

# NEWSLETTER



# San Jose Flipper Dippers

DECEMBER 2025

GENERAL MEETINGS HELD  
3RD WEDNESDAY  
OF EACH MONTH  
[WWW.SJFLIPPERDIPPERS.COM](http://WWW.SJFLIPPERDIPPERS.COM)

**IT'S BACK!**

Don't miss the San Jose Flipper Dippers' infamous

**December Holiday General Meeting.**

You may go home with extra cash from our annual "Money Tree" raffle — envelopes containing \$50, \$30 and \$20 will be hanging on the tree!

**You may win fantastic raffle prizes!**

In order to get you into the holiday spirit of giving we ask that **every member bring a donation** for this special raffle. This can be a dive-related item, a Christmas craft, holiday goodies, a bottle of cheer, etc. BE CREATIVE! The more prizes in the raffle, the more chances you have to win. So **come to the December meeting with your raffle donation, a tasty treat to share, and your holiday spirit. See you there!**

## This flock of turkeys went diving!



A gaggle of Flipper Dippers and friends joined together for the *After Thanksgiving Dive* at MacAbee Beach on Saturday, November 29. Great weather greeted the divers along with good ocean conditions between the big swells that have been hitting the West Coast. The pinnacle was located during the two dives. There was also a treasure hunt for a lost underwater camera – which was found! Sorry, no prize was given other than a Big THANK YOU! from a very grateful diver. Lots of dead and dying Mola Mola were spotted during the dives as the sea lions had been at work chasing and attacking them. (See more photos on page 4) ☆



You could be a Money Tree Winner at the December General Meeting!

## DECEMBER HOLIDAY TREATS

Besides the **election of officers** and our fantastic **Christmas holiday Raffle**, another reason our December General Meeting is so popular is that **homemade holiday goodies** are the main feature at refreshment time. Everyone helps out by baking their favorite holiday specialty and sharing it with their fellow Dippers. Do your part to help feed the large turnout expected to attend this special holiday meeting. All donations will be greatly appreciated! ☆



## What's Inside?



- President's Corner . . . . . 2
- Dues Due. . . . . 3
- 2026 Elections . . . . . 3
- Dive Report Photos . . . . . 4
- Mola Mola. . . . . 5
- USS United States. . . . . 6
- Activity Calendar . . . . . 7

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER



### Happy Holidays to All!

(Ed Note: Barbara is on a safari/dive combo trip to Africa!)

The Dippers will finish off the year in style! In addition to the December Second Saturday Scuba (S3) dive, and our Point Lobos dive on Monday, December 29th, the December's General Meeting brings our Christmas Raffle, our homemade holiday goodies table and the election of our 2026 Club Officers. (Check out page 3 to see who's running.) I look forward to seeing all of you on the dives or at the meeting.

If you haven't paid your club dues yet, please get them in! And remember to complete and sign the annual Assumption of Risk Agreement form ([www.sjflipperdippers.com/sjfd.assumption.of.risk.pdf](http://www.sjflipperdippers.com/sjfd.assumption.of.risk.pdf)). See more information on page 3.

The November 29 After Thanksgiving SCUBA Dive was held at MacAbee Beach, coordinated by **Carl Tuttle**. We had a great turnout with eleven divers (count'em 11!) joining in. Most everyone found the pinnacle on the first dive. Visibility was a hazy 10-15 feet and the water temperature was between 57 and 58 degrees. After a surface break eight of the divers joined in on a second dive and found the pinnacle again. There was a boat anchored on the site and with the additional divers stirring up the sand visibility had deteriorated a bit. During the first dive, visiting diver **Stephanie Miranda** lost her camera in the surf line. But luck was on her side! Entering the water for the second dive, Carl spotted and retrieved it! See the photos by former Club member **Cédrick Faison** (who is visiting from Brussels, Belgium) on page 4.

Looking Ahead to 2026: On Wednesday, January 28th, we'll have our virtual Annual Planning Meeting to plan the Club's calendar for the coming year. Everyone is encouraged to join in and share their ideas for dives and other Club events and activities. A preliminary calendar will be emailed to members before the meeting for any input you may have.

Everyone stay safe and let's go diving! – Barbara

### Hood Canal Dive – 2026

Mike Chalup

Hello fellow Flipper Dippers! During my last dive trip to the Hood Canal, in Washington, I sat down with Mark Fischer (Flagpole lodging owner) and Ed Capelle (who coordinates Flagpole dive trips) and discussed a possible Flipper Dippers' dive trip.

