



The Newsletter of the Northern California Rainbow Divers (NCRD)

Buddy Line

November, 2012

Ho ho ho! Holiday Party on December 16, from 4-8 p.m.

by Karen Doby

Back by popular demand, the Northern California Rainbow Divers (NCRD) annual holiday party will be held this year on Sunday, December 16, from 4-8 p.m. Dennis Nix has graciously offered to host the event at his home in San Francisco, CA. You are encouraged to come and bring a guest to a fun-filled afternoon/evening with friends and fellow Rainbow Divers as we celebrate the past year, hold our 2013 election and learn about new plans in store for next year. Finger food and drinks will be served, and there will be a fun giveaway for everyone who attends.

As 2012 comes to a close and the Thanksgiving holiday approaches, I'm reminded of what a wonderful year this has been for NCRD. Club finances have done well thanks to the oversight of Treasurer Tommy Todd. NCRD's website and Facebook page have proven themselves invaluable as member communication mediums thanks to the many efforts of NCRD President Christophe Beraud. Thanks to Christophe and Rob Raso for hosting our summer gear swap and party. Thanks are due to Mike Miller for hosting and maintaining the club's email lists and to club Secretary Tim Cosgrove, who gently reminded the Board of lost action items and decisions and plans from past meetings.

Fantastic cold-water diving was enjoyed throughout the year along our California coast, from Point Lobos through Carmel and Monterey to the Sonoma coast, thanks to our local dive planner, Christophe Beraud, for interesting, accessible shore dives as well as numerous charters aboard the *Silver Prince*, *Cypress Sea* and *BeachHopper*. Mendocino coast dives were also on offer this year thanks to trip leader Audrey Haug. Even more superb California diving awaited eighteen lucky

Rainbow Divers who embarked *Truth Aquatics* in April for a spectacular dive cruise through the Channel Islands, thanks to the leadership of Tim Cosgrove. Another half dozen joined September's annual Big Sur trip aboard the *Silver Prince*, led by Christophe Beraud.

Certainly there was no dearth of warm-water diving opportunities this year! Mexico's magnificent Sea of Cortez was explored by twenty Rainbow Divers in August, thanks to Christophe Beraud, followed by our "Year of Indonesia" diving in October. Tommy Todd and Christophe Beraud escorted a dozen Rainbow Divers to the world-class Lembeh Strait in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, for a week of muck diving with exotic, unusual creatures. Diving For Life's jamboree was held the following week at Rama Candidasa in Bali, where our own Kelly Thiemann presided as co-planner for this annual LGBT dive extravaganza. Camaraderie continued still for nineteen LGBT divers for a third dive week in Indonesian waters inside the magnificent Komodo National Park aboard the *Mermaid II* liveaboard, led by Karen Doby for Rainbow Divers and Greg Hamman from Undersea Expeditions. These Indonesian dives provided "first times" to many, such as first Mola Mola sighting (different species from the ones in California), first liveaboard, first manta ray, first current dive, first safety sausage, etc.

This high caliber of animal encounters, dive skills development and good times with LGBT divers always seem to bring forth an excitement and renewed enthusiasm for diving. It reminds us of why we like to dive with like-minded buddies and friends from LGBT clubs like Northern California Rainbow Divers. More fun things are in store for 2013, so come hear all about it on December 16!



Upcoming! Annual Election of Directors for 2013

Have you ever wondered how your dive club works? For example, who decides where we travel and when? Where does all that great logo wear come from? How about the magic behind the NCRD website and Facebook page? How can you bring your ideas into reality for the club?

Many of NCRD's activities begin simply as ideas from club members that start with "Wouldn't it be cool if ..." or "I'd like to ..." Bringing forth your ideas, time and enthusiasm are what keep our club strong and form the foundation for our governing structure.

As our holiday party rolls around on December 16, think about what you could do to help the club. If you can commit to be on the Board or organize local dives, or even plan a warm-water trip to a place you've always wanted to visit, that's excellent! Or write a newsletter article, contribute photos or organize a social event. There's room for anyone who wants to help run the club or make it better.

