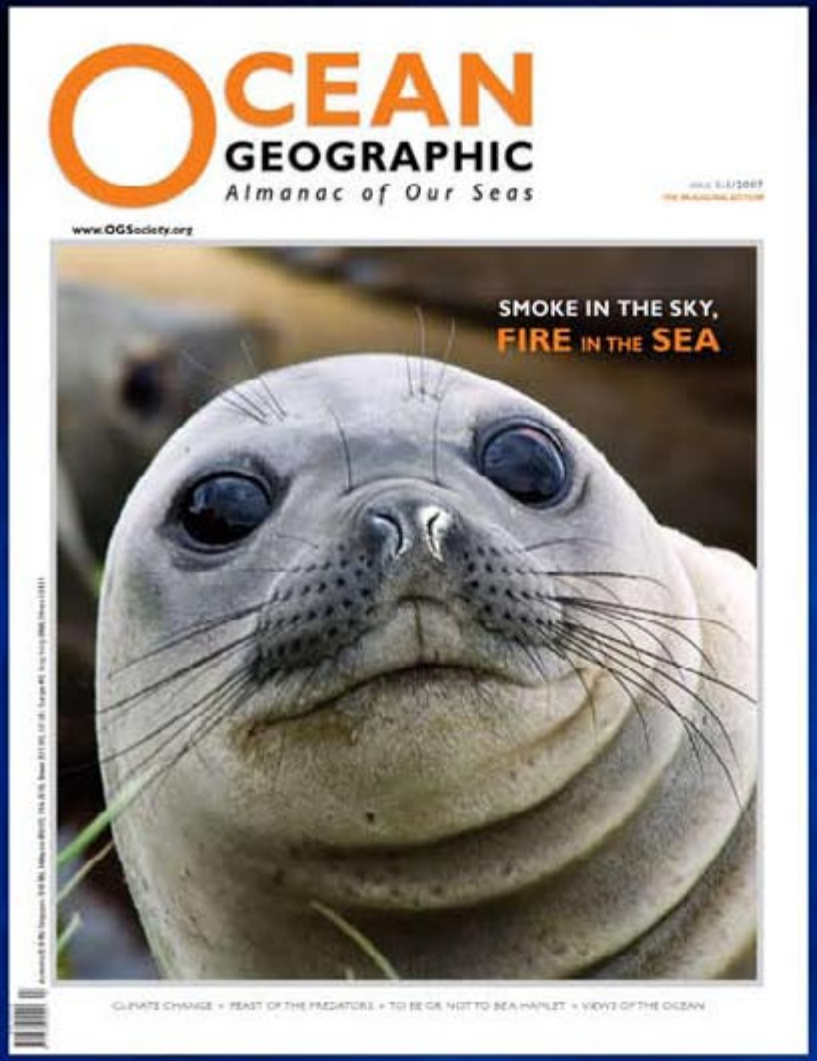
Underwater Photography

a web magazine
Issue 39
Nov/Dec 2007

Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2007

Enrich Your Legacy
Join the Ocean Geographic Society



Ocean Geographic is a high quality photographic journal that features the finest arts and images of the sea. Each edition of Ocean Geographic is a visual adventure of discoveries, exploration and dives into provoking issues that guarantee to inform, inspire and invigorate. The board of editors and senior contributors are comprised of Michael AW, David DOUBILET, Dr Gerry ALLEN, Doug PERRINE, Dr Carden WALLACE, Emory KRISTOF, Stan WATERMAN, Dr Alex MUSTARD, Jennifer HAYES, Christopher LEE, WYLAND and Amos NACHOUM.

'Ocean Geographic' - its wonderful! Fabulous imagery, reproduction and features - pure class! I'm still enjoying it!

Gemma Webster, Competition Officer
Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year, The Natural History Museum, UK

Join now as Charter memver and you will be part of our quest for discoveries and a partner in the conservation of our ocean planet. You will be eminently recognised for sharing our vision with your name inserted in all future editions of Ocean Geographic and in the web domain of Ocean Geographic Society.

Membership Benefits:
Four issues - Ocean Geographic Journal
Free pass to the World Festival of Underwater Pictures - Antibes
Free Master pass to 'Celebrate the Sea Festival'
Ocean Geographic Limited edition print - (Dec 2008)
Membership to OneOcean Alliance Frequent Diver program - 1000 bonus points
Australia and Singapore A/S$50 per year
Charter Member International: USD88 (airmail) or
Classic One year subscription for Ocean Geographic - USD 68 (airmail)
www.OceanGeographic.org : www.OGSociety.org

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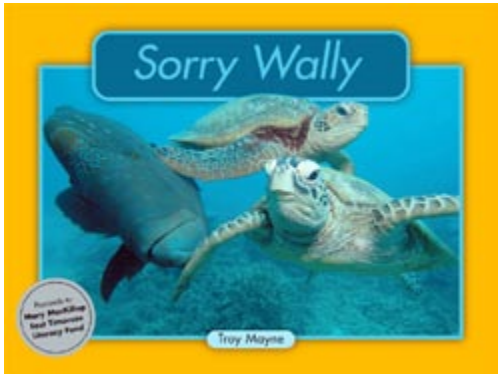

Cover shot by
Sergery Gorshkov /
Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2007

Underwater Photography
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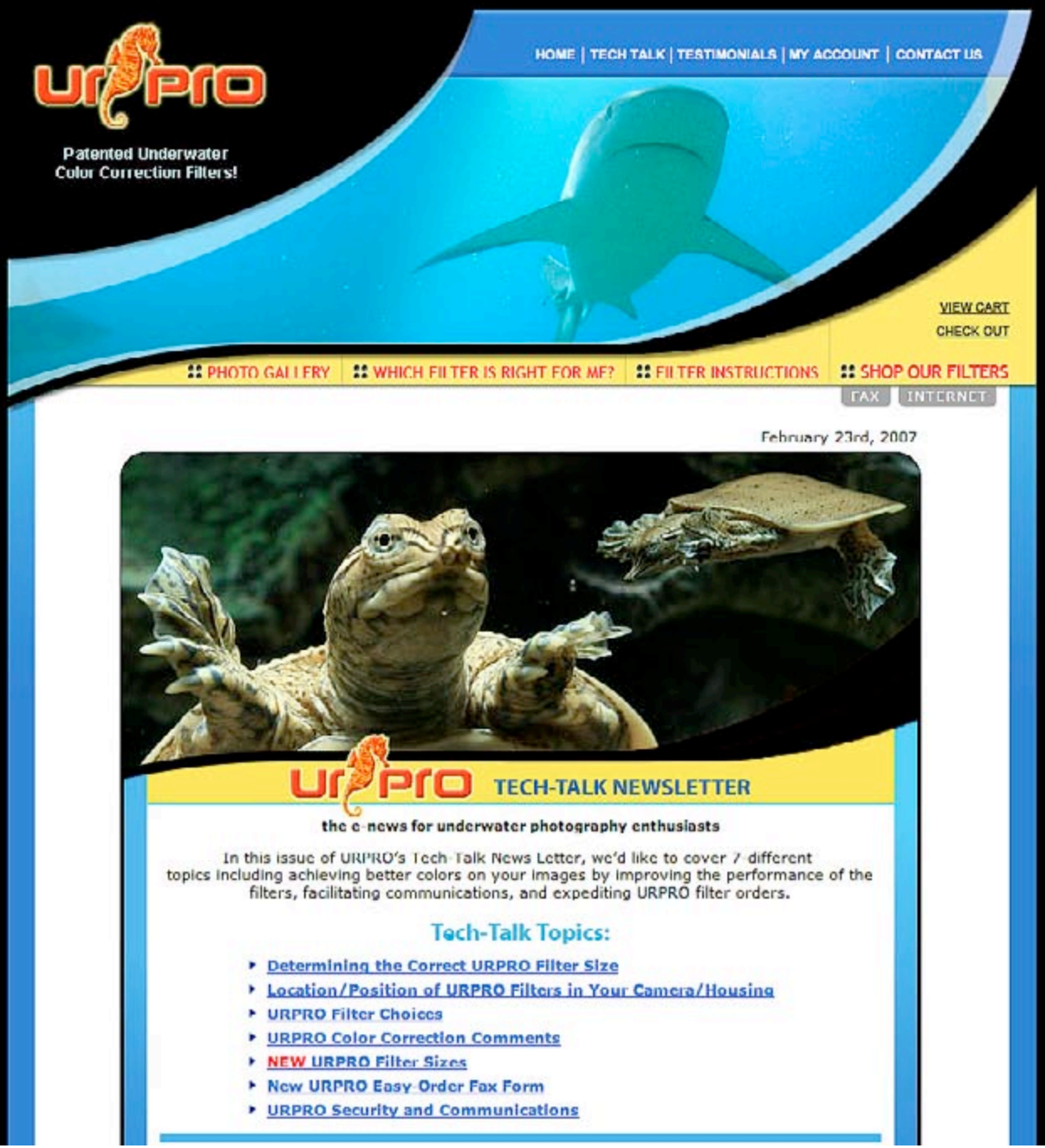
Publisher/Editor Peter Rowlands
www.pr-productions.co.uk
peter@uwpmag.com



Click on the link below to go to the Tech-Talk Newsletter

www.urprofilters.com

Editorial

Cover shot

I have always been especially pleased and amazed at UwP's ability to come up with consistently good front covers and this one, I feel, trumps the lot but first, let me explain something.

As I have said before, UwP is virtually unplanned yet it has managed to produce 39 issues which I'd like to think have been fairly consistent in both the number of pages and variety of content. After each issue the cupboard is bare and the next issue relies on what arrives from contributors in the intervening time. Now I'm not one prone to panic but there have been times a week before publication when the contents have been looking decidedly thin but, lo and behold, an e mail nearly always arrives with a perfectly formed article and images. I like to think of it as 'kismet' and so far, fingers crossed, touch wood and break a leg, our luck's been in.

The same is true with front covers. They just appear. Go looking for them and they will disappear. Trust in kismet and, so far, she (?) hasn't let us down and I feel that, for this particular issue, she has dished it out in bucketfulls!

In my work I look a lot of images. They are mostly good, more often than not very good and sometimes absolutely stunning. And then, ever so every now and again when the moon is blue and the pigs are flying, an image arrives which literally stops me, stops time and takes me there. Such is our latest cover shot. It terrifies me but I can't stop looking. It is so simple yet so full and every aspect is perfect.

Sergery Gorshkov, I salute you.

Advertising vacancy

Advertising revenue is the lifeblood of UwP because it helps to keep it free for you, the reader.

If you or anyone you know is in the advertising industry or better still the diving advertising industry we would like to hear from you with a view generating revenue to help keep UwP free.

Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com

News, Travel & Events

Our World Underwater 2008

3rd Annual Wetpixel and DivePhotoGuide Competition

Over $50,000 in Prizes!

Popular websites Wetpixel.com and DivePhotoGuide.com have teamed up again in association with Our World Underwater to celebrate the beauty and delicacy of the marine environment with the announcement of the 3rd annual, international underwater photography and video competition. The competition has become the "Superbowl" of international underwater imagery competitions, with world-class prizes, celebrity judges, and the opportunity to have your images showcased to the world as some of the planet's best.

Photographers & videographers will compete in seven still-image categories and two video categories, to win more than $50,000 in prizes including premium dive travel, underwater photo/video and diving equipment and more! Dive packages include trips to some of the top photo destinations in the world, including Socoros Islands, Wakatobi-Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Ambon-Indonesia, the Red Sea, Grand Cayman, the Solomon Islands and Vietnam! Other prizes include camera housings, strobes, lighting systems, and other valuable items. The competition includes a category for images that focus on conservation and the marine environment, and one specifically for entries taken by compact digital cameras.

Celebrity judges include leading professional underwater photographers, cinematographers and editors: Eric Cheng, Berkley White, Tony Wu, Ric Frazier, Chuck Nicklin. and Mary Lynn Price.

Winning images will be published worldwide, and Divefilm.com will be podcasting the winning videos as episodes of the iTunes-featured DiveFilm Podcast Video and DiveFilm High Definition Podcast Video.

As with all Wetpixel & DivePhotoGuide events, 15% of proceeds will be donated to marine conservation efforts.

Deadline for submissions Jan 13, 2008

www.underwatercompetition.com

International Underwater Film Festival Beograd

Dear Underwater Filmmakers,

We are very pleased to announce the 11th International Underwater Film Festival in Belgrade, Serbia.

This event will be held, like every year, in December, from 14th to 19th and we use the opportunity to ask if you have any production/film to be presented at the 11th International Underwater Film Festival. We will be honored to present your film or films to our audience.

Films for the contest would have to be 2006. or 2007. production, with at least 30% underwater shots and formats are BETA SP, DV Cam or MiniDV (PAL)

The subject is free. Competition admission is free.

We are hoping that you will find our festival interesting enough to support our desire to make it an important event and gathering point for divers and all people who enjoy watching and being in the underwater world.

Please, do not hesitate to contact us for any additional information.

www.kpa.co.yu

British Underwater Image Festival 2008 entry call

Film and photography entries are now being accepted for the 2008 British Underwater Image Festival (BUIF). Following on from two hugely successful years, the third British Underwater Image Festival returns to the Go Diving! show at the Birmingham NEC on 14 to 16 March 2008.

More than £10,000 worth of prizes are available to the winners in each of the competition's nine categories. The finalists of the 2008 Festival will be displayed at the three-day Go Diving! show, which is part of the Outdoors Show (www.theoutdoorsshow.co.uk).

The festival will showcase a range of winning still images and films from a variety of abilities, from first-time photographers to professional television documentary makers. A presentation of prizes and trophies will be held at the festival on Saturday 15 March, followed by a champagne reception.

Leading underwater film-maker Peter Scoones, DIVE editor Simon Rogerson, British Society of Underwater Photographers (BSoUP) founder Colin Doeg and award-winning photographers Alex Mustard and Charles Hood will be among judges.

Prize sponsors include Suunto, PADI, Mares and Apeks.

To enter the festival and to find out more, go to

www.divemagazine.co.uk/BUIF2008

Beneath the Sea 2008

Beneath the Sea 2008 is pleased to invite Photographers and Videographers from around the world to enter its annual World-wide Underwater Photo/Video competition.

In addition to a surprise of prizes, including a trip aboard the renowned liveaboard Nai'a diving the amazing reefs of Fiji, competition in each category will be for individual recognition from the Grandmaster of that field:

Underwater photographers will compete for the coveted David Doubilet award for excellence in underwater photography, the distinguished Stan Waterman award for excellence in underwater video and the celebrated Jim Church award for excellence in creative underwater photography.

Wherever you live in this wide world, accept the challenge, submit your underwater photographic work to the Beneath the Sea 2008 World-wide Photo/Video Competition. The contest deadline is December 31st, 2007.

The winners of the Beneath the Sea 2008 Worldwide Photo/Video Competition will be announced at the Saturday Night Film Festival the weekend of Beneath the Sea's Ocean Adventure Exposition and Dive Travel Show, March 28th , 29th, and 30th, 2008, at the Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus, New Jersey. In addition to the awards that the Grand Prize winners of each category will receive, there will be prizes for all First, Second, and Third place winners.

www.Beneaththesea.org

Upcoming International Photo & Video Competitions

November 15th

International Underwater Film Festival - Belgrade

December 21st

Nature's Best - Ocean Views 2008

December 31st

Beneath the Sea 2008 Photo & Video Competition

DEEP Indonesia 2008

Indonesia's 2nd International Diving, Adventure Travel & Water Sports Exhibition

28-30 March 2008, Jakarta Convention Center

www.deepindonesia.com

2nd Annual DEEP Indonesia International Underwater Photo Competition

Hosted by Wetpixel and DivePhotoGuide

Over $30,000 in Prizes!

