



West Wind Explorer

The
Newsletter
Of The
MetroWest Dive Club
Framingham, Massachusetts



Volume 24, Number 3

March 2014

MWDC General Meetings Move to New Location!!

The MWDC monthly general meetings will be at the Sheraton Tara, Route 9 West, Framingham MA for the next few months while our normal meeting spot undergoes remodeling.

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Diving Indonesia

Diving the "Coral Triangle" reveals some of the most exotic and exciting marine life on earth.

By Andrea Dec

There are many reasons to visit the Indonesian archipelago, but a big reason is diving due to the various locations available. After all, Indonesia is located in the "Coral Triangle" within the marine waters of Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste – a region with more than 500 reef-building coral species and an epicenter of marine biodiversity. Geographically, Indonesia has 17,500 islands scattered over both sides of the equator and spread out in an area that is over 700,000 square miles. You'll find some of the finest reefs in the world there, but the main reason for my trip to Indonesia was to try muck diving in Lembeh Strait – North Sulawesi.



Glossodoris cincta; one of the many brightly colored nudibranch species found in Lembeh Strait.

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Meeting This Month

Tuesday - March 11th— Bob Michelson— Northeast REEF Fish Identification Program

Sheraton Tara— Route 9 West, Framingham MA (Note **NEW Location**)

Social Hour: 6:30-7:30 (In the bar) Meeting Begins: 7:30 Sharp

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West Wind Explorer

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The *West Wind Explorer* is a monthly publication of the MetroWest Dive Club. It is distributed electronically to members prior to the club's first meeting of the month. Club meetings take place on the second Tuesday of each month.

Editor

Bill Borek

Contributors

Andrea Dec
Gary Marcoux
Laurie Borek

We encourage authors to submit original articles and photographs for publication. Contributions to the *West Wind Explorer* are considered to be positions of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions or positions of the *West Wind Explorer* or MetroWest Dive Club. Articles, contributions, and letters-to-the-editor should be sent by postal mail to:

**MWDC Editor,
C/O Bill Borek
P.O. Box 1916
Framingham, MA 01701-1916**

Email contributions can be sent to:
editor@mwdc.org

Diving related classified advertising in the *West Wind Explorer* is **free** to all club members.

Editor's Plank:

The winter that will not go away. I am ready for some warmer weather-
Diving, boating, diving, pool, diving, barbeque, diving, baseball, diving....
Well you get the picture.

As always, articles are needed and greatly appreciated.

Bill Borek
MWDC Newsletter Editor

MetroWest Dive Club Board of Directors

<i>President:</i>	Jim Nannery	president@mwdc.org
<i>Vice President:</i>	Georgios Kokovidis	vicepresident@mwdc.org
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Darlene Deschambeault	treasurer@mwdc.org
<i>Secretary:</i>	Laurie Borek	secretary@mwdc.org
<i>Membership:</i>	Steve Bigelow	renewals@mwdc.org
<i>Newsletter:</i>	Bill Borek	editor@mwdc.org
<i>Directors:</i>	Jim Andrews Mark Criasia Gary Marcoux Rich Palanzi Alexine Raineri Karen Riccui Mike Royer Jeff Wagner Alternate – Patrick Hannon	

The Officers of the club are available to answer your questions about the club or about diving. Please feel free to call them. The MetroWest Dive Club is dedicated to promoting fun, safe diving, and introducing and familiarizing members with new dive sites. We are committed to encouraging good relations with our coastal neighbors through courtesy and good diving etiquette, and getting involved in community activities. The club meets monthly on the **second Tuesday** of each month. Guests are welcome: divers and non-divers alike. The club can provide direction to the many training classes locally available. Join us at our next meeting or write to us: **The MetroWest Dive Club, PO. Box 1916, Framingham, MA 01701-1916**; email us at mwdc@mwdc.org; or visit our website at <http://www.mwdc.org>

Activities:

Rich Palanzi activities@mwdc.org

Speakers:

