

# MARIN SCUBA CLUB NEWSLETTER

Volume 15 Number 10    October, 2008



## **Taking The Census**

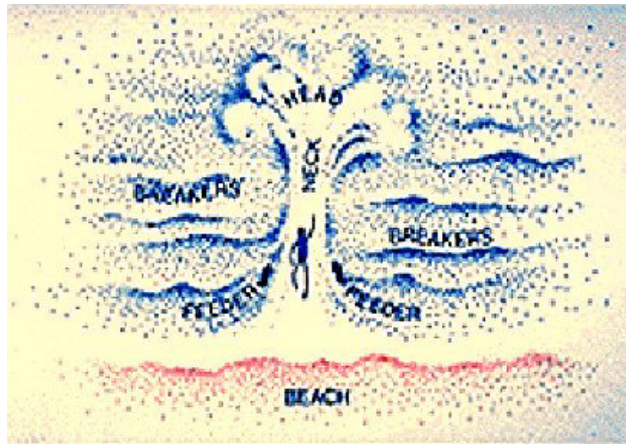
by Spike Flertzheim

The census was being taken, and I had signed up to help. However, something seemed “fishy” about the whole plan. First off, it was being taken at St. Vincent, the largest island of the country of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the Caribbean. Second, it was to be conducted underwater! Sponsored by the Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF), there was to be a two week survey of the health of the St. Vincent reefs, including fish counts by teams of divers. The activities were led by Paul Humann and Ned DeLoach, world renowned fish identification authorities, who head up the REEF organization. I was on the second week shift, but arrived a day late due to a missed plane connection in Barbados.

How does one count fish? The short answer is: with great difficulty. We were all seasoned divers, with experience in identifying various fish species.

Nonetheless, we were all issued waterproof fish ID books and clipboards with waterproof paper. The counting was simplified with categories of: single, 2-10, 11-100, and over 100. That made it bit easier, still we all took copious notes. We divers were divided into three equal groups led by Paul, Ned, or Bill Tewes, the dive operator and resident fish expert, plus one of Bill’s local divemasters. Our groups remained fixed, but the leadership rotated every two days, so everyone had a shot with each expert. The local divemasters were excellent fish finders.

St. Vincent is noted for its healthy reefs and wide varieties of fish life, and it didn’t disappoint us. Overall, our group identified over 100 species, but the frosting on the cake was seeing rare and unusual critters. The smallest was a peppermint goby, striped in bright colors, who was less than an inch long. Yes, we all carried magnifying glasses on our



## **Diver Safety Tips:**

### **Rip Currents**

by Michael Mohawk

Rip currents are the most threatening natural hazard along our coast. They pull victims away from the beach. The United States Lifesaving Association has found that 80% of the rescues affected by ocean lifeguards involve saving those caught in rip currents.

A rip current is a seaward moving current that circulates water back to sea after it is pushed ashore by waves. Each wave accumulates water on shore creating seaward pressure. This pressure is released in an area with the least amount of resistance which is usually the deepest point along the ocean floor. Rip currents also exist in areas where the strength of the waves is weakened by

objects such as rock jetties, piers, natural reefs, and even large groups of bathers. Rip currents often look like muddy rivers flowing away from shore.

Rip currents are sometimes mistakenly called "rip tides"

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## **Halloween Party 10/25**

On Saturday evening, October 25, join the other ghouls and goblins who’ll be haunting Dave Benoit’s house o’ horrors. This year’s party will feature a costume competition, games, and other surprises from the party committee consisting of Nathan Cobert, Ross Nadeau, Dyane Mohr, Dave Benoit and Kat Tyson.

The club will serve free drinks and an entree. Bring a dish to share. More details and driving directions are in the enclosed flyer.

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dives. The most unusual treasure was a small octopus the diameter of my fist who had yet to be given an official name. He was a NIB (not in the book), and made his hiding place inside small shells which he carried with him. He blushed a deep magenta when I took his picture. His nearest named relative is another small octopus who hides inside split coconut shells, and lives in Indonesia. I had previously seen that one in Lembeh Strait, so it was a thrill to meet his cousin.

Another treat was a pipehorse that looks like a straightened out seahorse, but acts like a pipefish. Other special sightings were a short nosed bat fish who walks along the bottom on his pectoral fins, a rare black brotula, and flying gurnards who seemed to skim along the bottom. Among the less common varieties there were cowfish, seahorses, juvenile jackknives, spotted drums and a variety of eels. Everywhere we looked there were schools of hundreds of brown or blue chromis, and scores of damsels, surgeons, and butterflies. Most of the dives were shallow at 30-40 feet, so our bottom times were in the one hour range, and my deepest dive was only 79 feet on a small wall. Super, and relaxing, diving!

Our group stayed at the Mariner's Hotel on the outskirts of Kingstown, the capitol. It had an excellent restaurant called The French Verandah. The group's routine was breakfast, two dives each morning, a late lunch, and then informal discussion classes on fish identification and behavior, followed by a cocktail and a leisurely dinner. While I was diving, Betty read, watched the Food Channel or simply relaxed in the beautiful tropic atmosphere. On our last night, Betty and I dined "French" with snails in butter, a salad, and a huge bowl of the best French onion soup I have ever tasted, plus wine, of course. All too soon our week was over, and the census takers, now friends, departed to homes all over the U.S. Would I do it again? In a heartbeat!

