

NEWSLETTER



San Jose Flipper Dippers

MAY 2026

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

Sperm whales' communication closely parallels human language, study finds

Oliver Milman, The Guardian

We may appear to have little in common with sperm whales - enormous, ocean-dwelling animals that last shared a common ancestor with humans more than 90 million years ago. But the whales' vocalized communications are remarkably similar to our own, researchers have discovered.

Not only do sperm whales have a form of "alphabet" and form vowels within their vocalizations but the structure of these vowels behaves in the same way as human speech, the new study has found. Sperm whales communicate in a series of short clicks called codas. Analysis of these clicks shows that the whales can differentiate vowels through the short or elongated clicks or through rising or falling tones, using patterns similar to languages such as Mandarin, Latin and Slovenian.

The structure of the whales' communication has "close parallels in the phonetics and phonology of human languages, suggesting independent evolution", the paper, published in the Proceedings B journal, states. Sperm whale coda vocalizations are "highly complex and represent one of the closest parallels to human phonology of any analyzed animal communication system", it added.

The findings are the latest discovery about the lives of sperm whales by Project Ceti (standing for Cetacean Translation Initiative), an organization that has studied whales off the coast of Dominica in an attempt to find out what they are saying. Last month, the project released video of a sperm whale giving birth while other whales supported it.

Until the 1950s, it was not clear to scientists that sperm whales even vocalized but modern technology, including artificial



Do the Bunny Hop! Hop! Hop! Hop!

Florence Frans is all ears while hunting for eggs during the Club's 17th Annual Underwater Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 11. But wait! Was she using those ears to find the hidden Easter Eggs? SCORE! ☆

U/W Easter egg hunt divers find all the eggs plus 1

For the first time in seventeen years of the Annual Underwater Easter Egg Hunt all of the eggs were found! Yes, you read that correct. Tom and Jackie Gardner distributed 47, numbered, hard-boiled eggs into the water at Del Monte Beach via their 2-person kayak. There would have been 48, but Tom said one broke, so he had to eat it. With Howard Chien and Frances 'Flee' Lee providing assistance, divers gathered on the beach at the starting line and when the "Go" command was given the competitors raced into the water.

Divers made their way out to the Drop Zone, descended and started hunting. Visibility was excellent with 15-20 feet which made for optimal sightings.

Divers used a number of techniques in their hunt, from zig-zagging, to compass readings, kicking counts and time duration.

The group of hunting divers included: Troy Edgar, Cedrick Fairon, Florence Frans, Tom Gardner, Christe Kroon, Kiran Prabakar, Jeff Rowland, John Snyder, and Carl Tuttle. All the divers worked hard to collect eggs for a chance



Photograph: Mike Korostelev/Getty Images

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER



**Hi All!**

We had a great turnout for our 17th Annual Underwater Easter Egg Hunt for our S3 dive on Saturday, April 11th. This is always a super fun day! For the first time, every egg that went into the water was found by the divers. In fact, one additional egg was found as well! We're sure the unusually good viz reported helped with that! Dippers are diving so come and join us!

There was also a good turnout for our Fourth Sunday Cycle (FSC), which is now back on our monthly schedule of events!

We have a number of events to look forward to in May! Plans to dive Point Lobos for the S3 dive on May 9th didn't work out, but reservations were made to dive there on Sunday, May 3rd. We will still have our usual S3 dive on Saturday, May 9th. location TBD. And of course, we're all looking forward to the annual Memorial Day weekend campout at Henry Cowell State Park! This park is near Felton, so not a very long drive from the Bay Area. So even if you're not a camper, think about coming to visit for a day – or join in on the Saturday bike ride and lunch (See the calendar).

As I mentioned in last month's column, there are a number of groups working to save and restore our oceans, including the Sunflower Star Laboratory. They are having their Spring Social at the Other Brother Beer Company on Sunday, May 17th. Check out the link here for more information: <https://www.sunflowerstarlab.org/events>

Hope to see you all in (or out of) the water soon!

**Let's go diving! – Barbara**

### Sperm Whales – Continued from Front Page

intelligence, is helping unlock the language of these creatures – with unexpected similarities to our own speech. "I think it's another humbling moment that we're not the only species with rich, communicative, communal and cultural lives," said David Gruber, founder and president of Project CETI. "These whales could be passing information along generation to generation to generation for over 20 million years. Humans now are just having the right tools and desire to be able to look at whale voices in this way to see the complexity that has been there all along."

