



Barbary Coast Bulletin

The Monthly Newsletter of the Barbary Coast Divers

January 2000

Next Meeting: January 19th

All meetings are held the third **Wednesday** of every month at
ROUND TABLE PIZZA ON GEARY AT 16TH AVE.
upstairs in the party room

Upcoming Dive Club Events:

Diving at Big Sur on January 15, 16, and 17 (Martin Luther King Holiday)

Caspar Cove on May 27-29 (Memorial Day)

At Our Next Meeting:

Pete, Naoko, and Siodin are showing their video of their trip to Hawaii.

We will be making a list of dive club events at the next meeting.

At Our Last Meeting:

Our last meeting was the Christmas party. See [page 3](#) for a synopsis.

Read this newsletter on the web at www.idiom.com/~catzan/bcd

If you are getting a paper copy of this newsletter and wish to switch to an all electronic format (ie, you receive an e-mail each month telling you to go to the web page to read the newsletter), let me know.

Announcements

Time to pay dues!

The cost is \$35 per person or couple, which includes a subscription to CenCal diver club (<http://www.cencal.org>). CenCal represents all divers in California and lobbies for rights of divers.

Send check payable to Carol Reed, 150 Sadowa, San Francisco, CA 94112
If you have questions, call Carol at 415-668-6662 (work) or 415-333-8820 (home).

New Fishing Regulations

(Thanks to Curt for providing these)

Bag limits:

Rockfish - 10 total
Bocaccio - 3
Canary - 3
Cowcod - 1/angler, 2/boat
Lingcod - 2

Size limits:

Bocaccio - 10 inches
Lingcod - 26 inches
Cabezon - 14 inches
Kelp Greenling - 12 inches
Rock Greenling - 12 inches
Calif. Scorpionfish - 10 inches

Seasonal Closures for rockfish and lingcod fishing:

South of Lopez Pt. - closed January and February
North of Lopez Pt. and south of Cape Mendocino - closed
March and April

For a complete list of regulations:

http://www.dfg.ca.gov/fg_comm/fishregs.html

New Abalone Regulations for 2000

There are three big changes this year:

- 1. Divers are limited to taking 100 abalone per year.** (The four-per-day limit, as well as the seven-inch size limit, have not changed.)
- 2. Abalone divers are now required to carry an "abalone report card"** in addition to your abalone stamp and fishing license. Upon returning to shore from your dive,* you must immediately punch a hole in the report card and record the date, time, etc. (I assume they give you the report card when you buy the stamp.) You are required to turn in the report card to Ca. Dept. of Fish and Game at the end of the calendar year.
- 3. You cannot have abalone on board any boat or floating device which has scuba diving gear aboard.**

** Persons diving from a boat or shore may have their report card, abalone stamp, and fishing license on the boat or within 500 yards on the shore, respectively.*

Recent BCD Adventures:***Christmas Party***

The Christmas Party was a smashing success this year as usual. The elegant affair (no neoprene allowed) was held in the gracious home of Roy and Colleen Coto. It attracted faithful members such Tom and Ester Turner, as well as the usual bunch. Roy's father cooked a sumptuous roasted ham and the club funds (yes, your dues at work) paid for the honey-baked turkey.

The gift exchange was rather quiet this year, compared to past years where riots nearly broke out over gifts like Santa Claus boxer shorts and bottles of Grand Marnier. The most sought after gift this year was the towel rack shaped like a fish, my sources tell me. The highlight of the evening came when the Christmas tree decided to spontaneously topple over, nearly crushing several near-by drunk party-goers who claimed they did nothing to cause the incident.

Cozumel... Rick and Catherine (me!) went to Cozumel and the Yucatan mainland for nine days (it would have been ten but I left my passport in Santa Cruz, forcing us to delay our flight a day). Diving on Cozumel was paradise, as usual. It is great to see that the reef is holding up over the years. We dove with Paradise, one of the larger dive operators and were pleased with the hands-off approach of the dive masters (i.e., they treated us like adults). Since we were not on a package deal, we were able to go each day on their "fast boat," on which they generally put their more experienced divers.

On the Yucatan mainland we stayed in Akumal, about 65 miles south of Cancun. The white sandy beaches stretch out endlessly. The off-shore diving is pretty good, but nothing compared to Cozumel. The on-shore diving, the Cenotes, are the main attraction. It is pure magic to dive in these caverns, where glowing shafts of light filter through the crystal clear water. See [page 4](#) for a (mostly true!) story about the cenotes.

Hawaii

Pete, Naoko, and Siodin went to Hawaii. See [page 5](#) for more!

***Local Holiday Diving:***

The unusually warm Christmas weather had BCD divers gearing up to enjoy the calm conditions and excellent visibility.

