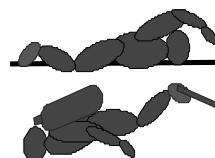




ESTEC SWIMMING & SUB-AQUA CLUB

August 2000 Newsletter



Editorial

Hi folks,

this has been a great newsletter to put together!! I didn't have to do any pleading, begging or threatening. I just walked into work one day, switched on the computer, opened up my mailbox and there they were: articles for the newsletter!! How wonderful! Keep them coming!!

As you may know the club is buying a new boat, for all to enjoy. Now we need a name for it, so we decided to organise a little competition to come up with a new name! So all you kids and grown-ups out there, get your thinking caps on and see what you can come up with. I have been informed that the boat is orange with a black stripe - it may help you with ideas?? Please email, hand in or send your ideas to me or another committee member. We will then announce all the names and democratically decide the winner. The prize is.....don't know yet, but it will be fantastic whatever it is.

Don't forget, please send any articles, information and news to my email address at home (tat.people@12move.nl) or work (Sharon.Tatman@wldelft.nl)

All **contributions** for the next newsletter need to be in by **15 October 2000**.
Next Newsletter will be **1 November 2000**-ish.

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Announcements from the committee including the new pool rules for the swimming and diving sessions

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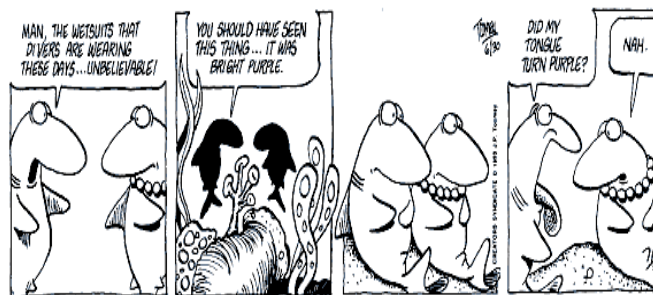
A Personal Do/Don't List from the Red Sea

Ok, I know it, you have all been there, done that. You have done it from shore, on daily boat trips, on a liveboard, after breakfast, before breakfast, during breakfast, so, I won't just talk about the Red Sea. I just wanted to share our (my and Nathalie's) personal experience, so that it might be helpful to our new generation of divers (wow) and why not, they may ring a bell to somebody else too.

DON'T

1. **DON'T** go for a dive trip if the boat carries both divers and snorkellers. Make sure that you choose the right dive operator, or you will end up spending a holiday on the ideal snorkellers site: 40 cm of water and a scary wall down to the abyss (7 meters if they are experienced enough ... and they've got guts).
2. **DON'T** even think about playing with that very big turtle. You will end up a good nautical mile from your boat and have to find how to get back there.
3. **DON'T** dive without your dive computer (did I say that already!?). Deco stop from a 40 cm dive can be very long and your buddy can get tired very easily of having to avoid you yo-yoing up and down happily.
4. **DON'T** dive with the dolphins if you are under 18 years of age. Always wondered how these funny animals spend their quality time underwater? (can tell you, the dolphin is a miracle of evolution, anybody that can do it without arms underwater).
5. **DON'T** go on a boat trip when there are novices on board (where novice is usually a poor chap who had an hour theory introduction and maybe a pool dive). You will be spared the view of an instructor holding two novices, each one by his neck, trying desperately to control his and their buoyancy and ending up landing feet first into that beautiful coral tree
6. **DON'T** go for a Red Sea holiday if you are afraid of sharks. As it is well known to everybody, those waters are practically infested by all kinds of sharks, for all tastes and sizes. If you don't want your adrenaline to pump hard, avoid it.

Figure 1 How "they" see us.



7. **DON'T** dive deeper than 30 meters. Besides the fact that you usually have to fin a good half an hour to get away from the 40 cm snorkelling site, your dive guides (in the sense that they guide you to the site and then go back to sleep while you are down there struggling for your life) will give you a hard time as (so they claim) Egyptian laws (yes, they seem to exist) forbid anybody to dive deeper than that.
8. **DON'T** go diving in the Red Sea if you want to avoid a 1 and ½ hour boat trip to reach a site which is obviously a 5 min. walking distance from down town (anybody that dived the Faladir reef in Hurgada knows what I'm talking about).
9. **DON'T** go to the Red Sea if you want to have a night dive. No matter how hard you will try, you will not be able to do it (trying to get a Belgian and few Egyptians to organise something is a task which not even Mohammed and his mountain would be willing to be challenged with).
10. **DON'T** even think about drinking Egyptian beer. Oh yes, it exists as long as you can afford it (at 17 LE per bottle, a mere 14 guilders), and the taste is, well, lets say, evasive?

