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Scuba & H2O Adventures Magazine

DISCOVERING HISTORY
LIFE & DEATH IN THE BIKINI ATOLL

CAPTIVATING MANATEE
THROUGH A PHOTOGRAPHER'S LENS

DIVING IN NORWAY
LAND OF THE VIKING



SCUBA & H2O
ADVENTURES

ALBERTA
EXPLORE & DISCOVER

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ABOUT THE COVER:
Reflected in Cyprus:
High Tide Photo by marine
life photographer
David Schrichte

Publisher: Selene Muldowney

selene.dnn@gmail.com

Senior Editor: John Tapley

dnn.editor@outlook.com

Interns:

Andrew Pierzchala

Reagan Muldowney

Regional Correspondents:

Gary Lehman - NE

Gene Muchanski - SE

CEO and Advertising Sales:

Rick Stratton

rickstratton.dnn@gmail.com

www.scubaH2Omag.com



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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 dive-related business. Send us your stories and photos!

Presenting the LIDA 2018 Film Festival

*Text and Photography by
Michael Salvarezza and Christopher Weaver (Eco-Photo Explorers)*

On Saturday, January 20, 2018, the tri-state dive community will once again convene on the campus of Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York, for an evening of underwater entertainment. The Long Island Diver's Association (LIDA) Film Festival is an annual tradition that helps to shake the winter doldrums and inspire dreams of dive adventures to come.

This year, a compelling slate of speakers, photographers and filmmakers will be featured at the film festival.

Larry Cohen and Olga Torrey will be taking the audience on a journey south of the border in their program titled "The Many Faces of Mexico". Peter Venoutsos will introduce the audience to "The Seals of Shoal Island." Ryan Christie and Ashley DaCosta will share their ex-

periences from "A Summer of Diving" while John Moyer will present "Art Treasures of the Andrea Doria".

Long Island's local marine environment consists of many different ecosystems. Soren Dahl will uncover the fascinating world of seagrass in "Long Island Seagrass: Science and Conservation". Eco-Photo Explorers Michael Salvarezza and Christopher Weaver will journey north of the Arctic Circle to explore "Greenland: The Vanishing Frontier" and to round out the program, renowned film maker Rick Morris will honor legendary explorer Dr. Sylvia Earle in "The View Through My Mask".

Attendees of the film festival are also treated to a very popular after party immediately following the conclusion of the show. Here, in ad-

