



# HUPS Newsletter

**December 2,  
7- 9 pm**



**Join us for Christmas Dinner,  
Fall Video, Best of HUPS and Creative Contests**

<b>Inside this issue:</b>	
<b>Details of Christmas Party and Contests</b>	<b>2-3</b>
<b>President's Message</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>HUPS Photo Contest, POTY Standings, Contest Categories</b>	<b>8-14</b>
<b>Anything Goes Video Night January 6</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Member of the Year</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>"Our Oceans" Netflix Premiere</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Gadget of the Month</b>	<b>18-19</b>
<b>Trips and Announcements</b>	<b>20-39</b>



# Christmas Dinner

Bayland Community Center & Zoom Program – 7-9 pm December 2

[Link to the Zoom broadcast Meeting ID: 822 2562 5836 Password: 079944](#)

The annual HUPS Christmas Party will be December 2nd at Bayland Community Center. Henry Ragland will be picking up the meat and bringing it. We will need sides and desserts to go with the meat . Usually there seems to be a good balance of sides. If possible, please send an email to Mary of what you're bringing.

[maryameliadaniels@gmail.com](mailto:maryameliadaniels@gmail.com)

Marty and I will bring ice, sodas and all plastic ware. Anyone who has time to help set up (6:00-6:30) and clean up after would be wonderful.

by Mary Daniels

# Creative Contest

Please remember to send your photos for the HUPS Creative Contest! This will be the last contest of 2024, and will be judged by the attendees at the December meeting. Please send them before the meeting on December 2nd.

Just email your photos directly to:  
[HUPS\\_Photo\\_Contest@googlegroups.com](mailto:HUPS_Photo_Contest@googlegroups.com)

**Theme: Something Creative or Funny**

**Description: Keep it underwater or diving related. You can be creative with photoshopping different subjects, backgrounds, etc. The Creative category lets you enter anything you want as long as you do the photography and any special editing. Think outside the box and HAVE FUN!**

**Deadline: Monday, December 1, 2024**

Please let me know if you have any problems or questions.

Thanks!

Martin

[martin.daniels3@gmail.com](mailto:martin.daniels3@gmail.com)



# President's Message

by Craig Beasley

As we head into the end of the year, there is always a sense of winding down and reflecting on the past as well as looking forward to the future. Indeed, the first month of the year is named in honor of the Roman god Janus who is shown with two faces – one looking back, reflecting on the past and the other facing forward and looking to the future. So, this tradition is an old one, with deep roots.

I won't recite my impressions of the last year – after all, you were all there and your thoughts are as good as mine. Let's just say it was busy, busy, busy and a lot of fun and I know I learned some things. And now, we just have a few things to do to finish it off in style.

As far as club meetings, we just have one to go and it's always my favorite – the Christmas party on December 2, 2025 at the Bayland Community Center! We will have the usual Best of HUPS photo contest, Creative Photo Contest, pot luck dinner, raffle and whatever else they have dreamed up for this year. We will also see the results of the Fall Video Contest. A special thanks to Mary Daniels for organizing and to all those who contribute. And that's everybody!!!

Another tradition at the Christmas party is to name the HUPS Member of the Year. Any member can nominate any other member and this year, I am fortunate to have received a nomination letter for Ja Van Pruitt. Please see this letter, published here in the December newsletter. That and other HUPS awards will be presented at the TGCC banquet in January.

After we recover from this slow, reflective period, things heat up, as usual. Our first meeting of 2025 will be January 6, 2025 and will feature the HUPS Anything Goes Video Night – please see my call for contributions in this newsletter and also in a HUPS email blast sent November 24. Soon afterwards, HUPS will participate in a special event at the Match Theater on January 18. This invitational event is a result of our HUFF performances and features a group of HUPS videographers who will present a sampling of our filmmakers' different motivations, philosophies, goals and viewpoints as well as examples of their films. This will be followed by a Q&A discussion. The HUPS slot is 15:15 -16:15 at the Match and details can be found here: <https://matchouston.org/events/2025/mix-match>

Following these events, we have the TGCC banquet and awards event (January 25 at Bayland) and don't forget the 2025 HUFF which is April 12-13, 2025! So, take a moment to reflect, mark your calendars and get ready.

Let's go diving!!!

2nd Annual

# MIX - MATCH

A MIXED ARTS FESTIVAL



Saturday, January 18, 2025



## **MATCH PRESENTS**

## **MIX-MATCH**

**A MIXED ARTS FESTIVAL**

Join us for the 2nd annual **Mix-MATCH: A Mixed Arts Festival!** This one-day event celebrates Houston's vibrant and diverse arts community, bringing together an extraordinary lineup of performances and exhibits that showcase the city's creative spirit.

The 2025 Mix-MATCH Festival centers on collaboration and inclusivity, featuring theater, dance, music, performance art, film, and visual art—all in a single afternoon. Guests can also enjoy **food trucks** and **interactive activities** throughout the day, ending with the MATCH Mixer, a unique opportunity to connect with artists and fellow art lovers.

**[CLICK HERE](#)** for a printable schedule.

## **\$40 FESTIVAL PASSES ON SALE NOW**



With a **festival pass** you will have access to any of the performance that you wish to attend along with two drink tickets to enjoy throughout the day!

**\$15 single** performance will go on sale the first week of January while supplies last.

Please note that each pass is subject to a **\$3 service fee** at checkout.

