



# FATHOMIERS NEWSLETTER

• FREEDIVING • SPEARFISHING • COMPETITION FEBRUARY 99

## CALENDAR

### CLUB MEETING-MONDAY FEBRUARY 8

The February Fathomiers Club meeting will be at the Round Table Pizza on the South-east corner of Hawthorne Blvd. And Redondo Beach Blvd.

### FATHOMIERS COMPETITION- SUNDAY, February 21

The February meet will be held at Leo Carrillo. It will be a ten fish meet.

## PAY YOUR DUES!!

You must be current to receive your March issue. Don't be a cheap #S@\*&#!@#@  
All dues should be paid to Eddie Ota who is filling in for Bob Sellers.

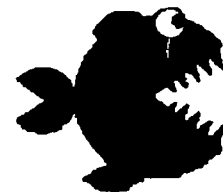
## 1998 AWARDS BANQUET

The awards banquet will be held at the Redondo Beach Elks lodge, February 27, at veterans park in Redondo Beach. Located on the corner of Torrance Blvd. And Catalina. The menu will be finished up at the Feb. meeting. Side and main-dishes are still needed. Remember, all should contribute. If you can't cook, KFC will suffice.

## Classified Section (Coming Soon)

Do you have any old dive gear that you want to unload?

We will be starting a classified section where you can advertise (for a small bribe to the editors of course) any dive gear which will make another diver (and your wife) happy.



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Croak!!

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THE FATHOMIERS NEWSLETTER IS THE  
OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
LOS ANGELES FATHOMIERS

The Fathomiers is a Southern California club dedicated to  
Freediving and Competitive Spearfishing.

Membership is open to the public. To become an Active member, you  
must fulfill obligations and conditions. You can also become an Associ-  
ate Member for \$20. Contact the Fathomiers for further information.

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The editor reserves the right to make spelling and grammatical corrections to submissions, and may rewrite sections for purposes of clarity and/or space considerations. The intent and meaning of submissions shall be maintained as closely as possible. Anyone who has submitted an article may request a preview of their article as it will appear in the publication. At that time the submitter may request changes or withdrawal of the article. The editor and the club officers will determine which submissions to include and which to exclude. While reasonable effort is expended to ensure accuracy of the information in this newsletter, we do not guarantee it. The editor, and the Fathomiers and its officers, shall not be held liable for errors in this newsletter. The Fathomiers do not accept paid advertisements.

Submissions are needed. Articles or information may be mailed, emailed, or communicated over the phone. Articles and photos may be dropped off at Team Sports for the newsletter. Photographs submitted will be returned to the owner after publication. Please take the initiative to contact me or to send me materials. If you have information for the newsletter, do not depend on "word of mouth" to get it to me.

## Thankyou

The editors would like to thank those of you that have contributed thus far and to remind you that we are still in great need of diving stories tips etc. so we can make your newsletter as good as is possible. Contributions are easiest to use if they are in computer form (e-mail, word processor etc.) but any contribution is more than welcome.

## REELS: PURPOSE AND USE

By Stathis Kostopoulos

Many spearfishermen in So. California use floats for their guns. In Europe, on the other hand, a reel is the norm in speargun rigging. A reel is a useful device that can make our hunting safer and more productive. However, using a reel requires some basic knowledge. So in this article I would like to go over the questions of why and how to use a reel. Although most of this article assumes a European type of gun, most of the discussion applies to the wooden guns of California also. I will also assume that you are right handed.

### Purpose

A reel is a safety device. It is the apparatus that may save our lives in some tricky situations. The reel is useful, not only for huge pelagics like amberjacks or yellowtail, but also for reef fish like grouper or snapper. Even a medium size fish may exercise enough resistance to slow down our ascent considerably. Fighting the struggling fish while ascending may deplete our oxygen reserves to a serious extent and lead to shallow water blackout. In conclusion, the most important purpose of the reel is safety.

A reel provides a lot a convenience. Take for example the case where we've speared a grouper and it has holed up a bit. If we have no reel, the fish may have enough freedom to penetrate into the cave further as we go for the surface. By using the reel and keeping the line taut, we are preventing the fish from holing up further. In addition, if this happens to be in deep water with poor visibility, the line from the reel shows us the exact location of the cave. The gun is at the surface and we can easily follow the line on our way down to the cave, rather than having to guess where the cave is.

