

PARADISE DIVE CLUB

Club Business | Great White Sharks at Guadalupe Island | Odds & Ends



Upcoming Meetings

Club meetings at Zodo's

7:00pm, but show up early for dinner and socializing.

September 27

October 25

November 29

Deco Stops

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](#)

Editor's Note

This special edition of the club's newsletter is about a September 2016 trip to Guadalupe Island that club member Jacek Smits went on with several friends aboard the Nautilus Explorer to go see some great white sharks. Story and all photos by Jacek Smits.

Club Business

Staff Writer

Elections

Remember that at the September general club meeting elections will be held for the 2016-17 board. If you are interested in participating in running the club, please contact [Paul Bullock](#) with any questions you may have. The following position is up for grabs: Publications Officer

Oil Rig Dives

There are still a few spots open for the oil rig dives on the 24th and 25th of September. Contact [Paul Bullock](#) to get one of these spots.

Guadalupe Island

Jacek Smits

I'm settling in for the roughly 22 hour return trip from Guadalupe Island where I've been cage diving with great white sharks aboard the [Nautilus Explorer](#) for the past few days. Guadalupe Island is a small volcanic island some 150 miles off the coast of Baja Mexico, and about 185 miles from Ensenada ([Google Maps](#)). Because of the distance it is a five day trip with three days of cage diving and a day of travel on either side of those diving days.

Dive Club Officers

President	Paul Bullock
Vice President	Tim Doherty
Past President	Kellen Tobin
Treasurer	Jim Axtell
Secretary	Véronique Lisi
Membership	Ludovico Cavedon
Sgt. at Arms	Michel Giroux
Entertainment	Juan Beltranena
Social Media	Jan Fejt
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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Cage diving with great white sharks

Departure

The Nautilus Explorer operates out of Ensenada, Mexico for their Guadalupe Island trips. You can either fly to Ensenada and take a taxi from the airport to the ship, or you can meet the Nautilus people at a hotel in San Diego and get on a bus they charter for the trip to Ensenada. My friends and I did the latter. The bus departed from San Diego around 7pm and we boarded the ship around 9:30pm. Soon after boarding the Nautilus Explorer on Sunday evening, September 4, we departed for Guadalupe Island. It wasn't a rough crossing but we were definitely rolling quite a bit prompting several passengers to develop various degrees of sea sickness and miss dive briefings



Cage diving with great white sharks



Divemasters prepping the chum

and emergency drills during the crossing. Once we tucked into a cove on the north-east side of Guadalupe Island Monday evening the ocean was flat and the boat stopped moving.

The Diving

The Nautilus Explorer has two surface cages at the back of the ship where you can jump in any time they have room. In addition, the ship has two submersible cages that operate on a 45 minute schedule and all the divers take turns on a rotation schedule set by the crew. They lower the submersibles with cranes to about 33 feet, keep them there about 40 minutes and then bring them back up for the next group. Each submersible cage takes three divers and a divemaster and they have two levels: the divers are in the lower level and the divemaster is at the top level. If you ask nicely the divemaster will let you come up to the top level during the dive. Sometimes that is nice because with three divers at the lower level it can feel a little crowded. All the

dives are done with surface supplied air and there are tanks with regulators in the cages in case of emergencies. The surface cages open at 6:30am and the submersible cages start operating at 8am every day. All cages close around 4:30pm. The water temperature was right around 69°F all three days.

Every morning the crew uses a chainsaw to cut up some solidly frozen whole tuna fish that they will use to attract the sharks. The divemasters will take big disks of frozen tuna with them on the submersibles to grind down and, hopefully, attract sharks to the cages. The heads and tails of the tuna are used for shark wrangling at the surface with the intent to attract sharks closer to the surface cages.

Over the three days of diving I ended up doing 15 dives in the submersibles but only one in the surface cages. At 69°F I chose to preserve my body heat for the submersible dives. We did have pretty good shark action. I only got skunked on one dive when one shark showed up for just a few minutes. The rest of that dive I ended up watching the interactions of some 100,000 sardines, 50 yellowtail jacks, and five yellowfin tuna fish. The other dives I had two or three sharks around and they kept going back and forth between the submersible and surface cages for pretty much the entire time of the dive. The sharks that were there were in the 13-15 feet long range with



Cage diving with great white sharks



Cage diving with great white sharks

one female probably 16 or 17 feet long. She was also a little bolder and kept bumping the cages during the times she was around.

