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DEMA Report
Antibes Winners

Honduras
Roatan's Dolphins

Himalaya
The Highest Dive

The Philippines
El Dorado

Norway
Orca Safari

Coral Reef
Diving
Etiquette

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PHOTO BY NONOY TAN. Lion fish, Philippines.

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Sir David... Thanks!

by Peter Symes



Recently, I tuned in to a late evening show of the always excellent Parkinson on the BBC. This elegant talkshow host always manages in his interviews to raise the talk well over and above the trivial, and he does so with the ease and quiet naturalness of a true maestro. It is always relevant, and always enjoyable.

On the evening in question Sir David Attenborough was in the chair opposite him, as his third guest, I no longer remember who the other two were, for it was David Attenborough who stole the show and left the greatest impression.

Among other things the occasion was the 50 year anniversary of David Attenborough's production of Zoo Quest in 1954. For fifty years - half of a century! - he has captivated and enthralled viewers as he has puffed his way up high

mountain sides, crawled around on smoking volcanoes and dived down to the oceans' depths in order to be able to point out yet another fascinating creature and initiate us into another of nature's ingenious and strange wonders.

He is now 76, but looks like only fifty, or perhaps a little more, and still has a seven-year-old's insatiable curiosity, energy and inquisitiveness. "Pension?" For once, Parkinson's question dumbfounds David Attenborough for a moment or two before he regains his usual energetic self.

He had much too much to do, and he loved what he did. I don't doubt it. He is gripped by his fascination and it fills him with life and energy.

In that way I find that I can learn much from David Attenborough. Not just of nature,

about which he is so good at communicating, but also about how he does what he is so good at, and stands for. For he is also a fine role-model for how we can both understand and experience

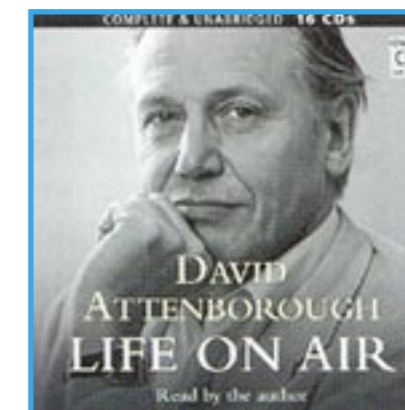


PHOTO: NONOY TAN. Territorial combat between two wrasses. Philippines.



editorial

nature on a deeper plane and enjoy its beauty. He is also an example of how we can involve it and let it play a much larger role in our lives, without it necessarily meaning that we must turn our backs on our lives in a modern society. Which, incidentally, would be a totally unrealistic and thereby unusable real politic if this world is to be saved for future generations.

And before we go further in that direction, it is also obvious that his experiences and insight are so invigorating – so perhaps there's also something to be learned here too. Drop the cigarettes and live longer! On with the diving equipment, live even longer and enjoy yourself in the process.

OK! It's not all fun.

But as David Attenborough so rightly pointed out when the interview turned to all the current threats to nature, from global warming, El Nino and George Bush, all the information and attention does have some use. He stated, among other things, that the threatened mountain gorillas had received so much attention from the 1970's and onwards that they had in fact increased in numbers but that their habitat was still decreasing. Our attention does, therefore, make a difference wherever we choose to focus it.

Our abilities to experience and observe, to understand and communicate, therefore play a decisive role for us, both as individuals and as a species. That's all very well, but let us now come down to earth and give these ideas a concrete content. It means, for example, that it is important that we travel for the sake of the experiences, and that it is very important that we understand what it is that we are experi-

encing and seeing on our travels. (And please, for the sake of the enjoyment and relaxation, try to do both – not to enjoy it would be a horrible mistake). It also means that it is important to take a stand as to how we travel and why we do it. For example, can the fact that we choose to travel to observe manta rays help to protect them? Not only here and now, because their worth in tourist valuta just happens to be more than a thousand times the value of their worth as meat, but also in the long run. Because when relations to these natural resources change, human systems are forced to change too. And that will be the best guarantee for the survival of these species in the long run.

That means, that we must choose the right form for ecotourism, that which is not just an attached smart marketing label for ordinary commercial profit. Not only because we will thereby become engaged witnesses and therefore be guarantors for the continued existence of these species, but because we will also come to value them - not just in the usual emotional meaning of the word – but also in a literal macro-economic way. For nature, that cheap lady, suddenly becomes worth a lot of hard cash, and the ubiquitous economic marketing forces will change to her advantage, so that the coral reefs will be preserved instead of being cleared to give place to yet another shopping mall with a seaview.

But it requires that we feel that it is something to do with us, that we have a point of view, and that we air it. And a good place to start the whole long but luckily enjoyable educational journey is in the world's biggest classroom – the Oceans. Do like Sir David. Go out into the world with an open mind and with open eyes. That is your best hope. It is our best hope.

