

PARADISE DIVE CLUB

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Upcoming Meetings

Club meetings at Cody's Cafe

- March 31
- April 28
- May 26

Deco Stops at HBC

5:30pm, 2nd Friday
after the club meetings

Club Sponsors

- [Truth Aquatics](#)
- [Santa Barbara Aquatics](#)
- [Blue Water Hunter](#)
- [The Eagle Inn](#)
- [Channel Island Dive Adventures](#)

President's Thoughts

Paul Bullock

I'm writing this report on February 15th. The harsh, wicked winter is in full effect in Santa Barbara. I actually saw fog this morning! The tourists are flocking, the beaches are full, parking is awful, the restaurants are all full and you actually have to make reservations to get a table. But the surf is backing off and I'm hoping that there could be some good diving again soon. I'm looking at my calendar and realizing that Spring break is just around the corner.

My wife wants to go to Mexico and I want to go to Mammoth Mountain. It's OK though, I like Mexico too. This year we'll probably fly into Loreto and then drive across the peninsula and go whale watching at Magdalena Bay.

Apparently the Grey Whales finish their migration from Alaska there, give birth, swim around a bit with their calves and then head back up to Alaska. The small panga boats that they take you on can and do get right up to the whales.

I've seen numerous pictures of people petting the whales. I guess they're not afraid of humans anymore. So, hopefully that'll be a fun and exciting time. I may try to do a few dives in Loreto too or maybe some kayaking or sailing. We'll just have to see what the family wants to do. We may just end up sitting under a palm tree sipping some cervezas!



Dive Club Officers

President	Paul Bullock
VP	Christina Grabowsky
Past President	Kellen Tobin
Treasurer	Jim Axtell
Secretary	Rich Cirincione
Membership	Ivan Girling
Sergeant at Arms	Lynn Axtell
Entertainment	Juan Beltranena
Social Media	Jacek Smits
Publications	Jacek Smits

Mission Statement

Paradise Dive Club is a diving and social club. The Club provides a setting that allows continued growth in our sport and one where friendships can develop and flourish. Paradise Dive Club promotes fun, safe diving related activities and environmental awareness. The Club was founded to provide social and recreational opportunities to people with mutual interests in snorkeling, scuba and free diving, and to educate and inform its members and the general public in matters related to diving and the ocean, particularly in regard to issues involving coastal Santa Barbara County.

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Anyway, I hope you all had a nice Friday the 13th, Valentine's Day, and President's Weekend. Our next club meeting will be on 3/31. There'll be loads of fun and laughs and even a speaker to entertain us once the raffle is over.

So thanks for reading and see you all soon.

First Saturday of the Month

Jacek Smits

The club is going to try something new to keep an interest in diving going and active among its member, as well as trying to attract new divers to the club. On March 7th we held the very first "First Saturday of the Month Dive" dive at Refugio State Beach. Seven divers and one beach goer showed up for what turned out to be an amazing day. We had blue skies and sunshine, no waves to speak of, very little surge, and at least 20 feet (dare I say 30 feet?) of visibility. The lowest temperature my computer registered was around 57°F. We saw small abalone, lots of lobsters and nudibranchs (especially Spanish Shawls), hermit crabs, a turbot, sculpin, and lingcod. Today was one of those dives that makes you keep going back for more. There's not much kelp at the moment at Refugio SB. Hopefully that'll come back in which case it will add yet another dimension to the dive site. Refugio State Beach is a great local dive spot with two sites, ample parking, benches, rest rooms, showers, and BBQ grills on the day



Photo by Jacek Smits



Photo by Jacek Smits

use side. The \$10 per car for day use fee is well worth it if you haven't tried Refugio yet.

The next First Saturday Of The Month Dive will be a night dive at Hendry's Beach (Arroyo Burro) on April 4. That day will combine a full moon with a total lunar eclipse. Unfortunately, both of those happen between 3 and 5am while the dive will take place around 7pm. Still, that's pretty awesome. I think it may even be Mercury Retrograde and Mars and Venus are still in really close conjunction. And the Moon will be in the 7th House. Check your scuba gear,

your primary and backup dive light, and everything else you need for a night dive.

