

News, Travel & Events

UPY 2023. Searching for images to help Save Our Seas



The Marine Conservation Photographer of the Year Award, sponsored by The Save Our Seas Foundation (SOSF) and organised by the Underwater Photographer of the Year competition opens for entries on 1st November and closes on 7th January 2023. It is free to enter and offers cash prizes for the first, second and third placed photographers.

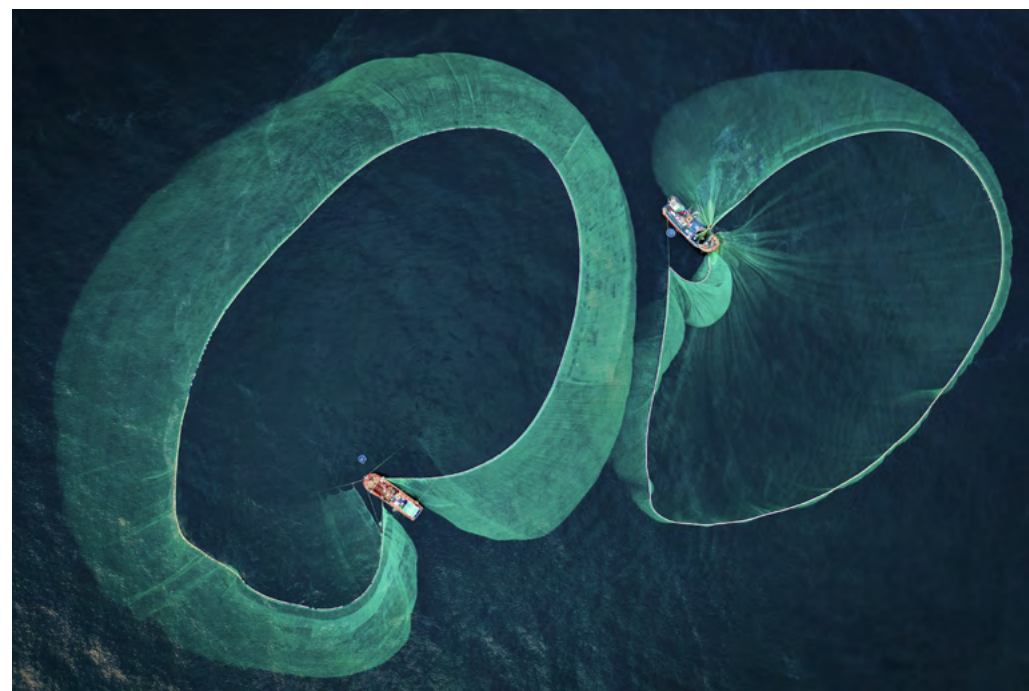
The Marine Conservation Photographer of the Year is open to both above water and underwater photographs and they must highlight a marine conservation story or theme, with both positive and negative stories encouraged. Freshwater themed conservation images are also accepted.

Chair of the judges, underwater photographer and marine ecologist Dr Alex Mustard MBE said “Powerful photographs are able to change hearts, minds and attitudes. Conservation imagery is especially important from the oceans, which faces many threats from our activities. However, these issues mostly happen unwitnessed,

out of sight of land or beneath the surface. This contest gives these valuable images a huge public platform.”

Dr James Lea, CEO of the Save Our Seas Foundation, said “Images have a profound capacity to affect how people view the world, and at SOSF we are all about encouraging positive change in how people view and interact with the marine environment. As such we are delighted to partner with the Marine Conservation Photographer of the Year award, which is uniquely placed to highlight issues our oceans are facing and inspire change”.

