

A History of the Catalina Channel Swims

Since 1927

by  
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Revised 2012, 1996, 1994, 1988

### **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 15

### 2012 Solo Swims

There were twenty four individual swims in 2012. The first swim of the year was Jaime Caballero of San Sebastian, Spain. He swam in the spring, on April 3, at 2:17 am from Doctor's Cove to the Mainland. The water was 56 degrees at the start. There was no wind and the water was flat. This was after a bumpy ride to the island according to the observers: Carol Sing and Tina Neill.

Jaime went the first hour without taking a feed break. Then he took breaks every thirty, twenty and fifteen minutes. On the first break he would have a sport liquid and on the next he would have water and a banana for a very short feed. His third feed was a drink and a Hostess Ding Dong (a small chocolate cake with cream in the center and covered in chocolate.) Then he would start the process over.

At 6:52 am, while he was half way, the swells and wind picked up. By 8:15 am the ocean had dropped to 54 degrees. Jaime on the other hand had just increased his stroke rate from 53 strokes per minute to 56 strokes per minute. The air temperature was 56 degrees. The wind speed was 13 to 16 knots while the waves were 3 to 5 feet high. By 9:49 there was a bright sun but the air felt colder even though it was 6 degrees warmer. At 10:49 Greg, the captain, took Bubba, to check out the landing spots. He decided on Terranea Beach and at 11:48.45 he landed. His official time was 9 hours, 31 minutes and 20 seconds.

Jaime became the 228<sup>th</sup> swimmer to swim Catalina.

Ernie Hoftzyer launched his swim at 12:09 am from Doctor's Cove on June 28<sup>th</sup>. There were no waves and no winds. It was a calm night. Ernie fed every thirty minutes. He drank 8 ounces of Perpetuem and three inches of beef stick. By his fifth feeding he gave up on the beef stick and went to Clif Shot with Perpetuem. He stayed with this combination through his last feed. He did say he was tired of Perpetuem on his 7:33 am feed.

The ocean temperature was cold. At the undertaking the water was 65 degrees but quickly fell to 64. Within two hours the water was 62.9 degrees. At 6 and half hours it was 61 degrees. Ernie was happy and doing well as recorded by the observers. When the water hit 60 degrees Ernie did not even know. In an hour it was back to 61 degrees.

The air temperature stayed in a range of three degrees, 60 to 62.

At 5:39 am the sun rose and with it were lots of small jellies. In addition, there were dolphins in front of Ernie. At 8:38 am Ernie had a regular feed but the Clif shot of caffeine made him in good spirits. There was a one foot wave at this point in the swim but it disappeared as soon as it came.

The GPS was 33.43.409N 118.23.949 W. Ernie landed at Terranea. His time was 9:36.43. There was a welcoming party on shore.

35 year old LaurieJo Hall-Cueto Arreola from Bloomington, Indiana attempted Catalina on June 28<sup>th</sup>.

She set out on her swim at 11:51pm. She left from Doctor's Cove where the water was calm but the sea life was active. The GPS was N33.29.862 W 118.31.024. The ocean

temperature was 66 degrees but dropped to 62 degrees during the nine hour swim. At 1:21 am the wind picked up and had swells of 1 to 3 feet as the crew sang her Happy Birthday. At the same time dolphins seemed to dance astern.

The air temperature dropped radically. From 74 degrees at the start to 63 degrees within two hours. It further fell to 61 degrees within another two hours. This combined with the water temperature was affecting the swim. Laurie fought through the pain.

Laurie maintained a 56 to 57 stroke per minute count. She had two counts higher at the start, 59 and 57, otherwise she held 56 to 57 spm

Laurie made the unusual choice of rarely stopping to re-fuel. She would swim at 2 to 3 hour intervals between feedings. Each time, the stops became longer and longer. Some up to two to three minutes in length.

Laurie landed at 9:07.00 am, East of Pt Vicente lighthouse, for a final time of 9 hours 15 minutes and 30 seconds. She became the 230<sup>th</sup> person to swim Catalina.

Anna-Carin Nordin of Sweden swam the Catalina Channel on July 2-3<sup>rd</sup>. She began at 11:02 pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> from Doctor's Cove. It was a calm night with no wind and less than a foot swell. The water was smooth as glass and was 56 degrees at the start. Palos Verdes was visible and there was a near full moon. There was cloud cover over the ocean towards the mainland.

Anna fed every two hours, then every hour. She planned to drink one gel with oats and whey mixed with 2 cups of water. In the odd hour she drank one gel plus a shake of 2 cups of water with oats and whey. She fed for thirty seconds but returning everything to the boat took one and a half minutes.

Anna's stroke count ranged from 77 at the beginning to a low of 63 at the finish. At the 4:58 feed Anna was asked questions of her fatigue as her stroke count had dropped from the high sixties. She was alert, coordinated and chipper according to observer Don Van Cleve and Dave Van Mouwerik.

By 5:35 am there was sufficient light to write and read by. Dolphins appeared and were jumping. This made Anna laugh.

A strong current was pushing the boat for two hours to the West despite the boat angling to the 20-25 degree to the East. This was explained to Anna. The KNX news radio reported on Anna's swim. At 11:06 Bubba went in to find a landing spot. At 11:43.02 Anna finished at the bottom of Cardiac Hill.

