

MARCH 2020 VOLUME 70 • ISSUE NO. 3

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SOCORRO
6/94

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FISH STANDINGS

CALIFORNIA

Calico Derby (Eric Bodjanac)	6.0 lbs
Calico Bass (Eric Bodjanac)	6.0 lbs
White Seabass (John Hughes)	68 lbs
Yellowtail	Open
Sheephead	Open
Bonito	Open
Barracuda	Open
Dorado	Open
Wahoo	Open
Bluefin Tuna	Open
Marlin	Open
Lobster (Hobie Ladd)	11.2 lbs

OUT OF STATE/COUNTRY AWARDS

Yellowfin Tuna	Open
Reef Fish (Mike De Giosa)	47 lb Cubera

Kent McIntyre Award

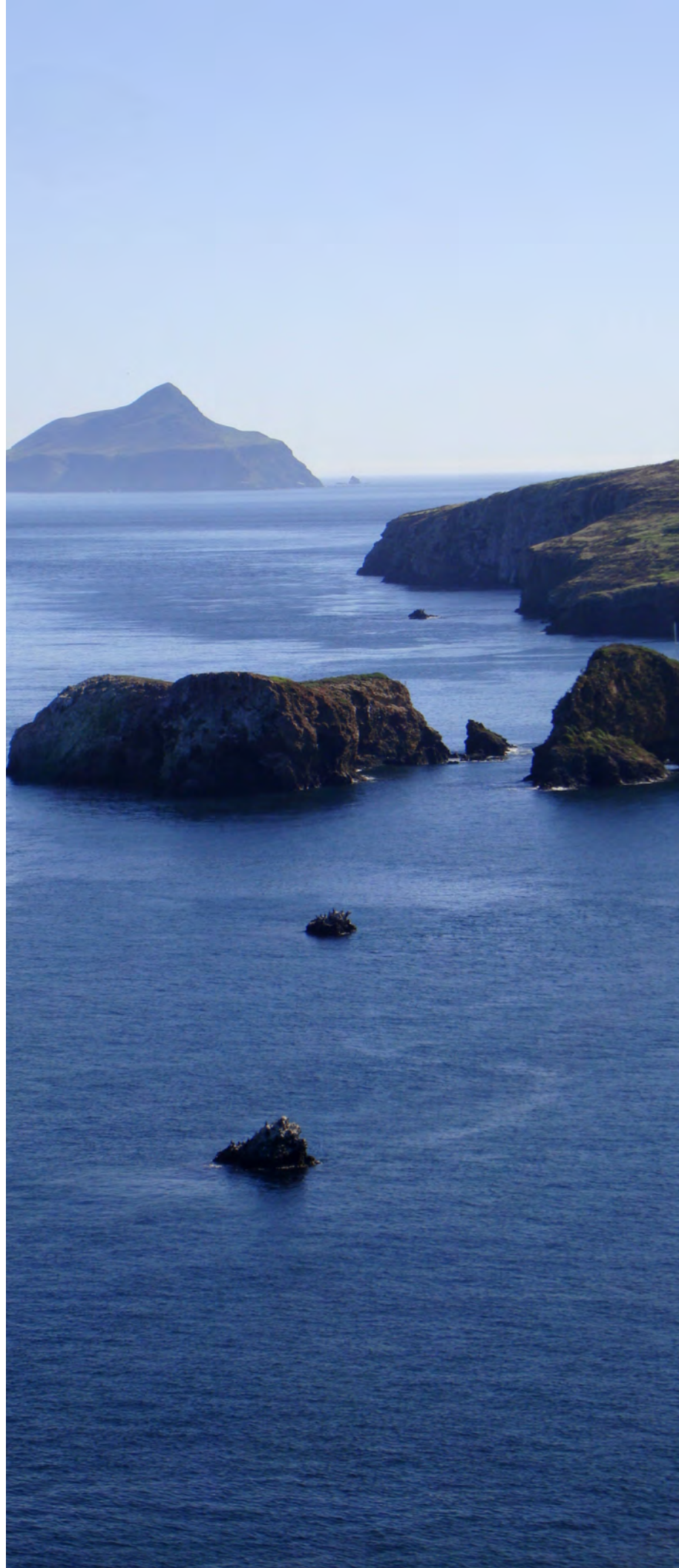
Open

Perpetual Big Fish Trophy

Open

THE BEST HAS YET TO COME

- March 4th- Vote on legal status of the Long Beach Neptunes
- **March 21st (Saturday)-
2019 Awards Banquet**
- April 1st- Meeting
- May 6th- Meeting
- June 3rd- Meeting
- **June 13th- BLUE WATER
MEET**
- July 1st- Meeting
- August 1st- San Diego
Freedivers Touranment
- August 5th- Meeting
- August 8th- OC Spearos Classic
Tournament
- August 15th- Fathomiers
Scramble Meet
- September 2nd- Meeting
- October 3rd- Lobster opener
(6am)
- October 7th- Meeting
- **October 10th- FALL CLASSIC**
- November 4th- Meeting
- December 2nd- Meeting
- **December 5th- Christmas
Party**
- December 25th- Merry
Christmas!





LONG BEACH NEPTUNES AWARD BANQUET

HOST:

Jeff Benedict 562-743-5442

WHEN:

Saturday, March 21 at 5:00 PM

WHERE:

Harbour Rackhouse
16903 Algonquin St.
Huntington Beach, CA 92649

- Please RSVP via the emailed link
- When responding, please reply with a comment of your meal choice from the options.
- Cost is \$20/person- please pay via PayPal with a note for "Awards Banquet"
- **Deadline to RSVP and pay is MARCH 15th!**
- Appetizers start at 5:00 pm
- Awards at 5:45 pm
- Dinner is served at 6:30 pm

CLUB MEETING

MARCH 4TH

Vote on Legal Standing

The meeting this coming week is an important one where we will be voting on the legal standing of the club. As Jeff states in his message below, the club would potentially become a not-for-profit entity (501c7). Please come prepared to make an educated vote. Whether you are for or against it, please attend and place your ballot, we want your participation!



COMMANDER -IN CHIEF



