Underwater Photography

Jul/Aug 2023
Issue 133

UWP

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

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www.bunakenoasis.com

WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS WINNER 2021 Indonesia's Leading Dive Resort

WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS WINNER 2022 Indonesia's Leading Dive Resort

Contents

Underwater Photography
A web magazine
UwP133 Jul/Aug 2023

Editorial

BBC Wild Isles

Nearly every issue of UwP has what I think is a stand out article and this time it's Richard Davies' account of his involvement in the recent BBC series Wild Isles - the latest in a BBC/ Silverback Productions collaboration highlighting the wildlife in the UK from mountain to plain and from freshwater to the sea.

As an ROV enthusiast it's obviously right up my waterway but it's a great example of longterm dedication to a subject matter which is often overlooked photographically but which, nonetheless, is iconically majestic - the Atlantic Salmon.

The other point is that Richard was using comparatively off the shelf equipment - a Chasing M2 ROV - but the important thing was his subject knowledge combined with a photographic thirst to attain better and better footage.

The goal, for him, was the launch of a salmon up a 3 metre rapid but, for the first time, from underwater. Being hired by the production team gave him the luxury of time but he nailed it for sure.

It's a great example of what one person can do to capture unique footage and place the final piece in the visual jigsaw that is the life of a Wild Atlantic Salmon.

Bad news comes in threes

It's not been a good time for the diving/underwater world recently, what with the Titanic ROV implosion, the fire on a Red Sea liveaboard which claimed three lives and the third, much less reported, fatal shark attack, again in the Red Sea.

The first incident received international media coverage - a perfect 'will they, won't they' scenario which filled miles of column inches and hours of experts' opinions, culminating in the sad loss on implosion. The second, probably given more UK coverage as it involved British diving tourists, was the liveaboard fire helped by images of the horrific fire and footage of someone leaping off the upper deck to safety. It would have certainly hit a nerve with all of us who have been on similar trips for decades.

And the third was the fatal shark attack at the same time as the two above tragedies which received virtually no coverage, which in a way is good, but why did they have to kill the shark and, more importantly, were they sure it was the right one?

Incremental differences

The news that Sony have just announced a 16k TV comes, to me, as no surprise at all - because they can - and good luck to them, I say.

The problem I have is that this 'carrot and stick' development encourages the image capturing manufacturers to produce compatible output cameras to tempt our wallets but, this time, it seems we will actually be getting very little more in terms of a visual experience compared to the inevitably large 'investment'.

Sure, the human is reputed to be the equivalent of 576 megapixels so there's a long way to go before we can be outperformed but, in the real world living room where the TV lives, the effect of such seemingly big incremental increases actually becomes less and less.

Personally I'm still impressed with well lit HD footage (thats 1080p in old money) and even in 2023, 4k output is limited by broadband speed practicalities so heaven knows what we'll need when we fall for it and buy a 16k TV.

Rest assured, when I get mine, I'll tell you all about it :-)

Unbelievable quality of macro images

The recent 8th Anilao Underwater Shootout covered in this issue has produced another set of amazing images (including our front cover).

I'd love to it include all the images but that would upset the balance of the magazine but if I did, you would see a strength in depth and compositional perfection that nearly all of the images had, without fail, right down the list of images entered.

The overal standard was, to this 'seen quite a lot of images' old lag, absolutely extraordinary so if you want macro inspiration check out the winners later in this issue and at

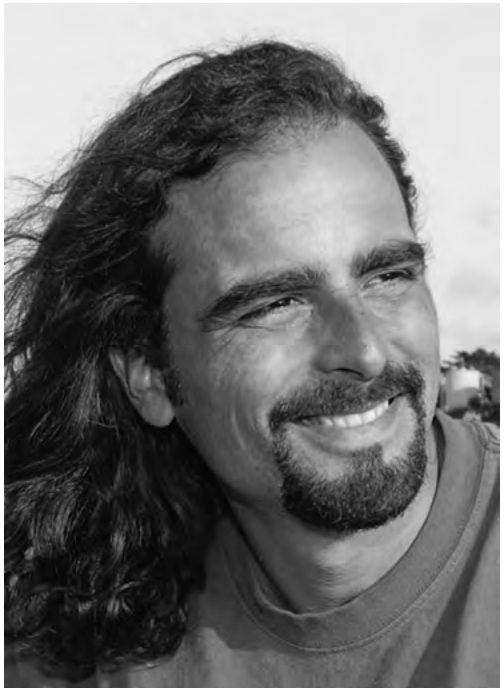
www.facebook.com/anilaoshootout

Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com

News, Travel & Events

Antarctica Citizen Science Expedition

February 20 - March 4, 2024



Berkley White and Erin Quigley will join Faith Ortins, from Blue Green Expeditions, and other polar diving specialists, image makers, and scientists, on an amazing citizen science expedition to Antarctica!

February 2024 represents the 150th anniversary of the Challenger's crossing of the southern polar circle. This expedition is to honor their contribution to our understanding of the world's oceans while simultaneously exploring Antarctica.

This expedition is more than just a dive trip. Here we will pool our resources and time to assist scientists and image makers in adding to our understanding of the Antarctic region...as well as getting a little "fun" time in Antarctica!

The goals of this expedition are to:

Raise $100,000-$150,000 in donations for organizations dedicated to developing interest in marine careers.

Contribute $22,000 to carbon offsets to minimize the environmental impact of the expedition's carbon footprint

Use the images, videos, and data collected by the image professionals and citizen scientists to develop multimedia educational tools across platforms, including live streaming to classrooms.

Bring image makers to Antarctica whose efforts will contribute to a greater appreciation of the delicate Antarctic ecosystem.

Use the expertise of scientists, with the assistance of citizen scientists, to explore new areas. Projects include plankton tows, reef surveys of key indicator species, sample collections, and marine mammal ID.

We have the entire Oceanwide Expeditions ship m/v Ortelius for this expedition - this will be an amazing adventure so reserve your spot now!!!

https://www.backscatter.com/reviews/post/Antarctica-Citizen-Science-Expedition

Reef Photo & Video Anilao Workshop

May 4 to May 11 and May 11 to May 18, 2024

Join us for a week of fun and learning in one of the most productive underwater imaging locations in the world!

Anilao, Philippines is justifiably one of the most famous marine critter and fish species locations anywhere on earth. Few locations can serve up the diversity of coastal environments and types of marine habitat within an easy boat ride of shore. And perhaps no other destination of its caliber is as easy to get to - no matter where you might be traveling from. All this comes together to provide what is probably the best underwater imaging workshop location to be found anywhere.

The pros at Reef Photo and Video have come back often to Anilao and it never fails to impress with new sightings and discoveries. We love sharing these opportunities and helping people to capture images that they will be proud of, all while expanding their photographic possibilities. When we do these week long events, we are there to offer hands-on support throughout the event – above and below the water.

Our host in Anilao is the beautiful and quiet Aiyanar resort. Unlike most resorts in Anilao, you enjoy a peaceful hillside on the water with minimal influence from the outside world. The staff will cater to your every need and you need barely lift a finger for the week. On the other hand, your cheeks may tire from returning all the smiles of the staff.

If you have never been to Anilao, you don't know what you are missing. If you have, you know why you have to do it more than once. Join us. Let Reef Photo show you the best of the region and how to get the most out of it. The images will last a lifetime.

https://reefphoto.com/collections/workshops

Paul Nicklen and Cristina Mittermeier Exhibition until July 22 2023

C. Parker Gallery, Greenwich, Connecticut

The Town of Greenwich is honored to host this exhibition at the C. Parker Gallery, featuring the photographs of Paul Nicklen and Cristina Mittermeier, two of the most globally celebrated photographers of our generation. The exhibition has been extended for one more month due to popular demand, on view until July 22.

These artists/conservation champions have created some of the most iconic wildlife images of our modern-day culture, and are internationally acclaimed for harnessing the majestic beauty of their images to inspire change on our planet. The art gallery is ideally located near New York City (in Greenwich, Connecticut, just a 40-minute train ride from Manhattan).

Their photographs are included in some of the world's most important private collections, and have been featured as iconic images by major national media including National Geographic and TIME Magazine. This is an incredible opportunity to witness the beauty of nature in an intimate and personal way, to share their important message, and join their mission advocating for greater conservation and environmental awareness.

Featuring more than 30 large-scale photographs by Nicklen and Mittermeier, this new exhibition is presented in partnership with the Town of Greenwich Conservation Commission, the Greenwich Shellfish Commission, and the Greenwich Point Conservancy, curated by Tiffany Benincasa, C. Parker Gallery's proprietor.

The Gallery is located at 409 Greenwich Avenue, just a 40-minute train ride from New York City (the train station in Greenwich is just two blocks from the C. Parker Gallery).

www.cparkergallery.com
www.SeaLegacy.org

Watch the SeaLegacy.org video at
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqVcwnBs4Cs

Insta360 - Filming a Dive With Hammerhead Sharks

Insta360 - Filming a Dive With Hammerhead Sharks (ft. Zimydakid)

I'm writing to share an inspiring short documentary that follows cinematographer and NGO founder Zimy Da Kid as he dives with sharks to capture up-close underwater footage and raise awareness for shark protection and ocean conservation. This World Environment Day project includes never-before-seen footage from inside a shark's mouth shot on the Insta360 X3 camera.

As you may know, sharks play a vital role in maintaining the balance of marine ecosystems and are crucial to the health of our oceans. Unfortunately, many shark species are at risk of extinction due to shark finning and other human-induced threats.

Zimy Da Kid is taking a proactive approach to address this challenge via his NGO, Deep Sea Guardian, which employs creative and powerful images to educate society about the hardships that oceans and marine animals are facing due to climate change. He believes "If everyone could dive and see these animals in real life, our entire perception of them would change." Through the Insta360 Think Bold Fund, Insta360 is empowering this NGO via donations and underwater videography equipment to protect these magnificent creatures and preserve marine ecosystems.

You can check this video to learn more about it:

https://youtu.be/mnu5RqKhYno

The Healing Powers of Water Exhibition

Sheffield, UK
30th June 2023 for two weeks

A new photography exhibition explores the Healing Powers of Water and tells the stories of people who have been cured or helped by water and swimming.

The exhibition opens on Friday 30th June at 6pm at Annie Jude's in Hillsborough, Sheffield and runs for two weeks.

Lucy Ray from Starfish Underwater Photography said: "I have always felt a strong affinity to water and love the feeling of being submerged. It's so peaceful and any worries are forgotten for the brief time you are under. Over the years I have met so many people who have also found the water therapeutic and wanted to tell their amazing stories. All the subjects featured in the collection have overcome their own personal struggles, be it mental or physical, and used swimming and water to better their lives."

Esmae Walker, 6, was born thirteen weeks early, at just 27 weeks. Esmae still has mobility issues and finds walking a challenge, but she can move freely in the water.

She added: "Swimming also

gives her body a freedom that she doesn't have out of the pool. We'll never understand how that must feel for her and the relief she must get but you can see it in her face as soon as she hits the water."

Daniel Hadleigh-Dunn was injured whilst serving in the army in Afghanistan. He said:

"Swimming helped me during the early stages of my recovery as I couldn't walk due to the amount of damage to my left foot and leg. ."

The exhibit also features a transgender woman, Allana, who credits water for keeping her alive: She said: "My connection with the water has kept me alive. I love the water, and when I die, I will be cremated and put into a limestone memorial, placed in a reef as a host for coral growth."

Also featured are children who use swimming as therapy. Lacy Burns,

12, is paralysed from the waist down, and gets a sense of freedom and normality when in the pool.

The underwater images were taken with SLR cameras in underwater housing, and underwater strobes (flashlights) as well as a drone for the aerial photograph.

The exhibition can also be viewed online at:

www.starfishunderwaterphotography.com/healing

Don't settle for 2nd best

Film - No Filter No White Balance

Digital - No Filter Manual White Balance

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.

www.magic-filters.com

New Products

Nauticam NA-Z8 Housing for Nikon Z8

The Z8 is arguably the most hotly anticipated full-frame mirrorless camera from Nikon and the first to feature the '8' series badging. Featuring a high-resolution 45.7MP sensor that will also capture 8K/60p N-RAW video while delivering incredible autofocus and dynamic range. The Z8's 3690k-dot OLED EVF packs a fast refresh rate for blackout free shooting thanks to the camera's electronic shutter.

The Nauticam NA-Z8 is the most intuitive and reliable underwater housing available for the Nikon Z8. Building on the successful and field-tested designs for the NA-Z6/7 and Z9 housings the NA-Z8 embodies Nauticam's Mission Control design philosophy placing essential controls within easy reach of the reinforced molded handles.

The NA-Z8 underwater housing for the Nikon Z8 utilizes the N120 Port System for Z-mount full-frame lenses. However, the NA-Z8 is also designed to accommodate the use of F-mount lenses, thanks to the FTZ adapter. This allows the same port configuration as found on an F-mount DSLR system like the NA-D6 or NA-D850.

Electronic viewfinders are constantly achieving higher resolution and better dynamic range and the Z8 features a 3690k-dot OLED 0.5" viewfinder. Pair the Z8's EVF with Nauticam's Full Frame Enhanced Viewfinders for unrestricted viewing of the entire EVF in either a straight or angled configuration.

The Nikon Z8 promises clean full-resolution HDMI output using an HDMI type A connector and the NA-Z8 features an M24 bulkhead that can accommodate an HDMI 2.0 connection to a monitor/recorder such as the Atomos Ninja5+ in the NA-Ninja5 housing.

The Nauticam vacuum check and leak detection system is shipped with NA-Z8 as standard equipment. Combined with an accessory vacuum valve (PN 25624), this monitoring system provides constant updates on the water tight and safe-to-dive status of the housing.

Model Number: 17229
Port Opening: N120
Depth Rating: 100m
AUD Retail Price: $6,686 (inc. GST)
CNY Retail Price: ¥27,499
Euro Retail Price: €4,558 (inc. VAT)
GBP Retail Price: £3,974 (inc. VAT)
HKD Retail Price: $32,174
USD Retail Price: $4,832

www.nauticam.com

INON Canon EOSR6 and EOSR6 Mark II housings

INON are pleased to announce that our latest housings for Canon EOSR6 and EOSR6 Mark II are now available to order.

Both come with standard highly accurate TTL converter and vacuum leak sensor (PAT.P).

As same legend X-2 housings, carefully designed aluminum alloy housings are compact, light weight yet durable and offer intuitive controls including INON unique MRS system to control camera lens controls by magnet attraction.

www.inon.jp

BACKSCATTER

THE BEST BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

OLYMPUS E-PL10

Sea&Sea Sony Alpha Universal Housing Compatible with a7R Mark V

Sea&Sea has now added the Sony a7R Mark V to the list of cameras compatible with its universal housing, unveiled in July 2022. The MDX-αU already supported the "entry-level" a7 Mark IV, "video-centric" a7S Mark III, "pro sports" a9 Mark II, "8K-capable" a1, and the high-resolution predecessor, the a7R Mark IV. As a result of the "universal" design, initial mounting of the camera is a little more involved, there are some functional limitations that require workarounds, and an optional additional kit is needed.

The universal housing features a large acrylic back panel, which reduces weight and aims to provide better visibility of the LCD. There's a fiber-optic cable cover, which is designed to protect the connectors and prevent them from falling out. A leak alarm unit is included as standard equipment. The housing is available in a silver finish as well as the tradtional black.

The MDX-αU supports fiber-optic connectivity with compatible Sea&Sea YS strobes in TTL or manual modes via the optional Optical YS Converter S2 or Manual Flash Trigger, respectively. If you trigger your YS strobes via sync cords, you also have the option of an electrical connection.

Available from retailers, the MDX-αU is priced at $4,400.

www.seaandsea.jp

Isotta Nikon Z9 housing

Isotta produce high quality aluminum underwater housings, and their Isotta Nikon Z9 housing continues to live up to their reputation. The housing is compact, lightweight, has excellent ergonomics and can take a beating. It also has a unique, yet very easy, way to open the housing with their single-hand locking system. In addition, the housing has a double o-ring seal design which ensures that your camera is safe and drastically decreases the chances of flooding.

The optional Optical Flash Trigger/TTL Flash Trigger can be installed on the housing. The flash triggers gives the signal to the strobes to fire using fiber optic cables. This is by far the most straight forward and ergonomic way of firing strobes.

Isotta Z9 Key Housing Features:

Ergonomic side handles, adjustable
Two fiber optic connections standard
Three M16 holes and one M28 for installation of accessories, e.g. syncro cords, vacuum valves, monitors
Back housing completely detachable from the front housing
Tray with lock for the easy insertion of the camera
Aluminum buttons and dials with engraved symbols identical to camera controls
Wide back display viewfinder glass
Removable port 120 mm bayonet
Ports security latch to prevent accidental opening

External viewfinders can be mounted, INON X-2 compatible

www.backscatter.com

Nauticam NA-ZVE1 Housing for Sony ZV-E1 Shipping in July

Take your underwater videography to new depths with the NA-ZVE1 designed for the Sony ZV-E1 Camera. With its compact size, 12.1 MP Full Frame Back Illuminated sensor, advanced image processing, and AI subject recognition, this housing and camera combination unlocks limitless creative possibilities. It's the world's most lightweight and compact full-frame camera with interchangeable lenses. The NA-ZVE1 was built with the image maker in mind making sure all essential camera controls are positioned at your finger tips. ensuring ease of use in challenging environments.

NA-ZVE1 features an integrated handle system. This ergonomic style provides exceptional control access, even with thick gloves, with ideal placement of the shutter release and a thumb-lever to actuate the AF-ON button from the right handle.

The NA-ZVE1 features an M24 bulkhead which supports the Nauticam HDMI 2.0/1.4 cable system that can be paired with supported

external monitors/recorders. Two of the most popular external monitors setups are the Atomos Ninja V and the newly released SmallHD Ultra 5.

www.nauticam.com

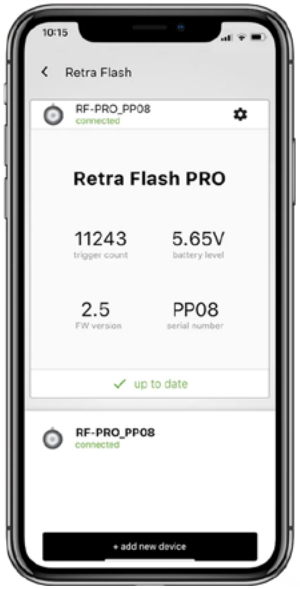
Ikelite 200DL Housing for Nikon Z8

For the underwater photographer, the Nikon Z8 is one of the most exciting mirrorless cameras ever released. Nikon has literally taken all of the photo and video performance of their flagship Z9 camera and shrunk them down into a package that is easy to travel and dive with.

