

ODYSSEY
CENCAL DIVE COUNCIL NEWSLETTER
SUMMER 2022

CENCAL BI MONTHLY MEETING: Wednesday July 27, 2022 at 7:30 pm via zoom

URCHIN CULLING by *San Jose Flipper Dippers*: Barbara Davis Reports: Certified Kelp Restoration Specialist Divers **Barbara Davis** and **Howard Timoney**, *San Jose Flipper Dippers* dive club, boarded the Beach- HopperII on Wednesday, January 26th, to head out to Tankers Reef to cull some urchins! The boat was full with 11 divers aboard, ably assisted by Captain MaryJo Nelson and divemaster (and G2KR guru) Keith Roostaert.

We anchored on the orange buoy and headed north to smash the small purple sea urchins that are decimating the kelp. We did two 54-minute dives with a maximum depth of 39 feet. Water temp was about 54 degrees with visibility ranging from 15-20' on the first dive and 10-15' on the second. With 11 divers doing 2 dives each, we made a significant contribution to the kelp restoration efforts! Check out g2kr.com for more information on the *Giant Kelp Restoration* project. Additional dates have been scheduled for urchin culling dives on Wednesdays and Thursdays in February and March.

KELP RESTORATION/URCHIN CULLING: In case you're not all up on our ocean issues. A perfect storm occurred several years ago. Warm water (warm water blob) and death of most starfish. Starfish are main predators of urchins whose population, with the starfish loss, urchins exploded. Urchins eat kelp – as do abalone. The north central California coast kelp population was almost completely destroyed. Important to note: north central kelp is annual while So Cal kelp is perennial.

The dominoes falling. Abalone are starving. The red abalone population is at 10%, so ab season closed until at least 2026. Divers saw shrunken abalone, and urchin 'barrens' appear all over ocean floor. Interestingly, urchins are also starving, so taking urchins for insides is futile – they are empty.

All sorts of ideas came to the minds of divers and marine scientists too. Crush urchins – what to do with them? It is a falsity that crushed urchins spread eggs to grow more urchins. Plant kelp? Not as easy as it may sound. Several groups have undertaken restoration plans. Urchin take limit increased. *Reef Check* got involved with a kelp restoration certification. *The Watermen* are organizing urchin crushing events in two coves legal for crushing: *Tankers Reef* in Monterey and *Caspar Cove* in Mendocino.

THE RAAC: The Recreational Abalone Advisory Committee In October of 1997, Governor Pete Wilson signed SB463 into law bringing sweeping changes to abalone management. Besides the closure of all abalone take south of San Francisco, the bill created the [Recreational Abalone Management Program - RMAC](#) (Code Sections 7149.8-7149.9). The program requires sport license holders to purchase an abalone stamp/report card to take abalone. The funds are deposited into the Abalone Restoration and Preservation Account. It also outlines the restricted uses for which the funds may be directed. In addition, the bill required the Director to appoint the members of the [Recreational Abalone Advisory Committee](#) (RAAC) (Code Section 7400) who..."shall meet at least once each calendar year to review proposals and recommend to the director projects and budgets for the expenditure of fees received pursuant to Section 7149.8. The committee may review progress reports and the results of projects funded under this article and make recommendations to the director regarding abalone resource management."

The director shall appoint a Recreational Abalone Advisory Committee consisting of nine members who shall serve without compensation. Two members shall reside south of the southern boundary line of Marin County and a line extending due east from the easternmost point of Marin County located in San Pablo Bay and north of the boundary between Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties and a line extending due east from the easternmost point in that boundary line. The two members shall be selected from nominations submitted by the Central California Council of Divers, the Southern California Shellfish Assessment Program, the Northern California Shellfish Assessment Program, or by individuals or organizations that actively participate in the recreational abalone fishery, except that not more than one of the members selected shall be an active or former commercial abalone diver or involved in commercial seafood processing or marketing. Current members are Dennis Haussler and Doug Laughlin. Dennis has recently resigned from the Committee as he is moving out of state.

BAD BAD MUSSELS Not all divers have or use boats, but in summer there is a legion of water watercraft on California's array of lakes, reservoirs and waterways. Also in summer, state inspectors gear up their efforts to guard against any possible spread of quagga and zebra mussels – the state's most notorious invasive species. Inspectors have found the best way to guard against these mussels is to ask for help from the boat owners, and ask them to remember the importance of cleaning, draining and drying their watercraft to ensure no movement of the invasive species.