A reel reduces the chances of the fish working itself out of the spear. If the fish is not hit in a good spot like head or spine, its fight will increase the size of the wound considerably. If we were to short-line the fish, we would stand a big chance of losing it, as the shaft tears up its flesh. This is especially true for fish that fight very hard only in the beginning, like the white seabass, or the dentex.

### Use

Using a reel is a tricky business. It requires some knowledge and expertise. If we don't have this knowledge, the reel becomes a double edge sword. There are several cases where divers have become entangled in their own lines, with near tragic results

Let's say we shoot a large free-swimming fish. The shot was not deadly so the fish takes off, with the spear in its back, going for deeper water. We have to make sure the reel's drag is deactivated so that the line is played out. Therefore, we need to make sure that the line has been wrapped clock-wise in the first place. The brake

(Reels cont.)

is designed to open up when the line is pulled out. When the fish starts pulling, the brake immediately opens up and line starts coming out. Occasionally, beginning divers have wrapped the line counter-clockwise and, as a result, the brake doesn't open and reel is useless.

Now the fish has taken several feet of line and heads for deeper water. We have to apply pressure on the line by grabbing the gun's tube, and let the line run through our palm and tube. Therefore we need to always wear gloves. Even with gloves, this can become a painful experience, if the fish is too big. If we are right handed, we grab the tube with our left hand. The right hand can control the reel's drag. We can use the drag to control the speed that the line is paid out, but it is preferable not to do so. The typical Euro-gun's reel base is somewhat flimsy and may get damaged from too much stress. Riffe's reels are sturdier.

we are now ascending holding the gun's tube in our left hand, while we keep the right hand on the gun's handle. We never let go the gun from the left hand. If something happens suddenly, like say the reel jams, the right hand on the handle alone will not be enough to hold the gun. Some divers, as soon as the fish is shot, drop the gun and they just grab the line. This is a serious error, and can lead to entanglements or injury. If we let the line alone run through our palm, it may saw right through it. Kevlar in particular is very abrasive, and would cut through the thickest glove.

If the fish is taking too much line, or is headed towards some rock formation trying to cut the line, we need to take immediate action, in order to prevent it from happening. A very useful maneuver is to use the gun's tube as a lever. By holding the handle in our right hand, and the tube on the left, we can control the angle at which the line is coming out of the muzzle. Hence if we were to raise our left hand, the angle of the line to the tube is almost perpendicular. This slows down the line release tremendously, due to friction. This is a short term tactic and it will slow down the fish considerably. We never use this maneuver if we are too deep and we don't have enough air in our lungs, because it will also slow down our ascent.

We are now at the surface. We first take a couple of deep breaths before doing anything else to the reel. Most divers feel very comfortable and strong, so they tend to start pulling the line hard to recover the fish. Big fish rarely tire quickly. They may slow down a bit, but they soon start fighting again. We have to tire the fish by giving some line when it pulls too hard and then collecting it when the fish slows down. We are now in a dangerous situation where there's a lot of line floating next to us. We have left the gun floating at the surface. As we start collecting the line, we need to make sure that we move away from the floating line. If the fish takes off for deep water again, we are not in danger of becoming entangled in the lines. We keep the line to our right, so that we can see where it is at a glance.

The fish is now exhausted. We make sure that we are as far from the line as possible, and then with the left hand we grab the shaft and with the right hand we go for the fish's gills, for pelagics, or eye sockets, for groupers. After that we finish off our prey, and

we collect the line back into the reel. We have to let the shaft sink, so that the line is not twisted. Then we start collecting it into the reel by turning clock-wise. We need to make sure that the line is coiled in a nice smooth way, just like those electrical coils. This is very important, because line which is wrapped in a messy way may become tangled as the reel spins fast, after we hit the big fish.

### Gun Loading Technique

By Gerald Lim

I have a 90 cm Picasso gun with a custom shaft to optimize power. It only has one wishbone on the shaft, and it is on the last 1/4" of the shaft just outside the trigger mechanism. Because it is so close to the mechanism and thus to my chest, that I would not be able to load the gun, no matter how high on my chest I place the butt, EXCEPT for a technique I learned from Edward Hayman (from S. Africa).

