

Chum Line



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LOS ANGELES ROD & REEL CLUB
together since 1950

Good Sportsmanship is Worth all the Fish in the Ocean

• MAY 2002 •

And the Beat Goes On!!!!

The *Red Shirt brigade* was out in force at the last DFG meeting in Long Beach on April 4th. Readers will recall that this meeting took place after DFG Director Robert C. Hight announced that the dramatic plan of Channel Island closures was being revisited in favor of one to include more participation from the recreational and other sportfishing interests.

As usual, **Sal Vallone** put in a super effort in trying to recruit participants to help show our flag. Responding from the LARRC were **Larry Brown, Tom Polliard, Mike Grossman, Joel Greenberg, Mike Godfrey** and **Eric Rogger**. Who is to say that the past demonstrations on the part of "us" recreationalists was not influential in postponing any final decision so that early inequities and shortcomings might be addressed?

We were seventh on a very long

agenda but Sal made us arrive and take seats early. The size of the hearing chamber was such that late arrivals of busloads of blue shirts had to stand in the isles—from which they were shepherded to another chamber with remote electronic hookup—because of fire marshall considerations. Listeners were treated to a public forum which included speakers on spearfishing, poaching, kids fishing (Dan Hernandez) and aquaculture—involving talapia and barramundi raising.

Also presented was a panel on the socioeconomic aspects of closures which put most everyone to sleep—or at least we couldn't understand the statistics and methodology! Two economists, from NOAA and from the DFG made extensive use of graphs and charts. Commissioner **Michael Flores** questioned whether people they surveyed really had a good understanding

Continued on page 7



Dennis Hurley to be Speaker at May 20th Dinner Meeting

Well they tried Panga Fishing at the Revilla and there's that famous six day bass trip to the Cedros area and haven't we seen panga fishing all over the Baja Peninsula? Here's a new idea.... let's go mothership fishing at the Channel Islands!

Dennis Hurley will acquaint you with his innovative plans to berth a boat, the Iron Eagle, at Pierpont Landing from where the pangas will be towed to their destination. Each will hold five anglers with close contact being kept at all times. At \$395 for a three day trip the price is right.

Come hear Dennis tell us about his operation—call the hotline for dinner reservations now. (818) 808-4909. Additional information at www.oceansportsadventure.com



The Red Shirt Brigade

Photo by Joel Greenberg

Trophy Contenders as of April 3, 2002

SPECIES	LINE TEST	ANGLER	LB.	OZ.
OCEAN WATERS				
Bass, Calico	10	Joel Steinman	4	14
Bonito, Pacific	2	Steve Greanias	2	3
Bonito, Pacific	6	Steve Greanias	2	1
Halibut	12	Phil Bell	32	3
Snapper, Australian	10	Michael Grossman	24	8
Snapper, Australian	20	Michael Grossman	30	0
Tuna, Yellowfin	40	Eric Rogger	122	1
Tuna, Yellowfin	60	Al Scow	82	0
Tuna, Yellowfin	130	Doug Taylor	205	6
FRESH WATER				
Trout, Lightning	2	Royal MacNair	4	2
FLY ROD				
Lady Fish	20 Tippet	Eli Livnat	Released (5)	
Sailfish	20	Earl Warren	Released	
Sierra	20 Tippet	Eli Livnat	Released (12)	
Shark, Black Tip	20 Tippet	Eli Livnat	Released (2)	
MEN'S RELEASED				
Sailfish (2)	20	Earl Warren	Released	
Sailfish (2)	30	Earl Warren	Released	
Steelhead (18)	10	Earl Warren	Released	
Steelhead	10	Al Scow	Released	
* New Club Record				

Weight certificates must be signed by a witness to the catch and witness to the weight, other than the angler.

Weight certificates must be postmarked within 15 days of the catch, unless a written explanation is submitted to the Board of Directors for approval.

All weight slips must be sent to Joel Steinman at 5826 Ostrom Ave., Encino, CA 91316: Phone (818) 345-1356, Fax(818) 345-6104. E-mail: joelis@ix.netcom.com

Pacific Coast Anglers Spend Billions....

