

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

October - 2021



Tips for preparing for **CALIFORNIA'S SPINY LOBSTER SEASON**

Remember: Safety first, lobsters second.

California's 2021/2022
Spiny Lobster Season Runs
October 2, 2021 - March 16, 2022



Check & update your equipment.



Refresh your diving skills.



Upgrade your training.



Use caution and safety.

Don't put yourself or your buddies at risk for the sake of catching a lobster.

www.dema.org | [godivehow](http://godivehow.com)

**BE PREPARED. BE SAFE.
AND HAPPY HUNTING!**

LOBSTER SEASON OPENS SATURDAY AT 6:00AM

We say it every year: No lobster is worth dying for.

The biggest thing I can implore you to do is WATCH YOUR AIR. Let me repeat that for the hard-of-reading: WATCH YOUR AIR.

Most of the problems we see, especially opening weekend, have to do with a lack of air supply because a diver was too intent on the hunt and not aware enough of the breathing gas. There's no such thing as checking your air too often. (This applies to non-hunting dives too.) In my book, two things should be happening:

1. You should be checking your air every 500psi. If you've consumed more than 500psi since the last time you checked, you're not checking often enough.
2. Before you look, say to yourself how much air you think you have. If you're off by more than 300 psi, you're not checking often enough.

A couple of other tips to help you make it to another hunt:

1. Every time you ATTEMPT to grab a bug (successful or not), check your air.
2. Arrive at your safety stop with a minimum of 500psi. (More is better.)
3. Use depth times 5, added to 500, to know when to start directly ascending to your 15-foot safety stop (so if you're at 50 feet, $50 \times 5 = 250 + 500 = 750$ psi.)
4. Surface with no less than 300psi to account for gauge inaccuracy.
5. Remember that surfacing with SOME air, is always better than dying with NO air.

Oh yeah . . . Have fun.

NICE DAY IN AVALON

Maybe "nice" is an overstatement because it was cloudy/overcast, the viz wasn't all that good, there was particulate in the water, and the seagulls swooped in stole my lunch. But we all had a good time. (Especially the seagulls.)

Best of all, the Cousteau plaque seems to be in amazingly good shape after almost a year underwater. A few little scars on the face of the plaque from when we removed the protective lacquer coating but other than that, not too bad. There's some pitting going on on Jacques' face which we'll take a better look at next time we're over there. But make sure you say hello to Jacques next time you dive there.

The stars of the show are always the Giant Sea Bass that hang out and, despite the less-than-optimal conditions, they were there in force. We saw multiples, and on each of our two dives had a nice extended encounter. (Pix of one of them on page 4.)

But there was plenty of other stuff to see as well and we all commented on the number of Sheephead we were seeing, espe-

cially three or four large males. As you hopefully know, Sheephead start as an orange juvy with five black spots and a white horizontal stripe, then morph into a female, and then – depending on the number of males around – some of the females turn into males. So the fact that we are seeing large males (meaning they're older) and the fact that we're diving in a Marine Protected Area (where no fishing is allowed), underlines the idea that MPAs definitely help strengthen fish stocks.

Because of the conditions, we opted out of dive #3 and instead opted in for 18 holes at Golf Gardens, Avalon's miniature golf course. Personally (and I really LOVE miniature golf), I think it's one of the best courses I've ever played. Not too gimmicky and accurate putting is at a premium. I was not on my game but managed to cobble together a 59 (par is 51).

Our next trips over are scheduled for October 27 and December 8. Make plans to join us if you can. It's a fun day, with or without golf, and because we go midweek, the Underwater Park is generally not very crowded. Give us a call at 310/652-4990 to get signed up.

2022 DIVING VACATIONS

March 11-20 • Socorro

May 20-28 • Bonaire

July (??) • Indonesia

Fall (??) • Yap

UPDATED COVID TRAVEL INFO

Don't forget this stuff changes frequently so what I'm writing now could very well be inoperable by the time you're reading this. For both CDC and State Department "Level" designations, 1 is good/low, 4 is bad/high. But in general terms (in no particular order):

MEXICO – Remains open and a lot of people seem to be flying into Cabo San Lucas, Cancun, and Cozumel without incident. United briefly had a Saturday non-stop from LAX but that seems to have disappeared. You can go through Houston with a layover and connection or you could fly non-stop to Cancun, and then take the Ultramar ferry out of Playa del Carmen over to Cozumel. Resorts are open in Cozumel, Nautilus and other are running Guadalupe trips out of Ensenada (bussing you over the border from San Diego).

BELIZE – Seems to be open and dive operations are advertising deals.

BONAIRE – Still open. CDC raised the alert status to Level 3 but Bonaire itself does not seem to have changed anything. However, your negative PCR test now has to be done 48 hours before your originating flight rather than 72. Note it says "originating" flight, which may not necessarily be the flight you take into Bonaire.

