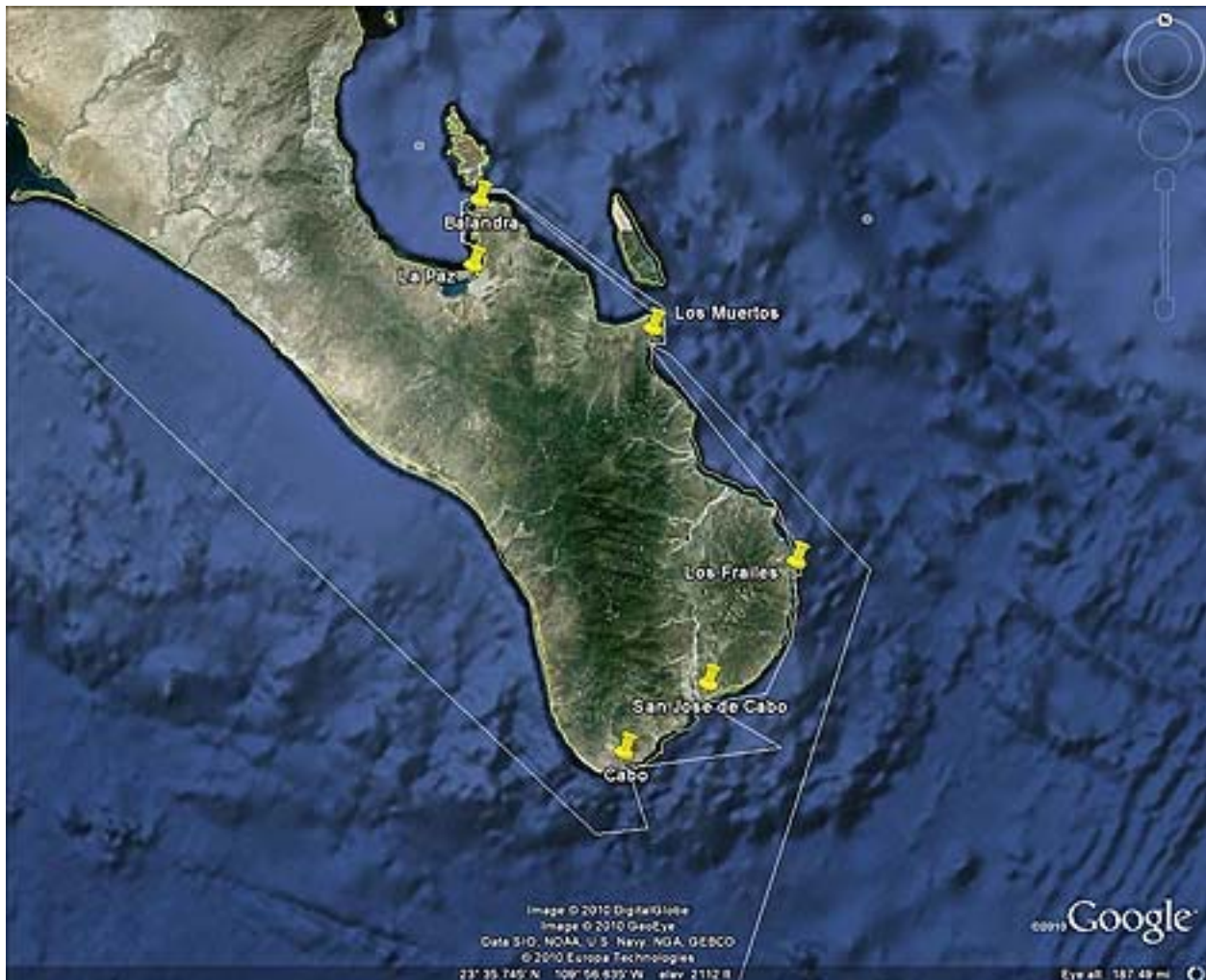


## RisingTides – Expedition 2010

### Baja Peninsula

March 20<sup>th</sup> to April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010



Route around the Baja Peninsula with marked anchorages

#### Baja California

In general, we were constantly impressed by the environmental awareness of those who worked on or near the waterways. We observed an active participation to preserve the aquatic environment. This awareness is providing results. We noted branched coral present in Los Frailes, Los Muertos, and Puerto Ballandria. Everywhere along the coast and bays the water was clean, trash was almost nonexistent, and there was a general attitude of protection from the restaurants, ports, and local fishermen.

