THE TRIDENT

The Monthly Newsletter of The Long Beach Neptunes

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Juan Carlos Aguilar throwing down at the 2024 Blue Water Meet with a 53.1 lb. white sea bass.

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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.

2024 CALENDAR

- **July 3, 2024 Monthly Meeting**
- **August 7, 2024 Monthly Meeting**
- **October 12, 2024 - Annual Fall Classic**

FISH STANDINGS

CALIFORNIA

Calico Derby	Jeff Benedict	7.0 lbs
Calico Bass -	Jeff Benedict	7.0 lbs
White Seabass -	Jeff Bilhorn	69.0 lbs
Yellowtail -	Juan Aguilar	32.0 lbs
Halibut -	Byron Quinonez	18.5 lbs
Sheephead		Open
Bonito		Open
Barracuda		Open
Dorado		Open
Bluefin Tuna -		Open
Lobster	Dr Ivan Sanchez	7.3 lbs

OUT OF STATE/COUNTRY AWARDS

Yellowfin Tuna		Open
Reef Fish		Open
Pelagic, non-tuna -		Open
Kent McIntyre Award	Juan Aguilar	85.1
Perpetual Big Fish Trophy		Open

2024 Annual Blue Water Meet

BWM STANDINGS

1st Place	Juan Carlos Aguilar	53.1 lb White Sea Bass
2nd Place	Todd Farquhar	49.9 lb White Sea Bass
3rd Place	Jeff Billhorn	36.0 lb White Sea Bass
4th Place	Will Wither	34.1 Yellowtail
5th Place	Marcelo Poccia	29.4 White Sea Bass

A PERFECT DAY

By Juan Carlos Aguilar

With the Blue Water Meet a few weeks away, I was excited to have another chance to try and make the podium this year. Since learning about spearfishing, it has been a dream to compete in the Long Beach Neptunes Blue Water Meet. Fifteen years ago I managed to secure a sponsor, and managed to get to live my dream. I didn't have any luck that day, but I was elated to be a part of an historic event. It began my obsession with trying get on the podium. In 2013 and 2021 I managed to get on the podium, with a respectable 2nd and 5th place finish. But as had been the case for the Fall Classic until recently, I was always the bridesmaid, never the bride. Fellow Neptune, Mike Wells, and his son Dylan were to be my partners on game day. I have had a decent season, landing some solid fish, so I had a plan... my boat had other plans. A couple of weeks before the meet, my engine kicked the bucket, and I was lucky to be able to borrow a boat to get me on the water. It was a smaller, tiller driven boat, but sturdy and got the job done. On the bright side, nobody would be able to tell where I was diving that day... I was going incognito.

We set out the morning of the tournament, cruising a flat sea, with grey skies looming above. It was going to be a cold one. We pulled up to the first spot, which was thankfully vacant. Hopping in the 62 degree water was definitely a sure way to wake up, since the coffee seemed to be taking it's sweet time getting that job done. Visibility was decent, with a steady downhill current pointing us in the direction of possible glory. I said possible. It was quiet. Lots of life, but no gamefish to be seen or heard. After a respectable effort, we decided to head to spot number 2.

Pulling into our anchorage, I reminded Dylan to be extra careful not to make too much noise as he lowered the anchor. He skillfully deployed it, and soon we were all heading out in search of a stroke of luck. Visibility was much improved over the last spot, with visibility nearing 60 feet. I could make out details of the sandy bottom below and had high hopes. I watched as a school of barracuda cruised through, looking disinterested in my presence. As we were anchoring, we had noticed a harbor seal milling about in the kelp nearby, and I soon saw it cruising along the bottom. I wanted to get some cool footage on my GoPro, so I took a dive to see if I could pique its interest.

Approaching the bottom, I noticed movement to my left. A pair of white seabass materialized just above the elk kelp, at a steady clip, from left to right. I began to take aim and tried to remember the incredible visibility. I had missed a few shots earlier in the week due to misjudgment of the size of the fish, coming up short due to the clarity of the water. I had my big gun, and decided it was time to pull the trigger.

