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A web magazine

UwP139 Jul/Aug 2024

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Underwater Photography 2001 - 2024

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Competitions

Another issue, another batch of competition entry dates, salivating prizes and stunning winning images.

I think it's fair to say that there are too many competitions in our world but, then again, it's supply and demand.

In the film era the quality of your images was mostly reflected by the amount of money people/companies were prepared to pay to use them. This, in a round about way, was a reflection of how good they were and, if you were a recipient, it was a double whammy. Lucre and likes.

Enter the digital era and the value of images has been decimated substantially by the sheer amount of them available, the ease of distribution and the high quality that modern cameras can produce in even the most modest of hands and let's not even start to think about AI.

The result was a shift in emphasis towards competitions where the lucre was replaced by prizes/cudos and the likes became position placings.

I think it's also fair to say that a significant percentage of top quality camera and housings system purchases in the non professional world are motivated by the desire to succeed in competitions and that's fine. Each to their own. It's certainly good for the manufacturer's business.

Editorial

The problem I have with all of this is that it results in a situation where underwater photographers are relying on other people i.e. judges (my goodself included) to let them know what level we think they are at and that is why Sandra Stalker's 'My Journey' article is so refreshing and should help keep things in perspective.

In it she credits competitions as the catalyst to try and take her images to a new level of creativity but in the process, and to use her own words:

"Most importantly though I do what I do for me and because I love it, all art and photography is incredibly subjective, what one person loves another will hate so I feel its really important to have masses of fun with what I do and primarily do it for me."

I think that is a very healthy approach to take; to avoid competitions distorting a sense of one's own images and influences why you take underwater images in the first place.

Competitions serve many purposes, absolutely no doubt, but they are not the be all and end all - win or lose.

RIP Martin Edge

I am sure you have already heard the sad news of Martin's passing and have read the many tributes paid to him from a wide spectrum of the international underwater photography community.

It made my heart swell to hear that I had been an influence on his early image making and he developed into an accomplished underwater photographer and, much more so, a mentor, yet he never left his grounding.

His passing marks the beginning of the end of one of the most exciting periods in underwater photography when truly original pioneers inspired the next generation in the film era who took the baton into the digital dawn and embraced all of its capabilities and potential. That same baton is now with a new generation who are already taking images to new and even more inspirational heights.

Through his books, workshops, one-to-one teachings and talks, Martin must have brought on more underwater photographers than almost anyone. Martin was an excellent image-maker in his own right; he was also able to impart,

enthusiasm and empower old and young alike.

He had the ability to debunk the technicalities which so many newcomers were daunted by and build their confidence to think more about their images rather than worry too much about the science. It was for this reason that he was so inspirational to so many and many of those have gone on to great success in underwater photography competitions.

It was as UPY judges that Alex Mustard had the idea to put Martin and I together in one room for a couple of intense but immensely enjoyable days judging the images for the Underwater Photographer of the Year Competition each year.

Here we had the chance to talk about our favourite subject – other people's underwater images – because, as men of a certain age and smelted in the film era, we had nothing to prove and everything to enjoy.

They were some of my most enjoyable days because of him.

My condolences to his wife Sylvia and family; he will be greatly missed in the underwater world but his legacy will last and help fill the void.

Peter Rowlands
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Remembering Martin Edge

by Alex Mustard

I am sure that most of you have heard by now the sad news that Martin Edge has died. He will be sorely missed by our community. Few underwater photographers have felt as well-known to so many as Martin because even those who never met him, felt that they had through his disarmingly personal teaching from the pages of his books. Ah, the book, it is fair to say that most people had at least one edition of his celebrated book, *The Underwater Photographer*, on their shelves during the book's 30+ year and 5 edition existence. It must surely make Martin one of the best-known British divers ever, certainly from an international perspective.

What set Martin apart was that he was one of the first to really teach that there was more to underwater photography than equipment and settings. As Jim Church commented he was the leader of a new generation of underwater photography writers. Martin's revelation came from acknowledging he was using the same settings, the same gear and shooting the same subjects as the best. But rather than having an over-inflated opinion of his own pictures he was able to honestly appraise his work as slightly inferior to the top dogs. And he set out to work out why.

Martin was underwater photography mad, and a natural born coach. He loved sharing his knowledge on any subject and he loved helping people. His day job was Police detective, and that gave him the enquiring mind and ability to dig through people's words and understand their real motivations... And in 1983 all this arrived at BSoUP

– the British Society of Underwater Photographer – which was both a hothouse of international UW photo talent, but also had a tradition of openness and sharing of information.

“All the famous names were in attendance,” said Martin recalling that first meeting. “I recognised their faces from their photographic achievements in the dive magazines. [Over the years] the BSoUP ‘gods’ were so very generous with their information, but it was up to us to ask the right questions. We so admired the work of Peter Rowlands, Peter Scoones, Warren Williams and Mike Valentine that any opportunity to ask these guys questions was a bonus. I began to realize how little I really knew, but what did sink in was the fact that photography underwater was less to do with f-sops and shutter speeds but more about light and opportunities. I waited in line to ‘interview’, no, I mean to ‘ask’, Peter Scoones a question and he went on to explain the notion of finding great ‘light’ and then just looking for something, anything to put into that light.” Martin gave a host of other examples, concluding “Their answers opened our hearts and minds into how the very best shooters approached their own photography.”

Today's new underwater photographers are taught early to not simply take photos on a scuba dive, but to dive for their images. You are encouraged to take more shots of less subjects; to seek out great light, if you want it in your pictures; to work opportunities. These approaches were what all those leading shooters were doing when Martin

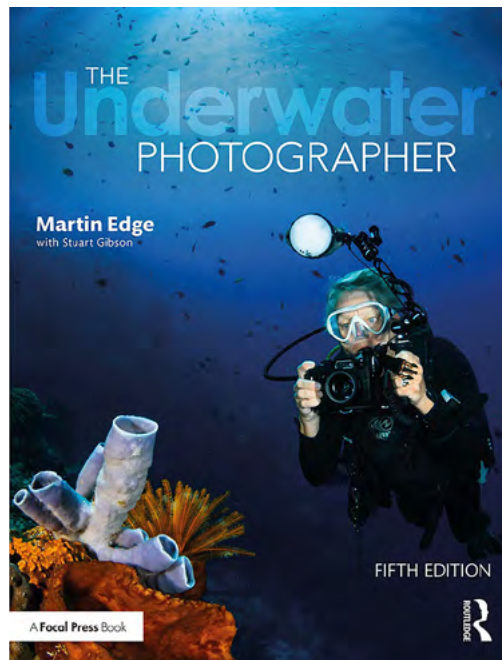


started out. For many these were things they did naturally or through experience, but most had never thought to talk about it. Martin took the time to extract the information and then found the words to teach that knowledge and more to the community. Many of the key lessons of the underwater photography mindset started here.

“People would pay thousands to be a fly on the wall today,” Martin would always say when the three of us (myself, Martin and Peter Rowlands) gathered

for UPY judging. And it is these magical times that my minds return to when I think of him. We worked damn hard, there was only time for straight talking, but faced with 1000s of the best underwater photos in the world, it was a privilege and an education to dissect them and uncover the winners. Judging UPY definitely improved my photography, as the discussion raged, with some pictures castigated and but most exalted through detailed arguments. There was no-small talk, just hardcore photography chat, well, until the evenings, when a few glasses brought out wonderful tales from the past.

As judges, we actually had quite different tastes, which meant plenty of debates but this ultimate enriched the UPY collection each year. And the dynamic worked because the three of us had a friendship based on strong mutual respect. Peter had been Martin's photographic hero when he started and then Peter was the first to publish Martin's teaching in UP, the original Underwater Photography (print) magazine. I knew of them both from my early 20s years, but got to meet, dive and learn much more from Peter. I've been fortunate to dive around the world with Peter, from the Browning Pass to Triton Bay, and Peter also encouraged me to share my knowledge, and I cut my teaching teeth writing articles for UWP.



I didn't get to really spend time with Martin until later, but fate brought us together 20 years ago during those exciting early days of digital. And from there we both treasured our chats (Martin often recording them – you can take the man out of the police...) and distilled them for his books. The two of us operated independently most of the time so we always had loads to discuss when we met for an exchange of information and cross fertilisation of ideas. And, both being self-employed, we'd even have a "work Christmas lunch" together at a New Forest pub! I also wrote different chapters for the 3rd, 4th and 5th editions of The Underwater Photographer, and the foreword of the



5th Edition (Peter wrote the foreword for the 3rd Edition).

What is often not mentioned enough is Martin's own photography, which won plenty of contests back in the day and sold well as prints. Although celebrated as a teacher, for me, Martin's style was not technical, but heavily artistic. He loved to experiment and play with ideas. He loved shallow water and working close to the surface, and once he switched to digital he'd regularly run out of air as he became caught up in the creative process! I'd never meet him without there being a new idea he was enthusing about. Some became well known techniques, others

stepping stones to something new!

I also always remember Martin as a great family man. The first thing he'd say to me is Sylvia says hello. And I was heartened that he was surrounded by them so much over these last few years. Sylvia and Martin had only recently celebrated 51 years together, and I am sure it is very tough time for them. Martin's loss definitely leaves a big hole in the underwater photography family too, but his contribution to making everyone better underwater photographers will be celebrated for years to come.

Alex Mustard
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News, Travel & Events

2024 Monterey Shootout - August 23-25, 2024

The Monterey Shootout is an underwater photo event focused on fun, education, and the goal is to inspire new underwater image-makers.

Are you new to underwater photography or Monterey diving? Come meet a supportive group of die-hard Monterey divers, learn new shooting techniques in our shooting seminars, and maybe even discover a new dive site.



Our friendly shooting competition not only rewards advanced shooters with amazing prizes but also bestows fantastic prizes to the newest shooters in the ranks. Join us for a weekend diving and seminars!

First time underwater shooters will enjoy our introductory seminars held on Friday. All skill levels will get inspired with our more advanced seminars held on Sunday. Come meet fellow enthusiasts and learn from our professional presenters.

You don't need to be a pro to have fun and win big in our friendly competition. You just need to get in the water this weekend. Our 32 hour photo and video competition has categories for beginner, intermediate, and advanced shooters with great prizes from our sponsors. All competition entrants must register for a full weekend pass to enter.

Monterey diving is second to none when the conditions are right. We can't control the weather, but we can help you find good dive boats, great dives, and places to stay during your visit. You'll also find all event locations at this link.

Registration Only \$35

One low price gets you into the Competition, cocktail party, and all Seminars

www.backscatter.com

Inaugural Underwater Awards Australasia Imaging Competition

The Underwater Awards Australasia 2024 is a new underwater imaging competition focused on the Australasian region—an industry-first three-way collaboration between the long-established Underwater Australasia, leading underwater photography and videography resource DivePhotoGuide, and underwater imaging equipment and dive gear distributor UW Images.

The competition will culminate in an exhibition at Go Diving Show ANZ in September 2024—the inaugural Australian edition of the hugely successful Go Diving Show in the UK.

The prestigious judging panel comprises Tobias Friedrich, Jayne Jenkins, Brett Lobwein, Ross Long, Matty Smith and William Tan.

The prizes, worth more than A\$50,000 in total, include dive trips with the world's top resorts and liveaboards, as well as the latest underwater photo and video gear. Entrants compete for prizes in 8 categories, including the unique



“Reels Showcase” video category. The top image or video among the category winners receives the distinction of “Best of Show.”

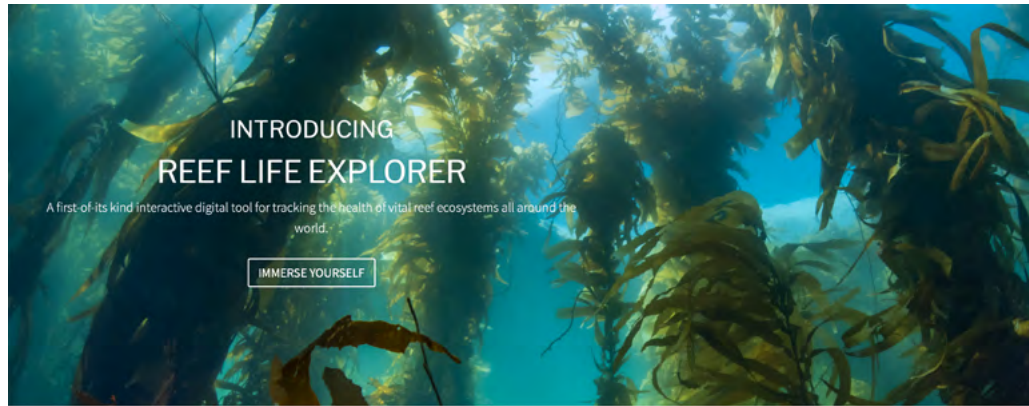
The competition calls for passionate underwater shooters from around the world to submit their most captivating and compelling images and videos from the Australasian region.

The competition opens on June 15th and closes on August 1st, 2024. Winners will be revealed on UnderwaterCompetition.com and published by supporting media partners worldwide shortly thereafter. The entry fees are US\$10 per image or video entered.

www.underwatercompetition.com/uwaa

www.uwpmag.com

Reef Species of the World



Our citizen science organisation Reef Life Survey has recently developed some free online species identification tools that we'd love to share with the broader diving community.

The Reef Species of the World is an online collection of images and data covering every marine species that Reef Life Survey divers have recorded over the years, drawing on data from over 30,000 surveys globally.

The RSoW allows users to generate a list or field guide of all species for a given location, a global list of a taxonomic group of interest, or even identify a species from their own photo using our 'search by image' recognition tool.

Each species has its own page, with most including photos taken by

RLS divers, a brief description, a list of similar species, and some biological info from our database.

This is a really wonderful (and free!) tool that our team of volunteer divers use to hone their species identification skills for biodiversity surveys. It appeals to all marine users who are interested in learning about the species they encounter.

RLS depends on the support & commitment of volunteers to conduct essential monitoring of the condition of our planet's reefs.

Volunteer your time, funds, resources or voice to Reef Life Survey and help us continue the essential work that we do to present the true story of the world's oceans and the life within them.

www.reeflifesurvey.com

<https://youtu.be/qvupU10syLg?si=xcB9-vZt5PO9uPwn>

Bunaken Oasis 2025 Photography Workshop with Alex Tattersall

Dive into an underwater photography paradise with Alex Tattersall at Bunaken Oasis!

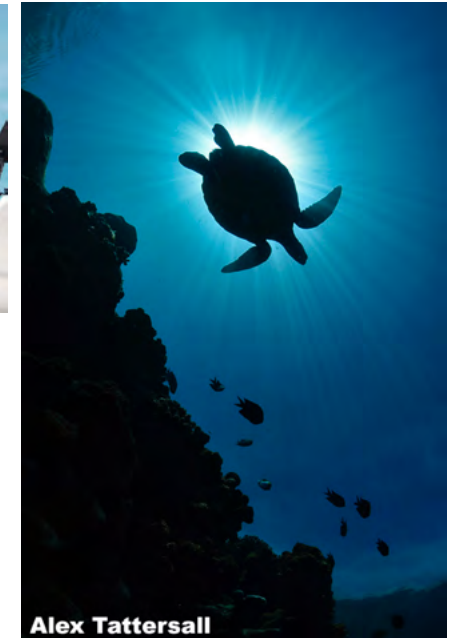
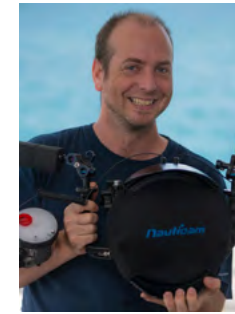
We are thrilled to announce our 2025 Photography Workshop, a unique opportunity for enthusiasts to elevate their skills amidst the stunning marine landscapes of Bunaken, Indonesia.

Departing the UK on 23rd September 2025, this 9-night adventure includes 8 days of diving, featuring 23 Nitrox dives and 2-night dives.

At Bunaken Oasis Dive Resort and Spa, you will receive expert instruction from Alex Tattersall, renowned for his passion and expertise in underwater photography. Immerse yourself in crystal-clear waters teeming with vibrant coral reefs and diverse marine life, while enjoying the luxury and serenity of Bunaken Oasis.

Don't miss out on this unforgettable journey for more information or call us at 01323 648924 to secure your spot today.

Join us for the ultimate underwater photography adventure and capture the ocean's beauty like never before!



Alex Tattersall



2017 Alex Tattersall

www.bunakenoasis.com

'Word on the Reef' podcast dives into Great Barrier Reef stories

A new podcast series telling the stories of divers and conservationists on the Great Barrier Reef aims to inspire urgent action to protect the natural wonder.

With a background in journalism and 12 years' experience working as a marine naturalist, dive instructor and conservationist on the Reef, host Tanya Murphy has plenty of expertise to share, and a range of exciting guests joining her on the show.

"Despite recently suffering through its fifth mass coral bleaching event in eight years, the Reef still has areas which are in healthy condition and there is still hope for us to save it, but we need to act quickly," said Tanya.

"There's a lot of confusion out there about the Reef, with some people believing it's already dead and others saying it's completely fine - the real story is much more complicated and the best way to understand it is to listen to the stories of those who are diving on it every day.

"Through this podcast series I take people on a journey to see the Reef through the eyes of those who know it best, exploring the enduring wonders it still holds - while also sharing some of the threats it's facing,

and the things we can all do to help protect it."

Episodes include deep dives into First Nations conservation knowledge, hair-raising encounters with marine life like sharks, whales and sea turtles, and first-hand reports of this summer's devastating coral bleaching event from scientists who live and work on the Reef's most remote islands.

