



SERC Scared Straight

Various

Scared Straight Experiences

- Loose Weight and Swim Longer – Is this a good idea?
- My stupidest swim in the Bay so far!
- Take away.....the Lifeguard was gorgeous!

Loose Weight and Swim Longer

Is this a good idea? - J.C. Wallace

This is a message to share a hypothermia experience and reminder to all to watch out carefully for your limits (which vary day-to-day sometimes!):

Tuesday morning Ben & I set out on a longer swim from AP. Beautiful sunny morning at 8:30am and calm in the cove. We were targeting 65 mins with a 2x Creakers or Creakers + cove. I was wearing my neoprene vest which made me feel safer. Early in the morning I had been feeling a bit "meh" mentally but brushed it off... swimming always makes "meh" turn to "yeah!" I told myself.

Going to Creakers on the outside the first time around I felt a bit challenged with the chop, in particular close to the end of Creakers, but we powered through. Starting the second Creakers we were 28 mins in and I felt fine but we pre-agreed to turn back 2/3 of the way out (at the bend). 1/2 way out I started feeling iffy again (given decent chop plus cold) and we agreed to turn back on the outside.

As we headed back I was starting to feel anxious and as we neared the opening the anxiety increased rather than decreased. Ben, thankfully, stayed close by and urged me on but I started to really struggle with a mix of feeling cold and panicky even though we were now in the Cove (!?!). If it wasn't for Ben I don't know if I would have made it back to the club as I was starting to seriously experience lack of clarity brought on by being hypothermic. I think we ended up being in the water closer to 75 mins (can't remember). After getting to the beach I literally don't remember anything until I was suddenly in the Sauna (!) wrapped in some blankets with Ben looking at me worriedly and handing me warm cups of water (I later learnt the sauna is being made available for emergencies like this only). It probably took me 20-30 mins to get my mind to start processing things normally again and easily another 30 mins more for my body temperature to feel somewhat normalized.

I understand from Jeany Duncan who is an EMT and was thankfully at the club volunteering when I grabbed onto the Dolphin Club pier rope at the beach that I was "pretty seriously hypothermic... wasn't capable of doing anything for himself, couldn't walk or talk, had some muscle rigidity, confusion, etc. [Ben] most likely saved his life today. And I never say that lightly. I'm so glad he wasn't alone in the water."

I'm still processing why this happened to me when I've done much longer swims with significant chop and been fine and have swum through winters at the club. I'll share some of my personal lessons learnt in case they are helpful for anyone else:

- 1) Make sure you are mentally in the right space for the swim - If I had listened to my "meh" feeling I would have stuck to the Cove the second half of the swim;
- 2) Make a plan/decision based on your intuition before you are in the middle of the swim when you may not be as lucid and clear as you are at the beginning;
- 3) Make sure you are well nourished ... I had eaten a very light dinner and only a banana that morning... not enough!
- 4) If you are lean (like me) don't push the cold limit this winter! I'm now going to wear a wetsuit on any longer swim until things start warming back up... and it's ok to cut a swim short!
- 5) Remember that cold+chop+distance from the beach/club combine to make things more challenging (and dangerous) if you find yourself bonking. I will definitely plan to do swims closer to shore (especially the second half of any longish swim).

Of course, having a swim buddy is key to stay safe (and saved me!), but if I had been in even more trouble I shudder to think that I could have endangered my swim buddy too. I'm just sharing this as a reminder for all of us to be careful out there. And thanks again to Ben for sticking with me and making sure I was ok, and Jeany & George & others for acting quickly to help me out when I arrived at the beach!

JC

My stupidest swim in the Bay so far!

