



Indonesia's Leading Dive Resort



Bunaken Oasis offers world-class luxury accommodation with world renowned scuba diving sites in the heart of Indonesia, Bunaken National Park in North Sulawesi. Five-time winner of Indonesia's Leading Dive Resort at the World Travel Awards

info@bunakenoasis.com
www.bunakenoasis.com



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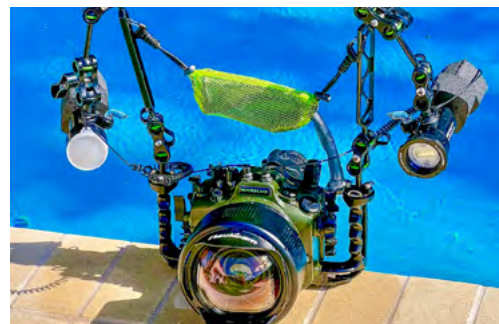
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A web magazine

UwP132 May/ Jun 2023

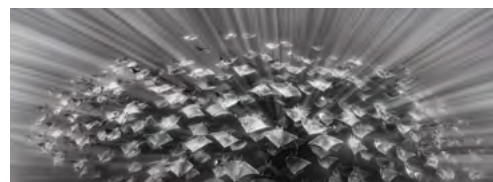
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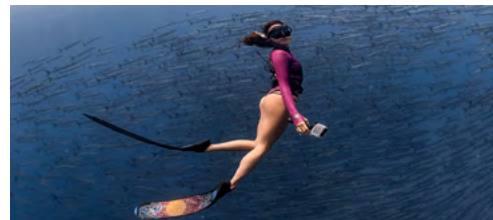
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Underwater Photography 2001 - 2023

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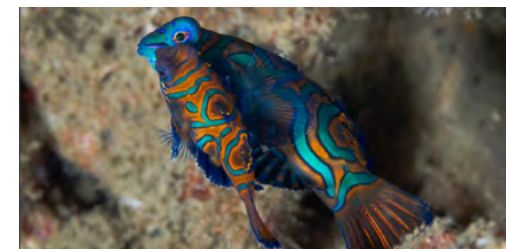
Publisher/Editor Peter Rowlands

www.pr-productions.co.uk

peter@uwpmag.com

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Public appeal

I found Issy Arnett's review of the exhibition of this year's UPY images at the Gosport Museum and Art Gallery a fascinating read because it was from someone unaffected by being an underwater photographer.

By unaffected I mean that she is not an underwater photographer and so reacted to the images on another unfettered level - technically free to enjoy them for what they are - images which communicate.

As underwater photographers we often look at technicalities first - sharpness and edge definition, for example, rather than the overall effect so it is refreshing to hear Issy's response and for her to highlight how much she liked Martyn Guess's 'Pash and Pal' shot of a diver and seal interaction.

I suspect that underwater photographers would be affected by the stray weightbelt strap in our goal of technical tidiness and this would be negative for us but not so for Issy.

Overall she also found the images thought provoking - especially the Save Our Seas Marine Conservation category because "it is important for these images to be seen; striking for very different reasons to their warmer and fuzzier exhibition counterparts.

Sometimes it's good to hear from the outside.

BBC Wild Isles

The most recent blue chip Attenborough series 'Wild Isles' screened on British TVs recently and it may well have been released worldwide too but, if it hasn't or you missed it, make sure you check it out.

Three years in the making, covering spectacular wildlife and habitats from mountains, forests and plains via freshwater to the sea, it is a visual celebration of our small, but perfectly formed islands. Stunning orca behaviour from Shetland, time lapse life in kelp beds, salmon migration and tuna frenzies were particular highlights.

The production quality from Silverback was superb and the underwater content, shot mainly by Doug Anderson, was groundbreaking. UwP is hoping to have a behind the scenes interview with Doug in the next issue and also Richard Davies who shot unique salmon footage with an ROV.

A final episode filmed in tandem but not actually part of the series was released on iPlayer and highlighted the perilous nature of our wildlife in terms of density with Homo Sapiens, river pollution and global warming as the main culprits.

Editorial

AI

These two small letters which, when combined rather like atomic molecules, have been whipping the media into a self feeding frenzy because the technology can teach itself at a rate of multiplication which quite genuinely defies belief.

It is this rate of development which, once unleashed, becomes all devouring with an insatiable appetite and thirst for knowledge. With it comes a form of intelligence which develops human-like nuances seeming artificial at first but then seeming capable of overtaking us in the not too distant future.

Photographically it came to the fore when a photographer used AI to create an image which was entered into a high profile land based competition.... and it won. The photographer was completely open about it and used it not to cheat but to highlight how blurred (pun intended) the boundaries now are.

Underwater photography will no doubt be next and might already, like a Triffid, be developing.

Photoshop was once seen as the death nell but proved to be a partner. AI has much darker overtones to my simple mind.

Flipping

I bet that most underwater photographers who feel the need, or enjoy, post processing their images rarely think of 'flipping them' - that is flipping them horizontally (or sometimes vertically) to see if it would look any better.

The excellent and graphically simple cover image on this issue is another eye catching shot but I thought it would look more appealing if it was flipped. The original is in Brook Pyke's lovely selection of Portraits on page 47.

As with anything to do with images, it is always entirely personal and, as the late, great Terence Donovan is attributed "It's all about having an opinion". I thought that the flipped image was much more logical on the eye which naturally scans from left to right so the Title is first followed by the Sea lion. Left 'unflipped' the Title and the subject would have clashed visually.

In this particular case something has been added, i.e. the Title, which has upset the balance and I suspect that the majority of your shots, because you shot them that way, are best left as they are but don't let that stop you experimenting sometimes.

You never know til you try and it's easy to undo if it doesn't work out.

News, Travel & Events

Bunaken Oasis special offer: Stay for 7 nights only paying for 5 in June



Bunaken Oasis redefines diving in Bunaken. Positioned very much at the luxury end of the spectrum, our aim is to provide a 5-star luxury diving experience whilst keeping our ecological footprint to a minimum.

The resort offers 12 large, traditionally-built villas, including one family villa with two bedrooms, and one villa near the Long House for those who may have difficulty walking.

With easy access to over 90 superb dive sites, the variety of diving Bunaken offers is amazing: vertical walls with the sea bed 1500 metres

beneath your fins, gentle walls with sandy bottoms, stunning reef tops, and muck diving on the mainland. Bunaken has it all. But what happens beneath the waves is only one part of the diving experience. At Bunaken Oasis we firmly believe that every aspect of the diving experience should reflect our focus on luxury.

Visit us in June and stay for 7 nights only paying for 5. This offer works across all packages.

www.bunakenoasis.com



UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2023

Underwater Photographer of the Year (UPY) is the world's most prestigious annual competition for underwater photography and will be hosted at Gosport Gallery for the very first time. With its roots as far back as 1965, this respected competition celebrates the extraordinary realm hidden beneath the surface of oceans, lakes, rivers and even swimming pools. Visitors can expect to see captivating images of the highest technical and creative brilliance, drawing our attention to the beauty of planet Earth's waters, yet often depicting thought-provoking and challenging stories.

The 2023 competition attracted over 6000 entries from 72 countries and the winning photograph features a playful, pink Amazonian dolphin. This exhibition will showcase further winning photographs and an edited selection from the finalists in the competition's 13 categories. These include themes such as Macro, Wide Angle, Behaviour and Wreck photography, as well as four categories for photographs taken in the British waters. This year's judges are experienced underwater photographer's Peter Rowlands, Tobias Friedrich and Dr Alex Mustard MBE.

From the poles to the tropics, embark on a journey of underwater discovery in this fascinating exhibition.

Image credit: © Malcolm Nimmo/UPY2023



EVENT INFORMATION

Date: 1 Apr 2023 - 15 Jul 2023

Venue: Gosport Museum and Gallery

EXHIBITION



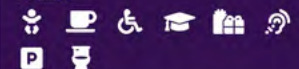
Event address:
Walpole Road, Gosport, PO12 1NS

[Get directions](#)

Opening times:

Fri 21st Apr: 10:00 - 21:00
Sat 22nd Apr: 10:00 - 16:00
Sun 23rd Apr: Closed
Mon 24th Apr: Closed
Tue 25th Apr: 10:00 - 16:00
Wed 26th Apr: 10:00 - 16:00
Thu 27th Apr: 10:00 - 16:00

Facilities:



www.gosportmuseumandgallery.org.uk/event/underwater-photographer-year-2023

Online Underwater Photography courses: The Underwater Club is live!

The Underwater Club, a first-of-its-kind online underwater photography school, is now live, and offers a unique learning experience for underwater photography enthusiasts:

- Comprehensive curriculum: members have access to 7 courses, 40 lessons, 46 quizzes, and a total of 16 hours of online videos.
- Bite-sized topics: the learning experience is mobile-friendly, with lessons broken down into shorter topics for learning on-the-go.
- Monthly webinars: beginners and experienced members can exchange ideas and explore other ways to develop their artistry during monthly webinars.

Visit The Underwater Club to start your free 7-days trial, and continue learning underwater photography anytime, anywhere!

TESTIMONIAL 1:

PT Hirschfield, Pink Tank Scuba

I've just commenced The Underwater Club course. From my own background as an underwater

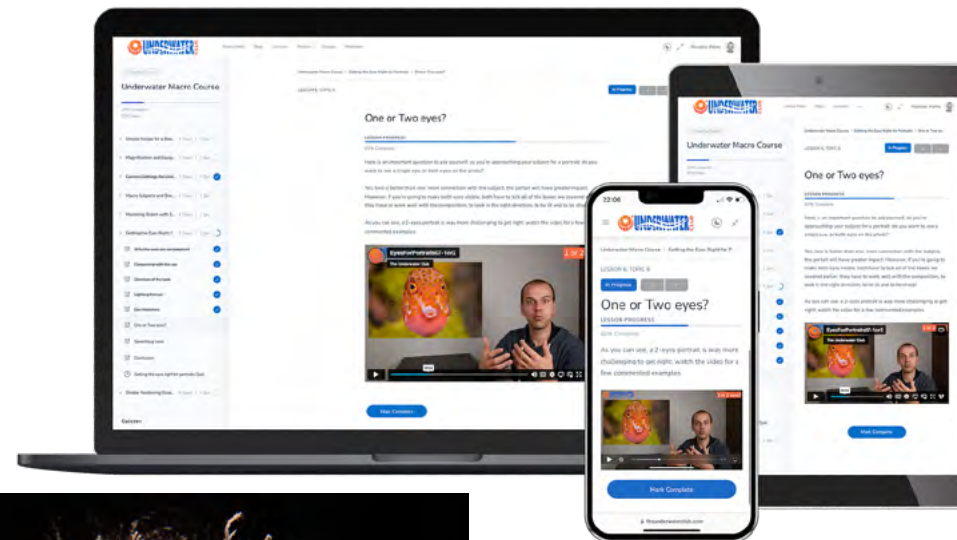


photographer and classroom teacher for over 20 years, I'm impressed from the outset with the way this course has been structured and delivered. It's self-paced, allowing photographers to commence wherever their greatest need or interest lies. The course offers scaffolding of skills that helps photographers to upskill their understanding and proficiency steadily, irrespective of their initial starting point.

The video components of his course are 'bite sized', clear and engaging. Nicolas is articulate in his explanation of concepts, supporting the delivery of each idea



with visual examples. Images (often supplemented by diagrams) are used as illustrations of both successes and challenges, in conjunction with the finer details of how they were created and how various technical and creative decisions may have led to alternative outcomes.



TESTIMONIAL 2:

Matt Waters, ScubaGoat Podcast

Nicolas' tutorials are comprehensive and the community forums provide a great platform to connect with other photographers and get feedback on your work. I've only just joined the club, however it has already helped me improve my photography skills tremendously, and at such an affordable price, it's a no-brainer. I highly recommend it, see you in TUC's forums!

www.nicolaslenaremy.com

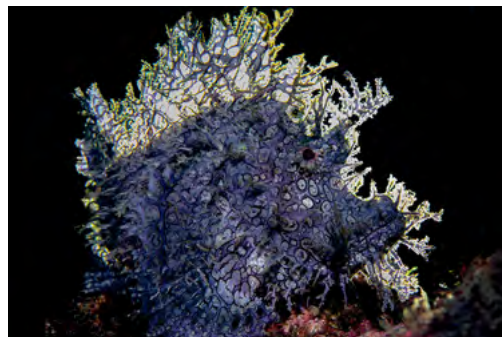
www.theunderwaterclub.com



Learn Underwater Photography at Crystal Blue Resort

Private one-on-one or semi private instruction (2-4 guests) for half day or full day instruction and is conducted by our in-house photo pro, Mike Bartick. Each session covers skills and techniques that are used to create stunning photos and memories.

Topics include:
 Macro photography
 Super macro photography
 Wide angle photography
 Animal behavior photography
 Lighting
 Snooting and backlighting
 Each half-day course is a



3-phased approach:
 Theory discussion
 In-Water instruction
 Follow up photo review and critique
 Each style of shooting requires a special skillset. Mike will assist you

NEW Ghostnet Campaign T-Shirt - Large Back Print

Sea Shepherd UK | Ocean T-shirts | Men | NEW Ghostnet Campaign T-Shirt - Large Back Print

NEW Ghostnet Campaign T-Shirt - £27
Large Back Print
 Sea Shepherd UK's highly successful Ghostnet Campaign uses skilled volunteer divers to recover lost and discarded fishing nets and pots. If left on the sea bed, this 'ghost' fishing gear will continue to take lives for decades. You can support this campaign with this T-Shirt. 100% of the proceeds from the sale of this T-Shirt go towards helping to fund our UK campaigns. To find out more, please visit www.seashepherduk.org

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www.seashepherd.com

in developing a method and the skills needed to shoot like a pro and to shorten your learning curve. Learn the latest techniques for using strobes, snoots, backlighting, adding color to your images and more.

For more information please contact

Mike@DiveCBR.com

www.divecbr.com

www.uwpmag.com



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The Event for
Marco Underwater Photographers



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10 July 2024

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Indonesia, Lembeh

organizer of the journey

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THE MASK**

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NOW**

www.PanOceanPhoto.com

Dive Galapagos with Josef Litt 22-29 September 2024



If you are looking for the perfect diving trip, look no more. Welcome to Darwin and Wolf in the Galapagos Islands, the ultimate destination for awe-inspiring underwater adventures! Dive into waters teeming with hammerhead sharks, whale sharks, sea turtles, marine iguanas and more while exploring stunning underwater landscapes.

- Whale shark high season -
- Diving with marine iguanas
- Dive with Hammerhead and Galapagos sharks.
- Luxurious liveaboard - En-suite twin cabins. Gourmet-style dining. Wine, beer, liquor and spirits included. NITROX included.

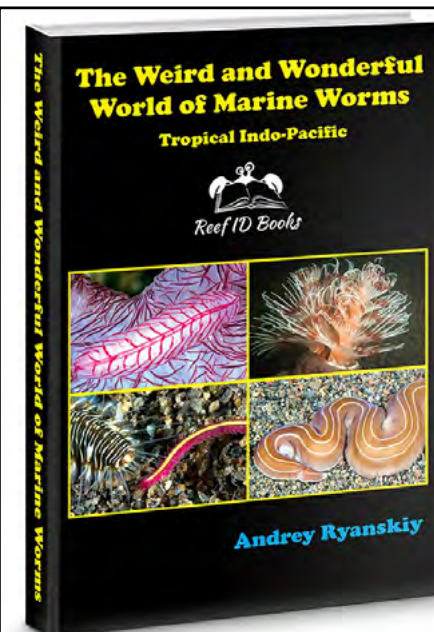
This trip is led by Josef Litt, underwater photographer and author of GALÁPAGOS, the most comprehensive guide to the islands. Josef will share intriguing stories, interesting facts and his photographs on a handful of talks to add something a little special to this cruise. Seven



nights aboard included. Three days diving on Darwin and Wolf islands and a dive with marine iguanas on Fernandina.

Price USD 7,395 in Deluxe Cabin
Based on a single person sharing.
Flights excluded. Upgrade to Master Cabin for USD 300.

<https://litt.cz/diving-galapagos-aboard-galapagos-sky/>



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Dummies” class
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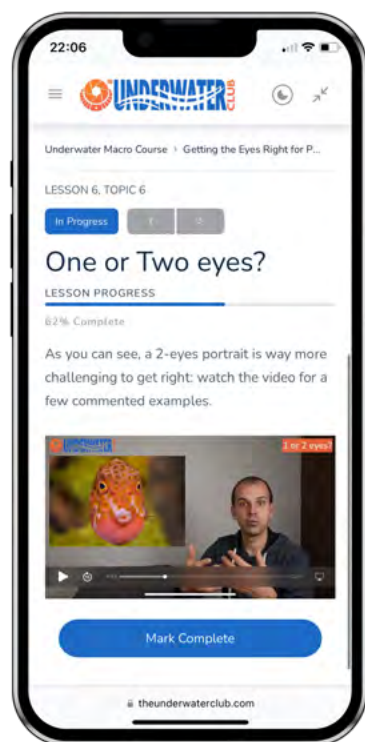


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www.uwpmag.com



Learn Underwater Photography Online



7 Courses
40 Lessons - 46 Quizzes

TheUnderwaterClub.com

Macro Mania in Lembeh with PanOcean Photo June 29th - 10th July 2024

The Critter Capital of the World, a Muck Diving Mecca and the Twilight Zone are just a few of the names Lembeh has been given over the years for its high density and diversity of rare and unusual marine life. Diving in Lembeh is unlike anywhere else as every dive reveals myriad species of creatures that have made their home on Lembeh's famous muck diving slopes. Hardly anywhere else is it so easy to realize breathtaking and creative macro shots!

Lembeh Resort is nestled in a private bay with an abundance of exotic flora and fauna in central Lembeh Island. The resort's secluded location guarantees a peaceful and tranquil holiday experience, while the warm team offers service with a smile to ensure your experience of Lembeh is the best it can be.

The special highlight: In the Lembeh Resort we will do several Bonfire boat dives - Blackwater Dives in a protected bay. This gives us the opportunity to calmly portray the most impressive creatures of the open sea. The travel date is therefore also favorable to the new moon time.

The Lembeh Resort enjoys an excellent reputation among photographers and filmmakers: Air-conditioned camera room, dive boats with enough space for the equipment and a crew that knows the needs of us recording maniacs leave almost nothing to be desired.



www.panoceanphoto.com/en/behindthemask-lembeh-2024

Underwater Photography Basics – Perth Workshop with Emma Burdett



This Perth based workshop will teach you about the equipment and techniques needed to take great photos with any type of camera!

This workshop is classroom based and over the 4 hours Emma will cover:

Basics of photography composition and exposure.

Choosing the right camera for your needs.

Underwater photography equipment and accessories.

Tips, tricks and settings for taking photos below the surface.

Introduction to Adobe Lightroom & post-production editing techniques.

Caring for your underwater equipment.

Resources and next steps for your photography.

Tickets \$179 per person and include tea, coffee and light snacks for lunch.

[Link](#)



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www.uwpmag.com

NAD-Lembah Blackwater Diving

Here at NAD-Lembah we truly love Blackwater Diving it is exciting, fascinating and something new to many divers. If you've never done a Blackwater Dive before keep on reading as we'll take you through the basics.

Blackwater diving can be described as dropping in the water at night and looking for planktonic/larval forms of marine creatures that migrate from the depths of the ocean to the surface. The two different ways we do this is through "Bonfire" diving or "Blackwater" drift diving.

Bonfire dives are great if you are new to the concept. We put a large light source on the sand in a relatively shallow area (maybe two if we have a bigger group). The lights attract plankton and in turn other marine life. During this dive you will be able to see the bottom at all times usually diving at a maximum depth of 12-15m...but spending most of our time in the top 5m.