- On Dec. 26, BCDers launched their kayaks at Del Monte Beach in Monterey. Roy, Dan, Curt, and Carol paddled out to catch their dinner in 30-foot visibility water.
- Curt and Carol were the only two mussel-pickers on New Year's Day. The rest of us were busy nursing hangovers, or, given the sedate nature of this years celebration, cursing themselves for staying home and boarding up the windows against the pernicious Y-2K bug. Carol says the mussels were succulent and delicious. The following day they launched from breakwater where the fishing was good, the visibility was 20-25 feet, and the temperature was about 53 degrees.

Cenotes - Cave divers on the edge by

Catherine Zandonella

After five hours of hiking through the jungle, the alligator was hardly a welcome site. The beast sprawled placidly on the far side of the shaded pool, grinning like a starving man who'd just found a MacDonald's. Christophe Le Maillot, a wiry French diving instructor turned jungle explorer, looked back at his colleagues who were struggling up the last bit of trail, slapping at mosquitos. "Who's ready for a swim?" he said.

The team had hiked to Cenote Ya'ax Kai, a pristine pool deep in the heart of the Yucatan. The pool, or cenote, is one of several entries into a labyrinthine system of subterranean rivers that flow towards the sea. Each member of the team is a highly trained cave diver who'd gravitated to the Yucatan to dive these tranquil conduits. Now they hauled scuba tanks, wetsuits, a generator, and tents and bedding into the jungle on pack animals. For the next 23 days, the team would make dozens of dives in the 75 degree, 400-foot visibility water.

Upon reaching the cenote and discovering its guardian alligator, the team was feeling very discouraged. But they decided to go on with the mission. In this lush, tropical forest there was sure to be plenty for the alligator to eat, so it was unlikely the 'gator would go after one of them.

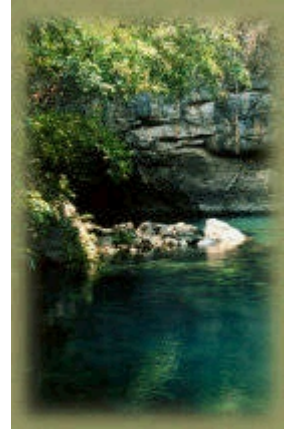


Each day, Chris and the other divers donned specialized cave-diving gear and slipped into the silent waters. They spooled out behind them tough nylon line to mark their path. With each dive, they charted the dark underwater passages where no light could penetrate. They swam in silence passed majestic stalagmites that rose from the cave floor like fairy castles. They shone powerful spotlights over what cavers call "flow stone," a formation that looks like vanilla ice cream that melted and then refroze. Occasionally, they emerged into blue-green pools where shafts of sunlight made it difficult for the diver to tell where the water ended and the the air began.



As the weeks progressed, Chris and the others became accustomed to the 'gator. They became so relaxed around it that often the lot of them would jump into the cenote to cool off after a long day. Little did they know the giant reptile's patience was wearing thin.

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On the last day of the trip, Chris was cleaning his gear when he heard a loud shriek, followed by hoarse cries of "Help me, help me!" It was Sabine, the young cave-diver from Canada. The cries came from the cenote. Chris ran to the pool to see Sabine grabbing for dear life onto a water scooter. She zipped through the water with the alligator right behind her. The 'gator was gaining. Chris grabbed a stick and threw it at the reptile, while another of the cave divers started pelting it with rocks. Meanwhile, Sabine managed to motor to shore and scramble out onto the rocky bank.

Later, Chris and the others had a good laugh describing how scared Sabine looked as she desperately motored just inches ahead of the creature's gaping jaws. Cave-divers laugh in the face of danger, they told her.

By the close of the trip, the divers had mapped 45,000 feet of passageway, and discovered six new cenotes in the system. They packed up and headed back to the coast. They knew they'd be coming back--there were still plenty of passages to explore. This time though, they'd try to pick a cenote that didn't have a 'gator.

Learn more about this team and their research at:
<http://www.mexicocavediving.com>

Monterey Harbor Clean Up Dive
Saturday, January 22

The air fills will be free from local shops and it has been organized as a "pay back" to the harbor master for getting the Breakwater showers working again. Contact David Clayton for more details: drc@ccnet.com

Hawaii continued from [page 3](#)



Pete, Naoko, and Siodin went to Kona for six days of diving. They saw white-tipped reef sharks and lots of sea turtles, but overall, the three were not impressed with the diving. "At least it was warmer than California," said Siodin.

Kona is famous for its manta rays. To see them, the entire boatload of about 20 divers sat on the sea floor aiming their flashlights at the surface to attract algae that then attracts mantas. The mantas were a no-show.

If the diving wasn't so spectacular, the volcano was.