

AQUANEWS

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Morehead City Revisited

Paul Galeazzi Jr.

Another year has gone by and Max and I have recently returned from North Carolina. I have been diving the wrecks of this area for about 5 years now. Max has joined me for the last 2 of these years.

We were 1 month late this year because I was waiting for the OK from my surgeon to dive. I must say it took the extra month of begging. So off we went to Olympus Dive Center in Morehead City North Carolina. When I made the reservations for the dives I was asked if we could bring some New York bagels. I know this is a strange request but I have had stranger things asked of me.

Being so late in the season you have to worry about the storms that seem to come up out of no where. Of course the first day out diving we had 4 to 7 foot seas. We ended up going out of the harbor just to turn around and come back. For the remaining 3 days of diving we had to contend with 2 to 4 foot seas. Let me tell you it was well worth it.

The visibility ranged from 40 to 60 feet with water temperatures from 73-76 degrees bottom temps and 80-84 degrees surface temps. Even with the fairly heavy seas, currents were never a problem. Of course getting back into the boat was the real challenge, but every dive worked out great.

Now to the dives. We did 6 dives in the 3 days, diving 4 different wrecks. We dove the WE Hutton, the Spar, the U352 and the Aeolus. The Spar was just sunk on 6/17/04 as an artificial reef. We were some of the first divers to explore this wreck

underwater. While Max went crazy taking identification tags I of course removed a 1/4 inch valve with a tag on it. I guess that is the plumber in me.

Now what is North Carolina famous for besides the wrecks? SHARKS, there was no disappointment there. Sharks were everywhere. There was one female Sand Tiger, who was pregnant, that was huge. She was at least 11 feet long and very wide. She also didn't look very happy. There were fish everywhere. We also seen a very large lion fish that was magnificent, what a KODAK moment. The photographers on the boat took hundreds of photos of this fish. It seemed to pose for each of them.

Even though the boat was full everyday, everything went like clockwork, Olympus Dive Center does a great job and I recommend them highly.

I can't wait until next year, hopefully some more Aquanauts can join us. If not, Max and I will miss you.



AQUANEWS

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Reminded of my first wreck dive Steve Improte

In the July AquaNews an article was reprinted that appeared in the Long Island newspaper Newsday, written by Tomoeh Murakami Tse and was titled, "Diver dies near shipwreck off Atlantic Beach."

The article was about Anthony Lobue, 56, an experienced diver of 15 years with about 200 dives and 12 years of diving in the waters off of Long Island. Lobue and 3 other divers had taken the dive boat The Karen out of Brooklyn for a night dive on the shipwreck Iberia. The article states that a crewmember, after searching for lobsters, was following a safety line back to the anchor line and found Lobue unconscious and tangled in his own safety line about 30 minutes into his dive. The crewmember cut Lobue free from the line and brought his body to the surface. Lobue was brought to the hospital where he was pronounced dead.

The article brought back memories of my second dive after getting my Open Water Certification in May of 1988. My dive buddy Norm, certified at the same time, and I took the Sea Hunter dive boat, out of Freeport, to our first wreck/ocean dive on the Iberia. We entered the cold waters of the Atlantic on the 1st of a 2-tank dive, and we descended on the anchor line to the wreck. New to diving and having difficulty clearing our ears in our ¼ inch wetsuits with hoods and 3 fingered mitts I forgot to set my bezel on my watch to track our bottom time. Upon reaching the bottom, we experienced 14 ft visibility and about 45-degree water temp at a depth of about 75 feet, I think I saw a fish. After swimming around a bit I realized I had not set my bezel and had no clue how long we had been down, I signaled to my buddy what happen and we decided to ascend and hang for an extra long safety stop. After realizing we probably weren't down for too long since it took us so long to get down the line and fears of getting bent eased, we went on the second tank dive, I set my bezel that time, and we explored the wreck for a second time, well let's say we swam around the anchor line and saw little of the wreck. The highlight of that dive was seeing our first Lobster nestled in the wreck. Before our next dive we bought automatic bottom timers, so we wouldn't have worry about bottom time again.

I didn't know Mr. Lobue, who ironically lived in the town of Valley Stream, the town right next to where Norm and I grew up, but my sympathy goes out to his family, and reminds me that diving is serious stuff and having a buddy nearby is very important.