**MEET THE FESTIVAL PARTICIPANTS**

(click on the individual names for more information)

**Pronoia Theater** (theater)

**Artemis Hunter** (theater/drag)

**TORCH** (theater)

**NMLY.dance** (dance)

**Karina Gonzalez/David Rivera/Tonya Burton**  
(dance/videography/music)

**Indian Performing Arts Samskriti** (dance/music)

**6 Degrees with George Heathco** (dance/music)

**The Pilot Dance Project** (dance)

**Group Acorde** (dance)

**Brave Little Company** (theater)

**oh, hooray** (music)

**Teatro Loft** (theater)

**Houston Underwater Film Festival** (film)

**3G Percussion** (music)

**Silambam Houston** (dance/music)

**Houston's A.S.S.** (music)

**lo-fi puppets + stuff** (theater)

**Ugochi Emehaha** (spoken word)

**Boomtown Brass Band** (music)

**Canda** (performance art)

**Carmenza Perdomo & Ruby Fear** (visual art)

**Sketch Supercollider** (improv/comedy)

# FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

Saturday, January 18, 2025

# MIX - MATCH

A MIXED ARTS FESTIVAL

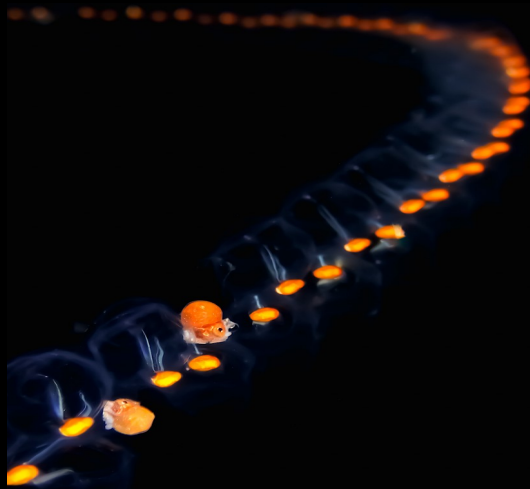
	MATCHBOX 1	MATCHBOX 2	MATCHBOX 3	MATCHBOX 4	GALLERY
3:15 PM - 4:15 PM	<b>NMLY.dance</b> (dance)	<b>Tonya Burton</b> (music) <b>Karina Gonzalez</b> (dance) <b>David Rivera</b> (videography)	<b>Brave Little Company</b> (theater)	<b>Houston Underwater Film Festival</b> (film)	<b>lo-fi puppets + stuff</b> (theater)
4:45 PM - 5:45 PM	<b>Torch</b> (theater)	<b>6 Degrees Dance w/George Heathco</b> (dance) <b>Indian Performing Arts Samskriti</b> (dance/music)	<b>Teatro Loft</b> (theater)	<b>3G Percussion</b> (music)	<b>Artist Talk w/ Carmenza Perdomo &amp; Ruby Fear</b> (visual art)
6:30 PM - 7:30 PM	<b>Pronoia Theater</b> (theater)	<b>The Pilot Dance Project</b> (dance)	<b>Sketch Supercollider</b> (comedy)	<b>Silambam Houston</b> (dance/music)	<b>Boomtown Brass Band</b> (music)
8:00 PM - 9:00 PM	<b>Artemis Queerbaret</b> (performance art)	<b>Group Acorde</b> (dance)	<b>oh, hooray</b> (music)	<b>Houston's A.S.S.</b> (music)	<b>Ugochi Emehaha</b> (performance art) <b>Canda</b> (performance art)

# November 2024 Contest

## Sponges, Tunicates, Anemones



Sage Holt - Novice 1st



Sage Holt - Novice 2nd



Tiffanie Crumbley - Novice 3rd

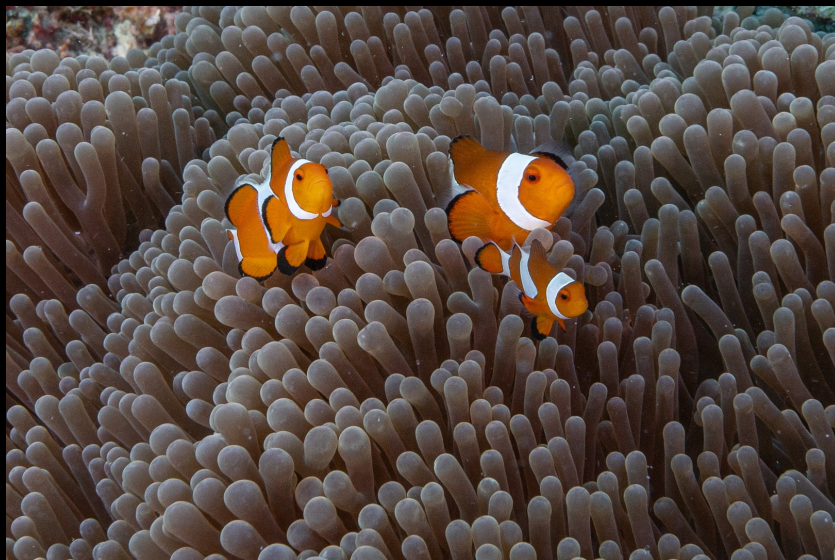




Lynn Zechiedrich - Intermediate 1st



Alex Kendig - Intermediate 2nd



Lynn Zechiedrich - Intermediate 3rd



Barry Cline - Advanced 3rd



Barry Cline - Advanced 3rd



John VanAtta - Advanced 3rd



John VanAtta - Advanced 1st



Debbie Mensay - Advanced 2nd

# 2024 POTY STANDINGS

	<b>Novice</b>	
<b>1ST</b>	<b>Sage Holt</b>	<b>759</b>
<b>2ND</b>	<b>Scott Singleton</b>	<b>753</b>
<b>3RD</b>	<b>Tiffanie Crumbley</b>	<b>578</b>
<b>4TH</b>	<b>Aaron Crumbley</b>	<b>527</b>
	<b>Intermediate</b>	
<b>1ST</b>	<b>Jennifer Opiela-Miksch</b>	<b>691</b>
<b>2ND</b>	<b>Alex Kendig</b>	<b>600</b>
<b>3RD</b>	<b>Lynn Zechiedrich</b>	<b>353</b>
	<b>Advanced</b>	
<b>1ST</b>	<b>Justin Wallace</b>	<b>776</b>
<b>2ND</b>	<b>Debbie Mensay</b>	<b>742</b>
<b>3RD</b>	<b>Jim Mensay</b>	<b>728</b>
<b>4TH</b>	<b>Barry Cline</b>	<b>689</b>
<b>5TH</b>	<b>John Van Atta</b>	<b>680</b>

Click [here](#) to view the  
 HUPS Photo Contests  
 on HUPSdotORG.

