Underwater Photography

May/June 2014
Issue 78

Seacam D4 Silver

Subal D800

Aquatica A-EM1

Gates XA25/XA20/G30

Aquatica HD Wave

Fantasea FG-16

Recsea RX-100MKII

Recsea G-16

Ikelite S-120

GoPro Hero

Watershot iPhone/Galaxy

Scuba Symphony Malaysia
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Underwater Photography

A web magazine UwP78 May/June 2014

Cover shot by Alex Tattersall

Underwater Photography *2001 - 2014*

Publisher/Editor Peter Rowlands
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Editorial and Parting Shot

Peter Scoones
1937 - 2014

I was lucky to have spent quite some time with Peter Scoones over the years. He was a very generous man who was a genuine genius.

It is always sad at the end of a life but we still have Peter's stunning body of work to remind us of just how unique he was and why he was such an inspiration to so many.

I'll never forget the day when we watched the Wildlife on One programme about the Great White Shark which he had filmed and it was so groundbreaking that Sir Attenborough himself interupted the start of the programme to say how groundbreaking it was. Something which had not been done before nor since. Peter's response, at the end of the screening, was to praise the editor for cutting it together so well. Such was the man.

His major input into blockbuster series like the Blue Planet is widely quoted but there was also the groundbreaking "Malice in Wonderland" and "Reef Encounters" for BBC Wildlife on One where the Producer gave Peter carte blanche to go to the Red Sea and produce his magic. The results were 30 minutes of spellbinding displays where not one second was above water and each sequence was complete from beginning to middle to end and from wide to medium to close and back.

On location Peter was total. He devoted every waking hour to capturing marine wildlife behaviour with maximum quality and his power of concentration and performance underwater was perfect. I was reminded of this quite early on when we were in Eilat for a week filming a particular coral pinnacle from the shore. It had everything from glassfish to lionfish and was an oasis of behaviour.

"What depth is it to the base of the pinnacle?" he asked me one lunchtime. "16 metres" I replied, thinking that he was calculating how long he could stay filming before running into decompression. "Why?' I asked and without a blink he said "I was trying to decide what strength of filter to use for the available light shots".

Goodbye, ole friend.

Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com

News, Travel & Events

Siren Fleet Underwater Photography Workshops 2014



Worldwide Dive and Sail has always been a keen supporter of underwater photographers and our Siren Fleet yachts are designed and updated to accommodate the growing needs of underwater photographers.

We've put together two in-depth photography workshops for you to enjoy this year in Fiji.

Hosts, Douglas Hoffman and Gerald Rambert, are both seasoned professionals, experienced in teaching the use of compact and SLR cameras.

Douglas leads groups on international trips three times a year, with well over 10,000 hours in the water he has specialised in the coral reefs in Fiji.

Gerald, from Mauritius will give afternoon and evening presentations on a range of subjects and provides individual in-water instruction and between dive coaching to ensure you develop your own techniques and style at an individual pace.

Both will work alongside our guests to focus attention on where each individual needs it most – on board and underwater!

A series of afternoon and evening presentations will be provided, on topics including "Framing and Composition", "Lighting and the use of Flashes", "Wide-Angle" and "Buoyancy Control".

Douglas Hoffman's trip is from 19th -26th May 2014 and Gerald Rambert's is from 14th -24th June 2014.

www.sirenfleet.com/liveaboard-diving/photo-trips-2014.html

Raja Ampat

March 2 - 13, 2015

We have chartered the MSV Amira. We will make sure that you will see the best that Raja Ampat has to offer, tailoring it to your desires.

Raja Ampat is located in the northwestern tip of Indonesia's Papuan "Bird's Head Seascape," and lies in the heart of the coral triangle, the most bio-diverse marine region on earth. The islands of Raja Ampat offer a world of thrilling big animal encounters, the chance to see new species, pristine reefs of hard and soft corals and some of the world's most intriguing macro creatures. Surveys suggest that the marine life diversity in the Raja Ampat area is the highest recorded on earth.

www.scubadiveasia.com

14th Marmara Underwater Photo & Video Festival

The International Marmara Underwater Photo & Video Festival, which shows us a visual spectacle by bringing underwater world to surface, will celebrate its 14th year!

Since 1993, the Festival has been organized by "Türk Balıkadamlar Spor Kulübü" (1954) which is the first and one of the major underwater sports clubs in Turkey.

This year, as in previous years, the festival has been dedicated to the memory of Mr.Haluk Cecan, an internationally renowned underwater photographer and documentary film maker who passed away in 2007.

"The Marmara International Underwater Images Festival" is a member of the European Underwater Images Festivals Association, an organization that hosts many important events in the underwater arena and is considered to be the authority in the field.

World leading photo and video experts will be hosted during the Festival. A social responsibility Project will also be presented during the highly anticipated Festival.

The festival consists of two separate competitions :

International Contest: Previously shot and taken underwater photographs and videos from all over the world, no restrictions for region and date.

"Living Marmara" Contest: Evaluation of photographs and films taken and shot underwater around Prince's Islands in the Marmara Sea during the contest.

The Application Deadline is 8th of June 2014

www.marmarafestival.org

World Shootout 2014 rewards amateur photographers with a $1,500 check!

Taking underwater images using a compact camera system? We've got a $1,500 check waiting just for you...

Submit a single image taken with a compact camera system during the months of January-July to the World ShootOut 2014 Amateurs Category and you might just be the proud winner of a $1,500 check , couresty of Unterwasser Magazine !

Images can be submitted to the competition by uploading them to the competition website during the months of January-July. Deadline for submitting images to the competition is July 31st, 2014.

www.worldshootout.org

Sign up to stop SeaWorld from imprisoning killer whales for profit

SeaWorld just got busted by a US government agency for violating the Animal Welfare Act -- and we may have a rare chance to end its animal cruelty for good.

SeaWorld imprisons orca whales in tiny, cage-like tanks -- and the USDA citation reveals conditions at the park are dangerous to the animals' health. SeaWorld is still defending its barbaric practices, but huge pressure is building on the company.

In a surprise move, a Californian assemblyman has just introduced a law to make it illegal to keep orcas in captivity. This could change everything -- but SeaWorld is already mounting a vicious campaign to defeat this assemblyman's brave move. We need to tell the State of California that the public won't accept SeaWorld's imprisonment of orcas any longer.

SeaWorld's actions are no surprise to anyone who has watched Blackfish, the documentary exposé showing how SeaWorld tortures these intelligent animals as they force them to perform tricks for the sake of entertainment and profits. But the Orca Welfare and Safety Act could change all that. The Act makes it illegal to "hold in captivity, or use, a wild-caught or captive-bred orca

for performance or entertainment purposes."

SeaWorld claim that the captivity of whales is about education, but we know better -- it's about profits. Through the years many groups, including SeaWorld's own trainers and staff, have called for the end of the imprisonment of whales.

But with recent scrutiny, the company is under more pressure than ever. After CNN aired the groundbreaking Blackfish documentary, the world now knows that Seaworld still keeps orcas like Tilikum in captivity, taken from the wild at two years old. This is dangerous not just for Tilikum's own health, but for his trainers -- the mental effects of being locked in a 20-by-30 foot dark metal container has seen him implicated in the deaths of three people.

This latest bust by the USDA for violating the Animal Welfare Act is just a sign that SeaWorld needs to stop this. Attendance is dwindling at SeaWorld as the world wises up about the cruelty of the business of capturing animals for entertainment. Parents and kids are understanding that forcing intelligent, sensitive animals to live in cages is a cruel, unethical practice. If this law passes, we can stop this practice in California for good.

Sign on to stop SeaWorld from imprisoning whales for profit.

http://action.sumofus.org/a/seaworld-orcas-captivity-california-ban-blackfish/

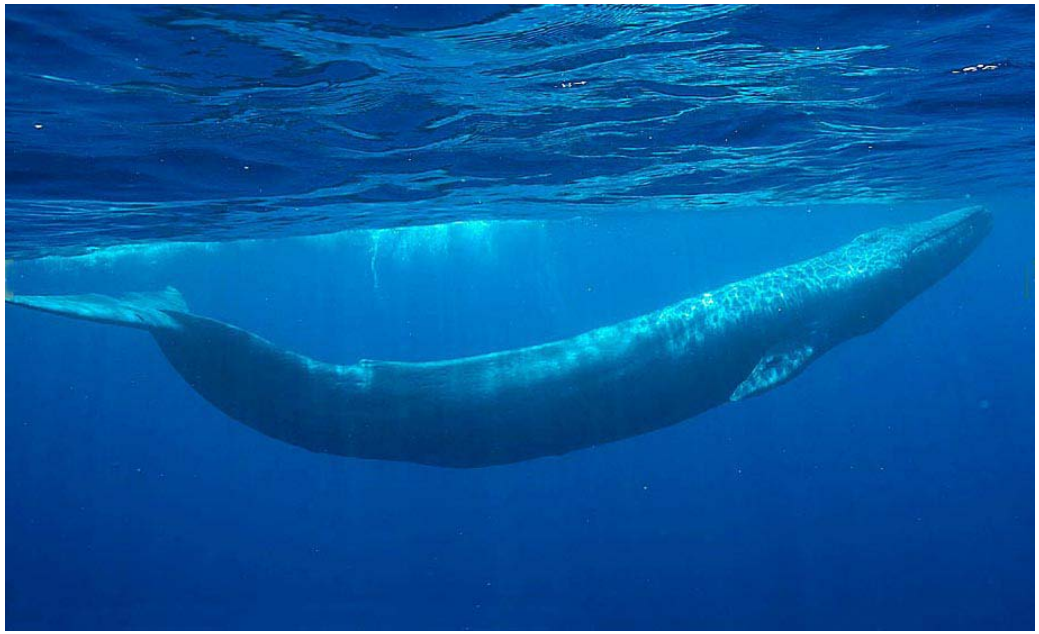
Check out our special Whale Sharks trips in 2014

MSY SEAHORSE.COM

Download our online brochure
HERE

BigAnimals Expeditions

Blue Whales July 13-19 2014



After feeding in the Sea of Cortez during the spring months, the blue whales make their way to enjoy the warm waters off Southern California during summertime.

BigAnimals Expeditions has established a superb logistical infrastructure to make the most of this event by pinpointing daily the real-time location of the blue whale migration.

With the support of a scout plane and several reporting posts along the coast, we board our diving vessel and set sail each morning from San Diego, making our way directly into the path of the blue whales as they journey north on their summer migration.

We only take 5 guests to keep environmental impact low, and snorkel to provide the best experience in the water. Once we are near the whales, it's into the kayaks - the best vehicle for getting close to the blues. Each kayak is powered by an expert sea kayaker who will paddle each of us out to experience the earth's most majestic animals.

Nick LeBeouf is leading the expedition. Space for 3 guests available (5 guests total)

www.biganimals.com

Focus Grand Cayman

Aug 30 - Sept 6, 2014

Join us at Focus Grand Cayman for world class diving on the North wall & Northwest Point, where sheer walls and hundreds of dive sites await you including the world famous Kittiwake wreck. You'll dive with Pros in the Photo and Video world, and meet many of the Who's Who in the Rebreather diving world.

New photo buffs and experienced shooters are welcome!

The fall offers laid back diving and you'll get a chance to test out the latest in underwater housings, strobes and cameras from Reef Photo & Video and Nauticam. Dive with Ryan Canon, Chris Parsons, and Tanya Burnett from Island Exposure. Learn about new products and technologies, or test out a Semi or fully Closed Circuit Rebreather! This event is open to divers of all experience levels, including open circuit and Rebreather divers, recreational or technical divers, with profiles for everyone from shallow reefs to sheer deep walls & wrecks.

www.focusgrandcayman.com

Christopher Bartlett trips

Papua New Guinea and the Caribbean

An experienced professional photojournalist, Christopher's work has been published across the globe.

Christopher has spaces left on a Papua New Guinea FeBrina liveaboard trip 3 to 11 September, visiting his favourite reefs, and those chosen by David Doubilet for the 125th anniversary edition of National Geographic, in the Witu Islands, Father's reefs and Kimbe Bay.

In the heart of the Coral Triangle, the world's most bio-diverse marine region, this itinerary combines a perfect mix of sea mounts, reefs, walls and muck dives, with a beautifully intact World War II Japanese Zero fighter plane as a bonus. Add in great viz, easy diving conditions, up to 32 dives, and a Captain with 19 year's experience and knowledge and it's a total winner.

He has also put together an unprecedented Caribbean Shark and Whale safari. His 11-night "Phat Fish Fest" will take in the Tiger, lemon and nurse sharks of Tiger Beach, the Bull and great hammerhead sharks of Bimini, Stuart Cove's Shark adventure on New Providence, and the migrating humpback whales from Salt Cay, Turks and Caicos. 11 nights, four islands, five-inte-island flights, 1 helicopter transfer, 6 diving days, 3 snorkelling days, accommodation, photography coaching : $4150 based on two sharing.

t www.bartlettimages.com

www.bestofpng.com/pages/mv-febrina/photography-workshop-2014.php

www.indigosafaris.com/pages/caribbean-shark-and-whale-safari-2015.php

Digital Shootout
Little Cayman
June 14-21, 2014

Take it seriously or take it slow, the Digital Shootout is an underwater photography/videography vacation designed to take the shooter in the group to the next level. If you're a new or an intermediate shooter, the Digital Shootout is our fast-track to better underwater imaging. It's also our most popular trip for shooters with an interested, but not die-hard, image-making travel partner. Spend the morning diving together. Afterwards, the partner can hang out at the beach or make afternoon boat dives while you attend the afternoon seminars. Circle back with the group each evening at the slide-show bar party for critiques with the pros.

Most of our repeat guests consider the Shootout events the ultimate working vacation. In six days of seminars and diving, the Digital Shootout team will help dial in your underwater system and shooting techniques.

Enter your best images in the final contest to win trips, gear, and more from our great sponsors.

Little Cayman is accessible via most major airlines. If you're traveling heavy, you'll incur excess bag fees but there should be no problem with you getting all of your camera and dive gear to the Digital Shootout in Little Cayman. No worries...

www.thedigitalshootout.com

Win an INON underwater LED

You can enter into a free draw to win an INON underwater LED light just by "Liking" The Underwater Camera Company's facebook page.

The specialist supplier of underwater photography equipment was set up by Mark Koekemoer and offers a great range of quality products. Mark's unique background means he can offer vital advice and, what's more, you'll always be dealing with him personally.

Mark is the co –designer of the INON UK Level One beginner to intermediate underwater photography course and is currently developing the Level Two Creative Lighting Course on behalf of INON UK. Mark's expertise was called upon by Martin Edge as a specialty writer for The Underwater Photographer, considered the best manual on underwater imaging. Mark has also written many magazine features on underwater photography. He has regularly presented talks on underwater photography at dive shows. Mark has shot professionally for national newspapers, including images for the 2012 Olympics.

To win an INON LE350 LED light worth £149.95, visit his website and follow the facebook link. T&C Winner announced on 31 July 2014 on facebook. UK shipping Free. International shipping charges apply.

www.theunderwatercameracompany.com

UWP World Championship

September 7-13, 2014

Eilat, Israel

In the world of art, media and creativity, some of the most impressive works introduced are those produced by successful teamwork. And so, Eilat Red Sea, PADI and Festival Mondial de L'image Sous Marine introduce the National Team competition, inviting photographers from the same country to team-up during the Eilat Red Sea event and to put together a stunning, award-winning portfolio of 6 images.

Images submitted to this category should be captured by team photographers during the Eilat Red Sea shoot-out, which takes place on September 7-13, 2014, in Eilat, Israel.

The judging phase will be featured in LIVE during the Festival Mondial de L'image Sous Marine, which takes place on October 30th – November 2nd, 2014, in Marseille, France. Each team will be ranked by the judges (70%), festival visitors (15%) and by public votes (15%). The team who managed to receive the highest integrated score will be announced as the winner and will be awarded with $3,000, sponsored by PADI.

Eilat Red Sea 2014

You're invited to take an exciting one-week break from your daily routine in the crystal clear water of the Red Sea. Meet people, dive, photograph fish & models, party all night long and perhaps even win some valuable prizes, including a $10,000 USD check for the first prize of the main category!

The Eilat Red Sea event is celebrating a whole decade in Eilat, Israel. By now it's known worldwide as the International Underwater Photography Olympics and will take place this year on September 7-13 .

Prizes include huge cash prizes, diving vacations in dreamy destinations, underwater photo equipment, scuba gear and more.

www.eilatredsea.com

Cocos Island, Costa Rica

October 9 - 19, 2014

We have chartered the Sea Hunter. Join a great group of like-minded divers and UW photographers. Cocos Island is an underwater photographers dream. Beyond the stunning display of large pelagic fish like whitetip reef sharks, scalloped hammerheads, and grey reef sharks, you can also enjoy the viewings of thousands of other species. The lack of human inhabitants on Cocos Island supports a pollutant-free environment that supports manta rays, marbled rays, tuna and dolphins as well as pilot whales, false killer whales, marlin and sailfish.

www.scubadiveasia.com

Team Edition Open Fotosub Isla de El Hierro.2014

1st 2 Masters announced

The current world champion, David Barrio, is the first Master of the Team Edition Open Fotosub Isla de El Hierro. The Cabildo of El Hierro and the Canarian Goverment confirm that the world champion is the profesional UW photographer chosen to direct one of the four teams that will compete this year in the international underwater photography competition.

The new Master also holds the Spanish underwater photography champion title, and twice champion of the Open of El Hierro. He has also won various national and international prizes, and his photographs and photo journals have been widely published.

David will assist the event with his model Luis Quintanilla, will lead the Yubarta team and his mission will be to direct the teaching and training of his team members, getting them ready for the final competition phase when, with 15.000 euros at stake, they will face the other three teams.

The second Master is Franco Banfi who is a professional wildlife photographer and photo-journalist, well known for his expertise and accuracy in underwater imaging. Recently he specialized in leading photo expeditions and in giving workshops and seminars about photography in different locations.

For a long time, he has become known around the world for his versatility. He has meticulously documented a lot of uncommon animals and locations, wildlife and human relationship with nature, in environments from the Equator to the Poles.

The period for pre-registration in the 18th El Hierro "Team Edition" Open Fotosub started on 15th of March. All interested photographers, as well as their assistants/models, may apply for pre-registration in the event, with no commitment, using the form you can find in the REGISTRATION section of the Blog.

Once the Masters who will lead each of the four teams of the Open (Yubarta, Solrayo, Zifio and Maroma) are announced, the organization will contact the pre-registered participants so they can formalize their inscription and express which team they would like to join, in order of preference.

The techinical management of the event will take such preferences in consideration, in addition to the technical and competitive level of the pre-registered photographers, to determine the composition of the teams that will compete in La Restinga from the 16th to the 17th of October, once the training and teaching phase from the 12th to the 15th of the same month has ended.

It is important to highlight that this year's Open Fotosub is more open than ever to the participation of UW photographers of all experience levels, who will have the opportunity not only to participate integrated in teams of similar levels, but will also have the chance to improve their photography skills coached by some of the best underwater photography teachers.

www.openfotosub.es/en

New Products

Sea & Sea Ltd introduce Bersub Dive Lights

Bersub are brand new to the UK dive scene but have been making top quality, aluminium bodied dive lights for over 25 years.

Bersub dive lights are tailored to all branches of diving and provide optimum lighting characteristics for their intended use. The lights are robust, easy to use and maintain, and feature fail-safe technologies which makes them safe, reliable and a pleasure to use.

To ensure the highest standards of production are maintained, all component parts are designed, manufactured and assembled in France.

Depth rated to 300m and backed by a two year warranty, hundreds of recreational, professional and military divers across the globe already rely on Bersub Dive Lights.

Sea & Sea Ltd are sole UK distributor for Bersub Dive Lights and prices range from £200 - £800.

www.sea-sea.com
www.bersub.com

INON LF1000-S LED flashlight

INON INC. is pleased to announce the official release of the first version of LF series LED flashlight the LF1000-S

The LF1000-S runs on 3 x AA batteries providing maximum 1000 lumen /30 degree coverage with two different power settings from its handheld compact body.

The burn time with Eneloop Pro rechargeable batteries, is approx. 50 minutes at full power or approx. 235minutes (3hrs 55 min) at low power.

The LF1000-S has a simple rotary switch with a lock ring to ensure reliable ON/OFF operation and greatly reduce flooding risk.

www.inon.co.jp

DeepPro GPH3 GoPro housing

The new DeepPro GPH3 Domed Housing is designed for the GoPro® Hero 3 and 3+ cameras with the goal of providing the best wide angle image for the professional film maker.

The new DeepPro GPH3 Domed Housing for the GoPro® uses a built in concentric dome port system which eliminates the optical shortfalls inherent in a flat port design. Our housing's design fully restores the camera's underwater field of view to be equivalent to the cameras above water FOV.

For the first time, the using the DeepPro Domed housing that GoPro® signature wide angle look can now be fully realized underwater.

www.deepprosystems.com

Nikon WP-N2 housing for Nikon 1

If you've always wanted to capture images that will do justice to the wonders you see when you dive deep beneath ocean's surface, the compact Nikon 1 underwater diving case is the perfect accessory for you.

Waterproof to 40 m, this stylish case allows easy access to the main camera buttons and is compatible with the 1 Nikkor VR 10–30mm zoom lens.

Comfortable to hold and easy to use, you can switch easily between stills and movie shooting and even use the zoom to capture close-up shots of small fish, or shoot bigger specimens from a safe distance.

www.nikon.co.uk

CMdome diffusers

Introducing the line of CMdome diffusers by AquaTerraImagery.

Available for INON, Sea & Sea and Ikelite strobes. CMdome diffusers are an important add on for both the professional and amateur underwater photographer.

Unlike conventional diffusers, the unique curvature design of the dome diffuser spreads light more evenly allowing photographers to paint with the edge of the strobe more effectively, eliminating most unwanted hot spots.

CMdome diffusers are very durable. The molded dome is constructed of high quality studio opaque plastic for greater color accuracy, and will provide many years of use. Separately designed diffusers are available for both wide angle and macro photography.

For photographers running three, four or five light sources this tool is essential. When it comes to lighting up that special reef scene, a large school of fish, or photographing big animals CMdome diffusers are the answer at the business end of your strobe because… You never know when you might get the same chance again.

Aquaterraimagery ships to most countries.

www.cmdiffusers.bigcartel.com

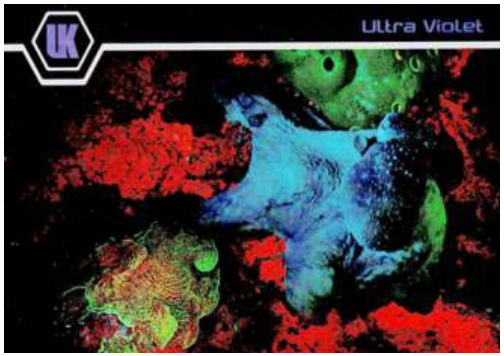
Stingray dive lights

The Stingray™ Series dive lights just released by SeaLantern® are smaller, lighter, smarter, brighter, tougher and more reliable than anything the dive light market has seen before.

StingRay™ offers customers a choice of 3 models for different tasks, the XM-L, a 6000Lm Flood light,- StingRay™ Spot, a 1800Lm Spot light, and the StingRay™ Coral, a Fluorescent light with 3740mW fluoro power, plus 750Lm of white light designed to bring out the stunning colour pigments in corals.

www.SeaLantern.com

UV Dive Lights from Underwater Kinetics



See Corals & Critters Like Never Before! Amaze yourself by seeing new colours not normally revealed in the beam of your old tag along dive light.

Marine scientists have noticed that certain marine animals light up with a splendid show of colour when viewed under ultra violet or blue light just like the UV posters of yore. Chemical compounds contained in the skin of these animals (mostly corals) fluoresce in brilliant reds and greens.

UK offer two different UV dive lights models each with unique shades of UV light: the SL4 eLED L1/UV-455 (Available Now) and the Aqualite eLED UV-395 Lamp Head (Available Soon)

The Aqualite UV is more violet and almost invisible to your eyes.

www.sea-sea.net

Ikelite Canon EOS Rebel SL1 100D housing

We've packed a lot in a small package, only slightly smaller than the EOS 100D camera and just as comfortable to hold.

Set up is a snap with simple, fully front-loaded camera installation. The camera mounting shoe is designed to be unobtrusive and allow changing of battery and memory cards, or attachment to a surface tripod without being removed from the camera.

Controls are provided for all camera functions except for the rear touchscreen, so you have complete creative control anywhere you go. For a system of this caliber, a tray with handle is essential to good handling, balance underwater, and attachment of external lighting. The complete handle assembly removes with just two nut for traveling.

This housing comes standard with an optical grade acrylic dome port with zoom ring. This port provides sharp images and zoom capabilities with both the Canon EF-S 18-55mm STM kit lens, plus the popular Tokina 10-17mm lens. Minimal vignetting (dark shadows in the corners of the image) will be present in the 10-12mm range when used the Tokina lens. A special zoom gear system allows the camera with lens attached to be installed from the back of the housing, without requiring removal of the dome port.

The dome port may be removed without tools to attach the optional Flat Port for the Canon EF-S 60mm Macro lens. Simply loosen the securing thumb screws and slide the port off. The optional Flat Port allows use of the 60mm Macro lens in auto-focus mode and features 67mm front threads for the optional attachment of macro converter wet lenses.

www.ikelite.com

Backscatter Macromate Mini

Backscatter Underwater Video & Photo are pleased to announce our newest product, the Macromate Mini Underwater Macro Lens for GoPro FLIP Systems. It's available now from Backscatter Underwater Video & Photo, or FLIP3.1 dealers worldwide!

