

NEWSLETTER



San Jose Flipper Dippers

AUGUST
2026

GENERAL MEETINGS HELD
3RD WEDNESDAY
OF EACH MONTH
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July Dive Reports: Ah yes, you know the answer: I should have been there!

July 11 Second Saturday Scuba (S3) Dive

Six Dippers got together at North Monastery Beach. After observing the conditions it was decided to move to MacAbee Beach where conditions were much better. The group of divers included: **Sim Upadhyayula**, **Carl Tuttle**, **Lucy Yen**, **George Cutu** and **Grace Chi**.

The group suited up as the sun came out and ventured into the water heading to the MacAbee Pinnacle: Head stright out, drop down at the edge of the kelp, swim until you hit 50-feet, and turn right (Well yea, kind of simple instructions). As the group gathered underwater Lucy had some equipment issues and she and George went to the surface. The rest followed Carl and they found the strawberry anemone covered pinnacle. Visibility was anywhere from 10 to 30 feet; Not too bad. They observed a large sheephead, lingcod out and hiding in holes, and an assortment of blue rockfish. When it was time to turn around, the four headed back to the beach and found Lucy and George.

After a surface interval, snacks and drinks the group gathered on the beach for the second dive. As they headed via the prescribed compass bearing it appeared they had drifted to the right a bit and it wasn't long before they hit the 50-ft mark and there was the pinnacle! This time the visibility had decreased a bit as there were other divers visiting the site during the surface interval. This was the first time Lucy and George had seen the site so all was good. Another sighting of two rather large sheephead and someone reported seeing a seal swim by.

The group of six worked their way back to the beach and change into dry clothing. As in the past, tanks were dropped off at Aquarius Dive Shop for fills and everyone met at Taqueria Zarape for lunch and sighting reports.

July 25 2026 Dive Report

Eva Alexander

During the Christmas in July Picnic Saturday, July 18, I mentioned to **Carl Tuttle** that **Shelby**, my daughter, and I were planning to go diving on the following Saturday; but we were only comfortable to go to either McAbee or The Breakwater, because I always followed the leader when we dove at Monastery. Carl gracefully volunteered to lead our dive so that I could learn how to dive South Monastery next time.

Two divers responded to our email invitation to dive at South Monastery – **Jeff Rowland** and **Cian Bougart**. Carl, Shelby, Jeff and I showed up at 8 am and we watched the conditions for a while. Reality matched the weather forecast: there was about 2-3 feet of swell from the east, meaning South Monastery was rather protected. North Monastery,

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Ham, Ram, Lamb, Buffalo, Beef or Bear?

Mr. Abby (aka **Ben Wilson**) works the grill during the Christmas in July BBQ and picnic. The weather was great, the food was great and the raffle was great: Especially for one Dipper who scored the \$30 and \$50 envelopes off the Christmas Tree! See page 5 for photos.

Five improperly equipped divers die at 200 feet

Undercurrent (Edited for length)

The death of four Italian sport divers and a dive guide in the Maldives on May 14, 2026 is perhaps the most serious sport diving tragedy ever. Using normal scuba gear, they dived deep into a cave off the island of Alimatha in Vaavu atoll, a popular diving spot, and never returned. Their deaths are fraught with error, a lesson for all of us.

The deceased included a 51-year-old marine biologist from the University of Genoa, Monica Montefalcone, her 22-year-old student daughter, Giorgia Sommacal, university researcher Muriel Oddenino (31), marine biology graduate Federico Gualtieri (30), and the dive guide, Gianluca Benedetti (44). They dived into a cave about 200 feet deep, where even a short time at that depth would require a greater gas supply (they used only air) and lengthy decompression stops. Benedetti's

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Greetings Divers

Let's start out with a big THANK YOU to **Abby Golden Wilson**, and **Ben**, for organizing the amazing Christmas in July picnic on July 18th! Great food, great friends, and a fun raffle. Everyone who attended reported having a great time! Can't wait to do it again next year. Thanks also to **Jim Rezowalli** for hosting his annual July 4th barbecue and watching the great fireworks display put on by Morgan Hill.

We have a lot of great events coming up in August, including the S3 dive on August 8th, and the beginning of our Labor Day weekend campout on August 31st. We've reserved several campsites for this getaway and have plenty of room to share! Plus, mark your calendars for the Elkhorn Slough Kayak on Aug 22nd! Check out the Dive and Activity Calendar and other articles in the newsletter for more information.

