Underwater Photography

a web magazine
Issue 40
Jan/Feb 2008

Discover UNDERWATER Photography

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. Most Ikelite SLR-DC housings include conversion circuitry that provide TTL compatibility with the latest Ikelite DS Substrobes. Many housings also include a Flash Compensation Module which provides over and under-exposure compensation in the TTL mode and easily allow 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.

Canon
EOS 5D
EOS 20D
EOS 30D
EOS 40D
EOS 350D, Rebel XT
EOS 400D, Rebel XTi

Fuji
S-5 Pro

Nikon
D40, D40X
D50
D70, 70s
D80
D200
D300

Olympus
E-330
E-410
E-500
E-510
E-3

Sony
A100
A700

ikelite
Underwater Systems
50 W. 33rd. Street
Indianapolis, IN
46208
317-923-4523

www.ikelite.com

Ikelite Compact Digital Still Housings for

Canon • Fuji • Nikon • Olympus • Sony

Ikelite offers housings for more than fifty different digital still camera models to meet the diverse demands of the underwater photographer community. Ikelite's Compact Digital Still Housings are molded of clear polycarbonate. Dive while knowing your system is safe and have complete visual access to the camera, LCD, monitor and control functions. Most housings are rated to 60m (200').

Ikelite AF35 AutoFlash Kit

Fits most compact digital camera housings.

Ikelite • Canon • Olympus • Sony

The AF35 AutoFlash replicates your camera's flash for automatic exposure in any situation. You only have to know how to point.
The AF35 AutoFlash kit is an effortless and affordable way to add an external flash to your point-and-shoot camera system. Everything you need to get started is in the box - just attach it to the bottom of your housing and start taking pictures!

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Cover shot
by
Alex Kirkbride

Underwater Photography
2001 - 2008 © PR Productions
Publisher/Editor Peter Rowlands
www.pr-productions.co.uk
peter@uwpmag.com

News, Travel & Events

Destination Dominica webzine

We are pleased to announce the launch of our exciting & innovative new webzine about Dominica.

The webzine is a PDF file (approx 5mb) downloaded from this website. While people can send it via e-mail, we encourage you to link to this page. That way people will always be able to access the latest version of the webzine and future editions.

www. destinationdominica.com

OWU2008 and DEEP2008 Deadlines

The deadlines for the Our-World Underwater 2008 and DEEP Indonesia 2008 underwater photo and video competitions are coming up shortly after the new year.

OWU2008's deadline is January 13, 2008 and DEEP2008 ends on February 15, 2008.

Get your entries in now to compete for $80,000 in prizes! In addition, winners will be published in a celebratory issue of Wetpixel Quarterly

www.wetpixelquarterly.com

www.underwatercompetition.com

Ocean Optics Open Day with Mark Webster

12 January 2008

Well known photographer and workshop host Mark Webster will be hosting a second open day with Ocean Optics in London on Saturday 12 January 2008.

Mark will make two technique based presentations during the day with plenty of opportunity to ask questions and get advice on your equipment and technical problems. There will also be a short image critique session for specific issues.

The Ocean Optics day is free but it is necessary to book your place in advance. If you wish to bring images for critique please let us know when you book. Time for this session is limited and will be booked on a first come first served basis.

Contact Ocean Optics for full details and to book your place

www.oceanoptics.co.uk

Tel. 020 7240 8193

Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition 2008

From sub-Arctic waters off northern Canada to the freshwater springs of North Florida, the search for the year's best wildlife photographer has begun.

The Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition is the world's greatest wildlife photography contest and an international leader in the artistic representation of the natural world. Every year, it showcases the very best photographic images of nature to a worldwide audience, giving people an insight into the beauty, drama and variety of the natural world.

Now in its forty-fourth year, the 2008 competition is open to anyone with an appreciation of wildlife and a passion for fresh, innovative photography. Entrants stand to win an impressive £10,000 prize if they are given the coveted title of Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2008 or £23,550 share a prize fund if successful in other categories.

The competition has 11 adult categories including Underwater World. The subjects in the Underwater World category can be marine or freshwater. Judges are looking for pictures that are memorable, either because of the behaviour displayed or because of their aesthetic appeal - and ideally, both.

Entry opens on 17 January 2008 and all images must be submitted by 24 March by post or 31 March online.

www.nhm.ac.uk/wildphoto

Kungkungan Bay Resort refurbishment

Kungkungan Bay Resort has just completed a major refurbishment of all its rooms, which has seen a radical change of 'out with the old and in with the new'.

Bedding, pillows, towels, lamps, decorations, furnishings, curtains and cushions have all been replaced incorporating a contemporary yet traditional style, which really reflects the stature of this fabulous resort. All rooms are now fully air-conditioned.

Renowned for its beautiful, secluded setting, fine food and high levels of personal attention and service, the 17-room resort also boasts an swimming pool with bar and an 'over-the-water' restaurant.

The Lembeh Strait is arguably the best destination on the planet for "Muck Diving", offering a unique concentration of rare and exotic underwater species, or "critters", including the pygmy seahorse, mimic octopus and Ambon scorpionfish.

www.divekbr.com

Three New Lonely Planet Books by Tim Rock

Lonely Planet and Tim Rock of Double Blue Images are happy to announce the recent release of the new Diving and Snorkeling guide books for its colorful and informative series.

D&S Thailand, D&S Belize and D&S Cayman Islands joins Tim's other new books on South Africa/ Mozambique and Bonaire.

The guides are in full color and feature numerous popular and also unique sites from each of these hotbed diving destinations. All photos are by Tim as well as the info.

www.doubleblue.com

Upcoming International Photo & Video Competitions

There are only 4 competitions in Jan and Feb, but the year is starting off with some big ones! Good luck!

Jan 10
2008 World Press Photo contest

Jan 13
3rd Annual Wetpixel & DivePhotoGuide International Photo & Video Competition

Jan 31
3rd Annual British Underwater Image Festival

Feb 15
2nd Annual DEEP Indonesia International Underwater Photo Competition

1000th Whale Shark Found

The 1000th specimen of the world's largest and most cryptic fish, the whale shark, has been identified thanks to global efforts by hundreds of 'citizen scientists' and eco-tourists.

ECOCEAN, the group behind a unique, award-winning* conservation effort to save the world's threatened whale sharks, today announced the identification of the 1000th identified whale shark in its online Library which shares data from scientists and ecotourists worldwide.

"Its a major milestone, for science and for conservation," says ECOCEAN project leader Brad Norman, of Perth WA. "And it was achieved with the help of ordinary people worldwide who want to study and protect this wonderful creature."

ECOCEAN tracks individual whale sharks throughout the world's oceans using a web-based photo-ID library of the unique spots that pattern the animals' skins. Researchers and eco-tourists submit images, which are logged to reveal a picture of whale shark movements and behaviour over time.

The 1000th shark was reported by a major contributor to the ECOCEAN Photo-ID Library, Simon Pierce, a marine biologist studying the sharks that visit Mozambique. It was a 6.5m male. Simon has contributed more than 100 sharks from his three year study in Mozambique.

"We can expect there to be substantially more than 1000 sharks alive in the world today. But, even so it is still a very tiny global population that needs close monitoring to ensure its survival.

Participation in the ECOCEAN Library has increased dramatically in recent years. It took three years to reach the 500th shark milestone but only one additional year to reach 1000. This is evidence of willingness by people worldwide to use the Library to study this cryptic giant.

Brad Norman notes: "We're calling on the public worldwide to become 'citizen scientists' and help us study this wonderful animal by logging their images and sighting details on www.whaleshark.org

"This will build a better understanding of this threatened species and help save the largest fish in the ocean from extinction"

www.ecocean.org

Manta Mania Yap, Micronesia

24th - 31st May 2008

Manta Ray Bay Hotel & Yap Divers in association with "Save our Seas" are proud to host Manta Mania 24th - 31st May 2008.

This will be a week of combined science, underwater photography and fun with Dr. Andrea Marshall and Tim Rock. Andrea is the founder of the Mozambique Manta Research Project and is doing some ground-breaking work in the area of manta study and marine science. Tim is a Lonely Planet author and Micronesia-based photojournalist as well as expert Manta shooter.

They will be on the dive boats daily along with Manta Man Bill Acker. The week will include a number of manta dives as well as reefs and walls. Evenings will feature captivating film shows and seminars by Dr. Marshall and Rock about mantas and diving in Yap and throughout the world.

Manta Mania participants will do more than dive. They will learn about identifying manta rays and kick-start the Yap Manta Ray ID program. Their photographs and observations will be used as part of a global comparative study on Manta Rays.

Ask for Code TR01 and get the 7 night / 10 Dive Packages starting from $1229.00 per person.

www.mantaray.com

Wrecks, Reef and Muck in Tulamben with Mark Webster

26th Nov - 3rd Dec 2008

Bali is already well known as an exotic holiday destination and is now building a reputation as a world class diving destination, particularly amongst experienced photographers.

Mark Webster will be hosting a photo workshop at Tauch Terminal in Tulamben Bay, perhaps the best know dive site in Bali and home to the spectacular wreck of the USS Liberty. What makes Tulamben so attractive for photographers is that within a few metres walk you have a truly world class wreck dive, muck diving, shallow reef diving and a wall dive. There is a stunning variety of marine life and different habitats to keep your camera busy for a week or more.

The workshop will include daily presentations from Mark, the opportunity to ask questions throughout the day and a competition to find the best image of the week.

www.photec.co.uk

Ferraris at Kungkungan Bay

June 13th - July 2nd 2008

World-famous underwater photographers and marine life authors, Andrea & Antonella Ferrari, are holding an informal hands-on photo workshop at the newly refurbished Kungkungan Bay Resort (KBR) from June 13 to July 2, 2008.

The workshop is really informal and will look at the creativity and actual underwater action of capturing shots as well as in-depth chats about the subject. Share experiences and make the most of improving your underwater photography with their priceless tips and suggestions.

The Ferraris will also sign copies of their new book, A Diver's Guide to the Art of Underwater Photography - the ideal tutorial for all those diving at KBR.

www.eco-divers.com

International Year of the Reef 2008

Three of the UK's most respected marine conservation groups – Coral Cay Conservation, Blue Ventures and Project AWARE Foundation – announced today they have joined forces to promote coral reef conservation during the International Year of the Reef 2008.

The United Nations has designated 2008 as the International Year of the Reef - a worldwide campaign to raise awareness about the importance of coral reefs and the threats they face. Throughout 2008 the three UK groups will announce public events and activities to promote reef conservation and motivate people to take action to protect them.

It has been 10 years since governments and conservation organizations around the world declared the first International Year of the Reef in 1997. During that first campaign, hundreds of groundbreaking studies were conducted to determine the status of coral reefs and numerous international policies were enacted to protect these vital resources.

Coral reefs have been called the "rainforests of the sea" because of the vast diversity of life they support. Reefs cover less than one percent of the Earth's surface, yet they are home to 25 percent of all marine fish species.

But more than half of the world's coral reefs are at risk from human activities. At the present rate of destruction, 70 percent of the world's reefs will be destroyed by the year 2050.

The three organisations have won international recognition over the years from such bodies as the United Nations, the World Conservation Union and governments worldwide for their work to protect coral reefs in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

www.projectaware.org **www.coralcay.org** **www.blueventures.org**

Aldabra with John Boyle

14th April -1st May 2009

John Boyle first visited the remote atoll of Aldabra as part of the National Geographic expedition there in 1991, along with David Doubilet. At that time they were the first divers to go there since Cousteau over two decades before. No-one knew what to expect. There was no prior knowledge of where to dive. Only the fact that the Calypso's divers had dared to do it gave them the courage to drift dive the crazy currents of the channels leading from the lagoon to the sea. John's film of that adventure 'Expedition Aldabra' sold to television stations around the world.

The boat itself is one of John's favourites (he says it is the most comfortable motor yachts that he has been on) and the crew is impeccably trained. And our voyage will not only take in Aldabra but a number of other remote and isolated atolls in this uninhabited region of the Indian Ocean, as we island-hop across this beautiful and generally uninhabited archipelago on a voyage from Aldabra back to Mahé in the Seychelles.

Sea Star is a very comfortable, fully air-conditioned teak motor sailing boat with 9 cabins accommodating up to 18 passengers. However, as the flight to Aldabra can only accommodate 14 passengers plus their luggage, the number of passengers on the boat will be limited to 14 and therefore there will be plenty of space for everyone. The Honeymoon Suite is situated in the bow of the boat and has one double bed and en suite shower and toilet. There are 8 further cabins all with en suite shower and toilet; four have a double bed and four have a double and a single bed. In addition there is a salon with bar and a salon with dining area. There is TV, DVD and stereo for entertainment when you are not searching through your identification guides or working on your images. A washing machine and dryer are available so no need to bring along much in the way of clothing. There is a very pleasant sun deck for enjoying those inter-island cruises.

www.divequest.co.uk

Alex Mustard's Red Sea Digital Photography Workshop

7th-14th November 2008

Join leading underwater photographer Alex Mustard on his 2008 digital photography workshop in the southern Egyptian Red Sea, brought to you by Red Sea Safaris and Blue O Two. The trip will focus on photographic diving at the celebrated Elphinstone Reef, The Brother Islands and is timed to coincide with the peak of the Oceanic Whitetip Shark season. If the sharks are around we will

MY Blue Horizon

dedicate plenty time to photographing them. Weather permitting, of course. The area also offers dramatic reefs, exhilarating fish action and several impressive wrecks.

Following the pattern of Alex's liveaboard workshops, digital technique lectures will be split into bit-sized 20 minute morsels and given once or twice a day before dives. Not only does this provide detailed technical information when you need it, but it also frees up the evenings for one to one reviewing of your images, discussing post processing and troubleshooting.

Alex will be joined by Casper Tybjerg, photographer and Nikon Ambassador for Denmark, who will be onboard to provide additional advice and feedback on your images during the evening review sessions.

The trip will be on MY Blue Horizon, widely regarded as one of the best boats in the Red Sea (see the Blue O Two website for more details).

The cost is £1200 which includes diving, accommodation, Alex's digital techniques workshop, food, soft drinks, transfers, Marine Park Fees etc. This price also includes flights from the U.K (London Gatwick) or Denmark (Copenhagen/ Billund). This is just £1 more than a standard trip on this boat in the high season. Given the demand in previous years it is also possible for us to arrange flights from other European airports. The workshop is aimed at DSLR shooters. Some of the divesites may have strong currents and could be exposed to swell. Therefore this is not a trip for those diving with a camera for the first time.

This workshop is a fantastic opportunity to learn from one of the world's most respected underwater photographers. Uniquely, Alex has been an award winner in the BBC Wildlife Photography Of The Year for the last three years running and his latest book "Reefs Revealed" was awarded the "World Grand Prize for Best Book of Underwater Photography" from the Antibes Festival 2007. If you are interested please book early.

To reserve your place please contact Dave Bennett at Red Sea Safaris:

dave@redseasafaris.dk

www.redseasafaris.dk

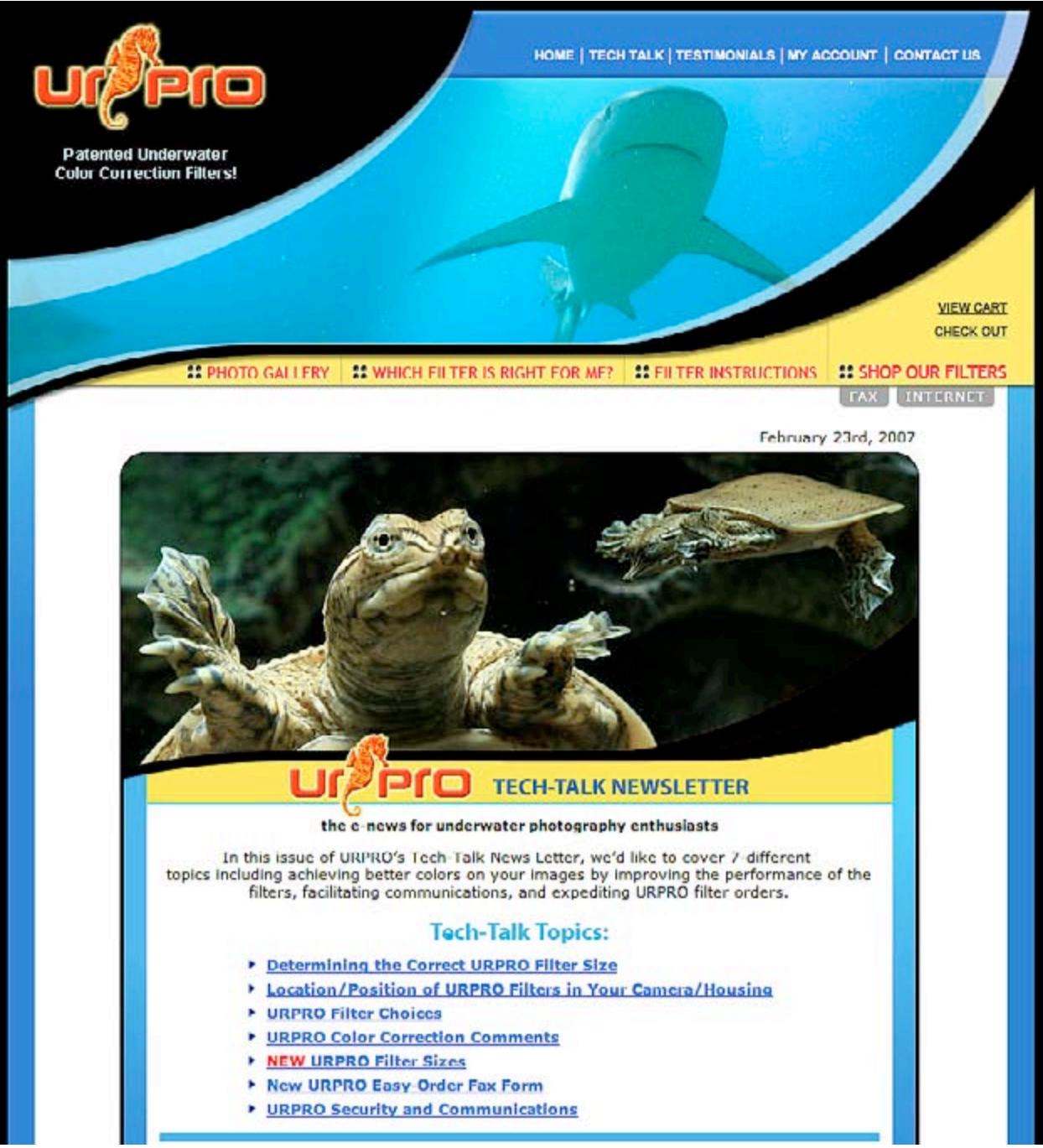
Shark Angels

Alison Kock, Julie Andersen, Kim McCoy

32 years after the film Jaws showed a defenseless woman being dragged underwater and devoured by an insatiable monster, three women have come together to debunk that largely fictitious image.

