

Northeast & Midwest Edition



Northeast Dive News



July 2009

We Know Diving Cold...



**GO BATTY IN
GALAPAGOS**

**A DIVER'S PARADISE
TOBERMORY**

**DIVING WITH CHAMPY
LAKE CHAMPLAIN**

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Northeast & Midwest Dive News

The complete resource for diving in the Northeast and Midwest.
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 Dive News Magazine is committed to promoting the sport of scuba diving in the Northeast and Midwest. We will present a practical, unbiased point of view regarding all aspects of the sport of scuba diving.

The Dive News Magazine believes in honesty and integrity in business and will support all efforts related to this. We encourage readers to participate in determining the content of this publication by giving us their opinions on the types of articles they would like to see. We invite letters to the editor, manuscripts and photographs related to diving or diving-related business. Send us your stories and photos!

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ABOUT THE COVERS



◀Cover Photo by Warren Lo
 Tobermory is a diver's paradise, and Warren Lo has taken the time to explore the many wrecks and amazing dives that make Tobermory truly awe-inspiring! To see more images Warren has taken, please visit www.warrenlophotography.com.



▶Cover Photo provided by ScubaFest Photo Contest
 Winner of the 2009 Ohio ScubaFest Regional Photo Competition. Congratulations!

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NORTHEAST US DIVES

10 Lake Champlain

By Jamie Farris

The waters of Lake Champlain hold history in their dark depths. The bottom is the final resting place to ships, rail cars and steamers. Between rumors of a Loch Ness-type monster and shipwrecks still yet to be discovered, this freshwater lake is the adventure diver's dream.



NORTHEAST CANADIAN DIVES

14 Tobermory

By Jamie Farris

Tobermory is the kind of town every diver wishes was in his or her own backyard. Located at the top of Canada's Bruce Peninsula, town is a magnet for divers looking to visit shipwrecks just off its shores. Fresh, clean air and gorgeous scenery make Tobermory an amazing summer retreat.



WRECK DIVING

22 Wreck Facts

By Ellsworth Boyd

Take advantage of the opportunity to read and ask Ellsworth Boyd some of your tough Wreck Diving questions. From East Coast to the Midwest wrecks, he definitely knows wrecks. If you want your questions answered you can email him at ellsboyd@aol.com



TROPICAL DESTINATIONS

24 Galapagos Islands

By Michael Salavaressa and Christopher P Weaver

The Galapagos Islands are well known amongst divers as a world-class destination for adrenaline drenched shark dives and heart pounding whale shark encounters. Indeed, divers the world over have either traveled to this spot (or dreamed of it) in the hopes of witnessing the fabled schools of hammerhead sharks off Darwin and Wolf Island.



DIVERS BEGIN EXPLORING VANDENBERG WRECK



A retired U.S. Air Force missile-tracking ship intentionally sunk to create an artificial reef in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary has opened for public use. The 523-foot-long *Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg* that once tracked U.S. space launches off Cape Canaveral, monitored U.S. defense missile test launches and eavesdropped on Russian missile launches during the Cold War, is situated about seven miles south of Key West. The bottom of the ship's hull rests on sand at depths between 140 and 150 feet. But the ship is so massive that the superstructure extends to about 45 feet below the surface. For more info on the Vandenberg visit www.fla-keys.com.

EXPLORERS REMEMBER SPENCER



The Explorers Club is formally recognizing Carl Spencer for his lifetime achievements. A member of the New York-based club, Spencer died at age 37 during a dangerous underwater filming mission. He suffered the bends on May 24 while diving in

the Aegean Sea on the *Britannic*, a sister ship of the *Titanic*. Spencer was a highly regarded member of The Explorers Club, an international society of professional explorers founded in 1904. The Club will pay tribute to Spencer's outstanding achievements and his substantial contributions to exploration. For info visit www.explorers.org

