

Safety Tip #1

“A Whistle is Always a Good Idea”

We were diving on Santa Barbara Island and heard a man yelling. The yell was coming from the direction of the setting sun and wind; and seemed to be 300 plus yards away so we could not make out who was making the noise. At first, we assumed it was a kayak party coming around the island. After the yelling continued for some time we got alarmed and decided it was time to get all our divers out of the water and go rescue this guy. It turned out to be a diver from the other small boat in the area. His boat was about 100 yards away from him but up wind so he wasn't heard for a very long time by his boat's driver. The diver had shot a "large white sea bass" and it had tide up to kelp about 60 feet down in 100 foot of water. This was deeper than he could reach. He couldn't leave his spot since he had no way to mark it so he stayed there and yelled and yelled for 30+ minutes until he finally got the attention of a boat - us. If he had carried a whistle, both boats would have easily heard him and known he needed help. Also, if he had an inflatable float to tie to the float line or kelp to mark the spot then he could have swam to his boat to retrieve the tank he needed to recover his fish. This diver was not prepared for the type of hunting he was doing. You can buy a pocket size (when not inflated) salami shaped 3' - 6' long marking float for \$30 to \$40. Also, Skip Hellen has very big inflatable floats for sell that can lift 100 pounds and can give you the horse power to lift that fish out of kelp. Another important thing to remember when hunting large fish that are in an area that may go out of your capabilities is to be more careful of your shot and shoot for the head. It is much easier to control a fighting fish if you have control of their head and don't let it get turned for deep water or structure. Fish will almost always go down and out to deeper water and look for structure when scared or hurt. If you want to hunt game fish, then be prepared for the conditions you plan to be diving in. Your boat should have a tank on board plus you should have a float line or reel line 25% longer than the depth of water; an inflatable float to mark your spot and hold up a fish; a sharp knife capable of cutting steel shooting cable if you are using it and at a minimum shooting line and kelp; and a whistle is always a good idea.

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