



Good Sportsmanship is Worth More Than all the Fish in the Ocean DECEMBER 2024



What's On My Mind

By John Ballotti

Happy Holidays

May your holiday season be filled with family, fun, and good health.





Board Meeting

December 16, 2024 Via Zoom • 7pm

Please email the Club Preisdent for link information if you would like to attend the Board Meeting.

NO Dinner Meeting

72nd Annual Banquet February 23, 2025

Tribute Opportunity

Tribute Cards are available when you want to send your thoughts or feelings for

 $\bullet \ Congratulations \ \bullet \ Graduation \ \bullet \ Anniversary \ \bullet \ Illness \ \bullet \ Appreciation$

Best Wishes • New Home • Baby Announcement

Bar/Bat Mitzvahs • In Memoriam

Your LARRC Foundation is a charitable organization.

Donations maybe deducted. Tributes will be posted in the Chum Line. Tribute cards will be sent to recipient.

Information Request and Donations may be addressed to:
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tammy2508@socal.rr.com

Meet the Board

Tami Shepphird

I did not grow up in a fishing family. The first time I fished was as a young adult with friends on the Colorado River. I remember sitting in a lawn chair in the river with a cold beverage and occasionally being disturbed by a school of catfish. I was not terribly impressed. When Covid hit I somehow ended up at Bass Pro with a friend who wanted to start fishing Balboa Lake. I got a pretty blue spinning rod and began throwing stuff in the water. I had no luck with worms so off I went to Bob Sands where I bought what everyone else was buying. I started joining Facebook groups and fishing apps to see what the fish were eating. I started following little kids who looked like they knew what they were doing. Sometimes that worked. I finally swallowed my

pride and hired a fishing guide. Shoutout to Lorenzo at Guppies Fishing Adventures for taking two middle aged women fishing at Lake Balboa on a cold winter morning and getting me what is still my personal best at that lake!

By now I had bought a Covid boat and was throwing stuff in the water at Lake Castaic as well. I now had several fishing rods and had graduated to a backpack fishing tackle bag. I learned that I preferred action baits and started learning how to make stuff swim in the water. I now realized I bought the wrong boat as mine was made for skiing and family beach days, not coves and shorelines.

During this time, I had knee surgery so was off work recuperating. I was almost ready to go back to work when a co-worker invited me on a half day rock fishing trip on the Stardust in Santa Barbara. That sounded like a good idea so I went. I cannot describe the joy and excitement I felt when I dropped that double dropper loop and came up with two fat reds! Every. Time. There were fish flopping, people yelling and I had never had so much fun in my life. Then I had a boat burger. And just like that I was HOOKED.

That was September of 2020, and I went on six more trips that year, graduating from the half day to a two day

trip. I found out I get seasick and discovered the patch works well but I have to put it on the day before and

drink LOTS of electrolytes. After standing in the wrong line for my first San Diego boat a kind angler from Arizona gave me a few names of lady anglers and suggested I reach out to them. I sent friend requests to a couple of ladies and soon ended up on a trip with them. They immediately welcomed me, and I could not have picked better women to show me the ropes. Both of them have so much knowledge and expertise and have freely shared their lives with me. I



count them as dear friends and have gone on fishing trips, cruises and recently a trip to Bali, Indonesia with one of them. And yes, we always fish wherever we go.

Through my awesome lady angler friend, I was introduced to the wonderful world of Baja, Mexico. I now have many wonderful friends in Bahia de Los Angeles and travel there as often as I can. I have taken Jonathan and my twenty-six-year-old daughter there a few times and she is begging to go back! Jonathan has been with me for this entire journey as well and I am so excited his Dad even got back into it as well! I

love that instead of playing video games he is working to earn money for fishing trips! I went on seventeen fishing trips in 2021, from a six pack day trip to a week in Bahia de Los Angeles and everything in between. I went on my first long range trip, an eight-day trip on the Spirit of Adventure. I learned I love staterooms and that I will pick a boat just for the food. I also learned there is no such thing as too much time on a boat. Every trip ends way too soon. By now I have a chest freezer, but I am figuring out that an upright deep freezer is needed. I have learned to make ceviche, sushi, poke, seared tuna, yellowtail soup, smoked yellowtail dip and baked wahoo. I am finding out which of my friends have freezer space and want fish.