# 2024 Photo Contest Categories

<b>January</b>	<b>Invertebrates</b>	<b>Any creature without a backbone. Sponges, Cnidarians, Worms, Mollusks, Arthropods, Echinoderms, Crustaceans, Sea cucumbers, Nudibranchs.</b>
<b>February</b>	<b>Schools of Fish</b>	<b>Lots of fish - not critters, just fish. A school – 12 or more of the same fish.</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>Eyes and/or Teeth</b>	<b>Any sea life that has an eye or teeth. Can be fish, invertebrates or mammal.</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>Blue Water</b>	<b>Any primary subject as long as the background has a nice blue color.</b>
<b>May</b>	<b>Nudibranchs &amp; Worms</b>	<b>Again, this is pretty specific but you may need to check your critter ID book if you're not sure. Worms can fool you sometimes.</b>
<b>June</b>	<b>Mammals</b>	<b>Any kind of marine mammal (not divers), such as: whales, dolphins, seals, sea lions, sea otters, manatees, etc.</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>Scorpion fish, Gurnards, Lionfish</b>	<b>Another theme that gives you multiple choices of fish. This theme gives you up to 3 possible choices of fish families.</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>Really Small Macro - Subjects smaller than a chicken egg</b>	<b>The main subject is smaller than an egg. Can be a portion of a larger subject (eyes, fins, etc). Should be taken with a macro lens or one that focuses close. Don't just crop the heck out of a picture.</b>
<b>September</b>	<b>Reef scenes without diver</b>	<b>Any kind of reef scene somewhere in the shot, but without any divers.</b>
<b>October</b>	<b>Syngnathidae (pipefish &amp; seahorses)</b>	<b>The Syngnathidae is a family of fish which includes seahorses, pipefishes, and seadragons.</b>
<b>November</b>	<b>Sponges, Tunicates, Anemones</b>	<b>This theme gives you up to 3 possible choices of creature families. If not sure, check your creature ID book.</b>
<b>December</b>	<b>Best of HUPS</b>	<b>NOVICE, INTERMEDIATE, ADVANCED, and CREATIVE contests: First place winners from each month's Novice, Intermediate and Advanced categories will be entered automatically for judging. The Creative category lets you enter anything you want as long as you do the photography and any special editing.</b>

## 2025 Photo Contest Categories

<b>January</b>	Single Color Focus (Blue, Red, Green, Yellow, etc.)	Subject must be a single color or shade of color, such as: green moray eel, green parrotfish, soap fish, sharks, sponge, coral .
<b>February</b>	Fish Portraits	1 or 2 fish (not critters), side on, angled views, or face-to-camera shots are what we're looking for.
<b>March</b>	Groups, Sweetlips	Groupers typically have a stout body and large mouth, and can be quite large. Sweetlips also have large, fleshy lips.
<b>April</b>	Long and thin - fish or critters	Any fish or critter that is characterized by long, thin lines.
<b>May</b>	Pairs (2 of the same)	Two of the same critters or fish, similar in form, matched or associated.
<b>June</b>	Things that Live in Sand or Muck	Fish or critters that live in sand or muck.
<b>July</b>	Echinoderms (starfish, urchins, sea cucumbers, etc.)	Echinoderms usually have five-point radial symmetry, and include starfish, brittle stars, sea urchins, sand dollars, sea cucumbers, and crinoids.
<b>August</b>	Silhouettes	In Silhouettes the outline and shape of the subject are what is important. A good silhouette should have almost no detail observable in the primary subject. .
<b>September</b>	Juveniles of Any Species	A Juvenile can be anything that's not a mature adult, preferably fish or critters that are obviously still maturing. Such as: juvenile anglefish that have distinct markings or juvenile spotted drums that need to grow into their fins
<b>October</b>	Corals-Macro (hard or soft)	Coral a tiny soft-bodied animal that typically lives within a stony skeleton grouped in large colonies. The goal is individual polyps, not a reef composition.
<b>November</b>	Reef scenes with diver(s)	Any kind of reef scene somewhere in the shot, and also must include at least one diver.
<b>December</b>	Best of HUPS	NOVICE, INTERMEDIATE, ADVANCED, and CREATIVE contests: First place winners from each month's Novice, Intermediate and Advanced categories will be entered automatically for judging. The Creative category lets you enter anything you want as long as you do the photography and any special editing.