But, after all, the Red Sea can offer you a fantastic holiday, just make sure that you:

DO

1. **DO** go for a dive trip if the boat will carry both divers and snorkellers. Not only snorkelling sites are full of life, but they are usually ideal for dolphins too.
2. **DO** think about playing with that very big turtle. You will end up a good nautical mile from your boat but usually the Red Sea is so full of diving boats that chances are that you

will have one there handy just to give you a help (99% of the cases the captain of this boat will be a brother or a cousin of your captain, so he will be more than happy to find your boat and give you a lift there).

3. **DO** dive without your dive computer. Isn't it time you checked you still know how to use a diving table? If your computer fails, you haven't got anything else but your dive watch and that
4. **DO** dive with the dolphins if you are under 18 years of age. **DO** dive with the dolphins if you are above 80 years of age. I mean, you don't want to miss that, do you!?

Figure 2 A typical Red Sea shark



5. **DO** go on a boat trip when there are novices on board (where novice is usually a poor chap who had an hour theory introduction and maybe a pool dive). In the absence of any other entertainment (I mean, after you have seen the 100th lion fish, the 500th giant moray eel, the 1000000th parrot fish/butterfly fish/clown fish, etc. etc.) you can have some fun trying to bet how many times the poor lad (left alone, as the instructor went chasing the occasional panicker that got his mask and regulator off)

will yo-yo from surface to bottom before suffering a stroke.

6. **DO** go for a Red Sea holiday if you are not afraid of sharks. As it is well known to everybody, these waters are practically infected by all kind of sharks, for all tastes and sizes. They are mean, they are ferocious, they are terrible killing machine!
7. **DO** dive deeper than 30 meters. The sight of a reef wall going down into the deep blue, and you in front of it, surrounded by anything but the same deep blue water, with the excitement of waiting for any pelagic fish to come from the open water to fly in front of you (or is that nitrogen narcosis?) will be enough to repay you. Oh yeah, don't forget to tell your guide that you dived to 30 meters ONLY.
8. **DO** go diving in the Red Sea if you want to avoid a 1 and ½ hour boat trip to reach a site which is obviously a 5 min. walking distance from down town (anybody that dived the Faladir reef in Hurgada knows what I'm talking about). This happened to be one of the best dives we had in our holiday.
9. **DO** go to the Red Sea if you want to have a night dive. I mean, hopefully you will be able to do one (Inshallah).
10. **DO** go to the Red Sea if you want to have an unforgettable diving experience. Anybody that has been there will have something in their heart that made it dear to them (they won't just tell you, you know, divers are supposed to be tough underwater explorers).

Isn't it time that our diving officer organised a club expedition to the Red Sea? Flood him with letter/faxes/emails

NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE

News from the Swimming officer

At a recent Committee Meeting the Club Rules were discussed and some revision was agreed. It is my task to update and circulate them. Please read the following "Information and Rules for the Saturday and Sunday swimming sessions" carefully and see if you can spot the changes.

Barrie

To all swimmers, snorkellers and divers

Information and Rules for the Saturday and Sunday swimming sessions

Saturdays: Wassenaar pool - Sterrenbad (all year round)

10.30 am - 11.15 am

Swimming session, the pool is divided into three areas (looking from the coffee bar).

Right lane - lane swimming; any stroke any speed. Don't forget to adapt your stroke and speed to those around you, especially when it is busy.

Middle lane - any stroke but mainly crawl. Swimmers in this lane are usually doing 40 lengths and timing themselves (average time around 20 to 25 minutes).

Left lane - free area. Please remember that if you are using the diving board there are also swimmers to look out for.

For everyone's safety fins are **not** allowed in the pool before 11.15 am. Masks and snorkels are allowed.

Because of possible disruption to swimmers/snorkellers ball games are **not** allowed in Wassenaar

11.15 - 12.00

Snorkelling and diving.

Two lanes each side of the pool are allocated to the divers.

Two lanes in the centre are for the snorkellers

Note: In the summer period when the two lanes each side of the pool are not occupied by the divers, the swimmers can use them on the following basis:

1. The right lane should be used for swimming, the left lane for children's play area.
2. If both lanes are not used by the swimmers, the snorkellers may take over one of these lanes.
3. The different disciplines must be separated by ropes
4. It must not be used as an excuse for turning up late, because if the divers are there you will not be able to continue swimming after 11.15 am.

11.15 onwards

Coffee and a chat

Sundays: Noordwijkerhout - de Schelft (Winter period only)

16.15 - 17.15

Finish off those rainy Sundays on a high note. Time for a swim, a play on the water slide or chat in the jacuzzi. A favourite with the 'kids' in the club.

