

## **A WORLD THAT IS NOT LOST**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The article retells the impressions of the experienced diver from diving in the Andaman Sea (Thailand). The standard of dives was for divers with experience. The team was highly professional. This made it possible in a short period to see under the water that many cannot do for years. Despite the environmental and natural disasters on our planet there are still places that attract by its primitiveness. Photos from the dive sites reflect the impression of underwater variety, which should which should be taken care of by modern man.

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We usually study other travelers' impressions, to take a decision on forthcoming trip. If not to concur with advertising booklets and appeal to adventure genes, we will find that the majority will prefer coral sand or a chaise lounge at a coastal pool. The minority, whose relative quantity increases every year, try their best to get bright impressions which will remain in their memory for a long time. Here a noble place occupies crews of yachts and balloons, commands of climbers and cave explorers, historical and green tourists, and, of course, visitors of a continental shelf. A few words and illustrations what can feel and see a competently organized visitor.

Sure, I will tell about underwater dives with scuba, i.e. diving.

There has passed time of the first generation of Ukrainian scuba-divers of 60-70<sup>th</sup> dressed in stripped vests, with aqualungs «Ukraine-1 and -2» and flippers «Aquanaut» which have lived up to now. This period, nevertheless, is significant by the leading achievements of Ukraine in aquanautics, building of underwater laboratories "Ikhtiander" and diving down to record depths (2500 m). Now, under water romantic life, in many respects has been divided into the professional technologies using ship pressures chambers and deep-water equipment, and recreational, connected with active learning of depths down to 100 m. Today all coasts of the warm and cold seas are stuck round by the dive-clubs providing full service and modern equipment.

Our trip has been organized by the Kiev underwater club «Muraena/Мурена», its head V.V. Bragin, in the past the chairman of Executive committee of the Ukrainian underwater federation. 40-year experience in organizing underwater competitions has allowed to choose a route which has captured the best dive-sites of Andaman sea.

The team of divers from Ukraine, supplied with the NDL certificates, less, than in day has arrive to Bangkok, and then a province Krabi on island Ko Lanta We were constantly accompanied by the only, on island, Russian-speaking diving club the "Ok Club Thai".

Bungalow romantics near shallow-white coral sand beach, completed with a damp heat in combination with very warm water.

Coconuts here are used instead of a building stones, they surround flower beds, paths, or they simply lay in heaps. The see throw them out on the sea beach. Everywhere people drink nut juice through a straw, and then scratch out pulp with a spoon. You start to understand "lazy" natives. However, you will never find Thai bodies lying on a beach, - all are doing business: many-sided touristic service, trading local agricultural product at numerous markets and consumer goods in small shops, driving mopeds and "tuk-tuks".

Everything is very cheap. Thai inscriptions have no intervals between words, one should guess, how to separate them and what they mean. On the island, local people know English very approximately; they smile in response, as if they have understood, but the result is inadequate.

Our main task is faster to dive under the water, therefore after a blitz-acclimatization - again a minibus, «Lexus» with Thai tuning (Rather good!), registration in the dive-club "Liquid" checking our dive certificates, filling in the forms. We signed the forms in which, as always, the maximum responsibility for your safety during dives is laid on the diver himself.

At last, a pleasure yacht "Vilai Samut", with great delay, rather late, at night started in the sea. It was its first flight in this season, therefore I do not mention about the starting disorder, I know, it could have been much worse. But in a day everything was adjusted. In flights, usually, after a withdrawal, everything arranges.

Diving routine consisted not only in getting impressions from the dives themselves, which happened four times per day, but also in dragging weights, numerous vestments in equipment, jumps from a board into the water, swimming in flippers observance of personal safety, maintenance of untouched ecology demand, and also in performance of instructions, procedures and checks of accompanying instructors. They appeared highly competent professionals, and nice guides. Communication with them created trust and confidence. And around sailors-assistants constantly fussed around, helped to lift equipment, filled cylinders, provided a roar of the compressor and transportation by "Zodiac" boat, etc.

Simillian islands present a chain of small, practically uninhabited, mountainous islands which are declared a national parks-reserves «Similan Islands», «Surin». All islands are very picturesque, every second would suit for descriptions in adventure stories by Bussenar: steep rocky coast, sometimes woody or steep, alternating with snow-white beaches. There was an island, hollow inside, with a lake, and a beach and the internal jungle, connected with the sea by a long dark cave in which only your head passed over the water.

The mislaid world. The paradise, in one word. But without platforms for a house, a garden or a kitchen garden and without the potable water, protected by ecological controllers. For visitors it that is exactly what they wanted: best conditions for the maximum satisfaction of tourist hunger.

The route covered the best sites to which because of the complexity to be reached, you do not meet no crowds of beginners. These islands are: Anitas Reef, West of Edem Reef, Three Trees Reef, Koh Bon Bay Site, Koh Bay Site West Ridge, Koh Tachai Pinnacle, Koh Tachai Serin Isl, Rishelieu Rock, Boonsung Wreck Khao Lak, Hin Daeng, Hin Muang, Koh Haa.

