



The Yucan Has Sunk!

Many of you are aware of the project in San Diego to sink a large Candian destroyer, the Yukon, along their Wreck Alley. This 366ft ship is to be the highlight attraction in a stretch that already has more accessible wrecks than anywhere else in the state.



The good news is that it did make it into the ground, after a few delays. The bad news is that it sank 36 hours before planned, and in the wrong orientation. Long before the explosives were triggered, water flooded in on the left side openings and it was all they could do to get everyone off. It sank at the right location, but is on its side instead of sitting upright. That effectively closed off half of the hatchways.

The end result is that this wreck is a far more advanced wreck than was planned. Since the ship is taller than wide, the effective depth range is now deeper. More critical is for penetration - it is no longer a simple swimthrough from the left side to the right side opening. And with the ship on its side, it's much easier to become disoriented. There are markings inside pointing the way out, but many point straight to the sand. One must stick to proper wreck or cave diving procedures and use a reel, rule of thirds, etc. Already there have been a few DCS incidents, and one near miss where an instructor level diver got lost inside the ship and make it the the surface with 100psi. This has lead to a rather animated conversation on the Diver.net BBS on whether restrictions need to be implemented for access to the site.

This is something that I will do my best to oppose, especially for diving the Yukon in general. While it is now an 80-100ft dive, it is not out of the realm of the competent OW diver. Joining a few of the club dive events is the equivilent of any AOW course, in my mind. I'm not even concerned about those who choose unwisely to enter inside the hull. I'd hope that those who need it would seek out wreck training - there is a lot of opportunity for that now - but I will trust each diver to decide that on their own. California has always catered to more independent diving and I hope that continues to be the case.

In any case, if you do head down to see it, take care down below. Be sure to monitor your SPG closely, and try to avoid the rapid ascents. And if you do find the plaque room, look for my name! —Jason

The Reef Rap

August 15th - August General Meeting: Bruce Watkins is our guest.

August 20 - 22 - Peace boat club dive trip: 3 days in the Channel Islands! Check with Jim Vallario for current availability. \$305, with unlimited nitrox option for \$75 additional. Last Call!

August 23rd - Come help paint the Alliance Building. More info on page 3.

September 8-10 - Dive, camp, play at Lake Tahoe! Norm Knutson leads. Details on page 3.

September 19th - September General Meeting: Our speaker is Ellen Gartside, marine biologist

September 24th - Day trip to Point Lobos with Robert Foster. Info on page 4.

October - Mexico: (??) 7-10 day Diving Excursion to the Yucatan Mainland for Reef, Deep, Cavern and Cave diving with sidetrips to the Jungle and Mayan Ruins. Curt Degler Coordinates - cdegler@best.com (707)-570-0457.

October 7th - Ab Dive, October 8th - Ab Feed7. event

10/7 - Ab Dive and 10/8 Ab Feed at The San Francisco Rod and Gun Club. Roy Didier coordinator 415-564-5745. We need divers, cooks and most important, GUESTS!

October 14th - We've chartered half the Cypress Point (10 spots). Cost is \$65 for 3 tanks. Nitrox available onboard for additional cost. Contact Jim Vallario to sign up. (415) 566-0784

Plan an Event! Summer is coming to an end, but we all know that is just the beginning of our prime diving season! Talk to Curtis or me to schedule and publicize it.

Join the E-mail Discussion site! The club forum on egroups is getting good use now. In addition to reminders of upcoming planned events, members have used it to put together short notice dive trips. You can join it at <http://www.egroups.com/group/sfreedivers>. If you have any questions about how to join or use his forum, e-mail Curt Degler at cdegler@best.com.

Be a Buddy! If you are thinking about going diving on a date when no club activities are planned, you can always call up some people and see if others are up for water. If there are errors in your entry, please contact Loretta at 415-305-7517 or by email at lorettalowe@earthlink.net.

