

NEWSLETTER



San Jose Flipper Dippers

SEPTEMBER
2023

GENERAL MEETINGS HELD
3RD WEDNESDAY
OF EACH MONTH
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You Make Me Sick!

The A professor trying to solve the death of a beached sperm whale ended up discovering 21 pounds of whale vomit worth half a million dollars.

Matthew Loh

A scientist in the Canary Islands discovered a 21-pound lump of whale vomit worth around \$544,000 in the intestines of a beached sperm whale. Antonio Fernández, a professor from the University of Las Palmas, was inspecting the dead sperm whale at Nogales beach on May 21 when he found a huge clump of ambergris in it, the local news outlet Canarias7 reported.

Ambergris is a rare and highly sought-after secretion produced in the digestive systems of sperm whales, and it's typically only found in around one out of 100 specimens. It's valued in the perfume industry for its distinct odor and scarcity, and it's often called "floating gold" or the "treasure of the sea." Scientists believe the substance is excreted by sperm whales when they eat cephalopods, such as squid and octopus, and cannot digest the beaks of their prey. These remains are often vomited out, but sometimes they can mix with a waxy substance in the intestines to produce ambergris.

Fernández told Canarias7 that he was investigating the cause of death for this particular sperm whale while checking its colon. "What I took out was a stone about 50 to 60 cm in diameter weighing 9.5 kg," he said, according to The Guardian. "The waves were washing over the whale. Everyone was watching when I returned to the beach, but they didn't know that what I had in my hands was ambergris." Fernández, who's also the director of his university's animal health and food safety institute, said the whale died of sepsis caused by the chunk of ambergris, per The Guardian.

The professor also told Canarias7 on June 20 that he planned to give the valuable lump to local authorities in La Palma so that it could be sold to help those affected by a devastating volcano eruption in 2021. In 2021, a group of fishermen in the Gulf of Aden scored a chunk of ambergris worth around \$1.5 million, which they sold to a buyer in the United Arab Emirates. The 35 fishermen purchased houses, cars, and boats from their profits, the BBC reported.

Commercial trade of ambergris is strictly regulated in some countries, including Australia and the US, which bans the trade of the substance because of concerns about exploitative whaling. 🌟

Christmas in July BBQ - in August



Howard Timoney shows up and scores the \$50 Cash envelope off the Christmas Tree! Does he buy PowerBall tickets too?

The Club's Christmas in July BBQ held in August had a great turnout. A big **THANK YOU** to **Abby Golden Wilson** for making the arrangements for the Club to use the group picnic area at Santa Teresa County Park. The site was covered and had a big BBQ area. And a **BIG** thanks to **Greg Davis** for spearheading the cooking of the salmon and chicken. Everything was delicious! All those in attendance brought some additional food to share and no one went away hungry.

There were some great prizes on the raffle table along with the cash envelopes

containing \$50, 40\$ and \$20 attached to the Christmas Tree. The envelopes only had \$\$ signs on them so it was the 'luck-of-the-draw' as to who won the cash. See more photos on pages 4 and 5. 🌟

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👉 **NOTICE:** Due to a large number of Dippers diving in Bonaire our September 20th General Meeting will only be held virtually starting at 7pm. See Calendar on Page 7.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



August was a fun month for the Dippers, starting off with camping at Samuel P. Taylor State Park and doing a night time bioluminescence kayak trip in Tomales Bay. That same weekend we had our usual Second Saturday SCUBA dive at the Breakwater and two new divers were able to join in. After our great General Meeting on August 16th, we had our second Christmas in July event (but this year in August, on August 20th). All of the Dippers and friends who attended brought great food

and raffle prizes. It was a tremendously fun event and everyone who attended reported having a great time!

In September, we'll start off with the annual Labor Day weekend campout at Van Damme! Some of the LORDS (Loyal Order of Retired Dippers) and other Dippers are heading up early for a fun week of diving, kayaking, hiking and biking! All are welcome to join us for whatever days you can. We have 4 campsites reserved for Aug 28th – Sept 4th. Contact Carl if you want to join the fun.