In this technique, you place the butt against the tummy/waist area, grab the bands, then (this is the key to this technique!) use you fins/feet and cross the fins over the top of the muzzle to keep the muzzle from rising. Now using your back muscles simply lean back - like rowing a boat - with a slight flexing of the arms, your band can be pulled almost completely BEHIND the entire trigger mechanism if you so desire.

The limiting factor in most cocking techniques is that your ARMS lose power as they near full flexion close to the body. This is accentuated when using guns where the trigger mechanism is very close to the end of the gun. However the "Hayman" technique circumvents this problem by utilizing the back muscles rather than the arms - important for us "wusses" :-)

One drawback to this method is that, due to the power generated, a slip could be extremely painful! To help avoid any unnecessary pain you should keep your upper torso somewhat bent to help prevent the butt from slipping and do not rely on your weight belt to anchor your gun...it won't. Another minor problem with this technique is the rubbers; they get damaged quite quickly because you are pulling them up while your fins are across the top, with the plastic type blades these days it cuts them.

It sounds a little complicated to describe, but in practice the "Hayman" technique is very simple and enables you to use some stronger bands, or put the notches further back on the shaft, in effect giving you a "longer" gun. I showed this technique to Ron Mullins to impress him how much more macho I was than him, and he was suitably impressed!

Gun Load-

ing Technique

By Gerald Lim

### Feb-May Fathomiers Schedule

There will be a club meeting the second Monday of each month.		
Sun. Feb 21	Club dive	(Leo Carrillo)
Sat. Feb. 27	Banquet	
Mon. March 8	Club meeting	(vote on new members)
Sun. March 14	Club dive	(Palos Verdes)
Sun. April 11	Club dive	
Sun. May 16	Club dive	

## Freedivers Night of Terror

By John Iwaniec

It started off like any other evening on our way to San Clemente one weekend. Nelson Dooley, Scott de Firmian, Rene Rojas and myself were headed out for some spearfishing with a late start Friday evening. We got to Catalina just as the sun was going down and were making good time looking forward to anchoring at Pyramid Rock later that evening. Well, it wasn't too long before dark that we spotted the first flying fish, or I should say the first buttock of flying fish, gads they were everywhere. We watched them as they lifted off the surface of the water, spreading out in a pattern on both sides of the boat. Gliding along gracefully with the last rays of light turning their wings a beautiful silver color, we commented on their graceful beauty and the rare treat in seeing so many of them. Everything was wonderful until it got dark and then the panicked winged marvels could no longer see where they were going, WHAP, AAAHHH, I've been hit, I've been hit screamed Nelson, sitting on the deck behind us, got me right in the head, shit that son of a bitch hurt, look at my hat it's got scales all over it, see you can smell the dang thing. Indeed he had been hit and we all got a good chuckle out of his misfortune, then they were everywhere, flying along side of the boat. They were particularly dangerous from the Starboard side cause they would catch the wind, turning their wings up and to the left. Like a bunch of Kamakazi divebombers they would careen into us and someone would yell "INCOMING" and then SPLAT, BANG, THUD we were under full attack. Something hit me in the back and then another painful scream from Nelson, PLAP, AAAAHHHH,

shit, got me in the chest, look at the size of the Som a Bitch, he's right here on the deck, damn that thing stinks and for certain, there he was, a big ass flying fish with a wingspan of a 747 lying there with a smashed in nose. Get him off the boat says Rene, damn that thing stinks. By now all of us are dodging the winged missiles crashing into everything, I noticed Scott very quietly backs up so he's in my shadow, Chicken Shit I yell, get your ass out here and take it like a man. Thinking to myself, I decide not to keep my mouth open. I wonder what it would be like to have one crash down your throat and gag you to death, wings flapping against your cheeks as you suffocate, I also think at how ironic it would be to have one hit you in the temple and get killed by a flying fish, boy that would get a laugh. All the while, Rene is safe cause he's short and can just see over the roof. I realize, at 6' 5" that I'm sticking out like a sore thumb so I get a little lower. I notice the lower I duck Scott is getting lower too. All of a sudden one comes right by my face, so close his wings tickle my nose, damn that was close, did you see the nads on that one? Something catches my eye just in time to see one go right over Rene's head across my chest, under my left arm, through Scott's arm and then WHAP, AAAAHHHHH, shit, got me in the chest again as Nelson falls back against the side of the boat, Som a Bitches are after me, how come no one else is getting hit? By now we're all howling. Here he is behind all of us and already hit three times. We spend the rest of the trip to San Clemente all

