

Chum Line



Good Sportsmanship is Worth More Than all the Fish in the Ocean NOV/DEC 2025



What's On My Mind

By John Ballotti

This and That

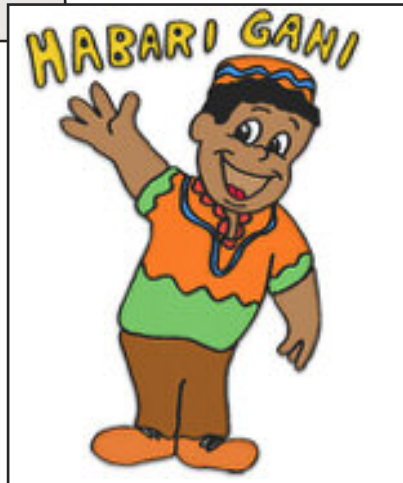


Save the Date – Sunday, February 15, 2026, your club and foundation will hold our annual banquet and fundraiser at the Porter Valley Country Club in Northridge—a fun event highlighted by the installation of your 2026 board of directors and club officers. This is the foundation's prime fundraiser for 2026. There will be many desirable silent and live-auction items to bid on. You will be receiving your invitation and RSVP in early January. Please mark your calendars and attend what surely will be an enjoyable day.

2026 Club Roster – Thank you to everyone who has paid their 2026 dues. Currently, 23 members have neither paid nor notified me that they wish to resign from the club. If you are one of these 23, please contact me.

Elections – The election results have been tabulated. Elected to the board of directors are Scott Schiffman, Sophia Huynh, Dave Goske, and Gregg Cohan. Congratulations!

Happy Holidays – However you celebrate this holiday season, I wish you peace, joy, and happiness.



CALENDAR

Board Meeting
December 22, 2025
Via Zoom • 7pm

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

Dinner Meeting
NO DINNER MEETING
HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Save the Dates for 2026
Annual Awards Banquet
February 15, 2026

Lou Berke Fishing Derby
April 24, 2026 (tentative)

Lake Sherwood Family Events
May 9, 2026

Surf Fishing Crew Expeditions
TBD June-August 2026



VETERANS APPRECIATION BBQ

DECEMBER 4, 2025
WEST LOS ANGELES FACILITY

LARRC Foundation throughout the year plans four fishing trips with the end of the year bbq for the veterans who reside at the West Los Angeles Veterans Administration Facility.

This year we served over 125 veterans to a delicious bbq put on by our own Paul Varenchik and Calabasas Custom Caterers. The menu consisted of bbq chicken, ribs, tri-tip and fish. There was also macaroni and cheese, cole slaw, garlic bread, ice cream and drinks.

We would like to thank our members Joe Mahfet, Keith Heerdt, Linda & Steve Simon, John Ballotti, Marc Monforte, Ed Lieberman, Dave Morgan, Paul Varenchik and the Los Angeles MPA collaborative represented by Irene Gilgoff, Denise Olive, Jennifer Kolbau, and Linda Chilton.

Click here to see all the photos from the event on the LARRC Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/LosAngelesRodandReelClub>



OWN
ISHING



CONSERVATION MATTERS

November 2025

By Theresa Labriola

Global conservation body takes first step to protect ocean's twilight zone

The mesopelagic zone is the chilly, dimly lit layer of ocean found 200-1,000 meters below the surface, which scientists say plays key roles in the marine food web and carbon cycle. Delegates to the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi adopted a motion to protect it. The motion calls for any activities that could harm the mesopelagic ecosystem, including fishing, geoengineering and deep-sea mining, to be approached with caution and guided by the best available science.

The mesopelagic zone, sometimes called the “twilight zone,” is home to an immense biomass of fish – 600 million metric tons, according to one estimate. Species inhabiting this zone include lanternfish, pearlsides and squid, which are crucial food sources for predators like dolphins, tunas, marlins and sharks. Research suggests this vast zone also plays an essential role in regulating the climate by facilitating a process called the “biological pump” that moves carbon from the atmosphere into the deep ocean for long-term storage.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2025/10/global-conservation-body-takes-first-step-to-protect-oceans-twilight-zone/>

“Low Rates” Aren’t Enough: How We Are Misrepresenting Bycatch Numbers

Each year, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) sets the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for groundfish and other fisheries in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. TACs are based on stock assessments and aim to ensure the long-term sustainability of the target species. The process is often described as one of the most science-based in the world. However, TAC decisions also affect the amount of bycatch taken, and at today’s harvest levels, that bycatch remains far too high.

So why do we often hear celebration of the “low rate” of bycatch in many of our largest fisheries? That’s because looking at bycatch as a rate can easily make it sound or seem less impactful than it is, particularly when discussing harvests in the billions of pounds. What we need to do is look at totals. What we need to do is look at totals. Even 1% of a large fishery can still translate to hundreds of thousands -

if not millions - of animals, each with its own value (monetary and otherwise), and its own role in the ecosystem. Salmon support subsistence traditions and commercial livelihoods, halibut sustain small-boat fleets, and crab play critical ecological roles, along with supporting commercial and subsistence efforts. Losing them in large numbers has serious consequences.

