

Underwater Photography

a web magazine

June/July
2002

Kim Westerskov

Bonaire

Bubbles

Towards a fellowship

Spawning damselfish

Novice digital

Amsler photo course

Monochrome

Starting simply

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Underwater Photography

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e mail uwp@uwpmag.co.uk

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News, travel & events

Truk and Bikini combined with Scuba Safaris April/May 2003

Scuba Safaris have announced an unrivalled opportunity to dive the World War II wrecks of Truk Lagoon & Bikini Atoll in the same trip!

They have chartered the Truk Aggressor II and taken all the accommodation at Bikini Atoll for consecutive weeks, allowing you to first dive the wrecks of Truk aboard the Truk Aggressor and then the wrecks of Bikini Atoll.

They have arranged the



trips so that you can do both destinations or either one - you chose! The saving made by combining the two destinations in one trip is £1055!

The cost is £5025 per person in twin share and full details are available from:

Scuba Safaris
PO Box 8, Edenbridge, Kent
TN9 7ZS, United Kingdom.
E mail info@scuba-safaris.com
Tel 01342 851 196.
Fax 01342 851 197
www.scuba-safaris.com

3rd Annual San Diego UnderSea Film Exhibition

We are very pleased to announce the 3rd Annual San Diego UnderSea Film Exhibition on October 18 & 19, 2002 at the new state-of-the-art, large-format theater at the San Diego Natural History Museum in Balboa Park!

Each evening's program will consist of fourteen to fifteen short films of the undersea world, submitted by both accomplished professional and aspiring amateur underwater filmmakers and videographers.

We hope that you will put together a film of five minutes or less of your best underwater footage, and submit it to us so

that it is RECEIVED no later than August 1, 2001 for possible selection. Submissions are limited to three films/videos per filmmaker.

Films should have a soundtrack that compliments the visual footage and may include narration; although often narration can detract from the quality of the film and so should be well written and spoken if used at all. Filmmakers are also encouraged to consider narrating their works in person at the showing if your work is selected. No film should be longer than five minutes in length; and at least 50% of the footage must be underwater.

Please insure that no part of your film infringes upon any

rights, whether music, visual footage, personal, copyright, or any other legal right.

We are accepting mini-DV, VHS and Hi 8 tapes for consideration. Please submit a master copy if you are sending a VHS tape; or contact us if you have questions regarding the submission of VHS masters, or other formats not mentioned above.

Please send your entries to:
UnderSea Film Exhibition
c/o Chuck Nicklin The Diving Locker 1020 Grand Ave., San Diego, CA 92109 (858) 272-1120

Please include your name, address, phone, e-mail address, film name and length, and a brief bio.

**Indonesian Photo Workshop
with Mark Webster
5-16th November 2002**

North Sulawesi in Indonesia has been gradually building a fine reputation amongst underwater photographers for its amazing diversity of subjects including the unique experience of 'muck diving' in the Lembeh Straits.

The group will be staying at the Tasik Ria resort and the dive centre (Eco Divers) is on site with its own boat dock and two newly constructed spacious dive boats. The diving will be split between the dramatic coral walls and fringing reefs of the Bunaken Marine Park and the

extraordinary macro subjects of the Lembeh Straits.

The workshop includes 7 days diving during 10 days in Manado. For full details contact Oonasdivers and visit Mark's website.

info@oonasdivers.com
Tel: 01323 648924
markwebster@photec.co.uk
www.photec.co.uk
Tel: 01326 318307

**Underwater British Columbia
Photographic Society
Competition 2002**

The Underwater British Columbia Photographic Society is again sponsoring an international underwater

photography competition. Last year's competition was a great success, with over 460 entries from all over North America, Europe and Asia. Our 35 sponsors donated liveboard trips, dive holidays, photographic equipment and dive gear that were awarded to 22 talented winners in seven categories. We would like to invite you to participate in this, our fifth competition.

The closing date will be: 25th October 2002, at 11pm in Vancouver, BC, Canada.

The competition rules, categories and entry forms are available on their web site

<http://www.ubcps.bc.ca>

For more information visit email ubcps@hotmail.com

Divequest underwater photography trips

Bonaire

**Underwater photography
course with Linda Dunk**

Sunday 17th November -
Monday 25th November 2002



Linda will be on hand to review your processed films and will be encouraging participants to 'share your shots' with the group!

Charles Hood

**The Channel Islands of
Southern California**

Saturday 14th September -
Sunday 22nd September 2002



6 days diving including both boat diving around Catalina itself and all day shark diving trips out into the Pacific Ocean.

Martin Edge

**Travels with my camera:
Kungkungan bay**

Friday 27th September - Sunday
6th October 2002.



Join the Master Craftsman of underwater photography on a trip to the world famous home of weird and wonderful creatures: Kungkungan Bay

DIVEQUEST

Protected 2937

Telephone: 01254-826322 or e-mail divers@divequest.co.uk website: www.divequest.co.uk

The Ultimate in Underwater Photography Adventures

ATOL

St. Abbs and Eyemouth "SPLASH IN 2002"

The annual photographic competition at the St Abbs and Eyemouth Voluntary Marine Reserve takes place on August 24/25th 2002.

Photographs are taken on the first day within the reserve. The images are then developed and the winner is decided at the slide show in the village hall on the Sunday evening by votes from the audience.

Categories:

1. Marine Life Portrait: close up portraits of marine species.
2. Diver Scenic: underwater scenery with diver in frame.
3. Reserve Atmospheric: underwater or surface shot portraying the reserve.
4. Humorous: any funny aspect of the reserve/ inhabitants or visitors.

There are prizes for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners of each category and other prizes for best beginner, first and second overall winners.

Sponsorship has so far been obtained from Scoutscroft Dive Centre and St. Abbs Dive Centre. Many more prizes still to be confirmed.

The entry fee is £15, which includes the film, development and entry into the slide show on Sunday evening.

For further details contact Sarah Bowe,
Marine Reserve Ranger
C/o Rangers Cottage
Northfield
St. Abbs
Coldingham
Eyemouth TD14 5QP
E mail sbowe@nts.org.uk
www.marine-reserve.org.uk

Save \$2000 shooting Great White Sharks and \$1000 for Blue Marlin - but hurry!



Two of Amos Nachoum's clients have had to cancel their participation on the Great White expedition, South Africa and Blue Marlins in the Azores. They both had to forfeit their deposit.

He is offering a credit on this amount of \$2,000 for the brave souls that can make this speedy decision and join us in South Africa.

The Great White Shark trip dates are July 1 - ending on July 14 in Cape Town

Cost - \$6,200 - \$2,000 (credit) = \$4,200 excluding of airfare

Price includes eight days of diving activities with Great whites in Dyer Island and accommodations in Gansbaai, plus four days in Simonstown for Airjaws (shark leaping out of the water and Seal island).

There is also a place available for the Blue Marlin trip in the Azores on August 27 - September 08. This is on offer at \$1,000 off.

For more detail please go to <http://www.biganimals.com/greatwhiteshark.htm>

Amos Nachoum,
2000 Broadway # 1204 San Francisco CA. USA 415 923 9865

<http://www.biganimals.com>
amos@biganimals.com

Introduction to Underwater Photography course Dates: 20, 22, 27 June 2002



A practical introduction to the world of underwater photography for those who are interested in this fascinating and challenging subject. This is a beginners' course, requiring some general photographic experience. Participants must be comfortable underwater and have basic camera handling techniques.

Time: 10.30 - 5.30 (Sat),
6.30 - 9.30 (Thurs)

Tutor: Niki Sianni

Fee: £130.00 / 110.00 concessions

Level: Beginners

Contact: Photofusion 020 7738 5774

New products

Inon Z-220 New Miniature Strobe For Film and Digital Users

Building on the success of their unique Quad Flash Inon have now introduced a miniature strobe for both film and digital users. The T Flash, named for its dual flash reflectors, offers conventional TTL automation with the Nikonos, most housed Nikon SLRs and some Canon systems. For more creative lighting no fewer than ten (?) manual power settings can be selected. These settings also make the unit especially useful for digital systems where controlling the guns manually is still the norm. They allow for fine tuning of the exposures to suit personal taste. A slave is built in. By adding a fibre optic cable the T Flash can be docked to several of the Olympus own label digital housings and triggered from the cameras own flashgun. This provides more choice in lighting angles and greater flexibility for avoiding



backscatter in low visibility. This takes these cameras out of the point and shoot category and into the serious shooting arena. When cabled to a housed camera a powerful light automatically illuminates the subject to assist with aiming and focus when the shutter release is half depressed. An on board laser can also be used to confirm strobe aiming with the digital cameras or for times when the focusing light might be intrusive. The laser also uses less battery power and is



easier to see in very bright daylight.

The T Flash reaffirms Inons reputation for combining practicality and innovation and looks set for success. The T Flash costs £550.00 for the head only.

For further details contact Ocean Optics, 13 Northumberland Avenue, London WC2N 5AQ. Tel 44 (0)20 7930 8408. www.oceanoptics.co.uk

Sealife Reefmaster DC200

The Sealife Reefmaster DC200 is rated to 60 metres (200 ft) and houses a 1.3 megapixel camera with a 2x digital zoom.

The 8mb on-board memory can be supplemented by a compact flash card - a 32mb card will hold 64 high resolution images.

The system can be expanded to include a powerful external flash, close up lenses and accessories.

The price in the UK is £499.99 inc VAT.

For further information contact Sangers, Priory House, Pitsford Street, Birmingham B18 6LX.

Tel 0121 554 5540

www.sealife-cameras.com



MXTENDER

Optical strobe cable system for the Sea & Sea MX-10

The MXTENDER is the innovative fiber optic strobe cable system for the Sea & Sea MX-10 produced by GB Undersea of the USA. Now available in the UK through Ocean Optics this system will bring you a dramatic change to your photos with the Sea and Sea MX-10 system. By increasing the off camera distance between the MX-10 camera lens and YS40a strobe backscatter can now be dramatically reduced.

The MXTENDER has been designed with durability and ease of use foremost in mind. Its structural components are precision machined of corrosion-resistant tempered aluminum alloy, then matte finished and black anodized. The fiber optic fittings are machined of corrosion-proof 316 stainless steel. The MXTENDER integrates perfectly with the MX-10/YS40 camera system, mounting easily in place and allowing you to quickly and securely move the strobe on or



off camera.

The generous length of optic cable releases the strobe from camera to allow you to handhold the YS 40a strobe to the position you require for that creative shot. As this technique requires the use of both hands it can feel a bit more demanding, but can be fine tuned with practice.

Off-camera flash control is ideal when working in turbid water conditions, as is often associated with UK diving locals. With a little practice the MXTENDER can make shooting



in less than ideal visibility help produce excellent results in the most challenging of conditions.

For further details contact Ocean Optics Tel 44 (0)20 7930 8408. E mail optics@oceanoptics.co.uk or visit their web site www.oceanoptics.co.uk

Gates news

Gates new web site has been launched – check out www.gateshousings.com.

With the launch of the new site, all housings (except Guppy model) are now rated to 450 feet/ 138 meters. they've received great response from tech divers, many of whom are diving wrecks and caves to these depths.

They also have a new Multi

Port, an underwater changeable lens system that allows you

to change from Wide Angle to Macro in the same dive. Gates is the first to offer this type of system for video housings, and the response has been so good that they're already backordered.



“Don't Take a Chance, Take a Gates!

For further details, contact Gates Housings 5111 Santa Fe Street Suite H San Diego, CA 92109 858-272-2501 858-272-1208 Fax Email: JohnE@GatesHousings.com

Digital Imaging for the Underwater Photographer:

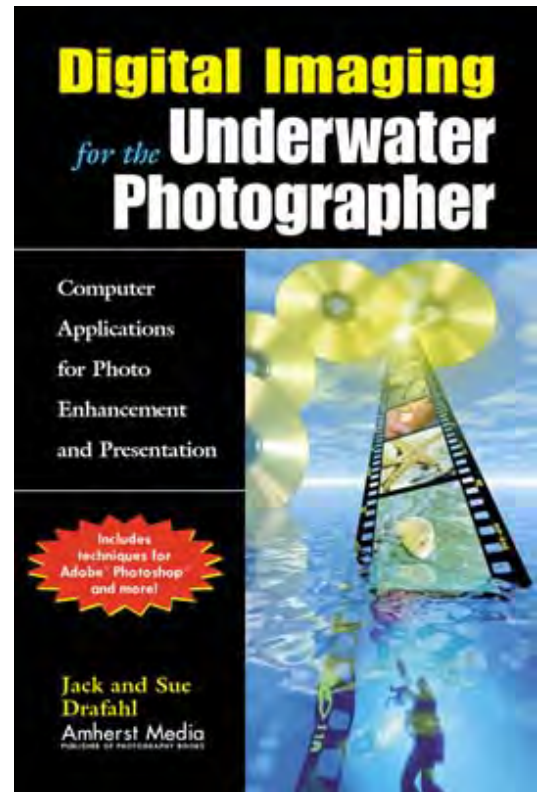
by Jack Drafahl and Sue Drafahl

This is the definitive guide to using digital technology to produce stunning underwater images. The Drafahls present the basics on using scanners, hardware and software, printers and film recorders. The information presented in the beginning of this book serves as a primer for the advanced tips that fill the balance of the book. Readers will learn how to balance color on their monitors, adjust contrast and brightness, reduce grain and repair flaws. Image composition and archival data storage is covered as well.