# **January 6**

## **Anything Goes Video Night**

**by Craig Beasley**

**It's time to send in your clips.**

**If you have a clip or sequence of clips you'd like to show, please send them to me. I can do any processing and editing necessary, so don't be shy!**

**You can always send me a finished clip, as well.**

**You can use Drop Box, WeTransfer.com, TransferNow.com or any other file transfer service you like.**

**Send them to [cb\\_as@hotmail.com](mailto:cb_as@hotmail.com).**

**Deadline January 1**

**Email or text me if you have questions.**

**My cell is 281-935-0659.**

# **Member of the Year**

## **JaVan Pruitt**

**This nomination letter was received on behalf of JaVan Pruitt.**

**“I am writing this letter in support of naming JaVan Pruitt the 2025 HUPS Member of the Year. While this Award can be given just for the contributions made within a calendar year, those so named generally have a long history of contributions and this is certainly the case for JaVan.**

**She has been an official member of HUPS since 2019, but is a longtime prominent member of the Gulf Coast dive community. She has attended meetings long before becoming a member and has participated in our photo and video contests. She has been an outstanding volunteer in just about all we do including the Christmas party and the HUFF. Most recently, she volunteered to be the Membership Chairperson, an incredibly important position.**

**Perhaps JaVan’s most valuable contribution is her important role in promoting community among local divers and clubs. She has been an invaluable liaison between HUPS and other clubs and this effort has resulted in the clubs working together in a number of ways.**

**I could go on and on, but I believe that JaVan will receive universal support for this award.”**

**Congratulations, JaVan! Well deserved.**



# On Netflix November 20 Our Oceans Season 1

Submitted by Betsy Beasley



When Indonesia first reopened after the pandemic Craig and I went to Black Sands Dive Retreat in Lembeh Strait. When we arrived we were the only people there except for a Netflix crew who'd been there a few weeks. They had completely taken over the camera room. Every surface, including the floor was covered with their equipment. 40 cases. We overlapped with them for about a week.

They were there to film the Indian Ocean part of a 5 Ocean Netflix series, which had no name at the time. They spent their entire time on the house reef (Hairball) filming coconut octopus 5-6 hours a day, using rebreathers. The finished series was named Our Oceans and hit Netflix on November 20.

Click [here](#) to see the trailer.

# Gadget of the Month

Presented by  
Craig Beasley  
at November  
meeting



Must have for your dive tool kit.

Click [here](#) to view on Amazon

# Gadget of the Month

**Bring your favorite  
gadget to the  
December meeting  
to share.**

# Texas Gulf Coast Council of Diving Clubs (TGCC or Diving Council) News

Every diver, every elected or appointed club officer, should plan on attending the TGCC Annual Club Awards Luncheon. It's a major dive community event. The following are some detail about the "Awards Luncheon":

This event is the one opportunity for all members of the dive community to get together – hear what was accomplished last year and learn about key issues and projects for the current year. It is the place where the Diving Council, our charity - American Charitable Watersport Activities Foundation (ACWA) and the Houston Underwater Film Festival (HUFF) updates everyone. It's the one time of the year when:

Each of our clubs can "break bread" together and celebrate.

Leaders and the critical workers of our community are recognized.

Additions to the community's memorial program are announced.

Time is taken to recognize many of our community's leaders.

We pause a moment to remember those dive club workers who are no longer with us.

Each of us can learn more about the other clubs and members of our community.

**The event is Saturday, Jan. 25, 2025.**

***At Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, near Hillcroft.***

**Social -11:00 AM Lunch - 11:45 AM. Awards and Presentations – 12:15 PM.**

**Tickets are \$30. Tickets are available from Frank Burek, Ja Van Pruett and Mark Leiserowitz. Representatives from each of the dive clubs have tickets for sale to their club members.**

Each club, and the TGCC will present their awards. TGCC known awards at this time are:

Its 2024 **Member-of-the-Year** award to Rodney Dwire.

Its 2024 **Neptune Award** to Betsy Beasley.

Each of the TGCC member clubs will present their 2024 awards at this event.

The Representatives from TGCC's member clubs have chosen the TGCC Officers for 2025 & 2026. They are:

President – Frank Burek  
 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President (Recognition Programs) – Pee Wee Dwire  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President (Legislation, Flower Garden Banks NMS monitoring) – Andy Lewis  
 Treasurer – Mark Leiserowitz  
 Secretary – Ja Van Pruett  
 Webmaster – Tom Burns

Results of TGCC's Neptune Award program 2024:

1<sup>st</sup> Place – Betsy Beasley (11)

2<sup>nd</sup> Place - Craig Beasley (10)

3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Ja Van Pruett (8)

3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Brion Saathoff (8)

4<sup>th</sup> Place – Rodney Dwire (7)

4<sup>th</sup> Place – Christie Emerson (7)

4<sup>th</sup> Place - David Lenderman (7)



# NP Alacranes Reef

## iNaturalist Challenge 2025

Citizen science and nature's photography

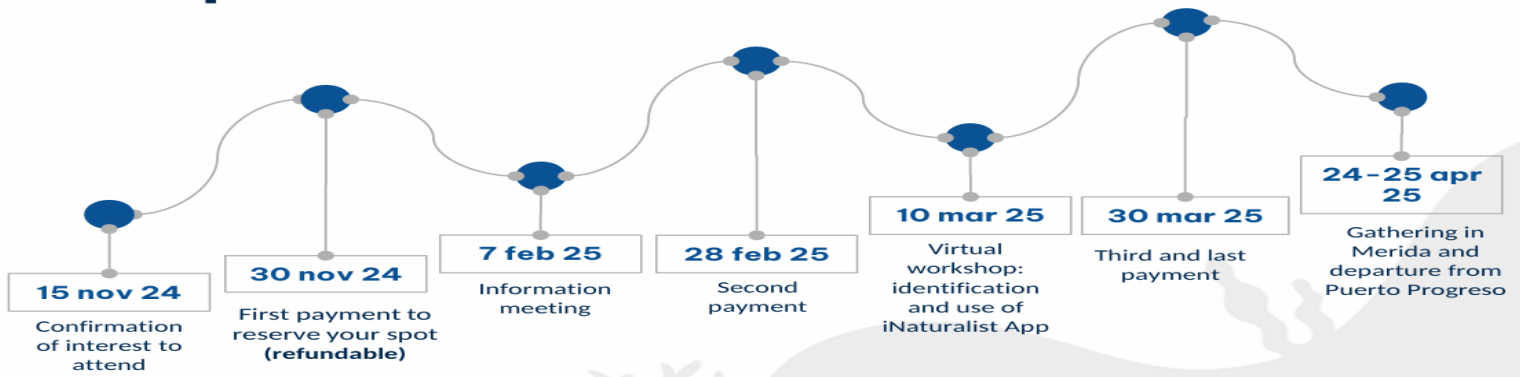
April 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025



