

# AQUANEWS

30th Anniversary of the AquaNews

Volume 30, No. 10

October 2006



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## Truk Lagoon Revisited

By: Paul Galeazzi Jr.

I just returned from my second trip to Truk Lagoon. I must say that in a lifetime of diving there is no way that anyone can see everything that there is to be seen. The only way that this may be possible is to pack up and live in Chuuk for years and to dive constantly.

The variety of the wrecks and other dive sites are probably the best in the world. Even as of this year they are still finding wreck sites that have never been dove on or even documented. We were told that recently the crew of the Odyssey seen an unknown blip on their depth finder. When they had a chance to go back to this site they dove the area and found a landing craft sitting on the bottom. Here is something that no human being has seen in 61 years or possibly even more! Can you imagine how many more items that may be on the bottom that will never be found.

This time around I did all my diving from a liveboard called the Odyssey. It was a great experience and an excellent dive boat. From the time that they picked us up at the airport until the time that they dropped us back off a week later everything was done with the utmost professionalism. As most of you know I have some severe food allergies. I want you to know that the cook even cooked most of my meals separately so as I wouldn't have any problems, which I didn't. The food was also prepared very well and there was always more than enough to go around. Also in between every dive there was a snack

and fruit ready for us to wash the salt water taste out of our mouths. They tried to solve any problems that we may have had to the best of their ability.

One of the guy's that went with us had one of his bags lost at the airport. Of course it was the one that had all his dive gear. The captain went to town just about every day to see if the bag was found and returned to the airport. Of course it did show up 2 days before we were to leave so he had to drag it all the way back to New York, what a bummer. Of course he never missed a dive. What ever gear our group wasn't able to put together for him the crew did. The crew handled all our needs without a hitch. Of course we did drive them crazy with the Nitrox Mix's that we required. They were even mixing us 24% for all our deep dives almost daily. They could have made us dive with air, but for safety's sake they had no problem doing the extra work for us. It also helped to cut some time off of our deco. We also carried pony bottles with a 50% mixture to also give us a better safety factor but not to necessarily cut down our deco time. As you know even when doing everything right some problems can occur. We did have one diver who got a bad case of the skin bends. He had to go on 100% Oxygen which cleared the problem, but not fully. He did have to stay out of the water for a time, but returned to diving the following day with no additional problems occurring.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## AQUANEWS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION  
OF THE ROCKLAND  
AQUANAUTS ORGANIZATION.  
WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS &  
PHOTOGRAPHS ARE ALWAYS  
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## Next Meeting: Tuesday October 10th, 2006

7:00-9:30 pm at the **Palisades Mall**

Level 4, East End

The Besso Community Room

West Nyack, NY

This months meeting will start at 7:00 PM.

Speaker: Paul Galeazzi on his recent trip to Truk Lagoon

### Directions:

The Palisades Mall is located on the New York Thruway (I87 and I287 at exit 12 West Nyack, Route 303 ). You can't miss it.

The Besso Community Meeting Room is located on the 4th level (top floor) at the east end of the Mall, directly above Macy's (formerly Filene's). The Besso Room - and other meeting rooms - are in a hallway leading to the Ice Skating Rink (also above Filene's).

The best and easiest way to get into the mall is to drive into the underground parking area. Proceed to the east end of the parking garage to parking areas "M" or "N" near the "East Mall Entrance". Take the escalators in the East Mall Entrance all the way to level 4. When you come off the escalator, turn around and you are looking right at the Ice Rink.

### Members of the Rockland Aquanauts Organization Inc.

We need articles for our newsletter! Any help is appreciated.

Contact our webmaster [webmaster@rocklandaquanauts.org](mailto:webmaster@rocklandaquanauts.org)

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.**

## Truk Revisited

*(continued from page 1)*

Now to get back to the diving. I completed 17 dives with an average of about 4 hours in the water a day. I guess you can say that our group all did just about the same profiles. On the deeper dives, 160 feet to 190 feet, we averaged about a 30 minute bottom time. Of course we could have done more diving if we didn't want for the longer bottom times or to see the deeper wrecks. Since we were the only guests on the Odyssey we had the pick of the wrecks that we wanted to visit. That is what makes a group trip excellent besides diving with people who you have dove with before, and you may even like.

