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## More Coronavirus Travel News & Painful Octopuses

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# undercurrent

The Independent, Nonprofit Guide for Serious Divers Since  
1975



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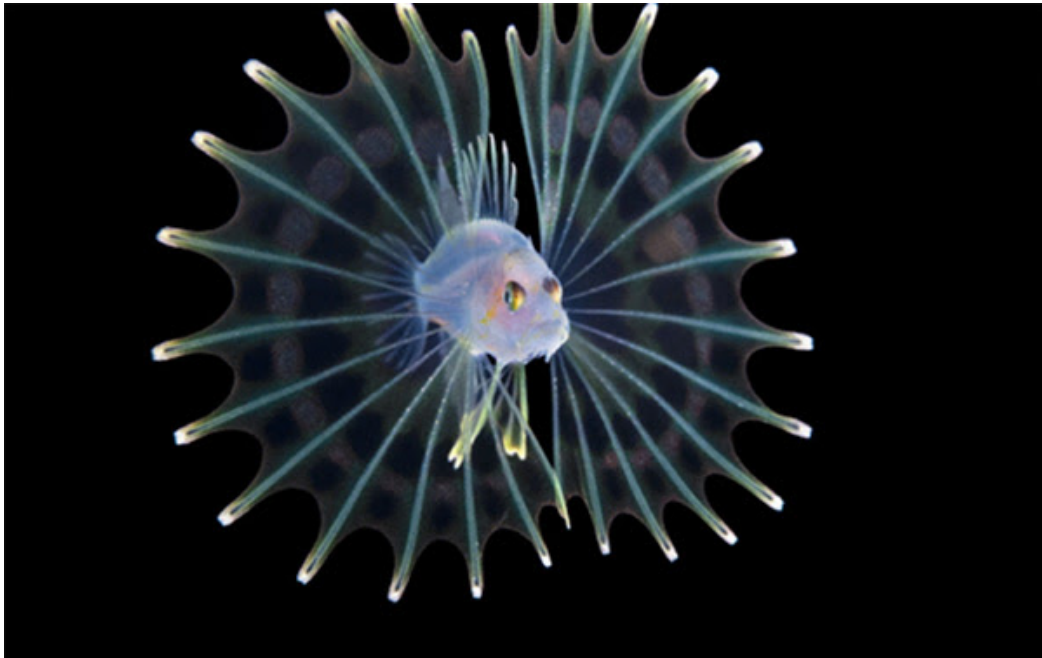


**Octopuses Feel Both Physical and Emotional Pain.** We all know how an octopus is a master of disguise and usually darkens in color when it becomes defensive or irritated by a diver. A new study by neurobiologist Robyn Crook (San Francisco State University) suggests octopuses are likely to feel and respond in way similar way to mammals. Octopuses are the most neurologically complex invertebrates. Using detailed measurements of spontaneous pain-associated behaviors and neural activity, Crook found evidence that the octopuses can feel negative emotions at times. So, kind divers, don't go about upsetting them. [Sciencealert.com](https://www.sciencemag.com/news/2021/04/octopuses-feel-pain)

**Something for World War II Buffs.** As far as WW2 wreckage is concerned, the Mediterranean is a treasure trove. Greece's Ministry of Culture & Sport has just announced the opening of 91 listed ship and aircraft wrecks to recreational divers,

with more on the way. The majority are deeper than 100-feet, with a preponderance of German JU88 bombers among British and Italian warplanes. *Divernet.com*

**The List of Countries Divers Can Visit Grows.** Besides Mexico and many Caribbean countries, Ecuador (and the Galapagos) is now open to those that can prove they have been vaccinated against COVID-19 and can present a PCR test or antigen test completed within three days of arrival. Belize accepts vaccinated travelers who can present a negative PCR test taken with less than 96 hours before arrival or a negative rapid antigen test made within 48 hours before arrival. In Saba, more than 85 per cent of the adult population has been vaccinated. Starting May 1, the island will welcome vaccinated tourists; non-vaccinated persons will still require 5-days quarantine. The Seychelles are welcoming vaccinated visitors, and divers ready to face colder water are accepted in Iceland. They will not be tested or quarantined if they can prove they are fully vaccinated. Coming home, however, may be complicated. As of now, the CDC requires all airline passengers headed to the U.S. to show proof of a negative Coronavirus test or recovery from COVID-19 before boarding a flight; airlines are required to deny boarding to those who don't comply. And once arrived in the U.S., you should have a follow-up test 3-5 days after return, whether or not vaccinated.



**Not So Giant Monsters of the Night.** Thanks to the super-macro lenses now available to underwater photographers, the daily movement of larval fish and invertebrates from the depths to the surface each evening (one of the largest migrations of organisms on the planet) can now be captured by camera. It's given rise to black-water photography. Most of the larvae are no bigger than a fingernail; others are even smaller. And they can easily be mistaken for bits of seaweed or drifting detritus. More and more photographers have captured stunning images and videos that reveal a secret world of bizarre, tiny animals that scientists have struggled for decades to better understand. Nowadays most underwater photography contests have a black-water category. Click [here](#) to view the article.

**The Caymans are Recruiting Divers to Fight Stony Coral Disease.** Impacting over 20 species of reef-building corals in local waters, stony coral disease seriously affected many Cayman reefs. To tackle the problem, the Department of Environment is contracting with qualified divers to apply topical antibiotics and remove infected corals. Pay is \$90 US for 7.5 hour a day. Preference will be given to local divers. People with an academic and practical marine sciences background and the ability to identify coral species are also encouraged to apply. Email [Rebecca.Jordison@gov.ky](mailto:Rebecca.Jordison@gov.ky) by 17 April.



