

Waves 'n' caves

www.wavesncaves.com

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The latest in brief...

There has been some totally rad diving going on of late. A few have been travelling to Mt Gambier to do some totally extreme diving to the max. Another group headed to Queenscliffe to do some hot as diving in the bay. Others have been getting some wicked cool crays down at the coast, while another bunch have been going to some gnarly sites up around Jervis Bay.

In this edition:

- Past Events
- Upcoming Events
- Ewens Ponds Update
- All about Anxiety
- Warning—Melbourne Hyperbaric chamber out of action!
- Update on the HMAS Canberra
- Trim & Buoyancy
- Mapping project —divers wanted.

The weather has still been totally sick (and not in a gnarly cool way) but we've got hard core divers with persistence to the power of infinity that just want to dive, dive, dive!

The ex HMAS Canberra has hit a drawback and Ewen ponds is currently still open for diving *at this point in time* (more details inside this edition) .

It's true—this season has been so lame weather wise but there's still been a bit we've been able to do.

There is also many dive sites on divers 'want to dive' list, also mentioned in this article. Why not check it out to see if there's any sites listed that you may enjoy to.

Grab yourself a cuppa, put your legs up and have a read through this edition of Waves N Caves. We've got stories on recent dives, ideas on where to hide those car keys, an interesting article about anxiety, tips to improve your diving, and Scuba Snoopy is back with another great adventure! 



Where to store your keys?

So... you want to go diving, but don't know what to do with your car keys. This can be a problem, especially with shore dives. Let's take a look at a few ideas that may help you with your decision.

Hide your keys

The first (and most obvious) option is to hide your keys somewhere near the dive site. While this option may be fine for remote areas, it certainly isn't suitable in populated areas where any number of people will see where you put your keys, but at remote locations can be a viable option.

You can even hide your key on another divers car, so if in a rare situation someone does find the key—they'll be trying to open the wrong car with it.

Take your keys with you.

This might be fine for drysuit divers, but what if you're in a wettie? One thing that can be done is to have a spare 'bare' key cut to your car. You can lock your ignition key (with the remote locking / security codes) in your car, and store the bare key on you. (Inside a wetsuit boot, or in your shorts pocket under the wetsuit for instance). Being a bare metal key, it won't matter if it gets wet.

On modern cars, the bare key will not start the car, but it can be used to open and lock your vehicle. Once inside, you can grab your normal key from under the chair / inside the glove box (or wherever you choose to hide it) when you're ready to drive away.

There are also underwater waterproof key storage products available that you could take diving with you too if you were so inclined to do so, but I would

be too worried about it flooding and wrecking the electronic features of a modern day car key.

Use a Key Safe

There are a few products around such as Hitchesafe key storage, or Victory-store's Portable key storage that allows you to store a key and other small valuables in a combination locked environment.



Hitchesafe connects with your tow bar and has a combination that is required to open it, or remove it from your vehicle.

Other options exist like this combination pad lock with inside storage that allows you to lock it to—well, anything that you can lock a normal padlock to.

This is a safer option than simply trying to hide your keys. Hitchesafe is well disguised and the portable key storage can be locked to something under the car (or elsewhere).

Hopefully this gives some ideas as to what you can do if you're short on ideas. ✍️



Looking for Accommodation in Mt. Gambier?

Whether you're chasing it for a night, a weekend or a week, this spacious 3 bedroom house with good size living areas and fully furnished, located in Wimmera Street Mt Gambier may be what you're looking for.

It includes an outdoor entertainment area at the back with facilities for diving gear to be hung up on. Perfect for scuba divers visiting the Mt Gambier region, whether to dive in caves or the nearby sea.

It also makes an excellent place to stay while doing your CDAA course! Prices start at \$20 / head / night.

For bookings, contact Kelvyn or Paula Ball

Ph: (03) 5384 2259 Mob: 0428 842 259 / 0427 842 259
Email: freddy@wavesncaves.com



Alfred Decompression Chamber N/A

Divers should be aware that the Alfred decompression chamber in Melbourne is offline for all treatment.