See you out there.



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MOHAMMED BIN RASHID AL MAKTOUM**

**DIVE MIDDLE EAST EXHIBITION
(DMEX) 2005**

**TUESDAY 10TH – WEDNESDAY 11TH MAY, 2005
AT THE MADINAT CONVENTION CENTRE,
DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

Open to qualified industry professionals and dive enthusiasts, DMEX 2005 is an event produced by the Emirates Diving Association (EDA), and managed on its behalf by NettResults Integrated Marketing.

DMEX 2005 Exhibition aims to be the largest trade, commercial and dive enthusiast event in the world. It will offer the most comprehensive international marketplace for the diving industry, giving companies the opportunity to showcase and demonstrate products and services to businesses and individuals interested in all diving products, services and holidays. DMEX will promote all aspects of diving in the region and present Dubai as a hub for the industry, a platform where business gets done.

Why Dubai?

When it comes to a hub for diving, Dubai offers the perfect environment. As a central hub for commerce in the region, reaching over 2 billion people, and a few hours from legendary dive sites such as the Red Sea, The Maldives and The Seychelles, it is possible that DMEX is closer than any other industry event to eight out of the top ten dive sites around the world. Dubai's history started with pearl divers and today offers some of the best tourist locations resorts, many of which offer diving packages. Recent world-class off-shore development projects such as Palm Island, The World and Hydropolis (the underwater hotel) have raised environmental issues to the front. Synonymous with the oil and gas industry and thus commercial divers - Dubai is simply the diving hub.

Getting to and staying in Dubai

Dubai's award winning carrier Emirates Airlines has direct flights from America, Europe, Africa and Asia. No where is easier to get to. Once you are in Dubai there are some of the world's leading hotels to choose from. DMEX is making this easier still by offering an accommodation office to offer the best rates at a variety of hotels that are either walking distance to DMEX 2005 or will offer dedicated transport for you free of charge.



Madinat Convention Centre opened in late 2004 and is one of the most versatile locations in Dubai with state of the art facilities. This is no sterile exhibition hall, but a stunning village of conference facilities, hotels, a souk, countless food and beverage outlets - all connected by Arabic waterways. What could be more ideal for a diving exhibition?

Madinat Convention Centre
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
+971 4 366 8888

www.dmex2005.com

Close encounters of the dolphin kind

Roatan's Dolphins

Text and photos: Bill Becher

I slap my hands on the water and two bottlenose dolphins swim toward me, propelled by a few flicks of their tails. The 400-pound creatures push hard on my feet with their noses and skim me across the surface of the warm Caribbean lagoon.

My two-dolphin-power E-ticket ride is at Anthony's Key Resort on the island of Roatan off the coast of Honduras.

This tropical playground, well known to scuba divers, is also home to the Roatan Institute of Marine Science. Here you can touch, swim, snorkel and scuba dive with dolphins and even be a "dolphin trainer for a day."

A dolphin trainer's day starts with preparing food. You help sort the restaurant-grade frozen fish, picking out damaged fish that might harbor bacteria.

Snorkelers get a close-up encounter with a dolphin at Anthony's Key Resort.





Roatan's Dolphins

Trainers carry small coolers of fish marked with each dolphin's name out to the large pens in the lagoon rimmed with wooden catwalks. It's a pretty setting with no concrete in sight. We sit on a floating platform and get acquainted with the dolphins.

Biologist Teri Bolton and her husband run the dolphin program. She invites us to pet a dolphin --- they like strokes. Their skin is smooth and tight, like an inflated inner tube.

Dolphins aren't fish, they are air-breathing sea mammals. They are also curious, playful and intelligent. If humans lived in the ocean dolphins would be our golden retrievers, except smarter --- you wouldn't find a dolphin drinking out of a toilet.



Some dolphin trainers take their work very seriously.

Finding your inner dolphin

After watching the trainers interact with the dolphins and learning about their habits and likes and dislikes



LEFT & RIGHT BOTTOM: Swimmers get a close-up encounter with a dolphin at Anthony's Key Resort.





Dolphin trainer for a day gets a kiss from a dolphin.

Roatan's Dolphins



Dolphin trainer for a day commands a dolphin to jump by raising her right arm.

you head back to the fish house to prepare another meal. Then it's time to learn the hand signals trainers use to communicate with the dolphins.

We sit with feet dangling in the water. Two male dolphins swim up --- Esteban and Paya. They're out of their pens in the open ocean. They seem to enjoy what they do. If they didn't they could just keep swimming to Jamaica.

The dolphins pop their heads out of the water. Bolton tells us to raise one arm quickly. The dolphins swim away and then leap into the air repeatedly until you lower your arm. Then they come back for a fishy reward that they swallow whole.