### ***The John, Nathan and Gary Show***

In addition to our regularly scheduled program by John Lewis (Palau and Southern Channel Islands), attendees at our September meeting were treated to additional images from our recent Peace trip by Nathan Cobert, and a DVD from our spring Dive & Dine beautifully produced by Gary Wingert. It's nice to know the Club is stocked with so much in-house talent!

or "undertows." These are misnomers. Rip currents are not directly associated with tides and they do not pull people under.

Try to avoid swimming/diving where rip currents are present, but if you become caught in a one, swim parallel to the shore until the pull stops and then swim back to shore. If you are unable to return to the beach, tread water and wave for lifeguard, boat or other assistance.

Stay at least 100 feet away from piers and jetties. Rip currents often exist along the side of fixed objects in the water.

Be aware of ocean conditions. Lifeguards are trained to identify potential hazards. Ask a lifeguard or other experienced local divers about the conditions before entering the water.

### ***New Officers, Program Coordinator***

Nathan Cobert has moved up from Vice President to President of the Marin Scuba Club. Long time member Patrick Ritter steps in to fill Nathan's Vice Presidency. And Jeffrey Zankel takes on the vital role of Program Coordinator. All were elected by acclimation at the September meeting. Other officers and directors remain unchanged. See the list with contact information on page four.

Congratulations to these new Board members. We welcome your enthusiasm and fresh energy. And many thanks to outgoing President Elliott Zalta for years of terrific leadership. We'll look forward to EZ's continued involvement on many levels.

### ***California Wrecks at October 15 Meeting***

David Finnern, our guest speaker for the October 15 meeting, is past president of the California Wreck Divers, Inc. He has spent over 35 years searching for shipwrecks and submerged ruins. As an award-winning writer, he has published hundreds of stories on underwater exploration and has written on-assignment for such magazines as Skin Diver, Underwater USA, Western Diver and Immersed. Finnern is the author of several books, including The Sport Divers' Guide to Sunken Treasure and Passage Through Deep Waters. He is a member and former president of The Adventurers' Club, and was elected a Fellow of The Royal Geographical Society in 2002.

Come find out more about California wreck diving on the 15th.



# BOTTOM TIMES

**Oct. 15 (Wed.):** Board Meeting, 6:00, *Club Meeting*, 7:30. California Wreck Divers, Lost Ships off our Coast. Call Elliott (415-461-6644).

**Oct. 25 (Sat):** *Halloween Party*, 6:30-? at Dave Benoit's home. See enclosed flyer.

**November 5 (Wed.):** *Newsletter deadline*. See below.

**Nov. 8 (Sat.):** *Cypress Sea boat dive* (3 Dives), Monterey. Call Pierre at SF Reef Divers (415-285-6293).

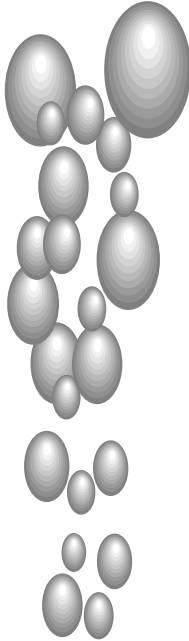
**Nov. 19 (Wed.):** Board Meeting, 6:00, *Club Meeting*, 7:30. Santa Cruz artist Bryant Austin's life size whale images. Call Elliott (415-461-6644).

**Dec. 13 (Sat.):** *Holiday Party* at Mike and Sharon Royce's home. Flyer in November newsletter.

**Dec. 13 (Sat.):** *Cypress Sea boat dive* (3 Dives), Monterey. Call Pierre at SF Reef Divers (415-285-6293).

**Jan. 10 (Sat.):** *Cypress Sea boat dive* (3 Dives), Monterey. Call Pierre at SF Reef Divers (415-285-6293).

**Feb. 14 (Sat.):** *Cypress Sea Valentine's Day dive* (3 Dives), Monterey. Call Pierre at SF Reef Divers (415-285-6293).



**We need articles, recipes, short notes, pictures, SCUBA funnies or whatever for future newsletters and for our website.**

Website: E-mail photos with a caption and/or article and photo credits to John Brenneis (webmeister@marinscuba.org). If you do not have a scanner, mail photos along with captions and photo credits with a self-addressed stamped envelope if you want the photos back. John's address is PO Box 3299, San Rafael, CA 94912.

Newsletter: Deadline is usually the first Wednesday of the month - two weeks before the meeting.

Send materials for future articles in one of the following ways. Note that these are listed in priority order.

1. E-mail text to Larry at click@dipsymusic.com. It's best to just send the material in the body of the e-mail and not as an attachment.
2. Send a CD to the address below. MS Word - PC format is preferred, otherwise include a note as to what the format is.
3. Fax typed manuscripts to 415-339-1361.

**Pictures and Graphics** - E-mail JPEG files to [click@dipsymusic.com](mailto:click@dipsymusic.com) or mail CDs or hard copy to Larry Clinton, 29 Gate 6-1/2, Sausalito, CA 94965.

**Marin Scuba Club**  
**PO Box 3408**  
**San Rafael, CA 94912**



*Next Meeting*

**Wed., Oct. 15**

**Program:**

**California Wreck Divers**  
**Lost Ships off Our Coast**

**Happy Hour 6:00-7:00**  
**Socializing: 7:00**  
**Meeting: 7:30-9:15**

**Seafood Peddler,**  
**100 Yacht Club Dr.**  
**San Rafael**  
**(Look for tall boat sign**  
**off East Francisco)**

**MARIN SCUBA**  
**CLUB**  
**NEWSLETTER**

The Club meets the  
3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month  
**(except December)**

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**Board of Directors**  
*[www.marinclub.org](http://www.marinclub.org)*

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