"The Macromate Mini is the only true macro lens for GoPro. No other lens will enable you to shoot nudibranchs, ghost pipefish and other very small underwater critters. I believe this lens will revolutionize the way professionals and amateurs use GoPro underwater." - Berkley White, Owner - Backscatter Underwater Video & Photo

From juvenile frogfish to nudibranchs to tiny crabs and shrimps, you can now shoot true macro with your GoPro!

Why do you need a macro lens?

Without corrective optics, GoPro 3+ and 3 cameras can only focus to about 1-2 feet underwater. The custom Macromate Mini design allows you to get within 3 inches of your subject so you can bring the tiny wonders you find to the big screen.

If your favorite underwater subjects are about the size of a golf ball, the Macromate Mini is about to become your best friend.

Macromate Mini is the only true macro lens for the GoPro

Two custom designed glass optics are mated together and sealed in a vacuum resulting in a lens that is perfected for underwater use. This design delivers sharper images, higher contrast, and deeper blacks than any other GoPro lens designed to date. It's state of the art and born from countless hours of in water testing.

http://bsuw.co/macromate-video-reel

Recsea Sony FDR-AX100 & HDR-CX900 housing

Recsea has announced the release of an aluminum housing for the Sony AX100 4K camcorder. It utilises LANC control via a right hand grip to give access to all camera functions and can be fitted with an external monitor or Inon 45° viewfinder.

This is a compact and durable, CNC precision machined corrosion-resistant aluminum housing.

It has a maximum operating depth (MOD) of 100 meters (328 feet).

Electronic LANC Control provides access to all camcorder functions.

www.recsea.com

Ikelite housing for Nikon Coolpix L30

We can't think of a better way to get started in underwater photography than with this compact, easy-to-use system.

Switch effortlessly underwater between colorful 20.1 megapixel stills and high-resolution HD 720p video with a single package. You'll be ready for anything you come across with the possibility of shooting wide angle, portrait, and macro on the same dive - all framed beautifully by the L30's super-bright 3.0-inch LCD screen.

The housing port is designed to accept 3.0-inch diameter color filters, and wide angle or macro options with 67mm threads.

The camera and housing has an MSRP of $400.

www.ikelite.com

FIX Neo video and photo lights

Nauticam USA announces the release and immediate availability of the FIX Neo line of underwater photo and video lights.

Neo combines the most requested features in a light by combining an ultra-modern LCD status display, removable battery, 100 degree beam angle, interchangeable light heads, optional remote controller, and sealed recharging. Whatever a shooter's ambition, wide-angle, macro, focus light, video or photography, Neo delivers the configuration, power, and control in a travel friendly small-lightweight size to keep shooting to create the memories of a lifetime.

"The Neo is the culmination of listening to market demands and delivering the most advanced underwater photo and video light system to date." – Chris Parsons, Nauticam USA Sales & Support Director. "As a videographer or photographer there are specific needs for lighting and lighting control which don't map-over from products designed only to be a simple dive light."

An ultra-modern LCD panel clearly communicates Neo's status by simultaneously providing remaining battery time and light output level. Need more data? Just wait a few seconds after adjusting Neo's output and the LCD screen displays the remaining burn time in minutes!

Neo's battery is removable allowing a fully-charged spare battery to be installed and get the diver back in the water shooting.

Neo features an optional remote controller called the FR1. Position the FR1 on a handle or tray of your system and instantly transform your lighting control within thumb's reach.

www.nauticamusa.com

SeaLife Flex-Connect mounting system

SeaLife have recently introduced their new Flex-Connect mounting system for underwater lighting.

Flex-Connect is fast becoming the standard for outfitting underwater cameras with external lights and strobes due to the incredible speed that these and other accessories can be assembled and disassembled. Grips, Flex Arms, trays, light/flash heads and more connect instantly with a simple "click." Disassembly is equally as fast with only the push of a button, requiring no tools and allowing for convenient, lightweight traveling.

The compact Flex-Connect Micro Tray is perfect for adding light and stability to small cameras like GoPro®, and the Flex-Connect Dual Tray greatly expands underwater cameras with the ability to add multiple lights. The universal trays mount to all underwater cameras using a standard ¼-20 tripod mount, making it simple to expand with just a "click."

Flex-Connect Flex Arms connect directly into a tray, or between a grip and light head, adding 7-inches of reach to lights and strobes and 100 degrees of bending motion for full control over underwater lighting. In close-up macro photography, the flexible arms allow bending of the lights or flash within inches of the subject for creative light effects. Alternatively, the arms allow spreading the lights far away from the camera to avoid backscatter in low visibility waters.

www.sealife-cameras.com

Ikelite Vega

The Vega 2000 lumen 65° beam packs a lot of power into a compact and travel friendly package. Switch quickly between full, half, and quarter powers for video, focusing, macro photography, or to use as a backup dive light. Power level is controlled by a large, easy to turn dial on the rear of the light.

A premium, high-capacity built-in rechargeable battery provides up to 3 hours run time on a single charge. 6 LED indicators on the back give you power level (blue LEDs) and remaining battery information (red LEDs) at a glance. The rear LEDs are bright enough to see during a day dive yet unobtrusive when diving at night.

Each Vega is completely factory sealed and water pressure tested for care- free maintenance. The clever rear dial over-rotates to a secondary 'Off' position with lock to prevent the light from accidentally turning on when not in use.

www.ikelite.com

INON accessories for Olympus E-M1/PT-EP11

INON INC. is pleased to announce some new accessories and current products compatibility for the Olympus E-M1 compact camera and PT-EP11 housing.

By using combination of dedicated lens port PPO-EP01 and macro lens adapter PMLA-EP01 the following INON macro lenses can be used: UCL-330, UCL-165M67, UCL-100M67. The UFL-M150 ZM80 can also be used.

A wide conversion lens is not compatible due to camera lens specification.

For strobe photography "S-TTL" Auto strobe with the INON S-2000/Z-240/D-2000 is available using the Optical D Cable Type L products.

Basetrays, handles, ball joint arms and bouyancy arms are also available to make this a complete system camera.

www.inon.co.jp

Ikelite housing for Nikon D3300 DSLR

We've designed this housing to be one of the best performance-to-dollar purchases in the world.

The Ikelite DSLR housing is a seamless blend of functionality, durability and waterproof integrity. Other housings simply waterproof your camera. An Ikelite TTL housing improves your photos.

TTL or "Through-The-Lens" flash metering means the camera controls flash duration to properly expose an image. Our built-in proprietary circuitry tells your camera that a TTL external flash is attached, allowing the camera to adjust exposure more accurately than with the slave TTL strobes.

An over-sized knob smoothly engages our unique system of universal zoom gears. We provide two zoom sets with each housing, one for use with most popular larger diameter zoom lenses and a second designed for use with smaller diameter zoom lenses. Both sets are lightweight and easy to install with no modification to the lens required.

A variety of dome and flat ports attach with four locking latches for maximum security and quick changes between dives. This housing includes a balanced aluminum tray with our signature quick release handles for easy attachment and removal of external lighting.

MSRP $1500 Product Number 6801.33

www.ikelite.com

Mangrove housing for Sony FDR-AX100

Aditech is proud to announce the lunching of the new Mangrove housing MVHS-AX100 for the Sony camcorder FDR-AX100 and HDR-CX900. The housing's front case is constructed from marine grade aluminium, machined, anodized and the rear case is machined from solid Delrin. The Mangrove housing is designed for optimal grip operation, it is depth rated to 200 meters (660 feet)

The housing MVH-AX100 comes with a 56mm threaded port ring that accepts optional removable ports like the wide angle port WP-90 or the flat port Mangrove FP-M56 that supports any 67mm threaded wet lenses

The housing MVHS-AX100 is mainly electronically controlled, it uses the LANC connector, the external controls on the housing are linked by 12 electromagnetic pushbuttons to corresponding controls on the camera inside the case, there is only one mechanical control at the front of the housing which allows to access the zoom gear ring.

The electromagnetic controls do not penetrate the housing wall and can be easily removed for cleaning and maintenance.

Another convenient feature of this type of system is that the controls for the housing are grouped together in three locations, to the left, right and under the in-built monitor, so that each function can be operated by your thumbs while maintaining a steady grip on the handles.

www.aditech-uw.com

Nauticam NA-A5000 housing for Sony A5000

Nauticam is pleased to announce the NA-A5000 underwater camera housing for the new Sony A5000 mirrorless camera. The value represented by this camera system for underwater shooters is unprecedented… camera with lens plus rugged aluminum housing and port for right around $2000. Why settle for compact camera performance when a 20 megapixel interchangeable lens system is available that is every bit as compact as the compact?

The NA-A5000 is the product of continued refinement of the Nauticam mirrorless camera housings. A5000 is the great grandchild of the Sony NEX-5, which was the first mirrorless camera supported by Nauticam, and the first successful interchangeable lens mirrorless camera system for underwater. Nauticam is well known for it's innovative and ergonomic housing designs, and those traits are fully evident in the NA-A5000. The housing is very comfortable in the hand, and all controls are easily reached.

The housing gains the new style port locking mechanism, which will be familiar to people who have seen Nauticam SLR housings. This style locking lever made it's mirrorless debut with the Nauticam NA-EM1 housing, and is an iconic symbol of Nauticam innovation. The new lock makes port changes quick, easy and as secure as ever.

Milled from solid aluminum, the housing is rated to 100m/330ft depth, and is rugged and ready for use!

www.nauticamusa.com

Ikelite Canon EOS 100D review

by Phil Rudin

Making its debut at DEMA 2013 the newly released Ikelite housing for the Canon EOS 100D SL1 has to be the smallest DSLR housing package I have ever seen. Smaller than many mirrorless camera systems this combination ticks all the boxes for the traveling photographer. The system is small, light weight and easy to pack in just about any airline carry-on bag. I had a chance to test drive this new system while teaching the Underwater Digital Fiesta 2014 Workshop at Casa Del Mar in Cozumel Mexico during April. Jorge Gonzalez is the owner and organizer of Underwater Digital Fiesta now in its fourth year and the publisher of MEXICANDIVER.com. Jorge was able to bring this housing along with several others for our workshop members to test-dive and I heard nothing but positive feedback regarding this exciting new housing system.

THE CAMERA

The housing is designed around the very tiny Canon EOS 100D Rebel also branded in many countries as the SL1 Rebel. The 100D/SL1 Rebel is the entry level camera in the Rebel line with the Canon EOS T5i Rebel currently sitting at the high end of the Rebel line. These are DSLR cameras with an optical viewfinder not mirrorless cameras. The 100D has an 18.0 megapixel APS-C sensor for still photography and full HD video over an impressive ISO range from 100 to 12800 with quite usable image quality above 6400 ISO. The camera ships as a "kit" with the Canon EF-S 18 to 55mm f/3.5-5.6 STM lens. The new STM lenses are designed to provide noticeably improved live view and full HD video shooting over past Canon "kit" lenses. The auto focus is reasonably fast but not as fast as the latest crop of mirrorless cameras from Panasonic and Olympus. The Canon 18 to 55mm STM zoom covers a wide range of underwater subjects and will make a excellent all purpose lens for the entry level shooter.

While the 100D is quite small the same can not be said for the 18 to 55 zoom, this is a simple matter of physics. The larger APS-C sensor requires larger lenses compared to lenses for smaller sensor cameras. Ikelite has negated this shortcoming with a custom dome port for this lens which has the zoom control dial built into the port. This is ideal for reducing the overall size of the system. Unlike port offerings for many kit lenses this is a dome not a flat port. The dome port allows a wider angle of view at the 18mm end of the lens and increases AOV at the 55mm end of the lens as well. The on/off switch has three settings off, on and a video icon. When the camera is turned on a display of your shooting information appears on the LCD display. It includes the mode you are shooting in like manual and information related to that shooting mode. In manual mode shutter speed, F/stop, ISO, exposure compensation, white balance, battery power, AF points, one shot or multi shot RAW capture, number of exposures and more all appear.

To make a change like moving the ISO setting all you need to do is press the OK button, scroll to ISO using the four way arrows press OK then scroll to a higher ISO and press OK. You can use the main command dial to change functions like shutter speed and F/stop settings. Move the switch to the video icon and you hear the mirror lock-up and the video framer appears on the LCD for video shooting. Press the OK button and now your video shooting information screen appears on the LCD. Press the

four way arrows and you can make changes to things like movie recording formats (like 1920/24), white balance, AF modes and more.

In still mode push the control button to the right of the viewfinder and you will hear the mirror lock-up, you are now in live view mode and the image will appear on the LCD rather than in the viewfinder. In live view the speed of the auto focus is reduced noticeably compared to the AF speed when using the optical viewfinder. In low light this issue is even more noticeable.

In video mode you push the same button that is to the right of the viewfinder to begin recording and to stop recording. A red dot appears on the LCD to remind you that the camera is recording. Using auto focus works well as you move the camera from subject to subject while shooting video. Once you have finished recording you can push the blue review arrow and the left/right arrows to find the clip you wish to review, then push the up arrow and OK to play. When the camera is turned off a sensor cleaning icon appears on the LCD to let you know the sensor is being cleaned.

THE HOUSING AND PORT

Ikelite is a U.S. company which has been making underwater photography equipment for over fifty years. The company has an outstanding reputation for customer service both with new equipment and aging equipment, offering upgrades and fast service turnarounds to their many loyal customers. Ikelite's housings are made with a high grade polycarbonate blend which is extremely strong yet remains clear and lightweight. These clear polycarbonate housings provide an excellent view of all of the camera controls and O-rings after the housing is sealed. The Canon 100D housing has

(Above) Coney fish, Canon EOS 100D 18-55mm kit lens, at 55mm, ISO-200, F/18, 1/200th, one Ikelite DS161 set to TTL.

(Right) Diver, Canon EOS 100D 18-55mm kit lens, at 18mm, ISO-200, F/8, 1/200th, one Ikelite DS161 set to TTL.

four main components, the front "box" where the camera sits, a flat rear door, the removable front port and the camera tray which attaches to the tripod mounting point on the bottom of the camera. The front part of the housing where the camera sits has a track at the bottom that the camera tray slides into. Once the camera is aligned in the housing the hotshot for strobe connection is mounted on top of the camera and the housing is ready close. The rear door of the housing is then secured by facing the housing down and making sure that the rear door O-ring has properly seated in the font half of the housing. The two heavy duty lid snaps are then secured by pushing down, you should hear the lid snaps click into the locked position and you should not be able to lift the snaps without pushing in the

snap locking device. I like to use equal pressure on both lid snaps so that they lock simultaneously.

Once the camera is secured inside the housing you can see the controls on the camera and align them with the housing controls. The right hand side of the housing has the shutter release, the left side has the lens release control which allows you to change lenses by removing the port and not the camera from the housing. The bottom of the housing

has two mounting screws for mounting a tray to the housing and the top of the housing has the sync port for the strobe cord, controls for on/off/video, ISO settings and the main control wheel. Also on top is a nifty mounting device for your Go Pro so that you can shoot stills with the housing while running Go Pro video at the same time(Go Pro not included).

The rear door for the housing has controls for menu, info, live view/video start/stop, mode dial, AF point/magnify button, AE/AF lock button, AV aperture/exp. comp. button, up/down/left/right arrows, set/OK button, playback button and erase button. The rear door also has an optical pickup finder included which helps your view into the rather small viewfinder on this camera.

The most common negative feedback among those students using this housing was that the viewfinder was a bit small. This is a common issue with many of the smaller sensor DSLR cameras. Our housing shipped with the acrylic dome port for the KIT lens with sun shade and left hand zoom control. This port never needs to be removed unless you are installing the flat port for the Canon EF-S 60mm macro lens. The flat port has 67mm threads

Two divers, Canon EOS 100D 18-55mm kit lens, at 18mm, ISO-200, F/14, 1/200th, one Ikelite DS161 set to TTL.

Trunk Fish, Canon EOS 100D 18-55mm kit lens, at 27mm, ISO-200, F/11, 1/200th, one Ikelite DS161 set to TTL.

for close-up lenses and flip adapters. The housing also ships with a neoprene cover to protect the dome port, waterproof bulkhead cap when not using the strobe port, a main door spare O-ring, extra port screws, one year manufacturer warranty and a quick release tray and handle which allows an Ikelite strobe and strobe arm to be easily mounted to the housing.

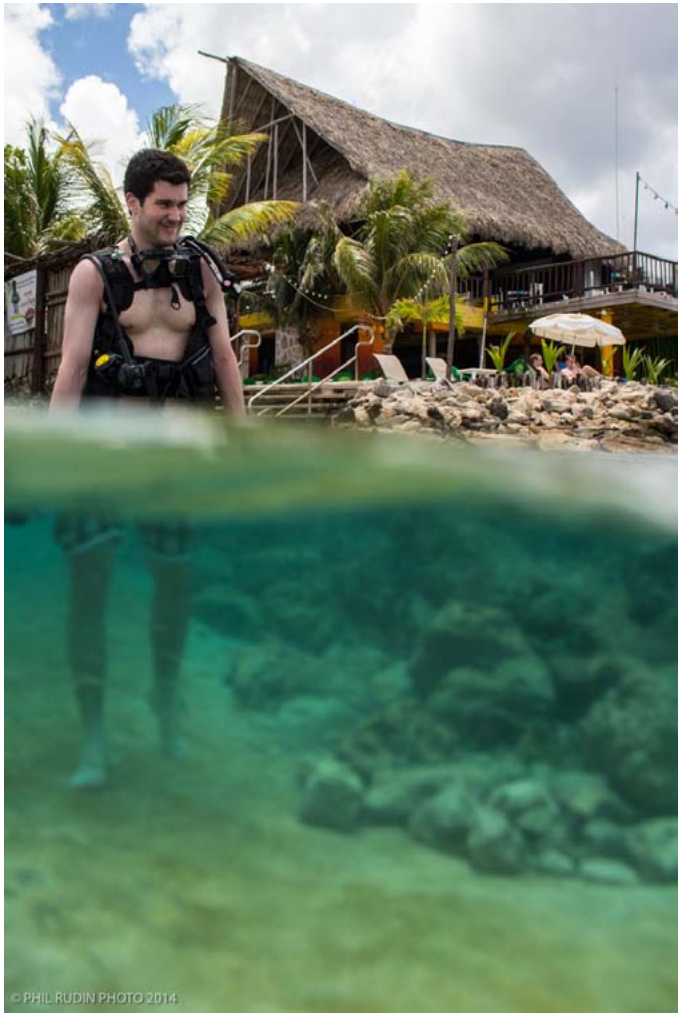
THE STROBE

Ikelite included an optional DS161 strobe and Ikelite strobe arm with our test housing and tray. This housing is compatible with a variety of optional Ikelite strobes including the DS50 (above serial# 70,000), DS51, DS125 (above serial#5000), DS160, DS161, and DS200. Several non-Ikelite strobes can also be used with this housing system when fired in manual exposure mode. Ikelite's Manta strobe will also fire as a slave off of a primary strobe with this housing. Our test strobe, the Ikelite DS161 also doubles as a video light for use with the 100D or if the Go Pro is mounted to the housing. The strobe connects through the strobe bulkhead on the housing and provides rich well balanced TTL exposures. The strobe can also be used as a flashing signaling light if needed. A diffusing cap is included as well. This strobe is very well respected in the underwater photography community and is well worth a review on its own.

FIELD TESTING

In the field the housing with the camera kit lens and tray will be a bit positive in salt water. This worked well for me while shooting shallow A/V light images and over/under shots. I was able to get some decent split images with the standard dome port and kit lens at the 18mm setting.

The internet is already a buzz over this new housing with talk of what other lenses might do well behind the standard dome port. The answer to one



Split image, Canon EOS 100D 18-55mm kit lens, at 18mm, ISO-400, F/7.1, 1/2000th A/V light.

such post is that yes the popular Tokina 10-17mm fisheye zoom can be used in the port with minimal vignetting in the 10-12mm range. Regarding lenses, the older non-STM Rebel lenses will be slower to auto focus than the new 18-55 kit lens that comes with the 100D camera.

I shot at or near the surface with the camera set to aperture priority and got some very richly colored images in the clear blue waters around Cozumel. With the single DS161 strobe I was shooting with all manual settings while firing the strobe set on TTL, this combination resulted in excellent exposures within the TTL range. The system is extremely easy to dive and snorkel with, being every bit as streamlined as many of the small mirrorless housings I have tested in the past.

This is an excellent little housing system for travel, those entering underwater photography looking for a moderately priced system and for those die hard Canon fans looking for a backup system.

The housing system with port and tray retails for $1100.00, Ikelite also sells a housing package with the camera and kit lens included for $1850.00. Ikelite strobes range in price from around $400.00 to around $1100.00 for the DS161. You can contact your local authorized Ikelite dealer for pricing in your area.

I would like to thank Ikelite for their support both for Underwater Digital Fiesta 2014 at Casa Del Mar in Cozumel, Mexico and for the test equipment used for this review.

www.ikelite.com

Phil Rudin

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Fantasea FG16 for Canon G16

by Peter Rowlands

For a long time now the Canon G series of cameras has provided everything needed for photographers who want to be in full control of their image.

The chunkier than compact body is extremely sturdy while the built in 5x 28-140mm equivalent lens is f1.8-2.8 which is great for low light and there have been significant improvements in the video modes with up to 1080p60 frame rate. But rather than going into fine detail about the camera here I will point you to the excellent benchmark website for camera reviews. They concluded that "The Canon PowerShot G16 gives enthusiasts all the basic tools to shoot great photos in a fast and reliable package."

www.dpreview.com

Underwater housing manufacturer Fantasea has a long and successful history producing Canon G series and Nikon prosumer housings and their G16 carries on their tradition of robust construction, ergonomic ease of use with a competitive price tag.

From the moment you push the safety catch and rotate the opening dial there is a familiar feeling of precision and quality. The double O ring compression and piston seals should be foolproof but there is also an audible and optical leak alarm for an early warning of any trouble. The camera needs nothing attached to it and all you have to do is lift the Mode dial and push the camera into the housing. Everything lines up and the camera is held very precisely.

The external controls are chunky and well spaced even for gloved hands and the front and rear grip contours make holding the housing a breeze. As primarily a video user the stop/start button is well positioned for thumb control and should ensure wobble free activation. A nice design touch is the shroud around this button to save accidental activation.

For those who do want to trigger external strobes there are 2 fibre optic ports and there is a cold shoe for attaching aiming lights. If the internal flash is sufficient for you there is a large diffuser which can be attached to give even coverage.

The rubber shade for the LCD screen provides effective shading in shallow, brightly lit water.

The tripod base has 3 holes rather than just the usual 1 so attaching baseplates and handles will be very secure. Fantasea also produce a range of accessories including wide angle lenses, strobes and filters so you can expand the system to suit your specific needs.

A neoprene hand grip and a padded neoprene lens port cover are included at no extra charge.

Once again Fantasea have produced a premium housing for a very capable camera.

www.fantasea.com

In the UK, Canon cameras and Fantasea housings are available from Bristol Cameras

www.bristolcameras.co.uk

Peter Rowlands
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Nauticam iPhone housing

by Phil Rudin

For those of you lusting after the latest shinny black Nauticam housing you may be surprised to learn you can now have your housing in yellow or blue. You may already own the camera as well!

Nauticam has recently released its first polycarbonate housing for the iPhone 4/4s/5/5s. This is an all purpose housing built for the abuse of extreme watersports. This housing allows you to optimize the capabilities of your smart phone for your underwater photo and video needs.

The housing is available with a bright yellow or blue front case. The rear half of the clam shell style housing is clear polycarbonate and the housing is secured with the same rotary cam locking system used on all of the Nauticam Mini housings. Just push in the red button and rotate counter-clockwise to open and clockwise until the locking system snaps shut.

The housing has a flat glass front port which is shaded by a 32mm filter thread for accessories like closeup and wide lens adapters, colored filters for your video needs and more. The housing is packaged with a handy black wrist strap, spare O-ring for the rear main door, O-ring grease, O-ring remover, warranty card, instruction manual and has maximum depth rating of sixty meters.

The bottom of the housing has a metal universal tripod mount with three (1/4") mounting threads. This allows the housing to be mounted to a tripod, camera tray with video lights and much more. The housing comes setup for the I-phone 5 and comes complete with a set of rubber plugs that can be easily exchanged to fit the iPhone 4"s. Once in the housing the iPhone is protected from water damage plus wear and tear. Not only is the housing water tight but the iPhone rides on the rubber plugs which prevent shock.

To control the camera you must first go to the Apple iTunes store and download the free Nauticam App to your phone. Just do a search in the App store for Nauticam and the App will pop right up. Once the App is downloaded to your phone just open the App and a very intuitive pulldown menu will appear which allows access to all of the Nauticam App functions.

The App includes a dive log with space for all of your dives to be recorded. This function is well worth the download even if you never use the housing. Once in the main menu you can open all of the camera's controls. The controls allow you to use everything from basic stills to rapid fire, front and back camera modes, GPS overlays, video, social media sharing and more while the phone is secure and bone dry inside the housing.