Blackwater drift diving is done a bit differently. We attach lights to a hangline and drift through deep water. All going well you will not see the bottom on this dive, unless we choose a location close to a reef wall in hopes of finding a particular critter. The hangline sits at around 10-12m



depth and it's in those top 10 metres where you will see most activity.

www.nad-lembah.com

www.uwpmag.com

MARSA NAKARI AND WADI LAHAMI WITH ALEX TATTERSALL

15 SEPTEMBER 2023



Award winning photographer Dr Alex Tattersall teamed with Oonasdivers back in 2010. We have hosted multiple workshops in Egypt, Indonesia & Philippines and the Gulf of California.

Alex's boundless enthusiasm for creatively capturing the underwater world and sharing these ideas and techniques with others has become the signature of his Oonasdivers workshops. He also has possibly the most extensive bag of underwater toys for all to play with including fluo filters, close up lenses, light shaping devices, laser snoots, and if you are nice to him he may even allow you to have a go on his magic ball!

ABOUT THE TRIP

I've been enchanted by Marsa Nakari since I first went all the way back in 2009. The resort has a very intimate and relaxed feeling, we are always well looked after, and the diving is so relaxed and exotic. This part of the trip will take us all on relaxed a journey together into the photographic marvels residing just below the waves. We will mostly be shore diving from the resort, jumping into the azure bay and local fringing reef (with its resident Indian mackerel schools) with the option of a couple of excursions (paid for locally) to some of the jewels in the crown of this beautiful area. Photo instruction will be a combination of group talks on aspects such as lighting, composition, creativity and art, exposures, subject selection, finding and approaching subjects, and more along with individual tutorial time and image critiques.



WADI LAHAMI EXTENSION

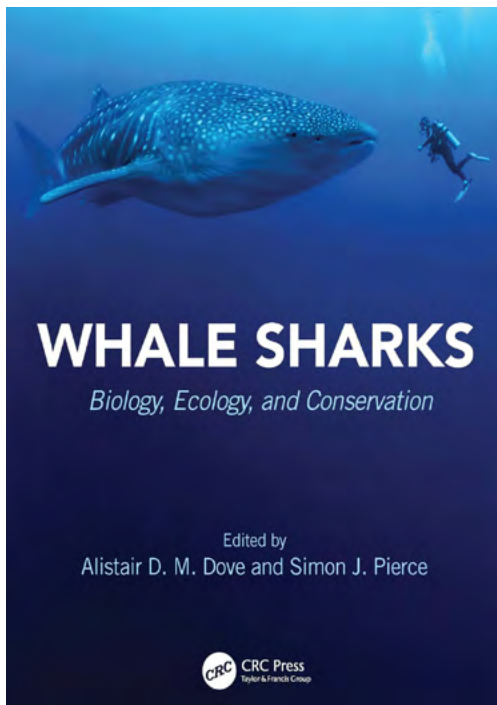
Our adventure will continue further south to Wadi Lahami where we will apply many of the skills we have learnt in the Marsa Nakari section of the trip. This part of the trip is an optional extra and does require a level of adventurousness/physical fitness but the photographic rewards and diving experience from visiting the Fury Shoals reef system are endless.

Nakari Workshop 7 nights from £1395 – Lahami Extension from £725 – Flights £POA

Based on twin share deluxe chalets, 7 nights Nakari, 4 nights Lahami, 6 days diving Nakari, 3 days RIB Lahami, full board & selected soft drinks.

For full itinerary details contact Lydia at Oonasdivers - lydia@oonasdivers.com or call 01323648924

WWW.OONASDIVERS.COM



“

Dove and Pierce have brought together the world's leading scientists to review this shark's fascinating biology and its elusive ecology. More than a collection of scientific facts, it is a roadmap for the conservation actions needed to ensure humanity continues to benefit from this "utterly extraordinary species". Whether you are an inquisitive citizen scientist or a trained expert, you will find awe aplenty within its pages.

DR. GEORGE LEONARD
CHIEF SCIENTIST, OCEAN CONSERVANCY

GET YOUR COPY



Photographing Crocodiles at Banco Chinchorro, Mexico July 2023

Travel with us to the remote Chichorro Atoll Marine Reserve and Xcalak, Mexico to get in the water with the American Crocodiles and dive pristine reefs full of corals, tarpon, fish, and manatees. This is a rare opportunity to get close to a misunderstood, rare, and dangerous marine animal in a situation as safe as possible. Getting to them is a pleasant adventure to a remote location few are allowed to visit.

The journey begins with an arrival in Cancun then traveling south almost to the Belize border to the town of Xcalak. We make our base here and enjoy a day of diving on their pristine reefs where we see schools of resting tarpons, pristine reefs, large schools of fish, and a passing manatee.

Our 2nd day we transfer to the Banco Chinchorro Marine Park where the American Crocodile population lives among the shallow islands and sea grass beds. We are 3 hours out to sea and have packed everything we need with us. Our base will be a rustic fishing hut standing over the shallow water and near to other huts housing working fishermen. We will have no signal, a small generator, hammocks, and only what we brought with us



for the next two nights. This is what makes a great adventure: a departure from everyday habits and the opportunity to tune into something different and concentrate just on the moment and what is new around you: the crocodiles and the life at the atoll.

Access to the Atoll is restricted to protect the Marine Reserve and every possible step goes into ensuring human and animal safety while with the crocs. One or two guests plus at least one guide/handler are in the water at a time. The handlers have learned to read the croc behavior and recognize individuals. The older crocs look fierce and threatening with their

scars and missing teeth but are not aggressive and behave much calmer in this situation. It is believed that the crocs are curious but wary because a guest holding a camera and big dome port is the biggest and strangest thing they have seen in the water. They want to investigate but stay cautious.

This is an adventure for diver or photographer who will enjoy this remote location, camping at the fishing hut over the water, and getting face to face with the American crocodiles. Our group size is limited to 6 guests in order to provide quality.

www.gregorysweeney.com

#07 SPRING 2023

Explore the **Marine Megafauna Foundation's** pioneering conservation work

OCEAN GIANTS



**MARINE
MEGAFAUNA
FOUNDATION**

**WHALE SHARK
ULTRASOUNDS**
03

**MARINE LIFE
PORTRAITS**
17

**MANTA
MIGRATIONS**
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**FLUORESCENT
FISH**
39

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Great White Shark Australia with Amos Nachoum December 27, 2023 – January 7, 2024



Imagine yourself joining an exclusive great white shark diving expedition led by the legendary underwater wildlife photographer, Amos Nachoum. As you set sail to the Neptune Islands in South Australia, an area known for its rich marine life and great white shark population, Amos shares his wealth of knowledge about these apex predators and their crucial role in maintaining the delicate balance of ocean ecosystems.

The crew lowers a custom-designed cage into the water, ensuring its stability and security before you and Amos descend into the depths, surrounded by the deep blue ocean.

Throughout the dive, Amos continues to offer guidance on photographing the great whites, providing invaluable tips on

composition, lighting, and camera settings. His presence enhances your experience, offering a deeper understanding of the sharks and their behaviors while also helping you to immortalize these breathtaking encounters through photography.

At the end of the day, you return to the boat with unforgettable memories, incredible images, and a newfound respect and appreciation for these often-misunderstood animals. Your adventure with Amos Nachoum leaves you with not only a thrilling experience but also the satisfaction of knowing that you've learned from a master of underwater wildlife photography.

www.biganimals.com

<https://marinemegafauna.org/magazine>



Issue 132/12

www.uwpmag.com

New Products

Nauticam NA-R50 Housing for Canon EOS R50 Camera

Enthusiasts asked for it.
Nauticam listened.



Many underwater imaging enthusiasts have been anxious to move beyond the limited performance of their compact camera systems but have been reluctant to give up the compact form factor and simplicity of the genre. Other world travelers have started wondering if there is a way to downsize from their DSLR without giving up too much performance. Nauticam has been listening to this increasing interest and their industry leading engineers have responded with the new NA-R50.

The mission statement was clear: Design the most compact and friendly housing possible for Canon's awarding-winning and remarkably compact EOS R50 mirrorless APS-C camera. The added challenge was making the housing just as simple and straight forward as Nauticam's legendary compact camera housings, while making it even easier to achieve superior imaging results. The resulting housing represents an entirely

new category for Nauticam while maintaining their famous ergonomics and quality.

Nauticam has always been at the forefront of underwater housing technology. They consistently push the boundaries to create evolutionary, and sometimes revolutionary, products to make imaging creation easier. The NA-R50 Underwater housing is no exception, integrating everything that makes Nauticam's range of housings a favorite among underwater photographers into a small and lightweight package.

The new innovative system is engineered around the Canon RF-S 18-45 F4.5-6.3 IS STM Lens, since this is by far the most versatile and practical RF lens to use on the Canon RF APS-C format underwater. The port is thus integral to housing and requires no additional maintenance, much like Nauticam's compact camera systems. This lens provides excellent results in the wide to narrow

fish portrait FOV range but is easily married to Nauticam's superb WWL-1 or WWL-C for exceptionally sharp wide angle coverage with full zoom through while still keeping a modest form factor. Nauticam's Compact Macro Converter water contact optics can be added for a full "do anything and go anywhere" system that easily fits in a traveler's carry on.

Model Number: 17339
Port Opening: Fixed Port with Bayonet Mount
Lens Support: RF-S 18-45mm F4.5-6.3 IS STM
Depth Rating: 100m
AUD Retail Price: \$2,068 (inc. GST)
CNY Retail Price: ¥8,503
Euro Retail Price: €1,410 (inc. VAT)
GPB Retail Price: £1,229 (inc. VAT)
HKD Retail Price: \$9,683
USD Retail Price: \$1,494

www.nauticam.com

Ikelite T-Shirt

F/8 and Be There
Underwater Photographer (Indigo Blue)



If Ikelite Ambassador Steve Miller could give one piece of advice to any underwater photographer, it would be this: "F/8 and Be There." This shirt is the perfect thing to throw on whether you're dreaming of your next dive or out there in the middle of it.

Super-soft preshrunk jersey knit t-shirt. Small, Medium, Large, Extra Large, 2X Large.
\$ 25.00

www.ikelite.com

BACKSCATTER

THE BEST BANG FOR YOUR BUCK




OLYMPUS E-PL10

Sea&Sea YS-D3 MKII Lightning



The YS-D3 DUO is an underwater strobe that is compatible with the “Wireless RC Flash System” of OM SYSTEM digital cameras.

The “RC System” is a light control mode where the camera automatically controls the flash output based on the brightness through the lens. Since the camera can control the flash output based on digital optical signal, it can control the light more precisely than TTL mode of a typical underwater strobe. Of course, it is also possible to control the amount of light by selecting flash/non-flash or by manual operation.

In addition to TTL auto shooting in conjunction with the camera, the camera can also adjust the flash output compensation during TTL auto shooting.



The difference can be easily recognized from the outside by the MKII label on the side of the unit and the new control knobs on the rear.

Newly designed circuitry and light-emitting unit produces powerful guide number of 33. In addition, a high precision aspherical optical troidal lens has been fitted over the two flash tubes to disperse an even light from the center to the edge. The strobe’s beam angle will increase to 110° by attaching the standard accessories Diffuser. When the optional Dome diffuser is attached, beam angle will increase to as wide as 150(TBD)

www.seaandsea.jp

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Nikon Z9 Housing

An ergonomic, highly professional housing, completely made in Italy, offering the highest quality and improved performance underwater.

The Address for Underwater Photography in Germany



www.PanOceanPhoto.com



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innovation underwater

Panasonic Lumix S5II/X

A robust and ergonomic solution for the Panasonic Lumix S5 II and S5 IIX for underwater photography and videography.

The Address for
**Underwater
Photography**
in Germany



www.PanOceanPhoto.com



Issue 132/15

15 Best Underwater Cameras in 2023

By Torben Lonne



Ready to dive in and purchase an underwater camera? If so you've probably noticed a lot of tempting cameras on the market. To help make your decision easier, we've reviewed 15 of the best underwater cameras.

Each comes with its own unique selling points, which we've detailed below. All you need to do is think about what features you need and decide on a budget. And if you need to know a little more about underwater cameras, we go over some of the key points you'll need to consider when making a purchase.

Top 10 Underwater Cameras in 2023

- 1 Olympus Tough TG-6
- 2 PANASONIC LUMIX LX10 4K
- 3 Insta360 ONE R
- 4 Sealife Micro 3.0
- 5 Panasonic Lumix LX100 II
- 6 Sony RX100 VII Premium
- 7 Canon G7x Mark II
- 8 Nikon COOLPIX W300
- 9 Sony Alpha a7II
- 10 Underwater Camera FHD

To read the full review with links to more detailed individual reviews, visit the link below:

<https://www.divein.com/diving/underwater-camera/>

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Issue 132/16

Nauticam housing for NA-S5II Housing for Panasonic S5 II/S5 IIX

Panasonic has a knack for developing cameras that fill a unique niche that have earned the brand a passionate following. So where does the S5II slot for the underwater enthusiast? First and foremost, this camera provides a remarkable value for a full frame, feature rich platform in a compact (for full frame) body. Despite its entry level pricing, it punches well above its weight class with some impressive specifications.

The Nauticam NA-S5II underwater housing provides unfettered access to all camera controls and functions and Sigma's MC-21 EF to L adapter allows for the use of Canon and Sigma EF-mount lenses.

The NA-S5II Housing is designed to not only accommodate the adapter but to allow for the use of the existing focus and zoom gears for Canon EF-mount lenses for the N120 Canon System along with the existing Canon N120 extension ring and port combinations for those lenses. As more native L-mount lenses become available, those best suited to underwater use will be added to the system.



Model Number: 17721
Port Opening: N120
Depth Rating: 100m
AUD Retail Price: \$4,814 (inc. GST)
CNY Retail Price: ¥19,799
Euro Retail Price: €3,282 (inc. VAT)
GPB Retail Price: £2,861 (inc. VAT)
HKD Retail Price: \$22,547
USD Retail Price: \$3,479

www.nauticam.com



Nauticam NA-R5C housing for Canon R5 C



"Cinema Mastery"

The excellent Canon R5 has lots of fans, but serious video shooters sometimes felt a bit throttled by the built-in limitations of that camera. Canon's answer is the R5C. All that was great about the R5 has been fully unleashed.

You get Canon best-in-class white balance and AF and simply stunning image quality. Nauticam rose to the challenge with exceptionally elegant engineering incorporating full cinema zoom and focus in a compact form factor that inspires confidence from the very first use. Underwater cinema work has never been this easy.

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Issue 132/17

OM System 90mm Macro Lens

The OM System 90mm Macro Lens provides an all new, greater focal length to use on micro four thirds sensor and lens mount cameras than was previously available. What does this mean for underwater photographers, and what makes it cool? Watch our video interview and read the review to see why this might just be the most exciting new underwater macro lens!

Olympus is now OM System. OM System and Olympus products are fully compatible with each other.

More Working Distance

Get more space between you and your subjects. The OM System 90mm Macro Lens allows for greater working distance from the subject to minimum focus distance of the lens compared to other macro optics.

2 to 1 Macro Magnification

Make teeny tiny subjects look larger than life. With a maximum 2 to 1 reproduction ratio, the OM System 90mm Macro Lens creates up to double life size images for an insane amount of detail in your images. Most other macro lenses require an external diopter or wet-mount macro conversion lens to achieve this.



Excellent Autofocus Performance

Lock in razor sharp focus with super fast speed and accuracy. We tested the OM System 90mm Macro Lens on a number of cameras, including the OM System OM-1 and Olympus E-PL10. The results left us stoked with how fast, accurate, intelligent, and responsive the autofocus was.

More Controls

Customize operation to your preferences with the limit switch and L-Fn button. It also has a limit switch to restrict the focal range to just the size of subject that you want to shoot for optimal speed and performance within that range. The customizable L-Fn button allows you to toggle between auto and manual focus to easily switch on the fly underwater (with an underwater port that supports this control).

www.backscatter.com



Nauticam NA-A1 housing for Sony a1



"Do-Everything Powerhouse"

Sony has reconceived what a pro camera should look and feel like with the Sony a1.

Sony maintained the form factor of the A7 series, but loaded it with state-of-the-art technology that provides superior stills and video performance. 4K 120p, 8K Video, 50MP @ 30FPS, 9M dot EVF and more breaks new ground in this class. If you can dream it, the a1 can do it.

Married to the Nauticam NA-a1 housing with its superior ergonomics, the underwater possibilities are near limitless.

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Ikelite 200DLM Underwater Housing for Canon EOS R8



On release, the Canon EOS R8 in our 200DLM Underwater Housing is the smallest, most powerful compact mirrorless camera system to date. It is as powerful as the Canon EOS R6 Mark II in a form factor half the size and weight. If you can live without a 2nd SD card slot and in-body image stabilization, then you will benefit from choosing this model.

Lens choice, image quality, and autofocus performance, and capture speed are the greatest strengths of the Canon EOS R8 system. When combined with a DS160 or DS230 strobe you can take advantage of high fps burst shooting to capture the perfect moment of a moving subject.

\$ 1,345.00

www.ikelite.com

Saga Kouen screen magnifier



Saga Kouen is a screen magnifier for monitor cases and monitors.

It allows you to view the screen at a distance of 30 to 40 cm from the camera screen to the diver's eye, with a magnification of more than x2 of the original screen of the housing, monitor or external monitor.

Its small size makes it a versatile and ideal accessory. For a standard screen of a housing (approx. 3 inches), the image obtained would be equivalent to wearing at least a 7-inch monitor.

www.sagadive.com

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Nauticam NA-A7RIV for Sony a7R IV



"Resolution Rethought"

Sony, has come up with yet another addition to their a7 line that is sure to impress. This fourth edition of the a7R sees the inclusion of an updated 61MP Exmor R BSI CMOS sensor and enhanced BIONZ X image processor. Despite its high resolution, it can shoot at up to 10 frames per second with full autofocus and shoot 4K video either from the full width of its sensor or from a Super 35 crop. The NA-A7RIV underwater housing provides fingertip access to all key camera controls in a rugged and reliable aluminum underwater housing. Ergonomic camera control access is one of the defining strengths of a Nauticam housing, and the NA-7RIV continues this tradition.

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OM-D E-M1 Mark III & AOI UH-EM1III underwater housing special package

The professional model OM-D E-M1 series, which have been admired by professional photographers with the unrivalled compact & lightweight system and outstanding reliability, has evolved. The compact & lightweight body with weatherproof construction equips worlds' best image stabilisation compensates up to 7.5 shutter speed steps and new image processing engine TruePic IX, attains high shooting function such as 50MP handheld High Res shot and Live ND. Together with the best AF performance in the OM-D series and high speed burst of maximum 18 fps AF/AE tracking, OM-D E-M1 Mark III allows to capture the right moments in any shooting scenes.

The new UH-EM1iii underwater housing for the Olympus OM-D E-M1MKiii takes it to the next level. Integrated with a new and improved optical trigger, it is compatible with the RC Flash mode of the E-M1 MKiii. Allowing users to capitalize on one of the key features of the camera when underwater - Super FP mode.

Super FP is a special flash mode



which allows shutter speeds to be used faster than the x-sync capability of the camera-flash system. When do you use Super FP flash mode? When you need wide aperture for shallow depth of field, such as when shooting macro and a bokeh effect is desired or when you are shooting fast moving animals, the fast shutter speed will prevent motion blur due to the subject moving. By being able to utilize these modes, photographers no longer have to work around these limitations.

To ensure that everything works as it should, the housing is pre-installed with a Vacuum Analyser & Wet Detection System.