Shark enthusiasts Kim McCoy, Executive Director of Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, Julie Andersen, Director of Shark Savers, and Alison Kock, Head Field Biologist of Save Our Seas, have joined forces to create a short feature documentary called Shark Angels. Representing the next generation of shark conservationists, these organizations are coming together for the first time to combat myths about sharks. Production began on November 14, 2007 in the Bahamas.

www.seashepherd.org
www.sharksavers.org
www.saveourseas.com



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

www.urprofilters.com

New Products

Ikelite AutoFlash AF35

The AutoFlash AF35 kit is an effortless and affordable way to add a flash to your point-and-shoot camera system. Everything you need to get started is in the box - just attach it to the bottom of your housing and start taking pictures!

Single or dual trays attach directly to most housings for point-

and-shoot digital cameras. Mounting hardware is also included for use with most housings from Olympus, Canon and Sony.

No tools are needed to remove handle, arm and strobe assembly from the tray for packing. The system is lightweight above water for travel and approximately neutrally buoyant underwater when attached to an Ikelite housing with camera.

The exposure selector dial on the side of the sensor provides fine-tuning to optimize results with a variety of digital still cameras. Once you find an exposure level that you like, leave the dial on that number for automatic operation.

For advanced users, the selector dial can be used as exposure compensation while remaining in automatic mode. The flash also features six manual power settings for full control over exposure.

www.ikelite.com

Sea & Sea TTL Converter III

This converter is equipped with a TTL PCB that connects a Nikon digital SLR with SEA&SEA YS-Series strobes and uses the camera's TTL flash adjustment to control the amount of light put out by the strobe.

The converter allows quick switching between TTL and manual mode from outside the camera. You can use the TTL correction dial to adjust the amount of strobe light for the next shot. Because the converter comes with two separate strobe connectors, you can use advanced automatic TTL flash adjustment with two strobes.

www.seaandsea.com

Light and Motion Sunray 1000

Light and Motion's new line of solid state LED lights are an industry breakthrough. These 1000 lumen lights deliver light, more reliably and efficiently than the HID lights they replace. Our 1000 lumen light consumes less than 12 watts of power, while delivering almost the same light output as our 22 watt HID.

Solid state construction means extremely rugged, nothing to break—no need to open the light head. Completely reliable with 9 separate LED's in each light head (18 total per system). Our LEDs are rated by the manufacturer at 50,000 hours service life. You should never need to replace a bulb again.

www.uwimaging.com

Ocean Optics and Action Underwater Studios

© Zac Macauley

Ocean Optics, the London based specialists in underwater photography equipment, has announced a tie in with Action Underwater Studios, the Essex located movie tank.

Action Underwater Studios is a purpose designed studio complex for filming both in water and underwater sequences. The main tank offers 6 metres of water in which to work.

Ocean Optics will be offering clients the opportunity to practice their own underwater photography at monthly sessions during 2008 and is also promising special teach in's at Action Underwater Studios. Award winning commercial photographer Zac Macauley is planning a model shoot to take Ocean Optics clients behind the scenes of shooting glamour portfolios under the water.

Maria Munn of "Ocean Visions" will be hosting underwater compact photography courses in conjunction with Ocean Optics at Action Underwater Studios in the new year.

There are also plans for specialist freediver training to help underwater photographers extend their breath hold times for working with shy animals such as manatees and whales. All diving equipment, including tanks and weights, is available at the studio. There are individual changing rooms and showers and parking on site.

Steve Warren, for Ocean Optics, explained -' We impressed the directors at Action Underwater Studios with our professionalism and attitude towards safety. Action Underwater Studios is a unique facility and our exclusive tie in for offering underwater photography events at the studio opens up lots of future possibilities for courses and equipment teach in's".

www.oceanoptics.co.uk

Fantasea Nikon Coolpix S50 and S51 housing

Fantasea Line have announced their new FS-51 housing that is compatible with the Nikon Coolpix S50, S50c, S51 and S51c cameras. The FS-51 housing provides photographers with access to all camera functions. Depth rated to 60 meters/200 feet, this housing also features Fantasea's latest design and improved construction. The FS-51 is ideal for outdoor and underwater photographers, who can now quickly access all Nikon Coolpix features to capture fast action pictures easily and creatively. The FS-51 housing has a double O-ring seal on all controls, anti-glare hood over LCD screen, built-in flash diffuser and a 41mm lens port.

www.fantasea.com

Ultralight AC-CSL clamp

Ultralight's new clamp, AC-CSL is longer than a regular clamp and longer than a ultra buoyancy clamp allowing you to get your spotting light further out in front of your port.

A number of housings have their spotting light thread back a ways from where you need the light on your subject or many of the macro ports with extension rings or extrenal diopters need the light out further. This gives your spotting light a further distance. If this is still not far enough you can add a 3" arm length and another regular clamp to get those super macro subjects.

www.ulcs.com

Aquatica Buoyancy Compensating Floats

Aquatica is proud to introduce its new TLC underwater Buoyancy Compensating Floats. This new product is part of a new line of AQUATICA underwater camera housings accessories that are designed to raise the comfort and performance level of the underwater photographer, These floats are compact, economical and simple to attach to a TLC standard strobe arm or to most housing brand on the market.

Today's cameras, housing and underwater strobes are often smaller, denser and heavier. These combinations can make a long dive, especially one in macro configuration, tiresome for the underwater photographer. Using these floats will easily shed pounds off your rig, making handling and concentration much easier for the user.

Made of non corrosive light weight material they are supplied with a 1" TLC ball for mounting to either a housing or strobe arm allowing the photographer to perfectly trim the balance of his or her housing.

Some of the features of the Aquatica Buoyancy Compensating Float "BCF" include:

Flexible positioning for trimming housing's balance.

Universal design will fit existing Housing from Aquatica and other brands as well.

300fts / 90 meter depth rating at par with all our housings.

Simple to assemble design for the traveling diver.

Standard diameter 1" ball supplied for mounting.

Each float as about .5 kg / 1 pound of lift

www.aquatica.ca

usaNexus.com
858-481-0604

45 degree finder

Fiber optic sync

D70

D2x

D200

D80

1Ds MarkII

5D

Nexus INON 45 degree viewfinder

The new 45 Degree viewfinder by Inon for Nexus D200,D80,D2x, Canon 5D and 1DsMark2. It can also rotate for verticle position shooting. The 45 degree angle helps you keep bubbles out of your vision and allows you to get the camera at much lower shooting angle. It gives you the freedom to shoot on the flat ocean bottom while still being able to see through the finder.

The Inon 45 degree finder is a optional accessory and has to be installed by USA Nexus factory in the USA.

www.usanexus.com

Amphibico Endeavor

Amphibico have announced the Endeavor housing for the “NEW” Sony HDR-FX7 & HVR-V1-3CMOS HDV camcorders. Designed for the Prosumer in mind with access to full camcorder controls, outstanding Optics and superior balance it will create broadcast HD quality imaging. Amphibico continues to excel to a new level by accessing from the housing, all the important features such as White Balance, Gain, Shutter Speed, Iris and manual focus. We have also added a large 3.5” SD LCD rear viewfinder to facilitate your framing.

www.amphibico.com

New owners at Sealux

With effect from 1st October 2007 the staff member of many years Mr. Jürgen Ostertag and the experienced CAD-designer Mr. Dipl.-Ing. Arno Thiel have become the new owners of SEALUX Unterwassertechnik in Kempten.

Mr. Ostertag has already been acting as director of company SEALUX.

Mr. Thiel has been supervising the CAD-construction of SEALUX freelance for approx. two years. The company founder Dipl-Ing. Milan Czapay is still busy as adviser in the background. All the other employees stay unchanged in the team of the underwater housing builder in the Allgaeu.

This well prepared change in leadership guarantees continuity in design, manufacture and marketing. With this step we assure you that the brilliant quality of our SEALUX products is improved continuously and new ideas are realized to the satisfaction of our customers.

At the BOOT 2008 in Düsseldorf the new team will present together with Mr. Czapay as usual a variety of new products, for example the underwater housing for Nikon D300, Canon EOS 40D, the system flash CANON 580EXII as well as the Sony Universal housing with installed large 16:9 monitor and is looking forward to welcome and advise many interested customers at our stand 3F20.

www.sealux.de

Have you learnt something invaluable by reading this issue of UwP?
Have you saved a lot of time benefitting for the experience of UwP contributors or do you simply just enjoy UwP and want to help it continue?
If so, please donate to the UwP contributors

You may not know this but none of the UwP contributors get paid. They provide their articles and photo talent in support of the cause of UwP which aims to keep the magazine free for anyone to download.

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When deciding how much you want to donate please bear in mind that PayPal's charge for amounts smaller than £3 or $6 can be as high as 24%!! Whilst I accept that PayPal is absolutely brilliant and safe, I don't want this to become a 'Donate a lot to PayPal"!!

You can make a donation in either US $ dollars, UK £ sterling or € Euros by following this link

www.uwpmag.com/donate.html

Donate here PayPal DONATE

Gates XHA1/G1 Housing

Like its bigger XL H1 cousin the Gates XHA1/G1 Housing is designed for the discriminating diver. Legendary Canon optics paired with Gates reliability return underwater images of unmatched caliber. Iris, focus, white balance, custom key and custom preset controls, adjustable handle grips, optional EM43 high resolution color monitor and Gates premium ports are available in this feature-rich design.

www.gateshousings.com

Olympus PT-041 for Mju790 compact

Waterproof to 40 m there are controls for all the camera functions and there's a detachable LCD hood for LCD monitor.

The housing is neutral under water and the front port incorporates a screw mount for converter lenses and filters.

The internal flash can be used underwater to trigger digital compatible slave and a standard tripod socket permits attachment of a lighting tray.

www.olympus.co.uk

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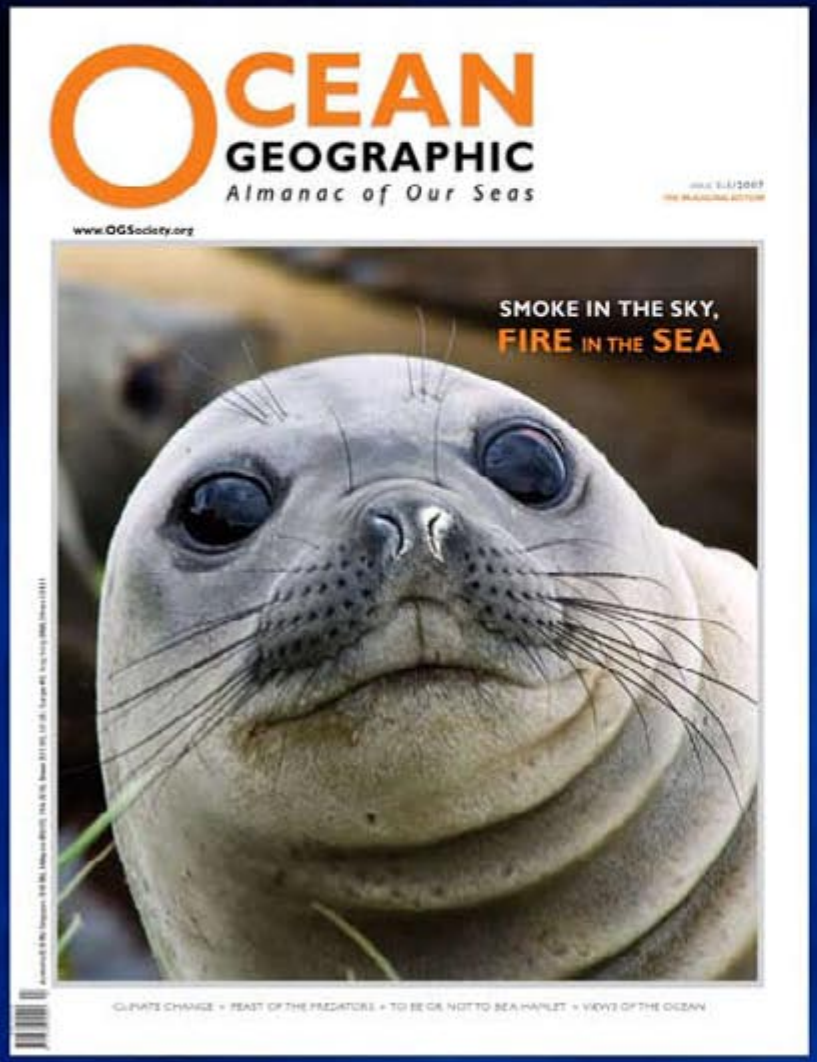


Ocean Geographic is a high quality photographic journal that features the finest arts and images of the sea. Each edition of Ocean Geographic is a visual adventure of discoveries, exploration and dives into provoking issues that guarantee to inform, inspire and invigorate. The board of editors and senior 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

HeinrichsWeikamp converter for Nikon iTTL

by Peter Rowlands

When I cut my teeth in underwater photography a flashgun was triggered basically by touching two wires together and that for me was technology I could both understand and accept. Even when the Nikonos V arrived with its 5 pin TTL flash system I could still understand how it worked because it was basically 5 wires making the contact between camera and flashgun.

Everything was going swimmingly in the (good?) old film days, especially if you used a housed Nikon camera. Their TTL system never changed from camera to camera so if you upgraded your camera you could still use your existing flash. TTL flash was the norm and became so established that many newcomers to underwater photography had never used anything else and so had little need to understand the flash exposure basics of aperture and distance.

Then the digital age arrived and, to be perfectly honest, I thought the camera manufacturers, especially Nikon, started showing off. With each new camera model came a new TTL system. Gone was good old understandable TTL. Now there was DTTL which begat iTTL and the maximum shutter speed for flash also varied in both directions.

The result of this posturing meant that existing underwater flashguns could only be used in manual exposure and we all had to remember how to vary the aperture dependent on the flash to subject distance to get the correct exposure.

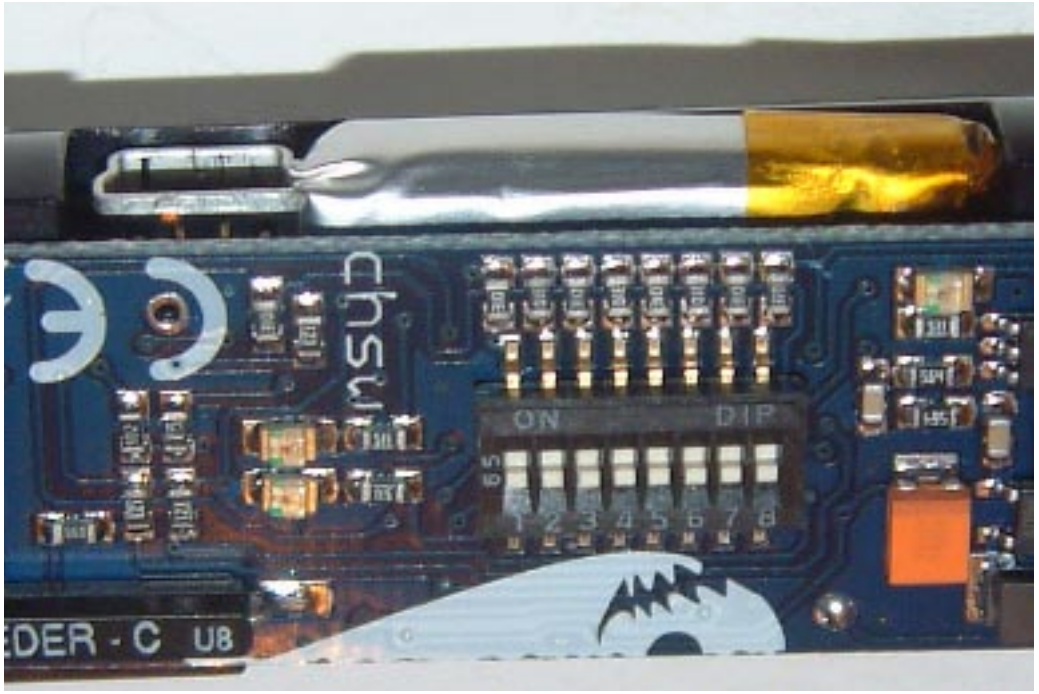
In truth and practice it wasn't that difficult, especially with the instant review on the LCD screen but it was only when I tested an Ikelite D80 housing and their iTTL conversion circuitry that I realised how useful TTL flash exposure really was.

The perspex cover slides back to allow a USB connector to be plugged in to charge the on board battery. This takes 1.5 hours to charge and the blue light indicates charging is taking place. In use, this light glows green to indicate the flash is ready to fire. If it glows red, the battery needs to be recharged

As a Nikon D70 Subal user I had to return to manual flash exposure again after the test so I was delighted when German electronics manufacturer HeinrichsWeikamp sent me their "External converter for Nikon iTTL" to evaluate.

At this point I fully admit that I haven't got a clue how it works. My good old two wires have been replaced with centipede multiprocessors,

The converter connects in line between your camera housing and flashgun connector, shown here. In use, I taped mine to the base section of the arm for neatness. At the moment, the external converter is available only in a Nikon version for iTTL. The following cameras may be used with this external converter: D200, D2X, D40, D50, D70, D70s, D80, D3 (soon) and D300 (see HeinrichWeikamps web site for full details of compatible flashguns)



Most flashguns can be used straight away but some need to use different switch settings on the tiny on board DIP switch (Check their web site for full details). This switch can also be set to provide exposure compensation of +/- 3EV.

discreet components, surface mounted this and that and a ubiquitous USB socket. All I know, and all I need to know, is that it works and allows me to use a range of flashguns in the TTL mode. This in turn allows me to preset the aperture to give my desired depth of field and the TTL flash electronics will automatically adjust the light output to give a correct exposure.

This is a classic case of, if you want TTL flash exposure, get one of these. They're not cheap at €350 but when the alternative is to buy and house a Nikon land flashgun, it suddenly gets a lot cheaper.

To check if your camera/housing/flash combo can take advantage of the HeinrichsWeikamp External converter for Nikon iTTL, check their website

www.heinrichsweikamp.net

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Going Live

The Olympus E-330

by Rob Spray

There used to be a gulf between the two castes of underwater photographers - compact snappers or SLR toting 'photographers'. That was before the E-330, which even a year after its launch remains unique. What makes it so unusual goes unnoticed when people 'give it a go'. SLRs, as a rule, can either view or take a picture. The mirror that gives them their name routes the image to either eyepiece or sensor - thus a live view is normally impossible as no light hits the sensor. An increasing number of SLRs can hold the mirror up, allowing the sensor to be exposed for a 'lock up live view'. This includes the Nikon D3 and 300, Canon 40D and 1D MK3 and all new Olympus SLRs. It's OK but the mirror has to flap to focus and shoot so there's an unwelcome delay - just like a compact - only the E-330 works as a normal SLR at the same time as providing a live view.

