

Warren's word

Backing Up

Matt Crowther was on time for work. It was a bad omen. Matt was never on time. He'd returned from a week in the Red Sea observing early taping for the BBC production "Blue Planet". He placed the company Nikon F90 on the counter. "It's only slightly wet. Look the display still works..." His voice trailed off. For Crowther, who would later go on to be a key writer for Dive Magazine, this was his first flood.

The camera, notwithstanding the working top display, was of course destroyed. Ocean Optics had paid for Matt's place on the unique charter to let him try out a range of new equipment as part of his product training. The loss of a camera so early on in the trip could have been a disaster.

Experienced divers increasingly focus on redundancy. Any item of equipment whose failure could endanger them is duplicated. That includes items like regulators, buoyancy systems, computers and masks. As a diver who came late to underwater photography I avoid depending on individual items of kit for preserving my life. And, with the keys to Ocean Optics,

I never travel, and rarely enter the water, with only a single camera system.

Underwater photographers, especially when starting out, don't usually have back up camera equipment. It's a dangerous strategy, brought home recently when a strobe we supplied failed on a trip. If you don't have a back up, you probably won't get the shot. In this case the photographer did not have his own back up and was indeed fortunate to be offered a loaner by the group leader. The group leader, by the way, owned several back ups.

But surely if you spent lots of money on your camera equipment, it shouldn't go wrong. No it should not. But we live in an imperfect world.

Serious divers carry redundant equipment because they know it can, and probably will, eventually go tits up. And because it is life support equipment they back up for when that day comes. You can argue that they shouldn't have to. But 120m inside a cave is no place to stand on your consumer rights.

People perceive underwater camera equipment as expensive. It isn't expensive enough. Perfect quality control comes at a price which manufacturers deem to be more than the market can stand. So they do the best they can within budget.

This does not just apply to underwater photographic equipment and diving gear. It also applies to the aircraft you flew to and from your destination on.



Matt's flood was not a disaster. He had been provided with plenty of back up equipment specifically to cover him for such an event. He simply changed camera bodies and continued to shoot some very pleasing images.

The message is clear.

If you want to be a serious underwater photographer you have to think long and hard about backing up.

Steve Warren



Underwater Photography

a web magazine

Guidelines for contributors

The response to UwP has been nothing short of fantastic. So much so that it will soon be published monthly and we are looking for more 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!

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

Uw photo techniques -

Balanced light, composition, wreck photography 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 with leading underwater photographers

**If you have an idea for an article,
contact me first before putting pen to paper.**

My e mail is peter@uwpmag.co.uk

How to submit articles

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

1. The text for the article should be copied from your word processing file and pasted into the body of the e mail.
2. Images must be "attached" to the e mail and they need to be:
Resolution - 72dpi
Size - Maximum length 15cm i.e. horizontal pictures would be 15 cm wide and verticals would be 15cm.
File type - Save your image as a JPG file and set the compression to "Medium" quality
This should result in images no larger than 70k 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.

We pay a flat fee of £50 (+VAT if invoiced).
I look forward to hearing from you.


UwP 49

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