

# Underwater Photography

a web magazine from Ocean Optics

Dec 2001

8 new products

Candice

Diving Guernsey

Wreck photography

BG Wildlife winner

Southern Red Sea

Californian seals

The snorkel

Tobias Bernhard

Derawan

Coral spawning

Nikonos survival

# Bonica

❖ *Excellence - taken to great depth* ❖



## Multi Snapper

- Protected from flooding by GOALI
- Built-in macro shoots from 5" to infinity
- Extraordinary depth-of-field
- Electronic Shutter
- Auto shut-off saves energy
- Digital frame counter
- Auto advance & rewind
- Rated to 165 feet
- Ergonomically designed
- Takes regular 35mm film



## SeaKing II Snapper

- Available Spring of 2001
- Protected from flooding by GOALI
- External on/off switch saves energy
- Digital frame counter
- Auto advance & rewind
- Oversized viewfinder
- Ergonomically designed
- Takes regular 35mm film
- Rated to 150 feet



## Handy Snapper

- Focus free 30mm f/5.6 lens
- Takes regular 35mm lens
- Manual advance & rewind
- Separate camera for land use
- Maintenance free silicone O-ring
- Rated to 150 feet



## Accessories

- Strobe systems
- Marine lens
- Close-up kit & framer
- Flipper
- Assorted strobe arms
- DCIEM Logarithms



Web: [www.bonicadive.com](http://www.bonicadive.com)

Email: [underwater@bonicadive.com](mailto:underwater@bonicadive.com)

# Underwater Photography

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e mail [uwp@uwpmag.co.uk](mailto:uwp@uwpmag.co.uk)

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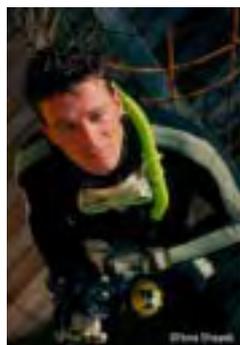


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*Cover shot by Candice  
(See page 18)*

**From the company that offers the best range of underwater cameras for professionals. The best underwater cameras for beginners.**

*It must be Christmas!*

**C-1 Underwater digital photography for everyone**



The Olympus Camedia C-1 is set to impress. Besides offering extreme user-friendliness, this compact innovation also features numerous functions and delivers quality images for great price-performance.

As a result, the C-1 is the perfect model for those who don't necessarily possess a technical background and are primarily looking to take good, enjoyable digital photos.

The PT-008 underwater housing is waterproof to 30 metres and follows the tried and trusted design of previous Olympus housings.

All of the camera controls are accessed by simple push buttons.

**PT 005s housing**

The PT 005S houses the following cameras:

Olympus Camedia 2020, 2030, 3030, 3040, 3000.

As with all other Olympus housings, they are waterproof to 30 metres and have push button access to all of the cameras controls.



**PT012 C40z housing just arrived!**

This latest Olympus housing is for the Olympus C40z 4mpixel camera is now available.

**Ocean Optics**

13 Northumberland Avenue, London WC2N 5AQ  
Tel 020 7930 8408 Fax 020 7839 6148

[www.oceanoptics.co.uk](http://www.oceanoptics.co.uk)

# Editorial

## Support UwP and its advertisers

UwP's web site statistics show that each issue has been downloaded nearly 20,000 times and this must provide potential advertisers with an excellent vehicle to promote their goods and services to underwater photographers.

In order to keep UwP free, the support of advertisers is crucial to our future and your response to these adverts is equally crucial.

If you want UwP to continue and grow, please respond to the advertisers and make sure you tell them that you saw their advert in UwP.

Our advertising rates are a fraction of a conventional magazine and our readership is extremely focussed so if you know of anyone who should advertise, please encourage them to do so.

UwP was started following the

generous sponsorship and support of Ocean Optics and it now looks as if it will make a considerable contribution to the underwater photography world.

UwP is free but it can only continue to expand if you support it rather than just receive it.

Give us your feedback, recommend it to others, respond to it's advertisers or contribute an article to it.

End of lecture.

## Free classifieds

The response to our offer of free classifieds has been encouraging and we now have more adverts than all of the UK diving magazines put together.

There are hundreds of items for sale or wanted so check it out at <http://www.uwpmag.co.uk/class.htm>

If you want an advert included, e mail

[classifieds@uwpmag.co.uk](mailto:classifieds@uwpmag.co.uk).

When your items have been sold, please e mail us to let us know and don't forget to say "Thank you". It really makes us feel appreciated for providing this free service!

## UwP goes monthly

I may live to regret this but we've decided to make UwP a monthly magazine!

The next issue will be out at the beginning of January 2002.

I think there's enough subject material out there to keep the content interesting. The number of pages may come down a little but I think we (that means YOU and me!) can come up with an interesting variety of entertainment and knowledge.

Onward and upward.

**Peter Rowlands**

# News and events

## Southern Egypt on Coral Queen



Coral Queen will be based at Wadi Lahami in Southern Egypt in 2002 to continue her unique deep south itineraries which have proved so successful over the past 4 years. She is offering a special £100 discount for all guests on her charters in March and April 2002. The tour cost will be only £865 and will include flights from Gatwick to Hurghada, air-conditioned coach transfers to Wadi Lahami, 7 nights full board including soft drinks in ensuite air-con cabins, 6 days unlimited dives, weights & cylinders.

This is a brilliant opportunity to discover the deep south sites in the St Johns area, away from the crowds and in comfort, aboard this pioneering dive vessel.

Mark Webster's feature on these trips is on page 22.

For further details contact Oonasdivers Ltd  
e-mail: [amanda@oonasdivers.com](mailto:amanda@oonasdivers.com)  
web: [www.oonasdivers.com](http://www.oonasdivers.com)  
Tel: 01323 648924  
Fax: 01323 738356  
20 St Leonards Road Eastbourne,  
East Sussex. BN21 3UH

# New products

## Digital combo from Reefmaster for \$599.00

### Camera Specs:

1.3 Mpx - most popular resolution . Large 1.8 inch / 45mm monitor . 3 quality levels, j-peg compression 1  
2 Resolutions: 1.3 Mpx and .3Mpx  
TTL Exposure Control,  
Apertures f 2.8 - f 8.,  
Shutter speeds 1/30th to 1/800th sec  
Built in flash; pre-flash in land mode  
USB computer connection  
Number of pictures:  
8 MB 17 high quality, 213 e-mail quality -  
32 MB card: 64 high / 852 e-mail  
128 MB card: 256 high / 3,400 email  
8MB on board memory F card compatible

For more detail. go to

<http://www.sealife-cameras.com>



### Housing Features

Constructed of crystal clear Makralon for increased durability . Optical glass front port  
Simple 2 button design with ergonomic placement of shutter button  
Stainless steel hardware  
Dual o-ring to insure waterproofness at 200ft  
Ergonomic rubberized grips . Single latch closure  
New snap ring for positive attachment of lenses  
Compact to fit into most BC pockets  
Depth tested to 200 ft / 60 m

## Light & Motion Tetra housing for Olympus C-4040 digital



Light & Motion's Tetra digital still housing for the Olympus Zoom Series\* will revolutionize the way you capture the underwater world.

Tetra housings accommodate most of Olympus' 2000, 3000, and 4000 Zoom series digital cameras, including the new Olympus C-4040 Zoom 4.1 megapixel camera.

The Tetra is the first underwater housing to combine the advantages of digital photography with the control of a SLR. The result is phenomenal camera control with instant results.

Film constraints no longer exist. Don't like the photo, delete it.



End your dive with only exceptional photography.

The Tetra includes a flat port and two dovetail strobe arm mounts. Optional for the Tetra is a wide angle lens, macro lens, primary and

secondary bulkheads, and a modeling light.

For further details go to <http://www.uwimaging.com>

## Olympus C-40z and housing



Olympus has launched a 4 megapixel digital still camera that measures 43.5 millimeters thick by 87 millimeters wide by 68.5 millimeters tall, and weighs 190 grams.

The company claims this makes the Camedia C-40Zoom the smallest and lightest in its quality class.

The camera features a 4.13 megapixel, 1/1.8 inch CCD (charge-coupled device) image pickup and

has a 2.8x optical zoom and a 1.5-inch TFT (thin film transistor) LCD (liquid crystal display) monitor. It can also record moving images.

The Camedia C-40Zoom features the “my mode” function, which allows users to set up and memorize their favorite settings.

The camera accepts Smart Media Cards and can record up to 165 images at the lowest resolutions of 640 x 480 pixels on a 16M-byte

card. The highest resolution mode is 3200 x 2400 pixels.

Images on the camera can be downloaded to a PC via USB (universal serial bus).

The Camedia C-40Z went on sale in Japan on Oct. 19 at 99,800 yen (US\$830).

Olympus, in Tokyo, can be contacted online at

<http://www.olympus.co.jp>

## UWA100-Ultra Wide Angle lens for Bluefin VX2000/PD150



The Light Bluefin VX2000/PD150 video housing is the ultimate professional underwater video imaging tool. With the all new Bluefin UWA100 lens you now have the ultimate professional

lens that delivers a dynamic range and image quality not yet seen in a DV format. The new UWA100 lens from Light & Motion is specifically designed for the Bluefin VX2000/PD150 underwater video housing. The Bluefin Video Housing supports Sony's 3ccd VX2000 and PD150 DV

The UWA100 delivers an astounding 100\* degree field of view with minimal distortion and 100% full zoom through. The dynamic range and angle of coverage of the lens is what separates it from the competition. In addition to the ultra wide angle capability, the full zoom range of

the camcorder is actually improved. High resolution macro images can be recorded when the subject is only 6 inches from the port vertex in air and 28 inches from the port vertex in water.

For more information on the Bluefin Housing click the below link

[http://www.uwimaging.com/products/video\\_housings/bluefin\\_vx2000/travel\\_pks.htm](http://www.uwimaging.com/products/video_housings/bluefin_vx2000/travel_pks.htm)

For more information on the Bluefin UWA100 lens click the below link

[http://www.uwimaging.com/products/video\\_housings/bluefin\\_vx2000/optics.htm](http://www.uwimaging.com/products/video_housings/bluefin_vx2000/optics.htm)

## Ikelite housing for Nikon Coolpix 995 Digital Camera

The Nikon Coolpix 995 digital camera allows the nicest installation Ikelite have done for this popular camera series.

The camera flash is blocked by the underwater housing, but a deflector is included in the housing to allow any Ikelite TTL SubStrobe to be triggered by our wireless TTL Slave Sensors.

The housing is molded of corrosion free clear polycarbonate and operates safely to 200 feet.

The Release Handle system allows easy attachment and removal of SubStrobe mounting arms at the touch of a button.

The complete housing and camera weighs less than 9 pounds.

Controls are provided for every camera function, and removable external UR-Pro filter is included. The optional Nikon wide angle and fisheye lenses do not operate in this housing, but the special underwater wide angle lenses from Inon and Sea & Sea can be used.

The housing measures 8" wide including knobs; 12" wide with the removable handle bar attached; 8" high including the removable base; and 7" deep including back knobs and port.

A bulkhead to allow use of a sync cord with TTL SubStrobes is also included. Combining two older SubStrobes with a dual sync cord requires modification if the strobes were made before 6/1/01. Optional mounts are also available for Nikonos strobes.



For further details go to <http://www.ikelite.com>

## Gates External Monitor Package

The Gates external monitor has a 2.5" diagonal Active color matrix screen . It uses 8 "AA" batteries, burn time approximately 4 - 5 hours

The monitor is available in either NTSC or PAL.

You need to specify which Gates housing you will be mounting it on so they can send the correct mounting bracket.

To mount to other housings, the monitor mount ball uses a 1/4" - 20 screw.



Dimensions: 5" W X 3" H X 5 1/2" D. Weight w/batteries 2.25 lbs

For further details go to <http://www.gateshousings.com>

# Sea & Sea VX-2000 PRO

The DCR-VX2000 is Sony's successor to the benchmark of mini DV camcorders, the VX1000. The DSR-PD150 is Sony's elite professional model. Both are 3-CCD camera systems. In video terms, the more CCDs, the better the image quality and colors, and in today's market, three CCDs is as good as it gets.

The VX-2000 housing has been engineered to meet the stringent demands of professionals and serious digital video enthusiasts and accommodates both the DCR-VX2000 and DSR-PD150. The VX-2000 PRO incorporates the high-performance features and hydrodynamic profile that made its forerunner, the VX-1000, the preferred housing of pros worldwide, and introduces a host of refinements for unsurpassed ease of use and unparalleled image quality.

The VX-2000 Pro is a synergy of Sony and Sea & Sea technologies, a formidable imaging system with no peer.

## VX-2000 Features

The 0.5x Multi-Coated Super-Wide Conversion Lens expands the angle of view of the camcorder's 12x optical/48x digital zoom lens. It is multi-coated for professionally-sharp reproduction without image aberration

Internally mounted color correcting flip filter is accessed via the filter ON/OFF switch, enabling you to flip it into position or retract it quickly and easily

Main switch, autofocus ON/OFF switch, iris and zoom can be controlled while holding the grip

Large-sized gear-driven focus control provides smooth and confident operation

Gear-driven manual zoom enables more precise control of zoom speed

Oversized viewfinder on



model 58520 is comfort-cushioned for up-to-the-mask viewing

Model 58510 is equipped with a 2.5" color LCD monitor. Large rectangular window enables you to hold the housing at arm's length and see exactly what you are recording

Built-in leak detector alerts to moisture. Simple rotary locking latches make opening and closing the housing quick and easy

Quality amphibious microphone provides realistic sound recording. Ergonomically-contoured handle provides a well-balanced grip

## Accessories

The Infrared Remote Control Grip with push-button REC/PHOTO/ZOOM controls can be operated while holding the grip, providing millisecond response

The new BLX-55W video light system is a high-color temperature (4700° K) system that will warm the scene like sunlight and deliver images with impact.