The mussels come from Europe and Asia; multiply quickly, alter water quality and the aquatic food web impacting native and sport fish communities. They spread by attaching to watercraft, equipment or nearly anything in the infected waters. The mussels can attach and damage boat engines, steering; colonize underwater substrates (boat ramps, docks, lines and such); cause monetary damage.

What to do???? Boat owners should CLEAN: inspect exposed surfaces and remove plants/organisms. DRAIN: all water, live wells, bait buckets. DRY: allow watercraft to dry thoroughly between launches and keep dry for at least 5 days in water weather, 30 days in cool weather.

Zebra mussels first landed in northeast- took some years to make it west – but they are here now. (Excerpted *Outdoor California*, Cal DFW, May-June 2022, page 8-9)

RIVER TRASH TRAPS Floating fences, whimsical water & solar driven conveyor belts, rechargeable aquatic drones and bubble barriers – are some of the sophisticated and low tech inventions deployed to capture plastic trash in rivers and streams before stuff reaches the ocean. The devices are fledging attempts to dent the estimated 8.8 million tons of plastic getting into the ocean every year where marine plants and animals are maimed or killed. The traps won't eliminate or can reduce ocean plastic. The best so far are the anthropomorphized Trash Wheels at the mouths of four Baltimore watersheds – called *Mr. Trash Wheel* and there are others: Bubble Barrier, WasteShark etc. (excerpted from *Independent Coast Observer*, Gualala CA page Vol 24, #13 June 2022)

FRACKING In June 2022, California Attorney General secured a decision by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals blocking the Department of Interior from authorizing fracking on offshore platforms on the coast of California. In December 2016, the California Attorney General's Office and the California Coastal Commission filed a lawsuit challenging Interior's final environmental assessment, which would have cleared the way for fracking, acidizing, and other advanced well treatments on the Pacific Outer Continental Shelf on the coast of California.

GHOST FISHING NETS RECOVERED: At San Pedro, California, in early May, six volunteer divers from *Ghost Diving USA* teamed up with nonprofit *Healthy Seas* to recover 200 pounds of abandoned fishing nets draped over the wreck of the *USS Moody*, sunk in 1933 for a prop for the movie *Hell Below*. Ghost fishing nets continue to trap and kill marine life long after being abandoned. (from *undercurrents* July 21, 2022)

PUPS AND FISH Beware and take precautions to protect dogs from ‘salmon poisoning disease.’ This is a potentially fatal, bacteria-like organism, disease found in certain types of raw or cold smoked fish such as salmon and trout and other freshwater fish carcasses. The bug does not survive cooking, is not harmful to human, but without prompt treatment, the disease is fatal to dogs. (Excerpted *Outdoor California*, Cal DFW, March-April 2022, page 6)

RECENT WITH OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL: California has a 35-30 Program in contrast to President Biden’s 30-30. OPC will hold 8 MPA seminars on line this summer. See OPC website for more information.

WARDENS’ ENFORCEMENT REPORT 2021 Citations 665 with 1366 warnings – main efforts for education and information. Including in the 665 were 271 citations in MPAs. Compare those number with 2020 where 605 citations given in MPAs. Most are south of San Francisco in Southern California offshore islands. Department boat Chinook re vamped and ready in Ft. Bragg.

FISHING LICENSE CHANGES: In 2023, license will be 365 days with report cards same. There is also a move to display of a sport fishing license on a mobile device also by 2023. Current regs require a physical license. The E license requires change in regulations and technology. The question of E license for ‘water’ is unknown – carry cell phone on kayak????? 😊

RED ABALONE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN – FMP This plan has been underway since 2014 with many obstacles, rerouting, interruptions including the pandemic. The Plan covers Marin north only. At the July 11 meeting of the Marine Resources Committee, subsidiary of the Cal Department Fish & Wildlife Commission, the Cal Dept Fish & Wildlife presented a review of the Plan including management of red abalone, harvest control rule and *de minimis* fishery concepts. There are recommendations to integrate management strategies: 1) harvest control rule using both spawning and density 2) two fishing zones Sonoma/south and Mendocino/north allowing for 3rd north zone based on data 3) biological fishery as *de minimis* option only based on/driven by scientific need 4) tribal allocation. Data collection in the ocean is extremely difficult, time consuming and expensive. No abalone data collection was done in last 2 years due to the pandemic but is scheduled to resume this summer with survey of 3 sites and followed by 3 more in 2023. There is a general plan is for RAAC members to chair/hold public monthly meetings starting in August 2022.