Former Flipper Dipper **Brian Zaugg** is putting together a dive trip to Roatan in September. The group will be staying at Turquoise Bay Resort, an all-inclusive property with a top-rated dive operation on site. The package costs \$1,999 – **Now 2 divers for the price of One!** See page 6 for more information.

Need prescription lenses for your mask? New Dipper member **Lucy Yen** works with a lab that specializes in snorkel/scuba community based out of Florida and they can put prescription lenses on any existing masks of major brands like TUSA, Scubapro, Oceanic, and others. Her office, Eye Luv Lucy Optometry, is located in Willow Glen. See page 6 for more and her contact information.

Stay safe everyone and let's go diving! – Barbara

Flipper Dippers' Elkhorn Slough Kayak Adventure - August 22

Elkhorn Slough is a magical place to visit. Otters and seals play in the estuary. Native plants and wildflowers pepper the valleys and hills overlooking the water. Hundreds of bird species pass through each year as they migrate up and down the Pacific Flyway. Kayaking there is otterly fantastic.

We will take the rare opportunity of a small outgoing tide in the morning and incoming tide @ 1PM. In the morning we will park cars at Kirby Park Landing. Kirby Park is about 5 mile up the slough from Moss Landing where we'll launch kayaks.

Need a kayak? Sit-on-top kayaks can be rented at Monterey Bay Kayaks at Moss Landing. Arrive early (8:30AM) to get your kayak and gear. They open at 9AM. www.montereybaykayaks.com.

We can figure out transporting the rental kayaks to Kerby Park with some of the vehicles and returning them back to Moss Landing.

Bring windbreaker jacket, hats, gloves, sunglasses, sun screen, water and some snacks for the paddle. You might also consider a wetsuit bottom and booties.

Don't miss this rare opportunity!

When: October: Saturday Aug 22

Where: Kirby Park & Moss Landing

Time: 10:30AM (or earlier)

Cost: Nothing (unless you need to rent)

If you are interested in going be sure to sign up: email **Jim Rezowalli**: jimandthebeach@gmail.com or text: 408-293-7390.

We need at least 6 dippers to sign up to make this happen! ☆



San Jose Flipper Dippers

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CLUB OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

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Sim Upadhyayula 408-608-5009

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CLUB COMMITTEES

AWARDS AND FINES

o Position Open o

MEMBERSHIP

Ken Agur 408-242-3779

NEWSLETTER & WEBSITE

Carl Tuttle 408-829-3660
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PHOTOGRAPHY

Mike Chalup 408-744-1868

RAFFLE

o Position Open o

REFRESHMENTS

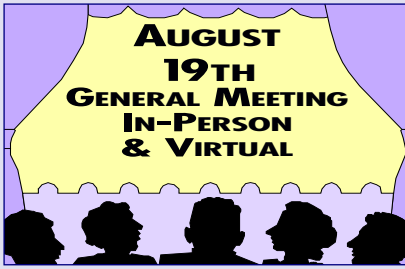
o Position Open o

STAR ACHIEVEMENT

Jackie Gardner 408-274-9447

TROPHY COMPETITION

o Position Open o



We'll be having our in-person General Meeting this month. If you come please bring a refreshment to share! We'll have a live MS Teams connection for those who still prefer to meet virtually. Watch for an email update. ★

MEMBERSHIP

Ken Agur

Welcome new Dipper Members **Peter Radsliff**, **George Cutu** and **Lucy Yen** who were voted in during the July General Meeting. The three also joined the Dippers on the Cayman Aggressor IV trip in June. In the photo, Ken and Eva welcome them as official members

Happy Birthday! These Dippers are completing their annual 365-day trip around the Sun this month: **Eva 'Pink Fins' Alexander** and **Cédrick Farion** ★



