



# CALLING THE DIVE

Bryan Saint Germain, August 2009

**Any team member can call off a dive at any time.** Suiting up, floating on the surface, or partway through the dive, it doesn't matter. Other team members should agree immediately, without argument or criticism. Discussion can wait until everyone is back aboard/ashore. The decision to call the dive can be easy and obvious ("Was that thunder?") but other times the decision is tough. Here are some thoughts that might help . . .

**Recreational Diving is diving done for the fun of it.** If you need to make a judgment call, don't ask yourself, "Can I do this dive?" Your ego may respond, "Hell, yeah!" Ask yourself Instead, "Does this dive look like fun?" After all, if you can replace a stressful hassle with a relaxing hour on the water by not diving, why not?

**Re-Evaluate Conditions.** A good diver continuously re-evaluates conditions to decide whether to continue with a plan or to modify it. Conditions include mental states of all team members.

**Don't Suck it Up.** The bigger the buildup and anticipation and effort expended before the dive, the harder it can be to disappoint yourself and your team members. But sucking it up can be the first step into the incident pit.

**You won't remember the dives you called.** I've long ago forgotten them. I do remember dives I should have called early but didn't. They were not fun (to put it lightly) but everyone came back aboard/ashore healthy, which is the over-arching goal of every dive plan.

**Have a Plan B.** Your save-a-dive kit might include a Plan B (waders and a tidepooling bucket, Audubon book and binoculars, whatever) so you can still have a good time even if the diving doesn't work out that day.

**You're Still a Diver.** There is no shame in sitting out a boat dive. Sit back, wait for the rush to the gates to clear, then think things through again. Maybe plan a simpler dive. If it doesn't quite come together, don't go. The boat crew will be happy to have someone to talk to, and you get first crack at the munchies. If you mention your reasons for not doing the dive, their advice will likely be more valuable than what you might have discovered down there.

**Always remember: having the wits to call off a dive makes you more of a diver, not less.**