

FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

CHANNEL ISLANDS DIVERS



Photo: Franklin Murphy

NEXT CLUB MEETING:

February 18th, 2026
 Black Bear Diner
 2401 East Harbor, Ventura
 Ventura, 93003

Social and Dinner: 6:00 PM
 Meeting: 6:30 PM

BOTTOM TIMES

By Club President Delbert Stewart



Greetings and salutations, amigos!

The most anticipated day of the **month** is here! Your very own newsletter, packed with all the happenings of your favorite diving celebrities caught in action and juicy topics. Hot off the press and delivered with priority mail straight to your inbox.

And it gets better. This is also the most anticipated issue of the **year** because the 2026 CID club agenda is inside. Yes, you read that right. Our full schedule of fun under the sun, in the water, and abroad. But no skipping ahead to Page 13. You must finish reading the Bottom Times first... or it will vanish.

January general meeting recap: We had a great start this January, beginning with our general meeting, where we had the pleasure of learning about the solo adventures of author and Ventura legend Ken McAlpine. The presentation did not follow our typical meeting format with the PowerPoint and pictures that usually extend our attention span. Ken, a charismatic fellow and quick with his gift of gab—as you would expect from an author—had everyone hooked with his anecdotes from his journeys. Right from the podium, impromptu style, it was an enjoyable evening with lots of laughs.

Once his presentation concluded, people flocked over to buy the book and chat him up. I could tell he enjoyed his moment of fame. Great work, Channel Islands Divers, welcoming our guest and engaging with him before, during, and after his presentation. He expressed his gratitude to me.

Peeking into February meeting

Moving forward, our speaker for this month is another local legend, Neail Holland, owner of Rec2Tec (and CID sponsor). I believe that stands for “Recreational Diver to Technical Diver.” I recall the first time he introduced himself to the club and spoke briefly about his dive shop business, offering his services to anyone interested. It did not take long before Mr. Rob Johnson jumped on it, put together a group of divers, negotiated a good deal, and got them nitrox certified and ready for Bonaire... Oohrah!

Last year, Neail inquired about what it would take to become a full-fledged club sponsor, and I gave him the pumped-up spiel I give all dive shops. He was happy to support us. Now what we need to do is pull him closer into the circle, get him diving with us, and have him show off some of those cool dive moves.

😊 So join us this week. Bring your questions. Introduce yourself. Give our guest a warm CID welcome.

Moving on to club business,

Shore Diving Update

Great news for those of you interested in shore diving—we are continuing with two shore dives a month! Score!!

The first dive is moving to the second Saturday of the month to accommodate the dive coordinator’s schedule. To make it even better, we will be joining our event sponsor, SC Diving, will our very own Dive Master Dan leading the trips. Details will be posted on the club’s Facebook group 1-2 days before the dive.

The second dive remains on the Saturday after the general meeting (third Saturday of the month). If you would like more information, please email Dan at Dive@channelislandsdivers.org.

A Snippet of What the Year Holds

Our yearly Refugio State Beach Park BBQ – September 21 just got a lot more interesting. Pack the camping gear and the s’mores! We are going to try to reserve a group campsite for this weekend. Space is limited to 30 guests and 9 vehicles, so carpooling will be key. This is the first time in a long time we are doing this, and several members and I are really excited about it. We plan to camp Friday and Saturday and pack out Sunday.

For the **Easter Dive and BBQ – March 21** at Carpinteria State Beach Park, the goal was to camp there as well, but planning it has its challenges given the need to book sites 3-6 months prior and the timing being around spring break. If you can find a campsite, grab it. I mentioned it to Melanie, and she locked in a spot. Nice work. Most of us may have to wait until next year for camping, but we will see.

If there is strong interest, we will try to plan it properly for 2027 during our 2026 planning cycle. Yes, that means handing a task to the 2027 board... but hey, that is how legends are made. If you want to camp at Carpinteria in 2027, let us know. Help us weigh the scales.

Next up, the **Scuba Show – May 30 & 31** in Long Beach. Laura and Stormy are organizing the trip. Rob Johnson is handling the dives at Veterans Park. Same great format as last year. And surprise, Rebecca... Stormy volunteered you! 😊

We also have a road trip to **Baja California Sur to La bufadora – March 21**. This will be a 3–4 day explore-and-dive adventure. More details coming soon.

