

The Sea Creature at the Wind Sock

By Don Eovino

It was late for me to begin my training swim, as it approached sunset. I know that it is easier for sharks to distinguish a human from a turtle when the water is clear, so it was with a little trepidation that I started my out-and-back swim, having procrastinated the entire day.

I swam out to the wind sock and had the scariest experience in the water in a looong time. Treading water at the buoy, I started to head back to shore and all of a sudden saw what looked like a swimmer coming right at me. I wondered instantly why I didn't see him earlier, and then I saw a huge fin, and a black body surface that looked like a mini-submarine.

The creature had a huge black back, way too big to be a turtle, and in a second I realized how fast it was moving as it had a wide wake as it came toward me. When it was about 20 feet away from me it slid under the surface and disappeared.

I thrashed to the wind sock and with the current I struggled to hold on to the rocks and a rusty bar, all the while looking under water bug-eyed to see what behemoth this was and if it was still around.

I looked long and hard to spot what I thought was a giant shark lurking in the water just waiting to attack me, since I realized swimming with my bike shorts, I resembled a tasty seal.

With as much bravado as I could muster, I broke away from the buoy and raced towards shore back to the OCC. I barely got my hair wet and vowed never to swim that channel again if I made it back alive.

Upon arriving at the shore I caught up with a fellow OCC member in his one-man canoe who paddled right past me and looked like he swerved at the last second to miss this mysterious denizen of the deep.

He grinned as I asked him if he saw what I saw, and was it a shark? He retorted that he indeed saw it also and never saw such a thing in his life. In fact it looked him straight in the eye so that he could identify it as a 10-12 ft. monk seal on his way out of the channel. He was as astounded as I was to see such a thing on his way back to the Club.

I told him that if he wasn't there to confirm my sighting and verify what the creature was that that would have been the last of my days swimming the OCC channel.