

Palm Beach, Florida

By Walt Stearns

When divers think of big animal destinations their minds often turn to distant corners of the world such as the Galapagos, Azores, Silver Banks or Cocos Island. But there's another location that, while not as exotic, is rapidly gaining recognition as a mecca for big animal encounters. I know this place well, because I call these waters home.

Florida's Palm Beach County is best known as a winter home of the mega-rich. But just offshore of the beachside mansions, another world awaits, and it is populated by an impressive cast of outsized marine life. Those with only a passing knowledge of the diving scene may make statements such as "Oh yeah, you do a lot of drift diving there." But while the technique of drift diving is certainly the means by which area reefs and wrecks are explored, it is not by any means the primary attraction.

What makes the Palm Beach area so compelling is the marine life. I am not talking about profusions of pretty little reef fish, although they are here. I'm referring to the wide cast of big-ticket showoffs that can make the heart skip a beat when they appear suddenly out of the blue. The list of

heavy hitters that call Palm Beach home is both long and distinguished, including some of the largest groupers in the world, all five species of sea turtles native to the Atlantic, and more than a dozen species of shark, including lemon, bull, reef, sandbar, silky, dusky, tiger and greater hammerhead. And although rare, encounters with both whale sharks and great whites have taken place here.

Diving with the Ancient Mariners

Sea turtles have long been a familiar part of the Palm Beach Florida diving scene. Coming face to face with these non-threatening and often quite large marine reptiles is so common that if you see fewer than two during a course of dive, it's considered a really slow day. That's because this 45-mile stretch of coastline is one of the few places where all five of the Atlantic species of sea turtles - Loggerhead, Hawksbill, Green, Leatherback and Kemp's Ridley - are known to converge.

The smallest member of this group is the Kemp's Ridley



Baby leatherback sea turtle rests up before making a dive into the depths of the Gulf Stream of Palm Beach, FL. Canon 7DmkII inside a Nauticam housing shot in manual at 1/160 sec at f/11, ISO 200 with a Tokina 10-17mm lens at 17mm. Lighting provided by a pair of Sea & Sea YS-250 strobes set at 1/8 power from less than a foot away.

(*Lepidochelys kempii*), which may reach 36 inches / 90 cm in length as an adult, averaging around 100 lbs. / 45 kgs. They are easily mistaken for a young loggerhead, with the most telltale difference being the carapace (shell), which on a Kemp is both slightly flatter and rounder. Although found predominantly in the Gulf of Mexico, there is a small population of Kemp's that live off Florida's eastern coast between the state's northern border and the northernmost end of

the Palm Beaches in Jupiter. So far, I have come across only three in all my years of diving off Jupiter.

Another rare sighting for divers is the giant Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), a turtle which at full maturity can measure over 6 ft. / 1.9 m in length, and weigh up to 1,100 lbs. / 500 kgs. The largest leatherback recorded was 6.5 ft. / 1.98 m in length, and tipped the scales at 2,019 lbs. / 915 kgs.), making it a colossus in the world of living sea turtles. While in-



Mating season can make for some peculiar scenes off Palm Beach, FL, when loggerheads get a bit too amorous. Nikon D200 inside a Subal housing shot in manual at 1/80 sec at f/8, ISO 125 with a Tokina 10-17mm lens at 15mm. Additional lighting provided by a pair of Sea & Sea YS-250 strobes set at 1/4 power.

water encounters with leatherbacks are fairly rare, meetings do take place. When they do, there is no mistaking this creature, which has a predominantly black body with white markings and a teardrop-shaped leathery carapace instead of a hard shell. The best time to look for one is from early March through June, as this is this turtle's nesting season.

