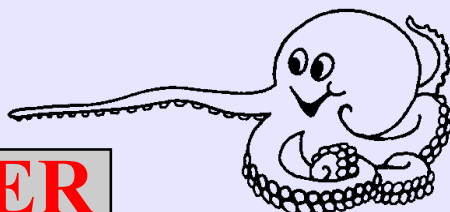


THE REEF SEEKER



REEF SEEKERS DIVE CO.
P.O. Box 634
Beverly Hills, CA 90213
Phone & text: (310) 652-4990
web: www.reefseekers.com
e-mail: kenkurtis@aol.com

December - 2025

LOCAL TRIPS & CLASSES FOR 2026

The entirety of page 3 of this newsletter is the Reef Seekers 2026 Classes & Local Dives schedule, suitable for printing. We try to offer a variety of opportunities for you and the nice thing is that some of these we'll do even if there's only one person signed up.

That's especially true of the classes done via Zoom – Fish ID, Tables & Computers, Photo Workshop, and NAUI Nitrox – as those take the same amount of time to do for one person as it does to do for a dozen. And with those specific offerings, we try to choose things to help make you a better or more knowledgeable diver. Here's the brief rationale for each:

FISH ID – You took time to learn how to dive. Shouldn't you take time to learn what you're seeing? The question we hear most often after a dive is, "What was that fish?" This class aims to help you discover those answers on your own. We'll start with some basics of fish identification, learning common shapes, behaviors, habitats, and other things that help ID fish. Then we'll follow that up with some practical applications of actually figuring out the IDs of some fish pix. Because people travel so much nowadays, we'll cover California fish, Caribbean

fish, and Indo-Pacific fish. But you'll also learn, in addition to some specific names, that there are common characteristics that work in each ecosystem and once you get comfortable with some of the basics, the techniques work anywhere in the world.

TABLES & COMPUTERS - With more and more diving "education" on-line these days, it seems there's less and less emphasis on some of the science and math behind our sport. This class is designed to simplify that for you and make the process easier to understand. We'll start with the basic gas laws and physics. Then we'll look at Haldane's research into decompression sickness which will take us into a simplified explanation of how (and why) dive tables work. After we've cleared the mental cobwebs about that, we go into computers, which essentially tell you the same thing as dive tables do, but on a much more sophisticated level.

PHOTO WORKSHOP - With the proliferation of cameras nowadays, from small point-and-shoots to big housed DSLRs to small video/still cameras like the GoPro, it seems like everyone is taking pictures or shooting video. And – as many of you probably already know – it's easy to take crappy shots. But to take ones you're proud of takes a little bit of work and thinking about

what you're doing. This 2-3 hour workshop aims to help you in those areas. We'll cover some of the basic things to remember when shooting, go over ways you can "fix" shots with things like Photoshop and Lightroom, and we can even look at things you've already shot and see if we can spot the problems. It's very free-form, and very hands on. The goal is for you to walk away with some skills and perspective that you didn't have when you walked in. And whether you're a new shooter or a veteran, we're willing to bet that you can become a better shooter after spending an evening with us.

NAUI NITROX - Although we were one of the last stores in the world to accept the concept of recreational divers using nitrox as a breathing gas, we're the best store to learn how to use it because we've thoroughly investigated all the ins and outs of diving nitrox, and didn't just succumb to the hype. We'll teach you all about PPO2s, proper and improper uses of nitrox, the dangers of oxygen toxicity, how to analyze tanks, and a whole lot more. At the end of the classroom session you'll be qualified to dive nitrox. Course fee covers instruction only. You may need to also purchase a book.

So in 2026, expand your knowledge base and join one of our Zoom-based or Vets Park classes.

SPEAKING OF CLASSES . . .

Don't forget we've got our FREE "Understanding Tables & Computers" class this Wednesday evening, from 7:00-9:00PM. If you've already signed up, we'll send you the Zoom link sometime on Monday or Tuesday. If you haven't yet signed up and want to join, shoot us an e-mail and we'll get you added to the list. Hopefully by the end of Wednesday evening Boyle, Dalton, Henry, and Haldane will be some of your best friends.