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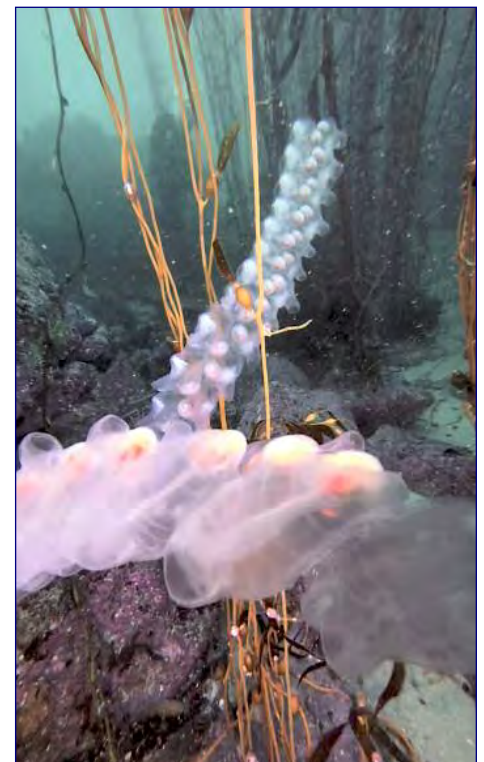
however, did not look diveable. We were wondering where Cian was. Turned out he was already all geared up, but at McAbee where he did a dive at 6AM! Once Cian showed up, we were just about finished gearing up and ready to head to the ocean.

1st dive: Visibility was fantastic—about +30 feet! Temperature was 51F. We had a 48 min dive. The highlight of the dive was definitely the salp chain we came across on the way back. I have seen individual salp before but this was the first time I saw a chain. It was about 15 feet long! It was so alien looking. Cian was taking videos and had a keen observation, saying it looked like one of them was eating a shrimp! It was quite incredible. He also took some great video of the group swimming in a line on the way back to the beach. It's been posted on the Club's FaceBook page so be sure to take a look.

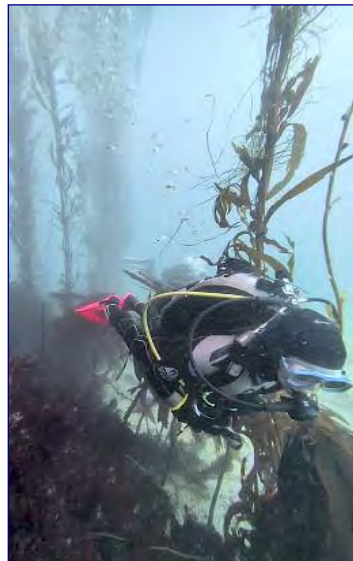
Even though it was a warm sunny day, Shelby and I could not get ourselves warm enough to do the 2nd dive. We hung out on the beach while Jeff, Carl and Cian went for a 2nd dive. They tried to find the salp chain, but no luck. We then headed to our usual Crossroads BBQ for lunch where we shared dive stories. We had a wonderful day. Thank you Carl for leading us. ★



Carl, Eva, Cian, Jeff and Shelby



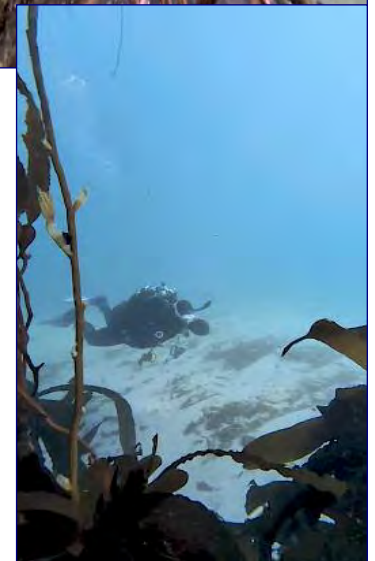
Carl



Eva



Shelby



Jeff

Dippers dive the Cayman Islands!

Here are more photos of Flipper Dippers enjoying clear waters, warm weather and exceptional diving. 🌴



Christmas in July! Photos by Jackie Gardner

A big THANK YOU to **Abby** and **Ben Wilson** for pulling together another fun-filled event! Lots of Dippers showed up to enjoy stories, too much food and great weather. Lots of great prizes on the Christmas tree and raffle table. No issue with yellow jackets this year either. And some Dippers went on the bike ride too. This new tradition is a great event for everyone to get together to share stories, laughs and enjoy a great meal of BBQ chicken, salmon and many side dishes. ★



Howard Timoney scored the \$20 off the tree!



