

THE TRIDENT

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ISSUE 5
VOLUME 70



UP AND COMING

- May 6th- **ZOOM Virtual Awards 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!

The Trident is the official newsletter of the Long Beach Neptunes, a non-profit organization. The Trident is published monthly and is provided free of charge to the members of the Long Beach Neptunes and associates.

FISH STANDINGS

CALIFORNIA

Calico Derby	Open
Calico Bass (Paul Zylstra)	8.5 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

(John Hughes)	68 lbs
(Paul Zylstra)	38 lbs
	Open

Perpetual Big Fish Trophy

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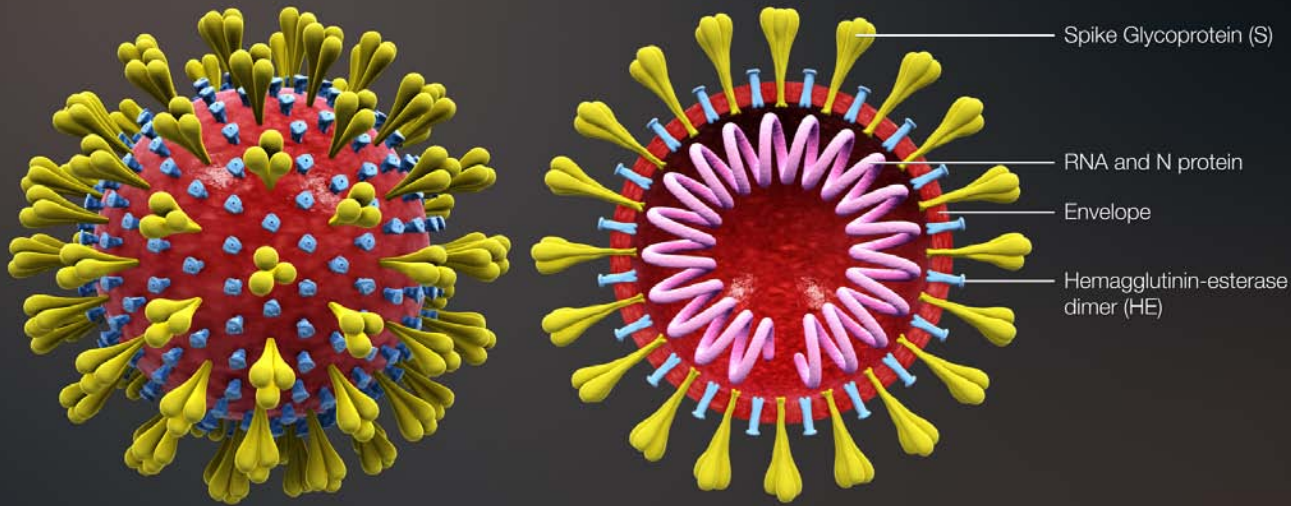
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**ATTENTION- DUE TO ORDINANCES
SURROUNDING COVID-19 THE MAY MEETING
WILL BE HELD VIRTUALLY.**

**THE COMMENCEMENT OF FUTURE MEETINGS
AND EVENTS WILL BE DETERMINED AS THEY
APPROACH.**

Dear Neptune Members,

My hope is that this note finds you, your loved ones, and extended friendships healthy and well in this concerning time. Cover up and stay safe. Honestly, the safest place we know to be is underwater. What's to report? Red tide. Cold water. And a few fish around. I did happen to find a small spot of blue water in the middle of a bed recently. As I lay motionless in the mat...a 30 lb seabass parked itself right next to my right ear. Parked! Unbelievable. Barely under the surface. Literally less than 12 inches from my head. I couldn't move. It sat there for a spell then started to make a slow U turn. Once I could no longer see his head I tried to slowly pivot my gun. Not a chance, he bolted.

Some members have been asking for a virtual meeting. Other members want their trophies- hence the Long Beach Neptunes 1st Virtual Awards Meeting is born and will occur **Wednesday, May 6th at 7pm**. We've chosen ZOOM as the platform. Meeting ID number is **895 5000 8826**. An email has been sent to all members with directions for attendance. I'm expecting a few glitches but I have faith that we will make the best of it. The biggest challenge, typically, with this media form is: background noise (dogs, kids, TV, etc.) when your microphone is on, people constantly asking "can you hear me?" (if your microphone is on, we can hear you), or people standing up from their desk and being, uh hum, in their underwear or less (Fair Warning!)

Our Articles of Incorporation have been approved by the State of California and the Federal "Not For Profit" status is in the works. The possibility of a June 13 Blue Water Meet is not looking good at this point. Stay tuned as we continue to monitor the situation and stay in contact with Catalina's event coordinator.

Lastly, Jon McMullin is refunding all monies collected for the dinner at the previously scheduled Awards Banquet.

Pray for warm blue water so that we may provide healthy clean food for our families!