Wetpixel & DivePhotoGuide have once again organized a unique joint collaboration with a second international competition in association with DEEP Indonesia , Indonesia's first-ever Diving, Adventure Travel and Water sports expo.

Photographers will compete in 7 themed categories to win over $30,000 in prizes, including photo equipment, dive gear, and premium dive travel packages to some of the top photo destinations in Indonesia and beyond. Indonesia trips include Ambon, Bali, Fak Fak, Komodo, Lembeh, Manado, and Raja Empat. Additional dive packages include Papua New Guinea and The Bahamas. The contest includes a category for images that focus on conservation and the marine environment, one specifically for entries taken by compact digital cameras, and one specifically for Indonesian entrants.

Esteemed judges Eric Cheng, Stephen Frink, and David Espinosa will select winners after the Feb 15, 2008 deadline. Winners will be announced online, published by our media partners worldwide and exhibited during the DEEP Indonesia Expo in Jakarta, Indonesia (March 28-30, 2008).

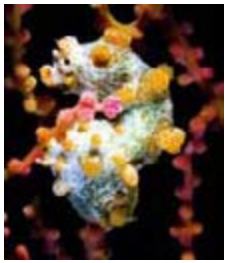
As with all Underwatercompetition.com events, 15% of entry proceeds will be donated to marine conservation efforts.

www.underwatercompetition.com

Rod Klein trip

Adventurer II - Raja Ampat

18 - 29 February 2008



It is a rare opportunity that divers are able to watch a quality photographer at work underwater and perhaps it is even more unusual that divers can discuss techniques and skills in relaxed environment with an experienced and dedicated professional. The Archipelago Fleet is proud to announce that this will be possible in early 2008.

World renowned US photographer, Rod Klein will be joining the Archipelago Adventurer II as a Photo-Pro in residence, in Raja Ampat for cruise dates February 18 - February 29 2008 a total of 11 nights aboard the vessel. With an itinerary Sorong - Sorong, the voyage will encompass the most popular dive sites in the Raja Ampat region and, in addition, also less well known sites with unique and interesting habitats.

There will be no additional charges for the photo advice tips or indeed any assistance provided by Rod during the cruise. As a result spaces are at a premium and are to be in short supply.

www.archipelago-fleet.com

Situated on a beautiful tropical island in the remote and peaceful Wakatobi archipelago in the Banda Sea, Wakatobi Dive Resort offers what many consider to be the best reef diving in the world.

Blessed with a house reef (considered the most lush and healthy to be found today) where you can begin your dive only 20m (60 feet) from the dive center, Wakatobi is often described as a live aboard with a built-in beach!

In addition to the spectacular house reef, there are several dozens of easily accessible dive sites offering incredible marine life diversity, color and natural splendor. With all boat dives and unlimited shore diving included in the very comprehensive resort packages, you're ensured total diving freedom!

www.dolphinscuba.com

DivePhotoGuide Unveils Website Overhaul!

After months of anticipation, we are incredibly proud to announce and unveil to the world, The New DivePhotoGuide.com!

Since 2005 DivePhotoGuide has provided unique resources for underwater photographers & videographers of all levels from around the world. The new website is designed to be rich in content and to provide a platform for participation - in a very unique way.

Please login and join the conversation, start by adding your comments and feedback about our new site right here at the bottom of the page.

We look forward to seeing you articipate and enjoy the new DPG!

www.divephotoguide.com

Turtle Week Bali

Report by Kurt Amsler

On the agenda was a 'Stop the Sea Turtle Killing' demonstration lead by Profauna activists at Kuta Beach, information stands and photo exhibits in the town's largest shopping centre, a meeting with the Authorities, and a media conference. Each event was vital in raising local people's awareness to the plight of the endangered sea turtle, keeping pressure on the Authorities and making a splash in the media.

Turtle Week was only able to go ahead thanks to the generous support of the firms SEEMANN-SUB, SEACAM and SCHOENER-TAUCHEN, DE / CH. But nobody could have guessed that the events in the run-up to the week were nearly as exciting as the week itself!

A phone call is all it takes!

Wayan Wiradnayana, the director of the Pro-fauna office on Bali received a call from an Austrian tourist in the early hours of the morning. Whilst walking on Sanur beach, the man had witnessed two large turtles being loaded into a boat and hidden in a nearby hut. What happened next sounds unbelievable, but is true. Thanks to www.sos-seaturtles.ch and media publications, the man was fully informed of the plight of the sea turtle on Bali and the name PROFAUNA had stuck in his mind. The owner of a nearby restaurant helped him look up the correct telephone numbers and Wayan wasted no time in informing the Chief of Police, the Forestry Department and the Bali Marine Police.

Time was of the essence because there was a strong possibility that the sea turtles might be moved on. Indeed, when the police arrived on site the animals had already disappeared, and unfortunately so had the determined tourist. The Marine Police, not to be deterred in such situations, soon found out where the sea turtles had been taken.

Both 'green turtles' were of good size and were measured and tagged by the Forestry Department.

The release took place a little time later as the tide was going out on Kuta Beach. As ever, the events attracted the interest of many residents and tourists, and provided a great opportunity for PROFAUNA to distribute information leaflets on the endangered sea turtles.

In the Lion's Den

The trade in sea turtles in Tanjung Benoa lies in the hands of two men, Pak Tami and Pak Hassan. One man who knows all the goings on is the Swiss-born Heinz von Holzen. He has lived on Bali for the past 12 years and owns the famous Bumbu-Bali Restaurant and Ruma-Bali Village. Understandably his work is more behind the scenes, however he has a number of people working undercover who keep him directly informed on what is happening on the sea turtle scene. Instead of turning up at markets, as they did in the past, sea turtle eggs now come to Heinz's place, where he incubates them in his many turtle rearing plants and then releases them. Heinz literally buys the freedom of illegally caught turtles, so that they are spared the horrific end of

being cut out of their shells alive.

The news that five sea turtles were being kept for a buyer in a hiding place on Pak Kami was brought to him by an informer from Tanjung Benoa. The main priority was to liberate the turtles as soon as possible and also to photograph the proceedings in order to provide material for the media and also proof for the Balinese authorities. How the trader would react to the camera was the least of my worries at that moment.

The only thing that gave away our arrival was the BUMBU BALI Restaurant truck that was driven by Pak Madi, Heinz Von Holzen's specialist for this sort of tricky business.

Although quite hardened to these sorts of things, I still did not find it easy to remain cool when confronted with this man who has in his lifetime been responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of sea turtles and to haggle with him over their price as if they were bananas or coconuts! Better to see him in a different light, such as through the viewfinder of my Nikon!

The noise of the camera produced no reaction from him whatsoever, but the same could not be said for his side-kick, a stocky, sly looking man who

was evidently Chinese.

One word from Pak Madi put him in his place. Evidently he was keen not to bungle the sale over a small disagreement.

He encouraged us to follow with exaggerated politeness and after 15 minutes of insane driving we arrived at the shed where the creatures were being kept.

Both concrete basins measured around 5 by 5 metres and were filled with around 40cm of water. Here, our four adult greenturtles were to be found, each one weighing more than 100 kilos, alongside a small and genuine hawksbill turtle.

The transporting and preparation for the release carried out by Heinz's men is a procedure that has seen many years of practice.

Late afternoon, as the tide was going out, the turtles were taken to the Holiday Inn Hotel beach and released back into the sea – a very moving moment! Back to their own surroundings where up until their capture, they had been living for the past 30-40 years! It is highly possible that the turtles could live to double this age…

Kuta Beach Demonstration

The backdrop was like the set of a TV commercial.

White sand, blue sea, and in the foreground, dressed in white, the PROFAUNA activists holding their banner. Rigid expressions, motionless and a straight faced – picketing for the endangered sea turtles.

Young women with the same look distributed leaflets amongst inhabitants and tourists alike here on the most famous of the Bali beaches.

PROFAUNA demonstrations always cause a big stir in the media. This occasion was no different. Cameras flashed, tv cameras filmed, and even an ARD cameraman used the opportunity to build the demonstration into a production he was already filming. Naturally the place was also teeming with uniforms: the Chief of Police, the Forestry Department and other officials were omnipresent.

In Indonesia demonstrations and information campaigns are closely watched and taken very seriously. PROFAUNA builds on this, for it is the only way in this country to get a strong grip animal

and species protection. This is why the organisation also works closely alongside schools and universities. PROFAUNA is however not only concerned with the protection of sea turtles, but with all endangered species throughout Indonesia.

Visiting the Governor

The meeting with the Governor was scheduled for 10am. On our way to the Government buildings we noticed a giant cloud of smoke. Fire engines with flashing lights and sirens blaring headed for the town centre. A large fire had broken out in Denpasar city centre. Therefore it was understandable that the Governor had to be excused from our meeting and that instead we were to meet with a Minister for the Environment, named Ir.Ni Wayan Sudjj. Even knowing the extent of the Governor's influence, we were not disappointed by the way things turned out. It soon became clear that the Environment Minister was fully informed of the sea turtle plight and spoke perfect English. Our statement was clear: according to Indonesian Law, article 764-98 / April 1997 the killing of sea turtles is forbidden, and trade over the border is seen as a violation of CITES regulations, the international Commission for the protection of endangered species.

This is where image is vital: and there is no clearer language than more than 20,000 letters of protest from all over the world and even more signatures. Hundreds of publications and the world-wide link www.sos-seaturtles.ch has drawn people's attention to the murder of sea turtles on Bali, and as Bali is currently fighting to keep every tourist it can, such things are taken very seriously.

When we began the first sea turtle campaign shortly after the fall of the Suharto regime just before the year 2000 around 25 thousand creatures were being massacred in the slaughter houses of Tanjung Benoa. Currently around 3 thousand are being killed in secret.

Of course, we referred to this positive outcome, and put across our fervent desire that consistent police action be continued and even

increased so that an end is brought to all killings. Once this happens, we can show the more beautiful side of the dream island of Bali in the media, and no more bloody images from Tanjung Benoa.

Alibi-Island

This turtle island' is not far off the south coast of Tanjung Benoa. Tourists are herded out there on little boats to gawp and paw at the 30 sea turtles eking out their miserable existence in the dirty waters of the lagoon and a concrete basin. Alongside them are cages containing birds, giant lezares and a large python with tape wrapped round its mouth, the front part of which, incidentally, is missing, as it was crudely removed along with its fangs. The icing on the cake is that souvenirs made out of turtle shells are being sold there. An exhibition that would take the joy out of the day of any normal person – the few visitors present were nearly exclusively tourists from Asian countries.

By researching and closely watching the island, PROFAUNA members and the journalist Daniel Peterlunger could gather clear evidence that ‚turtle island' was being used as a cover-up for the trade in sea turtles. Through the back doors of the compound we were able to get some pictures creatures stored on a small boat were transferred to a hut lying directly opposite with a water basin. The shells and bones lying in the waste outside were further proof that slaughter was taking place here. The photos taken of these wheelings and dealings are lying on the desk of the Environment Minister as we speak and are being channelled through at all government levels by the PROFAUNA team.

In Summary

Everything that has taken place on Bali since the beginning of our campaign in March 2006 shows very clearly that our ‚public relation' strategy in the media and on the internet is working. However in order to be at the front line and in order to support the actions of our comrades-in-arms on Bali, we are heavily dependent on sponsorship and donations. In the end, putting an end to the murder and trade of sea turtles on Bali comes down to who is the most determined to succeed!

Kurt Amsler
www.sos-seaturtles.ch

The Ultimate Machine

SLR-DC Housings

The Ikelite SLR-DC housing takes full advantage of the digital SLR camera's innovative features. The housing is injection molded of clear, lightweight polycarbonate for strength, visual access to the camera, LCD screens and camera controls. The housing provides controls for most camera functions. Ikelite SLR-DC Housings include conversion circuitry that provide TTL compatibility with the latest Ikelite DS Substrobes. Most housings also include a Flash Compensation Module which provides over and under-exposure compensation in the TTL mode and easily allows you to switch to Manual Exposure Mode which provides eight power settings. All exposure compensation is done on the back of the housing. There is no need to access complicated camera menus.

Housings for:

Canon
EOS 5D
EOS 20D
EOS 30D
EOS 40D (available soon)
EOS 300D
EOS 350D, Rebel XT
EOS 400D, Rebel XTi

Fuji
S-5 Pro

Nikon
D40, D40x
D50
D70, 70s
D80
D200
D300 (available soon)

Olympus
E-330
E-410
E-500
E-510 (available soon)

Sony
DSLR-A100

ikelite usa
underwater systems
50 W 33rd Street
Indianapolis, IN 46208
317.923.4523
www.ikelite.com

New Products

Aquatica Nikon D40x housing

Aquatica is proud to announce that it is starting shipping of it new housing for the Nikon D40x camera. This exciting product is part of a new line of Aquatica underwater camera housings that are designed and built for the newer, smaller and less expensive digital SLR cameras, making high quality underwater photography more affordable for the recreational diver.

Made of anodized aluminum and machined to exacting specifications, the new D40X housing was crafted with the user in mind. It features all of the controls favored by professionals in a compact (H 6" x W 6.9" x D 5" or 154mm X 176mm X 127mm) and easy-to-use design. Built around Aquatica's well established bayonet port system, these new Aquatica housings will accommodate all current ports, extensions and gears. As well Aquatica is introducing a new 6" dome port and a new, more compact macro port for both this new housings and its current line of well established housings.

Aquatica's robust aluminum construction also means no warping or twisting, which can affect the controls when diving the deeper part of the recreational diving limit. In addition, our acclaimed Aqua View Finder, along with many other accessories, is fully compatible with these newer housings.

Some of the additional features of the Aquatica D40X housing include:

Simple to assemble design for the traveling diver

Full and comfortable viewing of the images on the rear LCD,

Quick response zoom control to allow selection of the lens focal length.

Newer more compact dome and macro bayonet port line up.

Full compatibility with all existing bayonet ports and extensions.

Smaller more streamlined design.

The easiest and most secure camera mounting system in the industry.

300ft / 90 meter depth rating maintaining full operation of all controls.

Easy access to camera controls.

Simple to assemble design for the traveling diver.

The MSRP is $1649

www.aquatica.ca

Gates Deep Red

Gates Underwater Products, the global leader in reliable underwater housings, formally announces Deep Red, an underwater housing for the Red One camera. Deep Red represents a watershed in underwater imaging, providing the means to capture 4K resolution (or 4 x HD resolution) motion imaging, suitable for digital cinema.

www.gateshousings.com

Ikelite Housing for Canon A650

The Ikelite compact digital housing is molded of corrosion free, virtually indestructible clear polycarbonate. An unobstructed view of the main o-ring provides assurance that the case is sealed properly. Its heavy duty walls allow it to operate safely to 200ft (60m).

All functions of the camera are accessible except the print button. A flash diffuser is included to aid in improving lighting quality when the camera's built-in flash is used to illuminate subjects underwater.

For optimum lighting underwater an optional DS Substrobe is recommended. The DS Substrobes are brighter, recycle faster and offer wider coverage than the camera's flash. Being farther from the camera lens, the optional DS Substrobe aids in reducing the illumination of particles in the water and helps to eliminate

backscatter.

