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# Mammoth Discovery & Another Threat to Cozumel's Coral

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The Independent, Nonprofit Guide for Serious Divers Since 1975



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May 21, 2021



**Iconic Galapagos Diving Landmark Collapses.** On May 17, passengers aboard the *Galápagos Aggressor III* witnessed the natural collapse of Darwin's Arch, the famous surface landmark of Darwin Island, where divers encounter scalloped hammerheads, whale sharks, and other spectacular marine life. Caused by erosion, the collapse left the two supporting pillars, which are already being dubbed "the Pillars of Evolution" by some in the diving industry. [www.aggressor.com](http://www.aggressor.com)

**Florida's Plastic:** John Fine, a veteran environmentalist, journalist, and diver, has been checking out the reefs of Florida forever and lately is even more disturbed with the abundance of plastic he has spotted and what it means to the fish and the

marine life. He's written a short piece on the problem, illustrated with his photographs showing how easily a turtle can mistake a plastic bag for a jellyfish. You can read his important blog [right here](#) on the *Undercurrent* website.

**Help Protest Another Big Threat to Cozumel's Reefs.** What are they thinking of? With tourism already shattered by the effects of the pandemic, the government is contemplating adding a fourth cruise ship dock on Cozumel. Not a single ship has disembarked passengers since June 2020, and residents and environmental groups say it is inexplicable that yet another dock is planned for an area that is home to a coral restoration project. While the island's reefs have been ravaged by hurricanes and coral bleaching of late, years of effort have been spent by volunteers to transplant small pieces of living coral to structures anchored to the seabed to grow new reefs. German Mendez, a biologist who founded the Cozumel Coral Reef Restoration Project, says the three cruise ship docks built since 1994 have already destroyed much of the coral for which the island was once famous. The island simply does not have the capacity for an extra 3,000 cruise ship passengers daily, added to the 100,000 inhabitants. **YOU CAN PROTEST.** A petition has already gained over 38,000 signatures. [Sign it here.](#)

**Are You Fully Vaccinated?** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention still recommends against travel to all but 31 countries, but rules differ from one destination country to the next. If you are fully vaccinated (which means it's been two weeks since your last required dose), entry requirements can be simplified. Here's a current [list of destinations](#) open to vaccinated travelers.



**Mammoth Find in Arcadia.** Often, exciting diving discoveries are waiting at your doorstep. Two divers found a giant Colombian mammoth bone in Florida's Peace River at the end of April. Derek Demeter and Henry Sadler were scuba diving when they came across the giant leg bone, possibly 100,000 years old. Their original plan had been to hunt for shark teeth, but bad weather forced them to change their plans. Their unique find was reported to the Florida permitting program and will aid scientists who are tracking where and when mammoths lived in Ice-Age Florida.

**A Hell-of-a Down Current!** Many divers have experienced the powerful and sometimes unpredictable currents squeezing between the Indonesian islands. In April, an Indonesian submarine that went missing was finally discovered broken up on the bottom, all of its crew dead. It was apparently pulled down and sunk by a powerful underwater wave caused by the difference between the density of the waters off the coast of Bali and in the Lombok Strait. These strong oceanic waves have pushed divers down hundreds of feet within minutes, with some unlucky ones never to return. *Interesting Engineering*

**Tragedy Strikes a Well-Known Dive Industry Professional.** At the end of April, two children, aged 7 and 9, drowned in a bizarre scuba equipment-connected accident when visiting a house with their father, who was there to work on or demonstrate a DPV. While Rodney Nairne, a popular figure in the scuba industry with his Submerge Scooters, was busy working with the woman who lived on the property at Jensen Beach, FL, the children were allowed to enjoy the pool. Alas, there was a scuba tank nearby, filled with an anoxic mix including helium, intended for use at depth, which the children confidently but unknowingly took advantage of. Zale Dudas (aged 9 and named after Zale Parry) and Saxon Nairne (7) quickly became unconscious and drowned in the pool. We wonder how this helium mix could have been pool-side, presumably with a regulator fitted, since it would only be used at extreme depths. *MSN.com*

