

Buddy Line

Northern California Rainbow Divers

San Francisco PRIDE 2004 Yearbook

DIVING

What NCRD is all about

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The primary purpose of NCRD is to bring divers together.

The membership of Northern California Rainbow Divers (NCRD) is as varied as San Francisco itself. While the primary focus of the organization is on the LGBT community, the organization welcomes all divers and people interested in becoming divers. And, while most of our 150 members live in the San Francisco Bay Area, they are equally distributed throughout San Francisco, the East Bay and the South Bay.

Membership is open to divers of any level. If you are not yet a certified scuba diver and would like to become certified, we can help you with that. Several scuba instructors are NCRD members. They represent several different certification agencies and are always happy to answer questions about certification and help you begin in or continue your diving education.

(continued on page 3)



Karen Doby is one of 18 NCRD divers who made bubbles in Saba in January (The '03-'04 Dive Log begins on page 4.)

UPCOMING DIVE TRIPS

OUTSIDE CALIFORNIA DIVING

GALAPAGOS ISLANDS • 2 TRIPS
DEC. 2-9 AND WOMEN'S WEEK DEC. 9-16

A once-in-a-lifetime adventure to the world's most exotic dive site. Two trips are scheduled aboard the Galapagos Aggressor. (See back page.)

DOLPHIN ENCOUNTER
WITH UNDERWATER PHOTO SEMINAR
JULY 23-30 • BIMINI, BAHAMAS

The absolutely perfect trip. Dive, snorkel and swim with dolphins and sharpen photo skills with Donald Tipton aboard the Bottom Time II liveaboard. (See page 7.)

ALASKA • AUG. 7-16

Nine days of diving on the luxurious liveaboard Nautilus Explorer. Some of the best diving in the world. (See page 7.)

SEA OF CORTEZ • OCT. 2-11

Perfect for photographers and those interested in marine creatures. Naturalist and author Dan Gotshall will be joining us. (See back page.)

CALIFORNIA DIVING

MONTEREY

PT. LOBOS • SUNDAY, JULY 18

BREAKWATER • SATURDAY, AUG. 21

SILVER PRINCE • SUNDAY, AUG. 22

Pt. Lobos, a state marine preserve, offers some of the most pristine diving in Northern California.

Then in August, we head to Breakwater in Monterey for shore diving, followed by a picnic, both on Saturday, Aug. 21.

The fabulous Silver Prince leaves from Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey for an easy, two-tank dive. Sea lions are not guaranteed, but there's always hope. The cost is \$75/diver (nitrox is extra). We're limiting the load so the boat won't be crowded. (See page 7.)

CHANNEL ISLANDS • NOV. 4-8

Four days of liveaboard diving in the southern Channel Islands aboard the Vision. Cost is \$550 per person, inclusive of food, lodging and diving. (See back page.)

For more information on the trips, see pages 7 and 8, or visit the trips section of the website at www.rainbowdivers.org.

DIVE CLASSES

Many people dream about becoming certified scuba divers. Too often, though, they don't follow through on their dream because they don't know where to start. That's where Northern California Rainbow Divers (NCRD) comes in.

NCRD offers several ways for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered future divers to become certified divers, and opportunities to keep diving in exciting locations in California and throughout the world.

"We are fortunate to have among our membership several scuba instructors who are associated with local dive centers," said Mike Ford, international trips planner, who is a dive instructor. These instructors offer certification and advanced level classes, sometimes through NCRD-only classes and also by welcoming NCRD members into their regularly scheduled classes.

Several of the instructors are also certified through the Handicapped Scuba Association to teach diving to people with a wide range of disabilities, from blindness and limited sight to paraplegia and quadriplegia.

For divers who have been certified, but who have not been diving for several months or even years, there is the "Rusty Divers" course, which reacquaints them with the sport and its equipment.

OPEN-WATER CERTIFICATION

As the first level of scuba certification, open-water certification provides the platform for all scuba divers. The format of the class varies from instructor to instructor, but in general the class involves several sessions in the classroom and in swimming pools. These sessions typically are held over the course of a weekend or several weeks. At the end of these sessions, a weekend of diving in the ocean, most often in nearby Monterey follows.