The Ikelite 200DL Underwater Housing is perfectly suited to making the most out of this powerful camera. Every element is optimized for lightweight strength, reliability, and field serviceability. The Ikelite 200DL the only housing that allows you to clearly see the camera and o-ring after assembling the system.

www.ikelite.com

Retra UWT App



The world's first underwater strobe with smartphone connectivity

We wanted our users to have as much control and information on the performance of their Retra Flash as possible. That's why we made the Retra UWT Application (for Android & iOS) that can be paired with your Retra Flash via bluetooth. The Retra UWT App allows you to:

Download firmware updates

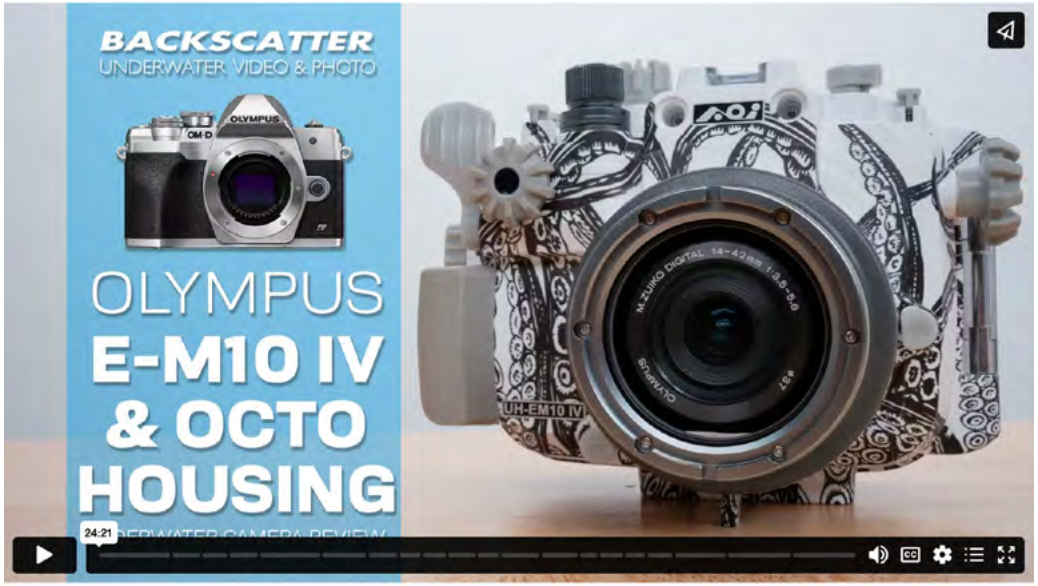
Create custom user modes

See basic information (number of flashes, current version, serial number, etc)

Read instruction manuals

www.retra-uwt.com

Olympus E-M10 IV and Backscatter Octo Housing



Watch our complete video review of the Olympus E-M10 IV and Backscatter E-M10 IV Octo Housing.

The last few years have seen a major rise in the popularity of compact mirrorless cameras for underwater photography. The Olympus E-PL10 was our pick for the Best Bang For Your Buck but that camera has now been officially discontinued, so it's time for something even better to come along: enter the Olympus E-M10 IV and Octo Housing Package.

What's upgraded with the E-M10 IV?

Image quality improved from 16 to 20 megapixels

Dedicated exposure controls: ISO, shutter speed, & aperture

More ergonomic shutter activation

Automatic TTL flash power with Backscatter Mini Flash 2 via LED flash trigger

The Olympus E-M10 IV can still be used like a point-and-shoot camera with external 'wet' conversion lenses or used like an SLR with dedicated wide angle and macro lenses and ports.

The integrated LED flash trigger features automatic TTL flash power and High Speed Sync when used with Backscatter Mini Flash 2 making good lighting results easier to pull off and better looking than ever.

At $799.99 for the camera with lens and $699.00 for the housing, it's easily the best bang for your buck in underwater.

www.backscatter.com

Complete Guide For Gopro Hero 11 Best Underwater Video & Photo Settings

The GoPro HERO 11 is one of our favorite action cameras yet because of the impressive built-in video stabilization, how easy it makes it to start capturing great looking 4K Ultra High Definition video clips underwater, and how compact and well suited for travel it is. It can also snap photos with point-and-shoot simplicity.

This guide will walk underwater photographers and video shooters through everything they need to know in order to equip, set up, and use their GoPro HERO11 successfully while diving, snorkeling, and freediving. Most settings will be set-and-forget so that the only thing we need to change during our dive is our Custom Preset shooting mode for wide angle video, macro video, or photos.

Be sure to download a copy of the Cheat Sheet PDF with all of these settings so that you can always have it with you. We recommend laminating a copy and keeping it in your camera bag.

www.backscatter.com

SKB 3i-2313-8 case

Like all iSeries cases, the 3i-2313-8 is molded of ultra high-strength polypropylene copolymer resin that's lighter and 2.8x stronger than competitive cases, and features a gasket-sealed, water and dust tight, submersible design (MIL-STD 810G) that is resistant to corrosion and impact damage. This size is available with either a standard empty interior or a cubed foam interior.

Dimensions & Specs: INTERIOR DIMENSIONS 23" x 13.09" x 8". EXTERIOR DIMENSIONS 24.32" x 15.56" x 8.84"

www.skbcases.com

INON Compact Grip Base for GoPro

The INON Compact Grip Base for GoPro is a double handle/tray system exclusively designed for GoPro camera housed in GoPro original housing when using INON SD Front Mask with the pursuit of the utmost in downsizing whole of system.

Usable as a serious filming system with holding both handles to deliberately capture the scene.

3-way style are available to suit to different situations.

www.inon.jp

Aquatica housing for Nikon Z8 coming soon

Please note that all our housings come standard with your choice of strobe connectors and complete Surveyor kit which includes the valve, pump and moisture board. For the version with optical connectors the flash trigger is included.

www.aquatica.ca

Alphamarine Photography UK

We sell the complete ranges of underwater photography equipment by Nauticam, Inon, Fantasea, Deepshots, Sea and Sea and Weefine including camera housings, strobes, lights and lenses. We can supply AOI underwater housings for Olympus EPL-9/10 cameras and housing ports by Zen Underwater. If you need underwater lighting equipment we are dealers for Ammonite, Divepro and SUPE (Scubalamp) and can supply dive lights as well as specialist video lights. It's also possible for us to acquire for customers Backscatter strobes and lights, Retra strobes and Keldan video lights. We also now sell a range of books on underwater photography and diving.

We have a broad range of suppliers and if there is a brand you don't see mentioned here please get in touch as we can almost certainly source what you want or an equivalent.

Our ethos of best advice means that we look at your requirements and find the right equipment to meet your needs. This is why we don't have an electronic commerce website. Instead if you contact us by emailing info@alphamarinephoto.com, telephone 0800 234 3350 or message us through Facebook we'll take time and care to make sure you get the best underwater photography equipment for you and your budget. We aren't interested in making a quick buck out of you by selling something that gives us the biggest mark-up. We'd prefer that you spent less money and were happy with what you bought.

Email us at

info@alphamarinephoto.com

Asiwo Manta scooter

The Asiwo Manta is capable of reaching depths of up to 45m (148ft), so you can see what lies beneath the surface of the water like never before. It opens up a whole new world of underwater adventure, letting you explore the sea to your heart's content.

The Asiwo Manta underwater scooter comes with a built-in GoPro mounting bracket at the front so that you can effortlessly film your marine adventure and preserve your precious memories. It means you can dive once, but cherish the experience forever.

With three speed/thrust modes, you can adjust your speed to suit your needs. Whether you're exploring at a leisurely pace, gliding alongside the fishes, or racing through the water, the Manta has you covered. Its top speed of 5ft/s (1.5m/s) lets you swim like a pro.

Weighing at just 7.7lbs (3.5kg), the Manta is lighter than even water. Thanks to its feathery buoyant build, it automatically floats to the water surface when not in use. Moreover, the compact size makes it possible to carry it in a handbag. You can even carry it on a plane!

https://asiwo.com

https://marinemegafauna.org/magazine

Nudibranchs of Britain, Ireland and Northwest Europe

by Bernard Picton and Christine Morrow

Nudibranchs, or sea slugs, are a group of marine gastropod molluscs whose adults lack shells, an evolutionary loss that has led to a wide variety of body shapes, colours and colour patterns, making them popular with divers and underwater photographers.

In the second edition of their book, experienced nudibranch experts Bernard Picton and Christine Morrow provide an accessible and authoritative photographic identification guide for anyone interested in finding and identifying nudibranchs in the coastal waters of Britain, Ireland and Northwest Europe.

Covers more than 195 species, each on its own two-page spread

Includes in situ photos to aid finding nudibranchs under water and on the shore

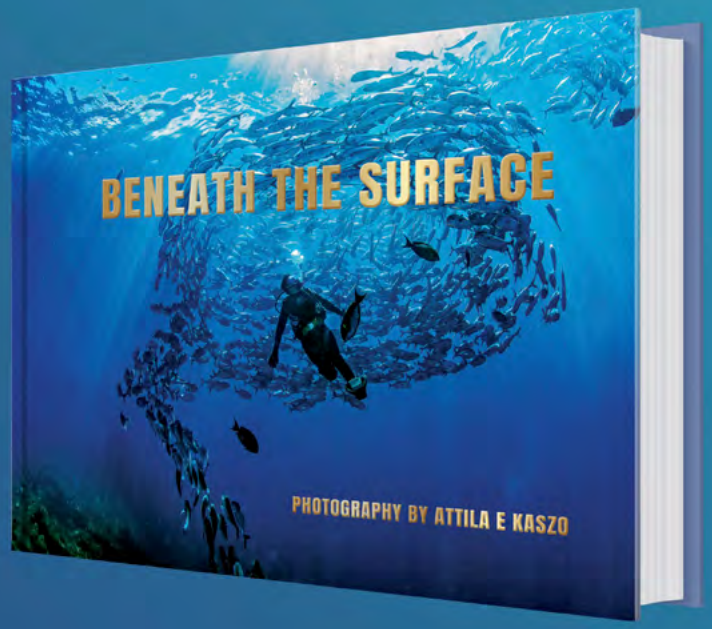
Features photos of nudibranchs' distinctive spawn coils and studio photos showing detailed anatomy

Presents key distinguishing features and essential information on size, habitat, diet and distribution.

£35.00

https://shop.mcsuk.org/products/nudibranchs-of-britain-ireland-and-northwest-europe

An Underwater Photographic Journey



"'Beneath The Surface' is not only a visual journey but an education. It is a poem of images easily understood. I recommend it for young and old alike."

Valerie Taylor AM
Knight of the Order of the Golden Ark

'"They say every picture tells a story - and Attila's images takes you straight to Chapter One."'

Peter Rowlands
Publisher/Editor, Underwater Photography Magazine

https://books2read.com/AttilaKaszo

DPG

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

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

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

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

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

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

www.divephotoguide.com · contact@divephotoguide.com

Canon R7 & Nauticam housing:

Maybe the perfect compact rig for underwater imaging?

By Kevin Palmer

The last several years have been a boom time in digital camera products. Mirrorless cameras are taking over the market while DSLRs are quietly being discontinued. Sensors keep getting bigger and resolutions have been heading through the stratosphere. Video continues on the same trajectory with very high frame rates and up to 8K resolution. And while enthusiasts eagerly scoop up the latest and greatest cameras on release, there is the majority of the underwater photography market that really just wants great imaging results in the easiest and most fun way possible. If you are in this category, the Canon R7 may just be your answer.

The old Canon 7D MkII was a legendary APS-C performer in a bulky DSLR camera body. The new R7 is the spiritual successor to that camera, but in a svelte mirrorless body that outperforms the old 7D in everyway while being much more travel friendly.

Specs

This Canon has just about anything anyone could ask for in a camera and they even fixed some long stranding complaints we UW photographers have had.

32mp This is really enough for even the most demanding underwater image makers. Water softens our UW images with every inch of the wet stuff we shoot through. More resolution does not really improve that and definitely eats up more storage.

4K 60P This is the standard that most of us want to be able to shoot video at and Canon has proven to have the best UW white balance for video in the industry.

1/320 Sync Speed - Hooray! Finally Canon gives us the kind of sync speed UW photographers really love for capturing sunrays and darkening backgrounds.

Continuous shooting at 15-30 FPS This is fast enough for anything you will discover in the aquatic world... and if not, you probably don't want to be in the water with it.

Dual UHSII SD Card Slots Two slots are great and UHSII cards are by far the most speed for the buck. They are plenty fast enough for 4K 60p, so why get more expensive and exotic?

Near Telepathic AF The 7D MkII was one of our all time favorite cameras for fast accurate auto-focus. The R7 is better in most regards - enough said.

Sounds great, though we need to get the usual questions out of the way.

But Won't Full Frame Cameras Give Me Better Photos?

Epic resolution and Full Frame sensors are usually what most customers ask us for when shopping for a new underwater camera. It is what the media and their photography buddies have told them and in some instances it might be true. Shooting a bald eagle at dusk with a 600mm lens at a shutter speed of 1/1200 and ISO 3200 may benefit from these things. Shooting underwater macro in Lembeh or whale sharks in Mexico, not so much.

"But I really like super high resolution so I can crop my images"

An APS-C camera will offer you 50% more magnification when shooting macro with the same

lens as a full frame camera. So, when you want to fill the frame, you can do it more easily. Since you will have more depth of field at any given angle of coverage, the odds of your subject being in focus also increases substantially. In other words, your "keeper rate" may be higher than with a full frame camera.

"But won't full frame cameras give me wider angle coverage when I need it?"

This is partially true, but like many things, shooting underwater is different. APS-C cameras use shorter focal lengths to achieve the same wide angle coverage as full frame cameras, but with greater depth of field at any given aperture. This means that APS-C wide angle is often sharper at the same angle of coverage as a full frame cameras when shooting wide angle behind a dome. Also of note; there are several excellent fisheye zooms that offer lots of flexibility on a crop sensor camera, but only a fixed 180 degree coverage lens option on full frame.

OK, with that out of the way, let's look at what makes the R7 in particular a great underwater set up.

For those who love full fisheye, you can shoot Canon's superb 8-15mm fisheye zoom and take advantage of everything from 10mm 180 degree fisheye to a tighter 130 degree FOV at 15mm.

NA-R7 Housing

Clearly the R7 has the chops to outperform what most of us UW image makers are capable of asking of the camera, but there are a couple of secret ingredients that make this system so appealing to the traveling photographer. First is the housing; much like the popular Sony A7C Nauticam housing, Nauticam has focused on making the housing as small as humanly possible without giving up their famous ergonomics. Compared to Nauticam's housing for the aforementioned Canon 7D MkII, the NA-R7 is no more than half its size. Yes, really!

The second secret ingredient is from Canon. The Canon RF-S 18-45mm f/4.5-6.3 IS STM Lens. This compact "kit lens" from Canon is a gem and happens to be a design that works perfectly with certain Nauticam water contact lenses. Combined with a Nauticam WWL-1B or WWL-C, a shooter can have near fisheye angle of coverage down to fish portrait capability on the same dive with tack-sharp results in a compact package. Add a CMC wet macro lens and you can have a true "do everything" rig without ever removing a lens from your camera or changing ports. Your

And super macro? Nothing quite matches what you can achieve with a long macro lens and powerful close-focus wet lens on an APS-C sensor. The shots above were taken with the RF 100mm and Nauticam SMC.

entire system can travel in your carry on. No more overweight fees!

For Crispy detailed wide angle, the WWL-1 and WWL-C excel. The WWl-1 offers 130-degree angle of coverage with full zoom through in a modest size package. The WWL-C offers 116-degree coverage and a little more zoom reach with stunning sharpness and an even smaller form factor.

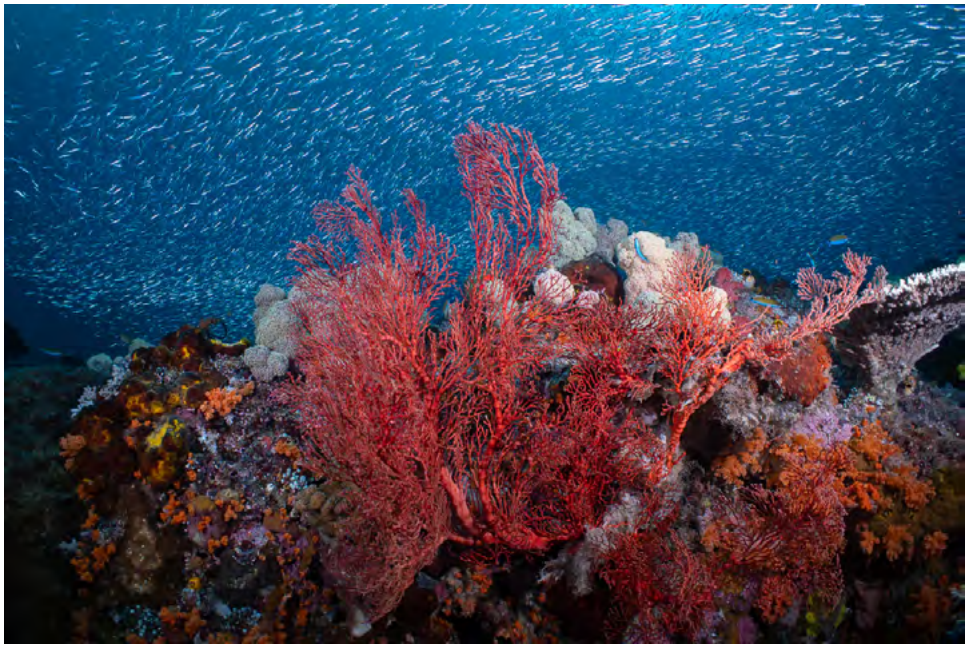
For an all-in-one-dive experience, the CMC-1 (or CMC-2) can be used with the Canon 18-45 lens for extremely sharp macro options when one exchanges the Wet Wide Lens for a Compact Macro Converter underwater.

Of course, the whole banquet of RF lenses Canon makes as well as EF lens favorites can be used on the R7. All of which is great if you have a special mission in mind, but for some, the above combination may be all you ever want to shoot and results will be outstanding.

All that said, serious macro shooters sometimes want a bit more, and for those folks, the R7 delivers

The WWL is also great zoomed in for close focus wide fish portraits, or shoot the 18-45 with no wet lens.

Even with a long macro lens like the RF 100mm, the R7 focused fast enough to capture some of the most difficult subjects I go after, like the infamous Flasher Wrasses of Indonesia.



The WWL-C offers 116-degree coverage and a little more zoom reach with stunning sharpness and an even smaller form factor. It was used for the image bottom left.

For an all-in-one-dive experience, the CMC-1 (or CMC-2) can be used with the Canon 18-45 lens for extremely sharp macro options when one exchanges the Wet Wide Lens for a Compact Macro Converter underwater.

with options including the traditional Canon EFS 60mm, EF 100mm, the newer RF 35mm Macro and RF 100mm Macro.

FINAL THOUGHTS

There is no one perfect system for everyone. But for many years we have been hearing from underwater photographers that they really want a bit smaller, easy to travel with system that is friendly, but doesn't give up performance in any particular category. In the past we have often had to say you can't always have your cake and eat it too. But the R7 brings that possibility closer than any mirrorless camera we have gotten a chance to use lately.

Kevin Palmer
www.reefphoto.com
www.islandexposure.us

Canon R7, green-water notes from the field

by Dan Bolt

Just a couple of weeks before my latest trip to the beautiful Sea Lochs of western Scotland, a big heavy parcel landed on my doorstep and I was lost in a world of new and exciting camera and housing kit.

I've got exactly the same setup as Kevin has reviewed (ie Canon R7, with Nauticam housing and WWL-1 lens) and agreed entirely with how great this camera is and how good the housing ergonomics are too.