Victorian Divers who are conducting dives during this time should be aware that due to the chamber not being available, there may be significant delay in treatment due to the need to transfer to an appropriate facility interstate.

Divers conducting decompression requiring dives or other high risk dives should consider the risks of such dives and potential consequences of such dives and should have adequate emergency oxygen available on-hand.

Divers requiring treatment should contact either the Alfred switch on 03 90762000 and ask to speak to the Hyperbaric registrar or call the DES line for advice. Divers with suspected DCI will in most cases be assessed at the Alfred ER and transferred as appropriate, although those diving that are within striking distance to Adelaide (such as diving the South West coast of Vic, or Mt Gambier regions) should consider Adelaide for hyperbaric treatment at this point in time. 

Trim and Buoyancy

Trim and Buoyancy is crucial to diving. Different stages of diving require different buoyancy. Positive, natural and negative—they all come into play during every dive.

Unfortunately some divers forget about trim and buoyancy the moment they finish their open water course, and don't consider it again until they have done a dive that highlights the importance. (Such as diving through a silty wreck, visiting a sink hole with a silty bottom, etc).

It is also easy to overlook that buoyancy and trim may have changed since you last correctly weighed yourself. Things such as changing to a different wet or dry suit, changing your BC, using a different tank, or even changes in your body weight or physique (such as muscle vs fat), can all alter your trim and buoyancy thus having you work harder during a dive than you should.

How long has it been since you've checked to make sure you're correctly weighed?

Before you can work out your trim, you need to be

correctly weighed.

The optimum way to achieve correct weight is to be able to float at eye level in the water whilst having your lungs full of air, your tank almost empty and your BC completely empty.

This can be hard to achieve as we rarely have our tanks almost empty, so it can be done with full tanks at the start of a dive, and then you add a bit of weight (approx 5lb / 2kgs) to offset the additional weight a full tank holds.

Remember that your buoyancy will alter from fresh to salt water, so if you dive in both fresh and salt water, you will need to get yourself correctly weighed twice, once in each environment.

Once we have our correct weight we can then work on our trim. Unlike our buoyancy we only need to work on our trim once. (As only buoyancy is affected and not trim by the difference between fresh and salt water).

Whilst under the water put yourself into a horizontal position. (A buddy can be helpful to ensure you are **really** in a horizontal position, and just don't think that you are). Breathing normally try and maintain this horizontal position without moving your arms or legs.

One of 4 things will happen.

Your feet will rise, and you will turn upside down.

You will most likely have too much weight on the upper part of your body. Try lowering your tank on your BC to see if this corrects the problem. You can also try adjusting your weights slightly, or if this doesn't succeed you could use tail weights, or ankle weights to help balance out your trim.

If you're in a drysuit is air getting to your feet. You can compensate by wearing gators around your shins. Rockboots are also helpful.

If you do decide to use ankle weights, make sure that you can still keep your feet up in the right position and fin comfortably.

Your feet sink, and you end up head up, vertical in the water.

This can be corrected by moving weight up your body a little. You could try lifting the cylinder up (but make sure you're still able to lift your head up), or move some weights up on the body a little. You could attach some weights higher on your body, or use trim pockets on your BC if you have them. You

could also put some weight around the neck of your tank.

Only do a little bit at a time, and re-check until you have the right trim.

You roll left or right.

This will normally happen if you have more weight hanging on one side than the other, or your BC isn't fit correctly (and your tank is hanging more to one side than the other).

Sometimes this can happen in conjunction with being feet heavy or light, so you may need to work on both.

Make sure your BC is correctly fitting—that your tank is in the right position and that you have even weights on each side of the body.

You stay in a horizontal position.

Congratulations! This is exactly what you should be achieving. Once you are correctly weighed and trimmed you will find diving requires much less effort, your breathing / SAC rate will improve, and you will be less tired after each dive.