<https://conservefish.org/2025/10/23/low-rates-arent-enough-how-we-are-misrepresenting-bycatch-numbers>

Groups urge NOAA to keep commercial fishing out of monuments

Environmentalists say the Trump administration needs to hear input from the public on any moves to open up marine national monuments to commercial fishing. In a letter signed by more than 230 scientists and 53 ocean conservation organizations, critics say President Donald Trump’s April executive order, titled “Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness,” could have substantial impacts on five marine monuments if commercial fishing is allowed, including physical damage to pristine habitat for fish, as well as harm to marine mammals, coral and other ocean life. The letter says lifting of fishing bans in marine monuments would place “sensitive ocean ecosystems and the local economies that rely on them” at risk of permanent damage from “industrial-scale fishing.”

<https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/ee-news/2025/10/14/groups-urge-noaa-to-keep-commercial-fishing-out-of-monuments-00607295>

The ‘blob’ is back – except this time it stretches across the entire North Pacific

A record-breaking and astonishingly expansive marine heat wave is underway in the Pacific Ocean, stretching about 5,000 miles from the water around Japan to the West Coast of the United States. The abnormally warm “blob” of ocean water, which is getting a significant boost from human-caused global warming, is affecting the weather on land and could have ripple effects on marine life. The hot ocean waters around Japan contributed to that country’s hottest summer on record, which featured its all-time national maximum temperature record, set on August 5, at 107.2 degrees Fahrenheit. On the other side of

the Pacific, the ocean heat is also yielding higher humidity in northern California at the start of meteorological fall, and if it persists, could enhance rain and mountain snowfall from wintertime atmospheric rivers.

The sea surface temperature difference from average across the entire North Pacific smashed an all-time record for the month of August, with reliable data stretching back to the late 19th century. What worries scientists is the repetitive nature of these events. As climate change causes more heat to be stored in the oceans, ocean temperatures are reaching new heights that could lead to more significant impacts from these heat waves like this. The North Pacific warmed at the fastest rate of any ocean basin on Earth during the past decade.

<https://www.cnn.com/2025/09/19/climate/pacific-ocean-blob-hot-water-global-warming>

Antarctic conservation summit closes with stalemate on MPAs & krill fishing rules

The annual meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) responsible for conservation of the marine ecosystems in the Southern Ocean concluded with no progress on two issues before it: the creation of new marine protected areas and the strengthening of regulations governing krill (*Euphausia superba*) fishing. “We’re extremely worried and extremely disappointed,” Maximiliano Bello, an ocean policy consultant who attended the meeting as an adviser for the U.K.-based NGO Blue Marine Foundation. “The ‘conservation’ word is fading out of the convention now and more and more we see this sort of proposals and push to continue increasing the impact in the fishing, particularly of krill,” Bello said. The combination of a lack of will to reinstate previously agreed regulations governing the krill fishery and the new push to drastically increase the krill harvest suggests a change in direction at CCAMLR toward more permissive fishing. The meeting also did not advance measures to improve the spatial distribution of krill catches or establish protection zones. Members will continue to avoid fishing in voluntary restricted zones it introduced in 2019, safeguarding over 74,000 km² of key penguin foraging habitat.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2025/11/antarctic-conservation-summit-closes-with-stalemate-on-mpas-krill-fishing-rules/>

Tribute Opportunity

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

- Congratulations • Graduation
- Anniversary • Illness • 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:

John Ballotti
1751 B Andreo Avenue • Torrance, CA 90501
johnballotti@gmail.com

Chum Line Editor: Sophia Huynh
If you would like to submit pictures, articles, recipes for publication please contact me via email
fishnsoph@gmail.com
Share your experiences with your fellow club members!

FROM SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT TO FISHING WITH THE LA ROD AND REEL CLUB A DECADE LATER

By Claire Arre

Sitting on the back of the Betty-O, John Ballotti and I had a genuine full-circle moment, not only because we were returning from a great day of fishing with veterans, but because the only reason I was there at all traced back to an opportunity the LA Rod and Reel Club Foundation gave me more than a decade ago. I received the Foundation's scholarship that made attending the "Catalina Semester" possible and set me on the path that ultimately led me right back to fishing with the Club.

I completed my undergraduate studies in marine biology at CSU Long Beach, determined to build a career in the field. As many of you know, far more students study marine biology than end up working in it, and I was determined not to be part of that statistic. When I learned about the "Catalina Semester" at USC's Wrigley Institute at Two Harbors, I knew it was the kind of hands-on experience that could set me apart. But affording it felt impossible. I was working full-time in retail just to cover living expenses and tuition, so adding the costs of an island semester felt out of reach.

When I learned about the LA Rod and Reel Club Foundation's scholarship, I applied immediately. Receiving it was the moment everything shifted. It made attending Catalina achievable. I still worked hard the summer before to cover the remaining costs, but the scholarship opened the door—and I swam through it.

