

# The Future from the Past

By Brook Peterson

When I got scuba certified, I never dreamed how much it would change my life. Before scuba I was ignorant of how vital the world's oceans are to life on earth. But the more I began exploring the marine environment, the more I learned about efforts to conserve this valuable resource. Human activity can devastate these fragile environments, but human activity can also heal them.

Such is the case in Aqaba, Jordan. Aqaba is situated at the northernmost tip of the Red Sea in the Gulf of Aqaba. It is the only city in Jordan that has contact with the coastline. Because of its semi-enclosed form, the bay is susceptible to pollution, over-fishing, and consequently, the destruction of marine habitat. But fortunately, environmental advocates are making a difference. Surprisingly tourism is one of the tools they are using to revive local waters.

The Jordanian king, Abdullah II and his son, Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah are scuba diving enthusiasts. They have taken a “hands on” approach to ruling Jordan which includes an active role in preserving and restoring their coastal waters. In July 2019, under his direction, a tourist attraction was created that is unique and aimed at restoring the over fished sea as well as encouraging tourism.

Enter the world's first underwater military museum. These decommissioned historical pieces of military machinery and vehicles are arranged on



*Nikon D850 in a Sea & Sea MDX850 housing. Nikon 8-15mm fisheye lens at 15mm. 1/60 @ F14. 500 ISO.*

the sea floor in a battle formation. The purpose of the display is multi-leveled. On its most basic level, the museum serves as a tourist attraction. But it is much more than that. It is an effort to restore a thriving ecosystem.

There are many factors that contribute to the collapse of a marine ecosystem. Some of these are over-fishing, pollution, climate change, ocean acidification and various human activities. Over-fishing, for example, may deplete the larger fish in

the area to the point that the smaller fish have no predators. Without predators these small fish can explode in population until they have depleted the water of needed oxygen, or nutrients necessary to support reef life. In turn, the remaining fish leave the area to avoid starvation or suffocation. When the ecosystem has collapsed, even the coral reefs die which are necessary to support the growth of new fish populations.

This is where the sunken treasures of the



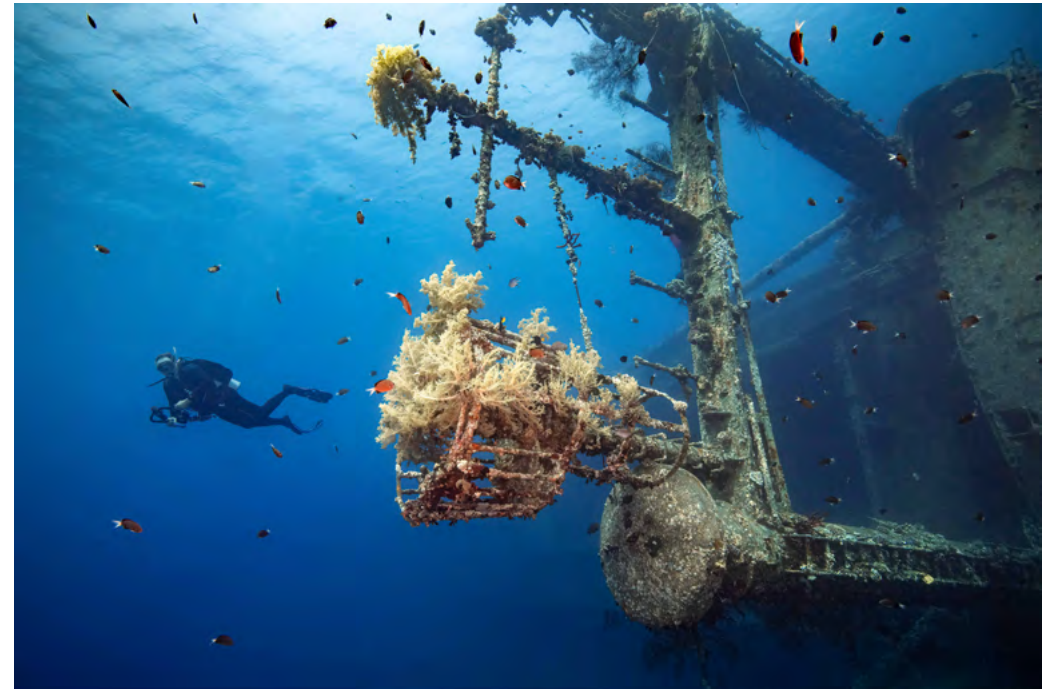
*Cedar Pride. Nikon D850 in a Sea & Sea MDX850 housing. Nikon 16-35mm fisheye lens at 16mm. 1/60 @ F14. 400 ISO.*