I had the opportunity to use the R7 in pretty clear water (upwards of 10m visibility) but we weren't blessed with much sunlight so it was an ideal time to put the new camera through it's paces. I've always liked letting natural light into my photos, regularly pushing my old Olympus OM-D E-M1 to places it struggled with.

As you'd expect the R7 didn't disappoint. It's ISO capabilities are pretty good for such a densely packed sensor, but the in-body image stabilisation is amazing. I was regularly shooting at 1/30th, or 1/25th of a second and achieved a very high hit-rate indeed.

Like Kevin, I found the new RF-S 18-45mm lens paired with the Nauticam WWL-1 (I have the original version of this lens) is a match made in underwater-heaven.

After two weeks in the Lochs, I found that my two favourite lenses were the kit lens + wwl-1, and the EF-100mm macro. I also have the Tokina 10-17mm and EF 60mm macro, but I was less

Edible crab on brittlestar bed
Canon EOS R7, Nauticam housing, RF-S 18-45mm @ 18mm, Nauticam WWL-1, 1/30th, f/10, ISO1600, 2 x Sea & Sea YS-D1

Clingfish
Canon EOS R7, Nauticam housing, EF 100mm macro, 1/200th, f/13, ISO400, 2x Sea & Sea YS-D1.

Top left. Flapper skate . Canon EOS R7, Nauticam housing, RF-S 18-45mm @ 18mm, Nauticam WWL-1, 1/30th, f/7.1, ISO1250, natural light.

Above. Yarrel's blenny. Canon EOS R7, Nauticam housing, EF 100mm macro, 1/200th, f/13, ISO400, 2x Sea & Sea YS-D1.

Left. Soft coral scene. Canon EOS R7, Nauticam housing, RF-S 18-45mm @ 18mm, Nauticam WWL-1, 1/25th, f/14, ISO640, natural light.

impressed by them (maybe that's just because they don't suit my shooting style as well as the others did, certainly there's nothing wrong with those lenses!).

I had less success in pushing the sync speed of my ageing YS-D1's. I could only go to 1/250th before suffering with black banding in my images. My buddy has the R7 also and can go to 1/400th with his Inon Z240's. Me? Jealous? Yeah, just a little. But new strobes are a serious investment these days so that'll have to wait until my D1's give up completely. Happily, the R7's base ISO is 100 so that'll help in those few situations when "only" being ably to sync at 1/250th becomes problematic.

It wasn't a cheap exercise to switch from Micro Four Thirds to mirrorless APS-C, but I'm very happy with my decision (plus the housings are almost the same size/weight) and I'm looking forward to a fruitful relationship with the R7.

Dan Bolt

www.Underwaterpics.co.uk

Backscatter Mini Flash 2

by Phil Rudin

A pleasant surprise at the 2022 DEMA show for me was the debut the new Backscatter Mini Flash 2.

The first Backscatter Mini Flash 1 had its debut at the 2019 DEMA show and it became an enormous success among those seeking a lighter and less expensive quality flash.

Fast forward to the post Covid 2022 DEMA show and the new Backscatter flash called the Backscatter Mini Flash 2 or MF-2 and Optical Snoot 1 or OS-1. The MF-2 strobe still retails for $399.00, the OS-1 snoot is still $149.00 So pricing is the same as the 2019 MF-1 release but with a far more full featured flash.

Backscatter designed the MF-2 as the ultimate compact flash for small cameras shooting both macro and close focus wide angle scenes. The MF-2 has a beam angle which is narrower than many wide angle flash units and is particularly well suited to fish portraits, macro and super macro with any DSLR or mirrorless housing system.

While the MF-2 is marketed for compact cameras shooting small subjects I have found that a pair of these flashes can also be excellent for wide angle subjects as well.

The first thing you notice about the MF-2 is how small and compact it is measuring just 65 mm in diameter (2.56 inches) this is the same size as MF-1 so the original snoot and lighting accessories can transfer over to MF-2.

The MF-2 is about 194 mm (7.64 inches) in length 10mm longer than MF-1 to accommodate the addition control dial on the top of the flash.

The battery compartment is also a bit larger to accommodate the larger and more powerful battery. The flash is machined from anodized aluminum and weights around 275 grams (9.70 once) in air without battery. The MF-2 ships with a one inch ball head, a Sea & Sea type ball mounting clamp, an Allen wrench to install the mounts, two extra O-rings with lube, a clip on white plastic flash defuser with a retention lanyard plus more that will be described later.

The recommended battery and battery charger are not included in the price of the MF-2 flash. The flash is depth rated to 100m/330ft and the single straight flash tube is in the center of the strobe facewith two LED aiming lights located directly above and below the flash tube.

The MF-2 has several excellent new upgrades starting with the LED lights which can be left off or set to four increasing levels of light intensity starting at 1000 lumens with a fully charged battery which is twice as bright as the 500 lumen MF-1.

As the battery level is depleted brightness levels will depress from 4 to 3,2 and finally a low safety power level. Battery levels are managed to allow a 90 minute burn time even with hundreds of flashes. Power levels two and three are recommended but for bright day light situations or when using the snoot a power level of four may work best.

My experience was that I was able to do three macro dives without a battery change and still had plenty of battery left. On night and blackwater

dives of over 90 minutes using only the LED's at mid power I still had plenty of battery power to spare.

The new MF-2 has a larger battery compartment that threads into the rear of the flash and has an excellent double O-ring seal design.

If the battery compartment should flood the rear of the compartment has a pressure relief valve to release any gas buildup. The front half of the flash with the electronics also appears to be sealed from the battery compartment so that repair costs should be minimal.

The only battery recommended by Backscatter for the new MF-2 strobe is the XTAR 21700, 5000mAh (up from 3500), 3.6v 18Wh (up from 12.6Wh) 500 Cycles Li-Ion battery. The old 3500 batteries from the MF-1 can also be used with an optional battery sleeve. With the new battery the MF-2 flash has a faster recycle time and a longer run time than with the older MF-1 battery.

My two MF-2 test flashes came with two of the new batteries, a Nitecore dual battery charger and a waterproof plastic battery box. I was cautioned by Backscatter staff to be extremely careful when charging the batteries in light of recent fires associated with battery charging. A warning on the battery compartment also advises not to travel with a battery installed in the flash and to only use approved batteries.

Battery life is excellent well exceeding the 1400 flashes from the older MF-1. The bottom of the MF-2 flash has a threaded mounting point for a standard ball head attachment or a Sea & Sea ball mount which are both included. The new standard fiber optic cord socket has a threaded area around the outside to accept the included "Light Pipe" for control of remote off camera operation. I used the flash with a S&S fiber optic cord which has 90 degree port socket with a small retention O-rings.

During my many test dives the cord never dislodged from the port socket and I never had a misfire. The top of the the MF-2 now has three rather than two controls, a round red power intensity knob now with seven power level settings. Behind the power intensity knob is a new mode dial and below that is a round focus light button. All three controls can easily be used while wearing heavy gloves.

The mode dial has an array of new features that sets the MF-2 head and shoulders above the original MF-1. The first setting on the mode dial is off which shuts the flash down. Next to that is the "M" manual flash setting that when turned on emits a green light under the dial after two quick blue flashes. In manual you increase or decrease power using the seven levels on the power intensity knob. Next to that are the SC and the SC with a Flower setting which work in TTL with Olympus/OM-Systems branded cameras like the TG-6. SC is for larger subjects like fish and reef scenes while the SC Flower setting is for Microscope mode or macro mode subjects. With these settings the red intensity knob has no function.

Mirrorless ILC cameras need to use a popup flash or a compatible RC flash trigger with TTL, this may limit flash sync to 1/60th in some cameras. Check with your authorized dealer for further information regarding different camera models.

Next is the High Speed Sync (HSS) setting which allows you to shoot at flash speeds faster than your cameras max flash sync. In my case I have the Sony A7R V which syncs at a high of 1/250th and the Sony A1 which syncs at 1/400th in full frame and 1/500th in APS-C mode. Being able to shoot full frame at 1/320th to 1/800th and more is a big advantage for both macro and wide angle in bright overhead light. To use this feature you need a compatible flash trigger and my choice has been to equipment both of my Marelux housings with UWTechnics flash triggers set for HSS. The HSS setting does not interfere with normal sync speeds for my cameras. I try to stay in the 1/320th to 1/640th sec range because above that

power from any HSS flash begins to fall off quickly. The HSS setting is for manual flash only with non-Olympus DSLR and mirrorless cameras.

Next is the Remote Lighting Control (REM) for Mini Flash 2 which allows remote wireless triggering and remote changes to power intensity. This can be done while the flash is mounted on the housing or off camera using the new Remote Lighting Muck Stick to anchor the flash securely in the sand.

For remote triggering you need two MF-2 flash in a two Mini Flash 2 configuration with one flash being the trigger via fiber optic cord and the second being operated remotely. The remote off camera flash needs to be setup with the included "Light Pipe" threaded onto the optical core port and then pointed where it has line of sight with the main controlling MF-2 flash.

When both flashes are set in REM the main flash can control the power level on the remote flash by moving the intensity knob higher or lower. Once the remote flash is set to say level 4 the main flash can be set back to manual "M" and the power intensity can be changed without changing the power level on the remote MF-2 flash.

The huge upside to this is that it allows you to place the remote flash anywhere around your subject, side, front, rear, top and more while triggering the flash remotely even from a distance. You can also have multiple off camera flashes triggering from different directions. The possibilities for remote lighting are endless and very exciting.

Last is the Test control which flashes when you push the round focus light button. In all settings except Off and Test the round focus light button allows you to turn on the focusing lights at the highest power and then scroll among the four

Spotted Moray Eel, Sony A7R V, Marelux MX-A7RV housing, Sony 90mm macro, two MF-2 flash's, ISO-400, F/10, 1/400th sec. Using the MF-2's in HSS with UWTechnics flash trigger

Cave Diver, Devil's Eye Run, Sony A7R V, Marelux MX-A7RV housing, Sony FE 20 to 70mm F/4, two MF-2 flash's, ISO-400, F/9, 1/125th sec. Using two MF-2's without defusers

power levels. When the battery is depleted the green light will change to red letting you know the flash is not working at full potential. Other features include holding down the focus light button to emit a flashing light of short duration for signaling and more. The ability to add a snoot and/or color gels excites the imagination even more. The HSS and REM are both outstanding additions to the underwater photographers creative tool box.

Backscatter Optical Snoot OS-1

The OS-1 optical snoot was designed in conjunction with the MF-1 to be a powerful macro strobe and snoot combination now it can also be used with the MF-2 Flash. I reviewed this in UwP112 for those who want to know more.

Field Testing the MF-2 Flash

I had an opportunity to test the Backscatter MF-2 flash with and without the snoot using Nauticam 5 and 8 inch arm combos. I also mounted the MF-2 on the Remote Lighting Muck Stick off camera using an on-camera MF-2 for triggering the second MF-2 remotely. With flash defusers attached you loose about one stop of light but have plenty of power for close focus and close focus wide angle shots with lenses as wide as a fisheye. Now of the included wide or macro shots were taken with a defuser.

For my field test I used two MF-2 flashes with Marelux housings and ports using a verity of lenses from macro to wide angle. At times I was only using one MF-2 with the OS-1 snoot mounted off the housing. Because of the compact size of the MF-2's moving through the water with the system was as easy as it gets when using a full frame mirrorless

camera housing. I was shooting macro with the Sony A7R V and Sony A1 cameras using the very quick focusing Sony FE 90mm F/2.8 macro lens. These two Sony cameras have elevated quick auto focus to a new level not seen in prior cameras.

For my MF-1 review I dedicated all my dives to night and blackwater macro outings with the Sony 90mm macro lens. For this review I decided to go with a much wider range of subjects and lens options to demonstrate how useful these little flashes can be for general photography.

By now many reviews have been posted using MF-2's including some excellent ones on the backscatter.com web site. All of these reviews however have focused on macro capabilities and little more. The narrower beam angle of the MF-2 does not prevent it from being a very capable all-around flash.

Since receiving the MF-2's they are all I have used for several months of diving and several images using the MF-2's have already been published in UwP. These powerful little flashes allow you to get great separation of the subject from the background making the colors pop while maintaining both a light or dark background.

For blue water and blackwater backgrounds the narrow beam reduces backscatter in the ambient light areas. The MF-2 is extremely easy to move around the macro port and smaller dome ports on the housing allowing a wide verity of multiple lighting combinations like overhead lighting, extreme side lighting, back lighting, inward lighting and much more.

Diver entering Ginnie Springs Ballroom, Sony A7R V, Marelux MX-A7RV housing, Sony, Sigma 17mm F/4, two MF-2 flash's with green color filter on the left and white light on the right to demonstrate the difference using color filters, ISO-640, F/11, 1/160th sec

Large Bigeye, Shot with front IR filter MF-2 and rear lighting with red filter using off camera flash trigger with second MF-2. Sony A1, Sony 90mm macro, ISI-50, F/2.8, 1/400th sec. 6cm X 9cm target. A much different look when triggering the rear flash with IR light rather than white light

Placing the light on the Muck Stick off camera increases the possibilities with both a single light or combination of lights. With the 90mm macro I shoot most of the time at ISO 50 to 100 using apertures from F/10 to F/22 and shutter speeds form 1/250th sec to as high as 1/1000th of a second using the MF-2 HSS feature.

I was able to get proper exposures at ISO-50 at up to F/22 using power levels 4 or 5. With the 90mm macro at F/2.8 for shallow DOF at ISO-50 I was getting proper exposures at power level 1. This is shooting with a lens to subject range from around 8 to 24 inches.

With closeup lenses like SMC-1 the camera settings remain about the same but the lens to subject distance is reduced by about 50% because of the SMC-1 C/U lens.

For wide angle to mid-range shots I used the excellent and versatile Sony FE 20 to 70mm F/4 zoom which allows a wide range of subject matter from Whalesharks and divers down to diner plate size fish with a 180mm dome port. For super-wide rectilinear shots I used the Sigma 17mm F/4 reviewed in this issue and shot exclusively with the MF-2's. With these lenses is was able to shoot HSS up to 1/800th and F/ numbers up to F/16 covering the entire subject without needing to use the supplied diffusers. For wide angle I used the same shorter arms as the ones I used for macro and the same Felxibuoy's. One of the big takeaways for me

with the MF-2's was that they make a great backup for high power, high priced wide angle strobes.

Doing two 2 1/2 hour macro dives shooting stills with the focus lights on mid power I never reached the RED low power level. Recycle times remain excellent at any given power level through the entire dive as well.

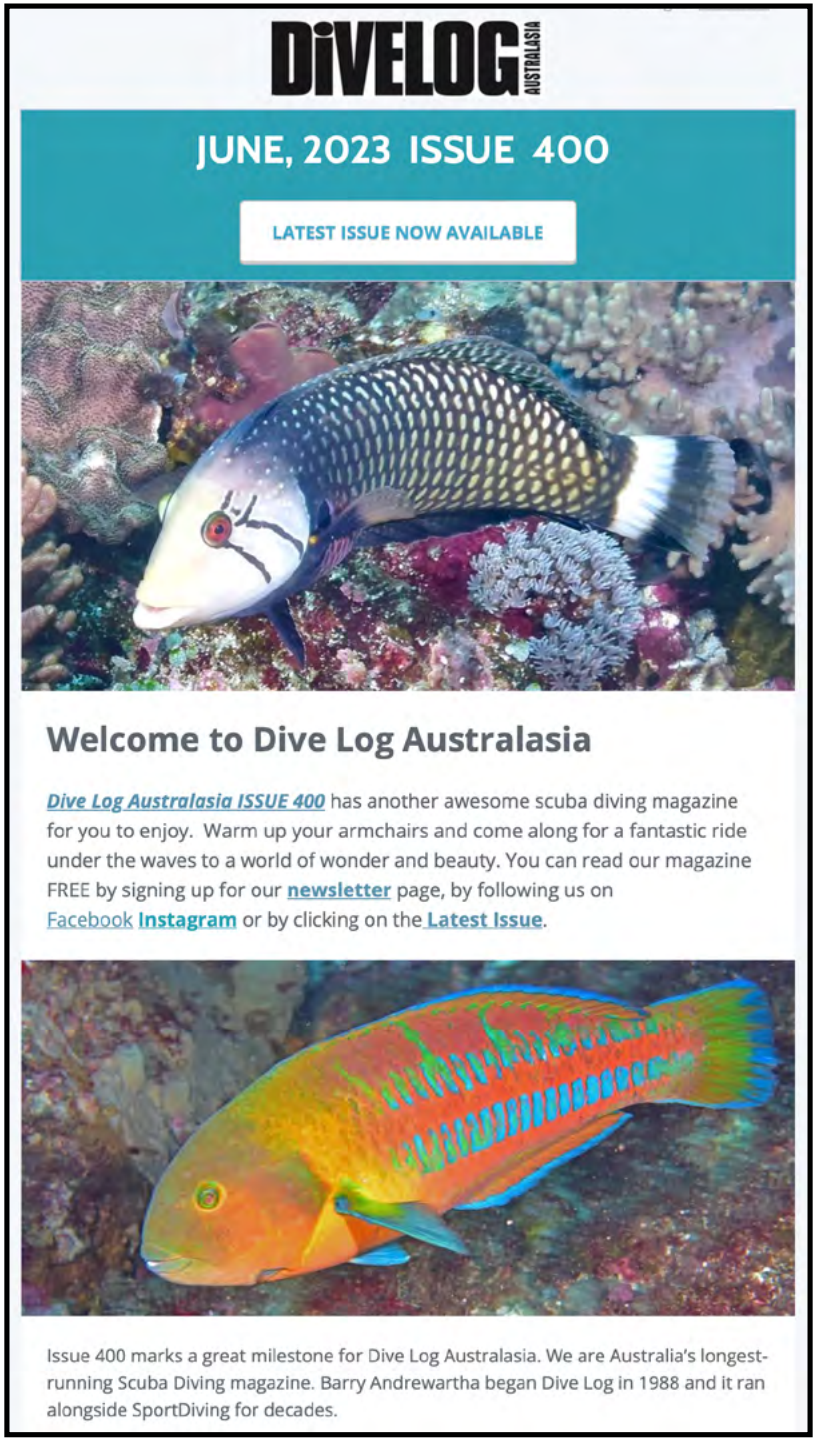
Shooting a single MF-2 on a Muck Stick off camera using the remote function was so much easier than using an extra long fiber optic cord or remote flash trigger. The MF-2 flash fired consistently as long as the "Light Pipe" was properly directed at the triggering flash. This allowed me to place the MF-2 anywhere it would not damaging to the surrounding sea life.

The Muck Stick is designed for MF-2 and has a ball head for use with a mounting clamp and an Anti-Rotation Sand Anchor that allows the MF-2 too be precisely positioned anywhere around the subject and remain very stable. The downside to the Muck Stick is that in some areas it can not be pushed far enough into the sand bottom to give stable support to the MF-2. I found this to be the case in some areas around the shallow sites at Blue Heron Bridge in Florida. When I was able to push the Stick 8 or 10 inches into the sand it was excellent at supporting the MF-2 and even larger flash heads. After each days diving I rinsed the flash and snoot before removing the batteries and then dried for storage.

For this review the Backscatter MF-2 strobes were full production models complete with an instruction manual and they were on loan from Backscatter. While the MF-2's work in TTL with Olympus cameras I was not able to test this feature because I did not have an Olympus system in house.