## Specifications

Compatible cameras: Sony DCR-VX2000 Digital Video Handycam and DSR-PD150 3-CCD Mini DV Cam Camcorder

Controls: Power on/off, record/zoom/photo, autofocus on/off, manual focus, manual zoom, iris gain, white balance, shutter speed, program AE, color correcting flip filter, dual-position ND filter, eye-piece shutter open/close (58520), LCD monitor on/off (58510)

Construction: Corrosion-resistant aluminum alloy with galvanized gunmetal finish

Dimensions: 235 x 338 x 404mm / 9.3 x 13.3 x 16 inches (H x W x D)

Weight: 10 kg/22 lbs (land), 100g/3.5 ounces (underwater)

Maximum depth: 75m/250 feet

For more detail visit <http://www.seaandsea.com>

## Subal 70-180 macro zoom port

Subals owners can now take full advantage of the versatile and inexpensive Nikkor Micro Nikkor 70-180mm zoom lens. The 70 - 180mm focuses as close as 0.12m (4.7 inches) and offers reproduction ratios from 0.31 to 0.75. By adding a Nexus wet lens that slips conveniently on and off the port, and unlike teleconverters does not affect autofocus, higher magnification ratios can be achieved.

The newly developed Subal port is dedicated to the zoom and is to be manufactured only in limited numbers. The port features a built in support ring to minimise vibration that can cause image blurring and has controls to switch the lens between auto and manual focus and for focusing by eye if the AF cannot lock on. Manual focusing is also useful for working with shy subjects that are disturbed by vibration from



the camera focusing motors. Zooming is operated from the camera housing.

Ocean Optics clients now have access to the most extensive macro shooting systems available with both Nexus and Subal able to accommodate the Nikon 60mm, 105mm, 200mm and 70 - 180mm zoom micro lenses, optional tele converter accessories, wet lenses and the unique Inon Quad flash.



Before use the tripod leg needs to be removed from the zoom. Your local dealer can arrange for this inexpensive modification. The 70-180 port includes manual focus gear, focus switching gear and zoom gear.

For further information contact your nearest Subal dealer or Ocean Optics in London Tel 020 7930 8408.

[www.oceanoptics.co.uk](http://www.oceanoptics.co.uk)

## Late breaking news

### First full frame 35mm digital SLR announced by Contax

Kyocera Optics, Inc. is pleased to announce the launch of the Contax N Digital, the world's first digital SLR camera to employ a full-frame 35mm, 24 x 36mm, 6+ megapixel CCD. This achievement allows the camera full use of auto focus Carl Zeiss T\* lenses while offering the user world-class digital picture quality.

The N Digital is based on the Contax N1 and provides the perfect ergonomic platform. The N1, which was introduced in the fall of 2000, has proven itself to be a high quality product that can stand up to the every day rigors of the working photographer. The N Digital and N1 cameras share all basic functions as well as the unique features incorporated in the N1. This includes the "Dual Focus

Mechanism", the world's first "5-point Wide Array Diagonal Auto Focus System", and "Fine Focus ABC (Auto Bracketing System)". The N Digital can offer greater control and creativity to meet the photographer's demands by incorporating the Dual Focus Mechanism along with the highly advanced SLR digital image technology. The N Digital offers a high-resolution equivalent to film-based photography, meeting the needs of both professional and serious amateur photographers.

The new Contax N Digital will be able to take advantage of the impressive lens line from the N system, which includes a total of seven lenses. In addition, the Contax N Digital can also use all eight lenses from the Contax 645

system with the NAM-1 adapter. The option of using lenses from the Contax 645 system is especially important to 645 owners since they could utilize their current lenses with the N Digital with the simple addition of the NAM —1 adapter.

**For the latest detail and specification visit**

<http://>

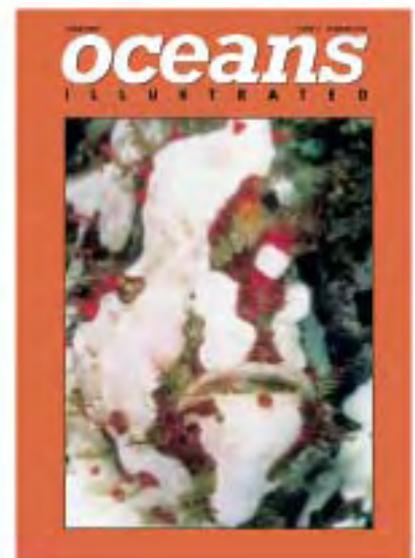
[www.contaxcameras.com/nseries\\_press/index\\_nd.html](http://www.contaxcameras.com/nseries_press/index_nd.html)



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**From the publishers of DIVE MAGAZINE**

# Bonica snaps snappers

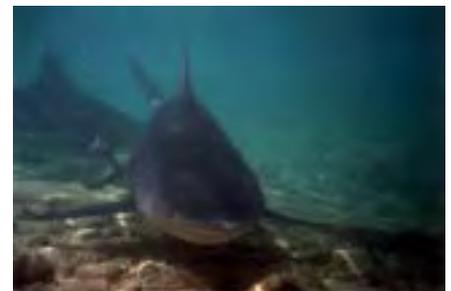
Advertisement feature

Walkers Cay in the Northern Bahamas has gained a world-wide reputation for the quality of its shark diving. The main event is the chumsicle dive where divers watch up to 100 Caribbean reef sharks, Blacktips and Nurse sharks tussle for a ball of frozen fish heads. You are very close to these beautiful creatures and can swim belly to belly with them as they circle round for another bite.

Exhilarating though this was, the main reason that my wife Kyna and I had come to visit Walkers was a chance to swim with the Bulls. Expertly chaperoned by Jeremy Stafford-Deitsch we were able to snorkel in four to ten feet of water with up to 15 magnificent Bull sharks (as well as the occasional Lemon and sleepy Nurse shark). It was an unforgettable experience trying to photograph the bulls as they were swimming underneath us and we soon developed favourites including the huge Bahama Mama and the camera loving Princess.

As a relative novice to the world of underwater photography I was delighted that there were other experienced u/w photographers on the trip that I could learn from. On occasion I have to admit to suffering from 'equipment envy' as cameras the size of u/w scooters were given their pre-dive checkout. The Bonica Snapper that I had bought from Ocean Optics was small, easy to use and took about a minute to prep which ensured I didn't miss out on the 'experience'.

Returning to the UK in sunny February I was apprehensive about how my shots would come out. Fortunately in amongst the close ups of the back of the boat, sea grass and Kyna's hair, some of the shots worked out well and I was pleased with the clarity and colour of the photos. So for anyone considering a foray into u/w photography I would recommend the Bonica as a good option, and for



the commissioning editor of National Geographic I am still awaiting your call.

We travelled with Divequest and the expedition to Walkers was in conjunction with the Shark trust. Thanks to Jeremy and also Gary and Brenda Adkison at Walkers for such a great trip.

**Dan Beanland**



<http://www.oceanoptics.co.uk>

<http://www.sharktrust.org>

<http://www.divequest.co.uk>

# Gadget of the month

## Jessops lenspen

For UwPs British readers, Jessops is a well know photo retailer with branches in most major cities. I'm sure there is an equivalent chain of shops in the States and other countries who should sell this invaluable gadget.

In the UK it costs £8.99 so that means they are probably 89 cents in the USA and come free in any cereal packet in OZ. Someones got to pay inflated prices and it may as well be us Brits.

Anyway enough of the wingeing, the Jessops lenspen has two functions - a lens brush and a lens cleaner. The brush is hardly rocket science and it does exactly what it looks like it should.

At the other end, however, is a small magic disc covered in an enexplained material which is absolutely brilliant at cleaning lens elements with scratching or smearing.

**Have you got a useful gadget we should know about?**

**Please let us know at [gadgets@uwpmag.co.uk](mailto:gadgets@uwpmag.co.uk)**



*About the size of a fat fountain pen, the Jessops lenspen won't take up much space in your case but it will keep your lenses nice and clean.*



*Push the blue slider and a soft lens brush appears which is useful for wiping dust off lenses.*



*Pull off the cap at the other end and you have the most brilliant lens cleaner I have ever encountered.*

## Web watch

**Web site of the month <http://www.uwphotographer.net/>**

Here's a few sites offering loads of links to interesting places

<http://scuba.about.com>

<http://scuba.miningco.com/library/weekly/aa120998.htm>

[http://radawana.cg.tuwien.ac.at/~martinpi/sc\\_link.html](http://radawana.cg.tuwien.ac.at/~martinpi/sc_link.html)

<http://www.acecam.com/crindex.html>

<http://www.madforscuba.com/Scuba/Articles.nsf/PhotographyG?OpenView&Start=1&count=16>

**Do you know of an interesting/relevant web site?**

**E mail us at**

**[websites@uwpmag.co.uk](mailto:websites@uwpmag.co.uk)**

The results of the 39th International Underwater Photographic Competition are posted at <http://www.laups.org/39comp/compresults.htm>

**Whether you're on the water, in the water or by the water, we can cater for all of your needs.**

**With helpful and experienced staff you will find it easy to get the exact kit to suit you.**



**THE LARGEST WATER SPORTS STORE IN LONDON**



**11 - 14 Northumberland Avenue  
London, WC2N 5AQ**

**Tel: 020 7930 5050**

**Fax: 020 7930 3032**

**email:info@oceanleisure.co.uk**



# BG WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2001

organised by BBC Wildlife Magazine and The Natural History Museum, London



## WINNING PHOTOGRAPH by Tobias Bernhard

Nikon F90X with 18mm lens; 1/15 sec at f16; Fujichrome Velvia; two strobes.

We found grey reef sharks in this lagoon on the Beveridge Reef in the South Pacific and used bait to habituate them to meeting us at a particular coral head. Over the next fortnight, they ventured closer each day, in groups of up to eight. Most were adult females, with a distinct 'pecking order'. Though these sharks can be dangerous, we never once felt threatened. This dominant female was the biggest (about two metres long), and sometimes, out of apparent curiosity, she would swim straight towards us, then, at the last moment, gybe sharply to change direction. Once I was familiar with this habit, I could preset focus, exposure and flash and concentrate on panning the shark as she cruised in. On this occasion, she was barely 30cm from me.

'I believe that living and working on my boat, a converted old fishing vessel, is often central to achieving the images I have in my head. It allows me to spend virtually unlimited time to get to know an animal subject, its habitat and behaviour.

Winning the BG Wildlife Photographer of the Year award (even a highly commended) is a dream for many serious wildlife photographers and I was no exception. So it might be understandable that when I found out what I had won, I felt like I'd wake up any moment from this dream.

There are so many great nature photographers that I can still learn from myself and I am a bit reluctant to give advice. However there is the

obvious need for patience, perseverance and respect for your subject. I think being super critical of one's own work is important - I always see room for improvement in all my images.

For my next project I am planning to sail to Fanning Island in eastern Kiribati from here (Vavau) at the onset of the hurricane season where there is a Manta ray cleaning station in the pass to the atoll. From there on to the Tuamotu Islands for more pelagic and Tiger sharks.'

Naill Benvie - Wildlife Photographer and Competition Judge said "This picture is loaded with tension - between the warm and cool tones and between the viewer and subject. The line of the fish is dynamic and the sense of motion adds to the power of the image." ●

# Tobias Bernhard

by Pete Atkinson

For nature photographers, one competition is regarded more highly than any other, the BG Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition. It attracts over 19000 entries from 60 countries. 19000 is a stack of slides 38m high, just to put it in perspective. Many of the world's top professionals enter and even a highly commended is cause for excitement.

Winners and runner-ups in each category are flown to London for the presentation from all over the world. The dinner is simply magnificent, held in the main atrium of the Natural History Museum, lit by candlelight with an 80' Diplodocus skeleton draped between the tables.

This year, for the first time, the overall winner was an underwater photographer, Tobias Bernhard. Almost amazing as the win itself, was the fact that he also won three highly commendeds (shown opposite). Four awards in one year is virtually unprecedented in the history of the competition.

Tobi was presented with his awards by Chris Packham and Andrew Bonfield.

Tobi Bernhard was born in Munich, a long way from the sea. His parents owned a house in the south of France which kindled his interest in the underwater world and where he learned to dive.

After completing his studies in graphic design he travelled all over the world for three years with his partner Nora Shayeb. Back in Munich he worked in a graphic design studio for a while before he and Nora emigrated to New Zealand in 1991. He also worked as a diving instructor in Thailand.