Check the club's Meetup page for details and plan to be there (RSVP please). Of course and always, conditions permitting! Keep an eye on the Meetup page for up to date information.

Speaking Of Beach Diving

Staff Writer

We are fortunate enough to have access to some amazing beach diving that, on a good day, rivals diving at the islands. Unless you like a challenge, conditions like those in the picture to the right may not be ideal to go scuba diving. Which begs the question, what do you need to keep in mind when beach diving? Since the club is now organizing beach dives on a more regular basis, we decided to include a short primer on beach diving in this month's newsletter.

Bottom Composition

It is important to know what bottom composition you're dealing with. Is it sandy or rocky? Is it steep or gradually sloping? Are there piles of rock in the way? Are the rocks slippery with grasses? All these questions need to be considered on their own and, especially, in the context of wave action. Also, an entry or exit at low tide may be



Photo by Jacek Smits

completely different from an entry or exit at high tide. All the things you can't see below the water line can make for a very different entry from the one you had just a few weeks ago at the exact same site. You may think that bottom composition is a stable characteristic of a site, but you'd be surprised. Big winter storms can carry away large amounts of sand and expose sharp rocks that create challenges for stable footing. If you're not sure about a particular dive site, ask a local dive store or send an email with questions to pdc_members@paradisediveclub.org.

Tides and Tidal Exchanges

The steeper the slope, or the bigger the difference between low and high tide, the more water movement and the less visibility. Tidal currents are strongest midway between high and low tide and, somewhat depending on the specific site, the possibility of rip tides should be part of your consideration to go beach diving or not. The general recommendation is to dive around high tide for best visibility. Hopefully it's also a day with a small tidal change. There are several sites to check for tide tables. One is FreeTideTables.Com and another one is the NOAA site.

Swell

Swell is a series of waves that are created by winds generated by distant weather systems. Since we can monitor these weather systems, swell tends to be fairly predictable. The biggest problem with waves for scuba divers is that they can easily knock you over in the surf zone. Don't underestimate the power of a mass of water hitting you. Even a small wave can knock you off balance if you let it hit you in the back of your knees. Remember that with all your scuba gear on your back you are top-heavy and unstable. The entries and exits through a surf zone are the riskiest part of a beach dive. You want to spend as little time as possible in the surf zone while keeping an eye on the wave action to protect yourself. Here are two links to web pages with swell predictions: Surfing Magazine and Surfer.



Photo by Jacek Smits

Pre-Dive

Now that you've checked the tide and swell and decided to go beach diving, make sure you show up a little early at the dive site so you can evaluate the conditions. Are the waves as expected? What are the sets doing? Gear up at about the same speed as everybody else so nobody is waiting and overheating in their wetsuit. Pick a visual reference point for your entries and exits. Do your pre-dive safety check, agree on communication, lost buddy procedures, and enter the ocean in between sets. Finally, if it is a new site for you, talk to other divers or a local dive shop who know the site and ask about entries and exits.

Beach diving along the Santa Barbara coast can be amazing and rewarding. They're also a lot cheaper and quicker than a day trip to the islands, but they carry different risks than boat diving and you need to be aware of those. They're well worth trying, though, if you haven't done a local beach yet.

Note: This is a very short primer highlighting some of the major concerns you should keep in mind when beach diving. It is not an exhaustive list and no substitute for training. If you are new to beach diving you probably should go talk to your local dive store and hire a divemaster or instructor to teach you how to do beach diving safely.

Equipment Recalls

Jacek Smits

Having received two manufacturer recalls from Toyota for my truck, I decided to check if there were any recalls on any of the scuba equipment I own. Fortunately, there were none. While we all love to trust our scuba equipment every time we go diving, it is important to check on a regular basis whether your equipment is under a safety recall. For example, the manufacturer may have found a bug in the software of your dive computer that should be dealt with. Or they may have found manufacturing problems with your first stage that could lead to cracks and failure over time. A reasonable list to keep an eye on is the one at scuba.com, but you'd be better off by checking the web site of the manufacturer of your diving equipment on a regular basis. Also, keep your scuba equipment maintained as per the manufacturer's recommendations.

