



# FAIRFIELD COUNTY DIVING ASSOCIATION SURFACE INTERVAL

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## **The Presidents' Corner** by Matt Rownin

Wow, it's time to write another volume of the President's Corner. The time seems to just fly by but what becomes more difficult is thinking of something to write about, that you all want to read. Not an easy task....as I sit here drawing a complete blank.

Spring weather seems to be a little slow in starting up and we have had one local trip to Fort Wetherill scrubbed due to some high winds and rain, we will keep trying to get the local dive season kicked off. I was able to travel in April and do some blue water diving in St. Thomas for one trip of two dives, it was my first time there and really enjoyed it and will get back there again. Next time I will plan to stay on the island and experience it some more, this time we were on a cruise and only had the day there.

The FCDA does have some dive trips planned for the summer – the July Cape Ann trip is just around the corner. We are heading up there on July 10 and diving Thursday afternoon and Friday morning with Charter Boat 1 and camping at the Cape Ann Camp ground as usual. If you want to come up let me know, we may have a spot open on the boat.

We are also trying to get some dives on Bill Palmers boat, The Thunderfish, dates to be scheduled so stay tuned. Look

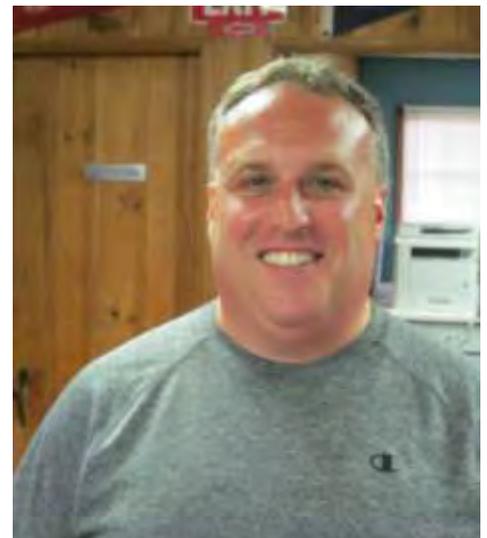
for more Fort Wetherill dates as well.

Now for the business end. We have been in need of a secretary for quite some time and desperately need one. In addition to that we will also need to fill the Treasurer and Web Master spot for next year. So please, with no joking, we will need to have some new people step up so our beloved club can carry on for years to come. If you have any interest in these or one of the other officer positions let Lisa, Mike or myself know and we can accommodate what you would be interested in.

Memorial Day is early this year so our meeting WILL be on the last Friday, May 31 at its usual time with a pre-meeting BBQ starting at 7pm.

See you all soon. Safe Diving.....

Matt





## FCDA Donor

The business listed on this page has donated dive gear and dive services to help support the Fairfield County Diving Association.



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BONAIRE – November 16-23, 2019

LITTLE CAYMAN – March 7-14, 2020

## New England Dive Center at BTS 2019





# Snorkeler Gets Swallowed by a Whale

When Jonah of the Bible got swallowed by a whale, it was three days before he was finally spat out . Luckily, Rainer Schimpf of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, was released a lot sooner after he found himself inside the mouth of a whale . Schimpf, 51, has been organizing trips out to the famous Sardine Run, 25 miles off Port Elizabeth, for more than 15 years . Sometimes they can be disappointing, others they can result in spectacular one-off experiences to be treasured . Austrian diver Heinz Toperczer got one of those cherished moments when he captured video footage of Schimpf

being gathered up in the mouth of a charging Brydes whale while snorkeling in February . Schimpf told the Daily Telegraph that there was no time for fear or any emotion . "I knew instantly what had happened . I knew a whale had come and taken me, and I instinctively held my breath, assuming it would dive down again and spit me out somewhere in the depths of the Indian Ocean ." But then he felt enormous pressure around his waist, which is when the whale may have realized its mistake, Schimpf said . "As the whale turned sideways, he opened his

mouth slightly to release me, and I was washed, together with what felt like tons of water, out of his mouth, while the whale himself was swallowing all the fish in his throat ." OK, maybe Schimpf didn't actually get swallowed, but it certainly was a one-off experience to find himself inside the whale's mouth even for just 1 .8 seconds . Brydes whales can reach up to 55 feet long and weigh 30 tons, so they certainly have big mouths .