HAWAII – Open with some caveats. If you're vaccinated, come on down!! If you're not vaccinated, you can fly provided you test negative with one of Hawaii's specific approved Trusted Testing & Travel Partners, or you can choose to NOT get tested and quarantine for 10

UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	PRICE
Sat.	Oct. 9	Redondo (Vets)	Beach dive (single tank)	\$25
Wed.	20	--- CLASS ---	NAUI NITROX	\$75
Wed.	27	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$160
Wed.	Nov. 3	Redondo (Vets)	••• Night dive •••	\$25
Sat.	13	Redondo (Vets)	Navigation (single dive)	\$25
Wed.	17	--- CLASS ---	TABLES & COMPUTERS	FREE
Sat.	Dec. 4	Redondo (Vets)	Beach dive (single tank)	\$25
Wed.	8	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$160

days after arrival. (Doesn't sound like fun, but it's your vacation.)

YAP – Not yet open. Fingers crossed for 2022.

INDONESIA – Limited opening through selected ports of entry as of last week. State Department still has them at Level 3 (reconsider travel). You have to apply ahead of time for a visa (no visa-on-arrival currently), you must be vaccinated, and you must have a negative PCR test within 72 hours of your originating flight. Manado, Jakarta, and Bali appear to be open. However, if you're transiting through Singapore, the timeline on your test may only be 48 hours rather than 72. So, before you leave, make sure you've got all of your COVID ducks in a row because it's easy to screw this up and they WILL send you home.

MALDIVES – The Maldives is open but the State Department has them at Level 4 (do not travel – due to terrorism) and CDC also has them at Level 4 which advises caution for vaccinated people and highly risky for unvaxxed people. Also be aware that, vaxxed or unvaxxed, if you contract COVID while in the Maldives, you will be REQUIRED to quarantine at your own expense in a state-approved facility and some of them are apparently less-than-ideal. There's some great up-to-the-minute info from this site: <https://>

visitmaldives.com/en/covid19-updates. One of our divers is there now doing back-to-back trips so maybe we'll have first-hand info in a couple of weeks.

PALAU – Open and seemingly eager to re-establish tourism. Level 2 for the State Department (increased caution) but Level 1 from CDC. However, there are other restrictions. You MUST be fully vaccinated. You must submit a negative PCR test (along with proof of vaccination) taken within three days of departure to Palau. You must quarantine for the first five days (except for essential outings – grocery, medical, banking, etc.) and submit to a PCR test on Day 1 and Day 5 at the Belau National Hospital between 8:00-10:30AM and pay \$30.50 for the test. After the fifth day, it sounds like you're free to go. I have no idea how this would affect you on a liveaboard so if you're traveling, check with your tour operator.

The following are some diving country CDC-assigned levels as of early August, the most recent list I could find without doing it myself country-by-country. Check the CDC website for a specific country as some of these may have changed either up or down:

LEVEL 1 (lowest incidence of COVID issues) – Cayman Islands, Dominica, Palau, Saba, Singapore, Turks & Caicos.

LEVEL 2 (be cautious) – Egypt, Guam, Jamaica.

LEVEL 3 (CDC suggests you avoid all non-essential travel) – Aruba, Bahamas, Belize, Bonaire, Easter Island, French Polynesia, Honduras, Mexico, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Saint Lucia, Thailand.

LEVEL 4 (avoid travel) – British Virgin Islands, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curacao, Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Papua New Guinea, Saint Martin, Seychelles, U.S. Virgin Islands.

This list is not necessarily comprehensive but was the best I could find at the time of this writing.

Bottom line: Get vaxxed, wear a mask when traveling, don't get complacent and hopefully you can do all of this without incident.

LAX SECRET TAXI STAND

I am not a fan of LAExit. The general concept is fine but it's the 20 minutes it usually takes to get a bus and then get over to the lot that's a bummer. I miss the good old days when you could exit baggage claim and get a taxi right there at the curb.

Well, you still can.

There's actually a "secret" taxi stand that's just beyond the baggage claim for terminals 7 & 8, so if you're flying United, this is perfect for you. You simply exit baggage claim, turn right, walk two hundred feet, and you're there. (There's also a sign that says TAXI STAND with an arrow.) It's right in front of the Airport Police satel-

lite station. There's a sign there that gives you the dispatcher telephone number, you call them, tell them where you are, and (from my experience) the cab's there in a couple of minutes. Load up and off you go.

This is certainly not limited to United passengers but it's obviously going to be a very long walk from the International Terminal or terminals 4 and 5. It might make sense from terminal 6 but it's still obviously going to be a longer walk.

But if you're coming out of 7/8 and don't want to do LAExit, give this a shot. (Ironically, the walk to the LAExit stop from 7/8 baggage claim is almost as far in the opposite direction as the walk to the secret taxi stand.)

PICTURE PAGE - Avalon Fish

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2021)



Kelpfish
in the kelp (where else?)



P.O. Box 634
Beverly Hills, CA 90213

WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM



Giant Sea Bass
(our favorite subject)



**Big male
Sheephead**



**Gorgeus juvy
Garibaldi**



Male Rock Wrasse