



Sea Braggin'

St George scuba club newsletter

Feb 2015

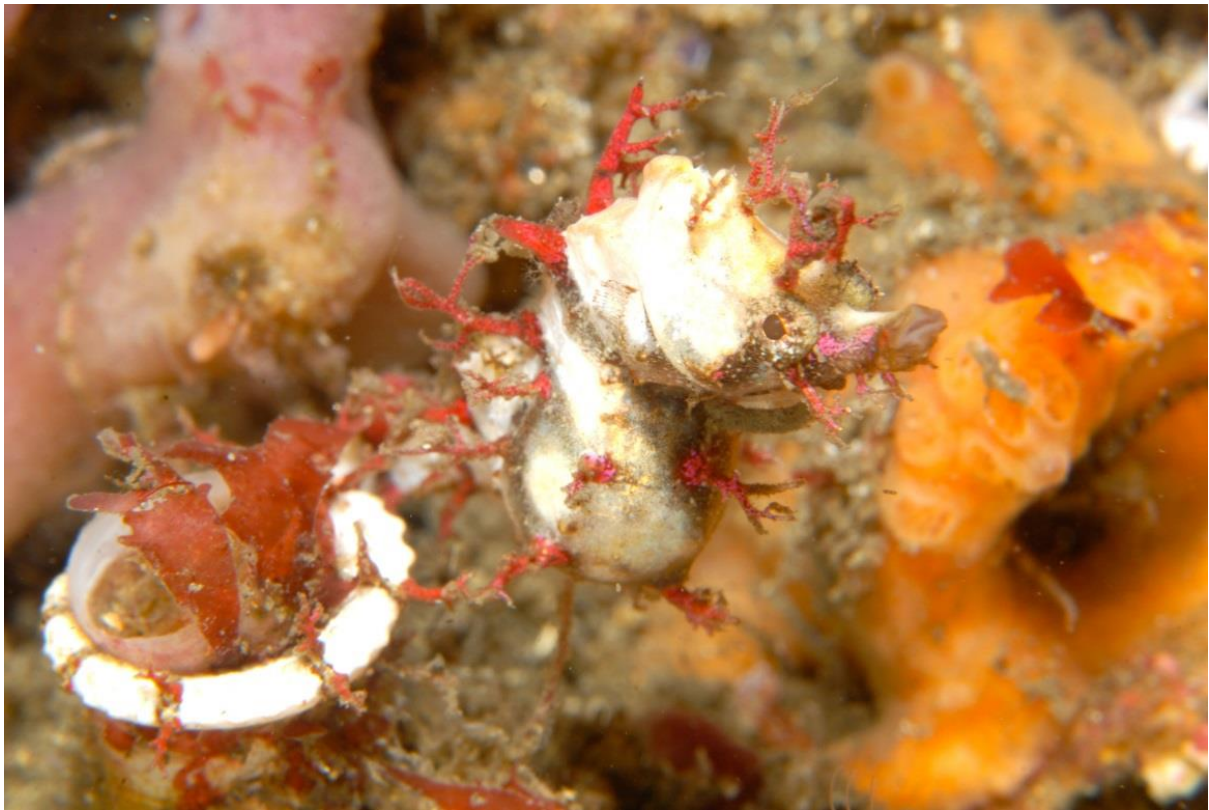


Photo of Pygmy Pipe Horse by Mike Scotland

A big thankyou to members for sending in articles and or photos:

Roger Lee, Rianti Bieler, Phil Short, Wayne Heming, Michael Roelens, Ron Walsh, Mike S.

Diving in March

When	Event	Contact
Sat 31 28 th Feb	Shell Harbour	John Beddie
Sat 7-8 th Mar	Girls Weekend away	Nancy Scoleri
Sun 8 th Mar	Pizza Reef	Dave Casburn
12 th Mar	Phillipines trip	Mark Ridsdale
18 th Feb	Club Meeting	Natasha Naude
Sun 22 March	Free boat dive Frenchman's Bay	Jason Coombs
28 th Mar	Deep dive Tuggerah	Peter Flockart
Thursday nights	Night dives	Michael McFadyen

Note: lots of other diving happening. Please look up dive calendar.

