

JANUARY 2019

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ADVENTURES MAGAZINE

22 100TH ANNIVERSARY

CELEBRATING THE USS SAN DIEGO

08 INSPIRE & EMPOWER

SOUTH'S GOT SUNSHINE & NO CLOUDY DAYS

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DIVING PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND

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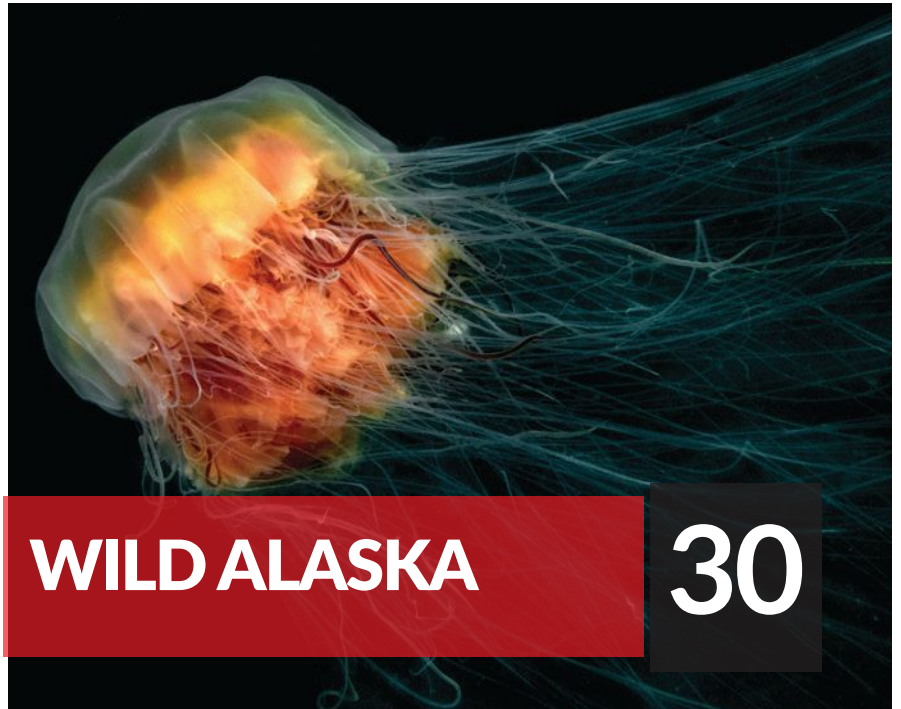
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From the Publisher



The new year is upon us and it is time to set the stage for a fresh start. When you feel good – you look good! This year we chose to undertake a rebranding from our magazine's look, content, and the website (set to go live shortly!). This wasn't an easy task, it took team work, strategic collaboration and communication, and of course an evaluation of our mission and goals. Our branding has evolved as technology becomes more complex and the

demand for honest and truly community-based news and stories has increased. We knew that by doing due diligence early, the brand would take shape correctly.

Our team had lots of fun working on the rebranding. We focused on:

- Who we work with
- What is our purpose
- What are our values
- What makes us unique

As a result, we chose some basic mission and design principles:

- Be HUMAN
- Global
- Modern
- Transparent
- Lightweight
- Mobile
- Inclusive
- Environmentally friendly



Our mission is to share community stories, inspire others, and become better stewards of the earth! Join us on this journey.



Selene Muldowney
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About the Cover:

"Icebergs in the Alaskan summer" Photo by Eco-Photo Explorers

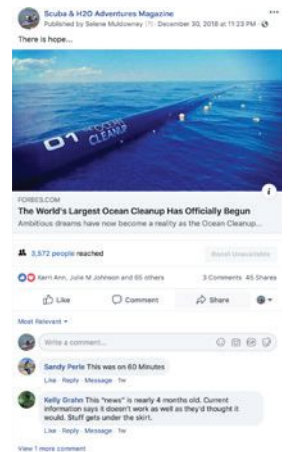
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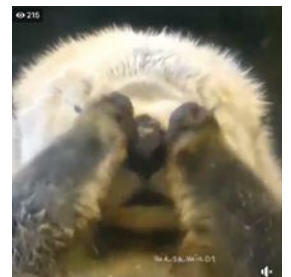
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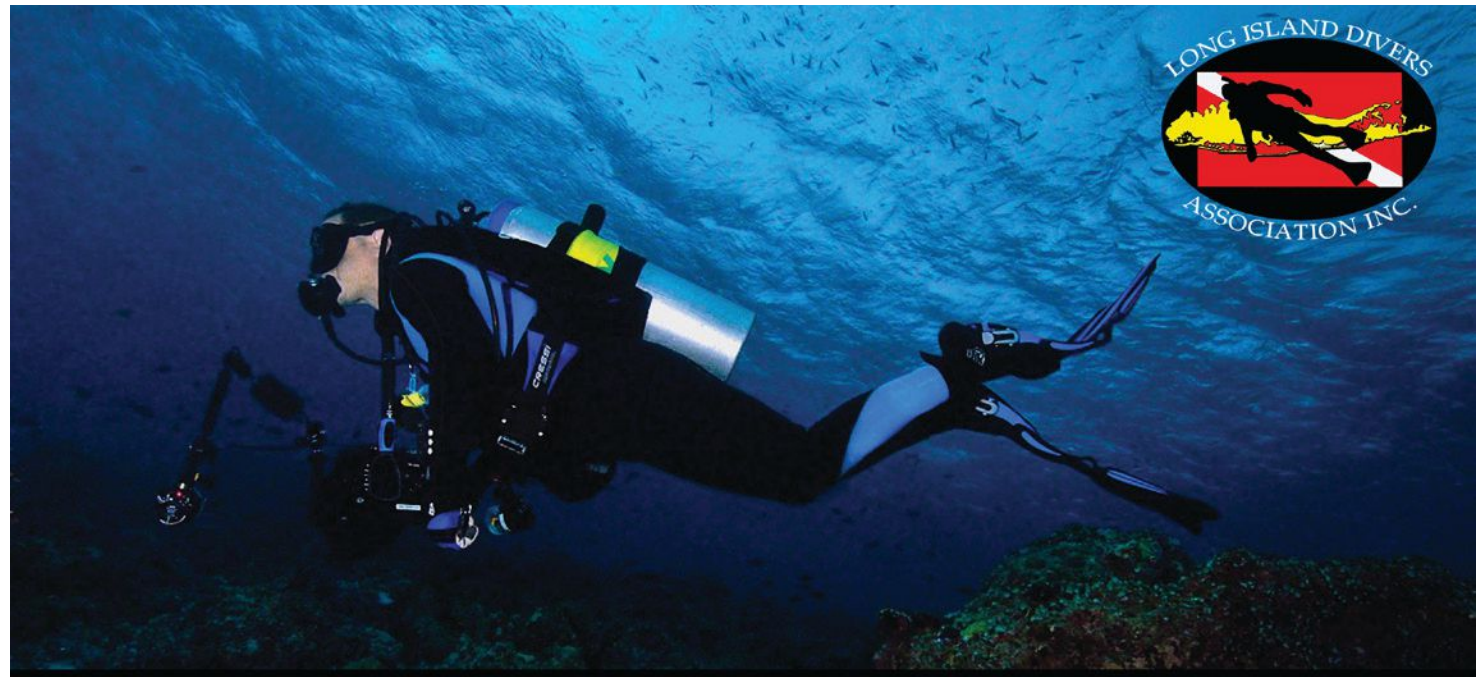
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LIDA 2019



2019 Annual Film Festival

Saturday, February 9, 2019, 7-11 p.m.

For information and to purchase tickets online: <http://lidaonline.com>

FESTIVAL

On Saturday, February 9, 2019, the New York area dive community will once again convene on the campus of Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York, for an evening of underwater entertainment. The Long Island Diver's Association (LIDA) Film Festival is an annual tradition that helps to shake the winter doldrums and inspire dreams of dive adventures to come.

The Film Festival is an annual fundraising event for LIDA and features an exciting slate of world-renowned speakers, explorers, filmmakers and photographers. Appearing this year will be Larry Cohen and Olga Torrey, Peter Venoutsos, Mike Rothschild, David Charash, Kristen Regan, Michael Salvarezza and Christopher Weaver, and Peter Hunt. This two-hour program is the highlight of the diving season on Long Island.

The evening's presentations will take the attendees on an exciting journey to the underwater world. Learn about local shipwrecks, diving with Great White Sharks, experiences living in underwater research facilities and the unique threats that plastics are posing to the environment. In addition, viewers will experience the wonders of travelling to exotic locations like the Maldives Islands and Papua New Guinea and, finally, experience the dramatic search for a lost Grumman fighter plane in the waters of Washington State.



TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY
MICHAEL SALVAREZZA AND CHRISTOPHER WEAVER (ECO-PHOTO EXPLORERS)

Attendees of the film festival are also treated to a very popular after party immediately following the conclusion of the show. Here, in addition to food and refreshments, dozens of raffle prizes are distributed. These prizes range from equipment giveaways to all-inclusive dive holidays in remote locations and on famous liveaboard dive vessels. At the party, divers get the chance to meet the speakers, renew friendships, swap stories and begin planning the upcoming dive season.