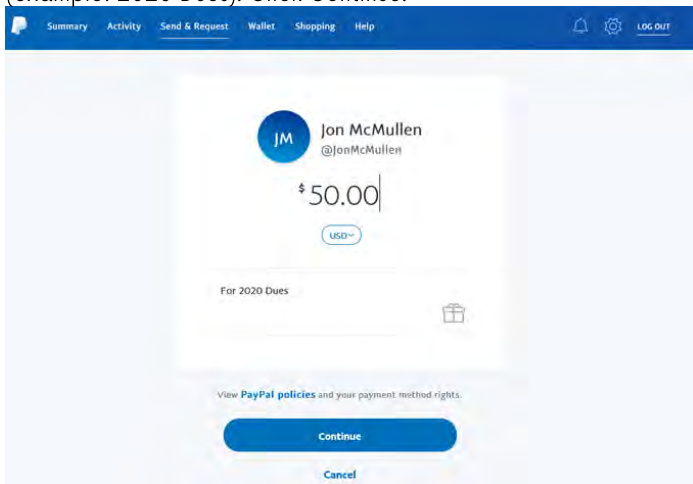
We are so fortunate as active spearfishermen, living in Southern California with one of the strongest fisheries at our shores. Its February and word of Blue Fin tuna have been seen just miles off the Newport Coast line. The Sea Bass are beginning to come to our shores and visit they're old haunts. Hobie just pulled an 11+ lb bug, Hughes landed a 68 lber and Eric recorded a nice Calico to kick the year off. All this moves us toward another stellar year of hunting, fellowship, generosity and healthy eating. March is looking like a busy month to be a Neptune. We have Tim Hatler of Palapas Ventana speaking at the March 4th meeting, the annual Awards Banquet on the 21st, LB Fred Hall show starting on the March 4th and the annual Long Beach Neptunes Auction on April 1st, NO JOKE! We will also be voting on a new Club Historian as well as incorporation of the club as a 501c7 not-for-profit entity at the March 4th meeting. The Awards Banquet should be a fun evening hosted at the Harbor Rackhouse Bar and Grill in Huntington Beach. It's noted as a fun and energetic locals' venue with good food, plentiful drinks, a fireplace and pool tables. The awards will be held early so that we may enjoy dinner, drinks and socializing thereafter. It's \$20/person. Please RSVP early as the deadline of March 15th will soon be upon us. It's also time to clean out your garages and boat lockers in anticipation of the Long Beach Neptunes Annual Auction. We need your 2nd and 1st hand donations as you also need to make room for the new bargains you're going to bring home! It's time to reach out to your new gear, art and nautical connections and talk about a marketing strategy starting at the LB Neptunes Auction. It's one of the largest gatherings of divers with the fattest wallets looking to buy your gear! These donations help defray the cost of our tournaments, trophies, t-shirts, gatherings, etc. In essence, we all benefit from this event so do your part. One of the ways in which this events helps our community is exemplified in the recent \$400 donation the Long Beach Neptunes made to Hubbs Sea World Research Institute. Lets get after it!

