

THE REEF SEEKER



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December - 2017

DISCOUNT SHARKS

There little doubt in my mind that a diver's favorite word is "FREE." The one that takes a close second is "DISCOUNT." So here we go:

As you know, we've been to Guadalupe for the cage-dive Great White Shark experience now four times. Each time has been wonderful and unique and - most importantly - each time we've not only had plenty of Great White Sharks but they're close enough that you can touch them.

I've been asked about a trip in 2018. I'm happy to do that but, for a variety of reasons, this trip is generally a slow-seller for us. Some of that has to do with the nature of it since it's an extended journey across open ocean (usually around 20 hours) and it "only" involves three actual dive days out of the six days of the trip.

Pricing also plays into this because there's no question it's not a cheap trip. For 2018, the price for a spot in a double stateroom is \$3,250 plus you need to add on the \$65 port tax and whatever you choose to leave as a crew tip (we suggest \$300). So you're looking \$3,600-ish plus you have to get yourself to San Diego.

Some of you also know that in past years, Nautilus has offered a special discount at the Scuba Show

for bookings made there. They have sworn to me on a copy of the U.S. Navy Dive Manual that that will NOT be happening this year because they realize that some people just wait for that and it sort of undercuts their entire market. So if you want to go with Nautilus - who IMHO has great crew people and the best boats - don't be waiting for a coupon in the mail. However . . .

Given that it's the holidays and I'm such a magnanimous and giving guy (and I need some points to stay on Santa's "nice" list), I'm willing to make a special holiday-only offer on our trip.

Nautilus is holding spots for me on the October 15-20 trip. This is on the *Belle Amie* which I think is absolutely the nicest dive boat I've ever been on, is HUUUUUGE (145' x 33'), they have a large open deck from which to work the sharks cages, and there are FIVE cages in all which means you can have 17 divers underwater all at the same time. In short, I think it's the perfect boat for this trip.

So here's the holiday offering: I will offer a 5% **DISCOUNT** if you want to book this trip with us. That means your cost drops to \$3,095 (but there's still the port tax and tip). This would make a **WONDERFUL GIFT** to put under your Christmas tree or

Menorah. (Yes, I know you don't put gifts under the Menorah but I'm just making a non-denominational point.) And that brings me to the caveat: This 5% **DISCOUNT offer expires at 6PM on Sunday, December 24**, aka Christmas Eve.

If you're looking to give a unique present this season, this could be it, and you'll save 5% to boot. If you've been wanting to go yourself, then this is a great gift to give to yourself, and you'll save 5% to boot. Or if you're just . . . frugal (nicer word than "cheap") . . . and you won't budge unless there's a deal, act now and save 5%.

But don't be tardy. Because on December 24, at exactly 6:01PM, Belsnickle becomes my booking agent. (And if you don't know who Belsnickle is, Google it.)

So you've got the time, I've got the space. I don't need full payment up front. \$500 will secure your spot and then we'll figure out a payment schedule that works for you. Be aware that all of these price offerings are cash/check. Credit cards are fine but will be slightly higher.

So give it some thought, check your calendar, and give us a call. Because the clock is ticking. And Christmas Eve will be here sooner than you think . . .

BONAIRE DATES HAVE SHIFTED

The original dates fell during Spring Break and Easter weekend but we had picked them because of a specific person who was going, who has now dropped off of the trip. As a result, we're shifting the Bonaire dates to April 14-21. Not only will Buddy Dive be a little less crowded, but the airfare drops by around \$1,000 which puts it into a much more reasonable range. So if this is a trip you were thinking of, but the March dates didn't work for you, take a look again because April may prove to be more favorable for you.

ABANDON SHIP NOW!!!

For years we've told you to carry a Save-a-Dive kit: Little things like o-rings, mask straps, Schrader valves, etc., whose failure can mean you sitting instead of diving. Add to that an Abandon-Ship kit. We talked about this both in the Fiji trip report and in one of the TWARS, but it bears repeating.