A PERFECT DAY

By Juan Carlos Aguilar - cont'd

I hit the fish LOW. I knew I had to play it softly, or I may lose it. Thankfully my Mori slip tip held true on the initial run, and the fish made straight for open water. I had pulled the trigger at nearly 50 feet and hustled to the surface to quench my burning lungs. All the while the fish was pulling hard at my 120 foot float line, and soon I saw my 100 foot mark pass through my hands. I put the brakes on and managed to turn the fish just as I hit the surface. I gained as much line as I could before getting dunked repeatedly. Soon I could see the fish belly up almost 70 feet below. It made a couple of half-hearted runs but was giving up the ghost. That's when I noticed the shot placement. There was a 1 inch patch of skin holding this fish on. I tried to dive and grab the fish, but I was still too deprived of air. I had to wait another few seconds until I got it shallower before diving down and giving it a big hug.

Pulling into the weigh in area a few hours later, my bag was the first in the circle. I had high hopes, but I've been disappointed before. The cutoff time came and went, and there were some solid looking kill bags taking up the stage. As the fish were being weighed, my spirits were lifting. Soon, it was my turn. I put it on the scale and was elated with the weight. 53.1 pounds.
When no more fish were weighed, I screamed. It has been a dream come true. First place. A perfect day.

Deep Water Rescue

By Steve Parkford

Jeff Benedict and I set out to Catalina on my new found Freedom Boat Club membership last week. We drove out to West Cove only to see the once productive cove completely washed out from the cross swells colliding on the backside. Heading to Johnsons we found calm waters and dove without sightings for an hour. Moving down to Parsons we were at the last minute blocked by a fishing party boat. Next stop Eagle Reef.

Anchoring on the high spot we both kicked up into the uphill current. I spied from the surface a WSB swimming out of the kelp into deeper waters, as the visibility was 30+ feet. At the top of the kelp but before the buoy I spotted a school of seabass collecting sardines into a ball. Diving down on the fish I picked one out, despite their uncharacteristic quick movements corralling the bait. Hitting mid-ship a good size fish from about 15 feet at 25 feet of depth, I saw my shooting line and attached float line take off. But within seconds the fish was free, and the school moved on.

Calling Jeff over because of the sighting, we both headed up to the pinnacle adjacent to the buoy ahead. Just as I reached the submerged kelp waving from the more intense current coming over the high spot, I spied what I thought was a yellowtail, as this fish was on the move across the leaning kelp. Diving on the fish to about 20 feet, I realized it was a good size WSB but moving quickly away so I "put on the gas" and chased the departing fish as it was about to disappear into the swirling kelp. Shooting downward at the fish as it continued to move away, I stuck the top of the fish.

While I held hard to the float line, I could not maintain grip and the fish plunged downward. Shorting up the float line to hopefully tow the beast up I found it stuck; attaching my 3 atmosphere float to create a taunt vertical float line, I breathed up for 5 minutes and descended without knowing what was below. Down and down I went, into the murk and poor visibility; down into the colder water knowing I probably would only get a look at what was hanging up the fish. Following the float line, I found my tuna clip had snagged on a rocky corner at 65feet and was able to free it. Slowly surfacing and moving the gear away from the rocks I was able to secure a safe accent of the 40lb fish.

The yellowtail was shot at Fish Hook two days later off Rocky Rafkin's 25' skippy.

Nothin' Under 30

By Todd Norrell

We started planning the trip on Tuesday, June 25. Forecast for the weekend looked a bit rough. Lots of wind and swell. Windy, NOAA, and weather.com all gave conflicting reports on what to expect as go-day approached. Mike Marsh, Ivan Sanchez and myself decided to shove off on Friday morning come hell or high water. June 28 - smooth crossing to East End of Catalina, then even smoother on over to SCI. A beautiful day. Started off on the front, and worked our way around the corner.

The famous Wall was brilliant. Deep blue was the word of the day. 80 foot visibility, the kelp was waving gold in the nuclear penetrating sun. On one of the first dives at the wall I dropped down to about 40 and grabbed a kelp stringer in the pumping current, hung there motionless for awhile, savoring my existence. Absolutely mesmerizing - the cyanic splendor, those colors and all the life. I remember looking up over my shoulder at Ivan who was watching me from the surface, the water was gin clear . . . surreal. Bonito cruising through, schools of Skinnies and lots of bait.

