

Shooting the Tokina 10-17mm

with Alexander Mustard

I am sorry that this review is late. I wasn't the first to get my hands on the Tokina 10-17mm when it was released at the end of last year and I had actually expected it to have been reviewed by now. I believe that this is a very important lens for underwater photography and it would be a glaring omission if it wasn't covered in the hallowed pages of UWP. So here are some of my thoughts on shooting this lens - better late than never.

Fisheye lenses have always been popular in underwater photography because they are the widest viewing lenses, allowing us to shoot large subjects from as close as possible and also to create space in the murky undersea world. Our community has a long history of taking them underwater often showing great inventiveness in doing so. For example, in the early 1970s, before housings were widespread, Geoff Harwood designed and made the Vizmaster I and II for the Nikonos cameras in the UK. Others, such as Flip Schulke and UWP's own Peter Rowlands made lens housings for the manual focus Nikon 16mm fisheye so it could also be mounted



on the Nikonos series. More recently, underwater corrected fisheyes have been manufactured by Sea & Sea for the Nikonos V and by Nikon themselves in autofocus SLR form for the Nikonos RS. And in the last few years Inon have produced their WL-165 accessory fisheye for digital compact cameras.

By definition, fisheye lenses are ultra wide angles that forego a rectilinear image to achieve their wide coverage with characteristic barrel



The zoom allows us to fill the frame with subjects when we are not sure how close we will be able to approach. Schooling bumphead parrotfish, Sipadan, Malaysia. Nikon D2X + Subal housing. Tokina 10-17mm @ 17mm. F9 @ 1/40th. 2 x Subtronic Alpha Pro strobes.

distortion. Not having to worry about maintaining a rectilinear image (in other words keeping straight lines straight) allows lens designers to concentrate on making fisheyes ultra wide and sharp. Fisheyes have limited appeal on land and are generally considered special effect lenses, but underwater, where there are few straight lines, they are transformed from niche lenses to workhorses. Like many of you, I use fisheye lenses extensively, for example in my first

book *The Art Of Diving* fisheyes contributed more than 50% of images.

Probably the biggest real world frustration of actually using fisheye lenses in underwater photography is that they are so wide. Unless your subject is very big, or lets you get very close there are plenty of times when you just can't fill the frame. That is where the fisheye zoom comes in.

The Tokina 10-17mm is not the first fisheye zoom to be widely