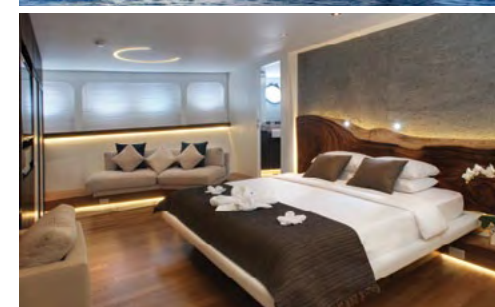
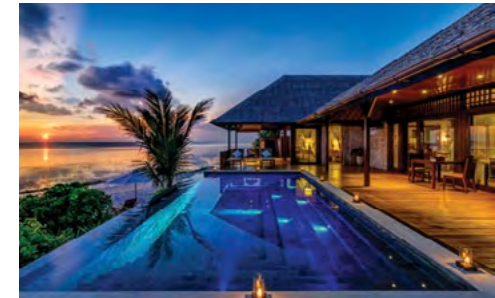






An experience without equal

At Wakatobi, you don't compromise on comfort to get away from it all. Our private air charter brings you directly to this luxuriously remote island, where all the indulgences of a five-star resort and luxury liveaboard await. Our dive team and private guides ensure your in-water experiences are perfectly matched to your abilities and interests. Your underwater encounters will create lasting memories that will remain vivid and rewarding long after the visit to Wakatobi is concluded. While at the resort, or on board the dive yacht Pelagian, you need only ask and we will gladly provide any service or facility within our power. This unmatched combination of world-renowned reefs and first-class luxuries put Wakatobi in a category all its own.



"After years of travelling to the best dive sites in the world and often experiencing poor conditions, we found Wakatobi Dive Resort. They have a perfect balance of luxury with outstanding diving."

~ Kate Pagdget-Koh



www.wakatobi.com

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by Peter Rowlands



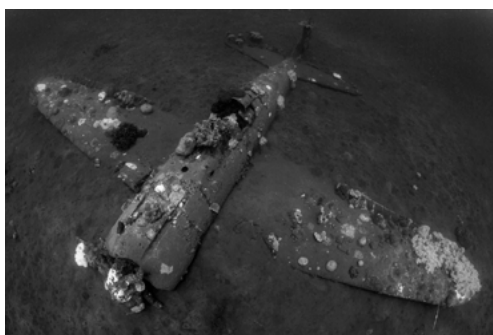
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Cover shot by
Tony Myshlyaev

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A web magazine UwP96 May/June 2017

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Underwater Photography 2001 - 2017
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www.pr-productions.co.uk
peter@uwpmag.com

Editorial

People v Science

Bob Halstead's excellent article questioning the accuracy of the extent of coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef certainly gives food for thought and I am sure will generate a response from the scientific community.

My take on things is a scientific study may not be as accurate as data feedback from boots on the ground or, in our case, flippers underwater. I was reminded about this when I had a social conversation with a marine biologist who was banging on about how a particular piece of marine life was 'extremely rare' in the Plymouth area. I didn't have the heart to tell them that we had seen several examples of this species on our dives in a particular area and it was in a very wide area of that particular area, if you get my drift.

I am not in the scientific community and fully expect to get shot down by those who are but I suspect that this marine biologist in question was indeed right that the particular species was extremely rare but only where he had been looking.

As we all know, the sea is a vast environment and us mere mortals can only take a stab at quantifying and cataloguing it. Our results may well be accurate but only in the comparatively small area we were studying.

Video crop factor

One of the disadvantages of today's hybrid cameras which can shoot stills and video is that more often than not the angle of coverage you get when shooting video is less, and often very significantly less, than when shooting stills.

There are a few reasonable reasons for this, starting with the dimensions of the image sensor. For example 'full frame' is 36x24mm i.e. a 3/2 ratio of width to height. The 4/3rds format has already done that calculation for you and is 17.3x13mm.

The problem starts when video shooters want to shoot 'wide screen' to simulate the footage they have seen in cinemas. This is typically a 16:9 ratio which is longer and thinner than full frame or 4/3rds. The result is a 'top and bottom' crop which effectively reduces the diagonal angle of coverage.

The coverage is further reduced when image stabilisation is introduced which sounds great but is actually achieved by further cropping the image area to take up any 'wobble' in the footage.

Unfortunately, as far as I can make out, there is very little disclosure of these facts on the camera spec sheets so if you shoot a lot of wide angle video underwater, do your homework before 'upgrading'.

All 95 UwP Back Issues on special offer for £9.95

The UwP back catalogue has built up into a unique record of underwater photography starting in 2001 and following the trends and incredible achievements of underwater photographers over the past 16 years - an era which has seen the greatest ever improvements in underwater imagery.

No other publication can claim to have anything anywhere near as detailed or regularly concentrated as UwP and to celebrate this and encourage those new to the sport/hobby, the complete back catalogue will be available for a limited period at a much reduced price of £9.95 (half price!) which equates to a little over 10p per issue!

This limited period offer is only available for a limited period and once that limited period expires it won't be a limited period any more so you should take advantage of this limited period offer before it reverts to £19.95 :-)

www.uwpmag.com/?p=backissues

Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com

News, Travel & Events

Wetpixel Whalesharks 2017



Wetpixel has a long and proud tradition of offering amazing trips catering specifically to underwater image makers. Many of the images that you see in magazines or winning contests have been taken during our trips. Typically, we go to amazing places and ensure that the infrastructure is imaging friendly.

Wetpixel returns to Isla Mujeres in 2017 to observe and document the amazing whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) aggregation.

One of nature's most amazing and unique events, hundreds of whale sharks gather each year to feed on eggs spawned by bonito (*Euthynnus alletteratus*) off the island.

For 2017, we are running two five day trips:

From 07/30/2017 to 08/05/2017
(1 Spaces available)

From 08/04/2017 to 08/10/2017
(2 Spaces available)

We keep the participant numbers very low and maximise the time with the sharks by leaving early and getting back late. This makes them incredibly productive for image makers.

The trips are snorkeling only.

For full details including fee, please visit the expedition's page or e mail Adam

www.wetpixel.com/i.php/ws17
adam@wetpixel.com

Blue Whale Expedition June 25 - July 1st 2017



Join Big Animals in San Diego California to experience nature at its best with this heart pounding expedition.

You will experience raw excitement when you swim with the largest animal ever to live, bigger than all dinosaurs reaching up 100 feet.. weight over 180 tons, yet only feeding on plankton.

It is difficult to imagine just how huge these whales are until you're in the water with them.

We only provide small group expeditions so you can truly have a wonderful experience. This is a trip you will never forget.

During this Expedition, you will experience a true Ocean Safari with Giant Mola's, Dolphins, Sea Lions and other wonderful Ocean Life!

What makes this expedition so unique is that, in addition to having a scout plane with us every day, we also employ five master kayakers to paddle us as quietly as possible to the shy blue whales.

Everyone is kept apprised of all whale movements at all times so that your kayak will be able to reach your whale quickly and silently.

www.biganimals.com

Alor Photo contest 2016 winner

We have the 7th winner for our grand prix of 9 nights stay at Alor Divers Eco Resort!

The photo contest that started in 2010 already gained full momentum last year and is continuing full on in the same direction. This year numerous UW photographers submitted their amazing digital captures of Alor's marine beauty.

The decision was not an easy one to make and there was again a tight run for the prize. We use this opportunity to thank all the participants, we hope you join us

again in exploring the magnificent underwater life of Alor.

The prize for Best Portfolio of Annual Alor Divers Photo Contest 2016 goes to Anders Nyberg!

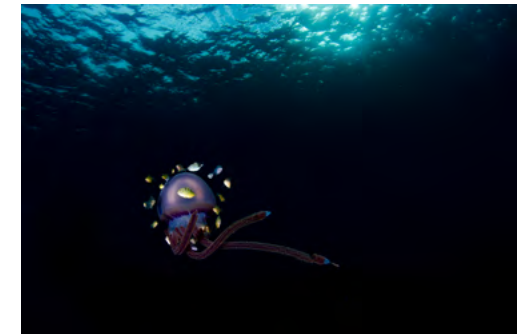
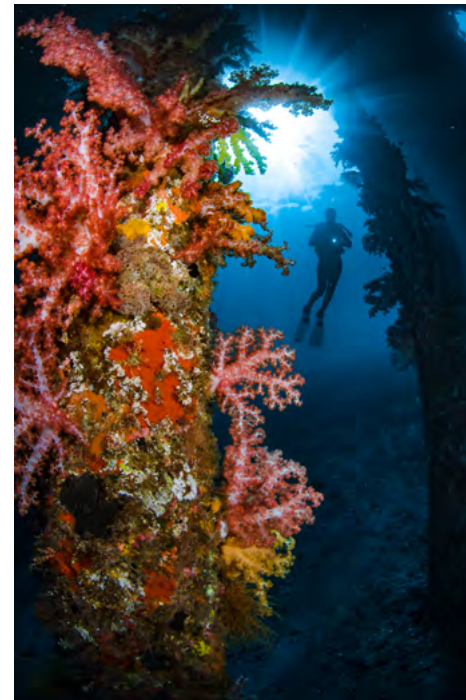
Of course he took his winning photos while diving with us in Alor in 2016

Congratulations to you Anders and we are looking forward to meeting again here at Alor Divers!

www.alor-divers.com

Anders Nyberg

www.worldoceanphoto.com



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www.baskingsharkscotland.co.uk



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Worldwide

scubadiveasia.com



Underwater filmmaking with David Diley Marsa Shagra - Southern Red Sea 4 - 11 October 2017

David Diley, award winning Film-Maker and Underwater Cinematographer, is best known for his work with large sharks, stingray and commercial film productions for the UK Dive industry.

This workshop is open to anyone seriously interested in improving their underwater videography in an informal, friendly, non-competitive environment.

This week long Underwater Film-Maker Workshop will provide you with a fresh and more detailed take on traditional underwater videography workshops. You do not need the latest, most expensive

equipment to make good movies, with David's help you will be amazed at the result you can achieve with your GoPro or DSLR.

Designed to cater for all abilities but especially relevant to those at beginner and intermediate level, this workshop aims not only to expand your knowledge of the technical aspects of filming underwater, but more importantly, to inspire you to unlock your creativity to help you tell engaging stories using your own creative voice.



<https://vimeo.com/172028218>

<http://www.oonasdivers.com/workshops/introduction-to-underwater-filmmaking-with-david-diley>



Issue 96/7

www.uwpmag.com



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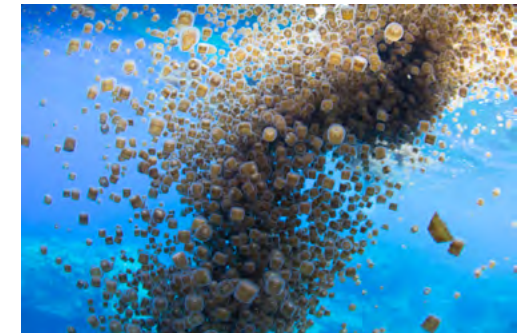
SIDE sponsors largest photography contest in Solomon Islands history



Solomon Islands Dive Expeditions along with our sister-company Dive Munda, is hosting the largest photography contest in Solomon Islands history. With over \$22,000USD (\$1.7 million SBD) in prizes, we expect to draw submissions from around the world.

Photographers are invited to submit their best photos or portfolios of life above or underwater in Solomon Islands. An international jury will reward the best portfolio along with best underwater shots. Up to 100 honorable mentions will be selected and submitted for public judging and selection of an additional prize winner.

Solomon Islands is still relatively undiscovered by travellers. We want our visitors to share their experiences and inspire others to visit these beautiful happi isles. From WWII relics scattered in the jungle to leaf-hut villages where traditional culture



is alive, there's so much on offer. Then there's the visual appeal, with scenery reminiscent of a Discovery Channel documentary: volcanic islands, croc-infested mangroves, huge lagoons, amazing underwater vistas and tropical islets. Travelling the Solomons onboard Taka allows divers and adventure seekers to discover the very best of the Central and Western provinces.

www.solomonsdiving.com/photo-contest-rules

www.uwpmag.com

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www.wetpixel.com

Dive Explore Indonesia



MSV SEVEN SEAS
LIVEBOARDS



RAJA4DIVERS
RAJA AMPAT, RESORTS



SV ARENUI
LIVEBOARDS



CALICO JACK
LIVEBOARDS



MSV AMIRA
LIVEBOARDS



NAD LEMBEH RESORT
LEMBEH, RESORTS

After 17 years of living and diving in Indonesia and more than 10 years organizing dive trips for my own clients - always in remote areas - I found out that one of the important keys for a successful and hassle free trip is to have a good travel agent.

From my belief and experience I can say a great advantage of travel agency based in Indonesia is that it can respond fast and efficiently to any trouble.

So Dive Explore Indonesia is born and offers you:

- * carefully selected choice of operators,
- * fast, efficient and reliable service (24h/7) even weekend and holidays,
- * exclusive promotions & great group offers

To help you make 2017 a great diving year, we are pleased to offer you an exclusive 5% discount on any booking! (Valid until Aug 30th 2017)

Please contact us for any query around this vast archipelago:

www.diveexploreindonesia.com

www.uwpmag.com



Maldives with Backscatter Manta Bay on the Manthiri September 2017

We just can't get enough of the amazing diving in the Maldives. This marks our 10th charter on the Manthiri since 2009 when we first witnessed the manta aggregation of Hanifaru. We've since fallen in love the surrounding reefs with gin clear water, lush soft corals and large schools of fish. These two 10 night charters are scheduled during the prime time of year to give us the best opportunities to see all the action.

Hanifaru Bay, Maldives is one of the greatest dive sites in the world. For a few months each year, ocean currents and wind patterns align to capture krill in this white sand bay in shallow water. This tiny bay acts as a natural krill net and thus attracts hundreds of manta rays and dozens

of whalesharks to feed on the dense krill buffet. When ocean conditions are perfect, divers can swim alongside the greatest gathering of mantas ever seen in the wild. When ocean currents are fickle, the bay can be nothing but sand. Good timing and luck are essential, thus our experienced boat and photo crew are essential for making the best out of our timing.

Boarding: September 16, 2017
9AM Returning: September 26, 2017
9AM. We suggest you arrive in Male (MLE) the day before the trip boards. You can fly home anytime on the return day. Contact us for more travel details.

For more information about the Manthiri, check out their Web site:
www.manthiriliveaboard.com

<http://www.backscatter.com/learn/trips-and-classes/trips.php?ID=255>

Blue Heron Bridge Photo Workshop August 10-13, 2017

Take advantage of one of the finest macro sites in the world, our own Blue Heron Bridge, located in West Palm Beach, FL. This 3 day clinic focuses on macro photography, and there may not be a better setting anywhere in the world to hold this kind of class.

From composition to exposure to achieving that critical focus, this class will help you dial in your macro skills. We'll dive each of the 3 days, and given the shallow depth, you can expect to be able to dive for upwards of 2 hours depending on your air consumption. We'll do classroom before and after the dives, and we'll do daily critiques.

This class is intended for beginner to intermediate shooters, and all types of underwater camera systems are welcome. An orientation session will be held Thursday evening at the Reef Photo & Video Underwater Photography showroom in Fort Lauderdale.
Thursday Evening 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
Camera Check, Slideshow,
Orientation and Dive Site Briefing,



Reef Photo & Video retail location in Fort Lauderdale
Friday 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM dive approximately 9:30 AM
Saturday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM dive approximately 10:15 AM
Sunday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM dive approximately 11:00 AM

To provide you with the best experience, the schedule may be modified due to weather, ocean conditions, or other factors.

All divers will be required to carry a fishing line cutting device while diving.

http://reefphoto.com/shop/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=162&products_id=9135

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www.masterliveaboards.com

2018 Shootout captains announced

Two eminent pro underwater photographers have joined The Shootout as team captains for 2018

The Shootout, which will be held from 15 to 23 June 2018, will again pitch two teams head to head in a live underwater photography contest. A team from the beautiful Gulen Dive Resort in Norway will be competing with their opposing team at the equally beautiful Lembeh Resort in Indonesia. The first contest, in 2016, resulted in the narrowest of last-minute victories for the team from Lembeh.

The 2018 event is proud to announce that captaining the Lembeh team will be the world-renown professional underwater photographer, Alex Mustard and in the corner for Gulen Dive Centre will be another big hitter of the underwater imaging world, Keri Wilk.

Keri captained the Gulen team in 2016, so he has a score to settle:

“If last year’s 3-round nail-biter was any indication of what to expect, we should have another exciting battle on our hands,” and he went on to state, “last year, Team Gulen showed the world that we could indeed compete with Lembeh. Next year, however, we aim to show that we can WIN!”

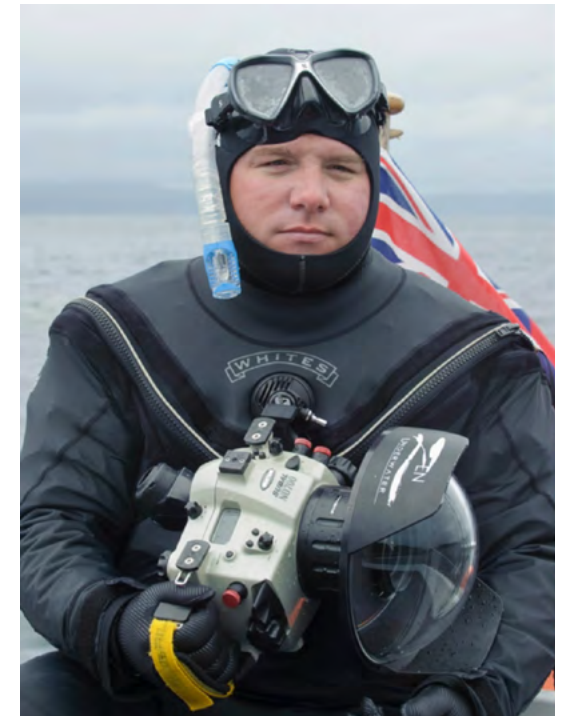
Both captains will not only be



providing guidance to their teams on how to get the winning shots but also will be making tactical decisions about image selection. They will, of course, also be helping team members to create stunning imagery by extracting the very best of their photographic ability.

Alex says: “Team Lembeh won the last Shootout, so the pressure is on me this time! It’s such a fun event where the team has to all work together to ensure that everyone gets great images to be sure of success.”

The Shootout will feature a program of live



broadcasts and reports from the event, including video discussions with the captains and teams.

Both Gulen Dive Resort and Lembeh Resort are actively seeking team members to help them to win. If you think you have what it takes and would like to participate in what will be the most talked about and fun event in underwater imaging during 2018, please contact Gulen Dive Resort or Lembeh Resort directly.

www.amustard.com
www.keriwilk.com

www.gulendiveresort.com/contact
www.lembehresort.com/contact

British and Irish Underwater Photography Championship 2017 26th August 2017

This competition engages the British and Irish underwater photography community in a one day competition shoot out. It is accessible to people who live and dive at different locations around Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Northern Ireland and England.