Reprinted from Undercurrent - May 2019

## FCDA Member Ads

Hey - have you got a non retail-diving business that you'd like to share with your fellow members of FCDA? Get your business card size ad in the FCDA monthly newsletter "**Surface Interval**" for only \$50.00 for one year. Give your business a boost and help support the production of our monthly newsletters. For more information, write to FCDA, P.O. Box 554, Fairfield, CT 06824 or email to fcda@aol.com.

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## Events of Interest to FCDA Members

Jul 10 - 13 2019 - **Annual Cape Ann Trip** - Cape Ann Campground - Boat dives with Charter-Boat1 on Thursday the 11<sup>th</sup> at 12:30pm and Friday the 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:30am. Contact Matt Rownin at (203) 767-2361 or email [matt@CTHomeSales.com](mailto:matt@CTHomeSales.com)

## April Meeting DAN Raffle Winners

After Jason Giannaris' excellent presentation on **Shipwrecks of the Bahamas** the club held its monthly raffle to support our DAN Sponsorship.

Winners were: Safety Sausage and Whistle Dive Mask donated by Orbit Marine - **Tom Thomes**; Orbit Marine Slap Strap donated by Orbit Marine - **Tom Thomes**; Trident Reef Anchor donated by Orbit Marine - **Mike Cassetta**; Scubapro Hat donated by New England - **Lisa Jarosik**, Scubapro Tee Shirt Cosey donated by New England - **Kate Rickard**, Dry Bag donated by New England - **Kate Rickard**, Cayman Is-

lands Tee Shirt donated by Ski and Scuba Connection - **Jay Gross** and a Scubapro Tee shirt donated by Ski and Scuba Connection - **Michelle Lapin**.

Thanks to **New England Dive Center**, **Orbit Marine Dive Center** and **Ski and Scuba Connection** for donating tonight's raffle prizes for our DAN raffle.

Remember, you can't win if you don't buy tickets and you can't buy tickets if you don't get up and come out to **FCDA** events and meetings!





## Watching Wildlife from Space by Melissa Gaskill

# FAIRFIELD COUNTY DIVING ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 554  
Fairfield, CT 06824

Internet mail: [fcda@aol.com](mailto:fcda@aol.com)  
<http://www.fcda.us>

### 2019 Board

Presidents Matt Rownin &  
Mike Cassetta  
Vice-President Lisa Jarosik  
Secretary vacant  
Treasurer Paul J. Gacek

Searching for individual animals in the vastness of the world's oceans is far more difficult than finding the proverbial needle in a haystack. It's an ongoing challenge for scientists who study marine life such as whales and sea turtles, which routinely travel thousands of miles and spend time in remote, unreachable waters.

The job just got a little easier, however, thanks to two literally out-of-this-world tools: satellite images and a tracking system that uses an antenna on the International Space Station.

### Far From Closeups

Scientists recently confirmed that it is possible to locate and identify whales in images from a DigitalGlobe WorldView-3 satellite, which provides the highest resolution currently available.

"We looked at four species that are fairly different in color, shape and size and were pleased to see that we could detect their flukes and flippers," said Hannah Cubaynes of the British Antarctic Survey at the University of Cambridge. "That showed us that we can see whales in the satellite images and differentiate between species, so we can use satellite images as a reliable method to study the animals."

Observing the animals where groups of them are known to gather, the researchers focused on southern right whales off the coast of Argentina, humpback whales in the Hawaiian Islands, fin whales in the Pelagos Sanctuary in the Mediterranean Sea and gray whales off the Pacific coast of Baja California.

"We were pretty sure that each

of those species — and just that species — would be in those locations at the time," Cubaynes said. Behavior and differences in body structure make some whale species more distinguishable than others, she added. Fin and gray whales are easy to pick out, for example, because their body color contrasts with the surrounding water, and they often position themselves parallel to the sea surface. Southern right whales, on the other hand, spend a lot of time in deeper water, where their dark color makes them harder to see.

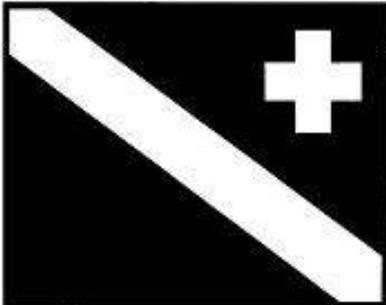
Studying the migratory routes, distribution and abundance of whales — and what habitats they use and when — is an important part of efforts to conserve them. Researchers typically survey whale populations by boat or air, which can be time-consuming and costly. Even when a project has adequate resources for conducting surveys, the large areas many species cover can prove daunting. Some species spend time in remote habitats that are nearly impossible to access by any means.