While the Open Water class introduces students to the equipment used in scuba diving, as well as the techniques of scuba. It also prepares students to dive safely on their own. Following successful completion of the foundation course, the student is certified. Scuba certification is required throughout the world to rent equipment and to participate in dives on liveaboard dive boats or at resorts. It also is required for the advanced classes, which provide students with additional skills.

Those who are already certified and divers who want to continue learning new skills or honing existing skills can continue their diving education through many other classes that NCRD-affiliated instructors provide, including Advanced Open Water, Stress and Rescue, Nitrox, and specialties such as Drysuit Diving, Boat Diving, Night Diving, Advanced Navigation, and many others.

If you're interested in learning to dive, start by visiting the Classes Section on the NCRD website www.rainbowdivers.org. It provides answers to commonly asked questions, information about club-affiliated instructors and how to contact them.

For general questions about classes, exact pricing information, and class sign-up, please e-mail Anthony Perry, NCRD's Classes Coordinator, at classes@rainbowdivers.org.

Northern California Rainbow Divers

584 Castro Street, #478

San Francisco, CA 94114

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Club Policies

Board meetings are held once a month. These meetings are open to any member in good standing. If you are interested in attending these meetings, please call any of the board members listed above for location. Membership dues are \$35/year, \$55/yr for domestic partners at the same address, and \$20/yr for newsletter only subscription (available to addresses more than 150 miles from San Francisco Bay Area). Advertising is available. Rates \$7/month to club members to have a business card size non-changing ad. It is \$10/month for non-club members to advertise. If you are interested in advertising please call Nisa Donnelly at 530-472-3209. Club policy regarding money paid for club sponsored dives: Unless otherwise noted, all monies are non-refundable. NCRD does not warrant, recommend or guarantee the products or services contained in advertisements in this newsletter.

Club mail or inquiries:

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San Francisco, CA 94114

Web Site:

www.rainbowdivers.org

Northern California Rainbow Divers, Inc.
is a California non-profit
mutual benefit corporation.



PAWS: John Lipp, executive director of PAWS (Pets Are Wonderful Support), right, accepts a check from NCRD members Brendon Kearney, left, and Steve Graham, the DFL liaison. PAWS supports the human-animal bond for persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Two San Francisco-based nonprofits were beneficiaries of \$2,570 each from the Northern California Rainbow Divers' share of 2003 Diving for Life beneficiary funds. DFL funds are raised in conjunction with the annual Diving for Life Scuba Jamboree and distributed to local charities selected by participating scuba clubs in those communities. The amount for each community is based on the number of local club members participating in the Diving for Life event. NCRD has donated more than \$50,000 from DFL funds since the event's inception in 1992. Steve Graham is the DFL liaison for NCRD and co-organizer for DFL 2003 in Cozumel. He and Patti Davidsan, also an NCRD member, are members of the DFL Board.

DONATIONS DFL Diving for Life

At press time, there were still a few spots open for the 2004 Diving For Life Jamboree, Oct. 30 through Nov. 6 at the Malolo Island Resort in Fiji. Quite a few NCRDers have signed up for this year's trip, along with divers from many LGBT scuba clubs from all over the world. To find out more about DFL, visit the website at www.divingforlife.org.



DGLC: Todd Higgins, left, client advocate for the Deaf Gay & Lesbian Center (DGLC), accepts a check from NCRD members Steve Graham, center, the DFL liaison, and Mike Ford, the Trip Planner. DGLC is a program which provides counseling, advocacy and serves as a referral agency.

Who We Are *(continued from page 1)*

ACTIVITIES

There are many opportunities for members who are interested in participating in NCRD—from joining one of the many trips we sponsor each year to taking one of the many courses.

NCRD holds monthly shore dives and frequent boat dives in Monterey, and sponsors between two to six larger scale dive trips each year to warm-water and cold-water destinations. The club also has monthly membership meetings at various locations. We keep in touch with the membership through an e-mail list, the web site (www.rainbowdivers.org), and through e-newsletters and printed newsletters.

Then again, if you just feel like diving once in awhile, that's okay, too. We require nothing of our members other than that they dive safely and respect one another.

Trips are scheduled throughout the year and range from nearby Monterey and California's Channel Islands to the exotic Galapagos Islands (see Trips, for more information, or visit the website at www.rainbowdivers.org).

