

On Friday, August 4, 2006, Cindy LaRosa and Kevin Magee drove 8 hours from Cleveland, OH, to Rogers City, MI, to go diving on some of the best deep wrecks in the Great Lakes. Rogers City is in the rural northeast corner of Michigan on the western shore of Lake Huron. Meeting them there was Dean Ziegler, a member of the Bay Area Divers (BAD) and his son Eric. Dean had earlier towed his 25' Sport-Craft "Ziggy II" from Ohio and set up camp at Kelly's Venture Inn campground. Dean also obtained and delivered to the campsite the helium, oxygen, and argon cylinders from The Engine Shop, which is conveniently located nearby.

Each morning Dean's boat was put in the water at a public boat ramp at Rogers City or Presque Isle, depending on the wrecks visited. The campground served as home base where the boat was stored each night, gases were mixed, and we slept. Air top offs were obtained regularly at the dive shop Great Lakes Divers in Rogers City 5 miles north of the campground. Steve Kroll, the owner of the shop, also runs an excellent charter service to all of the wrecks for those interested in seeing them without towing one's own boat. His web site is listed below. The wrecks in this area are spectacular. All sit high off the hard bottom with almost no silting evident and are in excellent condition. However, almost all are in the 150'-200' range.

<http://www.greatlakesdivers.com/>

Everyone had multiple sets of tanks to help alleviate some of the daily gas blending chores. Depending on the depth, the diving was done using single 120's with H-valves, doubles, and one or two stage bottles. Bottom water temperatures were 38-42 deg F, the thermocline was between 40'-50' or 60'-70', and 70-73 deg F water was on the surface. Visibility was excellent with 60'-100' of viz seen on the wrecks with a layer of small mussels covering them.

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Saturday morning, August 5, 2206, Scott Lang and Brandon Schwartz joined the group for the first dives of the trip. The first wreck was the "F.T. Barney" out of Rogers City. It was a 2-masted schooner carrying a cargo of coal when it sank in 160' of water after a collision with another schooner in 1868. Because the wreck is relatively shallow compared to the other wrecks in the area, it is a good starter dive. However, it is very intact and equals or exceeds the deeper wrecks in terms of quality. The mooring was tied to the windlass at the bow, which points west, and the deck is at 145'. The bowsprit has a very impressive 30'-40' jib boom attached with broken martingale stay chains hanging from it at various points along its length. The jib boom is a prominent feature of the wreck and is rare since they are usually broken off during sinking. Bobstay chains are also attached to the bowsprit and connect to the stem of the ship. Two wood-stocked anchors are on the wreck, but the port anchor and its cathead have broken loose from the railing and are hung up against the bowsprit. The starboard anchor is

still hanging from its cathead on the railing. Both anchors have their chains attached and go to their respective hawse pipes.

An aft-entry companionway with a sheltered roof over the top is immediately behind the windlass with vertical steps going down below decks to the chain locker. Previous penetrations of this companionway revealed two split rooms below deck with chain filling the starboard one and some stray pieces of coal on the floor. The linkages to a single-cylinder hand pump stick up from the deck aft of the companionway. The foremast is broken off near its base, and mounted against the aft side of the mast stub is a small winch. The remains of the foremast can be seen lying on the bottom off the port side. Its topmast is still attached but broken off above the steps. The crosstrees are in place with several planks across them to create a platform. Lying on the deck are both the gaff and boom of the foremast. A cargo hatch, complete with an intact wooden cover, is behind the mast stub. Two more cargo hatches exist further aft with their hatch covers partly smashed or missing. Inside can be seen the coal cargo filling the ship completely.

All deck equipment has slid/fallen to the starboard railing, including a pile of chain from the windlass. It appears the ship listed heavily to starboard when sinking before coming to rest on an even keel on the bottom. Four shovels can be found near the bow leaning against the starboard railing or lying on the deck. Amidships the capstan lies on its side against the starboard railing, leaving its base plate on the centerline. The centerboard winch also lies fallen against the starboard railing with chain running across the deck to its centerline hole. All the railings are completely intact with a set of five deadeyes for the foremast and a set of four deadeyes for the mainmast. At the stern the mainmast is standing, and looking up the crosstrees can be seen at the top. The mainmast's boom is fallen and partially hanging over the railing on the starboard side. Mast hoops are still stacked on the mainmast, and another small winch is mounted against the aft side of the mast. One of the three cargo hatches is located between the mast and cabin.