One of the lessons from the sinking of the *Fiji Siren* was the importance of being able to take with you - and quickly - essential things you might need if the boat sinks. Obviously, you can't save everything you brought. But decide what are the most critical items for you. Definitely a passport, perhaps a credit card, phone, some cash, prescription medicines, and stuff like that. The key word is "essential". What do you absolutely need to have over the next couple of days or to return home from where you are? (This is why, when in a for-

eign country, the passport is REALLY important.)

Some people use a ZipLoc baggie which is absolutely fine. But some companies - Pelican and Otter immediately come to mind - make fairly small watertight cases into which you can throw your essentials. Even better, before the boat leaves the dock, put your must-have goodies in this container and then put it in an easy-to-get-to place and also where you also won't forget where you put it.

In the highly unlikely (but as we saw with the *Fiji Siren*, possible) event that the boat is going to sink and you have to abandon ship, this is something you can easily grab and which won't suffer from being in the water. Also consider that you might have to swim and will need both hands, so the other thing to consider is having some sort of a lanyard or necklace on it so you can hang this from your neck or attach it to your wrist in case you need both hands free. How awful would it be to have all your goodies but then drop them into the deep because you couldn't keep a grip on them?

This may sound like a bit of overkill and the hope certainly is that

you'll never need to use it. But in case the unthinkable happens, better to be prepared than not.

2018 LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES

On the next page you will find - suitable for posting on your bulletin board or refrigerator - a complete list of all of our currently-scheduled local trips (Avalon Underwater Park and Redondo beach dives), classes (Fish ID, Photo Workshop, Navigation, and NAUI Nitrox), and the dates for our foreign trips.

We might add some local boats dives over the course of the year. I can also promise you that some of the dates will change due to changes in my personal sked. But we'll do our best to offer these as planned.

If you're interested, make sure you either e-mail us or call 310/652-4990. Sometimes we'll do these with only one person. Others (like the Avalon trips) require more than one. But we love taking you diving and teaching you new things, so these are your opportunities to do it with us in the coming year.

2018 DIVING VACATIONS

April 14-21 • Bonaire

June 8-20 • Yap Immersion

July 14-28 • Sulawesi, Indo

August 18-25 • Isla Mujeres

REEF SEEKERS DIVE CO.

2018 LOCAL DIVES, CLASSES & VACATIONS

RESERVATIONS (310)652-4990



IMPORTANT STUFF YOU NEED TO KNOW

All diving must be done within recreational sport diving limits: depths 130' or less, no-deco bottom times, on standard compressed air or nitrox (<40%) as a breathing gas.

Limit one scuba tank per diver.
Pony bottles do not count as a second tank.

Specific departure & return times vary trip-to-trip. Please confirm those when you book your spot.

Directions to all boats & Redondo Beach are on our website.

All dives are dependent on weather and may be changed or cancelled at our sole discretion.

You must show your certification card(s).
No c-card, no scuba diving.

A general briefing is conducted on each trip and is mandatory for all divers.

Avalon trips are generally 3 dives.
Redondo dives are single-tank.

We may add an occasional boat trip to this schedule.