In 2022, I went on twelve trips, having discovered I prefer trips at least two days long. I have learned it is never worth driving to San Diego for an overnight trip. I went on a ladies only trip on the Producer and discovered a whole new friends group. My favorite part was a guy on another

boat at the bait tank saying, "Do you guys all know each other?" There were a lot of men who identified as a woman that day lol. I now have an upright freezer and am running out of friends who eat fish. I also now have rod racks and a mini tackle shop in my house. I forgot to mention gear. Oh yes, the gear. I stopped calling my co-worker to tell him how much he owes me after each trip, but it would definitely have been cheaper to take up crocheting. I started with a few used rods bought from a friend. I somehow now have an arsenal of custom CalStar Rods by Robby and the reels to match. I have a reel bag. I have fishing clothes, boots, cold weather gear, tackle bags for any length trip and oh, the shiny stuff! I still get a rush walking into Bob Sands looking at all the pretty shiny things on the wall.

By 2023 I have stopped counting trips and have my favorite boats, charters and annual trips. After stopping in at the LARRC tackle sale in Chatsworth, I am somehow a member and am meeting a new group of fishing friends. I learned that I love taking kids fishing more than I love fishing myself. I also learned that I need to take the patch even if it is a half day trip.

Oh well...This fishing thing has taken on a life of it's own. I was recently invited to fish

for sturgeon in Oregon by a friend I met at 22nd Street Landing. I had no idea what to expect but nothing could have prepared me for those majestic prehistoric beasts. I look forward to checking out fly fishing in Montana soon and am always looking for new experiences on the water. My six-year-old granddaughter is already slaying it at the lake and I cannot wait to introduce her to saltwater fishing. More adventures to come!!



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CONSERVATION MATTERS

By Theresa Labriola ~ December 2024

As this year draws to an end, I leave you with some thoughts on the precarious nature of our ocean which seems so formidable. We are blessed with abundance and joy from the ocean, and sometimes, we must slow down and reflect on her majesty, endurance, strength, and delicate balance.

A Warning From a California Marine Heat Wave

An extreme heat wave off California's coast seemed like an anomaly 10 years ago. But as the ocean warms, the catastrophe may be a glimpse of the future. Researchers are still untangling the threads of what happened when the temperature increased by 11 degrees and the food web broke down and the ecosystem convulsed. They caution against drawing universal conclusions from a single regional event. But the Blob fundamentally changed many scientists' understanding of what climate change could do to life in the ocean.

https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/01/climate/california-farallones-ocean-warming.html

To Save Whales From Ship Strikes, Listen Carefully Thousands of whales are killed or injured each year from collisions with ships. Research is helping prevent ships from colliding with whales. Acoustics data in particular are informing guidelines about places ships should avoid, when they should slow down, and even providing real-time alert systems if whales are near. https://reasonstobecheerful.world/acoustics-technology-saving-whales

The Destructive Legacy of Failed Aquaculture

Aquaculture is big business. In 2023, open-net-pen salmon farming in British Columbia alone produced 50,000 tonnes of fish worth just over US \$350-million. In 2029, the Canadian government's long-looming ban on open-net-pen salmon farming is set to take effect. On that day, 63 operations will be forced to shut down. But closing a salmon or other kind of marine farm isn't as simple as letting a field lie fallow. Whether degraded by poor maintenance, battered by heavy storms, or beset by financial woes, aquaculture operations have gone under before—sometimes literally. And when they do, derelict equipment can find its way to the seafloor or become suspended in the water column. It's pretty devastating.

https://hakaimagazine.com/features/big-fish-the-aquacultural-revolution/

Ocean acidification: Negative impact on sea life 'likelier by the day'

The likelihood that marine organisms and the ocean environment are already being impacted by ocean acidification is "increasing by the day", claim scientists close to the subject who, in the wake of new research into the depths acidification is now reaching in marine space, argue that "any assumption we are still within planetary boundaries are just plain wrong". It has raised new concerns that, while we still know relatively little about the ocean acidification crisis, evidence is only mounting that the ocean is now operating "far outside of a supposedly safe space." https://oceanographicmagazine.com/news/ocean-acidification-negative-impact-on-sea-life-likelier-by-the-day



Greetings from Cabo San Cucas

Charlie and I flew down on Thanksgiving day, which as advertised was a heavy travel day, but we were just fine.

It seems that we stay at a different place every time we come down here. This time we're actually in the city itself. All the places are nice.

We booked a 28 foot cruiser with Pisces Sportfishing. I have been fishing with them for approximately 36 of their 40 years in business mostly great experiences but had a very strange employee with a very bad experience a couple years ago. Decided to give them another chance and was well rewarded.

The boat includes all appropriate tackle, a captain and mate. Bait is \$30 for 10 pieces, which varies according to whatever is locally available.