42 year old Chris Geer attempted to swim Catalina from Doctor's Cove at 12:51 am on July 6th. It was a beautiful night and there were perfect conditions. Chris began with a stroke rate of 70. Gradually he settled in to a rate of 65 for a while. From there his low rate was 66 and his high was 70. He increased his rate when dolphins were jumping next to him or when he heard how much was left to go.

Chris fed every half hour. He drank Cytomax, EFS, Perpetuem and water. He also had an Advil.

The observers stated the "water looks more like a lake" and later at 5:20 am "smooth as glass."

The water was, however, a bit colder. It fluctuated from 63 to 66 degrees. The air temperature commenced at 64 degrees and ended at 72 degrees. There were no waves or

wind on the whole swim. Then there was a surge at the finish that lifted him up and planted him on the rocks. He climbed over them onto the beach.

Chris's time was 9 hours, 56 minutes and 14 seconds. He was the 232nd person to swim Catalina.

Eddie Irwin was a 40 year old man from Cork, Ireland. He started his Catalina swim on July 9, 2012 at 11:41 at night. It was a calm night with an orange glowy moon. The ocean had two to three foot swells.

The water was 66 degrees at the onset. Gradually it lowered until it plummeted to 59 degrees at the finish.

The air temperature was a cool 62 degrees at the departure of Eddie from Catalina. It descended from there to 60 degrees but then jumped to 63 for the finish.

Eddie's stroke count fluctuated from a low stroke count of 51 spm to a high stroke count of 62 stroke per minute.

Eddie fed fluids every thirty minutes during the swim. Besides having a quick feed, 20 to 30 seconds, he drank paracetamol.

He received a "phone telling him to kick his feet and bring it home", as recorded in the log.

He smiled and kicked harder.

Eddie was surrounded by dolphins most of the last 3 ½ hours. By 9:00 am the water was colder. Eddie landed at 9:39.23.

35 year old Miguel Suner Comalat of Spain attempted Catalina on July 9, at 11:56pm. Miguel had a perfect night with both clear water and a night. There was some breeze but this settled down by 2 am. His first feed was a ½ liter of lemon recuperation. He also feed on Isopower, top 50, 50, infisport, energy plus, and a banana. Miguel repeated this mixed through the night.

As the night wore on the air temperature grew colder. In addition, Miguel appeared to drop his stroke count slightly as the hours wore on from 48 to 45 strokes per minute. This was not a large drop.

At 5:30 am Miguel switched to feeding every 20 minutes. Everyone was in good spirits; Greg played his bagpipes. Miguel landed at Point Vicente Beach, in 8:11.13. He was only six minutes off of the men's record.

Maria Selina Moreno Pasagali of Spain swam on July 12 at 11:52 pm. Her boat was the Bottom Scratcher, captained by Greg Elliott. Maria departed from Doctor's Cove during a 15 knot wind and rain storm.

She fed every 40 minutes at the beginning. She had short breaks then they became longer and longer until they reached three minutes on the fifth feed at 3:26 am. The rain had stopped then she took a five minute break as she needed another protein bar from the boat. From then on the breaks were two or more minutes every time.

The water temperature was a steady 66 degrees with one reading at 68 degrees. This made for a comfortable swim. Similarly the air temperature ranged from 71 degrees to 68 degrees.

Maria's stroke count fluctuated from 76 to 70 strokes per minute during the swim. She

breathed on both sides during the swim. Maria had a slight pain during the swim but kept fighting. At 11:11.35 Maria Selina became the first Spanish woman to swim the Triple Crown and the first breast cancer survivor Triple Crown according to the log.

Dave Van Mouwerik, 54, of San Luis Obispo entered Catalina at 00:16 on August 6, 2012. He left from Doctor's Cove. At the start there were 2 to 3 foot waves and 10 knot winds. There was a problem with too few glow sticks so Dave had to stop and have more put on but that failed. It failed a second time. After this he had to change goggles. Everything seemed to calm down after this break.

Dave's stroke rate ranged from a high of 66 to a low of 60 strokes per minute. The water temperature was 68 for most of the crossing then it lowered a few degrees. The air temperature also ranged from 72 degrees to 65 degrees.

Dave had planned his breaks well. He planned to drink Gu, Gel, Perpetuem, vitamin water and to eat Fig Newtons. On his next break he had 3 Tylenols and the conditions were calming down. After 30 minutes he wanted Vita water. While drinking this there were tons of Dolphins around him. Dave had 5.89 nm to reach the finish. Next there was a whale right in front of them. They had a large swell to land on the rocks and Dave landed safely. His time was 12:09.07. He was the 236<sup>th</sup> person to swim the Catalina Channel.

Sue Free of San Francisco intended to swim from Catalina to the mainland. She departed on August 7<sup>th</sup> at 11:29pm from Doctor's cove. There were long rolling swells and a clear sky. Nevertheless, soon after her first feed Sue threw up. After this a second kayak was launched for safety. On her third feeding of ginger tea and potato she really felt nauseous. She had two more feeds of tea and switched the side of the boat to avoid the fumes. This didn't help. At 3:38 am Sue fed on Hammer Gel and water then proceeded to "toss her cookies" with much wrenching and enthusiasm. Her crew cheered her on as they knew she was having a tough time. She fed on water but threw it up until the crew gave her a crushed Pepto-Bismol with water. Her response was "My crew was mean".

