

A History of the Catalina Channel Swims

Since 1927

by
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Abstract

The purpose of the book is to develop a history of the swimming crossings of the Catalina Channel since the first swim was completed in 1927.

On January 15, 1927 George Young won the Wrigley Ocean Marathon swim across the Catalina Channel in 15 hours, 44 minutes, and 30 seconds. Within three months of the Wrigley Ocean Marathon, four swimmers successfully tackled the Catalina Channel.

Between 1927 and 1952 only two men conquered the Channel, but from 1952 to 1958 eleven swimmers crossed the Channel. Numerous attempts were made between 1958 and 1970 but none were successful. In the early 1970's and again in the late 1970's, the men's and women's speed records were rewritten. There were twenty-nine crossings by seventeen swimmers in the 1970's. From 1980 through 1989 there were thirty two individual crossings and twelve relay crossings. The book is further broken into the following sections from 1990 to 1999; 2000 to 2004; 2005 to 2007;2008; 2009; 2010; 2011; Around the Island swims and 2012.

In 2011 the overall relay record was broken and in 2012 the women's record and overall record from Catalina to the mainland was smashed. Numerous records were broken, especially that of the oldest person to swim the Catalina Channel (which was broken three times) and the relay record. From 1927 through the 2012 season there were two hundred and fifty-one (251) people who swam Catalina.

The following conclusions were reached:

1. The 1927 Wrigley Ocean Marathon swim began the long history of Channel swimming in the United States.
2. In the end of 2012 there had been eighty-five relay crossings and two hundred and fifty-one people swam the Catalina Channel.
3. Female swimmers have been as successful as male swimmers in crossing and setting records for the Catalina Channel.
4. Age is a determinant of speed in swimming the Catalina Channel.
5. The establishment of the Catalina Channel Swimming Federation has aided in the development and furtherance of the Catalina crossing and its history.
6. Pool swimming and the inception of the marathon team aided in development of marathon swimmers in the 1970's.
7. The Catalina Channel swim is comparable to the English Channel in conditions, difficulty, distance, and challenge to the swimmer.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

On Tuesday, August 23, 1875 after being in the water 21 hours and 45 minutes, Matthew Webb stepped ashore in Calais, France. He was the first person to swim the English Channel successfully. Instantly, he became a hero.¹ The challenge, the mystique, and the possibility of instant fame from swimming the Channel began to attract marathon swimmers from all over the world.

In the summer of 1926, Gertrude Ederle became the first woman to swim the English Channel. She also broke the existing record set in 1923 by Enrico Tiraboschi of 16 hours and 33 minutes, by completing the distance in 14 hours and 39 minutes. Overnight she became a celebrity; New York even honored her with a ticker tape parade.²

On the other side of the country one of the interested observers was William Wrigley, Jr. Ederle's swim and all the publicity she received intrigued him. He decided to put on the Wrigley Catalina Island Swim. To insure numerous entrants from all over the world, he offered a \$25,000 purse, winner take all. The race, on January 15, 1927, would go from Avalon to the breakwater at Point Vicente, a promontory landmark on the California coast. The straight line distance of the Catalina, or San Pedro Channel, was twenty-two miles, one mile further than the famous English Channel.

Wading into the chilly waters destined for the mainland were 102 swimmers, 87 men and 15 women. Of these, only one entrant completed the crossing. The swim was very successful, not only in publicity and also financially for Wrigley and the Island, but it touched off a new craze in marathon swimming. There was another Channel for marathon swimmers to conquer. It was no longer necessary for them to travel to England with the Catalina Channel in their backyard. Whether for the challenge or the preparation, swimming Catalina has become as important as swimming the English Channel to such top marathon swimmers as Florence Chadwick, Greta Andersen, Tom Park, Lynne Cox, and Penny Lee Dean, John York, Karen Burton, Chad Hundebly, Pete Huisveld, Todd Robinson and Grace Van Der Byl.

