

Inspiring People to Care About our Oceans Since 1995

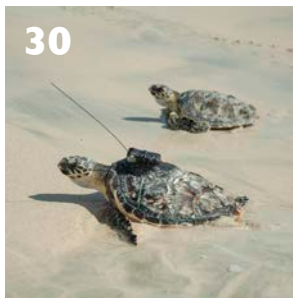
DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

WWW.EMIRATESDIVING.COM | MAGAZINE | JUNE 2015 | VOLUME 11 | ISSUE 2



DIGITAL ONLINE 2015 PHOTO & VIDEO RESULTS ARE IN

GIVE & GAIN 2015 • A DAY FOR SHARING • HSBC REEF CHECK TRAINING
• FAZZA FREEDIVING CHAMPIONSHIP • CRITTER LOVERS • REPORT A SIGHTING



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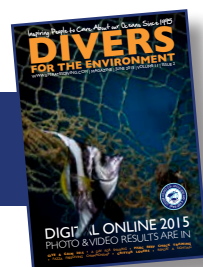
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DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Please note that EDA's magazine, "Divers for the Environment" includes articles written by individuals whose opinions, whilst valid, may or may not represent that of EDA. It is hoped that the magazine can become a platform for individuals to voice their opinion on marine and diving related issues. You are welcome to suggest an article for the next issue of "Divers for the Environment" released in September 2015. Send all articles, feedback or comments to: magazine@emiratesdiving.com

EDA COVER
PHOTO BY MOHAMED ABDULLA



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Discover this year's Digital Online Results

KIDS CORNER – FONT USED: DYSLEXIE FONT

Dyslexie font has developed a typeface especially for people with dyslexia called Dyslexie. People with dyslexia have problems distinguishing some letters. They sometimes turn, mirror and switch letters whilst reading. The Dyslexie typeface targets these problems by altering the shape of the letters so they are clearly different from any other letter. As well as this the spaces between the letters are improved and capitals and punctuation are bolder so people with dyslexia don't read words or sentences together anymore.

RESEARCH

Representative research among many dyslexics has now shown that the font actually helps them with reading texts faster and with fewer errors.

THE QUARTERLY CONTRIBUTORS

Meet the regular quarterly magazine contributors who share their passions, interests and the expertise of their fields for our readers of 'Divers for the Environment'.

Want to contribute? Email: magazine@emiratesdiving.com

DR. ADA NATOLI

Ada is a specialist in population genetics applied to conservation of species. Having been involved in whale and dolphin research since 1992, she is a member of the IUCN Cetacean Specialist List and founder of the UAE Dolphin Project.
www.uaedolphinproject.org



SIMONE CAPRODOSSI

Simone is an Italian underwater and travel photographer with a passion for diving and the sea. Simone uses his photography to support environmental initiatives and is heavily involved in local shark and turtle conservation projects.
www.scaprodossiphot.com



PATRICK VAN HOESERLANDE

Diving opens up a whole new world. Being a writer-diver and co-editor of the Flemish divers magazine Hippocampus, I personally explore our underwater world and share it through articles with others, divers and non-divers. You'll find a collection of my articles on www.webdiver.be



PAUL WARWICK

Born and educated in the UK leading to a career as an officer in the British Army. Now a specialist consultant for the UAE Government inbetween his other interests and his passions which are family, scuba diving (A PADI IDC Staff Instructor), conservation and marine management.



DR. BARBARA KARIN VELA

Dr. Barbara Karin Vela is a Diving Medicine Physician EDTC/ECM Ila, working in the Dubai London Specialty Hospital and a referral doctor in the United Arab Emirates for the Divers Alert Network Europe.
www.dubailondonclinic.com



NICO DE CORATO

Blogger on www.dubayblog.com, marathon runner and triathlete, diver and heli rescue swimmer with Bergamo Scuba Angels. You can read my blog, contact me on social networks or email me via admin@dubayblog.it for information about my articles or just to say hello.



PHILIPPE LECOMTE

Having followed in his father's and brother's love for the sea, French diver and underwater photographer Philippe, took to underwater photography in 2006 after having moved to Abu Dhabi in 2003 and now seldom travels without his camera.
www.plongee-passion-photo.over-blog.com





We send our deepest condolences to the Al Muhairbi family. Faraj Butti Al Muhairbi (1943-2015) EDA's Chairman of the Board of Directors will always be remembered for his passion towards ocean conservancy.

The tide recedes but leaves behind bright seashells on the sand.
The sun goes down, but gentle warmth still lingers on the land.
The music stops, and yet it echoes on in sweet refrains.
For every joy that passes, something beautiful remains.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

FAREWELL TO OUR FRIEND, OUR CHAIRMAN: FARAJ BUTTI AL MUHAIRBI



IBRAHIM N. AL-ZU'BI
EDA Executive Director

20 years ago, Faraj Butti Al Muhairbi was a man with a vision. He believed that a small group of passionate like-minded individuals could make a difference to ocean conservation, and that their passion would inspire others to do their bit for our planet. He was right.

20 years ago EDA had less than 10 members. Today we have over 2500 from all over the world who believe in what we stand for and who help us keep the beaches, oceans and its inhabitants cleaner and safer. Every single one of us has made a difference over the years and it's thanks to Faraj 20 years ago that we have had a platform to be able to do so. Tragically, Faraj passed away on the 27th of April, but his legacy will live on through our work in EDA.

One of Faraj's happiest places was at sea where he spent the majority of his life diving, cleaning and protecting oceans around the world. Through continuing his legacy at EDA, his life will be celebrated by us and the next generation of individuals young and old who want to make a difference in the world.

Faraj was a dedicated pearl (as well as SCUBA) diver who had been involved with the sea for the last 70 years with positions ranging from dhow boy to pearling vessel captain. He started doing post pearling-era dive expeditions which he continued to do annually, mostly in the western coastal areas of the Emirates where oyster beds are found in abundance despite the offshore human and industrial activities

Faraj focused his observation on the condition of oyster beds on which he was an expert. His message has always been, "If the oysters are healthy, the sea is healthy and we are all going to feel it. If the oysters are sick, the sea is sick and we are all going to feel it".

Faraj had enormous respect for the sea. His message and dedication will live on in EDA.

Farewell our friend,

Ibrahim Al-Zu'bi

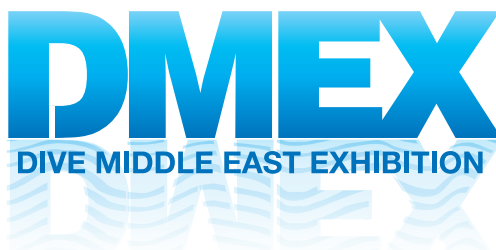
Ibrahim N. Al-Zu'bi and the EDA team

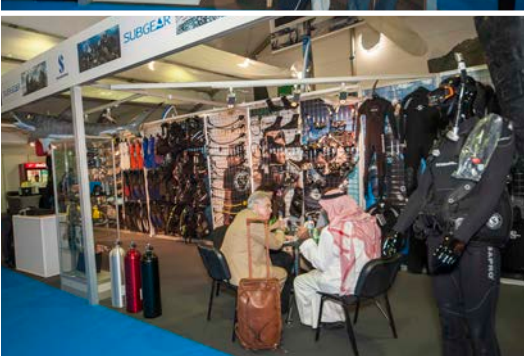
DIVE MIDDLE EAST EXHIBITION 2015

Having past its 8th year and maintaining its exclusive position as the only dive exhibition in the Middle East, 2015's exhibitor attendance

represented over 100 of the world's leading diving brands. In addition, Diving Middle East Exhibition offered exhibitors from outside the

UAE an opportunity to showcase what's on offer in international waters. Here is a recap of the event in pictures.







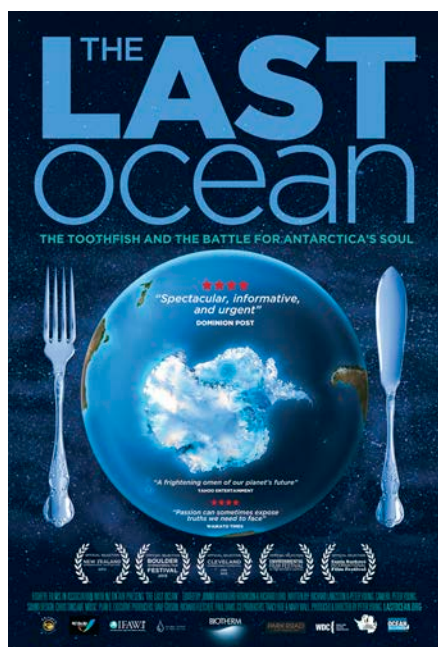


AN EDA MOVIE NIGHT WITH VOX CINEMAS

THE LAST OCEAN



Midnight sun over pack ice © John Weller



The Ross Sea, Antarctica is the most pristine stretch of ocean on Earth. A vast, frozen landscape that teems with life – whales, seals and penguins carving out a place on the very edge of existence. Californian ecologist David Ainley has been traveling to the Ross Sea to study this unique ecosystem for more than

thirty years. He has written scientific papers describing it as a 'living laboratory'. Largely untouched by humans, it is one of the last places where the delicate balance of nature prevails. But an international fishing fleet has recently found its way to the Ross Sea. It is targeting Antarctic Toothfish, sold as Chilean Sea Bass in up-market restaurants around the world. The catch is so lucrative it is known as white gold. Ainley knows that unless fishing is stopped the natural balance of the Ross Sea will be lost forever. He rallies his fellow scientists and meets up with a Colorado nature photographer and New Zealand filmmaker who also shares a deep passion for this pristine corner of the world. All want to stop fishing and protect this last pristine ecosystem. Together they form 'the Last Ocean' and begin a campaign taking on the commercial fishers and governments in a race to protect Earth's last untouched ocean from our insatiable appetite for fish.

DIRECTOR AND CINEMATOGRAPHER

Peter Young is an award-winning documentary cameraman and producer. He came to filmmaking the long way, spending the first ten years of his working on the land and sea over which time he developed a strong connection to the great outdoors and people that live and work there.

Peter established Fisheye Films in Christchurch, New Zealand in 1997 and has worked as a freelance director and cameraman ever since. He has credits in well over a hundred documentaries, among them; BBC's Blue Planet Series, a Giant Squid documentary for prime time Discovery, he filmed many of the South Island Country Calendar episodes, the acclaimed TVNZ series Explorers and the final tribute documentary for Sir Edmund Hilary. He produced and shot the award winning series, Hunger for the Wild for TVNZ and is now working on his second series of Coasters.

The Last Ocean, was his first feature documentary. This labour of love has expanded into the formation of a Charitable Trust to promote the protection of the Ross Sea, Antarctica, the world's most pristine marine ecosystem.

Peter has won many awards for his skills and creativity behind the camera, both shooting and producing, but it's the opportunity to work with great teams and telling great stories that keeps him in the business.

THE PROJECT

Peter Young, the director and producer of The Last Ocean began shooting the film in Antarctica in late 2006. He travelled to the Ross Sea on a Russian icebreaker with



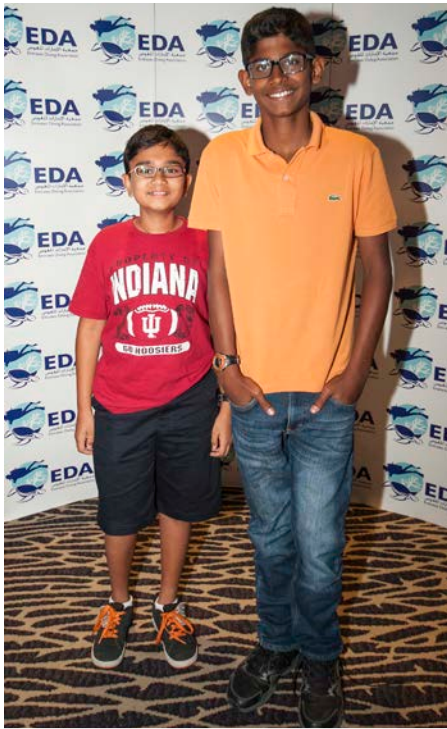
Antarctic Toothfish © Rob Robbins



Adelie Penguin © John Weller



Peter Young



Colorado nature photographer John Weller to film the wildlife. Weller had recently read a paper about the importance of the Ross Sea by world-renowned Antarctic ecologist, Dr. David Ainley. Since the initial film trip in 2006 Peter has travelled the world filming interviews with scientists as the film and campaign evolved.

In June 2009 Peter Young co-founded the Last Ocean Charitable Trust, which advocates for full protection of the Ross Sea. The Trust built The Last Ocean website and worked on creating a credible presence within the New Zealand media and political circles. Funding for the film was achieved through donation, personal investment and grants from the NZ funding agencies NZ on Air and the NZ Film Commission.

The film premiered at the NZ International Film Festival on 1st August 2012 where it sold out theatres throughout the country. It also had a small general release before playing on PRIMETV in New Zealand on 2 October 2012.

THE ROSS SEA

Located approximately 4000 miles south of New Zealand, the Ross Sea is the most

productive area of the Southern Ocean. It is home to many species found nowhere else and has all its top predators intact, including whales, seals, large fish, penguins and other seabirds. US Ecologist Dr. David Ainley, who has been studying in the Ross Sea for more than 40 years, describes it as a 'living laboratory, a place that can teach us about the workings of all marine ecosystems'.

While the land of Antarctica is protected under a global treaty signed more than 50 years ago, the oceans allow for the rational use of a living resource. In 1996, the New Zealand Government encouraged a major New Zealand fishing company to explore the Ross Sea. They found Antarctic Toothfish, a lucrative catch that is sold as Chilean Sea Bass in up-market restaurants around the world. As word got out, that one boat from New Zealand grew to near on 20 from a dozen different countries and they were permitted to take more than 3000 tonnes of Antarctic Toothfish every year. However, the Antarctic tooth fish is a top predator in the Ross Sea and if taken in significant numbers, the natural balance of the last pristine marine ecosystem on Earth will be lost forever.



Minke Whale © John Weller



Emperor's of the Ross Sea © John Weller



Weddell Seal heading up for air © John Weller

GIVE & GAIN 2015



EDA participated in its second Give & Gain Day, which is organised by Dubai Chamber. This is an initiative where corporate members of Dubai Chamber volunteer with community partners.

EDA's project proposal was to redesign the Diving Village where EDA's offices are located. The reason for the redesign was to attract more members of the community to visit the Diving Village and make it more interactive to visitors, especially schools and universities. EDA was very fortunate to be chosen by

Laing O'Rourke as their Give & Gain Day community partner:

The Laing O'Rourke's design team arrived promptly at 9am, surveyed the area and worked solidly till 1pm. The ideas were discussed and more exciting ideas were born. The ideas presented by the team were highly innovative and will definitely attract visitors to The Diving Village. More will be revealed once the design is approved and finalised!

LAING O'ROURKE

Laing O'Rourke is a privately owned, internationally focussed engineering enterprise with world-class capabilities spanning the entire client value chain. They operate an integrated business model comprising the full range of engineering, construction and asset management services delivering single-source solutions for some of the world's most prestigious public and private organisations. See more at: <http://www.laingorourke.com>

DUBAI CHAMBER AND GIVE & GAIN

Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry was established in 1965. It is a private non-profit organization whose mission is to represent, support and protect the interests of the business community in Dubai. It does so by creating a favourable business environment;

supporting the development of business; and by promoting Dubai as an international business hub.

Give & Gain Day is a celebration of the power and potential of employee volunteering across the world. By getting unprecedented numbers of people out volunteering on one day, we're championing the talent, skill and energy found in business and the role it can play in helping communities prosper. Since 2008, over 82,000 people in 35 countries around the world have taken part in Give & Gain Day.

Last year's Give & Gain Day on the 15th May 2014 was a great success in Dubai, thanks to all volunteers from our corporate members who swapped their usual work day to make a difference to the communities they live and work in and touched upon the lives of thousands of community members. Also thanks to our community partners to offer community projects to make the day possible.

In 2014 over 340 employee volunteers from 25 companies supported over 1500 beneficiaries in 40 projects organized by 22 community partners across Dubai on Give & Gain Day.

Find out more on www.dubaichamber.com

EDA TROPHY AND CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

EDA thanks and awards Coca-Cola Middle East with a trophy and certificate of appreciation for their continuous sponsorship support towards Clean Up Arabia.



THE DIVE CENTRE'S DIVE AGAINST DEBRIS



The Dive Centre Dubai and Sandy Beach run frequent Dive Against Debris events to help prolong the usage and interest of our dive sites, help raise awareness for the Marine Debris cause and help promote diving in our region.

Marine debris is a global issue affecting many dive sites around the world. It is not surprising for divers to regularly see debris when they are out on a dive. Our events bring together a community of divers ready to actively help the cause. We choose our sites based on how much debris we have monitored throughout the month.

Last year in Dubai we ran three trips to the Victory Star that was in much need of a clean up. Some areas were making it unsafe for divers as the bridge was surrounded by a huge net.

This wreck is again in desperate need of a clean up this year. Left without, it is a hazard to dive.

We started our Dive Against Debris program in May at our new Sandy Beach Dive Centre with a clean up dive around our home reef at Snoopy Island. Being so close to the shore, we brought up a collection of cans, glass bottles, plastic bags, fin straps, broken snorkels, lost clothes and more.

Of course cleaning a dive site should not only be saved for a designated Dive Against Debris event. Every diver has the power to make a difference on every dive. Our dive trip to the Musandam this weekend saw our divers above and below the water spending time collecting marine debris. With the passion all divers have for the sea, we can make a difference and

protect our dive sites for future generations. If you would like to join one of our scheduled trips or you would like more information on our local dive sites, please email nicola@thedivecentre.ae.

DIVE AGAINST DEBRIS DATES IN DUBAI AND FROM SANDY BEACH:

27th June

- Dubai SMB
- Sandy Beach Snoopy Island

25th July

- Dubai Victory Star
- Sandy Beach Sharm Rocks

29th August – TBC

26th September – TBC

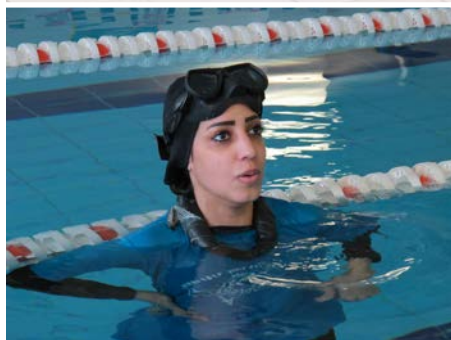
31st October – TBC

28th November – TBC

19th December – TBC

FIRST FEMALE UAE FREEDIVING CHAMPION

BY FREEDIVING UAE



On the 21st of March, Hadeya Hassan Almenhali held her breath for 2 minutes and 11 seconds to become the first ever female freediving UAE national record holder. Hadeya said, "I knew I could hold my breath for longer than 2 minutes and I think this is a challenging national record". She continued, "This was a great experience being in an official competition and I was a bit nervous but next time I am sure I will do even better".

The official AIDA (International Association of Breath Hold Diving) competition was the first of its kind in the UAE and allowed UAE nationals to display their freediving prowess.

Other UAE Nationals came close to breaking the mens freediving static and dynamic apnea records. Rashed Ailan Al-Hamelin managed a 4 minute 42 second breath hold but did not manage to comply with all the AIDA International rules on giving the 'all clear' at the end of his breath hold. "I was really pleased with my breathhold, it was 2 minutes longer than my previous personal best. I was disappointed that my time did not qualify but this is all part of the experience. I have learnt a lot from this competition and will do better next time."

Ali Al Shehhi managed a clean 3 minutes and 17 seconds hold but it was not enough to break the current UAE National Record set

by Ahmed Khoori of just over 4 minutes. "I was very nervous, you really feel the pressure in these types of competitions. I was very happy with my time and it was near my personal best but if I can learn to relax more I will do better".

The competition, which was held at the British School Al Khuhairat – Abu Dhabi also had competitors from other countries including Finland, Russia and Jordan.

AIDA International has recently recognised AIDA UAE as the national representative of AIDA International. AIDA UAE has qualified AIDA judges who oversaw the competition and ensured that it was run according to AIDA International's competition rules. "AIDA International has very strict rules for running competitions and it is important that we adhere to them to ensure the records are safe, measurable and comparable, and prove to AIDA that we have the capability to host more of these competitions in the UAE" says Yuri Rakhmatullin.

WHO IS AIDA INTERNATIONAL?

AIDA is the Worldwide Federation for breath-hold diving, established in 1992. AIDA manages and oversees the recognition of records, organises competitions and sets the standards for freedive education. Since 1993, AIDA International has officiated over 300 Official World Records.

WHO ARE AIDA UAE?

AIDA UAE is the national representation of AIDA International in the UAE.

WHAT ARE STATIC & DYNAMIC APNEA?

Static Apnea (STA): The freediver holds their breath, face down with their respiratory tracts immersed in water, generally in a swimming pool. It is essentially a mind game where the freediver is trying to control their urge to breathe. The current world record is 11 minutes 35 seconds.

Dynamic Apnea With Fins (DYN): Freedivers compete on how far they can travel horizontally underwater in a swimming pool using fins (usually mono fins) on one breath. The current world record is 273 metres.

INTERESTED IN COMPETING IN THE FUTURE? EMAIL:

alex@freedivinguae.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

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DUGONG MORTALITY IN ILLEGAL AND ABANDONED NETS

A MAJOR CHALLENGE TO MAINTAINING A HEALTHY POPULATION OF DUGONGS IN ABU DHABI'S WATERS

EAD CALLS ON COMMUNITY TO HELP PROTECT ENDANGERED DUGONGS IN ABU DHABI

The Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) called on the community once again to support its efforts to protect the endangered Dugong species which continues to face growing threats due to habitat loss and human activity.

Dugongs (*Dugong dugon*), their foraging habitats and migratory routes in the UAE are protected under Federal Law 23 and 24 (1999). As a signatory to the United Nations Convention on Migratory Species, the UAE has an international responsibility to protect its dugongs. What's more, the UAE is host to the world's second largest dugong population after Australia. Over 2,800 dugongs are currently resident in UAE waters.

Studies conducted by EAD experts have indicated that between 2000 and 2014, 153 incidents of dugong mortality have been reported. Under a long-term dugong monitoring programme that is carried out by EAD, all reported cases of dugong mortality are routinely examined.

The main cause of mortality in the last 15 years was drowning in abandoned, lost and/or illegal fishing nets (72.5%) followed by vessel strikes (15.7%). However, in the last 5 years (2010-2014), the cause of death due to drowning, has increased to 85%.

H.E. Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, Secretary General of EAD said, "These figures once again very clearly reaffirm the vulnerability of these majestic animals to human threats such as being caught in discarded fishing nets, impact with boats, marine pollution, combined with a decline of its critical natural habitat – seagrass beds."

"The protection of dugong habitats will continue to be a priority for Abu Dhabi. We are focused on ensuring that Abu Dhabi's waters are managed in a way which helps us to maintain the species' populations by ensuring the integrity of its key habitats and marine ecosystems," she added.

Dugong mortality incidences were frequently reported during the winter months that extend from November to March. The season coincides with higher seagrass biomass, greater congregation of dugongs and an increase in the level of fishing activity. Death incidences are mainly due to drowning in fishing nets, namely "hiyali", which are used illegally by fishermen during this period of the year to catch king fish. Hiyali drift nets are deployed in shallow waters up to a maximum depth of 8-10m, largely the same waters harbouring extensive seagrass meadows that dugongs naturally inhabit.

Informal interviews conducted as part of the studies revealed that the majority of respondents were aware of the laws prohibiting the use of illegal nets and the protected status of dugongs in the UAE. In spite of the regulations, however, many fishermen continue to use "hiyali" nets because it is a particularly lucrative method of fishing.

Since 1999, EAD, Total and Total ABK have collaborated in conducting detailed studies on the local dugong population. These studies have provided EAD with critical, timely data that helps the Agency better understand the behaviour of and threats to the dugong population.

EAD called on the community to report any dead dugong or any other species caught in discarded fishing nets, through the Abu Dhabi Government Contact Centre at 800-555.

ABOUT EAD

EAD was established in 1996 to preserve Abu Dhabi's natural heritage, protect the future, and raise awareness about environmental issues. EAD is Abu Dhabi's environmental regulator and advises the government on environmental policies. It works to create sustainable communities, protect and conserve wildlife and natural resources. EAD also works to ensure sustainable water resource, clean air and minimise climate change and its impacts.



A DAY FOR SHARING

BY KIDS SCUBA



Every year, Kids Scuba, a PADI 5 Star Dive Center hosts an event to share their water experience with young children and teenagers from orphanages in the vicinity of Kuala Lumpur. The event was held at the Maybank Training Academy swimming pool in Bangi, about 30 minutes from Kuala Lumpur. Recently, Kids Scuba invited 46 underprivileged kids from two orphanages to a one day pool water experience titled, 'A Day for Sharing', involving education on the marine environment, swimming, snorkeling and Discover Scuba.

'A Day for Sharing' was hosted by HJ. Syed Abd Rahman, Kids Scuba's Founder and PADI Master Scuba Diver Trainer who opened the day's activities with breakfast for everyone. After the morning's introduction, the children were split into four groups, carefully planned for them to learn about the marine environment, basic swimming skills, a snorkeling experience and discover scuba diving under the guidance of the dedicated Instructors and Divemasters from Kids Scuba.

During the program, the groups rotated around the four activities so everyone got to learn and enjoy each session. After a successful four hours, there were a lot of smiling faces and gleaming eyes during the lunch break as they reminisced their experiences with each other, the Instructors and Divemasters.

Kids Scuba's pool program ended with a group photo session with the team, followed by awarding a certificate to each participant with a backpack gift full of basic school necessities. The teachers and coordinators were presented with gifts for each of their orphanages especially from Kids Scuba.

