

## Kwajalein Scuba Club, April 2011

### --The First Stage--

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The contest last month was video, so we don't have a winning photo to profile this time. But not to worry- Bob Greene is here with a picture of a manta that he took somewhere off Emon Beach.

There will be no Photo Contest or Video Contest in April or May.

#### *April monthly meeting-*

Wednesday the 13th, 7pm, in the MP Room at the High School.



*Manta Ray near Emon Beach, by Bob Greene*

It is mandatory for all KSC divers to attend one of the annual safety meetings. This month's meeting is the first opportunity for you to complete the annual safety requirement.

On April 13<sup>th</sup>, the doors will open at 6:15pm, and the meeting will start at 7pm. Bring your certification card with you to these meetings. Please arrive early enough to complete the renewal application before 7pm. It is understood that many people will have work requirements that night and may not be able to attend the meeting. This meeting is also nomination of club officers.

During the April meeting we will also be a voting on NITRO, as long as we have a minimum of 100 members in attendance. This is an important vote, we feel it is fair to have as many as possible to participate in this decision making. Everything you ever wanted to know about NITROX will be explained. This includes how it will be paid for and by whom. I can tell you that unless you sign up for NITROX your dues will not be increased. If we do not have at least 100 at the meeting, the vote will be delayed until the May meeting.

Looking ahead to the May meeting- it will be held on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Please note that this is the **THIRD** Wednesday of the month. This meeting will also be held in the MP Room at the High School. Again, the doors will open at 6:15pm, and the meeting will start at 7pm.

We are pleased to announce that Dan Orr, President of Divers Alert Network, will be our guest speaker at the May meeting. Dan Orr and wife will be on- island from May 17 through May 21. Other events are being planned during his visit and will be announced in the May edition of the First Stage.

**March Video Contest Winner-** Congratulations to Marc Rivera for winning the Video Contest at the March meeting!

**New Club Officers-** (Due to an oversight in the last newsletter, John Pennington was not mentioned as being the new temporary Environmental Officer. The editor apologizes for the error.) John obtained his Open Water from Maryellen Gibson while on TDY in 2004. He dove in Hawaii, Florida, and cold rock quarries in Alabama before another TDY in 2005 and becoming Maryellen's first PADI Master Diver. After convincing wife Tracy to move to Kwajalein in 2007 he completed his Divemaster in 2008. John is a past KSC President and has served the club in a variety of ways to include the recent appointment as Environmental officer.



**Reminder to all boat owners-** March was registration month at the Small Boat Marina. The cost was \$25 during March. If you did not register your boat before March 31<sup>st</sup>, the cost is now \$35.

**Fish of the Month-** "Dave Johnson's Wrasse" by Scott Johnson



During my tour in the early part of the 1970s, there were a number of highly talented and accomplished fish enthusiasts and photographers here at Kwaj. It was an exciting time to be a Kwaj critter connoisseur. Fish photographers and shell collectors were finding unrecorded animals and expanding the known ranges of species of fish and mollusks just about every week, or even more often. A fair bit of what scientists now

know about those two groups in particular in eastern Micronesia is due to Kwaj divers.

In addition to expanding the distributional ranges of known species, a number of animals new to science were discovered. This week's fish is one of those. David Johnson, a longtime Kwaj resident in the 70s, 80s and 90s, was one of the sharp-eyed fish photographers of that era. While diving the algae flats on the sandy lagoon slope between Bigej and Meck Islands, he made a discovery.

Actually, several discoveries. That particular habitat had been long ignored by most Kwaj divers. A more or less featureless sandy slope covered with a low growth of *Halimeda* algae at first glance appears rather dull and lifeless. But it is anything but lifeless when you look close. There are a number of anemones, two of which have still not been officially recorded from the Marshalls. The algae itself is loaded with snails,

### *Fish of the Month- continued...*

slugs, echinoderms, and a variety of other interesting invertebrates. And there are numerous species of fish that swim above the algae and sometimes hide down within it at the approach of danger.

Among those fish, several of which were new records for the Marshalls, Dave spotted one for which he could not find a name. Photographs were sent to Dr. John Randall, ichthyologist of the Bishop Museum in Honolulu and the world's most knowledgeable authority on tropical reef fish. Dr. Randall occasionally passed through Kwaj on his way to do research at the Mid Pacific Research Lab on Enewetak Atoll, Marshall Islands. Dave was able to show where the animals lived to Dr. Randall, who subsequently found them living in the same kind of areas at Enewetak. In 1988, a new species description of this fish was published by Dr. Randall, who named it after Dave.

It turns out the fish is common in the correct habitat. On some algae slopes we see literally hundreds at a time, most of them rather nondescript peachy brownish females. Interspersed in the schools of females are a number of vividly colored males who zip around displaying their bright red dorsal fins and colorful lunate tails at other males in aggression or at females in courtship. Jeanette's photo shows a displaying male--not an easy picture to get, since the fish never stop rapidly moving. The bright red color does not show up well at their typical depth of 20m so it takes a closeup photo taken with a strobe to truly appreciate the gorgeous colors.

Like other wrasses, *Cirrhilabrus johnsoni* is a protogynous hermaphrodite. It starts off its adult life as a female, and is capable of changing to a male later. And like other *Cirrhilabrus* species, it is a plankton feeder.