DIVING IN TAIWAN

By Roger Lee

Not to be confused with Australia Green Island, Taiwan Green Island (Lyudao) is a small island located 33 kilometers in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of South Eastern Taiwan. Having a population of 2000 on an area of 16.2 square kilometers, the island was formed by volcanic action, which left a curved and complex coastline. Coastal beach terraces and cliffs drop to colorful coral reefs where schools of tropical fish make their abode. Location of Green Island Taiwan <http://goo.gl/KbPK1F>

Not many divers will have heard about the Taiwan Green Island as it is rarely mentioned in any dive magazine. The shore diving at Green Island is spectacular, visibility more than 30meters and warm water at 23 degrees during the winter. This is because Green Island is right on the way of warm Japan current that bring not only the all the essential elements for beautiful marine life but crystal clear blue water. Diving can be done throughout the year except when typhoon make landfall.

I chose this location for my new year dive this year from 5th to 8th January (total 8 shore dives). The dive price is very reasonable TWD260 for one tank (approx AUD10) + TWD1000 per dive master to share amongst divers (approx TWD40 share with X divers). Just on shore dives, there is amazing drop off, arch, big sea fan and

big mushroom more than 1000 years old, rises from seabed 12m height and more than 30m in diameter.



Check out some of my photos below and at flickr
(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/58879609@N03/sets/72157648061751353/>)

To get to Green Island, take train from Taipei Main Station to Taitung Station. There is a daily ferry service to island at 9.30am returning at 2.30pm. I booked my dive and accommodation at Blue Safari Dive Centre. The owner, Mr. Ma was very nice to pick me up at the Pier. Getting around is usually either on scooter or on bike. Else, you will have to walk or be the pillion rider. Accommodation is basic dorm but around the dive centre you can get better twin share room.

On some of the dives, we even found box spiders and squat lobsters after turning a few rocks. According to local dive masters, there are also pink and white pygmy seahorse but it is only dive able during summer months. Hence, I will definitely check

out this island again soon !

I will be going back in end September 2015. If anyone of you keen to tag along for this value dive location, let me know.



photo by Roger Lee .

RIANTI BIELER'S PERSONAL MILESTONES FOR 2014

Looking back, I have a few personal "dive achievements" in 2014. Quite a memorable year: here we go!

1. I finally conquered my fear of cold (Sydney) water and got back into diving after a 10 year break. I know, I know... some of you would say that 20 degrees is not cold but I'm super tropical and only 25 degrees and above is acceptable!
2. Not coping well with the cold water after all (especially during surface interval), I bit the bullet and bought myself a dry suit. A HUGE decision for me as I had a diving accident while diving in Norway in 2004 which was a direct result of wearing a (unfamiliar) dry suit. I drowned and very close to end up six feet under. After a few nervous tryout dives (thanks Janine for keeping an eye on me!) I now can't live without my dry suit (yes, even in summer)



3. I had a lot of “firsts” in 2014 too in terms of marine creatures. I saw my first White’s Seahorse (Janine found my first one), seals, weedy sea dragon (both thanks to Natasha), grey nurse sharks, dusky whalers, sea hares, manta ray, decorator crabs and many more temperate water fish. First time I got in a cave too at Fish Rock. I always envy my two kids who seem to always find a new magical wonder each day (yes, a dead Christmas beetle counts) so it’s nice that I got to experience a few magical wonder moments myself last year.
4. I got my first underwater camera in the beginning of last year and now I feel weird if I don’t have it with me. What do I do with my two hands?! And that means I can show my kids what I see during a dive. My proud moment was when my seven year old daughter corrected her teacher during science session, “Excuse me Miss W, that’s NOT a fish. It’s an Eastern Blue Groper”.

So, I won’t call them milestones but rather “memorable moments of 2014”. I have now fallen crazily in love with underwater Sydney (I finally get used to the 5m viz but still dread the long walk to the entry point at most of the shore dive sites) and looking forward to many more memorable moments in 2015 and beyond.



Wayne Heming's Milestones article

My diving began with a Resort Dive, 28th December 1998, on the Great Barrier Reef out of Port Douglas. Although I was very comfortable underwater diving with 11 other resorts, stirring up the bottom and bumping into everything, wasn't pleasant.