The Club's Documents

Jacek Smits

As you may or may not remember, at the last meeting The President of our venerable dive club announced that the board has reviewed the club's Constitution, By-Laws, Rules of Conduct, Membership Form, and Liability Release, and made them available to active members for review so that we can hopefully vote on adopting them at the next club meeting. The existing documents were about 25 years old and in need of review and some cleaning up here and there. You can find the updated documents available for download on the club's Meetup page. Please have a look and direct questions and comments by email to pdcb@paradisediveclub.org.

The Club's Yahoo! Group

Staff Writer

For all you Yahoos out there: as Kellen announced in an email to the club's Yahoo! group, that group will disappear soon and will be replaced by the club's web site and email lists, Facebook, Meetup, and Twitter pages. You may as well stop using the Yahoo! group now as any communication aimed at it will disappear into a vast void never to be heard of again.

History of Diving

Staff Writer

For reasons I can no longer remember I came across an article in the July 1953 issue of Popular Science that featured a six page spread on how to build and use your own aqua lung. A monthly magazine dedicated to mechanics, autos, and home building decided to take a stab at scuba. The process of building your own aqua lung starts out with a pair of surplus CO₂ tanks that were flushed clean with hot water to remove all CO₂ traces. For the regulator they used a modified aircraft AN-6004-1 Oxygen Diluter-Demand Regulator:

Step 15: Replace spring of diaphragm lever with one of the same length and diameter, but heavier, to add snap to diaphragm return action.

Step 16: Back off screw on pressure regulator to cut air flow. Adjust this screw after underwater trials if you get insufficient or excess air.

Step 17: Seal edge of diaphragm with Permagasket to keep water out of regulator. Apply several built-up layers rather than one thick one.

Step 18: Waterproof diaphragm with several coats of rubber cement. Dust final coat with talcum to prevent it from sticking to cover.

You get the gist. The part on how to use it safely for your underwater adventures was equally interesting and they dedicated an entire 3/4 of a page to it. I will never try this myself but in some odd way it was a fascinating read. I searched around for some success stories but couldn't find any. I'm not entirely sure what that means. For those interested in the whole article, [here's the link to it](#).

Upcoming Club Events

- First Saturday of the Month Dive: March 7, April 4, May 2
- Gear Exchange / Golf Ball Challenge: Saturday, May 16
- Monterey Camp & Dive Trip: July 9-13
- Underwater Photo Contest: TBD
- LA County Coast Beach Dive: TBD
- Pumpkin Carving Contest: TBD



Photo by Jacek Smits

Odds & Ends

Richard Salas Exhibition

From March 14 to September 7 Richard Salas's exhibition titled "0 to 60: An Underwater Adventure" will be on display at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, the Sea Center, and the Wildling Museum in Solvang. [Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History](#).

NOAA Expands Two Marine Sanctuaries

Both the Cordell Bank and the Gulf of the Farallones national marine sanctuaries will more than double in size in order to protect the region's marine and coastal habitats. Link to the [NOAA Press Release](#).

Strike Of The Electric Eel

Electric eels hunt by taser-like high-voltage discharges that affect motor neurons and induce full body muscle contractions in its prey, effectively immobilizing them. [Link to the article](#) or the summary at [National Geographic](#).

Insulin Used By Cone Snails For Hunting

Two fish-hunting cone snails have developed a specialized form of insulin (closer to fish insulin than snail insulin) that they can release into the water to put fish into a hypoglycemic shock. Once the fish stop moving, the snail can catch up and eat it. Link to the [article at PNAS](#) or the [summary at National Geographic](#).

Arabian Sea Humpback Whales

The humpback whales in the Arabian Sea is a non-migratory group of whales that has been isolated for approximately 70,000 years and, as a result, has become genetically very distinct from other highly migratory humpback whale populations. Link to the [article at PLOS](#).

If You're Reading The Print Edition

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