For some idea of the value of recreational fishing to coastal economies, consider a survey of the West Coast states by the National Marine Fisheries Service in 2000. In this region alone, anglers' expenditures totaled \$4.5 billion, with fishermen in Southern California spending \$2.5 billion of that.

Source: *Saltwater Fishing* 3/02

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SO LONG HANK An obituary!

Henry Schwartz, a long-time member of LARRC, passed away on to where the albacore never stop biting. He was charter master for the "Dirty Dozen" for decades on George Mio's Wednesday trips on board the New Hustler and New Hustler II. Hank took over from Fred Polesky and that was the start of the "rogues", which could have been an alternate name for the "Dirty Dozen". The dirty tricksters were part of what made the trips memorable. There was Hank with his cop's whistle when it was time to rotate, but that did not stop the stern hogs. Trips on the bus to San Diego to chase albacore were a blast, you never knew what to expect.

Hank got even. He was a jeweler and asked to see the watch one of us wore. He shook it, then with no apparent response, took a hammer and gave the watch a lick. Still didn't work, so he threw it overboard. Somehow a barracuda head got into his tackle box. (Which wasn't nailed to the deck this time). His habit was to leave the box in his trunk, until the next trip in two weeks. Eventually he smelled a foul odor, looked into the trunk, then opened the tackle box. You gotta believe it was awful. The stench and the maggots were too much. Well, he needed new gear anyway. From that point on, no one on the trip could sleep without one eye open.

Hank, we are forever grateful for the fun, companionship and great memories you provided for the "Dirty Dozen" and other club members.

Submitted by Julian Wolf - Dwindling Dozen

Meet the Man Who is Making the Kids' Trip Happen

Do you remember your first time?

First time for me was in 1964. I was 13 years old and I was looking forward to a very special night out with my Dad, **Norman Port**. After my homework was done, a shower, a clean shirt and tie, we were off to the Fish Shanty restaurant. The room was filled with round tables set for ten, with one special table set for twelve far off to the right way up near the head table. It was reserved for the "DIRTY DOZEN". Most of these men had been involved in my life before this night, but this night was special. **Dr. Henry Levy, Dr. Herman Epstein, Teddy Hammock, Herm Sears, Hank Schwartz, Bill Naythons, Judge Irv Harris, Dr. Bobby**



Jim Port — He makes the Kids' Trip happen.

Horowitz, Dave Lippey, Julian Wolf, Harold Price, and Norman Port. Over the last 35-plus years, I have had the opportunity to be a part of this great organization—the Los Angeles Rod and Reel Club. I have said this both privately and publicly many times, but it's worth saying and writing many more times: "THANKYOU" Dad for teaching me the right way to live.

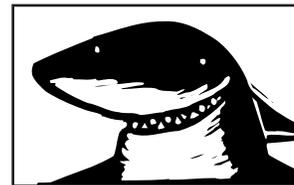
I have just celebrated my 51st birthday. Wife Stella and I are about to enjoy our 25th anniversary this November. She earned her PHD and is an administrator in the Covina-Valley School District. So we are Dr. and Mr. Port. We have two chil-

dren, Victor is 21 and in his third year at Chapman University. Jackie, 18 years old, and graduating High School this June. I am a real estate broker and I own and manage multi-tenant industrial parks.

My love for fishing has never waned, it's just not been on the front burner for me during the last few years. I hope to get back on the water soon. Over the years my main interest in club activities have centered around the KID'S trip.

REMINDER:

Be sure to volunteer your services for the July 8th Kids' Trip. Call Jim at 909.783.2100.



The May Effort at Humor!!!!

Frank was excited about the start of the hunting season and the opportunity to try out his new rifle while bear hunting. He spotted a small brown bear and shot it. Right after, there was a tap on his shoulder and he turned around to see a big black bear. "That was my cousin and you have two choices...either I maul you to death or we have sex".

After considering briefly, Frank decided to accede to the latter. Even though he felt sore for two weeks, Frank soon recovered and vowed revenge. He headed out on another trip where he found the black bear and shot it. Right after, there was another tap on his shoulder. This time a huge grizzly bear stood right next to him. "That was a big mistake Frank. That was my cousin and you have two choices. Either I maul you to death or we have rough sex". Again Frank thought it was better to cooperate. Although he survived, it took several months to recover.

