

NZ Dolphin Underwater & Adventure Club

Newsletter February 2023

Club Meeting 7:00pm Wednesday 8th February 2023
DVD: Predators of the Deep: The Ocean's Silent Killers

www.dolphinunderwater.co.nz



Club's Mail Address
14 Gails Pla ce
Okura
RD3 Albany



**Club Contacts Inside
Website As Above**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: 2022/2023

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	Tom Butler	0278 931 936	trbutler@xtra.co.nz
Web Site	Matt Gouge	0210 777 282	mattgouge@gmail.com
Entertainment	Allan Dixon	021 994 593	allanandjilldixon@xtra.co.nz

Life & Honorary Members

Barry Barnes – Life	Peter & Margaret Howard – Life	Brian Horton – Life
Reg Lawson - Life	Roberto Tonei – Life	Dave Quinlan – Life
Graham Thumah – Honorary	Tony & Jenny Enderby - Honorary	Eileen Slark – Honorary

Cover Page Photo:– Grandchildren practising in the resort pool for the future by Denis

8th February – Wednesday- 7:00pm DVD/Socialising & Club Meeting,

20-26th March 2023 - Dive Fiordland Trip – a number of Club Members on this trip – contact Liz@divezonetauranga.co.nz or phone **07 578 4050 - 021 398 744** – **Two places are still available.**

Norfolk Island Dive Trip – Holiday – April 2023 –If you might be keen, **please let Margaret know.**

27th May – 3rd June 2023 – Diving Fiji - Thomas will be hosting this trip – for further details of both the Fiji Trips please contact Jeni Tassell – Kiwi Divers – Silverdale 021 881 469 or 09 426 9834

17th July – 30th July 2023 – P&O Cruise – 13 days – Leaving from Auckland and back to Auckland visiting Fiji, Dravanui Island, Norfolk Island and four or five other islands through to Vava'u, Tonga. If anyone is interested in joining others on these cruise trips, **please contact Margaret, 0274 839839.** There is also another P&O Cruise that Club Members are on in November. This time 9 days around NZ leaving Ak and back to Ak. If you don't like travelling on your own. Give me a call and I can give you further details.

12th Aug – 19th Aug 2023 – Diving Fiji - Volivoli Beach Resort | Dive into the heart of Fiji - Jeni and Brent Hassell are hosting this trip. **please contact Margaret, 0274 839839**

Dive trips, NZ & Overseas – Check out the dive shop's web sites, there is plenty available, but you do need to contact the shops in person to confirm costs & booking availabilities.

Performance Dive NZ - Ph. 489 7782. or <https://www.performancediver.co.nz/Dive+Trips++Events>

Trips to Islands off Tauranga, Poor Knights Is, Alderman Is, Taupo Lake.

Global Dive - Ph. 920 5200. or <https://www.globaldive.net/page/trips> . Trips to the Poor Knights Is, Bay of Islands, Leigh Coast, Goat Is Marine Reserve, & O/seas – Fiji, Palau, Maldives, Mt. Gambier (Aus), etc.

Aucklandscubadive – Ph. 478 2814 or <https://www.aucklandscubadive.co.nz/dive-trips>

Trips to the Poor Knights Is, Tiritiri Matangi Is, HMNZS Canterbury Wreck, Great Barrier Is, HMNZS Waikato, Lake Taupo Drift Dive, Alderman Is, Hen & Chicken Is.

Other events & suggestions please contact a committee member or organise it yourself & get the club to make up your numbers. i.e. – Dives, trips NZ & O’Seas, Events, Outings, Tramps, Dinners, Movies, etc.

Our Club’s Trip Rules (Organiser’s rules apply for overseas trips)

- A. Bookings allowed on all trips. *Two trips & club membership is a must.*
- B. **A deposit or full payment to be made at time of booking.**
- C. Full payment MUST be paid at least two weeks before departure date.
- D. Trip Organiser to handle trip & bookings, & Treasurer to handle finances. Cancellations due to weather will be refunded in full, or transferred to another trip.
- E. Members cancelling for any reason will lose full monies unless they find a replacement for their position on the trip.
- F. The trips Organiser will determine if there are enough people to run a trip & if not will notify cancellation two weeks prior to departure. **Non - financial members will be charged an extra \$10 on trips.**

NB: All Memberships Now Due: Single – \$40 Family - \$50.00

For the club to continue we need paid up members see Margaret or Trish next meeting or do it online.

