

Underwater Photography

May/June 2011

Issue 60



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AD7000

Photo taken by Chris Doyal
with an Aquatica AD7000

This is my fourth Aquatica
housing, and the AD7000
tops them all.

Chris Doyal



www.aquatica.ca

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Underwater Photography



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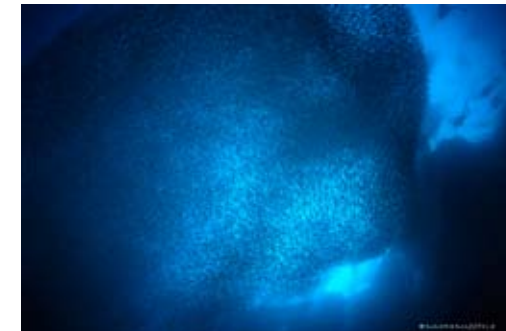
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Underwater Photography
2001 - 2011 © PR Productions
Publisher/Editor Peter Rowlands
www.pr-productions.co.uk
peter@uwpmag.com

Cover shot by
Tim Rock

Well, well, well. Who'd have thought it, eh? 60 today and the contributors for this issue have surpassed themselves yet again in the range of locations from hot to hostile, photo techniques that won't break the bank illustrated with inspirational images from all over the world.

Each issue, for me, has a stand out article. In the last issue it was Alex Tyrell's 'Egg-cellent shots!' and in this issue it is undoubtedly Tim Rock's 'Born Free'. It is an excellent example of what can be done without scuba gear and the benefits it brings. Tim is a consistent UwP contributor yet we have never met but his support of the magazine is very much appreciated by me and I am sure by you the reader.

The other contributor I would like to take a bow is Mark Webster whose output is both consistent in terms of interesting subjects and impressive in terms of images, especially his UK work which produces very attractive images in what can be far from easy waters.

With the exception of Tim and Mark all of the other contributors to this issue are new and I'm delighted to welcome them all. It is one of my great pleasures to work with new contributors and I am proud that we

have provided a platform from which so many have set out.

The cover images should also take a bow and I'm going to pat myself on the back if that's OK. You see it's my job to spot them and with very few exceptions they've all been lurking in the submissions. I don't worry about finding the front cover each time I'm compiling a new issue. They just seem to jump out as I'm working on a layout and it's always very satisfying when they do. Ah, that's where you've been, I say to myself.

One thing's for sure it will be a very different world when we celebrate our 20th birthday in 2021. Think of the changes that have happened between 2001 and now, then multiply them exponentially and you might be somewhere near the mark.

But such technological capability comes at a huge cost. If the scientists at the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis in Santa Barbara, USA are right only 4% of the world's oceans are now undamaged by human activity. Climate change, fishing, pollution, and other human factors have taken their toll in some way on all the other 96 per cent of the and a staggering forty-one per cent of

the oceans are seriously damaged.

What's the point of having all this amazing camera gear when we won't have much to photograph?

New website

I am fortunate to know an excellent website designer who has recently rebuilt ours from the ground up, given it a fresh new look and added many excellent new features.

He is great to work with, doesn't charge a king's ransom and does exactly what I ask him to do. I like working with people like that.

Facebook and Twitter

It might appear to the outward observer that I am bang up to date with the modern methods of communication and that is actually quite true but what I don't quite understand, and so can not raise any enthusiasm for, is the Facebook and Twitter method.

I do, however, get very kind invitations from Facebookers and Twitterers to hear what they are up to and to see the shots they are taking but they are not my preferred method

so I decline.

I like it a bit more personal and e mail is just fine for me and so far as me communicating outwards, so to speak, I think it's more than enough that you should have to put up with me every 2 months.

Sell your old gear

Now is always a good time to sell that gear you don't want or don't use anymore.

There are tens of thousands of UwP readers who are looking for gear which you might have, so book a small ad on the UwP website for just £5 and before you know it there could be a space on that shelf and you'll have a healthier bank balance.

With international currency sites like PayPal it's never been easier, or cheaper, to accept money from anywhere in the world so get listing that gear and get a Small Ad booked.



Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com

News, Travel & Events

Shark Fin Possession Bill Made Law in Guam



Guam became the third place in the world to ban the possession and sale of shark fins and ray parts today as Guam Governor Eddie Calvo Jr. signed the legislation into law. Guam joins the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and Hawaii as places that discourage and outlaw shark fin commerce.

After a lot of emotional testimony from fishermen, school students, shark lovers and an amazing show of support from an international community of ocean loving concerned citizens from well over 100 countries, Guam's legislators passed Bill 44-31 unanimously. The bill is intended to

curb the trade of shark fins in the US Territory of Guam.

The bill is an act to prohibit the possession, selling, offering for sale, trading or distribution of shark fins and ray parts.

The shark fin trade is a wasteful industry that fins sharks for use in shark fin soup. This is considered a Chinese delicacy that must be served at Chinese weddings. The practice is roughly 6 decades old. 73 million sharks are killed only for the fins every year with the body being discarded.

Story & Photos by Tim Rock

www.uwpmag.com

The Sardine Run with Mauricio Handler

June 11-17, 2011
June 19-25, 2011

Join Mauricio Handler on this one of a kind live-aboard photography expedition to the Sardine Run off of South Africa.

Two back to back expeditions aboard 153' Snow Petrel.

A few berths still available.

June 11-17, 2011 (3 spaces)

June 19-25, 2011 (2 spaces)

www.handlerphoto.com



Canadian photographer unveils u/w portraits

An underwater art project had been on Rodney S. Braun's white board for 7 years. The Winnipeg, Canada portrait photographer finally embarked on the project in the summer of 2010 and unveiled it this March. Entitled, "H2Oohhh",

The project was a collaboration with local Winnipeggers (who ended up being women), some of whom were dancers. There were about 20 different sessions in all, mostly outdoor, as well as several Manitoba locations. The project was shot with



a Canon EOS Rebel T2i and a B&H housing. Lighting was a mix of natural available light, on-camera flash and off-camera flash.

A 50-image exhibit and a 96-page book were created.

www.rodneysbraun.com

Estonian U/w photo Exhibition



Have you heard about an underwater photo exhibition? Not just an exhibition of underwater images, but a photo exhibition under the water?

Five years ago award winning Estonian photographer Kaido Haagen opened his first underwater exhibition WET EYES in Tallinn's KalevSPA swimming pool. "If you want the visitor to get a great but also a real experience, you have to put him in an environment similar to the one where the photos were taken"

Haagen explained the unusual choice of the exhibition hall. In

the end of last year he started a travelling exhibition WET EYES II. It differs from the first one in many ways. Apart from being a traveling exhibition, that has been up in more than 20 different swimming pools all over Estonia, the photos of WET EYES II are all taken in Estonian waters and shot on digital camera, as opposed to the first WET EYES exhibition, where all photos were taken in tropical waters and shot on film.

www.kaidohaagen.com

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Zeeuws and Dutch Open Championship 15th May 2011 and 26th June 2011.

Underwater photography is extremely popular these days and more and more divers are taking underwater pictures. Do you also take underwater pictures? We would very much appreciate if you will join us on (one of) our competition days in 2011.

Zeeuws Championship

Don't think "I just started" or "I am not good enough yet". The Zeeuws Championship is a perfect competition for all starter underwater photographers. There is nothing to lose, only to win. If you are not a winner of one of the beautiful prizes there is to win, then at least you will have the experience of competition in the beautiful waters of Zeeland where the competition takes place every year. Let the competition inspire you to make more beautiful pictures and learn by having contact with the other competitors. If you see beautiful pictures of top photographers in the magazines, just realise that they also had to start somewhere too.

The Dutch Open Championship

Apart from the beginners there is a wide variety of photographers that already have some more experience right up to top photographers whose

www.uwpmag.com



photographs regularly appear in magazines.

How do you organize a competition that is approachable to everyone, but also has enough of a challenge for the very best national and international photographers?

The organising committee Aquashot succeeded in having the right formula by having different opportunities to join the competitions.

- You are free to join the competition in one or more categories.
- You are free to participate on one or both competition days.

Also in this competition there are very nice prizes to be won. We hope to see many international competitors during the competition in Zeeland this year.

www.aquashot.nl

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The Raja Ampat Photoquest with Martin and Sylvia Edge 2nd - 18th November 2012

Martin Edge considers the underwater photography potential at Misool Eco Resort to be the very best in the world, so one cannot have a higher recommendation than that!

The reefs of the Raja Ampat are the richest reefs on earth, with more coral, fish and invertebrate species having been recorded here than anywhere else on our planet. Pelagic fish have not been fished out and still hunt these reefs in numbers. The condition of the coral is magnificent, the reefs pristine, the diving spectacular. Most dives are close to the resort, though some day trips to more far-flung dive sites may be offered. The house reef is there 'at your door step', quite literally.

Combine the quality of the teaching and photo support, the dive management, the comfort of the resort, the sheer exotic nature of this location and its unsurpassed marine life and you will know why you should be part of the UK's first underwater photography expedition to this area.



Misool Eco Resort offers a choice between Water Cottages and luxury villas. Water Cottages have the advantage of air-conditioning, are close to the dive centre and restaurant and are actually built over the resort's house reef. Step off your veranda and land in the epicentre of biodiversity!

www.divequest.co.uk

Photographing Marine Animals

South East Group MCS
with Paul Naylor



Photo: Gerry Casey

The aim of the course is to show those new to underwater photography how to start taking successful photographs/images and help existing photographers who are not having the success they had hoped for improve their technique.

Paul Naylor, author of three underwater guides to marine species of Britain, will lead you through when and how to use the types of equipment available to the underwater photographer.

The course will take place at Leeson House, Swanage, Dorset
Interested?

Contact Gerry Casey Tel: 01923 231575 or email:

gerry.casey11@btinternet.com
www.mcsuk.org



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- Nuweiba, Egypt
- Lembeh Straits & Bunaken Marine Park, Indonesia



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"Without Maria's passion I would not be producing such wonderful underwater photographs, something that I've been striving to achieve for some time. She helped me overcome my fear of the technical side and helped me learn the advanced topics with ease. My photographs have hugely improved."

Helen Denholm-Simmonds

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Maluku Divers, Ambon, Indonesia

September 21-28, 2011

Hosted by Ryan Canon



Got some new gear? This is the perfect spot to figure it all out. Located on the best muck diving site in Ambon, Maluku Divers offers action packed critter diving without the crowds! Home to



the now famous psychedelic frogfish, rhinopias, and more! Our package includes diving, accommodations, and meals for only \$1550!

Misool Eco Resort Raja Ampat, Indonesia

Sept 29 - Oct 6, 2011

Join us in Raja Ampat for some of the lushest coral reefs and densest fish populations in the world. Misool Eco Resort pioneered a 1,220 square km no take area around the resort with the cooperation of local fishermen, protecting this pristine environment for years to come. Accommodation is provided in spacious and beautiful over the water cottages just a short distance from the house reef.

Our package includes transfers from Sorong, meals, and unlimited

diving for \$3483 pp. We have worked out the transfer logistics allowing guests to do both Ambon and Raja trips together for an extended diving holiday.

Can't Decide? Do both trips! A transfer & hotel package is available for guests interested in both destinations.



www.reefphoto.com

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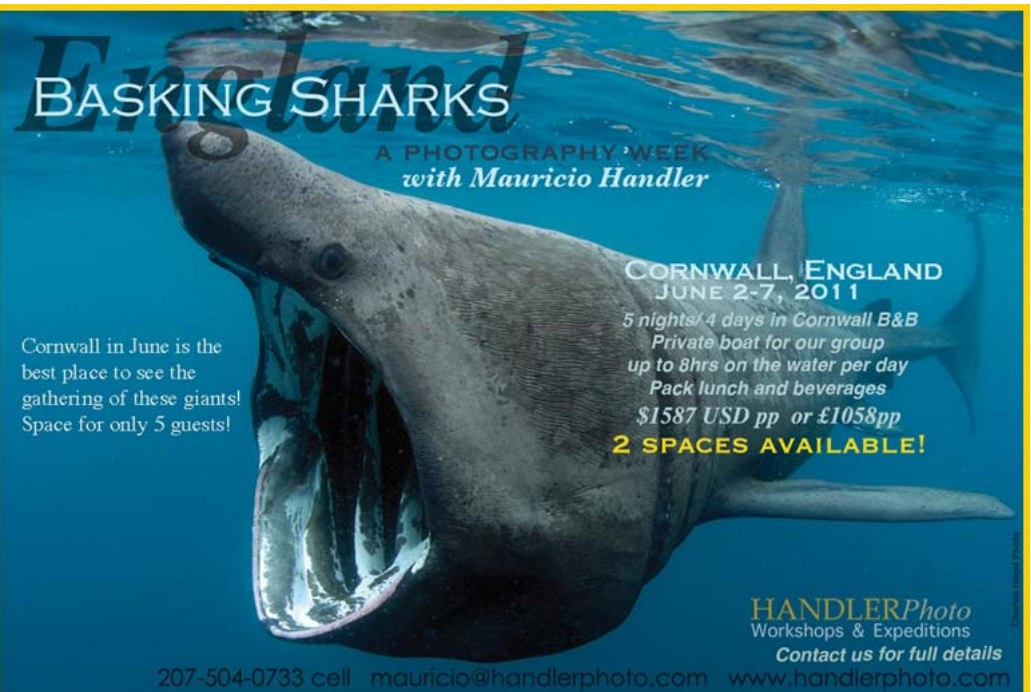
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www.divethenorth.is

www.uwpmag.com

Maria Munn uw photo workshop with Eco Divers

27 Nov to 9 Dec 2011

Thanks to Maria Munn's innovative and inspiring approach to teaching underwater photography, she is celebrating five years of helping more than 10 guests win prizes with their compact cameras by running a special 12-night underwater photography workshop with Eco Divers from 27 November to 9 December in the Lembeh Straits and Bunaken Marine Park, Manado, North Sulawesi. Maria will also be celebrating her recent award for her book, "Underwater Photography for Compact Camera Users".

Staying at Lembeh Cottages Resort & Spa for the first seven nights, Maria will help beginners and more advanced compact camera users master the art of capturing magical macro subjects with daily informal presentations to help make the most of the photographic opportunities in this world famous area. Slideshows of guest's photos will be shown nightly in the lounge as well as help with both Lightroom and PhotoShop techniques.

Moving on to Kima Bajo Resort & Spa for five nights, guests take



in the spectacular walls and marine life of Bunaken Marine Park. Wide-angle techniques and lighting will be explored to take compact camera skills to a high level and help to develop techniques to capture a wide range of subjects.

Package price of \$2,745 includes:

- * 7 nights at Lembeh Cottages in air-conditioned room
- * 5 nights at Kima Bajo Resort & Spa, in air-conditioned Kimez Studio Room
- * 10 days diving (6 in Lembeh, 4 in Manado), with up to 3 guided day-dives per day, by boat, with cylinders & weights
- * Breakfast, lunch & dinner
- * Free airport transfers and resort-resort transfer
- * Hotel tax & service; Diving tax

www.oceanvisions.co.uk

Issue 60/11



1st SNUPS Philippine Competition - SPLASH-NUDI Underwater Photo Shootout



Dive and shoot in the Philippines at Anilao – May 20-24, Dauin – May 27-31 and Cebu – June 3-7, 2011 to win over US\$15,000 worth of Digital SLR housing, Strobes, Accessories and much, much more!

SNUPS is a yearly underwater photo and video competition where on its first year, it will take place in three unique locations around the Philippines, namely: Anilao (Batangas), known globally for having one of the most diverse species of nudibranchs and macro life; Dauin (Negros Oriental), known for the marine sanctuary of Apo Island; and Cebu, home of the thresher sharks (Malapascua, Moalboal & Tinglo) and the sardine run (Moalboal).

It is the intention of SNUPS to be the anchor event for Philippine underwater imaging competitions where set standards on diver shooting

etiquettes, pre & post dive proper handling of imaging gear by dive staff and photo-video diver friendly dive resorts. The results of the competition will showcase the splendor of our oceans, which will provide the opportunity for other divers and non-divers alike to gain awareness on the importance of environmental conservation.

SNUPS is a yearly underwater photo and video competition organized by Splash Underwater Imaging, Inc. The event is done in cooperation with the Network of Underwater Digital Imagers (NUDI), an underwater photography club based in Manila.

www.snups.ph

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Galapagos - Art of Underwater Photography

Extraordinary image making with Shannon Conway

11th - 24th June 2013

Shannon has chosen the infamous Galapagos Islands of Ecuador for his next Art of Underwater Photography expedition. The photographic potential here is immense, however it is for the experienced diver and photographer only! Because of the nature of Galapagos diving, and the prevalence of swift currents, Shannon will not be conducting a formal workshop as he usually might. It is simply not possible to dive and shoot the way he might usually where conditions are



calmer. Shannon will be available and willing to critique and evaluate your work in the evenings. He will also give talks and host discussions on some evenings.

www.divequest.co.uk

Frogfish workshop in Sorido Bay Resort, Raja Ampat in 2012 either 15th -22nd April 2012 or 22nd-29th April 2012.

Limited places are now available for all level of underwater photographers, from enthusiastic beginner to budding professional, Compact Camera and SLR users are welcome to join us on this fantastic underwater photography expedition.

Raja Ampat has everything for the underwater photographer. You will be diving in small groups, with a relaxed and casual atmosphere. In the evenings you will be able to attend interactive workshops. This trip is open to all levels of diver and you will be able to discuss the type of diving



you are comfortable with before each day is planned.

www.frogfishphotography.com

www.uwpmag.com



In Cooperation with



Be in the Philippines at:

Anilao, Batangas
May 20-24, 2011

Dauin, Negros Oriental
May 27-31, 2011

Mactan, Cebu
June 3-7, 2011

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New UK photo friendly dive charter

UwP editor Peter Rowlands is now offering uw photo friendly dive charters out of Plymouth in Devon.

MV Magic is an 8.2 metre Botnia Targa which has a cruising speed of 20 knots and a very soft riding, planing hull. She has a walkaround design so there's lots of working space both fore and aft as well as comfortable seating.

Magic Charters limits the number of places available to five so that everyone will have plenty of space and there are tables available to work on equipment in between dives. With work spaces both fore and aft, kitting up needn't be a scramble

Magic Charters is hoping to appeal to small groups of underwater photographers who appreciate being able to concentrate on their hobby without a boatful of other divers. Being able to cruise at 20 knots gives quick access to offshore sites such as the Eddystone and Hand Deepes reefs as well as wrecks like the James Egan Layne and the Scylla. The style of diving is obviously the choice of the group but Peter has several shallow sites where it is possible to anchor up and dive as much as you like. This gives you maximum time underwater with the freedom to return to the boat whenever you want to change lenses.

The central cabin is heated and there is plenty of solar gain through the 360° windows so you'll be



able to get out of the wind and warm up in between dives (once you've taken your dry suit off outside!).

A 240 volt power supply is available in the cabin for powering battery chargers and laptops so you can check the results from your first dive before going in again or top up your strobe batteries.

MV Magic is based at Dry Stack Marina on the east side of Plymouth and there's plenty of free parking all day.

www.magic-charters.co.uk



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Dive into underwater videography with this incredibly compact and simple to use combination. The Compact Video housing is high quality, built to last, and backed by Ikelite's long-standing reputation for excellence. A full line of accessories allows you to really get creative with your underwater video.

All camera controls are fully functional through the housing and depth rated to 200ft (60m). Easy open latch and drop in camera loading make set-up a breeze.

PRO-V8 LED Video Lite

Light is the most important contribution to underwater video. The Pro-V8 LED is the easiest and most affordable way to add valuable light to your system.

Three 5-watt LEDs are arranged behind a special optical lens to give an exceptionally even 45° beam completely free of hot spots. The color temperature is daylight balanced for warm, beautiful tones with or without color filter. Light output is the same over its entire 10 hour burn time, providing more than enough light for an entire week of diving from one set of 8 "C" cell alkaline or NiMH batteries.

A lightweight and flexible pop-bead arm provides versatility in aiming without adding bulk. The included flex mount ball attaches to the top of any Ikelite video housing handle without tools. Additional pop beads can be purchased in 4-piece sticks to extend the arm.



New Products

Subal ND7000

The Subal ND7000 is an aluminium housing for Nikon D7000 SLR camera.

The ergonomic placement of all important controls provides convenient and comfortable handling of the camera functions. The camera is mounted on a



saddle for precise positioning inside the housing. A 4 mm main-O-ring and the SUBAL QuickLock system make it virtually impossible to close the housing if the O-ring is not lying correctly in its groove. Maximum security is assured.

