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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL BUGFEST COORDINATOR
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LAUDERDALE-BY-THE-SEA HOSTING 5TH ANNUAL BUGFEST (JULY 26 - JULY 30, 2016)

The Town of Lauderdale-By-The-Sea, Fla., once described as a "cozy little drinking town with a diving problem," will once again host BugFest-By-The-Sea, a week-long series of fun events for divers centered around Florida's annual lobster mini-season. BugFest will be held July 26-July 30, 2016. Florida's 2016 mini-season is July 27 and 28.

Sponsored by Reef Safe sun care products, BugFest is giving away $20,000 in cash, dive equipment, dive trips and other prizes.

This year's top raffle prize is a 4-day, 4-night dive trip with UNEXSO in Freeport, Grand Bahamas, courtesy of Reef Safe. The trip includes unlimited diving and a 4-night stay at the Pelican Bay Hotel. UNEXSO is well known for its fabulous dolphin and shark diving encounters.

Divers receive one raffle ticket for registering and for each lobster they catch. Ten lucky scuba divers will also go home with Swiss Legend dive watches!

Now in its fifth year, BugFest includes the following events:

- The Great Florida Bug Hunt Contest! Divers can win cash for both the biggest lobster caught off a boat, and the biggest lobster caught on a beach dive off Lauderdale-By-The-Sea. The $20 contest registration fee includes a free BugFest 2016 T-shirt and Goody Bag. The contest fee is refundable if divers stay in a Lauderdale-By-The-Sea hotel!

There also are dive gear prizes for the biggest bug caught on the *AquaView* and *Black Pearl* morning charter boat dives on July 27. *AquaView* and *Black Pearl* are owned by South Florida Diving Headquarters, a Pompano Beach dive charter company. SFDH owner Jeff Torode is a member of the BugFest-By-The-Sea event planning committee.

- A wreck diving workshop with John Chatterton (*Shadow Divers* & *Pirate Hunters*).

- A beach walk to support shark conservation.

- Free underwater photo and video contests!

- A BugFest Mini-Season Party & Chef Competition on Thursday, July 28.

- A pier clean-up on Saturday, July 30.

BugFest sponsors and supporters include Reef Safe, UNEXSO, Gold Coast Scuba, Aruba Beach Café, South Florida Diving Headquarters, Sea Experience, Reef Photo, Windjammer Resort, Beachside Village Resort, Driftwood Inn, By The Sea Realty, the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau, Swiss Legend, ScubaNationTV, ScubaRadio and the Chamber of Commerce.

BugFest is also honored to be supporting Divers Alert Network this year. A DAN seminar on mini-season safety is scheduled for 6PM on Saturday, July 23 in Jarvis Hall, 4505 N. Ocean Drive, Lauderdale-By-The-Sea. DAN also plans to survey mini-season divers this summer to determine how the annual number of mini-season deaths in Florida can be lowered.

With a reef just 100 yards offshore, Lauderdale-By-The-Sea is Florida's Beach Diving Capital. The Town was recognized by the Florida Legislature in 2015 for its efforts to promote diving and the wreck of *SS Copenhagen*, a state underwater archaeological preserve off the Town that is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

For more info, call 954-640-4209. The BugFest Web site is **www.bugfestbythesea.com**.