"The podcast series is a not-for-profit passion project aimed at raising awareness about the Reef, so it's been amazing to see so many people around the world tuning in," said Tanya.

"And this is just the beginning! There's plenty more to explore as we dive deeper into some of the Reef's amazing marine life and what we can do to protect it, so start listening now to join the adventure!"

'Word on the Reef' podcast is available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, YouTube, and all other major podcast platforms.

If you'd like to support this podcast, please consider becoming a sponsor or patron. For more information, please contact:



Reef host Tanya Murphy

info@wordonthereef.org

www.buzzsprout.com/2311255

Banda Sea with Grant Thomas
November 3-10, 2024



Join Ikelite Ambassador Grant Thomas aboard the Calico Jack Liveaboard in the Banda Sea. This region is in the heart of the Indonesian archipelago and is known for its vibrant marine life, healthy reefs, and pelagic fish - most notably large schools of hammerhead sharks! You'll also see unique critters like the Olive Sea Snake which are famous in the Banda Sea Islands.

Divers can expect 2-4 dives per day including: Reef dives, Drift dives, Shark dives, Manta dives, Night dives, Free nitrox.

Macro divers looking to extend their trip can register for the 3-5 day Ambon Muck Diving extension. This area is notable for its regular sightings of blue-ring, mototi, and wonderpus octopuses as well as the Psychedelic Frogfish.

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The 19th World Shootout Awards Are Open!

Calling all underwater photographers!
The prestigious 19th World Shootout Awards are officially open for entries!

• Submit your most impressive underwater photographs taken anywhere between November 2nd, 2023 and November 1st, 2024.

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Theme: The Impact of Plastic on Our Oceans

This year's Environmental category focuses on the critical issue of plastic pollution in our oceans. We invite you to showcase the impact of plastic, from large debris to microplastics, on marine life and ecosystems. Let your creativity flow to raise awareness and inspire action!



Don't settle for 2nd best



Film - No Filter,
No White Balance



Digital - No Filter,
Manual White Balance

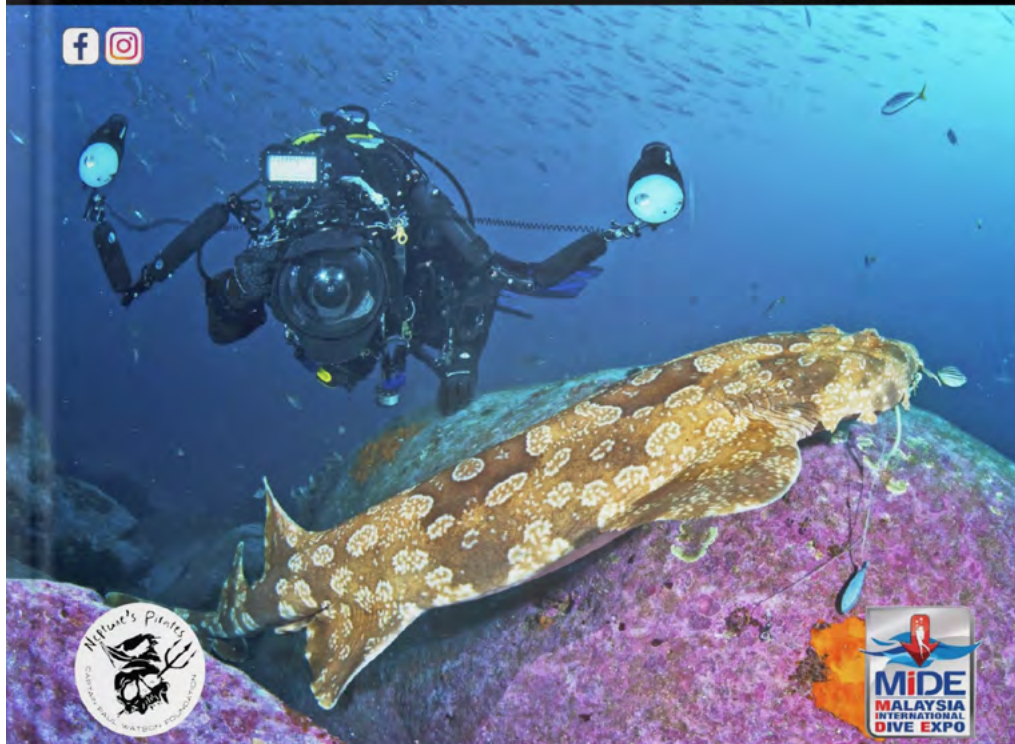


Digital - Magic Filter, Manual
White Balance

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.



Cuttlefish Aggregation
CARL CHARTERS

Advocating for Grey Nurse Sharks
VALERIE TAYLOR - AM

Hammerheads and Spice - Banda Sea
NIGEL MARSH and HELEN ROSE

Rapid Bay
KEN HOPPEN

Nudi Notes - Eubbranchus
DAVID MULLINS

Fish Id - Wobbegong Sharks
MIKE SCOTLAND

WildPhotos, Bristol , Sunday 13th October



Wildscreen is joining with Natural History Museum, London's Wildlife Photographer of the Year to host WildPhotos in Bristol on Sunday 13th October. Delegates will be able to join the event both in person and online.

A world-class line-up of speakers will come together for a unique programme of talks and panels at Bristol Aquarium that will explore the triumphs and challenges of capturing nature in photography, as well as the future of the genre.

Kathy Moran, current Jury Chair for Wildlife Photographer of the Year and formerly National Geographic Magazine's Deputy Director of Photography, will produce and host the event. The line-up will feature unique talks and panels featuring more than a dozen of the world's leading wildlife photographers. The event is aimed at professional and amateur photographers, industry

thought leaders, photography suppliers, and conservationists.

Headlining at the event will be Thomas P Peschak, National Geographic Photographer, Explorer and NGS Storytelling Fellow who specialises in documenting both the beauty and fragility of the world's oceans, islands and coasts. Originally trained as a marine biologist, he embraced photojournalism 15 years ago and is now Director of Storytelling for Save Our Seas Foundation. His images and stories have been awarded 17 times in Wildlife Photographer of the Year and received seven World Press Photo Awards.

The event will also feature a specially curated selection of images from Wildlife Photographer of the Year's community collection celebrating the best of the world's wildlife and conservation photographers.

<https://bit.ly/WPY60-WildPhotos>

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**Dive & More 7-night trip onboard Emperor Serenity,
“Best of Maldives” route
October 26th - November 2nd, 2025**

Dive into the turquoise waters of the Maldives and discover a world of unparalleled underwater beauty. With its pristine coral reefs, vibrant marine life, and crystal-clear visibility, the Maldives is a diver’s paradise like no other!

Late October is the perfect time to visit the Maldives, as it is the transition period between the wet and dry seasons, which attracts plenty of cool marine creatures. Visibility improves significantly from the rainy season and the mantas and whale sharks are still around!

In addition to those beautiful giants, we’ll encounter plenty of turtles, moray eels, sting rays, eagle rays, sharks, numerous species of reef fish (schools of Moorish Idols are my fav!) and lots of colorful critters.

On this trip, we will offer three classes on underwater photography, covering camera settings, strobes and video lights, light positioning, composition, wide-angle, macro, and post-processing. Throughout the trip, we will constantly review our photos and learn how to improve for the next day, getting even better shots with every dive!

Tiani Dun will be our photography trip leader, you’ll receive



personalized guidance and expert advice from her to capture stunning images throughout the trip.



She will conduct a full photography workshop and photo review sessions with each participant, ensuring individualized attention for photographers of all levels.

Tiani is an underwater photographer from Australia. She studied a Master of Marine Biology (MS) at James Cook University and has brought her passion for science and the arts together into the work she does today.

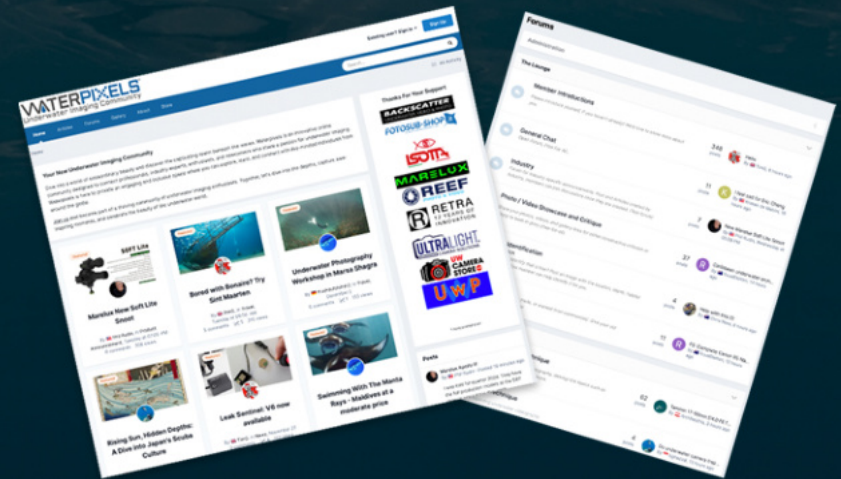
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www.diveandmore.com

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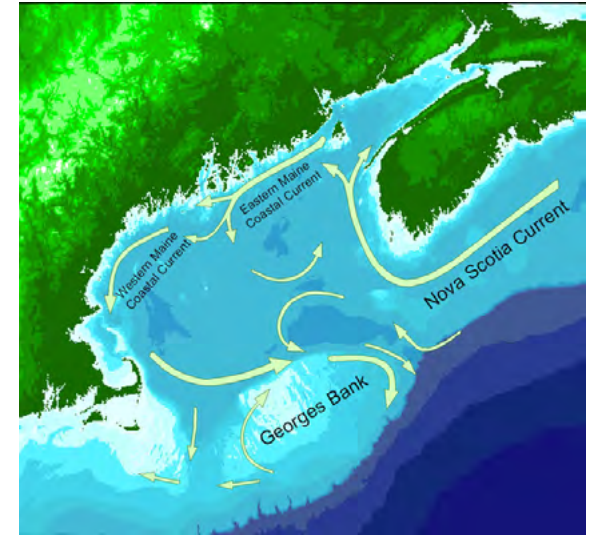
Sea Change: The Gulf of Maine, a NOVA Special Presentation to Premiere Wednesday, July 24 on PBS

Sea Change explores a body of water that is warming 97 percent faster than the global ocean, and what that means for the Gulf of Maine – for the animals, for the jobs dependent upon it, and the millions of people along its shores – and may serve as a preview of what could happen worldwide due to climate change.

The acclaimed underwater photographer Brian Skerry is a producer of the series, which features his work capturing the beauty of the area in spite of the devastating impact of climate change over the last 40 years. This series is part of a larger project by Skerry to document how warming waters are affecting this unique ecosystem, and includes his cover story on the Gulf of Maine in National Geographic's June issue.

Sea Change blends science, exploration, stunning natural history, and stories of human experience, to illuminate how what happens here could have profound global implications. Viewers will encounter the spectacular wilderness and wildlife that still teems in these waters.

A marine treasure of some 36,000 square miles, the Gulf of Maine stretches from the tip of Cape Cod to Nova Scotia and is more than a thousand feet deep at its lowest point. It courses with cold, nutrient-rich water, mixed by the world's biggest tides. This rich environment feeds a web of over 3,000 species ranging from microscopic plankton to massive right whales. Millions of people have lived along the Gulf, drawing their sustenance and livelihood from its plentiful depths. It is a seminal



body of water, a cradle to ancient peoples, and a lifeline to fragile marine ecosystems. But for all its storied bounty – and because of it – the Gulf is also in peril, with some of its fisheries now depleted to extreme levels.

“I’ve always had a deep love for the Gulf of Maine as a New England native and a current resident,” said Brian Skerry, one of the producers of Sea Change and a longtime National Geographic photographer. “Every other breath we take is of oxygen that was generated from our oceans. But they are now in peril, something that we can document deeply in the Gulf of Maine, an area that has provided for this continent long-before the arrival of Europeans and far into the last century. What once provided a seemingly endless supply of cod fish, lobsters, and clams, now allows us to witness firsthand the devastating changes brought on by climate change. It’s my hope that this series serves as a cautionary tale, as well as a tribute to one of my favorite places.”

We are at a crossroads for the future of the

Gulf of Maine – and our oceans. Does the Gulf retain enough of its biodiversity and regenerative strength to weather the human-induced storm? Is the sheer beauty of the place and spectacular range of its creatures enough to wake us to the stakes? Sea Change tells this epic oceanic story, with stunning photography to drive home the endless wonder of this unmatched natural resource.

www.brianskerry.com





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JUDGING PANEL

- Tobias Friedrich
- Jayne Jenkins
- Brett Lobwein
- Ross Long
- Matty Smith
- William Tan

**SUBMISSIONS
JUNE 15-AUGUST 1, 2024**

New Products

Backscatter Hybrid Flash HF-1

With the introduction of the Backscatter Hybrid Flash HF-1, underwater photographers can now capture stunning stills and video with a single versatile tool. With an underwater guide number of $f40$ and a 5,000 lumen video light, the Hybrid Flash is the most powerful strobe and video light combination ever created. The Backscatter Hybrid Flash also includes a 1,500 lumen spot light and a red light mode.

The Hybrid Flash is packed with tons of features and is the first strobe to feature Smart Control Automatic TTL Flash power for Sony, Olympus, and OM System cameras. The Hybrid Flash is also HSS compatible and can be used for remote shooting alongside the Mini Flash 2.

From the center to the edge, the Hybrid Flash has even light intensity with minimal drop-off. This will result in larger scenes being lit more evenly, with no harsh hot spots of light or major gaps. The wide angle coverage of the Hybrid Flash makes strobe positioning much simpler, due to the light's wide, even, and forgiving beam pattern.



The Hybrid Flash is compatible with a variety of different diffusers. For brighter, more intense light, shoot the strobe without a diffuser to yield an angle of coverage of 120° . For wider, softer light, the included Hybrid Flash White 140 Flat Diffuser will expand the angle of coverage to 140° for bigger subjects and scenes. For the widest, softest, and most even lighting possible, the optional Hybrid Flash White 160 Dome Diffuser will expand angle of coverage to its maximum, at 160° .

This all comes in an easy to travel medium sized strobe package that is perfect for both wide-angle and macro shooting. The Hybrid Flash special launch price is \$899, which is an incredible value for the power and features this strobe offers.

Backscatter Hybrid Flash Underwater Strobe & Video Light Key Features are:
 $f40$ Guide Number
5,000 Lumen Video Light



Spot, Wide, and Red Lights
Selectable Angle of Coverage, with Included Flat Diffuser and Optional Dome Diffuser— 120° , 140° , 160°
Selectable Color Temperature with Optional Filters—6500K, 5500K, 4500K
Smart Control Automatic TTL Flash Power for Sony, Olympus, and OM System Cameras
HSS Compatible
Wireless Off Camera Remote Control – Mix and Match with Mini Flash 2
SOS and Emergency Signaling Modes
Requires Two 21700 Lithium Ion Batteries

www.backscatter.com

TTL Converter for Marelux MX-Z8 housing for NIKON Z8 camera



Incredibly long battery life - 3 years of continuous work!