The underwater environment has a variety different from the Red sea. Very much impress the fish clouds, who illustrate the electromagnetic principles of the society management. Fields of soft corals made impression of the African savanna with mini baobabs. There were organized in vertical walls leaving down to 60 m, containing a level-by-level deep variety of flora and fauna. Muraenidae, executed roles of the witches who were looking out from their witches' huts, obviously wishing to bite acting meat parts of divers, especially at night. We saw fields-monuments to the recent tsunami which has changed the microclimate temperature, and caused mass destruction of corals.

We expected sharks, dumplings (mants) and turtles, which were promised by instructors, but have seen only one bolting turtle of average age. She informed us, that all the rest have left for a dinner. Rare underwater fish exotics compensated motley snakes, lionfishes, scorpaens and barracudas which also could deteriorate divers' health.

Everywhere, the unforgettable beauty of underwater landscapes which especially revealed due to 30 meters visibility. Underwater grottoes, caves, canyons, filled with fish, impressed by their primitive state. Night dives provided absolutely non-standard impressions: the full weightlessness, rummaging in different corners of water areas the rays of lights, predators, which have come out from their dwelling places for night hunting unexpectedly caught by a beam. As we

dived in water area near to the yacht it was possible to imagine the surprise of night underwater natives at the sight of the massed invasion of people with lanterns.

The fact that not all desired fishes have come into the view, was completely compensated by fine weather. Initially we risked, as the favorable season was only opening, and we could appear in a zone of wind and ripple which would cross out all pleasure from dives and would cause seasickness in ones, who desired. We managed to pass all the planned routes and to capture the maximum. The team turned out to be very professional: former and recent champions in scuba diving, underwater hunting, professional coaches and me, the professional deep diver, who turned for a period in a shallow diver. Therefore there were no technical problems during the dives, moreover, tough guys-instructors began to perceive us not as "teapots" which have bought their certificates, but as worthy partners.

A few words about the professional side of the topic. During recent years more and more popular kind of scuba diving becomes the so-called "techno diving". Its appearance is caused by improvement of underwater respiratory techniques, penetration of confidential, in the past, technologies into practice of recreational diving, birth of new generations of decompression meters, and also due to thirst of people to receive new sensations and to share subsequent bravado expressed in figures of the subdued depths.

Actually this method represents a remix of technologies of 50-60<sup>th</sup>, based on application for dives not compressed air, but a mix of nitrogen and oxygen with its lower concentration. It is caused by a necessity to prevent sharp oxygen poisoning. However because of the increased nitrogen dissolution in fabrics the risk of decompression frustration increases. It can be reduced by parallel application of helium-oxygen mixtures.

There is a variant of mixes enriched by oxygen: then the decompression procedure is facilitated, but a damaging action of oxygen becomes more vivid. All these significantly complicate the diving procedure. Moreover, such dives should be provided by a pressure chamber with the personnel in a ready condition, transport for delivery of the victim, supporting partners under water and afloat. All this is seldom observed by dashing techno divers. From a recreational position such immersing give the diver modest pleasure from stay in gloomy water with smaller assortment of flora and fauna. They can be defined as extremely risky. The established practice of underwater works testifies that dives with nitrogen-oxygen mixes can be used to perform professional targets. But ship pressure chamber technology equipped with lowered chamber-lift is much safer. But this is another story.

Very representative is supervision at the state of health of one of the most trained divers in the world. In 70<sup>th</sup> it was the crew commander of underwater laboratory. He stayed there 52 days at 15 m depth. He showed the best decompression limit: fast decompression after 6 hour stay at depth 21 m did not caused any illness symptoms. After all this experience he still works professionally (!) up to 6 hours a day. He hunts on sea hedgehogs, trepangs, underwater ducks, and derive gold from under the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans cold waters. Sure, hyperbaric loading factors on the organism systems were incredibly high. And though he did not experienced decompression disorders, there revealed symptoms of changes in his nervous system. The nervous tissue is sensitive to fat-soluble drugs-depressants, for example, to alcohol.