A few drops later while flying over the reef edge in the current, a free swimming white came cruising underneath me as I hovered at about 35. Didn't even know I was there when he took my arrow right through the shoulder blades. Pretty good way to start the day with a healthy 32 pound White Seabass. We worked the area a bit more then made it around the corner to one of our favorite high spots, dropped the hook - got in. Then, from about 3:30 to 5:30 the epic kill fest ensued. The viz, out of this world. Thousands of calicos, blacksmith and perch, moving and grooving above the kelp, which was just slightly laid down in the current, which was easily dealt with. Big yellowtail started breezing through. Whereas on the the front side our YT sightings were keeping their distance, these beasts were bold and unworried about us. You could see them coming from way out in this pristine azure dreamscape.

Nothin' Under 30

By Todd Norrell - cont'd

Singles, doubles, groups, and then a wall of yellows, big fat yellows. Team sea lion was out in force, always taking a crack once a fish was hit. All these YT put on a gnarly fight as one after the other hit the bloody deck, we were realizing this was more than just an epic day. Everyone of these fish was a slob - NOTHIN UNDER 30. At one point, I was breathing up on the surface and watching Mike hover in the amazing clarity below me. As he began to start surfacing, he immediately made a U-turn stretched out for a shot and nailed it. Then the fight was on. Mike worked that one hard as it tried getting into the kelp stringers, went for the reef, ran, pulled, battled but eventually was subdued by Mikes adrenaline fueled intensity. That one weighed out at 38 pounds. One of the biggest yellows I've seen at SCI in the last 10 years. Ivan surfaced more than once letting out one of his famous howls of victory. He brought a couple more to the boat late in the session.

While hanging right over the high spot, I looked up and saw a freight train rolling in. Had to be 20 nice fish coming right at me with reckless abandon. Quick duck dive to about 10 and slammed the second or third fish dead center. Another toad - low to mid 30s. We stashed all these fish in the hold, but it was overflowing, couldn't even close the damn thing. At this point, we had a bloody deck, stern and swim step and we were all beat, thrashed and tottering around on the deck like Joe Biden from that two hours of mayhem. Pulled the hook as 6 PM approached and made our way to the pyramid anchorage for the night. We anchored up 50 feet away from the Jager and the Cazadores, both captained by Neptunes, who side tied. We had some great banter with them about the day. Then the party began.

Nothin' Under 30

By Todd Norrell - cont'd

We cranked the tunes and started the barbecue as we guzzled our first, but not last, 12 pack of Pacificos. Ivans marinated short ribs and a couple of bottles of wine really got us in the mood for some serious filleting. Our multicolored stern lights were attracting the bait and all kinds of alien forms of jelly fish. Some that we swore looked like seas snakes, with forked tongues, and smiley faces. As Tone Loc smashed the beat out of our sound system for the enjoyment of everybody in the anchorage, Ivan was a filleting machine. He was actually moonwalking to the beat from one end of the table to the other, knife in hand, filet after massive filet being bagged by Mike. We literally packed the ice chest that night.

The only tragedy, we no longer had room for the beer in our supersized Yeti. A first world problem that we managed accordingly through copious consumption. Mike broke out his homemade pumpkin pie and we started in on Ivan's favorite bourbon to round out one hell of a day. Got through the whole playlist as the brilliant moonless sky lit up with stars. To top it off we were treated to a killer Space X launch and booster separation in the inky blackness just above. For me, my best SCI hunt ever on the Ocean Dancer with all those fish. 30+ YT / 30+ WSB days don't come around too often. What a Friday, and NOTHIN UNDER 30.

As the next morning came to life, it was a bit cloudy, a different day. We tried all our fave spots around the island and picked up a couple more fish. Even had a couple hours of nap time as the tide slacked and the brilliant sun came pounding in. We hit our honey hole at high tide again. Not as happening as the day before. The Cazadores came cruising our way while at anchor. Ron said that several hundred yards away they saw a big white fish with lots of teeth eat a sea lion right in front of them. He said "we're not diving around here anymore". That day ended with a nice evening scuba dive down to a 100 ft deep dark and murky reef. Anchor was tangled in sharp jutting rocks and crevices, all tightly wound with thick kelp. Managed to work it out, after a heart pumping ordeal at a hellacious spot to drop an anchor.