Club’s Internet bank account is 06 0122 0074227 00 & don’t forget to put in your name

Club Membership also includes Affiliation to the New Zealand Underwater Association

Inside the life of a deep sea saturation diver, one of the most dangerous and isolated jobs in the world

Britney Nguyen November 27, 2022·7 min read

A screenshot from the official UK trailer for "Last Breath" showing photos of Chris Lemons. Dogwoof/YouTube

- Chris Lemons was a saturation diver for 10 years working on oil fields on the North Sea floor.
- Now, Lemons is a supervisor, who gives instructions to divers and is responsible for keeping them alive.
- In 2012, Lemons almost died on the sea floor in an accident, and was rescued over 30 minutes later.

When he's not playing golf or spending time with his wife and two daughters, Chris Lemons is living in a small pressurized chamber at the bottom of a boat, hundreds of meters below the surface of the sea.

He spends 28 days at a time here, working on an oil field on the floor of the North Sea. Lemons is a supervisor now, but formerly worked as a saturation diver, named after the process of breathing pressurized air that saturates the blood and tissue of divers so their levels are in line with the pressure of the sea floor.

"I was just very young, my very early twenties, and in truth, I didn't really know what to do with my life," Lemons told Insider about finding his way into his 18-year diving career.

A friend's father helped him out with a summer job working on the back deck of a dive support vessel. There, he got to see a glimpse of the world he would soon enter — a world he said he didn't have any real concept of or even knew existed.

"They all seemed like enigmas a little bit," Lemons said about seeing saturation divers emerge from their chamber. "They probably turned up in fancier cars than me on the key side as well, so that was an appeal. Very quickly, I thought that's what I'd love to do."

He continued working on the boat and completed training for air diving — the process used for diving in shallower water than deep sea sites — in Scotland.

For eight years, Lemons was required to work as an air diver to gain experience for saturation diving courses, which he eventually did in Marseille, France, before spending 10 years as a saturation diver.

He talked to Insider about what the job's like, his career path, and his incident that inspired a documentary.

Life in the pressurized chamber

Lemons joked that the most important skill for being a saturation diver isn't diving, but being personable enough to live in the pressurized chamber. There can be up to 11 other people in the chamber, and not everyone gets along all the time, he said.

"I've always found it's a great leveller of people because you get people coming in with egos and whatever and it doesn't last very long because you're brutally exposed every day when you're working," he told Insider.

He continued: "It's quite a monastic way of living because you are in those chambers, so you don't have any access to alcohol, you're exercising every single day because you're working in the water. You live pretty clean really, and you breathe pure gas."

The chamber is filled with heliox, a combination of helium and oxygen. It's pressurized to the same level as the depth of the seabed the divers are working on. If they are working at 100 meters, for example, the chamber is pressurized to the same level as 90 to 95 meters below sea level.

The downside is a lack of sunlight, he said. But living in the chamber too long has its psychological impacts too, Lemons said.

"I think the day you start feeling that's a normal thing to do, a normal place to live or operate, then it's probably time to get out," Lemons said. "I certainly felt that's what stopped me. I enjoy the diving, but eventually you get tired of living in those conditions."

Lemons said he can talk to his family while living in the chamber because he has access to internet and telephones, but his voice is affected by the depth the divers live at and the helium in the chamber.

After spending 24 days near the bottom of the sea, coming straight back to the surface is not an option, because a diver could die of decompression sickness, or as its more commonly known, "the bends."

The deeper a diver goes, the more nitrogen is absorbed into their tissue. If they ascend too quickly, the gas bubbles in the diver's body will expand and can rupture the tissue or block arteries and stop the flow of oxygen to the brain.

If Lemons goes to the depth of 100 meters and spends six hours down there, the process of decompression can take four days.

