



Klipfish at Steenbras Deep, Gordon's Bay
Canon EOS7d Mark II, Sea & Sea, Dual Inon Z240s, Canon 100mm macro, f9, 1/160. ISO 100

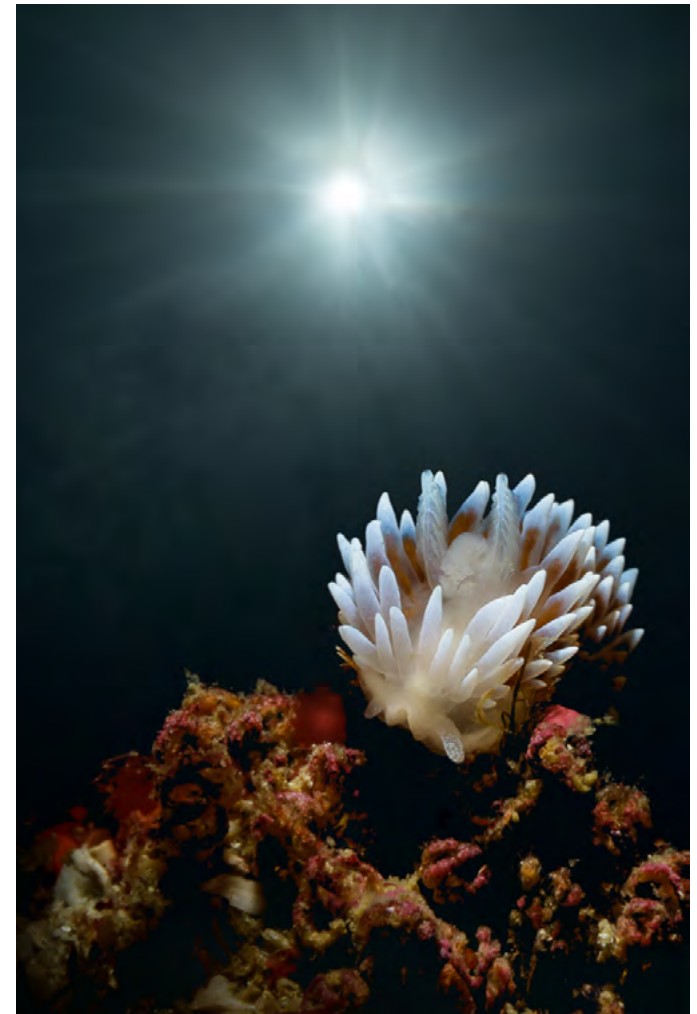
Cape Point. This warmer water tends to be clearer and bluer, providing a wonderful blue backdrop to the sharks one can encounter out there.

Macro Photography

There are many colourful and fascinating macro subjects to photograph in Cape Town's nutrient-rich waters. Macro life is plentiful and

incredibly diverse, with a large number of unique species that can only be found on the reefs in Simon's Town, Gordon's Bay and Hout Bay.

As diving conditions can be unpredictable, many dive shops advise their customers "when in doubt, go macro". Underwater photographers will be kept busy an entire dive with the numerous critters that can be found on the reefs and in the kelp forests.



Double Exposure – Silvertip Nudibranch at Blousteen, Gordon's Bay
Canon EOS7d Mark II, Sea & Sea, Single Inon Z240 with Iardino's snoot, Canon 60mm macro and Tokina 10 – 17mm fisheye, f18 and f22, 1/250 and 1/800. ISO 100

For nudibranch fanatics, 'nudis' can be found everywhere. They range in size from just a few millimetres to just over 10cm in length. Most famous are the beautiful blue and yellow gasflame



Gasflame Nudibranch at Whittle Rock, Simon's Town
Canon EOS7d Mark II, Sea & Sea, Dual Inon Z240s, Tokina 10 – 17mm at 17mm, f8, 1/125. ISO 320

nudibranchs, inkspot nudibranchs, Cape dorids, frilly nudibranchs, coral nudibranchs, whip fan nudibranchs and variable dorids. There is even a nudibranch called the Mandela nudibranch that can be found on some reefs, most notably at Steenbras Deep in Gordon's Bay. The best dive sites for nudibranchs include Steenbras Deep, Blousteen and Stone Dog in Gordon's Bay as well as Photographer's Reef, A-Frame and Roman Rock in Simon's Town.

Other macro life includes pipefish, spider crabs, common and

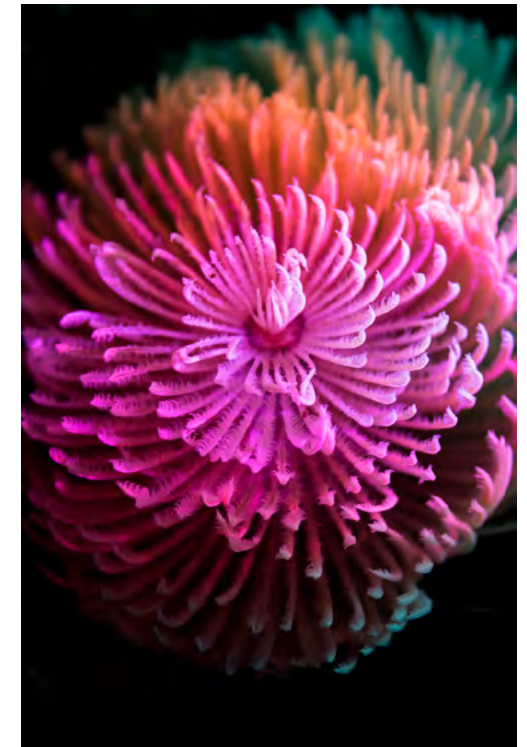
bobtail cuttlefish, octopus, sea spiders, flatworms, strawberry anemones, feather stars, amphipods, tubular hydroids, basket stars and quirky little fish such as tiny smoothskin scorpion fish, rock suckers (which are all head and no body!), blennies and Cape triplefins as well as the many colourful and inquisitive species of klip fish. The strange and unusual horse fish and white sea catfish can also be spotted on deeper reefs such as Steenbras Deep in Gordon's Bay as well as at Whittle Rock in Simon's Town.



