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SCUBA News (ISSN 1476-8011)

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Welcome to *SCUBA News*. It's getting difficult to know where next to go diving. We flew back from Egypt the same day that the Russian plane crashed, and many airlines are now not going to Sharm El-Sheikh because of security fears (see our story below). Bali airport is also closed but in this case due to volcanic ash. At Sipadan the government has decreed that every dive boat must carry a security guard. However, it is getting cheaper for some of us to dive abroad. Major currencies have risen in the last year against, for example, the [Malaysian](#) Ringgit and [South African](#) Rand - so diving in these areas will be cheaper.

You can [download a pdf version](#) of this newsletter [here](#).



## **\$400 off Maldives Liveboard**

For February or March trips  
on the [Manta Cruise](#)

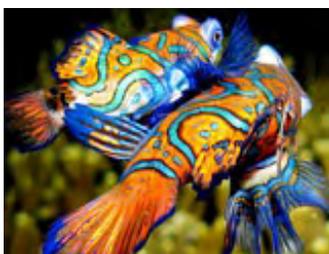
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**What's New at SCUBA Travel?**



### [Dive Operators in Malaysia](#)

Malaysia comprises two regions separated by the South China Sea: Peninsular Malaysia and Malaysian Borneo. Both have some excellent diving. More reviews of dive operators are now at [scubatravel.co.uk/malaysia/](http://scubatravel.co.uk/malaysia/)



### [Diving South Africa - the Chokka Squid Run.](#)

The Chokka squid are congregating in the South East Cape. The fishing season is closed in November and a multitude of predators arrive to feast on the spawning squid: sharks, dolphins, rays, octopuses, seals and others. Read more at [scubatravel.co.uk/africa/](http://scubatravel.co.uk/africa/)



### [Diving Ustica](#)

Ustica is a beautiful little island 37 miles north of Palermo, Sicily. It has been a Marine Reserve since 1986 which shows in the number and size of the fish here. Find out more at [scubatravel.co.uk/italy/](http://scubatravel.co.uk/italy/)

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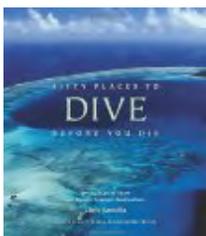
## Best-selling Diving Books of 2015

We are pleased to release the list of the 2015 best selling SCUBA books and dvds.

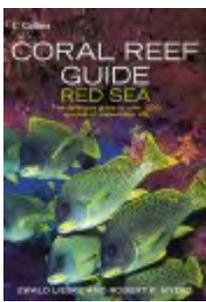
*Fifty Places to Dive Before You Die* regains the top spot from *Dive Atlas of the World*, which drops down to third. Most of the books are either diving area guides - to specific locations or dive sites around the world - or sea life guides. One breaks the trend though: Simon Pridmore's *Scuba Confidential*. This tells readers how to be a better diver.

One DVD makes the list, showing some great diving destinations.

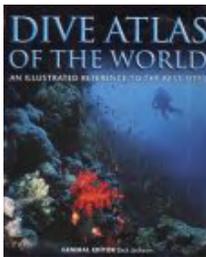
Here are the top ten: figures in brackets show the previous year's position. If we've reviewed a book, we link to [the review](#). Otherwise the links go to the cheapest place we've found for you to buy the book. If positions change (and some are very close) we'll update our [Bestsellers web page](#) with the new results.



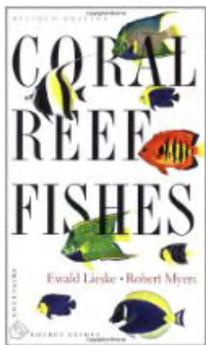
1. [Fifty Places to Dive Before You Die: Diving Experts Share the World's Greatest Destinations](#)  
by Chris Santella  
The fifth in Santella's bestselling "Fifty Places" series. (2)



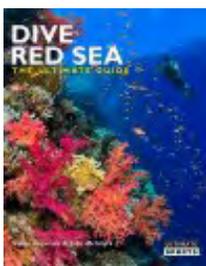
2. **Coral Reef Guide Red Sea** by Ewald Lieske, Robert Myers  
Excellent guide to the fish and invertebrates of the Red Sea. (5)