Another great night when chef Ivan laid out a full blown taco bar on the cleaning table, with all the proper accompaniments and sizzling grilled carne estrada 🤣. The food, the beer, the wine, the colored marine life show at the stern and more filleting rounded out the night. Yup, couldn't let those beers get warm, getting the fish on ice was top priority. So we drank em all, and savored the rest of the bourbon & pumpkin pie too. Note to self - buy more 12 packs next time. A beautiful Sunday greeted us. The water still blue blue. We blazed over to our honey hole and set the hook.

While putting on our gear we saw the Jager approaching, Alan standing at attention proudly on the rear deck. And then we heard it . . . The Theme from Jaws eerily blaring loudly from their sound system, Alan, Jim and Jeff laughing their asses off. Hmm, made us extra excited about getting in the water. Gave us one thought in particular , We need a bigger ice chest (not boat)!! The morning wore on, more blood on the deck. Time to head home and Hell Yes ~ Nothin Under 30.

2024 Kirk McNulty White Seabass Tournament Results

By Masahiro Mori

Nikki Tang was hailed as the winner of the 2024 Kirk McNulty White Seabass tournament with an impressive 78.1 lb White Seabass. Nikki became the first female winner of this tournament. Nikki has also qualified and has been accepted as the new women's IUSA world record for White Seabass. Nikki's fish is also the largest fish ever taken in the 11 year history of the Kirk McNulty tournament. Second place was taken by Ian Nichols with a 68.1 lb fish and third place was taken by Joe Farlo of the LA Fathomiers with a 67.2 lb fish.

The Kirk McNulty White Sea Bass Spearfishing Classic was started to create a legacy for Kirk McNulty (1984-2014), who passed away of an opiate overdose. Kirk was a world class waterman, surfer, brother and son who was inspired by everything ocean. Kirk was an avid free diver and enjoyed everything ocean. He spent time in the world's oceans, but specifically loved hunting White Sea Bass. He also cared deeply about the fish and the environment he was diving in. Kirk always felt his healthiest while in, on or near the water.

Through the Kirk McNulty White Sea Bass Spearfishing Classic, Oceans Global donates proceeds to Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute and/or its affiliated grow-out locations. Oceans Global looks to educate the recreational spearfishing community about Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute (HSWRI) efforts to raise, tag, and release white sea bass into the wild. Through a network of drop-off locations, spearos can donate their catch's head to HSWRI to be scanned for tags. Thus far, one fish has contained a tag yielding HSWRI valuable information.

The Newsletter Must Go On!

Your intrepid newsletter editor slaving away in the dreary confines of Madeira Island, Portugal.

Jeff Parmer – July 2, 2024

Fish Story

White Sea Bass

Shot May 19th, 2024

Monkey off my back

I got voted in to the Long Beach Neptunes I think 4 or more years ago. But a combination of the pandemic, and starting a second business alongside of my magic business, I have just been way to busy to get in the water. But this year, I just decided that I simply MUST get back in the water and start doing one of the things that I care about most in life.

So I started taking the boat out. I made it out 5 times in 10 days. The fifth day, was May 19th, and it was so fun.
I dove PV, at the spot that we all know and love. Before I got in, I said quietly, "*God please help me get a nice fish to feed my family*". I went in the water just outside the kelp bed. There was a ton of bait in the water. The bait was well outside of the kelp, so instead of going in to the thick stuff, I just decided to stay with the bait. On or about my 8th punch, I went down to approximately 30 feet. The fish was about 7 or so feet deeper than me, swimming from my left to my right. When I first saw it, I thought it was a shark. There were at least two other fish behind her, but I did not dare turn my head, because you know what happens when we do that. I shot the fish. It seemed like I had stoned it. It just turned onto it's side and froze. It did not even pull the floatline plug out of my gun. So I just started pulling the shooting line. Well, when the fish touched the tip of my fins she went NUTS. Swimming me around in circles, wrapping my float line around my head like 6 times. I cleared the line. It spun me around another 6 times. I cleared the line again. Finally I bear hugged the fish and dispatched it with my knife. I was so out of shape that I was wheezing deep breaths that were totally involuntary. My body was trying to stay alive. I was sort of embarrassed to myself at how out of shape I was. Anyway, I knew, holding on to this fish, that it was probably the biggest WSB I had ever shot (my personal best up until now was 58 pounds). Well I started swimming it back to the boat, knowing the whole time that it was going to be a problem getting that monster up on my swim step. I tried several times to get under it, kick my fins, and shove it up on the swim step. NO DICE! So I did something very scary. I put my gun on the swim step, let the fish go, holding on to

