

# AQUANEWS

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## 2007 - A DIVE SEASON TO REMEMBER

By Vinny Galle

2007 was a great dive season for me. Two oceans and one Sound later I look back and laugh at the fun of diving with old friends and new ones.

The season started off in February with some southeast Florida wreck diving on the Ocean Explorer, co-owned by Ted Masotti. Most of Florida's wrecks are artificial reefs and make for a lot of fun to penetrate. Unlike most of the wrecks in Shipwreck Valley, these wrecks are stripped of the hazards such as wiring, doors, etc. However, always remember that when going inside of a wreck conditions can take away your ambient light, so always take a light and extra air inside with you in case you need more time to find your way out.

My first day of diving took me to the Atlantic Hydro – 180 FSW and two Trimix dives. A not too forgiving way to knock out the New Year bugs, but I've had about fifteen to twenty dives on this wreck and find it a comfortable dive. The visibility was excellent on this day and we had very little current. This wreck usually offers a lot of sea life sometimes with big game fish. Once in awhile you have to watch out for steel leaders and thick fishing line. I've been on this wreck before with my dive buddy and fellow Aquanaut "cousin" Max Estroff and we've had fun. The Ocean Explorer is a very comfortable dive boat and offers a good variety of diving - both deep and shallow – from Florida to the Bahamas. This boat is capable of doing air nitrox and helium fills on-sight and is diver friendly, offering two ladders and an upstairs/downstairs to lounge around.

My Florida trip ended with one more day of diving on the Ocean Explorer. Then it was onto Dixie Divers and the Lady Go Diver. This boat and its owner Pavan pretty much "go with the flow". The experience of the divers is the deciding factor on where he is going to go. It was strange for me to be going from a set of double 119's and then being told that I could only rent a single 80. I have nothing against single tanks since I probably do more than fifty dives a year in the L.I. Sound with them. However, on a lot of dives in the ocean and on wrecks your capabilities and time will be limited. I like to go slow and sightsee underwater. Although I was treated well on this boat, I wouldn't go back again unless I had my own tanks with me.

Well my week in Florida ended too soon and the next thing I knew I was back in N.Y. The end of April came and the L.I. Sound dive season began. In all the years I've been diving the Sound this was probably one of the best for visibility. In years past, at an average of fifty dives per season, I would say only ten boasted more than three feet of visibility. Even my "cousin" Max, the shipwreck expert, was coming back with a smile on his face. Usually he would just shake his head and say to me "how do you enjoy this?" This year, however, the visibility was up to fifteen feet. The lobsters also came back this year and stayed with us until October when they started going east towards Montauk. I do have a couple of shallow shipwreck dives at twenty feet, so if some of you fellow Aquanauts would like to come with me next year you are more than welcome.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## AQUANEWS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION  
OF THE ROCKLAND  
AQUANAUTS ORGANIZATION.  
WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS &  
PHOTOGRAPHS ARE ALWAYS  
WELCOMED & ENCOURAGED.  
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### CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

PETER BEIN  
ALLAN BLOCK  
MELISSA BOGEN  
MAX ESTROFF  
PAUL GALEAZZI, JR  
STEVE IMPROTE  
LES PARKER

### NEWSLETTER COORDINATOR

PAUL A. GALEAZZI

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

TO CHANGE MAILING  
ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER  
OR E-MAIL, PLEASE NOTIFY:  
INFO@ROCKLANDAQUANAUTS.ORG

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS

We would like to wish everyone a very Happy Holiday & a Happy & Healthy New Year. Hopefully everyone will enjoy there holidays & be safe whether you will be at home or traveling

See you next year



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

OCEAN WRECK DIVERS 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
SCUBA FLEA MARKET  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17<sup>TH</sup>, 2008

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.

## A Dive Season to Remember

(continued from page 1)

As July came, I found myself in southern California attending my nephew's wedding. Well – opportunity knocked and I answered the call! The day after the wedding I hopped on a boat called the Great Escape which docks in Long Beach, CA. This boat is eighty feet long and has it all. In fact some of our boat captains here should go out there and take notes on how to treat people and make diving fun. You get three tank fills, eat like a king and get a personal bunk for \$120. It has two working, on-deck showers which make it easy to rinse off after each dive. Somebody is always waiting with a smile to help you with your gear when coming up the ladder. As soon as you book a dive on this boat, Capt. Tim Burke's mom calls to tell you to come on board early for the breakfast of your choice. This was an understatement – anything from three-egg omelets to pancakes to bagels to just fruit and cereal.

On this particular day the boat took us to the kelp fields of Catalina Island for three dives. The spear fisherman on the boat use snorkels with large fins and their spear guns have lots of line attached to a reel. On the first dive I started off at seventy-two feet and couldn't believe how large these plants were. They are easily broken by hand so there is no need to panic if you get tangled. After the first dive, the Captain put out snacks of fruits, nuts, cheeses and sweet breads. The second dive was great - watching sea lions and seeing one of the spear fishermen get a twenty-pound yellow fin. After the second dive we had lunch of shrimp over a spicy Spanish rice – all homemade – and all you can eat! One of the four mates filled our tanks while we ate. Then we moved on to a new spot for our third dive. Again, it was another great one and the visibility was unbelievable! Afterwards, there was an open bar for anyone (like myself) who wanted a drink or two. All the people I met were very friendly and willing to share their gear along with some "sea stories". I did hear a couple of white shark and whale stories which sounded very believable. And as the boat started the twenty-two mile ride back to the dock, I looked up into the sky smiling and said "thank you God for giving me such a wonderful day".

