

small fish, many Spanish dancers and a large collection of puffer fish. Pacific Scuba has a small boat, a complete DAN oxygen system on the boat and competent staff. The dive-master was very interested in fish life (we discussed fish in the area compared to the rest of the Pacific for the hour trip to the dive site). (Ph: + 52-322-24741; fax + 52-322-24741; e-mail [scuba@pvnet.com.mx](mailto:scuba@pvnet.com.mx); website [www.pacificscuba.com.mx](http://www.pacificscuba.com.mx))

## **UNITED STATES**

### **California**

#### **Catalina Island**

**Catalina Divers Supply, August 2000, Emmet Jones, Valley Center, CA.** Vis: 60-80 ft. Water: 64-70 F. Dove at rock quarry just north of Yellowtail Point. Great dive, 60-80 visibility. Divemaster Ron Moore put us on butterfly fish, very uncommon. Catalina Divers Supply ran a new boat, fast, huge deck area, excellent crew, lots to see. (Ph: 800-353-0330 or 310-510-0330; fax (310) 510-1629; e-mail [cds@catalinas.net](mailto:cds@catalinas.net); website [www.catalinadiverssupply.com](http://www.catalinadiverssupply.com))

**Catalina Divers Supply, Casino Point, Pavilion Lodge, July 2001, William and Frances Ungerman (Elitecorps@aol.com) Santa Ana, CA.** Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 60 to 70 Feet. Water: 68 to 70 F, choppy surge no currents. My ten year old daughter completed her PADI O/W certification dives and it was ideal. Casino Point is a marine reserve, a perfect place to explore for both beginners and the more advanced. Weekends in the summer tend to be

crowded with student divers, but there is plenty of room in the park once you clear the steps and adjacent area. Kelp was abundant and the water was clear and relatively warm, but then again, we were diving dry. Had a close encounter with a giant sea bass, which are protected. Cruised the wreck of the Sue Jac and other small wrecks within the park boundaries. Lots of Garibaldis and other typical California marine life. The Pavilion Lodge is diver friendly (although pricey) and is centrally located in Avalon. Take a cab or one of the shuttles to the point and rent your tanks and weights from Catalina Divers Supply. In the summer, they are there seven days a week. In the winter, only on weekends. Avalon is a great little getaway with the feeling of being in a lot more exotic locale than 26 miles from Los Angeles. The diving was good and the nightlife excellent. No rinse tanks available at Casino Point.

#### **Monterey**

**Monterey Bay Dive Center, March 2001, Howard Chalmers (hchalmers@mindspring.com) Suwanee, GA.** Vis: 15-25 ft. Water: 52-58 F, calm and flat. Dives logged: 61. Dive restrictions: depth. First dive on West Coast. MBDC set me up with a guided dive. Great dives! Made me very comfortable with the cold. Good explanation of what we would see in the kelp forest and on the flats. 5 or 6 small sea lions buzzed us on our second dive. (Ph: 800-607-2822 or 831-656-0454; fax 831-656-9535; e-mail [service@mbdc.to](mailto:service@mbdc.to); website [www.mbdc.to](http://www.mbdc.to))

### San Diego

#### **Dive Connections Inc., September 2000, Robert Lloyd, Las Vegas, NV.**

Vis: 15-40 ft. Water: 58-62 F. Dives logged: 50. Dove three areas in San Diego 1) Coronados — no fish, no coral, no sea life — if you like to look at rocks this site might be OK. 2) Point Loma — some fish, no coral, decent kelp. 3) Yukon — no fish, cold, current moderately strong — the ship having settled on its side hinders the enjoyment for even wreck divers — to investigate the ship required divers to constantly change depth. Dive Connections was user unfriendly. There were twenty-two people on a boat that should have had much less. When we booked our Labor Day weekend trip we were told a dive guide was provided yet this never occurred. When we asked about this we were told Ano, we can't leave the boat because of state law. Somehow, this law seemed to apply even in Mexican waters. The boat had at least three crew members. The greatest motivation of the captain was for the divers to get into the water quickly, complete their dives, so he could get back to the harbor to pick up the 2:00 load of divers. Conditions of rented gear were dangerously poor. One tourist was shivering so badly from using a wetsuit perforated by numerous holes she was unable to make a second dive one hour later. My rental regulator/octopus had a steady stream of bubbles coming from the pressure gauge and with every second or third breath the regulator allowed a quarter cup of water into my mouth. The

regulator setup I was given before this had a hose with a quick disconnect that did not match the power inflator on the BC. I did finally get a third regulator setup that worked, after surfacing with a third of my air gone in just the few minutes I was under water. At least one new certified diver was allowed to dive the Yukon, a dive that starts at sixty feet. (Ph: 888-420-3047 or 619-523-9282; fax 619-523-9286; e-mail [Info@GottaDive.com](mailto:Info@GottaDive.com); website [www.gottadive.com](http://www.gottadive.com))

