

NEWSLETTER



San Jose Flipper Dippers

DECEMBER
2023

GENERAL MEETINGS HELD
3RD WEDNESDAY
OF EACH MONTH
WWW.SJFLIPPERDIPPERS.COM

**IT'S
BACK!**

Don't miss the San Jose Flipper Dippers' infamous

December Holiday General Meeting.

You may go home with extra cash from our annual "Money Tree" raffle — envelopes containing \$50, \$30 and \$20 will be hanging on the tree!

You may win fantastic raffle prizes!

In order to get you into the holiday spirit of giving we ask that **every member bring a donation** for this special raffle. This can be a dive-related item, a Christmas craft, holiday goodies, a bottle of cheer, etc. BE CREATIVE! The more prizes in the raffle, the more chances you have to win. So **come to the December meeting with your raffle donation, a tasty treat to share, and your holiday spirit. See you there!**

Move over Ken we have a new Iron Diver!



The Flipper Dippers' own **Barbara Davis**, above left, was in Cuba diving with **Teresa Hanson** off the *Jardines Aggressor II*. Cruise director Xiomaly, right, presented Barbara the "Iron Diver Award" for completing all the dives during the week! How cool is that? See the dive report and more photos on page 4. ★

DECEMBER HOLIDAY TREATS

Besides the **election of officers** and our fantastic **Christmas holiday raffle**, another reason our December General Meeting is so popular is that **homemade holiday goodies** are the main feature at refreshment time. Everyone helps out by baking their favorite holiday specialty and sharing it with their fellow Dippers. Do your part to help feed the large turnout expected to attend this special holiday meeting. All donations will be greatly appreciated! ★



AWARDS BANQUET
Mark Your Calendars:
Saturday,
February 3, 2024

The Flipper Dippers' Annual Awards Banquet is coming back and is planned to be held on Saturday evening, February 3rd, 2024. The banquet will be held at **Rosy's at the Beach**, in Morgan Hill. Details to come. ★

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Happy Holidays to All!

The Dippers will finish off the year in style! In addition to the December 9th Second Saturday Scuba (S3) dive, and our Point Lobos dive on December 27th, December's General Meeting brings our Christmas Raffle, our homemade holiday goodies table and the entertainment will be the election of our 2024 Club Officers. (Check out page 3 to see who's running.) I look forward to seeing all of you on the dives or at the meeting.

The rescheduled November S3 dive at North Monastery was a smashing success with great visibility and calm conditions reported. Fall diving at its best. However, another dive scheduled for a week later was canceled due to high surf conditions. A great illustration of how winter diving can be great diving in and around Monterey but changing conditions can also make it challenging diving. Be careful and be safe out there and enjoy the holiday season.

Looking Ahead to 2024 On Wednesday, January 24th, we'll have our virtual Annual Planning Meeting to plan the Club's calendar for the coming year. Everyone is encouraged to join in and share their ideas for dives and other Club events and activities.

We're in the planning stage for reinstating our Awards Banquet to be held on February 3rd at Rosy's at the Beach, in Morgan Hill. We'll discuss this at the December Business Meeting and have more information at the December General Meeting. This is always a great time!

Everyone keep safe and let's go diving!

– Barbara



San Jose Flipper Dippers

www.SJFlipperDippers.com

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CLUB OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Barbara Davis 408-656-6390

VICE PRESIDENT

Andrew Grice 669-289-5809

SECRETARY

Grace Chi 858-337-2674

TREASURER

Tom Gardner 408-274-9447

SERGEANT AT ARMS

Howard Chien 408-410-0325

CLUB COMMITTEES

AWARDS AND FINES

o Position Open o

MEMBERSHIP

Ken Agur 408-242-3779

NEWSLETTER & WEBSITE

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REFRESHMENTS

o Position Open o

STAR ACHIEVEMENT

Jackie Gardner 408-274-9447

TROPHY COMPETITION

John Snyder 408-378-4963

California 2023 Lingcod Warden Stamp

Everyday wildlife officers are on the land, in the air and on the water working to protect California's valuable natural resources. The Warden Stamp is a decal that can be proudly displayed on vehicles or other items. All funds raised from the sales of the stamp go to procure vital equipment, protective gear and training for wildlife officers, all of which will increase an officer's ability to combat the illegal take and commercialization of wildlife, the destruction of habitat, and enhance officer safety.



The Warden Stamp Program was initiated in 2010 to address the need for better equipment and training for the state's wildlife officers and to provide funding for special law enforcement programs.