The record dropped from 15 hours and 44 minutes to 7 hours and 15 minutes set by Penny Lee Dean in 1976. Since the 1927 swim, two hundred fifty other swimmers have successfully braved the treacherous Channel, bringing the total number of successful aspirants to two hundred and fifty-one.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this book is to develop a history of the swimming crossings of the Catalina Channel since the first swim was completed in 1927.

Significance of the Work

The Catalina Channel is the only major channel crossing on the American continent which compares to the English Channel in both distance and difficulty. Furthermore, very little has been written on marathon swimming and even less on the Catalina crossing. The specifics of the crossings of these two hundred fifty-one athletes needed to be recorded before their contributions were lost. This work will enable present and future generations to see by whom and when the Catalina Channel was crossed and what these crossings entailed.

Definition of Terms

Catalina Channel: The San Pedro Channel, as it is officially named, is the 22 miles of ocean separating the Island of Catalina from Point Vicente, a promontory landmark on the California coast.

Marathon Swimming: The art of swimming continuously a minimum of ten miles in any kind of open water (lake, river, sea, etc.). It is permitted to grease the body before a swim, use goggles, wear a cap, ear plugs, and a bathing suit. However, no artificial aid of any kind is allowed nor is any physical contact by another person allowed.

Methods and Procedures

To gather information necessary for this work, the materials available on the two hundred fifty-one successful crossers was collected at the following libraries: California State Polytechnic University at Pomona; California State University at Long Beach; Honnold Library, Pomona College, Claremont; Long Beach Public Library system; Los Angeles Public Library system; Cabrillo Museum, San Pedro; the Avalon Museum, Catalina Island and the Catalina Channel Swimming Federation logs and interviews.

An attempt was made to contact one outstanding athlete who successfully completed the crossing from each of the following selective chronological periods: the early 1950's, the late 1950's, the early 1970's, the late 1970's, the early 1980's, the middle 1980's, the early 1990's, the late 1990's 2000-2004; 2005-2008; 2009; 2010; 2011; Around the Island; 2012 swims. Florence Chadwick, Greta Andersen, Lynne Cox, Frank Reynolds, John York, Dan Slosberg and Pete Huisveld, Todd Robinson, Hank Wise, and Grace Van Der Byl were some of the swimmers who were interviewed. Other swimmers interviewed included Pam Nickle, Ray Falk, Al Guth, Mike Suttle, Dave Clark, Richard Marks, Pat Hines, Kalani Russell, Suzanne Riedinger and Dale Petranech. The interviews also included people such as friends, coaches, and navigators. Chuck Slocombe, aide on Florence Chadwick's swim; John Olguin, Benny Nawahi's coach; John Sonnichsen, Greta Andersen and Lynne Cox's coach, Syndi Goldenson, a successful crosser and the coach of Orca; Siga Albrecht, original coach of Orca; Chuck Liddell, historian, Catalina Island; Richard Yeo, The Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Marathon Swimming Chairman 1976-1978; and Mickey Pittman, one of the navigators, were interviewed.

These people were located and personal interviews were used to collect material as it related to the swimmers' contributions to marathon swimming. Interviews were conducted personally or by telephone, and the material obtained was analyzed as to its relevancy to the work. Many extraneous items came up in the interviews which had nothing to do with the development of this publication. Information was then combined with the available literature. Further, the private newspaper collections of Richard Yeo, Chuck Liddell, John York, and Penny Lee Dean were used extensively. The author relied heavily on personal knowledge and acquaintances derived through forty-two years of local, national, and international competition and coaching in marathon swimming.

Once all material was gathered, it was critically analyzed regarding its relevance to the work, and then it was organized into an understandable and readable form.

CHAPTER 8

New Century: 2000-2004

In the first year of the new century there were four individual swims and three relays.