Hold your hand in the water and the dolphin places his nose on it. Tap on his side with your other hand and the dolphin takes off in a circular speed run. Lift both

Did you know that dolphins are so intelligent that within only a few weeks of captivity, they can train Americans to stand at the very edge of the pool and throw them fish? -- Unknown

hands and push and the dolphin tail-walks. Wag your fingers and the dolphin talks in clicks. Rotate the fingers and they pirouette in the water. By this time I confuse the signals and Paya spins when he's supposed to talk. I spin my fingers.

"No, the dolphin's training you," says Bolton, laughing. Apparently one of the qualities a trainer needs is to be smarter than the

dolphin. Enthusiasm and curiosity helps too.

"Anyone can walk out there with a bucket," says Bolton. "But the interesting part is wanting to see what tickles that animal and forming a relationship."

After the hand-signal session we don wet suits and masks and get in the water. The dolphins swim out, we grab their dorsal fins, and they tow us back to the dock. Then it's time for the dolphin-powered body





Scuba divers get a close-up encounter with a free-swimming dolphin at Anthony's Key Resort.

Roatan's Dolphins

surfing grand finale.

If training a dolphin isn't enough you can also scuba dive with them.

Kneeling on the sandy bottom the dolphins materialize, swooping around the divers then scratching their backs on a sponge. A dolphin swims by, streaming bubbles from his blowhole. Then they do a series of jumps, seen from underwater it's like a mirror image of the above water show.

Anthony's Key

For scuba divers at Anthony's Key there are also reef dives, wall dives, wreck dives, shark dives, night dives and beach dives. Visibility is good, averaging from 50 to 100 feet in 80-degree (F) water. Most dives are a short boat ride away,

and nitrox 32 is available for nitrox certified divers.

Anthony's Key is a PADI Gold Palm 5-Star Instructor Development Center and is ranked as one of the top dive resorts in the world. The ten dive boats are all modern 42 and 48-foot craft.

There is an on-site recompression chamber and staff physician, photo shop, dive equipment rentals, and a PADI continuing educational program that offers resort courses.

If three daily dives and two-a-week night dives aren't enough and your residual nitrogen allows, there is extensive shore diving available.

Two wrecks invite exploration: the El Aquila, a 230-foot double-deck cargo vessel sunk in 1997. This intermediate to advanced dive is a two-minute boat ride from the resort. The "El Aquila"

join in the passion

Photograph



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or "The Eagle" ran cargo between Puerto Cortes, Honduras and San Andres Island. This freighter originally sank 8 years ago around the Utila Keys, Bay Islands, Honduras. It was recently salvaged and brought to Roatan by Anthony's Key Resort. The ship is intact and is resting perfectly upright on a sandy bottom in approximately 100' of water.

The Odyssey is a 300-foot multi-level ship sunk in 2002. Dive depths are from 40 to 120 feet on the north coast of Roatan, a 12-minute boat ride away.

For divers and non-divers there is snorkeling, kayaking, jungle canopy tours, horseback riding, and my favorite, swinging in a hammock in the gentle ocean breeze and listening to the sound of the surf pounding on the reef.

Picture Perfect

The setting here could have been designed by a post-card photographer. The majority of rooms are on the beach at Anthony's Key, a 30-second boat ride away. The Key is also the site of the Monday night crab races, limbo contest and beach barbeque.

Most of the resort is built out of wood, giving it a simple, rustic feel. The dining room and bar are located up a flight of wooden steps like a giant tree house in the jungle overlooking the lagoon.

It is of interest to note that while some dolphins are reported to have learned English - up to fifty words used in correct context - no human being has been reported to have learned dolphinese.

-- Carl Sagan

Brent Howell from Seattle has been coming here for 15 years and is conflicted. "I'd like to tell people about Roatan and I'm afraid to tell people about it. It's a secret I don't want to share."

Bill Becher can be reached at billbecher@yahoo.com.

IF YOU GO

Several US carriers and Sol Air offer flights to Roatan via Miami or Houston.

Anthony's Key Resort offers dive and non-dive packages including seven nights accommodations, three meals a day, air tanks, weight belts and weights, three single tank boat dives per day and two single tank night boat dives starting at \$599. Scuba instruction and certification is available, as is try scuba resort course. Dolphin trainer for a day costs \$160 for guests.

For more information about Anthony's Key, go to www.anthonyskey.com or call (800) 227-3483. ■



Scuba divers get a close-up encounter with a free-swimming dolphin at Anthony's Key Resort.



feature

Roatan's Dolphins



Beautiful sunsets at Anthony's Key, a scuba dive and adventure travel resort on Roatan Island in Honduras.



fact file



Honduras



Map of Honduras

History: Honduras became independent of Spain's vast empire in 1821. A freely elected civilian government came to power in 1982, after 25 years of military rule. However, Honduras became a haven for anti-Sandinista contras fighting the Marxist Nicaraguan Government and an ally to Salvadoran Government forces fighting against leftist guerrillas during the 1980s. In 1998, the country was devastated by Hurricane Mitch, which killed 5,600 people and caused \$2 billion in damage.