Be an Author/Photographer! I need your story reports on club events! I also welcome UW photos that had good contrast (for B&W printing). If you travel away for diving, we also want to hear about your experiences. Details for submission are on the back page. Please don't send Word documents! Text only please- there are too many silly viruses attached to MS documents.

August Guest Speaker: Bruce Watkins

Topic: "Secret" dive spots of Northern California

"I think the title will be good enough to get people's interest. I will bring books for sale at a bit of a discount over retail."

Bruce Watkins is a photojournalist residing in Northern California. Bruce is a regular contributor to California Diving News, and hundreds of his articles and nearly a thousand of his photographs have appeared in various national and international publications. He is the author of "A Diver's Guide to Monterey County" and "A Diver's Guide to Northern California", both published by Saint Brendan Corp. (www.saintbrenden.com - also producers of California Diver News)

LAKE TAHOE DIVE
RUBICON WALL Dive
SEPT. 8 - 10
Kayak, hiking, biking, camping, etc.

Camp at either Sugar Pine State Park or D.L. Bliss State Park. D.L. Bliss is where we will be diving. Meet for the dive on Saturday morning, 10a.m. at the lower beach parking lot at D.L. Bliss S.P. You need to get there between 9 and 10 to be sure you get a parking spot at this scenic dive spot. I will be at Sugar Pine State Park on Friday, Sept. 8, because of my tent trailer (getting soft in my old age). D.L. Bliss has some very nice camp sites and you do not need a reservation, the weekend after labor day.

If you have never dived Tahoe, this is one incredible spot. It is a high altitude shore dive and begins shallow in turquoise green water of about 20 feet. As you drop down, you begin to see the drop-off in the distance and these huge boulders on top of each other. You get closer and look over the edge of the wall and look down into the blue water which turns into a darker blue the deeper you look down. Diving along this wall is quite a sensation that needs to be dived to appreciate it. You really feel like you are on another planet. This is a different kind of dive, i.e. no kelp or big fish but quite scenic in the underwater topography. There are a couple of tunnels formed by boulders bigger than a small house. You need to dive in a full wet suit like you would in Monterey. Because this is fresh water you will be less buoyant than in the ocean. However, I feel, you should not take any weight off your belt and be a little negative so when you are done diving at the suggested 60 depth, you burn some air in the shallow 15 ft. depth for approx. 5 minutes. Because this high altitude diving, one rule of thumb is to come up TWICE as SLOW than at sea level.

THIS IS NO PLACE FOR A RAPID ASCENT.

Friday and Sunday, I plan on biking and kayaking and exploring the Desolation Wilderness area by day hiking to one of the beautiful lakes in the area. I have an extra kayak plus mine that I will be glad to let you use. Cost will be one good beer.

Check out the web site for D.L. Bliss State Park and there is an underwater section. Let me know if you are going and I will send you some high altitude diving tips from this web site and from other dive publications.

Any questions, call me, Norm Knutson, 510-475-1934. That is my business number but it has voice mail on it. I like this better than my answering machine as I travel 80% of the time.

HELP NEEDED!

An event 8/23/00 (Wednesday) 3 to 9 pm. Come donate three hours or more of your time and help paint the interior of the Presidio alliance building at 563 Ruger St, our club meeting room and lodge. A light dinner will be provided by the Club and the Presidio Alliance and painters also get a chance at a free trip on the Club's next Cypress Pt boat dive on 10/14/00. Curt Degler Coordinator 707-570-0457.
cdegler@best.com

A Day of Diving at Point Lobos - September 24th

We have secured 4 reservations (for total of 12 persons) at Pt Lobos on Sunday, September 24.

I (Robert Foster) will be coordinating the trip, so send all your requests for space, issued first-come first-serve, or any questions directly to me via E-mail or phone (w. 510-622-6113). I prefer e-mail if at all possible. I will keep a list of all requests above the 12 person limit, to be issued in case of last minute cancellations. The group will have to split the \$28 reservations fee, which we will collect on the dive day, so please bring \$2.50 each.

If anyone has a watercraft which could be used for getting to Bluefish cove or the outer part of Whalers, and wouldn't mind bringing it, please do!

