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"Simply put, it doesn't get any better than this! Everything is about service and maximizing your diving experience. The dives were amazing, and the dive and hotel staff are first class. They will accommodate any request, but you hardly need to make any since they have thought of essentially everything."

Dr. Jim & Laurie Benjamin, May 2015



www.wakatobi.com

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A web magazine UWP86 Sept/Oct 2015

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Underwater Photography 2001 - 2015 ©
PR Productions
Publisher/Editor Peter Rowlands
www.pr-productions.co.uk
peter@uwpmag.com

Editorial

Sony developments

It's fascinating to watch camera sensor developments from APS-C to FX and from 4/3rds to the deceptively named 1". Then there's the mirror/mirrorless designs which combine to give us a much wider and therefore possibly more confusing choice of cameras. The other thing that fascinates me is the timescale.

Take the mirrorless full frame Sony A7 for example; this has been developing for at least 3 years and Sony are only just delivering the range of lenses which will make them attractive as a system. That seems a long time to me but what do I know!

Sony have been quite open in trying to topple the DSLR market and depending on who you believe, they are making a good job of it, certainly underwater.

Sticking with Sony a while more, their other development has been the RX100 line which has also been 3 years in the making. This large compact uses a 1" sensor which puzzles me. It's actually 13.2mm x 8.8mm so where do they get 1" from? Regardless of that chicanery each new model has produced better and better specs until they now offer 4K video with stunning 20mp stills from

a diminutive package.

And yet all of their developments have been achieved without having any regard to Menu ergonomics and, most importantly to underwater photographers, White Balance capability. I put up with the lack of both with my NEX5 and from what I can gather their performance or lack of it has been proudly undeveloped by Sony ever since.

It defies belief that two such basic requirements should have remained lamentably poor when Canon and now Panasonic have stunning capability in both departments. It's almost as if Sony never actually gave cameras to a wide range of testers for feedback but just went ahead with what they thought was acceptable.

And the final puzzle is that, I think I'm right in saying, these two capabilities can easily be brought up to scratch with a software rather than hardware development.

Equipment reviews

Despite their shortcomings, the above Sony cameras are becoming increasingly popular with underwater photographers and I think they deserve more than just one review so

over the next few issues you will be seeing more of them because it helps to get the opinions of several people before deciding what's best for you.

New talent

Way back at the start of UwP my stated intention was to create a platform to nurture new and exciting talent and I'd like to put my modesty to one side and claim that over the years we have done just that and quite consistently.

In addition, each issue of UwP has a stand out article which I have discussed before in this column but in this issue I think we have one which is both stand out and from an exciting new talent - Tom Burd. His beautifully illustrated and well written article about Sharks and Rays in the Azores is a textbook example of what UwP aims to generate for you.

I hope you will enjoy this issue and, as I always say, your feedback, good or bad, is always welcome.

Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com



UPY 2016 dates

Plans are already well underway for Underwater Photographer of the Year 2016 including a major new international award and an increasing collection of attractive prizes.

To help you prepare for this prestigious competition, here are some important dates for your diaries:

November 1st 2015 -

Website open for entries to be submitted online.

January 4th 2016 -

Closing date for all entries.

January 6/7th 2016 -

Images judged by Alex Mustard (Chair), Martin Edge and Peter Rowlands (in reverse order of importance).

February 13th 2016 -

Winners presentation, London.

www.upylondon.com



Issue 86/4

www.uwpmag.com

News, Travel & Events

Douglas Hoffman in Fiji 2 - 12 October 2016

Douglas will return to Siren Fleet and accompany guests on board for a 10-night trip to Fiji, being on hand to give advice on the differing techniques that will be used throughout any dive trip.

His presentations are delivered in such a way as to be appropriate for macro, wide-angle, compact and SLR photography. As an artist, Douglas believes much of the success with photography is related to envisaging the image prior to the dive to ensure you achieve the style of photo you were looking for and will spend time with guests to achieve these results. He will also accompany divers, giving assistance with composition and framing underwater.

After dives Douglas will sit with guests to review their photos, giving suggestions for improvement. This can be done individually or by making use of the plasma screen in the S/Y Fiji Siren's lounge.

Each evening a round-table discussion is held for guests to focus on the issues that they may be experiencing during the dives. Guests are encouraged to voice their comments whether positive or



negative to enable others to learn from the general knowledge and experience of the group.

Douglas is a Master Photographer with over 10,000 hours underwater. Beginning by leading his first trip in Indonesia in 1993, Douglas now brings groups to Asia and the Pacific at least 3 times per year, his specialties being whales in Tonga and coral reefs in Fiji. He has joined together with the Siren Fleet to share with our guests his technical photographic knowledge and understanding of Fijian reefs.

www.wwdas.com



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Adventure Travel Show 2016



The Adventure Travel Show, now in its 20th year, will take place at London's Olympia on 23- 24 January 2016.

This is your chance to immerse yourself in a weekend of Adventure travel inspiration and discover off the beaten track travel experiences with the biggest collection of specialist travel operators under one roof. Plus, you can listen to over 100 FREE Talks in 4 theatres from explorers, industry experts, guide book writers and expedition leaders who will help you uncover your perfect adventure.

www.adventureshow.com

World ShootOut 2015 uw photo competition is taking place NOW!



Dive and shoot in any natural water resource around the world during January to November 2015. Submit your best images to the different real-time shootout categories and win some very worthy prizes -including a 3-week dream diving holiday for 2 people to Papua New Guinea, worth \$25,000!

7 nights at the Walindi Plantation Resort, 7 nights at the Lissenung Island Resort, 10 nights on board MV FeBrina and round trip air tickets from Europe to Papua New Guinea!

www.worldshootout.org

www.uwpmag.com

2015 Ocean Art Uw Photo Competition

The Underwater Photography Guide is proud to announce that it is accepting entries for the 5th annual Ocean Art Photo Competition.

There is over \$75,000 worth of prizes, including over 20 scuba diving resort, liveaboard dive yacht and underwater photo gear packages.

Ocean Art is one of the most prestigious underwater photography competitions worldwide and also one of the largest in terms of prizes.

The 2015 competition has 15 categories, including a Novice DSLR category, 3 compact camera categories and 3 mirrorless camera categories, giving underwater photographers of all levels a chance to win a great prize. Unique categories include Supermacro, Cold/ Temperate Water and Nudibranchs, while the more traditional categories include Wide-Angle, Macro, Marine Life Portraits and Marine Life Behavior. The Pool/ Conceptual category is new for 2015, allowing photographers to blend underwater model photography with unlimited post-processing.

Judges include world-renowned underwater photographers Tony Wu, Martin Edge, Marty Snyderman



and Scott Gietler. Martin Edge is the author of The Underwater Photographer, a topselling book on underwater photography. Marty Snyderman is an Emmy winner with work appearing in top publications like National Geographic. Tony Wu is a renowned underwater photographer and author of Silent Symphony. Scott Gietler is the owner of Bluewater Photo, Bluewater Travel and the Underwater Photography Guide.

Photos must be submitted before the deadline of 23:59PM PST on November 24, 2015.

www.uwphotographyguide.com/ocean-art

www.uwpmag.com





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| Eco Adventure and more...

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Neapolis International Underwater Photo contest



The Neapolis International Underwater Photo contest is calling for entries. Neapolis, in association with the Tourism and Culture Department of the City of Naples, will hold a photographic exhibition of the competition winning works. There are categories for Advanced and Novice entrants in both Mediterranean and Other Seas classes.

The deadline for submissions is 21 September.

The Casina Pompeiana, located inside the Villa Comunale in Naples, will host the exhibit inauguration and the Contest award ceremony. The exhibition will run from October 30 to November 10, 2015.

www.neapolis-photocontest.it

Mike Scotland Photo and fish/shark ID in Fiji 3 - 10 December 2016



Mike is one of Australia's most experienced divers and leading marine biology educators. He has been a dive instructor for thirty-two years and is a Shark and Fish ID expert. Mike has well over one thousand photos published and has been an internationally awarded underwater photographer. He is one of Australia's most published photo-journalists with over one hundred articles published in Sport Diving, Australian Geo, Ocean Geographic and photographic magazines, including his previous Fiji Siren cruise here.

Mike is a public speaker on the marine biology of sharks and crustaceans at dive shows. He is a university educated marine biologist and professionally trained educator. Best of all, Mike knows how to pass on his knowledge clearly!!

www.wwdas.com

www.uwpmag.com

42nd Festival Mondiale de l'Image Sous Marine

The 42nd Festival of Underwater Pictures will run from October 29th to November 1st at Parc Chanot, Marseille, France.

A wind of change blows through the World Festival of Underwater Picture. This year, Philippe Vallette, Chairman of the event, asked the firm HP Communication to use its experience and skill to assist his team in the organisation of the Festival.

The HP Communication company is directed by H  l  ne de Tayrac-Senik, who also created and directed the Paris International Dive Show. This important event has been successfully organised for 18 years in Paris (Porte de Versailles), France.

This reorganization aims at improving the Festival with the help of the Town Hall of Marseille and thanks to the attractive features of Parc Chanot.

We can outline the event of 2015 as follows:

A modification of the categories in the competition in order to enhance the visibility and notoriety of the Prizes and awards.

The development of the Festival's Village, always dedicated to underwater picture but also connected to firms and institutions involved in the underwater world and the Blue



Economy.

The development of the educational vocation of the Festival. Those 4 days remain a major event to raise awareness for the preservation of the environment in general by insisting on the protection of the seafloor. .

Finally, you will be able to enjoy all activities offered to professionals and general public, such as projections of films in competition, the showing of underwater photographs.

The 2015 Festival Mondiale de l'Image Sous Marine Competition is now open for entries for its imaging and video competition.

Deadline for entries is September 30th, 2015.

www.underwater-festival.com

Alor Divers Uw Contest

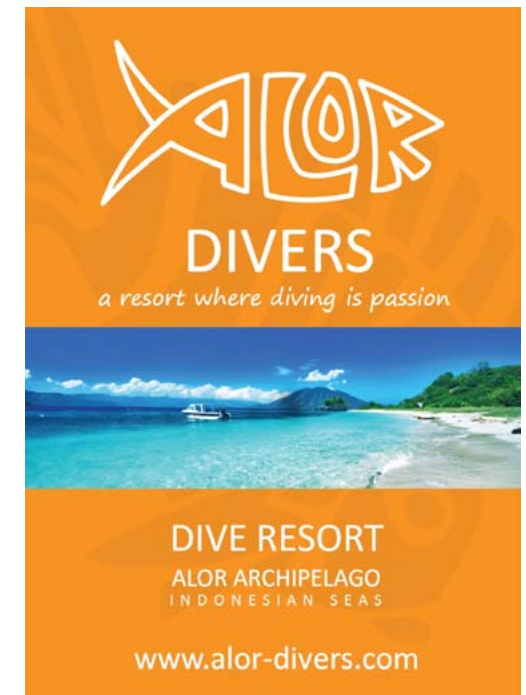


Alor Divers Under Water Photo Contest takes place every year and photographers can submit a Portfolio, it must include three wide angle shots and three macro shots. The wide angle photos can also be half/half shots. Photos must have been taken in Alor while staying with us .

The prize for the winner will be a 9 nights stay with Alor Divers Eco Dive Resort and it can be claimed within 3 years upon receiving the prize.

The competition for year 2015 will close on 31 Dec. Entries can be emailed to info@alor-divers.com.

www.alor-divers.com



Your advert could be here for just £50 and will be seen by over 10,000 underwater photographers worldwide. No other publication has such a targeted audience. For more details visit: www.uwpmag.com/?p=advertise

BILIKIKI

3rd to 17th November 2015



This is yet another great one off, chance in a lifetime to get a great group of divers together who know each other to go to another fantastic remote dive location. We are very lucky to be able to get out to Marovo Lagoon, this is not a standard trip, this has been extended to get out to this area!

November 3rd to November 17th is a specially extended trip so we can go further afield to dive the Marovo Lagoon area.

The Bilikiki has to be one of the most well respected dive liveaboards. This seems to be by far one the best operations in the Solomons, some say it's the best operation they have ever been with.

All accommodations are air-conditioned deluxe cabins have a double bed plus a single bed above with their own private shower, toilet and hand basin.

The Bilikiki offers very easy



diving. With a huge rear dive deck there is lots of space for suiting up and for the photographers there are dedicated carpeted camera tables that are right on the dive deck. This is a special 14 night trip we will diving the best route possible taking us out as far as the great Marovo Lagoon. The diving will be highly varied with gorgeous scenic reef dives, some big fish dives, macro dives and of course plenty of great night dives too!

www.diving4images.com

Bluewater Photo's 5th Annual SoCal Shootout September 18-20th, 2015

Bluewater Photo is excited to announce the 5th annual SoCal Shootout, happening September 18-20th, 2015. This weekend long competition brings together underwater photographers of all levels throughout Southern California.

Starting Friday morning and spanning through Sunday night, participants have the opportunity to shoot photos in the Pacific Ocean

anywhere south of Pt. Conception to north of the Mexican border to be eligible. Continuing into its 5th year, entry for the competition is still only \$40. Those interested in participating can sign up online.

Entrants can enter up to 8 photos or three video entries, or a mix of the two. Please see the website for complete information and rules.

www.bluewaterphotostore.com/socal-shootout

A promotional graphic for the Bluewater Photo's SoCal Shootout. It features a large, detailed image of a red lobster on the right. On the left, there's a blue starburst shape containing the text 'September 18-20, 2015'. Above the starburst is the 'BLUEWATER PHOTO' logo. To the right of the starburst, text reads 'Enter the contest and jump in the Southern Californian waters for an all out weekend of underwater photography, and a chance to win fantastic prizes! Over \$20,000 in prizes!'. At the bottom, the event title 'Bluewater Photo's SoCal Shootout' is written in a large, white, serif font, followed by 'Awesome Prizes • Categories for all levels • Great SoCal Diving' and the website 'www.bluewaterphotostore.com/socal-shootout'.

Divetech Enters New Phase in Dive Travel and Service to Grand Cayman



Divetech, one of Grand Cayman's premier dive operators, is moving its headquarters to their Lighthouse Point dive shop, home of the Guardian of the Reef. At the same time, Divetech is launching a dedicated dive travel department as part of a 2016 expansion plan to accommodate growth, development and customer demand.

The company is partnering with a number of hotels, condos and bed & breakfasts on the island to offer more package choices for divers this coming year. The plan also includes ending Divetech's relationship with Cobalt Coast and closing its dive shop there on December 1st after 15 years.

"We've enjoyed our partnership at Cobalt Coast but for some time, our customers have asked for other properties on the island, and we've listened to them," said owner Nancy

Easterbrook. "To all of our customers, we want to let them know to contact us directly for their diving, but they can also now book dive and room packages with us."

New headquarters, new website, new toll free number, new reservations department, new on-island partners; Divetech is ready for the 2016 season

The company is hiring additional staff for its reservations department and introducing new software to make bookings more efficient. Divetech has also launched a new website (www.divetech.com) which includes some of dive packages and services, plus a new toll free number 1 877-946-5658.

www.divetech.com

Caribbean's premier dive operation launches in Dominica



Buddy Dive on Dominica set sail on its first voyage from the Fort Young Hotel's jetty on August 2nd, marking the launch of the most complete dive experience in the Caribbean.

Last year, Dominica was declared the number one Dive Destination in the US and Caribbean by Scuba Radio. And there's no better place to experience these reefs than from the Buddy Dive facilities at Fort Young Hotel. Along with a full stocked dive retail shop, teaching facilities, rental gear room, lockers, rinse tanks and outdoor showers, it has a private jetty right alongside one of its waterside bars, with a wide variety of world famous dive spots within 15 minutes, including the stunning Champagne Reef.

Furthermore, Dominica is just as famous for its whales as its reefs, with two thirds of all known whales species either resident or visiting the waters around the island each year. Therefore in addition to providing diving and snorkeling, Buddy Dive on Dominica is also offering whale watching trips.

To celebrate this new exiting milestone, Buddy Dive on Dominica is offering FREE boat dives! Book any of our packages and get three 1-tank boat dives out of the package for FREE. Packages start from \$994 per person per week. This special is valid for travel until December 14th 2015 and can only be booked when mentioning "Press Release Dominica."




Elena Kalis Bahamas

"Original underwater photography is hard to come by, but Elena Kalis encapsulates whimsical emotion in every frame. Combining extraordinary styling with striking portraits, she makes you think 'I wish I'd thought of that', and despite the way water warps colour, works exceptionally with the palettes of scenes and subjects. Elena excels in a specialism which is particularly difficult to master to such an extent and is an artist in her own right."

- Lorna Dockerill, editor (Professional Photographer Magazine UK)




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New Products

The next generation Sea & Sea YS-D2 strobe



Building on the great performance specs of the YS-D1, the YS-D2 has added audible confirmation, providing ttl confirmation and ready light confirmation. The YS-D2 now also features a rear illuminated panel with easy to read controls and larger knobs for easy setting when wearing gloves.