The "Catalina Semester" became the true turning point of my career. For the first time, I wasn't just studying marine biology; I was doing marine biology. I was conducting research, diving off the dock, and fully immersing myself in

the work I had dreamed of since childhood. The scholarship eased enough financial pressure that I could focus on developing the skills I would need for the future.

After graduating the following spring, I interned with NOAA's Montrose Settlement Restoration Program, where I taught children aboard the Betty-O how to fish and safe fishing practices. Looking back, that year—receiving the scholarship, spending the semester on Catalina, completing my degree, and starting my internship—laid the foundation for the career I'm still building today.

While fishing isn't part of my daily job now, I feel incredibly privileged to work with the Marine Protected Area Collaborative Network, connecting anglers, researchers, communities, and coastal stewards to what we all value: a healthy ocean. And I am deeply grateful to finally share this long-overdue thank-you with the LA Rod and Reel Club Foundation. Your scholarship truly made my career possible.



Health and Happenings

Linda Simon is our contact for
"Health and Happenings"

Please contact Linda either by phone
(818-980-7470) or email

(simonmurphy08@gmail.com)

for any information about our club members/ family -
i.e., happy or sad news; health issues;
graduation or congratulations, etc.

FULL CIRCLE...OUR TOUR OF RANCHO SAN ANTONIO BOYS HOME

By Ed Lieberman (aka Sheephead Ed)

For the past 5 years, the LARRC Foundation mentors' fishing trips included young residents from the Rancho San Antonio Boys Home. Our relationship with the facility has been very positive. The club and foundation were recently invited by Rancho San Antonio to tour the property and learn more about its history and operations. On October 25th, 14 club members (including myself), board members and foundation trustees attended the eye-opening tour. Jesse Wallace and Andre Williams of Rancho San Antonio were our hosts and tour leaders.

The institution now known as Rancho San Antonio in Chatsworth, California, began its mission in 1933 when the charitable arm of the Catholic Church, the Catholic Big Brothers, established a home for boys in Redondo Beach. Five years later, in June 1938, the home was relocated to a permanent site in Chatsworth on Plummer Street, where it has remained to serve youth.

Over the ensuing decades, Rancho San Antonio evolved and expanded both physically (now 19 acres) and expanded its purpose. Throughout the 1940s and '50s the campus grew to include multiple dormitories, a chapel, recreation fields, and other facilities, supported in part by the Knights of Columbus. Architecturally, the campus reflects mid-century modern institutional styles, with buildings arranged across landscaped grounds.

Rancho San Antonio provides a haven and safe zone to begin healing and engage in the process of change. Rancho is a multi-service non-profit organization that provides both traditional and non-traditional trauma-informed therapeutic services to youth and families.

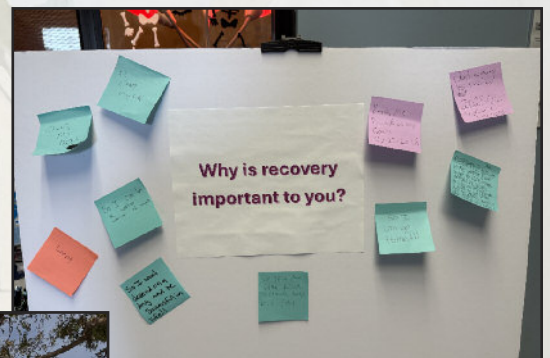
Rancho has many unique programs which include the following:

- Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) serving court referred male youth aged 13-18.
- Transitional Age Youth Housing (TAY) serving 18-23-year-old males that are facing housing insecurity.
- Shelter for Unaccompanied Immigrant Children (ORR), providing licensed shelter care for unaccompanied male children 13-17. These children enter the U.S. without immigration status or parental support.
- Substance Use Prevention and Treatment Services (SUD) offering intensive outpatient substance use treatment for youth aged 12-20

I am sure all the tour attendees agree, Rancho San Antonio is a well-run organization with exceptional leadership, track record and most of all caring for the youth it serves.

From the LARRC Foundation, standpoint, the youth of Rancho define exactly the type of group we want to serve and which our mission stands for.

Many thanks to LARRC board member Carol Chow for making this event happen! Her hard work and diligence allowed the foundation's charitable sponsorship and the club's volunteer efforts to come full circle by learning about Rancho San Antonio.



What do you think?

WHY YOUR PRESENCE MATTERS: THE POWER OF OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Dear LARRC Members,

As the seasons change and the tides shift, one thing remains constant: the camaraderie and shared passion that define our fishing club. Our monthly meetings aren't just calendar fillers, they're the heartbeat of our fishing community.

These gatherings are where stories are swapped, knowledge is shared, and friendships are forged. Whether it's learning a new knot, hearing from a guest speaker, or planning our next group outing, each meeting is an opportunity to grow as anglers and as a club.

But here's the catch: the strength of our club depends on you.