As a non-profit 501(c)(7) social and recreational club, NCRD is run by a group of unpaid volunteers. We need members like you to join us and share the load, doing what you're naturally good at, so that we don't end up with one or two people doing too much and getting burnt out. Don't worry if you've not done these things before -- we'll help you get started! Serving your club is a good way to hone new skills and meet good people along the way.

There are six Board members in total, who help govern and coordinate the activities and affairs of the club. They work to define and execute the strategy, goals and action items for the upcoming year. Three of these Board members are **DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE**, who do not have specific duties but make themselves available for general Board business. Directors-At-Large may or may not also serve the club in additional volunteer roles. The remaining three Board members occupy specific positions as follow:

PRESIDENT -- as Chief Executive Officer and General Manager, leads the Board in governing and coordinating the activities and affairs of the club; presides over monthly Board meetings, meetings of the general membership and the Annual Election of Directors.

TREASURER-- serves as the official keeper of the club's Books of Account; maintains correct accounting of club property and transactions; manages the club's deposits, debts, financial obligations and liabilities; produces records of cash flow, working capital and operating expenses for the club.

SECRETARY -- is the keeper of the Book of Minutes; records and circulates Board meeting minutes and action items; records and circulates club member meeting minutes; and is the keeper of official club documents and supplies.

Besides the Board, member volunteers carry out the club's activities as needed throughout the year, such as:

COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR -- facilitates communication between the Board and the general membership, between members and with sister LGBT clubs and orgs (e.g. newsletters; club website and Facebook page, and email announcements of club news and events); develops new avenues for member communications; maintains published club listings; maintains an ongoing list of LGBT dive and social opportunities.

SOCIAL CHAIR -- facilitates activities that deliver value to existing members of the club (e.g. quarterly socials, speakers and programs for member meetings, logo wear, dive shop affiliation benefits, boat discounts, etc.).

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR -- facilitates activities to attract prospective members into joining the club (e.g. Pride events, makes presentations to other LGBT orgs, arranges free introductions to diving, advertising); welcomes new members and introduces them to the club; maintains a roster with statistics and demographics for current and expiring members.

LOCAL DIVE PLANNERS -- organize and lead club dives along the California coast and Channel Islands.

TRIP LEADERS -- organize and lead group trips to exotic dive destinations.

EVENT HOSTS -- organize venues for our mid-year Annual Gear Swap and Summer Picnic and the year-end Holiday Party and Annual Election of Directors.

If you can help out, we'd love to hear from you! Please email any Board member to let us know.

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

2012 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Christophe Beraud
president@rainbowdivers.org

Treasurer, Tommy Todd
treasurer@rainbowdivers.org

Secretary, Tim Cosgrove
secretary@rainbowdivers.org

Membership Director, Brooke Berger
membership@rainbowdivers.org

Communications Director, Karen Doby
communications@rainbowdivers.org

Board Member-At-Large, David Lowe

2012 VOLUNTEER STAFF

Website Coordinator, Christophe Beraud
website@rainbowdivers.org

Mail Server Manager, Michael Miller

Diving For Life Liaison, Kelly Thiemann
dfli@rainbowdivers.org

Newsletter Editor, Karen Doby
editor@rainbowdivers.org

Local Dive Planner
Christophe Beraud

Hosts, Annual Gear Swap & Summer Picnic
Rob Raso & Christophe Beraud

Host, Holiday Party & Annual Election
Dennis Nix

Trip Leader, Channel Islands 2012
Tim Cosgrove

Trip Leaders, Lembeh Strait 2012
Christophe Beraud & Tommy Todd

Trip Leader, Komodo 2012
Karen Doby

Trip Leader, Men's Week Cozumel 2013
Tommy Todd

Trip Leader, Women's Week Cozumel 2013
Tommy Todd

Trip Leader, British Columbia 2013
Christophe Beraud

<http://www.rainbowdivers.org/>

CLUB POLICIES

Board meetings are held once a month and are open to any club member in good standing. If interested in attending, please contact any of the Board members listed above for location.

