

*Jennifer Stock:* Tom Kendrick is the author of "Blue Water Goldrush - The Odyssey of a California Sea Urchin Diver." The book came later, though. What the book describes is Tom's 18 years as a commercial sea urchin diver in California. Blue Water Goldrush reveals a little bit of everything: natural history, behind the scenes, a look at the camaraderie between folks in the industry, what it's like to make a living from the ocean, managing money, relationships, and responding to changes in the ecosystem, and world economics. Tom, thanks for joining me in the studio.

*Tom Kendrick:* Nice to be here, Jenny.

*Jennifer Stock:* So, can you give us a little bit of background first of just how did the sea urchin industry start and I know that it started in Japan and I'm curious how did they all of a sudden decide they wanted urchin roe or is it just roe that they wanted or...?

*Tom Kendrick:* It's actually the gonads of the urchin, but we call it roe, yes, and in the mid 60's, one of the world's foremost experts on kelp, a fellow by the name of Wheeler J. North, down at Scripps Institute in southern California determined that sea urchins were destroying the kelp beds of California. So, he started this urchin eradication program under the auspices of California Department of Fish and Game. Divers were sent down with hammers to kill the urchins. This is in the mid and late 60's. Now, just a couple of years later, a National Fisheries Marine Biologist by the name of Susumu Kato...now, this fellow knew that urchins were a prized item, a delicacy in Japan on the sushi menu, called uni and so he looked at these guys going down killing these urchins and he scratched his head and he said, "Now wait a minute. I wonder if we can start a fishery up here and export these fresh uni over to Japan."

So, in 1972 the experimental sea urchin fishery began in California.

*Jennifer Stock:* So, it's kind of a neat opportunity to manage an ecosystem and also have an economic value as well.

*Tom Kendrick:* Well, it really went through a lot of changes. Back in those days in the beginning, the urchins were considered a pest. The dive magazines were advertising for urchin divers. You can make, you know, 7, 8 cents a pound, you can go out and make yourself a hundred dollars a day doing this. We need to clean out these pests.

*Jennifer Stock:* So, there was encouragement to get out and dive on these kelp beds, get these urchins, and then make a dime as well....

*Tom Kendrick:* You got it.

*Jennifer Stock:* ...a pretty dime from what I understand. So, how did you get involved in sea urchin diving yourself?

*Tom Kendrick:* Well, I grew up in Hawaii and I had this natural love for the ocean and for surfing. I was...spent more time at the beach than I did at school. We moved to Santa Barbara in the mid-60's. I finished up my high school years and I was just a surfer there. I was living on a boat trying to get out to the Channel Islands to find the surf out there. I had heard there was surf out there and this was in the mid 1970's.

I was sleeping on my boat one morning. There was a knock on my cabin door, a sea urchin dive boat skipper needed a deck hand. His man didn't show up that day. So, that day in the spring of 1978, I went out to San Miguel Island, I tended on that boat, I made \$160. That was the beginning of my 22 year sea urchin career.

*Jennifer Stock:* So, tending on the boat is...you're not actually diving, but you're, kind of, helping on the boat.

*Tom Kendrick:* Right, you're the deck hand. You're handling the machinery, the dive hoses, you're hoisting the urchins up on to the boat. It's difficult work.

*Jennifer Stock:* Did you get any surf in that day?

*Tom Kendrick:* No, I didn't find any surf out there for a long time.

*Jennifer Stock:* But you found a job.

*Tom Kendrick:* I found a job.

*Jennifer Stock:* Alright!

*Tom Kendrick:* I eventually found the surf.

*Jennifer Stock:* So, actually, in your times later with the urchin diving was there usually surf trips combined with that after....?

*Tom Kendrick:* You know, some guys are able to do that, combine the surf with the diving. I was never able to do that. For me, it was either I'm

going to make a work trip and go diving and make money or I'm going to go surfing today and go play.

*Jennifer Stock:* Nice. It seems there are certain character requirements that you describe for one to be a member of the sea urchin fleet. In your book, you talk a lot about some of the characters that you worked with, which are great stories and you write about the citizens in quotes and the non-citizens in quotes. What's the criteria for being a citizen of the sea urchin fleet?

*Tom Kendrick:* Oh, gee. I think there's one part of the book where I said we're comprised of a group of drug addicts, alcoholics, thieves, murderers, liars, and parking violators. Other than that, we're great guys.

