

U/w photo competitions

UwP has made a point of trying to help promote many of the underwater photography competitions which take place annually throughout the year but recent discussions on the internet forums have highlighted the possible copyright problems involved.

Most competition entry forms come with more pages of regulations than most entrants can be bothered to read but a careful scan of these rules can reveal some worrying and often flagrant attitudes towards the entrant's copyright protection.

In truth most well established competitions are respectful of the entrant's copyright and only ask that they be allowed to use the winning entries to promote the current and next competitions. This seems fair enough to me except in the case where a diving magazine organises the competition and saves itself a tidy sum by being able to reproduce the winning images in its publication.

However there are other competitions, one of which we feature in this very issue whose rules state "Use of Photos by the NC Aquariums—All entered photographs will become the property of the North Carolina Aquariums and may be used without further compensation for a variety of purposes including, blah blah blah etc etc". Basically they do what they like with the pictures.

Now I make no excuses for promoting such a competition because firstly it is, without doubt, a worthy cause and secondly the rules are plain and simple and make no bones about what will happen to an entrant's photographs. In short, each entrant must enter with their eyes open and make sure they are fully informed and accept the consequences.

Competitions provide a healthy venue for those

Editorial

who wish to compete and I myself have entered them in the past when I was young, eager and wanted to become known.

Now that I am older, less eager and well known for all the wrong reasons I really don't see why underwater photography should be competitive. In competitions, for every winner there are dozens of bitter losers who lose the ability to enjoy their own underwater photography by trying to achieve a grading for their work.

So that's why I gave up entering competitions - because I don't see it as a competitive hobby and I couldn't face being beaten by the new kids on the block.

Shark attacks

A recent fatality in Australia involving a surfer and most likely a Great White shark was a tragic event and my sympathies go out to all those affected.

However I have to question the human response to this attack for the authorities announced that they were going to try and find the culprit and shoot it.

Such a response beggars belief from at least two points of view. Firstly Great Whites, as I understand it, are an officially endangered species and so really ought not be shot for doing what comes naturally to them and secondly how will they know which shark did the attack?

Sharks can reputedly cover up to 100 miles a day (which is faster than we can do on most of our

motorways at weekends). In addition they could swim in any direction in a 180° arc from the shore so by my reckoning the search area at the end of the first day would be well over 15,000 square miles. I think that gives the culprit a pretty good chance of fleeing the bullet.

The father of the victim was quoted as saying that he held no hard feelings towards the shark which, at such a tragic time, was highly commendable. He accepted that his son was in the shark's territory and suffered as a consequence.

We all know the oft-quoted statistic that more people die per year choking on peanuts than are killed by sharks but peanuts aren't, to my knowledge, an endangered species and anyway I always buy smooth peanut butter.

Larson on the web

I am a huge fan of cartoonist Gary Larson and used to pay for and include one of his marine related cartoons in every issue of the original Underwater Photography magazine from 1987 - 1989.

Imagine my surprise when I asked for a similar request for UwP and received the following reply:

"Unfortunately, Mr. Larson has a blanket policy that does not permit his cartoons to appear in any electronic format".

Well, at the risk of being sued, do you remember the one of the two bears in the wood and one of them has a large ring of target circles on his chest and the other bear says "Bummer of a birthmark, Hal".

It's just not the same, is it?

peter@uwpmag.com