Moving forward from the pool program,

four orphan boys aged between 18-21 years old were selected for a special program in educating and training them for the Zero to Hero program from PADI Open Water to Divemaster. Mr Fadhel, Shakir Ashraff, Daniel and Kamal were selected and trained by Kids Scuba's dive team under the direct supervision of HJ. Syed during the weekly pool scuba session for their confined water sessions. With the support from PADI, the four boys sat and completed their knowledge reviews, quizzes and exams before their island trip to Tioman Island at the end of March 2015.

During the Open Water dive trip, our Kids Scuba team dived with B & J Diving Center, a PADI 5 Star, IDC Center in Kg Salang Tioman. The boys were exposed to shore/jetty dives at the Salang Jetty and continued on to boat dives to Soyak and Renggis Island at the Tioman Island Marine Park assisted by our DM Mr. Khairul Azizi.

After a 3 day/2 night dive trip, the boys graduated with flying colours and received their PADI Open Water certificates and temporary cards in successfully completing their PADI Open Water Diver courses. We congratulate them for their achievements. The boys' next trip will be to Tenggol Island in Terengganu for their Advanced Open Water Course.

We would like to thank everyone involved with the 'A Day for Sharing' program, together with the PADI Open Water course for the boys. It was a success with all the support and assistance from close and caring friends, together with the Kids Scuba students, our dedicated Instructors and Divemasters, Fastrack, Salang Pusaka Resort with B & J Diving Center, a PADI 5 star IDC Center on Tioman Island and the PADI Asia Pacific Office.



HJ. SYED ABD RAHMAN

Director, Scuba Educator
PADI/EFR Instructor #302849
Master Scuba Diver Trainer (MSDT)

KIDS SCUBA

PADI 5 STAR DIVE CENTER

PADI Youth Diver Education Award Dive Center
PADI Outstanding Contribution to Diving Industry
Award Dive Center

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WEBSITE: www.kidsscuba.com

100% AWARE FLAG FLYING HIGH

BY **LINE DOMINO ALBERT, PROJECT AWARE COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER**

What a busy start to the year! From Paris to Dubai, many 100% AWARE partners joined us at popular dive shows and exhibitions in Europe and the Middle East to raise awareness of the plight of our ocean and rally support from the dive community to take action locally and globally to protect it.

Together with our 100% AWARE partners who came from all corners of the globe to share their passion with like-minded divers, we answered all your burning questions about shark and ray protection, our recent shark conservation successes, the new AWARE Dive Against Debris Distinctive Specialty course, and how to help protect the ocean one dive at a time.

We were proud to see so many 100% AWARE flags flying high at all the dive shows we've attended so far this year. Support from 100% AWARE partners at dive shows is key to encouraging divers to choose dive centres and instructors who take ocean conservation to heart.

Diving with 100% AWARE partners means that you make your training dives count for ocean conservation. 100% AWARE partners commit to making a donation on your behalf to support a trash free ocean, and help protect vulnerable shark and ray species.



We would like to thank all our 100% AWARE partners who participated or exhibited at dive shows since the beginning of this year. We look forward to working with them again and meeting more divers like you at upcoming events and exhibitions.

With nearly 300 partners worldwide to choose from, you can be sure your dives are making a difference. To find your nearest 100% AWARE partner, check out the 100% AWARE Map and when attending dive shows, look out for the 100% AWARE flag!



EDA with the Project AWARE Team



100% AWARE Partner Nautilus Diving Kuwait



100% AWARE Partner Maryam Jaffar, Alpha Divers Kuwait

SCUBATEC DIVING CENTER RECEIVE A PADI AWARD FOR THEIR 23rd PADI CENTER ANNIVERSARY

Scubatec Diving Center LLC based in Dubai is a 5 Star IDC Center Licensed by PADI, established in 1993.

Scubatec prides itself on the personal touch and prefers smaller groups on dive trips so the Divemasters and Instructors can dedicate more time and attention to the individuals. They feel the same way about diving courses, smaller numbers ensure that the diver gets the best of their time. They will also fit the timings around work schedules, enabling students to do the courses at their own comfortable pace.

Diving is one of the world's fastest growing sports. Scubatec will show you the magic and thrill that the underwater world has to offer. With Scubatec you can be sure to have a memorable and exciting underwater experience. They also offer AIDA freediving courses.

Diving equipment brands found at Scubatec are: Oceanic, Mares, Scubapro, IST, Akona, Sherwood, Suunto, Seac, Epsealon, Riffe, Loksak.

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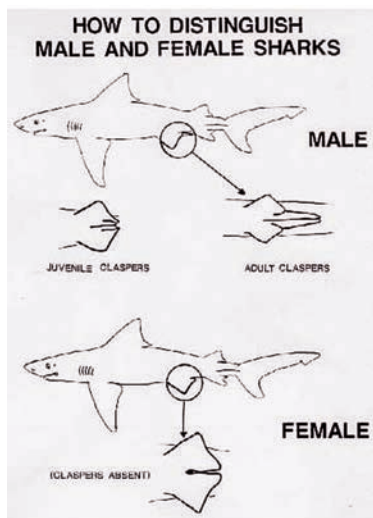


REPORT A SIGHTING

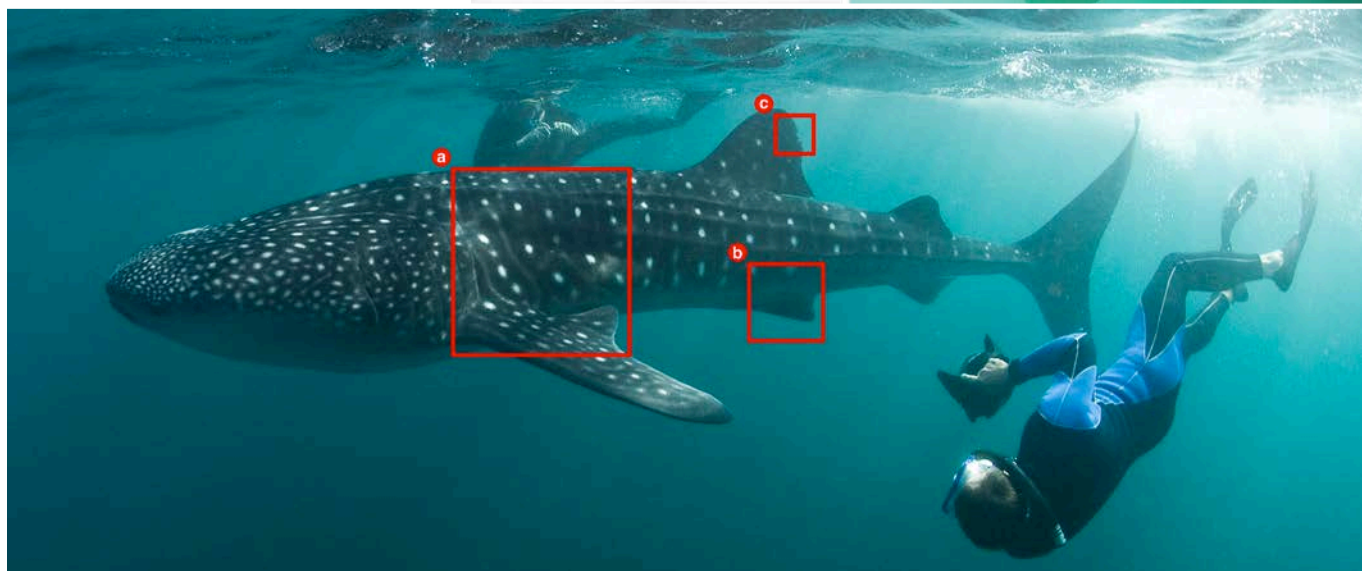


SHARKWATCH
ARABIA

www.sharkwatcharabia.com



A Male Whale Shark



Whale Shark ID tips: (a) the white spots on shark skin are individually distinct – try and take photographs of the left and right flanks to help with scientific software identification. (b) make a note of the shark's sex (male = claspers) if you are unsure take a photograph. (c) make a note or take photographs of any unique markings or damage to fins/tail. Photo by Warren Baverstock – verstodigital.com.

Sharkwatch Arabia is a database that aims to collect sightings on whale sharks throughout the region. The initiative was started in 2010 as a tool to collect information on shark abundance and movements in the region. Report any whale shark encounters you have

had! If you have a photo, great and if you have one of the identification areas shown in the image, even better! If you don't have a photo, it is still important to report your encounters as every bit of information collected really does help with research.

Report your encounters and upload your images online at www.sharkwatcharabia.com.

Join the Sharkwatch Arabia Facebook page where regular posts on whale shark related news and interesting findings are posted.



U.A.E. DOLPHIN PROJECT

Support us,
report a sighting!

If you would like to volunteer your help on fieldwork or be on a more permanent basis, please contact the UAE Dolphin Project at sighting@uaedolphinproject.org. Volunteers are directly involved in all phases of the research with research leader, Dr. Ada Natoli.

If you encounter a dolphin or a whale, dead or alive, please Report Your Sighting at www.uaedolphinproject.org!

Alternatively, you can send a text to +971 56 671 7164 or email sighting@uaedolphinproject.org.

Log with the following information: Date, Time, Location, and if you have any, photos.

You can also post info on the project's Facebook or Twitter pages. Please do take photos. You might just identify an individual!



These are just 2 of the bottlenose dolphin photo id's from Dubai waters. UAE dolphins all get given a name by the photographer providing the first photographic evidence of that individual.

ONLY **YOU** CAN SAVE ME...
REPORT SIGHTINGS

WWW.GULF**ELASMO**PROJECT.COM



1/4 OF THE
WORLD'S SHARKS
AND RAYS ARE
THREATENED WITH
EXTINCTION

By reporting your sightings of sharks, rays, guitarfishes and sawfishes, **YOU** can make a difference. Be our eyes in the field and help us advance research and conservation in the region.

Supported by Emirates Natural History Group - Abu Dhabi
Image © Simone Caprodossi Photography

You can make a difference and be our eyes in the field. You can submit information on your encounters with sightings of sharks, rays, guitarfish, sawfish and skates in the region to help collect scientific data, raise

awareness about Arabian elasmobranchs and support management decisions. The data is then collated and analyzed to gain a better understanding of the species composition of elasmobranchs in this region as well as

those most targeted by fisheries. Your reports and sightings can be recent or historical. All information is invaluable and can help!

Please visit www.gulfelasmoproject.com.

Photographs taken underwater need to show the whole body of the animal. The best photos for identification are side images of sharks and top views of rays or guitarfish.

RIMA W. JABADO, PhD
FOUNDER AND LEAD SCIENTIST

P.O. Box 29588, Dubai, UAE

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GULF**ELASMO**PROJECT

YOUR EYES ON ELASMOS
Advancing research and conservation
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Using your **EYES** to make a difference

FRED IS BACK

FEATURE PATRICK VAN HOESERLANDE ILLUSTRATION PETER BOSTEELS



In the first stories, we introduced you to Skubba and Fred. The story ended with Skubba trying to see underwater through a pair of old glasses his grandfather had given him. Glasses make some people see better, but they did not work underwater. Maybe Skubba had to squint to see better?

But that did not help either. Skubba could still not see any better underwater. Whichever effort he undertook, his sight underwater remained murky.

“That will not work!” He heard somebody yell behind him. Fred was there again.

“I’ve read that there should be some air between your eyes and the glass.”

“How do we do that?” asked Skubba.

“I’ve made something.” Fred pulled out something out of his bag that looked like a lunch box. However, the bottom was cut out and replaced by a transparent, hard plastic. He gave the box to Skubba who looked at it and then looked at Fred. He did not understand it. How could a broken lunch box make him see better? Because Fred told him it would work, he had to believe it would as his way had not.

Skubba put the broken box on his face and ducked under water. 1, 2...10 seconds later he came up spluttering, shaking his head. The water ran out of the box.

“It does not work! I cannot see any better with this than with my grandfather’s glasses.” And he threw the thing over to the side.

“Of course not,” said Fred. “There is water in the box. I told you that there must be air between your eyes and the window.”

Oops, indeed that was what he had said. “What must I do with it?” asked Skubba, pointing to the box lying on the ground like trash.

“Take the box and push it into the water. If you do not go under with it, you should be able to see better,” Fred replied as he picked up the box.

Full of doubts, Skubba took it back and did as the boy had instructed. He pushed the box onto the water, very gently as not to make any ripples. Then he pressed his face against the opening of the box. As soon as the transparent bottom penetrated the water, the water no longer looked cloudy.

“Yes. It works! I can see my feet!” He could almost see a meter deep. He had never been able to see that far into the water before. Enthusiastically he dived to the bottom. But he was barely under when he surfaced again. A bit disappointed.

“Nice thing, but I cannot use it underwater.”

“True,” Fred replied. “But now we know that it works. If we can manage to get air between your eyes and the plastic, you will be able to see.”

Maybe this strange boy did know what he was talking about. Could they become friends some day?

A BETTER LUNCH BOX

FEATURE PATRICK VAN HOESERLANDE ILLUSTRATION PETER BOSTEELS

They stood side by side at the table. Before them lay the lunch box. They would take a bigger box and carefully replace the bottom with a hard, transparent plastic like Fred had done with the small box. With a larger box, Skubba would then be able to see deeper.

But being able to see deeper did not interest him if he could not dive with it. They could not think of a solution to this problem. While Fred thought, Skubba stood there, watching. He was getting bored.

“Do you want another drink, Fred?”

“No!”

“OK. Then I will wash our glasses.”

The sink was full of water and Skubba pretended one glass was a ship on the ocean. A storm came up and the boat tipped over. Blub, blub, the glass sank to the bottom. Not exactly though, he had to push the glass to make it sink. It was floating because there was an air bubble trapped inside it.

“THAT’S IT!” Fred exclaimed.

Before Skubba could say anything, Fred yelled “THAT’S IT!” again. Totally confused Skubba saw his new friend dancing around.

“What do you mean that’s it?”

“Don’t you see it? You have just solved our problem!”

“How so? With a boat that is not sinking?”

“We do not need a bigger box. We just need to put your head inside it.”

“My head in a glass?”

“No, in the bubble.”

“But that is still in the glass!?”

“Wait, I’ll show you.” And gone was Fred.

How would he get his head in that bubble? Skubba did not understand what his friend was planning to do.

Moments later, Fred came back with a bucket. He put it on Skubba’s head.

“But I can’t see anything,” said Skubba half surprised. “If I see nothing now, how will I be able to see when I dive?”

“No, no. Of course you cannot see anything now. There is no window. We must first place a clear plastic window into it.”

“But then I won’t be able to put my head in it anymore?”

“No, no, we’re not putting the plastic in the bottom like in the lunch box. This time we’ll place it in the side of the bucket.”

Fred opened a drawer and came back with a large knife. He took the bucket and began to cut into it. Now Skubba could see what Fred meant. The window would come on the side. When the hole would be covered with the clear plastic, he would be able to see through it. To see underwater, he must look through the window. With his head in the bucket.



HSBC REEF CHECK TRAINING

EDA organised a Reef Check training course for The HSBC Dive Club as part of their support to EDA, the environment and spreading environmental education at HSBC.

Over a course of 4 days in Dubai and the East Coast, Ken Atkinson trained 11 HSBC Dive Club members.

The photos and feedback from the club members speak for themselves!



A FEW WORDS FROM HSBC MEMBERS:

To me, the Reef Check Eco Diver course is a unique and valuable initiative addressing environmental challenges. What is really different is the focus on an environment angle that many of us, literally, don't see or know about when it does affect all man-kind in a significant manner. I mean the underwater world and its importance to the global ecosystem.

The course has definitely benefited a small group of HSBC staff members who took the time to attend, but I'm sure the positive impact would be much wider through the awareness that such a small group will spread among the larger diver and non-diver communities. Overall, the course was worth every minute spent and we also had lots of fun and it was an excellent opportunity to interact and to network among ourselves.

The course gave me a lot of appreciation to the variety of fish and sea life in general. I am sure we will all look at sea life very differently now when we dive, from butterfly fish to parrotfish and from hard coral to rubble, it all used to look the same but not anymore! In addition, to be able to contribute (even in a small way) to the study of the reefs and for the greater good of sea life in general is a great feeling.

The course was extremely well run and Ken is a great teacher. He brings it to life with all the experience and real life examples.

Looking forward to the first Reef Check!

...

Thank you for organizing this well worth project.

The course was very relaxed, informative and enjoyable. I wanted to help out with Reef Check and I will, but in addition it gave me great insight into what I have been seeing over the past years diving and it will make all future dives more enjoyable.

...

Really interesting, a lot of learning points and presented really well, in a relaxed and informative manner.

...

This was a great course and definitely an eye opener. Everyone was very enthusiastic and attentive for every minute of the course. And now everyone is eager to start the first real Reef Check dive.

HSBC 





NEW ECODIVER TEAM OFF AND RUNNING IN TOBAGO

PHOTOS ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE CHARLOTTEVILLE (ERIC)



In January 2015, Reef Check EcoDiver Course Director Nikole Ordway-Heath from Florida was asked to come down to Tobago to help get a Reef Check team started. The scientists, Aljoscha Wothke and Lanya Fanovich, from Environmental Research Institute Charlotteville (ERIC) arranged for Nikole to teach the Reef Check EcoDiver course to local divers. She had nine students; some of them work with the North East Sea Turtle (NEST) organization to help protect sea turtles in Tobago.

The land around Charlotteville is protected down to sea level; however, the underwater environment is not protected in this area, so ERIC would like to start changing this to help protect their coral reefs. For ERIC, Reef Check

monitoring surveys are a stepping-stone to help them gather data to show what the reef system is like in their areas and how certain effects can be very damaging.

The training went very well, and all students passed the above and below water tests to become EcoDivers. We even conducted live surveys after the training to get the team started with collecting their data. The coral reefs in the Charlotteville area all differ from site to site. One of the dives called Pirates Bay is a great site to survey because it is close to shore and has different human impacts such as fishing, scuba diving, anchoring, and town pollution. In Pirates Bay, there are a lot of Gorgonians lining the substrate. At other sites around the island

they have huge boulder corals, and a field of elkhorn coral was present at another site. There was also an abundance of fish on the reefs and, at one site, massive spiny lobsters!

After we finished the EcoDiver training, three of the scientists who work at ERIC moved on in training to become Reef Check Trainers. They are now able to train more EcoDivers in Tobago to get even more teams out there to survey. We hope to start seeing more from Reef Check Tobago soon and wish them luck with their surveys!

If you are planning a trip to Tobago and want to help out this Reef Check team, contact info@eric-tobago.org



MINNESOTA STUDENTS DIVE INTO MARINE BIOLOGY IN HONDURAS

BY JAMES HEWLETT



to the biology of sea turtles and dolphins, learned about ongoing research at RIMS, and were provided opportunities to practice their fish and invertebrate identification skills. Many of the students were newly certified in SCUBA and were given many opportunities to practice their new skill during a week of spectacular diving on the west end of Roatan. After finalizing their training, the group was able to complete two full Reef Check surveys along a portion of the reef that students were using for their research projects.

The Caribbean Sea rewarded the new EcoDivers on the last day of the course. As the students were returning to the resort from their last day of diving, three whale sharks appeared on the horizon. For the next hour, students were able to snorkel alongside these amazing creatures – an experience that several students described as “life changing.” In the end, the course produced 18 new certified EcoDivers and a new group of ambassadors of the ocean.

For more information on the University of Minnesota degree program, visit <http://cbs.umn.edu/learn/undergraduates/cbs-minors/marine-biology> or contact Dr. Sehoya Cotner via email, sehoya@umn.edu.

In January, eighteen students from the University of Minnesota traveled to the Bay Islands of Honduras as part of a Coral Reef Ecology course students can take as part of the university's new Marine Biology degree program. Students participated in a weekly seminar during the fall 2014 semester where they learned about Reef Ecology and in December of 2014, the course wrapped up with the classroom portion of the Reef Check EcoDiver training course. EcoDiver Course Director Professor James Hewlett led the training and along with Dr. James and Sehoya Cotner, helped prepare the students for the field portion of their course which took place at Anthony's Key Resort on the island of Roatan. Roatan's reefs are part of the Mesoamerican Reef region in the western Caribbean, which is the largest barrier reef in the Western Hemisphere, stretching nearly 700 miles from the northern tip of the Yucatan Peninsula down through the Honduran Bay Islands.

The EcoDiver field training was integrated into the field course so that students could utilize their training as part of their own individual research projects. In addition to their training,

students were provided opportunities to further their education as part of a series of workshops from Jennifer Keck, who serves as the Education and Research Coordinator at the Roatan Institute for Marine Sciences (RIMS). At the workshops, students were introduced



AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT ABALONE: PART II A BRIEF HISTORY ON ABALONE FISHERIES AND REGULATIONS

BY ANNA NEUMANN, NORTH COAST REGIONAL MANAGER, REEF CHECK CALIFORNIA PROGRAM



Historically, Native Americans fished abalone along the entire coast of California. The first commercial fishery was established in the 1850s by Chinese Americans. These fishermen mainly targeted green and black abalone and their catch peaked in 1879 with 4.1 million pounds. The Chinese-American fishermen collected abalone in shallow water and by 1900, the first regulations were placed on abalone fishing and the shallow water fishery was closed to commercial harvest [DFW, 2001]. Soon after this closure Japanese divers started exploiting the subtidal abalone stocks, first by free diving, then by hard hat diving. In 1901 the first size limit was introduced, requiring all abalone to be 15 inches in circumference. In 1909 a commercial fishing license program was established and later a variety of regulation efforts went into effect including catch limits, gear restrictions, open/closed areas as well as open/closed seasons [DFW, 2003]. In 1913 the abalone fishery in southern California was closed, thus forcing the effort northward. From 1916 to 1935 the catch steadily increased to a peak of 3.9 million pounds (see chart) and then declined

to 164,000 pounds in 1942 as fishermen of Japanese heritage were relocated during WWII [DFW, 2001]. In 1943 the southern California fishery was reopened to boost wartime food production [DFW, 2001] and remained open until 1996 [DFW 2003]. In 1949 the commercial abalone fishery in northern California closed from San Francisco to the California-Oregon border [DFW, 2003] due to dramatic declines [DFW, 2005]. The abalone catch experienced a second peak in 1957 with 5.4 million pounds but by 1969 the fishery was in rapid decline [DFW, 2001]. In 1996 abalone catch had fallen to 229,500 pounds; roughly 4% of the peak catch and the commercial fishery was closed statewide [DFW, 2001].

Initially all abalone were managed as a single fishery, which made it difficult to address the collapse of a single species since the number of abalone caught remained stable as fishermen moved from one species to another [DFW, 2001; DFW, 2003]. This process, known as serial depletion, only becomes apparent when the catch is recorded separately for

each species. From 1952 to 1968 in southern California, the decline in the number of pink abalone caught was offset by an increase in the number of red abalone brought in. In 1971, size regulations were placed on the pink abalone resulting in an abrupt decline in the number caught. However this drop was masked in overall catch data by an increase in green abalone catch. The red abalone catch began to decline in 1968 but this decline was masked by an increase in the number of green, black and white abalone caught [DFW, 2003; DFW, 2010].

The Abalone Recovery and Management Plan (AMRP) pinpoints some of the reasons for the failure of abalone fisheries. The AMRP states that the management effort was limited to placing limits on size to protect the population. This type of strategy, where the minimum size is set to allow the abalone to become sexually mature before reaching the legal fishing size, assumes that abalone will have several years of spawning success before they are fished. This approach ignores the possibility that abalone may go several years without spawning

successfully [DFW, 2005]. A study done in 1998 in northern California found only one successful spawning event in a 4 year period while another study done in 1989 in southern California found only one successful spawning event in a 5 year period [DFW, 2005]. Relying solely on size limits may result in abalone being taken that have never successfully spawned, even though they have been sexually mature for several years [DFW, 2005].

An additional problem with the management of the fishery was a reliance on catch-per-unit-effort data to determine the abundance of abalone. Catch-per-unit-effort looks at how much effort is required to collect abalone. Catch-per-unit-effort is usually measured in time spent fishing relative to how many individuals were collected. An increase in the amount of effort required to catch abalone indicates overexploitation while unchanging figures indicates sustainable harvest [DFW, 2005]. However this method can be misleading for several reasons. Improved fishing techniques or technology can make fishing more effective (e.g. GPS which makes finding fishing grounds easier) and movement of fishing effort to substitute losses in overexploited areas and shifting of effort from one species to another all can result in a steady catch-per-unit-effort while the population is declining if they are not accounted for. From 1983 to 1996 the catch-per-unit-effort even increased while populations declined. This caused delays in conservative management efforts [DFW, 2005].

Additionally, managing solely with size limits and estimates of catch-per-unit-effort ignores the loss of dense aggregations of abalone needed for spawning success since abalone must be in close proximity to successfully reproduce [DFW, 2005]. Unlike fish that can swim around and find mates even after a significant proportion of their population has been fished, if abalone populations are thinned out too much, the much-less-mobile abalone may not be able to travel the distance to find a mate.

The final factor that delayed the closing of the commercial abalone fisheries was the increase in demand by foreign markets and growing populations in California. The increase in economic incentives translated to increased political pressure to keep the fishery open despite collapsing stock [DFW, 2005].

The recreational take of abalone first became regulated in 1911 when fishing seasons were established. A bag limit of 10 abalone was established in southern California in 1913 and by 1931 a recreational license was required for all species. In 1953 the northern California recreational red abalone fishery became limited to breath-hold diving in hopes of protecting deeper abalone that free divers could not easily reach. By 1993 the recreational fishing of black abalone closed

and in 1996 recreational fisheries for green, pink and white were also closed. The following year the entire coast of California south of San Francisco closed for recreational abalone fisheries. North of San Francisco, regulations have continued to get stricter to protect the declining populations of the state's last abalone fishery. The abalone stamp was introduced in 1998 to generate revenue for population assessments, management and enforcement efforts. In 2000 the abalone report card became mandatory for all abalone divers and in 2008 a tagging system went into effect to help control illegal take as well as to document catch and effort [DFW, 2003]. In 2005 the Abalone Recovery and Management Plan was adopted by The California Fish and Wildlife Commission to manage the red abalone stocks in northern California [DFW, 2010]. Current abalone regulations, which went into effect April 2014, permits divers to take 3 abalone per day with a yearly limit of 18 abalone. Of the 18 abalone taken, only 9 may be taken from Marin and Sonoma Counties. The Fort Ross area in Sonoma is completely closed to abalone fishing. Fishing was also limited to the daylight hours after 8am [DFW, 2014].

