

KELP KRAWLERS DIVE CLUB

June 2005

Volume 21, Number 6

Wooden Boat Festival

The Kelp Krawlers' hard work paid off in a very successful weekend of displaying touch tanks at the Wooden Boat Festival this year. After a bit of a rocky start due to the last minute date change, many members of the club pitched in to make this one of our most successful efforts ever.



Both sets of divers collected at Itsami Ledge, which is full of sea stars and is a good choice. On Sunday, we launched at Zittles, and then transported the critters by truck to the festival, which got them there very quickly, with less stress and they seemed much livelier in the tanks. The sea cucumbers did better this year without being touched, but we should stick to a couple of medium sized ones and leave the huge ones alone, as the very large cucumber did get over-stressed.

Additional changes slated for next year will be getting a new Banner printed, which **Jerry** has prototyped and is looking excellent. We had a lot of foot traffic and many return customers that come every year to see the critters. People liked the tanks, but often had no idea why we were there. Some even wondered if we were "selling" the critters.

Another suggestion for next year was to display some of our dive gear during the event to help promote Scuba Diving as well as our dive club. I understand this has been done quite successfully in the past, and hope we can try it next year. The more divers the better!

Kudos to **Wayne Campbell** for organizing the event and to all the members of the club that worked so hard to make this a rewarding event.

Collection Divers on Saturday were: **Greg Volkhardt, Roger Gomez, Bob Richart, and Jeff Hamilton** with surface support by **Jaime Welsh** and **Carla Thurmond**. Collection Divers on rainy Sunday were: **Scott Boyd** and **Tani Iwashita**, with surface support by **Janet Boyd** and **Penne Macnee**.

Many thanks to the hard-working Kelp Krawlers that set-up the tanks on Friday night and tore them down on Sunday night, as well as everyone that **volunteered** their time to answer critter questions and diver questions at the Wooden Boat Festival this year.

Many changes were implemented this year due to the high rate of attrition of the critters during the previous years. The biggest and most successful change was covering the touch tanks with deer netting, which kept the critters from being mauled by small hands and kept the animals in pristine condition on both days. Another major change was collecting fresh critters every morning, and releasing them in the evening. This also worked out quite well.

Debbie Hamrick provided the awesome poster frames with large pictures and the Dive Site Map. Many people attempted to use the photographs to try and identify what was in the touch tanks, so next year we are going to try to have photographs and labels for the most common sea stars, etc., that are likely to be in the tanks. **Jerry Ehrlich** provided handouts with interesting information about Sea Stars and our marine environment. Thanks Jerry and Debbie!

The moon star on Saturday and the Sea Cucumbers on Sunday were the biggest attractions, followed by the wide variety of Sea Stars (especially the ones growing new legs).

2005 OFFICERS

President
Jamie Welsh
426-7755

Vice President
Steve Fornoff
426-1267

Treasurer
Wayne Campbell
789-3467

Secretary and Editor
Scott Boyd
456-2066
scott@boydski.com

Historian and Dive Officer
Rodger Gomez
486-5739

MEMBERSHIP

Kelp Krawler dues:
\$15 single or
\$25 for a family
Membership.

Make checks payable to:
Wayne Campbell

Mail to:
Scott Boyd

Inside this issue:

May Dive Reports	2
June Speaker	2
May Meeting Notes	3
BVI Trip Report	3
Sechelt Trip Report	4
Lewis Moon Snail	5
Contact List	6
Calendar of Events	6

Owen Beach Club Dive

On Saturday, May 28th, the Kelp Krawlers met at **Owen Beach** for a pleasant dive early in the morning before the crowds showed up. With the previous day's record heat of 92° fresh in our mind, divers descended into the refreshing, cool waters of Puget Sound to find great vis and calm currents.

The bottom slopes gently to about 25' depth, and then slopes more steeply to a depth in the 100'+ range where it flattens out once again. There is a submerged structure called "the barge" that is a popular attraction for divers. The South end of the barge is about 85' deep and the North end is about 100' deep. Sixgills have been seen at this site several times.

The newer divers played along the gently sloping bottom and were rewarded with a couple of beautiful **Tritonia Festiva** nudibranchs, lots of **hairy tritons laying eggs** (see photo to the right) and a very cooperative **Bay Pipefish** that hung out with the divers at their safety stop. The more advanced divers swam into deeper waters in search of the Barge and were rewarded with sightings of grunt and sailfin sculpins along with the very odd-looking **Sturgeon Poacher** (photo below).