BIRD FLU ENDANGERING ELEPHANT SEALS

I don't know how you'd classify this but the news isn't good.

You've heard of the Falkland Islands, which lie about 300 miles east of the bottom of South America. Another 870 miles SE of the Falklands lies South Georgia Island, and that's where this tragedy is taking place.

South Georgia Island is home to one the largest elephant sea colonies in the world and it seems that almost half of the female population has died. It seems the culprit is H5N1 bird flu, which has spread into the elephant seal colony. Drone images have documented that and scientists say, even though they knew of the bird flu presence there almost three years ago, it's worse that they had been predicting. They further fear that the virus is still spreading in that population.

There's this assessment from an article in Smithsonian Magazine:

Scientists also don't know how the huge losses on the island and elsewhere may impact other wildlife. "When you remove such a big mass, you completely upset the balance of the ecosystem," says Marcela Uhart, a wildlife veterinarian at the University of California, Davis, who has conducted separate avian flu research in South America, to the BBC.

Elephant seals are top ocean predators, and they serve as an important "ocean fertilizer," Uhart adds, spreading nutrients from their feces as they swim across the water. "No other species can replace elephant seals in the ocean."

TRAVELLING IN 2026?

Obviously, we're delighted when you choose Reef Seekers for your foreign vacation trips. (And I use that intro to slip in that we still have two available spots on our Indonesia trip in July of next year.) But we're also quite happy to simply advise you on whatever travel plans you might have, even if they don't directly involve us.

Many times through the year, people call and ask us about over-

all destinations, specific resorts, routing through airports, and things like that. We're happy to advise you as best we can. There's no charge for any of this. We're a resource and one that you should feel free to utilize when the need arises. And even though we specialize in scuba destinations, we're happy to advise on non-scuba trips as well. Give us a call at (310)652-4990 or send an e-mail with your details to kenkurtis@aol.com. And bon voyage!!!

GIFT CERTIFICATES

Just a quick reminder, without trying to get too commercial about the season, that if you're looking for gifts for your loved ones (or even people you just tolerate), give some thought to a Reef Seekers gift certificate. We can still acquire gear from some of our manufacturers, and gift certificates obviously can be quite useful if you want to treat someone to one of our foreign trips, a day trip to Avalon, or the after-you-got-certified class offerings. Just give us a call at (310)652-4990, let us know what you have in mind, and we'll get it taken care of.

2026-2027 DIVING VACATIONS

March 9-22, 2026 • Yap

July 1-14, 2026 • Indonesia

Sept. 2026 • Philippines

August, 2027 • Eclipse & dive

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.
Vets Park 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 these #s as well]

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— REEF SEEKERS DIVE CO. — 2026 CLASSES & LOCAL DIVES

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED ACTIVITY	\$\$\$
Sat.	Jan. 3	Veterans Park	Navigation Made Easy	25
Wed.	7	--- CLASS ---	--- PHOTO WORKSHOP ---	25
Wed.	14	Catalina Express	Avalon UW Park	180
Thu.	22	Veterans Park	••• Squid Dive (night) •••	FREE!!!
Sat.	31	Veterans Park	Surf Entries Made Easy	25
Wed.	Feb. 4	--- CLASS ---	--- NAUI NITROX ---	75
Wed.	11	Catalina Express	Avalon UW Park	180

Saturday, Feb. 21 • 44th Annual Avalon Underwater Cleanup

Thu.	26	Veterans Park	••• Squid Dive (night) •••	FREE!!!
Sat.	28	Veterans Park	Beach Diving Made Easy	25

March 9-22 • Micronesia • Return to Yap (Manta Ray Bay)

Wed.	Mar. 25	--- CLASS ---	--- FISH I.D. MADE EASY ---	25
Sat.	Apr. 4	Veterans Park	Navigation Made Easy	25
Wed.	8	Catalina Express	Avalon UW Park	180
Thu.	23	Veterans Park	••• Guided Night Dive •••	25
Sat.	May 2	Veterans Park	Surf Entries Made Easy	25