The first time SUBAL offers 4 different viewfinder systems for this housing:

The Standard-Viewfinder reduces the viewfinder image slightly to allow the whole frame to be viewed whilst wearing a diving-mask.

GS-180 viewfinder and WS-45 angled viewfinder offers a image sized equal to the cameras viewfinder. The GS-180 viewing angle is line of sight and the WS45 is 45°.

The new Prism finder PS-30 shows the viewfinder image full sized with a viewing angle of 30°. The PS-30 has a long eye relief which is especially helpful for video shooting.

All SUBAL ports with bayonet mount can be fitted to this housing.

www.subal.com

Bonica 1080P HD camcorder



Bonica Precision, manufacturer and distributor of underwater video systems, announced their fourth generation underwater housing, compatible and interchangeable with their line of high definition video cameras evolving since their introduction in 2006.

Starting at \$399 MSRP US, for a 1080P HD camcorder with a unique 180 foot-rated, dual layer housing - Bonica will bring a new element to scuba divers and the whole recreational industry.”

Bonica’s new housing showed several incremental improvements. They said that many of the design changes were inspired by real world use and customer feedback. These included:

- A removable visor over the LCD viewscreen.
- A bayonet-style mount for wide-angle lenses and filters.
- Ergonomic improvements in control buttons.
- A new fiberglass enhanced, nylon shaft in the housing hinge, eliminating all possibility of oxidation.

The newest version of the Snapper HDDV system is now available.

www.bonicadive.com

Nauticam NA-LX5 for the Panasonic LX5



The first true compact to enter the Nauticam range, the NA-LX5 houses the Panasonic Lumix LX5 and also the Leica D-Lux 5.

The NA-LX5 housing features an outstanding ergonomic design in a compact housing body in that it allows full access to all camera functions. It also features a super sensitive shutter release mechanism, which results in an enhanced tactile experience underwater.

It has a 67mm threaded front allowing various brands of external diopter to be attached, and a wide angle dome converter allowing full exploitation of the camera’s wideangle 24mm Leica lens. The NA-LX5 can be used in conjunction with Nauticam’s new universal housing tray and soon to be released arm system. The NA-LX5 retails at US\$950.

www.nauticamuk.com

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7D

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Dyron glass dome port for Nauticam D-SLR housings



Dyron have announced a hemispherical glass dome port for D-SLR Nauticam housings

It can be used with the following lenses:

10.5mm Nikon, 10/17 Tokina, 15mm Canon, 4.5mm Sigma, 8mm Sigma. The shade is removable for 4.5 and 8mm lesn Sigma

Specifications:

Material: optical glass - aluminum - POM-H Delrin- Size : 4.8" , 120mm- Weight: 680g- Depth rated: 100 meters

www.dyron.fr

TLC 1" ball with 1/4-20" threaded hole



This newly introduced TLC 1" diameter ball with its 1/4"-20 threaded hole will bridge the gap between a regular tripod screw and our TLC line of strobe adapters and arm components.

One popular use for this 1" ball is to mount it on a compact tripod and then attach a slaved strobe using our regular TLC component. This gives a photographer more creative freedom with its lighting techniques, Strobes with snoot attachments will be able to attain and maintain, the critically precise and independent positioning necessary when using this method.

In cave and wreck diving, multiple slaved strobes on mini tripods can add another artistic dimension by being able be hidden behind objects or structures, all the while, retaining the flexibility to position the angle of light where the photographer wants it directed.

www.aquatica.ca

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THE UNDERWATER IMAGING COMPANY



YS-01

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75m Depth Rated**



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Dyron glass dome port for Ikelite D-SLR housings



Dyron have announced a hemispherical glass dome port for D-SLR Ikelite housings

It can be used with the following lenses:

10.5mm Nikon, 10/17 Tokina, 15mm Canon, 4.5mm Sigma, 8mm Sigma. The shade is removable for 4.5 and 8mm lesn Sigma

Specifications:

Material: optical glass - aluminum - POM-H Delrin- Size : 4.8" , 120mm- Weight: 680g- Depth rated: 100 meters

www.dyron.fr

Nauticam NA-60D for Canon 60D



The NA-60D continues the dynasty of dSLR housings with all of the Nauticam trade mark ergonomic features including:

Features include: Easy to use locking latches with embedded safety button - Easily adjustable ISO switch - Patented locking port release lever- Super sensitive shutter release - Audible and visual moisture alarm - Lens release button - Optical strobe connectors - Rubberized ergonomic grips - Three customizable accessory holes - Embossed control function labels - Quick release camera mounting shoe - Four strobe & accessory base mounting locations- Complete access to all key camera controls.

The NA-60D retails at US\$3000.

www.nauticam.com
www.nauticamusa.com
www.nauticamuk.com

Nauticam
USA

Nauticam Universal optical viewfinder



"Clearly better"

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- 1:1 reproduction
- No color bias
- Low distortion
- Low color fringing.
- It's bright!

- Flexible eyepoint viewing
- External diopter adjustment
- Multicoated glass optics

www.nauticamusa.com



ACQUAPAZZA

5 different ports arrangement is available.



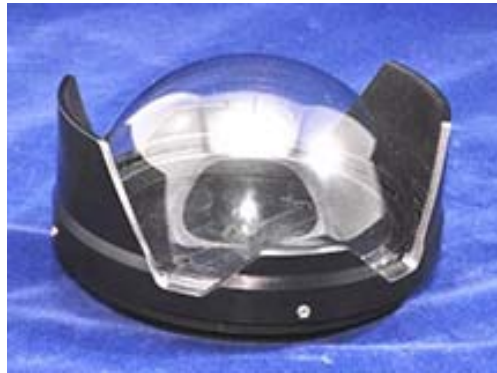
Underwater Housing for
SONY NEX-5 and NEX-3

APSO-NEX5
APSO-NEX3



<http://acquapazza.jp/>

UnderWater Camera Stuff Modular 5” Domes



UnderWater Camera Stuff has announced the release of their two Modular 5” Domes.

Each dome is tuned for a specific lens and both versions are designed to work with the Ikelite modular port system. One dome is tuned for use with either the Tokina 10-17 Fisheye lens or the Nikon 16 mm F2.8 AF lens. The second dome is tuned for the Canon EF 15mm f/2.8 Fisheye lens or the Sigma 15mm Fisheye lens.

Both domes work well with full-frame sensor cameras and cropped sensor cameras. Having a dome tuned to a specific lens means that the images captured with that lens and dome will be in focus from edge-to-edge.

www.UwCameraStuff.com

Nauticam Panasonic GH2



Nauticam have released renderings of their forthcoming housing for the Panasonic GH2.

At the time of going to press no further details were available except that the housing is designed for 100M depth rating, and there will be dedicated ports for 14-42mm zoom, 45mm Macro (with 67mm thread), 14mm pancake lens, 7-14mm wideangle zoom, and 8mm fisheye.

www.nauticam.com

Nauticam
USA

Nauticam NA-NEX5
Sony NEX-5 housing



“Back to the future”

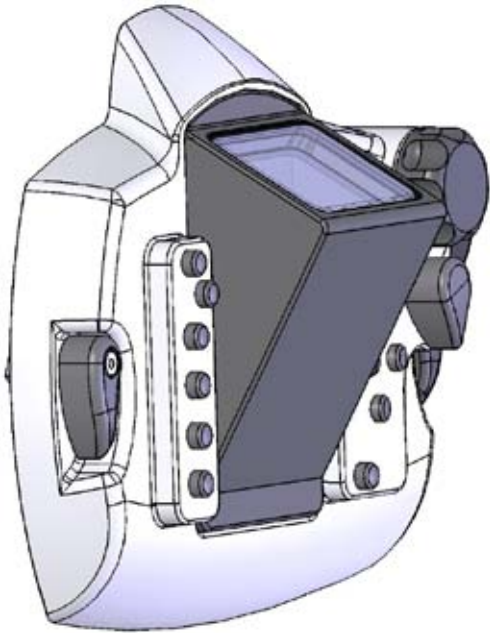
The Sony NEX-5 provides DSLR image quality with the full HD video of a camcorder in a compact size. The Nauticam NA-NEX5 extends that capability with a form fitting aluminium housing and a full range of ports from fisheye to macro.

But the most innovative twist is a port adaptor to use Nikonos lenses from the pin sharp 15mm UW Nikkor to the super macro combination of 35mm and extension tubes.

For decades the Nikonos range of lenses were world leaders but the advent of digital saw them put on the shelf. Now we can use them all over again to benefit from the past with a camera for the future.

www.nauticamusa.com

Subal prism finder PS-30



At the Dusseldorf BOOT Show, Subal showed a drawing of a new viewfinder prism they are working on.

The new prism finder PS-30 shows the viewfinder image full sized with a viewing angle of 30°. The PS-30 has a long eye relief which is especially helpful for video shooting.

www.subal.com

New External Filters from Magic



Magic Filters are proud announce a new version of their Auto-Magic filter designed for external mounting on digital underwater cameras. The new filter uses their proprietary formula making it available for the first time in a Plexiglass filter that can be added or removed from the lens underwater.

Because the filter can be taken on an off your camera during a dive, you can shoot macro, wide angle with flash and filter images all on the same dive.

The filter is suitable for both still and video shooting in blue waters. They are currently on sale in a variety of screw thread filter sizes as well as square filters for the Amphibico .55x lenses with more shapes and sizes planned.

The Auto-Magic filter allows you to take colourful underwater pictures without the hassle and difficulty of getting good results with the internal flash or an external strobe. The Auto-Magic delivers great colours without the risk of backscatter.



www.magic-filters.com



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Panasonic DMC-GH1 underwater housing



Vivid Housings introduces PGH1 underwater housing for Panasonic Lumix DMC-GH1 micro four thirds camera. Made of clear cast acrylic, the housing features all camera controls, anodized aluminum tray with ergonomic handles and simple, yet effective and reliable port fastening system.

PGH1 housing allows underwater photographers and videographers to enjoy the advantages of micro four thirds system - easy, fast and accurate framing, focusing and shooting using the LCD screen and high quality video.

The housing features Leak Sentinel, pre-dive vacuum leak detection system, making it even more reliable and fun to use.

Standard and custom macro and dome ports are available upon request (here pictured with macro port for LEICA DG MACRO-ELMARIT 45mm / F2.8 lens).

Dimensions: 160x140x100 mm

Weight: 1800 g

Price: €850

www.vividhousings.com



5 important reasons to make Reef Photo and Video your choice for underwater photo and video

We are divers and photographers

Everyone on our friendly staff is an underwater photographer. We use the gear that we sell, and we keep up with the latest imaging products for both underwater and topside.

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www.reefphoto.com

Dyron Double Macro M77



Thanks to the two UV coated lenses and anti-reflection glass, these lenses restore a distorted image to a perfect one. for sharper pictures with same magnification

The Dyron Double Macro M77 can be used with most of the cameras in wide angle position or full range zoom

The Dyron Double Macro M77 is +7 dioptries and comes with an M77 mount (male/female) as well as step ring M67

The specifications are:

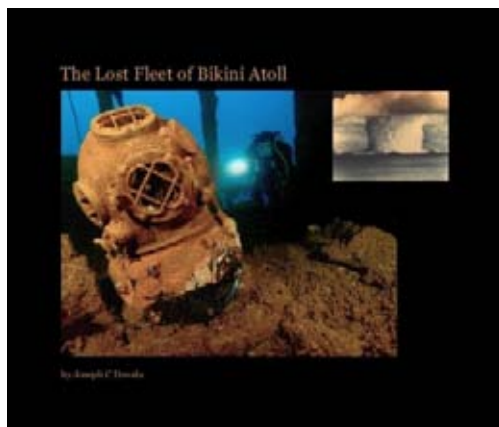
Depth rated: 100 meters.

Material: Optical glass - Aluminum.

Weight: 170 g. Warranty: 2 years

www.dyron.fr

Lost Fleet of Bikini Atoll by Joseph Dovala



Hello All,

I've finished my second book called Lost Fleet of Bikini Atoll - A photographic journey through the lagoon." I did an eBook awhile back but this "real" book has been updated with some new images and layout. Bikini Atoll has been closed since late 2008 due to bankrupt Air Marshall Islands. There are no current plans to open again. So if you'd like to see what you're missing please click on link below.

www.blurb.com/books/2047951

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Underwater Camera Housing for
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ACQUAPAZZA

ACQUAPAZZA APSG-DP2x, DP1x
<http://acquapazza.jp/>

Small ads



SOLD! – Ikelite housing for a Canon 5D MKII

Ikelite housing for a Canon 5D MKII, Ikelite 8" dome port (no scratches) for a Canon fish eye lens, Ikelite ports Canon 17-40mm and a macro 100mm-IS lens. I am based in Scarborough, U.K. £1100 ovnoraminrobin@hotmail.com

Your advert could be here instead for just £5.00



For sale – extrem'vision(up to 100 m!!) and video camera sony vx 2000

I'm selling a fantastic underwater housing extrem'vision(up to 100 m!!) and video camera sony vx 2000 in really good condition!!!coming with a pelican case!!!!The underwater housing is coming with :- 2 lenses (1 macro and 1 wide angle) - 1 red filter. - 2 set of o'rings - Sillicon for the o'rings. - Digital screen.The sony camera vx 2000 is coming with :- A set of batteries (2 large, 1 medium, 1 small) - 5 new dv tapes. - 2 cleaning tapes.Extrem'vision is a French Brand known worldwide.it's strong, reliable and easy to repair if any problems.....REALLY GOOD CONDITION!!!!2000 euros!!!!!!fabien mouret

Email: maddox666@gmail.com [Ref:c147]



SOLD! – Subtronic Nova analog version no ttl converter

Subtronic Nova analog version no ttl converter

The strobe is 3-years-old in good condition

All sockets in 56

800-€

Rudolf Solböck

Ref C146

Your advert could be here instead for just £5.00



For sale – Aquatica housing 5D, 8 inch dome, dome shade and canon 5D body

Aquatica housing 5D, 8 inch dome, dome shade and canon 5D body including 2 spare batteries and spare charger for sale £1600 + p&p.Housing:Aquatica 5D housing - good to 90m, 8" optical acrylic dome port – some minor scratches but not visible in photos, 8" dome shade / guard, for wide angle lenses, Spare O ringCameraCanon 5D, 3 Batteries, 2 Chargers, StrapAll for £1600+ p&p, will accept paypal, or cashPlease feel free to ask any questionThe equipment has not been used for a while but I have just upgraded to a canon 5D mark II package so have this for sale.I am based in London and if you wish to come round and have a look/examine the equipment prior to parting with your money we can arrange that.

Email: martin.abela@hotmail.co.uk [Ref:c145]

Sell your stuff

You'll be amazed at just how quickly your unwanted underwater photography kit could be converted into hard cash with a UWP small ad.

You can have your own UWP small ad for just £5.00 and it can have one photo as well as up to 100 words.

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LeakSentinel - pre dive leak prevention for any UW housing!

Vivid housings introduces Leak Sentinel, the new vacuum pre-dive leak prevention system. For only the fraction of the price of existing systems, you can now have the peace of mind and concentrate on photography, rather than guessing if the housing is properly sealed or not. Leak Sentinel is a must-have part of equipment for any serious underwater photographer.

Leak Sentinel is lightweight, reliable and simple to install, and even simpler to use. It comes with everything needed for the installation, including the drill bit and wrench.

The included hand pump eliminates the need for batteries, works smooth and fast, and requires almost no effort to pull the air from the housing.

Leak Sentinel can be installed on any housing with flat place of 30mm (1.2") in diameter. Custom threads for installation in existing bulkheads and fittings are available upon request.



Red and green LED indicators are installed in the transparent valve body, visible at all times and from any angle, rather than just by looking through the viewfinder.

Letting the air in after dive is even more simple than pulling it out - just moving the valve sideways with the fingertip does the job. No hoses or valve disassembly are required.

If one thing makes Leak Sentinel stand out, it is definitely its price – at 150€ and free shipping worldwide, saying it is affordable is simply an understatement.

www.vividhousings.com

Nauticam Ireland



UnderWaterVisions Ltd are pleased to announce that they are now the official Nauticam distributors for Ireland.

Alongside Nauticam, we are pleased to offer Stix buoyancy and floatation, F.I.T. diopters and accessories, Fisheye housings and lights, Light and Motion lights, Zen Underwater dome ports, Ultralight arms, trays and clamps, Inon and Sea and Sea strobes, Glowdive and Magic filters, and Cameq cold water dial extenders for the UK and Eire.

www.nauticamuk.com

Submerge Camera Turtle HD Video Housing



In a unique partnership with respected video housing manufacturer Submerge Camera releases its own “Turtle” underwater video housing.

“Basically we took an already great idea and just expanded on it by adding a second handle for balance, softening up the push button electronic controls for divers that are primarily using the unit above 110ft (33m) and adding a new professional color scheme all for under \$1200.00/ USD. It is really quite amazing if you look at the units sitting below or at that price point now and how it really is the absolute best value in the industry for shooting HD video underwater,” states TJ Mansfield owner of Submerge Camera and long time industry professional.

www.submergecamera.com

www.uwpmag.com

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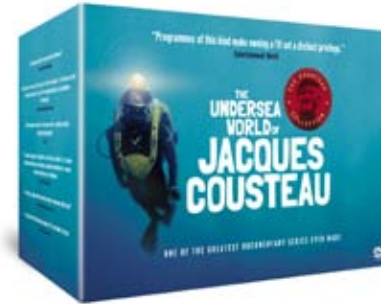
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- for all strobes with Nikonos plug*
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Cousteau DVD films and box set



During the '60s and '70s, millions tuned in to watch the groundbreaking TV series THE UNDERSEA WORLD OF JACQUES COUSTEAU, held spellbound as the renowned explorer, ecologist, diver and filmmaker brought the hidden wonders of the world's oceans into their living rooms for the first time. Now Go Entertain is proud to present a complete 19-disc box set of the iconic show, chronicling the amazing adventures of Cousteau and his crew aboard the Calypso as they journey from the icy reaches of Antarctica to the coral jungles of the tropics. As well as capturing stunning footage of ocean life – from sharks to shipwrecks, whales to walruses – THE UNDERSEA WORLD OF JACQUES COUSTEAU also charts the fascinating life of a truly remarkable individual.

A landmark natural history title, THE UNDERSEA WORLD OF

JACQUES COUSTEAU is credited not only with showing never before seen images from the ocean depths but also with raising public awareness of pollution and other ecological issues. Now, Go Entertain's massive new box set gives you the chance to experience a true classic of documentary film-making in its entirety.

Go Entertain is also proud to present three of Captain Cousteau's finest movies in high-definition Blu-ray for the very first time, as well as on DVD:

THE SILENT WORLD, WORLD WITHOUT SUN & VOYAGE TO THE EDGE OF THE WORLD will be released on 23rd May 2011, price £14.99 Blu-ray, £12.99 DVD.

The 19 DVD Box Set and the films will be available from 23 May 2011 for £149.99 from Amazon, Play or HMV

(*) Motormarine version available. For incompatible strobes check www.heinrichsweikamp.net

(**) depth limited by strobe connected. Max. operation depth 300 mtr.

New Acquapazza housings



Japanese housing manufacturer Acquapazza have announced 2 new housings. The first is the APSO-HX 7V for the SONY DSC-HX7V (pictured here) which should be available now. The second is the APOL-XZ1 for the Olympus XZ1 which should be available by the end of May.

These 2 new aluminium housings will have a common specification which includes a choice of 5 stock colours – black, violet, red, bright yellow and blue as well as 9 ‘build to order’ colours. They have double O ring seals, 3 tripod screws and 4 strap holes as well as 2 optical connectors for INON strobes. The internal flash is masked to eliminate light spillage.

An external diffuser is supplied to increase the coverage of the internal flash and reduce and unlit corners.

The LCD panel port incorporates a monitor hood mounting groove for attaching an optional UN magnifier. Both housings are rated to 50 metres.

The APSO-HX 7V is available with 2 ports. The first is for the 25-150mm range which has no cut off at the wide end or there is another port for the full 25-250mm range but this will cause cut off between the 25-30mm range. Both ports have an M67 threaded front.

Both housings are rated to 50 metres.

www.acquapazza.jp

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FrogFish@DiveLife

Two of the UK's most innovative diving companies have teamed up to provide the perfect facility for both budding and professional underwater photographers. Frogfish Photography, the leading underwater specialist in the North will be offering workshops at DiveLife where divers can come in with their equipment or photographs to get free advice from Nick Robertson-Brown.

DiveLife will also now be offering, via Frogfish Photography, The Complete Underwater Photographer course, which includes the INON Academy Level 1 qualification. Course dates will be released soon on both websites.