The first swimmer, Scott Coleman, from Boca Raton Florida, swam from Catalina to the mainland. He entered the water on August 14 at 11:21pm at Doctor's Cove. It was a calm night with clouds and a full moon. Scott fed every 15 minutes, drinking Cytomax. At the hour break he also had Gu. After a while he had OJ and Cytomax but this led to a stomach ache. He switched to a tea feeding but this led to him vomiting. He took two Advils and then he felt better. After four more feedings he took three Advils.

Scott's stroke count was 64 at the beginning, changing to 62 near the end of the swim. The water temperature was a warm 72 throughout the swim, dropping only to 71 degrees. This is pretty rare.

His goggles leaked and he was given a new pair. (Most swimmers carry three to four pairs of goggles on a swim for safety.)

While Scott was swimming at various times, the navigator, Greg Elliott, played the bagpipes.

At 8 am dolphins appeared near the swimmer. They stayed quite a while. This made him increase his stroke count for the last two hours. Finally, Scott landed near the old Marineland pier, after swimming 12 hours, two minutes and fifty seconds. He was the 95th person to swim the Catalina Channel.

The second attempt of the summer was James Murphy, swimming from Catalina to the mainland. He started at 12:40 on September 5th. He fed every 25 minutes. He drank Cytomax and had a vitamin package or Gu with water. According to observer Carol Sing, the crew was concerned if James had enough fluids for the crossing. Luckily, he planned it perfectly. James began with a 68 stroke count but quickly dropped to the low sixties. As he reached the mainland his stroke dropped into the high fifties.

Throughout the swim the water temperature was 68 or 69 degrees which was very comfortable.

Unfortunately there were problems with one of the kayaks as it tipped over, broke and just caused a few problems which the crew quickly dealt with.

Water conditions were fine but there was a swell, maybe two feet early in the night rising to three to four feet later. The night was starry and clear.

Many fish, dolphins and finally porpoises were seen in the crossing. Besides sea creatures, various swimmers joined James as pacers which were nice supports for him. At 10:19 am he had his last feed as the zodiac went to find a landing spot with Carol aboard. James finished after 10 hours 26 minutes and 36 seconds climbing over the rocks and clearing the three water steps.

Amy Migliazzo ended up being the next individual swimmer of the summer. She swam from Cabrillo Beach on the mainland accompanied by a paddle board and a pace swimmer.

The night was warm but there were two foot swells and waves. Over the course of the swim the swells increased to four foot. Amy wasn't bothered by them. She would fix her cap and goggles which were the only sign she was getting smacked in the face.

Her stroke count, taken by the observer, Warren and Sylvia Glenn and coach Alan Freeman, every seven to ten minutes, all night and day, ranged from 58 to 78, with the high at the start. She had lower counts but those were on feeds. At the beginning she fed every twenty minutes then dropped to fifteen minutes near the finish. At one point she didn't feel well and couldn't drink, even water.

The water was colder near Cabrillo Beach, a mere 66 but near the Island had raised to 70 degrees. The air temperature was wonderful from 68 to 71 degrees.

At one point in the swim Amy needed Vaseline which she had neatly held in a Ziploc bag. She also wanted a glow stick. She and her crew were well prepared. The only problem was the fumes which were blowing into her, but she never complained.

After 12 hours 45 minutes and 29 seconds Amy stepped ashore at Long Point on Catalina.

John York was the last swimmer of the summer. He swam on the day before his 40th birthday, October 6th. It was for fun and a challenge how well he could do.

He swam from Catalina to the mainland.

His time was outstanding, 8 hours 32 minutes and 49 seconds, one of the fastest in this direction for men. This was his sixth crossing, the most of any person.

There were three relays swimming a mainland to Catalina and back. (MCM)
These were:

Blue Caps	Red Caps	Orange Caps
Anne Cleveland	Chris Day	Judith Sheridan
Becky Jackman	Jo Lamott	Carol Hamilton
Warren Haviland	Carol Sing	Rich Henry
Christy Ryan	Michelle Bloomberg	David Alexander
Cat Moore	Paula Selby	Robert Philipson
Chris Wagner	Steve Dockstader	Ida Jones

The relays left from Cabrillo Beach on August 20th at 9:21 pm. The water was unseasonably warm at 70 degrees. On most relays, swimmers don't feed nor are stroke counts taken. It is too hard to watch three swimmers, the paddlers and the water, or really what is in the water. This swim started out calm with a small swell and five knot wind. As the hours crept by the swells increased until it was just bumpy and even some white caps were visible. At the same time the amount of interested marine life increased.

