

The TRIDENT

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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.

The Long Beach Neptunes would like to thank the following members for their work in obtaining our 501(c)(7) non-profit organization status:

Jeff Benedict, Brian York, Jon McMullin, Will Wither, Steve Parkford

2023 CALENDAR

- **January 4th** - Monthly meeting IN PERSON at Me 'n' Ed's Pizzeria
- **March 22nd** - California Spiny lobster season ENDS
- **April 5th** - Long Beach Neptunes Auction
- **June 10th** - 60th Annual Blue Water Meet

FISH STANDINGS

CALIFORNIA

Calico Derby
Calico Bass
White Seabass
Yellowtail
Halibut
Sheephead
Bonito
Barracuda
Dorado
Bluefin Tuna
Lobster

Open
Open
Open
Open
Open
Open
Open
Open
Open
Open
Open

OUT OF STATE/COUNTRY AWARDS

Yellowfin Tuna
Reef Fish
Pelagic, non-tuna

Open
Open
Open

Kent McIntyre Award

Will it be you this year???

Perpetual Big Fish Trophy

Let's go!!!



MONTHLY CLUB MEETING

January 4th, 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**



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Neptunes and Friends,

I hope that everyone had a happy and safe holiday. I am so excited for this upcoming year with you all! It is a special year for me; Ten years ago I became a tentative of the club while my dad, Chris Yates, was president!

This year we are celebrating the 60th annual Blue Water Meet, as well as our 22nd annual Fall Classic. With the spirit of competition strong amongst the club, I am hopeful that we will keep safety at the forefront of our minds. Let's continue to lead by example to not only the spearfishing community as a whole, but most importantly the next generation of divers coming into this sport that we all know and love.

I look forward to taking the reins and being your president this year! I'll see you on the water!

Thank you,

Taylor Yates



Editor's Note

Hello my fellow Neptunes. Happy New Year! As we welcome in 2023 I can only hope that the upcoming year will bring as much action and excitement as last year!

I am honored that I was considered and nominated to be this years Newsletter Editor and with your help I hope to publish some great stories for all of us to enjoy.

I hope this year brings everyone more great memories in and on the water. Let's have an action packed year of shooting fish. Be safe out there, shoot straight and happy hunting!

Jacob Seto



Honoring new life member

DON PAUL GABOURY



Don Paul's involvement as a volunteer with United Anglers served to strengthen the relationship between UA and the free diving community. Don Paul worked cleaning the White Sea Bass grow out pens in Newport Beach.

Originally from Connecticut, Don Paul began spear fishing in Southern California in 1980. In 1982 he joined the Long Beach Neptunes and logged over a thousand hours diving Laguna alone. Between the years of 1982 and 1996 Don Paul has made 32 trips to the French Polynesia, New Caledonia, New Zealand and the Cook Islands.

You may have seen some film footage of Don Paul in Tahiti with Terry Maas during the filming of Terry's and Laslo Pal's documentary "Blue Water Hunters". This PBS film was viewed by over 25 million people and helped to introduce the sport of blue water spear fishing to the world.

After discovering a gill net while diving at San Clemente Island, Don Paul swore he would do everything in his power to stop the devastation they brought to the marine ecosystems he had come to know so intimately. That day at San Clemente was the beginning of a ten year battle. Don Paul met a woman named Doris Allen in 1985. Allen was the Assembly Woman for the 76th district. She proposed legislation that would govern gill netting. Her proposition was "Prop 132" the very proposition that many claim is what gave us back our White Sea Bass. Don Paul collected signatures and did whatever he could to support the three mile ban on gill netting.

In the Neptune's Annual Fish Competition, Don Paul has been very successful. He has received the award for the largest Calico three times, 1983, 1986 and 1994, the largest being 11 lbs. 9 oz. He won Largest Halibut and largest Yellowtail at 40 lbs. and in 1997 held the IUSA 21st Century records for Wahoo at 79.6 lbs. and Dorado at 45.6 lbs. Through these achievements Don Paul has earned the award of King Neptune #19