**Dive Connections/Lois Anne, August 2001, Bill Mashek ([rubicon@sonic.net](mailto:rubicon@sonic.net)) Forestville, CA.** Experience: 501-1000 dives. San Diego area is good place when you have visibility >15ft. Coronado islands are great. Visibility is consistently good and lots of sea life. The Yukon is an interesting wreck as it is well over 300 ft long and sits on its side (this was a mistake when they sunk the ship). It is best to view this wreck with visibility exceeding 25ft. Anything less would not make a fun dive. The kelp beds are always good. Lots of game fish and lobster. I used Dive Connections for the Coronados. A cattle boat operation with confusing online booking. The staff was trying to be helpful but too many people for a boat that size, uncomfortable for a long boat ride. Lois Anne was a more personable boat. They offer mid week three tank dives. If you plan to dive San Diego in the summer, dive mid week.

**Hydrodiver, March 2001, Kevin Gilbert ([kevbort@yahoo.com](mailto:kevbort@yahoo.com)) Mountain View, CA.** Experience: 51-

100 dives. Vis: 15 to 30 Feet. Water: 56 F, surge. We planned a weekday dive to the Coronados with Blue Escape, but they had to cancel due to late diver cancellations. They referred us to Hydrodivers, and we set up a trip to Wreck Alley for 2 divers with less than 24 hours notice. The boat is undergoing interior renovation but performed well and was well stocked with food and munchies. Captain Jim Stickler is very knowledgeable and chats about the Yukon and other SD dive subjects. He was willing to run the trip for 1, 2, or 3 tanks depending on how we liked the diving. 15' visibility on the Yukon, combined with high surge and the ship's sideways attitude, made it a very disconcerting dive. This will be a fabulous dive in good visibility. The wreck also needs some time to accumulate marine critters. Visibility and surge were better for the Ruby E, which has much more colorful and interesting critters. Lots of small anemones and large schools of blacksmith? Fish (500+). For the novice wreck diver the Ruby E is much better than the Yukon — smaller, upright, and more marine life. (Ph: (800) 493-7634; fax (714) 939-6398; e-mail [hydrodiver@home.com](mailto:hydrodiver@home.com); website [www.hydrodiver.com](http://www.hydrodiver.com))

**Lois Ann, Comfort Inn, October 2000, John Mayes, Colorado Springs, CO.** Vis: 20-35 Ft. Water: 55-60 F, surge. Boat was very crowded — probably 5 divers too many (15 onboard). Had to wait until folks cleared out to get into the water — sometimes up to 20 minutes. Crew (2) was not very helpful in assisting with

gear — a helping hand with the BCD would have been appreciated. Had a no wet gear below deck rule that seemed silly also added to the topside chaos. Boat was old and had a lot of chipping paint. Food wasn't served till on the way back to the dock. Nitrox 32% was available with steel 80 and 95s. Dive sites were excellent Yukon, Ruby E, and Kelp Beds were impressive. Comfort Inn on Hotel Circle N was nice for a medium priced hotel — good steakhouse next door. Handlerey Resort also tasty food. Need to stay week due to all the things to do and see at Balboa Park. (Ph: 800-201-4381 or 858-780-0130; fax 760-931-9442; e-mail [info@loisann.com](mailto:info@loisann.com); website [www.loisann.com](http://www.loisann.com))

**Quest Charters, April 2001, Richard, Castle Rock, CO.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 80 to 85 Feet. Water: 60 to 60 F, calm. I booked one two-tank dive to the local kelp forest on Wednesday and a three-tank dive to Coronado Island on Friday. When I called Monday, Pete (the owner) told me we were going to do Coronado on Wednesday and the kelp on Friday, which was fine. Visibility on Wednesday was 85'. Weather was fantastic. I was surprised when Pete told us that this was only going to be a two-tank dive. When I asked if we were expecting bad weather he said, "No, I have some things to do this afternoon." Diving was excellent. Seals and sea lions as well as a tree fish, sculpins, a few sea fans, an eel, blue-banded goby, a couple of blennys, ubiquitous garibaldi, brightly colored starfish. A Mexican fishing vessel