military museum come in to play. The vehicles sit on the sandy floor of the bay away from the shore where healthy corals exist. These vehicles provide places for new coral growth, and nursery areas for young fish populations. The vehicles were meticulously cleaned before they were submerged so that they provide an ideal environment for marine organisms to thrive.

In addition to providing a nursery for a budding marine ecosystem, the military museum is a unique treat for scuba divers to explore. Tourism

quadrupled in Aqaba between 2015 and 2019 which caused some stress to the existing coral reefs. The military museum relieves these coral reefs from the pressure of too many divers while improving the condition of the marine environment.

There are currently nineteen vehicles on display in the military museum. These include two helicopters, tanks, cannons, a military ambulance, military transport vehicle, and several smaller vehicles. The two helicopters are at the deepest end of the display and sit at 28meters/92 feet.



*Nikon D850 in a Sea & Sea MDX850 housing. Nikon 16-35mm fisheye lens at 16mm. Two Retra Pro strobes. 1/60 @ F14. 400 ISO.*

The shallowest vehicles are two jeeps which sit in just 3 meters/15 feet of water. The site is accessible from the shore or by boat and snorkelers can enjoy the display as well.

Creating artificial reefs is nothing new in Jordan. At the request of King Abdullah II, several ships, including the Cedar Pride, a Lebanese freighter sunk in 1985, were scuttled and now rest on the ocean floor.

The Cedar Pride is a good example of how important an artificial reef can be to a marine environment. After more than 35 years under water,

it has been colonized extensively by coral growth. A noteworthy example is the crow's nest, which is covered in soft corals and provides refuge for small fish as well as an interesting structure for divers to explore. Well within recreational dive limits of less than 30 meters/92 feet at depth to just 7 meters/22 feet at its shallowest point, the wreck is ideal for novice and experienced divers alike. It is a short swim from shore and is accessible to snorkelers as well as divers. In addition, currents are mild or non-existent and the shallow waters

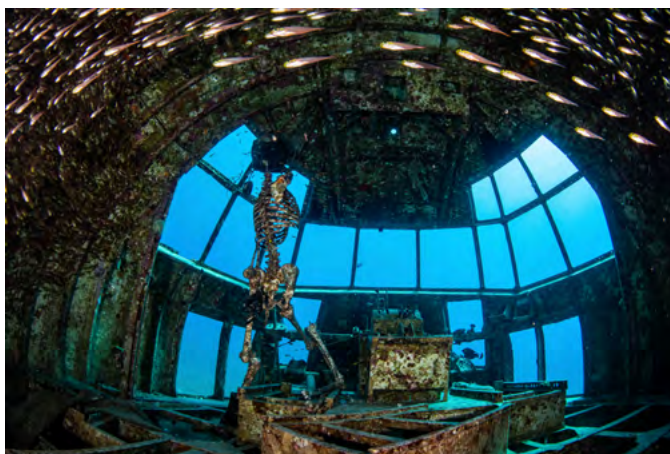
are warm and clear.

Perhaps two of the most exciting wrecks that have been scuttled in recent years are not ships at all, but airplanes. The Hercules C130 was scuttled in 2017 and is one of the most popular dive sites for recreational divers. It sits in 12-17 meters/ 39-55 feet of water and is accessible by boat or from shore. It was broken apart by a storm early in 2020 and now houses large schools of sweepers and glass fish. Soft corals hang from the wing and other marine life has colonized the cargo hold.

The other aircraft is the Lockheed Tristar 1011 which became the latest artificial reef in 2019. This airplane is a passenger jetliner and contains some interesting details such as the cockpit, bathrooms, food prep areas, passenger seating, oxygen masks and a few humorous surprises. It was placed on a sandy bottom away from the reef in 15-28 meters/ 49-92 feet of water. There is a swim through in the tail area of the jetliner where divers can enter the air intake from the inside of the plane and exit to the outside.

