

KELP KRAWLERS DIVE CLUB

April 2005

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Washington Scuba Alliance Annual Meeting

By Jerry Ehrlich

I attended the WSA meeting on March 12th at West Bay Marina, Olympia, Washington.

This year's meeting was well attended with 30 or so divers from Washington, Oregon and British Columbia. John Tupper from the Aquanauts and myself were the South Sound/Hood Canal reps.

The presentations were all very good, but two young women from Bel-larmine Prep were outstanding. They are both seniors who began diving a year ago and have adopted Titlow as their personal dive site and have been diving there regularly since their certification.

They heard that the pilings at Titlow were to be removed as part of the mitigation for the new Narrows Bridge. The reason for removal is creosote soaked pilings are highly toxic and these toxins work their way up the food chain to large invertebrates like Orcas. The Titlow site has dozens of these from the old ferry pier constructed after the demise of Galloping Ger-tie (the first narrows bridge).

The young women approached their Biology teacher with a proposal to do a real scientific study to prove the piling were no longer dan-gerous and had in fact become valuable habi-tat.

The teacher seized on the idea and they devel-oped a real study with a small grant and do-nated lab time to get the chemical analysis done.

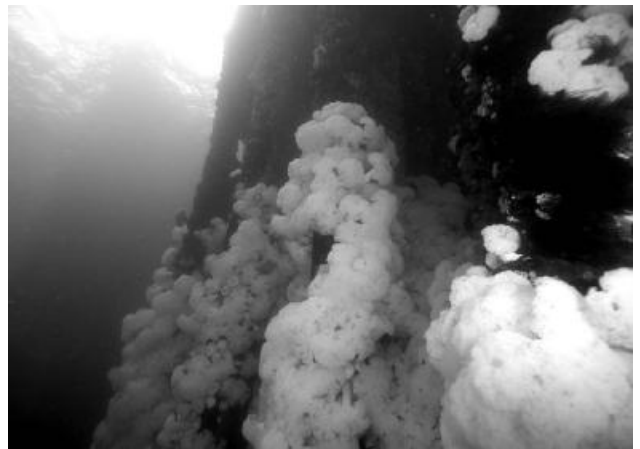
Their hypothesis was as mentioned before, that the piling were a benign environment and should be left in place. (This was their favorite dive site and they did not want to see it destroyed.)

They developed coring techniques for the pil-ing and sediment sampling around the piling. All of the samples were sent to a lab and tested for toxic chemicals and compared against baselines established by the EPA and NOAA.

The results were a surprise. The pilings were still polluting at way above harmful levels. The interiors of the pilings are completely loaded with the nasty stuff and will continue to leach into the water for years to come.

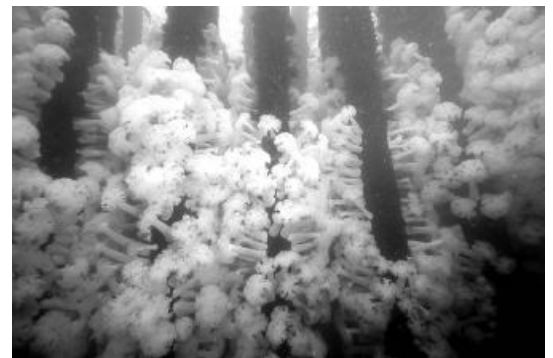
They were disappointed about the loss of their favorite dive site, but very glad to see the pil-ings go in the near future.

Sometimes we divers as casual observers



really do not see the whole picture. We look but we do not see. We see white anemone growing all over the pilings and see lots of fish and assume all is well. The white anemone can grow on a poisonous substrate and merely pass it up the food chain. All is not well at Titlow, even though it looks like it.

We need to keep this in mind as we make value judgments based on casual observation. The Puget Sound marine environment is a complex web and the only thing we lay person divers know for sure is dumping stuff in it as we have for years has polluted it. We are in-formed enough to be aware that anything that can be done to improve it needs to be done.