HISTORY

NCRD is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing scuba diving opportunities and diver education to the LGBT community in Northern California. The organization was formed in the early 1990s. Originally known as the Sea Snakes, the name was changed shortly thereafter when it was pointed out that there actually are no sea snakes in this part of the world. Newly christened as NCRD, the club began to grow quickly and hasn't stopped.

NCRD Monthly Meeting

Want to share some dive stories? Plan your next trip? Find a dive buddy? Plan to attend the next NCRD meeting:

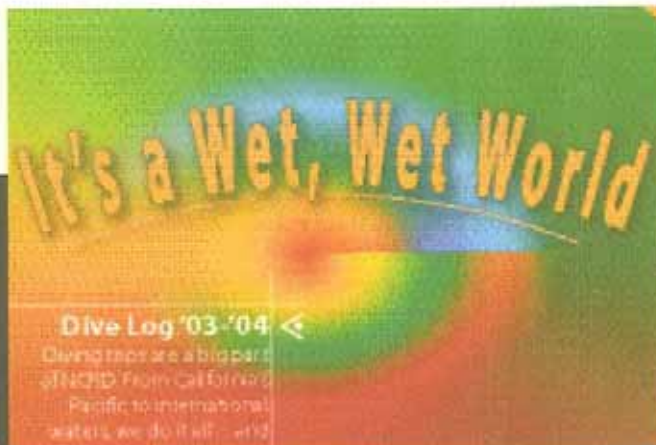
Wednesday, July 14, 6:30 p.m., Sausage Factory, 517 Castro St., San Francisco

Sharon Ponder Photo



NCRD is all about diving, and we work hard to bring our members as many opportunities to "get wet"

as possible. In addition to our monthly dives in Monterey, we also travel the world in search of great underwater destinations. During our '03-'04 season, we visited old favorites and several new spots.



Mike Ford Photo

by Mike Ford; Nisa Donnelly (Saba); John Marum (Roatan)

Cozumel 2003

Almost exactly a year ago, shortly before Pride 2003, we escaped the chilly fog of the San Francisco summer and winged our way to sunny Cozumel for a week of warm-water diving. Returning to Scuba Club Cozumel for a second time, we were welcomed by the friendly staff who were thrilled to see us again. And within an hour of arriving, we were floating in crystal blue water right off the hotel pier, where we found the resident eels, puffer fish, and a barracuda seemingly waiting just for us—right where we left them on our previous visit.

The next day, we boarded the resort's catamaran and set out on our first day of exploring some of the area's most beautiful dive sites. The helpful crew worked magic for us, finding many toadfish, slipper lobsters and nurse sharks that found cameras snapping faster than a moray's jaws. Particularly exciting was our visit to Devil's Throat, a natural tunnel through the coral at 130 feet that tested the buoyancy skills of even the most seasoned divers in the group.

Midway through the week we were momentarily sidelined when a stomach virus swept through the group, sending most of us to our beds for 24 hours. But thanks to the actions of club member Joe Wofford, who braved the local "pharmacies" to buy up every last box of Floxil we were all back in the water in seemingly no time. And it says something about the spirit of this group that we had a great time, even when we were sick.

After a week spent diving, relaxing in the seaside hammocks, enjoying the local restaurants, visiting some archaeological sites, and generally doing nothing but having fun, our week on the island culminated in an unforgettable trip to the mainland and a trek into the jungle to dive the famous Hidden Worlds cenotes (underground caverns). None of us who spent the day diving among the gorgeous stone formations and looking up to see the jungle peering in at us will ever forget the experience.

Cozumel was great, but those of us whose idea of heaven is cold-water diving were looking ahead to August, when we traveled to breathtaking Alaska.

Alaska 2003

Awe-inspiring is an apt description of this trip. We spent a week on the world's coolest liveaboard, the Nautilus Explorer. Our friend and captain, Mike Lever, was excited to have some Rainbow Divers on board again, and outdid himself as he took us on a journey north from the tiny fishing island of Port Hardy up to rollicking Juneau, with stops in quirky Ketchikan and a visit to the natural hot spring. Along the way we spent a memorable day swimming around the glacier at Tracy Arm, splashed at the eerie wreck of the Princess Sophia, watched orcas hunting for sea lions, took in the breathtaking aurora borealis, and saw the world's biggest and most beautiful nudibranchs at Wooden Island.