To learn more about abalone fishing regulations, check the Department of Fish and Wildlife's webpage. Currently the Department of Fish and Wildlife is developing a Red Abalone Fisheries Management Plan to further refine

and implement the long-term management objectives of the Abalone Recovery and Management Plan. More information on this process can be found at: www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/redabalonefmp/

SOURCES

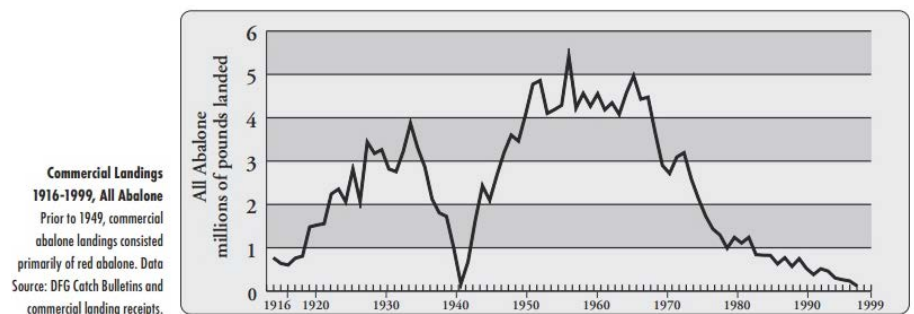
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FEATURE CREATURE

WHITETIP REEF SHARK (*TRIAENODON OBESUS*)

FEATURE **IUCN RED LIST 2014.3** PHOTOGRAPHY **SIMONE CAPRODOSSI**



RED LIST CATEGORY & CRITERIA:

NEAR THREATENED

Scientific Name: *Triaenodon obesus*

Common Name(s):

English: Whitetip Reef Shark

Justification: This assessment is based on the information published in the 2005 shark status survey (Fowler et al. 2005).

The Whitetip Reef Shark (*Triaenodon obesus*) has a widespread distribution in tropical and subtropical Indian and Pacific Oceans. The species is commonly found between 10-40m around coastal reefs. Divers frequently see it resting in caves by day; it is most common in areas of high relief coral and caves. Formally it was abundant over coral reefs, these sharks' numbers are at lower levels than those found prior to widespread expansion of fishing in the past 20 years. The species' restricted habitat, depth range, small litter size and moderately late age at maturity suggest that with increasing fishing pressure this species may become threatened.

Geographic Range: The Whitetip Reef Shark is wide ranging in the Indo-Pacific. It occurs along

the east coast of Africa from South Africa to the Red Sea, Indian Ocean islands, northern Indian Ocean, including India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Vietnam, the Philippines, Australia, New Guinea and Polynesia, Melanesia, Micronesia to the Hawaiian Islands and Pitcairn group. The species is also found in the eastern Pacific, Cocos Islands, Galapagos and Panama to Costa Rica (Compagno 1984b). It is found in shallow tropical waters from about 1m down to 330m depth, but mainly between 10-40m (Randall 1977).

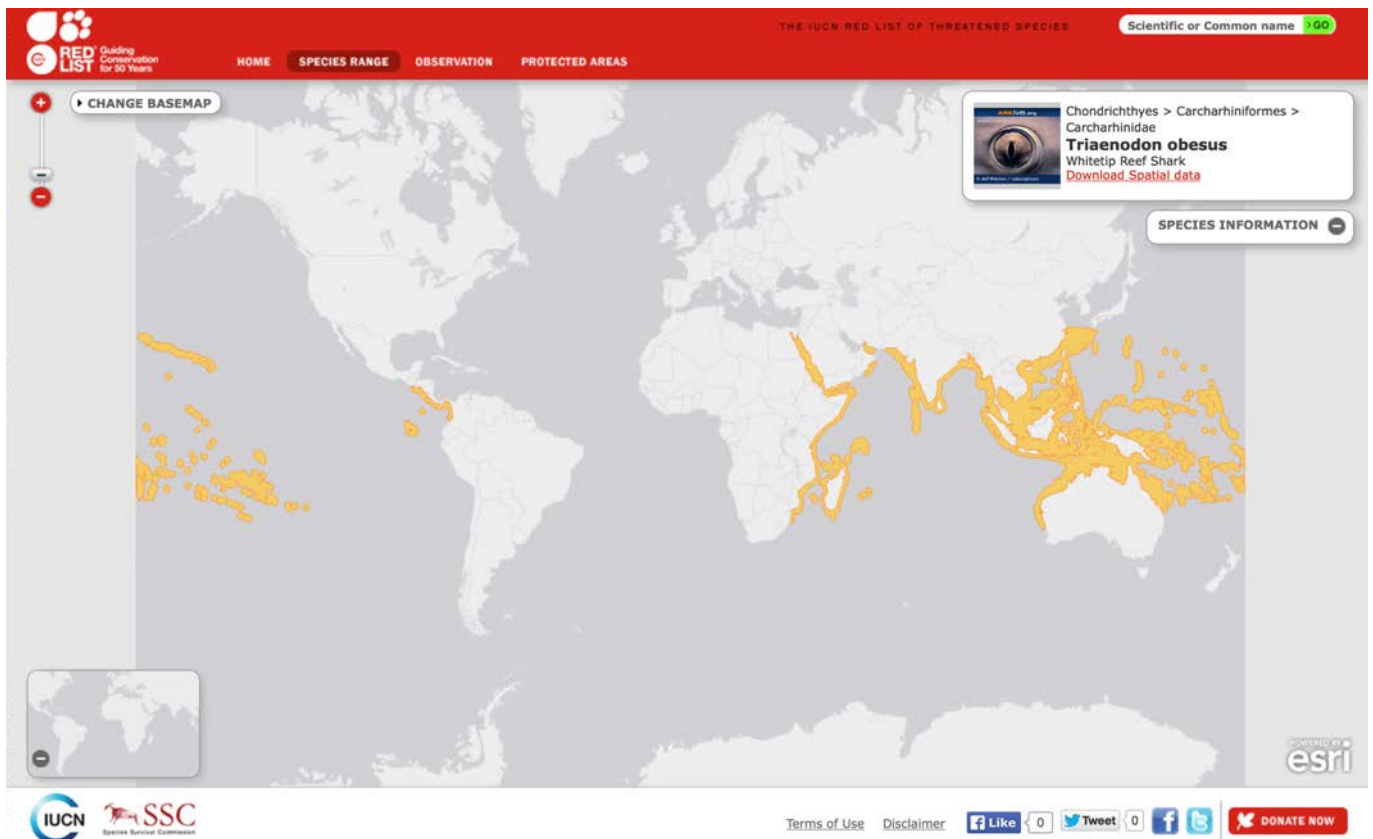
Countries: **Native:** American Samoa (American Samoa); Australia; Christmas Island; Cocos (Keeling) Islands; Comoros; Cook Islands; Costa Rica; Djibouti; Egypt; Eritrea; Fiji; French Polynesia; Guam; India; Kenya; Kiribati; Madagascar; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Mauritius; Mayotte; Mozambique; Myanmar; Nauru; New Caledonia; New Zealand; Niue; Norfolk Island; Northern Mariana Islands; Palau; Panama; Philippines; Pitcairn; Réunion; Samoa; Saudi Arabia; Seychelles; Solomon Islands; Somalia; South Africa; Sri Lanka; Sudan; Tanzania, United Republic of; Tonga; Tuvalu; United States (Hawaiian Is.); Vanuatu; Viet

Nam; Wallis and Futuna; Yemen.

FAO Marine Fishing Areas: **Native:** Indian Ocean – eastern; Indian Ocean – western; Pacific – eastern central; Pacific – northwest; Pacific – western central.

Population Trend: Unknown

Habitat and Ecology: Whitetip Reef Sharks are closely associated with coral reefs in clear, tropical waters. Primarily nocturnal, they shelter in caves by day, often communally. They often return to a home cave for periods of days, weeks or more (Randall 1977). Active at night, they hunt fish and other prey, often in caves and crevices. Maturity is attained at about 105cm, although a mature male of 95cm and a pregnant female of 102cm have been recorded in the Maldives (Anderson and Ahmed 1993). Mating has been recorded in the wild by Tricas and Le Feuvre (1985) and pups are born at 52-60cm after a gestation period of at least five months. Litter size has been recorded as 2-3 in Madagascar (Fourmanoir 1961, Last and Stevens 1994) and 1-5 elsewhere (Randall 1977, Last and Stevens 1994).

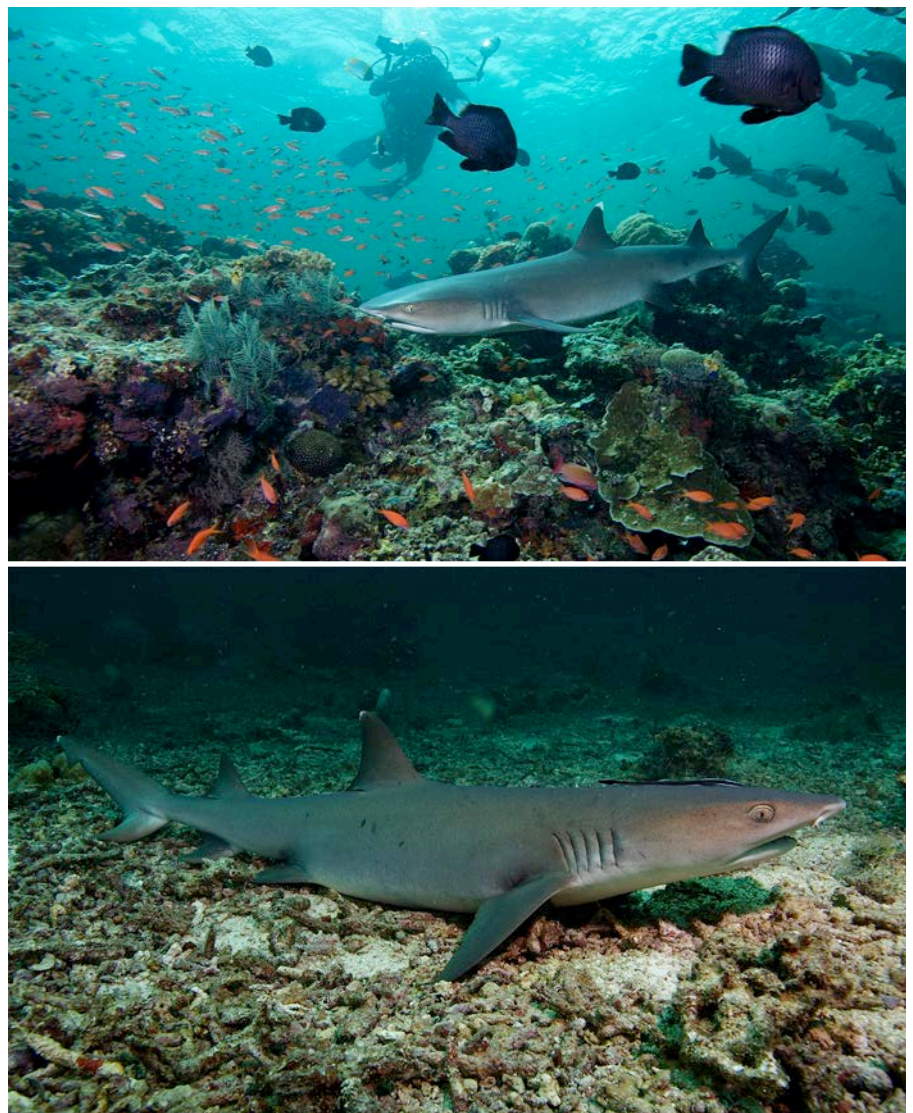


Growth is slow in the wild, estimated at 2.1–4.2cm per year (Randall 1977), and they may attain sexual maturity at eight to nine years and live to about 16 years (Randall 1977, Smith et al. 1998). Maximum size is around 200cm TL but adults are very rare over 160cm (Compagno in prep. b).

Major Threat(s): Taken in line and net trawl fisheries operating in shallow reef areas, this shark has been recorded as part of the multi-species shark catch taken by tropical fisheries, e.g. Barnett (1996), Hayes (1996) and Keong (1996). Although its life history pattern suggests a moderate capacity for rebound (Smith et al. 1998), heavy fishing pressure inshore and lack of management plans in most places suggest that this species may be under threat in heavily fished areas, including remote tropical reefs (Anderson et al. 1998).

Conservation Actions: No specific management or conservation plans are known to exist for this species and it must be regarded as potentially under threat from continuing tropical multi-species fisheries. Marine reserves of appropriate size and locality could protect this species, given the pattern of residency shown by Randall (1977). Its distribution in clear waters over coral reefs makes this species ideal for non-consumptive use in the form of tourism diving, as has been shown in a preliminary analysis by Anderson and Ahmed (1993).

Citation: Smale, M.J. 2005. *Triaenodon obesus*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2014.3. www.iucnredlist.org.





TRANSMITTING DATA

42 TURTLES RELEASED BACK TO THE WILD

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **ALLY LANDES**





The two juvenile hawksbill satellite tagged turtles, Sandy on the left and Raphael on the right.



On the 14th of May, 42 critically endangered hawksbil turtles from the DTRP were released back to the wild, including 2 satellite tagged turtles named Raphael and Sandy.

Raphael and Sandy had been very sick and had washed up in the winter here in Dubai when they were found and brought in to the DTRP. Their rehabilitation process had been

a success, so they were fitted with satellite transmitters, one purchased by Dubai British School and the other by Jumeirah Group.

Foundation Stage One students from Dubai British School had been invited to come and experience the release of the turtles. The children had been on a visit to the DTRP's centre back in November last year and since

then, they have worked hard to collect dirham coins into Smartie tubes to pay for their own satellite tag.

Both Raphael and Sandy weigh less than 2kg each. Having satellite tagged them allows the DTRP to track where these animals travel to and how they utilise their habitat. The tags are so small that they only weigh in at 37 grams,





The DTRP team listened to the deep discussions between the enquisitive children and watched their excitement when they got to see their satellite transmitter for the first time.

but size does not deter them from being able to collect data on temperature as well as location. Small things, can do big things!

The battery life of these transmitters will not last long due to their size, but the turtles are young and at this stage they grow very fast so the tag attachment will break off quite quickly as the turtles carapace changes size. It

is expected to give at least 90 days of data, but only time and the environmental challenges they face will tell how long they last.

As Sandy and Raphael are still so young they have a tough journey ahead of them. There are many threats out there, including garbage ingestion, boat strikes, construction work and predators. They were last headed North toward the Palm Deira.

Tracking more juvenile hawksbill turtles is very important to the DTRP and the efforts put in by those who share an avid interest in protecting these marine animals does not go amiss.

You can track Raphael and Sandy's journey via the following link: http://www.seaturtle.org/tracking/?project_id=687

An underwater photograph of a freediving competition pool. The pool has a blue tiled wall with several bright lights. A diver's arm, wearing a yellow tag with the number '3', is visible on the right side. The floor of the pool is sandy and white.

FAZZA

FREEDIVING CHAMPIONSHIP

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **MOHAMED ABDULLA**

This unique freediving competition started back in 2006 which makes the Fazza Freediving Championship stand out as the most extreme static apnea competition because it has been designed specifically to simulate the challenges faced by the ancient pearl divers in the Arabian Gulf.





FREEDIVING IN THE ARABIAN GULF

Diving has always been a way of life for people in the Arabian Peninsula, but as we all know, after the discovery of oil, people started moving towards other career paths, which made the world believe that they had given up on diving. But in the United Arab Emirates, in Dubai to be more precise, a man named Hamdan aka "FAZZA", the Crown Prince of Dubai, His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum believes that they've still got it and is challenging the world to prove that the world's best divers still exist in this region.

THE HAMDAN BIN MOHAMED HERITAGE CENTER

This competition is brought to us by the Hamdan Bin Mohamed Heritage Center; HHC is the reliable source and reference for the conservation of national heritage in the United Arab Emirates and abroad through producing a variety of visible, audible and readable documents. Its vision focuses on the promotion of the Emirati national heritage and communicating it between the young generation at regional and global levels. In addition, the Centre organizes events and competitions as well as conducts special heritage studies and specialized research for the preservation and documentation of the UAE's national heritage. It also provides traditional sources and references for researchers and interested parties including all members of the community.

The Centre serves as a platform for all initiatives, championships and national and cultural activities on the country's heritage conceptualized by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of the Dubai Executive Council. It seeks to consolidate the cultural Emirati heritage and be valued by the new generation. The Centre also promotes awareness about the UAE's values, customs and traditions, inherent society as well as activates young Emiratis' participation in the maintenance of their national identity.

WHERE AND WHEN

The Championship took place in the Hamdan Sports Complex, qualifiers started on the 5th of March and the final round ended on the 7th. As a tradition of the championship, the management facilitates a fourth day of training free of charge per month before the competition to whoever would like to attend, and the divers will be trained by the former champion of the competition which in this case, is Branco Petrovic. The goal of this course is to polish the local talents and teach them techniques that allow them to reach longer breath-hold times and makes the competition even more challenging and exciting.

The Dubai Police Rescue department contributes by offering two safety divers on each diver and a live feed camera that helps the judges and the audience watch the diver from screens the whole time he/

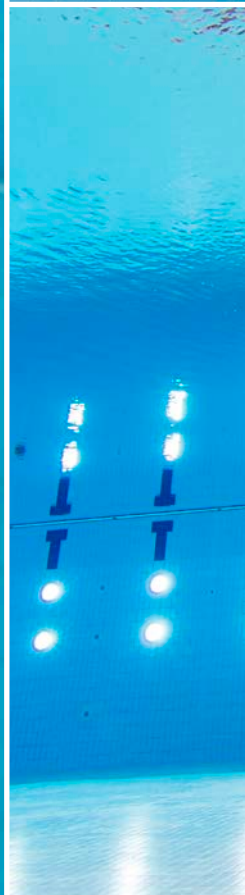
she is underwater which is also recorded to playback any disqualification incidents to help the judges make final decisions. There are also two ambulance vehicles on standby at all times to assure a high level of safety in the championship.

THE CHAMPIONSHIP

The prizes to be won in the Fazza Freediving Championships, are the highest prizes awarded in freediving! In both the International Professional category and the Local GCC category, the top three divers win a brand new 2015 4x4 car! Divers from 4th to 10th place receive large summed cheques.

This unique freediving competition started back in 2006 which makes the Fazza Freediving Championship stand out as the most extreme static apnea competition because it has been designed specifically to simulate the challenges faced by the ancient pearl divers in the Arabian Gulf. A diver must not wear any diving equipment whatsoever; no mask, snorkel, fins, wetsuit, not even a dive watch! A bathing suit is all you are allowed to have on. The competitors have to grab a rope and stay underwater for as long as they can. This rope resembles the strong bond between us and our past, no matter how strong we become, we always remember that our ancestors prepared the platform for us and gave us strength to reach the top. The diver is not allowed to let go of the rope at any time, even when he/she has finished the dive, the diver must come up on his own and the





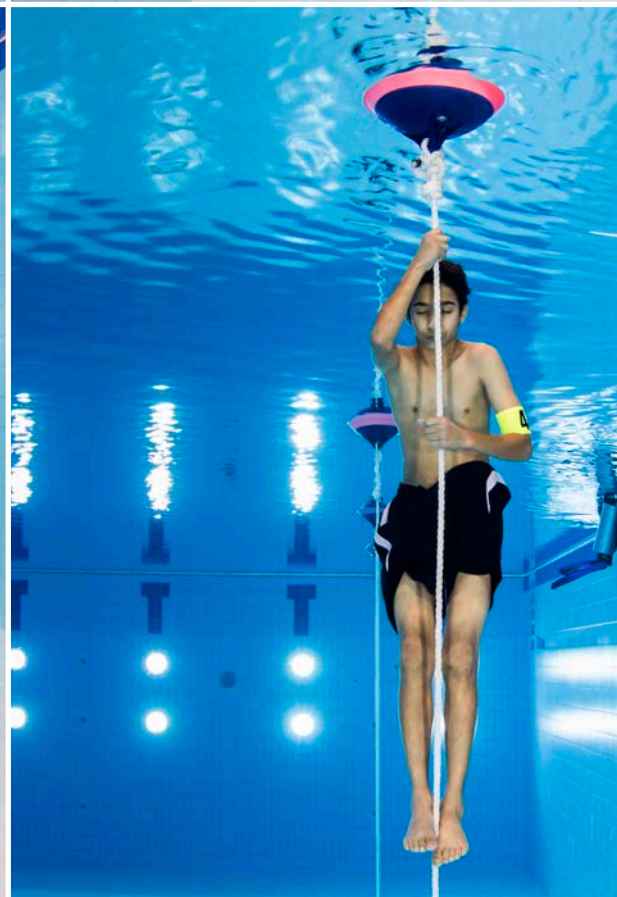
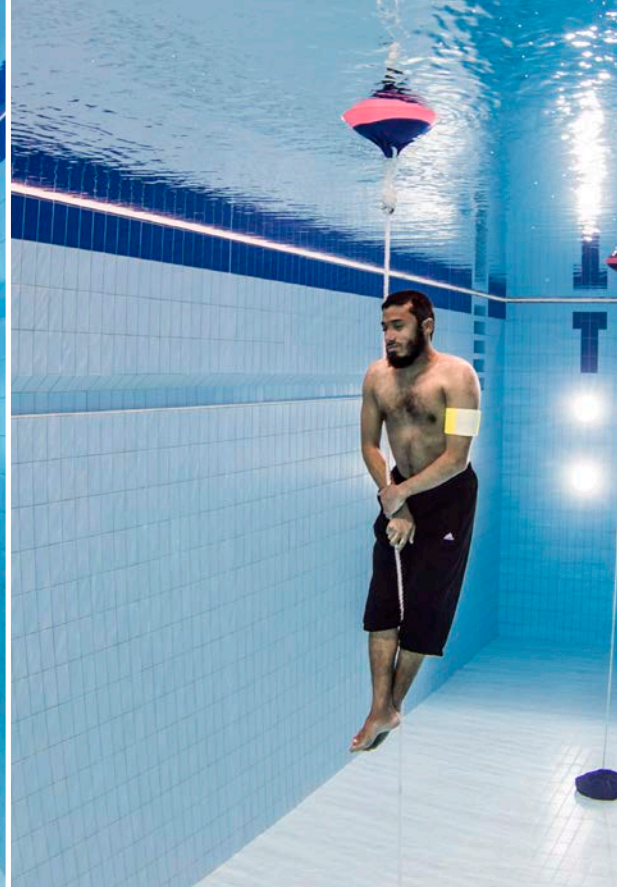
judges must confirm that he/she is perfectly fine, then the dive time is recorded, if the diver faints and fails to keep hold of the rope and requires immediate assistance from the safety divers, he/she will be disqualified and the dive time will not be recorded.

Competitors are divided into three categories; Professionals – which includes all international competitors, Adult Locals and GCC – which includes Emiratis and competitors from GCC

countries, and finally Young Local and GCC – competition for the 12-15 year olds.

In the 1st edition of the Fazza Freediving Championship, the first place recorded was 4 minutes and 15 seconds. With time, the competition's reputation reached every corner of the earth attracting the best divers on the planet. In the 9th edition, March 2015, the competition was full of surprises. The most striking event was the disqualification

of last year's champion, Branco Petrovic from Serbia. Branco had held his breath for over 10 minutes in the qualifiers, two days before the finals. He is the current Guinness World Record holder for Static Apnea (STA) with 11mins 54secs which he won last year in The SPEARO Extreme Sports Expo in Dubai in front of a live audience. All bets were on this guy, he was over 2 minutes ahead of anyone else, but unfortunately it was not his lucky day.



Three other competitors were disqualified for the same reasons, of which two were from the young competition. Any competitor that shows signs of fainting and requires immediate assistance is quickly pulled out of the water and received immediate attention from the ambulance responders providing pure oxygen when necessary. All four disqualification incidents were resolved by first aid and none required any additional care or transportation to hospitals.

WINNERS

Goran Colak from Croatia came first in the pro category, holding his breath for 8mins and 36secs, second place went to Veljano Zanki also from Croatia, with 8mins 04secs and third place was Natalia Molchanova from Russia with 7mins 38secs.

In the Local and GCC competition, Hamad Saeed Faraj from the UAE came first with 5mins 50secs and surprisingly, only 2 seconds

away, Nasir Al Razi last year's national champion was in second place with 5mins 48secs. Third place was won by Khamis Al Oramy from Oman with 5mins 36secs.

In the young competition, the new champion was Ahmed Al Zarooni from the UAE with 2mins 15secs. Second place went to Khalid Al Mazroui from the UAE with 1min 53secs and third place to Saif Al Shamsi also from the UAE with 1min 33secs.



THE MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **PATRICK VAN HOESERLANDE**

A few months ago, I went on a business trip to Monterey Bay. Whilst travelling, be it for business or leisure, I try to go diving, at least once. I have to admit that I rarely succeed in this personal objective. As a diver who prefers his own equipment for safety and comfort reasons, I bring all the necessary equipment with me when I do travel to dive. On these other trips, my dive computer and my regulator are the bare minimum I always take with me for a chance to dive.

To dive somewhere after flying in for just a short stay is a failure in the making. I have never been successful in combining a short business trip with a good dive. All kinds of problems arise keeping me from my mission. I do not understand why I'm often needed to do a test dive as I'm an instructor and a lot of the time, refused the opportunity to dive without one. One day, I will combine a short trip with an interesting dive, I'm not giving up.

