

Diana Nyad Extreme Dream

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Diana's Birthday Insight



Well, 60 was this magical looming number in my mind. 60 was the moment that prompted me toward the inspiration to find my strength, to remind myself that I still have plenty of chi left in this spirit, in this body. 60 was my connection to the millions of you who understand the fear of only looking back, no longer forward.

So the Cuban visas didn't come through last week when the crew and I sat here in Key West in a heap of frustration and watched 2 1/2 days of glassy seas come and go. Then yesterday I turned 61. (The outpouring of inspiring birthday messages from all of you, old friends and new FaceBook friends alike, was a major lift! Thank you so very much for your time and generosity of spirit!)

So be it. I'll do this swim when I'm 61, instead of 60. The skeleton crew down here with me threw a party at our rental house. One of our Boat Captains, Dee Brady, celebrated her birthday yesterday as well so we gathered around like sailors and fishermen and swimmers are wont to do, and told a lot of tall tales.

I haven't shared with you so many of the details of the enormous variety of tasks at hand to put something of this scope together. For instance, we have discovered that it is next-to-impossible for me to swim close to the guiding Escort boat in the full dark of night. I veer way off to the right.

Not only is this unsafe because the boat handlers can no longer see me whatsoever. The kayak support paddler is always with me but it's not prudent for the two of us, very low to the surface, to be far out at sea on our own at night, with huge ships crossing channels. Also, the Escort boat is holding a steady course. Any distance and time I spend swimming away from that boat, and then back to it, adds on to the distance and time needed to get to the other shore in the end.

So David (navigator), Stuart (shark protection kayaker) and Captain John (inventor extraordinaire) have been experimenting with a slew of night-light rigging systems. They've come up with a white sailcloth streamer of sorts that trails under me, almost like a lane in a swimming pool, about 21 feet out to the starboard side of the boat. But when it got very choppy the other night, the light on it tipped, the streamer unfurled, and I was once again lost and hopelessly drifted out to the right. The tricky part is that bait fish, and then the sharks behind them, are attracted to bright lights, especially white and green.... so we need to light the streamer well for me to follow it, but we have to be able not to cast too much light on it. They're trying red lights, as they evidently don't read as well to the fish below. And you know which fish we mean.

Right now we're doing a bunch of night swims, these three guys constantly trying the new version of this rig until we get the most efficient one designed.

More details to come. Sanjay Gupta is doing a one-hour special for CNN on all these various science/medical eccentricities that develop around this venture. That will air in October.

Thanks again for all the wonderful bday wishes.....from your 61-year-old friend, diana

Diana Nyad

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