TRAVEL GALAPAGOS WITH ECO-PHOTO EXPLORERS

Eco-Photo Explorers 

In 1835, Charles Darwin reached the Galapagos Archipelago, a cluster of islands straddling the equator 600 miles off the west coast of Ecuador. His five weeks on these strange volcanic islands formed the basis for his theories on the evolution of species, concepts that shook the world in controversy that continues to this day. Today, the Galapagos Islands are a mixture of Ecuadorian National Parks, scientific research stations, bustling towns and a thriving tourist industry. Join the New York-based Eco-Photo Explorers as they dive the world renowned Darwin and Wolf Islands and take you along on other awe-inspiring adventures both above and below the waters of these enchanted islands. Travel logistics and diving details are posted at www.ecophotoexplorers.com

8TH ANNUAL NORTHEAST FISH COUNT



The New England Aquarium Dive Club and The Reef Environmental Education Foundation will host the 8th annual Northeast Great Annual Fish Count event. The celebration will be centered at Stage Fort Park at Gloucester, Mass., and dives are planned at seven shore locations around Cape Ann, Mass., and Nubble Light, York, Maine. There will be a picnic, raffles and door prizes. Every survey form submitted after each dive will count as an entry into the raffles for each diver. More than 100 divers are expected to participate in the event. For info visit www.neadc.org

DIVES INTO CHAMPLAIN'S ARCHAEOLOGY



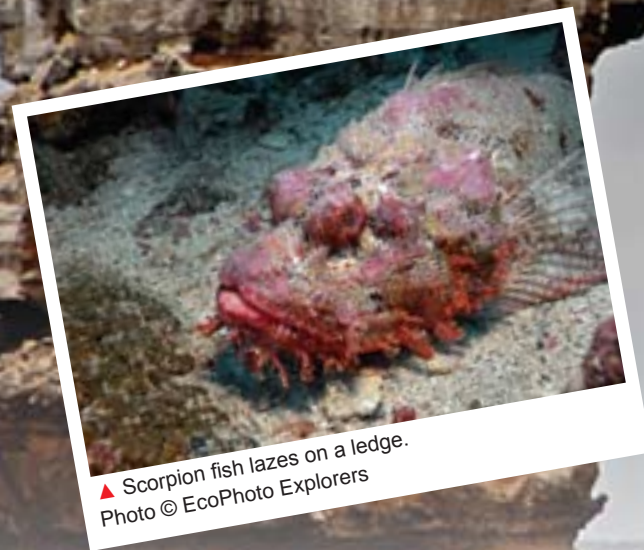
Lake Champlain Maritime Museum will sponsor an archeology weekend Sept. 26-27. Nautical archaeologists will present on-water field trips, special demonstrations in the conservation lab, lectures and films. The field trips will include "Paddle to Prehistory" where museum archaeologists and ecologists team up to lead a canoe trip on Otter Creek and Dead Creek, identifying wildlife, interpreting the landscape, and teaching stone tool making. A nautical archaeologist will be a guide aboard a cruise boat, which will allow passengers to a shallow shipwreck without getting wet. For info visit www.lcmm.org

NE DIVE NEWS EDITOR TO SEE GYPSIES



Look at scuba diving around the world with stops in Belize, Bermuda, Bonaire, Cayman, Cozumel, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Grenada, Honduras, North Carolina, Malaysia, Southern California, Thailand and the Yucatan. Diver News Editor Bob Sterner will be speak on "Diving In Paradise" at the New York City Sea Gypsies club at 7 p.m. on July 8 at Clancy's in New York City. The talk is a pastiche of images and tales from his press trips around the world. For info visit www.seagypsies.org or www.sternereditorial.com

DESCENT TO THE VALLEY OF THE BATS



▲ Scorpion fish lazes on a ledge.
Photo © EcoPhoto Explorers

Story and photos by Michael Salvarezza and Christopher P. Weaver

The Galapagos Islands are well known amongst divers as a world-class destination for adrenaline drenched shark dives and heart pounding whale shark encounters. Indeed, divers the world over have either traveled to this spot (or dreamed of it) in the hopes of witnessing the fabled schools of hammerhead sharks off Darwin and Wolf Island. It is here, perched along rocky walls that tumble into the depths, that divers brace themselves against fierce currents watching a veritable parade of marine life that includes schools of jacks and creole fish, squadrons of eagle rays, curious

dolphins and seemingly ambivalent green sea turtles. But it is the hundreds of scalloped hammerheads, the hulking Galapagos sharks and the majestically huge whale sharks that command the true attention and focus of all who come here.