Jack Drafahl and Sue Drafahl are a husband and wife team of professional undersea journalists, lecturers and multimedia producers. They have written over 500 articles, which have appeared in, amongst others, Petersen's PhotoGraphic, Rangefinder, Photo Lab Management, Outdoor Photographer, and National Geographic. Sue holds a BA in Photographic Communication; Jack holds a Masters degree in Photographic Education. They have patented two inventions related to underwater photography. Both Jack and Sue teach seminars worldwide on all aspects of photography, both on land and underwater.

REVIEWS: "Neophytes will not get snowed with jargon and technicalities. The Drafahls draw on what they've learned in preparing hundreds of magazine articles and lectures on the underwater world." —Immersed

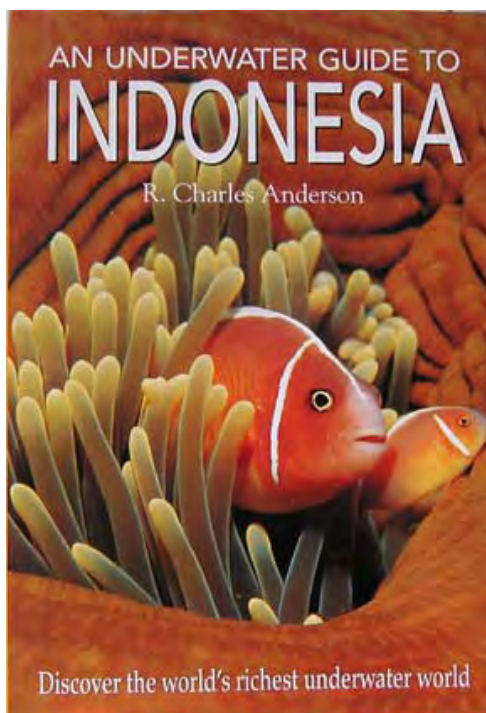
"Readers can learn how to eliminate backscatter, understand resolution and image quality, enhance fluorescence and macrophotography, and archive and



catalog images for safe storage and easy access." —Dive Training Magazine

PRICE: £29.95

For further details contact
Ocean Optics,
13 Northumberland Avenue,
London WC2N 5AQ.
Tel 44 (0)20 7930 8408.
www.oceanoptics.co.uk



An underwater guide to Indonesia by Charles Anderson

Judging by the number of articles I receive about diving in Indonesia this area could claim to be one of the most popular diving destinations in the world.

This 160 page hardback book is a lavishly illustrated identification guide which includes descriptions of the marine habitats, coral reefs and behavioural observations such as relationships, self defence and mimicry.

Measuring 23 x 16 cm, this book is the ideal traveling companion for those visiting the area and will provide them with extra knowledge to help appreciate and understand this diverse environment.

Peter Rowlands

Interview with Kim Westerskov

By Ross Armstrong

New Zealander Kim Westerskov is the only photographer to have received five first places in the prestigious BBC/British Gas Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition. I caught up with Kim at his home in Tauranga to talk about his photographic career.

What got you started in underwater photography?

I have always liked photography. My parents gave me a camera when I was about eight or ten. I learnt to dive as part of my PhD in marine biology at Otago University - studying oysters. It seemed an obvious thing to try underwater photography and it became an important tool in my research. The marine lab at Portobello had lots of dive gear - and also Nikonos cameras! This was fortunate because I couldn't afford any - so I borrowed theirs for a decade or more. I'm very grateful to them for this, and also to Bill Ballantine at the Leigh Marine Laboratory for employing me when I was thinking "What do I do next?"

In 1981 I graduated from Otago University and also had my first book published: 'The Seas Around New Zealand'. This book really helped get my career going. I took all the photos and wrote ten chapters. My friend Keith Probert (another marine biologist at Portobello) wrote the other 20 chapters.

In 1983 I married Vivienne



(Above) New Zealander Kim Westerskov

(Below) Young humpback whale about to surface in clear tropical waters, South Pacific. This youngster - a baby really at 5 metres length - later caught me with its long pectoral fin and carried me along for awhile. I call it being "cuddled" by a whale. Canon F-1, Canon 20mm lens, in Mark Twain housing with fisheye port. Ektachrome Elite (EB) 100.f4 or 5.6.



and the following year declared myself a full-time freelance photographer and writer. There was no money coming in at all to begin with, but I persevered, and

eventually it became 'a goer'. It's going really well these days.

Dense underwater forest of bull kelp Durvillaea antarctica. Subantarctic Auckland Islands, New Zealand. Nikonos 5, Nikonos 15mm lens. Ektachrome Elite (EB) 100. f4 or 5.6, auto exposure.



How did your underwater photography develop?

There was one clear decision that I made somewhere in my twenties. I had persevered with underwater photography to a point where I more or less knew what I was doing and was getting reasonable results. I was about to move on to 'the next thing' but thought "Isn't it time to stick with one thing long term and see where it leads me?" So I stuck with underwater photography. It was a good choice - it's been heaps of fun. Challenging but very rewarding.

I have always taken mostly above water photographs but have somehow built up an image of being an 'underwater photographer'. In an average year I would do between 30 and 50 dives. Never 100 - not yet anyway. So diving has never been a huge part of my life, but it has always been an important



Blue shark, South Pacific. Canon F-1, Canon 20mm lens, in Mark Twain housing with fisheye port. Ektachrome Elite 100. f4 or 5.6.

one. I have tried to make every dive count by either diving where no one else has dived before, or with a whale or, somewhere special. My results have come not from huge numbers of dives, but from getting the most out of each one.

What do you credit your photographic success to?

The reason for doing well in the past was partly because I got myself to places that no one else had been to before. Anywhere that hasn't got people sounds good to me - and if it's cold as well it sounds even better. My

patch is from Fiordland and Otago down through Stewart Island, the Sub-Antarctic islands and Antarctica itself. I would look at maps and wonder which of these islands I could maybe get to. Nowadays I'm having to rapidly upgrade my technical and creative abilities, as well as just getting to faraway places.

In 1991-92 I got a really big contract with Christchurch International Airport who were building a seven million-dollar Antarctic Visitor Centre and wanted a photographer in Antarctica to get photos. I had already spent four months there in 1981-82 and another 2-3 months in 1990, so I knew the system and what was involved. I knew how cameras reacted in the temperatures of -30 to -50 degrees (Celsius) below freezing. I took around 24,000 photos during that time in Antarctica, including underwater, aerial, and from an icebreaker.

Do you consider yourself a technical photographer or creative or what?

Definitely not technical. However, there is a certain amount of technical knowledge that you simply have to know - you can't just be an artist without understanding your tools. I have enough technical skills to get my pictures, and to figure out what the limitations of my equipment are, and work within them. Pete Atkinson and Darryl Torckler have been very generous in helping me with technical matters and I'm much indebted to them.

Maybe underwater photography is like a triangle: 'technical' in one corner,



Baby Southern Right Whale heading towards me. It passed within touching distance [I didn't touch it]. That big dark thing behind it is its mother. Winter breeding grounds, subantarctic Auckland Island. Nikonos 5, Nikonos 15mm lens. Ektachrome 100S. f4 or 5.6, auto exposure.



"Aroha". Bladder kelp Macrocystis pyrifera on shore. Limpets. Subantarctic Auckland Islands. Canon EOS-1. Canon 35-350mm lens. Ektachrome 100VS. Gitzo tripod.

'artistic' in the second corner and 'biology' in the third. The biology is not just scientific knowledge but more of a connection. I fit in easily with animals: I admire them, don't hassle them, don't get eaten by

them. Every photographer will fit into this triangle differently as we each have our particular strengths. I'm somewhere in the middle of the triangle, but near the biology corner.



Diving in Antarctica, alongside the overhanging ice wall of a floating glacier tongue. Erebus Glacier Tongue, Ross Island, Antarctica. Nikonos 5, Nikonos 15mm lens, Fujichrome RDP. f2.8, auto exposure.

do it? There is no magic formula I know of - apart from doing something that you like and believing in yourself. Some photos will work - 'connect' - and some won't. Learn from both kinds - and move on. Keep moving.

Wide angle photography has always appealed to me. Wide-angle photos are basically underwater landscapes. In them there is usually a foreground - you can see something clearly and have an appreciation of its colour, texture and personality. But there's also a sense of distance and some of that feeling which doesn't photograph easily - the experience of being underwater. That feeling or mood is what we are all striving to capture and wide angle seems to achieve this best.

What advice would you give to anyone thinking about trying underwater photography?

Do it. Enjoy it.

Sounds like great advice. We look forward to seeing many more great photos taken by you in the future.

By Ross Armstrong



Group of red starfish (Odontaster validus) feeding. Under sea ice, shallow sea floor, Ross Island, Antarctica. Nikonos 5, 28mm lens, close up tube, Velvia, Sea and Sea YS-200 strobe. f22, 1/30

Do you think that there is much left to be done with underwater photography?

There's heaps still to do, and I'm working on some promising leads at present. It is only our lack of our imagination

and commitment that stops a lot more happening.

What makes a good photo?

Connecting with people. Sounds simple, but how do you

Bonaire - a unique underwater studio

By Linda Dunk

Whether you are already an accomplished underwater photographer seeking to perfect a particular technique or explore new ways of approaching your subject, or someone keen to master the basic building blocks of underwater photography, there are some essentials that are needed to make the creative process easier and more productive, and in my experience, one of these is continuity of location, conditions and subject material.

I have struggled with picture taking in wet places for rather longer than I would care to admit, and have had plenty of time over the years to consider, when in far flung places the shots are simply not coming up to scratch, what uncontrollable circumstances I can blame for my lack of success. Excuses I have come up with have included jet lag following horrendous triple- and quadruple-flight journeys that leave someone in the prime of youth, let alone pushing on well through middle-age, feeling bereft of a brain, let alone inspiration visual ideas clamouring to be committed to film. Many is the time I can hardly remember when finally on location how to put the dive kit, let alone the camera gear together, after a long-haul trip to what I know, if I can only get my head around it, is sure to be an underwater photographer's paradise.

Another source of tremendous frustration can be that old coconut of being taken, either by RIB, dhoni, liveboard,



Nikon 801s in a Subal housing, 16 mm Nikkor full-frame fisheye, Nikon SB25 strobe in a Cullimore housing, Sea & Sea YS30 slave. 1/60th F11. Fuji Velvia film

you name it, to a terrific site that you know instantly you could spend the rest of the trip, perhaps even the rest of your life on, only to be told that the RIB doesn't come back to that site until the day after you have left, or that the liveboard's schedule

involves a new dive site every two hours, and no, they won't change things just to suit you.

Other rich veins of excuses have included currents well-suited to a wet-and-wild extravaganza, whose only use to the photographer are to



demonstrate at high speed what a bountiful array of subjects he/she will not be able to photograph, and the certainty that the exciting light coupled with a calm surface that bends the wide-angle photographer's brain occurring at the beginning and end of the day will not coincide with the preset dive times. Often these preset dive times are those favoured by every other dive operator within 50 miles, so that divers can experience the communal pleasure that comes from shoaling in warm water. Then there is the possibility that those precious babies, your films, may come back, if there happens to be processing available, fried in the first developer. Finally, don't forget the ever-present risk of encountering an embryonic dictator or RSM masquerading as a dive guide, and you can be easily be excused from producing a half-decent underwater photograph for the



(Above) Nikon 801s in a Subal housing Nikon SB25 strobe in a Cullimore housing, Sea & Sea YS30 slave. 105 mm Nikkor lens. 1/60th F11 Fuji Velvia film,

rest of your life.

However, it doesn't have to be like this - because Bonaire exists.

Americans have long been familiar with the delights of Bonaire, but when I first had the good luck to find myself on this

island fifty miles or so north of Venezuela fifteen or so years ago, it was not a location uppermost in the consciousness of the British market.

Bonaire is part of the Netherlands Antilles, with companion islands being Aruba



(Left) Nikon 801s in a Subal housing, 16 mm Nikkor full-frame fisheye, Nikon SB25 strobe in a Cullimore housing, Sea & Sea YS30 slave. 1/60th F11. Fuji Velvia film

and Curacao, known in maritime parlance, according to a rather optimistic coastal skipper course I undertook way back, as ABC. As a self-governing part of the Netherlands, the Bonaire authorities had the great foresight to ban spearfishing on the extensive reef system that surrounds the island and its uninhabited sister islet, Klein Bonaire, in 1971, and then to designate a vast area of reef on the sheltered western side of Bonaire and all round Klein Bonaire as a Marine Park.

This action has resulted in the spectacular fringing reefs remaining largely pristine and teeming with marine life, including a variety of unusual, but not too difficult to find, marine creatures of interest to underwater photographers. These include seahorses, terrific cleaner shrimps in the anemones, snake eels, secretary blennies, approachable squid, frogfish, heaps of juvenile spotted drums, and many more. The usual varieties of grunts, schoolmasters, snappers, angelfish, moray eels and groupers are also available to have their pictures taken, and tend to be less fey than in other locations possibly due to their being used to divers and not being hunted.