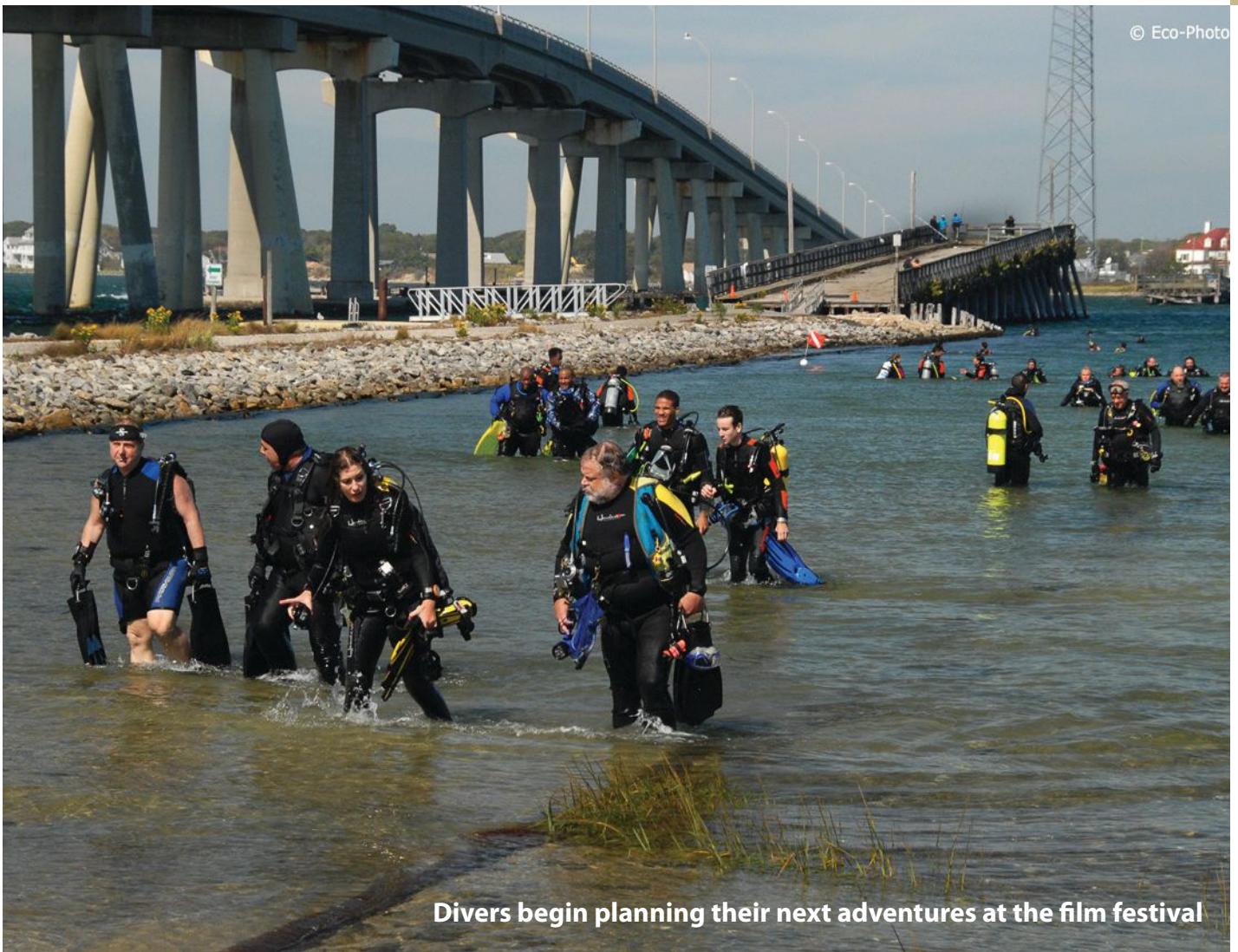
dition to food and refreshments, dozens of raffle prizes are distributed. These prizes range from equipment giveaways to all-inclusive dive holidays in remote locations and on famous liveaboard dive vessels. At the party, divers get the chance to meet the speakers, renew friendships, swap stories and begin planning the upcoming dive season.

"The Long Island Divers Association's annual Film Festival is the perfect opportunity for all of the Long Island and New York City divers, dive stores, dive shops and dive boat captains to come together at one location to enjoy the camaraderie within our great organization.," says Barry Lipsky, President of LIDA.