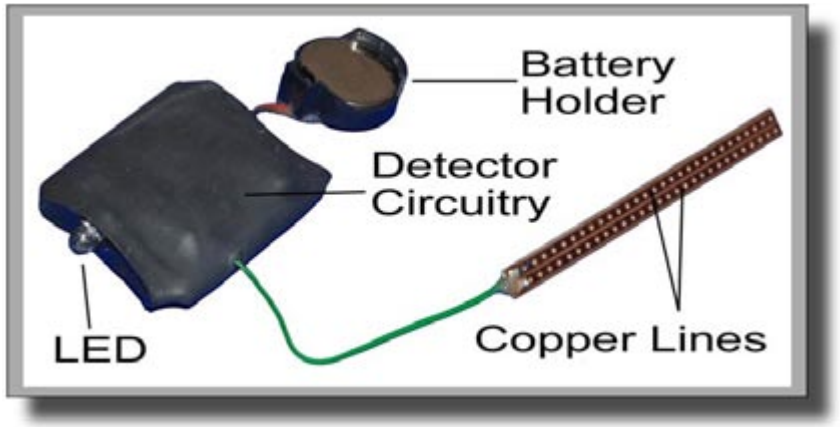
The EV Manual Controller senses the camera's flash and fires the external DS Substrobe without requiring any fiber optic "sync cord" . The EV Controller provides precise control of the Substrobe in 10 power settings. Available in complete strobe packages which provide everything you need for breathtaking photos.

The included tray with release handle provides stability and exceptional handling underwater. The release handle allows easy attachment and removal of Ikelite strobe mounting arms at the touch of a button. Also available as #9523.32 Tray with Dual Release Handles for increased balance or the addition of a second Substrobe.

The Ikelite W-20 and other 67mm threaded wide-angle conversion lenses from Inon or Epoque attach directly to the front of the housing's port.

www.ikelite.com

Mullins Housing Leak Detector



If you've ever had an underwater housing flood, you'll certainly know what prompted Australian underwater photographer Jeff Mullins to design a Leak Detector for underwater digital camera housings. That heart-in-the-mouth feeling when you first see a small puddle of sea water rolling around inside of your housing - threatening to destroy your prized camera; does tend to take the edge off a perfectly good dive!

Jeff's small electronic sensor circuit, gives early warning of the slightest moisture (or water) gathering inside of your housing. The warning is by way of a Hi-Intensity LED (Light Emitting Diode) that is placed near the camera's LCD screen (easily seen when taking/reviewing photos or looking at the rear of the housing), alerting the photographer to an impending disaster. The photographer can then surface before the housing accumulates enough water to damage the camera.

Jeff explains "Initially this was just a home project to act as a safety device to warn me early in the event of any moisture/water managing to get into our housings. But what then transpired is that I ended-up making them for more friends, who tell their friends..... and well, now I have started producing them for various DSLR and point & shoot housings, plus various video housings".

The Leak Detector is very-very sensitive, detecting the slightest amount of moisture on two copper sensor strips that sit in the lowest part of the housing, (just breathing on the sensor will turn-on the LED). The unit is small and fits into many styles of digital camera and most video housings including;

Ikelite: All DSLR housings - All Video housings - Most Point & Shoot housings.

10Bar/Fantasea: All DSLR housings - Some Point & Shoot housings

Olympus, Canon, Nikon & Fuji: Some Point & Shoot housings.

The Leak Detector is designed for each individual housing and comes with simple instructions for self-installation. Each unit is supplied complete with a battery and all necessary components for you to install in around five minutes - without tools.

Leak Detectors are available direct from Jeff via his website. If he hasn't produced a Leak Detector for your particular housing; all that he requires are a couple of e-mailed photo's to confirm the camera/housing dimensions. The finished unit can be posted anywhere around the World for US$60-$70 including postage, depending on your location.

www.uwleakdetector.com

Theory Of Underwater Photography with Peter Scoones and Ocean Optics

Peter Scoones is unequalled in his experience, knowledge and career success in underwater stills and cinematography. The man behind the camera on nearly all BBC natural history blockbusters is renowned for the generosity with which he imparts information and knowledge he has worked so long and so hard to acquire.

Peter has very kindly agreed to run a special course on the theory of underwater photography. This is a master class from an individual whose underwater imaging track record is exceptional and who is considered the professionals professional.

It will take place mid week for clients to attend after work. It is the nature of Peter's career that he can find himself on assignment with little warning. For this reason you will need to be flexible with attending this workshop as dates may change at short notice. For up to date details please contact Ocean Optics.

www.oceanoptics.co.uk

Aquatica remote release

Camera connected and ready to mount

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D70

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D200

D80

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5D

Nexus Nikon D300

The Nexus Nikon D300 housing controls are all accessible and have dual fiber optic ports for TTL with Inon Z240 strobes plus 2 Standard Nikonos sync ports for conventional direct strobe linkage.
The Nexus D300 is an aluminum housing with a full range of lens ports.

Nexus Canon 40D

In the Nexus Canon 40D housing all controls are accessible and have dual fiber optic ports for TTL with Inon Z240 strobes plus 2 Standard Nikonos sync ports for conventional direct strobe linkage. It is an aluminum housing with a full range of lens ports.

www.usanexus.com

Fantasea FP-5000

Fantasea Line is pleased to announce their FP-5000 housing for Nikon's new Coolpix digital cameras, the P5000 and P5100.

The FP-5000 housing is fully functional, providing photographers with access to all camera functions. It is depth rated to 60 meters/200 feet.

www.fantasea.com

Compact cameras update

by Peter Rowlands

Trends in diving don't change very fast. Despite its obvious advantages, nitrox is still used by the minority, even BC's took a long time to catch on and rebreathers will only ever appeal to the specialists. Underwater photography, however, the long time preoccupation of nerdy eccentrics, has seen something of a second coming with the advent of the compact digital camera. Small and lightweight, even when they are in their housing, these cameras truly appeal to the mass diving market and combined with their excellent value for money they have become the 'must have' accessory for many divers.

The sheer number of cameras and housings available today makes a daunting task for the decision maker so we contacted Cameras Underwater who kindly supplied some of their best sellers for us to evaluate and produce an update on what is still a developing market with new cameras and housings appearing almost every month.

Despite this seemingly fast moving technology it is fair to say that many of the performance features and specifications have levelled out making it comparatively easy to make a decision without the fear that there is something far better and cheaper around the corner. True, there will always be a replacement model on the way but the big advances such as megapixels and LCD screen size have all taken place. All of the cameras reviewed here will provide everything you would normally require in terms of ease of use and quality of output. The decision is more in the fine print and that is what we will be looking at in this update.

The sheer number of cameras and housings available today makes a daunting task for the decision maker

This edited article first appeared in Dive magazine

www.divemagazine.co.uk

I am grateful to Cameras Underwater for supplying the camera and housings

www.camerasunderwater.co.uk

What to look for:

Megapixels

The amount of megapixels (mp) the camera's chip has is an indication of the image quality you can expect to get. The more the megapixels the merrier.

In the early days of digital compact cameras when a 3mp camera replaced a 2mp one that was a 50% increase in resolution which was very significant. Nowadays, when a 7mp camera replaces a 6mp the increase in quality is much smaller at around 16%.

All of the cameras featured here will produce excellent A4 prints and larger or images that can be projected onto large screens for audience viewing so you can rest assured that, unless you have big ideas, any of these cameras will be good. However the old addage of buying the most megapixels you can afford is still sensible. It is better to have too much image quality than too little!

LCD screen

This is the large viewing device on the back of the camera which shows you what you are about to take

and then displays the finished result when you have.

Here size really does matter but only up to a certain point. Most cameras nowadays have 2.5" screens which provide a nice large image to view. I think that this is the size where it will 'max out' as larger screens would mean a larger camera and there must come a point when size increase becomes unattractive. Mind you, the 3" screen on the Canon IXUS 75 looks very tempting!

Zoom

Underwater this is not really a feature that should be overly important and is certainly not one I would recommend using at the extreme telephoto end. However because you will no doubt use your camera on land it is a factor to take into consideration.

Most, if not all, cameras boast an 'optical' zoom. This is achieved conventionally by the lens elements. The higher the number factor of the zoom, the more telephoto effect you will achieve.

In addition to this, some cameras boast a 'digital' zoom which, as the name suggests, is achieved electronically and my advice would be to steer well clear as the image quality is significantly reduces to the point of being unusable.

Lens angle

This is a perfect example of the specifications jungle. Not all chip sizes are the same so the easiest factor to look for is a reference to lens angle/focal length on conventional 35mm film (remember that?). Most provide an angle of coverage of around 65° corner to corner which is the equivalent of a 35mm lens on 35mm film. Some provide around 75° (28mm on 35mm) and I would argue that, underwater, the wider angle of coverage would be useful but there are fewer cameras which offer this.

Shutter delay

This refers to the time lag in between you pressing the shutter and the actual picture being recorded. The time is needed for the camera to autofocus and calculate the exposure settings.

In the early days this was measured in seconds so no good for fast moving fish! Fortunately the time of this delay has reduced considerably but not disappeared altogether.

ISO rating

This is a term used to describe the sensitivity of the camera chip and this is an area of specification, rather like digital zoom, where camera manufacturers can exaggerate.

The higher the ISO rating, the lower the light levels you will be able to shoot in but the poorer the image

quality is likely to be. Having said that higher ISO performance is something manufacturers are constantly developing which is good news for us underwater photographers.

Manual white balance

This, more than any other feature, is what seperates digital cameras from film.

In the (good?) old days most film was designed to reproduce the correct colour under daylight conditions. If the colour temperature of that light varied a colour cast would result and the only way to counteract that was with a colour correcting filter.

A lot of modern digital compact cameras have several settings to correct various lighting conditions i.e. daylight, tungsten and flourescent. In addition some have the ability to 'manually white balance' which is a very useful feature underwater where the colour cast produced by even the clearest of tropical water is quite strong and gets much stronger with depth.

Manually white balancing entails taking a dummy exposure with the lens pointing at, ideally, a white card (though in practice this is not absolutely essential). The camera then looks at the colour cast and adjusts its processing software to reproduce white as white. Underwater this is extremely useful and well worth the extra effort before taking a shot.

In addition, some cameras have 'underwater' settings, the performance of which varies from manufacturer to manufacturer but they are easy to use and, effectively, add some colour back into the picture which is no bad thing. These settings are nearly always designed for clear, blue water where the majority of users will no doubt be operating.

Movie mode

Finally don't forget this feature because it is a real plus. All of the cameras here can shoot movies! True, the image size and quality is small but the results are surprisingly watchable (much bigger and better than U Tube) and with sound thrown in you have a powerful recording medium.

Finally in terms of scoring the cameras and housings, you will note that they all get fairly high marks. This is because, in my opinion, this generation of compact digital cameras provide pretty much everything you need in terms of value and performance quality.

Underwater photography has been revolutionised by the advent of these small miracles. Their price and ease of use will appeal to almost any diver and, for once, underwater photography is starting to look attractive.

Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com

Fuji Finepix F40 and WP-FXF40 housing

Fuji have been a leader in providing housings for their digital compacts and this combination, together with keen package prices, has made them very popular, and for good reason.

At 8 megapixels the F40 is at the top of the tree in terms of picture size and quality and the high ISO performance is impressive.

The principles of the housing design and construction have changed little because they got it right first time. Ergonomically everything is in the right place and the controls are smoothe and precise.

The only downside is the rear door locking control which has a manual locking mechanism rather than an auto one.

VERDICT

Good quality combination
Value 8/10
Performance 9/10

www.fujifilm.co.uk

Canon PowerShot A570 IS and WP-DC12

Looking slightly old fashioned compared to some designs, the A570 nevertheless comes packed with features and controls normally associated with an upper price bracket. As well as Programme Mode there is also Aperture and Shutter priority and even full Manual Mode.

This was the only camera which has to be switched to ‘playback’ to view previous images.

The housing is a well proven, ergonomic design. The external controls are transparent in colour which gives the housing a slightly less rugged appearance which is deceptive because this is a fully rated 40 metre housing.

VERDICT

Versatile workhorse
Value 9/10
Performance 8/10

www.canon.co.uk

Canon IXUS 75 and WP-DC14 housing

This camera is stylish, sleek and even, dare I say it, sexy. Turn it round to see the gorgeous 3” LCD screen and you have a visually stunning camera.

The set up functions took a bit of getting used you but were OK once I understood the logic. With such a big LCD screen the camera controls are squeezed into the remaining space which can make operating them a bit fiddly but with practice they worked fine. The 7.1 megapixel chip gave excellent images but the 1600 ISO performance was disappointing.

The housing is similar to the A570 and the controls, being slightly spaced apart, make the camera easier to use underwater than on land!

VERDICT

Gorgeous looking performer
Value 9/10
Performance 9/10

www.canon.co.uk

Panasonic DMC-FX01 and DMW-MCFX01

This is actually my camera and housing which is no longer current but it does have one feature which appealed to me – 16:9 format of which I am a great fan. Admittedly it's not true 16:9 (it chops off the top and bottom) but it saves me having to crop each frame.

In addition it is the widest lens of this group at 28mm which is very useful underwater. The camera is a good point and shoot with an uncluttered layout but I would say that because I've used this one much more than the others.

The camera has recently been superceeded with a 12mp version but I don't see the need to upgrade the camera and then the housing because this combination produces exactly what I need. I never thought I'd ever say that!

VERDICT

Stylish 16:9 performer
Value 8/10
Performance 8/10

www.panasonic.co.uk

Sony DCS-W90 and MPK-WB

At 8.1 megapixels the DCS-W90 leads the field in image size. The quality is very impressive indeed and, like the Panasonic, it can shoot 16:9. Unfortunately, in a lot of ways, it stops there. This is very much a point and shoot camera with very few Mode adjustments or control over your images. Having said that, if all you want is easy picture taking then this camera will surpass your requirements.

The housing is without doubt the leader. The design and construction is quality and the LCD shade will make viewing in bright conditions much easier. Internally there is a rubber insert which provides precise positioning of the camera as well as light baffling of the LCD screen for maximum contrast.

VERDICT

Top quality point and shoot
Value 7/10
Performance 8/10

www.sony.co.uk

Olympus mju760 and PT-036

Olympus housings stand out from the field with their provision of a metal filter thread ring. This allows for accessory lenses and filters to be used which greatly increases the range and quality of pictures they can take. In addition there is an LCD shade. The main push button controls are tiered in length making it easy to differentiate each one.

The closure latches are well shrouded, traditional metal over-centre catches which require a healthy set of fingernails to operate but this does make them virtually foolproof.

The mju760 is a quality point and shoot which is an 'all weather' design so it will survive and shoot in splash environments. Having recently been superceded you can make big savings without a noticeable loss in performance.

VERDICT

Stylish, small and versatile
Value 9/10
Performance 9/10

www.olympus.co.uk

A car for the underwater photographer

By Alexander Mustard

During 2006 I was approached by Nissan who were planning to design and build a concept car for the Tokyo Motor show in late October 2007. This was to be no ordinary car designed for mass market appeal. No this was a niche product aimed specifically at my needs as an underwater photographer. I did point out that a boat would be more traditional, but Nissan knew there would be multiple benefits for both its designers and future cars by exploring such an unusual design direction. The vehicle is called the Nissan NV200 and this is a short article about some of its features.

Shiro Nakamura, senior vice president and chief creative officer at Nissan Motor Co. takes up the story, "Nissan prides itself on designing its cars to fulfil the needs and requirements of its customers. For NV200 we have taken that guiding principle quite literally and created a vehicle for one specific customer. But it is a totally adaptable and flexible concept that could have applications in a number of areas of the market"

A typical small van is little more than an empty box on wheels: functional, certainly, but seldom innovative or smart. From the outside, NV200 is the epitome of a modern van. But it's the details that set it apart. At the heart of NV200 is a patented sliding cargo pod which is divided into a number of separate areas into which different pieces of diving and photographic equipment can be stored.

Stephane Schwarz, design director of NDE continue "We wanted to create a flexible toolbox for professionals. NV200 is practical and functional but aesthetically pleasing at the same time." The pod is latched inside the shell of the load area when the van is being driven. But upon arrival at its destination, it slides out rearwards to allow easy access to the storage zones. The pod is deployed manually with the aid of hydraulic rams, and sits securely on integrated 'drop-down' legs when fully extended.