Staying at a resort such as Captain Don's,

situated on the western side of Bonaire, and facing Klein Bonaire, you have the tremendous benefit of a house reef that can sustain you in terms of picture opportunities for whole period of your stay, if you so choose to work that way. Captain Don's prides itself as being "the home of diving freedom", and indeed, you can dive whenever you want, day or night, and it is not necessary to encumber oneself with a buddy - again, the choice is yours.

You can work the house reef entirely to your convenience, and although Bonaire is often said to be a macro heaven, for a wide-angle devotee like me, this has huge advantages.

After a shallow swim to the edge of the reef, the house reef off Captain Don's slopes away at about an angle of 45 degrees, and the sun rises in the early morning up over the top of reef, perfectly positioned for close-focus wide angle, using foreground subjects on the reef slope to make up the picture. Shoals of fish are often calm at this time in the morning, as is the surface, and small boats on fixed moorings can be brought into the composition. Alternatively, if a buddy can be persuaded to get out of bed, the diver, torch, video light scenario can be brought into play. The important thing is that the sun is in the right place for you, and that you can go back, each morning of your stay, and shoot, shoot and shoot again until the picture in your mind's eye finally and satisfyingly, makes it onto the film.

You don't have to dive deep to find your subjects, visibility is usually very good, currents amount to a gentle wafting at worst, the sun shines a lot, and the reef inhabitants appear to be as much creatures of habit as Homo sapiens can sometimes be, doing the same things in the same place at the

(Right) Nikon 801s in a Subal housing Nikon SB25 strobe in a Cullimore housing, Sea & Sea YS30 slave. 60 mm Nikkor lens. 1/60th F11 Fuji Velvia film.

(Below) Nikon 801s in a Subal housing, 16 mm Nikkor full-frame fisheye, Nikon SB25 strobe in a Cullimore housing, Sea & Sea YS30 slave. 1/60th F8. Fuji Velvia film



same time, so enabling you to find them without wasting valuable dive/shooting time. You are also able to plan ahead and fit just the right lens for your chosen subject, again maximising the possibility of successful picture taking. However, there must be waves occasionally, in order to justify an overheard remark when preparing for a night dive along the lines of “Honey, I don’t do waves”....

Should you wish to be a little more adventurous and stray from the house reef, boats operating an intelligent rota that avoids overcrowding will take you to sites around Klein Bonaire, the Salt Pier, and an array of other locations; you just sign up for where you want to go in advance on a first-come-first-served basis. The Town Pier is known world-wide as a night dive to die for. Dive kit is kept close to the shore diving entry steps/jetty, so you don’t have to clump about for miles in the heat all kitted-up, and can start your dive alert and full of enthusiasm rather than near collapse. Likewise, the rooms are not too far away either, so you won’t come back with one arm larger than the other and in permanent spasm due to all that unwanted training carrying heavy camera gear back and fore n times daily.

At Captain Don’s, the rooms are generous in terms of space and storage, giving the underwater photographer plenty of places to secrete the often extensive range of bits and pieces, gadgetry, film, batteries, ports, chargers etc etc. You can set yourself up comfortably for those long hours of camera fiddling, with the benefit of air-conditioning if you choose to cool you down when equipment malfunction rears its ugly head, and there is sufficient space for those with more than one rig to set it up ready to run without having to climb over it/stub your toe on it during the night when nature calls. Because you are not on a boat, using the night hours to go from A to B, engines throbbing away, anchor rattling up and down at 4 am, you can look forward to a decent night’s sleep, that is if the excitement about today’s pics in the development stage and tomorrow’s opportunities can be quelled (a spot of alcohol in moderation

(Left) Nikon 801s in a Subal housing Nikon SB25 strobe in a Cullimore housing, Sea & Sea YS30 slave. 105 mm Nikkor lens. 1/60th F11 Fuji Velvia film.

can be handy here - another thing easily available in Bonaire).

Captain Don's has an excellent photo shop on site, enabling you to pop your film in hot from pressing the shutter, and get it back, reliably processed, next day. This has immeasurable benefits for all underwater photographers, and especially for those participating in a photo course, as you can not only see that the kit is working properly, but you can also look at your films, decide what you like and don't like about them, discuss successes and problems with the tutor, take the remedial steps, and best of all, go back and shoot the picture again and again, until it all comes right for you. You can improve your technique almost exponentially as a result, mastering concepts that can take years to get one's head round doing it on an ad hoc basis, in a very short time. This liberates you through improved understanding from the shackles of the nuts and bolts of kit, film speed, aperture, shutter speed, depth of field, lighting, and focusing, and frees up your mind to concentrate on the end goal, the actual picture. As a result, you can progress to develop your own style of underwater picture taking.

None of this benefits from isolation, and as part of a group working together on a common goal, nothing is better than discussing one's ideas with others intent on capturing those elusive shots that have the gasp factor that we all so keenly seek.



Such conversations can be accompanied by the odd chilled beer, rum punch or margherita as appropriate as the sun goes down.

No course would be complete, however, without some more formalised teaching, and this can comprise, in addition to individual chatting and tuition, maybe three or four evening lectures, before or after dinner, as the group chooses. The resort has excellent conference/projection facilities for this activity, with air-conditioning that can be turned up to arctic if needed to keep everyone attentive after an active day's shooting. Tuition is not a one-way process, and opportunities are always available for you to share your work with the group as part of the process.

Finally, if the photography/diving becomes a little too intensive, why not try something a little different for a day or two; hire a car and tour the island (can be combined with shore diving as well, if you simply can't leave it alone), visit the Washington-Slagbaai National Park, attempt flamingo photography instead (it'll help to

put the underwater thing in perspective), or just laze by the pool. After all, it is your holiday.....



Linda Dunk

Linda's next photography course is in Bonaire, at Captain Don's Habitat, from November 17th - 25th, 2002. Details can be obtained from Hilary Lee at Divequest, on (44)-01254-826322 (Tel), (44)-01254-826780 (fax), e-mail: divers@divequest.co.uk.

A range of Linda's work, including a series of fine art prints offered for sale, can be seen on her website at www.lindadunk.com.

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The Subal housing for the
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Underwater photography will turn a corner.

Towards a Fellowship

by Anne Owen FRPS

Most of us who take underwater photographs go through a phase of wanting to show our pictures to other people and be assured that we are taking 'good' pictures. We show them to our friends, we go in for competitions, we try to get them published.....and some of us go for Royal Photographic Society 'Distinctions'.

Someone once asked me why I went to the RPS for 'affirmation' of my ability as a photographer, when 'surely, they can't understand underwater photography'. Well, OK, taking pictures underwater is hard and there are special considerations to deal with like back-scatter, absorption of reds and the need to get very close to subjects. But many other advanced nature photography techniques are hard too - birds in flight or pitcher plants suspended high above the ground in low light below the rain forest canopy. The basics for good images though are the same - good lighting, good composition and the photographer's 'eye' for an interesting subject - the 'wow'-factor. I felt that pitching myself against the broad spectrum of Nature photographers would be a real challenge.

Like most underwater photographers I chose to submit work in the Nature category. Nature photography is considered to be primarily record photography, which means to say that the subject is rendered in a life-like way, in its natural environment. The trick, as with anything else in life, is to know when it will be OK to break the 'rules'.

How did I get started? I first submitted a panel of 15 slides for assessment for the Associateship (ARPS) back in 1998 and having been successful, I almost immediately set my sights on the next level - Fellowship.

Since the comments about my Associateship Panel had been very encouraging, my first effort was to add 5 slides, to come up with a 20-image submission, which I took along to an Advisory Day. There, a group of experienced Assessors look at your work and spend 10 or 15 minutes discussing each individual image, as well as the Panel as a whole. This was a sobering experience. Two things became clear. Firstly, the technical standard required of each image was higher than at Associateship. Tiny flaws that had been tolerated at



Emperor Shrimp on Spanish Dancer, PNG.

Cropping in very tightly has removed un-interesting background and enhanced the details of the remarkable camouflage of the shrimp. Traditionally, you would avoid two subjects, but in this case, it works.





Spine-cheek Anemonefish, PNG

Cropping the image to produce a vertical format transforms an ordinary snapshot into a much more powerful image.



the lower standard would definitely not be overlooked this time around. Secondly, that re-using a lot of images between Associateship and Fellowship was not good enough. I was essentially faced with producing 20 brand new top class slides.

Like many amateur underwater photographers, I only get to take photographs for 2 or 3 weeks each year. On some trips, I'm lucky to come back with even a few reasonable images. So producing a whole new Panel of slides felt as though it would take a lifetime.

On the other hand, I had dozens of 'almost-there' slides - the ones where the framing is not quite spot on, or there's an unfortunate bit of back-scatter, or whatever. That led me to think about submitting prints instead of slides. Perhaps in the process, I would be able to do a bit of tidying up, and salvage some of my 'almost-there' slides into decent prints. I had heard that

digital printing was capable of producing high quality images. The only real drawback to the plan was that I had no experience whatever of printing, digital or otherwise and I had never even seen PhotoShop, let alone used it.

Step one was to book into a long-weekend digital imaging workshop. I took along just two slides to work on, and was very focussed about what I wanted to learn, which was the basics of scanning, cropping, colour correction and minor 'editing'. I bought exactly the same equipment as the course leaders had selected - a Minolta Dual Scan and an Epson 1520 Photostylus printer.

Step two was to start looking seriously at my slides. I scanned, cropped and did preliminary editing on over 150 possibles, then did A4 prints that I scrutinised very carefully. I became quite ruthless at eliminating images - focus not

pin sharp, disappointing colours, uneven lighting, boring subjects and so on. This was a largely 'mechanical task'. At the same time, I was trying to form a vision of what the overall Panel would look like.

At Assessment all 20 prints are displayed together, so that you have to consider the overall visual impact. The prints have to relate together in some way. I decided that my 'story' would be the complexity of colour and pattern on the reef. I would keep each individual image very simple and rely on the grouping to paint the picture of the immense richness of a coral reef community.

I honed down my selection to 35 images and worked hard on each, adjusting contrast and tone and removing blemishes. At this point I realised that I was 'too close' and it was becoming harder to make decisions. I started showing my pictures to lots of people ñ friends,



Colonial Anemone, Fiji

This image has benefited from eliminating some distracting out of focus highlights in the black background surrounding the anemone.

underwater photographers and other nature photographers, in fact anyone who would take the time to look. I wanted to find the images that most people liked. This process was incredibly helpful. Some of my personal favourite were eliminated. For some reason although they appealed to me, no-one else was interested. On the other hand, some images that I had almost dismissed, perhaps because they had been easy to take, were very popular.

I was down to 25 images and faced with making a final selection. At this point, I went off for more coaching, on how to mount and present prints. Finally, I printed all 25 images, at full size on good quality paper. I spread them out on the living room floor (easier said than done, as I'd printed 31.5x25 cm images on A3 sheets) and shuffled them round. My aim was to choose the 20 prints that would work best as an overall group.

I set out the prints in two rows of 10 prints and worked outwards from a core group of four macro prints that I felt were especially strong. On the top left hand side I positioned a group of three prints, on the top right I balanced these with another set of 3 prints. The outer ends of the row were anchored with strong verticals. In the bottom row, I placed other groupings that would contrast and complement those at the top. I tried to ensure that from a distance there would be an overall sense of harmony, while each print would stand up to close scrutiny in terms of composition and quality.

This all sounds very 'by the book'. In fact, I

broke lots of 'rules' as I went along. One image shows two fish, bucking the conventional wisdom about having an odd number of subjects. Several images have cropped subjects, against strong guidance to show images of complete animals only. Not all the pictures are in focus from front to back.

I was, of course, delighted to be successful. I look back on the whole process as a very stimulating, though nerve-wracking experience. I learned a great deal. Obviously I had to learn about printing and PhotoShop, but what I learned about composition and attention to detail, has transformed my photography in the water. I now take as many vertical compositions as horizontals. I spend as much time looking at the background as I do at the subject before pressing the shutter ñ if it's not good enough, I will move on. I even think about the use to which I might put an image while I'm taking it!

In April of last year I was invited to join the Assessment Panel for Associateship and Fellowship in Nature. The Panel meets twice a year and it is a pleasure and privilege to view some stunning Nature photography from all over the world. Underwater photography is reasonably well represented, but I'm sure there are many others out there who would enjoy the challenge of working towards a Distinction. If you are interested and would like to know more, please feel free to contact me.

AnneOwen
E mail 2000@aol.com.

Kurt Amsler photo course

by Andrew Bell

The dream for many aspiring underwater photographers is to make a full time living from underwater photography. So competitive and specialist is this medium that only a small handful of people achieve this status.

After many years of commitment into pushing his own potential Kurt Amsler is one of those people.

Thousands of hours have been spent underwater with camera in tow in pursuit of pushing the envelope to produce awe inspiring images to stay one step ahead of the competition. His vigour and enthusiasm was noted by leaders in the diving industry which directly secured him a contract with the PADI European College in Cannes to teach instructors how to conduct underwater specialty courses.