Government:

democratic constitutional republic

Capital: Tegucigalpa

Currency: lempira (HNL) Exchange rates: lempiras per US dollar - 17.3453

Languages:

Spanish, Amerindian dialects

Climate: subtropical in lowlands, temperate in mountains

Geography: Central America, bordering the Caribbean Sea, between Guatemala and Nicaragua and bordering the Gulf of Fonseca (North Pacific Ocean), between El Salvador and Nicaragua; Terrain: mountains in the interior, narrow coastal plains, has a short Pacific coast but a long Caribbean shoreline, including the uninhabited eastern Mosquito Coast, Elevation extremes: lowest point:

Caribbean Sea 0 m; highest point: Cerro Las Minas 2,870 m; Coastline: 820 km, Natural hazards: frequent but mild earthquakes; hurricanes and floods along the Caribbean coast; Agriculture: bananas, coffee, citrus; beef; timber; shrimp; Industries: sugar, coffee, textiles, clothing, wood products

Environment issues: urban spawl; deforestation from logging and clearing; land degradation, soil erosion, farming of marginal lands; mining activities cause heavy metal polluting of fresh water sources.

Population:

6,823,568 High mortality due to AIDS cause lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality, higher death rates, lower popu-

lation and growth rates; Below poverty line: 53%; Ethnic groups: Mestizo 90%, Amerindian 7%, Black 2%, White 1%; Religions: Roman Catholic 97%, Protestant minority

Medical/Deco chambers:

Cornerstone Decompression Chambers and Clinic at Anthony's Key Resort in Sandy Bay tel. 455 1049 / 445 1003. Fantasy Island at French Key. Woods Medical Center 24 hour service Tel. (504) 445-1080.

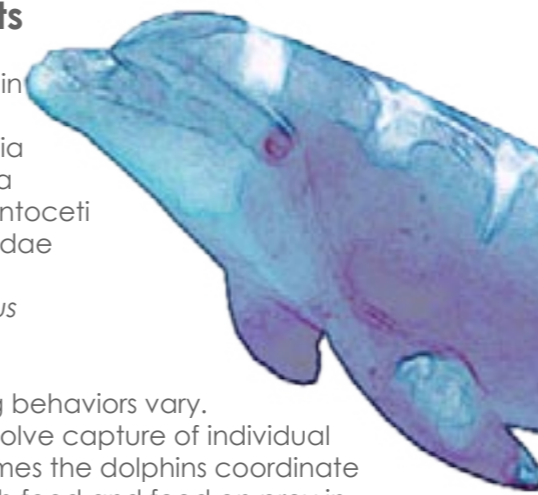
Dive Travel:

Anthony's Key Resort www.anthonyskey.com Bahia Tours Email: akr@anthonyskey.com 800-227-3483 or 954-929-0090

Dolphin Facts

Bottlenose Dolphin

CLASS: Mammalia
ORDER: Cetacea
SUBORDER: Odontoceti
FAMILY: Delphinidae
GENUS: Tursiops
SPECIES: *truncatus*



FEEDING

Dolphins' feeding behaviors vary. They primarily involve capture of individual prey, but sometimes the dolphins coordinate together to catch food and feed on prey in association with human fishing as well as chasing fish onto mudbanks. Dolphins eat several pounds of fishes, squid and crustaceans per day.

MATING & BREEDING

Calving takes place year-round. Nursing continues until calves reach 12-18 months. The calves stay with their mothers for 3-6 years to learn how to catch prey and other tasks important to dolphin survival and society. Male dolphins reach maturity at 10 years old and female dolphins reach maturity between 5 and 10 years of age. Gestation for dolphins one year.

Did you know that:

There is a dark side to dolphins? They can become aggressive, sometimes brutal. Dominant members in a pod of dolphins are known to push around weaker dolphins.

A dolphin can see as well underwater as above it thanks to a very sensitive retina that gathers light very efficiently.

In relation to the size of the body, the dolphin's brain is larger than the brains of great apes and chimpanzees.

In a single day, an adult dolphin can consume as much as 30 pounds of fish or more.

Even though the dolphin has 100 teeth in its mouth, the dolphin swallows fish whole. Dolphins use their teeth to catch and grasp their prey.

Dolphins can jump out of the water as high as 20 feet.

The killer whale is the largest member of the dolphin family. It can grow up to 30 feet long.

Like human skin, a dolphin's skin is very delicate and can be easily injured by rough surfaces.

The boto is the largest of the freshwater dolphins. It lives in the Amazon and can grow up to 10 feet long.

SOURCE: www.acsonline.org; www.animalplanet.com

Dolphins Diving Dining & Dancing...

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Himalayan Heaven

Diving high altitude lakes of Nepal

text by Andrey Bizyukin
photos by Miriam ?