The Long Island Divers Association (LIDA), a 501(c)(3) non-profit regional



The LIDA Film Festival is an annual tradition among local Tri-State area divers

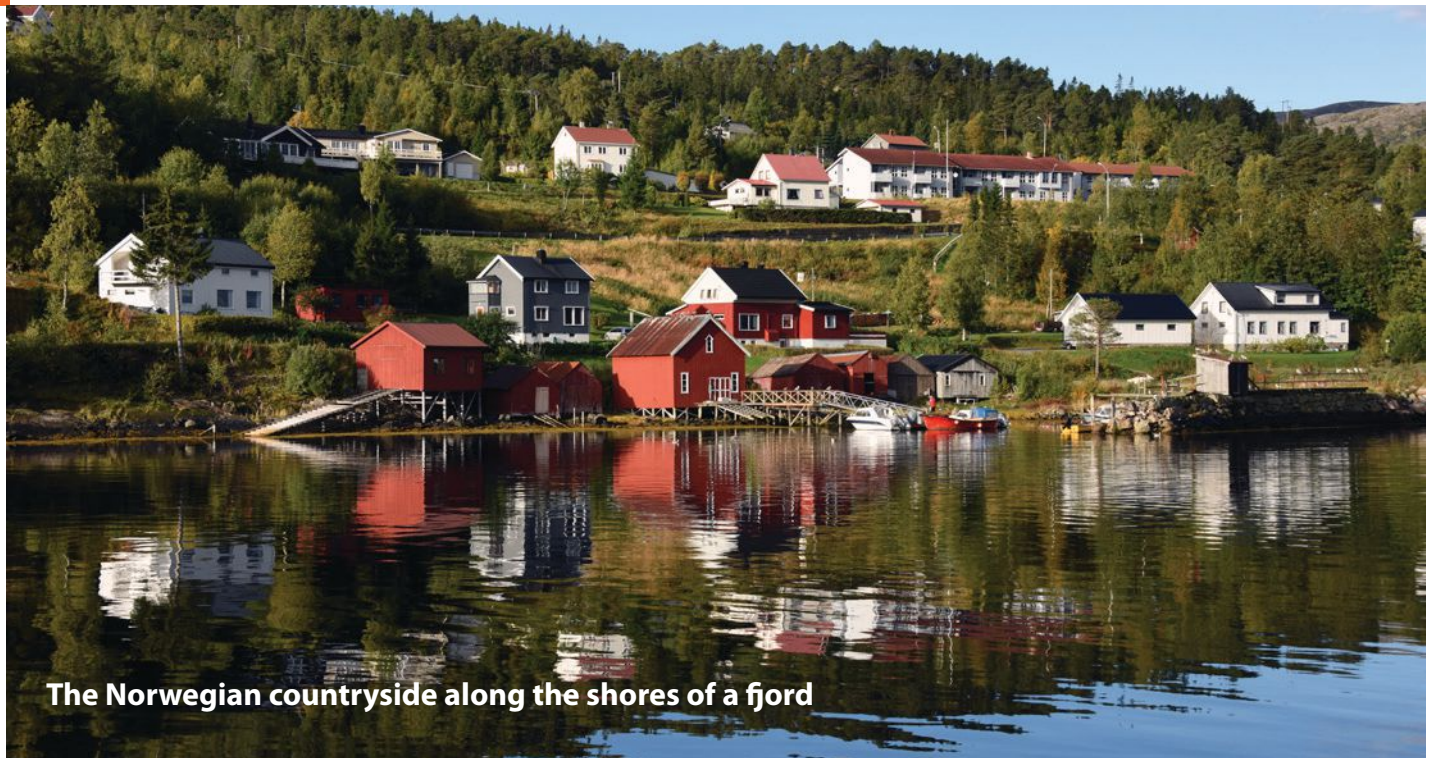


Divers begin planning their next adventures at the film festival

organization dedicated to the promotion of local diving, the representation of divers interests throughout the diving and general community, and the protection of divers rights through outreach to local and regional government officials, uses the film festival as a key fund raiser for all of its ongoing efforts. Attendees not only enjoy the remarkable presentations and entertaining after party, but they can be assured that their entrance fee goes towards the support of the LIDA organization.

Tickets are on sale for this event. To buy tickets, or to learn more about LIDA and the Film Festival, visit them online at www.lidaonline.com.





The Norwegian countryside along the shores of a fjord

Frontier Diving in the Land of the Viking: Norway

Article and Photos by Michael Salvarezza & Christopher P. Weaver

It was quite a journey to get to this spot. A five-hour drive into Nordland from Trondheim, a ½ mile trek through the forest to get the divers, dive gear and camera equipment to the dive site and a rope rappel down a 30-foot mud and rock slope to the river's edge...and we were not yet in the water! As we looked over the tumultuous waters of the river rapids, we wondered if we really were going to dive in this roiling maelstrom. But that's where the Salmon were, and our best opportunity to photograph them as they marched upstream to spawn was right below the white-water rapids in a shallow pool where we hoped to catch a glimpse and snatch some images. So, after attaching a safety rope to prevent being whisked downstream, we dropped below the surface current to a relatively calm pocket of water and began the search for these remarkable fish. Above us the water tumbled at rocket speed but descending just a few feet below the surface got us out of the current. Using large boulders and rocks to shield us from the furious flow, we pushed

forward and before long we spotted our quarry: large, stocky Norwegian Salmon swimming furiously against the downstream current. After attempting unsuccessfully to leap up a small waterfall slightly upstream from this spot, many of them were now resting in this pocket of water and this represented our photographic opportunity. Still, this was not at all an easy task. Pushing the cameras through the force of the rapids, locking the focus of the camera onto the subject and squeezing off the desired shots took all of our effort. This was diving the frontier of Norway...and our expedition had only just begun.

For divers, Norway offers quite a palette of fascinating opportunities. Our journey to the land where Vikings once ruled took us to the north to search for Salmon, and deep into some of the fjords along the coast to explore historic shipwrecks, lush gardens of kelp and unique geological features. Along the way, we searched for rare and little understood deep-water organisms.

Visitors to Norway are often impressed with the beautiful countryside, the warm and welcoming culture of the Norwegians and, if they are fortunate, the dazzling northern lights. But it is underwater where some of Norway's true treasures, and best kept secrets, can be found.