A 26th August on-the-day multi-location competition format reduces the travel and cost burden for competitors, whilst at the same time encouraging a level of participation commensurate with a true championship.

Photographers will compete for five awards and associated prizes, foremost being a trophy in memory of one of BSoUP's co-founders, the late Peter Scoones, and the title British & Irish Underwater Photography Champion 2017

Images can be taken and submitted electronically from anywhere within the championship geographic boundary from 10pm Friday 25th August to 10pm Saturday 26th August 2017. The competition is open to all underwater photographers of all nations, with contestants demonstrating the underwater photographic and post-production



skills to produce high impact British and Irish images within a limited time frame. Images can be from any body of salt or fresh water.

BSoUP will convene a panel of three judges (to be announced) during the week following the competition. The results will be announced week commencing 11th September and the awards presented in London on 19th December 2017.

www.biupc.photium.com

British Wildlife Photography Awards 2017 Closing date 3rd June 2017



The British Wildlife Photography Awards were established in 2009. The key aims of the Awards are to:

- Recognise the talents of photographers practicing in the UK, while at the same time highlight the great wealth and diversity of Britain's natural history.
- Celebrate British wildlife, in all its beauty and diversity, through a collection of inspirational photographs.
- Showcase the very best of our nature photography to a wide audience and engage all ages with evocative and

powerful imagery.

- Encourage discovery, exploration, conservation and enjoyment of our natural heritage.
- Raise awareness about British biodiversity, species and habitats.
- Winners and commended entrants have their work showcased in a national touring exhibition and in a stunning book.

www.bwpawards.org



OLYMPUS OM-D E-M1 MARK II

Don't let the size fool you... The smallest housing on the market also packs the most punch! Built-in TTL circuitry provides lightning fast strobe recycle time and extended camera battery life. A redesigned control set, ultra-durable new ABS-PC blend construction, and the versatile Dry Lock Micro (DLM) port system make this system ready for anything you want to throw at it.



Order now through any Authorized Ikelite Dealer. Find one at ikelite.com.

New Products

Keldan Video 8X 11000lm CRI92 upgrade

Keldan is releasing an upgrade of its high CRI version of the Video 8X series model. The name of this new version is “VIDEO 8X 11000lm CRI92”.

The luminous output has been increased to a stunning 11000lm with an outstanding color rendering index of CRI92. The correlated color temperature (CCT) is specified at 5400K. The actual output is measured at operating temperature in real world conditions.

With its small form factor and a low weight of only 870 gr. it is extremely travel friendly and fits easily into a gear bag.

The mechanical design is the same as the high flux version Video 8X 13000lm CRI82, the only difference is the use of a different LED with a smoother spectrum to obtain a studio quality color rendering. As with the high flux version, the high CRI version uses the same wide range LED driver with a 9 step power regulation, resulting a variable output from 270lm (20 hours runtime) up to 11000lm (45min runtime). The light is fully protected

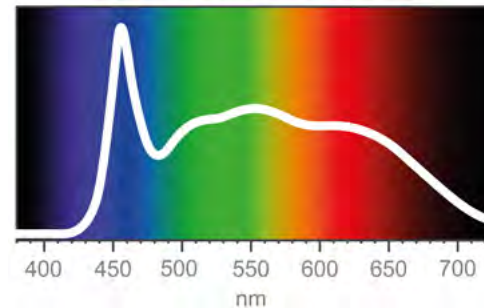


against overheating and will reduce the power automatically to a safe level when operated in air.

The quality of beam pattern also remains unchanged, with the same smooth, even, and wide beam angle which Keldan users demand. To the keen eye of the underwater videographer, the shape and quality of the beam is paramount. The dome of the Video 8X allows for a 110° usable beam angle with gradual fall off. There are no hard edges to contend with even with ultra wide lenses. Beam angle in water when measured using the FWHM standard of 50% intensity is 90 degrees, but that doesn't accurately represent the beam pattern of these lights. The usable beam angle is much wider thanks to a very even and gradual edge fall off.

Battery packs can be easily changed in the field, supporting

Spectral Power Distribution



long shooting days and short surface intervals. An LED charge indicator provides battery info at a glance.

The high CRI version of the Video 8X series is the preferred light for shooting macro and used by professional videographers around the world. This nice upgrade is sure to continue that tradition!

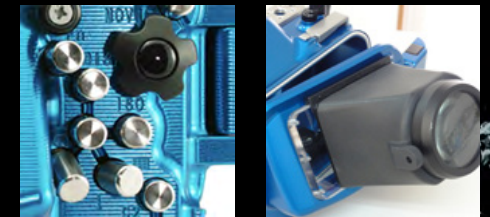
www.keldanlights.com



Coming soon!

Underwater Housing for the Sony α 6500
APSO-A6500

ZEISS 50mm Macro, 12mm Wide and 16-70mm that are suitable for high image camera were added.



<http://acquapazza.jp/en>

Nauticam
innovation underwater



Nauticam produces the finest Build Quality and widest range of rugged underwater camera housings and related accessories.



www.nauticam.com

Ikelite Canon-7d-Mark-II housing

This popular model has been completely re-designed from the ground up to include all of our latest improvements.

The single most important upgrade is our long awaited new Dry Lock (DL) port system. This exciting new system is even more robust and even easier to assembly than our time-tested Four Lock (FL) system. The new ports are lighter and more adaptable, and can accommodate extremely large diameter lenses with ease. If you're considering shooting professional quality lenses like the Canon EF 16-35mm Type II/III or the Canon EF 11-24mm, then the DL system is essential.

Most popular zoom lenses and select lens focus rings can be engaged using a simple yet effective gearing system that puts adjustment right at your fingertips. A large, soft-touch lobed knob on the side of the housing makes fine tuned adjustments a breeze. Zoom and focus gears differ depending on which lens you are using. All are lightweight and affordable. Refer to the DL System Port Chart to choose the correct gear. Zoom gears sold separately.

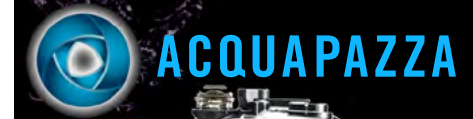
Due to differences in mount



diameter and zoom engagement, DL and FL system ports cannot be used interchangeably. The DL port mount may be removed and replaced with old style port locks for legacy users with standard or modular ports from our Four Lock system.

This modification will prevent the use of newer DL ports. The housing cannot be converted back and forth repeatedly.

www.ikelite.com



APSO-A72D

Underwater Housing for the Sony ILCE-7M2/7RM2
**Go to the depth 200m!
656ft!**



<http://acquapazza.jp/en>

MDX HOUSINGS



NIKON MDX-D500



CANON MDX-80D



SONY MDX-α6300

WWW.SEA-SEA.COM **SEA&SEA**
THE UNDERWATER IMAGING COMPANY

BS Kinetics housing for the Leica S



This BS Kinetics housing was developed for the Leica S-Series. It is built using carbon fibre and epoxy resin, along with stainless steel, POM and aluminium. These components can be used to make very light waterproof housing which can be used at a diving depth of up to 160m. The special hologram carbon fibre imparts a unique design to the housing.

The waterproof housing has a LiveView-Finder. It allows a free insight on the screen of the camera. It is attached to the posterior side of the housing. A soft, silicon O-Ring with an advantageously thick cross section operates as the housing's main sealing mechanism. An elevated bridge at the anterior side positions the two halves of the housing securely, preventing water from dripping in when it is opened. It is fastened using a secure quick-release function.

The controls of the camera are easily manageable. Everything is reduced to the essential and there are no unnecessary functions. Shutter release, mode dial, and shutter speed

are controlled by the right hand. The aperture on the back of the housing is also controlled by the right had via a wheel.

With the aid of the four function buttons all further functions can be controlled. The Joystick button is for the confirmation and is easily reachable on the right side. The back wheel is for the choice. Both functions are reachable with the right hand without letting go the handle bar. They allow a quick adjustment of the camera.

The flash synchro works manually via Nikonos V.

BS Kinetics supplies ports suitable for all types of lenses with its underwater housing. The ports can be adapted to diverse lenses by means of distance rings corresponding to each kind.

Low maintenance involves simple cleaning with water.

www.bskinetics.com



Nauticam NA-RX100IV for Sony RX100 IV



"Amazing 4K Compact"

With the ability to shoot stunning 4K video and 20mp stills, this camera and housing package offers image quality approaching that of an SLR system with the size and convenience of a compact. Controls are simple, but well thought out with easy to access push buttons. Dual command dials immediately access frequently used manual settings like Manual Focus, F-Stop, and Shutter Speed. The addition of excellent wet lens options make for one versatile, powerful, compact package.

www.reefphoto.com

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WWW.FLIPFILTERS.COM

Xit404 Body Caps



Xit404 Body Caps are available for a variety of applications to fill openings in underwater camera housings. These are made from durable impact resistant plastic.

There are caps for port openings, covers for ports, and caps for viewfinder holes. Whichever cap you need it will provide protection from dust and debris from fouling your equipment.

They are not watertight and only serve to protect the sealing surfaces to cover the opening. Plugs on the other hand are for plugging holes in underwater housings and are made of plastic or aluminum. They are also watertight and you can pressure test your housing with these plugs.

www.xit404.com

CineBags Revolution Backpack CB25B



The CB25B Revolution backpack is the ultimate location backpack. Big enough to carry your entire camera rig, while still carry-on size to fit in the overhead bin of most commercial airlines. Heavy duty construction through-out.

Other features include:

- waterproof fabric • neoprene carry handle • padded dividers
- laptop compartment • deployable rain cover • outside storage pouches for accessories • padded hip strap removable logo with Velcro • CineBags key chain • business card holder

www.opticaloceansales.com



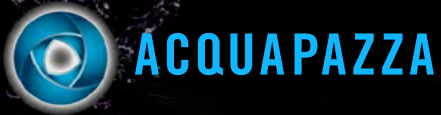
Nauticam NA-D500 for Nikon D500



"A New Era"

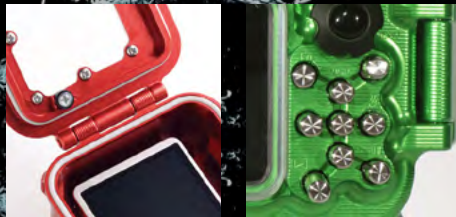
With 153 focus points and 10 fps continuous shooting, there has never been a Nikon DX camera with the level of autofocus and continuous shooting capability as the Nikon D500—not to mention the revolutionary addition of 4K UHD video. This extraordinary camera demands an equally impressive housing, and the Nauticam design team has left no detail overlooked. In addition to the superior ergonomics for which Nauticam is renowned, each NA-D500 comes with an installed manual optical flash trigger—standard!

www.reefphoto.com



Underwater Camera Housing for SONY RX100 M5
APSO-RX100M5D

**A compact digital camera
 also go to the depth 200m
 656 ft!**



<http://acquapazza.jp/en>

**Deepshots Panasonic
 Lumix G 12-32mm
 zoom gear**



Deepshots gear range just keeps on growing. The latest addition is a zoom gear for the tiny but excellent Panasonic Lumix G 12-32mm f/3.5-5.6 lens.

What makes this lens and gear combination interesting for underwater photographers is that it can be used with wet-interchangeable wide-angle lenses. With Nauticam housings choose the Macro port 29 and with Olympus housings choose the AOI FLP-04 port. You can then use wide-angle lenses like the Nauticam WWL-1, the Inon UWL-H100 or the AOI UWL-09.

www.deepshots.co.uk

VL15000P-PRO MINI



Also known as “Chubby Jr.,” this is the 4th generation of our 15,000 lumen video lights and has a smaller diameter and length from the original. This light is still full of great features including: 1) Self-contained Li ion rechargeable battery pack, 2) Battery and charger included with an easy-to-access, removable battery pack, 3) Beam angle of 160°, 4) Push-button on/off switching system with 4 power output settings and an SOS setting, 5) A built-in red LED setting, 6) A Lantern grip for easy hand-held use, 7) a standard 1” ball joint for easy mounting to any camera system, and 8) A 24 LED cell design giving a stunning 15,000 lumens! Fifteen Thousand Lumens and now in a smaller package size!

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safety pressure valve, 12-100 degree beam angle and much more.

The Fusion 1000 provides an amazing amount of light for any dive whether you are diving on a wreck, in a cave or just drifting along a reef. Put the light in video mode by simply attaching your light to one of our camera tray arms, then sliding your lens to 100° beam angle. Accepts either AA alkaline batteries (not included) or lithium-ion rechargeable battery. Includes lanyard, 26650 Li-ion battery, charger, & USB cable.

www.Tovatec.com

INON Monitor Housing for LVR3



INON Inc. is pleased to announce official release of Monitor Housing for LVR3 on March 1st, 2017.

The Monitor Housing for LVR3 is a dedicated underwater housing attached on INON SD Mount Base UWH1 to use Sony Live-View Remote RM-LVR3 which is bundled with Sony Action Cam FDR-X3000R/HDR-AS300R.

www.inon.co.jp

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Ikelite Olympus-E-M1-Mark-II-a



This powerful compact housing packs in all of our latest upgrades to controls and ergonomics. The shutter lever has been updated to a more sensitive and natural feeling curved design. The standard control hugs the side of the housing for comfortable use when hand holding. It can be easily extended using the optional Shutter Trigger Extension # 4077.93 to put it within easy reach when using a right-hand quick release handle.

The AEL/AFL button is accessed by a lever placed right where your thumb is for quick access to back button focus. This popular technique is especially handy for shooting small or fast moving subjects. Less often accessed controls are located in the same configuration as on the camera to replicate the muscle memory and familiarity you've developed with your camera on the surface.

Even our push buttons have been redesigned to reduce weight and salt build-up. The video record start/stop button is bright red anodized so that you never miss the action. The back of the housing features laser engraved control symbols which will never fade or fall off.

The camera mount is front-loading for easy installation and removal. A small mounting plate attaches to the bottom of the camera and secures in the front of the housing. The camera mounting plate does not need to be removed from the camera for surface use or when changing the battery or memory cards. The mounting plate features a 1/4-20 threaded mount on the bottom so that it can be attached to a tripod on the surface.

www.ikelite.com

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Nauticam Arri Alexa



Arri Alexa is the undisputed king of the feature film and commercial production video worlds, and the latest form factor iteration brings the amazing Alexa image quality into a super-lightweight carbon fiber body that is less than half the length of an Alexa XT, and weighs 2.3 kg / 5 lbs.

This housing has been produced in collaboration with HydroFlex, the world's leading underwater cinema equipment rental house, owned by Pete Romano, ASC. Pete has over 30 years experience designing underwater housings for motion picture cameras, and numerous credits as Underwater Director of Photography from some of Hollywood's most memorable feature films. Pete's expertise, combined



with the unmatched Nauticam design and manufacturing capability, form the perfect underwater housing system for Alexa Mini - available for rent at HydroFlex Partners worldwide.

Alexa Mini is ideal for use on drones, gimbals, and integrates perfectly into the Nauticam Cinema System. The 4:3 Alexa sensor, complete with anamorphic de-



squeeze, ArriRAW, and ProRes recording in camera to CFast 2.0 cards in an underwater system. Footage that cuts seamlessly with other Alexa cameras on set, with the same workflow.

www.nauticam.com



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thought at your fingertips
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Weefine Divergo-1



The Weefine Divergo-1 is a very compact underwater camera with an exceptional high image quality (photo and video), Wifi, special underwater white balance programs for blue and green water and several unique features.

The Weefine Divergo-1 underwater camera is equipped with a high quality 16 Megapixel Sony CMOS sensor. This sensor, together with the F2.0 lens, produce beautiful images, even in less ideal circumstances. With this Instant fixed focus lens you can quickly shoot photos without shutter delay. You will never miss a shot.

The huge field of view (140 deg. on land, 106 deg. underwater) will let you capture big animals even from a short distance and the special underwater programs for blue and green water, result in beautiful colorful pictures. It's also possible to set the color temperature manually..



The Weefine Divergo-1 not only takes beautiful photos but also impressive videos. The video quality is very good: Full HD 1080P up to 60fps and 720P up to 120fps. That's perfect for slowmotion scenes!

A big advantages of the Divergo-1 is the possibility to easily swap both the battery and the memory card. The high capacity battery will last for 3 hours (with the screen turned on!). Want to dive more than 3 times? No problem, just swap the battery for another 3 hours of fun.

The camera uses regular micro-sd cards with capacities up to 64Gb. The same type of cards that are used in most modern cellphones.

www.uwcamerastore.com

www.uwpmag.com



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SIGMA dp00, dp10, dp20, dp30**



<http://acquapazza.jp/en>

Sealux CS Panasonic GH5 housing



The new Sealux CS GH5 housing made for the innovative Lumix GH5 provides perfect support for both photography and video.

To support the new high resolution OLED-viewfinder of the GH5 we added the option to make use of the superb Sealux viewfinders to this housing. The basic version of the housing comes without a viewfinder, but the Sealux viewfinders can be added later on at any time. Now, this digital system camera with its superb operability can fully show its strengths underwater, too.

The new camera slide makes fitting the camera very easy. The grip fitted at the front is adjustable! We have designed the precision-fit CSGH5 housing in such a way that you can make perfect underwater use of your Lumix GH5 camera.

www.sealux.de

Nimar NI7DMK2WB for Canon EOS 7D Mark II



With the new Nimar Water Sports housing made for Canon EOS 7D Mark II it is possible to take pictures and shoot videos above and under the water.

The new Water Sports line, while keeping the performing quality features of the classical underwater version, the same manufacturing material and the depth limit of use (-60m/-197'), is designed to be used on the water surface for water sports like surf, windsurf, sup, triathlon, etc.

The Base Water Sports Housing has been designed to be used exclusively with the 2 Button Pistol Grip Trigger.

www.aditech-uw.com

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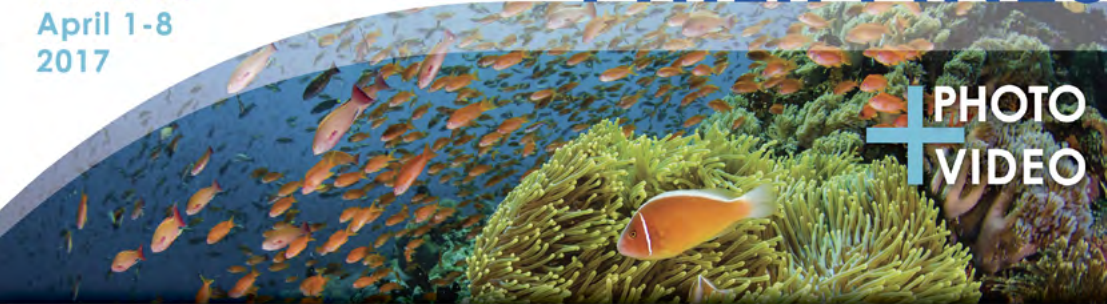


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FishSpy

FishSpy is a professional quality camera housed inside an aerodynamic marker float, that transmits live video to your phone or tablet. Durable and designed to withstand the rigours of fishing, it is waterproof to depths of 10m.