Here is a potential itinerary for a group of divers:

1. Fly from SJC into SeaTac.
2. Rent a van and drive 97 miles to Lilliwaup (where Flagpole is located). I'd meet you at SeaTac (Seattle airport), hopefully, with my pickup to transport luggage. We'd stop along the way to shop for food for the stay.
3. Make reservations to rent tanks and weights at YSS Dive Shop in

Hoodsport.

4. Day 1 would be travel. Day 2, 3, and 4 would be diving at Flagpole, 3 dives/day possible. We'd wrap up diving on day 4 to give divers a 24-hour surface interval before flying.

5. Day 5 return to SeaTac and fly back to SJC.

There would be the option of doing a boat charter with YSS one day, leaving from Hoodsport or Union.

Estimated cost would be \$85/day per-person at Flagpole (\$340, includes onsite air fills), share of van rental, share of gasoline, tank/weights rental, and food. Individual airfare not included. Option: people could drive, from the Bay Area which would be about 850 miles each way.

We'll work out some possible dates during the Annual Planning Meeting, on January 28th. So stay tuned – more information to come. ★



## San Jose Flipper Dippers

[www.SJFlipperDippers.com](http://www.SJFlipperDippers.com)

Follow and Like Us on Facebook

CLUB OFFICERS

### PRESIDENT

Barbara Davis 408-656-6390

### VICE PRESIDENT

Sim Upadhyayula 408-608-5009

### SECRETARY

Grace Chi 858-337-2674

### TREASURER

Tom Gardner 408-274-9447

### SERGEANT AT ARMS

Howard Chien 408-410-0325

CLUB COMMITTEES

### AWARDS AND FINES

o Position Open o

### MEMBERSHIP

Ken Agur 408-242-3779

### NEWSLETTER & WEBSITE

Carl Tuttle 408-829-3660  
email [tutcomms@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tutcomms@sbcglobal.net)

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Mike Chalup 408-744-1868

### RAFFLE

o Position Open o

### REFRESHMENTS

o Position Open o

### STAR ACHIEVEMENT

Jackie Gardner 408-274-9447

### TROPHY COMPETITION

o Position Open o

## MEET YOUR 2026 CLUB OFFICER CANDIDATES



### PRESIDENT:

**BARBARA DAVIS** Joined the Club in 1993 and has been a force to reckon with in the water. She has served as the Club's president the past four years. She really enjoys diving and has served as Club Vice President and President in the past. Barbara is always up for 2-tank dives on any of the scheduled S3 dives. She has been diving in many places around the world, including Cuba, and has now completed over 1,700 dives and is well on her way to 2,000!



### VICE PRESIDENT:

**SIM UPADHYAYULA** Got his certification in February, 2023, and since finding the Flipper Dippers, has participated in a great number of dives. He didn't waste any time completing his membership requirements and was voted into the Club in May 2023. He has lots of energy and has already collected his 1st Star in the Club's Star Achievement Program. Sim has served as the Club's Vice President for the last two years.



### SECRETARY:

**GRACE CHI** Joined the Club in 2016 and has been participating in a wide range of Club dives including beach dives, boat dives, the UW Easter Egg Hunt, and a trip to Bonaire. She is very informative when addressing new divers on Club dives and makes sure they are ready to go. Grace has held the office of Club secretary the past four years.



### TREASURER:

**TOM GARDNER** Has served as the Club treasurer during the past two years. He became a member in 2009. He was the Club's President for two years: 2018-2019. Tom served as the raffle chair during 2013 (and assisting Jackie in 2012). Tom participates in many of the Club's activities including beach dives, campouts and bike rides.



### SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:

**HOWARD CHIEN** Has been the Club's sergent-at-arms the past five years! He joined the Club in October 2020 and has participated in many international and local Club dives, campouts and bike rides. He is excited about the many activities the Club has to offer and has been a very active member.



## MEMBERSHIP

*Ken Agur*

We're a dive club and we're diving! If you're looking for a dive buddy look no further. See the Club's website for more information on becoming a member (Membership Requirements). Welcome **Lucy Yen** who attended the November General Meeting and is looking to dive with us. We also had a number of folks attending virtually!

