



UNDERCURRENTS

Newsletter of the Bluegrass Dive Club / www.bluegrassdiveclub.com

Sept 2026

Volume 56, Number 09

This Month's Meeting

Thursday, September 10 2026

Meeting: 7:30PM Social: 7:00

Roosters on Richmond Rd

Program: Bonaire 2027 Trip

President's Message

By Kathryn Bowers



We are back from our live aboard experience and I must say it was a bit of an eye-opener.

I have been on dive trips, and I have been on sailing trips, and much like both of those I was overpacked for this. I failed to realize how little clothing that I would need! We didn't have the added packing challenge of a few days at a resort before and a few days after so I needed some clothes, but once I got on the boat, I was pretty much in a bathing suit the entire time and other than that one pair of shorts and two T-shirts was more than enough!

I still believe that five dives a day is too much diving. Maybe not for everyone but at least for me. On our trip there were five days that had five dives. I made all five day dives three days. I skipped the after lunch dive two days. The first time, I wanted a longer nap after lunch and the second I realized I needed to skip one somewhere and that was a decent time to stay out of the pool. I also skipped the

night dive once (because my dive buddy wanted wine with dinner).

Our last day had only one morning dive, and it was very early. By that point in the trip, I think I was probably exhausted. I did not really enjoy the last night dive or that early morning dive. I may have just been too tired by that time. I felt like I needed to take the morning dive to not end on a sour note. That was probably a mistake. Getting in for a dive exhausted and half asleep was not a good plan.

All in all, it was a good experience. The boat was great. The staff was exceptional. The food was great. The problem was me and not being honest with myself about my relationship with diving. I like diving, quite a lot actually. I do not LOVE diving. I'm sure I will do it again. I just need to pick the dives I want and get comfortable with not taking every opportunity to dive. Funny, that's exactly the reason I agreed to give the Live Aboard experience a shot. 🚩

The Editor's Notes

By Scott Newby



We have a great selection of photos from the club Pig Roast to share, courtesy of John Geddes!

Please send any photos from trips or events to

newsletter@bluegrassdiveclub.com 🚩

Vice President Report

By Butch Mellott



Hello all from the membership side.

We have several new members, Please welcome:

Michael Hardin, Ft Campbell KY
Amber Waugh, Dema KY
Lou Hirsch, Lexington KY
John Becker, Lexington KY
Jill Marie Van der Meulen, Homosassa FL

Welcome all! Please join us at the member meeting in person or by Zoom

Enjoy the splendor, Leave only bubbles 🐬
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Thank You,
W.A. "Butch" Mellott 🏊



Trip Director Report

By Priscilla Mellott



Hi everyone!

September 18 & 19 2026

PENNYROYAL SCUBA CENTER
Hopkinsville, KY

\$25 admission (special price for dive club)

If interested please notify

Priscilla: tripdirector@bluegrassdiveclub.com

Or contact a board member for more details. If you have never been to

Pennyroyal you will need to go to their website: pennyroyalscuba.com

and complete a park waiver. We need to know as soon as possible if you're interested.

November 21, 2026

ATLANTA AQUARIUM
Atlanta, GA

Finalizing paperwork but should be able to sign up soon!

October 24-31, 2026

COZUMEL

Trip is closed. There are 9 club members going!

February 27-3/6 2027

Bonaire

MORE INFO ON THIS TRIP AT THE CLUB MEETING!

June 3-10, 2028

FIJI

30 Club members are signed up. There is also a waiting list.

Possibly a few more rooms may be available....

I hope to see everyone at the Bluegrass Dive Club meeting on September 10th. Remember, if you can't be there in person, there is also a ZOOM opportunity to join us!



Secretary's Report

By David Carr



BGDC Regular Club Meeting Minutes 08/13/2026

Board members present: Kathryn Bowers, Dan Miller, Alex Fassas, Scott Newby, Bill McGrady, David Carr. Absent Butch and Priscilla Mellott.

President Kathryn Bower called meeting to order 7:36

Officer and Directors report

Secretary David Carr

-Minutes reviewed and accepted by the members with all ayes.

Treasurer Dan Miller

-Dan reviewed and displayed financials to the membership showing reconciliation of club checking with bank balance. Current balance 28,128.43. There was a flurry of activity at the end of the month not yet reflected in account to be reconciled with next months accounts.