The camera records and then transmits live footage at ranges of up to 100m, enabling you to find features, check the presentation of your bait, and see the fish interact with your bait. You will be amazed at what you have been missing!

FishSpy generates its own Wi-Fi signal and transmits it to your portable wifi-enabled device, so there is no need to worry about having an internet connection or phone signal on the lake. FishSpy does it all.

The specially designed low light camera records and transmits clear pictures in murky or coloured water, so you will always be able to find the perfect spot. If the water is too deep for a clear picture, not a problem - submerge FishSpy down to the lakebed and then play back the footage when FishSpy returns to the surface. Once submerged, FishSpy will lose its Wi-fi connection to your device but recording continues; it's quick and easy to reconnect FishSpy



to your device and play the footage back when the FishSpy resurfaces.

Supplied with an orange fin marker as standard, with optional Yellow fins (for use in low light conditions) and black fins (for use on very bright days) available. Included in the box is the FishSpy boom, a USB cable and a foamy ring, which creates extra buoyancy and is used when fishing at distances of over 30 meters or when you're on weedy water.

Three hours of battery life and seven hours record time complete the package. All that's left to do then is share the action online, including the ones that got away.



www.fishtec.co.uk

www.uwpmag.com

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Fantasea Sony a6500 and a6300 housing



Fantasea Line introduces the rugged and stylish FA6500 Housing for the Sony a6500 and a6300 mirrorless cameras. The housing is expected in April 2017.

The Fantasea FA6500 Housing was designed and manufactured specifically for the Sony a6500 and a6300 cameras. The FA6500 Housing features an ergonomic design with access to all essential camera functions. It offers the highest professional standards of functionality, style and durability.

Sony considers the a6500 as their flagship APS-C mirrorless camera and many underwater photo pro's consider it the best value-for-money mirrorless camera in the market today!

Retail price of the FA6500 Housing in the USA is expected to be as low as \$980.

www.fantasea.com

Seacam compact Sony A7 II R/S



The Seacam compact for the Sony A7II R/S sets new standards in design and ergonomics. Due to the special construction, the mounting of the camera is especially easy.

The housing is milled out of a saltwater-proof light metal alloy twice hardened and high-value anodized. Special longevity is achieved through use of materials of only the best quality: stainless steel, anodized aluminum, premium synthetics as well as Helicoil threads.

Double sealing with seamless, high-quality precision O-rings protects all shafts and press buttons. The main O-ring is of a particularly strong dimension.

The titanium Safety Lock fastening system safely secures both housing shells.

www.seacam.com



Nauticam NA-A6300 for Sony A6300



“Versatility & Power”

The Sony A6300 is blurring the lines between compact camera, DSLR, and video powerhouse with its 24.2MP APS-C sensor and 4K UHD shooting capability. An ever-expanding selection of lenses allows your pick of the right lens for the job. The 16-50mm PZ kit lens is easily and comfortably controlled in the Nauticam A6300 housing and is expertly complemented by the Nauticam Wet Wide Lens (WWL-1) or Compact Macro Converter (CMC-1) for the ultimate in versatility—all in one dive!

www.reefphoto.com

Aquatica Sony Alpha 6500 housing



The Aquatica A6500 is a housing designed to be small, compact and easily handled just like the camera that it is designed for.

With 24.2 MP stills and 4K video capabilities coming in at a retail cost of \$1,399.00 USD the SONY Alpha 6500 is a great camera for the beginner and professional Underwater Photographer alike.

The Aquatica Digital Power Saddle incorporates an optional rechargeable battery pack that plugs into the camera's micro usb port and attaches magnetically to the camera's mounting plate. This option can be purchased with the housing or purchased later as an add-on. Purchasing the Power Saddle will allow both still and video shooters to have the equivalent of two extra batteries in their housing, allowing the extra power they need to fuel their creative visions.

www.aquatica.ca

Ultralight “Sue’s Knuckles (AC-CSSK)



These are Ultralight's regular AC-CSF clamps that have a slot in one side.

Sue Drafahl requested we modify our AC-CSF clamps. Cut outs were made in the lower half of the clamp to allow the photographer to move the arm segment in almost any position.

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Also check out Ultralight's stylish new website!

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YS-03

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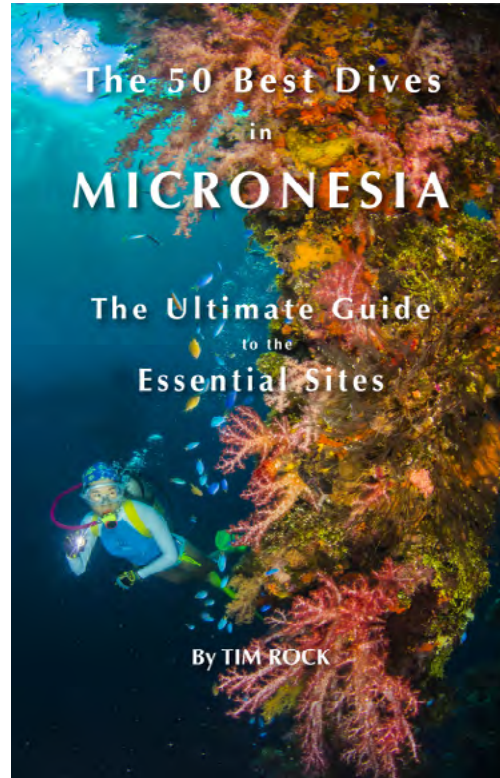
The 50 Best Dives in Micronesia: The Ultimate Guide to the Essential Sites by Tim Rock

Veteran Micronesia based photojournalist Tim Rock has a new and special book in e-book, PDF and print. It is the first in a new series:

This book gives you full details and great images of the best places to scuba dive across the vast expanse of the northwestern Pacific Ocean known as Micronesia, covering such famous locations as Palau, Truk Lagoon (Chuuk), Yap and Guam and less well-known but just as wonderful destinations like Kosrae, Pohnpei, the Northern Mariana Islands and the Marshall Islands.

Author and photojournalist Tim Rock lives in Micronesia and travels and dives the islands frequently. Here, he gives the reader insight into both the popular sites and those that are a little off-the-beaten-path. He writes about not only the main islands, but the outer reefs and remote atolls too.

This is not just a great reference book, it's a fun adventure. Page through and imagine diving all the fantastic sites, seeing astonishing seascapes, visiting sunken historical relics and gazing at the amazing



marine life and fantastic corals.

This is a great new concept from a veteran dive author and photojournalist. Full color throughout with over 200 photos and maps, the book is the first of a series that will include The 50 Best Dives in the Philippines and in Indonesia.

Available for Kindle and Print at Amazon.com.

www.amazon.com/dp/B06XXFJ861

www.blurb.com/my/ebooks/618681-the-50-best-dives-in-micronesia

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/the-50-best-dives-in-micronesia/id1216987406>

Anilao Nudibranchs 2016 by Jim Anderson & Mike Bartick

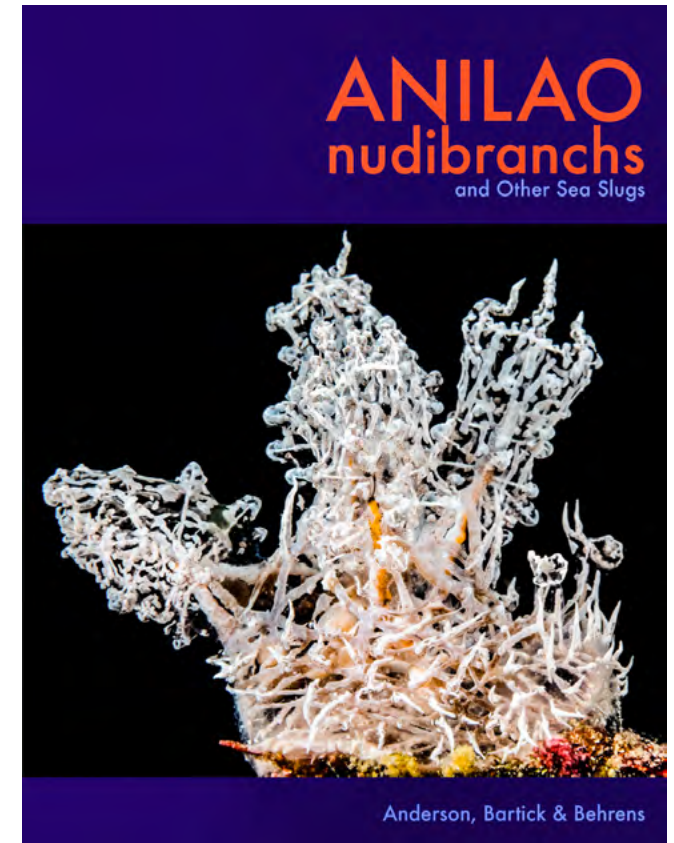
This book is available for download with iBooks on your Mac or iOS device. Multi-touch books can be read with iBooks on your Mac or iOS device. Books with interactive features may work best on an iOS device. iBooks on your Mac requires OS X 10.9 or later.

A guide to the nudibranchs and other sea slugs seen during the 1st Nudibranch Festival, 2016 in Anilao in the Batangas region of Luzon Island in the Philippines. Over 490 species are described and illustrated many with multiple images and with general information of the families and groups. This is the first guide to these beautiful molluscs in this area.

\$9.99. Print Length: 511 Pages

To view this book, you must have an iPad with iBooks 2 or later and iOS 5 or later, or an iPhone with iOS 8.4 or later, or a Mac with OS X 10.9 or later.

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“Often copied,
never equaled”

WeeFine Ring Light 1000

by Peter Rowlands

As an underwater photographer who primarily shoots video with the available light I have rarely shot any macro footage as it requires extra light(s) to restore the vibrant colours but more importantly to help increase depth of field/focus. This means the extra bulk of ball joint arms and lights and these were never designed with neutral buoyancy in mind which is, to my mind, a must have feature for steady video footage. Add the need to position the lights and you get a much more complicated rig than simple available light requires. Enter the WeeFine Ring Light 1000.

The WeeFine Ring Light 1000 (WRL from now on) is just that. A ring of LED lights designed to provide shadowless, smooth lighting for close up and macro (and even super macro) photography. Ring lights are nothing new in either land or underwater photography and they have built up a devoted following; what the WRL does is provide a very simple, effective and economic package for underwater use which even I could see would take the hassle out of macro shooting.

At 1000 lumens the WRL should be thought of as limited to close,

macro and super macro shots as it is not particularly powerful but I found that with a slight increase in ISO it was capable of generating enough light to achieve apertures of at least F11 and smaller which provided a very workable depth of field/focus.

The WRL has a rear 67mm thread for attaching to 67mm thread housing ports or to 67mm thread close up lenses which then screw onto the housing port. The WRL can then be rotated to get the battery pack at the top for ease of access to the On/Off button. This works well but if you over tighten any of the threads you run the risk, when trying to remove it, of the WRL continuing to rotate rather than unscrew. The manufacturers recommend not screwing the close up lens or WRL too firmly which makes sense but to my mind isn't ideal but not the end of the world.

Underwater the WRL was, for me, a joy to use. Push and hold the On/Off button for a second and the WRL comes on at 100% power, press it again and it's 75%, again and 50% and finally to 25%. At 100% the supplied rechargeable Lithium battery gives just over 1 hour output so correspondingly more as the power



The WeeFine Ring Light 1000 comes with a Lithium battery and mains charger



A ring light like the WRL provides soft, shadowless illumination which is ideal for photographing creatures that live in crevices.

setting is decreased. In practice I used it at 100% power all the time. The beauty of continuous light as opposed to strobe lighting is that you see the effect of the lighting 'live'.

I used the WRL on my Panasonic GX8 Nauticam housing and 14-42mm lens with the FIT 0.5 close up lens which gave a minimum focus of about 150mm (6") which was fine for me as



The tapped hole below the battery compartment is for an adaptor to mount the light onto a remote arm. This should be available shortly.



The battery compartment holder has double O rings



The 1000 lumen output is quite suited for balanced lighting in UK waters



Zooming the Panasonic 14-42 in gets detail on this crab under a crevice without changing the lighting perspective.

I got used to this style of photography again.

Initially I used autofocus which would ordinarily have worked well but there was the beginnings of a plankton bloom which meant every now and then I got sharp plankton shots rather than the intended subject. On the next dive I switched to manual focus which solved this and I have used that ever since.

The light from the WRL is 5000/5500K which to all intents and purposes is daylight so white balance can be set at AWB or Daylight and forgotten about. Exposure-wise I shot in Manual and was soon getting very consistent exposures as the camera to subject distance only varied slightly. This left me free to look for subjects and concentrate on framing rather than exposure technicalities. Ideal and a very simple rig to handle.

There is no doubt that the WeeFine Ring Light lured me back to macro photography because it offered simplicity without any loss of quality and that's exactly what I wanted and got. As a result this combination is now a permanent piece of kit in my armoury.



I must declare that I was sent a WRL to review by the Underwater Camera Store in the Netherlands. and was offered a generous discount if I decided I liked it enough to buy it and, as you will see from the above, I did but even at the full price of Euro 249 I think it is well made and very good value.

Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com

www.uwcamerastore.com

Don't settle for 2nd best



Film - No Filter No
White Balance



Digital - No Filter Manual
White Balance



Magic Filter Manual
White Balance

Digital cameras have opened up new possibilities to underwater photographers. For available light photography manual white balance is an invaluable tool for restoring colours. But when you use it without a filter you are not making the most of the technique. You're doing all the hard work without reaping the full rewards. These three photos are all taken of the same wreck in the Red Sea. The left hand image was taken on slide film, which rendered the scene completely blue. The middle image is taken with a digital SLR without a filter, using manual white balance. The white balance has brought out some of the colour of the wreck, but it has also sucked all the blue out of the water behind the wreck, making it almost grey. The right hand image is taken with the same digital camera and lens, but this time using an original Magic Filter. The filter attenuates blue light meaning that the colours of the wreck are brought out and it stands out from the background water, which is recorded as an accurate blue.

www.magic-filters.com

Our World Underwater 2017 winners

The Our World Underwater international underwater photography and video competition has become known as the “Superbowl” of underwater imaging events. The competition celebrates and highlights both art of underwater photography as well as the beauty of the ocean.

This year the panel of judges went through thousands of images and videos taken by novice to professional photographers and videographers from around the world.

\$55,000 in prizes were awarded to the winners. Congratulations to Yatwai So, who won Best of Show for his 1st place image from the Macro Unrestricted category.

Winners were announced live on stage during the Our World Underwater film festival in Chicago (February 24–26, 2017), and will be published by supporting media partners worldwide. You can enjoy the winning images and video below.

www.underwatercompetition.com



*yatwai so
Best in Show &
Macro Unrestricted*



*Beau Pilgrim
Wide Angle Unrestricted*



*J.R. Sosky
Compact Cameras*

Coral Bleaching on the GBR

By Bob Halstead

If you live on a dive boat for decades, as both film maker Ben Cropp and I have done, you get to see a lot of amazing things - such as the time when, cruising through the night, I suddenly found the boat surrounded by huge patches of pulsing lights. Or the evening thousands of flying fish decided to commit suicide on my deck. One unforgettable day I looked down to see what had been a glorious reef transformed into a glowing graveyard of white corals.

Late in 2015, Prof. Ove Hoegh Guldberg, Director of the *Global Change Institute* at the University of Queensland, informed the *Cairns Post* that, because of the current strong El Nino, the Great Barrier Reef was likely to experience a major coral bleaching event early in 2016.

Ben and I independently replied to the *Cairns Post* saying, with hope, that bleaching was not certain, as that depended on many factors. Alas, at the end of February 2016 “paling” (slight loss of colour) of corals was noticed at Lizard Island. Hoegh Guldberg was right, and the alarmists woke up. Suddenly El Nino became “Climate Change” and the reefs were “dying”. I use “Climate Change” with capitals

for “Catastrophic Anthropogenic Global Warming” so that you are not confused – everyone knows the climate changes).

Corals are fascinating creatures because they are both animal and plant. The symbiotic plant matter, *zooxanthellae*, are essential for corals’ health. Through photosynthesis they use CO₂ and sunlight to produce 90% of the food necessary for corals. But they are sensitive to stress caused by heat, sun’s radiation, calm water, rain, and also cold and pollution. If the weather gets hot, and calm, and skies are cloudless then the stress is enough to start corals expelling their *zooxanthellae*. The first stage of coral bleaching shows when the tips of coral branches go white. In the second stage, called “paling”, coral colours become fluorescent pastel shades, and so do some anemones. When full bleaching occurs the whole coral will turn white. At this time all the *zooxanthellae* have been expelled from the coral – however the coral is still not dead! The coral is now starving, and if the stress is not removed then within a few weeks the coral will die – and brown algae will start to grow on its surface



Bleached plate coral - surrounded by healthy corals 2017

2017 Reef supposedly “devastated by bleaching” in 2016





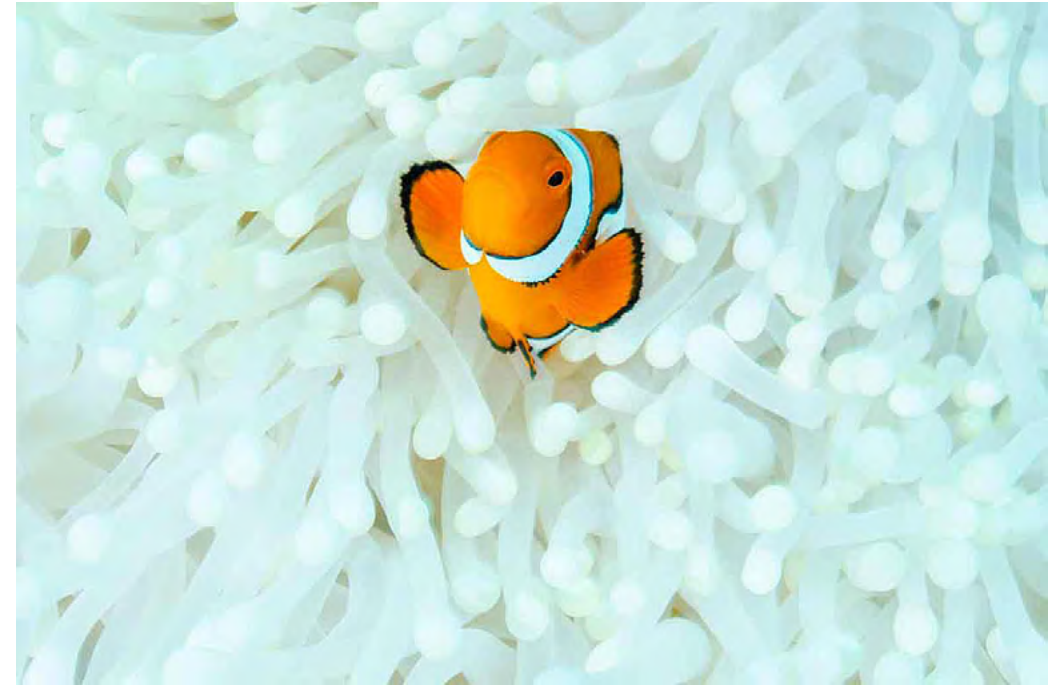
“Paled” corals 2016

The March edition of the *University of Queensland* news published an alarmist story on coral bleaching, quoting Heogh Guldberg, using a photo captioned “Coral Bleaching, Heron Island, February 2016”. The *Sydney Morning Herald* of April 8th also published a story again quoting Heogh Guldberg and entitled “Is this the end of the Great Barrier Reef?” This story bizarrely showed images, by Eddie Jim, of healthy live coral labelled as bleached, and one image from *Catlin Seaview Survey* of fully bleached white coral and captioned “A diver checking out the bleaching at Heron Island in February

2016”. This is very interesting because there was not any bleaching at Heron Island in 2016.

