

FLOTSAM

Issue #1, 2009

Newsletter of the
Auckland University
Underwater Club

akunidive.com



Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of Flotsam for 2009. Flotsam is the utterly sporadic newsletter of the Auckland University Underwater Club. With any luck, we may get more than one issue out this year!

This is your club newsletter so I welcome your contributions. I'm sure noone wants to spend the year reading my trip reports. Eventually I'll get sick of writing them and I'm sure as hell you'll get sick of reading them. You can email me your contributions to flotsam@akunidive.com. I'll consider anything, from gear reviews to trip reports to photos from club events and more.

I know there's a growing group of underwater photographers amongst us now. I'd love to publish your pictures, especially on the cover of Flotsam. Email me your images. I took this issue's cover photo of Cameron in Spanish Arch (Locky's Memorial) at White Island in November 2008. The AUUC trip to White Island is one of the most challenging and spectacular dive trips of the year. Challenging because of White Island's exposed location, spectacular for the same reason. Check out some of the photos from last year's trip in the AUUC online Gallery to see if this trip is for you: <http://akunidive.com/gallery>.

See you down under,
Ali Perkins

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Club Meetings

Club meetings are held at 6:00pm in room Eng 3.401 at Auckland University on various Wednesdays throughout the academic year. Visit the club website <http://akunidive.com> to find out when the next one is.

6:00pm, Wednesday 29th April, Eng 3.401
Guest speaker Dr Roger Grace: "NZ's marine biodiversity, from the Kermadec Islands to Stewart Island".

What's Going Down?

Visit <http://akunidive.com/upcoming-trips> for more details and the latest trip list.



2-3 May
23 May
24 May
3-6 July
25 July

Bay of Islands
Poor Knights Islands
Poor Knights Islands
Bay of Islands
Lake Taupo

Diver's memorial feared stolen

News broke on the New Zealand Scuba forum in January <http://www.scubadive.net.nz/bb3/viewtopic.php?f=26&t=2974>. The plaque had gone missing from Northern Arch. An article was published in The New Zealand Herald on 02 February 2009 http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10554676.



The plaque in question was located at a depth of 37 metres in Northern Arch at the Poor Knights Islands and read:

IN MEMORY OF
JOHN BARRIE CATTON
AGED 26 YRS
LOST AT CATTON'S REEF
1.8 KM NORTH OF THIS (TAWHITI RAHI) ISLAND
ON 4TH AUGUST 1979
AT THE FRONTIERS OF ENDEAVOUR PERILS
ABOUND. MODERATE EXERTION AT THE
SURFACE CAN BE FATAL AT DEPTH

John Catton was an Honorary Life Member of AUUC, for his services to our club, and was well known and respected within the diving community. His disappearance in 1979 shocked all divers in New Zealand, as he was a very skilled diver who was careful about safety. The news that the memorial plaque has gone missing has caused deep shock and great disappointment amongst former club members who were mates with John. For those of us who did not know John, the plaque has been a feature of Northern Arch at the Poor Knights Islands, for divers to visit with due respect. We pray for the plaque's safe return.

If anyone hears anything about the plaque's disappearance, could they please contact flotsam@akunidive.com.

Below is a picture of Northern Arch at the Poor Knights Islands, where the plaque was located.



Seasick - The hidden ecological crisis of the global ocean

By Alanna Mitchell

Book review by Ali Perkins

Thanks to its immense depth, the ocean makes up 99 per cent of the living space on our planet, covering more than seven-tenths of the earth's surface. The ocean is the source of life on earth and the future of life on this planet. That's the good news.