"There's no circumnavigating that four days of decompression," Lemons said. "If you break your leg or your mother dies, it doesn't make a difference, you still have to do four days of decompression."

In the UK, Lemons said saturation divers are legally limited to living in the chambers for 28 days, so they might spend 24 days working on the seabed, then decompressing for four days.

Working at 100 meters below the surface of the sea

Lemons works in the North Sea which he said probably has the highest safety standards in the world for divers.

There are four teams of three divers on his vessel who each cover six hours on the seabed. The boat runs 24 hours a day.

Divers are lowered toward the seafloor on a diving bell which takes about an hour to launch and an hour to come back, meaning divers are in the water for about eight hours a day.

"It's really a routine, you basically do the same thing at the same time, every single day," Lemons said.

When the divers wake up, they're sent a food menu from which they can select what they want to eat. The food is sent in on silver trays through a gas lock.

Afterward, the divers are given paperwork telling them what work they are doing for the day, and are briefed by the dive supervisor on the mitigations and risks.

One diver always stays behind in the diving bell as a rescue diver, and to manage the three "umbilical cords" that are attached to the divers in the water, Lemons said. One cord is for gas to breathe, one is for heat, and one is for light.

Lemons works exclusively in the oil and gas industry, putting in and inspecting wells, pipelines, and the hydraulic and electronic infrastructure that keeps the oil field going.

"You can have days when it can be fairly intricate work," Lemons said. "You always have an engineer and a dive supervisor talking to you through an earpiece, so you're fed information and procedures."

Other days involve the divers lumping sandbags around the seabed for six hours, he said.

The incident

In 2012, Lemons was on the job when the dynamic positioning system, which keeps the boat in place, failed.

Lemons's umbilical cords snapped, and he was left at the bottom of the sea with only five extra minutes of breathing gas. He was rescued after over 30 minutes, during which he said he was mostly unconscious.

A documentary called "Last Breath" was made in 2018 about Lemons's incident. But he says he feels disassociated from the incident when thinking about it or watching the film.

"I think for all three of us who were involved in the water that day, I don't feel any of us feel we've suffered any kind of trauma," Lemons said. "It was a significant event in our lives, definitely, but in a weird way, it's been a positive thing for me."

Because he was still early in his career, Lemons said he was more worried about losing the job after his incident than grappling with the gravity of almost losing his life.

After a three week investigation, Lemons said he chose to return to his job, and the three members of his diving team resumed work as usual.

"The people who suffer are not really the three of us who can affect the outcome, it's the people you leave at home — your family, your friends, the ones who have to sit at home and imagine the worst."

Now, Lemons publicly speaks about his career as a saturation diver, and talks about the incident to promote safety and share what he learned from the experience.



Beautiful Dolphin Carvings in Paihia – Bay of Islands

[Celebrate Seventy-Five Years of Florida's Weeki Wachee Mermaids](#)

And see photos of that time Elvis showed up By [CJ Lotz](#) January 9, 2023



photo: Courtesy of Bonnie Georgiadis

A vintage photo from 1958 of Weeki Wachee mermaids Flo McNabb and Bonnie Georgiadis.

Ever since it opened in 1947, the charmingly kitschy [Weeki Wachee Springs](#), which is now a state park that sits an hour and a half west of Orlando, has been holding its own among those *other* Florida attractions you may have heard of. For one thing, it's got mermaids. For another, the mermaids swim and dance in crystal-clear water fed by an ancient spring.

"The setting itself is what makes this place magical," says John Athanason, a specialist with Florida's Adventure Coast Tourism

Bureau who has worked with the park for more than twenty years. "It's not a girl swimming in a tank. When you're sitting inside the theatre and the curtain rises and you see this beautiful spring, you're awestruck. There's no other theatre like it in the entire world."

photo: Bob Reed An underwater performance from 1947.

Besides the acrobatic mermaids pirouetting underwater while catching their breath with hookah-like air tubes, there's the real possibility that a manatee might crash a live show—I've seen it. The performers made way for the friendly giant, spinning alongside it while we audience members, separated from the spring by a giant wall of glass, shrieked in delight from our subterranean seats.



photo: Bob Reed

The park's first underground theater.