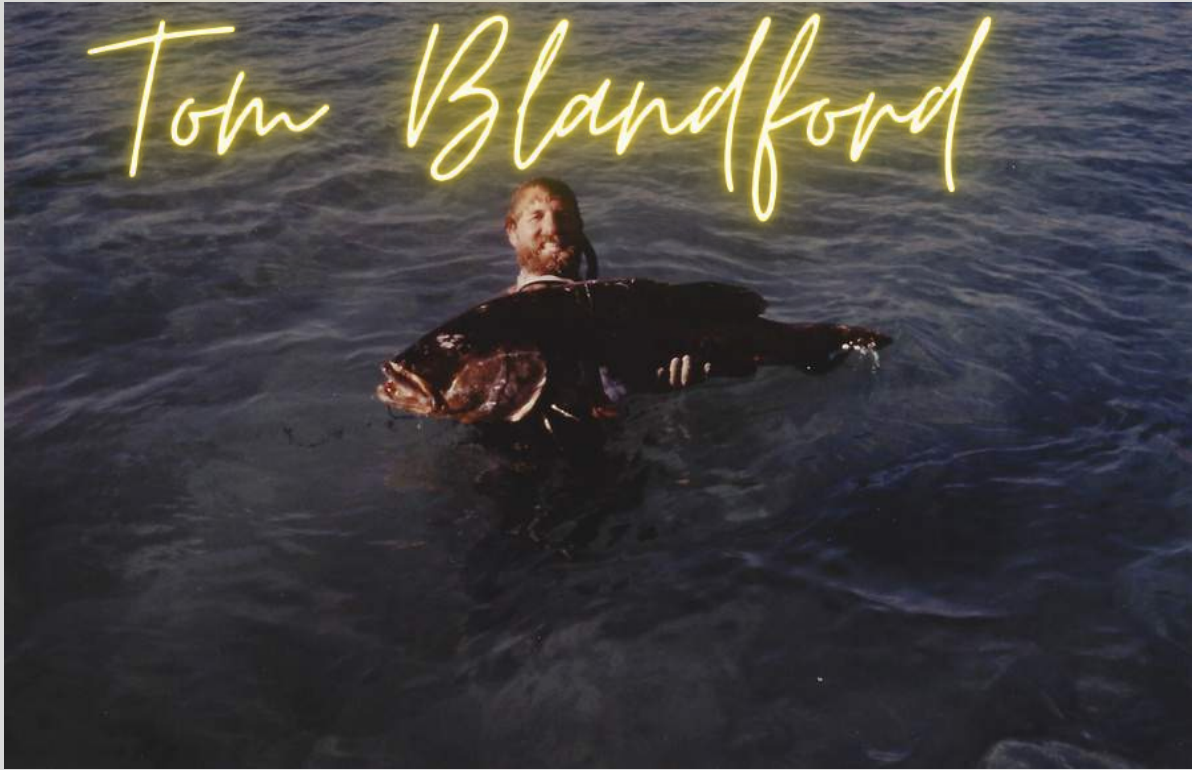


Through these achievements Don Paul has earned the award of King Neptune #19

In 1984 he won the largest Sheephead award. In 1987, he took the largest White Sea Bass, which may well be one of the most coveted awards every year. In 1991 and 1992 he took the largest Barracuda and Largest Bonita respectively. Don Paul won the 10th anniversary Calico Derby and also placed 2nd in the Blue Water Meet twice, in 1983 and 1995. In 1984 Don Paul won the Fathomier's Scramble Meet. He also won the largest fish of the meet award.

John Warren a renowned blue water hunter and spear gun innovator from San Clemente says that Don Paul is one of the most intense and involved free divers he has ever met. John says big game blue water hunting is Don Paul's expertise. John is sure that Don Paul spends one third of every day thinking about some aspect of spear fishing. From personal equipment design to scientific testing of his gun that he is constantly refining. John points out that the hunt and the gathering of fish for food is the prime directive for Don Paul. This has led to John and Don Paul talking for hours about the proper psychological alignment necessary to swim alone 100 miles offshore. John states...."Don Paul's got the right stuff".

Honoring new life member



Tom with a very nice Red Snapper

I received a note from Jacob Seto, our new Newsletter editor. As a newly inducted Life Member, Jake asked if I could send him a few photos and stories about my accomplishments and memorable incidents as a Neptune. I'm short on accomplishments, but I have a "whole bunch" of memorable fish stories.