Tech Divers can enjoy the Taiyong Shipwreck believed to have been scuttled in the late 1990's. This wreck sits in 35-58 meters/114-190 feet. It features a large crane and is covered with corals and other marine life. In addition, the Al Shorouk is a landing craft laying in 38-60 meters/124-196 feet and provides more opportunities for tech divers to explore.

Currently there are twenty-five wrecks to explore along the Aqaba coast that are providing sanctuary for young marine life and a haven for scuba divers. The fish populations are beginning to make a comeback which benefits the local fishermen. Dive centers such as Deep Blue Dive Center organize regular cleanups to keep the sites

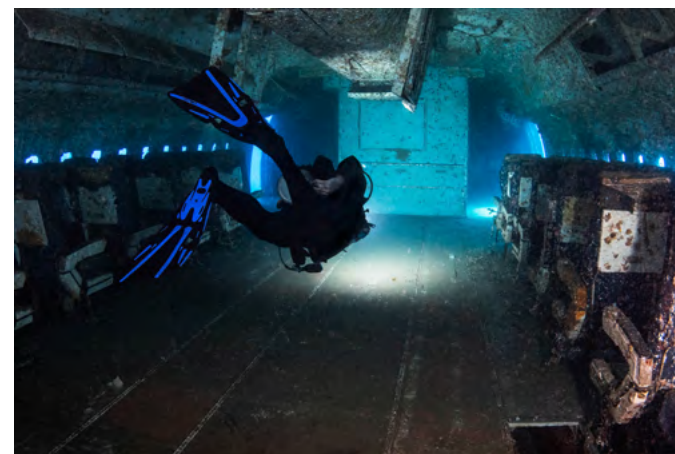


### ***The Hercules C130 Aircraft Carrier***

***Life inside the cockpit of the Hercules C130 Aircraft Carrier***

***Nikon D850 in a Sea & Sea MDX850 housing. Nikon 8-15mm fisheye lens at 15mm. Two Retra Pro strobes. 1/60 @ F14. 500 ISO.***

free from trash that blows into the water from shore. By all appearances, the Jordanians have created a successful model for conservation that benefits the environment, the economy, and the tourists.



### ***The cockpit area of the Lockheed Tristar L 1011***

***A Diver explores the Lockheed Tristar L 1011 Passenger Jetliner***

***Nikon D850 in a Sea & Sea MDX850 housing. Nikon 8-15mm fisheye lens at 15mm. Two Retra Pro strobes. 1/60 @ F14. 500 ISO.***

## **How to dive it**

Best Time to Dive: Diving is good all year round with water temperature always above 18° C/65 F. The best time is from September-October



*A Diver explores tanks and the military ambulance.  
Nikon D850 in a Sea & Sea MDX850 housing. Nikon 16-35mm fisheye lens at  
16mm. 1/60 @ F14. 400 ISO.*

when the water is 23-27 C/75-82 F but the air temperatures have begun to cool.

Getting There: Flights to Jordan enter at Queen Alia International Airport in Amman. From there travelers can take a short one-hour flight to King Hussein International Airport in Aqaba or take an inexpensive bus called Jett bus which runs daily between Amman and Aqaba and takes four hours.

Resorts and Hotels: There are many resorts and hotels in Aqaba City and several dive shops along

the coast. Deep Blue Dive Center is a five star PADI dive center and is located in the Tala Bay Resort area. They offer hotel pickups from the city. There are Air BNB units available in Tala Bay, a Movenpick Hotel and the Grand Tala Bay Resort among others if you prefer to stay near a dive center.

Attractions Close By: The three main attractions in the area are Petra, Wadi Rum, and Aqaba and together they form what the locals call "The Golden Triangle." Petra is an ancient city ruin less than a two-hour drive from Aqaba and the beautiful Wadi



*Smaller vehicles in the underwater military museum  
Nikon D850 in a Sea & Sea MDX850 housing. Nikon 16-35mm fisheye lens at  
16mm. 1/60 @ F14. 400 ISO.*

Rum desert is only one hour away by car. You can take a jeep tour in Wadi Rum and stay in a Bedouin camp for the night.