So real, full-time SLR live view is impossible? Not at all, cue the E-330! An extra sensor shares the viewfinder, seeing what you see and putting it on the screen. That mode (called Mode A) works like a compact and it also has a mirror lock up mode (Mode B). You can use it like a compact or SLR, it has some of the advantages of both. Paired with a housing it's a neat package for divers looking to graduate to the undoubted advantages of an SLR. Like various things that Olympus do, e.g. effective dust reduction, it's a product of lateral thought not just evolution. Some reviews and SLR fundamentalists have missed the point - compact

users never have trouble finding new ways to take pictures, holding cameras up, down or sideways to get their shot. I think there's a message there!

The body

The E-330 is an unusual looking SLR, the side swinging mirror which allows the extra sensor gives it a flat top. It's a solid plastic lump with a good handgrip and pleasant non-slip surfaces. The controls are clear and arranged around the centre piece of the back panel – an articulated 2.5" LCD which is bright and sharp but catches reflections easily. It moves in one plane - tilting up or down - very useful on land but not possible in the housing.

The resolution is an odd 7.5 Megapixels, slightly retrograde as the E-300 and E-500 were both 8. The new LiveMOS Panasonic sensor necessitated the drop and in fact 8 Megapixels are accessible from RAW files. Counting dots is missing the point, the difference is negligible. There are 3 auto-focus points which some regard as a demerit – the first thing I did was to disable the

outer two so it wasn't a problem for me! There are scene modes, several for underwater, but also full manual control and everything in between. It was never designed to be entry level and there are few things you can't configure.

Lenses

The standard lens (14-45mm, film equivalent 28-90mm) isn't bad but not very versatile underwater, the 50cm minimum shooting distance means this is no macro lens. Olympus' newer kit lens, a tiny 14-42mm, focuses much closer. But buying an SLR is all about the opportunities offered by specialist lenses, so I'll concentrate on those :-)

The first choice lens is Olympus' f2 50mm macro. For extra magnification it can be paired with an extension tube or 1.4x teleconvertor. It

is famously among the sharpest lenses available for any camera and behaves like a 100mm film lens - excellent for portraits. The 1.4x and 50mm combination is now my macro weapon of choice - it allows crisp, close focus and considerable magnification. A compact 35mm lens offers greater magnification if you can get closer - excellent for slugs but not for fish portraits.

Olympus have no quality handicap in their wide lenses but there are no third party options on offer. The only prime option is an 8mm fisheye which covers 180 degrees diagonally. There's also a very well reviewed 11-22mm. Like the top of the range 7-14mm, it is rated as good as a prime, which is a rare complement.

The 7-14mm is the widest 'made for digital' lens available, a 14-28mm in film terms. You can't match this without a full frame SLR which costs much, much more! It's not a fish eye and has very, very little distortion. Your wallet will get a workout, this beautiful lens costs £1,200. It's for those unique shots which capture a whole scene or defeat impossibly bad vis.

Strobes

There's no room to raise the pop-up flash to trigger slaves so the only options are wired via the 5 pin bulkhead. This is Olympus' own connector and they make 2 flash and case combos but there are also several third party options.

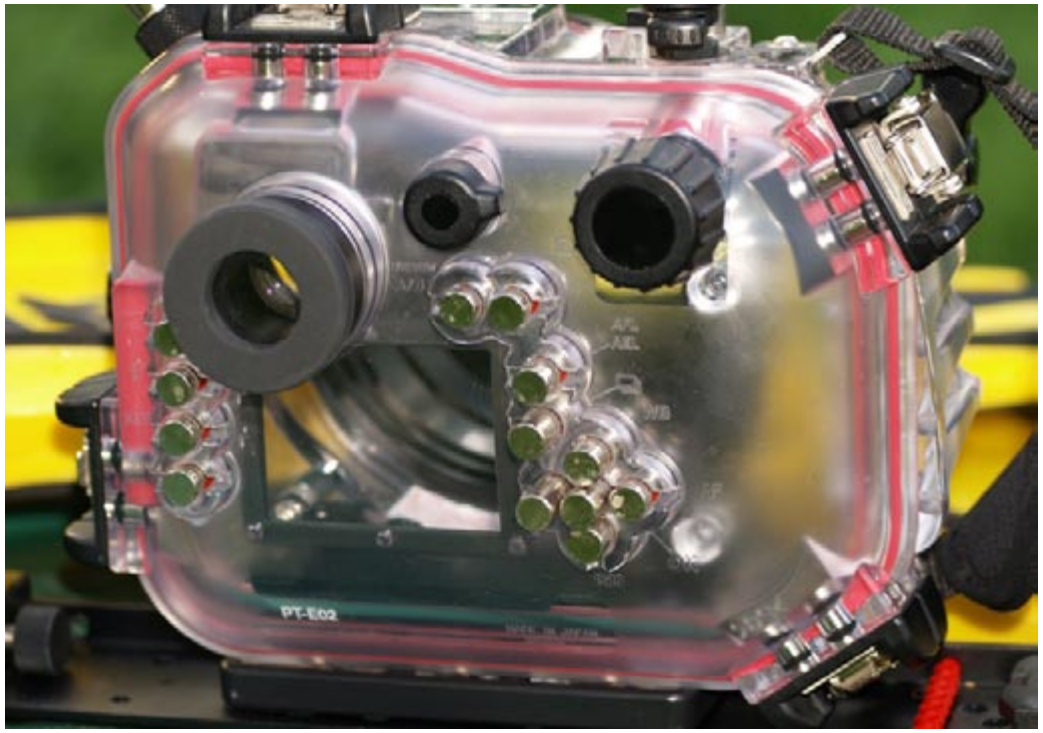
I've tried both and there are some important pros and cons. In their favour they work superbly and have extraordinary delicacy of TTL control. In addition you are not restricted to typical SLR sync speeds (often slower than 1/200th second) and are free to go up to 1/4000th of a second - even compacts can't do that! On the downside the FL-20 isn't very powerful and whilst the FL-36 has higher output it saps the pair of AA batteries which power them both even sooner. Both are bulky in their cases, the FL-36 to a striking extent – the 60m housing is 10mm thick. The third party options work but are restricted to mortal sync speeds (1/180th second) and limited in TTL capability as the E-330 uses a very fast pre-flash which most units cannot recover from.

Battery life

After my C-7070's epic battery life I feared the E-330 was heading for a fall - but it's actually very good. Using the viewfinder helps and I've only reached its limits on long dives. Over 450 pictures (6GB of files) and around 3-3 _ hours is a very useful performance. I normally feed it every couple of hours or dives. It seems to better some SLRs, e.g. Canon 400D, which I've seen fed batteries on a per dive basis.

PT-EO2 Housing

The E-330 fits the 60m PT-E02 snugly, with little air space. If you've used an Olympus compact housing you'll notice how similar everything is, just bigger, better and tougher. The camera slides in on a locking sled, the strobe cable fits on the hotshoe and once the mode control is engaged you're ready to lock the case down. 4 sprung catches secure the back and compress two large, red o-rings. All the camera controls are brought out, none are shared. The rig is large but not big by housed SLR standards. Size is on par with metal housings rather than larger, more generic offerings. The black aluminium ports have a deep thread and are stiff to turn once the signature red o-ring engages - a filter



wrench is a boon when they need swapping. All the port windows are glass. The case allows manual control of one ring – focal length for zooms or focus for primes. The control can't reach if the teleconvertor is used.

There's no shortage of other choices with cases from 10bar (also sold as Fantasea), Ikelite and Aquamir.

In use

The E-330 was baptised in Holland. The bulk of the rig disappears once submerged and I was very quickly at home. Although live view is this camera's USP I soon found myself switching to the viewfinder and back as though I'd been doing so for years. It struck me that some scenes and subjects were easier with the viewfinder – it's more accurate framing macro with the camera steadied on your head… whilst wide benefits from the free view of both the subject and camera. A purist might suggest that both options were compromised but they wouldn't have both options. It's a shame the display can't be angled in the case (it can in the Aquamir) but it would obscure the viewfinder (the Aquamir can't use it).

Although aware live view might be poor in low light this wasn't the case even on some very murky dives. One of the uses of live view was to arrange lighting from torches which helped focus under these tough conditions. It was a treat having a 'real' view for macro focussing and I was impressed for the most part at the new degree of control over macro which opened up in comparison to the C-7070 - still challenging but the strike rate was greatly increased with the SLR.

We dived the E-330 set up for wide and macro and aside from lens changing it was much like diving with a compact – only bigger! The drill of 'o'-ring and strobe checking is the same and in some respects it's easier to line up larger catches and more reassuring to see bigger 'o'-rings 'squidged' thru the case.

The dome port looks like a cooking utensil after small, snappy cameras, you are soon very conscious of all the scratchy things which could damage it. Being glass it's not as vulnerable as a polycarbonate dome but then it does cost 2-3 times as much, gulp! Pre and post dive routines now include fitting and removing the dome's neoprene 'knickers'. The macro port is a subtler affair, giving the housing a 'pig snout' for nosing into tight spaces. One interesting feature is that each Olympus housing has the same thread and lens datum so your lens/port pairs can progress from case to case if you change your body.

The results

I spent days wandering around the garden taking pictures of everything until my first dive arrived, so there were fewer surprises when I took to the water.

Diving with new kit can be a challenge but after a first dive expecting too much instant improvement I was soon at home with macro - using the viewfinder in preference to the display – but with the option to place the camera off at an angle or low down. One aspect of SLR photography which shouldn't have been a surprise was the linked effect of the increased aperture range and reduced depth of field. With the C-7070 I could set it to manual at 1/1000th and F8 and TTL flash would give foolproof exposure within a few feet. It took some time to understand how to trade depth of field for light. The instant readiness for the next shot, snappy focus and viewfinder were changes I had no problem accepting.

Back at my laptop I discovered buying an SLR hadn't made me into a great photographer overnight. I still had to hold the camera still, squeeze the shutter and compose for a picture to work but there was a clean, pure look to the results that was immediately apparent. There's little picture noise and outside the depth of field the background detail was flattened, almost to extinction in some cases.

Whilst macro was an immediate pleasure it took longer to get used to ultra-wide angle. The 114o field of view was far beyond what I was used to and needed extra care in composition. It came into its own in Holland, we went for the cuttlefish breeding and conditions were murky to say the least! Having the widest possible lens let us get really close, luckily the cuttlefish are preoccupied. This was a godsend and allowed some stunning pictures in grim vis. We've sometimes struggled to use our prize companion as it suits confident, static subjects or clear wide views - but it'll be our challenge to get the best from it. It'll be amazing for reefscapes and when we're attacked by something huge we'll get great pictures of ourselves disappearing inside.

One problem we encountered with the huge angle of view was that it was hard to get the strobe far enough out to avoid backscatter at

the fringes of the pictures – clearly some longer arms are required… We found our own solution; Dawn swam above the scene with a slave strobe which triggered off the wired one. That kind of performance benefits from the live view as the whole scene; strobes, lights and subject can all be marshalled.

Conclusion

Short on SLR experience I won't say whether the E-330 is better than others. The balance of review opinion seems to be that some competing systems focus a touch faster but that Olympus lenses are among the very best. As a package the E-330 makes a strong case as an upgrade from compact systems with great long term prospects. The case is very well tailored and smaller than the third party housings.

The flash connection is a weakness, but I've made hundreds of dives with no problem - although others haven't been so lucky/careful. I'll make simple guards for them but it would be good to see them positioned safely in the first place. Spares and replacements are available so damage is manageable.

The results have been really good; sharp, true coloured and clean. Operation is in a different league from compact cameras with negligible shot to shot delay and no speed penalty in choosing to use RAW format - you can save full quality JPEG at the same time which covers all bases.

The large live view screen is a key benefit which makes the compact to SLR transition painless. If you already have an SLR it may not be the compelling reason to change but using the optical viewfinder is no problem either. If you are starting from scratch the very attractive deals on the E-330 make it a good choice - a unique camera with advantages above water too.

Pros: Big live-view, neat case, excellent lenses, cracking results, a real SLR

Cons: High speed TTL only with own brand strobes, ports not cheap, few cheap lens options

Rob Spray
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Compact flash comparison

by Dan Bolt and Dan Hopkins

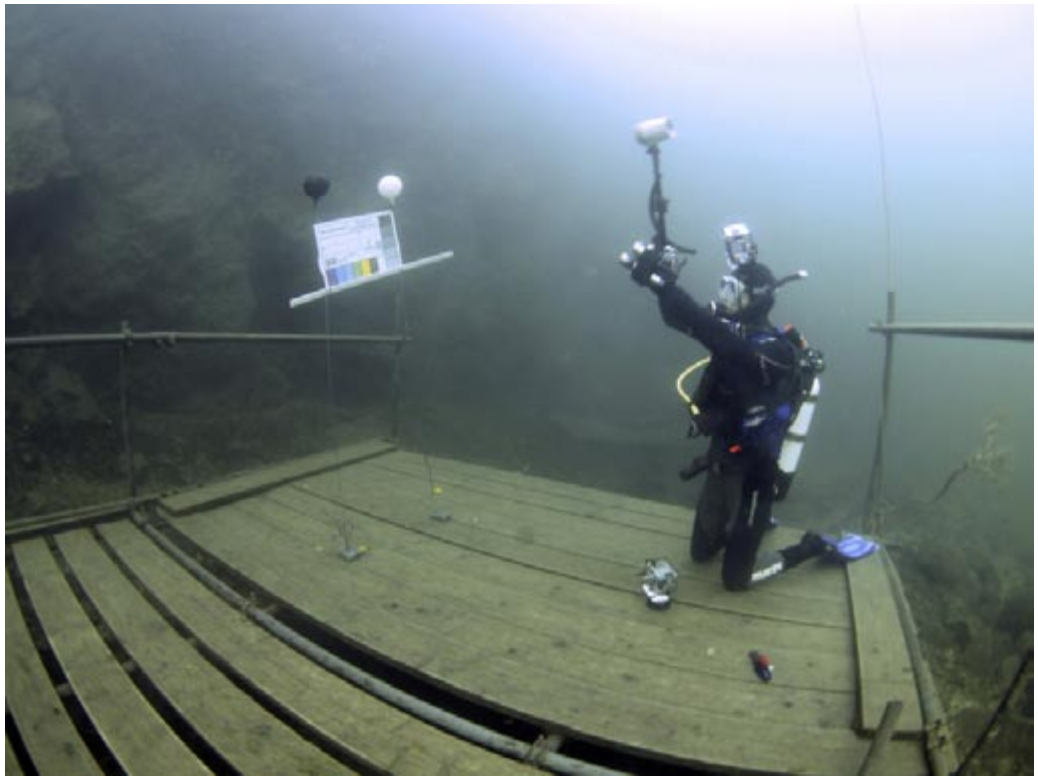
The recently released 12mpix Canon G9 has created quite a stir in photographic circles with both Canon and Ikelite producing a housing for it. Allowing underwater photographers to add this fabulously-specified camera to their Christmas list this year. One of the main advantages of cameras like the G9, or 'bridge' cameras to use the popular term, is that having a hot-shoe mount for external flash-guns means that there is true TTL metering and flash control being produced by the metering system in the camera itself.

To reflect this ability of the G9 and to extend it to our chosen photographic environment, a number of strobes have been in production over the last few years to make the most of the TTL capabilities offered by bridge units like the Canon G series cameras, the Olympus SP350 & SP560 models and Nikon's P5000.

What we are going to try to do in this article is to conduct a head-to-head test of these strobes to see if they live up to their reputation and to see if you really can get TTL-like flash exposure from a non-DSLR set-up. What a great excuse to play with lots of new kit!

TTL flash exposure has its advantages and disadvantages, indeed shooting manually on both camera and flash is perhaps the way to get ultimate control over your shots, but for many underwater photographers still shooting in-camera metered shots on compact digital cameras, a TTL strobe could be the next step in the learning process. Choosing the right strobe will also allow a degree of manual adjustment over the amount of light produced anyway, so giving ultimate flexibility underwater to cater for all lighting situation we are likely to encounter.

The equipment we chose (and Cameras Underwater kindly supplied) was the Canon G9 in both the Ikelite housing and Canon's own WP-DC21, along with the Sea & Sea YS110, Ikelite DS51 and Inon Z240 strobe heads. As a wild-card we also tried the Inon Z240 on a Canon A640 in an Ikelite housing, just because we could. We used the DS51 'hard wired' into the canon via the Ikelite bulkhead and you might suggest this is not a fair comparison to make against the other 'optically' fired strobes, but as



Olympus E330, Olympus Housing, natural light, ISO200, f/3.5, 1/6th, digitally applied colour filter, programmed auto (Dan Hopkins)

Ikelite have just stopped making their TTL controller it would not have been realistic to test kit that is no longer available. It is worth mentioning Ikelite's new strobe the Autoflash 35, this strobe was not quite on the market when we conducted our tests but it would have been an excellent choice for an entry level automatic strobe. On paper it is designed to achieve similar results to the other strobes we used, obviously with limitations on coverage and power, but it is clearly aimed at the compact digital camera user. Hopefully we will be able to get hold of one soon and write a full review of it for UwPMag, so watch this space.

Being November it was impossible to guarantee the sea conditions around the UK so we chose the Vobster Quay inland diving centre (an old flooded quarry) to conduct our tests as they have clear (if a little cold) water, good facilities and training platforms at various depths on which

Having completed the test shots it was time to enjoy the dive and relax with the simplicity of TTL flash

we could run through our testing. Not only that, but also having constant conditions over a number of diving days would be necessary to maintain a fair test and to get the 'feel' of each set up in actual diving conditions.

To create a valid test and allow comparisons to be drawn it is important to keep as many of the conditions constant as possible. So trying to bear that in mind we designed two tests to run the kit through; one a close-up shot and the other a wide angle composition. Because we had included the Canon housing for the G9 we obviously couldn't use any supplementary wet-lenses... but that's a debate for different article all-together.

For the test shots the cameras were set on Aperture Priority (Av), ISO100, auto white-balance, evaluative metering, and for the close-up test macro focusing mode. The zoom was not used so all shots were at the 35mm (equiv) wide end of the zoom range. Then each camera was taken through the entire aperture range step by step which produces 10 shots per test for each camera/strobe combination. The visibility was a crisp 15m but the 10m deep platform we used was in the shade of a cliff so there was not a great deal of natural light around.