I would once again like to thank the staff at backscatter.com for loaning me these superb little MF-2 flashes for this review. The MF-2's have landed at the top of my wish list going into mid-2023 and are a product which should be considered if a budget flash is in your future. Head over to the backscatter.com web site for more related reviews and information.

Phil Rudin
Instagram



Vivid Leak Sentinel version V6

by Tim Gurney

'Nothing is certain except death and taxes'. As underwater photographers, we can add 'and leaks'. If you're an underwater photographer that hasn't yet experienced the horrors of a leak, you will.

With the best will in the world, leaks are inevitable. The best solution that underwater housing manufacturers currently offer is to mitigate any water damage with a leak alarm. Often this involves a buzzer and flashing LED, inside the housing, that warns when water has worked its way inside. Whilst this might help prevent catastrophic damage from a full flood, as little as a spoonful of salt water can wreck delicate electronics. Even a trickle can cause significant damage. The size of the 'trickle' merely determines the size of the repair bill.

The solution to housing leaks

The solution: the good news is that systems do exist to monitor the seal of a housing before it goes in the water. This creates a more effective safeguard, reduces the risks of the dreaded 'Owner Setup Error' and enables greater peace of mind. Enter the vacuum valve.

A vacuum valve uses a small hand or electric pump that sucks air out of your housing. This creates a vacuum which is monitored by the valve's electronics. If, for any reason the vacuum reduces, the valve will give a warning indicating a leak. The housing can be set up and tested before diving and the valve's indicator can confirm that the housing has been sealed properly.

One such system is the Vivid Leak Sentinel vacuum valve which I've been using in Subal housings since 2014. I started with Sentinel version 3 and worked my way, over 700+ dives, through versions 4, 5XB and now 6XB and can confirm, I'd never leave home without one.

Installation of the Leak Sentinel

The Leak Sentinel system is simple to install. The valve is screwed into an empty bulkhead on the housing so that the warning LED is visible when diving. In earlier models (versions 1 to 4) the battery was part of the Leak Sentinel's valve assembly and sat on the exterior of the housing.

Vivid Sentinel V5XB with the battery on a printed circuit board connected by wire to the valve

The manual hand pump for the Leak Sentinel system

From version 5, called the 5XB (i.e. eXternal Battery), the battery was part of a circuit board inside the housing with a wire connection to the valve. This avoided the need to disassemble the valve to change battery; a feature of the earlier models.

Depressing a button on the Leak Sentinel activates a flashing red LED. Using a small hand-pump, of the type used with Vacuvin wine corks, you pump air out of the housing through the valve (a small battery-operated pump is also available).

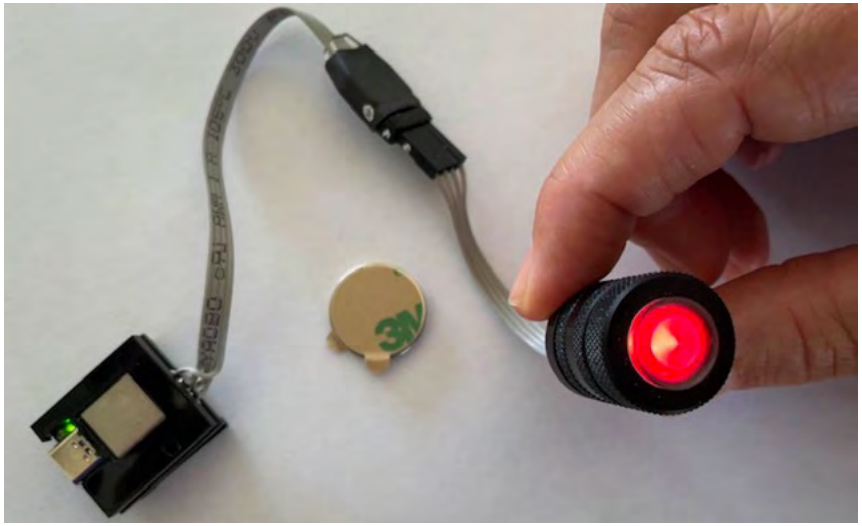
As air is removed, the LED will change to flashing red/green until the vacuum is established. The LED will then flash green. This usually takes about 20, or so, pumps depending on the volume of the housing and port.

If the housing has not sealed properly because of a fault, or more likely user-error, the valve LED will either stay red or flash red/green, indicating a problem. If so, check your housing for possible problems – perhaps a hair or sand, or incorrect positioning of an O-ring - and retry.

Vacuum valves are great devices to help avoid user-errors and, more importantly, warn of an issue before the housing gets wet or leaks. It is this feature which makes them even more valuable than a housing leak detector which only works when water is already in the housing. You might decide the detector avoids the need for a pre-dive rinse tank test.

Leak Sentinel have just released version V6. Like the 5XB, the electronics are inside the housing. A cable with a connector links the valve to the electronics which is powered by a rechargeable battery. The connector makes installing and removing the valve and its electronics from the housing straight-forward.

Like the 5XB, once a vacuum



Vivid Sentinel V6. A connector allows easy removal of the system if necessary. The coin-shaped disk in the middle is a magnet which holds the square circuit board inside the housing

The electric pump for the Leak Sentinel system

is established and the LED blinks green for a reasonable length of time (I usually wait an hour), the Leak Sentinel can be switched off by pressing the LED button and left until dive time. This saves battery life. Switch it back on pre-dive and the LED will reappear and should blink green. If the LED flashes red, there is a leak.

I find it efficient to set my system up the night before, check the vacuum is solid and then turn off the system. However, one caution: once in a while when reactivating the valve next morning, I have found the LED might flash red/green. This does not necessarily mean there has been a leak. Whilst the Leak Sentinel electronics allow for an element of temperature variation, a warning can be triggered if, for example, the system is setup in an air-conditioned room and then moved into a higher ambient temperature. To counter this I have found it helps to add an extra 3-4 pumps once the red/green LED flashing turns to a green blink. This usually manages temperature variation issues.

I have had dives with the 5XB when the difference between water and air temperatures has caused the LED to switch from green to red/green at depth. If this happens to you, try not to panic. If you have completed your set up correctly and the LED green light showed for a decent time during the setup process and there are no physical signs of anything untoward, then you should be fine to continue. On resurfacing the LED may well return to green.

The 3-4 extra pre-dive pumps usually prevents this (once you know it can happen!) and I understand improvements have been made to the 6XB to temperature variation management.

Earlier versions of the Leak Sentinel used readily available, disposable batteries that offered dozens of dives, lasting many hours. I have not yet been able to field test the run time for the rechargeable V6, but it has just gone past 10 hours on my bookcase with the LED blinking away. So enough, at least, for a full day's diving – probably several.

Customer Support

On the very rare occasion when I've had a question or an issue, the Leak Sentinel's producer, Miso Milivojevic of Vividhousings, has been unfailingly helpful at finding a solution in response to my emails.

In summary, the Leak Sentinel is:
• easy to install • easy to maintain • provides extra peace of mind • is relatively inexpensive

Is it worth installing one on your system? No question.

I'd suggest the Leak Sentinel is one of the best "investments" to make in your underwater housing setup. Who doesn't want to reduce the risks of a flood and enjoy the additional reassurance a vacuum valve provides?

Tim Gurney
http://timsimages.co.uk

Sigma 17 mm F/4 DG DN

for Leica-L and Sony FE Mount Cameras

by Phil Rudin

Sigma is a Japanese company founded in 1961 which exclusively provides quality photography and video-related products world wide. All products are manufactured in Aizu in the Tohoku region of Japan.

The contemporary lens line which is the subject of this review features the very latest in technology and optical performance combined in a very small package. I own the Sigma 17mm F/4 being reviewed and the very compacted 90mm F/2.8 DG DN.

The Sigma 17mm has an F/4 to F/22 aperture range and a rectilinear angle of view of 103.7 degrees or around 70 degrees if you switch to APS-C mode. The lens has all metal construction including the lens hood and weights in at 220g (7.8oz). The lens is also quite small at 64mm and 50.8mm long or (2.5" X 2").

The front filter size is a small 55mm, It has seven rounded blades with nine elements in eight groups.

The Sigma 17mm F/4 is quite basic on the outside with manual and "A" settings for aperture control and an AF/MF switch. The lens has a rather narrow manual focus ring which is buttery smooth when engaged in the MF setting.

Image stabilization with the Sigma 17mm is handled in camera.

The Sigma 17mm in Leica-L or Sony mount retail's for $599.00 US and includes a soft carry case, rear cap and two lens caps a pinch type and a magnetic version which I have been using a lot above water. These are at retail prices and they may very due to the age of the lens and sale pricing.

During my film days 17 and 18 mm rectilinear primes and the nearly equivalent Nikonos 15 mm at 94 degrees diagonally were the gold standard for underwater photographers. Most modern lens manufactures have now opted for zooms to cover this focal length and 17 mm full frame fixed autofocus primes are now as scarce as Hens teeth.

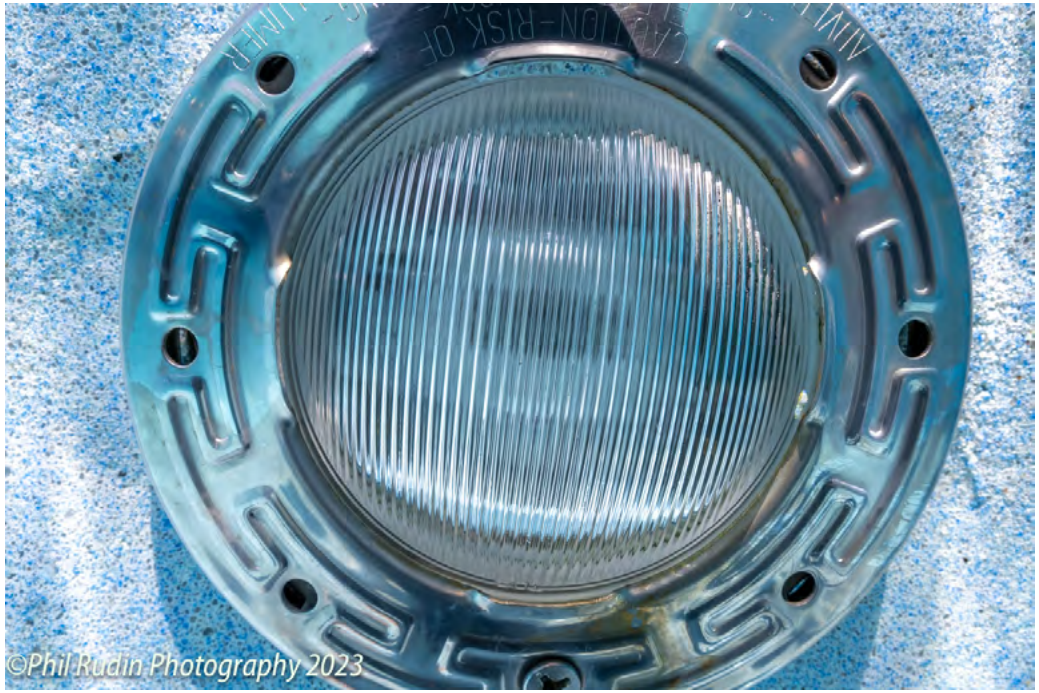
What sets the Sigma 17mm apart from the Zeiss and Tamron lenses listed above as well as the less expensive Rokinon/Samyang 18mm F/2.8 also reviewed in UWP #119 is the excellent close focusing capability of the lens. Minimum focus distance for the Sigma 17 is 12 cm (4.7") giving it a reproduction ratio of just 0.28X or 1:3.6 which is excellent for a lens this wide.

By comparison the Rokinon and Zeiss minimum focus is 25 cm (9.84") and the Tamron at 17mm is 19 cm (7.5") and 26 cm (10.2") at the 28mm end of the lens. The very short 12 cm focus distance for the Sigma 17mm allows me to shoot all the way to the port glass using a 140mm optical glass dome port.

This is the best wide rectilinear for close focus wide angle I have used. I have attached a photo using a 140mm port touching the glass on the light in my swimming pool which is 15 cm (6") across.

High quality rectilinear lenses will not preform any better than a "kit" lens underwater if they are not mated with a quality dome port and proper extension if needed. I am asked all the time if a particular lens will work with a port not really designed for that lens. I can't stress this point enough, if you

Sony A7R V with Marelux MX-A7RV housing, Marelux 180mm optical glass dome port, Sigma 17mm F/4, two Backscatter MF-2 flashes, 1/125th, F/11, ISO-640



Marelux 140mm dome port touching the pool light glass, F/11, 1/250th, ISO-400

are going to invest in a high quality camera and lenses you need to seek out the very best port combinations to complement your lens choices.

Full frame cameras with high megapixel numbers like the Sony A7R V with 61MP tend to expose flaws more easily than say M43 cameras with lower (20's MP). Full frame lenses of lower quality and lenses used at lower aperture values in the F/4 to F/8 or so range also suffer. I try to shoot full frame in the F/13 or higher range when corners are going to be an issue. Many times corners are not the prime issue and lower F/numbers can be used without noticeable issues unless you pixel peep at high magnification.

We would of course like all areas of a photo to be in crisp focus but everything in photography is a tradeoff. We want smaller and lighter equipment for travel and ease of use, to avoid having to bump the ISO, faster shutter speeds, how photos will be used I.E internet or massive prints and the list goes on. Each of use has a limit for what they will tolerate as far as image quality is concerned and many equipment choices will be made based on cost and personal tolerances.

Field Testing The Sigma 17MM

Not all port combinations work the same when shooting with the Sigma 17mm. For this review I was shooting the Sigma 17mm F/4 with a Sony A7R V (61MP) in a Marelux MX-A7RV housing and my port choices were the Marelux 180mm optical glass port with a 20mm extension and the Marelux 140mm optical glass port with a 15mm extension. Like many of the lenses I test Marelux has not yet listed the Sigma 17mm F/4 on the Sony port charts nor has anyone else that I am aware of so I was left to test lens the and dome port combinations myself.

Above water I manually move the aperture ring on the lens to change settings. Underwater you need to set the lens to the "A" setting on the aperture ring and use the camera controls to change aperture settings. I have shifted the aperture ring off the "A" setting without noticing several times. It "clicks" when you shift to "A" but no lock is provided to hold the ring in place. When I am shooting with "A" inside the housing I just use a bit of tape on the ring to make sure that it remains in place.

For this review I used the

180mm dome and 20mm extension with the Marelux housing in the field and both the 140 and 180 domes in the pool during testing of extension lengths. The extension lengths will of course very depending on what housing system you are using.

Along with this lens I used two Backscatter MF-2 flashes with eight inch and five inch arm combinations and two 800ml Flexibuoys, as described in the last issue of UWP. I attached the Flexibuoys to my flash arms for adjustable flotation control.

I also have the very useful UWTechnics TTL flash trigger installed in the housing to allow me to enable HSS on the MF-2 flashes. I find HSS up to around 1/500th to 1/640th very useful in the clear shallow water and for macro, especially for blackwater.

In the water I found the two MF-2 flashes without diffusers easily covered the entire AOV of the 17mm lens. The Sony AF worked flawlessly including eye-AF on several occasions when photographing divers.

Having a 104 degree wide rectilinear lens which will snap into focus all the way to the port glass in a 180mm or 140mm port is an excellent advantage over many zooms that require 230mm ports for acceptable image quality. At F/4 shooting shallow depth of field the background blur, AKA bokeh was smooth and creamy - quite exceptional for an under $600.00 lens.

If you own a Leica-L or Sony FF underwater system and looking for a rectilinear lens option, the Sigma 17mm F/4 provides excellent image quality at an affordable price with minimal port and extension sizes. This is a lens I will consider traveling with when space and weight are an issue.

Sony A7R V with Marelux MX-A7RV housing, Marelux 180mm optical glass dome port, Sigma 17mm F/4, two Backscatter MF-2 flashes, 1/320th in HSS, F/14, ISO-640

Sony A7R V with Marelux MX-A7RV housing, Marelux 180mm optical glass dome port, Sigma 17mm F/4, two Backscatter MF-2 flashes, 1/250th, F/14, ISO-320

I would like to thank marelux.co for their input and technical support with this review.

Phil Rudin
Instagram

Marelux 180 degree Smart Viewfinder

by Phil Rudin

Marelux Precision Inc. is headquartered in California, USA selling U/W photography products manufactured in China. One of the latests product releases is the 180 degree Smart Viewfinder. This is an optical viewfinder designed only for underwater use with the cameras LCD screen. Marelux also has a 45 degree viewfinder made for use with the EVF.

The 180 degree Smart Viewfinder is made from anodized aluminum alloy and optical grade glass. It weights in at 300 grams (10.58oz) and is depth rated to 100 meters.

One of the things that makes this viewfinder interesting is the built-in on screen indicator that displays current depth, diving time, ascent rate, ascent speed alert, battery status and water temperature. For Blackwater divers, night divers, cave divers or other areas where gauging a frame of reference is a bit difficult this viewfinder will add a degree of safety to your dive. On several blackwater dives I have been looking into the viewfinder following a subject without realizing that I had dropped deeper than I realized. With this viewfinder that information is available while following your subject.

The viewfinder is powered by two CR2032 batteries that fit into a compartment on the right side with a cap sealed by two O-rings. The cap can easily be removed without tools by simply unthreading and rethreading with your thumb and forefinger.

On the left side are two push buttons that control power and mode on the bottom button and unit switch and depth reset at the top button.

The small display can be set to metric or imperial systems of measurement with ease.

To power on the viewfinder display you push and hold the bottom button for one second. Before diving you press the bottom button for the depth display and then press the top button to reset the depth to zero. At the top of the display is an arrow that indicates ascent rate and a too rapid assent alert.

The bottom button has a round marking and the top has a square marking if you prefer to look at those.

The viewfinder also has a diopter adjustment that is set once underwater by simply rotating the eye piece in or out until it provides the sharpest view of the LCD for the users vision.

The optical lens has a large 0.8X magnification underwater. The optical glass element is large and has a nice molded rubber sunshade that virtually eliminates problems seeing the LCD in bright overhead sunlight.

The view into the Marelux viewfinder was a bit more than I had expected having used LCD viewfinders in the past that tended to highlight pixels in the display. With the Marelux viewfinder the LCD screen looked large and very sharply in focus all the way into the corners of the frame. Another thing I found useful are the mounting points on top of the viewfinder for the included ball head to support equipment and arms. It is a perfect place to mount a focusing light and many other useful tools like the

sending unit for my ring flash.

The LCD window on Marelux housings has a metal frame around it held in place by four small Allen bolts. To use the Smart Finder you need to remove the frame with the provided Allen tool and replace with one of the several included new frames that have the rails to secure the viewfinder. The included frames are different depending on camera in use.

On the Marelux Sony A1 and Sony A7R V housings I was able to replace the frames on both of the housings with the included frames. This allows me to quickly move the viewfinder between the two housings without additional work. Be aware that the LCD viewfinder will not fit on the housing if you already have a viewfinder mounted for the EVF.

On the left top of the viewfinder is a small lock that lifts up allowing you to slide the viewfinder into place on the provided rails. Once in place over the

LCD you can hear the lock snap into place securing the viewfinder onto the housing. The locking device pushes up to avoid accidentally hitting it on something while diving. If it pushed down it would allow the viewfinder to fall off the housing if the lock was bumped.

