

# LIBERTY CALL



RMC (SW) Ken Cone photo

## Taking the plunge

SCUBA diving offers more Hawaiian sights to see, see, see at the bottom of the deep, blue sea, sea, sea

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NAVY REGION HAWAII

Much of the world's most popular recreational areas are crowded, too far or too difficult to get to. When it comes to uncluttered recreation - unless you're into extreme sports - there aren't many places left to explore.

But for those hearty souls willing to take the plunge, there's a whole new world just below the water's surface that the entire family can explore.

Qualified divers are a tightly-knit group of explorers who enjoy the excitement and many sights under the world's oceans, lakes, rivers and even rare flooded caves.

Morale, Welfare and Recreation's dive shop, located at Pearl Harbor's Scott Pool, is run by San Diego-based Ocean Enterprises. They also operate an outlet in the main Navy Exchange. In business for more than 19 years, Ocean Enterprises has made the military community their prime focus serving at Naval bases from Hawaii to Germany.

"We're a five-star professional instructor development center," said Ray Cone, store manager and PADI course instructor at Scott Pool.

That five-star rating is not just a title, it's a level of service they provide that they have to qualify for periodically.

"We offer all levels of diver service, including repair, rental, sales and service for most name-brand dive equipment," Cone said.

The dive shop offers full, professional services for someone just interested in taking up a new, exciting hobby and for those who want to progress to the working-professional level.

"Our training goes from beginner to instructor level," Cone continued.

With normally flat water conditions around Hawaii and a common visibility range of more than 50 feet, one of the best things about diving in this area is the abundance of marine life a diver can see.

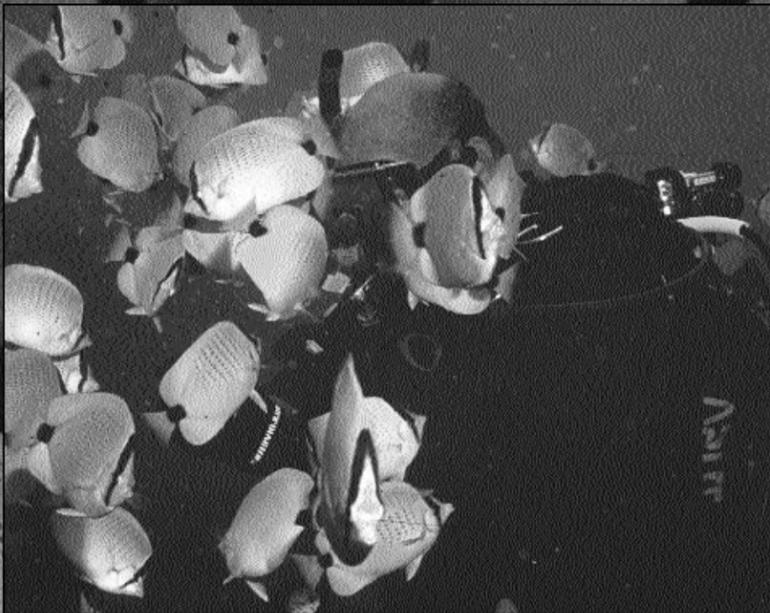
"My best diving experience in Hawaii was a chance encounter with a 30-foot long whale shark," Cone recalled. "I was diving off the coast of Waikiki when the world's largest fish passed by. They're plankton feeders, swim very close to the surface and are very docile. It's safe to swim with them as long as you don't get too close for them to nudge you. They're powerful creatures. It was an unbelievable experience."

"I remember being totally humbled by a 50-foot humpback whale," said Mark "Sharkey" Stephenson, Dive Master at Ocean Enterprises' Scott Pool location. "Seeing something like that doesn't happen often, but you have to be under the water to experience something like that. It's an awesome experience. Something that you remember for a long time."

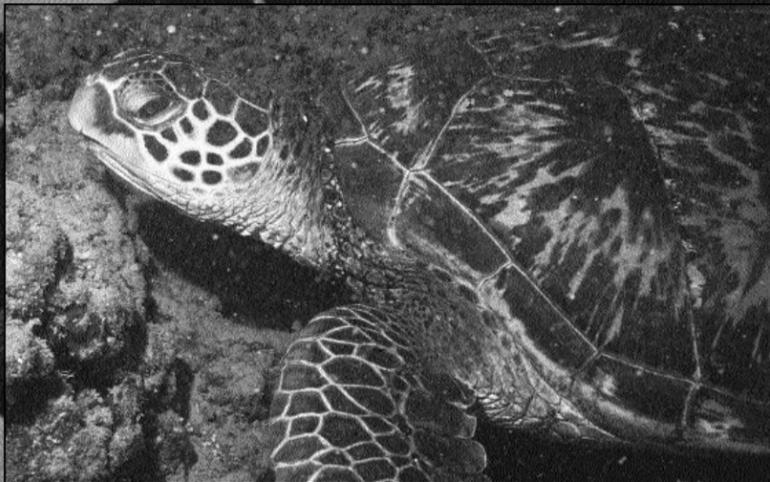
Whales migrate through Hawaiian waters, spend their winters in the area. Their songs can be heard for miles. There's a lot of other exciting animal life in local waters like manta rays, dolphin, colorful reef fish and the occasional reef shark. Some divers enjoy the thrill of treasure hunting for exotic seashells, capturing the sights with underwater cameras or wreck diving. But whatever the motivation for going, Cone said that diving safety is premium.

"Safety is absolutely our top priority," Cone said firmly. "Safety and fun. We want to have everyone go out for their dive, have a good time and come back happy."

For more information about Ocean Enterprises visit their website at: [www.oceanent.com](http://www.oceanent.com) or call 422-5990.



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(Top) A Moorish Idol swims over reefs off the coast of Waianae. Visibility of 50 to 100 feet is common in Hawaiian waters. (Left) "Sharkey" gets a closeup look at a school of fish. (Below) A sea turtle rests in a reef bed in 40 feet of water.