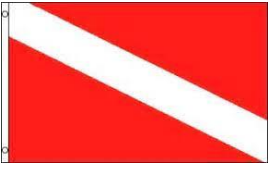


# Triton's Call



NASJAX SCUBADIVING CLUB



August 4, 2021

[www.nasjaxscubadivers.org](http://www.nasjaxscubadivers.org)



**Hathaway Bridge Spans** - The Hathaway bridge was originally built in 1929. The spans were from the old bridge that connected Panama City to Panama City Beach. There are 14 Hathaway bridge spans. The spans were sunk in 1988.



USS Strength before sinking in Panama City Beach

## President's Comments - Kathy Lawler

Dive into Panama City Beach, FL along the Florida Panhandle Shipwreck Trail. There are 12 wrecks plus, 10 barges, 10 bridge spans, lifeboats, and airplanes! Look for the leopard toadfish with his fleshy beard in nooks among the wrecks. The diving is challenging due to surface currents, reminder to keep hold of the tag line until clear of currents and follow instructions given in the dive briefing.

Stay safe & keep diving, Kathy

## Glen Akins – Secretary (usually our newsletter editor) absent

**Safety Officer -Chet Tomlinson:** Glen forwarded an article on the 3 deaths during lobster mini season. Chet discussed the chance that 2 of the deaths were cardiac problems. The 3<sup>rd</sup> died at the hospital from prop injuries. Chet reminded us to have a cardiac check-up & a yearly discussion with our doctor about our fitness for diving.

**Treasurer – Monster Molyneux** Treasurer's report - We have \$1,029.24 in the NASJAX dive club account. A change because someone bought a shirt.

**Web Master-Sharon Green** Visits to our web page: 129 page views- down 3%, Unique visits 61 down 13% , most visited pages were the Home page and the dive club calendar.

**Ball Cap order-** Sharon showed us images of the cap & later emailed us the image with the color selections. The cost is about \$12. The order will go in 10 days. The price will be less if more people order. Please email her your order.

## DIVE REPORTS

Monday August 2, Mitch and I dove on the USS Strength, a WWII minesweeper. There were 7 divers on the 60 ft dive boat, the Recreation II, with lots of space between each diver to maneuver & put on equipment. The boat also has a large covered main area, bathroom, and storage area. The dive charter run by the original Diver's Den, does a good job with briefing and safety. We would dive with them again.

The wreck lies in 60 to 75 ft. of water 5 ½ miles from Panama City Beach, in broken and jagged pieces with fishing line, rope, anchor chains in many places. We were warned not to get close to any part of the wreck because we would be in danger of entanglement. The visibility was limited to 20-25 ft. With lots of particulate. The water temperature at depth was 80 degrees, surface temp 83. Mitch & I wore skins which was comfortable and protected us from the jelly fish. The beginning of the dive was a challenge due to racing currents. We jumped in, swam for the tag line, and pulled ourselves down the line anchored to the wreck. The current tugged my safety signal flag loose, it was flapping around me in the current. I wadded it up and stuck inside my skin that did the trick until I was back on the boat. I thought I blew through a lot of air moving from tag line and then fighting the current down the line to the wreck but I was ok. What was special about this dive, we were engulfed by a fish ball of silver sides! Wow what a neat experience, our first with a bait ball. My next thought was oh no what's chasing them? I looked and expected sharks, but was disappointed to find juvenile barracuda about a foot long. Divers often find sandbar sharks and goliath grouper on the wreck. We spied many healthy leopard toadfish peeking out of ledges and holes, tiny bright blue fish darting near the toadfish, good size blue angel fish, and several feisty trigger fish. Mitch & I held hands so as not to get lost in the low visibility. During the outgas interval we saw a large green sea turtle 30 ft from the boat. By the time I grabbed my camera he swam out range.