The pod contains wet and dry storage areas for diving equipment. Lockable roller blinds protect the contents, while valuable camera equipment can be accessed either from within NV200 or from outside the pod. As the pod is withdrawn from the van, the area left behind is transformed into a mobile office and IT dock. A computer table drops down from the side of the van to reveal two

Text and photos courtesy of Nissan.

LCD screens upon which images can be edited. The front passenger seat swivels backwards on a single curved rail to face the table. A shockproof briefcase made from rugged ribbed plastic houses a laptop. When not in use, it docks into a side of the van beneath the worktable. The pod also houses a small refrigerator, drop down sink unit and first aid kit.

NV200's tanks hold enough water to supply a shower, fitted on the outside of the pod, to allow divers and equipment to be washed after use. Power for the computer, shower, 'fridge and other electrical fixtures comes from a small generator housed within the van. This, in turn, is charged by solar panels situated on the roof of the pod. When the pod is deployed, the solar panels are directly exposed to daylight. But even when the pod is pushed back into the van, the panels line up beneath the skylight. In this way, power can be generated in daylight hours whether the vehicle is stationary or not.

A two-man tent - accessed from outside NV200 - is housed at the base of the B-pillar behind the driver's door, while fillers for fuel and water are housed within the opposite B-pillar. The driver and passenger doors open conventionally, while access to the workspace is via a single sliding door on the passenger side.

Most the materials, textures

and colours used throughout NV200 reflect the materials, textures and colours used in the diving world. The exterior has a scratch resistant matt satin finish in a steel grey colour to emphasise the 'toolbox' nature of the project. Interior materials are either hardened lightweight plastics or rubberised fabrics finished in a dark grey with acid yellow highlights. Perhaps the only area not directly influenced by the ocean, is the wooden floor of NV200. This is finished in a hardwearing wood, bringing a touch of warmth to an otherwise working environment.

Sadly, Nissan aren't about to make the NV200 commercially available. But I was fascinated to see how a talented group of designers were inspired by our world and the problems we all face when we go shore-diving by car. Now if only they would let me keep it…

Alex Mustard
www.amustard.com

The East Coast of Bali

with Don Silcock

The north coast of Bali is well known for the excellent diving at Tulamben's Liberty wreck and the weird & wonderful critters to be found at the muck sites at Seraya, Purl Jati (PJ) & Secret Bay. Getting to these sites means a 3 to 4 hour drive from the main tourist area of Kuta and involves a trip up the scenic east coast of the island.

I have made that journey many times and normally stop for a toilet break at Candi Dasa, about 60 km north of Kuta. Often referred to as the eastern frontier of tourism in Bali, Candi Dasa is a pleasant small town located at the northern end of Amuk Bay and hosts a wide selection of hotels, restaurants & cafes.

In December 2006 I decided that instead of passing through Candi Dasa I would stay there and dive the east coast. In all I made 33 dives on that trip and the purpose of this article is to document what there is to see in this area of Island Of The Gods.

Dive Sites

There are two things you really need to know about diving on the east coast - first the area is subject to some of the strongest currents you are ever likely to experience and secondly the water can be really cool so a 5mm wetsuit is highly recommended. The strong currents are the result of the Indonesian Throughflow (see sidebar) and the water temperatures are produced by the cold-water upwellings from the deep trenches to the north & south of Bali. This is a powerful combination that acts as the catalyst for some really great diving, but a good guide with local knowledge and experience is essential if you want to experience the sites safely.

Reef scenic - Nusa Penida
D200 & Subal housing, Dual SS200 strobes, Nikon 10.5, f9 @ 1/60, Manual Exposure

Large cuttlefish on the bommie at the Blue Lagoon
D200 & Subal housing, Dual SS200 strobes, Nikon 70-180, f8 @ 1/60, Manual Exposure

Amuk Bay – The Blue Lagoon, Mimpang & Gili Tepekong

Amuk Bay itself is roughly 8km wide, with Candi Dasa at the northern end and Padangbai just round the southern tip of the bay. Padangbai is a small but very pleasant & picturesque fishing village, best known as the place to catch the ferry to Lombok and where most of the dive operators working the east coast depart from.

The three main dive areas offer quite considerable diversity and each one has its own unique features:

The Blue Lagoon is the location that less experienced divers are usually taken to first, as the dive sites in this area are generally much less exposed to the strong currents experienced at the other sites. However, don't let this fool you into thinking that this is a second rate area - it's not and of the six dives experienced here I was impressed with the health of the bommies and the general marine life.

More of a macro than a wide angle area, I saw a great selection of frogfish, leaf scorpion fish, moray eels, scorpion & stone fish, blue spotted stingrays and lots of nudibranchs.

The name Blue Lagoon conjures up images of deserted Pacific Ocean islands with swaying palm trees, however it's actually a small bay located just around the headland and to the northeast of Padangbai bay. There is a small resort located right on the beach, which is popular with tourists from Candi Dasa who go there to snorkel.

The more correct name for the area is Tanjung Sari and there are a number of sites to dive, not just the bay in front of the resort. The relative lack of currents and maximum depths of around 15-18m offer a pleasant combination of an uncomplicated dive site but with plenty to see.

Gili Mimpang is one of three islands located just outside Amuk Bay as the seafloor starts to drop down into the depths of the Lombok Strait, which means that all three spots are subject to the strong currents associated with the Throughflow. None of them are suitable for newly qualified divers and again a good guide is essential for even the most experienced diver.

Jelly fish at Biaha
D200 & Subal housing, Dual SS200 strobes, Nikon 12-24, f6.3 @ 1/60, Manual Exposure

Leaf scorpion fish on the bommie at the Blue Lagoon
D200 & Subal housing, Dual SS200 strobes, Nikon 70-180, f20 @ 1/60, Manual Exposure

Anthias on the reef at Nusa Penida
D200 & Subal housing, Dual SS200 strobes, Nikon 12-24, f7.1 @ 1/60, Manual Exposure

Moray eel on a bommie at Nusa Penida
D200 & Subal housing, Dual SS200 strobes, Nikon 17-55, f11 @ 1/60, Manual Exposure

The other two islands are Gili Tepekong and Gili Biaha, with Tepekong about 1 km south-east of Mimpang and Biaha about 4 km north-east.

Gili Mimpang is actually a group of small islands, three of which break the surface and are known as Batu Tiga. Local legend has it that they were used for target practice by the Indonesian air force in the 1960's – thus possibly explaining why they are so broken up compared to the very solid lumps of rock that make up Tepekong & Biaha. Mimpang's position is closer towards Amuk Bay, which means that it is less exposed to the currents of the Lombok Strait and therefore is often considered to be a lesser site than the other two.

My experience from two days of diving both Mimpang and the nearby Tepekong is that it has a great deal to offer, particularly the southern edge of the site where there are some excellent small caves teeming with fish life and very healthy soft coral which are surrounded by very photogenic glass fish.

I was amply rewarded for visiting Mimpang when, on the first dive of the second day, my very excited dive guide Mitra basically dragged me away from the caves giving me a very strange hand sign that I subsequently learned is the local

Mola Mola at Nusa Penida
D200 & Subal housing, Dual SS200 strobes, Nikon 17-55, f6.3 @ 1/60, Manual Exposure

Reef scenic - Nusa Penida
D200 & Subal housing, Dual SS200 strobes, Nikon 10.5, f9 @ 1/60, Manual Exposure

code for the Mola Mola, or Oceanic Sun Fish, that this area of Bali is well known for at certain times of the year.

I have long wanted to photograph the Mola Mola, but was not expecting to be so fortunate as it was late December, and September is known as the time to see them. Not only did one grace us with its amazing presence that day, but I was actually able to photograph it as I had made the decision to use a fish-eye lens after being shown the cave area on the previous day.

They really are a unique creature, almost 3m from tip to tip they appear quite ungainly at first glance but can move very quickly, as I learned when I tried to get "the shot". A true pelagic about which very little is known, they are believed to come to this area of Bali to be cleaned of parasites – usually by the common banner fish, which was indeed the case with the one we saw that day.

The southern edge and the western side of Mimpang are one of the best places in Bali to see white tip reef sharks and on my second day I saw a group of about 10 larges ones swimming in the strong current. Like most sharks they are wary of divers, particularly ones emitting large streams of bubbles as they struggle against the current to get in position to take photographs – no award winning shots that day!

Gili Tepekong is only 1 km from Mimpang but the conditions can vary considerably between the two sites and often when one can be dived in safety, the other is out of the question.

Located as it is, right on the edge of the Lombok Strait, Gili Tepekong is swept by the Indonesian Throughflow which means that when it is safe to dive the site it is spectacular, but if you try to dive the site in the wrong conditions you may experience the so-called toilet effect where instead of going up to the surface as nature intended, your bubbles are spiraling in the opposite direction - caught in one of the infamous down-currents that make the east coast so potentially challenging.

Definitely a site only for experienced divers, Tepekong rewards those who do venture there with some spectacular diving. The highlight

Reef scenic - Nusa Penida
D200 & Subal housing, Dual SS200 strobes, Nikon 10.5, f13 @ 1/60, Manual Exposure

of which is the Canyon at the south-western tip of the site where fallen rocks from the island have created an area reminiscent of Roman ruins that is now populated by large schools of sweetlips, jacks, groupers and white tip reef sharks.

The Canyon has apparently established a reputation as a "must dive" location but many operators are very reluctant to take divers there because of the dangers of the downdraft. Patience and trust in your dive guide are a must, because if they tell you that the conditions are not suitable you need to accept their judgment as they can read the situation better than you can.

Such was the story on the days I was diving Tepekong and my guide Mitra knew how much I wanted to dive the Canyon, but cautioned me against it, which is basically what you are paying for – good advice!

At the northern tip of Tepekong there is a site known as the "Faux Canyon", as apparently some operators have been known to take divers there and tell them it is the real Canyon! I dived this site a few times and enjoyed it, particularly the shark nursery – a wide but low & tapering cave that is host to a substantial number of white tip sharks. It's called the nursery because of the baby white tips that are always found there and infact the first couple of times I visited, that was all I found – 4 to 5 one metre long juveniles. However on the last dive it must have been lunchtime, as mum & dad were home as well and although initially quite camera shy they started to come closer & closer. Quite an exciting sensation when you find yourself jammed into the cave due to the strong surge!

Nusa Penida - Sental, Ped, SD & Toyapakeh

Nusa Penida, together with Nusa Lembongan & Nusa Ceningan, is a group of three islands that sit right in the middle of the Lombok Strait between Bali and Lombok. This position means that their northern coasts bear the full brunt of the Indonesian Throughflow as it hits the islands, and the western & eastern coasts experience very strong currents due to the huge volumes of water sweeping past.

Nusa Penida is by far the largest of the three islands - roughly 18 km long & 14 km wide, compared to the combined size of Lembongan & Ceningan at just 3 by 5 km. Separated from Lembongan & Ceningan by the Toyapakeh Strait, Penida is a low, dry limestone island, which means that it does not have the wet season heavy river run-offs that significantly reduce the underwater visibility.

I had read stories of the excellent visibility and healthy reefs on the northern & northwest coasts of Nusa Penida, but had also heard others about coral bleaching as a result of El Nino in 1998 and I guess my expectations were fairly low. However on my first few dives there I was frankly quite stunned by the 25m plus visibility, excellent fish life and overall vibrancy of the reefs.

The water temperature at all the sites on the north coast – Sental, Ped & SD and Toyapakeh on the northwest coast can be really quite cold and my computer registered 22 Deg C on one dive! But the strong currents and nutrient rich, cold-water upwellings combine to create some tremendously rewarding diving.

I had also read that many of the Nusa Penida sites were not particularly good for underwater photography as the strong currents basically turn every dive into a high-speed drift. However, I actually got some of my best images of the trip on these sites by keeping close to the reef and looking for spots where I could shelter from the current.

The north & northeast coasts

White tip reef shark at Tepekong
D200 & Subal housing, Dual SS200 strobes, Nikon 12-24, f7.1 @ 1/60, Manual Exposure

of Nusa Penida are also known as locations to see the Mola Mola and to my surprise & delight on the 4th day of diving in the area I saw another one. This time I spotted it myself when something caught my eye down in the blue – I was at about 15m at the time and what I saw was a cloud of banner fish surrounding a large but non-descript lump of something. The lump was the Mola Mola looking up the reef slope, as it was cleaned of the many parasites that live on its body, and when it turned slightly my nitrogen saturated brain finally registered what it was.

This time I did not have the fisheye lens, but it did not really matter as the Mola Mola only allowed me to get close enough for one shot before demonstrating it's strange but very effective swimming technique and disappeared rapidly into the depths.

Conclusion

As a general rule of thumb, I much prefer liveaboard diving to land based – my day job pays for my dive travel & cameras and, like most people, I get a limited number of days vacation every year. Liveaboards allow me to get the maximum diving in the shortest time, whereas land based diving usually restricts you to 3 dives a day and too much time getting to the sites.

Having said that, what I really liked about diving the East Coast on this trip were the logistics. I based myself in Candi Dasa and was picked up every morning about 08.30 for the 15-minute drive to Padangbai, where I was able to enjoy a Bali coffee at the Topi Inn (www.topiinn.com) whilst the dive boat was loaded with the gear for the day's diving.

We were usually on our way by about 09.15 and the maximum time to any of the sites was 40 minutes, but usually much less. The morning's two dives were done before noon and then it was time for a nice lunch ordered the day before from the Topi Inn, followed by a quick snooze.

The afternoon dive was usually completed by three and then it was back to Padingbai for a quick fresh water shower and another coffee before heading back to the hotel in time for a sundowner of ice cold Bintang whilst reviewing the days images – very civilized!

Don Silcock
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Footnote

My visit to the East Coast of Bali was organized through AquaMarine Diving and I would like to thank Annabel Thomas and her staff for a first class trip, which was superbly organized and very professionally conducted.

www.aquamarinediving.com

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Bestiary in the Bay

Observing life in the Bay of Fundy

By Scott Leslie

The ebb tide gets pinched into a powerful eight-knot current as it passes through the narrows of Grand Passage between Long and Brier Islands at the western tip of Nova Scotia. The current meets head on with the brisk wind, whipping the water into a froth of standing waves. Our lobster fishing boat pitches and rolls through the passage as we make our way to our dive site in the Bay of Fundy, home of the world's highest tides. Samuel de Champlain first sailed these turbulent waters some 400 years ago, when he discovered what was to become Canada.

The torrent of Grand Passage behind us, our destination looms into view: Gull Rock. Three kilometres off Nova Scotia's Brier Island, this obdurate basalt islet looks pretty unremarkable; that is until you look below the surface.

Swept by powerful currents, the waters around this column of rock that rises 40 metres from the seafloor is replenished twice daily by a smorgasbord of plankton. This constantly renewed supply of food upon which the marine ecosystem rests is why the Bay of Fundy is one of the richest cold-water ecosystems on Earth.

With the tide low and slack right now, there's a brief window of opportunity to dive in still water. With my camera in hand, I roll over the side of the boat into the numbing 4 C water, protected in my drysuit and plenty of woollies. Through the crystal clear water I can see my destination below, a kelp-covered rock jutting from the side of the reef. Descending past 10 metres I find myself in a constellation of hundreds of luminous little jellyfish, each carrying a cargo of minute amphipods. I don't know if they are feeding on the jellies, or simply hitching a ride, but they certainly make an interesting subject!

High tide at the head of the Bay of Fundy where the tides can be up to 15 metres.

A lion's mane jellyfish cruises just beneath the surface of the Bay of Fundy. Common in the bay, the lion's mane is the world's largest jelly, with a diameter of 2.5 metres and tentacles up to 15m long.

