

THE REEF SEEKER



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July - 2022



INDO TRIP HAS FILLED

I will confess that it (pleasantly) surprised me that our October trip to Indonesia filled so quickly. In fact, we ended up with more people (16) than I had initially figured we'd end up with. Embarrassment of riches.

And because there was such a high level of interest in this specific trip, I'm looking to do it again in 2023. Generally we go in July but I've also had some people inquire about pushing the trip back to September or October. I'm fine either way. So if you're interested in doing this trip at any time next year, let me know, and we'll see what works best for everyone's schedule and interests. There are advantages and disadvantages no matter what month we would choose to go so there's no "right" answer.

But it all speaks to a pent-up demand from divers to go diving again, especially if it's a foreign vacation-type trip like this. And we're happy to be there to help you scratch that itch. In "before-

times" we'd do as many as 6 trips a year and we're looking to gear the schedule back up again. Already this year we've done Socorro (March) and Bonaire (May) so the upcoming Indonesia trip will be out third for 2022.

Our hope is to have a fuller schedule for 2023 so, even if it's not Indonesia, let us know what destinations you have in mind, what your budget is, and what times of the year work (or don't work). It's always like an enormous juggling act to pull these trips together but we've been doing it every year since 1988 so we've got a few tricks up our sleeve. Happy to have you join us.



GUADALUPE MAY NOT OPEN ON TIME

Usually, Guadalupe (aka Isla Guadalupe – home of the Great White Sharks) opens on July 1 with the season running through late November. That may not be the case this year.

It sounds like the Mexican government will keep the area closed

at least until August 1, and maybe even a bit beyond that. I know that Nautilus has re-positioned some of their boats and changed their destinations to Sea of Cortez trips that leave out of Cabo. (The specific itineraries aren't laid out but might include Cabo Pulmo as well as places like Los Islotes and maybe even Las Animas.)

But the point of letting you know all of this is that, if you've got a Guadalupe trip booked with any of the regular providers, especially if it's in July or even August, check with your tour operator to confirm that it's still happening. I've got a sinking feeling that a lot of people may be showing up in Ensenada in July only to find that either they're diving local spots or that their trip has been cancelled all together.

CATALINA DIVERS SUPPLY NEW DIGS

They're now based in the ground floor of the Casino, right across from the fuel dock and the good bathrooms. They've done a really nice job and what a vast improvement over the previous locations. Make sure you take a peek next time you're in Avalon. When I was there a few weeks ago, I had my camera so snapped some pix that you can find on page 4 of this newsletter.



AVALON – JULY 20

We've been a bit remiss in doing our monthly mid-week Avalon trips lately but are 99% certain we'll be going on July 20 as scheduled.

These are fun trips all the way around. We'll leave out of San Pedro on a 7:30AM boat (summer sked means an earlier departure) which puts us in Avalon no later than 9AM. A taxi will whisk us to the Park, we'll pick up tanks, and off we'll go. We generally get three dives in over the course of the day (out of the water and packed up generally by 4PM) with a break for lunch (we pack our own) between dives. And since our boat back isn't until 6PM, we might even have time for a round of miniature golf for those interested. (And how could you NOT be interested in that????)

July is also a great time of the year to go see the various Giant Sea Bass who have taken up residence in the Park over the years. There's usually three or four hanging out in the 60-foot area pretty much straight out from the stairs and, as we always tell everyone, if you settle down and just watch and don't make sudden moves, they get very comfortable with you and will spend as much time looking at you as you will looking at them. It's a pretty cool experience.

We're also hearing reports of more "exotic" animals being spotted due to warmer water temps. Although

not spotted in the Park (yet), there have been reports of turtles around Catalina, in the past we've seen Arrow Crabs and Guadalupe Cardinalfish, so you never know what might be hiding under a rock or will be around the bend.

If you're interested in joining us, send an e-mail to this addy or call 310/652-4990 to get signed up.

GO SEE THE DIVING MUSEUM

It's free, it's a short walk (literally a hundred yards) from the Underwater Park, and it's chock-full of interesting things. (But go in dry, not dripping wet.)

The Avalon Diving History Exhibit is the brainchild of Jon Council. Jon's got all sorts of unusual items and loves telling the stories behind them. And through his numerous contacts in the film industry, he's also got a lot of stills and props that were used in films that featured underwater sequences.

The museum's generally open 10AM-5PM but might be closed on days Jon's not on the island. But definitely worth taking a peek.



CATALINA EXPRESS PRICE INCREASE

This was bound to happen.

Catalina Express has announced that due to a 100% increase in their fuel costs, they're raising their rates on trips to Avalon. They also mention that there could be a further fuel surcharge increases down the road. (Existing reservations will be honored for the price at the time of the booking.)

The new round-trip rates from both Long Beach and San Pedro are:
ADULTS (12-54) - \$83.50
SENIORS (55+) - \$76.50
CHILDREN (2-11) - \$68.00
INFANTS (under 2) - \$6.50
COMMODORE LOUNGE - Adds \$40.00

Accordingly, were going to have to raise our fees for our Avalon trips by \$5. They will now be \$175/person which includes the Express, taxi to/from the Park, tank rental and airfills for three dives, and all the fun you can handle. (Parking, lunch, Mini-Golf all not included.)

2022-2023 DIVING VACATIONS

Sept. 17-28 • Indonesia

May 2023 • Bonaire

July 2023 • Indonesia again (?)

