



“DIVE LOG”

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED DIVERS
OF CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

August 2010

Volume IX Issue 8

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Lobster Tales from the Cape

By Ken Mostello

Photos by Bob Abraham

This story is going to read like one of those classic fish tales you hear all the time, but here it is anyway.

Five of us made the lobster hunt trip down to Cape Cod on Sunday, July 18th. Rick Boucher organized the trip and Bob Abraham, Larry Dufour, and Mike Michaelson also joined in. Frankly, we were all a bit skeptical about the lobster hunt stories we heard at prior club meetings, but we went anyway. It turned out that lobster diving on the Cape was every bit as good as we were led to believe and probably better.

Having wisely spent the night before at a motel in Bourne, we met our charter boat at the marina in Harwich Port at 8 AM for the 1 ½ hour ride to the diving destination. On the way there, we had three or four encounters with breaching humpback whales—not a bad way to start the day I thought. Arriving at our site, we were all eager to jump in and try Cape lobstering. Most of you know by now that the lobstering regulations on the Cape differ from the North Shore and are also enforced differently. The minimum carapace size on the Cape is 3 3/8” —1/8” higher than the North Shore. There is no maximum size, and you can take V-notch lobsters as long as most of the notch is covered by setal hairs.



Humpback Whales

We had an interesting dive briefing. We all were asked to dive in buddy teams with a flag for each team. Our dive master told us there were multiple reasons for this procedure. We would be drift diving in an area known for boat traffic and rolling fog, and, we were told, that there was a slight chance of an encounter with white sharks. I suppose he figured our odds of surviving an encounter with Jaws were probably better if we stayed together. Having covered safety procedures, the briefing turned to advice on how to lobster here. Since we didn’t have 3 3/8” gauges, we were told not to bother taking anything close to the North Shore minimum size or to take any softies, since we could only take a maximum of 15 lobsters

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Congratulations 50/50 winner!!
 Mike Michaelson

President's Message

On behalf of the board I want express our appreciation for everyone's patience regarding the issues with the newsletter this year. We have this behind us now and it is time to move forward. There will be a couple night dives scheduled for August, so keep an eye for those. We have lots going on! We have the Brownstone Quarry and Lobster Fest coming up. Lobster Fest has always been an excellent time and I am sure this year will be no less. The Brownstone Quarry is something new that I expect will be lots of fun, diving or not. As for the lobster ban covered in last month's newsletter, it has been tabled for now. I still believe this is a great opportunity for divers and lobstermen to join together. It is awesome that there are so many people diving this year! As has been the case this summer someone is diving almost every Friday, Saturday and/or Sunday, contact Kevin Brook to see where and when the diving is. See you all at the next meeting.

Safe Diving,
Mark

Guest Speaker

Club member Jeff Goodreau will be doing a video presentation followed with a brief Q & A. His presentation will feature a dive on a wreck in Bonaire where something didn't go as planned. We will see how brief Jeff can be with the Q & A!



I can only think of one experience which might exceed in interest a few hours spent under water, and that would be a journey to Mars.
William Beebe.

United Divers of Central Mass Presents: "An Evening with Richie Kohler"



October 8, 2010 beginning at 6:00PM

Devens Common Center,

Andrews Parkway, Devens MA

Tickets: \$35.00

Dinner, Music & Presentation

Tales From the Cape *cont. from page 1*

home with us per diver. In other words, we were to save our allotment for the big hard ones!

With the looming threat of white sharks, I decided to abstain from my normally questionable solo diving habits, and team up. Since Rick Boucher chose to dive wet like me, I asked him to buddy up, and he graciously offered to carry the flag. Down we went. Reaching the bottom at 70 feet, one misconception I held was settled immediately. The bottom temperature on the Cape is no different from what you would normally encounter on the North Shore—a not so balmy 46 degrees. I made a mental note to bring the dry suit next time.