The housing has a large shutter release triggered by the right forefinger and an ergonomic grip for the right hand. The functions are controlled by a four way controller wheel on the rear of the housing operated by the right thumb. Starting from

the top you have an icon for playback of images and zoom-in while shooting stills. The second icon is the basic mode control which allows you to shift from still to multi shot and video, it also controls video play back. The third icon controls sleep mode and zooms-out for the widest lens angle of view. The fourth icon controls the shutter release in still mode and the record and stop record in video mode. These are the basic control settings and they can be customized for your shooting needs in the main menu.

I first went to settings, then general, then Auto-lock and set the phone to shut off after five minutes or not at all depending on my shooting needs. I found that without doing this the phone shuts off and defaults to the main screen which can be turned on by a right press to the rear wheel but does not get you into the Nauticam App. My test housing did not come with instructions so I am sure this issue will be addressed but I am not savvy enough to find the workaround.

Shooting in the water is a breeze; just point and press the shutter release. Shooting at or near the surface in bright sunlight is a challenge when trying to review the images just as it is above water.

This is clearly not an underwater photography system for the advanced U/W shooter but it is still quite a valuable tool for any serious photographer. The possibilities are endless. Much like the Go Pro this is a go anywhere system designed around an excellent photography tool. More images are shot on a daily basis with smart phones than any other camera and of those images and videos more are shot with an iPhone than any another smart phone. I have included some images of just a fraction of the many ways this system might be used.

The Nauticam housing for the iPhone 4/5 is available at your local Nauticam retailer for around $190.00, €149.95, £144.95.

Phil Rudin

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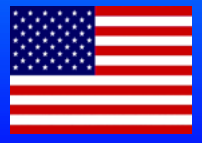

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Bersub Variled x2 Neutral Wide 90

by Peter Rowlands

Bersub is a well established light manufacturer based in France and they now have a new distributor in the UK - Sea & Sea - and they sent me a Varied x 2 Neutral Wide 90 to evaluate. The Bersub range is very extensive and there are models to suit all diving requirements but the Neutral Wide 90 with its 90° coverage will appeal to underwater photographers the most.

To be honest LED lights are getting harder to review: “It has a switch and, if you turn it, the bright light comes on.....” Fortunately for me the Varied x2 has some novel features which are aimed to give the purchaser a choice of power sources and outputs and these set it apart from the increasing big pack of manufacturers.

The Varied is extrememly well made with an aluminium body and large controls suitable for the thickest gloved hands. In addition its rating to 300 metres will appeal to those who will insist on going down that far.

Double O ring seals provide reliable waterproofing and the large 2 power On/Off switch has a very effective and positive Lock mechanism and is well shrouded.

So far nothing much new but it is when you unscrew the main body from the rear section that nice features are revealed..

The Varied x2 is powered by 6 x removable AA batteries so you have a flexible choice of power sources from standard alkaline batteries, to NiMh and Eneloop rechargeables. NiMhs have the greatest capacity available - the highest I found was 2850 ma and these should give up to 2 hours output at full power from the 6 x 2.5w LEDs which give 1200 lumens.

The ability to use AA batteries gives a very economical advantage and a back up set will be far cheaper than a dedicated battery pack. The only downside is that there are far fewer 6 cell chargers than there are 4 cell.

Interchangeable heads mean you can swap to a spot beam for a more conventional dive light.

You are spoilt for choice when it comes to dive/video lights but if you are in the market for one you really should take a look at the Varied x2.

Peter Rowlands
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www.sea-sea.net
www.bersub.com

Sepia Apama

The Giant Australian Cuttlefish

by Paul Macdonald

The Sepia Apama congregate every year from mid June to mid August in the shallow rocky waters of False Bay which is bound by the industrial city of Whyalla and the picturesque Point Lowly in South Australia.

It estimated that during this period around 40,000 or more cuttlefish are present in the bay. This is an amazing spectacle to literally see 25 to 40 cuttlefish in your mask vision. These are the largest known cuttlefish in the world and can grow to a tube length of 60cm and weigh up to 10kgs.

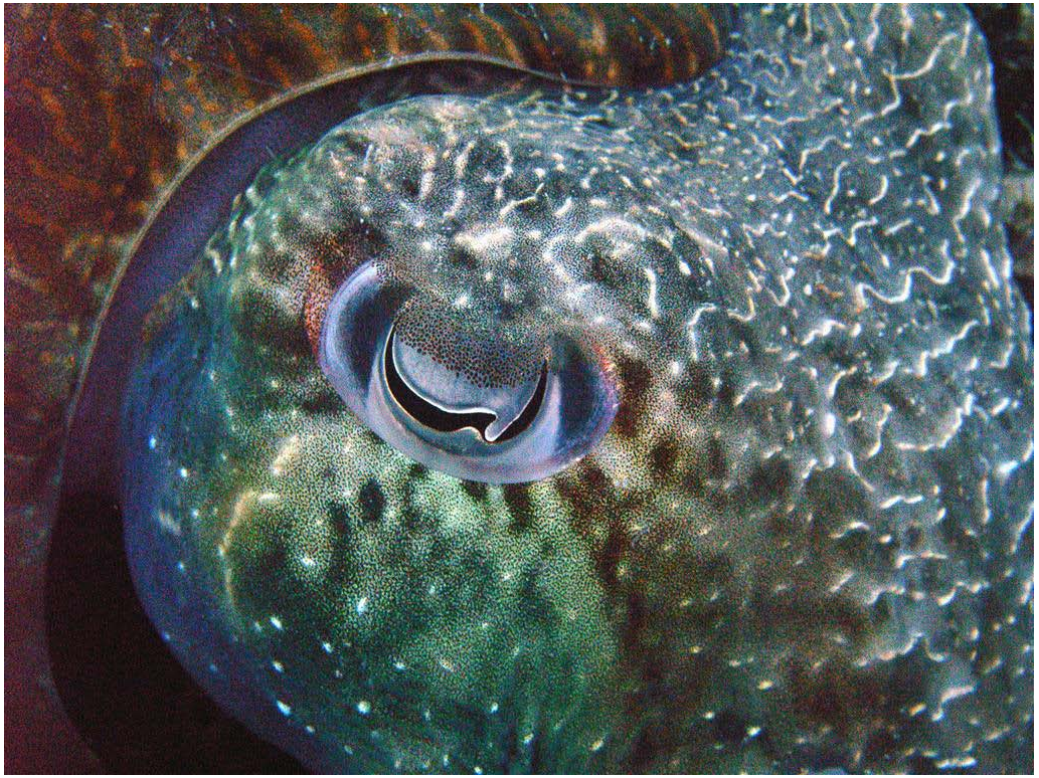
This bay is very special as it is the only known site in the world where cuttlefish are known to aggregate in such large numbers for the purposes of reproduction. Later in the year and for a shorter period of time Southern Calamari are also known to aggregate in the bay for mating purposes. The importance of False Bay has been recognized by the South Australian Government and all cephalopods are now protected in the area.

The Giant Australian Cuttlefish is part of the cephalopod family and have 8 arms which it uses for grabbing, moving and camouflage. They also have 2 feeding tentacles that they use to strike with amazing speed. These are smooth along their length with a tentacular club covered with suckers. It uses these feeding tentacles to catch its prey which comprises of small fish, crustaceans and smaller cuttlefish. It eats its victims with its beak like mouth and tooth lined tongue.

Nikon D700, Sea & Sea housing, 15mm sigma fish eye lens, 1.4x TC, 2x Sea & Sea YS110 strobes, f/14, 1/60, ISO-400

The Sepia Apama has a porous internal shell called a cuttlebone. Apart from providing structural strength for the body, the cuttlebone is multi chambered allowing for exceptional buoyancy control. Swimming generally is done from the small fin fringe around the mantle however if threatened it can move surprisingly fast using jet propulsion by pumping water over their gills and out their funnel.

The Giant Australian Cuttlefish only breeds



over one season and their lifespan is only 18 months, dying after breeding. Wild dolphins are often seen by divers during mating season feeding on the dying cuttlefish. Some cuttlefish do not reach maturity to breed in the first season so will survive through to the next. These older cuttlefish are the largest in the next season.

Cuttlefish have been described as the chameleons of the sea. They use 3 layers of colour changing cells to put on some amazing electric flashing displays or to blend in with their environment. The first layer consists of chromataphores which sit just beneath the surface of the skin. The chromataphores consist of a central saccule cell that contains a colour pigment. This cell is attached to 15 to 25 muscles that stretch and contract to control the colour of the pigment. It has been estimated that there are up to 30,000 chromatophores per square inch, for photographers it's a bit like 30,000 dpi.

Under the chromatophores lies the next system of iridophores. This next layer functions by reflecting and refracting light and are responsible

(Above left) Cuttlefish Eye, Black Point, Whyalla. Ricoh GX8, Sea & Sea housing, SeaLife strobe, f/6.2, 1/50 sec, 11mm, ISO-250

(Above right) Mating Cuttlefish, Stony Point, Whyalla. Nikon d200, Sea & Sea housing, 12-24 nikkor lens @ 19mm, 2x Sea & Sea YS110 strobes, f/7.1, 1/40 sec, ISO-100

(Right) Giant Australian Cuttlefish, Songvaar Wreck, Wardang Island. SeaLife DC310, SeaLife Housing, Onboard flash, f/3.5, 1/80 sec, 8mm ISO-100

Nikon d200, Sea & Sea housing, 12-24 nikkor lens @ 19mm, 2x Sea & Sea YS110 strobes, f/7.1, 1/40 sec, ISO-100

Diver with Cuttlefish, Stony Point, Whyalla. Nikon d200, Sea & Sea housing, 10.5 nikkor fish eye lens, 2x Sea & Sea YS110 strobes, f/6.3, 1/60 sec, ISO-100

for the shimmering metallic green, blue and gold colours displayed by cuttlefish. The third layer consists of leucophores and they reflect whatever colour of light illuminates them.

During mating season females are outnumbered by males in a ratio of around 11 to 1. It is believed that males stay in the area for the whole season whilst the females come and go. The competition amongst males for the females attention is quite intense. Males put on beautiful flashing displays of dark colours that roll and pulse across their skin to warn off other males. They will also attack each other with their beaks and males are often seen with chunks taken out of them by rivals. It is incredible to watch smaller males imitate females in order to sneak in close to other females and quickly mate with them while the other larger males are still fighting.

The females will mate face to face with multiple males during the mating season and will hold several different packets of sperm, selecting up to three of these packets to fertilise her eggs.

Divers are able to get quite close to the cuttlefish during mating season. They are far too preoccupied with their sexual goings on to be concerned with large bubble blowing divers.

In recent years the numbers of Giant Australian Cuttlefish attending the aggregation has diminished significantly and has become cause for great concern amongst environmentalists and locals. Whilst there are several theories about why the numbers have declined, they all remain unsubstantiated and there are a number of studies being undertaken in this regard. Hopefully the situation can be rectified in the near future and the cuttlefish can return to their historical aggregation numbers.

Paul Macdonald
www.downunderpix.com

Nudibranch Photo Competition 2014

11th April 2014. NPC, Devon, UK.

Today, the winners of the inaugural Nudibranch Photo Competition, sponsored by Nauticam UK, have been announced.

The competition is the first entirely dedicated to these tiny sea slugs, whose variety and beautiful colouration enchants divers around the world. Despite its apparently narrow focus, the competition attracted close to 1000 entries from underwater photographers in 33 different countries. The competition was judged by Alex Mustard, Constantinos Petrinos and Bernard Picton.

The British category was won by Mark Webster from Cornwall, with a photo taken in Falmouth Bay. The World category was won by Italian Adriano Morettin, with a photo taken near Sorrento, Italy. Each category winner will receive Nauticam's innovative new Super Macro Converter lens, worth £400.

Mark Webster was also the runner up in the British category with another photo from his native Cornwall, while Norwegian Christian Skauge was runner up in the World category with a photo taken at the Gulen Dive Resort in Norway. They both win a copy of the new iBook "Nudibranchs of South West England".

After such a successful first edition, the competition will take place again next year.

Britain's leading nudibranch expert and curator of marine invertebrates at the National Museums Northern Ireland, Bernard Picton, said "Underwater photography is an invaluable tool in studying nudibranchs, just amongst the finalists of this competition there are four species, which may not even have scientific names yet."

British underwater photographer and marine biologist, Alex Mustard said "everyone has heard of sharks, whales and dolphins, but the Nudibranch Photo Competition was started to celebrate ocean biodiversity. Nudibranchs are found around the world, from the poles to the tropics, they come in all shapes and colours and are a great advert for the richness of life in the seas."

www.nudibranchphotocomp.com

UK First Place

Mark Webster

Species: Favorinus branchialis with eggs.
Location: St Anthony's Head, Falmouth Bay, Cornwall, UK.
Technical Details: Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 105mm micro, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 100 f25 1/60

Photographer's Notes:

There are numerous shallow fringing reefs around Falmouth Bay with undercut or overhanging faces which seem to attract nudibranchs in the spring season. The location of this reef is within a stone's throw of St. Anthony's light house and proved a very productive site during 2013 which was an unusually good year for nudibranchs in Cornish waters. Although I had seen this species before this was the first time I had seen it within the egg mass of the more common sea lemons and in fact there were several more on this large spiral of eggs which are out of shot. The reef is only 5-6m deep at high tide and there are often gentle swells here as it is right on the edge of Carrick Roads and the mouth of the Fal river and entrance to Falmouth harbor. The tidal movement in the

estuary provides nutrients for healthy sponge and hydroid colonies which in turn support the nudibranchs. The challenge here was to keep steady enough to focus in the swell whilst holding my breath as I shot up towards the subject and adjust the exposure to keep the detail in the white egg mass. There were four or five nudibranchs within the eggs but this one offered the best angle and a pleasing composition with the curve of the eggs framing the subject.

Judge's Notes:

A fascinating behaviour image of this nudibranch laying its eggs within the egg mass of a larger species. According to judge Bernard Picton, this colouration is very unusual for this species in the British Isles, being more typical of the Mediterranean, and this photo may be evidence of this colour variety starting to extend its distribution more northwards.

Mark will receive Nauticam's innovative new Super Macro Converter lens, worth £400 donated by Underwater Visions

www.uwvisions.com

UK Runner Up

Mark Webster

Species: Polycera quadrilineata.
Location: Minack Reef, Porthcurno Bay, Cornwall, UK.
Technical Details: Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 10-17mm FE zoom with 2X teleconverter, Subtronic Mini flash guns, ISO 200 f18 1/60.

Photographer's Notes:

The location of this shot is very close to Land's End on a small reef below the cliff top Minack theatre. The water depth is 8-10m at high tide so the reef top is completely covered by dense kelp forest. The kelp fronds support healthy colonies of bryozoan sea mats which are a favourite food of this species of nudibranch. This species both feeds and breeds on the kelp and I had often photographed the pairs of nudibranchs mating and individuals laying their eggs on this site. Occasionally we see these aggregations of nudibranchs on individual kelp fronds with a good cover of sea mat, but this particular season there seemed to have been a population explosion and I wanted to use a technique that would capture the numbers and show the density of the gathering. Using a 10-17mm fish eye zoom and 2X teleconverter creates a wide macro lens that will focus right down to a subject touching the

dome port when set at the 17mm end. All I then needed a calm sunny day and hopefully a large group feeding together for the composition I had imagined. Both kelp and photographer will move in even a slight swell and this will result in the lens constantly hunting in auto focus, so it is best to preset focus and then shoot as soon as your subject comes into focus whilst the increased depth of field of this lens combination will also assist in capturing a sharp image. I took many (possibly hundreds!) shots on different kelp fronds but this was the most pleasing composition which came closest to the image I had planned.

Judge's Notes:

An image that captures a fantastic event, an explosion of numbers of this species, with far too many individuals to count within the frame, more than we've ever seen before in a shot! We particularly like how the photographer has composed the image with the line of feasting nudis on a diagonal and the ungrazed seamat above them and the stripped leaf below. Shows how great nudibranch diving can be in the UK.

Mark wins a copy of the new iBook "Nudibranchs of South West England".

www.southwestnudis.co.uk

UK Highly Commended

Len Deeley

Species: Flabellina pedata
Location: St Abbs, Scotland, UK
Technical details: Nikon F90X, Aquatica housing, 105mm lens, Inon Z220 strobes. Film Juji. ISO and aperture not recorded

Photographer's Notes:

St Abbs has been a favourite dive location for many years and I have in the past gone up regularly for the Splash in. This image was taken in 1999 when I was still using a film camera. The image was taken at the Horn Dive site at St Abbs. The Horn is about 200 yards out from the harbour wall with an average depth of 20m. Currents can be variable to strong and it is quite exposed and best dived on a flood tide during fairly calm conditions. It consists of rock walls which are quite steep with numerous fissures. There is an abundance of life, including plumose anemones, dahlia anemones, dead men's fingers, etc. Surrounding it are rocks and boulders of various sizes and gravel. You can also find angler fish, wolf fish, scorpion fishes and more as well as schooling species.

Judge's Notes:

A beautiful portrait with pin point focus, made particularly special by the background green shining through in the image (presumably the result of the photographer taking a long-ish exposure). The emerald green not only clearly says British Seas, but is also a pleasing complementary colour to the nudibranch's pink and purple hues, making the photo particularly eye catching.

World First Place

Adriano Morettin

Species: Janolus cristatus
Location: Puolo Bay near Sorrento, Naples, South Tirrenian Sea, Italy.
Technical Details: Nikon D3X and Nikon 105 micro in Seacam housing, 1 flash Seacam 150 with Retra LSD snoot. 1/250 sec; f/22; ISO 100

Photographer's Notes:

The Janolus cristatus is one of the most beautiful nudibranchs of the Mediterranean Sea and I met this one in the Bay of Puolo in the Gulf of Naples, thanks to the help of the friends of Punta Campanella Diving Center of Massa Lubrense.

Fortunately I had my Retra LSD snoot that allowed me to take this picture which I had had in mind for a long time.

This photo is in fact a double exposure done in camera directly without switching off the camera and using the same lens.

This is the only way to get a RAW file from two or more consecutive shots.

The first shot of the nudibranch is made with the snoot Retra LSD applied to the flash Seacam 150 in order to isolate the subject with the background perfectly black.

The second exposure is made pointing up to the surface where it is sunny and changing the exposure and time of shooting.

The main difficulty is to run the two shots without the images overlaping and use the right shutter speed and aperture in both shots.

Judge's Notes:

A beautiful image of this nudibranch in a pleasing pose with its distinctive caruncle clearly visible too. But like so many great macro images, it is not just about the subject, but about turning the negative space in the frame into a positive feature. The out of focus sunburst in the background of this picture is beautiful and evokes a strong feeling of being underwater.

Adriano will receive Nauticam's innovative new Super Macro Converter lens, worth £400 donated by Underwater Visions

www.uwvisions.com

World Runner Up

Christian Skauge

Species: Cumanotus beaumonti
Location: Gulen Dive Resort north of Bergen on the Norwegian west coast
Technical Details: Nikon D300s in Nauticam housing, 2x Inon Z-240 strobes, Nikkor 105 mm macro + 1.4x Kenko TC @ f/32, 1/100 sec, ISO 200

Photographers Notes:

The Cumanotus beaumonti is considered a very rare species, not just in Norway but throughout its distribution area. This is partly due to the very specific feeding habits of this nudibranch – it feeds exclusively on the Corymorpha nutans hydroid.

This large hydroid is found in May-July on the Norwegian west coast, on the rocky sand-covered bottom. The Cumanotus nudibranchs climb the stalk and attach themselves close to the tentacles of the hydroid, and can remain there for a period of time. They are very well camouflaged and may be tricky to spot.

This particular specimen had exhausted its food source and was on its way down the stalk of the hydroid towards the bottom. Luckily the hydroid was placed near the edge of a rock and I was able to shoot upwards to frame just the nudibranch and the stalk with the water in the background.

Thanks to the settings used the background turned beautifully black allowing the beauty of the nudibranch and the exquisite lines on the hydroid to become the focus of attention. By slightly tilting the camera I was also able to achieve an appealing diagonal, making the image visually more interesting too.

Judge's Notes:

A rare species and shown it all its beauty in this graphically simple, but powerful composition, full of impact with the strong black background. Instantly eye catching, like a flower on a stem.

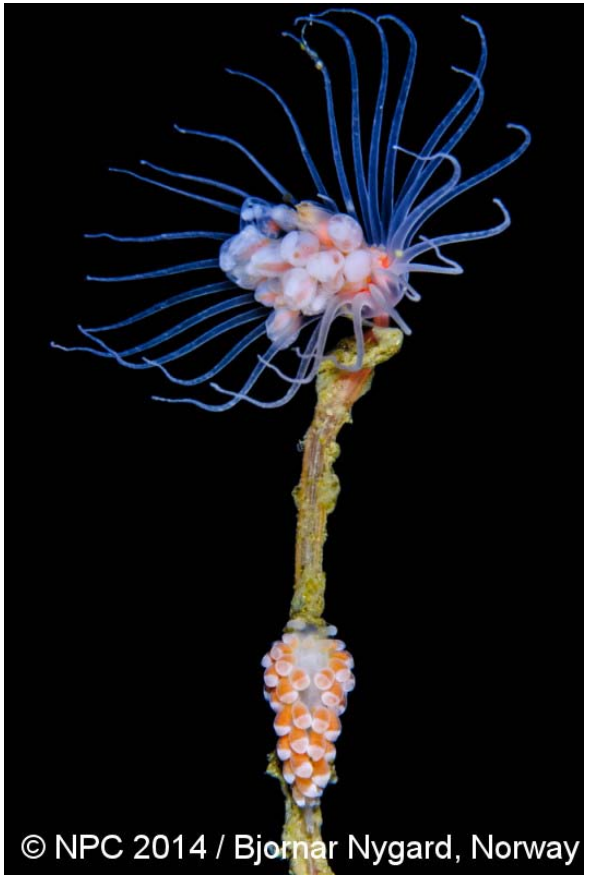
Christian wins a copy of the new iBook "Nudibranchs of South West England".

www.southwestnudis.co.uk

World Commended

Bjørnar Nygård

Species: Cuthona gymnota
Location: Gulen Dive Resort north of Bergen on the Norwegian west coast
Technical Details: Nikon D300 in Aquatica housing, 2x Inon Z-240 strobes, Nikkor 105 mm macro @ f/29, 1/160 sec, ISO 200



Photographers Notes:

I was doing a dive on the house reef and I went in the water with a plan to shoot the beautiful Cuthona gymnota. I've seen it here a couple of times before but never got the shot that I wanted.

After some searching in the place I had seen it before, I found a nice specimen climbing the stalk of a Tubularia indivisa hydroid. Luckily the hydroid was standing somewhat alone on the edge of a rock, giving me the opportunity to frame just the nudibranch on the stalk and the hydroid polyp with only the water as the background.

The settings used gave me a nice black background making the nudibranch and the hydroid pop out, and let them show off their beautiful colours.

Judge's Notes:

This is one of those shots that when I see it as I judge I say "Why was I not there? Why didn't I shoot that!" Well, I know why I wasn't there: too cold. But I will definitely try to "copy" this sublime composition in one of my shots. My warmest congratulations for achieving one of the more pleasing images of this competition as far as I am concerned.

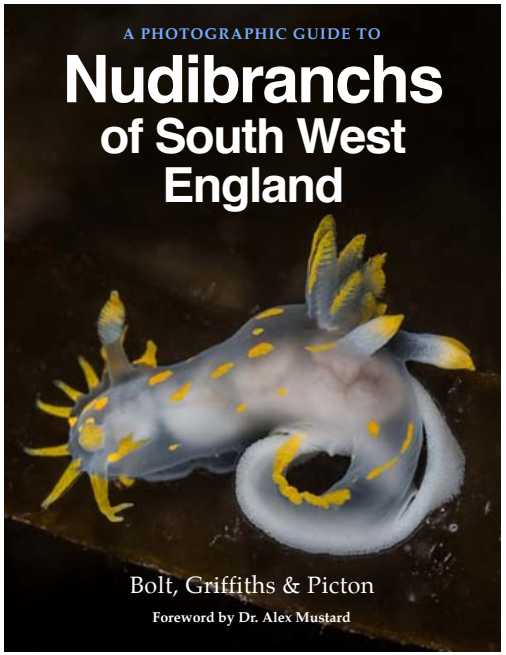
www.nudibranchphotocomp.com

iBook Review

Nudibranchs of South West England

by Bolt, Griffiths & Picton

by Peter Rowlands



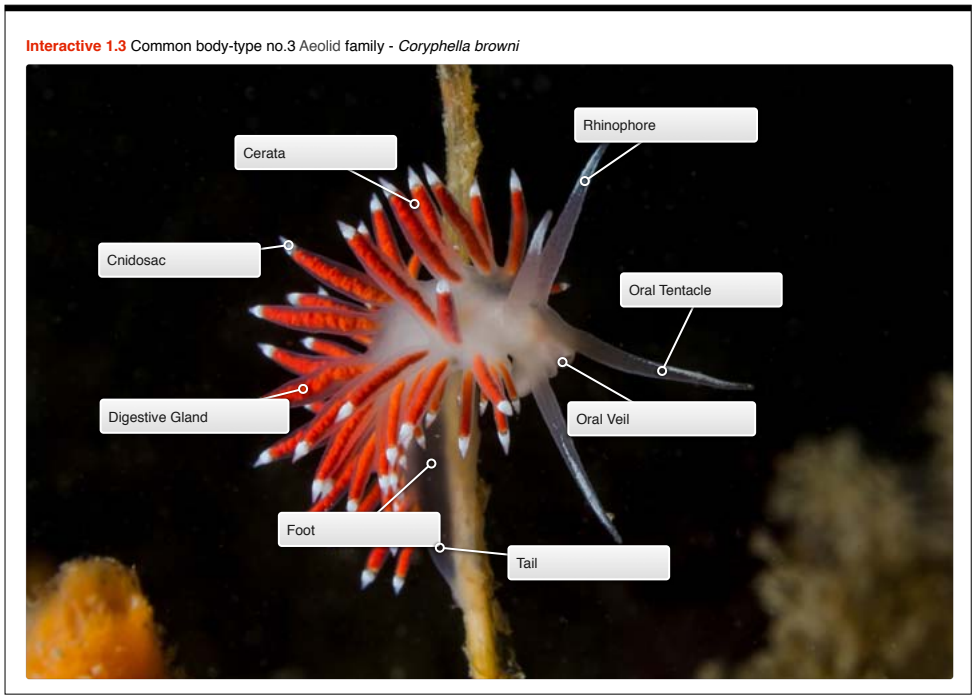
There can be no doubt that nudibranchs are the current 'cool'. Their seemingly endless variety and amazing colours and shapes make them the perfect macro subject. They also inhabit temperate and warm waters so they are available to shoot wherever you are!

