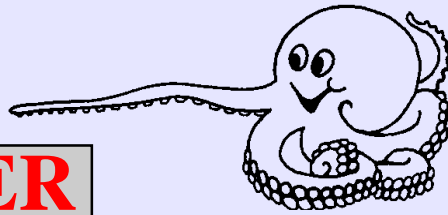


THE REEF SEEKER



REEF SEEKERS DIVE CO.
P.O. Box 11634
Beverly Hills, CA 90213
(310) 652-4990
www.reefseekers.com
e-mail: reefseekrs@aol.com

January - 2012



NEW MPAs TAKE EFFECT

Probably one of the biggest changes for you to adjust to for the new year is going to be the implementation of all of the South Coast Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) that were developed as part of the Marine Life Protection Act. The new reserves become operational with the changing of the calendar. We'll give you some links in the January 2 edition of TWARS but suffice it to say that you can find all of this info on the Department of Fish & Game website or just Google "CA MLPA" and you should get it.

Essentially there are now numerous no-take areas. The thought is that by suspending the take of game, species within the areas can recover (obviously, it takes time) and then there's a "spillover" effect to adjacent non-closed areas. And whether or not you agree with the effectiveness of MPAs, the reality is that they're here and they're the law.

There are some commonly-dove areas along the coast that are af-

ected. These include Point Dume, the southwestern part of Palos Verdes (generally around Pt. Vicente), and pretty much all of Laguna Beach.

Offshore areas have also been designated as no-take areas. These include all of Begg Rock off of San Nicolas, the SE portion of Santa Barbara island (pretty much the Rookery area and out). Some of the more dramatic changes will take place at Catalina, which is obviously one of the most-heavily populated.

The new Blue Cavern State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) is a no-take zone which not only includes the previously-established Wrigley Marine Science Center reserve, but also now includes Bird Rock, Sea Fan Grotto, the Quarry, Crane Point, and down almost to Yellowtail Point. Ship Rock and Isthmus Reef are outside of this MPA.

And just to be clear, it's not that diving is prohibited in these areas, only the taking of game. And even with that, a few areas (but not all) have some limited exceptions to the no-take for some pelagic species such as white sea bass or bonito. So you really need to familiarize yourself with any exceptions for the individual area where you might be.

Other areas on Catalina that will

receive protection include an area around Long Point, Lover's Cove in Avalon, and Farnsworth Banks. (At Farnsworth, which is divided into on-shore and off-shore areas, you're still allowed to take bonito or white sea bass by spear in the offshore area.)

The implementation of the new MPAs also confers no-take reserve status on the Avalon Underwater Park and dispels a long-held misconception. For years, the common thought was that the Underwater Park had been specially-designated as a reserve. Not true. As part of the run-up during the MLPA hearings, we couldn't find any legal authority creating the Park as a no-take reserve. So the implementation of the South Coast MPAs means the Park finally gets legal status that it's actually lacked in the past. (The Park has a special designation to still allow for fish-feeding for the purposes of observing marine life.)

If you don't take game, none of this will directly affect you unless you're on a dive boat with hunters which may mean that certain areas are no longer visited. But if you are a hunter, it's your responsibility to know the new regulations and restrictions and, more importantly, follow them. Obviously there's going to be a learning curve here but hopefully it will all go smoothly.

MEXICAN FISHING VISA

Also taking effect on January 1 is a new rule for those plying Mexican waters (which will mainly affect boats out of San Diego). But if you're doing any fishing south of the border in 2012, you will need to obtain a Mexican Fishing Visa to do so. You can either get a 3-day permit (roughly \$33) or a yearly permit (\$250) and all of this is in addition to the normal Mexican fishing permit you're required to have. (If memory serves me right, divers had to have that even if they weren't taking game in Mexican waters.)

I haven't heard much from the San Diego-based dive boats about this but the SD-based fishing boats are raising a huge stink, especially since this comes at the same time as the implementation of the South Coast MPAs, which stretch all the way down to the Mexican border. Anyhow, just one more thing to take into consideration.

3MM DRYSUIT

An acquisition I bought for myself is a new Oceaner drysuit. But one thing that attracted me to this (other than the fact that I know Oceaner makes good stuff - in fact, they make drysuits for others mfgs as well) is that this suit was offered as a 3mm neoprene.