The team's passage towards La Paz was broken into various anchorages. For reasons such as broken sailing gear, to unfavorable sea conditions, stops were made in Cabo San Lucas, Los Frailes, Los Muertos, and Puerto Ballandra. On the 20<sup>th</sup> the team made it around the tip of Baja Peninsula under very light winds, from the distance, the lights of Cabo San Lucas could be seen. On the morning of March 21<sup>st</sup>, they tried to head up the Sea of Cortez, only to have strong headwinds and sea on the nose, bring them back to Cabo San Lucas. The team pulled into "Cabo" and took the time to officially check into Mexico. This took quite the effort as this is known as "The Mexican Cha-cha", which has you running from office to office.



### Cabo San Lucas March 21<sup>th</sup> through 23<sup>rd</sup>

When the team tried to leave on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, they found that the engine had flooded just as it had in Avalon. On further inspection, Brian Basura found that due to the addition of the stern rail and mounting of wind generators and solar panels, the waterline of the boat had changed causing engine flooding. The engine water intake check valve had

to be raised. The team quickly searched out needed tools and worked through the night for departure the following day.

Once again, the team headed up the Sea of Cortez only to be driven back by strong headwinds and high seas. The team then took an alternate destination and turned into Puerto Los Cabos in Bahia San Jose Del Cabo.



Puerto Los Cabos in Bahia San Jose Del Cabo March 24<sup>th</sup> through 25<sup>th</sup>

The seas were so rough that the Harbormaster initially was not allowing boats to enter their narrow breakwater. Luckily for the team, upon their approach, the Harbormaster relented.

At the time of this writing, Puerto Los Cabos was a new marina still under construction. Their aim is to make a minimal impact on the local area and improve/restore it whenever possible: Plants requiring little or no watering was used in landscaping; energy efficient outbuildings and services are in place; and a massive cactus garden attraction are just a few ways they are blending restoring the environment while providing a new services and local jobs.



Zero Landscaping adds delightful attraction



Cactus Pyramid



### Los Frailes March 26<sup>th</sup> through 28<sup>th</sup>

On March 26<sup>th</sup> the team continued on their way. Although, the seas continued to be rough, the team decided to motor against the wind to make anchorage at Los Frailes. Under a full moon, the team was able to anchor safely for needed rest. By this time, Brian and Claudia realize that breaking up their passage made for more realistic goal and ability to get to their destination of La Paz.

While in Los Frailes, they decided to hike 750 feet up to the top of the mountain that gave the name to the area. Much to their surprise, they found a well marked hiking trail up the steep mountain. The trail was marked by pink plastic ties, which were tied onto the shrubs as they made their way up. Not only does this aid the hiker keeping them safe, it also aids in reducing the footprint of the trail that could cause disturbances to the indigenous plants growing on the mountain. Again, trail was found to be clear of trash, and was found to be most enjoyable allowing for a clear view of the anchorage below and the bay on the other side, known for great diving.



Los Frailes Mountain with well marked trail allowing visitors to view a spectacular ecosystem

On March 29<sup>th</sup> the expedition continued, the next stop, Los Muertos. Along the way the team enjoyed splashing juvenile manta rays that seem to jump out of the water for the joy of becoming air born. However, a more practical reason for jumping may be to rid themselves of parasites.



## Ensenada De Los Muertos March 29<sup>th</sup> through 30<sup>th</sup>

In Muertos the team waited for calmer weather conditions to lead them closer to La Paz. While here the team saw the old salt and silvermine port that once stood in this location and was now used as a small craft dock. Also noted around the dock were small branched coral and reef fish.



Old salt and silvermine and loading area



### Puerto Ballandra March 31th through April 1st

The next stop was Puerto Ballandra, located just south of the City of La Paz. On March 31<sup>st</sup> to April 1<sup>st</sup> the team took the opportunity to visit this small bay. To their delight they found a small coral reef where they were able to perform their first coral survey using the *Coralwatch* method. The team familiarized themselves with the protocol and jumped in to snorkel and collect data on the existing coral. The team found the method to be easy to follow and following the outline of the sheet given by *Coralwatch*, they recreated a form to submit to the agency.

Following are the results. The Coral Number indicates the coral surveyed. The color code indicates light (L) and dark (D) that matches the color chart as given by *Coralwatch*. This provides the general health of the coral and may show if the coral is undergoing bleaching or rejuvenation during a given time. With multiple sampling of the same area would be the best analysis over time. Coral Type can be boulder (Bo), branch (Br), soft (So), and plate (Pl).