Outraged he headed back to the woods, managed to track down the grizzly and shot it. He felt sweet revenge, but then, there was a tap on his shoulder. He turned around to find a giant polar bear standing there.

The Polar Bear looked at him very sadly and said, "admit it Frank, you don't come here for the hunting do you?"



Big Al Strikes GOLD



Al Scow and Guide Dane Fyfe with 21.3-lb. trophy

I have been reminded a half dozen times that “even a blind squirrel can sometimes find an acorn.” I did indeed find what is considered a trophy steelhead. I caught an estimated 22-pound beautiful steelhead. The estimated weight comes from measurements of 40 inches long and 20 inches around the girth. The picture testifies to its size. Unfortunately, the black and white photo cannot capture its beautiful colors.

Dan Felger and I flew to Campbell River and then on to the small town of Gold River, British Columbia. Local guide, **Dave Fyfe**, met us at the airport. Dave is owner/operator of “Fyfe’s Sea and Stream Charters”. He is an excellent guide and fun to be with. We were lucky to book his services due to a last minute cancellation.

He guides fishermen from many parts of the world but primarily from England, France, Ireland and the United States.

The Gold River is named because of its golden colored water. The water is gin clear but has a distinct golden hue due to the mineral deposits from the mountains where the river originates. The river is a world-class steelhead fishery. It is all catch and release—artificial only—and barbless hooks. The river is nearly void of fish other than steelhead. There is no vegetation, algae, or bugs to support any feeding fish. The steelhead do not feed once they return to the river after spending most of their

life in the ocean. Unlike salmon, they spawn and return to the pacific waters to live on.

Dan, Dave and I spent two and a half days fishing the river in a 14-foot “Zodiac”-type inflatable. The river has a lot of rough water and the necessary deep pools of calm water where the fish are holding. We hooked 14 fish but landed only 9. We fished using 10lb. line on 9-foot long “whippy” rods.

The weather has a big influence on

the fishing. The more miserable and cold, the better. Rain, cold temperatures and an occasional snow flurry are all part of the experience. Dan nearly “froze up” completely. My fingers and toes are just now back to normal. As cold as our weather was, it was not bad enough to raise the river level and improve the fishing. We fished hard and put in 10 to 12 hours a day on the water the first two days. I hooked and landed my 22-pound steelhead just before noon on our last day. Dan I and I were both cold, hungry, and decided to call it a trip. I couldn’t ask for a better ending to a fishing trip. I plan to have a mount made of the fish to show off to all my family and any one else who might want to hear “the rest of the story”.
—Al Scow



Dan Felger’s steelhead.

C A L E N D A R

LARRC Charters 2002

WEEKDAY CHARTERS ON THE PACIFIC CLIPPER
Cisco Landing, Oxnard

MAY	8 Wednesday	16 Thursday			
MAY	22 Wednesday	30 Thursday			
JUNE	6 Thursday	12 Wednesday	19 Wednesday	27 Thursday	
JULY	10 Wednesday	17 Wednesday	25 Thursday	31 Wednesday	
AUGUST	8 Thursday	14 Wednesday	15 Thursday	21 Wednesday	28 Wednesday
SEPTEMBER	4 Wednesday	18 Wednesday	26 Thursday		
OCTOBER	9 Wednesday	16 Wednesday	24 Thursday		
NOVEMBER	7 Thursday	20 Wednesday			
DECEMBER	4 Wednesday				

1. Departure time will be 5:00 AM SHARP, from Cisco Landing in Oxnard. However, some trips may depart earlier. These earlier departures will be at the sole discretion of the Charter Master after consultation with the Skipper.
2. The trips will be planned for local surface calico bass; however, opportunities to fish for exotics, such as white sea bass and yellowtail or salmon, will take precedent. Also, several trips will be for light tackle rock fish and/or halibut at Santa Rosa or San Miguel.
3. Return time will usually be 4:00 - 4:30 PM, but could be earlier or later depending on fishing conditions and weather, and will be determined by the Skipper.
4. Sleeping accommodations will be assigned by the Charter Master. Please note that this boat has 3 state-rooms and 7 bunks.
5. This is a 6-pac charter. Loads will be limited to 6 people, including juniors. There will be no over-booking and juniors will pay full price.
6. Cost: \$130 Earlier departures will cost additional.
7. Charter price includes trip, bait, fish cleaning and tips. Not included are soft drinks, beer and food.
8. Reservations should be made through Arnie Cohen, 11101 Viking Ave., Northridge, CA 91326. Phone-msg. ctr. 818/366-3300, home phone 818/368-5834, fax 818/366-4945.