Good buoyancy and trim is not something that is done, and then forgotten about. Every time you change your setup, minor adjustments will need to be made, and you should always keep your practise up, even if you don't require it.

For instance, if you're going lobster hunting you may decide that you want to be negatively buoyant to stay on the ocean floor.

Many divers just jump out of the boat, and descend until they hit the ocean floor.

Instead, descend and aim to stop just before you reach the ocean floor. Hover, maintaining neutral buoyancy and good trim for a few seconds and then release more air to rest on the bottom.

Taking a few moments to do things like this on every dive will help you to maintain good buoyancy and trim so your skills are there, ready for when you need them. It may also help you avoid an unpleasant encounter on a bottom dwelling creature, such as a stingray hiding in the sand directly below your boat. ✍

Mapping Project—Divers wanted.

Peter (Puddles) Horne has approached me with a request to map the deepest section of Little Blue. This is the last part of little blue that needs to be surveyed for a more accurate map to be made of the area.



Linda Claridge shows good buoyancy and trim control whilst diving on a rebreather in Ewen Ponds.

The South West quadrant of little blue includes the undercut section that goes under the road.

Also needed are photo's of various features in this area.

At present little blue is about as clear as a bowl full of vegetable soup, so this project will not need to start until some time near late winter (where hopefully the visibility below 30m will improve from 2 feet to something more acceptable!)

Mapping projects can be enjoyable and enlightening. Not only do they give divers something different to do whilst mapping—it also changes the way a diver views the site—having a much greater knowledge and detailed understanding of all the small things that are missed on normal dives.

If you are interested and willing to do a couple of dives in little blue to map this last section, please contact Adam Hair (as he's looking for volunteers at present). ✍

Need to hire dive gear?

Do you need to hire some dive gear? Not sure where to go? Let us know, and we may be able to help.

We've had a few members find it hard to find dive gear of late.

There are plenty of people around with a spare set of this, or another set of that, that are happy and willing to hire out their gear.

If you're having some problems, contact Freddy or Adam and they should be able to give you some helpful suggestions, or point you in the right direction. ✍

All about Anxiety

All divers experience anxiety of various levels at some point in their diving life—sometimes it's noticeable and sometimes it's not.

As the levels of anxiety increase, it can bring on an anxiety attack. An anxiety attack can be often misdiagnosed as a panic attack—but the two are very different.

A panic attack is one where the diver is no longer able to think logically and is a dangerous situation for both the diver, and any buddies nearby. A classic example is the description given to us when we did our open water course—a diver with an uninflated BC, having wide eyes and placed their mask on their forehead who kicking and splashing at the surface trying to stay afloat.

An anxiety attack on the other hand is quite different, as you will see in the following account of a real situation.

I was going through my cavern course. I was being task loaded up with various drills such as sharing air, and line work, but yet I felt comfortable with what I was doing. I didn't foresee any problem.

Then I was asked to remove my mask. No problems—I've done this plenty of times before, including a few times today. As I removed my mask—the cold water hit my forehead (much colder than anticipated), and I started to hypoventilate.

I did not know what was going on at the time. I could still think clearly, so I knew it wasn't a panic attack. I remember thinking rationally—"just slow down your breathing—you are not going to fail this course" I scolded myself.

I felt safe. I wasn't frightened of drowning or anything, but I couldn't stop the rapid breathing. Why was I breathing so rapidly I thought. I stopped what I was doing for a minute to try and regain control of my breathing, but it didn't work. Being a stubborn person, I was determined in my head to pass the course, regardless of whether my body wanted to or not—so I decided to keep to the original dive plan rapid breathing or not. (Thankfully we were at the part of the dive when we were on our way out).

I was the lead diver, so I started to move back up the line towards our simulated decompression stop. I decided to move as quick as I could whilst maintaining control. (I was sharing air with another buddy and guiding them back too). I knew something was wrong, and I didn't want to stay down longer than was necessary—but I'll be stuffed if I'm going to abandon the line, head to the surface and fail my course! (I told you I'm stubborn.)