- Firmware includes TTL-profiles of many underwater strobes: INON S220, Z330, Z240, RETRA PRO X (including HSS functionality!), SEA&SEA YS-D3MkII, YS-D1, YS-250, IKELITE DS-230, DS-162, DS-161, DS-160, DS-125, SUBTRONIC Pro-270, Pro-160
- Synchronization is available by fiber optical cables or by electric sync cord as well, even simultaneously in TTL!
- Optional electric bulkheads (Nikonos, Ikelite, S-6) are available.

www.uwtechnics.com

WACP-C

N100 0.36X Compact Wide Angle Conversion Port

@ 28mm full frame equivalent focal length

Lens FOV 75 deg
Converted FOV 130 deg

Lens Zoom range 28 - 70mm lens
Converted FOV 130 - 59 deg

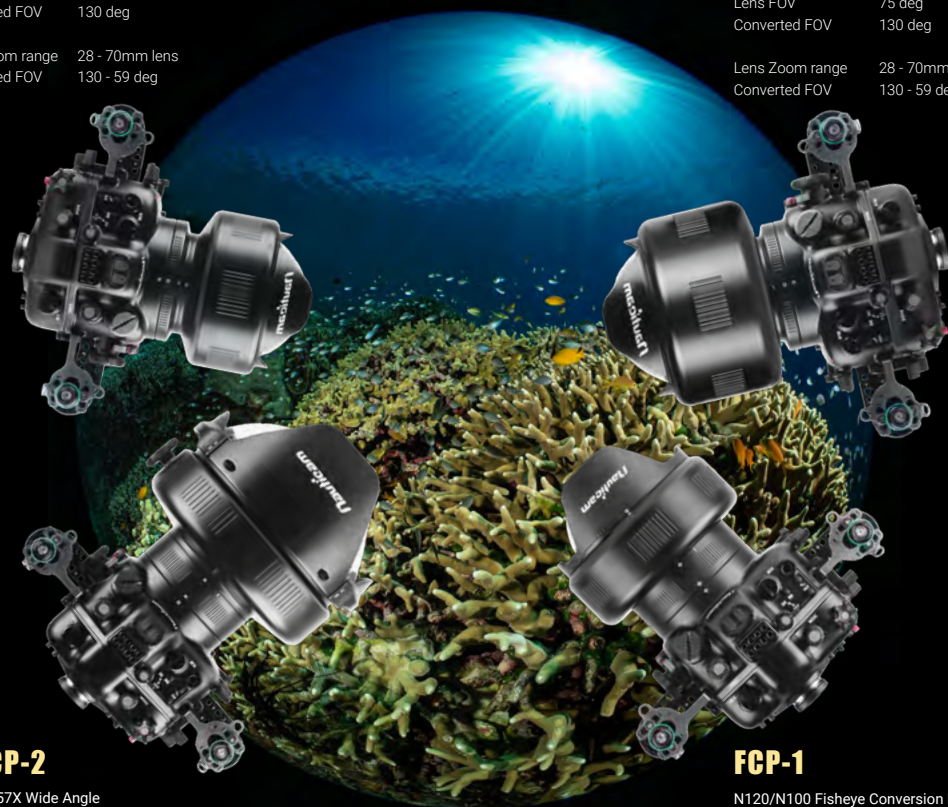
WACP-1B

N120/N100 0.36X Wide Angle Conversion Port with Integrated Float Collar and Interchangeable Port Mounting Ring

@ 28mm full frame equivalent focal length

Lens FOV 75 deg
Converted FOV 130 deg

Lens Zoom range 28 - 70mm lens
Converted FOV 130 - 59 deg



WACP-2

N120 0.57X Wide Angle Conversion Port 2

@ 14mm full frame equivalent focal length

Lens FOV 114 deg
Converted FOV 140 deg

Lens Zoom range 14 - 35mm lens
Converted FOV 140 - 72 deg

FCP-1

N120/N100 Fisheye Conversion Port with Integrated Float Collar

@ 28mm full frame equivalent focal length

Lens FOV 75 deg
Converted FOV 170 deg

Lens Zoom range 28 - 70mm lens
Converted FOV 170 - 62 deg



NA-TG7

For Olympus TG7 / TG6 / TG5 Camera

PN#17820/17821



NA-A9III

For Sony A9III Camera

PN#17437



NA-GFX100II

For Fujifilm GFX100II Camera

PN#17160

Weefine TG-7 Super Macro Ring Light Kit

With this TG-7 Super Macro Ring Light Kit, you can make the best super macro shots. The Ring Light that is included in this kit ensures you that subjects can be well exposed at very short distances. The macro mode of the Olympus Tough TG-7 is great, but the lens port of the PT-059 housing blocks some parts of the flash light and can create dark shadows. The ring light solves this problem.

The macro possibilities of the OM System TG-7 are amazing but the internal flash of the TG-7 alone is not enough to ensure that your super macro photos are well exposed. A large part of the flash light is blocked by the housing. The special Ring Light that you can make the best macro photos.

The macro possibilities of the camera are fantastic! Its outperforming any compact camera on the market! If you're looking for a compact camera for use on land and underwater and if you're into macro-photography then the OM System TG-7 is just perfect!



www.uwcamerastore.com



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2024

Category Sponsor



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AMCS
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Photo by
Ben Verdelle

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- Black
- Silver Grey
- Olive Green
- Yale Blue
- Burgundy

MODELS

MX-R5	MX-R5C	MX-R6	MX-R6II
MX-R7	MX-A7RIII	MX-A7RIV	MX-A7IV
MX-A7RV	MX-A7SIII	MX-A1	MX-FX3
MX-Z6II/Z7II	MX-Z8	MX-Z9	
MX-TG6,7	MX-RX100M7		

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

MX Housing

Mirrorless Camera



MX-Z9

MX Strobes



Apollo S Apollo III Apollo Nano

Marelux developed three innovative strobes, world's first TTL HSS RC compatible UW strobe, with wireless trigger, patented design including wireless signal transfer.

MX Wet Lens



CONTACT US

Facebook: [MareluxUSA](#) [www.marelux.co](#)

Instagram: [Mareluxco](#) service@mareluxprecision.com

Twitter: [MareluxUSA](#) sales@mareluxprecision.com

Apollo III Strobes



Marelux Apollo III 2.0 Strobes are now compatible with TURTLE and UW Technics flash triggers to support advanced TTL and HSS functions for Sony, Canon, Nikon and Olympus cameras.



Ultralight TPK-LMU-06-tripod

The Ultralight TPK-LMU-06 large 6" leg tripod kit uses a TRI-TRAY multi-use platform

It includes one TRI-TRAY, three BA-MT universal mounts, three AC-CSF clamps, and three DB-06 arms.

They are black in color, made out of 6061 T6 aircraft-grade aluminum with Type III anodizing

Hardware is 316 stainless steel.

Will work in the harshest of environments and built to last.

Weight 1.792 lbs (0.81 kg)

Dimensions 10 x 8 x 3 in (25.4 x 20.32 x 7.62 cm)

MSRP \$396.95



www.backscatter.com

SeaPal 6" Dome

Connects to your SeaPal Waterproof Case to capture crystal clear underwater content as well as over/under style images

Optically correct for under/over water shooting

Shoot over/under style contents 6" (15cm) acrylic dome for easy split of water

Full access for phone lenses

Lightweight and easy to install



www.joby.com

/// MARELUX AMBASSADORS / INFLUENCERS ///



Kathrin Landgraf Kluge



Bruce Jungsunbong



PJ Aristorenas



Lilian Koh



Luca Keller

DIVEVOLK

OCEAN KIT

The all new Divevolk Ocean kit not only offers a great **multifunctional housing** for your smartphone. This kit includes the **wide angle lens & red filter** making it a **compact companion** underwater. All whilst using your **native touchscreen** and **apps**. The possibilities are endless!



LET'S MAKE STORIES TOGETHER!

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Marelux Nikon Z8 Housing

Marelux housing is built from high grade aluminum alloy which provides durability and can withstand even the toughest beating. Ergonomics is also top-notch, all camera controls are readily available at your fingertips and maintain a small footprint which makes it great to travel with. Buttons are clearly labeled. It is very easy as well to assemble and installing the camera to the housing is a breeze with its quick release plate. It also has a depth rating of 100m. Find out what we think of Marelux Underwater Housings.

The Marelux Nikon Z8 comes with a specially designed camera base plate which helps dissipate heat to assist with longer recording times.

The dual locking system design provides security and minimal effort to lock your housing. In addition, it has a special feature which prevents accidental unlocking but still very easy to open if you need to change your battery or memory card.

The Port Locking Design secures your port and port extensions in place with one simple click with its built-in locking system.

The optional flash trigger converts the electronic signal from



your camera into a light signal which triggers your strobe. The flash trigger also has a very long battery life - 10,000 triggers with the (2) CR2032 batteries

The housing comes with a quick release camera plate which makes camera installation a breeze. Also, the plate locks in place to the housing and can be easily be installed and removed. Once in place, the camera is secure to the housing.

www.marelux.co

www.uwpmag.com

BACKSCATTER MINI FLASH 2



THE
PERFECT
MACRO
STROBE
FOR
ANY
CAMERA



Barlus MINI 50mm global shutter camera for high-speed shooting



Water pressure resistance Max. 1000Kpa (Max. water depth 100M)
Cable- Default length 10 meters, PU material, diameter 12MM. 60KG tensile strength, anti-aging, anti-friction, anti-seawater corrosion, special underwater cable.
Usage environment: Land/ vehicle-mounted/boat-mounted/ surface/submersible (freshwater, seawater)
Working humidity: 0%-100%
Operating temperature: -20°~55°
Input Voltage: DC12V
Camera Size: 50*48mm
Camera weight: 0.3KG

www.barluscam.com

EUGOOCX 40M Waterproof Case for DJI Osmo Pocket 3

This waterproof dive camera housing case is designed to be compatible with DJI Osmo Pocket 3, making it ideal for underwater photography during activities such as swimming, diving, and surfing.



Waterproof Protection up to 40 Meters: This high-sealing design ensures effective protection against water damage, allowing for underwater activities with confidence.

Equipped with 12pcs anti-Fog sheet, ensuring clear and unobstructed shooting even in challenging conditions.

Made from high-quality PC material with a light transmittance of 90%, maintaining the clarity of the camera for exceptional image quality. The top 360-degree dome design provides a wider view enables shooting at various angles for versatile underwater photography experiences.

www.amazon.co.uk

BACKSCATTER FLIP UNDERWATER GOPRO FILTERS



BACKSCATTER

THE BEST
BANG
FOR YOUR
BUCK



OLYMPUS
E-M10 IV



Issue 139/23

SUPE Scubalamp V7K Moive light

With a 27mm movie grade COB LED, V7K is a professional underwater video light. 15000 lumens for wide angle 120 degree.

- Dual switch mode: Press button switch on/off and rotation switch
- 4 Steps: 100%(15000lumens at 40mins) -> 75%->50%(7500lumens at 80mins)->25%.
- Working Voltage: 16.8V
- Compatible Battery: 4*21700 battery pack with 77.4Wh with average charging to each battery.
- Battery indicator: 100%-->80%-->60%-->40%-->20%.
- Depth Rating at 100M
- Beam angle: wide angle at 120 degree.
- Color Temperature: 5600K
- Color Rendering Index(CRI): 96 Red 9(R9):94
- Television lighting Consistency Index(TLCI):97
- Colour : Black/Silver
- High grade Aviation Aluminium Alloy
- Internal circulation conduction to reduce corrosion of the body.
- Dimension : Length 178mm x 61mm x 69mm(head)
- Weight : 689g(Underwater)



www.scubalamp.com

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THE UNDERWATER IMAGING COMPANY

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- 1) Officially compliant RC mode by OM Digital Solutions.
- 2) High precision DS-TTL dimming.
- 3) Various custom functions for all cameras.

www.seaandsea.jp

www.uwpmag.com



**MASTER YOUR
OM-SYSTEM
TG-7**



The comprehensive user manual written by renowned UW-photographer Ron Offermans. Full of tips & tricks for mastering your TG-7 underwater.

Available in:
English, German & Dutch

EDGE MAX Water Housing Nikon Z9



Built and designed for the Nikon Z9, for those who demand reliability, durability and flexibility when working in the most demanding environments on earth.

The EDGE MAX for the Nikon Z9 borrows design aspects from the popular EDGE Water Housing while featuring the latest advancements in creative camera controls and ergonomics. The EDGE MAX features the new X-Handle, X-Grip, updated backplate camera controls, improved zoom control, plus a new robust die-cast aluminium camera mount. Designed and built to cater to the demands of industry-leading professionals and enthusiasts alike the EDGE MAX water housing will allow you to take your camera, anywhere.

Depth rating of 10m/33ft

www.aquatech.net

INON X-2 R6 Mark II Housing for Canon EOS R6 Mark II



This is a housing for Canon EOS R6 Mark II. INON strobe compatible ultra-accurate multi-functional built-in “TTL Converter” as standard feature. Control flash amount directly from camera.

12 shots/sec. continuous shooting supported. Standard “Vacuum Leak Sensor (PAT. P)” checks housing sealing in only 5 minutes.

MRS port further evolves to support fine manual focusing. Optionally available “Quick Shoe System” for quick camera position switching between landscape and portrait composition. Optional two viewfinders provide bright and clear finder image. Lightweight and compact ultra-precision cast aluminum body.

www.divervision.com

BACKSCATTER HYBRID FLASH



GUIDE NO.
F40
AND
5000
LUMEN
VIDEO LIGHT



www.uwpmag.com



Nauticam
innovation underwater

**AUTHORIZED
RESELLER**



SERVICE CENTER



CINEMA SPECIALIST



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Issue 139/25

Backscatter Sharp Wide Lens Pro



Get a significant upgrade in image quality from your GoPro camera with the Backscatter Sharp Wide Lens Pro (SWLP). This optical grade glass wide conversion lens will dramatically increase the sharpness of the footage from corner to corner, add extreme detail, and improve contrast. It will increase the angle of coverage to 140°, and by allowing the GoPro to focus much closer, you'll be able to limit the amount of water between you and your subjects while maintaining a wide field of view and getting more of your video lights on your subjects. The fumble-free bayonet design is easy to mount and remove. Get perfect underwater

color by adding the DIVE+ for SWLP or DEEP+ for SWLP slide-in filters for pro-level color correction at any depth. Compatible with GoPro HERO 9-12.

Watch this demo video with side-by-side comparisons to see how this lens puts the Pro in GoPro for the best image quality you can get from a HERO camera!

www.backscatter.com



Nauticam NA-R5C housing for Canon R5 C



"Cinema Mastery"

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

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

www.reefphoto.com

www.uwpmag.com

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**BRAND
NEW
D3.**

- 1) Officially compliant RC mode by OM Digital Solutions.
- 2) High precision DS-TTI dimming.
- 3) Various custom functions for all cameras.

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Ricoh announces Pentax WG-8 and WG-1000 waterproof compacts

Ricoh has announced two new Pentax WG waterproof compacts: the range-topping WG-8 and the entry-level WG-1000.

The WG-8 replaces the Pentax WG-6 (and the Ricoh-branded WG-6 before it) at the top of the lineup. It's a 20MP camera with a Type 1/2.3 sensor (6.2x4.6mm) that's waterproof to a depth of 20m (65.6ft) for two hours. Ricoh says this is equivalent to an IPX8 or JIS Class 8 rating.

It is shockproof from 2.1m (6.5ft), able to withstand 100kg force (220lb of force) and can withstand temperatures as low as -10°C (14°F). It has a 3.0" 1.04M dot (720 x 480px) rear LCD.

The WG-8 has a 28-140mm equivalent zoom lens with an F3.5-5.5 maximum aperture and a six LED ringlight around the lens. It can shoot up to 4K/30 video and can act as a webcam. It includes GPS and compass.

Like its predecessor, there's no Wi-Fi, so you'd still need to use a Flash Air Wi-Fi SD card. The ability to act as a webcam is the main difference compared to its predecessor.

The less expensive WG-1000 has a 16MP sensor and a 27-108mm equiv zoom. This has a maximum aperture



of F3.0-6.6. It makes do with a 2.7" 230k dot (320 x 240px) rear display. It can only shoot video up to 1080/30.

Its durability specs are also lower, with waterproofing rated to 15m (49.2ft), shockproof from 2m (6.5ft). It also lacks its more expensive sibling's GPS and compass features. Neither model can capture Raw data.

The WG-8 will be available in late July at a recommended price of \$399.95. The WG-1000 will arrive in mid July, costing around \$229.95.

Details from mid July at:

www.us.ricoh-imaging.com

 **REEF**
PHOTO & VIDEO

Nauticam NA-A1 housing for Sony a1



"Do-Everything Powerhouse"

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

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

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

www.reefphoto.com

T-Shirt Vintage Ikelite Logo (Natural Cotton)



The return of a classic design from our 1980 catalog. The light color and soft fabric is the perfect way to prevent a sunburn in-between dives.

Medium weight 5.3 oz 100% pre-shrunk cotton. Made in Dominican Republic and printed in the USA. This shirt has a 'standard' fit.

Sale price\$ 20.00

www.ikelite.com

Oceanic+ Dive Housings from Malta



UK Customers Can Now Buy The Oceanic+ Dive Housing Directly Online!

If you live in the UK, you can now order the Oceanic+ Dive Housing directly from the Oceanic website. The Dive Housing will ship directly to you from our facility in Malta, with no freight charges.

Now you can use your iPhone as both an underwater camera and dive computer! The patent-pending Oceanic+ Dive Housing allows you to take great photos with automatic color-correction on your iPhone when diving or during any water adventure. With the Oceanic+ app and Dive Housing, your iPhone also becomes a fully-functional dive computer.

www.oceanicworldwide.com

Ikelite Housing for Sony Alpha a6600



The 200DLM/E Underwater Housing combined with the Sony Alpha a6600 is a compact and affordable option for great video while scuba diving, freediving, surf, pool, or any adventure.

The a6600 features a 24 megapixel APS-C CMOS sensor capable of UHD 4K 30p video. It provides good autofocus capabilities and excellent battery life in a small form factor designed to appeal to casual shooters and anyone looking for something compact to travel with.

A compatible lens port is required for waterproof operation (sold separately). Choose the correct port components on the lens you will be shooting.

Sale price\$ 1,195.00

www.ikelite.com



Nauticam NA-Z8 for Nikon Z8



“Z9 Performance in a Z7 Body”

Every few years Nikon manages to hit a home run with a camera that just does everything better than seems possible.

The Z8 is that camera and more.

46MP/30FPS/

4K 120P/8K 60P/N-RAW 12-Bit/
ProRes RAW 12-Bit.

Lightning fast customizable AF for stills & best ever Live AF. Nauticam has met the challenge by crafting a new level of its legendary ergonomics into the NA-Z8 housing.

Nauticam and Nikon; bringing underwater imaging to a new standard.

www.reefphoto.com

WORKSHOPS

PHILLIPINES

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Join us May 04-11 2025 for a photo & video workshop held at Anilao's most beautiful resort.



Unlimited shore diving, daily boat dives, optional night and blackwater dives. Abundant, friendly support above and below the water.

A few spaces still remaining!



Anleitung Unterwasserfotografie mit der OM SYSTEM Tough TG-7

Dieser Anhang ist keine Alternative zum allgemeinen Handbuch, sondern eine Anleitung für diejenigen, wie die Kamera speziell zum Aufnehmen von Unterwasserfotos verwenden möchten. Das allgemeine Handbuch gibt einen vollständigen Überblick über alles, was mit der Kamera eingestellt werden kann. Bei modernen Kameras ist das eine enorme Menge. Ein großes Augenmerk wird unter anderem auf Themen wie Aufladen, Wartung, Wiedergabe und Sicherheitsvorschriften gelegt.