We went north out of the harbor for about 45 minutes, near a place called Arcos. The captain stopped for additional bait. As we were making bait, he put out a line and after a few minutes it took off

It was an approximately 130 pound thresher shark, which was a very mean fish. I got all the exercise I need for the next week.

We made a very short move and started bait fishing in the area. This was actually fly lining drifting, not trolling.

Charlie had never been Marlin fishing before but likes outdoor activities and previously owned their own boat. It was not too difficult to talk her into trying saltwater sportfishing.

In the old days, I would do stand-up fishing, but I am now learning the delight of having a chair to sitting while fighting a strong fish.

We had three double hook ups, as well as several individual hook ups, resulting in eight striped Marlin brought to the boat. All were released in good condition.

Our last two fish were the biggest fish of the day and by that time we were a little bit tired so they were beating us up pretty bad. Even though we had time left Captain decided it might be a good idea to head in, a little early, which we thought was a delightful suggestion.

Total for the day was eight striped Marlin, released, and one thresher shark, released.

Since we were in a little early, we decided to have a refreshing cocktail to watch the rest of the fleet return from a restaurant overlooking the marina. Generally boats had a fish or two, and one boat had six. We apparently were the high boat in the fleet.

The first time Charlie and I traveled together, we got bumped up the first class on a trip to Qatar. During the flight, she turned to me and said, don't get used to this.

I had to pass on the same advice with regard to Marlin fishing, but it was great to have her with me on the best Mar-



MAGNIFICENT MAGDALENA BAY

By Marc Monforte

Taking a break from my usual multi-day (stay aboard the boat) fishing trips out of San Diego, I recently hooked up with Donald Goldsobel and David Morgan for a five day, fly down/fly back trip to the Magnificent Bahia Magdalena Bay in Baja California Sur, Mexico.

Because we were flying to our fishing destination, we were challenged with determining what particular tackle to bring along, considering the various fish that we could possibly encounter and the associated gear needed to get the job done. One of the two major factors that we faced was the restriction that Mexico has regarding the number of fishing rods that you could bring into the country (four), without having to pay a significant penalty for bringing more. Additionally, limiting our airline luggage weight to fifty pounds was also challenging, considering it needed to include a number of reels, various trolling and throwing jigs, rod pad, various terminal tackle, clothing, etc.

We Three Amigos embarked from LAX airport on a Monday morning and arrived after a two-hour flight into the Sea of Cortez's seaside town of Loreto, which is the home of Baja's very first mission, San Javier, built by the Jesuits in the 1700's. After disembarking down the stairs of our plane and into the small one-line terminal at Marina Grupo Aeroportuario De La Ciudad to collect our baggage and rod tubes, we cleared customs and awaited for our next mode of transportation. After just a short wait, we were greeted by Diana Hoyt, our host for the next five days, along with her husband Bob, the owners of the fishing outfit.



After stowing all our fishing gear and luggage in the bed of the truck, we were off on the next leg of our trip, heading to our final destination of Puerto Adolfo

Lopez Mateos, Baja California Sur (BCS). After a short stop at Marina Puerto Escondido for our first taste of authentic Mexican food, fresh guacamole and ice-cold



cervezas, we started heading west along Mexico I towards the Pacific Ocean side of the Baja peninsula. During the ninety-minute ride from the airport, we are able to view the diversity of the mostly barren yet varied landscape. Along the road, we passed through arrays of succulents and pockets of green that poke out from gaps in the landscape and merge into mini-skylines of massive Cardon Cacti. Also known as Elephant Cactus, it is the second largest cactus in the world and largest in Baja Sur. It lives for hundreds of years, grows to over 60 feet tall and can weigh over 20 tons. Also observed along the way are the very unique yellow-flowering Boojum tree, or "Cirio" in Spanish, which only exist in BCS.

For those not familiar with **Bahia Magdalena**, or "Mag Bay", it is a large, shallow system of enclosed bays and mangrove-lined channels that is located on the Pacific coast of the Mexican State of BCS about 800 miles below the U.S. border. Bahia Magdalena stretches along the coast for the distance of approximately 130 miles from north to south, and is somewhat L-shaped, with La Poza Grande (San Jorge) the most northerly bay entrance, and Puerto Chale the most southerly entry to the bay.

The entire bay area is divided into two main sections. The southern half is composed mostly of two large, open bays connected by a wide channel. In the extreme south is Bahia de Almejas, which is connected to Bahia Magdalena proper via the Canal Gaviota. Bahia Magdalena itself is the larger of the two bays, about 15 miles across and 35 miles long. The mainland is protected from the Pacific Ocean by the two sandy barrier islands of Isla Magdalena and Isla Santa Margarita. Magdalena, mostly to the north and facing northwest, is a long, slender, segmented island that parallels the coast for about 40 miles north, ending at the Boca de Soledad bay entrance. The very small southern settlement

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of Puerto Magdalena is the only inhabited part of the island. Across the mouth opening of the bay is the island of Santa Margarita that parallels the south-facing coast. On its inland side is Puerto Cortes, the only settlement on the island, which is also the site a small naval base.