3. **Dive Atlas of the World: An Illustrated Reference to the Best Sites** by Jack Jackson  
300 pages detailing some of the world's best dive sites. (1)



4. **Coral Reef Fishes: Indo-Pacific and Caribbean** by Ewald Lieske, Robert Myers  
Another from Lieske and Myers, this goes on all my tropical diving holidays. (7)



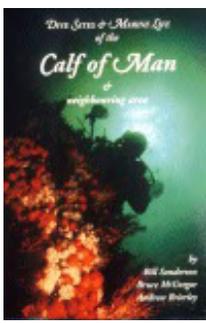
5. **Dive Red Sea: The Ultimate Guide**  
Mainly covers Egypt but also mentions Aqaba, Eilat, Eritrea, Djibouti and Yemen. (6)



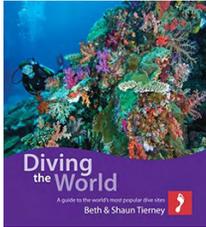
6. **Hurghada: Diving Guide and Integrated Logbook**  
A great little guide and money well spent if you are going to Hurghada (Egypt) as nearly all the dives you will do are covered. (-)



7. **The World's Best Dive Destinations DVD**  
Visual SCUBA dive guide to the world's best diving locations (9)



8. **Dive Sites and Marine Life of the Calf of Man and Neighbouring Area** by Bill Sanderson, Bruce McGregor, Andrew Brierley  
A surprising entry, but the Isle of Man boasts some excellent diving and this book describes some of the best. It is written by three marine biologists, based on their extensive personal experience of diving the area. (-)



9. **Diving the World** by Beth and Shaun Tierney  
Husband-and-wife team Beth and Shaun Tierney are another pair who have two entries in the list. They have selected, reviewed and photographed over 200 tropical sites for *Diving the World*, and released a fully updated and expanded third edition. (8)



10. **Scuba Confidential: An Insider's Guide to Becoming a Better Diver** by Simon Pridmore  
Candid, no-nonsense practical advice from a professional who has been involved over the last three decades with virtually every aspect of the sport. (-)

## Diving in Egypt

Members of the SCUBA Travel team flew back from Egypt just hours before the Russian plane crash. Our thoughts are with not only those who lost people on the plane but also with the [Red Sea](#) dive operators.



The dive operators, hotels and restaurants in the northern Sinai, in [Dahab](#) and Nuweiba, are already struggling as many European countries have advised their citizens to avoid "non-essential" travel there. After this tragic crash things can only get worse for them.

The men who work in the hotels, dive centres and restaurants - and the vast majority are men - are from all over Egypt and spend months away from their families. School teachers work as receptionists because they can

earn more money that way.

Many European countries are now not flying into Sharm El Sheikh. Flights to Hurghada and Marsa Alam are still operating, although Russia has ceased all flights to Egypt. Make sure you have comprehensive travel and medical [insurance](#) before travelling.

Find out more at <http://www.scubatravel.co.uk/redsea/>

## Fat Helps Corals Cope with Climate Change

It may come as a surprise to know that like us, some corals can store energy as fat.

When the water in which they live gets too warm, corals become unhealthy and turn white - known as bleaching. What is actually happening is that the algae that lives in the coral, and makes food for them, are lost.

Healthy corals get their day-to-day energy from sugar that the algae make through photosynthesis. They also eat zooplankton which they use for growth, healing and reproduction. During bleaching, their nutritional state is thrown completely out of balance.



*Healthy coral reef by Tim Nicholson*

"When coral is bleached, it no longer gets enough food energy and so it starts slowing down in growth and loses its fat and other energy reserves - just like humans do during times of hardship," said lead researcher in a recent scientific study, Verena Schoepf.

Corals eventually start consuming their own bodies, as human bodies do when severely malnourished. And while all the corals in the study were able to eat zooplankton, the ones who had more fat fared better than the rest.