As for the strobe heads; we used the 'straight-out-of-the-box' recommended settings with no adjustments to the output - had we tried to find the best adjustment for each strobe we'd still be down there doing the test! Each unit was set up as follows:

DS51 - TTL Sync Cord and hot-shoe connector, Mode Switch to TTL

YS110 - Optical cable, Mode Switch to TTL, Slave switch to On, Light Level Control to Full

Z240 - Optical cable, Mode Switch to S-TTS, EV Controller to B (ie: no power adjustment)

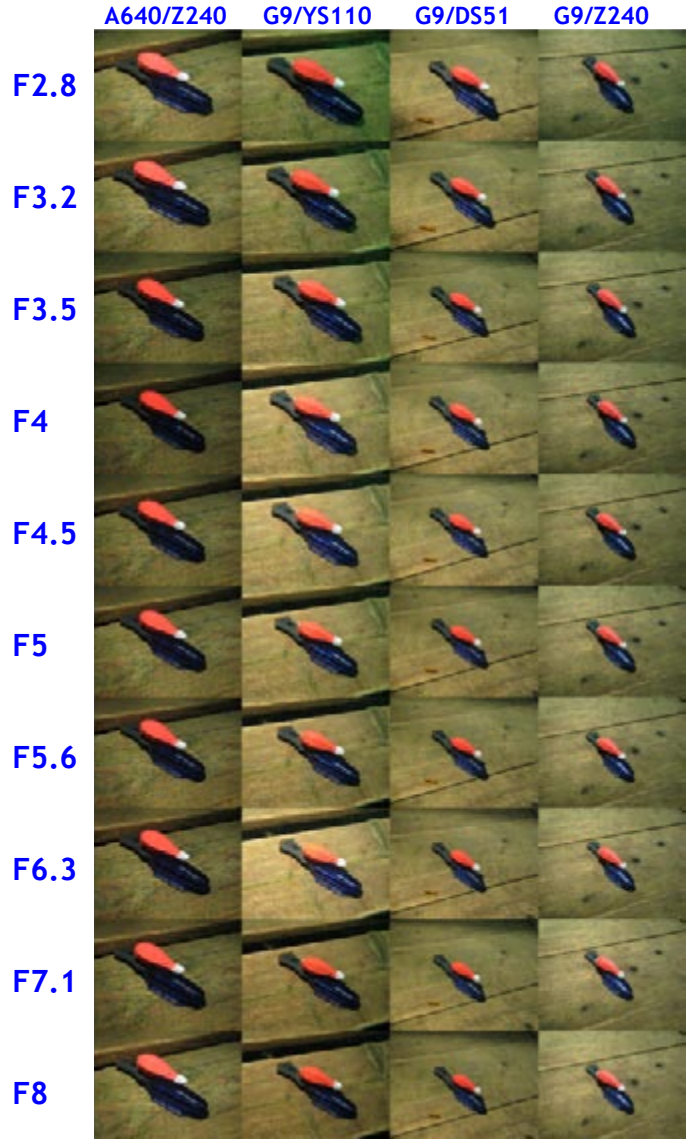
Canon G9 - Flash On, Flash Control set to Auto, 1st Curtain Synch, Slow Synchro Off, no adjustment to flash output

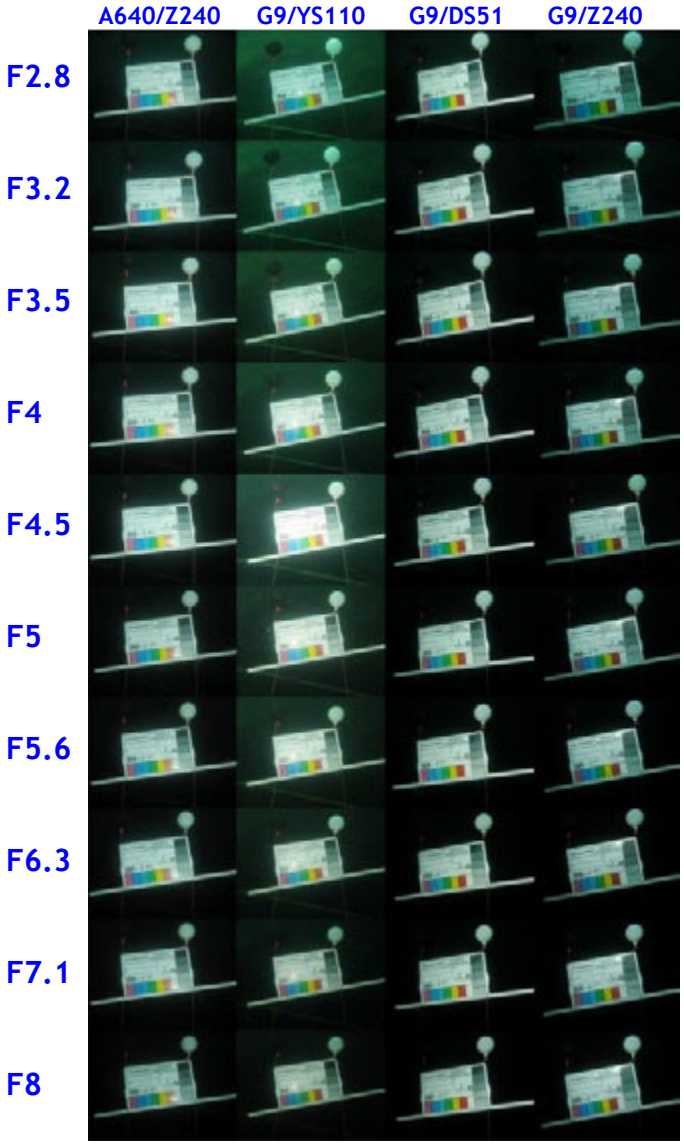
Running through the test shots was quite a simple exercise but we did have a bit of a struggle with all the settings of the G9 to get the results we wanted, though to be honest that was more down to us not reading the manual properly than any failing of the camera! Not including the cost of trays and arms, the most expensive strobe was the Inon Z240, followed by the YS110 and then the DS51. They are all fairly pricey units and some would question if many compact digital camera users would want to shell out more for their flash than the camera/housing cost them in the first place. That said, purchasing cheaper, manual strobes could instantly turn point-and-shoot simplicity into a manual-control-nightmare. What these strobes allow for is the continued use of point-and-shoot methods while allowing the photographer to grow into the manually exposed shots we see the 'pros' taking.

Looking at the test shots side by side (and judging on exposure alone, we're

not expecting top marks for composition here!) it is fairly easy to see which strobes gave the best results. Unsurprisingly the more expensive Inon Z240 faired very well giving even exposure throughout the aperture range. This was also evident while using the Z240 on a dive around the quarry, it's exposure was pretty spot on in all the situation photos we tried. Interestingly the Z240 faired quite well on the lesser-equipped Canon A640 too. The Ikelite DS51 was being controlled directly by the camera using a sync cable and so should have been right on the money every time. Again, looking at the test shots it faired very well too, producing the right amount of light for each shot we took. In use during the dive it seemed to not do quite as good a job as the Z240, sometimes greatly over exposing the shot. Finally we look at the YS110 chart and it's quite obvious that this doesn't cope quite as well the previous two strobes. There is an obvious light-spot around f/4.5 on the wide shot and f/6.3 on the close up. Just to be sure it wasn't a glitch each of these shots were repeated with the same result being given. Depending on the situation the YS110 tended to give out a little less light than was required when we used it around the quarry, some may say this is preferable to overexposing images which will render them useless in post-production.

Please remember that we did not adjust the strobe output to get the best results, so you need to bear that in mind when looking at the results and drawing your own conclusions with regard to price/ performance. Sadly we had to give all the kit back to Cameras Underwater at the end of the day so we have no vested interest in which one is better that the others - we've tried to be totally impartial judges while doing these tests (though we each had our favourite after using them!)





(Photos by Dan Bolt)

One thing for sure when taking pictures of marine life, if you want that punchy shot to grab the observer by the throat you need artificial lighting. Only time will tell if people are prepared to spend more on their strobe than on their camera AND housing put together. One thing is true and that is; you get what you pay for. Compacts are getting better and manufacturers are taking them more seriously producing good quality accessories including lenses as well as strobes.

The two Dans - Hopkins left and Bolt right.

So with the maturing compact market and TTL strobe technology we could be seeing the start of rival exposure systems to that of DSLRs. At the end of the day that's a personal judgement we should make for ourselves, but it is interesting and worth keeping an eye on.

As well as all the test kit we had to play with, we were lucky enough to have even more cameras, housings and strobes to use in-between the test dives. This threw up some interesting photographic results and we learned a great deal about different lens/housing combinations in addition to the lighting effectiveness of the test strobes. You can see more images from our adventures on http://www.underwaterpics.co.uk/2gallery/vobster where we have additional images from an Olympus E330, Canon A640, Fuji E900, and an old YS60 with HeinrichsWeikamp converter - enjoy!

Big thanks have to go to Cameras Underwater for providing kit, manpower and expertise; Tim at Vobster Quay for accommodating us so well, Ian for letting us borrow his Canon G9 housing/YS110 rig, and Peter at UWPmag for giving the backing to the article in the first place!

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Capture the Character

by Mark Webster

The underwater world is blessed with a multitude of colourful and sometimes weird subjects to keep even the most avid of photographers happy. As wildlife photographers we shoot a lot of 'portraits' of marine life perhaps illustrating their habitat as well, or isolating them from the rest of the reef. An objective that we share with most land photographers is trying to capture the 'character' of a subject so that there is a sense of communication with the viewer. This can be a challenge with fish, but it can be done with certain subjects and judicious composition and often a large measure of patience. There are also other species on the reef which ooze natural character and some are only too willing to pose and perform for the camera.

It helps to begin by identifying the species that may be willing to cooperate, which are likely to be those that predominantly sessile or territorial. Many fish species are constantly on the move and whilst 'grab' shots do work sometimes you don't have the opportunity to get the confidence of your subject. Larger species like sharks can also produce good portrait shots, but mostly only by baiting for them, but for me do not have the character or expression that the smaller species offer.

Knowing something about your subject and its habitat is the first step, but getting to know a dive site by visiting regularly is certainly a big advantage as you can identify potential subjects and encourage them to accept your presence. This of course is not something we can all practice unless you dive regularly in your home waters, but it is a procedure you can adopt on a trip if you have the opportunity to dive a site repeatedly. There are 'shore based' locations which offer a selection of local dive sites that you can dive repeatedly during your stay (Lembeh, Tulamben in Bali and Bonaire are good examples) and if you join a live aboard with a dedicated group you can

Pygmy seahorse – these little beasties are technically challenging to photograph as they are so small but they are a very appealing subject as they do ooze with cute character. Lembeh Straits, Nikon D100, Light and Motion Titan housing, Nikkor 105mm micro, Inon Quad flash, Inon wet lens, ISO200, f11 @ 1/15.

often dive a site three or four times during a trip.

Whichever subject you have chosen, the most important element of the composition will normally be 'eye contact' or at least the appearance that the subject is peering into the lens and connecting with the viewer. Some subjects seem to look interested or inquisitive whilst others may look haughty or dismissive but it is important that you have gained the attention of your subject to establish this relationship to produce a more powerful image.

Fish

There are numerous species of fish to target as portrait opportunities, but you will have most success with those that are territorial or are camouflage hunters or are just plain inquisitive. Many of the blenny species fall into the latter category and no matter where you are diving in the world there are going to be species of blenny that have bug eyes and often colourful markings, patterns and appendages which make them such appealing subjects.

In the UK it is the tom pot blenny that takes top spot as reef poser. These comical looking little fish can be found living in the same hole in a reef for years on end. I have one on my local beach dive site that I have been visiting and photographing for more than 5 years. He (I am making a sexist assumption here) is now so accustomed to my visits that he will immediately adopt a pose at the front on his hole when I arrive – and if the hole is vacant will generally return within a couple of minutes whilst I wait. He is so tame now that if I offer a gloved finger he will nibble it to see if there is any food on offer.

These blennies have tropical cousins of course and one of the most striking is the leopard spotted blenny found in the Red Sea and in other Indo Pacific reef areas. These guys are very much more timid and are extremely difficult to spot as their pattern helps them blend with the shadows in the branching corals which is home to them. They also like the shallow elevations of the reef and are often found in 2-3m depth where swell motion makes them a real challenge to photograph. Having spotted one it is then a game of patience. They normally have a route mapped out on their piece of the reef and will appear in the same spot every minute or two to take a look at you. Pre-focusing on these spots gives you the best chance of capturing them and a longer macro lens will keep you out of their personal space.

Another of my shy Red Sea favourites are the lemon gobies. These

Tompot blenny – A common species in the UK and Mediterranean with a very comical and expressive face which makes them an excellent macro portrait subject.
(Top right) Leopoard spotted blenny – A timid and sometimes hard to find species which needs a good deal of patience to get close to for a frame filling portrait.
(Right) Lemon goby – A nervous but very territorial fish found mostly on table corals often in small groups. Nikon D100, Light and Motion Titan housing, Sigma 180mm macro, Inon Quad flash, ISO200, f11 @ 1/30.

tiny little fish live in small groups on table corals and present another test of the photographer's patience. They also have a defined patrol area on their chosen coral and again are very sensitive to a close approach, but when they do stop to look in your direction they have a most appealing expression on a perfect vivid yellow face with delicate white and blue markings. A longer macro lens between 150-200mm is the ideal tool for a frame filling shot, although you can still get very good images with a 105mm if you have the patience. You are generally shooting between the branching layers of a table coral, so watching the position of your strobes is important so as not to cast shadows – ring flash is ideal in these situations.

Frog fish are a species often difficult to find and also difficult to photograph as then blend so well with the reef. Occasionally you will find them on the edge of the reef or gripping sponges in an elevated position which allows you to get a low approach and separate them from their background. Although nobody would describe these fish as attractive (although I do admit to a certain passion for them) they do have wonderful expressions and seem to stare into the lens fully convinced that no matter how close you approach they cannot be seen.

Frog fish – Occasionally you will find a frog fish on a strongly contrasting background. This one definitely does not look pleasd to have been found. Lembeh Straits, Nikon D100, Light and Motion Titan housing, Nikkor 60mm micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO200, f11 @ 1/125.

Short nosed bat fish – Perhaps one of the strangest looking fish in the sea most often seen in sandy areas in the Caribbean. Confident of their camouflage, they will hold a pose but you may need to dig in the sand a little to get a lower view point. Belize, Nikon F90X, Subal housing, Nikkor 60mm micro, Sea & Sea YS50 & YS30, Fuji Sensia, F11 @ 1/60.

John Dory – A temperate and Mediterranean species that is well camouflaged amongst seaweeds. These need patient stalking to get close but make a terrific subject.

A species that I have only encountered once in Belize is the short nosed batfish, which visually appears to be more closely related to frog fish or hand fish (of Tasmania) than the other Indo Pacific species of the same name. They are in fact found throughout the Caribbean and also in the Pacific, in Galapagos for example, but like all camouflaged species are very difficult to spot in their preferred habitat of shallow sand and rubble sea beds. Their face is like no other and they have the most striking pair of red lips in the marine world which appears to have been smeared on like child's lipstick! They have a very haughty expression and will look disdainfully at you down their nose – there is also a 'long nosed' species which just has a longer nose as far as I can tell.

John Dory are a species that I have previously waxed about in these pages. Aside from the challenge of tracking them down they do seem to have that indefinable element of character once you have gained their

confidence and they begin to pose for the camera. Their striking gold/green colouration, spiky appendages and mournful expression make them one of my favourites particularly as a portrait composition.

Other common species which are often easily approached and can present a good toothy grin for the camera are groupers (many different species) and lone barracuda which are quite common and often almost tame on popular sites in the Caribbean.

Cephalopods

Possibly one of the most entertaining and responsive creatures on the reef is the octopus. They are not always easy to find being past masters at camouflage, but once found they are normally very inquisitive and often keen to interact. Changes of shape, texture and even expression make these guys excellent character portrait subjects. They are found everywhere around the world but are particularly abundant in certain areas.

Perhaps the most spectacular octopus behaviour comes from the mimic and wonderpus species. These are not often encountered by chance, as they spend much of their time in burrows in the sand. Dive guides in locations like Lembeh Straits are skilled at recognizing their burrows

Coconut octopus – I began shooting this octopus in his clam shell home when I noticed a second octopus joining us and trying to muscle in on the action. The second octopus was perhaps jealous of the attention to the first or coveted his neat home, as he tried to pull the shells apart to extract the resident! Lembeh Straits, Nikon D100, Light and Motion Titan housing, Nikkor 60mm micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO200, f11 @ 1/60.

Wonderpus octopus – these octopus can be difficult to compose well as they are always on the move. They will stop occasionally to rise up and look at you which provides the opportunity for a 'head and shoulders' portrait. Lembeh Straits, Nikon D100, Light and Motion Titan housing, Nikkor 60mm micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO200, f11 @ 1/60.

or spotting a fleeting glimpse of eyes peeking out of the sand. They will then set to work to tempt the octopus out into the open by using a long steel pole which they tap the seabed with in front of the lair. This normally does the trick and soon has the octopus out and looking for an easy meal it seems. It is at this stage that they will begin the now famous repertoire of shapes and imitations (although not all marine biologists agree that this is really mimicking behaviour), but between transformations they will often stop and rise up on their legs to take a good look at a photographer and this is for me the best opportunity to take a portrait shot.

Octopus are extremely intelligent, but is it possible for them to feel jealousy? I have one experience in the Lembeh Straits which might demonstrate this – whilst photographing a coconut octopus in a pair of clam shells, another slowly approached and watched for a few minutes before coming between the camera and my subject. I moved to continue taking pictures of the other one in its shells and eventually this octopus moved again to be between us. When I moved once more to get a better angle on my primary subject this second octopus moved swiftly to the other and tried to pries' apart the shells in what I thought was an attempt to evict him – was this to gain my attention? I am not certain but I withdrew after watching the struggle

for a few minutes.

Cuttle fish are a member of the same family and they also display a number of similar characteristics as their long armed cousins. They are less territorial and once spotted it is best to display patience and perhaps feign disinterest which normally encourages them to become more inquisitive. They will come very close eventually and perform a number of display activities which may be a form of communication with us but nevertheless produce excellent imaging opportunities.

Cuttle fish are a common species in the UK between late spring and early autumn. In the spring time they are busy mating and laying eggs and are most often found in eel grass beds in my locale. They are very approachable when mating or laying eggs and will often ignore your approach – this applies in tropical locations as well when you will often find a group of males watching over perhaps one or two females placing their eggs in the coral. One very colourful small species of cuttlefish which displays no stage fright is the flambuoyant cuttle fish which is common throughout the Far East. These guys are a dull dark brown to black colour until approached or are in the act of hunting, when they display a vivid set of colours ranging from bright yellow, through orange to red and white. In the Lembeh Straits you will often find their eggs in old coconut shells and on my last visit I witnessed one of these eggs hatching whilst photographing them. The tiny guy that emerged was no more than a few millimeters long but went immediately into its flambuoyant display – amazing!