bent over and peering over the roof of Rene's boat flying fish slamming into us and skidding across the deck like Exocet missiles. Well we finally get to the island and round the corner, Nelson says ok John you get up off the floor now. I had been sitting on the floor behind the cabin after tiring of bending over for the past three hours, but I can still see fish flying around behind the boat. All of a sudden, PATWANG, a suicide bomber ricochets of the door of the cabin and AAAHHHHH SHIT my head, I've been hit in the head again... That was it we all laughed so hard we were crying. I don't know when the last time was that I've laughed so hard. When we got to our anchorage, we were still laughing. The next day Nelson

Shows us black stripes across his hat. Know what these are says he? Black stripes from those damn flying fish wings, course that brought out more howling again. By the way, we shot 28 Yellows, I got 16 with my suicide gun as some guy named Bruce called it from the Encore, cause I had no trail line or reel, two fish were 28 and 35 pounds respectively. Matt Lum, that was me that missed the yellow under you wile you were filming. My one chance for stardom and I blew it. Dang the bad luck. It was a terrific weekend and my last dive in California. Looked like the guys from the ENCORE were doing pretty good too. I will always remember the night of the "Flying Fish Terror Attack". Y'all take care.

## METEOROLOGICA

### Weather -

Los Angeles (213) 544-1212, Santa Barbara (805) 897-1942

### Surf Reports -

Ventura (805) 644-8338 and (805) 962-7873, Zuma (310) 457-9701, Malibu (310) 457-9701, Hermosa (310) 379-8471, Cabrillo Beach (310) 832-1130, Orange County (714) 650-5783.

### Online NOAA Redondo Beach Buoy -

[http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/station\\_page.shtml?\\$station=46045](http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/station_page.shtml?$station=46045)