Wednesday, May 6 • Chamber Day & Eve 2026

Wed.	13	--- CLASS ---	--- TABLES & COMPUTERS ---	25
Thu.	21	Veterans Park	••• Guided Night Dive •••	25
Wed.	27	Catalina Express	Avalon UW Park	180

Sat. & Sun., May 30 & 31 • Scuba Show • LB Conv. Center

Sat.	June 6	Veterans Park	Beach Diving Made Easy	25
Wed.	10	--- CLASS ---	--- PHOTO WORKSHOP ---	25
Thu.	18	Veterans Park	••• Guided Night Dive •••	25
Wed.	24	Catalina Express	Avalon UW Park	180

July 1-14 - Indonesia • Murex Dive Resort (Manado)

Sat.	July 18	Veterans Park	Navigation Made Easy	25
Wed.	22	--- CLASS ---	--- NAUI Nitrox ---	75
Sat.	Aug. 1	Veterans Park	Surf Entries Made Easy	FREE!!!
Wed.	5	Catalina Express	Avalon UW Park	180
Sat.	15	Veterans Park	Beach Diving Made Easy	FREE!!
Thu.	20	Veterans Park	••• Guided Night Dive •••	FREE!!!
Sat.	29	Veterans Park	Navigation Made Easy	FREE!!!
Wed.	Sep. 2	--- CLASS ---	--- FISH I.D. MADE EASY ---	25

September 10-28 • Philippines

9/12-19 @ Atlantis Dumaguete • 9/19-27 on Atlantis Infiniti

Friday, October 2 • Lobster season opens at 6:00PM

Thu.	Oct. 8	Veterans Park	••• Guided Night Dive •••	25
Sat.	17	Veterans Park	Surf Entries Made Easy	25
Wed.	21	Catalina Express	Avalon UW Park	180
Sat.	31	Veterans Park	Beach Diving Made Easy	25
Wed.	Nov. 4	--- CLASS ---	--- TABLES & COMPUTERS ---	25
Wed.	11	Catalina Express	Avalon UW Park	180
Thu.	19	Veterans Park	••• Guided Night Dive •••	25
Sat.	28	Veterans Park	Navigation Made Easy	25
Wed.	Dec. 2	--- CLASS ---	--- PHOTO WORKSHOP ---	25
Wed.	9	Catalina Express	Avalon UW Park	180
Sat.	12	Veterans Park	Surf Entries Made Easy	25
Thu.	17	Veterans Park	••• Squid Dive (night) •••	FREE!!!

Reservations: (310) 652-4990



ETHIOPIAN VOLCANO ERUPTS

I'm always fascinated by nature, even when it doesn't directly relate to being underwater, and this

stunning image – taken from the International Space Station – caught my eye the other week. It's of a 12,000 year-old volcano in Ethiopia suddenly erupting, and spewing ash high into the sky, as you can see.

This does have an underwater angle to it, since we know that there are dozens, if not hundreds, of underwater volcanoes that are all around the "Ring of Fire" in the Pacific. On top of that, we know of the Black Smokers that were discovered at places like the Juan de Fuca Ridge, which lies off of Vancouver, Canada, and the state of Washington. Plus there's Mount Kilauea in Hawaii, which is in a near-constant state of eruption.

So while they may not be as spectacular as the one in Ethiopia, there

is an underwater connection. I doubt we have to worry about being caught in an underwater eruption but underwater volcanoes do shape the submerged terrain.

HAPPY EVERYTHING

Whether you observe Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, Diwali or any of the other multitude of December holidays (or don't), we wish you a happy season. This can be a wonderful time of the year for reflection and even change. It's hard to believe that 2025 is coming to a close but the end is only a month away. And since the New Year always seems to foster a spirit of beginning and even rebirth, here's hoping 2026 is better all around for everyone.

PICTURE PAGE - Christmas Tree Worms

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2025)



Maldives
with the Manthiri



P.O. Box 634
Beverly Hills, CA 90213

WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM



Yap
with Manta Ray Bay



Bonaire
with Buddy Dive



Palau
with the Palau Aggressor II



Indonesia
with Murex Manado Resort