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DIVE BARBADOS BLUE dive instructor Robert Bourne (left) and boat captain Robert "Ra Ra" Forde (right) jump for joy with Sophie Stewart, who had just completed her 50th dive to qualify as junior master diver. (Picture by Nigel Browne.)

Dive history

DIVE NUMBER 50 is under her belt.

And with it, the diving world has another junior master scuba diver while the island has its first in 12-year-old Briton Sophie Stewart.

Stewart accomplished the feat yesterday when she completed her qualifying dive with Dive Barbados Blue.

She now joins an elite handful of pre-teens around the world who have achieved the highest junior ranking in recreational scuba diving.

"I was just really shocked. I couldn't really believe it. I was happy," the 12-year-old said.

Barbados has been the only place Stewart has dived.

"At home it is really cold and I didn't have my own gear. There aren't many dive shops near us and I come here every year anyway so I just dive here," she said, noting she can now turn her attention to her next pet project - getting the invasive lionfish on more menus across the island. (HLE)

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