Part way up we hit a thermocline and the water temperature raised. Then I noticed I was no longer hypoventilating. I had no idea what had happened at the time.

Anxiety attacks can be sudden. A diver may feel comfortable in their surroundings and mentally unaware of the anxiety and added task load, but still be under stress with added task load (such as in an advanced dive course), and an added load or change of scenario can bring it on instantly, as you can see in the above account. (The proverbial straw on the camels back).

As you can see, it is very different to a panic attack, where a diver is no longer thinking rationally and is scared for their life.

Anxiety attacks can be brought on by stress or too much task loading (for what one is used to). The good news is that, if a diver is aware of their situation and what is happening during an anxiety attack, they can work towards a remedy to the situation themselves by either reducing the number of tasks, bringing themselves into a more familiar environment, or controllably returning to the surface.

In the above example simply putting the mask back on would have probably been enough to stop the attack from continuing, but the diver decided to press on. Fortunately for them another situation (moving through the thermocline) was enough to stop the attack in their instance.

A good buddy will also be able to realize what is happening, and assist, reducing the task load, and thus helping their buddy out.

Anxiety attacks if left untreated can lead to panic attacks—so it is important to deal with an anxiety attack as soon as possible. An anxiety attack can bring on more stress to an already stressful situation, and spiral down to become a panic attack if left unchecked.

Even just being aware of what is happening can help to reduce the stress levels, as being unaware of what is happening can cause someone to become more stressed and frightened, leading them from an anxiety attack to a panic attack.

If you do experience an anxiety attack at some point in your diving training, a good thing to know is that it can be overcome with time! Someone may experience an anxiety attack whilst doing a course, or something beyond what they have done before, and afterwards they can be worried that maybe it's just not for them and give up.

However, if you can—think back to your very first

time when you first put on a snorkel or reg, and put your face underwater. Do you remember what happened to your breathing? With most people they tend to breath a lot faster. Some may have even experienced a mild anxiety attack back then, and didn't realize it—because they could still think clearly and do what they needed to do. All they may have known was that they were uncomfortable and breathing faster than normal.

And now, later on as they've become more familiar with diving, breathing underwater is no longer an issue. That's because they've become familiar with their environment and those added tasks have now become second nature. Now they can continue with further training and more tasks than before. They have increased the limits of their ability before anxiety sets in.

Likewise, a diver undertaking an advanced course beyond what they've been used to do may once again experience an anxiety attack. That does not mean that they have hit their limit to their diving, but they have hit their limit at that point in their life. They may need to take things a little more slowly until they become more familiar with each step, so they can complete the task (and additional tasks later) without having another attack.

So, if you're experienced an anxiety attack in the past, and think you're not 'up to' going any further with your diving—think again now that you know about anxiety and how to overcome it.

Warrnambool Sub Aqua Club

The Warrnambool sub aqua club plan dives for most weekends, which have a wide range in the skill levels involved, so there's something for everyone!

They include shore dives, boat dives, wreck dives, cray dives, cavern / sinkhole dives and cave dives.

The Warrnambool sub aqua newsletters are on our website, and dates are listed on our main page, as well as our calendar.

They're a bunch of friendly divers, and more than happy for you to join them for a dive. They also have their own dive boat, which can get you out to fascinating locations such as the Loch Ard wreck, Emily Wreck, Thunder point, etc.

Why not catch up with them and go for a dive?

If you decide to travel, please send an email to the mailing list to let others know as there may be other interested people who would come with you. ✉

Did you know...

The current deepest scuba dive (on open circuit mixed gas) was 318.25m, by Nuno Gomes.

Hal Watts has set his records in the Guinness book with the deepest scuba dive **on air** was to 158m in 1999, with aPPO2 level of around 3.5 and most likely narced to the equivalent of almost 17 martinis.

And, just recently, the world record set by us Australians for 'Extreme underwater Ironing' was taken away from us by a British team of divers where 86 pressed their garments in Gloucestershire. The effort raised more than £6,000 for charity!

