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SCUBA News (ISSN 1476-8011)  
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Welcome to SCUBA News. Some ideas for last-minute diving stocking fillers below, and a review of *Manta Rays and Margaritas*. We wish you a happy and peaceful New Year.

I hope you enjoy SCUBA News, but should you wish to cancel your subscription you can do so at <http://www.scubatravel.co.uk/news.html>.

You can also [download a pdf version](#) of this newsletter. SCUBA News is published by SCUBA Travel Ltd.

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What's New at SCUBA Travel?



[What are the Maximum Diving Depths for Different Scuba Agencies?](#)

In response to your comments, we've updated our equivalent diving qualifications page (BSAC, CMAS, PADI, SSI, NAUI, etc) and added maximum depth information for many of the grades.

<http://www.scubatravel.co.uk/training/qualifications.html>



[Scuba Diving Marsa Alam](#)

Three divers give the low-down on what to expect around Marsa Alam in the Red Sea: Dugongs, Dolphins, Sharks, Turtles and the Red Sea Walman.

<http://www.scubatravel.co.uk/redsea/diving-marsa-alam.html>



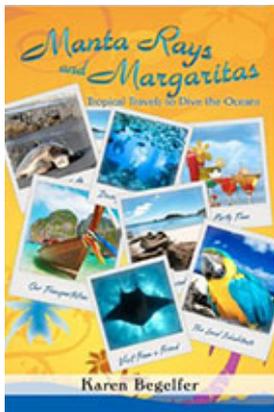
[Still looking for last minute Presents?](#)

See our suggestions from a diver egg cup or a bottle opener to beautiful hand crafted silver cufflinks or ear-rings. Or what about an underwater print, or a year's subscription to a diving magazine? Our shortlist is at

<http://www.scubatravel.co.uk/presents2.html>

Don't forget to keep sending us your reviews. E-mail news@scubatravel.co.uk, [fill in the form at the website](#) or post at the [SCUBA Travel Diving Reviews Community](#).

Book Review: Manta Rays and Margaritas



Manta Rays and Margaritas: Tropical Travels to Dive the Oceans

by Karen Begelfer, 2012, paperback and Kindle format.
266 pages, £9.25 / £2.59

"My theory on choosing dive companies via the internet is simple: if the pictures of divers have happy expressions and there is at least one photo of an ocean-loving dog on the site, the dive shop has to be good"

A quirky way of choosing a dive shop maybe, but as the last two diving centres I've used both had dogs I think Karen Begelfer may be onto something.

Descriptive and charming, in this book Karen Begelfer tells of her diving travels from learning to dive, getting hooked and visiting both out-of-the-way and popular destinations. This is no run-of-the-mill account someone else's diving adventures: instead it sparkles along.

The author writes well and includes well-researched historical, and geographical, context to the places she has visited. I love her descriptions. "Angry green vipers with full body mohawks...long green ribbons of muscle undulating through the water" makes a perfect vision of a Giant Moray. Crown-of-Thorns starfish are like "leggy pincushions".

Thirteen chapters cover Bora Bora, Moorea, Australia, Bahamas, Mexico, the Virgin Islands, Hawaii, Micronesia, Palau, Belize and the Cayman Islands.

Sprinkled with boxed quotes from writers such as James Fenimore Cooper, P.J. O'Rourke and Lewis Carroll, this is ideal for some between-dives reading;

Manta Rays and Margaritas is available from [Amazon UK](#), [Amazon US](#) and, at the cheapest price, the [The Book Depository](#).

Read more [diving book reviews](#) at <http://www.scubatravel.co.uk/interview.html>

Diving News From Around the World

For breaking news see our [Twitter page](#) or [RSS feed](#)



Mysterious disease creates Zombie Starfish

Sick and dying starfish are appearing in a multitude of locations between Alaska and southern California. "It's like a zombie wasteland," says biologist Emily Tucker. "You'll see detached arms crawling away from their (starfish) body."

Italian prosecutors investigate claims of restaurants

servicing dolphin

A journalist secretly filmed a meal including a salad dressed with flakes of dried dolphin.

Careless divers put coral at risk

A recent study finds more than 70% of Hong Kong divers came into contact with coral when they were underwater. Lead researcher, Dr Chung Shan-shan called for restricted areas to be established. The study showed that each diver touched coral a shocking 14.7 times on every dive. Contact was unintentional and caused mostly by hands and fins, and people steadying themselves in order



to take a photo.

Endangered Corals Get Their Own Sperm Bank

Faced with an alarming loss of coral on Australia's Great Barrier Reef, scientists in Queensland are building a coral sperm bank.



EU Rejects Deep-Sea Bottom Trawling Ban

The European Union has rejected the opportunity to ban deep-sea bottom trawling, giving-in to industry demands at the expense of fish stocks. The deep-sea is a fragile environment that, once damaged, is unlikely to recover. Highly vulnerable to fishing, deep-sea fish stocks are quick to collapse and slow to recover because they reproduce at low rates.

Deep-sea corals record dramatic long-term shift in Pacific Ocean ecosystem

Long-lived deep-sea corals preserve evidence of a major shift in the open Pacific Ocean ecosystem since around 1850, according to a new study. Deep-sea corals can live for thousands of years, feeding on organic matter that rains down from the upper levels of the ocean. The corals' branching, tree-like skeletons are composed of a hard protein material that incorporates chemical signatures from their food sources. As a result, changes in the composition of the growth layers in deep-sea corals reflect changes in the organisms that lived in the surface waters at the time each layer formed.

Deep-sea study reveals cause of 2011 tsunami

The devastating tsunami that struck Japan's Tohoku region in March 2011 was touched off by a submarine earthquake far more massive than anything geologists had expected in that zone.

Microplastics toxic to marine animals

Toxic concentrations of pollutants and additives enter the tissue of animals that have eaten microplastic, new study finds

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