

# Flotsam & Jetsam

## Reef Creature Book Not Large Enough

Someone should tell Paul Humann, author of *Reef Creature Identification*, that he needs to get back to work. A recent study estimates the number of species that inhabit coral reefs to be 423,000. The current number of species that have been named and described is only somewhere between 35,000 to 60,000. No wonder I don't recognize a lot of the things I see on a dive.

## Crown Diver Down

Both the *Crown Diver* and the *Crown Islander*, which have been diving the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos, seem to be out of the dive picture. The *Crown Islander* is said to be in dry dock for a year and the *Crown Diver* is not accepting bookings. At their 800 number, no one would say if or when they would be running trips again.

## Crossed Legs to Cayman Brac

Getting to Cayman Brac has never been easy: Cayman Air has only a few flights into the Brac, and some days the planes don't land until midnight. Starting April 30, Gulfstream International Airlines will be flying a Beechcraft 1900 to the Brac three times a week from Miami. As one editor put it, "Imagine flying over Cuba in a 19-seater with no head on a two-hour flight after sucking down a couple of Café Cubanos at the Miami Airport." Maybe the price or the convenience will be worth it.

## Sheck Exley Dies Deep

Sheck Exley, who literally wrote the book on cave diving (*Basic Cave Diving*, Best Publishing Co.), died in April trying to beat his own depth record of 881 feet. Sheck and his partner Jim Bowden of Austin, Texas, were diving in Pit 6350, also known as Zacaton, located north of Tampico, Mexico.

Jim Bowden shot down to 925 feet in 11 minutes, then began his 16-tank, 8½-hour ascent. Sheck, who was trying to break 1,000 feet, went deeper. Topside members of the team reported that within 18 minutes of the beginning of the dive one of the two streams of bubbles stopped. One theory is that Sheck experienced violent tremors due to the rapid increase in pressure.

Sheck's body was recovered when the team returned to the pit. They had not expected to recover the body because of the depth and the 200 pounds of equipment that he was wearing. However, his body became entangled in the equipment lines and was pulled to the surface. Jim Bowden said, "All I can say is that he was doing what he loved the most and did it better than anybody in the world."

## GMI Out?

We've had a few heated discussions about Motomarine camera repairs in this newsletter. Rumor is that GMI, the American company which handles distribution and repair for the Motomarine and other Sea & Sea products, is to be replaced.

## In Depth

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