While Bigej-Meck remains a good place to spot these, it is outside the normal marina boating areas. However, we have seen this species commonly in similar lagoon slope algae patches on other parts of the east and west reefs, including Ningi, near Shell Island, and along the lagoon reef between Carlson and Carlos.

To my knowledge, *Cirrhilabrus johnsoni* has never been reported outside the Marshall Islands.

*Text by Scott Johnson, photo by Jeanette Johnson*

<http://www.underwaterkwaj.com>

### *New USAKA 50ft. No Chamber Dive Rule-*

The KSC EC and DSC are actively working with UASKA leadership to address concerns and provide them the accurate information they need to reverse this decision. Please be patient while the club leadership works through this problem.

### *Continuing Education-* “Fitness to Dive”, by Dr. Lisa Shier

Every diver needs to evaluate before every dive whether they are really fit to make that dive. Signs you should temporarily not dive include:

- \* A medical professional has advised you not to dive for a particular time period or until a particular condition has cleared up.
- \* You have a cold, allergies, or other nasal, lung, or sinus congestion.
- \* You have an ear infection or other ear problems.
- \* You are pregnant or trying to get pregnant.
- \* You have open wounds, serious scrapes, or other breaks in your skin. There are a lot of nasty microorganisms in the water here.
- \* You have sprains, strains, or other conditions that limit the use of muscles or joints.
- \* You are hung over.
- \* You are sick, not feeling well, or mentally not prepared for the dive.
- \* You are exhausted or overly tired.
- \* Your diving equipment is not in perfect working condition.

Occasionally passing up diving can prevent accidents or save you from serious health consequences.

### *Tankhouse notice-*

If you have tanks on your boat, at home, or otherwise not in the tank house, please return them immediately. This is the time of year for the annual inventory, and we need to get all the club tanks accounted for. Thanks for your help!

### *Coming Events-*

**Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup>**- Easter Egg Hunt at Emon Beach. Meet at 1:00 for a KSC traditional underwater Easter egg hunt where both snorkelers and scuba divers of all ages will look for eggs hidden in the lagoon. Water, soft drinks, snacks, and prizes will be provided by the KSC. Call John Pennington 5-3290 for more information and/or to RSVP for an air tank (KSC members) to be brought down for you.

**Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup>**- Dan Orr, President of Divers Alert Network, will be the guest speaker at the May membership meeting.

~~~ *Ascend slowly from every dive!* ~~~

*Rescue on the Beach*- March 21, 2011:

KSC held a rescue drill at Emon Beach on March 21<sup>st</sup>. The scenario was a lost diver and a panicked diver. The Fire Department participated in the drill as well. Once the drill was over, there was a cookout for the participants. Here's some pictures from the event...





*Taking it to the next level-* Rescue Diver: Be a safer diver, be prepared!

“Challenging” and “rewarding” best describe the Rescue Diver course. Building upon what you’ve already learned, this course expands on what you already know about how to prevent problems, and how to manage them if they occur.

The fun part about this course is rising to challenges and mastering them. Most divers find this course both demanding and rewarding, and at the end, say it’s the best course they’ve ever taken.

What you learn: self rescue, recognizing and managing stress in other divers, emergency management and equipment, rescuing panicked divers, rescuing unresponsive divers.

CPR and First Aid are a requirement for Rescue Diver. You have to have completed a CPR/First Aid course in the last two years. If you are not current your instructor can bring you up today.

*...Don't forget...*

***Wednesday the 17<sup>th</sup> for the April meeting, in the MP Room at the High School...first safety meeting to get the annual safety requirement taken care of, voting on NITROX, and nomination of club officers for the 2011-2012 membership year!***

~~~ Safe diving is no accident! [www.diversalertnetwork.org](http://www.diversalertnetwork.org) ~~~

*Year in Review*- A few of our past Photo Contest winners...



Marc Rivera  
July 2010



Josh Griffin  
September 2010



Erikka Collins  
December 2010

~~~~ *The Classifieds* ~~~~

**AquaLung, Suunto, APEX, DiveRite, SeaQuest, DeepSee, Pelican, and AquaSphere** are industry leading brands you can really trust for SCUBA diving.

Call **John Pennington** at 5-3290 for incredible **Kwajalein only** pricing/discounts.

On-Island servicing is still available for many regulators, BCDs, and computer battery replacements for these brands.

**Get an iPod nano® when you purchase our new TRAVEL PACKAGE™**

| <i>travel light package</i> |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Mikron Regulator            | 1.96 lbs.         |
| Micromask                   | 0.32 lbs.         |
| HotShot Fins                | 3.28 lbs.         |
| Zuma BC                     | 4.40 lbs.         |
| Impulse 3 Flex Snorkel      | 0.41 lbs.         |
| + Departure Bag             | 7.26 lbs.         |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>17.63 lbs.</b> |

“Travel Package” includes: Zuma travel BCD, Mikron 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> stage regulator with octopus, HotShot fins, Look 2 or Micromask, Impulse 3 snorkel and the 21” Departure bag. The package is perfect for Kwajalein folks who are traveling or just to save space in BQ rooms, Domes, etc... This travel kit above sells for \$1600 in the US but is **only \$954 on Kwajalein**. Just add your existing gauges/computer or add-on a new Suunto at a really great price. Call **John Pennington** at 5-3290 to reserve your set.