Ein Großteil der Kameraeinstellungen oder -möglichkeiten wie Gesichtserkennung, Sprachnotiz, Rote-Augen-Korrektur, Selbstausslöser, Fernbedienung, Drücken usw., sind für Unterwasserfotos nicht wichtig. Deshalb wird in diesem Anhang nicht zu viel Wert darauf gelegt.

Neu: Erklärung zum Arbeiten mit dem Remote Control TTL-Blitzsystem. Die neuesten Blitzgeräte von Sea&Sea, AOI und Backscatter unterstützen dieses RC-System.

Es ist besser, sich nur auf die Funktionen und Fähigkeiten der Kamera zu konzentrieren, die für die



Unterwasserfotografie erforderlich sind. Darüber hinaus wird in diesem Anhang erläutert, wie die Kamera am besten mit externen

Geräten wie Weitwinkelkonvertern, Makrokonvertern und externen Blitzgeräten zusammenarbeiten kann.

www.uwcamerastore.com

English, German and Dutch versions are available

www.uwpmag.com



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Immerse Yourself in the World of Underwater Imaging

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

TECHNIQUES

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

ARTICLES

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

TRAVEL

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

EQUIPMENT

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

CONTESTS

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

DIVE PHOTO GUIDE

www.divephotoguide.com · contact@divephotoguide.com

Treasures, Shipwrecks and the Dawn of Red Sea Diving by Howard Rosenstein

A beautiful hardback book illustrated throughout by 200 original images by the author and others including renowned underwater photographer David Doubilet.

Howard Rosenstein wasn't just opening the first dive school in Sharm El-Sheikh; he was cracking open a hidden world in Sinai. This true story dives headfirst into those groundbreaking times, where celebrated guests, uncharted dives and historical discoveries became the extraordinary routine.

It's a tale of grit, where resourcefulness and connections fuelled Howard's pioneering spirit. From Roman coins glinting on the seabed to the dark, unmapped depths, his dives unveiled sunken treasures and secrets of the past. But these weren't just underwater adventures — they were tightrope walks between nations still at war. He braved floods, assisted grounded ships, and even the depths of Mount Sinai itself.

Howard's journey wasn't a solitary one. He rubbed shoulders with underwater legends, bestselling authors, true photography greats, and even world leaders.

Through his dive centers, first in the Mediterranean and then exploding

HOWARD ROSENSTEIN

TREASURES, SHIPWRECKS & THE DAWN OF RED SEA DIVING



A Pioneer's Journey

WITH FOREWORDS BY SYLVIA EARLE & DAVID DOUBILET

onto the Sinai scene, Howard became a pioneer of recreational diving. He shared the magic of the underwater world with a generation, igniting a passion that would forever burn, his only desire that it would never end. But peace, like the tide, comes with a change.

Dive deep into the extraordinary story of the entrepreneur who pioneered Red Sea dive tourism with a cast of unforgettable characters. How a dive school in a train carriage at the edge of the desert became a global destination. A journey of success and purpose.

www.divedup.com

www.uwpmag.com

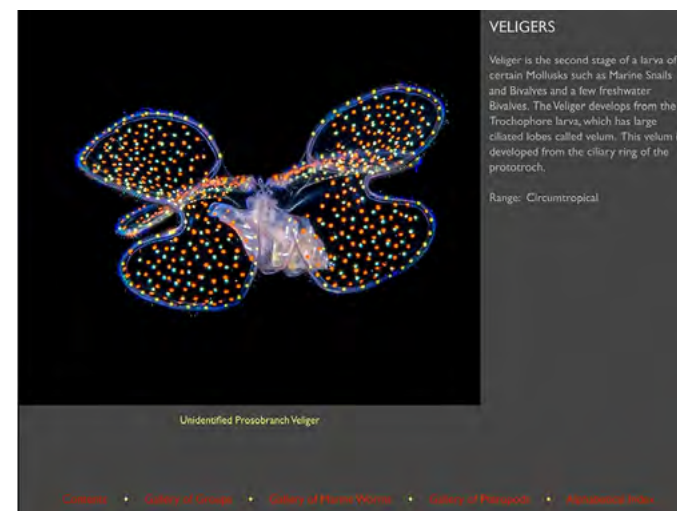
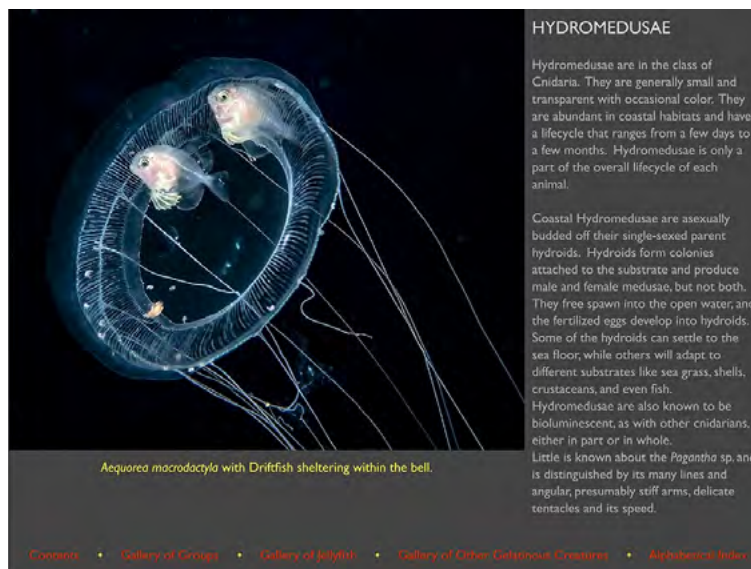
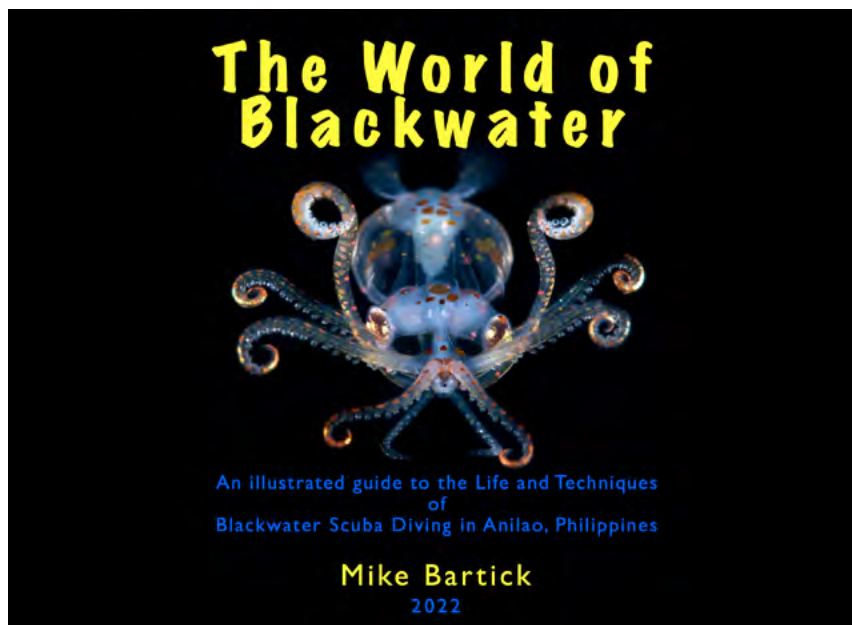
The World of Blackwater by Mike Bartick

The greatest migration of any animals on our planet happens every night in the form of Zooplankton rising from the depths towards the surface, where divers can meet and enjoy the weird, exotic, and wonderful creatures that appear. The World of Blackwater is an e-Book that is the first of its kind. In it, we show a unique hidden world on our planet and learn about exotic creatures and contemplate what it must be like to drift with them in the open ocean at night.

The contents of The World of Blackwater include:

- Forward by G. David Johnson PhD
- Introduction to Blackwater Diving
- Diel Migration and the Great Carbon Pump
- Cephalopods - 21 species of Octopus and Squid
- Crustaceans - 13 species of Crabs & Shrimps
- Larval Fish - 45 species of Larval Fish & Flatfish
- Jellyfish & Other Gelatinous Creatures - 16 species
- Marine Worms and Pteropods - 19 species
- Relationships
- Photographic Skills
- Glossary
- Alphabetical index Also available as an Apple iBook.

\$25



https://blackwaterworld.gumroad.com/l/The_World_of_Blackwater

2024 United Nations World Oceans Day winners

The winners of the eleventh annual Photo Competition for United Nations World Oceans Day were announced during the United Nations World Oceans Day celebration at the UN Headquarters in New York.

A panel of worldrenowned judges selected five (5) first place winners from thousands of global entries made by both amateur and professional photographers.

The 2024 categories for photography aligned with the United Nations World Oceans Day's 2024 theme "Awaken New Depths" and included:

Underwater Seascapes, Small Island Developing States, Big and Small Underwater Faces, Awaken New Depths, and Above Water Seascapes.

With each first place winner hailing from a different country, the winning photographers are: Renee Grinnell Capozzola (USA), Taryn Schulz (Canada), Andrea Marandino (Brazil), Mathieu Macias (France), Michael Sswat (Germany).

The first place winners, along with the second and third place winners for each category, will be featured in the competition's virtual gallery at www.UNWorldOceansDay.org starting June 7th as well as displayed during next year's UN World Oceans Day event in 2025.

<https://unworldoceansday.org>

Awaken new depths category winner: **Renee Grinnell Capozzola**



Bringing Up The Net

This large discarded fishing net was found lying on the reef at about 30 meters in Kona, Hawaii. Volunteers from Ocean Defenders Alliance, also known as ODA, brought up this net by working closely together, using lift bags, and the net was then raised onto a boat provided by Kona Honu Divers. Earlier that day ODA had raised and extracted large volumes of fishing line (ultimately filling large buckets for removal) that had been snarled upon the reef. Unfortunately, our ocean suffers from large amounts of debris, which can destroy reefs, entangle marine life, and release harmful chemicals. Many thanks to organizations such as ODA for helping to clean our ocean and preserve marine ecosystems for future generations.

Underwater Seascapes category winner:
Taryn Schulz



Cormorant love

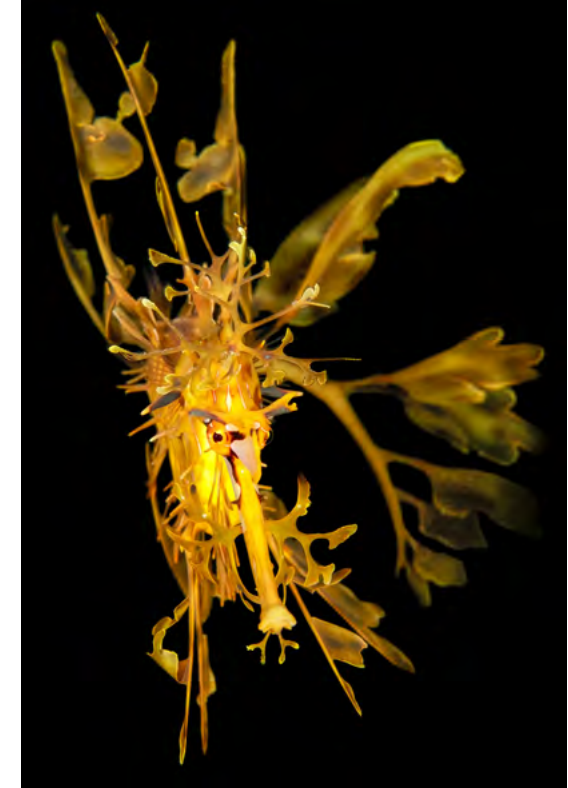
This image was taken in Baja California at Isla Islotes, a location known for its sea lion colony. The day we dived here there happened to be a large amount of sardines taking refuge by the island, which became an exciting spectacle in the water with pelicans and cormorants like in this photo flying around and torpedoing themselves in the water. Moments before this shot the sardines were swimming very quickly, so I turned around as I knew something was coming and I was so happy to capture the heart shape of the sardines as they fled from the cormorants.

Small Island Developing States category winner: **Andrea Marandino**



Image was taken in Abatao, North Tarawa, Kiribati. The children of Kiribati have a close relationship to the ocean and play in the water from a young age. Tarawa, the capital of Kiribati, is a narrow strip of land that lies between the Pacific and an enormous lagoon that depends on a freshwater lens. The kids are always smiling and happily interact with the few visitors, but their future is uncertain. Kiribati's coral atolls are very low-lying, with a maximum elevation of 3 to 4 meters above sea level, making it one of the countries most threatened by climate change.

Big And Small Underwater Faces category winner: **Mathieu Macias**



This photograph is a portrait of a leafy sea dragon taken in Rapid Bay, South Australia, where it is endemic. I was absolutely charmed by this creature as soon as I saw it for the first time in the first photo and it became a dream for me to meet one. Although the first try was a failure, I decided to come back a few months later and my dream came true. I was so happy to meet this animal that is so cute and almost unreal, with its amazing ability to camouflage itself. Its shyness it was a big challenge in making this portrait, but I am delighted with the result.

Torbay Splash-in 2024

by Tim Allen

The Torbay Splash-in this year took place on Saturday, 29th June. This was the eighth year in a row that the Torbay branch of the British Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC) had organised this underwater photography competition. The photographs had to be taken on the same day and within the Torbay area. There were four categories of entry: Beginner, Compact Camera, Wide-angle, and Close-up/macro, as well as a Popular Vote prize.

Seventeen competitors registered and submitted a total of 54 photographs. As usual, the standard of photography was very high, with the judge recognising some 'Highly Commended' and 'Commended' entries, in addition to the First and Second Prizes.

In the evening, 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, editor of Underwater Photography Magazine, who provided useful and helpful comments on every one of the submitted photographs.

This year, the competition again attracted sponsorship from some generous donors, with O'Three, Teign Diving Centre and Dr Paul Naylor donating prizes.



Compact Camera

First prize sponsored by Dr Paul Naylor

First Prize

Tony Reed

Peter Rowlands: "This is just an excellent shot, certainly for a compact camera, where it's very difficult to do splits. It's well-lit and moody. It's a fine shot and a deserved winner."

Tony commented: "This shot and the second-place wide angle shot were the hardest I have worked to capture a couple of

images. I got to Brixham on the Fishcombe side in the afternoon and set off exploring by kayak and found a couple of areas that might look good with some nice rocks covered in sea weeds and pointing in the direction of the sunset. As the evening started to draw in, I got my snorkelling gear and went a few metres out as the tide was coming in. I had to be quick as I was in a cut-off area in the dark, so I'm pleased to have won with these images.

I used my trusty Olympus TG4, PT-056 housing with a Weefine WFL-02 wide lens and a hand-held

Light & Motion Gobe video light which goes down to 80 lumens. No fancy settings, but the camera had been left in sunset mode which actually did a nice job with the colours”.

Tony also won a copy of Paul Naylor’s book ‘Great British Marine Animals’.

Second Prize

Jon Bunker



Peter Rowlands: “There were other shots, other subjects that were head shots, but here the eyes were spot-on in focus, in a very powerful composition. The fact that it’s just slightly tilted gives it more power and lifts it from a straight head-on, so a very appealing shot.”

Jon commented: “Long Spined Sea Scorpion. I actually spotted this one whilst trying to get a squat lobster in frame. Both species of our Sea Scorpions share a fearsome name but also rather beautiful, mottled colouration which they can of course change to better fit their surroundings. This one sat patiently, as they so often seem to, for his portrait. Perhaps he was convinced of his invisibility!

Camera was a Sony RX100m5a, 26 mm equivalent, f11, ISO-100, 1/125, Nauticam housing, single Backscatter Miniflash strobe.”

Beginner Category

First Prize sponsored by O’Three

First Prize

Richard Blair



The Beginners’ Category was underrepresented this year with only one person submitting entries. Although several competitors had registered for this category, they had mostly decided that their photographs on the day were too poor to submit, making Richard’s shot a worthy winner!

Wide-angle

First prize donated by Teign Diving Centre

First Prize

Malcolm Nimmo



Peter Rowlands: “I liked this very much. There were probably 4 or 5 jellyfish shots and this one has a different composition. As we do when judging the UPY competition, I took out all the jellyfish shots and put them on the screen at once so that you

have a direct comparison. This shot was by far the most interesting, well-lit and different.”

Second Prize
Tony Reed



Peter Rowlands: “This is a very strong shot, but the technique and location had been seen winning the previous category. So, it was a strong contender and slipped because of repetitiveness.”

Close-up/Macro

First prize donated by Dr Paul Naylor

First Prize

Terry Griffiths

Peter Rowlands: “Compared to all the others, this was completely different. A little bit bright top left, but the subject is fine, and I think it’s nice that he’s on a diagonal rather than at 6 o’clock, which makes it a more attractive image.”

Terry commented: “The photograph was taken at Babbacombe Pier along the side of the steps. You have to wait for the high tide as the Montagu’s blennies like to hide in the old red building bricks.



The size of the fish is about 25mm long.

Camera was a Canon R7 with a Canon 60mm macro lens, shot at 1/125, f11, iso800. Strobe was a Retra Pro flash with a Backscatter snoot fitted.”

Second Prize
Jon Bunker



Peter Rowlands: “This was a really early contender with a beautiful background and composition. Unfortunately, the right-hand tentacle is not 100% sharp and if it had been it would have really lifted it. But it’s a visually beautiful shot.”

