

THE REEF SEEKER



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HEAT WAVE = HYDRATE

We are now in the midst of a major heat wave, as you doubtless already know. The current metro L.A. forecast calls for temps in the 90s through Monday. Even the beach comminutes will be in the high 80s to low 90s. The watchword during these times is a simple one: HYDRATE.

Drink plenty of water throughout the day. (Also be aware it's possible to over-hydrate.) Be aware of signs of dehydration which can include feeling thirsty, less urination, dizziness, mood swings, irritability, fatigue, headaches, muscle cramps, changes in heart rate and breathing.

When it comes to urination, pay attention to the color of your pee. Dark is no good and indicates dehydration. Light-colored is where you want to be.

It's fairly easy to get dehydrated while diving even on a normal day, let alone on an excessively

hot one. To start with, the air in our tanks has 0% moisture so you're breathing in dry air and exhaling some moisture whether you like it or not, so you're going to dehydrate some on every dive. On top of that, you may be out in the sun or you may be sitting around in a wetsuit waiting for a buddy, both recipes for dehydration.

If you're doing a beach dive – Vets Park at Redondo is a good example of this – you may be fully gearing up in a parking lot and then walking down a fair distance to the beach and then across the hot sand to the water's edge. All of this, on top of the dive itself, can contribute to becoming dehydrated.

Some years ago, there was a fatality at the Avalon Underwater Park where dehydration seemed to come into play. It was a hot summer day and the diver was fully geared up, including wearing a hood, and sitting on the wall by the top of the stairs waiting for his instructor to finish a dive with another class. It seems the diver in question was overheating and got in the water to cool off but never put his reg in his mouth and ended up drowning. Fatigue and disorientation from dehydration could also have played into this scenario.

Prevention is the best cure. Drink water. Especially if you've been

sweating a lot (or just feel like you have), replenish electrolytes as well with sports drinks. It's not a bad idea to drink 4-8 ounces of water shortly before you begin your dive and another 4-8 ounces shortly after you end the dive. And be especially alert for muscle cramps during the dive – for me, it's usually in the legs – as these could be early indicators.

Cool off between dives as best you can. Take off your hood, remove (or at least roll down) the top half of your wetsuit, put on a good hat, splash some fresh water on your face, find some shade. And be aware, for yourself and those around you, of the signs of heat exhaustion which are fairly similar to dehydration. Untreated, these can lead to heat stroke which is a medical emergency.

On the last page of this newsletter, rather than our usual set of fish pix, I've included a handy-dandy chart about heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Seems appropriate and it wouldn't be a bad idea to cut it out, maybe laminate it, and keep it with your dive gear.

Take the heat seriously, drink plenty of water, and don't become a heat victim.





A SAD ANNIVERSARY

Depending on how old you are, certain dates are seared in your memory: November 22, 1963 – JFK assassination; January 28, 1986 – *Challenger* explosion; September 11, 2001 – Terrorist attacks. And for divers, September 2, 2019 – *Conception* fire.

It's hard to realize that this weekend marks three years since that horrible day. But, tragic as it was, we learned things that hopefully help us insure this doesn't repeat. Perhaps one of the most significant realizations was that when we have an alternate means of escape, specifically from a bunkroom, if it opens into the same area as the primary exit, it's not much of an alternate. We also gained an increased awareness about the hazards of rechargeable batteries, re-evaluated the type of smoke detectors that should be used on boats, and became much more aware of the requirement for a roving overnight watchperson.

Much of what we came to realize started with the investigation by the NTSB. Their final report was released on October 20, 2020 and had these recommendations:

- Smoke detectors must be in all accommodation spaces
- They should be inter-connected
- Coast Guard must develop method to insure boat compliance with roving patrol requirements
- Secondary exits must lead to a different space than the primary

exit space does.

In January of this year, two years and four months after the accident, the Coast Guard (USCG) announced interim rules (actually published in the Federal Register on December 27, 2021) as a result of all of this. The eight rules they've proposed (some of which will be phased in over a 2-year period) are:

- Improved crewmember firefighting training/proficiency
- Inter-connected fire detection equipment as well as more fire extinguishers
- Install a monitoring device to insure the wakefulness of the night watch
- Increased fire detection/suppression systems in unmanned areas
- Improved handling/storage of flammables such as rechargeable batteries
- Mandatory passenger egress drills prior to departure
- Provide all passengers with a copy of egress plan.

Some of these items dive boat owners/operators had voluntarily implemented soon after the accident. One of the big ones was ending the practice of overnight charging of electronics, as that was pre-

sumed to be what started the *Conception* fire. (But even the NTSB report states that the specific cause and start time of the fire cannot be determined.)

There was certainly a greater renewed awareness of the requirement (contained in the Code of Federal Regulations under which the boats operate) for an active roving night watchperson. Lack of such was also cited in the NTSB report as a major safety issue with *Conception*. However, in response to that, many boats stopped the practice of opening the night before a day trip and allowing people to sleep on board because to do so would require a crewperson to be awake and on watch through the night.

There's no question this was a horrible accident with many ramifications. If anything good can be thought to come out of this, it's that it forced us as an industry to re-evaluate what we do and how we do it and discard some preconceived notions about what was safe and what was not. From that perspective we can move forward, vowing together to do everything we can to make sure this never happens again.