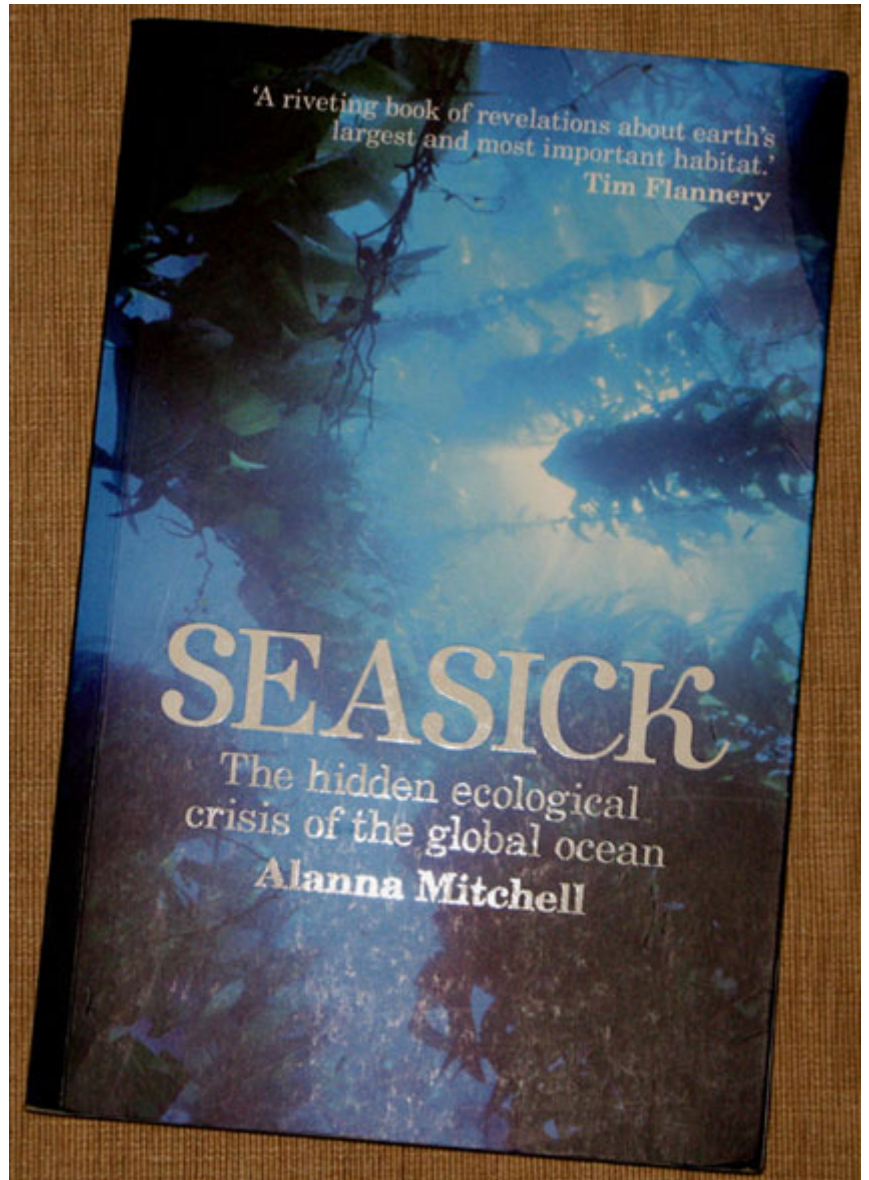
The bad news is that roughly a third of the carbon dioxide that humans are putting into the atmosphere has entered the ocean and it has absorbed about 80 per cent of the extra heat being created by climate change. It can't continue. At least, not if we want life as we know it to persist on this planet.

Forget global climate change, it's the global ocean change we should be worrying about.

What most of us don't realise is that plankton produces half the oxygen we breathe in. These microscopic creatures, living in the ocean, are the real lungs of our planet. Mess with them, and we're messing with our own source of oxygen. And that's exactly what's happening.

Alanna Mitchell takes us on a tour of the world, visiting renowned scientists as she goes. From the greatest reef system on earth, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, to the Gulf of Mexico with its growing dead zones and Canada with its legendary collapse of the Atlantic cod fishery, she explores the threats facing the ocean and therefore life as we know it.

The ocean is the main medium of life on earth. It's a concept that humans have struggled to grasp, with our strong ties to the land. Question is will we realise the damage we're doing before it's too late? Seasick is a brilliant book, and, written by an environmental journalist, you don't need a scientific background to understand the concepts nor the message. Read it. It might change your life.



Rahui announced for Deep Water Cove

PRESS RELEASE

Te Rawhiti Community announces a Rahui (Temporary Closure) in Maunganui Bay.

The purpose of the rahui is to enable seriously depleted fish stocks to regenerate.

Ngati Kuta and Patukeha are the resident hapu at Te Rawhiti. Under customary lore as kaitiaki of Rakaumangamanga they have a responsibility to uphold the healthy state of their traditional lands and fishery. The area Maunganui Bay also known as Deep Water Cove was a special fishing area for Maori. Since the early 1960s Maunganui has suffered from many years of over fishing. Evidence shows gradual depletion of fish in this bay and Ngati Kuta and Patukeha want to rebuild the stocks back into the healthy state as it used to be. Traditional fishing practices allowed fishing for certain species at certain times and in certain places. This kept robust fish stocks available so that enough stock was left to regenerate the species and catchment areas.

Recently Ngati Kuta and Patukeha purchased the *Canterbury* wreck as their commitment to help restore the fishery. Providing an artificial reef and nurturing the growth of juveniles to restore resident fish populations. It is also a place where unique fish species are found.



Unfortunately some of the public have a different view and see the wreck as an ideal spot to catch fish. It is the action of a few that has prompted local hapu to place a rahui over Maunganui Bay.

The rahui will be in place for two years effective from today (16 March 2009). During that time on-going research will be undertaken to measure and monitor the health of the resident fishery. The rahui will not stop visitors who wish to dive, swim or anchor in the bay, but the taking of fish and shellfish would be prohibited under the community-imposed Rahui.