The cabin is completely intact with a double-barreled hand pump just forward of it and a companionway into the cabin on the port side. On the roof near the companionway is the exhaust hole for the stove with protective metal guards over it. Inside the cabin are the scattered remains of furniture, two rooms on the port side, and two rooms on the starboard side. The doors and walls for these rooms are collapsed, and window openings are visible along both sides of the cabin. In the middle of the back wall of the cabin is another companionway, and next to it on the port side is a box that appears to have allowed passing things to the helmsman from the cabin without using the companionway. The top of the box has a small circular metal cover with breathing holes punched in it. Resting on top of the box were several dishes and the ship's compass. More ceramic wares were also on the cabin roof. Immediately behind the aft companionway on the steering deck is the ship's wheel with its associated steering gear exposed

behind it. The wheel is slightly damaged since it points to the port side. Two lifeboat davits point straight out from the extreme corners of the stern, and the transom and rudder can be examined behind the ship.

Against the hull on the bottom forward of the cabin on the starboard side is a large stockless Navy-style anchor. Its shank is broken, and a large two-pronged hole runs up the side of the hull above the anchor and destroys the railing in this area. This anchor is from the modern era and probably came from a lake freighter waiting to enter the Rogers City Calcite limestone quarry. It was present when the wreck was found in the early 1980's, so the event happened sometime before this. The laker managed to snag the wreck with its anchor, damaging the wreck's side extensively, and possibly toppling the foremast before finally losing the anchor. This is the only damage to an otherwise fabulous wreck. Finally, sitting upright on the deck a little forward of the anchor damage is a navigation lantern with a green lenses on one side and red lenses on the other side. A metal cover exists on the backside and may have been used to cover whichever side wasn't needed. This lantern formerly rested on the bottom but has since been relocated by divers to the deck for easier viewing.

Dive treasure was lost but then found on the wreck. Bottom time was 20 minutes, total run time was 48 minutes, 25/20 trimix and 100% oxygen were used, and max depth was 150'.

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As a second dive, Scott and Brandon dove the "Barney" again. Meanwhile, Kevin, Cindy, and Eric decided to dive another wreck off Rogers City. After waiting ashore and touring the Rogers City annual summer carnival in the afternoon, they loaded their gear for a trip to this wreck. It is a two-masted schooner that sank in 130' of water but has not been positively identified. It was originally believed to be the "Perseverance," which sank in 1855 in a collision, but it is now believed to be the "Northwestern," which sank in 1850 in a collision. The bow points west, is intact, stands 10'-15' high off the bottom, and leans at a 45 degree angle to the starboard side. The bowsprit is present, and underneath is a small scrollhead. Teasingly, there are name boards on both sides of the bowsprit, but no name can be read on them since they were probably painted. Both anchors are lying on the bottom partially buried with their chains leading up to their respective hawse pipes. The forecastle deck is intact with a windlass on the deck, and the anchor chains lead through the hawse pipes and wrap around the windlass.

Immediately aft the whole wreck disintegrates into a jumble of debris on the bottom. Both sides are collapsed, and the middle of the wreck is filled with wooden debris. Both masts have fallen to the starboard side and proceed far out away from the wreck. Their bases are still located in the center of the wreck, and an integral five rail wraps around the circumference of each mast near the base.

The centerboard box has also fallen on its side, and nearby on the bottom in the middle of the wreck can be seen the centerboard winch.

At the stern the steering deck, transom, rudder, and underside of the ship are intact and stand high off the bottom. However, they are leaning 45 degrees to the starboard side. The rudder post stands 10'-15' high, and a tiller can be seen attached to the top of it. Collected in the middle of the wreck near the stern are a few pieces of ceramics. Unfortunately, they are all that remains of what used to be a wonderful collection of artifacts. Originally, there was a pocket watch, two whiskey jugs with decorative designs, a brown pitcher, cups, serving platters, bowls, and plates. These items were taken by some unscrupulous individual(s) some time between July 4 and August 27, 2005, and they will be sorely missed. They were highlights of the wreck, and it is a real shame that they were taken so only a few could enjoy them in their basement.