In 11 hours 37 minutes 17 seconds the three swimmers landed together on the West side of Long Point on Catalina, turned around and reentered the water thus beginning the second leg of the double crossing. The morning was beautiful and the air temperature rose to 78 degrees according to Carol Sing, David Clark, Paula Selby and Steve Dockstader. Four observers helped when one swam or paddled and keeping more eyes on the athletes. It was especially important when suits just fell off in the midday.

Was it the blue whale that passed in front, then a Marlin jumped out of the water trying to see what was going on with the swimmers? Later some bottlenose dolphins swam right under the swimmers. Christy jumped in to swim with the dolphins.

The water was getting choppiest as the relays approached the five mile buoy. The wind was up to ten knots. The white caps were constant. The swimmers fought through this and landed at Cabrillo Beach together after 23 hours 26 minutes and 12 seconds. The second leg, Catalina to the mainland took 14 hours 7 minutes and 17 seconds. These were very reasonable considering the conditions, marine life and suits disappearing!

2001

2001 was a good year for individual swims with five successful swims. There were no successful relays.

Forty-five year old Anne Cleveland from La Jolla, California attempted to swim from Catalina to the mainland. She began at 12:24 on August 24th, according to observer Frank Reynolds. Anne fed every twenty minutes on the crossing. Anne had quick feedings using only five to ten seconds. In the swim Anne had thirty feedings. During her second feeding, David Clark, who was kayaking saw a seal. This was the only marine life seen all night. The only type of feeding listed was soup at the five and a half hour mark. At the eleventh feed Anne was sick and felt weak. On the thirteenth feeding she had water and gradually felt better. Her feedings were changed to 15-20 minutes which seemed to help Anne.

Amazingly Frank took every stroke count, water temperature and air temperature. Her stroke counts ranged from two at 59 to an average of 56-57. Her low stroke count was only 55 strokes per minutes.

By 6:00am the sun was coming up and this inspired Anne.

With the sun up a pod of dolphins could be seen. Throughout the night the swells were three feet. As she approached the mainland the swells increased further. Another seal swam by and then the captain began playing his bagpipes to serenade Anne.

The water temperature drastically dropped from 68 to 64 degrees as she had two miles to swim. Anne fought through the cold water and landed at 10:39 am East of Point Vicente.

Her time was 10 hours, 15 minutes, the fastest for any woman over forty! She was the ninety –fourth person to complete Catalina.

The second swim of the summer, by Andrea Karge, began at 31 minutes after midnight on September 11, 2001. It was a beautiful night with some clouds and a half moon.

Andrea swam from Catalina to the mainland. She fed every twenty minutes throughout the swim. Early in the swim one of the kayakers ran over her feet. She wasn't hurt, just surprised.

There were flying fish around the kayak and all of a sudden a three inch fish jumped in the kayak with David Clark. Soon after, another jumped into the kayak.

As the night wore on the swells increased from Lake Catalina to one then

gradually to two then to three feet high. As the boat fumes also increased the swimmer had to move away from the boat. The fumes made Andrea nauseous. She was positioned behind the boat making it hard for the observer, Margaret Clark, to see the swimmer.

Next, the boat had engine problems and fell behind. Andrea and the kayaker kept going. At her next feeding she had ibuprofen with her fluid concoction she drank. This made her feel better.

Andrea was consistent with her stroke count, from 59 to 64 when it could be taken. The water temperature remained 66 degrees while the air temperature was 59 to 61 degrees throughout the swim.