Jeff Benedict

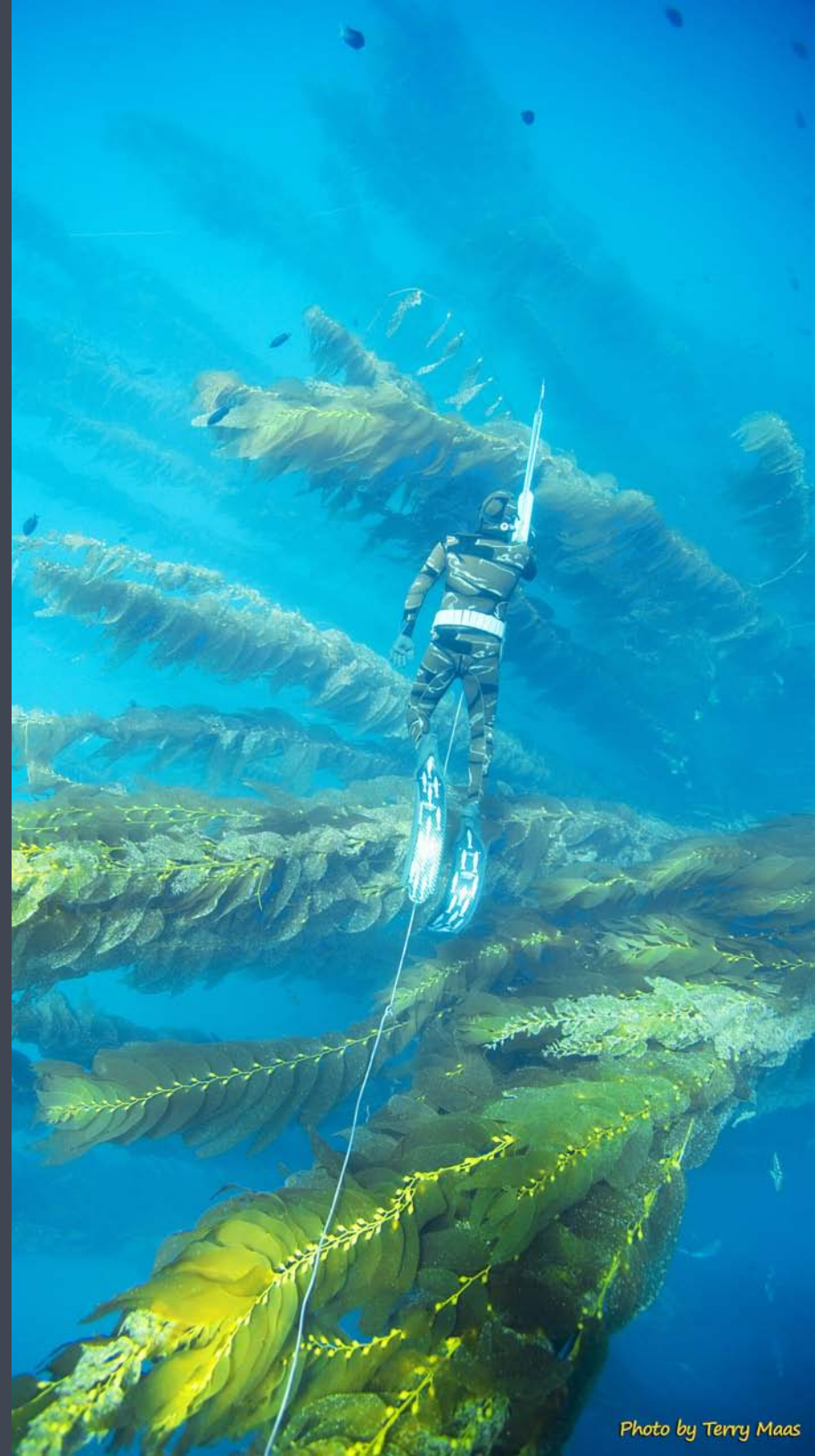


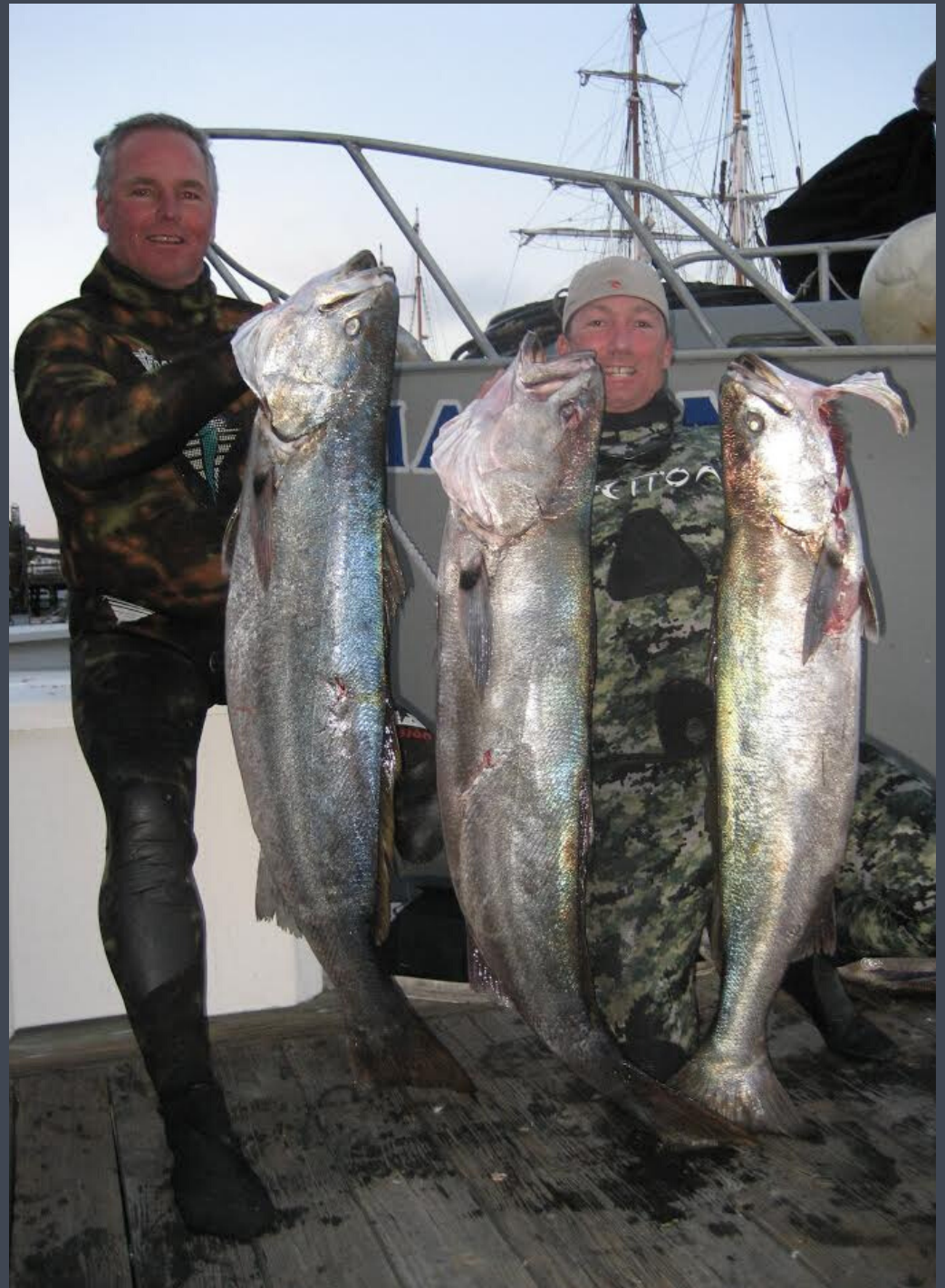
Photo by Terry Maas

Beginnings...