NCRD is planning another Alaska adventure in August. To find out more, see page 7.

Big and beautiful describes the focus of the October trip, when we went in search of the great whites.

Great White Encounter 2003

At our very own Farallon Islands, within seconds of tossing the float into the water around these remote islands, a great white came rushing up, launching into the air and hanging motionless for a single second as we all stared, enchanted and terrified.

When it crashed back into the ocean, we looked at each other, seemingly wondering "What have we gotten ourselves into?" This didn't stop us from jumping eagerly into the shark cage that was lowered into the murky water soon after. We spent the morning taking shifts in the cage, peering into the green water around us for glimpses of the magnificent sharks that circled the boat. Even the low visibility couldn't hide the massive forms that emerged from the darkness as the sharks came to see what strange creatures had invaded their world. Hands and feet were quickly pulled inside and counted as sharks up to 20 feet in length cruised around us.

The action on top of the water was even more exciting. All day we watched as massive sharks swam by, sometimes stopping to look up at us with beautiful black eyes. We witnessed several feedings and lots of shark action as the big fish did what they do best: hunted the resident sea lions.

Finally, it was time to say goodbye and sail for home, leaving the wild things behind.

California waters were the scene for our next trip as well, November's annual outing aboard the well-known Southern California liveaboard, the Vision.

Channel Islands 2003

NCRD has been going on the Vision trip for years. Departing from Santa Barbara we spent four days diving the gorgeous Channel Islands. Departing in the middle of the night, we headed to the

Southern Channel Islands planning to spend the entire time at distant San Clemente.

But we were in for a real surprise when, after a day at San Clemente, the crew asked if we would be willing to go even further south to the seldom-visited Cortes Banks. Located, literally, in the "middle of nowhere" this beautiful area is known for its warm temperatures and almost endless visibility, but it is not often dived because conditions have to be exactly right. Luckily for us, they were. The crew rewarded us by catching not only lobsters for dinner, but yellowfin, yellowtail and bluefin tuna, which they served up as sashimi after our night dives.

NCRD is planning another Channel Islands trip in November. To find out more, see page 8.

After ending 2003 on such a high note, we rang in the new year with our first visit to the tiny Dutch Caribbean island, Saba.



Stephanie Krmpotic Photo

Sharing the undersea world with sharks is always thrill for divers. This one was spotted on the Saba trip.

This perfect jewel of an island is largely overlooked by most divers. Its waters are protected by one of the world's first marine parks, and as a result are pristine. Beneath Saba's waters, steep mountains ascend from the abyss to within 80 feet of the surface, making the diving extraordinary.

Every day we enjoyed calm, clear diving, but this doesn't mean it was boring. Far from it. Our visit to Shark Rock was an adventure and even sites we insisted on visiting again and again never lost their charm.

Neither did the island itself. The friendly locals welcomed us in, keeping



Mike Ford Photo

restaurants open late, introducing us to the local floral and fauna, and making us feel like old friends. We particularly enjoyed spending time with Saba's resident gay and lesbian population, and look forward to seeing them again on our next visit.

Truly off tourism's beaten path, Saba was the ultimate eat, sleep and dive holiday.

Our next destination was Silver Bank in the Dominican Republic, where we went to spend a week swimming with humpback whales.

Dominican Republic 2004

Only three licenses to visit this area are given out to boat operators by the Dominican government, and we were fortunate to be aboard the Bottom Time as it made its way into this unique part of the world where humpback whales spend the winter months breeding and raising their calves.

Each day we set out in zodiacs, looking for whales whose behavior indicated that they were open to encounters with us. And find them, we did.

Every outing saw us getting in the water with whales, sometimes mothers with calves, sometimes mating pairs and sometimes lone travelers. We were constantly amazed at the grace and gentleness of these 40-foot creatures. And, after a magical week, we left them knowing that we had been granted a very special gift.

Another of our favorite dive locations is Roatan in the Honduras Bay Islands, and in April we made a return trip there to the beautiful Inn of the Last Resort for a week of diving.