After leaving the forest wilderness and our encounters with Salmon, we next arrived at Namsen Fjord, a picturesque fjord along the western coast of Norway 100 miles north of the city of Trondheim. Here, we first explored the sunken wreck of the M/S Hamo, a freighter sunk in a local harbor in 70 feet of water. The wreck is covered with myriad organisms and offers terrific photographic opportunities in an easy setting. In reality, though, diving the M/S Hamo is just a tune-up for a dive on the HMT Aston Villa.

The Aston Villa was originally launched as a fishing trawler but was requisitioned in September 1939 to serve as an anti-submarine vessel during the Second World

War. She came under heavy fire off the Norwegian coast in May 1940 from German forces and suffered significant damage. Considered unable to cross the North Sea to reach safety and repair, she was then intentionally sunk alongside the steep wall of the fjord to avoid having the ship come into enemy hands. Today, a dive on this wreck represents a descent into a little-known aspect of Norwegian history. The wreck lies on a sharp downward angle, with its mangled stern section reachable in relatively shallow water at 60 feet and its intact bow at 95 feet pointing to deeper water.

After exploring these wrecks, we turned our attention to the mouth of the Fjord where it reaches the open Norwegian Sea. Here, along a rocky coast strewn with boulders and small islands, we prepared to dive lush gardens of kelp in search of Wolf Fish, Anglerfish and other endemic critters. Descending into 60 feet of clear, cold North Atlantic water, we swayed gently in the surge while we explored cracks and fissures, photographing invertebrates and small fish. This area of Norway is little explored underwater. Virtually

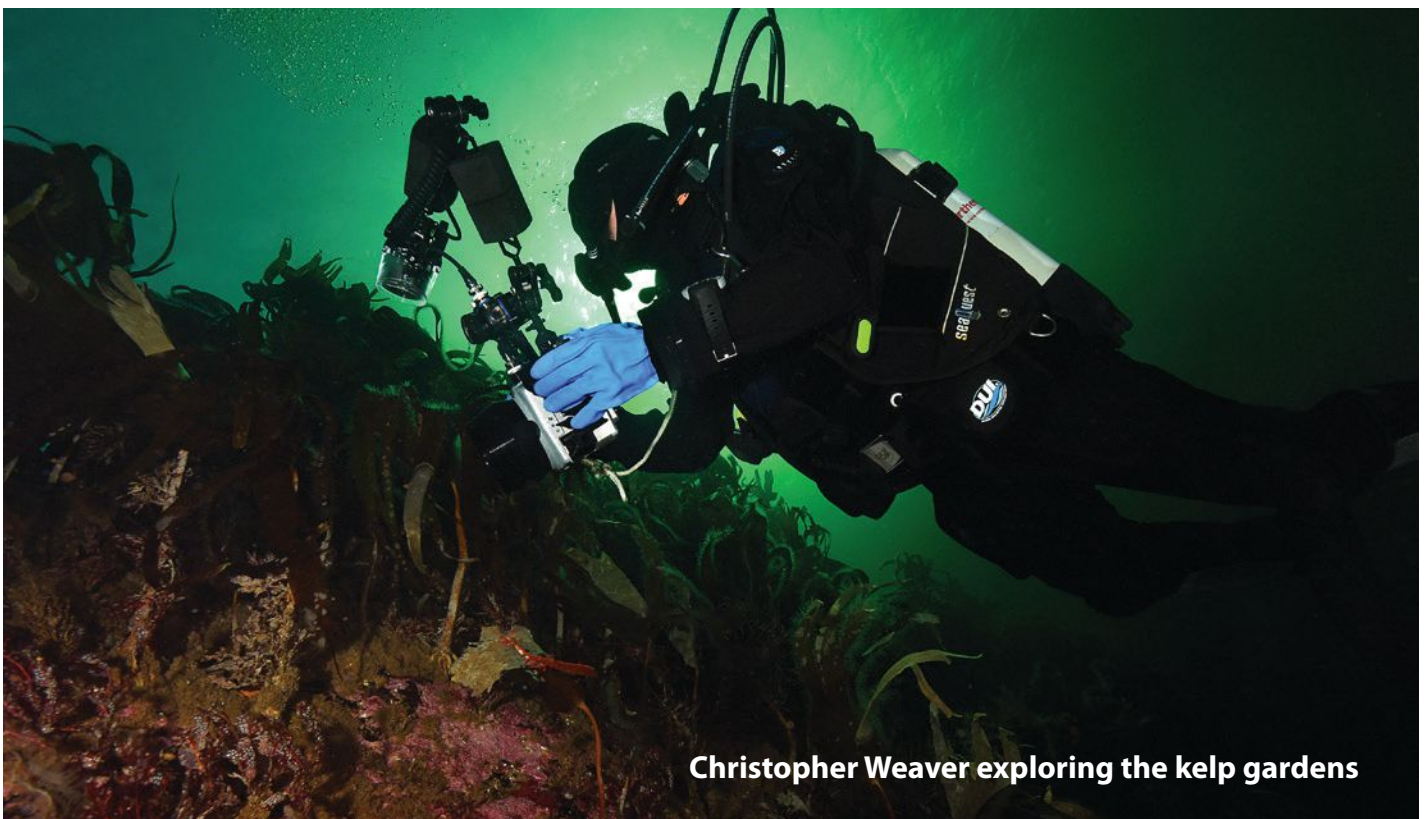
any spot along the coast could represent a compelling dive site and more are being discovered all the time. Still, unlike other established destinations, only a few divers have seen the dive sites here and they are so new and unexplored that don't even have names.