Palm Beach area is a major breeding and nesting ground not only for the giant Leatherback, but also two other primary species, the green and the loggerhead. When nesting season reaches its peak in May and July, this coastline plays host to more sea turtles per acre than anywhere in the Southeastern U.S. or Caribbean. According to data compiled each year by the Loggerhead Marinelife Center, which records and monitors 9.5 miles of beach in Northern Palm Beach County, this area alone often sees more than 10,000 turtle nests per



Hawksbill turtles are common sights year round in the waters of Palm Beach, FL. Nikon D300 inside a Subal housing shot in manual at 1/80 sec at f/7.1, ISO 200 with a Tokina 10-17mm lens at 14mm. Lighting provided by a pair of Sea & Sea YS-250 strobes set at 1/3 power.

season. 2015 was a banner year with more than 9,700 recorded loggerhead nests, 3,616 green turtle nests, and 213 Leatherback nests tallied through the month of July.

For the most part Greens (*Chelonia mydas*) are highly transient and only converge in numbers during their nesting season, which runs from May through September. Easily identified by their smooth, olive-brown carapace (shell) marked with darker streaks and/or spots, and an equally smooth bullet shaped head, greens are large, averaging 240 lbs. / 190 kgs., and the males can get quite amorous. Often times their quest to mate can get so heated that they will pursue the wrong species, giving resident Loggerheads and Hawksbills a fit, while at the same time providing a show for divers.

The Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) nesting season pretty much overlaps that of every other



Count on seeing lots of sea turtles during the spring and summer months off Palm Beach, Florida; this pair of greens is doing a fly by, while a large loggerhead leaves the scene. Canon 7DmkII inside a Nauticam housing shot in manual at 1/160 sec at f/9, ISO 200 with a Tokina 10-17mm lens at 17mm. with a little bit of front lighting provided by a pair of Sea & Sea YS-250 strobes set at 1/3 power.

turtle, beginning as early as March and ending as late as August. And they can be found in Palm Beach waters at most times of the year. That is because there is very large resident population to begin with, a feature which has made them a signature attraction of the local diving scene. When it comes to looks, these darlings of the reef may not win any beauty contests. They have thick, rough-textured shells and large blunt heads, which looks like the end of a log; hence the name. They are the second largest turtle found in Palm Beach waters, with a carapace length around 4 feet / 1.2 meters. A mature female will average between 350 - 450 lbs. / 158 - 204 kgs in weight.

Diving the reefs in the 50 - 80 feet / 15 - 24 meter range during the height of nesting season



During the winter season the local population of lemon sharks jumps up by a factor of 10 in the waters off Jupiter, FL. Nikon D300 inside a Subal housing shot in manual at 1/90 sec at f/4.8, ISO 280 with a Tokina 12-24mm lens at 22mm.

(late May – June), it is not unheard of to count as many as 20 to 30 adult loggerheads scattered about the bottom during the course of one dive. Most will be females, recovering from the physical expense of hauling their large bodies out of the water and up a sandy slope in the night. Once ashore, they must dig a hole deep enough to bury the 100-plus eggs they lay, then drag themselves back to the sea to repeat the ritual 10 days later. The most telling evidence of recent nesting is when a big female is so bugged out from exhaustion that she

will barely make it to the reef before falling asleep in her tracks. Even more comical are the ones that conceal their heads under a small overhang while leaving the rest of their massive body exposed to the world—it's a bit like a poor attempt at parking a large truck in small tool shed.

Another highly abundant species of sea turtles found along the Palm Beach Coast is the Atlantic hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*). Next to a Loggerhead they are a smaller and more agile species, identifiable by the ornate coloration of their shell, and



Winter brings sharks to Palm Beach County, FL, and Jupiter is the place to see a great variety like this sandbar shark. Nikon D300, Subal housing shot in manual, ambient light at 1/160 sec at f/9, ISO 320 with a Tokina 10-17mm lens at 17mm.

the protruding upper jaw, which bears a strong resemblance to a hawk's beak. Often times, divers will come upon one of these turtles using that specially designed beak to dig in and tear small chunks off a sponge. In fact, sponges form a primary part of the hawksbill's diet, which explains why they are a common feature on the sponge-rich reefs of Palm Beach. One thing I find interesting is that, unlike leatherbacks, greens and loggerheads, hawksbills rarely nest here, as most of these turtles encountered are largely adolescent individuals measuring less

than 24 inches / 60 cm in length. Once in a while I will come across a fully mature turtle in the 36 inch / 91 cm range, but these I tend to write off as transient turtles just passing through.