An interest in diving with a graphics arts background, inevitably led to underwater photography. In New Zealand he bought the 32' yacht Sedate, and sailed among the



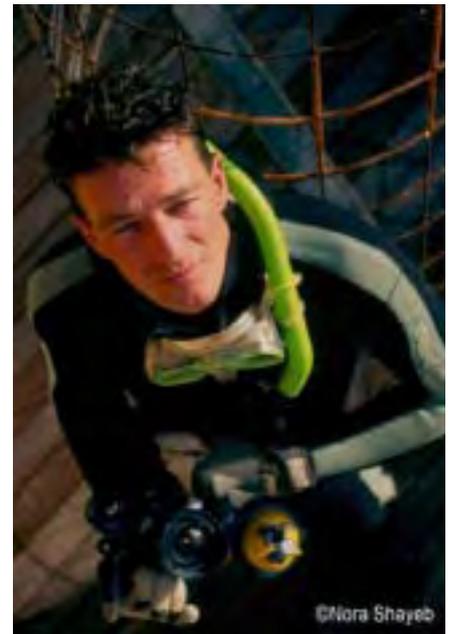
South Pacific islands looking for adventure.

When we first met at Suva Yacht Club in Fiji he was struggling with a Nikonos V and wide-angle attachments. He soon realised that the gear was a restriction and bought a Sea&Sea housing for the Nikon F90X. Later he bought a Subal Nikon F4 housing and recently bought the last Subal housing for the F90x which Nikon in their infinite wisdom have discontinued.

In the early years I was able to help him with technical points, but he always had an almost obsessively clear view of what he wanted to achieve and would pursue it with relentless vigour until his pictures matched his vision. Now it's me who has to ask how he achieved certain effects.

At Beveridge Reef where he shot the winning picture I also took loads of slow shutter speed panning shots but mine were all utter rubbish. He seemed to master slow shutter speed techniques with ease and applied them with great skill to great whites, producing unique images from a subject which has received a lot of attention from the world's best photographers.

I have never met a



photographer quite as critical of his own work. He throws away pictures that I'm sure my agents would be able to sell. His own agents delight in his submissions since there is so little to weed out.

The Tutukaka Photo Festival in New Zealand is in its infancy, but Tobi's winning shot which the judges had no difficulty in awarding the top prize was fished out of the rubbish bin by his partner Nora Shayeb, who has unnerving talent for picking winning pictures, including some of mine.

Her artistic influence over many years can only have had a positive affect on Tobi's photography. She is a talented painter, sculptor, builder or pretty much anything she turns her attention to.

He believes that living and working on his new boat Nexus, a converted 47' aluminium fishing vessel, is often central to achieving the images he has in his head. It allows him to spend virtually unlimited time to get to know an animal subject, its habitat and behaviour. Nexus was a long-liner and the fishing gear came off in the



part exchange deal with Sedate. The 9 tonne ice-hold was converted into a pristine camera, computer and editing room. You wouldn't eat your dinner off the floor because it would leave crumbs: it's immaculate.

The aft working deck is protected from the sun by an upper deck which houses the shark cage, kayak and solar panels.

One of the amazing things about Tobi is that he has only been taking photos underwater seriously for five years. This year, apart from the BG win, he has won Best New Zealand Image at Oceanz 2001, and won the marine life category of the prestigious Nature's Best competition in the USA. This attracts 15000 entries from the world's top nature photographers. So I guess we'll be hearing more about Tobias Bernhard in the future.

The BG Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2001 Exhibition is now open at The Natural History Museum, London until 11th March 2002.

Tobi's website is <http://website.lineone.net/~tobias.bernhard/>

**Pete Atkinson**

# Candice - a bold new talent

by Sarah Jackson

Amateur Photographer magazine



*Shot in the Maldives for FHM magazine, f90 aquatica housing wide angle lens. Kodak E100SW film. "Timing is very important when shooting split level"*

Candice (she never uses her surname) came into photography by a circuitous route. She used to work with horses in New Zealand and Australia, before setting off to backpack round the world. A qualified diver, she was inspired to take pictures after diving off Australia's beautiful Great Barrier Reef.

Once Candice was back in the UK, she decided to study for an HND in Photography at Plymouth College of Art & Design. Naturally, she chose the college's underwater photography option. At first Candice spent her time photographing more conventional subjects under the waves, but that soon changed – she explains, 'I got bored of photographing fish'. Instead, she decided to concentrate on people, choosing the unusual route of taking fashion shots underwater.



Her work was spotted by British Airways which commissioned her, while she was still a student, to do a shoot in the Red Sea for its in-flight magazine, High Life. Returning to the UK, she started to get other commissions

*Shot in a studio pool in london, using hmi film lighting, E100SW Kodak film, Bronica Etrsi camera, held very carefully above the water whilst I was standing in the water, no splashing allowed!! For Saturday Times magazine*



*Shot on 160vc kodak film. Nikon f90 in aquatica housing, wide angle lens. Commissioned by Sunday Times magazine, shot in Cape Town South Africa*



*(Above) f90 aquatica housing, shot in studio pool in london, E100SW Kodak, using hmi film lighting. For Saturday Times magazine*



*Shot in Portugal, in an icy freezing pool, but beautifully clear water! f90 aquatica housing 20mm lens for Speedo and Harrods*

*(Below) Commissioned by a pharmaceutical company, shot using underwater tungsten lights and f90, aquatica housing, 160 vc, Kodak film in a pool in London*



which led to more fashion shoots (some underwater, some not) in such places as India and the Maldives. She acquired an agent; yet she was still at college. Looking back, she says, 'It all happened very quickly.'

Since then her career has really taken off. Now a professional photographer based in south London, Candice reckons 30% of her work is carried out underwater, often fashion or beauty shoots for brands such as Sainsbury's, Alitalia and Harrods, or for magazines like FHM, Harpers & Queen and Elle. She also does lifestyle shots for picture libraries and magazines, portraits for private clients and weddings. Candice says, 'I love photographing people.' This element, and a wonderful informality, is common to all her shots, whatever the setting.

When you're shooting underwater it's vital to have back-up equipment and for that reason Candice has four Nikon F90 bodies, with lenses from fisheye and wideangle to 60mm and a macro lens. The camera is protected by Aquatica housing, designed for professional use. Film is Kodak, either print or transparency depending on the effect Candice wants to achieve, and she prints everything out using paper and ink from Epson, which sponsors her. Candice normally has one camera under the water, with a second in the hands of her assistant, who takes care of film loading, changing lenses and anything that has to be done above the surface. The other two bodies are kept in reserve.

She has travelled all over the world for underwater shoots, from chilly swimming pools in London to

exotic locations like the Seychelles. Where the shoots take place depends on several factors, including the time of year and the budget available. For the comfort of the models, the water can't be too cold (which rules out UK coastal waters) and for the best quality results on film, the water must be crystal clear.

An indoor shoot typically takes two days – one to set up and



one to shoot. Outdoors, if the shoot involves only natural light, it may take just a day. Candice says, 'Often I'm in the water all day. As I get older I'm getting colder!' It can be extremely tiring and, as she's underwater, concentration is vital at all times.

A shoot in or near water involves more people than the average shoot in dry surroundings, because of safety issues. Candice is always accompanied by a dive 'buddy' in case she should get into difficulties. If the shoot is in an indoor swimming pool or water tank, powerful, daylight-balanced lights (of the type used on film sets) are usually needed. Fitted with gels to change their colour, there are often as many as eight positioned around the pool, some directed on the models and some on the backdrop, according to the effect Candice is looking for. That means electricians need to be on hand and more assistants to check that the cables don't go anywhere near the water.

Underwater, Candice wears either a wetsuit or a semi-drysuit. She often shoots within 5m of the water surface, in which case she will either hold her breath or use snorkelling equipment. Sometimes, however, she goes down to 10m or 12m, necessitating a dive-support team and the wearing of full diving kit, including air tanks. Any further down and there would be a lot of light fall-off and colours would start



to lose their brilliance. All this kit doesn't come cheap, of course, but Candice is lucky enough to be sponsored by Scuba Pro, as well as by Epson.

Composition can be tricky as 'everything appears 30% closer underwater' and so the photographer has to compensate with the framing. I can't imagine peering through a viewfinder while wearing a snorkelling mask, but Candice has got used to it and doesn't find it much of a drawback. She normally sets the camera to autofocus – as long as the housing is clean, the lens won't be fooled by the glass directly in front of it. Communication with the models is done by hand signals.

As is normal on a fashion shoot, a stylist is often on hand to dress the models and there will be input from an art director about the look needed in the final shots. However, Candice is given quite a lot of freedom when it comes to actually taking the photographs. Apart from the fact that her style is known and trusted, she points out that you can't shoot Polaroids underwater, so there is no way for anyone to check what the shot will look like on film. When you're going halfway round the world, you can't afford to make mistakes that will not come to light until after the

entire film has been processed.

Underwater photography sometimes involves hairy close encounters. On one occasion photographing off the Seychelles, a shark came close by. Luckily it had plenty of fish to feed on so it wasn't interested in the delicacy of a female photographer. Worse was to come when Candice was again in the Seychelles for a different shoot. A hurricane had brought a sea snake close to the shore. The poisonous, 7ft-long creature gave her quite a fright before it swam away without harming anyone. But Candice was fascinated when she encountered a manta ray in the Maldives. It had a 6ft wingspan and nosed round the models before looking Candice straight in the eye and gliding off – an amazing sight. Underwater, it seems, you have to be ready for anything.

Candice's website is at:  
[www.candice.co.uk](http://www.candice.co.uk)

**by Sarah Jackson**  
Amateur Photographer magazine

Candice's dive  
equipment is supplied  
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# Way Down South

with Mark Webster

You have only to open a diving magazine to see that the Red Sea is the most popular diving destination for divers in both the UK and Europe. Until quite recently a trip here meant starting your holiday from either Sharm El Sheik or Hurghada or perhaps as far afield as Safaga, El Gouna or Dahab if you were adventurous. These areas are still incredibly popular but now regular visitors are beginning to explore the developing areas around El Quesir and Marsa Alam whilst those really in the know are all talking about the diving still further south and the virgin sites to be found there. Is this true or just travel brochure hype?

If you made your first visit to the Red Sea in the 1970's or even in the early 1980's then you will have experienced the absence of commercial development and some solitude on the now popular sites in the north and also appreciate what effects the growth in popularity has had on the reefs in many areas. There are still many fantastic dives to be found in the north but to be sure of finding undamaged reefs you need to search for that solitude once more. The development along the Egyptian Red Sea coast is constantly pushing further south and the opening of another airport at Marsa Alam in 2001 will be the catalyst for another surge towards the border with Sudan. However, this is still in the future and whilst the diving closer to the border at Fury Shoal and St. John's reef is now an open secret, there are still very few boats operating here and that elusive solitude is attainable for a while.

To reach this area and Rocky and Zarbaghad islands to the east



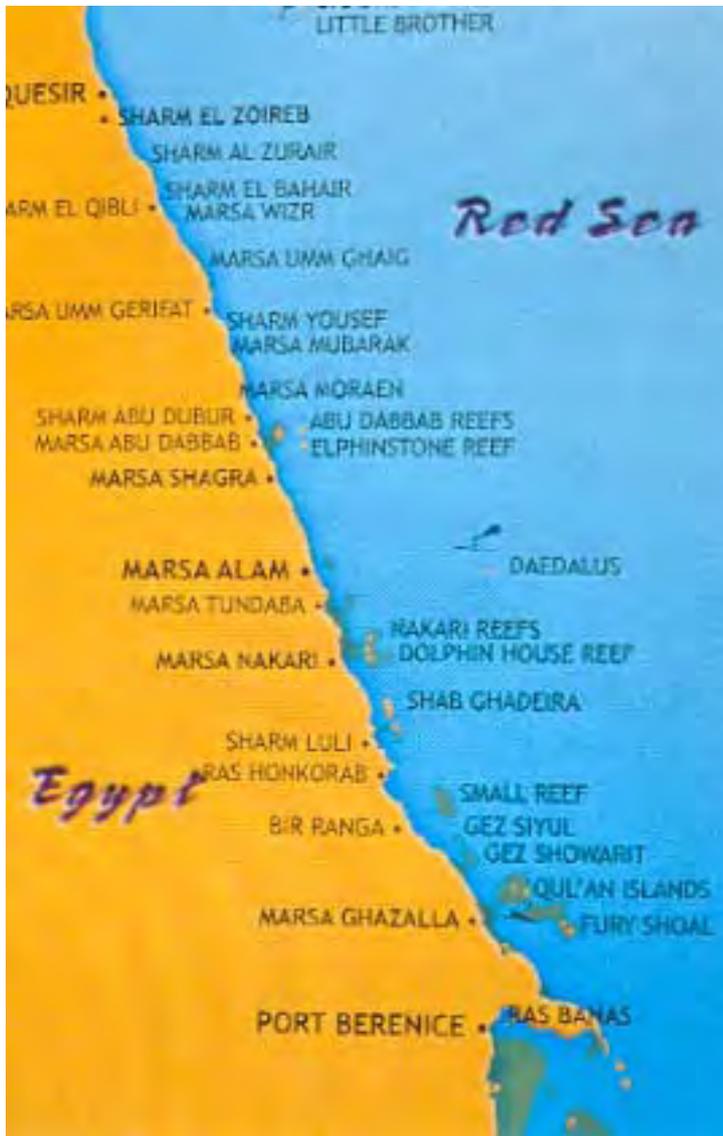
*A turtle swims overhead in the early morning. Nikon F90X, Subal Housing, 20mm, YS120/YS30, f11 1/60, 100 ASA.*