Also Frogfish@DiveLife will be offering specialist photography dive trips around the UK and abroad, with a photo expert on hand for advice on every trip. In the UK, Anglesey and the Farne Islands will feature heavily for seal photography and they already have a specialist trip to Raja Ampat booked for April 2012.

www.divelife.co.uk
www.frogfishphotography.com

Seahorn Canon bracket

Seahorn have a custom made bracket for the Canon WP-DC28/DC34 housing(Canon G10,G11,G12 cameras)

It holds a focus light or small strobe and works with the M67 adapter as well.

Price: USD \$ 28.00

In addition they have an alternative adaptor for Subsee macro lens, compatible with any housings!

Price USD \$ 28.00 for bracket, bolt and nut only.

www.scubasympphony.com



Small focus light



The smallest aluminium focus light in the market!

Now you can enjoy the Automatic Flash Off function in a super compact body, its light pattern is very even without visible hotspot, with the standard mounting clip, you can set it up as your handy focusing light or your rugged pocket light for backup.*

Specifications

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Size 46.4 x 151.6mm (DxL)
Weight in air 260g.
Buoyancy in seawater -122g.
Price: USD \$ 123.00

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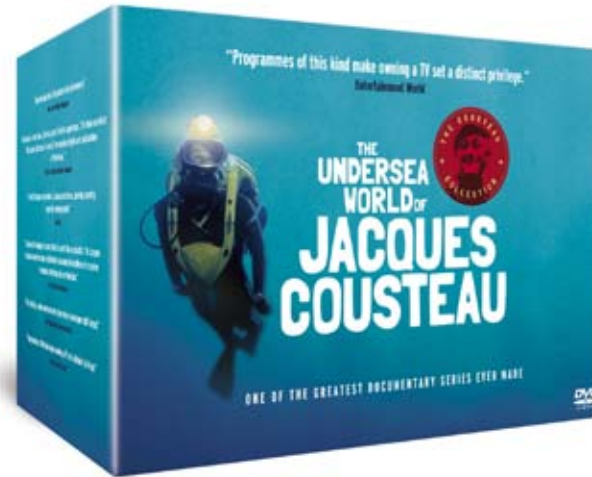
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He also produced 3 Oscar winning films - The Silent World, World without sun and Voyage to the edge of the world.



Now's your chance to win all four of these fabulous prizes worth £195.

There are also 3 Blu-Ray copies of each of the films up for grabs for 3 lucky runners up.

All you have to do before May 31st 2011 is to download one or more back issues of UWP and your name will be put in a hat and the winner will be pulled out on June 1st. The more issues you download, the more chances you will have to win.

UWP's back issue download facility is a fantastic reference library chronicling all that has happened in underwater photography over the past 10 years.

Buy your copies now and you could be the winner of this fabulous prize!

Buy back issues here

Fantasea FP7000

by Peter Rowlands

The Coolpix brand has traditionally been Nikon's mid level compact range but with the advent of the P7000 it has aimed it's sights directly at the top end which in the past has been dominated by the Canon G and Panasonic LX compact cameras. The result is a chunky, fully featured pro level camera with a high specification that will appeal to those who want the controllability of an SLR without the bulk.

I don't intend to delve into the camera's pros and cons as there are several excellent websites that provide such information and advice so if you are interested in this level of camera I'll suggest www.dpreview.com as a good start.

The Fantasea line of housings is a well established brand who have majored in housing Nikon compacts and the FP7000 is their latest for the Coolpix P7000. Just as Nikon raised their sights with the spec of their camera, so too have Fantasea upped their quality output with an excellent housing both in terms of moulding, construction, design and finish.

The housing is opened with a large oval turn button on the right hand side which has an integrated safety lock. The red lever is lifted away from the housing and allows the large button to be rotated anti clockwise to open the rear door and reveal the inner workings of the housing.

Most notable at first is the main double O ring seal, compression and piston. In common with most compact housings both sections are bristling with controls – push buttons, dials and wheels, which operate all of the functions of the camera. There



are as many controls as there are on most SLR housings so it's a wonder how they can provide all at such a competitive price. All of the controls are very clearly marked. In fact some of the most clearly marked that I have ever seen and that makes controlling the camera much quicker and more

accurate.

Loading the camera is a piece of doddle. Fantasea recommend removing the camera's strap lugs but in practice, if they are lifted up, they don't get in the way. Then all you have to do is lift the front mode dial and feed the camera into the front



of the housing where it is held very precisely in 8 padded supports and four front posts. All but 3 of the controls auto locate and these are the three control wheels which, when turned, it shows up on the LCD screen what setting has been chosen so it's not a problem. In reality it doesn't take a second to align these controls and the likelihood is that once it's done you won't need to realign them again.

There are 2 ways flash lit photos can be taken. The first is with the built in strobe and, to get even coverage, you need to attach the large front diffuser. The second is to fit the supplied double fibre optic cable plate

www.uwpmag.com



to trigger external strobes for more controlled lighting.

Fantasea produce a range of accessories to make this a true system camera so it can be expanded to suit your photographic needs. The housing is 18 x 15 x 13.5 cm in size. On land, with the camera inserted, it weighs just 1.1kg which in saltwater becomes 0.3kg negative.

At \$599 the Fantasea FP7000 is the least expensive rigid housing on the market and I would argue that it is the market leader in terms of quality, performance and therefore value for money.

Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com

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Aquatica HD Wave



Seacam Prelude



Subal 7D



Epoque 550D



Aquatica NEX-5



Aquatica D7000



Olympus XZ-1



FIX S95/ G12



Canon WP-DC34/G12



Fantasea BigEye



Big BLue 1x5W AFO



Memory Kick SI



Waterproof Wetsuits



Sea&Sea YS-01



Seahorn Snoot



Dyron 15mm M67 lens



StiX Floats



FIX LED 1000DX



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- Events:**
- 19th March- Ivan Choong/ Scuba Symphony Workshop
 - 25 April- 1 May - Sim Chee Ghee/ Gorontalo Workshop
 - 13-18 May- Aaron Wong/Manado-Cocotinos Workshop
 - 16-22 May- Maumere Underwater Photography trip
 - 29 May- Scuba Symphony Open Day/ Underwater Model Shooting
 - 1-3 July- Malaysian International Dive Exhibition (MIDE)

Using the Sigma 8-16mm Ultra-Wide Zoom

Story & Photos by Tim Rock with Elaine Kwok

When news of the Sigma 8-16mm F4.5-5.6 DC HSM ultra-wide zoom first came out, I was elated. I like to use Nikon DSLR cameras with APS-C size image sensors. This little marvel would give me a 35mm equivalent angle of view of a 12-24mm lens.

My idea of a perfect dive trip is when I never have to use a macro lens during the duration of a trip. So what I could do with an 8-16 on wrecks, in caves, for reef panos, shooting models and with big marine life was boggling my mind. According to the usual pre-release hype, Sigma's FLD glass elements, equal to fluorite glass, correct for distortions and color aberrations to deliver beautiful high contrast images. Yee-haw.

My order from B&H arrived and I unpacked it and noticed it was quite a bit bigger in length and barrel size than my bread and butter Tokina 10-17mm workhorse. Still, it isn't a monster and the lens shade is built in to reduce flare.

This lens fit well into my Aquatica housings on both the D90 and D200 cameras. I used the 8mm

wide dome and a couple of extension rings. Basically the same set-up I use for my Sigma 17-70mm Macro zoom.

I was looking at the 8-16's minimum focusing distance of 9.4" (24cm) allowing CFWA images to get in close to a subject to create some cool exaggerated perspectives. At 8mm, it really does some interesting things both good and bad.

So myself and my high energy model Elaine Kwok decided we'd try some new stuff to put this thing through the paces. We had been looking at some nice natural light shots done with a model in European lakes. Elaine asked me where that could be done in our neck of the woods and I told her the amazing cave in Rota, an island 30 miles north of Guam, had a hole in the cave roof that created a mesmerizing shaft of light about 2 hours a day when the sun is strong. So we rounded up some gear and props and made our way to Rota.

Mark Michael of Dive Rota knew the exact times for the proper lighting conditions and soon we were finning into the undersea cathedral of



Senhanom Cave. There are actually two places in this massive cave where divers can see sunlight... one in the upper roof and one along a back ledge. One can surface here and we set up shop. Sans tank, Elaine recalled her ballet days of youth as I moved up and down and in and out with the 8-16, trying to use a combination of natural and Ikelite strobe light to make some surreal images.

I noticed I could work extremely close to her at every range. Distortion at 8mm was pretty minimal if I kept her center frame. There was no real problem at all at 16mm. But if a hand or foot got too close to the lens at 8mm, a very elongated distortion made her look a bit like E.T. So we had to watch that.

But it was tack sharp, fast focusing and wide as wide could be. We tried different outfits on different dives and also some scuba shots. Shooting in this cave is magical and we had a lot of fun. Or at least I did. Elaine had to hold her breath for the better part of two hours, lost a few sacrificial contacts, froze to death and that sort of model thing. But her hard work paid off with some special images.

Back in Guam, we were working on a book on Guam five marine preserve areas. Two of these are in shallow bays that range from 6 to 30 feet. In the Tumon Bay preserve, there is white sand, tons of fish big and small and stunning, gin clear water, especially on high, incoming tide.

Here we tried lots of natural light images at both superwide and 16mm and got some pleasing results. The wide setting seemed to elongate the model's legs and fins a bit, which was acceptable to both her and me.

We also stumbled onto a coral spawn in the daytime over the reef in the deeper part of this



preserve and watched the release could the water and reef. The wide lens allowed me to free dive down to 25 feet or so and get right into it and also shoot some spawning panoramas.

Shooting coral in shallow water with this lens at 8-10mm lets one see the clouds through clear water, the early morning rays of sunlight coursing through the surface and get very close to stationary subjects like coral heads to maximize color and still

create nice wide scenics. It does not have a filter slot in back and the built-in lens shade prevents the use of a front filter. But someone clever could certainly



trim a Magic Filter to fit the back I am sure.


Another nice touch is that Sigma claims it has done a couple of things to the glass and lens configuration to reduce flare. We tried some scenics and overlooks at sunset time and found for such a super wide lens, flare was minimal in most cases.

This lens is noticeably wider than the Nikon 12-24 and the 10-24. It focuses quickly and quietly. It does let in a lot of light, so you have to shoot manually or really watch your meter in auto modes. It is fun to use in video as you can swim over the reef with it and through schooling fish and get a

real IMAX effect!

As a wide angle zoom freak, I love this lens. I worked well with my Aquatica housings and there is an Aquatica zoom ring available to fit this lens. I'm having fun with it and it is working its way into the workhorse position in my array. I don't think it is going to outdo my 10-17 Tokina, but it has some great creative applications no other housed lens can offer at this point. Give it a try wide freaks!!

Tim Rock
www.doubleblue.com

FULL  FRAME

WETPIXEL



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Born Free

by Tim Rock

Free diving and snorkeling are integral parts of underwater photography. In fact, you may be surprised at just how many photos are created without using any SCUBA gear at all. A couple of years ago I was talking with my longtime model Yoko Higashide. Although she is a dive guide and instructor, she told me she prefers free diving and snorkeling. So we planned a year of trips where SCUBA dive gear was not part of the kit we would pack.

Armed with mask, long fins and snorkel and a few cameras, we went to Ogasawara for dolphins and whales, Bimini for spotted dolphins, sharks and stingrays, Mozambique for whale sharks, humpbacks and mantas, Tonga for humpbacks and Palau for dolphins and mantas.

The results of these tankless trips very pleasantly surprised me. I came back not only with some compelling images of big fish and marine mammals, but also an array of varied shots we had taken in the shallows with wrecks, starfish, rippled sand, stingrays and other reefy stuff that those venues had to offer.

I live on Guam very close to one of our marine preserves and



Young humpback and Photographer Mark Strickland come face to face. Nikon D200 in Aquatica AD200 housing, Tokina 10-17mm lens at 10mm. 1/80th @ F5, 100 ISO and natural light in Vava'u, Tonga.

Bottlenose dolphins and model Yoko Higashide in Palau. Nikon D200 with Aquatica AD200 housing, Tokina 10-17mm lens at 10mm. 1/50th @ F6.3, 100 ISO and Ikelite strobes for fill at 1/8 power.

own a business that sits on one of the other Guam preserves. These are in shallow bays and offer lots of fish and coral life. So I am in the water a lot, sans tank, trying to use light and reef elements to make nice images on my lunch break or before I go to work.

It is a great challenge to just use your skills, as limited as mine may be, and the results can be stunning. The good news is that you don't have to be named Herbert Nitsch to do this. If you can dive down to 3-4 meters for 20-30 seconds, you are already on the right track. Here are some situations where snorkel and free dive photography is not only handy, it is preferable.





Saltwater crocodile, Palau Rock Islands. Canon 20D in Aquatica housing with Ikelite DS125 strobes and Canon 10-22 zoom lens. 1/2000th @ F16.

Mr. & Mrs. Big

Using simple equipment with large marine creatures like whale sharks, whales, dolphins and feeding mantas is not only the easy way to go, it is also the most effective and least intrusive. Some creatures just don't like bubbles. So SCUBA is out. In other cases, like trying to keep up with a whale shark or whale, SCUBA gear creates too much drag. You work more and burn up more air with the gear than without and don't get photos that are any better for the effort.

Even when a whale shark is

hardly moving, that big paddle of a tail pushes it along at a knot or so. You have to swim, sometimes swim hard, to get the shots you may want. Fly-bys are also common with whales and dolphins, where the boat drops you in the path of the creature and you have a very limited but excellent encounter that you can shoot as it comes, swims at or by you and allows you to keep up for a few fin kicks before all you see is tail or tails.

Mantas feed a lot on surface plankton. So dipping down past the plankton layer just a bit and shooting



Manta Ray in Guam's Tumon Bay marine preserve. Early morning natural light with manta swimming into light source using Nikon D200 in Aquatica AD200 housing with Tokina 10-17mm lens at 17mm. 1/100th @ F5.6. ISO 100.

them as they feed is also best done on snorkel. When they feed, they don't care about a human so much. Mantas march on their stomachs. Do not hinder them but grab the shot as they swim by, mouths agape.

Snorkeling and finning make all these encounters with large creatures a simpler and more effective affair.

Model and Specialty Shots

There is a good reason to use free diving and snorkeling for model shots.

When I use the term model here, I am not referring to a high fashion model slinking her way down the runway. I mean an underwater model, which requires special skills and knowledge on the part of the model, be the person male or female. Those include knowing the habits of many species of marine life and how to best approach them without scaring them. It requires being an excellent snorkeler and competent free diver. A model must also understand photography and lenses and be able to strike a pose in



Southern stingray and snorkeler Yoko Higashide at Honeymoon Bay, Bimini, Bahamas. Nikon D200 with Aquatica AD200 housing, Tokina 10-17mm lens 1/60th @ F6.3. ISO 100. and Ikelite strobes for fill at 1/8 power.

mid-kick. If you find a good person with most or all of these attributes, treat them well. These people are hard to find.

The reason for using a “model” is pretty simple. It adds a dimension to the image... another element of composition. It helps put the viewer in the model’s place. The person looking at your photo thinks “that could be me” and adds interest to the image.



Cave ballet with Elaine Kwok in Senhanom Cave, Rota, Northern Mariana Islands. Nikon D90 with Aquatica Ad90 housing, Ikelite strobes at 1/2 power and Sigma 8-16mm lens at 8mm 1/60th @ F7. 200 ISO.

Also, the proper interaction between the marine subject and the model again creates viewer interest. It helps to personalize the image.

Using photography in the shallows lessen the loss of the color red, which is pretty much gone after 3 meters due to light refraction. So skin tones remain true and the color of the marine creature, like a dolphin, is also easy to render. A couple of wide angle strobes mounted on a housing at the handles at very low power can help just to provide enough fill to bring out

color in the model and/or the subject.

For our Bimini, Bahamas, shoot I mounted strobes on the camera housing and left them at low power for the entire two weeks we were there. They added just enough color and light to make almost every shot I used acceptable without having to resort to Photoshop fill.

Approaching Wildlife

Do bubbles scare marine life? Yes. Plus, breathing underwater makes a lot of noise. I was talking to

a rebreather user who was at Cocos Island and waiting alone to take video of some hammerhead sharks. He said all was tranquil when all of a sudden he heard what he thought was a herd of buffalo coming. But it was a group of ten divers. SCUBA is noisy and the bubbles do distract some marine life like spinner dolphins, most whales and mantas.

So how to get around it? Well, this isn’t for everyone but I spent some time with champion free diver Ai Futaki in Yap at Manta Fest a couple of months ago. She can easily drop to 15 meters and stay for 2-3 minutes. She was able to interact with gray reef sharks, schooling blackbar barracuda, rainbow runners and other fish with great ease.

Now I had SCUBA and also was able to approach them too, but the free diving skills she used allowed her to move more freely than me, change depths at will and not worry about large exhalations.

Ai is trying to turn her video work into an artform and she has made some pretty nice short clips already of Komodo, a Guam spearo in action and the Yap sharks using just free diving breath hold skills. Most free diving classes boast that they will be able to allow you to reach 18 meters within a couple of days of training. So this approach is readily available through training and brings

another weapon to your underwater photography arsenal. It also helps keep you in shape and you do need to be fit to dive using free diving techniques.

Creative

Shallow water is great for artsy images. Reflections and sun ripples add a lot of a photo. Using the natural light, you can get patterns and shapes across the sea floor and on your subject. It is also great to catch the sun's rays. Early morning and late evening make warm images with the sun streaking through. In fresh water and some of the clear caves, a light source become a beacon, bringing dancing light to the walls or floor of the cave for great still and video.

Half-half shots can be made with a fisheye lens in a half meter of water. A good wide angle and balanced strobe lighting also allows for artsy and compelling half shots.

Conclusion

The use of snorkeling and free diving techniques opens a whole new world with a plethora of critters ranging from massive to tiny. It will put you in places that allow you to use natural elements like the sun and clear water to make special images. Don't overlook this aspect of your photography. It is a great way to see the sea and bring it home.



Young humpback. Nikon D200 in Aquatica AD200 housing, Tokina 10-17mm lens at 10mm. 1/80th @ F5, 100 ISO and natural light in Vava'u, Tonga. (Left) Whale shark in natural light in Thailand with Nikon D200 with Aquatica AD200 housing and Tokina 10-17mm lens.

What you need

For the photography part:

First, get a potato. Then, assuming you are using a housed DSLR, which is the most functional type of camera for this, use a wide angle lens of at least 20mm or less. I personally like the Tokina 10-17mm zoom lens for photographing humpbacks, dolphins and mantas. The Nikon 14-24 wide angle on a full frame camera is also an excellent

lens. Use a wide dome and keep it free from scratches. You will be shooting on or near the surface and lens flare from the sun is a fact of life with these wide lenses.

Shallower depth, in general, also means a higher f-stop. So scratches and dings on the dome will show up. Go to your local auto body shop and tell them you want your dome polished. The same treatment they give to make headlight lenses like new will give you a shiny new

dome.

Then, when you're out at sea, use the potato. Rub the juice across the dome to keep water from beading and streaking. It works great for surface shots and half-half images.

Also, for models and medium to small subjects, use a pair of wide angle strobes mounted on the handles and pointed outward for fill light to add color and fill in the dark areas. For whales, don't worry about filling the barnacles of a whale!



Bottlenose dolphin and model Yoko Higashide in the dolphin grounds off Bimini, Bahamas. Nikon D200 with Aquatica AD200 housing, Tokina 10-17mm lens at 10mm 1/160th @ F6.3. ISO 100 and Ikelite strobes for fill at 1/8 power.

Shoot at a high shutter speed if you can. Around 250th or better. Your swimming creates a lot of motion and you're moving with the subject, you need some stopping power. This may mean you'll also want to up your ISO to 400 to help out in this area.



Snorkeler near Maap, Yap, Micronesia. Nikon D200 and Tamron 10-24 mm lens at 10mm 1/160th @ F6.3. ISO 100 and circular polarizer

For the free diving and snorkeling part:

It may seem simple but there is a true art to staying streamlined, properly weighted and equipped when trying to photograph marine life using snorkeling and free diving. Get a low volume mask and low profile snorkel. Both should be easy to clear.

Most free divers don't actually keep the snorkel in their mouths while underwater as it tends to put air in the cheeks. It is just used to catch a breath at the surface. So for this kind of up and down photography, a simple

snorkel is best.

But for swimming with dolphins or trying to keep up with a whale shark, you may want something with a purge and a bit of height that keeps the air hole above the waves.

Use long free diving fins. They add more power to your kick and give you speed. You can also keep up with creatures easier. I prefer full foot fins and they seem to create fewer rubbing points and thus less blister and skin rubs.

