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## The World's Deepest-Diving Homemade Submarine

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Undercurrent by Ben Davison <maildist@undercurrent.org>  
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# undercurrent

*The Independent, Nonprofit Guide for Serious Divers Since 1975*



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October 29, 2020



**The World's Deepest Diving Homemade Submarine.** What did you do during the COVID lockdown? Canadian Hank Pronk, of Fairmont, B.C., has built his own little submarine, and it's not his first. His latest, the *Elementary 3000*, has been pressure-tested to 2,900 feet in a pressure chamber in Vancouver, and he took it for a dive 400 feet deep in Kootenay Lake in September. This winter, he plans to build an indoor swimming pool so he can dive in his submarines when the local lakes are frozen over. *Columbia Valley Pioneer*

**Liveboard Dive Boat *Oceanic Explorer* Sinks.** On October 25, the *Oceanic Explorer III* sank during a typhoon off Bauan, in the Batangas area of the Philippines, south of Manila. One crew member died, while seven other people were rescued. The 128-foot steel vessel built in 1979, had ten guest cabins and accommodated up to 28 passengers. *GMA News Online*

**Corrections to *Conception* Inquiry News.** Some errors crept into the editing of our report to you last week. While the National Transportation Safety Board could not pin down the cause of the fire, the *Conception's* wiring is also a suspect, as well as the host of diver equipment being charged, or the receptacle for cigarette butts, as we reported. However, the Board is not ruling out an unknown cause. The NTSB inquiry was not the final inquiry; the U.S. Coast Guard is conducting its own investigation. An ongoing criminal investigation may result in serious charges. There were 34 fatalities, including one crew member. The unrecorded fire caused by a charging battery aboard *M.Y. Vision* occurred 11 months before the *Conception* tragedy, not years back, as we stated. [This link](#) is to a synopsis of the NTSB meeting rather than its report.

**Grand Cayman Reef Sites Closed Due to Coral Disease.** Forty-three North Wall dive sites have been closed to divers. Dive sites from Bear's Paw off the coast of West Bay to Delia's Delight, off North Side, will be closed, hopefully stopping or reducing the spread by divers of stony coral tissue loss disease. The sites are predominantly along the North Sound entrance, the only area so far known to be impacted by the disease, which is having disastrous effects in other parts of the Caribbean. *Cayman Compass*

**Diving in Hong Kong? Read About it Here.** While Hong Kong is not the first place that comes to mind when choosing a distant diving destination, we are publishing a solid review of diving there by Christopher Dillon, a former chairman of the Hong Kong-based South China Diving Club, extolling the underwater virtues of these islands. First published in *The Correspondent*, [Dillon's article is available here](#) for your review.

**Damn and Blast!** The RAF dropped a dozen monster 5.4-ton dam-buster bombs during an attack on the German cruiser *Luetzow* in Poland in 1945, but one failed to explode. Well, it has now, with a huge blast. After the bomb was discovered 40-feet deep in a Baltic shipping canal, with its nose just sticking out of the silt, Polish Navy divers attempted to deflagrate the explosive by gradually burning it away with a remotely controlled device, but it exploded prematurely. Nobody was hurt because 750 nearby residents had been evacuated. You can [see a video here](#).

**Update on Getting to Bonaire.** There is still a ban on flights to Bonaire from the U.S., but Curaçao is open, and Americans (from NY, NJ and CT) and Canadians with a recent (within 72 hours) negative COVID test can connect to Bonaire via a connecting flight from Curaçao. Bonaire welcomes you if you can get there. [traveloffpath.com](#) & [infobonaire.com](#)

**An Ecological Threat to the Southern Caribbean.** A huge oil tanker, the *Nabarima*, containing approximately 1.3 million barrels of crude oil, has taken on water and is leaning to one side off Venezuela's coast in the Gulf of Paria. The ship is threatening to pollute the waters and ecosystem of nearby Trinidad and Tobago -- and the livelihoods of those who depend upon it. The U.S. embassy has urged immediate action to prevent an environmental catastrophe. The vessel is operated by Petrosucre. An oil spill threatens to be five-time worse than that of the Exxon Valdez in Alaska in 1989. *Newsweek*

**David Attenborough -- A Life on Our Planet.** David Attenborough's latest film is his witness statement for the environment, tracing his career of more than 60 years, revealing how the planet's biodiversity has diminished during that time. Astonishing nature photography accompanies his retrospective. To illustrate the emptying of oceans, the director has intercut thriving coral habitats with images of large gutted fish, frozen and stacked for market. As such, it represents probably the most important documentary you might watch during COVID isolation. It's now running on *Netflix*.

**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?](#)
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