No One Else Will Ever Dive
Higher or Report on this Unknown
Expedition.

Underwater Himalayas – these words, while absurd at first glance, began to make sense in 1999 when Andrei Andryushin (NAUI dive instructor) together with his friend and adventure companion, Denis Bakin, have been traveling in the area of Anapurna, one of Nepal's eight-thousand-meter mountain peaks. At one of the passes, a sherpa guide told Andrei that not far from their route lay Tilicho, the the highest mountain lake in the world.

*That's one small step for
man, one giant leap for
mankind.*
-- Neil Armstrong

Tents are dwarfed by the Himalayan mountain peaks surrounding Tilicho, the highest mountain lake in the world.



Andrei Andryushin takes a break on the trail up the mountain side.

Himalaya



Steep mountain passes make the trek up to Lake Tilicho difficult and treacherous.

Different sources positioned the lake at an altitude varying from 4,960 to 5,200m above sea level and described its size as 4 by 1.5 km across. Asking the locals and guides about the lake as well as subsequent internet search confirmed that no person had ever dared to dive in the lake.

The Big Idea

As it usually is with decisive people, the path from an idea to its practical realization was not long. Upon his return to Moscow, Andrei met with Vadim Belenikin, president of Sprout Dive Club,

and made a presentation of his idea – to set an unbeatable world record by making a dive in the highest mountain lake in the world. Vadim strongly supported the idea.

Soon the following group of enthusiasts started working on the project: Andrei Andryushin, Denis Bakin, Vadim Belenikin, Maxim Gresko, Pavel Ruslanov, Guennadi Slobodanyuk, Dmitri Friedman and Svetlana Chistyakova.

To everyone's disappointment, the representative office of the *Guinness Book of Records* turned down the request to register the record since their

representative could not participate in the expedition personally. But neither this nor the lack of sponsors and high cost of the expedition could stop the enthusiasts in their determination to set a new world diving record.

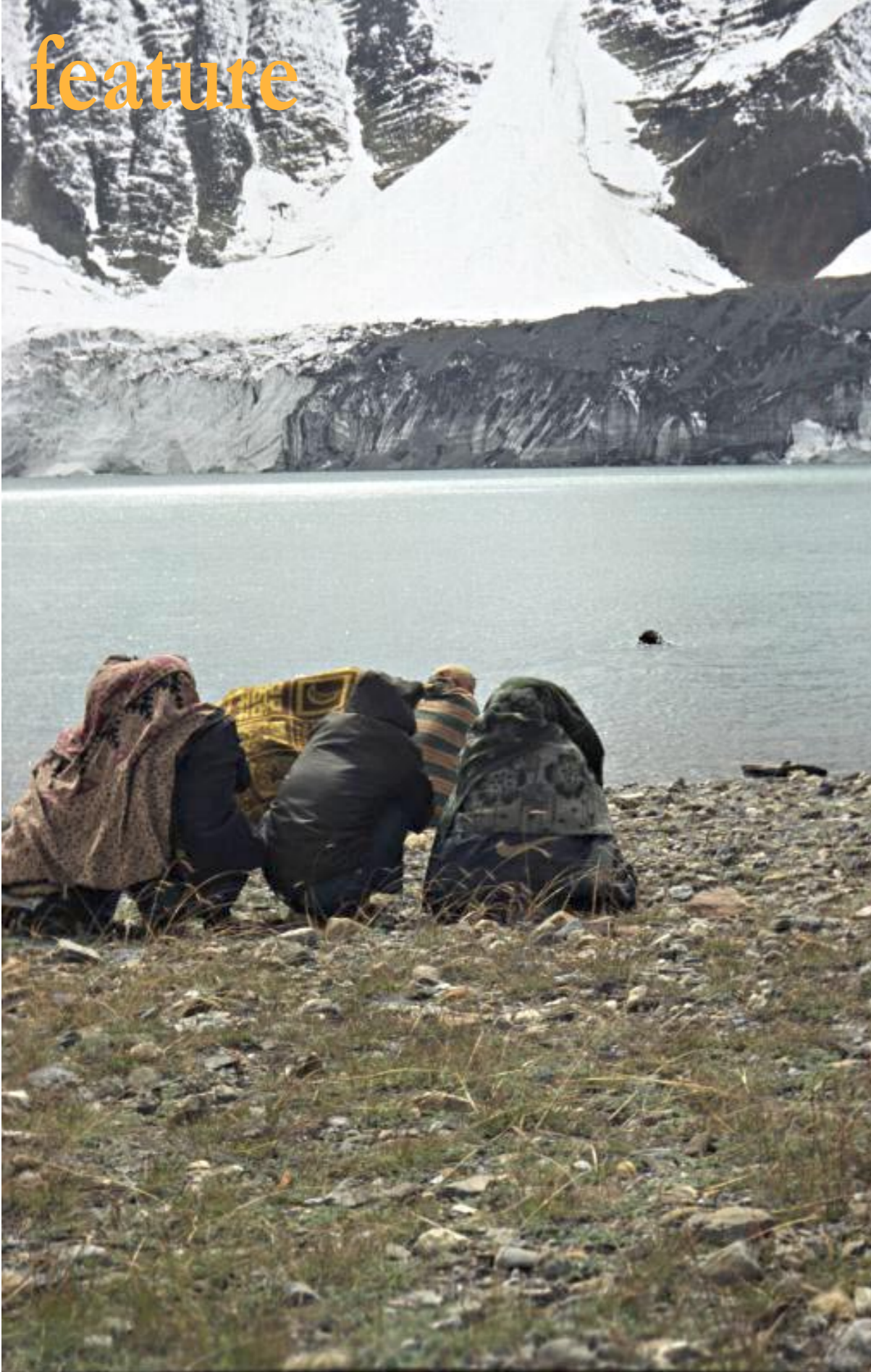
In pursuit of their dream, the adventurers decided to finance the expedition with their own personal funds. All logistics issues were handed over to the Himalayan Club, whose president, Sergei Vertelov, decided to join the expedition personally.





