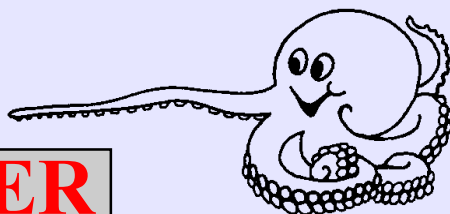


THE REEF SEEKER



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August - 2025



LAST-MINUTE MALDIVES

This doesn't happen often, but . . .

We suddenly have two divers who can't do our Maldives trip which is this coming September (less than two months way). They'd like to sell their spots if possible. One guy was signed up for both trips (Sept. 16-28 and Sept. 27 - Oct. 8) and the other one is signed up for the first trip. So we've basically got two spots available for the first trip, and one spot available for the second trip. If anyone's interested in one or both spots for one or both trips, please let me know ASAP.

Both trips are with our good friends on the *Manthiri*, the longest-running liveaboard in the Maldives. This will be our 6th and 7th trip with them and, as like to say, we wouldn't keep going back if it wasn't good. This is an 11-day trip and we should get in close to 30 dives. On the first trip, we're going to try for a northern itinerary and on the second trip, a southern route. (But both are weather-dependent.) We generally do three

dives each day but sometimes squeeze in a fourth. All the food is included and we've only got 12 people on the boat (plus a crew of 11) so it's not like it gets crowded or anything.

Cost of the trip is \$5,990 which includes a hotel overnight the night before each trip starts, all the diving (with nitrox if qualified), all meals on board, local taxes and marine park fees, and a generous crew tip. Airfare on Singapore Airlines is running around \$1,600. (I'll advise you on flights if you want to go.) If you're interested, give us a call at 310/652-4990. Since both people have paid in full, if you take one of the spots, you pay me and I refund them. Given the last-minute nature of this, if anyone wants to try to negotiate price, that decision - to accept or reject a lower-than-market-rate offer - will be up to the person whose spot you're buying.

TSUNAMI DIDN'T MATERIALIZE

You've doubtless heard by now about the 8.8 magnitude earthquake off of the Kamchatka Peninsula that generated numerous tsunami warnings throughout the Pacific, including here in SoCal. Other than some damage and flooding in some Russian areas that were

close to the epicenter, there don't seem to be any reports of other issues.

Supposedly when the wave hit Hawaii it was about 6 feet above the general tide line and by the time it got to SoCal - in the early A.M. hours of Wednesday - it was less than a foot higher than normal. However, authorities still caution that the tsunami waves could be generating some rip currents and recommend anyone entering the water exercise caution for a few days. But if you've got a weekend shore dive planned at a local beach, all should be good by then.

Lest you think some of this was a Chicken Little-style over-reaction (there were pix of people on rooftops and traffic jams fleeing to higher ground in Hawaii), bear in mind the lesson learned in 2004 with the Banda Aceh earthquake and tsunami which killed an estimated 230,000 people as it struck many coastlines around the world, most notably in Thailand. Granted, it was slight larger (9.2 magnitude) than this one, but we also, as a world, weren't as tsunami-aware then as we are now, and in that specific region of the world, there weren't warning systems in place.

So while this earthquake/tsunami didn't seem to amount to much, that doesn't mean we should let our guard down.



BOATS ARE RUNNING OVER DIVERS

About a week ago, a local Cozumel divemaster who was guiding a small group was run over by a boat travelling at high speed through a known reef. The DM and the group were on the surface at the time, supposedly with an orange safety sausage flying. It's also reported that the boat was travelling at upwards of 25mph in an area where the speed limit is supposed to be 4mph. The DM, the only one injured, suffered severe lacerations to his legs from the boat props.

This is not an isolated incident. Though they are sporadic, there are reports from many heavily-dived regions of the world that tell a similar tale or of a close call. We've even experienced this at least twice at Reef Seekers.

I was in Cozumel doing a shore dive with a buddy and we were about 15 feet deep (admittedly with no surface float but bubbles clearly visible and in a known diving area). A boat at full speed ran right over the top of us. I saw and heard it coming but my buddy had her nose to the bottom looking at a fish with her fins tilted up at a 45° angle. The dual props left a wake on each side of her upturned fins. I still get upset when I think of what the outcome could have been.