Steve Bigelow speaker@mwdc.org

Club Clothing and Merchandise

Shore Dives: dateateight@mwdc.org

Ways & Means

Jim Nannery

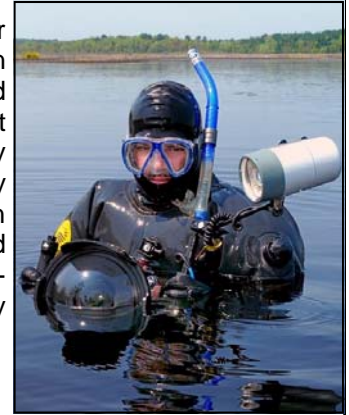
Web Master

Bob Wilson webmaster@mwdc.org

Boat Dives:
boatdiving@mwdc.org

Speaker Alert: *Bob Michelson: The NE REEF Fish Identification Program*

Divers are naturally curious and recognizing many of the fish and other critters we encounter in New England brings a unique satisfaction to every dive outing. In March, Bob Michelson will present a 45-minute workshop that will teach divers how to identify the 20 most sighted Northeast Fish species using the REEF Environmental Education Foundation's Northeast Fish Identification Program. This photography-based presentation teaches how to identify local finfish in natural habitats and shows how to identify these creatures by using body shape, size, fin structure and location, body markings, coloration and habitat as identification keys. Memory clues are used to make this learning experience fun for scuba divers and snorkelers of all skill levels. Bob will also provide support materials including laminated waterproof color ID cards and a Quick Look Reference Guide. This is an exciting opportunity for both novice and experienced divers to improve their fish recognition skills!



New temporary Club venue: Remember that our regular digs at the Courtyard Marriott in Natick will be undergoing some needed renovations over the next few months, and we will be meeting instead at the Sharaton Tara hotel on Route 9 in Framingham.

Remember that our meetings are always **free** and open to divers and non-divers alike. If you've never been to a meeting before, feel free to show up and join us. If you know any divers that haven't visited a Club meeting yet, bring them along - everyone is welcome - new divers and grizzled veterans alike. Why not make next Tuesday a family night- bring your spouse for a drink in the lounge, treat the kids to an appetizer before the meeting and introduce them around. Join us on Tuesday night and catch up with your fellow Club members, welcome new members, and stay informed about current and future Club activities.

Date @ 8 — Every Saturday - at the Rest area just after Exit 19 on Route 128 in Beverly

Need a Buddy? Come Meet with MWDC's Date @ 8 coordinators and dive Cape Ann

Coordinators are: Roy Mennell Jr --- 781-891-3280
 Steve Bigelow - stevebigel@gmail.com
 Alexine Raineri- alexineraineri@rcn.com

dateateight@mwdc.org

If you plan on meeting for "Date @ 8- make sure you contact the coordinators a day or two in advance - particularly if the weather could be a factor.

March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

If you are going to the Date-at-Eight, please add another piece of essential gear - a trash bag and maybe a disposable glove. Yes, a trash bag. Some of the places we have been going have a lot of trash that has washed in from storms and more trash from others using the area.

We should make every day Earth day.



Diving Indonesia

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Getting it “Straight”

Just the word “muck” evokes images like the Pines River in Revere, Massachusetts which usually (if not always) has dark, murky water – to see the bottom your face must be less than a foot away from it. But the Pines River is only 50 miles from home. Lembeh Straight in North Sulawesi is over 9,000 miles away. It’s been two years since my last visit to Indonesia but I’ve been anxious to return and see more of the underwater beauty.

Although Lembeh Straight was at the top of my list, I also considered stops on Bunaken Island as well as Raja Ampat, West Papua. Bunaken Island is known to have excellent wall diving and Raja Ampat is known for having very healthy coral reefs and many species of fish.

So, I started planning and lucky for me a Google search turned up

<http://www.divesafariasia.co.uk/>.

Ben Stokes, co-owner of the company, was offering a Trans-Indonesian trip that sounded perfect, and it was. I contacted Ben and he later phoned me that evening to go over details as the trip was departing in less than a month, and there was one spot left. Lembeh Straight was not part of his group trip, but he kindly offered to set up that portion for me, and I would simply go and meet the group the following week in Bunaken Island. By mid-November 2013, I was heading to Indonesia for 18 days.



My cottage while diving at Kungkungan Bay Resort



The resort offered very comfortable accommodations.

Ben set up Kungkungan Bay Resort for me on the black sand shore of Lembeh Straight. This is a luxury sea level resort with a professionally run dive shop on-site. The accommodations are superb; a beach front cottage just steps from the water. It had a living room and a large separate bedroom that had a walk in stone shower – and its location is picture-perfect. The resort’s restaurant is open 24 hours with a full-service menu. There is wide variety of deliciously prepared food of quality ingredients. They even smoked their own bacon! The professional and friendly staff ensures you will have a pleasant stay at KBR.