Our journey into the Norway's underwater frontier continued in the Trondheimfjord. Here, in a dramatic setting alongside quaint cottages and rural sheep farms, we began our search for rarely seen and photographed deep-water organisms. Although the fjord appears relatively narrow, the sharp walls of the surrounding landmass drop precipitously to hundreds of feet of water just a short distance from shore. It is here, in certain areas washed with current-swept waters, that divers have the opportunity to encounter deep-water medusae, deep and cold-water corals and even the mysterious Ghost Sharks in depths attainable by divers.

Our first dive here started on a cold and dreary rainy day. As we descended into the deep, however, the surface weather receded from

our minds and we began our search for the large, colorful deep-water medusa. Swimming along a silty, rocky bottom we passed over brittle stars, colorful cold-water anemones and various invertebrates before reaching a depth of about 90 feet. Suddenly, like an apparition in the night, the deep red bulbous bell of a Medusa, fully 18 inches in diameter, appeared out of the dim edge of visibility. Upon closer inspection, we observed the strange tentacles and pulsating underbelly as the weird creature drifted by in the current. Then, as our eyes quickly adjusted to the low light, we spotted another...and another! In the end, we photographed a number of these fascinating creatures, all of various sizes and all drifting languidly in the current from the unlit depths to destinations unknown.

Our final objective in these cold Scandinavian waters was to observe and photograph the mysterious Ghost Sharks of Norway. Often referred to as Chimeras, these are deep-water cartilaginous fishes related to sharks and rays often found in waters as deep as 8000 feet or more. Ranging in size from 24 to 80 inches in length,



Christopher Weaver exploring the kelp gardens

they are characterized by large eyes, two dorsal fins, and a long, tapering slender tail. There are 28 different species worldwide, but the ones we sought in Norway are known to only rise to diveable depths in a few select areas of the fjords. They emerge at night, presumably in search of food, which for the Ghost Shark, consists of shellfish and small fish. Because of the treacherous tidal movement in the fjord, our dive had to be timed to slack water after high tide... which meant that at 11:30 on a rainy night we hiked down a steep slope through the shoreline woods to the entry point for our dive. Once in the dark water, we began a 20-minute swim at 90 feet before we suddenly spotted a silvery flash in our lights: A Ghost Shark! Local experience has established that these sharks tend to hunt alone, with divers encountering one at a time along the sandy slope

of the fjord. Individual sharks are often separated by some distance but on this evening, something brand new was observed. Here, 90 feet below the surface of the darkened fjord, we found a veritable shoal of Ghost Sharks. About a dozen individuals were congregating in the same area of the fjord and the reason for this gathering is really subject to speculation. Perhaps they were mating. Perhaps they were exhibiting some other behavior. Regardless of why, this dive was sure to add to the general knowledge base of these strange and mysterious specters of the deep!

Whether it is straining to capture glimpses of migrating Salmon in the river rapids, exploring historic shipwrecks and undiscovered dive sites in the fjords, or searching for little known and rarely seen

deep water marine life, diving in Norway truly represents a journey to an underwater frontier.

Our expedition took place as the seasons were beginning to transition from summer to autumn. Walking down a country lane after our final dive, the approach of winter was evident in the air. The wind was blowing forcefully through the birch and evergreen trees and the howling rush of cold air through the trees was a harbinger of tougher weather to come. But as the residents of Norway were beginning to prepare for the long arctic night, underwater in the fjords and rivers of this land, life goes on, marching to a timeless rhythm that is the same today as it was in the days of the Vikings. There is much to explore and discover still in these waters. This is the frontier.