Wildlife crimes are on the rise and becoming more complex to solve. With approximately 400 wildlife officers in the state patrolling 159,000 square miles of natural habitat, the job is extremely demanding.

Officers must perform a number of roles including catching poachers, eradicating illegal marijuana grows, responding to oil spills, providing public safety, educating the public and much

more. Every day is a new challenge.

- Wildlife officers protect more than 1,000 native fish and wildlife species, 6,300 native plant species and 360 threatened or endangered species.

- Wildlife officers patrol about 400 square miles of land per officer.

- Wildlife officers keep watch over 1,100 miles of coastline, 30,000 miles of rivers and streams, 4,800 lakes and reservoirs and 80 major rivers.

- Wildlife officers patrol on foot, by plane, boat, all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, and even on horseback.

- There is approximately one wildlife officer for every 100,000

Californians.

To purchase stamps, visit the link:

www.ca.wildlifelicense.com/internetsales scroll to the bottom of the page and click "Continue as Guest". From there, click on "Warden Stamps" under the Menu tab. Add stamps from the line that reads "2023 Warden Stamp Decal" and follow prompts to check out. Thank you for your support! By purchasing this special stamp you can show your support for the important work wildlife officers do. Purchase yours today! 🌟

MEET YOUR 2024 CLUB OFFICER CANDIDATES



PRESIDENT:

BARBARA DAVIS Joined the Club in 1993 and has been a force to reckon with in the water. She has served as the Club's president the past two years. She really enjoys diving and has served as Club Vice President and President in the past. Barbara is always up for 2-tank dives on any of the scheduled S3 dives. She has been diving in many places around the world, including Cuba, and has completed over 1,500 dives and is well on her way to 2,000!



SECRETARY:

GRACE CHI Joined the Club in 2016 and has been participating in a wide range of Club dives including beach dives, boat dives, the UW Easter Egg Hunt, and a trip to Bonaire. Grace has held the office of Club secretary the past two years.



VICE PRESIDENT:

SIM UPADHYAYULA Got his certification in February, 2023, and since finding the Flipper Dippers, has participated in a great number of dives. He didn't waste any time completing his membership requirements and was voted into the Club in May. He has lots of energy and has already collected his 1st Star in the Club's Star Achievement Program.



TREASURER:

TOM GARDNER Has served as the Club treasurer during the past year. He was the Club's President for two years: 2018-2019. He became a member in 2009. Tom has served as the raffle chair during 2013 (and assisting Jackie in 2012). Tom participates in many of the Club's activities including beach dives, campouts and bike rides.



SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:

HOWARD CHIEN Has been the Club's sergent-at-arms the past three years. He joined the Club in October 2020 and has participated in many club dives, campouts and bike rides. He is excited about the many activities the Club has to offer and has been a very active member including assisting other divers when he isn't diving.



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). **Rick Bernal** attended the November General Meeting. He met many club members during the April Cozumel dive trip. Welcome!

Happy Birthday December Baby! Oops . . . no members were born this month so no FREE raffle tickets! ☆

CLUB DUES PAST DUE?

It is well past October and time to pay your **annual dues** at the General Meeting. 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.

CenCal (Central California Council of Diving Clubs) dues are **\$15.00** and USofA (Underwater Society of America) dues are **\$30.00**. (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.

A summary of annual dues are:

CLUB DUES	\$ 50.00
Newsletter (U.S. Mail)	10.00
Optional: CEN CAL	15.00
Optional: USofA	30.00

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.

Late dues incur a late fee of \$5.00 ☆

**DECEMBER 20TH
GENERAL MEETING
ELECTIONS FOR
2024 OFFICERS
HOLIDAY TREATS
AND RAFFLE**



We'll be having our in-person General Meeting holding **Elections for 2024 Club Officers** and a **BIG RAFFLE**. ☆

RAFFLE NEWS

We're back again this month for our in-person General Meeting. More folks are showing up and having fun!

We're planning our big **Christmas General Meeting** with a BIG raffle with all those treasures you've safely stored and great treats! See front page for more information. ☆

Cuba Trip Report

Dippers **Barbara Davis** and **Teresa Hanson** had a nice relaxing trip diving the Gardens of the Queens in Cuba November 4 – 11 aboard the *Jardines Aggressor II*.

On our drive from the airport to the port, we drove through several small towns and stopped in one for a bit of sight-seeing. We took in the town square and a few people stopped off at a local bar, and others took advantage of the nearby shop selling Cuban cigars, which they later smoked on the boat. The landscape was intensely green and we passed fields of sugarcane and banana trees.