Sometime in 2023 . . . Yap

JULY ZOOM SEEKERS – KURT LIEBER

Make a note to join us on Tuesday, July 12, for our monthly Zoom Seekers talk which this time round will feature Kurt Lieber of the Ocean Defenders Alliance (ODA) as our guest.

ODA fills a huge void in the world of marine conservation by taking on the role of “cleanup crew” for the seas. Kurt is an avid diver and underwater photographer and, while enjoying recreational dives, recognized through his own experiences the need for this important work. On dives all over the world, he saw human trash and commercial fishing gear that had been discarded . . . often wrapped around beautiful reefs, trapping and killing helpless marine life in an endless cycle.

In 2000, Kurt took action by creating Ocean Defenders Alliance. To date, ODA has completed hundreds of results-oriented excursions, but there is still work to be done.

ODA envisions a world in which they educate communities and involve them in solutions that help ensure marine ecosystems can exist free from harm caused by human debris. Without abandoned fishing gear, trash, and improperly sunken vessels damaging their habitat, marine flora and fauna will be able to thrive.

Kurt will give us insight into the work of ODA and explain how you can get involved as well. Kurt’s talk will start at 7:30PM, a Q&A will follow, and we’ll be done by 9PM. As this is a Zoom talk, the link will be sent out in TWARS just before the talk and will also be available on our website.

UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	PRICE
Thu.	July 7	Redondo (Vets)	••• Night Dive •••	\$30
Sat.	9	Redondo (Vets)	Mastering Surf Entries & Exits	\$30
Wed.	20	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$175
Wed.	27	--- CLASS ---	--- Secrets of Fish ID ---	\$30
Thu.	Aug. 4	Redondo (Vets)	••• Night Dive •••	\$30
Sat.	6	Redondo (Vets)	Beach Diving (single tank)	\$30
Wed.	17	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$175
Wed.	24	--- CLASS ---	--- Easy Tables & Computers ---	FREE



RENAME THE MPA

We passed the first hurdle. Last month (June 16), the F&G Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to refer our petition to Commission staff for further review and recommendation. They also went out of their way before the vote was taken, to acknowledge the tremendous outpouring of public comments (well over 200) that accompanied the petition. (These are all your comments both from our dedicated e-mail addy and the change.org petition.) Bear in mind that, in general terms, F&G does not like to name MPAs after people, no matter how wonderful their constituency thinks they were.

In fact, one of things we’ve discovered since the petition was filed is that they have a policy of not naming anything for someone until they’ve been dead for at least five years. So while I think we can make a very strong case for why it’s appropriate to name the Casino Point MPA in Dr. Bill’s memory, the timeframe is another hurdle to overcome and we’ll need

to come up with some arguments as to why it should be done now as opposed to waiting the requisite five years.

But there’s some precedent for waiving the five-year waiting period. That’s the same as for the major sports halls of fame. A player has to be retired for at least five years before they’re eligible to be considered. However, there have been exceptions to that rule. For baseball, Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, and Roberto Clemente all were elected to the baseball hall without waiting the five years. And in basketball, Kobe Bryant was elected only four years after retirement. So while there’s some precedent, it’s a very steep hill to climb.

But it sounds like there might be a crack in that policy for special cases and we’re hoping we can convince them that this is one of those instances. As always, we will keep you posted. Bear in mind that this is a slow, methodical process. Commission staff – and I’ve already talked with some of them – will mull this over for the next month or so and will likely make a recommendation in time for the Commission’s August meeting. But even if it’s approved then, the renaming proposal has to then go through a couple of public hearings before it can take effect. So this isn’t something that will happen overnight, if at all.

SURF ENTRIES & EXITS CLASS

Chances are that you're not a fan of beach dives because you're not comfortable going through the surf. And chances are, if that's correct, the reason you're uncomfortable and didn't master that skill is that your first exposure to surf entries was on your very first certification checkout dive when the waves seemed ten feet tall and your training consisted of your gung-ho instructor saying, "Let's go people!!!"

Most divers are either not very good at surf entries, terrified of them, or both. But the reality is that we've got lots of good shore diving here in SoCal, so knowing how to safely (and relatively eas-

ily) get in and out of the surf is a useful skill.

This non-certification class is taught as skin-dive-gear only (mask, snorkel, fins, booties, gloves, hood, and wetsuit - no tanks) and will start with a short lecture on how to "read" a beach and what to watch out for. Then we'll go play in the surf, showing you not only the right things to do but the wrong things to do as well and how to recover from those. We'll show you what to do when/if you get knocked down. (HINT: "Stand up" is not the best choice.)

We'll go through a couple of different entry and exit techniques, look at where you should put your fins on (or take them off) and why, and will show you the #1 rule of surf entries: It doesn't matter when

you go, it will seem like the wrong time.

We'll start around 9AM at Vets Park in Redondo and should be off the beach and out of the parking lot by Noon. Again, because this is skin-dive-only, you don't need to bring tanks, weights, BC, or regulator. You should also figure you're going to get rolled around in the surf a couple of times so realize you'll end up sandy. But you may also discover these entries/exits can actually be fun. (Or you'll swear never to do it again.)

The class fee is \$30 and you should also bring some quarters for the parking meters (although I think those meters also now can be paid through a QR code as well). If you'd like to join us, call 310/652-4990 and we'll get you signed up.

PICTURE PAGE - New Catalina Divers Supply

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2022)



Main sales area



P.O. Box 634
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WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM



Lots of goodies



Plenty of rental gear



Anyone need weights??



Lots of regulators