*Jennifer Stock:* And I'm sure ocean-loving people because it takes a lot of commitment to be on the water that much.

*Tom Kendrick:* You know, back in the early days if you really look at how anything got started, the pioneers of any industry, or the pioneers of countries, you take a look at the first citizens of the United States, of Australia, the first citizens of Las Vegas, the pioneers of any industry are a lot of times some colorful characters.

*Jennifer Stock:* So, are there any characters you'd like to share any stories about? Maybe one spirited character that you could recall some good memories with?

*Tom Kendrick:* Well, I guess I could talk...there's so many of them. One of them is a fellow named Crazy Harold and Crazy Harold was the guy who made all our air compressors and so, if we needed an air compressor system, we would go out to Crazy Harold's house. Now, Crazy Harold had a very foul mouth, a lot of four letter words. He was very abusive when he spoke to you and not really, not a nice guy. He actually is kind of a pussy cat, but he was very loud, obnoxious, but if you could tolerate the verbal abuse, you could always get a good deal from crazy Harold.

*Tom Kendrick:* Typical dive day is you've got...let's say you've got a two-man boat, a two-man operation with one tender. Say you've got a 30 foot boat. You're going to cruise along about 15 knots, maybe. So, you're going to get a pretty early start.

We would leave while it was still dark, about 5:30 in the morning. We would have about a four hour run longways out to San Miguel Island, about 50 miles. So, we'd get out there and get anchored up

and start suiting up say around 9 or 10 o'clock. A diver is going to spend between four and six hours underwater everyday, not all at one time. They'd dive for about an hour, hour and a half, get up on the boat, take a break, and then make another jump. And so, we'd finish up our work day, get underway, maybe four five six o'clock. On this particular boat I was on back in the late 70's, we'd get back to Santa Barbara and get back to the harbor maybe 9, 10 o'clock at night, get unloaded, clean up the boat, and home by midnight.

*Jennifer Stock:* And is there somebody waiting on shore to weigh your catches and....

*Tom Kendrick:* Right. We would...his name, the dock master or the weigh master, a fellow named Wes Carpenter and so, I actually write about Wes. He was a great guy and mentor to a lot of us young divers. So, this was pre-cellphone days. So, we would get on ship-to-shore marine radio, call up the marine operator, and call to Wes's house and tell him we're going to be in about 8 o'clock. We've got 8,000 pounds of urchins. So, he'll call the trucks in Los Angeles and the trucks will be waiting for us when we hit the dock.

*Jennifer Stock:* I see. So, where else was urchin diving taking place in the 70's? You were writing from the Channel Islands, but where are some other areas in the United States that urchin diving was taking place?

*Tom Kendrick:* It got started in central California and Santa Barbara, Channel Islands. There were eventually by 1980, there was a fishery working out of San Diego. That was...and the Channel Islands Harbor in Ventura. That was about it for California. A fishery got started in Maine in the early 1980's, getting the green sea urchins. Now, in the early 80's, in the mid 80's, there was a lot of exploration taking place. We looked over Oregon, Alaska, fisheries got started up all over the world in those days in Chile, in Russia, Vancouver Island, Canada, and so, it was in the early and mid 80's when the fishery really exploded.

*Jennifer Stock:* With all this happening all around the U.S., there's a lot of urchin potential. What was...how did that drive price economics with getting a price per pound or was that...did that drive the price or was that more of the need for...?

*Tom Kendrick:* It's a typical supply and demand-type business. The quality of the roe at the Channel Islands is very high quality, second only to the Japanese product. So, in the late 70's and the early 80's, Santa Barbara was king and we were making good money. Our price

continued to climb. There was a lot of competition. We controlled the domestic market. There was no other urchins being harvested in the United States. So, Santa Barbara was king.

We were making a lot of money. We were buying houses and new cars, new trucks. When we came up to the north coast in the mid 1980's it was the same thing all over again and we had this new virgin territory up here and we harvest a lot of urchins here in northern California. Now, also at the same time was when the other fisheries got started around the world, created a lot of competition, making it a lot tougher on us.

*Jennifer Stock:* What made the product so supreme in Santa Barbara?

*Tom Kendrick:* Well, the sea urchin roe was....what you're really looking for is bright yellow, a firm piece of roe about the size of your thumb. There was a huge amount of kelp beds in the Channel Islands that urchins are well-fed. They have a lot of natural nutrients in that area of the coast and so, that's kind of what makes them a superior product.