[contacto@kalanbio.com](mailto:contacto@kalanbio.com)



# Important dates



## What do you need?

### General profile

Certified divers with interest on photography, science and conservation.

### Abilities

Photographing underwater environments

Basic identification of marine organisms

Responsible handling of diving equipment

Work team

### Requirements

- At least **18 years old**.
- A valid **Open Water** certification or higher with at least **20 documented dives**.
- Diving insurance coverage.
- Participate in a **mandatory orientation session** about the iNaturalist platform, reef species, and safety protocols.

### Essential equipment

#### Personal diving equipment

- Mask, snorkel, and fins.
- Diving regulator and buoyancy control device (BCD).
- Wetsuit suitable for tropical reef conditions.
- Depth gauge or dive computer.

#### Underwater camera

- Waterproof photographic camera or housing compatible with your camera.
- Optional: Underwater lights to improve visibility in deep areas.

#### Security equipment

- Surface Marking Buoy (SMB) and finger spool.

## Why travelling with us?

This event offers a unique opportunity to explore one of **Mexico's** most **biodiverse marine ecosystems**. As part of this expedition, participants will have access to a remote location at a **much more affordable cost** than any other way of reaching the park.

### Price per person

MXN\$25,000-27,500

- Includes:
- Transportation: live on board Caribbean Kraken.
  - Food.
  - 3 days of diving (up to 11 dives), including 2 night dives.
  - Nitrox available at an additional cost.

Does not include tips, Mérida-Progreso transportation, or arrival in Mexico. Does not include any expenses not mentioned.



### Fauna experts

On this expedition, we will be accompanied by **experts in marine and terrestrial fauna**, allowing you to learn more about the great biodiversity found in Alacranes Reef.



**Nuno Simões**

[nunosimoes](#) / Crustaceans



**Deneb Ortigosa**

[deneb16](#) / Molluscs



**María Muciño**

[mary\\_mucino](#) / Crustaceans



**Xochitl Vital**

[vitalar](#) / Molluscs



**Raúl Castillo**

[raulcastillo52](#) / Molluscs



**Lina Jiménez**

[marcelai13](#) / Molluscs



**Antar Pérez**

[antar\\_miaai](#) / Sponges and corals



**Quetzalli Hernández**

[quetianthe](#) / Echinoderms and corals



**Lilian Álvarez**

[lily704](#) / Ascidians



**Pamela Tapia**

[pamela\\_tapia](#) / Molluscs



**Diego Barrales**

[d\\_b](#) / Arachnids and birds



Are you passionate about underwater photography? Then this expedition is for you! Join us on April 25-28<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and venture to National Park Alacranes Reef to capture biodiversity in an exciting citizen science project.



 Location: 120 km north of Progreso, Yucatan, Mexico.

 This reef forms the largest coral structure in the Gulf of Mexico.

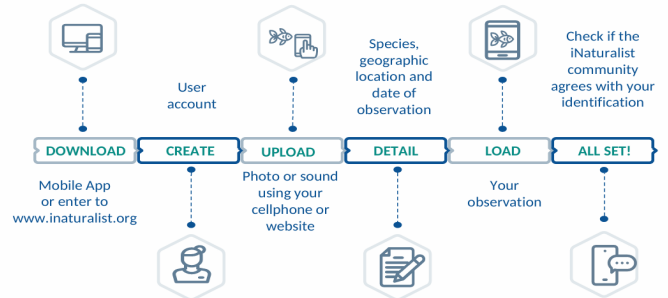
 Platform reef of approximately 300 km<sup>2</sup>.

 More than 1,100 species inhabit this reef, 18 are at risk and 21 are non-native.

 Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO and RAMSAR site by The Convention on Wetlands.

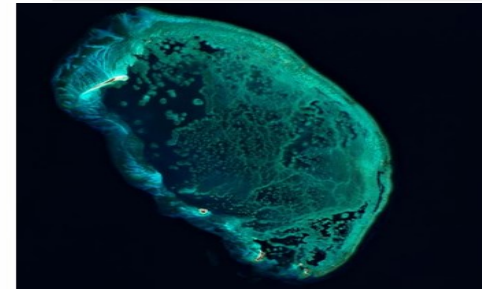
The work group Marine Biodiversity of Yucatan (BMDY), along with Kalanbio A.C., A POCO NO, Arachno\_cosas and the National Laboratory of Coastal Resilience (LANRESC), are looking for passionate naturalists and iNaturalist users to participate in the City Nature Challenge 2025, an international citizen science event.

### How to participate?



### What will the data be used for?

- Now you are a nature scientist.
- You will help document general biodiversity, including the detection of invasive species, rare species, endemic species, commercially important species, and coral diseases.
- You will update the distribution map of species.
- You will contribute to the collection of essential data for marine conservation.
- Your work will directly support the [coastal observatory for resilience from LANRESC](#).



## Activities

### 2-3 immersions per day

To photograph species that inhabit coral reefs.

### Night dive

To photograph species of nocturnal habits.