How to Pay Dues

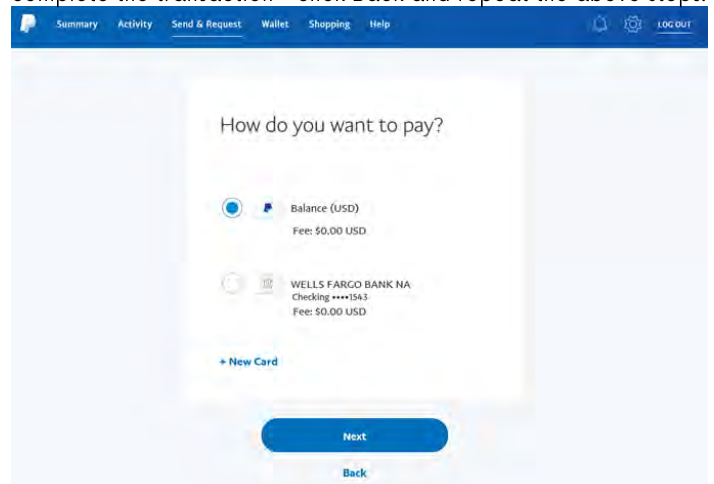
For Dummies

When using PayPal - please utilize the SENDING TO A FRIEND option. If you do not use this option the Club will be charged a fee - for example, if trying to send \$50 for dues the Club will only receive \$48.25. It's not a large amount of money but there's no reason we should be giving that money away. If you submit a fish application and you haven't paid the full dues amount will the application be accepted???

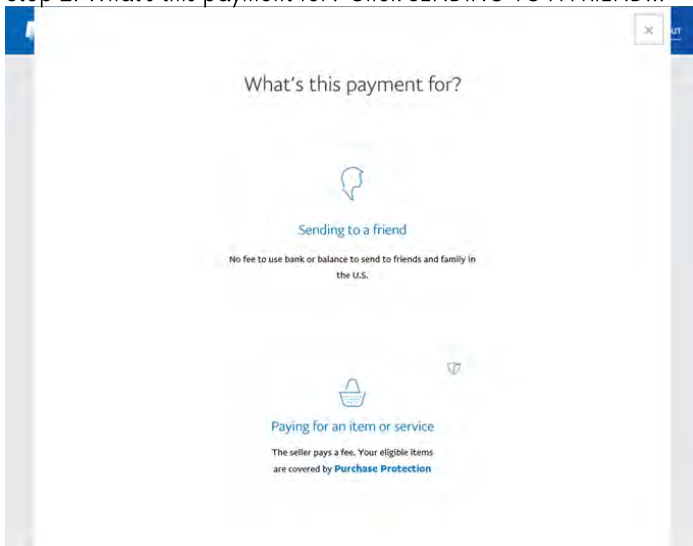
Step 1: Fill out payment information. Account is lbneptunespayment@gmail.com. Look for the Neptunes logo in the profile picture. Please include in the notes what you are paying for (example: 2020 Dues). Click Continue.