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www.uwpmag.com



Photo by
Tom St George



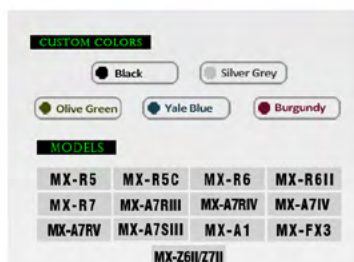
MX SOFT Pro

Smart Optical Flash Tube

STROBES

INON/Sea&Sea/Ikelite/
AOI/Retra/Seacam/
Supe/Weefine/Kraken

SOFT Pro can be used with various popular strobes to narrow down the beam coverage. Lighter and shorter than the original version, SOFT Pro features a user adjustable red and white build-in aiming light. The aiming light will automatically switch off when it detects the flash from the strobe and the delay in-between is user adjustable too.



Best-in-class design, Compact and lightweight. Made by uniquely anodized aluminum, Superb scratch resistance with multiple color options.

MX Housing

Mirrorless Camera



180 Degree ViewFinder



MX Viewfinder

180 Degree Smart Viewfinder with built-in indicators of current depth, ascent rate and dive time.



45 Degree ViewFinder



MARELUX AMBASSADORS / INFLUENCERS



Bella Zandoná



Tom St George



Ilaria Managulia Rizzuto



Takaji Ochi

Marelux Ambassador Thomas Van Puymbroeck



Belgian Thomas Van Puymbroeck is an award-winning photographer. His passion for underwater photography began over 15 years ago.

Even though he graduated as multimedia graphic designer, he pursued his dream job at the local public aquarium in Antwerp. Working there he had to take a diving course. After his first few dives he knew for sure: he wanted to take pictures.

Together with his wife he travels the world in search of the most beautiful dive spots, capturing these unique moments, places and animals. He is often referred to as one of the Belgian shark ambassadors.

Thomas's purpose in life is to

make people conscious of the need to protect these magnificent creatures, to learn more about them, ... instead of killing them...

You may have come across his pictures in a calendar of National Geographic or in one of the national and international diving magazines.

Although he has travelled and dived many tropical waters, his absolute favorite dive site is the one closest to home. Ask him about the diversity under water and macro life possibilities. He will amuse you for hours with pictures and fun facts about the marine life.

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WWL-C

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Nauticam
innovation underwater

Nauticam EMWL Reef Photo tutorial



Nauticam is dedicated to designing the finest underwater imaging products available. The new EMWL - Extended Macro Wide Lens - takes that innovation to the next level. The EMWL allows you to shoot macro, wide-angle and combine the styles to create images we only dreamed about previously!

The EMWL was built to work with several popular macro lenses (listed below) and is optimized for both stills and video. It is a wet mount design so the lens can be attached and removed underwater. This increases the versatility of the entire system and other accessories like SMC and CMC macro converters can also be used. It is a modular design with



three individual pieces that make up the EMWL, the Focusing Unit, the Relay Module and the Objective Lens. Nauticam has made components optimized to work with different camera manufacturers and their macro lenses, as well as choices for three unique perspectives.

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Digital Underwater Photography, 40 Essential Knowledge by Pedro López Alegret

This ebook has been published in 3 languages: English, Spanish and French.

Index: The light. The sensor. The resolution. The camera. The lens. The underwater housing. Wet lenses. Underwater strobes. Mobile phone. Action camera. The subjects to be photographed. The complete equipment. Transfer of equipment. The equipment with the greatest coverage of field angles. The focus. Focusing possibilities. The exposure triangle. The depth of field. Dynamic range. Noise. The white balance. Photograph as close as possible. The composition. Know the subject. Framing: viewfinder or screen. Zoom with fins or with the lens. Buoyancy of the equipment. The marine environment. The subject of the photo. Underwater macrophotography. Lighting. Lighting possibilities. Position of electronic strobes. Diffusers for electronic strobes. TTL Strobe. Photography of large fauna. How to act when the exposure obtained is not correct. Developing. The Histogram. Main settings.



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A visit to Underwater Photographer of the Year - Gosport Museum and Gallery 2023

by Issy Arnett
(aka mummyscrummie)



Today Mr Scrummie and I headed off to the newly refurbished Gosport Museum and Art Gallery to attend the press preview of the Underwater Photographer of the Year exhibition.

We'd never visited the museum and gallery before and had absolutely no idea what to expect, but were enticed 'down Gosport way', by the prospect of seeing the prestigious annual competition for underwater photography in flesh!

To say we were pleasantly surprised by the venue is a total understatement; nestled in Walpole



Road, the neighbour of Morrisons and Pets At Home, and housed in what was the old Grammar School, the space is a total hidden-in-plain-sight gem in Gosport's crown.

The magnificent 1901 building has been beautifully refurbished and transformed into the most fantastic community hub; housing alongside its museum and gallery spaces: a bright and spacious café, a stunning open-air courtyard and a brilliant Play Gallery - a breast-feeding friendly, family-focused, art and play space for under-fives.

There isn't the slightest hint of



pomposity about the refurbishment; clearly the intention has been to create a space shaped by the community, for the community, and it works beautifully.

And so, on to the exhibition itself!

Underwater Photographer of the Year (UPY) is an international competition born in 2014, out of a desire to revive a decades-old tradition of major international Underwater Competitions, all of which trace their roots back to Bernard Eaton's Brighton Underwater Film Festival of 1965.

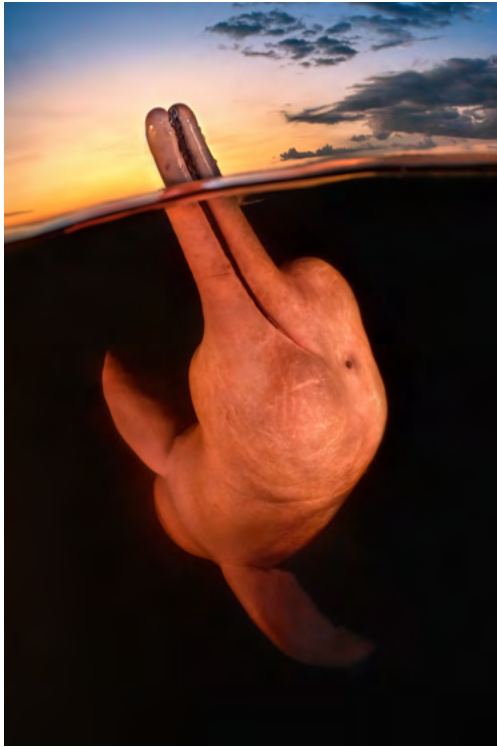
And so, it seems only right that the competition find a home back on the South Coast of England, in a town embedded with naval and marine

history.

Visitors begin the exhibition with J. Gregory Sherman's 'Fade' and from there, work their way through an incredible showcase of hidden underwater realms, including oceans, lakes, rivers and even swimming pools!

This year's competition attracted over 6000 entries from 72 countries but it was US photographer, Kat Zhou who walked away with first prize, awarded for her photo, 'Boto Encantado', of a pink river dolphin in the Amazon River in Brazil.

The photo's title is taken from a local legend told by indigenous communities, that - come night-fall - the dolphins in the river transform



UPY 2023 WINNER
'BOTO ENCANTADO'
Kat Zhou, United States

into handsome men, known as "Boto Encantado", and walk out of the water, hoping to find young and foolish people to fall in love with them!

Now, I was raised by a Highland Scot, and this shape-shifting watery beast folklore reminded me very much of the Celtic mythology surrounding kelpies (or water horses) - and made me wonder how many other cultures and traditions have this sort of superstition embedded in their waterside histories... Do you know a legend like this?



British Water Living Together
HIGHLY COMMENDED
'PASH AND PAL'
Martyn Guess,

From the poles to the tropics, this fascinating exhibition really gets you peering at the tiny, crisply photographed and printed details, and asking big questions. Whilst being beautiful, it's also incredibly thought-provoking.

UPY unashamedly positions the natural world right up alongside the human, and only sometimes is the pairing a peaceful one.



My favourite entry comes from the 'British Waters Living Together' category and is by Martyn Guess. Titled: 'Pash and Pal', the image (shot on Lundy Island, here in the UK) shows the moment that diver, Pash Baker's brightly coloured flippers caught the attention of a local grey seal.

According to Martyn, the seal was so enamoured with Pash's flippers that he wouldn't leave her alone, even when she was coming up for air! As a mum of two small children, this image really speaks to me and I absolutely love how Martyn has captured the connection between seal and human in that 'flipping beautiful' moment!

On the other side of the coin, depicting sides living less harmoniously together, the Save Our Seas Foundation category repeatedly presents the unavoidable truths of global warming and mass ocean

pollution. Important images to be seen; striking for very different reasons to their warmer and fuzzier exhibition counterparts.

So - why visit Gosport Art Gallery and Museum, and the Underwater Photographer of the Year exhibition?

Well, because it's beautiful, poignant, thought-provoking, detailed and vibrant; the 'British Waters' categories in particular serve as a home-pride-inducing reminder that, right here, on our doorstep, in Great Britain, we have the most incredible and awe-inspiring natural habitats, animal species and underwater worlds.

It's also completely FREE and ACCESSIBLE to visit. Whether you're a nature lover, a photography fan, or just someone looking for somewhere calm and quiet, you'll enjoy the exhibition. Mr Scrummie and I spent an hour there, we could happily have spent longer.

Underwater Photographer of the Year runs until 15th July 2023. For more information, visit the Gallery's website.

Issy Arnett

www.mummyscrummie.com

<https://www.gosportmuseumandgallery.org.uk/event/underwater-photographer-year-2023>

Sony FE 20 to 70mm F/4 G

by Phil Rudin

For decades, just about every lens and camera manufacturer around has had several versions of the versatile full frame 24mm to 70mm lens in F/2.8 or F/4 apertures.

These are lenses with the standard 34 to 84 degree angle of view. Most manufacturers have also added a 24mm to 105mm F/4 with a 23 to 84 degree AOV extending the long end of the lens. I have used both of these focal lengths for years finding them great for things like travel photography but a little narrow for underwater work.

I have friends that do fish I.D. work that find the 24mm to 70mm focal length very useful and it has been supported by all of the U/W housing manufacturers for years. These are lenses that can be used with the smaller 170/180mm dome ports without a huge loss of image quality. They provide a smaller system size compared to using the more common 16mm to 35mm zooms with a 230mm dome port.

Sony has recently introduced an innovative new standard zoom lens that adds an additional 10 degrees on the wide angle end. The Sony FE 20mm to 70mm F/4 G

takes the wide end of the lens from 84 degrees to 94 degrees which is a massive improvement for underwater photography.

The 94 degree AOV was the gold standard for the venerable Nikonos 15mm film lens which are still relevant today. From the 1960's to 1990's the lion's share of underwater wide angle work was done with this lens. The Nikonos 15mm with a 94 degree coverage was considered the best rectilinear focal length for both landscape and portrait imaging underwater and hundreds of images with this lens adorned the covers and pages of every dive publication in the world.

Sony FE 20 to 70mm F/4 G lens

The Sony 20 to 70 zoom is an F/4 to F/22 lens that has a minimum focus distance of 25cm (9.8 inches) which gets you to a reproduction ratio of about 1:4 on the 70mm end of the lens. This is an excellent zoom range for just about every non-macro critter from a Wrasse to a Whale Shark.

The lens has nine rounded diaphragm blades which produce a smooth background shooting wide



open which I often do for portraits.

The lens is also a perfect zoom range for shooting splits of divers. The lens has a 72mm filter size using 16 elements in 13 groups for outstanding image quality. The lens weighs in at 488g (17.2 oz) which makes it a great travel lens for both underwater and topside use.

I would be remiss in my reporting if I did not point out the obvious advantage over 24mm for vloggers. Sony makes the 24mm to 70mm lenses in F/2.8 GM version II but I see little upside for this lens which at \$2298.00 US cost more than twice the \$1098.00 price for the Sony FE 20 to 70 F/4.

The GM II 24/70 version also according to the Nauticam port chart requires a 250mm optical glass port for best results. I suspect that also may be the case with the 20/70 F/4



but to me this is overkill for most underwater shooters who will most likely be happy with results from a 180 or 230 mm port.

The 20 to 70mm has two EX (extreme dynamic) linear motors which gave me excellent focus speed with extremely accurate focus tracking and smooth silent operation for both stills and video. For those of you that may be interested I have used the lens in a 230mm port with the Sea & Sea M77 correction lens on a 72mm to 77mm step-up ring. This will improve corners on the wide end of the lens but I think most users would be far more likely to want to stick to the 170/180mm port offerings. For that reason all of the images presented in this review were with the 180mm port and without the S&S lens which for me does not add value in ports smaller than 230mm.



©Phil Rudin Photography 2023

Field Testing

For this review I field tested the 20 to 70 zoom in the Marelux MX-A7RV housing for the new Sony A7R V camera. Some pool images were with the Sony A1 showing the AOV difference between 20mm and 24mm's. Both images of the Marelux SOFT Pro were taken with the same camera settings, un-cropped full frame and from the same distance to the SOFT Pro.

Along with the Marelux housing for A7R V I used a Marelux 180mm optical glass dome port, I fashioned a zoom gear from a Marelux gear for the Sony FE 12 to 24mm F/2.8 as the new 20/70 gear was not yet in stock, I also used the Marelux port charts recommend 50mm of extension for the 180mm port and 60mm of extension when I used the Marelux 230mm optical glass Fisheye port II. A note on port extensions, as a reviewer I stick to the manufacturers recommended port lengths because this is what consumers of these products will likely do. Tweaks in chart extension lengths may lead to slightly better corner

Cave Diver, Devils Eye, Florida Springs, Sony A7R V, Marelux housing with 180mm dome, two MF-2 Flashes using UWTechnics flash trigger set for HSS, 20mm, ISO-400, F/9, 1/160th sec



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*AOV comparison Sony A1, Marelux housing with 180mm dome AV light, ISO-640, F/13, 1/100th sec.
24mm above*



©Phil Rudin Photography 2023

20mm above



©Phil Rudin Photography 2023

sharpness but not by much and at the expense of having to buy an extension in an odd number like 15mm or 25mm's. If you already own an odd numbered extension it is always fun to try in the pool but I would not waste my time if I am already at a diving location where I want to make the most of the time I have unless you have serious issues with the recommended extension length.

Also be aware that at the time of writing this review no other aluminum housing manufacture was showing support for this lens. I am sure that support is on the way from others but not as of this review.

For my review I also used a pair of the new Backscatter MF-2 mini strobes and a fairly short set of flash arms. These were fiber optically fired using the UWTechnics TTL flash converter for Marelux. I had the flash trigger set for use with the MF-2 high speed sync (HSS) mode which works well at all shutter speeds. These strobes have plenty of power and coverage for this lens at all AOV's including the 20mm end. I used a flash defuser on the right hand side of the system for some of the wide shots. I also used the Inon Straight Viewfinder Unit II with the FUN-IN Underwater adapter for the Marelux housings.

Once underwater I used two

Marelux Flexibuoy's to trim the housing system for my needs. I chose the north Florida springs for this lens test because of its abundance of subjects both large and small.

Upfront I will say that this lens did not disappoint even in the smaller 180mm dome port. As advertised auto focus was both fast and accurate with silent operation. Set to eye AF the system locked on and held just about every subject with an eyeball. I credit these results to the new AI auto focus system in the new Sony A7R V camera. The small system was easy to swim with and checked all of the boxes for portability and performance.

The lens has white lettering around the front element which has caused issues for me with some systems I have reviewed in the past, reflecting back onto the image sensor. I have noticed this issue more with acrylic ports than with optical glass ones most often when shooting at or close to the surface. I did not have this issue with the Marelux 180mm dome but keep in mind that you may want to use some flat black tape to cover the lettering on the lens.

Also notice in the split images taken with the Marelux 180mm dome that water drops on the top half of the images were not a problem because

Cave Diver, Devils Eye, Florida Springs, Sony A7R V, Marelux housing with 180mm dome, two MF-2 Flashes using UWTechnics flash trigger set for HSS, 20mm, ISO-400, F/13, 1/640th sec





©Phil Rudin Photography 2023

*Pan Fish, Devils Eye,
Florida Springs,
Sony A7R V, Marelux
housing with 180mm
port, Two MF-2 flashes,
70mm, ISO-400, F/10,
1/250th sec*

*Zeri, Sony A7R V,
Marelux housing and
180mm dome, AV
light, 40mm, ISO-50,
F/4, 1/500th sec*



©Phil Rudin Photography 2023

of the Marelux coating that repels most water droplets. I found this to be a bonus when shooting splits rather than using a potato, mask cleaner etc etc for water droplets. I found that for most of my needs the 180mm port hit the sweet spot between image quality and system size.

As a portrait lens shooting at F/4 subject separation was excellent with smooth foregrounds and backgrounds. On the wide end of the lens everything from about f/9 onward could be used without a noticeable erosion of image quality. If optimal corner sharpness is required for your shooting situation my recommendation would be a 230mm dome and perhaps the Sea & Sea correction lens if you already own it.

The \$1098.00US Sony FE 20mm to 70mm F/4 G ships with a pinch lens cap, plastic lens hood which, if used in a housing would likely hit the inside of the

port glass at the 70mm.

The Sony 20/70 is an ideal travel lens for general photography, by that I mean not a macro intensive muck diving location where macro lenses and accessories are the norm and not a wreck diving spot where ultra wide and fisheye lenses are the norm. This is also a lens that would cover most of your land photography needs while traveling. I would also recommend this lens for someone starting to build a Sony full frame system that wants a wide range of coverage at a reasonable price.

Thanks to Marelux US for assistance with some of the equipment used for this review marelux.co web page has all of the components to support this lens.

Phil Rudin
Instagram

Sony A7R V

by Jim Decker
CEO Backscatter

The Sony a7R V is the newest full-frame mirrorless camera from Sony. It's an all-around serious upgrade for a7 users and we dove deep to find what matters most to underwater photo and video shooters.

Backscatter CEO Jim Decker put it to the test underwater and came back with some excellent images, gorgeous video, and lots of juicy info about the updated autofocus performance, improved video specs, new processor, and much better-looking manual white balance.

The Sony a7 IV is the base model, which tends to be more entry-level in features and price, with a photo resolution of 33mp and 4K 60p video.

The Sony a7S III is more video-centric, recording up to 4K 120p video with very low noise at high ISO values and faster sensor readouts for less rolling shutter effect, but with a lower resolution 12mp photo sensor.

The 61mp Sony a7R V is all about photo resolution and ultimate still image quality, though it can also shoot up to 4K 60p video, too.

Outside of the a7 lineup is the Sony a1, which is a combo of the best video, up to 8K 30p and 4K 120p, and

50mp photo resolution all wrapped up in one camera body - along with a justifiably hefty price increase over the a7 line.

