

THE TRIDENT

JUNE 2021 VOL. 72 ISSUE 6



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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.

2021 CALENDAR

- June 2nd - Monthly Club Meeting 7PM
IN PERSON at Me 'n' Ed's Pizzeria
- June 5th - Blue Water Meet
- June 16th - Limit on White Seabass (*Atractoscion nobilis*) increases to 3 per day
- July 31st - Deadline for Picture Submission
- October 2nd - Spiny Lobster Season Opens
- October 9th - Fall Classic
- November 25th - Thanksgiving
- December 4th - Christmas Party at Acapulcos in Marina Pacifica Long Beach
- December 25th - Christmas

FISH STANDINGS

CALIFORNIA

Calico Derby	Closed
Calico Bass	Juan-Carlos Aguilar - 5.62 lbs
White Seabass	Jeff Benedict - 72.0 lbs
Yellowtail	Open
Halibut	Open
Sheephead	Open
Bonito	Open
Barracuda	Open
Dorado	Open
Bluefin Tuna	Open
Lobster	Open

OUT OF STATE/COUNTRY AWARDS

Yellowfin Tuna	Open
Reef Fish	Jorge Veliz Ramirez - Grouper 78.94 lbs
Pelagic, non-tuna	John Hughes - Yellowtail 45.5 lbs

Kent McIntyre Award

Jeff Benedict - 72.0 lb WSB
Steve Parkford - 64.2 lb WSB
Ron Warren - 60.687 lb WSB

Perpetual Big Fish Trophy

Jeff Benedict - 72.0 lb WSB



MONTHLY CLUB MEETING

JUNE 2nd, 7:00 PM



This month's club meeting will be held IN PERSON, at
Me-n-Ed's Pizzeria

4115 Paramount Blvd, Lakewood, CA 90712

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER:



Eric W. Ching

**Marine Safety Captain - Rescue Vessel Program Manager
HUNTINGTON BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Let's get together and have a good time!



The Long Beach Neptunes

58th ANNUAL BLUEWATER MEET

JUNE 5, 2021

WEIGH IN @ 4 PM SHARP

BUFFALO PARK, TWO HARBORS, SANTA CATALINA ISLAND

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION IS JUNE 3, 2021

[CLICK HERE TO APPLY](#)

EDITOR'S NOTE

Rolling into June, I'm always amazed with what our club members manage to find in the depths.

Huge fish have been hitting the decks lately, and even this ugly dude (right) managed to find a couple.

I can only hope that everyone reading this has gotten a chance to get slimy, and fill the freezer in the process.

Good luck to all competing in the Blue Water Meet!

**Juan-Carlos
Aguilar**





**John and
the boys
hauling
in the
slug
yellows**

**Larry
with a
fat
ghost**





SEABASS SEASON

Cold, dirty water with hopes of a big one!

I had been in a drought. No seabass seen or shot since 2019. The 2021 season started the same as previous years. Putting in time with high expectations and never giving up.

Lyle Davis and I had probably only put in 5 days this year before I scored. This trip consisted of Lyle, Steve Parkford, Buzz, and myself. We made the run from Newport to PV in search of some better vis and big hopes of finding the fish. It was quickly approaching 2 pm with no real promising signs. We decided to make a big move to the other side where we had seen good surface bait action much earlier in the day. This was to be our last of 6 stops. We were immediately greeted with aquarium like conditions and an abundance of life. Even if there were no seabass to be had, the dive was a '10'.

I had been in the water for a brief time when I heard Lyle yelling to Buzz. "Dive to the bottom" then more unidentifiable conversation. Buzz is fairly new to the sport, so I assumed Lyle was just coaching, as he does so well. Although the yelling continued for some time. I finally decided to swim by and see what the ruckus was about. Low and behold, Buzz had a beautiful chrome 50 lb fish in his hands. WOOHOO! So stoked. This was to be Buzz's first seabass ever! This is a life time experience we can all relate too.

I left the party and swam up current to the front of the bed. It wasn't 10-15 minutes before I spotted three 50 lb fish below me on the bottom. They were in no hurry and had no clue that they were being watched. Then I noticed what appeared to be a shark following behind them.

It all seemed to be in slow motion. We had seen 7 Gills and Soupfins earlier in the day so it didn't seem out of place. This fish was just that wide. But then I saw the tail, OMG it was a bass! She was following the three males with only one thing on her mind.