And of course, **Cozumel – October 21**. We already have 17 members heading to the eastern Yucatán Peninsula. There is so much to explore on this little island! I am going to rent a moped and play “Downtown,” but in my head it will be “Cozumeel! Cozumeel!” 😊 That trip is shaping up nicely. *We have three more spots available, so book SOON!!*

This is only a snippet of what the year entails. There is plenty more diving on the schedule. Check the agenda. Ask questions. Get involved. I am looking forward to seeing you all this Wednesday, February 18 at Black Bear Diner. Join us at 6:00 PM for some good food and light socializing. The meeting kicks off at 6:30.

Come hungry. Come ready to dive in. 😎

See you there.

FEBRUARY PRESENTATION

Neail Holland

Public Safety Diving

Neail Holland's presentation will provide an in-depth look at the world of Public Safety Diving and the specialized training required to operate in challenging and high-risk environments. Drawing from real-world experience, Neail will discuss the purpose and structure of public safety dive teams, how members are selected and trained, and the unique operational demands these teams face.



The presentation will cover legal considerations, including OSHA requirements, specialized equipment, deployment strategies, and safety protocols used during public safety dive operations. Additional topics include underwater evidence recovery, proper documentation procedures, and how these missions differ significantly from recreational and technical diving.

Neail has been scuba diving since 1989. It wasn't until he came to California in 1991 that he became passionate about scuba diving. Over the years, he sought additional training while diving the California Channel Islands regularly. In 2005, he became a Divemaster and then became a Technical Diver, cave diving with a closed-circuit rebreather, which increased his knowledge and safety awareness. In 2007, Neail became a NAUI Instructor and started Rec2Tec Scuba (one of our club sponsors). Within the next few years, he became an Instructor Trainer and then a Course Director.

Neail is a retired Police Sergeant from the Oxnard Police Department and was a member of the Oxnard Police and Fire Public Safety Dive Team since 2002. He started as a police diver and tender and eventually supervised the unit's operations, personnel, training, and equipment.

Along with scuba diving, Neail enjoys travelling. His travels with fellow scuba divers have taken him through the USA, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

Member Reports, Local Dives, Special Events

Club Dive Report 1/24/26

County Line Conquest: Bugs, Scallops, and a Knife-Point Catch!

The Pacific gave us a bit of everything for our latest club outing at **County Line**. We had a strong showing with nine divers hitting the water—eight of our dedicated club members (Jessica, Joe, Tony, two Michaels, Isaac, Rob J. and yours truly, Diver Master Dan) along with Andrew, a Rescue Diver from SC Diving who we hope to officially welcome as a new member soon!

The Conditions

The morning started with a moody, overcast sky, and the ocean was feeling lively. We timed our entries through **2–3 foot waves**, though a few larger sets kept everyone on their toes. Once under the surface, the surge was definitely noticeable, making for a real "Channel Islands Workout."

While the initial descent had viz of about 15 feet, the dive transformed as we pushed through the kelp forest. Once we hit the rocky portion of the reef, the visibility opened up to a beautiful **25 feet**, with temperatures holding steady at a comfortable **60 degrees**. Just as the dive peaked, the sun finally broke through the clouds, lighting up the reef perfectly.

The Harvest

It was a productive day for the hunters in the group. Several **lobsters** were bagged, and a nice haul of **scallops** was harvested from the rocks. However, the highlight of the day happened sub-surface in a move that most of us wouldn't believe if we hadn't seen the results:

Good-size halibut taken using nothing but a dive knife!

It's not every day you see a diver go "old school" and come out on top against a halibut without a speargun. Let me describe the scene. Andrew and I had surfaced after about an hour to get our bearings and we were quite a way out, with about 1000 PSI. We marked the stairs on our compasses and started in towards the shore. Rob had mentioned he usually gets his lobsters on the way in and sure enough we both found a keeper, so we had our eyes peeled for more. Suddenly, I feel a tug on my fin and turn around, and Andrew is pointing down at a nice size halibut. I pulled out my 4-inch dive knife and check my air – I'm down to 250 psi. I position myself over the fish and try to determine the best spot to dispatch it. I aim for the spot between the eyes and plunge in my knife. It did not appreciate the attack and proceeded to thrash around, and I lost hold of it. Luckily, the visibility was so good that I was able to watch it swim away and settle back onto the sea floor. I gave chase and to my surprise it did not react. I struck again and it thrashed about some more and attempted to escape once again. Again, I calmly watched it settle back onto the sand. I got close and delivered the final blow. I took my trophy by the gills and casually looked at my air: 98 PSI. I headed to the surface, inflated my BCD, and began the surface swim back to the beach. It was a nice fish and measured 29" and had almost 10 lbs. of steaks. Jessica got some great pictures!

