

# Lighthouse Point

JUNE 2014

## SPECIAL SUMMER ADVENTURE ISSUE

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SS Copenhagen

Trekking  
into Africa

Kayak  
Fishing  
to the Max

Building a  
Coral Reef

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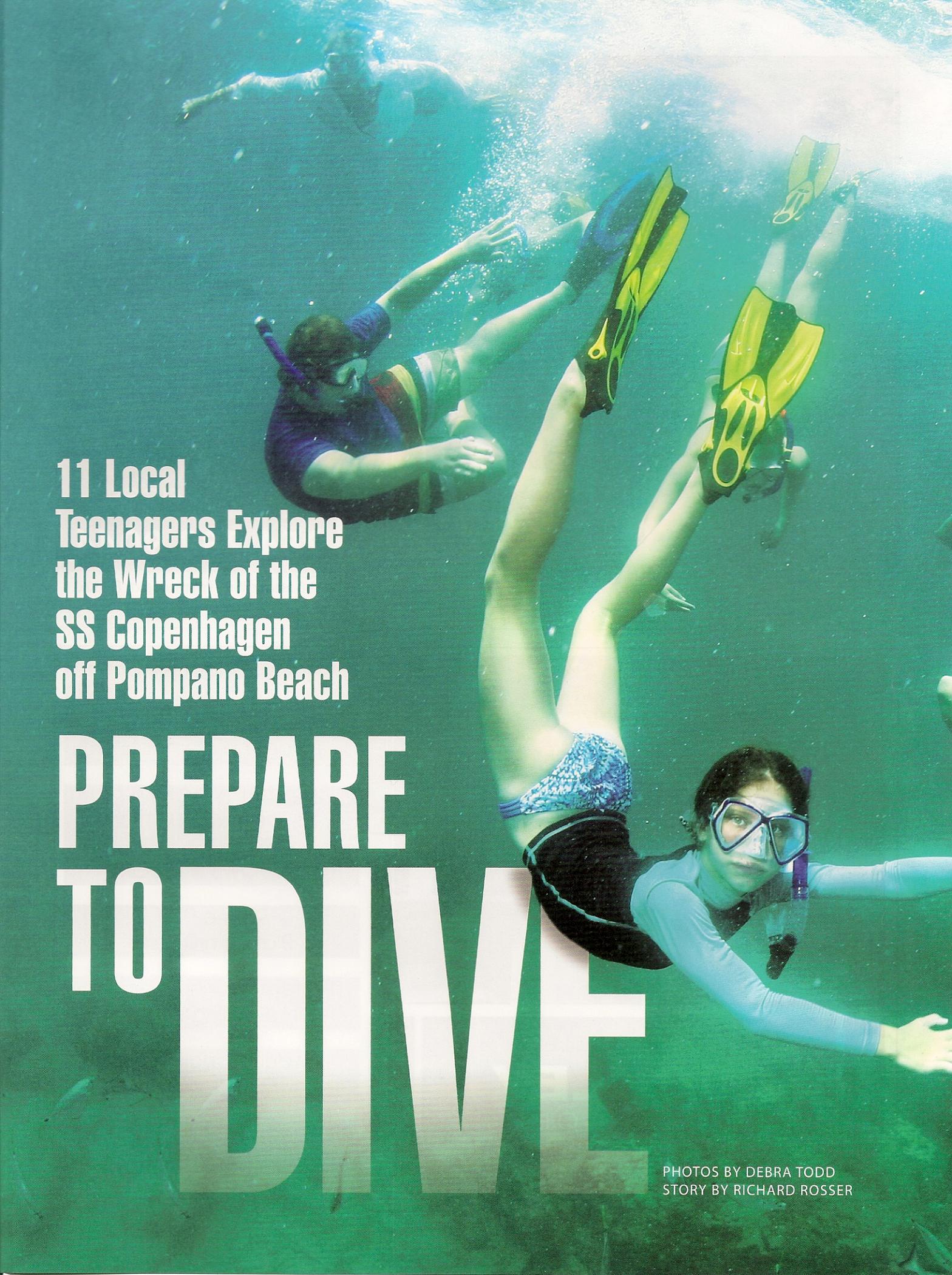
TIPS FOR A MORE  
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Happy Snaps

MEMORABLE MOMENTS  
AROUND THE POINT

Jack Weiss

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**11 Local  
Teenagers Explore  
the Wreck of the  
SS Copenhagen  
off Pompano Beach**

# PREPARE TO DIVE

PHOTOS BY DEBRA TODD  
STORY BY RICHARD ROSSER



Less than a mile offshore from the venerable Sea Watch restaurant in Lauderdale-By-The-Sea, lies the wreck of the SS Copenhagen which sank in 1900. Eleven local teenagers went to explore it and the surrounding reef to show that remarkable adventures are just a few minutes away and quite affordable.

We gathered at the Pompano Dive Center around 8:30am for the 30-minute scoot past the Hillsboro Lighthouse and down the beach to the wreck. For about \$40, snorkelers get the boat ride, good-quality rental gear, snacks, sodas, fresh water showers (very nice) and a pass on trawling or cleaning up the boat.

This is a great snorkeling trip and a beginner scuba trip for the area. The depths range from 15 to 30 feet which

makes the reef one of the most accessible for snorkelers coming from the Lighthouse Point area. Scuba divers have many more options in the region.