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Diving Indonesia

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Boat and Shore Diving

The dive operation www.divekbr.com is run very smoothly by Manager Stefan Soh. They offer two boat dives in the morning, one afternoon boat dive and a night dive. There is unlimited shore diving from the long dock, so you never get sand in your gear. All you have to do is let the staff know that you will be going on a “shore” dive. They will have all your gear ready for you on the dock where you will be doing a giant stride in the water. When you are done with your dive there is a ladder to climb out. The staff is always there to help with getting in and out of the water. Shore diving from KBR is done at slack water only due to the currents – but it’s really the current that drives great visibility and fosters an abundance of strange and wonderful critters.



View of the dive shop and pier at KBR; a giant stride location for shore dives.

The term “muck” has been used to describe the diving in Lembah Straight, but that’s really a misnomer. Here “muck” simply refers to the black sand, lack of natural hiding spots, and a stark environment many critters have adapted to live and thrive in. So it was quick to see that visibility is far from zero.

Lembah Straight is sometimes called a muck diving mecca – and for good reason – it’s the reason divers from all corners of the globe go search of the most unusual critters. It did not take long to discover that any critter with odd shapes, copious amounts of hair, psychedelic colors, deadly poisons, cunning camouflage (or prefers to carry other marine life on its back) will simply thrive in Lembah Straight.

My first dive was a site called Palau Abadi located close to shore across from the very busy city port of Bitung. The site is also next to many fishing boats that were moored. My first thought was; “What could possibly be here besides floating debris?” We all did our back roll and descended to the black sandy bottom, but the visibility was far better than I initially pictured in my mind.



A vibrantly-colored Peacock Mantis Shrimp

The action just continued throughout the day and the remainder of my stay at Kungkungan Bay Resort.

When we visited sites like Jahir I, Aer Bajo II and III, or TK 3, there wasn’t any coral and the bottom was black sand only. These locations offered visibility around 20 feet, but I also saw the strangest marine life. On the other hand, dive sites like Nudi Retreat offered a wall covered in hard coral and yellow soft coral. Dive site Angles Window had a wall covered in hard corals, and at 80 feet there was a swim-through with a resident pigmy seahorse.

The action started right away when my dive guide Liberty pointed out a peacock mantis shrimp, a juvenile painted frog fish, a xeno crab on sea whip, then an orangutan crab, a frog fish, a sea whip goby, a ghost pipefish, a blue ring octopus, a shrimp fish, a Lembah Sea Dragon, and a Cuttlefish egg with the developing embryo – all in the first twenty minutes of the first dive.



This Juvenile Painted Frog Fish is not really blending in

Diving Indonesia

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Across from the resort was a dive site named Pintu Colada where we experienced a sandy slope with critters. After finishing the dive in the shallows, there were several healthy coral heads to swim around in the bright shallow water. These dive sites had visibilities that exceed 50 feet. Pintu Colada was also the site of the Mandarin fish dive. This was my first Mandarin dive and we were not disappointed. Several large Mandarin fish greeted us for their mating ritual – this dusk to night dive was truly spectacular.



A Xeno Crab holding onto a section of spiral whip coral



This Blue Ringed Octopus is in defensive mode; its venom is 10,000 times more toxic than cyanide.

During the initial dive briefing, the manager invited us to suggest any particular critters that we wanted to see. I arrived with a wish list of “critters” – 32 in fact – and 75% were nudibranchs. The first day of diving, I just wanted to get in the water to see what it was all about. It was incredible, and my guide showed me so much that I practically forgot about my list.

A gorgeous Mandarin fish with its extremely vivid colors.



Diving Indonesia

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When I looked back at the list that evening, the most sought after for me was the “boxer crab”. I couldn’t stand the thought of going home without seeing it, but the following day during the afternoon dive the boxer crab was unveiled in all its radiance. I saw things there that I never thought I would ever see. It was almost common to see several Blue ring octopus, different species of pygmy sea horses, ghost, banded and robust pipefish, soft coral crabs just to name a few.

Moving Past Lembah Straight

The second leg of my trip required a three hour drive to Tasik Ria Resort where I would finally meet up with Ben Stokes from Dive Safari Asia. From this point on, I was traveling with Ben and a group of 15 diving at Bunaken Island, and then off to Raja



The elusive Boxer Crab with its adorning anemones on its claws used for defense



A Nembrotha cristata nudibranch foraging for a meal of Ascidians



Crystal clear waters from the top of a reef off Bunaken Island

Ampat.