Join Us Next Time

Whether you're hunting for dinner or just enjoying the view in the kelp, these club dives are what it's all about. A huge *thank you* to everyone who came out and made it a safe, successful day.



Fun facts about scallops: Most scallop species remain free-swimming throughout their lives...except the locally occurring Giant Rock or Purple-Hinged Scallop (*Crassadoma gigantea*). This bivalve attaches to hard surfaces after its juvenile free-floating (planktonic) life stage. It is found from Sitka, AK south to Baja's Magdalena Bay, on rocks, oil platform supports and pier footings, from the low intertidal zone to 250 feet. A fishing license is required to collect them, and the bag limit is generally 10. Like many filter-feeders, these bivalves are susceptible to biotoxins from algae, which may cause serious illness in humans. Domoic acid, a neurotoxin, is typically the most common – and most serious – toxin in Southern California. (BTW, it is not killed by cooking.)

JANUARY RAFFLE WINNERS



Alex Weid: Marine turtle photo, donated by Bill Weinerth & taken during their recent trip to the Galapagos.



Alex also won the Cozumel Fish ID care & safety sausage.



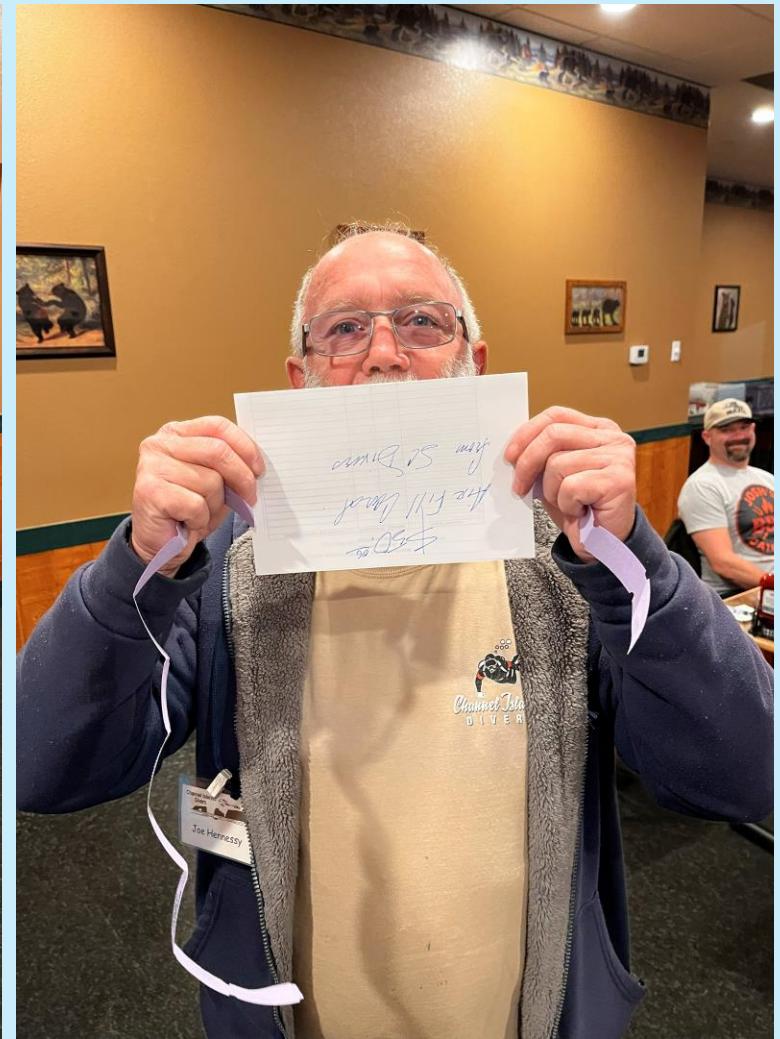
Melanie Kemmann won the Cozumel Travel Kit



Del Stewart won the door prize, including a map of our local Marine Protected Areas, Pacific fish ID card, and various other goodies!



