

# THE REEF SEEKER



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December - 2022

## VACATION TRIPS IN 2023

I've been spending a lot of time looking over flight skeds, checking with our partner resorts, sending out notes to those of you who have expressed general interest, and doing the other nuts and bolts that it takes to put together a selection of diver vacation offerings.

I think 2023 is going to be known as holiday vacations for us because it seems like each trip I'm planning encompasses a holiday: Easter in Bonaire, perhaps Fourth of July in Yap, Thanksgiving in the Maldives. Normally, I try to avoid scheduling trips over a holiday but this year things seem to be working against me. C'est la vie.

I will detail some of the trips separately in a moment, but let me give you a general idea of what's involved when you travel with us.

The general idea is that you get yourself to the airport and we'll take it from there. All of our trips are led by Reef Seekers owner Ken Kurtis. Most of the places we go are places we've gone before or owned by companies we've dealt with before, so we've already got a relationship going on and that usually works in our favor.

The prices we quote are exclusive of airfare but generally include

everything else. We don't want to nickel-and-dime you to death. Most importantly, all of our trips include the end-of-trip crew/staff tip. We also include hotel overnights when needed as well as airport transfers at our destination. If we're flying United, I can usually bring some of you into the United Club through my membership. On trips where all meals are not included, we will outline that up front so you know what to expect. Our goal is to make the trip easy on you, so all you have to concentrate on is having fun (which hopefully won't be too difficult to do).

Rooming arrangements are usually double-occupancy. Single supplements are generally available but if they're not and you're willing to pay for two spots, we're happy to make it work that way too.

As for the actual dives themselves, you're always welcome to dive with me or with your buddy or whatever works (within reason). Because we go to places we're familiar with, we usually know which sites will be best and which ones we can skip. On top of all of that, if you're a photographer, we're happy to do informal photo workshops and are always available for fish ID.

In a nutshell, we don't think you can have a better trip than you will

when you travel with Reef Seekers. And given the number of repeat guests that we have on our trips, we're guessing that you feel that way too.

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## LOCAL TRIPS AND CLASSES IN 2023

On page 3, you'll find the complete list of all of our Avalon Underwater Park day trips, local beach dives, and classes for the coming year. It's (obviously) suitable for printing and sticking on your refrigerator or somewhere else convenient.

There may be some changes throughout the year but those will be announced and updated on the Reef Seekers website. And one caveat is that the three things listed for July will most likely change because I haven't gotten our Yap dates confirmed yet but when I do, it may replace some of all of those.

Any of the offerings which are marked as "—CLASS—" are done via Zoom. In-water classes (Beach, Navigation, and Surf Entries/Exits) are done at Redondo Beach's Veterans Park as are the Night and Squid Dives. Hope you can join us for some of these throughout the coming year.



## **SAN IGNACIO (FEBRUARY)**

Want to hug a whale??? San Ignacio Lagoon in Baja California is the place to do it.

For years - probably hundreds of years - Grey Whales have come down to this isolated lagoon to give birth to their calves and get them ready for the long journey back north. And over time, humans have realized that the whales hang out here and, quite amazingly, a bond has formed between the whales and people. You've probably heard stories about whales approaching small boats (pangas) to be petted and hugged. Well, this is the place where that happens. And if you'd like to experience it, you should plan to come and join us for this trip.

We will be experiencing this with our friends at Nautilus Dive Adventures and we want to emphasize that there's no diving involved in this trip. It's strictly interacting while on the water in pangas so in reality, the whale is in control of what will or won't happen. We'll fly down to Cabo (SJD) and, after an overnight, will then fly in a small plane to the lagoon. We'll be there for four days (three nights) in the Nautilus "Glamping" camp and each day we'll go out 2-4 times to see if the whales want to play.

Cost of this trip includes overnight near the Cabo Airport,

roundtrip flight to San Ignacio, double-occupancy glamping tent with standard amenities (running water, toilet & shower, heat), 10-12 panga trips to see the whales, food and non-alcoholic drinks while at the lagoon, crew/staff tip. Airfare to SJD is not included.

This trip is filling fast and we only have 4 spots left as of this writing. So don't get left behind.



## **BONAIRE (APRIL)**

If ever there's a place where "reliable" could describe the diving, that would be how you'd describe Bonaire. Because of how it's situated in the Caribbean, it's fairly immune to hurricanes, the tradewinds help stabilize things, and diving conditions are usually, well, reliably good.

I don't know how many times we've been to Bonaire but it's cer-

tainly approaching 20. We wouldn't keep going back if we didn't like the diving. And we wouldn't keep using Buddy Dive if they weren't as reliable and good as Bonaire is overall. This year, we'll be there over Easter (perhaps the Easter Kurtis will bring you some candy) as the dates are April 8-15.

Our usual setup is for 2-bedroom and 1-bedroom apartments (each one comes with a rental vehicle) and a combination of boat and shore dives. We usually shoot for 2 boat dives in the morning M-F which leaves the afternoon free for shore diving. And we generally offer a dusk dive around 6PM each evening on the Buddy Dive house reef for those interested.

There are a variety of ways to get there but the best seems to be American through Miami which gets us there mid-afternoon on arrival day and gets us back to LAX on departure day without having to overnight on the way back.

We don't want this group to get too large so if you're interested, be sure to drop us an e-mail or call us at 310/652-4990. And did we mention Flamingoes?????

### **2023 DIVING VACATIONS**

**Feb. 6-10 • San Ignacio**

**April 8-15 • Bonaire**

**July TBA • Yap**

**November 15-29 • Maldives**

# 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, 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 start/finish times vary by event. Please confirm these when you sign up.