(continued on next page)

(continued from Page 5)

Roatan 2004

Our trip began with four wonderful flights on TACA (aka: "Take A Chance Airways"). TACA at least provided a number of topics for conversation, especially as to the make up of the sandwich meats. After two jets from San Francisco to San Salvador to San Pedro Sula, we transferred to a turboprop which, as one group member pointed out, lacked both air conditioning and cocktails.

In Roatan we were met by the staff of the Inn of Last Resort, a short van ride away. The inn is a rustic, wooden multi-building facility right on the water, with generously large rooms, plenty of air conditioning and an on-site dive shop. The inn supplied all meals, as well as a place to store dive equipment and even ported the tanks and BCs onto the boat before each dive.



Sharon Ponder Photo

NCRD'ers in Roatan dove the wreck of the El Aguila on Monday. Here, they are gathered at the bow of the wreck.

The inn scheduled three dives per day, with one night dive during the week. Tanks were available at other times for dives in the lagoon behind the inn.

Our first day of diving was at three

different coral reefs. Many large curious fish came right up to us, as if to check out this new group of divers. On the way back to the inn, dolphins appeared.

Things got more interesting on the third day, with a first dive to the wreck of the El Aguila, which broke into three sections and settled at a depth of between 90 and 100 feet. It was the first of two wrecks we would explore. The second, the Odyssey, was the first dive on day five.

At 95 feet, the Odyssey's collapsed superstructure exposes inner decks and offers the chance to explore its rooms—or sit at a table and chairs that are still attached to the bow. We decompressed at a nearby reef with large schools of fish and even a porcupine.

The natural rather than manmade challenges included several narrow swim-throughs with dark overhangs, which offered the opportunity to see lobsters. The third dive was again along a coral reef at Inner Sea Quest, where a Moray eel was spotted.

For those who wanted to get in deep diving, the first dive of the fourth day gave us the opportunity to drift dive along the wall at depths of 130 feet or more. This was followed by another drift dive to Turtle Crossing, where a turtle was coaxed to within about 10 feet of the group before swimming off. That day's third dive was to Spooky Channel, a there-and-back swim around which included several swim-throughs and plenty of dark crevices. One member of the group found a very large Moray eel.

A stingray was spotted on the second dive at Lighthouse Reef, and the night dive provided the chance to see some sea life that normally hides during the day. At least one octopus and several lobsters joined the group, and near the end of the dive we extinguished our flashlights so that our eyes would become accustomed to the dark. Rapid movements in the water produced a faint bioluminescence.

The dry day at the end of the week was spent visiting the nearby butterfly farm or taking a canopy tour of the rain-forest. The next day we flew back, but this time with the foresight to load up on Wendy's burgers at the airport. No more mystery meat sandwiches for us!

Oh, my aching ears!

Tips, tricks and tribulations of a self-confessed ear-gear junkie

I suffer from good-ear envy. By rights, I have the kind of ears that would keep a more sensible person out of the water. When other kids went to Disneyland on their summer vacations, I went to the hospital with swimmer's ear. It wasn't a pretty childhood. When I started diving, I knew I was in serious trouble on my open water dives. I also discovered I was on my own in figuring out what to do about it.

It's taken dozens of hours of Internet research, more than a few conversations with the nice DAN docs, no small amount of trial and error, and lots of strange looks on the dive boats, but I've finally figured out a system that works, at least for me.

My ear gear consists of:

Doc's Pro Plugs (special ear plugs for divers that come in different sizes; my ears can and do change size on an extended trip, so I always carry an assortment); the Pro Ear 2000 mask (which is equipped with ear covers and a tube system designed to help with equalization); a sturdy neoprene hood to hold it all in place (yes, the hood goes over the mask); a bottle of alcohol for post-dive ear flushes; and a bottle of prescription ear drops, just in case.

Is it perfect? No. The ear plugs often come loose, especially if you've been hanging upside down in the water. The mask is just so-so and tends to leak at an early age. The hoods aren't very comfortable (there is a hood especially designed for the mask, which is more uncomfortable than most hoods). And you can expect to have to explain the ear gear to at least one person on every dive. But does it work? Yes. Is it worth it? Considering the alternative, which for me, would be not diving. Absolutely.

-Nisa Donnelly

(PS: e-mail me at Editor@rainbowdivers.org, if you'd like to "talk" ears.)

