



Sounding

Newsletter of the South Shore Neptunes

ANNOUNCEMENTS, ACTIVITIES, & REMINDERS

Calendar 2019-20

12/1 Club Dive, 9AM
12/3 General Meeting:
Nominations
12/10 Board Meeting:
Nominations
12/15 Club Dive, 9AM
12/17 Elections (There will be
food), Newsletter assembly

2020

1/1 Sober Up Dive Pleasure Bay
1/7 General Meeting
1/14 Board Meeting
1/18 Annual Awards Banquet,
\$33/pp
1/21/David Robinson, Director,
Mass Board of Underwater
Archaeologists, Newsletter
Assembly
2/4 General Meeting
2/11/ Board Meeting
2/18 Andy Martinez slide show
3/3 General Meeting
3/6 - 3/8 Boston Sea Rovers
Annual Clinic Danvers, MA
3/10 Board Meeting
3/17 Program Newsletter
4/2 General Meeting
4/9 Board Meeting
4/16 Program Newsletter
5/7/ General Meeting
5/14 Board Meeting
5/16-23 Club Dive Trip -Bonaire
5/21 Program Newsletter
6/4 General Meeting
6/11 Board Meeting
6/18 Program Newsletter

- ANNUAL AWARD ENTRIES DUE NOVEMBER 30!
- NOMINATIONS December 3 & 10
- ELECTIONS December 17
- DUES-\$35-ARE DUE BY ELECTION NIGHT!
- Weds. Jan 1, Sober Up Dive, Pleasure Bay, plus more
- Saturday, Jan 18, Annual Awards Banquet. The Common Market, Willard St in Quincy. \$33/person
- May 16 - 23, 2020 Bonaire Club Dive Trip: Blackie announced members should save their money because he's planning a club dive trip to Bonaire. Details will be spread upon the club in the near future. Stay tuned!
- Rugby team traveling to Berlin 11/20-11/25 to compete for the Berlin Cup.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER CLUB ACTIVITIES & DIVES

My adventures with Mola mola in September 2019. *Story and video link supplied by Todd Alger.* The Bay State Council competition dive was held on September 15 and scheduled for 1130a.m. at Stage Fort Park in Gloucester. By the way, we (Neptunes) won for the third consecutive year (see old newsletter for story). I knew from past experience that I would have time to go to Cape Ann and do a lobster dive before the competition dive began, so that is what I did. I arrived at the dive site around 8a.m. and geared up and began my dive. The water was warm probably high 50s and the vis was good, from 15 to 30 feet depending on where you were on the dive. In some areas the seaweed caused the vis to be less but over rock, reef, or sand the vis was very good. Thanks to Bob Bell's big lobster catch, my diving goal was to find a bigger lobster, so I was moving around at a pretty rapid pace, really only looking for big lobsters. My air pressure eventually told me it was time to start heading in without finding anything worthwhile. I was still pretty far out and heading in swimming up the rock reef, which at that point was gently

sloping when I saw a big white shape just at the very edge of visibility. I stopped moving and stared very hard at the shape to see what it was. It was swimming directly at me. I was in about 30 feet of water on the bottom. The shape was at a higher level than I. It began to come into focus, and I realized it was not going very fast; then I recognized what it was. It was a very large Mola mola, aka Sunfish. The fish was swimming directly towards me. As it got closer and closer, it banked and swam right in front of me and I looked directly into the eye facing me and it looked like it was looking right back at me. It banked again and swam around me, and I turned my body so I could watch it swim around me. My flag line was going directly to the surface and the fish went from almost at my level up and around my flag line. Then, it came back to my front and made a second pass around me. This time it came so close to me I could have reached out and touched the fish. It was less than three feet away. Once again, it seemed to be looking directly at me. I would estimate the fish was 8' long from nose to tail and about the same in height. I have attached a stock picture from the internet, and other than the water being blue in the picture and green water in my experience, the fish looked exactly like that in my eyes. It was a great big animal experience. The one regret I have was that I did not have my underwater video camera with me. It would have made a great video.

Fast forward one week. We held a club dive and a bunch of us Neptunes are going out on the boat, 'Sandra Jean', owned by Kevin from our Neptunes friendly yacht club, QYC. We do our first dive at the 'Roaring Bulls. Some divers have navigational difficulties, and the boat leaves the anchor to pick them up. So once the pick-up procedure starts, then all divers end up getting picked up.