Ken Mignosa

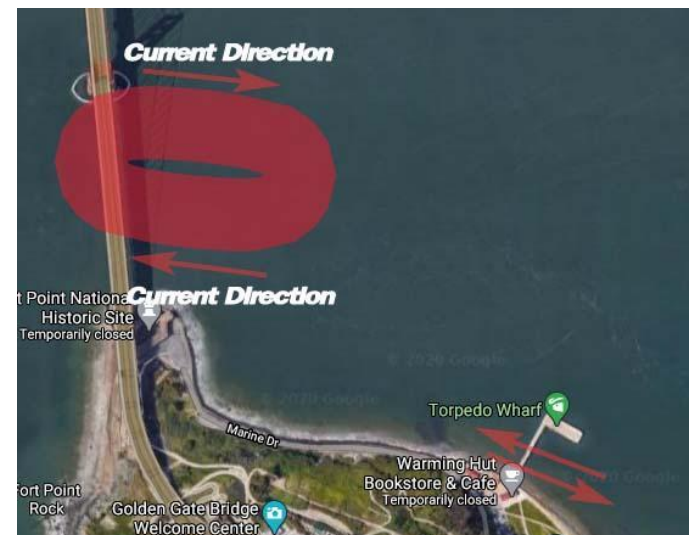
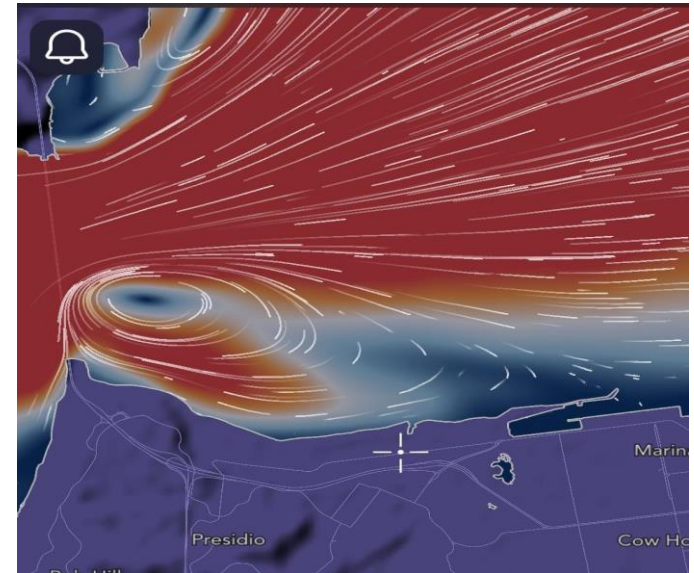
Swimming in circles, stuck in a whirlpool.
Should never have been there, and
certainly not without support!

I planned about a 3 hour swim on 17 September, 2020, and I had food and water for a 4 hour swim. I got out to the Golden gate in about 2.5 hours, and figured I'd have the flood to push me back.

The swim would still end up under my 4 hour feed/water limit.

However, when I arrived under the Golden Gate I was trapped in a gyre... for over 3 hours. I had to keep telling myself "don't panic!" Obviously, I eventually got out of it, but by the time I did, I missed the flood. So the swim back was a grind. And the grind was exacerbated by strong conflicting currents immediately under the Torpedo Wharf pier.

This is kind of what the currents looked like



My stupidest swim in the Bay so far!

Ken Mignosa



6:32 AM on Thursday, September 17, 2020

My Stupidest Swim in the Bay So Far

Went to the Golden Gate, got trapped in a whirlpool for 3+ hours, missed the flood to get back and ground out a return to AP against an ebb. 9 hours for about 25km... Suunto ran out of juice somewhere around the St. Francis Yacht Club on the way back to AP.



With someone who didn't record?

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20,302 m 7:49:42 2:18/100m

Distance (?)