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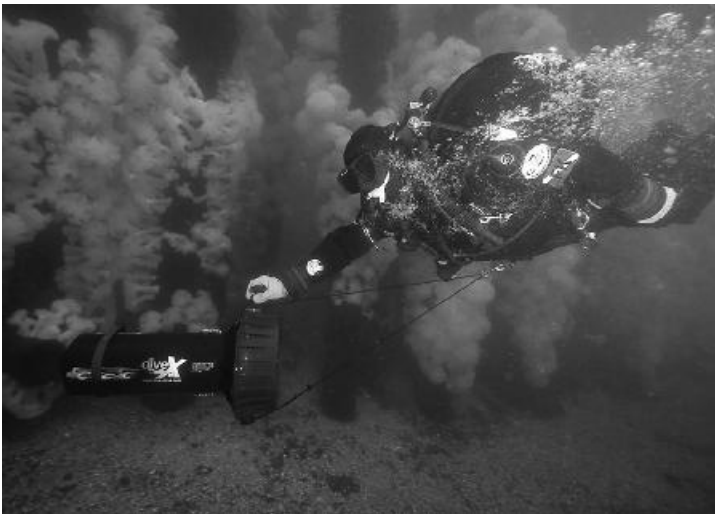
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March Club Dives

by Rodger Gomez

The **Kelp Krawlers** had a busy weekend diving on the North end of Hood Canal. We reserved the boat with Pacific Adventure for a morning and an afternoon dive. The morning divers included: **Steve Griffith, Don Noviello, and Patti Garrett.** Afternoon divers were: **Rick and Diane Cooper. Steve and Carolyn Fornoff, Rich Penny, and Rodger Gomez.**

The morning divers had a little wind and rough water for their first dive. Their second site seemed to be a lot better as they were all happy campers when they returned to Pleasant Harbor



to end their day of diving. The afternoon divers dove **Rosie's Ravine and Goby Garden** as well as **The Pinnacle.** The Garden dive had a lot of bloom in the water to about 30 ft. Beyond 30 ft it cleared up quite a bit.

Rich and I found a dead Octopus at the base of a wall around 125 ft. The Coopers found three octopus out and about at or above 30 ft. I don't know how they saw them as the viz in that neighborhood might have been 6 ft in a pinch. The second dive was at The Pinnacle where the viz was really pretty good. Above 30 ft it was a bit foggy but below that it was really clear. I would guess around 35 to 40 ft on the horizontal. Rich and I found a really big octopus at 80 ft stuffed into a rock the size of a small VW. Both dives were exceptional, with the second one turning into a night dive. Stay tuned for some more diving with **Pac Adventure.**

The March Club dive was at Sund Rock on Sunday, March 13th. Let me see, who showed up? Oh, yea, there was Jerry, Jamie, me,...did I mention **Jerry and Jamie**,.... Well for those of you who didn't show up you missed the opportunity to fine tune your navigation skills. Jerry and I teamed up and for 50 minutes of so, it was bump and touch to stay in close range of your dive buddy. The Viz was, at best, maybe 5ft, and that's being generous. Jerry's got that navigation stuff down. He managed to easily find the North wall, which I didn't recognize until I got right on top of it. Even with poor viz, we man-

aged to find a couple of octos and a few wolfies. The white and orange sea cucumbers were having a feast and were interesting to watch. We never went beyond 70 ft, or so, and the viz was as thick as pea soup all the way down. One dive was enough for the both of us and I think Jamie felt the same as his boat was gone by the time we surfaced.

Underwater photo video class

Optiquatics is offering an underwater photo and video class on May 27-29th. It will be put on by **Joe Myssocki**, owner of Optiquatics and **Roger Roth** of Underwater Images. The cost is \$250 with a class of 10-15 people and will include classroom sessions and work, handouts, in-water instruction, and evaluations. Joe will be bringing good quality video cameras, housings, and lights for use and testing. This is a good chance for you photographers to try something new and different.

Bonnie Smith will be bringing brochures to the next club meeting but if you need any other info please contact Bonnie at (360) 280-2372. www.optiquatics.com

March Meeting Notes:

John Shliemann gave a fascinating presentation on the recovery of a B-17 "Flying Fortress" from the bottom of a remote lake in Labrador, Canada. Additional footage and information will be in a future documentary about the recovery.

The **Aquanuts** are planning a dive trip to the San Juans. Contact **John Tupper** for details. Wayne Campbell had a great trip to Belize, hanging out and diving from a chartered sailboat. **Mike Beyer** and **Brad Condon** had a great tech-trip to Sechart with **Porpoise Bay Charters.** **Lee** and **Oleta Artman** just returned from an awesome trip to **Palau** and have promised us a trip report.

Meeting Attendees: **Becky Lundin, Carla Thurmond, Karen and Mike Beyer, Wayne Campbell, Don Noviello, Hobe Pannkuk, Lee and Oleta Artman, Steve Griffith, Carolyn and Steve Fornoff, John and Jane Tupper, Frank Ehresmann, Phillip Pedack, and Scott and Janet Boyd.**

Poop Dive

Seven divers that only knew each other via the Internet converged on Bremerton for a "**Superman dive**" to fly through the **Port Washington narrows** on a fast running current (predicted over 5 knots) on April 9th. The weather and tides cooperated (even when the boats did not), and 6 of the divers dropped in to take Mr. Toad's wild ride beneath the bridges.

