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## Ernie Brooks Passes & Scuba Diving Record Attempt

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The Independent, Nonprofit Guide for Serious Divers Since 1975

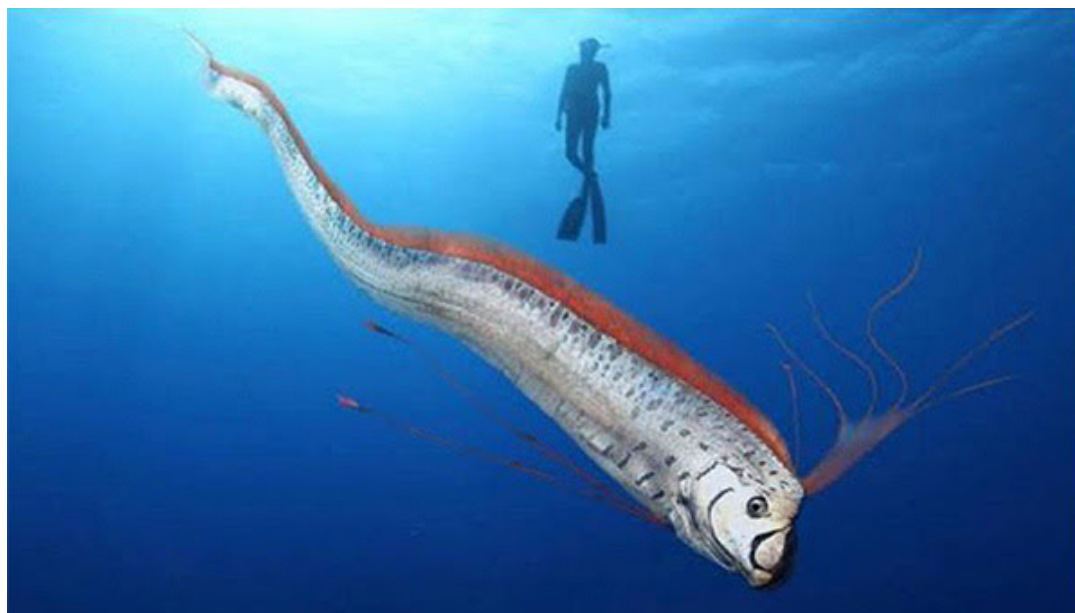


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November 29, 2020



**As If 2020 Wasn't Bad Enough.** The discovery of a nine-foot-long oarfish dead on a Bali beach has triggered alarm because it's believed locally to herald an oncoming disaster, such as an earthquake/tsunami. The longest fish known, the long herring oarfish, silver-colored and with Dalmatian-like dark spots, has a red-colored dorsal fin that extends the length of its body and a long, thin pelvic fin. Indonesian scientists discount reports linking the occasional beaching of oarfish to imminent seismic disaster. *Bali Discovery*

**Dumaguete Diving Death.** Local dive guide Jundril Suaring of Harold's Dive Center, short of an income thanks to Covid-19 restrictions, resorted to spearfishing at the end of October to make ends meet, and under pressure to get results, got bent. Experiencing a strong current at 100 feet deep, he made a fast ascent. There is no recompression chamber in Dumaguete City, despite money being previously been allocated by the provincial government to provide one. Covid restrictions on movement

of people made it impossible to transport him to Cebu, with tragic consequences.  
*Dumaguete.info*

**Keeping Safe from Infection.** You're safe from coronavirus underwater, and Egyptian diver Saddam Al-Kilany, 29, stayed safe for more than six days by staying underwater for a world-record-shattering 145 hours and 30 minutes, beating the record set by Karabay in Cyprus in 2016. A video of his record attempt at Dahab, in the Red Sea in November, has yet to be ratified by the *Guinness World Records* as the world's longest scuba dive. He'd planned to stay longer, but parts of him were reported by *LAD Bible* as "getting wrinklier than a rhino's scrotum." *UPI.com*

**The Failure to Use a DPV Properly** led to the November arrest of Matthew Piercey, 44, a California man accused of leading a \$35m Ponzi scheme at his local church. He first fled authorities by car and then used scuba gear and a Diver Propulsion Vehicle to hide from agents underwater in the frigid Lake Shasta, near Redding. He should've used a rebreather because agents were able to watch his exhaled bubbles break the surface for 25 minutes before he emerged to be quickly arrested. *Sacramento Bee*