*Jennifer Stock:* You were saying earlier there was this management scheme they were eventually...earlier before they knew it was going to be an economically valuable practice, they were going to go out and get rid of these urchins. What was the ecological scene at the time of why there were so many urchins? How come there wasn't a real balance?

*Tom Kendrick:* Well, of course, the natural predator for the sea urchin is the sea otter. The otters, as we know, were hunted to near extinction by the turn of the century. So, by the time guys like me came along, the urchins on the coast of California has almost 100 years of uninhibited growth. There were carpets and carpets of urchins out there and our job was to clean out the kelp beds, to save the kelp forests.

*Jennifer Stock:* Because the kelp provides habitat for so many other animals, right?

*Tom Kendrick:* That's right. Now, interestingly enough, it, kind of, through the course of my career in Santa Barbara, started out with only maybe 100 divers in the state. Well, by 1986, there were nearly 1,000 divers harvesting the urchins and so it kind of went the other way. There was no size limits, there were no regulations, we were taking huge quantities of urchins, and so, there was problems of overfishing...were taking place.

*Jennifer Stock:* So, that brings up a good point. You write in the book about regulations and then they come. What was the reaction from the community?

*Tom Kendrick:* Well, it was interesting because there was, I mean, even up here in Fort Bragg and Noyo, one of the fish and game biologists, a guy named Pete Calvis, was calling for an emergency five-year moratorium on urchin harvesting. So, it was a really volatile subject and the urchin divers, we were up in arms because we're out there trying to make a living on these things, but I could see, even guys like me could see, that we would go into an area, a kelp bed, and harvest 95 percent of the urchins. We'd take them all and they'd take a while to come back.

So, what happened was, and there was all these rumors of regulations. "Oh, we're going to be shut down. We're not going to be able to provide for our families." So, we had regulations imposed on us right around 1986. We had a size limit. Urchins could no longer be taken less than three and a half inch shell diameter on the north coast. We...our harvesting days are cut back to seasons and so, then there was also a moratorium put on the number of divers we could have. The number of divers began to, we had a target number of 300 we had to get down to.

So, a lot of us were up in arms about it. It did hurt us financially to the tune of about 30 percent of our income for the first couple of years. As I look back on it, it was the greatest thing that we could have done. The size limits alone created what we have now as a sustainable sea urchin fishery.

*Jennifer Stock:* And probably some of those regulations were a benefit to the families that were wanting their partners back on land every once in a while.

*Tom Kendrick:* That's right. We had...before more my schedule...everything was dependent on the weather...

*Jennifer Stock:* Right.

*Tom Kendrick:* ...on the weather and the market and then it came along we could only work four days a week and, of course, that made my wife happy.

*Jennifer Stock:* Yeah. Now, how did actually...you said there was a limit of 300 on the fleet. How did they cull down to that number?

*Tom Kendrick:* What happened was there was, like, 960 divers in the state. So, the fish and game said we have to somehow get this number down to 300. So, there was a lottery system put in place that for every ten divers who got out of the fishery, let there permits go, one permit would be released by lottery. Now, it took about 12 years to get the number down to 300, but that's about where it is now.

*Jennifer Stock:* Did you have any of your buddies lose out on this process or the people you worked with, did they stay in or...?

*Tom Kendrick:* Well, a lot of guys have stayed in. You know, you get to be about 40, 45 years old and its hard to change careers and so, now what we have is an average age of sea urchin divers is now in the late 40's.

*Jennifer Stock:* Wow.

*Tom Kendrick:* A lot of my friends are still doing it. So, we've got interesting times ahead in the sea urchin fishery because guys are getting out and hanging on to their permits and still trying to scratch out a living. So, it's interesting times ahead.

*Jennifer Stock:* Interesting. So, when did you get your own boat? You worked on a couple other boats when you got started and really got a feel for how to do this and what you would need to do if you invested more money. So, what brought you to finally buy your own boat?

*Tom Kendrick:* Well, I needed to do some surfing. The guys that I was diving with and working with, they weren't surfers and it would kill me to be out there eating my sandwich, taking a lunch break, and 400 years away there's these beautiful waves and guys surfing on them. So, that was really the prime motivator for me was I wanted to have a rack on my boat and I could carry my surfboard and if I had a few bucks in the bank, I could go surfing.