If you use the ball mount on top of the viewfinder a simple safety cord can be attached to prevent loss if the viewfinder comes off for some reason. I have used the unsecured viewfinder on several dives where I jumped off the back of a dive boat without any problems as part of my review process. My recommendation would always be to add a line as a backup just in case.

Field testing the Smart Viewfinder

The first thing you notice when entering the water is that the viewfinder is open on the bottom and closed on top. The viewfinder needs to flood between the rear of the glass optic and the LCD window to work properly. This is most easily done by turning the housing upside down insuring that all bubbles are off the glass and LCD window. The bubbles won't effect the image quality but may reduce your quality of view into the LCD.

If you intend to take split images just be aware that this viewfinder will not work until totally submerged. If you look into the viewfinder while it is not flooded the image in the LCD will be completely out of focus. This takes a bit of getting use too when first using the viewfinder. If you want to make adjustments to camera settings at the surface you will not be able to see the LCD screen the way you do with a through mounted EVF viewfinder. With the ball head installed you will not be able to see into the EVF at all.

Once underwater this viewfinder is great for fast pans while holding the camera away from your mask. With the diopter adjusted for my vision I was holding the housing several inches from my eyes for both macro and wide angle while still being able to see into the corners of the frame.

If you are coming from a compact or just prefer the LCD to the EVF when judging focus and composition this may be the tool you have been looking for. With excellent sharpness and image size this viewfinder is a winner.

The Marelux 180 degree Smart Finder is available from your authorized Marelux dealer and lists for $680.00 US, £522.72, €598.47.

Thank you to marelux.co for the loan of the Smart Viewfinder for this review.

Phil Rudin
Instagram

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.

Simple and inexpensive, yet so effective.

www.magic-filters.com

10th Annual Photo Competition for UN World Oceans Day winners

The winners of the 10th Annual Photo Competition for UN World Oceans Day were announced on June 8th, 2023, during the UN World Oceans Day (UNWOD) 2023 event at the UN Headquarters in New York. The free competition, which launched this past March, explored the six thematic categories linked to the overarching 2023 theme: “Planet Ocean: Tides Are Changing.” World-renowned judges including wildlife photographer Rathika Ramasamy (India), wildlife photographer Rajan Desai (USA), underwater fine art wildlife photographer Ipah Uid Lynn (Malaysia), and photographer and filmmaker Antoine Janssens (Switzerland), selected first, second, and third place winners for the categories. Winners were selected from thousands of global entries made by both amateur and professional photographers.

The UN World Oceans Day event and the annual photo competition are hosted by the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs (DOALOS) in partnership with Oceanic Global and supported by Panerai, with contribution by Discover Earth and OceanX.

The annual competition is curated by Ellen Cuylaerts, and coordinated with DPG, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, and Nausicaa.

The 2023 winning photographers hail from 14 different countries. Their names include: Álvaro Herrero (Mekan), Simon Lorenz, Ines Goovaerts (“No Time

© Tom Shlesinger (Israel). Putting the Ocean First — Winner Although the hawksbill sea turtle is critically endangered, it is quite common in the Gulf of Aqaba and Eilat, northern Red Sea. Here, a hawksbill sea turtle checking out a coral nursery dubbed “the igloo”. This dome-shaped artificial reef was built and placed in the sea more than two decades ago. Quickly after corals were transplanted onto the igloo, many more established themselves naturally, which in turn attracted numerous species of fishes and other animals to visit and inhabit the structure

© Álvaro Herrero (Mekan) (Spain). No Time to Waste – Winner Humpback Whale. Pacific Ocean, Baja California, Mexico. A humpback whale with a buoy entangled to its tail, already decomposed, dies slowly and agonizingly. A clear reflection of the slow and painful death that we are giving to our oceans, our planet

© Andy Schmid (Switzerland). Underwater Seascapes — Winner
A female Orca splitting a Herring Bait Ball while diving through it to get one, shot from underneath while freediving. Every winter enormous schools of Herring migrate from the open ocean into the fjords of Northern Norway and attract large numbers of big predators such as Orcas and Humpback Whales. Witnessing Orcas feeding on Herring using the so-called carousel feeding technique is very exciting but not easy to capture due to various factors: limited light and visibility, fast paced action plus cold surface and water temperature. Being able to freedive and capture the action on an ongoing feeding frenzy in these conditions is difficult but this winter I managed to create a series of photos I had never dreamt of capturing

© Glenn Ostle (USA). Big and Small Underwater Faces – Winner
The narrow Sea of Cortez is one of the most biologically diverse bodies of water on the planet. Home to more than nine hundred species of fish, thousands of species of invertebrates, and a wide array of marine life, it so impressed Jacques Cousteau that he referred to it as the "aquarium of the world." Only a short boat ride from LaPaz, Mexico, is a pair of rocky islets known as Los Islotes. With a population of between four and five hundred animals, it is home to the largest reproductive colony of California Sea Lions (Zalophus californianus) in the Sea of Cortez. We were fortunate to visit the islets at a time when huge schools of fish were also in abundance around the islets. The water seemed to boil with life and it was hypnotic to watch the sea lions dart into huge aggregations of silver fish, only to burst back through the schools, splitting, and dividing them. The fish would quickly regroup but so densely that it was often difficult to even see another diver just a few feet away. At times, the sea lions seemed to pause and appear somewhat overwhelmed at the sight of so many fish within easy reach, as this young sea lion seemed to be doing

to Waste"), Tom Shlesinger, Edwar Herreño Parra ("Putting the Ocean First"), Chris Gug, Sina Ritter, Alex Permiakov ("The Wonderful World of Tides"), Shane Gross, Niklas Manger, Rachel Moore ("Ocean Is Life"), Glenn Ostle, Simon Temple, Adriano Morettin ("Big and Small Underwater Faces"), Andy Schmid, Mayumi Takeuchi-Ebbins, Simon Biddie ("Underwater Seascapes"). All participants signed a charter of 14 commitments regarding ethics in photography.

The United Nations World Oceans Day Photo Competition is an ongoing tradition that calls on photographers and artists from around the world to communicate the beauty of the ocean and the importance of the respective UNWOD themes each year. Winning photos from past years can additionally be seen at

www.unworldoceansday.org

8th Anilao Underwater Shootout

by Sabrina (& Franco) Banfi

Take a look and prepare to be amazed by the view of the images awarded during the 8th Anilao Underwater Shootout (AUS2023), which took place from 22 to 26 May in the warm water of Mabini, in Batangas province of the Philippines.

The awarded pictures highlighted the area's rich biological treasures and captured teeming marine biodiversity, the beauty that lies beneath the surface and the hidden creatures.

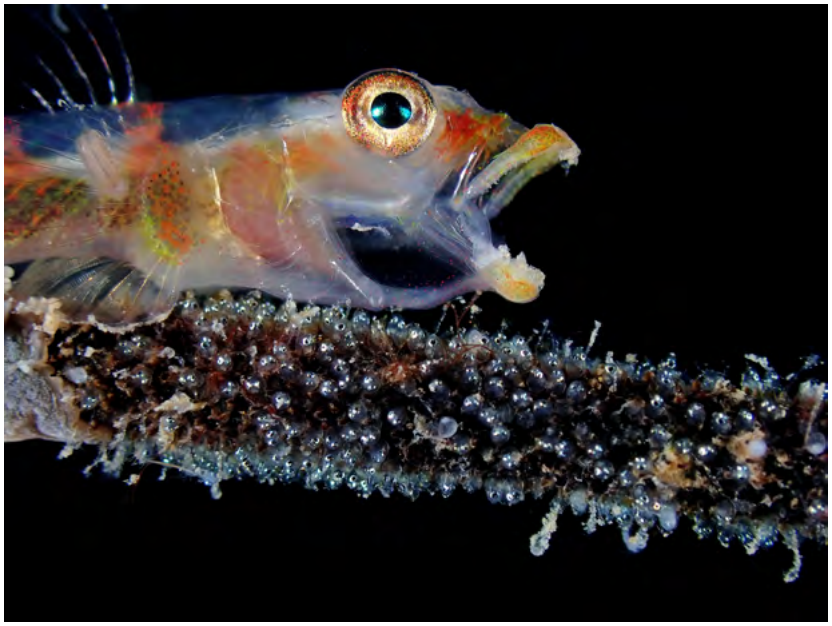
Geographically located between Maricaban and Mindoro Straits, called the Verde Island Passage, Anilao is a place of extraordinary marine life, acclaimed as the planet's second top macro diving destination, sometimes called the "Centre of the Centre of Marine Biodiversity" and a Marine Protected Sanctuary.

Competitor Eric Javier, who won the DOT Photographer Year title in the Compact class with the picture of Radial Filefish, said that "Anilao is an underwater photographers' perfect playground, a piece of paradise under the sea … Every time I dive with my camera gears, I am like a kid full of excitement, eagerly anticipating what type of underwear critters, reefs and

Kim KyungShin won the Open Macro/Supermacro category and became the DOT Photographer of the Year title with this picture of a Ocellated Tozeuma Shrimp

Left: OPEN-category MARINE BEHAVIOR-1ST place- DENNIS CORPUZ

Right: COMPACT-category MARINE BEHAVIOR-1ST place- REGIE CASIA



COMPACT-category FISH PORTRAIT-1ST place-ERIC JAVIER

seascapes I will come across. And to be able to showcase all of these through my camera lens will be my greatest fulfillment".

While Kim KyungShin, who took the DOT Photographer of the Year title in the Open class with the picture of a Ocellated Tozeuma Shrimp, said about his winning picture "After a full day's diving in Anilao, I enjoy my time just gazing at the horizon for the sunset while having a beer in my hand … I have always wanted to capture that Anilao sunset while diving there. However, recreating that sunset with macro photography has never quite come

COMPACT-category NUDIBRANCH-1ST place-JAYSON CEDRICK APOSTOL

out the way I felt it … I wanted to brighten up the background and asked my guide Obet for some backlighting. The results of that shoot startled me quite a bit".

Last May, 153 participants from 14 countries challenged themselves and entered this unique event sponsored by the Department of Tourism (DOT) of the Philippines. A few mesmerizing shots stood out against the all entries, which overall captured the attention of the jury.

OPEN-category FISH PORTRAIT-1ST place-DENIZ MUZAFFER GÖKMEN

Fascinated by the amazing array of critters living in depths and sea conditions accessible also by beginner recreational divers, competitors were surely eager to magnify the details through the cameras lenses and to show the vibrant colours, patterns, behaviours, translucence that usually go unnoticed to common diver until a skilled guide

point out them. And let's say that, during this kind of competition, the talent of the guides certainly equals the skill of the underwater photographers.

During the four days of the event, the five judges - experienced and award-winning underwater photographers Aaron Wong, Brook Peterson, Rafael Fernandez Caballero, Scott Gutsy Tuason and Franco Banfi- plus assistants and media partners were divided into two teams and went diving in the same spots with the best guides, so that they could check, first-hand and lenses, critters and conditions. Nothing was left to chance by an impeccable and generous organization in partnership with Mabini Tourism, Department of Tourism region 4 A Calabarzon #DiscoverCalabarzon, Solitude Acacia Resort, Aiyanar Beach and Dive Resort, and Lakan.

Even if this wonderful competition has strongly suffered (like others) from the more than two years pandemic ban (the 6th AUS in 2018 counted 241 contestants from 23 countries), it is clearly on the way to growing exponentially in the next years, since the number of entries raised 22,41% and participants increased by 27,5% compared to the 7th AUS (in 2021).

OPEN-category NUDIBRANCH-1ST place-DENNIS CORPUZ

During the award ceremony, Tourism Secretary Ms Christina Garcia-Frasco said the event strengthens the Philippines' position as the world's leading dive destination. Through the competition, the Department of Tourism seeks to grow the country's dive market with programs that not only promote the area's marine biodiversity but also actively advocate for its protection and preservation.

COMPACT-caterogy MACRO-1ST place-REGIE CASIA

"The department is dedicated to ensuring that the Philippines maintains its standing as the world's leading dive destination through a coordinated, focused, and fully supported approach to the further development of our dive products across the country," Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco said.

"The presence of international participants at the Anilao Underwater Shootout is a big boost to the promotion of dive tourism in the Philippines, and also to the rebooting of the travel and tourism industry. We are thrilled that the passion for diving and underwater photography has brought everyone to Anilao as this year's edition welcomes international participants for the very first time since the pandemic," the Secretary added.

Here are the winners of this year's Anilao Underwater Shootout.

Open Class

In the Macro/Supermacro category, winners are Kim Kyung Shin, 1st place; PJ Aristorenas, 2nd place; Yat Kuen Eric Fung, 3rd place.

In the Marine Behavior category, winners are Dennis Corpuz, 1st place; Patricia Santos, 2nd place; Yat Kuen Eric Fung, 3rd place.

In the Nudibranch category, winners are Dennis Corpuz, 1st place; Mark Chang, 2nd place; PJ Aristorenas, 3rd place.

In the Fish Portrait category, winners are Deniz Muzaffer Gökmen, 1st place; Patricia Santos, 2nd place; Mark Chang, 3rd place.

Compact Class

In the Macro/Supermacro category, winners are Regie Casia, 1st place; Luzelle Artillero, 2nd place; Teresa Sy Ortin, 3rd place.

In the Marine Behavior category, winners are Regie Casia, 1st place; Eric Javier, 2nd place; Neil Anthony Torres, 3rd place.

In the Nudibranch category, winners are Jayson Cedrick Apostol, 1st place; Ronilo Corpuz, 2nd place, Jose Antonio Caluag, 3rd place.

In the Fish Portrait category, winners are Eric Javier, 1st place; Jayson Cedrick Apostol, 2nd place; Oscar Rey Maranan, 3rd place.

Special prizes were awarded to Dennis Corpuz in the Blackwater/Bonfire category and Mark Chang in the Wide-Angle category.

Guide Louie Casapao and guide Roberto Corpuz were named DOT Photographers of the Year Dive Guide for the Compact and Open classes respectively.

Sabrina (& Franco) Banfi
https://banfi.ch

#AnilaoUnderwaterShootout #AUS2023 #DOTScuba #DOTDivePH #ScubaPH #DivePhilippines

https://beta.tourism.gov.ph/news_and_updates/the-countrys-colorful-marine-life-takes-the-spotlight-in-dots-anilao-underwater-shootout/

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF6uyziBXyg

https://www.facebook.com/anilaoshootout

https://www.instagram.com/anilaoshootout/?hl=it

Torbay Splash-in 2023

by Tim Allen

The seventh annual Splash-in underwater photography competition run by the Torbay branch of the British Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC) took place on Saturday, 3 June. A Splash-in competition is one where the photographs must be taken on a single day, and sometimes within a certain area (in our case, Torbay). There were four categories of entry: Beginner, Compact Camera, Wide-angle, and Close-up/macro, as well as a Popular Vote prize.

Unfortunately, the weather conditions this year were challenging, so although it was warm and the sun was shining brightly, easterly winds had been blowing into Torbay for a couple of weeks, resulting in extremely poor water visibility. Consequently, the decision was made to relax the geographic location requirement and competitors were informed a couple of days before Splash-in day that they could take their photographs outside of Torbay, as long as they handed in their entries on time in Torquay. Sixteen competitors registered and submitted a total of 49 photographs. The standard of photography was again very high this year, with the judge recognising two 'Highly Commended' entries in each category, in addition to the First and Second Prizes.

On the evening of Splash-in day, a presentation dinner was held at the Royal Torbay Yacht Club, where all the photographs were shown, and a Popular Vote held to select a 'peoples' favourite'. Judging was conducted anonymously by Peter Rowlands, the well-respected photographer and editor of Underwater Photography Magazine, who provided insightful and useful comments on all of the photographs.

This year, the competition again attracted sponsorship from some generous donors. The Beginners category was sponsored by O'Three and Alphamarine Photography, with a voucher for 50% off a new drysuit for the First Prize, and a voucher for an online underwater photography course for the Second Prize. Teign Diving Centre sponsored the first prizes in the Wide Angle and Close-up categories, and Dr Paul Naylor donated two copies of his excellent book 'Great British Marine Animals' to be awarded to the first prize winners in the Compact Camera and Popular Vote categories.

Beginner Category (Prizes sponsored by O'Three and Alphamarine Photography)
First Prize- Milayna Arthurs
Peter Rowlands: "The winner is a lovely delicate shot, different, subtly lit, it just has great appeal, and then in the bottom right-hand corner, what's called negative space where there is nothing happening, but it is contributing to the overall effect of the image, and the composition is very nice. It's just a very pleasing shot, the sort of shot you could look at and not get tired of. Great shot."
Milayna commented: "My first photo is of a nudibranch; I find them fascinating yet have such difficulty finding them usually. I used an Olympus TG5 to take the photo at F-stop 3.5 and ISO 1600."

Beginner Second Prize
Milayna Arthurs

Peter Rowlands: "This is a striking shot as soon as you see it. The only slight downside to this - it's looking slightly away from the camera. The eye is fine, but it would be much more engaging if the body position was more coming into the frame rather than exiting."

Milayna commented: "My second photo is of a blenny. They're usually very skittish, but this one was very confident in his camouflage and allowed me the opportunity to snap this photo. I used my Olympus TG5 at F-stop 3.6 and ISO 1600."

Compact Second Prize
Jo Cale

Peter Rowlands: "A lovely shot. Unusual I would have thought – are these fighting or is there some kid of argy-bargy going on or are they just hanging out? I don't know. But it's a nice composition and this is sufficiently different from the standard portrait shot, and to have two in the frame lifts it above 'highly commended'. Lovely shot."

Jo commented: "While working on taking a portrait photo of a Tompot Blenny, the second Tompot shot out from under a section of the Thurlestone wreck and started what can only be described as an aggressive dance with the first larger Tompot. A moment of stillness between the moves allowed me to capture the photo! The camera used is a Canon G9X II, with an AOI UWL-400A wet lens and a single Inon S2000 strobe."

Compact Camera (First prize sponsored by OonasDivers and Dr Paul Naylor)
First Prize - Tony Reed

Peter Rowlands: "An instant winner, as soon as it was on the computer screen really – your eye goes straight to where the photograph is telling you to go to: jellyfish, nice composition diver, lovely surface detail, and rays of light as well. It's like bang, bang, bang – there's no ambiguity about it whatsoever, it just has a very instant appeal and I think it's the sort of appeal that you could look at it again and again, and appreciate it for what it is. A strong shot."

Tony commented: "The 1st place compact category shot was a decision made at the time as my buddy was photographing a jellyfish! The sun was beaming through the surface, so I moved around for the best angle, and it turned out nice. Olympus TG4 with PT-056 housing, Weefine WFL-02 wide lens, natural light. Settings: 1/500, F2.8, ISO 100 ".

Close-up/Macro *(First prize donated by Teign Diving Centre)*
First Prize - Simon Temple

Peter Rowlands: "This is a very well balanced shot – your eye goes straight in and you've got the horns, the background lovely, out of focus, distracting but still contributing. The focus point is exactly right and it's just a classically well taken macro shot."

