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Diana Nyad Xtreme Dream 103 miles. Cuba to Florida. Summer 2011

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Elaine Lafferty

Posted by Xtreme Dream Team on Oct 17, 2011 in Blog | 8 comments

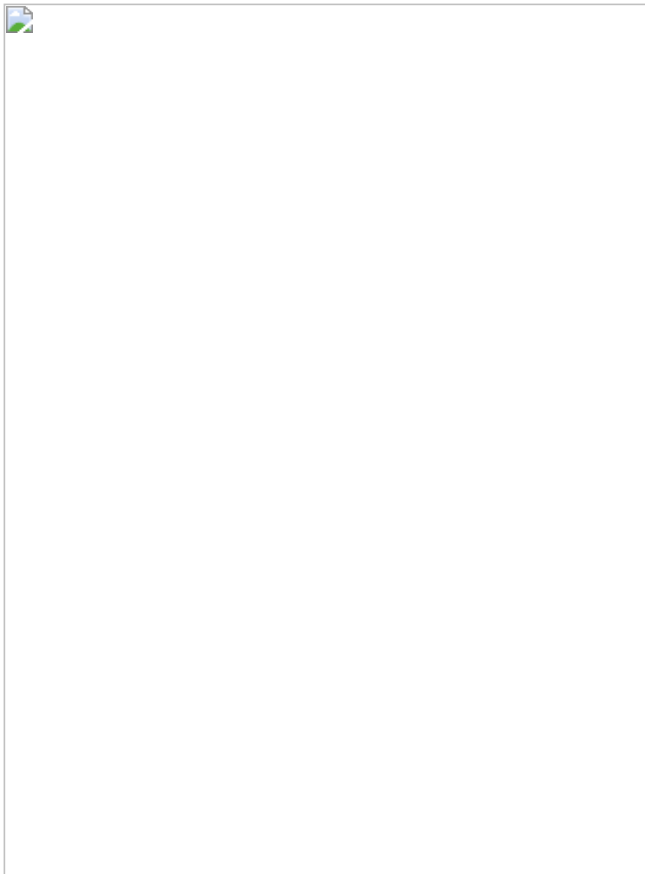


Photo: Christi Barli

It was three weeks ago that Diana Nyad began her third attempt over a lifetime to achieve a dangerous, record-breaking, gorgeous dream...a marathon open water swim from Cuba to the shores of Florida.

Archives

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Diana's Tweets



- Happy Hanukkah!
<http://t.co/RLMRBV0E> about 9 hours ago from HootSuite
- A true classic! Two of the greats. MT @chatterblast: Bowie & Bing. The greatest, most amazing, Christmas video: <http://t.co/xLFjqIYL> about 12 hours ago from HootSuite
- @freeagentsonly Thanks, that's a pretty good description of it. Did U know I've been nominated by @openwatersource <http://t.co/WY9Wxmm6> 11:11:25 PM December 19, 2011 from HootSuitein reply to FreeAgentsOnly
- @deekyann Thank you so much. Its such a pleasure to be a motivation to you. Did U know I've been nominated by @openwatersource... 11:09:44 PM December 19, 2011 from HootSuitein reply to DeeKyAnn
- @secondact Thank You! 11:08:22 PM December 19, 2011 from HootSuitein

If she hadn't sustained life-threatening stings from the most venomous creatures in the ocean – box jellyfish – I believe Diana would have made it, and I'm not someone known for sunny optimism. She swam 92 miles over 41 hours. For God's sake she wasn't even tired at the point she ended it... but

Diana made a decision that Sunday to live the rest of her life when the doctors told she actually might she sustained another sting that night.

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About this capture



Photo: Christi Barli

I was one of 30 people on that expedition three weeks ago. We were aboard three escort boats that left Key West September 22 around 2 pm for the 15 hour trip to Havana. Diana and her chief handler Bonnie Stoll flew over the day before. Our crew got to spend a merry day exploring Havana before Diana entered the sea just after 6 pm. And what a glorious start! Calm waters with a perfect temperature of 88 degrees. The stroke that Diana The Swimmer is famous for- rhythmic and symmetrical, the unlikely sound of a human moving purposefully and gently across an ocean – was on full display as the sun set.

And then, just barely two hours later...a different sound. Guttural screams that shattered a dark night. Honestly, you can't imagine it and I am going to fail miserably here at describing it fully. It wasn't the screams themselves..that's horror movie stuff we are all pretty numbed to. It was the calling out, counting, over and over... "One two three four five six seven eight! Oh God! One two three four five six seven eight! Help me! One two three four..." Indescribable pain yes, but more terrifying the jolting realization that this woman was being paralyzed in the middle of the ocean, struggling to move and to breathe, to live...