Next up will be our Second Saturday SCUBA (S3) dive on Sept 9th. The location for this is still being considered, but check out this facebook link www.facebook.com/groups/1447242965517132 regarding CA Biodiversity Week 2023: Point Lobos SNR which runs from Monday, Sept 2 – Sunday, Sept 10, 2023. More info can be found here: www.inaturalist.org/projects/ca-biodiversity-week-2023-point-lobos-snr. Underwater pictures are welcome as well, and photos can be taken at Monastery beach in addition to Whaler's Cove inside Point Lobos park.

The Dippers' trip to Bonaire is coming up Sept 16 – 27 so expect some great dive reports next month! As a reminder, the Wed, Sept 20th, General meeting will be 100% virtual since so many of us will be in Bonaire. And the meeting will start earlier at 7pm California time which is 10pm in Bonaire.

Club dues will be due in October. Some members also pay dues towards CenCal (Central California Council of Diving Clubs) and USofA (Underwater Society of America) to support their efforts on behalf of all divers in the areas of beach access along with conservation, and state and national legislation. These two organizations form an effective method for presenting the divers' interests state-wide and nationally.

Everyone keep safe and keep diving!

– Barbara



San Jose Flipper Dippers

www.SJFlipperDippers.com

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o Position Open o

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NOTICE: Due to a large number of Dippers diving in Bonaire our September 20th General Meeting will only be held virtually --> starting at 7pm California Time. <--





We'll be having our General Meeting virtually this month with a live Skype connection starting at 7pm ★

MEMBERSHIP

Ken Agur

We're a dive club and we're diving! If you're looking for a dive buddy look no further. See the Club's website for more information on becoming a member. (Membership Requirements).

Happy Birthday to You! If we had a regular General Meeting, a FREE raffle

ticket would be given to **Abby Golden Wilson, Frances Lee** and **Taylor Sullivan**.

CLUB DUES DUE in October

It will soon be October again and time to pay your **annual dues**. Dues help cover a portion of the yearly room rental, website hosting, domain name registration, and newsletter printing and distribution. Each member will also be asked to sign an "Assumption of Risk Agreement" when dues are paid (the form is available on the Club's Website). If you can't make the in-person General Meeting please send a signed copy with your dues in the mail to: **Tom Gardner**, 2986 Everdale Court, San Jose, CA 95148. Contact Tom if you want to pay your dues in cash.

Club Dues this year are \$50.00 and \$10.00 per year to receive this Newsletter via the U.S. Postal Service. Or download it FREE each month from the Club's Website in full color. Charter and Lifetime Members will continue to receive the Newsletter by U.S. mail.

GenCal (Central California Council of Diving Clubs) dues are **\$15.00** and USofA (Underwater Society of America) dues are **\$20.00**. (Pay online at: www.cencal.org). These optional dues support the many efforts of CenCal and USofA on behalf of all divers in the areas of beach access along with conservation and state and national legislation. These two organizations form an effective method for presenting the divers' interests state-wide and nationally.

A summary of our annual dues is as follows:

CLUB DUES	\$ 50.00
Newsletter (U.S. Mail)	10.00
CEN CAL	15.00
USofA	<u>20.00</u>
Total	\$ 95.00

Remember, associate member (non-diving spouses of Dippers) dues are **\$5.00**. Associate members may attend Dipper functions at member prices, but have no voting privileges. Also, dues must be paid by November 30th or you will incur a late fee of \$5.00. **SO DON'T DELAY!** ★

Maui is Open, Just Stay Away from the West End

Undercurrent

West Maui councilwoman Tamara Paltin said, "We don't want to be seeing people on vacation when we're trying to pull our lives back together. We don't want our roads closed because tourists can't follow directions. If you're a tourist, don't come to Lahaina. I don't care if you have reservations, now is not the time. Go someplace else, please."