Laurie Hennessy won the Landing Pad



Joe Hennessy won the \$50 air full card



Viktoria Burmann won the Progressive Drawing prize, a Tusa dive bag.

FEBRUARY RAFFLE PRIZES



Blue Dive Parka w/
Club Patch



Dive Hood



Tusa Dive Snorkle



XS Scuba Compact
Console Retractor

RAFFLE

- Regular:** Buy tickets at the meeting and those are the tickets we draw.
- Progressive:** This drawing is pulled from all the raffle tickets you've bought over the Quarter.
- Participation:** Points are given for your participation in our club activities, such as attending monthly meetings, going on club events, posting to our Facebook page, and contributing to the newsletter (hint, hint!).

RAFFLE SCHEDULE

January	<i>Progressive</i>
February	Participation
March	Regular
April	<i>Progressive</i>
May	Participation
June	Regular
July	<i>Progressive</i>
August	Participation
September	Regular
October	<i>Progressive</i>
November	Participation
December	No drawing in December

Teaser Alert: The April Progressive Raffle prize will be an Insta360 X3 Camera Dive Kit, sponsored by Channel Islands Dive Adventures (*thank you, Ken!*)



CLUB CALENDAR

FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
<p>14: Shore dive TBA</p> <p>18: Club Meeting, participation raffle drawing</p> <p>Speaker: Neill Holland</p> <p>21: Shore dive, La Janelle</p> <p>24: Board Meeting</p>	<p>14: Shore dive TBA</p> <p>18: Club Meeting, regular raffle drawing</p> <p>Speaker: TBA</p> <p>21: Shore dive, TBA</p> <p>24: Board Meeting</p> <p>31: Underwater Easter egg hunt, Carpinteria State Beach Park</p>	<p>11: Shore dive TBA</p> <p>15: Club Meeting, progressive raffle drawing TBA,</p> <p>Speaker: TBA</p> <p>18: Beach dive, Point Dume</p> <p>21: Board Meeting</p>
MAY	JUNE	JULY
<p>9: Shore dive TBA</p> <p>20: Club Meeting, participation raffle drawing,</p> <p>Speaker: TBA</p> <p>23: Spectre boat dive; no beach dive</p> <p>26: Board Meeting</p> <p>30-31: Long Beach Scuba Show; May 30th beach dive at Veterans Park.</p>	<p>13: Shore dive, TBA</p> <p>17: Club Meeting, regular raffle drawing, Speaker: TBA</p> <p>20: Beach dive, TBA</p> <p>23: Board Meeting</p>	<p>11: Shore dive, TBA</p> <p>15: Club Meeting, progressive raffle drawing, Speaker: TBA</p> <p>18: Beach dive, TBA</p> <p>21: Board Meeting</p>

More Fun facts – Sleeping Sea Jelly & Anemone?

Long time club member Cindy Doyon shared this link to recent studies that indicate one species of sea jelly (jelly fish) and one species of sea anemone appear to sleep. Interesting for several reasons, not least of which is that neither of these creatures have brains. It's long been thought that sleep is essential to brain health, so what's happening here? Read on for more info:

https://globalpost.com/stories/jellyfish-sea-anemones-need-sleep-like-humans-new-study/?_bhid=1b1361424408b1e555883c36c2553dc3e8210b82