Jon commented: “Okenia elegans. Torbay seems to have their fair share of these scarce but spectacular Okenia elegans wriggling about. I gather they eat sea squirts, though I’ve only ever seen them on sea lettuce. I recalled a similar shot of mine from the 2022 Splash-In, where Peter mentioned the green background was a bit stark. To avoid just taking the same shot again I got in as close as my wet lens would allow and kicked open the aperture to f4 for some bokeh blur, shifting position to try and get some curve from the sea lettuce around the nudibranch.

Camera was a Sony RX100m5a, 26mm equivalent, f4, ISO-100, 1/125, Nauticam housing, single Backscatter Miniflash strobe (with snoot).”

Popular/People’s Vote
Malcolm Nimmo

Peter Rowlands: “Very nice, straightforward. That’s a very strong shot.”

See you all next year.



Tim Allen
Torbay BSAC

Nikonos 13mm Conversion for Sony Mirrorless

By Matthew Sullivan

I imagine many of those reading this are familiar with the preview I did for the Nikonos RS 13mm conversion for Sony mirrorless cameras. If you haven't, fear not! Everything covered there will be covered in this full review—and much more.

Originally released for the Nikonos RS film camera in the 1990s, the Nikonos RS 13mm has a cult following in the underwater photography realm—and with good reason. The lens was one of the very first water-contact optics and is legendary for its phenomenal image quality. However, with the rise of mirrorless cameras, it seemed the 13mm might have reached the end of its life for underwater photography with the exception of some DSLR stalwarts. Fortunately, my friend Isaac Szabo came to the rescue.

Isaac took it upon himself to give the Nikonos RS 13mm new life in the mirrorless realm. He figured out how to take the optics of the 13mm fisheye, install them in the body of



Blistering detail from the Nikonos RS 13mm lens: A manatee hovering in the crystal-clear waters of a North Florida spring (Sony a9, Nikonos RS 13mm f/1.8 fisheye, Seafrogs housing, dual Kraken Sports KS160 strobes, f/10, 1/50s, ISO 160)

a native Sony lens, and rehouse the underwater optics into custom ports. The Nikonos 13mm now performs exactly like a native Sony lens, with full aperture control and autofocus, since it is, in fact, a native Sony lens but with introduced optics.

Even on a DSLR, the Nikonos RS 13mm was known for its phenomenal overall image quality. The fact it came in a very small package was a welcome bonus, but the optical performance is why this lens is still so highly regarded. As with all the best

underwater optics, the Nikonos 13mm was originally designed specifically for underwater use. It is a water-corrected optic, meaning it corrects for optical issues that can plague a “land” lens behind a dome.

Isaac's conversion still uses all of



Clockwise from top: The optics of the 13mm mounted in the Sony 50mm body with accompanying distance optimizing “focus” gear (left) and the custom Nauticam port with RS 13mm glass (right); top-down view of the port with the distance optimization ring on the lens set to 10”; the Nikonos RS 13mm converted lens mounted on a Nauticam NA-A7II housing



the original optics—both the water-contact dome and the inner lens elements—so there is no hit to the image quality. In fact, Isaac has spent months fine-tuning his conversion and has not only improved the overall image quality, he has allowed the lens to perform even better and at significantly wider apertures than previously. The sharpness and detail

rendered by the Nikonos 13mm is truly staggering. It has become a fun pastime to pixel-peep the files I shoot with the lens just to revel in the ridiculous clarity.

The Nikonos 13mm gives a 170-degree field of view, wide enough for just about everything, and it is a true fisheye lens. It is well known that “land” fisheye lenses perform better

A freediver (Ariana Paone) exploring a spring in Florida, USA: Believe it or not, this image was shot at f/2! Bottom: As this 100% crop shows, the detail is incredible for any aperture, much less such a wide aperture (Sony a9, Nikonos RS 13mm f/1.8 fisheye, Seafrogs housing, f/2, 1/1000s, ISO 400) (Right 100% crop)





A meaty goliath grouper hangs out with some baitfish on a deep wreck, Florida, USA: The conversion allows the Nikonos RS 13mm to be shot at wider apertures without an image quality hit, meaning lower ISOs can be used and faster shutter speeds. Despite being at 90-plus feet, I was able to shoot ISO 100 and still get blue backgrounds thanks to shooting a wider aperture than I normally would (Sony a9, Nikonos RS 13mm f/1.8 fisheye, Seafrogs housing, dual Retra Flash, f/8, 1/50s, ISO 100)

behind large dome ports than small ones. Small domes are convenient, cheaper, and better for close-focus wide-angle photography, but often these come at the expense of image quality compared to a big dome, especially in the corners of the frame. The Nikonos 13mm, despite its tiny size, does not suffer these same shortcomings.

The Conversion

Isaac could explain the technical aspects of the conversion far better than me, but essentially, he removes all the optics from the 13mm lens itself and installs them into a Sony 50mm lens. It's coincidence that the 50mm houses the new elements perfectly. He also removes the water-contact glass element from the body of the Nikonos



A fall leaf, Florida, USA: The original Nikonos 13mm could not focus right onto the front glass. Now it can! It makes for exceptional close-focus wide-angle capabilities. This leaf is only about 1.5–2 inches across. It is also wonderful being able to shoot at very wide apertures; it gives a unique look to wide-angle underwater pictures (Sony a9, Nikonos RS 13mm f/1.8 fisheye, Seafrogs housing, f/3.2, 1/1600s, ISO 800)

13mm and mounts it in a custom-built port, designed for whichever housing is being used. Nauticam and Seafrogs are currently available, and Isotta will be soon. Other brands such as Marelux will potentially be made available, based on demand.

While it may be difficult to believe for those who are familiar with the Nikonos 13mm lens on DSLRs, Isaac has made some tweaks to the

performance of the lens to make it even better. I touched on the improved image quality earlier, but that is not all. Post conversion, the lens is capable of focusing right down onto the glass of the port, which the original Nikonos 13mm lens could not do. This is extremely useful for close-focus wide-angle shooting, as the difference between a subject right on the port versus two inches away, at such wide



The small overall size means you can get up nice and personal with your subjects like this huge American alligator, Florida, USA (Sony a9, Nikonos RS 13mm f/1.8 fisheye, Seafrogs housing, dual Kraken Sports KS160 strobes, f/8, 1/20s, ISO 800)

The largest fish in the sea, a whale shark, cruises the blue waters off Isla Mujeres, Mexico: The Nikonos RS 13mm is the perfect big-animal lens—wide, small, and exceptionally sharp (Sony a7RII, Nikonos RS 13mm f/1.8 fisheye, Nauticam housing, f/5, 1/320s, ISO 320)

focal lengths, is dramatic in terms of how large it appears in the frame.

I have yet to be able to induce any flaring or ghosting. Both of these are known to plague water-contact optics, so not having to worry about them is fantastic, especially for my work, a lot of which is done in bright, shallow water. There have been a few instances when friends have

found an example of flaring in one out of several hundred images, but personally, I have not encountered this in my personal shooting.

By removing all the optics and creating his own ports, Isaac has managed to further shrink the already small footprint of the Nikonos 13mm. A removable shade is also a welcome



A huge, prehistoric-looking longnose gar beneath some spectacular sun rays, Florida, USA: Some water contact optics have a tendency to suffer from flaring. I have yet to encounter even a bit of flare with the Nikonos 13mm on Sony mirrorless. Sunballs, sunbeams, backlight, and so on, nothing has yet to produce a flare (Sony a9, Nikonos RS 13mm f/1.8 fisheye, Seafrogs housing, dual Kraken Sports KS160 strobes, f/6.3, 1/100s, ISO 500)

addition for those special occasions when you may need to get just that tiny bit closer to a subject on the bottom.

An interesting change Isaac made to the lens is the ability to maximize image quality for the distance at which you are shooting your subject. For example, if you are shooting a subject a foot from the front of the lens, you can actually set that distance on the lens to maximize the image quality

at that distance. It does not degrade image quality at other distances; it just maximizes it at your set distance. A key printed on the lens provides a guide to setting the proper optimal distance. For Nauticam shooters, full control over the distance adjustment is now available underwater. For my own rig, I currently have to preset the distance optimization ahead of time.

Final Thoughts

The mirrorless realm is still waiting for a native fisheye lens. The big three—Canon, Nikon, and Sony—all have neglected this niche lens, and those who want to use fisheyes have been forced to use an adapter. At least for Sony users, this is no longer the case: The Nikonos RS 13mm is the best fisheye that has ever been made and being able to use it flawlessly on Sony mirrorless cameras has given new life to a legendary optic.

The Nikonos RS 13mm is objectively better than other fisheye options available to underwater shooters. Fisheyes are arguably the most important lens in an underwater photographer's gear bag, so why not get yourself the best fisheye available? Keep in mind, however, that the lenses still pop up on eBay but are being snapped up faster and faster now that they can be used again.

If you'd like your own conversion, please email Isaac. Note that he charges US\$1,000 for the conversion—Nikonos RS 13mm and Sony 50mm not included. The latter can regularly be found for less than \$200.

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DivePhotoGuide
www.divephotoguide.com

Matthew is a Florida-based wildlife photographer who has been diving since he was 10 years old. He has traveled extensively, visiting well-known dive destinations such as Guadalupe Island, Indonesia and the Philippines, but he also likes to dive closer to home in Florida. When not taking pictures underwater, he can be found trekking mountains, or exploring national parks and rainforests in search of new adventures and wildlife encounters.

He also partners with Alex Mustard in The Underwater Show.

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Sony GM Wide Angle lenses

by Massimo Franzese

Rectilinear lenses are frequently associated with problems within the underwater photographer community. Many times fisheye lenses that are not mainstream success become cult lenses underwater, like the Tokina 10-17mm for cropped sensor. We ask ourselves would it get any better if I get a really good topside lens? Is it worth housing it?

Unfortunately this is not that simple and it is due to water. The water glass interface makes things complicated and many people, even respectable photographers, don't get their head around the physics of dome ports and the drawbacks.

It is probably helpful to have a recap of few key features of dome ports:

1. Preserve field of view of the lens
2. Do not introduce distortion
3. Cause the camera to focus much closer than in air
4. Increase depth of field
5. Introduce spherical aberrations and field of curvature

The first two points require your dome to be properly sized and positioned. Unfortunately I have not located a comprehensive system to determine the parameters so I had to write it myself you can find it [here](#). There are also empirical methods but are hard to replicate without a good set up.

Now assuming that your dome system is correctly set up we want to understand the value of spending considerable money on top quality lenses.



The average underwater photographer does not engage in lots of topside photography and therefore will look for more affordable options, however some have some good topside lenses and want to know if they will get good results housing them.

I happen to do a lot more topside photography than underwater and therefore I own two lenses that have a solid reputation in the Sony E-Mount system. One is the 14/1.8 GM well known by low light



Caribbean Blue 14mm f/16 1/125 500

Sponge Up 14mm f/16 1/200 500

photographers and the other is the 16-35/2.8 GMII recently released and one of the best wide angle zoom ever made for e-mount.

I also own a Zen DP230 and a Nauticam Wide angle port 180mm and in a recent family holiday to Grenada I took the Zen, that is able to host the 14mm field of view, on the trip and shot both lenses underwater. Using my own method I calculated the required extensions. For the 14mm, it did not

coincide with manufacturer recommendations.

First of all let me start with an assessment of the lenses on their own merits.

The 14mm GM is a compact lens with a price of £1,399 and can be found on offer at certain times of the year. The lens' most important feature is that it is relatively small and fast, this also means that the smallest aperture is f/16 which is a clear limitation underwater. My interest in this lens was mainly for split shots and I got some decent results with my daughter modelling. Obviously I do not have a rich coral reef to check all the edge details however I would say this lens is going to work if you already have it.

I also took the lens on an open water dive to see how it worked and due to the wide field of view the lens presents the typical issues of rectilinear lenses even stopped down. Due to the shape of the optics the lens has no filter thread, solutions like the sea and sea corrector will not work (assuming that they have a real benefit) and you are limited to f/16 which means there are situations where this is a problem. The lens performed better on super close shots than it did on mid range shots. I believe this is due to the field of curvature increasing as you focus further away. Few shots to provide context support this view. In the future I believe a split shot at f/16 is the only situation I would consider this lens. I would even go and say that unless you have a low light use case this is a lens not to be invested in for sole underwater use because the use case is fairly small.

Moving on to the 16-35GMII the situation is different. First of all this lens is very consistent centre to edge sharpness and this benefit is apparent in water. Shooting the lens at f/11 provides decent quality photos even at close range and I did not feel the need to stop down. I believe this is due



Guide 16-35mm f/11 1/80 500

to the fact that the field of view being wide but not extremely wide contains the field of curvature issue and therefore you get many good images.

The lens is £2,299 at time of writing and unless you have a strong topside use case this will not be something you will fancy and most likely opt for the Tamron 17-28 that I have tested extensively and recently sold to Alex Mustard.



Turtle Bay 16-35mm f/11 1/80 500

If instead you have a strong topside use case, the lens is just a killer and works totally fine with the 180 wide angle port providing a more compact set up than the Zen 230.

I took several shots with the purpose of purely testing the optics underwater after having done many pool assessments, the results were consistent across the field.



Swarm 15mm fisheye f/16 1/80 500

Now all been said the performance of rectilinear lenses underwater can never match what that same lens would do on land. Is there anything else that can be done?

As a compendium to this article I want to include some post processing tips that may address concerns of certain people that want that edge to edge sharpness but of course this comes at a price.

If you are interested in your rectilinear lens to be truly rectilinear this means you will use a lens profile which will give you very straight lines but also bring out the field of curvature issues mentioned at the

beginning of this article. However if you are more worried about better edges, perhaps because you have reef scenes and the edges are just a distraction, there are a number of things you can do.

Starting from the Sony 14 GM this lens uncorrected has a modest -2.25% distortion, the minus indicates barrel distortion. Your first step is to disable lens correction, bearing in mind that this will also eliminate the vignette correction so perhaps you just want to set distortion correction to zero and adjust the vignette to a value you like. This will give you an improvement because barrel distortion



Purple Rain 14mm f/13 1/200 500

compensates for blurry edges. The second step, which would do if you were not shooting a wreck interior, would be to add barrel distortion. I found that -25% brings good results and can be applied if straight lines are not essential, this will be still much more straight than a fisheye lens and mostly occur at the edges.

When it comes to the 16-35GII this lens exhibits what is referred to as moustache distortion and therefore you need to consider what you are doing more carefully. You have 3 options: one is to just apply the correction if straight lines are to be totally perfect, the second is to

disable corrections which will improve matters but affect the centre, the third is to introduce barrel distortion after correction which will only alter the edges. I did not find the 16-35 to really need the added distortion but at the end is your preference. What I can say is that unless you shoot a pool wall you won't be able to tell things apart and edges are at the end ok even compared to a fisheye.

I want to close on a note on fisheyes and here provide some images from the same trip. Contrary to common belief the reason why fisheye shots looks good underwater is the barrel distortion itself that compresses



Trumpet 16-35mm f/11 1/125 500



Sponges and diver 15mm fisheye f/16 1/50 500

the edges supported by the increased depth of field of the dome port. Ultimately I do not see how a 15mm fisheye edge is really better than the 16-35mm images and for me that is in essence the badge of approval for the 16-35GMII.

Other reasons why the 16-35GMII performs so well is that it focuses close allowing you to get identical results with the smaller wide angle port which is a big benefit for portability.

In summary spending money on a top of the range wide angle lens is not a guarantee of results underwater, and the parameters to get optimal performance from a rectilinear lens

remain the following:

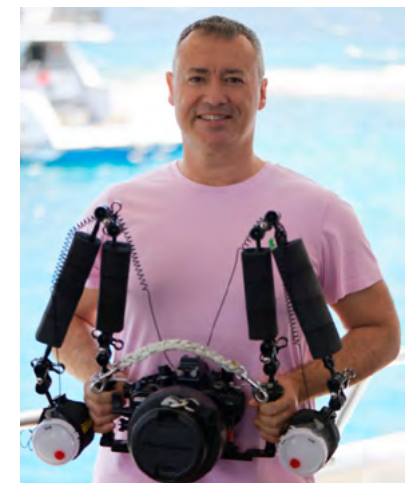
1. Get a lens that is sharp across the frame to start with as things do not get better underwater
2. Make sure your lens focuses close and does not have drop of sharpness at close range as your focus distance behind a dome will be around the 30 cm mark
3. Check the physical design to ensure the lens can focus inside the dome so that it has the maximum range of focus underwater, this is important if you shoot splits to have a sharp water line
4. Evaluate yourself the extension required and do not follow blindly

manufacturers port charts if you want to squeeze the maximum out of your set up

5. If possible check that the lens has limited field of curvature at close range as in water this will get worse

On a final note I want to add that if you are truly obsessed by edge sharpness you should consider a cropped format for example micro four thirds. Due to the additional depth of field your rectilinear shot at the edges will look better however you will lose in centre performance and resolution compared to a high megapixel full frame camera.

Massimo Franzese
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www.uwpmag.com

My journey

by Sandra Stalker

My first underwater camera was an epoque point and shoot film camera that I had picked up second hand in about 2003 with the dizzying heights of two settings: cloudy and sunny. It was probably more suited to tropical waters as colour images from my local Dorset dive sites were always a disappointment, brown on brown fuzz, so I resorted to shooting with black and white film as I could push the processing myself as I am an Art and Photography Technician at a college.