The commercial dive operators who dive the *Canterbury* wreck have an arrangement with the owners of the wreck. These arrangements can be extended to any commercial dive operator or dive club. To maintain the role of the *Canterbury* wreck as a fishery enhancement project, obligations under the resource consent conditions have to be met. The compliance cost of these obligations is derived from a nominal diver surcharge of \$10 per diver.

This is an area pristine in nature, being mostly Maori lands that have remained un-spoilt. The nature, cultural and historic values is special to Maori and it is the desire of Ngati Kuta and Patukeha to keep it that way by putting in necessary protections. It is an integral part of the Northland Nature Tourism product, critical to the economy and to our 'natural clean green' image internationally.

This approach is unique. It relies on the Te Rawhiti community, diver interests and public support to make it happen. It is a Maori-led initiative that relies on the self discipline of individuals to do the right thing. We invite you to join us in supporting the rahui and tell your friends

“you can look but don't touch”

Contact: (09) 403 7012 for more information or visit the website: <http://www.canterburywreck.co.nz>.

AUUC is running a trip to the Bay of Islands with Northland Dive over the weekend of 2-3 May.

This is your chance to dive the wreck of the *Canterbury*, a 113 metre long ex-New Zealand navy frigate that has been in the water since November 2007. Or Danger Rock, flanking pinnacles of rock that rise from the depths and are home to swirling schools of fish, gaily-coloured finger sponges and nudibranchs. Or Bigeyes Lair, a cavernous tunnel chock-full of nocturnal Bigeyes, moray eels and cleaner shrimp.

Email Kathryn at secretary@akunidive.com to sign up and visit <http://akunidive.com/about-our-destinations/bay-of-islands> to find out more.



Are the fish fighting back?

Goat Island trip report by Ali Perkins – Fresher’s Weekend – 14 March 2009

A great grey being is barreling straight at my buddy Cameron. It’s a massive Short-tailed stingray. Head down, Cameron is oblivious to the impending collision. I have no way to warn him. Cameron lifts his head to stare straight into the face of the oncoming ray a mere metre away, bearing down on him. He frantically attempts to back-pedal, hands pushing uselessly at the water. Cameron’s body language says it all “shyte, it’s a massive stingray and it’s coming straight at me”! The ray shudders to a grinding halt, its body language not dissimilar to Cameron’s “shyte, it’s a massive diver and it’s coming straight at me”! The ray responds instantly, pulls hard with its fins and disappears so quickly I don’t have time to fire off a picture. No danger, just a moment of shock and a brief encounter with an enormous fish.

Pouting lips, a Hiwihiwi (Kelpfish) is perched on its pectoral fins. What a top photographic subject, I think. I sneak in calmly, my strobe flares as I fire off a shot. Wham! The camera shudders in my hands. What the hell! I see a green flash. The Hiwihiwi has lunged at my camera lens. I turn the camera housing around and peer at the lens in concern. I’m thinking “if that damn Hiwihiwi has left teeth marks on my lens, it’ll be barbequed fish for dinner, marine reserve or not”. As I’m closely examining the lens, thwack, a blow to the side of my hooded head. Holy crap! I’m under attack! A fish the size of a fist is biting me and it’s packing quite a punch. I look around for my foe. It’s nowhere to be seen. I peer down. Cheeky bugger... the Hiwihiwi is using my own body as shelter while it launches it’s attach. This is not a fair challenge and there’s only one thing I can do. I fin out of there as fast as I can. I don’t look back.



Cameron points to the surface. We’re in shallow water. I can see that it’s pouring with rain and now I listen and I can hear it too. It was a grey, moody day when we entered the water. It doesn’t seem like the weather has improved. Oh well, I think, there’s no better place to be while it’s raining than underwater. I turn back to photographing a passing school of Jack mackerel. Nearby Cameron starts madly leafing through a kelp plant and summons me with an urgent wave of the hand. It’s as if he’s frantically searching a sock draw for a matching pair when he’s already late for work. Whatever it is he thought he saw, it’s quietly slipped away.



Established in 1975, the Cape Rodney-Okakari Point Marine Reserve, commonly known as Goat Island, was the first marine reserve in New Zealand. Today it is well known for its tame, resident Snapper, and for me, its belligerent Hiwihiwi. As we head back to shore at the end of a fantastic Fresher’s weekend dive, I observe a good sized Red crayfish sitting nonchalantly at

the edge of a crevice. Perhaps it is used to seeing divers that don't make a grab for it in the marine reserve, so it is not anxious to retreat into protective cover. I take a photo and imagine that the fish are fighting back.



What's on in the next issue of Flotsam?



Trip reports
from the
Poor Knights
Islands.
Here's
a sneak peek.