Bottom time was 20 minutes, total run time was 33 minutes, 28/10 trimix and 100% oxygen were used, and max depth was 125'.

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After diving the wreck, Dean prepared to make the final trip home after a long day of shuttling divers back and forth to the various wrecks. Unfortunately, the starter decided this was a good time to quit, and the motor wouldn't start. Furthermore, since this is a relatively unpopulated coast, the only possible tow for 50 miles in either direction was at Rogers City, and it was learned the only person who offers this service was out of town on business. After numerous radio and cell phone calls to sort out various options, Steve Kroll and his 30' Sea Ray Sedan "Summer Song II" came to our rescue and gave us a tow back to the boat launch. We arrived back before dark, but since it was the weekend, no replacement starter could be obtained until Monday.

Since the boat was broken, on Sunday, August 6, 2006, Kevin and Cindy toured Mackinaw City and the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum at Whitefish Point in Lake Superior.

On Monday, August 7, 2006, a new starter was obtained and installed, but unfortunately the weather didn't cooperate with large seas and high winds. So, Dean, Eric, Cindy, and Kevin made a trip to Sault Saint Marie and toured the Soo Locks and the museum ship "Valley Camp."

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On Tuesday, August 8, 2006, the weather finally cooperated and allowed diving to resume. The boat was launched at Presque Isle and preceded to the "Cornelia B. Windiate," a 3-masted schooner that sank late in the season in December, 1875, when it was only a year old. It sailed from Lake Michigan

bound for Buffalo with a cargo of wheat and was never seen again. It was always assumed to have been lost in Lake Michigan since its passage of the Mackinac Straits was never recorded. However, in 1986 this wreck was found in Lake Huron. Identifying it wasn't too hard because it is one of those rare wrecks that has its name on it. The "Windiate" is considered one of the most intact schooner wrecks found in the Great Lakes, and it lies in 185' of water with her deck at about 165'. The mooring is tied to the top of the foremast, which rises to within 90' of the surface with the topmast broken off above the steps. The crosstrees on the foremast are intact with wire rigging dangling down to the deck below. Amazingly, also attached to the foremast with a large metal truss is a spar resting at an angle. This spar supported the raffer sail, a large triangular topsail that is unique to Great Lakes schooners. Having an attached spar is a very unique and extremely rare feature.

It is a long descent down the foremast to the bow, which points south. The bowsprit is broken off but rests against the bow at an angle. The base stands on the bottom on the port side with the jib boom pointing upwards and resting against the starboard cathead. There is a large raised forecastle deck in front of the windlass, and the deck is littered with rigging and miscellaneous parts. An oar from the yawl boat can be seen lying among the debris on the deck on the starboard side. A companionway opening with vertical stairs leads down to the chain locker. Two wood-stocked anchors are stowed on their catheads on the railings. Curiously, the anchor chain runs out of the windlass and up and down the entire port side of the ship in three orderly, looping lengths. Original speculation was that this was an attempt by the crew to correct a starboard tilt of the ship as it lay trapped in ice, but it is now thought this was the normal procedure before going to anchor to prevent fouling of the chain. All deck equipment is present, including a two-barreled pump, capstan amidships, and centerboard winch with chain running down into the centerboard box. All cargo holds are sealed tight with the wooden cargo hatches still strapped down with metal bands, allowing no examination of their interiors. However, several deck boards are ajar, revealing a full cargo hold immediately below the decking with white mold growing on top of it. On the starboard deck near the stern is a large open-topped box with very thick wooden walls and a metal-lined interior. This was probably an icebox used to store perishables and is another unique item to this wreck.

All three masts are standing, but the tops of the mainmast and mizzenmast are both broken off. The top of the mainmast, complete with crosstrees and attached topmast, is lying on the bottom against the hull on the port side. Wire rigging runs from both sets of deadeyes down to the crosstrees of this mast section. The top of the mizzenmast leans up against the starboard side of the ship near the stern and points up across the deck with its crosstrees and topmast in place. Sail hoops are stacked around the masts at their bases, and there are freestanding fife rails around the masts with belaying pins in them. The foremast boom and gaff are scattered on the deck, but the mainmast boom is stowed in its

centerline position inside the H-shaped boom rest with its gaff resting neatly on top of it. Miscellaneous blocks are scattered on the deck or attached to various mast parts.

