

SCUBA News (ISSN 1476-8011)

Issue 149 - October 2012

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

Welcome to October's SCUBA News. Over 5000 of you subscribe to SCUBA News (thank you very much!) but only 407 people like us on [Facebook](#). We are trying to break the 500 barrier, so if some of you could rush over to <http://www.facebook.com/SCUBANews> and like us we would be very grateful. And let us know if there is anything we can do for you.

I hope you find the newsletter interesting, but should you wish to cancel your subscription please do so at <http://www.scubatravel.co.uk/news.html>

SCUBA News is published by SCUBA Travel Ltd.

Contents:

- [What's new at SCUBA Travel?](#)

- [Letters](#)

- [Creature of the Month: the Venomous Blue-Ringed Octopus](#)

- [Diving News from Around the World](#)

What's New at SCUBA Travel?



[World's Top Ten Dives](#)

The SS Yongala has topped the list of the world's best dive sites for 12 years, but this week was knocked off its perch by the Blue Corner Wall in Palau. See the new top ten dives, according to divers' votes, at

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



[Diving Belize](#)

Belize's Blue Hole is currently ranked sixth in the world, but is it the best dive in Belize? Visit our new Belize page and see write ups and reviews of the Blue Hole and other 5 star dives.

<http://www.scubatravel.co.uk/americas/belize-diving.html>



[Free e-book on the diving in Bali](#)

Vilondo Villas have written an e-book on the dive sites of Bali and made it available free to our readers. You can download the book from the Bali section of the SCUBA Travel site.

<http://www.scubatravel.co.uk/indonesia/balidive.html#GUIDE>

For regular announcements of what's new at the SCUBA Travel site see our [Twitter feed](#), our [Facebook page](#) or [the Diving Board](#)

Letters

Diving Bulgaria

Dear Sirs,

We have been enthusiastic scubadivers nearly for 15 yrs with my husband. We have been diving in 54 different countries so far and are planning to continue our "dive site spotting" as long as our medical cards allow And we love to read your newsletter!!!

We came just back from Bulgaria and I thought that you should know about Padi's dive shop there... We used Harrys Dive shop in Golden Sands

<http://divewithharry.com/en/products/5.html> which can be found in your pages as well.

1. Security was the first issue I was worried about: tiny boat, 6 divers + 2 "guides" in the boat. Two of the "tourist divers" were less than 10 years old - so kids... No briefing, impossible to move in the boat (so full) and we needed to wear all gear as no space in the boat. Both younger boys felt sick after the first dive, anyhow they were allowed to jump in to the water with us for the second one.

2. Tanks & security: we agreed that we will make 2 boat dives during the same day. We did not understand that it means 2 x 35 minute dive with the same tank... And the first dive was max 5,4 meters and the second in 10 meters... We saw millions of shells, few crabs, some fish, and that was about it....

3. Finally: we agreed on the price 2 days before we went for diving. Then when we came back, the price doubled... We have never had such a misunderstanding anywhere in the world and especially as the "dives" were really not dives there were just "cashing the money"...

I wanted to let you know and we cannot recommend this dive shop! There are naturally big differences in different countries, but this was the worst dive center I have used so far...

Looking forward to the new dives elsewhere though.

Best regards
Nina & Petri Torkkel
Finland

Can anyone beat Nina and Petri's 54 countries? Let us know. E-mail us (news@scubatravel.co.uk), tweet [@SCUBANews](https://twitter.com/SCUBANews) or tell us on [Facebook](#).

Creature of the Month: the Venomous Blue-Ringed Octopus



The blue-ringed octopus - *Hapalochlaena lunulata* - is said to carry enough venom to kill 26 people. This small animal spends much of its time in hiding, camouflaged. But when disturbed, the octopus flashes around 60 beautifully iridescent blue rings and, when strongly harassed, bites and delivers a neurotoxin in its saliva. Don't pick one up!

The flashes are extremely fast: much faster than generally seen with octopus. According to a study published in November's [Journal of Experimental Biology](#), the octopus achieves the fast flashes using muscles under direct neural control. "A fast, conspicuous display...is an advantage to predators, who are warned before attacking a venomous creature, and of course to the octopus itself, as it avoids being eaten." says zoologist Lydia Mathger and lead author of the study.

Blue-ringed octopus live in tide pools and coral reefs in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, from Japan to Australia. There are around 10 different species, all very small. While resting, this blue-ringed octopus is a pale brown to yellow color depending on its surroundings.

Two types of poison secreted by two separate poison glands are used against prey and predators. One of the poisons is used for hunting crab, the other, the extremely toxic one, is used as self defence against predators.

The octopus's parrot-like beak easily penetrates a wetsuit. Their venomous saliva can have dramatic effects within 15 minutes. For the first few minutes, though, if you are bitten you may feel no discomfort. Any close contact with this octopus should be treated as life-threatening immediately, as there is no antidote.