Kurt finds motivation through competition. To help facilitate this drive he takes time out between assignments to teach people his own hard-earned skills. It would be fair to question the wisdom of giving your trade secrets away, especially when a full-time income is dependant on it but it is this sharing of information that is exactly what pushes him to the next level in his own work. For a few weeks out of the year Mr. Amsler takes time out from his busy schedule to teach advanced underwater photography courses. Our class size consisted of only six students so led to more one on one tuition with Kurt. This ensured that his concepts were hammered across.



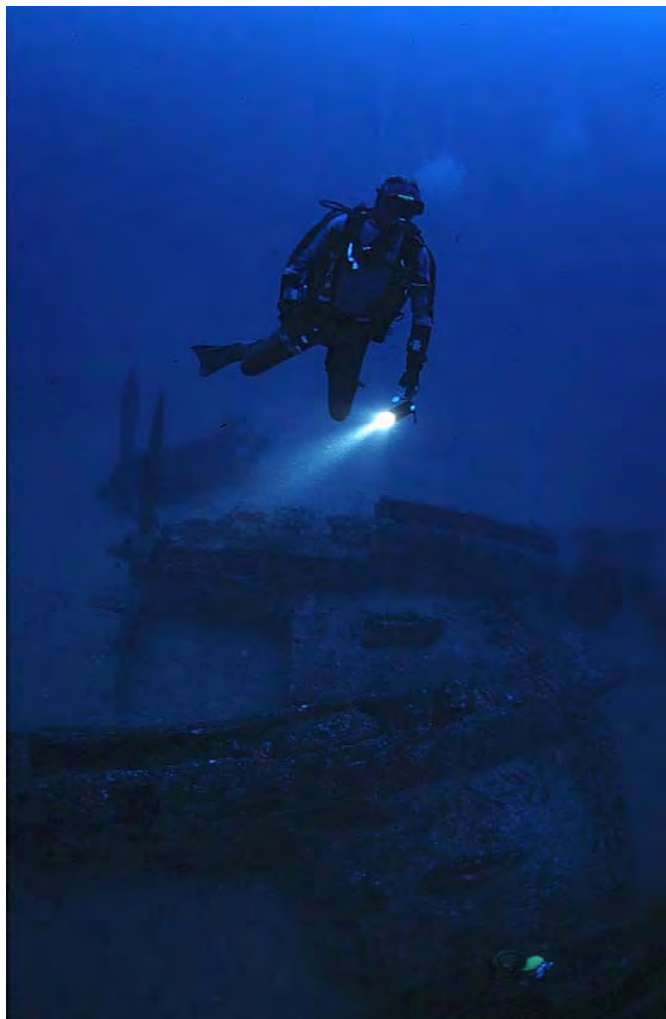
'Group Shot' - Kurt Amsler (both photos taken with a digital camera)
(Below) 'Lecques Aquanaut Center' - Kurt Amsler



There were only four such courses last year, all held in a small tranquil town called Les Lecques located along the Mediterranean Coast in France. The final course for 2001 was organised by Ocean Optics and was the only one conducted in English.

Over ten years the course has been fine-tuned to become a very efficient itinerary consisting of 6 theory lessons and one dive a day, with 5 boat dives in total. The assumption is that the

photographer is very familiar with the equipment and has had varying degrees of success in capturing images underwater. Building on a pyramid style 'See, Hear and Do' approach to learning we were given examples of specific types of underwater photography and then taught how to avoid pitfalls, learn from them and achieve a higher level of success. The course outline and location was a very efficient way to work as our studio, the sea, was only a few minutes



'P-38 Lockheed Lightning Fighter Plane' - Andrew Bell. Nexus housing, Nikon F90, 16mm lens, f. 2.8 1/30 fuji 100 provia

'Coral backlit' - Andrew Bell. Nexus housing, Nikon F90 60mm lens f. 2.2 1/125 Inon Quad Flash backlit with Sea and Sea ys30 fuji provia

'Blenny' - Andrew Bell. Nexus housing, Nikon F90 60mm lens f. 2.8 , 1/60, Inon quad flash fuji provia



away. The classroom, complete with light boxes for reviewing photos and film lab, was located at 'La Bastide', a old country home rebuilt in to a hotel. This was also our accomodation for next six days of the course. With the beautiful views of the 'Provence' region before us we all agreed this was a very nice part of the world to excel at our underwater photography.

To be taught by one of the best in the business was a unique opportunity and one that my fellow six classmates and I could only gain from. The experience level amongst ourselves as photographers was quite varied, from relatively experienced photographers to professionals. What was certain was that although all the students knew how to shoot a good underwater picture, Kurt was going to take us all to the next level to take excellent ones. This course was to be full on and we all needed to develop the attitude of wanting to apply ourselves to take full advantage.

Kurt's photo workshop does have a few prerequisites. Everyone on the course had to be an seasoned diver with boat diving experience and already have a basic general knowledge in underwater photography. We had to bring all of our

own photo and diving equipment, except for tanks and weights. Among the equipment required for the course we needed to bring our wide angle, mid range and macro lenses.

It was a Sunday afternoon when the course began. Kurt kicked off by welcoming us and then followed with the story of how he got into the business and how he propelled himself to where he is today. With the intensive course outline laid out for us it was quite apparent there would be no time for lazing around soaking up the mediterranean sun!

During the course of the week we were to be given 'assignments' by Kurt. A full lecture accompanied by a slide presentation to help facilitate getting his concepts across. The first lecture was an overview of the underwater camera equipment that is commercially available, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each system. A briefing followed for the ocean dive the



'Viewing and selecting photos from the morning dive for evaluation' - Kurt Amsler

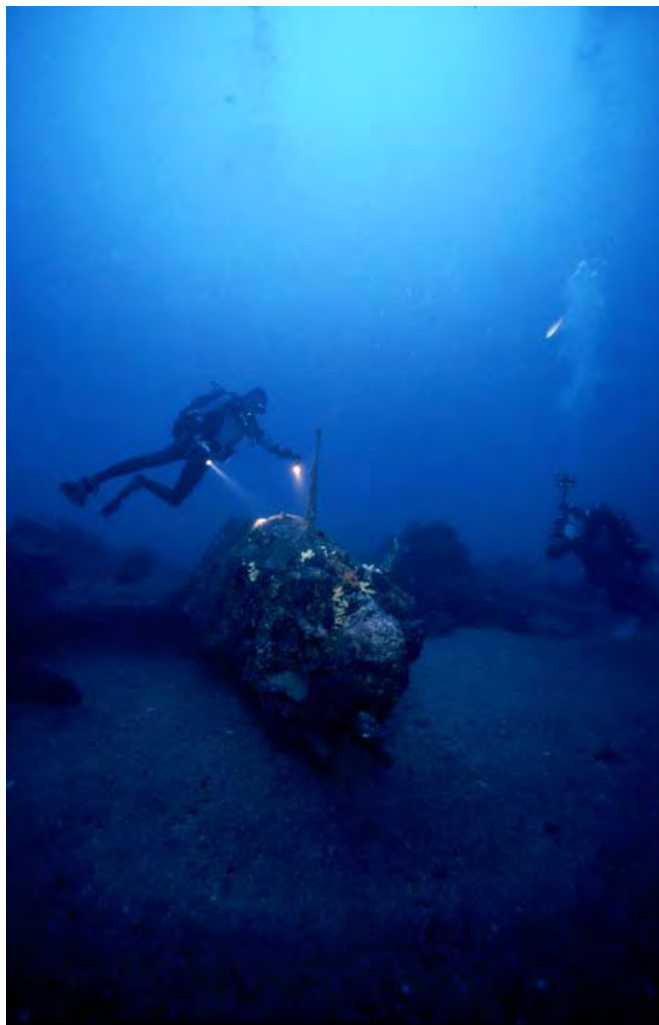
'P-38 fighter plane' Paul Webster Canon EOS 50 in a Subal Housing 14mm sigma, 1/15s, f4, provia.

'Scorpion Fish' - Gearoid Lane Nik V, 35mm lens with Ocean Optics close-up lens F22, 1/90 secs, Sensia.

following morning and we then ended the evening by having dinner with Kurt.

Monday morning, and everyone is enthused to jumping in the water and use our cameras in anger. Before we were unleashed on the diving centre to take us out for our first dive Kurt re-briefed what we were going to shoot. The rule for the first dive was that there were no rules, we could shoot what ever we wanted and any format we desired, whether that be macro, mid-range or wide angle. The AQUANAUT Dive Centre in Les Lecques were to be our diving hosts and a fine facility it was. The "H2O", a fast comfortable dive boat efficiently took us to our photo locations. We didn't need to travel very far to the quality sites which quickly dispelled any notion that the Med was dead. This corner of the Mediterranean was in fact teeming with life. We were certainly spoilt for choice on what to photograph first.

Low on air and annoyingly out of film we returned to the surface where the H2O dive boat was waiting for us. The dive crew took our cameras and gingerly placed them all safely in their designated area and within 15 minutes we were swiftly back at the marina. Back at The AQUANAUT Dive Centre we cracked open our housings and handed our first roll of film exposed back to Kurt. Always the competitor, Kurt chose to cycle uphill a few miles back to La Bastide, as he was training for a cycling race in the next few months. The rest of us were not feeling as energetic after our first and only dive of the day so we went to lunch at one of the many bistros to be



found in Les Lecques. As September was the off season for this small Mediterranean town we felt we had the place to ourselves.

Back in the classroom early afternoon our full day lectures would begin. Usually Kurt would debrief us about the morning dive and talk about things that went well and challenges we found during the dive too. After a break another lecture followed covering varying aspects of underwater photography. Such topics covered were strobe positioning, equipment maintenance, basics of film developing, the marine environment, life



'diver silhouette with camera'
 Paul Webster
 Canon EOS 50 in a Subal
 Housings, 14mm sigma, 1/60s,
 f8, Fuji provia

'Tompot Blenny' - Andrew Bell
 Nexus Nikon F90 f. 22 1/125
 Inon Quad Flash, Fuji provia .

behaviour, wideangle photography, macro photography, fish photography, diver/model pictures, and even wreck photography.

At this point in the day we could not deny that Kurt was really trying to hammer the information across. In effect he was encouraging new budding competition. I got the sense that everyone really wanted to be there and was soaking it all up taking everything that Kurt was freely willing to deliver to us. Over time I could sense confidence building between my classmates, and even myself?!?! Then Kurt would announce that he was now going back up to the photolab to get our processed films for review. You almost virtually see that sense of assurance spontaneously evaporate in the air knowing that Mr. Amsler was going to see where we had screwed up.

Light boards were lit up on the side of the classroom for us to review our films and select the pictures which would be later projected for review by my fellow classmates and Mr. Amsler's expert eye. Kurt would compliment when the shot was successfully achieved and



evaluate why certain shots did not. The point was not just just about achieving good underwater photos but to also understand why certain photos were not successful, and use that knowledge to our advantage later on.

After the final dive of the course Kurt once again peddled off with our exposed roll of film and we wandered over to one of the bistros for lunch. Lunch always seems to taste ten times better after a salt water dive. Since I was acting as a representative of Ocean Optics who had organised the course it dawned on me that it might be a good idea to ask how everyone

felt about the course.

Gearoid Lane, from Ireland said, "I found the course very enjoyable and useful. The classroom sessions were quite intensive, and Kurt was happy to impart all of his tricks and techniques. The diving in Les Lecques was surprisingly good - I would have enjoyed doing more than one dive a day to practice all of the theory a bit more."

Mikayo Langhofer, from the USA enthusiastically said, "Kurt's workshop really can provide you with the practical knowledge to make the camera an extension of your arm and eye".



Aris Speggos, from Greece said, “It was a great learning experience for me, and during a short time I accumulated a great amount of knowledge. He doesn’t hold back on his techniques and style. On the contrary, he openly discusses them and analyzes them with his students. I’m very happy I attended.”

Paul Webster has had one of his images picked for the ‘Big Shot’ feature in UK’s DIVE magazine. I was particularly curious what this accomplished underwater photographer felt about the course. Paul pointed out, “people not really comfortable with a basic understanding of photography could feel the conversations getting away from them. It would have been nice to include more diving to put into practice what is

covered in the lectures but that’s not possible (even underwater photographers have to sleep sometime). It was an enjoyable and instructive course run by a professional.”

On the final evening of our course we selected our best five frames to make a portfolio for a competition within our class. The judges comprised of the owners of our dive service AQUANAUT Dive Centre and an accomplished local underwater photographer. All the judges have seen countless of captivating photos of the local area so they were well versed on what could be achieved in these waters. The tension was broken as the prizes were handed out to the top three winners. Alas, I walked away empty handed, but still felt very happy at what we had all achieved as a result of the course.

The following morning was when we all said goodbye. There was a bit of urgency in Kurt’s departure as he had to get back to his home Switzerland, where he was to start his next photo assignment for a magazine. This time a photo shoot with the great white sharks in South Africa. A busy man in demand indeed!



Andrew Bell

Define your image



Kurt Amsler is one of the elite few to make a good living out of underwater photography. From natural history photo-essays to imaginative advertising shoots, Amsler’s images influence photographers all over the world.



