



KELP KRAWLERS DIVE CLUB

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Palau and back

by Scott Boyd

Several Kelp Krawlers and local divers joined the Palau Aggressor II for a week of wondrous diving in Palau (Federated States of Micronesia). Getting to this part of the world is a bit of a hassle, with lots of LONG flights, but the clear, warm water and bright colorful fish are amazing. The soft corals were also simply stunning.

The Aggressor fleet runs a first class operation, and the boat, which was actually built in Friday Harbor, was very comfortable. Safety was definitely a prime concern. Every diver was issued a cutting device, safety sausage and every dive pair was issued an underwater EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon), just in case.

All dives were conducted from a large skiff, which is hydraulically lifted up between dives, so divers get the comfort of the live aboard with the fast mobility of the skiff. As is the case with most live aboard dive boats, you set your gear up once, and they fill your tanks in place between dives. You've gotta love the convenience.

We were able to dive the world famous "Blue Corner" on three separate occasions during our week in Palau. We spotted a lone hammerhead, several gray reef sharks as well as several cat-like white-tip sharks. Hooking in with a reef hook and floating weightless in the surging currents is certainly a lot of fun, and worth the price of admission, however the site can get crowded with boats from Koror and in all the dives we did, there were far more divers on the site than sharks.

Other highlights from our week on the Aggressor were the amazing dives in Ulong and German Channels complete with Manta Rays, Turtles, Sharks and lovely lettuce corals. Large Anemones and Giant Clams can frequently be spotted as you drift by in the fast currents. The Anemone fish are quite colorful and photograph beautifully, and the anemones that host them are very impressive.

Some of my other favorites were Sias Tunnel, where the sun finally came out and we had the gorgeous deep blue water that Palau is famous for. Also the Coral Gardens, where I was able

to spot both an Oscillated Lion Fish and my first Cuttlefish. Simply Amazing Critters!



The crew was stellar, and the boat performed flawlessly. We had nice 60 minute dives at almost all of the sites we visited (except for the one pair of divers using air rather than Nitrox who often had to cut thier dives short due to No Decompression Limits). Ike, the second captain was amazing to dive with, coasting along slowly, pointing out many of the underwater wonders of the Palauan reefs. He kept us well informed about boat movements, weather and schedules and in truth I thought he was one of the best captains I had ever worked with.



Local Divers on this trip were: **Scott and Janet Boyd, Amy Kurtenbach and John Brown, Duane and Debbie Hamrick, Ed Fletcher, Jenny Salisbury, and Tim Villim** (the vet).

In some ways, Palau was a bit of a disappointment after our last Aggressor live aboard. We became a bit spoiled by all of the big action and electric diving at Darwin's Arch (Galapagos Aggressor II). We expected similar electric action at the famous Blue Corner off of the Palau Aggressor II, but in fact, the

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diving is much tamer in Palau.

For more information on this trip to Palau, come to the August 15th dive club meeting. Scott Boyd will be presenting a 30 minute Video/Slide show with photos from this trip to Palau and the following week in Truk Lagoon diving the WWII Japanese Shipwrecks.



Dive Reports

Bandito Charter Boat Dive

Sunday, July 2, 2006 *by Steve Griffith*

Steve and Carolyn Fornoff, Steve Griffith and Ken Domingo from the Kelp Krawlers, plus Tom Kaufman and Marty Cerbok made a 2-dive excursion with Bandito Charters yesterday. Other than having to get up early (at least, early for a Sunday) and driving to Public Dock 9 just off Johnny's Seafood Store in Tacoma to meet the boat, it was an outstanding day.

A total of 8 divers had signed on for the dive, but 2 didn't make it for whatever reason. That meant that the six of us that did had the luxury of a little extra room to move around the deck when we were gearing up. That combined with the absolutely perfect weather made for a super dive day.

Our first dive was at Day Island Wall. We were the only boat there when we splashed, so we didn't run into any other divers except those from our group. We dove as 3 teams of 2, and just drifted along with the current and observed the varied sea life supported by the wall. The highlight sighting was two pairs and one single wolf eel. One pair actually vacated their den to come out and play. Carolyn said that one even acted like it wanted to come home with her! Ling cod, kelp greenling, cabezon, and the usual variety of sea stars, sea cucumbers, and plumose anemone were also spotted.

During the trip to our next dive site, we were treated to a view of the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge from the underside, along with the cargo ship that had the bridge sections as it was being

held in place against the current by a tug boat.

