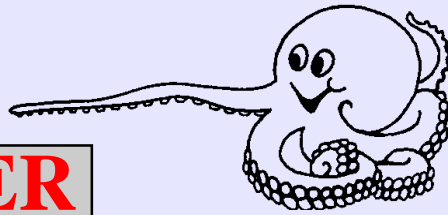


THE REEF SEEKER



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

April 1, 2009



AQUARIUM WHALE WASH

The Aquarium of the Pacific needs your help.

The life-sized model of a Blue Whale and her calf that hangs in the Great Hall is in need of a thorough cleaning, done about every five years. And the easiest way to do it is to lower it from the ceiling onto a rolling platform, wheel it out the front door, and plop it in to Rainbow Harbor for a cleaning. The other advantage of this technique is that it also allows the Aquarium to perform a stability test on the Blue Whale, as required by the U.S. Coast Guard, since the model of the whale is technically considered a vessel.

Divers are (obviously) needed to help with the project, which takes about three hours and is scheduled for this Saturday morning, 9AM-Noon. You do not need to be a current Aquarium volunteer to help on this project and all divers chosen will receive five (5) free passes

to the Aquarium, along with lunch. It's estimated that as many as 30-40 divers may be needed for the project. Please bring all of your own gear (including tanks) but the Aquarium will be happy to refill your tank upstairs in the Dive Locker at the end of the project.

Because the Blue Whale is hollow (and very buoyant) it's also a good idea to bring some extra weight.

This is pretty much on a first-come, first-serve basis and if you're interested, you should call the Aquarium Dive Office today at 562/951-1706. Be sure to tell them Reef Seekers sent you.



PASSPORT NEEDED FOR CATALINA

Effective immediately, you need to show a passport to go to Catalina (just like you now do for Mexico or Canada). This will mainly affect people riding over on the *Catalina Express* since, when you're diving from a dive

boat, you never go on the island so - technically - you haven't left the United States.

The Department of Homeland Security will be setting up kiosks at all *Catalina Express* terminals (along with any other ferries running to the island) to start checking for passports. Anyone intending to go to Catalina who doesn't have the proper documentation (a Green Card will also suffice) will be turned away.

This regulation has caught people by surprise and it turns out to have been one of the last acts of departed head of the DHS, Michael Chertoff. Although officials in the Obama administration have vowed to try to overturn this, it's in place at least for now. They concede this is a mess, but promise to make the inconvenience as minimal as possible.

But complicating matters is that - in addition to your passport - you will need to have a visa for your Catalina visit. The good news is that these are free-of-charge. The bad news is that they're only good for a maximum of two weeks. But the other good news is that you can get them up to six months ahead of time, so you can stock up.

The visas are available in a Visa-On-Arrival policy at the Mole in Avalon. They can also be obtained for future dates at Luau Larry's.



SNORKELS NOW NEED A V.I.P.

Effective today, the D.O.T. now requires all snorkels to be visually inspected once per year and have a sticker slapped on them, just like a tank.

The rationale (if you can call it that) behind this is that the snorkels are an air delivery system and, when you inhale, the air passing through the snorkel is under greater than ambient pressure, so the same rules that apply to tanks will apply to snorkels. In addition to insuring that the inside of the snorkel is clean and free of corrosion, air airflow test will also be performed to insure that the snorkel can deliver adequate airflow under all circumstances. Cost of the new sticker is projected to be \$20 or so.

Although both PADI & NAUI have filed lawsuits in federal court against the implementation of this policy, the case has not yet been heard so the regulation goes into effect today.

As part of the new process, if you're on a boat and are seen to be in possession of a non-VIP'd snorkel, the divemasters are required by law to seize the snorkel from you and destroy it. This means that anyone diving this weekend (like those of you joining us on our

Clemente trip Sunday) will need to have your snorkels inspected before then.

There is an exception to the rule though. If your snorkel is less than one year old, it does not yet need a sticker. However, to prove you're in compliance, you will have to have the sales receipt with you at all times.



GREAT ESCAPE TO INSTALL ICE RINK

It's no secret that not as many people are diving in 2009 as in the past. Some of it may be due to a shrinking economy, some of it may be due to fewer divers. But at least one boat is reacting to the new paradigm.

Tim Burke, owner of the *Great*

Escape, has decided to pull out the six double bunks that are in the middle of his rear bunkroom, and will install a small ice rink instead. "This'll be great," says Tim, "because it gives people something else to do on the ride over and back." Tim also says that it really won't impact the amount of passengers he can take since the boat can already sleep 48 and he's only taking out 12 bunks.

Ice skate rentals will be set up in the stateroom under the stairs. There will be a nominal charge for skates ("We're still working on that," says Tim) or you can bring your own.

Tim's is hopeful that this also opens up some new business venues for him. "There's research to show that there are many ice skaters who would love a chance to g diving," he says, "and this now gives them a chance to do both at one place." Besides Tim adds, "What's ice but frozen water? And what does a diver need to dive in? Water. It's an obvious connection."

There is still one small hurdle to overcome, says Burke, but he hopes to have that resolved by the end of the month. And that's the issue of where exactly to store the Zamboni.

DIVING VACATIONS

May 15-23

Buddy Dive • Bonaire

October 11-18

Don Jose • Sea of Cortez

GIANT SQUID EGG IN REDONDO

Over the past few years, Redondo's Veterans Park has become known as a great place to look for squid eggs when squid mating season (December - March) is around. But this year hasn't been so hot.

At least, not until last night.