*Jennifer Stock:* Now, you stuck to California waters only because I know...what about Mexico? Did you ever go down to Mexico or were you allowed to fish in Mexico?

*Tom Kendrick:* Well, we weren't allowed to. We...me and a buddy of mine tried to get a little something going down there in northern Baja and we had a great time. It was a fun experience. We failed miserably, but there is now a healthy fishery in Baja.

*Jennifer Stock:* By Mexican divers...

*Tom Kendrick:* Yes.

*Jennifer Stock:* ...and regulated by Mexico too, right?

*Tom Kendrick:* Yes.

*Jennifer Stock:* Excellent. Well, I just wanted to take a short break in just a few moments here and let listeners know that they are hearing from a former sea urchin diver, Tom Kendrick, and we're talking about his experience as a commercial sea urchin diver and you're listening to Ocean Currents on KWMR. Please stay tuned.

I'm talking with Tom Kendrick, the author of Blue Water Goldrush and a former commercial sea urchin diver and avid surfer still to this day.

*Tom Kendrick:* Yes.

*Jennifer Stock:* So, Tom, tell us just a little bit about, something about sea urchins in general of their natural history. They're an echinoderm. They're related to sea stars, but can you tell us a little bit more about them?

*Tom Kendrick:* Urchins, as it turns out, are like 400 million years old. They predate most animal species on the planet. They're found in oceans, waters all over the world. One of the really interesting things I found out in my book research was the urchins that we were harvesting, say at the Channel Islands, now, we thought that the urchins, we'd harvest them, they would have babies, and they would grow there. Well, as it turns out that happens with some of them, but with many of them, they're spawned maybe 1,000 miles away up in Canada and they drift in the currents, in the California current, and they eddy around in the ocean and they settle there and the urchins that are spawned in the Channel Islands could settle out and become babies 1,000 miles south.

*Jennifer Stock:* Wow. That's interesting. That makes a lot of sense oceanographically because Point Conception is a big break point for the California current and then that's why the Channel Islands are such an incredible area because they have these swirling currents and incredible settlement areas for life drifting in the current.

*Tom Kendrick:* We were so spoiled diving the Channel Islands. That's where my diving career began. I dove the Channel Islands for nine years. When we did the north coast migration in 1987, came up here, it was just a complete different ballgame. We're diving in this, you

know, dirty water, poor visibility, cold, miserable, you know? It was just the Channel Islands are such as unique area on the coast.

*Jennifer Stock:* When you say dirty you mean plankton-rich.

*Tom Kendrick:* Well, you can say plankton-rich, but you could also say muddy because we have a lot of runoff in the coastal areas up here after a rain and we have a lot of river outlets too. So, there's a lot of brown water...

*Jennifer Stock:* Right, from the Russian River and north. So, what actually brought you to move up north to Mendocino? You really had a great thing going in the Channel Islands. What was going on that really made you and a few others decide to check out Mendocino?

*Tom Kendrick:* Right. By the mid-80's the fisheries had really grown to, like I said, almost 1,000 divers and the Channel Islands were really over-harvested. We had a lot of divers out there taking the urchins with no rules, no regulations. So, the resource, number one, had been depleted. Then on top of that we had a couple of back to back El Nino years. The kelp, by 1986 and 87, was essentially gone. So, the urchins weren't eating good. They were poor quality.

Now, a few guys came up here and discovered these vast virgin reef areas of Sonoma and Mendocino counties. I came up in the second wave in 1987, started harvesting Point Arena even though the water was cold and, you know, dirtier than what we were used to diving in, poor visibility. There was just carpets and carpers of what we would call virgin reef.

*Jennifer Stock:* How did you know that Point Arena would be a good destination? Were there people scoping it out?

*Tom Kendrick:* A couple of guys came up and scoped it out. They just had a brand new pier put in. The pier was knocked out in the storms in 82 and 83 and so, there was a brand new pier there, which was nice. We had unloading facilities there.

*Jennifer Stock:* The waters are definitely a little bit creepier up here with poor visibility. Did you have encounters with some of the predators that seem to be in high abundance here, white sharks, Mr. G.W., as you refer to in the book?

*Tom Kendrick:* In all my years of diving, you know, we have a lot of stories, a lot of encounters with a lot of crazy things. I never saw anything like that until I started diving the Farallon Islands in about 1988 and

that's, of course, a well-known breeding ground for the great white shark. Now, I made 118 dive trips to the Farallon Islands. I saw great whites less than a dozen times, but when you see those guys, it gets your attention.