The Galapagos are, in a word, magnificent. Straddling the equator some 620 miles off the west coast of Ecuador, this isolated archipelago of roughly 125 volcanic islands and islets represents a true laboratory of natural history. Made famous by the visit of Charles Darwin in 1835, the Galapagos support more than 3,000 species of flora and fauna and it was the subtle variations in several species of birds and tortoises from isolated island to island that led Darwin to

his theories of natural selection, theories that remain controversial to this day.

Visitors to these islands are often immediately struck by the fearlessness of its land animals; Galapagos sea lions cast a wary but almost indifferent eye to visitors. Land and marine iguanas go about their business unperturbed by human observers. Blue-footed booby birds sit vigilantly on their scratched out nests on the barren volcanic soil, tending to their eggs and largely ignoring the two-legged creatures walking about and snapping pictures of them! This cautious ambivalence is one of the reasons tourism to the Galapagos is so popular.

Scuba divers who venture into the inviting waters around the main islands are

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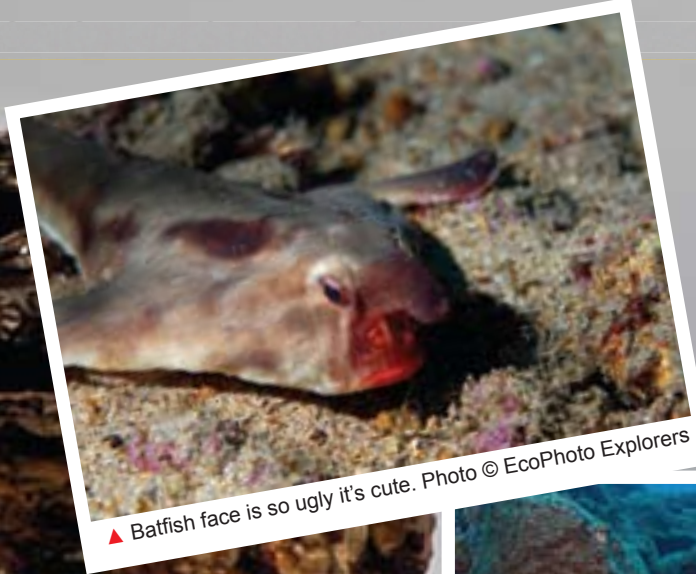
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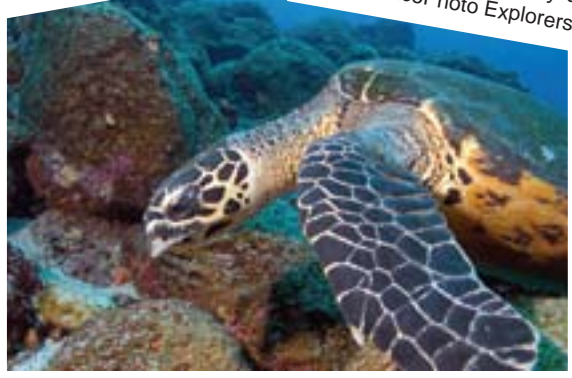
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▲ Batfish face is so ugly it's cute. Photo © EcoPhoto Explorers



▲ The Batfish is definitely a draw to dive in the Galapagos. Photo © EcoPhoto Explorers



▲ Sea turtle visits the islands. Photo © EcoPhoto Explorers

immediately startled by the surprisingly cool waters. Temperatures can range from a frigid 56 F to a comfortably warm 75 F. In fact, populations of the northernmost penguin species, the Galapagos penguin, make their homes here, an odd juxtaposition of polar wildlife on the equator! And, although the waters around the main islands are interesting enough for divers, the real action lies some 12 hours away by boat at the uninhabited islands of Darwin and Wolf.