Frances Lee & Jing Agur



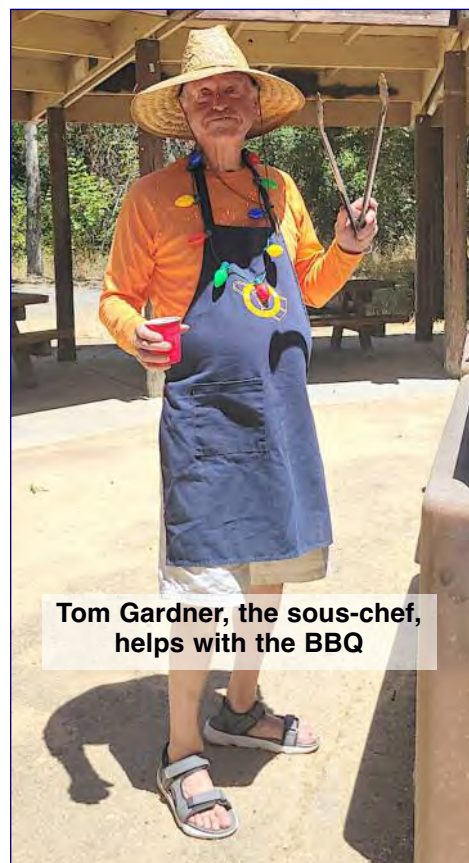
Time for the raffle!



Ken Agur scored the \$30 off the tree!



Jim & Gabi Rezowalli relax



Tom Gardner, the sous-chef, helps with the BBQ



Ken Agur scored the \$50 off the tree!



Eva Alexander, Grace Chi, Howard, & Carl Tuttle ready to eat!



Gabi, Frances, Howard Chein, Carl, & Jim; Let's Ride!

continued from front page

body was first recovered from an outer section of the cave while the others were found farther into the cave system.

They were diving from the luxury live-aboard MY Duke of York, and, according to Orietta Stella, the legal representative of Albatros Top Boat (the boat's charterer), their diving was supposed to involve coral-sampling at standard recreational depths. The University of Genoa was quick to distance itself from the tragedy, saying that though researchers were on a scientific mission in the Maldives, they had taken the fatal dive on their own, while other tourists aboard MY Duke of York engaged in normal recreational diving.

Because "the group was using standard



Sommacal/Montefalcone/Benedetti

80 cu. ft. cylinders, not suited to depth below 100 feet," Laura Marroni, CEO of DAN Europe, told La Repubblica, "they would have had little time to turn around [if they took a wrong turn]." The divers ran out of air.

Monica Montefalcone, one of the five divers who drowned, had published multiple studies involving the collection of sediment from the bottom of the ocean floor on dives at depths of 260 feet, deepening the mystery on her funeral day about why she and her daughter decided to go down without appropriate equipment.

Desperate not to attach blame to those who lost their lives, many "experts" who were buttonholed by reporters offered theoretical explanations with no evidence, a favorite being that the divers were helplessly drawn into the cave by a current caused by the site's unique entrance. This was dismissed by Sami Paakkanen, one of the Finnish divers who retrieved the bodies. He told the Italian paper Corriere della Sera: "It's a huge cave. It's not possible they were sucked in. At 60 meters (197 feet) deep [in the Maldives] it's still daylight outside. When you enter a cave, you know it because it gets dark. You don't risk accidentally entering a cave."

Shaff Naeem, a well-known Maldivian technical diver, confirmed Paakkanen's view: "I have visited that cave countless times. There is no current [in the cave]. The Italian group swam into that last chamber. They chose to go in there."

Some news reports mention oxygen toxicity, but no knowledgeable diver would have planned to dive that deep with nitrox (oxygen-enriched air). But then, one might argue

that no knowledgeable diver would have planned to go that deep with just air in a single 80 cu. ft. cylinder.

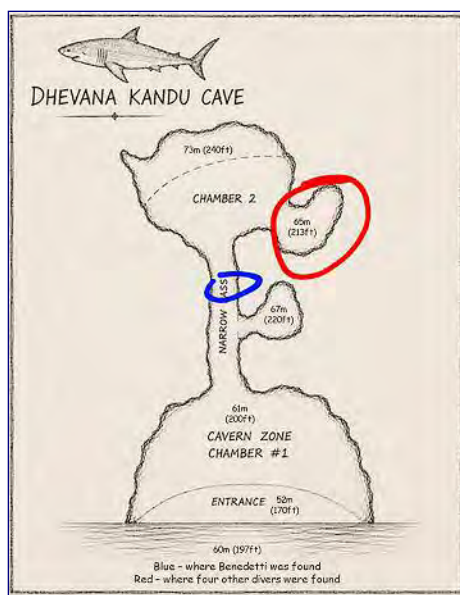
Investigators examined the boat's compressor, but found no evidence that a poorly installed or maintained air filtration system allowed carbon monoxide (in exhaust fumes from the ship's engines) to bypass filters and enter the cylinders; only a small amount of CO would be fatal at such depth.