This world class photographer and teacher is now set to share his successful techniques with clients of Ocean Optics. Kurt will host a one week workshop in Southern France this September. Places are strictly limited. For full details call Steve, Andrew or AJ.

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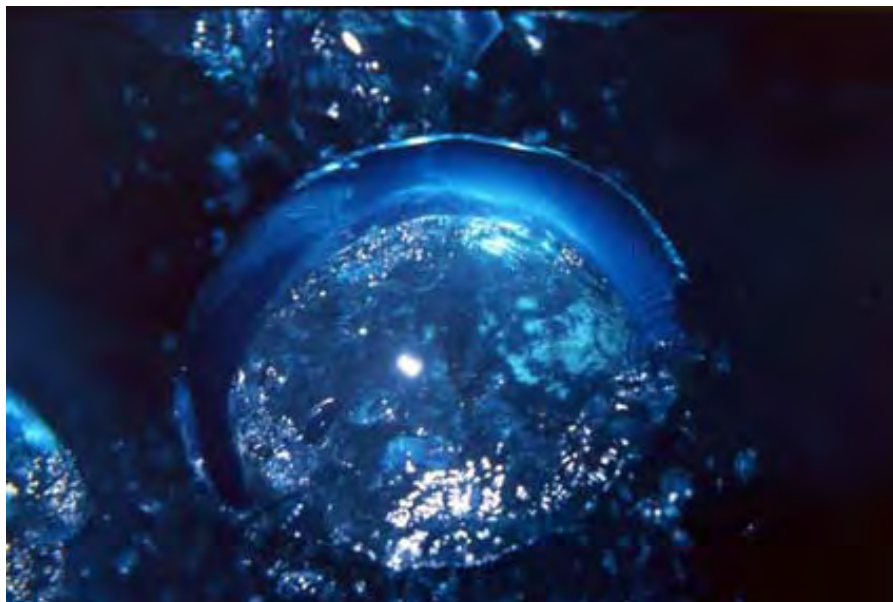
Ocean Optics

Bubbles

by Will & Demelza Posslethwaite

No, this is not an article about an amazing scuba diving chimpanzee but some thoughts and hopefully inspiration on the use of bubbles in your photography. It was a young girl who had just finished the first pool session of her course that set me thinking about this topic. Like many she was really thrilled with the idea of breathing underwater but beyond that the dancing of the exhaled air on its way to the surface she found very beautiful. I had to agree with the rest of the class that she was right. It was the freshness of the idea that struck me. Often it is difficult to step back and look at things clearly and in a new way. Invariably it takes someone without the accumulated baggage that we often call experience to see the simple beauty in things. For us conventional scuba guys bubbles are always with us. They are our tracks in the snow, the only signs that we've been there (hopefully) and can convey a great deal about what it feels like to be a diver to those who know the feeling and also to those that have yet to try it out. Inspired by this girl's insight here are a few ideas I had.

The first shot I decided to do away with was that of a near ground diver between breaths. In other words one in which the diver is the subject but not showing how he is staying alive. A dead shot emotionally. I looked back at the pictures I used to illustrate the use of reef hooks in issue 4 of UWP and realised



*(Above) Diver's bubble rising to the surface
Nikon F90X with 60mm in Subal housing with flat port, Fuji Velvia, 1/60th, F11, Sea & Sea YS90 on TTL.*

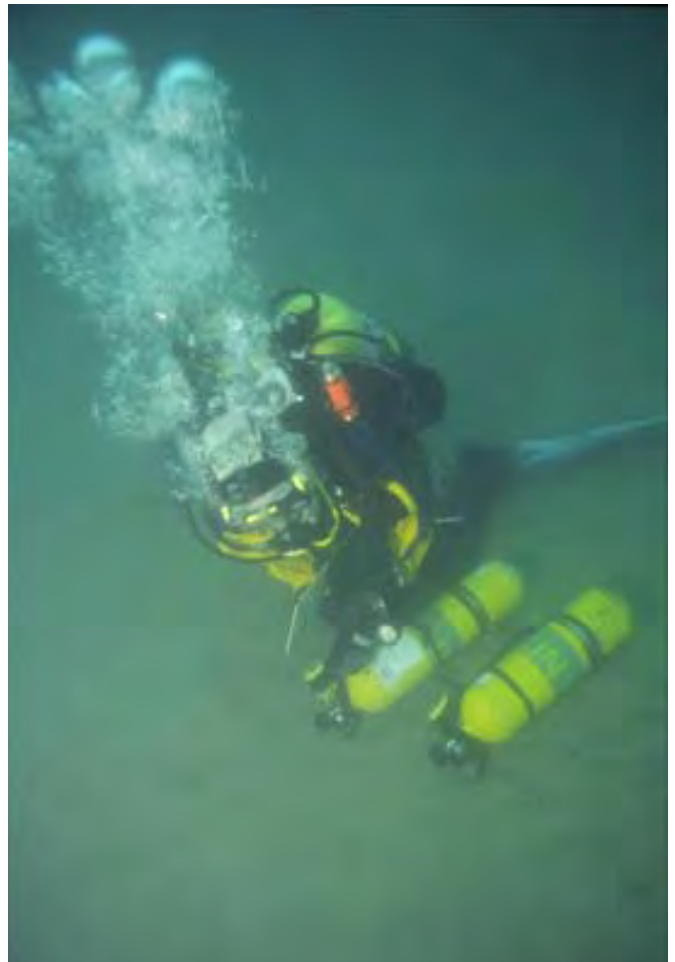


*(Left) Wreck of the Carnatic "breathing", Northern Red Sea
Nikon F90X with 20mm in Subal housing with compact dome port, Fuji Provia 100 F, 1/60th, F11, two Sea & Sea YS120 strobes on half power.*

none of them showed a diver exhaling. The impact of the bubbles streaming away in a strong current would have been far better.

If we look at the two shots of the diver staging her decompression tanks which works for you? For me where there are no bubbles the kit is more clearly in view as a sponsor

might wish but although there is action it seems somehow muted. Where the diver is breathing out not only do the bubbles fill some of the dead space but they track the diagonal and, more importantly, they show the concentration in the task and highlight the importance of the gas in these tanks on getting safely back to the surface.



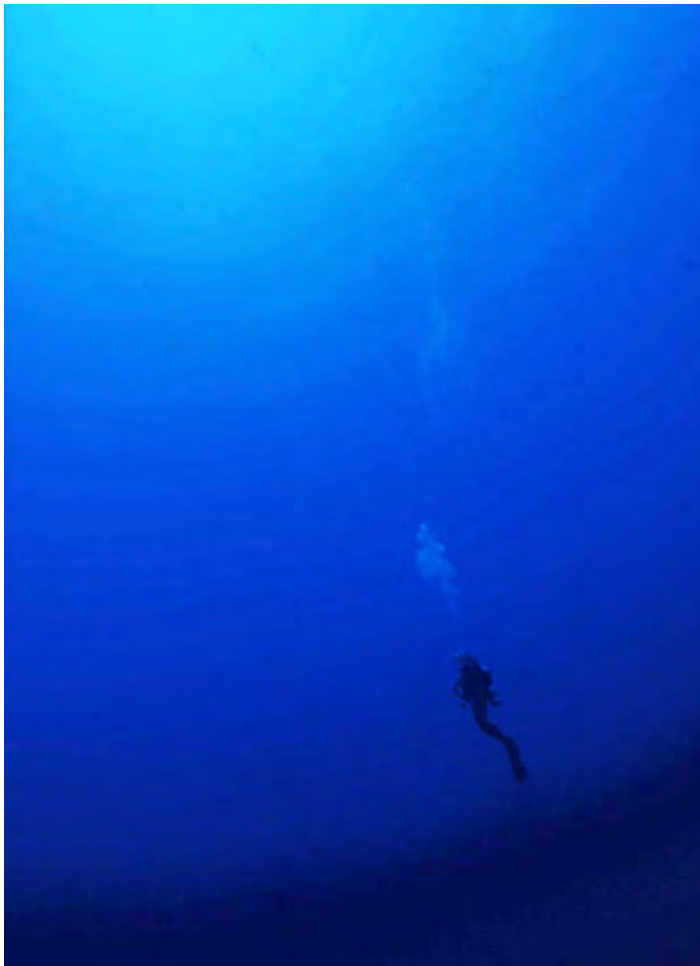
With and without bubbles. Nikon F90x with 20mm in Subal housing, Sea & Sea YS120 and YS90 Strobes, Fuji Provia 400 F (my favourite film for wide angle in indifferent vis. (i.e. UK), 1/60th, F5.6, Strobes on full.

Often divers are used more as a back drop to a near ground reef scene. Here the silhouette is all important but if we get the diver breathing out the silhouette of his bubbles can add more than just an extra dimension. Take the next shot here that I call 3meditations2. We were hanging in the blue just off the reef at the Brothers in the Red Sea hoping to see hammerheads and oceanic white tips. The dive was quite charged with adrenaline but when I saw our guide he looked totally at peace. His slow, deep breathing emphasised this and as each breath drifted up to the surface they placed him very much in deep space. There was so much going on in this scene that nothing in the fore ground was needed. Getting the diver fairly small was important for the effect of isolation but by using his bubbles the dead space is punctuated on the diagonal leading the eye from the dark depths below the diver up past him and link him to the sunlight and surface in the far corner. Without the bubbles the shot is lifeless.

I find the best shots with divers are around wrecks. For many people this is the essence of

diving. The exploration of the history of the sea and how the underwater environment claims its victims. The shot here of the wreck of the Carnatic has the divers in the picture but only visible because of their bubbles coming up through the structure. As I watched this it struck me that there was something more subtle in the picture where the wreck itself was perhaps being given life by the bubbles or perhaps those lives lost in the tragic sinking were haunting our presence? You might agree with me or you might think I'm trying a bit too hard here. I don't mind which because all I'm trying to achieve is to make you think how bubbles in the shot would work for you. Technical though underwater photography undoubtedly is, the final shot is still subjective in its appeal.

The last image takes me back to the girl in the pool and her fascination with the bubble itself. A safety stop can flash by if you've got divers below. As the air makes its dash for the surface, expanding as it goes, the friction of the water and surface tension bend the bubble into a great lens, splitting the spectrum and reflecting the light. As you are



“ Meditations “

*Nikon F90X with 20mm in Subal housing,
Fuji Provia 100 F, 1/60th, F8, ambient
light.*

shallow these shots can be taken with or without strobes. I haven't managed it here but I remember seeing a shot a few years ago where the photographer got a perfect self-portrait in such a bubble. He claimed it was just lucky. Here we are underwater illustrating diving and divers, again without having them in the shot and also giving the viewer another dimension (and perhaps a diving physics lesson!).

Like this bubble, you might think this is all full of hot air, but I bet when you next take a shot with a diver in it you will think hard about how his bubbles will affect the final image.

**by Will & Demelza
Posslethwaite**

*Will & Demelza teach underwater
photography at Cornish Diving
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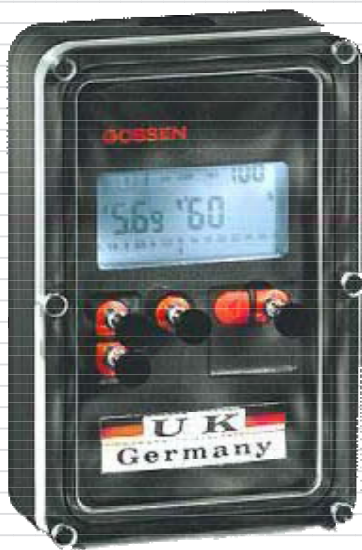
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Photographing the spawning of whitebelly damselfish.

By Alexander Mustard

At Visions in the Sea 2001, I was asked to speak on the subject of “Capturing fish on their best behaviour” to give tips on how to photograph the natural behaviour of coral reef animals. And although I dragged the talk out for most of an hour, in my opinion the key to this type of photography can be summarised in a sentence. To learn as much as possible about the subject before entering the water.

Knowledge is everything. With understanding we can select a common and easily approachable subject, know how to recognise and predict its behaviour and select the optimum photographic equipment to capture it. Field experience is, of course, invaluable; but with prior knowledge, quality field experience can be accumulated much more quickly.

If I had to recommend one subject, as an ideal introduction to taking photos that show a bit more about the lives of reef animals, it would be the reproduction of the whitebelly damselfish - WBDF (*Amblyglyphidon leucogaster*). In this article I will introduce some aspects of its biology and relate some of my experiences photographing this species spawning in the northern Red Sea, I hope these will be of help when photographing this species.

The whitebelly damselfish is a widespread species, tending to live on the upper parts of reef walls and pinnacles from the Red Sea eastwards throughout the Indo-West Pacific region. This species lives in groups feeding on plankton brought to the reef by the prevailing currents. The WBDF is generally unafraid of divers probably because of its comparatively large size and deep body which makes it quite a mouthful for predators. As a result it is possible to carefully approach this species close enough for photography without disturbing its natural behaviour. This is ideal! In fact, often I feel that I should stop my photographic sessions with this species because I fear that they will soon start laying eggs on my port!