The first day we were alone in this cove but then the Solmar V, the Nautilus Belle Amie, and two other, smaller dive operations showed up. It didn't really seem to change our shark interactions and, according to the crew, more ships means more chum attracting more sharks.

There were definitely enough opportunities to take pictures of these sharks but at times I stopped doing that just to watch and enjoy these beautiful animals move through the water.

It was quite mesmerizing. I have a [two minute](#)

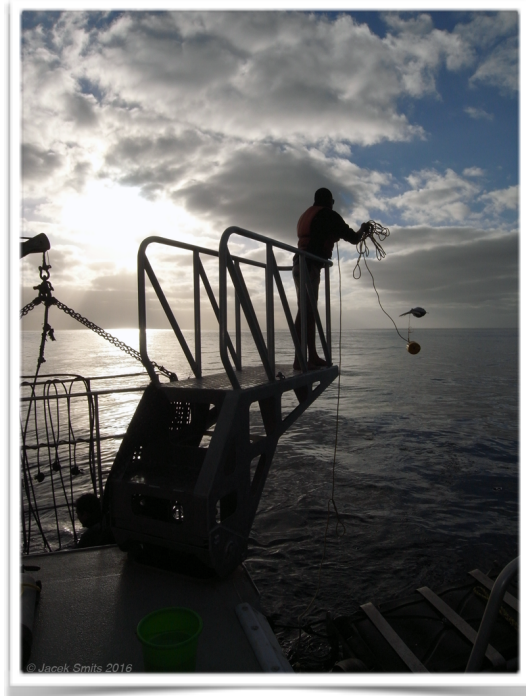
[video compilation](#) of clips I shot with my GoPro while in the submersible cages that gives a good impression of what the diving was like.

After three days at Guadalupe Island the crew brought the cages back on the ship's deck, lifted the anchor and started the 22 hour journey back to Ensenada. Over the days that we were at Guadalupe Island the ocean had calmed down and the return trip was remarkably smooth. Once we were back in Ensenada we all got back on a bus that took us back to the hotel in San Diego where we arrived at 7pm, just in time for us to get off the bus and the next group of passengers to board it for their shark diving trip.

In Summary

I had a fantastic time and very much enjoyed it. The Nautilus Explorer is a great ship with an excellent crew and they take good care of you. They pay attention to detail and are always friendly and helpful. The food is excellent and plentiful. This trip had been on my to-do list for a while and I'm glad I finally did it.

The Nautilus currently operates two ships: the Explorer and the Belle Amie. Recently they bought the Undersea Hunter and will start running it as the Nautilus Under Sea soon. They run two different types of trips: one is this shark trip, the other is diving at the Socorro Islands. The latter one is a truly spectacular trip with lots of interaction with giant manta rays and a wide variety of other sea life. I've done that trip twice and am booked to do it again on the Nautilus Under Sea this December. On occasion they extend the Socorro Islands trip to visit the Sea of Cortez as well.



Shark wrangling

I definitely recommend dive trips with the Nautilus group, especially the Socorro Islands trip. I'm glad I did the shark trip, and had a great time, but, personally, I'd pick the Socorro Island trip to do again over the Guadalupe Island trip. You can start exploring their schedule and options on [their web site](#). Feel free to contact me with any questions you have on this trip.

Upcoming Club Events

Staff Writer

The Board has set the schedule for club events for 2016. Always check the club's [Meetup](#) and Facebook pages for details and updates on these events, especially last minute changes or cancellations due to conditions:

- TBD: Golf Ball Challenge at Goleta Beach
- October 29: Pumpkin Carving Contest at Goleta Beach
- November 5: FSotM trip to Anacapa
- December: Holiday Party

Odds & Ends

Staff Writer

President Obama Designates First National Marine Monument

On September 15, 2016, President Obama created the *Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument*. This is an area the size of Connecticut and home to a vast variety of ocean wildlife. Link to the article [Popular Science](#).

Larger Marine Mammals At Higher Risk Of Extinction

Researchers at Stanford have published data that large marine mammals are more likely to become extinct than smaller creatures living in the oceans. According to the researchers this is likely driven by human over fishing of the oceans. Link to article at [Science Daily](#).

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