Today, Mag Bay is particularly known for the seasonal migration of the California gray whales that come from their Arctic feeding grounds during the winter to breed and give birth to their calves. Annually, varying between 20,000 and 30,000, the whales gather along Baja's Pacific coast in the first few months of the year, during the winter leg of what is the longest migration of any marine mammal on the planet. Their round-trip journey spans 12,500 miles. They come to Mag Bay, which is one of only three primary calving bays/lagoons on the Baja peninsula where they frequent to give birth and nurse their calves. Their southern journey arrives at the furthest north bay of Ojo de Liebre (also known as Scammon's Lagoon), while some travel further south to San Ignacio Lagoon, and lastly, many venture to the furthest south region of Mag Bay.

Although over ten different species of whales visit the coastal waters off Baja California each year, making it one of the best regions in the world for whale watching, the three lagoons/bay are the most famous for the gray whales. Whale watchers from around the world venture here to get up

close to these magnificent creatures in pangas to experience one of the world's most spectacular wildlife encounters. It is here that these gentle giants are known as "the friendliest whales in the world".

For a historical perspective, Magdalena Bay was not a very friendly place for unsuspecting sperm and California gray whales. As early as 1837 American whaleships visited the bay to

cooper the oil from the sperm whales, which were hunted along the Baja, coast, and they also hunted the gray whales that entered the bay during their calving season. Between 1855 and 1865 alone, an estimated 1250 gray whales were harvested in the bay. Although the cows and calves were the primary targets because of their relative size, their overkill lead to the eventual taking of the bulls as well. The number of gray whales taken each year in the bay had dwindled until the International Whaling Commission banned gray whale hunting in 1949. During a previous LARRC trip to Mag Bay, fishing out of Mag Bay Lodge in the small fishing port of San Carlos, I was actually able to view a bit of that history. I ob-

served the remaining abandoned buildings the whaleprocessing factory, which is still standing



south of Isla Magdalena's Sand Dollar Beach, where we caught bait just off the remnants of the receiving pier.

The area that we stayed and fished from on this trip is named Puerto Adolfo Lopez Mateos, which is a good-sized town of a few thousand people who make their living primarily off the sea. A large cannery operation handles the catches of the Pacific seiners, trawlers and a sizable panga fleet. In addition to the fishing industry, a large whale-watching complex sits adjacent to the cannery, which supports the seasonal whale- watching tourist activities. The town is located on the panhandle, some 25 miles north of Bahia Mag-

dalena proper, which is where Mag Bay Lodge operates. It has a couple of paved roads, but is mostly traveled across on

> dirt roads, which are surrounded by flat desert, and it is perched on the east bank of the main panhandle channel where Arroyo de Soledad flows into it.

Boca de Soledad's narrow, open passageway entrance to the ocean has very large breakers crashing almost all the way across its mouth and it was very tricky for our captain to navigate through it. This

is the passageway that the panga fleet and sport boats use to access the Pacific Ocean. The larger boats that dock at the cannery take the longer southern route out, traversing the winding Hull Canal and exist through Bahia Magdalena proper.

On our first day of fishing, we loaded our rods and tackle into the vehicle for a one mile, early morning ride to the dock where our 28 foot Grady-White was awaiting us. Since the winds were blowing hard on the ocean, it was agreed that we would stay within the bay area and fish the mangroves to the north. To the south, the main channel (Hull Canal), is wide and straight for many miles, with only a

> Cabo San Lucac



few mangroves growing along the eastern desert shoreline, and none along the west side sand dunes. That said, we opted to go north. After having live shrimp delivered to the boat for our day's bait, we departed Lopez Mateos and started cruising around 25 knots as we passed the Boca de Soledad bay entrance and continued north until the desert shore gave way to mangrove islands and thickets that extended another 40 miles to the very end of Mag Bay (La Poza Grande).