At the stern the cabin is completely intact. The mizzenmast runs out of the middle of its roof, and the boom and gaff are on the cabin roof. A front companionway is on the port side. Entering into the cabin, the stove can be seen on the floor. Two open doors can be seen leading to small rooms on the starboard side. These rooms and their walls are fairly broken up, and broken furniture pieces can be seen on the floor. Windows with metal bars and sliding shutters are on both sides of the cabin, and original traces of white paint can be seen on the walls. At the rear of the cabin, a graceful winding staircase can be seen making a 90 deg. turn up and out of the cabin on the port side. On the raised steering deck one finds the wheel and steering gear with the wheel tilted up from a failed salvage attempt by an early diver. The davits are arched metal designs at the corners of the stern. On the port railing alongside the cabin is located the name board with "Cornelia B. Windiate" carved into it. Examining the transom one finds a series of decorative metal stars, five on each side, attached to the transom in a curving design with a nautical rope design along the edges of the transom. There are also holes for two unusual oval or key-shaped portholes on the transom, but sadly, they are missing and stolen by an early diver. Dropping down to the bottom, the rudder is turned hard to starboard at a 90 deg angle. Finally, on the bottom on the starboard side near the stern, a wooden yawl boat can be seen sitting upright next to the hull about 10' away. Its bench seats and floorboards are in place, and there is a large wooden block inside at one end. This block would have mated to the davit.

It is speculated that the wonderfully intact condition of the "Windiate" may be due to its having been fully encased in ice before slowly settling and sinking, thereby holding many items in place that would normally be blown off like the icebox, yawl boat, hatch covers, and stowed boom and gaff. Bottom time was 20 minutes, run time was 55 minutes, 20/35 trimix, 50% nitrox, and 100% O2 were used, and 176' was the max depth. For those interested, pictures of the "Windiate" can be found at the following web sites of Vlada Dekina and Tom Wilson.

<http://www.wrecksandreefs.com/windiate.htm>

<http://www.scubaq.ca/ontarioscubadiving/windiate.htm>

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On Wednesday, August 9, 2006, the boat was again launched at Presque Isle. Unfortunately, both Cindy and Brandon had to leave, but replacing Brandon was Scot Wernett. The weather was slightly rough at 3' seas, but the seas seemed to be lying down, so the decision was made to try. It was a good decision because by the end of the day it had calmed to 1'-2' seas. The wreck was the "Defiance,"

an early-design 2-masted schooner that sank in 185' of water in 1854 after striking another sailing vessel, the "John J. Audubon." The mooring was tied to the starboard railing at the extreme stern with the deck at about 170'. This is a change from previous years where the mooring was tied to the top of the mainmast, which starts at 100' depth. Its topmast is missing, but the crosstrees and steps are in place, and hanging from the top of this mast are three impressively large blocks. The stern points west, and davits stick straight out from the extreme corners of the stern. The fallen boom from the mainmast lies on the deck and overhangs the transom on the port side. At the very end of the boom is a 2'-3' long sawtoothed ridge that is of unknown function but interesting to examine. This is a unique early vessel because it has no cabin, and the rear deck is completely flush with the main deck. In place of the cabin is a small roofed companionway with a forward entry and stairs that lead below deck to the living quarters. It would be an extremely tight entry, and no entry was attempted. Several decorative dishes and a faceted teapot have been placed on the deck near the companionway. Aft of the companionway is a 6-windowed skylight at the helmsman's feet. Since it was an early vessel, it was steered with a tiller rather than a wheel. The tiller is large and impressive. Even more impressive, however, is that it moves when pushed. Looking over the transom to the bottom, the rudder can also be seen to move and sweeps out a full arc of travel! This is an incredibly rare opportunity to see underwater a completely intact and functional steering mechanism that is over 150 years old. The tiller moves with surprising ease as well.