Upcoming Events

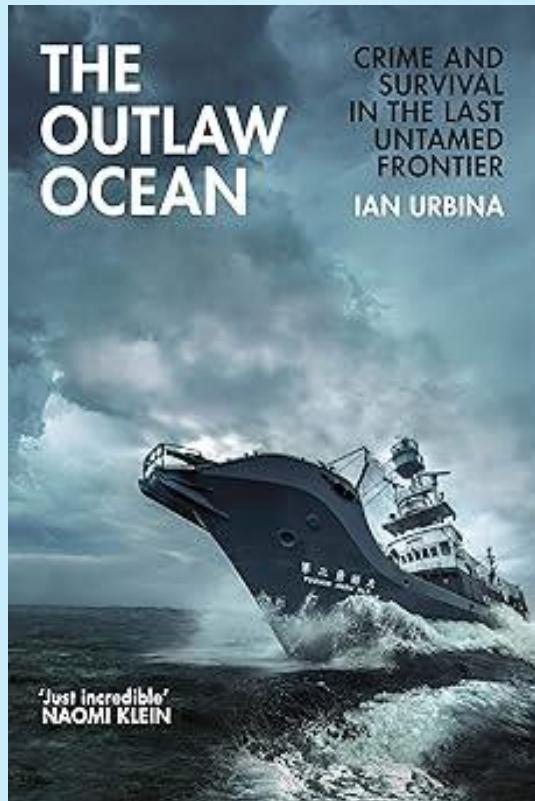
Date	Location	Description
14-Feb	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
21-Feb	La Jennell	Club dive with beach clean-up
14-Mar	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
21-Mar	Carpinteria State Beach	Easter egg hunt/dive, BBQ, and camping
11-Apr	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
18-Apr	Point Dume	Club dive with beach clean-up
9-May	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
23-May	Spectre boat dive	Sign up now open!! 
30-May	Veterans Park/Scuba Show	Morning dive at Veterans Park
31-May	Veterans Park/Scuba Show	Morning dive at Veterans Park
13-Jun	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
20-Jun	Deer Creek	Club dive with beach clean-up
11-Jul	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
18-Jul	Ensenada/La Bufadora	Small boats take divers to drop off near the blow hole. Supper sleepy little village. Great food. Camping nearby.
8-Aug	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
22-Aug	Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber	Dive to 165 feet; tour the USC Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber
12-Sep	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
12-Sep	Refugio State Beach Park	Yearly club BBQ, dive (and potentially camping) weekend
10-Oct	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
17-Oct	★ Cozumel	Trip abroad; still room for more!
24-Oct	Point Lobos	Weekend trip to Monterey
31-Oct	Underwater Pumpkin carving	Sponsored by SC diving, location TBD
14-Nov	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
21-Nov	Santa Cruz trip	Club boat owners meet at Scorpion Cove for a group day of diving and hiking. Members who cannot fit on boats will travel via Island Packers.
12-Dec	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
19-Dec	Laguna Beach	Road trip for the last dive of the year

Book of the Month

The Outlaw Ocean

Written by Ian Urbina

I never realized how many illegal activities occur on the oceans. *The Outlaw Ocean* is a collection of non-fiction stories relating to an investigative reporter's five years researching activities such as illegal fishing, pollution, and labor exploitation. This book exposes a global network of crime and abuses in the fishing, oil, and shipping industries.



"There are few remaining frontiers on our planet. Perhaps the wildest and least understood is our oceans: too big to police and under no clear international authority, these immense regions play host to rampant criminality and exploitation....a place where anyone can do anything because no one is watching." Source: Goodreads.com

Ian Urbina introduces the reader to a most interesting & hidden world of:

- Traffickers and smugglers
- Pirates and mercenaries
- Wreck thieves and repo men
- Vigilante conservationists and elusive poachers
- Seabound abortion providers
- Clandestine oil dumpers
- Shackled slaves and cast-adrift stowaways.

If such shady activities pique your interest, I highly recommend this book. The author takes you on some sketchy boat rides with unscrupulous characters and into some life-threatening encounters as he investigates these illegal activities.

Book review by club librarian, Steve Peterson.

Please see our website for member benefits

<https://www.channelislandsdivers.org/membership>

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP: 94
Thank you to all renewing members!!

Welcome to our newest member, Ryan Schuster!!

Membership Policy: Club policy is to drop members from the roster
THREE MONTHS AFTER MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION

Membership Prices: Renewing Membership: Single = \$30; Family = \$45
New Membership: Single = \$40; Family = \$55

Please mail renewals to: CID Membership, P.O Box 5801, Ventura, CA 93005

Renew by Zelle: cidtreasurer92@gmail.com

Board of Directors

Delbert Stewart: President
president@channelislandsdivers.org

Rob Marion: VP
vicepresident@channelislandsdivers.org

Ann Hoagland: Secretary
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editor@channelislandsdivers.org

Steve Peterson: Librarian
library@channelislandsdivers.org



Sponsors Corner

Our sponsors generously offer discounts to our members! You *must* show your membership card to reap this benefit. See Rob Johnson, our Membership Coordinator, to receive your very own card.



Websites:

- <https://www.rec2tecsuba.com/>
- <https://www.scdiving.com/>
- <https://islandpackers.com/>
- <https://scubasolutionsca.com/>
- <https://channelislandsdiveadventures.com/>
- <https://maverickunderseadivers.com/>