I waited for the train to pass and dropped in from behind putting a solidly centered shot in the back of her neck. The fish seemed more annoyed than surprised. She ran out only about 30' before wrapping the first stringers of kelp, then made a U turn back toward me and proceeded to wrap another bunch of kelp. Round and around and around, about 3 times. The fish wrapped itself tight to the kelp and proceeded rub against it like a dog rubbing up against a sofa. She gave the appearance of having an itch that she couldn't quite scratch. I can still visualize the run as I was in roughly 25-30' of gin clear water.

I had used my Wong 50 that day so I was a bit unsure of exactly how much penetration had taken place on a fish of this mass. When I dove down to assess I was in awe of the size of her head! It was huge! I cut a gill and surfaced. With concern now of a shark joining the mix and seeing other divers' photos with missing bites out of their fish, my goal was to quickly subdue the fish and get it in the boat. I dove once more for the kill. It was the end of the day so I had no problem just cutting my line to quickly get the fish up and work back to the boat. I stopped to attach a float to my gun and headed for the swim step.

All the guys were on the deck still celebrating Buzz's first seabass ever, and rightly so. They had no idea I was even on a fish. I quietly grabbed the swim step and hollered to Lyle, "little help". He instinctively walked toward the stern with no clue what I was up to. It's when I raised the fishes head up that his eyes got so big and his mouth fell open. "Oh my God! You got a monster!" As he reached down to help pull it onto the deck he just kept saying,

"OMG, it's huge! it's got be 80 or 90-lbs!"

We were all in awe! Its size came into perspective as it lay on the deck next to the 49lb fish Buzz had just shot. "That's a fish of a lifetime" Parkford yells! We were all so excited at this beautiful early season fish we all had hoped to see.



It was getting late now so I quickly jumped back in to retrieve my gear and head for home. Lyle immediately gets on the phone to Balboa Anglers requesting they stay late as we raced back to Newport to get an official weight on this fish. There was so much stoke and excitement as the Half Dozen raced the clock back to Newport.

We pulled up to the dock and dragged the fish to the scale. As they began to hoist the fish, word was spreading, and a small crowd began to gather. Now the digits on the scale are beginning to climb, 50.....60.....70.....72! It wasn't 90 although our perspective was a bit off since we hadn't seen a fish other than Buzz's for quite some time. The fish definitely had potential for being much heavier as the stomach was empty and roe was minimal.

Funny thing was, we were intending to keep this quiet and head back to the same spot the next morning. Yet before the night was over, someone in the crowd had posted the fish on IG listing it at 73lbs by Lyle Davis of the Half Dozen. Ha, so much for keeping it quiet in Southern California.

The next morning Lyle and I ran back for a repeat although the conditions had totally changed. I'm thinking of possibly upgrading and patting myself on the back for being so patient on selecting this fish. Well, As soon as I saw three heads start to come out from behind some stringers.....I blasted the first one not even waiting to see the entirety of the quantity or size of the fishes. So much for patience! This fish went 50lbs and I was grateful. I must have totally screwed the bed at that point as no more fish were to be seen that day.

I am forever grateful to Steve Parkford for the introduction to this obsession and friends like Lyle Davis that are never short with invitations to share knowledge and space for one of a kind life adventures over and over again. There are many more Long Beach Neptune friends that I will acknowledge in the future although you will never rightfully know how much this fellowship means to me.

I thank you all!

Jeff Benedict





Parkford, Marsh and a San Diego diver shoot yellow tail galore at Seamus's "San Carlos Yellowtail Tournament" - 8 out of ten dives singles, doubles and schools of YT were seen. But there's always a hitch: all 15-20 lbs. Super event, tons of raffle prizes and 60 divers! Super fun time!