Wear as little as possible without freezing to death. Keep your

rubber volume down. You will also want to weight yourself so you are a bit negative. This allows you to sink under the surface just by exhaling. As large as they are, whales like humpbacks are extremely skittish. They don't like humans diving down on them very much. But you can calmly slip under the surface so you are a meter or so down. This gives you a better eye-to-eye shots. The weights also help if you have to go down quickly to keep up with dolphins.

On your weight belt, bring a safety sausage of some sort as well. Ocean currents can be tricky and you can find yourself miles out to sea when chasing whales or looking for sailfish and bait balls. Don't take a chance. It can help with floatation as well as alert those that the current is too much for you to get back to the boat.

Keep in shape and try to keep the body fat down. This will also help you move and sink and keep up with your ridiculously fit model. If you don't live near an ocean, keep the fin muscles in shape in a pool.

Tim Rock
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Selective lighting for macro

By Daniel Stassen

Many dive sites around the world have not only been extensively dived in the last couple of years, but also most of their critters have been photographed by thousands of keen photographers at every level. How can we take original photos of subjects that have been photographed a million and one times? There are many techniques that you may or may not yet have experienced with, for example the use of a snoot to isolate a subject from the rest of a frame or emphasize a certain part of that subject. Snoots have become increasingly popular, thanks to the inspiring work of Keri Wilk ! However, in this article I am going to try to explain selective lighting with the use of a single or twin strobe and nothing else, which can be all you require for creating photos with a special mood and showing a subject in a “new light”.

Some people like to use two strobes at equal distance from each other on each side of the housing. They will happily use both of them simultaneously for a whole dive without even thinking to change angles or even turn one off, regardless of a subject and its orientation.

Even though this technique may remove unwanted shadows, in my opinion it creates flat, 2-dimensional, unflattering photos. I find that the most difficult part is to aim my strobe(s) in a way that will not illuminate a distracting background or anything that can take away the attention from a subject. In most instances, a single strobe properly angled works best to produce dramatic results, keeping the focus on the subject. By trial and error one can, sometimes, find the perfect strobe angle that best isolates a subject in the frame with a black background to add drama to a scene. Of course, it is not always a success and one will often end up with stacks of rejects, but when it works, it is most rewarding experience!

Even though you can achieve stunning results by using large apertures in macro photography, rendering a background blurry and isolating a subject from the rest of a frame, personally I prefer using the smallest aperture possible to maximise the overall sharpness of my images and create a black background. What I have found works best is to set one or two strobes on full power and



(Left) Ribbon eel (With black background) One way to remove a distracting background is to use the inwards strobe technique . Canon 7D, Nauticam ND7, 100 mm macro, twin Inon Z240, ISO100 f16 1/250



(Right) Ribbon eel (With blurry background) It is difficult to isolate a ribbon eel from its background. Canon 7D, Nauticam ND7, 100 mm macro, twin Inon Z240, ISO100 f16 1/250

to change the aperture until I have achieved a good exposure. I always start around f32 or f29 and try my way down to f16. As they say “a picture is worth a thousand words”; hence I will explain how I achieve selective lighting with examples of my own trial and error experiences.

Hand covering

You can achieve selective lighting by partially covering a strobe with your hand. By doing this, you can choose where the light will and will not illuminate a frame. Instead of using a hand, you can also cover part of your strobe with a black plastic or anything that will block the



It is difficult to get an original photo of a Waspfish because they lay in sand around leafs and logs. Canon 7D, Nauticam ND7, 60 mm macro, single Inon Z240, ISO100 f16 1/200

light. I prefer using my hand as I can directly adjust the coverage of the beam underwater. Let's have a look at the Waspfish photo. The Waspfish was sitting in the front of a log, and front lighting would have also shown a distracting background, not exactly what we're looking for ! To achieve the black background on left side of the Waspfish, I used a single strobe positioned at the right side of my port and angled outwards. I could have stopped there, but I wanted to create a more dramatic image; hence I covered

part of the strobe with my hand, only lighting with the edge of the beam the most important features, the mouth and the eyes.

Use the surroundings

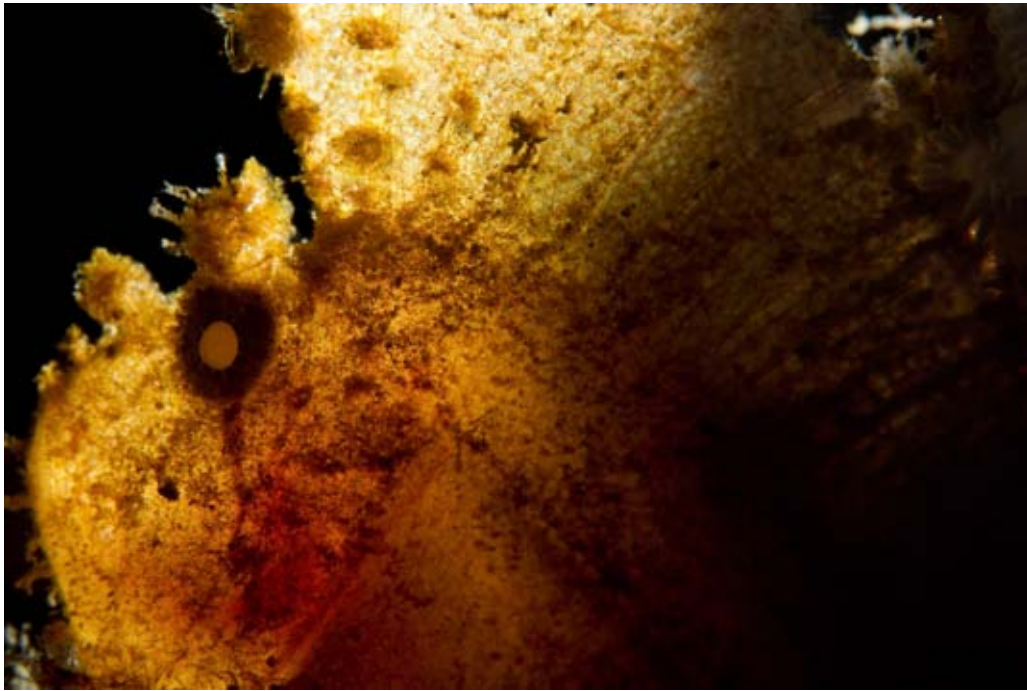
One more way to create a moody atmosphere is by using the surroundings of a subject. By using the same principles as the "hand cover" technique, an object located close by a subject can also stop the light illuminating distracting parts of a frame. It can be a log, leaf,



A tiger shrimp sitting at the edge of a black sponge. The sponge stopped the light illuminating the subject's background, creating a spot-like effect. Canon 7D, Nauticam ND7, 60 mm macro, single Inon Z240, ISO 100 f8 1/100

rock, or anything that is strategically positioned in relation to a potential subject. It may not be obvious at first but with practice you will develop an eye for these kinds of scenes. I used this technique for an eel inside a bottle. The bottle acted as a perfect tool to play with the light. I chose to light the right side of the eel's head because, at the moment, it seemed the better angle of approach with the slight tilt of the eel's head. I took the photo with a single strobe positioned on the right

of the port angled outwards. The neck of the bottle created shadows on the top, right, bottom and back part of the head, creating a different atmosphere all together. I must say that eels are excellent for this type of lighting because they are often hidden between rocks, wood and the likes. The majority of times I encountered tiger shrimps, they stood hidden among crinoids or inside crevices. One time I got lucky, a tiger shrimp stood at the top of a black sponge looking up towards the sky. I took the



Leaf scorpionfish make excellent subjects for backlighting. Canon 7D, Nauticam ND7, 100 mm macro, single Inon Z240, ISO200 f16 1/160

opportunity and lit the tiger shrimp with the outside edge of a single strobe which was angled outwards to the frame. Angled properly, the black sponge acted as a barrier to the light, not illuminating the negative space at the back of the shrimp.

Inwards strobe position

I learnt about the inwards strobe position technique in the last edition of Martin Edge's book "Underwater photography", or should I say "the bible of underwater photography". Even though most techniques seem

easier in theory than in practice, I could directly obtain solid results. For those of you who have not read Martin Edge's last book, I will try to explain. It works by positioning one or more strobes towards the inside of a port until the majority of the output beam will only illuminate a subject and not the background. Basically, a subject is lit with the outside edge of a strobe's beam, whereas in more traditional techniques we try to light a subject with the inside edge of a strobe's beam. I used this technique to eliminate a distracting

background for a blue and yellow ribbon eel photo. I must agree that two strobes on each side of the port facing outwards produced a relatively pleasing result and I could have gone searching for more photogenic subjects such as Rhinopeas which are commonly photographed at Aer Prang in Lembah. However, I always experiment new techniques to improve my photos, and by placing both strobes at each side of the port but facing inwards, I could isolate a commonly photographed subject from its rubbly background, creating a beautiful black negative space. As a bonus, the ribbon eel opened its mouth as much as it could, making this photo even more special.

Back lighting

Back lighting works best for subjects that are somewhat translucent. Leaf scorpionfish are particularly good subjects to practice this type of lighting because the light seems to shine through, and as a bonus they do not move very much. What I usually do is place my strobe in the desired angle, which needs to be adjusted until I find the best position to avoid backscatters and to illuminate the subject. Then, I change the aperture and/or shutter speed until I obtain the desired effect. Selective lighting enables us to take our photographic experience to the

next level, and in many instances can transform what we see. Because of the narrow range of lenses we can effectively use underwater, we have a considerable challenge to differentiate our work to others. Thus, it is important to always try new camera settings and/or strobe angles for a same subject until you have exhausted all the photographic possibilities. If you adopt this mind set, you will need to be patient and never give up any single idea because two or three different strobe angles did not produce any satisfying results, and sometimes you might also need to spend a whole dive with a single subject until you are satisfied with the results.

Of course, there are many more techniques than the ones described above to achieve stunning selective lighting. There are no limits to your imagination!

Daniel Stassen



Creative Lighting with Seahorn Snoot!



Flexible fiber optic attachment coming soon!



Many thanks to Kay-Burn Lim,
David Baxter and Jeffrey de
Guzman for the wonderful
photos above!

Seahorn Snoots are available from:

Scuba Symphony Malaysia: <http://www.scubasympphony.com>

Reefphoto & Video, USA: <http://www.reefphoto.com>

Fotosub, Italy: <http://www.fotosub-shop.it>

Onderwaterhuis, Netherlands: <http://www.onderwaterhuis.nl>

Scuba Supply Sweden: <http://www.scubasupply.se>

Digital Dive, Germany: <http://www.digital-dive.de>

Underwater Visions, UK: <http://www.uwvisions.com>

Cameras Underwater, UK: <http://www.camerasunderwater.co.uk>

Splash Underwater Imaging, Philippines: <http://www.splashuwimaging.com>

Oceanic Focus, Singapore: <http://www.oceanicfocus.com>

Diver Channel, China: <http://www.diverchannel.com>

Talking Tec

By Damien Siviero

Early on in my closed-circuit rebreather (CCR) training my instructor once said “that camera is going to kill you”. He also forced me to conduct the vast majority my training either carrying or using a DSLR camera rig. His sobering words made me carefully consider how and where I would take a camera in the water from then on. Underwater photography presents a serious task load on any diver, so the concepts in this article apply also to standard diving as well as tec diving, loosely defined here as any diving conducted past accepted norms of depth and/or overhead environments.

Understanding Risk

From the start of our open water course we are told that scuba diving has risks; that is true but no where do they become more real than when tec diving with a camera. Understanding what additional risks a camera puts on us is critical in mitigating and/or accepting them.

We are confronted with various types of risks that effect different things. Different risks effect different aspects of our diving and photography, such as safety, equipment, mission objective and so

on. Each risk needs to be assessed and if practical mitigated as small issues can snowball into bigger ones. I say “if practical” as it is my opinion that certain risks are best left alone and accepted, because the overhead of eliminating it is too great – it is up to each of us to decide where that line is.

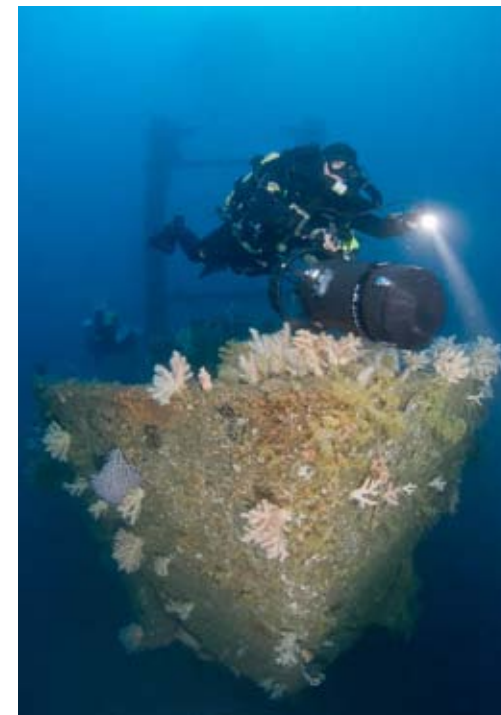
During the execution of a typical dive I consider the ascent and descent phases to be of particular risk to me. We dive in high current, rough seas and limited visibility more often than not. The result is ascents and descents that require particular attention and often two hands to hang on, manipulate equipment, etc... To manage this risk I clip off my camera, but in doing some argue that I am at risk of losing it due to a clip failure. Personally I accept the risk of equipment loss (ultimately a financial issue) to manage what I consider a real issue to my safety. Not holding a camera rig frees up both my hands and mind for other more critical tasks.

Lack of attention/awareness (often described as complacency) is another area of high risk whilst tec diving. Managing deco time, gas, PPO2, and so on are critical to executing a dive safely. Underwater photography does a great job at



*Bow and anchor of the SS Catterthun,
60m, Sydney
1/50s @ f/3.5; ISO1600
Canon 7D, Tokina 10-17mm, Aquatica,
2 * z240s*

*Scooter diver over the bow of MV
Fairwind, 90m, SW Rocks, Australia.
1/60s @ f/3.5; ISO1250
Canon 7D, Tokina 10-17mm, Aquatica,
2 * DS125s*



distracting us from these tasks. My approach to address this problem is to dedicate a block of time I use to shoot a given subject. I estimate the time required to shoot a subject (e.g. 3-5 minutes), assess the variables (gas, time, etc...) and if it is within parameters I will proceed. If not, I will either not shoot or revise my objective to fit within the allocated limited. Maintaining awareness of how long I am shooting for and what I am achieving helps give me reference to overall dive time. Safety divers are a great solution too, though unfortunately a rare commodity in non-commercial circles. On many dives my buddy/model becomes the safety diver by default, and if he/she says we're going or calls the dive that it and the camera is away.

Equipment Overload

The hallmark of a tec diver surely has to be the amount of equipment that is carried on a dive. Rebreathers, twin tanks, stage cylinders, reels, canister lights, computers, and so on are all carried to safely execute a typical dive. When we add a sizeable camera to this, it can quickly become overwhelming and dangerous.

One approach to addressing this scenario is by managing smaller issues one by one or even eliminating them before the dive begins. For



Sturdy clamps and 12+9" arms allow a DSLR rig to be tightly wrapped up. Stix arms provide lift, making the it near neutral. Front and rear neoprene covers are tied together with 3mm bungee along with a boltsnap for clipping off when not in use.

example, hook/suicide clips can make handling gear difficult, so switching them out for standard boltsnaps often makes handling easier and avoids the snowball effect.

The amount of equipment we carry adds greatly to the task load underwater, so if you do not need it leave it at home. The bare minimum of equipment can still be a lot and the best way to deal with it all is incrementally. If you can deal with a single small stage cylinder, don't add a reel and canister light until you can do that too. Your camera rig is the last piece of equipment you want to add, and even then perhaps start out with no strobes, then small arms and finally multi segment ones.



Shooting in high flow caves with models and off camera strobes can be difficult. Ginnie Springs, Florida.

1/100s @ f/4.5; ISO800

*Canon 7D, Tokina 10-17mm, Aquatica, 2 * z240s, DS-125 off camera*

A clean, tidy and consistent equipment setup will make tec diving easier to execute. The same is true with your camera rig. Strobe sync chords (particularly thin optic fibre ones) should not have exposed loops or other loose ends that can snag and cause entanglement issues. Making your rig neutral (or near neutral) in the water will make it easy to handle and when appropriate clip off. Consider buoyancy arms that provide positive lift for this purpose. The smaller you rig gets, the easier it will be to manage.

Handling your rig

One of the biggest issues I faced when I began doing complex tec dives

with a large camera rig was what to do with it when executing tasks (e.g. gas switch, pickup a cylinder, run line, deploy a SMB). Having the ability to clip off your rig and free up both hands is at times critical.

Multiple ways to clip off a rig exist and your particular equipment configuration may dictate your best approach but for me it is often to clip the rig off to my right d-ring. To enable this, my housing has a single boltsnap (with large eye for finger insertion) attached to the base of the right grip. With the strobe and arms wrapped up tight, this makes my rig reasonably small and discretely tucks in behind my twins or rebreather. It does not clutter my front chest area or

dangle below me, which is a major issue in wreck/cave penetration. When clipped off, I always have the front and rear covers on to protect the port and viewfinder. Both are made from neoprene and are tied together with a piece of 3mm bungee with a boltsnap at one end. When using the camera, the covers are clipped off to the right hip d-ring and again float upwards from there and neatly out of the way.

My experience with most cave and wreck photography is that it can be either mission specific or opportunistic. With the former, we set objectives (e.g. shoot a given section of cave) and then plan depth/time/distances around that objective. Opportunistic dives are very different and I tend to fit photographic opportunities into a given dive plan; this often makes sense when I've not dived a wreck before and don't really know what I'm going to find.

Years ago I used a tether or camera strap with a quick release buckle and squiggly coil. I quickly found out that for deep wreck diving this was not a good idea as it would snag and catch on everything. Simple tasks like removing a stage cylinder or inflating a SMB became a burden; it was also the source of the "that camera will kill you" comment by my instructor. The logic behind a long tether is that when dropped, the camera will hang below you and out of the way. In practice I found it to be an irritating distraction hitting my legs (when vertical) and an obstacle between my buddy and I (should proximity be required).

Many divers talk about cave and wreck line as coming alive underwater. Unless managed properly, it snakes and weaves its way around as if it were possessed. DSLR rigs, with their controls/dials, strobe arms and clamps appear to be a natural



*Stern and propeller of SS Birchgrove Park, 50m, Sydney 1/100s @ f/3.5; ISO800
Canon 50D, Tokina 10-17mm, Aquatica, 2 * DS125s*

magnet to guidelines. Other than holding the camera in a position clear of the line (not always possible and also a high task load), a clean and tidy rig that is stowed clear is the best way I have found to deal with line entanglement. Taut line and awareness is the key to success, so pay attention to where the line is and how it may attach you camera. Also apply particular care when deploying a SMB at depth as an inflated SMB snagged on the camera attached to you is not fun.

Coming from a cave background, one area I do not compromise on is lighting. I always dive with a primary light as standard and never rely on my on-camera lighting for safety. More often than not my on-camera lighting is more than adequate and I don't bother using my primary, but if I decided to leave the camera on the surface or ditch it mid dive that leaves me in a less than ideal situation.



*Diver twisting through passages of Devil's System, Ginnie Spring, Florida. 1/80s @ f/10; ISO650
Canon 7D, Tokina 10-17mm, Aquatica, 2 * z240s*

Rebreathers and Photography

Closed Circuit Rebreathers (CCR) offer the tec diver a virtually unlimited gas supply and greatly extend time underwater. Contrary to popular myths, CCRs do not make you immune to nitrogen and they do not make you undetectable to marine life. For an overview of the types of rebreathers, visit my rebreather guide at <http://damiensiviero.com/rebreather-guide/>.

If you consider time and light as the biggest constraints in underwater photography; the former is addressed in a big way by CCRs. Reducing gas limits and optimal PPO2s enable you to spend more time in the no-decompression zone and/or far less time decompressing. Net result is you can spend more time shooting, but this comes at a cost of complexity and monitoring. The latter is critical for the photographer, as instead of the focus being on gas volumes it now shifts to PPO2 monitoring. For this reason I consider a Heads Up Display (HUD)



*Descending into the high flow of Devil's Eye as tanic water mixes with fresh, Ginnie Spring, Florida. 1/60s @ f/3.5; ISO1250 Canon 7D, Tokina 10-17mm, Aquatica, 2 * z240s*

that conveys PPO2 information to your mask very important for the photographer.