*Jennifer Stock:* Yeah. Well, I know the Farallones is an eating ground. I don't think they know if its a breeding ground yet, but they don't even know where the white sharks breed, but that would be a concern I would think as a diver to be in the eating grounds of white sharks. Now, when you're diving it sounds like with urchin divers, you pretty much go straight to the bottom and you're down there the entire time and where did you see the sharks? Were they at more the surface? Were they down more below checking you out? What were your observations?

*Tom Kendrick:* Just about every time I ever saw one...now, you have to keep in mind we're busy, we've got our head down, and we're working. We're not really looking around at pretty fishies and things like that. We're working hard and we're trying to make a lot of money and just about every time I ever saw a shark, he had come up from behind and the first thing I would see would either be his head or his pectoral fin. So, he was already by me by the time I saw him.

*Jennifer Stock:* Wow and your reaction?

*Tom Kendrick:* Basically fear.

*Jennifer Stock:* Yeah. I can imagine the adrenaline.

*Tom Kendrick:* We would have all these theories that we would come up with. You know, we would say, "Well, let's see. If we go up and pull the anchor and move the boat 300 yards, we'll be safe." Or we would say, "We'll pee in our wetsuit because maybe sharks don't like urine. Then we'll be safe." I know these theories seemed to work.

*Jennifer Stock:* Uh-huh. Actually, that brings up a point. You talked about, with your boat, a process that you did for trying to discover a new habitat called live boat surveying and that's pretty much a boat moving forward and a diver being dragged behind. Was there any concern of looking like a marine mammal when you were doing this?

*Tom Kendrick:* Well, the way you're describing is we're kind of trolling the diver along. Live boat is usually done when there's very little wind and a pretty calm day. So, you've got one guy up on the boat who is a very experienced boat handler and so, he's operating the throttle

and he's watching the hose. The other diver is in the water and he's just swimming around, not necessarily being pulled around by the boat. Now, periodically, he might say, "Ok. Drag me over there." So, you do get a little bit of that, but for the most part, the boat is just kind of floating around.

*Jennifer Stock:* That's good.

*Tom Kendrick:* The diver is swimming around.

*Jennifer Stock:* Yeah because that's one of the ways that they are known to be attracted is by things floating near the surface, but I guess you're down below anyway. So, you came up to the north coast of Mendocino and you wrote some really neat natural history descriptions of some areas and one are you talk about is the Blue Lagoon and it sounds like this mysterious spot that's really hard to access and can you talk a little bit about that place?

*Tom Kendrick:* Of all the stories in my book, that's the one that people most ask me about is the Blue Lagoon and it's just a little slot, a little nook in the rocks that we found up north of Noyo Harbor. My friend, Duagg, and I and it was just found it while we were live boating and swam in and saw a field of urchins in there. We were able to squeak the boat in there. It was pretty dicey getting the boat into this little crack, but once we got the boat inside the lagoon, we were invisible. The other boats couldn't see us and couldn't find us. So, we worked for several months up at the Blue Lagoon north of Noyo and a lot of people to this day always ask me about the Blue Lagoon. Where is it?

I go into a real description in the book telling about the caves that we found in there, the walls of urchins, the octopus, and all the neat stuff that was being held in the Blue Lagoon.

*Jennifer Stock:* Yeah. It sounds like an incredible place. I really enjoyed that part of the book of just...really descriptive of this underwater place that's somewhere protected.

*Tom Kendrick:* Our little underwater paradise.

*Jennifer Stock:* Yeah. Well, if it's not Cordell Bank it's got to be nearshore. So, in your experiences with diving in the nearshore of Mendocino coast versus the Farallones, what were some of the differences you noticed in the underwater habitat that was either good for urchin habitat or not so good for urchin habitat.

*Tom Kendrick:* Well, urchins are what they eat and the urchins eat the kelp and whatever other nutrients they can find. So, on the Sonoma and Mendocino coast, we have kelp, we have the macrocystis-type kelp, the bull kelp, the palm kelp, but it's not island. It's not the nutrients you get out at the islands and you have these swirling currents out there that the islands catch. So, the Farallones are 25 miles offshore. So, besides the kelp and the lettuce and whatever else is on the bottom out there, they're going to get all of those water-borne nutrients as well. So, the urchins out there at the time were very high-quality urchins.