(Left) A ctenophore named Mertensia ovum can be common in the bay at times.

(Centre) A jellyfish with a cargo of little hitch-hikers of unknown species.

(Above) A lion's mane jelly drifts through sunbeams, it's bell raised like the wings of a bird

All the images were shot with a Nikon F90x in Aquatica housing using nikkor 20mm lens, sigma 24mm macro or a 60mm micro nikkor. The topside shots are taken with a Canon 20D with a 15-30mm zoom.

Like inner-space voyageurs, the animals we commonly know as "jellies" drift through the Bay of Fundy in their billions. The Bay is home to many species, including the largest of all, the Lion's Mane Jellyfish, which can reach a diameter of 2.5 metres and have tentacles over 15 metres long. This animal has only one predator we know of, that antediluvian giant wanderer of the seas, the Leatherback turtle.

Jellyfish are referred to as macro-plankton (from the Greek for "large wanderers"), and like other plankton they generally float passively in the boundless sea. Transparent, and often as beautiful as crystal, their life's journey through the ocean is controlled more by tides and currents than by any primitive instinct or locomotive ability they might possess. They are a truly ancient family, having plied the oceans of the world for hundreds of millions of years.

Photographing any animal that drifts in mid-water is particularly difficult and the small size of these jellies makes it more so. Lacking a solid surface as a reference point while looking through a small viewfinder calls for some careful buoyancy control to hover steadily in mid-water.

Because an abundance of jellies at any given place is unpredictable and their position in the sea is completely at the mercy of ocean currents, I am fortunate to find as many as I have. Working quickly, I set exposure and adjust my strobes to capture these little jewels on film. Time is of the essence; I have only about fifteen minutes of still water before the tide begins to flood and soon I must ascend to the waiting boat.

A sea raven peers menacingly through some sea lettuce as it waits in ambush

Slack water is so brief here that if I want to do more than one tank, I have to face an inescapable fact: at least one dive will have to be done while the tide is running! Luckily, the boat captain tucks into the small eddy behind Gull Rock, where it's safe from the raging current flowing past on either side. Back in the water with a fresh tank,

I descend to 15 metres where sea gooseberries drift through the long stalks of broadleaf kelp, vacuuming up plankton that is invisible to me. Their eight rows of tiny cilia, or "combs" flash neon green and red as they refract the light from my strobes.

On the bottom I find a myriad of oddly shaped animals-fan worms, anemones, nudibranchs, lampshells, sea stars, sponges and sea peaches-clinging to the rock and creating a rococo tapestry of red, pink, orange, white, yellow, black and blue. Such as rainbow of life conjures up images of a tropical reef, not the cold waters of the Bay of Fundy.

The multitude of body designs here illustrates the basic difference between biodiversity

(Top left) The long-horned scuplin sometimes becomes prey for the larger sea raven

Top right) A winter storm rages along the Nova Scotia side of the Bay of Fundy

(Bottom left) A lumpfish in it's bright red breeding colour rests among the broadleaf kelp

(Bottom right) A northern lobster emerges from a hiding place under a rock

A slender sea star at rest on some kelp

Though it doesn't look like one, this is actually a member of the jellyfish family, a trumpet-stalked jelly to be precise

Frilled anemones are a common species throughout the Bay of Fundy

This tiny pink sculpin blends perfectly with its surroundings

on land and in the sea. Virtually all the terrestrial animals belong to just two phyla -chordata and arthropoda- major taxonomic groupings of organisms based on the fundamental form of their bodies. The former includes all mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians (not to mention 22,000 species of fish in fresh and saltwater) and the latter, insects, spiders, and most other crawly things that can be seen with the naked eye on land. It's a different story underwater, however, and on this one little reef beneath the Bay of Fundy, I have found at least seven different phyla of animals. Each one is as distinct from the others as an ant is from an anteater.

Using a macro lens-it's the small end of the spectrum that's inhabited by the really fascinating organisms- I begin photographing in the still water of the eddy. Beneath the sea, appearances can be deceiving and things aren't always what they seem. Case in point: despite being distinctly clam-like, the northern lampshells tucked into the vertical crevice in front of me aren't related to clams or any other mollusk. Members of an entirely different phylum, brachiopoda, lampshells and their ilk sweep a lace-like "hand" back and forth snatching tiny prey from the water. Having changed little in 600 million years, many members of this ancient phylum are considered living fossils.

Nearby I find a red-gilled nudibranch, one of the more common species of "sea slug" found in the northwest Atlantic. Shaped like the fuselage of an airplane, these 30mm long animals posses a prominent mane of gills and two protruding nose stalks. Their appearance is bizarre and evidently they avoid becoming a meal by tasting very bad (it would have sucked to have been the biologist who had to check that out in the name of science!). Farther down the reef, I spot a sea raven.

(Far left) This red-gilled nudibranch finds itself on the tentacles of a frilled anemone

(Top centre) A school of sand lance swim through a sandy cove

(Above) This sea raven has swallowed a long-horned sculpin, a fish nearly two-thirds its size.

(Left) Close-up of a winter flounder, showing its Picasso-esque face

This lugubrious bottom-dweller conceals itself in ambush among some sea lettuce. Of course, he's no threat to me, but small flounder, sculpins and rock gunnels had better keep an eye peeled since sea ravens can swallow a fish two-thirds their size in a single gulp. Despite their menacing countenance and resemblance to the deadly stonefish of southern seas, sea ravens are somewhat curious, tame creatures.

Near the sea raven's hideout I spot a lumpfish amidst the kelp looking up at me with its big saucer eyes. The slow moving, blunt-headed fish rises from the bottom and swims in a circle over its precious patch of eggs, settling again once I've passed. In late spring, males in their brilliant red breeding colour, use a specially evolved suction disk to attach themselves to the rocky bottom where they guard their eggs. The young will hatch out and eventually make use of their own disk to anchor themselves to the safety of a kelp frond to hide from predators and to rest. These endearing denizens of the sea propel themselves through the water by fluttering their pectoral fins and rather small tails, moving in a slow, deliberate manner over the bottom, Tai Chi masters of the sea.

At 43 metres deep I come to Gull Rock's base. The flat muddy bottom dissolves into the murk in every direction. But even here life abounds, and I find a metre-long ocean pout rolled up on the mud like a firehose. Aptly named, the eel-like fish waits for dinner to happen by before engulfing it with an enormous mouth rimmed by fat, pouty lips. Just a few metres away several large winter flounders

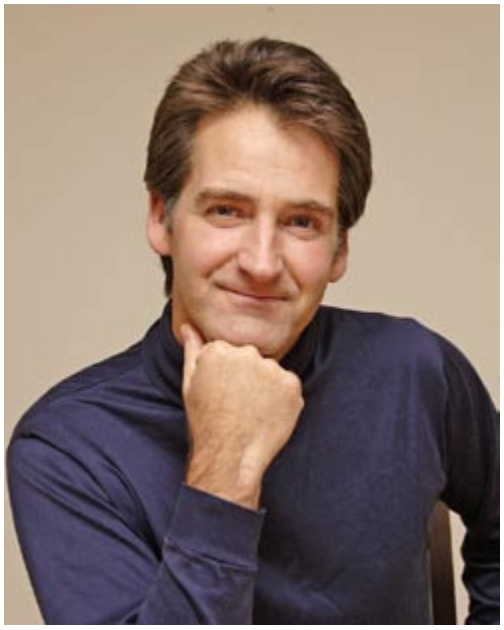
A short-honed sculpin in its kelpy habitat

Low tide at the same spot as earlier, showing how transformed the seascapes is when the tide is low. Note the people standing on the bottom of the sea on the right side of the photo.

snuffle through a sandy patch. Every time one moves, legions of Acadian hermit crabs scatter in a starburst of legs, claws and shells. Comically asymmetrical like something right out of a Picasso, these flounders have both eyes on the right side of the head. When they're very young they look like an average fish, but as they get older one eye "migrates" to the other side of the head.

After 30 minutes of exploring, I sense a change in the sea. The eddy begins to dissipate as the tide turns. I don't want to be fighting the current at this depth, so it's about time to finish my dive. As I near the surface, a curious harbour seal comes out of nowhere and does barrel rolls as it circles me, as if to celebrate its discovery of a bubble blowing undersea monster. I am amazed at the display of effortless agility as it swoops, pivots and pirouettes with powerful grace like a Pitts Special stunt plane at an airshow. I tuck into the shelter of an overhang for a moment to watch, but the seal disappears into the dancing ball of sunlight above. With my air almost gone and a deco limit fast approaching, I take one last look at this remarkable place before the accelerating tide snatches me from the reef and pulls me into the open sea as I ascend.

Scott Leslie
www.scottleslie.com



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Go Big in the Red Sea

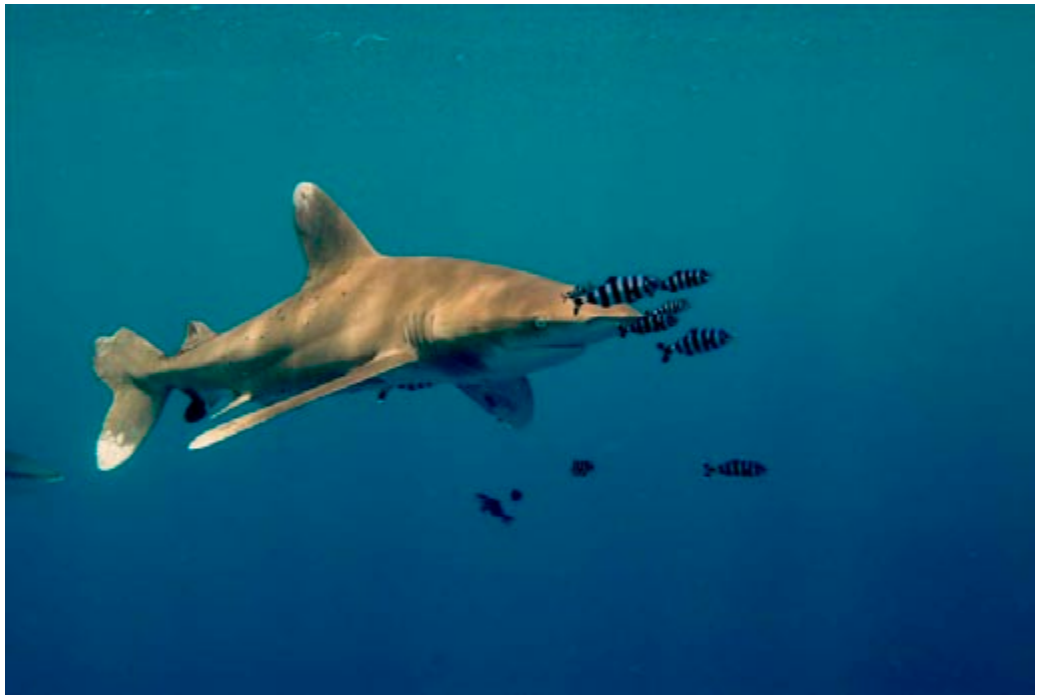
by Mark Webster

The Red Sea is a very popular destination for underwater photographers particularly from Europe due to its proximity and often bargain prices compared to other longer haul destinations. There is a well established diving infrastructure and large fleets of day boats and liveaboards which will cater for the needs of the occasional snap-shooter to the fully dedicated photographers and professionals. The number of boats operating does of course lead to some over crowding at popular or 'classic' dive sites but it is still possible to find some levels of solitude if you are prepared to forgo the big names.

Although some of the strange and exotic creatures found elsewhere around the globe are harder to find in the Red Sea, there is still a mind boggling variety of species here and numerous spectacular coral reefs. If you have dived here many times it is tempting to become blasé about the quality of the diving and as photographers it is often necessary to consciously focus our minds on particular techniques or images to get the best from your visit. Although there are an abundance of excellent macro subjects here, many of the sites feature so much colour, spectacular topography, activity and excellent blue water visibility that they are crying out for your wide angle lens. Hopefully this short article will provide a few pointers and fire your enthusiasm for the next visit.

Lens choice

The old adage in underwater photography is of course get close and then get closer still – reducing the water column is important no matter how clear it appears to be. Wide angle and super wide lenses allow us to do this and with so few straight lines on a coral reef you might be tempted to think that the widest possible lens (i.e. a fish eye) will be the best



Oceanic white tip shark. Nikon D200, Tokina 12-24mm zoom, Subal ND20 housing, Magic Filter, f8 @ 1/60, ISO 200

Coral bommie and diver. Nikon D200, Tokina 10-17mm zoom, Subal ND20 housing, Magic Filter, f11 @ 1/30, ISO 200

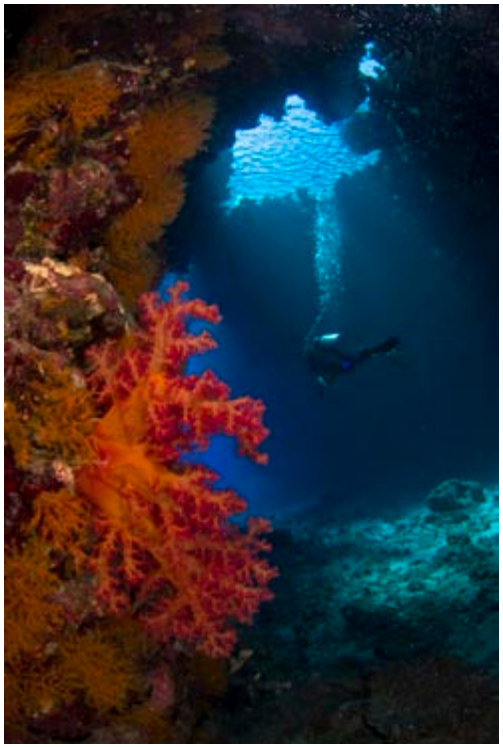
There are a host of wide angle lenses to choose from – clockwise from left Sigma 15mm FE (an aged manual lens that the editor may have fond memories of); Tokina 12-24mm zoom; Nikkor 18-35mm zoom; Tokina 10-17mm zoom; Nikkor 10.5mm.

The Tokina 10-17mm zoom requires a small extension ring. Shown here is the Subal 15mm ring. The lens will work behind a standard FE dome without an extension, but the ring will give optimal positioning.

Masked butterfly and banner angel fish. Nikon D200, Tokina 12-24mm zoom, Subal ND20 housing, Subtronic Minis, f11 @ 1/60, ISO 100

choice. This will be true in many circumstances but a fish eye (defined as 165º to 180 º diagonal view regardless of sensor/film size) can be just a little too wide on occasions and even on an irregular shaped reef can produce obvious distortions. If it is the only wide angle lens you have then of course in this digital age we can crop a picture easily, but you must remember to compose for this.

I personally love using the fish eye on my D200 and a recent lens to hit the market seems to have resolved the dilemma of whether to choose a full frame fish eye or super wide angle lens for a particular dive. The new Tokina 10-17mm zoom (for DX format sensors) seems to have been especially designed for UW photographers and gives us a full frame fish eye at one end and super wide of approximately 100 º at the other, which is roughly the equivalent of an 18mm lens on a 35mm film format. This lens also focuses extremely closely which makes it ideal for classic 'close focus wide



Soft corals and diver. Nikon D200, Tokina 10-17mm zoom, Subal ND20 housing, Subtronic Minis, f11 @ 1/30, ISO 100

angle' and 'wide macro' compositions. The maximum aperture is variable between f3.5-4.5 compared to the Nikon 10.5mm of f2.8, but frankly you won't notice the difference through the viewfinder and we rarely need full aperture underwater. Laboratory test comparisons might pick a few holes in the Tokina's performance but you would be hard pushed to find them – if you are in

Some photographers favour long arms for wide angle photography. In most circumstances I find these unwieldy and prefer a pair of 8" arms with my Subtronic Minis.