Simon commented: "We travelled to Firestone Bay in Plymouth but with Spring Tides forecast, we had only 45min of slack water. We entered the water just as the sun came up at 5:20am. We made our way to an area we had seen Coryphella browni in June last year. However, all we found were the orange variant of Coryphella lineata. I spent some time waiting for the slug to emerge from its hydroid food source and crawl towards the lens. I used a snooted light source to isolate the subject and minimise backscatter, while using a wider aperture (for macro) allowing me to blur the background, de-cluttering the overall image. NIKON D500: ƒ/16, 1/250, 60mm, ISO200. Single strobe with snoot."

Popular Vote *(Prize sponsored by Dr Paul Naylor)*
Jo Rabineau

Peter Rowlands: "My least favourite category! I was interested to see the winner because there were a lot of images that, for today's conditions, were surprisingly good.
I'm actually very pleased with this because it's a lovely shot that missed out in the macro category because it was submitted incorrectly as a small file size that lost impact on the screen."

Wide-angle *(First prize donated by Teign Diving Centre)*
First Prize - Simon Temple

Peter Rowlands: "Lovely shot. Very well executed, well composed, well lit, well balanced, well…everything really! It's just a shot that you look at and you know exactly what it is, where it's going. Lovely eye contact, lovely subject, and a clear winner as far as I was concerned."

Simon commented: "While diving the wreck of the Louis Shied I spotted a corkwing wrasse performing a familiar nest building behaviour inside a metal structure close to what was once the engine. The location provided me a dark backdrop for the shot with a few 'windows' into the blue beyond. I waited and watched the wrasse as it left and returned to the nesting area; over time the wrasse became less concerned with my presence, eventually allowing me to move my camera close to the nest and capture a close up! NIKON D500: ƒ/11, 1/125, 15mm, ISO250. 2 x Inon Z240 strobes."

Tim Allen
https://torbay-bsac.co.uk

Doug Anderson & BBC Wild Isles

by Peter Rowlands

© Jacca Deeble / Silverback Films / BBC

Congratulations on your involvement in the latest BBC 'Wild Isles' series. There must have been both a simultaneous feeling of the culmination of a career tinged with a fear/responsibility. When did you become involved and/or was it an idea which you have always wanted to materialise?

Hi, Pete. Yeah, definitely. I couldn't sum it up better. That's exactly the way that I felt. I was incredibly excited to begin with. An opportunity to have a shot at filming in the United Kingdom for a wildlife series, and particularly with Sir David narrating but at the same time there was that kind of nagging anxiety and feelings of responsibility for just making sure that it was as good as possible.

So many people that I know have been fighting for better marine management in the UK over the last 20 or 30 years and although these films may play a small part in their ability to be effective and get things done, they still do play a part. And I just wanted to make sure that we helped in some way to develop a greater understanding of the extraordinary pockets of life that we have in the UK and at the same time impart how important it is to protect much more of it.

It's completely breathtaking that in the last 30 or 40 years we've gone from what we had, to the destruction of it, to what we lost, to the position that we're in now, where there's the giant potential for recovery given good management decisions. I think generally I have a feeling of responsibility for making sure that these small films could be a part of that conversation.

Modern documentaries, especially underwater, are very much a logistics team game until the cameraman hits the water. Does HSE requirements play a major role and roughly how many were involved in, for example, the Orca sequences, how many trips were needed/budgeted for, what specialist equipment did you use and did you get all the footage you had hoped for?

All of the diving was done under the HSE diving at work regulations and, yeah, obviously that did add a degree of complexity to the project but, at the same time, didn't because the diving at work regulations actually aren't massively restrictive. We pretty much work under them everywhere on the planet anyway. We were very lucky to get Catherine Buckland, a Plymouth based diver/skipper and supervisor , in on the project from early on and she basically guided us through the nuances of the diving or work regulations in terms of the type of photography that we wanted to do on this series and then also oversaw the design and build of the boat that we purchased to do the to do the job.

We decided on a 7.5 metre Tornado RIB and after a few months we ended up with a really good 4 person dive team - Catherine as Skipper/Supervisor, me and Jacko Divo and then a 4th who was either from the production team or more often than not a local with knowledge.

I towed the boat with a Toyota Hilux and this meant that we could be very flexible and also when we went to locations for a long time, like the Shetland trips, we could be autonomous and not limited to a dive charter schedule. We could be out at 1am following Killer whales and it was a really pleasing part of the job watching that team come together and I was very grateful to have them along for the experience.

Underwater, do you have a go to camera, housing and lens or is each rig built for the subject material?

Most of the series was shot on RED cameras but underwater we used RED Geminis which have better low light performance.

Lenses were mostly Nikon including the Nikonos RS 13mm and the housing was the Gates Deep Weapon.

In addition we used the much smaller Z cams in Nauticam housings mainly for motion control and the small housing meant we could get low angles which is crucial for this style of work.

Talking of equipment, it is obviously more complicated and capable than ever before but are there times when it becomes slightly overwhelming and slow you down?

It's a constant process nowadays whereas 20 years ago there would have been one camera, a couple of lenses, a scuba tank and away you'd go. Nowadays there's a lot more equipment including rebreathers which add a lot more complexity in themselves. We go through a process of 'Ready Reckoner' which is basically deciding whether a sequence is worth 'taking the kitchen sink' or whether we should reduce and yet still be more effective. These are conversations and decisions we have almost daily and

we must ask "Just because you can, do you need to?". More often than not, we'd start with a lot of kit and then, as time went on, reduce. This was particularly so with Wild Isles where a paired back system was often better for the uncertain water conditions and shorter weather windows in the UK compared to the tropics and even the Poles. We always aimed to get some footage under our belts first before thinking about how to improve sequences.

The underwater programme was full of big subjects, exquisitely filmed but were there other subjects on the list which either didn't work out or got ruled out and finally:

By the end of the series we felt that there were still so many more subjects/sequences out there and I found myself amazed how rich the UK is underwater and for every sequence we got I'd say there are at least half a dozen more still to be made. There is always a frustration that we never achieve all that we want but it's

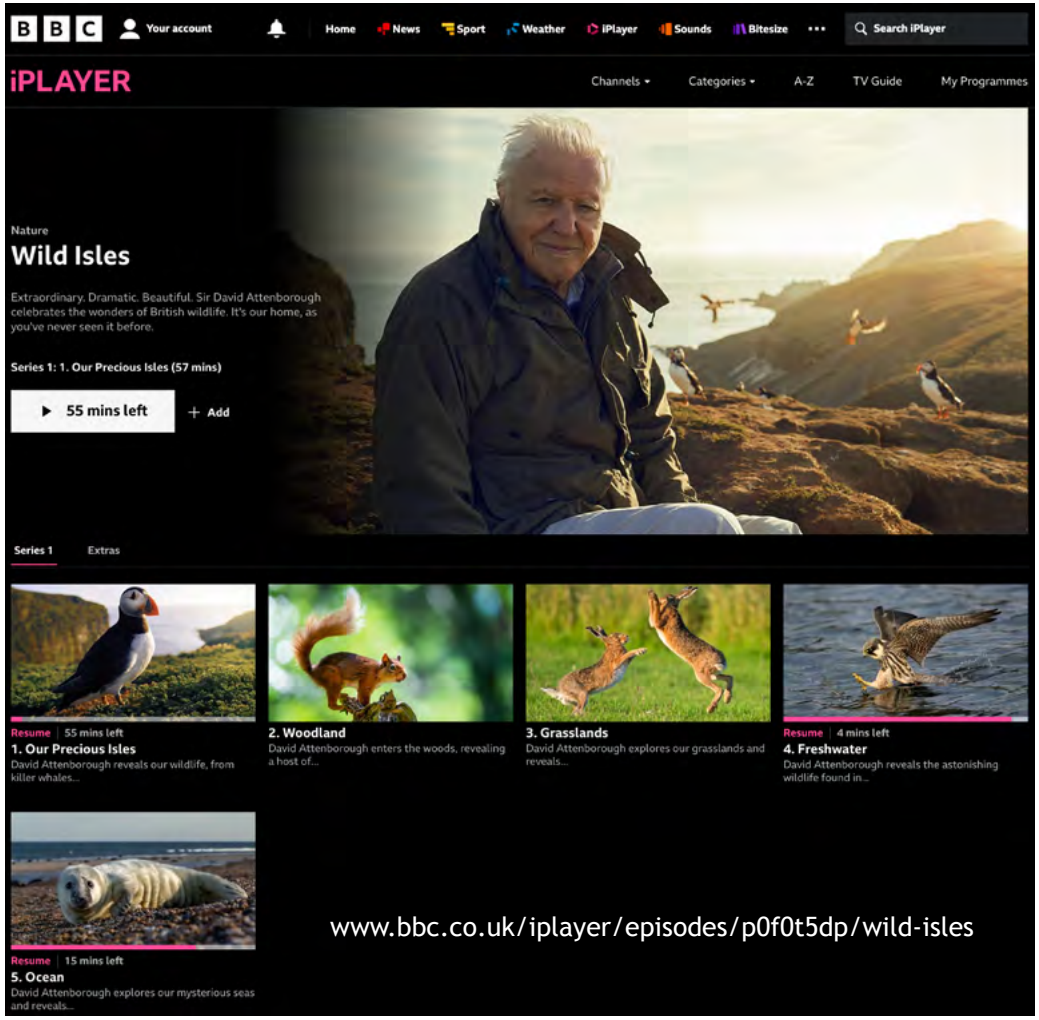
reassuring to know that they are still out there for the taking and I hope that I will be back to record them.

What has been the most gratifying feedback about the series?

The feedback overall has been very gratifying and I was very pleased how the production team, headed Alistair Fothergill and Gisle Sverdrup, edited the sequences and I was very pleased with Sir David's narration, obviously, and also George (Fenton)'s music. I sat down and watched the film with my son Charlie and just let it wash over me and it was a really good experience. It was nice to see the UK in such a light.

Even more gratifying has been the response from within my industry and especially those from the UK. It was in these waters that we started before our careers took us overseas and to receive well wishes from UK based cameramen, producers and colleagues said to me that this film meant a lot to a lot of people and, for that, I am immensely grateful and also, to be quite honest, immensely relieved now that the responsibility has lifted.

Congratulations, once again, and thanks for your time.



Peter Rowlands
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Remotely Wild Salmon

by Richard Davies

So, I'm the salmon guy who lost and found a tiny screw on BBC's latest Attenborough series, Wild Isles.

It started as a curious child with a fascination for the Atlantic salmon.

I recently achieved a lifelong dream to film on an Attenborough presented series. It was not always a realistically held ambition, given my main income is not from camera work. Indeed, if truth be told, my income from camera work pays for the toys I use and little else.

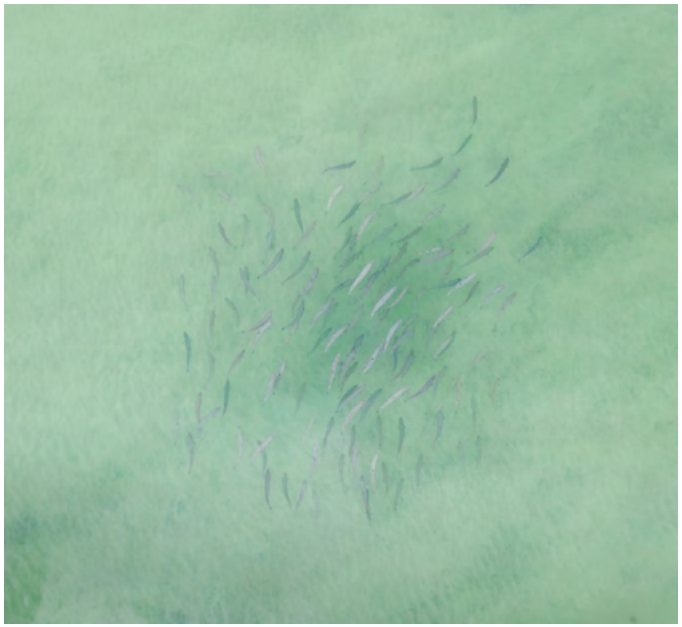
For as long as I can remember, I have been mesmerised by the underwater world. Not in the way true divers are, immersed in the sensations and freedom of movement. I am a fraud! No, I was always drawn to the ambiguous and mysterious place between two worlds. Not above or beneath but the mystery of the meeting place at the surface. The reason for this was fishing. Fly fishing for salmon and sea trout, to be precise. This mystery plane is where our lures are sometimes met by something from beneath where the fish breaks the surface momentarily to get a closer look. And then it's gone into the invisible depths once more.

As a hunter I've wondered about what we can't see and what we can't therefore understand about our "prey" and its habitat. There will be some deep, long forgotten evolutionary benefit to this train of thought. For years this invisible shield between underwater and above created a challenge and one I had attempted to overcome using traditional methods of scuba gear or snorkel and mask. This approach had inherent flaws that made it impossible to get as close and as controlled as I'd like to wild salmon and seatrout, especially in shallow muddy bed rivers. The challenges in relatively shallow freshwater are very different to deep open water. Either I'd sink and cloud the water, have

Me trying to control the ROV and the midges

The Chasing M2 ROV has 8 thrusters, is very manoeverable and has the ability to track sideways

An aerial shot of salmon swimming over the beach in Uig, Isle of Lewis



Without the ability to swim sideways, ROV shots would all end up being like this

Head on salmon shoal that disappears into the distance. An impossible shot for a human to take.

to adjust position, move and thus spook the fish, struggle to continue swimming against the current, or the space just didn't allow a human form to be there. It was never going to yield the secrets of how the fish behaved naturally. Frightened yes, but not naturally.

My first attempt at automation and using remote technology to observe below started with aerial drones. I'd long marvelled at salmon leaping in the sea and was frustrated that the glare from the surface prevented any view at all and certainly not the ability to count fish in a shoal. At the time this was useful for management purposes. When you look directly down off a bridge you can see into the depths but as soon as the angle of observation gets too great in relation to the surface, reflection obscures what lies beneath. When aerial drones were released, I was an early adopter with the sole aim of being able to look down on shoals of fish at sea in front of my house. Effectively moving the "bridge" with me to where the fish were. This proved fruitful and I then decided to gain my professional UAV (Unmanned Aerial vehicle) licence, which lead to interesting television and film work and created a learning curve for remote operation of cameras and visualising in 3D.

Aerial drones are reasonably easy to control and, given that we can see what is above the surface and can imagine quite easily what the drone sees and how to manoeuvre around the sky, is a relatively simple skill to learn. When we look at the broadcasted image on our hand-held controller, we can tell where the drone is, even without keeping eye contact all the time.

The UAV has superb GPS ability, hovers even in strong wind, thanks to this and if left without input, remains stationary and even comes home and lands by itself should the need arise.

Moreover, sensor sizes are excellent, with my current Mavic 3 pro having a micro 4/3 sensor along with two other cameras in a 60 mm squared box hanging off a fold up drone that flies 50mph. You couldn't make it up. The tech is truly outstanding.

Underwater, things aren't as straightforward and the technology isn't as advanced yet. Firstly, regardless of ROV manufacturer, there is currently no accurate positioning system on smaller, affordable ROV's.

GPS does not work and wireless image transmission and control is not possible. You have to have wires following the ROV in currents or around obstacles and without any automatic control.

When you've wanted to film fish in their environment without human interaction, these are small things to overcome. It gets even more complicated in small freshwater streams with faster flows and shallow operating depth. The wire can come into shot and creates drag and snags from time to time, both on the bank and in the water, the ROV is buffeted around and often gets stones stuck in thrusters, but again, small frustrations to overcome to get footage impossible any other way.

In higher end productions a cinematic feel, by having both moving subject and camera add to the immersive experience for the viewer and this was something I had always wanted to master. The alternative method of getting close to, in the case of my Wild Isles remit (more on that shortly), Atlantic salmon, is what I call lobster potting. This is where you place several small, weighted action cameras into a location and hope fish come into shot after you have left.

Local knowledge of where fish rest helps of course. Collecting the cameras is like lobster potting. Did I catch a shot? This can prove fruitful and using a Ken Burns effect on larger resolution images can give an illusion of movement of shot but limits output quality.

The final challenge underwater and with nearly all ROV's available is light and sensor size. Handheld dive rigs allow for superb optics and sensors to be used, picking up all the available information in the light available. It's still the go to method where depth and space and disturbance of the subject isn't an issue and I think may always be so.

ROV makers, for whatever reason, have chosen to use tiny sensors, which are awful as regards picture quality. Some have auxiliary cameras available but inexplicably, these are no better than the main enclosed camera. It is infuriating.

As a result, my rig consists of a pretty good compact ROV, the Chasing M2 (I have two back-up Mini's, in case of breakdowns on location) and a plate that holds two auxiliary cameras. The M2 has eight thrusters and pretty good stability as a result. It can also look up and down or rotate to keep the shot level even if currents mean fish are at an angle. Other small ROV's don't have the ability to track sideways against a current either and for this assignment, this was a must, to hold station sideways onto the action.

As with all equipment underwater, maintenance is key and I have no end of issues with stuck thruster motors. No matter how you clean them, corrosion gets in. I've also had the odd leak but by and large Chasing have been great at sending chips or parts to repair damaged components. I wouldn't think everyone would want to strip down and solder but it's part of what it takes to keep the equipment going.

The auxiliary cameras I have reluctantly fallen on using are the Insta360 ONE R 1-inch editions, with one-inch sensors onto the top. Not huge as regards sensor size but superior to the onboard camera and small enough not to require a larger ROV. They are modular so are prone to leaking and I went through 4 of them

I've become intimate with the M2!

during the shoot for Wild Isles alone. It's a technical juggling show and I cannot find any way of improving it at present.

The downside of the system is image control. You have none once the record button is pressed on land and the ROV sets sail. As a result, a lot of time learning light conditions and camera settings for a location has to happen before being confident enough to try and get the professional shot. I tend to hedge by having the ISO slightly different for each auxiliary camera, in effect, bracketing.

I should point out that while this is about photography, I rarely

Myself, Steven, Chris and Lindsay

take photographs. Salmon, like most fish, are so elegant in movement that photographs don't always do them justice. I also sell most footage or get commissioned for video work and tend to give away my photographs to organisations attempting to protect the Salmon's habitat. The species has become my life passion and is under threat thanks in a large part to our awful treatment of our waterways.

I've been filming salmon for twenty-five years and underwater for nearly as long. Before Silverback Productions got in touch, I'd been experimenting with ROV's for several years and had supplied footage to pretty much any natural history series involving Atlantic salmon. None of us remember how we connected, but I was excited to be involved in showing the salmon to the masses and, let's face it, to have Sir David describe your footage.

We were a small "in the field"

You wouldn't expect to see much, but you can below the turbulence

Lindsay McCrae balancing the slow-mo camera rig above the falls

Salmon gathering beneath the falls before their brave leaps

team comprising Chris Howard, producer, Steven McGee-Callender, camera operator and drone pilot, Lindsay McCrae, BAFTA award winning camera operator, Raymond Besant, camera operator, and myself, camera, drone and underwater camera.

Apart from our own team, to meet Doug Anderson at Loch Eriboll, while he was on location was a privilege and to work alongside the team was a great experience.

Lindsay, I found out, is a keen fly fisher like myself, so we had plenty to talk about during the waiting periods. Chris is remarkably talented, and Stephen braved midges like I have never known anyone do before and achieved a dream drone shot too. Raymond was so patient and focussed and supplied technically stunning footage and braved terrible conditions in the snow while after otters at –15C. I, on the other hand, needed plenty of light for underwater, so focussed on nice days at sensible times of day and enjoyed a glass of rosé in the evening, just as Chris and Steven would be heading out to try and get otters in the gloaming and midges. I did say I was a fraud!

