



# FATHOMIERS NEWSLETTER

FREEDIVING SPEARFISHING COMPETITION JUNE 1999

The World's Best  
Diving Club  
Since 1957

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### Club Dive-Sunday, June 14

The June Fathomiers club dive will be held at White's Point in Palos Verdes.

### Fathomiers Club Meeting/Auction

Monday June 14

The June Meeting is the annual auction. Bring any old (or new) dive gear to the meeting. This is a major fund raiser for the club and an excellent opportunity to pick up some gear which you need and makes your wife cringe.

Richard Balta wins the May dive and wraps up the Al Schuck Trophy.

**Congradulations Richard!**

The race now starts all over again.

## MAJOR 1999 EVENTS

JULY 10 OMAR NEILSON MEET

JULY 30 U.S. NATIONALS

AUG 7 SCRAMBLE MEET

AUG 28 SAN DIEGO FREEDIVERS  
5TH ANNUAL BLUE WATER  
MEET DEDICATED TO TOMMY  
McCAIN

OCT 2 CHARLIE STURGILL MEET

NOV 14 LARRY STAAT MEET

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 Associate  
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 it's 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 processer etc.) but any contribution is more than welcome.

## Gear Tips:

Unfortunately we do not have any materiel for this month's Gear Tips. We need material. Please send articles to any one of the editors.

Thankyou

## The Discovery Of Tuna

By Charles F. Queenan  
(From Fedco Advertisement)

Commercial fishing in San Pedro had been limited to supplying the local market until the turn-of-the-century discovery of a method of converting an unpalatable fish into one of America's favorite foods turned it into the leading fishing and canning center in the country.

In 1893, the Golden Gate Packing Company opened the California Fish Company, the first cannery in San Pedro.

By 1903, the sardine supply in local waters had dropped, and the cannery badly needed a new product. Later that year, Albert P Halfhill, co-owner of the cannery, perfected a technique for steaming previously unpopular albacore to make it look and taste like chicken.

He called it tuna, and the cannery packed 700 cases of the new product and tried to market it in Los Angeles stores. Most of it was sent back unsold, but Halfhill persuaded grocers to give it away with coffee. The gimmick worked and the public began to develop a liking for the new fish product that didn't taste fishy.

Wilbur Wood, former cannery superintendent at California Fish Company, opened his own cannery in 1912, and sold it two years later to Frank L. Van Camp, who renamed it Van Camp Sea Food Company.

## 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 Bouy -

[http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/station\\_page.phtml?Station=46045](http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/station_page.phtml?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>

### Online Southern California Swell Model

<http://cdip.ucsd.edu/models/wave.model.html>

### Online Global Wam Forecast (Unclassified)

<http://152.80.56.202/wam.html>

Van Camp became a dynamic force in the growth of the business in San Pedro, offering to purchase all the albacore the fishermen could bring in.

He built his own fleet of 15 gasoline-powered albacore boats for \$,3000 each and loaned them to the fishermen-with the catch pre-sold to Van Camp. He persuaded other cannerys to promote tuna nationally with a cooperative advertising campaign and by lowering the price to 10 cents per can.

The results were spectacular. Tuna took the country by storm, and even the timing was right. Along came World War I and the government bought tons of tuna to feed American forces fighting in Europe.

Sadly, during the last few decades a series of negative factors combined to decimate Southern California's once thriving fishing and canning business: soaring costs, falling tuna prices, disputes with Mexico over territorial rights and low-cost labor in Pacific island canneries.

## 1999 Fathomiers Schedule

All Meetings begin at 7:30 and are held at Roundtable Pizza on the south-east corner of Hawthorne Blvd. and Redondo Beach Blvd.

Sunday June 13	Club Dive
Monday June 14	Meeting (Annual Auction)
Saturday July 10	Omer Neilson Meet
Sunday July 11	Club Dive
Monday July 12	Meeting
Friday July 30	US Nationals Spearfishing
Saturday August 7	Scramble Meet
Monday August 9	Meeting
Saturday August 14	GLACD Elim #1
Saturday-Sunday 21-22	Bill Kroll Meet
Saturday September 11	GLACD Elim. #2
Sunday September 12	Club Dive
Monday September 13	Meeting (Vote on New Members)
Saturday October 2	Charlie Sturgill Polespear Meet
Saturday October 9	PCC's (Tenative)
Sunday October 10	Club Dive (Possibly reschedule)
Monday October 11	Meeting (Nominate Life Member)
Sunday November 7	Club Dive
Monday November 8	Meeting (Nominate Officers)
Sunday November 14	Larty Staat Polespear Meet
Sunday December 5	Club Dive
Monday December 13	Meeting (Elect Officers)