Sue's stroke counts were from 60 to 64 strokes per minute on the swim. She averaged 61 spm.

The water temperature began at 69 degrees and held there for four hours before dropping to 68 degrees for three hours. For the last hour the water had patches of 52 degrees and warm water. This created more nausea and pain. Meanwhile the air temperature was 67 to 68 through the night and rose to the warm eighties for the finish.

Other conditions included two foot high waves and wind speed for the first five hours then everything dropped to one foot and finished and below sea level. Sue was in better spirits and had another Hammer gel with water. Sue appeared positive. This was at 5:20 am. The next feeding was at 6:05 am when she had water and Hammer Gel. Before she started swimming again she had leg cramps.

At 6:17 she asked how far she had gone and was told more than half way. The sun came up at 6:43 am and at 6:54 Sue was given more water and another Hammer gel! At 7:06 she had swum 13.2 miles according to the captain.

Finally at 7:52 Sue had potato and water for a feed and was fine. In a half hour

she had another Hammer gel and water. Again at 9:25 am she had a Hammer gel with water.

At 9:45 Sue went crazy and called her crew liars. She believed she would be done in a ½ mile but was then told it would be longer. She stopped vertically to say this and was anxious to be finished. Gradually the fog lifted but Sue couldn't see the shore. She looked every few strokes according to observer Michelle McConica. She was not able to see anything; it was 10:35. Sue fed at 10:37 and saw the land right in front of her. Sue finished at Terranea Beach at 10:52.43 am.

Once on board Sue explained the pockets of 52 degree water and warmer water and how miserable that was. That was why she was so upset. Three miles of changing temperatures was not fun.

Sue's final time was 11 hours, 23 minutes and 38 seconds becoming the 237th person to swim Catalina.

50 year old Hendrik Meerman entered the water at Catalina at 11:42 pm on August 9<sup>th</sup>.

The conditions were well. There were no winds but a beautiful, bright half moon. The water temperature was 68 degrees to a low of 62.5 degrees at the finish. Meanwhile, the air temperature spanned from 68 to 78 in the swim.

Hendrik had a wide range in his stroke count from a high of 65 spm to a low of 51 spm. This could have been from the throwing up or the long breaks.

At 3:10 am Hendrik began throwing up. He continued this until the last two hours of the swim. When he had trouble with food his crew tried every combination of Maxim, Perpetuem, Power Bar, Green tea with carbohydrates, water and Pepto-Bismol.

By 7:53 am Hendrik went to ten minute breaks to get more fluids and carbohydrates in him. He maintained this to the end of the swim. This again was his crew's idea. At 10:27 am the sun was bright and Hendrik took time to stretch on each ten minute break.

At 11:29 am he smelled hot dogs cooking, a favorite smell of his. He had 1nm to go. He finished at 12:30 pm. His time was 12 hours, 48 minutes 30 seconds.

Adam Moine, a 20 year old from Torrance, decided to swim from Catalina to the mainland. He departed from Doctor's Cove at 1:57 am on August 20, 2012. At the beginning of the swim the water temperature was 71 degrees. The ocean was calm and it was an overcast night. Early in the swim Adam was stung by a jellyfish.

On his fourth 15-minute feeding Adam drank Ensure. Almost immediately Adam needed a goggle change which he did on the next feed. On the sixth feed Adam said he felt seasick. This seemed to pass rather quickly. By 6:12 am the sun came up, making for a nice day. Adam's feeds were fast 12 to 19 seconds. As Adam fed at 6:58 am a large tanker, Italia, was passing him. Adam was just over half way.

Dolphins came into view in between the feeds, exciting everyone on the boat. Something else began to happen. Adam would have an 8 second feed, followed by a 30 second feed. The second time this happened he asked for 2 Aleve. He hadn't complained of pain but must have had it.

Adam's stroke counts began at 66 strokes per minute for four hours. He slowly

fell to 62 strokes per minute. He dropped drastically to 55 spm at 8:07 am and stayed in the range of 54 to 58 spm to the finish. One of the reasons this happened as he began to lift his head to see where he was. Unfortunately he was doing it every 5 to 7 strokes. At 9:59 he had 1.7 nautical miles (nm) to go. Adam's family put a sailboat in the water and Adam's dad got in. His last two feedings were warmed as the water temperature had dropped.

Adam took off his cap as he was reaching shore. Believe it or not it was 70 degrees just 50 yards off shore. He landed just east of Terranea Resort. Adam finished at 11:11.31 for a final time of 9 hours, 14 minutes and 11 seconds.

The next swimmer from New York City, New York was Dan Boyle. Dan was swimming from Catalina to the mainland also on August 20<sup>th</sup>. He entered the water at 11:24pm at Doctor's Cove covered with lanolin. As recorded by observer Anne Cleveland, "It's a balmy, calm night with a crescent moon. Beautiful conditions for a swim".

Dan began with 62 strokes per minute. It was long and strong. He fed at the half hour mark, drinking Carbo Pro. At his fourth feed he requested water. He also stated he felt fine. After this he needed 2 ibuprofen. This seemed to kick up his stroke count which had dropped to 56-57.

By 5:30 am the sun was breaking through the darkness. Dan was more than half way and looking good. The water temperature was still 72 degrees and the air temperature was 67 degrees. The ocean was flat and there was no wind. He was still drinking CarboPro feed and he had 2 more ibuprofen at 6:00 am. Gradually the wind was picking up.