Back to Monterey Bay. This time, it had all the elements of being a success. I had everything well prepared. An email from the dive base – it took 4 emails to get one reply – confirmed the booking. I then just had to make sure my meeting would finish on time to be able to combine the dive with the flight back home as the two had to be separated by at least 24 hours. As the week neared its end, the meeting followed the agenda like clockwork. Hopes increased and to make sure that details would not turn sour, I gave the dive centre a quick call by phone to check my diving arrangements. Everything was ok. Great!

With high hopes, I walked over to the dive

shop from my hotel. The scene of a man cleaning dive equipment triggered an internal alarm. Normally, cleaning is done after a dive, but maybe this was low season. Did I have an appointment? No. As he was the owner of the shop, he would have known of it. There was no more diving for the day. I have no idea who had been on the other end of the phone when I had called to confirm the schedule. It was a total failure, the only thing left to do was go for a wander.

The view from the beach clearly demonstrated all the niceties I had missed. The water was so clear that the visibility could be measured by eye for several meters. Sea lions and sea otters were enjoying the thing I had hoped to do myself. Looking down into the water, I could see all the fish swimming. A bit farther away, two divers were entering the water looking happy in anticipation of what they hoped to discover.

My walk unintentionally took me to the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Why not? I knew that entering would increase my frustration of having missed another dive, but on the other hand I would get to see some of the local fish species. There would be no comparison as good as diving, but it would be a worthy alternative.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium is not the biggest of aquariums, but it has earned its place as one of the world's best. The entrance does not impress me and it looks very normal, but for now, I'm fine with it being small.

Once inside, the old Cannery Row displays its hidden treasures and looks very promising.

As if a huge vacuum, the building sucks me in. From that moment on, I was on a journey of constant amazement. No words can rightfully reflect the wonders and sensations concealed inside. I almost forgot the cause of my being there.

After having entered, I turned left leaving the kelp forest for later. I passed a small aquarium with some amazing sea creatures inside it. I took my time to study them. Every animal deserved more attention than I could give. This could be the only time I would visit the Monterey Bay Aquarium, so I wanted to make sure to see it all.

As a diver, I'm drawn to the big tanks. The 30 meter long Monterey Bay habitat contains more than one million liters of water. It represents the local bay's habitats of sandy sea floors, shale reefs, deep reefs and wharf pilings. Small sharks, salmon and huge sea bass populate this enormous aquarium. I've never seen such a big tank. Trying to look in from all possible angles, I wondered how it would be to dive inside it. To be one with the animals. The visibility was great, so as a diver it would feel as if you were suspended in air. A group of passersby rip me from my daydream and I have to move on and continue with the rest of the exhibits.

Next on my visit is the aviary. At first I was surprised to discover an exhibit of birds in an aquarium, but a sign explains that these birds had been wounded and that this is the only place where they are able to survive. Even though I'm born on the coast, this was the first time I could almost touch a shore bird.



Next to the aviary are the touch pools. Seeing and touching are normal behaviors during the exploration of new things, so you can find these kinds of pools in every aquarium. The volunteers take care of their designated animals and invite visitors to touch the creatures while explaining how they live. It is funny to observe how kids react with such surprise when they touch a ray. Following the noise of breaking waves, I left the left wing and crossed the bridge over to discover the rest of the 550 species left to see in nearly 200 exhibits.

Once on the other side, I stepped into the interior of a very big fish bowl. I stood there with thousands of sardines eternally circling around me. It was a big school of fish in that one tank. I had never seen that before and it was wonderful. It was then that I believed this building was home to more than 35,000 creatures as I had skeptically first thought when reading it in the brochure. Before leaving, I noticed one estranged individual swimming counter clockwise, against all the rest.

Next up into the darkness, was "The Jellies Experience". They are such strange, but fascinating animals. Here I learned a lot more about them, but their simple beauty is what struck me the most. They just do whatever they have to do, moving through water like 3D ballerinas. You may not like them, but you have to admit that when you see them dancing in open water, they look beautiful. The setup of that exhibition showed these delicate drifters in their full grace, light and all.

As I turned the corner, I heard music that I automatically connected one of my favorite movies to, 'Le Grande Bleu'. I stopped, eyes wide. In front of me was the front of a huge plexiglas window of a 4 million liter tank. This was the Open Sea exhibit. In the Open Sea, you find a lot of fish, small and big. The kind

of fish you do not expect in great numbers in an aquarium. In the Open Sea exhibit you'll discover hammerhead sharks, sea turtles, ocean sunfish, huge tunas, a school of mackerel, and if you're lucky, a great white shark. I picked the left corner to sit down and relax and almost instantly, felt like I was on the inside with all those magnificent creatures.

A flashlight brings me back to the realization that they are the ones swimming and I'm just sitting there watching them. I have to move on. I could have stayed, but I continued on with my discovery, and headed slowly downstairs.

There I began my journey into a world of undersea magicians, masters of disguise and quick-changing artists. The special exhibition 'Tentacles: The Astounding Lives of Octopuses, Squid and Cuttlefish' increased my amazement and understanding of these creatures. This exhibit showcased two dozen species, from the giant Pacific octopus to the chambered nautilus. On dives, I find it challenging to find them and to then observe their behavior. Their creativity in solving problems attracts me. The kids are even more fascinated than me. If they knew more about these animals, they may start to appreciate them and maybe some day, these young visitors will protect them.

Leaving the dark towards the light, I observed sea otters in their playful mood. The two-story tank allows visitors to watch the otters enjoying their stay at the surface and underwater. When will we be able to move that gracefully and effortlessly underwater?

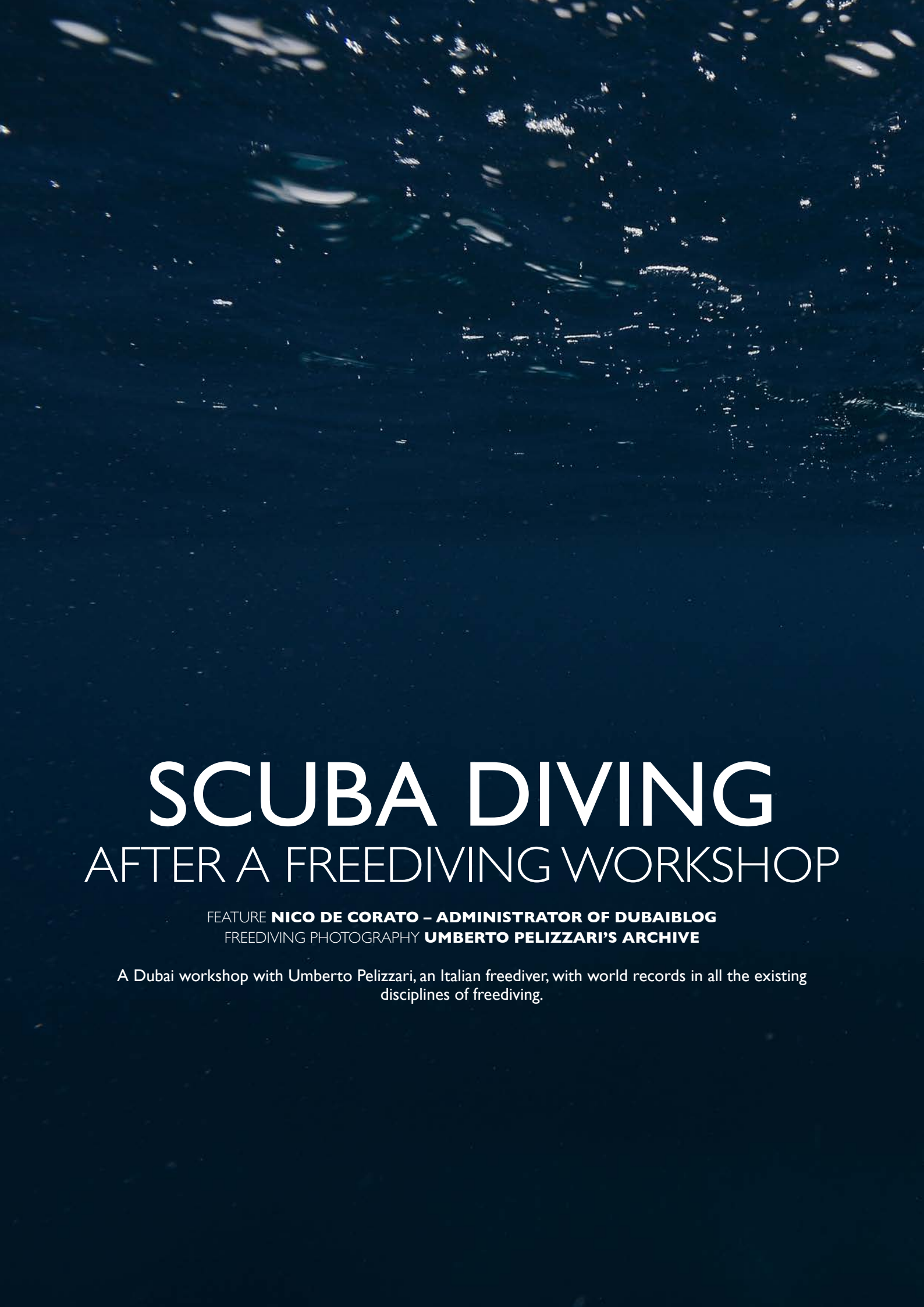
Before visiting the exhibit I had kept for last, a volunteer called me in to the movie theater. The screen announced a documentary on the great white shark. This shark does not inflict me with the kind of fear that 'Jaws' had so well created. This big fish fascinates me and has my

respect as I have for all animals. I left the theater with a very good feeling after a very interesting exposé illustrated with photographs and short films. The rest of the audience left the room smarter with this gained knowledge and with a respectful 'awe'.

With the intention to end my visit with the reasons for my being there, I walked towards the Kelp Forest. This is a towering tank of almost 10 meters high showcasing a living kelp forest community. With one glance, the full meaning of 'forest' hits me. Looking at all the other people standing around and observing it, I was clearly not the only one trying to absorb the picturesque setting. I moved over to a quieter spot on the stairs to allow myself to get in the diver mood. I almost had it when I sensed some disturbance. Instinctively, I looked towards the surface and I discovered the reason.

A pair of fins announced the arrival of a diver in the aquarium. A guide had taken place in front of the tank and began talking to the public. A short instance later, a second person introduced herself. The diver! Through a two-way communication mask she interacted with the guide and the visitors. She named each of the fish swimming in the tank and explained some of the kelp forest's features. Then she started feeding the fish. The commotion drew everyone's attention. This was a very good show!

My visit had come to an end and I needed to head back to my hotel. I have made myself the promise to one day return for a full day. While walking out through the door, I wondered what kind of work divers do in a public aquarium. Are they only there to feed the fish during an interactive show? Or do they get more involvement? Something for another article maybe?

The background of the entire page is a dark, deep blue underwater scene. It features numerous bright, out-of-focus light reflections and bubbles, creating a sense of depth and movement. The light appears to be coming from above, filtering through the water.

SCUBA DIVING

AFTER A FREEDIVING WORKSHOP

FEATURE **NICO DE CORATO – ADMINISTRATOR OF DUBAIBLOG**
FREEDIVING PHOTOGRAPHY **UMBERTO PELIZZARI'S ARCHIVE**

A Dubai workshop with Umberto Pelizzari, an Italian freediver, with world records in all the existing disciplines of freediving.



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Technical Polymer

FEATURES

It was put to my attention that Umberto Pelizzari was coming to Dubai to run a freediving workshop together with Gerardo Cantà (Freedive Instructor of Apnea Academy International). It was Gerardo himself, along with my friend and candidate instructor to the workshop, Roberto Landi whom informed me through an opportune meeting

I cannot deny the idea of meeting such a famous athlete and to be a media partner of such an event had me very honored; especially as I had been asked to join the other participants for the workshop. I accepted the invitation, although the recurring thought was "but underwater I'm used to exhaling continuously...you have to! It's the first rule you're taught, to never hold your breath".

So, I attended the course. One of the things that impressed me most, was the approach you must take on when freediving. The phase of preparation is much more important than the act itself of a breath hold. Apnea is a voluntary suspension of your breath, so to learn how to practice apnea, you must learn how to first breathe properly.

The ability to hold your breath for a long period of time is a much sought-after skill. Breathing is a natural thing for every living being; breathing well, is something we need to learn and train. It is also vital you relax completely and release any tension from your body as you hold your breath, with proper relaxation techniques (designed to increase our underwater resistance without breathing); not only when practicing the static apnea, but also during the dynamic freediving: any movement or displacement must be carried out in order to minimize the consumption of oxygen, and so extending the time/depth reached.

During the workshop we got the chance to spend some time with Umberto Pelizzari and ask him some questions:

NICO: Why did you become a freediver?

UMBERTO: It happened by chance. I started freediving when I was a child, in the swimming pool. I played with other kids and we practiced "breath-holding games". Then the games

became challenges; how long you can stay underwater; how far can you go underwater and so on. I remember at that time I was not counting how many 'pools', but how many tiles. I think the idea of becoming a freediver started in those situations, adding to the passion with the study of the correct techniques to use to improve day by day.

NICO: How do you feel when you reach an important depth, in your case deeper than that legal of leisure scuba divers?

UMBERTO: In order to feel some sensation, you don't need to go so deep. You can feel something special even when you are at shallower depths than those of record depths. One of the sensations I remember is when training in the swimming pool with the ballast, feeling my body get lighter and lighter, up to the point where I can only feel my mind in the water. Or when you are in the open sea and you imagine yourself as a tiny spot in the deep blue.

NICO: Which is the most important skill for a good freediver?

UMBERTO: To know yourself and to listen to the signals given to you from your body. When it's time to turn back, when to stop, when you can't do what you did yesterday or when you can push your limit a step further. Technically speaking it's also important to be able to equalize easily, in a natural way.

NICO: What are your feelings after this first course in Dubai, held at the splendid Jumeirah Beach Hotel?

UMBERTO: I felt there was incredible enthusiasm and a will to learn. I meet plenty of beginners these days who underestimate themselves, who could reach great results from the first day. I can see in Dubai lots of things that still need to be done, but also lots of enthusiasm. The course for example, was fully booked within just a few days and without a need to promote it. A clear sign of promising territory.

NICO: Freediving versus scuba diving?

UMBERTO: One of my favorite quotes is, "A scuba diver immerses to look and observe,

a freediver looks and observes himself". I know lots of people doing both, but they are different. And in any case, a freediver can easily get scuba gear on and scuba dive; the reverse is not necessarily true. But at the same time, scuba divers can improve their skills through freediving techniques.

PUTTING THEORY TO THE TEST

The advanced relaxation techniques freedivers use to extend their dives, in particular, can be useful in scuba diving. For example, pre-dive freediving respiration techniques can be a great tool for scuba divers who want to calm themselves before a dive. Learning freediving respiration techniques may actually help a scuba diver to reduce his/her air consumption rate as well.

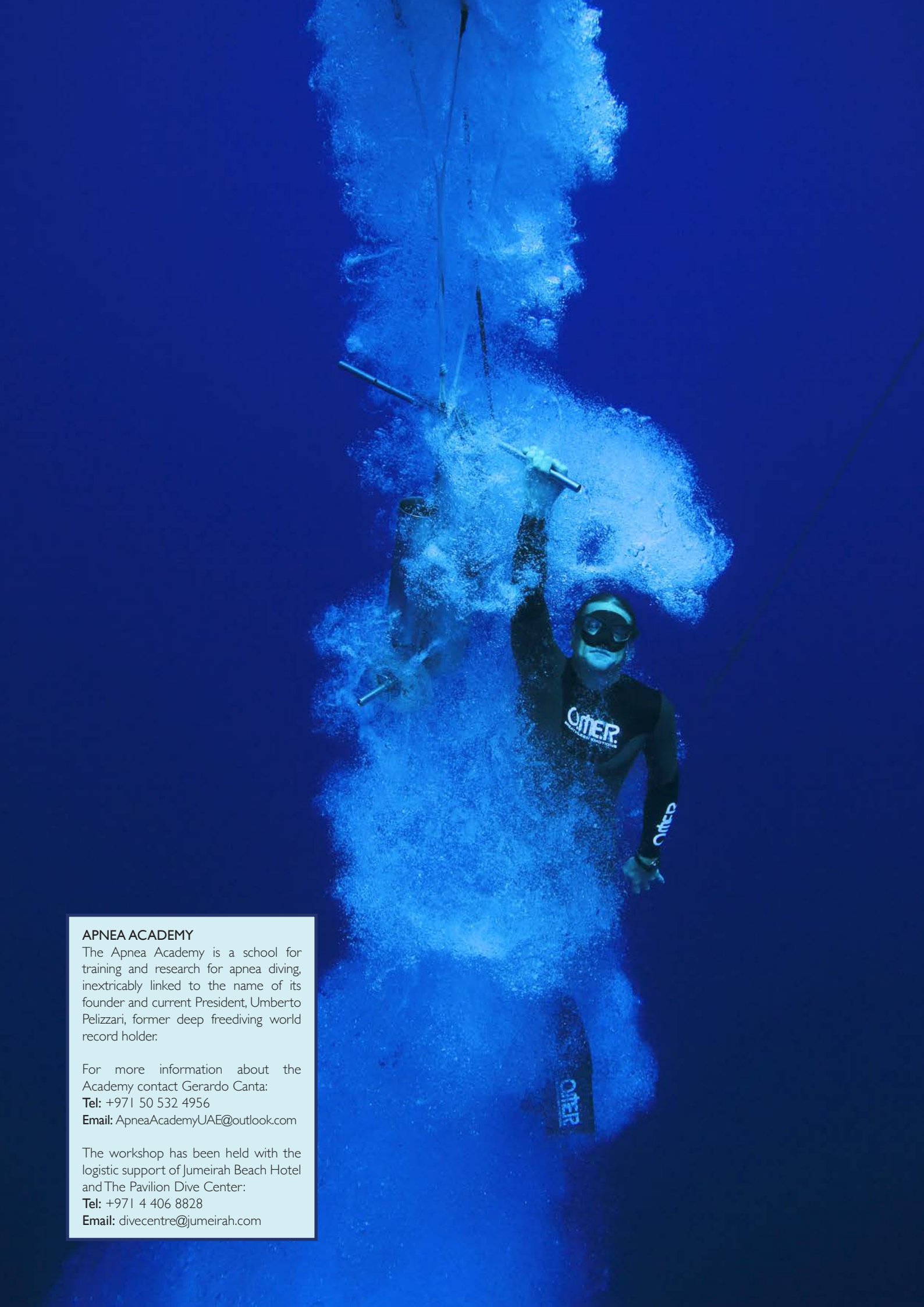
But that is a theory...I needed to test that out myself as soon as possible with a dive which I had the occasion to do a few days after the workshop, during a trip to Italy. I had the chance to try my first dive with a drysuit. I chose to do it in Banco di Santa Croce, Castellammare di Stabia, Italy.

I will not dwell on the beauty of the place as I have already spoken of this destination in a previous issue, but here are just few notes about the dive. We went down to 38 meters into one of the caves inside the main pinnacle, with very cold water (for my taste especially) at 14°C. With this being my first dive in a drysuit, I wore some extra weight (8.5kg instead of my normal 4 or 6kg) for safety reasons, since air in a drysuit affects your underwater balance and there is the risk of an uncontrolled ascent.

Well, despite the cold water, the use of new equipment and being dropped to nearly 40 meters for over 40 minutes, I came out of the water with about 100 bar in my cylinder. When I came out of the cave I had more than 150 bar, which had me thinking my SPG was broken. I've always been a scuba diver with heavy air consumption!

Scuba divers interested in discovering new ways to explore the underwater world, challenging themselves, or simply improving their scuba diving skills should approach freediving techniques. They can benefit from it!





APNEA ACADEMY

The Apnea Academy is a school for training and research for apnea diving, inextricably linked to the name of its founder and current President, Umberto Pelizzari, former deep freediving world record holder:

For more information about the Academy contact Gerardo Canta:

Tel: +971 50 532 4956

Email: ApneaAcademyUAE@outlook.com

The workshop has been held with the logistic support of Jumeirah Beach Hotel and The Pavilion Dive Center:

Tel: +971 4 406 8828

Email: divecentre@jumeirah.com



THE MAKING OF AN UNDERWATER CAMERA CASE

VISITING THE NIMAR FACTORY, TO DISCOVER FEATURES OF THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **NICO DE CORATO – ADMINISTRATOR OF DUBAIBLOG**

An underwater housing is essentially a camera case for your camera, allowing you full control of the camera when diving. It must be waterproof and pressure proof and in many cases, as ergonomic as using your camera without it.

Camera housings are the most precious tools for an underwater photographer. If the housing fails, then the rest of the equipment goes down with it, not being electronically designed to go into saltwater. Housings nowadays have become very complex, allowing professional and amateur photographers to take their cameras down hundreds of feet underwater.

For over 30 years, the Italian brand NiMAR has been synonymous with underwater photography and camcording. The company was set up in the eighties as part of a company based in Correggio (Reggio Emilia – Italy) in the forefront of the plastics industry. In the following years, it manufactured the first

underwater Video 8 camera housings and also made a name for itself in the market thanks to the cooperation with prestigious brands in shooting No Limits freediving record attempts. At the same time, it developed a line of products dedicated to underwater photography and exported its brand worldwide.

We had the chance to meet some representatives of the company during an exhibition and we proposed them to approach the Emirati market, where it's not always simple to find proper equipment. We then began a collaboration together.

During one of my latest visits to Italy, they opened the doors of their factory to show us some features of the production process.

PART I: DESIGNING

The first step in creating a housing is not really taken by the housing manufacturer; but by the

camera manufacturer. Not all cameras are suitable for underwater use, that's why you cannot find housings for all the cameras.

Once a candidate is selected, it's put on a laser scan bench to get a 3D virtual model, then integrated in the Computer Aided Design software (CAD). The virtual environment allows the engineers to realize a virtual design, saving time and money in spite of a real prototype (at least in this phase).

After that, engineers will project the controls and buttons layout and finally the design will gradually go from a simple wire frame shape to a realistic rendering. The final price of the housing, sometimes considered highly expensive, includes the housing design itself.

The next step is to enter the data of the preproduction prototype into the Computer Numerical Control (CNC) program.



PART 2: MACHINING

In order to have a complete housing, there is need of two blocks – one for the front portion, and the other for the back. To start off, the machinist will insert a block of raw material of a specific alloy into the machine. Then cutting tools will be loaded on to the dispenser and the process will begin. The block will then be flipped over; the proper program will be loaded, and the necessary cutting tools will be installed. The same is applied for the rear part. The housing now starts to resemble what it will look like when completed.

PART 3: TREATING

After a manual deburring (by using various types of fine-gritted sand paper all over the sharp edges) there are still some external sharp edges that need to be addressed. Then it's time for the smooth finishing.

PART 4: SURFACE TREATMENT AND LABELING

Some external companies are in charge of surface treatment: anodized aluminum, chrome buttons, paint or other treatments of some surfaces. Then it goes back to the

assembly room to attach the different logos and operational labels, with a waterproof bonding material. Applying stick-on labels did not last long enough in the harsh underwater environment.

PART 5: ASSEMBLY (ELECTRONICS)

Assembly is now ready to start and all shaft buttons and levers are set in place. This is when the housing will become personalized to the eventual owner's requirement. Connectors are tested for continuity prior to installation with a multi meter one by one.

PART 6: ASSEMBLY (MECHANICAL)

After that it's time for o-rings and all the mechanical commands (buttons and levers).

Every single control is tested, adjusted and re-tested.

PART 7: TESTING

It's time to test the housing. First of all, the housing is put in a water tank for 24 hours for a first water-proof test. Then the housing is put inside a pressure test tank to make sure the housing can stand up to the ruthless rigors of diving.

A close and thorough inspection of all the internal parts is done afterwards in order to detect any signs of water entry. If even so much as one small drop or residual humidity is found, the housing will be torn apart and closely inspected. Once the source of entry is determined, it will either be rebuilt from the ground up if it was a minor issue, or sent to the recycling bin if the source could not be pinpointed accurately.

Once the housing has successfully completed the hydrostatic test, the strobe connectors are again subjected to yet another continuity test.

Finally, the preproduction prototype is complete.

PART 8: OPEN WATER TESTING

The in-house technical staff and some trusted outside field advisers will evaluate the completed preproduction prototype housing underwater to determine if any minor changes need to be done to the final production models.

There could still be a few steps before green lighting the final production of the housings.

FEATURES

Reprogramming the updated and modified data instruction (if required) after in water test for example. Repeating all the tests for a double check, writing and printing the owner manual, preparing the packaging.

Finally the production models are ready to enter the market.

Consider that besides the design part, each single part has to be done for any single case, including the double testing, which is done one by one.

In the next issue we'll present some tips for the correct maintenance of the housings, thanks to the support of the NiMAR technical staff.



CONTACTS AND INFORMATION:

Housings for underwater photography and underwater videography – Photo and video lights, dome ports, lenses and accessories – Underwater cameras – Underwater camcorders – Underwater sets and packs – Watertight cases – Underwater flashlights.

NiMAR s.r.l.

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NiMAR offer EDA members a 5% discount through the purchase of their products.



DISCOVER Y-40 DIVING

ARE YOU CURIOUS TO HAVE A DEEP DIVE IN AN INDOOR ENVIRONMENT? Y-40 IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO DO SO

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **DANIELE PERLETTI – OWNER OF PERLETTI DIVING STORE (ITALY)**



If you head straight for the deep end at your local swimming pool, the curiously named Y-40 The Deep Joy in Abano-Montegrotto Terme, Padua (Italy) is probably right up your alley. Until the completion of the Y-40, Nemo 33 – an indoor swimming pool facility in Uccle, Belgium – had held the record as the deepest indoor swimming pool in the world since its opening on May 1st, 2004. The Y-40 is the only diving pool with thermal water (Nemo 33 contains 2,500,000 litres of non-chlorinated, highly filtered spring water maintained at 30°C by a solar heater).

