

KELP KRAWLERS DIVE CLUB

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Piling Removal at Titlow

by Scott Boyd

The task of removing pilings from the **Titlow Beach Marine Sanctuary** was one of three mitigation projects required by Fish and Wildlife to offset environmental impacts to the local marine environment while building the new **Tacoma Narrows Bridge**. The two other major projects were to enhance fish habitat with riprap (stones) placed along **Toliva Shoal**, and to replace the stone bulkhead at Pierce County's **Narrows Park** with tree root balls and stumps known as "soft armoring."

The use of creosote-treated lumber and pilings in marine environments, though historically a common practice, allows leaching of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), phenols, and other potentially toxic compounds into the water and sediments. The **mitigation plan for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge** required the removal of 16 pilings from the Titlow Marine Sanctuary.

On July 28 and 29, 2004, crews working for Tacoma Narrows Constructors (TNC) removed **16 creosote pilings** from the Titlow Beach area in Tacoma. Removing the pilings was a requirement of a Hydraulic Project Approval permit issued to WSDOT by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife as part of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge project.

To excavate the pilings, TNC's crews accessed the shoreline during low tide and used a mini excavator and chainsaw to remove them. Once excavated, the pilings were disposed of at a licensed upland disposal facility in Graham. **Eleven piles were pulled and 5 piles were cut 24 inches below the mud line.**

According to Erin Babbo, TNC Public Affairs Manager, **"this completes all of TNC's obligations** for pile removal, and they will not be doing any further work at Titlow."

Interestingly enough, the presentation made by Molly Palmersheim and Sarah Van Mill at the Washington Scuba Alliance annual meeting on the "chemical analysis of the coal tar creosote in the marine pilings at Titlow" occurred well after the piles had already been removed.



Diving Accidents Plague B.C.

VICTORIA, British Columbia --Inexperience and pre-existing medical problems are factors behind a number of recent scuba-diving deaths and mishaps, says regional coroner Rose Stanton.

"There's no pattern of equipment causing problems," said Stanton. Still, the frequency and number of divers getting into trouble this season off south Vancouver Island is troubling.

On May 18, a 54-year-old Calgary man suffered an apparent heart attack and died while on a dive off Denman Island.

On May 22, a 37-year-old male diver was pulled away by strong currents from his anchored boat off James Bay. He was rescued by a nearby boater.

On June 3, a male and female failed to return to a charter boat while diving near Race Rocks. They were rescued later by coast guard crews, who found them floating several miles apart in five-foot waves. The area is known for its strong currents.

On July 5, a 33-year-old Ontario woman on her honeymoon ran into trouble in 50 feet of water and drowned while diving with her husband in Sansum Narrows.

On July 10, a male diver suffered an apparent heart attack at Snake Island near Nanaimo.

While scuba diving is extremely popular here, those who have problems are often inexperienced and don't dive regularly, said Stanton.

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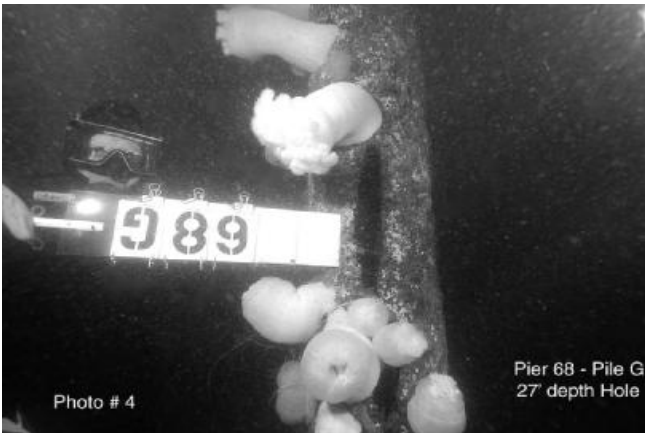
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Dive Reports

by Scott Boyd

My two favorite pastimes are **diving** and **taking pictures** underwater. When I get the opportunity to do both at the same time, and to get paid for it, I jump at the chance! The first weekend in June, Duane Hamrick and I spent a couple of long days diving and inspecting the underwater sections of the NOAA and EPA pier in **Manchester Washington**. Located in Clam Bay, just south of the East Entrance to Rich Passage, the pier is home to a large number of fish pens that are part of the NOAA Northwest Marine Fisheries Research Center. The Pier is 825feet long, and is supported by 378 pilings and 332 races.



Duane and I did four dives over the course of 2 days, spending over 4 hours underwater. Maximum depth at the end of the pier was only about 40'. The pilings are covered with thousands of HUGE anemones (that have been there since the 1940's), and we had to dodge large jellyfish on a regular basis. Some highlights from our dives there were spotting a mosshead warbonnet, sailfin sculpins, and one of the most beautiful **painted anemones** that I have ever seen. This site was loaded with huge painted anemones in their usual green and red variegated coloring, but we came upon one that was a stunning violet and beige color, located in an old tire field off to the South side of the Pier.

This would make a great recreational dive site, except for very tricky currents (that are ripping near slack for Rich Passage, but calmer when Rich Passage is ripping), but the proximity of the Fish Pens requires permission from NOAA and EPA, along with notification of the US Navy to dive the site. What a bummer!