Previous editions of the contest have attracted entries from photographers around the world, keen to draw attention to conservation issues, campaigns and success stories important to them. The award was most recently won by Thein Nguyen Ngoc from Vietnam, with his aerial photograph “Big Appetite”. The photo



shows boats straining the waters for anchovies in the Phu Yen province of his country. “Salted anchovy is the most important raw material in traditional Vietnamese fish sauce. But these little fish are also a keystone of a natural ecosystem. Despite increased fishing, the catches of anchovies have decreased by 20-30% in the past 10 years. When they are overfished, the whales, tunas, sea birds and other marine predators face starvation and critical population declines.”

The Marine Conservation Photographer of the Year, part of UPY

is an annual competition, that traces its roots back to 1965.

The Save Our Seas Foundation has been dedicated to protecting life in our oceans, especially sharks and rays, for 19 years. They have funded around 425 projects in over 85 countries, supporting passionate and innovative researchers, conservationists and educators.

Each project strives for deeper understanding and more innovative solutions in marine research, conservation and education.

www.underwaterphotographeroftheyear.com



Could you be Underwater Photographer of the Year 2023?



have been captured, especially with photographers returning to work with subjects dear to them.”

A new addition to the contest for 2023, is that exciting underwater photography equipment manufacturer Marelux has joined UPY as a double category sponsor. Marelux are, generously providing UPY's biggest ever cash prizes for photographers finishing 1st, 2nd and 3rd in both the Wide Angle and Macro categories. Jun Ouyang from Marelux said “We are delighted to be supporting a contest that is so highly regarded by the underwater photography community, best of luck to all the photographers,

we cannot wait to see the stunning winning images”.

UPY is an annual competition, that celebrates photography beneath the surface of the ocean, lakes, rivers and even swimming pools. The competition is truly international, has 13 categories, testing photographers with themes such as Macro, Wide Angle, Behaviour, Wreck and Conservation photography, as well as four categories for photos taken specifically in British waters.



The contest incorporates a bespoke results system, providing feedback to the photographers on how far through the contest every single image has progressed, so every entrant benefits from taking part.

The experienced judging panel consists of underwater photographers Peter Rowlands, Tobias Friedrich and Alex Mustard.

www.underwaterphotographeroftheyear.com

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August 2023

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humpback whales up close in the
South Pacific **Niue Island**

organizer of the journey

**BEHIND
THE MASK**

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www.PanOceanPhoto.com

Anda, Philippines with
Simon Rogerson, June 2023



Anda is a little explored area on the east coast of Bohol featuring 15 kilometres of fascinating dive sites. Join Simon Rogerson for 17 dives over seven days on this exclusive adventure to discover the diversity of the marine life and unique topside experiences on this emerald isle.

With easy access to a multitude of stunning dive sites away from the crowds, the holiday experience in Anda is both relaxing and rewarding, especially for divers. The magic of Anda is in its mix of habitats as well as the diversity of the colourful marine life.

The first four bookings get free nitrox, and there's a discount for BSAC members.

Whale Sharks in Stereo for First Time



Here is a new way of measuring Whale Sharks being tested by Dr Chris Rohner on one of Aqua-Firma's Whale Shark Research & Photography expeditions to Mexico.

It is hoped that this will be the most accurate method yet, using two video cameras to create 'stereo pair images'. The length of the shark can be determined from the degree of overlap of the two images.

If it works, this technique will replace 'laser photogrammetry', which involves taking an image of two lasers exactly 50cm apart, pointed onto the side of a shark. This laser technique was easier than the method it replaced (two swimmers holding a tape measure at either end of a shark).

The ability to measure sharks

accurately is important. We see some sharks year after year and so by measuring their length, we can understand how fast they grow. Researchers like Chris can monitor if this varies by location; and where satellite tracking tags have been applied, we can compare rates of growth according to where whale sharks have been feeding. We may also be able to spot changes in growth rates due to anthropogenic influences too, such as the build-up of plastics within the stomach.

If the technique works well, you can next see it in action if you join on of our Whale Shark Research experiences in Madagascar this October, Tanzania this November, or in July next year in Mexico.