### Land campaigns

Tours to photograph island flora and fauna.



### Live on board Kraken

Visit to the different islands of PNAA.

### Several visits

Isla Pájaros, Isla Blanquilla, potential visit to Isla Desterrada (depending on weather conditions).

### Snorkel

In shallow areas.





# Using Drones and Tags to Study Rice's Whales

November 06, 2024

NOAA Fisheries and partners got an up-close look at the life of these endangered whales.



*A drone hovers over a Rice's whale, ready to drop a suction cup tag to collect data. Credit: NOAA Fisheries/Ocean Alliance (Permit #21938)*

NOAA Fisheries listed the [Rice's whale](#), previously known as the [Gulf of Mexico Bryde's whale](#), as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act in 2019. Since then, they have been a top research priority for NOAA scientists. Even with dedicated research efforts, many questions remain about the behavior and ecology of these whales, including how they feed, their diving patterns, and when they vocalize.

This summer, NOAA Fisheries partnered with [Ocean Alliance](#) [↗](#) and [Marine Conservation Research](#) [↗](#) to investigate some of these questions. Together, we deployed suction cup tags from drones onto Rice's whales in the Gulf of Mexico to learn more about these endangered whales. Ocean Alliance [recently used this technique](#) for other baleen whales, but this is the first time this method has been used on Rice's whales.



In late August 2024, the team set sail on board the [Song of the Whale](#), a 70-foot sailboat and floating research station. The team included scientists and staff from NOAA Fisheries, the University of Miami's Cooperative Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Studies, Marine Conservation Research, and Ocean Alliance. They spent 21 days at sea searching for whales to tag. The team successfully tagged seven Rice's whales and collected approximately 65 hours of dive and movement data. These data will increase our knowledge of Rice's whale diving patterns and fine-scale movements in their [core distribution area](#).



*The Song of the Whale, a 70-foot sailboat and floating research station aboard which scientists searched for and tagged Rice's whales. Credit: Ocean Alliance*

Some tags also recorded videos—providing a “whale’s-eye view” of their activities. The team collected video footage from three of the whales and observed them diving, feeding, and navigating the underwater landscape.

## Benefits of Suction Cup Tags

Marine scientists often use tags to track animal movement. For an endangered species like the Rice's whale—with approximately 50 individuals remaining—it's important to minimize risks to the animals while studying them. This is where suction cup tags are beneficial. The tags temporarily adhere to the whale's skin and pop off after a few hours or days—without injuring the animal.

The tags recorded data about each whale including:

- Movement, such as pitch and roll
- Direction (heading)
- Acceleration
- Depth
- Calls

In the past, we've [deployed these tags](#) by approaching whales in a small boat and tagging the whales with a long pole. This process can be difficult, requiring very calm weather and close coordination between the tagger and the boat driver. The researchers also need to be careful not to cause too much disturbance to the animals. Due to these complexities, we have only collected data from two Rice's whales using this method.



*Suction cup tags used to study Rice's whales. Credit: NOAA Fisheries/Meaghan Emory*

*Matthew Bowers was the lead scientist for the mission. He stated, “In four prior cruises, we successfully tagged two whales using poles, so it’s a significant breakthrough to be able to tag seven animals on our first cruise using the drone approach.”*

This is where the drones, and our valuable partnership with Ocean Alliance, come in. Ocean Alliance provided the drones, equipment, and pilots for operating them. Ocean Alliance developed this drone-based tag deployment method and has successfully tagged multiple species of fast-moving whales that present similar challenges as Rice’s whales. The speed, maneuverability, and bird’s-eye view provided by drones provide an advantage over traditional tagging methods and cause less disturbance to the whales.

*Annie Gorgone, a marine mammal field biologist, described the experience saying, “It was remarkable to see how effectively this tagging method worked. This expedition will mark a monumental step forward in our understanding of these whales.”*

One added benefit of using suction cup tags is that they are a non-invasive method for collecting genetic information. Once the tags are recovered, the team swabs the suction cups and brings the swab back to the lab for genetic analysis. These data can help scientists further refine population estimates, identify the sex of individuals, and even identify individual whales using their unique genetic sequence.

## How To Tag a Whale with a Drone

The team set out into the Gulf of Mexico to survey the whales’ [core distribution area](#) for individuals to tag. Their habitat extends all around the Gulf’s continental shelf break in waters 100 to 400 meters deep, and most Rice’s whale sightings have been in the northeastern Gulf. This is also where long-term passive acoustic monitoring instruments have detected Rice’s whales on more than 90 percent of days, so the team focused their efforts there.

Once a whale is spotted, a pilot from our partners at Ocean Alliance launches a drone. The drones are equipped with a custom-designed system to carry a tag and release it on command.

The drone operator carefully pilots the drone in the whale’s direction until it is hovering about 100 feet over the whale. It takes a lot of skill to match the whale’s direction and speed. Once they are synced up with the whale’s movement, the pilot slowly lowers the drone to about 30 feet above the whale and waits for it to surface. When the whale comes up to breathe, the pilot releases the tag from the drone. After a short fall—plop!—the tag’s suction cups stick to the whale’s back and it is taken along for the ride.

## Tagging a Rice's Whale With a Drone

NOAA Fisheries and partners got an up-close look at the life of endangered Rice's ...

<  
Share



The tags sometimes come off on their own when they lose suction—typically after about a day. During this study, these tags stayed on the whales anywhere from 15 minutes to 18 hours. The team can also program how long the tag stays on the whale and when it is released from the whale. Once it detaches, the tag floats to the surface of the ocean where the science team can track its immediate location using radio telemetry. Then, they sail to its location, scoop it up, and download the critical data housed inside.