At 7:30 it was actually breezy. Dan had 4.7 nm to go. He also needed to change to tinted goggles and apply sunscreen to his face. By 8:30 there were 6 to 7 knot winds but no waves. By 8:45 there was a light chop and Dan only had 2.6 nm to go. He fed normally for a ½ hour then drank only water. His last feed was CarboPro with the land insight.

Dan finished at Terranea Beach in 10 hours, 55 minutes and 44 seconds. He was the 240th person to swim Catalina.

Laura Lopez-Bonilla was from Spain but she lived in Canterbury, England. Laura decided to swim the Catalina Channel in order to accomplish the final leg of the Triple Crown. On August 22 at 11:30pm Laura entered the water at Doctor's Cove after jumping off the boat and swimming into the shore. The water temperature was 68.5 at the start. Immediately, the kayakers complained of the smell of the exhaust. This led to Laura skipping her feed. Finally, she took a 30 second feed, drinking Maxim and Gel. She fed with a cup but inhaled some salt water. On the next feed she used a bottle.

At 4:20 am while Laura was drinking the boat began to drift and it took five minutes to bring Laura back in line. Gradually the captain and Laura seemed to be working together. This helped to decrease the rocking of the boat.

Laura's stroke counts started at 48 rose to 50 then to 52 spm. She maintained these throughout the swim. Similarly, the water temperature rose from 69 to 70 degrees, reached 71.5 before falling to 66 spm. Then an unusual occurrence happened. As Laura approached the three mile upwelling current, the water warmed up instead of down

making for a warm finish to the swim.

Laura's 7:12 am feed included a banana, gel with water and tea. She also agreed to feed every thirty minutes for the rest of the swim. The swells had picked up to less than two feet but with a six knot wind and a light mist.

During the swim Laura asked where you could find a decent breakfast. At the next feed she was given scrambled eggs made on board. She also had tea and Maxim.

By 10:00 am Laura was in pain again and had to take pain medicine and Ibuprofen. She drank more fluid on her next break. In addition, Point Vicente was visible. This made Laura happy. Besides this, her stroke count, her stroke and body position were in good shape according to the observers.

For the next two feeds Laura had gels and water then topped it off with Tetley's and fructose. As the chop was increasing Laura switched from bilateral breathing to greater breathing to the right side. This prevented her from swallowing lots of sea water.

Laura's last feed was at 1:25 pm when she had gel and 6 ounces of water. At 2:02.38 Laura climbed up the Terranea Beach. She immediately swam back to the boat. She refused food and drink. She was suffering from mild hypothermia as she was shivering slightly. Laura was in good spirits. Her total time was 14 hours, 31 minutes and 36 seconds.

Maribel Hawley, a 43-year-old from Mexico City, sought to swim the Catalina Channel on August 24, 2012. Prior to commencing the swim, Maribel greased up with Vaseline, baby ointment, and sunscreen applied by Nora Toledano, her coach. She started at 11:48 pm at Doctor's Cove.

Maribel chose to feed every thirty minutes in the swim. On her first feed she drank Accelerade. Her stroke was long and smooth. The water was also calm and balmy as recorded by observer Anne Cleveland.

At the three hour mark Maribel requested a pace swimmer. By the fourth hour the swimmer was moved to the port side of the boat as the diesel fumes were bothering everyone.

Maribel's stroke count began at 68 per minute then once she relaxed, the stroke count increased to 70 spm. She ranged from 68 to 70 strokes per minute for the rest of the swim.

The air temperature plummeted more than the water temperature. The air started at 73 degrees and fell to 64 degrees while the water temperature started at 71.7 and lowered to 67.3.

Besides drinking Accelerade, on some breaks Maribel ate mash potatoes and Gatorade, a little coffee and Hammer Perpetuem. She ate the potatoes from the boat. The potatoes seemed to lift Maribel's spirits.

Conditions were still good but some wind had picked up. It really didn't matter as Maribel only had a mile to go to finish and she was going strong. At 11:15.58 Maribel climbed out and over the rocks and on the beach at Terranea. Her final time was 11 hours, 27 minutes and 28 seconds. She became the first Mexican woman to swim Catalina and complete the Triple Crown.

Monica Bender, a 17 year old high school student from Mary Star of the Sea in

San Pedro decided to swim Catalina to the Mainland in 2012. She had a perfect night for a swim—calm, clear, beautiful night and flat ocean with no waves or wind. She entered the water at 1:07 am on August 26<sup>th</sup>.

Monica fed every fifteen minutes in the swim. She drank Ensure, Gatorade, hot cider, water, and pre-game fuel. She tried to spend no more than 15 seconds feeding.

About 5:00 am Monica began asking how far she had left to swim. She had completed  $6\frac{3}{4}$  miles which meant she had a little over ten nautical miles to go. It was a calm morning when the sun began to rise. The water was still glassy so it looked like Lake Catalina. At 6:53 am Monica's foot cramped so she asked for two Advil. In a few minutes she was feeling better.

Monica asked again, "How far do I have to go?" In a half hour she was given an answer. By 8:50 am Monica looked fatigued but pushed through the pain. She had five miles to go. At 10:23 she had 1 mile to go. After finding this out, numerous dolphins appeared. At 10:58.59 Monica finished. Her total time was 9 hours, 51 minutes and 14 seconds. She became the 243<sup>rd</sup> person to swim the Catalina Channel.

