TOPSIDE

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TRAINING SCHEDULE

A general reminder that all training course materials (training request, physical, equipment measurement form, swim test, etc.) for the April/May Working Diver course are due ASAP to NDC.

Training requests are being accepted for the **September 2002 Working Diver** and **Divemaster** courses. Please contact Laurie Barber if you have any questions about diving class requirements or enrollment procedures.

A Diver Refresher course for working divers and scientific diver candidates is tentatively scheduled for August 2002. Training dates will be determined by the NDC schedule as well as prospective student's schedules. Please contact LT Bill Cobb for more information about this refresher course.

The following classes are scheduled for:

2002

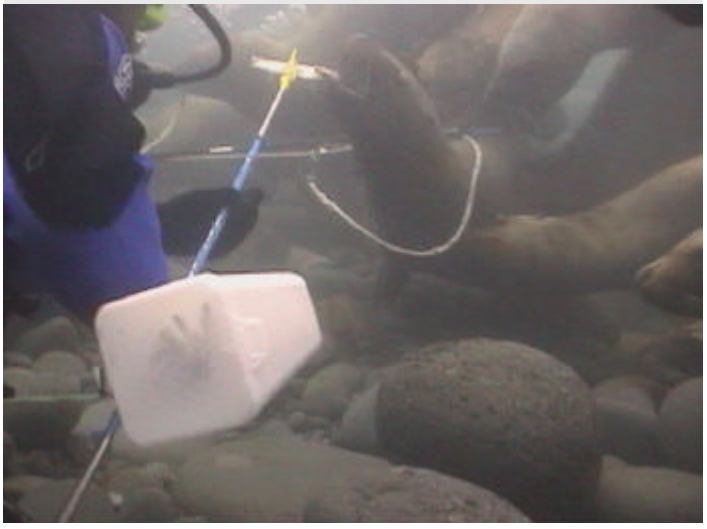
Mar 26 - 29	Diver Refresher	Seattle, WA
Apr 29 - May 17	Working Diver	Seattle, WA
May 13 - 17	Divemaster	Seattle, WA
Aug - TBD	Diver Refresher	Seattle, WA
Sep 09 - 27	Working Diver	Seattle, WA
Sep 23 - 27	Divemaster	Seattle, WA

2003

Jan 13 - 31	Working Diver	Key West, FL
Jan 27 - 31	Divemaster	Key West, FL

"STELLAR" CAPTURES

Six NOAA divers from the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Seattle recently completed a very successful Steller sea lion capture trip in Alaskan waters. These underwater captures were made in support of an ongoing study of the foraging ecology, survival, and food habits of Steller sea lions in the Gulf of Alaska and Aleutian Islands. Juvenile Steller sea lions were targeted near rookeries around the Kodiak and Krenitzin Islands area. Divers used bait, the natural curiosity of the juvenile sea lions, and topside support to capture 22 animals for critical measurements and instrumentation. Bait was used to lure the sea lions' heads through a surface buoyed noose. Once the noose had "captured" the animal, the divers then surfaced and topside personnel retrieved the animal. Captures were made in depths ranging from 6 - 41 feet on animals weighing up to 300 lbs! Congratulations on a safe and successful trip under these challenging conditions!



ALT. AIR SOURCE UPDATE

The Sherwood "Shadow" in-line second stage regulator has been selected as the alternate air source (emergency regulator in reality) to be issued by the NOAA SEP program. The Shadow will serve as an emergency spare regulator (in lieu of buddy breathing) in an out-of-air situation or in the event a diver's main regulator were to fail. It is not a spare air source, though (i.e., will not function if air in the diver's scuba cylinder is exhausted). One hundred units have been ordered and distribution to NOAA divers will begin shortly. Depending on funding, the procurement and distribution of these units to all NOAA SEP divers may be complete by the end of the calendar year.

Sherwood Shadow

Shadow Drysuit Application

DIVE EQUIPMENT INVENTORY

A new SEP dive equipment inventory database is currently under development. Eventually this database will allow all NOAA divers with SEP equipment to view their equipment (including brand, model, quantity, serial numbers, etc.) through the online dive log system. The first step in this process will be to verify equipment currently in your possession. This will be accomplished through an online form that will be filled out individually by SEP equipped divers. More to follow as the equipment database and online form near completion.

FLYING AFTER DIVING

A quick review on flying after diving (or any ascent to altitude after diving) because the rules have changed in recent years.

Ascending to altitude (aircraft, mountain pass, etc.) lowers the ambient pressure which allows nitrogen dissolved in your tissues to more readily come out of solution. This increased off gassing can result in nitrogen bubble formation that causes decompression sickness. In order to lessen the chances of this happening, **NOAA divers should use table 4-3 "Required Surface Interval Before Ascent to Altitude After Diving" located on page 4-28 in the NOAA Diving Manual.** This table is also located on the NDC web site (under Dive Planning/Dive Planning Forms, Tables & Formulas).

Use of this table is fairly simple once a few of the basic rules are understood. Enter the table matrix using your highest repetitive group designator (RGD) in the last 24 hours (not necessarily your final dive RGD). Find the altitude you will ascend to in feet (assume 8000' for commercial aircraft). At the intersection of your RGD and ascent altitude is the time you must wait from your final dive (even if the RGD used was not from your final dive) in hours and minutes. Only after waiting that interval after your last dive can it be considered safe to ascend to that altitude. It's worth remembering that bubbles that form because of decreased ambient pressure (ascending to altitude) may not go back into solution once pressure is increased back to or near sea level. Contact the Diving Center if you have any questions about flying after diving.