When you show up, you bring more than just your presence, you bring your experience, your questions, your laughter, and your ideas. You help shape the direction of our events, influence conservation efforts, and ensure that our club remains a vibrant, welcoming space for all who love the water.

Upcoming Speakers You Won't Want to Miss

- **December:** We'll take a short break to recharge and reflect.
- **January:** Kick off the new year with Steve Yatomi, owner of AdventureTravel Alliance, who will share expert insights on fishing travel and global angling adventures.

So whether you're a seasoned pro or just getting your feet wet, we invite you to make our monthly meetings a priority. Let's keep the lines of communication open, the spirit of adventure alive, and our club stronger than ever.

Tight lines and see you at the next meeting! Invite a friend and don't forget to RSVP to John Ballotti.

Wendy Tochihara
Seminar Speaker Chairwoman

Members...

Chas Schoemaker with his wahoo that interrupted their offshore run from Cabo to one of the banks. It was the honored guest at dinner, prepared four different ways, all delicious. He fished on the Pisces boat Andrea for two days. Caught another wahoo, some school sized tuna, dorado and released eight Marlin.



CONSERVATION MATTERS

December 2025

By Theresa Labriola

The end of the year gave me an opportunity to highlight the vulnerability and The end of the year gave me an opportunity to highlight the vulnerability and resilience of our aquatic ecosystems. These stories demonstrate how nature recovers when we remove human interference and how human interference threatens hidden of our aquatic ecosystems. These stories demonstrate how nature recovers when we remove human interference and how human actions threaten fragile ocean communities.

A River Restoration in Oregon Gets Fast Results: The Salmon Swam Right Back

After being absent for more than a century, Chinook salmon have returned to their historic spawning grounds at the headwaters of the Klamath River in Oregon. Oregon wildlife officials said this month that the fish had made it past a key milestone, a long lake, and had reached the tributary streams that make up the river's headwaters. Demolition on the last dam was completed in October of 2024. Just days later, salmon were swimming upstream, passing through the former dam sites and heading for Upper Klamath Lake, the last stop before the smaller tributary streams where they would spawn.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/29/climate/klamath-salmon-recovery.html>

One Year Later: A Dam's Removal and a River's Rebirth

Following the dismantling of the Kwoneesum Dam, the area has been transformed and its wildlife is returning. The dam, like all dams, had an outsized negative impact on the fish population, stopping the flow of steelhead and salmon upstream, meaning they weren't able to access their headwater spawning grounds. To make matters worse, the reservoir absorbed solar radiation in the summertime, and the outlet for the dam created a 30-foot waterfall, causing hot surface water to spill over, resulting in a deadly aquatic environment. Today, almost exactly a year after the last of the dam was removed, the whole area has been transformed, and the water temperature has returned to what it should be: Mid-50s in fall and spring, and about 62 degrees in the summertime. Significantly, in June 2025, scientists discovered fragments of fish DNA using E-DNA technology, indicating the presence of salmonids in the stream. They also had some visual observations of adult fish

coming back to this reach, and redds [the nests where salmonids lay their eggs] that were located within the reach downstream of the dam. "We went from a zero to a positive."

<https://reasonstobecheerful.world/kwoneesum-dam-removal-river-rebirth>

Miami's latest traffic jam is helping marine life. Here's how.

Miami Beach, Florida, is known for its gorgeous beaches, Cuban food, and terrible traffic. Now, traffic is being used for a good cause in the city. The city of Miami Beach residents and visitors are able to see 22 life-sized concrete cars being lowered into the ocean. Once completed, they will form Concrete Coral. The artwork, created by Leandro Erlich, will replicate an underwater traffic jam 20 feet below the water's surface. This is the beginning phase of ReefLine, a "first-of-its-kind" underwater sculpture park and hybrid reef.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2025/10/28/reefline-project-miami-concrete-cars-coral-reef/86931900007>

Life Finds a Way, Even on Inactive Hydrothermal Vents

In the deep, inky blackness near the abyssal seafloor, the light from the remotely operated vehicle pierces the seemingly endless nothingness. Suddenly, a shrimp flickers in the light, followed by pale vent fish. Then crabs appear, crawling along the rocky surface as an active hydrothermal vent spewing a billowing plume of dark water comes into view. Hydrothermal vents are seafloor fissures where seawater enters the Earth's crust, gets heated by magma to a scorching 370 degrees Celsius, and then comes shooting back out with a smoky color that comes from dissolved materials. As the dissolved minerals harden, towering formations often rise above the fissures. These so-called chimneys can grow as fast as 30 centimeters a day, reaching heights of up to 60 meters. While scientists have been learning about active vent ecosystems since they were first discovered, their complexity and high densities of life is still emerging.

<https://www.biographic.com/life-finds-a-way-even-on-inactive-hydrothermal-vents>

2026 LARRC BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION RESULTS

First, I want to say thank you to the exiting board members. John Ballotti has been a mainstay for the club and critical to its operations. I know he jokes, but I'm sure he will miss collecting the raffle tickets. Keith Heerdt will be more focused on Foundation business, which is the heart and backbone of the club, and Toby Williams will continue to have his hands full with Foundation work, Membership Engagement, and Club Apparel.