At 11:45 pm on September 9, Jaimie Monahan of New York departed on her crossing of the Catalina Channel. The boat was decorated by her family to instill good luck for the Catalina to mainland swim. She fed at the  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour mark and in this feed she had 8 ounces of warm Carbo Pro and ginger tea. A  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour later she had the same feed. She retained this pattern for many feeds. At 2:15 the fog crept in towards the swimmer. To cleanse her mouth of salt at 3:45 she gargled some mouthwash. She looked strong and her stroke was powerful. She had her normal feeding and sprung off. She was holding 43 to 44 strokes per minute until the last bit when she sprinted to the shore and hit 48 strokes per minute.

The ocean temperature was 72.8 degrees as she commenced the swim. Gradually and over seven hours it dropped to 70 degrees. After four hours at 70 degrees, it rose to 71 through 72.3 degrees. It was an amazingly warm swim. The wind knot speed rose from zero at the start to 5k then back to zero. The wave height was calm then reached two feet and then returned to a foot.

This was an ideal crossing with very few waves, limited wind and warm water. At 1:13 pm after seeing a pod of dolphins Jaime left the water and climbed up the beach. Her final time was 13 hours, 28 minutes and 41 seconds.

54 year old Ned Denison of County Cork Ireland walked into the water off of Catalina on September 20, 2012. An USA expatriate went to Ireland to train marathon swimmers. He has been running an open water swimming camp for eight years.

On his swim Ned averaged 66 strokes per minute. His high stroke count was 68 spm while his low was 64 spm. He was very consistent. The water temperature ranged from a start of 70 degrees to 71 for a few hours. Then it dropped to 68 degrees, slightly hit 69 degrees and was 68 degrees for the finish. This was a remarkable water temperature range.

The conditions were calm with some slight swells. The kayaker at the time of the swells fell off and it took four minutes for him to remount the kayak. Ned used this as a rest stop. The next stop Ned drank water as he didn't feel well. He took acid reflux and

anti inflammation drugs. On the ninth feed he exclaimed he had thrown up. By 6:36 am he felt fine and he enjoyed a beautiful sunrise for thirty seconds.

At 7:30 am he repeated his drug cocktail but this time without any problems. At the following feeding conditions had calmed and the sun was shining. Most of his feeds were 30 seconds in length and happened every thirty minutes. He drank off of a pole. Besides feeding on time he made sure to regularly pee every thirty minutes. At one point in the swim Ned looked to his left. His kayaker was on his right and he was guiding off of him. When he looked he swore he saw the largest damn shark he had ever seen but no one was reacting. He looked again and saw the same thing. Why was no one reacting? He was ready to quit. He would look one more time. He did and then he realized it was the boat. He laughed and kept swimming.

He finished in just under nine hours. 8 hour, 50 minutes, 04 seconds to be exact. He had trouble landing as there was strong surf at the finish.

Ned was in California to be inducted into the International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame. He was the 245<sup>th</sup> person to swim Catalina.

Douglas McConnell, also a 54 year old man from Barrington, Illinois, chose to swim Catalina on September 27. He swam from Catalina to the mainland. He departed at 12:25 am from Doctor's Cove. His captain was Greg Elliott of the Bottom Scratcher. Between the swimmer and the kayaker there were so many lights the observer thought it looked like a Christmas disco as they used red and green blinking lights.

Doug fed after he counted 3,247 strokes or an hour. His next break, 5,025 was 1 ½ hour. The water was calm, ocean was clear and there was a partially full moon. At his next feed, 8550, he screamed for the boat to stop as he fed off of the boat. He found it difficult to feed off of the boat.

His feed included liquid Advil, Infinite Nutrition, Maxim, water and tea. He drank every thirty minutes.

His stroke count was in the mid sixties at the beginning and slowly dropped to 60 where it remained for many hours. Slowly he fell to 58 and held that for the finish. Early in the swim he gathered it would take 30,000 strokes to complete the swim.

At 3:57 am he had to switch goggles twice as the first pair was leaking and the second pair he was given was tinted. Finally, he was given a clear pair and off he went.

He had no problem urinating and was asked early on in the swim. He requested it be written down and many times he announced when he relieved himself.

At 5:50 am the observer noted what a nice night it was and how calm it was. He also stated how lucky the swimmer was to have such a great night. At 6:30 am the serenade began as it was getting light.

The water temperature started at 69 degrees and slowly dropped to 63 degrees near the finish. Doug didn't complain about the temperature. He stayed in good spirits. At 25,840 strokes the crew dropped the end of the rope when throwing the feed bottles but no complaints were recorded.

With 5.1 nm to go he had swum 28,150 strokes. At 9:42 he felt the water get colder when he was feeding. At 10:20 a crisis occurred. He lost count –“Let's call it 32,600.” He had a long feed and changed goggles again.

He had two more hours and finished at 12:52 pm making his time 12:41.13. After

all the counting no final stroke count was recorded. He was the 246<sup>th</sup> person to swim Catalina.

Roger Finch chose to swim from Catalina to the mainland on September 30<sup>th</sup>. He began at 11:22 pm from Doctor's cove on a calm night with a full moon. There was a slight wind however. The boat was semi surrounded by dolphins.