A breathtaking view of the Himalayan mountains from the trail.





Members of the team huddle together on the shore as a diver submerges.



View from inside a tent overlooking the sparkling surface of Lake Tilicho.

Challenges

The task to bring over half a ton of equipment, including a compressor, and a group of divers to a remote region of Nepal located at the same altitude of that of the peak of Elbrus, looked complicated by any standard. Another problem was the absence of proven tables that would allow divers to calculate maximum duration and depth of a dive at such an altitude.

On top of that, urgent evacuation in

case of trouble was impossible, and the group could not get information on the availability of a single pressure chamber in Nepal. It's a well-known rule that air travel should be avoided for some period after diving. But the atmospheric pressure at the altitude of the lake of Tilicho is 0.5 bar, which is much less than in a cabin of any commercial airplane. After some approximate calculations, it was decided that the dive depth should be limited to 25m with a maxi-

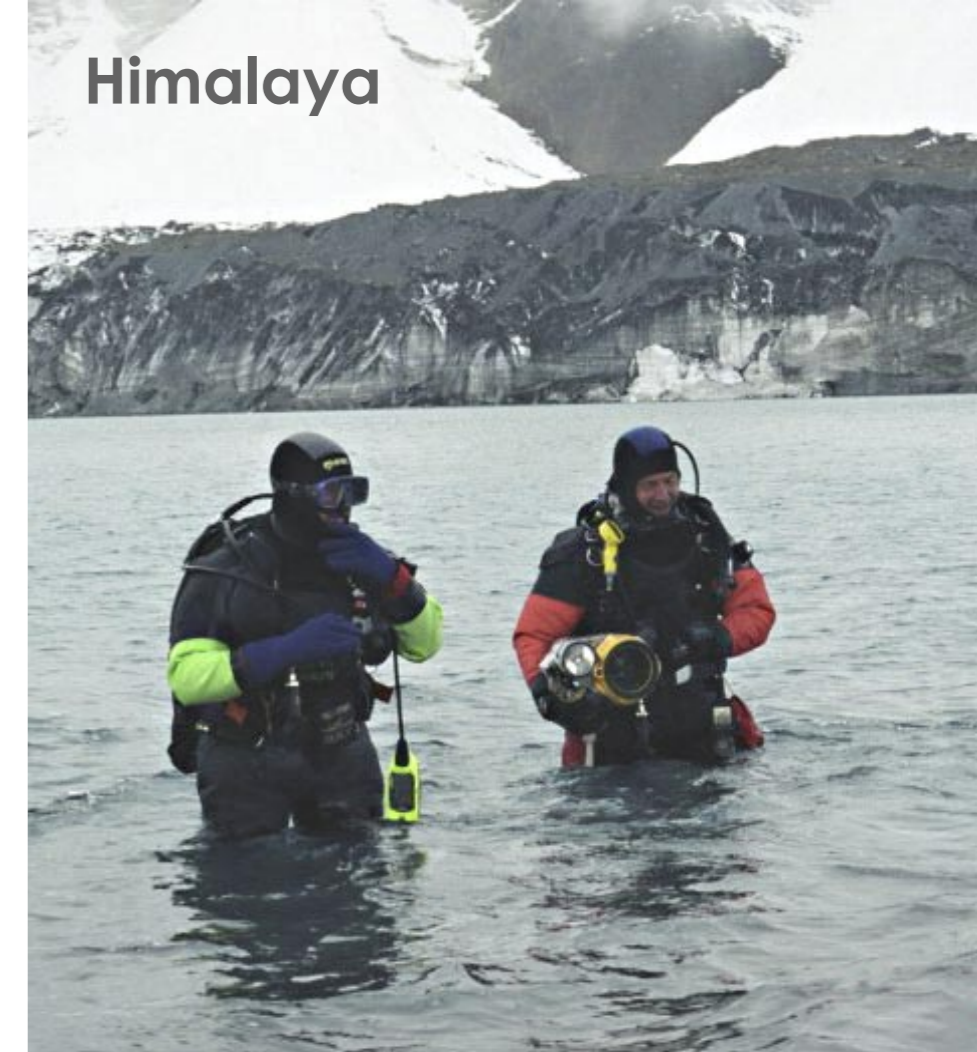
mum exposure of one minute.

