



October 2010

## President's Log

As I get older, I find myself realizing that most days end up being what we make of them. As a club, we made September 25 a GREAT day. We had a good turnout for the beach cleanup, and as always, picked up hundreds of pounds of trash. My only regret from the day is not taking before and after pictures.

Again this year, our hosts at Refugio State Beach allowed us the use of the area by the education building and their BBQ. Lynn was kind enough to take care of the BBQ with the help of several ladies while the rest of us put our tanks on and washed off any small bits of trash. My first act as president was to arrange a day of sunshine and temperatures in the eighties. As I am new to this, I neglected to arrange warm and clear water. As I said earlier, we made the most of it anyway, and who says you can't have good experiences with less than eight foot visibility and fifty-five degree water? Along with the usual sights we also had several very interesting sightings: Nathan and Erwan spotted a trigger fish (not common in cold years) and a yet to be identified nudibranch. Jim also spotted an eel-like fish, to be identified. You all made it a great day!

## The Marine Reserve of Cerbère-Banyuls

Dreaming of your next summer vacation, which has to involve cultural, gastronomical, shopping, touristy, beach and scuba fun? The Côte Vermeille (in Catalan, *Costa Vermella*) on the Mediterranean coast just a few kilometers north of Spain has it all. You can fly into Paris or Barcelona and then take a high speed train to stay at one of the quaint fishing harbors/beach resorts dotting the coastline: Argelès-sur-mer (long fine sand beaches, vintage sailing boats), Collioure (lots of tourist shops, lots of tourists, anchovy canneries to visit, medieval fortifications), Port-Vendres (authentic fishing village with a monument to American independence), Banyuls (Aristide Maillol's museum, wineries with free visits and generous amounts of free tastings of the famous Banyuls vin naturel) or any of the villages inland, on the Pyrenees' foothills. Then, you book your boat dives to discover the Natural Marine Reserve, the first ever created in France in 1974. So, the fauna and flora have had plenty of time to recover from the damage done by human activity. The reserve is 6.5 km long and 2 km wide from the shore. Among the more than 1200 animal species you will get a chance to see is the mola mola, the world's heaviest bony fish.

Other creatures often spotted at the reserve are moray eels, huge octopi which are not shy of people, interesting looking galathea or squat lobsters, graceful jellyfish, dotted sea slugs which are aptly called Dalmatian sea slugs in French, pink flabellinas (nudibranchs), another purple sea slug called *Prostheceraeus roseus*. We were amused by the shaggy look of the spiny starfish. One of my favorite creatures was the wreathy-tuft tube-worm, called spirograph in French. The langostas (better tasting than lobsters, but of course only for your eyes there) are plentiful also.

As for the vegetation, one part of the reserve is actually called the "posidonia oceanic zone" because of the abundance of this plant also called Neptune grass (if you go by Roman mythology rather than Greek mythology which claims the god of the sea as Poseidon).

Travelling with non divers? What is unique about this marine reserve is its underwater trail. It starts at a sheltered bay, and you snorkel along a marked out trail, exploring the shallow rocky sea bottom. The trail is 250 meters long and is bordered by a float line. There are 5 numbered buoys, each equipped with an underwater information sign. These buoys all have a handrail so you can rest there also.

Even better---you can rent an FM Pro Frequency snorkel which gives you a commentary during your swim. It works



with the mouthpiece, thanks to the bone conduction through your teeth. what you see, you can also rent a waterproof booklet of the marine life specific to this trail.

Info for divers: All sites are within 10 to 30 minutes of the harbors, so all outings are one tank dives, but you can book two in a day. You just go back for lunch, which is great considering all the delicious local Mediterranean dishes you'll want to discover at the little eateries in the harbors. Guided dives are cheap, and you get a guide for a maximum of three divers. You will have to pay a small fee for each dive at the reserve. Bon voyage!

Valérie Lent



*Photos by Erwan Lent*



**Quiz: What do you call a mola mola in:**

1. English? 2. Russian? 3. Italian? 4. Latin? 5. Spanish? 6. Polish? 7. French? 8. Mandarin? 9. Portuguese? 10. Dutch? 11. Taiwanese?

**Answers:**

In **English** you call it the ocean **sunfish** because it likes to come to the surface to bask in the sun ( This is where we saw them each time on our trip).

In **Russian** it is **рыба-луна** , meaning moon fish(because its shape reminds you of a full moon)

In **Italian** you will say **pesce luna** (moon fish).

In **Latin**, **mola** of course, which means “millstone” because it looks like a big round grey rough stone.

In **Spanish**, **pez luna** ( moon fish).

The **Polish** word **рыба-луна** means “head alone”.

The **French** say **poisson lune**,(moon fish) .

In **Mandarin** it sounds like **fan-che**, meaning a toppled car (not very nice).

In **Portuguese** it is **peixe lua**, again the moon fish.

In **Dutch**, **maanvis** means---yes, moon fish.

Why the **Taiwanese** call it **mambo**, no idea.

Anyway, as you can see a majority of countries went for *moon fish* but *sun fish* makes sense too.

Quiz by Erwan Lent



## Deco Stop



Friday 10/8 at 5:30  
Endless Summer Bar and Grill on  
the Waterfront

Mark your  
calendars:



*Pumpkin Carving Dive  
Contest at Goleta Beach  
on Saturday October 30.  
Bring your pumpkin and  
a dish to share for the  
picnic. The club will  
supply meat and drinks.  
Meet at 10:00 on the  
right of the pier.*



# Great Job!



Photo by Steven Trainoff

# Beach Clean-up





## PDC **Thursday Night Dives!**

To find out where the group will be diving, or to be added to the night dive e-mail list, sign up at [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PDC\\_midweek\\_dive](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PDC_midweek_dive), or send e-mail to [PDC\\_midweek\\_dive\\_subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:PDC_midweek_dive_subscribe@yahoogroups.com)



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### **Dive Club Officers**

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