Rockland Aquanauts Organization Inc.
Mission Statement:

To provide, promote, and advance environmental protection, care, and voluntary clean-up of waterways by any and all lawful means; to promote the importance and care in every manner possible by environmental awareness and otherwise; to purchase, print, publish, and circulate literature to promote the importance and care of the waterways and the work of the Corporation. To perform all acts the Corporation may deem appropriate or advisable in such operation; to establish, provide, and voluntary clean-up waterways, to encourage, support and subsidize the cleaning and protection from pollution.

Hessian Lake & the Picnic

Paul Galeazzi Jr.

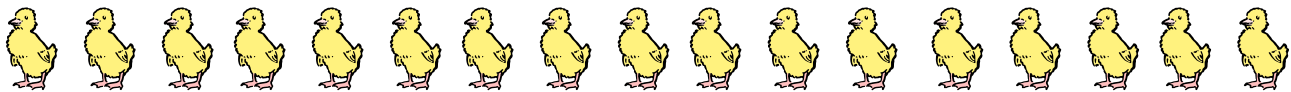
For those of us that ventured out on this dismal Sat. July 24th, we had a magnificent time. Not only didn't it rain, the day turned out to be spectacular. We ended up with 4 divers in the water with visibility reported from 10 to 15 feet. I was able to see the divers as they approached the shore line.

As usual we ended up filling three (3) bags of garbage and of course the great bottles. Les found an empty Olive jar with the cork still in it. But Ben had to do better by bringing up an exact duplicate of the bottle full of green Olives also with the cork still intact. He wouldn't let us open it and try them out, but they looked great.

Then after all was cleaned up, the caravan of our cars went up to Les & Melissa's house for their July picnic. This was the first year, they had it after a Hessian Lake dive, usually the dive is at Walton Lake. I know it was a lot more work for them but it really turned out great. We had the old standbys of great Hamburgers & Hot Dogs, but we also had some great Venison Steaks that were marinated and cooked on the grill. As an old hunter this really ended up being a treat for me. The salads and the deserts were also very good.

As far as the atmosphere around us, this couldn't have been better. Besides being with great old friends & some new ones, we had fun with the chickens that were all around us. And of course the little baby chick with her mommy was really great to watch. By the end of the day even Jerry was clucking a little.

So all you guy's and girls that didn't come to this magnificent day, all I can do is say Shame on You.



August Factoid of the month

Sharks shed their teeth about every 8 days, and go through as many as 50,000 teeth in a lifetime



SEA SICKNESS, BY THE NUMBERS

A new report on marine health could make you queasy.

- 30 Number of years since the last comprehensive government review of national marine health and ocean policy.
- 4.5 MILLION Square miles of ocean territory under U.S. jurisdiction—larger than the combined land area of all 50 states.
- 50 Estimated percentage of the U.S. population living within 50 miles of the coastline.
- 40,000 Estimated number of U.S. sewers that overflow annually, discharging waste directly into rivers, estuaries and oceans.
- 12,000 Number of beach closings and swimming advisories in 2002 due to bacterial contamination from fecal matter.
- 2,429 Number of those closings and advisories that were in Guam.
- 4 BILLION Number of pounds of seafood consumed in the U.S. annually.
- 62 Percentage of seafood-related illnesses due to marine toxins.
- \$117 BILLION Dollars that fishing and other marine industries contribute to the U.S. economy annually.

SOURCES: 2004 U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy Preliminary Report, Natural Resources Defense Council

Members of the Rockland Aquanauts Organization Inc.

Have something to **sell** or **trade**?

Contact our webmaster

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DROWNING IN AN OCEAN OF PLASTIC

From: <http://www.wired.com/>

By Stephen Leahy, Wired News, Jun. 05, 2004

The United Nations has turned its attention to the oceans for World Environment Day, and one of the main evildoers is a familiar one plastic.

Marine trash, mainly plastic, is killing more than a million seabirds and 100,000 mammals and sea turtles each year, said U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan in a statement.

Plastic bags, bottle tops and polystyrene foam coffee cups are often found in the stomachs of dead sea lions, dolphins, sea turtles and others. The implications have many at the conference concerned. Last April, Dutch scientists released a report on litter in the North Sea and found that fulmars, a type of seagull, had an average of 30 pieces of plastic in their stomachs.