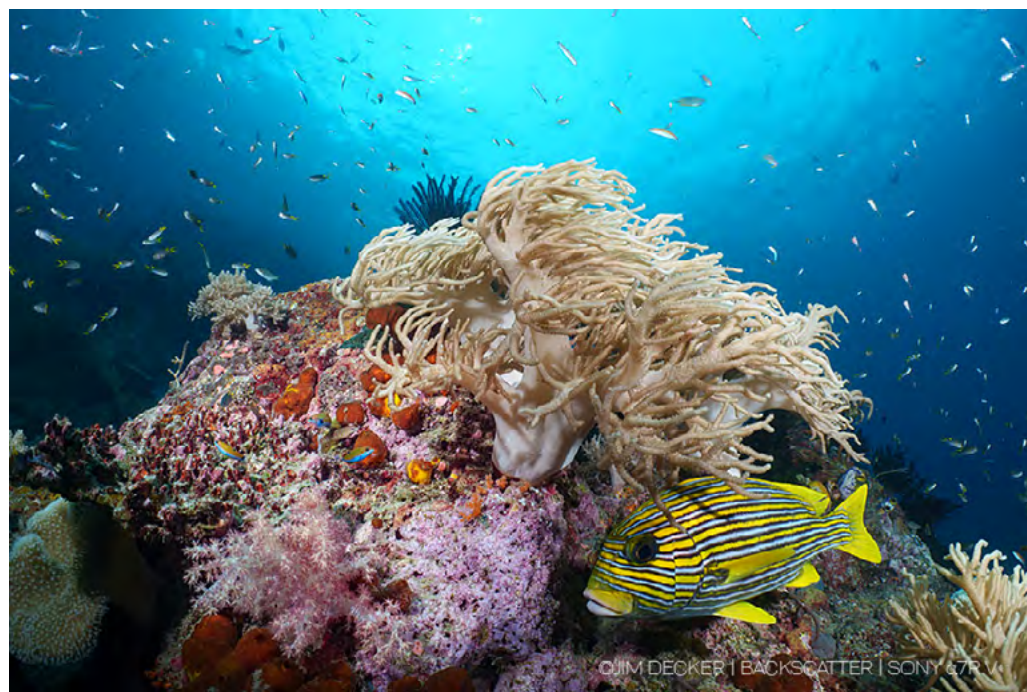
The 61mp sensor isn't changed from the previous model, but that is totally fine with us. It's sort of an "if it isn't broke, don't fix it" type of situation. In our review, we called the previous model Sony a7R IV the best image quality of all time and that title hasn't changed with the latest generation.

The resolution is outstandingly sharp, allowing for insane amounts of detail when zoomed into 1:1 size during review. The dynamic range is great and maintains sharp resolution and detail in the brightest highlight and darkest shadow areas of the image. Color reproduction is great as well, with a very natural look that often requires minimal correction for ideal results.

It's not uncommon for ultra-high resolution sensors to suffer a bit in low-light performance. They can often create higher noise levels at lower ISO levels than other cameras. This is not the case with the Sony a7R V; it performs great in lower light



If you're online, watch our interview with Backscatter CEO Jim Decker to learn firsthand what shooting the Sony a7R V was like underwater.



The Sony a7R V is the photo-centric model of the Sony lineup with an ultra sharp 61mp sensor.

Sony a7R V | Sony 28-70mm | Nauticam WACP-C Lens | 1/125 | ISO 200 | f11



The level of detail captured by the Sony a7R V is insanely sharp. Sony a7R V | Sony 90mm Lens | 1/250 | ISO 100 | f16

environments thanks to the backside illuminated sensor. Test shots at ISO 1000 look more like ISO 400 film grain than distracting noise - we actually kind of liked the look, in fact! Even in large-scale prints this noise is barely noticeable and not at all distracting from the image quality in our opinion.

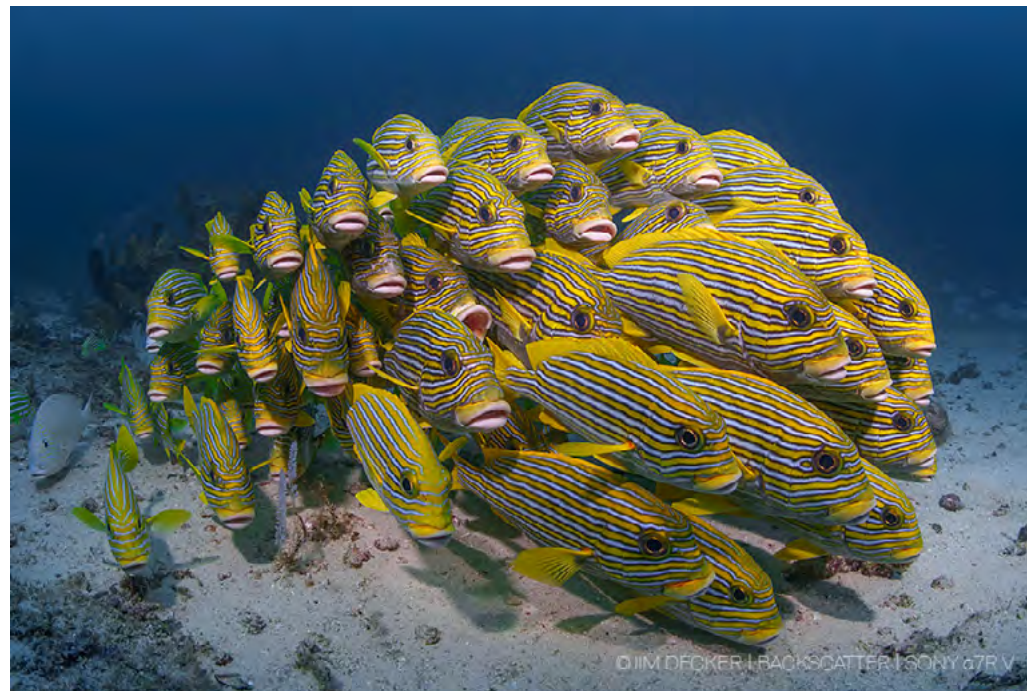
The Sony a7R V will shoot 10 frames per second in a compressed lossless RAW format which is pretty quick for how huge of a file size the 61mp sensor creates. If switching over to uncompressed RAW it drops to 7 frames per second, which is fine if shooting with strobes as most strobes won't be able to keep up any faster than that anyway. Strobeless shooters might feel that this shooting speed is a little limiting for fast-action shots, but if that is the priority, then it's worth seriously considering a bump up to the Sony a1 for its impressive 20 to 30

frames per second performance.

We can confidently say that the Sony a7R V has the best autofocus of any camera that we have ever used. This is due to the all-new AI engine powering the autofocus system. The relative performance increase over the previous model cannot be understated. This is most noticeable when shooting macro.

In the past, Sony full-frame mirrorless cameras have struggled to autofocus well when using the Sony 90mm macro lens. We used to recommend shooting the Canon 100mm IS macro lens with a Metabones adapter as it worked better than the native Sony lens. This is no longer the case at all as the Sony 90mm now blew us away with how well it worked on the Sony a7R V.

We set the camera up to shoot with the Animal Eye Detect setting and



Shooting lossless RAW quality at 7 frames per second is more than fast enough when shooting with strobes, and the images process quickly too.

Sony a7R V | Canon 8-15mm Lens | 1/60 | ISO 800 | f11

it worked wonders for macro critter tracking. We would use continuous focus and just place the focus square over the eye of the subject, hold the AF-On button using the back-button focus technique, and let the camera do the work. The camera would not only recognize, and follow the eye, but it would also seamlessly switch between tracking a single eye to both eyes as the subject moved and repositioned itself.

The electronic viewfinder on the Sony a7R V was about as good as it gets, at least on par with our other

current top picks found on the Sony a1 and Canon EOS R3. Electronic viewfinders will - at least for now - not be able to match the dynamic range of the human eye, however, the performance of the viewfinder on the Sony a7R V still allowed us to make out detail in both the brightest and darkest parts of the frame as we were composing the shot. This is most apparent when shooting sunballs and scenes where there are both super bright and super dark elements in the same shot.

An optical viewfinder such as



©JIM DECKER | BACKSCATTER | SONY a7R V

The dynamic range displayed in the electronic viewfinder was among the best that we have seen yet and was actually usable for a change.

Sony a7R V | Sony 28-70mm | Nauticam WACP-C Lens | 1/250 | ISO 400 | f8

those found on DSLR cameras will always be our first choice when it comes to wide angle shooting, as they will always beat the dynamic range that an electronic viewfinder can produce. That being said, there are actually some benefits to using an electronic viewfinder for macro, such as not having to remove your eye from the viewfinder for image review and built-in focus and exposure tools that an optical viewfinder cannot do.

Our preferred method of shooting was to disable automatic image review in the viewfinder and

to use the playback button when we wanted to review our images. This allows us to shoot more like an SLR, where our shooting is not interrupted by our image popping up in the viewfinder. It is easy to apply the viewfinder/toggle function to the C3 button, which is conveniently accessible from the left thumb button. This allows us to toggle between working from within the viewfinder or off of the LCD screen. This setup provides maximum flexibility with minimal shooting interruption.



©JIM DECKER | BACKSCATTER | SONY a7R V

By disabling the auto image review we were able to shoot through the viewfinder uninterrupted.

Sony a7R V | Canon 8-15mm Lens | 1/200 | ISO 640 | f11

Choosing the right glass for the job

For wide angle we shot the Canon 8-15mm Fisheye lens with a Sigma MC-11 adapter; there are also Metabones adapters available. The Sigma MC-11 does not allow for autofocus in video mode, whereas the Metabones does (the Sigma MC-11 was all that we had available at the time of this review).

For macro, we shot the Sony 90mm Macro lens. We also shot the basic Sony 28-70mm lens behind the

versatile Nauticam WACP-C.

Some of our favorite tried-and-true lenses worked great on Sony a7R V, with the Sony 90mm feeling like an all new lens compared to using it on the previous model

The Nauticam WACP-C is a more compact version of the Nauticam WACP-1 with slightly lower-grade optics. We found that the Nauticam WACP-C liked higher apertures around f/11 to f/16 for the best corner sharpness, whereas the Nauticam WACP-1 could have been opened up to f/5.6 without any issues. With 61mp



The Sony a7R V is able to capture more accurate colors deeper than any a7R before it. Sony a7R V | Sony 28-70mm | Nauticam WACP-C Lens

of resolution to examine it can be easy to pick apart any potential flaws in your images, so opting for the highest quality lenses and wet optics is highly recommended for this camera system.

For our review, we used the Nauticam NA-A7RV housing. Other housings from Aquatica, Ikelite, Sea & Sea, Marelux and Seacam are either currently available or coming soon.

Video

The Sony a7R V gets a nice little boost to the video specs by jumping up 4K 60p over the previous model's limit of only 4K 30p. At this point, 4K 60p is really the minimum required spec to be taken seriously as a video

camera, so it's great to see this model meets that requirement. The benefit of 60p footage is that it allows you to slow down playback to half speed to increase the duration of your clip, improve stability, and get a nice little slow-motion effect when played back at 30p.

One of our most often repeated video mantras is that "if the color isn't right, nothing else matters". Video shooters have to get the color right in camera during recording, as there is not nearly the same amount of latitude for color correction that shooting photos allows for. This is controlled by the ability to capture a manual white balance using only natural light at depth. In



See the gorgeous and accurate colors captured by the Sony a7R V in action.

the past Canon has been the gold standard for doing this well, but the recently upgraded performance on the Sony a7S III has risen to be a decent competitor for the top spot. Thankfully the Sony a7R V seems to have inherited the same color accuracy and abilities of the Sony a7S III so it is extremely capable of capturing natural-looking, accurate colors in video underwater.

To put this in context, the previous model of this camera was only usable to about 30ft/10m when shooting ambient light video. Now the Sony a7R V can shoot at depths of nearly 90ft/30m while producing accurate colors with only ambient light.

One factor to be aware of for video is that the camera does a 1.24x crop on the sensor when recording. This means that wide-angle shooters may favor a lens with a wider field of view, such as the Canon 8-15mm Fisheye lens to help offset that crop. Meanwhile, macro shooters might be a little excited about it, as it means more working distance and tighter shots on those tiny subjects.

When rolling video there's loads of data coming off of this sensor but the read speeds can sometimes have a hard time keeping up with it. Fast, hard pans and shots with lots of fast-moving things may produce noticeable rolling shutter effect, but if things are nice and steady and stable

this will likely not be an issue. For the ultimate video performance, we still recommend either the Sony a7S III or Sony a1, but the Sony a7R V is now more video-capable than any A7R model has been in the past.

There are some control scheme updates on the Sony a7R V that we are quite fond of. It now offers the ability to have separately saved controls for photo and video. You can be set to the ideal settings for either shooting style with just a single flick of a switch. This is massively helpful for quickly switching between photo and video, as it saves the time required to make the necessary changes to aperture, ISO, shutter speed, focus, and white balance that we would have to do individually otherwise.

The photo exposure will typically be set to underexpose ambient light by 1-2 stops, and we are usually shooting in auto white balance because we will be correcting the RAW files in post. Conversely, the video exposure will be set so that the shutter speed is always double the frame rate (1/125 when shooting 60p), and the white balance will be custom to get the color right in-camera. We'll also have the aperture set to f/8, ISO set to Auto, and Exposure Comp set to -0.7 to knock down the highlights a bit. Thanks to the new control operation we can have those settings locked in and ready to roll video with ideal

results with just one control activation from the ideal photo settings.

We also liked programming the C1 custom button to the white balance function. This allowed us to execute and cycle between saved white balance presets with just 1-2 button presses which was super convenient for video shooting. If we already had a white balance saved, we were ready to roll as soon as we flipped the control switch. If not, we were just 1-2 clicks away from either selecting the appropriate white balance or capturing a new one.

Conclusion

To state it as plainly as possible, the Sony a7R V is the absolute best image quality from a full frame camera right now - mirrorless or DSLR. The ultra-detailed and razor sharp resolution captured by the whopping 61mp sensor are currently unparalleled. It creates the opportunity to easily crop down to a vertical aspect ratio from horizontal shots with plenty of resolution to spare. The dynamic range detail in brightest highlights and darkest shadows holds up extremely well under intense scrutiny. The color reproduction is accurate, vibrant, and walks the fine line between rich saturation and natural appearance - so perfectly in fact that we felt most of

the color was ready to publish straight out of the camera. It's incredible that a camera with so much resolution can also maintain such a low noise limit even when shooting in excess of ISO 1000, creating a look that was more like ISO 400 film grain than digital noise. This will absolutely be our first choice for an underwater photo camera when ultimate still image quality is the top priority.

The video side of things left us pleasantly surprised, and while it may not be the ultimate video camera, it is absolutely solid enough to be considered a viable hybrid camera. The white balance is as good as the best video cameras currently on the market and the 4K 60p video spec meets our minimum requirements for serious video work. The 1.24x crop factor is a negative factor to consider for video as it is a pretty heavy crop to contend with and

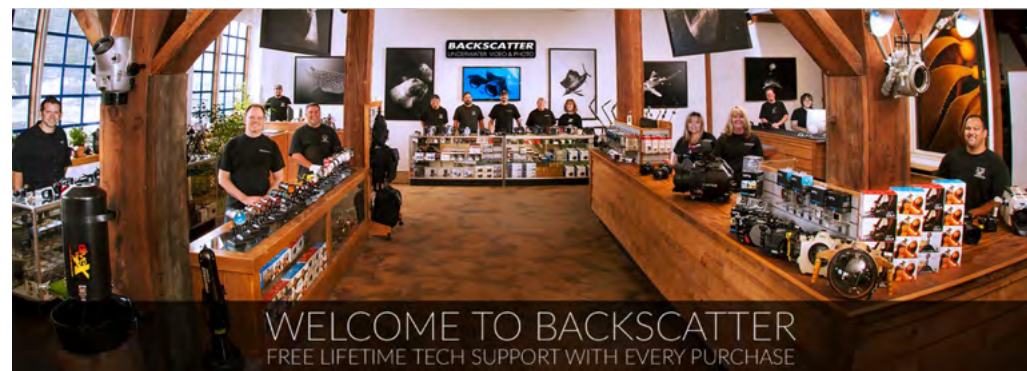


will require a lens that will maximize the field of view.

This camera is made for the hardcore photo shooter, who wants to dabble in video that looks pretty dang awesome, too. Anybody interested in high-quality, high-resolution still photography needs to take a hard look at the Sony a7R V.

Jim Decker

www.backscatter.com



Accessories

by Phil Rudin

For the fashionably clothed male and female, most outfits are not complete without a bit of accessorizing to capture your own personal style.

First let me say that I fully intend to review the new Sony A7RV and the Marelux MX-A7RV housing in a coming issue of UWP but I thought it might be worth first talking about how I accessorize many of the housings that I review.

Over the years I have reviewed dozens of camera and housing combinations from many of the most popular underwater housing manufacturers. Many of the reviews included accessorizing the basic housing to fit my personal needs. I would like to cover four of the accessories that are important to me and that readers may want to consider.

Vacuum Valve System

Starting inside the housing, most modern systems now include leak detection systems that are triggered when moisture is detected inside the housing. All have a power source, usually a small button size

battery, that powers both an audible and visual warning when moisture is detected. This can be anything from condensation moving from an air conditioned room to the outdoors or a catastrophic flood of the entire system.

Most manufacturers have now added extra M14 and M16 bulkheads to their housings for vacuum valves that integrate with the leak detection system. The valve allows a vacuum to be drawn that helps seal the housing's O-rings before taking it into the water.

I have added this feature to every housing I have owned since they became available. The addition of a vacuum valve and the manual vacuum pump runs in the \$100.00 to over \$200.00 USD price range in a standard M14 thread size depending on manufacturer.

A verity of manual pumps are including with the valve from manufacturers like the Marelux valve which retails for \$166.00 USD. I draw a vacuum every time I take a housing into the water including in my pool. Some days, when I am testing different lens, port and extensions combinations, I may open and close the housing ten or fifteen times while



testing. Marelux offers a solution for those of use that who do frequent vacuum pulls - the Automatic Vacuum Pump. This is a vacuum pump that works with any of the 13mm diameter



valves tops and it is powered by a single rechargeable 18650 battery. The unit is 210mm (8.27 inches) long weights 230g (8.11oz) and easily packs away for travel. The AutoVac is one

of those, I didn't know how much I needed it until I had it type of products and sells for \$89.00 USD, battery and charger not included.

Flash Trigger System

My Marelux MX-A7RV review housing came equipped with their Manual Flash Trigger for Canon, Nikon and Sony cameras which retails for \$198.00 USD. This flash trigger has a single contact to trigger the flash manually and is powered by two CR2024 button batteries.

The trigger fires two red LED lights in the fiber optic cord windows. The system has never failed to fire any of the strobes I have paired with it and the two batteries are reported to last for as many as 10,000 activations.

UWTechnics Flash Trigger

For my Sony A7R V review I wanted to include shots taken using high speed sync flash, TTL and some other items that are not covered by the Marelux manual flash trigger.

My tests will include TTL using my trusted Inon Z330 strobes and HSS using the excellent new Backscatter MF-2 flashes which now include HHS, adjustable remote trigger and much much more.

For these reasons I installed the outstanding UWTechnics flash trigger. I did a full review of the UWTechnics flash trigger in UwP issue #121 using a Nauticam housing with a Sony A1 camera. At the time I did not have access to a High Speed sync flash of any brand. Currently not too many exist and none are at the Backscatter MF-2 price point, in fact most are in the over \$1000.00 USD per flash price range.



Two of the many things I like most about the UWT triggers are that they don't need to be charged and they don't need to be turned on and off for use before sealing the housing.

The UWT triggers use the same common CR-type button batteries as most flash triggers and they simply turn on and off when the camera is turned on and off in the housing.

The UWT trigger has a simple dial setting that once set will work at all shutter speeds including high speed sync and in TTL without needing to be programmed through your PC or Mac.

Once the UWT trigger is set up it will work with just about any compatible fiber optic TTL flash in the market.

The UWT flash trigger is for most purposes almost indistinguishable from the stock Marelux flash trigger. It is user friendly and can be removed and reinstalled in the same way you would the original Marelux flash trigger using their provided Allen wrench set.

Once again with the UWTechnics flash triggers I have never had a misfire other than when I became



impatient and triggered the system before the flash had time to recycle. The UWTechnics flash trigger retails for \$485.00 USD and can be found at the uwtechnics.com web page. UWTechnics also sells a wide range of flash triggers and other products for many camera brands and has support for most housing manufacturers.