### Online Surf Cams -

<http://www.hbonline.com/bchcams.htm>

### Online Surf Forecast -

<http://www.oeregister.com/ads/ocean/surf.html>

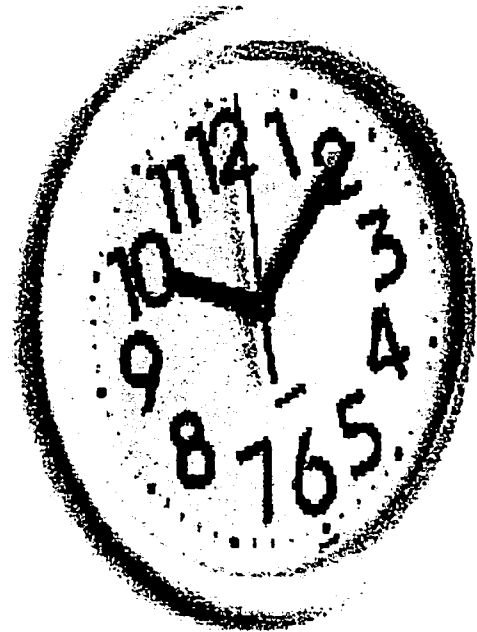
### Online Tide Tables -

<http://facs.scripps.edu/cgi-bin/tidegen.pl>

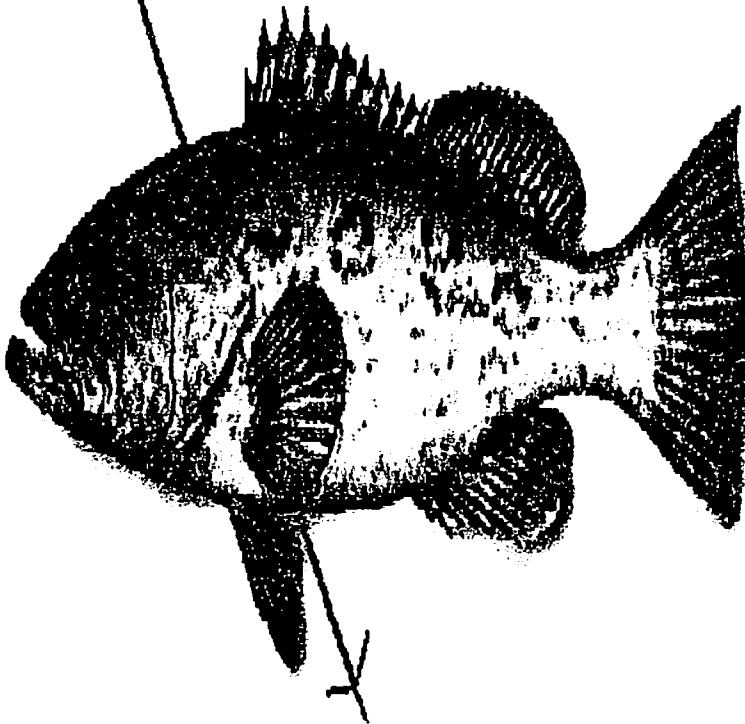
# SECRETARY'S REPORT

Fathomiers Monthly Club Meeting  
January 11, 1999

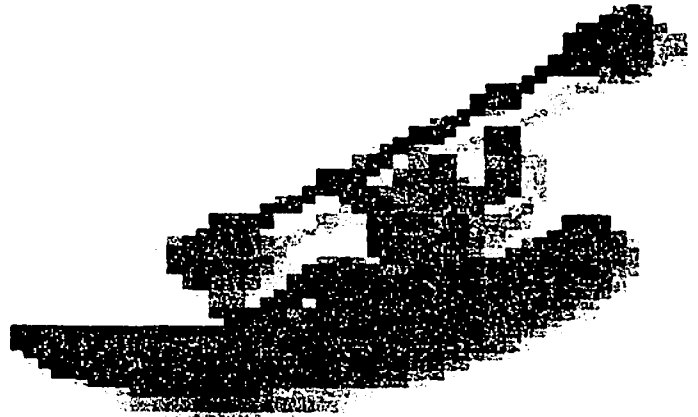
By Mitch Walker



IT IS TIME TO SEND  
IN YOUR FISHY STORY  
OR YOUR FISH STORY  
OR ANYTHING YOU  
WOULD LIKE TO SHARE  
WITH YOUR CLUB



CLASSIFIED SECTION



# Fathomiers 1999 Competitive

**CHECK YOUR  
SCORES!**

Place	Diver		Weight	Jan	Current
1st	Richard Balta	2	26.94	100.00%	100.00%
2nd	Paul Romanowski	3	9.90	44.57%	44.57%
3rd	Mitch Walker	3	4.5	25.91%	25.91%
4th	Erez Abayov	2	3.33	18.41%	18.41%
5th	Thom Fogerty	1	4.32	18.38%	18.38%
6th	Marcos Pinho	1	1.96	10.15%	10.15%
7th	Carlos Serret	1	1.78	9.60%	9.60%
8th	Fil Labastata	1	1.74	9.46%	9.46%
9th	Cisco Serret	1	1.24	7.74%	7.74%
10th	Dustin Ellis	1	.86	6.42%	6.42%

**Biggest Fish: Richard Balta, sheephead, 25.02 lbs.**

\* prospective/non member

## Richard Balta wins the Al Schuck point:

Richard Balta started off the year with a bang by nailing a 25.02 lb. Sheephead. At the January meet which was held at 1000 steps in

Took the lead in the hunt for the Al Shuck trophy, but Eddie Ota is still in the hunt with the point Eddie picked up in November. (We apologize profusely to Eddie for omitting his point in the February issue)

## Al Schuck Memorial Trophy

Diver	Points
Richard Balta	2
Eddie Ota	1

## FATHOMIERS 1999 "IN CALIFORNIA" RECORDS

SPECIES	LBS	OZ.	DIVER	LOCATION
California Sheephead	25	.336	Richard Balta	Laguna Beach

Turn in those record: If you have a record, in California or outside California, notify Richard Balta.