Studying sperm whales can be challenging – they dive deep underwater for up to 50 minutes in search of squid to eat, only surfacing for 10 minutes at a time. But it's near the surface where the animals "chit-chat", as Gruber put it, with their heads close together. "If you watch sperm whales, they put their heads right together and click into each other's heads," he said. "It's like if you wanted to talk to someone about a Chaucer novel or something – you wouldn't want to do that from opposite ends of a football stadium. You would want to get real close to have a real sophisticated conversation."

That sperm whale conversation sounds, to our ears, little more than a staccato morse code. But by removing the gaps between the clicks, researchers were able to find patterns strikingly similar to human speech. Much like how we alter our tongue position to change an "A" sound into an "E" sound, whales can manipulate their organs to produce different 'vowel' sounds of their own.

Gašper Beguš, a linguist at University of California, Berkeley who led the new paper, said that this level of complexity in sperm whale

speech was beyond anything he had studied in other creatures, such as parrots and elephants, and highlights the parallels between our lives and those of the whales. "They have very different lives to us – they're not stuck to the ground all the time, they float in the water, they sleep vertically," said Beguš. "Yet you realize that there's a lot that unifies us. They have grandmas, they babysit each other's calves, they give collaborative births, they're very loud during a birth and so on. It's such a distant intelligence, but in many ways very relatable."

The new study shows that "sperm whale communication isn't just about patterns of clicks – it involves multiple interacting layers of structure," said Mauricio Cantor, a behavioral ecologist at the Marine Mammal Institute who was not involved in the research. "With this study, we're starting to see that these signals are organized in ways we didn't fully appreciate before." The latest discovery around sperm whale speech has inched forward the possibility of someday fully understanding the creatures and even communicating with them. Project Ceti has set a goal of being able to comprehend 20 different vocalized expressions, relating to actions such as diving and sleeping, within the next five years.

Actually being able to fully grasp what the whales are saying, or being able to converse with them, is still a longer-term proposition, Gruber said, but not an outlandish one. "It's totally within our grasp," he said. "We've already got a lot further than I thought we could. But it will take time, and funding. At the moment we are like a two-year-old, just saying a few words. In a few years' time, maybe we will be more like a five-year-old." ★



## San Jose Flipper Dippers

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o Position Open o

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o Position Open o

### REFRESHMENTS

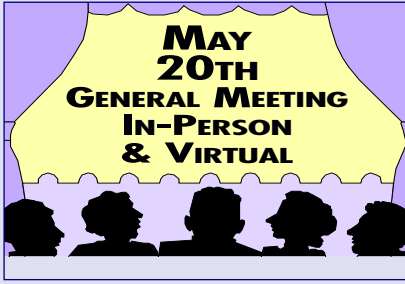
o Position Open o

### STAR ACHIEVEMENT

Jackie Gardner 408-274-9447

### TROPHY COMPETITION

o Position Open o



We'll be having our in-person General Meeting this month.

Please bring a refreshment to share with your fellow Dippers!

We'll have a live MS Teams connection for those who still prefer to meet virtually. 🌟

## MEMBERSHIP

*Ken Agur*

Welcome our newest member **Florence Frans**, at left in photo with Ken, who was voted into the Club at the April General Meeting!

If you're looking for a dive buddy look no further. We offer all certified divers great dives, great fun and great friends! We'd love for you to join us!

**Happy Birthday!** This Dipper is completing his annual trip around the Sun this month: None other than the 'Iron Diver, himself, **Ken Agur**. 🌟



## Titanic survivor's life jacket sells for over \$900,000 in landmark auction

Lianne Kolirin, CNN

A life jacket worn by a survivor of the Titanic sold for £670,000 (around \$904,500) at an auction Saturday, far exceeding expectations in what was billed as a "once in a generation" sale.

The jacket, which was expected to fetch between £250,000 (\$339,000) and £350,000 (\$474,000), is the only one from a survivor of the 1912 tragedy to go under the hammer, according to UK auction house Henry Aldridge and Son. The garment was worn by Laura Mabel Francatelli, a first class passenger on the historic liner, which sank 114 years ago this week.