I participated on another Resort Dive in Fiji in 1999, this time it was great, just three of us and an instructor. I was hooked. But it wasn't until October 2001 while on a family holiday in Merimbula NSW, I attended my Open Water course and completing only 13 dives that year (2001) and only 7 dives in 2002. Then in 2003 I decided to step up the diving, bought some basic gear and completed 42 dives, with the help of a trip on Spoilsport with Mike Ball to the Yongala and Coral Sea that I won by answering a couple of questions on his web site. I also completed my Advanced Open Water before I left on this trip. In April 2004 I joined the Deep 6 Dive club and was shore diving most weekends with the occasional boat dive. This is where I met Rudy my long time dive buddy. We both attended an information night at Deep 6, West Ryde, about training and becoming a Divemaster. We both signed up for this program. It was 5 specialties, Master Scuba Diver, Rescue Diver and Divemaster. We spent

the next 12 months attending theory nights, exams and dives and finally certified as a Divemaster in March 2005. We then continued on with all the specialties and qualified as Master Scuba Diver in August 2005. During the first half of 2005, Rudy and myself dived many shore dives around Sydney until one day Rudy commented about how easy it was diving from a boat. All of a sudden the light bulb went off, I own a boat. On the 16th July 2005, we, Rudy and myself, took "Yes Dear" my 16ft Mustang Runabout out for its first dive. Finally after 256 dives on 22nd November 2008 we had our last dive on "Yes Dear" to Minmi Trench, and then in December 2008, "Yes Dear Too" was purchased, a 5.6m Bar Crusher.

I sold "Yes Dear" to a work colleague, who eventually sold it to Daryl Brett another St George Scuba Club member. He Sold it a year or 2 later.



photo of Wayne Heming at M&K reef by Mike Scotland

Over the next few months we set the boat up for diving using tips from Michael <http://www.michaelmcfadyenscuba.info/> Between 2008 and 2011, just the two of us dived most Saturdays. We both love wreck diving and with the help of Michael's GPS marks we started diving some of the deeper wrecks around Sydney. I now have a complete set of WGS84 GPS marks on my web site. Wanting to know more about deeper diving we both attended the Advanced Nitrox and Decompression Theory courses with TDI and purchased a set of twin tanks manifolds for this course.

On 4th Sep 2011 I finally joined the St George Scuba Club where I still dive most Saturdays with Rudy. We continue to dive the deep wrecks when weather permits, most of the time I

have a full boat of 4 divers, including myself. At the time of writing this, 30th Dec 2014, I have completed 506 dives on "Yes Dear Too". In October of 2014, I completed my 1000th dive, this was on the Tuggerah wreck. You can follow all my diving and read a lot of useful, and maybe useless information, on my website. <http://dive.hemnet.com.au/>. Here is some of that useless information

Total Dives	1017
Deepest Dive	55.8m (Coolidge)
Coldest Dive	6° (Stony Cove UK)
Warmest Dive	30° (Gold Coast)
Total Dive Time	815:56 (HHH:MM)

Dive on SS Tuncurry by Phil Short

On Sunday 25 January 2015, Corey O'Keefe and I went out on John Black's boat and dived the wreck of the SS Tuncurry. The Tuncurry was a 35m wooden carvel hull cargo vessel, which sank in 1916 and is located about 6 – 7 kilometres' off Broken Bay in 60 metres.

The vessel sank with the loss of no lives after taking on water. Due to the amount of water that entered the vessel in a relatively short period it is thought that she probably sprung a plank. The Tuncurry was carrying a cargo of cement bags, explosives and boxes of whisky. I last dived this wreck in 2009 shortly after it was discovered by Paul Wright with the assistance of John Riley and John Black.

The day was pretty much perfect conditions for boating and as we left the coast the water turned from a brownish colour to clear blue. John located the wreck and sent a shot line over. Corey and I were first in and we were to either secure the anchor or use a cave reel to run a line from anchor to the wreck.

I obtained some left over helium from John and blended a light trimix gas for the bottom of 18 o2 and 15% helium which gave me an equivalent narcotic depth of 50m. Corey was diving on air. The dive would be a square profile and we allowed for a 15 minute bottom time with a total run time of around 50 minutes. All deco above 18m was on 50% o2.

The surface water was 22 degrees and at least 20m viz. We descended to the bottom and unfortunately found sand and with 8 or so metres of viz on the bottom could not see the wreck. After 8 minutes we located the wreck after heading north east and then taking an arc to the west. Temperature on the bottom was a bit less than 15 degrees.

The wreck is quite small with the main features being the bags of cement which have formed into boulders, the boiler and engine. There is a drive shaft from the engine to the propeller which sits up quite nicely. There are still plenty of artifacts lying around the wreck and unfortunately we did not have time to move forward of the cargo into the bow area.