Some localised bleaching was reported from Heron Island 2006/7. But when I dived Heron Island in 2011 there were huge fields of stag horn corals, all in perfect health. The reef had recovered. I had already seen the rapid recovery of my PNG reef and biodiversity had actually increased after the bleaching.

Heogh Guldberg is also alarmed about Ocean Acidification where CO₂ levels rise to such levels that the ocean becomes acidic (or at least less-alkaline) and corals fail to grow,



2016 Fully bleached - but healthy anemone

then dissolve and die. It must be frustrating for him that over the past 30 – 50 years actual measurements of pH (acidity) on the open Great Barrier Reef have apparently only shown random or diurnal fluctuations, not trends.

A recent study (*Scripps Institution of Oceanography*), reveals that coral growth in many remote places, away from domestic and industrial pollution, but still subjected to “acidified” ocean, have thrived. I’ve seen it myself in PNG. Some of the coral reefs are in the most spectacularly splendid condition I have ever seen them – in 43 years! Other

scientists (such as Dr. Shallin Busch, NOAA) claim that no reef in the world has ever been naturally damaged by “acidification”, in fact alarmists have been using the same figure now for over a decade – they say pH has declined from 8.2 to 8.1 on a log scale, derived from measurements at Hawaii, but not replicated anywhere else. A more recent study shows no change in ocean pH since 1910 when records began! The Hawaii result is silly anyway considering the natural range is between 7.5 and 8.3. Also it turns out that CO₂ in the ocean is not all turned into acid. Most remains dissolved – and as such

feeds coral polyps through photosynthesis utilising the *zooxanthellae*, in a similar way that increased CO₂ in the atmosphere encourages terrestrial plant growth. This “greening” of the Earth was recently reported (*Nature Climate Change*) at 25 to 50% worldwide since 1982, with only 4% “brownier”.

In 2008, a report from AIMS (Australian Institute of Marine Science) described a 21% decline in coral growth rates, then speculated that this MAY be because of acidification – however no measurements of acidity pH were quoted, and the headline said “Global Warming WILL change the Great Barrier Reef as the ocean becomes increasingly acidic” (my caps.). It is just another case of speculation miraculously transformed to fact. “May” becomes “Will”. It happens all the time in Climate Change “Science”.

The ABC in its eagerness to proclaim the GBR dead through Climate Change fraudulently illustrated its story with historic pictures of coral bleaching from Samoa. The images originated with Greenpeace. The ABC had to apologise. The WWF in an emotive attempt to persuade us that “Nemos”, living in bleached anemones, would soon die, all because of Climate Change, promoted a photo of a bleached (but otherwise healthy) anemone. A dive blog site showed dramatic photos of “bleached” corals - that were actually a couple of small corals that had been eaten by Crown Of Thorns Sea Stars. “Scientists” declared that the GBR was dying. Even those corals filmed last year by David Attenborough were “dying”. I’ve already had overseas friends declare that they will not be diving the GBR as it is dying. But what is actually happening?

From aerial surveys and counting reefs, it was reported that 93% of coral reefs north of Cairns were “bleached” meaning if any reef showed even



2016 partly bleached anemone

slight paling/bleaching seen from the air, it was counted. This was reported or misunderstood as 93% of (all) CORALS were bleached (and dying). Most were mostly just paled at that stage, and could (and did) easily recover.

Bleaching events on the GBR are not new. In 1998 there was severe bleaching due to El Nino. In 1929, before Climate Change, and in 2002, bleaching occurred, but predictions of annual bleaching due to climate change made after 1998, FAILED. In 2006 the southern part of the GBR

was bleached possibly due to rainfall and cool water. Even so, according to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, only 5% of the corals were listed as “Severely Damaged” (dead) after the events, the rest survived. The dead corals eventually regenerated. Indeed in 2012 when AIMS published its paper “The GBR has lost half of its coral in the last 27 years” (Oct 2012) they listed bleaching to be a minor (10%) contributor to the total loss. According to AIMS, coral cover in the storm area had increased by about 19% in the past three years.

Interestingly, anemones can stay bleached for a very long time; years even, without dying.

So with rumours flying, I joined a *Mike Ball Dive Expeditions* cruise from 10 – 17th March 2016, to see for myself. We cruised from Cairns to Bougainville and Osprey Reefs in the Coral Sea, re-joined the GBR at the Cod Hole near Lizard Island, and cruised back down to Cairns. The whole area showed minor paling in patches. I saw NO full bleaching, no dead corals from bleaching, and no dying anemones. See the photos! The reef was not devastated, and that late – mid March – it could be expected to fully recover if temperatures started declining. As I write this, in late April, temperatures have fallen 1.5 degC below the bleaching threshold, 2.5 degC in all.

Nevertheless the news from dive boats operating the same Cairns to Cod Hole itinerary is that paling is obvious in the northern section and more full bleaching and mortality have occurred. At the main dive sites, catastrophic bleaching has not taken place.

When I returned to Cairns *The Australian* newspaper interviewed me for a story titled “Reef spared the worst of coral bleaching wipe-out”. There was no alarmism and *The Australian* acted responsibly. Others are not taking into account how irresponsible alarmism seriously impacts the livelihoods of so many.

Within days the *ABC* and the academics were into it: -

“Professor Terry Hughes, a coral reef expert based at James Cook University in Townsville who led the survey team, said the situation is now critical.

‘This will change the Great Barrier Reef



Spoilsport dive boat on GBR 2015 before the bleaching

forever,’ Professor Hughes told 7.30.

‘We’re seeing huge levels of bleaching in the northern thousand-kilometre stretch of the Great Barrier Reef.’

Of the 520 reefs he surveyed, only four showed no evidence of bleaching.

From Cairns to the Torres Strait, the once colourful ribbons of reef are a ghostly white.”

And then this in the same report: - “‘We’re seeing climate change play out across our reefs’

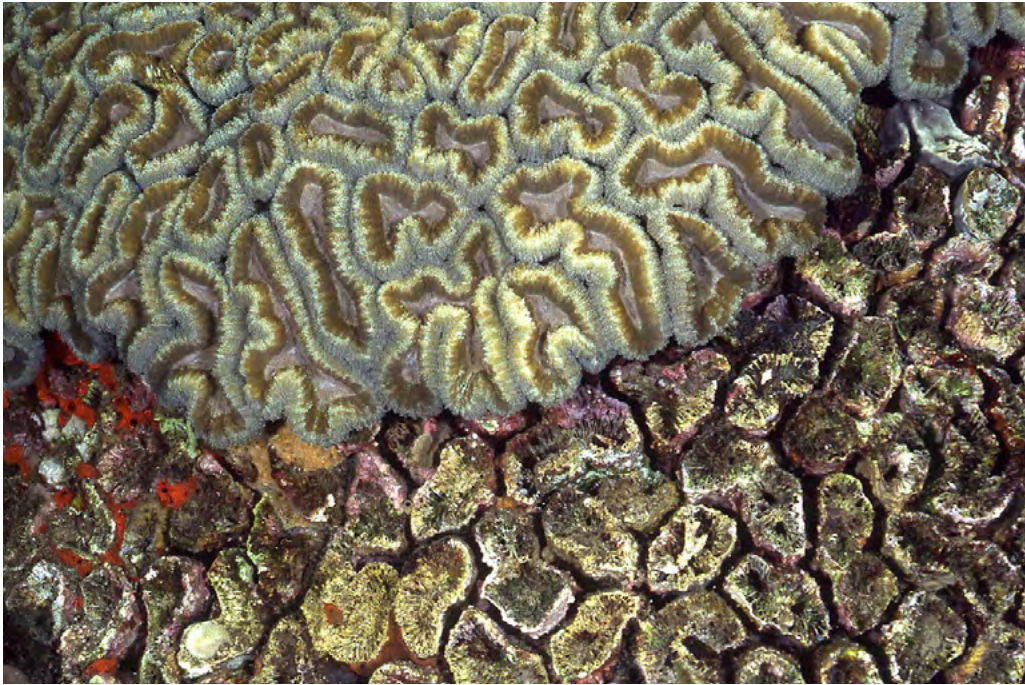
Professor Justin Marshall, a reef scientist from

the University of Queensland, said the reason for these bleaching events was clear.

‘What we’re seeing now is unequivocally to do with climate change,’ he told 7.30.

‘The world has agreed, this is climate change, we’re seeing climate change play out across our reefs.’”

Notice the irrational appeal to consensus “The world has agreed”! Before the bleaching event it was predicted “because of El Nino”, now that it has



Live coral rapidly resurfacing previously bleached coral

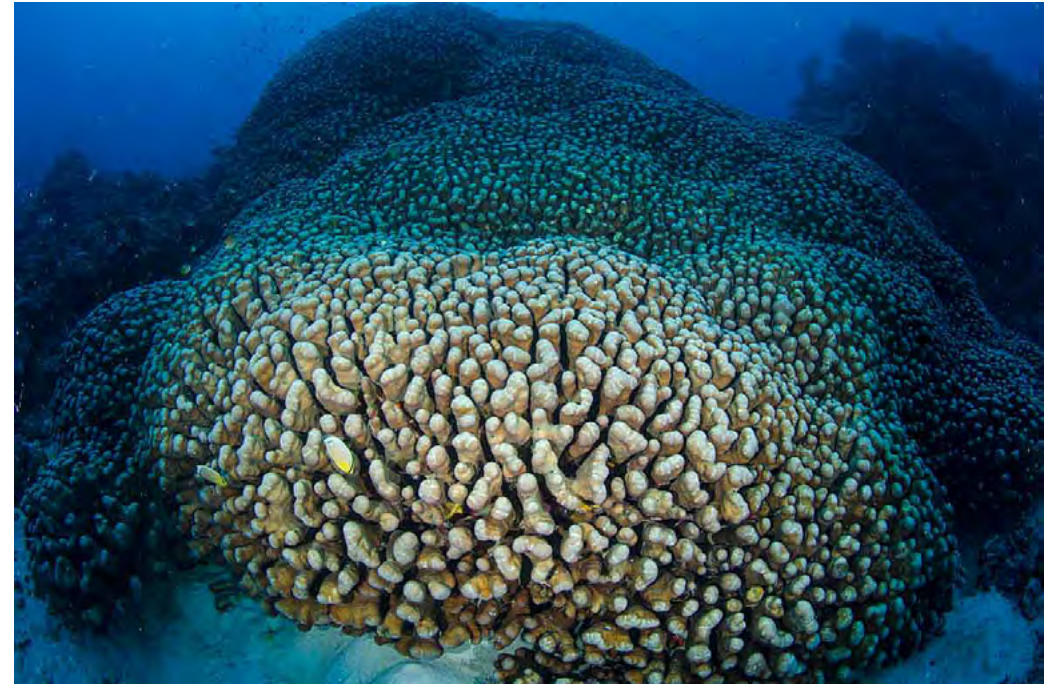
actually happened, it is because of “Climate Change”.

Readers can view NOAA temperature plots for the time showing a strong El Nino at http://coralreefwatch.noaa.gov/satellite/vs/greatbarrierreef.php#LizardIsland_GBR

The temperature increase because of “Climate Change” is often quoted as 0.7 degC over the past 30 - 50 years, or 1 degC over 100 years, but an El Nino event can suddenly raise temperatures by up to 3 degC. We have just had, we are told, “the hottest years”, yet there has been no regular bleaching. Take away the 2-3

degC from El Nino this year, and 1998, and the sea surface temperature drops below the bleaching threshold. In other words blaming the current bleaching on “Climate Change” just does not hold up. Activists are so desperate to get support for their failing “Climate Change” hypothesis that they take any opportunity to impress the gullible.

Prof. Will Steffen of the alarmist *Climate Council* sent out a passionate message blaming Climate Change and noting that the GBR supported 69,000 jobs that were now at risk because of the bleaching – well no actually, I think the jobs are more



Huge healthy Pavona coral totally unaffected by bleaching 2017

at risk because of the alarmism, eg. “*climate change is killing reefs, and killing them quickly*” and so on. I guess that would put me off if I were planning a visit? The point is that this alarmism is misguided. In the main tourist diving area only about 3% of corals are reported to have died. This number will rise however bleaching events NEVER produce as much coral destruction as cyclones. And I had better say it here – Australian cyclones are NOT increasing in frequency and magnitude, that is a popular myth from the “say it often enough and people will think it’s true” basket. See here <http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/>

climatology/trends.shtml
 Temperatures in the Bismarck Sea, closer to the equator, are historically higher than the temperatures in the Coral Sea, and corals survive splendidly in the warmer waters (in the Red Sea, renowned for its corals, temperatures can reach 35 degC!) so it is not absolute temperatures that count. (Within reason; some areas of underwater volcanic vents do not support coral growth because the bottom is too hot – you cannot hold your hand in some of the vents. Nearby a vibrant coral reef thrives with volcanic CO2 bubbling through

it). There is evidence that corals can switch their *zooxanthellae* to more heat resistant variants. In other words – corals can adapt, and the bleaching process may be part of this adaptation. The real problem for corals round the world is not temperature; it is toxic pollution. Most of the world's reefs have deteriorated because cities, agriculture and industry have been built close to shore and pollute the local ocean through run-off.

We now have an army of divers out there surveying the reef and collecting data. First reports for reefs important to Cairns tourism (early April) give the following approximate averages from 378 underwater surveys:- healthy coral 33%; bleaching restricted to tips of corals 4%; corals paled 37%; white bleached corals 22%; dead corals 3%. I had better repeat that – on the Cairns dive sites up to Cod Hole only about 3% of corals have died.

Environmental organisations are spreading a lot of unnecessary misery – it seems that GetUp (Coal causes Coral Bleaching) are

socialists, and do not care what they say as long as it promotes the downfall of capitalism. Greenpeace is much the same, and WWF only a little better – at least they understand the evil of real toxic pollution and are trying to do something about it. The ABC never grew out of undergraduate outrages, and both ABC and the Universities suffer from a plague of conformity. They promote “Big Ideas” but actually mean only those ideas that agree with their stale efforts. Hence Bjorn Lomborg, author of “*The Skeptical Environmentalist*” 2001, could not be tolerated in Australian academia. In his 2007 book “*Cool It*” he actually accepts that CO2 has produced global warming, but he derides the billions wasted on useless efforts to eliminate CO2 saying they could be much better be spent on other ways of helping humanity. This is not what group-think in Australia wants to hear. It seems that a peer reviewed environmental paper cannot get published without a “Climate Change” warning in the conclusion. Try reading a



Thriving Reeftop 2017

few; it is quite amazing, and ample reason to sack “climate scientists”.

Responsible scientists should not continuously blame “Climate Change”. They might also consider the responsibility they have not to cry wolf, and to remember that businesses and jobs are at stake here. No I am not suggesting a “Jaws” cover-up at Amity – just tell the whole

truth. There are certainly high temperatures associated with El Nino and corals have paled, some fully bleached, and some have died, most north of Lizard Island. But there is no excuse for hyperbole and misrepresentation. This is not the end of the world and certainly not the end of the GBR. History tells us that corals not killed by bleaching will recover within a few

months, and those killed will rejuvenate within a few, say 5-10, years.

Since my trip on the reef, I have asked a couple of friends to keep an eye on things. One of the reports was not good – further bleaching and some mortality was observed on the northern Ribbon Reefs and in the Coral Sea during April – however other experienced divers

reported wonderful pale, but very much alive, corals over a wide area, and also corals recovering. Australian ace underwater videographer Stuart Ireland has just shown (29th April) that most corals at Miln and Moore reefs have been totally unaffected by bleaching. Cairns operators hosted a special survey north of Lizard Island and discovered that reefs around Raine Island, famous for Green Turtle nesting, were in superb good health.

Now late in the 2017 season we are seeing some bleaching again – though in different areas – even though we have not had an El Nino event. Temperatures from El Nino 2016 did not fall as much as anticipated and the already warm waters were made warmer by an exceptionally calm and dry spell. Then we had cyclone Debbie, and the bleaching stopped. The reef is now in recovery.

El Nino is the principal cause of the current bleaching events – as it was for most others! We do not have to panic or “Act Now” especially when that generally means doing the wrong thing, like building a wind farm. For those scientists on the public purse, let me say that it is not acceptable to also be devout advocates of a “religious” and largely falsified hypothesis, particularly if it means that young scientists are expected to conform to your advocacy.

Science depends on brilliant minds questioning orthodoxy, not being browbeaten by it. If you cannot handle that – join Greenpeace! I am appalled at the lack of professionalism and the appeal to emotion that is apparent. It just demonstrates a lack of a good hypothesis, and adherence to the agenda of “Guilt, Envy and the Pursuit of Mediocrity” that I think prevails in Australian environmental “science”.

Coral reefs are not monuments. They are extraordinarily dynamic and resilient, and the life cycle of the living “skin” of coral, is much shorter than the 1000 years often quoted. Some fast growing corals have life cycles of only 20-25 years, and these are particularly vulnerable to events such as bleaching, Crown of Thorns sea star damage and storms. Given clean water, they are also particularly adapted to rapid recovery. Long live the GBR!

Bob Halstead

www.halsteaddiving.com



Bob Halstead's Coral Sea Fish Guide

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Bob Halstead has dived and photographed the Coral Sea for over 40 years and in 2008 was inducted into the International Scuba Diving Hall of Fame.



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Diving in PNG

by Scott Portelli

PNG is an amazing part of the world and the diving is so diverse it offers something for everyone. Whether you are into critters, large animals or plane wrecks, PNG will satisfy your thirst.

After a month in PNG getting to dive across a number of regions it has given me some insight into what PNG has to offer. And if you haven't dived here yet, you soon will see why you need to dive here. There are 3 oceans that surround the region including the Bismarck Sea, South Pacific and Solomon Sea all with their unique underwater worlds. Kimbe Bay, Rabaul and Kavieng are where I spent the majority of my time.