Our quarry at Darwin and Wolf was, not surprisingly, the schools of hammerhead sharks. But we were also hoping for encounters with whale sharks, and were not disappointed on both accounts! Literally hundreds of scalloped hammerheads swam lazily back and forth in the currents as we watched awe-struck. Every so often, a Galapagos shark would emerge from the blue and swim uncomfortably close as it seemed to search the rocky walls for prey. Interestingly, on one occasion we actually observed a small school of five Galapagos sharks schooling with the hammerheads. And on one memorable morning, after rising at 5:30 a.m. in the hopes of an early encounter, we swam with three 45-foot whale sharks in a series of dream dives at Darwin that we will never forget.

But, there are other fascinating mysteries here, natural oddities that are easy to overlook in the pursuit of "Mr. Big." It was late afternoon at Wolf Island when we descended along a sloping rocky bottom at a dive site known as the Anchorage. With daylight waning, our search was not for schools of sharks but, rather, a rarely seen and incredibly weird marine enigma – the red-lipped batfish!

Among photographers, the red-lipped batfish (*Ogcocephalus darwini*) is every bit as legendary as the huge animals swarming the swift seas around Darwin's Arch a few miles away. A rather odd looking fish, the batfish is a bottom dweller that spends its life hopping around the sea floor, perched on its modified pectoral and ventral fins. Occasionally, this diminutive little creature, which grows to 7 inches in length, will find the motivation to swim short distances, which it does with sideways strokes of its tail. Of course, it is the face that makes

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▲ Diver waits on wall for date with Mr. Big.
Photo © EcoPhoto Explorers



▲ Angelfish glides through clear blue water.
Photo © EcoPhoto Explorers

▲ Eagle rays swim in a flock. Photo © EcoPhoto Explorers

for the most interesting photos: bright red lips and a long blackish-brown horn. Under this protuberance is a small-concealed lure, the purpose of which continues to stump scientists. Still, this oddly patched together Mr. Potatohead face is a face that only a mother could love.

Red-lipped batfish are limited in distribution. Originally endemic to the Galapagos, some specimens have now been found off Peru and the coast of Ecuador. However, they are rarely seen and we were quite skeptical when we entered the water with a promise from the dive master that they would be here. So, as we descended the rocky slope to a sandy bottom to 100 feet, our hopes were not very high. Perhaps we would find one or maybe two fish. Perhaps we wouldn't see any. The cameras were ready, but we were very much in doubt.

And then, as our eyes adjusted to the diminished late afternoon light, there they

were! Dozens of them! Everywhere we looked. At first, they looked like small rocks on the sand. Soon, however, we became quite adept at distinguishing them from their surroundings and it was quite easy to spot them. If we approached one to photograph it, we had to be careful not to rest on top of another one inadvertently. If we focused our attention on an individual in front of us, two more would hop away to our left or right. And if we approached one too quickly, it would swim away, only to reveal another just a few feet beyond.

Red-lipped batfish are generally active at night, and feed on snails, crabs, crustaceans and small fish. They are light brown in color, with variations of light beige, cream or blue-gray and they have two dark longitudinal stripes along the back. They can be found in shallow water down to 150 feet, but at the Anchorage, the resident population seems to stay between 80 and 100 feet.

Wolf Island is the best place to see batfish, although they can also be found throughout the archipelago, and are abundant at Punta Vicente Roca, Tagus Cove and Gardiner Island off Espanola.

Our dive at the Anchorage and the search for the Red-Lipped Batfish was quite a success. These strange looking fish are just another example of nature's infinite variety and are a fascinating example of adaptation to a specific ecological niche. Or, perhaps, they are an example of nature's sense of humor! Either way, we think the Anchorage should be renamed The Valley of the Bats.

Michael Salvarezza and Christopher P. Weaver have documented a world of adventure topside and underwater through their Long Island, N.Y.-based business EcoPhoto Explorers. They are popular lecturers and their work has been published in leading diving and general interest magazines. Learn more at www.ecophotoexplorers.com.

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Photos: Mark Smykes, Dipi Lotze, Shane Lewis, Jeff Drinell

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