



TOPSIDE



APRIL 2005

The NDP Newsletter for NOAA Diving Supervisors and Divers

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TRAINING SCHEDULE

Dive Supervisors take a look at your current roster and see if you need to get people into the September class! It's already filling up.

These are the application forms required for an applicant to the Working diver classes.

- NDP Training and Authorization Request form
- NOAA NDC Standardized Equipment Measurement form
- **Completed** NOAA Diving Physical package, (there are new forms for NOAA Corps officers and Wage Marine employees DD-2808, 2807-1)

These forms are available at the following web address: www.ndc.noaa.gov/forms.html. Fax or mail completed forms to NDC.

Course schedules through January 2006:

May 9 - May 27	Working Diver	Seattle
May 23 - May 27	Divemaster	Seattle
Sept 12 - Sept 30	Working Diver	Seattle
Sept 26 - Sept 30	Divemaster	Seattle
Jan 9 - Jan 27	Working Diver	Key West
Jan 23 - Jan 27	Divemaster	Key West

Please contact Laurie Barber at 206-526-6695 or via e-mail at laurie.barber@noaa.gov with any questions.



REGULATIONS REMINDER

NAO 209-123 states that working dives must be performed by NOAA qualified Working divers only. All units are reminded that NOAA qualified Scientific divers are **not** allowed to accompany a working diver on, or participate in any working dive.

The reason for this is that the temptation to assist in tasks, for which NOAA scientific divers are not trained in, may create a situation that could be dangerous to not only the Scientific diver, but the Working diver as well.



COLD OR ARDOUS DIVING

Your body can absorb and/or retain more nitrogen when performing cold (any time a diver is cold, regardless of water temp) or arduous (strenuous) dives making you more susceptible to DCS. Therefore, when using diving tables, it's recommended that you build in a safety factor that avoids pushing the limits of the table used. This "cushion" can be created by using the next longer bottom time, or a longer surface interval. Whatever method is used, the diver should avoid the maximum no decompression time for the depth dived, and take special care to monitor physical changes or fatigue levels during and after dives of this sort.



N. C. LIONFISH SURVEYS

Despite adverse weather conditions created by fog and wind, researchers from NOAA's Beaufort, NC lab conducted the first winter-time decompression dive operations off the coast of North Carolina in February. This research was to determine the winter time distribution of the invasive Indo-Pacific lionfish within the Atlantic. Dive operations were conducted aboard the NOAA Ship OREGON II and were supported by divers and funding from NOAA's Undersea Research Center (NURC) in Wilmington. Researchers were able to conduct two dive evolutions each day deploying from the OREGON II's forward well deck cutout and diving to depths ranging from 115 to 135 fsw. All divers wore dry suits as water temperature ranged from 15- 20°C. Each dive consisted of a three person team and lasted 30 minutes with air being used as the primary bottom mix. Decompression protocols utilized the NOAA Hamilton dive tables specifically formulated for depths up to 150 ft on air with in-water oxygen decompression above 20ft. One safety diver was deployed during the decompression phase of each dive evolution and there were 2 additional standby divers geared up and ready to dive if needed.

This winter time sample collection was very important to answer the central questions of whether this species of lionfish were over-wintering off North Carolina and if they are reproducing during the winter. The ability of lionfish to survive the winter off North Carolina has been questioned due to their sub-tropical to tropical distribution in their native range. The divers found lionfish on every dive so they know that they are over-wintering at sites > 115fsw and also that they are not spawning in the winter time in North Carolina. Future surveys will be necessary to further define the inshore limit of lionfish distribution off North Carolina.

Specific activities conducted by the divers included;

- 1) Visual transect surveys
- 2) Underwater videography
- 3) Deployment of temperature sensors
- 4) Collection of lionfish specimens.

Divers also received training and familiarization from NURP personnel on the deployment and use of the Hyperlite S.O.S hyperbaric stretcher prior to departure.



NMFS Beaufort divers preparing to deploy from NOAA Ship OREGON II's cutout for Lionfish collection and surveys.

NOAA ID CARD UPDATE

During the recent NDSB meeting, Steve Baumgartner, UDS for the FKNMS (Lower Region) requested that the board reverse its previous decision to discontinue issuing NOAA Diver ID cards to non-federal employees. He indicated that the current policy hinders their attempts to create a seamless workgroup with no distinction between the federal and state workers. Following discussion, the board reached the consensus to overturn the original decision and to issue the cards to all NOAA divers. To help identify appropriate NOAA Diver ID card to be issued, the board recommended that eligibility be linked to participation in the SEP program – that is, those that receive NOAA dive equipment would be issued an ID card. It was also recommended that the word “equivalent” be included on all ID cards issued to non-federal employees. What this means to you as a diver, is that if you are currently participating in the SEP program as either a NOAA Scientific or Working diver, and don't have a NOAA dive card, contact your UDS to get a card. If you have any questions about this, please contact LTJG Eric Johnson at the NDC.