**Planned Ferry Sinking Meets Opposition.** The planned sinking of an old ferry in Lake Champlain for the benefit of scuba divers has run into opposition by environmental groups concerned with its impact on the lake. The now-retired *Adirondack* constructed in 1913, sailed regularly between Burlington and Port Kent, NY, and is now being cleaned of pollutants before it is to be sunk in an underwater historic preserve that includes nine other vessels. The cost of scrapping would be half the \$175,000 preservation cost, but the draw for visiting divers would boost the local economy. *WRAL.com*

**DAN Recommends Divers Stay Dry for Seven Days after Vaccination.** Their advice is based on current recommendations of the European Medical Agency, which suggest that although side effects are usually mild and that scuba diving or free-diving may not worsen them, there are anecdotal cases of symptoms possibly related to decompression illness after dives within the normal range of decompression safety. Divers with side effects that persist or who are contemplating deep/technical deco diving, should wait 14 days. *DAN*

**New Proposals to Destroy Sharks.** The Western Australia government has proposed a shark cull in response to fishers' concerns about their loss of catches to sharks. This would include allowing commercial shark fishing around the famous Ningaloo Reef, the UNESCO-listed Shark Bay World Heritage area, and off the coast of Kimberley. Marine conservation organizations have been quick to ask for the cull to be rejected, saying there is no scientific evidence to suggest reducing shark numbers would reduce depredation. Campaigners have launched a *Stop the Shark Cull* campaign. You can add your name to the protest [here](#).

**Sevengill Shark at La Jolla Cove.** Professional diver Brian Jack, from Zach's Scuba Shack, took divers out into the La Jolla underwater park and ecological reserve during the last week of April and encountered several rare seven-gill sharks. He said later it was one in a thousand dives but it was a mind-blowing experience. *CBS 8 San Diego*





**Scalloped Hammerhead Tracked from Space.** Good places to dive with schooling hammerheads include Cocos Island, the outer islands of the Galápagos, and Colombia's Malpelo Island in the eastern Pacific. It's been suspected that these sharks are all part of the same population, and now, researchers from Save Our Seas Foundation, the Guy Harvey Research Institute, and the Charles Darwin Foundation have recorded the 435-mile migration of a pregnant scalloped hammerhead shark from the Galápagos Islands to Cocos Island. The innovative use of towed satellite transmitters allowed researchers to document the exact route and timing of this epic migration. After traveling north of Darwin Island for about 10 days, the radio-tagged shark started swimming eastward until reaching Isla del Coco 14 days later. *Charles Darwin Foundation*

**Nautilus Explorer Takes Firefighting Seriously.** Previously in *Undercurrent* (February 20) we published an extensive list of precautions and fire-fighting preparations now taken by the operators of *MV Seahunter* and *MV Argo* in light of the disastrous *Conception* fire. We are delighted to hear from reader Harley Piltingsrud that Mike Lever, proprietor of the *MV Nautilus Explorer* which makes dive trips to Socorro, has taken similar steps to ensure the absolute safety of his passengers should the unthinkable happen. <https://nautilusliveboards.com>

**DEMA Show Goes On.** After a hiatus due to the pandemic, the Diving Equipment Manufacturer's Association convention for diving trade members and professionals will be held at the Las Vegas Convention Center on November 16 -19. Those intending to exhibit are reminded that the deadline for payment is May 24. To help with the challenges businesses are experiencing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DEMA has compiled a collection of resources available to the entire industry. [info@dema.org](mailto:info@dema.org)

*Stay Safe  
Wear a Mask, Socially Distance, Wash Your Hands  
Get Vaccinated  
Don't Share Your Air*

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Wash your hands



Wear a face covering



Give space



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