**MAYBE NEXT TIME IT CAN BE YOU**

## ***The Wrecks that I Visited on this Trip***

Ship Name	Highlights	Length	Depth Range
Fujikawa Maru	Lush coral growth. Zero airplane fuselages and wing sections.	439'	30'-120'
Yamagiri Maru	14" diameter artillery shells of Battleship Musashi.	437'	60'-120'
Nippo Maru	2 man tank and artillery guns on deck. Photogenic wheelhouse.	353'	110'-175'
Heian Maru	Torpedoes and submarine telescopes. Massive size.	510'	35'-100'
Sankisan Maru	Lush soft coral growth on mast. Machine gun ammunition in hold.	200'	50'-100'
Hoki Maru	Trucks, bulldozer and tractor in hold. Massive destruction of bow.	250'	110'-175'
Unkai Maru	Photogenic bow gun. Good coral growth on masts.	360'	80'-130'
Rio de Janiero Maru	Awesome size. Photogenic propellers. Large engine room.	461'	40'-120'
Fumitzuki Destroyer	Bow and stern guns, torpedo launcher.	320'	80'-120'
Amagisan Maru	Bow gun, Staff cars in hold #2, Tank truck	450'	80'-210'
Shinkoku Maru	Lush coral growth. Fantastic marine life. Excellent engine room.	500'	30'-130'
Aikoku Maru	Massive destruction of bow. Photogenic stern gun.	270'	100'-210'
San Francisco Maru	Tanks on deck. Trucks, mines, bombs and ammunition in holds.	375'	100'-210'
Shotan Maru	Anti aircraft guns, Stern Gun, intact bridge	286'	100-160

Lion Fish  
By BRUCE LAMBERT  
NY Times, Published: September 8, 2006

GARDEN CITY, N.Y., Sept. 7 - Long Island's waters are being invaded by the exotic lionfish, an alien tropical species native to the Pacific Ocean that has vividly colored stripes and a freakish array of venomous spines.

Divers report capturing hundreds of lionfish this summer, compared with a total of about 30 over the last three years. "For us to be finding that many, there must be thousands and thousands more out there," said Todd R. Gardner, a biologist at Atlantis Marine World aquarium in Riverhead. "It's a population explosion."

Apart from the novelty of lionfish and the mystery of how they wound up so far from home, the sudden proliferation also raises questions about effects on the ecosystem, including potential threats to indigenous fish and hazards to swimmers.

"That's really the \$2 million question: What are they eating and what are they competing with for habitat?" said Paula E. Whitfield, a biologist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which is studying the phenomenon with Mr. Gardner and the University of North Carolina. For now, the strange species is a draw at the aquarium. "It's a flamboyant fish," Mr. Gardner said. "People walk into the room and run right to that."

For the worried, the good news so far is that all the odd-looking visitors are pale babies and are expected to die off when the cooling sea drops below 50 degrees in the fall. But the fish are voracious eaters, feasting on Long Island's already diminished shellfish and fin fish as they grow to five inches long during their detour here. "All you have to do is look at their full bellies," Mr. Gardner said. "They look like they're going to explode."

And even in the juvenile stage, the fishes' hollow hypodermic-like spines and venom sacs inflict nasty - but not deadly - stings. "It's very painful, a burning pain," said Mr. Gardner, who has impaled a finger. One pet-store worker required surgery to save a badly swollen arm after four punctures from an adult lionfish, Mr. Gardner said. Experts advise prompt medical attention and immersion of the wound in hot water to weaken the venom.

Every year, the Gulf Stream sweeps tropical fish north, and some of them inevitably veer off to the New York region, delighting researchers, divers and fishers.

But lionfish are not native to this hemisphere, at least not until recently. A few appeared in Florida in the mid-1990's, followed by occasional sightings along the Carolinas and Georgia.

Those few fish were adults, prompting speculation that they had been released by pet shops, suppliers or hobbyists, or that they had escaped somehow. Inadvertent transport in ship ballast is another possibility, but experts discount it.

Scientists were stunned in 2001 with the discovery of evidence that the lionfish, whatever their origin, were spawning in the Atlantic. That discovery came when Mr. Gardner, then a graduate student on a field trip, found a tiny lionfish clinging to a dock piling in the Great South Bay by Fire Island. "I was absolutely shocked," he recalled. Coming up for air, he wondered: "How could there be a lionfish here in New York? It was just not registering, not making sense." He dipped back underwater. "Sure enough, he was still there, and I caught it."

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## Lion Fish

*(continued from page 4)*

His perplexed professor accused Mr. Gardner of using a pet fish as a prank, but it was so tiny that it could not have come from a store. Others suggested mistaken identity, but the lionfish is unique with its vertical stripes of white alternating with a deep maroon or rusty color. Skepticism melted a week later when Mr. Gardner captured another baby at the same site.

Other divers and researchers were finding adult lionfish established on reefs and shipwrecks off Southern states. Reports trickled in of hatchlings carried on currents as far north as New Jersey and Rhode Island.

Still, Mr. Gardner's many dives off Long Island never found more than a dozen or so lionfish in any season - until this year. "They're very easy to catch," he said. "I don't even use a net, because they don't scare very easy, because they have such an effective defense system. I just carry a Ziploc bag and scoop them up."

Some recreational divers have started collecting lionfish for home aquariums, Mr. Gardner said, and one diver offered to sell 39 to a pet shop in Patchogue.

The local lionfish were found in the bays along Suffolk's South Shore, but not in the open ocean, so bathers at the major beaches were not at risk. And even in the bays, the fish congregate at underwater rocks or pilings, so waders are unlikely to bump into them or step on them, said Stephan B. Munch, who teaches at the marine sciences center at the State University at Stony Brook.