A John Hughes Tale

I think it was 2007. We didn't know what the hell we were doing. Back then, I remember running to Cat every time we wanted to go for seabass. It took me 3 years of looking for one before I finally shot one. I think this was the 4th or 5th year I had been hunting them and although I had shot nothing over a 12lb schoolie, I was hooked. I had bought my first Mori gun, a 62" model. I was determined to not pull the trigger the first time on anything unworthy.

So we ran around the backside again, my best friend Capt. Ron, a buddy named Kenny and myself. Since we had no idea of what we were doing, we were just jumping random beds looking for silver fish. To this day, Ron still loves to jump the random beds and by doing this, we've found some gems. We dove all damn day for nothing. I remember being around 330pm and about 3/4 ways down the back when we hit a spot that tugged on my memory banks. I told the guys I remembered fishing this spot for seabass when I worked the charter boats and maybe we should check it out. We were all pretty much over it at that point and the guys told me they were going to finally eat something and sit this one out. I put my fingers to my forehead in the shape of an "L" and said "OK Losers, I'm going to go shoot a seabass."



I jumped in the water as they cracked open sandwiches and Gatorade bottles. I swam into the bed about 82' away from the boat and from the surface saw a giant 8lb calico just kicking it behind a kelp stalk. I remember the fish fairly clearly because I had time to really study it and decide if it was worthy of the first trigger pull on my new \$1200 Mori gun. Once I decided it was, I started to line up on it but was having a problem turning my gun. The back of the gun wouldn't swing and as I looked back and tried to figure out what the hell was going on, I noticed my new 85' floatline was tight. Following that back with my eyes all the way to the boat, I saw "my buddies" had tied it off to a cleat. That's how I knew I was about 82' away from the boat because I figured they had a full 3' wrapped around the cleat.



"Hey Assholes, cut me loose!!!!" I screamed. "OK LOSER!!" was the reply to endless cackles from the boys. It seemed the guys were having a little fun with my cocky attitude and it wouldn't be the last time it came back to bite me. It was at that point the strangest thing happened. As I swung my head back into the water to look for that fat toad of a Calico, it was gone. In it's place was a big silver fish just laying there sleeping. WTH!? I was so shocked and excited I did what I would continue to do for the next 2 or 3 years when I'd spot a seabass. I promptly shot it right in the belly. I think I shot my first 15 fish in the belly and most of them were sleepers. Ah, the excitement of your first few years hunting seabass! Brings back a lot of good laughs for me and I've got a ton of good belly shot photos to prove it.

As I looked back and screamed like a little girl, "FISH ON LOSERS!!," I still remember seeing sandwiches and Gatorade bottles flying. Those guys were in the water so fast, I hadn't even dug my fish out of the great depth of 18' or so before they reached me. When I was finally able to stop hyperventilating and dig my fish out I remember thinking how lucky I was the shot hadn't torn out. I swam back to the boat and tried to calm down as the boys hit the bed. The fish was somewhere around 40lbs which was by far my biggest yet and a worthy first trigger pull on my new gun. I was in heaven.

Kenny was back shortly with one around 50 and Ron was still swimming in circles. After more gloating, we both jumped back in and decided to look some more and Ron was definitely not leaving till he got one. I was only back in the bed about 10 minutes before a 5 pack swam up to me and I shot another. This one tied up a bit deeper and I still had no idea what I was doing so I was always diving without even breathing up. I'm lucky I didn't kill myself those first few years and I can tell you I came close a few times. On this particular fish, I remember swimming down as fast as I could in a panic and just slashing wildly with my knife to cut the fish loose. I don't think I managed to hit any kelp but as I screamed back up to the surface, I damn well noticed I hit my shooting line because I saw my fish sinking towards the bottom. Aw man was I shook. I screamed (I screamed a lot in those days LOL) at the guys for help.

The fish dropped into around 60 or 65 feet and the panic had me breathing so hard I knew I was never getting there. Kenny dove on it for around 10 minutes and told me it kept swimming away right as he'd go to grab it on the bottom. He said it had finally swam into a ledge and he thought it was stuck. Ron at that point looked at me and my saucer eyes and said, "dude you've been on the surface 15 minutes, you should mellow out a little." Haha, 15 minutes later and I was still hyperventilating. I realized this and made a conscious effort to slow my breathing and calm down. I remember Kenny dropping and it just so happened I was ready and dropped right on his fins and followed him down. He had no idea I was there and when we got around 15ft from the bottom, sure enough, there was my fish in a crack. I remember clearly thinking, "I'm all the way down here, I'm getting my own fish" and pushed Kenny out of the way at the last minute and grabbed my prize. Not even realizing I was right behind him, I think he shat his suit and I remember feeling his body shudder when I locked onto his shoulder and shoved him aside. LOL. The feeling of triumph when I hit the surface was extreme.

Ron and Kenny swam around for another hour or so before Ron finally got one. Of course it was over 50 and the biggest of the day. We ate our bananas and got some food in us before we ran for home. What a day. I look back on those first few years hunting seabass with so many fond memories. Most of them with Capt. Ron. That guy is a champ and we've had so many wins and losses together, it's what great friendships are made of. I'm so grateful for that guy. To this day, he's still my best friend and to this day, that is still my favorite spot on the backside and one we just stumbled on jumping random beds.



MAKO DOWN UNDER

TERRY MAAS

Images by Terry Maas and Mike
Grummell



Late January, we traveled to New Zealand. The COVID was a distant rumor. Our guide and host is Joe Burke a former California abalone diver. Joe moved to NZ over 20 years ago and married a beautiful, charming and highly educated Maori woman. Together they have raised their mixed family with Joe working in the frigid South Island for abalone while Kura his PhD. wife researches native issues with a marine focus.

Our focus is Kingfish, which look and act almost exactly like our California yellowtail. You may remember Fathomier Rene Rojas held the world record for some time. He landed his 104-pound kingfish while diving with Joe at White Island. You might recognize this island because a few months before our trip it exploded sending caustic hot gasses into the atmosphere and mortally burning and suffocating 20 visitors to the island who had come to view the sulfurous gas that billows white over the island—hence the name.

