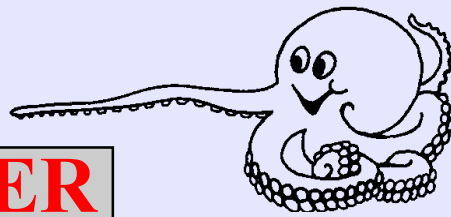


THE REEF SEEKER



REEF SEEKERS DIVE CO.
P.O. Box 634
Beverly Hills, CA 90213
Phone & text: (310) 652-4990
web: www.reefseekers.com
e-mail: kenkurtis@aol.com

April 1, 2025



TRUMP ENACTS TARIFFS ON DIVING

President Donald Trump today announced that he is levying a 25% tariff on all diving that is done within U.S. waters. "Our beautiful waters of the United States, including those in the Gulf of America, have for too long been exploited by neoprene clad thugs, many of whom wear wetsuits made in China, and it has to stop. So this tariff will show them we mean business." Trump made this proclamation as he signed Executive Order #5936 imposing the tariff.

The tariffs go into effect today and even cover dives done from U.S.-flagged vessels as well as those that are foreign-flagged. They also apply to vessels that start and end at the same port, a trip long referred to as a "voyage to nowhere."

Dive operators will be assessed the tariff and will have to decide if they want to pass it on to their customers or not, the same way

automobile dealers will have to choose what to do about their tariffs.

Trump touted the economic benefits. "Given the current state of the dive industry and the number of people diving, we estimate that this could raise thousands of dollars, maybe even many thousands of dollars. Many people have long said this is the way to go so we're just giving the people what they want."

Trump also announced that Elon Musk would be in charge of collecting the new tariffs. "Elon says it's OK to pay this in small, unmarked bills, and preferably ones that haven't gotten wet. You can't do wet because that's like laundering money and so wet doesn't work."

Obviously, this has caused great consternation within the diving industry. If you'd like to express your opinion about this to the White House, you can call them directly at 202/456-1414.

REDONDO SAND SWAP

About a dozen volunteer divers are needed this weekend for the annual Redondo Beach Sand Swap

at Vets Park.

One way we keep the area pristine is that we take all of the sand that's underwater, and all of the sand that's on the beach, and switch them out. The beach stuff goes into the water and the submerged stuff comes out to dry. The Army Corps of Engineers does some of the heavy lifting but we need divers to help with the placement of the sand in the underwater areas, because it's very important that we keep the bottom contour as similar as possible as to what it is now. So we'll create a gentle slope out to 30-35 feet, then a slope down to 60 feet or so and then gradually deeper. (And rest assured that no diver will be asked to go deeper than 100 feet.)

The other thing divers are needed for is animal care. Because we're bringing all the sand up from the bottom and out of the water, many times we find rays, squid eggs, Sarcastic Fringeheads, and other common fish. Those animals need to be returned to the ocean ASAP so we have volunteers around the bathrooms at the bottom of the stairs sifting through the sand and finding the creatures that need to go back into the water. They're then placed in buckets which divers can then grab and take back in. The buckets are sorted by depth so there are buckets for the animals that live just outside the surf zone

(juvies mainly), those that live in the 15-30' range (lots of rays and some crabs), and then the animals that thrive in the deeper depths of 60 feet or more.

We'll start at 9AM Saturday and go until around 5PM. Staging area is the Vets Park parking lot. Because this is considered a charitable outing, parking meter fees are waived for the day for any divers participating. But you must be registered ahead of time. You can do so by calling Redondo Beach City Hall at 310/372-1171 and make sure you tell them you're calling about the Saturday Sand Swap. See you there!!!



AQUARIUM OPENS STONEFISH TOUCH TANK

The Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach has announced that they'll be opening a new exhibit soon: a Stonefish Touch Tank. Long known to be deadly to the touch, the Aquarium thinks they'll be able to get around this small problem with specially-made neoprene gloves. "We've done some testing," an employee who asked to remain anonymous said, "and for the most part, the gloves generally worked some of the time."