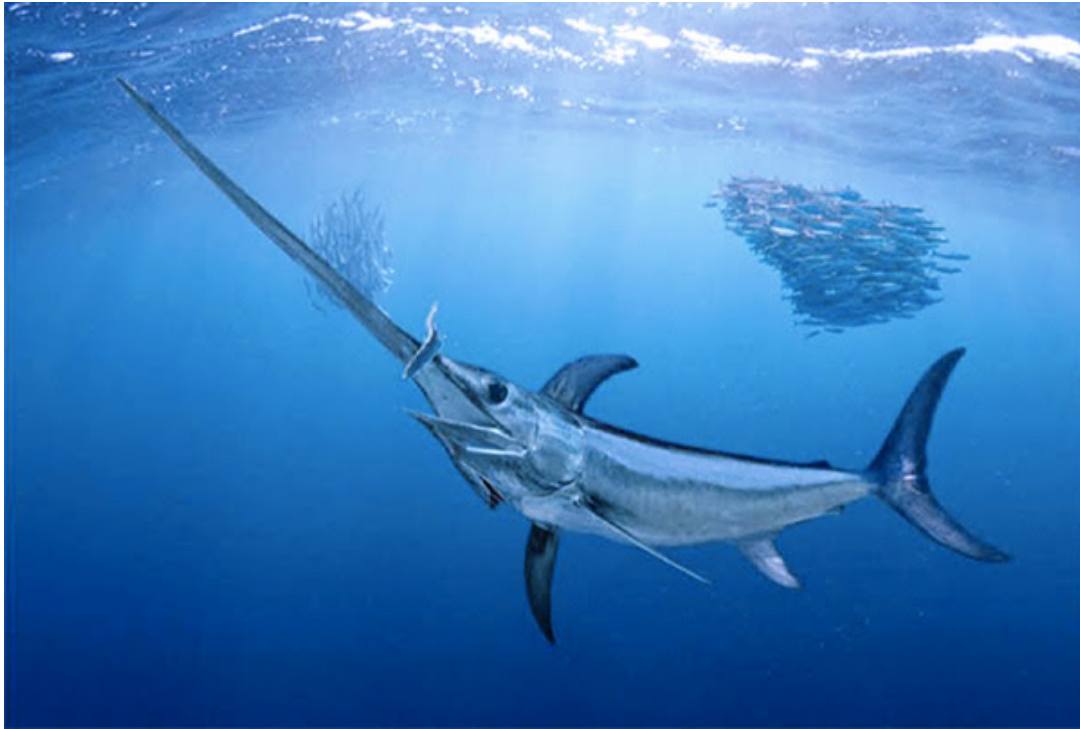
**Mexican Protected Area Fees Rocket** Beginning January 1, 2021, the National Park Admission Fee for some significant diving spots in Mexico will rise to \$75/day. This means the cost of a 6-diving-day trip to Socorro and Revillagigedo will increase by \$450.00, and a 4-diving-day trip to Guadalupe Island will increase by \$300. National Park Admission Fees are not included in the liveboard fees of most operators. Divers with a "Conservation Passport" will not be able to use them in these areas.

**Underwater Photography Pioneer Ernie Brooks II Passes.** A significant figure in the industry and well-loved by all who knew him, Ernie Brooks II passed away aged 85. The son of the man who created the Brooks Institute of Photography in Santa Barbara who learned his underwater craft with Hans Hass, Brooks II also worked with Jacques Cousteau and established the school's underwater photography courses. His friend Leslie Leaney credited Brooks' generosity with helping numerous nonprofits, among them the UC Santa Barbara Leaney-Brooks *Diving History Archive*: "A study of diving history that will outlive us both," said Leaney. "Ernie's spirit will live on in the photographs of his accomplished students and the hearts of those who were fortunate enough to have known him." *Santa Barbara Independent*

**Amazing Diving Stories by John Bantin.** We've all accumulated stories from our diving adventures, but *Undercurrent's* senior editor assembled 65 of his in a volume entitled *Amazing Diving Stories*. It's written in an anonymous third person style to avoid sounding like an ego trip and is a best-seller among diving titles. It's a great read, a great way to pass the time while cooped up awaiting the pandemic to end. It's available in paperback, on Kindle, and as an MP3 audiobook, which avoids battling British English spelling. [Get it on Amazon.](#)

**Alarms Sounded for U.S. Reefs.** A report released in November by NOAA took stock of the health of coral reefs under U.S. jurisdiction, from Guam and Hawaii in the Pacific to Florida and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the Atlantic and reported a dire outlook due to warming ocean, fishing, disease, and pollution from the land. Not surprising, the reefs off the Florida coast are the most degraded, with perhaps as little as two percent remaining. A bipartisan federal bill cosponsored by lawmakers from Hawaii and Florida will seek federal funding to help restore and manage the nation's reefs. One can only hope that the opponents' threatening cries of "government socialism" won't defeat the measure.

**Dive In with Guest Amos Nachoum.** The big-animal photographer and expedition leader joined Liz Taylor, ocean explorer and naturalist, and National Geographic Explorer in Residence Sylvia Earle, founder of *Mission Blue*, to discuss the ethical and non-invasive approach to photography and ecotourism. You can view it [here](#).



**Can a Swordfish Kill a Shark?** Scientists made a strange discovery on a beach in Libya this year. They found the remains of a 14-foot thresher shark with a swordfish bill sticking out from a deep wound between the creature's head and dorsal fin. There have been at least six other documented cases of swordfish mortally wounding blue sharks elsewhere in the Mediterranean. Threshers aren't known to prey on adult swordfish, so it is argued that the stabbing could have been a case of two deep-sea predators fighting over a meal or territory. *Smithsonian Magazine*

**Looking for a Kid's Christmas Gift?** How about this great little book, *Sharks for Kids: A Junior Scientist's Guide to Great Whites, Hammerheads, and Other Sharks in the Sea*, by marine biologist David McGuire, who runs Shark Stewards, a nonprofit dedicated to saving sharks worldwide. Factual, fun, with vivid images and in-home experiments, it's a great gift for kids ten and under, maybe ever older. [Order here](#).

**Stay Safe,**

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### **Undercurrent May Issue**

- [St.Helena. Is it the most difficult-to-get-to diving destination?](#)
- [Tough times for members of the diving industry - How are they coping?](#)
- [Tales of woe from those who found their trips cancelled.](#)
- [Can you trust that dive guide?](#)
- [Afloat and lost at the surface of the ocean - and how to avoid it.](#)

- [Bad Covid-19 News for divers? Experts don't agree.](#)
- and much, much, more

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