And now as the third week of November approaches I wrap up my boat for the winter and, as I look back and reflect, again I look up to the sky and smile...

Please visit EmbroidMe, at the below location, to order garments with the club logo. You may order and purchase just about any garment that they sell at not only our club discount but tax free.

Just see any sales person and tell them that you are from The Rockland Aquanauts, and then shop until you drop. You would never believe the amount of items that they sell and the quality of many of them. Turn around time depends on the items ordered.

The board wants you to know that the club does not receive any of the money. All the savings goes directly to the members. The club paid all set up fee's up front to keep your costs down.



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E-Mail: [nanuet@embroidme.com](mailto:nanuet@embroidme.com)

Website: [www.embroidme-nanuet.com](http://www.embroidme-nanuet.com)

27 N. Middletown Road — Nanuet, NY 10954

## Princeton study puts up to 3% of N.J. under water by 2100

By Tom Avril  
Inquirer Staff Writer

The authors cited global warming and sinking land. Solutions include cutting emissions and some withdrawal from Shore.

Rising sea levels will permanently flood up to 3 percent of New Jersey in the next century, according to a Princeton University study to be released today. Severe "100-year" floods could temporarily inundate more than 9 percent of the state, damaging roads, buildings and wildlife habitat.

The authors blame the phenomenon partly on global warming - melting ice caps send more water into the ocean, and warmer water occupies more space - and partly on the fact that the land is gradually sinking. The combined effect could result in an increase in sea level of 2 feet by 2100, or a worst-case scenario of up to 4 feet, the authors wrote.

Their proposed solutions include a "gradual withdrawal" from parts of the Shore, where possible, and reducing the release of heat-trapping "greenhouse gases" from vehicles and industry.

Studies of the rising sea's impact on the Jersey Shore have been done before, but the latest study takes advantage of newer, more sophisticated satellite data, the authors said.

They concede that curtailing development along the Shore would be unpopular, but in some places unavoidable. "Abandonment is certainly going to be part of the pattern in some places," said Michael Oppenheimer, professor of geosciences and international affairs and one of the study's authors. "We need a comprehensive approach that involves slowing emissions... and more intelligent coastal planning."

For example, some states, such as Maryland and Florida, have programs to acquire land in vulnerable coastal regions, according to the study. Other possibilities include allowing for buffers near wetlands and also restricting construction, they said.

Rick Van Osten, executive vice president of the Builders League of South Jersey, said the state does not need more restrictions. He said he had not seen the study, but after hearing a description, he said "it almost sounds like science fiction."

"New Jersey's already strictly regulated," said Van Osten, whose trade group comprises builders, developers and associated businesses. The state is "proposing all kinds of buffers and restrictions on building, so I don't know what more could be proposed."

Relying on previous studies, the Princeton researchers projected that 70 percent of future sea level rise will occur as the result of climate change. The rest would come from the fact that the New Jersey coast is naturally sinking and that the sediment is becoming compacted - for a combined impact of about 2 mm, or 0.08 inch, per year.

"You have an ever-increasing number of people and infrastructure at risk," said Matthew J.P. Cooper, the study's lead author, who has since left the university for the private sector.

The midrange projection calls for a 2-foot increase in sea level, which would permanently cover nearly 1 percent of the state's land area - about 74 square miles. A 4-foot increase would cover 3 percent of the state.

Maps included in the study do not identify specific communities, but it appears that much of the popular barrier islands along the Jersey Shore would be at risk.

Currently, a 100-year flood - about a 9.5-foot rise in the water level - would cover 6.5 percent of the state's land area. If the sea were to rise an extra 2 feet, storm-fueled floodwaters would cover more than 9 percent of the state.

Another way to look at it is that what is currently considered a 100-year flood would occur from three to 20 times more frequently. It would have to be relabeled a 30-year flood or even - in the worst case - a five-year flood, Oppenheimer said.

## White House Unveils Plans to Address Trash in the Ocean Initiative Boosts Project AWARE's Long-Standing International Cleanup Day Efforts

Rancho Santa Margarita, CA – Friday, November 9, Project AWARE Foundation and partner environmental organizations applauded First Lady Laura Bush's unveiling of a new initiative to address marine debris.

The First Lady called for an increase in public/private partnerships for cleanups, enhanced public education on marine debris prevention and an emphasis on international cooperation during the dedication ceremony of the J.L. Scott Marine Education Center-Gulf Coast Research Laboratory in Biloxi, Mississippi, USA.

"Whether we live on the shore or not, all of us have the obligation to care for these amazing natural resources," stated Mrs. Bush.