Links to the underwater world

[Palos Verde Reef Restoration Project](#)

[Snipe Eel Article](#)

[Football Anglerfish Article](#)



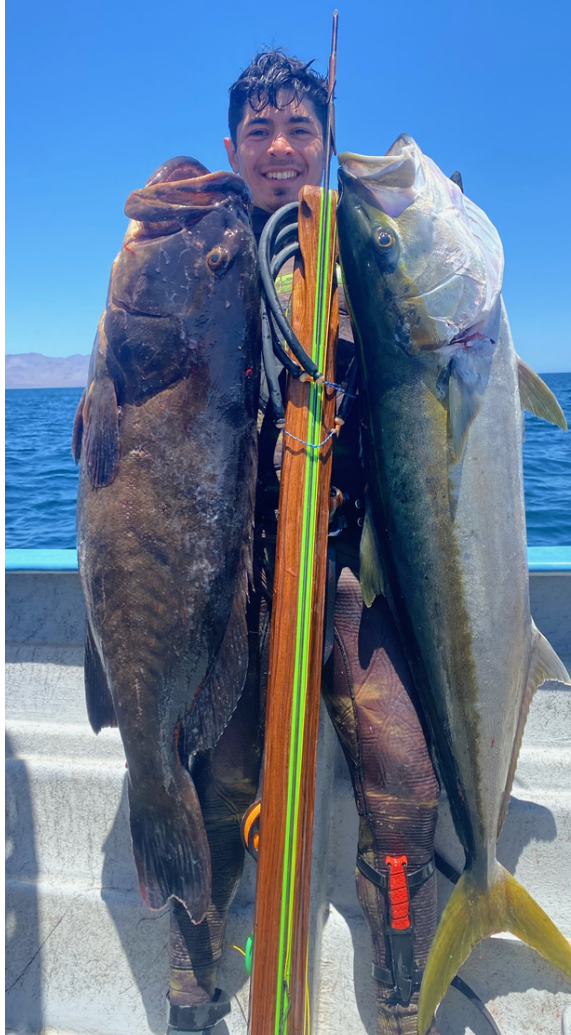
**Please welcome the newest member of
the Long Beach Neptunes
Jorge Veliz**



First day of the trip to BOLA is one I'll remember for a long time.

I was blessed with an opportunity to shoot my PB Gulfie early in the day, my first kill as a Neptune. First drop I went down to about 40 feet and held back from shooting at a school of decent size yellows. 2nd drop of the day I was a bit deeper and made a drop straight to the bottom, I scratched a rock and looked around for a bit, then I turned my head and looked back only to see a monster gulfie looking at me head on. I turned away and pretended it wasn't there as I swam around the rock next to me and got the gun positioned, then I took a few kicks to close the gap and let the shaft fly.

The spear pierced it's bottom lip and was toggled inside it's mouth. He turned and immediately pretzeled the shaft before he tried going head first into a hole. I immediately grabbed the line and kicked hard to the top and was able to keep him from holing up. After the quick fight he was done and came up to the surface with ease. That ended up being the first and only shot taken in the entire day as it was more than enough grouper for the day and absolutely crushed the yellows on yoyos and surface iron the rest of the day. The fish went 78.94 on the digital scale, super happy to have beat my old gulf grouper record and biggest fish for me ever.



Jorge Veliz



**Captain Ron
with a
massive 60
pound
White
Seabass**



**John
"Hollywood"
Hughes with
a 55.3 pound
ghost**



Juan
got
one
too



This article was written by my mentor Skip Hellen about his mentor Al Schnepershoff.

Skip was a member of the Neptunes many years ago. The world record holder for white seabass for quite a while and dove in the era of the club where a lot of controversy prevailed. When you talk to some of the old timers and mention Skip's name, you will definitely hear some colorful stories.

Skip was a lot of things in life (controversial for sure) but he was to me, respectful and a hunter with natural instinct I only wish to possess.

I spent a lot of time on the boat with Skip over the years and heard countless stories of the diving/exploring he did with Terry Maas and others.

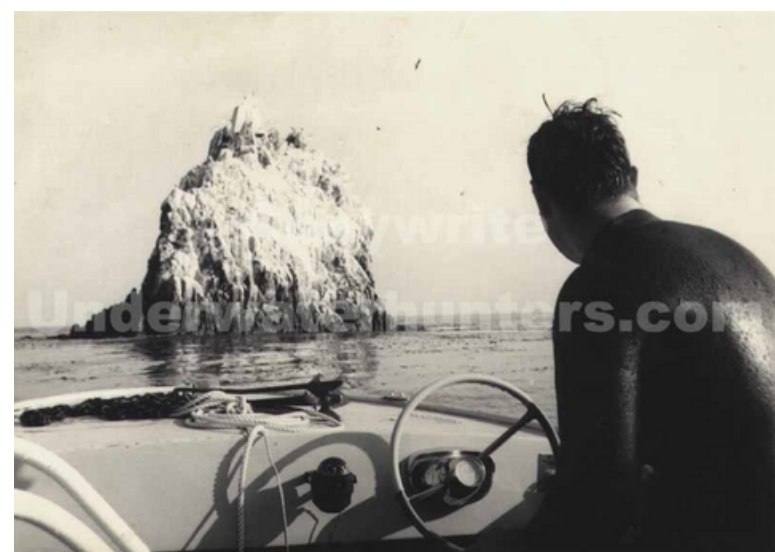
I will write my own mentor story about Skip soon but I thought the history in his story was pretty amazing and appropriate. Skip gave me this article to read in 2010 and I hope you like it.