When RMS Titanic set sail on April 10, 1912, she was the largest passenger ship in service and considered to be "unsinkable." Just four days later, the Titanic's maiden voyage was transformed into an international tragedy when the ship struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic at 11:40 p.m. April 14. The ship, which sank in less than three hours, did not have enough lifeboats for the approximately 2,220 people on board. Only about 700 people survived.

Francatelli was secretary to fashion designer



Laura Mabel Francatelli (circled), together with other survivors of the lifeboat. Only about 700 of 2,220 people on board survived.

Lucy Duff Gordon and was traveling to Chicago with her employer and employer's husband, Cosmo Duff Gordon. All three survived after they managed to board life boat number one.

Signed by Francatelli and others who were rescued in that life boat, the beige vest features 12 cork-filled pockets of canvas with shoulder rests and side straps, according to the listing on the auction house's site.

It was part of a wider auction of Titanic and White Star memorabilia held at Henry Aldridge and Son this weekend. Andrew Aldridge,



managing director at the auction house, said it is "one of the most iconic" items ever to come up for sale from the ill-fated ship. "Quite simply this lifejacket presents a once in a generation opportunity for collectors, it's the only example to ever be offered for auction from a Titanic survivor," he told CNN in an email ahead of the sale.

Laura Mabel Francatelli, who wore the jacket, signed it together with other survivors of the lifeboat she was on. - Henry Aldridge and Son Ltd. "Although (the) Titanic sank 114 years ago, every man, woman and child onboard had a story to tell so in essence we have over 2,200 chapters and today we present those stories through these pieces of memorabilia. The lifejacket is without doubt one of the most iconic items from the Titanic ever to be offered for auction," he said.

According to Aldridge, the vest was being sold by someone who "has decided it's time to pass on the baton to another collector." It was previously on display at Titanic Belfast, the museum based at the site where the ship was built, and also at the world's largest Titanic Museum in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. 🌟

Continued from Front Page  
**U/W Easter Egg Dive**

to win great prizes. Unfortunately, Kiran had some equipment issues and was unable to continue his search but did snorkel out to the Drop Zone.

As the divers returned to the beach there was a bit of rain welcoming them. Each diver asked one another, "How many eggs did you find?" Excitement built as the competitors counted their eggs and added up the numbers written on them.

Buy wait! Why was there no number on one of the eggs that Christe recovered? Some suggested the number wore off, someone suggested it was left over from last year, Carl suggested there was a Easter Egg Hunt on the

beach the week before and it was carried out with the tide. Tom later took it home and cracked it open. It was raw! So it appears that someone tossed it into the water to see if eggs float. Sorry, eggs do not float.

And here is a list of the winners with egg and point totals:

Name	Number of Eggs	Points
Carl Tuttle	13	308
Florence Frans	7	209
Christe Kroon	6	135
Cédrick Fairon	6	127
Troy Edgar	6	119
Jeff Rowland	6	74
John Snyder	2	62
Tom Gardner	2	47
Kiran Prabakar	0	0

As the sun started shining between the clouds, divers lined up as the totals were added and prizes awarded to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners. And everyone got additional Easter goodies to enjoy. A BIG THANKS to Tom and Jackie for putting everything together. As always, everyone had a great time.

After the awards were handed out, Florence, Cédrick, Troy, Christe and Jeff did a second dive along the pier. When they came back all were pleased that they went as the visibility remained excellent and lots of critters were seen. And, well you know, . . . You should have been there! ★

Photos by Jackie, Frances and Cédrick.



Tom and Jackie toss the eggs from their kayak



Winners! Florence, Carl, Christe and Troy



Florence and Carl with their radar ears



Everyone's a Winner! From left: Howard, John, Carl, Frances, Christe, Troy, Florence, Cédrick, Jeff, Tom and Kiran.

**U/W Easter Egg Dive Photos**



*On Your Mark, Ready, Set, GO!*



*A couple of dumb bunnies?*



*Cédrick and Florence counting their chickens before they hatch!*



*Let's get this show on the road ... in the water.*

**TSC Riders on the Trail – May 26th**

A few Dippers got together for the restart of the Fourth Sunday Cycle (FSC) and rode the Los Gatos Creek Trail from Campbell to Los Gatos and back. Lunch was at LUNA Mexican Kitchen in the Pruneyard. Riders included *Carl Tuttle, Kyle 'Mr. Grace' Sanner, Frances Lee, Gabby and Jim Rezowalli, and Howard Chien.* 🌟



## Search and Non-Recovery

During the second dive after the Under Water Easter Egg Hunt, **Jeff Rowland** lost his dive light. He put out a call for help searching for it and **Cédric Fairon, Florence Frans** and **Carl Tuttle** answered the call. So on Monday, April 19th, the four went to Del Monte Beach to search under the pier. But, no such luck.