SUNDAY LARRC CHARTERS on the SEABISCUIT (18 People)

- **4 A.M. DEPARTURES** (local fishing):
• May 5th • July 7th • August 11th • September 22nd
\$90 per person
- **10 P.M. DEPARTURES** leaving Sat. night and fishing Sun. (outer islands weather permitting):
• June 9th • July 28th • September 8th
\$110 per person
- **TWO-DAY TRIP (ONLY ONE SPOT LEFT)** in October leaving on Friday night. Fishing Sat and Sun. Returning on Sunday:
• October 18th
\$240 for 2-day trip (16 people) extras are \$55 for food plus drinks. There is also a possible fuel surcharge for exotic destinations.

For questions contact our chartermaster for these trips:
Joel Zide.
Call for further information at 818 986-1199 or fax 818 986-1138

*Food, Filing, Tips & Drinks NOT INCLUDED



Dinner Meetings

May 29

June 24

Please note the HOT LINE number for future reference. Be sure to call it if you intend coming to our dinners. HOT LINE (818) 808-4909

Board Meetings

May 13

June 10

All Club members are welcome to attend. Please RSVP to Al Scow at 310/791-4196 at least 2 days prior to the meeting to confirm attendance and if you will be having dinner.

Dinner: 6:00 pm • Meeting: 7:00 pm

THE VALLEY INN
4557 Sherman Oaks Avenue, Sherman Oaks

Other Events

May 18

UASC Dinner/Balboa Pavillion

July 8

2002 Annual Kids' Trip from Pierpont Landing

Foundation Meetings

Aug 12

6:00 pm at the Valley Inn

Dec 2

6:00 pm at the Valley Inn

Upcoming Speakers

May 20

Dennis Hurley - Iron Eagle Mothership/pangas @ Pierpont

June 24

Bill Boyce Ocean Photographer

July 29

Tim Hobbs - National Coalition for Marine Conservation

MULTIPLE DAY CHARTERS- 2002

Club Members please note: LARRC guarantees the boat operator the contracted number of passengers and payment for each charter trip. Trips managed by an individual member but not underwritten by the club will be indicated in italic type. These are considered private charters.

ALASKA **SOLD OUT**

4 NIGHTS/3 DAYS — June 19th - 23rd, 2002

CALL CHARTERMASTER TO ADD YOUR NAME TO STANDBY LIST.

Arnie Cohen (W)818-366-3300 (H) 818 368-5834

QUALIFIER 105

5-DAY CHARTER — July 15th - 20th 2002

ONLY TWO SPOTS LEFT!

- 1-The cost is \$1550 per person
- 2-The passenger load will be limited to 22. Chartermaster may overbook by one.
- 3-Not included in cost are soft drinks, beer, tackle, fish cleaning (if permitted) tips, Mexican permits, jackpot, and fuel surcharge.
- 4-This is a charter and the full charter price must be paid by the LARRC irrespective of number of participants. Therefore, if you sign up you must be responsible for the full amount of the trip cost in the event you cancel and a replacement is not available. LARRC members will be responsible for their guests.
- 5-A reservation can only be accepted if accompanied with an initial deposit of \$350. Subsequent deposits of \$400 each will be due December 15th, 2001, February 15, 2002, and April 15, 2002.
- 6-Participants may make a stateroom selection, and the Chartermaster will make every effort to accommodate. However, the final assignment will be made by the Chartermaster just prior to the departure date.
- 7-Checks are to be made payable to LARRC and sent to Dan Felger, at 860 Hampshire Road, Suite W, Thousand Oaks, CA 91361.

5-DAY CHARTER — September 19th - 24th 2002

There are still several openings. This trip especially priced at \$1500 includes soft drinks, beer, permits and tips. This trip takes place during the most productive time of the summer and the five days allow the skipper lots of options.