With rods in hand, we started to wander the various channels cut through the tickets that formed different sized islands. Behind these islands are big lake-like "back-bays", of which we did not venture to on this day. The two methods of fishing that we employed were either using the live shrimp on hook or trolling with various spoonbill, minnow and rapala-type jigs. Both methods worked throughout the day. In either case, it involved getting your bait as close as you could to the mangrove thickets and overhangs. Although the fishing was a bit slow, we were still able to land a variety of fish, including Pargo, Leather Jacket Pompano, Triggerfish, Broomtail Grouper, Stripped and Sand Bass, Pufferfish, Halibut, Spotted Cabrilla, and the catch-of-theday Orange-Mouth Corvina. Based upon the iffy weighing scale we had, we estimated that David's Corvina was about 28 to 30 pounds. Certainly large enough to get accolades from the skipper and others who saw it. At 4:00 pm, we brought the boat back to the pier area, stayed aboard, rode the boat up onto the trailer on the beach, and then continued to stay aboard as it was pulled out of the water and drove through the town's dirt streets, finally delivering us to our houses' front door. Now that is what I call VIP service!

After unloading our rods and tackle, the boat was taken back to the compound and the fish cleaning there commenced. Later that night, the filleted fish was brought back in vacuum-sealed bags and placed into a chest freezer, await-

ing our return home.

During our stay, we were housed in a comfortable three bedroom home, with a young lady that was there to prepare our hot breakfast, to-go lunch, hors d'oeuvres, and a homecooked dinner each evening. The fresh made appetizers like ceviche, guacamole, quesadillas, tortillas, and a few other items I am not sure the name of, were delicious! To complement the food, we were also treated to fresh made Agua de Horchata and Agua de Tamarindo.

On day two, it was the same routine, since the wind was still blowing too hard to go offshore. Again traveling even further north than the day prior, we fished at various spots, until finally reaching all the way to the Boca de Santo Domingo entrance to the Pacific. With the advantage of a fast boat, we were able to cover a lot of water and fishing locations. We did spend a lot of time slow trolling right up close to the mangrove tickets and eelgrass. The mangrove fishing was a bit slower than the day before, with the same type of fish coming to net, and many being released. Having our fill of mangrove action, we made a move back south to look for larger size grouper. We arrived at the grouper grounds and tried the deep-water jigs like cole snippers, to

entice the grouper to bite, but to no avail. After leaving a few colt sniper jigs as souvenirs on the rocky bottom, we called it a day and returned to more great cooking and cold cervezas (Pacifico). After dinner, Diana surprised **David** with a cake to celebrate his **72nd Birthday**. Frosted chocolate cake with fish-shaped sprinkles and vanilla ice cream....YUM!



last day of fishing, the wind laid down and we were able to get offshore. With 500 horsepower behind us, we exited the Boca de Soledad's narrow entrance and headed southwest to Thetis Bank. The bank is about a two-hour, 40-mile ride. Arriving at our destination, which is just a 6 to 19 fathom underwater mountain high spot, we put out the three trolling outfits in search of Yellowfin Tuna and Wahoo. Although the Wahoo were absent that day, the tuna were not. The bank had plenty of 20 to 40 pound school-size fish on it. With a combination of single and double hook-ups, The Three Amigos were each able to catch our six fish limit. Although the bank also has yellowtail there, we did not invest much time in locating them. With another bumpy two-

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hour ride back, we were happy with our catch, and we headed for the barn. San Diego

On Friday, after saying our goodbyes to all those who provided their hospitality and provided our opportunity to experience the fishing adventure in the **Magnificent Magdalena Bay**, we rode back to the airport in Loreto, had a couple more cold cervezas at the bar for the road, and departed from the airport for our return home. During the flight, I was able to reflect upon the uniqueness and diversity of the landscape, the fish, and certainly the amazing birdlife. Traveling through a natural sanctuary for an abundance of sea birds, I took out my trip notebook and reviewed the various birds that I had observed over the past few days, by which I happen to know their names, but also

other unknowns as well. If you are a bird watcher, you would love this place! Included in my observation were Great Blue Heron, Snowy & Reddish Egrets, Common Loon, Whimbrel, White American Ibis, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Double Breasted Cormorants, Willets, Western Seagull, Magnificent Frigatebird, American Oystercatcher, Yellow-Crown Night Heron, Grebes, White Turn, Brown and also the more rare White Pelicans. Did you know that unlike their Brown Pelican cousin, the White Pelican do not dive underwater for their food; rather they catch it while swimming and scooping?

For anyone looking to take a trip that provides all the attributes mentioned above, Bahia

Magdalena Bay needs to be on your must-visit destinations to consider. A return visit for me at a different time of the year will allow for not only fishing, but also the added adventure of up-close whale watching at its finest.











Isla Santa Margarita

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 San Jose del Cabo

Chum Line DECEMBER 2024

TROPHY CONTENDERS 2024

as of November 30, 2024

as of November 30, 2024								
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				Bass, Calico	40	David Stich	5	0*
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