Additional features include:
Wing-Nut style fixing bolt
New Control Knobs
New Design Battery Compartment
Dual Powered Target Light with Red Filters included
Recycle time: 1.5 sec. with NiMh Batteries
DS-TTL II system's accuracy and stability have further improved
Exposure compensation: +/- 2EV.
Information panel on rear (mode, guide number, exposure compensation) is illuminated by a backlight so you can now check



settings with ease, even in dark conditions. Controls have been made bigger, for easier operation even when you are wearing a pair of thick gloves. Built-in target light is brighter and now has two power settings. Red filters also included for target light.

www.sea-sea.net

Fantasea FRX100 IV Housing for Sony RX100 IV



The FRX100 IV Housing was specially designed for the Sony Cyber-shot RX100 III and RX100 IV digital cameras.

The FRX100 IV Housing is manufactured to the highest professional standards of function, style and durability. It is depth rated to 60m/200 feet and is fully functional with ergonomically designed and labeled controls.

The Fantasea FRX100 IV is the ultimate waterproof home for the Sony RX100 IV and RX100 III cameras.

The FRX100 IV Housing was designed to be compatible with a complete accessory system, enabling photographers to enhance the quality of their images.

www.fantasea.com

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NA-A7II Housing
for Sony A7 II/A7RII camera



NA-RX100IV Housing
for Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 IV Digital Camera

www.nauticam.cn

Acquapazza APSO-A72



Acquapazza's APSO-A72 housing for the Sony A7 ILCE-7M2 & ILCE-7M2K is progressing well and should be available by the end of the year.

The port for the 90 mm F2.8 Macro and extension ring for the FC Fisheye converter are designs exclusive to Acquapazza and they ensure the lenses are positioned precisely and concentrically in relation to the front ports.

In addition the 16mm fisheye



converter hood is retained in the front dome port but can be released quickly for removing the camera from the housing.

www.acquapazza.jp/en

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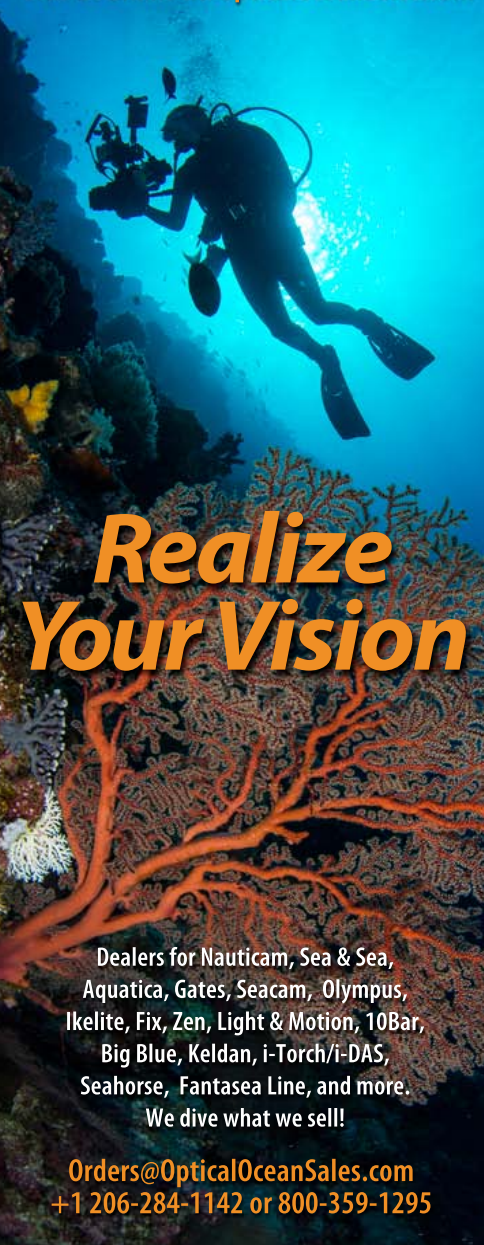


Coming soon!
APSO-A72
Underwater Housing for the Sony ILCE-7M2/7RM2



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Ikelite housing for Sony Cyber-shot RX100 IV



This sophisticated housing provides everything you need to get creative with this powerful compact camera! We recommend this system for its excellent low-light capabilities and super-sharp, 24-70mm Zeiss lens.

The Sony Cyber-shot RX100 Mark IV differs from the III slightly in camera thickness. The newer Mark IV camera can be used in the previous housing version made for the Mark III, Product Number 6116.12. All controls are operable in this installation with the exception of the rear control dial, which must be set to the inactive position. The rear dial control may be adjusted for the Mark IV camera by installing a washer underneath the control knob. Adjustment washers may be purchased through an Authorized Ikelite Dealer.

This newer housing features improved ergonomics like a front-

loading camera system and improved rear dial control. Continue reading for a full explanation of new features.

The RX100 Mark III can be used in this housing with the exception of the rear control dial. Older RX100 Mark I and Mark II cameras are not usable in this housing due to differences in lens and control placement.

www.ikelite.com



Nauticam NA-RX100IV for Sony RX100 IV



"Amazing 4K Compact"

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

www.reefphoto.com

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nju system - splashbag: the first underwater photographers' backpack



In the last months and years we didn't only design a new range of universal SLR housings, but also a new kind of backpack suited to the needs of underwater photographers.

But what defines an uw-photo backpack?

Usual photo-bags mostly aren't water resistant. The better ones feature a rain cover that you have to pull over the bag, but then you can't access equipment quickly.

Sometimes it's also problematic to put wet/moist stuff inside simply because it isn't made for it. Lightness



is always an issue to deal with as are size restrictions for planes.

The material of backpack is waterproof, and the harness is padded and its' straps are highly adjustable and feature a mechanism for stowing loose ends. There's also an adjustable chest strap.

www.njusystem.com



Nauticam NA-EM10 Package Special for Olympus OM-D E-M10



"Ready to Dive"

It's never been easier to start shooting great underwater images than with this ready-to-dive package from Reef Photo & Video. This package includes: Olympus O-MD E-M10 with 14-42mm lens, Nauticam NA-EM10 housing and Macro Port 56, Easitray, Inon S-2000 strobe, fiber optic cable, mounting hardware, 16GB memory card and rechargeable batteries. This is the perfect opportunity to 'dive' into a mirrorless system! Enjoy quality imaging in an easy-to-use, travel-friendly, package.

www.reefphoto.com

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APSO-RX100M4

Underwater Camera Housing for SONY RX100 M4



<http://acquapazza.jp/en>

Nauticam NA-5DSR for Canon EOS 5DS and Canon EOS 5DS R cameras



Nauticam is pleased to introduce the NA-5DSR. This housing incorporates the latest innovations from the renowned Nauticam design team, and pairs it with the extraordinary Canon EOS 5DS and Canon EOS 5DS R cameras.

Clearly a camera of this magnitude deserves the very best housing to take it underwater. The NA-5DMKIII housing will work flawlessly with the 5DS. But Nauticam is unable rest on laurels, and so simply had to produce the NA-5DSR, refining the NA-5DMKIII housing just that much more. The Nauticam NA-5DMKIII has been incredibly popular and well liked among it's users. Many of the controls for the NA-5DSR are based on the NA-MKIII, taking advantage of how solid that housing is. Still, the Nauticam designers were able to make improvements. Small changes,

to be sure, but each incredibly well thought out - designed by underwater photographers, for underwater photographers.

As an example of a minor but important change, the right side of the housing has been made less "crowded" by moving the video/still switch to the top of the housing, and combining the ISO and DOF preview buttons in a tactile rocker that makes accessing both controls exceptionally easy.

Perhaps the biggest change is the addition of the patent pending multi-controller. This moves the joystick control closer to the right hand, making it easier to get to. The piano keys for Set and Q were beautifully sculpted to make room for it, yielding a user interface that is both beautiful and functional.

www.nauticamusa.com


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Issue 86/18

Fantasea Radiant video lights

Fantasea proudly announces the release of the Radiant 2500 and Radiant Pro 2500 - durable and powerful video lights, which offer a variety of quality lighting options for enhancing color and light in underwater videos and still images.

Featuring an ergonomic design and durable construction, these lights can be comfortably integrated into any underwater photo system, such as with action cams, amphibious cameras, compact digital housings and more.

A battery power indicator light around the power switch enables easy monitoring of the battery power. Color temperature of the beam is warm and assists with producing vivid and colorful videos and still images without having to use any color correction filters. Adjustable power output allows controlling the intensity of the beam in various compositions and diving conditions, as well as extending the burn time of the light



(batteries will provide power for a considerably longer time when the light is set at lower intensity settings such as 50% or 25%).

Depth rated to 100 meters/330 feet, the Radiant 2500 and Radiant Pro 2500 fulfill the needs of both recreational and technical divers.

www.fantasea.com

THE NEXT GENERATION YS-D2 Underwater Strobe



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ADVICE FROM THE UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHERS THEMSELVES!

Store owner Marco Heesbeen won a Golden medal at the CMAS World Championship of Underwater photography.



Recsea Sony RX100 IV



Recsea is shipping their housing for the Sony RX100 IV. CNC machined in a plastic polymer, it features a 67mm threaded fixed port with access to the front control dial. It is dual O ring sealed and is rated to 60m (197ft).

www.recsea.com

INON X-2 housing for Canon EOS 6D

We are pleased to announce very first full-frame X-2 housing for Canon EOS 6D which is Canon's most compact digital SLR delivering incredible image quality with newly designed CMOS sensor.

The housing was released on August 4th, 2015 on a BTO (build-to-order) basis.

www.inon.co.jp

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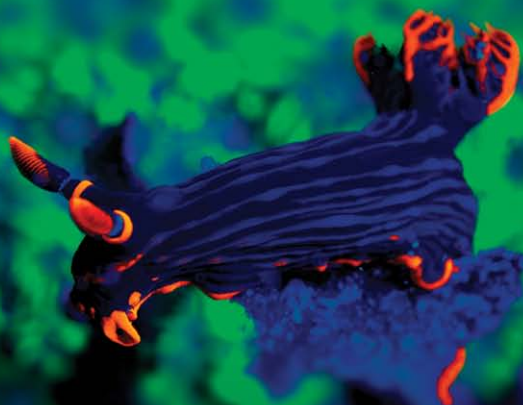
SONY a7 MkII
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NA-5DSR for Canon EOS 5DS/5DS R camera



Zen Underwater support for the Olympus 7-14mm f/2.8 PRO and 8mm f/1.8 Fisheye PRO

Zen Underwater is pleased to announce support for the new Olympus M.Zuiko ED 7-14mm f/2.8 PRO Lens and the Olympus M.Zuiko ED 8mm f/1.8 Fisheye PRO Lens on both the Nauticam N85 mount and Olympus PT-EP Housings.

For Nauticam N85 housings we recommend the following configurations:

Olympus M.Zuiko 7-14mm f/2.8 + Nauticam 36204 N85 to N120 Port Adaptor + Nauticam 21120 Extension Ring 20 with Lock + Zen Underwater DP-170-N120
Olympus M.Zuiko 8mm f/1.8 (option #1 - small dome) + Zen Underwater DP-100-N85 (*check with us for additional compatibility information) + Nauticam 36630 Mini Extension Ring 30
Olympus M.Zuiko 8mm f/1.8 (option #2 - larger dome) + Zen Underwater DP-170-N85

For Olympus PT-EP housings, we recommend the following configuration:

Olympus M.Zuiko 8mm f/1.8 + Zen Underwater DP-100-EP + Zen Underwater ER-EP-25.

For Olympus PT-EP08 or PT-EP11, add the Zen PA-EP08-EP Adaptor





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While the Canon 5D Mark III, 5DS, and 5DS R cameras are physically identical, the 5DS series utilize a newer TTL flash protocol. Older housings produced originally for the 5D Mark III camera, Product Number 6871.03, will cause Ikelite DS strobes to over-expose by at least two f/stops in TTL mode when used with these newer cameras. This can be compensated for by dialing in negative EV compensation through the back of the housing, or using the strobes in manual exposure mode.

An over-sized knob smoothly engages our unique system of universal zoom gears. We provide two zoom sets with each housing, one for

use with most popular larger diameter zoom lenses and a second designed for use with smaller diameter zoom lenses. Both sets are lightweight and easy to install with no modification to the lens required. A variety of dome and flat ports attach with four locking latches for maximum security and quick changes between dives.

Like every Ikelite product, our housings are designed, built, and tested in the USA. We use locally sourced, top-grade materials. Our housings are built by hand and individually tested for fit, function and waterproof integrity. The average assembly technician is a certified scuba diver and has over 16 years of experience building Ikelite products. We back our products with over 50 years of experience and the most accessible and responsive customer service staff in the dive industry.

www.ikelite.com



Nauticam NA-5DSR for Canon 5D Mark III, 5DS & 5DS R



"Truly Refined"

At 50mp, the Canon EOS 5DS (R) is the highest resolution SLR to date. This extraordinary camera demands an equally impressive housing, and the renowned Nauticam design team has left no detail overlooked in refining the solid design of the NA-5DMKIII to complement the shooting experience of the 5DS (R). In a marriage of form and function, the NA-5DSR features (among many thoughtful improvements) Nauticam's patent pending multi-controller, yielding a user interface that is nothing short of elegant in its ergonomics.

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Nauticam NA-RX100IV for Sony RX100 IV



Nauticam is pleased to announce the release of it's newest aluminum underwater camera housing for the Sony RX100 IV.

Three years ago Sony redefined the advanced compact camera with RX100, and the subsequent iterations of RX100 II and RX100 III went on to forge a completely new category.

The NA-RX100IV housing provides the ergonomics, build quality, and innovative feature set our customers demand in a tiny, travel friendly package.

The NA-RX100IV sets a new standard for compact camera housing design. It is the ultimate refinement of the three models that came before it, with ergonomics, reliability, and control access improved in each new product.

Nauticam designs are always improving, and new features integrated into each new release. The ergonomic experience has been

tailored for a photographer's right hand on the side of the housing, placing key controls literally at the users finger tips.

Some users, especially those wearing cold water gloves, prefer shooting from handles such as the Nauticam Flexitray and Easitray. To better support this style of shooting, a set of stainless steel handle brackets and new mechanical shutter release trigger extension is included with every housing.

The features you'd expect are certainly present, like ergonomic design, the clearly labelled controls, sculpted shutter release and more. A updated fiber optic connection block is standard, as is the built-in vacuum check and leak detection system. Two accessory bulkhead ports support HDMI cables for an external monitor and the vacuum valve.

www.nauticamusa.com

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Nauticam NA-502 for SmallHD 501 (HDMI) and 502 (HDMI and SDI Monitors)

The SmallHD 500 series, the sharpest and lightest 5-inch field monitors available, are the perfect complement to a Nauticam underwater video system. These products combine a stunning 5", 1920 x 1080 Full HD Display with an amazing suite of software tools for image monitoring in a compact form factor.

The monitor feels immediately familiar, almost identical in size to your favorite smart phone. A rubberized joystick is used to effortlessly flip through video "pages". Each page accepts multiple imagine analysis tools, configured by the user for their individual needs. The NA-502 housing provides access to all monitor controls, and the complete menu system is available in the housing, and at depth.

There aren't enough good things that can be said about this screen... Pixel density (the specification that results in sharpness) is greater than iPhone 6. The monitor is capable of displaying 85% of the NTSC color gamut, surpassing REC 709. These tech spec simply translate into the best color, contrast, and resolution available in this class.

The Nauticam NA-502 housing



features the rugged build quality and advanced manufacturing expertise our user base has come to expect. The joystick navigation system used by the 500 series monitors is translated to four directional arrows, a center select button, and the dedicated "back" button. The interface is simple, but elegant, and perfectly suited to the underwater environment.

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Backscatter FLEX DIVE Filter for GoPro Hero 4 and Hero 3+



The Backscatter FLEX FILTER system is a simple press on color correction filter system for the Hero 3+ and Hero 4 standard housings. The FLEX system allows any filter from the FLIP 3.1 system to mount to the FLEX FILTER frame, giving you the flexibility to expand your filter system in the future. The DIVE filter is included and is optimized for blue water, 20 to 50 feet deep.

The FLEX frame is made of a flexible material that will not shatter or break, ensuring your FLEX filter system will stand up to rough conditions.

www.backscatter.com

Sea & Sea housing for OM-D E-M5 Mk II



Sea & Sea has announced their housing for Olympus' OM-D E-M5 Mark II mirrorless camera.

The MDX-EM5 MKII is the latest aluminum housing for Olympus' highly touted mirrorless camera, offering ergonomic access to all camera controls. Most notably, the housing accommodates the Olympus FL-LM3 hot shoe flash, offering the ability to turn it on/off underwater. This is significant, as it means you can switch between using strobes via fiber optic cables and shooting higher shutter speeds at natural light.