16.15 - 16.45

The large pool to be used for lane swimming, children welcome.

16.45 - 17.15

After the swimmers have finished their lengths then the pool will be free for other members to practice for their diplomas or just have a splash around.

It is important for the safety and pleasure of all, that these rules are observed.

Thanks for your co-operation and continued courtesy to your fellow swimmers.

Barrie Henson

News from the Equipment officer

At the AGM, the members once again endorsed the purchase of a new club boat, which has been talked about for as long as I can remember, but finally we have managed to just about scrape enough money together and we can place a deposit for a serious dive boat. We hope the new boat will also get used for other activities as well, and providing you have a license to drive it, then the club will be happy for you to use it for just the cost of the petrol and oil used. The bad news is; to make the final payment and leave enough cash in the bank, we have to sell our beautiful Humber inflatable, Evinrude 40 engine, fuel tanks, spares and boat trailer (with two wheels again and brand new bearings). We are going to have to sell it quickly and this means at a bargain price of just 4000 Dfl, which - when you consider how much it has been used since we bought it, always kept in dry storage, and the engine is in good running order - I am sure you will agree, it's not a lot of money. So if any of you want a bargain, then speak up now, it can be viewed locally any lunchtime or evening. There is even the possibility of storing it locally for about 75 Dfl / month.

The Club is currently investigating a course in English for the Dutch "Klein Vaarbewijs" which

will be held most likely in September. Under Dutch law it is necessary to have a license to drive a boat capable of a speed in excess of 20 Km/hour or longer than 15 Metres (this includes our dive boat, speed boats, yachts etc.). The big problem in the past has been that it is a theoretical course in the Dutch language with a multiple choice exam at the end. Details of the course will be published as soon as they are available.

Most of the divers should now know that the bottle filling arrangements have completely changed and we now have to do it ourselves. The luxury of dropping it off at the fire station and returning a few days later to pick up a full tank has gone forever. Two courses were held on the use of the fire station compressor and most of the instructors and regular divers are now trained in its operation. We have a regular rota together to ensure bottles are filled and ready, but please remember that it is a voluntary system and with missions, holidays, etc. it's not always possible to get them filled each week.

A few months back, Jeff requested that all private cylinders were to be removed from the firestation - most of them were. When it came to move all the club tanks from the fire station to the club hut, we ended up with about a dozen unclaimed bottles without names on them. We have now assumed that these have been donated to the club by ex members who no longer wish to keep them or get them tested and serviced. The good news is that each of these dive tanks will be serviced, painted yellow, and clearly marked as club bottles, for the benefit of all the divers. If at a later date anybody can prove the bottle belongs to them, the bottle will be returned, providing the club is reimbursed for any expenses incurred.

Finally, as equipment officer I am still trying to track down equipment that has been borrowed by the members and ex-members, if you have any let me know. In addition if you suspect any of the ex-members may still have some, then also let me know, so I can contact them directly.

Keith

News from the Social officer

Skid course, Zandvoort (8th July)

We set out to enjoy ourselves for an evening of anti-slip and slalom; we did enjoy ourselves! Those who didn't, come and see me - hanging is still permitted in this country!!!

I will leave you in peace now for the summer months - see you in the fall.

Who am I?? This is the noisy new social officer signing off!!!

Maria

Makos and blues off San Diego

The alarm went off very early that morning in Florence. Via Schiphol - home - the office - Schiphol again - Minneapolis - Los Angeles I made it to Pasadena, although the checked bag with all my diving gear mysteriously disappeared en route. I finally regained bed after a lapse of more than 30 hours. It all comes with the job of course. The fringe benefit of this particular nightmare though, was that it would force me to spend a weekend in San Diego, where I had organised to make use of the services of San Diego Shark Diving Expeditions on the coming Saturday.

I was told to show up at the dock at 8 am. So I did; and so did most but not all of the others. In the end everyone had arrived, we were altogether eight divers and an accompanying nondiver on the boat, the *D&D II*. There was captain Scotty, and captain (since the day before) Jessie, and the shark feeder (and owner of the operation) Paul 'Doc' Anes. At 9 o'clock we left harbour, the Quivira Basin in Mission Bay, San Diego, and dieselled straight into the grey (reflecting the unfortunate colour of the sky, it's called a 'marine layer') Pacific. 'Doc' explained to us that he had been up early, listening to fishermen radio conversations and weather reports, in order to decide which 'site' to choose. Although on the surface it is all ocean, when you look at a chart you realise that not all locations are the same. We were heading towards the 'Nine Mile Bank', conveniently located - you guessed it - about 9 miles west of the coast.