Membership dues are \$35/year and \$55/year for domestic partners at the same address. A free email-only option is also available, although paid club membership is required for trip participation.

Advertising is available for \$7/issue to club members for a business card-size ad, or for \$10/issue for non-club members. If you are interested in advertising, please contact the editor. NCRD does not warrant, recommend or guarantee the products or services contained in advertisements in this newsletter.

Unless otherwise noted, all monies paid for club-sponsored events are non-refundable.

Diving Under the Rainbow in Bonaire

A Photo Tour



Bonaire divers

Photo by Susan Huebschle



Sea Turtle

Photo by Mark Huebschle



Peace underwater

Photo by Feney Matthews



Crab

Photo by Susan Huebschle

Despite occasional winds and summer heat, Northern California Rainbow Divers (NCRD) found good diving and fun times in September, 2011. A lively bunch of 12 NCRD's headed over to the lovely Caribbean island of Bonaire, seemingly built for SCUBA diving with well-marked beach access to dive sites. A private villa, shared cooking responsibilities and frequent marine life sightings (squid, sea turtles, all manner of shrimps on sponges, eagle rays, frogfish, even dolphins! with the usual plethora of fish) kept the camaraderie lively. After the day's diving was done, many enjoyed the short ride into town for ice cream or dinner. Bonaire's flamingos and Slagbaai National Park offered interesting diversions while off-gassing on the last day. Overall, it was a fantastic week in Bonaire with good times for all! Thanks to Tommy Todd and Christophe Beraud for organizing the trip, and to Feney, Robin, Kathi, Karen, Sheila, Pat, Tim, Mark, Susan, Tommy, Christophe, and Rob for their excellent company.



Relaxing after a great dive

Photo by Susan Huebschle



Sharp-tailed snake eel

Photo by Christophe Beraud



Photo by Sheila Hemenway



Bonaire Salt Mines

Photo by Susan Huebschle

World's Best Diving: Manta Research in Ecuador

Article by Peg Stone

Photos by Ralph Wolf

The world's best diving lies off the coast of southern Ecuador. Surprised? So was I. An hour's bumpy boat ride from the undistinguished fishing village of Puerto Lopez lies Isla de la Plata, one of several eastern Pacific islands with stories of whalers and pirates attached to their pasts. The water is chilly, visibility highly variable, and currents cut this way and that around the edges of this barren and rocky patch of ground surrounded by ocean.

But for the experienced diver, the challenges of the diving combined with the extraordinary sea life make for dives of a lifetime. The result, pure and simple, is addiction. Divers with over 1,000 dives as well as newbies with 15 jumped in and came out glassy eyed, running a serious Isla de la Plata dive jones. "How can I get me more of this stuff?" they say. You can see them rearranging their lives, literally, to get back to Puerto Lopez.

The big deal – literally – is manta rays. The largest aggregation of giant manta rays (*Manta birostris*) in the world collect here in August and September, creating the biggest manta ray party scene on the planet. With all these UFO-sized creatures appearing from every direction, it's hard to notice the wealth of other creatures lying in the sand, tucked into the rocks and clouding the ocean: guitar rays, marbled rays, sting rays, octopus so common that one can see them throwing each other out of the "best" cubby holes. And where there are octopus, there are moray eels, some as fat as your thigh. Big schools of fish, e.g. anthias, porkfish, butterflyfish and many more, clutter up your photo frame. Turtles look at you glumly and slowly rise off the floor to find a less crowded spot for their nap. Scorpionfish are scattered about, posing problems for finding handholds on the rocky substrate when currents pick up. The place is an underwater wonderland.

