

KELP KRAWLERS DIVE CLUB

August 2004

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Quit Wiggling: by Jerry Ehrlich

Quit wiggling :o)

Don't just do something, sit there! We have heard the backside of this over and over; action of any kind is better than none. Just Do It is another beauty. I have no idea where any of this has any real application, but diving is not an endeavor where action for its own sake is a good idea.

We are all way too busy scurrying around on land to take it with us when we dive. Underwater is a place we can relax and enjoy a really cool fluid environment. Movement underwater is necessary to get from place to place to enjoy different sights but anything beyond that probably detracts from your enjoyment.

When I want to enjoy looking at something on dry land, I am not waving my arms around and wiggling my feet. I try to relax and really see and enjoy it.

When I see a lovely octopus, I stop, remain as motionless as possible and enjoy the experience. The animal probably has a better time as well :o)

Remember back in our open water training how we were all taught to stop, control our breath and then act? I suggest we all can benefit from doing this when things are going right, not just when we are stressing.

Try it. Stop completely occasionally during the dive and look around and enjoy just being there. No arm movement, no extra kicking, just hanging out with the fishies.

With any luck at all we can take some of that with us when we surface.

Editor's note: I also would encourage people to do this. One of my favorite things to do (or should I say not do???) is to just hang in the water, and float around with a school of rockfish. I could spend my entire bottom time doing that - it is so relaxing, and so fun to watch the fish as they swim up and look in your mask! My buddies are used to me doing this - I think at first they thought that something had happened to me since I was just "hanging around", and not moving at all. Of course, my buddies are used to some strange behavior from me anyway, whether top-side or underwater.

So lets all get out and go DIVING!!! And just hang out and notice some of the smaller life that is underwater, not just the octo's and wolfies. There are many different nudibranchs to be found. Try making a goal of seeing how many decorator crabs you can spot during a dive. Make it fun!!

And did I mention to GO DIVING???? If you need a buddy, check the list in this newsletter, or send a message to our egroup: kelpkrawlers@yahoo.com.

July Meeting Attendance:

Mike & Karen Beyer, Scott & Janet Boyd, Wayne Campbell, Jason Caskey, Doug Dunham, Jerry Ehrlich, Steve & Carolyn Fornoff, Steve Griffith, Jeff Hamilton, Duane & Debbie Hamrick, Amy Kurtenbach, Becky Lundin, Noel Ostrander, Jerry Rolly, Cheryl Scott, Carla Thurmond, and Jamie Welsh for a total of 21 people.

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MEMBERSHIP

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

Make checks payable to:
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(Kelp Krawlers)
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Kelp Krawlers supports **Divers Alert Network** and strongly encourages you to join! The advice and insurance available through **DAN** could save your life. **Steve** has applications. Or sign up on the web at: www.DiversAlertNetwork.org and use the club sponsor number **392620**.

Calendar of Events

August 17th: Club meeting.
September 21st: Club meeting.
October 19th: Club meeting.
November 16th: Club meeting.
December ?: Christmas Party

Treasurer's Report: Wayne Campbell

We have \$1,151.86 in the bank.

August Meeting

Scott Boyd will be showing a 30 minute video/slideshow presentation from his recent trip to the enchanted Galapagos Islands. He will also be showing Tani's Sixgill shark video (about 5 minutes) from their recent dive at Owens Beach. Read about their dive with the sixgills on the next page!! (*Hey Scott - are you going to be bringing a screen along with you this time??*)

The meeting is Tuesday, August 17th, and starts at 7pm at Dirty Dave's Pizza Parlor on Martin Way. Come early, order food and drink, and socialize!!

Editor's rant:

And if you see someone that you don't know, introduce yourself and find out who they are. How else are you going to find new dive buddies, and maybe another good friend? Lets all welcome everyone who comes to check out our dive club, and show them that we really ARE a friendly group!!

I know that we all tend to get in our ruts, and want to catch up on the news of people that we already know. I challenge you to find out something about a member that you don't know very well.

This mini soap box stand is because of things I have heard about how people perceive our club. We don't have the friendliest reputation!! We know that we are all wonderful people, but we aren't necessarily showing our best sides to people checking out our club. Also, when I attended a kayak club meeting last month, I was warmly and enthusiastically greeted by almost everyone there. It certainly made me feel welcome, in a group of people that I didn't know, and a new activity that I am just learning.

So try to remember what it feels like, to walk into a room full of people that all know each other, but no one knows you. And that you are a brand new diver, and possibly a little intimidated about learning a new sport. Please help make everyone feel welcome!!

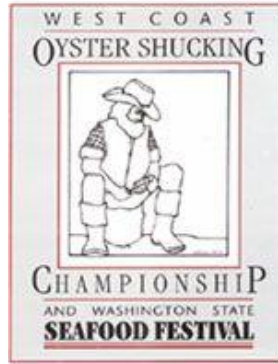
Rant over. :0) **DIVE SAFE AND PLAY NICE!!!!**

Christmas Party

Jim Eash - you have been nominated to host our annual Christmas Party again this year!! See what happens when you don't show up for a meeting or two??? Please let us know if this works for you or not, and what dates might work. We are also waiting to hear from Karen Beyer on possible dates.