**A Lonely Protest on Behalf of Sea Grass.** Thousands of marine species rely on sea grass for both food and habitat, but the world is losing seven per cent each year due to dredging, rising ocean temperatures, and other factors. Mauritian marine scientist, 24-year-old Shaama Sandooyea, donned a snorkel and dived below the waves to protest above the world's largest seagrass meadow in a remote stretch of the western Indian Ocean. The campaign draws attention to a U.N. goal of persuading countries to protect at least 30 per cent of the planet's land and ocean by 2030. Eel Grass can also reduce seawater's acidity to preindustrial levels, creating refuges for animals that can't tolerate that byproduct of climate change. *Reuters/San Francisco Chronicle*

**The Myth of Sustainable Fishing as it Destroys Our Oceans.** In his latest production *Seaspiracy*, 27-year-old British filmmaker Ali Tabrizi calls out the commercial fishing industry for plundering the oceans and indicts the myth of sustainable fishing. Since its release, the film has climbed to the top ten in *Netflix* documentaries. With interviews with famed biologist Sylvia Earle, and with each new scene, Tabrizi reveals the fraud, corruption, and greed currently destroying the oceans. As *Sea Shepherd's* Paul Watson says, we're strip-mining the sea. It's a depressing story that needs to be told, but no industrialized fishing is ecologically sustainable. *EcoWatch*





**Maldives Sharks Trouble?** In 1998, rising sea temperatures destroyed the spectacular coral banks of the atolls and many feared it was the end of the scuba industry in the Maldives. However, divers refocused their interest on the sharks and mantas that frequented the current-producing tidal areas of the channels or kandus, and a robust liveaboard dive industry developed. Now, despite denials from some interested parties, it has been reported in the *Maldives Times*, Minister of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture, Zaha Waheed, has said lifting the ban 'presents a profitable revenue-generation strategy for the state.' After an 11-year ban on the activity, other officials are looking to resume commercial shark fishing. This has resulted in international condemnation and an increasing backlash from some stalwart members of the dive community who are threatening to boycott the country once Coronavirus lockdown is lifted. State your opposition by [signing this petition](#) started by a Maldives citizen.

**Don't Be Tempted to Take a Pet Home!** During a regular x-ray inspection of luggage being loaded on a Baltra airport flight in the Galapagos on March 28, authorities discovered 185 recently hatched giant tortoises. Not more than 3 months old, they may have been stolen from one of three giant-tortoise breeding centers in the islands. An investigation has begun. *Galapagos National Park*

**Breathless Record-Breaking!** Croatian Budimir Buda Šobat, 54, recently held his breath underwater for 24 minutes 33 seconds to break his own in the Guinness Book of Records. The former body-builder, has who became one of the world's top ten breath-holders, did it in a swimming pool in the town of Sisak, while under supervision from doctors. His training has prepared him for involuntary muscle spasms that occur around 18 minutes beneath the water due to a lack of oxygen. Šobat's record breaking attempt was also performed in the hope of raising funds for disabled children. *Daily Mail*

**Coronavirus Errand of Mercy.** While Truk Lagoon has been closed to visitors, *MV.Odyssey*, the luxurious diving liveaboard, is being put to good use, providing accommodation and logistical support for local medical personnel administering COVID vaccinations to residents living on remote islands in the atoll. The team not only vaccinate for Coronavirus but also administer MMR vaccines to children. The medical team stays on board for five days per trip, while setting up temporary clinics onboard. It's expected to take three months to reach all the islands. <https://www.trukodyssey.com/>

**Will Those Pacific Islands Survive without Tourism?** After a year of COVID restrictions, many favorite resorts in the Pacific are in danger of economic devastation. While many Pacific islands managed to stay completely COVID-free, they've suffered from algae-filled pools and shuttered hotel windows as a sign of their government's decisions to close their borders. Fiji alone employed more than 150,000 in the tourism sector, providing around half of its gross domestic product. Mass unemployment also stalks the people Vanuatu, the Cook Islands, Rarotonga and other island nations. The government's rescue packages were funded through now-depleted cash reserves and borrowings from development banks. Their future looks bleak. *The Guardian*



**Living Life on the Edge.** A thousand times more potent than cyanide; that's the venom of a blue-ring octopus. This tiny creature is armed with enough poison to kill more than 20 people. However, a Virginia woman, Kaylin Phillips, visiting Bali in March, didn't know that when she picked up one of these cute little creatures, passed it around between her friends, and posted video of it on TikTok. Biologist Forrest Galante said, if she'd been bitten, she'd have been dead within minutes, thanks to its neuro-toxic venom that will shut down your breathing. Amazingly, she, and her unknowing friends got away with it. *Inside Edition*

**Are You Really Ready to Go Diving?** Don't be so sure. If you've been out of the water a year or more, your skills have degraded, and Dan Orr says you need to give some serious thought about just how you get back into diving. Read this important piece [here](#).

**The Deepest Wreck Dive in History.** A crewed submersible, manned by U.S. exploration team, has reached the four-mile-deep (21,320-foot deep) wreck of the *USS. Johnston*, a 378-foot-long destroyer, sunk during the Philippines' Battle of Leyte in 1944. It's the deepest shipwreck dive in history. The destroyer was sunk by fire from the largest warship ever constructed -- the Japanese battleship *Yamato*. The Caladan Oceanic-backed expedition found the bow, bridge and mid-section intact, with the hull number 557 still visible. *The Guardian*

*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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