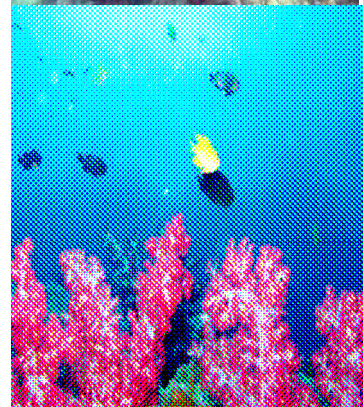
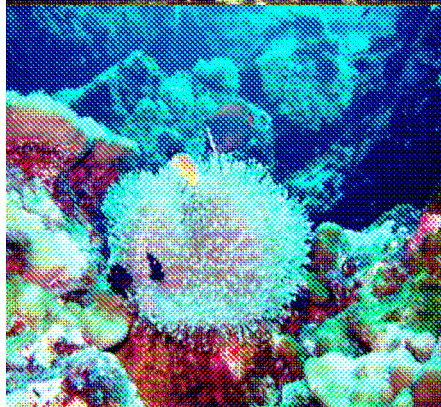
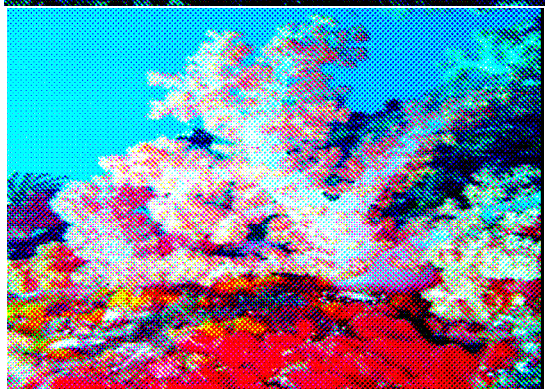
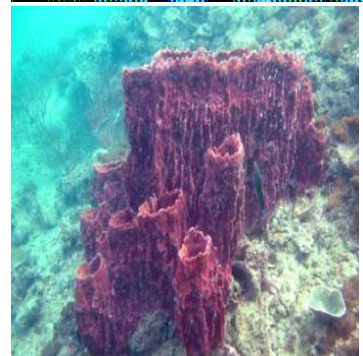
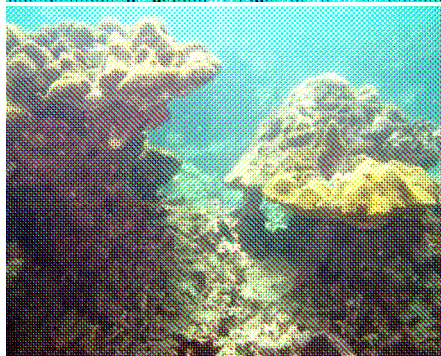
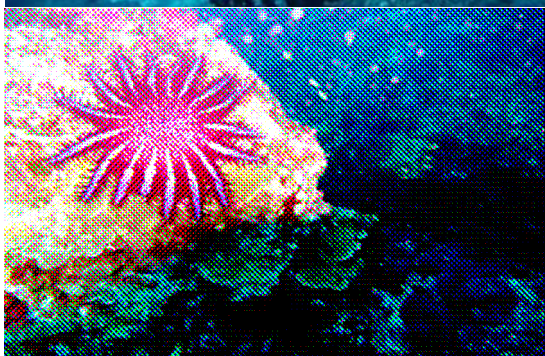
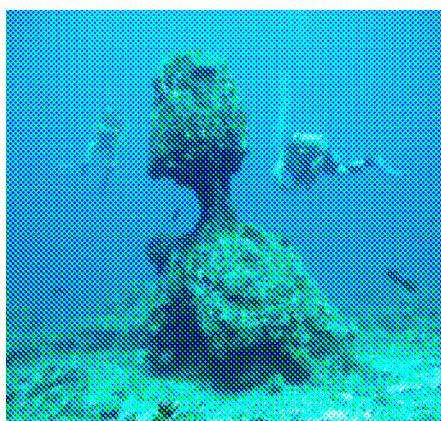
Last year's this diver started to experience symptoms of depression which demanded medical attention. We consider, this is the consequence of chronic nitrogen action on neurons, which has the mechanism of action similar to reaction to alcohol. It is well known, that the chronic alcoholism is also accompanied by a depressive-disturbing states. All mentioned above, can refer to technodivers, though not enough period of time have passed to single out such tendency.

To complete the story, it would be desirable to answer a question where it is better and whether it is necessary to go so far. Sure, much depends on recreational mentality. Very many people prefer to estimate the seas for the quality of sand on the coast and water temperature. Others prefer to come to seacoast, but to spend time within pool with warmed-up sea water. And only the few estimate seas for transparency of the water, beauty of the bottom, vegetation and living creatures. Simultaneous sensation of hydrospace, especially at night, chill in a body, connected with understanding of danger, and feeling of belonging to a special underwater caste.

Few gourmets distinguish these representatives of shelf diving and create a brotherhood never destroyed by years.

Exactly from this position seas significantly differ from one another never mind, how beautiful and extravagant coastal infrastructures may be. And from this position it would be possible to allocate the seas of the lowest class, suitable for kids and beginners. This concerns Azov, Caspian and Black, etc. the seas. Their comfort can be compared only with man-made river seas. Better quality may be titled to the group of the seas of Mediterranean type - more living creatures and water is warmer.

The next position could be given to Antarctic water areas having a rich exotic life, though in the extremely cold water. The top position of such pyramid should be given to tropical seas - Red, Caribbean, Andaman and the like. In these seas the violence of life is not destroyed even by the aggressive mankind. These seas reveal very vivid distinctions as to the inhabitants and plants. Therefore even if blindly to get to one of them, you will define the co-ordinates unmistakably. Not all Thai water areas are equally good, there are turbid and hollow shelf, but with an excellent beaches. Therefore there is a sense to preliminary study a question taking into account your interests. Part of beauties that the author managed to picture, the unique person, whose camera has remained efficient till the last day, is possible to see on the attached photos.



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