Recreational Bag Limits Reduced Some Rockfish Species 2022.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) announced multiple changes to recreational rockfish sub-bag limit. Changes to the sub-bag limits within the 10-fish daily Rockfish, Cabezon, Greenling (RCG) complex bag and possession limit include:

- decrease to statewide sub-bag limit for vermillion rockfish (*Sebastes miniatus*) from 5 to 4 fish
- A new statewide sub-bag limit for quillback rockfish (*S. maliger*) of 1 fish
- A new statewide sub-bag limit for copper rockfish (*S. caurinus*) of 1 fish
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The RCG complex has a daily 10-fish bag and possession aggregate limit, meaning each angler’s catch can be composed of any combination of rockfish, cabezon or greenling, as long as total catch remains at or below 10 fish. Sub-bag limits within the RCG bag limit are implemented when harvest guidelines cannot accommodate the 10-fish bag limit being composed of a single species.

New stock assessments conducted in 2021 for quillback and copper rockfish suggest severe population declines for these two species. Also, unsustainably high catches of vermillion rockfish have occurred each year since 2015.

To assist anglers identifying rockfish species, CDFW has a new informational flyers to distinguish copper and quillback rockfish from similar-looking species, such as gopher and canary rockfish: available on [CDFW’s Fish and Shellfish Identification page](#) and the [Marine Region Groundfish page](#).

For more information on the 2022 recreational rockfish sub-bag limits and to stay informed of in-season changes, please call the Recreational Groundfish Hotline at (831) 649-2801 or visit CDFW's [summary of recreational groundfish fishing regulations for 2022](#). information on groundfish science and management, please visit [CDFW's Marine Region Groundfish page](#).
(edited from Cal DFW Ocean Fishing Regulations)

UNDERWATER SPORTS:

UNDERWATER HOCKEY

PCCs (Pacific Coast Championships) - LA area Oct 8-9; Castaic Sports Complex Aquatic Center, California; 2 day meet
Play - San Francisco, Sebastopol and
World Championships – Australia July 2023

UNDERWATER RUGBY –

play - Mt View
National Championships - Sept 9-11 Connecticut

SKNDIVING SPEARFISHING

PanAmericans – November 2-6 Brazil; qualifier for Worlds 2023 Spain September 7
PCCS - (Pacific Coast Championships) scheduled Oct 8
National Championships - July 2023 in Kona Hawaii

FINSWIMMING –

World Games: USOA teams were in World Games in Montgomery, Alabama July
World Championships: also USOA swimmers, July in Columbia

CALENDAR 2022

July

July 27 CenCal BOD Zoom

AUGUST

Aug 13-14 **Euro Fresh Water Spear** Finland
Aug 12-14 Women/Youth UW Hockey Denver
Aug 18 CA Fish & Wildlife Commission, Fortuna

SEPTEMBER

Sept 5 *Labor Day Holiday*
Sept 9-11 UW Rugby National Championships
Sept 11 Patriots Day
Sept 26 Rosh Hashana
Sept 28 CenCal BOD Zoom

OCTOBER

Oct 1 *Underwater Society Annual Meeting/Zoom*
Oct 1-2 Boston Sea Rovers Dive Show
Oct 5 Yom Kippur
Oct 8 PCCs Skin Spearfishing/San Simeon
Oct 8-9 PCCs UW Hockey Castaic Sports Complex Aquatic Center, California
Oct 10 *Columbus Day Holiday*
Oct 13 CA Fish & Wildlife Commission, Truckee
Oct 31 Halloween

NOVEMBER

Nov1-4 **DEMA Show** Orlando
Nov 2-6 **PamAmerican Skin Spear**/Brazil
November 6 Daylight Ends
November 11 *Veterans Day Holiday*

November 17 CA Fish/Wildlife Monterey Area
November 25 *Thanksgiving Holiday*
November 30 CenCal BOD Zoom

DECEMBER

December 7 Pearl Harbor Day
December 15 CA Fish & Wildlife Commission, San Diego
December 19-26 Hanukkah
December 25 *Christmas Day Holiday*
December 31 National Champagne Day

CALENDAR 2023
January

January 1 *New Year Holiday*
January 16 *MLK Jr Holiday*

Miscellaneous

June 26-Jul 2 Juniors World Finswimming Champs, Cairo
July 7-15 UW Rugby World Championships, Montreal
July 17-30 UW Hockey World Championships, Australia

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