That's when divers came across an egg that is thought to be that of a Giant Squid. It's only a single egg sac, but it's 12 feet long. And you can already see inside that there's a squid growing.

Given that Giant Squid are presumed to be somewhat carnivorous (they attack Sperm Whales, and vice-versa), it's a good thing that squid generally lay their eggs and then abandon them. However, there's definitely some concern that when ever this thing hatches, it may be hungry. And if there are divers in the area, it's unknown what will happen.

However, this will be an unprecedented chance to see an actual, living Giant Squid, an animal that's only once been photographed alive. (Our entire knowledge base comes from the carcasses of dead ones.) And you have a chance to go see the squid egg before it hatches.

The egg is at a depth of 72 feet down in Redondo Canyon. From the stairs, head straight out, exactly perpendicular to the shoreline. When you hit the shoulder of the canyon, continue straight on down. At a depth of 72 feet (don't forget to make depth adjustments for high or low tide depending on when you dive it), you should be pretty close to it, depending on how good your navigation is. Now

UPCOMING BOAT DIVES

Sun	Apr. 5	<i>Great Escape</i>	San Clemente Island	\$165/180
Sat	18	<i>Sea Bass</i>	<i>Palawan/Avalon/Dminatr</i>	140/155
Sun	May 3	<i>Great Escape</i>	Farnsworth/Cat. backside	150/165
Wed	6	All boats	Chamber Day Benefit	\$90
Sat	16	<i>Sea Bass</i>	••• Oil Rigs •••	145/160
Sun	31	<i>Sea Bass</i>	<i>Star Scotland/Palos Verdes</i>	150/165
Sun	Jun 14	<i>Cee Ray</i>	Catalina (West End)	140/155
Sat	27	<i>Great Escape</i>	Santa Barbara Island	160/175

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.

just start looking.

Once you find the egg, be sure not to touch it as it's covered in a gooey substance that can be toxic to divers. You will also want to take a very good look around the edges of the egg sac to see if the squid inside has started hatching. Because if it has, you'll probably want to get back to shore quickly.

If you want to do this dive with us, we're going out this Friday evening and see if we can find it. (Because the egg sac glows from bioluminescence, you can actually do the dive without a light.) To get signed up for the "April Giant Squid Hunt" just give us a call at 310/652-4990.

ORCAS IN THE UNDERWATER PARK

Let there be Orcas.

A small pod of Orcas (aka "Killer Whales") has taken up residence - at least temporarily - in the Avalon Underwater Park. They've been there for a few weeks now and don't show any signs of leaving.

Amazingly, the Orcas seemed to be rather comfortable around humans. Not only have they been

seen lolling on the surface by the entry/exit steps, but there have also been occasions when classes have been doing skills over in the sandy area of the park, and the Orcas will just hang out and seemingly observe.

"It's really a bit spooky," said one of the students getting certified. "It's one thing to have your instructor and the rest of your classmates watching you, but to have this thing over your shoulder really intensifies the experience."

Locals say that this isn't the first time Killer Whales have been spotted around Avalon. Longtime resident Dr. Bill Bushing recalls, "Back when I was a young boy and diving for quarters thrown by the visitors on the Great White Steamer, we'd have to occasionally fend off orcas who would also want the change. It was quite an experience."

How long the orcas will be around is anyone's guess. But this represents a unique opportunity for you to get a close-up look at one of nature's apex predators. So be sure to book a trip over to Avalon whether it's with us or on your own. Oh yeah - and don't forget your passport.

INVISIBLE FISH DISCOVERED IN OUR WATERS

You probably read last month about the “barreleye” fish *Macropinna microstoma*, which is the weird-looking one with a transparent head, whose eyes rotate around inside the transparency. Well, now we’ve gone that fish one better.

Scientists have now discovered a fish that’s so transparent, it’s actually invisible.

“This is an amazing discovery,” said lead scientist Dr. R. U. Kidding, “and it totally changes the way we think about the ocean biomass.” Because the fish can’t be seen, says Dr. Kidding, “they could

be anywhere.” Fishing groups took this thought one step further.

“This proves that we don’t need Marine Protected Areas,” says Rance Marmy of the Clear-Cut the Oceans Foundation. “It’s quite simple: Put on a mask and look into the ocean and don’t see anything, that proves that the invisible fish are everywhere, and not needing any level of protection.”

Hortense Waggoner of the Earthly Ocean Campaign doesn’t quite see it that way. “These fish, even though they can’t be seen,” says Waggoner, “deserve our protection just as much as the fish that we can see. Just because they can’t be seen doesn’t mean they don’t have rights.”

This will likely play out in the

courts and may have some impact on the MLPA process that’s now wending its way through the state. But in the meantime, Kidding and cronies have classified the fish as a *Transpapiscies invisiblorus* but also refer to it under its better-known common name: snipe.

READ THIS, PLEASE

If by this time you haven’t caught on that the stories in these pages seem a little . . . well . . . far-fetched, welcome to the April Fool’s edition of the newsletter. And, just to be fair, we DID give you a hint in Monday’s TWARS. We hope you enjoyed having your leg pulled as much as we enjoyed pulling it.

PICTURE PAGE - Special photos

(RUB BUTTER OR MARGARINE OVER EACH SQUARE AND THE IMAGES WILL APPEAR SHORTLY)



***Moray Eel
inside diver's mask***



P.O. Box 11634
Beverly Hills, CA 90213

WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM



***Garibaldi being swallowed
by a Lingcod***



***Great White Shark
being towed by a diver***



***Sea snake
in a snorkel***



***Octopus smacking
a fish in the face***