came by with a diver on an umbilical cord collecting shells and other marine life, which was disappointing. I was toasty in my new Tilos 7mm Titanium jumpsuit with a 5mm vest/hood underneath, 6.5mm gloves and boots. On my second dive, my camera batteries decided to go at ten feet and only 5-10 min into the dive. I told my buddy I was going back to change them. When I got back to the boat, Pete asked me what I was doing. I told him I needed to change the batteries. He offered to do it, but when he opened the camera up the wrong way and let a bunch of water drip into the case, I thought I should do it. He stormed off mumbling that we had a schedule to keep. On the way back in, Pete spotted a humpback whale breaching, so we turned around to get a better look. Then we saw a grey whale too. And then another grey, and another grey, and another grey. A total of five greys and the humpback. I was the only one on the boat with a camera and I shot about two rolls in the 30-45 minutes that the whales put on a show for us. I offered to send pictures to everyone if they gave me their e-mail. Pete said he was working on his website and would actually like some "hard copies." He asked if I would go and get them developed at a one hour store and bring them back to him on my Friday dive! Kind of a lot of nerve if you ask me. He asked if I had any concerns over copyright issues, but comforted himself and me by adding, "You wouldn't have seen 'em anyway if I hadn't taken you to 'em." Thursday night I called Pete about Friday's dive. He said we were on, but we

would have to check the weather in the morning. I made the one hour trip from Escondido, arriving at 9am as planned. Pete said that we weren't going out "other operators" weren't going either. He said that he would have called me, but didn't have my number. I had told him three times where we were staying, but I suppose it didn't register. Other people who he had scheduled for the morning had "bailed" on him. He said he could dive with me, but he felt kind of tired. He did want to know if I got the pictures developed though. I had. He didn't offer to reimburse me for the expense. Of course, he didn't offer to discount the amount he charged for the Coronado trip either. I called other operators — Blue Escape, Dive Connections and Lois Ann — when I got back to my hotel. They all went out that morning. **(Ph: 800-303-3483 or 760-2699; fax ; e-mail [divedelux@aol.com](mailto:divedelux@aol.com); website [www.questcharters.com](http://www.questcharters.com))**

## Washington

### Tacoma

**Bandito Charters, February 2001, Dan Guill, Graham, WA.** Vis: 30-45 ft. Water: 48-50 F. Dives logged: 204. Dive restrictions: 130 ft. Strong current will kick in at end of dive — come back or come up. Rick Myers operates Bandito Charters. This operation is professional in every way there is. Always on time and friendly, a complete knowledge of all the very different dives they offer — wrecks, walls, reefs, drift dives, you name it. Two boats — morning and afternoon dives. **(Ph: 253-973-0370; e-mail**

**banditocharters@yahoo.com;**  
**website [www.banditocharters.com](http://www.banditocharters.com))**

## LIVE-ABOARDS

### CANADA

#### British Columbia

**Clavella, October 2000, LeRoy Anderson (leroy@sisna.com) Salt Lake City, UT.** Vis: 50-150 ft. Water: 45-50 F. Dive restrictions enforced: 130 ft. Superlative diving, in terms of marine life and healthy, pristine reefs. Absolutely stunning sponges, hard coral, soft coral, fish life, wolf eels, etc. Walls to die for. Brisk waves, wind, rain, and misty forest covered mountainous island archipelagos add a sense of adventure to the area. Extreme topside beauty. Cold water, strong currents and the need to manage your own gear make this a more advanced destination. The owner, John, and his divemaster (Brad) are very familiar with the sites and quite helpful. (Ph: 250-753-3751; fax 250-755-4014; e-mail [clavella@nanaimo.ark.com](mailto:clavella@nanaimo.ark.com); website <http://clavella.com>)

**Clavella, Vancouver Island, September 2001, Ralph Baker, Las Vegas, NV.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 30 to 80 Feet. Water: 46 to 49 F. Lots and lots of wildlife — both above and below the water. Wolf eels (and they will play with you). Pacific octopus, metridium anemones, Puget Sound king crabs, decorator crabs, decorated

warbonnets, budding anemones, lemon peel nudibranchs, (lots of nudibranchs). Scuba dive with pacific whitesided dolphins, watch gray whales “slurp” mud on the bottom, be within 30 feet of humpback whales bubble-netting herring, so many bald eagles you get blasé, harbor seals and stellar sea lions. If you dive southern California in a dry suit be sure and bring long underwear in addition to your usual undergarments. Everybody needed extra insulation. Strong currents. You dive the slack tide, so diving time varies. We normally got 3 dives per day and occasionally 4. There are 4 slack times, often one at 5:30 A.M. or 9:00 P.M. so diving wasn’t possible at those times. Visibility varied depending on the current. The sky was overcast most of the time, therefore underwater the light was more like dusk than noon. Bring a light. The Clavella holds 8 divers. Space is very limited. The boat was built in 1937 by the Boeing Company, but it is well-preserved gem. You will need to search for places to work on your camera, but they are available. You must pump the toilet to flush it and it can be heard throughout the sleeping area. John is an excellent captain. He knows the dive sites and finds the optimum places, regardless of conditions. He has a superb ability to maneuver a 20-foot skiff very close to the whales and other wildlife, without interfering with their activity. he is very laid-back and not overly communicative about dive locations and times. But he knows the tides, and when diving time arrives you will be diving in spectacular