-Paul Zylstra

My King Neptune

By: Dr. Skip Hellen

A story about how I met my mentor and King Neptune, Al Schnepershoff Jr. perhaps the greatest all-round spear fisherman ever



Al at Ship Rock Catalina - 1963



Al on a big wave Laguna Beach - 1970

It was a foggy morning around 4 AM in March 1965; I was sitting on a bus bench on the corner of a major intersection in Lynwood, California with all my dive gear waiting to be picked up by perhaps the greatest spearfishermen of his time, Al Schnepershoff Jr.

In those days, I spent a lot of time hanging around the Ski & Dive shop on Lakewood Blvd. in Bellflower, hoping to find a dive partner or get on a dive trip. In February 1964, I got my LA county scuba certification through a course at that Ski & Dive shop. Now all I need was some equipment and a dive partner with a car and even better a boat.

I met Al over the phone while hanging out at the dive shop one day. It may have been fate when the call came in! Dave Piet, the store manager, answered the phone. I eavesdropped on the call; it seemed to be one of the people I had been reading so much about in the local dive publications (Pacific Underwater News) Al Schnepershoff Jr.

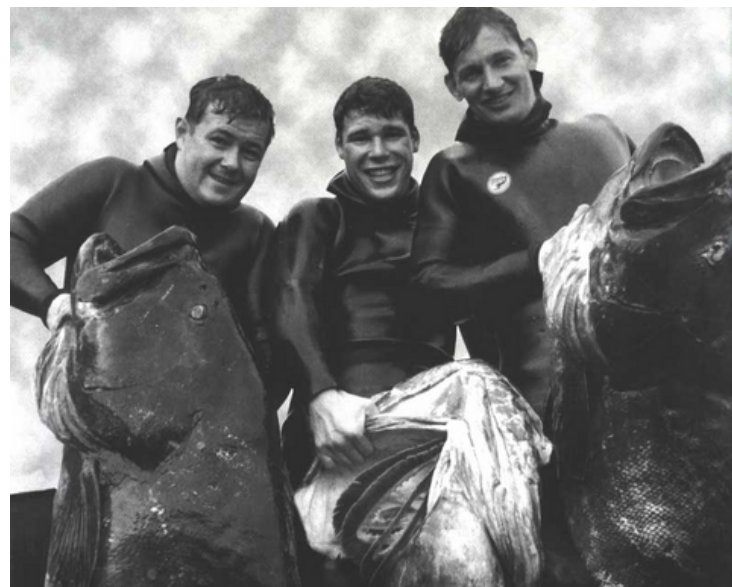
The dive shop was sponsoring an A class competition spearfishing team of Al Schnepershoff, Don Evers, and Ron Hill. They were being sponsored with free dive equipment in exchange for Ski & Dive advertising exposure when their sponsored diver's win spearfishing tournaments. Al apparently needed some 5/8" band rubber for his big game gun. Dave didn't know if they had the right size, he told Al he would check in the back. I asked Dave if I could talk to Al while he was checking and he handed me the phone.

I told Al I had been reading about his spearfishing adventures in the Pacific Underwater News and would really love to go diving with him some time. He said, "What is your phone number? I'll give you a call."

I'm sure he wasn't aware that of my young age or he may never have called me back. About two weeks later, Al called me and invited me on a boat dive trip to Catalina Island. I told him I would love to go but didn't have a car as I was not old enough to drive yet. Now, here's where Al showed his big heart. He said, "Where do you live?" "Lynwood," I answered, around 15 miles out of his way from his house to the launch in San Pedro. He said, "I'll pick you up at 4 AM." We made arrangements for him to pick me up at the corner of Atlantic and Century in the city of Lynwood, a couple of blocks from my house.