He fed every thirty minutes after the first 45 minutes. Roger drank or ate the following during the swim: Maxim, banana, Energade, candy, Ibuprofen, acetaminophen and energy sweets.

His stroke counts ranged from 68 strokes per minute down to one count of 64 spm. Roger averaged 66 strokes per minute on the swim. He held this very well.

The water was 70 degrees at the launch and quickly dropped to 68 degrees. Roger was lucky as the water stayed at 68 degrees until 6:00 am. From there it fluctuated from 66 to 67 until the last reading at the finish. At 9:07 am it was 64 degrees.

During the night there were some boat troubles and then somehow at one point with the boat out of gear it drifted into the swimmer. Roger was under the bow for a few minutes and swallowed salt water. He postponed his feed then seemed to take it all in stride at his 13<sup>th</sup> feeding.

He also had to deal with fog in the early morning. By 8:10 he was laughing. The fog was gone when the sun broke through, the wind had died down and he felt good. He finished at 9:07. Roger's total time was 9:45.02 according to the observers.

Gabor Molnar of Hungary decided to swim Catalina. He entered the water on October the 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:34 pm swimming from Catalina to the mainland. There was a slight wind, swells, and chop. It was clear however and the lights on the mainland could be seen.

Gabor's first feed was after an hour then he fed every half hour. He drank Maxim and Competition according to his Plan Your Swim. His feeds were ten to twenty seconds in length. He didn't speak much but at the 1:04 am feeding he was told, "kick those legs party boy" and he laughed. He had 14 feeds on the swim.

At 2:35am the kayaker changed but Gabor kept swimming and went way off course. The new kayaker had to chase him down and return him to the right course. From the temperatures taken the water was between 68 and 70 degrees the whole night. Similarly, the air was in the sixties to 78 degrees at the start. The wind didn't pick up until 3:05 am and then only to 5 knots. The waves were never over 1 to 2 feet in height. This made for a nice crossing.

Just near the finish dolphins appeared as the sun rose. The fog that was visible in the night was no longer around. At 7:35 am Gabor finished. His final time was 9:00.48.

From Lake Hopatcong, NJ came Bridgette Hobart. She wanted to swim Catalina to the mainland. Her boat was the Outrider, captained by John Pittman. She commenced at 11:19 pm on October 2, 2012. As she started she didn't have any glow sticks on so she was stopped, put them on and began again.

Conditions were fine. There was no wind or swells and there was a full moon. The water was warm, from 69 degrees to 67 at the finish. What a nice night. At 5:48 am

there were slight 1 to 2 foot waves. Then at 7:21 am a 5 knot wind appeared but within a half hour both had disappeared.

Bridgette fed every half hour. She had 22 feedings of Hammer products and some Advils.

Bridgette had a fluctuating stroke count throughout the swim. It drifted from 65 to 62 to 58 to 56 strokes per minute. The observers didn't comment on any stroke problems.

There were two unique situations on her crossing. First, she had to move to the other side of her escort vessel because of the diesel smell, a few times and second there was a container ship which re-directed to miss running over the swimmer. By moving it passed astern.

In the morning with 1.9 nm to go Bridgette stopped to admire a sea lion trying to catch fish.

Bridgette landed during the surf at Terranea Cove at 10:47. This made her final time 11:27.16.

The final woman swimmer of the summer was Grace Van Der Byl. She swam from Catalina to the mainland. Her navigation escort was Outrider. She hustled into the water at 12:48 am on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Conditions were flat with no wind. This changed to one knot wind for a half hour at 1:46 am. It returned at 6:34 am with 3.5 knot wind for a short time and then disappeared.

Grace fed every half hour. She drank Carbo ProHydra C5 throughout the swim. At the six hour mark she had Motivator, a caffeine and alertness pill made by Carbo Pro. She had 14 feedings. Her feeds were fast from four seconds to eighteen seconds.

The water temperature was 68 to 69.2 degrees throughout the swim. The air temperature however was only 64.5 to 66.3 degrees.

Gracie's stroke count fluctuated from a low of 52 at the finish to a high of 62 strokes per minute on the swim. Neil, Gracie's husband kayaked for her on the crossing. This helped her spirits and attitude.

At 5:51 am Gracie felt nauseous. She asked for a break from swim buddies. By the 6:18 feed she felt better and the daylight was breaking through the night.

There was a debate by the observers as to where Grace should land, on the rocks at Long Point or at Terranea on the beach. Gracie made the decision. She went for the rocks. She swam so fast. Her time was 7:27.25. This was a world record for women and men from Catalina to the mainland. She broke Karen Burton's record by over eighteen minutes. In addition, this was the second fastest time ever for a Catalina swim. Well done Gracie!

After Gracie swim's her foot hurt. She had stepped on a sea anemone as she exited the water. She spent five days in the hospital. The good news she was she was fine and was the 250<sup>th</sup> person to swim the Catalina Channel.

Adam Walker of Nottingham, England was the last person to swim in 2012. He swam on October 16<sup>th</sup>. He commenced from Doctor's Cove at 12:12 am. At the beginning there were bright stars and the water was glassy. On the mainland there was fog. Once Adam was out of the protection of the shelter of the Island there were 1 to 2 foot waves and 4 knot winds. The water temperature was 67 degrees and similarly his

stroke count was 67 strokes per minute.