At the Hotel Terme Millepini – a 4 Star hotel with thermal swimming pools, spa, wellness centre and thermal treatments – they have the world's deepest swimming pool with thermal water, aimed at becoming a global reference for the underwater industry. They opened on the 5th of June 2014. Umberto Pelizzari the world record freediver measured the depth and Enzo Maiorca opened the pool to the public.

The Y-40 has been projected by Italian architect Emanuele Boaretto, in cooperation with many professionals from the underwater industry. The name Y-40 is inspired by the mathematical

symbol, 'Y' which is the ordinate axis of the Cartesian system and '-40' is the world's record depth of the pool (40 meters underground). Y-40 is situated in the natural park of the Colli Euganei (Euganean Hills), an amazing area with a harmonious blend of Italy's long-lived history and spectacular nature. The architect had the idea to cover the pool with a lawn to cleverly include the structure into its environment congruously. It is a 100% Italian project.

The Y-40 is filled with thermal spa water: 4300 cubic meters maintained at a temperature of 32-34°C, so you can swim and dive in with just your normal swimming costume rather than having to wear a wetsuit. The pool is 40 meters deep with a surface area measuring 21x18m. It has various intermediate depths and caves for technical scuba diving.

Thanks to its record-breaking depth and the certified PADI instructors, Y-40 gives you the chance to undertake the course to acquire all recreational diving licenses and opens its doors to technical divers. It is designed for diver training, leisure diving, professional training (up to PADI instructor) and used for underwater film and photography shoots.

Y-40 aims to become a free diver's paradise as well, thanks to the temperature of the thermal water which favours relaxation and concentration. It is the perfect place for competitive training and athletic preparation for those who want to take the certification to becoming an instructor from the Apnea Academy.

I have been to Y-40 a few times, mainly out of curiosity, coming back from a business trip in the UAE. I'm a diver, a TEC diver and used to having my drysuit, tanks, trimix... It felt so strange to go down to -40 wearing my swimming wear without my drysuit.

In the beginning I was a bit skeptical about diving in a swimming pool. I love being in the open sea, to run the boat, to reach the dive site, to have the sun on my skin after and before the dive. I had my first indoor dive inside the Dubai Mall Aquarium. So I decided, ok let's try the one in Padua.

I'm not sure I will go back for another dive, but for sure it's an experience I suggest every diver to try! And for sure, it's a good opportunity to practice your skills in a protected environment.

QUI, SOTTO IL CIELO DI CAPRI

A FAMOUS ITALIAN LYRIC BY CLAUDIO VILLA, EXPRESSES ALL THE BEAUTY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN ISLAND
FEATURE **SERGIO RICCARDO** AND **PASQUALE MANZI** PHOTOGRAPHY **SERGIO RICCARDO**



Capri is a Mediterranean island of Calcareous origin that has been visited over the centuries by intellectuals, artists and writers, all enthralled by its magical beauty. A mix of history, nature, worldliness, culture and events that daily blend together and bring the Legend of Capri to life; a legend that sees no comparison anywhere else in the world.

Capri's most iconic sight is the dramatic Faraglioni, three towering rock formations which jut out from the Mediterranean just off the island's coast. Faraglioni is the Italian language term used to refer to stacks, a coastal and oceanic rock formation, formed by erosion from ocean waves.

THEY HAVE BEEN NAMED:

- Stella, connected to the island, 109m.
- Mezzo, 82m.
- Scopolo (or Fuori), 106m.

A snapshot with this breathtaking group of sea stacks in the background is a must for all visitors to Capri.

The charm of Capri can also be captured underwater; whilst diving the deep slopes of the island.

Diving in Capri is suitable for both beginners and experts, thanks to an extensive list of excursions ranging from 15 to 40 meters deep. The underwater world of Capri is populated by groupers, lobsters, anemones, nudibranchs and marine flora of all kinds. Entire seagrass

meadows accompany the diver towards walls covered in rich red and yellow gorgonians. In some seasons, you can also witness the blooming of the rare black coral.

If you ask an islander to name his or her favorite beach on Capri, you will almost certainly hear 'Il Faro', or the lighthouse located about 3 kilometres (1.9 miles) southwest of Anacapri (one of the island's districts).

In truth, Il Faro is not really a beach, but more a rocky bay where you can dive directly into the crystalline water: What locals love most about this beach, is the imposing lighthouse dominating the point and the sun which shines on this cove from dawn to dusk.

Punta Carena Lighthouse (in Italian: Faro di Punta Carena) consists of an octagonal brick tower with lantern and gallery above a two-story building. The lighthouse was repainted recently and is now white with red vertical stripes, and the caretaker's house is red. The waters off Punta Carena are also a fantastic dive site.

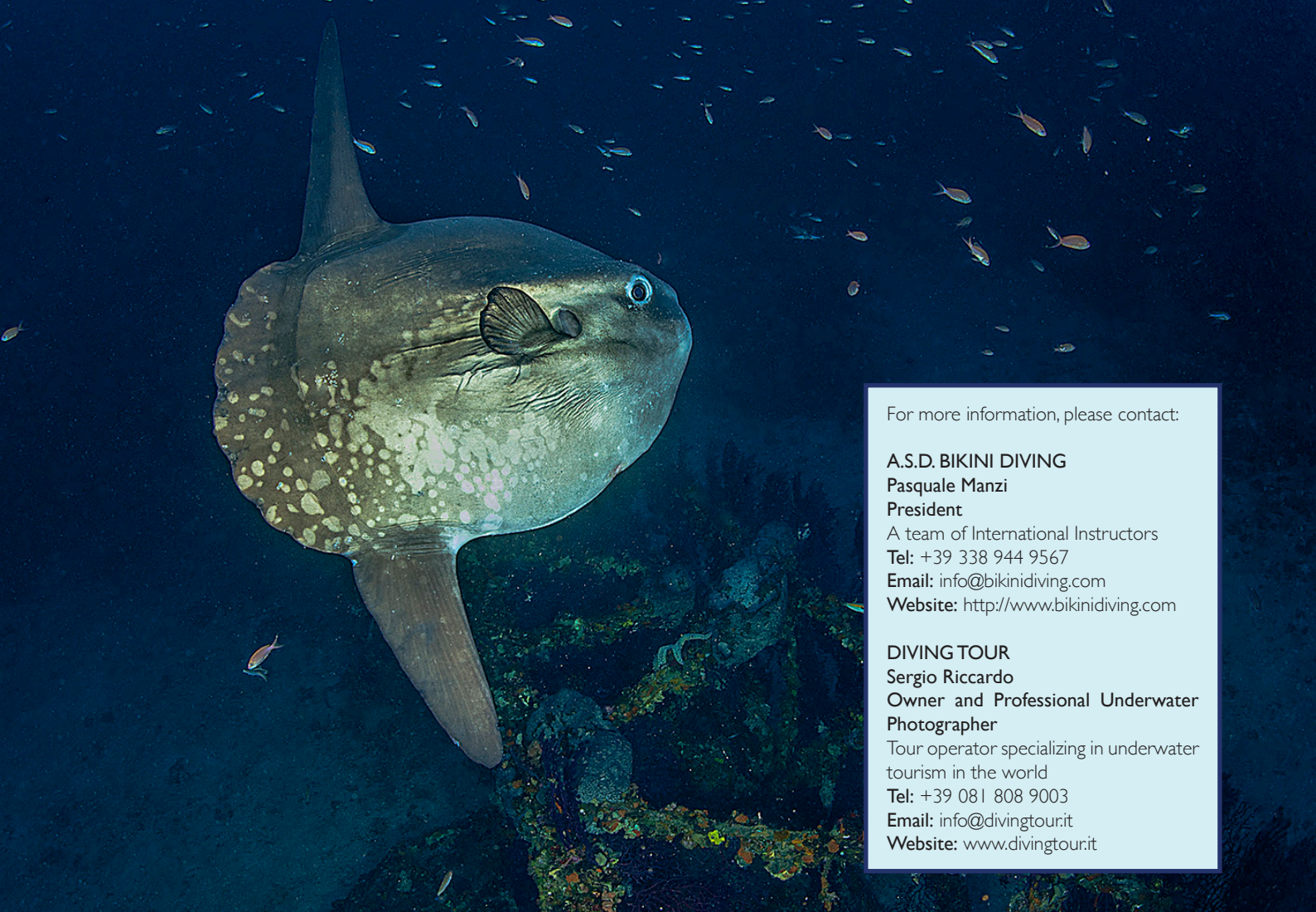
PUNTA CARENA

This is probably the most beautiful and spectacular dive down to the sea bottom around the island, but, at the same time, because of the strong currents often prevailing here, and the constant passage of boats touring around the island, it is only suitable for expert divers. As the name suggests,

the morphology of this diving site is like the upturned hull of a ship. In fact it is a rock face extending for hundreds of metres out to sea, rapidly reaching prohibitive depths. Thanks to the prevailing currents, the south rock face is a sudden explosion of colours and shapes. Gorgonia, both yellow and red, reign supreme. Dense shoals of Anthias swim alongside the face, forming real living walls. The rock face gets more beautiful and richer as you draw away from the mainland alongside it until you get to the splits: two vertical splits carpeted in Gorgonia on both sides, with enormous sponges in the middle. Here you are almost certain to encounter pelagic fish. We are already far from the tip and it is best to swim up to the top of the bank towards the coast and emerge in the bay under the Lighthouse.

TRALICCIO DI PUNTA CARENA

This dive is exclusively for technical scuba divers. In fact, the rock face, abounding in coral biocoenosis and Gorgonias suddenly drops down to great depths. At its base, at a depth of over 50m, a large pylon stretches across the sand out to sea, down to a depth of 62m. Covered in vegetation, sponges, tunicate, red and bicoloured Gorgonia, it is always surrounded by thousands of Anthias. The scene is really breathtaking, thanks also to the ever-transparent water. Emersion takes place strictly along the rock face, and the necessary decompression stages are carried out in a small inlet on the coast where the sea bottom slopes down less vertiginously.



For more information, please contact:

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DIGITAL ONLINE
جمعية الإمارات للغوص
EMIRATES DIVING ASSOCIATION
PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM COMPETITION

THE WINNING RESULTS DIGITAL ONLINE 2015

EDA'S UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM COMPETITION
AWARD PHOTOGRAPHY **ALLY LANDES, SIMONE CAPRODOSSI AND YOUSIF ALALI**



We celebrate Digital Online's 7th year and it continues to impress and delight our senses! We cannot thank the American University in Dubai enough for hosting our event for the second year. It is a great venue to be in amongst the university students. I want to thank our prize sponsors who also give so generously and really do make this a very inspiring competition to take part in. The collection of images and videos on exhibition and presented on the screens are a reminder of the precious underwater life we must protect if we want the future generations to see the same treasures as we are fortunate to see today. In addition to starting the awards this year, our special guest appearance by Photojournalist – Andy Murch with his showcase of underwater photography was a highlight for the aspiring photographers in our midst.

MR. ESSA AL GHURAIR – EDA VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Emirates Diving Association (EDA) held their 7th Digital Online – Underwater Photography and Film Competition. The Awards and Exhibition night opening were on the 27th of May, hosted for the second year at the American University in Dubai (AUD) in the School of Architecture, Art and Design.

The exhibition is open to the public in the Rotunda Gallery, Building A from the 28th of May through to the 6th of June. The gallery is open from 9:00-17:00 on weekdays and 14:00-17:00 on Fridays. Visitors will be asked to show ID at the main gate to receive entry.

The exhibition will then be on display at Yas Marina in Abu Dhabi from 9-23 June in Building 2.

DIGITAL ONLINE'S MAIN OBJECTIVES:

- To develop the human interaction within the underwater environment and highlight the beauty of its flora and fauna.
- To gather information on the number of underwater photographers in the UAE (both professional and amateur).
- To discover new promising underwater photographers in the UAE.

Digital Online was realised in 2009 by Marcelo Mariozi, a professional underwater photographer who had previously been involved in the organisation and set up of underwater photography competitions in his native country of Brazil. As there were no underwater photography competitions existing in the UAE at the time, Digital

Online was introduced by EDA for resident photographers to develop a relationship and human interaction with those unfamiliar with the underwater world and environment. The film category was introduced as an extension to the competition in 2012 to share our underwater world through motion pictures.

The event now in its seventh year, has seen the steady growth of underwater photography participation and the enthusiasm, and the passion step up to another level. The event has attained equal success within the non-divers who come to support the participants at the Awards and Exhibition night.

A very special guest appearance was made by freelance Photojournalist, Andy Murch. Andy is the CEO and Expedition Leader at Big Fish Expeditions. Andy gave a short presentation showcasing some of his photography and shared the unique experiences behind them.

Andy's love affair with sharks and rays began once he learned to dive in early 2000. The more he discovered, the more he felt the need to document through his photography. As Andy found a lack of information available on the species he encountered, his frustration drew him to creating Elasmodiver.com in 2002 where he could share his personal data he had put together on their locations and where to dive with them. Today his database contains more than 10,000 images between the Ray Field Guide and the Shark Picture Database.

Andy then went on to becoming an

accomplished and well respected writer and photographer within the diverse scuba press world. His shark photography has appeared in most big scuba diving magazines around the world as well as hundreds of book publications and appearing in many of the multi-media organizations such as the Discovery Channel and National Geographic to name a few.

We would like to thank all our devoted and new sponsors for all their wonderful prizes for 2015; BFC Travel Management, Tourism Malaysia, Desert Islands Resort & Spa by Anantara and Al Mahara Diving Center; Zaya Retreats on Nurai Island and Nurai Dive Centre, Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort and Spa, Millennium Resort Mussanah and SeaOman Dive Centre, Canon Middle East, Lua Lua Diving and Adventure, The Dive Centre, Nomad Ocean Adventures, Freestyle Divers, Al Boom Diving, Blue Planet Diving, MTM Marine LLC, Pavilion Dive Centre, Divers Down, Dive Rite and Blue Sea Diving Center.

We would like to thank our printing sponsor, Print Works who provide all the prints for the Digital Online exhibitions each year and a big thank you to the American University in Dubai for hosting the event for the second year running.

We would also like to thank Warren Baverstock, Jonathan Ali Khan, Christophe Chellapermal and Nuno Sá for being Digital Online's asset guest judges. We are privileged to have such amazing people and photographers/film makers be a part of this event.

PHOTOGRAPHY SECTIONS

Photography will be classified into Section 1, including DSLR and MILC (Mirrorless) cameras and Section 2, for Compact (point and shoot) cameras. Please state the camera section when entering your submissions and where photos were taken.

SECTION 1

DSLR: Digital SLR camera users with or without external strobes.

MILC: Photographers using the mirrorless interchangeable-lens camera (MILC), which is a class of digital system cameras. This type of camera provides an interchangeable lens mount. They do not have a mirror reflex optical viewfinder.

SECTION 2

COMPACT: Point and shoot photographers only (compact cameras).

PHOTOGRAPHY CATEGORIES

Photographers may enter one photo per category:

1. MACRO – ANY DESTINATION (Section 1 and Section 2)

Definition: Photographs taken with close up equipment, portraying underwater flora and/or fauna. The photographer may not crop the

original more than 20%. The original image may be requested.

2. WIDE ANGLE – ANY DESTINATION (Section 1 and Section 2)

Definition: Photographs taken with a wide-angle lens (or adapters that provide an equal field-of-view), with or without human presence, portraying the natural beauty of the underwater environment.

3. DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT – ANY DESTINATION (Sections 1 and 2 Combined)

Definition: Any underwater image featuring an environmental impact on reefs or marine life.

4. BEST OF THE UAE – UAE ONLY (Section 1 and Section 2)

Definition: Any underwater image taken in the UAE.

VIDEO CATEGORY

1. BELOW THE SURFACE

Definition: Show off your editing skills showcasing your montage of video footage (can be any style or all, such as macro, wide angle, wreck, etc) to the title 'Below The Surface'. Maximum duration including credits: 5 minutes.

EVENT BY EDA



EXHIBITION VENUE



PRINTING SPONSOR



PRIZE SPONSORS



DIGITAL ONLINE EDA JUDGES

ALLY LANDES | EMIRATES DIVING ASSOCIATION

Events Coordinator, Graphic Designer, Photographer and Videographer



Ally has been working with EDA since December 2004 where she created and introduced the quarterly magazine, 'Divers for the Environment' and is the magazine Editor. She branded and helped foresee the development of Digital Online – The UAE's Only Underwater Photography and Film Competition from its launch in 2009 and has since managed the event. Ally keeps busy within her fields of passion always looking to fill gaps with new improvements, developing EDA's brand, designs and managing all the EDA media material and FAM trips. As a qualified PADI Instructor, she utilizes the experience within everyday life at EDA.

REEMA ABBAS | EMIRATES DIVING ASSOCIATION

Projects Manager



Reema is a UAE national who has an insatiable passion for life. She paints, practices yoga and travels extensively in search of adventure.

An enthusiastic diver, she quotes, "Diving gives you a feeling of exhilaration as well as tranquility".

Her work with EDA as Projects Manager gives her a sense of fulfillment, knowing that she's with like-minded people working together for a positive cause.

DIGITAL ONLINE GUEST JUDGES

Warren Baverstock, Jonathan Ali Khan, Christophe Chellapermal and Nuno Sá judged the Digital Online 2015 entries in addition to EDA's Judges, Ally and Reema. We're honoured to have such respected photographers/videographers be a part of this event.

WARREN BAVERSTOCK | UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHER
Aquarium Curator – The Burj Al Arab



Warren has been involved with a number of filming projects within the region such as the popular television documentary "Arabia's Cycle of Life" and the more recent and ongoing "Sharkquest Arabia". Having a passion for elasmobranch conservation, Warren has gained essential

filming experience by joining researchers in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Djibouti and the Maldives where his filming has included large aggregations of whale sharks and manta rays. With vast experience of working with marine animals within a commercial aquarium environment, Warren specialises in aquaria photography/videography as well as the building and filming of artificial environments for documentaries.

Warren was Digital Online's overall professional winner for 2011 and 2012 as well as 1st and 2nd place winner in British Underwater Image Festival's 2011 competition and was featured in Time magazine, 2011 for his amazing photography on manta rays of the Maldives.

WEBSITE: www.warrenbaverstock.com

FACEBOOK: Underwater Photography by Warren Baverstock

NUNO SÁ | WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER
Professional Photographer Specializing in Marine Life



Nuno has been a professional photographer since 2004, specialized in marine life photography. He is the author of three books and several dozens of articles published in National and International magazines. He is the co-author of the "Azores Diving Guide" – Portugal's first

published diving guide, and a regular collaborator of several magazines, such as National Geographic Portugal.

He is the first Portuguese wildlife photographer nominated in some of Europe's major nature photography competitions, such as: Wildlife Photographer of the Year and Asferico International Nature Photography Competition, amongst others.

Nuno is also on the Wild Wonders of Europe's team of top European nature photographers. This is the world's biggest ever nature photography project with an expected public of over 100 million people, a project supported by the National Geographic Society.

WEBSITE: www.photonunosa.com

JONATHAN ALI KHAN | WILD PLANET PRODUCTIONS
Managing Director – Natural History TV Production, Underwater filming specialists, video production and photography.



JAK is a topside wildlife and underwater cameraman, producer, director and editor with a strong passion for the natural world having worked on a wide range of unique projects in the region and is recognized as an authority on environmental, conservation and diving related issues.

His fascination with filming all started after years of working as a photojournalist and shooting underwater stills. His primary interest is in marine subjects that led to the creation of Ocean World Productions in 2003. In 2008, JAK left Ocean World Productions in order to focus entirely on natural history TV development, leading to the recent creation of Wild Planet Productions.

WEBSITE: www.wildplanetfilms.org

FACEBOOK: Wild Planet Productions

CHRISTOPHE CHELLAPERMAL | PADI & TEK TDI
REBREATHING INSTRUCTOR
Founder and Owner of Nomad Ocean Adventures



Christophe Chellapermal arrived in the UAE when he was 7 years old and has been living in the Middle East region ever since. His love of water started as a young child and he has been a diver since he was 12 years old. Chris became a PADI Scuba Instructor in 1998 and with 25 years of

diving experience and 17 years of teaching experience, he has gained much knowledge in the aquatic realm. He is a TEK TDI Rebreather Instructor with Submatix and can teach CCR up to 60m. Founder and owner of Nomad Ocean Adventures since 2004, he loves the ocean and the planet and does all he can to involve Nomad Ocean Adventures with environmental conservation. Being a photography and nature lover, he spends hours in the water taking photos of his underwater adventures.

WEBSITE: www.discovernomad.com

FACEBOOK: Nomad Ocean Adventures Musandam





SPECIAL GUEST – ANDY MURCH



Andy Murch is a fanatical shark diver, having dived and photographed more sharks than most people could possibly imagine. And to top it off, he's so good at it, he utilises his free time to photograph more sharks. On his quests, he searches for sharks around the world that have not yet been photographed.

A MESSAGE FROM ANDY:

Underwater photographers are more than just image makers. Like all divers, marine biologists and even fishermen, we are ambassadors for the ocean and the stories and pictures that we share with the world in some small way help to shape our collective understanding of the ocean and the plight of its inhabitants.

I began shooting sharks and rays in the 1990s. After building a predictable portfolio of easily encountered species I became fascinated by the more unusual elasmobranchs (sharks and rays) that divers rarely encounter. I started Elasmodiver.com to share my stories and to shine a light on this incredibly diverse and critically important group of animals.

Not all shark species are in trouble but many are on the brink of extinction. At least 30

million sharks are killed each year to supply the Asian shark fin market. The actual figure may be well over 100 million. Because sharks mature slowly and have few offspring, their numbers are falling at an alarming rate.

Sharks help to keep our oceans healthy by keeping other species of fish and invertebrates in check by preying on sick animals that would otherwise weaken the gene pool. Only sharks can do this effectively because among ocean predators, sharks are the only group with a low enough reproductive rate to avoid becoming a problem of themselves. If we lose a single species of shark to over fishing, what a tragic loss that would be.

www.bigfishexpeditions.com

www.elasmodiver.com

www.predatorsinperil.org

	NAME	ENVIRONMENT	MACRO	BEST OF UAE	WIDE ANGLE	TOTAL
DSLR AND MIRRORLESS (MILC) CAMERAS						
1	Mohamed Abdulla	491	507	447	452	1897
2	Simone Caprodossi	407	490	443	540	1880
3	Jan Wenger	433	424	423	536	1816
4	Stewart Clarke	410	494	448	443	1795
5	Iyad Suleyman	404	512	380	446	1742
6	Michel Salsmans	336	422	436	515	1709
7	Chris Combes	373	448	446	421	1688
8	David Robinson	405	458	353	446	1662
9	Yousif AlAli	226	434	411	386	1457
10	Gisela Vargas	274	423	360	358	1415
11	Philippe Lecomte	N/A	414	439	503	1356
12	Simon Long	N/A	443	413	412	1268
13	Peter Mainka	N/A	366	362	433	1161
14	Sijmon De Waal	434	N/A	N/A	487	921
15	Steven Board	N/A	430	451	N/A	881
16	Abdulla Almehairi	N/A	422	435	N/A	857
17	Kevin Duell	N/A	443	N/A	N/A	443
18	Ahmed Obaid Alnaqbi	N/A	472	454	352	278
COMPACT CAMERAS						
1	Juraj Roka	441	482	N/A	447	1370
2	Lynette Ferreira	296	401	319	342	1358
3	Jayme Rush	292	389	332	321	1334
4	John Hager	241	303	371	356	1271
5	Yan Xiong	N/A	343	397	385	1125
6	Eyhab Al Sinan	N/A	492	477	N/A	969
7	Noura Alfardan	N/A	463	489	N/A	952
8	Mike Thirlwall	N/A	357	301	N/A	658
9	Kathleen Ebuen	N/A	447	N/A	N/A	447
10	Simon Croshaw	N/A	N/A	N/A	436	436
11	Karen Croshaw	N/A	N/A	N/A	417	417

DIGITAL ONLINE 2015 COMPETITION WINNING RESULTS

Digital Online's 22 Prize Sponsors having given this year's lucky winners 29 prizes to choose from! We have 24 Photography winners, 3 Video winners and 2 Overall competition winners. Congratulations to all of this year's participants for taking part and sharing their underwater images.

Note: This year's participants could only win one prize or prize package. Entrants with multiple winning entries were given priority in the points awarded.

OVERALL DIGITAL ONLINE DSLR/MILC WINNER

MOHAMED ABDULLA – 1897pts

BFC Travel Management | Destination Package – 5 days/4 nights in Bali, Indonesia

OVERALL DIGITAL ONLINE COMPACT WINNER

JURAJ ROKA – 1370pts

Canon Middle East | Powershot G7 X

DSLR/MILC 1st PLACE WINNERS

SIMONE CAPRODOSSI | WIDE ANGLE – 540pts

Canon Middle East | EOS 700D + 18-55 DC

IYAD SULEYMAN | MACRO – 512pts

Tourism Malaysia | Destination Dive Package – 5 days/4 nights in Sipadan, Malaysia

AHMED OBAID ALNAQBI | BEST OF UAE 454pts

BFC Travel Management | Destination Package – 4 days/3 nights in Terengganu, Malaysia

SIJMON DE WAAL | DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT – 434pts

Al Mahara Diving Center and Desert Islands Resort & Spa by Anantara | Complimentary two night stay on Sir Bani Yas Island for two at DIRS (including breakfast) with a two tank boat diving excursion with Desert Islands Watersports Center.

VIDEO 1st PLACE WINNER

KHALED SULTANI | BELOW THE SURFACE – 516pts

BFC Travel Management | Destination Package – 4 days/3 nights in Aqaba, Jordan

COMPACT 1st PLACE WINNERS

EYHAB AL SINAN | MACRO – 492pts

Millennium Resort Mussanah and SeaOman Dive Centre | Two Nights Stay (Deluxe Room for two persons, room only basis) with Two Tank Dive Package.