Another unique feature of this wreck is that the capstan is located at the stern immediately forward of the covered companionway. Most capstans are located amidships or occasionally at the bow. This is the only known example Kevin has seen at the stern. The capstan is the old cylindrical style, and moving forward along the centerline there is a hatch opening, a two-barreled hand pump with a fallen handle, and then the standing mainmast. Lying near the mast is the gaff, and it is unusual because it has a U-shaped metal bracket for the jaws rather than the half-moon carved wood usually seen. The mast collars are missing, creating a 6" gap around the base of the mast at the deck level and revealing the mast has a deep groove cut completely around it to lock the collars in place. The design must not have worked very well since the collars are missing and the mast leans rearward because of this. The mast also is cut into an octagonal shape both above and below the deck level. Above the deck level is a ring of vertical cleats on each flat facet. A collar surrounds the mast above the cleats for the boom to rest against.

Forward of the mainmast is a large centerboard winch, and then a rectangular stove sits on the deck amidships with cooking pots and dishes scattered around it. One of the pots is filled with coal, and the remains of a sheltering roof, posts, and maybe a single wall are lying on the deck next to the stove. The roof appears to have a circular hole cut into it for the stovepipe. This setup indicates the cooking was done out in the middle of the deck. Forward of the stove is

another cargo hatch opening and then the standing foremast. Pressed against the rear of the foremast is a small winch. Examining the base of the foremast reveals the same missing collars, circumferential groove, and octagonal shape as the previous mast. Both the boom and gaff are lying on the deck, and the gaff again has the U-shaped metal jaws. Opposite the foremast and slightly astern on both sides, full cutouts in the railing down to the deck allow for the easy boarding and loading of cargo on the ship. Identical railing cutouts on both sides can also be seen just aft of the mainmast at the stern.

Forward of the foremast is a chain locker opening and then the windlass with chain wrapped around its spool. The chain runs from the windlass in four loops up and down the port side half the length of the deck. One chain length then continues all the way to the stern, around the companionway, and back to the windlass along the starboard side. It is speculated this was done to run the chain out in preparation for anchoring, which never occurred. The starboard anchor is a classic wood-stocked design hanging from the railing, but the port one is missing along with its cathead. Chain leads from the port hawse pipe down to the bottom under the hull, where it can be seen the anchor is trapped underneath.

In front of the windlass is a triangular raised platform with slats that leads from the windlass to the stem of the ship. A pawl bitt is in front of the windlass, and it has a rocker mechanism attached to the front of it for unknown reasons, possibly to help in actuating the windlass. It did not appear to be for a pump. The bowsprit is broken off and lies perpendicular across the port side where the cathead would have been. The stem of the ship appears to be damaged, and the cutwater hangs loose and is barely attached to the stem. This is most likely the result of the damage that occurred when the "Defiance" struck the "Audubon."

Bottom time was 20 minutes, run time was 54 minutes, 20/35 trimix was used with 50% nitrox and 100% O2 for decompression, and the max depth was 175'.

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On Thursday, August 10, 2006, the weather again turned bad. The entire day was spent waiting at Presque Isle for an improvement, but it never did.

On Friday, August 11, 2006, the same situation presented itself. Both Scott and Scot had to leave at this point, but Joyce Hayward arrived along with Dean's wife Diane. Meanwhile, Kevin and Eric spent the day exploring Traverse City and Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

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On Saturday, August 12, 2006, the weather again finally allowed diving to continue. Since this was Joyce's first dive of the week, it was decided to do another shallow wreck. This was the "John J. Audubon," a 2-masted brigentine that sank in 1854 when the "Defiance," which was dove previously, struck it. This wreck lies in 165' of water with the deck at about 150'. The mooring was tied to the bow, which points east. The bowsprit is broken and lies peeled backwards along the foredeck. The stem is also split with a 1'-2' vertical gap that extends along the starboard side between the hull and deck. A metal-stocked anchor hangs from its chain on the starboard side halfway down to the bottom, and a classic wood-stocked anchor sits on the deck on the port side with its broken cathead still attached. The windlass is present with a chain locker opening and chain piled on the deck. Curiously, there is a three-pronged metal cage that covers the top of the pawl bitt in front of the windlass. Its purpose is not known, but it could have supported a bell. It could also be related to the mechanisms that are attached to the front and sides of the bitt. There is a rocker mechanism attached to the front of the bitt with arms that pass around both sides of the bitt to the windlass. It is speculated this could be part of a folding mechanism for the bowsprit since it appears the base of the bowsprit would have rested right up against the front of the bitt.