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Photo: Christi Barli

Listen, here's the truth; I don't think any of us who were on that expedition are really over it. We are back to our regular lives, our jobs. But chores are being neglected, deadlines missed. We are distracted. We are still back there. We are focused on making sure supplies are on the boats. We are recalculating the navigation plans, watching the currents. We are sleeping in shifts. And we still know how it's going to feel like when we touch the Florida coast after 60 or 70 hours at sea. Let me explain.

I've known Diana Nyad almost 20 years, quite casually. We both worked in Los Angeles as journalists, she often as a sports journalist, me as anything but. Diana Nyad is an athlete. I'm not. But she is one extremely fun and funny person, and may well be the very best story-teller I have ever met. So we're friends. (Up to a point that is: if chirpy Diana calls you on a Saturday morning and says "hey, want to go for a bike ride?," know that she means something like 25 miles. I think I once hung up on her.)

Diana is an athlete, but she's a weird one. She doesn't keep score. She rarely ever mentioned scores in her sports journalism. She is onto to something way bigger than score keeping.



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Photo: Christi Barli

Diana has always been all about spiritual connection, about living life fully in the present, about being truly alive. It's been her lifelong message in every thing she's done. It's why she has inspired millions of people – yes, 1.8 million people followed her on Twitter that Sunday – with her call to take risks, have courage, persevere and follow your heart.

She's the real deal. People know it. Governments know it. (Never mind swimming 92 miles...Any idea how challenging it is to get the both the border-obsessed United States and Cuban governments to say "Hey sure!" to a flotilla of three boats with 30 Americans and one woman in the water on short notice?)

This dream of hers, this swim between these two countries who don't speak with one another, is epic. Her message of connection resonates. Her message of relevance to everyone over 40 years old, resonates. And frankly, her competence and toughness strike a universal cord.



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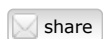


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Photo: Christi Barli

So everyone wants to know...will Diana Nyad try again? With more protection against deadly box jelly stings, should she try again? And what about you, dear reader, will you try again to reach your other shore?

Right now, for me...well I've got some deadlines to meet. And I will. But you know, thinking about it...I kind of like sleeping in shifts...



8 Comments



Shelly mandell

October 17, 2011

Nyad ia an amazing woman and inspiration. Elaine your perfect post and pictures brought me back to key west. Diana swims and you write, and both inspire.

Reply



Rev. Melinda V. McLain

October 17, 2011

Inspiring story – glad to read this and to keep up with Nyad's ongoing extreme dream. Love the final question – will you try again to reach your other shore? That'll preach old friend. Best to you and to all.

Reply



Bia

October 21, 2011

Thank you Melinda! Miss you...

Reply

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khalil boueri

October 21, 2011

dear shelly :very nicely put.. you hit it right khalil boueri

lebanese 63 years old. swimmer.. living in lebanon

<http://www.watermaster.com.lb>

Reply



Laura B.

October 17, 2011

You're right, she is the real deal! Should she try again? Only if for Diana it is a burning desire. If she can't sleep for thinking about it, then the answer is yes. I hope she does whatever will make her happy. As far as the Box Jellyfish, They are hard enough to see in daylight, how do you go about protecting Diana in the long night hours when you can't see them at all? She is truly a brave person who will forever inspire those of us who understand what she is all about. For those who can't understand, I hope one day with maturity you will.

Reply



Swimming Holiday

October 18, 2011

Elaine, we feel Diana will try again, its just the matter of time. We'll be there swimming with her!

Reply



khalil boueri

October 21, 2011

what a lady!!! inspiring ..so inspiring!!!!!! it is here 5 20 am . i mean in byblos (most ancient city in the world) in lebanon.. am 63 years old and a swimmer ..

Diana you gave me a huge boost... thank u and good luck for ur next trial khalil

Reply



Laura B.

October 21, 2011

Khalil Boueti, Your country is one of the most beautiful

undiscovered places in the world. The people a delight and only now the world is finding out about it because of it's food tours!

There is so much to see and do in your country and it will be my pleasure to do so in 2012! I can't wait!

Reply

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Diana Nyad's Xtreme Dream

"Diana is more than a swimmer. She's a beacon of hope to us all that we can dream big, live life large, and look back at all of it with no regrets whatsoever."

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Xtreme Dream. For Diana Nyad's representation please contact Pam Derderian