Flambuoyant cuttle fish – these small cuttle fish look dull brown until they are disturbed or are hunting when they light up with this impressive display of colour. Cuttlefish (right)– once you have their confidence, cuttlefish often seem to be trying to tell you something and signaling with their centre arms is very common. You can encourage them to display colours and patterns by returning the signal with waved fingers – but I have no idea what you might be offering!
Nikon D200, Subal ND20, Nikkor 105mm micro (left) 60mm micro (right), Inon Quad flash, ISO100, f16 @ 1/60.

Lens choice for portrait shots depends entirely on the size of your subject and whether or not you are trying to include some habitat as well. Even the larger fish can be captured effectively in tight face portrait with a 50/60mm macro lens, so this is as always a good all round work horse. If you know the dive site well and the subject you are targeting then that will make lens choice a little simpler, but once under the water as always almost anything can turn up unexpectedly so be prepared to be flexible! By concentrating on the communication with your subject you can turn an image of a common subject into a potential competition winner.

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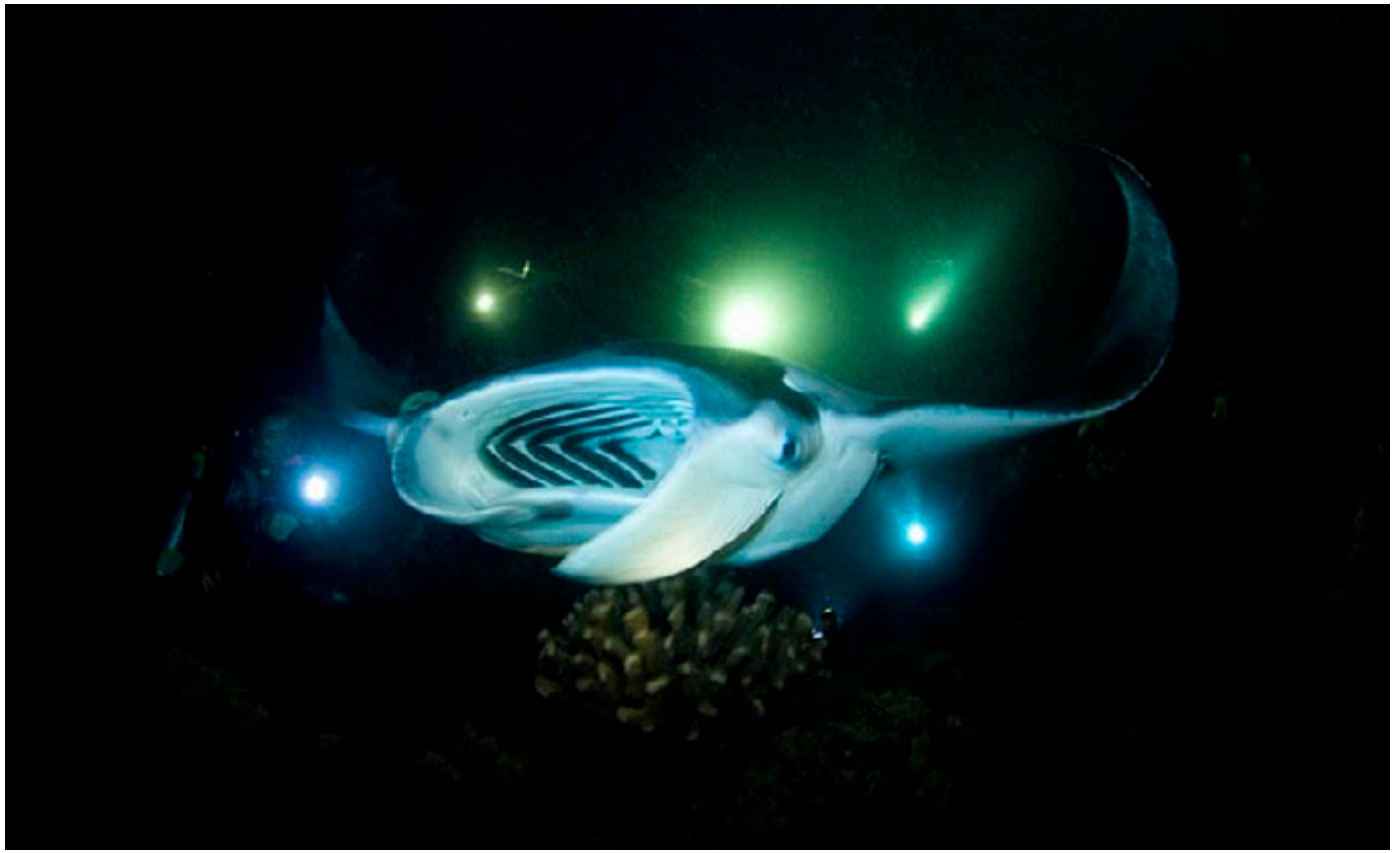
Behind the shot

By Martin Edge



Nikon D200 with a Nikon 10.5mm fisheye lens inside a Subal housing and fisheye port. My flashguns were two Inon Z220 on short ultra-lite arms placed out to the side of the housing. This particular shot was taken on F5.6 at 1/8th second at 400 ISO.

The manta ray night dives off the Kona coast, Hawaii were first made famous by National Geographic underwater photographer David Doubilet back in 1994. He employed the use of HMI lights (Hydrargyrum Medium Arc-length Iodide) a continuous light source that illuminates underwater at a day light temperature of 5600A° Kelvin, similar to the temperature of a traditional underwater flashgun. My attempts were quite modest in comparison. We shot the Manta over two nights, spending a total of two hours with them. I used the same photo equipment on both occasions but varying the technique on the second and most successful attempt. I used a Nikon D200 with a Nikon 10.5mm fisheye lens inside a Subal housing and fisheye port. My flashguns were two Inon Z220 on short ultra-lite arms placed out to the side of the housing. I ensured that both flash guns were behind the two side shades of my fisheye port. This was to minimise the effect of particles which were in abundance by virtue of the plankton attracted by the fixed lights and our own dive torches.

Fisheye photography at night in poor visability and planktonic water is about as hard as underwater photography can get. I had put a fair amount of thought and consideration into how best to shoot the manta, yet I was unable to conjure up any good ideas to make my attempts different in some way. My first attempt at the Manta dive site resulted in images of manta with mouths agape a few feet infront of the lens. Whilst they were sharp and well exposed, they failed to capture the atmosphere of the experience and were no different than the numerous 'manta dive' postcards on sale throughout Kona. I pondered this for some time. I wanted to record the manta at a distance, interacting with each other and the audience, but with traditional flashguns this was impossible. Because of weather concerns we had consoled ourselves to just the one Manta dive, however on the last night of our charter the weather picked up and we had a second opportunity adjacent to the Sheraton Hotel of Keauhou Bay. Ten of us entered the water at dusk and waited for the mantas to appear from the deep.

As normal I had tested both flashguns before entering the water and once I'd settled on the bottom I repeated this procedure. My heart skipped a beat! The left side flashgun failed although the ready light was glowing. I used the test button

Sheratan Hotel, Hawaii

– it fired! "No problem there then". "It must be a knackered flash lead". All the bending and pulling made no difference. The flash failed continuously again and again! How was I going to light these creatures with only one good flashgun and at night with an ultra wide lens? Ten more minutes of fiddling! The water had turned black and on cue the first manta appeared followed by several more. "How could I make them different with only one flash gun"?

The Manta's had been with us for about fifteen minutes with me shooting the same old stuff when suddenly I had a flash of inspiration! I decided to use the illumination from the torch- lights of the dive crew, the non-photographers and the deck lights from our live-aboard, which were clearly visible through the under-surface above us. I used my one flashgun as fill light on the manta. I selected 400 ISO and opened my shutter speed to 1/8th 15th and 30th of a second and used panning techniques (fingers crossed that this would work).. I used wide apertures of F2.8 and F4. I proceeded to shoot the spectacle at a distance and by constantly reviewing my LCD, bracketing apertures, shutter speeds and flash power I began to get the alternative images I had hoped for. This particular shot was taken on F5.6 at 1/8th second at 400 ISO.

If my flash had not failed I doubt very much that I would have done anything different from the previous opportunity earlier in the week. Instead, the faulty flash lead had forced me to think 'out of the box' and as a result I spontaneously, without thought upped my ISO, dropped both shutter speed and aperture and commenced panning techniques. This was that innovative idea I had pondered over for days.

Remember. Experience is what you get when you do not get what you want!

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Portraits

by Erik Henchoz

I dedicate this article to all the people who love the sea and to all divers who try to take portraits of sea animals with their cameras on every dive; faces, liveries, colors , forms and behaviors that at times surprise and excite.

From a blenny that leans out of its hole to come face to face with a big barracuda or with a grey shark; an infinity of “poses” and of “expressions” show how various sea life is and how fishes have a character, habits and fears of their own.

Just few days ago Ansa (an italian news agency) published an article referring to a study of the university of Liverpool on the rainbow trout. The study shows how bold, shy or curious these fishes can be according to the various individuals and to the different situations. The experienced scuba diver will certainly be already aware of it. To tell the truth one of the most interesting aspects of my dives is really the interaction that is established with the sea world and particularly with fishes, so much that I am able to experience an exchange of emotions and feelings. For this reason, I have devoted myself to portraits in underwater photo for a long time, in order to photograph these moments so full of emotion and at times unrepeatable.

But what do we mean by portrait in the photo? For a long time the portrait has been one of the most important and diffused photographic types. With such a term we generally mean the close-up shooting of a subject isolating it from the background in order to give it more prominence.

This is the reason why photographers make use of a reduced depth of field (the focusing zone in the image) and therefore F Stop with elevated numbers (F22-F32) to stop the time and to isolate the subject “in a pose”, leaving a more or less out-of-focus background at his shoulders.

Turtle. Fuji S2 Pro, DX-S2PRO Sea&Sea housing, 2 YS-90DX flashguns, s0 mm AF-Micro Nikkor F/2.8 D lens 1/100th @ F 8 ISO: 200, Autofocus

Moray eel. Fuji S2 Pro, DX-S2PRO Sea&Sea housing, 2 YS-90DX flashguns, 60 mm AF-Micro Nikkor F/2.8 D lens 1/200th @ F 22 ISO: 200, Manual focus

Fuji S2 Pro, DX-S2PRO Sea&Sea housing, 2 YS-90DX flashguns, 60 mm AF-Micro Nikkor F/2.8 D lens. 1/125th @ F 22. ISO: 200, Manual focus

Nikon D200, DX-D200 Sea&Sea housing, 2 YS-90Auto flashguns, TTL converter II, 60 mm AF-Micro Nikkor F/2.8 D lens. 1/100th @ F 8. ISO: 200, Autofocus

Also in the photosub we use a similar technique but with some differences: managing the depth of field with a very closed diaphragm and with little brightness, as it often happens underwater, is something of a problem and we will inevitably need at least of a good flash in the reflex photography. With a compact digital camera we will be forced to use the small built-in flash (better if supported by a good flash or external light box). Moreover, the poses of our subjects, even though spontaneous, will always have to be taken very quickly and often there won't be much time for the shot.

But what equipment shall we use for our sea portraits?

Compact digital cameras

An underwater portrait with a compact camera is surely possible, it is rather one of the best shots: the objectives of these cameras are already ready for this type of frame and they usually have lenses with an angle of view similar to that of the human eye (a frame similar to the human frame). However you must get as near as possible. The camera flash is not very powerful and if we photograph from too far (more than 1,5-2 mt) we risk to lose the colors of our subject. The built-in flash is for shots at a distance non superior to the 4-5 meters, of course on the dry land. In a dive, because of the absorption of the light by the water, our flash will be even less powerful.

Therefore, to try to take some beautiful portraits you must: 1) draw as near as possible to the animal 2) Frame the subject well, also by using possibly the zoom (without however exaggerating) 3) Remember always to use the flash forcing the shot with the special function of the camera (through menu or special button) 4) If possible use an external flash positioned aside (angle at 45∞) to work better with the shades and to avoid to get a flattened image 5) Have a good management of the delay at the shot of our compact camera; almost all compact digital cameras, before effecting the real shot, send forth some brief pre-flashes to focus the subject and to effect the exposure; not considering that often means to take the photo when the fish has already gone away or moved, irremediably ruining our composition.

Digital SLR cameras

With my Nikon cameras I make use of different lenses and I join them with Dome port planes, the classical Flat Port, and with Ports such as the Super Fish Eye or the Compact Dome Port.

The objective I use more often is surely the Nikkor AF-Micro 60 mms F2.8 D. Itís a lens for macro photo but its typology allows fantastic portraits. The 60 mm is famous among the fans of Nikon (Nikonists) and it is considered an exceptional lens both for its neatness and for its constructive quality.

Nikon D200, DX-D200 Sea&Sea housing, YS-90Auto flashgun, TTL converter II, 60 mm AF-Micro Nikkor F/2.8 D lens. 1/160th @ F 18. ISO: 200, Autofocus

Nikon D200, DX-D200 Sea&Sea housing, YS-90Auto flashgun, TTL converter II, 60 mm AF-Micro Nikkor F/2.8 D lens. 1/125th @ F 20. ISO: 200, Autofocus

For my portraits I often use the TTL. Often I work also in manual and I manage all the technical variables, from the exposure to the focusing to get the desired results.

The portrait is a true challenge, especially with the most bashful and timorous fishes; you draw near and the fish turns around hiding its face, or in a while it gets into some hole. For this a perfect buoyancy is needed, slowness in the movements and all the slyness typical of the photographic hunting. With some training and good will success is insured both when using a compact camera and an expensive reflex camera.

I suggest, at least at the beginning, to photograph little timorous subjects, the fishes that will let you approach more easily, allowing you to manage better the functions of your camera; for this, at least at the beginning, automatisms, exposure and automatic focusing are recommended. As you make progress, you will begin to feel the necessity to work in manual and you will demand more to your underwater equipment.

Another objective that I enjoy using for the portrait of the smallest animals is the Nikkor AF-Micro105 F2,8 D. This objective is more powerful than the 60 mm; used on the digital reflex camera... because of the Cropping (the Lcd sensor is smaller than the dimensions of the film for which the Micro 105 had been studied), it becomes very similar to a 180 mm. Itís an objective macro from any point of view. I also find it fit to photograph, with the technique of the portrait, all the bashful and timid fishes that will run away when you approach. We will succeed in taking shots similar to those taken with the 60 mm but staying much more distant (the minimum focusing is in fact at 75 cm). I recommend the manual focusing, the focusing motor drive of the 105 is a bit slow and often the dial of the housing allows very rapid and accurate regulations.

Soon I will try also the new Nikkor105 VR, a fantastic Macro objective that has a built-in optic stabilizer, soon some tests and a detailed article will be issued.

For bigger subjects (but not only for those) such as sharks, manta rays, etc., I prefer the Nikkor 20 mm F2.8 D. It is not an objective created exclusively for portraits but its focusing at only 25 cm and the ample frame range allows to shoot frames to big oceanic fishes from a really short distance. The only and big difficulty is drawing near, but with particular animals (such as manta rays) it is not often a problem.

Erik Henchoz
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Nemo33 - Dive another way

by Michel Braunstein

Born and raised in Belgium, I had the opportunity to dive quite a bit in the country's dark lakes and flooded quarries (Opprebais, Vodelée, Ekeren, Barrage de l'Eau d'Heure, and more). One of the features these sites all have in common is the freezing water!

Actually, I would have never had imagined that it would be possible to dive in clear 33°C tropical water in the very heart of Belgium. Surprisingly enough, I had the opportunity to do so in a very special place, the deepest swimming pool in the world located in Brussels, Nemo33 (http://www.nemo33.com).

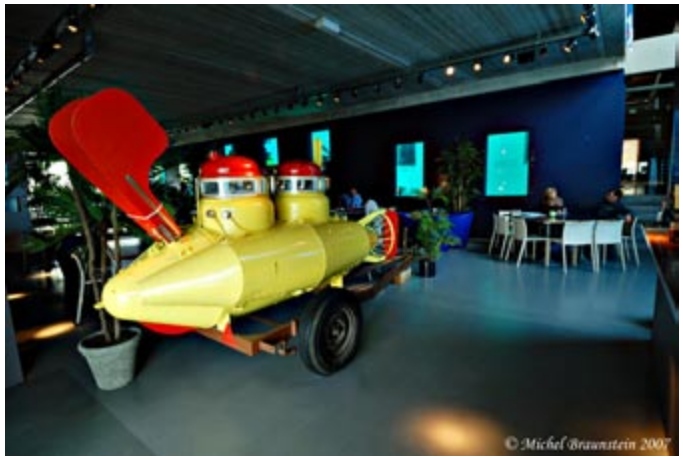
I arrived at Nemo33's on one of those typical Belgian rainy days. The organization was so meticulous that all the employees had "Smart" cars licensed NEM_022, NEM-033, NEM-O88, NEM-099. There was a small yellow submarine at the building's entrance. After entering, you could see the restaurant with soft lights and large deep blue windows facing the swimming pool. This sight definitely reminded me of Captain Nemo's Nautilus Submarine, only the monsters in the water were wearing diving gear!

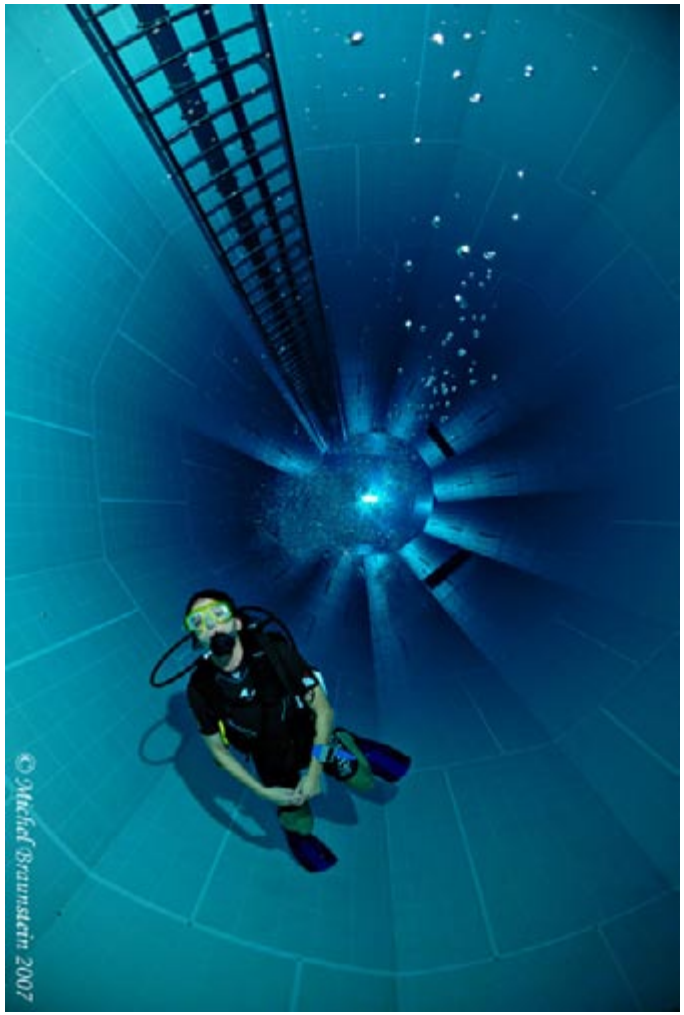
The few things I knew about Françoise Herman, the swimming pool manager prior to our meeting was that she had been in charge of a diving center for seven years in Sharm El Sheikh, that she owned a diving boat, and that she went through many adventures. Well, I thought I'd deal with a strong and authoritative person but in fact, she was a charming and sensible young woman.