On land, there is a myriad of exotic mammals, birds and insects that will fascinate the biologist in all of us. The plethora of bird species make PNG a hotspot for many twitchers. The multicoloured birds of paradise, pygmy parrots, cassowaries, cockatoos, kingfishers to name but a few, draw many bird watchers to PNG. Millions of years ago PNG and Australia were linked by land, and to this day they still share a unique group of mammals, the marsupials. There is

now an array of marsupials that are endemic to PNG including Cus Cus, Tree Kangaroos, and the long beaked echidna.

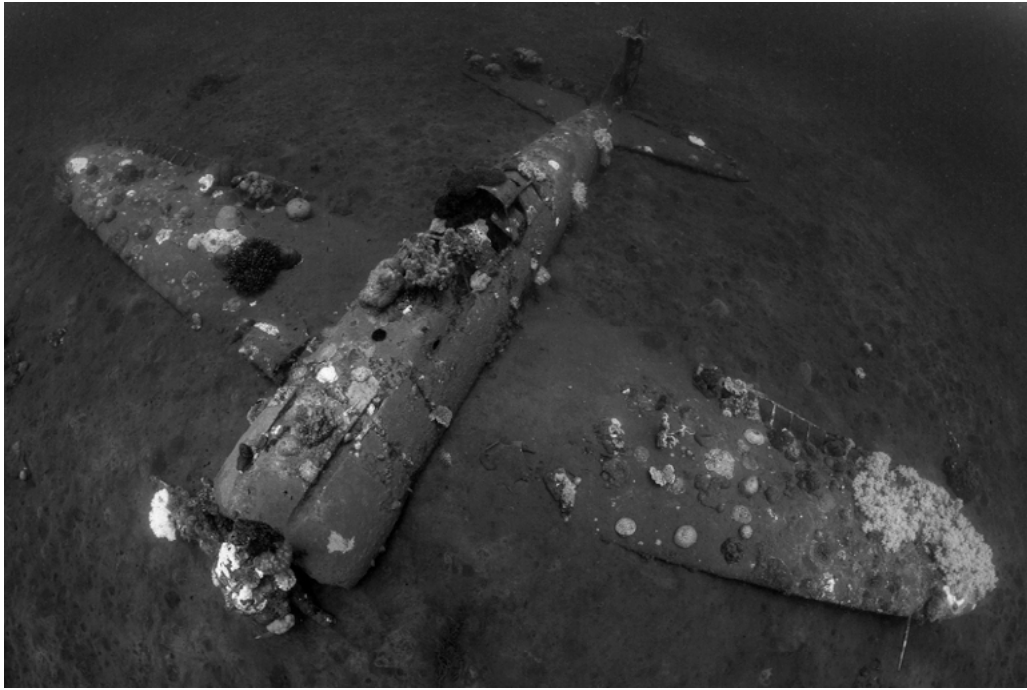
Kimbe Bay

My journey starts in New Britain. PNG is divided into 4 main regions and New Britain encompasses the Island Region. Kimbe Bay is known to most divers as the main dive destination in this part of PNG. The dive sites are located in the Bismarck Sea. And just a short boat ride from Walindi Resort where we are staying, and you are in world class diving. Even the house reef is constantly surprising with sightings of new and interesting critters on every dive. Perfectly situated for night dives as well.

*MV Febrina anchored off Southern New Britain showing the crystal clear waters surrounding the islands.
Phantom 4, 1/80 f2.8 ISO400*

*Coral fans stretch many meters in diameter encompassing a small bomme
Canon EOS 5D MkIII, Seacam Housing 15mm lens, 1/200, f11, ISO200*





The wreck of the Zero with gun barrel that the local dive masters keep in pristine condition by polishing it every time they dive the site. Canon EOS 5D MkIII, Seacam Housing 15mm lens, 1/200, f13, ISO320



*Aerial view of a WWII wreck hidden in the thick foliage of the PNG jungle
Canon EOS 5D MkIII, Seacam Housing 15mm lens, 1/160, f2.8, ISO100*

The arch covered in coral fans, gorgonians and other colourful soft corals at 40 meters. Canon EOS 5D MkIII, Seacam Housing 15mm lens, 1/160, f9, ISO500

One of the 'must do' dives in Walindi is the wreck of the 'Zero', a World War II Mitsubishi A6M5 fighter plane completely intact and in less than 20 meters of water. The fighter lies on a silty bottom with no real structure or corals around it, making it a more dramatic view as you approach the wreck and see it in isolation. The

plane is in a remarkable condition considering it has been there for over 70 years. One of the things you notice on the plane is the shiny gun barrel on the wing. Apparently every time a dive guide takes a group down to see the zero, they polish the gun barrel and remove any algae or growth, so this shiny chrome feature stands out





Two blennies meet at an impasse as they scour the whip corals they call home. Canon EOS 5D MkIII, Seacam Housing 100mm lens, 1/250, f22, ISO200

on the plane and looks like new. It's worth taking your time and moving around the wreck to see all the features.

The great thing about diving in Walindi is the team are eager to take you to the best spots on the reef and will really provide a thorough explanation of what the reef is like and what you might expect to see. They even have a great dive site folder in each of the guest rooms so you can read about all the dive sites before the next day of diving.

Some of the diving hotspots in Kimbe bay are Vanessa's reef, South Emma reef, Inglis shoal and Susan's reef to name a few. The coral is pristine and the critters are abundant. On most dives, you see large varieties of reef fish, corals, nudibranchs, eels and various critters as well as sea fans, gorgonians, sea whips, and many species of corals. The great thing about travelling out to each dive in the mornings was that we often saw bottlenose dolphins and it didn't take much to entice them to bow ride as we sped towards our dive destination.



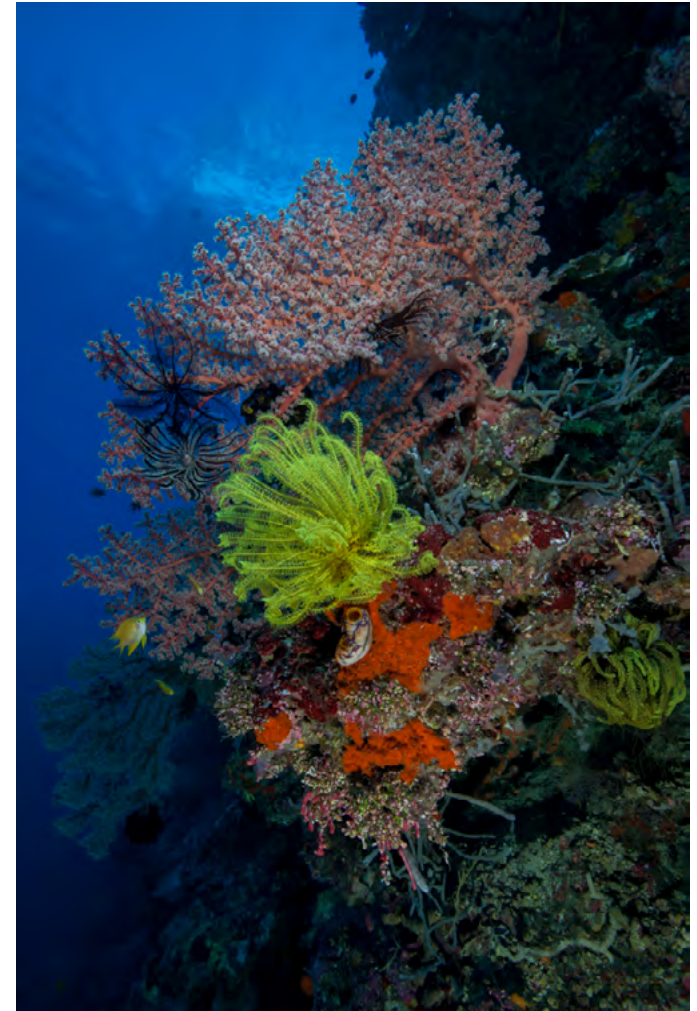
Clown fish in a bright anemone on the edge of a dropoff in the Witu Islands. Canon EOS 5D MkIII, Seacam Housing 100mm lens, 1/160, f25, ISO500

*Coral features line the drop-offs out at Fathers reef
Canon EOS 5D MkIII, Seacam Housing 15mm lens, 1/100, f8, ISO250*

Beautiful weather, calm clear blue oceans and marine mammals following us, was just too good to believe.

Vanessa's reef was a beautiful dive site with a myriad of gorgonians, hard corals, sponges and sea fans spanning 3-4 meters in length. Truly a photographer's paradise with many opportunities to shoot wide or macro at most dive sites.

One of my favourite spots was Susan's Reef with a plethora of sea whips, but what I loved about the sea whips were the razor fish, must be one of my favourite things to photograph. I can spend almost an entire dive following these guys around in circles in and out of the sea whips watching their vertical dance. Lots of colourful corals and feather stars, red sea whips, massive gorgonians make this a productive dive.



Joelle's Reef is spectacular reef lined with anemones, hard corals, sea whips and a multitude of reef fish. If you look out into the blue you would often see big-eye trevally and barracuda. But some of the main attractions on this dive is the variety of anemones lining the reef with an eclectic range of colours, blue, red, orange some with retracted tentacles and others flowing in the current, but all unique with their own inhabitants, Clown fish,



Harlequin shrimp . Canon EOS 5D MkIII, Seacam Housing 100mm lens, 1/200, f16, ISO200



Mandarin fish often seek refuge near rubble and deteriorating reefs. Canon EOS 5D MkIII, Seacam Housing 100mm lens, 1/200, f29, ISO200



Foraging turtle. Canon EOS 5D MkIII, Seacam Housing 15mm lens, 1/200, f8, ISO200

anemone fish, shrimp and crabs.

Each morning we embarked for new dive sites. The team at Walindi are very collaborative and will work to take you somewhere new each day, or suggest the best places for photographic opportunities. One of the sites we visited was South Emma. There is a cave at about 30m featuring an interesting swim-through. Surrounded by sea fans, whips and colourful corals, it was a perfect place to photograph the variety that PNG had to offer.

North of Kimbe bay are the Witu Islands and fathers reef, probably one of my favourite places in Kimbe Bay area. It is pure nature out there. The only way to get to these reefs is by liveaboard. The Febrina is one of the only liveaboards operating in this part of PNG. The reefs are virtually untouched and surrounded by massive schools of Barracuda, Jacks, and even large schools of Bumphead Parrot fish like I have never seen before.

The most special part of this area is the friendly hawksbill turtle. Our guide Andrew(Digger)

rummaged for some soft sponges between the coral and rocks on top of the Bommie where we were diving. Then from nowhere, this medium sized hawksbill turtle turns up obviously associating Digger with an easy meal and begins to hang mid water virtually on Diggers shoulder waiting for the soft yellow sponge. But Digger was certain not to let the turtle get to used to him and eventually the turtle went foraging for his own sponges.

One of the best ways to see PNG is on a Liveaboard. The Febrina does several different itineraries but I have had the opportunity to see both Kimbe Bay and Rabaul from onboard the Febrina. The staff are amazing. Our dive guides Andrew(Digger) and Josie are some of the best in the world. So motivated and so knowledgeable of not only the critters but of photography and photographers. I can say I honestly learned something new about photography from these guys.

Rabaul & South Coast New Britain

I was excited to visit Rabaul this time around, as I had heard a lot about the diving in the region but had not had a chance to visit prior. We set out from Rabaul towards the southern part of New Britain situated in the Soloman Sea. The Febrina is a great dive boat and their dive schedule allows for 4-5 dives a day which means you Eat, Sleep, Dive repeat for the entire length of your trip. You may even need a vacation after diving in this part of the world.

The great thing about this trip is the chance to see some of the rare critters that Macro divers get excited about. Personally, I love the Harlequin shrimp, Ghost Pipe fish, Mandarin fish, Coconut Octopus, Frog fish, Boxer crabs, Leaf Scorpion fish and Nudibranchs to name but a few.

One of the areas the West Linden Channel, was particularly interesting as it provided a variety of diving opportunities. One of the strongest currents I have dived was when we decided to dive the wreck

*Corals on the drop off. Canon EOS 5D MkIII,
Seacam Housing 15mm lens, 1/200, f13, ISO320*

Locals often greet the visiting dive liveaboards with food and wares to trade or sell. sometimes curiosity just gets the better of them.

of an old WW2 Japanese sea plane called. The plane sat in about 15-20 meters of water and was upside down, so the undercarriage was exposed. There was a great deal of coral and anemones growing on the plane but the main interest was the half open bomber doors still containing an unexploded bomb. Interesting...hmmm.

But the current was raging on this occasion so just moving around the wreck was challenging. Even more challenging was hanging on the anchor line for our safety stop. We were holding on for dear life in a horizontal position as the current tormented us. It was a relief to be back on the boat after all the physical effort.

One of the last dives we did near Sharon island was a section of reef with a large sandy channel and a coral Bommie to one side. I had never seen so many coral fans all clustered together in my life and the size of these fans was phenomenal, some stretching up to 8 meters in diameter. So large that even my fisheye lens struggled to capture the entire scene of coral fans.

A lot of our diving was done close to the shorelines with outlying villages, this meant we always had a good number of locals watching us dive, whether curious about our presence or purely interested in all the equipment we were wearing, we would still get a warm welcome. Especially from the children that would approach the boat in canoes and just watch what we were doing.



These areas were also ideal for night diving. Most of the night dives were in shallow waters close to islands or the coast, and the environment was often a sandy bottom with an outcropping reef. So, most the dive was spent in the sand or muck around more silty bottoms. But it was the ideal environment for the variety of macro life thriving below.

Upon returning to Rabaul our last few dives were close to the township and one was a Jetty with a sandy bottom covered in rubble and trash, but rich



in marine critters. there were a number of razor fish congregating around the anchored buoy I counted more than 200 fish. Around the Jetty piers were frog fish, blue slipper lobsters, pipefish, shrimp and scorpion fish.

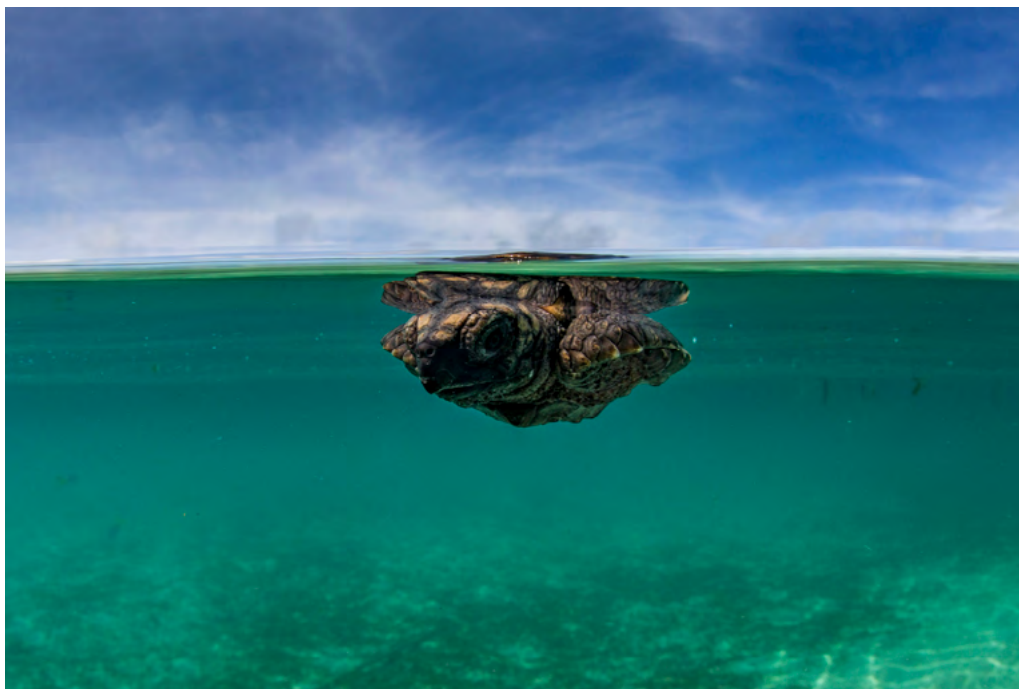
By this stage I was 3 weeks into my diving journey, but there was still one more place on the List left to visit.

Kavieng

Kavieng is a special place for several reasons including the diverse diving, wrecks, critters and the fact it borders 3 bodies of ocean, but one of the main attractions in the New Island region was Lissenung Island, truly a paradise with interesting creatures above and below the surface. It's hard to compare what the island and diving is like as it has so much to offer and the owners, Dietmar and Ange are just perfect examples of people living in harmony with nature, and community.

For a number of years, they have actively been helping the turtle populations by educating locals about the needs to preserve the Turtles in the area. Some locals now are becoming pivotal in the survival of the species. Many locals let Ange and Dietmar know where and when a turtle has laid its eggs on various islands and before the locals can eat them, they relocate the clutch to Lissenung and provide safe nesting areas for the turtles to incubate and hatch, before releasing them back into the ocean.

Occasionally they will nurse weak individuals back to health which involves, feeding and ensuring the turtles remain strong for the long journey out to sea. We met one of these little turtles during its rehabilitation, nicknamed bubbles because it liked to swim next the air bubbles in the tank from the aquarium



New hatchlings need to be able to fend for them self as soon as they leave the shell. This little hawksbill from Lissenung island was ready to start its long journey. Canon EOS 5D MkIII, Seacam Housing 15mm lens, 1/100, f8, ISO250

pump. This little turtle had an injured flipper and refused to swim with its front flippers, and would just use the smaller back flippers to get around.

The other interesting thing about Dietmar & Ange, is the makeshift clinic they have set up to tend to the locals on surrounding islands. Basically fixing, cuts and scratches and helping the locals avoid any serious infection, this clinic is open every evening. You never know how many people will turn up and when they might arrive each evening, but the couple are prepared for almost every situation.



Gus the Cus Cus exploring our dinner table one evening. Iphone - 1/25, f2.2, ISO200

You could easily be mistaken to think that this was a castaway island like the 'Swiss Family Robinson', as an array of animals frequent the Island at their own leisure. Sitting in the office checking some emails a parrot swoops through the door and lands on a perch, anticipating some food and water and quickly consuming all before swift goodbye and out the door he flies.

Through another window a young Cus Cus enters with similar expectations. This one however was brought to Lissenung by one of the locals who thought the animal might

be sick or injured, looking to Ange and Dietmar to look after it. But easily it became part of the family and cleverly named Gus (The Cus Cus) who would know also when it was dinner time and make himself present at the table. But you can see why you could get attached to such an adorable creature.

But let's talk about the diving, not only is there are a number ship and plane wrecks in the area, there is also several drop offs and pristine coral reefs. One of the first dives I did when I got to Kavieng was a site called Albatross Passage, known



The wreck of a WWII Float plane sits upside down on the bottom of a coral reef. still with unexploded cargo trapped within the bomber bay doors. Canon EOS 5D MkIII, Seacam Housing 15mm lens, 1/100, f8, ISO250

for its shifting currents and huge numbers of pelagic and reef fish gliding through the rapid currents feeding on the rich nutrients, I was told for other divers this was a must-see dive. Unfortunately, the tides were not cooperating the few times I dived there, but you could see by the way the channel was that an influx of ocean currents would bring in the large numbers of fish. I did however see a few sharks and eagle rays on the drop off.

