



# St George Scuba Club Newsletter May 2022



Beautiful composition. Photo taken by Roxanne Fea at Shelley Beach during club dive 8 May 2022.

*In this newsletter:*

*Fairy Bower Dusky Shark dive*

*Bass Point*

*Norfolk Island*

*Bare Island Deep Wall – new variant of nudi*

*Port Stephens, April 2022*

*EOI 2023 trip to New Zealand*

*Jason Coombs / Roxanne Fea*

*Madeleine Haglund-Gaunt*

*Paul Soares*

*Russ Jones*

*Ron Walsh*

*Greg Blackburne*

*Gallery contributors. Ron, Jason, Rox, Jon Pocknee*

## **Fairy Bower Dusky Whaler Sharks – 8 May 2022**

**Article by Jason Coombs, photos by Roxanne Fea**

The annual cross the bridge dive to Fairy Bower to see the baby Dusky Whaler sharks took place on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2022. Despite it being Mother's Day we had 7 divers (Lucy, Kevin, Andrew, Freeke, Josh, Rox and I.

After all the rain and cancelled dives conditions were glorious for this dive. A sunny day with a cool breeze and flat seas. And the forecast was for the rain to come back the very next day! A small window of great weather.

The car parking was even worse than usual. We got there before 7:30am and waited 20 minutes to get a park. The place was heaving with every diver, snorkeler, skin diver, swimmer and kayaker in Sydney seemingly there.

Once we got in the water we were treated to cloudy visibility up to 12 metres with the sun beaming down and 21c water. We entered off Shelly Beach and dived the left hand side towards Fairy Bower largely managing to avoid other divers.

This site is known for its fish life rather than fixed or macro life and today didn't disappoint. We saw cuttlefish, octopus, fiddler rays, stingarees, blue & red morwong, snapper & bream, yellow tail pike and wobbies including one being worked on by cleaner shrimp. There were schools of silver sweep, trevally, old wives, luderick, drummers, bullseyes, pomfret and a massive school of yellow tail scad being chased by kingies.

The tropical fish included Moorish Idols, moon wrasse, surgeon fish, a lionfish and a spangled emperor. There were blubber jellyfish near the surface, some of them being picked to bits by leather

jackets. As for the baby dusky whalers Rox and I saw 3 or the same one 3 times 😊 .

I always think this site is like diving in an aquarium especially when conditions are this good. After all the disappointment from recent months it was a really great dive and well worth the drive and the cost of parking.







## Bass Point Diving 16 and 23 April

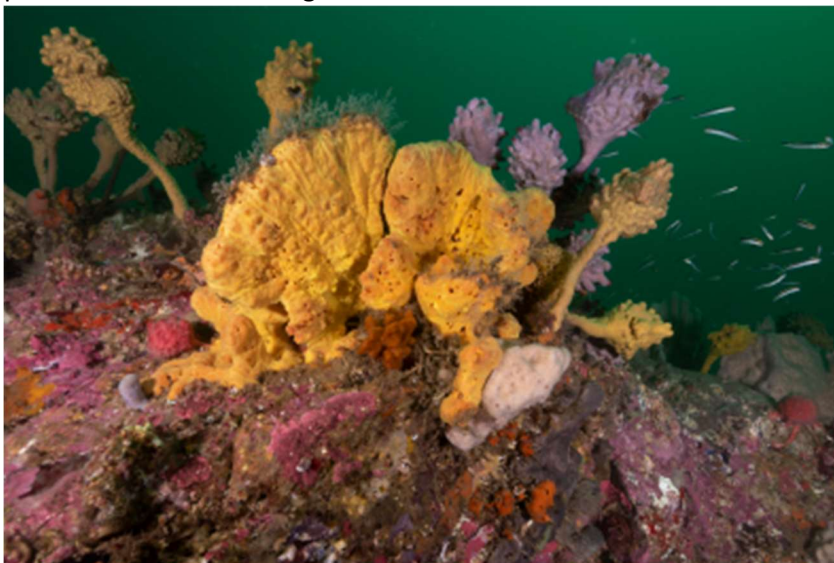
Text and photos by Madeleine Haglund-Gaunt

Being a regular Bass Point diver, I was itching to get back in after a two months hiatus. So much rain and big swell was always going to see some changes to my regular dive site, but the question was just how much...Well, I finally got a chance to dive on Easter Saturday and my expectations were not much, to say the least. Previous reports had the visibility at around two meters, so when I finally got in and found the viz to be at least 5 meters, I was pleasantly surprised.

Not too much damage around as far as I could tell, but a fairly significant loss of kelp. The big Gorgonian fans that we use to navigate by were all intact, thankfully! My dive took me out to the popular Blue Devil Cave which is a nice little swim due north from the entrance at "The Gutter": On the way out to the cave, we passed a beautiful Eagle Ray with a couple of small Trevally in tow.