- 1-The cost is \$1500 per person
- 2-The passenger load will be limited to 22. Chartermaster may overbook by one.
- 3-Included are soft drinks, beer, Mexican permits, tips. Not included are tackle or fish cleaning (if any).
- 4-Repeat players will have priority.
- 5-A \$500 deposit is required by January 1st to secure a spot. Balance will be required in two following installments of \$500 each April 15th and June 15th.
- 6-Checks are to be made payable to LARRC. Send to: Richard Stone, 21118 Elder Creek Road, Saugus, CA 91350, (661) 296-6669.

POLARIS SUPREME

10-DAY LIMITED-LOAD CHARTER, October 26th 2002

Join this charter and receive great gifts and prizes thanks to our generous sponsors: Shimano, Braid, Owner, Izorline, AA Plastics, FNT Lures, P-Line, Inside Sportfishing, Catchy, Boyce Images, Tag & Brag, Smitty's Belts, 976-Tuna, Area Rule Engineering, Iron Man, Megabaits, Fishworks, Hyper Hoo Lures, Tady Lures, Sportmans Seafood and Fisherman's Canning. Only 5 spots left. \$2480, Call Larry Brown at 310/578-2288 or Susan Rothery at 619/390-7890.

RED ROOSTER III

3-DAY CHARTER — September 11th - 14th, 2002, 1pm

Cost \$770. Extras- Mexican License, drinks, tips, filleting (if any).

Send \$100 deposit to Chartermaster: Arnie Cohen. (W) 818-366-3300, (H) 818 368-5834.

EXCEL

16-DAY TRIP— March 29-April 14, 2003

The Los Angeles Rod & Reel Club has chartered the *Excel* for a 16-day trip. The *Excel* is the largest and most comfortable sportfisher in the fleet. The accommodations include 16 staterooms (12 below the main deck and 4 on the galley level); 3 full baths below deck and one on the galley level; 2 staterooms have private baths: and head available to the deck area. The details:

- 1- Depart Fisherman's Landing, San Diego, Saturday, at 8:00 am March 29, 2003. Return to San Diego 8:00 am, Monday April 14, 2003. Fly back option from Los Cabos is available. Arrive at Cabo San Lucas at 8:00 am, Friday April 11. All stated times are approximate.
- 2-Passenger load will be limited 24 at a cost of \$3,695 per person. The 2 staterooms with private baths are available at an extra cost of \$250 per person double occupancy.
- 3-Not included are soft drinks, beer, tackle purchases, fish cleaning (if permitted) crew tips, jackpot, fuel surcharge (if any), air fare and permits.
- 4-The cost of the trip shall be payable as follows: \$1000 - at sign up, \$900- 3/31/02; \$900 - 6/30/02; balance - 9/30/02. Signees are responsible for the full fare unless replaced.
- 5-Participation is limited to LARRC members and their guests. Club members will be responsible for the conduct and financial obligations of their guests.
- 6-Stateroom preference will be based on a first come basis. However, the chartermasters reserve the right to re-assign to accommodate special circumstances.
- 7-Priority boarding is based on the date the initial deposit is received. Details will be announced by the chartermasters at a later date.
- 8-Checks are to be made payable to LARRC and sent to Dan Felger.

CHARTERMASTERS:

DAN FELGER

860 Hampshire Rd, Suite W

Thousand Oaks, CA 91361

(805) 370-1632 (805) 370-1483 (fax)

Danfelger@world net.att.com

AL SCOW

5302 Bayridge Rd.

Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275

(310) 791-4196

ascow@ix.netcom.com

CAT SPECIAL

3-DAYS "LOCAL" SURFACE TRIP—Nov. 2nd-Nov. 5th, 2002

Only 8 spots remaining for this 3-day surface free lance tuna and bass trip.

Leaves Saturday night, 9 pm, Nov. 2nd. Returns Tuesday night 7 pm Nov. 5th.

Departs from Cisco's Landing in Oxnard, skippered by John Fuqua. Cost is \$340, does not include tips food or drinks, open galley. Limit 18 players.