To mark seventy-five years of such memories, Weeki Wachee is throwing an anniversary party this week. On January 12, Florida's Adventure Coast Visitors Bureau will unveil the Mermaid Tale Trail, which features twenty-seven mermaid statues, hand-painted by regional artists, placed throughout

nearby Brooksville and surrounding Hernando County. Local officials will also dedicate the park and the towering Adagio statue out front as National Historic Landmarks. One of the original mermaids, Dianne Wyatt McDonald, whose pose inspired the famed statue, also plans to attend the party. (Now in her nineties, McDonald shared her recollections of the park in an entertaining interview).

“Whenever I sink beneath the surface of that beautiful water, I don’t want to get out again,” [another mermaid, Vicki Smith, told me when she was seventy-eight and still performing.](#) “There’s a freedom there. The movement of the current feels like silk wrapping you, and the bubbles become silver pearls all around.”



photo: Courtesy Weeki Wachee Springs State Park
Elvis with the Weeki Wachee mermaids in 1961.



photo: Courtesy Weeki Wachee Springs State Park
Elvis watches a performance from the theater.

Performers, travellers, Floridians, and stars alike have found inspiration at Weeki Wachee. Visitors to the park can swim in the sandy-bottomed springs, refreshed by water that stays a mild seventy-two degrees year-round. Elvis Presley himself made time to visit Weeki Wachee in 1961 when he was filming *Follow That Dream* in Florida. Three thousand fans turned up, and as these photos show, the setting worked its magic on Presley.

Group launches deep diving challenge to clean South-East Queensland waterways



[A voluntary organisation is stepping up a campaign to keep rubbish out of Queensland waterways.](#)

[Sunshine Coast News](#) 25 November 2022

With a startling statistic that almost 70 per cent of debris that enters the ocean sinks, a Sunshine Coast community group is initiating a state-wide underwater clean-up campaign.

Since 2018, the voluntary organisation has hosted dozens of clean-up dive events, engaged hundreds of divers and removed more than two tonnes of debris from the ocean – including more than 80km of fishing line.

Now, Sunshine Coast Clean Up Divers (SCCUD) is leading a promotion to address the scourge of hidden rubbish and will engage communities from Tweed Heads to Mackay to participate in a Scuba Scavenger Hunt.

The campaign will encourage and reward scuba divers, free divers and snorkelers who help remove marine debris from across southern Queensland waters.

SCCUD founder and director Elliot Peters said underwater explorers were uniquely positioned to lead the removal of marine debris.

“Marine debris pollutes our water, poisons marine life and negatively alters the balance of ecosystems,” he said.

“The problem is widespread – even in Australia – with illegal dumping, run off and increased flooding leading to an ever-increasing amount of debris in our waters.

“It’s up to all of us to mitigate and clean up this debris.”



Rubbish collected from the waterways at Noosaville.

The campaign is running from November to June 30 and participants can register their dive to go into the draw to win a pool of prizes, including a night’s stay at Herron Island.

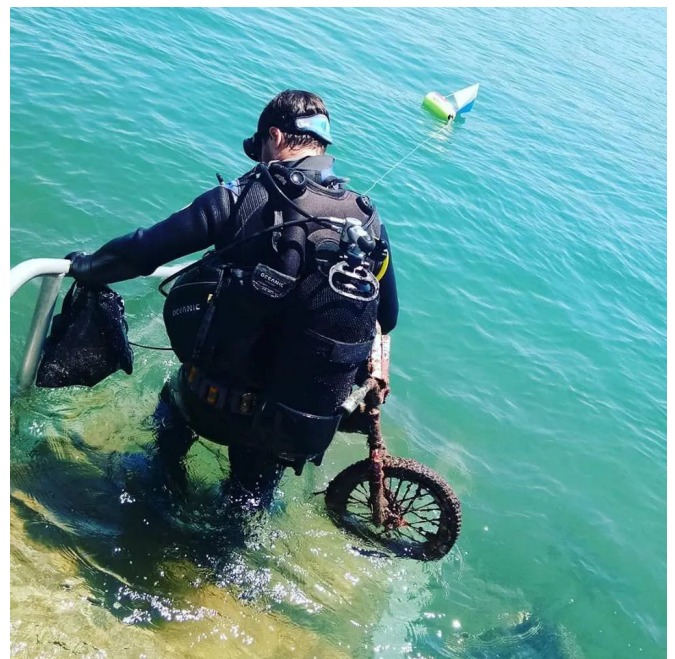
The Scuba Scavenger Hunt aligns with the PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) Dive Against Debris program. Through this program, divers can easily learn about responsible diving, clean up diving and register the debris they find to help inform policy and address marine debris across the planet.