I only had one day of diving Bunaken Island. The spacious dive boat leaves in the morning and stays out near Bunaken Island all day. Lunch is served for all the divers during the surface interval. The dive boat's guides give a descriptive briefing and are safety conscious. There were four divers to one guide.

The diving here involved gorgeous wall diving with tiny critters sprinkled about. The wall itself is basically vertical and there is some current to contend with, but the visibility was at least 100 feet. There were huge barrel sponges, gorgonians, and big stands of staghorn coral along with giant turtles. There was also smaller stuff including colorful ascidians, soft coral, nudibranchs and more. It was amazing to look around and see all the life.

Round Three

The third leg of the trip involved a late day flight from Manado, North Sulawesi to Sorong, West Papua. During this two hour flight we crossed the equator into the southern hemisphere. We spent a memorable evening at the one and only Royal Mamberamo Hotel in Sorong.

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Diving Indonesia

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The following morning, we had a two hour speedboat ride to Mansuar Island in the area known as Raja Ampat and stayed at the Raja Ampat Dive Lodge (<http://www.komodoalordive.com/>) located on a brilliant white sandy beach with the verdant green mountain backdrop. The cottages were very comfortable with good food and a friendly staff.

The location and setting of this dive resort was absolutely gorgeous. It also had a fantastic house reef, though all of the house reef dives were done by boat (again, sand never ended up in any gear). The crew would have us board the boat at the dock, and the captain would either drop us at the end of the long dock or drop us off further up the reef and then follow our bubbles. We would usually have two guides in the water with two or three

divers per guide.

The briefings for

each dive site were very informative, well-illustrated, and well-planned. Our guides were Dovan and Roy, they did a great job pointing out critters during each dive.

The boat schedule included two dives in the morning and one in the afternoon with a choice of evening or night dive before dinner. After the morning boat dives, we would stop at an uninhabited island or village for our surface interval which included coffee, tea or water along with fresh fruit and baked snacks. One day we visited Arborek Island and had our second boat dive of the day there. It was a fantastic location with a huge variety of marine life. We had macro critters pointed out to us, witnessed giant clams, and watched a school of Napoleon Wrasse foraging in the shallows before parading off to deeper



One of the many ascidian's found in the reef crevasses.



A bungalow at the Raja Ampat Dive Lodge in the heart of the Coral Triangle

water.

Another fantastic site worth mentioning is Frewins Wall. I could have spent several days at that one site. It started out as a slope with hundreds of tiny yellow sea cucumbers, but the highlight was a deep cut/overhang that the current took us by. This overhang went on and on with soft coral just draping out of the wall with black coral and gorgonians. It ended with a shallow shelf where we spent some time observing anemones with resident clown fish swimming about (Photo 15); just beautiful.

Raja Ampat had a lot of odd critters, and some were difficult to make out. One of the oddities was a hermit crab with tiny anemones growing on its shell, then the half-inch red crab that looked like it didn't have legs, but closer observation showed me that the legs were clear. Then, in the white sand, Dovan pointed out a sandy colored 2x1/2-inch flat worm-like critter, but a closer look showed me that it was a tiny flat crab – and these were all spotted on the night dives.



Clown fish take refuge in the embrace of an anemone

Good Planning and Great Guides

This was truly a fantastic trip! Ben really knows how to put a well-organized dive trip together. It was a long journey but he made everything seem effortless. I enjoyed every aspect of this trip and having him as a guide. *

Meeting Minutes

BOD Meeting Notes March 2014

This meeting was held at Georgio's home and the business meeting ran from 7:30-9:27.

- Hotel Accommodations were discussed and a vote was taken to continue meetings at the Marriot when renovations are completed.
- Banquet location was voted on and it will be held at the Columbus Society in 2015.
- Final Banquet details discussed.
- Club member request
- Finances
- New brochure
- Summer Picnic is Sept. 28. 2014
- Boston Scuba Show and Sea Rovers discussed
- Raffles and Clothing sales are doing well
- A scuba gear swap will be scheduled
- CPR Recertification discussed
- Snow Shoe and Cross Country Ski outing scheduled for March 22
- NC Trip June 22-27. There are a few openings.
- Membership is 77
- Speakers are lined up through October!
- Date at 8 had 6 divers on March 1!

Respectfully submitted by Gary Marcoux (for Laurie Borek)

MWDC Feb Meeting notes

Jim Nannery opened the meeting at 7:45. 21 people attended this meeting.

