



Northeast Dive News

January 2010

THE Local Diving Specialists

WINTER DIVING

What mysteries await beneath the ice?

THE 12 PRESERVES

Underwater
preserves
of Michigan

KINGSTON WRECK DIVING MECCA

Lake Ontario a mass graveyard of old ships
becomes a hotspot for divers

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Volume 6 Issue 1

\$1.95 US/\$2.25 Canada

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Dive News Magazine is committed to promoting the sport of scuba diving in the Northeast and Midwest. We will present a practical, unbiased point of view regarding all aspects of the sport of scuba diving.

The Dive News Magazine believes in honesty and integrity in business and will support all efforts related to this. We encourage readers to participate in determining the content of this publication by giving us their opinions on the types of articles they would like to see. We invite letters to the editor, manuscripts and photographs related to diving or diving-related business. Send us your stories and photos!

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The Dive News Magazine reserves the right to refuse service to anyone it chooses. The contents of Northeast and Midwest Dive News are opinions of individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher, editor or any of its staff. The publishers and contributors assume no responsibility for any mishap claimed to be a result of use of this material. Diving is an adventure sport and contains inherent risks. Improper use of diving equipment or improper diving techniques may result in serious injury or death. Readers are advised to use their own best judgment in each individual situation.

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BEDROCK PUBLICATIONS
 P.O. Box 1494
 Oak Harbor, WA 98277



◀ **Cover Image by Carlos Hiller**

Carlos Hiller was born in Santa Fe, Argentina in 1972. From early childhood, he has shown special interest in studying painting, music and biology, and during adolescence he made unusual journeys to explore his own country.

Since 1996 he has made individual and collective exhibitions in various art galleries and cultural centers. Collectors of his work ranged from Holland, Germany, England, United States, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Costa Rica, Hawaii, and New Zealand, etc.

Find out more about Carlos and his amazing works at www.carloshiller.com.

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NORTHEAST US DIVES

10 Kingston: Wreck Diving Mecca

Kenn Feigelman has been around the world diving on wrecks and filming aquatic wildlife for most of his life. But for all the places Feigelman has been, nowhere has been more interesting than in his own backyard: the eastern waters of Lake Ontario. Come explore his backyard with him. *By Jordan Press*



12 Winter's a (n)ice dive season

When the temperatures dip below freezing, and the bitter winds of winter begin to blow, many divers retreat to the comfort of their living rooms but there are some divers who still need their diving fix. Join these adventurous souls as they extend the local dive season and conquer what awaits beneath the ice. *By Michael Salvarezza and Christopher P. Weaver*



MIDWEST DIVES

18 The 12 Michigan Preserves -

Preserving North American Shipping History They are the final resting places for much of the shipping history of the North American Great Lakes. Twelve areas of water set aside for the preservation of the past. Shipwrecks come alive through the mask of divers from all over the world as we make a stop in Michigan to explore the 12 Michigan Underwater Preserves. *By Rick Stratton and Jamie Farris*



TROPICAL DESTINATIONS

24 Costa Rica - A Diver's Close-up of Biodiversity

Costa Rica is a diver's window into biodiversity offering its visitors a grand look through an oceanic looking glass that would have wowed even Alice with its abundant sea life and intriguing volcanic formations. Visit a land where the oceans are brimming with sea-going experience and slip your fins into the waters of Costa Rica. *By Carlos Hiller and Rick Stratton*





email Bob at: nediver@sternereditorial.com

Now that the temperatures are lower than your post-holiday bank account, it's time for the sport that can be enjoyed only in northern climes: ice diving.

That's right. Just because local dive boats are shrink-wrapped in plastic at marinas and the busted budget won't support a trip to paradise doesn't mean we can't have fun. Dive shops from the Eastern Seaboard through the Great Lakes offer outings to ice-covered lakes and rivers this month and next. Those who have never tried ice diving can add another certification to their log book.

They are joined by seasoned divers from earlier years in a truly awesome experience. Life doesn't stop when the surface freezes over, it just slows down. Freshwater fish that had been skittish in the summer laze about. Wrecks that had been obscured in murky waters often can be seen in crystal clarity from stem to stern. The colder the top-side temperatures the more spectacular are the ice formations overhead. And the lower air temperatures plunge, the warmer the water will feel to the diver.



For the support crew, though, icy temps are a different matter

Ice diving is more than just seeing your favorite site in a new light. It's about camaraderie. Out of the cold will come a warmth of friendship that will last a lifetime. And those bonds are more dear than the price of any mid-winter trip to more luxurious resort you can't afford now anyway.

We treasure the friendships we've built

with you, our readers, over the years. We hope during the winter round of Northeast and Midwest dive shows that we'll get to renew our bonds with members of the region's biggest dive club.

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WINTER'S A (N)ICE DIVE SEASON

Photo © Eco Photo Explorers

By Michael Salvarezza and Christopher P. Weaver

When the temperatures dip below freezing, and the bitter winds of winter begin to blow, many divers retreat to the comfort of their living rooms. With gear stowed and log books closed, many Northern divers begin to dream of warm summer days and the dives to come. Some divers escape the grip of the ice and snow and travel to far away destinations, leaving the winter behind for a brief time to get their diving fix.