The second dive was at mile marker 8. The current here was a little stronger, which meant that our drift was longer, and we got to cover more ground for the air we were sucking down. We saw pretty much the same critters as before, but not as many of each as we had on the wall.

This was a great day for all. We will be scheduling some more boat dives in the future, and hope to see more Kelp Krawlers there. For the money, it's a great deal!

C Ya in the Water!

Sund Rock MCA

Tuesday, July 11, 2006

Rick Cooper and I did a two tank dive at the Sund Rock MCA last Tuesday. The results were very good, with lots of critters spotted, and some new lessons learned.

We met at the Top Food Grocery parking lot, transferred gear to one truck, and headed out. In the water before noon, we did the North Wall first, and started seeing critters right away. I was using my digital camera for the first time, and took lots of pictures of just about everything in the Canal. As could be expected, there's still a lot to be learned, but I managed to get some good shots, especially of those things that cooperated by staying still. I got shots of anemone, plus ling cod, rock fish, flounder, and a real nice size sea lemon. I also got a nice shot of a tall seaweed stalk backlit by the sun. Lesson learned (or re-learned) on this dive concerned manipulating the external strobe to put the light in the right place. I also got reminded about how to approach critters without stirring up the silt. While I was doing that, Rick was busy, too. He spotted a dead octo, with an anemone consuming the left over eggs, plus some wolf eels in addition to the usual array of other North Wall residents.



The second dive was on the South Wall. Rick had his scooter, and used it on this dive. I hitched a ride from the entry point to the beginning of the wall, and then started taking more pictures.

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Unfortunately, I got a "battery low" light, so had to content myself with just seeing the critters that were hanging out down south. They included more ling, rock, and perch, plus the usual plethora of anemones.

Both dives were great! Also great was being the only divers on the beach. Sure beats going down there on Saturday or Sunday and diving with the masses; but, of course, that beats staying home and mowing grass. So it's all relative!

Hope to see more of you out diving soon. The visibility in the canal is getting better, so grab the gear and get going!

C ya in the Water!

Fox Island East Wall

by Scott Boyd

The East wall of Fox Island is one of the best wall dives in Puget Sound. There's a bit of a walk from the parking lot down to the beach, which seems to keep a lot of divers away from this site, but it's nowhere near as bad as Sunrise, and I think the wall here is much more spectacular. This site is also known as Toy Point, and receives little to no diving pressure.



Location: We most often dive this site by boat, but it is also easily accessible from shore, with very nice shore facilities at the park. Directions can be found in "[Northwest Shore Dives](#)". If

you are coming by boat, the large concrete "T" dock is easy to spot on the east side of Fox Island.

GPS coordinates are: 47° 13.67' N 122° 35.41' W

From shore, enter the water from the beach at the South border of the park. Swim out to the kelp that you will find at 12 -15' depth. Swim through the kelp, and the bottom will just disappear below you! This wall is 40 or more feet tall in several places, and is undercut from the wild currents of the Tacoma Narrows. It is loaded with Octopus, Wolfies, Nudibranchs, Sculpins and all sorts of interesting critters.

Currents: The current at this site calms down about one hour prior to slack at the North end of the narrows, so plan your dive on a day with a low tidal exchange and have a great dive. I personally think this site is far better than the wall at Day Island and is very similar to Sunrise in many ways, but much larger and without the traffic.

Betty Pratt-Johnson wrote, "The east wall of Fox Island is the most beautifully wild seascape I've seen in Puget Sound. Canyons and crevices, overhangs and caves within a few feet of shore make marvelous homes for all kinds of life." I have to agree. I avoided this site for years because I heard it was a, "bit of a hike." It really is stunning and beautiful, so dive it if you have the chance. You won't regret the dive! ;-)

Skill Level: Intermediate to Advanced because of the possibility for high currents.

The nearest boat ramps are at Wollochet or the Day Island Marina, both are about 2 miles from the dive site.

June and July Meeting Notes

Steve and Carolyn Fornoff had an extremely successful dive at Sund Rock followed by an amazing BBQ at their lovely home. They invited members from the three dive clubs that they participate in--the Kelp Krawlers, South Sound Divers and the Depth Chargers from Federal Way.