Our first day, we visited White Island. We went close to the viewing site, a small swale near the shore and saw the petrified helicopter abandoned and destroyed by the gases that enveloped it at the explosion. It sits starkly in the valley, jet black from the gas corrosion. We landed a few California-sized yellowtail that day. One of my favorite locations ever is a reef (really a small underwater island) about a mile from White. Several years ago, I landed an 80-lb kingfish there. I found a school of 50-lb fish circling about 60 feet off the edge of the rock. The water was very clear and bait fish—the startlingly blue and pink mau mau were finning in large groups high in the water column. I had learned that unlike California yellowtail, the NZ kingies will come to investigate when you make a staccato, deep croaking sound. I'd go down to 40 feet and croak, the school would come up 10 feet.

Soon the school was in 40 feet and I was looking for a big one. I saw one come in from the edge, much bigger than the 50-pound fish swirling in the school. I aimed perfectly and stoned the fish, or so I thought. It twisted, turned and headed for the bottom as I headed to the surface. My float followed it down several feet and then floated lazily up. Darn! I lost it. Dejected, I reloaded and swam back up current to where the school circled. Suddenly I saw a jet-black kingie swimming straight vertical to the surface. I intercepted it at 15 feet and drilled it through the middle. It was my "stoned" fish. The guys in the boat said it had gone straight down to the 200 ft bottom and returned straight up in two circuits before I nailed it. I got to second-shoot my own fish!





Joe's sidekick on our trips is Ray Powell (Mr. Dive R fins.) At one point Ray had been freediving so deep he actually got the bends! His stories from around the world keeps the dinner table entertained for hours past the last bite of food. On another day this year, we motored out to a rocky reef about an hour off shore. Shoals of bait fish flashed on the surface, evidence of predators below. Joe and Ray dropped me up up-current from a submerged rocky reef 20-feet at the shallowest. The current was roaring and the rocky area was small. When the drop from the boat was accurate, I hit the rock perfectly, and this is where the kingies circled. One drop, croaking as usual, a long sleek mako shark slid by apparently attracted to the sound. Back on the boat I asked the guys if it was OK to shoot a Mako. We knew if treated correctly, they made excellent food.

Half an hour later, having drifted well beyond the rocky prominence, if was in about 30 feet in dark spooky water when a large bright-blue mako swept up from the bottom, again apparently attracted to my croaking. It swam within feet just below me offering a perfect "kill" shot. I took the shot with my 5/16" Daryl Wong and hit it perfectly mid-head in the midline. It immediately stopped swimming, opened its mouth wide and arched its back almost double back. Clearly it was mortally injured. Anxious to get out of the water, I hastily jumped on the boat floating nearby and handed off the float line to Joe. The fish recovered and together we were just barely able to tie off to a cleat. It started swimming powerfully on the surface in a circle at the end of my 75-foot line stretched to the max. Ray jumped into the water with a powerhead just as the beast made a massive jump into the air. It was hard to believe that the terminal gear could handle the stress. My Mori slip tip stayed firm.

After multiple attempts while simultaneously chasing then dodging the toothed creature one of the powerheads put an end to the fight. As we brought the shark to the side it was clear it was going to be impossible to bring it aboard—we estimated it weight at 400 pounds. Having worked as a deckie on fishing boats for years, Ray is one of the best fish filleters I've seen. Our plan was to separate the head from the body and bring it aboard in parts. Ray jumped over and made quick work cutting loose the massive head while I filmed and a buddy diver acted as shotgun should the blood draw other sharks.

By this time it was time to return to shore. The carcass had been very effectively bled, but there was much attention needed to make a quick butcher job before the dreaded ammonia ruined the prized flesh. Working tirelessly over the next hour, Ray carefully and methodically filleted and then staked out the 4 giant slabs he initially cut. The steaks were quickly iced down and by the evening the fish was at the smoke house. Coincidentally, the local Maori were presiding over the passing of one of their tribe. It is tradition that family and friends travel for miles to spend three days mourning the departed. The local hosts are traditionally expected to provide the food for the many relatives attending. This one fish, along with a few kingie, fed them for days.

I love going to New Zealand in January and diving with Joe. It's like a free extra week of summer in the middle of winter. Additionally, while the time change is a day ahead, the clock is only 3 hours behind. This means, that except for the day, your body clock time is just off by three hours, similar to going to Hawaii or New York.

I am grateful for the efforts of Joe and Ray to put us on the fish and for the never-ending fish and ocean stories they share. Hopefully COVID will be a distant memory next January.



Bill Peratt called me on April 2 and told me to turn off the F'n news, get my ass off the couch and go diving. He said that the WSB were around. I quickly checked reports and learned that conditions were calling for 4-5' swells and 15 - 20 mph winds in the later afternoon. The vis did not look that good either. However, I decided to toss my gear in the truck and banzai down to the Wuzza Fuzz where I met Bill. We tossed our gear in the boat (in a manner that would make OCD Robert Strolbach further mental) and quickly left Huntington Harbor.

The swell was directly off the front of our bow, but the wind was not bad yet. We galloped upswell and hit a couple well known spots along the west side of Palos Verdes. Cold water, hazy 8' vis and no sign of fish. We raised the anchor and headed around the corner toward the south bay where we dropped the hook again outside of a well known, large kelp bed. Vis looked slightly better on the surface and we slipped in the water.

FIRST LOCAL WHITE SEABASS





Bill headed into the middle of the bed and I worked the outside edge. Since the vis was not that great, I decided to creep along the surface most of my time so that I would reduce the chance of spooking any fish. The time was around 3pm, and the tide was halfway between a low to 3.5' high. Half an hour later, I barely made out the silhouette of WSB slightly ahead, laying motionless about 15+ feet down within the kelp. I briefly considered making a shallow dive before quickly deciding that it would probably spook the fish. I froze, slowly maneuvered the gun over the shoulders and let the shaft fly - hitting him slightly in front of the dorsal fin. The fish went berserk, swimming up and outward along the surface before turning around and running back into the kelp. I wasn't sure how well I hit him, so I gave the fish plenty of line which resulted in the typical WSB kelp "sh** show" on the bottom.

I secured my gun and made several dives before finding the fish just off the bottom, wrapped tightly head up in the kelp. I noted that my slipped tip had exited his lower, opposite cheek; well secured and giving me some relief that I did not have to act too quickly. I surfaced, rested a few minutes before diving down about 45' and cutting the kelp below the fish. The wrap was so intense that it took two dives to cut the kelp and drag the mess to the surface.

