

## Fancy background macro

Underwater photography has always had trends or styles, some are one trick ponies but others, like creative backgrounds macro, have become very popular indeed. There's no doubt they were very eye catching in the early days and they certainly stood out in, and started winning competitions immediately.

Roll forward a few years and I'm wondering that, however well produced, their effect lessens but, more importantly, I worry about the physical process of achieving such images.

Macro photography, especially when working with high magnification lenses, requires immaculate buoyancy control if the environment is to remain pristine. It's difficult enough with a neutrally buoyant rig and both hands on the housing but try holding a reflective background behind the subject and it must upset one's balance. Working in such close proximity to very small subjects means the slightest wrong movement could cause damage. Add in the competitive mind set to achieve at all costs and you have a very precarious situation developing.

I don't want to sound like a killjoy, and to some, I most obviously

already am but all I ask is to consider the situation.

Thankfully Nauticam has recently made some less powerful macro lenses which increases the camera to subject distance so much that it would be impossible to handhold a reflective background!

Finally, and who knows, just as trends and styles come and go, this one might fade away especially, heavens forbid, if they start to lose their appeal with competition judges.

Time, as always, will tell.

## Ocean

David Attenborough's Ocean, produced by Silverback Films in Bristol, is a cinema release, natural history documentary with a distinct twist and I highly recommend it for two reasons.

Firstly the footage quality and story telling raise the already high bar and secondly, this just might be the one that changes the direction of marine conservation.

The big problem we face is that the general public can't see what we can. They look at the sea from the promenade and think it's lovely. Even the brightly coloured fishing boats

# Editorial

passing slowly from left to right and then back again for hours are iconic; but underneath is a whole different story. Hopefully the bottom trawling footage in Ocean will be enough to create public outrage and increase the number protected areas significantly.

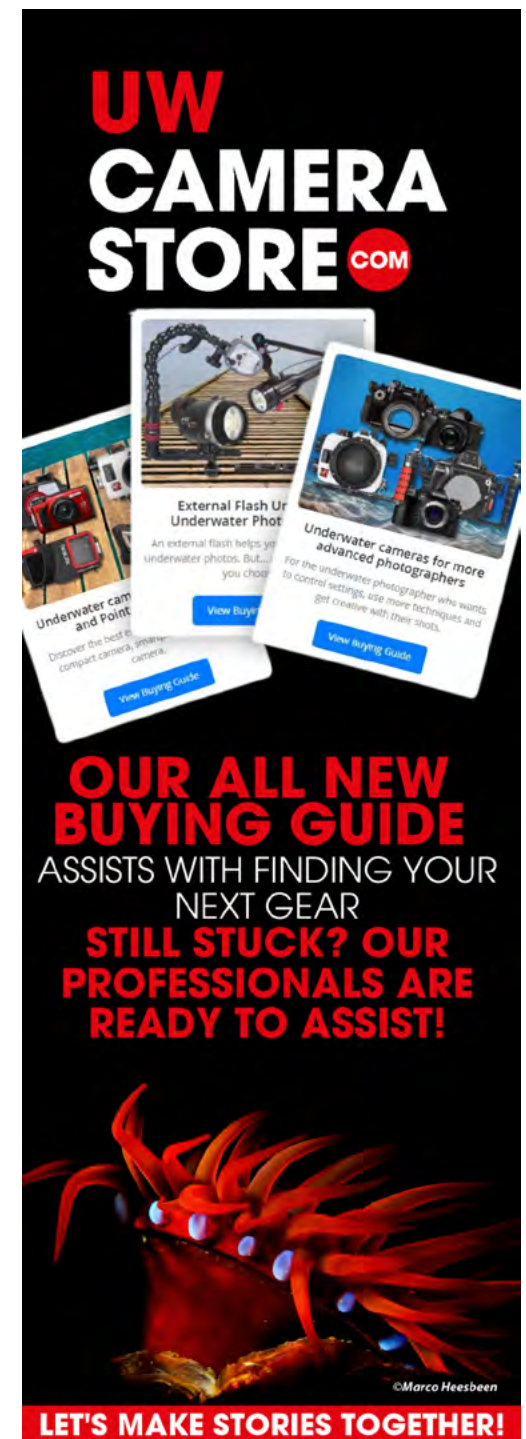
The film's release was timed to coincide with the UN Ocean conference in Nice, France. The key aim was to get the High Seas Treaty ratified by 60 countries to bring it into force. The agreement was signed two years ago to put 30% of the ocean into protected areas. Fifty countries had ratified by Friday, but dozens more promised to ratify by the end of the year.

The power of the underwater image is the only way the authorities can communicate the seriousness of the situation; without it, there are just words.

The final message from Ocean is that the sea can recover if left to its own devices and then we'll have even more and even more spectacular subjects to photograph.

Win, win.

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