We went up three floors to reach the swimming pool and I was given full diving gear (Tank, regulator, BC and fins). It's really fun to get to a diving spot without having to bring along a large and heavy bag full of equipment!

The place is very clean. All the equipment is modern, well set up and maintained to a high standard. On the pool's surface, a nice red Zodiac helps new divers learn to step off the boat and climb back into it after the dive.

When we were ready, Françoise took me to the deep end after going through the shallower parts of the pool. The deepest part of the pool is actually quite wide. We went through it slowly and after a few moments, she showed me her diving computer which displayed 35 meters. It's quite impressive to look upwards from such





a depth across serene and clear source water. It was really moving to observe the scene from the bottom through that wide cavity. There was no sunlight but instead the powerful glow of the electric light on the building's ceiling. What a splendid image!

After the "abyss", Françoise led me inside "caves" were we could stick our heads outside the water despite the fact that we were at a depth of 10 meters. The first cave was nicely decorated with stalactites on the ceiling and on the walls; my buddy did some meditation there. The second cave was decorated with submarine windows showing some underwater life. The third cave, not yet decorated, is used at the end of diving courses when the instructor opens up a bottle of Champaign and drinks it together with the newly certified divers to celebrate their success.

After our dive, we went to eat Asian food in Nemo33's restaurant in which they invested a great deal in the atmosphere, food standards, as well as service. I've been to numerous restaurants in sports centers but I have never tasted such delicious food in this type of environment. It's not surprising that many people working in companies nearby go there to have lunch, just to enjoy.

While at the restaurant, I was lucky enough to meet John Beernaerts, the fascinating man who had the Nemo33 dream and engineered the project. John used to be an engineer and one day decided to begin working independently. He is now managing Nemo33. Since for many years diving was his passion, he decided to integrate it into his professional life. He built Nemo33, the deepest pool in the world to date. Contrary to other similar pools which are dug directly into the ground, Nemo33's pool is built from the third floor of the building downwards, which from a technical perspective is much more complicated. When at the restaurant, you sit at a depth of -7 meters underwater.

After the meal, Françoise invited me to go on another dive. This was a real pleasure. No doubt that next time I am in beautiful Brussels or surroundings, I won't miss a dive at Nemo33.

In addition to enjoying a dive and having a fantastic meal at Nemo33's, you can take any PADI diving course as well as going to aqua gym or "Living better" courses.

Michel Braunstein
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www.nemo33.com

Mantangale Melange

By Stan de la Cruz

Alibuag is the local term for undersea freshwater spring. You read that right: spurting, ice cold, freshwater, under the briny sea. This natural phenomenon can be found in a number of dive sites accessed by the Mantangale-Alibuag Dive Resort (MADR). Looking like a column of dark oily water issuing from cracks in the seabed, diving through one of them is another world of experience. Vision gets clouded, the sound is akin to that of bubbles bursting from a bottle of soda, the feel is very cold, and the taste is definitely fresh…. Once I swim through and my vision returns, I notice the exquisite pastel hues of the scenery and realize that I am in midst of a soft coral garden. I peel my eyes off the reef scenery to take in a small school of barracuda and a shy eagle ray. But bright spots of color pull my eyes back and I see the nudibranchs huddled together, making sure that there is a next generation.

I had come to MADR to get my nitrogen fix and get away from the hassles of city life. Located on the northern shores of the Mindanao mainland, 80 kms. from Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines, it is one of the best kept secrets of Philippine diving. With access to more than a dozen dive sites, the location offers a variety of sites/ topography, conditions and critters that I find better than in the well known dive locales in the country.

The house reef in Banaug, is also known as “again” reef. I descended ahead of my group, down the buoy line to the reef top at 17 meters escorted by a squadron of batfish. Shaped like an underwater pinnacle rising from the depths, the top was crowded with plate corals, gorgonians and black corals and populated by groupers, snappers, trumpetfish, scorpionfish, and a host of other reef fishes. I watched the rest of the divers come down the buoy line, silhouetted by the blazing sun. The sound of approaching bubbleblowers stirred the inhabitants to life. Then the activity meter kicked up a notch when the divemaster started handing out fishy tidbits, even the eels poked their heads out of their hiding holes to gobble up scraps. Despite associations of a “house reef” with some hohum diving, guests have repeatedly asked to dive this site again, and again.

Sta. Ines wreck is that of a WWII pontoon boat. Looking like a railroad box car, it sits on a steep sandy slope starting at 10 meters down to 45 meters. Covered in black corals, it serves as home to snappers, grouper and sweetlips. The resident frogfish

(Top) Olympus C7070 in PT27,Manual F5.6 1/125 iso80, Inon M67 WAL + dome, Inon D2000 in sttl

(Right) Fuji E900 in ikelite case, Manual F6.4 1/200 iso80, INON M67WAL + dome, Inon D2000 in STTL

(Left & centre) Olympus C7070 in PT27, Manual F10 1/800 iso80, inon D2000 in STTL, inon UCL 165 (Right) Fuji E900 in Ikelite case, Manual F6.4 1/640 iso80, INON M67WAL + dome, Inon D2000 in STTL

was a very girlie pink that day. The surrounding reef had an abundance of soft corals and whips complete with gobies and xeno crabs. The previously fishbombed talisayan shoal was abandoned by the fisherfolk and over time has recovered enough to warrant a dive. The coral rubble is mostly on the sloping sides of the shoal with the top strewn by large boulders festooned with soft corals and leather corals. The fast growing specie of hard corals are of a good size. Mantis shrimp scurry about the rocks and toxic urchins march along the sand, many with Coleman shrimp amongst their spines. A dense patch of coral rubble serves as playground to some skittish mandarinfish.

I had a very memorable dive in nearby Lapinig island. We dropped down to 30 meters to pay a visit to a stable of shy bargibanti pygmy seahorses. After I had taken about a dozen pictures, the DM tapped me on the shoulder from behind. I turned around and he was pointing at a different looking seafan. Taking a closer look, I soon spied the object of his interest; a family of denise pygmy seahorses. Going back up the reef to Mandarin city, we settled down to watch the psychedelic colored fishes doing their frantic mating dance. Total darkness came down all too soon and we brought out our lights to continue the dive. The Tubastrea cup corals were soon in full bloom and other reef critters started coming out too. We spotted cuttlefish, anemone crabs feeding in the slight current and flatheads half buried in the sand. A crocodile snake eel was holding my attention when a signal from the divemaster brought me to his side. And there in the halo of his divelight was a mimic octopus. It was enjoying a meal and I blinded it with my strobe for a good 5 minutes before it found a hole down which it disappeared.

The next day dawned bright and clear. In the middle of breakfast, the call goes out that a whaleshark has entered a nearby bay and the dive boat was heading there in 5 minutes. A mad scramble ensues as my fellow divers and I abandon our meal, and head for the dive shoppe to kit up. In another 5 minutes we were in the water face to face with world's largest

Olympus C5060 in PT 20, Manual F6.4 1/250 isp80, Inon D2000 in STTL

Olympus C7070 in PT 27, Manual F6.4 1/100 iso80, Epoque WAL, Inon D2000 in STTL

Olympus C5060 in PT20, Aperture priority F5.6, Iso 100, manual white balance

fish; Rhincodon typus, known locally as tawiki, or better known as whaleshark. Such was the impact of it's presence that some divers quickly went through their air supply and had to surface, trying to keep in sight of the animal while snorkeling in full scuba gear! Dodong Uy, the dive guide, explained that this place used to be the biggest whaleshark fishery on the Mindanao mainland, and that it took a while to convince the hunters to stop this practice and instead, report sightings to the dive shoppe whose clientele forked out a "spotters fee" for the opportunity to be in the water with such a majestic fish.

We headed out farther afield to the current swept sites in the Bohol Sea. Burias shoal is a series of mini walls and slopes and is known as the haunt of the elusive manta rays. With the current threatening to blow us off the reef, we made our way down the anchor line to 30 meters. We saw a parade of horse eyed jacks and black snappers, and a large school of drums going up and down the water column, but alas, no mantas today. Disappointed, the other divers made their way back to boat. I lingered on, hoping that the diving gods would bless me with a manta fly-by. Instead, the current picked me up and brought me back to the anchor point. I grabbed hold of the rope and started to head back to the boat when I noticed movement near the rocks where the anchor was lodged. On a closer look I spotted a normally shy zebra moray snapping its jaws in protest at my intrusion. I surfaced to the rare sight of Camiguin island and Mt. Hibuk-hibuk without a cloud cover; and despite comments from the rest of the group that I was the anti-manta, I felt that the gods had not wholly abandoned me.

Cabuan is on the south side of Camiguin island. A moderate slope always awash in currents, it features boulders strewn about by some long ago upheaval, now covered in soft coral and green gorgonian trees. That day we had 90+ feet of visibility and a light current to push us along. Schooling bannerfish and Moorish idols were all around, Cuttlefish were in every other coral head, and we spotted an anglerfish in hiding behind some plate coral. In the shallows I spotted a goby sized hole that was emiting a dark cloud of very hot water, reminding me of the volcanic nature of the island.

Heading back in the general direction of the resort, we saw a pod of dolphins heading away from us. Our boat made a sweeping turn and we were soon parallel to the pod. The dolphins seemed to be in a hurry to get somewhere and did not linger to play and were soon out of sight.

Last stop of the day was in Sipaca point, Mantangale's claim to muck diving (minus the

2 views of Camiguin island

mud). Nudibranchs, anglers, whip gobies and whip shrimps were seemingly everywhere one looked. Titan triggerfish regularly patrolled the waters and the endemic mushroom coral eel were also spotted. I spied a giant angler and I positioned myself to take a nice portrait when it opened its mouth to yawn! I got off one shot and then spent the rest of the dive waiting for it to move again….When the needle on my pressure gauge went into the red, I reluctantly headed for the surface where the boat was waiting to pick me up.

Another blazing sunset ended a perfect day of diving. Like a conjurer pulling one treat after another from his hat, Mantangale had given me a glorious weekend break.

When I awoke next morning, the rain was falling.

If you are ever in this part of the world, I encourage you to take a peek beneath the waves of Mantangale.

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Adventure Mozambique

Story and Photos By Tim Rock

Whales and whale sharks. Mobulas and mantas. Bottlenose and humpback dolphins. Bull and great white sharks. They're all here waiting for ya. The potential of the place really sinks in from atop a rolling, sandy hill near the Mozambique coast.

Look inland. It takes but one evening watching a sunset from high atop an ancient dune overlooking broad plains of trees and rolling hills with not a telephone or power pole in sight and only two track roads meandering off in the distance to realize Mozambique is someplace special. Perhaps it is as close to the "real" Africa one expects. Look toward the sea. The sound of crashing surf and rolling seas stretch out across the horizon. The beaches are endless and there's no one on them but sea turtles.

Immediately crossing the border the change from South Africa to "Moz" is astonishingly apparent. Situated on the northern border of South Africa and along side the Indian Ocean, Mozambique is a country that boasts rich diving. Divers can spend a few days in nearby South Africa in the famous Kruger National Park hunting big game with a camera and then go for the undersea life as well. Just leave the Crocodile Bridge gate and drive toward Maputo.

There's a mostly one lane black top that carries divers north of Maputo to the hotspot of Tofo Bay. Mozambique is known as a year round diving destination. The best months to dive along this coastline are May to July, due mainly to more moderate temperatures.

History

Humanoids have been around Mozambique for over 2 million years, and Homo sapiens have been settling the area for at least 100,000 years. Starting around 2000 years ago, Bantu peoples (named for their language group) began migrating into the area, bringing iron tools and weapons with them. Toward the end of the first millennium, several towns along the Mozambican coast grew into Bantu trading ports with links to other parts of Africa, the Middle East and India. The Arab influence in these ports was strong, and Swahili was the lingua franca of trade.

The country was not always

Above: Yoko Higashide snorkels with a youth male whale shark off Tofo.

Right: A giant potato cod fills a crevice at Manta Reef.

Tim Rock uses Nikon D200 cameras and primarily the Tokina 10-17mm zoom lens in Aquatica housings. Ikelite strobes and TLC arms are part of the kit as well.

The rich mangroves of the Inhambane Peninsula.

Fishermen watch from their tiny boat as a humpback whale sounds

Divers from the Manta Research Center head out into Tofo Bay.

accessible and hospitable. A recent long, horrific civil war has scarred the country, shattered its infrastructure and left a million land mines scattered about the countryside. Much of its wildlife, including big game such as elephants and rhinos, was decimated by war, and much of its coastline has been ravaged by cyclones. Droughts and floods take turns rubbing salt in Mozambique's wounds.

But it seems Mozambicans are a resilient bunch. They have begun putting the past behind them and have begun rebuilding their country at a remarkable pace.

Mozambique is fast reclaiming its former status as prime seaside destination. Mozambique is a somewhat reasonably priced destination. Very comfortable dive travel is available for US$150 a day or less.

Most dives are done from 8m-rubber inflatable boats powered by 2x85hp+ motors. Dives sites vary considerably from approx. 7m down to a current-swept 35m plus.

Inhambane & Tofo

Divers head north up the coastal highway to the various venues along the expansive coast. Getting there is truly part of an amazing journey through Mozambican life. People center much of their lives and activities along the main roads. Kids swimming naked in swimming holes, women with immense bundles of wood atop their heads, men shooing cattle down the sandy path are all images gathered while careening down the oft potholed two-lane blacktop that winds north to the famous beaches and reefs. A boy hawks a small parrot in a handmade wire change. Young girls with baskets of red berries try to attract passing buyers. Buses with massive lists and a crushing loads huff down the highways. Pickup taxis brim to capacity with people.

Mozambique has become the escape of choice for northern dwelling South African divers. Many make weekend drives into "Moz" to enjoy the beaches and reefs.

About eight to ten to twelve hours drive up the two-lane (sometimes pocked) blacktop is a jutting peninsula. It can now divers can fly on small turbo-prop planes. Baggage can be a bit limited but it is fast and less bone-jarring. In two hours you're there from Johannesberg.

The newest hotspot is Tofo Bay. Protected and scenic, this bay holds some nice lodges and motels. The Casa Barry Lodge is the home of the The Manta Ray & Whale Shark Research Centre, small science outpost with a big job of trying to survey and protect the area's main attractions. You can hear whale shark and manta lectures at the lodge twice-a-week. Tofo Scuba is the main dive operation here. It's a PADI 5-Star with all kinds of training available. Longtime Moz diver John Pears runs the place and is still finding new dive sites along the coast.



Top left and center: Snorkeler Yoko Higashide cavorts with bottlenose dolphins and a young whale shark. Right: A large manta hovers over the cleaning station.

Manta Reef

The premier site of the Inhambane coastal peninsula is without a doubt the massive manta cleaning station. Manta Reef, as it is cleverly called, starts in about 20m of water along the top of a rocky and craggy ridge.

Divers are always on the lookout heading for the site. Whale sharks feed along the coast and seasonal humpback whales breach and play amazingly close to shore. Sometimes they even come right into the shallow Tofo Bay. We slipped in to the water with a pod of bottlenose dolphins and the pod playd with us for a while before moving on to better things. We were told we were snorkeling in the same place a diver had seen a great white shark the year before!

The Manta Reef reeftop is featureless although there are some cracks and crevices. Its full of many sea anemones in amazing numbers. Soft leather corals also thrive here and stubby but brilliant red soft corals feed in the constant flow. The attraction is not only the mantas but also the holes, valleys and cracks that run along either side of a ridge bottoming out at 27m on the shoreward side and 31m on the seaward side. Here schools of striped snapper congregate in large numbers along with shoals of bigeyes and lots of red fang triggerfish.

The cleaning stations here are also the place to see large and somewhat docile potato cod.

But the reef got its name for the mantas and they are there feeding in the current and swooping in for cleaning. According to resident marine biologist Andrea Marshall, this relatively unexplored section of the Mozambican coastline boasts what appears to be one of the largest most stable populations of mantas in the world. She has seen upwards of 30 mantas on a single dive being cleaned at the various cleaning stations. She feels over 400 mantas actually live and thrive in the area. Her years of research at the Centre leads her to believe the consistency of the numbers of mantas on these coastal reefs is unparalleled. Manta Reef is consistently being used by mantas throughout the year.

There are actually three main cleaning stations that the mantas visit. And these mantas are generally huge. The biggest are mostly females. Mantas can be seen in numbers of up to 30 rays at a time. They circle a reef flat area looking for a quick clean from a wrasse and can get quite close to divers if one says still and doesn't chase them. The largest ray may exceed 7m across.

And one odd thing about this population is well over 70% of the mantas have some sort of shark bite. Some have huge crescents taken from

A resident school of batfish hang in th current in the waters above Manta Reef.

A beach launch is a daily chore along the sandy coastline here.

their wings and rear areas. Others are even missing a mandible. Many have no tails. In all, it is tough to be a manta in these waters. And even though large sharks are rarely seen on this reef, they are evidently here. Not only are the mantas a testament to their presence, but bait balls often boil in the water only to dissipate in a flurry of writhing fins and tails at the surface of the Tofo sea. So the sharks are here. Zambezis (bull), tigers and even great white have been reported in the area.

Divers can also look for mobulas, eagle rays and the occasional reef shark to cruise by. Sometimes the toylike mobulas come in to clean with the giant mantas. And marble rays and guitarfish can be seen in the sandy flats off the reef in the sand or under crevices. Sea turtles like loggerheads and even leatherbacks are here as well as lots of other tropicals and the collection of goldies (anthias) is amazingly colorful and active.

Ascend the buoy line and decompress in open ocean keeping an eye out for whale sharks as they like it here and are sometimes seen feeding over this reef.

This is one of those dives where the diver wished he or she could stay all day. Even as we ascended, the batfish patrol reappeared and then six giant rays moved across the reef directly below us. Few dives have the consistent electricity and variety this place has and even fewer can package it all in one submersion. This little spot off the continental shelf is a truly superb site by any and all standards.