Shark Alley

Seeing a large shark can add excitement to any dive. And in Palm Beach waters, things can certainly get exciting. The members of the shark family you are most likely to see here are the nurse, Atlantic reef, lemon and bull—in that order. Several reefs up between Jupiter and



Sometimes peering under a ledge on the reefs off Jupiter, FL can present an interesting surprise like this Atlantic Reef Shark quietly napping. Nikon D300 inside a Subal housing shot in manual at 1/125 sec at f/8, ISO 250 with a Tokina 10-17mm lens at 17mm.

North Palm Beach, including Shark Canyon and Tunnels, are regular stomping grounds for Atlantic reef sharks (*Carcharhinus perezi*). Dive charters do not feed these sharks, as this practice is not allowed in Florida State waters. But even without additional enticements, the sharks are at times inquisitive, granting a lucky a photographer a good photo opportunity. One of the interesting behaviors I have seen reef sharks exhibit from time to time is their habit of taking a nap beneath the overhangs provided by the edge of the reef.

My personal favorite is the lemon shark (*Negaprion brevirostris*), which often cruise the primary reef systems that run parallel to the coast at depths between 45-60 feet/ 14-18 meters, and at 70-100 feet/ 21-30 meters. Measuring up to 8 feet/2.5 meters long, and weighing as much as 300 lbs./140 kgs, these big brawny fellows (actually most are females) have all the bearings and looks of a pretty



Bimini is not the only place Greater hammerhead sharks like to visit during the months of winter and early spring; they also favor Jupiter, Florida. Canon 7DmkII, Nauticam housing, manual at 1/125 sec at f/8, ISO 320 with a Tokina 10-17mm lens at 17mm. Sea & Sea YS-250 strobes set at 1/3 power.

serious customer. Yet, comparing them to species like the Atlantic reef (the shark common to most shark dives in the Bahamas) they are not highly excitable, rather coming across as better behaved. Which is a good thing, because they are the least bashful about coming in real close to photographers.

I got to know the lemon shark back in January 2001 when I came upon something I had never seen before – over 40 of these sharks, all adult size, resting on the bottom in formation like cars in a parking lot. Contacting Dr. Samuel Gruber, one of the world's most renowned experts on lemon sharks, confirmed that this particular aggregation behavior was one of a kind, not known anywhere else in the world. This finding set in motion a highly extensive study under the auspices of Doc Gruber's Bimini Shark Lab. Information gained from the Jupiter Lemon Shark Project was able to fill in new



Winter brings sharks to the waters of Palm Beach County, and Jupiter is the place to see a great variety such as this tiger shark. Canon 7D, Nauticam housing shot in manual at 1/125 sec at f/6.7, ISO 200, Tokina 10-17mm lens at 17mm. Lighting provided by a pair of Sea & Sea YS-250 strobes set at 1/3 power.

chapters about this shark's natural history that were previously unknown.

In 2010, findings from Dr. Gruber's research played an instrumental part in the State of Florida passing into law and granting complete protective status for lemon sharks in state waters. The reasoning for this action was based the shark's slow-growth rate, which makes them extremely vulnerable to overfishing. Lemons reach sexual maturity at 12-15 years of age, and reproduction takes place every second or third year at most, with the number of pups in a litter averaging between 6 and 18. Add to that a juvenile mortality rate of 40-60 percent the first years of development and you have a very low recruitment rate for the species.

The lemon shark aggregating behavior I first witnessed back in 2001 is not the only massing of sharks that takes place in Palm Beach waters.

Between late fall and late spring, large bull sharks are frequently seen around the outer reefs and wrecks of the Palm Beach, FL coast. Canon 7DmkII inside a Nauticam housing shot in manual at 1/125 sec at f/5.6, ISO 250 with a Tokina 11-16mm lens at 16mm. Lighting provided by a pair of Sea & Sea YS-250 strobes set at 1/3 power

One of the most dramatic is the annual migration of a variety of blacktip shark known as the spinner (*Carcharhinus brevipinna*) – so named for their tendency to spin as they jump into the air. These sharks work their way down the North American coastline for the same reason birds fly for winter—to keep warm. By the end of December, schools of the relatively small sharks (average length 4 feet / 1.5 meters) numbering into the hundreds converge on the warm near-shore waters of the Palm Beaches.

