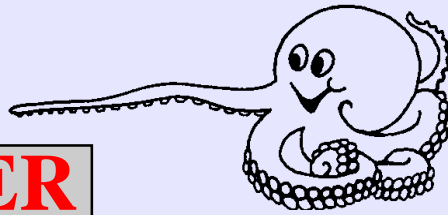


THE **REEF** SEEKER



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April 1, 2007



DF&G TO ALLOW BLACK SEA BASS TO BE HUNTED

In a stunning decision that caught many conservationists off-guard, the California Department of Fish & Game has announced plans to allow divers to begin hunting Black Sea Bass. The catch (no pun intended) is that it will be a limited season, hunters will require a special license, and that license can ONLY be acquired this Sunday, April 1.

In announcing the change in policy (the Black Sea Bass has been a protected species since 1982), DF&G official stated that the species has made such a dramatic comeback, that it's almost overpopulated right now. "We have frequent reports," the official said, "of anglers hooking them one right after another. Obviously, there's plenty to go around."

The special license to hunt the Black Sea Bass will cost \$100 each and will allow the diver (or fisherman) to take no more than three of the animals between the first day

of April and the last day of June. The only way to apply for such license is to call DF&G at **888/334-2258** and ask specifically about the Black Sea Bass Hunting Permit. (Of course, those of us opposed to this could use the number to protest the action too, we suppose.)

But remember, this is ONLY available this Sunday. Any other day, they'll probably laugh at you and wonder what you're talking about.

CATALINA TO BECOME INDEPENDENT

The island of Catalina has decided to secede from the United States and form an independent country, effective on the first day of April. The new nation will be known as "Catalinaland."

When asked why, Avalon Mayor (and soon to be chief-of-state) Bob Kennedy explained that "... every year we get countless tourists coming over thinking they need a passport, or that they need to exchange their currency, or that we don't speak English. We just got fed it up with it and decided that if they think we're a separate country, we might as well become one."

One of the advantages, according to Kennedy, is that as a country,

Catalinaland will be able to levy an exit tax the same way you do when you're leaving an airport in a foreign country. Kennedy says the initial fee will be \$10 "... but we may have to raise it based on whatever additional expenses we incur."

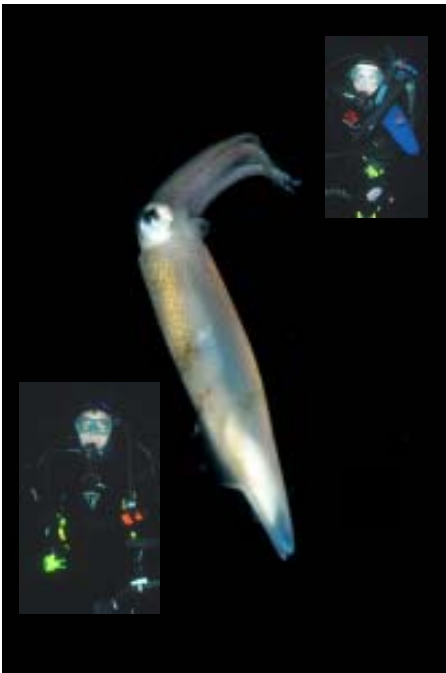
One immediate change will be that since you will now will leaving the United States to go to Catalinaland, all people making the journey will have to go through TSA screening. TSA lines are now being installed in all the Catalina express terminals both here on the mainland and over in Avalon. And once change there, like the airports is that they're now recommending you arrive at least two hours before your ferry departs for security screening.

It's unclear at this writing as to how that will effect dive boats, since even though we will journey over there, we never set foot on Catalinaland, so technically we left the United States but haven't entered this new "country."

Kennedy also said that since they'll be changing their status, they'll also be changing their form of government from a the current City Council democracy to a monarchy, and it will be with Kennedy at the helm. When asked how that felt, Kennedy replied, "It's good to be king."

