

MARIN SCUBA CLUB NEWSLETTER

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July 12 Meeting: Sean Wheelles, “Why I Don’t Think Sea Lions Like Rebreathers”

If you want to dive without scaring away sea life who bolt when they see bubbles, don’t miss this upcoming presentation by Sean Wheelles.



Sean enjoys rebreathers’ sounds of silence.

A Divemaster Since 1989.

He’s worked in the industry since he became a divemaster in Florida in 1989. Today, Sean’s a commercial diver out of the Port of Oakland and has been teaching classes in the Bay Area for over 20 years! He still has tons of fun teaching diving of all levels and he especially loves introducing new divers to the sport and connecting with those who are just beginning their pro and technical diving journeys.

[See Sean Wheelles, Page 2](#)

June Meeting Recap: Sea Women, “High Arctic Expedition”

We had one of our biggest turnouts in recent years for a fantastic presentation by three Sea Women who snorkeled with orcas and humpbacks in Norway’s frozen fjords.



Dr. Virginia Bria, photographer and videographer for this trip, kicked off the evening. She said they started planning this endeavor in 2019, but didn’t sail until November 2022 with 34 women from 19 countries. Their three one-week cohorts of 14 women each shared knowledge about STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) aboard the M/V Westland Explorer.

The goals were to **conduct a science project** by analyzing water samples, to **complete a mandala art project**, and to **interact with killer whales through The Orca Project**.

Virginia said, “Our relationship with the orcas was absolutely amazing. Norway is the only country in the world with no regulations about approaching them.”

Carol Cotton Blickenstorfer, also a photographer and videographer, captured images of these spectacular mammals on the trip — and created a short video that was shared with friends, family, and colleagues worldwide.

Carol added, “What we saw and experienced will impact us for the rest of our lives. I’ve made a personal commitment to share my stories and my passions to make a positive impact on others. Seeing orcas up-close and making eye contact with them was nothing short of spiritual.”

[See Sea Women, Page 2](#)

Sean Wheelles, Continued

That Was Just The Beginning.

Many divers see becoming an instructor as the pinnacle of their dive career, but for Sean, it was only the beginning. He sees continued education as essential for staying passionate about the sport. He found that there was always more to learn about the ocean and the gear we use to explore it, as well as an endless array of paths to stay engaged and build on training—from citizen science courses to technical diving.

Rebreathers Were Instantly Compelling.

Rebreathers, for example, were compelling to Sean right away. He found that he was interested in the equipment and the technology behind it and enjoyed expanding depth limits with the virtually unlimited gas supply that rebreathers offered.

He started rebreather diving in 1998 on the Draeger Dolphin, one of the first that was commercially marketed; soon after that, he became an instructor. Now, he's been teaching rebreather diving for nearly 25 years and is qualified on four different rebreather models.



This rebreather fan doesn't exactly travel light.

Recently, he earned an instructor rating on the Mares Horizon SCR.

When not diving for work, you can catch him diving for fun at a local dive site or in the caves of the Yucatan Peninsula.

Join Sean on July 12 for his presentation at MSC.

MSC Thanks Ken Smith and Undercurrent

Marin Scuba Club sends our collective thanks to long-time member and editor of *Undercurrent* for his generosity. Your annual membership includes a free subscription.

In order to show our appreciation, we encourage you to submit reviews of your dive trips, near and far, to *Travelin' Diver's Chapbook*. Your editor happily complies with that request and it's a helpful way to pay it forward.

Sea Women, Continued

Whitley Mike, co-leader of The Orca Project, was the designer of all the expedition's amazing graphics. She spent over 212 hours speaking with Sarah Neill before the trip to gain a deep understanding of everything needed of her.

Her project goals included:

- Collecting video footage to gather baseline data
- Ensuring that everything was shot in wide angle on GoPro cameras
- Helping the eco-tourism venture
- Creating an accessible procedure and data sharing system to continue community science involvement

Whitley's collected data revealed:

- Eight interactive behaviors towards snorkelers
- Female orcas typically approach people first
- Sometimes, they don't react to humans at all
- Over 16 hours of interactive videos
- Witnessing an elusive pod of 60 to 80 humpbacks

She concluded, "Seeing orcas in person and in the water for the first time was incredibly spiritual."



Norway Frigid Fjord Orcas, by Virginia Bria

Watch their presentation: <https://vimeo.com/839054103>

Visit <https://www.instagram.com/seawomenexpeditions/> for more info about this 10-year-old organization dedicated to scouting, recording, and documenting a warming arctic, creating space for women and gender-diverse people to participate in polar expeditions.