The boat was nice, the crew, divemasters and other divers were great, but the diving was a bit disappointing. There was a lot of coral bleaching and not very healthy looking sea fans. But we did see reef sharks and nurse sharks and giant goliath groupers on almost every dive, plus an abundance of other fish, crabs and many tiny, tiny blennies. (Barbara is glad she brought along her diving magnifying glass!)

Teresa completed her 450th dive and Barbara earned her second Aggressor Iron Diver award! Where to next? 🌟



Big groupers during the dives



Jardines Aggressor II



Lots of sharks!



Teresa enjoying diving in the waters of Cuba



Can you say "grouper"?



It's Golden Dippy Time!
Teresa packed all her dive gear including extra camera lenses and attachments for the Cuba trip. Upon unpacking her gear on the boat, she realized she forgot one important item. Her camera!



Teresa completes 450 dives. Well done!

November Dives: Take 1, Take 2, Take 3

Take One: The Second Saturday Scuba (S3) dive scheduled for November 11th had three divers signed up including **Sim Upadhyayula**, **Carl Tuttle** and **Cedric Wright**. The plan was to meet at North Monastery and check out conditions. Ocean conditions weren't the best but the group decided to give it a go. But at 4:45 a.m. on Saturday morning, Sim texted Carl and Cedric that he was fighting a cold and fever that had hit his family earlier in the week. Carl and Cedric decided to pass on the dive this time as swell models were predicting 8-ft swells. Cedric texted, "Yes, the swell looks pretty high. I'm going back to bed."

Take Two: Sim followed up during the week to see if Carl and Cedric were interested in diving on Saturday, November 18. Carl was up for it but Cedric responded, "I'm going to pass. If the conditions are good, please lie and tell me it was bad!"

Carl arranged to meet Sim and Chris Matheny (who was in the scuba class with Sim) at the school at N. Monastery. The weather was off-and-on rain on the drives to Carmel. The group took a look at the ocean and determined this would be a good dive. Gearing up the rain stopped and the sun came out between passing clouds.

Sorry, Cedric. The vis was from 30 to 40 feet! No surge and little swell. Lots of lingcod in the area along with other divers that might have been part of an advanced diving class. Carl and Chris dropped their BCDs and weights off at a large rock and carried their tanks up to the vehicles to change tanks for the second dive. The second dive had the same conditions as the first dive so everyone was happy.

Chris had to take off so Sim dropped his tanks at Aquarius for fills and he and Carl had lunch before heading home.



Sim, Carl & Chris

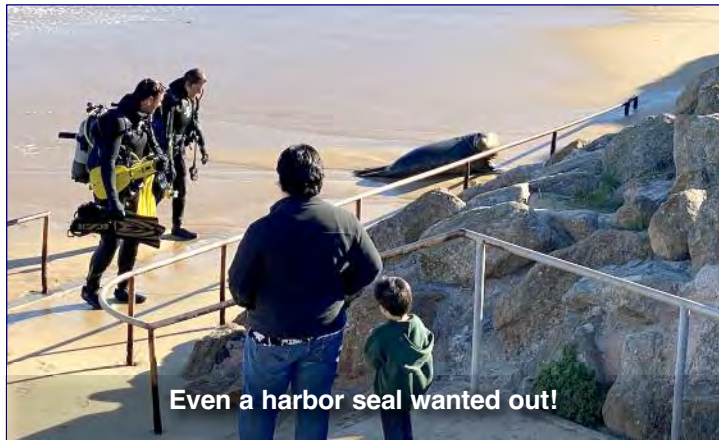
Take Three: After reports from the Monastery dive, word went out for a dive on Saturday, November 25th at MacAbee beach. **Barbara Davis**, Sim, Carl, Cedric, Chris, **Les Addison** and one other person were ready to go. As the swell models were showing 8-ft swells the group decided to go take a look anyway as things could change. And then there's always the Breakwater if things don't look so good.

As the time to meet approached some in the group bailed out and only Barbara, Sim, Carl and Les showed up and the swell predictions were right . . . and they looked even bigger as it was high tide. There were also alerts that day about dangerous "sneaker waves" hitting the coastline.

So the group moved over to the Breakwater and after watching some divers get in and out of the water they called it a day. A number of divers were seen struggling in the water and some lost some gear. Les and Sim headed home while Barbara, Carl and Cedric went to brunch in Seaside. See, you never know what Mother Nature has in store for you divers! ☆



MacAbee - yep, it's a big swell



Even a harbor seal wanted out!