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Apr. 5 Fish I.D.	June 7 Fish I.D.
8 Beach Diving/Navigation	10 Beach Diving/Navigation
11 Night Diving	13 Night Diving
14 CPR/Oxygen/1st Aid	14 Rescue
19 Tables & Computers	21 Advanced (dives 6/23/24)
26 PADI Digital Diver	
May 3 Fish I.D.	July 5 Fish I.D.
9 Night Diving	11 Night Diving
10 Photo Workshop	12 Photo Workshop
13 Beach Diving/Navigation	14 Beach Diving/Navigation
19 CPR/Oxygen/1st Aid	14 CPR/Oxygen/1st Aid
	19 Tables & Computers



GIANT SQUID AT LONG BEACH AQUARIUM

The Long Beach Aquarium, a few months ago actually, has captured a Giant Squid and is ready to put the behemoth on display. As many of you know, it was only last year that a Giant Squid was finally photographed (by some guys in Japan) and there's never been one put on public display. This specimen is about 15-feet long and seems to be adapting well to captivity.

Perry Hampton, Director of Husbandry for the Aquarium, marveled at how the beast came to be given

to AOP. "Apparently he was following the *Catalina Express* boats across the channel like some love-struck puppy. And in hanging around their docks, he was in danger of and getting caught up in their props, so they netted him and gave him to us."

A special exhibit has been built and opens to the public for the first time Sunday. The Giant Squid is the only thing in the exhibit because, with their voracious appetite, they'll eat anything put inside with them.

"One of our biggest challenges," says Hampton, "is how to feed him and how often." The squid, who's already acquired the nickname of "Squirt" for his habit of playfully inking the aquarists assigned to him, has been eating about once a

week. And the Aquarium said their plan is to develop a special team of divers to feed the squid.

"We'll need plenty of bodies," says AOP Dive safety Office Derek Smith. "And anyone who wants to become part of the squid feeding should call me at 562/951-1706 and ask to join our squid feeding program. We're not sure how many divers we'll need overall, but we're thinking he won't eat more than one or two divers per week. But it's really a rush when he clamps his tentacles around you and you see that beak coming towards your head. The divers on our feeding team have all been screaming so far. With joy, I assume."

Given the presumed mortality rate, there will be a constant supply of divers needed, so if you're interested in a unique underwater experience, be sure to give Derek a call. Interested divers must be certifiable by a recognized agency, have a minimum of 100 logged dives under their belt, a body fat of at least 20%, and a last will and testament. And given the special nature of the task, squid feeders will be given special parking spaces in the AOP parking structure.

So if you're interested, be sure to give them a call.

DIVING VACATIONS

June • The Titanic

August • Marianas Trench

October • Black Smokers

KELP IS AN APHRODISIAC

Ever felt a little “frisky” after a dive? Ever wondered why? Well scientists now have the answer. It turns out that kelp is actually an aphrodisiac. We’ve known for years that the algin in the kelp (*macrocystis* is the fancy word) works well as a binder and is used in shampoo, toothpaste, ice cream, and even Jell-O. But only now are it’s “other” benefits being discovered.

Turns out the stuff works in a number of ways. You can simply ingest it (have you noticed some divers secreting munching on kelp fronds lately?), you can dry it and grind it into a powder to be mixed with water, or you can get it in a capsule. It turns out that even simple physical contact with the kelp can produce the same effect.

Scientists did a controlled study at CIMI to see what the effects of swimming through the kelp forest were on the libido of a number of divers. And they concluded that just the act of swimming through the kelp beds, since one almost always makes some inadvertent contact with kelp, raised the libido of their test subjects.

The ultimate test was having a diver get totally wrapped up in and entangled in kelp to see what the effect was. And the results coincided with some anecdotal comments from divers who have been entangled. “One time I got hopelessly tangled up,” said a veteran diver who wished to remain anonymous, “and the thing that amazed me was that while I was struggling, I had this overwhelming feeling that my wife was the sexiest

UPCOMING BOAT DIVES			
Apr. 1	<i>Cee Ray</i>	Catalina (Italian Gardens)	\$120/130
7	<i>Great Escape</i>	Santa Barbara Island	145/155
21	<i>Sea Bass</i>	••• Oil Rigs (limited load) •••	130/140
29	<i>Great Escape</i>	San Clemente (frontside)	145/155
May 2	<i>Cee Ray</i>	Chamber Day	\$90 + 30
12	<i>Cee Ray</i>	Catalina (frontside)	120/130
27	<i>Magician</i>	Catalina (West End)	120/130
June 9	<i>Cee Ray</i>	Farnsworth Banks/Cat. back	130/140
17	<i>Cee Ray</i>	<i>Olympic/Italian Gardens</i>	120/130
<p>Prices are listed as 14-day advanced purchase/regular. Food/air included all trips. All diving to be done on compressed air only - no nitrox. Fuel surcharge may apply.</p>			

thing alive and I fought harder and harder to get free just so I could be with her. She didn’t know what hit her when I got out of the water!”