The housing is depth rated to 330 feet and will retail for \$1,849.95 USD.

www.sea-sea.net

iDivesite FL-11101B Venom 35s Black



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INON Olympus EM5 Mk11 compatibility



INON INC. is pleased to announce compatibility of existing INON products with Olympus E-M5 Mark II/PT-EP13 housings.

www.inon.co.jp

INON ompatibility with Olympus TG-4/PT-056



INON INC. is pleased to announce compatibility of existing INON products with Olympus TG-4/PT-05

www.inon.co.jp

Gates Alexa Mini

Specifically designed for the ARRI ALEXA Mini camera, the Gates MINI is a deeply integrated marine imaging system, blurring the lines between housing and camera. Twelve user-assignable controls interface directly with the ARRI Mini allowing access to frequently used functions like white balance, peaking, display overlay, and frame rate.

www.gateshousings.com

Delta 3 Technical Lighting Control

The Delta 3 lighting support system from Technical Light Control introduces a bold new design, starting with the clamps, it features a spring loaded tensioner, a finer pitch of 1/4-28" for smoother and more precise adjustment of tension. The knob features three indents and a positive knurling, tightening them, whether wearing cold water mitts or being bare hands, is as easy as it can be.

www.aquatica.ca

Sealux HDF57 housing for Sony PXW-FS7



The SEALUX HDF57 is a tailor-made housing for the professional PXW-FS7 4K 4:2:2 10 bit camcorder made by Sony. This means it is one of the smallest and lightest aluminium underwater housings on the market for the PXW-FS7.

With this housing our main focus has been on operational versatility. An optional display case for the on-top-of-camera display supplied by Sony allows comfortable viewing of images from a swimming position. If an external monitor/recorder is to be used (such as the Odyssey 7Q), a cover plate will be fitted to it. 3 additional sockets, 1 x HDMI and optionally 2 x two-pole sockets allow connection of external devices, for example, an external monitor/recorder or a hydrophone.

www.sealux.de

Optical Ocean Sales expansion



Optical Ocean Sales, LLC has expanded its store/offices. The newly expanded space includes a third larger store, office and studio. The store features a large selection of underwater photo equipment in stock; cameras, video and still housings, strobes, focus/video lights, arms and trays, hard and soft cases along with many parts and accessories. They have many unique systems and lighting packages available that are ready-to-go.

Optical Ocean Sales are dealers for Nauticam, Fix, Zen, Keldan, SEACAM, Olympus, Sea & Sea, Inon, Gates, Aquatica, Fantasea, Light & Motion, Ikelite, SmallHD, 10Bar, Nanuk Cases, Seahorse, Big Blue, iTorch/iDAS, Xit404 and many other lines.

Optical Ocean Sales is

committed to its customers realizing the vision of the images they wish to create. They maintain an extensive free Educational Resource Center online with many Handbooks, Reviews, Blog, Trip Reports, product comparison charts and more. Staff is always available for questions and advice based on direct experience.

They also lead Photo Expeditions to many exotic locations all over the world.

The expanded store is located at their present location on Lake Union at 1800 Westlake Ave. North, Suite 201, Seattle, WA 98109. Hours are 10-6 M-F and 12-4 on Sat. Phone +1 206-284-1142 or 800-359-1295, or visit their webstore

www.opticaloceansales.com

Underwater Guide to Seychelles

Seychelles is a hugely popular diving destination and the waters that surround Seychelles are home to over 1,000 species of fish and 300 species of coral.

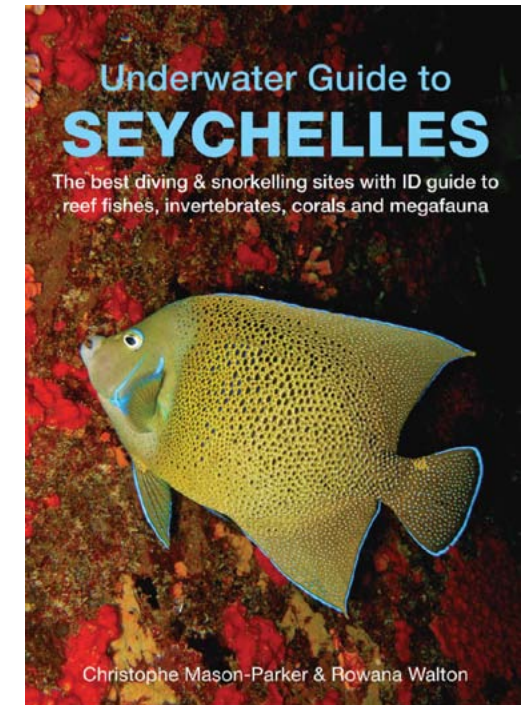
The islands are visited by giant Whale Sharks and manta rays, and are home to the critically endangered Hawksbill and Green Sea Turtles.

Divided into three parts, the book provides a general introduction to diving and snorkelling in Seychelles including what to expect and where to base yourself; a guide to the best sites for diving and snorkelling; and a photographic identification to 280 of the most common species of marine life covering fish, invertebrates, corals and megafauna.

It's the perfect, pocket-sized guide for those planning to spend time in or on the waters of the inner islands of Seychelles.

Christophe Mason-Parker is a conservationist and a photographer who has worked on numerous conservation programmes from Southeast Asia to the Caribbean, he is now living in the Seychelles where he runs the NGO Global Vision International Seychelles. He has contributed articles to various newspapers and magazines.

Rowana Walton sits on the board



of several NGOs and specializes in conservation communication and education. An experienced scientific diver, she has sampled the delights of marine life all over the world but still lists the Seychelles as her favourite diving spot. She currently works for the Seychelles Islands Foundation (SIF) which is responsible for the conservation and management of Seychelles' two UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

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NUPG Annual Splash-In and Print Competition 2015

Every summer since 2000, when the Northern Underwater Photography Group (NUPG) was founded, they have organised a one day underwater photography competition which takes place anywhere in North Wales.

Anglesey has, traditionally, been the focal point for the judging of the event, and for the third year running, the society has synchronised the event to coincide with the Anglesey Scubafest. It features a splash-in competition, where competitors have to take images on the day, in the sea, and only in marine waters around the North Wales coast line. In the past, the competition has been restricted to NUPG members only, but since the linkup with scuba-fest, the event is open to all comers and is now one of the best attended splash-ins in the country.

Everyone has their own idea of where they think they can get the best pictures. Some head out on boats, others shore dive, but this year, everyone had particularly difficult conditions to deal with. Whilst the sun shone overhead, making it a lovely day to be out and about, underneath the surface, the visibility was unforgiving for photographers at less than one

metre, and many of the dives also had some annoying and vomit inducing surge. Each participant can choose to enter images into 5 categories: System Wide Angle; System Macro; Compact Wide Angle; Compact Macro and the Spirit of Scubafest. Once the dives are completed, the divers, then all rush to the Scubafest venue, where the images have to be handed in by 7:30pm, in time to be considered in the competition. The images that are submitted are not allowed to be cropped and only basic, whole image editing is allowed. The images have to be taken on the day and in order to discourage anyone from using an image taken earlier, a registration sheet is emailed out the evening before, and this has to be the first image on the memory card.

On top of the splash-in competition, there is also a print competition, with four categories to enter: Overseas Wide Angle; Overseas Macro; British Wide Angle

Spirit of Scubafest: Winner – Roz Lunn with an image of a boy playing on an inflatable shark.



Overall and System Macro: Winner - Caroline Robertson-Brown with the image of three shannies.





Compact Camera Macro: Winner – Alex Tasker with a detailed shot of an anemone.

and British Macro. Each image has to have been taken within the last 12 months by NUPG members. These are displayed around the outside of the room for all those attending, whether they took part or not, to vote for their favourite images, two from each category. It was great to see so many lovely shots in each category making it a tough choice for every vote. It was generally felt amongst the NUPG members that this year's entrants were of a particularly high standard.

The event was sponsored by 10

different companies from within the diving and underwater photography industry. This meant that each category winner, from both the splash-in and print competitions, got a trophy to take home and keep. Apeks, Frogfish Photography and Mares were on hand to give out their awards, whilst Mark Evans, Sport Diver editor, was on hand to present the rest. Many of the votes were extremely close, with only one vote in it and for 3 categories, a vote-off was required to decide the winners, and in another



System Wide Angle: Winner – Caroline Robertson-Brown with an image of the blue sky looking up through some seaweed

two cases, the runner-up. The four splash-in category winners were then voted for to decide the overall winner of the 2015 splash-in. The overall winner won a trophy to keep, but more importantly, they also collected the highly coveted NUPG Splash-In trophy (an underwater photographer made out of nuts and bolts) to keep until next year.

Once again the event was very well attended, with a high standard of images on display (especially given the splash-in conditions). Caroline,

who is the NUPG secretary, was overwhelmed at doing so well on the night. "The NUPG splash-in trophy is something I have wanted to win since joining the NUPG 8 years ago. I am extremely proud to have now done so and cannot wait to get my name engraved on the trophy alongside some of our society's previous great underwater photographers"

www.nupg.org.uk

Sea & Sea YS-D2 strobe

by Peter Rowlands



The arrival of a new strobe in the post is always exciting so I was delighted when the postman dinged my door bell and requested a signature in return for releasing a parcel from Sea & Sea. It was their new YS-D2 strobe.

First impressions out of the box are of solid quality and a similar size and weight to the previous D1; 623gms and 89x133x116mm. The depth rating remains at 100m which will appeal to techies.

You have a choice of arm mounts - Sea & Sea's YS base or ball joint and it uses the same 4 x AA batteries for power but the compartment has

been improved by incorporating slots for each cell.

The standard coverage is 80°x80° with an output/GN of 32 but for wider coverage two diffusers are supplied to increase to 100°x100° with one stop light loss or 120°x120° with two stops light loss. In addition the diffusers give very slightly warmer colour output. This makes the D2 a market leader for this size of strobe.

Recycle time with NiMH batteries has improved almost 25% from 1.9 to 1.5 secs at full power but the maximum number of shots is down from 250 to 200. However in my experience it is rare to use



strobes at full power with today's high ISO cameras so this should not be a limitation.

As primarily a simple available light video shooter I must admit to being baffled by DS-TTL with ± 2 stops override and Pre-Flash control but the YS-D2 can do both as well as Manual (11 steps) and Slave TTL. In addition it can be triggered by traditional hard wire or fibre optic. With the latter, Sea & Sea have provided a nice touch by incorporating lugs to retain the thin cable and prevent tugging.

The aiming light has two power settings and the whole rear panel lights up with different colours depending on the Mode setting - a very useful visual aid for both day and night use.

The main control knobs are 1/4



knurled and should prove simple to operate with even the thickest of gloves. The YS-D2 has been designed for and caters to all types of diving.

Dan Bolt has been assigned to dive the D2 and produce a full in water review in the next issue of UwP but my conclusion is that the YS-D2 should be at the top of your shopping list if you are in the market for a new or indeed your first strobe. At £579.95 in the UK it is slightly more expensive than an INON Z240 but I think the D2 is a much better strobe all round.

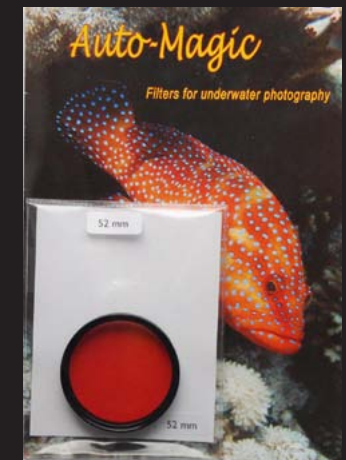
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Magic filters are now available in 3 options. Original Magic for use in blue water with DSLR and compact cameras with Manual White Balance, Auto-Magic for compact cameras in automatic point and shoot mode. GreenWater Magic for use in green water with DSLR and compact cameras with Manual White Balance. Prices start at just £19.



The Auto-Magic formula is now available in a Plexiglass filter that can be added or removed underwater.

www.magic-filters.com

Panasonic Lumix LX100 Review

By Jim Decker

I was super excited to get my hands on the Panasonic LX100. It's a revolutionary camera! Being the first compact camera with the ability to shoot 4K video and also great stills. I wanted to see how it stacked up against other top compact cameras such as the Canon G7X and the Sony RX100 II and III.

4K Video Recording

Of course the #1 big draw to this camera is the 4K recording capability. The LX100 shares the same 4K specs as the GH4, recording 4K 30p at a data rate of 100 mbps. The video looks fantastic. The exposure meter can be set to remain active during shooting, making it easy to monitor exposure in addition to zebra striping to show highlight areas that are starting to get a little hot. Video can be shot completely in manual exposure mode. These features combined, rival or exceed the capabilities of video modes in most other mirrorless or compact cameras. The LX100 makes an excellent primary video capture device especially if one shoots a little bit of stills too.

Excellent Custom White Balance

One of the problems with Panasonic in the past has been poor custom white balance execution. Previously, it had been so bad as to require a red filter or lights, with no chance of a decent white balance without either of those items. I was pleasantly shocked to find the LX100 execute a perfect white balance at 50 feet on my first dive. I

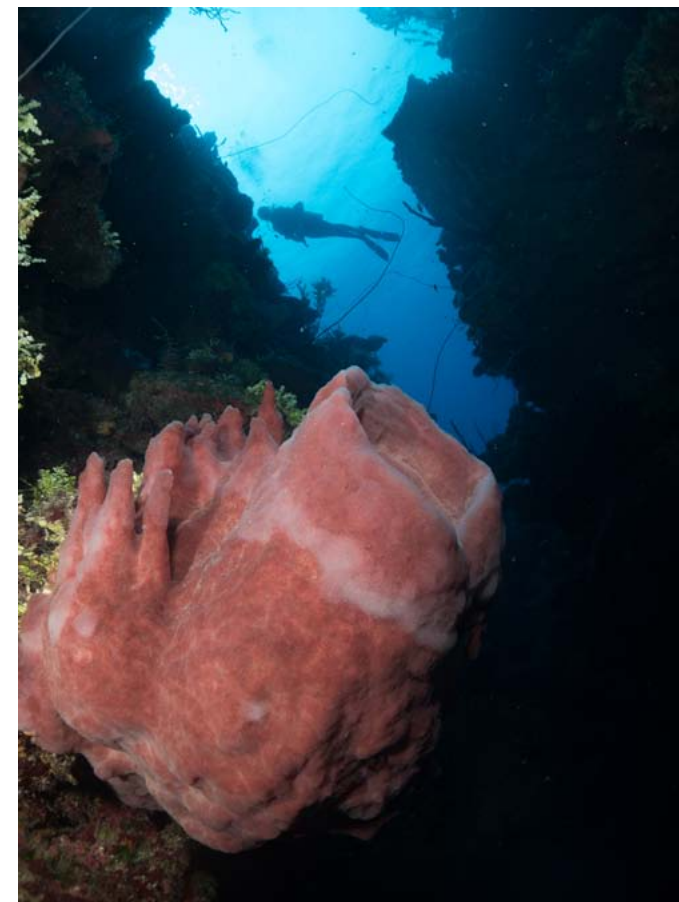


(If you're online, click to play.)

4K video from the LX100 is stunning, with great color rendition in ambient light with a custom white balance or when lit with video lights. 4K footage down sampled to 1080p looks sharper than if it was originally shot in 1080p and is a great reason to shoot 4K now even if you don't have a 4K display yet.

even had a great custom white balance executed at 70 feet.

The procedure for executing a white balance is simple. Press the white balance button, press up to activate custom white balance, then the center button to execute. There are 4 white balance banks



The LX100 does a great job with smooth gradients in blue backgrounds that go from very bright to dark.

available making it easy to save favorites for different depths or with lights.

Until now, I haven't seen cameras other than Canon execute such a great custom WB. I hope this is an indication that the next generation of GH4 will also get this great custom white balance color.



The LX100 does an excellent ambient light white balance execution to bring back true colors when strobes wouldn't be practical for large subjects like a shipwreck.

Stills

All this talk about 4K video casts a bit of a shadow over the stills features of the camera. It shouldn't though as the performance for stills is top notch. Super-fast autofocus, 11 frames per second in RAW, and a control set that would be at home on a top end mirrorless or SLR. The sensor is the same size as a micro 4/3 found in Panasonic and Olympus mirrorless cameras, giving great low light performance. Although the resolution

is only 12MP, the images are sharp and crisp with excellent detail.

Wide and Macro Accessory Lenses

With a lens as large as on the LX100 it presents a few challenges for shooting wide angle on a dive. While the stock port has no problem accepting a flip attachment for a macro lens, wide angle is another story. The stock port puts a wide angle



lens too far away from the camera's lens to be effective. The stock port can be removed and a shorter front port attached to bring a wide angle lens to the right distance. In testing we found the Inon UWL-H100 lens to have the best results with sharp corners. A dome unit can be added to the lens to expand the angle of coverage past 150 degrees. The camera lens needs to be zoomed to about 28 or 29mm to avoid vignetting of the shade. The camera has a menu option for "Zoom Resume" which will set it back to the last zoom setting used making it easy to always be set at the right focal length.

Control Set

The control set is a bit unconventional, but is very

comprehensive. There's no mode dial. The shutter speed and aperture dials both have an auto setting that determines what mode you are in. Put both on "A" and you're in Program Auto. Pick your own shutter speed and aperture and you're in Manual mode. This makes it easy to do quick changes without having to access a mode dial.