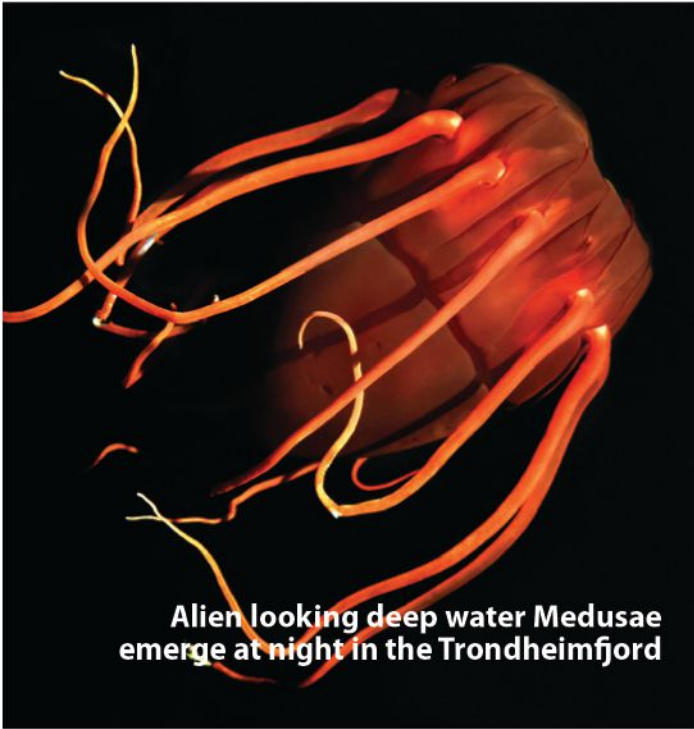


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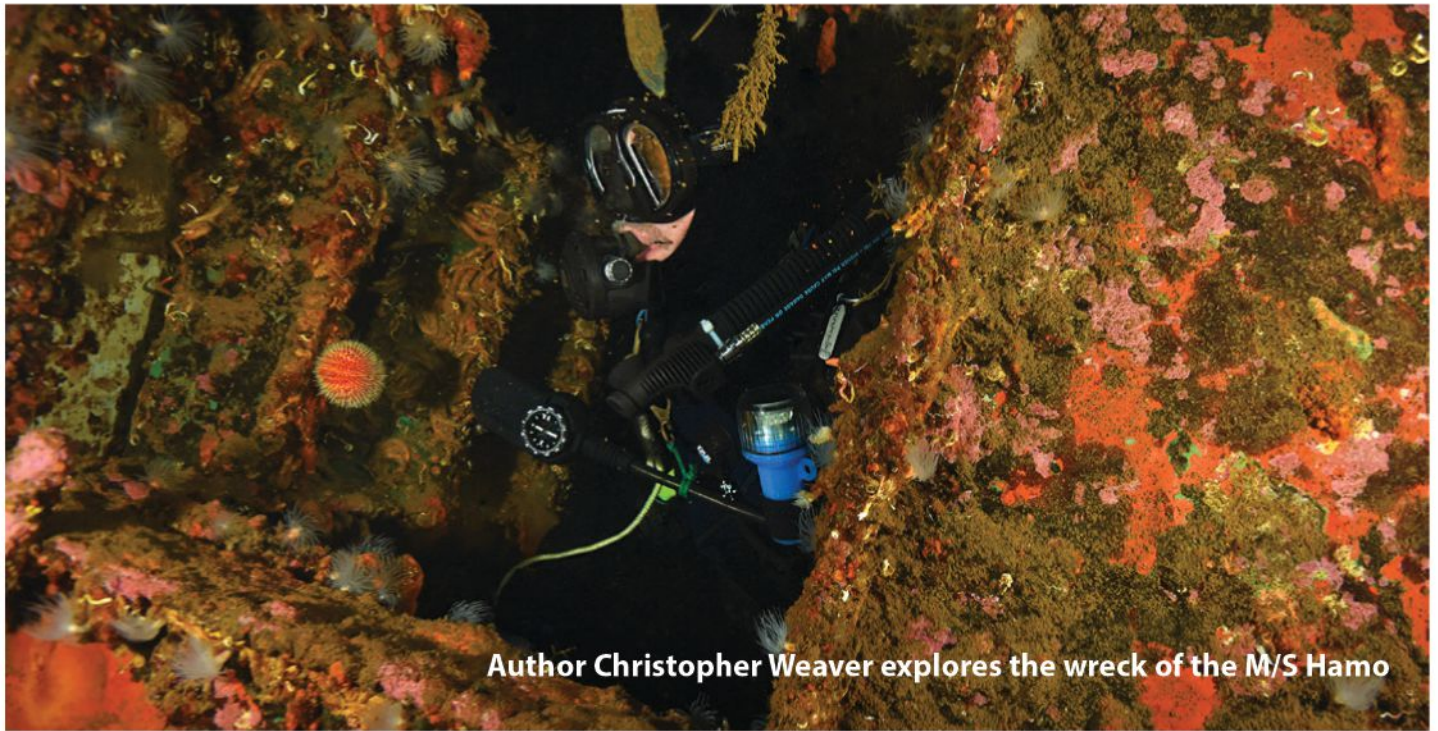
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Alien looking deep water Medusae emerge at night in the Trondheimfjord