The Under Water Channel (Online TV)

There is an online website called 'The under water channel', which hosts a variety of online TV programs. (Broadband connection is needed to view)

Babelgum have now changed their software, and use regular flash streaming to view the programmes! A good broadband connection is still obviously necessary.

Many of the programmes run for approx 40 minutes and content appears to be excellent.

The Channel is free to watch (except for the downloads depending on the plan you have with your ISP) and designed to appeal to a global audience of divers and 'armchair' divers - those who have yet to take the plunge!

The channel including stories of interest relating to free diving, wreck diving, cave diving, snorkeling, dolphin watching – and even nudibranch spotting!

Also, available are stories on Whales, Dolphins, Great White Sharks, Manta Rays, Wrecks and other dive destinations stories are also available..

For those who are interested, the site can be found at <http://www.theunderwaterchannel.tv/> ✉

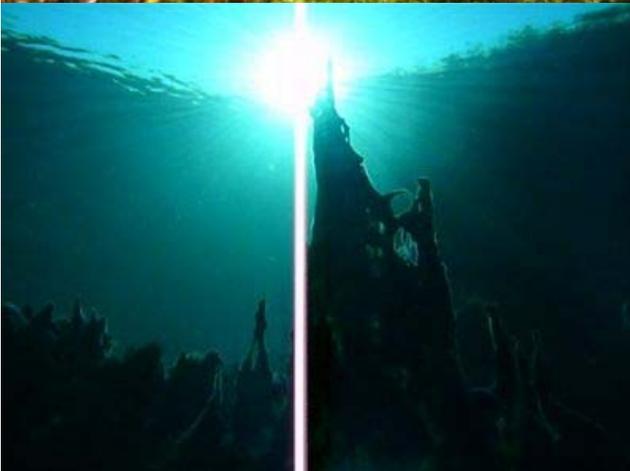


Ewens Ponds—Current Status

Submissions are no longer being accepted. Those that have been placed are now being reviewed over the next few months and a decision will be made.

We contacted the Department of Environment & Heritage for an update and was informed that a decision will likely be made around the new financial year (June/July) and once done will be enforced shortly after.

We have not been given a hint as to what may happen, so at this time it is still possible that Ewens will be closed for divers. We would encourage that anyone who would still like to take up the opportunity to dive Ewens either during day or night do so as soon as possible just to be on the safe side. ✍️



HMAS Canberra Update

It was originally believed that all relevant parties had signed off on the intended site, and if all went to plan we could be diving her now! However, the Department of Environment, Water and Heritage (DEWHA) have raised their expressions that they are not happy with the site. (DEWHA is the Commonwealth Department that has responsibility for the Sea Dumping Act and which must sign off before any permit to scuttle Canberra can be issued).

DEWHA did not make it clear on what their concerns are, and unfortunately due to lack of communication and action on their behalf, the sinking date has been pushed back.

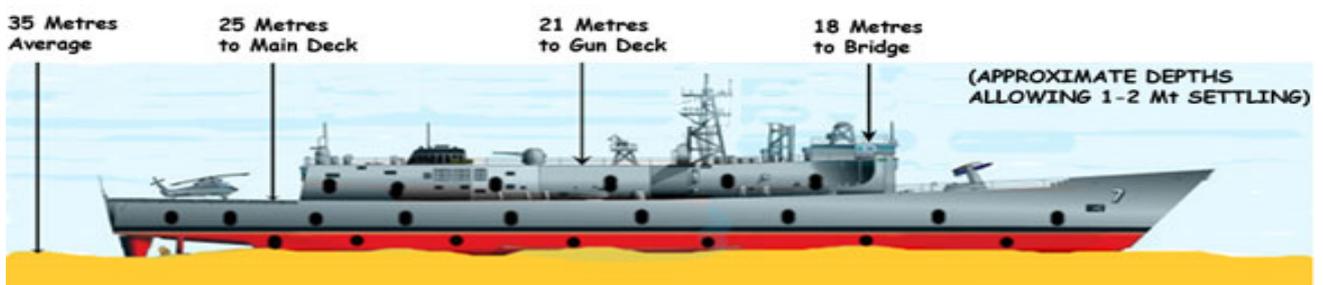
The site is excellent, close enough to shore to clear shipping, clear sandy bottom at just under 30 metres depth, away from the 4 metre high reefs which partly surround the site, but close enough to enjoy some disruption of ground swells from the prevalent south-westerly winds, and within the footprint of the existing dived wrecks.