Now down to business...Turn the handle, Randle...The ballots are in, the votes are counted, and there are no hanging chads. We have wrapped up the annual Board of Directors election. This year's candidates ab-

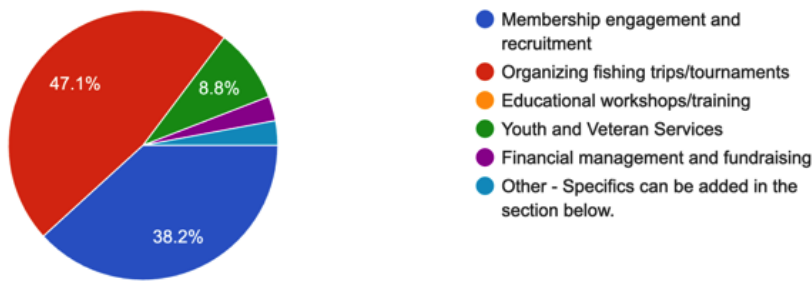
solutely crushed it, in fact, the voting was so decisive it was as if there were only four total candidates to choose from. Here's how it shook out:

Greg Cohan, Dave Goske, Sophia Huynh, will be added to the Board of Directors for 2026. With Scott Schiffman starting a second term. These four will be joining current board members Carol Chow, Dustin House, and Tami Shepphird.

Members also told us what the Board should tackle first next year. And honestly... You were pretty clear. We all want to go fishing ;-)

Which area of club activity do you believe requires the most immediate focus from the Board in 2026?

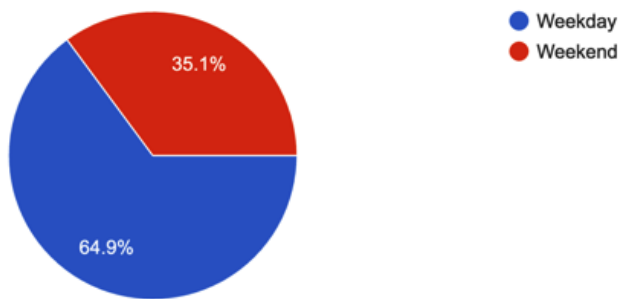
34 responses



We asked when you're most likely to sign up for charters. The answer was surprising to me.

What part of the week are you more likely to sign up for a LARRC fishing charter?

37 responses



Members left comments — some heartfelt, some extremely practical, and some very... let's call them "colorful." Here are the recurring themes:

- Modernize payment methods.
- Bring back overnight trips.
- Partner with other groups for more fishing opportunities.
- Create a digital hub for club members to chat online... Discord, WhatsApp, Facebook.
- Explore a future clubhouse. (We can dream.)
- Recruit more candidates for the next election.
- "Ask the older Past Presidents, they know stuff."

All of these comments have been passed to the Board.

Thanks for Being Part of This Club!

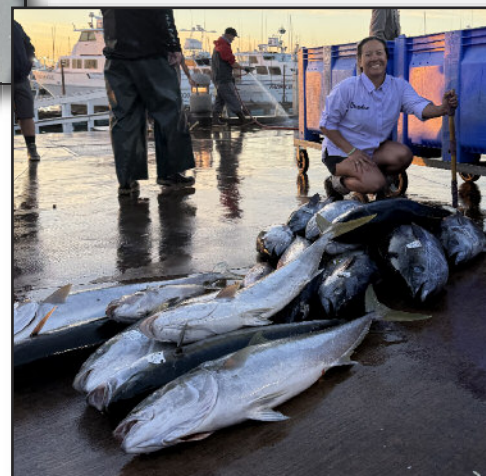
Your votes and feedback give the Board a solid roadmap for the year ahead. We're looking forward to: more fishing, new members, better club communication, and more ways to get involved.

Thank you all for your support, your ideas, and your willingness to help guide the club. Here's to a great 2026, full of tight lines, good people, and fewer tangles. And don't forget... If your bait's not swimming, it's not winning.

More Members...



Sophia Huynh caught these nice fish on her annual Izorline sponsored 8 day aboard the Shogun. They had great weather and fishing the whole trip!



Jonathan Gunther and new member Gavin Riggs went on the Navegante club 1.5-day trip and had a great time. The bluefin tuna were on the smaller grade but still scored full limits. They were biting best on light line and smaller hooks, which kept the action steady and fun the whole trip.

BLUEFIN TUNA – A Love/Hate Affair!