Maui Snorkeling, which just a few days after the Lahaina fire took tourists to snorkel in waters off the main highway into Lahaina – the same waters crews were searching to find missing residents who jumped in the sea to flee the flames – was lambasted on social media. They issued an apology, adding their intent was to donate 100% of the proceeds to the Maui Food Bank. Several snorkeling and scuba boats have been delivering supplies to Lahaina.

The Mayor of Maui, Richard Bissen, says, "Don't go to West Maui. There's so much going on with trying to rebuild it, but the rest of Maui is still open." So the leaders are saying that someone could be on vacation 20 or 30 miles away from the burn zone and not negatively affect the recovery. That means Kihei, where several dive operations have reopened, is a safe bet. Maui needs your business.

How to Help the Citizens of Maui*

- ❖ **Aloha United Way** has set up the Maui Fire Relief Fund, where donations will go directly to Maui United Way to support Maui victims.
- ❖ **American Red Cross of Hawaii** opened five emergency shelters to provide those affected by the Maui wildfires with information, a hot meal, opportunities to charge their phone, pick up relief supplies, and get health services. More information here.

- ❖ **Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement** is matching up to \$250,000 in community donations providing critical assistance to families and businesses in Lahaina.
- ❖ **The Hawai'i Community Foundation's Maui Strong Fund** was created to provide community resilience with resources for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. The fund is currently supporting communities affected by the wildfires on Maui.
- ❖ **The Lahui Foundation** strives to become a dependable resource for underrepresented and underserved communities here in Hawai'i. They are asking for monetary donations that will go directly to fire recovery efforts for residents of Maui.
- ❖ **Maui Food Bank** collaborates with various relief organizations to distribute supplies throughout Maui County.
- ❖ **Maui Mutual Aid Fund** is a local effort run by volunteers. They are asking for donations to support vulnerable residents, such as the elderly, those with physical disabilities, renters, and individuals without insurance. More information here.
- ❖ **Maui United Way** is accepting donations to its Maui Fire and Disaster Relief fund - all donations will provide direct relief to families and nonprofits directly affected by the Maui Fire Disaster.
- ❖ **Maui Humane Society** is expecting an inundation of hundreds of animals who have been burned, lost during the evacuation process and those in need of critical care due to smoke inhalation. Monetary donations can be made via their website, or send supplies directly through their Amazon wishlist.



* Be sure any Websites you visit are the real ones.

Christmas in July - August 20th

Photos by Jackie Gardner



Ophelia Drake won \$20 Cash



Jennifer Morris won \$20 Cash



Mr. Abby* & Abby got Flipper Dippers aprons
(* Ben)



Tom Gardner won something he needed?



Look Out! Jackie Gardner sold lucky raffle tickets to Howard Timoney.



Frances Lee is a winner!



Carl Tuttle scored a rare collector's Tee Shirt



Greg Davis is the Master Chef



Barbara Davis and Grace Chi waiting for lunch



Ben Wilson and Chris Morris supervise Greg's cooking



Barbara Zwieg, Carl Tuttle and Jennifer Morris



Grace Chi, Ken Agur and Frances Lee



Kelly Drake, Mr. Abby, Frances Lee and Ophelia Drake



Mr. Grace* keeps the bees away from the food table
(* Kyle Sanner)



Howard Chien & Abby Wilson are in the Christmas spirit

August S3 Dive Report

Cedric Wright

The monthly Second Saturday Scuba (S3) dive was at Breakwater/San Carlos Beach in Monterey on August 12th. Three Flipper Dippers, *Grace Chi*, *Sim Upadhyayula*, *Cedric Wright* and two non-members *Daniel Sturman* and *Chris* (no last name) made the dive. The conditions were excellent! The swell was reported to be 3 feet but at Breakwater the waves were about 6 inches and the sun was shining.

The plan for the first dive was to head out to the metridiums. We got as

far as the end of the pipe before we had to turn back due to low air. As we were exiting the water a friendly harbor seal came up to us and hung out with us while we removed our flippers.