Trip Director reported by Alex Fassas for Priscilla Mellott

Cozumel trip now with 9 travelers. Trip is closed but add on are possible.

Playa del Carmen canceled due to lack of interest and respectfully release rooms.

Pennyroyal tentatively scheduled for August 28-29 with 18-19 back updates.

Trip Director reported by Alex Fassas for Priscilla Mellott(cont)

-Georgia Aquarium in the works with November tentative.

-Bonaire time frame spring 2027. Looking into alternative place to stay and reviewing amenities.

-Fiji maxed out reserved rooms. Travel alternative details still up in the air since can't schedule commercial airline travel yet. Wait list sign up still possible. Many spots could be

freed up if those solo travelers in double room felt comfortable room sharing.

Safety Director Bill McGrady

-Early review of Maldives tragedy involved 5 divers, a 6th called the dive. Much is still unknown and litigation apparently abounds. What is known is that they proceeded to deep, not enough air available, and no line run as they entered cave. Current into the cave and lost orientation on turning around to exit may also played a part.

New Business presented by Alex Fassas for Butch Mellott.

-Welcome to new members Emily and Tom Perdue, Chris Sullivan, Zane I can't read my handwriting apologies, Taylor and Jacob I can't read my handwriting apologies, Todd and Jerry Lovins, Jessica McCoy, Shane Bennett, Missy Bishop, Kara Wait, John and Erin Becker, and Micheal Hardin. The club is looking forward to meeting you all.

Web Master Alex Fassas

-The website has an abundance of information available regarding trips, a place to ask specific questions and even occupancy updates.

Web Master Alex Fassas(cont)

-Reminder about the Pig Roast Party at John Schimmoeler and Terri Berish home. Please join the club and bring a dish to share.

Program

Video of Carr's trip to Raja Ampat.

Meeting adjourned 8:55 by president Kathryn Bowers 🚩



From the Treasurer

By Dan Miller



Student with ID, New Diver, First Year **\$10.00**

2025 Membership Renewal **\$20.00**

Student with ID
Single & Family (1 diver)
Family (non divers)
Family (2 or more divers)

Renewal: Please send payment to the address listed below, please make sure there is a correct indication of your mailing address, phone number and it is very important to indicate an email address.

Contact / Mail to: Bluegrass Dive Club c/o
Dan Miller 824 Gunpowder Drive
Lexington, KY 40509

New Members: Visit the website to fill out an on-line form or to access a Microsoft Word printable form. [CLICK HERE](#) 🇺🇸

SHARKS!

Everything You Need to Know About Sharks

As ocean divers, we're bound to encounter sharks at some point.

Sometimes it's a curious Caribbean reef shark cruising effortlessly along a coral wall. You may spot a nurse shark resting beneath a ledge or a hammerhead gliding through the blue. No matter the species, seeing a shark in its natural habitat is one of the most exciting experiences the underwater world has to offer.

While sharks deserve our respect, they shouldn't be feared. Movies and headlines have given these incredible animals an unfair reputation, but the reality is that most sharks are naturally cautious around people. Whether you're preparing for your first dive with sharks or simply want to learn more about these fascinating predators, this guide

covers everything you need to know from shark biology and behavior to conservation and safe diving practices.

Why Sharks Are So Important

Sharks are apex predators, meaning they help maintain balance throughout marine ecosystems.

By keeping prey populations healthy and preventing any one species from dominating an ecosystem, sharks help protect coral reefs, seagrass beds, and countless other marine habitats. Some shark species also serve as nature's cleanup crew, removing weak or sick animals from the population and contributing to healthier fish communities.

Another fascinating role sharks play is [acting as effective carbon sinks](#). When large marine animals die naturally and sink to the ocean floor, much of the carbon stored within their bodies remains locked away in deep-sea sediments rather than returning to the atmosphere. Scientists refer to this process as blue carbon, and it highlights yet another way healthy oceans benefit our planet. Finally, sharks help to move key nutrients for other ocean dwellers due to how they live. Their migration patterns as well as their travels between the depths and surface allows these nutrients to travel along with them and move through the ocean. If all those other sea dwellers couldn't get these key nutrients, the impact could be devastating to life above and below the surface. Sharks help to keep a balance in the food chain.