Entry: Purchase a Jordan Pass before you leave home if you plan to visit Petra or any other attractions while in Jordan. The Jordan Pass gives you entry into more than 40 attractions in Jordan and the cost of your visa is included in the pass. For more information, including Covid-19 requirements, visit <https://travel.state.gov>

**Brook Peterson**  
[www.waterdogphotography.com](http://www.waterdogphotography.com)



## Kit for sale

If you're looking for a specific piece of kit, enter a keyword (e.g. flash, housing, Ikelite, etc.) to show only the adverts you want.

Search UWP adverts



### FOR SALE – SET of Sea & Sea YS 250 PRO

SET of Sea & Sea YS 250 PRO, incl.diffusers and TCL ball mounts, 2x batteries, 2x chargers (EU and UK). 5-pin Dual Sync cord-1pc, 5-pin Sync Cord N-2pc, 2sets - Double Ball Arm L and M, YS-TTL Converter, spare ... [More >](#)



### FOR SALE – Sea Frogs Panasonic GH5 housing, flat and dome port

Brand new and never taken underwater, 40 metre Sea Frogs (formerly Meikon) housing for the Panasonic GH5. Flat port for macro lenses and dome port for wide angle. No zoom or manual focus controls. Prefer sale in the UK and ... [More >](#)



### FOR SALE – Aquatica Macro Port & 2 x Sea & Sea YS -120 Duo Strobes

Aquatica Macro Port (Manual & Autofocus) for any DSLR Aquatica housing with the 4 lugs bayonet fitting. £180. Sea & Sea YS -120 Duo Strobes with instructions & one Diffuser they are in good used condition and in full working ... [More >](#)



### FOR SALE – Nauticam Na-d800 Housing for Nikon D800

Nauticam Na-d800 Housing for Nikon D800 Excellent condition. Full overall by Nauticam in December 2017, not in the water since. Vacuum check; electronic monitoring circuit installed, no vacuum system. 2000 euros + shipping ... [More >](#)



### FOR SALE – Nauticam flat ports and lenses Sony 28mm and 90mm

Nauticam flat port for Sony 28mm + sony lens 28mm +Nauticam flat port for Sony 90mm + sony lens 90mm+Nauticam trigger flash for sony. SOLD Can be sold separately. Total price 1260€ (does not include insurance and shipping) ... [More >](#)



### FOR SALE – SEA & SEA MM2 U/W CAMERA WITH ACCESSORIES

SEA & SEA MM2 U/W CAMERA WITH ACCESSORIES: - Yellow SUB 50 TTL strobe / arm extension - SEA & SEA 16mm Wide angle lens MM-2 - SEA & SEA Macro lens ML-2/3T plus attachments - Removable view finder - ... [More >](#)



### FOR SALE – Nikon D500 + Hugaft D500 setup

This one year old set of equipment is in excellent working condition and will serve great to a new owner. The reason for sale is a switch to a new equipment. Nikon D500 (19k clicks). Sigma 10mm F2.8 Fish Eye. 128Gb XQD Lexar ... [More >](#)

Please support our advertisers and help keep UWP free.

*Magic Filters*

**BACKSCATTER**  
UNDERWATER VIDEO & PHOTO

**KELDAN**  
Advanced Lighting Technology

**OCEAN LEISURE CAMERAS**

**Nauticam**  
臨天海

**ULTRA LIGHT**  
CONTROL SYSTEMS

**Ikelite**

**XLOK**  
DIVERS

**REEF**  
PHOTO & VIDEO

**WETPIXEL.COM**  
digital imaging for divers

**SEA&SEA**  
THE UNDERWATER IMAGING COMPANY

**DivePhotoGuide**

**wakatobi**

**ACQUAPAZZA**

**UW CAMERA STORE**

**Nauticam**  
innovation underwater

*Magic Filters*

## Small Ads

**Sell your stuff** You'll be amazed at just how quickly your unwanted underwater photography kit could be converted into hard cash with a UWP small ad. You can have your own UWP small ad from just £7.50 and it can have one photo as well as up to 100 words.

Check out small ads here

Buy your small ad here