Step 3: You'll know you've done it correctly if on the following screen when selecting your source of payment it says FEE: \$0.00 USD. If there is an amount greater than \$0.00 for the fee do not complete the transaction - click Back and repeat the above steps.



Step 2: What's this payment for? Click SENDING TO A FRIEND!!!



Payments incurring a fee may be returned and considered incomplete.

Reminder: Dues are \$50 up to and including the March 4th meeting. If paying for dues after the meeting you will need to add the \$25 late fee (\$75 total).

Thanks for all of your help on this!

WELCOME TO WHITE SEABASS HUNTING

Last year I probably hunted white seabass for a month or so before I saw any and it was a very tough year for me. Most of the winter had bad visibility and the storms kept pushing that swell up preventing me from any shore diving. I remember one day though after work I stood on the cliffs above "Oaks Reef" and scanned below. The Santa Anas blew the day before and the water looked fairly clear. In no time I grabbed my gear and headed down to the promise land.

As the sun began to drift towards the horizon I started to hear the croaks. Baruuuump.

Baruuummp. Baruuump. I headed back towards the surface and slowly breathed up. When my D4 told me it was time to drop I slid silently towards the bottom. Maybe thirty seconds into my dive, I saw three very large shapes drift through the kelp. One of them was so big it looked like a Manatee! Because the water was so clear it was hard to close the gap, especially with my 55" gun that I use on shore dives. I thought I was in range and braced the gun.

BOOM BOOM BOOM, three massive tails beat in unison as the fish split before I could even squeeze the trigger. I went back to the surface and cursed myself, I should have brought the 59" gun dammit, I knew the biggest ones of the three were over 60 lbs and probably more like 70. I shivered in the cold water and dejectedly headed back towards shore empty handed.

Welcome to White Seabass hunting.



I'll make this declaration, I'm a white seabass junkie. A lot of my friends are the same way and when the season comes around we get jittery and keep asking each other, "you see any yet?". I'm no expert and a lot of you reading this have shot many more seabass than I'll ever see, but I've been pretty fortunate and I'm writing this mainly for the guys who are new to seabass hunting. White Seabass, *Atractoscion nobilis*, aren't even a true sea bass, they are in the croaker family of Sciaenids. They are the biggest of the Croakers found in California waters. They call these fish croakers because the males use a series of muscle tissue to rub against their swim bladders to initiate these croaks, presumably to attract females. Although it is stated in the literature that only the males croak (the female lacks the specialized muscle tissue around the swim bladder) I have heard females make some sort of noise on very rare occasions, it's more like a purr. I'm not even sure where the sound comes from, whether it is from their pectoral fins or it's coming internal but a few of my buddies also noticed this sound before shooting females. The males definitely croak, but they don't do it all the time and the croaks change. I have heard about 4 or so different types of croaks. The distant chant that you hear far off in the sand flats (when I hear this I don't even bother getting excited because it means the ones croaking are not in the kelp beds), the normal male croak you hear when they are near, a weird long groan which I think might be a danger croak to warn other fish, and the motorboat sounding croak which means that the school is fairly close.

I have mimicked croaks before, but it rarely works and I only do this as a last ditch effort when I'm heading back to the boat. One time I was diving at a different "Oaks Reef" and the seabass were croaking fairly close. I had not seen any in an hours time and was getting ready to go. I laid on the bottom of the reef and slowly mimicked a croak, I will never tell anyone the secret to this croak but it's based on timing and pitch and it's worked for me a few times. As I did it, on the third croak a big female cruised up to me and then turned broadside and I stone shot her, that fish went 60 pounds on a shore dive.





The minimum size to keep white seabass is 28 inches from the tip of the head to the tail. The limit from March 15 thru June 15 is a single fish. But outside of that time you may keep 3 below point conception. White seabass are not very old fish, even the oldest fish over 90 pounds are probably around 25 years old. The 28" fish on the other hand are about 5 years old. You can find big white seabass in almost any habitat, sometimes we see them deep on sandy bottoms, on hard reefs, up shallow in 3 feet of water, but mostly in kelp beds where they tend to hide out and sometimes mate. I have never seen a white seabass spawn in the wild but I've heard of some divers witnessing it when the males and females brush up against each other to release eggs and sperm. Once fertilized the eggs tend to float closer to the surface where they drift in currents and settle out. We often find little 1 inch fish near eel grass beds when we are doing scientific beach seines and they are also thought to settle out in the sand near kelp detritus. At work we start the fish out on life small foods like copepods and baby brine shrimp. As they grow we switch them to cut food like squid or pieces of fish.