The fish weighed about 43lbs; not a monster, but a decent fish considering that this was my first real WSB trip of the season. The wind & swell were up, so we headed back around the corner to seek some shelter and hit a couple other spots for nothing before returning to HB.

Thanks Bill for getting my ass off the couch!

**NARRATIVE BY
JOHN CARPENTER**

Some of our younger members are reading this article title thinking “what the F’k is a fortnight!” or “This old geezer (dude perhaps) doesn’t know how to spell Fortnite” which my 21-year old son tells me is an award winning video game from Epic! Well, in this case, it refers to a two-week period I was able to get 4 trips to PV with almost rewards on each.

I stipulate “almost”, as trip 1 did not start off well. It was with brother Neptune’s Parkford, Davis and our beloved leader, President Benedict. I had been lead to the deeper outside kelp by a sighting an hour earlier and was working mid-water column in about fifty feet depth. It was early in a drop that I saw a single fish swimming along the bottom, partially obscured by a kelp stalk. I allowed myself to drop freely toward where the I anticipated the fish to emerge from the kelp, when it did, I realized the entire bottom of the ocean floor was moving, White Sea Bass as far in each direction as the 35’ visibility allowed me to see!!

I selected what looked like a larger fish and continued to drop toward it, my gun aiming and awaiting missile lock, the surrounding fish seeming uncharacteristically undisturbed by my presence. I locked in and let fly, sticking the fish in the head, a stone shot!! I took a hold of the shooting line and swam the fish slowly up with me out of the fifty foot of depth, no problem. She kicked gently but was for most part, incapacitated.

As I drew the fish within 6 feet of me, I noticed it was big, and also that the tip had not penetrated the head fully, obviously hitting bone, and at that very moment, the tip fell out of the fish and it swam slowly into the murk. I screamed expletives into my snorkel, scrambled to reload and helplessly chased the fish in the direction it had last headed. I searched the bottom for an hour, hoping maybe it had just sank down to die, but no luck!



A FORTUNATE FORTNIGHT AT PALOS VERDES

Folklore by Seamus
Callaghan

I typically don't talk much about the fish that got away, lest write an article about them. But in this case, the images of this thing within my finger tips, the hindsight questions of what I could or should have done differently, haunted me! But it also lit a fire in me to get back out there and do it again. Not before changing my shaft and tip, as I had concluded from my post analysis, that this was obviously an equipment issue, no way could I have blundered such an opportunity. (Never underestimate the power of denial!!)

However, whatever it was, it did turn things around, as I was rewarded with a 46# fish the very next day. This fish again was taken out of a school of similar size fish.

That did not stay the nightmares from the day of blunder, so with the skies of thunder and, i was out there again with a fellow diver, Mike Feldman of the San Diego Freedivers.



I had been working the outside edge for about an hour, the 40-55 feet of water that had revealed fish two trips in a row now. Again, early into a drop down, I saw a nice sized fish swimming up off the bottom. I again allowed myself to drop from above, aim, missile lock, fire! It took off like a freight train, spooling my reel before I reached the surface. Not knowing the placement of the arrow and still having flashbacks of the one that got away, I swam with the fish so as to lessen the strain on the tip.

The fish tangled in about 40 feet of water and upon my drop to assess the situation, I could see I had a good shot. Still paranoid, I grabbed the fish and brained it, just to be sure it wasn't coming back to life. The clean up was quick, the fish was on my stringer and back to the boat, where it weighed in at 53 pounds.



Mike Feldman was still diving and after 6 continuous hours in the water, his hard work paid off, as he returned with a 38 pounder.

The story is not quite done, I still had the itch, and two days later I was out again with President Benedict, Mr. Davis and Jim Dexter.

And guess what, I was working the outside edge again, this time having put 4 hours in the water with just one sighting. I told quitters Benedict and Davis, already dressed and done for the day, I was going to check the anchor and make one more dive as had heard a little croaking.

Looking down on a dive, as that's where all my fish had emerged from, the croaking suddenly got intense!! I looked up and right there in front of me in mid-water column, was a massive school of nice sized fish. Again, seemingly undisturbed by my presence, I closed the distance and took a shot on a closer fish. She tangled up on the bottom, which had me a little on edge, as had seen several 7 Gill and Soup Fin sharks in the area.

However, the sharks only revealed themselves in my head, I was able to cut out the fish without incident and swim it back to the boat and waive it in the faces of my fellow divers! It was just 40 pounds, but this made it all the more rewarding.

The trip after was met with red tide and an end to my spree, but was a memorable two weeks of staying at home order, a silver lining to the dark cloud we are experiencing with COVID Virus.

Wish all the best to fellow Neptune's and hope to see you all out there again soon!

Timing Is Everything

Mike Marsh



This is especially true when hunting sea bass, or nowadays, just getting access to the surf zone. With all the closures due to COVID-19, making your way to the water's edge is nearly out of the question, unless your boat is in a slip. Not thinking the powers that be would have a few dirt trails leading to a not so secret spot at PV shut down, Steve Parkford arrived only to find a delineator stating that trail access was closed. WHAT THE F---, this certainly can't pertain to us. So we did what any law-abiding Neptune would do, we suited up. After keeping our distance 6' clear of the delineator, we made our way down and prepared to enter the knee-high surf. The water was 60 to 61 and the visibility was 25', ideal conditions to say the least. Steve and I remained in the same general area for the first hour, then drifted apart. The kelp was amazingly abundant which made surface swimming more challenging. Two hours into the dive, I saw the back of a large white making its way through the clearing 10 to 15 feet below me. Slowly lowering my Riffe Islander I immediately spooked the fish which never to be seen again that day. There were silver flashes and tail booms, which could have possibly been other white in the same area. Steve also had a sighting. While lining up on a good size fish, he pulled the trigger only to see his shaft make a hard turn missing the target. Something was bent, the tip, shaft or possibly both. Needless to say, a trip to Mori's shop was in order. Our day ended with a nut-busting hike back to the vehicles and for me a double-double at In and Out Burger. With images of the one that got away haunting me through the night, I made a plan to head back the next day. Sent a text to Steve regarding my plan, but he was a no go. That was until I texted him "Whose going to carry my fish up the hill?". That did the trick, he was on his way, but told me not to wait. After two hours in the water, while getting cold, disillusioned, and having absolutely no sightings, I decided to head back to the exit zone when I noticed something to my left. Swimming at the surface at arms reach was the image of white sea bass. We were both swimming parallel with thick strands of kelp separating us like an opaque curtain. Not able to dive, the fish was too close, I eased my gun slowly towards it hoping not to spook it and pulled the trigger. To my amazement, the yellow line began to spool. I applied periodic finger pressure to the line to somewhat slow it down, but hopefully not enough that it would tear off. I followed the line along the surface 60 feet or so until it dropped straight down to a massive kelp kaleidoscope. The stuff was everywhere. It's the kind of annoying kelp that wants to cling to you, like a prom date gone wrong.