The delay is frustrating, not only because DEWHA didn't give a clear reason as to why they have delayed the process, but now, instead of the ship being scuttled in March as was intended, it will be pushed back to June at the earliest (if we're lucky) and the end result being that the site is unlikely to start being dived regularly until summer 2009.

As usual, we will keep everyone posted as to the latest events with the HMAS Canberra. ✍️



CONCEPTUAL DRAWING AND PROPOSED SITE DEPTHS FOR THE EX HMAS CANBERRA



Past Events

The weather has cooled off, but the dives continue. The sea has continued with its trusty dog's breakfast condition, but we've managed to have a fair crack of the whip at other trusty locations. (Yup, those freshwater sites have come in handy yet again!)

Hot or cold, the outside air temperature doesn't make two hoots difference when you're under the water. Just make sure you've got some warm gear to climb into once you're back on dry land and you'll be good as gold.

Labour Day Weekend (& Week)

3 gents and 2 sheelah's went up to Jervis bay for the long weekend, and stayed until the following weekend. The weather was great, but sea conditions not the best with limited vis. (Still good compared to what we have down here though!)

Marine life seen on the dives included many octopi's (which put on a show for us), Cuttle fish, the Grey Nurse and wobbegong sharks, Blue Groper, Eagle and Bull Rays, and turtles to name a few.

Easter Weekend

The weather was beaut, and mostly sunny for this long weekend, where a number of divers had a squiz in some sites at the Mount. Sites dived included Ewens, The Shaft, Kilsby's, One Tree and Englebrecht's East. Freddy got to work with his new Rebreather putting it through the paces.

April 18th & 19th

Mt Gambier was visited again this time where various diving took place. Working with new gear was the theme of the trip. A couple of recent open water divers took to the waters at Ewens trying on new gear while the Rebreather was taken on its first cave trip. Sites visited included Ewens, Allendale, One Tree and Pines.

Also on this weekend Gary travelled over to the Wilsons Prom to spend a weekend living on a boat.

The plan was to dive the Cambridge but bad sea conditions put a stop to that. Instead they saved the weekend by diving on the Ex HMAS Bayonet (at 85m) the following day. He went back on May 2nd to have a successful dive the Cambridge, and now plans to visit it again in a few more weeks. The rebreather's getting a work out! ✍

Want to Dive ...

At these days there have been expressions of interest to dive the Lochard and Emily wrecks, Middle Island (Warrnambool), a drift dive and wall dive at Queenscliffe, including the submarine wrecks.

Weather being what it has been of late has made it difficult to plan dives on set dates (as has been done in the past), so the above dives will be done at short notice when the weather and sea present good conditions.

If you're interested, please make sure you're signed up to the Waves n Caves mailing list to get an email when it's good to go.

Vanuatu & Fiji

There has been some whispers mentioned about the possibility of visiting Fiji or Vanuatu later in the year for a dive. At this stage there are early talks with many factors to consider including the weather (for the farmers) and the economic financial status. If you're interested in going though, let us know and we'll work at getting all interested parties connected.

Unplanned diving events happen almost on a fortnightly basis which is why we don't have a whole lot of dives listed here, with trips all over the coast and inland at caves! (Even overseas trips are sometimes arranged at very short notice!) These trips, normally decided within a week or two of the dive are communicated between divers on the waves n caves mailing list.

If you are not on the mailing list, then you are most likely not in the know of the majority of the dives that take place!