*Jennifer Stock:* Wow. How about some of the other observations besides urchins. What were some of the differences in the habitat like as far as other animals that you'd see, fishes, or...?

*Tom Kendrick:* Well, of course, a huge difference is water clarity out there. You're out in the ocean. So, you have the opportunity to have some great visibility, 20, 30, 40 foot visibility days.

*Jennifer Stock:* Wow.

*Tom Kendrick:* We saw wolf eels out there, monkey-faced eels. We saw, of course, Mr. G.W. out there. Now, of course, not many guys go diving out there and there are boats out there. So, the bottom is littered with a lot of junk out there. So, we found a lot of interesting sea treasure as well.

*Jennifer Stock:* Ohhhh. What type of treasure did you find?

*Tom Kendrick:* Well, we found a ship, a couple of ships that hit the islands back around the turn of the century and I once found about a 50 pound stainless steel bruce anchor with 200 feet of chain.

*Jennifer Stock:* Wow.

*Tom Kendrick:* So, we found some other treasure besides urchins out at the Farallones.

*Jennifer Stock:* And what was the year you were out there at the Farallones?

*Tom Kendrick:* Started in '88, there at the Farallones through '92.

*Jennifer Stock:* Uh-huh and how many other divers were out at the Farallones? I know there's one boat that's still going out there.

- Tom Kendrick:* There's a couple guys that got out there before me that I know of. George Tomlinson and Jim Clayholt were out there before me and then when I went out there I dove by myself out there for a while and then I got couple of other guys on the boat, Terrell Cryer, Doug Dirksy, and Ron Elliott and Ron is the fellow you're talking about who is still out there.
- Jennifer Stock:* Yeah. He sounds like a character. You write about him a little bit.
- Tom Kendrick:* Ron's a good guy.
- Jennifer Stock:* And these boats that are going out to the Farallones are going out at Bodega Bay? Is that the closest point?
- Tom Kendrick:* We've dove to the Farallones out of Bodega Bay, Sausalito, and Half Moon Bay.
- Jennifer Stock:* So, after this period that you experienced seeing this change in the industry and more boats coming on and moved up to areas where there was virgin territory and you saw these changes, what were some of the things that brought your urchin career to an end? What were some of the key points that really made you decide it was time?
- Tom Kendrick:* I had been in it for 20 years. I was getting older. We started diving down at San Clemente Island when I got kind of tired of diving up here and the urchins were pretty good quality out at San Clemente Island. So, we went down there. My family was up here, my kids were in school, I was gone a lot. The diving on the backside of Clemente is deep. I got bent out there. So, I got hurt.
- So, an injury was a big part of ending my career around the year 2000.
- Jennifer Stock:* You had a lot at stake at that point and didn't want to mess around too much. So, as far as the fishery goes, is the urchin fishery still as viable and strong as it used to be?
- Tom Kendrick:* With the size limits, with the reduction of divers, the urchin business is now a viable, dynamic fishery leveled off to about 10 million pounds a year. It's not the 30 to 50 million pounds it was. It's not the cowboy days. It's not the gold rush days anymore, but it's a good business for a young guy willing to take a few risks and work hard.
- Jennifer Stock:* Are there any women in the sea urchin diving industry?

*Tom Kendrick:* A few. Not many.

*Jennifer Stock:* Yeah. It's a rough schedule, probably for...

*Tom Kendrick:* I think there's four or five.

*Jennifer Stock:* Wow. Any up here on the north coast or...

*Tom Kendrick:* Not that I know of.

*Jennifer Stock:* ...down in the Channel Islands? What do you think of when you see a sea urchin on the beach now? If you go to the beach and see an urchin are there any memories that are triggered?

*Tom Kendrick:* There's lots of memories, but really what I do now these days, I kind of travel up and down the coast and I talk to a lot of different schools, museums, rotary clubs, environmental groups, and I kind of talk about the urchin fishery and the urchin and I try to encourage people to go to their local sushi bar and try some uni and support your local sea urchin diver.

*Jennifer Stock:* Tom, what's the biggest change that you've seen in the urchin diving industry in your time as a diver?

*Tom Kendrick:* Well, it would have to be the size limits. Before there were no size limits, I would go into an area and take all the urchins. I'd take them all and nowadays the guys are wearing measuring devices, they're selective harvesting, they're taking maybe one out of every 20 urchins. So, it's a huge change to the ecosystem out there is the size limits.