White seabass are true spazzes, any sound will cause the fish to bolt. Interestingly enough, the young are also this way. We've had eggs from the Carlsbad hatchery at my work and once they hatched the young grow rapidly. So rapid that they often ate each other, even at a few weeks old. Once they reach about an inch or so they will dart rapidly around the tank when frightened and more than once we've lost small fish because they jump clear out of the tanks at night. It seems like this is their survival mode, anything that scares them causes them to flee. Keep that in mind because any noise you make, snorkel burps, wetsuit or sinus squeaks, popping of fins etc will scare them away. I don't consider myself a good white seabass hunter, just a lucky average guy. But I am methodical the way that I hunt, and that is to move extremely slow. Most of the time I think the fish are curious and come up to see what you are, I tend to scull my fins sideways to slide through the water instead of kicking when I can. If you ever see a monster school of big seabass consider yourself lucky, that is a sight you will never forget and not many divers get a chance to experience it.

One of the reasons these fish are so hard to hunt is they are unpredictable, we like to hunt on new or full moon cycles and higher tides because the research says this is when they spawn. But truth be told, we just hunt whenever we can get time off and I've seen them on minus tides, mid moon cycles, etc. My best advice to you if you are new is to go as often as you can, when I started out I was diving every day after work and I did 13 days straight one month. You also want to work in a network of trustworthy divers, the best seabass divers keep very quiet and have a smaller circle of friends that they share info with. Should you let everyone know on social media that you shot a seabass and expose a spot you are likely to be shunned by the experienced divers.



A good diver often has a jar filled with "white seabass stones" or otoliths, you can remove these from the head either from the top of the head, or under. My favorite way is under the head, once you cut out the gills you will see a massive bone above it that connect to the spine. If you carefully cut through this bone you will find 2 stones right behind the braincase. I normally write the weight on the big stones and have found that stones from fish that are above 50 pounds to 70 are pretty much the same size. The world record stands at 93.3 pounds but rarely do you see any fish over 75 pounds.

Adult White Seabass love mackerel, smelt, other fish and especially squid. In fact we think that most of the migration is the fish following the squid during most of the year which is why you'll find them all the way up in Monterey during the late summer. They can show up in the kelp beds at any time, but typically we see most of them around March thru June in southern California because that's the time they spawn here. I have seen 50 lbers in August and October though so they can show up anytime. Everyone has their favorite gear, mine is a 59" custom teak gun with a 5/16" shaft and slip tip with a high vis floatline that I use on the boat. I know a lot of guys like reels because they are less of a hassle, but I've been spooled before on big seabass and I like the pressure I can put on with a floatline and not having to worry about the reel jamming up. Most of the seasoned seabass hunters use slip tips, this is because the flesh of white seabass is so soft that it tears out easily. White seabass don't generally fight as hard as a big yellowtail, but they have a massive run on the first shot so unless you get a solid head shot or somewhere near the spine its best to not put a ton of pressure on it, otherwise it may tear out. I tend to put general pressure on a big fish until it ties up in the kelp. When its in the kelp its pulling against the kelp and my mono as well as the small bungee on the front of my floatline, as the fish pulls everything gives and it gets tired and dies easier. I also will tie off my gun to my floatline and then swim down to the fish and dispatch it with a knife to the brain, following with the knife slashing under the gills above the hear to bleed the fish out.