2022 & 2023 DIVE VACATIONS

October 17-28 • Indonesia

Jan or Feb • San Ignacio ??

March (?) • Yap

May • Bonaire



**ZOOM SEEKERS IN
SEPTEMBER –
CONCEPTION FIRE**

We will have an open-ended discussion about the *Conception* fire and the new regulations as our September 13 Zoom Seekers session. Although we initially had planned to have an NTSB investigator as the speaker, because of the ongoing civil and criminal litigation, he's not available at this time.

So instead, we will have an overview (led and moderated by Ken Kurtis) of what we've learned and what the new practices and regulations are that have come out of the investigations. Unlike our usual format which is a speaker with a Q&A at the end, this one is intended to be more of a group discussion as we go along, with as many of you participating as possible. And once we're done with our PowerPoint presentation, then we'll open the floor up and see where everything takes us.

That being said, there's a fine line between a productive discussion of the issues and the entire thing deteriorating into a mess. So we will be riding herd on where things are going and if we feel a person is getting out of hand, they will be given an opportunity to either modify their rhetoric or be invited to leave. Our assumption is that there might be relatives of victims watching, as well as friends of

UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES				
DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	PRICE
Thu.	Sept. 1	Redondo (Vets)	••• Night Dive •••	\$30
Sat.	17	Redondo (Vets)	Mastering Surf Entries & Exits	\$30
Wed.	21	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$175
Thu.	28	Redondo (Vets)	••• Night Dive •••	\$30
Wed.	Oct. 5	--- CLASS ---	--- Photo Workshop ---	\$30
Wed.	12	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$175
Sat.	15	Redondo (Vets)	Beach Diving (single tank)	\$30
Thu.	27	Redondo (Vets)	••• Night	\$30

victims (one of our regulars was on the boat and died, plus we have a longstanding relationship with Truth Aquatics, who owned the boat) and we would ask that everyone be cognizant of the audience when offering comments.

So mark your calendars for Tuesday, September 13, starting at 7:30PM. The URL link to the sessions will be sent out a few days prior as well as it will be posted on our website. Also bear in mind that we are limited to 100 people on the Zoom call but that we will live-stream the session thru FaceBook Live so if the Zoom room fills up, there's always that.

We hope you'll join us for what hopefully will be productive, educational, and maybe even a cathartic experience for everyone.



**AIRLINES BEND
TO PRESSURE
FROM DOT**

In a letter sent in early August, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg essentially told airlines either they could do a better job

with customer service when flights are delayed or cancelled or he'd impose some regulations to do it for them. Guess what? The major airlines have announced that they've made adjustments in that area.

Policies have been re-written to clarify when passengers are entitled to things like meal vouchers or a hotel stay and their language has been cleared up to make it (hopefully) a little less ambiguous. For instance, United will offer a meal voucher when a flight is delayed more than three hours. The previous requirement was a four-hour delay. Baby steps.

Delta said it's cleaned up its language as to when passengers can get refunds, adding that they've refunded over 11 million tickets since the start of 2020 and that over 2 million of those refunds have been issued this year alone.

American will offer hotel rooms when the delay isn't caused by weather-related issues, and they'll provide transportation to and from the hotel as well.

So at least it's moving in the right direction. But isn't it amazing how when the government threatens to further regulate you, that you can suddenly make improvements in areas where you previously claimed you were doing the best you could?



AVALON ON SEPTEMBER 21

Interested in some nice diving???

If you can make some free time, give some thought to joining us on Wednesday, September 21, for our monthly trip to dive the Avalon Underwater Park. We've been getting really nice Giant Sea Bass

action the last couple of times we were there, as well as large schools of various fish. It's a great place to go if you haven't been diving in a while as well as if you just want to take a midweek break.

We'll be leaving out of San Pedro on the 8:45AM boat, a taxi will take us over to the Park, and then we should be able to get in three dives with a break for lunch (bring your own) somewhere in-between. We'll be out of the water by 4PM, take our time packing up, and have plenty of time to get back to the dock for our 6:00PM departure from Avalon (which puts us back in San Pedro around 7:30PM).

\$175 gets you covered for the boat, the taxis, tank rental and airfills, and the dives (escorted or not – your choice). If you'd like to sign up, give us a call at 310/652-4990.



PEAK DIVING SEASON

We've said it before and it bears repeating: Fall is the best time to go diving in SoCal. Water temps are reaching their peak (and will generally stay relatively high almost through Thanksgiving), visibility tends to be best in September/October, diving demand slows down a bit following Labor Day, and – for those of you who are hunters – lobster season opens October 1. There's all kinds of good stuff to see but it won't come swimming up to your front door. Make some plans to go diving.

HYDRATION PAGE

Heat Exhaustion

ACT FAST

- Move to a cooler area
- Loosen clothing
- Sip cool water
- Seek medical help if symptoms don't improve

Dizziness

Thirst

Heavy Sweating

Nausea

Weakness



Heat Stroke

ACT FAST

CALL 911

- Move person to a cooler area
- Loosen clothing and remove extra layers
- Cool with water or ice

Confusion

Dizziness

Becomes Unconscious

Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.

Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not given.



Stay Cool, Stay Hydrated, Stay Informed!