Dove to where the fish might be but was unable to see it amongst the kelp. Dam, did I lose it? The line tugged and I could feel the weight. It was still on. On the second dive, I saw the head of the white and it was legal. My shooting line was twisted around this kelp ball, so I had to be careful not to cut it while freeing the kelp. Of course 5 minutes into it, I lose my knife. Good thing I always carry a backup. Who knows how much time was spent on digging this fish out, but by the time I was near finished Steve appeared. Oh good, he can help carry this fish up the trail. NOT. Understandably, he was on a renewed mission to find one as well. With the white on my stringer, contemplating the exit and hill climb, I made my way to just before the surf zone, when something caught my eye. That's baby yellowtail. We both moved on and then a school of 8 to 10 pounders appeared. Crap, load your gun. That was the thought that came to me while forgetting the 30 plus pounder already attached to my stringer. The school playfully circled me until I pulled back the last band, then disappeared. That would prove to be a good thing in regards to getting back to my truck. The exit was a bit of a nightmare. Making it through the low surf wasn't too bad. It's a juggling act hanging on to your gun while pulling those dam fins off all while the receding surf wants to drag this entire mess back out again. "My God", I made it to the rocky shore, "now what" as I looked at the formidable ascent awaiting me. Where is Steve when you need him? I laid the white down well past the surf zone, so I could regroup and walk the 100 yards to don the shoes that I left in the brush and to figure how to one trip it up to the heart pumping summit. I stuffed my fins, mask, and snorkel through my weight belt and turned back to grab my reward. Dammit, the seagulls were dive-bombing my fish. Having bruised my right foot and toe exiting and unable to move very fast, I heaved rocks at the flying rats to protect my catch. Crap, Steve always brings a mess bag in the off chance he gets a fish. He's a smart man. Well, I'm going to just have to neanderthal it, so over the shoulder, it went. One step at a time, huffing and puffing the whole way and stopping half a dozen times to catch my breath and adjust the fish, I made it to flat ground. I flopped the white onto the grass as passer-bys slowed for a look and take photos, not knowing what it took this 65-year-old to get it here. What a sport. Two of the onlookers, Keegan and Eden McNamee of Redondo Beach stopped to inquire about the catch. I told them that I was a Long Beach Neptune and gave them the reader's digest version. I asked if they would take a photo of the weighted fish. They agreed so I pulled out my scale, hopped up on my tailgate to weigh the five-foot-long fish. It weighed in at 34.7 lbs. Thanks to them, I have photos to remind me of this challenging and rewarding experience.

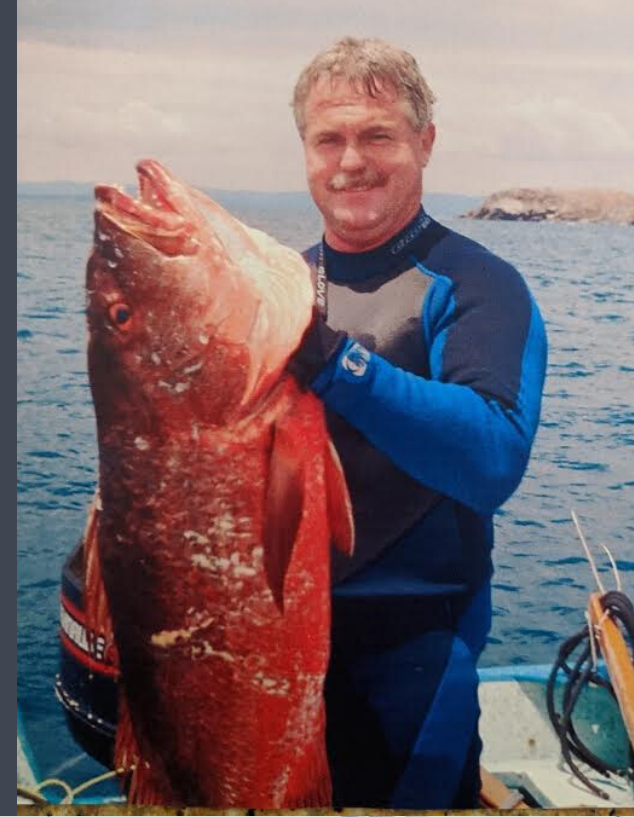


FEATURE DIVER

JOHN CARPENTER



I was born in Michigan City, Indiana, on the south shore of Lake Michigan. Our family moved to Riverside, Ca., when I was about 3 years old. Like many divers from my era, my curiosity with the ocean was sparked by episodes of "The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau" and Lloyd Bridges', "Sea Hunt." I recall reenacting Sea Hunt scenes by tying a cardboard shoe box on my back and slowly chasing my brothers around the house while holding a plastic knife! During summer, my mom packed up the neighborhood kids and took weekly trips to Corona Del Mar. I have fond memories of chasing large spider crabs on the jetty and spearing sand dabs with my 5' pole spear. I always gazed into deeper water and wondered what lies beneath. Around the age of 13-14 years, I joined a scuba club at the local YMCA. The pool was 14' deep and I cherished Wednesday evenings when I learned to scuba dive and practice other diving skills, including freediving. I recall checkout dives at Divers Cove, Laguna Beach and my first weekend camping/dive trip to La Bufadora, Mexico where I made my first night dive!