Diver photographing reef. Nikon D200, Nikkor 10.5mm FE, Subal ND20 housing, Subtronic Minis, f11 @ 1/100, ISO 100

Green turtle. Nikon D200, Tokina 12-24mm zoom, Subal ND20 housing, Subtronic Minis, f14 @ 1/30, ISO 100

Schooling banner fish. Nikon D100, Tokina 12-24mm zoom, Light and Motion Titan housing, Subtronic Minis, f11 @ 1/80, ISO 200

the market for a DX fish eye lens this is the one to go for. It is barely longer than the Nikkor 10.5mm and can be used behind the standard fish eye ports, although optically the best set up will be achieved with a short extension ring of between 15-20mm. The exact length will be dependant on your housing and the FE port design. Subal recommend a 20mm extension ring, but I use the 15mm with my home engineered ports as the base plate design is different. As this lens has such a good minimum focus setting, you can use it with small diameter domes without compromising quality. Nexus in fact offer a 4" diameter dome for this lens and the Nikkor 10.5mm FE.

For the super wide end you can look at the short range zooms from Nikon (12-24mm), Tokina (12-24mm) and Sigma (10-20mm) or choose a fixed focal length. The zoom lenses need a combination of extension ring and dome dependant on your housing and choice of lens and will most likely need a close up diopter for optimum performance, unless you are using a large diameter dome. If you have a DX sized sensor then you can try a 'film' full frame fish eye (15/16mm) which will be cropped down to around 100°. For a full frame sensor or if are using film then there are a host of lenses between 14mm (rectilinear) and 20mm plus fish eyes to choose from – most of these will work well behind a standard fish eye dome port.

Lighting

In the Red Sea we normally have plenty of natural light, so we are rarely trying to light the whole of a wide angle image entirely and are usually aiming for a good balance between the available light and the light from the flash guns. So high powered flash guns are not essential but a beam angle of 100 ° or more

Soft corals. Nikon D200, Tokina 10-17mm zoom, Subal ND20 housing, Subtronic Minis, f16 @ 1/100, ISO 100

is desirable, although you can work successfully with narrower beam strobes.

Strobe positioning and arm length are mostly dictated by the size of the main subject, distance and composition. For twin strobes a popular technique is to position the strobes for 'flat lighting' and use the point at which the beams converge to light the subject, thereby avoiding potential backscatter from illuminated particles between the dome and the subject. This technique works well, but needs some thought and practice particularly when working very close to the subject. Some photographers prefer very long arms for this technique, which is fine when working at greater distances from the subject, but I find unwieldy in most circumstances. My preference is for medium length arms which are easier to position when working close – but you have to experiment with a variety of combinations to determine which suits your own style best.

Strobe positioning with fish eye lenses is particularly important as it is very easy for them to creep into the picture. They need to be well behind the dome and 'film or sensor plane' to avoid this and only practice and

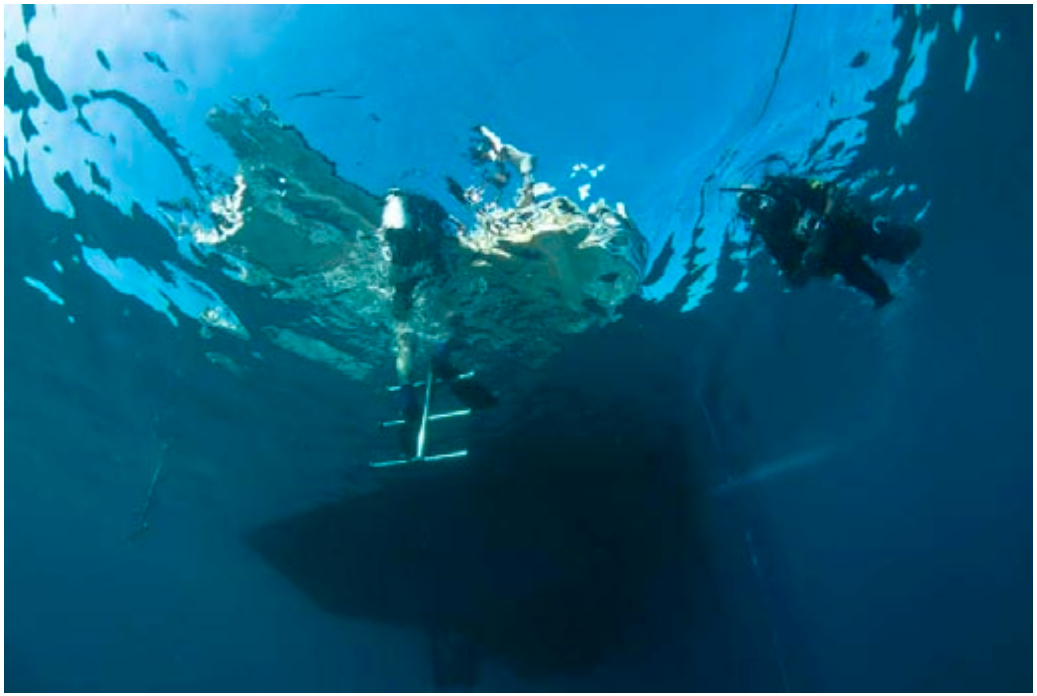
experimentation will help you get this right. Try to avoid positioning them at the corners of the frame where the angle of view is widest. The zoom lenses, particularly the 10-17mm fish eye, present another problem. I find I am repositioning my strobes more often as I use the zoom and it is all too easy to forget to pull the strobes back again after a close shot at the long end of the lens. It can sometimes be difficult to see the resulting 'flare' from the strobes at the edge of the picture in the camera LCD and you only discover this after the dive. So try and develop a mental procedure for each time you change focal

Diver over reef. Nikon D200, Tokina 10-17mm zoom, Subal ND20 housing, Magic Filter, f8 @ 1/60, ISO 200

length or subject distance to check to position of the strobes.

Filters

Using filters was a rare event when shooting with film, but now in the digital age we have the 'Magic Filter' which has changed our approach to natural light photography. The secret to success is the ability to adjust the white balance during the dive to optimize the colour correction provided by the filter and we can make further fine adjustment after the dive if you shoot in RAW format. In fact, if you don't have a filter or perhaps your strobe fails then it is worth pre-setting the white balance and shooting with available light as you might be surprised at the results. Filters don't replace flash photography, but they are certainly complimentary, and in an environment like the Red Sea they are superb for the wide reef vistas and perfect for wrecks. Using them will teach you more about managing available light,



Divers return to boat. Nikon D200, Tokina 10-17mm zoom, Subal ND20 housing, f11 @ 1/80, ISO 100

Soft corals. Nikon D100, Nikkor 10.5mm FE, Light and Motion Titan housing, Subtronic Minis, f11 @ 1/60, ISO 200

the best time of day to shoot and reading the way light and shadows will impact the image.

Timing

You can shoot wide angle at almost any time of the day, although classically the 'best time' is between say 10am and 2pm when the sun is at its highest. In the Red Sea the visibility often seems to deteriorate in the afternoon as the sun gets lower, so morning dives are often the best. You must also consider the topography of the dive site. It is no good planning to shoot on a west facing wall early in the morning when the sun rises in the east! Fortunately many of the offshore reefs offer more than one face, although one side is sometimes 'best' for life due to current direction, so your timing may be dictated by a variety of factors.

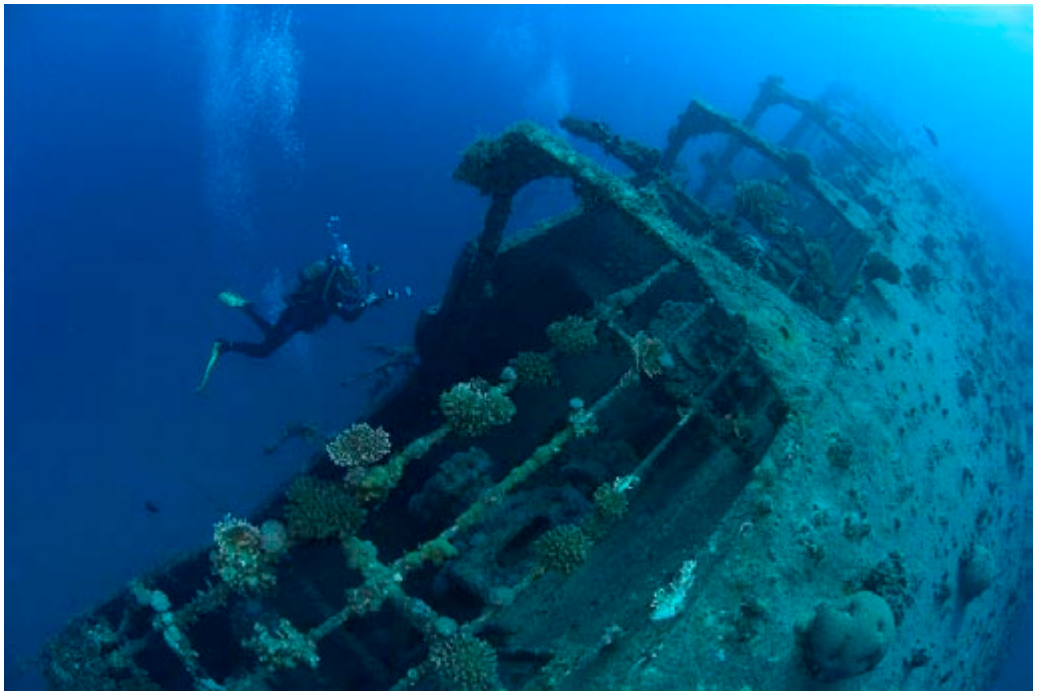
Diving early and late in the day can also bring the benefits of striking lighting conditions and effects. When the sun is low you can often catch the dance of shafts of sunlight from the surface by using a faster shutter speed, whilst shooting straight towards the surface with a fish eye lens can capture the attractive effect of Snell's Window on the surface.

Reef Subjects

The reefs here are truly spectacular in some locations and the Red Sea is renowned for its soft corals which add dazzling colour to an image in multiple hues ranging through deep red, purples, delicate pinks and yellows and pure whites. These soft corals are most abundant on reef walls exposed to the current which can be quite strong in some locations dependant on tidal conditions.

Hard corals are abundant in differing colours. In the southern Red Sea the reefs are dominated by massive and amazing coral formations particularly in the Fury Shoal and St. John's reef areas, and even a fish eye lens can be challenged when trying to capture the scene. These topographies present an ideal opportunity to use filters and natural light exposures.

The reef fish are equally striking and your first impression is one of



Diver on Atlas half wreck. Nikon D100, Nikkor 10.5mm FE, Light and Motion Titan housing, manual white balance, f8 @ 1/60, ISO 200

Tien Sien tug boat wreck. Nikon D100, Nikkor 10.5mm FE, Light and Motion Titan housing, manual white balance with Magic Filter, f8 @ 1/60, ISO 200

constant movement and activity, particularly from the Red Sea trade mark orange anthias which swathe over the reefs and react to every movement and sound. Framing these fish against the deep blue water background with the reef below creates a classic image which you will be tempted to shoot time and again in search of the perfect composition. There are numerous other colourful fish in small and large schools which make perfect foreground subjects on the reef, but don't forget to keep an eye on the blue water as well as almost anything can turn up which may pass by only for a moment.

Wrecks

The Red Sea has been a busy seaway since the time of the Pharaohs and consequently there are numerous wrecks here. The most popular and best known are those sunk within the last 150 years or so with steel hulls which have survived more intact and can be carpeted in coral to almost merge with the reef. Big name wrecks like the Thistlegorm have suffered from their popularity and much of the coral growth has been knocked off by the large numbers of divers visiting and indiscriminate mooring practices. However they are all worth a visit as seeing semi intact wrecks in good visibility is not to be missed and there are many imaging opportunities.

To capture large sections of a wreck, or perhaps even the whole of a small one, a fish eye lens is essential but you need to be cautious with your composition to avoid distortion of straight lines at the edge of the image. Sometimes this distortion is unavoidable and we will just accept it if the image is strong enough. Illustrating exploration by including a diver in the shot adds extra impact to a wreck shot (some may say this is a cliché of course) but it is also a good idea to look for marine life on the wreck to fill the foreground and show how the sea is taking over.

Big Subjects

Big subjects like whale sharks, mantas, turtles and even dugongs are often found in the Red Sea, but

Dugong with photographer. Nikon D200, Tokina 12-24mm zoom, Subal ND20 housing, Subtronic Minis, f11 @ 1/60, ISO 100

Hawksbill turtle. Nikon D200, Nikkor 10.5mm FE, Subal ND20 housing, Magic Filter, f11 @ 1/80, ISO 200

are perhaps a little less predictable than in other destinations. Djibouti in the far south is gaining a reputation for reliable encounters with whale sharks and mantas at the right time of year, but elsewhere meeting these creatures is more of a game of chance. In the Egyptian Red Sea, where more of the diving activity is centred, you can increase your chances by planning you trip for spring time when the plankton blooms occur, but this is no guarantee. However, the unpredictability does not detract from the adrenalin rush of an unexpected meeting which can occur almost anywhere. Sometimes these meetings are fleeting and grabbing the moment can be a challenge, although if you are shooting RAW then there is more chance of recovering a usable shot. Don't forget that you can shoot these larger subjects in silhouette and this can often be the quickest setting to make as you target passes by overhead.

Even if your ideal subject does not turn up almost every dive site in the Red Sea will offer some opportunity for wide angle images. If it is not one of the big sites then there are many shallow coral gardens and pinnacles or 'ergs' which can produce punchy compositions particularly if you concentrate on getting close to a colourful foreground subject. I recently visited Sharm El Sheikh for the first time in six years to give my youngest daughter the opportunity to try scuba diving. My initial impression of the (once lush) beach dives was not inspiring, but I found that by careful isolation of the main subject on small coral heads it was still possible to produce some pleasing wide angle images.

Avoiding the crowds

If you are serious about your photography then the best option for a trip to the Red Sea will be a liveaboard boat. Joining a group of photographers who all have the same goal will also give you some control over the dive sites chosen. Unless you yearn for the big name sites, and some like Ras Mohammed are still stunning, you can avoid the large crowds of boats and divers by heading for reefs off the usual route or reversing the route of the boat – if most boats head

north at the beginning of the week then persuade your skipper to go south.

The southern reefs are still far less crowded than the north generally, but south of Fury Shoal is really only accessible by liveaboard.

However, whichever you choose, be it liveaboard or day boat you will always be spoilt for choice on most reefs. Get to know your equipment, think about your composition and lighting and enjoy capturing the magic of the Red Sea.

Mark Webster
www.photec.co.uk

Ten Wide Angle Hotspots in the Egyptian Red Sea

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, just a few of my favourites:

Ras Mohammed – the wall is still a classic dive, but the shallows are a shadow of what was once there.

Abhu Nuhas Reef – Classic wrecks all in a row – Giannis D, Carnatic, Krisoula K (tile wreck), Kimon M (lentil wreck) and Seastar (rarely dived due to depth). There are also some excellent pinnacles in the lagoon to the south of the reef.

Big Brother and Little Brother islands – Fantastic walls, the chance to see some big pelagics and sharks and the wrecks of Aida and Numidia on Big Brother. Conditions can be challenging here – large swells and strong currents.

Daedalus Reef – another offshore classic with spectacular walls and soft corals.

Marsa Abbu Dabab – sea grass beds which are home to dugongs and green turtles. Recently closed to divers but hopefully only temporarily.

Tug Boat Tien Sien, Fury Shoal – A beautiful little wreck covered in coral and much loved by photographers. Normally quiet as most dive groups just pass by after a quick look on a guided dive.