Being stealthy underwater also provides the photographer with an advantage, but it is in my opinion often overstated. Marine creatures are not stupid, they know you are there but seem to have much more tolerance for a diver when you are not spewing out noisy bubbles. Shooting sharks and schooling fish are particular scenarios where CCRs provide an advantage because they do not emit bubbles. Bubble-less diving is also an advantage when shooting macro, as it results in a calmness that tends to make creatures more amenable to being photographed.

Deep dives and nitrogen narcosis present a serious problem to underwater photographers. Typically, divers either do their best to cope with the narcosis or use trimix, a combination of oxygen, helium and nitrogen, to remove or reduce the

narcotic effect. Whilst very effective, helium is a relatively expensive gas, which results in people either deep diving on air or running it lean to save money. Due to the low levels of gas consumed, CCRs make diving even on liberal trimix quite affordable.

Although other forms exist, rebreathers are commonly either manual (aka KISS style) or electronically controlled. Both have their merits, though I have dived both types extensively and find the electronically controlled rebreather to be more suited to the type of diving I do. KISS style units require a busier hands on approach in addition to the same level of monitoring and for the photographer, I consider the electronic CCR with their alarms and automation to be a more appropriate solution.

Diving with models

Unfortunately in tec diving competent and willing models are hard to come by. Understandably, not many people want to spend what little time they have on a deep wreck or cave being told to shine their light here or move a bit over there. My advice is if you find a good model, treat them well! Consider their safety first as it can be just as task loading (if not more) being the model than the photographer.

In caves with flow it is often easier for a model to retrace their path giving you another opportunity to take the shot, than it is to have them hold a stationary position back-finning against the flow. The forward movement also pulls back their equipment and yields a more aesthetic body position.

Conclusion

Despite advances in equipment, training and

attitudes, tec diving is still a dangerous activity and sadly people do die. Applying our craft of underwater photography in caves, wrecks and at extreme depths only adds to the risk already present on those dives. Although you can find yourself a tec instructor and get certified with relative ease, developing the skills and confidence necessary to safely execute a photographic dive is not as easy. Finally, be prepared to put the camera away, or if it comes to you or the camera even ditch it, as in the end you can always repeat the dive and cameras are replaceable – you are not.

Damien Siviero

<http://damiensiviero.com>

DISCLAIMER: Tec diving is dangerous and should not be undertaken without proper training. The concepts and techniques discussed in this article should be considered editorial opinion and are not in any way an adequate substitution for training from a qualified professional.



An Alternate View in the UK

by Mark Webster

I am returning to the theme of familiarity and alternate views but this time with your local dive site in mind. Although for many of us just having the opportunity to get into the water and explore the reef may be enough itself, if you have gone to the trouble of preparing your camera and choosing a lens for the dive you might feel disappointed if no new or interesting subjects turn up. In order to keep our photography fresh we need to consider photographing familiar subjects in different ways or perhaps look for opportunities to photograph these subjects in different situations or habitats.

To achieve this we need to consider some alternatives. Firstly think of the subjects you are likely to encounter and select the same lens you would normally use, but plan for a different approach with exposure and lighting. Another option to consider is to simply try and capture a subject in a more unusual pose or position which may require an element of luck but mostly a good deal of patience. The third option is to try and capture your subject with a different lens or optical combination to introduce new imaging

opportunities. There are all sorts of ways to interpret this approach, but here are a few examples which I hope will encourage you to see common subjects in a new light (excuse the pun!).

Nudibranchs

I think that most photographers will appreciate that there is a difference between a technically good shot and a well composed shot taken at the right moment. Sometimes this is referred to the peak of the action, but where nudibranchs are concerned the word action is a little misleading as most species move very slowly. So can you capture a nudibranch at the peak of the action?

Well, hopefully these two images will demonstrate that you can. This species of nudibranch (*Flabellina lineata*) is fairly common on my local dive site in early spring time and is often found feeding on the kelp torn from the reef after a storm which has collected in gullies on the sea bed. The first image is probably a fairly typical presentation of the subject and the temptation for me was simply to move on and try and find other perhaps more exciting subjects.



(Above) Flabellina lineata nudibranch - in this image the composition is fairly straight forward and is a reasonable species ID shot, but looking at the shape of the kelp and the direction of travel there were better compositions available. Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 105mm micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO100 f18 1/200.



(Right) Flabellina lineata nudibranch - waiting patiently paid off and the nudibranch eventually stretched around the curve in the kelp and a soft background. Worth the long cold wait! Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 105mm micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO100 f18 1/200.

However, I noticed that the shape of this particular kelp frond included a number of swirls and scallops along its edge and it occurred to me that this nudibranch would eventually find its way to these locations offering an opportunity for a much improved composition.

The water was cold and the nudibranch was definitely taking its time so I made several forays further along the reef returning every ten minutes or so to observe its progress and take a few more images. On the first couple of curves it did not quite reach the edge of the kelp or the curve was not extreme enough for the shot I had in mind. But eventually, perhaps through me telepathically urging it on as I got colder, the little guy finally started to move around a tighter curve and right on the edge which produced the final shot which I felt was far a more pleasing composition. So, yes you can capture a nudibranch at the peak of the action, but you must be prepared to slow your mind and expectations to the speed of time that exists in the sea slug world!



Polycera quadrilineata nudibranchs - With a macro lens it is easy to capture these nudibranchs in pairs or small groups but you have to move too far away from the subject to capture a larger group which decreases definition, saturation and increases the chance of backscatter. Nikon D100, L&M Titan housing, 105mm micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO200 f18 1/200.

The second example is another common species (*Polycera quadrilineata*) that congregates on kelp fronds in early summer both to feed on encrusting sea mats (bryozoans) and to mate and lay their egg spirals. There are always small groups found together or in pairs, but for a few days there can be very dense congregations of these sea slugs which is very striking and contrasts well with the green/brown

colour of the kelp. We would normally shoot a subject like this with a macro lens which can produce good results, but it is difficult to get a large number of the nudibranchs in the frame and retain both perspective and depth of field.

Like many other photographers I am using a combination of fish eye zoom and teleconverter for close focus shots which is ideal for this type of subject. This technique has its roots in



Polycera quadrilineata nudibranchs - Using the combination of fish eye zoom and teleconverter allows a very close approach to the subject whilst retaining a wide view. This wider shot illustrates the congregation of the species which is difficult to capture with a macro lens. Once you have the focus and exposure correct you can play with the zoom to adjust the background and capture some open water and even a sun burst. Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 10-17mm FE zoom, 2X teleconverter, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO200 f16 1/30.

terrestrial nature photography and had seen some action in the film days of yore. We used to make these sort of compositions using a Nikonos 15mm plus extension tube which I think first saw presented by Valerie Taylor at Brighton '83 (yes a long time ago!), but of course was much more difficult to get focus and framing spot on as

you had to compose without a viewfinder. Now I use my Tokina 10-17mm zoom with a 2X teleconverter which allows me to capture a wide range of subjects down to true macro.

Using this combination allows true macro magnification with a much greater depth of field which has produced image which



Sea hare (Anaspidea sp) - Here again this macro shot illustrates the species well enough but the background is dark and can be improved with a different approach. Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 105mm micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO100 f11 1/125.

I think illustrates the almost frantic (well for a nudibranch anyway...) activity on the kelp whilst including the open water and sunburst as negative space.

Sea hares

Sea hares (Anaspidea sp) are another very common species on inshore dives in the early spring time and can appear in their hundreds over a small area when they congregate to mate. They are found on several species of seaweed both feeding and mating and are relatively simple to photograph. But for something a little different in terms of composition and impact we need to separate the subject from the sometimes busy background negative space. As with the nudibranch species it is the kelp on the reef top which offers the best opportunities.

You can improve on the standard composition



Sea hare (Anaspidea sp) - With patience I eventually found a sea hare that was feeding on a kelp frond and could see that it would eventually reach the edge of the kelp and strike a more attractive pose. I made a few test shots to be ready for the moment and was then able to take two or three exposures as the sea hare moved from one side to the other. Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 105mm micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO100 f16 1/25.

by capturing the sea hare against open water in order to improve the subject separation. To achieve this we need a compromise between an adequate aperture to maintain a reasonable depth of field with your macro lens and a slow shutter speed in order to expose the open water behind the subject. Boosting the ISO will also help and using ISO 200 or even 400 will make life easier but you need to search patiently to find a kelp frond with a sea hare grazing on it in a suitable position. You may suffer another long wait and several attempts before the sea hare will finally begin to crawl over the edge of the kelp and perhaps produce a better image.



Tompots are naturally inquisitive and this one was fascinated by its reflection in the dome port and even rubbed his/her head against it....perhaps it was love?! Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 10-17mm FE zoom, 2X teleconverter, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO200 f16 1/125

Tompot Blenny

If you are familiar with UK diving then you are bound to have encountered a tom pot blenny which is an irresistible subject much like a clown fish - i.e. it is very difficult to swim past one without being tempted to take a picture! On my local beach dive I have a couple of resident tom pot blennies which have occupied the same holes for several years and are now quite familiar with my attentions as well as a few other photographers in the area.

My aim with this shot was to capture the whole of the tom pot and some of its habitat which is difficult to achieve with a macro lens without moving too far away from the subject. So I selected the combination of fish eye zoom and teleconverter once again for this shot which allowed me to get very close and also to control the field of view



Topknot flatfish - these flatfish are very common on inshore dives and are frequently found on the reef edge where it meets the sea bed or on flat ledges and in fissures on the reef. They are normally a patient subject convinced of their camouflage and this would be a typical head and shoulder portrait with a macro lens. Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 105mm micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO100 f11 1/25.

with the zoom. This lens combination produces a dramatic change in perspective when compared with a straight macro image taken with a 105mm lens. In fact the tom pot was so fascinated by its reflection in the small dome port that it happily came out of its hole to perch on the reef in front of the camera. The lens combination does of course introduce some forced perspective distortion to the subject, but I feel that this actually enhances the comical expression of the tom pot - that is open to debate of course!

Topknot Flatfish

Sometimes simply capturing a common subject in an unusual pose or environment is enough to



In this shot the topknot had begun to shuffle along the ledge preparing for take off and I was able to get low enough to include a distant sun burst. Nikon F90X, Subal housing, 60mm micro, Sea & Sea YS50 & YS30 flash, Fuji Velvia 50, f11 1/30.

make an image stand out a little. Topknots are a common flatfish reef species which are frequently seen at the edge of the reef or on any flat reef surface often just peering out of a crack. They have very good camouflage but once spotted they are normally convinced that you cannot actually see them which allows a close approach.

Occasionally you will encounter them swimming over the reef from one resting spot to the next and it is these movements that often give you the opportunity to capture a different image. Again it is a game of patience once you have found your subject. When you have your cooperative topknot you can spend some time capturing the standard shot and perhaps a few portrait shots in a vertical format whilst you wait for some movement. If you wait long enough the topknot will take off

with an undulating motion through the kelp along the reef, quite slowly and often pausing every couple of metres for a rest. These pauses are the best opportunity to capture an image with a more unusual background or pose. They will often rest on a blade of kelp and peer inquisitively at the camera which is time enough to get two or three exposures if you are prepared. If you are very lucky they will settle on a ledge allowing you get a very low approach and include an open water background. This has only happened once for me long enough to capture an image way back in the film days, but I have included it here in the sequence to prove that it can happen!

Snoots and Double Exposures

In many ways underwater photography is a little like fashion and we often see the resurgence of tools and techniques which go through another period of popularity. Snoots and directional lighting were an essential tool in the film days particularly in photosub competitions in the 1980's and 90's where you would see an elaborate array of snoots and funnels as photographers chased the perfect double exposure for the creative category. Directional lighting is making a come back and the latest variation is the fibre optic snoot which will direct your light more accurately to your subject, well in theory anyway. This latest tool has encouraged me to try snooting again and I have acquired a pair for the Inon Z240 from Ken Sullivan in the UK. This version uses large single fibre optics housed in Loc-Line arms which are more flexible than a bundle of fine fibres and (according to Ken) not hydroscopic like some of the fine fibre optic fibres. (you can contact Ken through his website: www.kensunderwaterphotography.com).



Fibre optic snoots (www.kensunderwaterphotography.com) mounted on an Inon Z240 with Pelican Mitylites for aiming.

allows image overlay. This is still work in progress for me but I have included a sample image.

So whilst I am sure that we all yearn for that next tropical trip and a variety of new subjects, try not to ignore the opportunities we have on our own door steps. The subjects may be common and photographed frequently but with a little imagination and a large dose of patience we can produce slightly different and pleasing images. The added benefit is of course keeping your creative and technical skills honed for that next overseas trip which means you can be productive from the first day.

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Snoot lit scorpion fish - when visibility is poor you can use a snoot to reduce backscatter by selectively lighting a subject and keeping the background black. Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 10-17mm FE zoom, 2X teleconverter, Inon Z240 flash with fibre optic snoot, ISO100 f8 1/250.

Snoot lit nudibranch - you can isolate a small subject like this nudibranch in a pool of light with a narrow beam snoot. Pale colours contrast well with the black background. Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 60mm micro, Inon Z240 flash with fibre optic snoot, ISO100 f11 1/25.

My attempts with this kit are still in the early experimental stages and the first observation I would make is that you need some way of helping to aim the light as the beam is quite narrow. I have added a pair of Pelican Mitylites which has helped, but so far I have only managed a couple of dives in my cold home waters. If you are

using a traditional snoot you can often use the flash focus light to good effect to help with aiming.

Snoots allow you to isolate a subject with a surrounding black background, introduce deep shadowing and textures with strong side lighting and perhaps play with double exposures if your camera



Raja Ampat

The Green Labyrinth

By Carlos Virgili

We have travelled to Indonesia many a time as it's one of our favourite diving spots. And whenever we choose the live aboard system, we always opt for the Ondina, a traditional "pinisi" adapted for scuba diving. A few years back we spent some time in Papua, but in Triton Bay which we loved, and even though a lot has been written about Raja Ampat we hadn't had the opportunity to visit it since it became a "World Class" destination.

Looking down from the window of the plane at the immense mass of green forest of this great island, my imagination began to plunge into its waters and the tangled jungle.

After a briefing with our Cruise Director, we raised anchor and headed north. Even though Indonesia and the Ondina are now like a second home to us, we had never been to Raja Ampat which we had heard so much about; and to be quite honest we were keen to get there.

Oh, by the way we've forgotten to introduce ourselves. We're the photographer and model Carlos and

Celia from Barcelona now based in the Costa Brava much closer to our Mediterranean Sea.

Whilst we are sailing, I stroll around the ship refreshing my memory. At the stern of the ship there is a shaded area where all of the scuba diving equipment is kept and set up from the first day to the last. Furthermore, you don't have to lug the bottles down to the zodiacs – it's all done for you. I see that the bottles are new, with practical covers to protect them from rubbing against the other equipment. Wow, what a luxury!

The photographers' area is just behind the equipment room and has a big table with shelving below and two small water trays for sweetening up our "offspring."

Outside at the bow, there is a glass-top table and benches where you can sit down to eat or rest between dives; a very popular spot to watch the very moving Indonesian sunsets.

The lounge next door has benches rather than the "sliding chairs" you tend to find on other cruises. What a great idea! ... I see



The famous jetty of Airborek. Nikon D300, Subal housing, 2 Inon Z-240, strobes, 10mm, ISO200 1/100 F13

The nice reef off the island called Pulau. Nikon D300, Subal housing, 2 Inon Z-240, strobes, 10mm, ISO200 1/320 F22

they've got a new plasma screen but they've still got the original sound system, which they promise to change this year! There are plugs under the tables to connect our laptops or a popcorn machine (or whatever takes your fancy...)

One thing I've always liked about this organisation is that on the





The impressive sea fans located on Fiabacet. Nikon D300, Subal housing, 2 Inon Z-240, strobes, 10mm, ISO200 1/80 F13

first day you're always given a kind of folder which you can use as a logbook throughout the trip, and in the dining room there is a map of the islands, all with unpronounceable names, indicating where we are.

After the standard "check dive", our cruise really begins with a night dive in the same waters as earlier on, but because we are still close to the populated areas, it wasn't really worthwhile; no doubt there'll be better dives to come. Curiously enough, I have never understood why the night dives in this part of Indonesia are

far from spectacular having seen the enormous biodiversity milling around the coral reef during the day. Is there a biologist around to enlighten us on this?

Although the timetable is flexible based on what the passengers want, and needless to say on the climate, which tends to be good the whole year round, there are usually three dives plus the night dive.

Oh, by the way, I forgot to mention that as the owners are Europeans, there are 15-litre stainless steel bottles on board, difficult to



A blackish Manta Ray exiting the clean station. Nikon D300, Subal housing, 2 Inon Z-240, strobes, 10mm, ISO200 1/80 F8

find on other similar cruises. These allow you to stay underwater for longer and mean that you don't have to carry the bothersome lead weights. And of course if you want Nitrox it's available, too.

As we did 35 dives I'm not going to go into all the detail, but I shall tell you about my favourites which I hope will be yours too.

The diving conditions in this area are quite different to other areas of this vast country as here, depending on the tides, there is less visibility due to the plankton

in the water and the strong currents which, in themselves, are the ideal conditions for a tremendous explosion of life. However, this is not a trip for beginners, certain skill is needed to cope with the currents, which can be treacherous like in the Galápagos or the Maldives.

The Passage: As its name suggests, it really is a passageway, like a river (of salt water) between two islands. On the left-hand side in a cove, there are large gorgonians and soft coral less than 6 metres from the surface. Totally unthinkable anywhere

else if it were not for the currents which feed these animals/plants and the fact that they have very little light in the shallows owing to the shoreline trees. If our fellow diver doesn't break the spell with his bubbles, on a day with the sea in a state of total calm we can see the reflection of the tops of the trees casting their shadows over us. In the mangrove swamps there lives a curious fish called the Archerfish; a nifty hunter of insects which he cleverly catches with his...spit. Well worth seeing.

When we've used up the memory card with our shots we can swim out to the middle of the "river" and literally let ourselves go with the flow. There's not much to be seen on the riverbed but shooting down the current feels like being on a roller-coaster. During our little "excursion" we were accompanied by a remora fish which came from nowhere and mistook me for a ray fish, a shark or god knows what...when the "river" reaches its end, the current slowly comes to a stop and the zodiacs "fish us out" and take us back to the "mother ship".

Airborek: The jetty of this island is probably one of the most photographed in the world. Its wooden columns have not only got sponges embedded in them but also soft coral bushes of vibrant colours. If you dive in with the sun directly above the



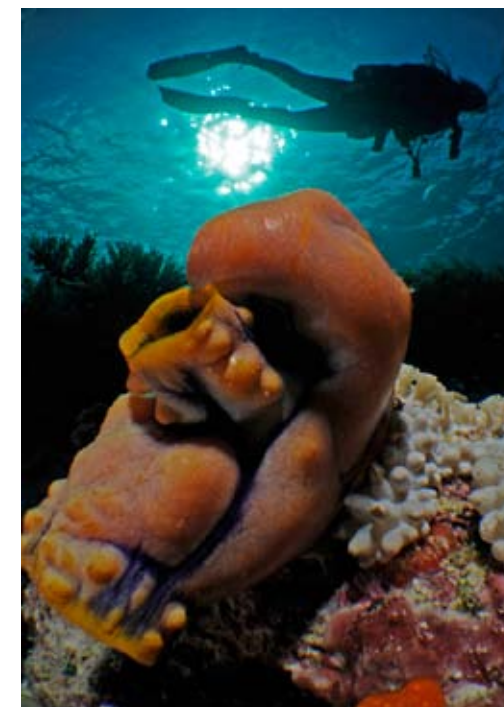
One of the holes in Goa Farundi. Nikon D300, Subal housing, 2 Inon Z-240, strobes, 12mm, ISO200 1/60 F13

jetty, you'll watch spellbound as the sun's rays pass through the battered planks and light up the pillars and the nets which are used to hold the catches for a short time.. These conditions of shallow water, plenty of light, relatively clean water, shapes, colours and light are a photographer's paradise...

Furthermore, under the shaded grid, a shoal of jack fish wanders by, giving some movement to the scene. And at the far end of the jetty there is usually a group of friendly batfish at

a cleaning station. Right next to them are several considerably large tridacna clams pouting their colourful lips. Not only this, but this construction is also the gateway to a very pretty village, and is well worth a visit to stretch your legs, chat to the friendly villagers and see its curious catholic church of which they are very proud.