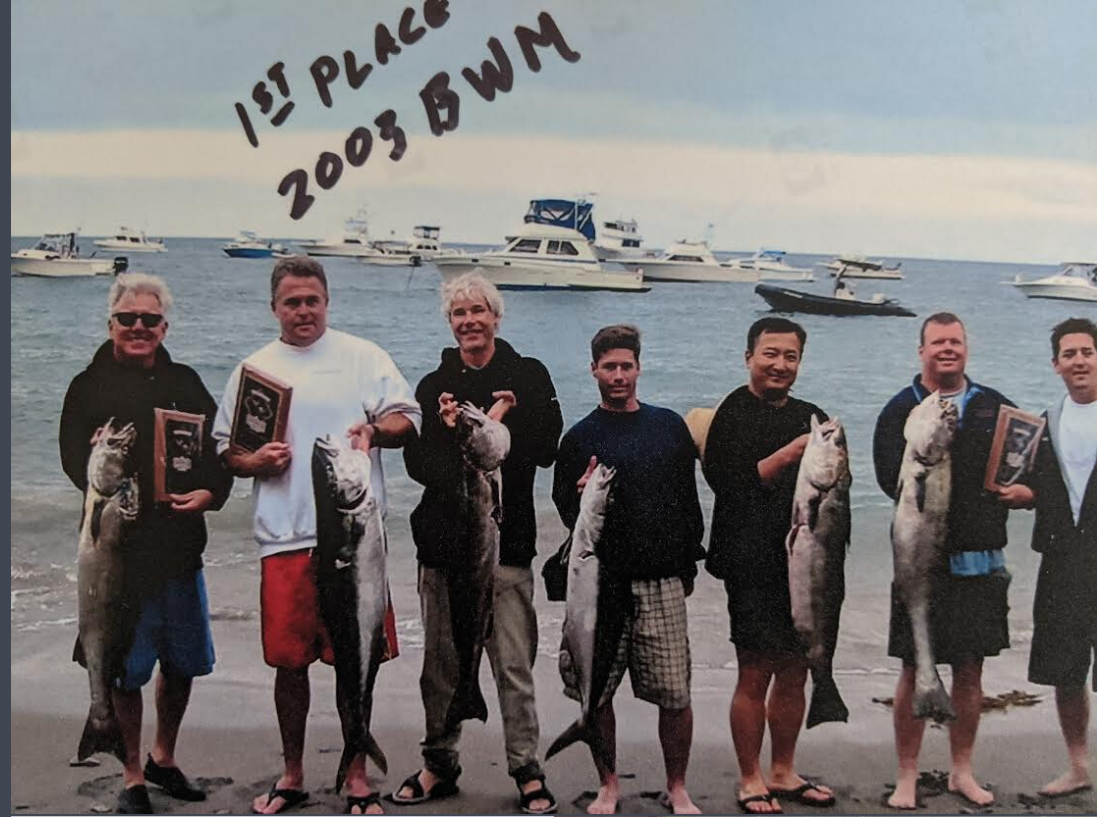


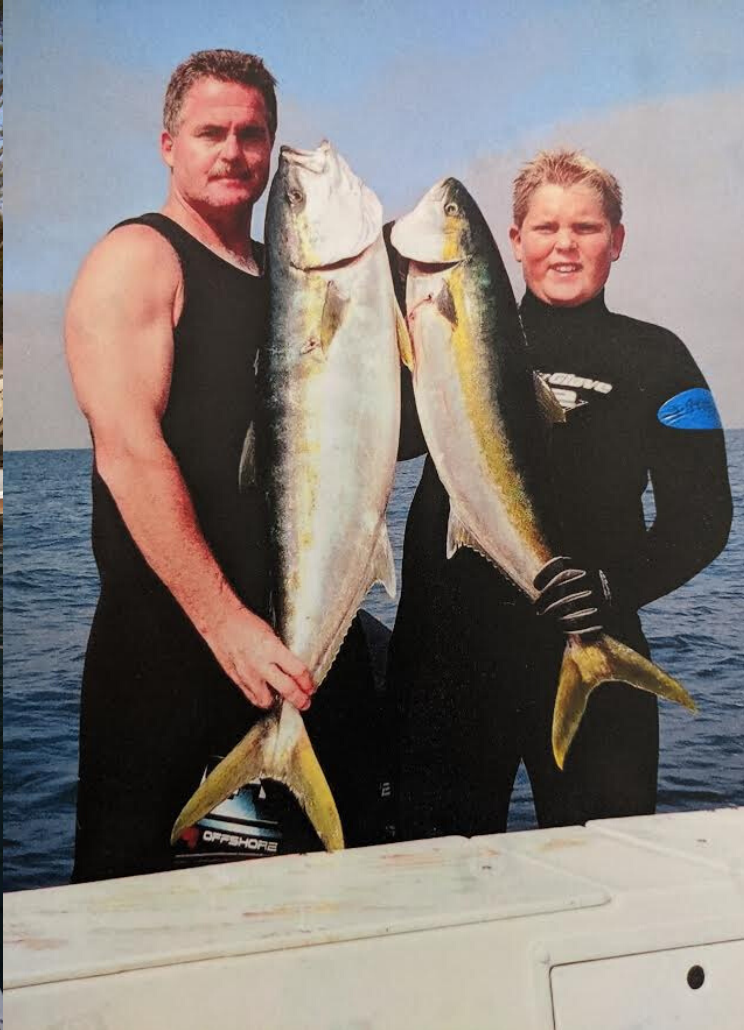


At 13 yrs old, I received my NAUI Junior Scuba Diving certification that allowed me to dive with an adult certified diver. The leader of the YMCA scuba club was in the Air Force and was transferred, which resulted in the club dissolving. The YMCA dive club and love of diving kept me away from many bad influences. I started diving out of a dive shop in Riverside called "Jay's Skin Diving," that was actually owned by Ron Mullin's father. I became friends with an adult diver and received my Open Water Certification at the age of 14 years old. That is when I started diving frequently off SoCal - many beach trips and charters on an old scuba "cattle" charter boat named the "Scuba Queen" out of Long Beach. An old salt named Pete Greenwood was the Captain and frequently mezmorized me with many stories of the "old days" of diving. I have many fond memories of Catalina, Santa Barbara and San Nicolas Islands as well as a few trips out of Port Hueneme. I recall the days of HUGE abalone, lobster and plenty of fish - mostly Sheepshead and Calico. Circa 1978 - I actually had my first real experience freediving/spearfishing south of Puertecitos, Baja. I was fishing with my girlfriend's grandpa when he dropped me off around some rocks to dive. I quickly learned that the scuba was scaring off "large orange fish with gnarly teeth!" I placed my scuba tank on the boat and went back to the rocks where I speared some nice Pargo. I didn't know their name then, but they tasted great! I had no idea how that freediving/spearfishing experience would later reenter my life forever.