Around 4:30am the swells died down as did the wind. Andrea was talking to the boat but no one, except the kayaker, could hear as she was too far away. Soon a container ship passed in front of the boat. Gradually the morning light was rising. She had a few pace swimmers which seemed to speed her up. By 6:30 am she was heard saying, "I feel awesome".

Again, the wind changed and Andrea had to be moved to get away from the fumes. All of a sudden there were dolphins jumping, sea lions and no wind. What a crazy night. This led to Greg Elliott playing his bagpipes. Andrea was 1 and 1/2 miles from the finish. Her stroke was a bit weaker but she was doing well according to her coach, David Clark. The small boat went in to check for a landing spot and 9 am Andrea climbed over the rocks to complete her swim in 8 hours 33 minutes and 18 seconds, a very fast time.

The third female swimmer to accomplish Catalina was Rebecca Jackman, on her second attempt. She swam from Catalina to the mainland. Becky left at 3:59 am on Friday, September 14. There was a problem with the thermometer so the water temperature ranged by five degrees between the coach and the observer. This mattered because she left the water on her first attempt as she was too cold. Knowing the temperature was a warning for everyone on the boat to be able to help Becky.

On the other hand, Becky fed every thirty minutes throughout the swim. She skipped one feeding as she felt sick and her coach entered the water to kayak for her. She did well from then on and seemed to get over her illness.

Becky maintained a low stroke count but averaged 52 strokes per minute. Her high was 54 and her low was 48.

Many swimmers jumped in to pace Becky throughout the night. This was very positive for her.

After 10 hours 28 minutes and one second Becky walked ashore. She did it!

Alan Bell, of Redmond Washington, was the fourth swimmer of the summer. He swam from Catalina to the mainland on September 21st. At approximately 1:58 am he entered the water at Doctor's cove. It was a dark night and the water was glassy. The water was 66 degrees for most of the swim, thus on the first break Alan said he was cold. This was not a good sign but Alan was tough and adjusted to the temperature quickly. This was further affected by a low air temperature for September, 61 degrees.

His stroke counts ranged from 68 to 73 per minute. These were strong.

At 4:00 am there was a shark scare which disappeared quickly. Everyone was prepared to deal with it but it just swam away.

Alan fed on Accelerade, usually 8 ounces. He fed every 15 to 20 minutes on the swim. The feedings were quick, however, from 10 to 20 seconds.

During the early morning, just before dawn Alan complained about the dark. This made him nervous. By 6:00 am the sun was coming up and this helped Alan. There were no swells, it was glassy.

Dolphins appeared around 8:00 am. Alan's shoulders were hurting so he took three ibuprofen and asked how far he had left. John York jumped in and swam with Alan. This increased his stroke count and seemed to settle him down. It also helped him increase his stroke count.

Around 10:00 am Alan wasn't feeling well but he was told he had less than two miles. He pushed through the pain.

At 11:00 am the little skiff went in to find his landing spot. At 11:26 he landed on a rocky beach near Cardiac Hill. His time was 9 hours 28 minutes and 29 seconds. This was a very fast swim for a man of 51 years of age.

The last swim of 2001 was accomplished by James Fitzpatrick, a 46-year-old from Laguna Niguel in California. His attempt was from Catalina to the mainland on October 2, at 11:24.40 pm. He entered the flat water at Doctor's Cove on a dark, windless night. It was so clear one could see Catalina and the lights on the mainland because there was a full moon.

James fed every twenty minutes, usually consuming 8 ounces of Gatorade. He did this in 15 seconds rarely needing 20 seconds.

From the beginning he had pacers in the water with him. There were times he was by himself, but not many. At one point the two swimmers crossed in front of the boat and the navigator had to drop speed to bring the swimmers back on the starboard side.

Another time the rope on the skiff or Bubba as it has been nicknamed, was caught on the underside of the boat. It took 15 minutes to fix this and catch up with James, the pacer and the kayaker. That was at approximately 4:00 am so it was very dark for the three until the boat caught up.

