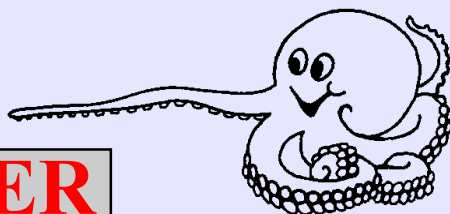


THE REEF SEEKER



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

July - 2025



GREETINGS FROM ROATAN

We arrived on Saturday and started diving on Sunday and will dive through Friday at Noon. So, depending on when you read this, we're roughly one-third to one-half way through the trip.

We're staying at Anthony's Key. This is our fourth time there and we've always enjoyed it. They've got a really slick (and I mean that in a good way) dive operation that runs like clockwork. The rooms are nice, the food is good, and the staff is pleasant. There are certainly other operators on the island we could go with but our general Reef Seekers M.O. is that once we find someone we like, we continue to deal with them unless they give us a reason not to.

The other advantage Anthony's has is location. They're on the north side of Roatan at Sandy Bay (the island runs at a slight angle NE to SW), about five miles from the west end of the island. The prevailing tradewinds that blow much of the year come out of the east. So the island itself really gives a lot of protection to those sites on the north side towards the west end and those are the main sites that

Anthony's dives. (Most of the sites are a 5-10 minute run from the resort.)

Resorts on the south side of the island are more likely to be exposed to those winds and so the diving might generally be choppier. By the same token, some people say the sealife is better on the south side and it's worth the choppiest water.

For Anthony's the only dive site that's not on the northwest side is Mary's Place, which is a fabulous dive, but also which is located on the south side of Roatan, about 12 miles up from the west edge of the island. So, while it's a great dive – it's basically a coral rock that's been split in half – it's also more exposed to the possibility of wind-caused swell so sometimes we can dive it and sometimes we can't.

But one nice thing about Anthony's is that all the dives are single-tank dives where you come back to the resort for about half an hour before going out again. Dives are at 8:30AM, 10:30AM, and 2:30PM, with night dives on Tuesday and Thursday around 6:20PM. So you can easily skip a dive without having to blow off the entire day.

At any rate, we're having good time so far. We've got 10 in our group, a boat to ourselves, our "regular" divemaster John Carter (who we've been able to get every

time we've been here). Water temp is roughly 83-84° and the viz is running anywhere from 50-60 feet. I'll give you more info in the full trip report once we complete the adventure and return home.

In the meantime, you can follow us on both the Ken Kurtis and the Reef Seekers FaceBook pages, where I post "Top 10" shots of the day each day that we dive. And if you go to the last page in this newsletter, I've selected five of my favs that I've shot so far.

GRAY WHALES IN TROUBLE

From the L.A. Times (edited for length):

The number of gray whales migrating along the California coast has plummeted again this year, dropping to levels not seen since the 1970s, according to federal officials. There are now likely fewer than 13,000 gray whales migrating along the North American Pacific coast — fewer than half the population's 27,000 peak in 2016, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Although a single cause for the population shrinkage has not been determined, scientists believe it is likely the result of a changing climate
(continued on page 4)



LET'S GO TO THE PHILIPPINES!!!

Whaddya doin' next September??? Specifically September 10-27. Because we'll be diving for two weeks in the Phabulous Philippines. Wanna join us??? (Bear in mind that this is a two-week trip.)

We're going to be doing all of our diving through Atlantis Dive Resorts. They have a number of options in the Philippines but we'll be on land for the first week in Dumaguete at their resort there, and then for the second week, we'll be on their boat *Infiniti* and we'll explore the reefs north of Dumaguete which may also give us a chance at seeing Thresher Sharks.

I've been to the Atlantis Dumaguete resort twice (including September 2024) and really enjoyed my stay both times. As with many dive resorts nowadays, this is all-inclusive. So we'll get up to five dives each day as well as breakfast/lunch/dinner daily as well. The dive sites are all relatively close (5-10 minute run from the resort) so everything is a 1-tank dive and then you do your surface interval back at the resort. It gives you time to make adjustments to your camera or, if you want to skip a dive, it doesn't mean you've blown the entire day.

While Dumaguete is mainly known as a macro heaven, there are also reefs at the on-shore sites as well.