If you would like to be on the mailing list, send an email to help@wavesncaves.com requesting to be added. The mailing list allows all involved to be able to send emails to the list members about any intended dives. ✍

Buoyweather Account

A reminder that our buoyweather account is still online with the same username and password as before.

Please contact Adam if you need login username and password details. ✍

Scuba Snoopy takes on the Grey Nurse of Fish Rock!

By Dave Harasti

Scuba Snoopy was bored. It had been 4 months since his last big adventure when he was off encountering Mola mola in Bali and since then diving had been pretty dull. Hed done a couple of dives in Nelson Bay looking at seahorses, nudibranchs and anglerfish, however hed become bored of the Bay. Snoopy even thinks that Nelson Bay diving is over rated and doesnt understand why anyone would want to spend so much time looking at tiny little critters.... some people are just weird!

Snoopy wanted some big fish action and hed always wanted to see a shark. However Snoopy was rather wary as hed seen on Discovery channel what sharks do to seals so imagine what they would do to a poor little puppy dog!. But Snoopy had been told there is a shark they call the giant puppy dog of the sea, the grey nurse shark. Surely hed be safe as one puppy dog wouldnt eat another, would it?

He got on the phone and rang his good friend Peter The Hoff Hitchins from South West Rocks Dive Centre to see if the conditions were any good at Fish Rock. The reply of its 22 degrees, 20 metres vis and bucket loads of sharks was all it took for Snoopy to hop in his fully sick snoop dog car and head up the Pacific Highway.

The next morning he was on the new SW Rocks Dive Centre boat, appropriately called Fish Rocket. Snoopy liked this boat as it was big and roomy and went as fast as a space rocket. They arrived at Fish Rock in no time at all and as they were gearing up The Hoff gave a dive brief to Snoopy. Well just swim through the deep entrance of the cave, up to the shallow end and hopefully well see some grey nurse sharks hanging out.



Well hang on a minute!!! Snoopy was keen to see a shark, not swim through some pitch black friggin cave. Snoopy was scared... he didnt have his cave dive certification and hed never dived in a cave before. But the Hoff assured him all would be cool and gave him a special drink called Harden Up and Snoopy felt revitalised, he was ready to take on the big black cave and anything it was willing to throw at him! Bring it on!!!

As they entered the cave Snoopy felt rather alone... all he could do was follow the torch light in front of him and hope that he didnt bump into anything. up a narrow dark chimney and then he saw it in the distance, a beautiful bright blue light that was the opening to the shallow entrance of the cave, it was so beautiful and surreal that Snoopy decided there and then that he liked caves. In fact he decided this might be one of his favourite dives and he hadnt even seen a shark yet!

But he wasnt here for caves, he wanted sharks. So he positioned himself at the entrance to the cave and waited... and waited... and waited some more. There wasnt a shark to be seen. Snoopy was starting to think he was jinxed!

And then he saw it! A small torpedo shape in the distance was approaching the cave entrance and it was getting bigger and bigger. It was a shark.... Snoopys first shark!!! Okay, Snoopy wont admit it but he was more than a little bit scared when he first shark.... it was humungous and after seeing the big pointy white teeth he was glad hed packed the brown budgie smugglers! After eye balling the shark off to show that Snoopy was tougher, the shark got the hint and slowly turned away and exited the cave. Snoopy had taken on the shark and won!!!



The next thing Snoopy saw was a turtle, this was Snoopys first ever turtle encounter. He was losing his diving virginity left, right and centre, First a cave then a shark and now a turtle!!! The only problem was that this small Hawksbill Turtle thought Snoopy looked rather like a tasty sponge and was about to bite into him until the Hoff appeared from nowhere and pulled Snoopy away to safety. The Hoff was a hero, just like he was on Snoopys favourite TV show Baywatch! Phew.



As they swam back to the boat Snoopy passed over several other grey nurse sharks, it had been a good day! A scary day but a very good day. Now that Snoopy has mastered eyeballing off the grey nurse he needs a new challenge...maybe its time to take on the Great Whites!

Dave Harasti— www.daveharasti.com