Simply put, healthy shark populations contribute to healthier oceans.

Diving with Sharks

One thing many new divers notice is that sharks often behave differently depending on where you encounter them. On dedicated shark dives, sharks that regularly encounter divers have become accustomed to their presence and often continue their natural behaviors without concern. While these sharks are still wild animals, repeated, respectful interactions can make them appear more comfortable around people.

On a reef or wreck dive, however, the experience can be quite different. Sharks you encounter unexpectedly may be more cautious and prefer to keep their distance. If a diver aggressively swims toward them, the shark may view that behavior as a potential threat.

The best approach is simple: remember that you're a guest in their world. Stay calm, give sharks plenty of space, and enjoy the encounter from a respectful distance.

MORE SHARKS!

How Long Have Sharks Been Around?

Scientists believe sharks have existed for approximately 440 million years, meaning they swam the oceans long before dinosaurs appeared. Throughout hundreds of millions of years, they've survived multiple mass extinction events while evolving into more than 500 different species. From the tiny dwarf lanternshark that is small enough to fit in your hand, to the enormous whale shark, which can grow to nearly 40 feet long, sharks have adapted to nearly every marine environment on the planet. However, [31.2% of all shark species assessed are threatened with extinction.](#)

Shark Teeth: Nature's Perfect Design

One of the most recognizable features of any shark is its teeth, but not all shark teeth are created equal.

Different species have evolved different tooth shapes depending on what they eat.

- Great white sharks have large, serrated triangular teeth designed for cutting.
- Sand tiger sharks have long, needle-like teeth that help grip slippery prey.
- Nurse sharks have flatter crushing teeth used for feeding on crustaceans and shellfish.

Unlike humans, sharks continuously replace their teeth throughout their lives. Depending on the species, a shark may lose and replace tens of thousands of teeth over its lifetime. This constant replacement is one reason shark teeth are commonly found along beaches and on the ocean floor.

Sharks' Incredible Sixth Sense

Yes. The [ampullae of Lorenzini](#) are located within sharks' head (they're the little black dots you often see just about their mouth) and are used to sense the electric fields created by other animals in the water. This 'sixth sense' allows them to hone in on their prey and attack. These special electroreceptor organs also allow sharks to sense temperature shifts in the ocean. It's all about survival.

In summary

These weird and wonderful creatures live in most ocean environments, from warm tropical climates to under the arctic ice. Did you know that the smallest shark (dwarf lantern shark) is about the

size of your hand and the largest (whale shark) is about 39 feet long and is actually the largest fish in the sea? Varying dramatically in size, sharks are key to healthy oceans and a healthy planet.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are sharks dangerous to scuba divers?

Shark encounters during scuba dives are uncommon, and aggressive interactions are even rarer. Most sharks are curious and will typically swim away after a brief inspection. Following your dive guide's instructions, staying calm, and respecting marine life are the best ways to enjoy a safe shark encounter.

What should you do if you see a shark while diving?

Stay calm and do not chase, corner, or attempt to touch the shark. Continue your dive as planned unless your guide instructs otherwise.

Are sharks attracted to scuba divers?

In most cases, sharks are simply curious about unfamiliar objects in their environment. While they may investigate divers, they are generally not interested in people as prey.

Can sharks smell fear?

No. Sharks have an incredible sense of smell, but there is no scientific evidence that they can detect human fear.

Are shark attacks common?

Shark attacks are extremely rare. Millions of people enter the ocean each year, and only a very small number of unprovoked shark bites are reported worldwide.

Can sharks see in the dark?

Many shark species have excellent low-light vision, making them effective hunters during dawn, dusk, and nighttime. They also rely on other senses, such as detecting vibrations and electrical fields.

Do sharks sleep?

Sharks do not sleep the same way humans do. Some species rest while remaining mostly still, while others must continue swimming to keep water flowing over their gills. Scientists believe sharks experience periods of reduced activity rather than true sleep.

Is it safe to dive with sharks?

Yes, when done responsibly with experienced operators and proper training. Shark diving is a popular activity around the world and gives divers the opportunity to observe these incredible animals in their natural habitat while promoting appreciation and conservation.