Adam went an hour before his first feed. During the swim he drank Maxim, hot chocolate, flat Coke and had Ibuprofen.

At the second hour he fed then vomited. Immediately he switched to half hour feeds. He drank a flat coke and held it down.

He drank Maxim and flat Coke at the thirty minute mark. He seemed to handle this so he drank his normal feed-hot chocolate with a scoop of Maxim. In 15 minutes this became fish food. Adam had another flat Coke to no avail. At 4:45am he had a third flat Coke but seemed to accept it.

At the same time the fog had rolled in and the clouds had covered the stars. Adam's stroke dropped briefly to 64 but once he was able to hold down his feedings his stroke count returned to 67 strokes per minute.

Adam's next seven feedings he rotated between Coke and hot chocolate without a problem.

By 8:55am the water was flat with slight ripples on long swells. Adam took a detour to pick up a mylar balloon during a feed. He had just been stung by two jellies in the last hour so was aware what was in the water or at least the surface.

At 9:45 after voiding satisfactorily according to the observers, he had a visit from a curious seal.

His stroke count increased to 68 spm as the blue sky peaked through the clouds. After not speaking on his feed the LAFD appeared to take pictures and stay with the swimmer until the end of the swim. Soon after the LAFD arrived Adam detected a massive temperature drop to 64 degrees. The fog was thick by the shore. Adam was swimming well. He was heading for Cardiac Hill. The coordinates 33.44.41N 118.24.16W. Adam landed at Cardiac Hill and was met by Forrest Nelson. His final time was 12 hours, 34 minutes and 55 seconds. He returned with the LAFD to be checked and warmed up. So went the 251<sup>st</sup> person swimming the Catalina Channel.

There were 24 swims in 2012. The outstanding swim in this year was preformed by Grace Van Der Byl. She swam from Catalina to the mainland in world record time. This was a world record for men and women. Her time was 7 hours, 27 minutes and 25 seconds more than 18 minutes under the former record. This is also the second fastest time ever swum across the Catalina Channel.

## NEW SWIMMER FROM 1950's

With greater research from many people and resources, five swimmers were found from earlier decades. They were Daisy Murchie, Leo Vigil, Stewart Evans, Greta Andersen and Isaac Papke. Considering that these swims were discovered following the 2011 season, they are included here.

**Daisy Murchie** was a 39 year old who swam on September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1956. She swam from the mainland to Catalina becoming the first woman to do so. Her time was 15 hours and 40 minutes almost two hours faster than her 1955 Catalina to the mainland crossing.

**Leo Vigil** was a 24 year old Cuban. He swam on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1957. He swam from the mainland to Catalina. Leo's time was 17 hours, 14 minutes and 45 seconds. He was retroactively credited as the 17th swimmer to cross

Captain **Stewart Evans** was from Newton Massachusetts. On August 27, 1959 he swam from Catalina to the mainland. His time was 20 hours, 55 minutes. Among the list of solo swimmers, he became the 20th person to make the crossing

The fourth swim for **Greta Andersen** was on October 16, 1959. She swam from the mainland to Catalina in 11 hours 7 minutes and 30 seconds. She was already credited as the 19th Catalina swimmer, but now ties Tina Neill for the most swims for a woman—four.

Finally there was **Isaac Papke** who swam from Catalina to the mainland. Isaac swam on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1963. He landed at 8:38 am after swimming 12 hours and 45 minutes. He becomes the 22nd person on the list of solo swimmers.

There were ten relays in 2012.

## CHAPTER 15 2012 Relays

There were ten relays in 2012. The relays begin with Tripod A, B, C. These were made of the following swimmers:

Tripod A	Tripod B	Tripod C
Karl Jacobs	Dan Simonelli	Tom Cook
Thomas Johnson	Julian Rusinek	Kelley Schall
Kenny Jacobs	Marc Horowitz	Tanya MacLean
Patsee Ober	Natalie Kreizinger	Steven Coppersmith
Martha Gaughen	Carol Hayden	Lynn Kubasek
Yafa Minazad	Kim Miller	Paula L. Selby

The Tripod relays started at 11:25pm from Cabrillo Beach on the Mainland. Each group swam well together and did sufficient changes. Initially the water temperature was taken. The water was 58 degrees! Gradually this warmed until it capped off at 66 degrees. At the end of the second leg numerous jelly stings were encountered. Unfortunately the jellies continued. At 5:25 am the first group returned to the water. The sky was getting light and foggy but there was flat water according to the observers. Soon after this a dolphin was sighted and this encouraged everyone. Everyone was going in at the next transition as the group was 500

yards from the finish. The official time of the three Tripod relays were 13 hours, 16 minutes and 41 seconds. These relays became number 76, 77, and 78.

The fourth relay, The Rocking Hot Chicks and the Dude

Teri Clavell	Cindy Meyer
Heidi Thomas	Becky Jackman-Beeler
Carol Sing	John York

The relay swam from the mainland to Catalina. The water was 59 degrees at the start and gradually warmed to 69 degrees over the next twelve hours. There were lots of jellies on the crossing or to quote it properly, “there’s a shitload of jellies, actually salps”. John was playing, spitting water, messing up stroke counts and stopping for jellies. At 8:35 am in the calm water the dolphins appeared. It was a large pod in front and behind the swimmer and the boat. Stroke counts were taken on the swim. John was 75 or zero when he was playing; Heidi was 50; Ashley was 53; Carol was 61 and Teri was 58. There was no count for Cindy. Cindy was the first and final leg of the relay. Everyone swam in with her. The final time was 12 hours, 17 minutes and 20 seconds according to observers.