Nudibranchs of South West England (SWN) is an iBook and is an excellent example of how this format is revolutionising the specialist subject publishing industry. It is secure and allows for updates as well as providing space for hundreds of high res images.

Nudibranch expert Bernard Picton has teamed up with nudibranch enthusiasts and underwater photographers Terry Griffiths and Dan Bolt. Making use of Bernard's unsurpassed knowledge and Terry & Dan's 50 years of diving in the south west is a powerful combination which has created a completely new and up-to-date reference guide.

SWN is a very well paced iBook and feels very inclusive. It would have been easy to blind the reader with Latin science but it still manages to impart that important information without a feeling of having to learn so much before getting anywhere. The 114 page iBook describes more than 60 of the species which inhabit these temperate waters

SWN is also a very helpful iBook in that early on it tells you how, when and where to find these small creatures – very useful information to get you off to a productive start. Then to be even more helpful they offer detailed hints on how to photograph them!



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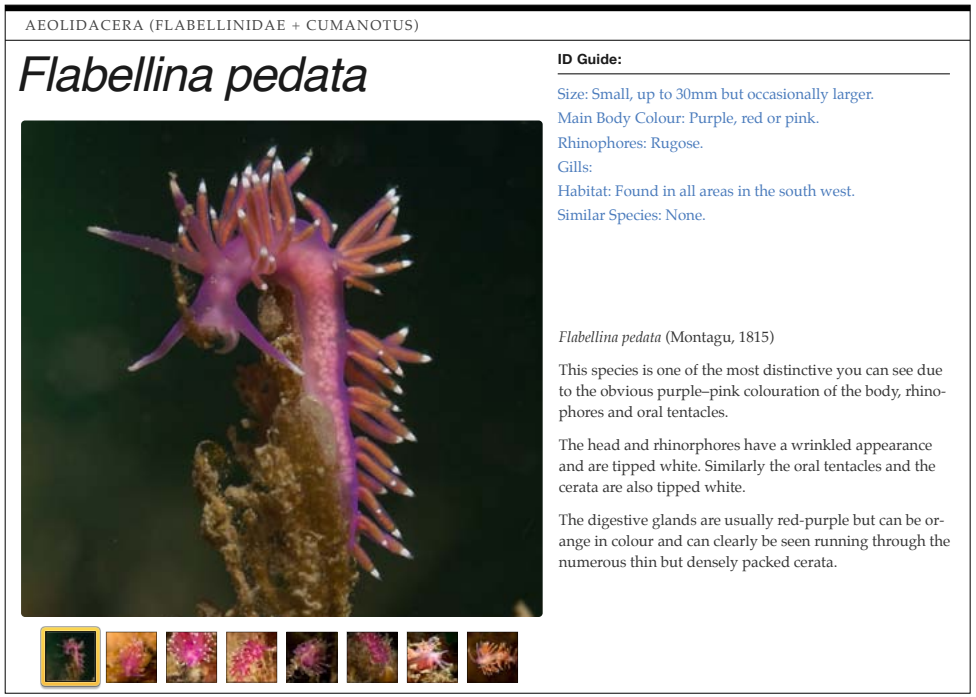

The bulk of the iBook is then taken up with detailed descriptions of the species and to aid identification each page has several images to make accurate identification a breeze. With authors such as these it goes without saying that the quality of the images is consistently excellent.

There is a powerful search facility but, personally, the images were the best form of quick ID. Finally there is a neat chapter describing similar species such as sea slugs and sea hares several of which look like they should be nudibranchs but actually aren't!

Finally a nice touch is the My Nudi Checklist which allows you to tick off the species you have seen and photograped

Currently you can only read SWN on Apple iPads and all Apple computers running OS X Mavericks. Nudibranchs of South West England costs $15.99 or £9.99 which, for such a helpful and informative publication, is an absolute steal.

www.southwestnudis.co.uk

Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com

Shooting Nudibranchs

by Dan Bolt

In recent years we have witnessed a rise in the popularity of nudibranchs amongst the scuba diving community, both as a photographic subject and from a natural history point of view. Now that underwater photographers and non photographers alike are seeing these little creatures with a new understanding and renewed interest in their many fascinating forms and behaviours, we are also seeing a rise in tempting photo competitions with dedicated nudibranch categories. In fact very recently I had the privilege to see almost 900 nudibranch photos submitted from photographers in 33 countries to the nudibranch Photo Competition which I was involved in running. And perhaps the most telling sign of this rise in popularity is Alex Mustard's cover shot of a nudibranch on a UK diving magazine back in January - not a diver, drysuit or bit of shiny tech diving kit anywhere to be seen; just a gorgeous Polycera quadrilineata.

Feeding into, and feeding from, this popularity are numerous macro-specific photographic trips and one or two nudibranch safaris being run around the world. A hugely popular trip based in Europe is the Gulen Dive Resort Nudibranch safari in Norway. This isn't for the feint-hearted as water temperatures can be as low as 2 degrees C, but the clear waters and sheer numbers of slugs (both species and abundance) draws many scientists and underwater photographers to the annual event.

There is a great deal of cross-over between nudibranch photographers and marine scientists who share the same interest. The photographers gain insights into the behaviour, location and abundance of many species; and the scientists get access to many detailed images and greater number of in-water observations that would normally not be possible.

Many photographers develop their own favourite style or technique for shooting in different situations; quite often this is led by the development of new kit, or simply what is considered a fashionable 'look' at the time. Taking images of nudibranchs is no different and their many shapes, sizes and forms make them suitable subjects for a variety of techniques.

The most basic approach is to see them as a traditional macro subject and apply tried & tested rules of engagement: macro lens, high shutter speed, small aperture and strobes. Compact camera users need not feel left out, as many models have superb macro capabilities which can be further enhanced using additional close-up 'wet' lenses.

Coryphella_lineata - Olympus E-PL5 & 45mm macro. PT-EP10 housing. 1/200th, f/13, iso400, 2xYS-D1. Two strobes slightly above eye-line pointing inward & equally powered. Manual exposure.

Moving beyond this method can open up a whole new creative world to the slug shooter. If you like velvety-black backgrounds you might want to try using snoots on your strobes, using 'inward-lighting' techniques (where you aim your strobes back in towards the camera & use the very edge of the light cone to light the subject), and cutting your kit down to just a single handle and strobe to facilitate getting very close to your subject.

Going in the opposite direction and keeping some ambient light in your shots will often involve careful control of the strobe as TTL metering sometimes tends to overexpose in this situation so using your strobe in manual can yield much better results.

If you are shooting in temperate waters where ambient light levels are very much lower, keeping an adequate depth-of-field by using your aperture will necessitate using higher ISO settings & lower shutter speeds to let that light into your image. Playing to the strengths of your kit in these situations always pays dividends; if your image stabilization is better than your high ISO performance, then use slower shutter speeds, if not then ISO should be your tool of choice.

Taking a different view of nudibranchs is perhaps where you'll start to see the greatest opportunities for amazing photos. Observation can be the key to getting interesting

(Top left) Eubranchus_farrani - Olympus E-PL1, PT-EP01 housing & 18-42mm @ 42mm +10Subsee. 1/125th, f/18, iso200, 1xYS-D1. Single strobe above port pointing slightly upward.

(Top right) Facelina_auriculata - Olympus E-PL5 & 45mm macro. PT-EP10 housing. 1/250th, f/16, iso200. Two strobes pointing out & from both sides of port, equally powered.

(Right) Polycera_quadrilineata_1.jpg - Olympus E-PL5 & 45mm macro. PT-EP10 housing. 1/250th, f/13, iso200, 2xYS-D1. Single strobe above port pointing slightly downward.

Habitat - Photo courtesy of Terry Griffiths - Nikon D7000 & 60mm macro. 1/1250th, f/13, iso200, 2xZ240

(Tritonia_hombergi - Olympus E-PL5 & 45mm macro. PT-EP10 housing. 1/250th, f/13, iso200, 1xYS-D1 snooted.

behaviour photos and as these critters can move surprisingly quickly, take some practice shots before you carefully approach the subject so you are ready for the action.

Almost every aspect of a nudibranch's life can be used for behaviour photography; aggregations, mating, egg-lying, feeding, cresting a pebble or frond of weed and sometimes even swimming in mid-water give plenty of chances if you know where & when to look.

Close-focus wide-angle is another technique which can be applied to the larger species of nudis. Again, compact camera users are not disadvantaged because many wide-angle or fisheye wet lenses have very good close focusing abilities. The most problematic aspect of a CFWA nudibranch shot is getting the light to the subject; the ability to reduce the size of your camera rig and get your strobes as tight to your port as possible is the key. This approach can be used to include a diver in the shot, or perhaps more interestingly place the nudibranch in its habitat - often they feed and live in very colourful and interesting places which can be used to make beautiful images.

As is common practice amongst the majority of underwater photographers, a respect for nudibranchs and their habitat is paramount. This is not just for the benefit of the slugs themselves because if you adopt a sensible and conservation-minded attitude in the water then your images will benefit too.

Many species of nudibranch live on mucky/silty sites so poor finning technique or buoyancy will disturb the sediment and ruin your photographic opportunities.

In every corner of the globe where slugs are found, using just one finger to steady yourself while keeping your body/fins away from the reef/wall/sea-bed should be your standard approach. Just because you can't see a slug or it's food or eggs doesn't mean they're not there!

If you shoot for competitions, nudibranchs are a surprisingly versatile subject in their own right and you don't even need a dedicated category to benefit from their many forms. Lots of competitions have 'abstract', 'behaviour' and 'portrait' categories which all lend themselves to photos of nudis. Applying the techniques discussed previously you've also got opportunities in 'traditional macro', 'super macro' and 'wide-angle' categories too.

Sometimes competitions throw up oddly themed sections to test the entrants creative abilities. Themes like 'reflections', or 'yellow' and 'camouflage' can all be useful to the nudibranch photographer if you know your species and have the ability to go & find them!

(Left) Polycera_quadrilineata - Olympus E-PL1 & 12-50mm @ 50mm. PT-EP01 housing. 1/160th, f/14, iso200, 1xYS-D1. Single strobe above port pointing slightly downward.

(Right) Flabellina_pedata - Olympus E-PL1 & 12-50mm @ 50mm. PT-EP01 housing. 1/125th, f/16, iso320, 1xYS-D1. Single strobe above port pointing slightly upward.

If in-camera manipulation is permitted you can try your hand at a double (or more) exposure that places a close-up shot of a nudibranch onto a cleverly exposed sun-ball or diver silhouette. Tricky to pull off well; but stunning if done properly.

The increasing appeal of nudibranchs is perhaps, in part, down to the fact that there are still new species waiting to be discovered. Even in the most popular diving destinations in the world, every now and then something new pops up and gets the scientists, and photographers, all excited.

In completing the necessary dives for my recent iBook on nudibranchs of south west England, my buddy (and fellow author) Terry Griffiths and I stumbled upon a potential 4 new species whilst diving sites we had be visiting for many years. It will take some time, and many more dives, to confirm, but the fact illustrates that there's still so much more out there to be discovered.

Dan Bolt
www.underwaterpics.co.uk

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 ovnoroaminrobin@hotmail.com~~

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~~The strobe is 3 years old in good condition~~

~~All sockets in S6~~

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~~Rudolf Sollböck~~

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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]

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Techniques & Tools

by Dr Alex Tattersall

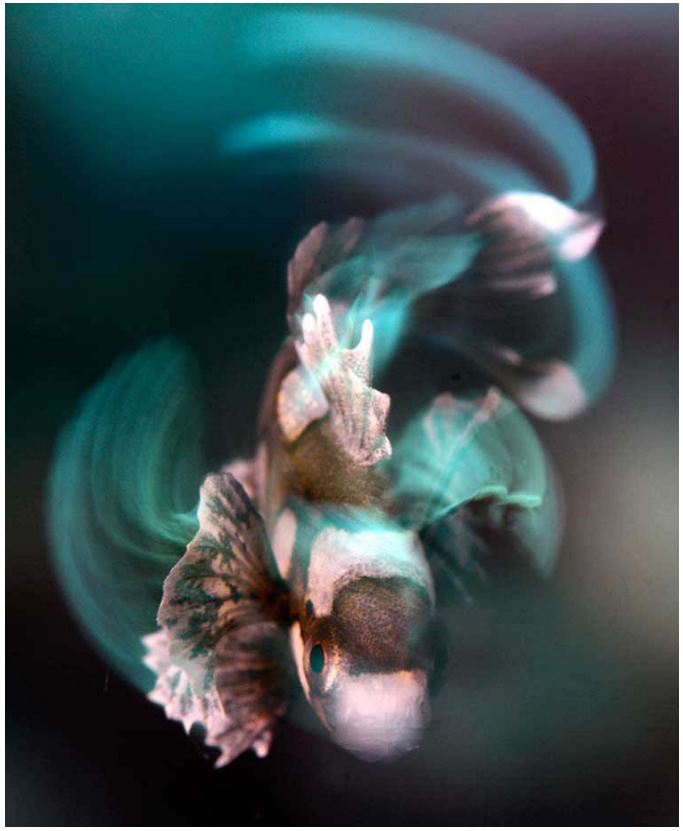
Techniques

I recently returned from leading a macro photo workshop in Puerto Galera, the Philippines, where benign conditions, shallow diving and splendid subject matter (special thanks to dive guides Kris and Taxe at Atlantis Dive Resorts) gave us all ample opportunity to practise our creative techniques.

As my default settings on DSLR for macro have always been around the F22, 1/200, ISO 320, giving consistent results, I had to make a conscious effort to step outside of the comfort zone. Whilst the techniques I am going to discuss below are not in any way revolutionary and I'm quite sure the more experienced of readers among you will have experimented with them long ago, they were new to me and I was glad to push the boundaries of my own photography further. In this part of the article, I plan to cover slow shutter speeds, shallow depth of field and creative negative space. In the second part, I will look at tools for creating original and memorable images.

Slow shutter speeds and panning

I had previously tried slow shutter speeds on the fast-moving feeding mackerel of Marsa Alam but only recently realised why these had all failed in my eyes. All the photos looked like the fish were swimming backwards. The reason was down to the synchronisation of the flash on the 1st curtain, in other words, the flash going off when the shutter opened. The effect then was that the flash would fire and freeze the movement of the fish, the fish would then move, and the movement would appear in front of the fish, giving the impression that the fish were moving backwards. Switching to rear curtain sync resolved this and allowed for the movement to happen before the subject was frozen by the strobes.



This technique warrants further exploration with other fast moving subjects.
Nikon D7100, Nauticam NA-D7100, 105mm VR macro, 1/10, F22, ISO 320, 2x INON Z240.

Inspired by a shot I had seen by Christian Loader, I was on the lookout for a juvenile multispotted sweetlips and we came across one on the second day of our trip. I bedded in, determined to spend the next hour with this frustrating little fish, to get the shot that was in my head. Still a work in progress but the subject matter suits this technique perhaps better than any other I can think of. My results are here, the swoosh of the fins being captured by the slow shutter speed with the flash freezing the subject at the end of the motion.

Nikon D7100, Nauticam NA-D7100, 105mm VR macro, 1/10, F22, ISO 320, 2x INON Z240.

At the end of a long dive in Anilao, I saw an anemone playing host to a large number of small fish. With a slight current running, the fish were all lined up nicely, in a perfect formation for me to try out some panning. Again, this was a new technique for me. Starting at the tail, I released the shutter and then panned the lens down the length of the fish and then the flash fired on the rear curtain. I quickly realised that the shot was much more effective when the camera was tilted on the diagonal so I continued in this way until I got a shot with which I was pleased.

Slow shutter speed is certainly a technique that I will be playing with more this year.

Backgrounds and negative space

If I look back over my own photographic development in the last eight years, I see an interesting trend which I also see in many of the photographers I work with. When I began, I was very subject driven, almost stamp collector-like, and would take a photo of a fish I found interesting with little regard for the attractiveness of its surroundings. As I collected images of different subjects, when I came across that subject again, I was able to invest more time and effort into trying to create a more attractive image, this being as much in the form of an interesting look or behaviour from the subject as in thinking about the beauty of its surroundings.

Negative space for me now is all-important. So important in fact, that I will regularly pass over a poorly positioned, rare subject if I can find a common subject in a particularly good location 'negative-spacewise'. Take the common pyjama nudi for example, a subject I will usually pass-over as they tend to be in difficult to reach, non-photogenic places and have been photographed ad-nauseum. The image shows the subject in a photogenic background worthy of time investment to achieve a pleasing shot.

What pleases me most about negative space and backgrounds is that when you have these in mind when taking a shot, you will know that the image you are creating has not ever been shot before and will not ever be shot again. Close-up portraits of whip coral shrimp for example do little to excite me now as I'm quite convinced that most if not every angle of this rather one dimensional critter has been covered. When negative space becomes a major feature of the image, creativity can be unlimited.

Lovely coral heads make for an excellent multidimensional background, this slug is worth the time investment. Nikon D7100, Nauticam NA-D7100, 105mm VR macro, 1/200, F22, ISO 320, 2x INON Z240.

By way of example, anemones provide some of the most photogenic of backgrounds, giving shapes, beauty and depth to an image. The close-up portrait of the porcelain crab in the first image is one that could easily be imitated; the undulations of the anemone in the second image makes it special. That is what I now seek to achieve with my images as far as possible.

The same anemone offers a richness of photo opportunities, framing subjects against the textures and colours of the skirt. The image below demonstrates how the negative space is as important as the subject. Here also the shadow of the anemonefish and the texture on the anemone skirt were achieved by unbalanced light, i.e. more strobe output on the right side with minimum output from the left.

A portrait of a porcelain crab, nice subject, nice negative space, but nothing very original. Nikon D7100, Nauticam NA-D7100, 105mm VR macro, 1/200, F22, ISO 320, 2x INON Z240.

Undulations and texture make for an original image. Nikon D7100, Nauticam NA-D7100, 105mm VR macro, 1/200, F22, ISO 320, 2x INON Z240.

Shallow depth of field

If we have full manual settings on our camera, we have the luxury of being about to control the depth of field we want in our images. Again, nothing revolutionary about this, but for me, this was an exercise in the rarely practised. All things being equal, adjusting aperture settings to gradually open the aperture (decrease the F-stop number) will gradually decrease the depth of field in the image. Note that depth of field in images will also decrease as magnification increases.

Manipulating depth of field allows us to use areas of bokeh to add interest to the image. It has the added benefit of allowing us to blur an unattractive background, of key importance to keen 'muck divers' like myself. The filefish below at Giant Clam muck divesite, Puerto Galera, was positioned against a very unattractive background as the first image shows.

By using a shallow depth of field both through F-stop changes and by increasing proximity I was able to blur this out and create a more attractive photo. Needless to say, with narrow depth of field, precise positioning of the focus point and a steady technique are both paramount to success. I used single point autofocus on the back button for this shot and moved the focus point manually to the top left third where I wanted the eye to be positioned.

Shallow depth of field can make the same subject and background into a very different image. Compare the images below and the effect that DOF has on the resultant impact of the shots. I'll be trying more of this but with greater mindfulness as to the role of bokeh in each of the shots.

An unattractive background calls for some creative technique.
Nikon D7100, Nauticam NA-D7100, 105mm VR macro, 1/200, F22, ISO 320, 2x INON Z240.

Opening the aperture and increasing magnification can help blur unattractive negative space.
Nikon D7100, Nauticam NA-D7100, 105mm VR macro, 1/200, F9, ISO 320, 2x INON Z240.

(Right) Closed aperture results in subject and much of the background in focus
Nikon D7100, Nauticam NA-D7100, 105mm VR macro, 1/200, F25, ISO 320, 2x INON Z240.

(Far right) Opening the aperture has a very different effect on the image.
Nikon D7100, Nauticam NA-D7100, 105mm VR macro, 1/200, F9, ISO 320, 2x INON Z240.

Detail on imperial shrimp.
Nikon D7100, Nauticam NA-D7100, 105mm VR macro, Nauticam SuperMacroConvertor, 1/200, F29, ISO 320, 2x INON Z240.

Uncropped. At full magnification with both eyes in plane of focus. The SMC, like any strong dioptre, merits good thought about the bokeh areas of the image which can absolutely make or break an image.
Nikon D7100, Nauticam NA-D7100, 105mm VR macro, Nauticam SuperMacroConvertor, 1/200, F29, ISO 320, 2x INON Z240.

Tools

I currently have two favourite tools for creating memorable images; the first for increasing magnification and the second for varying light.

Magnification

For magnification, I dedicated this trip to Nauticam's new supermacro convertor SMC.

I had previously used both F.I.T. and Subsee diopters both of which I rate highly. These still have pride of place in my macro toolbox since the SMC occupies a place of its own and is an advanced tool not suitable for all experience levels of underwater photographer.

It is a very powerful dioptre which requires competent diving skills and some thought in terms of subject selection. I used it with the Nikon 105mm VR lens on the D7100 and, as a hardened 'macro-head' found it a pleasure to use.

Distance to subject was far enough as not to cause an issue with lighting, and provided I was able to stabilise myself adequately in front of the subject the very high contrast helped focusing for both camera and photographer.

Focus was set to back button, mostly with AF-S single point auto-focus, the point being positioned in the desired part of the frame before setting up the shot. I would often focus on a static object close to the subject with the rear lever. When I'd achieved the magnification I wanted, I moved into the subject slowly and rocked gently forwards and backwards until I had the subject in focus in the viewfinder. Needless to say, a magnifying, enhanced viewfinder assisted this hugely.

The SMC will give a good range but as the camera lens approaches 1:1 magnification, the subject becomes

Nauticam SMC with mid-range zoom lens on mirrorless camera – Whip coral shrimp – with thanks to Doug Anderson
Olympus OMD-EM5, 12-50mm lens, Nauticam NA-EM5, Nauticam SuperMacroConvertor, 1/200, F11, ISO 320, 2x INON Z240.

greatly magnified with little distortion or chromatic aberration visible even at these high magnifications. Depth of field of course becomes noticeably narrower at these magnifications so good control and steadiness of the camera are absolutely paramount. This as much for the quality of the image, as for the protection of the marine environment.

It is however important to note that the SMC will not work well with all lens combinations. It works very well with compact cameras such as the Sony RX100, most midrange zoom lenses on DSLR and micro 4/3 (such as the 12-50mm Olympus kit lens), and longer macro lenses. Shorter macro lenses such as the Sony 30mm and the Nikon 60mm AF-S macro lenses are not among those that give an optimum performance with the Nauticam SMC.

For those fascinated with tiny detail like myself, the SMC coupled with a good sensor and lens offers discoveries not visible to the eye. New and interesting photo opportunities abound.

Making the mundane special.
Nikon D7100, Nauticam NA-D7100, 105mm VR macro, Retra LSD prime, 1/200, F29, ISO 320, 1x INON Z240.

Lighting

My favourite toy for controlling the light shape at present is undoubtedly the Retra LSD Prime. Although it is quite a heavy piece of equipment, it is thoughtfully and robustly made and significantly easier to use than another other snoot I have tried previously. The focus light from the strobe is concentrated, making it easy to see where the light will fall in the frame. With a long arm it is relatively straightforward to get

Nikon D7100, Nauticam NA-D7100, 105mm VR macro, Retra LSD prime, 1/200, F29, ISO 320, 1x INON Z240.

Magnification and precise lighting to isolate one polyp.
Nikon D7100, Nauticam NA-D7100, 105mm VR macro, Retra LSD prime, 1/200, F29, ISO 320, 1x INON Z240.

Scorpionfish with LSD Prime
Nikon D7100, Nauticam NA-D7100, 60mm macro, Retra LSD prime, 1/200, F29, ISO 320, 1x INON Z240.

pleasing results.

What I love about this type of technique is how it can turn the mundane into the truly special. Nudibranchs on unattractive sandy backgrounds can breathe new life with the LSD prime.

The last two shots demonstrate how, with some thought, precise lighting can produce interesting results.

The LSD prime comes with several different shape inserts to vary the size and shape of the light emanating from the strobe. One of the options is a dual hole which suits a static fish with two distinct eyes such as the scorpionfish.