Author Christopher Weaver explores the wreck of the M/S Hamo

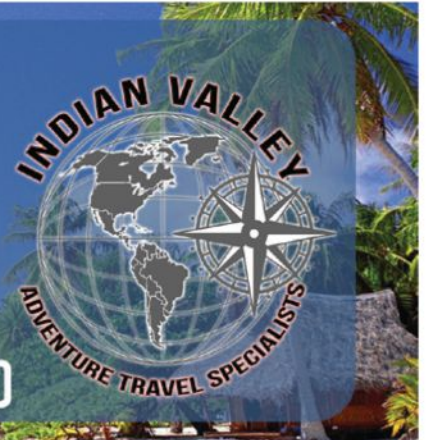
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Getting There

Most international visitors to Norway arrive into the airports at Oslo or Bergen. There are domestic flights to Trondheim, and other destinations, which will bring divers closer to the remote sites in the north. Most passengers do not require a Visa to enter Norway as long as their stay does not exceed 3 months. Norway is a member of the Schengen group of countries (named after the treaty that allows free movement between EU countries) so there are limited border controls if you are arriving from one of these member countries.

Transport to other regions in Norway can be accomplished either by driving or through domestic air travel.

Baggage

Baggage allowances vary for each international carrier, so check before you leave! Note: Some international carriers are now enforcing weight and size limits for carry-on bags as

well what is considered a personal carry-on type of bag.

Weather

Because of the moderating influence of the Gulf Stream, Norway enjoys a surprisingly temperate climate. The warmest temperatures are generally in July and August and the coldest occur between December and March. Bergen is the wettest city with 2250mm of rainfall on average per year. Visitors to Norway should be prepared for sudden changes in the weather as the climate is very variable.

Currency

The Norwegian currency is Norwegian Kroner (NOK). 1 NOK is divided into 100 øre (cents).

Electricity

Voltage: 220-240V/50Hz
 Primary Socket Type: Europlug, Schuko
 Travel Adapter: Round Pin Universal Plug