After arriving at the wreck I started to film around the boiler area and had just switched on my video light when a wobbie took a dislike to me. I didn't see him but I most likely dangled a fin in front of his mean looking face. He hit me around the fin area and continued up my side to under my arm. Not sure if he bit my fin but luckily no teeth on the dry suit. He successfully managed to scare the crap out of me and made sure he moved me on! After having his fun the wobbie disappeared under the boiler.

All too soon the dive was over and we had to swim the 15 or so metres back to the anchor and ascend. The other divers descended and had an easier time locating the wreck as I left my cave reel in place for them.

If you are suitably experienced and qualified to dive this wreck I recommend it. The Tuncurry doesn't receive a lot of visits from divers probably due to its location and depth. I don't know of any charter boats out of Broken Bay that visit her and it is too far from Sydney Harbour for the charters to visit regularly. I hope to get back there in about May or June with my boat, pick into the wreck and have a better look around.



photo by Phil Short

Beach & Under Water Clean Up on "Clean Up Australia Day"

By Caroline Corcoran

I'm organising a combined Land and Underwater Clean Up at Clifton Gardens on "Clean Up Australia Day", Sunday, 1 March 2015, meeting at 9am.

I'd love to get as many helpers as possible so please, please come along, even for half an hour, you can make a difference! Please ask your friends, family, and neighbours - anyone you can, to come along. Each of the areas - the picnic & sports area, car park, beach and of course underwater, especially under the jetty - are all big spaces so the more help we get the better.

The underwater cleanup part is suitable for all Open Water Divers but I need any divers I don't know to please bring along their certification cards on the day.

I'll have rubbish bags, gloves and some sharps boxes available but if you have some extra, please bring them along. I would especially appreciate if you can bring sharps boxes, as there are so many fish hooks stuck under the jetty.

We'll also have a picnic after the clean up, I'll bring my BBQ and provide a basic sausage sizzle but please feel free to bring anything else you'd like to pop on the bbq and your own drinks/other snacks.

I'll have a big blue and white "Project Aware" banner and Clean Up Australia Posters at the meeting point - one of the picnic tables on the beach side of the park - so will be easy to find on the day.



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Aidan Slevin,

A special welcome to our dive club and to all other new members who have joined recently.

It's the things you don't see that are the most spectacular...

Text and photos by Michael Roelens

When I was night diving at the Great Barrier Reef a few months ago, something caught my attention. It was so dark it could as well have been a black hole. Unnaturally black. Maybe, it was just a really deep hole. But when I looked again, it had moved slightly. So, I go closer to investigate. It was a velvet black flatworm, about 5cm long, 3cm wide. Darker than any of the holes and crevices in the wall we were cruising past, no light could escape from it.

Same thing at the Monument, on Tuesday the 17th. Mike –our dear editor - was pointing out another black hole. Not realising what I was looking at initially, I see a little breadcrumb on top of it as I was moving in closer. Quite excited of course, as it's the first time I've seen an anglerfish for real. The trouble with taking pictures of these is that the camera's dynamic range isn't usually good enough to capture all the detail from the darkest black to the bright bits of rock or sponge around it. That would make the camera automatically expose correctly for these surrounding bits, losing all the detail in the black subject you actually want to photograph.



So, most of the pictures I took of this fish that really needs some anger management/therapy were black blobs in between less interesting rock. Yet somehow, I managed to put a third light in there, my narrow angle torch, and took a picture without flash/strobe. That really brought out all of the texture in the skin of the

black anglerfish. Poor little angler, enduring about 6000 lumens...

Later that day, we read reports of anglerfish just across the bay, at Bare Island too. Simon Hoad was kind enough to go and point it out to us again. I find it amazing how well they blend in to their environment. So, Mike and I are taking our turns taking pictures and video, for at least 5 minutes, before we realise another anglerfish was sitting right beside it, slightly more orange looking, just hidden from view by a sponge, not even 10 cm away.

Other favorite camouflage experts are the cuttlefish, and the pygmy pipehorses. Plenty of them around in the St George area. I've thoroughly enjoyed all of my dives with this club, now up to 100 dives. Thanks everyone!



photo by Michael Roelens



photos by Michael Roelens

NEW GUINEA TRIP 2016 MIKE SCOTLAND

I am organising a New Guinea live aboard Trip on Febrina in 2016. The dates are to be finalised around June. I will organise bookings in six months.

