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A Freak Dive Boat Accident & A Regulator Servicing Tip

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July 28, 2021

Dear Fellow Diver:

Below is a shortened version of a monthly newsletter we send *Undercurrent* subscribers, who as a group are the most serious and well-traveled divers on the planet. Which is why they subscribe to *Undercurrent*.

We have begun producing issues again after a 15-month break for Covid. Subscribers last week received their first, with an undercover review of Cozumel diving, a lengthy review of a \$12 million wrongful death diving lawsuit, the legal issues involved in selling used equipment, and much more.

You may [become a subscriber to *Undercurrent* at a reduced \\$16.95 for six months](#) until we get back to a regular schedule with full-length issues. Your subscription will include four monthly issues, monthly emails, access to our enormous database of dive reviews from around the world, access to new travel reviews filed daily by our subscribers, and the opportunity to email any reader for questions about their trip so that you can plan yours. And, of course, updates on COVID and how it may affect your travel.

As has been the case for 46 years, if at any time during your renewed six-month subscription you are dissatisfied with *Undercurrent*, just send me an email at BenDDavison@undercurrent.org, and I'll give you a full refund.

Thanks so much, and here's a peek at just a few items we frequently send our readers.

Ben Davison, Publisher

Freak Accident Sinks Dive Boat. Seven people were left in the water when a dive boat, *Safari Diver* of South Florida Diving Headquarters, sank off Pompano Beach on July 19. Other boats raced to the rescue, and all seven passengers were saved, but they lost their car keys, wallets, phones, and anything else they had on board. An *Undercurrent* subscriber, diving the next day with South Florida Dive Company's *Black Pearl*, was told by a crew member that the vessel's propeller fouled the mooring line the captain had attached to the wreck they intended to dive. The rotating prop managed to winch the vessel's stern underwater before the captain

could grasp what was happening and stop the engine. The hull quickly filled with water and the vessel went down within minutes.

Check Your Passport: It's taking the U.S. State Department *at least* ten weeks to renew passports (in some cases even more), so if your passport is about to expire or if you are going to a country that requires your passport to be valid six months past the expiration date, or if you don't have enough blank pages to satisfy the country you're entering (usually 1-2, but a few require more), you had better get that renewal going. Passport expedition services like [Its Easy Passport and Visa](#), which for a fee have been able to get passports completed in just a few days, are also facing long delays. [Travel.State.Gov](#)



Regulator Servicing Tips. After a long lay-off, you may be surprised to find your regulator, while working perfectly when you last used it, now needs servicing. That's because the valve seat of the first stage can become engraved by its valve poppet while it's not being used. However, after you have it serviced, like anything highly tuned, it may still need time for the internal O-rings to bed in and then need further readjustment of its interstage pressure setting. If you can, check your recently serviced regulator by using it in a pool or on a local dive before traveling.

Morays Can Hunt on Land. A recent study has shown that moray eels can leave the water to hunt on land. Researchers from University College Sant Cruz videoed a snowflake moray wriggling out of the water to grab and swallow a piece of squid. How do they do that? Most fish need to be immersed in water to swallow, but the moray has a secondary or 'pharyngeal' jaw nestled deep in the throat, which enables them to hunt crab and other critters that might take refuge out on rocks. *New York Times*

Going to the Galapagos? Good news. From July 1, PCR tests are no longer mandatory for fully vaccinated visitors who can prove their final dose was at least 14

days before their arrival in the islands. Travelers who do not meet this criterion can still enter the Galapagos provided they can show proof of a negative PCR test or rapid antigen test within 72 hours of traveling. *Andean Travel Co.*



Don't Shine Your Light on the Clownfish at Night. Scientists studying reefs at Moorea in French Polynesia have found that if exposed for long periods of (human-generated) artificial light, orange-fin anemone fish, a species of clownfish, were less likely to survive than those living on reefs farther from human habitation. Those that did survive grew at only half the rate of their nocturnal-living counterparts. It was unclear why the light affected the growth rate, but one theory is that it attracts predators. Another theory is that it has adverse psychological effects because the fish get tired by not reducing their nighttime activity. *The Guardian*

Goodbye to Coral Reefs? In a recent study of underwater ecosystems, researchers at the University of Hawaii Manoa made the grim prediction that in a worst-case scenario, coral reefs might be extinct within 30 years if steps aren't taken immediately to mitigate climate change and elevated sea temperatures. Their study showed these ecosystems are among the most threatened by global climate change. *Hawaii News Now*

Is Koh Tao Safe for Visiting Divers? The pandemic has given everyone a chance to step back and take a fresh look at some travel destinations. With a prolific number of dive schools, is the Thai island of Koh Tao, a favorite among backpackers, safe for visiting divers? The numerous murders of foreigners on Koh Tao are not just a recent phenomenon. The cover-ups are nothing new either. There's no secret that many Thai holiday destinations are run by powerful families in the way of the Mafia, and it proves very difficult to get justice for crimes committed by locals. Mamamia.co.au

COVID is Surging in Indonesia. News reports from the archipelago on July 5 tell of a nationwide shortage of oxygen to treat sufferers. Hospitals have almost exhausted supplies, with one reporting that 63 patients died as a result. Indonesia has had the worst outbreak in South East Asia, with around 2.3 million cases. A lockdown was announced for the main island of Java. Meanwhile, Bali is in lockdown again, and no foreign visitors are allowed to enter. *BBC*

*Stay Safe
Wear a Mask, Get Vaccinated
Don't Share Your Air*

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Undercurrent July 2021 Issue

- *Undercurrent* subscribers are starting to travel again and it's not all good
- A trip to Cozumel is our first travel story since the COVID hiatus
- Saving the lives of countless Ridley turtles in Bali
- Selling your redundant dive gear? There's a risk to you, the seller
- We report of the tragic and unnecessary death of an

AOW trainee

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Members Only Exclusive: 840 pages with over 570 reports on over 50 destinations worldwide

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It's available free in 4 formats: PDF, Kindle (2 formats) and EPUB. You'll find reports from Africa to the Virgin Islands, Mexico to the Maldives, Indonesia to Vanuatu, Cayman to Cozumel, ... Detailed, honest reports that describe in detail what our subscribers experienced. All free to active subscribers.



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