Manta Mantra: Almost in single file, three coral pillars stand in the middle of the sand and form the invisible road which joins several cleaning stations for these graceful



One really close ascidian and a diver. Nikon D300, Subal housing, 2 Inon Z-240, strobes, 60 mm + Inon Semi Fish eye, ISO200 1/125 F32.

beings. It is important that the divers go down quietly and position themselves around the pillars although not too close to bother the rays during the parasite removal process, to watch their elegant but sometimes nervous movements while they are being cleaned. With a bit of luck we might even spot them queuing up to be de-wormed or perhaps see how one of these specimens repeatedly goes around the coral towers, trying to



My wife and model watching at a school of snappers. Nikon D300, Subal housing, Subtronic Nova + YS 120 strobes, 17mm, ISO200 1/80 F8

catch the attention of its small “flight crew”. Funnily enough, the ones that we saw were very dark, even their bellies, something I’ve only seen in Socorro (Mexico). After the dive, the biggest pillar is well worth visiting to see a shoal of glassfish just off to one side.

Pulau Wai: A pretty island surrounded by spectacular reefs where it is possible to get “fifty- fifty” type photographs and where a shore visit is highly recommended. A second-world war plane lays hidden deep

in these waters. A powerful 7-ton, bomber plane, one of the 15.700, P-47D Thunderbolt, built in the USA which still conserves some of its guns but, needless to say, they are totally covered in coral, sponges and alcyonarias.

At 30 metres deep we found the plane on a slope, lying on its back. It’s well worth taking a look at the wrecked cockpit and single powerful propeller.

Fiabecet: Not even in Fiji, quite rightly famous for having the biggest



The belly and head of a big wobegong flying over my head. Nikon D300, Subal housing, Subtronic Nova + YS 120 strobes, 17mm, ISO200 1/80 F16

and best kept gorgonians in the world, had we done a dive with such lavish examples swishing and swaying with the current; half a dozen different species, some of which, were bigger than a diver, all in perfect condition, one after another at different depths ranging from 12 to 50 metres. In and out of their branches, small fishes look for shelter, and in the blue, a couple of shy Napoleon Wrasse; shoals of smallish brightly coloured fishes, weaving through this winding forest of flexible arabesque. A Wobbegong

shark (a curious bearded shark) looms out of a bleak area which appeared to be nothing more than sand and shows us its incredible camouflage, going from a pale brown to a strong copper-colour. Barely swishing its tail from side to side, hardly moving the top of its body, it swims inconspicuously, looking for another place to lie in wait for its unsuspecting victims.

Raja Ampat which owes its name to 4 islands, the 4 Kings, is not only an underwater Paradise; the landscape which lies beyond the “blue frontier”



The Ondina at sunset.

hands, fish, deer, turtles... Neither their origin, nor their antiquity is clear, but there is no doubt that they are worth a visit, even if it's just to "lose yourself" in the tangled "seawater jungle" of the Raja Ampat islands.

These are the dives that you just cannot miss if you ever come to this remote part of Papua. From here onwards, we continue our voyage towards Ambon, but that is yet another story to come...

enchants us with its outstanding beauty. Rocky formations, no doubt of volcanic origin, crammed with trees, plants and wild flowers all competing to colonise every nook and cranny. Owing to the erosion of the sea, the majority of the islets are shaped like mushrooms and some of the smaller ones – and sometimes the not so small ones, are on the verge of losing their precarious balance and crashing down nosily into the sea

One afternoon, with the sole help of a GPS and a few notes jotted down from the Internet, we set out on an unforgettable trip in search of a wall with cave paintings. We sped off on the two zodiacs leaving the Ondina behind, plying the peaceful waters which are found in these intricate labyrinths of islands. The waters are shallow and you have to be on the alert: after getting it wrong a few times in the many canals, we finally reached the wall where we photographed all sorts of shapes and forms, some almost indistinguishable:

Carlos Virgili
www.risck.com



A large advertisement for the S.M.Y. Ondina sailing ship. The background is a vibrant blue sky with a white and orange sailing ship. The ship's name "S.M.Y. Ondina" is written in large, elegant white cursive. In the top right corner, there is a circular inset showing a hand holding a silver fork over a plate of green food, with the text "Neptune Award to the Best Diving Liveboard Cruise - Madrid, January 2005." Below this, the text "Come to a different Life" is written in white cursive. In the center, it says "Romantic and Adventurous Diving live a board. The adventure of the sea at its best!" Below that, it lists dive locations: "Dive in the very heart of Marine Biodiversity: Komodo, Rajah Empat, Alor, Tukangbesi, Banda, Maumere, Ambon, Lembeh Strait..... The home of the largest variety of marine life ever found!" Further down, it says "Special offers for small groups and full boat charters." In the bottom right corner, there is a circular logo for "S.M.Y. Ondina DIVE INDONESIA" featuring a sailboat. At the very bottom, the website "www.smyondina.com" and email "info@thebestdivingintheworld.com" are listed. The text "Come to a different Dive" is also written in large white cursive on the right side of the advertisement.

Antarctica

by Chris Sterritt

We all have one special dream destination and mine was Antarctica. I have visited the Russian Arctic for five weeks under ice and have even taken a week's liveaboard out of Murmansk, but Antarctica has always been my ultimate adventure. Earlier this year, an email from Aqua Firma (<http://www.aqua-firma.co.uk>) spotlighting a late-booking special offer set me to thinking. It only took a few days before I had flights, a hotel in Ushuaia, capital city of Tierra del Fuego Province, Argentina and the 12 day boat trip booked!

The diving is so remote that you have to take everything you might need with you, including a spares kit, so I carefully prepared my dive bag and camera gear. I began to worry about flooding my housing. Ordinarily, I would see it as an acceptable risk and simply a part of diving with a DSLR. However, this trip was special so I couldn't bear the thought of wrecking my camera on the first day and coming home with no photos. A long talk with Steve Warren of Ocean Optics (<http://www.oceanoptics.co.uk/>) helped clarify my options. In the end, I took a spare Canon body with me and a housed

Fuji F30 as a second backup. I packed an extra Inon Z240 strobe along with various other spare parts so I didn't have much baggage allowance left over for clothing by the time thermals and waterproof outer garments were in the bag.

A week later and I was in Ushuaia with a day to kill before boarding M/V Plancius for my trip of a lifetime. I spent my day in the Tierra del Fuego National Park and walked for six hours along the most beautiful coastline I have seen. It was the perfect opener for my trip.

The next afternoon, I presented myself for boarding and got my first sighting of the Plancius, named after the 16th century Dutch astronomer and cartographer Petrus Plancius, which was entirely re-fitted in

(Top) "Weddell Seal and M/V Plancius" Canon EOS 5D II with Canon 70-300 DO lens at 135mm. Aperture priority, F7, 1/160s ISO 100 Ambient light
(Right) DiversIceberg.jpg "Getting a closer look at an impressive iceberg". Canon EOS 5D II with Canon 25-105 L lens at 35mm. Shutter priority, F8, 1/160s ISO 100 Ambient light



*(Right) “Diving an iceberg”
Canon EOS 5D II, Subal housing, twin Inon Z240 strobes, Canon 15mm Fisheye lens. Manual exposure, F11 1/100s ISO 200*

*(Far right top) “Plenty to look at along the bottom”
Canon EOS 5D II, Subal housing, twin Inon Z240 strobes, Canon 16-35mm L lens at 16mm. Manual exposure, F10 1/80s ISO 200*

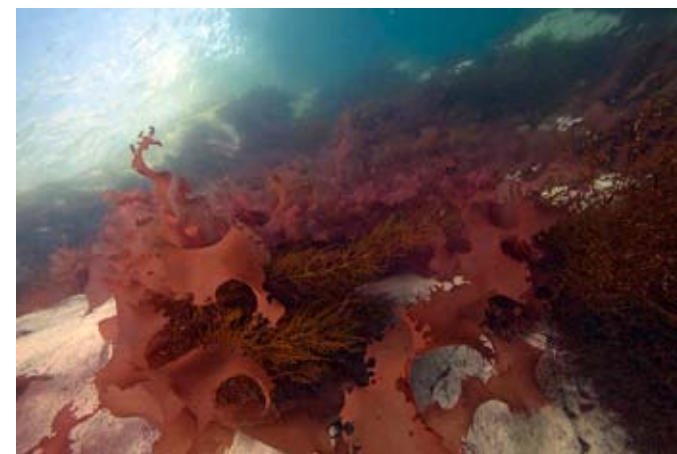
*(Far right bottom) “Macro Heaven”
Canon EOS 5D II, Subal housing, twin Inon Z240 strobes, Canon 100mm F2.8 IS lens. Shutter priority, F2.8 1/200s ISO 200*

2007. She is 89m long and 14.5m wide, carries a maximum of 114 passengers with 43 crew. This was going to be a luxury cruise ship rather than a diving liveaboard. In brief, we had fantastic accommodation, excellent food and the most helpful crew you could find. I was in a twin sharing with a non-diver and had more than enough room for all of my clothing and camera gear. Our cabin had 4 unused power points, so there was plenty of room for chargers. Dive gear went in a boot room next to the dive boat deck and stayed there until we returned to Ushuaia. We had adequate space in the heated room to hang suits and undersuits which always dried out thoroughly between dives. We were told that one trip had seen 34 divers aboard. With that number, the facilities would have been very cramped, but I am assured that a dozen or so divers is far more usual. The trip after ours, the final one of the Antarctic summer, had no divers on board.

The plan called for almost three days sailing



each way, with diving in the South Shetlands and the Weddell Sea. However, a force 11 storm whilst crossing from Argentina to Antarctica through the notorious Drake Passage pushed us a long way west of course and as no headway was being made, Plan B was devised. It is said that you don't take a trip to Antarctica, but that Antarctica takes you. We were now heading for the western side of the Antarctic Peninsular, with our first landfall to be at



Port Lockroy, a scientific station part of the British Antarctic Survey.

During the crossing, the expedition crew kept us entertained with various lectures. We had Antarctic Photography Tips, documentaries about Port Lockroy, Antarctic Weather, Antarctic



*“Kelvin found a beautiful pygmy octopus”
Canon EOS 5D II, Subal housing, twin Inon Z240
strobes, Canon 16-35mm L lens
at 20mm. Manual exposure, F6.3 1/80s ISO 400*

Mountaineering and Antarctic Wildlife. There were others, but I didn't see all of them. On the return sailing, Kelvin presented a talk on the underwater world using photographs we had taken during our dives. Most of the divers learned a lot as we don't always know a great deal about what we are photographing. The other passengers enjoyed seeing what was below the water line and we received a lot of compliments. It was very nice to be able to contribute a little.

Eleven of the hundred or so passengers were divers and we had a pair of highly experienced guides running the diving operation. Henrick Enckell, the dive manager, had been delayed in at least 3 cities on his way to join ship and arrived without any of his luggage. This was not the first time that this had happened to him, so we wondered if we had a real Jonah in charge of diving operations. Alas, poor Henrick, I knew him well.



*“Antarctic Fur Seal”
Canon EOS 5D II, Subal housing, twin Inon Z240
strobes, Canon 16-35mm L lens at 16mm. Shutter
priority, F5.6 1/100s ISO 200*

Our second dive manager was a large Scot going by the name of Kelvin Murray. Kelvin was Diving Officer of the British Antarctic Survey at Rothera for 18 months, so confidence was restored. One day, you may be lucky enough to meet this chappie and dive with him. In the mean time, trust me when I say that he's not half bad in the water and a very knowledgeable marine biologist.

Our first briefing whilst crossing the Drake Passage had introduced us to both Henrick and Kelvin as well as laying out a few general safety rules. With no easy access to SAR facilities or a chamber, we had to be very cautious in our diving. There was to be an absolute 20 metre depth limit with further diving banned for anyone who disregarded this. No solo diving was permitted although the behaviour of underwater photographers was anticipated. We were asked to be sensible and take more notice of our buddies than sometimes



*Canon EOS 5D II with EF 16-35mm f/2.8L lens
at 16mm, manual exposure, F10
1/100 sec, ISO 200*

happens. Maximum dive times would be announced before each dive and we were asked to respect them, particularly for the first few dives. We were reminded of the pristine nature of the Antarctic and requested to respect all forms of wildlife. Any specimen collection would be rewarded by an end to our diving and possibly by prosecution as well. Nothing unreasonable there and it was reassuring to see that our safety was genuinely a priority to our guides.

The dawn of day 4 aboard found us sailing through the Neumayer Channel in flat seas and we arrived at our first dive site, Port Lockroy. Looking out of the window, we saw massive mountains covered in blue-white snow, huge glaciers crumbling at the sea's edge and lots more snow! By this stage, we all had hundreds of ice and mountain shots. What on earth would we do without digital cameras?



“Dinner time”

Canon EOS 5D II, Subal housing, twin Inon Z240 strobes, Canon 16-35mm L lens at 16mm. Shutter priority, F5 1/80s ISO 400

Conditions were very good with some of the best visibility of the year. However, this didn't mean Red Sea clear water; there was a lot of plankton and long algal strings on all of the dives. We were not lucky with cloud, having total cover for all of our diving bar the final dive. This meant that ambient light was restricted and rather flat. All of the sites apart from the 2 iceberg dives were perfect for a macro lens, but it was difficult to choose macro as the prospect of photographing penguins, Antarctic Fur seals and Leopard seals was strong.

On the morning of our second day of diving, Kelvin jumped in with us and was our expert underwater eyes. Only three of us were diving with Kelvin as all of the others elected to go kayaking. During the dive, Kelvin found so many macro goodies that I was annoyed I had chosen to dive wide angle. I was ever so slightly happier when we were buzzed by a 3.5 metre Leopard Seal. My



“This is my patch”

Canon EOS 5D II, Subal housing, twin Inon Z240 strobes, Canon 16-35mm L lens at 25mm. Manual exposure, F6.3 1/60s ISO 400

pleasure lasted about 2 minutes before it turned to concern. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that we were being warned off by this magnificent, powerful predator. The aggression was muted to be sure, but was constant. When I reached 40 bar, I looked at Kelvin and asked, “Up?” He concurred.

We slowly rose along the bottom, but the buzzing never ceased. My worst moment came immediately upon surfacing when I realised that I couldn't see where the seal was. She circled Kelvin and I as the 2 Japanese climbed into the RHIB. Every 10 seconds or so, I ducked my head to have a quick peek at our lady friend. Kelvin may have used a few Celtic words of encouragement when asking Hiro to expedite his exit. This was the dive I came for, but I really think we should be careful what we wish for as it was the first time in my entire life that I thought that I could die by animal bite.

Rather oddly, 2 divers elected to go ashore



“Diving an iceberg”

Canon EOS 5D II, Subal housing, twin Inon Z240 strobes, Canon 15mm Fisheye lens. Manual exposure, F11 1/100s ISO 200

“Macro Heaven”

Canon EOS 5D II, Subal housing, twin Inon Z240 strobes, Canon 100mm F2.8 IS lens. Manual exposure, F10 1/60s ISO 200



rather than dive the second dive that day. The dive was pleasant and unremarkable. Unremarkable for a dive in Antarctica that is! Upon surfacing, we were given the choice of landing for a bit of penguin bothering, having a look see if we could find the Leopard seal or returning to the Plancius. I was considering Option 3, but the democratic majority chose number 2 - Leopard hunting. Thank goodness they did.

Within minutes, we saw her bobbing along with a rather frantic Gentoo penguin ahead. The fated penguin looked fairly comic as its efforts to stay ahead became ever more frantic. Within 2 minutes, there was a great swooshing of water followed by a flying penguin. This wasn't normal penguin flight activity as it appeared to be flying feet first. We saw the seal grab our hero's legs and go under. For the next 5 minutes, we followed slowly in the RHIB as the penguin was drowned. Cameras primed, we dropped in, snorkels at the ready. All except for me as I had left my snorkel onboard the Plancius. Anyhow, our Leopard seal ignored us and proceeded to flail the little penguin and eat it.

She allowed all 9 of us to approach within a metre as we clicked away. At one point, she flipped the dead penguin towards me and the carcass slipped under me to waist

level. At this point, an unpleasant image popped into my mind: what if she shot up from underneath me to grab the carcass in her jaws and bit me instead? I may have whimpered as I finned away as fast as I could. We stayed with the seal for what seemed like an age, but eventually returned to the Plancius for tea and medals.

All too soon, our diving was over and it was time for a thorough rinse down with the fresh water hose. Given the sea state on our crossing of the Drake Passage on the way out, everything was carefully stowed and the boot room was secured. It took us 3 days to get back to Ushuaia, but this time the Drake Passage was a real pussycat and the boat hardly rolled or pitched.

I called this a 'trip of a lifetime' but that's probably incorrect as I am already thinking of when I can go back.

Chris Sterritt



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Uw photography in the Amazon

by Oliver Lucanus

My fascination with fish eventually became curiosity to find out where the fish come from. Unlike marine fishes the information on freshwater fishes is limited to water analysis data, some information about the habitat, but precious little about the actual behaviour of the fish below the surface.

Frequent trips to the Amazon made a new fascination possible: to photograph the fish in their natural environment. Before the age of digital camera this was a true hit and miss project, with Nikonos cameras in murky water with low visibility, lots of particulate matter in the water, and bad quality of light sensitive films. With the arrival of digital cameras many things became possible, because the 1200 ASA files from most cameras produce images good enough for the Amazon's low light situations.

Photographing with available light is most interesting, because it is the only way to show the actual lighting under the surface, and it also avoids the particles getting lit by the flash. Much of the best photo

opportunities are in shallow water, and taken with a snorkel. Diving with SCUBA is not always a good solution and can be dangerous due to trees and current in many of the habitats.

The Amazon has three basic types of water: White water, which is silt laden and usually has a visibility of less than 20cm. Black water, stained by high amounts of tannins. This dark tea coloured water represents a challenge to photograph, because it is so dark. The usual rule for underwater photography applies here: get as close to the subject as possible. And finally clear water: habitats with clear water are rare in the Amazon and usually found

*Rapids in the headwater of the Rio Xingu, a typical clearwater river
Canon 1Ds III, ISO 200, EF 24mm,
F6.3, 1/640*

*The stream from the feeder spring in a
small tributary of the Rio Xingu, Brazil
Aquatica Housing, Canon 1Ds III, ISO
400, EF 14mm, F18, 1/20*





Female Cichla pleiozona (peacock bass) guarding her nest, Northern Bolivia
Aquatica Housing, Canon 1Ds III, ISO 400, EF 24mm, F4.5, 1/320



Feeder spring in a small tributary of the Rio Xingu, Brazil
Aquatica Housing, Canon 1Ds III, ISO 400, EF 14mm, F5, 1/125

where springs form small lakes or streams at the headwaters of the major rivers. The downside of this is that the black water and clear water habitats are often less diverse.

One great advantage of tropical freshwater habitat is the incredibly localized diversity. Isolation drives the speciation of all living things, and small freshwater fish often have very limited ranges of distribution. So any small habitat has the potential for new, endemic species, and dozens of cryptic, nocturnal catfishes and electric fishes.

The strong currents are the greatest danger in the Amazon, as are insect and water borne disease. The fish and other animals pose little threat to the diver/snorkeler. The much hyped piranhas are in general harmless fish that will not usually bite a person in the water. Even during a feeding frenzy the fish will swim within inches of

the photographers hands and not bite. The most feared fish in the Amazon are freshwater stingrays. The poison on the spine of the rays can cause terrible wounds that will take years to heal. Local fishermen will usually cut the tails of stingrays before removing them from their nets. Wading in Amazonian water can be more dangerous than swimming because the stingrays often spend the day buried in shallow water near the shore. The other fish that can be of serious concern is the electric eel because the powerful electric shock from this fish can cause a person to lose consciousness and drown.

Photographing in such conditions is hard on the gear. Nothing remains clean, and sand, and dirt eventually finds its way everywhere. It is best to carry all gear in hard cases, which can be used as tables to work on the cameras in the field, and also

keep insects at bay. Soft bags easily get invaded by ants, (or worse) when they are placed on the forest floor while you are photographing in the water.

Working in shallow or fast flowing water also means elbows and hands are in the substrate, so it is best to wear gloves and some pads on elbows and knees to brace against the bottom while taking photos. Housings must be made of metal, because plastic easily get scratched or damaged knocking against rocks and wood. I dislike the use of strobes because it takes away the beauty of the natural light, with modern digital cameras and mostly shallow working depths there is rarely a need to use artificial light.