After the cave divers were missing, the cave claimed a sixth victim: Maldivian National Defence Force diver, Sergeant Major Mohammed Mahudhee. Using ordinary air in a single tank – inappropriate for a lengthy dive at that depth – he lost his life to DCI during the initial search for the bodies in the outer part of the cave.

Why was the Italian group using just air for a dive of that depth? Did they go that deep on a lark or plan it? Why did they not realize they had insufficient air or that it was the wrong gas? Why did they not use multiple tanks or closed-circuit rebreathers? Why did they not take steps to ensure a safe egress from an overhead environment by using a guideline?

Naeem told the New York Post, "Everyone knows the rules were broken. The entrance to the cave is more than 170 feet deep, and it extends some 330 feet inward. There is no third chamber. There are two main ones and a passageway connecting them." Naeem provided Undercurrent with a rough sketch of the cave to counter misinformation and AI-derived illustrations disseminated by non-diving-related media.

The bodies were repatriated to Italy on



May 23, and post-mortem medical examinations found that "The direct cause of death for all five victims was asphyxiation due to gas depletion in an overhead environment . . . Tissue pressure data and forensic biological clocks indicate that the four victims – Professor Monica Montefalcone, her 22-year-old daughter

Giorgia Sommacal, researcher Muriel Oddenino, and research assistant Federico Gualtieri – shared an almost identical time of death. Local instructor Gianluca Benedetti's time of death occurred approximately five to seven minutes prior to the rest of the group."

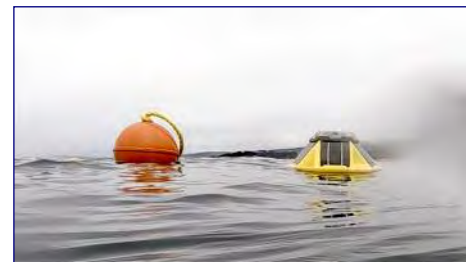
At the last minute, the sixth member of the Italian group decided not to dive and stayed on the boat. While it would be important to hear why she stayed on board and what the other divers were planning, for the time being she is not speaking to the press.

As Rob Palmer often said about cave-diving, "Get it wrong, and you're dead." In diving, that can apply to anyone on any dive. ★

Monterey Bay Area Scuba Divers Open

Tanner Shinkle

Hello everyone! I am a PhD student at Stanford University/Hopkins Marine Station studying physical oceanography in coastal ecosystems. We've deployed some research equipment at Monastery Beach, including a surface buoy you can see in the photo, which you may come across on your dives.



The purpose of these instruments is to analyze and assess physical conditions inside and outside of the kelp forest and the impacts on kelp over time. We are deploying similar instrument arrays at other kelp forests along the California coast, and we aim to understand why places like Monastery, which we know to be a dense and lush forest, maintain kelp cover whereas others may not.

This work is permitted by the NOAA Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary as well as CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, and we are all keenly interested in understanding and aiding these gorgeous dive sites and better understanding the kelp forests we love.

If you happen to come across these instruments on your dive, please do leave them undisturbed. We look forward to sharing our findings with you, and if you would like to learn more about this project, see this link:

<https://sustainability.stanford.edu/taking-pulse-coastal>

Thank you Monterey dive community for your understanding and stewardship. Stay warm out there. ★

DIVE & ACTIVITY CALENDAR

SIM UPADHYAYULA

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AUGUST 2026

**SATURDAY AUGUST 1
NO SCHEDULED DIVE**

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5

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, AUGUST 8

**SECOND SATURDAY SCUBA (S3)
DIVE: LOCATION TBD**

Join the Flipper Dippers for this month's S3 dive. **We're looking for a coordinator**. Location will be determined (TBD) based on conditions. Be sure to contact Sim if you want to coordinate this dive: **Sim Upadhyayula**. Text: 669-286-9796 or email: toytacous@yahoo.com.