Buoyancy Control Devices

Moving to the outside of the housing, most photographers and videographers use some type of lighting system supported by a verity of support arms of different lengths. With all of this equipment the systems can become heavy both above and below water.

To address the in-water issues of over weight equipment many buoyancy solutions have been advanced over the years. Some of the problems include differences in the weight of a system going from macro ports to large dome ports, mounting wet lenses, the weight of video or strobe lighting, freshwater v saltwater, free diving or scuba diving and many more.

Many divers have personal preferences as well regarding system buoyancy. Some strive for a completely neutrally system while others like myself want the system to be heavy enough to rest on the sand without floating away.

With each configuration of the housing system a change in the amount of added buoyancy needs to be considered and offset by adding weight to the diver in many cases. I have seen photographers use everything from a empty plastic bottles to cutup pool noodles to try to offset system weight.

Among the current solutions for the over weight problem are closed cell foam blocks that mount over lattice or hex arms, carbon fiber and aluminum float arms in varying lengths and diameters with varying amounts of buoyancy and a few lesser known solutions.

Currently float arms and blocks that fit over support arms are the

two most common solutions for this problem. These solutions however do not resolve the issue of quickly moving between systems without having to change the configuration of the buoyancy for each system change. Many of these solutions are also worth it but a bit expensive and add to the bulk of traveling with a complete system.

Marelux Flexbuoy

The Marelux Flexbuoy is a inflatable buoy (or bladder) that attaches to the housing or arms and can easily be deployed underwater by simply blowing gas into the bladder.

As the name implies, the Flexbuoy has a flexible weighted inflation tube that hangs from the side of the bladder. At depth you can inflate the bladder as much or as little as you like to offset weight and naturalize buoyancy.

As you ascend the gas expands and is vented out of the open inflation tube. As you descend the gas is compressed and additional gas can be added to offset the reduction in buoyancy which occurs as you go deeper.

You can add as much or as little buoyancy as you need for the system you are using without having to remove or add additional floats or float arm sizes.



Typical carbon fiber arms in the 50X200mm range (2X8 inches) have about 160g (5.64 oz) of lift, a larger 70X300 (2.76X12 inches) arm has about 671g (23.68 oz) of lift. The Flexbuoy comes in two sizes 400ml (13.6 oz) lift and 800ml (27.2 oz) lift with a retail cost of \$19.00 USD for the 400ml and \$21.00 USD for the 800ml size.

The Flexbuoy attaches to the housing or support arms with a simple spring loaded stainless and plastic clamp. The bladder is held inside a mesh bag which is tightened on both ends with a nylon bungee cord using a simple slip lock like those used on a



wrist straps.

When the slip lock is pulled open the bladder can easily be removed for cleaning by simply running water from the tap into the bladder. The weight on the end of the bladder inflation tube keeps the nylon inflator below the bladder at all times whilst in the water so it will never deflate accidentally during use.

Two things you should know about the Flexbuoy, they tend to hold water that seeps into the bladder at the surface when you end your dive. I found out quickly that, if not drained, you may end up with water in places it should not be.

Second the weighted end of the tube used to inflate the bladder can

hang in places you would rather not have it like in front of the LCD screen on the housing. These are easy fixes that are resolved in the first dive or two by finding a proper placement point to keep the tube out of your way and by remembering to dump the bladder before you drip onto anything that doesn't mix well with water.

I have two 400ml Flexbuoys in my dive equipment bag when I travel so I always have them with me. Flexbuoy's lime green mesh bag is hard to miss when I look in my dive bag so I have not forgotten them on any dive so far.

This is a product I am still in the process of testing but at this time I would say that they are worth the small investment for a pair even if you don't always end up using them. Because the nylon bungee cord that is used to secure the Flexbuoys stretches a bit I am able to secure the Flexbuoy around the five inch Marelux port extensions to raise the front of the port. I intend to find a way to also secure Flexbuoy to my macro port to help offset the weight of closeup lenses.

Accessory Viewfinders

In almost every camera and housing review I have done for UWP and other publications I have included information on a verity of viewfinders I have used with both DSLR's and



mirrorless EVF's.

I consider being able to access a large full frame view an essential tool for U/W shooters. Accessing a large image in the viewfinder allows you to accurately assess critical composition, with EVF's you can enlarge images to locate the exact focus point and also assess sharpness in critical areas like eyes without ever moving your eye from the viewfinder.

Inon Straight Viewfinder Unit II

Marelux has a Smart Viewfinder in the pipeline: the first offering will be for the LCD screen and it will include features like a depth indicator not found in other viewfinders.

While I wait for the Marelux Smart Finder to arrive for testing I wanted to try the awesome abilities of the over 9M DOT A7R V EVF. Because the standard pickup finder supplied with the Marelux housings is an odd size I sourced an adapter that works with the newest Inon Straight Viewfinder Unit II from Fun-In Taiwan.

The viewfinder and adapter arrived assembled and the only



requirement was to remove the pickup finder and replace it with the ready to install Inon finder.

After the vacuum is drawn on the housing the viewfinder can be rotated out of the way or turned completely upside down, so be aware that you will want to align the viewfinder with the EVF for full coverage of the entire frame.

Once installed the viewfinder shows full coverage of the rather large A7R V EVF and, at times, my old eyes struggled to see the information bar across the bottom of the large EVF screen. In some cases this was a result of the surrounding bright ambient light

rather than my vision issues.

Looking into the viewfinder I was able to see the focus points and compose the image with complete confidence. Reviewing images in the viewfinder I was able press the magnification function button on the housing without taking my eye away from the viewfinder and access critical focus in eyes and other focus points.

The Inon viewfinder is a reasonable option for the Marelux housing retailing for around \$690.00 USD and includes a cap to cover the optical glass. Inon also has a 45 degree Unit II that works with the same Fun-In adapter and sells for around \$600.00 USD.

These products can be sourced from the following web pages:

www.Marelux.co
www.UWTechnics.com
www.inon.jp
and
www.Fun-in.com.tw

I would like to thank all of these companies for assisting me with products for this review.

Phil Rudin
Instagram

We've got you covered!



Magic filters are now available in 3 options. Original Magic for use in blue water with DSLR and compact cameras with Manual White Balance, Auto-Magic for compact cameras in automatic point and shoot mode. GreenWater Magic for use in green water with DSLR and compact cameras with Manual White Balance. Prices start at just £25.

The Auto-Magic formula is now available in a Plexiglass filter that can be added or removed underwater.

www.magic-filters.com

“All Too Clear”

Documentary Filmmaking beneath the Great Lakes with Inspired Planet Productions and Boxfish Luna

with Yvonne Drebert and Zach Melnick

Yvonne Drebert and Zach Melnick of Inspired Planet Productions use the Boxfish Luna underwater cinematography drone to film their latest project about the Great Lakes.

Boxfish Research interviewed the documentary filmmakers about the documentary “All Too Clear” and why they chose the Boxfish Luna for underwater filming.

Tell us about Inspired Planet Productions and your new documentary project, “All Too Clear”.

Yvonne Drebert, Producer – Inspired Planet Productions, is located on the Bruce Peninsula in Ontario, Canada, right on the shore of the Great Lakes, where 20% of the world’s freshwater comes from.

“All Too Clear” is a documentary series about the invasion of the Great Lakes by the quagga mussel.

Zach Melnick, Director Cinematographer – These little critters’ quadrillions of them at the bottom of the Great Lakes have completely changed how these ecosystems function.

What challenges or problems necessitated a new ROV (remotely operated vehicle) solution?

Zach Melnick, Director Cinematographer – When we first started talking about doing a story about the offshore ecosystem of the Great Lakes, we realized this was a massive challenge. So how do you show people something that they almost never have any experience with personally unless they’re divers? And even then, most of the area we’re talking about is inaccessible to divers.

We found that there were some consumer devices that were okay, but their cameras were terrible, and there were a few remotely operated vehicles designed for big expeditions and scientists mainly. And so we found pretty quickly the Boxfish Luna as this sort of underwater drone concept.

What features of Boxfish Luna were most appealing and made it suitable for your documentary?

Yvonne Drebert, Producer – The Boxfish Luna kind of fits in this pretty amazing niche where someone like an independent production company



“All Too Clear” co-directors Yvonne Drebert and Zach Melnick of Inspired Planet Productions with the Boxfish Luna underwater cinematography drone the team uses to explore the Great Lakes. Photo Credit: Inspired Planet Productions.

can get one and start exploring waterways and lakes and oceans in a way that before just really hasn’t been possible. So it’s a really exciting time for us as filmmakers.

What made the Boxfish Luna stand out over other cinematography ROVs you researched?

Zach Melnick, Director Cinematographer – What really stood out with the Boxfish Luna is that it had

an incredible camera. So it has a real camera underwater, and it sends the signal up to the surface in real-time 4k uncompressed raw if you want.

We can control all of the camera settings from the surface. We see exactly what we’re filming, and we have total control, exactly the same as if you have the camera right in front of you.

By putting the Sony A7 SIII into the Luna, we’re able to see in very,



This new drone was specifically designed for underwater film production. The Luna gives the user full creative freedom to capture the incredible diversity of the undersea world.

very low light conditions, more than 300 feet, almost 100 meters without any extra lights at all, which is pretty incredible.

What have you been most impressed with when using Boxfish Luna for wildlife filmmaking?

Yvonne Drebert, Producer – The Boxfish Luna has an amazing battery life. So when we compare it to something that we can get with, say, divers who are limited in time to, say, 30, 40 minutes with the Luna, we can be down for hours. And honestly, we usually run out of energy before the Luna.

Zach Melnick, Director Cinematographer – One of the innovative things about the Luna is that you can point it in any direction and then move in that direction. So that really opens up a whole lot of opportunity for filming both moving wildlife like a fish, or if you want to get a really smooth pan of lake bottom or a shipwreck or something. Really, the sky's the limit in the freedom you have to get those shots as you want to get them.

Yvonne Drebert, Producer – One of the things that really drew us to the Luna was the safety aspect of it. We're not going to be sending divers



A moment of zen cruising with a gorgeous Rainbow Trout filmed beneath the surface of the Great Lakes. The photo is a screengrab from "All Too Clear" documentary footage shot on the Boxfish Luna with an integrated Sony A7SIII camera. Photo Credit: Inspired Planet Productions.

down. We're not going to be asking them to go a little deeper, to stay down a little longer to get that shot. With the Luna, we're all safely above the surface, and we can see in real-time what the Luna is seeing and what animals the Luna is interacting with. And that was something really special for us. The other thing is that the Luna doesn't emit bubbles. When we've encountered a lot of fish, they don't seem to be too concerned about us. In fact, some fish even come to us to check us out.

The Luna allows us to find an animal underwater and just be with it while it explores the environment,

which is really kind of a magical thing that we haven't really been able to do before.

We know you work a lot with scientists now. Tell us more about how you collaborate with them.

Yvonne Drebert, Producer – So for "All Too Clear", we've been working with a lot of fish scientists who are pretty excited to see the material we're putting out there. Unfortunately, a lot of the research methods that fish scientists use are fatal for the fish. So the footage that we've been able to gather with the Boxfish Luna of fish doing their thing, exploring the



During filming, footage of the underwater ecosystem is displayed on Bofish Luna's control console and monitored by Zach Melnick. Photo Credit: Inspired Planet Productions.

environment, eating, reproducing, the scientific community has just been so excited because they're able to see the fish that they love and work with all the time alive and interacting with the environment.

For us as wildlife filmmakers, it's amazing to get great film, but it kind of is a whole other level when the work you're doing is in collaboration with scientists who are then able to use that material to further the scientific research on a specific species and to hopefully help that species if it's struggling.

What plans do you have to use Bofish Luna in the future?

Zach Melnick, Director Cinematographer – Being able to have this freedom to film underwater has completely changed how we think about what we're going to do with our work in the future. We can get in the middle of a school of fish and be right with them in a way that would not be possible, I don't believe, before this. The sky is the limit, really. We have a whole series of projects that we want to do to show people things they've never been able to see before using this technology, with an initial focus on freshwater. But marine ecosystems are in our future as well.



The documentary filmmakers' version of ice fishing is filming a Lake Sturgeon beneath the Great Lakes ice in February. The photo is a screengrab from "All Too Clear" documentary footage shot on the Bofish Luna with an integrated Sony A7SIII camera. Photo Credit: Inspired Planet Productions.

Boxfish Luna

Boxfish Luna is the next-generation 8K underwater drone from Bofish Research designed for documentary filmmaking, wildlife cinematography and scientific research. The drone's full-frame professional camera allows filmmakers to shoot exceptionally crisp and stable 8K video and 50MP stills underwater. Scientists can equip Bofish Luna with up to eight sensors or add-ons for research and data collection, making capturing imagery and data quick, easy and safe.

Boxfish Research designs and

manufactures industry-leading, actively stabilized, ultra-high-definition remotely operated and autonomous capable vehicles for submerged asset inspection; marine science; expedition superyachts; offshore energy; aquaculture; biosecurity and search & rescue, and cinematography. Bofish Research incorporates cutting-edge technology with ease of use and advanced sensing to expand the possibilities for humans to understand, experience and work within the underwater world.



About Inspired Planet Productions

Producer Yvonne Drebert and Director/Cinematographer Zach Melnick are a husband-and-wife documentary production team working under the banner of Inspired Planet Productions. They have been creating documentaries for 20 years. Inspired Planet was most recently recognized at the Canadian Screen Awards with a nomination for the Rob Stewart Award for Best Science or Nature Documentary Program or Series in 2021 for their TVO/Knowledge Network series, Striking Balance. Yvonne and Zach have spent their documentary careers exploring

the connection between people and nature through stories of sustainable development, overlooked natural worlds, and forgotten history. They live on the shores of Lake Huron's Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula in Ontario.

**Yvonne Drebert
and Zach Melnick**
www.inspiredplanet.ca

www.boxfish.nz

<https://www.inspiredplanet.ca/alltooclear>



Issue 132/42



Immerse Yourself in the World of Underwater Imaging

NEWS

Keep up to date with everything that matters to underwater photographers, from the latest gear and gadgets to the newest developments in marine research

TECHNIQUES

Learn the fundamentals of underwater photography and progress to the latest, most innovative techniques taught by the top pros in the industry

ARTICLES

Discover the world of underwater imaging through compelling features from photographers, filmmakers, ocean scientists, industry experts, and more

TRAVEL

Read about the experiences of accomplished shooters as they visit the world's most iconic dive spots, and get inside tips on maximizing your dive vacation

EQUIPMENT

Use our comprehensive underwater photography and videography gear guide to find the best camera, lenses, housing, lighting, and accessories for you

CONTESTS

Submit your best underwater images and short films to our annual contests, including the prestigious DPG/Wetpixel Masters Underwater Imaging Competition

DIVE PHOTO GUIDE

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Jhon Henriano

by Nicholas Kouvaras

Indonesia is the world's biggest polynesia in the world with 17000 islands and it is one of the most popular destinations for underwater photographers. The list with destinations here is endless. Banda Sea for hammerheads, Bali shipwrecks, the mantas and the Mola, Komodo and Raja Ampat with the liveboards, Lembeh's muck diving, Bunaken's walls, Wakatobi's caves and pristine corals and also destinations not so well known like Alor.

Many Photographers, amateur and professional, visit Indonesia for the biodiversity and the photographic opportunities. It is also home to many workshops, competitions and shoot outs.

But what is to be a local Underwater photographer here? We asked Jakarta based UW photographer Jhon Henriano.

Can you tell us a few things about you?

My name is Jhon Henriano, I am working for Indonesia's National Oil Company, I am the founder of Underwater Studio Jakarta and for the last 5 years I am also a professional UW photographer.



Canon EOS R5 with Canon EF 16-35mm f/2.8L lens in a Nauticam Housing. f/20 1/100 sec ISO 200 @16mm Manual Mode

What made you move from a recreational UW photographer to a Professional?

When I started taking pictures underwater, I never dreamed of becoming a professional. In 2018 and after winning a couple of UW competitions, I started getting job offers. My first jobs were mainly documenting underwater both for the private sector and for the government. In the beginning it was hard. There was a lot of competition in the market but I soon realised that experience and skill are not enough. You also

need to have ideas to create high quality content and the skill and the means to monetize your product. Becoming a professional helped me become a better photographer and establish strong collaborations but also cost me some friends who now see me as a competitor.

What are the typical job opportunities here in Indonesia for an UW photographer?

There are a lot of job opportunities in Indonesia. Mainly underwater documentaries for



promoting the tourist industry. Underwater modelling is also big here. We also work a lot with the promotion of products, like dive computers, masks, fins, etc. Nowadays baby photoshoots are becoming very popular.

What is your favourite place to dive and take pictures in Indonesia?

I will have to divide the answer to two categories. Wide Angle landscape and big life. If you are looking for beautiful landscapes for



Canon EOS R5 with Canon EF 16-35mm f/2.8L lens in a Nauticam Housing. f/13 1/160 sec ISO 400 @16mm Manual Mode

wide angle photography, beautiful corals, clear waters with consistent water conditions, I would choose Alor, Wakatobi, Raja Ampat and Labuan Bajo. If giant mantas, dolphins, sharks etc, is your thing, then I would go for Labuan Bajo, Nusa Penida, Raja Ampat and Weh in Aceh for the Mobulas.

Do you have an all time favourite picture?

I love this one top right.

Can you tell us about the experience of UW studio photography?

It is so exciting to have your own UW Photography Studio. Being able to try new things, control the light, Use various light sources, play with angles and all that in super clear waters. Trial and error makes your creativity pop out and you never have to think about time. We can spend hours in the water. In this way you can really get the most out of your equipment and set up. The best thing is that the studio is in my home. No commuting, no traffic, no worries.



Canon EOS R5 with Canon EF 24-70mm f/2.8L II USM lens in a Nauticam Housing. f/4.5 1/160 sec ISO 400 @24mm Manual Mode

If money was no problem what would be your next setup?

Hahaha! If money was no problem, maybe, I would try getting a medium format camera for the photoshoots and maybe a Canon EOS C300 Mark III for Video. Then spend a lot of money on Surface lights like the Aperture 1200D Pro. It would be an overkill but it is always good to have more power! Hahaha!

What do you use now? Do you have a different set up for the studio and different for the ocean and why?

I usually go with my Canon R5 and a Ninja V monitor for commercial projects, since I need to meet certain requirements. When Travelling, I use a Canon 5D mark IV in a Sea&Sea housing as it is a much more practical package. In terms of lighting I use the same for both set ups. Two strobes and 1 continuous light or 2 continuous lights with strobe function.

My Gear

Cameras:

Canon R5 with NA-Nauticam R5



Canon EOS R5 with Canon EF 16-35mm f/2.8L lens in a Nauticam Housing. f/20 1/100 sec ISO 200 @16mm Manual Mode

Canon 5D Mark IV with Sea&sea Housing

Monitor: Ninja V - with Nauticam Housing

Arms: Inon Telescopic Arms

Clamps: Weefine clamps

Strobes:

2x Sea & Sea YSD3 Mark II

2x Inon z330 mark II

Continues lights: 2x Weefine Solar Flare 12000lms

Lenses: RF 28 - 70, EF 24 - 70mm, EF 8 - 15 Fisheye

For studio set-up :

I use the same basic gear for the studio. There is no difference on the camera gear. I only use additional surface lights. My surface lights are a M600D Godox as main light, and an AD600 pro Godox also at the surface for fill in light or for hair and highlights.

“Do you have a different set up for the studio and different for the ocean and why?”

Not really the main difference is the main light. I am always depending on my main source of light and use strobes or lights just to fill in. In the Ocean my main light is the sun, while in the studio my main source of light comes from continuous lighting, the M600D with 780 watt led Power.