Further Reading:

How does the blue-ringed octopus (*Hapalochlaena lunulata*) flash its blue rings? [doi: 10.1242/jeb.076869](https://doi.org/10.1242/jeb.076869) November 1, 2012 *J Exp Biol* 215, 3752-3757.

BLUE-RINGED OCTOPUS FLEXES MUSCLES TO FLASH FAST WARNING SIGNALS [J. Exp. Biol. 2012 215:i-ii](#).

[Venomous Animals of the World](#), Steve Backshall

Diving News From Around the World



You can display this news, in real-time, on your web site - for more details see <http://www.scubatravel.co.uk/newsfeed.html>. You can also read it on our [Twitter page at http://twitter.com/#!/SCUBANews](https://twitter.com/#!/SCUBANews)

[BSAC Withdraws Travel 4 Scuba Travel Insurance Scheme](#)

BSAC (British Sub-Aqua Club) have announced that their member benefit and specialist diving travel insurance scheme, Travel 4 Scuba, ceased this month. They say that "as a result of ever increasing claims costs, it has become uneconomical for the insurance

scene to continue . For other cost-effective diving travel insurance options see <http://www.scubatravel.co.uk/insurance.html>.

Support sought for marine conservation zones

Two Dorset biologists have launched an appeal for support to ensure plans to create 127 marine conservation zones (MCZs) around the UK are implemented.

Scientists unveil first maps of deep sea corals

Proposed marine protected areas will cover just 30% of the UK's deep sea coral reefs and 3% of the her sponge fields, according to the first-ever set of maps detailing where vulnerable deep-sea habitats are likely to be found in the North East Atlantic.

Fertiliser killing Barrier Reef

Revelations that chemical fertiliser pollution is driving the significant and ongoing loss of coral on the Great Barrier Reef highlights the urgent need for intervention by the Australian and Queensland Governments, WWF-Australia said. A new scientific paper reveals a staggering 50 per cent loss in coral cover since the early 1980s.



Plan to kill great white sharks that swim too close to Australian beaches

Western Australian officials have approved a plan to pre-emptively track and kill the endangered sharks.

Coral reefs: zombie ecosystem

The world's coral reefs have become a zombie ecosystem, neither dead nor truly alive, and are on a trajectory to collapse within a human generation according to an academic from The Australian National University.



Indonesia Coral Reefs Thrive under Centuries Old System

Some of the best results stem from time-tested techniques. A new study shows that Indonesian coral reefs are thriving under a management system designed in the 17th Century.

Philippines feted for Tubbataha Reef conservation effort

The Philippines received international praise for its coral reef conservation in Tubbataha Reef, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Carnage to Phuket's marine life continues

In just one day, half a dozen Olive Ridley sea turtles were rescued in Phuket, all suffering lacerations caused by fishing nets, and a young dolphin was stranded on Mai Khao Beach.

Manatees reflect quality of health in marine ecosystems

Over ten years of research in Belize have studied the behavioral ecology, life history and health of manatees in an area relatively undisturbed by humankind. Manatees are the proverbial 'canaries in the mineshaft,' as they serve as indicators of their environment and may reflect the overall health of marine ecosystems.



Why are coastal salt marshes falling apart?

Salt marshes have been disintegrating and dying over the past two decades without anyone fully understanding why. Now scientists report that nutrients--such as nitrogen and phosphorus from septic and sewer systems and lawn fertilizers--can cause salt marsh loss. Salt marshes are a critical interface between the land and sea. They provide habitat for fish, birds and shellfish, protect coastal cities from storms and take nutrients out of the water from upland areas, which protect coastal bays from over-pollution.

Canada Invests \$32 Million in Ocean Science

Underwater sensor network gets funding from Canadian government.

* Copyright SCUBA Travel - <http://www.scubatravel.co.uk/>

* Reprinting permitted with this footer included.

We are happy for you to copy and distribute this newsletter, and use parts of it on your own web site, providing the above copyright notice is included and a link back to our web site is in place.

Previous editions of SCUBA News are archived at <http://www.scubatravel.co.uk/news.html>

SUBSCRIBING AND UNSUBSCRIBING

Visit [UNSUBSCRIBE] and add or remove your e-mail address. To change whether your receive the newsletter in text or HTML (with pictures) format visit [PREFERENCES]

ADVERTISING

Should you wish to advertise in SCUBA News, please see the special offers at

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

Other advertising opportunities are at

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

CONTACTING THE EDITOR

Please send your letters or press releases to:

Jill Studholme

SCUBA News

The Cliff

Upper Mayfield

DE6 2HR

UK

news@scubatravel.co.uk

PUBLISHER

SCUBA Travel Ltd, The Cliff, Upper Mayfield, DE6 2HR, UK