Um Halhalla (Witches Hat), Sataya Reef, Fury Shoal – this is a very large reef area which has some spectacular hard coral formations. However, my favourite part of the dive is a series of pinnacles to the north of the main reef which are smothered with all the usual Red Sea suspects.

Erg Sataya – also know as the Elphinstone of the south – a spectacular wall dive with plateaus and shallow coral gardens.

Atlas ‘half wreck’, Ras Banas - although only the stern section of this wreck remains (sunk under tow for salvage) it is still very intact and full of life. The visibility can be disappointing here after rough weather as the wreck lies on the fringing reef protecting the lagoon close to shore.

St John’s Wood, St John’s Reef – a forest of coral pillars rising from a bright sandy bottom – each one offering something a little different. A great place for filter photography.

The Nursery (aka Dangerous Reef), St. John’s Reef – an anemone city, some impressive coral covered pinnacles, passing mantas and oceanic white tip sharks and the chance to see bumphead parrot fish.

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Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2007

Report by Alex Mustard

The Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year is probably the most prestigious photographic competition for the underwater photographer. This year the competition attracted a record 32,000 entries from professional and amateur photographers from 78 countries. The Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year is owned by the Natural History Museum and BBC Wildlife Magazine.

Like last year, underwater photographers did particularly well. The Underwater World category was won by Felipe Barrio for his photograph of feasting whale sharks and Thomas Peschak won the Nature In Black and White category with a split level of a blacktip shark at dawn. Other award winning underwater images were taken by Paul Nicklen, Graham Eaton, Jurgen Freund, Angel Fitor, Douglas David Seifert, Len Deeley, Patrick Weir, Bela Nasfay, Jeff Yonover, Wade Hughes and Alex Mustard. Also three other underwater photographers, Amos Nachoum, Paul Nicklen and Sergey Gorshkov, were category winners although with photos that they had taken above the surface!

The Wildlife Photographer of the Year has long been considered as a barometer for trends in nature and underwater photography - both aesthetic and technical. Perhaps the clearest message from the entries was that the transition to digital is complete, with all the award winning underwater images coming from Nikon or Canon digital SLRs. The competition also leads the way in preserving and rewarding the skill of the photographer in the field, as opposed to on the computer, as the rules prohibit manipulation of the content of the photographs.

Personally, I think that this year's selection is one of the strongest I can remember and this makes me particularly pleased to see that underwater photographers are competing so successful against terrestrial wildlife photographers. It is an exciting time to be in this game.

Alex Mustard
www.amustard.com

Animal Portraits - Winner

Sergey Gorshkov (Russia)
Bear glare

'I'd been so busy taking pictures of the salmon in the Ozernaya River in southern Kamchatka, east Russia, I didn't notice the bear until it was a metre away. It was a terrible shock. I kept calm enough to take the picture but only later did I realise how serious the situation was.' Brown bears roam mainly in far northern parts of America and Russia. But they used to live as far south as north Africa and Mexico. Excessive killing and habitat loss has made their existence more fragile. They tend to avoid humans, but can become aggressive if defending a cub or carcass.

Nikon D2X + Nikkor 12–24mm f4 G AF-S DX lens at 12mm; 1/250 sec at f10; ISO 200; Subal housing; two strobes INON D2000.

The Underwater World - Winner

Felipe Barrio (Spain)

Giant feast

'I was woken by a huge crash against the boat in the Red Sea. It was a 10-metre-long young whale shark. Four other sharks then joined it, gathered below a school of sardines. We slipped into the water using snorkelling gear, and watched them feed, non-stop for three hours. They not only sucked up the plankton, but also the sardines' excrement. It was a fantastic experience.' Whale sharks are the largest fish on Earth. The Gulf of Tadjourah off Djibouti, in the Red Sea, is a hotspot for these giants, which congregate from October to January to feed. Despite their huge size, they are filter feeders, sucking in water and filtering out the plankton, algae, krill and small squid or fish.

Nikon D200 + Nikon 10.5mm lens; 1/50 sec at f4; ISO 160; Seacam housing.
© Felipe Barrio / Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2007

The Underwater World - Runner-up

Paul Nicklen (Canada)

Teeth exposure

'I wanted to see if leopard seals were savage beasts or simply curious and misunderstood. I dived with them more than 50 times at Anvers Island off the Antarctic Peninsula, and they almost always approached in the same way, opening their mouths inches from my face. After they established their dominance, they seemed to relax.' Leopard seals are one of the largest seals in Antarctica, with a reputation for being aggressive. They are the only seals that regularly eat warm-blooded prey such as birds and other seals. They have punctured inflatable boats and even followed people onto the ice. But like all predators, they are usually judged by the worst stories. Leopard seals are inquisitive and solitary.

Canon EOS 1Ds Mark II + 17-40mm f4 lens; 1/30 sec at f11; Ikelite 125 digital strobes.
© Paul Nicklen / Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2007

The Underwater World - Highly Commended

Alec Connah (United Kingdom)

Fish roundup

'I visited Lankayan Island, off Sabah, Borneo, to photograph nesting turtles. One morning from the jetty I saw these young blacktip reef sharks, seemingly herding small fish into the shallows. I liked the patterns that formed as the fish leisurely evaded them. Sometimes, a shark would lash out and try to feed. I never did get the turtle shots, but this more than compensated.' The blacktip reef shark is relatively small, less than two metres long. All its fins have black or dark brown tips, and it lives around shallow waters in the Indo-Pacific. It is a fast predator, feeding mainly on reef fishes, but also stingrays and crustaceans such as crabs. Its fins are valued for shark-fin soup, a market that is decimating shark populations worldwide.

Nikon F5 + Sigma 70-200mm f2.8 lens; 1/250 sec at f5.6, Fuji Velvia 50 rated at 100 asa
© Alec Connah / Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2007

Animal Behaviour: All Other Animals - Winner

Amos Nachoum (USA)

Great white torpedo

'I spent two years planning this project, in an area known as the Ring of Death, Seal Island, in South Africa, where great white sharks ambush seals. Sometimes they breach for seals, sometimes one would do it for a rubber dummy towed behind the boat, as here. It was always unexpected and over in less than a second.' Sharks are the most notorious predators in the sea. They are fish, but unlike other fish, sharks do not have bones. Their skeletons are made from cartilage, making them more light weight and flexible. They survive on blubber from whales, seals and dolphins and large fish. More people die from encounters with bees, elephants and crocodiles than sharks.

Nikon F5 + 70-200 f4 lens; 1/1000 sec; Fujichrome Provia 100.
© Amos Nachoum / Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2007

The *Ghost Fleeet Of Bikini Atoll* and *Pacific Realm – A Kelp Forest*, two newly released eBooklets by Joseph C. Dovala, are now available. These are PDF files easily read by a number of free existing software programs such as Acrobat Reader. Electronic photo books, or eBooks, are able to showcase images and text in a new, exciting, and very inexpensive way. They have relatively small file sizes, usually of 10mb or less. Both above titles are only $4.00 each emailed. Please visit www.jcdovala.com for details.

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Sorry Wally

by Troy Mayne

I work on the Great Barrier Reef as an underwater photographer. I swim around photographing passengers as they engage in underwater activities such as SCUBA Diving, Platform Helmet Diving, and snorkeling.

In tow, I have a few work mates, a Naploean Maori Wrasse named Wally, and a few Turtles, two in Particular, Shelley and Casey. I spend over 3 hours underwater each day with these animals. Wally is very intelligent and the Turtles are well trained so I am able to get these animals to pretty much do anything I want.

After a few months of working with these animals I was perusing my collection of photographs I had taken of these animals together. I was surprised to see a collection of photo's involving these animals in interesting positions.

It didn't take long to realise that the photos had accidentally formed a basic plot. The plot was that of a conflict with Wally at the centre. I came up with an idea for a theme and extended the plot.

After I had came up with the storyline I had to buy some props, and then plan some photos.

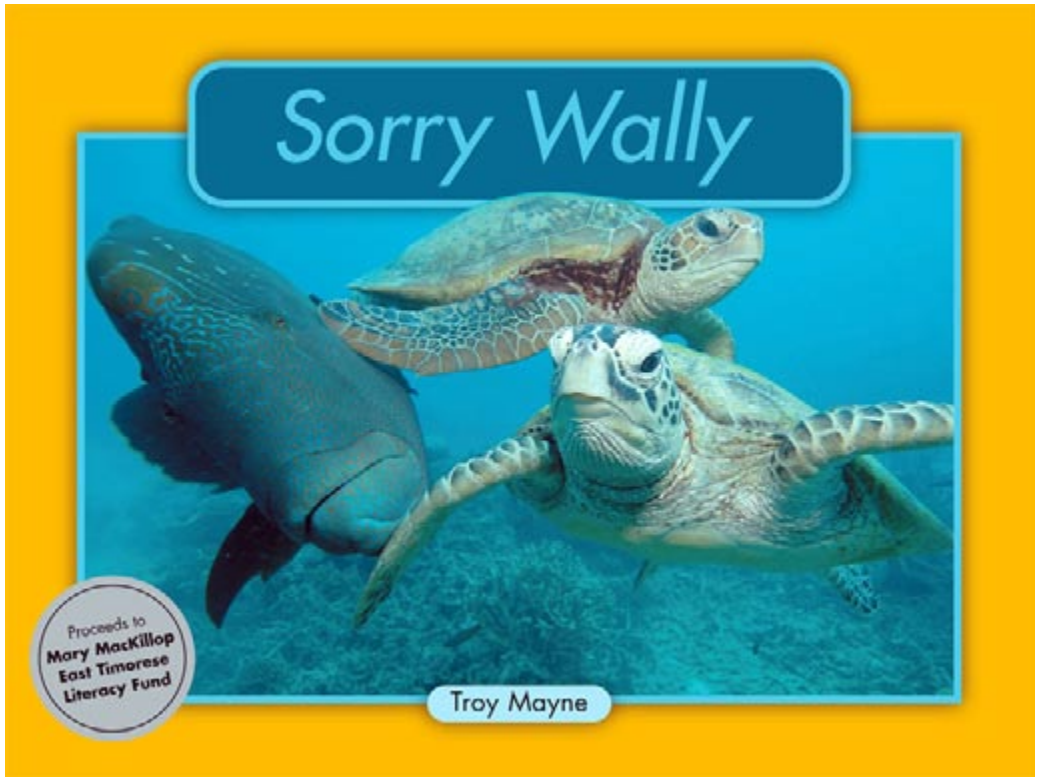
Fortunately these animals are there everyday, unfortunately they are not always there at the same time.

The plot centers on a brother and sister Green turtle named Casey and Shelley, that live and go to school on the Great Barrier Reef. Shelley must escort her younger brother to school each day. One day she encourages her brother to swim by himself against her parents wishes, carrying his new lunchbox.

Enter Wally, the school bully. He follows, and chases Casey down then steals his lunchbox, and hides it in the school ground.

Shelley finds her younger brother crying in the school yard. After comforting her little brother, she learns of the theft. Then they both go in search for the stolen lunchbox.

The search yields no luck, so they separate and roam the reef questioning various reef characters in their travels. The search ends in a physical encounter with Wally. The story ends amiciably with Wally apologising and the lunchbox returned to it's owner.



So I had to get photos with these animals and with a lunchbox. I had to balance a camera a luchbox, and food for both Wally and the Turtles whilst setting and composing the photo's.

Looking back I am not even sure how I did it, I remember wishing I was an octopus.

All of the photographs are real, with no modification or superimposition of any of the subjects within the photo's. The project has taken 18 months to gather the photos and write the story.

The characters are real, it is the same turtles in every photo.The plot

Author "at work" with Wally and Casey

Casey swimming to school with his lunchbox, his sister Shelley behind him.

Wally, the Reef School Bully, steals Casey's lunchbox after sneaking up on him.

Wally grabs Shelley by the flipper after she confronts him about stealing her little brother's lunchbox.

of the story is actually based on a true story. Wally really is a big bully. Wally gets very jealous of the turtles if I pay too much attention to them. He resorts to bullying tactics in order to prevent me from attending to them.

After a lot of research on bullying I decided to focus the plot of the storyline around the issue. Bullying is the number one issue facing children around the world.

I believed I had an opportunity to help address an issue to help children using non biased characters that would also inspire and excite children about our oceans whilst help get the message across about bullying.

The stars of the book, A Napoleon Maori Wrasse and the Green Turtles are listed on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) Red List OF Threatened Species. There is information at the back of the book on both species, and the many other reef animals that are featured within the story.

Sorry Wally is not only entertaining for children and adults alike, but also educates about the biggest issue facing children in schools today, bullying. I also hope that the photography will inspire children's imagination towards our oceans as well.

Although I have written this book as a children's book, from the reactions I have received from all the adults that have read the book, I think I maybe marketing the book at the wrong age group.

I am also currently working on two other books centered around the same characters as Sorry Wally, each with it's own moral message

Sorry Wally is being translated in Tetun (East Timorese Language) and proceeds from the sale of Sorry Wally goes towards a special print of the book. That edition of Sorry Wally will be introduced into every school in East Timor to try and combat their extremely low literacy rate, which is the lowest in the world.

Purchasing Sorry Wally will not only help to educate children about bullying and the ocean but help the children of East Timor to a better life.

Casey asking Adam and Annabelle the Anemonefish, if they had seen Wally and his lunchbox.

Troy Mayne
www.sorrywally.com

Book Review

Reefs Revealed

By Alex Mustard

The Art of Diving was Alex's first book in collaboration with wordsmith Nick Hanna. Their combination produced what David Doubilet described as " The best book about diving since Jacques Cousteau's The Silent World" and of Alex's images he stated "Alex has a unique eye. This is underwater imagery at its best".

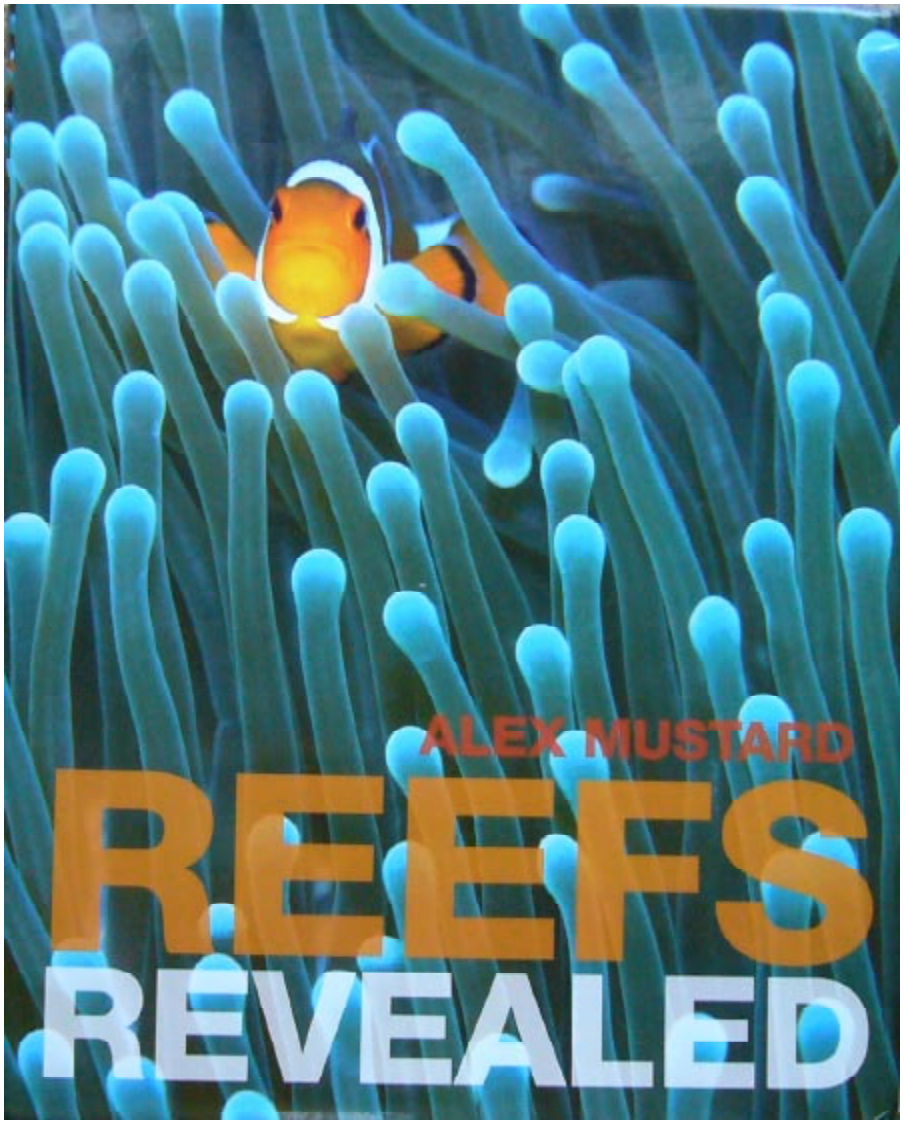
Reefs Revealed sees Alex flying solo, tackling a huge subject with his own combination of images and text. His background as a marine biologist provides him with an understanding of his subject but, as can so often happen with academics, the knowledge sometimes fails to transfer to the written word. Not so in this case. Alex's words are like his images - clean and concise, informative and readable. His introductory chapter is a good example of how to explain such a large subject globally yet precisely keeping the readers attention with a gifted blend of information and enlightenment.