## Annual Auction

It's that time again. The May meeting will feature our annual fundraising auction. Bring your money and any old dive gear etc. This is a great opportunity to help out your club and, at the same time, get some great bargains.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT:

By Mitch Walker

### Minutes 5/99

### Meeting called to order 7:32

#### Old Business:

1. Vote to replace treasurer
2. June 13 club dive @ whites point
3. July 11 club dive @ county line
4. Need artwork for scramble meet t-shirts
5. New roster-update and add names

#### New Business:

- 1 Those intending to enter the Bluewatermeet must be active members or tanatives.
- 2 Jim Matsukas showed one of his guns and talked of the importance of target shooting.
- 3 Two videos were shown.
- 4 Jim Christianson died of cancer. His ashes will be placed at sea.
- 5 Mori sold Bluewater t-shirts and sweatshirts, which were designed by Ken Pitcher. T-shirts \$15.00 hooded sweatshirts \$30.00 sweatshirts (no hood) \$25.00
- 6 Larry Heinrich talked about the bluewater meet and explained the rationale for making it invitational only (Fathomiers, Neptunes, San Diego Freedivers and guests of Neptunes only.)
- 7 Fish Stories.

## Fathomier Classified Section:

For Sale: Gray Cressi open heel fins. New rubber body \$50.00 OBO Call Fil Labastida @ (310) 518-5548

2 Tilos wetsuits w/ the step in shorts attached jacket w/farmer john One large, one med. Large plush interior. Both 6.5m.

2 pair booties sizes 9 & 10

2 pr. Power play fins

One pole spear

One second stage-Osprey

2 pr. Gloves

1 dive knife

All items above are brand new contact Marteen who works for John Modugno @ (310) 328-1077

## Guess What I'm Doing Next Weekend?!

By Cisco Serret

My alarm wakes me up at 3 am. I wake up and think "What the hell am I doing? This is insane". I was diving the day before and did pretty well for PV, got a 8 lb calico and a 7 lb cabezon (which are rather big for those species around pv), and I didn't get to sleep till 1 am. But I told my friend I'd be at his house at 4am so off I go. We get out to the dive spot and I jump in the water and it is FREEZING! Dirty too. I think again "I'm insane". I had things I wanted to get done this weekend but instead I dive all weekend and let everything else go to pot. I make dive after dive and see nothing. Then I dive and SEABASS! They move away from me quickly and towards my friend who takes a shot from the surface and misses. Hours later we see alot more seabass but I don't get any shots, but my friend gets one about 20 lbs and retires to the boat. The limit on seabass is 1 so he's done for the day. I continue diving when I come upon a group of much bigger seabass slowly moving to my left. I get closer and I think 30 lbs? 35 lbs? No... BIGGER? I close in on the closest one and I get so close that I fire "from the hip" straight at his spine behind the head. He pauses and I see that my shot was high. High? How the hell did I do that? Then I realize he was farther away than I thought, and I didn't allow for refraction. Still.. it's a fairly good shot, only a few inches above the spine. And BOOM! Off he goes at warp speed. I loosely grab the trail line and he's peeling line out line like a freight train. I look behind me to make sure that I don't give him all 100 ft. of trail line when I see the end coming up REALLY FAST! I clamp down on the line and off I go. I only had one foot of line left, and no float! I let go of my stock and I grab the line with two hands and the fish is pulling me through the water at a seemingly impossible speed. Then it goes down, and down I go. I kick like crazy and finally break the surface of the water and with one hand I'm splashing the surface of the water trying to keep from getting pulled down again, as I'm gagging for air. I look over to the boat and my friend is stretched out on the boat, relaxing in the afternoon sunshine 70 yards away. I think for a second what a contrast this is. I'm fighting for my life here and he's over on the boat lost in daydreams. I get yanked down again, WAY down, and I kick and kick and I get to the surface and again I'm flailing about gasping and gagging on seawater. I decide to lose my weightbelt, but as I reach down to the clasp, DOWN I go again. I think this is it, I have to let go, when "thunk"! It's all over, the fish is off and I break the surface of the water gasping for air again. Although the fish is lost, I'm relieved the ordeal is over. I pull up an empty shaft and then I go looking for my stock. I took me quite a while to find it, the seabass had pulled me quite a distance. I have a few more chances on seabass on that dive but none of them were as big as the one I shot and lost.

Guess what I'm doing next weekend?