Guests will have to sign a waiver and produce an enforceable last

will and testament but the Aquarium has dropped a requirement that they be named as primary beneficiary. And they freely admit that the danger of touching a Stonefish is part of the allure. "It's like eating fugu. You hope everything was prepared correctly but there's that nagging doubt in your mind that maybe this will be the end of you. That's the allure of the Stonefish touch tank as well."

The tank is in the final phases of testing now and the hope is that it will be ready for its debut during Chamber Evening on May 7 at the Aquarium. There will be a slight extra charge for accessing the touch tank – a nominal \$25 – but that fee will be refunded to the estate of anyone who doesn't survive the encounter.

HAVE YOU HAD YOUR FINS CALIBRATED?

A guitar needs to be tuned every now and then. An engine also needs tuning once in a while. And a lot of divers don't realize this, but your fins need tuning as well.

When you're kicking with your fins, we all realize that we're dis-

placing water and sending out vibrations. But did you realize that sometimes your fins can be in a state of harmonic distortion and they are not performing at their peak? It's all because they're sending out the wrong vibrations.

And here's a little known piece of rock and roll trivia: You know the Beach Boys big hit "Good Vibrations"? Most people think it was about a girl. Nope. It was really about Brian Wilson and Mike Love's appreciation of perfectly tuned fins allowing them to make some "good vibrations" in the ocean.

So you need to make sure that your fins are properly tuned. And we're happy to tell you that Reef Seekers is one of the very few places around that can perform that service, many times while you wait (unless the fins are really old and we need to get some parts).

Reef Seekers ace repair guru Robert Stark is one of the few fin-tuning certified technicians in the country and he can get your fins humming again. Give him a call at 310/947-8523 to schedule an appointment. (And don't forget to bring your booties along as well.)

2025-2026 DIVING VACATIONS

June 28 - July 5 • Roatan

September 19-28 • Maldives

March 2026 • Yap

July 2026 • Indonesia

CATALINA CLOSED ON WEDNESDAYS

In response to the tumbling stock market over the last few months, Catalina has announced it will now be closed on Wednesdays as a cost-cutting measure. Avalon Mayor Anni Marshall made the announcement over the weekend and the closure will be implemented starting this week.

To make this effective, all government-services will be suspended on Wednesdays from 12:01AM to 11:59PM. This means no electricity, no water, no phone service, and suspension of just about everything else that makes living on the island possible.

Cutting off the water is especially problematic because by doing so, that also means that toilets won't be able to flush for a full 24 hours. "We discussed that issue in committee" Marshall said, "but we also said that we have this big, beautiful ocean right at our doorstep and since we hear divers all the time saying 'The ocean is my toilet,' we figured that's the obvious solution."

It's unclear as to how long the Wednesday closures will continue but it seems like they might go through the summer. When it was pointed out that summer is the busiest time on the island and also when the most revenue can be made, Marshall also pointed out that that's when the peak usage of government services occurs. "So we'll be saving even more money than usual," was the official response.

If you'd like to express an opinion about this, you can call Avalon City Hall at 310/510-0220.

UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	\$\$\$
Sat.	Apr 5	Veterans Park	Navigation Made Easy	35
Wed.	9	Catalina Express	Avalon UW Park	180
Thu.	24	Veterans Park	••• Night Dive •••	35
Wed.	May 14	--- CLASS ---	--- NITROX ---	95
Sat.	17	Veterans Park	Surf Entries Made Easy	FREE!!!
Wed.	21	Catalina Express	Avalon UW Park	180
Thu.	Jun 12	Veterans Park	••• Night Dive •••	35
Wed.	18	--- CLASS ---	--- FISH I.D. ---	35

THE LATEST DIVE DESTINATION

Everyone's always looking for the newest "in" dive spot. Years ago, it was Raja Ampat. But as Raja got more popular, more and more operations started up, and now what was once a pristine dive area is sometimes over-crowded. As Yogi Berra once said, "Nobody goes there anymore. It's too crowded."