The terrain was totally different from any lobster hunting terrain you would encounter on the North Shore. The bottom is mostly sand interrupted occasionally by large boulders. With limited visibility and rampant lobster fever, Rick and I managed to stay together for exactly 2 minutes. Virtually every boulder I looked under had a sizeable lobster hiding in a shallow crevice. It was easy pickings by North Shore standards. Find a boulder, pick up a lobster. I managed to bag nine on my first dive and literally had to push the last two down into my bag to make room. At least five were in the three to five pound range.

I managed to catch one monster bug. The carapace was two to three inches over the normal 5 1/2" maximum. Now I had a dilemma I had never encountered before. What do I do with a lobster of such dimensions that I had every legal right to take? I decided I just had to let it go. I couldn't imagine how I would cook the thing, and I had nowhere near enough room left in the bag if I wanted to keep it. Frankly, my conscience was also getting the better of me. This creature was worth far more left to thrive and breed in its natural environment than any bragging rights and photo ops I would get.



The Day's Catch

Loaded down with bugs, I surfaced down current from the boat. Anxious to get picked up, I deployed my surface marker buoy and waited alone, keeping an ever wary eye out for any unwelcome company. I'm pleased to report that the day was totally free of any unpleasant encounters.

I did better than most on the first dive from a size standpoint, but nearly everyone bagged eight to ten lobsters. Out of necessity, we decided to limit our catch on the second dive to five or six premium size lobsters only! Needless to say, we all finished the day at the maximum. Afterward, I had to run out to a convenience store and buy one of those cheap Styrofoam coolers for the ride home, because I could only fit half my catch in the cooler I had brought with me.



Oversized Cape Lobsters

When we started the trip, Bill, the boat captain, swore we were about to have the best lobster diving in the world. I can now say that was no exaggeration, and Bob Abraham's photos attest to that fact. I didn't get home until 7:30, but we had quite the feast later that night. I had to use a hammer on each bug to break open the claws. My daughter Elise and I were stuffed after eating just one tail

and one claw each. The next morning, still full from Sunday night's feast, I happened to mention to my wife Michelle that maybe owning a vacation place on the Cape wasn't such a bad idea. We'll see. So, that's my fish story.

A New Technology to Enhance Diver Safety

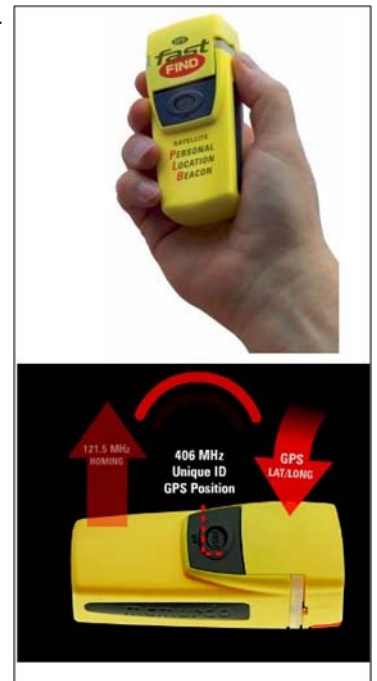
By Ken Mostello

When I learned to dive in 1976, the dive computer had not yet been invented. No one thought to do safety stops. The old horse collar style BCD's were just becoming available and many divers at the time saw no reason to include a submersible pressure gauge (SPG) or depth gauge in their equipment configuration. Training was done military style and it was fairly rigorous. It needed to be, given the equipment we used. For example, we spent countless amounts of pool time practicing buddy breathing. We had to. No one dived with alternate second stages, and even if we had wanted one, our regulators usually did not have enough low pressure ports to accommodate it. Most of us today would be horrified at the thought of diving the way we did back then, and they would be right to feel that way. The fact is that diving today is a much safer sport. There are more divers in the water, and there are far fewer accidents. Technology and improved industry practices have helped in making significant progress in diver safety. I now believe that we have a new technology available to us that promises to advance diving safety once again.