The greatest problem with photographing in the Amazon is to find the clear water habitats and be there at the right time of the year. For most places the dry season (our fall, early winter) is the best



Piranha (Pygocentrus cariba) feeding frenzy in the flooded Llanos region, Venezuela

Aquatica Housing, Canon 1Ds III, ISO 400, EF 20mm, F5.6, 1/125

Potamotrygon leopoldi (white spotted stingray) in the shallows of the rapids

Aquatica Housing, Canon 7D, Ef14mm, ISO 400, -0.33ev F & 1 1/250

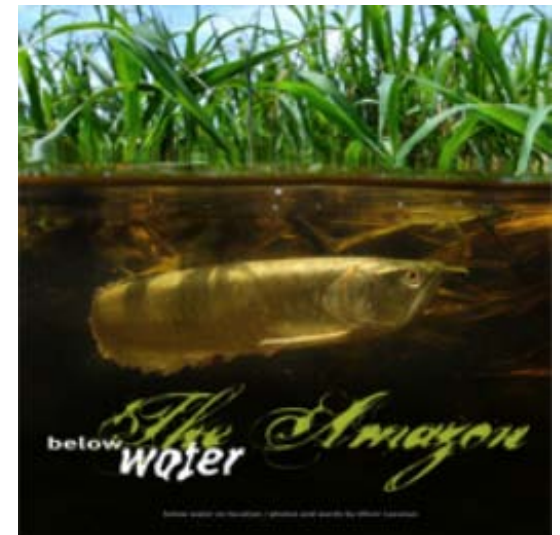
time of the year. But a lot of this is hit and miss and scouting many locations to find a place ideal for photography. Of course no tour company is offering specialized photo tours for underwater photographers. There is however one national park that is ideally suited, safe, comfortable and cheap to visit. The region is called Mato Grosso do Sul and is located near the town of

Bonito, in SouthWestern Brazil. A series of springs forms several crystal clear rivers that flow into the Rio Formoso. The rivers are all with 30 minutes of the well organized tourist town with plenty of things to do and safe snorkeling (and diving) in the local rivers.

Oliver Lucanus



To see more photos and video from the Amazon have a look at my book's website:



www.amazon-below-water.com

Don't settle for 2nd best



Film - No Filter
No White Balance



Digital - No Filter
Manual WB



Magic Filter
Manual WB

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

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

www.magic-filters.com

Blue Heron Bridge in 90 Minutes with a Canon Powershot S90

by Mark Sagovac

Never disappointing, always changing, unlimited photo opportunities, addicting, spectacular variety of marine life, an underwater photographers dream!- these are words and phrases to describe the shore dive site around the Blue Heron Bridge at Phil Foster Park located in Riviera Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida.

Locals, visitors and readers have long known of this site being one of the most accessible shore dives in South Florida and habitat for astonishing marine life (289 species reported by REEF) that inhabit this area just north of the Palm Beach inlet. Ease of entry, excellent water visibility, location and park facilities make this a unique destination for beginner and professional photographers as well as Scuba divers. The secret to the bio diversity is due to the tidal ebb and flow into the Lake Worth Lagoon. This tidal action flushes the water in the Lagoon out four times a day resulting in a

constant flow of nutrients and clean water resulting in amazing visibility even when the oceans are kicking up only a few miles away.

My first introduction to the “bridge” was where my dive instructor took me to complete a portion of the open water certification. My early diving days were without a camera but I knew one day I would start taking shots underwater but wanted to be a good diver before taking on the challenge. I had been shooting terrestrial since I was 12 years old, how much more difficult could shooting underwater be? Was I in for a surprise! Underwater photography has been both a frustrating and amazingly rewarding experience. Within a year and after a vacation to Anthony’s Key in Roatan and many “drift dives” off the Palm Beaches later, I bought an Olympus FE-230 in Olympus housing. This camera suffered from terrible shutter lag and did not provide me with the quality image I was looking for,



West Blue Heron Bridge Span- full span of the west bridge showing fishing pier in foreground. Composite of 3 shots stitched together using Photoshop Elements 7 (1/1000s, f5.6, ISO 200).

French Angel- friendly and always inquisitive they are a diver favorite as they weave their way around the sponge encrusted columns and pilings (1/125s, f3.5, ISO200).





Polka Dot Batfish- these friendly site favorites are always willing to let the divers observe them as they lay motionless and oblivious. (1/40s, f4.9, ISO100).



Seahorse- something about the elegant shyness of these creatures fascinates us all. This area is home to several different species of this docile creature (1/40s, f3.2, ISO200).



Southern Stingray- I came up on this big fellow early morning, covered in sand and gravel, still resting from the night before (1/250s, f2.5, ISO400).



Spotting a Batfish- dive buddy puts the spot light on a young Polka Dot Batfish moving across the gravel (1/125s, f5.6, ISO250)

so I purchased a Sea and Sea DX-1200HD which I turned around and sold on E-bay four months later. This camera had issues with the auto focus and macro mode as well as not having the capability to shoot in RAW (I think they discontinued this product right after I bought it). Today I am using a Canon Powershot S90 (compact) which I am very pleased with. It has all of the features a much larger SLR has but in a compact size. The camera takes very nice shots (on land and under water) and is fully manual. I have it in a Fisheye FIX housing which I think is fantastic. It has strong tight seal and the buttons are easy to work (even with gloves on) and I use a Sea and Sea YS-27 strobe.

One of the things that may surprise you about a dive trip around the Blue Heron Bridge is that the area is comprised of several unique sites and conditions that these “critters” call home. I have made up names for these areas since, to my knowledge, none exist other than East bridge or West bridge. These areas have different subjects to photograph within different backgrounds, lighting conditions and water currents. We can only visit the west bridge today because water under the west span is still closed for construction. Enter the water at least half hour before the slack tide. This will give us a good ninety minutes on one tank of air before the visibility starts to deteriorate due to tidal ebb.

Enter the water from the nice sloping sandy beach at the column just to the left of the playground. Here we head straight out across the “sand flats.” This is a shallow sandy area with patches of brown algae. Expect to see Stareye and Giant Hermit crabs, Spotfin and Eyed Flounder, Pufferfish and Leopard Sea Robins picking their way across the substrate in search of a meal. Look even closer and you may see a Southern Stargazer peering up from the sand as well as the ever present Polka Dot Batfish watching your every move. The Batfish are a local favorite of the park. They are big and healthy and relatively unafraid of the approaching diver. We continue a little further south to discover the “Winn Dixie” wreck. This sunken

24 foot (8m) speedboat sits upright and is covered in good growth and swarms of tropical fish. Pay special attention on the approach because this is where I often see Southern and Roughtail Stingrays patrolling under the moored sailboats as well as groups of barracuda. Look carefully on the encrusted lines for Seahorse and Pygmy Filefish. I have been told this is an area where “Froggies” can be



Florida Manatee- the inlet is a haven for these gentle giants as they stay warm in the shallows in winter and migrate up and down the intercoastal waterways year round (1/250s, f2.8, ISO 100).

spotted but have yet to see one. I call this site “Winn Dixie” because just 30 feet (10 m) to the East of the boat are five grocery shopping carts (from supermarket chain Winn Dixie) on the sand. Each one heavily encrusted with sponge and hydroid. Here you can find the intricate and colorful Decorator Crab, curious Blennies and juvenile Angle fish operating their clearing stations. Be sure to take your self portrait at the old mirror in front of the boat. Since we are still in shallow water there is plenty of ambient light.

We now move a little deeper across the sand flats in a SSW direction just north of the red channel marker to wreck “Belly Up.” This 30 foot (10m) boat is upside down.



Southern Stargazer- not as often seen free swimming they seem are more comfortable laying hidden in the sand “gazing” up waiting for un suspecting prey (1/125s, f7.1, ISO400).

Angels, Tangs and Sergeant Majors swirl around the hole at the end. You can always find a little Yellow Stingrays half buried in the sand, Seahorses as well as one of the resident Short Nose Batfish.

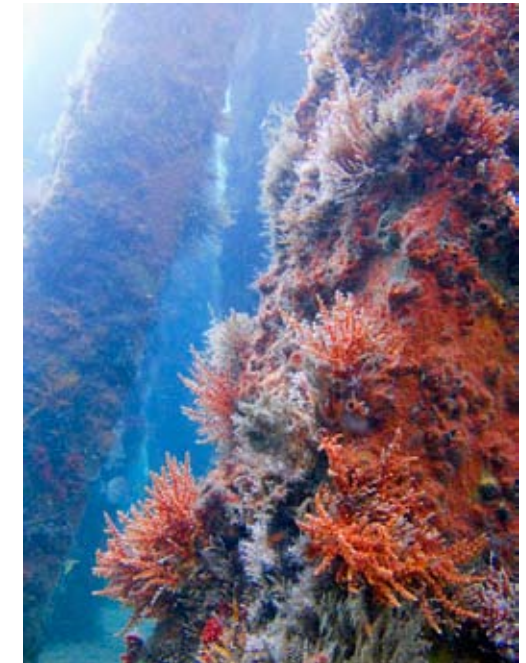
Moving due west to the next site “Red Lobster.” This site is right at the edge where the boat traffic turns out from the bridge channel. I recommend you be very careful, take your flag and visit only on a really “high tide” mid week and early morning when there is little boat traffic. This is a great place however. The site is a large mound of natural rocks absolutely covered with red sponge. Rocks are crawling with Spiny Lobsters well as the presence of multiple cleaning stations operated by



Flying Gunard- blend in nicely with the substrate, almost transparent, until you spook them and then are treated to a vivid display of iridescent blues (1/100s, f2.0, ISO200).

Coral Banded Shrimp. Blennies are popping in and out of the formations and here is where I see the largest Queen Angelfish as well as the Long Nose Batfish.

Turning north towards the bridge the water is getting a little deeper now and the floor has changed from silt sand to a gravel mix of shells and stone. These are the “Gravel Flats”. This area is littered with Sea Urchin and Pillow Starfish. Due to the proximity to the open channel I have seen many Spotted Eagle and Cownose Rays pass through. This is also the passage for the Florida Manatee on their way up and down the intercostals waterway. If our compass reading is correct we should come into the southeast end of the



Encrusted with Life- pilings are covered with soft corals, sponges and Hydroids (1/60s, f5.0, ISO800).

boat channel pilings. The plan here is to swim past, around and through the pilings searching around the column faces and gravel below. These pilings are exploding with life. We start at the southernmost set. Schools of Chub, Spadefish and Snapper are drifting high in the water column. The lower columns are very nicely covered in orange, red and yellow encrusting sponge. Growing are many different species of Hydroid, Tunicate, Barrel and Finger sponge. The water in between the columns are alive with French Angels, Queen Angels,,



Jellyfish- not a common sight for the bridge divers but when they appear they are beautiful to look at and shoot (1/250s, f3.5, ISO250).

Parrotfish (of all types) Wrasse, Tangs, Hogfish, Butterfly fish, Bass, Porkfish and Sergeant Major to name a few. Down on the floor look closely for the lurking Scorpion fish, Sharptail Eel, Spotted Moray Eel, Yellow Stingray, Lizardfish, Stone Crab and Horseshoe Crab. Nibbling their way over the sea floor are Sheepshead, Goat fish, Sand Perch and Filefish. As we weave our way up and down, in and out you will notice it is substantially darker over here. You may have to use your strobe. I normally adjust my camera setting as I transition in and out of the shadow and light areas. This is especially true as we turn into the "Swim Through" which is the narrow passage between the channel pilings and bridge foundation. On display are

Arrow Crabs, Scorpion fish, Web Burr fish, Spotted Drum, Blennies, Lobster, beautiful pink Finger sponge, and did I mentioned Red Bearded Bristleworms?

Now swim north toward the fishing pier. Carrying the dive float does not guarantee the fisherman will not throw his hook and sinker in your direction but swim quickly across and get under the pier. Down at the third last column is the "Bone yard." This pile of left over bridge pilings and demolished chunks of the old bridge are jumbled up and around. We are starting to feel a little bit of current now and are 60 minutes into the dive but that will not stop us. It is very dark under here but full of colorful life. Train your eye and find the Seahorses...they are here! The juxtaposition of the concrete poles has created habitats. This area is well worth further investigation.

Leaving the shade of the fishing pier we head back out into the varying light and dark conditions found in between the fishing pier and bridge to find great subjects to photograph with different backgrounds, lighting conditions and size. We cross the "Rubble Plain." This area lies in the path of strong current and the area is littered with rocks and boulders, much of which could have been from construction. This area is popular with photographers. Here we can spot

Nudibranch, juvenile fish, Spider crabs, Glass Shrimp and other super macro subjects. You will also see the Flying Gunard in this area as he tries to blend in with the gravel bottom. Spook him and he will give you a brilliant display of color! Heading east back towards the beach entry/exit point we cross a transition from rock to gravel to sand. This is where we find the Banded Jawfish peering from his well maintained little hole, Pipefish and the secretive Mantis Shrimp. Look up and you will see schools of bait fish swirling in and out between the columns. When the sunlight is just right it is a spectacular show. Unfortunately time is running out. The tide is starting to go out and the silt is starting to kick up. One last look around the bridge pilings and it is time to exit. Ninety minutes are up.

We surface to the sound of chatter and laughter. The divers are relaxing in the shallow water of the beach discussing and describing their dive experience, dive instructors are debriefing their students and children and beach goers are running around having fun. A short walk back up the beach back to the tables to get the gear off and a quick fresh water rinse before heading home. Now the fun begins. Post production work on the amazing images and share them with friends, peers and family!

The Canon Powershot S90

is a great little camera that packs a powerful punch and takes great pictures underwater. I recommend you use a post production software program like Adobe Photoshop. Delete the ones that did not come out right then convert the "keepers" in the CR2 RAW converter using the white balance tool. Next open them in Photoshop and use any of the adjustment tools necessary. I like the tonal balance, brightness, and color select, and saturation tools. Spot healing and clone stamp will take out any annoying backscatter. Follow few these steps and I think you will be thrilled by your efforts!

Give yourself a pat on the back, share your shots with everyone and get ready to do it again!

Mark Sagovac
Sagovac@comcast.net



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In the middle of Visaya land

by Massimo Mazzitelli

Cebu island is in the middle of Visaya archipelago exactly where join Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean, Cebu island is long 225 km, its surface is 5088 km square, inhabitants 3.848.919; Cebu island is surrounded of 167 smaller islands, the principal city is Cebu City.

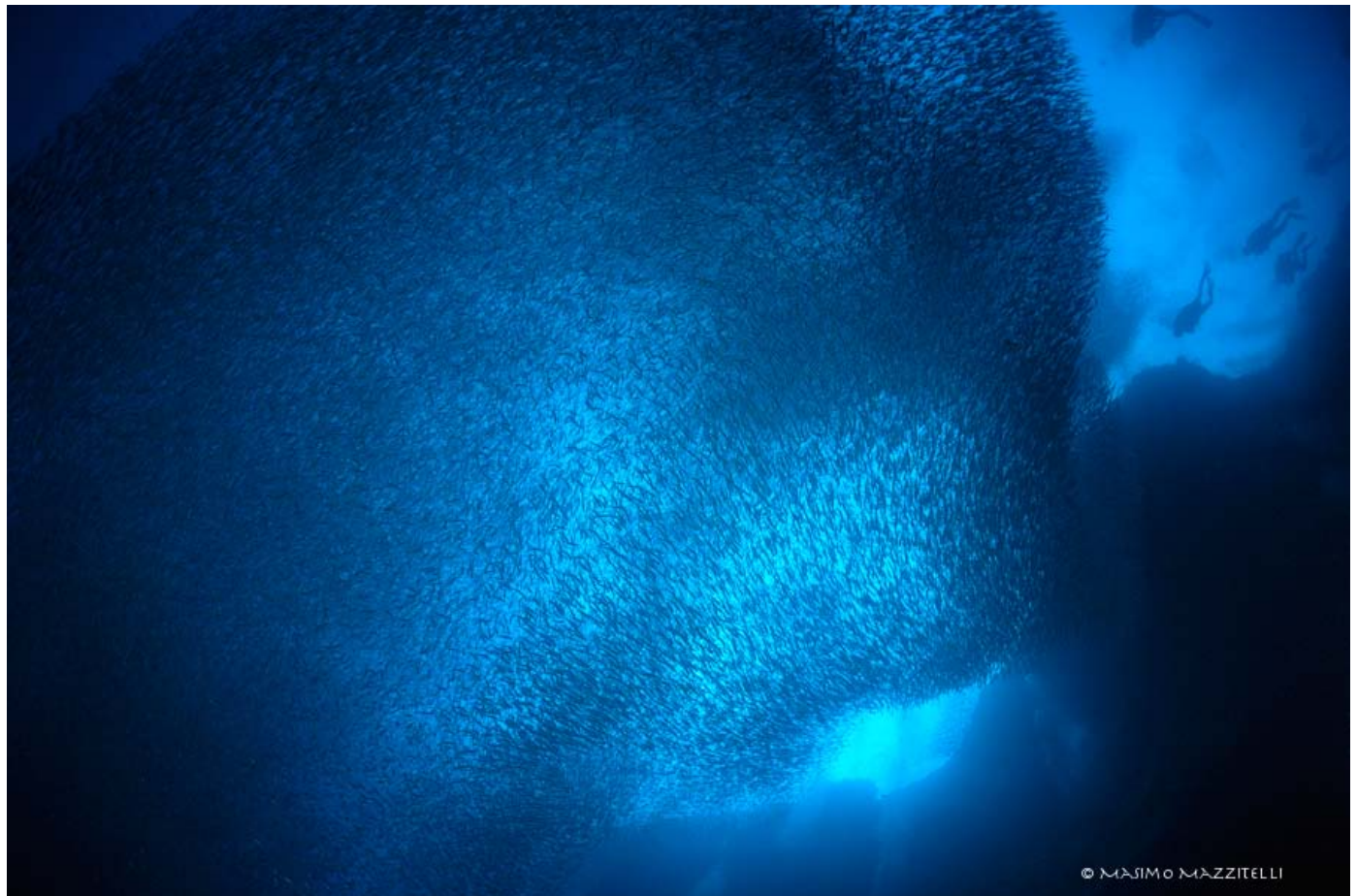
Moalboal town is far 3 hours by car from Cebu City. Moalboal is not frequented by mass tourism but is famous about its coral reefs, there are many dives suitable for every level of experience. Open water can dive in the shallow water and expert divers there is the possibility go down in the depth where admire gorgeous giant gorgonians, crinoids big sponges and many kind of shells.

Dives can be made directly from the beach because the reef is very close otherwise by the boat where can reach many dive sites that are located off the coast.

Dive sites are located about 10 minutes by boat, the most important are Kasai, Gargage, Withe Beach, Plane wreck and Pescador Island.

Small Pescador island is located 2 km off Panagsama Beach, on the island you can make a different dive every 5 metres, You can explore the

Sardines at Pescador Island shooting at a depth of 25 meters Nikon D200, Tokina 10/17 at 10mm, Easydive LEO housing, INON Z-240 strobe ISO100 1 / 60 F10



(Top right) Sardines, taken at a depth of 8 feet, off Pescador Island Nikon D200, Tokina 10/17 at 10mm, Easydive LEO housing, INON Z-240 strobe ISO100 1 / 60 F18



(Right) Taken in midwater, my friend Loren and the background on top is the resort's restaurant Nikon D200, Tokina 10/17 at 10mm, Easydive LEO housing, INON Z-240 strobe ISO100 1 / 60 F11



whole island under water, is a long way, you can see breathtaking drop off while the reef surrounded the whole perimeter of the island. On this island is happening an incredible phenomenon even scientists and biologists can explain it: spring 2009 a small sardines shoal began to populate the island without raising interest but in a few time the sardines shoal became bigger and still growing.

Surely the sardines shoal have found their natural habitat on the island, perhaps for the large abundance of plankton and the reduced presence of predators that can threaten it, even the presence of divers scares it. Despite you can see some fisherman with rod, the coast guard every day check whole area to respect ban on fishing by fishing net or trawl net because this is a protect area.

Millions of sardines are compacted taking very curious shapes, often obscure the sunlight, we can

find them from 2 meters depth to 35 meters if they are disturbed shooting and divided into several smaller clouds forming light effects.

Massimo Mazzitelli



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In the wake of the Guga Hunters

by George Stoye and Richard Shucksmith

Descending to 25m onto a kelp-covered rocky slope, we made our way north before stumbling upon a spectacular wall plastered in an extravagant profusion of life. Covered from top to bottom in delicate, multi-coloured anemones, soft, vibrant sponges, radiant golden tunicates and luxuriant swathes of dead-men's fingers, wispy hydroids and mats of bryozoans, macro life was in such abundance not a centimetre of bare rock could be seen.

41 miles north of the Butt of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides two rocks rise out of the north Atlantic. One is North Rona, the other Sula Sgeir, and together they are arguably the most remote islands in the British Isles. Battered by massive Atlantic storms, Lewismen used to row the 41 miles in an open six-oared boat, without compass, to collect juvenile gannets for the meat known as 'guga'. These men are known as the Guga Hunters and still make the trip to these remote islands every year in search of this delicacy.