There are usually three white seabass tournaments throughout the year. James and Joseph usually has "the Jack", Oceans Global has the Kirk McNulty tournament and Spearingforum.com has "the White Seabass Smackdown". Ours is only a 10\$ entry fee and if you win half goes to the charity of your choice and you keep the other half. But the best part is all the smack talk we give each other throughout the tournament. White Seabass are prized for their great eating. I'll eat mine sashimi about three days in the fridge, on the first two days I find the meat to be too soft. They are hard to beat on the grill or in the oven and everyone has their favorite recipes on our website we have a lot you might want to try out. Dive Safe, Drive Safe folks and I look forward to seeing you in the water. I'll be the guy with the dejected look on his face, shivering with no fish on the stringer...

-Chris Okamoto

FEATURED DIVER

LARRY HEINRICH





I STARTED DIVING

with my dad at PV for abalone back in the late 60's. Back then the abalone was everywhere and stacked on top of each other. It was the classic setup using a truck innertube and gunny sack. We would only take pinks as my dad considered these the best. My dad never spearfished but I made a pole spear out of a broom handle, trident tip, and surgical tubing from the pharmacy. At that time the Dominator was still a ship broken up on the rocks and as still to this day we'd climb down the cliff to dive.

Fast forward to the early 80's I moved to San Clemente and started in construction as a carpenter. I met someone local who was a scuba diver and wanted to hit the local spots like Laguna Beach. I was all for it as I hadn't dove much in the years between. We tank dove Laguna and George showed me all the "fishy" spots, but I hated tank diving and soon started skin diving again almost immediately. As far as I knew, the word "freediver" didn't exist then. At that time it was scuba wetsuits, scuba mask, and scuba fins. I went to Laguna Sea Sports and bought my first real speargun- a JBL with a double flopper tip. I sure was proud of that speargun and it was definitely rigged to lose fish haha!



My target fish was sheephead and I was always having fish taco cookouts at San Onofre after our volleyball games. One morning I slipped off the bach in Laguna for a sheephead hunt as I was really getting it down now! I laid on the bottom and this 20 lb sheephead that I had spotted earlier pops out of a hole for a look. I take a perfect shot and he tears loose. Two hours later I shoot another large sheephead that tears off too. I was depressed!

After loosing my sheephead I was going to drop some big money on this Sea Hornet wood gun at Sport Chalet. That would fix my problems! Thankfully, my buddy George calls me up and says he's got the number of a local guy that makes wood guns. I give him a call one Sunday and he says to come on over. Well I show up to Jay Riffe's house where he was in the garage with his lathe set up and all the gear to rig guns. I introduce myself saying and we start talking. I ask to see some guns and Jay leaves the garage for one minute and comes back with a Baja Gun. I just about died. I've never seen anything like it before and HAD to have one. He put some bands and a reel on it, but this would be the first time I ever used a reel. After parting with this weeks wages I couldn't get back in the water fast enough!

This was also my first time meeting another freediver and this guy was a wealth of knowledge. After that, I would come by his place to buy small odds and ends just to get a chance to talk with him. I actually still have the gun, and will never part with it. I had previously bought this book "Last of the Blue Water Hunters" and still had no idea that Jay was on the cover of it or what a legend he was until later.

I chased the white seabass ghosts for a year after reading that book and never saw one. It wasn't until I was floating on the outside edge of a kelp bed when this monster fish with black stripes appears. I take a shot and pray I didn't miss! I landed it and it was the biggest fish I ever caught at that point, 1" over legal! Its funny how much smaller they get out of the water. After a year of looking for seabass it was a proud moment for me. The momentum built and I started to hammer out a lot of whites locally but still didn't know any other spearos. At that point Jay told me about the Neptunes and offered to sponsor me. The rest is history!







THIS IS THE END

It's almost over. Don't start swimming around in the cold mud looking for fish that are not here yet. Or maybe they are? Regardless, you're about to miss out one of the best times of year. The beginning of the season is usually pretty good when they haven't moved out yet. But the end! The end of the season they come marching back in. They pile in together and they get ready to do their thing.

My spidey senses are tingling. I'm sure yours are too this time of year. Don't get distracted. Don't waver. Don't waffle. Do not get sidetracked.