Article provided by **Divers Direct** 



Webmaster

By Alex Fassas



Tales From The Watery Web

The Biggest State Fair

I am writing this article while in White Bear Lake, Minnesota, where we are visiting with family and taking in the last weekend of the Minnesota State Fair. Ostensibly the Biggest State Fair in the USA; definitely the best. If it can go on a stick, you will find it at the fair; likely deep fried.

The fact that this Kentucky boy is making this his 3rd year to visit the fair in 10 years says something. Mostly it says that I am a compliant

husband who will support his spouse in all of her endeavors.

Diving Like It's A Job

Five of your club members have returned from the Turks & Caicos Aggressor II live aboard dive trip. Noel Hall and Alex Fassas were veterans of the live aboard dive life. My wife, Kathryn Bowers, her sister and niece, Kristen and Natasha were newbies to the live aboard dive experience. Kathryn has written in previous months' articles about her apprehension for this experience. The live aboard mantra is: If you're dry, it must be time to go diving. If you're wet, it must be time to eat. If you're tired, it must be time for a nap or sleep. Five dives per day; fed like royalty; and make lots of new friends.

Fast forward to post trip, Kathryn was caught up in the whirlwind of excitement and FOMO of missing something under the sea. She actually dove all five dives per day on two days; even though she swore that this was more diving than she wanted to do. Kristen was the only Iron Diver of our group to accomplish all 26 dives for the week. I believe that the three Bowers women are live aboard converts and would definitely consider another live aboard experience.

2-Bedroom Accommodations for 2028 Beqa Lagoon Resort, Fiji

There are several [2-bedroom bure suites](#) available for the 2028 trip to Fiji. They will accommodate either triple or quad occupancy. If you are interested in joining this trip or in changing your rooming arrangements, this is an option. The 2-bedroom bure is on the trip page and available to pre-register (kind of like a waitlist) with no money needed yet. Please be sure to explain your roommate desire or situation in the notes. We will confirm your request and availability before booking the room.

If you are interested in joining this otherwise "sold out" trip, please add your name to the waitlist. Should an opening happen, your place

Webmaster Cont.

on the waitlist matters. You can find the waitlist on the [trip page](#).

Dive Accident & Travel Insurance

Your club is an affiliate partner with Divers Alert Network (DAN) and with Dive Assure. You must use our hyperlinks to begin your online purchase or renewal to benefit your club, at no additional cost to you. More information about the club's partners and links at <https://bluegrassdiveclub.com/dive-travel-insurance/>.

Do you have news or a program to share?

Your dive club has a fabulous email list with which to share news and information that would be of interest to its members and friends. If you have something to share forward it along to webmaster@bluegrassdiveclub.com or use the [Contact Us](#) web form. 🚩



Safety Information Director

By Bill "doc" McGrady



We are at the end of Summer and starting the Fall, the diving season is still ripe for hot weather destinations. ... I think this month safety should be a "back-to-school" [return to the basics...] and being mindful of hydration, good old' plain water and heat management.

When you think about it, some of us will argue with a dive operator for giving us a tank with only 2700 or 2800 PSI but smile and go for those 3200 PSI fills..... If you think about it, maintaining your pre-dive health for 2 hours before and even 8-12 hours before your dives is a way of "dive-maxing" some of your good hard spent money!!!

Hydration takes about 30minutes to really distribute throughout your tissues and a good 90 minutes to marinate thoroughly..... So start drinking a glass of water, upon waking in the morning. Then at breakfast, between a cup of coffee, hit a glass of water, then coffee, then water!!! And of course, dive gear on boat, load up and bring that canteen or aluminum water bottle and sip some of that for the boat ride....

As far as coffee, yes...it is a diuretic, meaning it makes you pee..... In practical terms, its "counts" like 80-90% water meaning, if you drink plenty of coffee or tea, yes, you still hydrate...but you also break the seal and need to pee often, which gets exacerbated when diving under pressure. [The "central compartment" which is your organ-core, including the kidneys, "get more blood" so the kidneys make LOTS more urine while diving....then when you get on boat and all that blood returns to legs and some to arms and a little back to skin compartment, the kidneys see a big "drop" in blood pressure/volume and so you are dehydrated more than you think.... but if you pre-hydrated and breakfast and the dock...even with a few coffees/teas/OJs.... You should be caught-up. And that surface interval, drink at least 8 ounces, not bad if you can get a liter of water back in..... a touch of salt and sugar can really taste good after a dive or 2 where you are dehydrated.

