

Diver "Electrocution" in Madison Blue ...'during thunderstorm' 5/17/2008

Electrocution in Madison Blue

<http://www.rebreatherworld.com/rebreather-accidents-incidents/19315-electrocution-in-madison-blue.html#post187579>

Two days ago, I was diving Madison Blue, together with John K. (jkaterenchuk). We first did the short traverse to Martz sink, and then started the Godzilla circuit.

When I placed the jump for the circuit, I suddenly felt a strong electric shock through my right arm. I was touching the cave wall with my right hand at this time. I was a little bit disoriented for a few seconds, and didn't really know if I imagined what just happened, or if it was for real. In any case, it was definitely a very "refreshing" experience, to put it mildly.

We completed the circuit without any further incidents. When we reached the basin, it became clear to me what happened: there was a huge thunderstorm above us. Staying in the water during such a thunderstorm wasn't a good idea, and neither was getting out really, given that we had lots of metal on our backs. Since the thunderstorm could last a long time (and it did), we got out of the water, and after dropping our gear, we made a run for the bathhouse, where other divers and the park warden already took shelter.

Once we arrived there, the others told us, that they had seen several lighting strikes very close to where the Godzilla room must be located. One of these lighting strikes must have made its way through the cave wall and my right arm.

I'm not really sure what the "lesson learned" from this incident is. Perhaps not to go cave diving if there is any chance that there could be a thunderstorm? Or perhaps no lesson at all, since this was a freak incident?

Also, let me use this opportunity to put to rest the myth that the HammerHead electronics couldn't withstand severe electrical shocks. My HH continued to work flawlessly after this incident.