Oysterfest

If you haven't been to Oysterfest before, make this your year to go! The Hood Canal Aquanuts have a very nice display of open touch tanks, and contained tanks for the more fragile marine life. The dates this year are Oct. 2nd & 3rd, which is a Saturday and Sunday. I haven't got the information on when the "critter collection" dives will be yet, so watch the Kelp Krawler email group list for more details as they become available. We will also be talking more about it at the September meeting. If you want to know more about what Oysterfest is all about, go to the website: www.oysterfest.com.



As Jerry mentioned at the last meeting, the Hood Canal Aquanuts have been very generous in financially supporting some of our projects. So please take some time out of your schedule to help them out with their touch tanks. It really is fun, and if you enjoy eating oysters, then you won't want to miss Oysterfest!! Also, it has been my experience that the people viewing the exhibits there are very friendly and co-operative.

Where in the world is the Kelp Krawler Banner??

Does anyone know where the Kelp Krawler banner is?? It has been missing in action for quite a while now. If you can remember the last time and place you saw it, please let Jerry Ehrlich know. We have been trying to track it down.



"You may want to make yourself comfortable. I may be down there for awhile."

Sixgill Shark - By Scott Boyd

The bluntnose sixgill shark (*Hexanchus griseus*) is found world-wide, typically at depths of 300 to 8000 feet. Also known as the sixgill cowshark, or mudshark, we are very fortunate to be able to find these magnificent creatures at diveable depths. This seasonal phenomenon (exclusive to the Pacific Northwest) coincides with our summer plankton blooms, which allows the light-sensitive sharks to come into the shallows to benefit from the local salmon and herring runs. It also appears to be part of the shark's mating and birthing patterns. Newborns are often found in shallow waters in the summer and early fall. Many of the adult and sub-adult females are also observed by divers to have bite marks near their gills, indicative of "love-bites" from mating male sharks, which is a behavior common to most species of shark.

Most sixgills encountered by divers are between 8 and 15 feet in length, weighing up to 1000 lbs. with the males being slightly smaller than the females. The largest one ever captured off our coast was just over 16' and weighed about 1300 lbs. The sharks become sexually mature at about 11 feet in length for males and 14 feet for females. The gestation period for this species is unknown, but assumed to be about two years (similar to our dogfish). Sixgills may give birth to as many as 100 live young, which are about 2 feet long, and may live to be well over 100 years old, being a very slow growing fish.

Feeding primarily on hagfishes, dogfish, lingcod, octopus, seals and cabezon, Sixgills have been observed striking from above and pinning large ling cod to the bottom. They will approach divers quite closely, shifting their course only enough to avoid bumping a diver, and while they appear to be very lethargic, when touched, may whip around and snap aggressively (so no petting the Sixgills, Janet). There are several cases of divers being snapped at, including one recorded attack (provoked) upon a SCUBA diver off of Caprera Island, Italy. A few underwater photographers have also reported having their strobes bitten by males immediately after firing. We observed no such behavior with the docile group of females we recently encountered, who ignored my strobe firing and would actually turn and come back to investigate us quite closely (about 18") after I quit following them.



Today's sixgill shark is nearly identical to fossils dating from the Triassic period (200 million years ago). It basically hasn't changed since then, and this prehistoric shark never even developed an iris to protect their light-sensitive eyes. This is probably a big reason why we only see these sharks in the summer. When winter arrives and our water clears up, they must retreat once more into the dark depths below 300' to protect their vision. So now there is a good reason to be happy with the crappy visibility we enjoy in the summer, because of it, you get to swim with Sixgills!!!!

Speaking of swimming with Sixgills, we recently did a dive at Owens Beach (Pt. Defiance Park) in search of this amazing creature. We descended to about 95' and swam slowly into the current looking for sharks. About 15 minutes into the dive, we spotted a baby octopus, and stopped to video tape the poor little guy, which was being harassed by a rockfish. At 20 minutes, we were approaching our No Deco limits, my neck seal was leaking, and we were just about to call the dive when we spotted the sinuous tail of a shark lazily

swimming by. I took off in hot pursuit, following the 11' female down to a depth of 110', taking pictures as I went. Out of breath, and with my computer complaining about partial pressures, I swam back to my buddy, who was video-taping another shark. I turned and the female had followed me back to a group of about 5 female sixgill sharks.

We hung out with this milling group of cat-like sharks for about 5 minutes, and several times had them swim directly at us, turning away at the last second. They seemed quite comfortable and curious around us, and I believe they are somehow attracted to our HID lights or the EMF (electro magnetic field) coming from the cameras and strobes. Most of the sharks we observed had bite marks from mating. They reminded me of cats, as they swim slowly by, rotating their primitive eyes to watch us, with their long tails swishing slowly back and forth. Unfortunately, at this depth, we really had to be heading for the surface for a little decompressing, and sadly left the sharks to themselves as we made our way slowly back to the boat.

Many, many thanks to Amy for mentioning there were Sixgills at Owens Beach, to Mike and Jerry for fixing me up with the right gas at the last minute so I could make this awesome dive, and to Janet for providing surface support so we could make this dive safely!