To document spinner populations, Florida Atlantic University (FAU) Associate Professor Stephen Kajiura, uses aerial photography, as the sharks are clearly visible in the clear shallows when viewed from the air. His flyovers allowed Dr. Kajiura to determine that between the months from January to the end of April, there can be as many as 500 sharks per square kilometer from the surf line out to half a mile offshore.

The reason so many sharks end up here is based on two related factors. The first is the unique nature of the Palm Beach Coast's underwater topography, which features the narrowest continental shelf anywhere along North America's East Coast. Offshore of the City of West Palm Beach, the shelf reached its narrowest point, spanning less than 3 miles / 4.8 Kilometers in width. Adding to this is the fact that this section of coastline happens to be the easternmost point of



land in all of Florida, which places it squarely in the path of the north-flowing Gulf Stream current. So when sharks move up or down the coast, the narrow shelf acts a little bit like a bottleneck, causing them to concentrate in greater numbers where water temps are most desirable.

While some dive operators would rather their guests aren't exposed to sharks, others promote these interactions. IF you are the type that likes to dive with sharks, it can certainly be arranged. Most of these dives are conducted near or over the edge of the shelf, 4-7.miles .6.5-11 kilometers

offshore of North Palm Beach County, in the Jupiter/Juno Beach area. I would not recommend such encounters for beginners, as bottom depths run between 90 ft / 27 m and 120 ft / 36 m plus, so half of the time you are in the water, the bottom can be pretty far below you. But out in this zone, the cast of players can be as numerous as they are varied, with lemons, bulls and silkys making up the core candidates, usually followed by duskys, sandbars, tigers and greater hammerheads making their special appearances.



During spawning season, Goliath grouper gather in large numbers around a number of sites off the Palm Beach coast. This group on the Zion train was captured primarily with ambient light only with a Nikon D300 inside a Subal housing with a Tokina 10-17mm fisheye zoom; camera was set to 1/90 sec at f/5.6, ISO 280 with the lens at 17mm.

Goliaths

In recent years, Palm Beach has seen the return of the giants. A full-grown goliath grouper can exceed 500 lbs. / 220 kgs in weight, and measure up to 7 ft. / 2.1 m in length, easily making them the largest tropical reef dwelling boney fish in the world. When confronted by one, they will command your attention. Yet despite their formidable size and somewhat dense demeanor, goliaths are not the ferocious brutes some spear-fishermen

would like you to believe. For the most part, they can be big babies, with most habitually retreating to a safer distance or disappearing down into hole on a wreck the moment they feel threatened. Now and then, a bolder fish might sound off with a short series of loud booms, but that behavior is typically all bark and no bite.

Now and then you may find a fish that swims out from cover and seems indifferent to the presence of divers. Local underwater photographers refer



In the waters of Jupiter, large Goliath groupers and sharks are common prospects for photographers. Nikon D300 inside a Subal housing shot in manual at 1/60 sec at f/5.6, ISO 280 with a Tokina 10-17mm lens at 17mm. Lighting provided by a pair of Sea & Sea YS-250 strobes set at 1/4 power.

to these more inquisitive and social fish as the “super models,” eager to pucker for the camera while the diver fires off shot after shot. Where the fish are this compliant, you can do almost anything short of giving it a bear hug. If you happen to meet one of these fish, remember there are a few simple rules to follow: Keep your movements slow and deliberate, as they also don’t like being surprised. Don’t put your hands in front of its face as it could result in the fish biting you. Don’t

chase the fish. Your best results will come by following rule number one and moving slow.

Over the course of the past five years, diving with Goliath Groupers have grown to become such a signature trait to Florida’s entire Palm Beach region that they just about eclipse all other attractions. Finding one is pretty much guaranteed at most wrecks, along with a few stretches of reefs that have a permanent resident population. Drop in on wrecks like the



As the spawning season comes closer to its end, a group of Goliath groupers gather around the stern section of the Castor Wreck. Canon 7D inside a Nauticam housing shot in manual working only with ambient light in the 100-foot depths at 1/125 sec at f/4, ISO 200 with a Tokina 10-17mm lens at 12mm.