A second time was in Indonesia. Our group was surfacing with a

marker buoy deployed, not too far from our dive boat. A boat from a local village was coming out at full speed and ran right through the middle of our group, with the side of their boat actually striking one of our divers. She told me later she could see the boat coming but couldn't dump air fast enough from her BC and assumed she was about to die. (I'm told that evening, our boat crew went to the village, found the offender, and punched him in the nose.)

The point of relaying these admittedly harrowing incidents is to remind you that there are not always marked lanes, or speed limit signs, or knowledgeable people out of the ocean. It can be the aquatic version of the wild, wild, west. So you've got to be careful when diving when you're coming close to the surface. This applies in SoCal waters just as much as it does around the world.

Here are a couple of things you can do:

1. Deploying a marker buoy is helpful but no guarantee.
2. When you're about 10 feet from the surface (so just as you leave your safety stop) look around you 360°.

3. Also listen while you're looking.
4. Surface near your float.
5. As soon as you surface, do another 360° look to make sure nothing's headed your way.
6. In the hopefully-unlikely event that there's a boat heading towards you, try to get back underwater at least 10 feet deep.
7. If that's not practical, start waving your arms and shouting.
8. And do whatever you can to get out of the direct path of the boat. (Inches one way or the other can make a difference.)

Ideally, try to avoid surfacing away from your dive boat. If you need to surface and don't know where your boat is, see if there's another boat around you can surface next to since boaters are less likely to hit other boats than they are to be watching for divers on the surface.

And just remember that while it's very easy to place the blame on careless boaters, if you get hit, that won't provide much solace or healing. Do everything you can to avoid becoming another statistic.

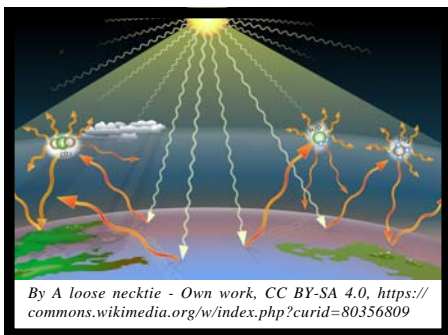
2025- 2026 DIVING VACATIONS

Sept 2025 • Maldives (2 spots avail.)

March 9-22, 2026 • Yap

July 1-14, 2026 • Indonesia

Sept. 2026 • Philippines



GREENHOUSE GASSES SUDDENLY DON'T MATTER

In a major and environmentally earth-shaking move, the EPA seems on the verge of declaring g that greenhouses gasses – which include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and various fluorinated gasses – are not a threat to public health and welfare. Coming to this conclusion requires ignoring years of scientific testing that validates the dangers.

By reclassifying these gasses, it will allow the Trump Administration to eliminate emission rules for fossil fuel drilling, power plants, and cars. EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin said this would be, “ . . . the largest deregulatory action in the history of America” and that it will “ . . . drive a dagger into the heart of the climate change religion.”

We have known for years, and repeated experiments have shown, that greenhouse gasses – primarily CO₂ - can form a blanket over the ocean which contributes to ocean acidification by increasing CO₂ absorption. This can also lead to a decrease in pH which harms marine life, particularly shell-building organisms. Additionally, greenhouse gasses trap heat, causing ocean warming, which con-

UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	\$\$\$
Sat.	Aug 9	Veterans Park	Navigation Made Easy	35
Thu.	14	Veterans Park	• • • Night Dive • • •	35
Wed.	20	--- CLASS ---	--- PHOTO WORKSHOP ---	35
Sat.	30	Veterans Park	Surf Entries Made Easy	FREE!!!
Wed.	Sep 3	Catalina Express	Avalon UW Park	180
Sat.	6	Veterans Park	Beach Diving Made Easy	35
Wed.	Oct 15	--- CLASS ---	--- NITROX ---	95
Sat.	18	Veterans Park	Navigation Made Easy	35

tributes to thermal expansion and rising sea levels, and also stresses marine ecosystems like coral reefs. There's once again a coral bleaching event going on along the southern parts of the Great Barrier Reef which is likely being caused by ocean warming.