Happy Birthday December Baby **Tristan Chutka!** ☆

## CLUB DUES PAST DUE?

It is well past October and time to pay your **annual dues** at the General Meeting. Dues help cover a portion of the yearly room rental, website hosting, domain name registration and newsletter printing and distribution. Each member will also be asked to sign an "Assumption of Risk Agreement" when dues are paid (the form is available on the Club's Website). If you can't make the in-person General Meeting please send a signed copy with your dues in the mail to: **Tom Gardner**, 2986 Everdale Court, San Jose, CA 95148.

Contact Tom if you want to pay your dues in cash.

**Club Dues this year are \$50.00 and \$10.00** per year to receive this Newsletter via the U.S. Postal Service. Or download it FREE each month from the Club's Website in full color. Charter and Lifetime Members will continue to receive the Newsletter by U.S. mail.

**CenCal** (Central California Council of Diving Clubs) dues are **\$15.00** and USofA (Underwater Society of America) dues are **\$30.00**. (Pay online at: [www.cencal.org](http://www.cencal.org)). These optional dues support the many efforts of CenCal and USofA on behalf of all divers in the areas of beach access along with conservation and state and national legislation.

A summary of annual dues are:

CLUB DUES	\$ 50.00
Newsletter (U.S. Mail)	10.00
Optional: CEN CAL	15.00
Optional: USofA	30.00

Remember, associate member (non-diving spouses of Dippers) dues are **\$5.00**. Associate members may attend Dipper functions at member prices, but have no voting privileges.

**Late dues incur a late fee of \$5.00** ☆

**DECEMBER  
17TH  
GENERAL MEETING  
ELECTIONS FOR  
2026 OFFICERS  
HOLIDAY TREATS  
AND RAFFLE**



We'll be having our in-person General Meeting holding **Elections for 2026 Club Officers** and a **BIG RAFFLE**. ☆

## RAFFLE NEWS

We're back again this month for our in-person General Meeting. More folks are showing up and having fun!

We're planning our big **Christmas General Meeting** with a **BIG Raffle** with all those treasures you've safely stored as well as great treats! See front page for more information. ☆

# Wild turkeys dive on the 29th . . . you missed a good one!

Photos by Cédrick Fairon



From left: Stephanie Miranda, John Robertson, Michael Dentil, Carl Tuttle, Tom Earl, Christopher Miranda, Grace (in front) Chi, Eva Alexander, and Les Addison. MIA: Sim Upadhyayula and Cédrick Fairon (who took the photo).



Stephanie lost her camera on the 1st dive. And Carl found it on the 2nd dive!



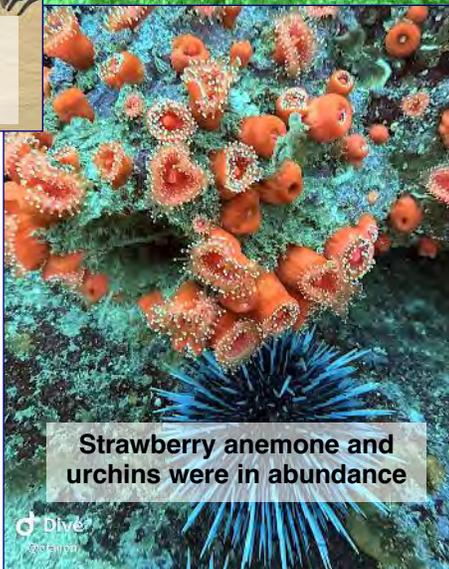
Mola Mola were providing meals to starfish, snails and crabs.



Sim and Grace suiting up for the 1st dive



Tom is ready to go!



Strawberry anemone and urchins were in abundance



Masking crabs and starfish were all around

## Mola Mola - Sunfish

*This time of year divers in the Monterey Bay encounter many Mola Mola.*

*(Wikipedia and Oceansunfish.org)*

The ocean sunfish (*Mola Mola*), also known as the common mola, is one of the largest bony fish in the world. It is the type species of the genus *Mola*, and one of three extant species in the family Molidae. It was formerly misidentified as the heaviest bony fish, which is actually a different and closely related species of sunfish, *Mola alexandrini*. Adults typically weigh between 247 and 1,000 kg (545 and 2,205 lb). It is native to tropical and temperate waters around the world. It resembles a fish head without a tail, and its main body is flattened laterally. Sunfish can be as tall as they are long (about 5.9 ft) when their dorsal and ventral fins are extended.