One of my greatest fears as a diver is being lost at sea. It happens too often, and we've all seen the Hollywood movies and documentaries that profile various cases. The fact is there are circumstances where you can do everything right and still find yourself lost or separated from your boat. I recall several years ago diving on the North Shore with Cape Ann Divers. During my dive fog rolled in and I surfaced in near zero visibility. Fortunately, I located a large channel marker buoy and stayed with it until the fog cleared enough to find the boat. At least in that circumstance, I had the confidence to know that, worst case, I was close enough to swim to shore. Several years later, I was diving off Cocos Island with two friends on a seamount when we spotted a whale shark and, ignoring our better judgment, we took off into the blue water to photograph it. When we surfaced we had drifted about a mile down current from our boat. The boat was barely visible to us which meant we were definitely invisible to it. I deployed my DAN safety sausage, we stayed together, and the boat picked us up nearly an hour later. Unlike the North Shore experience, there was no land here to swim to. We were 300 miles from the Central American coast out in the Pacific riding a westward drifting current.

Getting lost at sea is a serious matter. The fact is that drifting divers are difficult to spot from boats under ideal circumstances and nearly impossible to find in fog or rough seas. Locating a missing boat from an aircraft is hard enough. Trying to locate a diver from the air is a near impossibility. The risks are compounded if you dive far offshore or if you are a technical diver. Technical divers typically incur long deco obligations. If they get separated from the ascent line, they may have no alternative but to complete their decompression while drifting. The biggest risk to life if you're lost is hypothermia. The risk is serious whether you dive in warm tropical waters or the North Atlantic. A dry suit will keep you warmer longer than a wet suit, but your skin will eventually shrivel from the prolonged immersion in sea water and the suit's seals will then begin to leak.

For years, I have made it a practice to dive offshore with a Dive Alert air horn (marginally useful in fog) and a DAN safety kit consisting of a large safety sausage, a signaling mirror, and a cyalume glow stick. When my kids travel and dive with me, they carry exactly the same safety equipment. This equipment certainly helps but now we have a better option. On July 2nd, I had the pleasure of doing some night diving with Jeff Goodreau and Al Boyarsky aboard the Daybreaker (Fran Marcoux's boat). During our surface interval between dives, Jeff introduced me to a new piece of equipment he and Al had bought which I believe will someday become an essential dive safety device—the personal locator beacon, or PLB. What exactly is a PLB? A PLB works by receiving a GPS signal and then sending out a distress signal via satellite and a locating or homing signal when rescuers are close to you. It is designed to work anywhere in the world—on land or sea.



Cont. on page 5

A New Technology to Enhance Diver Safety *cont. from page 4*

If you own a boat, you are probably familiar with EPIRB's (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon). EPIRB's have been around for a long time, but in recent years they have evolved to utilize satellite and GPS technology. EPIRB's and PLB's are very similar. The primary differences are that EPIRB's are designed to be deployed from a boat in distress. They are larger, designed to float, and have longer battery life. PLB's are designed to be compact, lightweight, and portable.

With a dive trip to the Maldives planned for September, I decided to buy a PLB. I had a dream one night where I imagined myself lost at sea regretting that I hadn't spent a few dollars to avoid disaster. So, I went on the web and bought a McMurdo Fast Find 210. The unit cost me all of about \$250. Registering the unit is free. It weighs all of five ounces and is a mere four inches long. PLB's have not really caught on yet in the scuba diving market. For example, the Fast Find 210 is not buoyant and it's waterproof to ten meters only for a limited time. While the unit may be designed for marine applications, it's not really designed for scuba diving. The buoyancy issue is easily overcome by attaching a lanyard to the unit. If the PLB is ever used, the lanyard can be tied to a D-ring on a BCD to assure that it doesn't sink. There are several options to deal with the waterproofing problem. McMurdo sells a machined aluminum watertight canister for the Fast Find 210 for about \$300. Paying more for the housing than the PLB seemed excessive to me. Al Boyarsky fashioned a small housing out of PVC pipe, an O-ring and parts for a canister light. The Otter Box 8000 can hold the unit and is watertight to 100 feet. Alternatively, an old full size dive light with the batteries removed may hold the PLB.