During the mating season, which in the Northern Red Sea lasts from May to September, one can usually spot mating activity on almost every dive. The start of the mating season in this area is probably controlled by water temperature, with things tending to kick off once it is above 22°C. On a daily basis, the first dive of the



*Our subject, the whitebelly damselfish, *Amblyglyphidon leucogaster*. This male was easy to approach because he was guarding eggs at the time. Nikon F100 + 60mm. Subal housing. YS120 + YS30 flashes. Fuji Velvia.*

morning coincides with the climax of mating activity, which is also a great time of day to strap on the macro lens, while waiting for brighter light for wide angle. But spawning will continue throughout the day.

Furthermore, you should be able to catch the show whenever you travel because studies have not found any relationship between mating and the cycle of the moon and the tides in the Northern Red Sea.

Males and females can be differentiated by the different shapes of their genital papilla, or to get technical, their bits. However, when watching their spawning it is easiest to tell them apart by their behaviour. Male WBDF defend nest sites on the reef, these are usually an area of dead coral or a



A male stands guard while a female lays eggs behind. Nikon F100 + 105mm. Subal housing. YS120 + YS30 flashes. Fuji Velvia.



The eggs of the WDBF close to hatching. Nikon F100 + 105mm with +2 diopter. Subal housing. YS120 + YS30 flashes. Fuji Velvia. raid.jpg -

seafan although man made objects are often favoured where they are available. The flanks of wrecks, mooring attachments etc are often top of a male's shopping list. Once a male has selected a mating site, he sets to work with a bit of spring cleaning, pecking away at the substrate. Males are territorial and will defend their permanent nest site throughout the breeding season, and once the nest reaches

his standards, it is time to attract a mate!

While the male is busy working away preparing the nest site, the females tend to be up in the water column in a loose aggregation feeding. This is of course vital, because the females must be in peak condition to produce the energy rich eggs. Females periodically break off from feeding and wander through the males' territories.

Once attracted to a nest the female will face upwards and start to deposit eggs. Egg laying is a stop-start affair with females regularly taking breaks or being chased away by the male. An entire egg laying episode takes on average about an hour, which usually fits in pretty well with my dive profile, although laying can stretch to over 2 hours.

Most females will only spawn with a single male on a given day, and in the north Red Sea an individual female generally spawns every other day. Desirable males quite often have two or more females laying eggs at the same time! I am pretty sure that if you look carefully, you can see the corners of the male's mouth upturned at this time. Apparently, the luckiest reported male had 5 females in his nest at once! According to studies, the male generally waits until the females have stopped laying before fertilising the eggs.

Although I often see males moving along behind the female, apparently this is just to encourage her! The male will often stand guard, chase off predators or try to attract other females once the first female is busy laying.

A recently laid clutch of eggs is pink, but they darken to grey in 2-3 days and then to black after 4-5 days. The eggs hatch during the night after 5 to 8 days, with the time shortening as the water warms up. During this time the male guards the eggs both day and night, although males still feed on passing plankton during this time. Males are good guardians and it is very rare for a clutch of these energy rich eggs to disappear before they hatch.



(Left) On rare occasions the nest of the WBDF may be raided by a variety of reef fish. Nikon F100 + 17-35mm. Subal housing. YS120 + YS30 flashes. Ektachrome extracolour.

(Below) A male WBDF cleans his nest site. Nikonos RS + 50mm. YS120 + YS30 flashes. Fuji Velvia.



back on the reef, about a month to 6 weeks later.

Parental care of eggs laid on the reef is a just one example of the ways in which coral species reproduce. The advantages of this strategy are clear - by looking after the eggs through the early stages of their development the young inherit a much better chance of survival. Also by dividing the work, with females producing the eggs and the males looking after them, the reproductive output of the species is increased. You don't have to be Darwin to see how natural selection would favour such a strategy! Although this is just one of the 4000 or so species of fish that can be encountered on coral reefs, the WBDF is an ideal tutor. It is common, approachable and during the mating season you can find it at it on almost every dive - in short an ideal starting point for taking pictures that show that bit more about the inhabitants of the coral reef.

Alexander Mustard

Males are also very easy to photograph at this time! On only one occasion I have seen a nest raided by other fish. The raiders included Klunzinger's, birdmouth and even cleaner wrasses, as well as butterflyfish and angelfish.

After hatching the larvae drift amongst the plankton in open water feeding and growing until they metamorphose into juvenile fish and settle

The author has a PhD and works as a marine biologist at Southampton Oceanography Centre. I would like to acknowledge Dr Denis Goulet whose research on the reproduction of the WBDF has enabled me to take more meaningful images of this species.

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My way with monochrome

by Morris Gregory

The underwater world is an environment full of colourful fish, corals and other marine life so it's only natural for photographers to want to produce their images on colour film. Indeed, that is how I began my underwater photography and I will still continue to contribute to the profits of Fuji etc by taking lots of transparencies. However, having started out as a land based photographer shooting both colour and b&w I decided it would be interesting to explore what could be done with monochrome film underwater.

My main reasons for using b&w film on land are that it allows me to concentrate on form, shape and texture and also that it can create mood and atmosphere in a picture which can sometimes be lost through the distraction of colour. I decided that the underwater world would also lend itself to the same kind of reasoning.

A further very practical reason for using b&w film is the freedom from using flash guns as there is no need to try to restore the colours that are very quickly lost underwater and of course the curse of flash photography, backscatter, is no longer a problem. Taking just the housed camera on a dive without a tangle of cords, arms and flash guns, all of which are just one more thing to go wrong, is sheer bliss. I can concentrate on the picture taking without having to worry whether the arms are positioned correctly, if the flash settings are correct or if the flash will fire at all.



Seal - Ilford Delta 3200, f11 on aperture priority, 24mm lens on Nikon 801s in Subal Housing. Farne Islands, Northumberland.



Turtle - Ilford Delta 400 rated at 800 ISO, f11 on aperture priority, 24mm lens on Nikon 801s in Subal Housing. Brisee Rocks, Praslin, Seychelles.

The underwater environment presents its own particular problems for photographers, whether shooting in colour or b&w. The main two for b& w photography are the lack of definition and reduction in contrast the further objects are from the camera. A further one is the need to separate the tones of

subject and background to avoid a messy and confusing composition. The first two problems can largely be overcome by simply getting as close to the subject as possible, usually by the use of a wide angle lens. The latter requires a better understanding of how various tones will record on



Stingray - Ilford Delta 3200, f11 on aperture priority, 24mm lens on Nikon 801s in Subal Housing. Brisee Rocks, Praslin, Seychelles.



Moray Eel - Ilford XP2, f8 @ 1/125, 24mm lens on Nikon 801s in Subal Housing. The Jetty, Bathala Island, Maldives.

b&w film but, as with underwater colour photography, setting the subject against a background of water rather than rocks or coral often produces the desired result.

As far as subject matter is concerned I much prefer to photograph marine life than wrecks, although b& w does lend itself very well to wreck photography by the way in which it can add mood to the scene. In general I concentrate

on the larger creatures, such as turtles, rays, napoleon wrasse, batfish and the like that can be found in open water rather than hugging the reef as this more easily allows for the separation of the subject from it's surroundings. Invariably I will use my 24mm wide angle lens as it enables me to get close to the subject while still providing some space around it to put it in context. An even wider lens would be useful but I'll have to

save up the pennies for that.

Deciding on which film to use is largely down to personal preference but unless you intend to shoot in very clear, shallow water I would suggest nothing slower than 400 ISO. Anything less than this will leave little option but to use slow shutter speeds and large apertures leading to problems with camera shake and a lack of depth of field.

For my first attempts with b&w I tried Ilford XP2, a film I have used extensively on land so I was familiar with its characteristics. I find it to be a very good general purpose film with grain not being intrusive, plenty of detail throughout the tonal range, reasonably sharp and pushable by a stop or even two without significant degradation. I took a couple of rolls on holiday with me to Bathala Island in the Maldives. The island has it's own very good house reef and, when the current isn't running, it provides a safe, shallow environment ideal for conducting photographic experiments. I decided on a 24 mm lens in my Subal housing and clicked away.

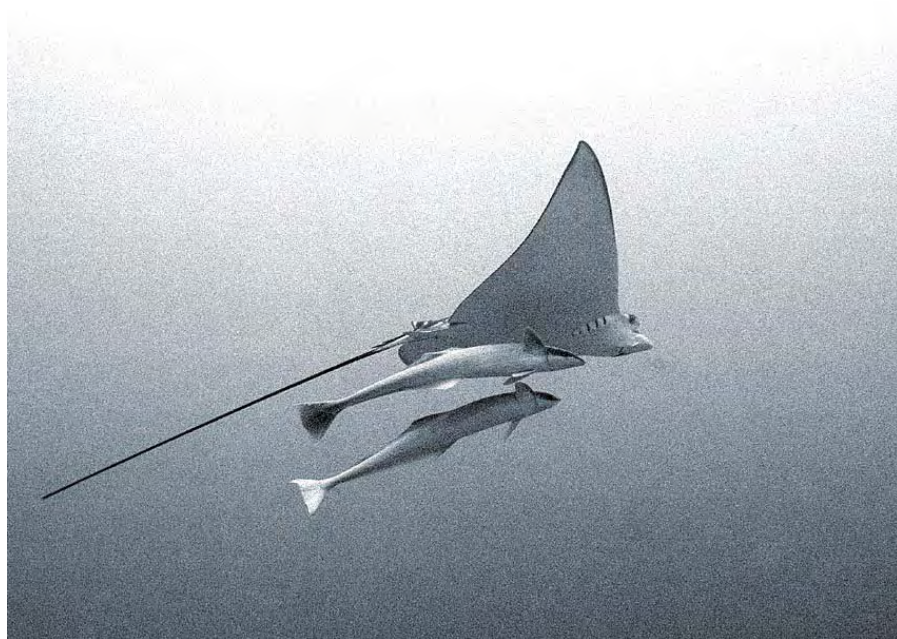
In general the results weren't particularly inspiring, as I had failed on many shots to pay sufficient attention to my own advice and the subject just blended in with the background. However, a few were sufficiently good for me to think it was worth persisting with.

A short while after my first dabbings with b&w I noticed, in various magazines, the work of Peter Hince and Julian Calverley, both of whom were producing some very impressive monochrome photographs using high speed film, so for my next attempts I tried some Ilford Delta

3200. Not surprisingly this film is quite grainy but the grain is well controlled and I have been generally pleased with the results it produces, particularly in low light conditions such as on a trip to the Farnes to photograph the seals. It was a fairly overcast day with some light rain at times so my expectations weren't high. For most of the dive I had to make do with pointing my lens at the odd inquisitive wrasse as the seals didn't seem to want to play. Eventually I did spot one seal and it came into range sufficiently long for me to take four shots as it glided by. If I had been using flash I would only have managed to get one shot as the seal would have been long gone by the time the guns had recycled, so yet another advantage of using ambient light.

Lately I have just begun using the 400 ISO version of Delta but I normally uprate it to 800 ISO and compensate by giving extra time in the developer. This not only gives a one stop advantage over it's nominal rating but also provides for slightly more contrasty images without introducing too much grain. For me it is likely to become my film of choice for underwater b&w.

As far as exposure is concerned I normally put the camera on aperture priority, set the aperture to the highest possible to give a hand holdable shutter speed and let the camera do the rest. In most instances this will give an accurate or at least acceptable result, particularly as negative films (both colour and b&w) have a better exposure latitude than slide films. On occasion I might switch to manual if I think the camera's meter is going to be fooled by



Eagle Ray - Ilford Delta 3200, f11 on aperture priority, 24mm lens on Nikon 801s in Subal Housing. Shark Reef, Praslin, Seychelles.

some particularly bright or dark element in the composition. For instance the underside of a stingray is very pale and this would lead to underexposure if it formed a large part of the picture space.

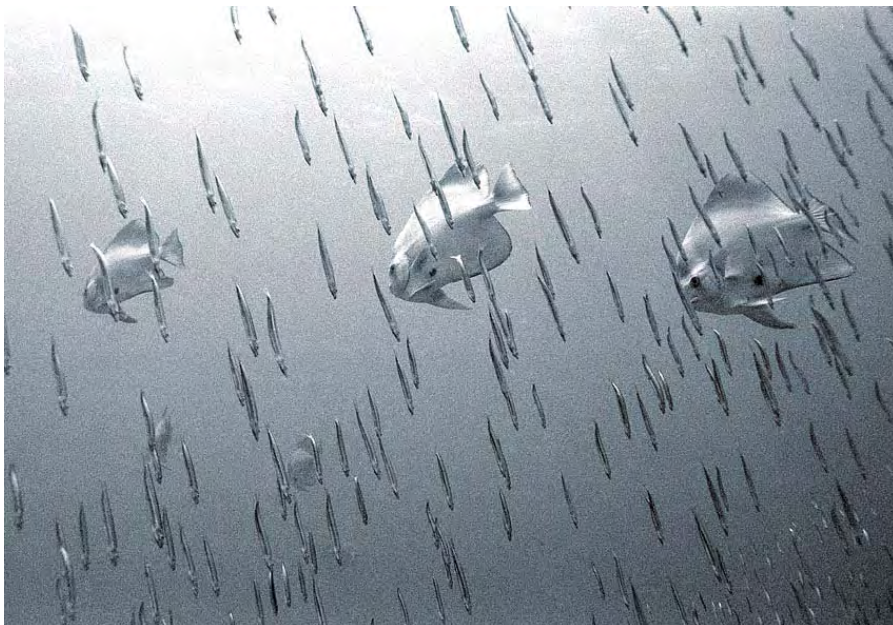
In such circumstances I would meter from the surrounding sea, looking slightly upwards, as this can be usually be relied upon to give a mid tone reading, and set the camera accordingly.