*Jennifer Stock:* And you see that as a positive thing for making this sustainable.

*Tom Kendrick:* Very beneficial. I think the size limits alone created what we have today as a sustainable sea urchin fishery.

*Jennifer Stock:* That's great. It seems with urchins because they don't have an air bladder that's an easy thing to measure and leave, whereas it's a little bit tougher for some of the fishes that we have size limits on, but when you already got 'em at the surface and their air bladder has expanded so much, you throw them back and it's a trash...it's a fish that's died anyway and it's a big problem with some of the rockfish industries, but I understand with urchins, they're just going to sit there.

*Tom Kendrick:* Well, we're fortunate with the urchins. It's very selective. We only take the sea urchins.

*Jennifer Stock:* How about, also, from all this time you spent underwater, I mean, you probably have thousands of hours of underwater observations. What are some of the observations that you would enjoy seeing on a daily basis? I mean, it is long hours, it's cold water, and you're pick, pick, pick, pick, pick, but what were some of the other highlights from just being underwater all that time?

*Tom Kendrick:* You know, when you spend that many hours, thousands of hours, underwater you always get to a point where, you know, a lot of times you have boredom. You're just saying, "Put the urchin in the bag. Put the urchin in the bag." And you'd think you had seen it all and this is what happened to me over and over again. I've seen everything there is to see underwater on this coast and then, boom. You see something that just blows your mind that you've never seen before. Whether you're back in a cave and you see this glittering ray of sunlight coming down and just basking in this beautiful rim of light or whatever it is, a spectacular giant electric ray that has a wingspan of five feet just hovering right in front of you, there's just so many things that you think you've seen it all and you never do.

*Jennifer Stock:* That's amazing. That's great. Well, since you have spent this time, what are some changes in the ecosystem as a whole, the ocean that you've seen and your time spent on the water both surfing and urchin diving, have you seen dramatic changes that...we've been hearing a lot about changes in the ocean, but what were some of your observations.

*Tom Kendrick:* You know, I'm no scientist. I talk to a lot of environmental people and a lot of scientists these days and I talk to a lot of people who tell me of doom and gloom, but I prefer to be an optimist. I think with the youngsters coming up today we've got so many great environmental groups and ocean foundations. We've got a lot of concerned people and I have great hopes for the future of our oceans.

*Jennifer Stock:* That's wonderful. If there was one recommendation that you could give to listeners about their role in being good ocean stewards, what would that be?

*Tom Kendrick:* I guess it would be unless you're harvesting commercially or you have a license to take from the sea, look but don't touch.

- Jennifer Stock:* Look but don't touch. Excellent. Well, Tom, thanks so much for coming in today and talking about your experiences. I want to encourage listeners to pick up a copy of Blue Water Goldrush at the bookstore. Is there areas that you know that it's available at, Tom, that you could let listeners know about?
- Tom Kendrick:* We sell quite a few direct sales. So, they can just call up. We live in Sevastopol. I love signing books for people. [707-829-7784](tel:707-829-7784). \$18 I'll sign a book for you or you can buy them off the website and they're in local bookstores as well.
- Jennifer Stock:* Excellent and you've been doing some local appearances too talking about your book, too.
- Tom Kendrick:* I'm all over the state. It's so fun.
- Jennifer Stock:* You're having a good time and wait, you said there's a potential movie deal coming down the line.
- Tom Kendrick:* I got a call from a film producer about five months ago and he said, "Look, I love this book. My writer loves it. Send me 15 more books and get to work on a screenplay." So, they brought me down and introduced me to a lot of people down there in Los Angeles and that is so fun, meeting a lot of movie stars and writers and directors and producers. So, working hard on the screenplay now. So, keep your fingers crossed for the movie.
- Jennifer Stock:* Wow, did you ever think when you hopped on that boat out to the channel islands you'd be preparing for a Hollywood film?
- Tom Kendrick:* Not in a million years. All my old friends, I tell 'em, "Start doing your pushups. You're playing yourself in the movie."
- Jennifer Stock:* Excellent. Well, thanks so much, Tom, I really appreciate you coming in again and supporting the radio station by donating a book and folks, if you have a chance to call in today, we do have a book available that Tom donated and you could read Blue Water Goldrush yourself. So, thanks again.
- Tom Kendrick:* Happy to be here. Thanks, Jenny.