So it is with great excitement that we can tell you that we think we've discovered the next secret diving hotspot. We can't tell you where it is or how to get there at the moment, but we can tell you its name: St. Nigel Island Pacific East. (Since that can be hard to say, sometimes it's referred to by an acronym of the capital letters.) This is something everyone's been hunting for. And we're going to take you there.

We're taking deposits starting today because we're sure you'll want to go with us. We can't tell you how much the trip is yet so just start off by sending us a \$1,000 deposit and then another \$1,000 each month and we'll let you know when it's enough. We're also not sure when we're going but we'll let you know at least a few weeks ahead of time so you'll have time to clear your schedule.

But this place has it all. Clear water (average viz is over 150 feet), warm water (roughly 90-95 de-

grees so you don't need a wetsuit), thousands of species of coral (all very healthy), and over 5,000 documented species of fish (more than any other place in the world). It almost sounds too good to be true.

If you need more info you can always call us at 310/652-4990 but get that deposit money in right away to secure your spot. If you miss out, you'll regret it the rest of your life. Don't get left behind!!!

GIANT SEA BASS RE-RENAMED

We used to call them "Black Sea Bass." A few years ago, the name was changed to "Giant Sea Bass." Now it's being changed again as part of the government's fight against DEI.

Someone in NOAA got the notion that "Giant" differentiates them from smaller fish and promotes diversity, "Sea" means they're similar to other fish promoting "Equity," and "Bass" represents an entire class of fish which means "Inclusion." All now verboten.

The new name is "Sized Ocean Fish" which is less offensive to people who get their knickers in a knot over every little thing and perceive slights and offenses where none really exist. It takes effect today and it will admittedly take some getting used to.

BEND-A-BUDDY

The Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber has come up with a new fundraising idea that will kick off this summer called “Bend-A-Buddy.” The concept is simple: Dive with a buddy and try get them bent so they’ll have to go to the Chamber to be treated which will increase the revenue stream.

Since the bends is basically a result of too much nitrogen in your system, the key to making this work is to increase that nitrogen in your buddy as much as possible. Since they probably won’t do that willingly, there are some tricks that can be learned to help your buddy get bent.

A diver’s nitrogen load is based on a couple of things: (1) % of nitro-

gen a diver breathes, (2) Depth, and (3) Time at that depth. The easiest way initially to help your buddy get bent is to do something as simple as telling them they’re breathing 36% nitrox but in reality give them a tank full of air (21%).

Other tricks include recalibrating their depth gauge to make it seem like they’re shallower than they really are, and re-adjusting their watch so it runs slower than it should. Both of these will help increase their nitrogen load far beyond what it should normally be and eventually they’ll utter those magic words: “I think I need to go to the Chamber.”

Now while all of this may sound cruel and unusual initially, remember it’s all for a good cause: Raising money for our Catalina Hyper-

baric Chamber. There’s nothing more important than that. And if because of all of this, some divers end up with a little permanent residual pain, or walk with a limp, or something like that, remember that it’s all for the greater good and that we all have to make some sacrifices . . . as long as it’s the other person doing the sacrificing.

DISCLAIMER

If you haven’t caught on by now, you might want to take a look at your calendar and see if “April 1” has any meaning for you. Hopefully you’ve enjoyed what you’ve read and if you still haven’t caught on: April Fools!!! (But the trips and classes are legit.)

PICTURE PAGE - Fake Fish

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2025)



**Found
Nemo**



P.O. Box 634
Beverly Hills, CA 90213

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**Fancy
Candlefish**



**Damsel
Scrubber**



**Lovely
Angeldish**



**Palauan
Potholder fish**