Zion Train or MG-111 off Jupiter, or the Castor wreck south of Boynton Beach, and you should find no less than 8 to 12 of the barrow shape behemoths milling about. In similar fashion, the Mizpah or Danny Wrecks off West Palm Beach will have at least 4 to 5 big fish present most of time.

When things really start to get exciting is towards the end of July, as the late summer months of August and September are this fish's spawning season. At this time, the fish come together in aggregations that are found

nowhere else in the world. These gatherings can draw 90 or more fish to five specific sites, each of which is within easy reach of dive charters between Jupiter and Boca Raton. The first four I already mentioned; MG-111, Zion Train Wrecks and Mizpah (all three sit in depths of 90 ft / 27 m or less), the Castor Wreck off Boynton Beach which sits in 110 ft / 34 m. The fifth site, called Hole-in-the-wall, sits off Jupiter and is a bit deeper, with a profile of 120 – 140 ft / 36-42 meters.

In comparison to most other



A small broken up barge off Palm Beach, FL provides a haven for large schools of grunts. Canon 7D inside a Nauticam housing shot in manual at 1/90 sec at f/5.6, ISO 200 with a Tokina 10-17mm lens at 10mm. Lighting provided by a pair of Sea & Sea YS-250 strobes set at 1/2 power.

species of grouper, the goliath's path to romance is more marathon than sprint, with some making the journey from considerable distances as far away as 350 miles/560 kilometers. Once in Palm Beach waters their spawning season will take up the entire months of August and September. This provides divers with a unique opportunity to get incredibly close to the entire spawning aggregation of a critically endangered species in one of the most accessible places in the world, where underwater

visibly can go from good to exceptional (60-100 ft / 18-30 m. Not only is it a spectacle that sometimes defies words, it also makes for one hell of a photo opportunity.

Back to the question what is there to experience in Palm Beach? I would think you will find more than "Oh yeah, you do a lot of drift diving there."



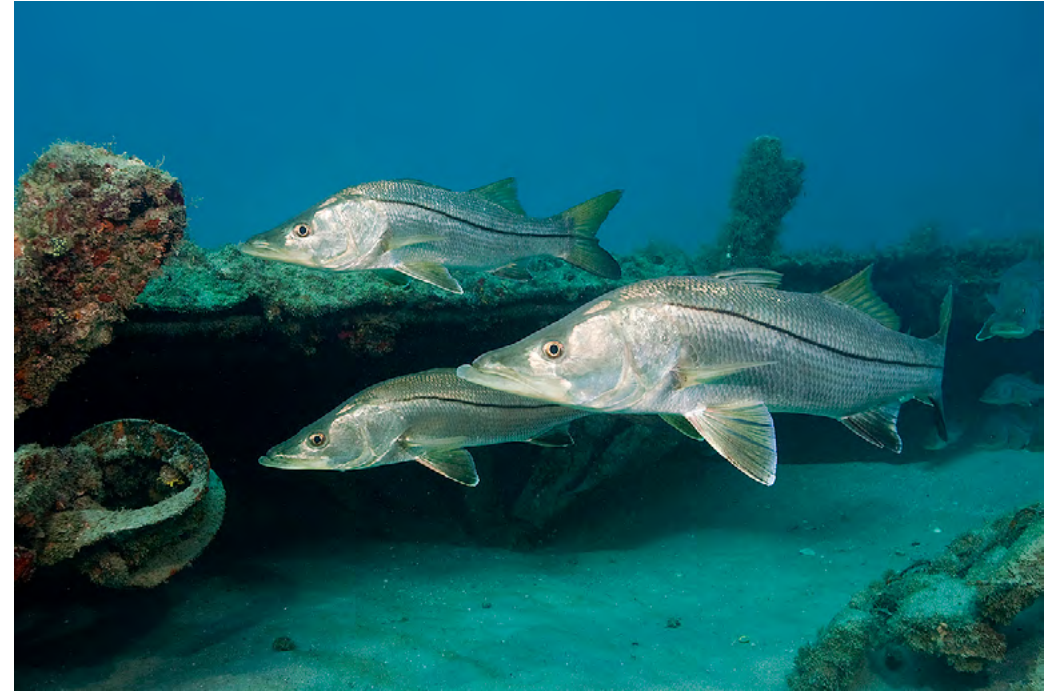
It's not only about large animal life around the reefs and wrecks off the Palm Beach coastline, it's also about the fish life, some of which is pretty colourful. Canon 5D, Subal housing shot in manual at 1/80 sec at f/10, ISO 250 with a Canon 17-40mm lens. Sea & Sea YS-250 strobes set at 1/3 power.