There are several interesting wrecks in the region and very close to

the main town, including the Wreck of the Catalina, all that remains are the 2 main propeller engines and some of the wing and fuselage sitting isolated on a sandy bottom. The water is clear and the remains of the plane is fascinating to say the least.

A nice wreck that sits in less than 12 meters of water is a B5N Kate Bomber plane, still intact and very close to the coral reef. It was encompassed by a rich array of fish life and corals but surprisingly no over grown. Most of the dive sites are very close to each other so you can do



A leaf scorpion fish hides in plain site among the myriad of colourful corals. Canon EOS 5D MkIII, Seacam Housing 15mm lens, 1/200, f20 ISO200

a number of different wrecks in a day.

But after each day we ended up back at the beautiful resort on Lissenung Island. I think one of the biggest surprises about the Island, was the house reef. Once we discovered what it had to offer, we didn't venture to far from the island for the rest of our stay. The reef covers two, thirds of the island and is between several channels with moving currents, so the coral reef is very healthy and teeming with life. From the moment, you put your head underwater, you are surrounded by schools of fish and

intricate coral structures. On one small bommie just off the island you will find 3 different species of anemones and their inhabitants. You could easily spend hours circling this small structure. And at night even more life, anemone crabs, shrimp, crocodile fish and much more.

A favourite spot for me on the island was the lagoon where the local staff would wash the dishes. It seemed to be attracting small reef fish in the shallows who would frenzy to grab the morsels of food scraps. But in their flurry, they would also attract a



Grey Reef shark surrounded by a small school of trigger fish on the edge of the reef in the Witu Islands Canon EOS 5D MkIII, Seacam Housing 15mm lens, 1/200, f5, ISO500

good numbers of blacktip reef sharks. I literally would lie in the water as the locals fed the scraps to the fish and watch the sharks come in to be part of the action. A few bumps to the camera and brushing past my exposed white toes made me a little cautious but I persisted for many hours, very rarely coming out of the water with any decent photograph. Combined low visibility and frenzied sharks churning up the backscatter, it wasn't ideal conditions, but fun nonetheless.

PNG offers so much for divers and photographers, you are presented

with something new on each and every dive and it can be a sensory overload once you process it. But it is the diversity of what you can see in this part of the world that makes it so special. Blue water, pelagic schools of fish, plane & ship wrecks, muck diving, drop offs, coral gardens, sharks, turtles, the list just goes on. PNG just keeps surprising me and I will look to explore more of what it has to offer in the future.

Scott Portelli
www.scottportelli.com

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Dumaguete

Frogfish capital of the world

by Nigel Marsh and Helen Rose

There is something about frogfish that makes them irresistible as a photographic subject. It might be the way they walk on their hand-like fins, or the fascinating way they flick their lures to attract prey, or it may be because they look like a child's cute soft toy. Either way they are one of our favourite camera subjects and we can never go passed one without taking dozens of images.

We have been fortunate to encounter many species of frogfish at a diverse range of dive destinations throughout the Indo-Pacific region, but recently dived an area overloaded with these delightful creatures. A wonderful location that claims to be the frogfish capital of the world - Dumaguete in the Philippines.

Located on the island of Negros, Dumaguete has always been popular as a reef diving destination, with the coral reefs at nearby Apo Island a major attraction. However, in recent years, with the discovery of amazing muck sites along the coast south of Dumaguete, the area has also attracted divers looking for weird and wonderful critters. This has made the

area perfect for those that want a great dive holiday combo of reef and muck diving, and also means a wonderful range of subjects for underwater photographers.

There are numerous dive resorts at Dumaguete, most located around the town of Dauin, and for our stay we booked a week at one of the newer resorts in the area, Liquid Dumaguete. This wonderful resort has all the standard features, a pool, bar, restaurant and comfortable rooms. It also has a great dive centre offering daily boat and shore dives, and being a PADI 5 Star IDC Dive Resort, it is also a popular spot for people learning to dive or continuing their diver education.

Liquid Dumaguete is a wonderful dive resort at Dumaguete (Nikon D7200, Nikkor 18-300mm, ISO 400, 1/500, f11)

We were surprised by the number of baby painted frogfish we saw at Dumaguete (Nikon D7200, Nikkor 60mm, Ikelite Housing, Inon Z240 strobe, ISO 200, 1/100, f16)





A pretty warty frogfish captured mid-yawn (Nikon D7200, Nikkor 60mm, Ikelite Housing, Inon Z240 strobe, ISO 200, 1/100, f13)

After a morning flight from Manila and only a 30 minute drive to the resort, we quickly settled in our spacious room, setup our camera gear and were ready to dive. With a love of muck diving, and working on a book on the subject, we requested a few of the local muck sites to start our Dumaguete experience. Our first site was only five minutes from Liquid Dumaguete by boat, a lovely site called Bulak. The sloping sand at this site was a great place to observe and photograph garden eels, shrimp gobies, nudibranchs, anemones, razorfish and harlequin crabs. And

with 20m visibility and 29°C water, it was a great introduction to Dumaguete diving. No frogfish unfortunately, but our guide Rocky said we were visiting in the frogfish low season (November) and during the peak season (March to May) dozens are seen on most dives. He said we would still see plenty of frogfish, and he wasn't wrong.

In the afternoon we dived another interesting muck site called Poblacion, which also had pretty coral gardens. Here we photographed ghost pipefish, mantis shrimps, moray eels and even a turtle, but still no frogfish. Next up was San Miguel, and Rocky



A tiny baby hairy frogfish next to Helen's muck stick (Nikon D7200, Nikkor 60mm, Ikelite Housing, Inon Z240 strobe, ISO 200, 1/100, f13)

assured us we would see frogfish. The sandy slope at this classic muck site was occupied by cuttlefish, snake eels, waspfish, dragonets and sand divers.

We were beginning to think we wouldn't see any frogfish until Rocky pointed out a tiny orange spot on the sand. At first we thought this orange spot was just a piece of sponge, but getting very close we could see a tiny eye and hand-like fins. It was a minute painted frogfish, barely 4mm long!

Rocky then proceeded to pointed out several other tiny spots over the next half hour, a collection of miniscule hairy and painted frogfish

that varied in size from 2mm to 10mm. These were the smallest frogfish we had ever seen, and very difficult to photograph with a 60mm lens. After the dive Rocky promised we would see plenty of larger frogfish in the coming days.

Frogfish were far from our minds the next day as we joined Liquid Dumaguete for a day trip to Apo Island. Expecting clear water and pretty corals we got out the wide angle lens to explore this wonderful marine reserve. It takes around an hour to travel to Apo Island, so the trip includes three dives and lunch.



Green turtles are common at Apo Island and often found sleeping on the corals (Nikon D7200, Tokina 10-17mm, Ikelite Housing, Inon Z240 strobe, ISO 200, 1/100, f10)

Our first dive set the tone for some spectacular reef dives, jumping into the water at the northern end of the island at a site called Coconut Point. This site often gets washed by strong currents, so has rich corals and a multitude of fish. There was only a gentle current for our drift dive, but still no shortage of marine life.

Drifting around the coral canyons and coral gardens we saw large barrel sponges, beautiful gorgonians and feather stars everywhere. But the highlights were the prolific fish and numerous reptiles. Coconut Point has a healthy population of reef fish, including triggerfish, groupers, snappers, fusiliers and angelfish. We also saw schools of batfish, bigeye trevally and quite a few large mackerel. However, a special treat were several green and hawksbill turtles, and a good population of sea snakes. Swimming amongst the coral and fish we encountered several common banded sea kraits, but also saw four larger and rarer black-banded sea



A rare Mototi octopus at Bonnet's Corner. This male is displaying to a nearby female (Nikon D7200, Nikkor 60mm, Ikelite Housing, Inon Z240 strobe, ISO 200, 1/100, f13)

Giant frogfish are seen in many colours at Dumaguete (Nikon D7200, Nikkor 60mm, Ikelite Housing, Inon Z240 strobe, ISO 200, 1/100, f13)

kraits. These serpents kept our cameras busy.

On the other two dives at Apo Island we explored coral walls, caves and coral gardens at Chapel and Katipanan. While these sites didn't have the fabulous fish life of Coconut Point, they had lovely hard corals and an abundance of green turtles. At both sites we saw turtles resting, swimming and feeding. We also had fun photographing the resident giant frogfish at Chapel.

We may not have visited Dumaguete in the right season for frogfish, but we had timed our visit perfectly to explore a brilliant muck site called Bonnet's Corner. The dive crew had mentioned this muck site to us upon arrival, informing us it was 'going off with cephalopods'. On our third day we finally got to see what the fuss was all about.



Bonnet's Corner is a sandy rubble slope, and located on a point is often swept by currents. Within a minute of descending Rocky was showing us a wonderful wonderpus, this was quickly followed by a mantis shrimp, a dwarf lionfish, a baby painted frogfish and then we were very surprised to see a Mototi octopus. Closely related to the blue-ringed octopus this was only the second time we had seen one of these rare cephalopods. From there it just got better and better. Coconut octopus, snake eels,



Flamboyant cuttlefish are abundant at Bonnet's Corner, as one guide said 'common as cockroaches' (Nikon D7200, Nikkor 60mm, Ikelite Housing, Inon Z240 strobe, ISO 200, 1/100, f13)



Wonderpus are always amazing to watch, and we encounter two at Bonnet's Corner (Nikon D7200, Nikkor 60mm, Ikelite Housing, Inon Z240 strobe, ISO 200, 1/100, f13)



Napoleon snake eels are another wonderful muck critter at Dumaguete (Nikon D7200, Nikkor 60mm, Ikelite Housing, Inon Z240 strobe, ISO 200, 1/100, f13)

pipefish, cockatoo waspfish, garden eels, cowfish, flamboyant cuttlefish, box crabs, razorfish and many other species. But the biggest surprise was seeing three more Mototi octopus, including a pair that looked like they were involved in a courtship ritual. To say this site was going off was an understatement, it was more on steroids!

We managed to dive this site three more times, and each time it seemed to get better and better. On each dive we photographed a great collection of cephalopods, including courting flamboyant cuttlefish, meandering coconut octopus, plus several greater blue-ringed octopus, a group of pharaoh's cuttlefish, another wonderpus and numerous small stumpy spined cuttlefish. The Mototi octopus were there on every dive, but we also encountered a number of rare algae octopus. This site must rate as the best cephalopod dive site in the world! However, the dive crew from Liquid Dumaguete did

inform us that octopus and cuttlefish are only seen in large numbers from October to December, which is possibly the breeding season from the mating behaviour we witnessed.

While Bonnet's Corner was the highlight of the trip, every muck site we explored at Dumaguete had something special and a good population of frogfish as promised. At Sahara we explored two different areas of this large site, which also has corals and artificial reefs. At Sahara Shallow we photographed harlequin ghost pipefish, thorny seahorses, snake eels and a painted frogfish. While at Sahara Deep we watched the antics of a family of convict blennies, a strange eel-like blenny that sucks the skin of its young to receive nourishment. This site also had a resident painted frogfish.

On the coral and sand at Masaplod North our cameras focused on a xeno crab, candy crabs, leaf scorpionfish and a baby seahorse on a sea pen.

This site was also home to a lovely orange painted frogfish and a pretty warty frogfish. We have often waited for ten minutes or more to capture the moment when a frogfish yawns, and more often than not ended up disappointed. But we got very lucky at Masaplod North when the warty frogfish yawned as soon as we started taking images. After dark San Miguel really put on a show with coconut octopus, bigfin reef squid, snake eels, nudibranchs and bobtail squid. However the biggest surprise on this night dive was when we found a rare freckled frogfish.

At Pyramids we photographed a giant frogfish, as well as a rhino shrimp, several moray eels, Pegasus sea moths and many nudibranchs. We also saw several giant frogfish at Ginamaan Point, plus mantis shrimps, cowries, snake eels and octopus.

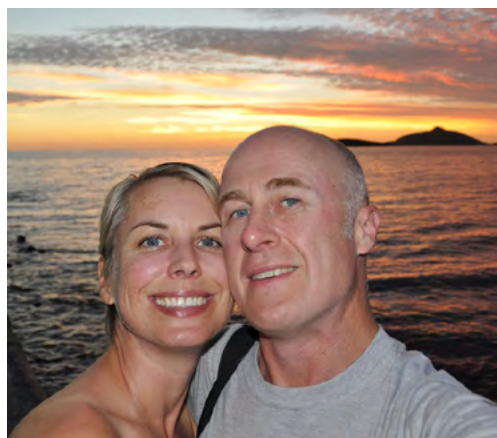
To balance out the muck diving we also did a return trip to Apo Island. We couldn't miss a

Giant frogfish are seen in many colours at Dumaguete (Nikon D7200, Nikkor 60mm, Ikelite Housing, Inon Z240 strobe, ISO 200, 1/100, f13)



chance to dive Coconut Point again, and it was just as good the second time around. We then explored a very unusual sandy slope at Largahan. Swimming over the grey sand we saw a few bentstick pipefish, garden eels and panda anemonefish, but the most interesting aspect of this site was the volcanic bubbles trickling through the sand. Our final dive at Apo Island found us exploring the pretty coral gardens at Rock Point West. Here we saw trevally, mackerel and a host of reef fish, but a hawksbill turtle munching on the coral stole the show.

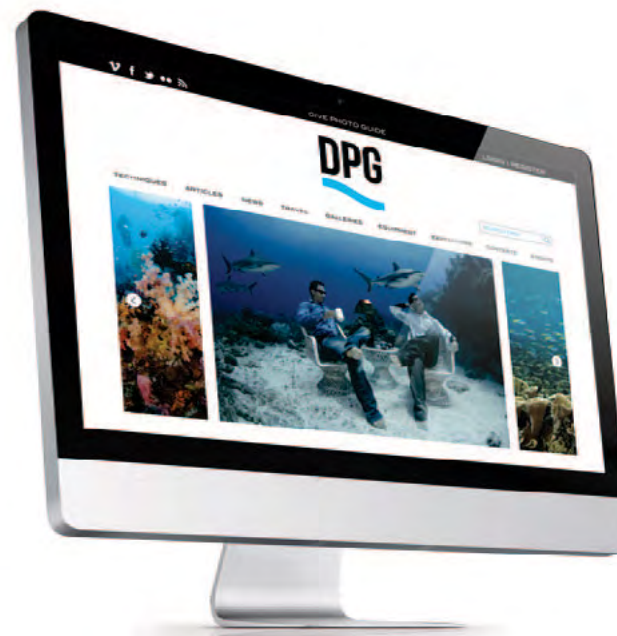
We had a wonderful week at Dumaguete, exploring a great combination of muck and reef sites and photographed many wonderful critters. And even visiting in the frogfish off season, we saw and photographed more frogfish at Dumaguete than we have seen at any other dive destination.



Nigel Marsh and Helen Rose
www.nigelmarshphotography.com

More information
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Down Mexico Way

by Dr Alex Tattersall

Four years seem to have flown by since we last had the opportunity to head to Mexico, and the magical lure of turquoise seas, barking (if not slightly fishy) sealions and refried bean burritos came flooding back as we boarded our plane from Mexico City to Cabo St Lucas, near the tip of the Baja California Peninsular on the West coast of Mexico.

Our previous trip had taken us to the vibrant and metropolitan city of La Paz and we were keen to return but decided to have a quick stop off in the sleepy, dusty little town of Cabo Pulmo. From here, we spent three days exploring the Cabo Pulmo National Marine Park which offers some spectacular diving, not least the resident school of horse-eye jacks for which the area has become increasingly well-known, particularly among photographers.

Cabo Pulmo is located some 1.5 hours East of the airport Cabo San Lucas. We originally looked into car hire but decided to have a taxi arranged for us by our very competent hosts at Cortez Expeditions, a La Paz based company run by the hugely enthusiastic Luke Inman, a British expat. We were picked up by a local taxi and delivered to our destination at a cost of US\$150. Adding this to the US\$200 we later paid for a taxi two hours North to the city of La Paz, this worked out to be about 2/3 of the price of car hire for the same period, but did mean we were not able to explore the local area as freely. That suited us though as we were there to dive!

Our diving was arranged by Cortez



A powerful female sealion cuts through the water at los Isolotes. Canon G7X2, Nauticam housing, Nauticam WWL-1, F8, 1/100, ISO 400

Expeditions using Dive Cabo, one of several dive operations working out of Cabo Pulmo. The marine park is I believe quite unique in that boats have to book time slots for their divers to enter and leave the water at certain sites in order to prevent diver congestion and environment pressure on the precious reefs. A result of this is that dive times are limited to 45-50 minutes which, as a photographer, naturally disappointed me at first, until we discovered that most of the sites were at

about 20 metres depth and there was no supply of nitrox or large tanks. Whilst the dive times were short, the dives themselves ranged from excellent to spectacular, and we never felt shortchanged to be assisting in an impressively functioning reef and fauna preservation scheme. There is also a rotation of sites which are closed on certain days, so ideally to do the area justice and explore more of the marine park, the three days we spent were not really enough. Photographically, I could happily spend a



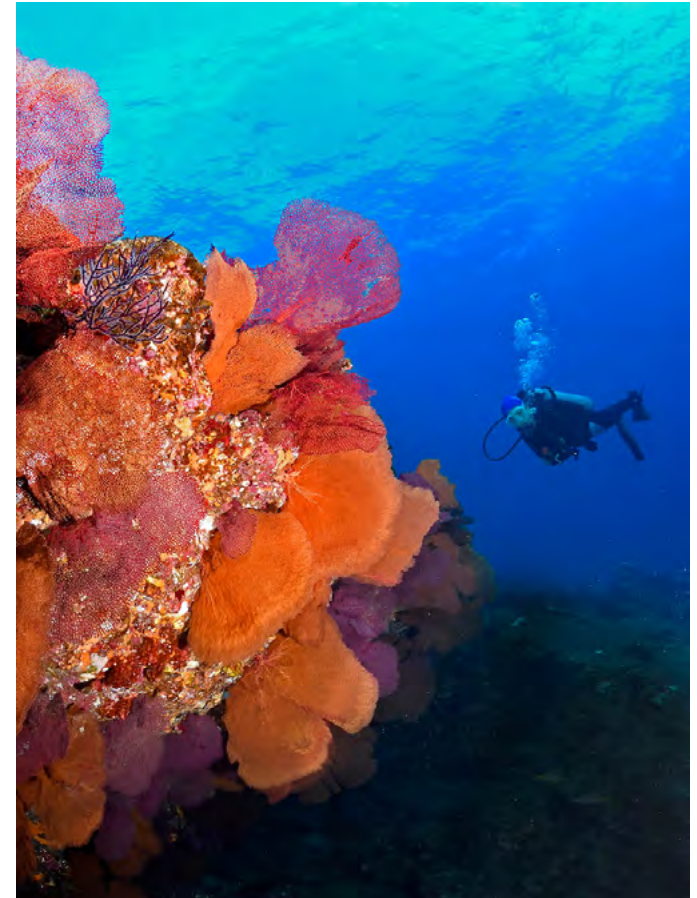
The huge resident school of horse eye Jacks in Cabo Pulmo - Nikon D500, Nauticam housing, 200mm Zen dome, Tokina 10-17, F13, 1/100, ISO 400

week or more in the area.