As regards what we wanted to achieve, I think Sir David Attenborough put it perfectly, "No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced". So the approach we took was to try and be immersed with the salmon, so people could connect, almost emotionally in their struggles, and we hope care more about them. This was my focus and am proud to say I put in at least double the hours I was paid for to do all I could to ensure the salmon got centre stage. Ultimately, in the final edit, it did. Salmon also made the "making of" section, which was a personal goal and always my favourite part of the big series when viewing. Poor Chris Howard, producer of two episodes including freshwater, had constant earbashings about why the salmon should be centre stage and be the focal point of freshwater. He said he'd do his best and delivered. I couldn't be happier.

Besides the normal shots of salmon swimming in a river or ascending a waterfall, we wanted to do things never seen before and this is where I came in. Newness is something all big budget BBC Attenborough series aim to achieve. I promised Chris I could get a few special shots and, over several years, had found ideal locations to get them, even if I had not yet managed them in my own time. This was mainly because technology was catching up with my ideas, one of which made the "making of" and that was filming salmon leaping a fall from below.

With a team and time paid to focus on it I knew it could be done. The white water would put most camera operators off but knowing that salmon need solid water, rather than aerated and less dense water to grip their tail against, I had figured there

Natural migration. When water clarity is good, the fish stand out

Swimming along with a shoal of salmon of the Caithness coast

To add to the thrill of capturing something I had dreamt of for years, my friends, Tony Inglefinch and Professor Eric Verspoor, a geneticist who has spent 30 years studying salmon, were with me for the day helping manage the ROV tether cable.

must be solid water below the white froth for high leaps and so it proved to be. The results you can all see for yourselves on the Freshwater episode, dark and a little grainy but something very different and intimate.

For the first year of the filming in the three year production, I tagged along (unpaid) on some shoots, helped Chris and Raymond understand the locations and did some recceing of my own and sent clips back to Chris to illustrate what we could get.

During this time I was improving the set up and investing in what was needed and seemed to be breaking cameras on a weekly basis. It was frustrating but you cannot ever give in. It also isn't that easy finding an abundance of salmon, which makes filming that much easier. They are becoming rarer, so my years of filming experience and past guiding experience helped find the right locations at the right times.

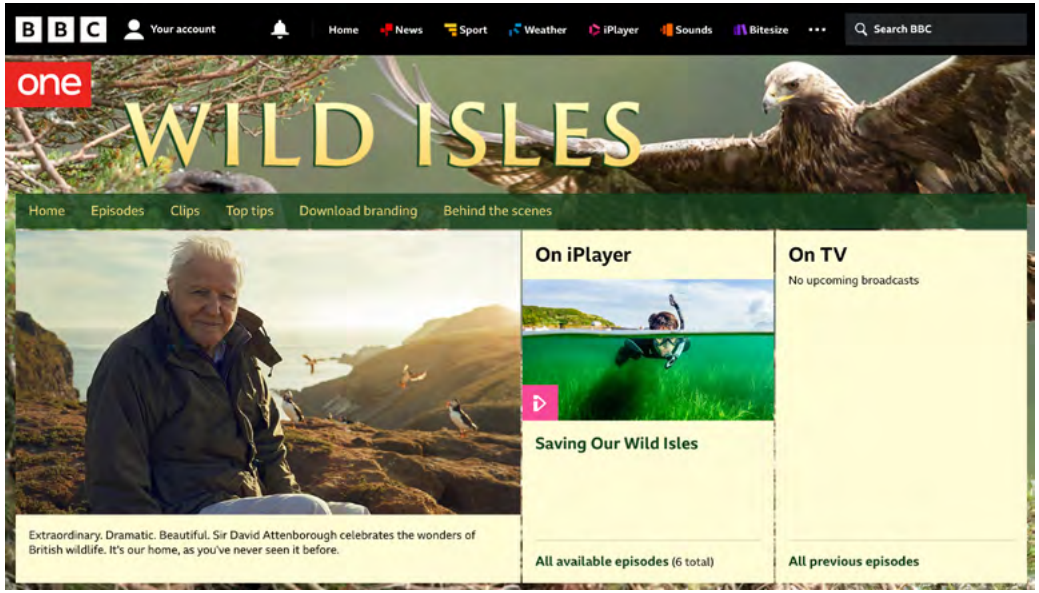
When it came to the actual shoots, we still had whole weeks of rehearsals on location prior to when the fish would be there, trying out different physical rigs and techniques we thought could work to achieve the angles we wanted. Often, events in nature only last a short time so you can't be finding out shots don't work while the action is happening. There really is an enormous amount of preparation into what might look like luck or simple techniques, especially underwater or in difficult locations. I can honestly say, we gave it everything we could and worked tirelessly.

The focus in the "making of" was on the falls leaping salmon, partly because this is the sexy bit an average viewer enjoys and in fairness, Lindsay's camerawork was exceptional and seeing salmon rocket into the unknown from below was also pretty cool.

My own personal highlight was capturing shoals of salmon swimming at sea. This was far more challenging on many levels. Firstly, sea conditions have to be quite calm for some time to clear the water, it needs to have been dry for a while so a head of fish are in the sea waiting. You then need to find them and then get a remote vehicle near them while they continually swim around. It was also important not to have the halocline of fresh water on salt. It had to be sea water.

Because of weather conditions and run timings, it is impossible to get shots like we achieved in three years out of four. It took a month of driving around, watching and waiting and this after twenty years of thinking about it.

Then it all clicked and, in a location, I only visited to get a lobster roll from -Tasty Toes Sea Food Shack (in Dunbeath – and they are exceptional lobster rolls)! I noticed a fish move in the harbour and



Salmon infected by a newly identified strain of Saprolegnia

spent some time observing and saw shoals off the coast and worked out their patterns and how and at what stage of tide to capture them on film. It still took four days before they behaved in a way that was photogenic for long enough.

The Silverback marine team were fascinated to learn how I managed it, having failed using traditional dive methods themselves. "You just can't get near the fish without spooking them" they'd said. That's where the little yellow submarine came into its own.

Despite the thrusters, to a fish's eye, there are no moving parts because they are enclosed and spinning too quickly to see. It is just a bit of driftwood that, if moved very carefully and slowly, can drift into their world and enable footage of fish behaving perfectly naturally and undisturbed. It sounds easy but it isn't quite as straightforward as that, but you get the idea.

For a specialist like me, there are not many opportunities to live out your dream assignment. I got lucky and conditions were on our side too. The end results were what we hoped for and that's good enough for me. I wonder if I will ever again have such a challenging shoot, over a whole migration season? I suspect not but I do have a few shots never before done I'd like to achieve.

It would be wrong of me not to include a word of caution. With a genuine biosecurity situation happening in UK freshwater right now, it's important to always clean all gear thoroughly with a disinfectant, like Virkon S or aquatic, after every shoot or before any change of location.

There's a newly discovered virulent strain of Saprolegnia, which may have been introduced around 2016. It is virtually wiping out salmon populations in some smaller rivers. It appears to be spreading, either by wild animals, anglers, or other water users like us. I would hate to ever be accused of being a spreader of something costing vital rural jobs and ecosystems.

So far it has not impacted too many rivers but let's keep it that way. Saprolegnia strains cannot live in saltwater, so have no fear there.

Also, bear in mind that you must seek permission from land / river owners before diving or swimming ROV'S in rivers where anglers have paid for fishing. The freshwater salmon shoots for Wild Isles were planned and arranged carefully on one estate where there were no anglers or other water users we would disturb.

Richard Davies
www.outerhebridesfisheriestrust.org.uk

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Underwater Fluorescence Photography

(Reef Raves for Masochists)

by Dr. Simon J Pierce

Bored of simply trying to take good photos, with complicated equipment, while lying suspended in thick liquid, within an unbreathable, alien environment? Don't worry, I have a solution. We'll do all of the above… at night. Also, let's add a thick mask filter so you can't see properly.

Welcome, gentle reader, to underwater fluorescence photography.

That said, it's really fun – and kinda sciencey – so it's no surprise that I'm mildly addicted.

I've already written up an article about the biology of underwater fluorescence here on the site, because that's how we roll here in geektown. In short, I tried an underwater fluorescence dive for the first time at Nosy Sakatia in Madagascar back in 2016. Immediately following the descent I saw a neon orange moray eel, then corals started lighting up everywhere. There was more fluoro than an '80s aerobics class. I came up feeling like I was drunk. It was wonderful.

I immediately wanted to throw my wallet at the computer screen and buy the gear to photograph it. Thankfully, Jaques Vieira from Sakatia was a fantastic advisor and – after doing all the hard (and expensive) research work himself – he pointed me directly to the supplier of his own favorite gear, Lynn Miner from Fire Dive Gear.

What gear do you need to photograph fluorescence?

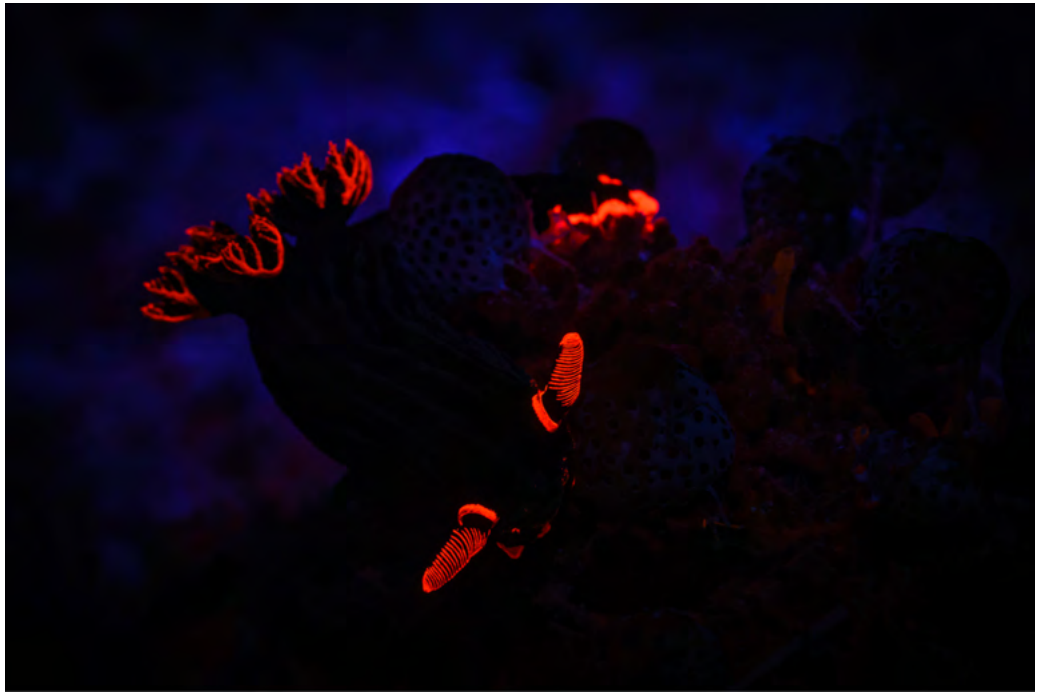
Filters. All the filters.

First, you'll need a blue light source, preferably one that can be easily mounted to your housing or strobe arm, to "activate" fluorescence. Fluorescence is reflected light, where an animal absorbs one color of light (in this case, blue) and re-emits it at a different wavelength, often producing shades of neon green. It's a totally different biological process to

Top: Fluorescing moray eel at Nosy Sakatia, Madagascar.

Right: Fluorescent mushroom coral in Raja Ampat, Indonesia

My underwater fluorescence photography setup



Nembrotha sp. nudibranch in Raja Ampat

bioluminescence, which is produced internally in an organism through chemical means.

Blue light works better as a light source than UV light, although people often refer to this as "UV diving" regardless.

Next, you'll need a yellow "barrier" mask filter to remove this blue light so you can clearly see the re-emitted fluorescent light. I gave Lynn my mask model – a Cressi Big Eyes Evolution – and he cut out the shape needed. The mask filter comes with an elasticated strip so you can wear it normally over your regular mask, and there's a neoprene strap so they can all sit comfortably on your head. This neoprene protector is also fluorescent, so if you're fluoro diving with a buddy you can see each other better.

Alright, now you'll be able to find fluorescent animals. The next step is to photograph them. For that, you'll need a dichroic "excitation" filter that fits over your regular strobe (a Sea & Sea YS-D2J in my case), and a yellow barrier filter for your port to cut out most of the blue light.

For macro photography (all I've attempted so far), I've been using a single strobe placed directly over the lens to maximize light output. Alex Mustard, in his (amazing) book, Underwater Photography Masterclass, advises "I always shoot fluorescence with strobes on full power, and will often add a third strobe to my rig, to increase the total light output." I've only got the one strobe filter at this stage, so I leave it on full power and – when in the water – have it set directly above the port. You can see the 67 mm yellow "barrier" filter on my Nauticam macro port for the Sony 90 mm lens above.

The 90 mm lens can be a bit too much reach for fluoro – something like a 50-60 mm, or thereabouts, kinda feels like it would be better as it would allow me to get closer to larger subjects. I haven't tried that yet though. I'd really like to try wide-angle fluoro, using yellow filter paper in the rear filter holder on my Canon 8-15 mm lens, but I'm waiting to get a second strobe filter so I can get more light on the subject.

When I returned to Madagascar with all this gear, Jacques noticed that my strobe had some white light leakage out of the sides when it fired. That white light can spoil the photo, so I've cut apart a neoprene bootie and use the heel as a black sleeve to cover the front half of the strobe (as seen above).

On the other strobe arm I've got my blue light. Lynn included an excitation filter on that, too, but unfortunately it shattered in my checked bag due to a lack of care on my part. It does work okay without it. I keep that on my regular macro arm setup to keep the kit near-neutrally buoyant underwater, but also so that I can move the blue light back if it's affecting the animal's behavior. Lizardfish and goatfish, among others, show no obvious reaction to the blue light. Small moray eels, which fluoresce like crazy and look totally amazing, hate it. It's much better to be able to move it right back so it doesn't annoy them, but so that you can still see the subject.

I keep my dive computer (a Shearwater Perdix AI) on my strobe arm so that I can monitor dive time and air easily. It's easy to read the display, but it's not annoying. In contrast, both the bright green "ready" light on the strobe and the green "vacuum seal" light on the housing are rather distracting. I use black electrical tape to cover them while I'm underwater.

I've obviously got a completely ridiculous high-end mirrorless setup (Sony A7rIII camera in a Nauticam NA-A7RIII housing) that is worth substantially more than my car. Some of my first photos were taken with a slightly less expensive, but still fairly ridiculous Olympus OM-D E-M1 setup. Serious underwater photography is basically (and somewhat literally) throwing your money into the ocean. Fortunately, there are some far cheaper options available for getting into underwater fluorescence photography.

The Olympus "Tough" series, currently the TG-6, is the go-to first underwater camera for many photographers. There's an Ikelite kit for the camera that Underwater Photography Guide recently called "the easiest underwater photography fluorescence kit."

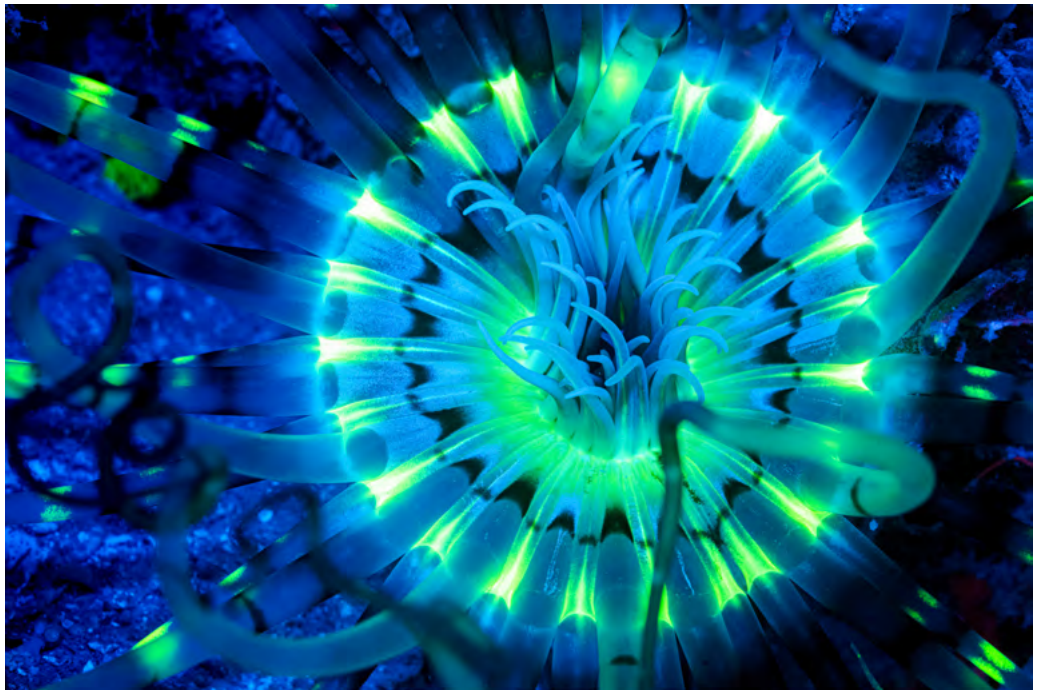
The other go-to starter option is, of course, the GoPro. Fluorescence filters are also available for those too (at Backscatter). There are some setup tips for filming fluorescence with a GoPro here.

Camera Settings

I'm still getting to grips with what settings to use.

My starting setting right now is 1/80 sec, f/14, 1600 ISO. I've tried opening up the aperture a bit, but there's minimal depth of field on the Sony 90 mm lens on full-frame at the best of times. The strobe is set to fire at full power.

Normally I use low ISOs for macro photography – you can check out my normal settings here – but I've been using far higher ISOs for fluorescence at night.



Sea anemone fluorescence under blue light at Nosy Sakatia, Madagascar

I've switched to using full manual focus with the Sony 90 mm as I find it difficult (and annoying) to autofocus consistently with that lens on the Sony A7rIII camera. I suspect that the low light that is integral to fluoro photography is going to challenge most autofocus systems, to be fair. Anyway, I've got the Nauticam manual focus gear, and the A7rIII has excellent manual focus aids. I use red peaking set to High, so I can see what's in focus, and when I start moving my focus plane a handy line appears on the LCD to show me which direction I'm moving (in or out), which I still find useful at this point.

One additional frustration is that the low gearing on the focus knob / focus gear means the focus plane changes reeeeeally slowly, but it looks like Nauticam has fixed this on the newer housing for the Sony A7rIV.

Practical tips

Don't try fluoro diving unless you've got good buoyancy. You can still see what's around you, but everything that doesn't fluoresce – including delicate reef structures – will just be a dark blue.

Fluoro diving over a full coral reef looks epically amazing – it's like watching the night scene in Avatar – but for photography, it's difficult to find the little critters I want to photograph with the whole scene glowing brightly. It's actually easier to swim over to the sand, on the edge of the reef, and search that area. Some fluorescence, like corals and anemones, can be gloriously obvious. Other critters, such as crabs and mantis shrimps in burrows, can be rather subtle. Don't move too fast, and scan the substrate.