Gulf Stream Effect

The Palm Beach Coast differs from the Florida Keys in the variety and nature of its coral reefs. Instead of the shallow spur and groove fringing reef formations typical of the Keys, bottom contours along Palm Beach take the shape of elongated limestone ridges formed in an earlier millennia when sea levels were 30 to 140 ft / 9 to 42 meters lower than they are today. Varying in height from 3 to as much as 18 feet (1 to 6 meters) above the sand, these elongated limestone

escarpments are far from featureless, which brings us to the Gulf Stream.

This mighty "river within the sea" is the second largest oceanic current on the planet that begins down the western Caribbean with a pathway that takes it up and around South Florida, up the U.S. East Coast and on into the North Atlantic all the way to the British Isles. This massive flow of clear, tropical water tracks closer to shore along Palm Beach County than anywhere else along the North American Continent. This provides



3 Snooks. Canon 5D inside a Subal housing shot in manual at 1/80 sec at f/8, ISO 200 with a Canon 15mm. Lighting provided by a pair of Sea & Sea YS-250 strobes set at 1/4 power

the clearest waters divers will encounter in Florida, with underwater visibility reaching up into the 24 to 30-meter range.

The proximity of the Gulf Stream does far more than provide divers with inviting water clarity and warmer temperatures in the winter. The Stream's constant flow enlivens area reefs, bringing the nutrition needed for corals, sponges and bottom fish life to thrive. Evidence can be seen most readily on the outlying reefs and wrecks in the 45-90 feet / 14-28

meter depth range, where the presence of colonial sponges, gorgonians, and hydra-corals are highly abundant and most varied. This covers reefs in splashes of color, from orange elephant ear sponges and deeper-hued orange and red tree sponges to my favorite of the bunch, the red polyp octocorals, with their eye-popping vibrant red to iridescent orange hues. But all that is mere garnishing on the plate when you see what the main entrée is often comprised of.

Between these two adjoining



The wreckage of a World War II era SB2C Helldiver torpedo bomber laying upside down in 168 feet of water was a surprise find off Jupiter, FL. How it got there ... nobody knows. Nikon D300 inside a Subal housing shot in manual working only with ambient light in the 168-foot depths at 1/45 sec at f/4, ISO 400 with a Tokina 10-17mm lens at 13mm.

factors (width of the shelf and presence of the Gulf Stream) coastal waters of Palm Beach serves as an oceanic highway for a multitude of open ocean and migratory species of marine life from sharks to jacks, mackerel, tuna, billfish and sea turtles, to the less expected like large Mola Molas (ocean sunfish), passing humpback and Northern Right Whales.

Wreck Diving

Just about every coastal region of Florida has a few wrecks to dive. Where Palm Beach differs from the rest is that there are a number of sites where divers can explore two to four wrecks during a single submersion. That is because many of these sunken vessels were purposely concentrated together in a linear progression south to north to take advantage of the Gulf Stream's directional flow.

Two prime examples of this are



Stern section belonging to one the four freighters sunk to create the Governor's Riverwalk Wreck Trek off Palm Beach, FL. Canon 7DmkII inside a Nauticam housing shot in manual at 1/160 sec at f/7.1, ISO 320 with a Tokina 10-17mm lens at 10mm. with a little bit of front lighting provided by a pair of Sea & Sea YS-250 strobes set at 1/2 power.

