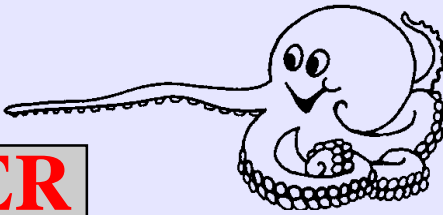


# THE REEF SEEKER



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November - 2007

## BAJA 2007 MINI TRIP REPORT

Here's the short version: We had a great time.

One of the things that makes these trips such a joy is not only the diving (which I'll get to in a minute) but the crew on board the *Don Jose*. They know us very well and we know them well and we're all very happy to see each other. That feeling makes for a great trip no matter what the diving might bring.

Even though we had some weather problems that forced us to alter where we'd go, the diving ranged from very good to great. The Mackerel Scad are all over the place at Los Islotes and the sea lions there are as playful and inquisitive as ever. Las Animas has some spectacular diving and I still say The Pinnacles represents some of the finest diving in the world. It's sort of hard to have a bad time there. El Bajo had a ripping current for us this year so we only did one dive there (and that was a hang-on-for-dear-life one) but that didn't daunt our spirits.

A nice surprise for us this year was a new site, the wreck of the Fang Ming. It's been down about five years now and has become a world-class dive. It's a fish magnet and is covered with millions of small baitfish who are, in turn being

stalked by predators and it all makes for a very interesting dive, even if you're not a big fan of wrecks.

All in all, a good time was had by all. You can read the full trip report by going to our website, and click on the link on the front page. And give some thought to joining us on this trip in 2008. We've already got four people signed up and would be happy to add you to the list.

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## PRACTICE<sup>3</sup>

You've doubtless all heard the old saying "Practice makes perfect." The bottom line is that there's value in keeping your skills current.

Too often when doing an accident analysis, we see that skills that divers should be able to do in their sleep have caused problems and factor in to the accident scenario. And many times, these are skills that you can practice on your own.

The most obvious one is mask clearance. How many of you have practiced a full mask remove-and-replace on your own in the last 30 days? These are the type of very basic skills that, when not practiced, may not be readily available to you in a time of need.

A number of years ago there was a

fatality when the cause of death was embolism but the underlying cause of the embolism was an inability to clear the mask. The diver was having mask problems on descent, struggled with clearing and flooded the mask more, panicked, bolted, and embolized.

So it's incumbent that you should review and practice many basic skills at a regular interval so that if you need these skills, they'll be readily at hand. Some of the things you should be doing include:

- Mask remove and replace
- Alternate air sharing with another diver
- Buddy breathing (in case the octo doesn't work)
- Weight ditching (whether integrated or a weight belt)
- Equipment removal (ditch & don)
- Regulator retrieval
- And any others you can think of

In addition to this, you should plan every day you go diving to create a dive plan, review it with your buddy (or buddies), talk about what you're going to do in various emergencies (out of air, separated, etc.), and practice things like air sharing before you go under.

It never hurts to be prepared. And one day, it may save your life.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

|        |                            |        |                             |
|--------|----------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|
| Nov. 1 | Fish I.D.                  | Dec. 6 | Fish I.D.                   |
| 8      | <b>Photo Workshop</b>      | 8      | <b>Beach Diving/Navig.</b>  |
| 10     | <b>Beach Diving/Navig.</b> | 12     | <b>Night Diving (Squid)</b> |
| 14     | <b>Night Diving</b>        | 13     | NAUI Advanced               |
| 17     | CPR/Oxygen/1st Aid         | 20     | Rescue                      |
| 29     | Sea Signs                  | 26     | <b>Squid Dive</b>           |



## NEXT YEAR'S VACATIONS

We're still putting the finishing touches on next year's foreign trips and we can still take input from you. A lot of time on these, we can actually build a trip around just a couple of people expressing an interest. That way, we can make sure that if it's a trip you're interested in, it's on dates that you can actually go.

Obviously there are times when we simply can't change things. Generally when we're doing liveboards, much as we like them, we've got a lot less flexibility. That's because we need to conform to times when the boat's available, and then there's a specific number of spots available.

But on land-based trips, we've got a lot more options. Many times it's easy to extend a day (or shorten by a day) or move the trip a week or so either way (we had to do that with a Bonaire trip two years ago when the airline reservations got screwed up). And, with land-based, al-

though we may have it down for a certain number of divers, we've usually got a lot more flexibility to add a room or two or even drop rooms and still run the trip.

So when you see something you like, let me know. I can then add you - at no obligation - to the e-mail list for those interested in that particular trip. And then we can keep you in the loop as to what's going on.

It's a big world out there with a lot of places to go see and we're happy to be the ones to take you there to experience the best diving that we can find.

## LOCAL TRIPS FOR '08

We're also putting the finishing touches on our 2008 local boat sked. It's going to be somewhat of

a change from our 2007 schedule, as we're going to do an every-other-week format throughout the entire year. And we're going to try to get a good balance between Saturday and Sunday trips, between Catalina and the outer islands (Clemente and SBI) trips, plus get a sprinkling of the Oil Rigs, Farnsworth, and other thrown in for good measure. (We're even trying to work in a *Star of Scotland* trip as well.)

We hope to have this all wrapped up shortly and will do our best to publish our 2008 sked no later than December 1, as is tradition. So keep your eyes peeled for that.

## SAVE 10%

Just another quick reminder that it still pays to have a Reef Saver card. You'll save 10% of all local trips you do with us (and that's 10% off both the Early Purchase as well as the Regular price) and you'll save 10% on any repair parts you need when you take your stuff over to Robert Stark for your annual service. The reef Saver Card costs \$50 for 365 days of savings and if you don't have one, you ought to get one soon.