Many areas of sunfish biology remain poorly understood, including mating practices and spawning locations, early life stages, movement and migration patterns, population structure and status, diet and trophic ecology, and post-release survival rates. Research efforts are underway, including aerial surveys of populations, satellite surveillance using pop-off satellite tags, genetic analysis of tissue samples, and collection of amateur sighting data.

Adult sunfish are vulnerable to few natural predators, but sea lions, killer whales, and sharks will consume them. Sunfish are considered a delicacy in some parts of the world, including Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. In the European Union, regulations ban the sale of fish and fishery products derived from the family Molidae. Sunfish are frequently caught in gillnets.

### Distribution and Habitat

Ocean sunfish are native to the temperate and tropical waters of every ocean in the world. *Mola* genotypes appear to vary widely between the Atlantic and Pacific, but genetic differences between individuals in the Northern and Southern hemispheres are minimal.

Although early research suggested sunfish moved around mainly by drifting with ocean currents (which has resulted in the sunfish sometimes being characterized as a megaplankton), individuals have been recorded swimming 26 km (16 mi) in a day at a cruising speed of

3.2 km/h (1.7 kn).

Contrary to the perception that the fish spend much of their time basking at the surface, *Mola* adults actually spend a large portion of their lives actively hunting at depths greater than 200 m (660 ft), occupying both the epipelagic and mesopelagic zones.

Sunfish are most often found in water warmer than 10°C (50°F); pro-



longed periods spent in water at temperatures of 12°C (54°F) or lower can lead to disorientation and eventual death. Surface basking behavior, in which a sunfish swims on its side, presenting its largest profile to the sun, may be a method of "thermally recharging" following dives into deeper, colder water in order to feed.

Sightings of the fish in colder waters outside of its usual habitat, such as those southwest of England, may be evidence of increasing marine temperatures. Sunfish are typically observed in solitary environments, though infrequently they may be encountered in pairs.

### Feeding

The diet of the ocean sunfish was formerly thought to consist primarily of various jellyfish and other gelatinous zooplankton, such as ctenophores, salps, and medusae. However, genetic analysis reveals that sunfish are actually generalist predators that consume mostly small fish (such as flounder), fish (eel) larvae, squid, other molluscs, crustaceans, and other soft-bodied invertebrates, with jellyfish and salps making up only around 15% of the diet.

Occasionally, they will ingest eel grass. This range of food items indicates that the sunfish feeds at many levels, from the surface to deep water, and oc-

asionally down to the seafloor in some areas.

### Life cycle

Ocean sunfish may live up to ten years in captivity, but their lifespan in a natural habitat has not yet been determined. However, estimates of their lifespan in a natural habitat place their life expectancy at around 2 to 23 years for females and 1-16 years for males. Their growth rate also remains undetermined. However, a young specimen at the Monterey Bay Aquarium increased in weight from 26 to 399 kg (57 to 880 lb) and reached a height of nearly 1.8 m (5 ft 11 in) in 15 months.

The sheer size and thick skin of an adult of the species deters many smaller predators, but younger fish are vulnerable to predation by bluefin tuna and mahi mahi. Adults are consumed by orca, sharks and sea lions.

The mating practices of the ocean sunfish are poorly understood, but spawning areas have been suggested in the North Atlantic, South Atlantic,

North Pacific, South Pacific, and Indian oceans. Females of the species can produce more eggs than any other known vertebrate, up to 300 million at a time. Sunfish eggs are released into the water and externally fertilized by sperm.

Newly hatched sunfish larvae are only 2.5 mm (3/32 in) long and weigh less than one gram. They develop into fry that resemble miniature pufferfish, their close relatives. Sunfish fry do not have the large pectoral fins and tail fin of their adult forms, but they have body spines uncharacteristic of adult sunfish, which disappear as they grow.

Young sunfish school for protection, but this behavior is abandoned as they grow. The fry that survive can grow up to 60 million times their original weight before reaching adult proportions, arguably the most extreme size growth of any vertebrate animal.

**(Ed Note:** Groups of 6 to 10 *Mola* have been seen and photographed by divers in the waters of Monterey Bay.)

### Predators

The sheer size and thick skin of an adult of the species deters many smaller predators, but younger fish are vulnerable to predation by bluefin tuna and mahi mahi. Adults are consumed by orca,

continued on page 6

continued from page 5

sharks and sea lions.