In fact, researchers say this phenomenon is actually beneficial to helping an entangled diver break free of the kelp. “As they make more and more contact,” the research paper reads, “their desire rises and will actually increase their ability to break free. Sort of like fight-or-flight but with a whole different angle.”

So the next time you’re diving, look at kelp in a whole new light. And if you’re on a first date, maybe instead of dinner and a movie, a dive through the kelp forest (with a little entanglement thrown in) will be all you’ll need to get that relationship going.

MASK HYDROS

The Department of Transportation has issued a new set of guidelines that, effective immediately, require masks to be hydrostatically tested just like tanks are.

The reasons, according to a DOT spokesperson, is that there have been a number of incidents recently where masks have shattered

and it presents itself as an obvious safety hazard that the DOT feels compelled to address.

So the DOT has deemed that no one can go in the water without a properly hydroed mask. This rule becomes effective this Sunday so if you’re diving this weekend, you’ll need to immediately take your mask into your local dive shop to get it hydroed.

The test is actually pretty simple: The mask is placed face down on a metal table. A 5-pound weight is suspended 4.1 feet over the top of the mask. It is held in that position for exactly 4.1 x 2 seconds. Then the weight is dropped on the mask. If the faceplate doesn’t shatter, it passes the test. If the faceplate shatters, then it was obviously defective and a new mask will have to be purchased. (Interestingly, brand new masks are not subject to a hydro test until they’re five years old.)

And while it might be tempting to do this test yourself, **DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME.** Leave mask hydroing to the professionals. Take your mask into your nearest dive shop as soon as you can to get it tested so that you can continue to enjoy all the things that there are to see underwater.

NEW AUTOMATIC BC

There's a revolutionary new BC hitting the market that will automatically control your buoyancy at any depth. Through a built-in computer, a GPS tracker, and a small bailout bottle to provide air for inflation, the new BC is constantly monitoring buoyancy and making whatever volume adjustments are required to achieve perfect neutral buoyancy at all times.

This new BC (which will retail for about \$600) has the formal name of the **Finely Oscillating Orbital Lung**. But it's already developed a much easier-to-remember nickname based on its acronym: **FOOL**.

In a press release, the manufacturer announced, "We intend to see plenty of FOOLs diving. In test

dives, we saw FOOLs at every depth and looking at every part of the reef. At the surface, it was music to our ears to hear a dive master say 'What's that FOOL over there doing?' as the BC inflated itself automatically."

The manufacturer claims the FOOL has fail-safe features built into it. And they freely admit that there may be some instances where the BC won't work as advertised. "You can FOOL some of the divers all of the time. You can FOOL all of the divers some of the time. But you can't FOOL all of the divers all of the time. That's just foolish."

The FOOL should be available now. In fact, just about every scuba diving shop in America probably has at least one FOOL in it. And there's a good chance that if you're

out on a dive boat this weekend, no matter where it is that you go diving, you'll see at least one FOOL if not a number of FOOLs going into the water.

YOU WERE WARNED PREVIOUSLY . . .

If by this time you haven't caught on that the stories in these pages seem a little . . . well . . . far-fetched, welcome to the annual April Fool's edition of the newsletter. And, in our defense, we did drop some hints in "This Week" to be wary this month. We hope you have enjoyed having your leg pulled as much as we have enjoyed pulling it.

LATE-BREAKING NEWS



NEW DEFENSE IN THE LIBBY CASE

Although he was convicted of obstruction of justice and lying to the FBI in the CIA leak case, former White House aide I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby has filed an appeal based on a new defense: He mistook Valerie Plame for a fish.

"It's very simple," said Libby's defense lawyer. "When asked about Ms. Plame, what Scooter meant to say was 'Flame' as in Flame Angelfish. But instead he blurted out her name. It's an easy mistake to make and one that should exonerate him on appeal."

President Bush jumped on the bandwagon right away. "I full understand how this could have happened," said the President. "She's a gorgeous woman, that's a gorgeous fish. Listen to how close the names are: Flame, Plame. It's easy to see how mistakes were made. It's like the dilemma I deal with every day: Iran, Iraq. Heck, I can't remember which is which most of the time so I feel Scooter's pain."

When old of the these development, Plame and her husband, former envoy Joseph Wilson issued a very simple statement: "It all sounds rather fishy to us."