As if the mantas aren't enough, one of the many great attractions in Mozambique waters is the chance to see and dive or snorkel with a whale shark, Rhincodon typus. The focal point of this endeavor is the area south of Tofo Bay but they can cruise the shallow northern coast as well. The sharks here are feeding happily on an abundance of plankton in the water. Encounters of up to ten whale sharks of all sizes have been reported in a two-hour span. This relatively shallow expanse is only 5-30m deep.

For best results, snorkel with the shark and don't touch the big fish. Some get spooked and dive down away from snorkelers but others get curious and actually seem to want to play, slowing to swim with the snorkelers. Even though them seem to be barely moving, whale sharks are cruising at a pretty brisk clip. Watch the graceful motion of the largest fish as it seines food. When the whale shark does decide to leave the presence of its short-term guests, it may does an almost balletic move, twisting tail and body and showing off its white underside as it careens downward into the abyss. The rays of the sun reflect in shafts through the water and make the departure of the shark and amazing sight to see.

More Tofo

Beachy and laid back, this tip of the peninsula is blessed with an eastern sunrise and a western sunset over the mangroves. Waters are plankton rich and feature whale sharks in season and plenty of game fish and sea life. It isn't a luxurious place to stay and pushing the boat into the surf every day can be a real chore, but rewards are worth the efforts. This is the ocean at its finest. Wild Tofo.

There is also another manta cleaning spot called The Office. On one dive we saw twin leopard moray eels, a manta with white wingtips and small valleys and gorges with lots of sea life. Anemones colonies were encased in soft bristle corals. There were Goldies, triggerfish and lots going on. When

The coastal dunes and broad beaches are excellent places to watch the sun rise

we surfaced, a huge leatherback turtle was sunning itself close to our RIB.

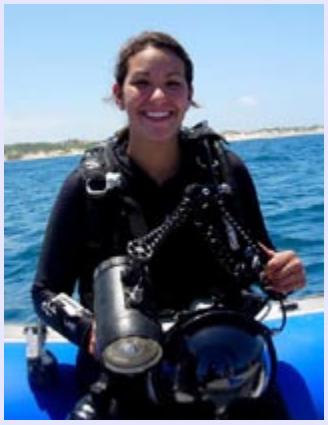
Also nice are the shallow reefs just out from Casa Barry Lodge. There are very good sites for small fish life and juvenile fish. Linkia starfish releasing, dragonets, many nudibranchs, oyster, crocodilefish, green mantis shrimp, glassy sweeping huge numbers with baby barracuda.

More and more of the coast is being explored and the wealth of big marine life here is just beginning to be fully appreciated. From migrating whales to whale sharks to one of the world's most incredible manta array populations, this piece of the African coast delivers. It is a diver's dream vacation and a special part of the world.

Tim Rock
www.doubleblue.com

Manta & Whale Shark Research Centre

Researching, protecting and conserving the marine life of Mozambique



The Manta Ray & Whale Shark Trust is a non-profit organisation formed in 2004 to encourage and facilitate research, conservation and education on manta rays and whale sharks in southern Africa. As a result of hunting and war, large land animals are scarce in Mozambique. This costs the country millions in lost tourism revenue each year as it is bypassed by the 'safari circuit'. However, marine life in the country is outstanding.

Mozambique may have the largest populations of mantas and whale sharks in the world, presenting a major addition to ecotourism in southern Africa and a point of difference for Mozambique itself.

These massive fish are now the focus of a burgeoning tourism industry in the south of the country, providing much-needed employment in one of the poorest countries in the world.

The Manta Ray & Whale Shark Trust is now conducting world-leading research in Mozambique on the ecology and conservation of mantas and whale sharks.

To learn more about the work of Drs. Andrea Marshall (left), Simon Pierce (centre) and locally born boat driver Gulamo Mamudo Ismael (right) go to:

http://mozmarinescience.googlepages.com

Open Fotosub El Hierro 2007

Linda Pitkin went as an invitee on the jury to an annual underwater photography competition in the Canary Islands. The 11th Open International Fotosub Isla de El Hierro was held from 22-28 October, 2007. Here Linda recounts her impressions of an eventful and very enjoyable week.

The horn sounds at 9 a.m. and the race is on. A fleet of RIBS speeds out of La Restinga harbour, jostling for position as they carry the competitors to their allotted dive sites, each team keyed up for the stressful task of making the best possible photos in 60 minutes underwater. The three days of competition of the 11th Open International Fotosub Isla de El Hierro have started now in earnest.

This Fotosub is a prestigious annual event with big money prizes, and this October it attracted 22 underwater photographers with their models or assistants, mainly from Spain and the Canary Islands and a few from Germany and France. As fate will have it, something is bound to go wrong for somebody when it really counts, and German photographer Andreas Koffka had a disastrous first dive when his memory card persisted in giving an error message despite him surfacing twice, getting back on the RIB, and opening the camera housing to try and fix the problem.

It is incidents like this that made me glad I was on the jury, and our boat left half an hour later for us to enjoy a relaxed dive with no pressure on us other than the watery kind. Fine weather meant that we did not have to contend with the rough seas that made the competition more challenging the previous year.

1st Prize went to Arturo Telle and Teresa Rodriguez

It was my first visit to the Canary Islands and, after 28 years of diving, my first experience of something in between Britain and the tropics, and I was pleasantly surprised. Firstly, as I hit the water, it was a relief to find I could manage OK in the still warm season with my one piece 5 mm wetsuit, plus hood, and I didn't regret that I'd been unable to squeeze the second piece, my top jacket, into my bulging luggage. Then, the water clarity was impressive, 20 metres or more visibility, and the marine life was fascinating as it was all new to me. I could see plenty of scope for the photographers in the competition, with striking volcanic scenery all around and a good diversity of fish and other animals including an abundance of some of a tropical nature, such as parrotfish, trumpetfish and filefish. El Hierro has a richer fauna because it is the most southerly of the Canary Islands with slightly warmer waters than the others. Helping to preserve the coastal area around La Restinga, at the southern

Best macro (close-up): Jesus Villalba

Best wide angle: Carlos Villoch & Maite Uribarri

end of the island, is a marine reserve where there are restrictions on fishing and diving is mainly limited to sites marked by buoys.

Not much English is spoken on the island and, struggling to recall any of my rusty Spanish picked up during fieldwork in Costa Rica 11 years ago, I was glad that the dive briefings just before we dropped in off the boat were brief. For Brian and I it was a case of suck it and see. On one dive I followed Brian to a small pinnacle at about ten metres, but I knew we must be in the wrong place. Straining my eyes far out into the hazy blue, I caught a glimpse of bubbles, and heading across a stretch of open water we eventually found our group diving around a massively tall pinnacle that dropped to the sand at 40 metres.
I enjoyed all the dives we did, especially El Bajon and El Desierto. Pelagic fishes swirl around the sheer current-scoured faces of El Bajon, and several large groupers too, but my favourite grouper had to be docile and photographer-friendly Pancho, the resort's 40 kg mascot that lives at El Desierto among the rocks 30 metres or so down. There is currently a move to save him from the threat of being fished, so that he can enjoy the full 50 years such a grouper might live to.

The competitors dived twice a day and submitted two photographs to be judged each of the first two days, plus two extra on the third day, that they had taken on any of the three days. The standard was very impressive and a pleasure for us in the jury to see, but quite hard work to make the all-important decisions in the scoring, especially on the last day when we had to go through all the 176 pictures to make the final selection of the top ten teams, best wide angle and macro, best model, photo most representative of El Hierro, and our favourite photo of a Canary Islands parrotfish. This fish is the emblem of the event and something of a local speciality not just in the water but rather disconcertingly on the restaurant menus too. It does seem just a little a bit unfair to spend the dive establishing a rapport with a fish and then go and eat it for dinner!

The jury was made up of three from Spain and the Canary Islands, plus the Hungarian underwater photographer Tibor Dombavani, and myself, making for an international mix. After much deliberation we were happy to pick as the overall winner Arturo Telle from Gran Canaria with his model Teresa Rodriguez. Arturo's collection of eight images was spectacular. Second place went to David Barrio and Luisa Quintanilla, and third to Julio DÌaz and Esther Torrent.

The organization of the Fotosub was excellent and a credit to the tireless efforts and attention to every detail of Carlos Minguell (three times world champion of underwater photography) and his team of helpers. The scale of the event was amazing in the small, quiet, fishing village of La Restinga. El Hierro is the smallest and least touristy of the Canary Islands, and the Fotosub is the event of the year for local people too, young and old. The enormous marquee erected on the harbourside to stage the shows was full to overflowing on the night of the awards, when we were entertained by an amusing and cleverly put together film of the competition, and a terrific instrumental band including a brilliant timple player (a characteristic Canary Islands instrument). In the main street of La Restinga a fiesta continued through the night, and as we prepared to leave for our early morning flight home, the young locals were still dancing to the throb of the disco.

Linda Pitkin
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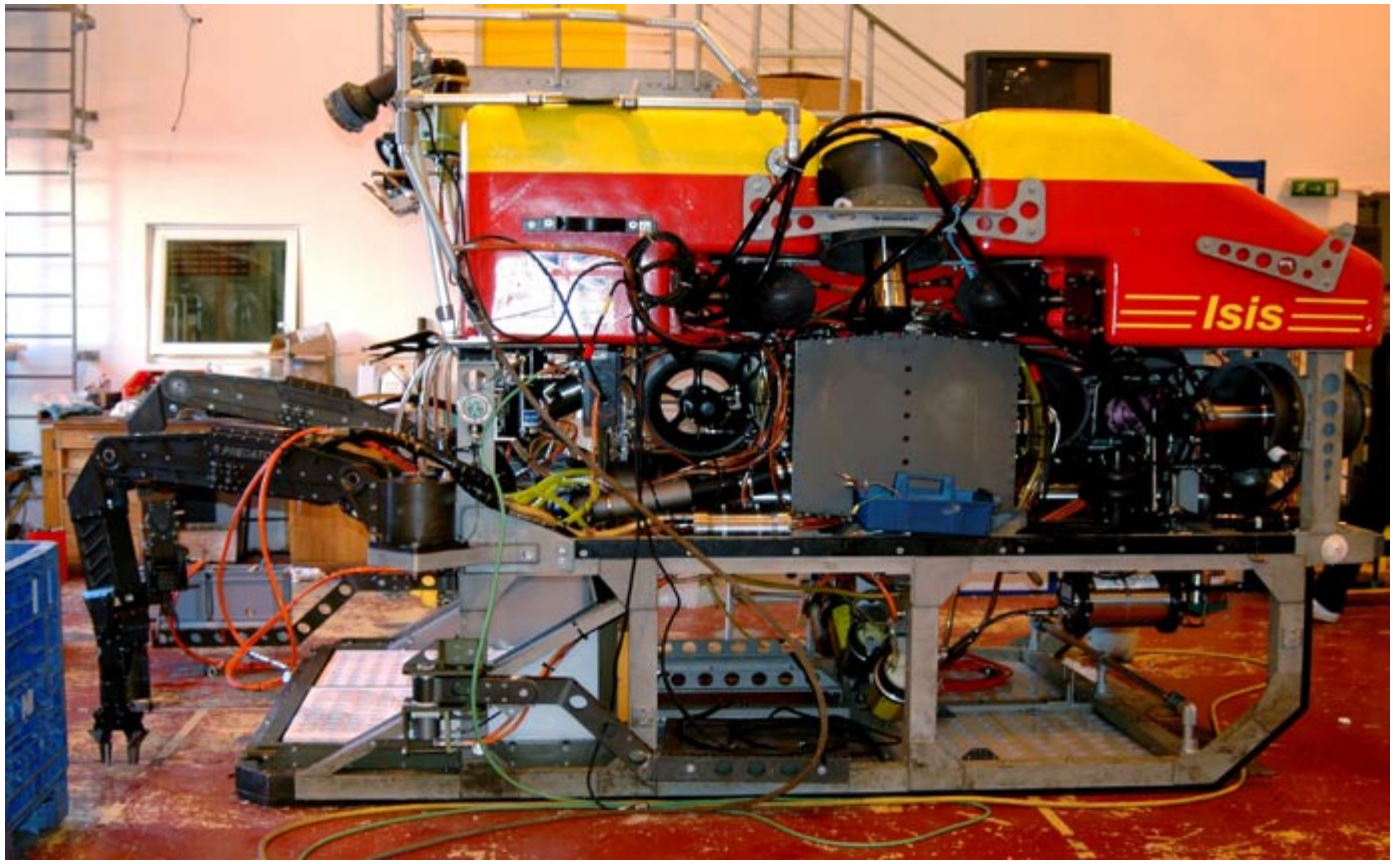
"Gelatinous bonanza" for the deep ocean beasts by Mario Lebrato

When we "human animals" feel hungry, a shop next to our home may fulfill our necessities, while the creatures that live thousands of meters deep in the oceans need to patiently wait for their "meal" to just arrive to them. Life forms in the surface waters of the ocean slowly sink once dead, disappearing and becoming part of the mysterious and unexplored abyssal depths below where no light from the sun can reach. Thanks to the advances in technology, scientists can now observe the mighstiest corners of the ocean with the aid of ROVs (submarines), or Remote Operated Vehicles, in real time, thus challenging and describing the fait of animals that where once in the surface, but are now deep into an "ocean of mystery". These incredible pieces of gear allow a wide range of functions and sampling possibilities, with several cameras and controlled arms that can grab, twist, or suck almost any type of sample.

At present several research lines are delving into the knowledge of what happens to jellyfish-like

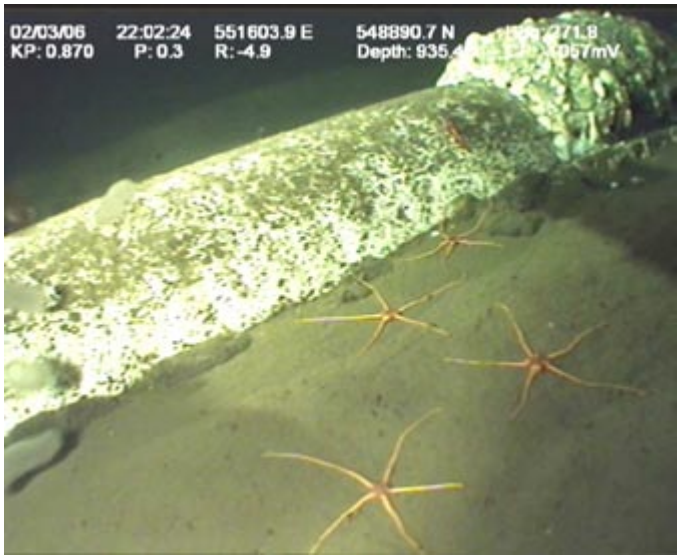


(Top) ROV Isis in the National Oceanography Centre. A similar one was used in the Ivory Coast study.

(Left) Pyrosoma moribund corpses at 1251 meters, with a sea star Solaster sp. feeding.

(Right) Angular Roughshark Oxynotus centrina near the pipelines. Probably they will scavenge or predate on other animals and not directly on Pyrosoma corpses.

Anemone, probably Actinostola sp. feeding in the middle of a patch of Pyrosoma accumulated in the continental slope channel.



Ophiuroids feeding on the sandy bottom.

creatures once they die and sink to the bottom of the ocean. A creature scientifically named as Pyrosoma sp., which forms part of the floating life in the surface waters (or plankton) is a close "relative" to jellyfish, gelatinous creatures by nature that form massive swarms at the very ocean surface. Once Pyrosoma die, their moribund bodies sink down to deep waters in mass as it can be seen in the image, where an incredible number of creatures feast on this "bonanza" indirectly "manufactured" by the action of the sun. This is so because Pyrosoma feeds on floating algae commonly known as phytoplankton, which carry out photosynthesis, taking advantage of the well-lit surface waters of the ocean.

The study was carried out in 2006 off West Africa in Ivory Coast, as part of the SERPENT Project in collaboration with the oil industry. ROV videos were retrieved from surface waters down to more than 1000 meters along oil pipelines, and this enabled the possibility of studying the fate of Pyrosoma once they die and became available for the creatures down to 1000 meters. These findings add new and intriguing data into the food resources available for deep ocean animals that were once believed to be only derived from phytoplanktonic production. A recent study in 2006 by David Billett and colleagues in the Arabian Sea described for the first time the fate of jellyfish creature's mass deposition in the deep ocean, but direct feeding observations such as the ones provided in our recent study are extremely rare. This study shows how important episodic food events may be in maintaining ecosystem functionality and ecological diversity. This work is not only attractive from a scientific point of view, but also from a photographic perspective, since new behaviors and curious "animals" can be framed. Bringing images to the surface from more than 1000 meters is a challenging business and the quality is not as good as conventional underwater photography. The images are rather quantitative than qualitative, and they rely on their uniqueness even if they are poor in terms of artistic composition. ROV imagery is proving as a powerful tool in science, and I think it not only needs to be used to drive scientific initiatives, but also the public needs to get some kind of visual access to experience what is going on in the abyss.

The science behind the images

Population explosions of jellyfish and other zooplanktonic gelatinous organisms are common in the oceans, affecting shallow ecosystems processes and dynamics. Their production in mass has been known to potentially affect the transfer of organic matter (carbon) to the deep sea benthos, thus providing additional resources to an already "low food" environment (as the deep sea is sometimes described). Organic carbon can enter the deep sea ecosystem as small detrital particles, episodic deliveries of large organic parcels such as large animal carcasses, actively swimming/dead zooplankton, turbidity currents, and macrophyte detritus (as described by Rowe, 1981). The relative importance of these organic carbon pathways is widely recognized to vary between habitat and distance from the neritic waters, although practical quantification remains still in its infancy (after Gage and Tyler, 1991). The present use of ROVs

Inside Isis ROV control box.

will certainly facilitate the quantification of these episodic events, which are know to act as "historical vectors" of food down to the deep ocean.

Populations of Pyrosoma, which are known as salps, feed on phytoplankton at the surface waters, and collapse once particle concentrations exceed an approximate threshold of 1 mg Chl. a m-3 (as defined by Perissinotto and Pakhomov, 1998). This is related to the inability of salps to regulate their filtration rate, and avoid clogging of the feeding apparatus. The use of Chl. a maps in this study enabled to monitor at a local and regional scale the phytoplankton concentrations in the months prior to the observation of Pyrosoma at the bottom, thus relating their benthic availability with the production in the surface. Passive sinking of the bodies coupled with deposition at the seabed and subsequent transfer by turbidity currents, canyons and channels may explain their appearance in the deep sea benthic environment. The "patchy" nature of the deposition along with its spatiotemporal heterogeneity may create hotspots of organic material from the continental shelf of Ivory Coast down to the abyssal depths. This certainly influences the community distribution and diversity adding new insights and controversy into the changes in diversity with depth, which is not only a function of the "pressure" but may also covariate with organic matter availability and other environmental factors.