I then moved on to a digital compact a few years later and bought my first macro diopter which was a game changer for photographing nudibranchs as my previous camera couldn't get any closer than 1 metre. I am a bit of a nudibranch spotter nerd so I spent the next 15 years mostly taking ID shots so I could identify everything I saw on my dives. A good ID shot tends to be the absolute opposite of a creative shot with a flat on profile, front and top down with as much DOF as possible. I started to share my images as I loved showing people the amazing creatures we have on our coastline and built up a little following of armchair divers. It did end up with me taking the same picture of the same sponge under Swanage pier in the same flat way over and over for years and I was getting a bit bored at that point as I had recorded pretty much every species in Dorset.

In 2019 as a member of South coast divers on facebook I saw an ad for the Underwater Photographer of the Year competition and entered 3 images into British waters Compact, they weren't



Pinky. Sand goby at Sandsfoot. Canon G7xii in Ikelite housing. Backscatter miniflash x 2. F8.1/125 sec. ISO 250.

placed but that was the start of the change in my photography and the journey I am on now.

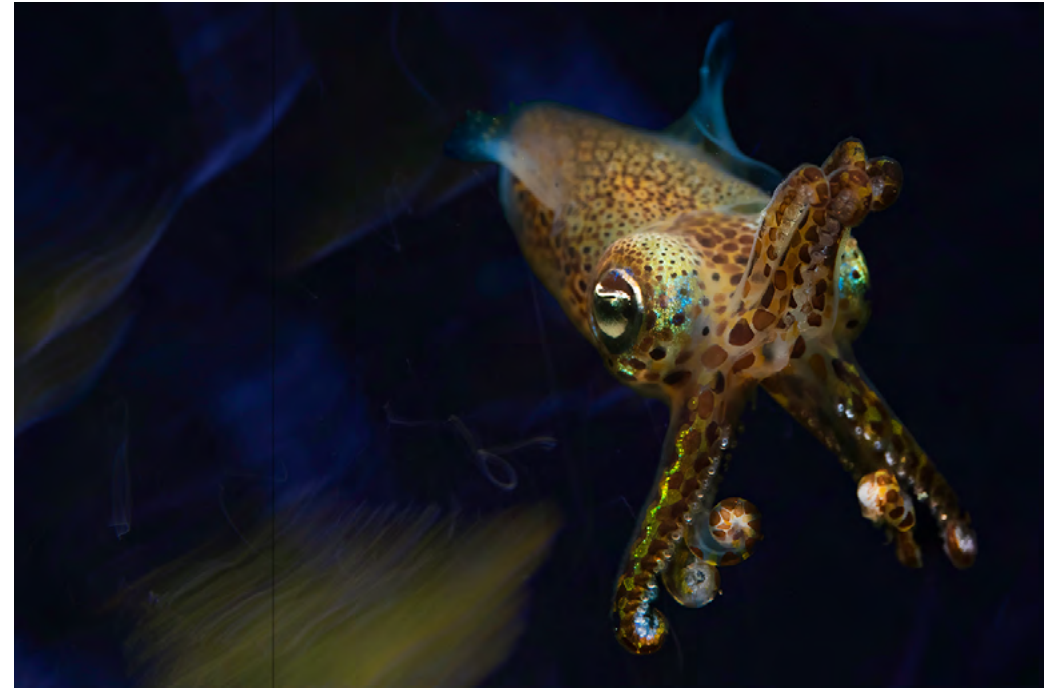
I was totally in awe of some of the amazing shots in the competition and how beautifully composed and artistic they were. Although I am trained in Art as an illustrator and Printmaker I never saw my underwater photography as anything other than a method of recording what I saw but after entering the competition it was like a switch had flicked and I got really excited; I wanted to produce

more artistic images that not only show off our fabulous UK creatures but also entice the viewer into that magical underwater world I am part of when diving. I aim to create images that go beyond the simple depiction of the creatures and draw you in as you view them, creating a narrative within the image or turning a common subject into something exotic.

I am lucky to live on such an amazing UK coastline that faces many directions as the UK



A crab enjoying solstice sunset, in the Fleet, Dorset. Sony A7RIV in Nauticam housing with two Backscatter miniflash strobes. Lens Sony 28-60 with Nauticam wwwl1b wet wide lens. F16.1/125.ISO 400..



Space Invader. Bobtail squid at Newtons Cove. Canon G7xii in Ikelite housing. Backscatter miniflash x 2. F11.¼ sec.ISO 400.

weather is a fickle beast and usually when one side or other is blown out with visibility like an oxtail soup there will be somewhere to get in, the viz may not be great but there's always something to see. I am also really lucky that my husband is also an underwater photographer and we have dived together for 24 years and started on this journey together and grown in it at the same time, this really helps as we are always in the water either diving, snorkeling or playing with rockpool shots together. It also helps to have someone to bounce ideas off; we have a book we write our

ideas for planned shots in. It helps that we both take a different creative approach to photography.

Not all of my shots are pre planned some are more spontaneous, some are luck, right place and time or an unexpected happy accident within an image, often many are a complete disaster as I'm always trying something new but that's the best way to push myself forward with my photography. The great thing is that where we shore dive, sites are only about a 5 minute drive from our house so I can try again if I have got something nearly right.



Midnight Raver. Green shore crab on a night dive, raving away, captured using a long exposure with a purple filter on a Backscatter video light and a snooted miniflash strobe. Sony A7RIV in Nauticam housing with Backscatter miniflash 2 Strobe and Backscatter videolight and coloured filter. Lens Sony 28-60 with Nauticam wwwl1b wet wide lens.F18.1/6.ISO 200.

My purple crab image that was awarded in UPY British waters Macro this year is an example of that. The first of the crab shots was spontaneous, there wasn't much about on a night dive and I loved the way the green shore crabs that are so common and often ignored for that very reason, danced around in front of me. My first shots hadn't quite worked but were nearly there so I was able to review the images

and my settings at home, think about what I could do differently and what I was trying to achieve and try again on another night dive. I often go for species that are common and overlooked by other divers as I find it really exciting to try and get a shot of them in a more unusual way.

I upgraded from my compact to a mirrorless Sony A7RIV about three years ago. There were

two reasons as I really did love my Canon G7Xii compact. Firstly my housing was failing and I was at a crossroads of what to do and secondly I think I had reached a point where I wanted to push my creativity forward by being able to change lenses on a camera and try new things. Ryan my husband had also just upgraded to the Sony and it made sense for us both to get the same camera so we could



King of the pier. A black faced blenny displaying his splendour under Swanage Pier. Sony A7RIV in Nauticam housing with two Backscatter miniflash 2 Strobes. Lens Sony 28-60 with Nauticam wwwl1b wet wide lens. F16.1/60.ISO 400.



Bloom: This image was taken whilst snorkeling where I came across a beautiful vivid red strawberry anemone on a concrete wall. In order to show off the beautiful red I shot up towards the surface and lit the background with a green (red and green should be seen, in my opinion) and then snooted the red. It took a few attempts to line it up as I couldn't see the camera screen as had it upside down. Sony A7RIV in Nauticam housing with two Backscatter miniflash strobes one with coloured filter one with snoot. Lens Sony 28-60 with Nauticam wwwl1b wet wide lens. F16.1/100.ISO 320.

share lenses. This was a game changer for me and has really allowed me to experiment much more.

I am particularly enjoying playing with a series of vintage lenses I have as they give much more of a fairy tale otherworldly narrative for me which fits with my view of the underwater

world. My favourite is the optic only of a Trioplan 50. I thought it was a complete lens at a bargain price on ebay but was missing the helicoid when it arrived so I had no way of attaching it to my camera, or focusing but that didn't matter as I have no way of focusing it in my housing anyway.



Pearl in the folds. Stalked jellyfish on Kelp at Porthkerris, shot using a single strobe at a low angle to create shadow. Sony A7RIV in Nauticam housing with single Backscatter miniflash strobe . Lens Sony 28-60 with Nauticam www11b wet wide lens. F18,1/125,ISO 400.



Sunset gazer. Nudibranch in Portland harbour gazing into the sunset. Using glitter board as backdrop behind the weed and a vintage lens to achieve the bokeh. Sony A7RIV in Nauticam housing with two Backscatter miniflash 2 Strobes. Lens part Trioplan 50 optic only (home bodged together). F2.9.1/200.ISO 100.



I bought an M42 microscope adapter tube which I then gaffa taped the lens into and it works fantastically. The tube acting as an extension tube and by pure luck giving me the optimum focus distance for the tiny size of nudibranchs we get along our coastline. I love using that lens over and above any of my other much more expensive lenses.

I do play a lot with coloured lighting as colour is something I

really love, I started off with Lee Filter gels taped to my old Sea and Sea strobe and my initial UPY success of 'Pinky' back in 2021 was taken using this method with my compact camera. I've since upgraded to the Backscatter Miniflash with filters as these are more easily interchangeable underwater. I also use the coloured filters on the Backscatter video light for long exposures such as the crab shot and can switch them easily

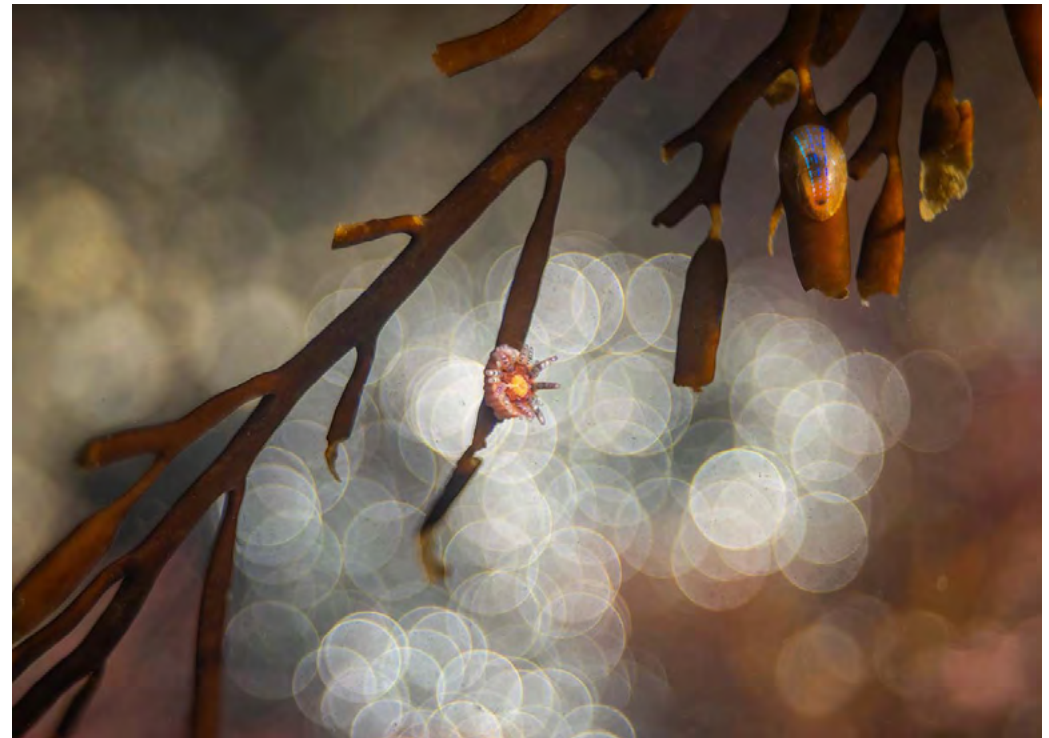


The conversation. A nudibranch and a snail having a chat at Kimmeridge Bay. Shot with a coloured filter on one strobe and a snoot on the other. Sony A7RIV in Nauticam housing with single Backscatter miniflash strobe . Lens Sony 90mm. F10.1/160.ISO 125.

between strobe and video light even in the depths of UK winter diving in 6°C water with fat gloves on. I do still use things like the Lee Filters taped onto cheap torches that I might place in the weed for a bit of coloured backlighting. I play with lots of different artificial backgrounds using anything I can alongside more natural backgrounds where I might see a creature against a colour or texture that I feel would be a great backdrop,

these tend to be spontaneous shots where I come across something I maybe wasn't expecting.

I think of the more macro scenes as mini stage sets where I can control everything to show off the creatures to the best and also create an image that I hope the viewer might get lost in or allow ambiguity in how they interpret it. I often use a snoot on one of my strobes in order to just pick out the subject against the colour. I used this



The belle of the ball. A tiny gem anemone and a blue rayed limpet on weed at Kimmeridge Bay, shot using a vintage lens and a pan scourer background to bring attention to the beauty of the tiny gem. Sony A7RIV in Nauticam housing with two Backscatter miniflash 2 Strobes. Lens part Trioplan 50 optic only (home bodged together). F2.9.1/200.ISO 100.

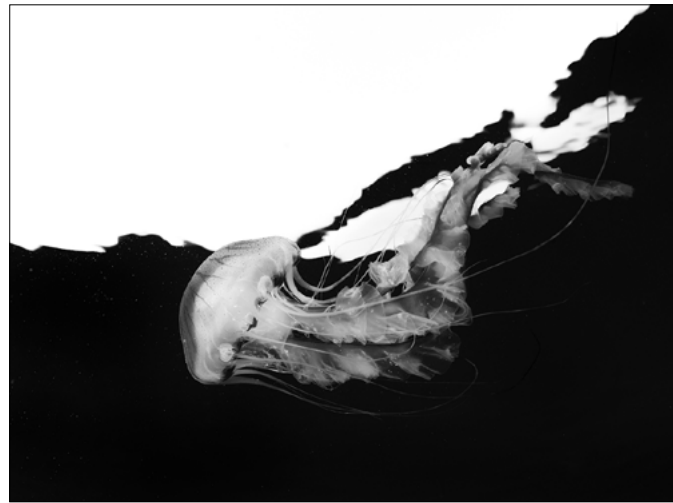
method with a coloured blue strobe backlight for my stalked jellyfish which had success in both UPY and CUPOTY last year. This was a shot that I had in my head and went in for my dive with my vintage lens on with this shot in mind. It was frustrating as the very abundant stalked jellyfish that had been everywhere the previous week were eluding me and I finally found one 60 mins into the dive, by which time the swell had picked up and

managing to focus with a fixed focus lens set to a very shallow DOF and line up a snoot beam on the subject felt almost impossible; in fact I came out from the dive thinking I hadn't managed to get the shot I wanted.

I also like to break the rules of photography, nudibranchs shouldn't be shot from behind so I shoot them from behind to add to the narrative, what is it looking at? Gazing into the distance, the viewer becomes part



Gliding through the honey pot. Seahare gliding along a piece of kelp backlit by the sun at Chesil Cove. Sony A7RIV in Nauticam housing with two Backscatter miniflash strobes. Lens Sony 28-60 with nauticam wwwl1b wet wide lens. F20.1/160.ISO 200.



*Between worlds: Compass jellyfish at Chesil Cove, Dorset
Sony A7RIV in Nauticam housing with two Backscatter Miniflash strobes . Lens Sony 28-60 with Nauticam WWWL1b wet wide lens. F18, 1/125, ISO 200*

of its world. My strobes are almost never lined up perfectly giving a flatter perfect exposure, I love to use shadow and directional light to add drama, I light from underneath to add horror movie style shadow to creatures like pipefish as they remind me of dinosaurs. I know how to play by the rules but breaking them can be lots more fun.

As I said at the start entering competitions totally changed my mindset and approach to my photography about 5 years ago and they really are what drives me forward and I am where I am now as a result. They are an exciting roller coaster of ups and downs that drive my creativity forward. Also being married to another underwater photographer we do have a healthy competitiveness between ourselves which is really good at motivating us and developing our photography; we both see the same subject in different ways and can learn from each other. I have to say that a huge amount of new ideas I try (some of them quite bonkers and experimental) often end up in epic fails at the start and I then build on what has worked and what hasn't to drive myself forwards, that's what keeps it all fresh, exciting and fun for me.

Most importantly though I do what I do for me and because I love it, all art and photography is incredibly subjective, what one person loves another will hate so I feel its really important to have masses of fun with what I do and primarily do it for me. It's been an amazing 4 years and I feel really excited for what the future will bring.

Sandra Stalker
[Instagram](#)



Recovering Split Shots with AI

By Steve Miller

Split shots – where your dome port is half-in, half-out of the water – can be challenging to capture. For one, everything is moving. The water, your camera, the subject, and your whole body gets tossed in the swell. This results in lots of misses. But before you start deleting files, make sure you have explored the possibilities of recovering them in the editing room.

Balancing Over- and Under-Exposure

A photographer shooting split shots for the first time recently reached out with the question: “I managed to over expose and under expose the same frame! How is that even possible?”

It’s not just possible, it’s probable. The tonal range of a 50/50 image can be many, many f/stops. Maybe even more than your camera sensor is capable of recording, though probably not. Mirrorless cameras sold today have an incredible dynamic range.

There are techniques for minimizing tonal range, for example

keeping the sun at your back. But often with big animals we have to take what we get.

The trick is to capture as many pixels as you can by avoiding pure white or pure black sections in the image. This leaves you a choice. If you let your light meter read the sky, your water may be almost black. If you let the meter read the water, your sky may go pure white. If the sky looks pure white, there may be no color or clouds to find. I prefer to skew towards dark water and make up for it in the edit.

Exposure Adjustments in Lightroom

Make your edits local, not global. Local brushes and filters allow you to play with the saturation, contrast, and even the white balance for a specific region in the image.

Use linear gradient masks in Adobe Lightroom to handle the portions of the image above the water separately from the portions below the waterline. The gradient mask tool has markers that allow you to control exactly how gradual or abrupt you want the edge line to be. And that



At first glance, this image is a wreck (actually, a shark ha,ha). The only saving grace is that the highlights are not blown out. It becomes a dynamic capture after editing exposure and adding a crop in Lightroom. Check out the video to see how. © Steve Miller

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSRGt2yuQZU>

will be dependent on how clean the capture of the waterline was.