MacAbee - yep, it's a BIG swell



The seal went looking for dry land



MacAbee - yep, it's a BIG SWELL

What is 'kelping'? Why whales are making hats out of seaweed

A new study sheds light on a fascinating whale behavior. But is it a form of play—or the marine equivalent of a skincare routine? Humpback whales are well known for their fascinating culture: These enigmatic animals migrate thousands of miles every year, sing enchanting songs, leap from the water in an enormous breach, and collaborate while hunting—creating bubble nets that trap their prey.

Now, researchers have shed light on another aspect of whale behavior: playing with kelp they find floating in the ocean—moving it between their fins, rolling around with it, and, most intriguingly, wearing it atop their heads like a hat. This behavior—called kelping—has been described in a new study as a “global phenomenon.” The study documents instances of humpbacks (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) worldwide interacting with seaweed, taken from over a hundred social media posts, and shows that this playful behavior is much more common than previously thought.

There's no doubt kelping looks fun. But could it have another purpose? Olaf Meynecke, research fellow at Griffith University and co-author of the study, thinks so—especially considering that whales can keep it up for some 30 to 40 minutes. “That's quite a lot of time to just spend with a little piece of algae,” he says. “It looked like there had to be more to it.” Meynecke believes the way they can softly and accurately move the kelp with all their body parts could indicate mobility training—whales need dexterity and coordination for feeding. It may also feel good for the whales and be beneficial for their skin.

HOW LONG HAVE WHALES BEEN KELPING?

Kelping was first observed in 2007, and it's not just humpbacks that do it. Other baleen species, including gray whales and northern and southern right whales, have also been observed interacting with seaweed. After seeing videos of kelping and reading a 2012 study on the phenomenon, Meynecke was intrigued. He had now seen three unrelated drone videos of kelping, and wondered how much more was out there.

To collect more data on this strange behavior, he searched social media with keywords like “kelping,” “humpback whale,” “whale,” and “seaweed,” and found hundreds of posts, which the team systematically analyzed.

Meynecke says it became clear that this behavior isn't accidental: “Having something touching your body in the water is quite difficult because it doesn't really want to stick, it floats away,” he says.

Heidi Pearson, professor of marine biology at University of Alaska Southeast, who was not involved in the research, has seen kelping at her humpback research site in Juneau, Alaska. Once, a female called Barnacles looked like she was entangled in fishing line. It turned out she “was playing with this kelp” draped over her back.

But “I've never documented it in a quantitative way,” she says, adding that she “didn't know that the word for it was kelping.”

HATS MADE OF SEAWEED

What's particularly intriguing about kelping is the way that humpbacks from different populations—in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres—all prefer to wear seaweed on the top of their heads, says Meynecke. They place kelp on their forehead in over half the recorded instances.

Baleen species are believed to like having their heads scratched—gray whales are known for approaching whale watching boats for a tickle on the nose. Because whales don't have hands to scratch themselves, like we do, Pearson suggests “they might seek out other tactile sensations that just feel good.”

Kelp, she says, is “slimy and slippery and smooth. It's a very neat feeling and I can imagine a whale might enjoy that feeling too—like a massage.”

SKINCARE, BUT FOR WHALES

Whales might also be treating kelp like a cleansing face mask, as seaweed has antimicrobial properties that can reduce levels of bacteria. Rubbing kelp across their bodies may also dislodge parasites and shed bacterial and viral growths to prevent them getting “completely overgrown” with sea lice and skin infections, says Meynecke.

“Those medicinal or health benefits are a definite possibility,” agrees Pearson, “And I don't think the two are mutually exclusive. It could be play, and also have health benefits.” Curiously, the whales also put kelp in their mouths as if “they're wanting it to touch that lip part that's impossible for them to clean otherwise,” he says—almost like flossing. “Grabbing something with their mouth is not natural for them,” he says. “They're not like cats. They don't hunt with their teeth—they don't have teeth.” But ultimately, he adds, “we'll never be able to fully prove it because we can't ask the whale.”

THE ROLE OF CITIZEN SCIENCE

Today, more people have better cameras and drones—which Meynecke says explains why it's much easier to document kelping now. Drone footage is particularly useful for scientific observation compared to still images, he adds, since otherwise “you don't know what the animal was doing before and after, and how long it was doing this for.”