The First Lady has championed marine debris prevention since seeing the extent of the problem during a visit to the remote Northwest Hawaiian Islands National Monument. She spoke about the importance of the ocean environment, promising to promote annual cleanups and make sure people are educated about marine debris and how to participate in solutions.

Vikki Spruill, President and CEO of the Ocean Conservancy, Project AWARE's partner for International Cleanup Day, spoke before the First Lady last week and shined a spotlight on marine debris issues and the international cleanup efforts taking place each year.

"The First Lady's dedication to the issues we've been fighting for is inspiring – and, it gives a big push to the sea change that is underway," states Vikki Spruill, Ocean Conservancy President and CEO.

"We're thrilled about the new White House plan to address trash in our oceans," said Jenny Miller Garmendia, Director, Project AWARE Foundation. "The announcement boosts Project AWARE's 12-year underwater volunteer effort to remove and prevent harmful aquatic debris – a human-induced and preventable problem."

Each year Project AWARE Foundation coordinates underwater cleanups in more than 100 countries and territories in partnership with dive professionals and the Ocean Conservancy. Cleanup volunteers are making a difference by improving aquatic environments and protecting fragile wildlife.

Project AWARE Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving underwater environments through education, advocacy and action. Visit [www.projectaware.org](http://www.projectaware.org) for more information about Project AWARE's ongoing debris removal efforts, to volunteer or to view inspiring images from cleanup events around the world.

IN CHINA, A GLIMPSE OF 'EXTINCT' DOLPHIN  
BY : Alexa Glesen, Associated Press

BEIJING – A white dolphin native to China's Yangtze River that scientists declared extinct last year has possibly been spotted swimming in the wild, offering a small shred of hope for its revival, a researcher said yesterday.

Wang Ding, a researcher with the Institute of Hydrobiology under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said a man saw and shot a video of what appears to be a baiji or white flag dolphin in central China's Anhui province on August 19.

The white flag dolphin survived for millions of years but was declared effectively extinct in December after a fruitless six-week search of its Yangtze River habitat.

Wang said the animal in the video looks and acts like a baiji and was seen about 25 miles down-stream from Anhui's Tongling city – a section of river that used to be known as a hotspot for white flag dolphins.

But he said he cannot be 100 percent sure because the video was taken from a distance of about 1,000 yards away and is not very clear.

A team of scientists will go to the area in September to look for the dolphin, he said.

If China were able to bring the animal back from the brink of extinction, it would help bolster a national image badly tarnished by severe air and water pollution.

The government says a quarter of the length of the country's seven main river systems are so polluted that even touching the water is harmful to the skin. Seven of the nine major lakes the agency monitors were equally toxic.

August Pfluger, a Swiss economist turned naturalist who helped put together last year's expedition, called the possible sighting "a big surprise" and "incredibly fantastic news."

"We declared the animal extinct, so if there is one left, that would be fantastic," said Pfluger.

But even if one or more baiji are left, Pfluger and Wang both said they still consider the animal "functionally extinct."

Any surviving baiji are unlikely to be able to find each other for breeding in the huge river and are threatened by ship traffic, overfishing and the degradation of their habitat, Pfluger said.

If any wild baiji are found, scientists will try to capture them and move them to a reserve where they would try to breed them if possible, Wang said.

The baiji dates back 20 million years. Chinese called it the "goddess of the Yangtze."

Around 400 baiji were believed to be living in the Yangtze in the early 1980s, when China was just launching the free-market reforms that have transformed its economy. The last full-fledged search, in 1997, yielded 13 confirmed sightings, and a fisherman claimed to have seen a baiji in 2004.

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE DUE

Rockland Aquanauts Organization  
2008 Dues

I guess it is that time of the year again, Membership Dues are due. Last year all our members received much more than they gave out to the Organization. As usual you will be receiving a tax donation for the first \$25.00. All members who attended the Annual Dinner not only received money off their own dinner but they also received money off their guests dinner. Everyone whom attended also received prizes, some worth many times the cost of their Dues. Don't forget the Annual Picnic as well as all the BBQ lunch's after the Lake Dives.

So please send in your \$42 dues early to;

Rockland Aquanauts Organization  
c/o  
Paul Galeazzi Jr.  
4 Greensward Drive.  
Valley Cottage New York 10989

## Deadliest Sea Creatures

### Stonefish



Ian Waldi, Getty Images

The stonefish (frowning, center) is the most venomous fish in the world. It is well camouflaged in the ocean, because its brownish color often resembles a rock. It has 13 sharp dorsal spines on its back, each packed with toxic venom. Someone who steps on a stonefish will feel intense pain for hours, temporary paralysis, possibly shock and even death. There have been no recorded human deaths in Australia due to the development of an antivenin in 1959.



**Rockland Aquanauts  
Post Office Box 387  
New City, NY  
10956**

**December 2007**

Dive Season to Remember, Princeton Study, White House, Extinct Dolphin, Membership Dues

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**\*\*There will be NO December Meeting\*\***

**Happy Holidays Everyone!  
Have a safe and Happy New Year**

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