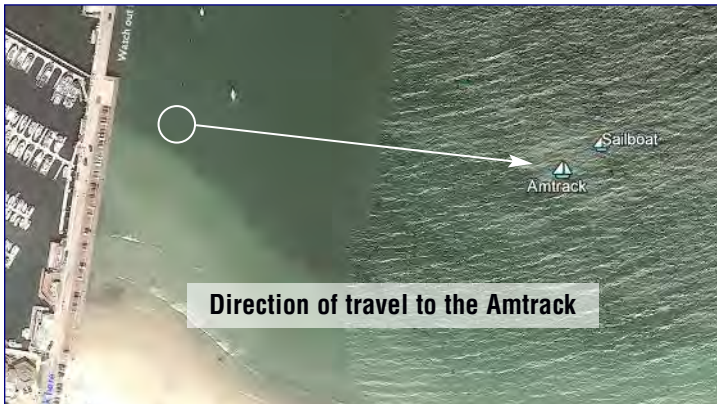
The group decided to do a 2nd dive to see if they could locate the two underwater wrecks; A military landing craft (Amtrac) and a sailboat.

Cédric had a map and coordinates, but it looked like the group would have to walk about 1/4 mile down the beach. Working with his map and other landmarks (watermarks) they used one of the mooring buoys as a starting point. They



Carl and Florence discuss the direction

swam out on the surface, dropped down at the buoy and followed the compass heading. After some time they found the landing craft! Then Jeff disappeared. Cédric went to the surface but didn't see him.



So the 3 lone divers headed back to the beach. Turns out Jeff wanted to get a GPS bearing from the surface. The wind pushed him a bit and when he went back down he landed right on the sailboat. The four eventually gathered back on the pier.

Here's a little information on the two underwater wrecks:

### The APC (armored personnel carrier) or Amtrac (Amtrak, Amtrac)

A rusted-out hulk of a WW II-era APC (armored personnel carrier – all-tracked), or Amtrac (Amphibious Tractor), also known as an LTV (Landing Vehicle Tracked). Usually carry 10–12 soldiers, possess a rear ramp for rapid deployment, and utilize tracks for off-road mobility. There are no reports on how this vehicle got where it is located.

It lies approximately 110 feet southwest of The Rogue and is accessible in the same dive. It's 40 yards from the sailboat on a 220-deg heading. It also suffered during the storms of 2016 and 2017. The turret has dropped into the



Soldiers from Ft. Ord on Amtracks during training in the 1950s.

body, and the sides of the body have partially collapsed. As of September 2018, the turret is exposed, though the sand level can shift up and down by a couple feet over the course of the year. It's unknown but it's rumored the Army was training when it sunk. There are two other sunken Amtracks on top of each other in another location. There was an orange line running from the sailboat to the amtrack in Summer 2014, but it was washed out by storms in December 2014.



Florence chicking out the wreck

### The Rogue Sailboat

The Rogue was a 60-foot sailboat that sank in 1994 during a storm off Del Monte Beach. The boat was originally intended to be deliberately scuttled as a dive wreck at the Breakwater, but legal wrangling delayed the plan until the vessel sank naturally in its present location.

Original plan — The Rogue was to be scuttled at the Breakwater as an intentional wreck for divers, but the City of Monterey refused to pay insurance for divers on the wreck.

Ownership — The boat belonged to Al Huelga, the former owner of Aquarius Dive Shop.

Derelict period — After legal issues stalled the scuttling plan, The Rogue sat derelict at the marina next to Del Monte Beach for several years.

Storm sinking — The vessel sank during a storm and settled in shallow water approximately 25 feet deep. The upper deck partially collapsed

in winter 2016. The sailboat collapsed in big storms during the first half of 2017. This allowed waves to push inside the hull in winter 2017 and flex it back and forth until it failed.