Safety Information Cont.

I won't pick on wine, beer and bourbon as we are NOT commercial divers, you're on vacation..... but do observe a Doc 'Grady ".....Been hard-drinkin' the Night before....".... Please drink at least a bottle of Gatorade [full sugar, NOT zero calorie!!!] and add a tablespoon of salt to it!!! It is basically magic rehydration fluid—[for science geeks out there: this takes advantage of the sodium/glucose cotransporters in the intestines] but easily it is MAGIC rehydration fluid....can also pull it off with a big sweet tea at breakfast, add 1 tablespoon of salt to it [trust me...] and a squeeze of lemon. Since you had a long night of drink, your liver is still working so just treat that first dive of the day as a good, steady-on warm-up dive. Don't try to break goals or keep up with the fresh Thundercats that haven't partaken the night before..... ;-).

IF you not feeling the dive, no problem....just stay on top, call it, drink your tea or Gatorade until your heart is content and helps the divers back on board!!! You'll be rehydrated and ready to jump in on the second dive of the day!!!!

One final safety issue that is bothering me but I don't know how to approach it or even answer it..... we as a society are seeing more and more "unchecked aggression" and explosive anger...down in Florida, a diver turned off a young person's air tank because they were at "his lobster spot".... He is being charged with attempted murder, luckily the young diver made it back without medical issue.... But how horrible!!!

Another incident was the shooting that took place in Lexington Park, again, the details less important than a 17yr old detonated and used a gun because of his "exaggerated" anger response. I am NOT arguing about the issues other than pointing out that anger/sudden impulsivity towards violence has become more common..... and we may see it at crowded resorts and crowded dive boats... more levels of inconsiderate behavior and impulsive anger. I don't have the answers..... But perhaps it something we can all start looking at and observing amongst ourselves dive community

.... Turning off a diver's air supply is simply horrible.... And perhaps preventable???

Well, back to basics!! Hydrate, 2 hours before the dive so that is 8 ounces on the bedside stand upon waking, hit the water or water/coffee/water heavy at breakfast.... Drink at the dock.... And consider first dive an easy one if you've partaken of good ole Bourbon bottle the night before!!!! I'm sure you're not alone and can pair with a dive buddy that partook as well!!!

Ciao, -Doc 🚩

Bluegrass Dive Club 2026 Calendar

September

10, Thursday Dive Club Meeting
24, Thursday E.C. Meeting

October

15 Thursday Dive Club Meeting
29 Thursday E.C. Meeting

November

12 Thursday Club Meeting (Elections)
26 Thursday E.C. Meeting

December

??, Saturday Christmas Party

2026 BGDC Officer's

Kathryn Bowers, President	859 619-0166
Butch Mellott, Vice President	859 621-5160
David Carr, Secretary	859 585-5105
Dan Miller, Treasurer	859 948-5133
Priscilla Mellott, Trip Director	859 553-0739
Bill McGrady, Safety Info Dir.	713 259-9701
Alex Fassas, Webmaster	859 582-1600
Scott Newby, Newsletter	859 559-5105

Trip Destination & Travel Dates	# Travelers & Rooms Reserved	# Registered On Trip	Room Release Date	Trip Page Cancel/Refund Date	Trip Page Final Payment Date
Cozumel, Mexico, 24-31 Oct 2026	10 (orig. 24) travelers, 5 (orig. 12) rooms	9 travelers, 5 rooms. Opening for 1 female roommate.	10-Aug-26	31 Jul 2026, 0% Penalty,	31-Jul-26
Beqa Lagoon, Fiji, 1-10 June 2028, 7 nights at resort	36 travelers, 18 rooms. 2-bedroom suites available.	30 travelers, 18 rooms. 2-bedroom suites available.	16-Nov-27	All deposits and final payments 100% Penalty	2 nd Dep. 6 Nov 2027, Final 6 Mar 2028