So you don't have to spend the entire time sifting through black sand hoping to find a Mimic Octopus. And, even though the dive guides are very good and can generally find almost anything you ask them for, I was very proud of the fact that when I was there last year, I found a small red frogfish that they'd never spotted at the site. So you might be able to show them something as well. We'll also do a day over at Apo Island, which has some wonderful reefs with soft coral and other things you don't always find in Dumaguete proper.

When it comes time to board the boat, late Saturday afternoon September 19, they'll pick us up literally in front of the resort. So we'll likely dive in the morning, pack up in the afternoon, and then transfer to the boat and head north.

While on the *Infiniti*, we should also get in 3-5 dives/day, enjoy wonderful meals, relax between dives, and just generally explore the reefs north of Dumaguete. I've not been up there so I don't have any insights to offer. But this is one of their "normal" routes so it's an area that they're familiar with. On September 26, we'll get off the boat in the morning (at the resort),

head for the airport, and begin the journey home which is Dumaguete-Manila, a few hours layover, and then Manila nonstop back to LAX.

Although we don't normally include airfare in our trips, this one includes round-trip airfare from Manila-Dumaguete as well as transfers to and from the resort (saves about \$250 overall). So you'll need to get yourself to Manila, which is running as low as \$800 from LAX. Also be aware that there are some park fees and boat fuel surcharges not included (another \$350-ish) nor is nitrox included if you choose to dive that.

The Reef Seekers price for all of this includes both weeks, double-occupancy room at the resort (single supplement might be available for an extra charge), all diving and meals while at the resort and on the boat and crew tips as well. Our price is \$6,499 (so basically \$3,250/week). A \$1,000 deposit (\$500/week) will hold your spot. Be aware that we're limited to 12 spots on this trip and we've already got about half a dozen people signed up. So don't let this one pass you by. Send an e-mail or give us a call to 310/652-4990 and secure your space.

2026 DIVING VACATIONS

March 9-22 • Yap

July 1-14 • Indonesia

Sept (12-19) • Dumaguete (land)

Sept (19-26) • Dumaguete (boat)

SCUBA SHOW CHANGES

If you attended the recent Scuba Show in Long Beach (May 31 & June 1), it may not have seemed like the “last” one but it was. Admittedly, I’m using the word “last” a bit liberally but it, in fact, was the last show that will be run solely by Mark Young as the owner of the show and CA Diving News. Because effective June 2 – the day after the show closed – Mark sold the entire business to Rork Media.

They’re based in the United Kingdom and pitch themselves as dealing globally with the scuba market as they publish Scuba Diver magazine, Divernet.com, and run the GO Diving shows in both the United Kingdom and Australia. They focus mainly on the UK, Australia, and North America. There’s also been a rumor that they might try to acquire another US-based dive show or two, since the US is such a large diving market, especially for travel.

The assumption at this point is that Scuba Show 2026 will be back in Long Beach and you may not notice much of a change. But we shall see what they bring to the table because even though the Scuba Show is the largest consumer-oriented dive show in the US, there’s always room for improvement and expansion.

HEAD BUYS AQUALUNG

Per a judgment rendered by the Commercial Court of Nice (Italy) on June 26th, HEAD has been declared the winning party in a bid for the AQUALUNG Group, which was placed in receivership on May

UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	\$\$\$
Sat.	Jul 12	Veterans Park	Beach Diving made Easy	35
Wed.	16	--- CLASS ---	--- TABLESCOMPUTERS ---	FREE!!!
Wed.	23	Catalina Express	Avalon UW Park	180
Sat.	Aug 9	Veterans Park	Navigation Made Easy	35
Thu.	14	Veterans Park	••• Night Dive •••	35
Wed.	20	--- CLASS ---	--- PHOTO WORKSHOP ---	35
Sat.	30	Veterans Park	Surf Entries Made Easy	FREE!!!
Wed.	Sep 3	Catalina Express	Avalon UW Park	180

16th, just six weeks ago.

HEAD has made previous acquisitions in the dive industry.

MARES was acquired by HEAD in 1971. SSI was bought in 2014, and ZOGGS, an Australian swim brand, was acquired 2020

So we’ll see how this all works out. It’s a further consolidation/corporatization of the diving industry as you now have a few players (Huish immediately comes to mind) who own multiple brands. Whether or not this is helpful to retailers and the dive business overall remains to be seen.