Arriving at the cave I was disappointed to not see the Blue Devil fish that regularly inhabits the small cave/overhang, but the usual school of Small-scale Bullseyes were covering the entrance. Quite often the Blue Devil fish hides inside the cave and can be quite hard to spot. The water temperature was a balmy 21-23 degrees, so despite the air temperature starting to feel a bit chilly, the water was about as warm as it gets! After turning the dive at around 100 bar, the swim back took us across the brown coral rock which is a beautiful large rock in about 21m of water. This particular rock has an abundance of sea tulips, gorgonians and hard coral growth. On a good day it has been known to have masses of fish such as salmon, circling it, and on one occasion a seal came to visit. If you're lucky the Blue Devil can be seen here and there's always a few Southern Roughies, Lingfish and Crimson Wrasse hanging around.

The following weekend I did the same dive and the viz had improved to about 10 meters. The Blue Devil was home, but I spent most of my dive interacting with a beautiful Giant Cuttlefish that is often seen in under a small overhang behind the Blue Devil cave. This cuttlefish took a liking to (or maybe a dislike to...) my camera dome. It was very interactive and I had lots of fun taking pictures of it. However, at 21m, bottom time is limited, so before I was ready to leave, my computer told me that I had better start heading back to my exit point. A nice gentle current made the swim back to the exit point a breeze and the high tide made the exit easier than usual.







## Norfolk Island – February 2022

Text and photos by Paul Soares

In mid February my wife Robyn and I took a one week trip to Norfolk Is. Robyn is a keen snorkeller but doesn't dive. Regardless I was hoping to do one or two days diving while I was there. Last time I visited, 1987, there was a dive shop but there is no longer one there. A local family have a dive boat and will take visitors by arrangement.

Unfortunately our plane was the first one allowed in after a cyclone had passed close by. A constant six metre swell and howling wind for 5 days prevented any diving. On the sixth day I had already arranged to do some fishing on a local charter boat and the next day I was flying home – so no diving was happening.

The island has a relatively sheltered lagoon which held a surprising amount of tropical and sub tropical life. We snorkelled on all but our last day (didn't want to pack wet wetsuits). Plenty of fish and a large variety of coral which we had not remembered from our previous visit. The water temp was 24 degrees and viz improved considerably the week we were there.

At the time we were there a university group was involved in a long term project to tag tiger sharks. In the past few years they have tagged and tracked over sixty individual animals.

The island has a lot of history dating back to evidence of Polynesian settlement, penal settlements and the descendants of the bounty mutiny. Plenty of folksy, homespun tours and entertainment to keep you busy when not snorkelling or diving.

The fishing trip was outstanding value. After about twenty minutes I had to hand my rod over as my arms were completely stuffed from hauling up fish, mostly red emperor.

I don't think you would go here if you wanted a diving holiday but if you were happy with one or two dives it would probably work out. You would need to contact the locals to see what was possible.

We returned to Sydney from Norfolk Is on the day before the ten week big wet started. As the water cleared up I managed to smash up a finger in my left hand – putting it out of action for eight weeks. Now I'm in the US for six weeks. Last dive was early February and next one in four weeks perhaps.

Have included a few images of the lagoon sea life.









## Bare Island Deep Wall – new variant of nudibranch

Text and photo by Russ Jones

### **Hyselodoris tryoni var B**

Diving with a few friends in the afternoon of Saturday 14 May at the Deep Wall of Bare Island we discovered a new genetical variant of the [Hyselodoris tryoni](#). The species is normally known to have a brown body and black spots with a blue mantle. Since confirmed by Australian nudibranch enthusiasts, Gary Cobb and Steve Coutts, this new variant has a pink body and red spots with a purple mantle.

Whilst the species is similar in appearance to [Goniobranchus geminus](#), [Goniobranchus kuniei](#) and [Goniobranchus leopardus](#), it lacks the wider mantle edge lines present in these alternate species.



## Port Stephens – April 2022

**Text and Photos by Ron Walsh**

At the end of April eight club members managed to sneak away for a diving weekend at Port Stephens and to celebrate a couple of birthdays - Happy birthday to Shelley B & John M.

Compared to diving in Sydney with the lovely brown water we had nice 19C water with up to 5m visibility and a nice selection of critters. We did two dives at Fly Point and one at The Pipeline. Both sites are starting to accumulate sand with The Pipeline site quite barren around the area of the seahorse hotels.

Despite the rain, everyone had an excellent time.