There's plenty of direct access to controls such as exposure compensation, white balance, and ISO. In fact, ISO is on a control wheel, so you can dial in ISO, shutter speed, and aperture all instantly with dedicated dials on the housing. This is especially crucial in video situations where quick ISO and aperture changes are mandatory to keep up with the action.



Unlike other compact cameras, focus can be separated from the shutter on the LX100 and reassigned to the rear AF-ON button. This is the preferred focusing technique used with mirrorless and SLR cameras for both macro and wide-angle underwater photography.

A downside is the size of the camera. It is not really “pocketable” but still much smaller than a mirrorless camera. It is very similar in size to a Canon G series camera. The trade off is a control set that is much more like a top end mirrorless or SLR than a compact.

Conclusion

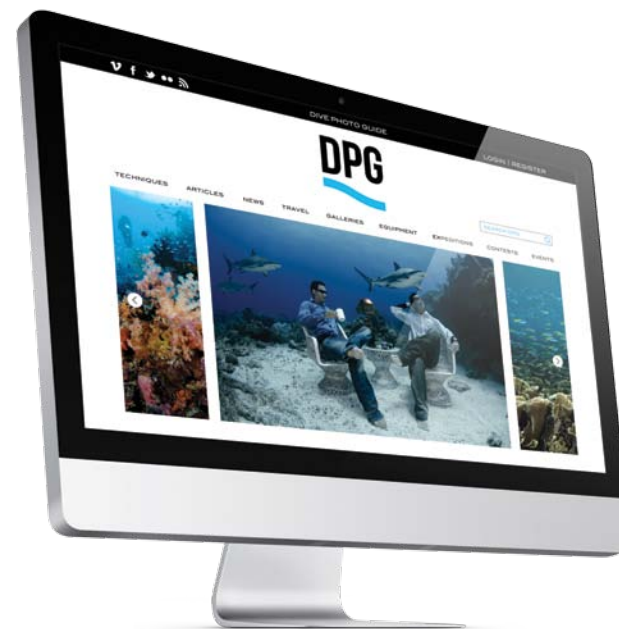
The LX100 is the best compact camera I have shot so far. Top-notch stills, excellent 4K video, great macro and wide angle lens options make it a great all-around, no compromise

camera for both the still and video shooter. I’ll still carry around a Sony RX100 topside for its ease of fitting in a pocket, but the LX100 is now my favorite all-around compact camera for underwater.

Jim Decker
www.backscatter.com



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Issue 86/34

Sony Alpha A7 II & Nauticam NA-A7II review

by Phil Rudin

The Sony Alpha A7 II is the fourth in the lineup of Sony full frame mirrorless cameras and the first to include sensor based in-body image-stabilization.

The Sony A7 & A7r released in early 2013 were the first mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras to feature a full-frame sensor in a mirrorless package the size of the current Olympus E-M1 & E-M5 II mirrorless cameras. Sony has made it quite clear that they intend to challenge Canon and Nikon in the pro and pro-summer markets by focusing heavily on their full-frame line of cameras.

Sony Alpha A7 II camera

The Sony A7 II is the first in the Alpha line to offer 5-axis sensor-based image-stabilization on a full-frame 24MP CMOS sensor. It is also first in the new Mark II lineup replacing the A7 with a somewhat larger and 25% heavier (600 v. 474 g) magnesium alloy body like the A7s.

The rugged new build quality enlarges the grip size making the

camera easier to hold out of water and also includes improved weather sealing.

The custom buttons are well laid out and any number of functions can be assigned to better assist with your photo needs. I have auto focus assigned to the AF/MF AEL switch button for rear AF control. By pushing the trash button the AF reverts to the shutter button and then resets to the AEL button when pushed again. This is very helpful if you use the camera to shoot above and below water allowing rear focus for U/W and shutter control for above water.

The A7 II includes improvements to the AF system with on-sensor phase-detect points and Bionz X image processor, a 3-inch tilting LCD with 1.23 million dots, an excellent and industry leading 2.36M dot OLED electronic viewfinder, 1080 video footage at up to 50Mbps (XAVC S) and a flat 'S-logs', Wi-Fi with NFC and more at the same US price point of around \$1700.00 as the past A7. My big gripe with Sony remains the fact that they don't provide a simple battery charger with



the camera instead providing a USB charger with a very short cable not long enough to reach from an outlet to the top of my desk. A simple Sony branded wall plug-in battery charger is under \$30.00 why not include it with a camera being marketed as

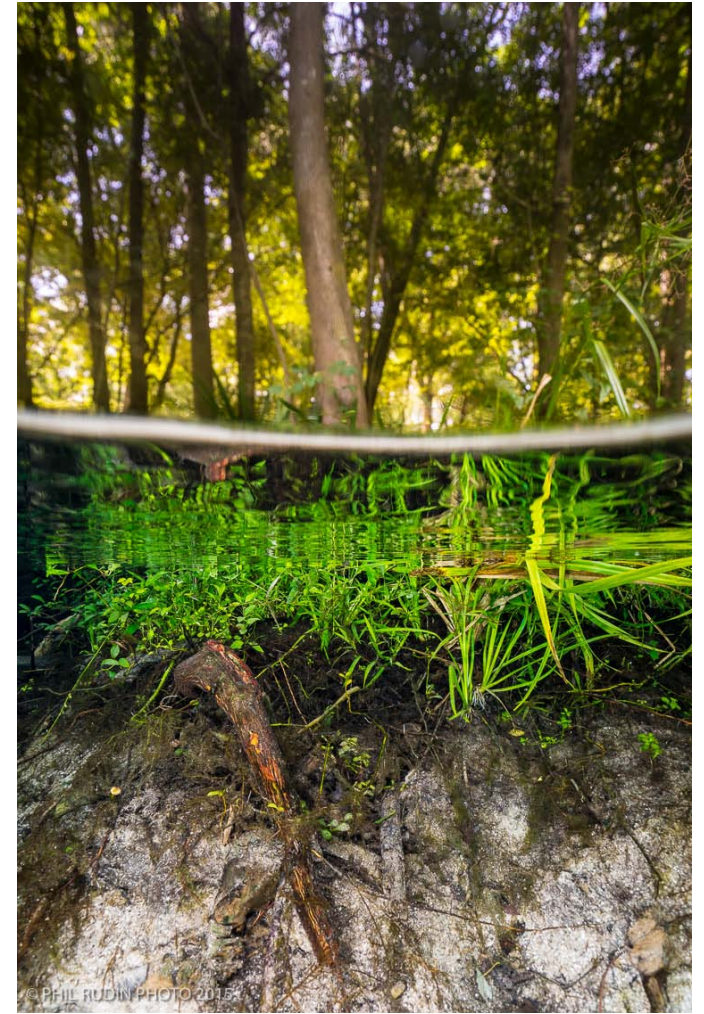
“professional”.

Battery life is also an issue with all mirrorless cameras compared to DSLR's without an EVF. My last gripe is the media card door - it opens with just the slightest bump. This is an issue I have never had with other



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Both shots taken in Ginnie Springs Florida, Sony A7II, Nauticam Na-A7II Housing, Sony 16-35mm At 16mm, Iso-400, F/5.6, 1/125th, Two Inon Z-240 Strobes.



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digital cameras and is a real bummer regarding the integrity of the weather sealing.

A new Alpha 7r II will be released by the time this article posts in this issue of UWPMAG.com for around \$3200.00 and I am sure we will be seeing an Alpha 7s II upgrade in the near future as well.

Nauticam NA-A7II Housing and Ports

One of the big advantages of the A7, A7r, A7s lineup is that all of these cameras were built on the same frame with almost the same button placement so one housing can be used with all three cameras.

Most popular among underwater photographers have been the A7r for its 36MP high resolution still images and the A7s for its excellent 12MP low light

video capability. Two completely different purpose built cameras that both fit into the same housing using the same ports and accessories is rare indeed.

The Nauticam NA-A7II housing is a new design to accommodate the larger Mark II camera bodies and the A7r II will work in the A7 II housing as well although future housings will at the very least have a control for the mode locking button on top of the A7r II mode dial which is not featured on



A7 II housing.

The A7 II housing retails for a US price of \$2850.00 which is the same price as the A7, A7r, A7s housings. The Nauticam NA-A7II housing is also \$450.00 less than the Nauticam NA-6D housing for Canon's 20MP 6D full frame DSLR camera and \$650.00 under the Nauticam NA-D750 housing for the Nikon D-750 which uses the same 24MP Sony sensor.

The Nauticam NA-A7II housing has all of the same features as the excellent lineup of Nauticam DSLR housings but is built around the 100 mm port mounting system rather than the 120 mm mount used on the DSLR housings. This places the housing size squarely between housings like the NA-EM1 M43 housing with its 85 mm port mount and the NA-D810 and D750 housings with weight differences of 1.80kg for NA-EM1, 2.9kg for the NA-D810/750 and 2.35 kg for the NA-A7II housing.

The NA-A7II housing has the same excellent twin locking system used on all of the Nauticam DSLR housings. This secures the front of the housing to the rear by turning the locking device 90 degrees. To unlock push the two red safety locking buttons in and turn the locks.

The housing has corresponding levers, push buttons, control dials and switches for every function on the camera body. These controls are very well placed and should be easy to use even with heavy gloves. The rear half of the housing has a large LCD window with an optical glass, quality pickup finder for viewing the EVF. I have replaced this with Nauticam's excellent 45 degree optical viewfinder. This is at least the sixth Nauticam housing where I have used this same viewfinder. Switching between the pickup finder and the 45 degree viewfinder takes me less than a minute and the larger viewfinder really helps those with aging eyes who are seeking better critical focus and composition.

The signature Nauticam red port locking lever is on the front righthand side of the housing and the lens release level is on the left. These allow you to remove the port and install lenses without removing the camera or even opening the housing, a feature I find very useful from time to time.

An M14 accessory port is located on the top rear half of the housing for the integrated vacuum system check and leak detection valve. The switch to turn on the vacuum system electronics is located in the rear half of the housing along with the audible



Model Romen, Sony A7II, Nauticam NA-A7II Housing, Sony 16-35mm AT 35mm, ISO-100, F/4, 1/800th, A/V light, wide open at 35mm

alarm and LED warning light. This is an accessory I highly recommend since the housing already comes with all of the electronics and flood alarm built in. The M14 valve is \$220.00 and includes the pump and a tool for user removal and installation of the valve.



Polka-Dot Batfish, Sony A7II, Nauticam NA-A7II housing, Sony 90mm macro, ISO-200, F/11, 1/125th, two INON Z-240 strobes.

The M16 accessory port on the front half of the housing can be used for electrical bulkheads when they arrive for the new Sony hot-shoe allowing manual flash connection with Nikonos, Ikelite and other sync cords. This port can also be used for HDMI out to devices like Atoms Ninja2 and small monitor housings like DP4 monitor, plus hydrophone installation.

The included handgrips are rubberized and very comfortable to use, they accept a verity of ball heads for video and strobe lighting as well as other accessories. Two additional

ball mounting points can be added to the housing over the included support brackets for the handgrips. The top of the housing also features two fiber optic threaded ports for optical sync cords. These are triggered using the Nauticam flash trigger for Sony Alpha 7-series cameras. The accessory flash trigger (\$220.00US) fires a verity of fiber optic compatible strobes like the Inon and Sea & Sea flashes in the manual mode.

The two included batteries provide thousands of flashes and reduce the drain on the cameras



Northern Stargazer, Sony A7II, Nauticam NA-A7II housing, Sony 90mm macro, ISO-200, F/14, 1/125th, two INON Z-240 strobes.

battery since no on-board camera flash needs to be recycled.

Nauticam has a verity of port options for the 100 mm port mount and some excellent port adapters for the 120 mm DSLR ports as well. This will allow users moving over from Nauticam DSLR housings to use some of their ports and to migrate some DSLR lenses using lens adapters like the Metabones EF and several other lens adapters. Also make sure that if you are migrating from the A7 housing to A7 II housing that you check the new and expanding A7 II

port chart as some lens configurations have changed.

Field Testing the Alpha A7 II System

Let me say upfront that the Sony A7 II system is a three year old work in progress that has been taking giant leaps with each new Alpha 7 release. The Sony lens line offers eleven FE lenses with twenty coming by 2016 and while incomplete compared to Canon, Nikon, Olympus and others each new Sony lens release has been



Conch eye. *Sony A7II, Nauticam NA-A7II housing, Sony 90mm macro, ISO-200, F/9, 1/125th, two INON Z-240 strobes.*



Sand Diver. *Sony A7II, Nauticam NA-A7II housing, Sony 90mm macro, ISO-200, F/11, 1/125th, two INON Z-240 strobes.*

brilliant.

For my review I have been using the newly released Sony FE 90mm F/2.8 macro G OSS and the Sony Vario-Tessar T* FE 16-35mm F/4 ZA OSS lenses. Both lenses are excellent and should be able to handle the higher resolution of the Alpha 7r II (42MP) with ease.

The 90 macro is without question the best macro lens I have ever used on a film or digital camera. The 16-35mm zoom on full frame can produce sharp images all the way

into the corners using the Nauticam 180mm optical glass port which is the same port recommended for the Olympus 7-14mm zoom on an M43 sensor. To attempt to equal these results on a full frame DSLR you would need a 230mm dome port. I can't say enough about how impressed I am with this equipment and I can't wait to test these lenses with the new Alpha 7r II when it arrives.

By design full frame mirrorless cameras require larger lenses than smaller sensor mirrorless cameras

but they don't need excessively large dome ports which makes the system about as easy to pack and travel with as mirrorless system.

The port extensions and dome for the 16-35mm zoom are 120mm so quite a bit of air is trapped inside the housing making it very well balanced in the water, however the port does have a tendency to want to point up a bit. This is not so far out of control that you will need to add weight but something to be aware of. Sony has not yet released a quality

FE fisheye lenses and has offered W/A (21mm) and fisheye adapters that can be mounted on the Sony FE 28mm F/2 lens much like the adapters for the E mount 16mm for NEX and A5000/6000. The difference is that the FE 28mm has much better native image quality than does the E 16mm. Nauticam has port solution's for both lens adapters using the 28mm F/2 but I would wait a few months to see what Nauticam may be offering going forward. I am not keen on adapting any of the manual focus



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Ginnie Springs Florida, Sony A7II, Nauticam NA-A7II housing, Sony 16-35mm AT 17mm, ISO-400, F/5.6, 1/800TH, A/V light NOTE THAT THIS IMAGE WAS PUSHED FIVE STOPS OF LIGHT FROM ISO-400 IN LIGHTROOM AND WAS TAKEN WITH AUTO FOCUS IN NEAR DARKNESS.

wide or fisheye offerings although some choices like the Rokinon 12mm fisheye are getting great reviews.

When testing new equipment I will often be using prototype or make shift solutions rather than finished products. This was the case while testing the 90mm macro which I tested before the release of the N100 Macro Port 105 for Sony FE 90mm macro with A7 II housing. My test port was an adapter to 120mm two extensions and a DSLR macro port. This configuration left the lens sitting about 12mm from the inside glass and rendered it mostly useless for shooting with closeup lenses like the SMC-1. I did however find that the 90mm macro lens focus was fast and very accurate in most all lighting conditions and the new port when it arrives will of course have the 67mm threads for closeup lenses with and without flip adapters. I carry a focusing light but did not find much need for it with the macro lens.

I had the lens set at the 0.5M to 28cm range lock which renders life size

(1:1) and found that most of the subjects I wanted to photograph fit well within that shooting range. As I have said in past reviews it takes a few dives to get the hang of shooting within this rather short focus range. I find that the lens will hunt less at this setting and if I need to get more than half a meter from the subject I am probably using the wrong lens for the subject size.

The 16 to 35mm zoom with the Nauticam gear has a buttery smooth zoom action and I found my best results for adequate depth of field and sharpness were in the F/5.6 to F/13 range with F/8 to F/13 being ideal. I was impressed with the of the corner sharpness of the 16 to 35 zoom and the 180mm port considering this is a full frame formate camera.

For most images I was using two Inon Z-240 strobes with two 10 inch carbon fiber float arms and two 8 inch double ball arms. My focus light was mounted on the macro port and was not necessary for wide angle. Spoiler alert, for those of you thinking of moving from

a sub-full frame system to any full frame system. The larger number of MP's and the reduced depth of field at any given F/stop over sub full frame present a few issues. First, high megapixel cameras tend to highlight flaws associated with many lenses, so chose wisely when making lens purchases. Second the shallower DOF associated with full frame cameras requires more critical focus so taking a machine-gun approach to shooting may result in high numbers of poorly focused images.

If you are seeking the very best in image quality and a full frame camera and quality lenses are within your budget one of the Sony Alpha II series cameras should be at or near the top of your wish list. Thanks to Reef Photo/Video and Nauticam USA teams for assistance with some of the equipment used for this review.

Phil Rudin

The Professional Advantage

by Karen Stearns

Honing underwater photo skills is an ongoing process that can last a lifetime. One of the best ways to accelerate the process is to work with an on-site photo pro. And while some veteran shooters might scoff at the idea of taking advice from a resident expert, the benefits can be tangible, and dramatic improvements can be realized in relatively short order.