IF I COULD TALK TO THE ANIMALS . . .

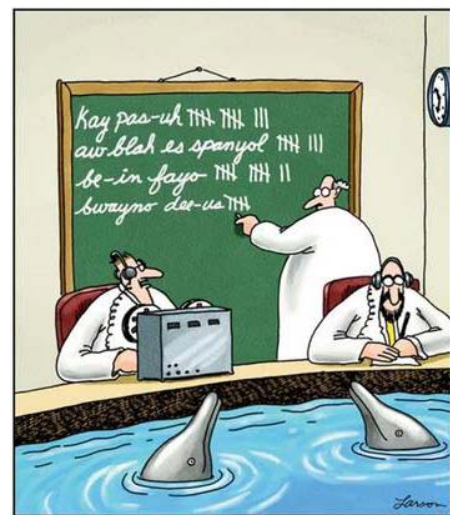
The idea of inter-species communication has fascinated people for a long time. Sure, your dog goes nuts when you say, “Would you like to go for a WALK?” But wouldn’t it be interesting if he could tell you, “Yes, but don’t take me by that area of the park again.”

Scientists - and divers too for that matter – have long known that whales are communicating with each other because we can hear their clocks and whistles when we’re underwater. We also know that these sounds travel really far. And for a long time, scientists have recorded these sounds and tried to make sense of things. But now

they’ve got a new tool to use: Artificial Intelligence.

A group of scientists have taken some 9,000 hours of whale recordings and started feeding them in an AI program to try to determine patterns and things that might indicate communication. And supposedly they’re now able to synthesize some sounds that they’re broadcast when whales are nearby and they even think the whales may be responding. No one’s really sure what anyone is saying yet, but it’s an interesting breakthrough to say the least.

Of course, anytime I hear of people talking about communicating with whales or other animals, I’m always reminded of one of my all-time favorite Gary Larson “Far Side” Cartoons:



Matthews ... we’re getting another one of those strange ‘aw blah es span yol’ sounds.”

(continued from page 1)

mate and its impact on the animals' Arctic and subarctic food supply.

This year, scientists in Mexico reported from the lagoons of the Baja California Peninsula that very few calves had been born, and that many adult whales were dying.

Researchers saying they observed only 85 calves migrating north to the whales' Arctic feeding grounds. That's the lowest number of calves counted since researchers began keeping records in 1994.

According to a news release this month by the NOAA, one of the most concerning aspects of these latest numbers is the continued population drop since 2019. While

these whales have faced population shrinkages in the past, they tended to rebound after a few years.

What the future holds for these gentle leviathans is something we should all be concerned about.

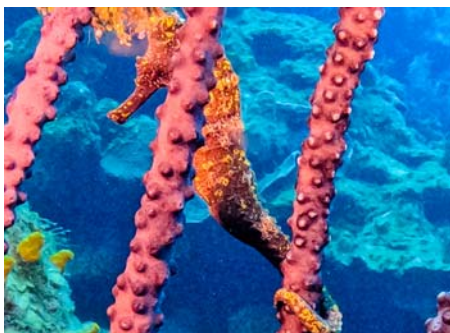
FOURTH OF JULY

We'll still be in Roatan for the 4th and I'm trying to remember if I've ever been outside of the U.S. for the 4th of July. Needless to say, it may feel a bit weird. But I also think it's important to remember that the more formal name of the day is Independence Day. And no matter what side of the political spectrum you fall on (and I think most of you know my own leanings), I hope you'll use this day to

pause and think and especially focus on the "Independence" part. Ask yourself if the direction this country is taking, if the way things are being done, and if the actions being proposed fit your vision of what America should be. "Land of the free, home of the brave" means different things to different people. But I would hope that on this special day, and maybe even more so on this particular Independence Day, that you'll reflect on where this country has been and where it's going. And I hope you'll do whatever you can to steer us in a direction that allows us to be the best that we can possibly be, one that the nations of the world can look to for inspiration and guidance, and one that citizens of the world say, "That's what I want MY country to be like."

PICTURE PAGE - Roatan critters

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2025)



**Yellow/orange
Seahorse**



WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM



**Friendly Nassau Grouper
with DM John Carter**



**Orange
Sponge**



**French
Angelfish**



**Yellowtail
Snapper**