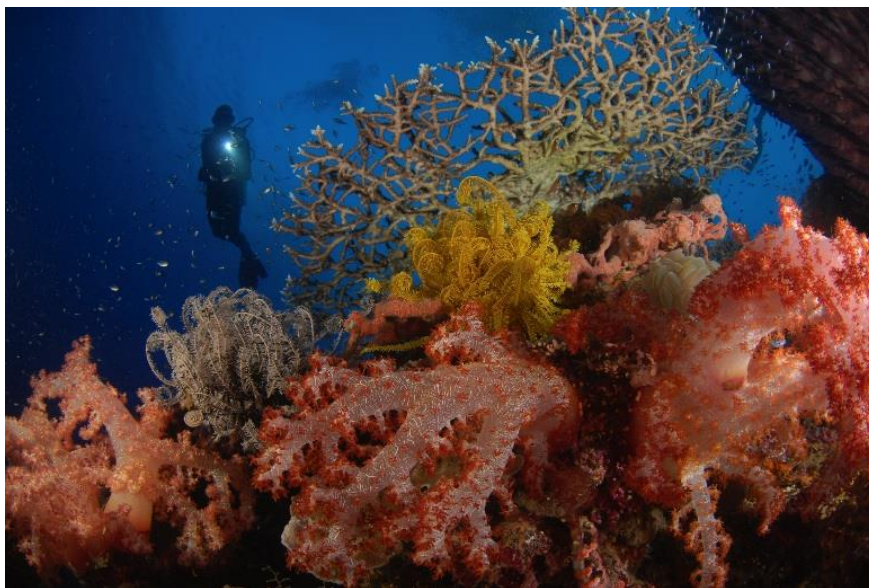


photo by Mike Scotland

There are a few of us going in May 2015. I am asking for expressions of interest to see if we can get a boatload of 12 divers for 2016. It will be around \$5000 including airfares but includes 10 days of diving, all meals (wine with dinner), free laundry and airfares. I have done this trip four times. I usually get 38 to 40 dives. Be aware that some \$3500 trips only include two dives a day, no meals and end up costing the same for twenty dives, especially if you add on a few extra dives. The hidden costs add up. I have dived a lot around the Pacific. In my opinion, New Guinea beats all of the others including Palau. (I am happy to debate the point with anyone.) Also, the dive guides are very helpful, as least as good as the best elsewhere, probably better.

There is a two page description of a day diving on Fathers reef in Dive Log Feb 2015. We did five dives, on Nitrox of course.

Deep Dive on the Undola 15 Feb 2015-02-19

By Mike Scotland

Divers attending included Phil Short, Caroline Corcoran. Nick Stojanovic, Corey O'Keefe, Dave Casburn, Ian G, Gary Perkins and me.

Conditions looked perfect at the wharf, seas were slight to moderate with light to moderate North-westerly wind. We tried for about one hour to anchor on the Tuggerah. The current was ripping, making it very difficult. Eventually, we had to abandon the idea and went south to try the Undola.

The current here was also strong. We managed to anchor up after quite a while. Ian and I descended. It took me about nine minutes to descend as the current was so powerful that I had to descend not so much as hand over hand but with one hand. My camera was in my other hand. It was hard work!

Once on the bottom, the viz was about ten metres and quite calm. Ian had almost run out of bottom time by the time I got down. He made a decision to do his deco stops on the anchor line due the strong current. It was a good idea to have individual ascent lines as there was less drag.

I took a few photos of Phil Short and Corey and a very 'friendly' Wobbygong.

The deco stop was extremely difficult. The current was so strong that it nearly "ripped our bloody arms off!" When Dave Casburn jumped in, the current ripped both of his fins off. They should be on eBay in Hobart by now.

When Gary jumped in, the drag from the current on his rebreather and two side mount tanks along with my mass was huge. It was an adventure but a lot of fun.



Thanks to Dave and Phil for providing the boats.



photo of Corey O'Keefe on Undola by Mike Scotland

The construction of a cheap underwater video (photo) rig

So, I'm fairly new to diving, only started about half a year ago, but I got the bug bigtime. I also do a bit of amateur photography, but there's no way on earth I'd take my DSLR down there. I've heard too many stories of people flooding their cameras already.

I had an old Olympus Tough TG2 before, great little camera, but that one flooded too, because of an error of mine: screwing it too hard onto a tripod mount made the case crack. I only realised that when I was underwater, and saw it smoking... Lesson learnt.