Scientists now can use the satellite images to find whales and then decide when and where it might be feasible to conduct field research using more traditional methods. Regular satellite images of a habitat could also provide valuable information about specific populations such as whether its numbers are increasing or decreasing or if animals are shifting to other areas.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species records fin whales and eight other baleen

*(Continued on page 6)*

# SILVER



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# Watching Wildlife from Space by Melissa Gaskill (continued)

(Continued from page 5)

species in one of its threatened categories (vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered) or as lacking enough data to determine its status. Satellite images could provide a more cost-effective way to monitor and direct conservation efforts for some of these species. The images could help protect whales from ship strikes, for example, by identifying when groups of whales are in areas with significant shipping traffic.

The next step is automating review of satellite images by using computers to identify images that might contain whales, which human researchers could then verify. Other whale species with characteristics that researchers could likely identify in satellite images include blue, sei, Bryde's, bowhead and minke.

## Tracking from the Space Station

The International Cooperation for Animal Research Using Space (ICARUS) developed an antenna, which was recently installed on the International Space Station, and lightweight transmitters that use the antenna to relay data from tagged animals. Current satellite systems can track 22,000 tagged animals; the ICARUS antenna increases that number to 15 million transmitters. Because the space station orbits the Earth much closer than sat-

## FCDA Donor

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\*\*\* Nov 2 - 9 - Saba & St. Kitts

\*\*\* Oct 10 - 14 - Florida Keys  
\*\*\* Dec 5 - 9 - Cozumel

#### 2020

\*\*\* Jan 11-18 - Bonaire  
\*\*\* Mar 8 - 15 - Maldives  
\*\*\* August - North Carolina  
\*\*\* Nov 7 - 14 - Bahamas Liveaboard The Aqua Cat

\*\*\* Feb 8 - 15 - Utila  
\*\*\* Mar 28 - Apr 4 - Cayman Brac  
\*\*\* Oct 8 - 12 - Freeport Bahamas

[www.orbitmarine.com/trips.html](http://www.orbitmarine.com/trips.html) for more info

"I'm goin' with or without YOU!"  
*Capt. Noel Voroba/Group Leader*

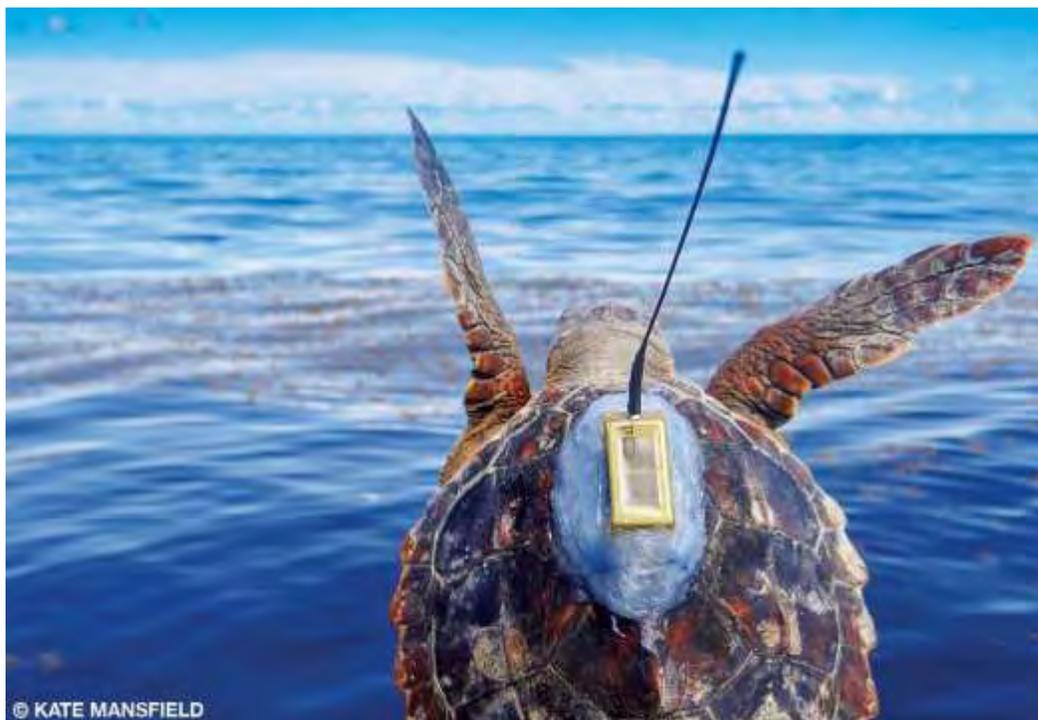
New SPRING Hours : \* Monday - Friday : 9 AM-6 PM\* \*Saturday : 6 AM-5 PM\*  
Sunday : 6 AM-1 PM\* \*Memorial Day, July 4th : 6 AM-1 PM