Much as I like a neoprene drysuit, a lot of times I find that the 6mm suits are either a little heavy (no biggie) but sometimes are too warm for me. I realize that sounds like a ridiculous thing to say but it means I can't use the suit in the

summertime because I overheat. And especially for the times I DM in a drysuit - which means I have to stay zipped up all the time - that really does make difference.

So I'm really looking forward to breaking this one in. I'll use some thermal fleece underneath (no need for a poofy drysuit jumpsuit) and should be good to go. I'm planning on wearing it on our Squid Dive January 11 and will report back after that.

If you're in the market for a drysuit, give this some thought. We've become an Oceaner dealer so I can get these for you. Although I don't plan on having stock on hand, you'll be able to get a good idea from my suit as to fit and comfort and if we order you a suit that doesn't fit, I'll take it back at no extra charge and get you a better size (which means the onus is on me to make sure you're fit right in the first place). Let me know if you're interested.

USED MOBBY'S DRYSUIT ANYONE??

Because I've got the new suit, it means I'm retiring my Mobby's

6mm neoprene drysuit. It's still in good shape (I just had a leak test done on it) and has plenty of life left. It's a men's medium with a shoe size around an 8. Retail on it originally was \$1500 and I'd like to get around \$400 for it. If you're interested let me know.

2012 TRIP SKED

You'll note that page 3 is another version of our trip sked, this time arranged by type of dive, and then chronologically within each category. Also note that this one has been corrected to reflect the date change of our September *Great Escape* trip to September 23.

Our first trip of the year will be later this month, January 21, on the *Great Escape* going out to Ship Rock (outside the Blue Cavern MPA) for a pair of dives and then on to another site to finish off the day. And the following month, we'll be taking a group over to Avalon on February 25 for the 31st annual Avalon Underwater Cleanup.

You can sign up for these or any other trip with us by calling us at 310/652-4990 or shoot me an e-mail to kenkurtis@aol.com.

2012 DIVING VACATIONS

February 12-18 • Florida

March 16-25 • Yap

May 12-20 • Dominica



**IMPORTANT STUFF
YOU NEED TO KNOW**

Tickets are fully refundable with 14 days or more notice.
8-13 days notice, future trip credit.
7 days or less, no refund/credit.

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.

BOARDING/DEPARTURE/RETURN

All *Great Escape* trips board starting at 9PM the night before the trip. Briefing is at 10:45PM.

Departure/return times:

Catalina - 5AM/3PM

Farnsworth - 4AM/4PM

San Barbara - 1:30AM/6PM

San Clemente - 12:30AM/7PM

All of our *Great Escape* trips have a limited number of staterooms (bunks with a door), reservable for \$10/diver extra.

All destinations are dependent on weather and may be changed at our sole discretion w/out notice.

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

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

We try to offer 4 dives on all full-day boat trips but sometimes, due to various circumstances, we may only be able to offer 3.



**REEF SEEKERS DIVE CO.
2012 SoCal Dives (by type)
Reservations • (310) 652- 4990**

Prices listed are for early purchase (spots must be *paid in full* 7 days or more prior to the trip) and regular purchase (spots paid in full less than 7 days before trip). Early Purchase saves \$5. Reef Saver discount (\$5) applies to both prices.

PRICING FORMULA FOR 2012 BOATS

All boat trips are listed as Base Price + Fuel Differential
Base price for all trips is \$155 (early) or \$165 (regular)

Fuel Differential (in addition to Base Price)
Catalina (East End, Ship Rock, West End): None (\$0)
Farnsworth/Catalina backside: add \$10
Santa Barbara Island: add \$30
San Clemente Island: add \$35

SINGLE-DAY BOAT DIVES

DAY	DATE	DIVE BOAT	INTENDED DESTINATION	BASE \$\$\$ + FD
Sat.	Jan. 21	<i>Great Escape</i>	Catalina (West End)	155/165 + 0
Sun.	Mar. 4	<i>Great Escape</i>	Catalina (Ship Rock & more)	155/165 + 0
Sat.	Apr. 7	<i>Great Escape</i>	San Clemente (NW)	155/165 + 35
Sun.	29	<i>Great Escape</i>	Santa Barbara Island	155/165 + 30
Sun.	June 3	<i>Great Escape</i>	Farnsworth/Cat. backside	155/165 + 10
Sat.	30	<i>Great Escape</i>	Catalina (West End)	155/165 + 0
Sat.	Aug. 4	<i>Great Escape</i>	Catalina (East End)	155/165 + 0
Sun.	26	<i>Great Escape</i>	Santa Barbara Island	155/165 + 30
Sun.	Sept. 23	<i>Great Escape</i>	Catalina (Ship Rock & more)	155/165 + 0
Sat.	Oct. 27	<i>Great Escape</i>	Farnsworth/Cat. backside	155/165 + 10
Sun.	Dec. 2	<i>Great Escape</i>	San Clemente (frontside)	155/165 + 35

