

Triton's Call

NASJAX SCUBA DIVING CLUB

www.nasjaxscubadivers.org

November 3, 2021



President's Comments - Kathy Lawler

-New officers: Venessa Wood volunteered to be the Treasurer and Carol Hughes the Secretary. Approved. In need of a VP.

-Added 1 new member: Burney (sp?) & last name unknown

-Christmas Party-look for email from Kathy re: 2 options for date & location, & vote by Nov. 10th.

Keep Diving!



Kathy

Dive Club Secretary We conducted our November 2021 Dive Club meeting via Zoom again. 9 dive club members attended.

Billy Schofield is wanting to buy single Aluminum 80 SCUBA tanks if anyone has any to sell
- (904) 881-0650

Patrick Burke has a set of double side mounted cave diving tanks for sale - (786) 385-5871

-Carol

Dive Club Treasurer - Monster Molyneux \$\$\$ Our club bank account balance is a little over \$1,000.

Dive Club Safety Officer - Chet Tomlinson

- Use Pre-check list especially if it's been awhile since you've been diving.
- Complete Buddy checks as well
- See link below for article re: Pre-check list
- Discussion re: club offering a BLS/CPR class if interested. Let Chet know if interested. Will probably be scheduled in January.

<https://www.dansa.org/blog/2020/10/19/the-importance-of-a-pre-dive-safety-check>

-Chet

Dive Club Webmaster - Sharon Green

-No report provided.

Sharon

904-755-2218

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Dive Reports

Blue Grotto Spring Dive Glen Akins 15 October 2021



On Friday 15 October Lucy Font and I drove to Williston, Florida and dived Blue Grotto Spring. It's a 100 mile drive from Jacksonville. As we arrived at the spring, I was concerned about how crowded it would be. I remembered Chet saying at the last dive club meeting about 40 dive students arrived there when he was finishing his dive the last time he dove Blue Grotto. It turned out to be a great day and dive. There were only about ten divers total in and around the spring. There were enough covered picnic shelters that we got one to ourselves with three picnic tables under it.

It had been two years since my last dive due to COVID 19 precautions and longer for Lucy. We assembled all our dive equipment, checked it, then carried it down the steps to the water.

Entering the water, we checked each others dive equipment. Lucy's octopus had an air leak, but not bad enough to cancel the dive. She'll have to replace the hose.

Blue Grotto is a great place to train students, check out dive equipment, do buoyancy control training and just get back into diving. The owners have built a nice dock to enter the water and wooden platforms under water at different depths to train on. The water in the shallower depths had a lot of silt and was stirred up somewhat. Under the ledge where the bottom was rockier the water



was a lot clearer. Water temperature was 72 degrees and visibility about 50 feet. Although you can dive down to 100 feet, we only went to 71. Like most springs, there's not very much to do or see. We dove for 43 minutes.

The facility was very clean and has lots of inside showers and equipment rinsing stations outside. Again, Blue Grotto is a very nice spring to dive, but can be crowded on weekends and the price of \$48 per person is a little steep. GA

From Major,

A friend wanted a dive buddy for a refresher dive at Blue Grotto on Saturday, 10/23, so I went along. Due to it being a Saturday with perfect weather, there were a lot of divers and several classes being conducted in the spring that day. Virgil, the long-time resident soft shelled turtle, met me on the entry ladder. The large number of weekend divers resulted in limited visibility, but it was an enjoyable opportunity to get back in the water, despite the 72 degree water temp. There have been a number of upgrades made to the area since the last time I was there.

The same friend wanted to do a 2nd refresher dive, but this time at the Blue Heron Bridge. We went on Wednesday, 10/27. Phil Foster Park wasn't very crowded since it was a work day. We started at the end of the west bridge and swam around the reef/snorkel trail to the east bridge and back. The trail includes a couple of small wrecks, rock piles, and sunken structures that are filled with mostly small marine life.

We found an old octopus lair, but no octopus. Didn't see any sea horses this time, but did see lots of sea life including stingrays, crabs, some vividly colored butterfly and angel fish, and several large sheephead that seemed out of place with all the smaller fish.

Visibility was 40-50' and the water temp was a warm 82 degrees, definitely more comfortable than the cool 72 degree water in the springs.