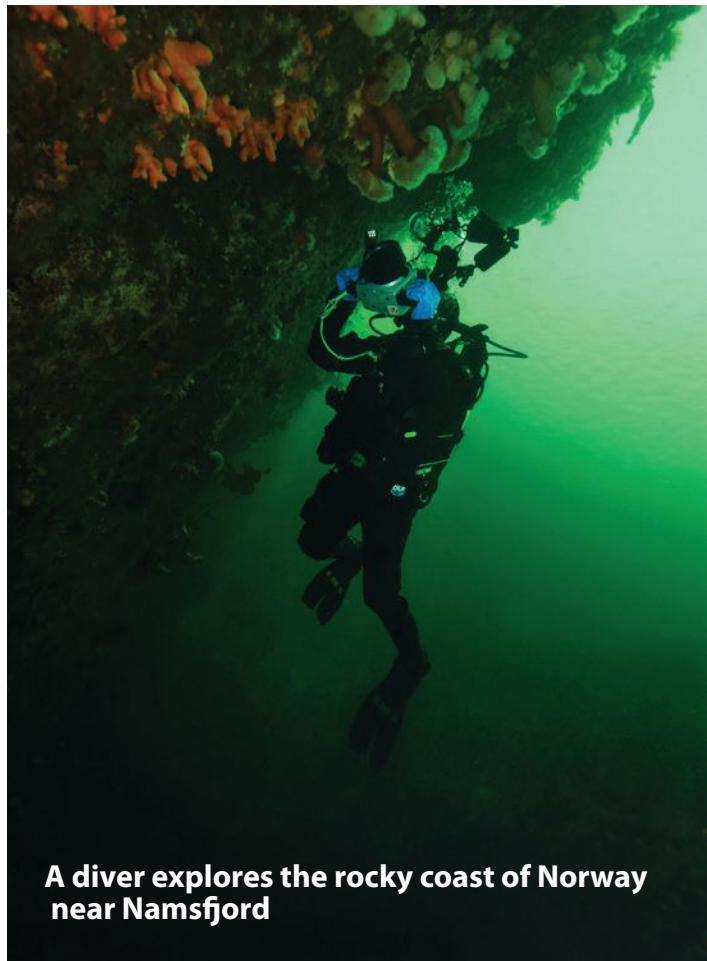
Scuba Diving

Contact Northern-Explorers for more information on specialized dive expeditions to the north of Norway, Svalbard and Greenland. www.Northern-Explorers.com. The cost of the expedition described here is 2.450 euro per person, which includes all diving and accommodations as well as two meals per day. There are other expedition options available in Norway so please contact Northern-Explorers for details.

Accommodations

Expedition diving in Norway involves access to remote locations. Included in the price of these specialized expeditions are all accommodations in twin rooms, including breakfast and dinner. Accommodations are typically in comfortable cabins located near to the dive sites.

Oslo has a recompression chamber



A diver explores the rocky coast of Norway near Namsfjord



The M/S Hamo is covered with tube worms



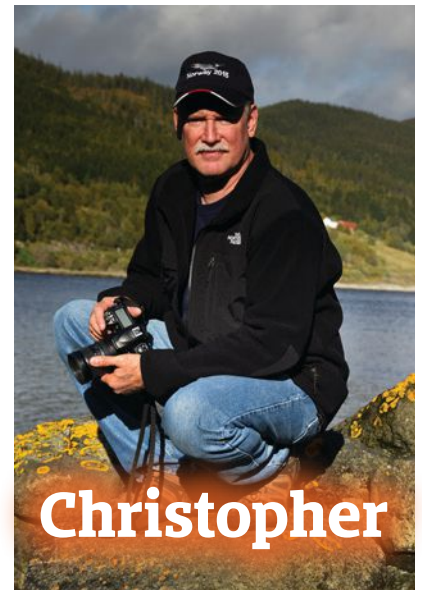
A robust looking starfish searching for its next meal

About Eco-Photo Explorers: Michael Salvarezza & Christopher P. Weaver

Michael Salvarezza and Christopher Weaver have been diving the waters the world since 1978. In that time, they have spent thousands of hours underwater and have accumulated a large and varied library of photographic images. They have presented their work in many multi-media slide presentations, and have appeared previously at Beneath the Sea, the Boston Sea Rovers Underwater Clinic, Ohio ScubaFest and Our World Underwater. Mike and Chris have been published more than 125 articles in numerous magazines, including National Geographic Adventure, and have authored numerous articles for the majority of the dive publications the world over. Their work has also been used to support a number of research and educational programs, including the Jason Project for Education, the Atlantis Marine World Aquarium in New York, The New York Harbor School Billion Oyster Project, The Northeast Ocean Planning Recreation Survey and the Cambridge University and the University of Groningen Arctic Centre work on monitoring the transformation of historic features in Antarctica and Svalbard. Mike and Chris are the Executive Producers of the annual Long Island Divers Association (LIDA) Film Festival.

Eco-Photo Explorers (EPE) is a New York based organization and was formed in 1994 to help promote interest in protecting the environment through knowledge and awareness through the use of underwater photography. Photography, multimedia slide presentations, lectures and freelance writing are all used to accomplish this goal. Christopher Weaver and Michael Salvarezza make up Eco-Photo Explorers. Both live in New York on Long Island and have been scuba diving together since 1978, but didn't seriously start photographing the ocean realm until 1989. Since then, they have spent thousands of hours underwater accumulating and putting together a large and varied library of high-resolution stock photography from around the world. They specialize in all aspects of underwater still photography (wide angle and macro), nature photography, magazine and technical writing and have produced many multimedia slide programs that are designed to educate as well as enlighten the public about the marine environment and the various threats that exist to destroy it.

www.ecophotoexplorers.com



Christopher



Mike