Dale Kote, Vance, Tom

I think my biggest accomplishment as a Neptune is being a Life Member. It means a great deal to me. I was shocked when Juan Carlos called and gave me the good news. What a surprise! So once again, I'd like to thank Juan and the 2022 Board for the recognition. Not sure I deserved it, but it's appreciated, and it is sooo cool.



A nice haul of Red Snappers

Fish Stories:

Of course, watching Harry Ingram being viciously attacked by a white shark at Guadalupe Island is more than memorable. It's a long story and it has been told too many times, but it was such a surprise to see my good friend--seconds after the high-speed attack--alive with all his limbs still attached. He was bruised but not a scratch.

It was so amazing to witness and hear the attack.



Watching whales. My wife Judy and I cruised from San Francisco to Panama. We logged about 15,000 nautical miles over a period of several years. We've seen blue whales; finback whales, a mother and her calf trying to scratch their backs on our deployed anchor chain; sperm whales, at least ten of them; a humpback whale and her calf breaching and spy hopping off Costa Rica; a pod of pilot whales protecting what appeared to be a new-born calf, the big bull stopped right next to us while we were in the water, turned on its side and gave us a look that suggested we shouldn't mess with him; a pod of fast-swimming killer whales and whale sharks (I know it's a shark, not a whale, but really impressive.



The most memorable fish: I was diving with a fellow Neptune, Vance Carriere. We were in the Sea of Cortez off Isla Cerralvo. It was May, the water was very clear and beginning to warm. I was on the surface pumping up to make a dive when I saw a very large grouper in about 30 feet of water (about the limit of my diving skills). Just before I tucked to make the dive, a school of yellowfin tuna encircled Vance and me. These were twenty-five-pound fish. I know that because Vance shot one.



Tom and Vance with an Amberjack and some Tuna

I continued the dive when I noticed a telephone pole swim under me at high speed. I can be a bit slow at times, but I quickly determined that this pole was actually a huge wahoo. I've never been very good at estimating the size of fish in the water, but this fish had to be close to 80 pounds. It was too smart and too fast for me to get a shot, so I continued toward the grouper. At about the twenty-foot depth, a 101-pound pez forte (amberjack) swam directly in front of my gun. It was an easy shot, but that was the only thing easy about this fish. I was spooled and hanging onto the reel line with both hands as I was being towed through the water. We had a 200-foot current line attached to the stern of the boat. Swimming as hard as I could, I was just able to reach the loop at the end of the line and avoided being towed to La Paz. Seeing tuna, a wahoo, a grouper and an amberjack on one dive was special. We weighed the fish and exchanged it for two pitchers of margaritas and two lobster dinners.

I have a few more stories about Neptunes, but I'm not sure they are suitable for this publication--and I'm a little concerned about the statute of limitations.

To be serious, I am so proud to be a member of the Neptunes: A stellar group of ethical men and women dedicated to freediving and underwater hunting.

Tom Blandford

FALL CLASSIC 2022



This year's Fall Classic was a very special event for me. I got word from my mentor, Kevin Inkster, that he would be joining me for the tournament. He has been off the island for quite some time now, and only occasionally gets a chance to visit, making the trek all the way from Arkansas. Last year he was able to visit, but unfortunately was unable to connect with any fish. We had high hopes of remedying that this time around.

It started the evening before game day. It was a beautifully calm evening, with an abundance of short lobster scurrying about in the early twilight hours. We managed to bag a few legals, which was all we really could hope for, since I knew it was always a long shot trying to compete with the donkey-sized mainland sourced crustaceans usually presented at the weigh in. We both ended up with enough to keep the wives happy, and called it an early night, planning on getting wet first thing in the morning.

5 AM wakeup call had me rolling out of bed, slamming down a cup of Joe, and making the last-minute checks on gear, conditions, and the state of my fellow divers. We met up at 6 and began making our way to the first spot of the day. As we approached, the sun began lighting up the water, revealing the visibility to be pretty good for this area. This was the first time Kevin had dove this area, so I gave him the quick rundown on what to expect, and soon he was slipping into the tranquil morning ocean with our third boat mate Greg right behind him.



It wasn't long before I heard Kevin's distinct southern drawl exclaim, "Just saw some yellows!" I knew it was just a matter of time until it was going to happen. Within a sixty seconds, I watched as his small lifeguard can began skipping along the surface of the water. WOOHOO!!!!