## "HUNTING YELLOW- TAIL"

By Orlando Delgado

The beautiful, slick and powerful Yellowtail is one of the most challenging pelagic species to land free-diving in Southern California waters. Their natural curiosity can sometimes make them an easy target, but they can also be weary at times. Once it is speared, the hard work begins. A Yellowtail heads for the nearest structure it can find with the force and speed of a small rocket. Many Freedivers have come close to drowning trying to land a medium size Yellowtail,

Yellowtail have a huge range and can be found almost worldwide. In Southern California they are common only south of Point Conception. They come in into our area in spring and usually stay through the fall. Some Yellowtail stay in our area year-round. These "Homeguards" can be huge! Yellowtail in our area range in size from 12" to over 60 pounds. The current world record Yellowtail is an 80.5-pound "Monster" taken by my friend and great Free-diver Rene Rojas, in his homeland, Chile. In our area they can be found along the mainland coast, islands and offshore banks. They like points of land and the outside edge of the kelp beds. They also like structure, current and lone rocks over open sand. Deep drop-offs can also be productive.

Equipment for hunting Yellowtail is usually a large game gun (65" or more) equipped with a reel or attached to a 100-foot trail line and float, secured to the spear-shaft. I prefer the float and trail line setup because a large Yellowtail, over deep water can strip a reel before you can reach the surface. With the float and trail line setup, the gun is free from the fish and stays with me on the surface as I fight the fish,

The techniques for hunting Yellowtail can vary from day to day, hour to hour and fish to fish. The following are quotes from some of the best Yellowtail hunters:

*"Charge fish if they are not curious. They will sometimes turn to see what is chasing them and expose their sides." Rene Rojas*

*"When bait scatters, wait 5 seconds then dive."*

*Gerald Lim*

*"Keep your gun close to your body. Do not stretch out your gun." Rene Rojas*

# www.fathomiers.com

By Cisco Serret

I propose that we set up a website for our club. On this website we can provide up to date information regarding our events. There can be a section listing the dates of club dives, another section that will contain the secretary reports, the recorder's reports, and other items of interest to club members. This can basically substitute for the newsletter (for those who have web access). The benefits of having this information on a website is that the information can be made available as soon as it is ready, rather than having to wait for the paper newsletter to arrive in the mail. And mistakes made in information on the website could be corrected quickly. This will also cut down on costs of newsletter duplication and mailings for the club.

We can also provide an archive of member's photos and stories, bios, etc. There are a lot of historical photos that can be made available on the website. Ed Gulley has a treasure trove of club photos dating back from the 1960s preserved in a photo album and these photos can be scanned into electronic form for viewing on the website.

Another feature we can have is ads, such as "Looking to buy" or "For Sale", or even "Looking for dive partner for Saturday at Catalina", etc. This will make communication between members a lot easier when time is of the essence. Another feature would be maps to diving locations.

I feel that this website should be password protected, with access open to Active and Associates of our club, and perhaps to selected members of other local dive clubs. Each member will have their own username and password to enter the site. This website would be a club benefit, and should not be open to anyone who has not contributed to our club. And we don't want to invite trouble by providing the dates and locations of our meets to misinformed members of the public (read P.E.T.A.).

The cost of registering a domain name (www.fathomiers.com) is \$70. Hosting with database services is normally around \$30/month, but I'll probably be able to provide the hosting at no cost for the club.

It would be most convenient if officers of the club had web access. That way they can input their information directly into the website. The secretary could input the secretary's report whenever it was ready, the recorder could input results of dive meets and new club records directly to the website, etc. Pictures that are scanned into electronic form can also easily be uploaded to the

website. If you don't have webaccess now, you probably should be getting it soon. Manufacturers of tvs, vcrs, and gaming consoles are starting to provide built-in webaccess capability, and soon cable television and Internet signals will be provided through the same cable. So even if you don't want Internet access, you'll probably be getting it soon anyways.

We could provide some revenue for the club by allowing advertisements, although traditionally the club has had a dim view of advertising in the newsletter. We could also put in a "bookstore" that is affiliated with one of the big internet bookstores, and purchases made through our website will make us some profit that can be returned to the club. Kind of like buying from ourselves.

The year 2000 I think would be a good target date for the opening of the Fathomiers website.

Whaddaya think?

## Hunting Yellow Tail (Continued)

face, to attract their curiosity. If you spot a Yellowtail from the surface, dive parallel in the same direction and to the same depth and hang. Don't look directly at him, and his curiosity should bring him around for a closer look. If bait fish bolt while you are underwater, watch which direction they flee and look in the opposite direction for incoming fish. Often Bonito will attack the bait fish first and the Yellowtail will follow. If you see a school of Bonito, look for the Yellowtail to come from the same direction and depth.