But for the adventurous souls who wish to extend the local dive season and conquer a new challenge, a different diving frontier awaits beneath the ice.

Ice diving is one of the most exhilarating activities local divers can undertake. Despite obvious dangers, ice diving can be conducted safely with the proper training,

equipment and techniques. The rigors of diving below ice, with water temperatures at or near freezing and with surface conditions even worse at times, can be physically and mentally challenging.

But the rewards are great. There is the thrill of penetrating below ice covered surfaces, and the sense of accomplishment of having conquered yet another hostile environment. Ice divers see that the aquatic world continues to thrive despite the harshness of the season.

Ice diving should never be conducted without proper training from a qualified dive instructor as part of a certification course. You may find that your local dive shop does not offer the course, but don't despair! With a little research, you should be able find a shop that does. We took our PADI Ice Diver certification at a dive shop three hours away

from home, but it was well worth the effort.

The course consists of several hours of classroom work followed by a series of dives out on the ice. Because of the need for ice-covered surfaces, dives are often conducted on inland lakes where the surface has frozen completely over. There are numerous locations in the Northeast and Midwest. Two New York locations are Lake Ronkonkoma on Long Island and Oneida Lake, near Syracuse, but there are many others throughout the region.

Beyond training, ice divers must pay careful attention to preparing the dive site; they must be diligent about using the right equipment, strictly adhere to established procedures and make sure that adequate protection from the elements is available.

Before divers can enter the water, a proper dive site must be created by first evaluating



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the ice. The ice must be thick and strong enough to support the entire dive team and transport vehicles such as snowmobiles. It's also a good idea to measure the bottom depth if you are not familiar with the area. Once the ice is determined to be safe, the next step is to prepare the dive site.

Cutting the dive hole requires special cutting equipment such as handsaws, breaker bars, chippers, augers and/or chain saws. Triangular holes are preferred because there is less ice to cut and the corner angles make it easier to enter and exit the water. The hole should be large enough to accommodate two divers and a safety diver at one time. On the surface, a visible marker should mark the site. Often, a tall branch is used, which can be left behind to indicate that there was an opening here that is now being left to re-freeze.

Once the hole has been created, additional markings can help divers under the ice to more easily find their way back to the opening. If there is a covering of snow, concentric circles are dug in the snow surrounding the site at predetermined intervals, along with intersecting lines and arrows that point toward the opening. Ambient light will penetrate below the surface in the shape of the markings, which can help a disoriented diver find the way out from under the ice. A surface design shaped like a wagon wheel is the most commonly used system.

With the site created and secured, preparation for the actual dives begins. Of critical importance is the proper functioning of dive equipment, the adequacy of thermal protection and, perhaps most important of all, the securing of a safe and effective rope system.

Regulators must be rated for use in cold-water environments. Divers exploring below the ice must guard against regulator freeze-ups, which inevitably cause free-flows. Some divers employ special shunts on the hoses near their second stages to enable them to quickly turn off the flow of air in the event of a free-flow. Divers also must be careful not to exhale into the second stage while above the water in freezing conditions, as this will frequently cause a freeze-up. Redundant air supplies are another important safety consideration.

Divers should not under-estimate the effect of cold water. Drysuit divers should use undergarments rated for these temperatures.

Integrated glove systems that allow air to flow around the hands, are beneficial as is an ice cap underneath the regular wet or dry hood.

Because of the danger of diving in an overhead environment such as a frozen lake, ice diving is a team activity that is made up of support personnel, divers, tenders and safety divers.

The line tender plays out and takes in line so that the diver does



Photo © Eco Photo Explorers

Tom Lee of Hoboken, N.J., Dive Center descends beneath the ice.

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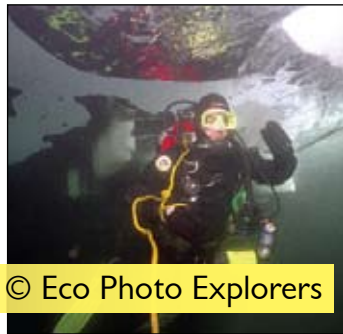
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not get tangled. Ropes are attached to the diver's chest harness via a locking carabiner to minimize the likelihood of the rope disengaging from the diver. Safety ropes leading to the divers are secured to the ice surface using ice-screws, which prevent the rope from accidentally slipping into the water.

A safety diver is always suited up and ready to enter the water at a moment's notice to assist the primary diver in the event of a problem. Safety divers will always have their own line tender.

Communication to the diver or to the surface is accomplished by simple line pulls. Each series of tugs on the line means a different thing. It is vitally important that divers and tenders agree and understand all rope commands. While there may be variations to these techniques employed in different locations, the general principles are the same. Yet because different techniques might be used, it is all the more reason to carefully rehearse with all the divers working the site what techniques will be used on the dive.

While divers in the water are often comfortable, the surface conditions can be quite harsh. The flat surface of a lake affords little shelter from the wind, and the temperatures may be far below freezing. Some form of protection from the elements should be brought onto the ice if at all possible to guard against hypothermia while donning and doffing equipment as well as keeping divers warm between dives. A small tent can serve as a windbreak, which can mean all the difference while waiting on the surface between dives.

