

Interesting news

Featured in "Undercurrent" (www.undercurrent.org) July / August 2021.

Regulator Servicing Tips. After a long lay-off, you may be surprised to find your regulator, while working perfectly when you last used it, now needs servicing. That's because the valve seat of the first stage can become engraved by its valve poppet while it's not being used. However, after you have it serviced, like anything highly tuned, it may still need time for the internal O-rings to bed in and then need further readjustment of its interstage pressure setting. If you can, check your recently serviced regulator by using it in a pool or on a local dive before traveling.

Going to the Galapagos? Good news. From July 1, PCR tests are no longer mandatory for fully vaccinated visitors who can prove their final dose was at least 14 days before their arrival in the islands. Travelers who do not meet this criterion can still enter the Galapagos provided they can show proof of a negative PCR test or rapid antigen test within 72 hours of traveling. *Andean Travel Co.*

Goodbye to Coral Reefs? In a recent study of underwater ecosystems, researchers at the University of Hawaii Manoa made the grim prediction that in a worst-case scenario, coral reefs might be extinct within 30 years if steps aren't taken immediately to mitigate climate change and elevated sea temperatures. Their study showed these ecosystems are among the most threatened by global climate change. *Hawaii News Now*

COVID is Surging in Indonesia. News reports from the archipelago on July 5 tell of a nationwide shortage of oxygen to treat sufferers. Hospitals have almost exhausted supplies, with one reporting that 63 patients died as a result. Indonesia has had the worst outbreak in South East Asia, with around 2.3 million cases. A lockdown was announced for the main island of Java. Meanwhile, Bali is in lockdown again, and no foreign visitors are allowed to enter. *BBC*

Freediving and Scuba May Enhance the Side Effects of the Vaccine. Diver Alert Network (DAN) reminds us that divers should keep out of the water about seven days after receiving the COVID vaccination and keep that in mind when it's time for your booster. Mild side effects are common in the first three days, and these can include a sore arm, red at the injection site, fever/chills, headache, fatigue, muscle aches, or nausea, which may be enhanced by increased ambient pressure. As for the side effects, not to worry; they simply indicate your body is building an immune response (called 'reactogenicity').

Only Your Computer Counts: Recently, we've received too many reports of divers depending on a guide's computer to finish their dive. It doesn't work that way. Your computer keeps YOU safe from the bends by monitoring YOUR time and YOUR depth to compute, through its algorithm, YOUR safe ascent time. You need to be fully versed in what the data on the screen tells you. Different computers use different algorithms and give different results, some more liberal than others. The only computer that is accurate for your dive is the one YOU carry. No other diver has the same dive profile you had (or, most likely, the same algorithm). If you wish to carry a backup computer, make it identical to your primary computer.

Using the Wrong Sunscreen Can Cost. Thailand has just banned the use of sunscreens that damage coral, joining Palau and Hawaii. You may think that's a drop in the ocean regarding the ecological damage we're doing to the planet, but you may be more concerned with the damage to your bank balance if you are caught flouting the rule: Fines in Thailand approach \$3000. The banned lotions are those containing oxybenzone, octinoxate, 4-methylbenzylidene camphor or butylparaben. *BBC*