Kevin tried to keep his fish off the rocks, but it managed to pull nearly all of his 75 foot floatline through his hands. Eventually, he called me over and asked for a second float, since his float was being dunked when he tried to break the fish free from the stalk of kelp it was entangled in. It took some time, and tons of energy, but soon had it free and on its way to the surface. He handed the fish to me and hopped in saying, "Well, I'm done for the day!" We both high fived and put the fish on ice.

Greg saw the school of yellows pass by a few times, but each time they did, they kept their distance and wanted nothing to do with him. After a while, the spot was blown, so we decided to move along to try our luck elsewhere. We dove a few spots with no sightings and tons of current, and we all began to get a bit tired. We decided to take a break and grab some lunch.

Bellies full and already stoked on the fish in the cooler, we decided to try one last spot in hopes of an eleventh-hour miracle for Greg or myself.



Pulling up to the last spot, we were greeted with a light uphill current, decent visibility, and lots of life milling around. I made my way down current (which I almost never do) and watched as a small group of barracuda slid stealthily beneath me. Just behind them I saw the tell-tale yellow dorsal fin of a white seabass snaking its way through the kelp below, and proceeded to make the loudest, uncoordinated, and awkward dive of my career in an effort to line up my shot. All the blacksmith in the area bolted exasperating the situation. Yet miraculously, the fish didn't spook. I lined up for the shot and pulled the trigger.



Fish on. It took a quick second to realize I had a holding shot, and I proceeded to put the brakes on, hoping to avoid a total Charlie Foxtrot of a kelp stalk wrap up. It ended up working out quite well, and soon I was headed to the surface with my fish in hand. Just before I made it up, I heard a "WOOHOO!!!" Kevin had managed to find me fiddling around with my fish and watched as I brought it back up, flashing me a 'shaka' to share the stoke.

We both knew our fish were going to be contenders for the top spots on the podium. We were elated to discover that we placed 1st and 2nd. His yellowtail went 26.3 pounds, my white seabass came in at 34.3 pounds.

Being able to put Kevin on fish as he had done for me so many times in the past was a true honor. He was the man responsible for teaching me virtually everything I know about spearfishing, including boat etiquette, sustainable practices, safety, how to read an area... the list is too long to write here. Seeing his eyes light up every time someone landed a fish on his boat years ago reminded me that this is a team effort. We all go out together, we learn together, we win together. Sharing our catch, knowledge and stoke with our dive buddies, families and friends will always be a part of spearfishing... probably the best part.

Juan-Carlos Aguilar



Juan Carlos Aguilar taking 1st place with a 34.3 lbs White Sea Bass during the 2022 Fall Classic

Link to the video

<https://youtu.be/ysU-pGjIH-4>

OUR NEWEST MEMBERS



Mark Wyneken



Jacob Seto

TENTATIVE

CRAIG BOND

I am 62 years old and just started diving in 2022. Nolan Yates is my sponsor. I have an advanced certification in scuba, and I've always wanted to learn to free dive and Spearfish. I'm happy to be part of the Neptunes because they are eager to provide instruction and guidance.

I have been retired for three years now as a commercial HVAC project manager. I am married, for the second time. This time I got it right, though. I have three children and four grandchildren that I love spending time with. My other hobbies include flyfishing and hunting. Recently I got my first elk in Wyoming on a horseback trip.



Unfortunately, I don't have any great Spearfishing success stories yet, but I do have one sad story. My first shot at a yellow tail hit its mark, but my reel jammed as I was kicking to the surface. After a significant struggle, I wound up letting go of the gun and I lost it and the fish. I already have a new gun and I'm looking forward to getting my first yellowtail with that.



TENTATIVE

GARRETT AWEI LU



Hello all. My name is Garrett Lu, and I go by my Chinese name A-Wei (short for Dao-Wei, pronounced "AH-way"). I'm Ventura-born and raised between Taiwan, the Midwest, and San Gabriel Valley. I am a former freelance travel writer, NAUI scuba instructor of 7 years, and divemaster among other things.... Currently I am an EMT in the ER, I teach EMT at a local college, swim competitively for a master's team, am a freediving instructor candidate and nursing school student. Besides spearfishing I enjoy camping, surfing, harvesting anything wild plant or animal, being a dog dad, and rock climbing among other things.... I'm popping by meetings with that recognizable neon shirt at the patronage of Mike Marsh, here to soak up all the fishy gossip I can find like a sponge. Happy New Year and good fishing to y'all.