AVALON TRIPS

DAY	DATE	BOAT	INTENDED DESTINATION	PRICE
Saturday	Feb. 25	Cat. Expr (LB)	31st Avalon U/W Clean-Up	125
Saturday	Apr. 21	Cat. Expr (SP)	Avalon Underwater Park	120/130
Sunday	Aug. 12	Cat. Expr (SP)	Avalon Underwater Park	120/130
Saturday	Oct. 13	Cat. Expr (SP)	Avalon Underwater Park	120/130
Sunday	Nov. 11	Cat. Expr (LB)	Avalon Underwater Park	120/130

BEACH DIVES (VETERANS PARK - REDONDO)

DAY	DATE	DIVE SITE	INTENDED DIVE PLAN	PRICE
Wed.	Jan. 11	Redondo/Vets	••• Squid Dive •••	• N/C •
Saturday	Feb. 4	Redondo/Vets	Daytime beach dive (1 tank)	5/15
Wed.	8	Redondo/Vets	••• Squid Dive •••	• N/C •
Wed.	Mar. 7	Redondo/Vets	••• Squid Dive •••	• N/C •
Wed.	Apr. 11	Redondo/Vets	••• Night Dive •••	5/15
Wed.	June 6	Redondo/Vets	••• Night Dive •••	5/15
Saturday	16	Redondo/Vets	Daytime beach dive (1 tank)	5/15
Wed.	Aug. 15	Redondo/Vets	••• Night Dive •••	5/15
Saturday	Sept. 8	Redondo/Vets	Daytime beach dive (1 tank)	5/15
Wed.	19	Redondo/Vets	••• Night Dive •••	5/15
Wed.	Oct. 17	Redondo/Vets	••• Night Dive •••	5/15
Wed.	Nov. 14	Redondo/Vets	••• Night Dive •••	5/15
Wed.	Dec. 5	Redondo/Vets	••• Squid Dive •••	• N/C •
Saturday	15	Redondo/Vets	Daytime beach dive (1 tank)	5/15



IN PRAISE OF SOLA

One of my Christmas presents from Best-Sister Sue was a GoPro setup from Backscatter that includes two Light & Motion Sola 1200 lights. Although I haven't played with them underwater yet, they are simply the most amazing lights I've encountered.

They're lightweight, compact, rugged, and REALLY bright. They're versatile too because they can be

used as video lights, as a spotting/focus light for stills, or (hand-held) as a dive light.

They've got three power settings (low, medium, and high) plus they can be used as spot or flood so you're really got six power settings all together. The things really light up a dark room, even on low power.

Now, they're not cheap. They run around \$700 each. (L&M makes a couple of lower-powered versions that also seem good and which are less expensive.) But if you're in the market for a really good light, give these some thought. We can't get them for you but many retailers around here can. And I'm going to start playing with my new video setup so I'll be bringing all of this out on our boats.



HAPPY NEW YEAR

Looks like we've got another year under our belt. Out with the old and in with the new. From all of us at Reef Seekers Dive Co., here's hoping that 2011 was good for you and that 2012 will be even better. Both personally and professionally, this past year was a pretty good one for us and we're looking forward to seeing what the new year will bring with eagerness and anticipation. Hope you are of a similar mindset.

PICTURE PAGE - Favorite pix of 2011

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2012)



**Lots of big heads
at Easter Island**



P.O. Box 11634
Beverly Hills, CA 90213

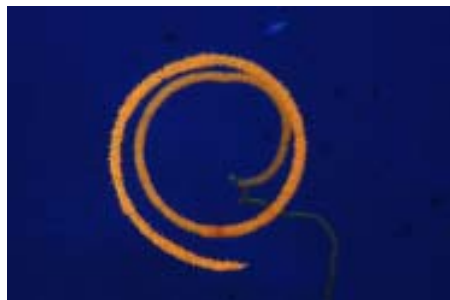
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**Mom & calf
Crystal River, FL**



**Jawfish brooding eggs
Bonaire**



**Looking through wire coral
Manado, Inodnesia**



**Coughing up gravel
Baja**