I hope this brief demonstration of the SMC and LSD show something of their potential in the creative process. They are both tools that will always be traveling with me on underwater photo trips and workshops in the future.

If you fancy exploring some of these techniques with me, my next workshop is to Manado and Lembeh, 16-26th March 2015, some spaces are still available with bookings through Oonasdivers.

Dr Alex Tattersall
www.uwvisions.com

www.oonasdivers.com/workshops/931-underwater-photography-workshop

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Gardens of the Queen, Cuba

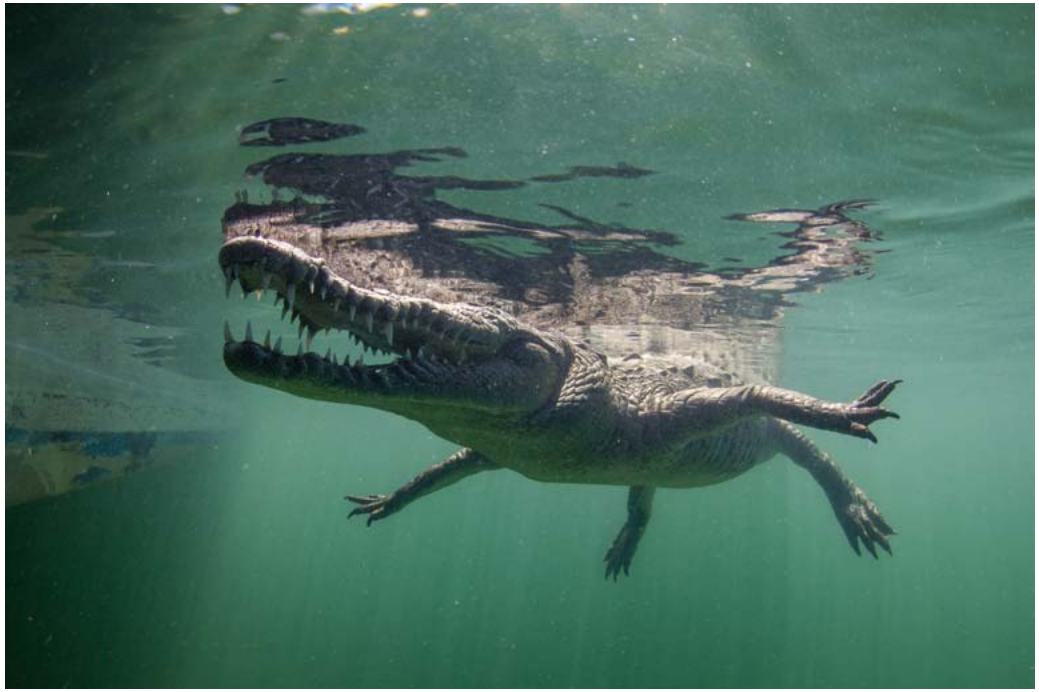
by Joanna Lentini

It's late in the evening and my eyelids have had all they can take for the day. I'm struggling to keep them open but they're leadened down from a mix of jet lag and dive exhaustion.

I finally give in to the pressure and shut my eyes. As I do so images of sharks flash through the darkness of my mind. And as I fade deeper the images linger longer, the lighting softens and their brown skin begins to glitter from the afternoon sun. The water is a brilliant shade of blue and as I start to float away in it I hear the wind howling outside and awaken. My eyes open widely and dart around the room before collapsing closed again. This whole process repeats itself several times until I eventually fade away into the ocean of my mind.

The next morning I wake up to the regular 7am knock at the door with an offering of coffee and juice. Now that's service! I take a quick stretch, and hop in the shower. As I stand there with the water raining over me it happens again. I can't close my eyes without seeing images of sharks. I find it amusing and quietly laugh to myself. Since I first landed in Havana my senses have been overloaded. From the unfamiliar sights, sounds and tastes I encountered in the city to the schools of Silkies and Caribbean Reef Sharks I met on my first dives this adventure has started off on a whole new level for me. And I still have seven days to go!

Having had an interesting night of dreams and restless sleep, I decide to stick with the 10-17mm fisheye lens as the prior day. I'm half asleep still and don't want to take any chances with changing ports. And besides, the 16-35mm isn't really necessary. The wildlife here is not at all camera-shy. I open my bedroom door and head down the steps with a slight bellyache. I'm not sure if it's anxiety, hunger or both. But I do know saltwater



(Top) American Saltwater Crocodile posing for the camera. Canon 60D in Nauticam Housing. F11, 1/125, ISO 125, Tokina 10-17mm @11mm. Available light

(Right) Just one of the hundreds of beautiful sea fans that were scattered across the ocean floor at La Puntica dive site. Canon 60D in Nauticam Housing. F13, 1/250, ISO 250. Tokina 10-17mm @10mm. One Inon Z240 strobe.

crocodiles are on the agenda for the day and well to be honest, I've got some mild apprehensions. It's one thing to talk about it and it's quite another story to quietly slip into the murky, green water to then sneak attack it with your camera. But hey, that's the plan.

Last night, while enjoying some mojitos on the deck, I was introduced to Franco, the resident 5-meter long American saltwater crocodile. Unfortunately, from what I was told, Franco is too shy to let photographers near him. Somehow this formidable giant is actually afraid of us! Still knowing he was out there with others of his kind was a sobering thought as I prepared myself for some mangrove exploration.

As is usually the case in the Gardens of the Queen, the weather today is mild, the sea is calm and the sun is out. The water is slightly warmer (27 C) for this time of year (February) and as a result the group has brought with them everything from 2.5mm wetsuits to full drysuits. Each diver seems to have very different experience levels but what's interesting is it doesn't really matter here. There really are no currents and the ones you do encounter are mild enough for beginners.

As we gear up I hear, "Niñooooooooo! . . . Niiiiiiñoooooo" . . . This is the call our guide Noel used throughout the week to attract a number of more juvenile Crocs who were affectionately referred to as "Niño" (Spanish for child). Amazingly, almost always, after some brief calling and clapping, one or all of about three juveniles would come swimming over to our boat like trained puppy dogs. From there we would calmly enter the water one by one and get up close and personal with these seemingly docile and curious creatures. My experiences photographing these amazing animals completely dismissed any prejudice and apprehensions I may have had. As the last person returns to the boat, the engine starts and the boat slowly drifts away; I think to myself just how grateful I am to be in this place. With only 350 divers allowed in this marine reserve per year I feel quite privileged to be one of them.

Jardines de la Reina, or Gardens of the Queen, is still a little-known piece of heaven positioned between Cuba and the Cayman Islands in the Caribbean Sea. Christopher Columbus gave this beautiful archipelago its name to honour the Queen of Spain. Having realized its beauty and need for protection the government of Cuba established it as a National Park back in 1996. This of course equates to a limited number of visitors, pristine conditions and abundant marine life. Some might say it serves as a time capsule for what coral reefs of the world looked like 50 years ago, or more importantly, what we wished they all still looked like today. The sites are bright, healthy, and teeming with marine wild life. BIG wildlife! However, with close to 840 sq. miles of cays and islands to protect, protection is a daunting task.

Saltwater Crocodile scurrying away through the sea grass as a larger saltwater croc decided to make an appearance.
Canon 60D in Nauticam Housing . F10, 1/200, ISO 200. Tokina 10-17mm @10mm. Inon Z240 strobe.

There is just one dive operator in the park called Avalon and due to unfortunate political concerns around government boat travel, aside from the Avalon staff, Cubans are not permitted to visit the marine park. And for the foreigners who do get to visit getting there is a bit of an adventure. From Havana you have six hours of land travel followed by another 3-6 hours by speedboat or ferry. But don't let that stop you. The trip is well worth it!

We were picked up from our accommodations (Hotel Parque Central) in Old Havana at 4am. Without a doubt, this is the area

where you want to get a room booked. The main attractions of the city will be at your doorstep. The luxury bus ride was smooth and made a few stops throughout the rugged countryside.

Six hours after you set out, you'll arrive in the tiny port town of Jucaro on the southern coast. Once you get clearance from the coast guard you'll hop on the boat and be on your way to Jardines in no time. I've heard the sea can be bumpy at times but I only experienced a little bit of that (on the way back). For the most part, my three hour speedboat crossing was smooth sailing. I was even able to catch up on some much-needed sleep after some long Havana nights.

Upon arrival, we are welcomed on board the Tortuga by friendly and casual staff who quickly get us organized and fed. No diving for today. The mission is to rest up for an intense eight days of diving to follow. There are a couple of options regarding accommodations, but of course these decisions need to be made well in advance.

Avalon offers several live-aboard options, however, our photographic expedition was booked onto the Tortuga. This retired houseboat is the hub of Avalon's very own water world and the majority of your diving is at most fifteen minutes away by small powerboat. It has been permanently fixed in place and strategically positioned in a channel surrounded by mangroves for added protection. This floating hotel never moves and is likely the best option for any one who has issues with seasickness. We make our way up the steps to our rooms, which are clean, spacious, air-conditioned and internet accessible via free WiFi (a true treat in this remote location given how expensive and difficult this was to find in Havana).

Strangely, in what has to be considered one of

the world's true diving meccas, most visitors come here to fish rather than dive. No worries, it is all catch and release. From what I was told, Avalon actually makes more money per fisherman than diver! The "big three" goals for sports fishermen are bonefish, tarpon, and permit. For now, we're in the minority here, and care far more to see the marine life beneath the waves. This only adds to the allure as our group are the only divers in the entire archipelago. Exclusivity at its finest!

As for dive service, our guides were true consummate professionals. Our group was divided into two and I was placed with Noel Lopez Fernandez. He has been working in Jardines for seventeen years and prior to that he was a cameraman for Cuban television. He's an incredible and ingenious underwater photographer who has learned to make do with what equipment is available in this remote location. Shooting with a Canon 60D inside a Nikon housing which he retrofitted himself is testament to that. The other group's guide, Andres, is actually a marine biologist, and although I didn't get to dive with him, I was able to pick his brain over dinner and hear

This school of Silky sharks seemed to enjoy cuddling up to each other. There were times throughout these dives when I thought another diver was accidentally hitting me with their fins. It took me a while to realize the fins that were "hitting" me weren't made of rubber.
Canon 60D in Nauticam Housing . F11, 1/250, ISO320. Inon Z240 strobe. Tokina 10-17mm @10mm

After an hour with a dozen plus Caribbean Reef sharks, some were kind enough to escort us back to our boat. They just didn't seem ready to say goodbye! Canon 60D in Nauticam Housing. F7.1, 1/160, ISO 200 Tokina 10-17mm @14mm Inon Z240 strobe.

One afternoon we found ourselves snorkeling into this tight waterway where we were surrounded by the mangrove on all sides, including from above. Canon 60D in Nauticam Housing. F7.1, 1/125, ISO 250. Tokina 10-17mm @10mm. No Strobe

some interesting dive stories.

Both men were professional, knowledgeable, and passionate about marine life and they seemed to truly enjoy being in the company of fellow divers for a change. I was surprised to find out that my guide, Noel, still logs every dive and during one of our dives he hit his eight-thousandth! At that stage you would think he had seen every nook and cranny of Jardines, however, it turns out they have only scratched the surface of this huge archipelago. In fact, Noel confirmed quite enthusiastically that he still sees something new and interesting almost every day. With fifty dive sites already, it was exciting to learn that new sites and species are being discovered all of the time.

The marine life these guys introduced us to seemed like something out of an underwater fairy tale and the photographic opportunities were endless. On our first day of diving at Cueva del Pulpo, we were greeted by a school of Caribbean reef sharks before we even entered the water. At first I'll admit I was a little uneasy doing a backward roll with so many circling the boat. But I quickly learned they were not a threat at all.

In photographing these specific sharks we were always guided down to the ocean floor between twenty and thirty meters. Apparently they can be a bit frisky at the surface with a bait box around. Aside from the occasional shark sneaking up on me (and one crazy Nurse shark) I felt completely at ease around them. I tried shooting with my new 16-35mm lens but it didn't work too well for me. I had considered as much but this was my first time diving with such large, confident sharks.

On our second dive, the 16-35mm seemed to work better with the Goliath Grouper. While getting close enough wasn't the issue, I wasn't particularly keen on getting too cozy

with him so quickly. That territorial chomp they make really got my attention and I've heard they can do some real damage. But of course my 10-17mm fisheye would have been the best bet if I had had the interest in getting closer.

Later on in the trip as I grew more comfortable with him I was able to get some nice shots with the fisheye. I learned that it isn't the goliath grouper as much as it is his smaller friends, the Black Groupers, that you need to pay particular attention to. They were probably the most aggressive creatures we met on the trip, coming after me a few times.

After lunch I decided to switch to the 10-17mm for the Silkies as I was told they would be coming in even closer than the Caribbean Reef's. Although known for some displays of aggression in other parts of the world here this variety are referred to as "brown sweeties" for their non-threatening almost affectionate disposition. And I'd have to say these guys lived up to their nickname and quickly became the highlight of my time in Jardines. Their friendly curiosity was incredible and I cherished every minute photographing and documenting their behavior at the Pipin dive site.

With schooling sharks, curious crocs, and goliath groupers abound, for me wide angle was the way to go

in Jardines, and my Tokina 10-17mm fisheye was undoubtedly my "go to" lens given all of the close encounters with such large marine life. However, if smaller critters are more your thing, don't be discouraged, as Jardines has it all. I simply had my mind (and lens) focused on the wide-angle images and found it difficult to deviate.

On one the last dives of the trip at La Puntica, I came across a large assortment of brightly colored, reef fish swaying in the shallow fields of dancing sea fans and hiding around the giant coral formations. With the sun low in the sky the beams of light seemed to braid their way through the water, reflecting off the most pristine reef I've ever laid eyes on. Despite the tranquil scene, my heartbeat began to pick up as it occurred to me why the fish were hiding. It was late in the day and each minute that passed added new shadows to the wild landscape, filling my mind with false glimpses of the one creature that eluded us the entire week: the Great Hammerhead. Maybe it's my wild imagination playing tricks on me but I could feel his presence that afternoon lingering just past the rim of visibility, tempting me to return to Jardines one day . . .

Joanna Lentini
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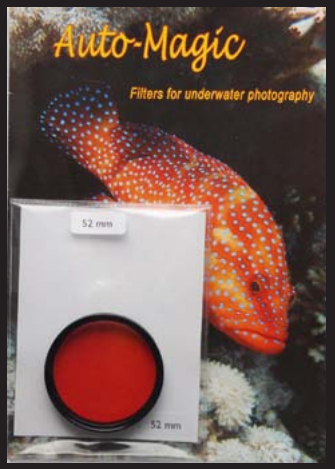

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Simply the best

by Erik Oskarsson

Diving around the Brothers, Daedalus reef and Elphinstone is widely known around the world, in fact so good that CNN a few years ago ranked the Brothers to be one of the world's top 10 dive sites. So it's not for nothing that travel agencies sometimes, slightly pretentious, name cruises to the Brothers, Daedalus reef and Elphinstone as Simple the Best. But diving at these remote locations should not be done without caution, as the conditions around Brothers and Daedalus can be somewhat of a challenge even for more seasoned divers. Strong currents, heavy seas and relatively deep water are common, but it is also these factors that make the diving around these reefs so fantastic.

A few friends and I decided to prove if these reefs are worthy of their name, so we spent one week cruising with the Emperor Superior live-aboard between the Brothers, Daedalus and Elphinstone in early November last year, with Hurghada as a starting point.

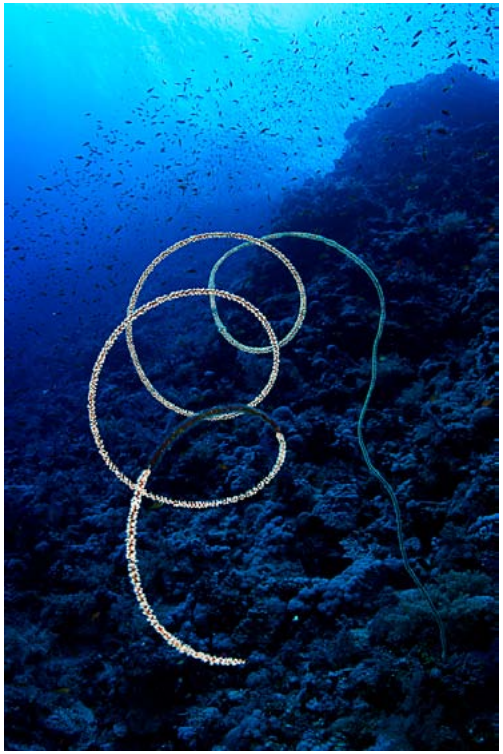
We could clearly see the lack of tourists in Hurghada, both on land and out at the dive sites, given I presume the past year's political instability in Egypt. If matters now are settling down, hopefully Egypt's precious tourist industry will once again pick up.

As for the cruise, the service was superb and the food way better than I have experienced on any Egyptian live-aboard prior this trip. As Emperor Superior measured about 25 meters in length there were plenty of space on-board, with 3 decks to be used as leisure space between the dives. My only complaint, which does not involve any of the staff or organisation in Egypt but rather the lack of tourists in general, would be the unnecessary long flight from Stockholm via Copenhagen, Cairo and finally Hurghada.

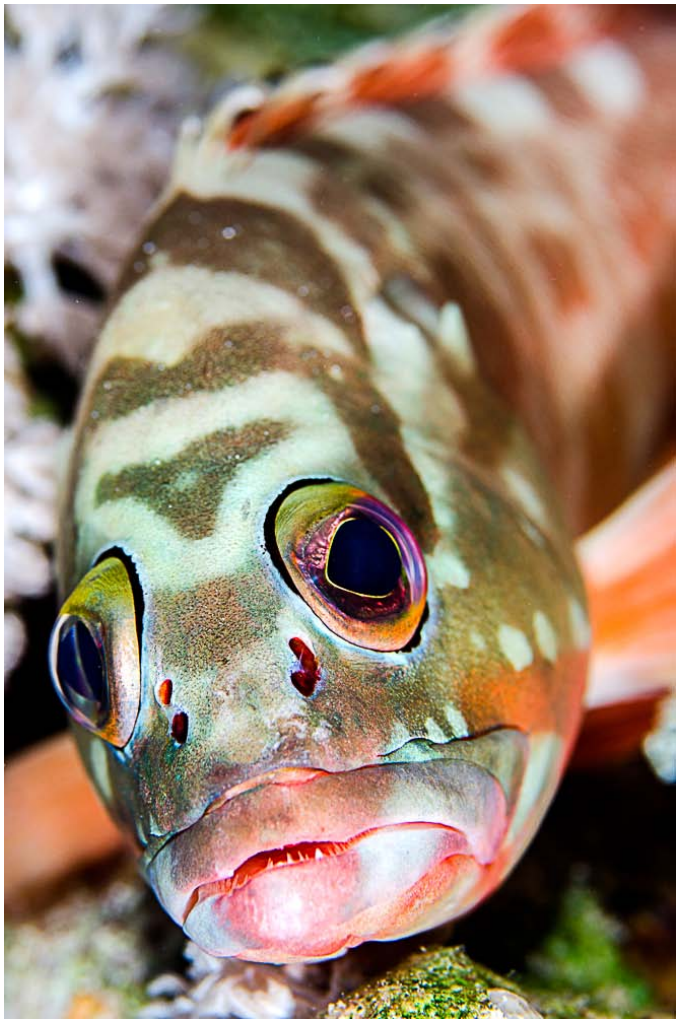
Brothers, which are also known as Al Akhawein, are two small islands located just on the border between Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The slightly larger island is "inhabited" by a few Egyptian soldiers responsible for the care of the lighthouse that was built in the 1880s. If I'm to be completely honest, it does not seem to be a pleasant employment.

At 06:00 we hit the water for the first dive, every day during our cruise. Big Brother, the larger of the two Islands is known for its wrecks and the high chance of pelagic action. The island has two main dive sites, the southern tip and the northern tip. The southern end of the Island has a large plateau which extends at approximately 35-40 meters depth, and the dive typically offers good visibility and beautiful corals. On our

A view of Superior (and her sister ship) from Daedalus.
Nikon D7000, Tamron 28 – 75, 1/40 f8,0 ISO: 200



A twisted whip coral on Elphinstone
Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, 2 Inon Z-240 Strobes, Tokina 10 – 17mm Fish eye Lens, 1/100 f7,1 ISO: 200



Hawk fish on the slope of Elphinstone . Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, 2 Inon Z-240 Strobes, Sigma 105 mm EX Macro 1/200, f5.6 ISO: 320

Crocodile fish. Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, 2 Inon Z-240 Strobes, Sigma 105 mm EX Macro 1/160, f11 ISO: 320

Soft corals on the Brothers Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, 2 Inon Z-240 Strobes, Tokina 10 – 17mm, 1/80, f7,1 ISO: 200

dives around the southern tip we did not see any large game. However, we did miss a manta ray just in the beginning of one of our dives with just a 2 minute margin. Bitterness is not a very attractive trait, but as I diver I sometimes have a hard time concealing it. Perhaps bitter management should be incorporated into every diver's basic training, or perhaps it is just one of my personal issues that I need to resolve.

Anyway, big Brother's north point is where the famous Numidia wreck lies almost intact, alongside the vertical wall. Because the wreck is almost in a vertical position, it becomes a bit of a surreal wreck dive, everything feels upside down. And it is a bit limited when it comes to space, so it will easily become filled up with divers.

I personally find the best part of the northern tip at big Brother to be the west side of the reef as

Salem Express with Anders in the Foreground (taken on our way back) Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, 2 Inon Z-240 Strobes, Tokina 10 – 17mm 1/125, f6,3 ISO: 400

it is strikingly beautiful, almost completely covered in colourful soft corals. It is great place to finish the dives being done on the northern tip, if the current grants you permission that is.

Little Brother is located about 1 km south of the big island. If you dive the northern tip of the island, which is probably the best starting point, the current's direction is usually a good benchmark for how to plan the dive. Either you take the eastern side or the western side. Fairly straight forward I must say. Just as big Brother, little Brother is excellent for large game. At one of our dives at little Brother we saw 3 different species of sharks, including hammerheads and a thresher shark. Sadly, none of these sharks were particularly interested in a Swede with a strange looking camera.

Another 10 hours sailing towards the south from the Brothers is the Daedalus reef situated. The reef is about 400 meters long and 100 meters wide, thus quite a bit smaller than the Brothers. On the reef there is a small artificial island, which houses a small lighthouse with some local staff. Daedalus is primarily known for its large schools of scalloped hammerhead sharks that can regularly be seen during the late spring and early summer, when the water is at its coldest temperature.

Diving Daedalus is similar to the Brothers, with steep drop-offs and strong currents. When the current permits it, diving out in the blue probably renders the highest chance of encountering the hammerheads. We were really lucky to encounter a small school of scalloped hammerheads during one of our early morning dives. The sharks did not seem to be intimidated by our presence, and I even managed to snap of a few shots.

Hammerheads, I have been told, are one of the youngest shark species in our oceans. They are estimated to be about 70 million years old and have extremely well developed senses through their slightly oversized head. Hammerheads are

Hammerheads at Daedalus reef Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, 2 Inon Z-240 Strobes, Tokina 10 – 17mm. 1/50, f5,6 ISO: 320

exceptionally graceful animals albeit during our encounter they occasionally had a fairly quirky swim style, as they were swimming on the side. All in all I believe the sharks circled us for about 10 minutes at a depth of about 40 meters, an amazing experience that I will treasure for the rest of my life.

Another nights sailing in the northwest direction from Daedalus, towards the Marsa Alam area you will find Elphinstone reef. Elphinstone, unlike the Brothers and Daedalus reef, is situated fairly close to the mainland so daytrips to this reef

Oceanic White tip cruising just below the surface
Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, 2 Inon Z-240 Strobes, Tokina 10 – 17mm, 1/125, f8,0 ISO: 200

are perfectly possible with high speed boats. Several dive centres in the Marsa Alam area offer day trips to Elphinstone especially during peak season, which sometimes results in a fairly diver intense underwater landscape.

Elphinstone is particularly famous for the possibility to encounter the Oceanic white tip sharks. The Oceanic white tip is a pelagic shark species that lives in warm and temperate seas worldwide. They grow to be just over 3,5 meters long and weigh nearly 200 kg, and they all too often carry a somewhat irritated face expression. I guess it fits their general personalities as they are completely unafraid of scuba divers. I might even stretch it as far as saying that the Oceanic White Tips seems to enjoy hanging out with scuba divers and do their best in trying to intimidate us with "chicken-race" similar tactics and swim-up really close once you turn your back on them. They seemed to be a very intelligent fish species, as by circulating divers they try to fool us to swim away from the reef.

However it is not just large pelagic sharks that can be found at Elphinstone reef, the walls are crowded with fish, soft corals and macro stuff that deserves attention. That, of course, goes for the Brothers and Daedalus reef as well, however I always find it perplexing to focus on small things when I know there is a chance that something extraordinary swims by.

As for if the cruise lived up to its name, Simply the Best, I would unhesitatingly say yes, at least as far as diving in the Red sea goes and the chance of seeing large pelagic game. So, I probably need to revise my earlier statement about the nickname Simply the Best being slightly pretentious. The few minutes we spent with the hammerheads are probably one of my most memorable dive moments to date.

This trip is definitely something I would recommend to anyone with an interest in the opportunity of a first-hand shark experience and beautiful healthy reefs.