Whilst I remember, there are no banks or ATMs in Cabo Pulmo, it is quite remote, and internet services are sporadic. As the town has a captive audience of divers, food and drinks are relatively pricey, as is the diving at approximately US\$50-\$55 per dive. It is however a place which should go on your bucket list for the pristineness of the reefs and the wildlife that lives thereupon.

Cabo Pulmo Diving

The jewel in the crown of the Cabo Pulmo area for me was the enormous school of docile horse-eye jacks, spiralling from a 20 metre sandy bottom up to the water surface. Boatmen can easily locate the school from the surface as it appears as a huge dark patch. As you drop in on the school, even if smaller schools have split off from the main group, it is still a staggeringly impressive sight to behold. Each of the many thousands of fish is a metre long



Incredible colours on the reefs of Cabo Pulmo National Park - Nikon D500, Nauticam housing with 140mm mini dome, Tokina 10-17, F11, 1/80, ISO 400

with huge eyes that watch you placidly as you swim in and out of the group. Below the school you can find large rays buried in the sand and groups of black and white pufferfish feeding from the 'waste products' of the school. The water when we were there (end of November) was a perfect rich blue at an average temperature of 27 degrees, although the whole area does see a significant change in water temperature throughout the year (from about 18 degrees to 29 degrees around the beginning



A female Sealion hareem waiting to be photographed, Nikon D500, Nauticam housing, 140mm minidome, Tokina 10-17, F13, 1/80, ISO 640

of November). This water temperature variation results in transient pelagic Cetaceans (Whales and Dolphins) and Elasmobranchii (Sharks and Rays) moving through the region at various times of year. November is prime time for bull sharks which were spotted at a distance by our group on one of the other popular sites, the La Esperanza wreck.

The La Esperanza Wreck is relatively small and scattered but is host to numerous schools of snapper species and smaller reef fish. It is a popular

site for bull sharks during the October/November season and has some impressive colourful sponge and coral growth. Lots of little blennies dart in and out of holes in the wreckage and surrounding rocks. For soft coral growth however, there are two excellent sites to see large numbers of colourful gorgonian fans, 'El Bajo' and 'El Isolote'.

In our limited time in Cabo Pulmo, we also dived two reef sites, the first, El Bajo, a deep reef of rocky terrain and mild current, located near the huge



Longnose Hawkfish, macro subjects around La Paz, Nikon D500, Nauticam housing, 105mm VR macro, F22, 1/200, ISO 400

school of jacks. Our slight drift took us past rays, eels, small schools of porkfish, snapper, pufferfish, and the rocky topography was littered with soft and hard corals with small gorgonian fans ranging from deep red, through bright purple, to light pink growing in the cracks between the rocks. The



A relaxed female sealion - Nikon D500, Nauticam housing with 140mm mini dome, Tokina 10-17, F11, 1/200, ISO 400

second site was a pinnacle called El Isolote, one side completely encrusted with large colourful gorgonian fans. With the marine protection scheme in place, everything seemed pristine and was a joy to behold. After three days though, we packed up our cameras and dive gear, hopped into a taxi and spent two hours on the road through some breathtaking scenery to the buzzing and vibrant city of La Paz.

La Paz

We were met by our host, Luke Inman of Cortez Expeditions, who had just returned from the DEMA

dive show in Las Vegas. In spite of having spent 4 days at the show, his boundless enthusiasm saw him up at 6am preparing his fully equipped 26ft 'Superpanga' custom dive boat, 'Monkey Business', to take us for our first trip out to los Isolotes sealion colony, a one hour run North of the jetty in La Paz. As we approached the small outcrop, we caught a familiar waft of fishiness and then our ears started picking up the sounds of barking echoing through the crevices and cracks in the rocky outcrop.

The excitement mounted as we caught sight of some of the many



Horseeye Jacks at Cabo Pulmo - Nikon D500, Nauticam housing with 140mm mini dome, Tokina 10-17, F16, 1/10, ISO 100

sealions basking on the rocks under the blue sky and dazzling Mexican sun. In we jumped and knew at once that we were there during the right season as groups of nibbly little pups at once set about us, nibbling our BCD straps, fins, fin straps, masks, hoods, cameras, strobes, indeed anything 'nibblable' they could find! It is without doubt among the most magical of interactions you can ever treat yourself to and we instantly fell in love with the entire colony once again.

The photo possibilities with the sealions are endless although

unless they are basking in the water, they do move very quickly, testing your reflexes as a photographer. The islands has small caves that you can go into and find yourself surrounded by nibbling pups, whilst adults males and females cruise by gracefully, less curious, occasionally letting out a warning bark which rumbles through the water like a bass guitar. With some of the larger males weighing in at more than 300kg, we are to be thankful that they are not as 'nibbly' as their pups.

Without doubt, you could spend a month in the water with the

sealions and still love every minute, but La Paz does offer numerous other dive sites, including some interesting macro subjects. Luke's right hand lady, Afelandra, is a local nudibranch specialist and has found and named new species in the area in spite of her young age. She was very keen to take us out to one of the macro sites they have discovered, whale island, and we dived on a sloping wall hosting several species of nudibranch and other fine La Paz macro subjects. Also of note, whale sharks are consistently seen in the last months of the year in La Paz although these tend to be in murkier, more plankton rich waters than those you might see on the other side of the continent at the Isla de las Mujeres.

Besides the diving in the area, La Paz is one of the coolest and most vibrant towns I've visited for restaurants, bars and general liveliness. Three and four generations of local families walk, bike, scoot together along the seafront 'known as the Malecón. We even saw someone walking a goat!

Our hotel, The Seven Crowns was placed right in the centre of the Malecón walkway and suited us perfectly. Again everything was arranged smoothly and expertly by our host, Luke. La Paz is also home to one of the most prestigious universities for Marine Science in Mexico. This meant that as we were spending time with Luke and Afelandra, we were constantly surrounded by people, both young and older, besotted with all things ocean related, keen to chat passionately about their areas of research with infectious enthusiasm. We also spent a nice dry day walking around the Whale Museum which is very much worth the time spent and we came out brimming with new knowledge about Cetaceans and the development of life in the Sea of Cortez.



Frolicking Californian sea lions, Canon G7X2, Nauticam housing, Nauticam WWL-1, F6.3, 1/200, ISO 400

I hope this brief article has managed to reflect some of the fun and excitement that we felt visiting Baja California and the Sea of Cortez. I'll be running a guided photo trip in October 2018 if you want to put it into your diaries right away. It will be special, with some surprises guaranteed.

Essentials

Flights – We flew via Las Vegas for the DEMA dive show but coming directly from London you would usually fly via Mexico City into either Cabo San Lucas for Cabo Pulmo or La Paz airport itself.

Operator – Without hesitation I would recommend a package through Luke at Cortez Expeditions. He has lived in La Paz for 20 years and knows the area extraordinarily well including sites that are off the beaten track. His new boat is ideally

Beautiful soft coral cups, Nikon D500, Nauticam housing, 105mm VR macro, F22, 1/200, ISO 400

suited for between 2 and 6 divers and he prefers to run a more personalised service than a larger scale operation. He prides himself in the sustainable practices of his operation and invests in the local community for supplies and staff. He has also hosted such big names as the BBC and world on major productions with some large production houses. Contact him at www.cortezexpeditions.com he will be able to fill you in on anything you need to know and arrange a bespoke trip depending on your requirements.

Seasons

There are peak periods to visit the area depending on what you are aiming to see. The optimum season for sealions is September-October-early November as the adults will not be as protective over their pups which are already growing in size. Water temperature varies considerably over the year so this should be taken into account if you prefer warm waters. Again October-early November brings in the warmest waters, this dropping off towards the end of November where winds can pick up. We lost two days diving due to Northerly winds preventing us from crossing the channel to the sealion colony, but



these dry days were a pleasure in La Paz, eating, drinking margaritas and generally bimbbling about. Contact Luke again for information on peak times for specific fauna visits.

Alex Tattersall
www.nauticam.co.uk



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Alorese fish traps

by Gilles Brignardello

Fish traps in Alor are one of the favourite subjects that UW photographers and divers often mention; Alor is the only place where they have seen them...

As man hunter evolved so did his fishing tools; and the purpose of his hunt... Today we have recreational fishers doing it for fun and challenge, the commercial ones for profit and the traditional ones most often for their food. Sometimes they all share the same technique and sometimes they differ greatly.

There are still corners of the world where tradition exists as if suspended in time. In Indonesia many fishermen in remote coastal villages still use a traditional bamboo woven fish trap named "bubu". Often times its shape is cylindrical and its open end is narrowing inwards. The fish is attracted by a bait placed inside the "bubu" and is guided towards it through the elongated entrance. Once inside the fish is trapped since it hardly ever finds its way out to freedom...

Bubu comes in various shapes and sizes, from rectangular and trapezoidal to half rounded or conical. Based on its use it can also

be categorized into a ground, floating or a drifting bubu as well as a special type used in a tidal belt. Bamboo traps were initially used in rivers, lakes and swamps and eventually found its use in the sea as well.

In Alor Archipelago the fishermen use cylinder shape ground fish traps to catch small to middle size fishes. There are several dive sites in Pantar Strait where it is almost guaranteed to see the fish trap serving its purpose underwater but the sight is often heartbreaking to the divers since the trapped fishes are often the colorful coral reef fish like a butterfly fish, damsel fish, anthias, trumpet fish and surgeon fish. But rest assured nothing goes to waste and everything is relative – what is an aquarium fish for one person might be an important source of protein for another one.

On the islands Pura and Ternate weaving of a fish trap is an artisanal craft and the knowledge has been passed down through generations from fathers to sons. Pura and Ternate are the two islands in Alor that rely heavily on the daily fish catch either for immediate consumption or for preserving the catch (salting and sun drying method) for months when the





sea is too rough for fishing. It is also the main reason why they were forced to learn through their own mistakes what means sustainable and how to respect the marine environment.

The fish traps utilization demonstrates that traditional methods does not necessarily mean sustainable. To use “bubu”, the trap has to be placed on the reef surface. In order to provide a stable base the area often has to be cleared of corals, which means direct damage to the reef. Many fishermen now understand the detrimental effect on the reef if they clear a new area each time they place the fish trap. Nowadays many of

them will reuse the same cleared spot before relocating it.

This gives a reef more time to recover the growth on the cleared area. Additionally many fishermen will place the trap on a naturally flat spot void of corals or they will simply place it closer to the shore on the sandy patches.

“Bubu” is also relatively light and needs ballast to keep it from floating. Less conscientious fisherman will break off corals in order to obtain the weight but the conscientious will put effort in bringing some heavy stones from the shore to use as a weight.

Another important manipulation is the way the traps are pulled to the surface. One end of the rope (natural rattan or nylon one) is attached to the trap and the other end to the shore. The trick is not to lose the “bubu” and to easily retrieve the trap for harvesting. The best way to resurface the trap is to bring the canoe directly above it and then vertically lift it since dragging it up the slope could inflict serious damage to the reef.

As many locals start to be educated on – or they experienced firsthand – the negative impact their fishing technique can have on the coral reef, the number of fishermen

who are putting effort in protecting their food source is increasing. They understand the role of the healthy reef for sustaining the fish population in front of their villages and this gives us great hopes for continuous preservation of Alor’s marine environment.

Gilles Brignardello
www.alor-divers.com



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Subtronic Nova analog version no ttl converter

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

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Canadian Salmon

by Fernando Lessa

Most underwater photographers have spent countless hours watching the classic National Geographic documentaries with amazing images of the Alaska salmon run. At least once, you have seen yourself diving in crystal clear waters and surrounded by ferrari red Sockeye salmon.

Before moving to Vancouver, I was aware of the city being very close to the countryside; but had no idea about how close wildlife is to the city.

I found out about the rich Burnaby Watershed, in metro Vancouver area, while taking a bus to a friend's house. Being in the city for just few weeks, I hadn't even had the chance to think about diving. But the name, "Byrne creek", became an obsession ... and resulted, after six months, in me visiting more than twenty different locations around Vancouver, looking for the Urban Salmon.

People think that living in cities disconnects one from nature, without even noticing that cities are a new environment in itself. A few minutes from downtown Vancouver, one can see the salmon run. Half

an hour bus ride, and there is a big chance of finding bears, cougars, and other amazing animals.

Before my first dive, I hadn't seen a wild salmon, only on fillets or fancy sushis. Being from Brazil, my coldest dive was 12C, but usually around 20C. For salmon to be healthy, the water must be under 6C. Sometimes well under. Surrounded by the Pacific Rainforest, I was very surprised when a fisherman asked me if I had bear spray, since he had seen a bear in the same spot - and a river full of salmon - less than 24h ago. And no! I had no clue about bears.

As a professional outdoor photographer, I believe that it's very important to one give one self assignments and develop ones own curiosity and interest. I departed from some thoughts that came to mind the first time I saw a 8kg Chum salmon climbing up Byrne creek with less than 25cm of water level: "I've seen dying and dead rivers. But haven't seen a reborn river so far..". Byrne creek was more of a dump than a river, less than 50 years ago. And now the salmon are back!

I chose the iconic Salmon as





the symbol. Being such an amazing animal, subject of lots of aggression, from the environment to over fishing, how are the fish doing around Metro Vancouver? Are the efforts and investments paying off?

My goal with the project is to portray the hidden urban wildlife beauty. I still couldn't get to the red sockeyes, but how about my surroundings? What was going on?

I tried to shoot the complete fish cycle, from the run to the eggs, the winter, when the eggs develop to the hatching, by the end of winter. It takes many logistics, since I haven't got a car and have to do everything on public transport; carrying wetsuit,

photo gear, clothes, hiking gear etc.

I have had to become a forecast expert and have almost got a degree in Google maps and Google Earth. I spent lots of hours searching for a suit that would be enough for cold waters, but not too heavy, since I would need to carry it back, wet. Gloves, hoods, every weight needed to be saved, without compromising performance. Finding a pack, packing all gear inside plus dry clothes. All had to be adapted.

Understanding your own limits is a big part, since diving in very cold waters with a wetsuit takes lots of energy, and depending on the location, it involves a 2 hour hike with a 45 kg





pack.

I gradually increased my limits, and the coldest dive so far was 1.5C underwater and -4C outside. You have to know when to get out of the water to have a warm brew. Making the most of your gear is mandatory, and flushing the suit with warm water is a must. At the moment, I'm diving with a two piece 7mm wetsuit, 3mm hood, 5mm boots and gloves. For the photo gear, a Nikon D800, my trusty pair of SB-105, 15mm f2.8 fisheye, 20-35mm f2.8 and a macro 105mm f2.8. For outside, I'm also using a 24-105 f4.

My first dive was at the end of September 2016. Not sure about what people would think of me diving in

their small neighborhood creek, I decided to start in the early morning, before sunrise.

I learnt a lot; I was using the wrong gear, got frozen hands and I learnt later that the friendly family of racoons should not be played with. So far I have been to half of the rivers and hope I can make better use of the next run in September 2017.

Getting to know the salmonids is also very important. Each species has its own limits, and if you respect them, they let you take your shots. Sometimes fish stay in the same place for days, and get used to you, letting you almost touch them.

I usually do some scouting

before actually going for a dive. It's important to know where you want to go and be prepared. I try to visit at least once the spot I want to go, and spend some time paying attention to the waters, looking for fish and best lighting. Apps that help you calculating where the sun is going to hit an area are very useful too.

Last year, there was a big presence of Chum and Coho salmon, but I also had short encounters with Cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii*), Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and Dolly Vardens (*Salvelinus malma*). I hope that in the spring, I'll be able to shoot some more species like the

iconic Steelhead and the endangered Nooksack Dace (*Rhinichthys cataractae*), which is only found in 4 creeks in BC.

Fernando Lessa
www.walkinglessa.com

Fernando Lessa (1984, Brazilian) is a professional photographer and has nature in his heart. With a degree in biology and a masters in photography, he has been working in search of unique images that portray the beauty and complexity of nature.

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Farne Islands, UK

by Jean Michel Machefert

Once upon a time there was a French diver who wanted to dive with mammals without going too far from France at a reasonable budget...So what to do?

In France and continental Europe if you are very lucky there are many places where diving with mammals such as dolphins, seals and some varieties of whales is possible but everywhere the opportunity of a mammal approach is quite small. Moreover there are also some places which have rules restricting the contact between divers and mammals.

After Googling a little bit, the UK appears to be a unique place with more than 40% of the world population of grey seals (*Halichoerus grypus*) one of the rarest seals in the world. The others are in north America and that is a little bit far for 1 week of holidays!. There are about 80,000 to 115,000 grey seals in UK and about 6,000 to 9,000 in the Farnes islands with about 2,000 pups each year. The Farnes islands are in Northumberland and here it seems quite easy to dive with them thanks to well organized dive boats allowing you to go close to the rocks where they live.

So decision was made, the French diver with his wife and some friends will go to the Farne islands. Moreover the distance between Paris and Seahouses (sea port just in front of the Farnes islands with all the diving boats and accommodation) is 900 km, what is great since this is the same distance as from Paris to the Mediterranean sea!



When to dive with the seals? The seals are in the Farne islands all year long but in order to have the chance to get close to them the best period is after mid-September when the pups (yearling and sub-adults) are well acclimatised to fishing and swimming and also big and confident enough to play between them (or with divers!) by running one after the others gently biting their fins and the kelp.

The yearlings in eastern England are born between November to mid December the year before and then their lives were not easy for them. Their mother gave birth to a single white pup which





Nikon D2x, housing Aquatica, Tokina 10 - 17mm at 10mm, 1/ 100, f9 , ISO 200 , 2 strobes Nikon Sb 910, Patima housings, 1/2 and 1/4 power.

she suckles for around 3 weeks and then as soon as the pup weighs around 40kg, the mother goes back to the sea for foraging (she did not eat anything for the suckling period) leaving them to live on their fat reserve for 2 or 3 weeks.

This lasts until hunger drives the pups to the sea where they learn fishing and surviving by themselves without parental care. Almost 50% of the pups will die before reaching 1 year old. The real life of seals is not the wonderful world of Disney even if the pups are cute as shlush!

The colonies of seals are located on the shores of the islands on the outer Farnes and time to time they move around the islands according to the winds and the weather; spending their time between sleeping on rocks, basking in the sun and feeding periods from a few days up to 1 month; they forage up to 100km from their colony at depths down to 200m for more than 5 minutes at a time.