my shooting line, I got the old man out of the water (I'm 62 years old). Now I start ever-so-carefully pulling my shooting line to pull this beast up on the boat. *Easy does it. Don't tear off. Pretty please. Help me Jesus...* Well, luck was with me, and I got this beautiful girl up on the deck. WHEW! WHAT A CELEBRATION! I was still wheezing and breathing so hard. Part excitement, and part just not really being physically ready to dive. I had been out of the water too long.

When I got back to the slip, I weighed the fish. It came in at 63.8 pounds. Per club rules, I must take a 5% penalty. So that brings this white sea bass in at 60.6 pounds. Come on Kent McIntyre! Come On King Neptune! Let's see if I can get the other fish required.

Bottom line, I am back to getting in the water more often. I am still WAY out of shape, but I have lost 13 pounds on Keto so far, and feel like I'm getting stronger every day. I hope to get in the water with more Neptunes. I had the pleasure of Scott Bamsey's company at the BWM, and Mike Marsh and I got out recently. What a great group of guys we have to dive with. Good times. It feels SO RIGHT to be back in the water. Thank you guys for your inspiration!

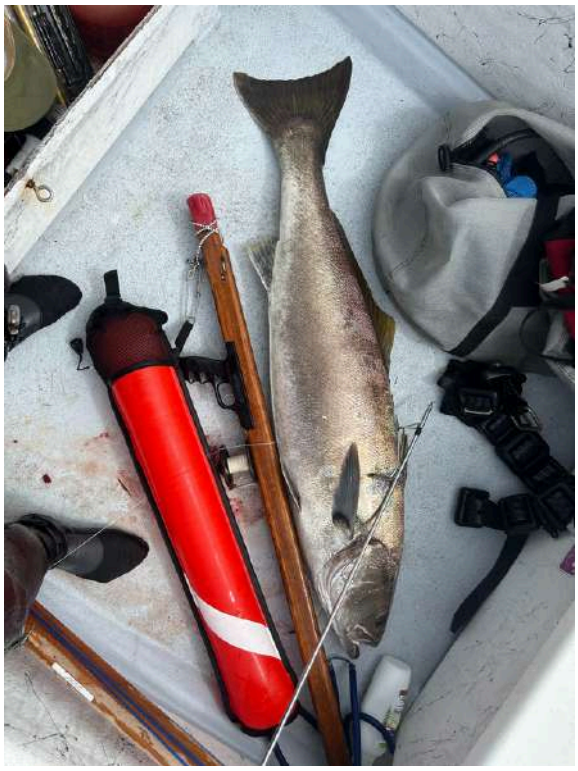
Back to SoCal from Montana for BWM

By Todd Farquhar

By far the hardest part of moving to Montana a year and a half ago has been losing my constant connection with the ocean. I was determined not to also lose my connection to the Neptunes, as the friends and times that I have had as a result of joining have been life changing. Since becoming a tentative over a decade ago I was able to make every BWM and Fall Classic up until last year. I found myself having to choose between the two and the Fall Classic happens to coincide with the deer and elk season here, so Fall Classic 2023 was my fist miss...and it hurt. Having taken on the ranching life and keeping a flock of sheep, pigs and chickens, made making this BWM tough but I figured I could pull it off, leaving the family to step up and tend the animals. Then just a week before the trip an opportunity I'd been hoping for popped up, taking in about 40 cattle.

With plane tickets already purchased I was mending fences and herding cattle on a quad right up til dark the evening before I left. Just a little bit stressful but what else could be done.

On Tuesday before the BWM I boarded a plane at 5:30 am with a cooler full of lamb, elk and venison to share. By 5:30pm the same day I was hunting the local kelp for WSB. How good it felt to get back in the water! I went again Wednesday morning (no sightings either dive) and passed on an afternoon dive to make the club meeting, hanging out with all of you who I've missed so much and meeting the newest crop of tentatives. Wow, the club is rolling better than ever!!! That never felt so good and I realized how easy it was to take for granted the regular gatherings with the great crew that is the Neptunes.I had planned to dive all day Thursday but got a text at dark early that morning beckoning me to the hospital to be there for my mom who was going into surgery for a burn accident. It was a no brainer to scrap my plans to be among the kelp stringers but I was bummed to miss out on the much anticipated day in the water.