There's safety in great size for the ocean sunfishes but on the road to largess, they are open to many dangers. Bycatch through fishing certainly takes a toll on mola populations. And parasites presumably claim quite a few lives as well. Other predators include orcas and sea lions.

During the fall months in Monterey, California, sea lions can be seen ripping the fins off sunfish and slamming the dismembered bodies against the sea surface. Presumably this action helps the lions tear through the molas – skin which is leathery tough and several centimeters thick in places. However, after tossing the bodies through the air for several minutes, the lions often simply abandon their prey. Tragically the hapless, finless molas unceremoniously sink to the seafloor and are consumed slowly by seastars or anemones.

### Conservation

Because molas spend so much time drifting near the ocean surface, they are vulnerable to fishing boats that use drift gillnets. Gillnets usually don't kill molas immediately, but they cut into their skin, scrape off their protective mucus and flood their gills with air.

Another hazard to the mola are discarded plastic bags. When these wind up in the ocean, they float at the surface and look a lot like a jelly – a mola's favorite meal. If the mola doesn't choke as it sucks the bag in, the plastic can clog the fish's stomach, slowly starving the animal. Helping the mola is one more reason to carry your own shopping bags with you to the store – and make sure any plastic bags you use are properly disposed of.

The mola is listed as "vulnerable" by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).

**Monterey sightings** as reported on the Website oceansunfish.org

11/17/2007

We were diving off San Carlos beach in 45 feet of water. The sunfish came by, swam around us a couple of times and then swam off.

10/08/2011

Tons of parasites, large parasites with algal growth! Hanging out at the Metridium Fields, possibly a cleaning station. The Mola that we saw was large, approximately 7 ft. from tip of dorsal fin to tip of anal fin in about 50 ft. of water. It was also very skinny. As mentioned above, there were numerous parasites. The Mola was also willing to have some of them removed by hand. We have pictures and video (bad visibility) but not on a website.



## Iconic ocean liner S.S. United States will be sunk on live video

Heather Gann | AL.com

Those interested in watching the famed Cold War carrier vessel S.S. United States take her final plunge into the sea will have multiple digital options.

The conservancy group for the ship — built by Newport News Shipbuilding in the early 1950s — announced in a Facebook post that a live stream and a professional documentary will be produced covering the tow-out and reefing of the vessel.

The vessel, which spent nearly three decades docked on the Delaware River, is slated to become the world's largest artificial reef when it is sunk about 20 miles off the Gulf Coast of northwest Florida.

At a board meeting Okaloosa County (the ship's new owners) authorized a 50% advance payment to WMV Productions and Gannet Creative House, according to the post. The firms will provide comprehensive video documentation of the ship's deployment, including: Onboard and aerial (drone) footage of the tow-out from Mobile, Alabama; Under-

water footage capturing the vessel's final placement on the reef site; A professionally edited documentary, to be completed within two weeks of the event.

"While the exact date and reefing location have not yet been released, both will be announced closer to deployment for operational and safety reasons and to ensure no incidents occur," the post reads. After months of delays, the ship arrived in Mobile, Alabama, where contractors have started the process of ensuring it is safe for ocean life and poking holes in its hull to make it land upright at the bottom of the Gulf.

This process has been predicted to take a year to complete after which the ship will take its final journey to a location about 20 miles south of the Florida Panhandle region in the Destin-Fort Walton Beach area, according to the Okaloosa County Commission. The ship will be sunk in about 180 feet of water. It will join more than a dozen other large vessels Okaloosa County has placed off the coast in recent years.

The county says the ships benefit the marine environment and are a boom to tourism, attracting divers to the Gulf Coast. The project also calls for a land-based museum of the S.S. United States' history.

continued on page 7



# DIVE & ACTIVITY CALENDAR

SIM UPADHYAYULA

www.SJFLIPPERDIPPERS.COM

DECEMBER 2025

## WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3

**BUSINESS MEETING: 7:30pm**  
The meeting will be held **virtually via Microsoft Teams**. Watch for an email with details. Bring your own food, drinks, and internet connection and we'll discuss ideas for upcoming dives and events.