Directions to all landings & Veterans Park are on our website.

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

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

A general briefing is conducted for 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  
or (310)652-4990  
[you can text this last # too]

**zelle**



# — REEF SEEKERS DIVE CO. — 2023 LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED ACTIVITY/DIVE	PRICE
Wed.	Jan. 4	--- CLASS ---	--- Secrets of Fish ID ---	35
Sat.	14	Redondo/Vets	Beach Diving	35
Wed.	18	Catalina Express	Avalon Underwater Park	175
Thu.	26	Redondo/Vets	••• Squid Dive (night) •••	FREE
Wed.	Feb. 1	--- CLASS ---	--- Photo Workshop ---	35
Sat.	18	Redondo/Vets	Navigation Made Easy	35
Thu.	23	Redondo/Vets	••• Squid Dive (night) •••	FREE
Wed.	Mar. 1	--- CLASS ---	--- NAUI Nitrox Diver ---	95
Wed.	8	Catalina Express	Avalon Underwater Park	175
Sat.	18	Redondo/Vets	Taming Surf Entries	35
Thu.	23	Redondo/Vets	••• Squid Dive (night) •••	FREE
Wed.	Apr. 5	--- CLASS ---	--- Tables & Computers ---	35
Wed.	19	Catalina Express	Avalon Underwater Park	175
Sat.	22	Redondo/Vets	Beach Diving	35
Thu.	27	Redondo/Vets	••• Night Dive •••	35
Wed.	May 10	Catalina Express	Avalon Underwater Park	175
Sat.	13	Redondo/Vets	Navigation Made Easy	35
Wed.	17	--- CLASS ---	--- Secrets of Fish ID ---	35
Wed.	June 7	--- CLASS ---	--- Photo Workshop ---	35
Wed.	21	Catalina Express	Avalon Underwater Park	175
Sat.	26	Redondo/Vets	Taming Surf Entries	35
Thu.	29	Redondo/Vets	••• Night Dive •••	35
Wed.	July 5	Catalina Express	Avalon Underwater Park	175
Wed.	12	--- CLASS ---	--- NAUI Nitrox Diver ---	95
Sat.	15	Redondo/Vets	Beach Diving	35
Thu.	Aug. 3	Redondo/Vets	••• Night Dive •••	35
Wed.	9	Catalina Express	Avalon Underwater Park	175
Sat.	12	Redondo/Vets	Navigation Made Easy	35
Wed.	16	--- CLASS ---	--- Tables & Computers ---	35
Thu.	Sept. 7	Redondo/Vets	••• Night Dive •••	35
Sat.	16	Redondo/Vets	Taming Surf Entries	35
Wed.	20	Catalina Express	Avalon Underwater Park	175
Wed.	27	--- CLASS ---	--- Secrets of Fish ID ---	35
Sat.	Oct. 14	Redondo/Vets	Beach Diving	35
Wed.	18	Catalina Express	Avalon Underwater Park	175
Thu.	26	Redondo/Vets	••• Night Dive •••	35
Wed.	Nov. 1	--- CLASS ---	--- Photo Workshop ---	35
Wed.	8	Catalina Express	Avalon Underwater Park	175
Sat.	18	Redondo/Vets	Navigation Made Easy	35
Thu.	30	Redondo/Vets	••• Night Dive •••	35
Wed.	Dec. 6	--- CLASS ---	--- NAUI Nitrox ---	95
Sat.	16	Redondo/Vets	Taming Surf Entries	35
Wed.	20	Catalina Express	Avalon Underwater Park	175

## SPECIAL EVENTS DURING 2023

Sat., Feb. 25 • 41st Annual Avalon Underwater Cleanup

Sat., March TBA • Divers Day • Aquarium of the Pacific

Wed., May 3 • Chamber Day & Chamber Eve 2023

Sat. & Sun., June 3 & 4 • Scuba Show • LB Conv. Ctr.

Sat., September 30 • Lobster season opens at 6:00AM

## Reservations: (310)652-4990

(If you get voicemail, please leave a message.)



## **GREAT BARRIER REEF STATUS**

There's a proposal within UNESCO to list the Great Barrier Reef as endangered. The Australian government says they will oppose such a designation. The GBR comprises about 10% of the world's coral reefs so this is significant.

The argument for the designation results from a survey done in May of this year that showed more than

90% of the GBR was bleached. The general cause of bleaching is warming ocean waters. When water is too warm, corals will expel the algae (zooxanthellae) living in their tissues causing the coral to turn completely white. Sometimes reefs recover from bleaching but sometimes they don't.

The argument against the designation, which I'm sure the government feels is like a smack in the face, is that there's a new government in Australia which is not only far more committed to fighting climate change than the previous regime, but also says they've already taken steps to do so. They pretty much blame the current situation on the previous government, which was in power for the past nine years.

The new government has said they've already increased their commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to roughly double what the previous government had committed to, and they've pledged almost \$800 million (US) to caring for and repairing the reef, as well as they've cancelled plans to build two new dams that could have adversely affected the water quality.

So it sounds like they're making moves in the right direction. UNESCO says they'll review the information from the Aussie government before making any formal recommendation to the World Heritage Committee which has some jurisdiction over what gets classified and what doesn't. We'll keep you posted.

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## **PICTURE PAGE - Fish shots I like**

*(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2022)*



***Elusive Clown Triggerfish  
(Yap)***



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[WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM](http://WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM)



***Playful dolphin  
(Socorro)***



***Curious Yellowhead Jawfish  
(Roatan)***



***Gorgeous urchins  
(Philippines)***



***Cruising Manta  
(Maldives)***