A tiny porcelain crab
Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, 2 Inon Z-240 Strobes, Sigma 105 mm EX Macro 1/200, f3,5 ISO: 200

Erik Oskarsson

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Malapascua Challenges

By Nigel Marsh

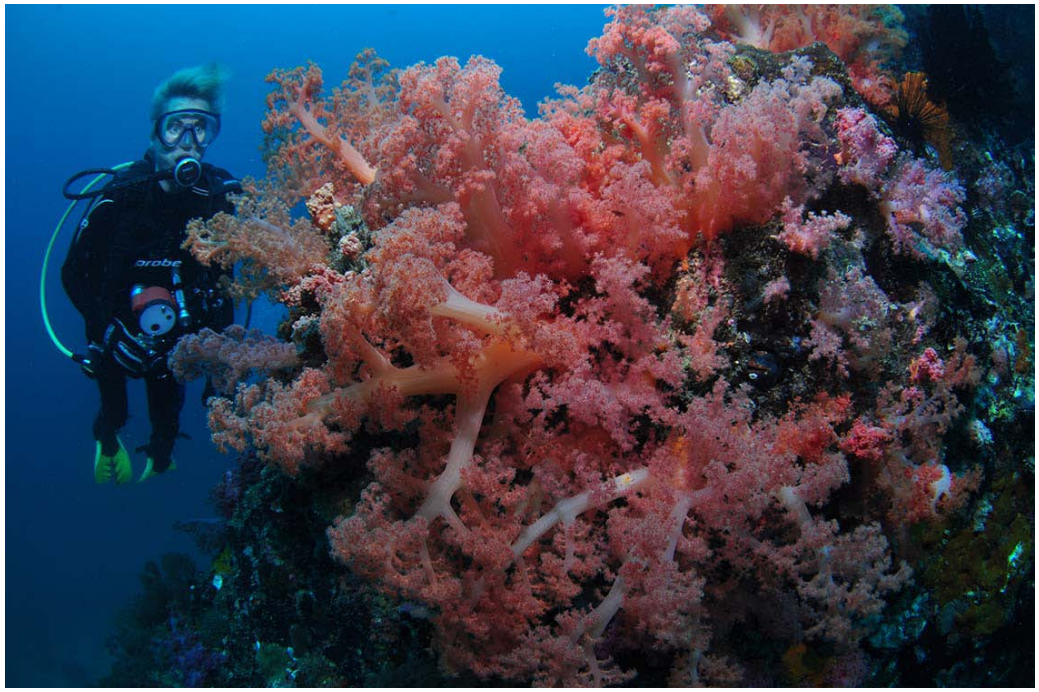
Malapascua is a lovely tropical island located off the top end of Cebu in the Philippines. The island is famous for its thresher sharks, but also offers the underwater photographer a wide range of subjects and challenges.

I had wanted to visit Malapascua for almost twenty years, ever since I first heard reports of the thresher sharks. However, I never got around to organising a visit and in a way I am very happy that I delayed my visit for so long as the challenge of photographing these sharks at dawn would have left me very frustrated and disappointed twenty years ago. It is only now that I think the cameras are up to the job with the vast improvements in high ISO settings.

For our week at Malapascua we choose Thresher Shark Divers (TSD), an operation that was recommended by a number of people for their professional service and excellent thresher shark dives. TSD operate three traditional banca dive boats and have a very well equipped dive shop. They work closely with a number of the resorts, including Tepanee Beach Resort where we stayed, which is one of the newer resorts and in a great location on a headland. Tepanee Beach Resort is about a five minute walk from TSD, which we didn't find to be a problem as the rooms are comfortable and they also have a lovely Italian restaurant attached.

Our checkout dive introduced us to the local reefs around Malapascua at a spot called Bantigue. This site had pretty coral gardens, but the soft sandy bottom proved to be the most interesting, and typical of the area had abundant reef fish, few big fish, but a great range of macro subjects. My 60mm lens got quite a workout photographing pipefish, anemonefish, shrimps, nudibranchs, shrimp gobies, leatherjackets, box crabs, lionfish, scorpionfish and razorfish. Some subjects were easy to find, but I was very glad to have my sharp-eyed local guide Wilbert to point out things that I would have missed.

The following morning was the first of our thresher sharks dives. These are done at sunrise, so the 4.30am wakeup was a bit of a shock to the system, but well worth the effort. The boat departs at 5am, in darkness, for the half hour journey east to Monad Shoal, an isolated sea mount that rises from 250m of water. A dozen dive boats were already



Lovely soft corals decorate the reefs around Gato Island (Nikon D90, Ikelite housing, Inon Z240 Strobe, Tokina 10-17mm, ISO 200, 1/100, f8

at Monad Shoal when we arrived, crowded together on the one dive site. Fortunately TSD have their own site here, several hundred metres away, so no crowds.

With the sun still hidden behind the hills of nearby Leyte we geared up and plunged into the dark waters. With no flash allowed the challenge was to photograph the thresher sharks in dark water with natural light only. Luckily I had got some tips from good friends, and top underwater photographers, Kevin Deacon and Andy Murch, that had both recently visited the island. This gave me a head start so I didn't have to play around with my settings too much. They recommended pushing the ISO as high as it could go, 3200 on my Nikon D90, setting the camera to aperture priority, f-stop to f4 and dial down the exposure compensation to -1.

I took a couple of test shots of the other divers as we descended, and all looked good. We then settled on the reef edge at 14m and waited for the sharks to appear. Even though the water was dark, the visibility was at least 30m and I could see plenty of

reef fish and a huge colony of garden eels on the sandy rubble slope in front of us. We only had to wait a few minutes for the first shark to arrive from the depths, a 3.5m long pelagic thresher shark, with a 2m long tail!

I kept myself and my camera down low and just watched this amazing creature for the first few minutes as it slowly cruised the slope about 10m away, too far away for my Tokina 10-17mm, even set on 17mm. Suddenly this shark was joined by two others. The pelagic thresher shark (Alopias pelagicus) is a deep water species, evident by their very large eyes, that visit Monad Shoal each morning at dawn to get cleaned by an army of cleaner wrasse. As I watched these three sharks I was expecting to see cleaning behaviour, but they seemed to be more interested in us than getting cleaned. They were also getting closer and closer on each pass, finally close enough to get some images.

Wilbert then indicated for us to move down the slope a little to get closer to the sharks. I inched my way down, staying low and slowing my breathing and avoided looking directly at the sharks, a tip from shark photographer Andy Murch, so I appeared less threatening. This seemed to work and the shark became more curious of me, but still stayed about 5m away. With three sharks it was hard to know which way to look to avoid direct eye contact, and when surreptitiously watching one approaching head-on I missed another that had come in from my side, about 2m away, only getting a photo of its long tail as it swam away.

The sharks then seemed to lose interest in us and returned to deeper water, so Wilbert indicated that we should follow them deeper. At this site, that TSD call Shark Wall, they have over a dozen spots where the sharks get cleaned, so the dive groups can be split up and move around depending on where the sharks are. We headed to one of the cleaning stations at 31m, but the sharks stayed in the distance, and then disappeared.

Heading back to the shallows we discovered that the sharks had snuck around us, or it could have been two other sharks, and were now patrolling the ridge top above us. When these two departed we drifted along the reef edge and saw several more thresher sharks, plus two pygmy devil rays and a number of trevally and mackerel.

After 50 minutes the sun was up, the water very bright and sharks seemed to have disappeared. At least that was what we thought until we arrived back at the mooring line

My favourite image of a pelagic thresher shark (Nikon D90, Ikelite housing, Tokina 10-17mm, ISO 3200, 1/200, f6.3

to find another thresher cruising around the divers there. What an incredible dive! I had a dozen decent photos of the threshers, but none as close as I had hoped, and none like I had envisioned in my minds-eye. Fortunately I still had quite a few more dawn dives to get it right.

Of course there is much more to Malapascua than just the thresher sharks and each day TSD offer two local dives around the island or a two dive day trip to nearby sites. The local sites were all great for macro, and also had some beautiful corals for wide angle photography, but with so many great critters I stuck with the 60mm lens.

TSD employ six local dive guides that all have sharp eyes and as the saying goes, know the dive sites like the back of their hand. At the local sites I photographed cuttlefish, mantis shrimps, shrimp gobies, moray eels, sea stars, cleaner shrimps, nudibranchs, lionfish, zebra crabs, dragonets, squat lobsters, porcelain crabs, orang-utan crabs, candy crabs,

The Dona Marilyn shipwreck is covered in corals and multitudes of fish (Nikon D90, Ikelite housing, Inon Z240 Strobe, Tokina 10-17mm, ISO 200, 1/100, f8

A beautiful pair of Coleman shrimps photographed at North Wall (Nikon D90, Ikelite housing, Inon Z240 Strobe, Nikkor 60mm, ISO 200, 1/100, f14

commensal shrimps, spindle cowries and a great range of wonderful reef fish. But the highlights for me were my first Coleman shrimps and mushroom coral pipefish.

The day trips were also very special, especially the dives at Gato Island. I had heard nothing but good reports about this small island and it certainly lived up to its reputation. I did three dives here and photographed some great subjects - banded sea snakes, cuttlefish, sea horses, pipefish and a good collection of unusual nudibranchs. The most popular dive here is a 30m long cave that cuts right through the island and is decorated with lovely sponges and tubastra corals. It was also home to a great range of crabs and shrimps. White-tip reef sharks usually rest in the cave mouth, but I didn't see any as both times I dived The Cave one or more groups of divers had preceded us.

The big challenge I had set myself for Gato Island was to photographer another shark species, the shy and retiring white-spotted bamboo shark. Gato Island is one of the best places in the world to see this small rare species, but finding them is the big challenge. Wilbert managed to find three of these elusive sharks, but all were tucked away under ledges and well out of camera range.

Another brilliant day trip we enjoyed was to Calanggaman Island. This is one of those picture postcard islands - white sand, swaying palm trees and surrounded by blue water. Steep walls are found off the western side of the island which are decorated with colourful corals. I could have used my wide angle lens here for all this lovely coral, plus the turtle, barracuda and schools of fusiliers, but the guides had informed me that this was another good spot for critters, and it didn't disappoint. I photographed pygmy sea horses, ornate ghost pipefish, longnose hawkfish, blue ringed octopus and many other subjects.

I did get my wide angle lens out for the trip to the Dona Marilyn shipwreck. This 100m long ferry sank in a typhoon in 1988 with the tragic loss of 389 people. The wreck is north of Malapascua and lies in 33m of water on its side. I always

enjoy photographing wrecks and the challenge is to find good angles with colour, structure and hopefully marine life. This wreck is covered in black coral trees, soft corals, sponges and sea whips, plus swarms of small fish. After a lap of the ship I found the protruding masts provided the best photo opportunities, so got my wife Helen busy modelling. One dive on this wreck wasn't nearly enough as there was just so much to see.

Each morning on Malapascua I got up early to dive with the thresher sharks and each day was very different. Day two I managed to get some closer shots of the sharks, including a few with divers in the background observing them, but I still didn't see any sharks getting cleaned. Speaking to the guides they informed me that there are more sharks now than in the past and rarely a day goes by without seeing several threshers. The increase in numbers can be directly attributed to the dive operators on Malapascua employing rangers to patrol Monad Shoal and keeping fisherman away.

My third dive with the thresher sharks was the best. It might have been because it was overcast, or I just got lucky that day. It started with a bang, two sharks swimming around the mooring line as we descended. I hadn't expected this, so by the time I got my camera on and ready they had dropped down deeper. We then had three sharks cruising up and down in front of all the divers for the next few minutes. While these sharks came in close to a few divers, they stayed well away from me and then departed into the blue.

We then swam up and down the reef edge for the next thirty minutes without see a shark. Just when we were about to give up we noticed a shark patrolling one of the deeper cleaning stations. We moved in, slowly dropping down the slope to 28m and for the next five minutes I finally got to see a thresher being cleaned. The shark would swim circuits around the station, slowing down each time it passed over the main site so the cleaner wrasse could rise up and pick off a few parasites, then continue again on another circuit.

With only Wilbert and I watching this shark it got use to us and quite bold, getting closer and closer. I stayed down low and finally got a sequence of shots I was very happy with when the shark came within 3m of me. It then came back for another pass; I had heard they will come within a metre of you so was hoping this pass would be even closer. But the shark suddenly turned away. I then looked to my left to discover another diver had suddenly appeared from nowhere, and was standing on the bottom with an outstretched arm holding a Gopro, making him appear even bigger. The shark didn't like this and now stayed well back, intimidated by the larger diver. I indicated for the diver to get down low, but he was too engrossed in filming the shark. I couldn't really blame him, he was over excited and didn't realise that he was actually causing the shark to back off.

I returned to Monad Shoal for the next few mornings, but it although it wasn't as good, we saw sharks each time, but they stayed well away from my camera. But at the end of the day I had got a very nice sequence and I was more than happy just to have seen these magnificent creatures.

The final photographic challenge at Malapascua was the sunset dive. First of all it was a challenge just finding the energy to do this dive

Sea horses are a highlight of the night dive at Lighthouse Reef (Nikon D90, Ikelite housing, Inon Z240 Strobe, Nikkor 60mm, ISO 200, 1/100, f13

Cuttlefish are found quite regularly around Malapascua Island (Nikon D90, Ikelite housing, Inon Z240 Strobe, Nikkor 60mm, ISO 200, 1/100, f9

A tiny candy crab hides in a soft coral at Deep Rock (Nikon D90, Ikelite housing, Inon Z240 Strobe, Nikkor 60mm, ISO 200, 1/100, f18

after such an early rise. This sunset dive is done at Lighthouse Reef each evening, on the eastern side of the island. This spot has dense hard coral gardens in 6 to 12m of water where mandarinfish mate. These colourful and secretive fish are always fun to watch and always difficult to photograph, as they don't like torch light on them, so focusing at twilight is quite a challenge. I managed a few images, but found that this wasn't the highlight of the dive, it was the dozen sea horses we saw clinging to the corals here. This spot was also good for a range of nocturnal molluscs and crustaceans and a great way to end the day on Malapascua Island.

The photographic challenges presented around Malapascua Island certainly made for a wonderful dive holiday, and while I met some I know I will have to return to complete the rest and maybe add a few more, like the manta rays and hammerhead sharks that are also seen around this brilliant Philippine island.

Typhoon News

The day after we left Malapascua the island was hit by Super Typhoon Haiyan, the largest storm ever recorded. While there was extensive damage on the island, no one was seriously injured, unlike in other parts of the Philippines. Within days many of dive centres and resorts reopened and have reported that there is little or no damage to the local reefs. The best support they can receive is for you to visit Malapascua, as this will help to rebuild the island, as many of the locals lost their homes.

For more information contact

Thresher Shark Divers
www.malapascua-diving.com

Tepanee Beach Resort
www.tepanee.com

Nigel Marsh
www.nigelmarshphotography.com

South West Ramblings 7

by Mark Webster

I began writing this next edition of ramblings during the late autumn of 2013 following a summer that offered some of the best weather and diving conditions for several years. The challenge was to make the most of the weather and imaging opportunities and inevitably this desire may of course clash with other home or work plans, but you can salve your conscience with the sure knowledge that next summer won't be so good and you can redress the balance then. This approach represents the thoughts of a somewhat deranged underwater photographer, my wife's view of course and not my own, as I know that if I am wrong then I can simply repeat this reasoning next year!

However, what followed the good summer was one of the worst winters on record in the south west for storms and continuous often torrential rain. This has caused significant damage to coastal defences, infrastructure and brought the misery of flooding to thousands of people across the region. So diving locally has been impossible either due to rough sea conditions or the appalling visibility which follows and was exacerbated by the rain and run off from the land and rivers. So in completing these notes my fervent hope is that I can repeat the above reasoning again this year and spend plenty of time in the water.

Although many underwater photographers mostly prefer to dive alone (myself included) having another diver in your wide angle pictures is often a good way of completing an image and perhaps telling a story, particularly to the non diving viewer. If you are using a fellow photographer to pose for you may sometimes get caught out by their flash firing particularly if they use a compact in a plastic housing. This can result in some attractive compositions but often it can spoil the shot if the flash is pointing in the wrong direction or fires at high power.

By applying a little planning to these shots, even after the first one has been spoiled, we can produce some effective images which actually convey a story to the viewer. Your model's flash will only fire if it is set to slave mode or the TTL sensor sees your key flash as often happens when reflections occur inside the clear plastic housings. If the flash is pointing towards your camera then this is likely to result in an ugly white patch of over exposure and possibly backscatter in the image unless the flash has a very low power setting or you have heavy diffusion on the flash.

Diver with flash 2 – the image improves significantly if you direct your model's flash downwards towards a subject and reduce the power output. Nikon D300, Subal ND2, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f11 1/60.

Often the best technique is to have the model's flash pointing downwards towards a real or apparent subject and select a low power setting. Even using a low power setting may result in some over exposure directly below the flash but this will look cleaner and more realistic and you can review the image and adjust the flash angle for the best effect. Make sure that your model is looking through the viewfinder or at the review screen to complete the effect of the photographer at work.

During the summer we normally see a large number of candy striped flat worms that begin to appear as the nudibranchs start to fade away. This year the average size to me seems to be much larger than previous seasons and I have seen several up to 14cm/6" in length when they would normally reach 5cm/2" on average. Being larger they are easier to spot but the best

Large candy striped flatworms have been abundant this summer and can be found easily on their preferred diet of light bulb tunicates. The horns of the "head" are clearly visible in this image. Nikon D300, Subal ND2, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f18 1/125.

Tritonia nilsodhneri nudibranch foraging on weed. The opportunity to photograph this species away from the host gorgonian sea fan shows how well the rhinophores and cerata mimic the polyps of the sea fan. Nikon D300, Subal ND2, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f18 1/125.

chance of finding them is to look for one of their favourite foods which are the light bulb tunicates that are very common on the reef.

Unlike nudibranchs the head of the flatworm is not so obvious but there are a pair of peaks or horns on the head and these are often best captured during the act of feeding as the flatworm elevates to nibble on a tunicate. The larger examples can even be captured with the long end of a fish eye zoom as a wide macro image, so don't ignore the subject if you think you have the wrong lens installed on the camera.

One nudibranch you will normally see throughout the year is the Tritonia nilsodhneri which mimics the polyps on the orange gorgonian sea fans that are fairly common in the south west. On one of my regular dive sites at Porthkerris there is a small sprig of gorgonian (not yet a fan by a long way) which has been home to a single one of these Tritonia nudibranchs for the past couple of years. I have often wondered how it found its way to this isolated sprig and whether it has any hope of another nudibranch finding the same location to breed as I have not seen eggs here.

I normally check the fan as I swim by just to be sure that it is still in residence but on this particular day I could not find the nudibranch on the fan. Thinking it may be dead or possibly eaten by a predator I had all but given up when I spotted a pale object on a piece of red seaweed a metre or so away from the fan. I thought to begin with that this was a sea cucumber but once I had trained my lens on it I realised that this was the Tritonia nilsodhneri out for a stroll perhaps or feeding on algae?

I have only once before seen these nudibranchs off the host sea fan but this was in a location with multiple fans close together and dozens of this species were mating on each fan and obviously moving between them. So I am not sure why this critter was out for a walk…… was it looking for another fan, a mate or simply a change in diet? Whatever

the reason it gave me the opportunity to get some shots of this species without the distraction of the fan and fully extended as it moved across the weed which illustrates nicely how the cerata look just like the polyps of the sea fan. I returned a week or so later and found that the same nudibranch was still on weed close to the sea fan so perhaps it is just a change of diet that is the reason? Perhaps there is a nudibranch expert amongst our readers who can answer this.

Another nudibranch that is active until late in the season is Acanthodoris pilosa and I found many of them still laying eggs in the third week of August. The average size of this species is 25-30mm (1" or so) but some are 50-60mm (2" or so) which means you can shoot them with either a macro lens or a wide macro set up. In fact I found one feeding on a bushy bryozoan (Alcyonidium diaphanum) that allowed me access with the 17mm end of a Tokina fish eye zoom which will focus right down to the surface of my mini dome. Although I was harassed by a cuckoo wrasse I did manage to get some clean images so don't assume you have the wrong lens if you encounter an interesting subject. Also try using a wide macro set up (e.g. 10-17mm FE zoom plus 2x teleconverter) which provides a very flexible lens range from true macro at the 17mm end to medium wide for larger subjects and is ideal for capturing subjects like these.

The Acanthodoris pilosa nudibranchs are found breeding into late summer often in groups of three or four on finger sponges or red weed. The picture area is an ideal size for a wide macro perspective with a fish eye zoom and teleconverter. Nikon D300, Subal ND2, 10-17mm FE zoom, 2 x teleconverter, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f11 1/30.

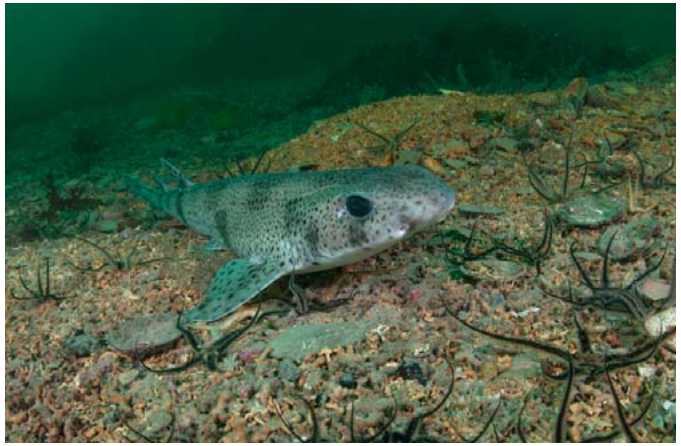
Fields of brittle stars (Ophiothrix fragilis and Ophiconomina nigra) surrounded the wreck of the Epsilon in Falmouth bay stretching to the limit of visibility. The seabed around the wreck comprises maerl, a calcified sea weed, which provides nutrients for the brittle stars. Nikon D300, Subal ND2, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 250 f11 1/25.

In the last edition of ramblings I described the march of gangs of seven armed starfish in search of scallops. Since then I have had the opportunity to dive the wreck of the Epsilon in Falmouth Bay for the first time in more than fifteen years and was pleasantly surprised by another species of starfish. This ship was sunk by a mine as it left Falmouth harbour in January 1917 and is a popular destination for local dive clubs as there are still substantial chunks of wreckage and plenty of marine life.

Whilst the wreck itself has not changed much since my last visit, we did encounter many thousands (possibly tens of thousands) of brittle stars (Ophiothrix fragilis and Ophiconomina nigra) which surrounded the wreck well beyond the limits of visibility, which was perhaps 10m on this dive. The seabed here is covered by a healthy colony of maerl which is a calcified seaweed and home to a variety of marine critters which I assume is what had attracted this swarm of brittle stars. Maerl is found in healthy quantities in several areas of Falmouth Bay and beyond, but this is the first time I have seen it attract such huge numbers of brittle stars which not only covered the seabed but also climbed up onto some areas of the wreck and

Inevitably there are inquisitive male cuckoo wrasse on the Epsilon and they are always willing to pose for the camera. The addition of a fellow photographer in the background completes the composition. Nikon D300, Subal ND2, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 250 f11 1/30.

Red gurnard do become nervous once they realise they have been seen and will begin to move away from the camera on their "fingers" and with short swims which expose the bright blue colour of their pectoral fins. Nikon D300, Subal ND2, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 250 f11 1/30.



The wreck of the Epsilon seems to attract a good population of dog fish that like to sleep most of the day. Most are very approachable and will even tolerate a mini dome and flash guns at very close range. Nikon D300, Subal ND2, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 250 f11 1/30.

small items of debris around the wreck to elevate themselves into the tide to feed. These are quite colourful and make a great CFWA image subject with the field of brittle stars stretching away into the background.

Back on the wreck there are plenty of opportunities for fish photography (pouting, pollack, wrasse etc.) and shots featuring your fellow photographers. Where the maerl is exposed it is worth looking carefully for camouflaged species as scorpion fish and red gurnard that like to rest here and feed on the small fish and crustaceans in the maerl. The red gurnard are not as patient as scorpion fish with the keen photographer. I have found they generally tolerate a couple of head on shots before they decide they have been seen after all and try to put some distance between you with a combination of crawling on their fingers and occasional short swims which reveals the deep blue colour of their pectoral fins.

We also found a number of dog fish here which also seemed reluctant to rest amongst the dense beds of brittle stars but would tolerate a few of the more spindly variety when they moved location. Dog fish are mostly co-operative and will allow a close approach when they are resting during the day, but some are very skittish are will depart as soon as they sense you are coming towards them. If they move they generally do not swim far so it is worth a second approach once they have settled down again.

If you have dived in the Caribbean you will know that the reefs are often dominated by sponges which can grow to impressive sizes and often in a dazzling array of colours. In the UK we don't often see such large growths of sponge but we do have a wide selection of colourful sponges and there are some reefs where they fight for dominance with soft corals for example. They can make very good foreground subjects in a wide angle composition so it is worth spending a little time looking for good examples in good positions and experimenting with exposure and lighting. Some sponges have very textured surfaces and can be lit with a snoot or extreme side lighting to enhance the effect.