Al liked to shoot lots of fish (Yellowtail)



Al, Terry M, Carl K. - large Gulf Grouper

On an early morning in March 1965, at the tender age of 14 I got to meet for the first time, a man who became my mentor, my hero, and my King Neptune, Al Schnepershoff Jr. To me, Al was one of the greatest all around spearfishermen of all time. His energy, enthusiasm, and charisma made him the heart and soul of spearfishing in California of his time. His brash confidence and charisma made Al the Muhammad Ali of California spearfishing of his day.

King Neptune was an ancient Roman God of the sea, identified with the Greek god Poseidon who presided over all the creatures in the sea. The Neptunes Dive club of Long Beach California has a King Neptune award, reserved for only the finest spearfishermen of their club. The award consists of three trophy fish (Black Sea Bass over 100 lbs., White Seabass over 40 lbs. and Yellowtail over 25 lbs.). In the clubs 50+ year history only a handful of members have earned the title "King Neptune." It normally takes many years to earn a King Neptune award. Al earned his King Neptune in one day, less than two weeks after becoming a club member in 1973. King Neptune and Poseidon were mythological, "Big Al" as they called him, was a real life King Neptune and in some ways bigger than life.

I clearly remember my first trip with Al to Catalina Saturday and Anacapa Island on Sunday where we dove a spot he called Quarter Acres. In the morning we dove Cat Rock where Al speared a 390 lb. Black Sea Bass that afternoon. I sat on the boat totally in awe of this mammoth fish that was more than three times my size.

Al had a name for newcomers like me, "mucky-muck." I didn't mind the tag. I was diving with the best, who better to learn from? Al hunted by moving aggressively, he always said, "If the fish aren't in front of you, move until they are." He employed this formula in his hunting as well as his trip planning. It wasn't unusual for him to hunt two different Islands on the same weekend or even in one day. I remember one weekend; we went to Anacapa on Saturday and the Coronado's on Sunday. One day we went to the Barn kelp off Oceanside on Saturday morning and finished up the day at the Coronado Island Mexico that same afternoon, where I speared and landed my first 30+ lb. Yellowtail. I got my first Black Sea Bass, White Seabass, Yellowtail, and Grouper while diving with Al from his boat.



Bob S, Yas I, Al Avalon Catalina - 1971



Al & me - Barn Kelp YT - 1967

I can still remember how proud I was after I won my first spearfishing tournament, the Water Festival Pole Spearfishing Meet held in Santa Barbara in 1967, and Al said "That's my protégé." I had earned some respect, no more "mucky-muck."

My baseball career separated me from the sea in 1968 when I signed a professional baseball contract with the LA Dodgers. Between Feb. - Oct. 1968-1976, while I was on the road playing baseball, were some of the best underwater game fishing years ever in southern California. I missed most of the summers hot fish runs because of my baseball travel schedule. I dove commercial abalone and lived in Avalon Catalina Island with big Al, little Al and Linda Schnepershoff, and became part of the Schnepershoff family after the 1969 baseball season.



Al's 524 lbs. IUSA World Record Black Seabass Sept. 1968

Al was a great abalone diver as well, nearly doubling my daily catch most of the time. It seemed there was little he didn't do extremely well in the sea. I wonder how much different the evolution of spearfishing would have been if Al hadn't been so tragically taken by a great White Shark at Guadalupe Isl. in 1973.

Today there are many fine underwater hunters from whom I learned and share my experience with (Big Al, Terry Maas, Harry Davis, Terry Lentz, Ed Glass just to name a few). I guess my youth has given way to age, experience and hopefully wisdom as life has gone full circle as now I am the old salty dog of the sea. I now get great pleasure out of sharing experiences with the younger hunters while they get new personal bests as personal bests and unusual events come rarely for me at this stage of my hunting career. I especially enjoy their excitement when they accomplish a new goal and remember how special it was for me many years ago.

I hope to hunt for many more years and share the secrets I have gained with more young hunters that hope to reach lofty career goals. This is my gift and rich reward for being very lucky and lasting the test of time.

The Key is to be with the Sea



The Long Beach Neptunes are proudly supported by the following entities

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