Looking forward to seeing you there. Don't miss your chance-respond early!

-Robert Foster <robert.foster@teligent.com>



Two images on a low viz day at the Metridium Colony - Jason



Tales of the Sunken Mariner

It was a gray, fog soaked sky that arose out of the darkness as we propelled toward Monterey on the morning of July 30, 2000. Sergeant Radkey had called reveille at 0400 ensuring the Killer and I would arrive no later than twenty after if I valued my stripes. The Radkey's have almost slowed down to a pace we can keep up with since A.A. (After Alison). There was no 'bagel blatin' Capt. Phil to bellow greetings and orders as the Cypress Point chugged up to the dock, but Capt. Dave appeared quite friendly and capable. The crew efficiently stowed our gear as Pam and Jim entrusted little Alison to the Killer. I ran back up the ramp to smooch with the beautiful Killer,* thanking the gods as a latecomer drove up to hurriedly board his gear. Then after fooling myself that I'd paid heed enough to the lecture, we were off.

Throughout the trip I felt chilled even through two layers of dry neoprene; I was thankful I was not earlier needed to retrieve a floating box top blown away back at the dock. The lowering fog pushed the seas flat through most of the trip to the outer pinnacles but as we moved out of the protective bay the swells rebelled against the fatiguing fog, stirring stomachs into similar mutiny against the bodies of their masters. Able Ann, Barnacle Bill, and I could not wait to surge through the intermittently murky 48 degree depths, enjoying the view of lavender colored hydra coral, strawberry anemone, and other small creatures growing or crawling along the ninety foot, multi-colored, granite crags.

Two-thirds into the dive Bill signaled the prearranged I'm OK but I'm heading back up sign and we watched him ascend assuredly toward the surface. A few minutes later Ann and I each gave the other the I'm cold sign and obliviously headed further into my extremely large unclosed circle turned eclipse, doomed navigation plan; just as Capt. Dave and Dive Master Perry told us not to do. After a relaxing three-minute safety stop in a sleeper current, I emerged to the top of the ocean to see only fog. Nervously turning a couple times, I was moderately relieved to see the bantam outline of the boat. I pointlessly pointed toward direction of the boat to a rapidly departed Ann, with double my 500 lb. air pressure. Compass reading, down I go; no Ann. Kick. Kick. Huff. Puff. 200lb. left now go up. Boat looks about ½ a mile away. Seemed longer as gravity mercilessly assaulted my limbs while climbing aboard. I staggered along the deck noticing Ann stashing the last of her gear and heading toward the galley for the excellent, warm chili that Dr. Scott concocted.

Our plan for second dive was a short swim in one direction from the anchor then return back. Missed the anchor but surfaced only ¼ mile away from boat this time. Next time I'll follow you, Ann. LingCod Cove or Reef was slightly warmer, more kelpy, and sheltered some nude branches, and colorful rockfish. I also saw a flaming red/orange soft hydrozoan standing 6-8 inches high (Fire coral?).

Our third dive which only the hardy or foolish braved, was at Pescadero Point at the opposite end of a reef close to Fire Rock. I cannot fathom why at this point those other three crazy reefers wanted me to lead the way. Maybe to keep me out of trouble. In the middle of this horseshoe shaped reef is a large swimthru which was easily found thanks to both the Captain's accurate directions and Kenneth Gwin pointing thataway when we reached bottom. At the exit it seemed closer quarters than my last visit. I decided to turn right at the exit, circle around the rock, and head 45 degrees to the left straight for the anchor when we reached the stirred up sand at the entrance. That is where Kenneth said I turned too far south. He signaled me back and his direction was a less severe left, past the cavern. Next time I'll need to recall the exact opposite number of degrees in which we headed toward the cavern in order to more accurately calculate the way back. We surfaced about seventy yards from the boat; the closest I'd been all day. This dive was intended to shake out the rust in preparation for the channel Island trip; looks like I'll need to pack some WD40 along after all. -- Still Hatchless Haworth

*One look at her forehead or serve on the tennis court and you'll discern why she is known as the Killer among tennis bums.