Contact: Bob Selvin, chartermaster, (310)474-4143. Payment of \$340 payable in full insures your spot. All customary LARRC charter rules applicable. Please make checks or money orders payable to LARRC. Mail to: 10820 Holman Ave. Unit 301, Los Angeles CA 90024 (310) 474-4143, fax (310) 652-1100 email rkstbred@aol.com

Membership News

Maurice Levy, former President and alumnus of the class of '50, called to inform us that reports of his demise—as reported in the 2002 yearbook—are grossly exaggerated. Maurice still plays tennis and has promised to appear at a future dinner meeting.

Alan & Mardell Fields have moved to: 78273 Fostoria Lane, Palm Desert CA 92211-3729. Phone (760) 200-5745, FAX (760) 200-5873. Email amfesq@msn.com

WELCOME NEW MEMBER Bill

Berger. Bill is a dentist and resides at 32132 Canyon Ridge Dr., Westlake Village, CA 91361 (818) 889-1370, fax 818 (889-0552 Email sanbil@earthlink.net

MEMBERSHIP APPLIED FOR:

Vincent Shriver, applied for non-resident membership. Vincent resides in Buelleton and is manager of the Club House Lounge.

Sol Zide has applied for active membership. He and wife Helen, live in Calabasas. He's retired.

Joel Greenberg is an internet consultant/design/photography. He lives in Valley Village. Joel has applied for active membership.

Jim Donofrio has applied for non-resident membership. Jim lives in New Gretna NJ and is executive director of Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA).

Dave & Irene Fyfe who live in Campbell River, B.C. have applied for family non-resident status. Dave is a fishing guide and they own the resort: Fyfe's Sea and Stream Charters.

Memo from Royal Mac Nair

If, following our recent mass mailing of the new LARRC 2002 yearbook, you find that you had already received your book(s), and can part with an extra, will you please bring it to the next meeting, so that we have a few on hand to give to new members throughout the year.

The Beat Goes On

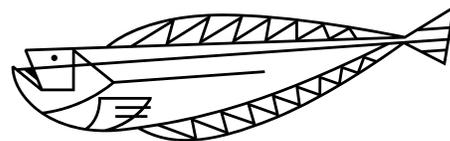
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of current conditions. Readers interested in this issue might like to know that our side also presented facts on the Economic Effects of Sportfishing Closures in Marine Protected Areas. This report was commissioned by American Sportfishing Association and United Anglers. Copies of this report can be had at www.asafishing.org.

There is so much we cannot review in a monthly newsletter like *Chum Line*.

The overriding message is that we need numbers to achieve clout. The National Resource Defense Council (NRDC), a lead enviro group, has 91,000 members in California. Fishing License sales averaged 2.1 million (years 92-96) That makes us a minority of about 5%. Think of it.

Note that the DFG has meetings scheduled for August during which final adoptions are to be made.



CABO SAN LUCAS TO THE RIDGE

NEW TRIP PROPOSED!—November 16-22nd

- 1- Mother Ship, Captain Villegas, is 107 foot vessel.
- 2- Pangas are 22 ft. long —9 Pangas available.
- 3-Off shore and in shore fishing along the Ridge.
- 4- Fishing will alternate between the bay and the Ridge.
- 5- The cost is \$1500 per person for 18 players. We may take fewer players and split the cost among us. Panga fishing is more fun! The ship can carry 27 we are taking a limited load of 18. There are 18 extra outside bunks for relaxation and afternoon naps.

For Charter Participation call: Don Lee @ (818)990-0248 or Raymond Yu @ (310) 472-0131

B.J. Greenfields'



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(310) 458-2666
1621 Montana Ave. Santa Monica 90403

At the April 29th dinner meeting, the speaker, Bill Cavanaugh, made several references to a new El Niño period for this year and a consequent strong tuna run closer to Southern California. The California Dept. Of Fish & Game has prepared a brochure dealing with El Niño questions. Chum line has reproduced this here. Additional information is available at their web site: www.dfg.ca.gov.

ALL ABOUT EL NIÑO!

What is El Niño?

El Niño is a naturally occurring event in the equatorial region which causes temporary changes in the world climate. Originally, El Niño was the name used for warmer than normal sea surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of South America. Now, El Niño has come to refer to a whole complex of Pacific Ocean sea-surface temperature changes and global weather events. The ocean warming off South America is just one of these events.

Why is it called El Niño?