By Marc Monforte

When a friend asked me how my recent fishing trip for **Bluefin Tuna** was, I remarked that at times I feel like it is a **Love/Hate relationship!** How's that, was his reply. I went on to explain how fishing specifically for Bluefin differs from other types of saltwater trips that I routinely take, in that I dislike certain peculiarities related to the way we fish for them! Although all the other types of fishing also have their own individual peculiarities, those fishing for Bluefin are my least favorite, relatively speaking. I have found that for the most part, unlike Yellowfin Tuna trips, the Bluefin are much more finicky, with smaller fish caught during the daylight hours, whereas the larger models prefer to bite at night, and line shy. Tiring vertical jig fishing during the night hours with heavy jigs is the normal, and the continuous motoring around the clock to locate a biting school can be monotonous, and sleep depriving.

Arriving to the Point Loma Sportfishing Landing and loading my tackle and gear onto the 65 foot, low to the water profile **New Lo-An** for a 3-day trip in search of Bluefin, and not knowing what mood the finicky fish will be in, I set my expectations for a usual trip with little sleep. Making the annual trip with only eight other anglers that fish with me on our annual, April 16-Day Okuma trip, it makes for an un-crowded and fun trip. Once all were aboard, we left the dock, visited the Everingham Bros. bait receiver to load up on sardines, and once reaching the end of the Point Loma Peninsula, our Skipper Brain swung the boat starboard and pointed us northward. Although the



Bluefin below the Mexican border were available and biting for boats venturing south, it had been decided that we would travel to the usual Channel Island locations in search of the larger-sized fish being reported.

For those who may not be familiar or fished those particular waters, the Channel Islands are part of an eight-island archipelago located within the Southern California Bight, off the California coast. They divide the



Santa Barbara Channel between the islands and the mainland. The four northern-most islands are Santa Rosa, San Miguel, Santa Cruz, and Anacapa. The four southern islands include Santa Barbara, Santa Catalina, San Nicolas, and San Clemente. Five of the islands, inclusive of the four northern ones and Santa Barbara as well, are within the Channel Island National Park. The waters around them make up the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, and as such, restrictions encompass those waters six nautical miles off each island.

After traveling north the remainder of the day, and as the sun was starting to set, we finally arrived at the southern-most Channel Island of San Clemente. It is an interesting island in that it is owned by the U.S Navy and is their only remaining ship-to-shore live firing range. Now within the Bluefin Tuna Zone, we started the slow and methodical process of Where's Waldo, except in this case it is **Where's Mr. Bluefin?** Working along the backside of the 21 mile long island for most of the night, the boat stopped at various times when fish were metered, and the speaker broke out with a familiar instruction from Skipper Brain, "get your jigs down to 300 feet", or then 400 feet, or then 350 feet, and on and on and on! Hour after hour, throughout the entire night, the boat plied the dark waters and the calls continued to occasionally get the hopeful anglers to the rail. For all our efforts that evening on numerous stops and many, many dropped jigs, the overnight fishing produced about 22 fish. Most of them were in the 100-pound plus category so the quality we were looking for was there, and spirits were encouraged. For my efforts of hard work dropping and retrieving a 400-gram (15 oz.) blue and silver bellied Mustad Rip Roller jig more times than I could count, I landed two nice fish (a 125 & 148), which is the **"Love Part" of Bluefin fishing!**

After motoring around all night, the sun arose and our



search for daytime fish commenced. All the anglers except for one, who fished all night, put aside the heavy jigs and were now standing by at the rail, awaiting an opportunity for a bait/sardine caught fish.

Although we came across various schools of fish throughout the day, our chumming of sardines was not very successful in bringing them up closer to the surface/boat. Although we did land a few smaller, school-grade (25 to 40 pound) Bluefin, the fish holds stayed wanting for more fish. Once again, the boat continued on the usual pattern of search/stop/chum/move on, until the sun started setting once again. Having been awake since 3:00 am in the morning the day before arriving to the landing, I was now at the first decision point in my hate relationship. Did I dare hit the rack after dinner, and risk missing a night bite, or chance that I wouldn't miss out on any fish caught?? Lessons learned from previous trips made my mind up for me, and as such, I was now embarking on my second straight night of fishing, and hoping it would turn into a night of catching!

During our searching for a biting school, we had moved further north about 45 miles to start our second night's jig fishing at San Nicholas Island, another one of the Channel Islands owned and operated under the U.S. Navy since 1943, and currently being used for a weapons testing and training facility. Starting around 11:00 pm, we began to hook and boat some of the larger sized (100 to 175) Bluefin. My first fish coming over the rail was a welcomed 168 pounder. Over the next few hours, we boated about 18 more fish. It seemed like the fellas that switched from the knife jigs to the shorter, flutter type jigs were getting bit better, so that's what I had done as well. After another long and tiring night of dropping heavy jigs, I was just about ready to take a break, but decided to drop my red and white stripped, 320-gram (11 oz.) Nomad Buffalo (flutter) jig one more time. At about the 400 foot depth, my line took off, I put the reel in gear, and the line came immediately tight. Fishing my International 50W with 100-pound spectra, I knew right away that I had a heavy fish on. As it turned out, the fish coming over the rail weighed in at **211 pounds. Just what I was looking for!** Two nice fish made the all night fishing a correct decision! Once again, that is the "Love Part"! After taking a photo of my catch and collecting the daily Jackpot, it was off to get the first sleep of the trip.