## DIVING VACATIONS

**January, 2008 - Australia**

**February - Florida**

**March, 2008 - Cayman**

**April - Socorro**

## LET'S GO FIND SOME MANATEES

When I first got certified back in 1978 in Virginia, we made an annual pilgrimage down to Florida in late January to go see the Manatees at Crystal River and then dive some of the other sinkholes, caverns, and caves of central Florida.

It was quite an adventure: We'd pile into our cars (the luxury version was the year we have a RV) and drive non-stop all the way down. Back then, Crystal River and the other areas were nowhere nearly as developed as they are today and we'd frequently either be the only ones out, or we'd be looking for a dive spot and the directions were something like "Go two miles, turn on the dirt road, take the left hand fork, and after the 10th tree, you'll see it off to your right."

Times have changed but the diving down there's still good and we think it's high time we went back. We know it won't be quite as adventurous as it was 30 years ago, but it'll be fun nonetheless. For 2008, we're looking at something like February 10-16 or perhaps February 24-March 1.

We'll fly into Orlando, pick up rental vehicles and drive to Crystal River, where we'll then spend a day with the Manatees. After that, we'll head north to such places as Williston, High Springs, and Branford, and get a sampling of what Florida Springs diving is all about - 72° year-round, fresh water, and phenomenal vis many times. (In fact, at Ginnie Springs, the water can be so clear that in photographs, if there are no bubbles in the shot, you'd swear the diver

## UPCOMING BOAT DIVES

|     |         |                     |                            |           |
|-----|---------|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| Sat | Nov. 3  | <i>Great Escape</i> | Santa Barbara Island       | \$145/155 |
| Sat | 17      | <i>Magician</i>     | Catalina (West End)        | 120/130   |
| Sun | Dec. 2  | <i>Great Escape</i> | Santa Barbara Island       | 145/155   |
| Sat | 15      | <i>Great Escape</i> | San Clemente (Pyramid)     | 145/155   |
| Sat | Jan. 12 | <i>Great Escape</i> | Santa Barbara Island       | 150/160   |
| Sun | 27      | <i>Great Escape</i> | San Clemente (frontside)   | 150/160   |
| Sat | 9       | <i>Sea Bass</i>     | •• Oil Rigs (adv. dive) •• | 135/145   |
| Sat | 23      | <i>Cat Express</i>  | Avalon U/W Cleanup         | 110       |

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.

isn't really underwater and is somehow suspended mid-air.)

We'll probably finish up the final day back in the Crystal River area giving the Manatees one more shot and the head back to Orlando. If anyone would like to arrange for a slightly extended stay and add Disney World &/or Epcot to the mix, that can be arranged as well, though it's not part of our plans for right now.

At any rate, let me know if you're interested and if the dates work for you and we'll go from there. This one will be more on the "adventurous" side but loads of fun.

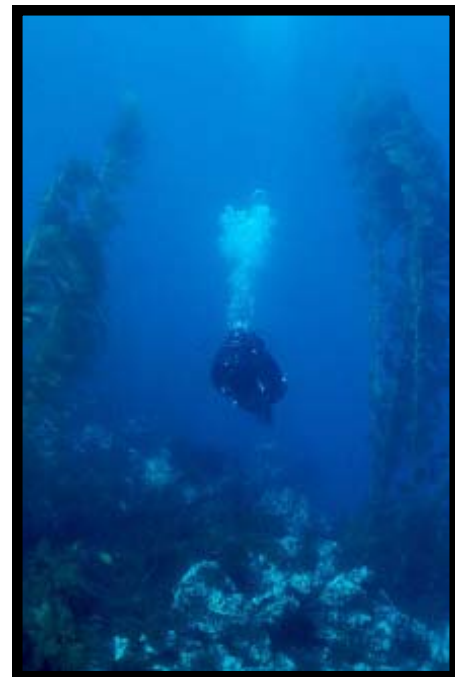


## FALL DIVING

People forget how good diving around here can be in the fall months. It's not uncommon to get visibility of 100 feet or more, especially out at places like San Clemente. In November and De-

cember, it seems like the sea lions are more playful and inquisitive. (In fact, last year, we had a phenomenal sea lion day at SBI in November.) The winter storms haven't kicked in yet so the rides are usually pretty good, water temps have just passed their peaks for the year so you don't get too cold, and we still get some late-season warm days that give us good weather and spectacular sunsets on the ride home.

We've still got four trips left for 2008 so don't let them pass you by. Give us a call - 310/652-4990 - and get yourself signed up.





**THE SQUID  
ARE COMING,  
THE SQUID  
ARE COMING!!!**

It's almost that time of the year when the annual Squid mating starts up. Just a reminder that we're be going out to Veteran's park on a regular basis starting in December and doing our Squid Dives, looking for those elusive little guys. Last year was one of the better seasons we've had lately and

there's hope that this means the squid activity is on the rise. Be sure to keep an eye on our schedule of shore dives and make plans to join us for one of these excursions. They can be quite exhilarating.



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**END OF DST**

Don't forget that Daylight Savings Time ends this coming weekend. You'll need to remember to wind your clocks **BACK** one hour at 2AM Sunday. If you're going out on a boat Sunday morning, make sure you make the adjustment. And if you're out on a boat that leaves Saturday evening (or prior to 2AM Sunday) it looks like you'll get an extra hour of diving in.

**PICTURE PAGE - CRITTERS WITH RED**

*(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2007)*



**Scorpionfish  
in the Sea of Cortez**



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**WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM**



**Banded Shrimp  
in Bonaire**



**Bigscale Soldierfish  
at Cocos Island**



**Sunflower Star  
at Santa Barbara Island**



**Club-tipped Anemones  
at the Oil Rigs**