I do this because I love natural light and the natural colour. The

white balance, in this way, will play a major role in all conditions and set-ups. The main difference is that when you are in the ocean you have a big and unlimited power of light coming from the sun, while in the studio We have to control the main light to mimic the sunlight. Sometimes I have to raise the power when the clouds cover up my studio (outdoor pool). The aperture I work with while in the ocean is between F11 and F13 and in the studio it is between F5,6 and F9. The shutter speed is the same between 1/160 - 1/250. In every situation I make sure the exposure level stays in the middle.

What holds the top spot on your bucket list in terms of destinations?

If I am lucky, I would like to dive Tonga. It is at the top of my wish list. And Mexico with the cenotes. I would love to take pictures of the 2 layers of water.

Thank you, Jhon.

Nicholas Kouvaras
Instagram

*Jhon Henriano lives in Jakarta
@aquababiesindonesia photographer
Owner @underwaterstudio.jkt, Photo/
video workshop
Technical advisor - @divesea.id*

www.uwpmag.com

Portraits

by Brooke Pyke

Want to learn how to capture the unique personality and characteristics of your favorite marine animals? This is something I do daily here on the Ningaloo Reef in Western Australia, and I hope I can share some of my photographic experience with you.

WHAT IS A PORTRAIT?

The classical definition of a portrait goes something like this: “A portrait is a painting, photograph, sculpture, or other artistic representation of a person, in which the face and its expressions are predominant. The intent is to display the likeness, personality, and even the mood of the person.” - Wikipedia

With wildlife portrait photography we aim to achieve the same outcomes. But unlike humans, wild animals won't just sit for you in front of your lens patiently while you adjust your settings and lighting. You need to be prepared to get your photo as soon as the moment presents itself. Capturing a good photograph of an animal takes mostly time, but also a lot of patience. You want to not only capture a nice photo of your subject, but also capture it in a way that shows something that is unique about that particular animal. You want to aim to have it facing or looking and moving toward the lens, by doing this you will likely capture its personality and characteristics.



Bottlenose Dolphin, Ningaloo Reef. ISO 200 f8 1/400s

All images were taken with a Canon R6, Canon 8-15mm Fisheye Lens, Nauticam Housing, Nauticam Fisheye Glass Dome, ambient lighting, no strobes.

CHOOSING YOUR GEAR

For most cases when shooting marine life portraits, you will need a wide-angle or fisheye lens. As most animals are quite large, you want to be able to get close while also fitting as much of the animal in frame as you can (unless you are shooting macro critters, then choose a macro lens). I shoot with a Canon 8-15mm Fisheye lens which is amazing for

these kinds of shots.

Another important thing about shooting with a wide lens is that it will limit the amount of water particles between your lens and subject. Thus your photos will look sharper and clearer even with lower visibility. You want to aim to get as close as you can to your subject to get the clearest and sharpest photo, but this is where it gets tricky. Generally, most animals don't want their photo taken, so keep



Me photographing a Whale Shark on the Ningaloo Reef. Photo by Oliver Clarke

reading to find out my tricks for dealing with this. In terms of choosing a camera, this greatly depends on your budget. But something with full manual control is a must, as well as interchangeable lenses. Small point-and-shoot cameras can be very limiting.

CHOOSING YOUR SETTINGS

One thing that really daunts people shooting manual for the first time is how to choose your camera settings. Advice will vary depending on who you ask, but let me share my techniques with you.

Shutter Speed

First of all, when shooting moving subjects, shutter speed is super important to achieve a sharp image. As a minimum, I always have my camera



Sea Lion, Jurien Bay. ISO 400 f6.3 1/1000s

set to 1/200sec – or faster if I can, depending on available light. For most shots I have my shutter speed on 1/400-1/500sec. But if it's a cloudy day, or there is limited light at depth, I will lower it. The faster the animal moves, the faster your shutter speed needs to be.

See the photo of a sea lion, I had to set my shutter at 1/1000s to get a sharp photo as it was moving very quickly. It is important to note that all my photos are taken with ambient lighting. If using

strobes, most cameras cannot shoot over 1/200s.

Aperture

Choosing your aperture is also important as this will determine your depth of field and whether your lens will focus easily on something close to the lens while blurring out the background creating a soft focus, or focusing on an entire animal that is a bit further away. Choosing your aperture depends

on what kind of effect you're after, are you wanting the whole animal in focus? If so choose an aperture with a higher number (this makes the lens aperture smaller). Maybe you're shooting a subject that is very close to your lens and you want just the face of the animal in focus. Then choose an aperture with a lower number (this makes the aperture wider).

For most of my photos of marine life my aperture will be somewhere between f/4 and f/9. But keep in mind that when you change your aperture this also affects the amount of light in your photo. Whenever the ISO, shutter, or aperture changes, so must one or more of the other settings (Shutter, Aperture, and ISO are the 3 sides of the triangle that determine the exposure of an image).

ISO

In really simple terms, ISO is a setting that will lighten or darken your image. Changing the ISO means you change your camera's sensitivity to light. And this relates to either film or a digital camera sensor.

The lower the ISO number the less sensitive it is to light, the higher the ISO the more sensitive it is.

But some people ask "then why not just use a high ISO always and then you have more freedom with having a fast shutter speed?" Having a high ISO creates some problems of its own.

When your ISO is high for example 800 or more you will start to see what's called 'noise'. This is the grainy and horrible effect you can sometimes see in photos. For example, have you ever tried using your phone camera in really low light and noticed how it looks really grainy? This is what you want to avoid.

Always try to have your ISO on the lowest you can to avoid this. I usually have mine somewhere



Leopard Shark, Ningaloo Reef. ISO 320 f8 1/800s

between 100 to 320. On a really dark cloudy day I sometimes bump it to 500 but only when I have to and not doing so would compromise my shutter speed.

White Balance & RAW Files

When shooting with ambient and artificial light, I always have my white balance set to automatic. Also, I only shoot in RAW format (if you don't know

what this means do some googling, but always always shoot in RAW, not jpeg).

Shooting in RAW means that the white balance can be manually manipulated in post-production with Adobe Lightroom better than what your camera can do on its own.

Color grading is a skill that can take a while to master, but learning to do so will mean you get the most out of your photos. I process all my RAW files using Adobe Lightroom Classic.

FRAMING YOUR SHOTS

My biggest tips on how to frame and compose your shots are: Get level with your subjects and shoot across. Shoot either front on to your subject or at a slightly front/side on with the face and eyes in focus. If the subject is angled away from the camera, it makes it look like it's avoiding you and the photo won't be as engaging.

Many animals have some kind of feature that distinguishes them from others. Aim to capture and show the beauty of what's unique about it as well as its character or any special behavior.

For example, look at the photo of this manta ray. One of the most noticeable features on a manta are their huge mouths and long cephalic lobes. With this photo, I wanted to capture the manta ray feeding front on so you could see not only the eyes and face but also the huge gaping mouth and elegant wings. All these features are what make them so unique and different from other rays. If I had photographed the manta top down, the image would not be as interesting nor show off the most eye-catching parts of it.

GETTING THE SHOT

As I mentioned before, the most tricky part of wildlife photography

is getting close to an animal and catching the desired photo without it spooking. All my photography on the Ningaloo is done by freediving, as our reefs are very shallow. But also I find that without the noise and bubbles of a scuba regulator, I am able to approach closer to marine life while remaining relatively silent. Also, it's easier to move fast without the added weight of all the gear, so I can quickly get myself in position. Getting in the right position involves a lot of prediction about where an animal will move next and waiting in its path quietly so that it will approach the camera and not turn away too soon.

Doing this really depends on what animal you're photographing. For example, I wouldn't position myself in the way of a humpback whale or whale shark as they may actually bump into you. But for animals like mantas who are very agile, as long as you remain still and low, they will simply glide over you or move around you without being bothered by your presence. Learning the way animals interact and how to predict their next move takes experience and time in the water with them. Also remember that while photographing them, don't stress them or block their exit. Always allow them room to move away from you if they want to avoid you. Approach slowly, stay calm, and get them to trust you.



Reef Manta Ray, Ningaloo Reef. ISO 500 f8 1/400s

FORMING YOUR IDEAS AND MAKING THEM A REALITY

Finding the animals you want to photograph can be hard, and it's a lot about luck but also knowledge of habitat use and seasonal populations. The more time you spend in the ocean the more encounters you will have and also deepen your understanding of where to find particular species. But when you do finally find the critter you're looking for, you may not have a lot of time to think of the photo you aim to create. So I often have preconceived ideas of shots in my mind that I want to get. So when I eventually find the animal I want for that image, I can focus on capturing that idea, getting myself in the correct position for it, and adjusting my camera settings as needed.

For example, the photo above of the leopard shark is a shot I was wanting to get for ages. The image I had in mind was the sunbeams shining from above the shark, white sand below and the reef making the background. On a snorkel, by chance this leopard swam into the reef and it was the perfect conditions to get the shot I wanted. I swam alongside the shark as it cruised through the coral making sure the sun was on the other side of it. Once it swam past a nice section of coral I dived down so I was level with it and shooting across

with a slight upwards angle I got this photo. This image was made using only ambient light, no strobes. One of the great things about shooting over white sand is some light bounce up onto the subjects so they aren't in complete shadow, illuminating them from below.

KNOW YOUR CAMERA

Things often happen quickly when interacting with wildlife, so you don't want to be wasting time trying to figure out your camera settings. practice with it on land and in the water and know how to change your shutter, ISO, and aperture almost without looking. A huge part of a successful photo is making sure it is correctly exposed, sharp, and with the subject in focus. Always be ready and have your camera settings set for the light and depth you're going to be shooting at. So if suddenly you get an opportunity for a good photo you don't have to change too many things.

I have base settings that my camera is always set on which I can quickly do minor adjustments too easily without taking too much time. Take advantage of the custom modes on your camera if they have them. This means you can save up to 3 options that you often use. For example, I have a custom mode set for shallow water on a sunny day, and another for



Hawksbill Turtle, Ningaloo Reef. ISO 320 f6.3 1/400s

cloudy days with low light. If the sun suddenly goes behind a cloud while I'm photographing customers with a whale shark, I don't have to change all the settings I can just flip the dial over from Custom mode 1 to Custom mode 2. It's worth having an in-depth look at your camera's manual to familiarise yourself with all the options your camera has.

PRACTISE MAKES PERFECT

To get good at anything, it really comes down to time and dedication. With any profession, it's also about investing in quality equipment. If you

want to get professional photos, there aren't many shortcuts around it. Buy a good full-frame camera setup with quality lenses. Get a camera you can grow with as you gain experience. Being capable to shoot in full manual mode will take you a long way, Shooting in automatic underwater mode is a good start, but you won't progress or be able to control the results of your photos.

Take the time to learn the art of photography, what makes a good photo good? I can easily take nice photos of a whale shark, but what is it that makes certain shots stand out over others? Explore it, try as many



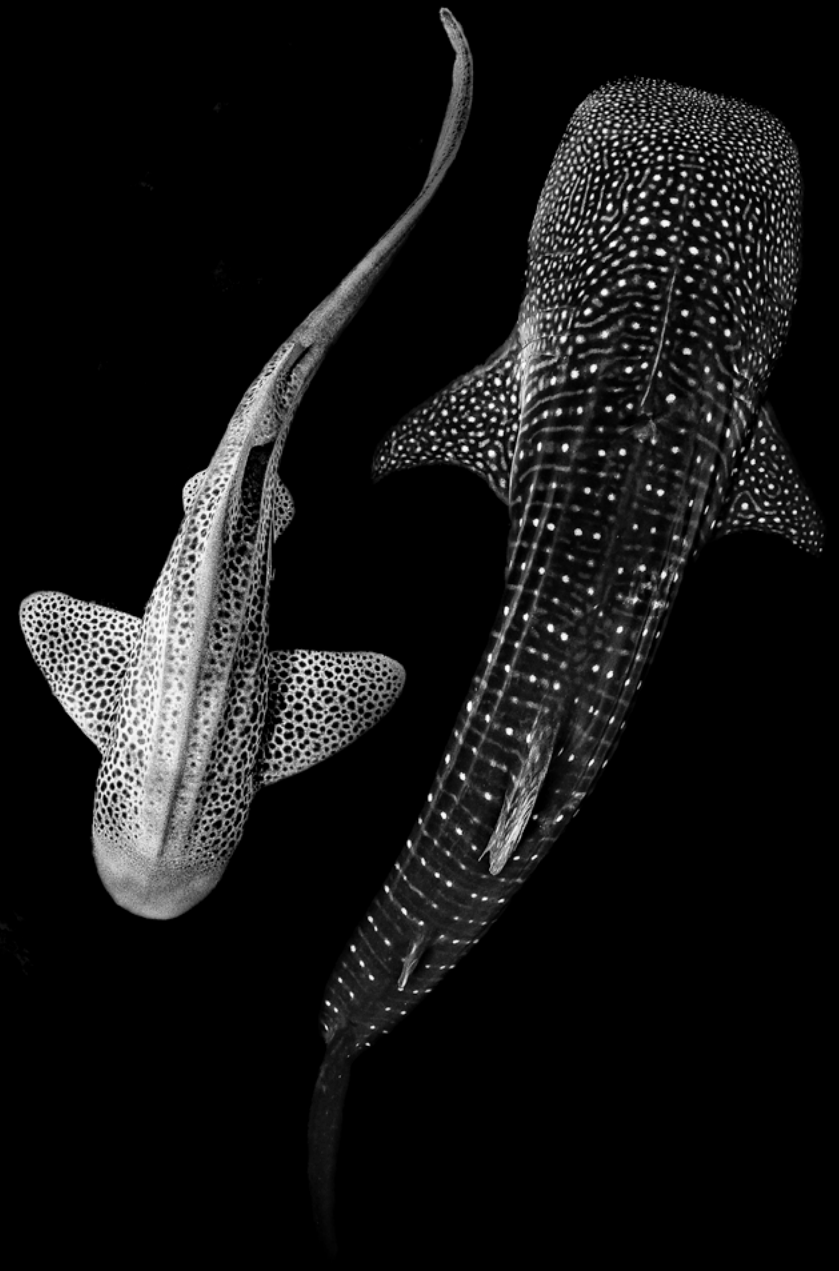
techniques as you can, read online tutorials, and take photography classes or workshops. Immerse yourself in the underwater world and spend as much time out in the field as you can. To this day I remain self-taught, I have no formal training. Having the internet is a great resource for learning and it's a great place to start. Real hands-on experience in the field is where you will learn to bring everything together to get the shots you imagine. Also, don't be afraid to reach out to other photographers and ask for advice. We have all been on this journey at some point and have asked the same questions of one another.

Thanks for reading! I hope I have shared some valuable information with you about marine life portraits.

Brooke Pyke
www.brookepykephotography.com



WWW.BROOKEPYKEPHOTOGRAPHY.COM



Panoramas

by Martin Broen

I love shooting underwater landscapes and panoramas as they are particularly challenging from the lighting and stitching but amazing for their textures and impact. Indeed, I won both the Second Place in the Amateur Category as well as the Second Place in the open Category of the 2022 Epson Pano Awards, both with underwater images!

The Second place Open Category is of the caves of the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico. the biggest underwater river system in the world, a never-ending labyrinth of tunnels and chambers decorated with incredible formations Venturing into the caves to capture their beauty is a fine balance of diving and photo skills and risk management. Shooting even minutes or hours away from the safe exit to surface, in pitch black conditions while you running out of gas.

This is a x 5 photo panorama stitch, Shoot with a Sony a7rIII and Canon 8-15mm at 1/12 sec handheld underwater, in zero ambient light, at ISO 6400 and f4.5. Using a BigBlue 15.000 lumen light

The Second place Amateur Category with a Photo of the Mobula Rays in Baja California, Mexico. Trying

to capture the extent of the Mobula Ray fever, and how they got frame by the sunrays penetrating the water. This is a x 5 photo panorama stitch, Shoot with a Sony a7rIII and Canon 8-15mm at 1/160 sec at f.7.1

While stitching panoramas using rectilinear lenses makes it much easier, In all those images I been using a 15mm Fisheye in a Full Frame (42mpx) camera.

The recommended overlap in 30%, so I have the “Rule of Thirds” grid active on my display and use that as a reference and go between that 33% and 50% overlap depending on how many recognizable features you have in the overlap for the software to recognize.

If you are trying to build a big image like the one of the flooded cave that is over 100 mpx, you shoot vertical frames doing a horizontal panorama. Or in the case of the image of the Cenote with the Hydrogen Sulfide cloud, is build of horizontal frames in a vertical panorama

And Lightroom has evolved to a point that is managing to stitch most of the Panoramas, Otherwise you are jumping to quite difficult dedicated software.

And is hit or miss. Some times will work perfectly with no edits require, some will never work, and some will require some adjustment in photoshop



Two Pro tips:

Don't move your camera using the center of your body as pivot, but instead use the optical center of the lens (non-parallax point) as center of rotation to avoid creating a parallax error in the photo

If you have a diver in Open Circuit in the scene, place her/him at the center of one of the multiple images

and not in the overlapping parts, as they will be moving between frames and the bubbles will make it difficult to stitch as well.

Martin Broen
www.martinbroen.com

Don't settle for 2nd best



Film - No Filter,
No White Balance



Digital - No Filter;
Manual White Balance



Digital - Magic Filter, Manual
White Balance

Digital cameras have opened up new possibilities to underwater photographers. For available light photography manual white balance is an invaluable tool for restoring colours. But when you use it without a filter you are not making the most of the technique. You're doing all the hard work without reaping the full rewards.

These three photos are all taken of the same wreck in the Red Sea. The left hand image was taken on slide film, which rendered the scene completely blue. The middle image is taken with a digital SLR without a filter, using manual white balance. The white balance has brought out some of the colour of the wreck, but it has also sucked all the blue out of the water behind the wreck, making it almost grey. The right hand image is taken with the same digital camera and lens, but this time using an original Magic Filter. The filter attenuates blue light meaning that the colours of the wreck are brought out and it stands out from the background water, which is recorded as an accurate blue.

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live!

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Cenotes Indonesian style

by Nicholas Kouvaras

It is 3:00 o'clock in the morning in Jakarta and a group of divers with a lot of gear are waiting to check in for a flight to Balikpapan. From there a smaller plane would take them to Berau and from there with a speed boat go down the river and finally to Maratua. One of the hidden gems of Indonesia's archipelago. The purpose of the trip is to dive in a cave/sinkhole/lake/cenote.