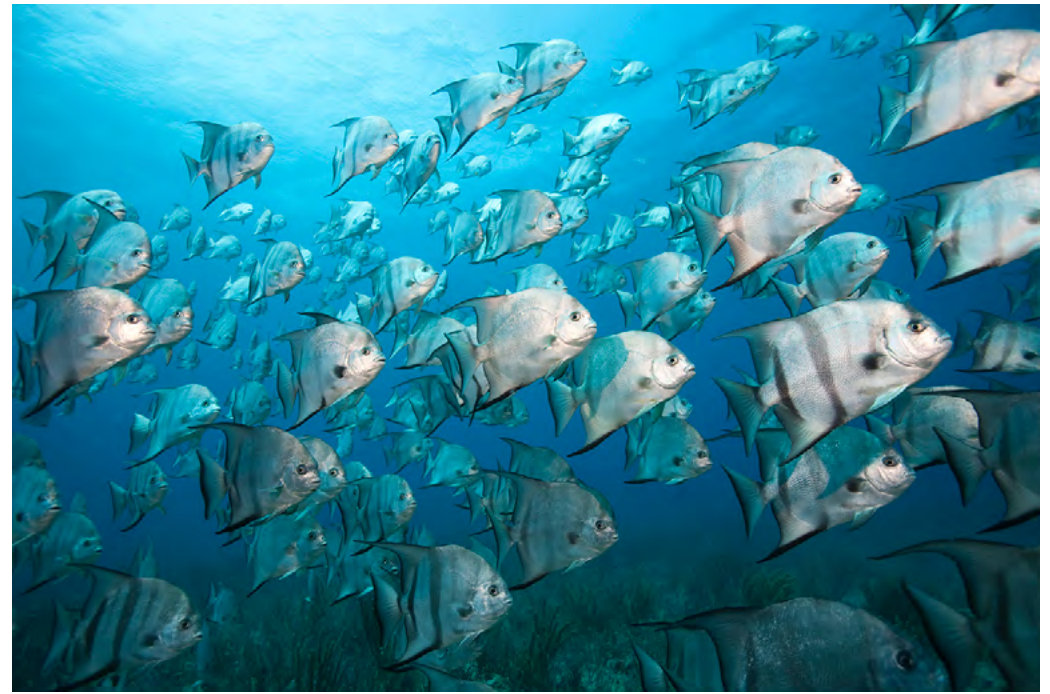
the Mizpah Corridor and Governor's Riverwalk Wreck Trek, both a short boat ride from the Lake Worth Inlet. The Mizpah Corridor begins with its namesake ship, a former 160-foot / 48 meter steel-hull ship sunk in 85 feet / 25 meters of water. It is joined by the broken up remains of the PC-1174, a former 150 feet / 45 meter Navy Patrol craft. Both were sunk in 1968 and support an amazing amount of marine growth and fish life. Just beyond the two hulks lies a third

wreck known as the Amaryllis, with nothing remaining but the hull of a 450 feet / 138 meter freighter. Should you still have enough air, you will likely make it to the fourth wreck on the list, the China Barge. This small wreck usually has a lot fish life around it. From start to end, the Mizpah Corridor is a 1,700 ft / 518 m long drift dive.

Like the Mizpah Corridor, Governor's Riverwalk is comprised of four large coastal freighters in the



In the shadows of a site named Tunnels, a large school of porkfish gather adding a striking amount of gold against the shadows created by the reef's swim-throughs. Canon 5D inside a Subal housing shot in manual at 1/80 sec at f/8, ISO 200 with a Canon 15mm fisheye lens. Lighting provided by a pair of Sea & Sea YS-250 strobes set down around 1/3 power.



Shooting subjects like this large school of passing spadefish in the depths can present some challenges such as their darn reflectiveness. Canon 5D inside a Subal housing shot in manual at 1/125 sec at f/7.1, ISO 200 with a Canon 17-40mm wide-angle zoom. Lighting provided by a pair of Sea & Sea YS-250 strobes set down around 1/4 power.