While I finally got a little needed rest, the boat continued on its never-ending search for more nighttime fish, and

then once again transitioning into the daytime bait-fishing mode. Missing breakfast and again reaching the rail around 8:00 am, the few, scattered fish that were being boated were the smaller sized ones. During the day, the relentless search for Bluefin was limited, but we were lucky to find a few kelp paddies that produced 10 to 20 pound Yellowtail to fill the daylight hours lull. Not what we were specifically targeting, but it did break up the monotony of all the motoring around.

Having covered many more searching miles, and as the afternoon approached, we had traveled about 60 miles south of San Nicholas to arrive at the Tanner Bank, which is a twin, shallow seamount about five miles away from the other seamount of Cortes Bank. For perspective, the banks are also about 60 miles west of San Clemente. Luckily, I was due up on the kite, and not long after we got my rigged flying fish (artificial) onto the surface about 150 yards beyond the stern, there was a large boil on my bait, and I was hooked into my first large, **Daytime Bluefin**. Utilizing the advantage of very heavy tackle (Shimano Tiagra 80W, 130# line and 250# leader) while kite fishing, it did not take long to boat my second fish over 200 pounds for the trip, a respectable **203 pound Bluefin**. Just missed the second daily jackpot by 6 pounds.

With the sun starting to set as we make the short move to the Cortes Bank, I was getting myself mentally set for another final night of fishing, with high expectations of picking up where I left off last night. With only a few more hours of fishing time left before heading back to the landing, I was able to reach my "keeper" six fish limit by landing a final 110 pounder. At 10:00 pm, I was relieved to hear that we were beginning our 110-mile trip back to Point Loma. Finally, time to get some long sought overnight sleep.

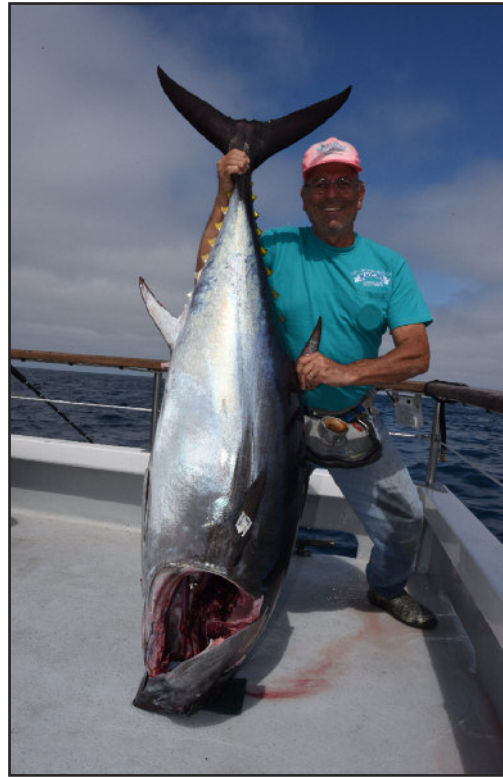
As an interesting factoid related to fishing at the banks, the waves at the Tanner and Cortes Banks are an elusive, open-ocean phenomenon that break only during a time when massive swells occur. Big Wave Surfers from around the world travel specifically to the Cortes Bank when massive swell is forecast. Surfing rides of 77 feet high have been documented via Biggest Wave Awards, although 80 to 90 foot waves have been observed, but not officially documented. The Cortes Bank Surf Event is an annual event that is considered one of the most challenging and dangerous



surf competition in the world, as the massive swells that hit the submerged island's western side reach up to 100 feet in height. **WHO KNEW!!**

Overall, the trip was very successful for my fellow fishing buddies and myself as well. I was happy to catch my limit of quality Bluefin Tuna, but that was at the expense of three days of continuous travel (less a couple short stops to fly the kites), and endless hours of sleeplessness. As it proved out on this trip once again, catching that Cow-sized Bluefin can happen either during the dark of night or during the daylight hours as well. Moreover, it is for that reason that I stay in the "fish-mode" for a majority of the entire 3-Day trip. As for the actual fighting of Bluefin Tuna, it is just in my own personal opinion, having caught a number of Yellowfin Tuna over 200 pounds and a fewer number of Bluefin, including these two, it has reaffirmed my position that the Yellowfin Tuna provide a tougher and longer fight to subdue them, on a pound for pound basis.

The Yellowfin is still the Champion!