Then, there was the flight to Katmandu, a transfer to a run-down local carrier, a flight to Manang — a village claiming to have the highest dirt airstrip in the world (3550m above the sea level), a two-day stopover for acclimatization, a check dive in a local lake and getting a blessing from a local lama, followed by an exhausting two-day climb to Tilicho.





Andrei and the team members prepare for the record setting dive and help each other suit up. High altitudes make any task much harder to accomplish.



Himalaya

Tilicho

On September 23th, 2000, the expedition reached the lake. Tilicho astounded everyone with its pristine beauty. The lake was absolute cyan in color. On the lake surface, huge pieces of ice were floating, sparkling in the cold rays of the sun. Later, it became clear that the ice was brought to the lake by avalanches, which rushed several times a day down the glacier covering the western slope of the mountain.

The camp was set up on the shore opposite to the glacier. At the water's edge, our GPS (global positioning system) was showing an altitude of 5,000m. Due to insufficient acclimatization period, most of the group members were suffering from different symptoms of altitude sickness

(headache, nausea, etc). It was then decided to follow the initial plan and begin diving the next day.

Sunny weather that everybody enjoyed during the day was replaced by snow, strong winds and temperatures at minus 10°C during the night.

In the morning, with the help of an inflatable boat and an echo sounder, the first depth measurements were taken. The measurements showed that a narrow shallow band by the water's edge near the camp sloped abruptly into a sharp rocky incline that was much deeper than what the echo sounder could measure (max. 75m). In addition, strange formations resembling seaweeds were found at the depth of 50m.



Divers use echo sound equipment to measure the depths of the lake.





Himalaya



Strong winds , whipping snow and extreme temperatures make for a very tough night on the shores of Lake Tilicho.



Team members rest on the shore of Lake Tilicho which sits at an altitude of 5000m.

A diver checks his gear in the shore dive.

feature

Remote and pristine, Lake Tilicho is the highest mountain lake in the world.

Preparations

With a lot of effort, a Colty Sub compressor managed to fill the air tanks up to 100 bars. But the weather started getting bad again, so the first dive was made from the shore near the camp. This dive, even though a shallow one at 10m, plus exposure to extreme temperatures during the following night, exhausted the team. The night was very cold and gusts of wind and snow tore out two tents.

On the morning of September 25th, Andrei was still willing to accomplish the goals of the initial plan. Together with Denis Bakin, Maxim Gresko and the sherpas loaded with diving equipment, he went over to the northern shore of the lake where the profile of the slope and shoreline would allow them to make the record dive.

Any movement at such altitude can make a person short of breath. It causes suffocation and requires time to regain normal breathing.

Two kilometers north of the camp, they chose a place with convenient access to the water. Friends helped Andrei to put on his gear, and then he went underwater. "I was moving down along a rocky slope. It was quite dark under the water. Visibility was no more that 1m. The water temperature at the surface was 6°C. My wrist computer switched over to dive mode as I reached the depth of 5m. That's when it indicated zero depth," said Andrei.

"I went down to 21m according to computer. The water temperature there was 3°C. The rocky slope kept going down, but I turned around and started going up to the



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TDI SDI ERDI PADI CMAS

Himalaya



surface following the slope profile. It was important to go back to where I started from under the water, because swimming on the surface in full diving gear at the altitude of Elbrus peak requires inhuman effort. My dive lasted for 10 to 15 minutes and brought no surprises. Afterwards, I felt great satisfaction that I reached my goal, and I experienced a rush of energy, probably thanks to breathing oxygen-rich air from the tank. I did not discover any forms of underwater life, but this came neither as a disappointment nor as something unexpected. But the most important thing was what we did accomplish – no one will ever dive higher than we did," said Andrei.

On the same day, the group decided to take the road back. The world record had been set.

Breaking Records

The Russian team set the absolute record in high mountain diving. They are the first to accomplish a dive in the highest lake in the world. Of course, in setting out on this expedition, they staked a lot on pure luck. But luck favors only those who dare.



ABOVE: The Russian flag keeps vigil at a campsite dusted with snow in the early morning hours.

PHYSICAL RISKS IN HIGH ALTITUDE DIVING

Training in high altitude diving procedures is essential for safety in diving at altitude.