A very specialist film I have tried, and so far failed with, is Kodak High Speed Infra Red. As its name suggests it's sensitivity extends to the infra red end of the spectrum, which water absorbs very quickly so it doesn't penetrate more than a foot or so below the surface. Trying to use ambient light is therefore a pointless exercise so it's back to flash, negating some of the advantages of b&w photography. That said it's an interesting film which can provide unusual, ethereal effects resulting both from unexpected tonal renditions and ghostly outlines due to having no anti

halation layer.

I used it, rated at 400 ISO (my usual starting point on land) with a deep red filter, to accentuate the infrared sensitivity, on my 24mm lens and using twin Ikelite flashes. Unfortunately, at only ten metres or so in the warm, clear waters of the Seychelles I found it almost impossible to see more than a vague outline of anything through the filter. I resorted to pointing the housing in the general direction of the subject, guessing focus and hoping for the best. For my future attempts with this film I will place red filters over the flash heads which should give the same results but make it easier to see what's in the viewfinder.

A few years ago I would have taken the negatives into the darkroom and spent a great deal of time and wasted a huge amount of photographic paper to get the final print. Now I look at the negatives through a lupe on a lightbox and decide which ones to scan into my PC. I then use Photoshop in a very conservative way, removing any dust marks



Raining Fish - Ilford Delta 3200, f16 on aperture priority, 24mm lens on Nikon 801s in Subal Housing. Shark Reef, Praslin, Seychelles.

etc and adjusting the tonal balance, brightness and contrast before converting the image to colour (RGB mode). A subtle amount of toning is added,

usually to the whole image but sometimes one tone to the subject and another to the background. The image is subsequently printed either on to

a glossy paper such as Tetenal Spectra Jet or on a textured paper (e.g. Kentmere Tapestry) for an 'artistic' look. Overall a much easier, controllable and repeatable process than the darkroom.

Shooting monochrome underwater can be a frustrating, challenging but ultimately rewarding experience. It continues to provide me with a great deal of enjoyment and by it's nature forces me to look at the underwater world in a different way to colour photography. I won't be giving up on colour as it hold its own fascinations but I would encourage others to try a few rolls of b&w it could give your photography a whole new lease of life.

Morris Gregory
www.morrisphoto.org.uk

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The Quad is packed with useful features such as an automatically activated modeling light to assist autofocus and Nikon compatible TTL. To get creative there are three manual powers and a built in shade lets you block off two of the reflectors.

Available with ports to suit both Subal and Sea and Sea SLR housings. Quad from £995.00. Ports

from £299.00. For a full review by award winning photographer, author and underwater photography coach Mark Webster see UwP Issue 2 at <http://www.uwpmag.co.uk>

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The Novice Digital Photographer

by Jurgen and Anne Brauer

We are a father-daughter dive team – instant converts to the sea and to u/w digital photography. No more film! That was the biggest draw.

Eliminating film means eliminating the wait to see your pictures and to learn from your mistakes. Instant underwater picture review leads to an incredibly steep learning curve. And you are not limited by a 36-frame film since digital disks allow you to take well over a hundred high-resolution shots. You merely click, review; recompose, click again, review; change the lighting, click again, review; change your position, click once more; review; change the lens, click again, review ... you get

the idea. You also get essentially zero-wait, zero-cost developing and distribution across the Internet to friends and family worldwide.

In this article we describe our equipment and share some pictures from our first two digital outings, in Bonaire (December 2001) and Cozumel (April 2002).

Ours are no “pro” pictures at all, but as first-time u/w photographers, we are mighty pleased with the results.



We (i.e.Dad!) spent some real money in October 2001 for an Olympus C-3040Zoom digital camera, plus an Olympus-made PT-010 housing. The camera has a 3x optical zoom, and the housing comes with a diffuser that disperses the light from the camera’s powerful internal strobe. The camera also has a macro-mode for close-up pictures, and the fifty dollar 128MB SmartMedia disk allows us to take more than 160 high-resolution (2048x1536=3.15MB) pictures, taken either as JPG or TIFF files.

The high-capacity, rechargeable batteries last for a two-tank jaunt, especially when the power-hungry camera screen is turned off in-between

shots. Further, the camera has a video and audio mode (it is fun to hear your bubbles while you watch your video of a feeding sharptail eel). You can also switch from color to b/w photography, and you can have the thing run fully automatic or you may set aperture a/o shutter speed manually as you become more advanced in photography itself. Moreover, you can change film-speed, white-balance, strobe-intensity, picture resolution, and plenty of other things – all underwater! Indeed, the list of options is overwhelming at first. What you are buying is a sophisticated camera with expansion options, and most of the expansion modules are already built-in!

After buying the camera, we spent a few weekends taking land-based pictures to learn about photography, and of course to become familiar with the camera itself. Once in the water, of course we made the beginner’s mistakes such as wrong lighting, ill-focused subject, and not following the rule-of-thirds. Solution: review and retake! Let us admit to one advantage we had up-front, however. By the time we dove Bonaire, we were closing in on a hundred dives each, meaning that we had a good feel for buoyancy control, surely a critical photography element. We also had a good feel for patience: creep up slowly to the critters. In short, it surely helped the photography to be budding u/w naturalists and to be comfortable in the water. If you are new to diving, your first pictures may not turn out quite as well, but if you are a reasonably experienced diver and are merely new to u/w



(01-Schoolmaster.jpg)

photography, we bet you will do just as well, be just as pleased, and impress your friends and colleagues just as much as we did.

(Let's look at a few sample pictures. Take the schoolmaster (01-Schoolmaster.jpg) shot. Of course we cut off the tail, and a "real" photographer is not supposed to do that. But the colors are exactly the way they looked underwater. The fish is nicely caught in the diagonal, and the background is blurred out to draw the eye even more to the fish. As a first-time shot, wouldn't you be pleased with it? Note that there is no lighting except for the internal flash, diffused through the housing.



(02-YellowtailSnapper.jpg)

Next, while Jurgen was hanging onto his compass to navigate the traverse in-between a double-reef formation at Bonaire's southwestern edge, Anne took the picture of a curious, lone Yellowtail Snapper (02-YellowtailSnapper.jpg) at about 40 or 50 feet depth. The focus is smack on the eye, the colors are natural against an almost black background, the flash reflects pleasingly off to the picture's lower left, and the snapper's lips are well-defined. As a first-time shot, we were very pleased with it.

Perhaps our single-best Bonaire shot is of an unconcerned Balloonfish (03-Balloonfish.jpg). We had run into a professional u/w photography couple (Renate and Roland Kraft) who, upon seeing our first pictures via the laptop we brought along, advised us to take an ordinary dive light for extra lighting, even during day dives. Ah, yes, of course! So we did. Anne held the light and followed the Balloonfish, and Jurgen caught it on digital "film." The colors are very natural, warm, and pleasing, as



(03-Balloonfish.jpg).



(04-ChristmastreeWorms.jpg)



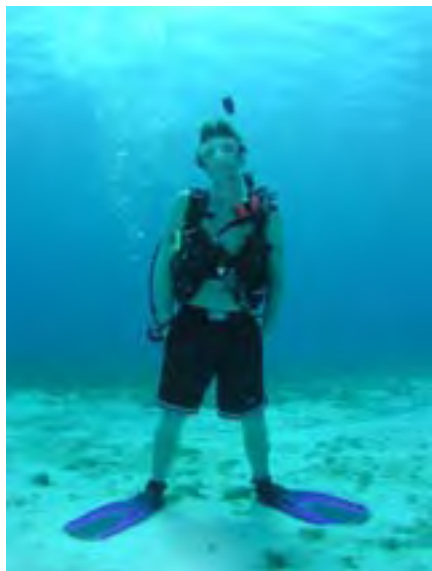
(05-RedbandedShrimp.jpg)

they are on the assembly of Christmas tree worms (04-ChristmastreeWorms.jpg).

What about u/w digital macro-photography? Simply push the "macro" button, settle down, compose your shot, and use the digital zoom as desired. Look at the Redbanded Shrimp picture that Anne took (05-RedbandedShrimp.jpg).

The external dive light (a Princeton Tec “Shockwave,” using eight C-batteries) serves as a modeling light to allow the camera to focus, but it also makes the colors appear very natural and soft as compared to the harsh strobe-flashes one sometimes sees on u/w photographs. The detail on the shrimp’s claw arms astonished us. Look closely at how well each hair on the claw arms is defined. We can’t stress enough that these are in fact first-time pictures!

Flushed with pleasure, and in view of an upcoming drift and shore-dive week in Cozumel in April 2002, we next decided to order a macro-lens and a wide-angle lens, both of which mount on the housing via a screw-on adapter ring. We found wide-angle photography exciting but difficult,



(06-LeonBrauer.jpg).

especially in the drift-dive conditions off Cozumel. One of the first wide-angle shots was of son (brother) Leon (06-LeonBrauer.jpg). Note the double-thirds composition (horizontal thirds and vertical thirds). At first we thought this looks like magazine-cover material! It’s an unexpected shot and it’s funny to boot, but the picture was rushed a bit and the focus is not on the head. Next time we’ll get it right.

The Slate-Pencil Urchin (07-SlatePencilUrchin.jpg) and the Glasseye Snapper



(07-SlatePencilUrchin.jpg)



(08-GlasseyeSnapper.jpg)

(08-GlasseyeSnapper.jpg) are, we believe, better than what the gurus themselves offer (Humann/DeLoach, Reef Set, 2002). No backscatter, complete clarity, the picture frame fully filled, and every detail of the animals well defined. Even the



(09-Juvenile Smooth Trunkfish.jpg)

some way as well?)

As regards u/w night photography, we managed a few good shots as well. The octopus (10-Octopus.jpg) moves along the light diagonal



(10-Octopus.jpg)

pea-sized juvenile Smooth Trunkfish (09-Juvenile Smooth Trunkfish.jpg) is well caught. Truth be told, though: we used Adobe Photoshop to crop the picture, then used autocontrast and fillflash, and adjusted the brightness. (But how many published film-based pictures are not adjusted in



(11-Balloonfish.jpg)

cone, and the balloonfish (11-Balloonfish.jpg) appears to float in the star-lit heavens as the normally irksome backscatter is here used to good effect.

Of course, the camera is perfectly suitable for land use as well. After a morning dive, we noted a rare natural phenomenon, a rainbow-halo around the sun and caught it as well (12-HaloSun.jpg). Or,



(12-HaloSun.jpg)

Sunset.jpg).

The camera, housing, disks, travel pouch, extra lenses, and adapter ring cost about \$1700. Camera prices are dropping, while features and powers increase. Ask any film-based photographer to add up the cost of camera, accessories, film,



(13-Sunset.jpg).

looking out across Cozumel's international pier, you can enjoy a simple sunset in which the clouds "cradle" the sun to rest (13-Sunset.jpg).

mailing, and developing, and you'll find that even though the digital up-front cost is higher, it'll soon come out

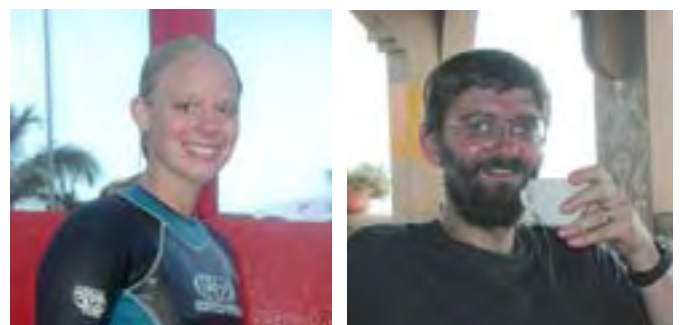


(14-Blenny.jpg)

cheaper and faster.

Well, then, aren't there any draw-backs to digital u/w photography? Yes, one in particular: on our camera there's about a one-second shutter delay. To capture nimble fish, you either need to anticipate where they'll be a second after you press the shutter or you need to pan the camera along with the fish, hoping that they'll stay in focus. We photographed tiny blennies, but not in action (14-Blenny.jpg)! This is a major drawback indeed, but one that will lessen over time as digital cameras advance technologically. Remember, we are talking about the private pleasures of amateur u/w photography, not about making a living of seeing your stuff published in all the world's scuba diving magazines.

Anne and Jurgen Brauer
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Some of their Bonaire and Cozumel pictures are posted at
<http://www.aug.edu/~sbajmb/Best-of-Bonaire-2001-Web/index.htm>
<http://www.aug.edu/~sbajmb/Best-of-Cozumel-2002-Web/index.htm>
Their next trip is to the Azores.