A Big Fish-Story:

While most of my hunting has centered around reefs for most of my life, or maybe because of it, I've never been zealous about the biggest fish I could find. As such my most memorable and fun experiences seem to involve exactly the caliber of fish needed for the story. My proudest one in recent years is therefore, not a "Big-Fish story," but a "big fish-story."

At the close of 2019 right before Covid ruined fun for humanity I had just finished a year stint in Mexico wrangling sharks and diving with giant pelagics. I was back in LA when a friend, PJ, offered me a day gig as a divemaster aboard the Explorer. I was familiar with that vessel, having run around as a little shit on her deck and pissing off the captain since I was the height of a large palm kelp. At that time the Explorer was transferring ownership and the pro tem skipper had nothing but the highest praise for my friend PJ and wariness for all unfamiliar crew. I was simply there to fill in for a day and enjoy the California sun at Catalina.

That late-November day was bound to be bizarre because PJ had somehow scooped a lost Shiba-Inu on his way to pick me up. With no time to find the owner or put the dog down we showed up at the docks and somehow the captain and chartering dive shop just all forgave it. We named it "Skip" for the day and perhaps because of its presence we were met with 1-foot swells, 50 feet visibility, and a beaming sun. And perhaps because of the conditions, or the hound, the normally disgruntled captain allowed me a break during the last dive to jump in the water. I had brought nothing to dive

with (Yes, bad form as divemaster but I assure you I didn't need it for this trip).

So I donned a rental scuba mask with the volume of a pyrex measuring cup, one of those mile-long snorkels with a corrugated part that makes it flop harder than whiskey-D*#@#, and PJ's 2-band competitor teak rifle gun--which was the same as mine--and I stripped down to my Calvin Kleins (for streamlining, naturally). The captain's eyebrows probably reached his hairline, but just being glad for a swim I hopped into Parson's Landing with no real expectation but a good time. I zig-zagged the sun-dappled kelp and took a few dives, noting my limited time being basically naked. About 15 minutes in and 100 yards out I spot from the surface a small school of the most delectable-looking California barracuda, 30 feet down. Taking care to pike dive with the wet noodle snorkel already submerged (knowing how skittish the 'cudas get) I cruise down to 25, flat against a kelp for concealment. There, with impeccable luck, one was stupid enough to hang back from the school and peek at my naked ass. I shoot it 7 more feet below and return to a very excited dog, a supportive friend, and a still-incredulous captain.

On occasion, in remote places, especially cold ones, I still practice naked spearing and encourage more to try it. The fish was about yay long and fed my then-girlfriend and I.

The shiba-inu's owner was found 2 days later.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLUE WATER MEET 2023

Every year for the past decade I've tried to figure out how I can get to Catalina for the Blue Water Meet in June. I live in Arizona and my boat is in Mexico, so it's always difficult. I noticed this year that several members faced the same problem and needed a ride to the meet. I'm not sure if it worked out for them, but there may be a solution next year (2023).

Juan-Carlos has chartered the Bottom Scratcher for the past two years for dive trips to SBI. These have been great trips: an outstanding crew, a diesel-powered RIB as a chase boat, limited divers and a boat that is setup for free divers. Juan asked the skipper/owner, Kevin, if his boat would be available to charter for next year's BWM. Kevin sincerely enjoys having Neptunes on board and immediately agreed to a possible BWM charter.

Tentatively, we'd leave 22nd Street Landing on Friday at midnight, dive all day Saturday, attend the weigh-in party that night and return to LA Harbor by 0600, Sunday morning. The chase boat will act as a water taxi for the beach festivities. Juan won't be able to organize the BWM charter for next year and asked me if I'd handle the charter. It was a no-brainer. Of course I would.

So, the reason for this note is to determine if there is an interest from club members in this charter for the 2023 BWM. I'm not asking for a commitment; I want to see if we have enough members to fill the boat (10 to 12, divers). I don't have a cost yet, but it will be less than the SBI charters.

If you are interested or have questions, please send me a note at mvgracias45@gmail.com , call me or text me at (562) 522-8670.

Tom Blandford

PS it's nice to have someone else prepare meals and clean the boat.





The Long Beach Neptunes are proudly supported by the following entities

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