Fishermen off the west coast of South America were the first to notice appearances of unusually warm water that occurred at year's end. The phenomenon became known as El Niño because of its tendency to occur around Christmas time. El Niño is Spanish for the "boy Child" and is named after the baby Jesus.

What is ENSO?

Enso is the "El Niño-Southern Oscillation," the name scientists use for what is often called El Niño. The Southern Oscillation is a seesaw shift in surface air pressure between the eastern and western halves of the Pacific. When pressure rises in the east, it falls in the west and vice versa. In the 1950's scientists realized that El Niño and the Southern Oscillation were parts of the same event.

What causes an El Niño?

In normal, non-El Niño conditions trade winds blow in a westerly direction along the equator. The winds pile up warm surface water in the western Pacific, so the sea surface is as much as

18 inches higher in the western Pacific than in the Eastern Pacific. These trade winds are one of the main sources of fuel for the Humboldt Current. The Humboldt's Current is a cold ocean current which flows north along the coasts of Chile and Peru, then turns west and warms as it moves out into the Central Pacific. So, the normal situation is warmer water in the western Pacific, cooler in the eastern.

In an El Niño, the equatorial westerly winds diminish. As a result, the Humboldt Current weakens and this allows the waters along the coast of Chile and Peru to warm and creates warmer than usual conditions along the coast of South America. As far as we know, other forces, such as volcanic eruptions (submarine or terrestrial) and sunspots, do not cause El Niños.

How often does El Niño occur and how long does it last?

El Niños occur irregularly approximately every two to seven years. Warm water generally appears off the coast of South America close to Christmas, and reaches its peak warmth in the eastern Pacific during the late fall of the following year. After peaking, the waters will tend to cool slowly through the winter and spring of the next year. Effects can be felt continually around the globe for more than a year, though this is generally not the case in any one place.

What effects does El Niño have on world climate?

A strong El Niño is often associated with flooding rains and warm weather in Peru, drought in Indonesia, Africa, and

Australia, torrential downpours and mudslides in southern California, a mild winter in the northeast, and fewer hurricanes in the southeast. Keep in mind that these effects aren't guaranteed, but an El Niño makes these conditions more likely to happen.

How does El Niño affect sea life and birds?

In non-El Niño years, upwelling of deep, cold ocean water brings up nutrients that lie near the bottom. Fish living in the upper waters feed on plankton that are dependent on these nutrients. Kelp forests also depend on cool, nutrient-rich water for survival and growth. An El Niño reduces the upwelling of cold water off the coast of the Americas. When this happens, fish either die or migrate to areas where they'll find more to eat. With the fish gone, sea birds that depend on them may die or go elsewhere. Kelp forests are often destroyed by storms and ocean swells.

Off California, fish populations may also be reduced. Marine mammals, such as seals and sea lions, that feed on fish may be affected. Californians may see an increase in dead and live strandings of seals and sea lions along the coast, and poor seal and sea lion pup survival as island breeding sites. However, despite the increased number of deaths of marine mammals during an El Niño, scientists report the long-term growth rate for California sea lions and harbor seals to be 6-10 percent annually. An occasional increase in strandings or deaths of these animals is not a threat to their overall population.

How does El Niño affect ocean fishing?

In California, warmer than normal ocean temperatures mean fishes normally found off Mexico, such as yellowfin tuna and dorado, are more common off southern California. However, bait, such as anchovy or squid, may travel to the north, some game fish, such as white seabass and California halibut may follow them.

Are all El Niño's the same?

Every El Niño is somewhat different in magnitude and duration.

How can we predict El Niño?

In the tropical Pacific Ocean, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration operates a network of buoys that measure temperature, currents and winds in the equatorial band. The collected data are evaluated by complex computer models designed to predict an El Niño. Even these complex models, however, cannot predict the exact intensity or duration of an El Niño, nor can they predict how areas will be affected.

What is the difference between El Niño and La Niña?

Both refer to different phases of ENSO. El Niño refers to a pattern characterized by the tropical Pacific's warmest water spreading eastward to the coast of South America. The opposite condition is characterized by unusually cold ocean temperatures in the tropical Pacific: hence the strongly contrasted name, La Niña.

More info at: www.dfg.ca.gov