To find the barge, descend just west of the Picnic shelter to a depth of about 90', turn left (West) and follow the 90' depth contour and you'll run into the barge, which is located West of the Main Beach area.

Divers included: **Duane** and **Debbie Hamrick**, **Scott** and **Janet Boyd**, **Tani** and **Marco Iwashita**, **Steve Fornoff**, **Miko**, **Jenny Salisbury**, **John Brown** and **Athena**, **Bob Richart**, and our fearless leader, **Rodger "no regs" Gomez!**

June 21 Dive Club Meeting:

Simon Geerlofs of the **Washington Sea Grant Program** will present, "**Dive into Tunicate Identification**". He will discuss the Washington Sea Grant Program which is designed to help divers identify, monitor, and report invasive tunicates in the Puget Sound.



Aquatic nuisance species (ANS) are a growing threat in Puget Sound. ANS are plants and animals introduced into the marine environment, often by human action. While some non-native species are commercially valuable, such as Pacific oysters and Manila clams, others, like *Spartina* cordgrass and zebra mussels, can cause environmental harm. Like the common terrestrial invasives *Himalayan blackberry* and *Scots broom*, once established, ANS are nearly impossible to eradicate.

Recent attention has turned to an **invasive tunicate** called *Didemnum* that was discovered last summer in Edmonds Underwater Park. While many tunicates are native to Puget Sound and occupy a productive niche in the ecosystem, **Didemnum** is a fast growing **nuisance** with the potential to outcompete native species. This poses a threat to the shellfish industry, and also to divers who like to see a diversity of life growing on underwater structures. The extent of *Didemnum*'s spread is not yet known, though it has been reported in isolated places from **Shelton to Vancouver Island**. Volunteer divers, the eyes of the sound, can play a valuable role in identifying and reporting this tunicate while there is still a chance to control its growth.

If you would like to learn more about invasive species, in particular invasive tunicates, please contact **Simon Geerlofs** at Washington Sea Grant Program at sigee@u.washington.edu. Simon is organizing workshops to educate divers about this potential threat and how to report sightings and organize survey dives. For more information on the invasive tunicate *Didemnum*, check out: <http://woodshole.er.usgs.gov/projects/stellwagen/didemnum/>

Kelp Krawlers Dive club celebrates 25 years.

South Puget Sound's independent dive club, the **Kelp Krawlers** celebrates 25 years of Scuba Diving this summer. The dive club was started 25 years ago at **Salt Creek**, with the club name coming from the divers crawling out of the surge by crawling through the kelp forests off the campground.

British Virgin Islands by Carolyn and Steve Fornoff

The **British Virgin Islands** are known for their beautiful white sand beaches, crystal-clear blue water and a rich marine environment. So, for our **20th anniversary** Steve and I decided to go sailing through these relaxing Caribbean waters.

We chose to spend the week aboard **Ayacanora**, a 72-foot sailing vessel, with our friends Ron and Brith. The Captains and owners are Mike and Roberta Haver, originally from the Pacific Northwest. Mike and Roberta make you feel like you are family and go out of their way to make sure you have a good time. Deciding where to go and what we wanted to do, determined our course for the day. We spent each night in a different location; with an average sailing time of 3 to 4 hours a day. Ayacanora has 3 staterooms allowing the 4 of us had more than enough space. Did I mention Roberta is a gourmet cook!

This is the destination where Steve and I each had our first open water dives after becoming certified. Most of the diving is at 75 feet or less among rocky pinnacles, beautiful coral, walls painted with colorful sponges, and giant underwater boulders. There are numerous wrecks, which have become the home to a variety of diverse and interesting sea life. One of the most famous is the Wreck of the **RMS Rhone** located near Salt Island. In 1867 the 310-foot sailing steamer was caught in a hurricane, which caused her to crash on the rocks near Salt Island breaking in two. Sinking immediately, only 6 people survived. Today, the two

including: Yellowtail snapper, sergeant majors, blackbar soldierfish, angelfish, boxfish, filefish, parrotfish (sleeping and awake) eels, turtle, barracuda, octopus and several eagle rays. Snorkeling was always an option that we took advantage of. **My favorite site was off uninhabited Norman Island** and included watching an eagle ray feed in only 25 feet of water during the day and that night observing a small octopus move around and try to become “invisible” to us.



We went with three different dive operations, all professional and well organized. The staff was concerned with safety and respect for the waters and marine life. There is a large increase of cruise ships in the area so we had some trouble getting spots on the dive boat at the last minute. Some dive operations do not take any “cruisers” and I found those more willing to take us to the better sites and be more relaxed without time restrictions.