ellites currently used for such tracking, it can pick up weaker signals. Transmitters that require less power can be smaller and suitable for use on a wider vari-

ety of animals.

When attached to an individual animal, the transmitter tags record its precise geographic lo-

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## Watching Wildlife from Space by Melissa Gaskill (continued)

(Continued from page 6)

cation along with data about its environment, such as the air or water temperature. Using an accelerometer, the same technology that detects the orientation of a smartphone, these tags also show the direction the animal is moving and its orientation and behavior. The solar-powered tags transmit only when the space station passes overhead.

This kind of tracking data helps scientists find out where specific species live at various stages, which can help determine how to better protect them. One research project plans to use the new system to monitor endangered sea turtles. While biologists have identified nesting beaches around the world, they know little about where sea turtles spend their first few months at sea after hatching. Important nursery areas and other habitat used by young sea turtles can't be protected without knowing where they are.

University of Central Florida researcher Kate Mansfield, an ICARUS participant, has monitored

sea turtles in the Gulf of Mexico for years. She can currently tag turtles with shells as small as about 5 inches (13 centimeters) long. The ICARUS tags can be placed on turtles with shells as small as 3 inches (8 cm) long. Studies have shown that transmitters should weigh no more than 5 percent of the animal's body weight to avoid affecting its behavior or chances of survival.

"In general, when putting something on an animal, you want to reduce its impact on the animal," Mansfield said. "Reducing the size and weight of tracking tags helps do that. We'll be able to tag post-hatchling turtles, maybe even those that are just a few weeks to a month old. Smaller animals haven't been tracked for long distances, so these tags will expand our understanding of their movements."

ICARUS plans to make all its data, except for sensitive conservation data, publicly

accessible. Thanks to these space-based tools, scientists will soon learn more about life in the oceans on Earth.

Reprinted from Alert Diver - Winter 2019



## Arctic Circle by Alex Hallatt





# Back by Popular Demand! FCDA Tee Shirts and Hoodies!

Get your FCDA Tee Shirts and Hoodies with a high quality embroidered FCDA logo on the front and an embroidered dive flag on the back. Available in sizes from Small to 3XL.

## Gildan Heavy Cotton T-Shirt



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Graphite grey shown -  
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Adult Sizes SM - 3XL  
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sleeves (not shown)  
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Both available in choice of  
ten colors



### Available Colors for Tee Shirts and Long Sleeve Shirts

Ash	Black	Forest	Graphite Heather	Irish Green
Navy	Red	Royal	Sport Grey*	White



# FCDA Shirt/Hoodie Order Form

Please note that all items are custom made and must be prepaid. Items will be ordered as soon as we have the minimum quantity for an order and will generally be available at the next scheduled meeting.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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### FCDA Tee Shirt with Logo and Dive Flag

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No. \_\_\_\_\_ Size \_\_\_\_\_ Color \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$25.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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**TOTAL** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Next FCDA Meeting

**Pre-Meeting Barbeque - 7:00 PM  
BYOM (Bring Your Own Meat)**

**Friday - May 31, 2019 - 8:00 PM**

**US Coast Guard Auxiliary Cottage - South Benson Marina, Fairfield, CT**

## **"The Best of Noel Voroba - The World Tour"**

**a presentation by**

**Captain Noel Voroba**

Captain Noel takes a look back in time to the places he's been and the wonders he's experienced. As the Captain says "I'm going with or without you!!!"

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