7 Expert Tips for Proper Scuba Equipment and Techniques for Diving in Puget Sound

Scuba.com article on scuba diving in Puget Sound, detailing first-hand tips from an expert on etiquette, techniques, and the scuba gear needed to have a fulfilling scuba adventure.

Irvine, CA (PRWEB) December 05, 2013 -- 1.) Check the Local Tides

Checking the local tide times and knowing the adjustment for your dive site can be the difference between a nice dive and a pointless drive. Time your entry about 15 minutes prior to the "slack tide." The slack tide time period is the time between the high/low tide and the point where the water begins to reverse. Puget Sound is the "World’s Largest Bathtub," they say, filling and emptying twice a day. This creates currents often too strong for the recreational diver.

2.) Be Aware of Where You Are

Due to the enormous amount of recreational and commercial boat traffic throughout Puget Sound, it’s always a good idea to use a Dive Flag, but it isn’t required by all counties or municipalities in the region, nor the Coast Guard. In places like Seattle and King County, however, displaying a dive flag while diving from shore is mandated by law, and is enforced by the Washington State Patrol and the King County Sheriff’s Department.

3.) Got a Light?

Puget Sound has cold, nutrient-rich water. Nutrient-rich water is often dark and murky, because the sunlight has difficulty penetrating everything suspended in it. One would think the brightest and sunniest of summer days would negate the need for a light, but in reality the exact opposite is true. When the warm sun hits these nutrients the plankton blooms, and blooms in a hurry. On otherwise gorgeous summer days, the visibility can plummet from feet down to inches in the span of one dive, so remember to bring along a solid dive light.

4.) Buy Heavy Duty or Hard Sole Dive Boots

Puget Sound is one of the most diverse diving environments on the planet for the shore diver. A walk down to shore can take a diver up boat ramps, across parking lots, used stairs, climbing down hillsides and embankments (some so steep that gear has to be roped down the hillside beforehand), crawling over old-growth timber driftwood, striding off of house-sized boulders, walked down train tracks and crossing many, many rocky beaches. All the way, it’s possible to feel every single pebble, stick, rock, or cracked piece of pavement through a soft or medium soled dive boot.

5.) Don’t Be Afraid to Get Wet

Personal note: On a particularly stormy day in the early 80’s I cut a phone call with my mother short to catch a tide. She was shocked that I would be diving in such terrible weather and asked "diving in weather like this? Won’t you get wet?!" Her concerns were valid, even if her logic was flawed. Some of the most exciting marine life I’ve encountered in Puget Sound occurred on the stormiest days. Some say it’s because the water motion and the vibrations of the rain agitate the marine life. Others say it’s because it’s darker than usual during the day, making both nocturnal and diurnal creatures active at the same time. Either way, don’t be afraid to "get
6.) Clothes Make the Man (or Woman)

Puget Sound is cold. A 6.5mm-7mm suit is not a suggestion, it’s the rule. Boots, gloves and hoods should follow suit. Weighting properly for the gear and the potential for current is a must, as is mastering buoyancy control. Select fins heavy enough to offer good performance in challenging conditions.

7.) Take a Camera

Puget Sound offers countless opportunity for the photographer. Wrecks, large prehistoric marine life, small, oddly shaped Nudibranchs, anemones of a variety of shapes and colors, jellyfish, and even coral. The colors are muted to the human eye during a dive, but underwater photographers are shocked and amazed at the colors their camera equipment captures. I’ve often given all my credit for underwater photography skills to learning the basics at Titlow Beach, in Tacoma.

For more information on how to get properly outfitted for cold water diving climates, or to contact expert scuba instructors for more tips, visit http://www.scuba.com. Feel free to live chat with experienced scuba diving instructors directly on the website, or send an email to info(at)scuba(dot)com for more information.