Implications for the future

Going beyond pure observational and rationale interpretations, it is known that climate change will affect the distribution and abundance of jellyfish-like creatures with a tendency to overpopulation. This certainly will lead to changes in the flow of food they provide that sinks directly to the benthic inhabitants. It is known that large patches of organic material can cause anoxia due to oxygen consumption/exhaustion, and that excesses in food inputs lead to a reduction in diversity and a tendency towards opportunistic behaviour. In this subtle way, ecosystem dynamics are believed to be altered as a consequence of global changes, with major implications in the relationships between trophic levels. We are still discovering how deep sea animals get their food supplies, and we are still keen on finding out what global changes may bring to their life-styles and ecology. Some people think everything would change, others believe in genetic adaptations and fast evolution at the genetic level towards adaptive strategies. Personally, I believe that species-specific and ecosystem-specific effects will be the reality in the future, since different life strategies and histories may lead to different ways of coping with the same pressures. We as individuals may be able to do something from our sides, our "little bit" in all of those daily activities that added globally make up the big one. Even if we know that our primary actions will not be manifested in real time in something that is tangible for us, our "materialistic nature" may at least feel a bit of relief in knowing that "it was our intention" to do something.

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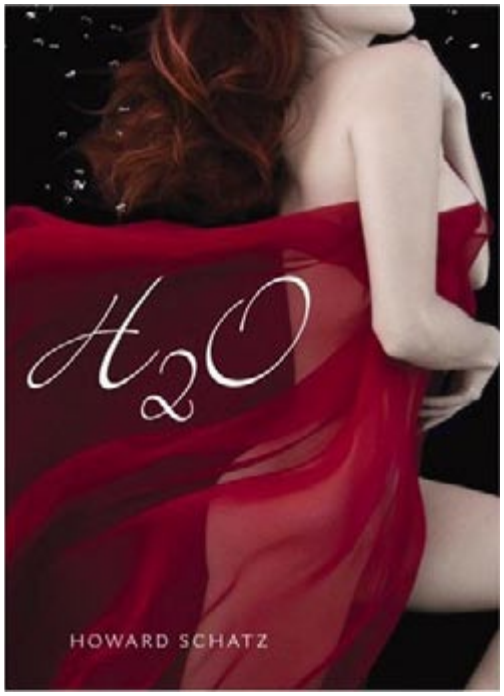
Thanks to the SERPENT project for providing the opportunity to get these images, the oil companies involved, the Baobab Oil Field in Ivory Coast, and CNR international, Sonsub, and the DP Reel vessel, which did the survey.

Book Reviews

H20
By Howard Schatz



'H20' is an extraordinary visual feast of images taken by this New York photographer and compiled into a beautifully printed 180 page 14" x 10.5" coffee table book.

The images are in the main taken underwater in a pool with precisely controlled lighting and physically articulate models to produce images of great beauty, richness and complicated simplicity.

In a strange sort of a way it is often what is left out that can contribute so much to an image and I began to realise that most of my favourite ones in this book were those where there seemed to be no water! The background was jet black and the model weightlessly suspended, adorned by diffused, pastel chiffon. A combination of great elegance.

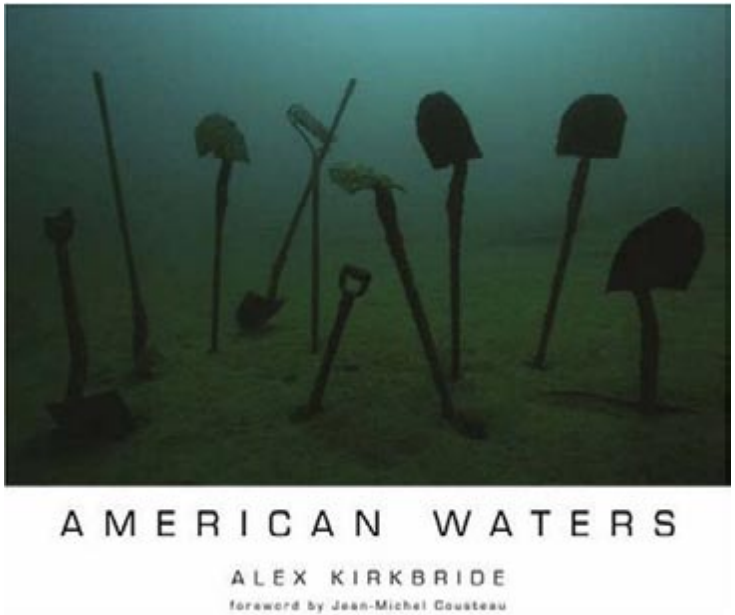
The introduction by Owen Edwards is precisely informative and provides an experienced insight into the photographer and his wife and business partner Beverly J. Ornstein. Together they have worked with the medium, used its reflections and lit its depths to great effect in what are, for the most part, personal projects. The Cirque du Soleil section, however, was a commercial assignment which combines everything magical about the troupe themselves and Schatz's photographic talent and for me this was the highlight of the book.

The teamwork required is reflected in the Acknowledgements section and goes to prove that beautiful simplicity takes many talents to pull it off. Water has never looked so good.

H20 is published by Bullfinch Press and costs $60.

www.howardschatz.com

American Waters
By Alex Kirkbride



I was very pleased to learn that Alex had been brought up in England where, I have no doubt, English eccentricity must have rubbed off on him and to prove it, I offer you this book.

'American Waters' works on so many levels glued together by water. Part road trip and part dive trip yet a very personal and at times splendidly silly (cows from their water tank, New York cabs from a blocked drain?!) journey.

The basic premise was to visit every US state and report photographically on the nation's water both salt and fresh. This was achieved over a 3 year period covering 50 states based in a classically American Airstream motor home pulled by equally American SUV. The combo was 55 feet long!

Many well thought out projects don't achieve their goal but this one keeps on track and produces a range of images which are both straightforward and surreal (a cranberry bog?!). On the way we learn of the people and their landscapes, see natural and unnatural subjects and all photographed from a watery perspective.

The result is a book which is far from ordinary and the author has gone that extra mile to capture the extraordinary in a gloriously informative way.

'American Waters' is published by David and Charles.

www.alexkirkbride.com
www.davidandcharles.co.uk

Peter Rowlands
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New Yap Book by Tim Rock

Tim Rock is happy to announce a new hard cover book highlighting the culture, beauty and nature of Yap in Micronesia. This full color book contains over 300 photographs of the people, culture, nature and marine world of Yap in Micronesia.

Award-winning photojournalist Tim has compiled some of the most stunning images ever taken on Yap to create a beautiful hard cover volume. A must for island lovers, divers and travel buffs.

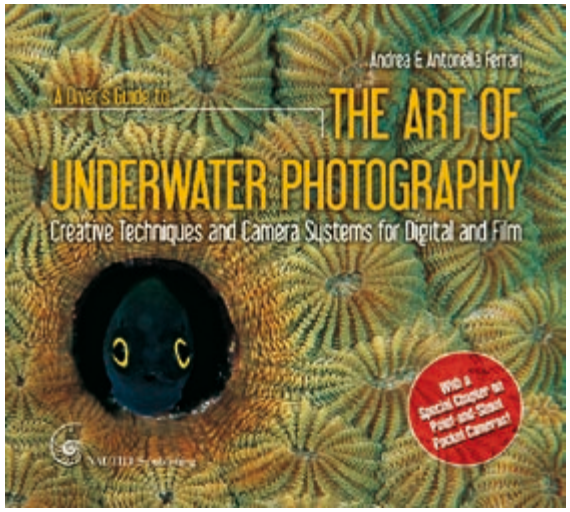
Large Format Landscape 13x11 inches (33x28 cm) 192 pages.

You can buy it at:

http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/143868

One glitch... as of now, this publishing company uses Swiss Post and UPS. UPS is very expensive so it may be cheaper for those outside of the US to send the book to a friend in the US using UPS ground and have the friend forward the book using the regular mail.

A Divers Guide to the Art of Underwater Photography is now available worldwide!



Eight highly enjoyable chapters about motivation, equipment, technique, mindframe, philosophy, artistic influences, cameras, housings, strobes, macro, wide-angle, portraits, topside surface interval photography and many, many other subjects. It's a big book - high-quality paperback, 360 pages, 300+ large photos, 25 cm x 22,5 cm, printed on glossy heavy paper.

Illustrated with a spectacular selection of some of our best shots plus image contributions by some of the world's best professional and amateur underwater photographers - including Doug Perrine, Tony Wu, Charles Hood, John Scarlett, Alex Mustard, Eric Cheng, Stephen Wong, Takako Uno, Alberto Luca Recchi, Fiona Ayerst and many, many others. A Diver's Guide to the Art of Underwater Photography strives to be completely different from all other guides currently on the market - not only it is produced on heavy glossy paper by the highest color separation and printing standards to coffee-table top-level quality, it also features scores of select spectacular images by some of the world's most influential professionals but also by many extraordinarily gifted amateurs from all over the world, reinforcing the basic them underlying it all: that taking great underwater images has less to do with camera models or technical trickery than with the "art of seeing" and the willingness to react on instinct, recognizing beauty when it appears in front of us. It strives to teach how to use one's own eyes. Each photograph - all three hundred of them! - is extensively captioned illustrating technique, equipment used, location, creative choices and final results.

Available from select retail shops,

www.nhbs.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:

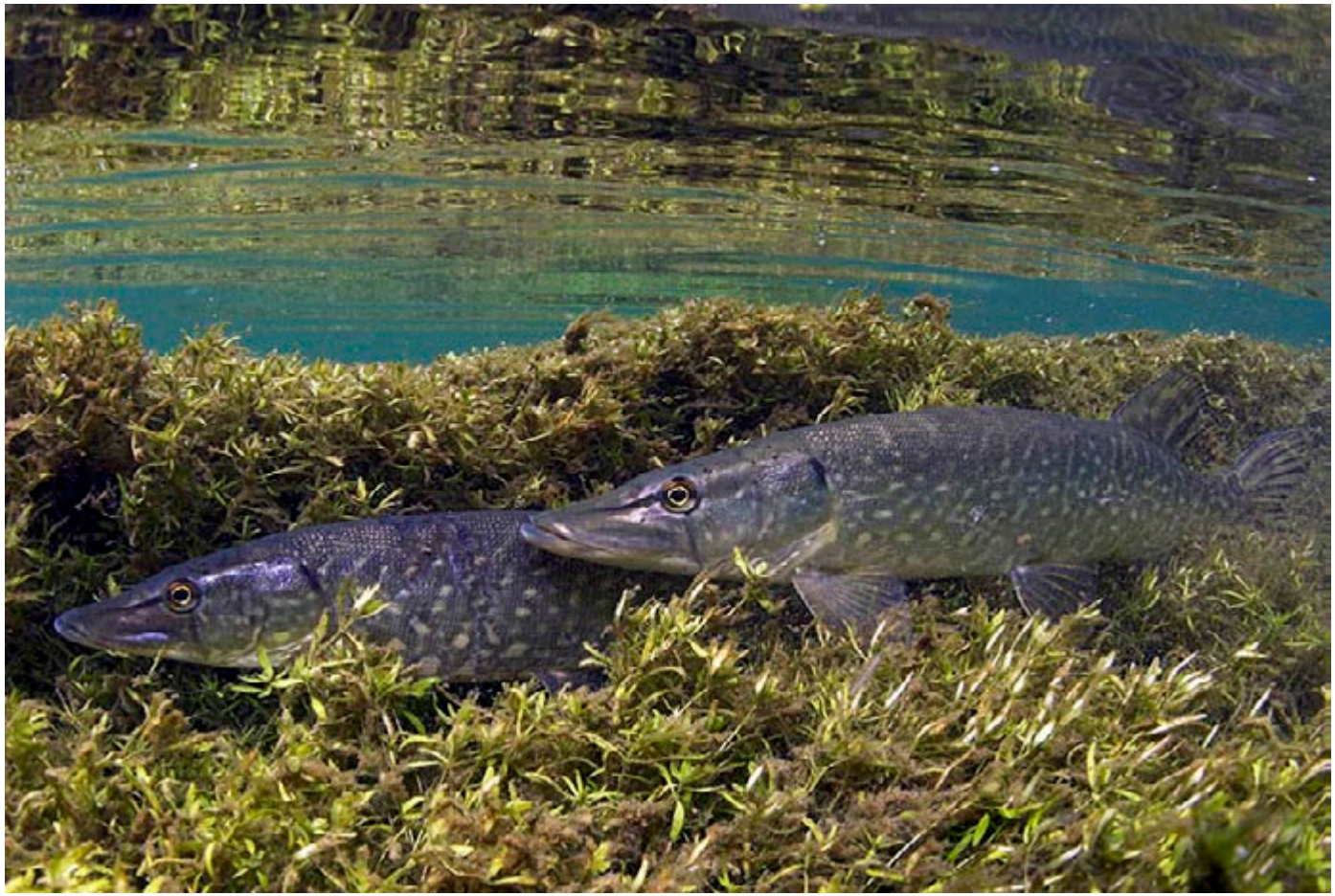
1. The text should be saved as a TEXT file and attached to the e mail
2. Images must be attached to the e mail and they need to be 144dpi

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



The pike image nearly didn't make it into binary format. I had gone to the Wildfowl and Wetlands centre near Arundel hoping to shoot more split level duck images, but the birds were just not interested in posing for the camera and nothing avian-focused was working. I decided to take a break from our feathered friends and walked to a nearby stream. The stream drained from a nearby millpond into a tidal section of the nearby river Arun.. The south of England is dominated by chalk hills which soak up the (copious quantities!) of rain, filter the sediment and then rise as crystal clear springs at the foot of the hills. What made the stream a joy for underwater photography is the clarity of water.

Any walk wearing a drysuit and carrying a housing soon becomes a trek and by the time I reached the stream I wished I had taken up cross stitch or chess as a hobby. I sat on the bank to cool down. A pike was twisting its way up and down one of the weed lined channels. As I watched the fish a few negative thoughts wandered into my head. Why bother? The pike will bugger off the moment it sees you leave the bank. All this effort and the pike will be just as frustrating as the birds. At times like this I banish these thoughts with simple phrase. "If you don't get in the water, you won't get lucky". And "the more times I get into the water, the luckier I seem to get!"

I clambered down the bank, pulled on my mask and fins and slipped quietly into the water. I'm not sure who was surprised most - me or the pike. We came face to face in the stream and to my surprise the fish didn't turn tail and take off in the opposite direction. Instead, he casually turned and flicked over a bank of weeds before turning to eyeball me. Inside my thoughts were screaming 'take the picture - any picture - before he disappears'. But I just relaxed and observed before starting to take pictures, hoping he would relax and cooperate. The pike let me get closer and closer. Gazing through the viewfinder I thought my eyes were playing tricks on me, for I could now see two pike. I lowered the camera and there were not one but two pike a mere 12 inches from the dome.

The whole shoot was over in less than 5 minutes. Two pike in crystal clear water close to the dome port. Sometimes you need to get into the water to get lucky.

Nikon D200 with 16mm (effective 24mm) lens. Subal housing Inon Z240 strobe F8 at 1/160th ISO100

Simon Brown
www.simonbrownimages.com

Parting Shot 2

Several times each year I am fortunate enough to travel to exotic locations to teach underwater photography.

Late in 2007 I found myself on the island of Yap in Micronesia a location that is famous for it's resident manta ray population which are sighted with great frequency in channels leading in and out of the surrounding reef.

I was on the island for several weeks and, as hard as this may be to believe, I got tired of mantas and wanted to record some of Yaps other marine life. For my last week I made it a point of going out as often as I could on any of the dive boats that were not going in search of mantas. The very southern end of Yaps reef structure extends out far from the island and comes to a corner that drops into open ocean. Visibility here is spectacular and the reef and drop-off supports a wonderful combination of sea creatures.

When speaking of underwater photography I often mention focus and I don't mean your lens. It is amazing what you can find if you hang out in one small section of the reef and really take your time and watch what is going on around you. That is where this image of the scorpionfish, Scorpaenopsis oxycephala, came from.

I had seen the scorpionfish and taken a few shots of him. He was in my tiny patch, but not really a subject I was concentrating on. A shy moray was getting used to my camera and each time I exhaled my bubbles would cause the surrounding schooling anthias fish to dart into the hole with the moray.

As we all got used to each other I saw a movement out of the corner of my eye and turned to see the scorpionfish (not far from my elbow) with it's mouth agape beyond what I thought possible. As I said to myself that I wish I got that shot, I went back to the moray. A few minutes later the scorpionfish repeated the great yawn and I decided not to miss it a third time. With the scorpionfish filling my frame I sat and waited…and waited… and waited. My persistence finally paid off and lightening struck for a third time.

David Fleetham
www.davidfleetham.com

Parting Shot 3

June heralds a yearly migration of divers from the British Society Of Underwater Photographers to the hunting grounds of Ras Mohammed for the annual event of shoaling snappers, batfish and barracuda. This year was no exception, a group of twelve photographers chartered the Tempest from Sharm El Sheikh and set off for the wrecks and reefs of the local area.

The weather was very calm and an early crossing to the Carnatic, Giannis D and the Chrisoula K set the trip in a mood of high expectations.

Alan the dive guide, ran a very good boat, most evenings we would watch him entertain the Egyptian crew with his card tricks and sleight of hand. Apparently in his “previous life” he had been a professional magician and belonged to the Magic Circle. Little did we know what he had in store for us.

On the third day after diving the Chrisoula K at Abu Nuhas we moved off to Shark Reef at Ras Mohammed. The dive started at 11am and I decided to put a 10.5 fisheye and 1.4 TC lens on my Nikon D70s. The batfish and large shoals of snapper were just off the vertical wall, so time was spent photographing their displays. Eventually we swam to the litter ground of Yolanda reef where the boat of that name floundered and shed some of its cargo of toilets and plumbing ware. We were towards the end of the dive and our guide Alan was hovering nearby. He suddenly started to point towards the surface, we thought maybe he had conjured up a whale shark, but no, out of the blue, a shimmering mermaid appeared. This was pure magic, so a controlled swim, camera at the ready, brought me within shooting distance. The flash as I took the shot alerted her to my presence. The mermaid a little startled, and her minder, finger waving, sent me back to a safer distance.

They proceeded down towards the wreckage where a diver was waiting with his large video camera. The model would take her air and swim dolphin fashion into the intended scene, then with lungs bursting she turned and rushed back to her life support. We watched mesmerised until our own air supply started running low. Finally , back on board the Tempest we raised our glasses and toasted the brave Mermaid of Yolanda

Nikon D70, with 10.5 Dx plus 1.4 tc in Subal housing and a pair of Sea and Sea YS 90’s strobes 1/60 f8.

Mike Davidge
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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