Daniel, Cedric, Grace and Chris

Although the temperature was a comfortable 53 degrees, Daniel, who had never dove cold water before, decided to stay on land and soak up the sun instead of doing the second dive. The rest of us dove out along the breakwater. We saw lots of great sea life including sea stars, crabs, fish and anemones. We heard the sea lions barking on the breakwater but they didn't come down for a visit. We were visited many times by Cormorants who were fishing down at 30 feet. After the dive we went to lunch at a local taqueria for burritos before heading back home. Yep, you missed a good one! ☆

That's the spot, right there

A Facebook video shows

an astonishing friendship between Paco Jimenez Franco — captain of a tourist boat in Mexico — and a gray whale that allows Franco to pat his head and remove his lice. The video was taken at the calving lagoon of Ojo de Liebre on Mexico's Pacific coast, part of the Vizcaino Biosphere reserve and a UNESCO world heritage site.

Here, whales migrate each year to give birth to their young, and it seems that they've developed a trusting relationship with the local people.

The caption describes that Franco is removing whale lice — cyamids — from the whale's head. Cyamids are different from the head lice that humans can get. They're larger, and they latch onto algae stuck to the whale or feed on dead skin from a wound. They benefit the whale to some extent, but it's assumed that they also cause minor skin irritation that is uncomfortable for the whales.

Regardless, the Guardian mentioned that whales often have hundreds of cyamids, so removing a few won't make a difference to their health. In the video, the whale comes to the surface of the water and patiently waits as Franco picks off a few lice — even spinning around so he could reach the other side of his head. When he is finished, Franco gives the whale a pat to tell him that he's all set, and the whale even lingers above the water, seemingly wanting to interact more, making the passengers laugh. "He loves it!" a bystander says in the background.

While we can't know for sure if this is true, the whale's behavior indicates that it does enjoy the interaction. Whales are known for being remarkably intelligent, and the interaction between Franco and the gray whale seemingly shows



the whale's understanding and trust in Franco — as well as Franco's respect and trust in it.

This is an important relationship, as almost half of the great whale species are currently endangered due to loss of habitat and accidents with fishing boats and equipment. Conservation efforts are working to reverse this, but folks like Franco are making a huge difference, too, by modeling mutual respect and admiration.

Commenters on the post were blown away by the interaction. "Wow! That's awesome!" one user wrote. Others chimed in with, "Extraordinary!" and "I love this story!" ☆



This close-up photo of a right whale's head shows dozens of hitchhikers — tiny crustaceans known as whale lice, or cyamid amphipods. They live on the rough patches of skin (known as callosities) on North Atlantic right whales, eating algae that settles there and only causing minor skin damage. Distinctive patterns formed by their white bodies crowding around rough patches on whales' skin help researchers tell one right whale from another! © Michael Moore/Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

DIVE & ACTIVITY CALENDAR

ANDREW GRICE

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SEPTEMBER 2023

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2
NO SCHEDULED DIVE
NO LICENSE FISHING DAY

AUG 28 – SEPT 3 LABOR DAY
WEEKEND AT VAN DAMME

Dippers are camping and diving at Van Damme State Park from Mon, Aug 28 through Sun, Sept 3.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6
BUSINESS MEETING

The meeting will be held **virtually via Skype**. All members are invited to attend. Please email **Carl Tuttle** if you need the link to join. Bring your own food, drinks, and internet connection and we'll discuss ideas for upcoming dives and events.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9
SECOND SATURDAY SCUBA (S3)
BEACH DIVE: LOCATION TBD

- We're looking for a coordinator!
Join the Flipper Dippers for this month's Second Saturday Scuba! Be sure to watch your email for an update on a location and coordina-

tor. Contact Andrew Grice at agrice07@gmail.com or text/phone: 669-289-5809 if you're willing to coordinate.

GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 20th

--> VIRTUAL ONLY <--

As many members are diving in Bonaire, the **General Meeting** will be via Skype at **7:00 PM**

Please contact **Carl Tuttle** for more details on the in-person meeting or a link to the virtual Skype meeting.

Celebrate 59 Years of the San Jose Flipper Dippers!