Best of all, divers join the serious research underway on the little-studied giant mantas. Despite their huge size, gentle natures and large brains, mantas have just recently begun to be studied in the wild. The four Rainbow Divers who traveled to Puerto Lopez this September (Larry Chow for his third year, Ralph Wolf and Peg Stone for their second year, and Lauren Wilson as a rookie) spent 13 days of diving, collecting data for five different

research efforts. Larry very likely holds the record for the most ID photos of *Birostris* rays, a remarkable feat for a citizen scientist. Ralph is in hot pursuit of the record. Lauren spent her time taking DNA and fatty acid samples of the rays.



Lauren with Hawaiian sling to extract manta DNA

This involved extracting a small piece of flesh from rays with a Hawaiian sling as well as experimenting with a less intrusive method of collecting DNA, a toothbrush.

Once she had harpooned the poor ray (who, frankly, didn't seem to mind at all), she had to switch gear and approach the same manta. A quick hard little scrub of the manta's back coated the toothbrush with gooey black mucus, immediately placed in a test tube. The mantas really took to this and seemed to experience the scrub as cleaning; they would slow down as if waiting for more rubs.



Using a laser beam to measure size of the mantas

This highlights what is so special about manta rays. Unlike most fish and even marine mammals, they tend to seek out divers and then hang around. They use divers' bubbles to try and knock off the nasty remoras that collect on their huge flat surfaces. They exhibit curiosity about divers, sometimes hanging in the blue with us during safety stops. And who

knows why else. But they come, more and more as the dive progresses.

And what else is there to do? Well, there is whale watching on the way out and back as humpbacks frequent these waters. There are huge pods of bottlenose and spotted dolphins, maybe 500 animals in some pods, to motor alongside and even snorkel with. There are nets and lines to cut from the mantas and last year, a severely entangled whale calf. And there is sleeping, lots of sleeping, especially on the boat ride home. The boat rides and the diving had us all snoozing during the day and hitting the sack hard at night.

Puerto Lopez, a fishing village and waystation for backpackers, is not a place for the high-maintenance individual, but for those watching their pennies, it offers some great bargains. People generally avoid the sidewalks since they are too rough to walk on and share the road with tuk-tuks and shiny new pickup trucks.



Photographing giant manta rays for identification

Bamboo huts selling Orgasmos and Cuba Libres line the beachfront. You can get dinner for \$3, for two. Or, you can get all out and eat high off the hog for \$15, including beer. We stayed in the best rooms in town. These offered the amenities I prize most highly in a hotel room: a great mattress, cleanliness and hot water at all hours. Of course, the water temperature might vary during the course of the shower, but there was always hot somewhere on the dial.

So, if water temperatures that roam from 68 to 75 degrees, currents that change during the course of the dive and visibility that can be 35 feet or 65 feet sounds like fun; if doing serious science that produces original findings on a threatened marine species gives you that warm fuzzy feeling; if adventuring off the beaten track to new and spectacular diving all appeal to you, have I got an adventure for you: Ecuador! We're going back in 2013. 🐙



Northern California Rainbow Divers Are Headed North !!

to northern Vancouver Island aboard the *Nautilus Swell*
October 5-12, 2013 *\$1,892 to \$2,290*

British Columbia (BC) diving offers some of the best cold-water diving in the world, with incredible colors, amazing diversity of life, giant pacific octopus, wolf-eels, nudibranchs galore, giant kelp forests, vertical walls so densely covered in life that there is not even a square inch in which you can touch the wall. It is no wonder that this was ranked as the best diving in North America three years in a row by Rodale's, in short, heaven for those who appreciate and enjoy the challenge of dry-suit diving.

The northern part of Vancouver Island offers the best diving in BC. Famous Browning Pass, a remote current-swept channel off Vancouver Island's Nigei Island, is one of British Columbia's diving jewels. The constellation of sea life inhabiting Browning Pass is out of this world. Seasonal upwellings — the movement of deep, nutrient-rich ocean water to the surface, combined with extreme tidal movement — produce an enriched planktonic broth that supports a lush assortment of exotic marine life outstanding in variety and abundance. British Columbia

harbors approximately 7,000 marine species, or roughly 4% of the world's total. Marine biodiversity experts believe this number could double once the province's subsea terrain is fully explored.