The last diver to get picked up is Rob Vice, and as the boat gets closer, we notice there is a Mola mola (AKA Ocean Sunfish) very close to Rob. Since Rob is in the water on the surface, he is too low to see it and realize there is a Mola mola right next to him. We jokingly yell out to Rob to check out the scary shark/Ocean Sunfish and he puts his masked face in the water and sees the blurry shape; but it then swims off. Once we all get back in the boat, we discuss jumping in the water to snorkel with the Mola and we drive the boat over to where we think it is, but it has become shy and we no longer see it. As soon as we give up on it and start motoring to our next dive spot, we see another Sunfish (possibly the same one but we did not think so) and Ken and I are the first ones to jump in to swim with him. Others from the boat geared up and jumped in soon after. Ken and I were already prepared from the previous close call. We swam right up to it, and Ken got directly over it and had a great view. Unfortunately for me, Ken was blocking my access, but I was still able to get a view of him. We tried to swim with him, but that proved to be way more difficult than it would appear from a boat. On a boat it seems as if the fish is barely moving, but as a snorkeler in the water he moves faster than we do. We eventually got tired and were just floating and swimming back to the boat when the Mola mola decided to swim over to us again. I got a very good look at him the second time. All in all, it was a lot of fun snorkeling with the Sunfish with a lot of my Neptunes friends. To be clear, the vis on the snorkel was not good and my view of the fish was not great. My underwater experience was far clearer and different.

This seemed to be the year of the Mola. In past years we rarely saw them. This year, we saw them on multiple different days while out on a boat. Unluckily for me and my buddies on boats, on other sitings we were never in wetsuits. It had always been either on the way out before we geared up or on the way back after we had changed out of our wetsuits. This was my first time siting the Mola mola on a boat with my wetsuit on. I would definitely jump in again if the opportunity arose.

On side note, I wrote about my original Mola in-water experience that occurred approximately ten years ago



when the visibility was about 6 inches. You can look that story up in the old newsletter archives. I did not enjoy that experience at all, but Tommy Lo REALLY enjoyed it.

Here is one of a few Ocean Sunfish videos we shot the day we snorkeled and saw them: <https://www.facebook.com/SouthShoreNeptunes/videos/405964403670525/>

A mid November plunge in Morton's Pond. *Story and photos by Rob Robison*

Saturday 11.16.19. My alarm went off at 5:30 AM to give me time to put my gear together and make a cup of coffee before driving down the road to Morton's Pond, where my local dive buddy, Brian Smith, and I planned to do a checkout dive. He was trying to be sure he was properly weighted in his drysuit with a new heavier steel tank, as opposed to his much lighter aluminum one. I was checking out my own drysuit plus my regulator set up, which had just come back from the shop on Friday from being serviced. Also, I was also delighted to have my 2500 lumens (Sea Life) Sea Dragon video cam light back from the manufacturer. Sea Life had replaced it and the battery for free after it had leaked and destroyed the insides.



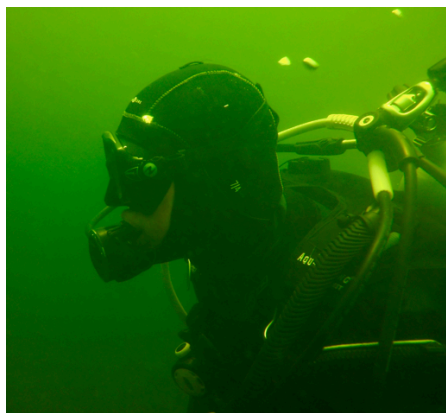
Rock pile guide

It was a good thing we chose the pond. Waves out on the ocean were averaging nearly 8 feet in height with 20-30 mph winds. Had we chosen a beach or boat dive, our dive would have been canceled under those conditions.

We suited up together and walked down to the beach. Near the lifeguard chair there is a small ledge or step, which I couldn't see with my gear and mask on. Not anticipating the drop in footing, I misstepped and fell down. Fortunately, Brian was

there to help me stand back up.

We proceeded on and walked into the water, put on our fins, and descended easily into the pond. The clear shallow water gave way to the darker green



Field of green? (Above) Left: Brian on the prow!

penumbra and cloudier vis, as we followed the contour down to 24'-25'. My newly serviced regulator sounded a bit unnerving at first because I could hear the first stage piston rubbing with each exhalation. Eventually, it stopped. Yes! Unfortunately, we were unable to locate the familiar "toys"; that is, the snowman, flag, slow-for-children sign, stocking-capped penguin figurine, etc., but we did find what was left of a plastic fishing lure and some green algae-like growths on the bottom. Brian was hoping to see the

fresh water jellyfish, but we made this dive too late in the fall to be successful in that hunt.