They need about 5kg of food every day, mainly eels, cod, flatfish but also octopus, squids and some crustaceans and mollusks. The bulls



Nikon D2x, housing Aquatica, Nikon 10.5mm, 1/ 100, f10 , ISO 400 , 2 strobes Nikon Sb 910, Patima housings, 1/2 and 1/4 power.

can weigh as much as 300 kg for a length of 3m and a female about 150 kg for 1.8m long. Even if they are big seals are not dangerous but of course if a diver places his hand or finger in a seal's mouth or if a diver blocks the way of a seal to go out of a cave then they can bite. In this case the only one to blame is the diver and not the seal!

After a quick and efficient organization the team was ready to dive on Monday the first week of October on one of the boats of Sovereign diving. The weather is beautiful with a clear blue sky, no

wind and it was more or less the same for the entire week with some swell in the middle of the week and only one or 2 hours of fine rain.

The water is not fully transparent with some grey-blue- green milky aspect at some places but near the surface this is fully acceptable for luminous pictures and dark backgrounds closer to the kelp.

45 minutes later, the first seals are here and for sure they are really everywhere. As soon as the boat arrives near a colony you are observed by hundreds of pair of eyes, and quite



often a lot of seals (most often the yearlings who are whiter and smaller than the adults who are darker with grey or brown dots) are queuing to enter the sea and to observe the boat and divers even before they jump into water.

As soon as you are in the water your only preoccupation is to approach the first seal looking at you like a bottle on the surface. Even if you try to look friendly with your camera, your tanks and dry suit, most of the time the “bottling” seal disappears quickly under the surface. This is time for you to dive... The bottom near the shores of the rocky islands is often covered with kelp and shows quite numerous canyons and small cliffs sometimes covered

with dead mens fingers, some urchins and also lobsters and crabs hidden in the gaps between boulders. This is interesting but you are sure to be in the middle of hundreds of seals looking at you... you are here to meet them, but nothing visible as yet.

You can decide to go under the kelp, maybe they could be here for fishing? Most of the time, nothing and if by chance you meet a sleeping seal he will disappear immediately at full speed. So what to do? Swimming slowly over the kelp, this is the answer. As soon as you stay still between the kelp forest and the surface sometimes for several long minutes it will pay you. The seals and most of the time the sub-adults are too curious and they cannot avoid



Nikon D2x, housing Aquatica, Nikon 10.5mm, 1/ 200, f9 , ISO 200 , 2 strobes nikon Sb 910, Patima housings, 1/2 and 1/4 power.

circling around you. Sometimes one or several seals will pass in front of you like missiles, too fast and too far away for a shot, sometimes they will turn around you and disappear but also quite often they will circle around you coming close to you as if they were smelling you and often biting your fins.

Look at the fin biting seal: he will act all innocent circling around you as if nothing happened. You have really the feeling that they are playing with you trying to communicate with you. When you realize their ability to move rapidly in all the directions

then you understand that you are not diving or playing with the seals but that the seals are playing with you, when they want and as long as they want. Nobody can predict what they will do, and even the number of seals around the boat is not a guarantee of interesting observations This is perfect because in my opinion, and this is always good to remember in animal observation or photography, divers have to remain humble and never forget that they are invited in the sea.

As an example, on the last dive of the week there were plenty of seals around the boat looking at us. Then

Nikon D2x, housing Aquatica, Nikon 10.5mm, 1/100, f8, ISO 200, 2 strobes Nikon Sb 910, Patima housings, 1/2 and 1/4 power.

we entered the water and as soon as we approached a seal he disappeared immediately at full speed, and then underwater only some high speed grey missiles cruising at 3-4m from us could be seen and nothing else.

Some interesting and funny behaviors were also observed during the week they dived with us. During the first dive a pup began to scratch his body with the fins of a diver and then as soon as the guy try to remove his fins the seal went closer for more scratching. The diver decided to scratch his body with his gloves and this seemed to be a big pleasure for this pup literally jumping into the arms of the surprised diver. The same day in the afternoon a bigger seal fell in love with my fins, biting them; his head near my fins and his body along me with the hind limbs in front of my mask. But my buoyancy seemed not to be suitable for him and he stabilized me gently between his fore limbs without any pressure: this was just an unforgettable moment.

Another day I met a new underwater photographer: a white young pup turned around me, examining my left strobe, then my dome port and then my right strobe before taking a leaf of kelp and showing me how he can bite it before offering this leaf to me.

On another day quite a big sub adult was standing in front of my wife looking right at her in the eyes through the mask and opening his nostrils and blowing some bubbles as soon as the regulator of my wife released bubbles then closing his nostrils as soon as there were no more bubbles coming out of the regulator and he did that several times exactly



as if he were trying to speak with her.

How to proceed for shooting seals? During the week on a few dives the seals were shy keeping their distance and then it is not possible to photograph them, they are too fast and too far away. This happens less in October in the Farne islands, and on most of the dives and almost with every group of divers one seal or more would come extremely close to us.

Every time they meet you, they are so close that all the pictures can be taken with wide angle or fish eye lenses (I used either 10.5mm Nikon or Tokina 10-17 at 10mm on my Nikon D2x) and other lens are useless here. The pictures are most of the time shot near the surface with 2 strobes at 1/2 or 1/4 of power only for lighting the face of the seals, but it could be also done fully in natural light.

As soon as you are in the right position it is

also possible to photograph seals with sunbursts, near the rocks where the colonies use to live you are always no deeper than a few meters. Since the seals are always playing and sometimes having human behavior, they are the perfect subjects for trying to catch a little bit more than a natural biological picture of an animal but also something more in the interaction between divers and seals.

The seals offer to the photographer a lot of opportunities for emotional pictures and as soon as they are not far from the surface it is always possible to combine some photographic effects (sunburst, silhouette, Snell window...) with some seals in the pictures.

So what more is there to say? This was an unforgettable week and as a British friend of mine who dives regularly with seals used to say "as soon as the seals are diving with you then this is really an addiction for you and you have to come back for the same experience as soon as possible". This is for sure what we will do.

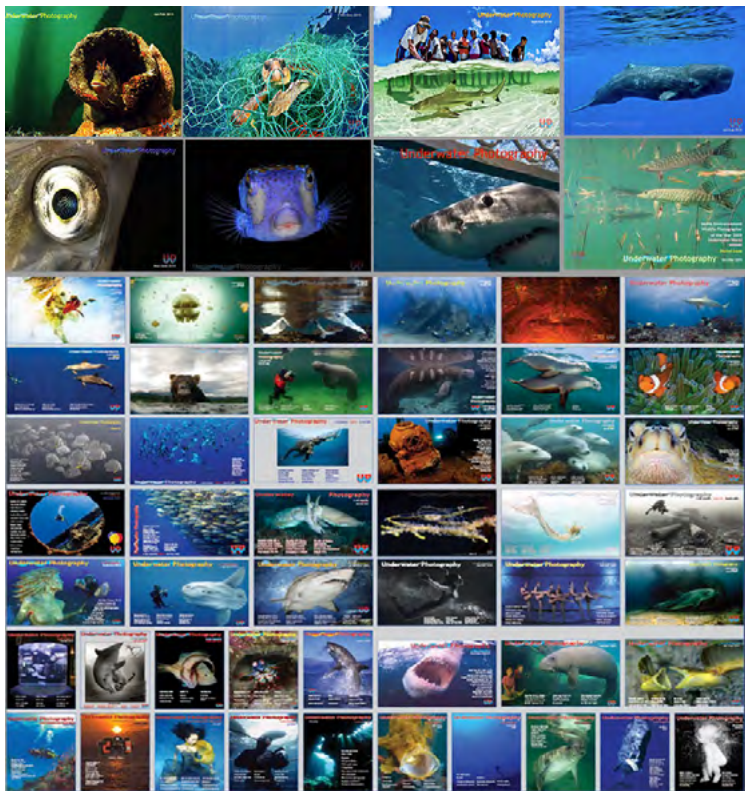
Jean Michel Machefert

Jean Michel began diving in caves, lakes and the oceans in 1987. He started underwater photography in 1992 using a Nikonos IV. After shooting many years with a Nikon D70 he now uses a Nikon D2x in an Aquatica housing. Pictures and some technical tips are on his website:



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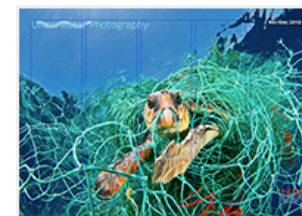
As you know, the current issue of Underwater Photography is free to download but all of the previous issues, going right back to Issue 1, are still available to download for just 99p per issue. It's a fantastic reference library chronicling all that has happened in underwater photography over the past 15 years.



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My Shot 1

by Tony Myshlyaev

There is nothing glamorous about how this photograph came to be. However, I believe that is what makes it all the more interesting.

To begin, it is important to note that working on a liveboard has uncontested perks. We get to dive at locations that would never be possible from a resort, wake up to different sights every day and explore countless new places. On the other hand, there is the inevitable downtime between trips and maintenance time which renders diving obsolete. Our boat, the MSY Seahorse, had a two-week break for renovations in Sorong. Thus as a dive guide and assistant cruise director, my duties were diminished.

For anyone who hasn't been to the city of Sorong in West Papua province of Indonesia, let it be known that it is a bleak city at best. Despite being the gateway to Raja Ampat, nobody has any interest in diving there. And why would they? The heart of the Coral Triangle is around the corner. With two weeks to spare and some full tanks on board curiosity got the best of me. I scouted a slope near depth, a fresh water source and a bit of altitude: some of the key ingredients for a muck dive. So I grabbed my 105mm and decided to

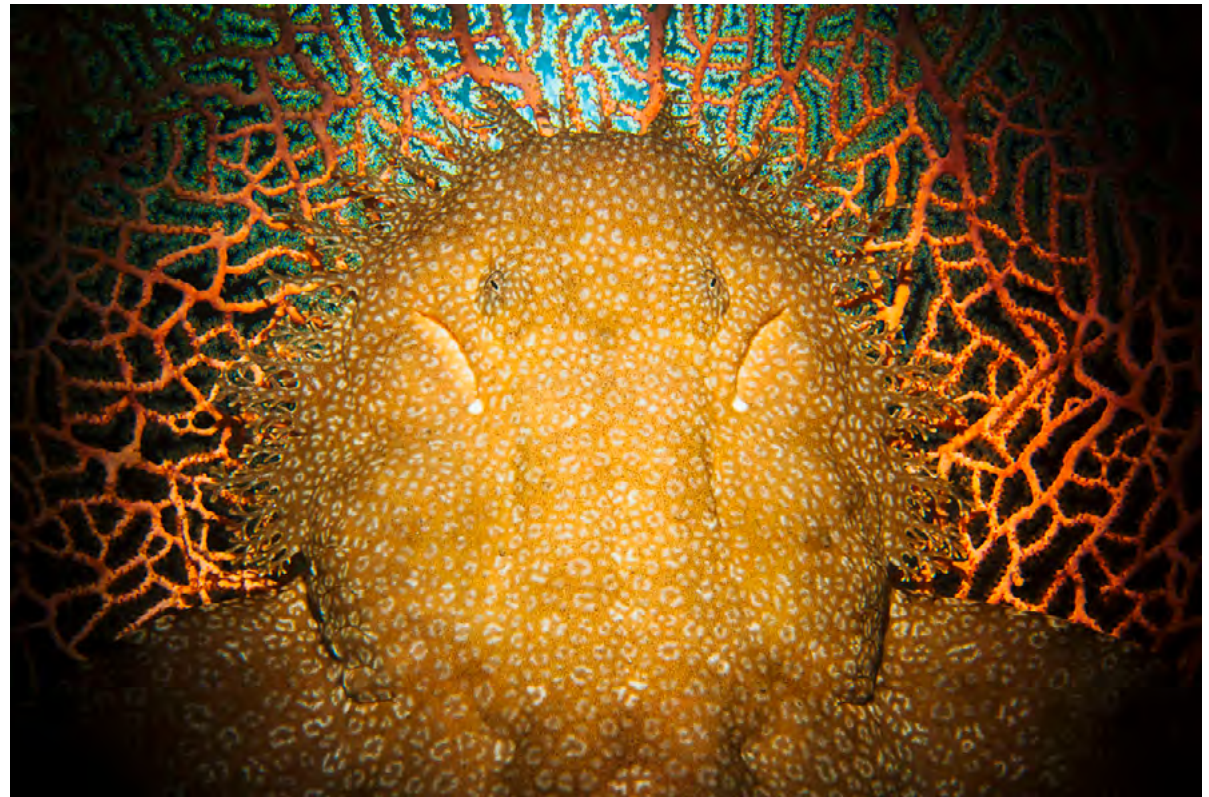
give it a try.

After a few evenings of exploration, the results surprised me. Amongst a lot of rubbish, I had come across patches of Halimeda, lush bommies, Estuarine Stonefish, Randall's Frogfish, symbiotic crustaceans, many species of cephalopods and nudibranchs amongst many other critters.

The most surprising find was a juvenile Tasseled Wobbegong.

They are common in northern Raja Ampat but who knew they would be so close to the city in some dirty muck?

The 105mm is the wrong lens for this subject but it was worth getting some shots just as proof I had seen one. Slowly the idea came to photograph it from the top, which is often a boring composition in underwater photography. In this case two wrongs did make a right. Using a snoot as a spotlight to compliment the shape of the shark's head and a torch for backlighting to create a bit of "pop" produced the result seen here.



Juvenile Tasseled Wobbegong (Eucrossorhinos dasyogon) on a Verucella fan. Nikon D700/105mm f/2.8D, ISO 800, f/16, 1/160 sec

It remains my favorite image from the dives because it is unlike the common close-focus fisheye compositions I have seen repeatedly with Wobbegongs.

Everything about this endeavor was quite odd and a number of people remain unconvinced that this image is in fact from the slopes of Sorong or that I went diving there at all. To me it is a testament of how productive a two-week maintenance break can be.

Whether I will ever return is to be determined however it seems fitting to name the location "Beggars Can't Be Choosers."

Tony Myshlyaev
www.tonymyshlyaev.com

My Shot 2

by Martin Sczyrba

Last year we spent our summer vacation on Bornholm, the Danish Island in the Baltic Sea. My son had finished his scuba training the year before and I started taking pictures underwater at about the same time. So we took our gear and looked forward for some nice dives. And we were not disappointed...

One dive we did at the lighthouse in Hullehavn near Svaneke. There you enter the water in a narrow bay surrounded by reefs of granite which fall straight to the ground forming like a canyon to swim through. When we surfaced from the dive I saw the sun shining directly at the lighthouse and coastline and being high enough in the sky to also illuminate the reef in the shallow part of the tunnel.

As one of my goals for this vacation was to try my first split-level shots it looked like a great chance for this.

So I started snorkeling with my Canon Powershot S120 in an Ikelite Housing

and a Fantasea BigEye Lens attached to it. It became quite a nice experience and training to do these shots in the wavy water: it took me some trials to get the exposure ok, meaning to not overexpose the bright sky or to not underexpose the reef. Here I really started to appreciate the benefits of digital photography. I have to admit that still some graduation filtering later on helped to further improve the images.

Once the exposure was set, the next task was to get the split as I wanted it. Floating on the surface following the movement of each wave this turned out to be interesting too. Always trying to get the right split and avoid any splash on the lens. The later being a challenge which was hardly achievable for me at the time.

However, by the end I got a few nice shots of which one is shown here.

I truly like the combination of the lighthouse with blue sky in the



Canon Powershot S120, Ikelite Housing, FantaSea BigEye Lens M67 MarkII, 1/250s at f/8 with exposure compensation -1 and ISO400, no strobe

background, the reef full of seaweed below and its rocks extending above the surface and all of this nicely sunlit. Above all, I really enjoyed the work to get these shots.

What could be more relaxing during a vacation than to be in the water trying to get a good picture?

My fascination for split-level shots was only increased

by this and I think this day was a good start into it.

Martin Sczyrba

“My Shot” can be a particular favourite of yours or one which brings back special memories and deserves to be appreciated by a wider audience.

Images need to be 150dpi, longest length (horizontal or vertical) 20cm saved as medium compression jpeg format. and sent with around 300 words of explanation together with camera details and settings. E mail them and you could be in the next issue of UWP.

peter@uwpmag.com

www.uwpmag.com

Guidelines for contributors

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

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

Uw photo techniques - Balanced light, composition, etc

Locations - Photo friendly dive sites, countries or liveaboards,

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

Equipment reviews - Detailed appraisals of the latest equipment

Personalities - Interviews/features about leading underwater photographers

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

How to submit articles

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

1. The text should be saved as a TEXT file and attached to the e mail

2. Images must be attached to the e mail and they need to be 150dpi

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

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

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

Parting Shot

During the winter period near Paris one of the closest places for sea diving is the port of Le Havre where each month dives to discover the local fauna are organized by the association "Port Vivant". Authorizations for diving are required since the dives in such big port are strongly supervised by the administration

To most divers the big industrial sea port of Le Havre is not supposed to be very rich in fauna and flora but this is not completely true and now almost 450 different species have been seen in the port of Le Havre. Among these species around 10% are non native coming on commercial boats (under the hull or in water ballast) from countries as far away as Japan.

Underwater pictures from such areas are interesting a lot the marine biologists and also nice pictures of numerous uncommon species can be taken .

During such dives the photographers have plenty of time with others studying biology as they are swimming at least at the same low speed as photographer in macro or close up mode, and the biologists are perfect companions for showing you unusual underwater inhabitants.

So on Saturday January 28th under a blue sky I entered the

water off the Basin de La Barre at a temperature of 3°C and a visibility of more than 6m what is exceptional here since most of the time the visibility is quite poor (less than 1meter) because of the blooming concentration of plankton as soon as the temperature rises.

For this dive, I was going for close up pictures with my 60mm micro Nikon on my Nikon D2X with 2 strobes Nikon SB 910 in Patima housings. I did not add any pink filter in front of the strobes and so the emitted light is quite cold (white bluish) and some ultra violet light is also emitted by the strobes.

For such dives I arrange my strobes in an inward orientation to have dark backgrounds, in the port the scenery is most of the time not so interesting and spoils the pictures.

During this dive I had the opportunity to shoot a snake pipe fish (for the scientists, *Entelurus aequoreus*, the last one was seen in 2007 in Le Havre) and also a more common but beautiful daisy anemone (*Cereus pedunculatus*).

Because of the blue and ultra violet enriched light of the strobe the anemone exhibits some bluish-light green fluorescence as can be seen on this picture. The origin of



Nikon D2X in Aquatica housing. 100 ISO, 1/60, F16, Nikkor 60mm, 2 strobes Nikon SB910 in Patima housing 1/2 power & 1/4 power, all in manual mode.

the fluorescent glow is due to the blue light of the strobes that excites pigments within the anemone.

During this dive the same fluorescing glow was also seen on some sponges (*Halichondria bowerbanki*) and also sea skirts (*Ciona intestinalis*).

Jean Michel Machefert
www.jmfrog.com

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

E mail
peter@uwpmag.com

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