Scientists are still identifying which animals do and don't fluoresce, and why, and it's an interesting exercise for a noob like me. Cryptic fish, like lizardfish and small morays, often fluoresce really well. Big morays don't, and I haven't seen any pelagic fish fluoresce yet (that would be cool). I was hoping that the "walking sharks" (Hemiscyllium spp.) in Raja Ampat would fluoresce, but no luck. Sad face. That's a good thing to be aware of – a lot of really neat stuff doesn't fluoresce, so if you're at an awesome critter destination like Tulamben it's good to do at least a few "white light" night dives too!

I'll keep updating this page as I learn more. Hope you find it useful!

Useful Pages, Articles & Resources:

Jacques Vieira's Facebook Page: Fluorescence Diving Madagascar Nosy Be

Fire Dive Gear (where I've bought my fluorescence photography equipment)

Underwater Photography Masterclass book by Alex Mustard – advice on fluorescence photography, and everything else.

Sport Diver: Underwater Photography Tips – Fluorescence

Simon Pierce
www.naturetripper.com

Dr. Simon J Pierce is a co-founder of the Marine Megafauna Foundation, where he leads the global whale shark research program.
https://marinemegafauna.org

My Shot 1

by Attila Kaszo

My book book, “Beneath The Surface”, came about after much contemplation and discussions with friends and family.

People who knew of my work started asking where they could see a body of work rather than seeing a few pictures in magazines and books. That was really the turning point for me to consider putting together a book comprised of over 50 years underwater photographic experience.

I had known Ron and Valerie Taylor for over 30 years and they had been part of my inspiration to begin underwater photography and marine conservation. So it was an easy choice to ask Valerie if she would write a forward for my book. She is a very honest and down to earth person who doesn’t pander to anyones ego nor will she do something she doesn’t support or believe in. So it came as a great honour that she wrote some very beautiful and touching words in the forward.

Valerie is now 88 years young, very sharp minded and still very much to the point. Small talk is not in her vocabulary, so to get a photo of her smiling was very special. We went to her residence had a cup of tea and reminisced about times gone by. It was then that I really appreciated how different it must have been for her and Ron in 1956 diving with extremely basic equipment, most of it home made and seeing creatures most people had never encountered before. I found the stories absolutely absorbing and fascinating. Just look at how far we have come!

To wrap up our meeting with Valerie, I gave her a copy of Beneath The Surface which to my surprise she didn’t open. I asked her if she was going to look at it, …..”of course” she replied, “after you have gone I’m going to put my feet up, have a cup of tea and absorb the beautiful pictures”.

The second forward was from Peter Rowlands who I also happen to admire and respect for presenting a top shelf on line publication and keeping it operational for so long. His many years of viewing and judging underwater pictures made him a perfect choice to write a forward, knowing it would be unbiased and well represented. It was, and I was delighted with what Peter has written.

Attila Kaszo
www.ambvision.com

https://books2read.com/AttilaKaszo

Do you have a favourite shot or an image/s
which made a dive special.
E mail yours with some text to
peter@uwpmag.com
and yours could be the next My Shot/s

My Shot 2

by Richard Byrom

Since acquiring a rebreather 3 years ago I now spend most weekends diving in the English Channel. Predominantly I dive out of Eastbourne and Brighton on wrecks in the 40m+ range most of which have been downed in WW1 and 2. Although I'm more interested in the wrecks, I've become very well acquainted with the marine life that inhabit these artificial reefs and normally take my GoPro along to capture the experience.

I mostly encounter lobster, spider crabs, edible crab and conger eels. Fish species are mainly Cod or Pollock. I use my GoPro footage as a dive log and try to tell a story as well as capture something that is unique.

On the day I captured this footage I was diving a British cargo Ship that was torpedoed during WW1 located about 5 miles off the coast of Beachy Head. I'd taken a scooter along so after descending to the stern of the wreck and admiring the propellor I swung round to the starboard side of the wreck at which point I noticed some Conger Eels under the hull. Normally there might be one or two in the same spot, but I couldn't believe my luck when I counted fourteen lined up next to each other as if they were a family.

Being under the hull of a wreck at 43m required a bit of additional lighting to get an effective shot and this was achieved by using the wide beam of my torch. I dropped carefully to the ground and got as close as a could without scaring them off and then captured the moment.

Given that this happened at the beginning of the dive I almost couldn't wait to get out of the water and see whether I had some decent imagery. However I proceeded to the bow then up to the deck and spent about 70 minutes on the bottom before heading up to complete about 50 minutes of deco.

Richard Byrom
Instagram

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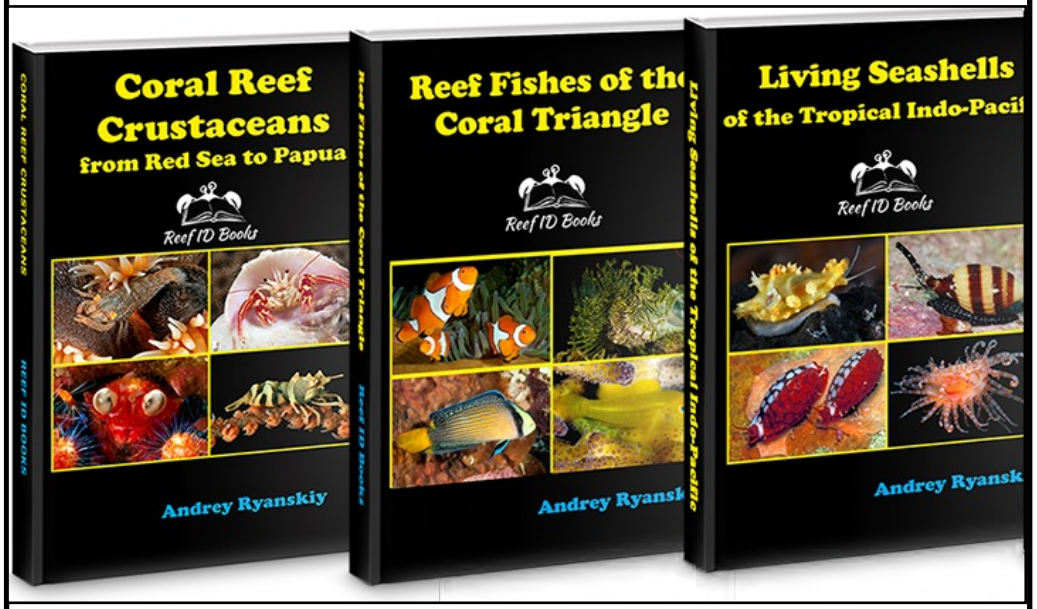

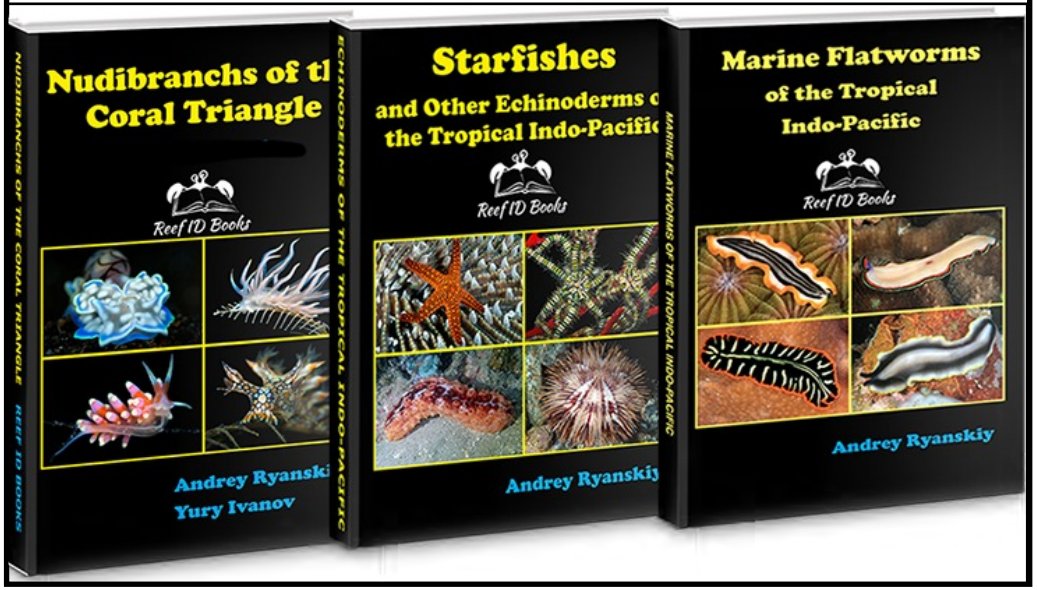

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Marshall's Mysteries 10

Do you know what these animals are, or what they are doing? Have a guess – answers on page 68

A

© Colin Marshall / Adea

Lembeh, Sulawesi, Indonesia — image about 5 cm across

B

© Colin Marshall / FLPA / Minden

Lembeh, Sulawesi, Indonesia — image about 6 cm across

C

© Colin Marshall / Adea

Lembeh, Sulawesi, Indonesia — image about 1 cm across

D

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Lembeh, Sulawesi, Indonesia — image about 1 cm across

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SEA & SEA MM2 U/W CAMERA WITH ACCESSORIES: - Yellow SUB 50 TTL strobe / arm extension - SEA & SEA 16mm Wide angle lens MM-2 - SEA & SEA Macro lens ML-2/3T plus attachments - Removable view finder - **... More >**

FOR SALE – Nikon D500 + Hugyfot D500 setup
This one year old set of equipment is in excellent working condition and will serve great to a new owner. The reason for sale is a switch to a new equipment. Nikon D500 (19k clicks). Sigma 10mm F2.8 Fish Eye. 128Gb XQD Lexar **... More >**

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Marshall's Mysteries 10 - Answers

A

Coconut Octopus (Amphioctopus marginatus) eggs. The octopus has laid its eggs in a glass jar, which was partially buried in the black sand.

The female octopus can lay up to 100,000 eggs, protecting them until they hatch.

This glass jar would provide the octopus with both an excellent home to protect her brood as well as a transparent lookout base to watch out for prey.

B

Marbled Stargazer (Uranoscopus bicinctus) exposing its internal worm-like respiratory organs as it forcibly buries itself into the soft sand by taking large gulps of water.

The fish uses the worm-like tentacle as a lure once it is buried fully in the sand, with only the eyes and mouth just barely above the surface, as shown in the classic portrait of this ambush predator below.

C

Female parasitic Rough Copepod (Cardiodectes asper) with pair of spiral egg sacs.

Full size image below, showing the parasite on the Large Whipgoby (Bryaninops amplus) host, in turn living symbiotically on a Whip Coral.

The relative size of the copepod compared to the host suggests the parasite could be detrimental to the goby, even if just exposing it to infection.

The goby is unlikely to leave the safety of the whip coral to find a cleaning station with cleaner shrimp or wrasse, ie this will likely be a long-term relationship.

D

Bunch of possibilities – Worm? Anemone? Part of the coral?

It's actually a Coral-dwelling Barnacle (Nobia sp), part of the Pyrgomatidae Family. It is a Crustacean, closely related to shrimps and crabs (not snails or molluscs).

The Barnacle has wedged itself into this coral, becoming sessile (non-mobile). This is a segue to the image shown in MM #3 in UWP 126 (May / June 2022), which is likely the exuvia from a barnacle moult (previously thought it was a free-swimming barnacle larva).

More detail on this Copepod and Barnacle can be found on pages 142 and 146 respectively in "Coral Reef Crustaceans from Red Sea to Papua" by Andrey Ryanskiy.

If you think any of the identifications or information above 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 may be included in future Underwater Photography issues.

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

If you have an idea for an article,
contact me first before putting pen to paper.
E mail peter@uwpmag.com

How to submit articles

To keep UwP simple and financially viable, we can only accept submissions by e mail and they need to be done in the following way:

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

Size - Maximum length 20cm i.e. horizontal pictures would be 20 cm wide and verticals would be 20cm high.

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 1

By Nigel Marsh

The Giant Guitarfish (Glaucostegus typus) is found in the tropical waters of northern Australia, but is a species that is rarely seen. One place they are found is Heron Island, at the southern end of the Great Barrier Reef. Groups of these elusive rays, which grow to 2.7m long, are seen on the reef flats at Heron Island and also in the man-made harbour.

I have seen several Giant Guitarfish on my trips to Heron Island, but have never managed to photograph one. So on my most recent trip I was determined to finally get a photo. I snorkelled the harbour, but couldn't find one. I also surveyed the reef flats without success. My final option was a shallow bay at the far end of the island on the rising tide, as many rays gather at this site. The only problem was the high tide was in the middle of the day, and the bay is only 1m deep!

I slipped into the water and it didn't take long to find a large Giant Guitarfish resting on the sand. The ray seemed relaxed to have me swim around it, so finally I could get some images. Unfortunately, the conditions were terrible for photography! Bright sunshine, a white sandy bottom, a light-coloured subject and the visibility was only 3m.

I shoot manual, so had a guess at the best settings, so tried 1/200, f16 and ISO 200. I could barely see anything looking through the viewfinder, it was simply too bright. I shot a few images and then found reviewing the images next to impossible. They looked over-exposed, but to do a proper review I got out of the water and under the nearby trees, only to find the images were completely over-exposed.

What to do? I then thought it best to abandon the manual settings and let the camera do the work. So I set the camera to Aperture, the f-stop to f20 and let the camera set the shutter speed. As I find the camera tends to over-expose, I also changed the exposure to -2. Finally, I wanted a little fill flash, so set the strobe to half power.

Back in the water I quickly found the Giant Guitarfish and shot some more images. Out of the water again I reviewed the images and found I had hit the jackpot, the exposure was surprisingly perfect.

I then enjoyed another hour in the water photographing several Giant Guitarfish, along with dozens of Broad Cowtail Stingrays and Pink Whiprays. I also managed to find a rare Porcupine Ray and had a close encounter with a large Sicklefin Lemon Shark.

I exited the water happy to finally have nailed some images of the elusive Giant Guitarfish, with this image being my favourite.

Nikon D7200, Ikelite housing, Tokina 10-17mm lens at 10mm, 1/400, f20, ISO 200, single Inon Z240 strobe.

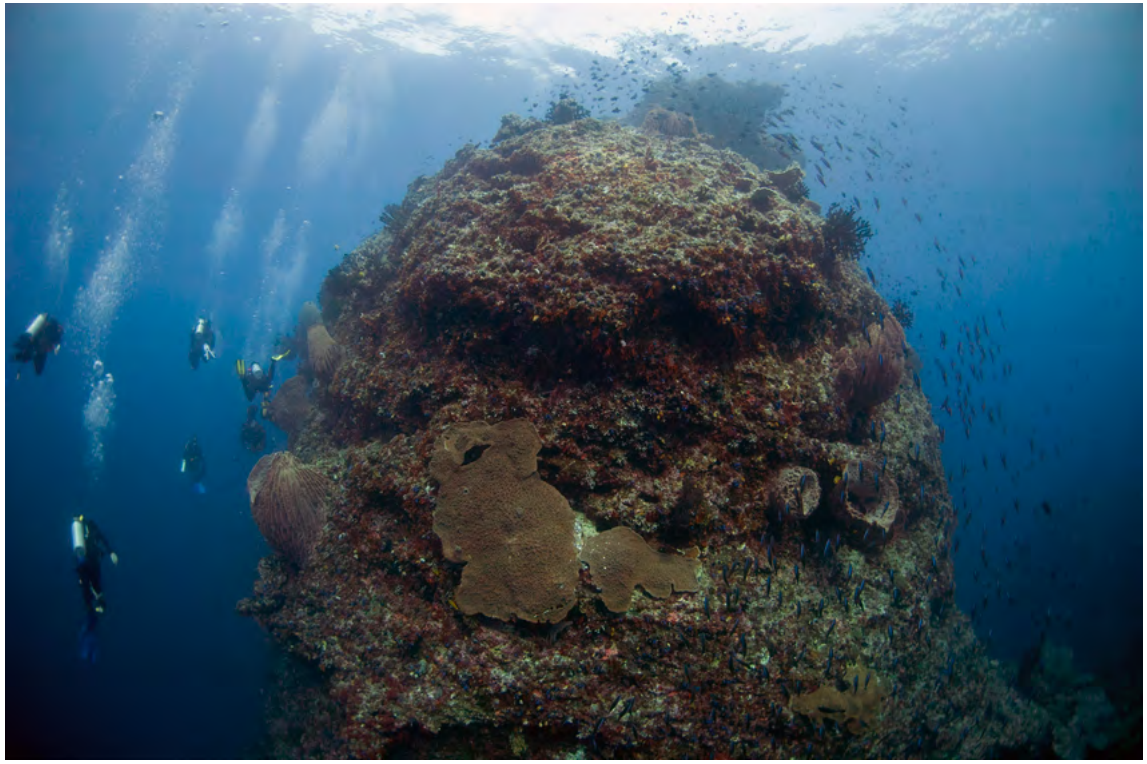
Nigel Marsh
www.nigelmarshphotography.com

Do you have a shot which has a story within a story? If so e mail it with up to 500 words of text and yours could be the next Parting Shot.

peter@uwpmag.com

Parting Shot 2

By Colin Marshall



Nikon D70 camera, Nikkor 10.5 mm lens, Subal Housing. f/2.8@1/80. ISO 320.

Probably my favourite dive destination in Indonesia is Banda Neira, south-east of Ambon. Amazing combination of blue water high visibility dives, lava flows with recently established new corals, hammerheads, large caves and swim-throughs.

Even the easy-to-dive site in front of the Maulana Hotel (famously visited by Mick Jagger and Lady Diana Spencer) is a unique muck dive as it has excellent macro, mating Mandarinfish, and an added bonus of possibly finding treasures (at least crockery) from the Dutch East India Company period buried in the sand.

This image from the Batu Kapal site in Banda Neira (taken in 2007) shows the fish all huddled together on the opposite side of the pinnacle to the oncoming diver onslaught. This demonstrates all too well how wildlife sensibly avoids us whenever possible. Fish seem to realize intuitively that clumsy underwater primates are unnatural and best avoided, especially when armed with noisy bubble-making gear and blinding strobes.

This experience inspired me to pursue "iconoclastic diving" – go where others are not and look in the opposite direction to where others are looking! This philosophy has led to many memorable underwater experiences, and even more lectures from my long-suffering and often solitary dive buddy (aka my wife)…

Similarly, I recommend avoiding "must-see" sites when they are busy. Many sites are not really that different to other nearby "unknown" sites. The famous sites are the equivalent of queuing to see the highly over-rated Mona Lisa, which is 5 meters behind a cordon, in a room tightly packed with hordes of selfie-taking tourists, and guards pushing the masses through as quickly as possible.

I have often been on a famous site and another dive boat has ignored protocols and deposited a huge number of (often inept) divers onto the site, diminishing the experience for those already in the water. If possible, I will swim away from the site (after telling the guide!), and go to a nearby reef to get away from the invaders. If we were due to dive a high-profile site which had a risk of another boat dropping in divers, I would prefer to be given the option to dive on a nearby "unknown" reef, but this is rarely offered as most clients (not unreasonably) want to see the promised famous sites, like tourists on a tour bus expecting to see the Mona Lisa…

Colin Marshall
colintrmarshall@yahoo.com

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