In the sea, big pieces of plastic look like jellyfish or squid, while small pieces look like fish eggs, says Bill Macdonald, vice president of the Algalita Marine Research Foundation, a Long Beach, California-based nonprofit environmental organization.

Macdonald, who is also an underwater filmmaker, said he has seen albatross parents fly huge distances to feed their young a deadly diet of plastic bottle caps, lighters and light sticks.

"The sheer volumes of plastic in oceans are staggering," he said. In recent years Algalita researchers have sampled a huge area in the middle of the North Pacific, and found six pounds of plastic for every pound of algae.

About 250 billion pounds of raw plastic pellets are produced annually worldwide and turned into a tremendous variety of products, from cars and computers to packaging and pens.

About 20 percent of the plastic in the oceans comes from ships or offshore platforms; the rest is blown or washed off the land, says Angela Corridore, a researcher with the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. Not only does plastic kill marine animals that eat it or get tangled in it and drown, but it also damages and degrades their habitat, says Corridore. "That's bad for fish and people. No one wants to go to a crappy-looking beach."

Plastic pellets are also magnets for toxic chemicals like DDT and PCBs, becoming, in effect, poison pills. Japanese researchers found that concentrations of these chemicals were as much as a million times higher than in the water. Plastics themselves can leach endocrine-disrupting chemicals like biphenyl A.

Macdonald has come across "snow drifts" of spilled pellets outside plastic product manufacturing plants in Orange County. "It took about three minutes for some of these to wash into a nearby creek during a rain storm," he said.

Most plastics don't biodegrade. Unless removed, they'll remain in the sea for hundreds of years, breaking up into ever-smaller particles. Recently British scientists discovered that microscopic pieces of plastic can be found everywhere in the oceans, even inside plankton, the keystone of the marine food chain.

(Continued on page 5)

DROWNING IN AN OCEAN OF PLASTIC

(Continued from page 4)

The scientists also noted that the amount of plastic particles in the oceans has at least tripled since the 1960s. The effect they have on the marine ecosystems is unknown.

Plastic pollution in the oceans is less of an issue to Ransom Myers, a leading fisheries scientist. Myers allows that there might be some unforeseen impact on ocean ecosystems. "Our ability to understand what's going on the oceans is phenomenally poor," he said. "The No. 1 threat to oceans right now is overfishing and habitat destruction by trawling."

In its preliminary report, the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy said time is running out for America's coasts and oceans. Among its recommendations: establish a National Ocean Council within the White House, stop subsidy programs that encourage overfishing and double investment in ocean research.

Funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency to monitor marine debris should also be restored, says Corridore.

Every year we're learning about something bad that's going on in the seas, says Macdonald. "It's just dawning on people that the oceans are in deep trouble."



Scientists Hunt for "Lions" in the Atlantic

In March, the first known capture of a lionfish by hook and line occurred off the coast of North Carolina. The fish was 17 inches long and weighed 2.5 lbs. It's the largest specimen to date in the Atlantic. Lionfish are venomous coral reef fishes from the Indian and western Pacific oceans that have invaded East Coast waters. They were likely first introduced off the Florida coast in the early to mid 1990s and by the summer of 2000 were found along the Atlantic coast of the United States from Florida to Cape Hatteras, N.C. NOAA scientists conclude that lionfish are established and reproducing along the southeast United States coast. It is likely that the introduction of lionfish in the Atlantic is from either intentional or unintentional releases related to the aquarium trade including amateur home aquarists.

Lionfish have distinctive red, maroon and white stripes; fleshy tentacles above the eyes and below the mouth; fan-like pectoral fins; and long separated dorsal spines. All of the spines on a lionfish are venomous, creating a danger to primarily divers and fishers if stung. Researchers urge caution to anyone who encounters these fish. Lionfish also are believed to pose particular risks to the local environment. They are voracious predators that feed not only on small shrimps but also on large fishes, perhaps including the young of important commercial fish species such as snapper and grouper, many of which use the region's "live bottom" reefs as nursery grounds. The invasive lionfish have few if any natural predators in their new Atlantic environment.

From FishNews - May 21, 2004



**Rockland Aquanauts
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August 2004

Morehead City Revisited, Hessian Lake, Hunt for Lions, Reminded of My First Wreck Dive

****There will be
NO
August 2004 Meeting **

September Meeting TBA**