

July 2016 | Dive Team Newsletter

Dive News

Summer 2016 Dive Intern

Our new Summer Dive Intern is Ryan Bacon (aka. Bacon). Bacon will be staying with us for 6 months.

He graduated with a Biology BS from Georgia Southern University, taking a lot of marine ecology & biology classes. He's an SSI AOW cert and holds a Master Captains License. He's had a lot of experience piloting commercial fishing charters & spearfishing.

Bacon's usual schedule will be Mon & Wed-Fri.



New Pony Bottle System

During the next month, the Dive Office will be retraining all of you on a new Pony Bottle System.

There is a new class version that everyone will retake and we will do a dry exercise.

We won't go into detail now; it is in the class.

Once we have everyone trained, we'll swap the new versions into the Gear Room. Until then, Dive Office will check out and check in the new system at the beginning/end of each day.



Emergency Gear

So why do we have emergency dive gear? A couple of reasons:

- First and foremost it is required for a Standby Diver to have gear readily available for use. Some Standby's will naturally have gear as they are part of the normal dive shift. End of the day you might have already put it away though.
- A secondary reason for the emergency dive gear is for rapid deployment in animal emergencies. A husbandry team member can run up to the tank and be ready to dive in only a couple of minutes.

This gear is to be checked every morning as part of the Emergency Checklist. Confirm main cylinder pressure and reserve air cylinder pressures. **Both should be above 2500psi.** If not, please swap the cylinders out. Leave both these tanks in the **OFF position & purged**, to prevent accidental diving in the OFF position during an emergency.

Every Friday all of this gear is swapped out. **Please do not randomly change this gear out.** It is meant to have a Spare Mask, Medium BCD, Medium Fins, and a 12lbs Weightbelt. Essentially gear that fits Arnold the Senior Biologist, who would be the most likely Husbandry member to respond to an animal Emergency. In addition, most members on our Team should be able to squeeze into or cinch down a Medium over themselves.

Birex Disinfect Spray



The regulator disinfect we use is called Birex. It is a dental grade disinfect meant to be used around the face and mouth. This is a very safe disinfect when used correctly. The biggest issue we have ever seen is prolonged exposure of Birex to the microphones in the FFM can cause damage. Thus the need to rinse with freshwater after 10 minutes.

Another fact about Birex is that it has a two week shelf life. Two members of our Wednesday Shift (Amy F. and now Al B.) have been the ones keeping up with this protocol and swapping out as needed. Please let the Dive Office know if there is any issue, before trying to make some yourself.

GOT News

Animal-Diver Swim Patterns

Our animals are growing, especially our 2 Sandtigers. We'd like to remind everyone that animals take precedence in swim patterns over Divers.

Most of our fish are pretty agile and nonchalant with divers being in the way. Sharks & the Eel on the other hand may get agitated with diver's blocking their swim patterns. There is also the possibility of a diver scrapping themselves on a shark's open mouth if they bump head on.

Caretta is another animal Diver's should yield to. With her, its unintended enrichment and she is more likely to playfully mouth a diver if you put yourself in her way.



As Divers, we are the guests in the GOT. As such please always be aware of your surroundings and yield to any shark, eel, or turtle's swim path.

Please also keep in mind that animal agitation can stack day to day. What encounter you might easily get away with unscathed, can affect the following shift.

As a general guideline, but not all encompassing:

- Do not puff yourself up and try to intimidate or challenge any animals; that is asking for a bite
- Do not force your position making an animal deviate around you; that can stress or agitate an animal
 - o This is often unintentional on a diver's part, simply due to being unaware.
 - So Safety Divers, be on the lookout and give feedback to your Team
 - o If you cause an animal to about-face or take a sharp turn away from you, reconsider your working space and movements. You may want to shift to a different location.
- Divers should always be the one to yield. We can always clean an area the next dive or next day.

Food Prep Change

Please Review the Food Prep Sheet, we have made some changes to amount and type.