Mr Peters said SCCUD was a voluntary community initiative, run by and for its participants.

“It is not only for the purpose of giving back to the environment we love, but to offer a safe space for open social engagement and strengthening community ties.”

“We are proud of our inclusivity, self-determination, transparency and environmentalism.”

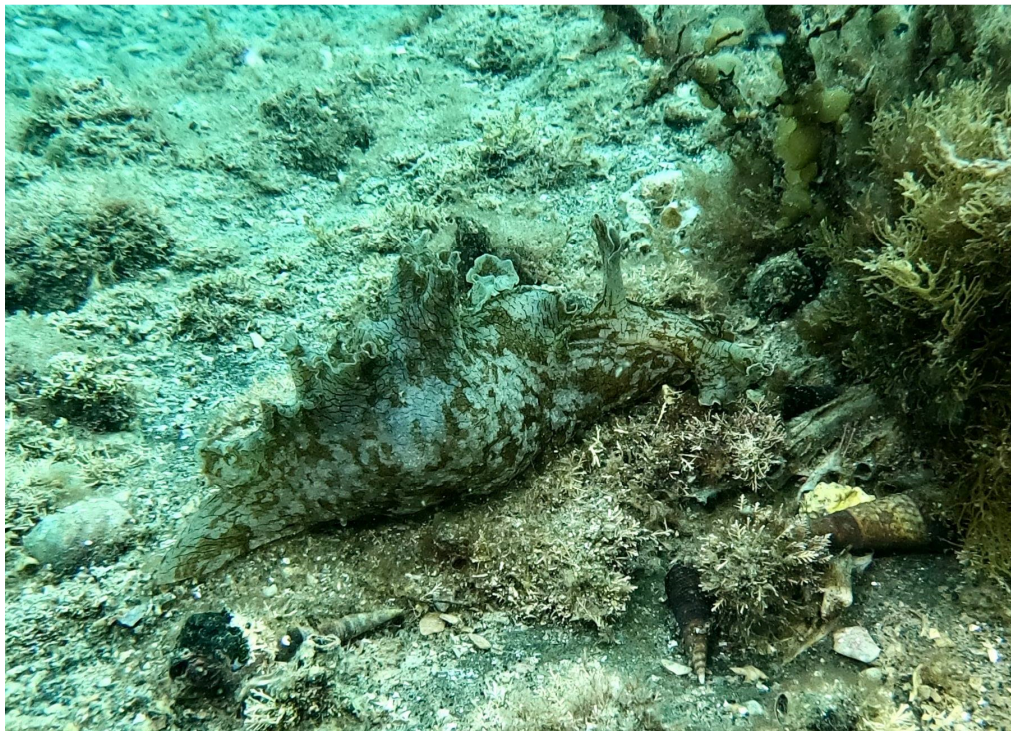
A diver with a bike pulled from the Mooloolah River at La Balsa Park, near Point Cartwright.



Maybe it’s time we had another clean-up day down at the Lake?

Discuss at next club meeting on Wednesday the 8th. Ed.

Xmas meeting at our President's place.



An uncommon photo of a Sea Hare by Matt Gouge

#Updating dive shop's contact details still in progress

The MAF regulations vary in particular when it comes to your catch size/limits & locations.

Practice being safe & staying safe for you & your buddies & we will see you all at the club meeting