[Link](https://www.aqua-firma.com/news/2019/08/06/measuring-whale-sharks-in-stereo-research-mexico-tanzania-madagascar)

<https://www.aqua-firma.com/news/2019/08/06/measuring-whale-sharks-in-stereo-research-mexico-tanzania-madagascar>



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#06

WINTER 2022

Explore the **Marine Megafauna Foundation's** pioneering conservation work

OCEAN GIANTS


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Wakatobi resort & liveaboard combo

Opinions vary over which offers the best experience – resort or live aboard? Of course, they are both very different experiences and each has its specific attractions.

At Wakatobi you can experience the best of both worlds by adding a cruise aboard our luxury dive yacht, Pelagian, to your resort stay. This luxuriously appointed 36-meter private yacht carries a maximum of ten guests to create a private yacht experience, and ventures farther afield in the Wakatobi archipelago and the southern shores of Buton Island.

If you've dived sites around Wakatobi Dive Resort before, you'll definitely want to expand your dive adventures to the reef systems beyond the island of Tomia. New marine life discoveries lie waiting for you and your camera. Exotic and rare marine life can be found on all dives but if you love muck diving, then sites like Cheeky



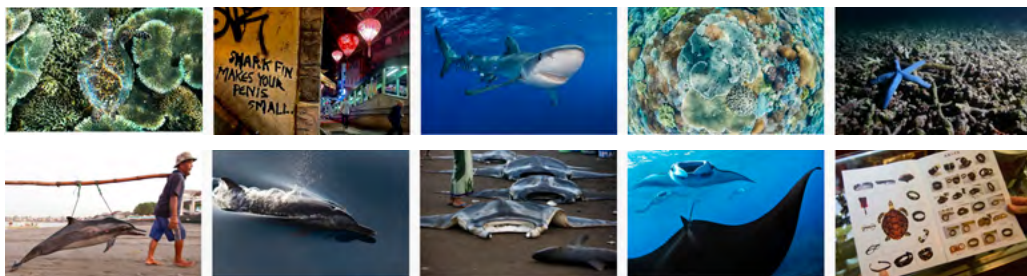
Beach and Asphalt Pier are sure to create excitement. If you like sheer cliffs and caves, Tanjung Batuturo offers something for both wide-angle and macro photographers.

www.wakatobi.com
<https://marinemegaafauna.org/magazine>


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Ocean Eye - Chasing the Beauty



Ocean Eye has launched a series of 10 NFT images in a collection called 'Ocean Eye - Chasing the Beauty' - taken by the Award Winning photojournalist Paul Hilton.

This is a unique series of images from the decades long mission of photo journalist Paul Hilton to document the destruction and beauty of our Ocean. The collection is to be sold in order to fundraise for the start-up operations of marine conservation technology platform Ocean Eye.

In his own words 'Ocean Eye is one of the most promising innovations in a long-time that can help bring solutions to critical issues of marine wildlife capture and trade from shark finning to unsustainable hunting of all marine species'.

At the time of multiple environmental crises Ocean Eye provides a solution to the number one marine conservation success

factor; stakeholder buy-in. Too often coastal communities lack incentives to support conservation initiatives and continue to unsustainably exploit vulnerable marine life such as sharks, turtles, cetaceans and others.

Ocean Eye is a data collection and financial transfer platform that collects wildlife sighting data and transfers ecosystem service payments. The animal sighting reports are directly linked to micro payments from tourists that go to coastal communities in order to incentivize the protection of endangered and vulnerable species.

'Ocean Eye supports equitable and fair access to finance and we are excited to be part of the disruptive economy of blockchain and trailblazing biodiversity conservation in a measurable way in this space', said Mareieke Dornhege of Ocean Eye.

<https://opensea.io/collection/ocean-eye>

Whalesharks in Mexico

22 - 28 Jul 2023



Join an international & local expert team of whale shark researchers, marine biologists, photographers & filmmakers amongst the world's biggest aggregation of whale sharks peak season hosted by Aqua-Firma Marine Scientist, Charlotte Caffrey & Whale Shark Researcher from the Marine Megafauna Foundation

Accommodation is at a premium all-inclusive hotel with careful COVID-safe protocols.