Moving astern of the windlass and chain locker, there is a single-cylinder hand pump, a capstan with an old-styled cylindrical head, and then a 3'-4' stub of the foremast. Examining the base of this mast, it has flat octagonal facets just like those seen on the "Defiance" except the mast collars are still in place. There is also an integral fife rail around the entire circumference of the mast with belaying pins still in it. The foremast itself lies back along the length of the deck astern and shows all the signs of having been square-rigged. First, there are seven sets of deadeyes on the railings opposite of the mast stub. The mast is made of three pieces with two sets of doublings/steps. The first step after the lower mast contains an elaborate bracing platform with a half-moon shape and a truss for the first square-rigged yard just below the platform. The topmast above it has at least one more metal ring that would have supported a truss on it, and then there is a simpler crosstree platform at the second doubling before the topgallant mast. At least one yard can be seen lying on the deck near the bow with the remains of a truss support on it. Overall, this is a wonderfully preserved example of a square-rigged ship mast, and it is all easily examined at the deck level.

Scattered all over the deck and on the bottom around the wreck are railroad rails, which were part of its cargo. They look like scattered matchsticks and are everywhere. This is like the wreck of the "Trade Wind" in eastern Lake Erie. Behind the broken foremast stub is an open cargo hatch with plenty of penetration room below decks, although there is not much to see in the cargo holds. Next, there is a centerboard winch, another hatch opening, and then the broken mainmast stub. The mainmast itself balances perpendicularly on the deck with both ends hanging off the sides 15' above the bottom. Off the port side are the crosstrees and topmast, which are still attached and unbroken. This

mast is a classic fore-and-aft gaff (schooner) rigged mast, evident by the four sets of deadeyes on the railings and the gaff and boom lying on the deck. This configuration (square-rigged foremast and gaff-rigged mainmast) defines a brigentine, and this rare example of a brigentine and square rigging is well preserved and allows easy examination on this particular wreck.

Underneath the fallen mainmast can be seen the remains of a double-barreled hand pump, followed by a final hatch opening, and then the large hole for the cabin, which is missing. There is a steering deck behind the cabin opening with a short tiller sticking out in the middle. Off to the starboard side is a small rectangular opening in the deck, probably for communicating with the helmsman. Forward of the tiller are the broken supports for the wheel, and the wheel itself lies off to the starboard side against the deck's railing. There are also signs of a block and tackle system attached to the railings that would have been part of the leverage system for the wheel's connection to the tiller. This ship was originally tiller steered but at some point was converted to wheel steering. Next to the wheel on the deck is a rectangular stove, and various pieces of crockery and dishes can be found collected in the cabin opening or on the deck. There are davits sticking straight out from the corners of the transom, and the transom has two small portholes, one each at the extreme lower corners. The rudder can be seen to be hard to starboard.

Bottom time was 20 minutes, total run time was 52 minutes, 20/35 trimix was used with 50% nitrox and 100% O2 for decompression, and max depth was 156'. It was noticed that after several days of storms, the thermocline had moved from a depth of 65'-70' to a depth of only 40'-45'. The bottom temperature was also a little cooler at 39-40 deg F instead of the expected 41-42 deg F.

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Since we'd been blown out for two days in a row and since the weather was so good, we decided to go ashore, get fresh tanks from the campsite, and do a second dive. This second dive showed signs of a stiff breeze and building seas, but despite the numerous whitecaps, they stayed small at only 1'-2'. We decided to dive the "Defiance" again, partly because this is the perfect companion wreck to the "Audubon" since they were involved in the same accident. All had a great dive and decided that was enough for the day.

Bottom time was 20 minutes, total run time was 58 minutes, 20/35 trimix was used with 50% nitrox and 100% O2 for decompression, and max depth was 177'.

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Sunday, August 13, 2006, was Kevin's final day in Rogers City. It was decided to dive the "Audubon" again for the final time since Kevin only had a set of shallow

gas tanks remaining and since Joyce wanted to shoot some pictures. The conditions were great with 1'-2' seas, and it was a fine dive.

Dive treasure was recovered on the bottom near the wreck. Bottom time was 20 minutes, total run time was 40 minutes, 25/20 trimix was used with 100% O2 for decompression, and max depth was 154'.

This ended Kevin's time in Rogers City, and it was another excellent trip visiting these fabulous wrecks. Weather and boat problems were much greater than normal this year, but the quality of the wrecks more than made it worthwhile.