I believe that the time to embrace this technology has come. I will continue to dive with my air horn and DAN safety kit, but I know that if that fails me, my personal locator beacon can guide a rescue team to within 90 feet of my location anywhere in the world.



Have you done a cool dive? Something new? Please share it in the newsletter!

Great American Fish Count

By Kevin Brook

I would like to thank all those that were able to make it to the GAFC this year. (Rick Boucher, Pete Conlon, Kris Dufour, Jose Bloise, Marcelle Champagne, Al Boyarsky, Mike Michaelson, Karen Ferrante and Jim Bogart).

Once again our group chose Lanes Cove. The tide wasn't exactly ideal but our group made it in and out without any problems. The weather was great except for the fog. The water was calm, and the visibility was not bad. Most members got in 2 dives and made it back in time for lunch. We also made out pretty good with the raffle. Some may rate it not as bountiful as past years, no Bonaire trip this time. Our group did not leave empty handed, Mike won a Sherwood regulator, Al won a pair of binoculars, Marcelle won a dive bag, Jose won a hat and I left with some unique hand made jewelry. All in all I think everyone had a good time!



Kevin

August/September 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
15	16	17	18	19 General Meeting	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2 Board Meeting	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16 General Meeting	17	18

Birthdays!!!



August 24 - Tom Bratko

August 24 - PJ Conlon

August 29– Marcelle Champagne

September 3 - Amy Michaelson

September 7 - Diane Avoli

September 8 - David Lawrence

DAY	DATE	HIGH				LOW				Sun		
		AM	hgt	PM	hgt	AM	hgt	PM	hgt	rise	set	moon
August												
Sunday	15	3:43	9.6	4:08	10.1	9:49	-0.4	10:29	-0.4	5:48	7:44	
Monday	16	4:43	9	5:06	9.8	10:45	0.2	11:32	0	5:50	7:42	
Tuesday	17	5:46	8.4	6:08	9.4	11:45	0.8			5:51	7:41	
Wednesday	18	6:52	8.1	7:11	9.1	12:38	0.4	12:49	1.1	5:52	7:39	
Thursday	19	7:58	7.9	8:14	9	1:44	0.6	1:53	1.3	5:53	7:38	
Friday	20	8:59	7.9	9:13	9	2:45	0.6	2:53	1.3	5:54	7:36	
Saturday	21	9:53	8	10:04	9.1	3:41	0.5	3:47	1.2	5:55	7:35	
Sunday	22	10:40	8.1	10:50	9.2	4:29	0.5	4:35	1.1	5:56	7:33	
Monday	23	11:21	8.3	11:30	9.2	5:11	0.4	5:17	0.9	5:57	7:31	
Tuesday	24	11:58	8.5			5:48	0.3	5:55	0.8	5:58	7:30	
Wednesday	25	12:07	9.2	12:31	8.6	6:22	0.4	6:31	0.7	5:59	7:28	
Thursday	26	12:42	9.1	1:03	8.7	6:54	0.5	7:06	0.7	6:00	7:26	
Friday	27	1:17	8.9	1:35	8.8	7:24	0.6	7:41	0.7	6:01	7:25	
Saturday	28	1:51	8.7	2:08	8.8	7:56	0.7	8:18	0.7	6:02	7:23	
Sunday	29	2:28	8.4	2:43	8.8	8:30	0.9	8:57	0.8	6:03	7:21	
Monday	30	3:07	8.2	3:22	8.8	9:08	1.1	9:40	0.9	6:05	7:20	
Tuesday	31	3:50	7.9	4:06	8.8	9:50	1.3	10:28	1	6:06	7:18	
September												
Wednesday	1	4:40	7.7	4:56	8.8	10:38	1.4	11:23	1	6:07	7:16	
Thursday	2	5:35	7.6	5:53	8.8	11:33	1.5			6:08	7:15	
Friday	3	6:37	7.6	6:55	9	12:24	0.9	12:34	1.4	6:09	7:13	
Saturday	4	7:42	7.8	7:59	9.4	1:28	0.7	1:39	1.1	6:10	7:11	
Sunday	5	8:44	8.3	9:02	9.8	2:30	0.2	2:43	0.6	6:11	7:09	
Monday	6	9:42	8.9	10:00	10.3	3:28	-0.3	3:43	0	6:12	7:08	
Tuesday	7	10:35	9.6	10:56	10.6	4:22	-0.8	4:39	-0.7	6:13	7:06	
Wednesday	8	11:26	10.2	11:49	10.8	5:13	-1.2	5:33	-1.2	6:14	7:04	
Thursday	9	#####	10.6			6:02	-1.4	6:26	-1.4	6:15	7:03	
Friday	10	12:41	10.7	1:05	10.8	6:51	-1.3	7:19	-1.5	6:16	7:01	
Saturday	11	1:34	10.4	1:54	10.7	7:40	-1	8:13	-1.3	6:17	6:59	