Our week included a lot of relaxing, eating, sipping on “Painkillers”, and enjoying the local flavor of the towns and marinas. I look forward to returning again someday to visit Ayacanora and the beautiful British Virgin Islands. If you are interested, check out their website www.Ayacanora.net.

May Meeting Notes:

Jamie was back and opened the meeting promptly at 7:00 PM. **Wayne** reported “about” \$500-600 in the treasury, you’ve got to love those exact figures! **Jerry Ehrlich** reported that a new banner will cost about \$150, and general consensus was to go ahead and make a new one, as the touch tanks were pretty barren without a banner identifying the club.

Breakfast dates will most likely be July 16th or August 13th. Jerry is checking with Paul Boardman. **Amy Kurtenbach** suggested we donate some of the proceeds from the breakfast to the Low Dissolved Oxygen problem in Hood Canal. **Phil Jensen** donated one charter for the breakfast raffle.

Meeting Attendees: **Jamie Welsh, Carolyn Thomas, Rodger Gomez, Becky Lundin, Wayne Campbell, Steve Sutton, Amy Kurtenbach, Duane Hamrick, Tani Iwashita, Bob Richart, Jerry and Becky Ehrlich, and Scott and Janet Boyd.**



halves and several sections rest on a sandy bottom. You can swim inside the bow section and cargo hold; see the intact crow’s nest and two cannons. Nearby you can swim around the boilers, the condenser and a complete set of large open-end wrenches. The stern section lies in only 30 feet of water with the rudder extending upward to within 15 feet of the surface. The huge propeller sitting upright near Black Rock Point once drove the Rhone at a top speed of 14 knots. This is the site where the movie “**The Deep**” was filmed.

Other dive sites we went to include: **Black Forest, Norman Island; Rainbow Canyon, Pelican Island; Seal DoG Island; Triple Tug Wreck, Cooper Island.** We saw a variety of fish

Sechelt, Porpoise Bay Charters by Scott Boyd

A small group of six local divers met up in **Sechelt**, along British Columbia's **Sunshine Coast** for a long weekend of awesome diving. We dove with **Anne** and **Kal** at Porpoise Bay Charters, and had a great trip. They both absolutely spoil you rotten, and with only six very experienced divers to deal with, Kal was in "rare" form.

Janet decide she had to bring some toys for the very large dogs that live on the property (Lucas and Apollo). She brought some tennis balls, which they destroyed in minutes, and the dreaded, "**rubber chicken**". The rubber chicken is now quite infamous at Porpoise Bay. I don't think either Kal or Anne got much sleep that first night with the dogs stealing the chicken from each other and starting a new "**squeak**" attack. Did I tell you it squeaks? Oh yes, serious squeak!

By our second day, the dogs both knew what the word "chicken" meant, and anyone uttering the words, "**get the chicken**" was quickly in possession of a well slobbered rubber chicken as soon as Apollo could get it away from Lucas. Anyway, on to the diving.



The waters around Porpoise Bay are **clear, cold and full of colorful marine life**. On this trip, with just the 6 of us, we were very comfortable in Kal's Catamaran. We did have him wondering how six divers could have, "so much stuff". At one point, I think we had 9 sets of doubles, 12 singles and 6 deco bottles on board the poor overloaded boat. We took way too many cylinders up to Canada with us, and even came back with some that were still full (oh the shame of it)!

Saturday morning we were up early, had breakfast at the house and headed out for a day of awesome diving. Our first dive was **Stag Wall**, which is deep, vertical and beautiful. We dropped down below 100' to admire the **beautiful cloud sponges** (pictured above), which are much whiter and brighter than our yellow sponges and we slowly worked our way up the wall.

Our second dive was further along the wall and was loaded with colorful critters, including an **octopus** that decided to play with Tani for a while. Visibility was awesome, and I managed to get

a couple of great shots of the little octopus against that beautiful emerald green water along the wall.

The third dive of the day was **Tzoonie Narrows**, taking a ride on the current as you drift through the narrows. The walls are covered with colorful anemones and eventually the current spits you out into a huge school of rockfish and greenlings waiting at the end of the channel. Kind of like the dinner bell had rung. Ding, ding, ding!

Sunday morning, we were up early again, for Anne's egg's benedict, and then off to the **HMCS Chaudiere**, sank there as an artificial reef 12 years ago. The Chaud lays on her Port side with the stern shallow and the bow deep. The orientation of the wreck makes this a much more disorienting dive than her sister ship in Nanaimo. I for one didn't stray far from the entrances



when poking my nose inside.