Blue Heron Bridge Dives Oct 15-16

Mitch and I arrived at BHB about 2:30, early to get a parking spot. After assembling our gear on the tailgate of Mitch's truck, we checked out the snorkel trail. We entered with mask & fins about 3:30pm. There is a short swim over a sandy bottom to the east end. Reaching the first reef structure, we were greeted by lots of small tropical fish, sergeant majors, sharp nose puffers, silver chubs, and lots of arrow crabs. Air temp 88 water temp 81, viz 35-40ft. We moved along the trails various shaped reef structures, we passed the tower shape and off in the sand about 5ft was a white spotted snake eel. Next, we swam over the wreck of a 20 ft fishing boat and saw a few bigger fish. In search of the underwater sculptures, we missed them. We had curved in towards the beach but the sculptures lay in deeper water.



1st dive at 4:17 temp & viz the same. Under the west BHB definitely felt the current. By the bridge supports, we observed a school of Spade fish, large Gray Angelfish, Cushion Sea Stars, Reef & Purple Sea Urchins, Feather Duster Worms, and a Fireworm. In one hole by a telephone cable were a blue crab, High Hat, and a Banded Coral Shrimp. Parrot fish and other large fish darted into the shadows between the bridge supports. We scuba over to the channel wall, turned around and slowly came back. PBS was filming some staged dive entry & exit shots while we were there! We dove for an hour and a half, until we were down to 900 PSI.

Sat. Oct 16, we tried to enter the park about 3pm but police had closed the entrance. We talked about diving from Singer Island Beach. Following the discussion, we walked the shopping strip for 15 minutes then returned to Phil Foster Park. Luckily it was open. We made 3 dives. Viz only about 30 ft water temp 80-81. At 4:09 we dove east of the snorkel trail and hit some lively colorful spot reefs. There was a giant school of Grunts, French, Small Mouthed, Blue stripe, and Tomtates. The reef had nice red & orange finger coral. Also circling the reef was eating sized school of Sheepshead, stop light Parrots male & female, and Princess Parrots m & f. As we swam to the next reef a big school of Doctor fish was pushed aside by a larger school of big Blue Parrots excreting showers of sand. It was amazing the number and variety of fish in the water. Then Mitch was signaling me and wrote a B in the sand. I was

enjoying the reef fish and didn't want to leave. We swam to the shallows towards the east side of the bridge.



2nd athletic dive at 4:56 we attempted to dive. The closer we dove to the bridge the stronger the current. It was pulling us along & I was not seeing anything. So, after 2 more minutes I signaled to Mitch to go back and end the dive. To return we pulled along on rocks or dug our hands into the sand. Back to shallow water I signaled to ascend. It was too early to go under the bridge high tide was 5:30. I also was stung by comb jelly fish. The work out dive lasted 10 minutes.

3rd dive at 5:10 we dove the snorkel trail seeing great numbers of fish again, 4 lobsters, several red scallops, French Striped Angelfish, Porkfish, lots of Banded Coral Shrimp, giant Arrow Crabs, Batwing Crab, and a Coral Crab. Going from one reef, we passed over a Stonefish, and a hiding Black Grouper, and a large Moon Jellyfish. Then as the sun started to set, I spied a shark. I strobed my light at Mitch to get his attention. I had found the 3 underwater Hammerhead sculptures. Yeah! Happy and low on air we exited the water at 6:30. A rule of the park is no night diving without a permit. Sunset was 6:50 so we were ok because we were out of the water. The photos come from a Paralenz, gun like camera. I rented the camera at a kiosk in Pura Vida Dive Shop. It was easy to use, low cost too. They email a link so the the photos can be downloaded. I took over 300 photos and 10 videos.





Dive Club Members attending the 3 November meeting:

Major Nimock, Carol Hughes, Kathy Lawler, Mitch Maxson, Chet Tomlinson, and Venessa Wood, Monster Molyneux, Glen Adkins, Billy Schofield

December 1, 2021 Meeting

Will be another Zoom Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Kathy will email the logon information prior to the meeting.

NASJAX SCUBA CLUB EXECUTIVE BOARD

President - Kathy Lawler

Secretary - Carol Hughes

Treasurer - Venessa Wood

Web Master - Sharon Green

Safety Officer - Chet Tomlinson

THE END