Moving Time

Pace

Elapsed Time

7:49:41

Calories

8,055

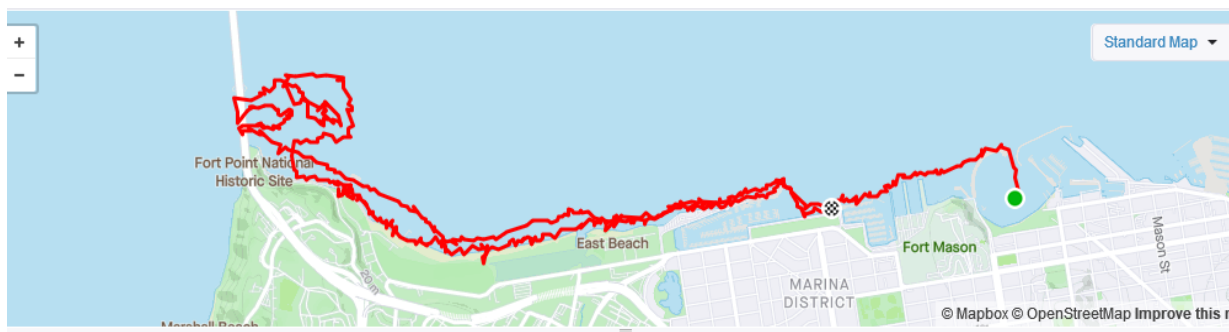
Suunto Ambit3 Peak

By the time I got back to AP I'd swum about 25km in about 9 hours. This on .75L of water two Humas and a Mama Chia.

What an IDIOT I was! During the course of my entrapment I tried exiting in every direction - toward baker beach, toward Fort Point, toward the Warming Hut, even toward the shipping channel. Every attempt at escape ended with me getting sucked back into the gyre. Had I been unable to break free, I would have needed rescue, but I had no way to summon the Coast Guard.

I found the experience to be more than a little frightening.

Here's the tracking from my Suunto before it died on the way back to AP



My stupidest swim in the Bay so far!

Ken Mignosa

Needless to say, I won't do that again. Frankly, my reasons for attempting this incredibly STUPID swim in the first place are pretty questionable.

There is a reason why I thought I could swim all the way to the bridge and back. A few days prior to my most stupid swim in the bay, I had done the same swim, and it had worked out just fine. It was at a slightly different place in the tide cycle, and I had one other advantage in that earlier successful attempt. On the day I was able to complete the entire swim in a little under 4 hours, when I reached the warming hut the outrigger folks were rowing by. And when I reached the pier at the warming hut, I watched them paddle out to the south tower. There was a fairly big group that day. When they all arrived at the south tower they stopped, and took pictures, and chatted, and did NOT paddle. They were able to just sit there and there obviously was no current moving them. So I had a good indication then that it might be okay to go under the bridge.

And on that day it was. Needless to say there were no outriggers as a guide to what to expect from the current on 17 September.

Did I mention how STUPID I was for doing this? Seriously dumb stuff. I should have known better. I do know better, and yet I did it anyway. Needless to say, by the end I was a little tired and sore. I took the next day off as a recovery day before another much better supervised adventure.

From the tracking you can see where I finally escaped. What the tracking doesn't reveal is that for the entire time I was heading back to

the Golden Gate just before exiting the gyre, I was actually swimming toward shore. There's the story. Somebody needs to whack me in the head the next time I think I'm going to swim out to the Golden Gate alone. To be fair, I've learned my lesson. There's no way I'm doing that again