So, I went hunting for another cheap camera, which preferably didn't need housing. Main reason for that: the housing is usually more expensive than the camera. It's price gouging, in my eyes. Maybe the small market size is a factor, too. But in the end, it's a piece of plastic, with a few O-rings. (Yeah, shoot me!) I do acknowledge, they crank out fantastic photos! But I wasn't willing to spend all that money on a photo rig yet.

I came to the conclusion that the \$300 Canon Powershot d30 was the cheapest camera that also went the deepest: it's rated for 25m depth. I accidentally took it to 32m already, and it was still behaving somewhat fine. The buttons get a bit mushy, rather than "clicky" at that point. I wouldn't take it any deeper though. So, for most (all?) Sydney sites, this is fine.

The camera is great above the water, as many modern compact cameras are. The biggest difference with underwater photography is that there's less light there, and it becomes much harder to take proper shots down there, especially below 5m, or in murky water. For macro shots in clear water, the flash works fine, even though it sometimes overexposes the whites a bit then.

One great thing (for camera connoisseurs), is that you can hack the firmware, like many of Canon's Powershots, so that it records the raw image (google for "CHDK"). That gives you a few bits more of dynamic range. This makes it a lot easier to bring out proper contrast and white balance afterwards with a bit of post processing. So, yes, I process my photos, not ashamed of admitting that: only for white balance correction and exposure adjustment. That's what the "intelligent scenes" on the camera would do anyway. The raw image gives you that control, instead of the camera's brain.

Then I got this cheap torch, on ebay, for 32 bucks (Zoic). The rotating magnetic switch is a bit temperamental at times (especially if you don't soak it in fresh water after every dive), but it's a great torch for spotting things. It's a very narrow spot though, so I put a little piece of diffusing plastic in front of the lens, to make the spot a little softer. It lights up a nudibranch from close by, and that's about it. It's really quite useless when trying to photograph or video anything bigger than that.

I quickly became more and more interested in video rather than photography, so that I could show my family in Belgium how a cuttlefish can change its colours so dramatically. After a bit of research (a few days on the internet), the Archon WV40R

seemed to get pretty good reviews. I found a person on ebay who was selling them for 260AUD each. So I got them for Christmas. The lights are so powerful, they even got a mention at the last club meeting ("It was like daylight!"). They're very wide angle, and evenly spread light: no spot at all. They also do red, blue and UV light, which I'm still to explore.

But how was I now going to handle a torch, 2 high-beams and a camera at the same time? Time for a Bunnings visit. After a walk around there, for a few hours, I started forming an idea which included 3 pieces of irrigation tubing ("poly irrigation rural"), with a few connection pieces (T-joints, to let the water in and out easily), altogether for about 10 bucks. The only problem that remained was to connect the tubes to the ball-joints of the lights, and the tripod mount of the camera. A handle-bar mount for the camera (10 bucks on ebay) works fine, except, the tripod screw rusts. It seems to be fine for now though, even with a bit of rust.

And then the piece de resistance: I happen to have 4 friends who have 3D-printers. After a quick meeting with two of them, we came up with an idea to print a screw/cap system that holds the ball joint, and connects to the Bunnings tubing on the other side. Just a day later, one of my friends had completed the design and printed the parts. And they fit magically: easily rotatable, but just firm enough to hold the lights in place when they need to be. Combined, they easily light up a Blue groper, even from close-by. The other advantage of the rig is that the "handle bar" makes it easier to hold the camera still, resulting in less video shake than if you were to hold the camera in your hand. But the best footage always comes from holding the rig completely still against rock, or jamming it into the sand, which isn't always possible... Buoyancy control!!



If anyone's interested, I'm happy to help you out with reproducing this setup. It's compatible with other underwater setups, and very versatile at the same time: it's

easy to get longer or shorter pieces of tubing to match the size you need.



by [Michael Roelens](#)

[Other Diving in February](#)

Photos by Mike Scotland and Ron Walsh

Here are a few shots from some of the dives we have done over the last few weeks.