James stroke counts were 50 to 51 except at the start when they were higher and at the finish when they dropped to under 50 strokes per minute.

The water temperature was 66 degrees the whole way. The air on the other hand was 63-64 degrees consistently.

As James approached the mainland a small chop was encountered. Despite this, James pushed through and landed East of Point Vicente on a rocky beach at 9:12 am. His final time was 9 hours, 47 minutes and 44 seconds. He was the ninety eighth person to swim the Catalina Channel.

There were no successful relay swims in 2001.

2002

There were two successful swims across the Catalina Channel in 2002. There were also six relays.

Bula Chowdhury Chakraborty of India was the first swimmer in 2002. On August 28th she swam from Catalina to the mainland. Bula's time was 10 hours, 23 minutes and

14 seconds. She became the first female swimmer from India to swim Catalina.

The second swimmer was Loren McCoy. She swam from Catalina to the mainland on September 20th. Her time was 11 hours, 12 minutes and 43 seconds. Loren was the 100th person to swim the Catalina Channel.

The first two relays of 2002 were the Wild Old Women and the Swell Guys consisting of:

Carol Sing	Steve Dockstader
Deb Peckman	Chris Wagner
Adrienne Pipe	Warren Haviland
Betsy Jordan	Donald Van Cleve
Sandra Vicker	Bill Kehoe
Janet Lamott	Rich Henry

These relays swam from Catalina to the mainland in 10:35. This made them the 43rd and the 44th relays to cross the Catalina Channel.

The third and fourth relays of the summer were the Tidalwaves and the Fireballs swimming from Catalina to the mainland. They also swam simultaneously. The teams were composed of the following athletes:

Preston Gable	Brian Shortal
Jeff Ricks	Rich Mahon
Tom D'Amato	Chris Collins
Mike Keeney	Mark Ackerman
Brian Francis	Kathy Hagan
David Lamott	Margy Moynihan

The two teams entered the water at the Island on August 26th and burst forth on the mainland after 13 hours, 41 minutes and 20 seconds.

Northern California sent the final two relays to swim Catalina in 2002: The South End Rowing Club Floods and the South End Rowing Club Ebbs. The members were:

James Knight	John Hathaway
Diana Wygant	Steve Ray Hutwitz
Nancy McCabe	Dan Needham
Gary Emich	Barry Maguire
Brenda Austin	Rhys Ludlow
Bill Wygant	James Miller

On September 17th the first two swimmers gingerly slid into the water at Catalina Island. The relays stayed together throughout the swim. At 13 hours, 31 minutes and 51

seconds the 47th and the 48th relay emerged from the water at the mainland.

2003

In 2003 there were five individual swims by Mark Monticino, William Schulz, Kevin Murphy, Jason Pipoly and Michael Miller. There were no relays, however.

The first two swims of the Catalina Channel for 2003 were completed by Mark Monticino and William Schulz swimming together. At 52 minutes after midnight on August 6th the two entered the water to swim from Catalina to the mainland leaving from Doctor's Cove. The two swam the Catalina Channel as a fundraiser for the American Diabetes Foundation.

The water temperature played a large part in this swim. When they began it was 67 degrees, a fairly normal to low temperature for Catalina. As they crossed the channel the temperature decreased to 64 degrees at the finish. That is a significant drop. Luckily, the air temperature improved from a mild 66 to 68 degrees, not having an affect on the water.

Observers, David Clark and Bob West, also took the swimmers stroke count. These two men stayed together despite having totally different stroke counts. Mark ranged from 56 to 60 strokes a minute while William ranged from 66 to 73 strokes per minute.

Mark and William were doing very well at taking ten to twenty second feed stops. At one stop they commented that they were glad they were not on the boat as it looked so bumpy! Motivation not to quit a swim-you would have to get on the boat.

They were feeding every 20 minutes.

The water was choppy but not too bad. The wind was hovering around four knots. By 7 am the wind died down.