I went off to college where I played football and, yes, went to class. At 23 yrs old, I graduated college in 1984 and became a Police Officer for the City of Riverside. About 4 years later, I met a young man by the name of Dave Smith. He told me about his father, Duane, a true LEGEND of the Long Beach Neptunes. Duane was a terrific man, and introduced me to the world of freediving/spearfishing. Duane, Dave and Steve Smith took me on several dive trips to Catalina Island on their boat, "Just For Fun," where I immediately got hooked on freediving/spearfishing. I recall one of the first trips where Duane swam back to the boat and threw a 25lb Yellowtail into the boat while exclaiming, "Son, this is what it's all about!" At that moment, I knew that I was hooked to our sport forever. I became a member of the Long Beach Neptunes around 1989. Duane introduced me to several well known Neptunes: Dale Cote, Harry Ingram, Wes Morrissey and Steve Alexander. I have great memories of sitting in Dale Cote's garage while Duane and Dale taught me to rig guns, tie band rubbers, make float lines and repair equipment. I bought a couple inflatable and trailer boats over the years and made several trips to Baja with Duane Smith and son Dave, Paul Byrd, Dale, Harry, Wes and Steve.





I served as Vice President of the Long Beach Neptunes in 1997, President in 1998, and I might have served as Secretary prior. I've received most of our annual fish awards; two of the most prestigious being the Kent McIntyre in 2007 and Big Fish Out of Country in 1996. I completed my King Neptune #35 Award circa late 1990s or early 2000. As far as annual competitions, I placed 1st in the first Tri-Club/Omer Neilson Beach Meet in 1999, Blue Water Meet 2003 and 2015 Fall Classic. A couple of my most cherished awards were receiving the Mr. Neptune Award in 2014 and Life Member in 2019. Freediving and being on the ocean are an integral part of my life and I cherish the camaraderie of our club. I look forward to many more exciting experiences - Dive Safe!



BEHIND **THE** DIVER



Paul was really putting everyone to shame on this trip with his big fish and big meat.



BEHIND *THE* DIVER

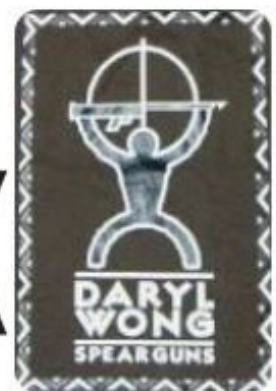


Kyle always looks fly when doing fish curls.

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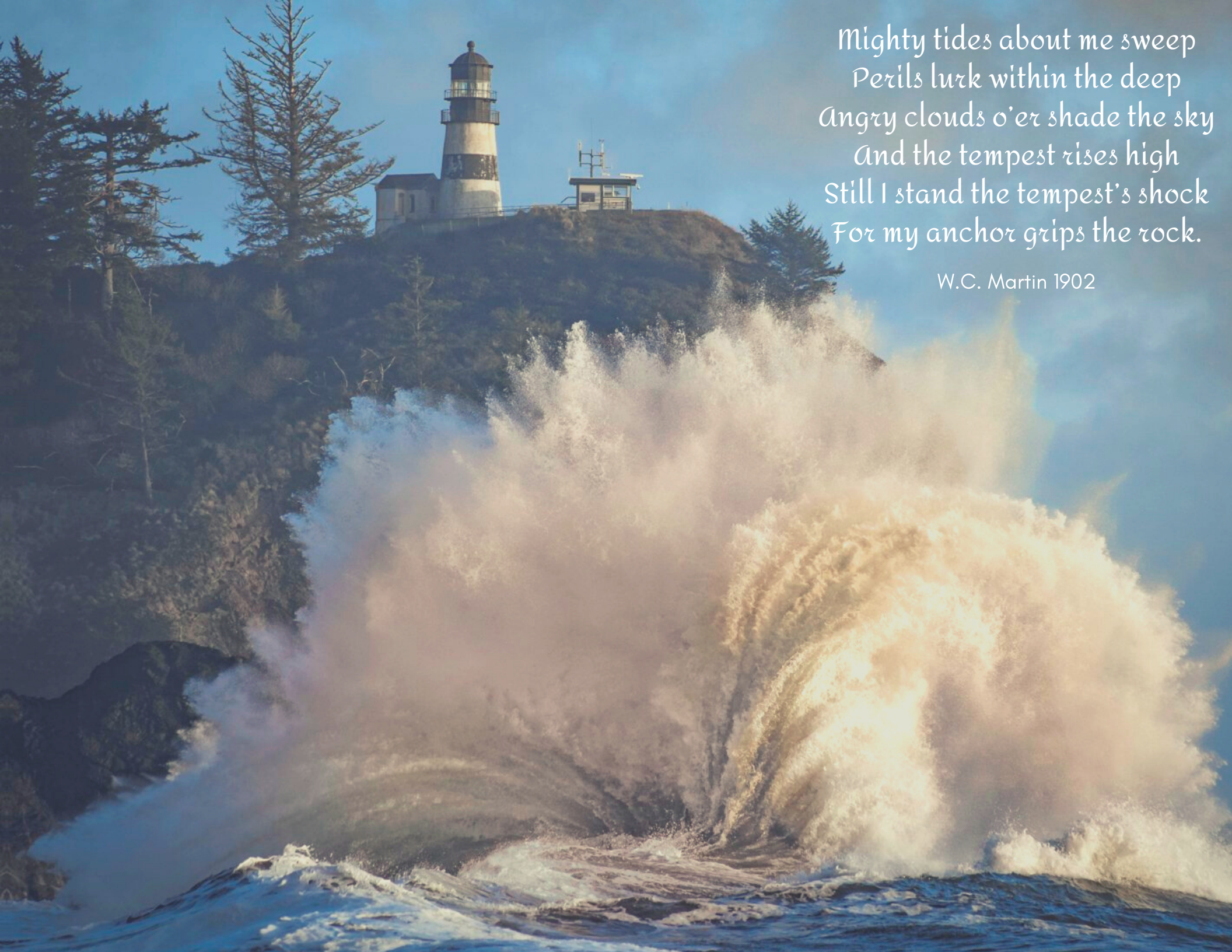


FIND REFUGE IN THE SEA





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Mighty tides about me sweep
Perils lurk within the deep
Angry clouds o'er shade the sky
And the tempest rises high
Still I stand the tempest's shock
For my anchor grips the rock.

W.C. Martin 1902