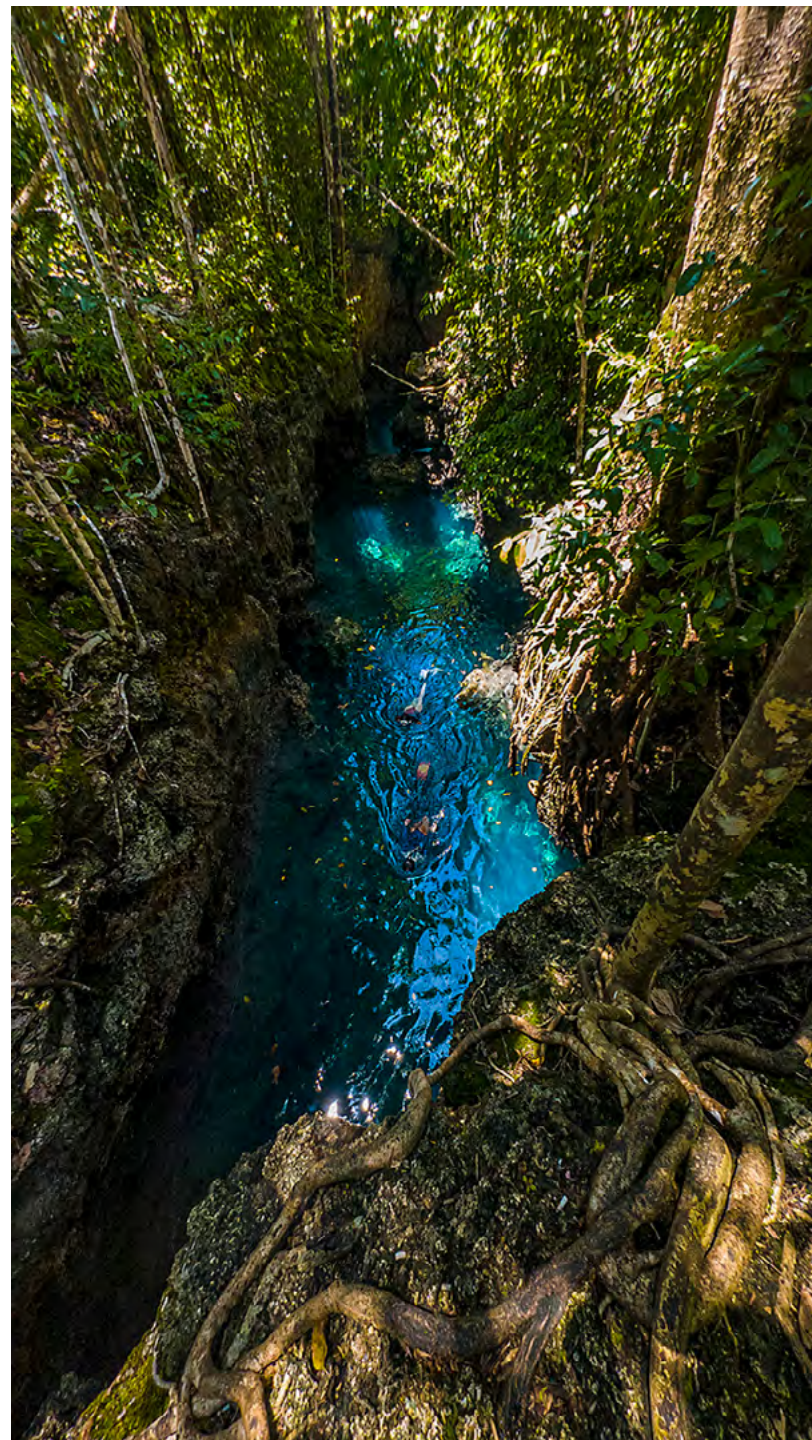
Halo Tabung or Haji Mangku Cave is a hidden gem on Maratua island. Inside the forest but close to the Ocean it is the most accessible from a series of similar flooded caves on this Karstic island. According to the locals it has some mystical history and it is considered a sacred and spiritual place. It is definitely magical, if you ask me. Maratua island is located in the East Kalimantan region and apart from the caves it offers an amazing diversity of dive sites. Schooling barracuda, thresher sharks, great walls with pristine corals and amazing volume of life. In the close by islands, there is a whale shark spot, a giant manta cleaning station, an inland lake with stingless jelly fishes and many more.

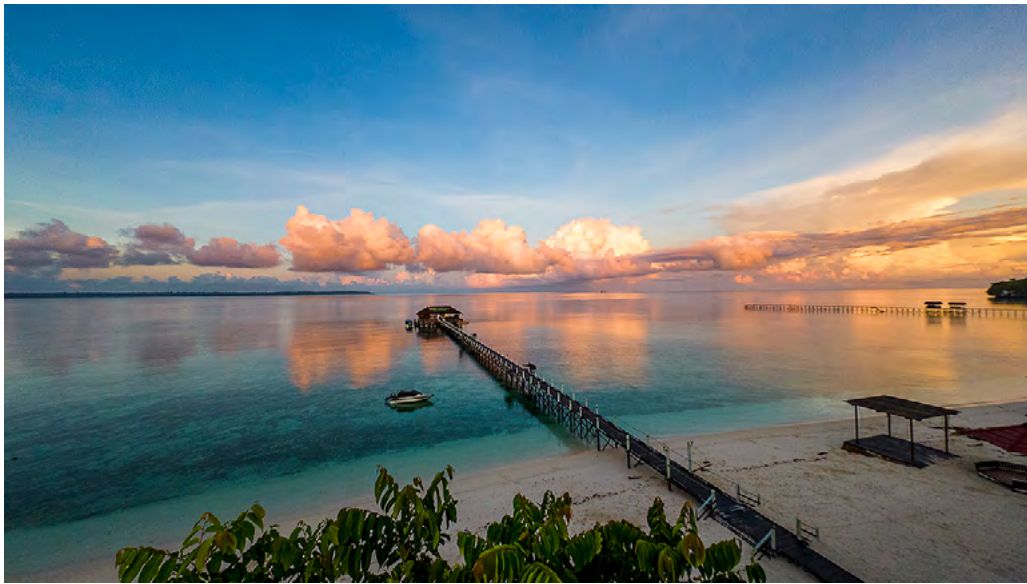
It was the second time that we visited the area and the cave. Both



Very like a superhero. Olympus OM-D E-M5 mark III with Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 8mm f/1.8 Fisheye PRO Lens behind a 4.33" Dome port in a Nauticam housing. f/2.5, 1/125 sec, ISO800, P Mode.

The Cave from Above. DJI Action 2 f/2.8, 1/100 sec, ISO320.





Morning view from the Green Nirvana Resort. DJI Action 2 f/2.8, 1/100 sec , ISO190.

The first chamber, small and dark but so unique. Olympus OM-D E-M5 mark III with Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 8mm f/1.8 Fisheye PRO Lens behind a 4.33" Dome port in a Nauticam housing. f/1.8, 1/60 sec , ISO1600, P Mode

times with students from freediving schools. This time around we were lucky to get the opportunity to dive the cave just with the team before the students arrived. The clear waters and the colours of the rock formations combined with the rays of light filtering through the trees create an amazing canvas for the underwater photographer.

We were also lucky on this trip to have really good divers with us that were happy to pose and suffer following the directions of the photographers.

The cave consists of three

chambers. All chambers are different and unique in the way the light reaches the water producing completely different results. This makes the cave even more interesting for the UW photographer. The deepest part of the cave is around 16 metres in the middle of the second chamber. There is also a swim through between the 2nd and 3rd chamber. The first chamber is small but the light comes from a small window and creates very beautiful rays.

It is less than 5 minutes to trek from the pier to the cave. Then you just go down the steps to enter the



first chamber. At low tide you can just swim to the next chamber. At high tide you need to make a small dive, it is just a couple of metres. For the third chamber you can swim at the surface or go down to 6-7 metres and swim though. The water temperature is 26 degrees and there is a layer of fresh water for the first 5 or 6 metres. At the bottom of the cave there are some logs that create an otherworldly effect.

My favourite is the first chamber with the wooden steps and the minimal light. The pictures there look so unique.

I was using my freediving friendly Olympus OM-D E-M5 mark III with the 8mm f/1.8 Fisheye Lens behind a 4.33" dome port in a Nauticam housing. There was one more photographer with the Canon EF 8-15mm f/4L Fisheye lens and 2 more with rectilinear lenses. The waters are very clear so I didn't notice any benefit from using the fisheye. Some divers in our group tried using strobes and lights but it was hard to contain the light between the narrow walls. The depth is very small and natural light worked best in the end. A very useful tip is to move slowly and avoid touching the walls to keep the waters clear. If a lot of people are in the water and they are not careful the visibility will degrade very fast.

For the next dive of the day we would go to the channel or big fish



Neysa can't hide her excitement. Olympus OM-D E-M5 mark III with Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 8mm f/1.8 Fisheye PRO Lens behind a 4.33" Dome port in a Nauticam housing. f/8, 1/400 sec , ISO800, A Mode



Last picture. Neysa put her tail and dove blindly, No mask no goggles and yet she was exactly at the right spot. She is amazing. Olympus OM-D E-M5 mark III with Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 8mm f/1.8 Fisheye PRO Lens behind a 4.33" Dome port in a Nauticam housing. f/2.5, 1/125 sec , ISO2000, P Mode

channel as the locals call it. When we arrived our hosts prepared a drone and used it to locate a big school of Barracudas. They brought the boat close and we dived. I have to admit that I have never seen such a big school of fish.

The diving was not easy. You had to swim constantly to keep up with the school. It was kind of funny watching the barracudas casually swimming followed by a bunch of scuba divers and freedivers with occasional flashes shooting every now and then. A grey reef shark checked us out for a moment and some Giant trevally also joined the festivities for a while. Every few minutes the barracuda would create a vortex and if you were lucky to be close enough you could swim inside it. Truly a magical moment and an amazing first day of a diving trip.

Here the fisheye lens made a big difference especially when I wanted to shoot the divers with the barracuda in the background. Being able to get closer, the barracuda looked a lot more sharp.

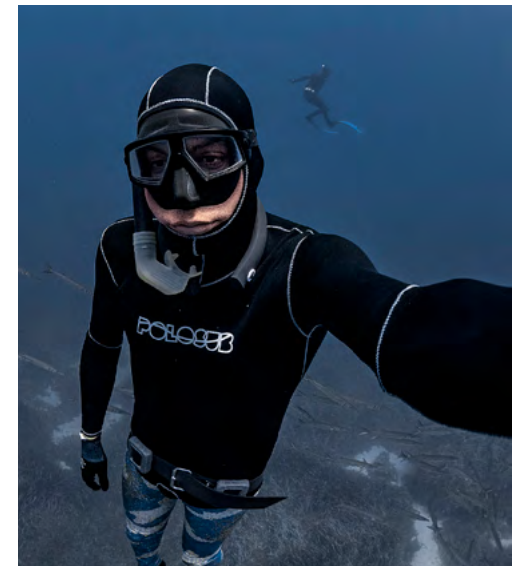
We stayed at the Green Nirvana resort on Maratua island that offered us apart from the accommodations

and the great food, the boat and the insights for all the dive spots. It helps a lot when the owner of the resort is a passionate diver and UW photographer.

Nicholas Kouvaras

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Polyamorous Mandarins

by Diggy Desai

As a young kid, I recollect how small little kaleidoscopes were sold outside the Gateway of India. Little colourful broken pieces of glass bangles would twist and dance into formations. A complete wonder & treat to the eyes.

Now imagine my surprise when a tiny little fish reminded me of similar colours. The mandarin fish (dragonet family) *Synchiropus splendidus* is one of the most colourful denizens of the ocean.

Mandarin was a name given after the colourful robes worn by bureaucrats during the Chinese imperial period. These bohemian-coloured fish put on a very special 20-minute show each evening for diving spectators. I have titled the show “Polyamorous” which you will realize fits in aptly as you read further. And what a fine show it is!

Chances are you may completely miss the climax if not extremely attentive. No worries though, as the show repeats every evening at the same time, with no extra charges.

The mating rituals of these dragonets are a pleasure to watch and have their own peculiar patterns. Polyamorous is defined as “sexual

sharing among two or more females and two or more males” The actors though, are very difficult to spot in the hard corals they hide in during the day.

Showtime is when they boldly reveal their amorous activities right in the open. Mating usually occurs within 20 minutes of sunset when the females gather and wait till a male comes by. The females that mate may not do so again for a few days.

And as far as males go, size matters. Larger males are preferred by females. Spawning takes place between males and females weekly throughout the year. And each day different dragonets fill in (the encyclopaedia of life).

During spawning, close to 200 eggs can be released in the water to combine with the sperm of the male fish. The parents, being complete show persons, do not involve themselves in caring for the eggs, the large number being a buffer against complete loss.

Incubation is about 12 hours for each egg and mortality rates are high as they are consumed by other fish. But a few do survive and continue the mating ritual and tradition. The show



A female mandarin fish patiently waits for the right male at dusk. All underwater images were shot with a Canon 1DXmk3 and 100 mm Macro lens

must go on as they say.

Due to a secret mucous secretion on their bodies that repel predators, these fish don't have much to worry about. Their bright fluorescent colours may also help in signalling off predators (Savdovy et al 2005) BUT photographing these elusive and secretive fish is a completely different ball game. Many, including me, have come home disappointed with nothing to show on camera.

There is a reason for this and hopefully the next few tips will help you get stunning images of these elusive fish and their amorous

activities.

1) Very finicky during the day they prefer to hide within debris or hard coral

2) They usually come out in the open for fleeting seconds every evening at twilight or just as the sun sets for their Polyamorous activities.

3) Bright white focus lights are something they shy away from.

4) The best moment to capture these fish on an image is when they mate. They do this every evening. Problem is this mating episode does not last too long.

After a few failed attempts I finally

(Left) Entire harem of females is being guarded by a male.

(Bottom left) The crucial moment is the male flashing his dorsal fin. Just after that, mating proceeds.

(Right) Mating.

found that some steps do help in getting these elusive fish on camera.

Day 1)

- If you have a couple of days diving then step number one is to just go observe them for the first evening.
- Once you find a mandarin don't lose sight of it. If a female it will be waiting for a male and if a male, he will be moving to find females. So trick is stay with the mandarin.
- As they are averse to bright white focus lights, get used to using red lights. Adjust your eyes to observe them with these lights. They don't quite mind basking in crimson.
- If you observe carefully, you will find that the male (usually larger) will start moving its dorsal fin up and down once he finds a female.
- This is that crucial moment. Once he starts moving this fin the next moment is when they both move up and out of the corals to mate.
- The next feeling you will get is damn, why did I not take images and just observe. But trust me the observation method helps tremendously with more chances of success the next evening. I know after having failed miserably the first evening.

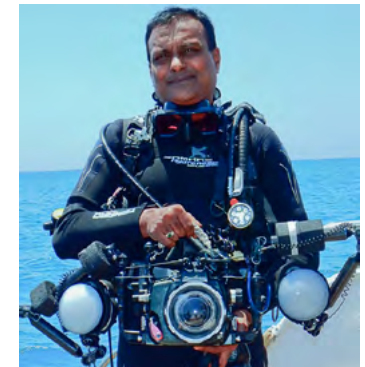


Day 2)

- Now that you understand how this works make sure you know your camera and can operate the same blindly.
- If using a compact like a TG 6 or similar, a single external flash is of great help along with a focus light with red mode.
- If using a mirrorless, the same principals as above apply but make sure you have a fast macro lens.



- For Mandarins I have found longer focal lengths more helpful as you get more distance from your subject.
- Also allot a separate focus button at the back of your housing rather than trying to half press the shutter button for focus. Please remember that unless you are lucky the mandarins won't allow you a peep into their amorous activity. Timing is of essence here.
- DSLR user all the above applies.
- Not that one may have much choice but try and be at a place where there is just water in the background and not coral. This will allow a black background. In my case I had no such luck. Try and use the highest shutter speed your camera allows with a strobe and use a larger aperture to highlight the mandarins and blur the background.
- As you may be stationary in one place for a long duration make sure of an appropriate wetsuit thickness to avoid feeling cold.



Diggy Desai

Yap

with Charles Fenner

The first time I visited Yap was in 2001 a few months before 9/11. I enjoyed my week there and always intended to return but life kept getting in the way. Thankfully after retiring I was finally able to return for two weeks in January 2023. I was glad to see that while the islands have continued progressing along with the rest of the world (wifil!), it still had generally the same sleepy island.

Yap was basically closed off from the world for 2 1/2 years due to Covid travel restrictions before beginning to re-open in mid-late 2022. Given how long the island was closed due to Covid travel restrictions I was more than a little nervous about how things might have been maintained after such a long time with no tourists. I was actually thrilled with every aspect of my stay in Yap. I decided to write this article just as a way of reminding people that that this off the beaten track destination is still something to consider, especially if you will be in the Micronesia area.

Yap is a state in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Yap State actually includes several outer islands stretched out over hundreds of miles, but the core Yap Islands are about 500 miles SW from Guam (about 2/3rds of the way from Guam to Palau). Roughly 8,000 people live on the core Yap islands with another 3-4 thousand on the outer islands. The FSM used to be a US trust territory and still maintains strong US ties via a compact of free association. The currency is the US dollar, with two ATMs on the island (which were repaired while I was there after being down for years during Covid). Yap



Sony A1, with Nauticam Housing, Sony 16-35mm F2.8 GM, Nauticam 230mm Dome Port II and Retra Pro X Strobos. ISO 100, f/8, 1/200 sec

is generally viewed as having maintained more of its original culture than many other islands. It is also famous for stone money. They used to send canoes to Palau to quarry rock that wasn't found in Yap and then returned to Yap across hundreds of miles in the open ocean. The stone money is still there displayed in gardens that some people may call banks, but they don't seem to actively use the stone money as currency.

Yap has had a manta ray focus going back a

few decades now and those are still the primary attraction. Decades of diving has allowed dive masters to build up a lot of knowledge regarding manta behavior. This trip I primarily saw them at a cleaning station called Stammtisch in 15-20 feet of water at a site well inside from the main reef. Evidently the mantas moved to this shallower site several years back from deeper cleaning stations they were using when I was there in 2001. We saw Mantas probably about 70% of the time we went



Sony A1, with Nauticam Housing, Sony 16-35mm F2.8 GM, Nauticam 230mm Dome Port II and Retra Pro X Strokes. ISO 100, f/11, 1/160 sec

looking for them at the cleaning station. While the most individuals I saw was 4 on one dive, the individuals did tend to linger for a bit making multiple passes. I think I spent 15 or 20 minutes with one individual ray the first day (and saw 3 others that day). There had been a lot of rain so the visibility wasn't that great in the channel (25-40 feet in the channel probably). All of the channel diving is tide dependent. I believe the manta rays use the cleaning station on the northwest side of the island where we were during the winter, but use a cleaning station on the opposite side

during the summer.

We also dove many dives on the outside reefs that ring the islands looking for things other than mantas. Visibility was also slightly variable due to winter surge, some days it was probably only 60 feet but on the best day I think it was well past 100+ feet (clearer than my Cozumel home on a really good day). They have a site called Vertigo where they sometimes feed the sharks, we saw a decent mix of various reef sharks there. The highlight was probably the Magic Kingdom site near the southern tip of the island where a few times we



Sony A1, with Nauticam Housing, Sony 90mm F2.8 Macro G lens and Retra Pro X strokes, ISO 100, f/22, 1/250 sec

saw a school of 12-14 baby eagle rays hanging out near what is evidently a cleaning station for them. We saw the eagle rays on 3 different days, but unfortunately I had a macro lens on the day they provided what would have been the best photo opportunity.

Like most places, Yap does have some macro opportunities. The macro sites tended not to be that diverse (we would see a multiple individuals of one nudibranch/slug species, but not multiple species). The best macro dive is the mandarin fish twilight dive 5 minutes by boat from the town. It is pretty easy to see mandarin fish there,

getting a good macro photo is a bit trickier since they tend to hang out at the base of a maze of coral and only climb out every so often. Evidently to get the true "money" mating shot you have to wait to the side and pray the pop up to the top of the coral to mate. Awesome shot if you can get it, but I had no luck on that one. You can shoot down on to some of the individuals as the climb the coral, but if you are hovering over them it reduces the chance of your getting a true "money shot" with a couple mating.

Aside from mandarin fish and



Sony A1, with Nauticam Housing, Sony 16-35mm F2.8 GM, Nauticam 230mm Dome Port II and Retra Pro X Strobos. ISO 100, f/8, 1/160 sec

night dives, most diving seems to be on 3 tank boat dives. There is a channel (“German Channel”) that cuts through the island that isn’t passable at low tide so that is part of the reason they tend to plan on 3 tanks since it isn’t always possible to get back to the resort at low tide.