The boat was heading for the lighthouse. With less than three nautical miles left, Mark saw the land for the first time and smiled. Everyone on the boat began cheering.

With one mile left, the water was at 64 degrees but didn't seem to affect either man. Both were doing well heading for the lighthouse. As they reached the rocky beach they exited together, swimming the Catalina Channel in 10 hours, 11 minutes and 13 seconds.

Kevin Murphy had swum the English Channel thirty times by August of 2003. He chose to swim from Catalina to the mainland. On August 8th he entered the water at 1:42 am. His wife acted as his coach. It was a clear night and the lighthouse on the mainland was visible.

At the beginning he fed every hour then he switched to a half hour. He ate porridge at his third break!

The navigator played his bagpipes at one of his food breaks receiving a thumbs up from Kevin. As the swim went on Kevin's breaks increased in length to two minutes.

He had a very consistent stroke rate, between 60-62 throughout the swim.

There were dolphins in the area during the night. Early in the evening it was 67 degrees in the water but once the sun came up it rose to 72 degrees. Meanwhile the air temperature jumped from 65 degrees to 70 degrees in the early afternoon.

After 15 hours 23 minutes and 12 seconds Kevin Murphy completed his first

Catalina swim by walking ashore on the mainland. He became the 103rd person to swim Catalina, an Englishman.

Jason Pipoly, a 32 year old from San Antonio, Texas, decided to swim a double crossing from the mainland to Catalina and back. The only disadvantage was Pipoly was a paraplegic, having lost use of his legs in a car accident in 1998.

He drank Cytomax every thirty minutes and rather quickly dropped to every fifteen minutes which was good. He asked that the fluid be heated as it was too cold and affecting his temperature. This was done and seemed to help him. He also had a gel.

He had to change goggles which took over two minutes. His next feed stop, he had to clear the goggles which also made for a long break. Each of these led to him getting colder.

Jason was using more fluid than he had planned for and the skiff headed to Two Harbors to pick up some more, around 8 am. His stroke count was between 57 and 60 on his first lap. As he approached the Island he was swimming strongly. He finished his first lap to Catalina in 17 hours, 59 minutes and 15 seconds.

Jason immediately returned to the water to swim back to the mainland. He saw a sailfish and dolphins but these didn't help to increase his rapidly declining stroke rate, 54 per minute. After 2.7 miles Jason wanted to get out. He had swum for over 24 hours. He didn't complete the second leg.

The final swim of 2003 was attempted by Michael Miller, a 49 year old, from Kailua, Hawaii. He swam from Doctor's Cove to the mainland. His coach was Steven Munatones and the observer was John York. It was September 14th at 1:37 am when he walked into the water.

He fed every 20 minutes in the swim. He drank fluids, ate peaches and protein bars throughout the swim. His breaks were 20 seconds to two minutes as he needed it.

The ocean was so calm and with no wind, the boat had trouble going slowly. Usually there are swells to deal with, wind and chop, making the boat work harder but this was a perfect night. There were no swells as the swim continued.

Michael's stroke ranged from 57 to 61 strokes per minute. At 11:57 am he landed at the mainland. His total time was 10 hours, 20 minutes and 13 seconds.

2004

2004 was an exciting time for Catalina Channel swims. There were four individual swims in 2004. Two relays also swam the Catalina Channel.

The first swimmer was swimmer Kathleen Wilson. She planned to swim from Catalina to the mainland on August 10th. Kathleen had a strong background in open water swimming. She had conquered the English Channel, the Around Manhattan Swim and Tampa Bay. At 54 minutes after midnight she entered the water at Doctor's Cove.

It was a clear and calm night with many stars visible above. She drank Gatorade every thirty minutes with a protein and glucose pack. All her breaks took less than thirty seconds. Likewise her stroke count was very efficient, varying only from 77 to 78 for the complete swim. It seems as if the air and water temperatures also remained constant. Her

only complaint during the swim was her back was cramping up. Kathleen mentally worked through this problem. Kathleen walked ashore in 9 hours, 36 minutes, and 34 seconds on the beach below Pt Vicente.