A photo pro can provide much more than souvenir images of your trip. Increasingly, dive resorts are hiring on-site, full-time pros to hold workshops, courses, and private lessons with guests. Working hands-on with a professional photographer on your next dive trip can help transform vacation snapshots into something you might actually hang on your wall, or even get published in a magazine.

A prime example of this trend is taking place at Wakatobi Dive Resort. Here, the world-renowned House Reef, which is just a short fin-kick from shore, proves the perfect real-world photo studio. Critters rare on most Indo-Pacific dives—pygmy seahorses, frogfish, crocodilefish, cuttlefish, and ghost pipefish—frequent the House Reef. Combine this location with the services of a full-time photo pro capable

of providing personalized learning and advice and rapid improvements are not only possible, but the norm.

“The greatest improvement I see in my students is when they start thinking of a photograph even before they take it—from researching the subject to lighting choices, they plan the shot,” explains Marco Fierli, Wakatobi’s photo pro. “Everything that comes after tells me that they will soon find their own personal style.”

Marco offers formal courses and workshops aimed at a variety of ability levels from beginner to DSLR shooter. These programs can be effective, but it is often the one-on-one time where photographers can see the most improvement, he says. At times like these, Marco puts away the books to customize the lesson to the individual ability level and interest of the photographer, be it basic lighting metering or advanced techniques like snooting. “I tailor the existing material

© Marco Fierli

Canon 5DMKIII, Nauticam housing, Canon 16-35 II, 8.5” acrylic Nauticam dome port, 2 X INON Z240 strobes, Nauticam carbon arms system, Nauticam flash trigger





Engaging the expertise of a photo pro, even if just for a short period of time, can provide much more than souvenir images from your trip. Photo by Walt Stearns



“The most remarkable aspect of Marco’s teaching is his capacity for communicating effectively underwater while in the midst of taking and evaluating shots,” recalls Scott Friedman. Photo by Walt Stearns.



Photo workshop student, Scott Friedman, was able to hone his macro and super macro skills during a short workshop at Wakatobi. He captured this image of a Halimeda ghost pipefish working with Marco on Wakatobi’s House Reef. Canon 5D Mark II in Aquatica housing and Inon strobes. 100mm macro. F22. 1/160th. ISO200.

and schedules to the specific needs and goals of the guest,” he says. “I can follow the guest for the day, give explanatory briefings before and after each dive, and write photographic tips on my slate as we dive together.”

Before his trip to Wakatobi, Scott Friedman considered himself an “experienced amateur” underwater photographer, but felt a gap in his portfolio, specifically with super macro. “I’ve long wanted to have

the know-how for super macro, especially to capture a solid image of a pygmy seahorse or a ghost pipefish,” he says. “For several years, I’ve owned a MacroMate attachment for doing super macro, but for the life of me I couldn’t really figure out how to use it. Marco helped me immensely (and quickly) with these goals. Since I didn’t have manual focus gear with me, he was able to adapt his instruction so that I could

use a particular autofocus mode to accomplish what I wanted,” said Scott.

Scott spent a couple evenings in the classroom at Wakatobi as Marco reviewed supermacro techniques. Each following day, he would put the gained knowledge to the test during in-water instruction. “The most remarkable aspect of Marco’s teaching is his capacity for communicating effectively underwater while in the midst of taking and evaluating shots,” recalls Scott. “There was a perfect combination of hand signals, a writing tablet, demonstration, and the occasional verbal exclamation into his regulator that somehow makes it to the student’s ears.”

Thanks to Marco’s guidance, Scott saw dramatic improvements in his images over the course of his stay at Wakatobi. And equally as important, he says, was the fact that he made these improvements while thoroughly enjoying the trip itself. As he puts it, “at Wakatobi, it’s simply a lot of fun to dive and take photos.”

Karen Stearns

www.wakatobi.com



Marco Fierli joined the team at Wakatobi in 2011. As an accomplished underwater photographer he shares his talents through private sessions and workshops based on individual need and experience.

See more of Marco’s images on his personal website.

www.marcof8.com

For more information or to arrange a session with Marco during your stay send an email

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SS Yongala - Fish Magnet

by Nigel Marsh and Helen Rose

Fish, fish and more fish, all I could see were fish! In front of me were vast schools of sweetlips, snappers, cardinalfish and baitfish, while speeding around me were trevally, mackerel and rainbow runners. But the biggest fish of all were the giant Queensland gropers, three of them and all over 2m long! I was just about to explore the biggest fish magnet on the planet, the wreck of the SS Yongala.

I first dived the SS Yongala in 1986 and from the very first dive was amazed by all the fish life attracted to this historic shipwreck. Every dive was an education, sending me to the guide books to identify species that I had never seen before. I dived this wonderful shipwreck again in 1989 and 1991 and was once more enthralled by the spectacular fish life, and could see why the SS Yongala is often rated in the top ten dive sites of the world.

Unfortunately I didn't get a chance to return to the SS Yongala until 2015. Not that I didn't try, but bad weather saw two failed attempts to reach the shipwreck in 2010 and 2014. Twenty four years since my last dive on the SS Yongala and I

was on Mike Ball Dive Expeditions' Spoilsport and this time the weather was perfect for a day and a half of incredible diving.

Entering the water I was curious to see if the SS Yongala was as good as I remembered it. I got off to a great start as the visibility was 25m and the fish encounters started on the swim over to the mooring with batfish, giant trevally and a curious black-tip shark all coming to check us out.

Descending a dark shape quickly came into view, the stern of the legendary SS Yongala. However we could hardly see the wreck for the swarms of fish; hovering around the stern like a shroud were millions of damselfish, fusiliers, baitfish and cardinalfish. As we got closer a pack of turrum trevally suddenly appeared and charged through the small fish, causing mayhem. A few of the small fish moved a little too slow and were picked off by the hungry hunters. Also milling around the stern were mangrove jacks, coral trout, coral cod, snappers, parrotfish, butterflyfish, angelfish, several large Maori wrasse and an olive sea snake.

It was mesmerising to see so many fish, but I soon found it could



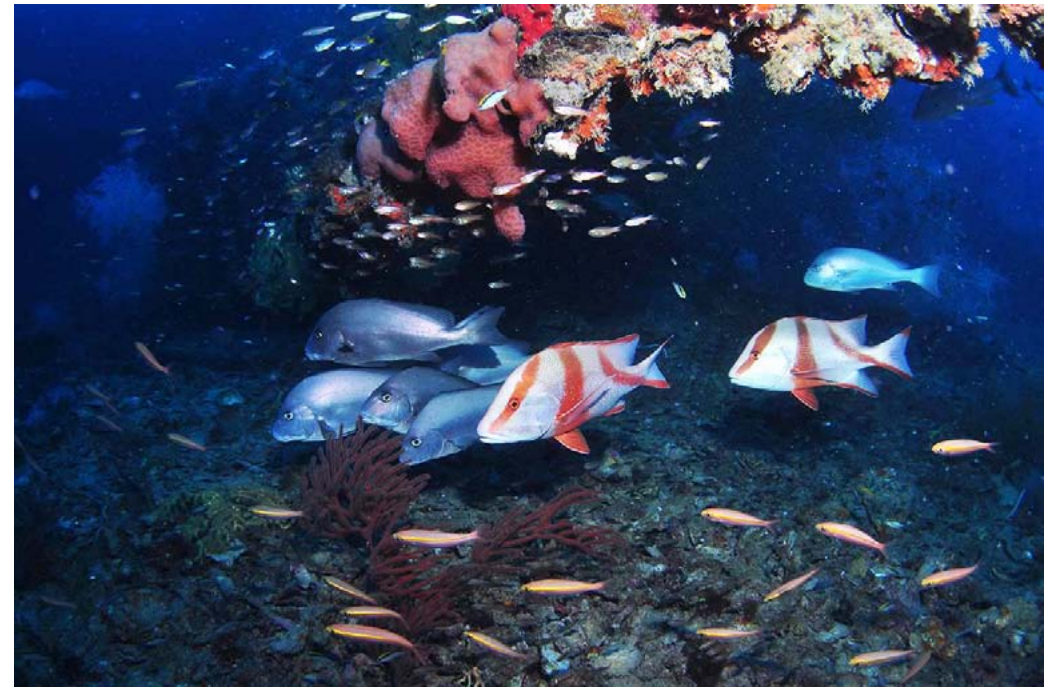
Early morning under the stern with the baitfish and painted sweetlips (Nikon D90, Ikelite housing, Inon Z240 Strobe, Tokina 10-17mm, ISO 200, 1/40, f8).



Helen swims along the hull of the ship (Nikon D90, Ikelite housing, Inon Z240 Strobe, Tokina 10-17mm, ISO 200, 1/100, f8).



Strange bed fellows, a loggerhead turtle and tawny nurse shark sleeping together (Nikon D90, Ikelite housing, Inon Z240, Tokina 10-17mm, ISO 200, 1/100, f9).



Painted sweetlips and red emperors encountered under a mast (Nikon D90, Ikelite housing, Inon Z240 Strobe, Tokina 10-17mm, ISO 200, 1/60, f8).

limit my photography. I dearly wanted to photograph as many fish as possible, but also the wreck and the wonderful corals that decorate it, but every time I got Helen in a good position for a photograph she would be swamped by fish. At times I could barely see her, even when we were only a few metres apart. This would happen again and again all over the SS Yongala – I never thought I would whinge about too many fish!

Dropping under the stern there was even more fish to be seen, hundreds of painted sweetlips lined up

into the slight current, plus two large estuary groppers and three even bigger Queensland groppers. These giant groppers, all over 2m long, had their own community of fish, with remoras hanging onto them and a cloud of ox-eye scad surrounding them like a cloud. Looking up at the wreck in the early morning light was just magic, millions of fish silhouetted against the rays of light.

Moving back onto the wreck we started our exploration, checking out the features of the ship, which hadn't seem to change much in 24

years. With such great visibility from the stern we could see the aft mast stretching out onto the sand and the recess for the aft cargo hatch.

At the aft cargo hold we paused to look at a sleeping loggerhead turtle and several large coral trout. Nearby a pretty black coral tree was engulfed by a school of one-spot snapper and cardinalfish. Below was a large flowery grouper sitting in a soft coral watching us closely. It proved to be the shyest fish on the wreck, disappearing into the shadows when we approached for a photograph.

The corals that decorate the SS Yongala are just mind-blowing and better than you would see on most reefs – candelabra gorgonians, sea whips, spikey soft corals, black coral trees, ascidians, tubastra corals and numerous sponges. Hiding amongst these corals was a wealth of reef fish, with some of the standout species being a footballer coral trout, a barramundi cod, a giant moray eel, red emperors and Meredith's angelfish. Cleaning stations seem to be everywhere and they had a lot of customers to serve. We watched one



A green turtle cruises along the shipwreck (Nikon D90, Ikelite housing, Inon Z240 Strobe, Tokina 10-17mm, ISO 200, 1/60, f8).



One of the giant Queensland groopers hanging around the stern of the SS Yongala (Nikon D90, Ikelite housing, Inon Z240, Tokina 10-17mm, ISO 200, 1/100, f9).

coral cod open its mouth wide to let the cleaner wrasse do its work.

Continuing to the midship region of the wreck there was suddenly an explosion of snapper species mixed together in a giant school. We noted blue-striped snapper, five-lined snapper and black-spot snapper, but there could have been more. While exploring this section of the ship we saw several turtles, sea snakes and a group of spotted eagle rays. Diving in this fish soup it was hard to know which way to point the camera, at the wreck or behind us, as a constant

parade of pelagic species, such as Spanish mackerel, rainbow runners, giant trevally and batfish, were zooming passed.

Getting close to the bow the fish life never thinned out, with more schools of sweetlips, snappers, fusiliers, fairy basslets and cardinalfish. Near the forward cargo hold a black-tip shark zoomed in to give us a once over, and in the distance we saw a large bull shark cruise by.

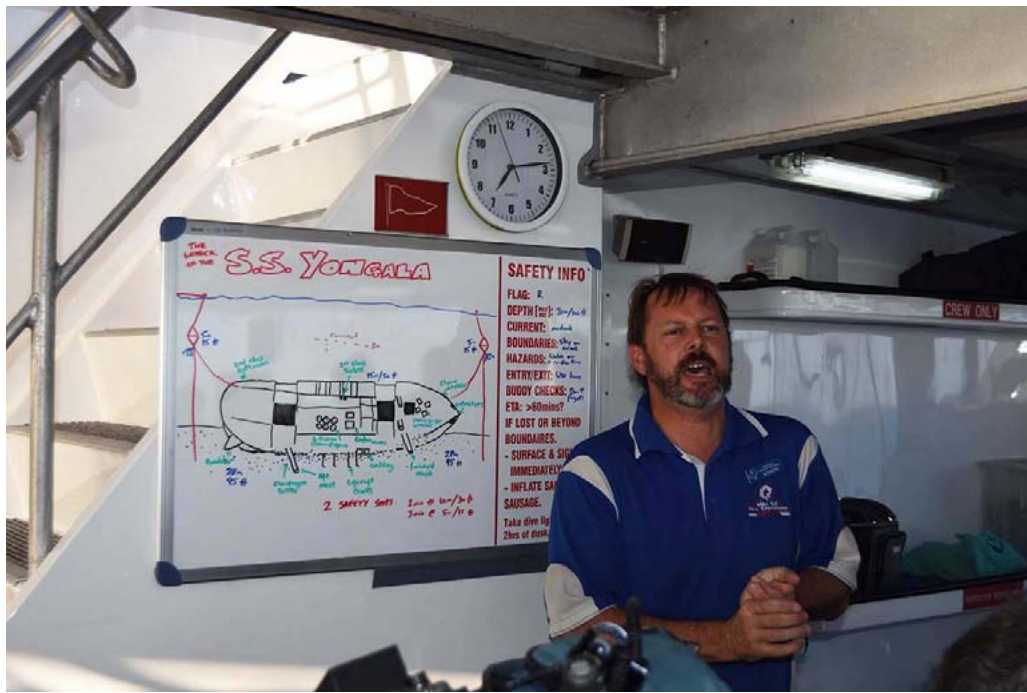
Reaching the bow of the 109m long ship it was hard to believe,

but there was even more fish here – zillions of baitfish. This thick silver cloud was being preyed upon by a dozen turrum trevally that would charge through the shimmering cloud causing it to dance and weave like a flowing wave. Off the bow was also plenty of action with several Queensland groopers (the same ones from the stern that seemed to have followed us), a large cowtail stingray and a family of Maori wrasse.

We lingered at the bow for several minutes to watch the trevally feeding, then swam through this mass

of baitfish ourselves, only to find hidden below the silver blanket coral trout, angelfish, tuskfish, parrotfish, lionfish, butterflyfish and several olive sea snakes.

Returning along the hull we finally found a section of the wreck without a swarm of fish, near the first class dining room. The corals in this area had been stripped away when Cyclone Yasi passed over the wreck in 2011 and hadn't regrown yet. I took advantage of the lack of fish to get some images of Helen exploring the wreck without fish in front of her



Trip director Kerrin gives a briefing prior to our dives on the SS Yongala (Nikon D7200, Nikkor 18-55mm, ISO 100, 1/250, f4.2).

mask.

Once passed this almost barren section the fish life returned in force, more damselfish, snappers and cardinalfish. Upon reaching the stern once more the turrum trevally were back to harass the smaller fish. Lingering at the stern the fish action never seemed to stop, with several barracuda and a wahoo gliding by.

With our air and bottom time running low it was finally time to surface, but just as we were starting to ascend a huge stingray surrounded by dozens of cobia suddenly appeared

out of the blue. This enormous ray, over 2m wide, was quite a sight as it had a smaller pink stingray riding its back. It disappeared just as quickly as it appeared, and it wasn't until we were back on Spoilsport that instructor Ollie, identified it as the largest and rarest of all the stingray species, the smalleye stingray. Ollie was very excited by the encounter as it was only the second time this rare stingray had been seen on the SS Yongala.

Over the next day and half we enjoyed six more incredible dives



A pack of turrum trevally stalk the shipwreck for prey (Nikon D90, Ikelite housing, Inon Z240 Strobe, Tokina 10-17mm, ISO 200, 1/80, f8).