The fifth and sixth relay of the summer of 2012 were:

Wild Old Women	Swell Guys
Carol Sing	Bill Crane
Betsy Jordan	Stephen Frantz
Janet Lamott	Dan Henry
Deb Peckham	Steven Dockstader
Dudley Rockwell	Roger Renstrom
Sandra Vickers	Stephen Cross

The relays commenced from Cabrillo Beach on August 3rd at 3:30 am. There was a full moon and a strong current pushing the relays to the Southeast. At 5:30 am a Pacific white sided dolphin was playing in the waves. In the distance two whales had been spotted. To help with the paddling once a swimmer completed his swim leg he would do a leg of paddling. This was very efficient use of resources and personnel. Conditions were ideal, so much so, they called it Lake Catalina. The ocean temperature was 61 degrees at the start. The water fluctuated from 61 degrees to 72 degrees. This was a large difference. Similarly, the air temperature ran the field from 64 to 85 degrees. The highest swell was 2 to 3 feet.

The third leg was begun at 3:30 pm. The relays were doing well. At 7:48.20 the swimmers completed the swim. The total time was 16 hours, 5 minutes and 65 seconds. These were the 80 and 81st relay of Catalina. In addition, the WOW relay was comprised of swimmers between the ages of 70 and 79 and they set a new age group relay record.

The seventh relay was Commotion on the Ocean made of:

Julian Rusinek	Tim Davies	Ben Barham
Peter Hayden	Vanessa Mesia	Karl Jacobs

The relay started from the mainland to Catalina on August 6<sup>th</sup> at 11:39 pm. There were excellent conditions and a clear night. The moon was a ¾ moon. The water was 63

degrees at the first reading and unbelievably it was 71 degrees by the finish.

Vanessa on her first swim had a 66 spm. Tim held 68 spm. As the swimmers were only swimming one or two hours with no feeding, having a stroke count helps them know how well they are doing. Ben had a low 47 spm, while Julian held 60 spm.

By the sunrise the swells picked up and made it tougher to swim according to the log. By mid morning the swell had calmed down and it had warmed up. A baby octopus was seen on route, sunning itself. Tim Davies finished the relay, landing west of Long Point on Moonstone Beach. All the swimmers went ashore. The final time was 14 hours, 11 minutes and 26 seconds.

The next relay was the CO & CA Kelp Patties. The members were:

Charlotte C Plummer	Averill Sehler	Michelle Poole
Jerry Orten	Cherie Edborg	Howard Burns

The relay swam from Doctor's Cove on the Island. There was no wind, no waves and no swells. The first swimmer was Charlotte with a 68 stroke count. Averill was second in a smooth exchange and a 70 spm. The third swimmer was Jerry who was able to hold a 56 stroke count. Michelle was the fourth swimmer with a 72 stroke count. At the same time the kayak tipped and messed up the order for a few minutes but then all was well. Howard paced a 70 stroke count and did it without a kayak for a while. Cherie entered after paddling two legs.

The team was more than half way and the bagpipes were blaring. The second round had begun and the sun had risen. A few legs were swum before Howard finished the relay. The time was 10 hours, 7 minutes and 53 seconds. This was the 83rd relay to swim Catalina.

The ninth relay was Just Keep Swimming made up of:

Alicia Bartley	Kate Martin	Robyn Beresh
Sherry Winston	PK Gauchan	Steve Klein

The relay swam from Catalina to the mainland. The relay used pilot Greg Elliott of the Bottom Scratcher. They departed at midnight on August 31<sup>st</sup>. The conditions for this relay were horrible. The seas were so rough everyone was seasick. The third swimmer was so sick she had to take barf breaks during her leg and no one knew if she would make it. She was tough and fought through not once, but twice.

There were jellies on the crossing and everyone was stung. The only good news was the water was 70 degrees. Most of the swimmers felt better when the sun came up. Conditions improved a little but it was still rough.

The team landed after 13 hours 8 minutes and 19 seconds. They became the 84<sup>th</sup> relay to swim the Catalina channel.

The tenth and final relay of the summer was the San Francisco Dolphins. The relay was composed of the following swimmers:

Rachel ElginSmith	Brian ElginSmith	Jessie Czelusta
Dave Cameron	Paige Coulain	Leigh Fonseca

It was a beautiful night with a romantic moon as recorded by the observer. The swim began at 12.11 am with Rachel leading the team. The second leg was Jessie, followed by Dave. Brian, the fourth leg, swam breaststroke. Next Paige hopped in the water and she was followed by Leigh.

The second round began as the sun was rising. Everyone swam a second leg and dolphins accompanied the group into the shore for the finish. The final time was 11 hours 45 minutes and 59 seconds. This was the 85th relay to swim the Catalina Channel.

There had been 251 people swim Catalina by the end of 2012. There had been 85 relays. The Catalina Channel Swimming Federation is growing and future years have much potential both for Catalina Channel crossings and for the Swim Around Catalina.