DAN has a new web-based educational program on ears. To find out more, visit the DAN website at:

<http://www.DiversAlertNetwork.org/training/seminars/earsanddiving>





Upcoming Trips

Mike Ford Photo

Bimini Bahamas Dolphins and Donald Tipton Photo Seminar

The upcoming Bimini dolphin trip has taken another interesting turn. The folks at Bottom Time Adventures have snagged underwater photographer Donald Tipton for the trip. He'll be hosting a photo seminar throughout the week, making the trip ideal for those who want to learn how to take pictures of frolicking marine critters. In addition, this is an excellent trip for non-diving partners. Take a gander at the new details below (including the lower price) and if you're interested, sign up ASAP.

July 23-30

place and welcome. And we're going to visit them!

All encounters are on the dolphins' terms. They are not lured, fed, or coerced in any way to interact with us. They do it because they choose to, making this one of the few truly all-natural dolphin experiences in the world.

What could make this better? How about participating in a seminar with world-renowned underwater photographer Donald Tipton. Check out his website at www.donaldtipton.com.

This once-in-a-lifetime trip is \$1,700, which includes hotel in Ft. Lauderdale, airport transfers, a week on the Bottom Time II (with all meals), the photo seminar, and airfare from Ft. Lauderdale to Bimini. Not included is airfare to and from Ft. Lauderdale from your departure city, crew tips and costs incurred on the boat for alcoholic drinks or T-shirts.

Do you love dolphins? Do you love the work of underwater photographer Donald Tipton? Do you want to learn how you can take better photographs?

If you can answer yes to any or all of these questions, we have the perfect trip for you.

The Caribbean island of Bimini is home to a pod of dolphins for whom encounters with humans are common-

Down in Monterey — Bubblemaking Close to Home

PT. LOBOS

As many of you know, Pt. Lobos offers some of the most pristine diving in the Northern California. Pt. Lobos is a state marine preserve and strictly limits diving (reservations required), which is why the club takes care of the reservations for you. The park doesn't open until 9 a.m., so you can sleep in for a change. There are easy shore entries using the boat launch at Whaler's Cove, and you can bring a hand-launched boat or kayak if you have one. The diving is superb. The park charges a reservation fee (\$7) and a nominal entrance fee.

MONTEREY/SILVER PRINCE

Depending on conditions, the boats usually go to sites such as Hopkins Reef, Aumentos Reef, and Eric's Pinnacle, all of which have great invertebrates on interesting rock formations. The sites in the Bay also frequently attract sea lions and harbor seals, who tend to be very friendly and often approach divers. The boat leaves from Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey.

To find out more about the monthly Monterey dives or to reserve a spot, e-mail Clark Burton at diveplanner@rainbowdivers.org.

Alaska in August

Alaskan Adventure (and Honeymoon Cruise)

August 6-16

We've arranged to charter the entire Nautilus Explorer, surely one of the most fabulous liveaboards in existence, for our return visit to Alaska and British Columbia, Aug. 6 to 16.

For 10 glorious days and 9 starry nights, we will have the run of the entire 116 feet and three levels. Not only that, but captain Mike Lever has saved his favorite trip for us. This trip combines the best of Alaska and British Columbia diving: wrecks, orcas, wolf eels, dolphins, nudibranchs, icebergs. It's all here.

But this isn't just about diving. No, not by a long shot. This is an excellent vacation for divers and non-divers alike. There's kayaking and snorkeling. And, as most of you know, Canada recently declared gay marriage legal. Our boat and its captain, Mike Lever, are Canadian born and registered. As a result, Capt. Mike is able to marry people. So we're turning this trip into our very own love boat.

After we board the boat in Juneau, Mike will take us out to sea (international waters) and marry any couples who want to get hitched. When we reach Canadian waters, we'll land and go to the nearest registry office to make our unions legal. This is a really fun way to celebrate our relationships and get in some of the best diving in the world.

This is cold-water diving, and dry-suits are pretty much required due to the large number of dives we'll be doing.

The low, low, low cost of \$2,150 includes round-trip airfare from San Francisco, your hotel in Juneau, all your diving, meals (except alcohol) and port fees. Not included are crew gratuities, Nitrox, alcohol, marriage certificate fees, etc. If you don't want or need the airfare from SFO, the trip is \$1,900.