**Dive 2 Hathaway Bridge Span #2** 165 ft long 22 ft wide, 36 ft vertically. The max depth was 62 ft, visibility was better 30ft to 40 ft, and less current. I was concerned about the thunder storm in the distance. Niko the dive master checked to make sure it would move away from us and distance from us was about 13 miles. I dove with Troy and Eric because Mitch had sinus and seasickness issue. I really liked this dive better because there were more fish & shells to look at, more color on the soft corals, less particulate. I was separated from the other divers by another bigger bait ball! This time young amber jack spiraled between me and my fellow divers. Eric was wearing a bright red rash guard that was not visible for a minute. We wove our way up, through and down the bridge spans taking care not to bang into anything. I picked up a bunch of empty colorful scallop shells and a heavy deep sea fishing weight. There were oysters and empty scallops embedded in the corals. At one point I saw a big lion fish lurking under the juncture of two support beams. The guys were not looking my way so I was not able to share that creature with anyone. Troy showed me an oyster drill working on a conk shell, they were locked together. Then we swam over a wrecked motorcycle intentionally sunk there. The front tire and handlebars were recognizable then the rest was pretty smashed up. It was a good dive and uneventful return to shore. See links and photos below for our dives. USS Strength <https://g.co/kgs/Wxs3eb>

video [Hathaway Bridge Span](#)



Sunday August 1, Kathy rented a boat to take her son and his family for a day of snorkeling at Shell Island. We saw lots of hermit crabs, picked up a few scallop shells, and some very tiny sand dollars that didn't make the trip home. The grandchildren snorkeled even through the seaweed! As they walked to beach or boat, I kept reminding them to shuffle their feet to avoid sting rays. They enjoyed jumping off the boat and walking across Shell Island. Grandpa Mitch caught a blue crab to show the kids, and my son found a live scallop. In the inlet on our return, we watched dolphins! The grandkids loved it that they came within a few feet of the boat. It was a fun day in PCB Panama City Beach.



### **Carol Hughes Hawaii snorkeling & other adventures**

Hawai'i was amazing! 😊 We went to Oahu, Maui, and the Big Island for a total of two weeks. My girls don't scuba dive, but we snorkeled several places right off the beach. May have convinced one to considering getting certified after we also went to the Keys and snorkeled back in June. 😊 On Oahu, we snorkeled on the North shore at Shark's Cove, & kayaked in Kaneohe Bay to a sandbar (beautiful area). On Maui, we did mostly land sites, though visited black and red sand beaches, did Road to Hana (& then all the way around) seeing lots of waterfalls, jumped off waterfall cliffs where we could, saw turtles on beach at Paia, sunrise at the top of Haleakala National Park. On the Big Island, we did Volcanoes NP (my Bucket List is to go to all the NP's 24/63 now), stayed in Hilo right at Carlsmith Beach Park-good snorkeling area, snorkeled at Honaunau Bay-beautiful, but didn't see any Spinner dolphins, & Punaluu Beach.

In all, we saw lots of beautiful Indigenous fish species-Reef Triggerfish (Humuhumu-nukunuku-a-puaa), Yellow Tang, Bluestripe Butterflyfish, Longnose Butterflyfish, Moorish Idol, as well as swam along with lots of turtles mostly Green. My waterproof camera stopped working after 2-3 uses & haven't transferred the SD card yet, & I haven't done anything with my GoPro pics/videos yet. 😞 I'll send a couple pics on another email. (Not letting me send some from iPad.)



**Other News-** Mark Vogel let us know Grand Cayman & Little Cayman are going to open fully for tourist in January 2022. They have handled COVID pretty well only 2 deaths, so Mark encourages us to consider diving there & help their economy.

Monster & Annette booked the last spot for Aqua Cat scuba cruise of Bahamas in October.... 2022!!! They realized it was next year and booked a Western Caribbean cruise for this October. They will visit many St. Islands on their cruise.

Chet reviewed the COVID procedures for Roatan and how they are separate from the mainland of Honduras.

**Those in attendance were:** Bill Allen, Sharon & Rich Green, Carol Hughes, Howard Feingold, Art LaRue, Kathy Lawler, Mitch Maxson, Monster Molyneux, Elmer Osborne, Chris Rule, Chet Tomlinson, and Mark Vogel

**Club meeting -** Next meeting Wednesday **September 1st** in person at 7:00pm La Nopalera **Fruit Cove**.

**111 Bartram Oaks Walk.** It is at the intersection of Racetrack Rd & State Rd. 13(San Jose going south into St Johns) behind the Gate gas station. We meet in the room to the right of the bar. The Location will be on the web site and will be emailed to all.