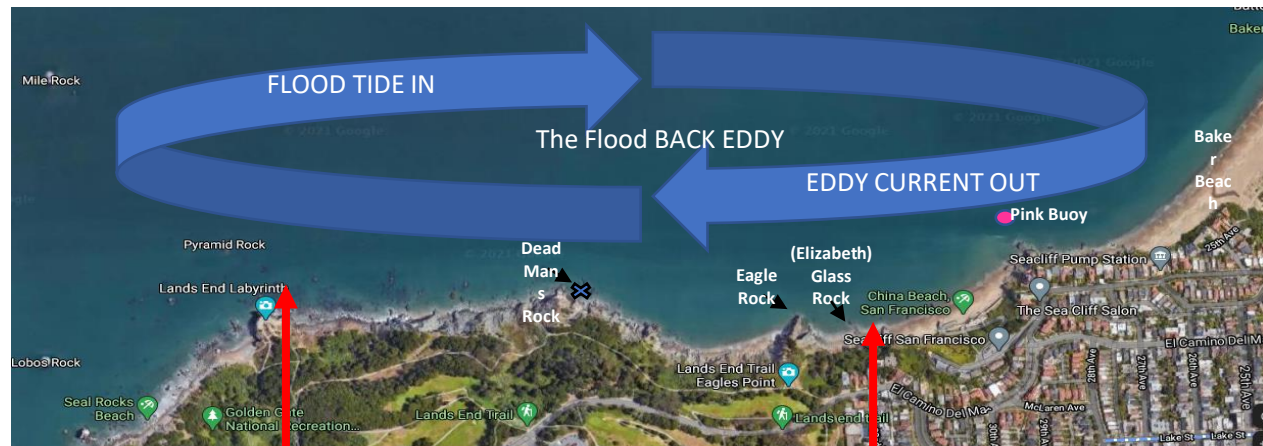
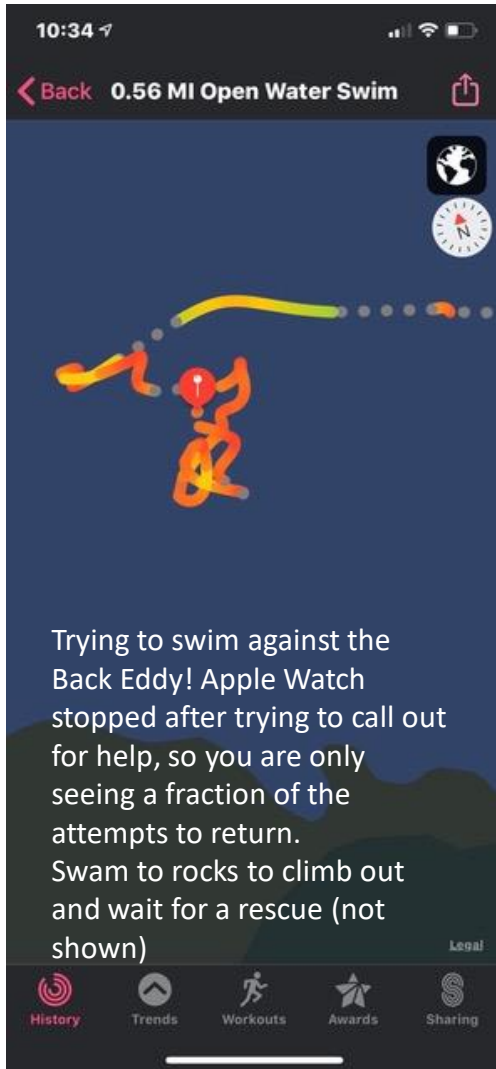
China Beach Eddy