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Beneath the ice, divers enter a completely alien and spellbinding world. Often, the winter water is clearer, affording unheard of visibility. And, while the winter temperatures have chilled the lake water, fish have nowhere to go. They still thrive in these frigid waters. Divers can often observe aquatic life that is often difficult to approach in the summer months.

And for those who are looking for activities beyond observing the underwater environment, ice divers often search for sunken equipment and other items of interest. For example, in many northern lakes, ice divers are sometimes approached to salvage sunken snowmobiles and other types of equipment that have fallen through the ice.

So now that the snow is falling, temperatures are below zero and the wind is howling from the north, it seems like a good day for diving. ■

Michael Salvatorezza and Christopher P. Weaver have documented a world of adventure topside and underwater through their Long Island, N.Y.-based business Eco-Photo Explorers. They are popular lecturers and their work has been published in leading diving and general interest magazines. Learn more at ecophotoexplorers.com.

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FILM FESTIVAL - SNEAK PREVIEW



Our World-Underwater will hold its annual Film Festivals on Feb. 19th and 20th at Donald Stevens Convention Center, Rosemont, Ill., where it is holding its 40th annual show.

Ty Sawyer will emcee the Friday Film Festival from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. Sawyer is an award-winning writer, photographer and editorial director of the Bonnier Dive Group and "Islands" magazine. He is also a frequent on-camera expert and personality for the Travel Channel. He will introduce a virtual who's who in diving photography and video making.

Leigh Bishop, one of Britain's foremost deep wreck photographers and videographers, profiles the Lost Liners – an intense guide to some of the most significant sunken ocean liners in the world. **Michel Gilbert** and **Danielle Alary**, award-winning, lecturers, photography and multimedia producers, will show "Her Majesty" on the wreck of the Rhone. **Jason Heller**, a New York City based commercial photographer specializing in underwater, travel and lifestyle photography and founder and publisher of DivePhotoGuide.com will present winners of the OWU, DivePhotoGuide.com and Wetpixel video contest.

Danny Mauro, producer, director and writer of four documentary television series in the undersea genre, will present National Geographic Channel's, "The Shipsinkers", a video showing the big business of artificial reefs, and documenting efforts of Canadians who are leaders in the technology and techniques to create them. **David Trotter**, Great Lakes shipwreck hunter, historian, author and video producer will present "Fury of the Sea", a collection one-of-kind images of the

Great Lakes greatest shipwrecks. **Valerie van Heest**, Director of Michigan Shipwreck Research Associates and member of the Women Divers Hall of Fame, will give "Deep Visions", an artistic look at the Great Lakes shipwrecks through images by top Midwest underwater photographers.

Wes Skiles will emcee the Saturday Film Festival from 7 to 9:30 p.m. Skiles is a director, producer and cameraman who has been actively exploring, mapping, and filming the underwater caves of the world for over 30 years. He will introduce the lineup which includes, **Howard and Michele Hall**, film directors and producers who are perhaps best known for their underwater IMAX films. They will give a "Behind the Scenes" description of the challenges of making underwater wildlife films in 70-millimeter IMAX 3D. **Jonathan Bird**, an award-winning professional underwater cinematographer and photographer, will share an alluring profile of "Diving the Mexican Underground", a video of the Cenotes of southern Mexico. **Paul Cater Deaton**, after shooting on six continents over three decades has become an award-winning writer, producer, director and cinematographer. His work has reached audiences all over the world via MTV, HBO, VH1, Showtime, Warner Brothers, Paramount, Tri-Star, the Travel Channel, E!

"A Lateral Line" is a new film produced by award-winning filmmakers **Joe Romeiro** and **Bill Fisher** that takes viewers on a journey to see pelagic sharks that can only be found in the wild. They produce films that help aid in the conservation of sharks and the marine environment. **Michel Gilbert** and **Danielle Alary**, will present their

latest multimedia piece, which was three years in the making. **Nancy McGee**, the assistant and protégé of filming legend Stan Waterman will show her profiles of Fiji and Tonga.

Greg Lashbrook and **Kathy Johnson** are authors, artists and experts in Great Lakes marine life with over 40 years of experience. As a special tribute to the Our World-Underwater show's 40th anniversary the couple will present a commemorative painting that Greg created underwater! **Jim and Pat Stayer**, authors and videographers who have been diving in the Great Lakes and around the world for more than 35 years, will present a stunningly beautiful video "Magical Maldives with Mantas and Whale Sharks". **Michael Salvarezza** and **Christopher Weaver**, a prolific writer and photojournalism team who have presented at many shows, will present the EcoPhoto Explorers, "Antarctica: Journey to the Frozen Wilderness".

Capping the show, **Stan Waterman**, will present "Night of the Mantas" truly sensational footage of manta feeding off Hawaii's Kona Coast. **Patrick Hammer**, the founder of Scuba Emporium and OWU Event Producer, will present the OWU Award.

See website for more details.



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