*The hard coral reefs throughout this area are particularly healthy and are populated by scores of reef fish and schooling anthias. Nikon F90X, Subal Housing, 16mm fish eye, YS120/YS30, f11 1/60, 100 ASA.*

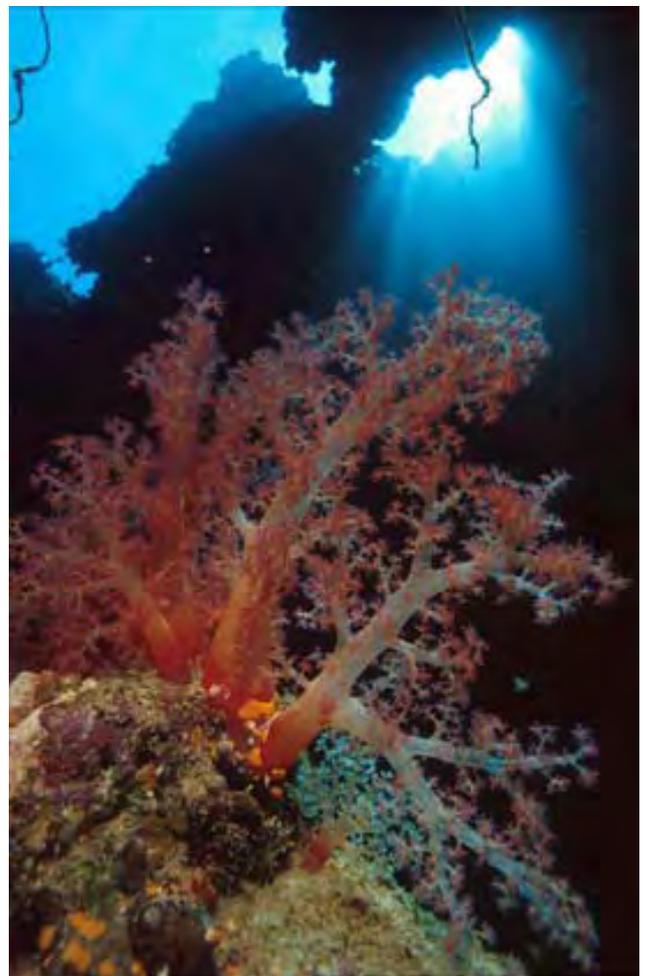


*The bumphead parrot fish can be found on reefs on the south side of St. John's. Nikon F90X, Subal Housing, 20mm, YS120/YS30, f11 1/60, 100 ASA.*



*MY Coral Queen*

*Soft corals are abundant particularly on the offshore ergs and habillis. Nikon F90X, Subal Housing, 16mm fish eye, YS120/YS30, f11 1/60, 100 ASA.*



you must select a live aboard, although there is a safari style camp at Marsa Wadi Lahami which accesses Fury Shoal by RIB's. Most of the available live aboards sail from Marsa Alam and will reach as far south as Fury Shoal on a one week charter and St. John's on a two week excursion. There are also two boats currently based in Marsa Wadi Lahami (MY Coral Queen and MY Salma) which will take you to St. John's on a one week charter. Either option involves a longer road transfer from Hurghada which will not appeal to everyone but is a worthwhile hardship.

So what can you expect once you arrive there? In the inshore regions the big difference here is the dominance of the hard corals which form intricate reef patterns and numerous ergs and habillis - erg is the Arabic word for a pinnacle or pillar of coral and a habilli is a submerged reef or, as the locals would say, 'unborn' as it has not yet reached the surface. The formations of the 'massive' hard corals (brains, mountains etc.) are stunning in many areas, but often to see the best of them you will need an experienced guide to lead you through the maze into the heart of the reef areas. These central areas of the reefs are sheltered from the rough winter seas

and offer pristine constructions populated by all the familiar Red Sea fish species. Those divers so familiar with the northern reefs will take one or two dives to adjust to the appearance of these reefs but you soon begin to appreciate the seemingly infinite shapes and arrangements and the mixture of delicate and striking colours.

As you progress further offshore the reef structures begin to change to a more familiar northern pattern of massive buttresses rising from

deep water, some reaching to the surface (ergs) and some just 3-6m below (habillis). These reefs are more exposed to the stronger currents which support the colonies of colourful soft corals and sea fans which are so much the trade mark of the Red Sea. The reefs also have a stunning selection of hard corals and the familiar image of swathes of anthias crowding the reef edge. The deeper water also attracts the pelagics from the open sea and it is common to see large schools of barracuda, jacks, red snapper and several species of shark. The larger ergs to the east of Fury Shoal are home to schools of scalloped hammerhead sharks which will be found cruising in cooler waters just below the thermocline. The depth of this varies with the time of year, but perhaps the best time is in late spring and early summer when the thermocline will be found at around 25-30m and surface conditions are calm. The best time to observe these magnificent creatures is early in the morning just after dawn when you should enter the water quietly and descend until you feel the cooler waters. A patient wait will often be rewarded by an inspection from these shy denizens but capturing them on film is very difficult due to the low light levels and the often fleeting visit. However, the remainder of the dive can be spent exploring the reef's treasures on your ascent.

*Clown fish are the trade mark of the Red Sea and are abundant on all the reefs in this area. Nikon F90X, Subal Housing, 16mm fish eye, YS120/YS30, f11 1/60, 100 ASA.*

Moving still further south to St. John's Reef, which is positioned right on the border with neighbouring Sudan, provides another opportunity for an unusual encounter. The collection of reefs at St. John's covers a wide area and those on its southern fringe are home to the strange looking bumphead parrot fish. This fish is more common much further south in the Red Sea and this area marks the northern limit of its habitat. The famous bump is used to break off pieces of coral that are too large to bite and give the fish a very dim-witted looking appearance. They prefer to graze on top of the reef table at high water early in the morning and late in the evening and between these times will most often be found resting in caves and overhangs on the reef edge. These fish are quite shy and need a slow approach to capture a good image on film. This challenge has been recognised by the owner of the Coral Queen which



runs an annual competition for the best picture of a bumphead which wins a free trip on the live aboard.

There are also a number of wrecks in the area, some discovered and some still yet to be found. The majority of these are in the Fury Shoal area and the most popular of these with photographers are the tug boat 'Tiensten' and the wreck of a small unnamed yacht. The tug has been on the reef since the early 1950's and has a remarkable covering of hard corals whilst the yacht is more recent but is already being engulfed by the reef. There is also the mostly intact remains of an oil tanker on the north side of Ras Banas (only the bows are missing) which makes a marvellous dive but weather conditions need to be good and the visibility is often poorer than on the reefs offshore. Nevertheless, this wreck has a wide range of marine life on it much of which will suit the macro photographer, including the largest population of pixie hawk fish I have



*Soldier fish shelter under coral overhangs during day light hours. Nikon F90X, Subal Housing, 20mm, YS120/YS30, f11 1/60, 100 ASA.*



*Clown fish are the trade mark of the Red Sea and are abundant on all the reefs in this area. Nikon F90X, Subal Housing, 16mm fish eye, YS120/YS30, f11 1/60, 100 ASA.*

come across.

There is no doubt that the number of boats visiting this area will slowly increase, but at present the facilities to bring large numbers of divers this far south do not exist. So the message for Red Sea connoisseurs is to sample this whilst you can still enjoy the relative solitude as you will not be disappointed.

**Mark Webster**



Mark hosts underwater photography workshops aboard the MY Coral Queen. See Mark's website for further details: [www.photec.co.uk](http://www.photec.co.uk)

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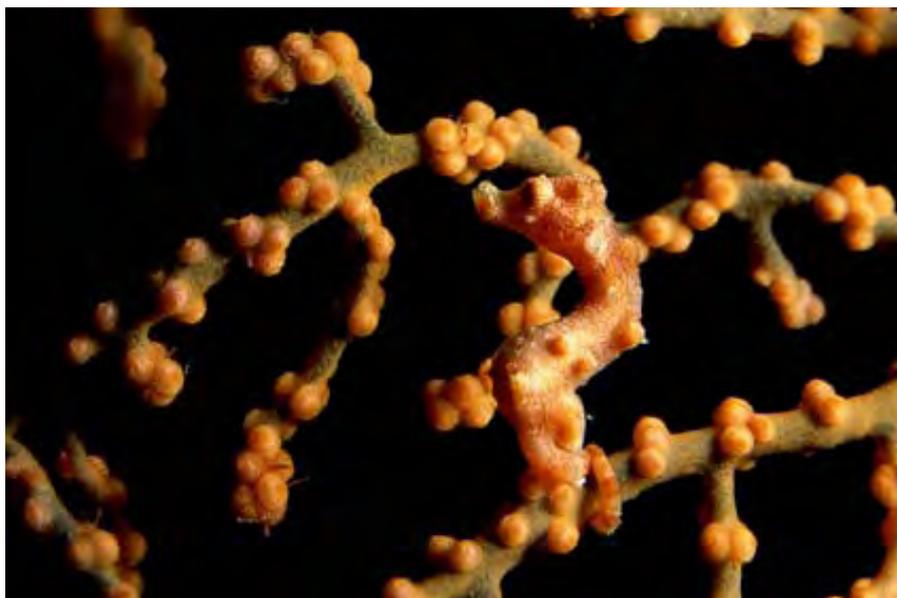
# DIVING DERAWAN

by Morris Gregory

It took three plane journeys followed by a lengthy boat ride down the river Berau to get to Derawan, a small island off the coast of Borneo. We had been lured by the dive travel brochures promise of Mantas, Barracuda and a wealth of macro life and were about to put that to the test.

The check out dive with Eddie, our dive guide, was at Turtle Bay. It was a gentle drift with plenty to see including a small shoal of batfish, humphead wrasse, lionfish, clams, nudibranchs and lots more. Near the end we came across five turtles, a female being mated by one of the males while the other three were harassing the couple eager to muscle in on the act themselves. I hadn't had time to get my camera gear ready for this dive so had to be content with watching the spectacle unfold before me while cursing the missed photo opportunity through my regulator. Not a bad start to the diving.

The first full day was at sites around Derawan Island, with visits to Sangalaki and Kakaban islands planned for the following days. We began at Lighthouse 1, another gentle drift starting on a plateau at 5m which then shelved down to 30m. We gradually made our way back up the slope throughout the dive and saw a variety of multi coloured nudibranchs, blennies, tunicates, wrasse, batfish and a couple of green turtles. On a later dive at this site Eddie found a blue ribbon eel that he teased out of its burrow with a long piece of wire, not a practice I was very happy with, but we did get to appreciate the full beauty of the eel with it's small bright blue and yellow head attached to a long blue sinuous body. The next dive was on an Unidentified Shipwreck and had very similar life to the first, with a couple of large turtles hiding under



the small wreck and several blennies poking out of the burrows they shared with tiny shrimps in a symbiotic relationship. It was the last dive of the day at Taturuga that proved to be the most eventful. As before it started as a pleasant drift but only ten minutes later the current picked up considerably, almost tearing our masks off and making it difficult for me to keep a firm grip on my camera gear. Eventually it was impossible for the group of seven to keep together so we split into two smaller ones and ours found a long rope, attached to a jetty, to grab hold of. We edged our

way along it hoping to find some calmer water but to no avail so inflated a delayed smb and surfaced. The others weren't too far away and Eddie had found some slack water so we regrouped and finished the dive in much calmer conditions. The highlight of this more relaxed part of the dive was seeing a turtle on a small coral mount that served as a cleaning station. It was content to pose totally unconcerned while I finned around it taking photos from various angles until I ran out of film.

As with many dive locations there is a Coral Garden and a Shark



*Apart from the turtle laying eggs, which was taken on my wife Sally's Motormarine II with built in flash, the photos were all taken with a Sigma 50mm macro lens on a Nikon 801S in a Subal housing. They were lit with twin Ikelite strobes, an Ai and an MV on a combination of Ikelite and ultralight arms. Film was Fujichrome 100 iso Sensia II. I don't keep a detailed record of exposures but as they are all macro or close up shots they are likely to have been between 1/60th or 1/125 at f11 or f16.*

Point. The former was appropriately named having a host of mostly hard and some soft corals with numerous anemones scattered amongst them, each with its attendant clown fish that, with their usual belligerent attitude, would attack my twin strobes making the task of taking photos that much harder. Unfortunately we didn't see any sharks at Shark Point but near the beginning of the dive, at 28m, we came across a creature that was one

of the reasons for travelling so far, a tiny pygmy sea horse extremely well camouflaged on a fan of gorgonian coral. I got just two shots of it before another diver joined the scene and sent up a cloud of sand with their fins. Moving on to a nearby coral fan we found a long nosed hawkfish and then it was time to start ascending the slope stopping off to look at the blue and orange tunicates and a crocodilefish before returning to the boat.

Lighthouse 2 didn't look very promising. Visibility was only a metre or so with a murky, milky appearance. We descended to the bottom at 15m and began to explore, being greeted with a vast forest of whip corals that parted before us in the eerie, ethereal atmosphere provided by the low visibility. On many of corals were crinoids of various colours, with feathery arms opened out greedily gathering in the passing plankton. One or two even left their corals and did a balletic dance across to another one. An hour later the dive was over but not before I had managed to get a photo of a dumpling squid as we did our safety stop. Eddie apologised for the poor dive and was puzzled by our beaming smiles and animated chatter as we agreed how fantastic it had been.