The viz was crappy, but the ride was very fun. We were wondering why we didn't see any other boats or divers out, until we recovered the boats onto the trailers back at the boat ramp, when someone spotted a sign that said: "**Danger**, do not enter the water, due to **Sewage Overflow** on order of Health Dept." Ewww! Now I know why there was no one else around!!!

Wolf-eel, *Anarrhichthys ocellatus*

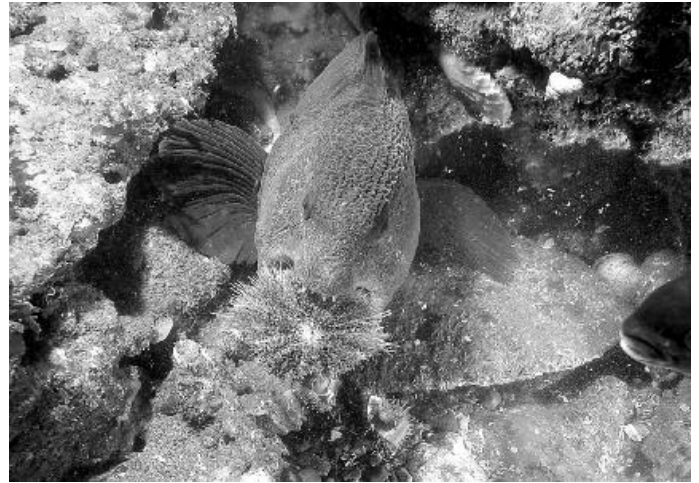
by Scott Boyd

The friendly, but fierce looking wolf-eel is a favorite of Pacific Northwest divers. They can often be spotted peering out of the many crevices and holes in popular local dive sites. When lured out of their dens in search of their favorite food (Sea Urchins), this impressive fish is a sight to behold, growing to a maximum length of 8'. While not a true eel (eels have no pectoral fins), wolfies are actually a fish with an elongated body and are referred to by scientists as a "wolf-fish".



Wolf-eels range from southeastern Alaska to southern California typically living in rocky reef-type habitats from the intertidal zone down to about 740 feet. Their coloration starts with a burnt orange spotted look, and then changes to gray for males and brown for females. Both males and females have a dorsal fin that stretches from head to the end of their 6-8 foot long body, and both have spot patterns that appear to be individualized. Scales are imbedded in the skin. Their diet consists of sea urchins, crabs, scallops -- assorted crustaceans and mollusks. They eat these with the help of conical teeth in the front and strong pulverizing molars in back.

Males and females form pairs at about 4 years of age and produce eggs at 7 years old. Spawning usually occurs from October into late winter. A male will butt his head against the female's abdomen then wrap himself around her as a sign for a mating call. It has been found that the male fertilizes the eggs as they are laid and up to 10,000 eggs can be released at a single time. The father and mother will then wrap themselves around the egg masses and will guard the eggs for about 13-16 weeks when the eggs will then hatch. Possible predators that prey on the eggs include rockfishes and kelp greenlings. Wolf-eels sometimes mate for life.



During the juvenile years, Wolf-eels can most commonly be found in the upper part of the water column, residing there for about two years. As the Wolf-eel ages, it will slowly migrate to the ocean floor eventually finding a rock shelter where it will mate and homestead for the remainder of its lifespan.

This species is of minor commercial importance and is also caught by deep-sea recreational anglers. The flesh of the Atlantic wolf-eel is commonly marketed as "ocean catfish." At the moment, many fishers use rockhopper trawls to fish rough, rocky sea floors. This method causes the destruction of the rocky reefs in which the Wolf-eel resides and many scientists are calling for a halt to this practice.

DIVE SHOP NEWS:

Capital Divers

866-3684

www.capitaldivers.com

Palau trip on the Palau Aggressor June 25-July 2 2006. Nitrox, argon and hyper filtered air fills available.

Hood Sport 'n Dive

(360) 877-6818

www.hoodsportndive.com

The shop is now pumping nitrox while you wait, trimix, deco gases, and argon. Also, they are offering easy access to the **Sund Rock Marine Preserve**.

Underwater Sports

493-0322

www.underwatersports.com

The Olympia Shop is now pumping hyper filtered Air. Discounted air cards for Kelp Krawlers: 10 fills for \$25.

Blue Diamond Dive Tours

(360)426-1267

BlueDiamondDiver@aol.com

Bonaire Trip at the Sand Dollar Beach Resort November 5-13.



Dive Safe and Play Nice!!!!