This study “would never have made it out there if it wasn't for the people getting excited that they just saw a whale putting kelp on their head, and posting about it,” says Meynecke. The study has caught the attention of researchers globally, and

Meynecke's inbox has been flooded with people who have also seen kelping. “Someone from Tahiti was like, ‘We see it all the time,’” he says. Now that the phenomenon has been highlighted globally, it could lead to further research into the behavior, its benefits, and even if other species do it. 🌐



DIVE & ACTIVITY CALENDAR

ANDREW GRICE

WWW.SJFLIPPERDIPPERS.COM

DECEMBER 2023

SATURDAY DECEMBER 2
NO SCHEDULED DIVE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6
BUSINESS MEETING: 7:30pm
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, DECEMBER 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 coordinator. Contact **Andrew Grice** at agrice07@gmail.com or text/phone: 669-289-5809 if you're willing to coordinate.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 16
NO SCHEDULED DIVE

GENERAL MEETING WEDNESDAY, DEC 20

The **in-person General Meeting** will be held at **7:30 PM** at the Knights of Columbus Santa Maria Hall 2211 Shamrock Dr., Campbell.

The **virtual meeting** will continue to be hosted via Skype.

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:

- Election of 2023 Officers
- Sign-ups for Monthly Dives

Big Christmas Social



SATURDAY DECEMBER 23
NO SCHEDULED DIVE



MONDAY, DECEMBER 25
MERRY CHRISTMAS!

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27
PT. LOBOS SCUBA DIVE

Coordinator: **Andrew Grice**, (at agrice07@gmail.com or text/phone: 669-289-5809). We have 6 Teams signed up. Meet at the entrance before 8AM. Be sure to bring your reservation confirmation **and YOUR "C" Card!** Let Andrew know if you are not going to make it as we may have some folks who want to dive.



JANUARY 2024

- 3 Business Meeting
- 13 Second Saturday SCUBA
- 17 **General Meeting**
- 24 Annual Planning Meeting



Careful What You Tuck Inside Your Wetsuit

After Perth, Australia's Matt Rogerson finished his regular good deed, snorkeling and collecting trash from his local beach; he was washing his gear when he noticed one of the most deadly creatures in the world hiding in an abandoned snorkel he'd picked up, and stuffed in his wetsuit. The tiny blue ring octopus, no more than an inch long, contains tetrodotoxin, and this little fellow's bite could have paralyzed Rogerson, maybe even killed him. He says he'll be more careful about what he tucks inside his wetsuit. ★



Delicious But Illegal

A man in Key West collected, cooked, and ate two queen conchs, noted for their beautiful shells. His decision landed him in hot water similar to that in which he cooked them, or, rather, he landed temporarily behind bars when he was arrested by Florida Fish and Wildlife police. Harvesting queen conch in Florida can be a felony. ★

Point Lobos Dive: December 27th

We're diving Pt. Lobos on **Wednesday, December 27** and have 6 teams signed up including:

- ★ Howard Chien & buddy TBD
- ★ Tom Gardner & Jackie Gardner
- ★ Andrew Grice & Cedric Wright
- ★ Howard Timoney & Dano
- ★ Sim Upadhyayula & Ken Ager
- ★ Carl Tuttle & Rick Bernal

At last check **reservations are still available** so if you want to join in get online ASAP and make a reservation. You'll also need to find a buddy to dive with: www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=28353.

Remember, you and your buddy will need to present your certification cards to the park staff to dive at Pt. Lobos. We can mix and match "Teams" at the dive site if needed. The Point Lobos gate opens at 8:00 AM, so plan to be there **before 8:00!**

There will be a group of non-divers attending for the day and will be hiking in the park so join in! And you'll also want to get there early as the parking is limited and fills up early.

If your plans change, be sure to contact the coordinator **Andrew Grice**, (text/phone: 669-289-5809, Email: agrice07@gmail.com) to let him know. ★

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

Dec 6	Business Meeting
Dec 9	Second Saturday SCUBA
Dec 20	🐡 General Meeting - Election of Officers & Christmas Raffle
Dec 27	SCUBA Dive Pt. Lobos

2024

Jan 3	Business Meeting
Jan 13	Second Saturday SCUBA
Jan 17	🐡 General Meeting
Jan 24	Annual Planning Meeting
Feb 3	Awards Banquet
Feb 7	Business Meeting
Feb 10	Second Saturday SCUBA
Feb 21	🐡 General Meeting
Feb 26	Labor Day Weekend Reservations (Aug 26-Sept 2, 2024) Van Damme

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

*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!



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