At Shark Cave, a wall dive to 37m, we did see a couple of sharks, both white tips that swam gracefully away as we approached. However, it was the purple fire gobies that Eddie had brought us to see and we did find a few of these beautiful little fish before ascending past some very large gorgonian fans which we scoured for pygmy seahorses but without any success. Getting back to the shelf at around 10m Eddie found us an Orang Utan crab on a bubble anemone. It looked like a small brown blob to me but closer inspection revealed the shape of a crab with very hairy legs. I took a couple of pictures but was much more interested in the nearby ghost shrimp that looked far more photogenic.

Derawan Jetty was the location for our night dives. It turned out to be an excellent site with plenty of fish and other life to see. There can sometimes be quite a current running through it but both times we did the dive it was relatively slack making it easy to slowly fin around taking in the macro life. Apart from numerous lionfish out hunting, and using our torch beams to do so, the life



included free swimming moray eels, hermit crabs, scorpion fish nudibranchs and plenty of soft corals. A brief glimpse of a mandarin fish, no bigger than my thumbnail but spectacularly colourful rounded things off.

### **Sangalaki**

The first trip to the nearby islands was to Sangalaki where we did two dives from Manta Point, both drifting with, and sometimes finning against, strong currents. On the first we went down a slope to 15m and very shortly after saw our first mantas of the trip. Six of them cruised by near the surface but the plankton in the water reduced the visibility and with it the photo opportunities. On the second dive we didn't see any mantas but did get close to a couple of white tip reef sharks and one black tip. Other sights included garden eels, that invariably disappeared into their burrows just as I got within photographing distance, several moray eels and a lone cuttlefish.

On our second trip to Sangalaki we snorkelled rather than dived with the mantas. This brought us much closer to them and was a more involving experience as they cruised by effortlessly while we did our best to try and keep up or just lay in the water waiting for the next

monster to pass by. We landed on Sangalaki at a small fishing village and after lunch watched as 2,500 baby turtles were simultaneously released into the sea shortly followed by a sea eagle swooping down to take it's pick of them.

### **Kakaban**

The other island visited was Kakaban where there are often large shoals of barracuda to be seen. At Barracuda Point there were very strong currents which it was necessary to fin diagonally across, past some dead coral, and then hug the bottom at 35m, while looking out for a rope to grab hold of. This provided a good stopping off point for watching the barracuda which were there in large numbers as were the trevallies and also several white tips. The dive was completed by finning round the corner into calmer, shallower waters, where there are coral gardens hosting a variety of macro life including leaf fish and frog fish both spotted for us as usual by Eddie.

For me, the best feature of Kakaban is the marine lake that takes up most of the interior of the island and is host to stingless jellyfish. A short, but not easy, trek through woodland, over jagged rocks and across a very unsteady rope bridge gets you to the lakeside.

As respite from fighting the currents around the island it was very relaxing to snorkel with the jellyfish and investigate the myriad life amongst the roots of the mangrove trees. There were all sorts of juvenile fish, brightly coloured sponges and even brighter nudibranchs together with numerous weird looking creatures that I couldn't identify. A fascinating place with loads of photographic potential.

### **Conclusion**

Overall the diving was very good and at times excellent. El Nino had taken it's toll on the corals but there aren't many places that can offer such a wide variety of marine life, from the tiny pygmy seahorse and mandarin fish through to turtles, barracuda, sharks and manta rays. If you're interested in wrecks then you'll be sadly disappointed but for photographers the main problem is deciding whether to use a wide angle for the mantas or a macro for the smaller stuff

All of the diving is guided, which I found very irritating at times, wanting to spend time on my photography, but Eddie did find several small creatures which I'm sure I would certainly have missed otherwise

The dive centre, Derawan Dive Resort, was professionally run and the small wooden boats were fine for the relatively short journeys but had no head on them so it was a case of peeing in the wetsuit or crossing your legs for a couple of hours if you were caught short.

On land there is very little to do, it's very much a diving island, but we did have the privilege one evening of seeing a green turtle coming ashore and laying her eggs.

It may have been a long way to go but the effort was certainly rewarded.

**Morris Gregory**

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## The Nikonos V

### A Statement From Ocean Optics

It is now official that the Nikonos V camera is to be discontinued following a final production run of 3000 cameras.

As users of the Nikonos system ourselves, and as dealers whose name has been synonymous with the Nikonos line since 1976, we very much regret Nikons decision.

However, once Nikon confirmed the news we immediately made a significant investment in Nikonos V bodies, lenses and strobes.

Ocean Optics Ltd, our sister company which has provided servicing of the Nikonos for a quarter century has also stocked up heavily on spares to ensure continued aftersales to existing and new owners. We will continue to manufacture our close up lenses and macro tubes as we have done for over two decades.

We hope this makes our continued commitment to the finest underwater camera ever produced unambiguous!

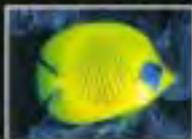


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# Diving Guernsey

## A little known photographers' paradise

By Steve & Jenny Powell

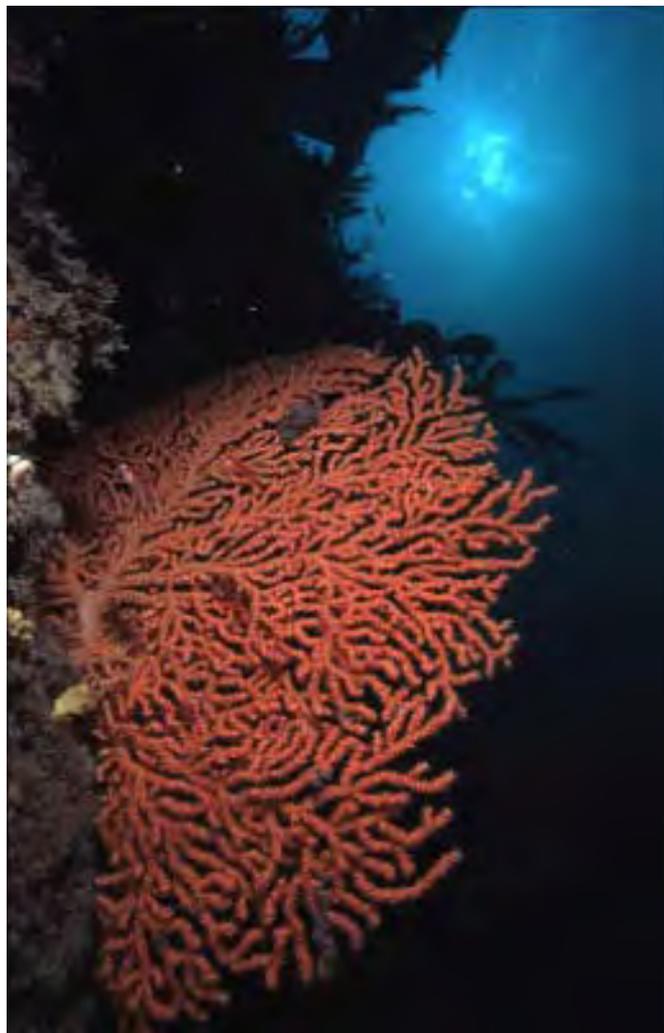
Like many underwater photographers in the UK, we had pretty much given up on UK diving. Living in the Midlands, trips to the coast had to be planned well in advance and were usually blown out by the vagaries of the weather. A move to Guernsey in the Channel Islands in 1998 gave us the opportunity to resurrect our UK diving and with it green water photography.

Guernsey is one of a group of islands off the coast of Normandy in the Gulf of St Malo known as the Channel Islands. Guernsey is the second largest in the group yet covers only 25 sq miles. Since 1066 AD the Channel Islands have remained possessions of the English Crown however they have their own governments and are not part of the EEC. The main industry is Offshore Finance and they enjoy a more favourable tax status than the UK, for example there is no VAT or Capital Gains Tax. The capital of Guernsey is St Peter Port situated on the east coast and surrounding the pretty harbour often described as one of the most picturesque in the world.

Guernsey boasts one of the largest tidal ranges in the world. A spring tide can give a range of up to 10m and even an average neap tide gives a range of 3m. These big tides are both a blessing and a curse for the underwater photographer. The vast amount of water flowing in and out of the Channel causes some very strong currents, which means the exposed sites are covered in current loving species like Jewel Anemones and large Sea Fans. It also means that the visibility often improves very quickly after bad weather. The downside is that picking the time of your dive to coincide with slack water is critical. For the non underwater photographer there is some very exciting diving to be had.

Guernsey may be a small island but the proximity of its sister islands, Herm, Sark, Jethou, and Brecqhou means that the variety and diversification of the dive sites in such a small area is spectacular. It is interesting that many Jersey divers travel to Guernsey and Sark because they consider the diving here to be so much better.

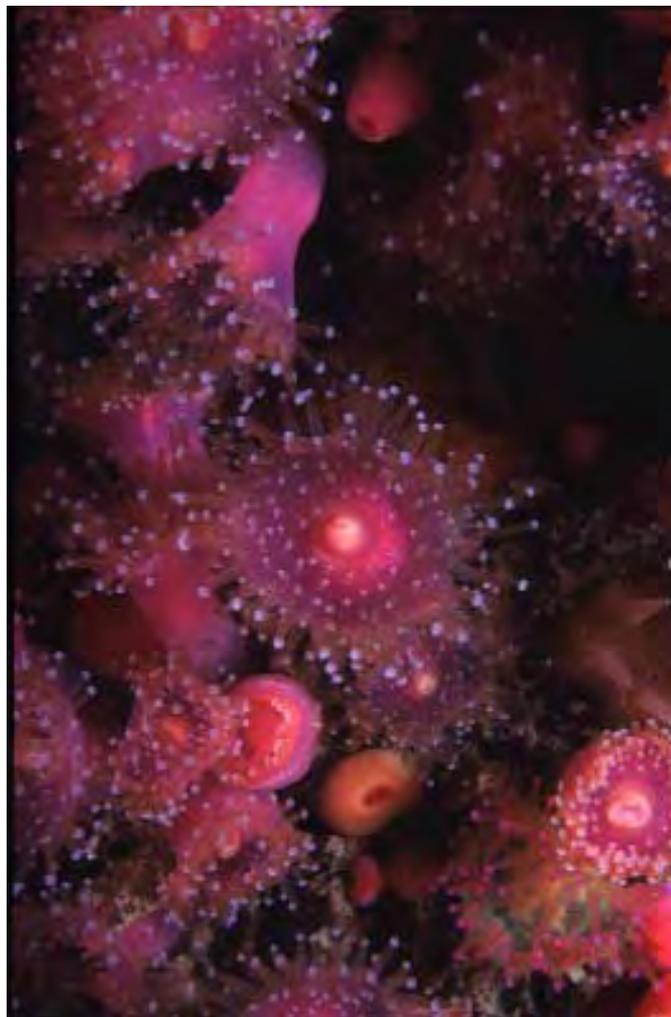
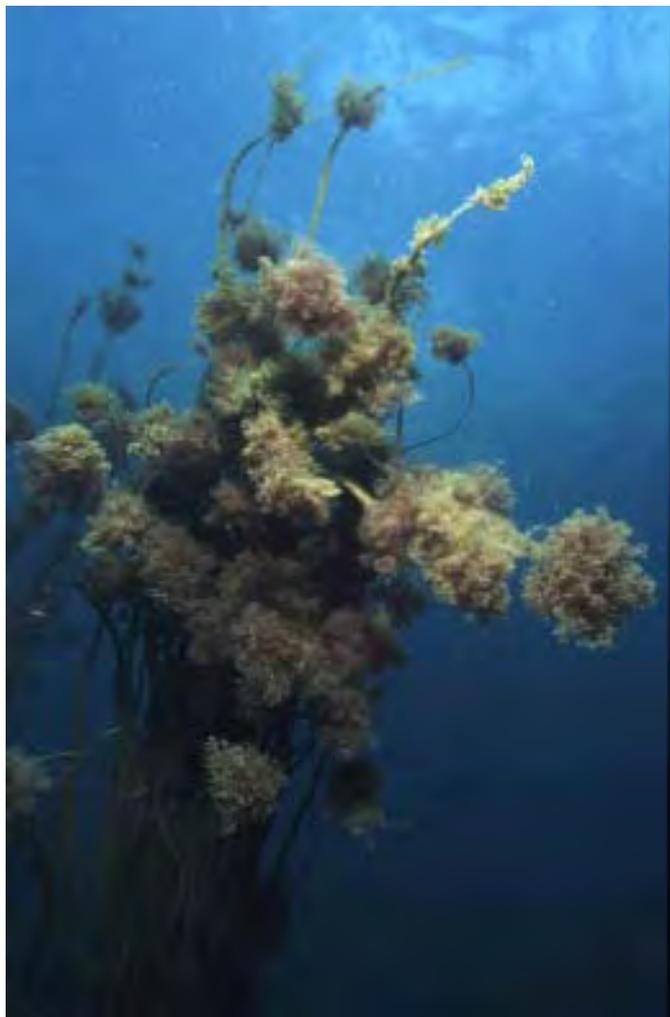
For underwater photography the following sites are some of our personal favourites:



*Nikon F5 in Subal housing always set to manual. Flash, Subtronic Mega Colour or SB25. Sea and Sea YS30 slave for macro shots. Set to TTL with -1EV for the wide angle shots. Flash arms, Ultralight. Film, Fuji Provia 100 slide.*

*The settings are best guess, I bracket a lot and don't take notes underwater!*





### **Havelet Bay, St Peter Port**

A shore dive with very easy access that can be dived at all states of the tide except a low spring. The bay is protected from all but strong south easterlies by the harbour wall and the picturesque Castle Cornet, which once served as the military stronghold to protect the town of St Peter Port. Maximum depth is 10-12m. This is superb for macro photography, there being vast numbers of Snakelocks Anemones with resident *Periclimes sagittifer*, Scorpion Spider Crabs *Inachus* sp and Slender Spider Crab *Macropodia tenuirostris* .