Topics discussed were:

- Banquet Feb 22
- GoPro
- Raffle Items, Log Books, Photo/Artifact Contest Entries,
- Diver of the Year Nominations
- Newsletter in need of articles
- March Madness
- Boston Scuba Show March 1
- Sea Rovers Mar 7-9
- Beneath the Sea MAR 28-30
- Snow Shoeing/Cross Country Skiing - Feb.16 at Windblown in Ipswich, NH
- Upcoming Speakers
- NC Trip added 4 slots due to demand- scheduled for the end of June
- Date at Eight adventures
- Upcoming Dive Trips
- Orders for Wick Away shirts and sweatpants were taken. The order will be placed after the March meeting. Both the shirts and sweat pants are \$23 each. Full payment must accompany order.
- Dive Talk

Tom Bergendahl spoke about Kayak diving and even had his kayak geared up to help us better understand the procedures for loading and unloading the gear and how the diver gets into both the water and his gear .Many safety points were discussed. It was a very interesting presentation.

The meeting ended at 9pm.

Laurie Borek
Secretary

Dinner Dance Thank You

I would like to thank everyone who helped with the dinner dance planning and food preparation as well as all the other things that many people did to make the evening a success. Rich Palanzi really deserves a huge thank you for suggesting the Columbus Society and for working with them to make sure the new location worked out smoothly. By providing the appetizers and desserts we saved money and had better food. So thank you, volunteers, for helping out. Many people mentioned to me that they would have been happy to help out, had they known we were making appetizers and desserts. So please keep in mind if you are not attending the 2 meetings before next year's dinner dance I will be looking for help again. Just contact me and I can put your donation on the list.

Laurie Borek

New Clothing Order to be placed following the March Meeting

By Laurie Borek

A Clothing Order will be taken at the Feb meeting. The order will be immediately placed in order to get the merchandise at the March Meeting.

Payment must accompany your order. All items are \$23.

We will reorder the popular Champion Wick Away shirts in Royal blue or grey – men's and ladies styles.

Also we are ordering Guildan Navy blue sweat pants with the Dive Flag Logo on the upper thigh.


Meetings

Continued from page 1

The Sheraton Tara is on Route 9 West, just off Exit 12 of I-90 (Mass Pike). The actual address (for those of you with GPS) is 1657 Worcester Road, Framingham MA 01701. Phone is 508-879-7200.

Take I-90 to Exit 12. After the toll– Bear left to Route 9 West. The entrance to the hotel is approximately 500 feet on the right.

March Tide Table - Rockport MA

DAY	DATE	HIGH				LOW					
		AM	hgt	PM	hgt	AM	hgt	PM	hgt	rise	set
Saturday	01	10:49	10.8	11:18	10.4	4:33	-1.3	5:03	-1.7	6:18	5:31
Sunday	02	11:40	10.7			5:25	-1.6	5:52	-1.7	6:16	5:33
Friday	07	3:23	9.1	4:01	8.2	9:46	0.2	10:02	0.9	6:08	5:39
Saturday	08	4:19	8.7	5:01	7.7	10:46	0.7	11:01	1.4	6:06	5:40
Sunday	09	6:18	8.3	7:04	7.5	12:48 PM	0.9			7:05	6:41
Friday	14	10:43	8.8	11:08	8.5	4:31	0.8	4:57	0.4	6:56	6:47
Saturday	15	11:22	8.9	11:43	8.8	5:10	0.5	5:32	0.2	6:54	6:48
Sunday	16	11:57	9.1			5:46	0.2	6:04	0.1	6:52	6:50
Friday	21	2:40	9.5	3:13	8.7	9:00	-0.2	9:14	0.3	6:44	6:55
Saturday	22	3:27	9.5	4:04	8.5	9:50	-0.1	10:05	0.5	6:42	6:57
Sunday	23	4:20	9.4	5:02	8.3	10:46	-0.0	11:04	0.7	6:40	6:58
Friday	28	9:45	9.9	10:18	9.8	3:29	-0.3	4:02	-0.8	6:31	7:04
Saturday	29	10:42	10.2	11:09	10.3	4:27	-0.8	4:54	-1.1	6:30	7:05
Sunday	30	11:35	10.3	11:57	10.5	5:20	-1.2	5:43	-1.1	6:28	7:06

Notice!!!!

**Due to construction at the Courtyard
Marriott where we normally meet -**

**the February General
Meeting will be held at the
Sheraton Tara (The Castle)-
Route 9 Framingham MA**

**The Sheraton Tara is just off Exit 12 of
I-90 (Mass Pike)**