*“We were extremely excited to have the opportunity to collaborate on this project and use our drone tagging expertise for what we think is an ideal use case - a data-deficient, difficult-to-approach, hard-to-study species,” said Chris Zadra, director of drone programs at Ocean Alliance. “We are proud to demonstrate the successful use of this tool with Rice’s whales and aid in furthering our understanding of this enigmatic species.”*

## Results and Implications

The data collected on this expedition specifically focused on understanding Rice’s whale behavior, including:

- Dive behavior
- Feeding ecology
- Vocalizations
- Energetics

A huge bonus with these tags is the ability to “listen” to the whales as they swim underwater. These data will help improve our understanding of their acoustic behavior, including:

- Which whales produce different call types
- How often they produce calls
- How their calling relates to foraging and social behavior

In addition, this will help our acousticians interpret call detections from long-term [passive acoustic recordings](#).

The team will analyze the photographs of the whales sighted during this survey and add them to our [photo-ID database](#). By photographing and observing the same whales through time, we can learn more about the life history and movement patterns of the whales.

*“Being able to successfully use this emerging and non-invasive technique to more efficiently apply tags to these whales is a game changer,” said Jenny Litz, marine mammal branch chief at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center. “The data we can collect from these tags is critical to understanding their foraging behavior, energetic needs, and call behavior. We are so grateful to our partners and excited about the data collected and the possibilities this new tagging method provides.”*



*A Rice's whale swims just under the ocean surface. Credit: NOAA Fisheries/Ocean Alliance (Permit #21938)*



**Miss  
any recent  
HUPS Meetings?**

**Click [here](#) to view them  
on our YouTube channel  
**HUPSdotORG****



**M-V Fling** has been carrying divers out to the World-Class sites at the Flower Garden Banks NMS and beyond! It's by far the best diving in Texas. Come with us to dive in BLUE-WATER and see coral reefs and all the animals there!

726 West Brazos Boulevard, Freeport, TX,

United States, Texas

(979) 233-4445

[info@TexasCaribbean.com](mailto:info@TexasCaribbean.com)

Go view this video to get a small view of the Flower Garden Banks: [https://](https://www.facebook.com/100057303948082/videos/422927503937073)

[www.facebook.com/100057303948082/videos/422927503937073](https://www.facebook.com/100057303948082/videos/422927503937073)

To book:

[texascaribbean.com](http://texascaribbean.com)

# Davinci Resolve Training

submitted by Betsy Beasley



## Davinci for Divers

Davinci for Divers is THE COMPLETE post-production training series for the underwater videographer. It utilizes the free version of Davinci Resolve. Choose your Modules, download the associated footage and follow along with the lessons at your own pace.

Davinci Resolve is the world's only solution that combines professional editing, color correction, visual effects, and audio post-production all in one software tool!

Craig and I reviewed the modules for the author, Pete Lightowler, while he was developing this course, which is specifically targeted at underwater videography. It is wonderful, easy to follow and the answer for those struggling to learn to use Davinci Resolve.

[Click here to go to the website](#)



**Virtual Tickets for HUFF 2024 are available at the HUFF website....[huff.hups.org/shop](https://huff.hups.org/shop)**

**Also available....Virtual Tickets from HUFF 2021, 2022 & 2023**

**Continue to check the website for upcoming HUFF 2024 videos, photos and filmmaker interviews.**

**HUFF 2025 is April 12-13, 2025.**





## American Charitable Watersport Activities Foundation

### 2024 Supporter Registration

The “American Charitable Watersport Activities Foundation” (ACWA) was established by SCUBA divers on March 31, 2023. ACWA is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) public non-profit charity. Staffed by non-paid volunteers, ACWA’s administrative and donation support is provided annually by members of our community.

Supporter Registration for the “American Charitable Watersport Activities Foundation” (ACWA) is open to Dive Clubs and Individuals who reside in the United States of America. 2024 registration is \$20.

“Supporters” on record for 2023 are listed on a “Supporter Master List” and need not complete this form. They continue their charity efforts with their 2024 payment of \$20 to ACWA’s treasurer - Mark Leiserowitz (contact information listed below).

New “Supporters” need to complete this form to provide ACWA with contact and IRS reporting information. To join as an individual (must be a certified scuba diver, or a member of a dive club) - fill out the application below. Please print legibly as e-mail addresses will be utilized to keep supporters abreast with the charity’s status and your name as identified below, used in any future donation reporting required by you or the IRS.

Dive Club \_\_\_\_\_

or

Certifying Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

C-Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Make Checks Payable To: ACWA, c/o Mark Leiserowitz, 5205 De Milo Dr., Houston, Texas 77092**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone / Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Click [here](#) to view the  
**Fall 2023 Video Contest**

**SPRING 2025 VIDEO CONTEST**

**Entries are due by midnight May 1. Short Video and Feature Length Video categories. Voting will take place on the HUPS Video Contest Facebook page through May and winners will be announced at the June HUPS meeting.**

**View the rules on [hups.org](http://hups.org).**

**Address questions to [betsytennis@gmail.com](mailto:betsytennis@gmail.com)**

**Please transfer files to Betsy Beasley via the free service - [WeTransfer.com](http://WeTransfer.com)**

# Membership

## Info for Dues Payments

**\$35 single person membership**

**\$45 family membership**

**Payable via PayPal on-line through HUPS webpage or cash/check. If choosing to pay via cash/check, please let us know so we can provide to you a mailing address. <https://www.hups.org/join>**

**Contact JaVan Pruettt at [caladyfish@gmail.com](mailto:caladyfish@gmail.com)**

# SAVE THE HUFF 2025 DATE

April 12-13

at Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston (MATCH)