Starting simply

By Sue Hall

For camera-less divers who would love to take photographs of their underwater adventures, it can be difficult to know just where to start. It seems that every dive boat has a photographer these days, sporting the latest line in enormous metal housings with enough strobe power to illuminate Wembley Stadium. The 2 questions this brings to the novice's lips are "What is in there exactly?" and "How much?!"

Housed SLR camera systems are the choice of professionals. Fully automatic and horrendously expensive, they have been known to make grown men weep hysterically when the F word (flooding) is mentioned. Dome ports, ring flash, rear curtain sync - even the jargon sounds complicated and costly, deterring the interested diver who wants to take pictures of a better standard than a cheap underwater point and shoot camera, but doesn't know where to start.

But there is another option! The Sea and Sea Motormarine II ex is a sealed underwater camera with optional detachable flash and a choice of additional lenses from macro to wide angle. Simple to set up, light and portable in transit, neat and compact underwater, and with excellent quality optics, it is a versatile entry-level system that can produce stunning pictures without the cost and frustrations of an expensive housed camera system.

The Motormarine basic camera has a 35mm wide angle lens as standard, which can be transformed into anything from 20mm wide angle to 1:1 macro with a range of additional bayonet mount conversion lenses. As the conversion lenses need water between them and the camera lens to focus correctly, this means that a full range of lenses can be taken on a dive to cover everything from pygmy sea horses to whale sharks - definitely not an option with housed systems. Mounts are available which allow several lenses to be taken underwater together, although additional security (e.g. a cord tied around the lens and onto the strobe bracket) may provide an extra safeguard against dropping a lens into the blue on a sheer wall! And as the Motormarine is light and small, it can get much closer to objects - say a nudibrach hiding



Grouper; Little Cayman; Velvia; 20mm wide angle; 1/60s, f5.6

deep in a coral - than a housed system, and without trashing the actual thing you are trying to get a shot of. With the macro lenses, as long as the object is aligned within the spacer bars provided then that is the picture you will get. This means you don't always have to get down with the camera to look through the viewfinder (the focal length is pre-set according to the macro lens used).

I have generally found that one strobe (a YS60) provides sufficient lighting for my photographs. A bracket is provided which joins the strobe to the right or left of the camera and allows the strobe to be angled down at the subject. However, greater versatility can be had by detaching the strobe and manually pointing it at the subject - a spotter torch on the strobe makes



Cleaner shrimp; Sulawesi; Velvia; 2:1 macro; 1/60s, f16

accurately aiming the strobe a lot easier. Different effects can be obtained by placing the strobe at various distances below, above, and at the side of the object. It's all suck it and see, and it's all fun!

The down side of the Motormarine is that the refinements of a housed system (e.g. a Nikon F90 in a waterproof housing) are not available. The Motormarine is not a SLR camera, but has a wide-angle viewfinder as an additional extra, which makes framing a picture whilst wearing a diving mask a lot easier. And with advances in computer software and photo scanning, something that turns out a little wonky in print can be made to obey the law of thirds very easily with a little judicious cropping! There is no built-in light metering, and f-stop, shutter speed and distance are adjusted manually. Although this can be a bit of a distraction with wide angle, it does make the user think about light, depth of field etc, and is a good apprenticeship should he move on to a housed system later. Even the highest paid professional's mantra is "bracket, bracket, bracket". As a rule of thumb, a good starting point for wide angle is 1/60th of a second at f8; however this will vary enormously with film speed, cloud cover, time of day, depth, and whether the subject is set against silver sand or dark rocks. If there is someone else diving in your group with a housed system, ask them what their metered settings are (an interesting process underwater!) - it will give you a good



Nudibranch; Lembeh Straits; Velvia; 1:1 macro; 1/60s, f16



Devilfish; Lembeh Straits; Velvia; 2:1 macro; 1/60s, f16

starting point, bearing in mind they will alter with film speed. (With macro, depending on the lens used, the settings will be f16 or f22 because depth of field is not an issue - there are some good guidelines provided with the camera and lenses, and it is really worth reading them.) From experience, I have found that it is good practice to have at least one roll of film developed at the start of a dive trip. It can be quite expensive, but it will show if you are getting the exposure settings right, and if not whether you are under or over exposed - which can save a lot of disappointment when you get home!

The Motormarine systems can often be found for hire at dive centres both at home and abroad, and cost around £25-£40 per day to rent. A quick



Reef; Little Cayman; Velvia; 20mm wide angle; 1/60, f5.6

browse through dive magazines shows some excellent second hand bargains to be had, with a complete system (camera, strobe and lenses) for about £500. My own photographic portfolio has been acquired through rental equipment, and the generosity of my photography dive buddy and best friend Val Fox, who has loaned me her complete Motormarine system when not using it herself.

But a word of caution - underwater photography is addictive. And the more you get hooked, the less people want to dive with you. Even Best Buddies will sigh reluctantly when you mention taking the camera on a dive, complaining about the time you take to grease your o-rings, or to line up a shot, or the gestures you make underwater when you want them to pose naturally in a picture.

The answer? Get them to hire a Motormarine II and see how easy it is for themselves!

Sue Hall

Flash Operators

Come out of the dark ages

Finally an underwater flash range that delivers the performance you've come to expect from professional studio lighting topside. Packed with features to compliment the most creative photographer, Subtronics also boast user friendly features for the beginner.

These high power, wide angle strobes offer tough aluminium construction, ultrafast recycling of 2 to 2.5 seconds, 7/10 watt switchable modelling lights, Nikon dedicated TTL automation, 7 manual powers, slave, test and SOS, smart chargers with 2 hour recharge and optional laser aiming and colour temperature adjustment.

We'd ask you to compare. But there's nothing to compare to. And with prices starting at just £799.00, that includes the price.

Check them out at <http://www.oceanoptics.co.uk/subtronic.htm>



Web site

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

Subtronic. Simply awesome.

Ocean Optics

13 Northumberland Avenue, London WC2N 5AQ
Tel 0207 930 8408 Fax 0207 839 6148

Underwater Photography

a web magazine

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!

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

Uw photo techniques -

Balanced light, composition, wreck photography etc

Locations -

Photo friendly dive sites, countries or liveboards

Subjects

Anything from whale sharks to nudibranchs in full detail

Equipment reviews -

Detailed appraisals of the latest equipment

Personalities

Interviews with leading underwater photographers

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

My e mail is peter@uwpmag.co.uk

How to submit articles

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

1. The text for the article should be copied from your word processing file and pasted into the body of the e mail.

2. Images must be "attached" to the e mail and they need to be:

Resolution - 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.

We pay a flat fee of £50 (+VAT if invoiced).

I look forward to hearing from you.



Classifieds

For Sale

Subal Ports and Strobe Housings
60mm macro port with auto/
manual focus switch. £250
including gears. 24-50mm zoom
lens port. £220 including gears
Subal housings for Nikon SB28
Speedlight. £250 including synch
cord
Phone Guy on 02920 702440 or
07967 682587, or email
guy@swmg.co.uk

For sale

Nikonos 111 camera £250.
Nikonos 35mm lens £80.
Nikonos 28mm lens inc
viewfinder £200.
Nikonos 28mm splash lens £400.
Contact Tel. 01277 363 296
(Essex) or email
dberwin@aol.com

For Sale

Aquatica Sport II Housing with
Dome Port. Set-up for 90X but
can fit N/F 50,70,90 & F601/
801s. 2 years old, with Nikonos
strobe connection. Also
Motormarine IIEx with YS50
strobe.
Any reasonable offer considered.
Contact:
john.belchamber@virgin.net
or 07957 709847

For sale

An F80 looms and so the
801 home has to be sold, sadly. A
caring new owner is sought, and
we can exchange contracts for
£550, which will pay for the
Subal body, a Subal macro port
and a Williams fish eye port
(currently sunning a Sigma
16mm). F80 wishes to move in
soon. Email Peter Howell
howelleurope@aol.co.uk. Tel
07786961021 or 01326 375161

For Sale

Complete Mamiya medium
format (120 film 6 x 7 cm
image) underwater camera
system.
Ocean Optics RB67 housing.
all gears & accesories included
2 ports 1 fisheye, 1 Correction
port (Peter Scoones type)
Mamiya RB67 camera body
37mm fullframe fisheye lens
90mm lens (for macro & normal
) 2 film magazines (120 &
70mm) 2 Oceanic 2003 Strobes
with EO connectors. Flight case
(holds everything above)
Everything for £2000. - Yes you
read it correctly. Contact John
Butler at jb@faglab.no
or phone ++ 47 70 13 82 60
monday - Friday, between 8
a.m. - 3 p.m.

For sale

Nik V (orange body) with 35mm
lens £500, Ikelite MS strobe
£150, Ikelite Substrobe 225
spare battery pack fast and
standard charger £200, sync cord
£45 (foc with strobes). Large
Pelican carrying case £40. All in
excellent condition.
Contact Dave Robson 07885 789
561, drdrobson@btinternet.com

For sale

Sony DCR-SC100E digital
video. LMI travel set -
aluminium housing with
powered handles. 2 Sunray HID
lights with 4 NimH batteries and
charger in carrying case. Camera
with leads, spare battery and
charger. Cost £5250, sell for
£2750. Spare camera £500.
Contact Dave Robson 07885 789
561, drdrobson@btinternet.com

Photo courses

Martin Edge, author of the
best selling instructional book
'The Underwater Photographer'
guarantees that he can improve
your images. Martin has
scheduled two weekend courses
for 2002. The dates are 23/24th
February and 16/17th March. A
Nikon SLR and Housing course
is planned for 2/3rd November
2002. Limited spaces available.

Using an indoor heated
swimming pool in a
Bournemouth Hotel, the
weekends are structured to the
needs of each individual. Your
own camera equipment is
preferable but hire facilities may
be available. E6 film processing
is included in the course price of
£165.

For more details Phone
Martin or Sylvia on 01202
887611 or e-mail
Martin.Edge@btinternet.com

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Comprehensive Nikonos V
camera system including camera
body, the fabulous Nikonos
15mm wide angle lens and
viewfinder, 28mm (brand new -
unused), 35mm Nikonos lenses.
Nikonos Close-up Kit including
case and framers etc. SB105
strobe including arm and case.
Price £2,200. Call Mark on 0208
763 0432 or Email
Mark_Emuss@Hotmail.com

WANTED

Underwater housing for a Nikon
F801s camera. Preferably Subal
or Nexus but anything
considered. Contact:
japesmith@ozemail.com.au

For Sale

Canon Housing/SLR.
SeaCam Pro housing Canon
EOS5, double strobe connection,
moisture detector, SeaCam
SeaFlash 350TTL, all
connectors, gears, arm, chargers,
cleaning kit, spares; dome ports,
carry case: Canon EOS5 , Canon
lenses (USM) Macro 50mm,
Wide Angle Zoom 20-35mm,
100-300mm, Flash 300EZ
Speedlite; camera bag: £4,500.
Contact:
julie.howell@compaq.com

For sale

Sea & Sea Motormarine II
camera system. MM-II Camera +
Sea & Sea flashgun. 20mm
wide-angle lens. 2:1 & 3:1 close-
up lenses. Optical viewfinder.
Lens caddy. Close-up flashgun
mount. Pelican case. All in vgc.
£500. Email ec96@liv.ac.uk or
tel. 0151-794-5224

FOR SALE

2 Ikelite Substrobe 150 TTL
flashguns £200 each. Buy both
and get a dual sync chord thrown
in for free!
Phone Jim on 01342 851 196 or
email info@scuba-safaris.com

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A classified advert in UwP will be downloaded over 35,000 times by underwater photographers worldwide. You can sell or buy your equipment for a flat fee of just £5 (or **£10 with a coloured box surround or £15 with a picture**) payable by Visa, Mastercard or cheque.

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Ocean Optics Ltd,
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BARGAIN OF THE MONTH

For sale

Sea & Sea 12mm
Fisheye lens and
matching viewfinder
for Nikonos. Mint
Condition. £500.

David Barker

Tel 01732 883037

(evngs)

E-mail

david@wealden.demon.co.uk

For Sale

Oceanic Hydro 35 housing,
dome port, leak detector, Nikon
F2, motordrive, action finder,
Nikon Micro-Nikkor 55mm/2.8,
Oceanic 2003 [new batteries]
with arm, Sekonic L86 & L164
exposure meters. Ikelite housing,
unused, for Minolta SLR with
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Offers to Mike Ballentyne
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Now available for the Nikon F100.



Subtronic

These are the ultimate strobes. With fast 2 second recycling, optional laser aiming light and colour temperature control, prices start at just £749.



Nexus



Nikonos



The classic underwater camera. We stock the range and have a fully Nikon authorised workshop facility.

Offering the most versatile macro system in the world today, Nexus make possible extreme close up photography unavailable from any other housing line.



Bonica

The Snapper builds into a neat system capable of creative pictures down to 150 ft, even in low visibility. It's so simple to use and, with prices starting at just £129, it's stunning value for money. This really is a breakthrough in price and performance. There's no better introduction to underwater photography.

Our aim at Ocean Optics is to keep you shooting. That's why we provide a full servicing facility in our own workshops for all Nikonos, Nexus and Subal equipment we import. We even have loan equipment for those impossible deadlines! If you choose to be an Ocean Optics client, you will benefit from the best support in the business

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