

My Shot 1

It seems it's all brains over brawn when it comes to cuttlefish love.

In the shallow waters of a small bay at Point Lowly in South Australia, the Australian giant cuttlefish (*Sepia apama*)—the largest of their kind, have abandoned their typically solitary lives to gather in their tens of thousands. They're here for one reason - to dance the dance of love at the only mass spawning aggregation of cuttlefish on planet earth.

It's not known why they choose this particular location, or where they even come from, but each year from late May to early August they arrive along this same small stretch of coastline.

As we descend into the icy shallow waters, thousands of intelligent aliens hover above the seagrass meadows, all in pursuit for the chance to perpetuate their species. With so many cuttlefish surrounding us, we don't really know where to point our cameras, so we decide to wait patiently by a female in the hope to capture the mating behaviour that continues to fascinate scientists and is witnessed by few divers.

It's not long before the tango commences, as a large bull male approaches and begins to muscle in close to the female - waiting for

a sign from her. He snuggles in close, guarding her with his arms outstretched, psychedelically strobing at her. His incredible display continues for 5 minutes or so and we begin to think, 'he's going to be the lucky guy'! As we scan the nearby area though, it appears she may have her eye on someone else. From left of centre, an underdog approaches, he is quite small and to be honest we can't even begin to work out what she sees in him.

Then right before our eyes, the small male uses the art of mimicry, attempting to disguise himself as female. Neurally organised cells under his skin put on a kaleidoscopic display of elaborate colours and patterns to the point that he now appears female. We can see that his male fourth arm (hectocotylus) is also no longer visible, and to our surprise he has manoeuvred himself into the prime mating arena. Then, just like that and before the large bull male realises, the pair meet head to head as he passes her his sperm package which she stores in a small opening under her mantle. We watch in awe. It appears the stealthy smaller male has been successful at stealing her heart—right out from under the bull male's nose!

Dumbfounded as to how he missed out, he looks on unimpressed!



Panasonic LUMIX GH5 in Nauticam Housing. Lumix G X Vario PZ 14-42mm f/3.5-5.6 Power O.I.S., plus Nauticam WWL - 1 Wet lens. Dual Sea and Sea YSD2J strobes. 1/125, f:8, ISO:200

Fact: while it's not yet known how many Giant cuttlefish visited the breeding grounds this year. Last year's record count of 247,146 suggests that this year may yet again set a new record.

Anita Verde and Peter Marshall
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Do you have a favourite shot (or two) with a short story?
If so, please e mail the image and text to
peter@uwpmag.com
and yours could be the next My Shot

My Shot 2

About twenty years ago, motoring north from Whangarei to Tutukaka in New Zealand, Anna Cherry, one of the girls on board my yacht *Vigia*, spotted a disturbance in the water. “Dolphins” was her first thought, “Sunfish” was mine.

Whale sharks are hard to mistake for anything else; as soon as we saw the tail and dorsal together we realised what this 7m fish must be. I had never heard of whale sharks in New Zealand and had never seen one in 19 years in the Pacific. As we motored discretely towards it the huge shark came right up to the boat, curious about us. The sun was obscured and it was 7pm so I decided not to get in the water. We shot some topside pictures and motored the last mile to Tutukaka, anchoring in the bay.

In the calm the following day we spotted makos and hammerheads, common dolphins and a Bryde’s whale. But it wasn’t until we were three miles from Tutukaka on our way home that Anna spotted another whale shark. Again it was late, but there was light. Anna dropped me in the water and I intercepted the shark. In the thick plankton visibility was less than a metre. I was worried that the Bryde’s whale feeding not far away would lunge through the plankton without seeing me. Outside the clouds of plankton the water was green with 15m visibility.

I shot some pictures of the first encounter with my Nikonos 3 and 15mm, then measured the light. I pushed Velvia 100 two stops and shot with the aperture wide open. The pushed film elevated the blues.

Anna picked me up and dropped me off again. The fish, a female, seemed almost oblivious to me while she fed on the thick plankton.

As we left the sharks to return to Tutukaka, we spotted another individual cruising through the plankton slick.

I was able to shoot 30 frames. The first frame of a whale shark ever taken in New Zealand was the best. Tobi Bernhard



scanned it and brightened the exposure still more. It ran on the cover of the local paper, The Northern Advocate, page two of the national New Zealand Herald and on TV3 6pm news.

Department of Conservation scientist Clinton Duffy wrote a paper on whale sharks in New Zealand. He recorded 36 reported sightings in 20 years.

I felt very lucky!

Pete Atkinson
www.peteatkinson.com

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My Shots 3

After a few years of hard work and saving up, the time finally arrived to execute our plan: almost a year off nothing but diving and underwater photography in tropical Bali.

We live in Perth, West Australia only a 3.5 hour flight from Bali and we have dived there many times. As a result we are familiar with the dive sites and conditions. This allowed us to comfortably dive by ourself.

We rented a house, a car and tanks as required and off we went.

The very first dive of the trip was a sandy sloping site and on the way down we spotted a Mimic Octopus eyeballing us from behind some small rocks. I carefully approached the little guy and managed to get a few photos before he took off.

Always a special find and an excellent start to our diving adventure!

We did over 400 dives in this period, all around Bali and a 10 day live aboard trip in Raja Ampat.

Raja Ampat was a nice surprise; my wife won the trip in a photo competition and we got news of this in Bali.

The variety of creatures we saw was enormous, from whale-sharks, and manta-rays to the holy grail of diving the Rhinopias as well as hundreds of nudibranchs, the tiny Ladybug Amphipods and everything else in between.

Yet, we never saw another Mimic Octopus.

It's remarkable how fast a year passes if you are having fun and the last dive of the trip came up way to quick.

We decided to do the second dive off the day



Olympus E-M1, Nauticam housing, 60mm macro, 2 x Sea and Sea 110a strobes 1/40th @ F4. 200 ISO

and the last dive of our trip in the same area we did our very first dive.

We wanted to photograph some nudibranchs around 27 meters. We went straight to the area with the nudies and spend most of our bottom time and nitrox there.

On our ascent we had to stage our way back to the surface with very little time left at any depth.

And there it was; another Mimic Octopus, I couldn't believe it.

I managed again to get a few shots of it before we were forced to get out of the water.

It was the most fitting way to end our trip of a life time.



Bert de Wit

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Guidelines for contributors

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

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

Uw photo techniques - Balanced light, composition, etc

Locations - Photo friendly dive sites, countries or liveaboards,

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

Equipment reviews - Detailed appraisals of the latest equipment

Personalities - Interviews/features about leading underwater photographers

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

How to submit articles

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

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

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

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

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

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