It took us about an hour and a half to get to where 'Doc' wanted us to be. En route he had made 'chum' (out of mackerels) to attract sharks. They would generally be blue sharks, but with a bit of luck also mako sharks. There was also 'readymade' secret formula chum onboard in special plastic containers with holes in them so that they would slowly leak. Bloody stuff I tell you! When on site, we started chumming, and made the 'getting to know how to dive with a shark cage' dive. The cage itself could hold three divers, and was placed about 10 m behind the boat at a depth of about 5 m. Each diver was escorted to and from the cage by 'Doc'. On his signal you entered the water using a giant stride from the dive platform at the back of the boat. Then you pulled yourself on the line connecting the cage to the boat down to the cage where you unlatched the door, swam inside, turned round, and latched the door again – we don't want to leave the door open, do we. In the cage each diver had a transparent section with a window that was opened from the outside by 'Doc'. Yes, we were briefed as to what to do in the event that a shark would be trapped inside the cage, and also what to do if the cage would start sinking... (Please don't panic, use your octopuses to put more air into the buoyancy devices – shark cages don't come cheap.)

When everyone had done the tryout cage dive we had lunch, and made bets as to when the first shark would turn up. I 'got' the quarter of an hour starting at 1.30 pm. After lunch I retired to the foredeck, and just after 1 o'clock lots of loud shouting made it clear that I was not the winner. There was one, no two sharks, swimming around the boat. One was a blue, the other one a mako which excited 'Doc' – it is not so common to 'get' makos. The idea now was to make the sharks stay and to attract more. Makos normally quickly lose interest, but blues can stay for extended periods of time. What happened for us was that the mako actually went for one of the baits, got entangled in a line, and then disappeared at lightning speed. After a while the blue also decided it had had enough, and left us all alone. Then there was nothing, and nothing, and more of nothing.

An hour later there was excitement again. No, no sharks, but we had sighted a mola-mola, or a sunfish or moonfish depending on whether you speak american or british english. We called it mola-mola – which I think is hawaiian... I donned

my snorkel and took a look hanging from the dive platform; I had never seen one before.

Time went and nothing happened. It started to look as if this trip would be an unlucky one. Sometime after 3 o'clock 'Doc' donned his chainmail shark feeding suit (I think mainly in order to boost morale onboard) and went down to the cage with bait. He also had underwater communication equipment so that he could talk to the boat. Almost immediately he began to shout, and Scotty commented that he was breathing like hell, watch those bubbles! Turned out there was a large mako in the water. While 'Doc' hid behind the cage, quickly the first three divers (I was number 3) got ready. In the meantime the mako disappeared. When it was my turn to enter I did as we had practised. Technically a cage dive is not difficult, but we were carrying quite a bit of extra weight so you wanted to make sure you would not sink to the bottom (which was at about 1000 m). When I got into the cage and my window had been opened, I was amply rewarded. Almost immediately the mako returned. What a sight! It was about a metre and half, looked like a 'mini great white', and seemed to be in a hurry to do something. I got the opportunity to admire the mako for some time, and then it was gone, as quickly as it had arrived.

First one, and then another blue shark appeared. They seemed to be in a completely different mood. They circled the cage cautiously a long time, and a couple of times they took the bait out of the hand of 'Doc' just in front of us. Brilliant! But in all fairness they were just baby sharks, one just above a metre long, and the other one even smaller. They were around for something like half an hour, then they were gone. After about an hour I was getting a bit cold, and nothing was happening. Staring at the open ocean (the visibility was good, using the boat as yardstick we concluded that it was at least 30-40 m) is only so exciting, and I considered going back to the boat. The first guy had already left, but for some reason nobody had taken his place in the cage. But given the time of the day and the fact that there were five more divers on the boat who had not been to the cage yet, I stayed. That was lucky; another (smaller) mako came and disappeared. Then I went back to the boat, I had spent 70 min under water, possibly the longest dive I ever made.

On the way back we got soup, bought T-shirts and generally had a good time. We saw another mola-mola, and – to the surprise of the crew onboard – another mako on the surface quite close to land (or to the beaches in other words!).

So what do I think? I had a good time, but it may not be for everyone. The weather chose not to co-operate fully. Although it was fairly calm, around force 2 with waves of about 1 m or less, there was no sun at all. We spent 10 hours on the boat, most of the time drifting and rolling in the open ocean while waiting. It did not bother me, I just took the opportunity to relax on the foredeck, chatting and reading. I had never made a cage dive before. I saw blue and mako sharks, and the mola-molas, none of which I had seen before, and 'Doc' was really interesting to talk to. Pictures? Sorry, haven't got any, but for pictures, more info, and to book your own trip, see <http://www.sdsharkdiving.com>. A one day trip like the one I made is US\$ 260.

Göran