I stayed at Manta Ray Bay Resort (MRBR) and dove with its Yap Divers affiliate. Manta Ray Bay Resort/Yap Divers is the most well-known operation in Yap and weathered the Covid shutdown storm surprisingly well. The hotel and dive operation were in great shape. I am not sure how, but they managed to maintain everything in good condition despite a long period without tourists. My room (think it was a deluxe waterfront category) was spacious, well furnished and very clean. All the dive boats were well designed and ran perfectly. The two divemasters I used (Nico and Ferr) were extremely experienced and helpful in achieving whatever my photographic goals were on each dive. Yap divers provided sandwiches on the boat for lunch. They



Sony A1, with Nauticam Housing, Sony 90mm F2.8 Macro G lens and Retra Pro X strobos, ISO 100, f/18, 1/250 sec

also offer hot tea, water, and hot towels after every dive.

There are definitely other hotel options on Yap post covid for those seeking to stay elsewhere. There were one or two other diver operators pre-covid, but I am not certain the status of those.

The MRBR has a floating restaurant called ‘The Mnuw’. It is a 170 ft wooden schooner from Indonesia. Depending upon the number of guests they will evidently do a buffet in the restaurant or a just serve individual breakfasts in the lobby if only a few guests are in house. I am not a big breakfast person, so primarily just had fruit but they seemed willing to do all the normal breakfast things. Lunch was usually on the boat. We did 3 tank dives, so they had several hearty sandwiches they could make. They took your lunch order either the night before or at the start of breakfast. I had dinner at the top-deck bar of the Mnuw most nights. They had a few nightly specials, not a particularly wide range but it was fine. One thing is that they evidently can



The MRBR has a floating restaurant called ‘The Mnuw’. It is a 170 ft wooden schooner from Indonesia.

make pizza and sandwiches (including hamburgers) every day, but they don’t necessarily list them on the menu chalkboard. If you don’t see what you want on the chalkboard I would ask what else they have on offer.

I also ate at the Oceania Restaurant a 5 minute walk from the hotel a few times. The hotel/bar/restaurant is evidently owned by an expat (or expat couple). They had a pretty broad menu that was pretty good. I had the ribeye a couple of times, cut quality wasn’t that great (ribeyes are pretty variable in the states, then you layer in a tropical island so you do have to temper your expectations), but the restaurant prepared and seasoned it quite well. I enjoyed my meal both times. It was nice to add some variety into a two week trip. The Oceania has a good reputation among the ex-pat community--a woman beside me on the shuttle from the airport to the hotel was raving about it. I saw many ex-pats and tourists enjoying their meals at Oceania (also saw pretty much the same people at Mnuw when



Yap is famous for stone money. They used to send canoes to Palau to quarry rock that wasn't found in Yap and then returned to Yap across hundreds of miles in the open ocean.

Oceania was closed on Saturdays and Sundays.

United Airlines is now flying to Yap once per week from Guam (it was only flying every other week in January and even less often during the heart of the pandemic). I did want to note that several guests used Pacific Mission Aviation (PMA) to get between Palau and Yap (making shorter Yap stays possible no, especially in conjunction with a Palau leg). I think PMA uses a 9 or 10 seat puddle jumper. Evidently they don't have a formal schedule

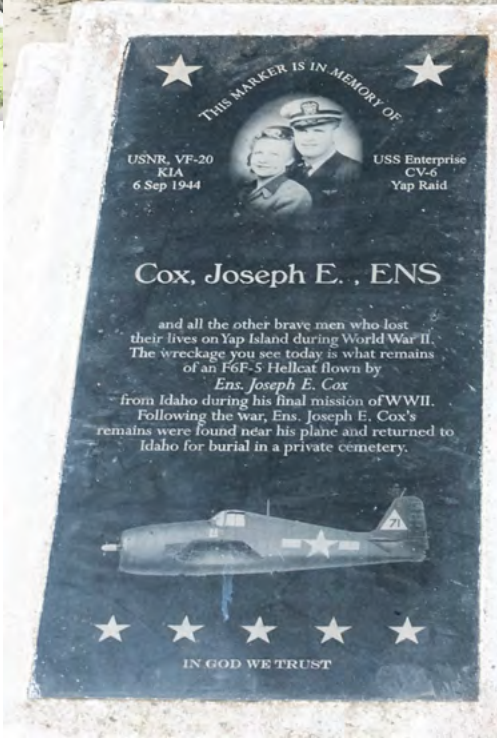
but are making fairly frequent flights (you have to email them evidently). They seem to be pretty well known in Micronesia. A non-diving guest thar had worked in the islands for years swore by them.

Great manta photo opportunities, good overall diving, great hotel on a quaint island with very friendly people--What's not to like? I look forward to returning to Yap. I think my two week stay is not practical for most vacation-limited people, but a one week add-on after Palau (especially if you don't



mind the PMA puddle jumper) could make a great deal of sense. If using only United, it will probably mean spending a day on Guam in between. Please note I am just an amateur photographer with no ties to Yap--I just felt the island could use a little attention after such a long period without tourists so I wrote this article as a way of showing my support.

Charles Fenner



My Shot

by David Fleetham

I shoot things now that I would never have pulled the trigger on back in the film days. I usually try to photograph fish from the side (ID shot) or attempt to pull off a more interesting composition from straight on or varying degrees to one side or the other. As of late I have been clicking the shutter as my subject has been swimming away with the expected mixed results. Many of these files are immediately removed from my hard drive, but every now and again something compelling occurs.

I photographed this female barred filefish, *Cantherhines dumerilii*, at Molokini Marine Preserve off the island of Maui (my home). The marine life here is accustomed to seeing divers on a daily basis and so they tend to be less frightened in comparison to other locations. This was not the case with this filefish. Perhaps my Canon R5 in my Ikelite housing with twin Ikelite 230 strobes on extended arms was just too much to endure at this time of the morning. As I followed I snapped a few shots and then gave up and let this individual go about its business. Most fish are capable of independent eye movement and this filefish is no exception. She is picture here with one eye strained back at the strange apparition that seemingly just won't take no for an answer

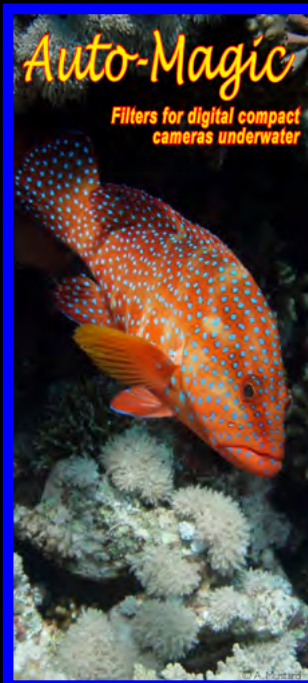
David Fleetham
www.davidfleetham.com



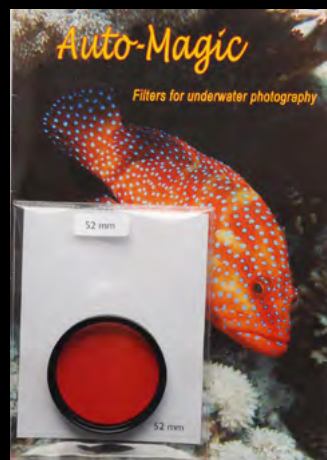
Canon EOS R5 set on manual in an Ikelite dry-lock housing with a Canon RF100mm f2.8 L macro lens ISO320, 1/125, f18 and two Ikelite 230 strobes set on TTL.

Do you have a favourite shot or an image/s
which made a dive special.
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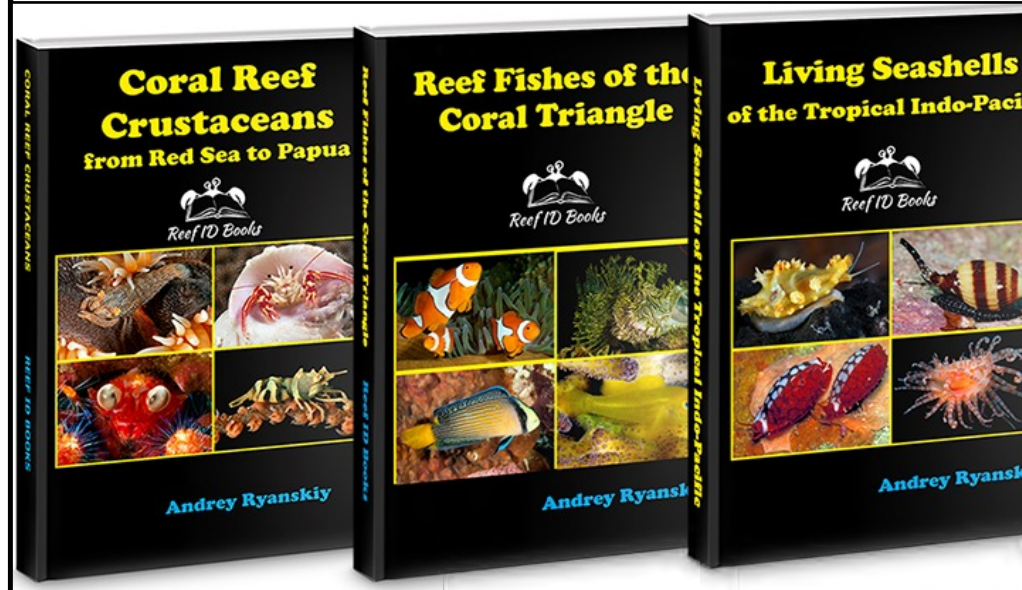


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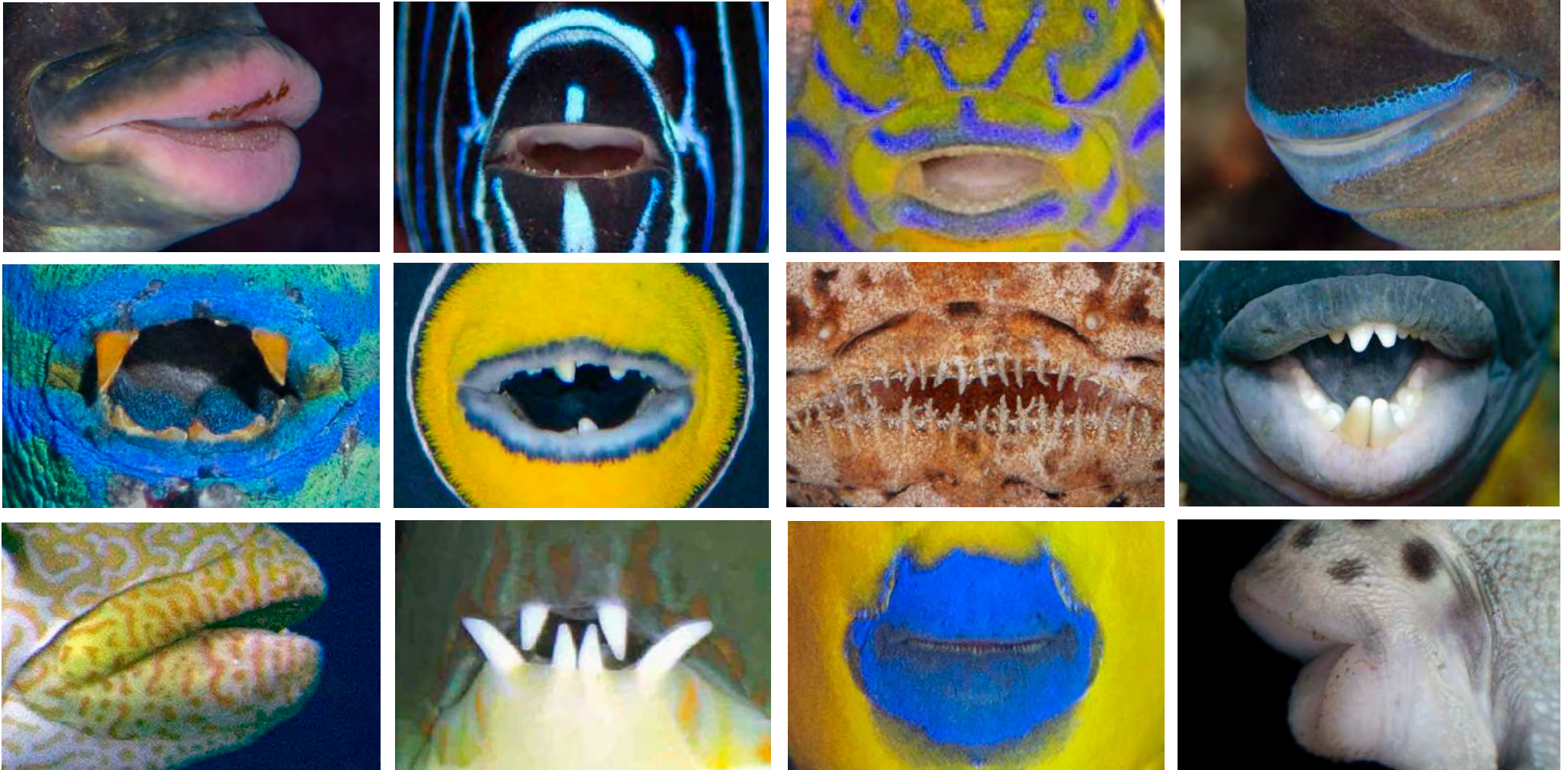
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Marshall's Mysteries 9

From Jagger to Jolie, we know how an individual's lips can identify them. Have a look at these and see if you can name the fish. Not as difficult as you may think. If you can get 10 or more (at least the family name, ideally the common name as well), you can declare yourself an expert. 4 or less and you need to get back in the water!

**Answers
on page 68**



All images © Colin Marshall

If you think any of the identifications or information is wrong, please let me know at colintrmarshall@yahoo.com. Feel free to send me any images of anything you'd like some help in identifying – any particularly interesting mysteries will be included in future Underwater Photography issues.

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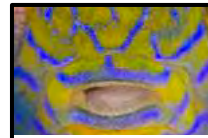
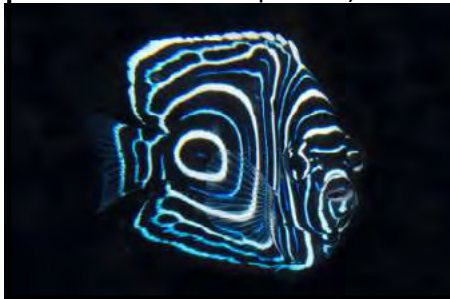
Marshall's Mysteries 9 - Answers



Pinnate
Spadefish
(*Platax pinnatus*)



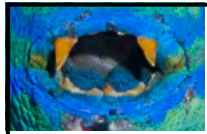
Juvenile Emperor
Angelfish
(*Pomacanthus imperator*)



Juvenile Speckled
Damsel
(*Pomacentrus bankanensis*)



Palefin
Unicornfish (*Naso brevirostris*)



Redtooth
Triggerfish (*Odonus niger*)



Clown Triggerfish
(*Balistoides conspicillum*)



Marbled Stargazer
(*Uranoscopus bicinctus*)



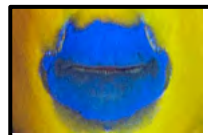
Titan Triggerfish
(*Balistoides viridescens*)



Humphead
Wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*)



Anchor Tuskfish
(*Choerodon anchorago*)



Three-Spot
Angelfish
(*Apothemichthys trimaculatus*)



Subadult
Shortnose Boxfish
(*Rhynchostracion nasus*)



Guidelines for contributors

The response to UwP has been nothing short of fantastic. We are looking for interesting, well illustrated articles about underwater photography. We are looking for work from existing names but would also like to discover some of the new talent out there and that could be you! UwP is the perfect publication for you to increase your profile in the underwater photography community.

The type of articles we're looking for fall into five main categories:

Uw photo techniques - Balanced light, composition, etc

Locations - Photo friendly dive sites, countries or liveaboards,

Subjects -, Anything from whale sharks to nudibranchs in full detail

Equipment reviews - Detailed appraisals of the latest equipment

Personalities - Interviews/features about leading underwater photographers

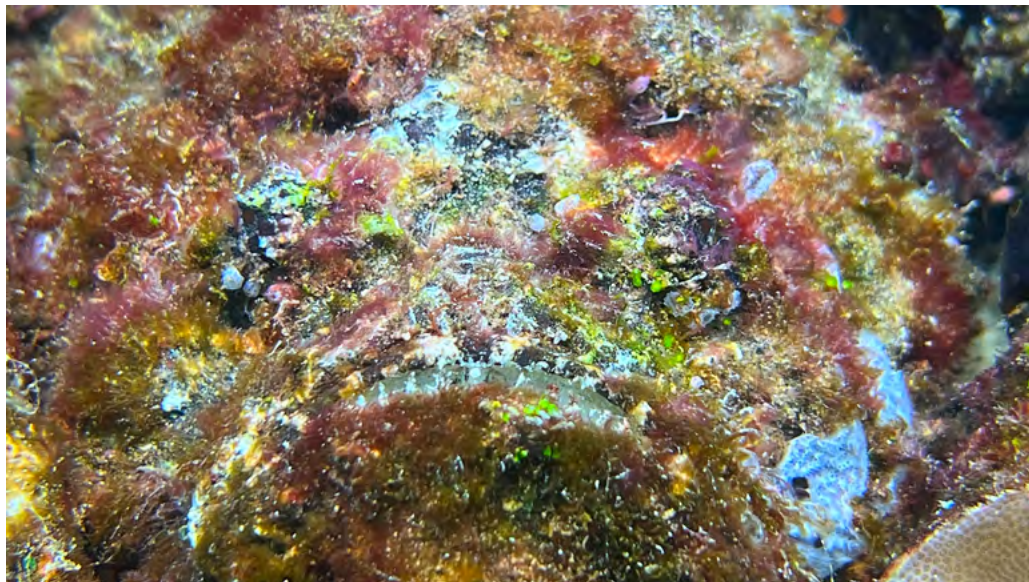
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1. The text should be saved as a TEXT file and attached to the e mail
2. Images must be attached to the e mail and they need to be 150dpi
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File type - Save your image as a JPG file and set the compression to "Medium" quality. This should result in images no larger than about 120k which can be transmitted quickly. If we want larger sizes we will contact you.
3. Captions - **Each and every image MUST have full photographic details** including camera, housing, lens, lighting, film, aperture, shutter speed and exposure mode. These must also be copied and pasted into the body of the e mail.

Parting Shot



iPhone 13 Pro Max inside of a DiveVolk Seatouch 4 housing with Trustfire DF50 video floods

If you haven't been on a liveaboard in the Maldives, plan it now. I have been going regularly for the past six years onboard the Carpe Diem. My UW photo kit has, of course, changed over the years. Now I use an iPhone 13 Pro Max inside of a DiveVolk Seatouch 4, and one or two Trustfire DF50 video floods. But this story isn't about me or my photography. It's about dad!

Anyone that has been to the Maldives knows most liveaboard dives are nitrox 75-100ft depth with a reef hook handy, due to the ripping currents. The most exciting trip to the Maldives just happened over New Years 2023. Dad joined me. He's

my hero. He was the hero for back to back Carpe Diem trips for twenty straight days. Dad dove down to those depths on nitrox, braved the currents, and experienced the Maldives for all twenty straight days. He left the photography up to me.

Munkko, our guide, mostly watched over my father and pointed out a lot of species dad wasn't familiar with or simply couldn't find. The stonefish on the bow of this wreck was an exciting event for him. Dad spent about five minutes just looking at the hull, trying to see what Munkko had pointed to. He had no idea what he was looking at until we debriefed and went through the photos. To

this day, it's one of his favorite stories from the Maldives. Now he challenges everybody to find the "fish" in the closeup.

This was his diving Swan Song. He's hanging up his fins for good. Dad will turn 80 years old on June 24, 2023.

Greg Lemoine
greg.lemoine@gmail.com

"Experience, travel - these are an education in themselves." - Euripides (c. 480 – c. 406 BCE)

**Do you have a shot
which has a story within a story?
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