### **Les Audames Little Russell Channel**

This spectacular reef is a small sea mount reminiscent of a Maldivian thila! It can be easily circumnavigated in 20 minutes but it is best to linger on the west and south sides, which are completely covered in Jewel Anemones of every colour imaginable. Many small invertebrates live amongst the anemones. Here you will find the *Periclimes* shrimp on the yellow boring sponge. The very photogenic Painted Topshell is common here. Across the sand heading slightly south there is often a large shoal of Sandsmelt, a real challenge for wide angle photography.

### **Parfonde South of Jethou**

This is a sheltered reef, very picturesque in the shallows, where masses of granite boulders form swim throughs, overhangs and small caves amongst areas of sparkling white sand domed and carved by the currents. The boulders are home to myriads of fish including Cuckoo Wrasse, Ballan Wrasse, Pollack, Conger Eels, Tompot Blennies and the shy Black-Face Blennie. Moving south there is a superb wall which goes from the surface down to 20m where it becomes a boulder slope down to sand at about 25m. The cracks in the wall are again home to numerous crustaceans.



diving and ex fisherman Graham Eker who owns and runs Dive Guernsey ([www.geker.freemove.co.uk](http://www.geker.freemove.co.uk)) has more than 30 years experience of local waters. He operates a hard boat licensed for 10 divers. He provides diving services to many local divers so it is not necessary to book the whole boat and small groups can be easily accommodated. Accommodation can be arranged through travel agents or the Guernsey Tourist Board ([www.guernseytouristboard.com](http://www.guernseytouristboard.com))

## **L'Etac South of Sark**

Many local divers consider this to be the best reef dive in the whole of the Channel Islands. It is subject to very strong currents, is sheer sided, deep and can be challenging for the underwater photographer. Here there is an abundance of the beautiful Sunset Coral. The visibility is often superb making it a good site for wide angle photography.

Winters are mild but windy giving some fairly rough seas. The best time for visiting divers is May to September. Condor Ferries serve the island from Poole and Weymouth. There are easy links from many regional airports. Local knowledge is vital for safe

**Steve &  
Jenny Powell**  
email  
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# The Seals Of San Simeon California

by Edwin Marcow

The sky was dark and threatening, black clouds hung on the horizon menacingly. The air was charged, as if something was about to happen. The male bulls appeared excitable, their grotesque bulbous shapes dotted the shore like a Manhattan skyline.

The stage was set for battle, like giants of Greek mythology who had been asleep for aeons and were slow to anger, but whose wrath was violent and vindictive. So the male elephant seals, squared up to each other as Gladiators.

The male bulls weigh up to 2,300 kg and grow to a length of 4.5 metres. They have large, imposing tusks that can inflict fatal wounds on a lesser opponent and with their pronounced proboscis they are a very imposing sight to behold.

Papa Bear, as Andrea liked to call him, was such an imposing sight. He was the alpha male and he had a lot to defend. He had the prize of a large colony of females, who were sure to pass his lineage on to the next generation. He would pass on one day, but his genes would live on through them. This was now all under threat however, as younger bulls threatened his dominance.

We were in San Simeon, California to photograph and document what we observed and we encountered more than we hoped to dream.

A lone younger male charged up the beach on Papa Bear's right flank, full of spirit and impertinence. On his left flank, two other males now gave chase. Papa Bear moved his enormous bulk down the beach towards the shore line. As he did so, he swung right to the first male. The earth shook and trembled, as a roar went up from Papa Bear and this young upstart stopped in his tracks. There were still the two males on his left flank, however, who were steadily moving up the beach. Things looked ominous. Maybe the game was up for Papa





Bear. He turned and charged straight at this motley crew he saw before him. Another roar bellowed in the air, tusks bared for all to see. He had no choice, his only defence could be to attack, otherwise he may lose all that he pervade. His right to all the females as long as he could muster the strength and stamina to fend off repeated and sporadic assaults on his dominance of his harem. Would be lost this very afternoon.

At first, the younger males stood their ground, refusing to give up any advantage they had made. Papa Bear drew closer, still bellowing and baring his tusks as he went on. A terrible battle was about to commence - someone had to lose. Then, just when one thought there was only one option but to do battle, the two younger males turned and like a bunch of alley cats on a hot tin roof, they scattered like the four winds before them.

After a brief rest and a chance to eye all that he behold, Papa Bear went on to mate with a receptive female that did require some coxing to his advances. One can only assume that this mating so soon after his successful defence of his realm was twofold; firstly, to propagate his lineage and secondly, to send a message to the younger males and in particular, to the three that he had just stood down.

Life for the average sea lion on the Californian coastline is a precarious existence, they are predated by White sharks and Orcas who patrol the shoreline. Life for a young male is especially dangerous as older established males will capture and kill them long before they reach maturity. This will result, in that their mothers will be receptive to mating.

The Northern Elephant seal lives in the Pacific Ocean, 30 degrees north latitude. This mammal has very thick blubber and as a result of this was hunted to the brink of extinction in the 1800s. They are intelligent and social mammals that congregate in colonies and in smaller groups in the water, called rafts.

Their breeding areas are called rookeries. Males will fight for mating dominance and often bear deep scarring from such battles. The Northern Elephant seal has no external ears. This pinniped is born black, with the fur turning a dark silvery brown as they mature. The whiskers [vibrissae] on the snout function to help the



seals sense of touch, the nostrils remain closed in the resting state. Male bulls weigh up to 2,300 kg and grow to a length of 4.5 metres, long whilst female cows weigh up to 760 kg and grow up to 3.6 metres long.

Once a year, from December to March, these seals migrate between their warm breeding grounds on the the Californian and Mexican coastlines and their cold feeding grounds in the northern Pacific Ocean, near Alaska.

Northern Elephant seals are carnivores. Males will dive to depths of 800 metres and females, to a more modest 600 metres, in search of food. They are excellent divers, able to breath-hold dive for twenty minutes. Their diet consists mainly of fish, eels, skates and rays as well as octopi and red crab. Elephant seals do not chew their food, but swallow it in large pieces, they themselves are predated by Orcas and White sharks.

Elephant seal classification;  
mammal, Order Carnivora  
Suborder Pinnipedia. Family  
Phocidea [earless seal]  
Camera Nikon 801 Film  
Kodak Ektachrome sv 100 Flash  
Fill in

**Edwin Marcow**



# Cracking the egg

by Alan Graham

**All images are still frames from digital video footage**

It was 15 minutes after sun set. Descending cautiously into the blackened blue, eyes straining to accustom ourselves, we knew this window of opportunity would be fleeting. We had our full moon up and we had our Admiralty tide charts calculated correctly - so we thought. Now all we needed was for the corals to perform.

This was not the Great barrier reef, where mass spawning occurs on a given November night; here, off the coast of Mauritius, little if any scientific study had been done to assess when corals, sporadic or otherwise, might spawn.

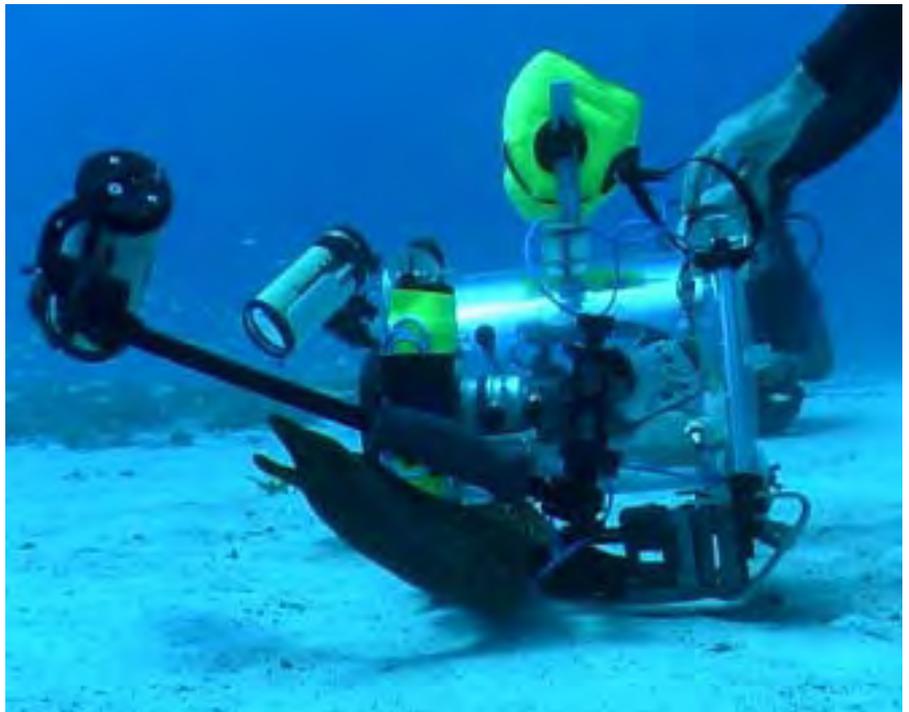
It was February, minimal tidal exchange was at its peak in the year, essential for the coming together of sperm and egg during the night ahead, 'we figured'. Two camera crews and 3 scout rescue divers peered into the black, fans of light sliced through the water, all eyes desperately trying to focus on any small pale object that drifted by.

The call came within minutes. A grunt of excitement, like a fog horn in the night, sent our blood racing. It was one of the rescue divers who had made the first discovery. He was pointing ahead of him as if he'd seen a ghost, urgently stabbing at the water, yet we could see nothing. It was not until I got to within a few strokes that I saw the object of his excitement, just a few inches from his mask: a small pale egg, perhaps 3 millimetres in diameter - and then we saw another.

We were at a depth of 7 metres, above a reef slope about 100 metres seaward from the reef crest and on the cusp of a



*Hard coral polyp (galaxea sp.) 6mm, egg release - depth 7m.*



*Undulate moray eel relaxes under camera housing at 25m depth.*

substantial drop off. So, we had found an egg, now we had to follow its course backwards, against the current, to find the colony from where it had been released. Our task became one of urgency. It only

takes a few minutes for a coral colony to release its load. How many metres up current would we have to go before reaching our goal? I mean, pulling a camera housing the size of a dustbin is slow



*Dolly at 5m stop, lights on extended top-mount arms, dome port for wide angle.*



*Cleaner shrimp (Lysmata amboinensis) 4cm, on tomato grouper -depth 25m.*

going. And if we reached the spot, would we have enough time to set up lights, stabilisers and camera shot, before the action was over?

Oh..., I think I forgot to mention. We were trying to catch all this action on video, in macro, to a magnification of about 5mm across the TV screen.

Why did we choose such an unlikely place to get the shots? Because the reef is just five minutes from our hotel room, for one thing... Budgets dictate!

Anyone who has dived off shore reefs knows that weather and transport are inherently fickle beasts. When making a TV

program of this nature will require over 150 dives, it makes financial sense to work from land, if you can.

Our company, AnD Creations, is a small independent production house, not a blond corporation with a topless budget. As such, we have many more gods than you might imagine. Besides, we had made the insane decision to go out and film a living coral reef in macro, rather than skip down to our local aquarium for the usual, banal shots in sterilised surroundings. Honestly, it did make sense back home in our living room!

Pick up any coral reef book and flick through the pages. What you see are remarkable close-ups of fascinating creatures, the habits of which have rarely been documented for television. Yes..., still photography was, and is, our mentor.

But just how were we going to compete? Where could we find help, when nothing like this had been done before? Moreover: how could we succeed at a reasonable cost?

Armed with only a storyline and an ambition, we set about solving the problems of underwater video in macro. Obvious horrors were lenses, stability and lighting; stability being the toughest challenge.

The Canon DV XL1 was our weapon of choice. Top in its class of 3CCD technology, it also met our specifications because it offered the possibility of interchangeable lenses. With a 60mm EF lens attached, our macro capability could achieve an amazing 400mm (the camera's chips being 1/7th the size of a 35mm tranny). An extender or two offered various depths of field: about 4mm at f16 with a minimum focal distance of about 15mm being a manageable standard for polyps.

Acceptable housings, for a camera which had only reached the European shelves in late 1999, were still unavailable, by our deadline of summer 2000. So, we decided to build our own.

Stanley Plastics manufactured acrylic tubes with external fixing plates and pressure sealed interchangeable ports to our specifications. Then we constructed rails, skids and telescopic legs from aluminium. Controls and cable plugs were supplied by Ikelite, with holes bored into the side of the housing using a pencil laser to line up the bit with the camera controls.