Once your exposure is balanced, you’ll probably need to go through the image with the Heal tool to remove stray water droplets.

Photoshop AI to the Rescue?

Everything we have described so far can be done in Lightroom. But it may be worth jumping over to Photoshop for a newer feature called Sky Replacement. In fact this feature might even change the way you shoot



Steve is a great presenter and educator who engages, informs and encourages.

splits.

Photoshop has always had the ability to merge two images into a composite, and the results are often nice... as long as you don’t look too close for the merge. But the process



(Top)) This whale shark image was brought back from the darkness with Lightroom. But it was shot on a cloudless day so it still lacks any interest in the upper portion of the image. © Steve Miller
(Above) This is the same image as before run through Photoshop's Sky Replacement tool. Adding clouds balances out the image and directs the viewer's attention to the whale shark. © Steve Miller

is pretty advanced for some of us.

Sky Replacement is an AI-generation tool that will find the horizon line in an image and insert a sky of your choice with a single click. They provide some stock cloudy skies and sunsets to use, or you can add your images and create your own library of skies.

Conclusion

Remember, photography is an art form and anything goes (except in photojournalism and some competitions). The tools exist to recover lackluster over-unders at the touch of a button, without becoming a Photoshop expert.

Next time you're in a challenging environment, try focusing on getting the best "under" possible for your split shot. Then dry off and shoot some sunsets at happy hour with an eye towards blending later.

Steve Miller
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Ikelite Ambassador Steve Miller has been a passionate teacher of underwater photography since 1980. In addition to creating aspirational photos as an ambassador, he leads the Ikelite Photo School, conducts equipment testing, contributes content and photography, represents us at dive shows and events, provides one-on-one photo advice to customers, and participates in product research and development. Steve also works as a Guest Experience Manager

for the Wakatobi Dive Resort in Indonesia. In his "free" time he busies himself tweaking his very own Backyard Underwater Photo Studio which he's built for testing equipment and techniques.



www.ikelite.com/pages/weekly-newsletter

Lembeh's Critter Camouflage

by Sam Robertshaw

The Lembeh Strait is celebrated worldwide as a premier destination for muck diving and underwater photography. Divers flock to this unique region to encounter its extraordinary array of critters, well known for their remarkable camouflage abilities. The sandy and rubbly seabeds of Lembeh conceal a myriad of fascinating creatures, from tiny pygmy seahorses to intricate nudibranchs, making it a haven for underwater photographers seeking unusual and captivating subjects.

Camouflage serves as a crucial survival strategy for marine life, especially in the challenging environment of Lembeh, which is teeming with predators and competitors. By blending in seamlessly with their surroundings, critters can avoid detection by predators hunting for prey. This ability not only enhances their chances of survival but also allows them to efficiently hunt for food without alerting potential prey.

Various types of camouflage are employed by marine creatures in Lembeh to achieve this remarkable adaptation. Background matching is one such tactic, where organisms match their colours and patterns to

their immediate environment, making them indistinguishable from the substrate or surrounding environment. Disruptive coloration involves bold patterns or contrasting colours that break up the outline of the organism, making it harder for predators to recognise them as prey. Mimicry, another effective camouflage strategy, involves organisms resembling other objects or organisms in their environment to avoid detection or gain protection.

Lembeh Strait is home to a variety of marine species known for their incredible camouflage abilities, making it a treasure trove for underwater photographers. Some standout species, such as the Pygmy Seahorse, Mimic Octopus, and Hairy Frogfish, are particularly notable for their mastery of disguise.

The Bargibanti's Pygmy Seahorse (*Hippocampus bargibanti*) is a prime example of extraordinary camouflage. Measuring just about 1 to 2 centimetres in length, this tiny seahorse resides exclusively on gorgonian corals. Its body closely mimics the texture and colour of the coral polyps, making it nearly indistinguishable from its host.



Pygmy Seahorse - Bargibanti Pygmy Seahorse are abundant in Lembeh, once you (or your guide) has found them, the challenge of keeping them in your viewfinder begins. A stunning subject with equally beautiful surroundings.

*Canon R5, Nauticam Housing, INON Z330 x 2, 100mm lens
1/200, f/8, ISO 100*



Mimic - Mimic Octopus are thought to camouflage in a different manner to other cephalopods, by actively mimicking other animals found in the substrate. There is still some debate whether this is a conscious effort by these octopus, or whether they just happen to share the appearance of animals such as flounders or sea kraits whilst going about their daily business.

*Canon R5, Nauticam Housing, Backscatter MF2 with snoot, 100mm lens
1/200, f/14, ISO 100*

This symbiotic relationship not only provides the Pygmy Seahorse with protection from predators but also offers a fascinating subject for underwater photographers.

One of the most famous camouflaging creatures in Lembeh is the Mimic Octopus (*Thaumoctopus mimicus*). Unlike the Pygmy Seahorse, which relies on static camouflage, the Mimic Octopus takes

mimicry to a whole new level. This intelligent cephalopod can imitate the appearance and movements of various marine species, such as lionfish, flatfish, and sea snakes. By contorting its body and changing its coloration, the Mimic Octopus can deceive predators and prey alike.

The Hairy Frogfish (*Antennarius striatus*), with its unique and bizarre appearance, is yet another favourite



Hairy Frogfish - Hairy Frogfish are arguably the most iconic Lembeh critters and ones that gained that unique appearance all for camouflage. The hairy appendages provides incredible camouflage against algae and seagrass beds, allowing them to hunt effectively whilst remaining invisible to predators.

Canon R5, Nauticam Housing, INON Z330 strobe with INON LF650h-N torch, 100mm lens. 1/200, f/5, ISO 10

here in Lembeh. Covered in hair-like appendages, this frogfish can resemble a piece of algae or a clump of seaweed, allowing it to blend perfectly into the sandy and rubble-strewn substrates of its habitat. Like other frogfish species, their body can slowly change colour to match its surroundings, further enhancing its disguise. Hairy Frogfish are ambush predators, lying in wait for

unsuspecting prey to come close before striking with lightning speed.

Another fascinating example of camouflage in Lembeh's waters is found in the Robust and Ornate Ghostpipefish (*Solenostomus cyanopterus* and *Solenostomus paradoxus*). These remarkable fish are masters at blending in with their surroundings, often mimicking the appearance of floating debris,



Ornate GP - There are fewer critters that blend in quite like Ornate Ghostpipefish, usually hiding amongst the arms of feather stars or hydroids. This yellow individual is one of the rarer colour variations, yet it still manages to find a matching host. Canon R5, Nauticam Housing, INON Z330 x 2, 100mm lens. 1/200, f/5, ISO 100

crinoids, or seagrass. The Robust Ghostpipefish has a more solid, leaf-like appearance that allows it to blend seamlessly with algae and other plant matter. In contrast, the Ornate Ghostpipefish displays intricate patterns and frills that closely resemble the fine details of feather stars or soft corals. These adaptations not only provide excellent camouflage from predators but also make them nearly invisible to the untrained eye.

Cuttlefish in Lembeh also display exceptional camouflage

capabilities. These cephalopods can rapidly change their skin colour and texture to match their surroundings, thanks to specialised cells called chromatophores. Whether blending in with coral reefs, sandy bottoms, or rocky outcrops, cuttlefish use their camouflage for both hunting and evading predators. Their ability to display a wide range of colours and patterns makes them a favourite subject for photographers looking to capture the marvels of marine camouflage.



Crinoid Cuttlefish - No matter which species of cuttlefish you come across or what substrate, they will almost certainly find a way to camouflage with their surroundings. This stunning crinoid cuttlefish changing both its colours and skin texture to match with the soft coral. Canon R5, Nauticam Housing, INON Z330 x 2, 100mm lens. 1/200, f/5, ISO 100

Spotting camouflaged animals is one of the most challenging aspects of this style of diving. A great guide is certainly a huge help; at NAD Lembeh, there is a 2:1 guest-to-guide ratio where the guides have well over 100 years combined diving in the strait.

One effective technique for searching is to look for movement in the substrate, panning to see if any camouflaged critters give themselves away. Pay attention to unusual shapes or patterns that stand out from the surrounding environment, as these

may indicate the presence of a hidden critter. Diving slowly and methodically through the area, taking your time to scan each section, can increase your chances of spotting these elusive animals.

When it comes to capturing camouflaged critters in Lembeh, having the right equipment is essential. Macro lenses are a must-have for photographing the small and intricately patterned creatures that inhabit these waters. A lens with a focal length of 60mm to 100/105mm is

ideal for getting close-up shots while maintaining a comfortable distance, and increasing magnification with diopters is another option too. In addition to your lens choice, being familiar with your camera's focus systems to help lock onto subjects quickly with either auto or manual focus is key. A small aperture (f/13 to f/20+) ensures adequate depth of field to capture the details of these tiny subjects while a wider aperture (f/2.8-f/11) can isolate the camouflaged critters from messy backgrounds.

Once you've located a camouflaged critter, composing your shot and using lighting effectively is important to capturing stunning images. Aim to position your camera at eye level with the subject to create a more engaging and natural perspective. Utilise strobes or continuous lights to illuminate the creature, highlighting its unique features without overwhelming its natural habitat. Experiment with different lighting angles to avoid harsh shadows and bring out the textures and colours of the critter. The use of snoots and other narrow-beamed torches are particularly popular nowadays, pinpointing the light on the subjects without lighting up any distracting elements that surround the animal.

There is no "right" answer when it comes to shooting underwater macro photos. One of the most exciting aspects of this genre of photography is the multitude of ways that you can take photos of a single subject. With the abundance of critters in Lembeh, you always have plenty of time with each critter to experiment and see which style of photo and/or lighting you prefer.

Camouflaged species play a crucial role in Lembeh's marine ecosystem and ecosystems around the world, contributing significantly to the biodiversity and health of the reef. These creatures often serve as both predators and prey within



Tozeuma - As with many other species of shrimp, *Tozeuma Shrimp* seek camouflage for survival. They do it in a unique way with their texture, colours and even body patterns mimicking the sponges where they reside.

Canon R5, Nauticam Housing, INON Z330 x 2, 100mm lens 1/200, f/11, ISO 100

the food web. For instance, a well-camouflaged predator like the Hairy Frogfish can control the population of smaller fish and invertebrates, preventing any one species from becoming too dominant. Conversely, camouflaged prey species provide essential food sources for higher trophic level predators, thus supporting the overall balance



Goby Sea Pen - A wide variety of coral and ghost gobies can be found amongst all kinds of substrate. This one on a sea pen where the goby's colour and patterns camouflage perfectly.

Canon R5, Nauticam Housing, INON Z330 x 2, 100mm lens. 1/200, f/8, ISO 100

of the reef. Their unique adaptations also promote a diverse range of interactions and symbiotic relationships, enriching the complexity and resilience of the ocean environment.

Preserving camouflaged critters and their habitats is vital to maintaining the delicate balance of our marine ecosystems. These creatures rely



Coleman Shrimp - Even critters as beautiful and brightly coloured as Coleman Shrimp have mastered camouflage. Their plain white colouration mixed with dark red or brown spots merge seamlessly with the nasty spines of fire urchins.

Canon R5, Nauticam Housing, INON Z330 x2, 100mm lens. 1/200, f/8, ISO 100

heavily on the health of their surroundings to thrive. For instance, corals provide essential habitat for hundreds of species of camouflaging fish, while seagrass beds offer refuge and feeding grounds for a whole host of other species. Human activities such as overfishing, pollution, and habitat destruction pose significant threats to these delicate environments. Conservation efforts

aimed at protecting these habitats, along with responsible diving practices, are essential to ensure the continued survival of these fascinating creatures and the overall health of the reef ecosystem.

In summary, Lembeh is a treasure trove for underwater photographers and marine enthusiasts, offering a unique glimpse into the world of camouflaged critters. These creatures, from the

minuscule Bargibanti's Pygmy Seahorse to the enigmatic Hairy Frogfish, showcase remarkable adaptations that allow them to blend seamlessly into their environments. Camouflage serves as a vital survival strategy, enabling these species to evade predators and ambush prey. Understanding the various types of camouflage, such as background matching and mimicry, enhances our appreciation of these fascinating animals. Capturing their beauty through photography requires patience, skill, and a keen eye for detail, but the rewards are immense.

I encourage all divers to explore Lembeh's camouflaged critters, whether you are new to these minute subjects or not. Appreciate the intricate beauty and ecological significance of these unique marine species. As you embark on your underwater photography adventures, remember to practice responsible diving and contribute to the preservation of these delicate ecosystems. The challenge of spotting and photographing camouflaged creatures is not only thrilling but also deeply rewarding, offering a deeper connection to many species that non-divers all around the world may not be familiar with.



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Providencia Island, Caribbean

by Wolfgang Schreibmayer

I first became aware of Providencia Island as a diving destination, when I asked in Scubaboard for a Caribbean diving location that still offers intact reefs and sealife and is not overrun by tourism (my Caribbean diving experience was, so far, limited to a stay in the early 90s at Grand Cayman and two stays on the Florida Key Islands around 2000).

Instigated by a very positive recommendation, Lisi, myself and two friends (Franz and Gerdi) headed towards Providencia Island in March 2024...

The tiny island belongs politically to Columbia, but is located in the western Caribbean approx. 150 km off the coast, at the geographical height of Nicaragua. It is located close to another, bigger, island, San Andres and belongs to the San Andres archipelago.

Before I start to report about this remarkable diving and UW-photography journey, it is important to state that this is certainly NOT a diving destination for everybody.

Do not attempt to undertake this trip, unless you are prepared to deal with the toils listed below, otherwise

the trip may become a nightmare:

Arrival and departure to and from Providencia is very tedious: For us Austrians this means a flight from Vienna to Paris, followed by a long flight from Paris to Bogota, the capital of Columbia. After arriving at Bogota in the late evening and spending the night in a hotel near the airport, we took a flight from Bogota to San Andres.

After spending another night in San Andres, we headed finally to our destination, Providencia.

Satena, a small domestic airline, operates the route from San Andres to Providencia with small turboprop aircrafts that remind me of bumblebees - especially landing and taking off on the small landing strip on Providencia is an adventure in itself.

Here is a facette of the typical reefscape at the outer reef. While I was trying to adjust flashes and camera to make a photo of the reefscape and the three langusts, a juvenile reef shark swam into the frame and destroyed my composition .

*Sony A7R5, Nauticam housing, Canon 8-15mm @15mm, 140mm domeport, 1/160s, f/9, ISO 250, 2*Z330.*



© Wolfgang Schreibmayer



© Wolfgang Schreibmayer

*The highlight for UW-photographers on Providencia island is certainly the Caribbean reef shark (*Carcharhinus perezii*). They live (still) in high numbers around the island. This species appears to be the Caribbean counterpart of the grey reefshark, that lives in the Indopacific (*Carcharhinus amblyrinchus*). They are “just” reefsharks, but some specimen can grow to quite formidable size (I estimate the individuals that we encountered to measure between 1 m and 2.5 m). The photo shows Gerdi taking a photo of a Caribbean reef shark at the outer reef: Sony A7R5, Nauticam housing, Sony 28-60mm @28mm, WACP-C, 1/200s, f/9, ISO 250, 2*Z330.*

The check-in luggage is restricted to 15 kg (!), but more luggage is allowed upon extra payment, so no problem.

The real problem was that three suitcases got lost on the flight from Paris to Bogota and these delayed suitcases are not automatically transported to the final destination.

It took us three days, a lot of effort and nerves, numerous phonecalls and the dedicated help of Nelson, an employee of a concurrent domestic airline at San Andres, until we had our complete photographic equipment on site - we were three UW-photographers.



© Wolfgang Schreibmayer

*These sharks are anything but shy and approach the divers as soon as they come close to the drop off at the outer reef (they are not fed or baited by the diving base). From few up to a dozen of these animals would encircle the divers during the entire dive and make outstanding motifs for UW photographers. Reef shark against the reef: Sony A7R5, Nauticam housing, Sony 20-70mm @20mm, 170mm domeport, 1/160s, f/9, ISO 400, 2*Z330.*

Departure from Providencia was the same, but in reverse order, and this time there were no problems with luggage. Just allow three days for each direction...

Tourism on Providencia island is simple. There is a small, single hotel with enclosed PADI diving base on the island, called “Sirius”. The complex had been completely destroyed by Hurrican Iota in 2020. Since then, only very simple accomodation is available

in private “Posadas” on bed and breakfast basis.

There is no “cold” or “hot” water, it comes just at the temperature as it is available at the container on top of the building. Some apartments have a gas stove for preparing food. In SW-Bay (the biggest beach in Providencia) there was a a single and small restaurant (“Divino Nino”) that offered delicious food for little money. For the spoiled ones amongst us, the choice



Grouper at “El Planchon”: Sony A7R5, Nauticam housing, Sony 28-60mm @60mm, WACP-C, 1/200s, f/11, ISO 200, 2*Z330.

between fish, shrimps or lobster may be a little bit repetitive...

The inhabitants of Providencia are very relaxed and exceptionally friendly to foreigners. Spanish is the official language, but they speak Creole amongst them and many know English.

A few tourists from Colombia come to spend simple, nature bound, holidays. In addition to the general tourists, there are a few divers, mostly from Colombia, but also others from all over the world (Providencia is not a complete insider tip any more).