Northern Vancouver Island also supports one of the planet's highest concentrations of sea mammals. Orcas, dolphins, harbor seals, Steller sea lions and seasonal migrants such as humpback and minke whales are all seen in the channel. In recent years, sea otters also took up residence here, and their population seems to be flourishing. Its magical marine wilderness holds its own with any of the world's great diving destinations. While the ocean may be cold this far north of the equator, the subsea splendor is remarkable.

It is worth dressing for cold water because you'll never endure mediocrity in northern Vancouver Island. Whether a recreational diver, tech diver or underwater photographer, discovery awaits those who are willing to take a dive on the wild side.

JOIN US !! 5 SPOTS REMAINING

Gear Bag



At this November's DEMA Show in Las Vegas, the one new item that seems to be taking the floor by storm is the new GoPro Hero 3 camera (retail \$399). If you can imagine it, this latest model is 30% smaller and 25% lighter than previous models with 2X better low-light performance. Known as the Black Edition, the Hero 3 breaks new strides for underwater videography as the first GoPro model to include both auto and manual white balance and a redesigned flat lens on the GoPro waterproof housing, allowing for less image distortion. The camera has been redesigned to allow shooting at "ultra wide", medium and narrow fields of view while recording at 1080p-60, 720p-120, 960p-100 and 1440p-48, plus cinematic ultra-high resolutions of 2.7K-30 fps and an impressive 4K-15 fps. While most of us probably aren't ready to upgrade our TV screens to take advantage of the 4K mode, it's most impressively packed into a very tiny package.

For still photography, the Hero 3 offers 12MP burst image capture at 30 frames per second and a new continuous photo mode allowing 12MP images to be shot up to ten photos per second, thirty at a time.

If those aren't enough new features, the battery is also smaller and lighter, and built-in Wi-Fi now permits the camera to be controlled remotely from Apple and Android smartphones and tablets running the new GoPro app, which includes image preview for videos and photos.

Another interesting product shown at DEMA is the iDive underwater housing for Apple's iPad, the first to give full access to its touchscreen capability while underwater. Designed for marine scientists to enter data while diving, it gives divers access to all iPad functions, e.g. photo/video, automatic dive logging, buddy notes, fish identification and more.

Board Meetings

Sunday, November 18

Sunday, December 9

Board meetings are open to club members. If you are interested in attending, please email Christophe at president@rainbowdivers.org

Holiday Party & Annual Election of Club Directors

Sunday, December 16
4-8 p.m.

Party Location

Our 2012 holiday party will be held in San Francisco, CA., at the home of Dennis Nix. The address will be included in your registration for this event.

Calendar

Please see details at <http://www.rainbowdivers.org/>

San Francisco Bay Area	California Diving	Exotic Destinations
<p>November 18, 2012 <i>Board Meeting</i> San Francisco, CA.</p> <p>December 9, 2012 <i>Board Meeting</i> San Francisco, CA.</p> <p>December 16, 2012 4-8 p.m. <i>Holiday Party and Annual Election</i> Held at the home of Dennis Nix in San Francisco, CA.</p>	<p>November 3, 2012: Boat Dives <i>Silver Prince Charter</i> Annual Halloween Night Dives Fisherman's Wharf, Dock "K" Monterey, CA.</p>	<p>April 28-May 5, 2013 <i>Men's Week</i> Villa Coralina, Cozumel, Mexico SOLD OUT — Wait List available</p> <p>May 5-12, 2013 <i>Women's Week I</i> Villa Coralina, Cozumel, Mexico SOLD OUT — Wait List available</p> <p>May 12-19, 2013 <i>Women's Week II</i> Villa Coralina, Cozumel, Mexico 1 open spot</p> <p>September 21-28, 2013 <i>Diving For Life</i> Kura Hulanda Lodge & Beach Club Curacao, Caribbean For info: www.divingforlife.org</p> <p>October 5-12, 2013 <i>Nautilus Swell</i> Liveaboard British Columbia, Canada 5 open spots</p>



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