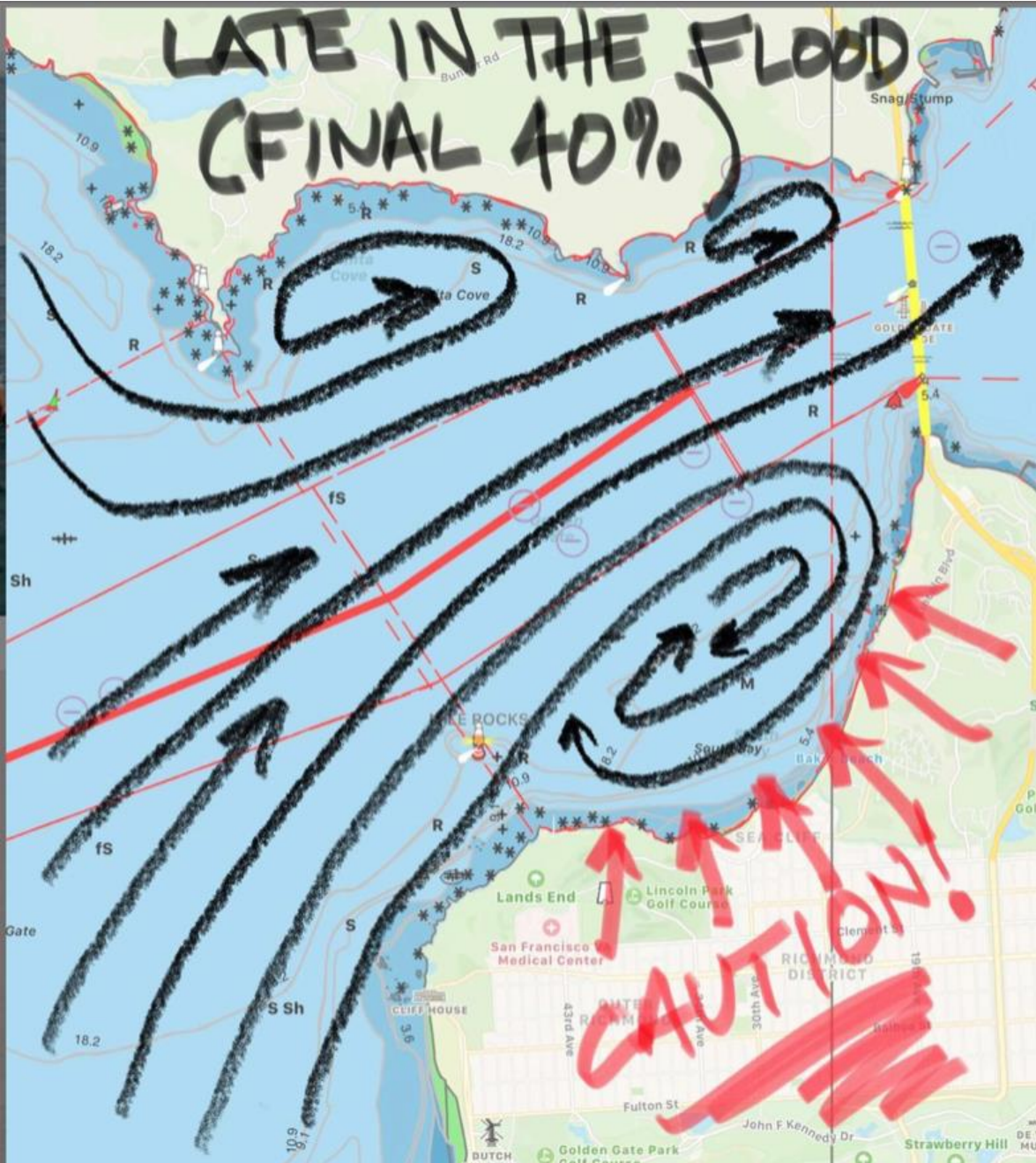
Nira Ray

Swam out on a Flood, thinking we were safe, but caught in the China Beach notorious (to those that know) Flood Back Eddy and got swept out to Lands End within minutes!!!

Scariest day ever, we thought we were gonner's. Had to be rescued, having climbed the rocks as a last resort!

Luckily we had an Apple watch with cell phone coverage to call 911, and of the 20+ people/boats/floats who came to rescue there was one lifeguard who was gorgeous!





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China Beach, San Francisco



pacificswimco Yesterday a local 67-year old open water swimmer drown at China Beach. Tuesday, we heard about two other local, experienced swimmers who got caught in this late flood eddy (and couldn't escape it) and were rescued, fortunately. This is what the current is doing in the last 40% of the flood. Do not swim solo. Do not swim without understanding the currents. Please... Please, no more drownings!!

32w



erinrunsultras 🙄



32w Reply



trimegtri That back eddy in front of saint francis is NO JOKE I'm so



Liked by **cooanimate** and 114 others

JULY 2, 2020



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