For our last dive we dropped in at **Towanek**, cruising along the wall and we swam into a huge mass of thousands of mesmerizing moon jellies. They came in all sizes from small to large and completely surrounded us. They also temporarily trap air from the divers exhaust bubbles and upon surfacing you can see a trail of floating jellyfish wherever the divers had been swimming below the surface. It was pretty amazing!

For more information: <http://www.porpoisebaycharters.com>

Recreational crab Season in Puget Sound

Marine area 13 (south Puget Sound) will **open June 18** seven days per week.

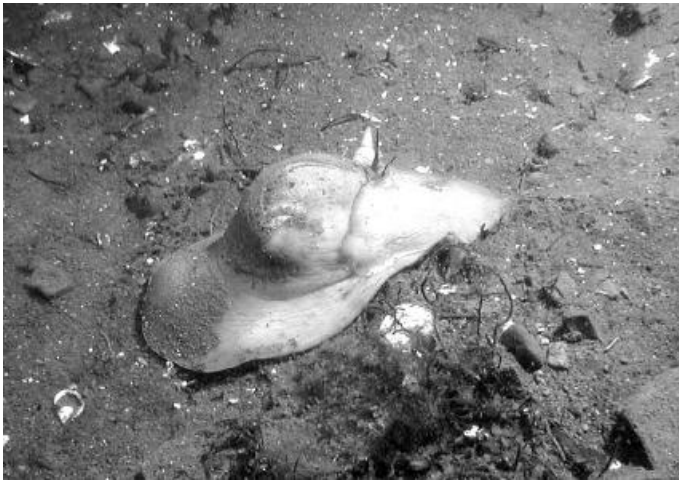
Marine areas 11 (Tacoma/Vashion) and **12** (Hood Canal) will **open July 1, Wednesday through Saturday**, plus the entire Labor Day weekend, before **closing** the evening of **Sept. 5** for a catch assessment.

Species affected: **Dungeness and Red Rock Crab**

Other information: **The Dungeness crab daily limit is 5 male crab 6 1/4 inch minimum . The daily limit for Red rock crab is 6 crab, 5 inch minimum, any sex. Permit Required.**

Lewis' Moon Snail *Polinices Lewisii* by Scott Boyd

Moon snails are common visitors to sandy dives sites, where they may be observed moving along the bottom using millions of tiny cilia on the bottom of it's expansive foot. Ranging from Vancouver Island to Baja, California at depths from Intertidal to 600', this voracious predator is the bane of oyster-growers and clam beds. Growing to a **shell diameter of 5 1/2"**, the moon snail generally feeds on mollusks such as clams and cockles by



drilling a hole in the shell. Alternate methods involve suffocating its prey by wrapping them in that gigantic foot until they suffocate and die. Clam shells found with a perfectly round hole drilled in them were probably eaten by moon snails.

Despite appearances, the animal actually can get it's entire body back into the shell it carries on it's back, although it can't live long tucked away in it's shell, as it will suffocate. To fit completely back into its shell, the animal must first expel considerable amounts of water. Humans and sunflower stars seem to be the moon snails only predators.

The moon snail is typically found partially buried in the sand and along mud beaches. It can extend a fleshy foot to over 12 inches in diameter.

Moon snail egg cases, commonly called **sand collars**, appear to be thin pieces of rubber in the shape of a round collar. They are composed of snail eggs sandwiched between layers of mucus coated with sand. About half way through the summer, the eggs



hatch and the collars fall apart. The free swimming snail larvae become part of the zooplankton in the ocean until they are ready to settle down and transform into little moon snails.

These snails are edible, and some people do eat them, but they are not commercially harvested. The Lewis' Moon Snail is the largest living moon shell. Its common and scientific names honor Meriwether Lewis, who with William Clark explored the route to the Pacific in 1804-1806, and who brought back specimens of this shell from the mouth of the Columbia River.

DIVE SHOP NEWS:

Capital Divers **866-3684**
www.capitaldivers.com

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

Bandito Charters on **Saturday, June 18th**, July 16th, Aug 28th, Sept 24th, Oct 23rd, Nov 19th and Dec 18th.

Hood Sport 'n Dive **(360) 877-6818**
www.hoodspordndive.com

The shop is now pumping nitrox while you wait, trimix, deco gases, and argon. Also, they are offering discounted access to the **Sund Rock Marine Preserve** for paid members of the Kelp Krawlers dive club.

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!!!!