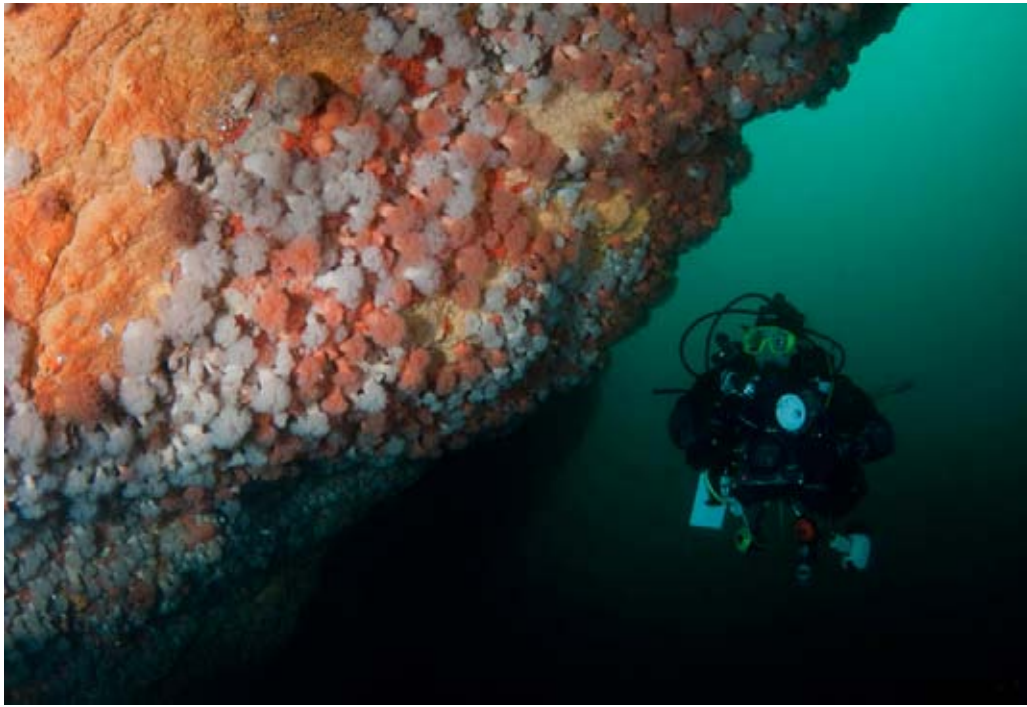
Twelve divers met the M/V

Halton on a calm Saturday evening in Scrabster on the north coast of mainland Scotland. A 70ft converted trawler, the Halton is a rugged vessel built to withstand the worst weather, with a modern-day navigation system, spacious galley (including an oil rayburn) and 6 comfortable twin-berth cabins. Our skipper for the week was Bob Anderson, a seasoned and experienced operator and diver around the northern isles. Supported by Seasearch, one of the aims of this expedition was to record the marine flora and fauna around North Rona and its neighbouring island 11 miles north-east known as Sula Sgeir.

Cape Wrath

Before heading to the islands we took the opportunity to 'warm-up' at a couple of sites just off the north-west Scottish mainland, a short 2 hour steam from Scrabster not far from Cape Wrath. Diving here is well-known for its rich marine life, clear Atlantic water and dramatic scenery. Dolphins and basking sharks were seen along the way and we





(Above) Entering the archway covered in colourful life. Nikon D300, 2x Inon Z240 Strobes, Ikelike Housing, Tokina 10-17mm f/9, 1/200Sec, ISO200. RShucksmith

(Top right) Dead man's fingers line the walls. Nikon D300, 2x Inon Z240 Strobes, Ikelike Housing, Tokina 10-17mm f/8, 1/100Sec, ISO400. RShucksmith

(Right) Jewel Anemones (Corynactis viridis) Nikon D700, 2x Inon Z240 Strobes, Nauticam Housing, Nikon 105mm VR Macro f/32, 1/100sec, ISO500. G. Stoyle



weren't disappointed as we explored a series of big gullies lined with large, healthy kelp and a colourful profusion of life. Multi-coloured jewel anemones, bright yellow and orange sponges, white and golden tunicates, wispy hydroids, rough mats of bryozoans and abundant psychedelic elegant anemones. The swell in these gullies causes a fairly

constant flow of water allowing this myriad of organisms to flourish. These sedentary creatures live most of their lives in one spot waiting for food to be brought to them in the current. For photographers it is macro heaven. Numerous mobile species are also in abundance such as small spider crabs decorated in yellow sponge, tiny but elaborate nudibranchs, large, healthy

lobsters, red-eyed swimming crabs always on guard and swirls of Saithe swimming gracefully over and around the swaying kelp. The relentless pendulum-like motion in these gullies, caused by the swell, makes it tricky to stop in one place for too long, let alone take photos. Gripping on in a fight against the current presents a fun challenge but the struggle soon becomes futile and it's easier to just go with the flow.

North Rona

After a decent night's sleep and substantial breakfast (cooked and served by Mary, our gracious hostess, deck-hand and general all-rounder) we got the news we were anxiously waiting for – the conditions were good for our attempt to strike out to the islands. The North Atlantic swell was fairly forgiving for the five hour crossing and soon we began to see North Rona looming on the horizon. The island is steeped in history, inhabited, on and off, for 700 years right up until the early 1900s. A small population survived on the island during the 1600s, but were quickly wiped out after an infestation of rats, likely from a visiting ship, ate most of the island's produce and possibly introduced the plague. Since then North Rona has occasionally been occupied by shepherds up until the mid 1800s after which it has remained

largely uninhabited. Continuously farmed by the folk of Lewis, nowadays North Rona is owned by Scottish Natural Heritage who manage it as a nature reserve, primarily for its grey seal and seabird colonies.

The small, natural harbour on North Rona offers relatively good protection from the wind and swell and is the best chance of a safe anchorage. Each evening as the light was falling we'd go out on deck and marvel at the dramatic cliffs towering above us covered in seabirds all in a constant state of motion flying to and fro. Rafts of puffins sat on the water with hundreds more overhead flying in their typical frenzied fashion, and above them cruised the evermore graceful gannets.

Although the majority of our dives would be around Sula Sgeir, the neighbouring island 11km north-east, we had the opportunity for a few dives around North Rona. Diving here is relatively easy and presents the classic scenery one would expect from a wild and exposed Scottish island – clear water, abundant healthy kelp, large boulders covered with pink encrusting algae and mussels, and frequent patches of colourful jewel, dahlia and elegant anemones. A lasting memory of diving the kelp forests of North Rona will be the huge numbers of tiny but charming iridescent blue-rayed limpets clinging to the kelp fronds,



Jellyfish (Pelegia noctiluca). Nikon D300, 2x Inon Z240 Strobes, Ikelike Housing, Tokina 10-17mm f/8, 1/100Sec, ISO200 RShucksmith

and also the sheer number of snow-white and bright yellow Polycera nudibranchs at times forming clusters of twenty or more.

Sula Sgeir

11 miles from North Rona across choppy seas lies the remote outpost known as Sula Sgeir. Approaching the island it soon becomes obvious how it gets its name ('Sula' being



Diver moves between the boulder gullies. Nikon D300, 2x Inon Z240 Strobes, Ikelike Housing, Tokina 10-17mm f/8, 1/60Sec, ISO200

gaelic for gannet and 'Sgeir' meaning rock). During the summer over 8,000 gannets crowd this small but spectacular island making it one of the most important seabird sanctuaries in the UK. Underwater the scenery is equally spectacular, similar to North Rona but with a more dramatic topography and greater diversity of species many of which you would expect from such extreme exposure.

The sheer cliff faces that plunge directly into the cold, nutrient-rich waters provide the perfect habitat for a remarkable array of life. Delicate nudibranchs cling onto algae which cover dense layers of barnacles and other sedentary species. Golden tunicates and beautiful iridescent Devonshire cup corals are scattered here and there. Invertebrate life is at times so dense not a centimetre of bare rock can be seen. The underwater landscape includes many gullies which typically become dominated by thousands of stunning jewel anemones which line the walls feeding in the current. These anemones become so dense through a process known as longitudinal fission whereby they reproduce by stretching their base and splitting themselves in two across the middle producing two identical anemones of the same size. The process only takes a few hours from start to finish and eventually creates huge patches of anemones of a single colour. These spread out overlapping onto other different coloured colonies resulting in sheets of bright luminous green turning to deep purple, bright orange to pink and all the colours in between, rivalling coral reefs for vibrancy.

Sula Sgeir has a number of impressive caves and archways, many of which have rarely if ever been dived. These provide some of the

most exhilarating diving with surging currents and abundant, occasionally unusual marine life. A particularly impressive site, North Thamna Sgeir, includes a massive archway which leads through a large rock just off the north-east of Sula Sgeir. The archway opens up like a black hole with walls heavily lined from top to bottom with softly coloured orange and white plumose anemones. The arch drops down to 30m and forms the entrance to a large cave which leads right through to the rock and out the other side.

The island also provides important breeding habitat for grey seals so encounters whilst diving Sula Sgeir are very likely. However, unlike other better known sites such as the Farne Islands, the seals here are not used to divers and appear very cautious. One memorable interaction involved a wary stand-off between us and 5 seals, each maintaining neutral buoyancy slowly edging closer for a better look. We hung in the water for around 5 minutes staring at one another before something startled the seals and they darted away to the surface. Apart from a couple of similar interactions we would mostly catch a glimpse of one or two seals in the gloom, or beneath us as we were ascending, watching us suspiciously.

Each time we surfaced at Sula Sgeir we were met by hundreds of

gannets circling overhead, apparently curious of the numerous fluorescent SMBs that had popped up. Watching them from the water while we waited for the Halton to pick us up created a sense of dizziness as they circled above, at times coming just beyond arms reach to get a closer look.

This expedition was a reassuring affirmation that diving in UK waters can be just as spectacular and rewarding as many of the far-flung tropical destinations so revered by divers. These wild and exposed islands provide habitat for an astounding variety and abundance of marine life. Places like these feel all the more special because, although

remote and difficult to get to, they are a part of our heritage. We were fortunate to be allowed a glimpse and privileged to be given the opportunity to report back to the world how truly magnificent these places are and how remarkable UK diving can be. We only hope to return in the future for more diving in the wake of the guga hunters and explore more of the underwater wonders of North Rona and Sula Sgeir.

Big thanks go to Paul Holmes for organising the trip and to Bob, Mary & Kenny of the MV Halton for their experience, care and attention to detail.

Thanks also to Seasearch and Chris Woods who helped financially support the expedition.

George Stoye and Richard Shucksmith



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As you know, the current issue of Underwater Photography is free to download but all of the previous issues, going right back to Issue 1, are still available to download for just 99p per issue.

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Ikelite housing for a Canon 5D MKII, Ikelite 8" dome port (no scratches) for a Canon fish eye lens, Ikelite ports Canon 17-40mm and a macro 100mm-IS lens. I am based in Scarborough, U.K. £1100 ovnoraminrobin@hotmail.com

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Book review

Great British Marine Animals

by Paul Naylor

3rd Edition

The 3rd edition of Great British Marine Animals is now available and for anyone who dives in British waters it is a must have for the bookshelf.

Lavishly illustrated with over 600 quality images the accompanying text is informative without being too scientific and provides the readers with an excellent reference from which to enquire further if desired.

Whilst there is a logical layout in terms of chapters and categories, Paul suggests that the best way to use the book is to scan through the photos looking for a similar creature to the one you want to identify and then refer to the accompanying text. This is good unstuffy advice and makes the book a pleasure to use. In addition it would be the perfect addition to your 'smallest room' as you can open this book at almost any page to see an excellent identification image and well written explanatory text.

For owners of either of the two previous editions, there is a lot to recommend this new one and, at £16, it really is excellent value for money.

New features of the 3rd edition of Great British Marine Animals include:

- 240 new photographs (out of 600) that show further aspects of the fascinating behaviour of common animals in addition to illustrating...

- 30 extra species (making 280 in total) including several more found in rock pools

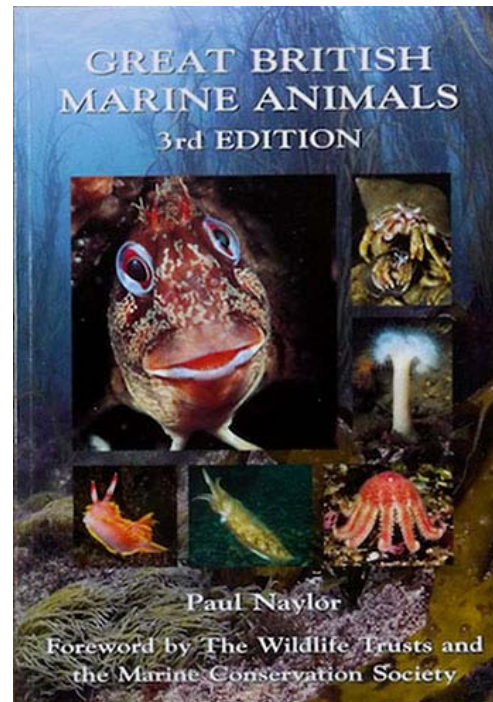
- An expanded introduction showing a selection of habitats and some of the typical animals that live in them

- Unusual action shots of cuttlefish hunting, a commensal ragworm feeding with its hermit crab host, sunstars and starfish spawning, gobies attacking a large sea anemone, a sea slug's defences in operation and many more...

ISBN 978-0-9522831-6-4, 320 pages, RRP £16.00

Available from bookshops and dive shops, also from NHBS Environment Bookstore www.nhbs.com.

www.marinephoto.co.uk



British marine life. With photographs of 80 different species in a panoramic montage, it can be used as a stand-alone display or as a backdrop for a specific conservation or educational campaign.

The display can be borrowed by any organisation involved in marine life conservation, and she only charges for incurred carriage costs. The current version is for use indoors or in a good waterproof marquee; we hope to develop an outdoor version in the future.

The display folds away into a container that will fit in the boot of a medium-sized hatchback car (e.g. Focus). Within this, there are 2 spotlights that enhance the vibrant colours and, also, instructions for display assembly. The instructions are straightforward, but she do ask that users follow them closely so the display can last for a long time to come.

Paul specialises in underwater photography of British marine life. The main aim of his web site is to make his work available to organisations promoting the protection, conservation and awareness of life in the beautiful but vulnerable seas around the British Isles. In addition his wife, Teresa, with National Marine Aquarium sponsorship, has produced a stunning free-standing display for use at events by conservation organisations. This stunning 2.9 metres x 2.2 metres curved pop-up display is ideal for promoting and raising awareness of

UK Dive Guide

It took three-and-half-years for experienced dive instructor and author Patrick Shier to research and write UK Dive Guide, which is published by AquaPress on 1 March. The book features detailed guides to some of the best-known sites in the UK, from Scapa Flow and St Abbs, to Portland Harbour and Swanage Pier, plus some lesser-known gems.

The unique thing about UK Dive Guide is that every dive featured is shallow, up to a maximum of 18m, which means everyone from newly-qualified divers to the hardened regular can enjoy the sites, which Patrick hopes will encourage more people to take up UK diving, or at least provide some new ideas for those who are diving regularly.

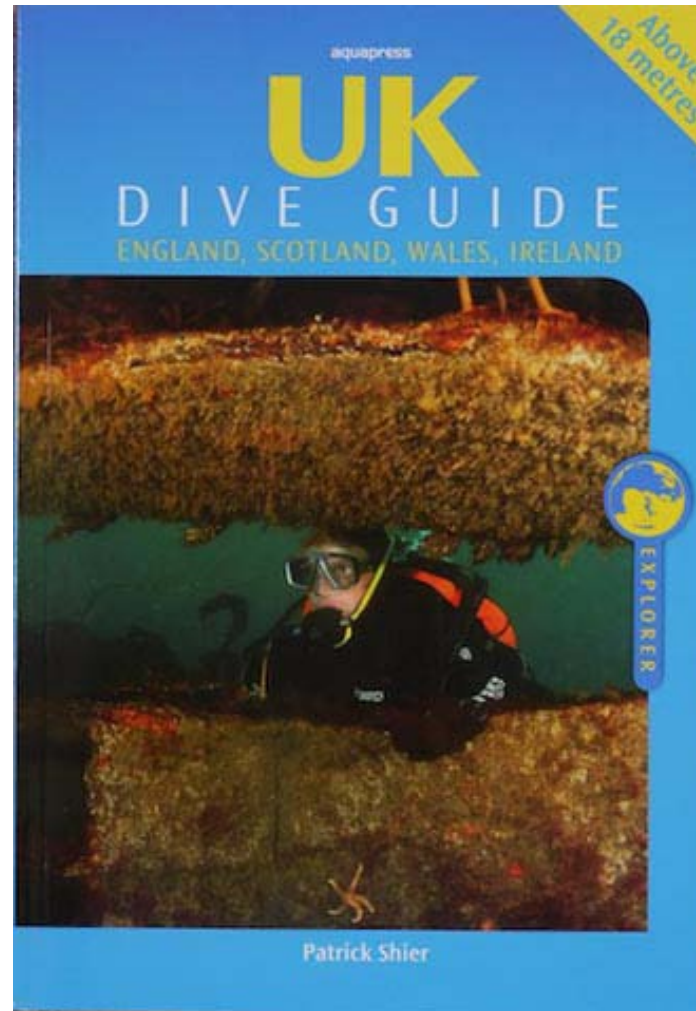
It's the marine life which Patrick found provided numerous examples of excellent underwater photography opportunities. So, armed with his trusty Canon G7 with Epoque ES-230DS strobe, Patrick set off around the UK in his battered van on a quest to seek out the best shallow dive sites. But as is often the case with UK diving, the conditions weren't always best-suited to underwater photography.

With so many dives to complete and deadlines to meet, it was inevitable that Patrick would have

to look to source images from other photographers, and rather than let his limitations as a photographer and some bad luck get in the way of a good story,

Andy Rankin and Ken Hawkhead are two Irish photographers who contributed many photos to the book. Others included Ann Smith, Peter Nitton, Seamus Bonner, Richard Scales, Tony Leveritt, Mike Raby, Sarah and Tony Iles, Alison Dickenson, Peter Steele, Richard Daley, Dave Gordon, Steve Myatt, Chris Moody, Gaynor Bennett, Len Bateman, Dave Hargreaves, Richard Lafferty and Nina Hukannen.

Patrick says the nature of the book itself, shallow diving, presented problems for photography with reduced visibility a recurring theme. However, Patrick identified a number of sites around the UK which produced the goods when it came to excellent marine life and reliable



conditions that photographers crave.

UK Dive Guide is available from all good bookshops 2011 priced £19.99.

www.aquapress.co.uk

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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 144dpi

Size - Maximum length 15cm i.e. horizontal pictures would be 15 cm wide and verticals would be 15cm.

File type - Save your image as a JPG file and set the compression to "Medium" quality. This should result in images no larger than about 120k which can be transmitted quickly. If we want larger sizes we will contact you.

3. Captions - **Each and every image MUST have full photographic details** including camera, housing, lens, lighting, film, aperture, shutter speed and exposure mode. These must also be copied and pasted into the body of the e mail.

Parting Shot 1

My friend and buddy Pete Bullen told me about Fibre Optic Snoots having heard a talk by Martin Edge and Alex Mustard last year. We both decided that, 'I could make one of those' so we set about trying to build our own.

All those years of watching Blue Peter as a child had finally paid off. Mine started life as fibre from Farnells, Loc-Line from Cromwell Tools, some shrink wrap and Polymorph plastic from Maplins and a small baby bowl from Ikea! My wife Bea kindly donated some knicker elastic (from her sewing box, of course) to help secure the snoot to my Inon Z240 strobe.

Having tested the snoot in my living room and getting decent results, I was very keen for full sea trials. Pete and I decided that under Swanage pier was our dive site of choice.

Sadly, the British weather conspired against us and our 2 planned visits were both blown out. On our second attempt, we arrived in Swanage to see a 1.5 metre swell rolling in over our 5m dive site!

Two weeks later I was in Antarctica with the snoot packed into my camera bags; after all, it weighs practically nothing. Out of the total



10 dives we had in Antarctica, I used my macro lens on only 2 and took the snoot in on the second.

The site was an absolutely stunning wall in Paradise Bay. I set the snoot to be aiming downwards at an angle into the centre of the frame at just over the minimum focusing distance of my macro lens. It took me about 10 minutes to get this right, but after that, I could ignore my camera viewfinder and use the snoot of the snoot to line up the shot. It worked a treat.

There can't be many home-

made pieces of underwater camera equipment that had their sea-trials in Antarctica!

Chris Sterritt



Do you have an interesting shot with a short story behind it?

If so e mail us and yours could be the next "Parting shot".

peter@uwpmag.com