (Hastings) 03 5979 3322

*Coast Guard (Safety Beach) 03 5981 4443

***Coast Guard is not always manned & operates mainly during daylight hrs**

Diving Doctors:

Dr Pamela Dagley (Eltham) 03 9439 2222 (VSAG member)

Dr Vanessa Haller (Carrum Downs) 03 9782 6666

Dr Adrian Murrie (Sorrento) 03 5984 4322

Dr Guy Williams (Rosebud) 03 5981 1555

Dr John Roth (Mornington) 03 5975 2633



Ian Scholey
Ocean Images

Cover photo - Gorgonian Fan, The Links- by Ian Scholey.