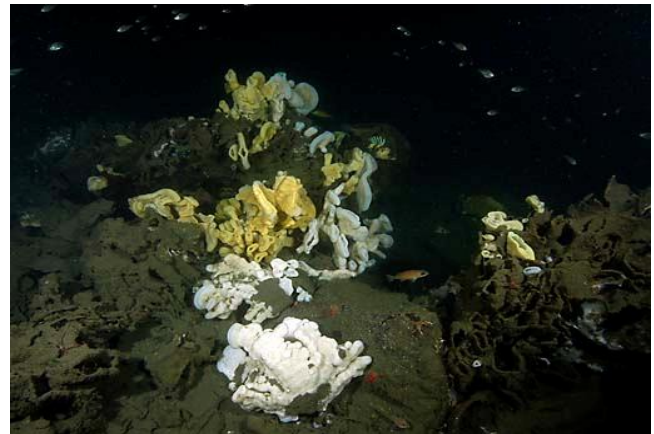
Flagpole Point

Flagpole point (aka "**the Knuckle**") at **Mike's Beach** has long been one of my favorite dives on Hood Canal. I've made several trips out there, taking pictures of the cloud sponges at the base of the knuckle and the huge resident octopus and wolf eels that live there. Little did I know that I was missing the best parts of the dive site.

For the final dive of my **Trimix class** (with **Craig Brown** and **Ron Akeson**, instructors), we swam out to the knuckle, skirted the base and swam a little ways to the Northeast to find the top of a huge vertical wall at 120' depth. The wall descends verti-

cally well past our 200' planned depth, and is loaded with critters and impressive structure. Craig's excellent navigation put us right over the chute that is cut into the wall, and we dropped slowly down, freefalling along the wall. I was amazed to see several of the largest **Giant Nudibranchs** that I have ever seen. They were on their way up to shallow water to mate, and should be spotted very soon at recreational depths. Last month, I noticed the same thing with the **Flabillena Nobilis** nudibranchs, which where clustered at about 165', and are now up in the 70' range to mate.

There were lots of very big Lings and Rockfish hiding amongst the nooks and crannies of the wall, and I spotted something new and delightful every time I shined my light into a hole. I had left my Vytec set with a depth alarm at 150', and discovered that as it was beeping to complain about the depth, this also turned on the backlight automatically, which meant that I could now see my gauge without using my light. Very cool! As we reached 200', we stopped, hovering motionless for a few moments. I was amazed at **how easy my breathing was** and how crystal clear my head was from the helium I was breathing. I felt like I was up swimming around at 80' (which was about what our Equivalent Narcotic Depth was), but my depth gauge said 201feet. You've gotta like that!



Much too soon, it was once again time to begin our slow ascent to the surface. On the way up the wall, I spotted several large wolf eels amongst all of the very fat and pregnant rockfish.

We stopped near the top of the wall for our **first deco stop**, and I looked directly below us to see a **huge octopus** spilling out of his den. He had a massive pile of crab shells on his front step that was about eight inches high and maybe 3 feet wide. He was obviously well fed and has been there for quite a while. It was interesting for me to look up and see the base of the knuckle a ways above us, and to realize that **my definition of "deep"** had certainly changed forever. I once considered the cloud sponges on the knuckle as a very deep dive.

I also used to think Mike and Jerry were a little nuts for doing this type of diving; but after seeing what I've been missing for all of these years, I have to say, although this type of diving is definitely not for everyone, the rewards do seem to justify all of the equipment and trouble. I'm looking forward to getting back down there with my camera!

July Meeting Notes

Jamie opened the meeting with great news. The mooring buoys have been installed at Sund Rock. We need to get any cost associated with this project to the WSA for reimbursement. Wayne was missing, but reported about \$425 in the treasury.

Dave Palazzi from the Department of Natural Resources gave a presentation on the Dolphin (pilings) removal from the Maury Island Barges marine reserve (reserve extends to 70' depth). Fish and Wildlife has issued an Hydraulics Project Approval (HPA) permit for this project, but the King County Shoreline permit is currently tied up in court. Conditions that were placed on the permit prior to its initial approval were:

- #17 Gravel Barge Operations are restricted to 7 AM - 7PM, Monday - Friday.
- #19 Operator must inform the public about recreational opportunities at the site.
- #52 No Anchoring is allowed within 20' of the sunk barges.

The local residents of Maury Island are not thrilled about a ten-fold increase in traffic and gravel mining activity associated with this, and have formed a group to block the building of the new gravel pier.

Rick Cooper talked about the upcoming diver's fair and **Jack Renfro** stopped by to promote a new dive operator in Malaysia (<http://www.scuba-azusa.com>).

Meeting Attendees: **Becky Lundin, Howard Gearns, Jamie Welsh, Karen Beyer, Carla Thurmond, Diane and Rick Cooper, Bonnie Knights, Oleta Artman, Carolyn and Steve Fornoff, Carolyn Thomas, Mark Reece, Duane Hamrick, Richard Penny, Rodger Gomez, Jerry Ehrlich, John Cipriano, Andy Mohrle, and Scott Boyd.**

August Dive Club Meeting

Janna Nichols and Wes Nicholson will present their Reef fish Identification seminar. Janna, from Pacific Northwest Scuba (<http://www.pnwscuba.com>) is *the* person to contact to identify those hard to id fish. 7:00 PM at Dirty Dave's Pizza.

Upcoming Club dives:

August 6th at Jorsted Creek (meet at Hoodsport N Dive at 11 AM). Contact Rodger Gomez.

August 20th, Bandito Charters, meet at Johnny's dock at 8 AM, \$65, 14 spots. Contact Steve Fornoff.

September 10-11th, Salt Creek Campground, camping on site or overnight in nearby hotels. Contact Rodger Gomez.



Port Washington Narrows

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). **Akumal, Mexico** trip November 6th through 17th. Nitrox, argon and hyper filtered air fills available.

Bandito Charters on **Saturday, 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.

Port Hardy Trip with Sun Fun Divers. - Sept. 22-26. Three days of diving (9/23-25). We'll leave Olympia on Thursday, Sept. 22 and return Monday, Sept. 26. Contact **Don Chase**.

Dive Safe and Play Nice!!!!