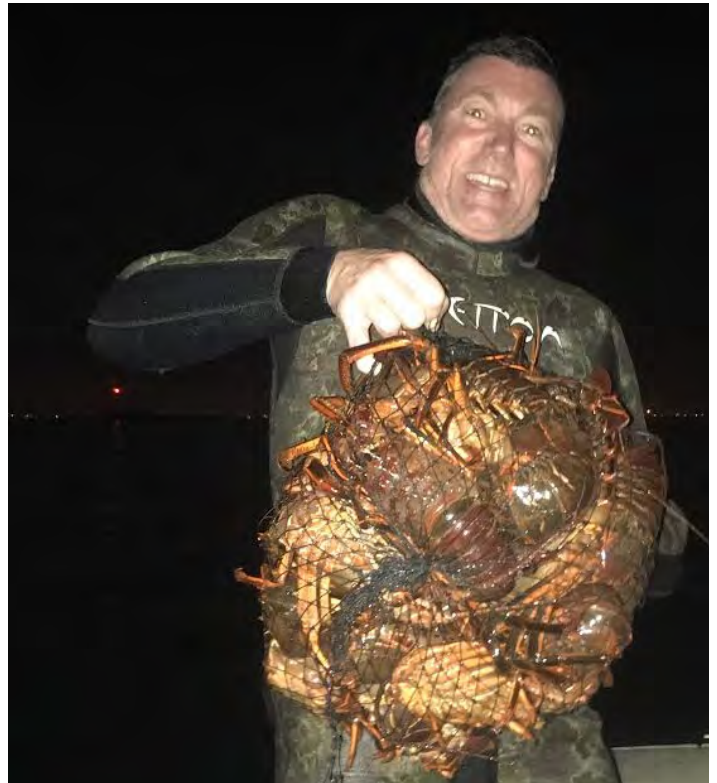
If you blink, you'll miss it.

HEY!! See, there you go. You're off thinking about seabass again. That's not what I'm talking about here. I'm talking about Lobster.

I've had some of my best bug dives at the end of the season. Some of my biggest catches and biggest bugs.



If you time it right you can get some really good combos, and the last few el nino years when the yellows never really left were some of the best. Diving yellows during the day and clobbering the bugs at night. Or the magic hour seabass runs and slide in for limits when the sun goes down. Not a bad way to spend an afternoon. But you can blow it. You can go chase ghosts and lose the best opportunity of the year to load the freezer with Pacific Gold. Best option yet, take a multi-day run to the islands and really knock em dead. Watch the weather, plan the time off and make all your bros and coworkers jealous with 60-80lb limits. Now is the time. Use it wisely and make it count.



Here's some past years closer photos to refocus your minds. -John Hughes

Congratulations to our newest member

TREVOR KENDRELL



BEHIND THE DIVER

Tickle sticks might be illegal in CA but this bug didn't get the memo- here we see Hobie's bug tickling him back.



BEHIND THE DIVER



Apparently Bamsy's
gas station sushi
didn't sit well in his
stomach.

BEHIND THE DIVER

We all know seabass spook easily so proper water entry from a boat is paramount, as demonstrated by Zylstra in the 3 step approach.

Step 1: Fins go vertical



Step 2: Proper arm rotation



Step 3: Pile drive your speargun



Introducing our newest sponsor



Salty Crew started as a movement, inspired by and highlighting that local crew of surfers, fisherman, divers, friends and family. Hard working, blue collar watermen who let their actions speak louder than their words and let their time on the water speak for itself. For the hard workers. The searchers. The risk taking, mistake making, watermen with nothing to prove. For the seafaring, the wax sharing, the grommets, young and old. For the tried and true, who've paid their dues, for those who Find Refuge in the Sea.

Here is a direct link to 40% off discount code:

<https://www.salty-crew.com/discount/LBNEPTUNES40>

The promo code **LBNEPTUNES** can also be input manually at checkout.

Sincerely,

Tom Ruiz and Jock Morrissey

THE LONG BEACH NEPTUNES APPRECIATE THE SUPPORT FROM OUR SPONSORS

ATOMIC
AQUATICS



HERRANEN
spear guns



FIND REFUGE IN THE SEA



Herbert Hoover

“Fishing is a discipline in the equality of men – for all men are equal before fish”