Day-of-dive problems?
Call Ken directly at (310)995-3639

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	PRICE
Thu.	Jan. 11	Redondo	••• Squid Dive (night) •••	FREE!!!
Sat.	20	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$150
Thu.	25	- CLASS -	- FISH ID -	\$25
Sat.	Feb. 3	Redondo	Beach dive (single tank)	\$25
Thu.	8	Redondo	••• Squid Dive (night) •••	FREE!!!
Sat.	17	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$150
Sat.	24	Catalina Express	37th Avalon U/W Cleanup	\$150
Thu.	Mar. 1	- CLASS -	- PHOTO WORKSHOP -	\$25
Sat.	10	Aqrm of Pacific	Divers Day	FREE!!!
Sat.	17	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$150
Thu.	15	Redondo	••• Squid Dive (night) •••	FREE!!!
Sat.	Apr. 7	Redondo	Navigation dive (single tank)	\$25
Thu.	12	Redondo	••• Squid Dive (night) •••	FREE!!!
Sat.	28	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$150
Wed.	May 2	Many boats	Chamber Day/Eve benefit	\$120
Thu.	10	Redondo	••• Night Dive •••	FREE!!!
Sat.	19	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$150
Thu.	24	- CLASS -	- NAUI NITROX -	\$75
Sat.	June 2	Redondo	Beach dive (single tank)	\$25
Sat.	30	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$150
Thu.	July 12	- CLASS -	- Fish ID -	\$25
Sat.	Aug. 4	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$150
Sat.	11	Redondo	Navigation dive (single tank)	\$25
Thu.	Sept. 6	Redondo	••• Night Dive •••	FREE!!!
Sat.	15	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$150
Thu.	20	- CLASS -	- PHOTO WORKSHOP -	\$25
Thu.	Oct. 4	Redondo	••• Night Dive •••	FREE!!!
Sat.	13	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$150
Sat.	20	Redondo	Beach dive (single tank)	\$25
Thu.	25	- CLASS -	- NAUI NITROX -	\$75
Thu.	Nov. 8	Redondo	••• Night Dive •••	FREE!!!
Sat.	10	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$150
Sat.	Dec. 1	Redondo	Navigation dive (single tank)	\$25
Sat.	8	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$150
Thu.	13	Redondo	••• Squid Dive (night) •••	FREE!!!
Thu.	20	- CLASS -	- FISH ID -	\$25

NEED A VACATION???

April 14-21 • Bonaire • Excellent Caribbean diving

June 9-20 • Yap Immersion • Mantas, Mandarinfish, & Macro

July 14-28 • Indonesia • Bunaken Park & Lembeh Straits

August 18-25 • Isla Mujeres, Mexico • Whale Sharks & more

October 15-20 • Guadalupe • Great White Sharks

Oct. 27 - Nov. 3 • Roatan • Big and small critters

Reservations: (310)652-4990

(If you get the machine, please leave a message.)



FIJI COMMENTS

Hopefully you've had a chance to read the Fiji trip report and look at the SmugMug pix. Needless to say, while we had a good time, it was NOT the trip we had anticipated. And weather played a big part of that to the point that the following week, the wind that we were experiencing and trying to hide from likely played a role in the sinking of the *Fiji Siren* (another large live aboard - no lives were lost but the ship is in 750 feet of water).

On our trip, a number of our divers were - understandably - complaining about the weather and how it affected our dive site choices. And that's certainly a gripe we hear here as well, whether it's a trip intened to get out to Santa Barbara

Island or San Clemente, or even just a beach dive with high surf.

Personally speaking, I'm always a fan of canceling when you could have gone instead of going when you shouldn't have. My favorite saying that I've tried to drill into you over the years is: You never get hurt on a dive you don't make.

With that as prologue, I want to repeat something I said about this in the Fiji report, because I think too often, divers are harshly over-critical of the very tough decisions that boat captains -as well as instructors and dive masters - have to make each day about whether or not it's safe to dive.

I opined: "It's very easy for any of us, on any trip (here or abroad), when the captain says it's too rough

to go here or there to think that they're just making up some excuse and trying to save fuel. As I've been writing this trip report (it's now Wednesday afternoon, November 15), I received word that another Fiji liveaboard, the *Fiji Siren*, has sunk and been lost at sea. Fortunately, no lives were lost and there were no injuries to passengers or crew. The *Siren* left out of the northern tip of Vitu Levu (we left out of the SE corner), and worked waters that are somewhat further north than where we were. But I've also got to believe that whatever happened to the *Siren* that caused it to sink, it must had been some of the residual wind/waves from what we experienced just a week earlier. The ocean, as the saying goes, is an unforgiving mistress."

PICTURE PAGE - Fiji 2017

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2017)



**Cecilia stares down
a Clownfish**



P.O. Box 634
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WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM



**Zebra Shark
(aka Leopard Shark)**



**Yummy kava
(May I have some more?)**



**Lemonpeel Angel
(personal favorite)**



**Phenomenal
soft corals**