In the two weeks we stayed

at Providencia, we met divers from Colombia, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany and USA. Daniel, the busy and helpful owner of “Sirius Diving” has established a new replacement diving base, located close to the original one and there are plans to re-establish the hotel and original diving base, but the opening day is uncertain.

This small island is located in the Caribbean high seas and is surrounded by a massive reef. The diving spots, both on the outside as well as inside the reef, are reached by small boats.



*Mixed school of bluestriped grunts (*Hemulon scirius*) and French grunts (*Hemulon flavilineatum*) at Tete’s place:* Sony A7R5, Nauticam housing, Sony 28-60mm @28mm, WACP-C, 1/160s, f/11, ISO 160, 2*Z330.

Visibility in “Caribbean blue” waters is good, I estimate 20m to 25m. The reefs are typical for the Caribbean, with a few stone corals, but plenty of horn and fan corals and impressive sponges. They looked completely intact to me, I could not see signs of bleaching or pollution (some hard corals were broken, presumably from the hurricane).

The Caribbean reefsharks at Providencia island are curious and investigative. Seldom but sometimes, they would come extremely close, almost touching the domeport, in

order to check you out. At a few cm distance they would haul off and continue to encircle the divers at greater distance. Only once during the entire period of two weeks was a shark exerting threatening behaviour against me, i.e. lowering his head and starting jittering with his pectoral fins just in front of me at arms length (I believe that this shark was feeling restricted, as I was positioning myself directly in his swimming direction to get a frontal photo, and Lisi, who was beside me, also taking photos, and the close coral wall dropoff - all



*West Atlantic trumpetfish (Aulostomus maculatus), well camouflaged in a gorgonian octocoral: Sony A7R5, Nauticam housing, Sony 20-70mm @70mm, 170mm domeport, 1/160s, f/11, ISO 100, 2*Z330.*

contributed to the restriction).

After Lisi and I swiftly backed off (better listen, when such an animal wants to tell you something), the shark continued to swim speedily back and forth along the reef edge, repeatedly and fast opening and closing its mouth.

At this point I should say that *Carcharhinus perezi* is considered harmless to humans, but



*Flamingo tongue snail (Cyphoma gibbosus), feeding on gorgonia, taken with the fisheye lens: Sony A7R5, Nauticam housing, Canon 8-15mm @15mm, 140mm domeport, 1/160s, f/16, ISO 100, 2*Z330.*

attacks on humans after neglecting such threatening behaviour have been reported.

A wreck, "El Planchon", is located at the bottom of the coral reefs surrounding Providencia island. Our guide, Carol, told us, that it had been a Colombian ship supporting German submarines with replenishment of all kind during WWII. When the end of the war was close, captain and crew

decided that it is time to go home and sunk the ship putting their thoughts into action (happy people!). Today the wreck is home to triggerfish, groupers and impressive reefsharks as guardians.

The diving at Sirius diving base is typically done with the first dive in the morning on the outer reef and, after a sufficient surface interval, the second dive in shallow and sheltered areas within the reef. These areas provide shelter for impressive schools of snappers, grunts and sweetlips, juvenile fish of all kind, puffer fish, nurse sharks and other kind of marine life (we even encountered a group of friendly porpoises, but they were too far away to take reasonable photos in good quality).

I must admit that I was so impressed by the variety of WA (and fishportrait) subjects (first of all the charismatic *Carcharhinus perezi*, that were abundant at Providencia and whom I, personally, met for the first time in my life), that I did not use my macro setup for even a single dive.

Instead I was using WACP-C/Sony 28-60mm, Canon 8-15mm and Sony 20-70mm for all dives (in this order). The period of two week diving was too short and it would have been better to stay for another, additional, week to exploit the beautiful macro subjects, including snails and shrimps, that we encountered.

Our trip to Providencia island was an exceptional experience for all four of us, with fond memories that will endure...

Wolfgang Schreibmayer

Sint Maarten

by Tim Gurney

I've been to Bonaire 7 times over the years and logged 235 dives there. I like it for the shore diving and, generally, for the macro critters. I love the laid-back feeling.

But, for me, the reefs are not what they were and marine life now seems a bit limited: reef fish, shrimp and arrowcrabs. Slight exaggeration I know but no big things (yeah, the odd tarpon, some turtles) and even the macro life now seems to take some





If I don't get bored after 436 dives this place has to be good, right?

So if you dive in the Caribbean and you fancy a change from Bonaire, check out Sint Maarten. Pack your camera, charge your GoPro, pack your snoot. You won't regret it.

I can recommend diving with Ocean Explorers (info@stmaartendiving.com) run by a super Brazilian couple, Lu and Jef. Jef knows the reefs there like the back of his hand and he and Lu have been running Ocean Explorers for decades.

Tim Gurney
www.waterpixels.net

hunting. Very little, if any, schooling fish.

Yes, I know it usually wins all the prizes for diving in the Caribbean. But, frankly, I had to admit to myself I was getting bored diving there.

By the happiest turn of fates my partner, bless her, was seconded to a job in Sint Maarten and I felt obliged to join her (NB: British irony). Almost three very happy years followed and 436 dives.

Sint Maarten is another of those curious Dutch outposts in the Caribbean. Although not part of the Netherlands (Bonaire is actually a city in the Netherlands), Sint Maarten (or SXM as it's known) is in the Kingdom of the Netherlands so similar in status

to, say, Jersey or Bermuda. It has a significant international airport and is a stone's throw from the British hold-out of Anguilla. I read that Anguilla to Sint Maarten is the world's shortest international flight.

In addition, the northern part of the island is actually an area of metropolitan France and as such part of the EU. One island, two cultures. Best part: two cuisines – the Dutch part slightly more American plus Heineken; the French part, oh la la, French. Think top quality pain au raisin or croissant for breakfast, patisserie for afternoon tea. Excellent inexpensive wines, good restaurants, great supermarkets and entrecôte.....

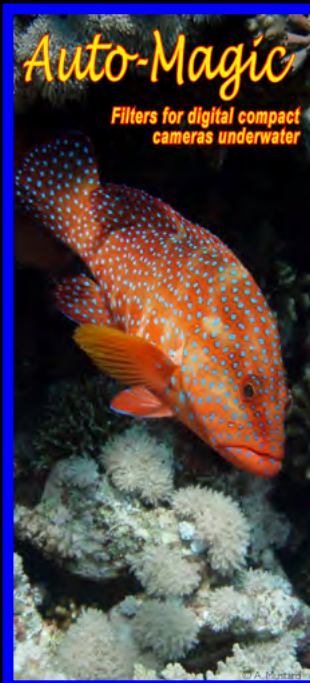
Unlike Bonaire, Sint Maarten is

hardly known as a dive destination. But if you are into macro, there are all sorts of shrimps; you can trip over arrowcrabs; lots of reef sharks, turtles, gobies looking out of crevices, loads of morays, SCHOOLS and I mean serious schools of grunts, blackbar soldierfish, snappers.... I was teaching the West Atlantic REEF fish identification course there and the place is a Caribbean fish spotter's dream. Plenty of wrecks covered in marine life and schools of fish..... and some intriguing coral mazes which are playgrounds for divers.

Yes, you must boat dive which means, probably, a max of 3 dives a day. Shore diving is, sadly, minimal verging on the negligible.



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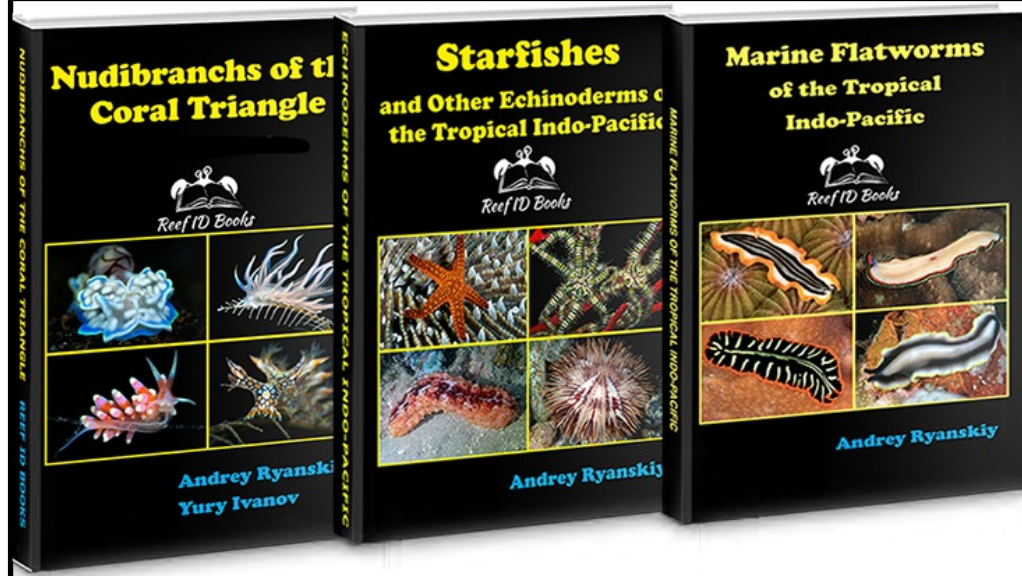
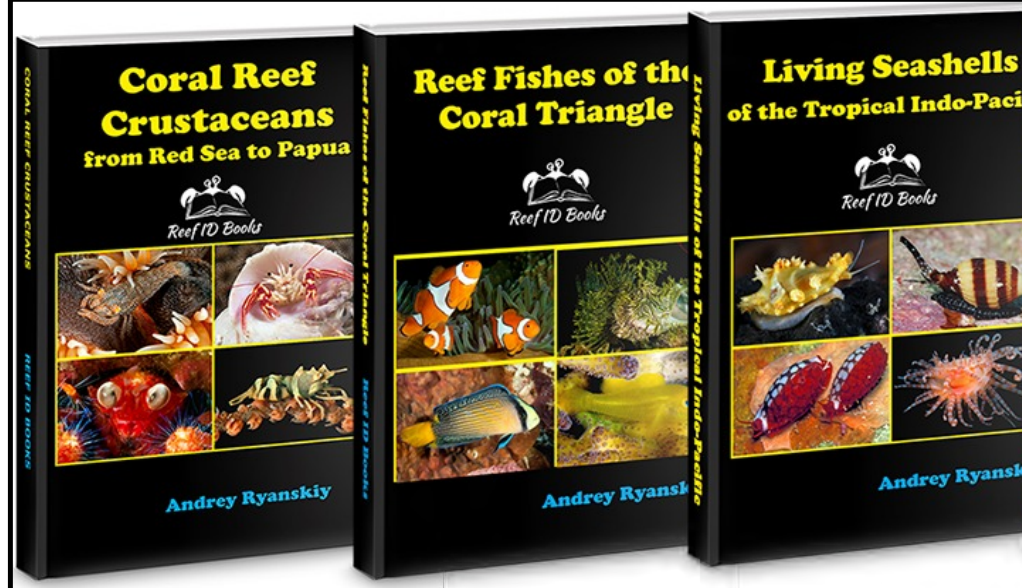


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Marshall's Mysteries 16

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

A



© Colin Marshall

Cendrawasih, Indonesia

image about 20 cm across

B



© Colin Marshall / Ardea

Lembah, Sulawesi, Indonesia

image about 2 cm across

C



© Colin Marshall / Ardea

Raja Ampat, Indonesia

Animal about 4 cm across

D



© Colin Marshall / Alamy

Ambon, Indonesia

Animal about 12 cm across

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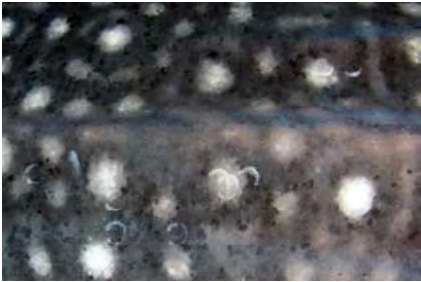
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Marshall's Mysteries 16 - Answers

A



Firstly, this is a close up of a Whale Shark, *Rhincodon typus*. But the more testing question is – *what is the cause of the white circular markings?* Possible suspects are :

- Remora / Sharksucker suction cups – not aware of them leaving these kind of scars
- Giant Squid or Octopuses – unlikely
- Barnacles – tend to be found on some slow-moving whales, not on constantly-moving animals like Whale Sharks
- Cookiecutter Shark - Photo-naturalist Tony Wu ([https:// www.tony-wu.com](https://www.tony-wu.com)) suggests this may be the culprit as the marks are the same pattern & size, similar to Cookiecutter marks seen on some cetaceans
- Manmade – Coral Reef Ecologist Mark Erdmann suggests the marks could be attempts by a researcher to take a biopsy sample or perhaps a bagan fisherman used a pole to try to usher the shark out of a net.

© Colin Marshall / FLPA / Minden



B



Ramose Sea Hare (aka Baba's Sea Hare, *Petalifera ramosa*) is a relatively rare and newly described species (1959).

It is found amongst sea grass, where it grazes on the macroalgae *Padina* sp.

Although this animal has a cartoon-like appearance, it is also regarded as a “jewel of the sea”, especially as it is adorned with exotic tubercles (some with distinctive branched papillae) and ocelli.

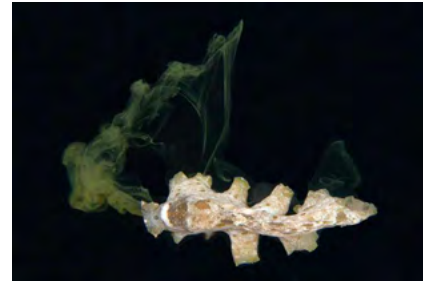
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If any readers have any ideas as to what likely caused these marks, please pass them through to colinmarshall@yahoo.com.

More detail on the Whale Shark can be found on pages 52-53 of Volume 1 of “Reef Fishes of the East Indies” by Gerry Allen and Mark Erdmann.

C



James Bond-esque Cryptic Flatworm, *Pseudobiceros kryptos*, producing chemical repellent to protect against predators.

This was on a night dive, so it is very likely that the flatworm was dispensing its precious chemicals to evade the clumsy photographer...

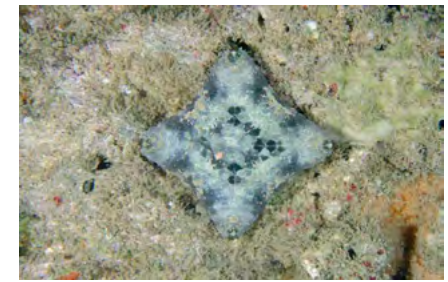
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D



Juvenile Cushion Star, *Culcita novaeguineae*.

However, the unusual aspect of this starfish is its square shape, ie that it has only 4 arms. “Normal” 5-armed Cushion Stars are shown on the left (top & underside views).

Reasons why some Cushion Stars could have only 4 (or 6) arms could include :

- Sublethal physical injury when the starfish is in an early larval stage
- Developmental anomaly due to random genetic flaws
- Disease or pollution effects that are established after settlement on the seafloor by the starfish

This anomaly does not get corrected later - whatever the Cushion Star has when they settle is what they have for the rest of their life.

Molecular data suggests there are multiple species within *Culcita novaeguineae*, but these have not yet been described.

If you think any of the identifications or information above is wrong, please let me know at colinmarshall@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.

My Shot

by David Fleetham

How do you feel your maturing eggs without hands? You use your mouth as this dusky anemonefish, *Amphiprion melanopus*, is demonstrating off the island of Guam, Micronesia, Mariana Islands, Philippines Sea.

Initially when I approached their anemone, both parents ducked for cover. After a few minutes with my camera hovering over them they figured out that I was not a threat and went about their various chores in the small section of reef they call home. Both parents would take turns tending to their, about to hatch young, which included aeration by pectoral fin. They would stop and turn sideways and vigorously flap these fins which would blow the eggs back and forth. I am unsure why, but several times they would nip at the tentacles of the anemone and even pull on them. Regularly one would stop at a spot on the patch of eggs and put several gently into its mouth as pictured here.

I returned a few days later to find the remnants of the egg casings. It is likely that the eggs



Canon EOS R5 mirrorless in an Ikelite dry-lock housing with a Canon RF 100mm macro lens, 1/160 sec, F32, ISO 320, with two Ikelite 230 strobes on TTL.

hatch at night to avoid predators and have the best chance of survival.

David Fleetham
www.davidfleetham.com

**Do you have a favourite shot or an image/s which made a dive special?
E mail yours with some text to
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(It's very easy. Images can be any size bigger than 20cm (horizontal or vertical) @ 150dpi saved as jpeg format and about 500 - 750 words would be fine.)

Parting Shots

by Steffen Schmitt

Hovering over the seabed around Bangka Island in North Sulawesi, I spotted a pair of beautiful nudibranchs engaged in their reproductive activities.

I took the opportunity to play with an artificial background to create some appealing bubble bokeh - a technique I haven't used much before.

As I tried different camera settings, I noticed that the foreground was a little blurred. When I looked up from the camera, I couldn't see anything - no rock, coral or other subject. I continued taking photos and was able to get some clear shots.

But suddenly there was something in the foreground that wasn't there when I looked up from the camera again. This repeated itself several times and I began to think of nitrogen anaesthesia until the mystery was solved.

A tiny little goby poked its head out of its obvious hiding place in the sand. I'm not sure if it was more curious about me and the camera or the two nudibranchs doing their business.

Either way, nature created a background that I hadn't expected and that can hardly be planned.

Enjoy nature!

Steffen Schmitt
www.h2ostsee.de
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