Five inch TFT monitors were stripped, then housed in separate acrylic compartments, secured to the top of the camera housing on a swivel mount which could be removed and hand-held as need be. This essential ingredient meant that we were no longer forced to place our head and body behind the camera to eye the tiny viewfinder while shooting. We could shoot vertically, from the top, pivot and track sideways, or even film at arms length while remaining comfortably in command.

Housing kits were fully adaptable, and needed to be. Shooting macro when the subject is less than a foot from your 6" port, requires that lights be managed on highly flexible arms. We chose Kowalski 50W lights (thanks Andrew at Ocean Optics), because they were small enough to squeeze in around the ports for close up work, while offering good, clean spread for wide angle shots.

Eight, 1k standard belt weights were placed beneath each camera housing on rails between the skids, before each dive. This neutralised buoyancy while allowing us to slide the weights to the front or rear of a housing during the dive to alter the pitch of the camera. Weighing in at around 25 kilos fully loaded, it took two guys to lower each overboard. But once wet, they remained perfectly stable in mid water, at what ever angle they were required to shoot.

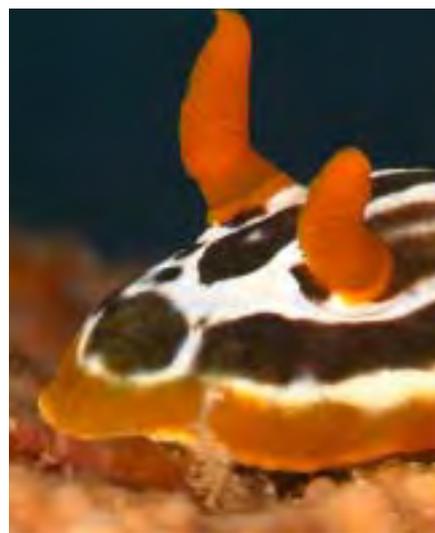
For extra stability if working on the bottom, an extra couple of weights would sink the lot. The housings, being tubes, were more hydro-dynamic than flat sided



*Dolly in mid water, shows weights beneath camera on rails - depth 8m.*



*Cleaner shrimp (Iysmata amboinensis) 4cm, rock outcrop - depth 25m.*



*Pyjama nudibranch (Chromodoris magnifica) 4cm, at night - depth 12m.*

### **All images are still frames from digital video footage**

housings, they gave less drag across a current. Four legs, one on each corner of the housing, could extend 1 metre telescopically, allowing us to level the camera securely on uneven surfaces, tilt precisely, or pivot on one leg for panning shots in close up. Each leg was tapered to a fine rubber point, for placement without damage to substrate, while skids were the ideal option for working in sand.

And one other thing: the cost of underwater mics is unreal! So we built those, too. We spilled the guts of a standard 1.5v condenser microphone into the empty carcass of a typical, 4 cell UW torch (flashlight), with a 5 metre lead for remote pick up. Quality and frequency response were assured, while maintenance was a breeze.

I suppose that is the most important factor when you are a

million miles from home: maintenance! Diving 3 times a day for 2 months puts the equipment through hell, and we had our share of hassles. Losing a few days due to equipment failure can be very costly in this business, but we never lost a single dive. Our systems were all designed by us: every knob and spring, wiring diagram and clamp was ours - even a lawn mower drive belt used for manual focus of EF lenses; we had built these babies so we could repair them, instantly.

We carried spares of everything. Three extended ports for various lenses, 2 flat and one 8 inch dome - interchangeable between housings. Four lenses, an extra monitor, and battery packs which could take standard AA or D cell batteries if our chargers or packs died in the night. We're not rocket scientists, but as one well known underwater photographer once confided in us: "underwater anything is a real hands on kind of job."

It was those words which probably gave us the confidence to tackle the seemingly impossible. We would not, however, suggest anyone try and build their own rebreathers!

So there we were, back peddling up current for all our might. The trail of eggs was slowly descending with every fin stroke we covered. The reef below was rising up to meet us, a sure sign we didn't have long to go. And yet, so insignificant was the activity, we might have passed the spawning colony altogether, had we not been looking for it. Dolly noticed it first, a release of perhaps 10 eggs in quick succession, a necklace of pearls dancing to our left, on the very edge of the drop off.

I was carrying the macro set up, so Dolly went in first with a standard flat port and zoom lens. We made it a rule, never to have the same set ups on a dive. The most agonising thing about wildlife photography, is being harassed by

some cocky little creature you've never seen before that just knows you've got the wrong lens on.

I watched as Dolly and her assistant battled to place the camera legs, both their bodies as if clothes on a washing line, being swept sideways by the demon current while they worked. BCDs hurriedly evac'd, but still they floundered. Fingers clinging in earnest to the housing, fiddling with creaky knobs and pesky levers. Monitor cocked out and up, now..; lights extended on twisted arms, like luminescent anemones in the grip of some giant, boxing crab.

I could see that the galaxea colony was almost two thirds done, and Dolly was still struggling with focus. I manoeuvred around behind her to take a peek at her monitor, and was riveted by the sight. She had about 5 polyps on screen, and as each egg began to appear the polyps were exerting such pressure to release the enormous load that their soft tissue was literally expanded like a balloon.

With just 3 eggs left to be released, Dolly rose up and signalled me in. It was my turn to look foolish. The challenge: get a single polyp in full screen releasing its egg. With time to prepare my camera housing before approach I had less set up to do but I was breathless, my muscles trembled uncontrollably and my brain was in a mess. My worst fear was realised immediately, I couldn't get the damn polyp on screen - I couldn't find it.

I could see it if I peered around the housing, but it was like trying to thread a needle blindfolded - in a hurricane. I knew it was there.., somewhere. But where?

"Patience, Alan," I told myself. Then I told myself to shut the hell up! I looked over the housing and there was only one egg left. Desperately I fought the current and I fought the camera.., and then finally I had the polyp on screen. A few seconds later I had focus, and watched in awe as the



*Alan Graham. Ring-necked parakeet on hat (IUCN cr. endangered)*

egg slowly emerged. Within 10 seconds it was all over!

One single egg of millions which spawned that night, GONE... up on a remarkable journey of hope, of survival.., towards forever, and into the beyond.

We dived seven nights in a row during the wane of that February full moon. Five other species of coral were successfully filmed spawning, but nothing was more exciting, more exhilarating than that first time. If you'd been on shore around half past eight that night, having a leisurely moon-lit stroll along the beach, you might have thought some poor diver was being murdered for a heinous crime. A little dive boat 300 metres out to sea, was heaving and bucking, while screams of delight and cries of sheer madness carried for hours and miles across the still ocean swell...

For all I know you might have heard us in Madagascar.

**Alan Graham**

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# The snorkel

## a uwp's best friend

By Alexander Mustard

Most people's first experience of the underwater world comes when snorkelling, but, once we have learned to use SCUBA, few of us regularly go back to the humble snorkel. Underwater photography usually follows learning to dive and as a result many of us will have only rarely taken photographs while snorkelling. I think that this is a big mistake. A snorkel is my favourite accessory for UW photography!

My first argument is financial. When most of us travel we pay for our diving, snorkelling on the other hand does not cost a thing. It is not known as free-diving for nothing! Consequently, on SCUBA I take my photography seriously, sticking with well rehearsed techniques, to maximise the number of good shots I can produce on each dive. But when I use a snorkel my attitude to photography changes completely.

No longer is film a precious commodity to be rationed over an hour or so of diving. With a snorkel, I may shoot only a handful of images or blast away an entire roll in a few minutes and rush back to reload.

I'll mess about with black and white, play with rear curtain flash or just snap away at subjects I wouldn't "waste" diving film on. I am free to experiment.

There is another reason why it is called free-diving. No, not because we are free from SCUBA gear but because we are free from other people, be they buddies, divemasters or worst of all, other photographers! When snorkelling we can go or stay where we want for as long as we want. We are also free to take photos in places we can not get to on SCUBA: in rock pools, rivers, sea grass meadows and mangroves, under jetties or on the reef flat. Just about anywhere wet.



*A shot inspired by David Doubilet's work. Southern stingray split level, Grand Cayman. Nikon F100 + 16mm FE, Subal housing. F11 on aperture priority.*



*Bottlenosed dolphins in the Red Sea. Nikonos V + 15mm. f4 on aperture priority.*

But, the most persuasive reason I can think of to get my snorkel out of my dive bag and strapped onto my mask is the subject matter. And topping the bill is the water's surface. I am not known to my friends as the most artistic of underwater photographers, but the sinuous reflections in the ocean's surface even bring out my creative streak.

Add to this shafts of sunlight and my film is winding on so fast my camera starts to smoke! Shallow

water and the sun also create beautiful patterns on the seabed, which are an attractive subject their own right or make a great backdrop for models or marine life.

And when snorkelling with a model you don't have to rely on hand signals to direct them. You can stick your head out of the water to tell your model that they are swimming with all the grace of S well, a SCUBA diver! And of course, the surface is also THE only place to take half and half, split

level shots!

But that's enough about the artistic side of underwater photography, marine life is much more my thing, and snorkelling is great for this too. First of all areas like rock pools, sea grass meadows and reef flats have a quite distinct flora and fauna to the species we encounter diving in the same locale. So snorkelling is a great way to find species you have never seen before, even in an area you know well. In addition, the lack of time constraints are ideal for capturing the behaviour of subjects, where patience often really pays off. Snorkels are also silent, which greatly reduces the chances of disturbing natural behaviour and also makes it easier to approach timid animals, such as marine mammals.

Standard underwater photographic techniques require a bit of tweaking for snorkelling, however these modifications are usually to simplify them. The shallows have the best light and colour and it is possible to take vibrant images without artificial lighting. My favourite snorkelling combinations are my housing with a fisheye or my Nikonos with the 15mm, both without flash. Shooting without flash not only makes exposure easy because aperture priority copes with just about everything, it also removes the problems of backscatter, flash coverage and TTL failure.

When lighting a picture with available light there are a few things to consider. First, to produce even lighting you must ensure that the sun is behind you (shining over your shoulder) in the same way you would on land. This causes problems when using a wide lens because you must be very careful not to include your own or the camera's shadow in your photos. I am still trying to master this one, despite slide after slide of negative reinforcement!

Macro techniques require very little modification, although with



*My brother, Oscar, in Grand Cayman. Nikon F100 + 16mm FE, Subal housing. f11 on aperture priority*



*My dog, Goldfinger, retrieves a stone from a river on Dartmoor, UK. Nikonos V, 15mm. f5.6 on aperture priority.*

the brighter ambient light levels it is possible to take balanced light close-ups at smaller apertures, which can have a pleasing effect. I have managed a few successful natural light macro shots, but on the whole these suffer from harsh shadows and a lack of colour and depth of field. I recommend not changing things much from your standard set-up.

So, to summarise, what if I was to tell you that I had an UW photography accessory that enabled you to experiment with a variety of

techniques, freed you from divemasters and other photographers, let you take pictures in photogenic environments filled with different species, let you shoot without flash and gave you unlimited time with your subjects? Would you want one? Would it be your favourite underwater photography accessory? What if I was to tell you that it is already in your dive bag?

**Alexander Mustard**

# Getting Wrecked with Mark Webster

Wrecks in both temperate and tropical waters are exciting to dive and will produce many picture opportunities. Most photographers will yearn for that “big” shot, of all or part of a shipwreck in clear water and under the right conditions these shot are attainable. But all too often these ideal circumstances elude us and so you must first learn to recognise and accept the limitations which present themselves on each dive.

Unless you have exceptional luck, visibility in British waters is rarely good enough to show large sections of a wreck so you must be prepared to tune your techniques to suit whilst perhaps saving your panoramic shots for those wrecks in the tropics. In the UK it may be best to limit your efforts to illustrating particular details of a wreck or close focus images of a diver examining wreckage. Wrecks are often a magnet to marine life and can make fantastic macro dives when the conditions are bad.

However if you are determined to produce the big picture then an ultra wide angle or fish eye lens is essential for successful wreck photography.

All extreme wide angle lenses will display some distortion and this is most obvious when photographing subjects where straight lines dominate. So you need to be aware of this problem when photographing wrecks and either accept some curvature or compose accordingly. Another problem that can arise with a foreground subject close to the camera is that of “forced perspective” which can make a feature look unnaturally large or distorted.

Flash is not always essential, especially if you aim to try to illustrate a large portion of a wreck in clear waters, but more often than not some artificial light will be required for lighting foreground detail or perhaps a diver. A powerful



*This is perhaps the classic wreck image. The viewer immediately gets the impression of the ship lying on the seabed and the apparent discovery by the diver. However, to get this type of shot you need to plan your dive to avoid other explorers. Try and persuade other divers in your group to give you ten minutes on your own! Nikon F90X, 16mm fish eye, Subal housing, F8 @ 60th , YS120 flash. 100ASA.*



*Sometimes the best picture may be off the wreck. Remember to look for alternative views for your shots, especially if the site is popular and possibly crowded. Nikon F90X, 16mm fish eye, Subal housing, F8 @ 60th , YS120 flash. 100ASA.*

wide angle flash gun is the best tool for lighting ultra wide images, although you will rarely use it on full power when balancing natural and flash light. Narrower beam flash guns can also be used to good effect when only the foreground detail requires additional lighting,

or you can consider using two narrow beam guns either both fired by the camera or one slaving from the other.