Shipwrecks and treasure under the High Seas, who do they belong to?

Just a short piece for those of you who harbor hopes of someday finding Sir Frances Drake's shipwreck or maybe stumbling on a sunken Spanish Galleon while diving the Florida Keys. If you had visions of fame and retirement on a sandy beach with a frosty umbrella drink, you may be in for a surprise.

In the heyday of the Spanish Empire, ships laden with gold, silver, and precious stones from the new world plied the seas to and from Spain. Thousands of these ships went down over the centuries. Spain estimates that 600 ships were lost in what are now American waters.

Until recently Spain has taken little interest as treasure hunters and archaeologists have raised some of this bounty from the sea. When Mel Fisher found the *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*, a galleon which sunk off the Florida Keys in 1622, he brought up some \$400 million in treasure. For its part, Queen Sofia of Spain was given one of the recovered cannons.

All that has changed, on July 21, a Federal appeals court in Virginia ruled that Spain owned the remains of two warships lost off the coast of Virginia two hundred years ago. The move by Spain was supported by both the American and British governments.

The case began in 1996, when Sea Hunt, a salvage company owned by Ben Benson was issued permits by the State of Virginia to explore the coastal waters off Assateague Island. He found the remains of the *Juno* which sank with the loss of more than 400 lives in 1802 and the *La Galga* which sank in 1750, most of whose crew survived.

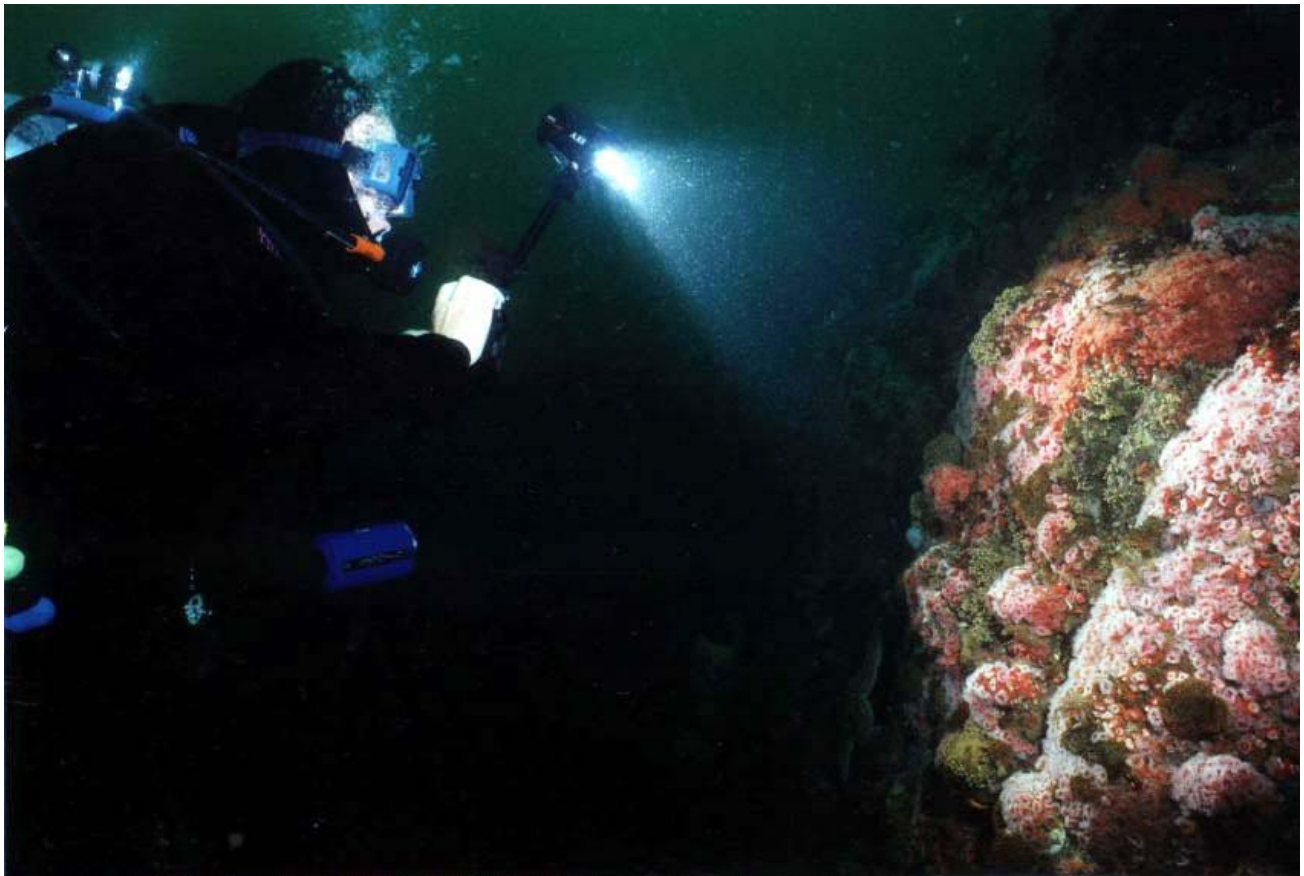
In 1998, Spain sued for ownership and possession, contending that they had never abandoned the ships. In 1999 a Federal judge awarded the *La Galga* to Virginia and the *Juno* to Spain. That ruling was appealed with the result that both ships now belong to Spain. The crux of the argument is that the abandonment of sovereign shipwrecks must be explicit and not merely implied.