We swam around the point slowly, returned to the beach about 22 minutes later, surfaced, and called it a successful dive. My two dive computers registered 44° and 45° F during the dive, respectively.

Coffee and donuts at Dunkin Donuts ended our time together. As we debriefed the dive while at the donut shop, Brian mentioned he could drop a couple of pounds off his belt, and I indicted I had a leak up my left sleeve because I had forgotten to straighten the dry cuff seal and remove my wristwatch before suiting up. Next time, I'll be dry for sure. Brian's from Michigan, so he had to hurry off to watch the game between Michigan and Michigan State with his local Michigan buddies, and I to ferry my wife, Carol, to Logan Airport. Diving on a sunny, brisk, and windy day in a pond sure beats sitting at home thinking about it. It felt good getting back into the water after several-weeks hiatus.!

Diving Plymouth Beach After the Weather Bomb Nor'easter. *Story and photos by Rob Robison*

Sunday 10/20/19. After returning from a four-day business and pleasure trip to Oklahoma, I was bushed. A number of my Divers of Mass Bay (DMB) buddies wanted to go diving, so I jellied and finally decided to throw my gear together and drive over to Plymouth Beach to make the dive. They were already on site when I arrived. Based on a strange feeling, I decided to check the cargo bay in my Rav 4 while waiting for the rest of the divers to show up and discovered that my gear was still at the condo complex next to the dumpster. I was so focused, I had forgotten to stop near the dumpster, where I had left



it, pick up the gear and pack it in my car on the way out of the drive. It took 20 minutes to return home, load my dive gear, gas up, and return to Plymouth Beach.



Threatened Spider Crab

Along with the DMB group, Neptune Charlie Perretti, a young scientist who works for NOAA and has been off supporting his wife finishing her Ph.D., showed up and so did newcomer Michele White, who has been following my blog on the Divers of Mass Bay. She's the one who

Facebook how fact I label my dive

We suited up and water at low tide, donned our fins, and hit the surface was flat, the water column was full of to 3 - 5'.

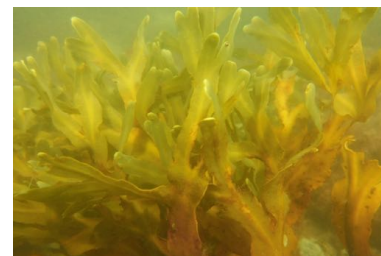
Almost immediately after moving across the dip toward the crease where the gravelly mix of broken shells begins, I spied a small fish and dark body, called a Grubby (*aenaeus*). I tried a few photos but the taking a good photo difficult.

We finned, I should say crawled, slowly, allowing the ebbing tide to pull us along starfish, Hermit crabs, Rock crabs, Decorator or as did Sea Wrack, Eel grass, and Green Fleece. A

Find the Grubby at right



Starfish vs Mussel



Sea Wrack field

commented on much she loves the photos.

walked into the bottom. Though the sand, limiting our vis

sand and down the glacial till and with a white head (*Myoxocephalus backscatter* made

across the bottom, as it retreated. Forbes Spider crabs abounded, few Comb jellies floated

by, and some Moon snails feasted on the scraps from a dead rock crab carcass. Plus, a few invasive Green crabs skittered about. The water was too occluded to see clearly how much scouring of the underwater boulders and rock piles had taken place from the pounding wind and waves, as a result of the recent weather bomb. I did not see the baby Sea Raven spotted by the DMB group and Michele, but I did spot the mounds of Half Slipper snails. Maybe next time a Sea Raven will be in the picture.

After nearly 60 minutes in the 53° water, we emerged from the surf, shucked and packed our gear, and took a group selfie to commemorate a beautiful dive, in no more than 9' of water, on a very pleasant and sunny Sunday morning.

With no one to brunch with afterwards, I stopped at the local Texas Road House for a couple of beers and a burger. It was a great day to be on the water diving into it!

Until next time, dive into it safely everyone, and **Happy Thanksgiving from us to you!**

Rob

ROB'S PARTING SHOTS - NORTH RIVER RUN