## SATURDAY DECEMBER 6 NO SCHEDULED DIVE

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13 SECOND SATURDAY SCUBA (S3) DIVE: LOCATION TBD

Join the Flipper Dippers for this month's S3 dive coordinated by **Sim Upadhyayula**. Text: 669-286-9796 or email: [toytaous@yahoo.com](mailto:toytaous@yahoo.com). Bring 2 tanks and plan on going for lunch after the dive. Location will be determined (TBD) based on conditions. Be sure to contact Sim if you want to join in.

## GENERAL MEETING WEDNESDAY, DEC 17

The **in-person General Meeting** held at **7:30 PM** at the Knights of Columbus Santa Maria Hall 2211 Shamrock Dr., Campbell.  
The **virtual meeting** held via Microsoft Teams. Watch your email for info.

Please contact **Carl Tuttle** for more details on the in-person meeting or a link to the virtual MS Teams meeting.

### Celebrate 61 Years of the San Jose Flipper Dippers!

Entertainment:

- Election of 2026 Officers
- Sign-ups for Monthly Dives

## Big Christmas Social



## SATURDAY DECEMBER 20 NO SCHEDULED DIVE



## THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25 MERRY CHRISTMAS!

## MONDAY, DECEMBER 29 PT. LOBOS SCUBA DIVE

Coordinator: **Carl Tuttle**, (408-829-3660, [tutcomms@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tutcomms@sbcglobal.net)). We have 5 Teams with some space available. Meet at the entrance before 8AM. Be sure to bring your reservation confirmation **and YOUR "C" Card!** Let Carl know if you are looking to join in, or if you've signed up and are not going to make it, as we may have some folks who want to dive.

## JANUARY 2025

- 7 Business Meeting
- 10 Second Saturday SCUBA
- 21 **General Meeting**
- 28 Annual Planning Meeting



continued from page 6

Originally designed as a top-secret, convertible troop carrier during the Cold War in 1951, the S.S. United States has transported presidents, famous actors, heads of state, tourists, members of the armed forces, and immigrants before it was retired in 1969. It once held the world record for the fastest trip across the Atlantic Ocean.

Notable passengers included four U.S. Presidents



The S.S. United States in Mobile, Alabama, as it is prepared for sinking. One of the SS United States' funnels is removed in Mobile, Alabama.

(Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, and a young Bill Clinton), Judy Garland, Marilyn Monroe, and John Wayne. ★

## Want to Own Your Own Dive Resort?

*Undercurrent*

The Paradise Taveuni dive resort in Fiji is for sale. It's one of the best-known in-demand resorts with easy access to Rainbow Reef and the Great White Wall, but resort management and the owner are seeking additional investors, though one can buy the entire property (which has been on the market for a year) for about US\$5.5 million. If you have the cash, try persuading Warren Buffett to get interested in scuba diving. DAN will still insure him. For more info, contact [allan@paradisefiji.com](mailto:allan@paradisefiji.com). ★



**NOTE:** All certified divers are encouraged to attend San Jose Flipper Dippers' dives.

Non-Club members will be required to show proof of certification to the dive coordinator prior to entering the water with our group. Please sign up for dives at the General Meeting or call the coordinator. This is needed in case of cancellation or changes.



# San Jose Flipper Dippers

c/o 1108 Sunset Landing  
Rio Vista, CA 94571-5148



Follow and Like Us  
on Facebook!



**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

## 2025 COMING EVENTS

- Dec 3 Business Meeting
- Dec 13 Second Saturday SCUBA
- Dec 17 General Meeting:
  - Election of 2026 Officers
  - Big Christmas Raffle
- Dec 29 SCUBA Dive Pt. Lobos

### 2026

- Jan 7, 2026 Business Meeting
- Jan 10 Second Saturday SCUBA
- Jan 21 General Meeting
- Jan 28 Annual Planning Meeting
- Feb 4 Business Meeting
- Feb 14 Second Saturday SCUBA
- Feb 18 General Meeting
- Mar 1 Labor Day Weekend Reservations  
(Aug 31-Sept 2, 2026) Van Damme

*Are you looking for someone  
to dive with?*

The San Jose Flipper Dippers Dive Club is  
a great way to meet divers who are  
always having fun times. **Come join us!**



**Watch This Space – Much More To Come!**

**See the Club's Website for the full Calendar**



[WWW.SJFLIPPERDIPPERS.COM](http://WWW.SJFLIPPERDIPPERS.COM)