Juvenile Smooth Boxfish



Platypus Cowrie





Trinchisia Sibogae (by 2)

© Ron Walsh



Rose Petal Bubble

© Ron Walsh

## Club trip to New Zealand

**Northland wrecks and Poor Knights**

**Expressions of interest for**

**February / March 2023**

**Organiser Greg Blackburne**



### **So, You Want To Dive Wrecks & Reefs??**

I intend to conduct a Wreck & Reef Dive Excursion to Northland New Zealand in approx Feb/March 2023.

Whilst I have yet to receive details from the operators as 21<sup>st</sup> May, whom I emailed on 19th May, I want to gauge member interest.

#### **The Basic Itinerary is:**

\*Fly to Auckland.

\*Pickup Hire Cars (already group booked).

\*Drive approx 3hrs north to Northland Dive,  
( <https://northlanddive.com/dive-the-bay-of-islands/> )

We will stay here for 5 days diving the following locations (Weather Dependant!!)

HMNZS Canterbury Wreck,

Rainbow Warrior Wreck,

Cape Brett Area, (Google It) amongst other sites (Weather Dependant)

The owners, Julia, & Shane, are a very professional team, the dive boats include 2 x 8.6m ribs, & now have a 15 m Cougar Catamaran for Liveaboard diving.

#### **“True Story”**

The night we arrived at Northland Dive in 2011, at approx 19:40, we received the Tsunami Warning from the Fukushima Disaster!!

Julia was completely unfazed, saying, we will cancel the morning Canterbury Wreck Dive, & check conditions for an afternoon & Night Dive.

\*Drive South towards Whangarei, continuing to Tutukaka.

We are undertaking 5 days of diving with Dive Tutukaka ( <https://diving.co.nz/> ) visiting these sites (weather dependant)



The Poor Knights Islands, (a total Marine Reserve and Nature Reserve, & a pending World Heritage Site)

HMNZS Waikato Wreck

HMNZS Tui Wreck,

This a very sleek operation with 3 large Catamarans, & smaller vessels.

\* Drive to Auckland for return flights to Sydney.

## **General Information**

### **Accommodation**

#### **Northland, Bay of Islands**

We will be staying at Northland Dive (ND), where we stayed previously in 2011, when Shelley ran a trip there. They have double/twin, bunk rooms. Yes, It's an Ex-Dairy Farm!!

#### **Tutukaka**

We will stay either at:

Tutukaka Holidaypark ( <https://www.tutukaka-holidaypark.co.nz/> ) 4 x Self-contained 2 bed cabin \$150 ( we stayed in these last time, & walking distance to the Dive Shop, Pub, & Restaurants)

Or a house depending on numbers etc.

I have seen some houses on AirBNB, Stayz. TBC

Please checkout their websites (above) for further information, & look at Michael

McFadyen's Web Articles from that 2011 trip.

<http://www.michaelmcfadyenscuba.info/news.php>

### **Car Hire**

Once we have firms dates, numbers etc, I'll source suitable hire vehicles.

Cost will be amortised across the group, so we can mix, & match gear transport etc.

### **Useful Links**

Dive Tutukaka ( <https://diving.co.nz/> )

Northland Dive, ( <https://northlanddive.com/dive-the-bay-of-islands/> )

Paihia, Northland Weather Water Temperatures

<https://www.seatemperature.org/australia-pacific/new-zealand/paihia.htm>

Poor Knights NZGeo Article

<https://www.nzgeo.com/stories/poor-knights-rich-seas/>

If you are interested in attending, please email me ( [blackburnegnb@gmail.com](mailto:blackburnegnb@gmail.com) )

Hopefully, I will get prices/availability shortly to work out firm dates etc.

As soon as I get more info, I will advise the club members, the Holding Deposit Amount, Payment Timings etc.