With a long history of tropical fish like grouper, snapper and jacks straying to Long Island, "it's really unlikely that lionfish are having any more impact than the others," he said.

Lionfish grow to 18 inches and, while they have no known predators in the wild, Mr. Munch said he had lost one specimen to its hungry tankmate, a grouper. Ms. Whitfield, the biologist with the oceanic administration, said they are eaten by people in the Philippines, and are starting to be eaten in the Carolinas.

One crew collecting lionfish for the federal study tried grilling some of its catch of the day. "They said it was good, a mild white flesh," Ms. Whitfield said, though she did not sample it herself. "I'm allergic to fish."



Iceland Resumes Whale Exports after 15-Year Gap  
*September 11, 2006 — By Alister Doyle, Reuters*  
ENN FULL STORY

OSLO — Iceland is resuming whale meat exports after a gap of more than 15 years with sales to the Faroe Islands despite objections from environmentalists that the shipments undermine a global trade ban.

"We have created a joint trade area between Iceland and the Faroe Islands," Iceland's whaling commissioner Stefan Asmundsson told Reuters on Friday. "There is free trade within that area and whale products are simply one item therein."

"We don't have a limit but I would be surprised if exports this year reached one tonne," he said. Iceland caught 60 minke whales in the North Atlantic in 2006 as part of a scientific research programme.

Iceland resumed whaling in 2003 despite a global moratorium on hunts imposed two decades ago by the International Whaling Commission. It has not exported meat since some sales to Japan around 1990, Asmundsson said.

Japan and Norway also harpoon minke whales, arguing that stocks of the small whales are plentiful, unlike those of endangered species such as the giant blue whale. The meat is usually eaten as steaks.

Asmundsson said the sales were legal even though trade in whales is banned under the U.N.'s Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Norway, Japan and Iceland have exempted themselves from the CITES restrictions.

"The Faroe Islands are not covered by CITES," he said. The Faroes, a self-governing region of Denmark, have a population of almost 50,000 on islands between Scotland and Iceland.

But some environmentalists said the sales violated the spirit of CITES because Denmark is a signatory and handles foreign policy for the islands.

"This flies in the face of the intention of CITES," said Arni Finnsson of the Iceland Nature Conservation Association. "Whether it's illegal is a technical interpretation but it undermines the letter of the law."

Replying to a letter from Oslo in 2003, the Danish Foreign Ministry wrote that the "CITES Convention does not apply to the Faroes for the time being." Oslo gave whalers permission to export minke meat in 2001 but has struggled to find markets.

Martin Norman at Greenpeace also said the Icelandic exports reflected a lack of demand in Iceland. "Iceland has always had problems selling the meat in Iceland," he said.

Asmundsson said Iceland's whaling research was coming to an end -- about 160 minke whales have been caught of a planned total of 200 set in 2003. He said that there were no current plans for a new research program.

Remaining Dive schedule  
For  
Hessian Lake

**Hessian Lake**  
Sunday October 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM  
Saturday October 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM

**More Tropical Fish Sighted in R.I. Water**  
By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEWPORT, R.I. (AP) -- An unusually large number of tropical fish have been spotted this summer in Rhode Island waters by divers, fishermen and environmentalists.

Among the fish seen so far: juvenile orange filefish, snowy grouper and lookdowns. A local lobsterman pulled up a large trigger fish in one of his traps.

"We're always catching tropicals during the summer months, but I mean there are a lot more. Probably about double the amount," Jean Bambara, an aquarist at Save the Bay's Exploration Center in Newport, told The Providence Journal.

The fish being seen are normally found in the warm waters off the southern states, just like the Portuguese men-of-war that invaded southern New England waters earlier in the summer and the manatee that was spotted this week in Warwick and North Kingstown.

Scientists said a change in the pattern of the Gulf Stream is likely a major reason for the number of warm-water visitors this summer. The Gulf Stream moves north from Florida along the East Coast before turning east toward Europe. Scientists say the turn is usually south of Delaware, but this year it's a more north than usual.

John Torgan, baykeeper with Save the Bay, said the average water temperature of Narragansett Bay has increased three degrees over the past few decades. He said this could cause cold-water species like cod and haddock to move further north and warm-water fish to move in.

"What's different is we've seen warmer water and we're seeing an increased sighting of these rare or accidental species in Narragansett Bay and Rhode Island Sound," Torgan said.



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October 2006

Truk Lagoon, Lion Fish, Tropical Fish sighted in RI, Whaling Resumes

**\*\*Next Meeting\*\***

**Tuesday October 10th, 2006**

At 7:00PM

The Besso Room

Palisades Center, West Nyack

(directions inside)

**The Next Dive of Hessian Lake is scheduled for:**

Sunday October 8th at 10:00 AM

Saturday October 14th at 10:00 AM