**SATURDAY AUGUST 15
NO SCHEDULED DIVE**

GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, AUG 19

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 62 Years of the
San Jose Flipper Dippers!**

Entertainment:

• **Social Hour**

• **Sign-ups for Monthly Dives**



**SATURDAY, AUGUST 22
ELKHORN SLOUGH KAYAK**

Coordinator: **Jim Rezowalli**. Join the Flipper Dippers for a kayak trip in Elkhorn Slough. Be sure to RSVP via email: jimandthebeach@gmail.com, phone: 408-293-7390 to receive final details and any last minute updates. See article on Page 2.

**AUG 31 – SEPT 7 LABOR DAY
WEEKEND AT VAN DAMME**

Dippers have campsite reservations at Van Damme State Park from Monday, Aug 31, through Sunday, Sept 7. Space is available to share. Contact **Carl Tuttle** (tutcomms@sbcglobal.net) if you would like to join in. See July newsletter for info.

UPCOMING IN SEPTEMBER

5 No License Fishing Day

9 Business Meeting

12 Second Saturday SCUBA

16 **General Meeting**

19 Calif & Intl Coastal Cleanup Day



Prescription Lenses for your dive mask

Hi Dippers! Some members are aware that I am an optometrist and are interested in getting prescription lenses for their scuba masks. I work with a lab that specializes in snorkel/scuba community based out of Florida. They have their own proprietary brand products, like masks and snorkels etc, but they can also put prescription lenses on any existing masks of major brands like TUSA, Scubapro, Oceanic, and others. In case you are interested I am their local vendor, in the Bay Area, and can arrange to get lenses for your dive mask.

Here's the company website:
www.seavisionusa.com/

Feel free to contact me
if you want more info.

Lucy Yen

Eye Luv Lucy Optometry
1335 Lincoln Ave
San Jose, Ca. 95125
Phone: 408-294-9900
email: yenoptyometry@gmail.com ★



2-For-1 Special! Dive Roatan September 19-26

Former Flipper Dipper **Brian Zaugg** is putting together a dive trip to Roatan in September. He'd love it if some Flipper Dippers wanted to join in. The group will be staying at Turquoise Bay Resort, an all-inclusive property with a top-rated dive operation on site. The package costs \$1,999 – **Now 2 divers for the price of One!** – plus airfare (double occupancy), which is a super-strong value for a week of Caribbean diving. You probably know that Roatan boasts the world's second-largest coral reef, shipwrecks, an underwater aircraft, whale sharks, sea turtles and more!

The booking deadline has been extended, so sooner would be better — but he's flexible and happy to work around whatever works for the club. If you're interested contact:

Brian Zaugg, Cold Water Dive LLC
email: brian@coldwaterdive.com
Phone: +1-408-218-9712
https://coldwaterdive.com ★

SALE 80 Alu Scuba Tanks

Dipper **John Snyder** has two aluminum 80 cu. ft. scuba tanks for sale. They have recently been hydro tested and visual inspected. Both are filled with 32 Nitrox. Asking price is \$110 each or both for \$200.

Contact John if interested:

Phone: 408-202-5196

email:

john.fishhunter@gmail.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 cancelation or changes.



San Jose Flipper Dippers

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



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FIRST CLASS MAIL

2026 COMING EVENTS

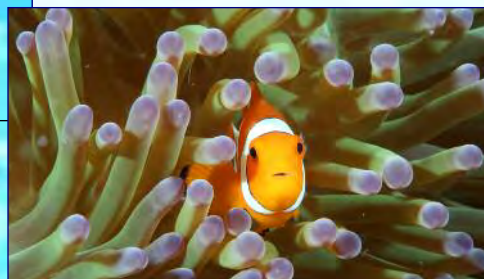
Aug 05	Business Meeting
Aug 08	Second Saturday SCUBA
Aug 19	🐡 General Meeting
Aug 22	Elkhorn Slough Kayak
Aug 31-Sept 07	Labor Day Weekend - Van Damme

Sept 05	No License Fishing Day
Sept 09	Business Meeting
Sept 12	Second Saturday SCUBA
Sept 16	🐡 General Meeting
Sept 19	Calif & Intl Coastal Cleanup Day

Oct 07	Business Meeting
Oct 10	Second Saturday SCUBA
Oct 14-18	Hood Canal, WA Dive Trip
Oct 21	🐡 General Meeting

*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



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