

Readers lives Cayman update

Endangered sharks

Just a follow up to your article on the recent shark attack on a surfer in Western Australia. Firstly, the great white is not only endangered in Australia, it is fully protected under law! Therefore I would assume that it would take an act of parliament to overturn this law to allow the death of this particular shark. Secondly, and I have supplied the video footage to Michael Aw, a local and highly popular current affairs program reported that the said attack was only an older shark teaching a younger shark how to “target humans.” This was then supported by Australia’s notorious shark hunter Vic Hislop. It was actually reported that there were originally two sharks present when the attack occurred. This evidence was supported by witnesses to the attack. So there you have it, sharks have been waiting for millions of years to be able to target humans for an easy meal. Especially when they swim out to you on surf boards.

Regards
Bruce

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I was on holiday on Grand Cayman during the recent Hurricane Ivan and I certainly believe that the media has not picked up on the extent of devastation on the islands. As a result the island is not getting as much international emergency aid as it needs.

I was at the East End of the island for the storm and drove from there back to Seven Mile Beach (in the west) before leaving on an evacuation flight (a sentence that cuts a very long story short). The drive allowed me to see the massive devastation across most of the island. I still find it disturbing to talk about, so briefly most homes are damaged either by the wind ripping off roofs or water washing through them. People are without homes, power, water, phones and food, drinking water and petrol are rationed. The photo shows the state of the road just outside our shelter after the storm - it was washed away in places, while in others it was buried under trees, building materials and sand.

I spent the storm in one of the National Hurricane Shelters and was welcomed with tremendously warm Caymanian hospitality, under the most dire circumstances for the islanders. I now feel it is my duty to repay their hospitality by raising awareness of the



Photo by Stephen Broadbelt

plight of the people on the island after the storm.

The Cayman Islands have touched many people’s diving lives and I hope that this encourages you to give a little back in their time of need. Immediately the islands need humanitarian aid. You can help at both at National level (see www.caymanislands.com) or at a Local level by visiting the websites of resorts and dive centres you know - which are using their secure payment facilities to collect donations for their areas.

In the longer term the islands also need us not to forget about them.

Everyone I know in the Tourism Industry on the island seems dedicated to get up and running as soon as possible (despite not having water, power or phone lines at the moment). They hope to be operating before the end of the year. Once the tourism is open for business, please consider Cayman as a destination again - not only will you have a fantastic Caribbean Dive vacation (and there are even some new beaches!) but your business will help the island get back on its feet again.

Respectfully,
Alex Mustard
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Cayman dive report



Friends of mine at Ocean Frontiers went diving (for the first time since Ivan) and have this report on the reef condition. They dived on the Southern side of the island that was most exposed to the storm:

The staff made one extensive shore dive yesterday covering two of the most weather-exposed dive sites, River of Sand and High Rock Drop Off. Both are near the famous Cayman Blowholes on the south side of the island, near East End. The visibility was good and the whole area has a much “cleaner” appearance

as any algae that was there is now gone. Many new gullies, tunnels, and swimthroughs are now further exposed and safe for divers to enter and exit since most of the sand has washed away. In fact, much of the sand has naturally relocated and may be found on the new 30-foot wide beach that mother nature dropped on the Compass Point doorstep—happily there is a silver lining. The hard corals and reef structure seem to have been built to “hurricane code” appear to be in very good shape. While some sponges remain on these two dive

sites, many have tipped over, leaving their “root” for healthy regrowth. The parade of marine life was out in full force, with a large grouper, 2 turtles and a school of 5 barracuda escorting Steve around the reef. Given that this dive was made on two of Cayman’s dive sites that were most exposed to the full brunt of Ivan’s fury, the prognosis is excellent for the other less-exposed areas around the island.

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Highbury-Paragon warning

May I, through the pages of your magazine, send a warning to all photographers who are considering sending material to Highbury-Paragon, particularly “Digital Photography Made Easy” magazine.

In November last year, I was approached by one of their writers who wanted to do an article on my specialist use of a digital camera. I was asked to supply images for the

article, which I agreed to do providing I was paid for their use - this was agreed.

Having supplied the images, with an accompanying letter stipulating that they were not be used unless payment was forthcoming, I heard nothing more from them.

Imagine my surprise, then, when I discovered the article and my images in DPME Issue 35. Emails and phone calls precipitated no response to my request for payment. I sent an invoice in May which was also ignored. Finally, early in September, I talked to a person in the finance office who agreed that my invoice should be paid and that I should receive the cheque “next week”. I am still waiting!

Even a communication to the managing director of the organisation has received no response.

What can one do against a company like this other than take them to the small claims court?

I could be more understanding if I submitted the material on the chance they might use it, but I was approached by one of their writers and sent the photos at their request, so I simply cannot understand their attitude.

Richard Knisely-Marpole
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