Entertainment:

- Social Hour
- Dive Plans and More



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16
INTERNATIONAL COASTAL
CLEANUP DAY

SEPT 17-27 BONAIRE DIVE TRIP

Ten Dippers are participating in 10 days of diving in Bonaire.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30
NO SCHEDULED DIVE



UPCOMING IN OCTOBER

- 04 Business Meeting
- 14 Second Saturday SCUBA
- 18 General Meeting
- 22 Fourth Sunday Cycle (FSC)



Sunflower Stars

Colbiey Pitt

Hi All, I'm a diver with Cal Poly Humboldt and we're starting the journey to breed Sunflower Stars at the university. We're in the infancy of the project but one of the things we are really wanting to work on is public outreach. All of you divers who have culled or at least know about the urchin scourge see the need for these Sunflower Stars and we as divers could never measure up to a seastar who is hunting every single day.

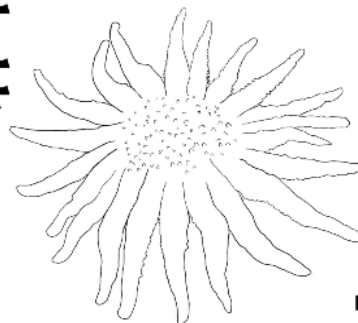
Part of our public outreach is awareness of the seastars, the other part is data from citizen scientists such as yourselves, data specifically about sightings of these seastars, approximate size and where you saw them – as accurate as you can get without disturbing them. Send your info to Seastars@humboldt.edu. It's not just Cal Poly Humboldt that is working in this but multiple academic institutions, aquariums, and zoos along the West Coast and all of us are working in tandem as how best to get these stars back out in the wild.

The more public support the more likely CDFW will be to allow us to actually put them in the water. If you have any questions feel free to leave it under this post. Also please visit our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/HumboldtSeastars>) to get updates about our progress toward getting these animals back in the water. ☆



Cal Poly
Humboldt.

Have You Seen a Sunflower Star?



What to look for:

15-24 Arms

Colors ranging from orange to pinkish to yellow, brown, and purplish with white spines.

If you spot a Sunflower Star please let us know.

We track Sunflower Stars to monitor their recovering populations for restoration of our kelp forests.



Scan to Access Form

Please scan the QR Code to fill out the Google form or send information to our email listed below.

Requested Info: Your name, contact details, date & time, location (coordinates if possible), relative size and images (if possible).

Email: seastars@humboldt.edu

Look For Updates on Facebook: Humboldt Seastars
Thank You for Your Participation! - Humboldt Seastar Team

NOTE: All certified divers are encouraged to attend San Jose Flipper Dippers' dives.

Non-Club members will be required to show proof of certification to the dive coordinator prior to entering the water with our group. Please sign up for dives at the General Meeting or call the coordinator. This is needed in case of cancellation or changes.



San Jose Flipper Dippers

c/o 1108 Sunset Landing
Rio Vista, CA 94571-5148



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FIRST CLASS MAIL

2023 COMING EVENTS

Sept 02	No License Fishing Day
Sept 06	Business Meeting
Sept 09	Second Saturday SCUBA
Sept 16	International Coastal Cleanup Day
Sept 17-27	Bonaire Dive Trip
Sept 20	🐡 General Meeting - <u>VIRTUAL ONLY</u>
Oct 4	Business Meeting
Oct 14	Second Saturday SCUBA
Oct 18	🐡 General Meeting
Oct 22	Fourth Sunday Cycle (FSC)
Nov 1	Pt. Lobos Reservations for Dec 27
Nov 1	Business Meeting
Nov 11	Second Saturday SCUBA
Nov 15	🐡 General Meeting - Nominations for 2024 Office
Nov 19	Memorial Day Wknd Reservations (May 20-27, 2024)
Nov 26	Fourth Sunday Cycle (FSC)

*Are you looking for someone
to dive with?*

The San Jose Flipper Dippers Dive Club is a great way to meet divers who are always having fun times. **Come join us!**



Watch This Space – Much More To Come!
See the Club's Website for the full Calendar



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