📍 (Photos by Cédric Fairon)



A small ray was spotted during the dive

# DIVE & ACTIVITY CALENDAR

SIM UPADHYAYULA

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MAY 2026

**SATURDAY MAY 2  
NO SCHEDULED DIVE**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 6  
BUSINESS MEETING: 7:30pm**  
The meeting will be held **virtually via Microsoft Teams**. Watch for an email with details. Bring your own food, drinks, and internet connection and we'll discuss ideas for upcoming dives and events.

**SATURDAY, MAY 9  
SECOND SATURDAY SCUBA (\$3)  
DIVE: LOCATION TBD**  
Join the Flipper Dippers for this month's S3 dive coordinated by **Sim Upadhyayula**. Text: 669-286-9796 or email: toytacous@yahoo.com. Bring 2 tanks and plan on going for lunch after the dive. Location will be determined (TBD) based on conditions. Be sure to contact Sim if you want to join in.

**SATURDAY MAY 16  
NO SCHEDULED DIVE**

**MON-SUN, MAY 18-24  
MEMORIAL DAY WEEK AT  
HENRY COWELL REDWOODS  
STATE PARK CAMPGROUND**  
Coordinator: Join **Carl Tuttle**, (408-829-3660, email: tutcomms@sbc-global.net) and the rest of the Flipper Dippers for camping at Henry Cowell Redwoods State

## GENERAL MEETING WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

The **in-person General Meeting** held at **7:30 PM** at the Knights of Columbus Santa Maria Hall 2211 Shamrock Dr., Campbell.  
The **virtual meeting** held via Microsoft Teams. Watch your email for info.

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

**Celebrate 62 Years of the  
San Jose Flipper Dippers!**  
Entertainment:

- **Social Hour**
  - **Sign-ups for Monthly Dives**
- ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Park Campground (2591 Gram Hill Rd., Santa Cruz). Dippers have 4 sites for the week and are open to sharing camping space. The Dippers are planning on hiking, mountain biking, and sharing food, drink, and stories around the campfire. Contact Carl regarding sharing space or if you just want to join in on the fun for a day. Spaces are limited to 2 vehicles, but additional parking is available. There is

a plan for a bike ride on Saturday, May 23rd, starting at the New Leaf Community Market, 101 Fair Ave., in Santa Cruz, and ride on the expanded Coastal Rail Trail to Davenport and have lunch at the Whale City Bakery, then ride back.

**Actual photo of me at every campfire I've ever been to**

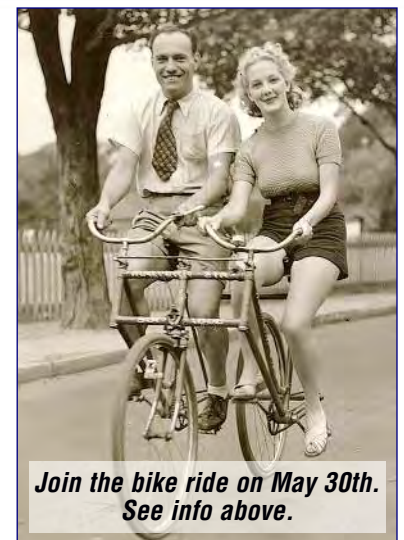


**SATURDAY MAY 30  
NO SCHEDULED DIVE**

**SATURDAY MAY 30-31  
SCUBA SHOW LONG BEACH**

- .....
- UPCOMING IN JUNE**
- 03 Business Meeting
  - 13 Second Saturday SCUBA
  - 17 **General Meeting**
  - 20-27 Cayman Aggressor Trip
- ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**How do you carry your tank(s)?**



**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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## 2026 COMING EVENTS

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| May 06     | Business Meeting                       |
| May 18-25  | Memorial Day Weekend - Henry Cowell    |
| May 20     | 📍 General Meeting                      |
| May 30-31  | SCUBA Show - Long Beach, CA            |
| June 3     | Business Meeting                       |
| June 13    | Second Saturday SCUBA                  |
| June 17    | 📍 General Meeting                      |
| June 20-27 | Cayman Islands Aggressor Trip          |
| July 01    | Business Meeting                       |
| July 04    | No License Fishing Day                 |
| July 11    | Second Saturday SCUBA                  |
| July 15    | 📍 General Meeting                      |
| July 19    | Christmas in July: Hellyer County Park |
| July 24-26 | Lake Tahoe Weekend                     |

*Are you looking for someone  
to dive with?*

**T**he 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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