NOURA ALFARDAN | BEST OF UAE – 489pts

MTM Marine LLC | Mares Abyss 22 Nitrox Din Regulator

JURAJ ROKA | WIDE ANGLE – 447pts

Al Marsa Musandam | 6 Night Livaboard Trip in the Musandam.

JURAJ ROKA | DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT – 441pts

DSLR/MILC 2nd PLACE WINNERS

JAN WENGER | WIDE ANGLE – 536pts

Nurai Dive Centre and Zaya Retreats on Nurai Island | Complimentary One night stay in a Beach Retreat at Zaya Nurai Island, inclusive of breakfast for 2 adults in Nurai Terrace with 2 dives (tanks and weights included) at the local dive sites.

MOHAMED ABDULLA | MACRO – 507pts

Nomad Ocean Adventures | A Pair of Nauticam Floating Arms

STEVEN BOARD | BEST OF UAE – 451pts

Nomad Ocean Adventures | Weekend Package in Dibba for 2 people (2 days/2 nights)

DAVID ROBINSON | DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT – 405pts

Canon Middle East | Powershot D30 (Underwater Camera)

COMPACT 2nd PLACE WINNER

KATHLEEN EBUEN | MACRO – 447pts

Blue Planet Diving | Sidemount Course

VIDEO 2nd PLACE WINNER

FAZALUDDIN JAYANTH | BELOW THE SURFACE – 444pts

Pavilion Dive Centre | PDI Dive Propulsion Vehicle Course

COMPACT 2nd PLACE WINNERS

SIMON CROSHAW | WIDE ANGLE – 436pts

MTM Marine LLC | Mares Dragon AT BCD

YAN XIONG | BEST OF UAE – 397pts

Freestyle Divers | 4 Dives from Umm Al Quwain Marine Club. 2 tank dives per day.

LYNETTE FERREIRA | DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT – 296pts

Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort and Spa | Summer Promotion – Two night stay during summer months in a Superior Room inclusive of Breakfast Buffet for two persons at Views Restaurant.

DSLR/MILC 3rd PLACE WINNERS

MICHEL SALSMAIS | WIDE ANGLE – 515pts

Nomad Ocean Adventures | Weekend Package in Dibba for 2 people (2 days/2 nights)

STEWART CLARKE | MACRO – 494pts

Nomad Ocean Adventures | A Pair of Snoots for the S-2000

PHILIPPE LECOMTE | BEST OF UAE – 439pts

Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort and Spa | Weekend night stay in a Superior Room inclusive of Breakfast Buffet for two persons at Views Restaurant.

CHRIS COMBES | DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT – 373pts

The Dive Centre | Two nights stay at Sandy Beach Hotel and Resort and two days diving (4 dives) for two persons.

COMPACT 3rd PLACE WINNER

KAREN CROSHAW | WIDE ANGLE – 417pts

Divers Down and Dive Rite | A pair of Dive Rite XT Fins

VIDEO 3rd PLACE WINNER

JURGENS SWARTS | BELOW THE SURFACE – 393pts

MTM Marine LLC | Mares Cruise Captain Bag

COMPACT 3rd PLACE WINNERS

JOHN HAGER | BEST OF UAE – 371pts

Lua Lua Diving and Adventure | 6 Dives Package for 1 person in Muscat, Oman. Accommodation not included.

MIKE THIRLWALL | MACRO – 357pts

Pavilion Dive Centre | Two Dubai Dives

JAYME RUSH | DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT – 292pts

Blue Planet Diving | 2 Day weekend diving for 2 people with 1 night stay at the Holiday Beach Motel in Dibba.

UAE NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

MOHAMED ABDULLA

Al Boom Diving | Voucher for 2 dives on East Coast with full equipment, for one person.



1st PLACE WIDE ANGLE DSLR/MILC
© Simone Caprodossi – 540pts



1st PLACE BEST OF UAE DSLR/MILC
© Ahmed Obaid Alnaqbi – 454pts



1st PLACE DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT DSLR/MILC
© Sijmon de Waal – 434pts



1st PLACE MACRO COMPACT
© Eyhad Al Sinan – 492pts

1st PLACE BEST OF UAE COMPACT
© Noura Alfardan – 489pts



1st PLACE WIDE ANGLE COMPACT
© Juraj Roka – 447pts





1st PLACE DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT COMPACT
© Juraj Roka – 441pts



2nd PLACE WIDE ANGLE DSLR/MILC
© Jan Wenger – 536pts



2nd PLACE MACRO DSLR/MILC
© Mohamed Abdulla – 507pts



2nd PLACE BEST OF UAE DSLR/MILC
© Steven Board – 451pts

2nd PLACE DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT DSLR/MILC
© David Robinson – 405pts



2nd PLACE MACRO COMPACT
© Kathleen Ebuena – 447pts

2nd PLACE WIDE ANGLE COMPACT
© Simon Croshaw – 436pts



2nd PLACE BEST OF UAE COMPACT
© Yan Xiong – 397pts





2nd PLACE DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT COMPACT
© Lynette Ferreira – 296pts



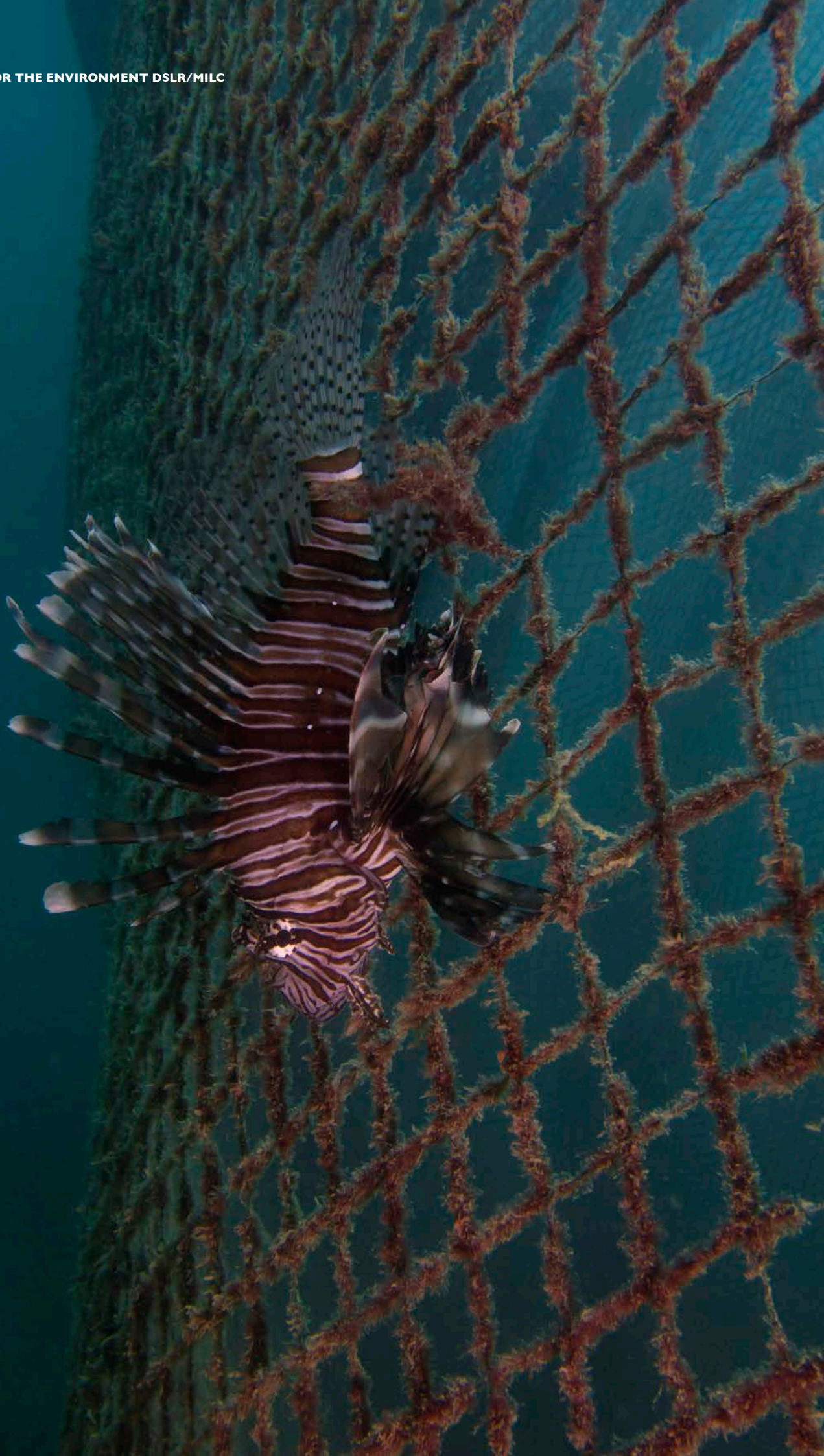
3rd PLACE WIDE ANGLE DSLR/MILC
© Michel Salsmans – 515pts

3rd PLACE MACRO DSLR/MILC
© Stewart Clarke – 494pts

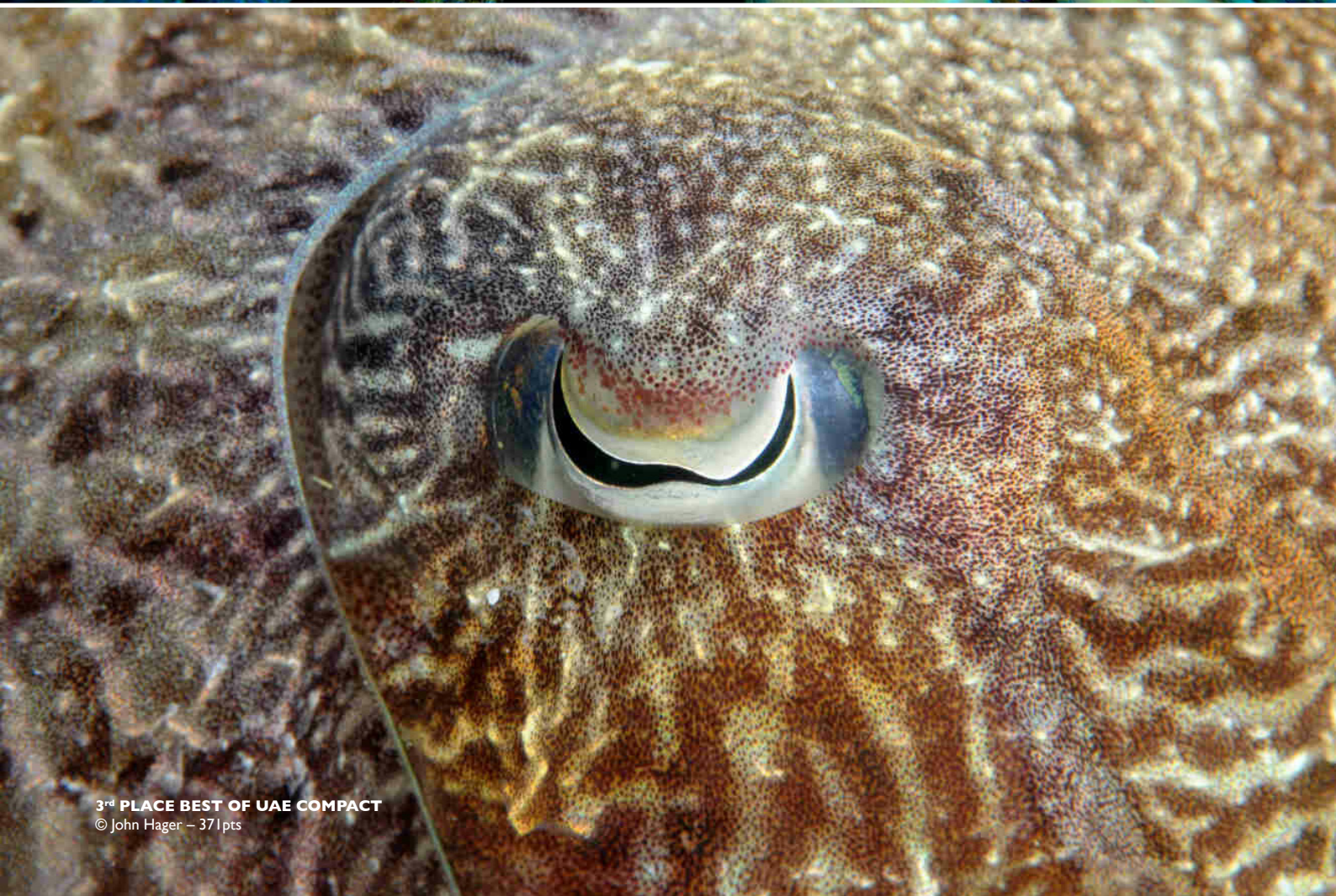


3rd PLACE BEST OF UAE DSLR/MILC
© Philippe Lecomte – 439pts





3rd PLACE WIDE ANGLE COMPACT
© Karen Croshaw - 417pts



3rd PLACE BEST OF UAE COMPACT
© John Hager - 371pts



3rd PLACE MACRO COMPACT
© Mike Thirlwall – 357pts



3rd PLACE DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT COMPACT
© Jayme Rush – 292pts



WIDE ANGLE DSLR/MILC
© Philippe Lecomte – 503pts



WIDE ANGLE DSLR/MILC
© Sijmon de Waal – 487pts



WIDE ANGLE DSLR/MILC
© Mohamed Abdulla – 452pts



WIDE ANGLE DSLR/MILC
© David Robinson – 446pts



WIDE ANGLE DSLR/MILC
© Iyad Suleyman – 446pts



WIDE ANGLE DSLR/MILC
© Stewart Clarke – 443pts



WIDE ANGLE DSLR/MILC
© Peter Malinka – 433pts



WIDE ANGLE DSLR/MILC
© Chris Combes – 421pts



WIDE ANGLE DSLR/MILC
© Simon Long – 412pts



WIDE ANGLE DSLR/MILC
© Yousif AlAli – 386pts



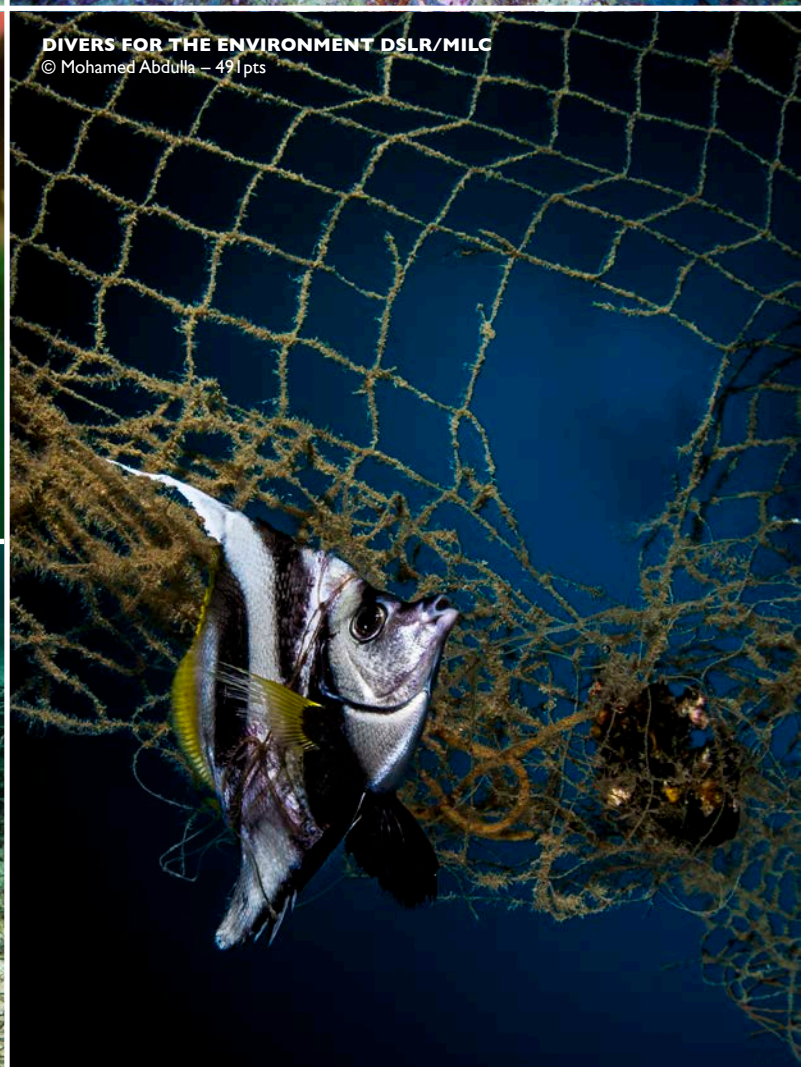
WIDE ANGLE DSLR/MILC
© Gisela Vargas – 358pts



WIDE ANGLE DSLR/MILC
© Ahmed Obaid Alnaqbi – 352pts



DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT DSLR/MILC
© Jan Wenger – 433pts



DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT DSLR/MILC
© Mohamed Abdulla – 491pts



DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT DSLR/MILC
© Stewart Clarke – 410pts



DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT DSLR/MILC
© Simone Caprodossi – 407pts



DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT DSLR/MILC
© lyad Suleyman – 404pts



DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT DSLR/MILC
© Michel Salsmans – 336pts



DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT DSLR/MILC
© Yousif AlAli – 226pts



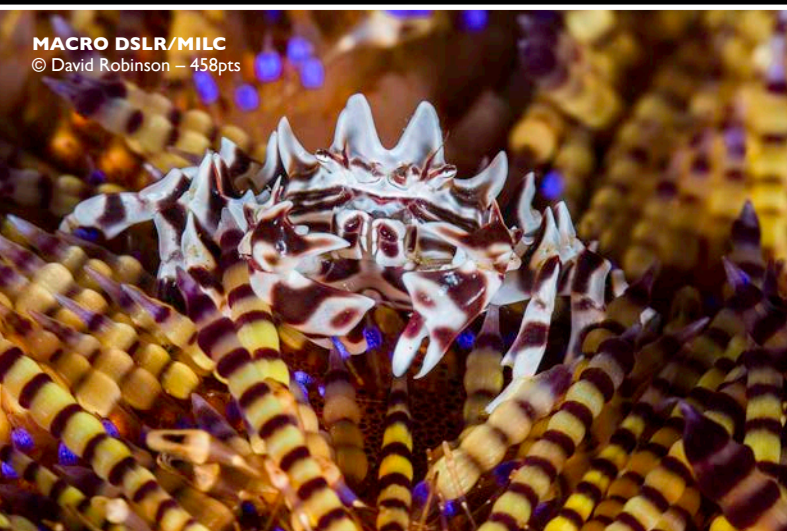
DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT DSLR/MILC
© Gisela Vargas – 274pts



MACRO DSLR/MILC
© Simone Caprodossi – 490pts



MACRO DSLR/MILC
© Ahmed Obaid Alnaqbi – 472pts



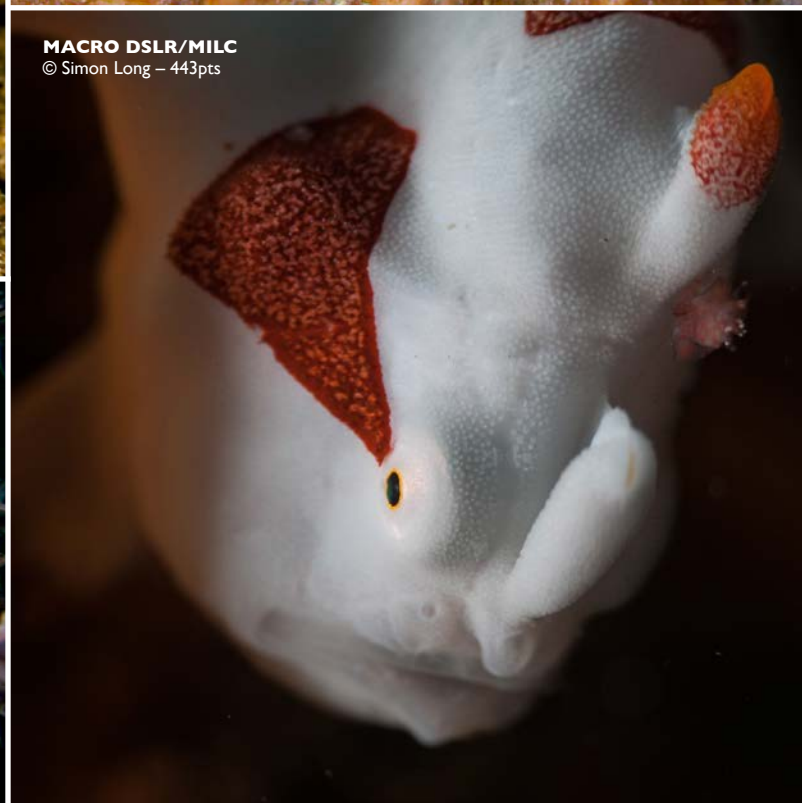
MACRO DSLR/MILC
© David Robinson – 458pts



MACRO DSLR/MILC
© Chris Combes – 448pts



MACRO DSLR/MILC
© Kevin Duell – 443pts



MACRO DSLR/MILC
© Simon Long – 443pts



MACRO DSLR/MILC
© Yousif AlAli – 434pts



MACRO DSLR/MILC
© Steven Board – 430pts



MACRO DSLR/MILC
© Jan Wenger – 424pts



MACRO DSLR/MILC
© Gisela Vargas – 423pts



MACRO DSLR/MILC
© Abdulla Almehairi – 422pts



MACRO DSLR/MILC
© Michel Salsmans – 422pts



MACRO DSLR/MILC
© Peter Mainka – 366pts

MACRO DSLR/MILC
© Philippe Lecomte – 414pts



BEST OF UAE DSLR/MILC
© Mohamed Abdulla – 447pts

BEST OF UAE DSLR/MILC
© Stewart Clarke – 448pts



BEST OF UAE DSLR/MILC
© Chris Combes – 446pts



BEST OF UAE DSLR/MILC
© Simone Caprodossi – 443pts



BEST OF UAE DSLR/MILC
© Michel Salsmans – 436pts

BEST OF UAE DSLR/MILC
© Iyad Suleyman – 380pts



BEST OF UAE DSLR/MILC
© Jan Wenger – 423pts



BEST OF UAE DSLR/MILC
© Abdulla Almehairi – 435pts



BEST OF UAE DSLR/MILC
© Simon Long – 447pts



BEST OF UAE DSLR/MILC
© Peter Mainka – 362pts



BEST OF UAE DSLR/MILC
© Yousif AlAli – 411pts





BEST OF UAE DSLR/MILC
© Gisela Vargas – 360pts



BEST OF UAE DSLR/MILC
© David Robinson – 353pts



WIDE ANGLE COMPACT
© Jayme Rush – 321pts



WIDE ANGLE COMPACT
© Yan Xiong – 385pts



WIDE ANGLE COMPACT
© John Hager – 356pts



WIDE ANGLE COMPACT
© Lynette Ferreira – 342pts



DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT COMPACT
© John Hager – 241pts



MACRO COMPACT
© Juraj Roka – 482pts



MACRO COMPACT
© Noura Alfardan – 463pts



MACRO COMPACT
© Lynette Ferreira – 401pts



MACRO COMPACT
© Jayme Rush – 389pts



MACRO COMPACT
© Yan Xiong – 343pts



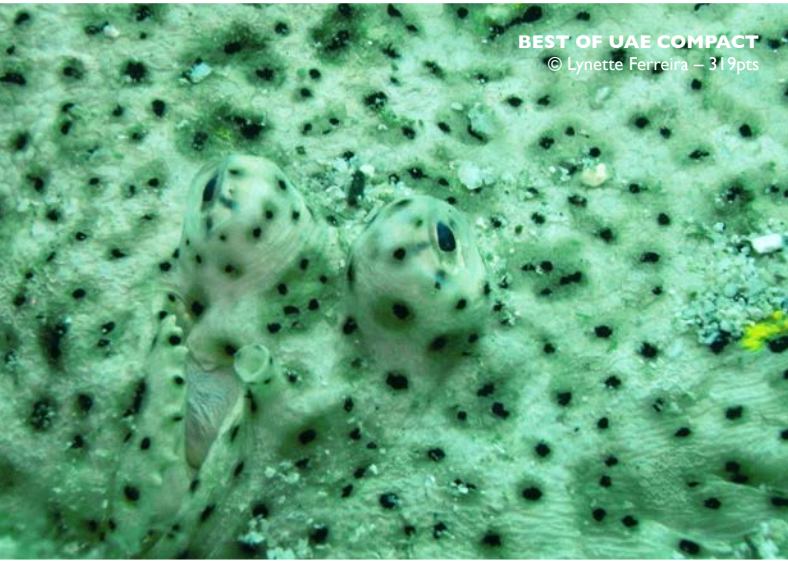
MACRO COMPACT
© John Hager – 303pts



BEST OF UAE COMPACT
© Eyhab Al Sinan – 477pts



BEST OF UAE COMPACT
© Jayme Rush – 332pts



BEST OF UAE COMPACT
© Lynette Ferreira – 319pts



BEST OF UAE COMPACT
© Mike Thirlwall – 301pts



MIKE THIRLWALL | PAVILION DIVE CENTRE PRIZE



KAREN CROSHAW (NOT PRESENT) | DIVERS DOWN & DIVE RITE PRIZE



CHRIS COMBES | THE DIVE CENTRE PRIZE



PHILIPPE LECOMTE | LE MERIDIEN AL AQAH BEACH RESORT AND SPA PRIZE



STEWART CLARKE (NOT PRESENT) | NOMAD OCEAN ADVENTURES PRIZE



MICHEL SALSMANS | NOMAD OCEAN ADVENTURES PRIZE



LYNETTE FERREIRA | LE MERIDIEN AL AQAH BEACH RESORT AND SPA PRIZE



YAN XIONG | FREESTYLE DIVERS PRIZE



SIMON CROSHAW | MTM MARINE LLC PRIZE



FAZALUDDIN JAYANTH | PAVILION DIVE CENTRE PRIZE



KATHLEEN EBUEN | BLUE PLANET DIVING PRIZE



DAVID ROBINSON | CANON MIDDLE EAST PRIZE



STEVEN BOARD | NOMAD OCEAN ADVENTURES PRIZE



MOHAMED ABDULLA | NOMAD OCEAN ADVENTURES PRIZE



JAN WENGER | NURAI DIVE CENTRE & ZAYA RETREATS ON NURAI ISLAND PRIZE



JURAJ ROKA | DIVERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT NOMINATION ONLY



JURAJ ROKA | AL MARSA MUSANDAM PRIZE



NOURA ALFARDAN | MTM MARINE LLC PRIZE



EYHAB AL SINAN | MILLENNIUM RESORT MUSSANAH & SEAOMAN DIVE CENTRE



KHALED SULTANI | BFC TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PRIZE



SIJMON DE WAAL (NOT PRESENT) | AL MAHARA DIVING CENTER & DESERT ISLANDS RESORT & SPA BY ANANTARA PRIZE



AHMED OBAID ALNAQBI | BFC TRAVEL MANAGEMENT



IYAD SULEYMAN | TOURISM MALAYSIA



SIMONE CAPRODOSSI | CANON MIDDLE EAST



MOHAMED ABDULLA | AL BOOM DIVING | UAE NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD





JURAJ ROKA | CANON MIDDLE EAST | OVERALL DIGITAL ONLINE COMPACT WINNER



MOHAMED ABDULLA | BFC TRAVEL MANAGEMENT | OVERALL DIGITAL ONLINE DSLR/MILC WINNER







UNDERWATER

WIDE ANGLE PHOTOGRAPHY

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **IYAD SULEYMAN**

Shooting wide angle is a bit tricky, at least at the beginning.