"This annual event is where the Scuba divers, dive boat operators, dive shop operators, and dive clubs from all over Long Island and New York City get together in one location to exchange diving information and experiences from the past year", says Barry Lipsky the President of the Long Island Divers Association.

The Long Island Divers Association (LIDA), a 501(c)(3) non-profit regional organization dedicated to the promotion of local diving, the representation of divers interests throughout the diving and general community, and the protection of divers rights through outreach to local and regional government officials, uses the film festival as a key fund raiser for all of its ongoing efforts. Attendees not only enjoy the remarkable presentations and entertaining after party, but they can be assured that their entrance fee goes towards the support of the LIDA organization.

Tickets are on sale for this event. To buy tickets, or to learn more about LIDA and the Film Festival, visit them online at www.lidaonline.com.

Wild Alaska



Diving Prince William Sound

MICHAEL SALVAREZZA & CHRISTOPHER P. WEAVER

Standing outside the Valdez Airport with our pile of dive and photographic gear, with no visible means of transportation in sight, this offer from a friendly stranger named Jeff, who worked at the airport, was music to our ears. We had just arrived after a cross country flight and this was the very start of our Alaska dive adventure. The unsolicited offer to drive us to town was emblematic of the friendliness and willingness to help that we would encounter throughout our time here.

Our dive expedition began in earnest the next morning after a restful night in a waterfront hotel. We loaded our gear, boarded a transport boat and set out from Valdez Harbor to Fidalgo Bay, some 3-4 hours away. Our objective for the trip was to experience Alaska's underwater world, immerse ourselves in the Alaska wilderness and possibly find Salmon Sharks in the waters of Prince William Sound.

However, before we even arrived at Ravencroft Lodge, our base of operations for the week, we found ourselves in the ice choked waters near the Columbia Glacier. Icebergs, both small and large, and of varying shapes, sizes and colors, bobbed in the

cold waters. Unlike other arctic regions where groups of seals could be seen hauling out on the icebergs, here we were treated to the site of dozens of Otters relaxing atop these floating bits of ice. The urge to snorkel the icebergs became irresistible!

Our journey to the lodge continued, with sightings of Bald Eagles, Stellar Sea Lions and False Killer Whales keeping us and our cameras busy. Eventually, we arrived at a well-appointed wilderness lodge and our attention turned to the dives ahead.

Getting There

Visitors should plan to arrive into Anchorage International Airport. From there, it is a five to six-hour drive to Valdez or a short 30-minute flight on RAVN Air, a domestic regional carrier. Note, RAVN Aircraft have small overhead compartments, so travelers may have to check large carryon bags at an additional cost. Divers should plan to arrive in Valdez one day prior to the assigned pickup time. The only access to the lodge is by float plane or by boat transport. A water taxi to the lodge can cost \$700, so be sure to be in town in time for the lodge's arranged pickup.

<http://www.alaskasharks.com>



Diving and Accommodation

Lodging in Valdez can be found at several hotels. We recommend the Best Western for its friendly staff, great service and proximity to the wharf where the boat pickups take place. Ravencroft Lodge is a fishing and diving lodge located in Fidalgo Bay. This is the only dive operator in the area. Dive safely, because the nearest recompression chamber is in Seattle!

The waters of Fidalgo Bay are sheltered between two strips of land and some towering mountains, but they are open to the exposed stretches of Prince William Sound and can turn rough quickly. We were fortunate that for our time in the area, the seas were calm. Our first dive was directly in front of the lodge and we were immediately intrigued: A lush garden of seagrass was home to beautifully adorned Opalescent Nudibranchs, small jellies, assorted crabs and a variety of starfish while further out in somewhat deeper water we found brilliantly colored starfish and foot-long sea cucumbers wandering a bed of bull kelp. One of the divers in the group located an oxymoronic small Giant Pacific Octopus hiding in a rocky lair. We didn't see this individual, but we did come across one on our last dive of the expedition.

Back in the seagrass, we located an old abandoned ore cart, a relic from the



When to go

The only season to dive in Alaska is the short summer, generally in June and July.

Currency

US Dollars and major credit cards are accepted at the lodge and in Alaska.



An abandoned ore cart is a relic from the copper mines of the past

past history of copper mineral mining in the area. Ravencroft Lodge is built on a former mining site and, in addition to this submerged cart, there are some artifacts scattered about the grounds of the lodge and a short hike into the forest will take visitors to the site of the original mine. Mining for copper occurred in the early parts of the 20th century before being abandoned due to a market drop in copper prices.