The second swimmer was Gary Greenwood. On September 7th at 10:28.50 he began his swim from Catalina to the mainland. Gary was 62 years old. David Clark was his coach and on the swim, Don Van Cleve was his observer. He swallowed water at the beginning of the swim. The feedings were every 20 minutes. He drank water, Gatorade and a Gel shot. The water ranged from 70 to 72 degrees which was very comfortable. Similarly, the air hung around 69 degrees.

Gary's stroke was around 60 strokes per minute with the exception of a high of 65 near the start and a low of 50 near the finish. There were some discussions if the course should change but in the end, this didn't happen immediately. When it did he dropped to feeding every 20 minutes. Gary was fine and felt strong. In mid morning Gary declared, "I will never drink Gatorade again." Too bad he had six more feedings! Gary landed without any problems. His time was 13 hours, 8 minutes and 3 seconds.

The 108th person to swim Catalina was 39-year-old Forrest Nelson. Similar to the other swims of the summer, he swam from Catalina to the mainland. He slid into the water at 11:32.16 pm on October 4th. It was a beautiful night with a slight swell. The water temperature was a bit cold averaging 66 degrees. To make things worse the air temperature was 59 to 62 degrees. The combination of cold air and water can lead to hypothermia. His stroke count, on the other hand, kept increasing until the last three hours. He began at 55 and increased to 60 but near the end dropped to 55-58 per minute. At the same time there were fume reports from the paddlers so Forrest was moved to the other side of the boat.

At the early morning after a boat passed astern of Forrest, Greg began playing his bagpipes. The water had calmed and the swells had disappeared. At 10:07.32 am Forrest climbed up the rocks East of Cardiac Hill. Forrest was cold but fine. He was suffering from mild hypothermia. His time was 10 hours, 35 minutes and 14 seconds.

The fourth and final swim of the summer was swum by Jim McConica. Jim was 53 years old and lived in Ventura, California. This was his second individual swim.

He embarked at 11:57.08 pm on October 6th from Arrow Point on the Island. It was an overcast, slightly windy night. The air temperature varied from 60 to 62 degrees while the water ranged from a low of 64 near the mainland to a constant 65-66 degrees the rest of the swim.

Jim fed every 30 minutes. He drank Sportalyte and took ibuprofen during the swim. His breaks were quick.

During the night many boats were visible, dolphins and then jellyfish. Jim was getting stung constantly. Next the diesel fumes of the boat affected Jim and the paddlers so he switched sides of the boat. This was done twice.

At the large rocks at Long Point, Jim exited the water by climbing up the rocks. His time was 10 hours 19 minutes and 24 seconds.

2004 Relays

There were two relays in 2004. These were the Mola-Mola and the Anguila. The teams swam simultaneously. The members were:

Mola-Mola	Anguila
Alan Freeman	Jaime Riley-Akers
Kerry Forsyth	Nicole Tetrault
Tom McNeil	Neil Dilworth
Duane Leib	Sylvia Glenn
Ron Perkins	Blake Chaffee
Mike Scarcelli	Ellery Strebin

The relays started just before day light, leaving at 6:12.50 am on August 19th. Within the first hour a huge sea lion swam by the two swimmers. Later numerous dolphins swam near the boat.

With the sun up the water temperature rose from 63 degrees to 72 degrees near Catalina. It was a calm day, with mild swells. A group of swimmers saw mola molas, then three blue whales. Unfortunately, the next thing to happen was a small shark approaching the two swimmers. The skiff was released to chase off the shark which turned out to be a three and one half foot Mako shark.

After 13 hours, 7 minutes and 35 seconds, according to observer David Clark, the two relays finished becoming the 49th and 50th relay to swim the Catalina Channel.

There were twenty swims in this era by 18 people. Jim McConica made his second crossing and John York in 2000 accomplished his sixth, becoming the most anyone had ever done.