The SS Copenhagen shipwreck site was selected in 1994 as the fifth of now 11 underwater archeological preserves established by the State of Florida. The "Lothus" shipwreck preserve is off the coast from Boynton Beach and the "Half Moon" off Key Biscayne are the nearest two preserves to the SS Copenhagen.

The SS Copenhagen last sailed from Philadelphia with 4,940 tons of coal. It was headed for Cuba. It burned coal to create steam for propulsion but it had masts and sails in case of engine failure. The 325-foot, steel-hulled vessel passed the Jupiter lighthouse with Captain William S. Jones



## ABOUT THE SS COPENHAGEN

The SS Copenhagen made its first Atlantic crossing in 1898 and met an early demise two years later. The ship sank in 1990 on a trip from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Havana, Cuba. It ran aground and got stuck on a reef. The ship was carrying coal. Efforts to release the ship from the reef were unsuccessful. It remained above water for many years and was even used by the Navy for target practice during World War II. The ship now lies in 16-31 feet of water and has become an artificial reef.

giving the order to sail South-South-East as he retired for the night. The ship's distance from shore was miscalculated and it hit the reef at full speed.

Intensive efforts to dislodge the vessel were unsuccessful so the crew of 26 worked for days to unload the cargo of coal. Eventually the \$250,000 ship was called a complete loss.

During World War II, U.S. Navy fighter planes stationed at Fort Lauderdale used the rusted hull for target practice. During our little trek, a 50-caliber bullet was found on the sea bed; a rare find but certainly part of the known history surrounding the wreck.

The dive center pairs the Copenhagen dive with a spot at "The Nursery" reef just north of the wreck. The water is more

shallow and provides for good reef diving and snorkeling with an abundance of marine life.

The boat was immediately swarmed by hundreds of fish eager for an easy meal courtesy of frequent divers and fisherman that moor at the reef. No need to use anchors as the reef is dotted with large floating mooring balls to which boats attach easily without disturbing the reef below.

Our trip was aboard the Sea Siren which was comfortable, clean and spacious. The captain and crew were adamant about safety first with mandatory role calls before leaving each dive spot. It was clear they took that task very seriously. The scuba divers entered the water first and my intrepid crew of teenagers jumped in from all parts of the boat.

**TOP** Jesse Monserrat, Conrad Schlegal, Alexandra Gonzalez, Tara Shulman, Jacob Rhinehardt, Zack Pomeroy, Jack Weiss and Darcy Haughey  
**BOTTOM** Tara Shulman **OPPOSITE** Jesse takes the plunge.

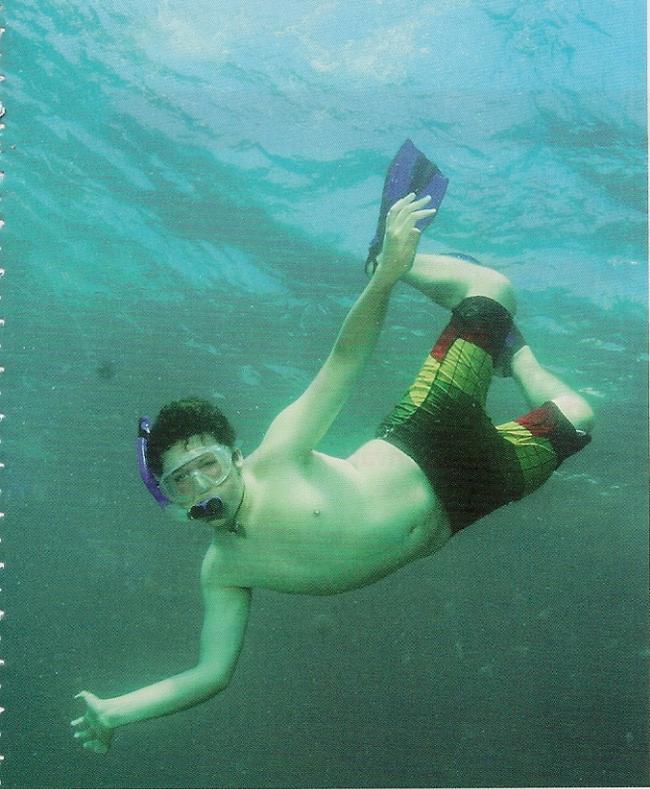


SS Copenhagen stranded on reef





ROXY



The wreck is scattered and is more the idea of a wreck and than the awe inspiring spectacle that newer wrecks can be. The short travel time and affordable cost make it worth the effort for beginning divers and especially children. An out-of-town guest from New York can be surrounded by marine life in warm ocean water just a few hours after landing at a local airport – for \$40 plus the cost of sun screen which is strongly advised (especially on backs as they are above the surface for the four hour trip.

The original anchor is the highlight of the dive but a bit deeper than most could dive. Another prominent feature of the dive is the large plaque erected on the bottom to mark and commemorate the historic site.

This dive can be accomplished on private boats or accessed directly from the beach. Boats can reach the shipwreck from mooring balls three or four (counting from the south). From the beach, it's a solid 30-minute swim to the dive site which only strong swimmers should consider.

There are a couple excellent videos of the dives on You Tube. The best one was made by Pompano Dive Center which lead me to contact them about the trip.

**OPPOSITE** Ashley Nouss  
**TOP** Jacob Rhinehardt **RIGHT** Jack Weiss

*Special thanks to Pompano Dive Center.*  
954-788-0208  
[or pompano.divecenter.com](http://pompano.divecenter.com)