175 feet / 53 meter range. As part of Palm Beach County's 2002 Artificial Reef Program the first three in the collection; the Shasha Boekanier, St. Jacques and Gilbert Sea were put down in consecutive in 90 feet / 27 meters of water. Nine months later, a fourth vessel, the Thozina (measuring 174 feet / 53 meters), was added to the group. Landing directly behind the Gilbert Sea and expanding Governor's to a spectacular artificial reef system, the group can be covered entirely in one dive.

While tropical storms and time have broken many of these ships apart, they are nothing short of amazing when you see the amount of sea life they

attract, making them some of the fishiest wrecks on the Florida coast. But when diving them, be prepared to sometimes fly like superman during the dive, as these sites are often washed by healthy currents from the Gulf Stream.

Drift Diving

The Gulf Stream influences almost every aspect of diving along the Palm Beach Coast, from what you see to how you actually dive it. The primary practice here is the "Live Boat" method in which the boat, between deployment and recovery of divers, follows the divers overhead while they

travel with the current, exploring the reef or wrecks. Here's how it works: As the boat gets close to the intended dive site, divers are given a 10-minute warning to gear up. At the site, the captain lines up the boat a short distance up current of the intended reef tract or wreck. Once in position, the boat is put in neutral and a jumpmaster-style type command of "Dive, Dive, Dive" is issued. The dive group steps overboard and begins their descent. At this point, they will not feel any affects of the current, because both they and the boat are moving with the flowing water. It is only as they approach the bottom, they will begin to notice that they seem to be flying

over the ground, at speeds that could range from barely describable to brisk, depending on the location and the nature of the currents on that particular day.

Once settled in near the bottom, divers can relax and allow the current to do most of the work, while staying in visual range of the divemaster and/or group leader who carries a tethered surface float. This style of diving actually requires less exertion than diving on a reef or wreck with no current, and divers are able to cover long distances following the reef contours and increasing their odds of seeing the region's big-ticket items. At the end of the dive there is no need to fight the current to get back to the anchor line, or remember where the boat is. Instead, the group simply heads for the surface, performing a safety stop along the way, and the boat comes to them for re-boarding. The process is surprisingly simple, convenient, and most of all, a lot of fun!

Where To Dive

Palm Beach Coast Departure Points

Palm Beach County's 45-mile long coastline is cut by four inlets, each of which provides local dive charters with access a large number of sites within a few miles of their corresponding inlet. Starting at the southern most end of the county, the

four inlets are located as follows:

Boca Raton Inlet – Situated on the southern most point of Palm Beach County, dive operations have the unique advantage of not only addressing many of the same wrecks and reefs that sit within reach of the Boynton and Delray Beach area, but also several of Broward County's famed collection of wrecks off shore of Pompano Beach.

Boynton Inlet – Also called South Lake Worth Inlet, this inlet provides access to the southern half of Palm Beach County with its own collection of reefs and wrecks for divers to explore off Boynton Beach, from Lantana south to Delray Beach.

Lake Worth Inlet – located nearest to the City of West Palm Beach, this large inlet cuts between Singer Island and Palm Beach Island, providing access to a large reach of both Northern and Central Palm Beach County's reefs and wrecks.

Jupiter Inlet – This inlet is located at the most northern end of Palm Beach County, providing direct access to both Jupiter and Juno Beach's prime collection of wrecks and reefs.

Walt Stearns

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Aquatica housing 5D, 8 inch dome, dome shade and canon 5D body including 2 spare batteries and spare charger for sale £1600 + p&p.Housing:Aquatica 5D housing - good to 90m, 8" optical acrylic dome port – some minor scratches but not visible in photos, 8" dome shade / guard, for wide angle lenses, Spare O ringCameraCanon 5D, 3 Batteries, 2 Chargers, StrapAll for £1600+ p&p, will accept paypal, or cashPlease feel free to ask any questionThe equipment has not been used for a while but I have just upgraded to a canon 5D mark II package so have this for sale.I am based in London and if you wish to come round and have a look/examine the equipment prior to parting with your money we can arrange that.

Email: martin.abela@hotmail.co.uk [Ref:c145]

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