**Tutukaka wreck**



**Middle Arch, Poor Knights.**



## Gallery

Following photos and critter ID by Ron Walsh, Port Stephens



Rosy Spindle Cowrie



Lionfish





Sieve pattern moray

© Ron Walsh

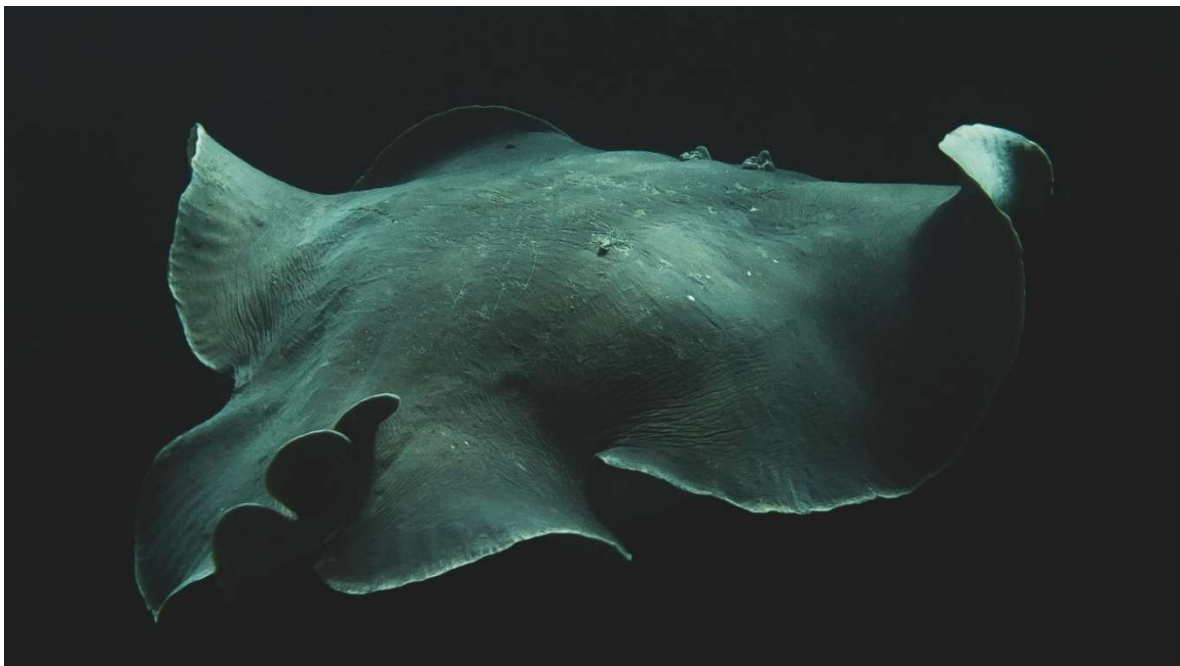
Following photos by *Roxanne Fea*, Shelley Beach.







Following photos were taken by John Pocknee at Gordons Bay and Clovelly using a TG6 camera and Inon S2000 strobes.







## Upcoming Calendar Events

### June 2022

#### ★ Boat Dive and BBQ - Frenchmans Bay - Meet La Perouse

Date:	04-06-2022	Starts at:	7:00
Contact Ray Moulang/Paul Pacey			

#### ★ June Long Weekend - NEEDED - Meet

Date:	10-06-2022	Starts at:	6:00
Contact			

#### ★ Boat Dive - The Apartments - Meet Rose Bay

Date:	11-06-2022	Starts at:	7:00
Contact Lachlan Wright			

#### ★ Club Meeting - GRSC - Meet Dolls Point

Date:	15-06-2022	Starts at:	20:00
Contact Maxine Hayden			

#### ★ Boat Dive - Wedding Cake Island - Meet Hole in the Wall/Port Botany

Date:	18-06-2022	Starts at:	7:00
Contact Bob Hill			

#### ★ Week Away - North Solitary Island - Meet Wooli

Date:	19-06-2022	Starts at:	6:00
Contact Michael Materazzo			

#### ★ Boat Dive - Osborne Shoals - Meet Yowie Bay/RMYC

Date:	25-06-2022	Starts at:	7:00
Contact Shelley Breuseker			

### July 2022

#### ★ Boat Dive - Mahon Pool - Meet Hole in the Wall/Port Botany

Date:	03-07-2022	Starts at:	7:00
Contact Michael McFadyen			

#### ★ Deep Wreck Dive - SS Annie M Miller - Meet Rose Bay

Date:	09-07-2022	Starts at:	7:00
Contact Craig Spillane			

#### ★ Boat Dive - Marys Reef - Meet Yowie Bay/RMYC

Date:	16-07-2022	Starts at:	7:00
Contact Craig Spillane			

#### ★ Club Meeting - GRSC - Meet Dolls Point

Date:	20-07-2022	Starts at:	20:00
Contact Maxine Hayden			

#### ★ Boat Dive - North Head - Meet Rose Bay

Date:	23-07-2022	Starts at:	7:00
Contact Michael McFadyen			

#### ★ MV Kalinda Live Aboard 6 days - Yongala Trip - Meet Townsville QLD

Date:	23-07-2022	Starts at:	6:00
Contact Mike Scotland			

Please submit any articles and photos for inclusion in the newsletter by replying to my club emails which are sent out every month. The newsletter will be published every month or bi monthly depending on content received.

Dive stories and photos are not restricted to organised club dives. Things like “I learned from that...” recent courses, equipment and general interest diving / diving photography articles are also welcome. If you don’t have no time to write anything, just send me photos for inclusion in the gallery section.

Many thanks to all of the contributors.

Cheers. Phil