World's largest Cuttle at South Whale Watch. Mike S



Michael Roelens and Weedy Sea Dragon at the Leap. Mike S



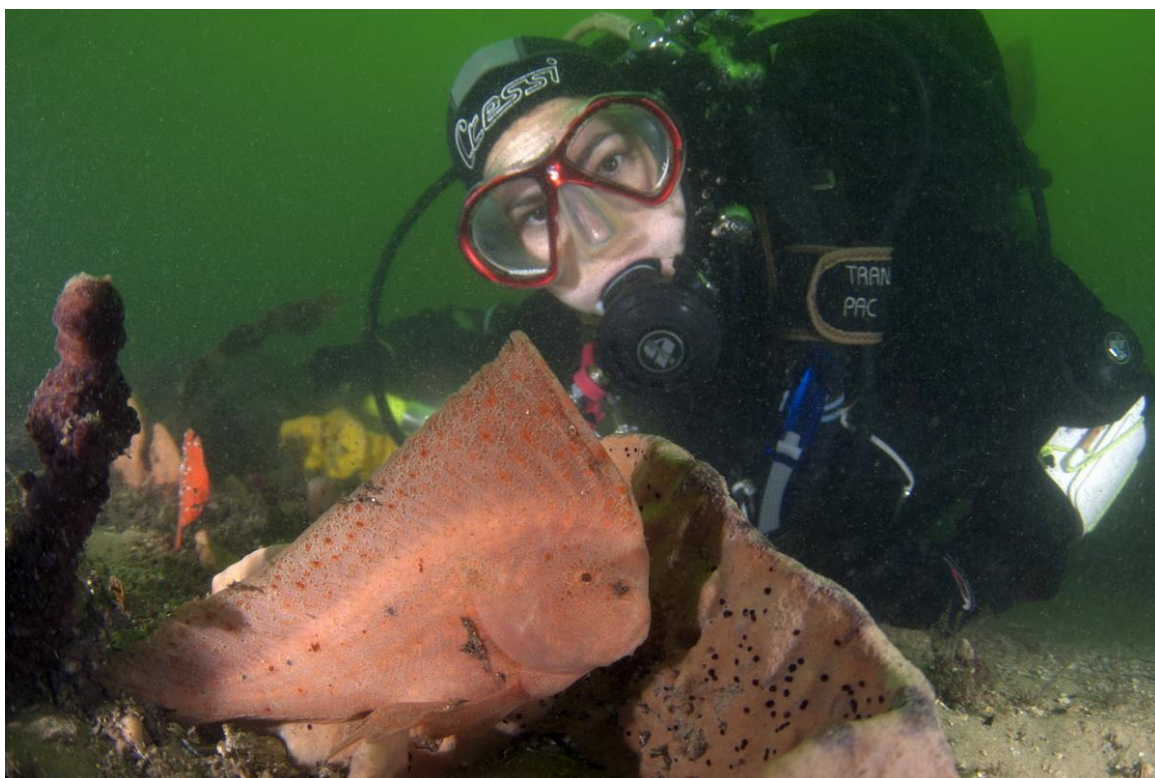
Tiny Moray hiding inside a sponge at The Monument Mike S.



male Striated Angler fish from Bare Island Mike S



POLYCERA FROM INSCRIPTION POINT. MIKE SCOTLAND. NANCY AND RED INDIAN FISH RON WALSH BELOW





Donna and RIF by Ron Walsh



Simon Hoad and RIF



Gary Dunnett and RIF by Ron Walsh

What your members have been up to.

Michael McFadyen Dive Log story on the wreck of the Yongala

Mike Scotland Dive Log story on Sea Horses and one on Fathers Reef in New Guinea.

Your Committee

President	Natasha Naude 0410 074 677	President@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Vice President	Dave Casburn	dcasburn@iinet.net.au
Secretary	Nancy Scoleri	secretary@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Treasurer	Caroline Corcoran	treasurer@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au
Assist Secretary/Treasurer	Shelley Breuseker	shellsb@bigpond.net.au
Webmaster	Paul Pacey	webmaster@stgeorgescubaclub.org.au

	0431 691 173	Paul.pacey@iinet.net.au
Newsletter Editor	Mike Scotland	
	0415 158 168	mikescotland@bigpond.com

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Please send photographs as separate jpg files, (not png) rather than inserted into the article.

Convert them to about 120 to 200 kB.

Please rename with your name them from something complex such as 1M9826I301C2K7E987Y654M4O1%U#6S^&E#6\$@ to something simple like "marys seaslug.jpg".

This will save me a lot of time, reformatting files, finding your photos and resizing photos etc.

Please run the spell check over your article.

Thanks.

Editor.