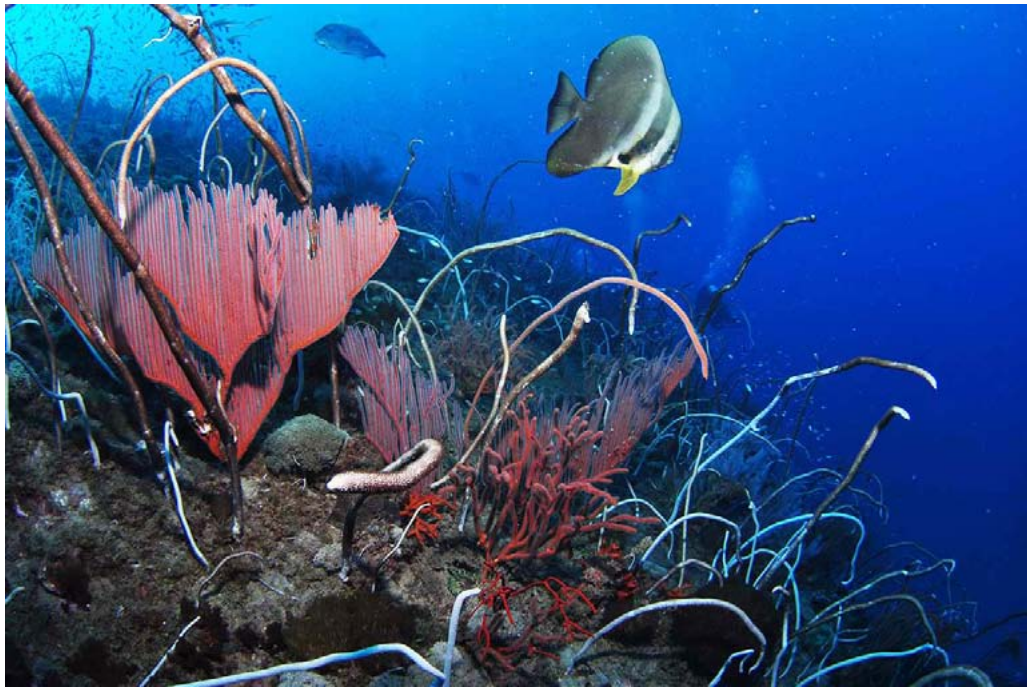
on the SS Yongala, and each one produced just as many fish and usually something special. On one dive it was a school of hundreds of barracuda, on another it was finding a tawny nurse shark and a loggerhead turtle curled up together asleep. While on the night dive it was watching the giant trevally hunting and finding three green turtles using the sea whips like a mattress to sleep on. On other dives we saw black-blotched stingrays, queenfish, a tasselled wobbegong and white-spotted shovelnose rays.

The SS Yongala is a very special

dive site and without doubt the biggest fish magnet on the planet.

Photography On The SS Yongala

There are not many shipwrecks that are as photogenic as the SS Yongala. With so much marine life and spectacular corals you will never run out of subjects no matter what lens you choose. I used a Tokina 10-17mm on most dives and had an endless selection of subjects, and



A jungle of sea whips decorate the hull of the SS Yongala (Nikon D90, Ikelite housing, Inon Z240 Strobe, Tokina 10-17mm, ISO 200, 1/100, f8).

found myself sticking to the widest setting for almost all images. The biggest challenge with photography on the SS Yongala, apart from fish getting in your way, is usually the limited visibility. But with most of the marine life used to divers you can generally get close to most subjects.

Diving in May, autumn in Australia, light levels were quite low, even with the good visibility we experienced. The early morning dives were especially dark. I stuck to 200 ASA and just dropped my shutter speed on the early morning dives to

still get a blue background. I wasn't too concerned about motion blur as I found the fish were not as active first thing in the morning.

For the late afternoon and night dives I switched to my 60mm macro lens, as I was after fish portraits and invertebrate species. But I was soon kicking myself as the late afternoon dive had some of the best action, with many species feeding. The action also continued at night, but night time wide angle photography is not the easiest, especially with giant trevally zooming around you.

Final photography tip is to always use a large memory card, as on the SS Yongala you will be shooting hundreds of images on every dive.

You can dive the SS Yongala on day boats from Alva Beach (near Ayr) and Townsville almost any day of the year (weather permitting), but if you really want to see this amazing shipwreck at its best then the only way to explore it is from a liveaboard. Mike Ball Dive Expeditions operate the luxury liveaboard Spoilsport to the SS Yongala on a number of special trips in May each year.

The main advantage of diving the SS Yongala from a liveaboard is being able to dive the wreck up to five times

a day, and see the ever changing array of marine life that visits the wreck over that time. Our best dives were the two early morning dives at 7am, when the ship was just coming to life, but the night dive was also something special, if a little creepy knowing that 123 people tragically died and this is their grave site. Anyway you get to dive the SS Yongala will be a very special experience.

Nigel Marsh and Helen Rose
www.nigelmarshphotography.com



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10 years of Magic

by Alex Mustard

In the beginning...

Exactly 10 years ago, almost to the day, I was in the Red Sea with a mad plan. I wanted to take a colourful image of the famous stern of the Giannis D. The composition was a classic. The wreck's rear end is exactly the right size for a vertical fisheye shot and we'd been shooting her that way since she crashed into the reef in the 1980s.

But the picture had always been monochrome blue. Being too big and far away to light with strobes. I wanted a more colourful version and I had tried on my previous visit to the Red Sea, using just manual white balance to restore the colours. Software in those days was very basic, and there was no such thing as white balance sliders in Lightroom (in fact Lightroom was still two years away) the only white balance you could use is what was recorded in the camera at the time of shooting! So I took endless photos of the wreck, all with slightly different white balance values. I could get colour of the wreck but the white balance was also sucking away the blue colour of the water too. I realized I needed a filter.

Filters are not new in underwater photography. They were popular in the early days when strobes were both unreliable and potentially dangerous. But their inflexibility on film severely limited their use. Using them in combination with digital white balance looked promising. The problem was that nobody made a filter for fisheye lenses, the one lens a stills photographer most wants to use a filter with. So I designed my own, by sandwiching three different gel filters together and sticking them to the back of my lens.

To hedge my bets I actually made up two different recipes, giving my less favoured design to my buddy Peter Rowlands to test. Post dive my shots were again too washed out, but Peter's were amazing. Fortunately

*A school of Bohar snapper (*Lutjanus bohar*) with diver (Dickon Smith) at Shark Reef, Ras Mohammed. Each of these fish is 50-80cm long and up to 40 years old.*

Nikon D4, Subal housing, Sigma 15mm lens. 1/125th sec at F10. ISO400. Available light. Original Magic Filter.



we dived the wreck again on the following day, and with a small modification to Peter's recipe I took the first photographs of the whole stern in full colour. Well apart from Peter's shots from the day before!

The trip was one with friends from the British Society of Underwater Photographers, everyone was very excited by the new shots, and over the week everyone who had a digital camera had tried it. The talented bunch producing amazing, strobe free, colourful images of wrecks, coral seascapes and schools of fish. Far more uses than I had ever imagined. They also implored me not to keep the filter to myself and, with a financial nudge from Peter Rowlands (I was a very poor underwater photographer at the time), by August 2005 we were selling Magic Filters. Andi Voeltz wrote the PADI Digital Underwater Photography course based on the techniques we shared, and photographers around the world used them, winning competitions and snaring magazine covers. Ten years on they are still helping photographers all around the world produce new types of images and video.

Filter Technique

It is important to consider filters as an alternative to shooting with strobes, not a replacement. Like any technique, they are about adding another option to our arsenal of skills. Something we should use with suitable subject matter, in suitable conditions. The best subjects for filters are coral gardens, divers, wrecks, big animals and schools of fish. Filters work best on sunny days, when there is lots of light, although now that most cameras perform very well at medium and high ISOs, they can be used in far more conditions than in the early days. That said filter photography works

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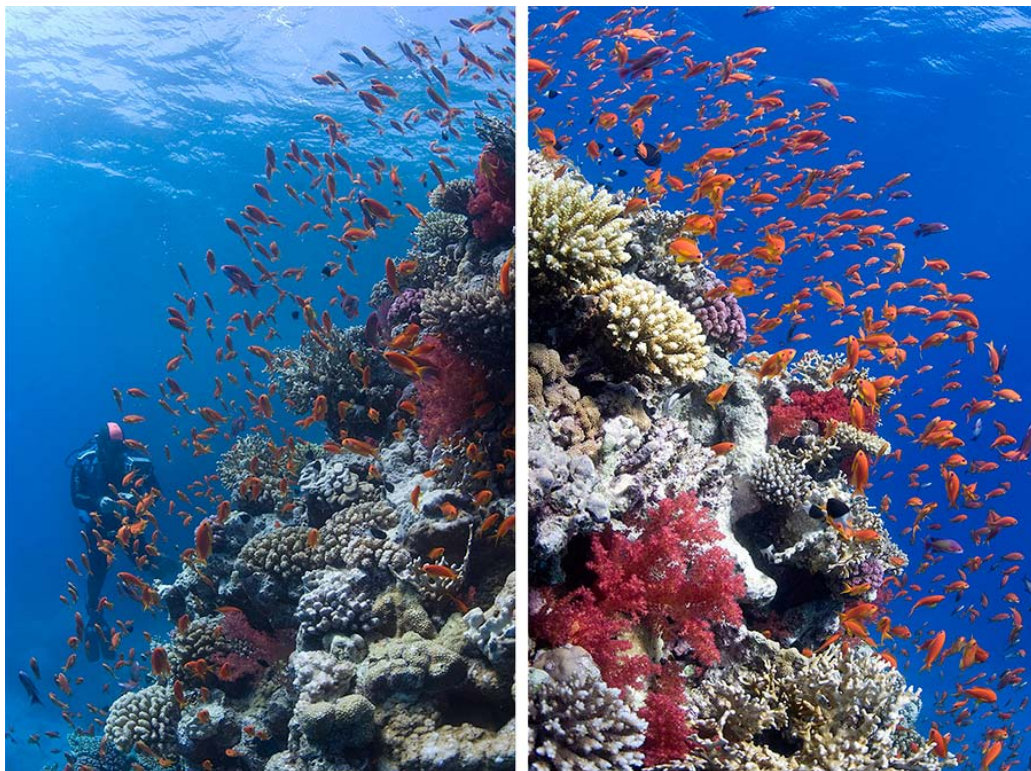
*Creole wrasse (Clepticus parrae) swarm above the bow of the wreck of the USS Kittiwake. Seven Mile Beach, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, British West Indies.
Nikon D4, Subal housing, Sigma 15mm lens. 1/80th sec at F10. ISO320. Available light. Original Magic Filter. Manual White Balance.*

best when shallower than 15m, although with less colourful subjects, like wrecks, we can push this a little deeper (the Giannis D is in about 18-20m of water).

The real key to shooting successfully with filters is to appreciate it is completely different to shooting wide angle with strobes. With filters the golden rule is to always shoot with the sun on our

back, so it comes over our shoulder and illuminates the subject. The direction of light must be our first thought before every shot. This means we cannot shoot every angle on each dive and we may need to dive a static subject, like a wreck, at different times of day to get the perfect shot of every feature of interest.

Avoid taking filter shots towards the light or



The golden rule of filter photography is to pay attention to the direction of light and to shoot with it coming over your shoulder onto the subject. These two photos were taken at the same time and the same depth. Left was against the light and colours are poor and blue is weak. Right was with the light and colours are intense and the blue is strong.

the surface, which will leave subject matter silhouetted without colour or detail and will also over expose, or white-out, the surface. With very wide lenses, like fisheyes, we may find that a slightly downward camera angle gives the best results.

Although we can now set white balance in post, we get noticeably better results if we set the

camera's white balance manually underwater and only tweak it in post production. This is because RAW files are not really as raw as we sometimes like to think. Big adjustments to white balance in post do create noise and reduce the range of colours in a RAW file. We avoid these issues when right white balance (or close to it) is locked into the file at the time of shooting



The GreenWater Magic filter as the name implies is designed to improve shots in green water with just available light. This shot was taken in 20 metres. Nikon D80, 10.5mm lens. 1/50th @ F2.8 ISO400. Greenwater Magic Filter. Manual White Balance. (Photo by Peter Rowlands)

(meaning only minor changes in post processing).

It is also worth shooting RAW + JPG with filters as many cameras process this type of images much better than third party software like Adobe Lightroom can. This is especially true of Canon cameras, which can add much more "tint" in camera, than can be added within the

limits of Lightroom. Setting the white balance manually causes concerns amongst SLR shooters, in particular. Compact shooters are often more used to this technique and surely smirk at the fuss SLR photographers make! The key is to practice on land (with the camera in the housing) so you get used to the procedure for setting it. This does vary between cameras.



These three photos compare a film shot of the stern of the Giannis D wreck (left), with two digital photos taken with the same camera, one using just manual white balance (centre) and one using manual white balance and a Magic Filter (right). Both white balanced images restore colour to the wreck, but the filter also helps hold a richer blue background.

Underwater we can set white balance against a white slate or grey card, but most of the time a neutral coloured section of reef or wreck is fine. As long as it is done at the same depth as the subject. Common problems that cause trouble in setting white balance are when the camera is under exposing the white balance target, the target is in shadow, or we are too deep. Sometimes filter shots can look a bit flat on the LCD screen underwater. I have had photographers show me their filter shots after a dive disappointed that they could not get the filter and white balance working.

But when they see the images again at the surface they are really pleased. So whatever happens keep shooting – white balance can always be corrected in post, if needs be!

Filter Art

The most exciting thing about filters for photographers is that filter photography adds colour to images in a different way to shooting with strobes and the best filter images are usually the ones that just can't be replicated with strobes. The question I get asked a lot is what is the advantage of using a filter, compared



with just using the camera's manual white balance alone. When you are very shallow, just below the surface, in the top 2-3m (6-9ft) then white balance alone is absolutely fine. However, once you are deeper than 3m (9ft) the advantages of a filter become increasingly apparent.

The main advantages are more subtle variations of the colour, and most noticeable, that the foreground is set against a rich blue background. Many photos taken with manual white balance are characterized with a washed out background water colour. A strong blue background is

Filters are an alternative, not a replacement for strobes. And always worth having with you. They have saved many a photographer's trip when strobes have gone wrong.

an important aesthetic element in an underwater photograph. Ask anyone what colour the sea is and they will tell you it is blue!

Finally, there is the hidden pleasure of filter photography to enjoy: leaving your strobes on the boat and enjoying the freedom of a manoeuvrable and compact rig. Ahh, the joy of being a diver! But the message I want to end with is the most important factor when using filters is to shoot with the light. Pay attention to how the sun is lighting the scene. It must be coming from behind us lighting up the subject. Driving home this lesson is the hidden reward of filter photography. I am convinced that my wide angle strobe photography underwater improved dramatically when the discipline of shooting filters taught me to pay proper attention to ambient light underwater.

Alex Mustard

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Don't settle for 2nd best



Film - No Filter No
White Balance



Digital - No Filter Manual
White Balance



Magic Filter Manual
White Balance

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

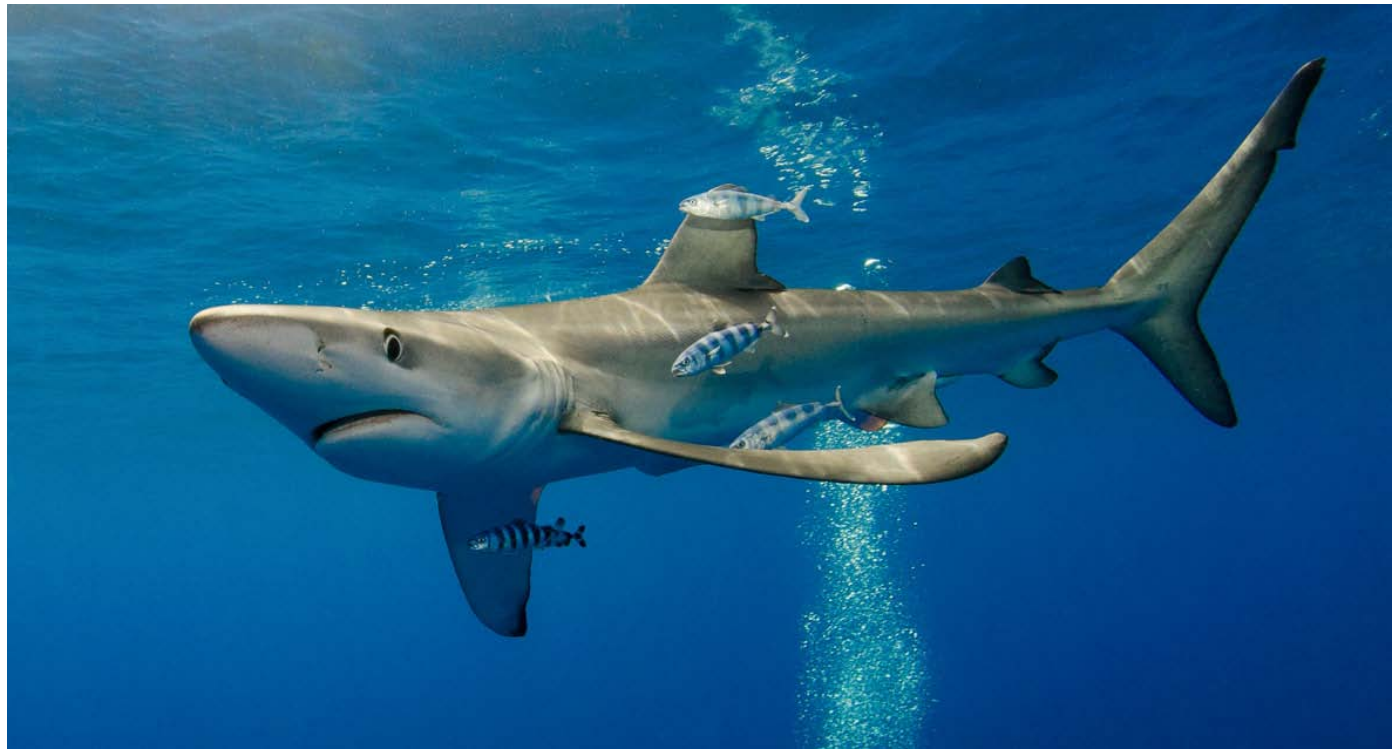
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Amazing Azores

by Tom Burd

Hovering under the dive boat, 900 nautical miles from the Portuguese mainland and with 200 metres of Azorean blue water between me and the bottom, I was certainly starting to question the sanity of this holiday choice. However, these fears disappeared soon enough as the first of five exquisitely beautiful blue sharks ascended from the depths to greet us. I was instantly lovestruck, completely amazed by their slender design and how effortlessly they cruise through the water. Their alluring curves exude the elegance of an Italian supercar but their cheeky, inquisitive nature is that of a mischievous young child! This is certainly a dive you won't forget any time soon. I didn't know it then, but I would be lucky enough to spend the entire next two summers getting to know these amazing creatures very well indeed.