They managed to entice 47 divers to Sund Rock on a sunny Sat-

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DIVE SHOP NEWS:

Capital Divers

866-3684

www.capitaldivers.com

Palau trip on the Palau Aggressor June 25-July 2 2006. Akumal Cave diving trip November 4 - 15. Nitrox, argon and hyper filtered air fills available.

Bandito Charters on Aug 17, Sep 17, Oct 14, Nov 12 and Dec 9.

Hood Sport 'n Dive

(360) 877-6818

www.hoodsportndive.com

The shop has now moved to a new location with convenient boat access in Hoodspport. Stop by, say hello and fill up with some nitrox while you wait. They are still offering discounted access to the **Sund Rock Marine Preserve** for paid members.

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.

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urday morning for a couple of awesome dives with the great visibility that we've been enjoying in the Canal. After the dives, we all tramped over to the Fornoff's to enjoy a marvelous BBQ with Oysters, Burgers and Hot Dogs along with lots of Pot Luck goodies. It was great fun to get to know the members of the other clubs.

Thanks for the great time Steve and Carolyn!

Several new members have joined the dive club recently, including Jerry Whately, Michael Fitz, Deb Cowan and Paul Jeffers. Be sure to say hello to them at our next meeting or club dive.

Mike Racine, President of the Washington Scuba Alliance gave a presentation at our June dive club meeting. Highlights from that presentation were:

There are 108,000 divers in Washington, half dive locally. The top 5 diving states are:
 Florida, Hawaii
 California
 Washington
 Texas

The WSA considers itself the "Voice of the Dive Communities". They promote dive tourism, ensure dive access and promote Marine Life Conservation. See their web site at <http://www.wascubaalliance.org> for more information.

Members Present: Michael Fitz, Deb Cowan, Carla Thurman, Steve Griffith, Becky Lundin, Rodger Gomez, Steve Sutton, Amy Kurtenbach, John Brown, Jenica Noveillo, Don Noviello, Duane and Debbie Hamrick, Mike Scholl, Ken Knutson, Starr Knutson, Mark Reece and Carolyn Thomas, Jerry Ehrlich, Alan and Ingrid Niles, Steve and Carolyn Fornoff, Richard Penny, Jordan Thomas, T.J. Thomas, Jonathan Thomas, Paul Jeffers, Jerry Whatley, Karis Yandehel, Rick Cooper and Scott and Janet Boyd.

August Dive Club Meeting

The August 15th Speaker will be our own **Scott Boyd**, showing a 30 minute Video Slideshow on last month's trip to Palau and Truk Lagoon. The August meeting is also time for our quarterly **Underwater Photography special interest group** to meet, so bring your questions in.

One of the successful experiments that Scott tried on this trip was the use of a "Magic Filter" and white balance adjustments to take

some natural light photographs in Palau. Even though there wasn't much sun, the results were impressive.

We may see the new Kelp Krawler Logos as well. The logo contest was extended until the August Meeting to allow for additional entries.



Upcoming Events:

Sixgill Shark Dive – Sunday, August 6th, at Owens Beach, Point Defiance Park, 5:30 PM. Contact Scott Boyd for details.

Neah Bay with Porthole Charters - Friday September 22 through Sunday September 24. Contact Underwater Sports.

Cave Diving in beautiful Akumal, Mexico. November 4 - 15th. Contact Wayne at Capital Divers for more information

Sulawesi trip, January 10-23, 2007, contact Bonnie Smith

Dominica Dive Trip - February 3 - 10, contact Steve or Carolyn Fornoff.

Underwater Photo Contest

Photographers, be sure to submit your best images from the Pacific Northwest to the **Kelp Krawlers Photo contest**. Selected images will be published in **Northwest Dive News** magazine and **Cash Prizes** are being awarded.

Get the details at <http://www.kelpkrawlers.org/Contest/>

Calendar of Events

- Aug 3-4** **Boat Dive,** Wreck of the Diamond Knot. Full.
- Aug 6th** **Club Dive,** 5:30 PM, Owens Beach. In search of the Sixgill Shark. Contact Scott Boyd.
- Aug 15th** **Club Meeting,** 7:00 PM, Dirty Dave's Pizza Parlor
- Sept 19th** **Club Meeting,** 7:00 PM, Dirty Dave's Pizza Parlor
- Sept 22-24** **Boat Dive, Neah Bay with Porthole Charters.** Contact Underwater Sports.
- Oct 17th** **Club Meeting,** 7:00 PM, Dirty Dave's Pizza Parlor. Underwater Photo Contest