“Up-coming Activities”

Brownstone Quarry


Lobster Fest

Clambake

Shore dives, including night dives, to be announced at the next the meeting!

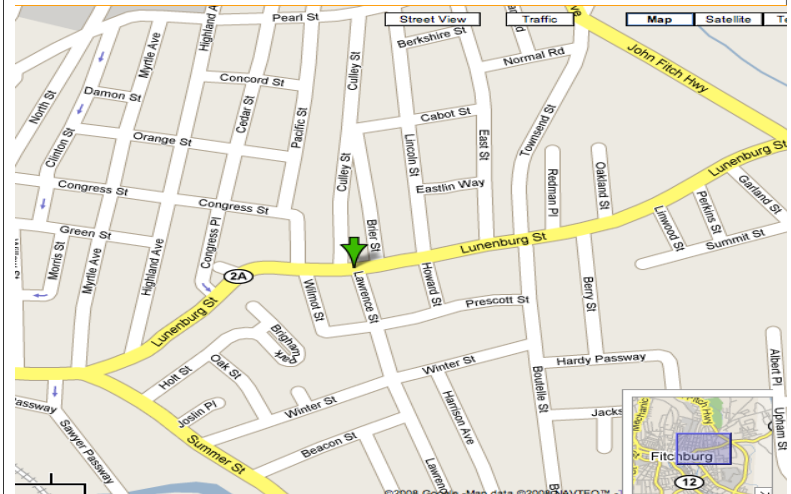
Meeting Time and Location

The United Divers meet once a month on the third Thursday of the month at Slattery’s located at 106 Lunenburg Street, Fitchburg, MA. There is ample parking provided in the rear of the building. The meeting will be taking place in the event room near the back right of the restaurant. The meeting will begin at 7:00p.m. with a social hour beginning at 6:30p.m. If you should have any questions please feel free to



ANDY'S
SPORT SHOP, INC.
SKI & SCUBA SPECIALISTS

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Dive Log

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please contact Mark at:
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The Purpose of the United Divers of Central Massachusetts

The purpose of the United Divers of Central Massachusetts is to promote the sportsmanship and sport of SCUBA diving by stimulating our members to achieve the highest standards of safety and proficiency in SCUBA diving. To promote friendship and wholesome social activity among its membership. To promote educational programs that will provide fundamental knowledge supported by actual hands-on experience in a variety of areas including: safe diving practices, conservation of marine ecosystems, first aid and handling diving related emergencies, to organize group SCUBA diving trips, educational and social events that will allow our membership to accomplish all of the above.



United Divers of Central Massachusetts
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