For complete information about outside-California trips, please e-mail Mike Ford, NCRD's Trip Coordinator, at grumbledog@earthlink.net.

(More trips on back page)

Galapagos Spots Open Up!

December 2-9

Women's
Week

December 9-16

We've had a couple of openings on both of our upcoming Galapagos trips.

If you've been wanting to go on an adventure, mark your calendar for the week of Dec. 2-9 or Dec. 9-16.

Two separate groups of NCRDers will be boarding the beautiful Galapagos Aggressor for a week of exploring the wild islands off the coast of Ecuador.

We'll be spending most of our time at remote Wolf and Darwin islands, home to schools of hammerhead sharks, whale sharks, and sea lions.

This is the trip of a lifetime. For \$3,100 you get a week on one of the world's most luxurious liveaboards and airfare from Quito, Ecuador, to the Galapagos. Airfare to Quito is not included.

For complete information on the Galapagos trips, e-mail Trip Coordinator Mike Ford at trips@rainbowdivers.org or grumbledog@earthlink.net.

Women's Week in the Galapagos

The Dec. 9-16 Galapagos trip, has officially turned into NCRD Women's Week. If you'd like to be a part of this wonderful adventure, or if you know any women who would be interested in an unusual all-women's outing, claim your space or pass this info along. You're not going to find a trip this great, for this cheap, with dive buddies who are this much fun.

Channel Islands

Annual Vision Trip

November 4-8

It's time to sign up for the annual NCRD liveboard adventure to California's Southern Channel Islands, Nov. 4-8.

We'll board the Vision at Santa Barbara, Thursday, Nov. 4, and the boat will depart at 10 p.m. While we sleep snug in our very own bunks (doubles available for couples), the crew will motor down to San Clemente Island. We'll awake to the smell of fresh salt air and breakfast cooking. While aboard, we'll enjoy unlimited diving (including night dives), returning to Santa Barbara Monday afternoon.

The Vision leaves from Sea Landing in Santa Barbara harbor, approximately 350 miles south of San Francisco. The boat has bunks for 30 divers and all meals are provided. The club has been making these trips for over six years and they sell out quickly. This is not surprising, since the Channel Islands features some of the best kelp forest diving in California.

The Islands are a sanctuary for some most amazing visions, experiences and creatures. To find out more about the trip, visit these websites:

<http://rainbowdivers.org/trips/trips3.html>; and <http://www.truthaquatics.com>.

The total cost of these four days of glorious, non-stop fun is only \$550, and a payment plan is available. The first payment of \$150 is required to secure your spot, and the balance of \$400 is due by Sept. 1.

To reserve a spot, e-mail trip coordinator, Alison Ronald, at webmaster@rainbowdivers.org for details.



Mike Ford Photo

Sea of Cortez Liveboard with Marine Naturalists

October 3-10

Visitors to the Sea of Cortez are awed by the stunning seamounts, vertical walls, warm blue waters, with temperatures in the 70s and visibility in excess of 100 feet, which are home to a stunning array of life, from the smallest nudibranchs to the largest whales.

We'll be on the Nautilus Explorer liveboard (port of call, Los Cabos, Mexico). Our trip begins Oct. 3, when we fly from SFO to Los Cabos for six days of diving, with the possibility of up to 25 dives. We land in La Paz on the afternoon of Oct. 9 and fly back to San Francisco the next day. The cost is \$2,500 all-inclusive.

NCRD instructor and critter queen Maureen McEvoy be on board, along with the world-famous marine naturalist and author, Dan Gotshall.

This trip is ideal for those of you who like warmer water. It's also perfect for photographers and those inter-

ested in marine creatures, both big and small.

Mike Lever and his crew are devoted naturalists, and they are very, very dedicated to protecting the areas they sail in and in ensuring that the ecosystem they help us explore remains intact.

The boat is wonderfully equipped for photographers and videographers, with a fantastic camera station, rental cameras of various kinds, and even film processing on board. Each cabin (double occupancy) has its own bathroom with shower.

We have only a few spaces left on this trip, and they're going fast.

To sign up, or to ask any questions you might have about this trip, e-mail NCRD Trip Coordinator Mike Ford at grumbledog@earthlink.net.