The experience of snorkelling with the largest fish in the sea, the whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) is not one you are likely to forget. These gentle plankton eating giants grow as large as 20 metres, display beautiful spot patterns from above, block out

the light of day from below and often carry with them a living reef of fish life.

This exclusive experience off the Caribbean coast of Mexico allows as small group of people to join an expert Aqua-Firma research team in search of whale sharks in the largest known aggregation of them on our Planet. We have been operating these trips for 8 years, during what has proven to be a peak period of the year. More than 400 whale sharks have been counted on aerial surveys and our research boat is sometimes surrounded by as many as 200 or more sharks. Photographic and video opportunities can be superb.

US\$ 3,590.

<https://www.aqua-firma.com/experiences/mexico-whale-shark-research-snorkel-freediving-cancun-isla-mujeres>

Niue Island

Photo trip with PanOcean Photo & Travel

14th - 28th August 2023

The only way to get to Alofi, the capital of Niue, is via a 3 hour direct flight from Auckland in New Zealand twice a week every Tuesday and Saturday. As you cross the international date line, you arrive in Alofi a day earlier. This means you have to take the Air New Zealand flight around 9am on Tuesday 15th August 2023 and arrive back in Auckland on Tuesday 29th August 2023. We will accordingly spend 14 nights on the island from Monday to Monday. (14th – 28th August 2023)

Meeting point for the trip will be in Auckland International Airport at the latest. Due to most flight connections, your guide will likely spend the night at a hotel near AKL Airport before flying to Alofi. Of course we can also organize your trip from your front door to the island including all flights and necessary overnight stays. A combination with New Zealand or at least Auckland would also be conceivable. However, at this time of the year it is winter there.

Upon arrival on the island, a minivan will be ready for the group and your guide will drive to the accommodation.



***Your tour guide: Roland Conrad
Photo Expert & Tour Guide***

Daily schedule:

A 25 minute drive along the coast brings us to our local partner: Niue Blue Island Adventures. For our whale watching trips and dives, a private boat will be available for the group with a maximum of 5 divers plus your guide, crew and captain from Niue Blue.

The whale trips take place either in the morning or in the afternoon and last up to 4 hours. Depending on the weather conditions and the decision of the participants and the guide. You really can't say which time is better or worse. Nature is unpredictable here. Theoretically,



diving would also be possible on the same day, but experience has shown that the snorkeling trips are very strenuous. 6 trips are planned and included. A double dive is planned for 3 days each. A guided island tour by Niue Blue will take place on one of the days off. So you still have 3 free days for further dives or your own activities. Explore the island on an e-bike or hike along the beautiful coast.

Please note that all shops and companies are closed on Sundays. This is a traditional Tonga-like rest day. This local tradition must also be respected so please keep this in mind if you head out to explore the island on Sunday.

A maximum of 5 freedivers and your guide are allowed per boat. This ensures a maximum nature experience!

<https://behind-the-mask.com/dive-travel/groups/2023-08-niue-island-panocean/>

Year End Global Sale!

🍁 15% OFF *all retail items* 🍁
🍁 *November 1st - December 31st, 2022* 🍁

*** NEW Lower price**



Example 1:

AR5 Housing For Canon R5

Regular price: \$3,199.00 USD

15% Sale price: **\$2,719.00 USD**



Example 2:

Aquatica 5HD Monitor Housing

Regular price: \$1,695.00 USD

15% Sale price: **\$1,440.00 USD**



Example 3:

A1 Housing For Sony a1

Regular price: \$3,199.00 USD

15% Sale price: **\$2,719.00 USD**

All Aquatica housings now come standard with vacuum pump, valve and alarm sensor as well as your choice of strobe connectors!