Your Name: Claudia Richardson & Brian Basura

Group Name: RisingTides

email address:

claudiarichardson@rocketmail.com

Participation field: environmental scientist

Country of reef: Mexico

Reef name: Ballandra

GPS: 024 18.92 N 110 20.00 W

Date of Survey: March 30, 2010

Time collected: 1600

Weather:

Sunny

Activity: Snorkeling

Sea

Temperature: 17 degrees Celsius

Coral Number	Color Code L :/ D:			Coral Type
1	L: B3	D: B4		Bo
2	L: D2	D: D5		Bo
3	L: B5	D: B6		Bo
4	L: B4	D: B6		Bo
5	L: B3	D: B5		Bo
6	L: C3	D: C4		Br
7	L: C2	D: C4		Br
8	L: D4	D: D6		Br
9	L: D4	D: D6		Br
10	L: B3	D: B5		Bo
11	L: B3	D: B4		Bo
12	L: D2	D: D3		Br
13	L: D3	D: D4		Br
14	L: D2	D: D3		Br
15	L: D3	D: D4		Br
16	L: D4	D: D6		Br
17	L: D5	D: D6		Br
18	L: D1	D: D6		Br
19	L: D3	D: D4		Br
20	L: D1	D: D4		Bo

Any relevant information:

Corals were surveyed along the Southern wall of Balandra entrance.

Average depth of survey was 4-5 feet

Any comments or inquires:

none

The following are pictures taken at the survey site.



Coral Survey Site



Coral Present allowed for first survey to be performed



### La Paz April 2<sup>nd</sup> through May 11<sup>th</sup>

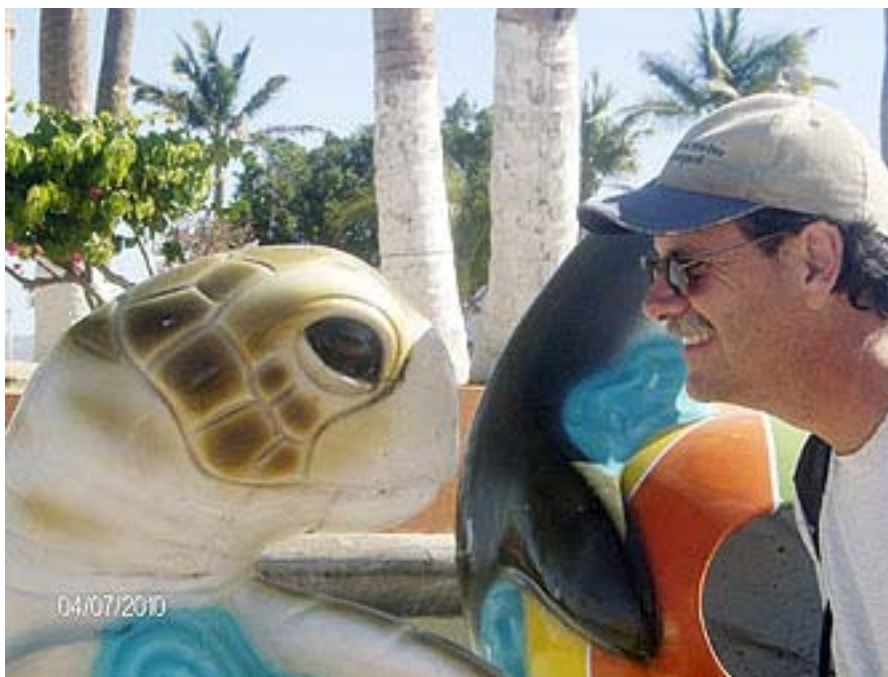
Thirty four days after leaving the home port of Wilmington, Los Angeles California the team finally reaches La Paz Mexico. A total of 1207 nautical miles!

With much relief they dropped the anchor, only to find that the windlass, the device for winching the anchor up and down had broke! The crew immediately had to add fixing the windlass to the checking into Port activities. They quickly familiarized themselves with the city to find the best places to find parts to fix the windlass as well as to reprovision s/v Skylight for the passage to the Marquesas.



The broken windlass was disassembled, cleaned, repaired, and reinstalled.

While in the city, the crew took in the sites and noted features that encouraged people to keep the city clean.



Brian Basura checks out the sea turtle recycling bin for aluminum cans

The team found that as many offices that were needed to check into Mexico such as immigration, Port Captain, and API (harbor control), one also had to find the Finance Department (equivalent to America's Department of Motor Vehicles) to pay for a health inspection and to schedule the health inspection. After much frustration and additional days to clear out of the country, the crew was ready for the Puddle Jump and headed for the Marquesas on May the 12<sup>th</sup>. However, during the first night's passage, the crew noticed that the navigational lights were not operating and the following day they made their way to Los Muertos for repairs. On April 14<sup>th</sup> after the repair was made the crew finally was able to leave for their next destination, Nuku Hiva, Marquesas, French Polynesia 3,100n miles away.



Wing-on-Wing and headed for Marquesas French Polynesia