Baby Basket Star at Atlantis, Simon's Town
Canon EOS7d Mark II, Sea & Sea, Dual Sea & Sea YS-D1 Strobes, Canon 60mm macro, f18, 1/200. ISO 160

Where to dive

It is important to note that when you visit will determine the best place to dive. In summer (October to April), the predominant wind is the south easterly and this brings flatter sea and clearer conditions to Hout Bay on the western side of the Cape Peninsula and Gordon's Bay on the eastern



Feather Duster Fan Worm at Stone Dog, Gordon's Bay
Canon EOS7d Mark II, Sea & Sea, Dual Mini Gear MS-03 snoot torches with colour filters, Canon 60mm macro, f4.5, 1/400. ISO 160

side of False Bay. In winter (May to September), the predominant wind is the north westerly, which brings flatter sea and clearer water to the area surrounding Simon's Town on the western side of False Bay.

It is a good idea to contact your dive centre the day before to find out where you will be diving as some sites are more suited to macro photography.



Speckled Klipfish at Roman's Rock, Simon's Town
Canon EOS7d Mark II, Sea & Sea, Single Inon Z240 , Canon 60mm macro, f2.8, 1/250 ISO 100

Visibility is also quite changeable and can vary from 5m to 20m at any time of the year, and enquiring about the destination and visibility could help you decide what lense to use.

Water temperatures

Ocean temperatures can range quite drastically from area to area. The water along the western side of the Cape Peninsula is brought up from the Antarctic by the cold Benguela current and you can expect water temperatures of between 8°C and

13°C when diving from Hout Bay in summer.

The water in False Bay is much warmer and temperatures along the Simon's Town and Gordon's Bay coastlines average between 12°C and 15°C in winter and up to 19°C in summer.

What to wear

To remain comfortable whilst diving in Cape Town, a 7mm wetsuit or semi-dry with booties, hood and gloves are advised. A dive computer



Exploring the reef at Steenbras River Mouth, Gordon's Bay
Canon EOS7d Mark II, Sea & Sea, Dual Inon Z240s, Tokina 10 – 17mm fisheye, f8, 1/100. ISO 320

and deployable surface marker buoy with reel are also recommended for all divers.

The diving

Most diving is done from eight-metre-long rubber ducks, known as RIBs or zodiacs in other parts of the world. The standard procedure is for divers to put their gear together on land, after which it is loaded onto the boat where the skipper will secure it to dive racks. Many dive operators provide plastic crates for larger

cameras and some divers with smaller compacts often bring their cameras on board in soft, padded cooler bags.

Divers then don wetsuits and booties and climb on board. Most boats launch from either the Simon's Town, Hout Bay or Gordon's Bay harbours and once at the dive site, the divers kit up for the dive, usually with the assistance of a dive guide or the skipper. When everyone is ready to enter the water, the skipper will slowly count "one, two, three, go!" and the divers all roll backwards into the water at the same time, on

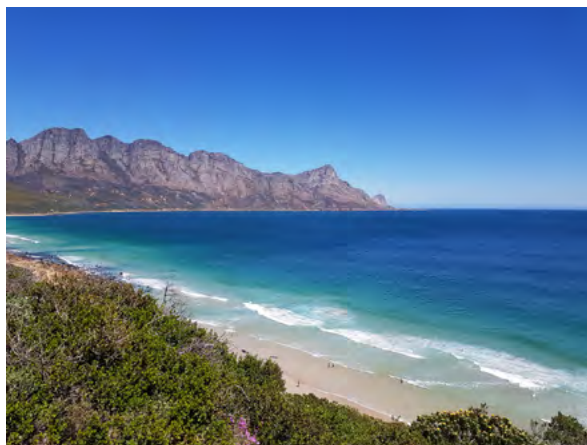
Cape Town's beauty is reflected beneath the waves. Gordon's Bay, eastern side of False Bay

the word "go". Underwater photographers can either roll backwards with their cameras or have them handed to them by the skipper.

Divers can usually choose to dive with a dive guide or dive in buddy pairs, exploring the reefs at their own pace. This is a suitable arrangement for photographers and more experienced divers who can take their time instead of rushing to keep up with the dive guide. At the end of the dive, buddy pairs deploy their surface marker buoy and the dive boat will come to pick them up. It is therefore important for all divers to have their own dive computers and surface marker buoys with them on every dive. Dives tend to be limited by bottom time or a maximum of 60 minutes, whichever comes first.

Underwater photographers are well looked after at all the top dive centres and the skippers and boat crew are used to handling cameras and underwater photography equipment. The operators are incredibly well organised and diving here is enjoyable, relaxed and stress free.

Cape Town should not be overlooked by visiting divers, and



with year round diving – whether it be kelp forests, reefs or wrecks, shallow or deep, wide angle or macro – there is something for everyone in this beautiful underwater paradise!

Kate Jonker

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