During August we have seen a second plankton bloom which unfortunately did not herald a return of the basking sharks in any numbers, but did bring with it numerous jelly fish and comb jellies. The dominant jelly fish was the compass jelly fish (Chrysaora hysoscella) but we also saw blue jellyfish (Cyanea lamarckii) and the almost

Yellow boring sponge (Cliona celata) with soft corals (dead men's fingers). Boring sponges normally penetrate the seabed strata but the harder granitic rocks in the south west makes them grow away from the reef. Nikon D300, Subal ND2, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f11 1/30.

Compass jelly fish have been common throughout August although water clarity and colour have varied dramatically with the plankton levels. This shot was taken on one of the clearer days when the water was almost blue. Nikon D300, Subal ND2, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f11 1/125.

transparent moon jellyfish (Aurelia aurita) which is a real challenge to light successfully. Comb jellies (Ctenophora sometimes called sea gooseberries) are another species which is very difficult to light successfully due to them being mostly translucent, but it never stops me trying as they are such pretty subjects often found just below the surface and it is satisfying when the shot is successful.

The autumn months also featured excellent weather which gave me the opportunity to play with some new toys (see the Subal ND7100 review in UWP76) but little did I know that the winter months would be so wildly different. Hopefully the next edition of ramblings will feature some wonderful spring diving.

Mark Webster
www.photec.co.uk

Guidelines for contributors

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2. Images must be attached to the e mail and they need to be 144dpi

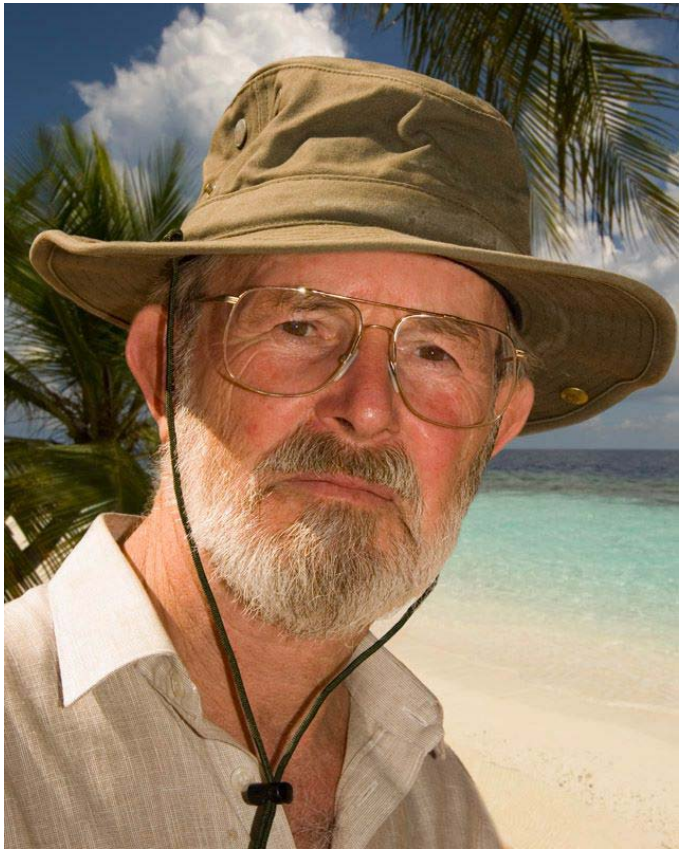
Size - Maximum length 20cm i.e. horizontal pictures would be 20 cm wide and verticals would be 20cm.

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.

Peter Scoones profile

by Gill McDonald



There is little, if anything, that Peter Scoones did not know about underwater image making. A BAFTA and two Emmys surrounded by numerous other awards were testament to his creative achievements. But it was Peter's dual expertise in both artistic cinematography and technical wizardry which made him both unique and extra-ordinarily accomplished in this challenging field. His creative talent took him many times around the world for a string of unrivalled wildlife documentaries, many for the BBC Natural History Unit in the company of perhaps the greatest and most distinguished wildlife presenter ever known, Sir David Attenborough. However, he also designed, built and maintained all his equipment and remained at the very cutting edge of his field right up to the end of his life after an underwater career spanning nearly five decades.

He made his first film with an 8mm camera in a homemade Perspex box in the early 1960's, using only a mask, snorkel and fins. From there he progressed to become one of the leading wildlife natural history underwater cameramen in the world. When I arrived to interview him a few years ago he was in the middle of designing a new viewfinder because the cameras he used had changed their configuration. "Necessity is the mother of invention" he said.

Born in Wanstead, North London in 1937 to a sailing family, a marine career seemed almost inevitable. After school he qualified as a naval architect but on subsequently passing the entrance exam to the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth for commissioned officer training, his eyesight was tested below standard. So, when National Service loomed, instead of two years as a naval clerk he signed up for nine years in the RAF "to learn something useful". That something was photography.

At the time, Peter was a serious racing sailor "I'm the sort of chap who is 100% involved in whatever activity I am doing, nothing else intrudes" he said. Posted to Singapore, he headed the RAF sailing team. The fast, keeled sailing boats became sluggish when coated in marine algae and hauling them up slipways was time-consuming and cumbersome. Instead, the team borrowed masks and snorkels from the Navy and scrubbed the hulls underwater. Having never previously considered what was under the yachts he raced, Peter observed the shoals of pretty, colourful fish feasting on the debris. Around the same time Hans Hass's boat moored nearby and Peter had a 'eureka' moment. Hass was already his hero and Hass's presence together with the lovely marine life meant the area was probably a prime location for the beautiful images he had seen on TV and in the cinema.

So, after persuading the Navy to teach the basics on their O2 rebreathers they formed a diving club. "The RAF disapproved of diving, considering it a dangerous activity, but we ignored them" Peter grinned. Due to limited equipment they became highly adept at snorkelling and learned to skip breathe. "I could hold my breath underwater for 3-4 minutes. You can't film while breathing it disturbs you, makes you wobble".

Due to the lack of kit, as a temporary measure using RAF machine shops, recycled aircraft oxygen tanks and various hoses Peter built a couple of aqua lungs. "Demand valves are fairly simple things" he explained, with typical understatement and modesty.

Already hooked on the underwater world through snorkelling, Peter's first ever dive, off Palau Tekukor over 50 years ago, was not without drama. Attached by rope "the tanks were very valuable, we didn't want to lose one" he floated down over the drop-off and with "wow" on his lips as a school of batfish wafted gently by he was completely captivated. With his skip breathing technique he

stayed down far longer than expected for the air in the tank, so the crew began hauling the rope in. As he was being drawn inexorably towards a large cluster of nasty black sea-urchins, the stings of which can be very painful and indeed serious if multiple, he planted his feet firmly on the wall and pulled as hard as he could. Not only did his first ever dive feature beauty, awe and danger, he also incurred the wrath of the Far East boxing champion who he pulled into the water on the other end of the rope.

Peter had been keen on both wildlife and photography since school days, so it wasn't long before his joint passions of image-making, diving and nature came together. Ever inventive, he would scavenge discarded, scratched aircraft windows returning them to stores and claiming a replacement, thus acquiring pristine sheets of Perspex to model housings from. He made cement from Perspex chips dissolved in chloroform, controls from used hydraulic linkages and created waterproof shafts – this was before o'rings were widely available. Unlike today when you can buy a housing off the shelf, there was nothing for it then but to build his own and in this he was truly a pioneer. "There was the Rolleimarin designed by Hass but that was way outside our budget, Nikonos which evolved out of Cousteau's Calypsophot didn't emerge until 1963, necessity is the mother of invention – if it doesn't exist, build it". There was that signature phrase again.

Tending towards moving film he housed a Bolex C-8 8mm cine camera and shot his first travel piece. He then moved from Singapore to Aden in the Red Sea and created his first feature film 'Breathless Moments'. This won the gold medal at the first Brighton film festival in 1965 and led to several production companies contacting him wishing to distribute the film. But, with great disappointment it transpired the 8mm media was not production quality and could not be used commercially. Peter immediately rejected 8mm, bought a 16mm camera and explained "I could never afford to film for myself again. The film was so expensive I had to get paid in order to fund it".

Around this time he co-founded the British Society of Underwater Photographers (BSoUP) with Colin Doeg. Colin, a former journalist working in PR at the time, has himself contributed significantly to British underwater photography including taking the first picture in British waters ever to win an open international underwater photographic competition. BSoUP is still going strong today boasting membership from many of the foremost underwater photographers in the UK. Despite being quite seriously ill by then, Peter still regularly attended the monthly meetings in London right up until the end of 2013. Colin also still attends. Having recently celebrated its 40th anniversary, this is a testament to the down to earth nature of both these amazing men.

Said Colin "being a superb camera mechanic as well as accomplished photographer helped Peter handle with aplomb the most dreaded event in any underwater photographer's life... a flood. It was an unforgettable experience to see him calmly pour pints of sea water out of his custom-made camera

housing and begin to salvage his expensive video camera anywhere on land or sea. Surrounded by an awe-struck audience and often an ashen producer or client - he could strip his camera down to its carcass, wash and sun-dry all the vital electronic circuit boards and have it working again in as little as a couple of hours".

Colin continued "Peter was hugely talented and was probably the most self-sufficient wildlife underwater cameraman in the world. He introduced many new ideas, including the use of polecams and cameras slung beneath radio controlled rafts. In the early days in the UK he pioneered the concept of standard sized openings in the body of housings so the ports were interchangeable, something we all take for granted today. He also used to produce correction lens from raw Perspex and blow his own dome ports".

At the end of his nine year stint he left the RAF and joined a colour laboratory in London. For the next few years he absorbed as much as possible about underwater filming. To supplement his strong technical background and optical knowledge he thoroughly researched and read everything ever written on the subject, teaching himself. "I learnt from anyone who could tell me" he said, "I was a sponge, soaking up everything that I needed".

During this time Peter became involved in a production company and continued to push the boundaries of underwater filming. Combining his by now extensive knowledge with an electronics expert colleague, they invented systems for the oil industry. One such project was developing inspection cameras for the BP offshore oil platforms. The only other equipment in existence was inadequate for the low visibility of the North Sea. So, necessity calling again, they developed a camera based on the silicon-intensified technology being used by NASA which functioned in low-light and worked remotely from the platform without the need for divers.

Their reputations spread and one day there was a knock on the door of the workshop in Richmond just outside London. It was David Attenborough (subsequently to become Sir David) and a colleague from the BBC Natural History Unit who wanted to film a live coelacanth in low-light conditions, something that had never been done before. The primitive looking, pre-historic coelacanth, which usually lives around 1,000ft deep, was only re-discovered in the last century after scientists thought it had become extinct along with the dinosaurs, 65 million years earlier. Attenborough

Peter took the first ever shot of a living Coelacanth

was heading to the Comores islands as part of the BBCs 'Life on Earth' series to follow up reports of local fishermen hauling coelacanths up from the deep. He had heard about Peter's camera and wanted to hire it. Peter seized his opportunity. Not only had he read about the coelacanth in school and long harboured an ambition to film it, but he also knew his camera was a completely unique and innovative asset that he was certainly not going to hand over for someone else to use. "I told them they could have my equipment for free" he recalled "as long as they paid for me to go out with them and operate it".

Thus began Peter's long standing involvement with the BBC including 'Reefwatch', 'The Trials of Life', 'Sea Trek', 'Life in the Freezer', 'The Blue Planet' and 'Planet Earth' which was the first broadcast in high definition, among many others. 'Reefwatch' filmed in the northern Red Sea was the first ever live underwater broadcast. At the time, production quality camera heads were not integrated with any recording device, thus filming was achieved by passing the image back to the surface where it was adjusted and recorded. The BBC technicians in Bristol were developing their own cameras "but their knowledge was limited" Peter recalled "I knew their equipment wasn't going to suffice, but they were disinclined to listen to a external freelancer. So I made my

own camera. It was less snazzy and elegantly engineered than theirs, but it out-performed them every time".

During 'Sea Trek', Peter enhanced the polecam which he had originally invented for filming killer whales in Norway for an Australian broadcaster. The whales would not approach if there was a diver in the water so Peter put the camera on a pole over the bow of an inflatable boat and drove right up to the creatures. The resulting film, 'Wolves of the sea' included the first recording of whales 'carousel feeding', herding the herring into balls near the surface then using their tails to stun them before scooping them up. With the modern proliferation of wildlife films and tourist excursions this kind of behaviour is now observed by a wide audience, but then it was completely innovative. The film went on to win the annual Wildscreen Festival. For 'Sea Trek' Peter used the polecam to film dolphins in the Bahamas coming towards the boat rather than going away, this was yet another first.

Peter's next invention was 'the dog'. He developed remote capability by buying a broadcast quality recorder and housing it, connecting it to the camera by umbilical wire and ensuring the unit was neutrally buoyant so it would follow him in the water. He developed the camera control system from scratch, making a colour viewfinder so he could control the image. No longer was he reliant on an onshore technician. This was a revolutionary development and used right up until the BBCs spectacular 'Life in the Freezer' displaying life in the Antarctic in 1993, again with David Attenborough. Around this time broadcast quality camcorders became available which Peter housed so everything was finally all in one unit.

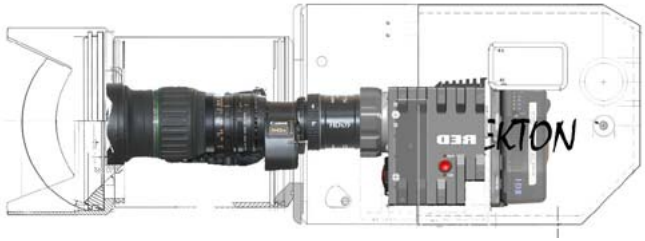
The following years brought a great variety of projects including, in 1995, 'Great White Shark' portraying the natural behaviour of great whites in California and South Africa. He always considered this to be the definitive depiction of these magnificent creatures, and as usual expressed this with no arrogance, simply as a fact. Peter was often accompanied on filming projects by his widow Georgette Douwma who is a highly regarded and accomplished photographer in her own right. The couple complimented each other delightfully with the ease and comfort of very good, old friends and also provided support and strength where needed.

The BBC's blockbuster series 'The Blue Planet' came next and Peter's skills were described by Sir David Attenborough thus: "Peter has a remarkable gift of composition.

He understands fish just as other cameramen understand chimpanzees. He knows fish so well he can sense what they are going to do. You can see it in his footage. He moves as the fish move. We told him to go to his favourite destination and produce the footage for a film," Attenborough says. "We would construct the story to go with it. He went to Sipadan and the resulting film won a Palm d'Or at the Antibes film festival in France."

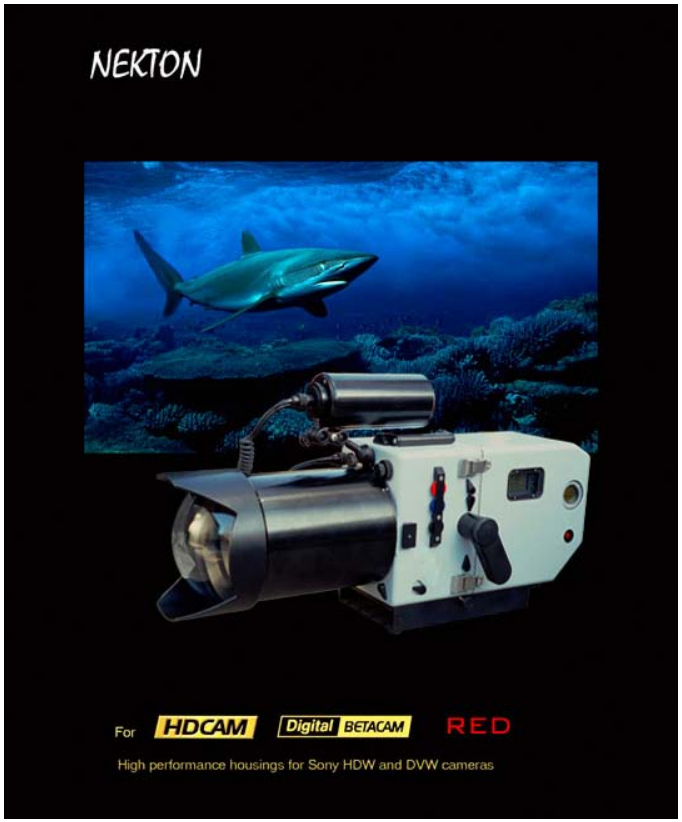
Peter's next, major involvement was with yet another BBC/ Attenborough landmark 'Planet Earth'. This was right at the forefront of technological advancement using High Definition (HD) technology for the first time. Aware of technical limitations on 'The Blue Planet' the series producer Alastair Fothergill approached Peter a year before filming and asked him to build the HD housings. Peter feared he would invest much time and effort creating high quality, top-end equipment only to see it hired out to other cameramen rather than filming himself, a prospect he was distinctly uncomfortable with. On assurance he would be fully involved he went ahead with the build, only to find some of his fears were realised with less involvement than expected. Apart from the frustration, this had a very real effect on his income. To balance this, after 'Planet Earth' wrapped up, rather than the equipment remaining with the BBC as is usual Peter insisted it be returned to his ownership and he subsequently hired it out himself, maintained it, continually developed it and still shot footage himself whenever possible. His last big involvement was with the BBC's recent great wildlife epic entitled simply 'Life'.

Peter's long and prolific career was not without hazard, like the time he was speared by an elephant trunk in the murky waters of the Okavanga



Delta while filming for Planet Earth leading to extensive dental work. His life was at risk from wildlife too many times to mention here, but he approached these natural dangers with a typical relaxed philosophy. However, there is something he admitted to being frightened of. "Ropes and regulations can kill you" he explained. "Once when filming a cable burying device the HSE advisor insisted I was attached by rope which I could not independently release. I blankly refused and eventually he compromised so I could release it myself. Sure enough, the rope became trapped under the bulldozer-like vehicle and I was drawn inexorably towards the burying device. If I had not been able to release it I would be dead, without question. When I surfaced, he angrily declared he would rather have a dead diver in the water than someone surfacing unexpectedly. I have been terribly anti- HSE, not to mention ropes, ever since".

Peter was intensely environmentally aware. He ate fish, but not reef fish "it seems a bit of a nonsense to go filming them then come back and eat them". He also invested clean-up time on a reef before filming, clearing discarded fishing lines and ropes "it's amazing how much rubbish comes from boats, often operated by ex-fishermen who regard the sea as somewhere to dump rubbish. They don't have an understanding of the reef or what we want



to see on it, because they don't see it".

It would be forgivable if this uniquely talented man had had a sense of arrogance or conceit about his many pioneering achievements. Not so. Peter was a true genius, but still more than happy to share his knowledge and discuss any topic with openness and generosity. "I'm just a chap who is learning how to take excellent pictures underwater" he stated. It could sound falsely modest, but he really meant it.

Gill McDonald

Peter Scoones' medium format and offshore inspection housings

by Peter Rowlands

I first met Peter at a BSoUP meeting in the mid 70's. He was working at Marine Unit Technology and I had just been appointed as the UK distributor for Oceanic Products; some of the first commercially available underwater photography equipment manufactured in the USA.

Oceanic Products produced a range of accessories for Nikonos cameras including wide lenses, strobes and mounting arms and extension tubes for close up photography underwater. I can admit this now some 40 years later but the equipment, especially the strobes, was far from reliable and I pestered Peter to help me solve some of the problems. He was graciously patient with this young whippersnapper but I suspect he recognised his own early enthusiasm and he couldn't help but help a fellow enthusiast. Peter was a very generous man.

At this stage I would go round to Marine Unit's premises in Richmond after work where Peter would still be working. He had spent his day as part of a small team developing state of the art low light SIT (silicon intensified target) video cameras for offshore inspections and his evenings working on his own housings for stills cameras. The first one I saw was a perspex housing for the Bronica S2A; a 6cm x6cm format camera with interchangeable wide and close up lenses. The quality of images he was producing with that camera and housing would still compete favourably with today's images but he was constantly improving his housings with minor tweaks until the time came to start again from scratch and build a new design incorporating all of Peter's new thinking. It was at this stage that I had a lightbulb moment and eagerly bought his old housing (for a very reasonable price, I seem to remember) thinking that the images would continue for me but the sad reality was that equipment alone is not enough!

I well remember the day that Peter told me of his shift of attention towards the newly introduced Mamiya RB67 - a 6cm x 7cm format as the name implies but with an amazing bellows front which produced a hitherto unheard of focus range

Circa 1979 at Bovisand harbour with the prototype Mamiya RB67 cast aluminium housing.

which would be ideal for underwater photography. Perspex was machined and glued at an alarming rate, gears were interlinked and dome ports were blown. Very soon the completed housing was given a sea trial and found to be almost perfect. And that is the point which needs to be emphasised here. By this stage Peter's thinking process, design knowledge and experience was producing housings which were very right, first time.

Now I will skip forward a year or too for housing continuity but then I will rewind to what I believe was Peter's and Marine Unit's finest product so please bear with me.

Peter was very pleased with his RB67 housing and I was eager to

produce a commercially available one so we embarked on the production of a cast aluminium housing which incorporated one of this first “right way up, right way round” prisms for viewing the image underwater together with precision plano concave optics to correct the lenses for underwater use. The result was the amazingly beautiful Ocean Optics Mamiya RB67 Marine housing (pics attached). Ten housings were made in all and all sold to top underwater photographers at the time and one was actually bought by the Mamiya Camera Co themselves for their historical archives!

OK. Let’s rewind now a few years to Peter’s day job at Marine Unit Technology where his combined knowledge of photography, optics and electronics was producing the previously mentioned low light video cameras. Inspection photography of the condition of the North Sea oil rigs was a legal/insurance requirement and video cameras were needed to show the surface operators what the diver was seeing. Marine Unit’s cameras were market leaders and sales were buoyant. A small production line was meeting demand leaving Peter and his small team to develop a ground breaking and iconic remotely operated vehicle (ROV) which incorporated Peter’s state of the art video cameras with a thinking out

Ocean Optics Mamiya RB67 Marine

of the box propulsion system. Now I this stage I don’t know which came first - the name or the acronym - but the romantic in me would like to think that initially the physical appearance gave way to the name Smartie - the flying saucer shaped yellow candy coated sweeties but such a cool name needed an acronym of technical justification and the great minds at Marine Unit came up with SubMarine Automatic Remote Television Inspection Equipment. SMARTIE. How cool it that! A star had been born.

Please allow me to get a bit technically nerdy here but it is justifiable! It goes without saying that any ROV which Marine Unit built would have industry leading video cameras on board and there was a

SMARTIE (SubMarine Automatic Remote Television Inspection Equipment) was way ahead of its time and was featured on the BBC Tomorrows World programme in 1978.

combination of four (as I recall, there were 3 cameras, set at 120 degree offsets). Low Light silicon intensified target (SIT) cameras and high resolution vidicon colour cameras at 90 degree intervals. If the operator needed to switch from one camera to another all he had to do was rotate the ROV 90 degrees at the push of a button; rather like the turret of lenses on very early broadcast cameras!

To compliment such optically superior firepower Peter and his team produced a propulsion system which had many significant advantages and incorporated some ground breaking designs. First and foremost was the decision to use water propulsion

SMARTIE could be deployed from the back of a Volvo Estate.

The MD600 became an industry standard in the North Sea

The MC70 stereo camera

using 3 phase high power submersible pumps. Propellor propulsion had been up until now been the thrust of choice but water propulsion meant a much smoother, snag free design. In addition to the new choice of propulsion format there was another significant difference in how that power was deployed. Peter and the team decided that, rather than have a traditional "stop/start" system where a propellor is turned on or off , their water propulsion would be constantly "on" and controlled by remotely operated butterfly valves. The result was very smooth propulsion and control.

As if this alone wasn't enough, the electronics engineers at Marine Unit programmed state of the art microprocessors - so commonplace nowadays but space age back then - which could input data from the sub's magnetic compass and gyro and project an artificial navigation "target" which the operator could follow on his video screen even though the craft may be passing through an area of zero visibility. Finally there was the amazing ability to press a button which would make SMARTIE maintain its current position of depth and heading. Quite amazing considering this was nearly 40 years ago. I really believe that SMARTIE was akin to Concorde; way ahead of its time yet they existed but were restricted by those who feared this new technical dominance.

I was not party to the corporate activity at the time but my understanding was that the threat of SMARTIE to another major video camera company led to a bid to buy out Marine Unit Technology to take capitalise on their video camera technology but to sideline SMARTIE. My saddest thought is of SMARTIE being consigned to an industrial skip somewhere in the melting pot of Aberdeen in the late 1970s simply because it was too good and ahead of its time. Unfortunately its brilliance was its demise.

To end this article on a high note the very sad demise of Marine Unit and SMARTIE meant that Peter was without a job so I could persuade him to work for me to develop a foolproof camera housing to enable detailed photos to be taken of defects or otherwise in North Sea offshore oil rig support legs. The result was the MD600; an amazingly simple design, easy to manufacture yet almost foolproof for an industrial diver to use which would become the industry standard for several years.

I am not ashamed to admit that this was a very profitable period in my business life and I hope Peter would agree that the regular royalty checks I sent him were very much appreciated!

The success of the MD600 and the increasing need for more photographic detail led to a demand for "stereo" images. Two images would be taken at the same time but with a physical spacing similar to the human eye so that a sense of depth could give much more information to the inspectors eye.

I financed and Peter developed the MC70 6cm x 7cm underwater stereo camera which was so amazingly simple yet so accurately capable. Unfortunately we never got round to maximising the potential of this camera because, as is so typically endearing of Peter, he was, quite rightly, being lured in a much more exciting direction.