The tranquil archipelago of the Azores is one of Europe's last pristine gems, composed of 9 volcanic islands with waterfalls, lush green hills and an amazing array of wildlife both above and below the waves. Although still largely undiscovered by the outside world, the main tourist attraction over the years has been the resident population of sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*) and other abundant cetaceans. Recently however, divers have become aware of the amazing blue shark (*Prionace glauca*) encounters to be had around the islands, as well as the opportunity to be encircled by an entire squadron of huge Chilean devil rays (*Mobula tarapacana*). The local dive industry is now kicking off and underwater photographers worldwide are



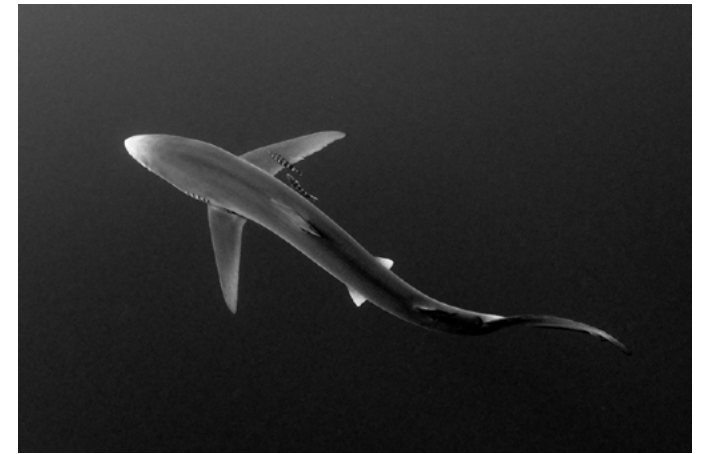
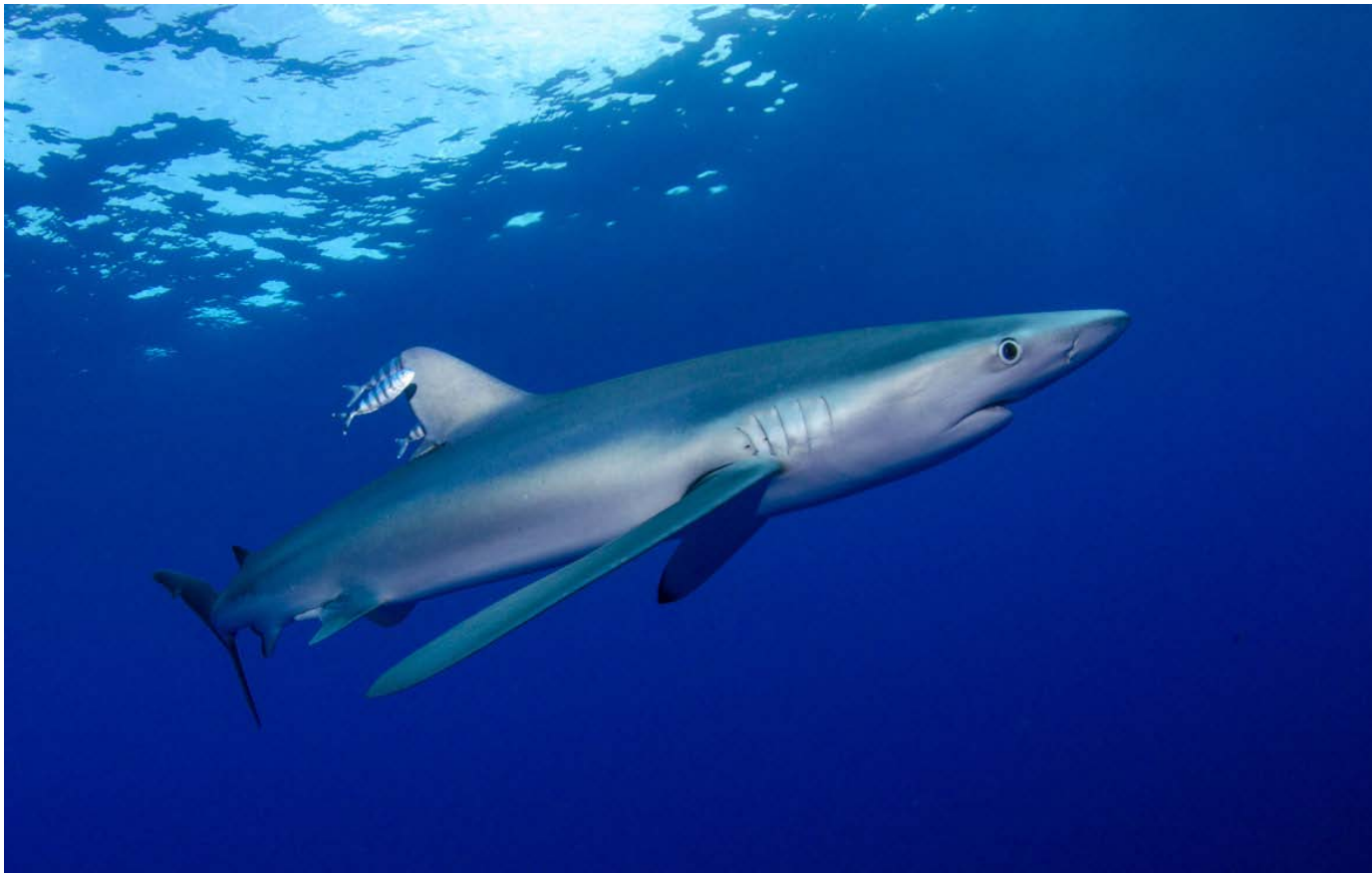
Blue sharks have to be one of the most charismatic elasmobranchs out there. Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, Tokina 10-17mm Fisheye at 10mm, 1x Sea and Sea YS-D1, ISO 400, f13, 1/160.

flocking to get a shot of these beauties in crystal clear water.

Blue sharks are one of the most wide ranging elasmobranchs (sharks, rays and skates) in the world, found mainly offshore in both tropical and temperate waters but also closer inshore where the continental shelf is narrow. They are extremely migratory, as recent tracking studies have shown, and their complex movement patterns are believed to be determined by prey distribution and breeding grounds. A trans-Atlantic trip in search of a companion seems to be no big deal for these guys! On average most of the sharks around the Azorean

central islands are between 1.5-3 metres in length, but the largest recorded individual was a massive 3.8 metres long. Blue sharks reach sexual maturity at 4-6 years of age and females give birth through viviparity, which means producing live young that are able to survive on their own.

As soon as you enter the water, it's obvious from where the blues get their name. Swimming close to the surface their entire backs emanate a striking blue tinge, and the rays of sunlight rippling across them is truly beautiful. Trying to capture this effect through the lens can be tricky, but usually the sharks stay around long enough for you to get



Don't forget to look down! As the dives happen in mid-water, it's easy to get a clean background for your shots. Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, Tokina 10-17mm Fisheye at 17mm, Natural Light, ISO 400, f13, 1/160.

These guys are not afraid to get up close and personal. Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, Tokina 10-17mm Fisheye at 10mm, 1x Sea and Sea YS-D1, ISO 400, f14, 1/160.

a good amount of photo opportunities. The water conditions are ideal for using natural lighting, as the visibility can reach 40 metres and all of the action happens within 10 metres of the surface. Strobes will obviously really help to light up the white underside of the sharks, giving your photos more of a punch as well as allowing you to follow the sharks deeper and shoot them from different angles. I have honestly yet to encounter another species of shark as curious and at ease around divers. A fish-eye lens is worth its weight in gold when these guys are butting your camera with their noses, allowing you to focus as close as possible and still get the whole

body in the frame. I tend to keep shutter speeds high to ensure that the subjects stay sharp, even though the blues are generally slow moving around divers. You also never know when a mako shark might turn up!

I find that recovering from such an amazing encounter is always helped along by a healthy sampling of local cheese and wine, and thankfully the Azores has plenty to offer in this department! The islands of Pico and Faial are where most of the shark diving happens and here there are many land-based attractions for those extended surface intervals, such as discovering Europe's longest

lava tunnels or visiting the vineyards classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. Although nature tourism is now an important part of the local economy, Pico island in particular has a different story to tell. The traditional practice of whale hunting started in the 1700's throughout the islands, developing into a major industry which provided meat, oil and other important produce. There are three interesting museums on Pico, paying tribute to the courage of those involved in the dangerous hunts, as well as to the animals themselves and their importance to the island inhabitants. In 1987 the last whale hunt took place from Pico, signifying a



Mobulid rays can be accompanied by various species of remora, often causing scarring on their dorsal surface. Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, Tokina 10-17mm Fisheye at 16mm, Natural Light, ISO 500, f11, 1/160.

change in global mentality towards these ocean giants. This part of history will never fade however, and still today the old traditional rowing boats are used in annual races to commemorate their past.

Most divers visiting the Azores will also find themselves embarking upon the epic journey to Princess Alice Bank, an underwater seamount situated 45 nautical miles offshore. The sunrise

behind Mount Pico, as you leave land behind, is in itself certainly worth getting out of bed for, even without the promise of one of the most exciting dives in the world! The long trip is regularly animated by schools of Atlantic spotted dolphin and bottlenose dolphin, as well as a sperm whale or two if you're lucky. Upon arrival at the seamount there is no sign of land, as the summit of the

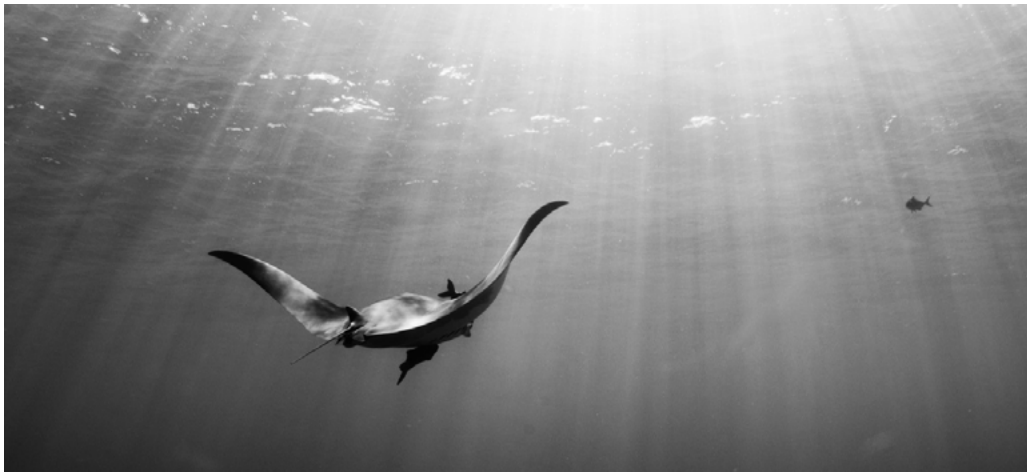
Few can stop themselves imitating these beautiful creatures. Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, Tokina 10-17mm at 14mm, Natural Light, ISO320, f18, 1/250.

pinnacle is roughly 35 metres underwater, but the occasional fin slicing through the surface assures you that you're in the right place! These fins belong to a member of the Mobulidae family, the Chilean devil



ray, which is closely related to the two larger manta ray species. It is quite different in appearance however and goes by many common names such as the box ray or the giant devil ray. Indeed these

magnificent creatures reach a maximum recorded disk width (wingspan) of 370 cm, so they are a very impressive sight underwater, especially when you find yourself completely surrounded by a



Most encounters happen near the surface at Princess Alice, which makes for some great lighting opportunities. Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, Tokina 10-17mm Fisheye at 17mm, Natural Light, ISO 500, f14, 1/125.

full carousel of over 30 individuals! Their dorsal surface has a unique bronze colouring, completely different from their larger cousins, which seemingly glows near the surface and can make for some fantastic shots.

Although the season can vary, throughout the summer months (June to October) large congregations of these rays are continuously found at Princess Alice Bank, which makes this one of the few locations to have such excellent chances of an encounter. On a good day the visibility is such that you can see the pinnacle from the surface, as well as the entire squadron of rays and everything else that happens to be around. This includes schools of barracuda too plentiful to capture with even the widest lens, and

Mobula tarapacana have very different ventral patterns from the Manta species. Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, Tokina 10-17mm Fisheye at 10mm, 1x Sea and Sea YS-D1, ISO 500, f16, 1/125.

huge greater amberjacks that make the blue sharks look like puppies!

Once anchored, more experienced divers can choose to visit the bottom to experience the sense of remoteness and the awe inspiring scenery rivalled only by the likes of the Socorro and Galapagos islands. The mobulas do venture deep, but are most often found within the top 15 metres, so divers hang on to the anchor line or hover mid-water





Divers marvel at the spectacle overhead. Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, Tokina 10-17mm Fisheye at 13mm, Natural Light, ISO 500, f11, 1/160.

waiting for the mobulas to come around. I've found that some of my best photo encounters with them have been whilst freediving, although they do very much enjoy diver's bubbles and are not afraid to come close to check you out! Unfortunately the currents are difficult to predict at this location, so be sure to pack your scuba gear as freediving is not always an option. This really is an experience of a lifetime, and it is one of those places where truly anything can happen, you just have to go and try your luck. My craziest moment there was undoubtedly when a heavily pregnant whale shark turned up, escorted on

either side by two mobulas acting as body guards (or so I like to think), but of course with no camera to hand, who's going to believe that?

As underwater photographers, we are driven by a fascination for the mesmerising world that we enter every time we put on our masks. Those who dive are able to see the beauty and intricacy of this environment, but are also made aware of its fragility. It's up to us to convince others that the oceans are worth preserving, so I would like to take a minute to involve you with a conservation issue of which I am very passionate. I'm sure you are



Hanging out with the blues. Nikon D7000, Nauticam Housing, Tokina 10-17mm Fisheye at 10mm, 1x Sea and Sea YS-D1, ISO 400, f18, 1/160.

aware of the vast worldwide fish stock declines in recent decades, including the loss of large apex predators, such as sharks. It is easy to think that shark populations are collapsing due to illegal fishing in far away countries, where law enforcement is difficult and we have no control over the market, but in truth overfishing is happening very close to home.

The Azores, as it belongs to mainland Portugal, must abide by EU fishing regulations. Since 2013 local authorities have been strict in implementing the European ban on shark finning, despite initially opposing the proposal, however

this does not mean that all is well. A staggering 100 Spanish and 30 Portuguese longliners have special permits to catch swordfish in the Azorean waters, in addition to the local fisheries. Longlining, which involves thousands of individual hooks spread over hundreds of kilometres of line, is an extremely indiscriminate fishing method. Many non-target species are taken, including endangered and protected animals, which cannot legally be landed and are therefore discarded at sea. Ironically the "swordfish" catches regularly consist of 95-100% blue shark. Official records indicate



Certainly worth getting up for: Mount Pico at sunrise. iPhone 5, ISO 50, f2.4, 1/1695.

that 2,800 tons of shark are landed annually in the port of Horta on the island of Faial, but through their research Sharkproject International believes that the figure was closer to 5,000 tons between 2012 and 2013. This number has since dropped as the sharks are now being unloaded directly in mainland Spain and Portugal, mainly in the towns of Vigo and Peniche respectively. It is difficult to translate weight into numbers of individual sharks, but to give you a rough idea of scale an average adult weighs 50-80 kgs. The average size of blue sharks caught over the past couple of years has dropped

dramatically, and this shift towards juvenile catches is extremely worrying as it is believed that the Azores is a crucial pupping ground for the entire North Atlantic (Source: Sharkproject).

Originally the majority of the shark diving took place at Banco Condor, a deep sea plateau near Faial Island. Since it was re-opened to commercial fishing in 2014, the sharks have seemingly disappeared from the area but are thankfully still being found elsewhere. All dive shops in the area have noticed a dramatic decline in sightings over the past few years and as a dive guide it is not only extremely sad to see such an amazing

creature disappear, but it is also disheartening for the local economy. Whilst writing I have contemplated how publicising this issue could affect dive commerce on the island, but I've come to the conclusion that people need to be informed, as they have the power to positively affect the situation by supporting the dive community. My final message is to go and enjoy these amazing creatures, and most importantly, please help us protect them by signing the petition opposite to put an end to longlining in Europe once and for all.