We will no longer be putting krill into Broadcast & Back Buckets. In addition we will be using a mix of both Peruvian & Lake Smelt on certain days.

GOT Towel Use



The Dive Office asks for your help with our Towel use. If a towel becomes overly soiled that is no longer cleans the GOT public windows, please place it in the hamper bin located below the Food Prep counter, near the blue recycle bin.

Recently, used and unused Towels have been mixed in the same pile, making it hard for us to tell which ones need to be replaced or refreshed. Often this becomes a problem when we find out day of that all Towels are too soiled to wipe anything.

To help stay organized, please keep used and unused towels separated from each other, so Dive Ops can take stock and help you all replace soiled towels with new ones. Unused towels will be stored folded on the white shelf near the Rinse Station.

And for reference, the Tanks do not need to be dried with a Towel; the towel is meant to dry your hands. We greatly appreciate the effort though!

This is the more important point for this topic:

If we are out of Towels to use, do not commandeer any microfiber towels from downstairs or from our Environmental Services. We specifically use these green "hucks" surgeon towels because they are reserved for Husbandry. Using any other Towel is a custodial towel and has a lot of chemicals embedded in their fibers. We do not want these towels to enter the hamper and rotate in Husbandry for animal health reasons.

Aquarium News

Shark Week – Aug 6th – Aug 13th

We will be hosting our own Shark Week theme in the Aquarium in August. As per usual there will be a Shark Week themed Dive Show. We are still waiting to get a draft from Education and will forward it to everyone when it is finalized.

Bricks Alive Exhibit – Opening Aug 19th

BricksALIVE



Our next upcoming Exhibit will be BricksALIVE. We will have 12 life-sized statues made out of LEGO® bricks. All our statues are being built in house and will total a 5 month process by the time we open. Heading the "construction" are Nigel Bowers (Exhibit Designer) & Jon Ivey (Exhibit Specialist).

LEGO® is not a sponsor or affiliated with this exhibit. For more info, such as what animals will be showcased, go to: <http://www.scaquarium.org/bricksalive/>

Fun Facts

Blue Hippo Tangs – *Paracanthurus hepatus* – AKA Dory

In celebration to “Finding Dory” coming out in theaters, let’s talk about some fun facts about the Blue Hippo Tang. Sometimes nicknamed Regal Tang, Blue Tang, or Hippo Tang, these fish are rated of Least Concern by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) currently.

Blue Tangs:

- Native Distribution is in Indo Pacific reefs
- Can reach up to 1ft in length
- Are pelagic spawners (eggs get released and float in the water column until hatching)
- (72F-78F) Tropical temp fish
- (8-20 year) Lifespan in captivity
- Wild populations feed mainly on zooplankton and occasionally grazes on algae.

There is worry that “Finding Dory” will spur home aquarium demand for the Blue Tang which could hurt their wild populations. This would be similar to what happened with Clownfish demand after “Finding Nemo” premiered.

Salt Water Aquariums are considered more advance than Freshwater for the hobbyist home aquarium. They are more expensive, require more maintenance, often more expensive food, and require a considerably higher attention to water quality & filtration.

In addition that Blue Hippo Tang is not recommended for beginner home aquariums. They require a fairly large tank for their full grown size and are notoriously susceptible to disease and parasites. Also unlike the Clownfish, which has been breed very successfully in captivity, Blue Hippo Tangs still haven’t had that success, which means every single individual must be wild caught.

If guests ask, a good message would be that “Dory fish” are not a good choice for someone starting out with their first aquarium. A better choice would be to start with a freshwater betta fish or a goldfish, as they are hardier and will ease a new hobby aquarist into a more gradual learning curve.

Message from the Dive Office

Hey Team,

Thank you as always for the great job you do. The addition of the 3rd Dive Show makes things are a bit busier. Sorry for the shorter lunches and less nap time. We really appreciate the help on the extended hour’s events as well. This has been a popular new promotion we are trying and the two extra dive shows help support this.

We hope everyone has a great summer!

- Dive Ops

Dive Office

South Carolina Aquarium

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