The production of this book is opportune, coming at a time when the balance of the natural world is in disarray with coral reefs representing the most delicate and totally dependent ecosystem of them all. Alex's images convey all that is magical about these wonderful and varied environments inhabited by weird and wonderful creatures. There is, quite literally, not a bad image in this book and, in true coffee table style, each image is accompanied by precise yet informative captions.

If pushed, I would make two negative comments. Firstly Alex has chosen not to include any images of damaged or dead reefs and I feel that this is an omission. Pictorially you come away from this book with an over-confident view of the situation that is far from the truth. Alex's text does cover the problem but I felt that even just a couple of 'reality' images would jolt the reader out of a false sense of wellbeing.

The second negative comment is, however, more personal. I'm credited in the Acknowledgements section and this is only right and proper as I travelled with Alex on several of the shoots for this book. Indeed I often gave up my diving time during these trips to act as his model underwater. So to read that, referring to my modelling, " a large object is useful to give some scale" is rather like one of Gary Larson's Far Side cartoons which shows the elderly Lone Ranger in a retirement home looking in an Indian dictionary and discovering that kemosabe is "an Apache expression for a horse's rear end."

The kids of today have got no respect but, annoyingly, this particular one takes a mean image and writes a crisp word.



Reefs Revealed costs £30 and is published by Constable & Robinson

www.constablerobinson.com

Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com

Guidelines for contributors

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

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

Uw photo techniques - Balanced light, composition, etc
Locations - Photo friendly dive sites, countries or liveaboards
Subjects - Anything from whale sharks to nudibranchs in full detail
Equipment reviews - Detailed appraisals of the latest equipment
Personalities - Interviews/features about leading underwater photographers

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

How to submit articles

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

1. The text should be saved as a TEXT file and attached to the e mail
2. Images must be attached to the e mail and they need to be 144dpi

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

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

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

Parting Shot 1

Canon 20D in an Ikelite housing w/ single DS125 strobe. ISO 200 Shutter speed

"Don't Harass the Fish. " I can still hear my father's words echoing through my head some 30 years later.

I grew up in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and my father would take me and my brothers snorkeling in the various reefs off the coast. My father taught us that the reef was a fragile ecosystem and we need to respect the inhabitants.

Fort Lauderdale is one of the few places in the world where you can walk off a beach in the middle of a bustling city and swim 50 meters to a beautiful underwater "Garden of Eden".

Today it is my turn to teach my sons what I learned and to pass down the respect that this environment deserves.

It is a bright clear day in October. The ocean is still a warm 82°F and the visibility is nearly 100 feet. I am diving with my favorite dive buddies Randy, age 14 and Brandon age 12 – my sons. The main purpose of our dive is to try out our new Cannon 20D and see if I can snap a few pictures to decorate the wall in their bedrooms.

Halfway through the dive, I am focusing on a moray eel at a cleaning station, trying to convince the eel and the banded coral shrimp to "pose" for me. My sons hover above, getting pretty bored. All of a sudden, Randy taps me on the shoulder and points towards his little brother. Brandon has found a porcupine fish and has started to taunt the fish, causing it to swell with water, a defense mechanism to discourage any would be attackers. Its defense is useless against the 80 pound Brandon Monster.

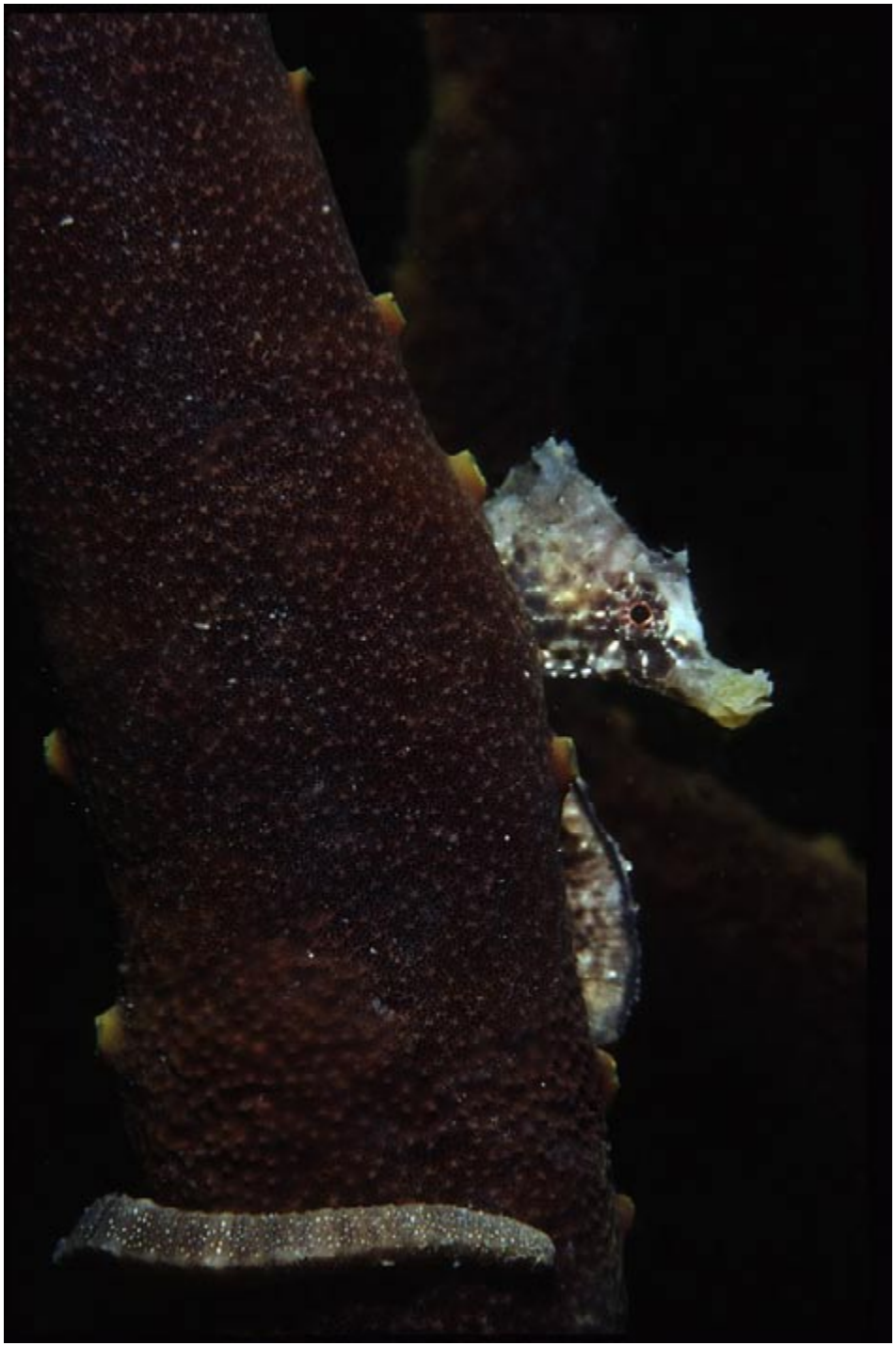
"Don't harass the fish" I say through my mouthpiece – repeating the words of my father some 30 years ago. But of course Brandon does not speak bubble-language and I must resort to a more sophisticated form of communication. I hand the camera rig to Randy and start my disciplinary action against The Brandon Monster. I swim over, pull him away from the besieged porcupine fish and shake my finger at him. He gives me his best "It wasn't me Dad". We are only diving in 20 feet of water so I bring him to the surface to repeat the 30 year old slogan instilled in my head from my father "Don't harass the fish". I get the usual "Sorry Dad" and his face disappears back under the waves.

Upon our return to the bottom, I see that Randy has focused the camera on the over-stuffed porcupine fish and is snapping away with the Cannon.

Well, the photo now hangs on the wall in Brandon's room with the caption:

'Don't Harass the Fish"

Randy Veliky SR
RVeliky@aol.com



Parting Shot 2

About three years ago, I was testing my film camera and housing for the first time. I had started my dive and began to look for a colourful subject to photograph.

I could see some divers observing something among the tubular sponges. When they realized that I was holding a camera they backed away and one of them pointed out the subject for me. It was a little seahorse, a grey one. I tried to photograph it, but it was hiding from my camera. I only managed one shot and continued my dive.

A week later, I viewed my roll of slides and cut off the uncolourful ones and put them in the wastebasket. My wife saw the seahorse picture and kept it.

Imagine my surprise when I found out I had won a prize in a contest with this little grey-uncolourful-seahorse!

Nowadays, I take the pictures, but my wife choses them for me…

Nikon F100 film camera+ Hugyfot Arius Housing.

Lens Sigma 28-80mm @ 80mm macro mode. F22@1/250th -0.7 compensation Sea & Sea Flash YS120 TTL

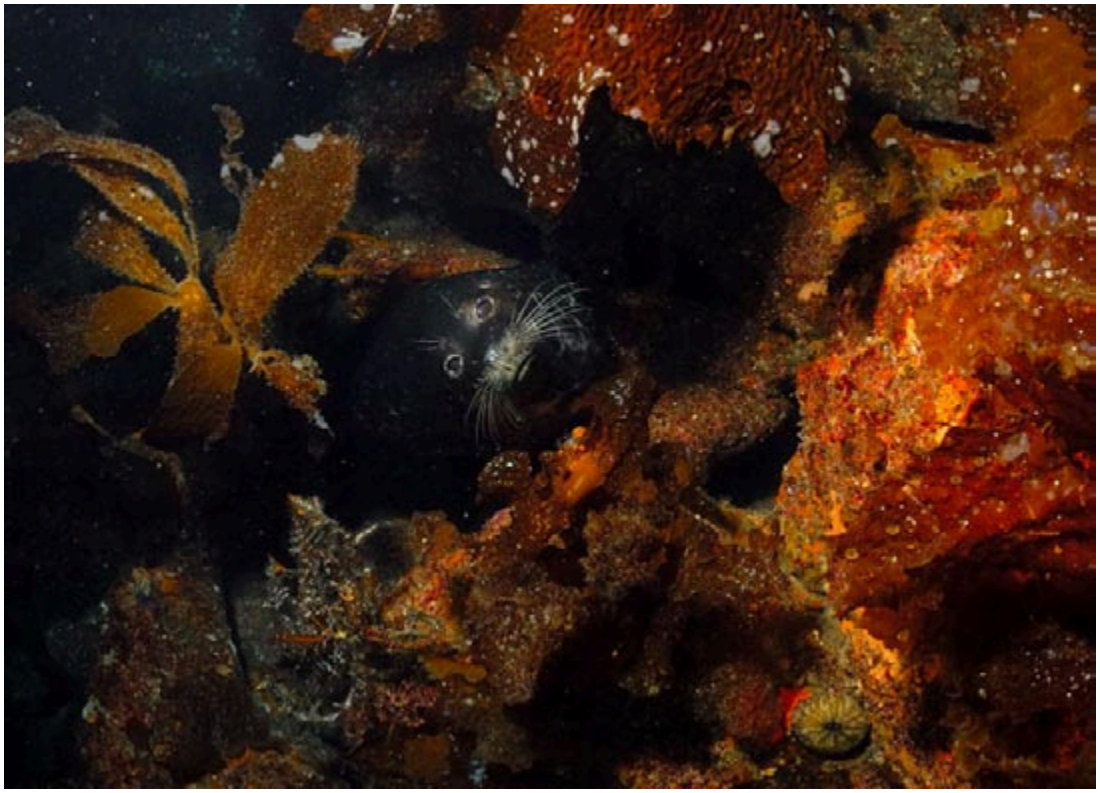
Porcos Island – Arraial do Cabo / Rio de Janeiro – Brazil

Christian Sgarbi
christiansgarbi@gmail.com

Do you have a nice shot with a short story behind it? If so e mail me and yours could be the next "Parting shot".

peter@uwpmag.com

Parting Shot 3



Nikon D100, LMI Titan Housing, Nikkor 16mm, ISO 200, 1/100 @ f8, Raw

I can count on one hand the number of times I've felt like something was "stalking" me underwater. When diving off the Channel Islands of Southern California you always keep thoughts of the "Landlord" (Great Whitey) in the back of your mind, especially hanging out doing green water deco. One time I actually might have seen one, just at the limit of visibility and for only a split second. More than likely it was my own brain making up stuff. In any case, there has never been solid evidence for a peeping "fish" following me until a particularly dark and cold dive at a place called Ship Rock a mile-and-a-half off Catalina Island in California.

The Rock is an exceptional dive site and you can do everything from a shallow kelp sojourn to a full on sub 200 foot technical dive on a vertical face in open water. It's definitely one of my favorite places. There also have been more than a few credible sightings of big critters with lots of teeth; including a killer whale standing on his head watching a diver take lobster out of a hole. Dolphin, barracuda, and gigantic schools of mackerel are no strangers here either.

It was with much excitement that we loaded up the gear and began our channel crossing. The overcast sky did not do the usual thinning, and in fact, it got darker as the morning wore on. The temperature dropped as well and we hardly saw any marine life, not even birds, on the trip over. There were no other boats at The Rock and the dark water was about as inviting as a tax audit.

Even in my dry suit the water felt c-c-cold and the visibility was a dark 15 feet. Despite the conditions and my subdued mood I had elected to bring my camera. Once we hit our target depth of 80 feet we started a clockwise swim along the kelp perimeter. To the left was near black open-ocean and to the right was a dark foreboding looking fairy tale forest. Within a couple of minutes a very strong emotion came over me and I began to make rapid spins looking behind me as we moved along. After a few more minutes I was sure I caught a glimpse of something fairly large darting in and out of the limits of visibility constantly following us. My imagination took hold full force and considering my frame of mind we decided to head up into shallower water and head back.

Once we got into lighter waters I started feeling kind of silly and actually began to enjoy the dive when I noticed a movement just ahead and below me. I started laughing because immediately I knew who my predatory stalker was. Shooting downward is rarely productive in u/w photography but as I drifted over my nemesis he peered up at me through the kelp and suddenly the whole day was worth it.

Joe Dovala
www.jcdovala.com

Do you have a nice shot with a short story behind it? If so e mail me and yours could be the next "Parting shot".

peter@uwpmag.com