Those with less fat hadn't healed even a year later.

Climate change is one of the main threats to coral reefs today, and mass bleaching events due to periods of warmer water have increased in frequency over the past decades. More worryingly still, severe bleaching is expected to occur annually around the world later this century, putting more than 90% of reefs at risk. In the Caribbean, this is projected to occur as early as 2040.

Those that can't recover in a year appear to be doomed.

Further Reading:

[Fat helps corals cope with global warming](#)

## Diving News From Around the World

Our round up of the more interesting underwater news stories of the past month. For breaking news see our [Twitter page](#) or [RSS feed](#)



### [Scientists measure the beauty of coral reefs](#)

A beautiful coral reef is a healthy coral reef: new on-line system judges health and beauty of reefs just from underwater photos. And you can upload yours to test it out.

### [Nudibranch & Sea Slug Identification - Indo-Pacific](#)

New book just released is a comprehensive guide to nudibranch identification for the diver in the Indo-Pacific - covers South Africa to Easter Island and from southern Japan to northern Australia.



### [First evidence of multiple paternity in bull sharks](#)

A single litter of bull shark pups can have two fathers, say French researchers.

### [Which reef life communities are most vulnerable to global warming?](#)

A 100 years from now, all the species in many marine communities will be lost and replaced by new species able to tolerate warmer conditions, leading to a redistribution of sea life across the globe. But which communities will be most affected?

### [The first fish seen leaping out of water to attack prey from air](#)

That's one small jump for a fish, but a big leap for fish kind. Needlefish have been seen shooting out of the water before smashing into schools of unsuspecting prey in the waters near Heron Island and North Stradbroke Island in Queensland, Australia.



### [What was killing the young right whales? New research finds a suspect](#)

The baby whales suddenly began dying in 2005. And continued for several years running. Scientists had never seen anything like it around Peninsula Valdes, an important calving ground for southern right whales on the coast of Argentina, or anywhere else for that matter. The average number of right

whale deaths per year at Peninsula Valdes jumped more than 10-fold, from fewer than six per year before 2005 to 65 per year from 2005 to 2014.

### [Data shared from 1,900 sensors in the Gulf of Mexico to be quality assured](#)

Nineteen thousand sensors collect data in the Gulf of Mexico every day, feeding it back to researchers around the world. The information acquired is used to track long-term trends such as sea level rise and

climate change, to enhance weather and boating forecasts, to aid shipping and navigation and track harmful algal blooms.



### [New Camouflage Mechanism for Fish in the Open Ocean](#)

The vast open ocean presents an especially challenging environment for its inhabitants since there is nowhere for them to hide. Yet, nature has found a remarkable way for fish to hide from their predators using camouflage techniques. Researchers show that fish scales have evolved to not only reflect light, but to also scramble polarization. The research



could help develop new materials to help hide objects in the water.

### **Deep Sea Mining a New Ocean Threat**

Adding to concerns about the disastrous decline in ocean ecosystems, now there is another emerging threat - deep sea mining. While shallow water mining for sand, gold, tin, and diamonds has been conducted for

decades, commercial deep sea mining has yet to occur anywhere. But that's about to change.

### **Female biased green turtle sex ratio in San Diego Bay**

Scientists have for the first time determined the ratio of males to females in a wild foraging group of green turtles in the Eastern Pacific, which suggests that sea turtles may be vulnerable to feminization from the temperature rises expected with climate change. The sex of sea turtles is determined by incubation temperatures on the nesting beaches, with warmer sand temperatures producing more females.



### **Warmer oceans mean some cod stocks will never fully recover**

Failure to include changes in sea temperature in fisheries models has led fisheries managers to overestimate some stocks by two to five times, leading to overfishing. Now warmer water may make the recovery of one cod fishery to previous levels impossible

### **Invasive freshwater species in Europe's lakes and rivers: how do they come in?**

Escape from aquaculture facilities, releases in the wild due to pet/aquarium trade and stocking activities as the main pathways of alien species introduction in European lakes and rivers.

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