They're going about this in a sneaky way. Rather than simply declaring greenhouse gasses to be non-existent, they're working to remove the “endangerment finding” of 2009 that provides the basis for regulation. Essentially what they're saying is (this is a made-up quote), “We know that greenhouse gasses exist. They just pose no harm to anyone.” The result of this action will be to loosen up regulations on oil drilling and other energy production, loosen or eliminate car emission rules, and just generally negate the mission of the EPA. In a landmark 2007 case (*Massachusetts vs EPA*), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the EPA has not the authority but also the obligation to regulate greenhouse gasses under the Clean Air Act. By removing the endangerment finding, this is sort of an end-run around that ruling.

There will likely be lawsuits but those take time to play out. In the meantime, damage will be done. It may seem futile, but a call to your Congressperson, especially if you live in a red district, might help negate this action.



THE PHILIPPINES BECKONS

Looks like 2 is the magic number. We suddenly have 2 openings on the Maldives 2025 trip and we've still got 2 opening on the Philippines 2026 trip.

We're going to be doing all of our Philippines diving through Atlantis Dive Resorts. They have a number of options in the Philippines but we'll be on land for the first week in Dumaguete at their resort there, and then for the second week, we'll be on their boat *Infiniti* where we'll explore the reefs north of Dumaguete which may also give us a chance at seeing Thresher Sharks.

As with many dive resorts and liveaboards nowadays, this is all-inclusive. Our first week is on land (Dumaguete) and we should get up to five dives each day as well as breakfast/lunch/dinner daily. The dive sites are all relatively close (5-10 minute run from the resort) so everything is a 1-tank dive and then you do your surface interval back at the resort. It gives you time

to make adjustments to your camera or, if you want to skip a dive, it doesn't mean you've blown the entire day. Some of their boats carry as few as four divers, some as many as a dozen. We'll likely use a couple of different configurations during the week on land.

While Dumaguete is mainly known as a macro heaven, there are also reefs at the on-shore sites as well. We'll do a day over at Apo Island, which has some wonderful reefs with soft coral and other things you don't always find in Dumaguete proper as well as being consider a haven for turtles.

After a week on land, we'll switch gears for a week on the seas. We'll board the *Infiniti* late Saturday afternoon September 19, literally off

the beach of the resort. So we'll likely dive in the morning, pack up in the afternoon, and then transfer to the boat and head north. While on the boat, we should also get in 3-5 dives/day, enjoy wonderful meals, relax between dives, and just generally explore the reefs north of Dumaguete. On September 26, we'll get off the boat in the morning (at the resort), head for the airport, and begin the journey home.

Although we don't normally include airfare in our trips, this one includes round-trip airfare from Manila-Dumaguete as well as transfers to and from the resort (saves about \$250 overall). So you'll need to get yourself to Manila, which is running as low as \$800 from LAX. Also be aware

that there are some park fees and boat fuel surcharges not included (another \$350 or so) nor is nitrox included if you choose to dive that way.

The Reef Seekers price for all of this includes both weeks, double-occupancy room at the resort (single supplement might be available for an extra charge), all diving and meals while at the resort and on the boat and generous crew/staff tips as well. Our price is \$6,499 (so basically \$3,250/week). A \$1,000 deposit (\$500/week) will hold your spot. Be aware that we're limited at the moment to 12 spots on this trip and we've already got 10 people signed up. So don't let this one pass you by. Send an e-mail or give us a call to 310/652-4990 and secure your space.

PICTURE PAGE - Marvelous Maldives

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2025)



***Unusual
Starfish***



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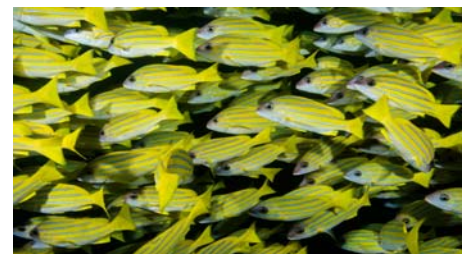
***Colorful
Coral Critters***



***Many
Sweetlips***



***Blue
Ribbon Eel***



***Snapper
School***