Wide angle underwater photography is very popular and wishful as it shows the beauty of seascapes, schools of fish, large creatures, wrecks or other breathtaking underwater scenery. But shooting wide angle is a bit tricky, at least at the beginning. At first you need to pay your attention to the foreground and background, and you should think of composition and lighting.

The big advantage of wide angle lenses is in focusing very closely on the subject and in a wide field of view. Lenses with short focal lengths offer the greatest depth of field and a larger picture area. The wider the lens, the greater the depth of field. Try to get close to the

subject and fill the frame – it's very important in wide angle photography! By getting close you reduce the length of the water column, which increases the effectiveness of flash, resulting in colour saturation and sharpness.

I use my Nikon D800e and Nikon D3s cameras with the following lenses: Nikkor 16mm Fisheye, Nikkor 16mm-35mm zoom lens and Tokina 10-17mm Fisheye with Kenko x1.4 Teleconverter. For my Canon 60D and 70D cameras, I use Tokina 10-17mm Fisheye and Canon 10-22mm zoom lens.

I shoot manual exposure underwater as it gives me full control of the picture while shooting.

Aperture, shutter speed and strobe power are all set manually. For getting successful underwater wide angle pictures, the aperture and strobe power are more important. You should be able to change the aperture opening very quickly, as the conditions could change very fast as well. (e.g. moving large fish, turtle etc.) My advice when buying an underwater housing, is to pay attention to the button for adjusting the aperture. It should be easy to use and access.

I usually shoot between ISO160-ISO250 and the shutter speed between 1/125s-1/250s. But the aperture figure is always being adjusted, depending on the position of your lens to the



subject and the sun location. My aperture can vary between $f/4$ and $f/22$. While shooting upwards towards the surface, the aperture opening should be smaller to get the pleasant color of the water above. My strobe power is also subject to change depending on the photo conditions: from $\frac{1}{2}$ to full power. I use dual strobes with diffusers, trying to underexpose the foreground with one flash and using the second to backlight the subject. When shooting wide angle, your strobes are used to light your foreground subjects, while proper ambient exposure provides a pleasant background.

The strobe position plays the leading role in

getting the pictures without backscatter. To prevent the illumination of backscatter, you should avoid the direct lighting on the subject. Angling your strobes away from the subject slightly outward can help in this case.

Try to find a nice composition and don't forget that the foreground subject should be in balance with the background.

And of course, when shooting pictures using ambient light only, (e.g. mantas, whale sharks close to the surface, sometimes wrecks) you absolutely need different settings. The ISO setting, as well as the aperture one will be more important here. If the light gets poor,

you can always increase the ISO setting, but don't overdo it as the pictures may suffer from noise. Try to correct the exposure by adjusting the aperture: make it wider to allow more light in, or make it smaller to reduce the amount of light.

Here are some tips for creative wide angle photography:

SNELL'S WINDOW

You have to use a fisheye lens (e.g. Tokina 10-17mm). Set your aperture to $f/20$ or a bigger number. Place your strobes close to the housing, on maximum power. Look up towards the surface through the wide angle lens. You will see a circle (or half-circle) through which

the sky is visible. This effect is called 'Snell's window'. Choose a subject, which has nothing above it (just water), get as close as possible and take a picture.



REFLECTIONS

Seeing the reflection of a subject close to the surface is your chance to take the photo, it can have a great impact on the viewers. Your camera captures the same picture that appears in your viewfinder. Make a nice composition and take your shot.



THE ZOOM-EFFECT UNDERWATER

To get the best result, your subject should not move. Your position should be stable. Focus exactly on the main part of the image (in my example, it is the eye of the crocodile fish) and make the shot zooming in by holding the camera fast. I used a Nikkor 16-35mm lens; ISO 100, f/22, 1/6s.



For any kind of underwater photography it's extremely important that the photographer feels comfortable underwater: neutral buoyancy of you and your housing, suitable diving suit, not fogging-up mask. Better you will focus on taking picture and will think of the composition, but not on solving the problem with your mask or feeling cold.





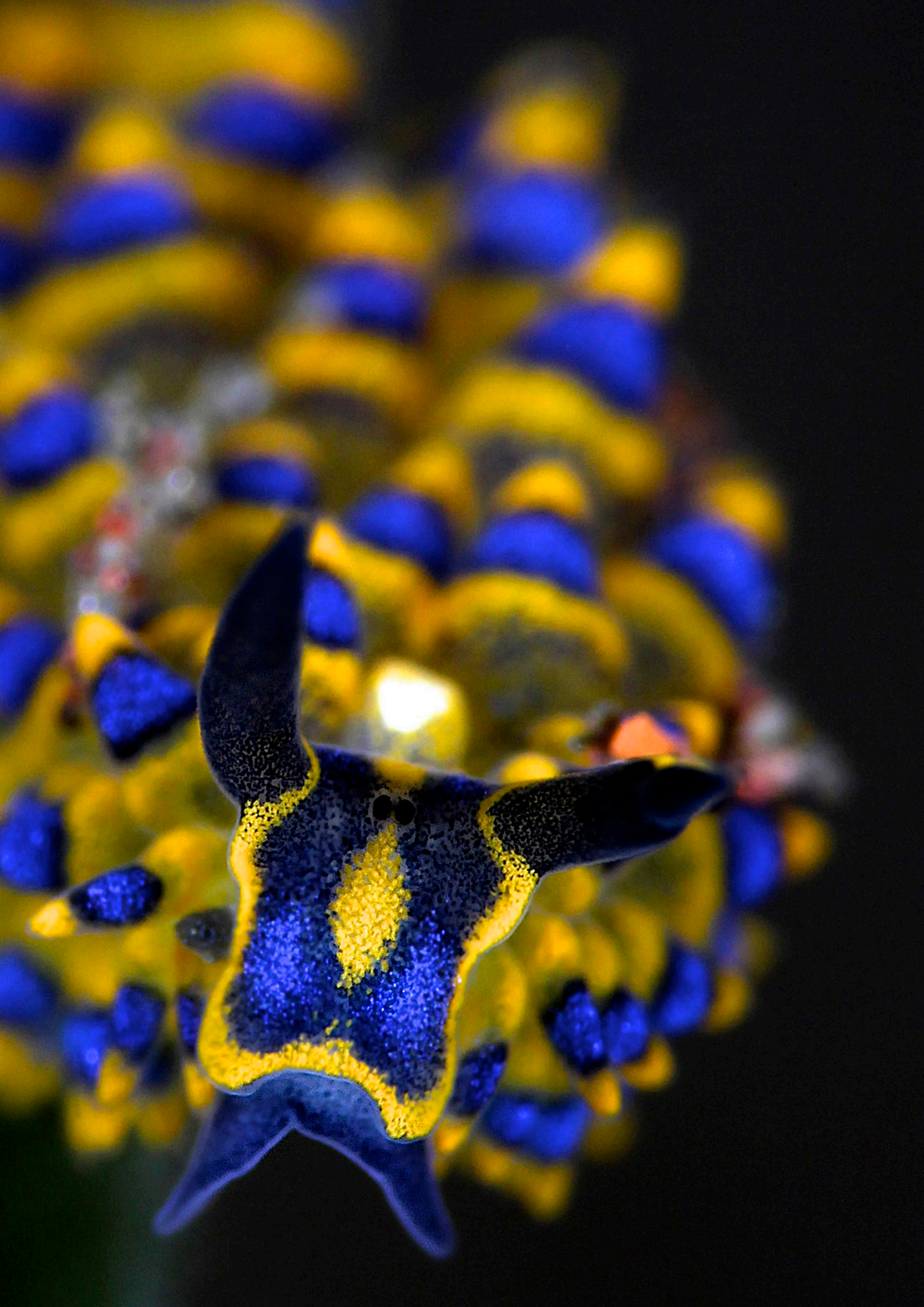


CRITTER LOVERS

UNDERWATER MACRO PHOTOGRAPHERS

FEATURE **ROCHELLE BUYUGAWAN** UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY **IYAD SULEYMAN**

From that small startup group of photographer enthusiasts, learning from each other, sharing different ideas about getting good macro photos, the group escalated.



WHEN IN TULAMBEN

It has been exactly 6 months since my last dive! I'm crushed as scuba diving has become my passion and part of my lifestyle since the day I received my PADI license. I terribly miss the smell of the sea, the taste of salt on my skin, the kiss of the sun, the beauty of the corals and sea creatures and of course, my diving group! I must do something soon before I fall ill from the lack of diving out in the open sea.

While I wait for the day I return back to the deep blue sea, let me recount my happy days when I mingled with bluespotted sting rays, turtles, smiley sharks, the giant yet gentle napoleon wrasse, bubbly nemo, the deadly lionfish, hairy shrimps and oh my nudies!

I've been to many different places and each dive has had unique stories to tell and a different level of beauty in terms of the marine life, corals, sea walls and water visibility! If you are to ask me which is the best, I would answer you in a hundred different ways! If you are looking for big stuff, I will vouch for Tubataha Philippines where the visibility is pretty good. If you are into wrecks, the best for me is Sharm El Sheikh, or if you're into manta rays, then Maldives is highly recommended. Nevertheless, I'm going to talk more about my newly found interest in diving and that is underwater macro photography, which I will brag about just a little bit longer.

HOW I BECAME A CRITTER LOVER

My diving group is the Filipino Scuba Divers Club which organises one international dive trip a year which I have been lucky to experience. Not only that, they also conduct programs such as dive clean ups and underwater photography. There are these guys expert in this field, and they formed an Underwater Macro Photographers (UWMP) group. They are pretty much addicted to capturing photos of macro stuff within the sea. To be honest, I didn't really have any interest in this activity in the beginning. I just wanted to dive and watch the marine life. That's it! But later on, when I saw photos of nudibranchs on my friends' Facebook walls, it caught my attention to how beautiful each of them were. From these observations, I told myself, I would love to do that too!

I purchased my first underwater camera and started taking photos whenever I went underwater. I was not however, impressed with the quality of my photographs. I sought a friend's advice and did some research on Google. After a year or so, I changed my underwater camera to an Olympus E-PM1, not because I had become an expert, but because it was on sale! Moving forward, I started going out with friends to practice at the Jumeirah Open Beach. From then on, every time I saw my photos, I became more and more interested in the results. With the help of friends and with information from the internet, I was able to get some good macro

photos. After a while, I purchased underwater accessories for my camera. I was then ready to join the UWMP group.

WHO UWMP ARE

Underwater Macro Photographers (UWMP) is a group of photographers from all around the world that get together to take close up photography of small marine life using macro lenses, tele-converters, diopters or wet-diopters etc. Subjects often photographed are the likes of nudibranchs, eels, crabs, shrimps, small fish, seahorses, coral, anemones etc, which are taken close up and show the fine details.

Ken Thongpila who is the founder and editor of the UWMP group, invited a few people with the same passions for diving and underwater macro photography and created a group through Facebook where they can share, learn and inspire each other. They show their macro photography and help each other to learn different techniques and get inspiration from seeing and commenting on each other's photos. The UWMP group was created on the 30th of September 2011 and started out with 130 members most of whom were Ken's friends on Facebook and who are experienced underwater photographers. After 3 years, they now have more than 35,000 members from all around the world.

From that small startup group of photographer enthusiasts, learning from each other, sharing different ideas about getting good macro photos, the group escalated. Thus, they decided to hold a regular gathering each year. Now, the UWMP group has an admin department that does all the necessary preparations from logistics down to the smallest of details, to gather all the macro photographers from around the world and unite them to a chosen macro paradise where they can practice their skills, share their talents and have fun together.

UWMP MEETUPS

I had heard and read that after the successful first meetup in Tulamben, all the members who had come to the trip had enjoyed the sumptuous food, the very relaxing and cozy resort with great facilities and a great week of diving. An interactive meeting was held each evening to discuss and share the shots taken from the day. Accordingly, the first meeting was followed by a second one which I was lucky to join.

The UWMP meetups are about getting keen members together. The founder didn't want it to just be a trip where members dive together or ran a workshop that members had to pay extra for. So, Ken decided to create an all-inclusive UWMP trip where members could dive, photograph, and have talks and presentations in the evenings to be able to learn as much as possible from each other.

WHERE THEY MEET

Last year, the UWMP met at the Liberty Dive

Resort at Tulamben, Indonesia for 6 days and 5 nights. I can say that the event was not that expensive.

COSTS FOR 5 NIGHTS

- Standard Resort Room US\$225
- Deluxe Resort Rooms US\$275
- Family Resort Room US\$375
- Standard Garden Cottage US\$275
- Deluxe Garden Cottage US\$325
- Family Garden Cottage US\$500

There are 6 different room types. Deluxe and Standard Rooms can accommodate 1-2 people, Family Resort Rooms can accommodate 3-4 people and Family Garden Cottage are independent 2 room villas that can accommodate 3-4 people.

DIVING PACKAGES

Diving packages will only cost you US\$415, which includes:

- 12 dives (can be 12 day dives or 10 day dives and 2 night dives)
- Group pick up and drop off from the airport
- Breakfast and buffet dinners included
- One dive guide for 2 divers
- Tanks and weights included
- Free Nitrox if you are certified
- Free UWMP shirt, a Liberty Dive Resort shirt and other cool diving freebies

Extra Dives will cost you US\$30 per day dive, US\$35 per night dive and US\$10 per boat dive.

This year's, third UWMP Group meetup will be held at the Crystal Blue Resort in Anilao, Batangas, Philippines which is the second most favourite macro diving destination that the group members voted for in the past 2 years. According to the macro diving experts, it has so many photo opportunities. Anilao is also known as the best underwater macro photography paradise!

HOW THE PHOTO POSTING WORKS

Any member of the UWMP group can post a maximum of 2 photos per day and all photos posted must have the following details to each photo: camera model, strobes, f-stop, shutter speed and ISO, name of subject and place it was taken. From these basic details, members can learn and improve their skills, checkout each other's camera equipment and also help each other to find the best destinations for macro photography.

UWMP is a group, specifically for underwater macro photographers. They do not accept wide angled photography or videography.

THE NUMBER OF POSTS UWMP RECEIVES PER DAY

They receive photos from apprentices to very experienced members, from compact cameras, to mirrorless/four third cameras and DSLR cameras. Every day, as per the founder,



UWMP receives between 20-35 photos per day or around 600-800 photos per month or more than 8,000 photos per year.

OTHER INFORMATION

Besides Facebook, UWMP also uses different online platforms where they promote their work that could be beneficial to their members and readers such as:

- **eNews** | The electronic newsletter which summarizes some of the important topics members have discussed. It provides survey results that the members will find useful and showcases some great photos. The eNews is published every 2 months and can be downloaded for free. There are 24 issues currently available.
- **Anniversary Photo Book** | In the runup to celebrating their anniversary, UWMP produces something memorable for their members. Ken and the admin team select more than 100 photos and photographers from each year to be included in the book in order to represent the diversity of the underwater macro world. It can also be downloaded for free with the same link to eNews.

UWMP TIPS

During my 6 diving days with the group, I have learned a few techniques which I believe are very helpful:

1. GET COMFORTABLE UNDERWATER

- Before I go out in the water, I condition myself to be very relaxed and I have to clear my mind of all the fears I have. Few people know that I was an aqua phobic before I became a diver. I conquered that during my open water course with my instructor. Underwater creatures and the beauty of the marine life help me a lot in overcoming my fears. One of the most important elements of underwater photography is feeling comfortable within the environment.

2. IMPROVE AND DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS

- You should practice your buoyancy control skills because you yourself will be the floating platform on which your camera rests.
- Be mindful in your kicking skills and avoid kicking up the sand which will cause the subject to be hidden and of course avoid being kicked out and bullied by your dive buddies.
- Have control of your breathing if you want to spend long periods in the deeper waters and get close enough to the marine life. Don't blow too many bubbles close to your subject or you may scare them away.
- Get low and move slowly.

3. BE READY

- Do buddy checks before each descent. One great lesson I have learned to avoid

accidents, is to always check everything is okay and ask your buddy to double-check your gear from your mask and snorkel, down to your BCD, fins and most especially your tank if it has enough air and if it's open. I experienced this in Tulamben where we descended and I panicked at 5ft because my air had not been opened.

- Prepare your camera, lens, strobe etc before you descend. Pre-adjust the strobe position and power for anticipated subject distance. Take a lot of test shots before that great subject appears in front of you.
- Be alert and focused!
- Stick to your dive guide because he/she knows where to find the best subjects you could ever shoot.

4. BE ETHICAL

- Do not be too selfish. Share the critter you have found and give way once you are done. 5 tries will do and then give your buddy a chance. You can always come back once your buddy is done.
- Don't leave your buddy. Always stick with each other.

- Patience, perseverance and a good sense of humour are vital when it comes to underwater photography. Sometimes the unexpected will happen and not always in your favour so be ready and have fun. Having a good laugh is better than being "that guy".

5. CREATE A CRITTER LIST

- UWMP have given us a list and they asked us to cross off the critters we have seen from it. Make some time to search the nature and behavior of the critters you have seen so that next time you know what to do and get the perfect shot.
- Research like crazy (books/net) and get the information from experts or diver friends. Make some time to discover what your critters feed on, when they are most active, how they mate, their habitats, bio-geographical regions, depth, best time of year, etc. There is a lot of data available on many of these critters so take advantage of it.

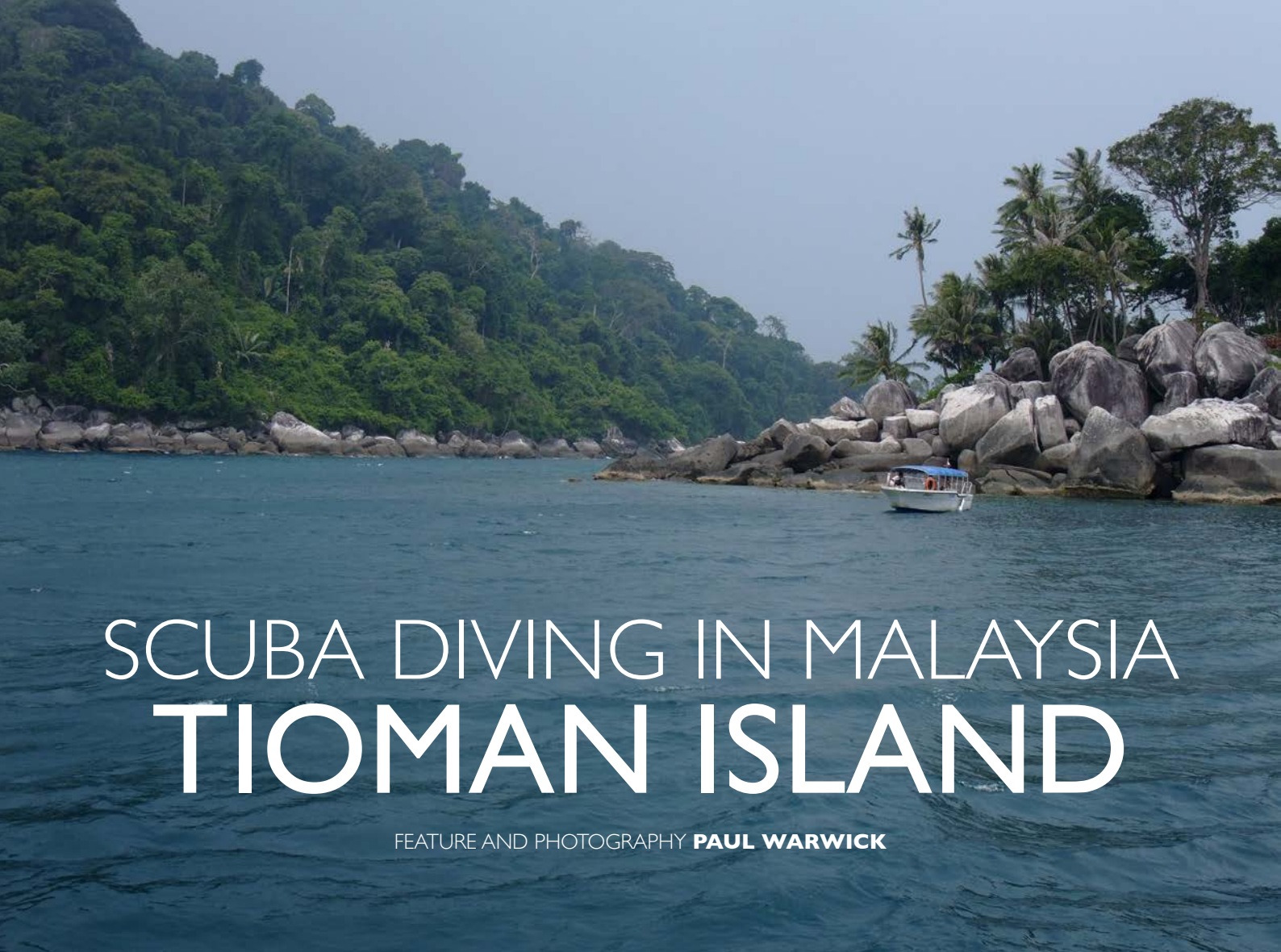
6. PRACTICE

- As they say, practice makes perfect. Yes, I admit I need this as all amateur underwater photographers do in order to improve and achieve to be good, if not the best!



TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE GROUP, CONTACT KEN THONGPILA:
Facebook: www.facebook.com/UnderwaterMacroPhotographers
Email: ken.thongpila@gmail.com
Website: www.uwmacrophotographers.com.





SCUBA DIVING IN MALAYSIA TIOMAN ISLAND

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **PAUL WARWICK**

Tioman Island (or Pulau Tioman) lies off the East Coast of the Malaysian Peninsula, acclaimed as a geological wonder, ecological paradise and one of Southeast Asia's most beautiful travel destinations. Located 32 nautical miles off Pahang State, Tioman Island is a melting pot of cultures, attracting youthful travelers from around the world – a great place to make friends during every season. The island enchants all visitors with its warm beaches, lovely seas and lush rainforests.

There are many legends behind the island's origin – the most popular story attributes its formation to a dragon princess who flew over the South China Sea en route to Singapore. Enchanted by the beautiful waters, she decided to make it her final resting spot. A far more practical account narrates the settlement of local fishermen from the mainland as civilisation spread across the Seribu Archipelago. Among their number was one who kept a pet mynah, called 'Tiong' by locals. This bird had been an excellent singer that greatly entertained the villagers. Warmly endeared, they decided to name the island 'Tioman' after its passing, a portmanteau of 'Tiong' and 'teman', which means 'friend'.

One of Tioman Island's claim to fame was it was the main filming location for the famous Rogers and Hart Hollywood blockbusting

Musical 'South Pacific' which now falls within grounds of the Berjaya Tioman Resort. Looking at the miles of golden beaches and the beautiful blue sea and the wonderfully rich sunrises and sunsets, it is easy to see why the producers selected this location.

HOW TO GET THERE

Until recently connections to the island were available by both air and sea. We were lucky enough to be one of the last to use the quicker air connection provided by Berjaya Air. Having flown from Abu Dhabi into Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang District, we then transferred across the city to Subang Airport/Skypark Terminal (Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport) which used to be the city's International Airport and is about a 45-60 minute ride in a taxi. The transfer was by a DASH 7 aircraft (small, noisy turbo prop with room for only 48 people) and hold baggage allowance was limited to 10kg unless any excess was previously booked. Flight time was about 60 minutes and the ride exciting, especially final approach into the mountain before banking sharply and dropping onto an airstrip about 3200 feet long! Taking off from this 'sidewalk runway' is equally as 'stimulating' and there is no room for pilot error in either direction whatsoever. Unfortunately this service, as well as the one from Singapore also run by Berjaya Air, has now stopped and to

date there is no substitute aircraft or airline although there are plans to extend the runway in 2015 so as to accommodate slightly larger aircrafts.

The only way to get to Tioman Island now is by sea through a number of small ports on the East Coast, the biggest being Mersing town in Johor using a local ferry. Travel time from Kuala Lumpur is about 4 hours drive in a taxi and there is also a bus services for the more adventurous explorer. There are three daily ferries with crossing time averaging three hours as the ferry stops at all the villages and is subject to tides, winds and monsoons. The main advantage for us scuba divers over the previous air option is that there is no weight limits on baggage on the ferry!