Yellowtail are voracious feeders, They eat Squid, Mackerel, Sardines, Anchovies, Flying Fish and many other baitfish.

You can tell when the Yellowtail are running by reading the fish reports in the newspaper. When they are in, it's fast action. They are not only fun to catch, but wonderful to eat, especially raw as Sushi or Sashimi.

"Good Luck"

## FATHOMIERS 1999 "IN CALIFORNIA" RECORDS

SPECIES	LBS	OZ	DIVER	LOCATION
White Seabass	76	9.6	Todd Bergenbring	Palos Verdes
California Sheephead	25	2	Richard Balta	Laguna Beach
Calico Bass	9	3	Stathis Kostopoulos	Laguna Beach

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

## Fathomiers 1999 Competitive

**CHECK YOUR SCORES!**

Place	Diver	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	Current
1st	Richard Balta	100%	100%	—	100%	100%	400
2nd	Cisco Serret	7.74%	—	—	58.82%	68.2%	134.76
3rd	Paul Romanowski	44.57%	0	5.15%	60.40%	—	110.12
4th	Eddie Ota	—	—	100%	—	—	100.0
5th	Carlos Serret	9.60%	—	37.84%	0	—	47.44
6th	Tim	—	—	—	30.40%	—	30.40
7th	Mitch Walker	25.91%	0	—	—	—	25.91
8th	Fil Labastata	9.46%	—	12.68%	—	—	22.14
9th	Erez Abayov	18.41%	—	—	—	—	18.41
10th	Thom Fogerty	18.38%	—	—	—	—	18.38
11th	Marcos Pinho	10.15%	—	—	—	—	10.15
12th	Dustin Ellis	6.42%	—	—	—	—	6.42

Place	Diver	Fish (est.)	Weight	Feb
1st	Richard Balta	3	4.34	100.00%
2nd	Cisco Serret	2	2.96	68.2%
3rd	Paul Romanowski	—	—	0%

### Al Schuck

**Competitive Results:** The May Club dive was held in rough conditions at Reef Point in Laguna Beach. Richard Balta won the meet and got his 4th Al Schuck point and the coveted Al Schuck trophy. Congratulations Richard!! The Al Schuck points will start over again for the June dive.

Diver	Points
Richard Balta	4
Eddie Ota	2
Paul Romanowski	1

## Steve Redding Trophy:

The Steve Redding Trophy is a lifetime trophy awarded to honor the memory of Steve Redding. The fish chosen are all gamefish which can be caught off the beach. It was thought that the eligible fish should be readily accessible off the beach or by kayak because Steve was primarily a beach diver. The qualifying fish are as follows:

Each diver must get, while an active member or tentative, one each of the following: Yellotail (at least 35 lbs.), White Seabass (at least 50lbs.), and either a CalicoBass (at least 10lbs.) or Halibut (at least 25lbs.)

So far this year, the White Seabass hunting has been extremely good and several people have already speared Whites of 50lbs, or more.

Diver	White Seabass	Yellowtail	Halibut	Calico
Todd Bergenbring	76lbs 9.6oz			
Scott deFirmian	61lbs 12oz			
Al Schnepershoff	56lbs 6oz			
Nelson Dooley	53lbs 4oz			
Skip Hellen	52lbs 6oz			
Richard Balta	50lbs 6oz			
Paul Romanowski	50lbs			

## Maps Needed!

There are many different dive spots which can be nominated for a club dive, but many of the members will be unfamiliar with the location and or the layout of the area (reefs structure etc.) As a service to the other members, it is requested that anyone that nominates a spot for a monthly dive, provide a rough map of the reefs and structure as well as brief instructions on getting to the spot. It is understood that you may have your "secret holes" at a particular location and nobody expects you to give those away!

## FDL "SHOOTOUT" PARTY

On Saturday, May 22, Robin Carden Hosted a Freediver Shootout Party at his beautiful estate in San Juan Capistrano. The party featured an equipment display, a shootout, lots of good conversation, great music, tasty food and wonderful people. What more could you ask for? Special Thanks go out to Robin Carden for hosting this spectacular event.

## Another man dies but the legend remains

The Man went by the Name Jim Christiansen or he was known by almost every freediver as "Big Jim", Big Jim was a pioneer in the World of spearfishing he was one of the few brave souls to venture out into the unknown frontier where sea monsters lived and men Never returned from. Big Jim saw things like the mask, fins, snorkle, and wetsuit be invented. He had a lot of input into some of these Inventions. Big Jim died recently after a long battle with lung cancer, but he will never be forgotten. Big Jim was a legend way before he died, which very few people can claim. He truly was a special man. We will miss you Jim, But, we will never forget you.

Editor,