Before setting our sights on deeper dive sites, we took advantage of favorable tides to explore a glacier-fed river where Salmon begin their migration from the sea upstream to their preferred spawning grounds deeper into the forests.

Here, in only 5 feet of frigid 47-degree water, we battled the fierce rush of tumbling water to remain still and photograph hundreds of Chum and Pink Salmon as they raced by in a desperate push to pass through fallen trees, waterfalls and rocks to journey

upstream. Some would dart past us at a frenzied pace, while others could be found resting in the eddies and pools as if to catch their breath before making another push upstream. By the time we hiked back to our skiffs we were all exhausted, excited and gratified to have witnessed one of nature's miracles.

Dawn comes early to Alaska in the summer months, and the next day we were awake way before breakfast eagerly anticipating our first search for the mysterious Salmon Shark. As we fiddled with our cameras and assembled our gear, we went over the details of what conditions we would be looking for, and how to dive with the skittish sharks. According to the experts at Ravencroft, we need flat calm water to spot the small dorsal fin slicing through the water. Once spotted, we need to find a "player". This is a shark that's interested in feeding and not too skittish as to be unapproachable. It can take some time, we were told, and indeed it did. In fact, after several hours

of looking, we found none. This pattern would repeat over the next few days. We did see one individual on the surface, but we were never able to get in the water with one.

Nature is not predictable: an unusually cold summer could be the reason we did not find Salmon Sharks during our visit. Theories as to why Salmon Sharks frequent these waters and linger on the surface for the summer months focus on water temperature. A warm-blooded shark, they may be rising from deeper, colder water to bask in the warmer surface layers of the sea. The season for spotting them is short, only a few weeks across the months of June and July. Our quest will continue in a future trip with the hope of finally capturing photographs of this elusive creature!

After our search for sharks, we decided to dive some rocky outcroppings nearby. At a site known as "The Magic Garden", we found carpets of huge Plumose and Metridium Anemones adorning the



Author Christopher Weaver photographs the Anemones

"Hey, you guys need a lift?"

boulders. In addition, we photographed Black Rockfish and other species of Alaskan bottom fish. The dives sites here generally consist of a rocky sloping terrain until about 70 or 80 feet of depth, when they typically drop off in a vertical wall to depths of 600 feet or more.

We continued our exploration the next day to several previously unexplored sites. It's always exciting to dive a new location and to see what's below. We were not disappointed. Our first dive placed us into relatively clear water with a beautiful bottom topography of rocks and crevices. We found several Lined Nudibranchs, as well as pair of large Lemon Peel Nudibranchs. These measured the size of a baseball and were strikingly beautiful.

Alaska is known for huge groups of jellyfish, sometimes called a "smack". Indeed, as we explored the second of our "undiscovered" dive sites, we found ourselves in a soup of Moon Jellies, Lion's Mane Jellies, and large and fearsome looking Sea Nettles. Protected by a dry suit and dry hood, the only vulnerable spot on our bodies to a sting is the area around our mouth...and of course, that's where we got stung! Lion's Mane Jellies feed on Moon Jellies and we watched, transfixed, as a slow-motion pursuit by a Lion's Mane of



a Moon Jelly took place right before our eyes. The Moon Jelly, in this case, evaded capture and swam safely away.

Diving Prince William Sound is very much frontier diving. It is diving done on the timetable and to the wishes of the Alaskan wilderness. Sometimes the Salmon Sharks are there, on occasion they are not. Sometimes, huge smacks of Moon Jellies so thick you can lose sight of your buddy a few feet away show up and sometimes they don't. The visibility varies, from a few feet to 50 feet, and divers who don't watch their buoyancy can easily stir up clouds of silt unwittingly. The weather in Alaska plays a big role in what takes place on and under the water. This is the essence of adventure!



Look into small crevices to find colorful shrimp



Chum Salmon during their migration upstream to mate

As we continued to explore the waters of Prince William Sound, other dive sites led us to encounters with colorful decorator crabs, groups of crinoids and rafts of scallops that danced and flitted away as we approached with our cameras.

Our final dive of the trip brought us face to face with a Red Irish Lord fish

lurking menacingly on the bottom awaiting prey. But it was the sight of a Giant Pacific Octopus inside a rocky crevice that made the dive worthwhile. As it peered at us from the safety of its lair, the Octopus seemed to be sizing us up. What were these strange bubble blowing creatures? Are they a danger? The Octopus decided we were...and remained safely inside its rocky home.

We decided to respect its wishes, ascend the upline to the dive boat and begin planning our return trip.