"It Was Crazy" Says California Kayaker

In November 2020, CBS Radio reported that two women were kayaking in San Luis Obispo Bay and watching whales feed on silverfish.

When one of the leviathans suddenly surfaced, the kayakers were momentarily engulfed in the whale's mouth! Read more: <https://tinyurl.com/4xjp4mvp>

BOTTOM TIMES

MEETINGS

Wed., July 12, Sean Wheelles, “Why I Don’t Think Sea Lions Like Rebreathers” Hybrid Club Mtg. — 7:00-8:45pm.
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7983463827?pwd=UGEREJ4VFoycmZRZ2lPWnM5NGp6dz09>
Meeting ID: 798 346 3827 Passcode: 755205

Wed., August 9, Linda Lanniello, “Black Water Diving”. Hybrid Club Meeting — 7:00-8:45pm.

Wed., Sept. 13, “Blue Frontier Campaign: California Kelp Crisis — Working to Save The Sequoias of The Sea”.
Speakers: David Helvarg, Exec. Director & Assoc. Director, Natasha Benjamin. Hybrid Club Meeting — 7:00-8:45pm.

Wed., October 11, MSC Member Presentations. Hybrid Club Meeting — 7:00-8:45pm.

Wed., November 8, Renee Cappozola, “Beneath The Sea Imaging”, 2021 Underwater Photographer of The Year Winner, Hybrid Club Meeting — 7:00-8:45pm.

2024 Presenters

January: TBD

February: Jim Hellemn, www.BlueOceanArt.com

March: Jami Leslie Feldman, “Dive Into Social Media!”

April: Jeff Bozanic, “The Coldest Dive: Antarctica”

May: Jodi Frediani, “Svalbard: Wild Land, Wild Ice, Wild Life”

EVENTS

Fri., Aug. 4, “Meg2: The Trench” opens in 3D. Trailer: <https://tinyurl.com/555pyvc9>. Contact gil@zeimer.com.

Thurs., August 10 – Sun., August 13 – Dive & Dine, Russian Gulch State Park Campsite. Details to come.

Sat., Sept. 23rd – Claire and Alissa are organizing a Coastal Clean-Up. Details to come.

Sun., December 3 – Holiday Party. Save the date for an afternoon party at Barb’s home. BYOB. The club will provide non-alcoholic drinks, lamb chops, turkey meatballs, and more. Evites will go out in October.

DIVE TRIPS – FOR DETAILS, SEE <https://marinclub.org/trips/>

July, Lake Tahoe, A weekend of hiking, biking, and diving. CANCELLED because campsites are sold out.

October 26 – November 5, Roatan – Thirteen members are now confirmed for 10 nights’ accommodations at The Splash Inn. Contact blwambach@comcast.net if interested. There are a few good rooms still available.

January 2024, Philippines, 2 weeks – Eight members are confirmed. Arrive Manila by January 11th. January 12th: van transfer and stay at the **Buceo Anilao Beach & Dive Resort** (6 nights with 4 days unlimited diving). Resort accommodations, transfers, breakfast and 15 dives included. On January 18th, travel to **El Galleon Dive Resort**. Seven nights’ accommodations, 6 days unlimited diving, transfers and breakfast. A few poolside rooms remain. Contact blwambach@comcast.net if interested — space is still available.

January 18 – Feb 1, 2025, Bahamas – Marin Diving Center is organizing a trip for diving with scalloped hammerheads on San Salvador Island in the Bahamas, then snorkeling with humpback whales aboard the Turks & Caicos Explorer II liveaboard. Contact blwambach@comcast.net if you’re interested.

The Marin Scuba Club promotes safe diving.

Remember to always plan your dive based on the conditions, be aware of your skills and equipment, and, above all, always stay with your buddy.

If you want to renew or join MSC, visit our Membership pages or contact Julie Finley for a PDF form:

<https://marinclub.org/membership/>



Marin Scuba Club
28 Marinero Circle, #30
Tiburon, CA 94920

Next Meeting:
Wednesday, July 12,
Sean Wheelles,
"Why I Don't Think Sea
Lions Like Rebreathers"

In-Person & Zoom
Hybrid Meeting:
Sausalito Parks & Rec
Center, Edgewater Room,
420 Litho Street, Sausalito.

The Club now meets on
the 2nd Wednesday
of each month.

Renew your
membership now.

Marin Scuba Club: Board of Directors
<http://www.marinscubaclub.org>

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