Back to SoCal from Montana for BWM

By Todd Farquhar

Heavier on my heart was the idea that I should remain with family during this time and miss the BWM. As my mom came out of anesthesia she was surprised to see me and thought I had skipped the BWM to be there. When she learned that wasn't until the next day, she insisted that I should go and would never want me to miss that. Good ol' Mom...she really gets me.

I had the good fortune to be invited to head out with Jeff Billhorn on the Jager joining with diving legend Allan and the Yellowtail magnet, Will. We headed out Friday morning to scout the island and with a couple fish on board, found the spot we wanted to set up on for game day.

We arrived Saturday morning with just one hook and line boat on the spot. Jeff quickly shot his 3rdplace WSB and we continued to work the area. The hook and line guys took off and I moved over to their position to find the concentration of life growing and hoping to catch a group of WSB moving into the kelp. I was visited by multiple groups of smaller yellowtail and decided to swim out to the bait to take a drop. As I pierced through the outside edge of a dense bait school I arrived at the floor of them to see countless fish on the edge of visibility below them. As they turned away in response to my presence, I couldn't believe it...a school of white sea bass. I froze to sink slowly and the school regrouped around me. This is nothing I have ever seen and was amazed to finally see what I had only ever heard about.

I lined up on the first fish in front of me but noticed a larger one to my left. After lining up on that one there was an even bigger one to the left of that. With my breath running out and not wanting to blow it to keep shopping I pulled the trigger and stoned selection number three. It went 50lbs and was good for 2nd place.

Half way back to the boat I crossed Will and gave him an adrenaline infused command to go find the bait and take a drop. Will did just that and took his 4th place yellowtail. At the boat we celebrated having shot our contenders all in the same spot and all by about 10am. We continued to hunt but as it often does, conditions quickly changed and all the life left just like that.

We got to two harbors early, enjoyed the beach party and the glory of the Jager taking 2nd , 3rdand 4th place. Huge props to Jeff for running a great trip and putting us on the fish! I have always said that there should be an award or at least a record of what boat/captain the winning fish came from...maybe someday?

To top it all off, I headed out Monday morning for a local dive and was blessed with a 40lb WSB. Visibility had gone down to 5-7 feet so I stuck it out hoping to have one swim in front of me and that's just what happened.

Thanks to the guys who sent me home with a double share of the fillets, Paul Z hooking me of with some of his freezer stash and my two fish I was able to gift my family 20lbs of fillets and still flew home with 50lbs of fish. I can't wait for the next trip!!!

MONTHLY CLUB MEETING

July 3, 2024, 7:00PM

This month's club meeting will be held <u>IN PERSON</u>, at

Me-n-Ed's Pizzeria

4115 Paramount Blvd, Lakewood, CA 90712

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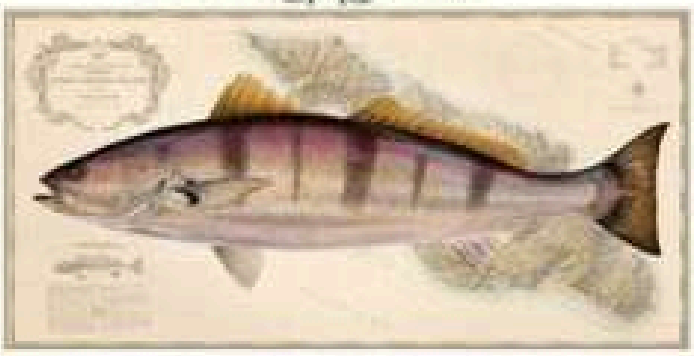

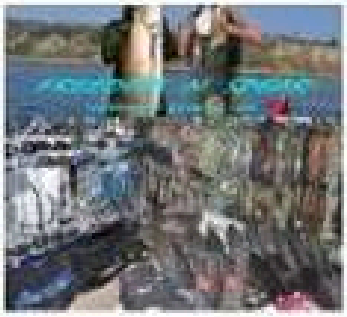

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