When using the camera’s TTL light meter bear in mind that these ultra wide lenses collect an awful lot of light especially if the sun is in



*Above: The marine life which engulfs wrecks is often the most interesting feature. You can use the wreckage as a background to support the composition. Nikon F90X, 16mm fish eye, Subal housing, F16 @ 60th , YS120 flash. 100ASA.*



*Above: The temptation is often to go for the big picture, in this case the stern of the wreck. These make effective shots, but having taken it get in closer and look for the more unusual views. Nikon F801, 16mm fish eye, Subal housing, F8 @ 60th , 100ASA.*

*Right: This is the same wreck, but this time much closer and using the structure of the ship to create a very graphic image in silhouette. Nikon F801, 16mm fish eye, Subal housing, F11 @ 125th , 100ASA.*



use spot or centre weighted metering to scan the scene and ensure that you are exposing the target area correctly. Using your flash on manual may also produce best results if you have a foreground subject close to the lens and off centre. Background wreckage is often too distant for TTL to operate successfully causing the flash to fire at full power, which will result in over exposure of the foreground.

Exploring wrecks in tropical waters will undoubtedly make the photographer's task a lot simpler. Visibility is normally far superior and the wrecks are generally in a more intact condition due to the mostly calmer sea conditions. However, the same basic principles of underwater photography still apply and you should still be aiming to get as close as possible to your main subject to maintain clarity and sharpness. Sedentary marine life is generally more colourful which can enhance the duller piece of wreckage, so it is worth

seeking out interesting shapes covered in marine life as foreground subjects. Don't forget the power of silhouette shots against the sun, either a subject on its own or as a backdrop to your colourful foreground. Having a diver in the shot will add scale and a sense of exploration and, although cliched, a powerful torch or slave flash will also add impact.

Even if the visibility appears limited to the photographer's eye, the camera and film can often resolve much more than is apparent, particularly when shooting with natural light. Don't be afraid to brace yourself and camera against some wreckage and try a small aperture, letting the camera's automatic exposure take over for longer exposure, and you may be pleasantly surprised. If the visibility is extremely poor then perhaps you should abandon the wide picture altogether and concentrate on detail and maybe try to emphasise the way marine life is colonising a wreck



*Above: ntroducing a diver to your wreck photographs provides that sense of exploration. The best results come from using a dedicated model rather than hoping for a passing diver. Nikon F90X, 16mm fish eye, Subal housing, F8 @ 60th , YS120 flash. 100ASA.*



*Left: This shot is taken on the wreck of a small yacht. The obvious picture might be outside the wreck, but don't forget to explore the inside and look for opportunities to frame a diver entering to explore. Nikon F90X, 16mm fish eye, Subal housing, F8 @ 60th , YS120 flash. 100ASA.*

Photography inside wrecks can also produce stunning results. Obviously you must take the obvious precautions when entering a wreck, although most photographers will want to stay close to openings to include some natural light in the shot. Your biggest worry will be disturbing the visibility either yourself or by your model. In addition to stirring up silt with your fins, your exhaust bubbles will also disturb rust and other debris above you. It is best to have investigated the wreck first before you plan this type of shot so that you can work quickly and carefully.

Film choice is largely a personal one although if your aim is to photograph large sections of wreck using natural light in clear water then a faster film is preferred to enable the use of a smaller aperture. Using a film speed of 200-400ASA is normally sufficient, but you can go as high as 1000ASA or 1600ASA if you are happy to accept some grain in the pictures, or maybe try

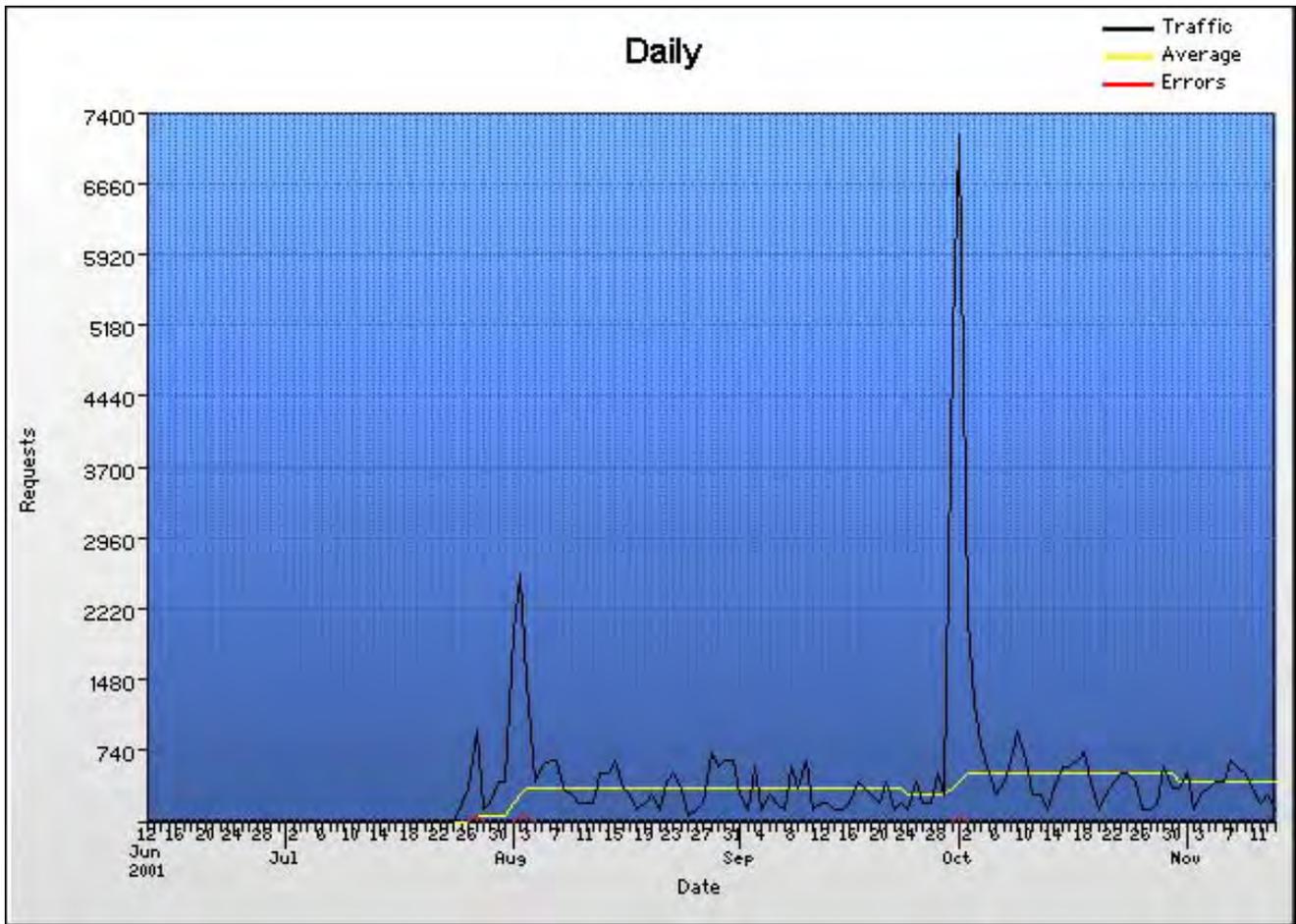


*Even if the wreck is not intact, you can use the shape of wreckage to frame a diver or some marine life which can create dramatic compositions. Nikon F90X, 16mm fish eye, Subal housing, F8 @ 60th , YS120 flash. 100ASA.*

high speed black and white. Many photographers aim to keep just the foreground sharp, with the background wreckage as secondary interest or perhaps framing the main subject, and are happy to work with 100ASA in order to minimise the grain in the picture. Whatever you choose initially, don't be afraid to experiment and compare the results from differing techniques and film stock.

**Mark Webster**

*Author of "The Art and Technique of Underwater Photography" . Hosts regular workshops both overseas and in the UK. For further details visit Mark's website at <http://www.photec.co.uk> or see details at Oonasdivers site <http://www.oonasdivers.com>*



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# The Nikonos survival guide

by Peter Rowlands

When you change the film in your Nikonos V you could, if you are not careful, allow a few small drops of water to enter the camera.

Unless you rinse and dry your camera thoroughly there will be a small amount of water trapped just outside the main O ring seal. When you open the camera back, it is possible that this water can get past the O ring as the pressure on it is released and it sits looser in the O ring groove.

The solution is very simple but it isn't pointed out in the instruction manual so read on to survive.

If you open the back with the camera pointing lens down, there is a strong possibility that a small amount of water will drop into the camera just behind the frame counter window. The thin black cover plate which is held by four small Philips head screws is not sealed and the water can migrate behind the plate and onto the frame counter mechanism. As well as working the frame counter, this mechanism also includes the main power switch contacts so any salt



*Tell tale signs of corrosion . If you open the back with the camera pointing down, there is a strong chance that water will drop into the camera*



*It is only when the inner body is removed that signs of corrosion can be seen just under the frame counter window.*



*The inner body of a Nikonos V is a very snug fit in the main outer body. This keeps the camera small but any slight amount of water getting into the camera will cause problems with the electronics and mechanics*



*Corrosion can clearly be seen around the frame counter assembly which also contains the main power contacts.*

**No!**



*Never remove a lens like this as water droplets can fall into the throat of the camera and get onto the shutter blades*

**No!**



*Opening a Nikonos V like this could allow water to drop into the camera around the frame counter assembly*

water (remember rinse tank water is rarely fresh) in this area is potentially fatal. You may not notice it at first but once water gets into this area you have an accident waiting to happen.

The solution is simple. When changing the film, keep the lens pointing forward and open the back slowly or, to be absolutely sure, have the lens pointing upwards whilst opening the back. If you use the second method, the rewind film cassette could fall out of its retainer so be prepared!

The same problem can occur when changing lenses so never remove them with the camera on its back as drops of water could fall onto the shutter blades. Keep the camera either horizontal or upside down and remove the lens slowly.

**Peter Rowlands**  
Nikon authorised  
Nikonos repairer for  
Ocean Optics, London

## **A basic rule of underwater photography!!**



**When rinsing your Nikonos V (or in this case Nikonos RS), do not take off the lens and rinse them separately....**

# Warren's word

## Backing Up

Matt Crowther was on time for work. It was a bad omen. Matt was never on time. He'd returned from a week in the Red Sea observing early taping for the BBC production "Blue Planet". He placed the company Nikon F90 on the counter. "It's only slightly wet. Look the display still works..." His voice trailed off. For Crowther, who would later go on to be a key writer for Dive Magazine, this was his first flood.

The camera, notwithstanding the working top display, was of course destroyed. Ocean Optics had paid for Matt's place on the unique charter to let him try out a range of new equipment as part of his product training. The loss of a camera so early on in the trip could have been a disaster.

Experienced divers increasingly focus on redundancy. Any item of equipment whose failure could endanger them is duplicated. That includes items like regulators, buoyancy systems, computers and masks. As a diver who came late to underwater photography I avoid depending on individual items of kit for preserving my life. And, with the keys to Ocean Optics,

I never travel, and rarely enter the water, with only a single camera system.

Underwater photographers, especially when starting out, don't usually have back up camera equipment. It's a dangerous strategy, brought home recently when a strobe we supplied failed on a trip. If you don't have a back up, you probably won't get the shot. In this case the photographer did not have his own back up and was indeed fortunate to be offered a loaner by the group leader. The group leader, by the way, owned several back ups.

But surely if you spent lots of money on your camera equipment, it shouldn't go wrong. No it should not. But we live in an imperfect world.

Serious divers carry redundant equipment because they know it can, and probably will, eventually go tits up. And because it is life support equipment they back up for when that day comes. You can argue that they shouldn't have to. But 120m inside a cave is no place to stand on your consumer rights.

People perceive underwater camera equipment as expensive. It isn't expensive enough. Perfect quality control comes at a price which manufacturers deem to be more than the market can stand. So they do the best they can within budget.

This does not just apply to underwater photographic equipment and diving gear. It also applies to the aircraft you flew to and from your destination on.



Matt's flood was not a disaster. He had been provided with plenty of back up equipment specifically to cover him for such an event. He simply changed camera bodies and continued to shoot some very pleasing images.

**The message is clear.**

**If you want to be a serious underwater photographer you have to think long and hard about backing up.**

**Steve Warren**



# Underwater Photography

a web magazine

## Guidelines for contributors

The response to UwP has been nothing short of fantastic. So much so that it will soon be published monthly and we are looking for more 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!

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

### Uw photo techniques -

Balanced light, composition, wreck photography 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 with leading underwater photographers

**If you have an idea for an article,  
contact me first before putting pen to paper.**

My e mail is [peter@uwpmag.co.uk](mailto:peter@uwpmag.co.uk)

## How to submit articles

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

1. The text for the article should be copied from your word processing file and pasted into the body of the e mail.
2. Images must be "attached" to the e mail and they need to be:  
Resolution - 72dpi  
Size - Maximum length 15cm i.e. horizontal pictures would be 15 cm wide and verticals would be 15cm.  
File type - Save your image as a JPG file and set the compression to "Medium" quality  
This should result in images no larger than 70k 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.

We pay a flat fee of £50 (+VAT if invoiced).  
I look forward to hearing from you.

  
UwP 49



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 Humpback Whales of Roca Partida, Mexico..Carlos Villoch



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