In 1995 I had the pleasure of assisting Peter on a week filming "The last voyage of the Thistlegorm" for Director Caroline Hawkins.

The BBC, and legend has it David Attenborough in particular, had seen the potential of Peter's low light video camera equipment and his individual photographic capability. So started a long and productive partnership of image acquisition and video camera development which would see the BBC Natural History Unit produce some of its most ground breaking underwater images and I truly believe that I am right in saying that, without Peter and his input and performance, it would not have happened when it did.

That concludes my description of my time when I was closely involved with Peter. After that it became limited to meals at the Pizza Express in High Holborn in between his BBC assignments. I would eat my Four Seasons with side salad deliberately slowly and savour the detail of his latest exploits and achievements.

I look back on it as the most productive and exciting period of my life and it has been a real pleasure to commit this to writing.

Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com

Peter Scoones

by BBC cameraman Doug Anderson

Peter Scoones changed underwater wildlife film-making forever. In a career spanning 4 decades he was the corner stone of the BBC NHU's underwater wildlife film-making effort. Series like Life in the Freezer, Blue Planet, Planet Earth and Life would not have happened were it not for his technical genius, beautiful eye for an image, detective like approach to gathering behaviour and down right stubborn tenacity.

When it comes to my approach to underwater behavioural acquisition I owe practically everything to Peter. Of course I knew his work before but it was my time in the field with Peter, as second camera in Planet Earth shoots, that I learned how to be an underwater cameraman – and perhaps more importantly what sort of underwater cameraman I wanted to try and be. Simply, I wanted to be just like Peter.

Continually, day after day, whether in the Panatanal or central Africa or on a reef somewhere, Peter kicked my ass in the water. I can't say it was easy watching his beautiful rushes night after night before putting on my slightly substandard work up on the monitor, but at these times Peter was at his softest. There is no doubt Peter can be hard on people – time in the field can be tough – but watching my rushes with Peter and having him gently cajole me into working towards cleaner, more rounded and complete underwater sequences are some of the fondest memories of my life.

Peter Scoones was a one off. A perfect blend of engineer and artist. Although we (the underwater cameramen) may not like to admit it often he was, quite simply, the finest of our kind.

Doug Anderson

Peter Scoones

by Keith Scholey

Former BBC Producer

Peter has been the greatest pioneer of underwater filmmaking over the last forty years.

I first met Peter in the early 1980's at the start of my career. He was already a legend in the underwater community being arguably Britain's top underwater stills photographer.

Peter was firstly a man of the sea, narrowly missing the Olympic sailing team and then became a photographer with the RAF in the early 1960's. There he learnt his technical skills that gave him the basis to become one of the great diving pioneers. Stationed in Singapore, he built his own diving equipment (SCUBA was yet to be commercially available) and some of the first ever underwater housings. From those early days, Peter built every one of his own housings for the rest of his career, modifying them with the changes in camera technology.

In the 1970's he built a business with colleges making housings for the burgeoning North Sea oilrig business. They were 'bomb proof' so that any North Sea Diver would not flood or destroy them!

However his first love was always underwater natural history and when I met him his course was set to break into NHU camerawork. Ironically, people then viewed Peter as a 'technical guy' but I discovered on my first ever film in 1982, making a film with Peter about offshore oilrigs in Borneo, that his technical ability was just a very small part of Peter's skill set. He was a superb diver with total control and phenomenal speed when required. He

People will always remember him for his groundbreaking filming but, in the 1980's, he was arguably Britain's top underwater stills photographer.

'read the sea' and always new the best place to enter the water. However it was his photographic eye that was exquisite, and leaps and bounds ahead of the other underwater cameramen of his time. In my view, few have matched him since.

From then, as my career took shape, Peter was the only underwater cameraman I would use. As any budding producer needs to learn fast,

Peter was a solutions man.

choosing the best cameramen always makes you look good! And Peter really did. Making the BBC series The Great Rift we filmed in the Red Sea and Lake Tanganyika where another key skill of Peter's became apparent; his ability to spot underwater animal behaviour and create sequences like they were being shot on the surface. This now does not sound special, but that time, little animal behaviour

was shot in the wild underwater and producers resorted to filming in aquarium tanks. I believe it was Peter who changed this and now very little is shot in tanks.

Up until the late 80's everything was shot on film. Then Peter worked on a bold live show, Reef Watch, using electronic cameras. His experiences on this and the subsequent Sea Trek series changed his thinking and he abandoned film…. an amazing thing to do in the early 90s! However, Peter saw a huge opportunity as he had worked out how he could rebalance the electronic camera's colours underwater to give a 'natural light look' at some depth. Now he had no need for artificial lights and the images he could produce were startlingly colourful.

I was one of the first to benefit from Peter's genius here as together we made two Wildlife On Ones, Malice in Wonderland and Reef Encounter. The striking look and detailed animal behaviour in these two little films had a dramatic impact on natural history underwater filming, and I must stress purely due to Peter's genius rather than my own contribution! It was now clear that a new standard had been set and that electronic cameras where the way forward. But there was a problem… only Peter knew how to make the cameras work and drive them!

My colleage, Alastair Fothergill, was at this point developing his landmark Blue Planet and he realised that all the underwater needed to be shot this way and Peter became a key member of his team. I was now the Head of the natural History Unit and I took great pleasure seeing this remarkable series come to completion with its stand out underwater cinematography that simply would not have happened without Peter.

My career took me into more administration and so I never had the chance to work with this remarkable man again, something I very much regret. Peter continued to pioneer, taking underwater filming into HD with Planet Earth.

Peter can only be described as a genius. Most of us are good at a couple of things but Peter combined an incredible visual eye with huge technical ability, consummate diving skills and an incredible understanding of the sea (that saved my bacon on at least one occasion!) and above all, great powers of observation and understanding and an outstanding naturalist.

There is no doubt that Peter Scoones has had more impact on underwater natural history filmmaking than anyone since the 50's legend Hans Hass. Peter needs to be remembered in the same light.

Keith Scholey

Peter Scoones

by Martha Holmes

Former BBC Producer & Director

There is nothing that Peter didn't know about cameras, underwater optics, electronics, housings and, if you got him going, batteries. He was also a great underwater naturalist; he could spot interesting behaviour where others simply saw colourful fish. His contribution to natural history filmmaking is immeasurable and not just underwater: by producing the most beautiful images of coral reefs imaginable and grading the shots underwater as he filmed, he influenced the trend for saturated, sumptuous images that we now take for granted across natural history output.

Underwater, Peter was the visionary who, ahead of the game, recognised that the advent of video cameras would revolutionise underwater filming. Peter forged ahead deconstructing and rebuilding cameras to fit into his personalised, self-built underwater housings. He would do this for months on end in his own workshop, but you might also find him at one in the morning, in the bowels of a rolling ship, machining parts to perfect the design. Perfection was the name of Peter's game.

I worked with Peter on numerous productions first as a presenter and later as a producer. On Reefwatch and Sea Trek when Mike de Gruy and I were wearing 'bubble helmets' and were tethered to the boat (a floating studio) by our sound cables, Peter was the mobile cameraman, swimming off to film our subjects. He was independent and happy to be so, but he was a vital part of the team. Peter's ability to keep the cameras working during the 6-week shoots was essential and every evening he would be stripping down a camera or repairing a battery pack.

On Life in the Freezer my role had changed to director and it took some time for us to find a way to work together. It must have been hard for him; I was a young, ambitious director wanting to push the boundaries. Peter didn't like being pushed. Once I had worked out how to appeal to his better nature we rubbed along pretty well. Peter loved solving difficulties, and if I presented a sequence that I wanted to film as a challenge, either creative or technical, he would rise to the challenge and overcome it… without fail.

We worked on land together too when Peter helped me film hippos at night and underwater for a Wildlife on One. Again, both sequences were technical challenges and Peter was right for the job.

One important part of the equation was his partner Georgette. Peter was always happier when Georgette was with him and as she was such an accomplished assistant having her on location was a bonus on all fronts.

On Blue Planet Peter was pretty much the sole cameraman for the Coral Seas programme. He was in his element, because it was coral reefs where he was truly at home. He and Georgette made a brilliant and productive team working from the Great Barrier Reef, Thailand and the Maldives to the Red Sea on all manner of boats. And it was on this programme that I think he truly excelled.

Martha Holmes

Personal Reflections on Peter Scoones

by Dr Alex Mustard

Peter in his beloved Red Sea

It is June 1988, I am thirteen years old and sitting in the back of the car en route to my grandmother's house in Leamington Spa. I am not happy. I am looking forward to seeing Grandma, but all week I have been counting down the days, waiting for a program to come on the TV. Now it is the weekend and it seems I am going to miss it.

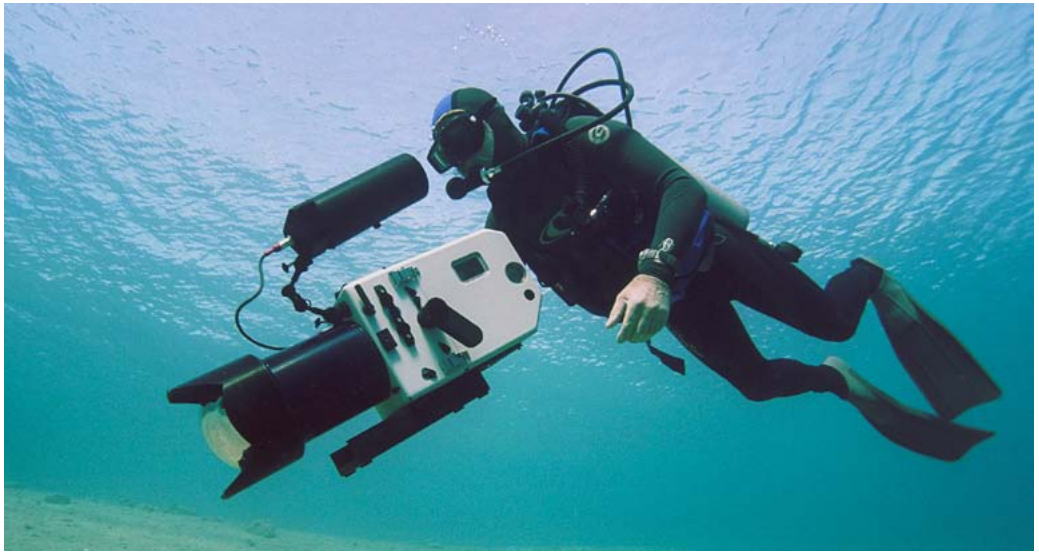
A tantrum or two later and a deal is struck. Her TV is small, but I am allowed to watch the installments as the show was broadcast at intervals during the day. I sit just a couple of feet from the screen, transfixed.

The program was a BBC production called Reefwatch. Beamed live(-ish) from underwater in the Red Sea it introduced me to names such as the Red Sea and Ras Mohammed. But one stood out above these. I was already taking underwater photographs myself and was keen to glean all I could from the show. Waiting for the credits I saw "Photography – Peter Scoones". He was the first underwater photographer I knew the name of. I became a fan, instantly.

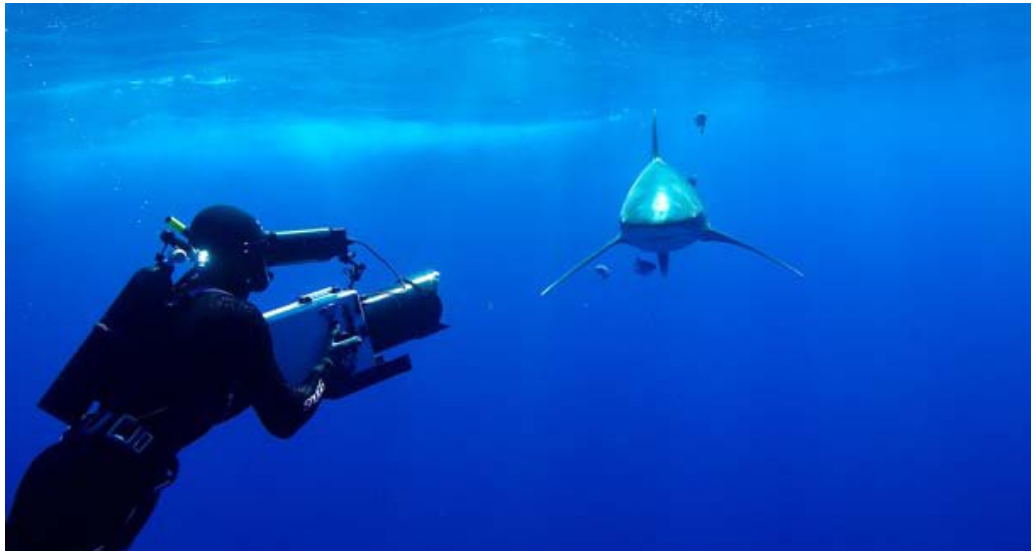
Throughout my school days I followed the adventures of Scoones in TV credits and diving magazines. I never dreamt I would meet him.

Spin on ten years to June 1998. I am now 23 and a marine biology PhD student, getting increasingly serious about my underwater photography. I have begun to win some competitions and this had led to my invite for a special Red Sea trip. It is a big step up for me and my excitement is mixed with nerves. It is my first time in Sharm El Sheikh and my first time on a liveaboard. But this was no ordinary safari. This charter had been organised by Peter Scoones to film for the coral reefs episode of a new BBC series that is going to be called Blue Planet. I am onboard for a week.

We arrive late at night and I collapse into my bunk. The next morning I am woken as the engines start as we leave the Travco marina and I stagger out into the bright light on the dive deck. Scoones is there,



Bouyancy control, ergonomics and trim were under total control



Peter was fearless

foot on bench, elbow on knee, hand on chin, staring out over the water at the cliffs of Shark Observatory. “Have you heard about Ras Mohammed?” he asks. I stumbled a reply.

That trip totally changed my approach to underwater photography. The way I dived, prepared for dives, looked after my camera, thought about my photography. I soaked up as much as I could.

Over the years I got to know Peter much better and took every occasion we met on trips, at BSoUP or at diveshows to pick his brain for ideas. His advice influenced my own photography in so many ways, from destinations I visited, to specific shots I produced and even to my general approach to underwater photography.

Peter was an innovator, never content to merely produce excellent images, he always wanted to push boundaries and thrill his audience with visuals they had never seen before. It is an approach I have tried to adopt with my own photography, challenging myself to create new types of images to keep people continually engaged with my work.

Underwater photography is a technically challenging genre and Peter’s engineering prowess was instrumental in driving his creativity. It is not simply about being able to build the equipment you need to get the shot. It starts with having the imagination to conjure a fresh artistic vision and then, by truly understanding the nature of light underwater and the underwater photographic process, you can then work out how existing equipment needs to be modified to bend and sometimes break the rules that constrain everyone else.

Peter’s other trump card was field craft. Sadly, underwater photographers speak about this much less than wildlife photographers on land: it is simply having the experience in nature to know where and when to find animals and behaviours and how to approach them photographically. There is no shortcut to field craft, it is earned, not awarded. It is often the fundamental difference between average and exceptional images and Scoones was the master.

Peter was often frustrated by BBC researchers, who wrote his shoot lists from academic papers, rather than field knowledge! And he encouraged me to get underwater, get away from people and really watch the reef. To not just rely on what I learned in books.

In short, if you were designing an underwater image maker from scratch, these are exactly the attributes you’d choose. And with them it is no surprise that Scoones dominated underwater photography and film for so many decades. I am also certain the Scoones mindset will infect my photography always, and my pictures will be all the better for it.

Dr Alex Mustard

Peter Scoones

Obituary

by Colin Doeg

Peter Scoones, one of the world's legendary wildlife underwater cameramen, has died after a defiant battle against cancer. He was 76.

Co-founder of the British Society of Underwater Photographers (BSoUP), he learned photography while serving in the RAF in Singapore in 1959. He was so captivated by the colourful tropical fish he saw while snorkelling to clean the hull of his sailing dinghy that his passion switched immediately from boats to recording the life and scenery he saw in the warm tropical water.

Unofficially, Royal Navy divers trained him to dive using oxygen rebreather equipment but subsequently he changed to air and housed his first cameras in boxes made from bits of Perspex from aircraft windows.

Returning to civilian life, he became increasingly involved in the development of equipment for the off-shore oil industry. He was technical director of a company providing sonar, photographic and television inspection equipment for use in the North Sea and also designed a remotely operated vehicle which was groundbreaking at the time.

However, by 1979 underwater photography took over as his main commercial activity. He became involved in the filming of TV commercials and features, but his heart was always in the natural history and documentary fields.

His break came when the BBC Natural History Unit mounted an expedition to the Comoros Islands to search for coelacanths, a fish once thought to have been extinct for millions of years.

Word had reached the Unit of a special low-light camera that Peter had developed. They wanted to hire it but he said it was only available if he could come along to operate it.

That was the first time he met Sir David Attenborough, the familiar face and voice of so many natural history films and documentaries.

In those early days the only way to film in the depths of the Mozambique Channel was to suspend the camera from a 320m-long cable but after many unsuccessful days of searching it jammed in the cleft of a reef and was lost.

However, as the crew were packing up to return home, Peter learned a fisherman had caught a specimen and it was tied to his canoe in the local harbour.

He persuaded the fisherman to let him photograph the fish. It made a few swimming movements while Peter filmed it and took still pictures. They were the first in the world of a living coelacanth.

Scoones went on to become one of the Unit's core underwater cameramen. He played a major part in many ground-breaking series including the first live outside broadcasts from underwater in the Red Sea.

Peter was renowned for his self-sufficiency and resourcefulness in the field. Martha Holmes, one of the original bubble-helmeted presenters in that series who went on to be the producer on many of Scoones' expeditions remarked: "Peter's contribution to the underwater wildlife making community is immeasurable. He was a visionary who, ahead of the game, recognised that the advent of video cameras would revolutionise underwater filming.

"Others were slow to adapt, but Peter forged ahead modifying cameras to fit into his own underwater housings. Not only would he do this

in the comfort of his workshop, he would be doing it on a rolling boat in the middle of the Southern Ocean, or minutes before an annual marine event that would not wait for him or his perfections.

"For 30 years Peter was at the forefront of underwater filming technology. For Reefwatch, the first live broadcast from underwater, he advised on the adaptation of studio cameras for the equivalent of an underwater studio in the Red Sea.

"He led the way with his technical expertise and kept the cameras alive and well throughout Sea Trek, Life in the Freezer and Blue Planet. Peter always saw a problem as a challenge to be overcome, and overcome them he did."

This ability enabled him to make special items to obtain unique footage such as operating a housed camera on a pole from the surface - the 'pole-cam' is now widely used - to obtain the first shots of a great white shark swimming naturally in the sea rather than gnawing at the bars of a safety cage or at hunks of meat suspended over the side of a boat.

Talking about his talents, Sir David said that Peter had a remarkable gift for composition and understood fish as other cameramen understood chimpanzees or spiders. "He knew fish so well he could sense what they were going to do. You could see it in his footage. He moved as the fish moved."

The late Rob Palmer, a noted cave diver, used to relish recounting how Peter ran out of air while far into the labyrinth depths of Jamaica's Blue Holes. Calmly Peter spat out one mouthpiece, fished about with one hand, found that for his reserve air supply and switched it on. When viewed later the slow pan from one side of the vast chamber to the other was rock steady.

In 1999, for his significant contributions to underwater photography he was included in Scuba Schools International's directory of the "world's most elite divers" by becoming a Platinum Pro 5000 diver, joining the ranks of such pioneers as Hans Hass, Jacques Cousteau and many others.

Said Joss Woolf, BSoUP's chairman: "Peter was a legend in his own lifetime. As well as a pioneer and innovator, he was a perfectionist who always wanted to improve his footage. He was an inspiration to underwater photographers throughout

the world."

Said the Society's co-founder Colin Doeg: "He was a driving force in the creation and progress of BSoUP, which was formed in 1967 and continues to thrive. He originated or was involved in the development of many features of underwater camera housings that today are commonplace and available off the shelf.

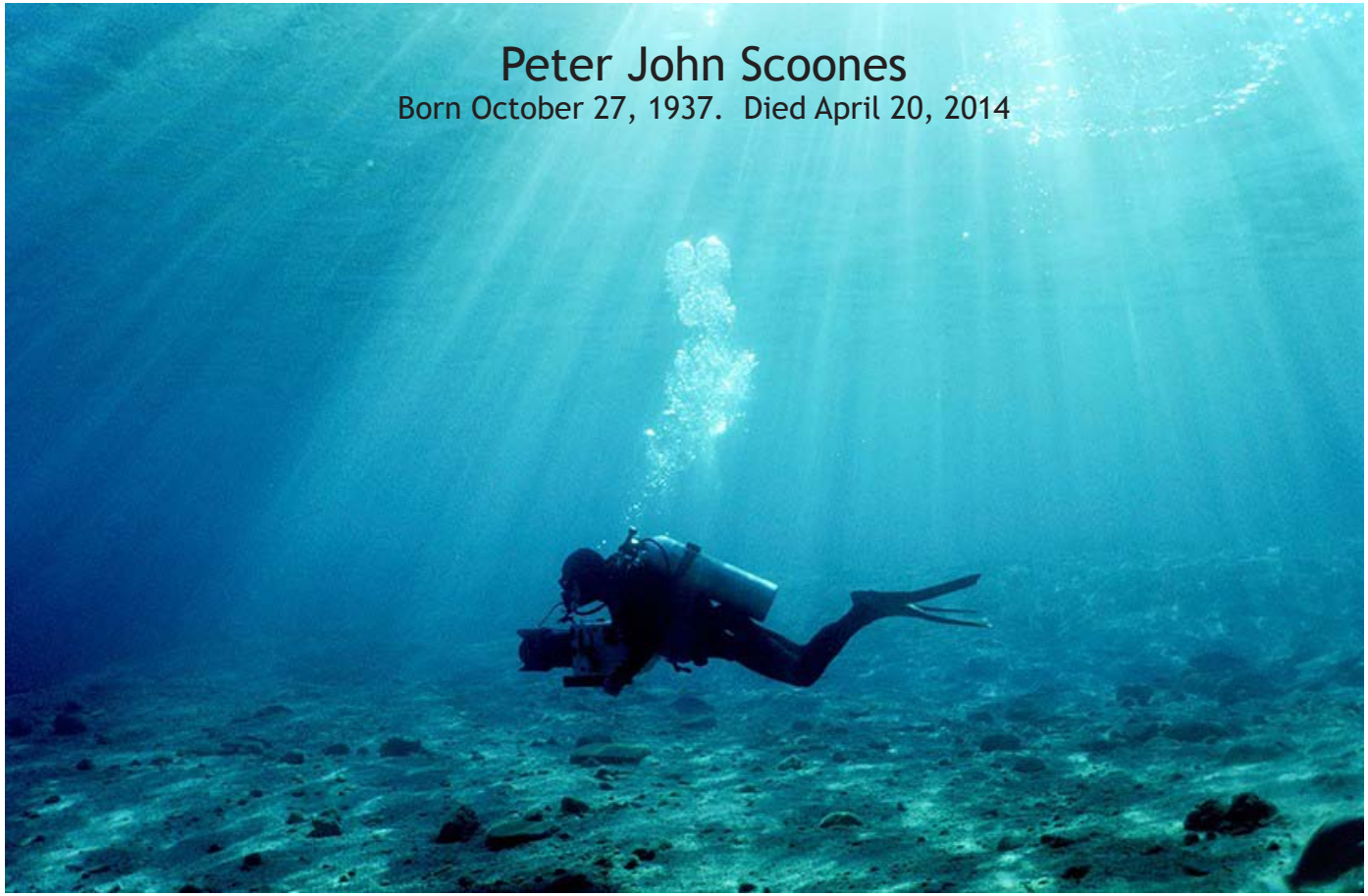
"At first we used to meet in the front room of his house. He knocked down a wall so we had more space and could project our underwater images at a larger size.

"Even in the world of early underwater photographers he was unique. He was a fearless cameraman, taking everything in his stride from piranhas and killer whales to alligators and elephants as well as from diving under ice and deep underground but his trademark footage was shot on coral reefs. He always refused to eat reef fish, they were his subjects."

Typical of the regard in which he was held by other underwater photographers and cameramen were the reflections of photo-journalist Alex Mustard. He said: "Peter was an innovator, never content merely to produce excellent images. He always wanted to push back the boundaries and thrill his audiences with visuals they had never seen before.

"His engineering prowess was instrumental in driving his creativity. His other trump card was his field craft. He knew where to find his subjects and how to approach them photographically."

Over the years Scoones won many awards for his pictures and films. He won an Emmy and a Bafta for technical achievement for his work on both Great White Shark and Reefwatch. In addition, he was twice awarded a Palme d'Or at the Antibes



Film Festival in France for his work. In 1993 he was named Diver of the Year by the British Sub-Aqua Club for his significant contribution to the diving industry.

He was twice British Underwater Photographer of the Year and recently BSoUP, the Society he co-founded, awarded him its first lifetime achievement award for his exceptional contribution to underwater photography.

Unlike other cameramen, he did not attach lights to his cameras. Instead, the lighting was handled by his wife Georgette Douwma, herself a talented underwater photographer and artist. His buddy for a major part of his career, both underwater and in life, she instinctively knew how he wanted his subjects to be lit.

As well as Georgette he leaves two children by his first marriage, Fiona and Robin.

Colin Doeg

https://www.facebook.com/peterjscoones