## Monthly Photo Contest

**Photo contest entries are due on the Wednesday before the upcoming monthly meeting. Please send them to Martin Daniels at**

**[HUPS Photo Contest@googlegroups.com](mailto:HUPS_Photo_Contest@googlegroups.com)**

**Address questions to Martin at**

**[martin.daniels3@gmail.com](mailto:martin.daniels3@gmail.com)**

### **From the Editor.....**

Send program ideas to Dennis Deavenport  
at [ddeavenport@comcast.net](mailto:ddeavenport@comcast.net)

Send workshop ideas to David Lenderman  
at [underh2o@mac.com](mailto:underh2o@mac.com)

Send newsletter entries to Betsy Beasley  
at [betsytennis@gmail.com](mailto:betsytennis@gmail.com)

## 2024 Meeting Presentations

Who	When	Topic	Expanded Topic
Betsy Beasley & Others	January 8	“Anything Goes Video Night”	Video clips and short films from HUPSters
Paul Cater Deaton	February 5	“Muck Monsters” & side trip to Star Wars	Film featuring muck critters and a topside romp through Paul’s Star Wars cosplay adventures
Dennis Deavenport	March 11	“Siren Song” A train of thought jaunt above & below water from the ill-fated MV Indo Siren	A retrospective on the Oceanic Ventures trip from Raja Ampat, by Halmahera, and to Sulewesi
Ken Knezick	April 1	“Composition for Underwater Photographers”	To include an Invited photo critique on images donated by members
Justin Wallace, David Lenderman, Betsy Beasley	May 6	HUFF 2024 Retrospective	An overview of the winning films and a short film of the weekend events
Tanya Burnett	June 3	“Ditch the Tank”	A presentation on snorkeling with humpbacks.
Steven Wolborsky	July 1	“Shooting Macro & Super Macro”	Not only about macro & super macro, but camera, lenses, and diopters
The Cuba Expedition - Invited special guests contributing to the fun	August 12	“Cuba - The Whole Enchilada - Havana & Diving Jardines de la Reina”	Traveling to Havana, diving aboard the Avalon IV in Jardines de la Reina and pointers for traveling to restricted countries.
Walter Marti	September 9	Blackwater Adventure	When, where, how and more about blackwater diving.
Scott Singleton (Truk) & Justin Wallace (Polynesian Atolls)	October 7	“Extreme Pacific - Truk Wrecks & Outer Atolls of French Polynesia	Two Not-So Easy Pieces diving in some of the more extreme Pacific locations.
David Lenderman	November 11	Night Divin’ and Ai Music Makin’	Opportunities and Challenges in the Dark: Tips and techniques to get the most out of your night dives + Ai Music making tips
Martin and Mary Daniels	December 2	Christmas Dinner/Best of HUPS, Creative and Video Contests	Pot Luck Dinner/ Best of HUPS in Novice, Intermediate and Advanced Categories/ Creative Contest/ Video Contest

# 2025 HUPS Dates

## Reserved at Bayland Community Center

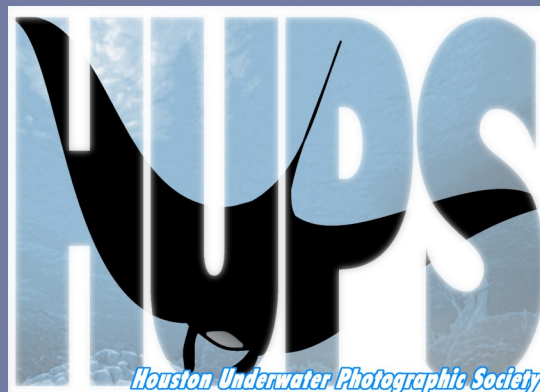
**General meetings** - Jan 6, Feb 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, June 2, July 7, August 4, Sep 8, Oct 6, Nov 10, Dec 8

**BOD Meetings** - TBD times - 2:00-4:00

**Workshops** - TBD

The BOD and Workshop dates are likely to change, as needed.

Stay Tuned!






## DECEMBER 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24		26	27	28
29	30	31				

## JANUARY 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				2	3	4
5	6 	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19		21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

## FEBRUARY 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13		15
16		18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	



Monthly Meeting 7 pm at Bayland and on Zoom

The Houston Underwater Photographic Society  
meets at the Bayland Community Center from  
7 pm - 9 pm, the first Monday of each month  
(except Monday holidays).

6400 Bissonnet, Houston, Tx. 77074

**Visitors are always welcome!**

## 2025 HUPS Officers

President: Craig Beasley

Vice President: Dennis Deavenport

Secretary: Tammy Allyn

Treasurer: Debbie Mensay

Membership: JaVan Pruett

Photo Contest: Martin Daniels

Video Contest/ HUFF Coordinator/ Newsletter: Betsy Beasley

Workshop Coordinator: David Lenderman

TGCC Reps: Frank Burek, JaVan Pruett and Mark Leiserowitz

Webmaster: Joe Holden

Trip Coordinator: Joe Haws

Historian: Frank Burek

Special Events: Mary Daniels

Merchandizing Coordinator: Sandy Bryan

Moody Gardens Coordinator: David Lenderman

## 2025 HUPS Board of Directors

Frank Burek	Henry Ragland	David Lenderman
Mary Daniels	Monica Losey	Betsy Beasley
Martin Daniels	Mike Greuter	Russell Ramsey
Jim Mensay	Joe Haws	Brion Saathoff



[hups.org](http://hups.org)



[youtube/user/HUPSdotORG](https://www.youtube.com/user/HUPSdotORG)



[facebook.com/  
groups/174166478778](https://www.facebook.com/groups/174166478778)



<https://www.instagram.com/>