There are normal physiologic changes that occur in all individuals who adventure to high altitudes:

- Hyperventilation (breathing fast)
- Shortness of breath during exertion
- Increased urination
- Night time changes in breathing pattern
- Awakening frequently at night
- Weird dreams

HOW TO RECOGNIZE ACUTE MOUNTAIN ILLNESS (AMS):

Within the time period of a recent ascent to high altitudes above 2500 m (8000 feet), a headache, with one or more of the symptoms listed below qualifies an individual for the diagnosis of AMS:

- Loss of appetite, nausea, or vomiting
- Fatigue or weakness
- Dizziness or light-headedness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Confusion
- Staggering gait

Many people wrongly believe that a headache at altitude is "normal" when it is really a symptom of AMS. One must be willing to admit that one has altitude illness.

According to the High Altitude Medicine Guide by Thomas E. Dietz, MD Emergency & Wilderness Medicine, there are two rules to follow:

GOLDEN RULE #1

It is OK to get altitude illness. It is not OK to die from it.

GOLDEN RULE #2

Any illness at altitude is altitude illness until proven otherwise.

SOURCE:

www.high-altitude-medicine.com

As conventional sea level tables and calculators are inadequate for the needs of high altitude diving, special conversion tables are available through NAUI for diving at altitude.

www.naui.org

The majesty of the Himalayas is revealed as clouds lift from the lake. INSET: Divers make calculations for max depth and prepare for their dive.





Himalaya



Members of the Russian team pose for a documentary shot to mark the record setting occasion.



Afterthoughts

I recently asked Andrei, "Would you like to repeat that record dive after all these years?"

He replied, "Now, I think I would, but up there in the Himalayas, it was really tough. I think it's human nature to forget the hardships and remember only the good things such as a good team and the breathtaking beauty of the mountain lake." ■

Andrei Bizyukin, PhD., makes his home in Moscow, Russia, and reports on adventures high and low throughout the world. For more information, visit his website at:

www.homepage.mac.com/moscow

ABOVE: Andrei emerges from his record setting dive. RIGHT INSET: Author, Andrey Bizukin, salutes the team.



fact file



Nepal



History:

Monarchy in Nepal ended in 1951. A cabinet system of government was formed. Within the framework of a constitutional monarchy a multiparty democracy was established in 1990. In 1996, a Maoist insurgency was launched. It has gained power and threatens to bring down the regime. In 2001, the Crown Prince massacred the king and queen and eight other members of the royal family, then committed suicide. The new king dismissed the prime minister and his cabinet for "incompetence" In October 2002, after the group dissolved the parliament and obstructed the election process. Today, the country is governed by the king and his appointed cabinet. He has negotiated a cease-fire with the Maoist insurgents until elections can be held.

Geography:

Southern Asia, between China and India, Terrain: flat river plain (Terai) of the Ganges in south, central hill region, Himalayan mountains in the north, landlocked; strategic region between China and India; has eight of world's 10 highest peaks, including Mount Everest, Elevation extremes: lowest point: Kanchan Kalan 70 m, highest point: Mount Everest 8,850 m, Natural resources: quartz, water, timber, hydropower, scenic beauty, small deposits of lignite, copper, cobalt, iron ore, Agriculture: rice, corn,

wheat, sugarcane, root crops; milk, water buffalo meat, Industries: tourism, carpet, textile; small rice, jute, sugar, oilseed mills; cigarette; cement, brick production

Capital: Kathmandu

Currency: Nepalese rupees per US dollar - 72, per Euro - 89

Government: parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy

Economy: Nepal is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world with 42% of its population living below the poverty line. Agriculture: 80%. Security concerns after 11 September 2001 U.S. attack led to a decrease in tourism.

Environmental issues: deforestation; contaminated water; wildlife conservation; vehicular emissions.

Climate: North - cool summers and severe winters, South - subtropical summers and mild winters, Natural hazards: severe thunderstorms, flooding, landslides, drought, and famine due to timing, intensity, and duration of summer monsoons.

Population:

27,070,666, Below poverty line: 42%, Ethnic groups: Brahman, Chetri, Newar, Gurung, Magar, Tamang, Rai, Limbu, Sherpa, Tharu, Religions: only official Hindu state in the world - Hinduism 86.2%, Buddhism 7.8%, Islam 3.8%, other 2.2%

Languages: Nepali, English, 12 other languages, 30 dialects. 45% literacy rate.

Medical

Nepal International Clinic, Travel & Mountain Medicine Centre
GPO BOX 3596, Lal durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal.
tel. 977-1-4434642, 977-1-4435357.
www.nepalinternationalclinic.com

Himalayan Rescue Association has medical clinics at Pheriche and Manang, Dhobichaur, Lazimpat, P.O. Box No. 4944, Kathmandu, Nepal
www.himalayanrescue.com

Dive Travel

Nepal Tourism
www.nepal.com



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