TROPHY CONTENDERS 2025 as of November 30, 2025

SPECIES LINE ANGLER LBS. OZ.
TEST

MEN'S OCEAN WATER

Bass, Calico	15	John Ballotti	4	2
Bass, Calico	30	Greg Cohan	2	9
Bass, Striped Salt	30	Ed Lieberman	18	0
Dorado	200	Greg Cohan	32	8*
Halibut, California	25	Greg Cohan	12	6
Halibut, California	30	Andrew Ratzky	18	4
Halibut, California	30	Merit McCrea	9	7
Marlin, Blue	50	Ed Lieberman	55	0
Marlin, Blue	200	Greg Cohan	160	1*
Rockfish, Vermillion	60	Greg Cohan	5	11*
Roosterfish	30	Ed Lieberman	50	0
Tuna, Yellowfin	200	Greg Cohan	81	2
Wahoo	60	Marc Monforte	72	6*
Yellowtail	30	Andrew Ratzky	25	10
Yellowtail	30	Greg Cohan	12	6
Yellowtail	40	Greg Cohan	25	2
Yellowtail	50	Marc Monforte	48	2

MEN'S SALT WATER RELEASED

Shark, Silky	200	Greg Cohan	RELEASED	
Tuna, Bluefin	100	Greg Cohan	132 Taped	

MEN'S FLY ROD

Trout, Rainbow	6	Keith Heerd	6	0*
----------------	---	-------------	---	----

MEN'S FRESH WATER

Bass, Large Mouth	4	Paul Varenchik	7	0
Bass, Large Mouth	8	Scott Schiffman	6	5
Bass, Large Mouth	9	Greg Cohan	3	8
Bass, Large Mouth	10	Joel Steinman	8	4*
Bass, Striped	6	Greg Cohan	4	5

MEN'S FRESH WATER RELEASED

Bass, Large Mouth	12	Paul Varenchik	RELEASED	
-------------------	----	----------------	----------	--

SPECIES LINE ANGLER LBS. OZ.
TEST

WOMEN'S OCEAN WATER

Halibut, California	30	Wendy Tochihara	4	14
---------------------	----	-----------------	---	----

WOMEN'S FLY ROD

Trout, Rainbow	6	Carol Chow	5	4*
----------------	---	------------	---	----

WOMEN'S FRESH WATER

WOMEN'S FRESH WATER RELEASED

WOMEN'S OCEAN WATER RELEASED

JUNIOR MEMBERS

Bass, Large Mouth	8	Connor Cohan	2	9
Bass, Large Mouth	10	Emilee Steinman	RELEASED	
Bass, Large Mouth	10	Valentine Steinman	RELEASED	
Bass, Large Mouth	10	Vincent Steinman	RELEASED	
Bass, Large Mouth	10	Vincent Steinman	RELEASED	
Bass, Striped	6	Connor Cohan	2	9
Dorado	200	Connor Cohan	32	8*
Tuna, Yellowfin	200	Connor Cohan	89	5*
Tuna, Yellowfin	30	Connor Cohan	8	5

FIRST GAME FISH OF THE YEAR

Halibut, California	30	Merit McCrea	9	7
		May 11, 2025		

FIRST ALBACORE OF THE YEAR

500	Dirk Perriseau	24	0
	August 18, 2025		



Los Angeles Rod & Reel Club
 c/o John Ballotti
 1751B Andreo Avenue
 Torrance, CA 90501
 Email: johnballotti1@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION
 Contact Toby Williams
 Email:
toeb34@gmail.com

Chum Line

Published by the Los Angeles Rod & Reel Club @ www.larrc.org
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/LosAngelesRodandReelClub
 Editor: Sophia Huynh (fishnsoph@gmail.com)

2025 OFFICERS

President	John Ballotti
Vice President	Toby Williams
Secretary	Dustin House
Treasurer	John Ballotti
Historian	Dustin House

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tami Shepphird	John Ballotti
Keith Heerd	Toby Williams
Carol Chow	Dustin House
Scott Schiffman	

2025 FOUNDATION TRUSTEES

Keith Heerd - Chairperson

Ron Glider	Toby Williams
Paul Varenchik	Chas Schoemaker
John Goss	Andrew Ratzky

2025 COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Family Event	Keith Heerd
Apparel	Toby Williams
Awards Banquet 2026	John Ballotti
By-laws and Legal	Randy Sharon
Charters	Dustin House
Chum Line Editor	Sophia Huynh
Communications	Scott Schiffman
Dinner Meetings	Tami Shepphird
Dinner Speakers	Wendy Tochiara
Elections	Greg Cohan
Environmental Affairs	John Ballotti
Events:	
Earl Warren's Memorial Kids' Trip	Paul Varenchik & John Ballotti
Lou Berke Fish Derby	Ted Feit & Carol Chow
Bill Alpert King of the Club	Dustin House
Frank Polak Marine Mentors' Trip	Andrew Ratzky
Fishing Records	Joel Steinman
Fly Fishing	Rob Baldwin
Hall of Fame	John Ballotti
Health and Happenings	Linda Simon
Membership	Toby Williams
Public Relations	Ron Ballanti
Raffles	Scott Schiffman
Surf Fishing	Keith Heerd
Tackle Management - maintenance	OPEN
Tackle Management - storage & donations	Tami Shepphird & Sophia Huynh
Tax Consultant	John Rhind
Tributes	John Ballotti
Veterans' Trips	Steve Simon
Trophies	Sophia Huynh
Website	Scott Schiffman
Yearbook	John Ballotti