

**OCT. 25, 2011  
TOWN MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **CENTRAL FLORIDA DIVER BEGINS ATTEMPT TO BREAK RECORD FOR THE WORLD'S LONGEST SALTWATER DIVE**



**Diver Allen Sherrod talks to the media Tuesday.**

Florida scuba diver Allen Sherrod began his attempt today (10-25-11) to break the Guinness world record for the longest saltwater dive.

Sherrod entered the Atlantic Ocean south of Anglin's Pier in Lauderdale-By-The-Sea at 8:16AM. If all goes as planned, he doesn't plan to resurface until after Friday morning, breaking the current world record – set in Indonesia - by 24 hours.

The conditions Tuesday were hardly ideal. Strong winds kicked up 4-to 6-foot seas. A strongly southerly current was also evident as he entered the water.

"When you get in the ocean, it's an uncontrolled environment," Sherrod said. "It's a roll of the dice."

A crowd of about 30 people gathered at the Town's Datura Avenue beach portal to watch Sherrod as he began his world record attempt. His world record dive attempt merited live news coverage from Channel 4 and Channel 10 news.

A resident of Groveland, Fla., Sherrod set up his temporary ocean residence in about 15 feet of water near the Town's newest artificial reef, which stimulates faster coral growth by using a low-level electric current fed by solar panels. The buoys housing the panels were removed so they can be repaired.

The artificial reef is about 300 yards offshore, just south of the Windjammer Resort, 4244 El Mar Drive. A NAUI diving instructor for 11 years, Sherrod chose the Town's coral reefs because they are vibrant and very close to the beach.

"This is the coolest shore dive place in all of Florida," he said.

A popular spot for beach divers because of its near-shore coral reefs, the Town of Lauderdale-By-The-Sea was declared the "Shore Dive Capitol of South Florida" by the Broward County Commission in September 1997.

Sherrod recently set a world record for the longest freshwater scuba dive in Central Florida (five days). During the attempt, he said he lost six pounds.

Except for staying well-hydrated, warm and keeping his hands insulated with petroleum jelly and gloves, he said the biggest challenge won't be physical.

"It's a real drain on you mentally," he said.

The current record for the longest saltwater dive is held by William Gordon, a diver from the United Kingdom who set it in January 2010 in Lombok, Indonesia. His record is 48 hours, 8 minutes and 7 seconds.

Sherrod expects to use between 40 and 55 tanks to stay underwater for 72 hours. He will limit his food intake during the dive to liquids (Gatorade and chocolate Ensure). He also expects to sleep, but not for long: "You get tired enough, you'll sleep anywhere."

Because of the rough seas, his safety team this afternoon asked the Volunteer Fire Department's Beach Patrol, which operates a water scooter, to help them transport air tanks out to where Sherrod is trying to break the record.

At least one safety diver will keep an eye on Sherrod at all times. During the day, he expects some local divers or snorkelers to drop by to say hello. Few if any divers are expected to visit if the seas remain rough the rest of the week.

Sherrod, who is diving with a full face mask, will be able to talk to other divers using an underwater speaker system housed inside a pony tank. He will make this available to any television, radio or print journalists who are certified divers and want to interview him during his record breaking attempt.

Members of the business community are rallying behind Sherrod's world record attempt, and are using the event to help raise funds for the Town's new artificial reef; its solar-panel buoys were recently damaged during rough seas.

Gold Coast Scuba will donate \$1 for each air tank it fills for divers who plan to visit Sherrod during his record attempt. Kilwin's Chocolates plans to launch a new candy, a sea salt caramel; a portion of its sales will go towards the new reef. The Windjammer Resort has been instrumental in helping Sherrod with preparations and will serve as headquarters for his dive support team next week.

As for Sherrod, the record attempt probably won't be the most fun he has had diving; as a dive instructor, he helps certify the mermaids who perform underwater at the world famous Weeki Wachee Springs in Central Florida.

When asked why he wants to set a world record for the longest saltwater dive, he said, "We have a bad economy. I didn't have anything else to do."

Here is a link to Channel 4's story today on Sherrod:

<http://miami.cbslocal.com/2011/10/25/fla-scuba-diver-seeks-to-break-world-record/>

The Windjammer Resort has focused its beach cam on Sherrod's red and white striped diver's down flag. It also started a "Groupertime" clock on its Web site to record how long Sherrod has stayed underwater since Tuesday morning.

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

Here is a link to the Guinness Book of World Record Web site listing the record for the world's longest saltwater dive.

<http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/records-2000/longest-open-saltwater-scuba-dive/>

Here are two cell phone numbers if you wish to contact Sherrod's dive team:

**Debby Sherrod** (wife): 352-702-8648

**Jose Mijares** (dive safety team leader): 352-552-1923.