ACCOMMODATION AND EATING

Budget and midrange hotels as well as apartment/motel type accommodation, provides quick accommodation at every village around the coast, but there are also a number of luxury resorts nestled within private coves and beaches. So there is something to accommodate all tastes and budgets from the "backpacker" to the 5 Star (+) traveler. Eating out is also available on the same basis with small restaurants and cafes to suit all budgets. Rather run down exteriors and backstreet cafes often surprised by producing a "hidden



gem" of culinary delights all based on local produce and local recipes which were handed down through the generations. We enjoyed a number of meals at one particular café and within two days became almost part of the family! The people are so friendly, eager to please and introduce you to their culture and food (and of course relieve you of some of your money!)

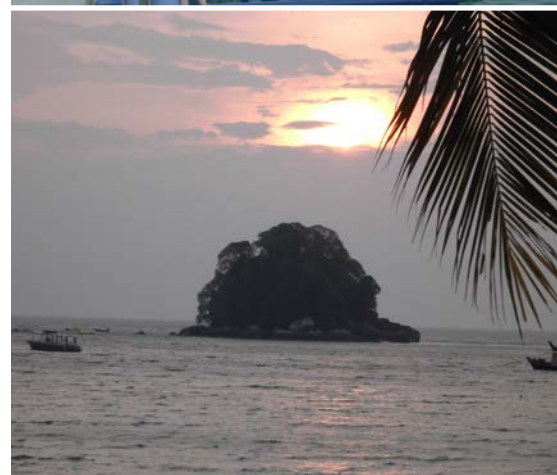
We stayed at the Berjaya Tioman Resort just south west of the village of Tekek on the West side of the island. Covering a large site, accommodation was in traditionally built chalets on stilts fronting the beach or the jungle and was blessed with fantastic views and excellent facilities, including its own Dive Centre and a Championship 18 Hole Golf Course. There were a number of restaurants and bars to choose from and from most you could enjoy fantastic views across the sea and even better the sunsets which were spectacular. Wildlife was in abundance all over the Resort and in all shapes, sizes and genus. Care had to be taken to avoid some of the larger co-residents, especially messy encounters with the macaque monkeys who would steal anything which was not fastened down, including your towels, underwear and dive gear, or the huge monitor lizards which prowled the immaculately manicured grounds looking for something to eat.

DIVE CENTRES

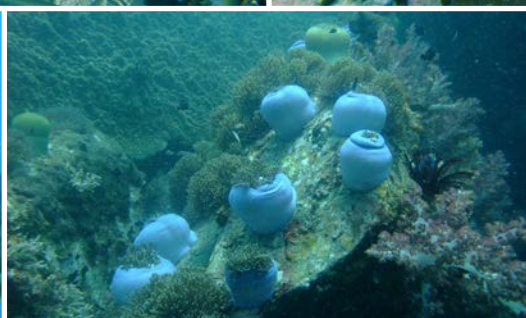
There are quite a few Dive Centres on Tioman Island, most located within the more "up market resorts" although one or two do operate from the local villages. Our Dive Centre was part of the Berjaya Tioman Resort and operated from a bespoke Dive Centre on the white sandy beach which adjoined the golf course all within easy walking distance of the accommodation, although for the more relaxed (or lazy), electric carts and push bikes were also available to get around.

The Dive Centre was very well laid out for both pre-dive preparation and post dive clean up and the system for checking in was thorough and "painless", although they do ask that you book your diving ahead of time and at least the day before due to demand and available spaces. With a mix of local and western dive leaders and instructors all the diving, whether formal courses or fun dives, seemed to be really well organised with knowledgeable and competent local dive guides. The equipment was first class and well maintained and the safety briefings and dive management of the highest order.

Prices were a little above normal for the region, but it was a PADI 5 Star Gold Palm Resort and it was within an exclusive Beach Resort. You were waited upon "hand and



DIVING DESTINATIONS



foot" and the quality of the service certainly warranted it.

DIVE SITES

Tioman Berjaya Resort does have a local house reef, which unfortunately can only be reached by boat unless you want a very long swim from the beach. It is essentially a number of dive sites around a small rocky island called Renggis about 1km offshore which is used for training dives, night dives, the less experienced divers and those refreshing their skills after a break from diving. Recognised as one of Tioman's top dive spots, the island is home to a vibrant, healthy reef and walls with all kinds of tropical fish of all sizes and shapes are in abundance. The concentration of marine life is astounding. Jacks, Tunas, Pompanos and Mackerels are just some of the pelagic life that continuously circle this reef feeding on schools of never-ending bait fish. Yellowtails, Giant Groupers, Cuttlefish, Turtles, Moray Eels, Black Tip Reef Sharks and Barracudas are encountered on almost every dive.

The main dive sites are generally to some of the smaller uninhabited islands/atolls and the reefs which are scattered around Tioman are various distances from the island. As a result, getting there requires the services of boats. The dive centre has these aplenty, both modern (relatively speaking) and the more traditional/rustic crafts which they moor offshore and bring into the jetty which supports the resorts logistics and the diving operations. Fast they are not and they match the pace of life on the island which is calm and very relaxed,

so do not expect your 35 knot speedboats. Diving is normally organised as either a morning or afternoon two tank dive. Although they also offer longer trips from morning to mid afternoon – in which case they plan for three tank dives and provide lunch onboard. As it was meant to be a holiday on which to relax as well as dive, we dived for 4 days and managed to take in some of the better sites although we were hampered by some stormy weather which dictated which side of some of the islands/atolls we were able to dive.

There are literally a myriad of dive sites depending on where you go, what entry point you use, what direction the tides are running and the seasons. The marine life is spectacular; the colours vibrant and alive and the visibility is generally amazing – certainly if you fare from the west coast of the UAE. No words, prose or diatribe can adequately describe the vistas which fill your eyes, unless you experience it for yourself.

Some of the more popular dive sites which we found to be amazing, although by no means exhaustive or necessarily the best are:

CHEBEH ISLAND: This is undoubtedly one of Tioman's top dive sites. Mini wall diving, underwater canyons, incredible boulder formations mixed with rich and dense colourful soft corals as well as the gorgonian sea fans garden make this a very popular site. It is one of the only spots where Giant Manta Rays can be sighted during certain months of the year. The other side of this island is also

good for swim thrus and cavern diving. Other than the usual varieties of fish, there are plenty of small wonders like the amazing varieties of Nudibranchs and rare Tiger Cowry. A night dive here for an experienced diver is absolutely heavenly. So much so that you actually forget that you are diving.

CORAL ISLAND: A small rock collection located in front of the white sandy beach of Coral Island is known to the locals as Batu Malang – "The Unfortunate Rock". The saga says that the Back to Top-rock never touched seawater before and is hence considered unfortunate. Coral Island is home to a number of dive sites – we spent two days doing four dives on the mains sites which were:

- Batu Malang
- Kandor Bay (also known as Mangrove Bay)
- Fan Canyon
- One Tree Bay

The Dive Sites around Coral island have something for everyone, topography of the dive sites is fantastic and the variable currents means that drift diving can be exciting and "speedy". The whole island is blessed with an abundance of hard corals such as Staghorn, Table, Back to Tops, Potato and Flower Corals, as well as Coral Bommies. The lighting is brilliant and it produces such amazing colors. Many of the sponge eating Hawksbill Turtles can be seen here; the Reef Cuttlefish (Sepia) make use of the Potato Coral to secure their eggs and Clown Anemone Fish (Nemos) are found literally everywhere amongst the



colourful Pot Anenomes. Moderate currents bring in barracudas and lonely Cobias and one can usually guarantee to see a large variety of marine life such including, Lion Fish, Moray Eels, Black Tip Reef Sharks, Parrot Fish, Wrasse, Blue Spotted Stingrays, Scorpion Fish and Butterfly Fish, just to name a few.

LEBAS ROCK: A long rocky outcrop shaped like a pregnant woman when viewed from a distance. From July to September, hundreds of seagulls make this their home, laying eggs all over the rocks. This site is blessed with superb underwater crevasses and rock formations, making exciting swim thrus and mini caverns for the more experienced divers. Less experienced divers will also be thrilled by the amount of colorful Gorgonians Sea Fans, Soft Corals and Neptune's Cup Sponges. There are lots of small wonders here like the various species of rare Cowry Shells and Nudibranchs. Lebas Island is another one of Tioman's popular dive sites

SEPOI ISLAND: A rocky island 3 times the size of Renggis, there are a few sea eagle's nests at the top of the island. Best dives are done when the current is running to the south, resulting in a great drift almost around the island. Its underwater landscape varies from a gradual to steep slope and ends with a soft and sandy bottom. Small volcanic rocks, numerous pore coral heads and boulder corals encircle this island. Schools of Golden Jacks, Barracudas, Napoleon Fish, Yellow Tails and Lobsters are commonly found in the area.

SOYAK ISLAND: Just off the shore of Salang Bay lies the small and uninhabited island of Soyak (also called Soyah). It is so close to Salang Bay, one could easily snorkel to it from the beach and enjoy its clear fish filled waters. The reef formation consists of large granite boulders, which are covered with soft corals, Fire Corals, Sea Whips, Turret (cup) Corals, Pot Anemones and a large variety of Hard Corals. The resident marine life you can find here include Hawksbill Turtles, Blue Ring Angelfish, Puffer Fish, Batfish, Emperors, Napoleon Wrasse, Titan Trigger Fish, Parrot Fish, Bump Head Parrot Fish, Butterfly Fish, Blue Spotted Stingrays, Yellow Striped Snappers, Moray Eels, Yellowtail Fusiliers, Yellowtail Barracudas, Zebra Lionfish and a huge variety of Nudibranchs. The close proximity and the diverse colours and marine life make it also one of our prime boat night dive sites.

MALANG ROCK: Huge volcanic rocks were compressed to form this site. This site is very popular for a second dive as it is shallow. The reef here is very unique in its own way. It consists of mostly hard porite corals mixed with cabbage and pencil shaving corals. A multitude of fish reside here together with a huge resident moray eel. There are also some interesting swim thrus on this site.

TIGER REEF: A submersed pinnacle between Labas and Sepoi islands, it starts at 9m and slopes down to 22m. This is one of the major highlights of Tioman's underwater world. The rock formation is simply amazing because

everything is covered by soft coral, hard corals and barrel sponges. Since Tiger Reef is not frequently dived, you can find very little human impact on the corals. Due to the stronger currents which you can expect here, you can encounter large schools of Jacks, Mackerel, Yellow Fin Barracudas and Rainbow Runners on almost every dive. With all these giant boulders around, experienced divers can zoom in and out of the canyons to avoid the strong currents. The resident marine life you can find here are Angel Fish, different varieties of Puffer Fish, Bat Fish, Emperors, Titan Trigger Fish, Parrot Fish, Butterfly Fish, Napoleon Wrasse, Nurse Sharks, Black Tip Reef Sharks, Stingrays, Moray Eels and Lion Fish.

SO IS IT WORTH A VISIT?

Most definitely – Yes! Tioman Island is a fantastic destination for singles, couples and families whether you are avid divers or not. It caters for all budgets and tastes to produce an eclectic mix of traditional culture and modern adventure all wrapped up in neat little packages. As a diving destination it does compare extremely favourably with other better known areas in the region, it is comfortable and has interesting diving which always produces surprises. Our experience of the locals is that they are friendly, eager to please and extremely knowledgeable. So why not take the opportunity to visit one of the "hidden jewels" of the Far East – We can almost guarantee that you will not be disappointed.



THE GREAT HAMMERHEAD OF BIMINI, BAHAMAS

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **PHILIPPE LECOMTE**

As a cartilaginous animal, the shark turns 180° within a fraction of a second in order to come back and smell the bait. The divemaster knowing their behavior all too well, is not surprised by this and gently pushes her away.





Always in search of sharks, my new adventures take me back to the Bahamas, to this time see the big hammerhead shark. From December till April, these sharks like the west side of Bahamas's waters to feed and/or reproduce. The great hammerhead feeds mostly on stingrays, small sharks and crustaceans. The Bahamas which is surrounded by large sandy bottoms, attracts and possesses numerous species of rays and sharks. With its mangrove swamps, the Bahamas is also a nursery to lemon, nurse and bull sharks.

I decide to spend a week aboard the MV Shear Water with Jim Abernethy. Jim has dived in the Bahamas for more than 12 years. He is undoubtedly one of the biggest specialists in the diving industry to dive with these magnificent creatures.

To start my journey, I headed to West Palm Beach in the North of Miami to board the boat which would take us to Bimini Island in the Bahamas. The crossing takes 7-8 hours depending on the weather conditions. A stop

at customs was made before our arrival the next morning to settle all the paperwork before entering Bahamas water territory. After the simple procedure, we headed 3km along the coast.

Over a bottom of white coral at a depth of 10m, George the captain releases the anchor. It is hard to believe that at this depth that sharks, that amongst them, the great hammerhead is going to appear below us.

The crew settles the various cages of bait out of the boat and after a mere 5 minutes, the first sharks begin to appear. Very slowly swimming and with clear water; it is possible to distinguish the characteristic shape of the nurse shark. The divemaster gets ready and dives in from the stern of the boat with his bait. Impatient to dive with sharks and to perceive the great hammerhead, I decide to follow him with another diver without knowing if the great hammerhead is around.

For an underwater photographer, diving into

clear blue water in 24 degrees is an enormous pleasure, especially with sharks all around. I get in with as little noise as possible and descend down to 12m near the divemaster. The wait begins with about ten nurse sharks swimming around us. Although these sharks look clumsy, they remain merciless predators to crustaceans and molluscs.

With our presence, they are incredibly curious and do not hesitate to touch us during their inquisition. After spending 20 playful minutes with these nurse sharks, the divemaster suddenly points his finger toward us. Indeed, within the limits of the blue, a shape appears and turns back. The tension rises in us. Is it the great hammerhead?

5 minutes pass and our guest appears from the blue. A female great hammerhead shark of 4m swims towards us. Majestic, agile, graceful and rapid, this mythical shark is finally here! While moving her wide head from left to right, she goes over towards the divemaster, but prevents her from coming to bite the cage with



the bait. Slowly and without aggressiveness, the hammerhead allows to be touched and then she is pushed away by the divermaster:

As a cartilaginous animal, the shark turns 180 degrees within a fraction of a second in order to come back and smell the bait. The divemaster knowing their behavior all too well, is not surprised by this and gently pushes her away once again.

The great hammerhead (*Sphyrna mokarran*) is the largest species of hammerhead shark, attaining a maximum length of 6.1m (20ft). It is found in tropical and warm temperate waters worldwide, inhabiting coastal areas and the continental shelf. The great hammerhead can be distinguished from other hammerheads by the shape of its 'hammer' (called the 'cephalofoil'), which is wide with an almost straight front margin, and by its tall, sickle-shaped first dorsal fin. A solitary, strong-swimming apex predator, the great hammerhead feeds on a wide variety of prey ranging from crustaceans and cephalopods,

to bony fish and smaller sharks. Observations of this species in the wild suggest that the cephalofoil functions to immobilize stingrays, a favored prey. This species has a viviparous mode of reproduction, bearing litters of up to 55 pups every two years.

Although potentially dangerous, the great hammerhead rarely attacks humans. It sometimes behaves inquisitively towards divers and should be treated with respect. This shark is heavily fished for its large fins, which are extremely valuable on the Asian market as it is the main ingredient to shark fin soup. As a result, great hammerhead populations are declining substantially worldwide, and it has been assessed as Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Diving down at only 12m with the great hammerhead is a truly unique experience. In spite of the great hammerhead being present in all the tropical oceans to date, it is only possible to make these shallow dives with them in the Bahamas. They can be seen in

French Polynesia, South Africa or in Australia, but not as close up as here.

If you follow your dive computer's profile, it is possible to do 4 dives with these magnificent creatures. In the afternoon, our hammerhead made way to 2 other females. They stayed with us till nightfall, giving us a continuous show as they left and returned, mixing with the nurse sharks. We spotted 2 bull sharks swimming in the background, but with the large females present, they did not approach us. The females had the run of the neighborhood and it was their territory at this stage, keeping the smaller sized bull sharks out.

To sum up my experience, the Bahamas is a destination of predilection for shark lovers. If you one day decide to spend a week away to refresh, I suggest a discovery in the Bahamas to see these wonderful creatures for who they really are. They are simply beautiful wild animals that deserve our respect and to understand them, we are to admire them in their environment.

RECOGNITION IS ESSENTIAL THE RISKS OF SYMPTOM UNDERESTIMATION

FEATURE **MARTY MCCAFFERTY, EMT-P, DMT**



THE DIVER

The diver was an experienced 48-year-old female with more than 300 lifetime dives. Her medical history included hypertension that was well controlled with a single medication. She also took a prescription drug to manage her cholesterol. Her general health and fitness were otherwise good.

THE DIVES

The diver was on a trip at a popular Caribbean island. The first four days of diving consisted of two morning dives each day. None of these dives was deeper than 24m, and all bottom times were within her computer's no-decompression limits. Her second dive each day was to 18m or shallower, and she breathed air on all the dives. On the fifth day, her first dive was a multilevel one to a maximum depth of 26m for a total time of 40 minutes. The dive was uneventful, and she exited the water at approximately 11:30am.

Within five minutes of surfacing, the diver began to feel slightly short of breath while she was removing her equipment. This was followed by soreness in her middle and upper back. As she was moving her equipment she noticed reduced strength in her right arm. Almost simultaneously both of her feet began to tingle, and the sensation progressed up both legs to her waist. Fatigue accompanied all these symptoms.

She reported the situation to the dive boat crew. They did not act alarmed and suggested that oxygen was not necessary because the reported weakness in her right arm resolved on its own within 15 minutes. The diver chose

not to participate in a second dive. The other divers were in the water for an hour. During that time her symptoms seemed to resolve, except for the tingling in her feet.

Back at the resort the symptoms did not return, but the tingling in her feet remained unchanged. She did not engage in any vigorous physical activity that afternoon and, after dinner, retired for the evening at approximately 9:45pm.

THE COMPLICATIONS

At 11:30pm the diver awoke due to acute discomfort in her bladder. She discovered that she was unable to urinate and upon reflection realized she had not urinated since the dive that morning. She took a warm shower, during which she became aware of unusual sensations in her feet and patchy sensitive areas on her legs. She reported that her legs also felt rubbery. As her concern grew she contacted DAN and spoke with the medic on call. Based on the evolution of signs and symptoms she reported, the medic recommended that she be evaluated at a nearby medical facility immediately. She spoke with the resort manager, who transported her to the local clinic.

As the clinic staff began their evaluation, the first priority was to empty the diver's bladder, and they promptly did so using a urinary catheter. The staff recognized the possibility of a decompression injury and began making arrangements with the local hyperbaric facility. They also placed the diver on high-flow oxygen (15 liters per minute via a non-rebreather mask). Due to staffing issues, the diver was not transferred to the hyperbaric

facility for another two hours, but she did continue breathing high-flow oxygen during her time at the clinic and during transport, which was uneventful.

THE EVALUATION

Upon arrival at the chamber facility the diver was fully alert and oriented and able to provide the treating doctor with a detailed account of the events and the evolution of her symptoms. The physician conducted a neurological exam and discovered no problems with the diver's right arm. Strength in her arms was equal, and reflexes were normal. The soreness in her middle and upper back had not returned.

Neurological evaluation of the lower extremities revealed reduced strength in the right hip-flexor muscles compared with the same muscles on the left side. There was also reduced sensation in the left leg and patchy areas of altered sensation in the right leg. Perception of hot and cold stimuli was altered in both feet. The diver was unsteady while attempting to walk heel to toe, she found it difficult to stand on one leg, and she reported that her legs still felt rubbery. The treating physician diagnosed her with decompression sickness (DCS) Type II with spinal cord involvement.

The staff initiated a US Navy Treatment Table 6 (TT6). About halfway through the treatment the diver reported improvement. Following the treatment, a repeat neurological evaluation revealed marginally improved strength in the right leg. The diver also reported improved sensation in her feet. She was helped back to the resort, where she slept for a few hours before returning for an additional treatment. During a shower she noticed improvement in her ability to distinguish hot and cold sensations. The diver's ability to walk heel to toe was also improved, and she had less trouble standing on one leg. The doctor decided to administer a second TT6, after which an evaluation showed further improvement.

The next day the diver was evaluated again and treated with a US Navy TT5 (a shorter chamber treatment), again with incremental improvement. Three additional shorter US Navy TT9 treatments were provided. The diver had reached a clinical plateau, showing no further improvement after the second and third TT9, so no further treatments were administered. Some slight sensory decrements were still present, but the physician's opinion was that the diver would continue to improve. After waiting the recommended 72 hours, the diver flew home and experienced no worsening of her symptoms during the flights.

Two weeks later she reported continued daily improvement with only mild sensory alteration remaining in her feet.

THE DISCUSSION

It would be easy to criticize the boat crew for their failure to act; they had probably seen people dive those profiles without incident many times and were thus lulled into complacency. Further confounding this case was the spontaneous resolution of most of the diver's symptoms. Such resolution of symptoms is typically a response to breathing oxygen, but in rare cases it may even occur in the absence of oxygen first aid. Although not all of this diver's symptoms resolved, the improvement of most of her symptoms made this situation appear much less severe than it actually was.

It is important to remember that the signs and symptoms this diver exhibited can be considered profound, but even subtle signs or symptoms warrant at least an informal conversation to determine the extent of problems. Any loss of muscular strength should prompt immediate evaluation and intervention. The On-Site Neurological Assessment for Divers course provides knowledge and skills for recognizing and assessing potentially injured divers; no matter what training you have, don't hesitate to recommend that a diver seek professional medical evaluation. Regardless of whether symptoms that appear after a dive are subtle or obvious, if they resolve with oxygen first aid – or even without it – don't discount the possibility that they will return.

ON-SITE NEUROLOGICAL ASSESSMENT FOR DIVERS COURSE

This course is an advanced-level program that provides additional training for those individuals who have successfully completed the DAN Oxygen First Aid for Scuba Diving Injuries course within the past two years (24 months).

COURSE OBJECTIVE

The DAN On-Site Neurological Assessment for Divers Provider ("DAN On-Site Neuro Provider") program is designed to:

- Refresh the knowledge of the warning signs of a dive emergency
- Identify when it is appropriate to conduct an on-site neurological assessment
- Conduct an on-site neurological assessment

MAL DE MER – SEASICKNESS

FEATURE **BARBARA KARIN VELA, MD**



Only a few, very lucky ones are unfamiliar with seasickness. The three dimensional freedom of boat movement makes this one of the worst forms of motion sickness. There is no escape from the boat and the misery is likely to last for some time. "Mal de mer" is the French phrase that came into the English language in the 18th Century, translated as "seasickness". From the French language, it had also been used to describe scurvy.

Seasickness is a form of motion sickness that happens while travelling on a boat. It is a disturbance in the balance system of the inner ear as it relates to visual and positional systems

in the brain. The common symptoms of this unpleasant condition is nausea, dizziness and fatigue. The origin is physiological. Nearly all individuals experience it if exposed to enough motion stimuli.

The main symptom is nausea, although it is frequently preceded by several more subtle symptoms. These are usually described as general feelings of unwellness, drowsiness, fatigue and irritability and can be mistaken for emotional responses to the situation. Sometimes the early sensation of 'stomach awareness' is frequently the first symptom felt in this situation.

The sensation of movement persists after the cessation of motion. This syndrome is called 'mal de débarque'.

Preventing seasickness is much more effective than trying to cure symptoms once they have already started. There are many anti-motion sickness preparations available and it is best not to self medicate. These preparations usually contain meclizine hydrochloride, dimenhydrinate (Dramamine), diphenhydramine hydrochloride and cyclizine. Divers should use this medication with caution, as common side effects are drowsiness and fatigue. Drowsiness can impair a divers ability to perform activities that require mental alertness or physical coordination. The effects of medication can increase the chance of nitrogen narcosis.

There are many non-pharmacological measures that will help prevent symptoms of seasickness:

- Stay on deck and keep your eyes on the horizon. Stay away from the engine – avoid inhaling exhaust fumes.
- Avoid reading, watching a video screen or putting dive gear together on a moving boat.
- Avoid heavy meals before diving.
- Drink plenty of water and avoid alcohol the night before the dive.
- Stand up if possible, sitting or lying down will make symptoms worse.
- Eat soft, bland meals, or dry crackers.
- Avoid others who become nauseous with seasickness and avoid noxious odors.
- Jump into the water.
- Last, but not least, try using 1g of fresh or dry ginger 12-24 hours prior to your dive.

Dr. Karin Vela is a Diving Medicine Physician EDTC/ECHM IIa and works in the Dubai London Specialty Hospital.

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DIGITAL ONLINE EXHIBITION AT AUD

28 May – 6 June | American University in Dubai, Rotunda Gallery, Building A

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

5 June

WORLD OCEANS DAY

8 June

DIGITAL ONLINE EXHIBITION AT YAS MARINA ABU DHABI

9-23 June | Yas Marina, Building 2

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MISSION STATEMENT

To conserve, protect and restore the UAE marine resources by understanding and promoting the marine environment and promote environmental diving.

LEGISLATION

Emirates Diving Association (EDA) was established by a Federal Decree, No. (23) for the year 1995 article No. (21) on 23/02/1995 and chose Dubai as its base. The Decree stipulates the following responsibilities for EDA.

- To legislate and regulate all diving activities in the UAE.
- Ensure environmentally respectful diving practices in all EDA members.
- Promote and support the diving industry within the UAE by coordinating the efforts of the diving community.
- Promote diving safety in the commercial and recreational diving fields through standardization of practices.
- Promote and preserve historical aspects of diving within the gulf region and enhance environmental education to diving and non diving communities through EDA activities.

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