Tom Burd

www.tomburd.co.uk

SHARKPROJECT



These are not the type of images we should be taking.

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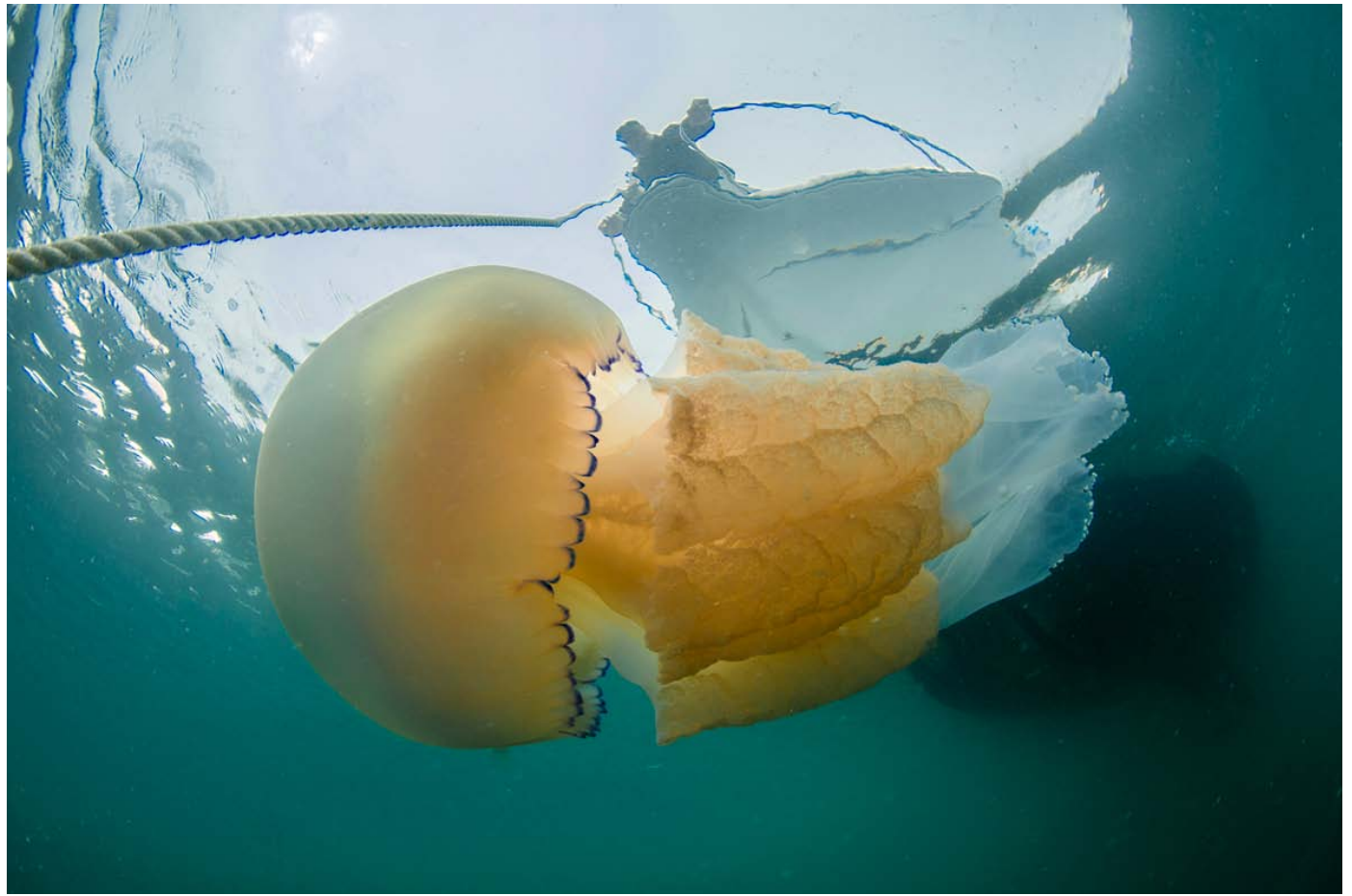
South West Ramblings 15

by Mark Webster

After a cool and windy start, it seems like summer has at last decided to arrive in the south west, although the water temperatures are still chilly at 11°C to 12°C but that has had the benefit of holding back some of the heavy plankton blooms we would normally expect in May and June. We have come to expect to see certain species or events at a particular time of year or in a particular location, but nature's fickle species life cycle in the underwater world occasionally surprises us by mixing up the schedule or not making an appearance at all.

One of the first strange events this year has been the arrival of hundreds of *Rhyzostoma* (barrel) jelly fish in April. These impressive beasts would normally appear in early summer at the end of the first plankton bloom so it was rather odd to see them drifting around in the colder clearer waters of springtime. They are still with us in huge squadrons at the end of June and have now been joined by moon jellyfish (*Aurelia aurita*), compass jellyfish (*Chysaora hysoscella*), an occasional lions mane jellyfish (*Cyanea capillata*) and all sorts of comb jellies (ctenophores).

Following a recent dive on the Manacles I was drifting gently in the current waiting for pick up when I felt some very firm but "soft" pushing on my legs. Looking down in the water I found I was surrounded by seven or eight very large *Rhyzostoma* two of which were determined to barge



*There are only a few options for shooting a *Rhyzostoma* jelly fish, but from below with the light behind is perhaps the most striking whether in silhouette or with fill flash. You need good buoyancy control and remember to hold your breath. Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 10-17mm FE zoom, ISO 200 f13 1/125.*

past me with their surprisingly strong swimming strokes. These jellyfish are very heavy (apparently weights reach 35-40kg) and have smooth, firm but compliant texture to the bell body and it is an odd sensation to come into contact with them.

If you get close to them look out for juvenile fish within the bell and around the tentacles, often horse mackerel, which are normally very shy and

difficult to photograph. A fish eye lens is the best tool to get close and capture an image just below the surface, which needs some efficient buoyancy control in a drysuit. *Rhyzostoma* as a subject are a little like basking sharks in that there are only a few compositions available, but they do look spectacular against a sunburst either in semi silhouette or lit with flash from below.



There was a dearth of nudibranchs on my favourite reef patch which had been overrun by candy striped flat worms. Only the occasional Limacia clavigera made an appearance. Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 105mm micro, Nauticam SMC wet lens, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f22 1/80.



Amongst the usual nudibranch suspects a few rarer species have made an appearance like this Trapania pallida which is extremely small (~10mm) so needs high magnification. Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 105mm micro, Nauticam SMC wet lens, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 250 f29 1/250.



Colpodaspis pusilla is an odd looking species, not quite a nudibranch and not quite a sea hare. It is also extremely small and so needs some careful searching to find and patient technique to photograph at high magnification. Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 105mm micro, Nauticam SMC wet lens, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f29 1/160.

A less attractive sight for early holiday makers is that of numerous dead and rotting Ryzostoma collecting on the beaches after high tide, but as always, beauty is in the eye of the beholder!

Being a nudibranch nerd I always look forward to springtime and a new sea slug season with great anticipation. I really enjoy the challenge of trying to spot these tiny beasts and then hopefully capturing a good image. I have several favourite reef spots which are normally very productive in both numbers and species variety. But one of this year's surprises and biggest disappointments is that my most favourite reef is almost bereft of nudibranchs this year. This sheltered overhanging reef section is in only 7m depth at high tide and is covered in all sorts of sponges, hydroids and tunicates which

are a feast for sea slugs which would normally be fighting for space here.

However, this year this reef patch has been taken over by literally hundreds of candy striped flat worms with only the occasional sighting of one species of nudibranch, Limacia clavigera, to add variety. In contrast other reef areas that are not normally productive are peppered with nudibranchs and very few flat worms. These reefs don't look any different to previous seasons in terms of available food source, so I am baffled as to whether there is a reason for this or if it is just a quirk of tides and the movement of larvae changing the scene this year. Any thoughts from the nudibranch experts out there?

There is another patch of reef that I

occasionally see a relatively rare species which is a cross between a nudibranch and a sea hare. This is Colpodaspis pusilla which is not often seen because it is extremely small (5-10mm) and requires some dedicated searching to find.

This species has a small internal shell which is covered by the mantle and there are two prominent head tentacles. The tentacles, tail and mantle are almost pure white in colour and all have a textured appearance. It has been a couple of years since I have spotted one of these, but this year the reef patch seems to have a high population and on a recent dive I saw six individuals. All quite odd!

Sea hares are another fickle species which vary their population and locations year by year. 2013 was a good year for sea hares on most shallow



Sea hares have been abundant this season particularly in the estuaries of the Fal and the Helford where there is plenty of weed and algae for them to feed on. For the larger examples I like to use my fish eye zoom to get very close and include some of the habitat and background. Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f18 1/50.

reefs, estuaries and even extending into rock pools in large numbers. But 2014 produced very few sightings for me locally whilst 2015 seems to be heading for a bumper year again particularly in the Fal and Helford river estuaries.

In fact there are already reports of the large Mediterranean species (*Aplysia fasciata*) washing up on the banks of the Helford river. This species last invaded the Falmouth

Bay area in 2007 when hundreds, some literally as big as a rugby ball, appeared and began breeding in October and November after a warm summer.

I have not encountered one of these yet, but there are plenty of small and medium sized sea hares to be seen in various habitats.

Sea hares' coloration and pattern vary from downright dull to almost spectacular which I think in part



depends on their food source. If you are looking for them it is best to start in shallow tidal waters where there is plenty of weed and algae and concentrate on finding their egg spirals first, which vary in colour from white to yellow and pink, and are easy to see laid on the weeds. Sea hares will not be far away and once you have seen the first then dozens will soon be obvious.

In the last couple of weeks they have been frequently seen paired up for copulation often with a smaller example riding the back of a larger one. Sea hares are of course

In your hunt for nudibranchs it is always a good idea to look for the egg masses first as these are often easier to spot. Once found begin to search carefully on the reef and amongst the weeds for the parents. Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 105mm micro, Nauticam SMC wet lens, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f22 1/80.

hermaphrodite like nudibranchs so it is difficult to work out why there is a size difference and you may also encounter instances of sea hare orgies where up to a dozen are balled together nose to tail all enjoying their version of Bunga Bunga (you might need to look that up if you are not familiar with Italian politics...). You can use your macro lens to shoot these critters, but I often like to use the fish eye zoom with the larger examples to capture some of the habitat as well.

Other dives have focused mainly on classic wide angle imaging when the visibility has been good. Although we may try to convince ourselves that we already have a good image of this or that, there is frequently room for improvement and the constantly changing conditions underwater means that there is always an opportunity for a different image or an improved one of the same or similar subject.



There are two distinct species of soft coral seen in the south west – the plain white dead men's fingers and the slightly slimmer red men's fingers which may vary from deep red, through orange to yellow. The co-exist happily side by side as can be seen in this image. Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f13 1/40.

This is what drives any photographer, land or underwater, to keep on picking up the camera and pursue perfection. Either that or UWP is an addiction that should be eligible for counselling on the NHS, but I digress.

There are certain sessile species that thrive on high energy reefs and so to catch them at their best we need to dive when there is at least some current running. There are a number

of sites that we dive that are simply not diveable when the tide is flowing at full force and so we have to try and time our dives for the end of the tide run or the end of a slack water period to see anemones, sea fans etc. at their best.

There is nothing worse than the anticipation of a shear reef wall covered in colourful plumose anemones only to find you have got the timing wrong and you have acres



Timing your dive to have just enough tide to see plumose anemones feed is vital. This image is taken just as the tide is reaching full slack and many of the anemones have already retracted to become unattractive blobs! Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f14 1/30.

of jelly looking blobs instead!

Our usual approach is to arrive at least an hour before predicted slack water and deploy a shot line with a good anchor and large buoy on location to observe the tide strength. The behavior of the tide can vary dependent on the subsea topography of the site. Where we have well submerged reefs the tide mostly follows the table predictions and slacks off progressively and you should enter the water before full slack. On sites that have more complex structures that come close to or break the surface, like the Manacles or Runnel Stone, you may see a false

slack followed by a final surge. This can often be in the other direction and give the impression that the tide has turned, but is more likely to be a volume of water that has been held back by the tidal flow levelling out. On big spring tides it can all be a bit more tricky and the tide can literally turn and begin to run the other way. On these occasions you need to dive on the turn and use the reef as shelter during the dive and then expect to drift a long way during ascent and pick up! Getting into the water with some tide running also needs a little thought. It is best to expel as much air as you can from your suit and stab jacket, carry your camera with a good lanyard attachment, and enter the water well up tide of the buoy to give yourself time to expel remaining air in your suit and jacket, catch the line as you pass and descend quickly.

If you have your timing right then you will be able to see the anemone fields and soft corals at



Whilst waiting for the tide there are always other subjects to keep you amused. On the offshore reefs male cuckoo wrasse are persistently inquisitive and love to investigate their own reflection in the dome port. Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f14 1/40.



The European cowrie has been seen in abundance this spring as well. Often they are found on the reef with a busy background, so look for those that may be elevated like this one and use a wider aperture to soften the background. Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 105mm micro, Nauticam SMC wet lens, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 250 f18 1/250.

their best, either as they begin to deflate as the tide slacks or as they start to feed again as it begins to flow. This is also a good time to observe fish behaviour as many lazy species like bass will shelter from the current behind the reef until the tide slacks and this can provide an opportunity to get closer. Tidal diving, when not drifting with it, can be tricky but when you get it right and see the reef at its best it is worthwhile.

Finally, for anyone who might be following the my last ramble regarding the proposed Dean quarry at St. Kerverne, the latest update is that the Secretary of State

for Communities and Local Government has advised that the planning permission approved by Cornwall County Council for the re-opening of the quarry should be revoked until a formal environmental impact assessment is completed.

This was announced on 10th June and on the very same day the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change announced approval for the planning application for the giant tidal lagoon in Swansea Bay (the rock from Dean Quarry would be used to construct this), so a sure sign of joined up government!

We are not yet sure if this means the battle is won as

of course there is an appeals process which could reverse the decision again, but it is a step in the right direction and shows that the value of the Marine Conservation Zone has been recognized.

Hopefully if the tidal lagoon does go ahead, a decision which is attracting its own barrage of opposition, then Shire Oak Quarries Ltd. will source their rock from an established quarry in the UK or Norway.

Mark Webster
www.photec.co.uk

Guidelines for contributors

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

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

Uw photo techniques - Balanced light, composition, etc

Locations - Photo friendly dive sites, countries or liveaboards,

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

Equipment reviews - Detailed appraisals of the latest equipment

Personalities - Interviews/features about leading underwater photographers

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

How to submit articles

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

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

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

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

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

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

Parting Shot

In the small group of islands that are situated 14 nautical miles south of the Island of Madeira, called “Desertas” (Desert Islands), there is one of the last colonies of monk-seal (*Monachus monachus*), with around 30-40 specimens. The monk seal is considered one of the rarest seals. There are less than 500 in the world.

Sometimes, males undertake the trip all the way to Madeira, for the delight of skin divers (not for spear fishers, however). Although they look friendly, they are wild animals, and all precautions should be taken...

One of the places, in the Madeira Island, that sometimes we are able to see monk-seals is a cave inside the “Garajau” Reserve area, where animals have been known to rest, away from human eyes.

Well, on the last diving day in Madeira, this August 2015, with my junior son (13 years old), the dive was in the cave.

Everyone was dully briefed beforehand; if a monk-seal appeared, no sudden movements and don't try to touch the animal... my son only kept saying that it would be so cool if we saw one... but it had been some time since someone last saw one there.

Jumping into the water, that was at 23° Celsius, and around 15 meters

visibility, we started swimming towards the entrance of the cave (5 divers, plus 2 guides). Into the cave we went, looking all around to try to see a seal, or just the small fauna that inhabits the place.

Reaching the bottom, with all of us trying not to kick up the sand, there was no trace of a monk-seal, just the regular fauna. Suddenly, someone pulled my fin... I looked back and there it was, a 2 metre monk-seal, looking back at the 7 divers...

Go-Pros started rolling, strobes started flashing and divers started positioning to get the best view or to get the best images... I just took a quick glance at my son, and I could see the huge smile behind the regulator...

Well, the monk-seal played with us for almost 20 minutes, moving around the cave and the divers, spinning, moving in and out of the cave. Sand started to be almost everywhere, as divers tried to stay put, but kept kicking up the sand as they tried to position themselves. At one



Nikon D7100, Hugyphot housing, 2 Inon Z-240, Tokina 10-17 mm, at 12 mm, 1/60, f9, iso 200

point, the animal started to follow my son, and we kept moving away, trying to keep a rock between them...

When the animal went again to the end of the cave, we decided to leave it be. Looking back, we all left the cave.

We swam for another 20 minutes, but I don't think anyone really remembers what we saw afterwards... Our minds were still inside the cave and enjoying that amazing experience.

Needless to say, my son, well, all of us, were more than happy...

Augusto Salgado

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