The Justice Department argued that the United States owned thousands of lost vessels and sought to ensure that be "treated as sovereign ships and honored graves and are not subject to exploration, or exploitation."

It is that last phrase that has some concerned. Spain has played down the treasure issue, but it is not clear what this ruling could mean to those who enjoy exploring wrecks. --Pierre



-Giant Clam by
Kathy Kennedy



-Jason using his Ikelite A35, by Eben Haber

USFWS RELEASES BIOLOGICAL OPINION STATING CONTAINMENT WILL JEOPARDIZE SOUTHERN SEA OTTER

POPULATION: On 20 July, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) released its biological opinion (B.O.) pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) claiming that **CONTAINMENT JEOPARDIZES SOUTHERN OTTERS:** A biological opinion from the removal of sea otters from the Southern California "otter free management zone" would jeopardize their "continued existence" and is "essential to the species' survival and recovery. Containment of the otter population to north of Point Conception offshore California was part of the USFWS plan to create a second colony of the animals at San Nicolas Island by "translocating" the animals one of the Channel Islands.

The rationale for the second colony and translocation, which ended up killing scores of the ESA-listed otters at the hands of the very agency charged with their protection, was fear of a major oil spill that could wipe out the existing colony centered in the Monterey Bay area. However, rather than work to prohibit new oil development along the central California coast and move tanker traffic further offshore (both of which were subsequently done), USFWS under pressure from their sister agency the Minerals Management Service (MMS) which was promoting offshore oil, proposed the second colony at San Nicolas. Part of the compromise to mitigate for shellfish losses at the islands from a new population of otters was an agreement to contain the southern migration of the otters at Point Conception. Now, however, with some otters established at San Nicolas Island, USFWS is seeking to renege on the containment agreement allowing the southern migration of the animals threatening southern California's shellfish fisheries. The biological opinion can be viewed at: <http://www.r1.fws.gov/vfwo>.

About SFRD (San Francisco Reef Divers): The Reef Diver Times is the official newsletter of the San Francisco Reef Divers, a not for profit community organization dedicated to safe sport diving and the preservation of our ocean resources. Membership is \$25 annually, dues payable to SFRD. There is a general Club meeting on the third Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm. We meet at the Presidio Alliance Building, Room B, 563 Rucker Street, The Presidio, San Francisco. Rucker is the first left after entering via the Lombard Gate Entrance.

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SFRD

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Reef Diver Times

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