

News, Travel & Events



Our World Underwater 2008 3rd Annual Wetpixel and DivePhotoGuide Competition Over \$50,000 in Prizes!

Popular websites Wetpixel.com and DivePhotoGuide.com have teamed up again in association with Our World Underwater to celebrate the beauty and delicacy of the marine environment with the announcement of the 3rd annual, international underwater photography and video competition. The competition has become the "Superbowl" of international underwater imagery competitions, with world-class prizes, celebrity judges, and the opportunity to have your images showcased to the world as some of the planet's best.

Photographers & videographers will compete in seven still-image categories and two video categories, to win more than \$50,000 in prizes including premium dive travel, underwater photo/video and diving equipment and more! Dive packages include trips to some of the top

photo destinations in the world, including Socoros Islands, Wakatobi-Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Ambon-Indonesia, the Red Sea, Grand Cayman, the Solomon Islands and Vietnam! Other prizes include camera housings, strobes, lighting systems, and other valuable items. The competition includes a category for images that focus on conservation and the marine environment, and one specifically for entries taken by compact digital cameras.

Celebrity judges include leading professional underwater photographers, cinematographers and editors: Eric Cheng, Berkley White, Tony Wu, Ric Frazier, Chuck Nicklin, and Mary Lynn Price.

Winning images will be published worldwide, and Divefilm.com will be podcasting the winning videos as episodes of the iTunes-featured DiveFilm Podcast Video and DiveFilm High Definition Podcast Video.

As with all Wetpixel & DivePhotoGuide events, 15% of proceeds will be donated to marine conservation efforts.

Deadline for submissions Jan 13, 2008

www.underwatercompetition.com



Dear Underwater Filmmakers,
We are very pleased to announce the 11th International Underwater Film Festival in Belgrade, Serbia.

This event will be held, like every year, in December, from 14th to 19th and we use the opportunity to ask if you have any production/film to be presented at the 11th International Underwater Film Festival. We will be honored to present your film or films to our audience.

Films for the contest would have to be 2006. or 2007. production, with

at least 30% underwater shots and formats are BETA SP, DV Cam or MiniDV (PAL)

The subject is free. Competition admission is free.

We are hoping that you will find our festival interesting enough to support our desire to make it an important event and gathering point for divers and all people who enjoy watching and being in the underwater world.

Please, do not hesitate to contact us for any additional information.

www.kpa.co.yu

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British Underwater Image Festival 2008 entry call

Film and photography entries are now being accepted for the 2008 British Underwater Image Festival (BUIF). Following on from two hugely successful years, the third British Underwater Image Festival returns to the Go Diving! show at the Birmingham NEC on 14 to 16 March 2008.

More than £10,000 worth of prizes are available to the winners

www.uwpmag.com

in each of the competition's nine categories. The finalists of the 2008 Festival will be displayed at the three-day Go Diving! show, which is part of the Outdoors Show (www.theoutdoorsshow.co.uk).

The festival will showcase a range of winning still images and films from a variety of abilities, from first-time photographers to professional television documentary makers. A presentation of prizes and trophies will be held at the festival on Saturday 15 March, followed by a champagne reception.

Leading underwater film-maker Peter Scoones, DIVE editor Simon Rogerson, British Society of Underwater Photographers (BSoUP) founder Colin Doeg and award-winning photographers Alex Mustard and Charles Hood will be among judges.

Prize sponsors include Suunto, PADI, Mares and Apeks.

To enter the festival and to find out more, go to

www.divemagazine.co.uk/BUIF2008

OCEAN ODYSSEY 2007

Digital photo Shoot-out

(in association with Asian Diver Magazine)

26 Nov - 5 Dec
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Manado

Kungkungan Bay Resort
Lembah Strait



Check out www.eco-divers.com/ocean-odyssey to find out how you can be a part of this exciting event!

info@eco-divers.com

eco-divers.com





Beneath the Sea 2008

Beneath the Sea 2008 is pleased to invite Photographers and Videographers from around the world to enter its annual World-wide Underwater Photo/Video competition.

In addition to a surprise of prizes, including a trip aboard the renowned liveaboard Nai'a diving the amazing reefs of Fiji, competition in each category will be for individual recognition from the Grandmaster of that field:

Underwater photographers will compete for the coveted David Doubilet award for excellence in underwater photography, the distinguished Stan Waterman award for excellence in underwater video and the celebrated Jim Church award for excellence in creative underwater photography.

Wherever you live in this wide world, accept the challenge, submit

your underwater photographic work to the Beneath the Sea 2008 World-wide Photo/Video Competition. The contest deadline is December 31st, 2007.

The winners of the Beneath the Sea 2008 Worldwide Photo/Video Competition will be announced at the Saturday Night Film Festival the weekend of Beneath the Sea's Ocean Adventure Exposition and Dive Travel Show, March 28th, 29th, and 30th, 2008, at the Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus, New Jersey. In addition to the awards that the Grand Prize winners of each category will receive, there will be prizes for all First, Second, and Third place winners.

www.Beneaththesea.org



Upcoming International Photo & Video Competitions

November 15th

International Underwater Film Festival - Belgrade

December 21st

Nature's Best - Ocean Views 2008

December 31st

Beneath the Sea 2008 Photo & Video Competition





2nd Annual DEEP Indonesia International Underwater Photo Competition

Hosted by Wetpixel and DivePhotoGuide
Over \$30,000 in Prizes!

Wetpixel & DivePhotoGuide have once again organized a unique joint collaboration with a second international competition in association with DEEP Indonesia, Indonesia's first-ever Diving, Adventure Travel and Water sports expo.

Photographers will compete in 7 themed categories to win over \$30,000 in prizes, including photo equipment, dive gear, and premium dive travel packages to some of the top photo destinations in Indonesia and beyond. Indonesia trips include Ambon, Bali, Fak Fak, Komodo, Lembeh, Manado, and Raja Empat. Additional dive packages include Papua New Guinea and The Bahamas. The contest includes a category for images that focus on conservation and the marine environment, one specifically for entries taken by compact digital cameras, and one specifically for Indonesian entrants.

Esteemed judges Eric Cheng, Stephen Frink, and David Espinosa will select winners after the Feb 15, 2008 deadline. Winners will be announced online, published by our media partners worldwide and exhibited during the DEEP Indonesia Expo in Jakarta, Indonesia (March 28-30, 2008).

As with all Underwatercompetition.com events, 15% of entry proceeds will be donated to marine conservation efforts.

www.underwatercompetition.com

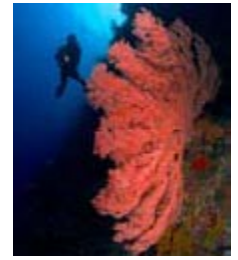
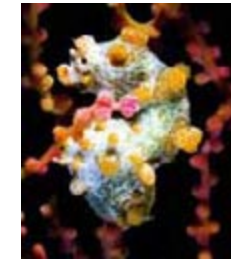
Rod Klein trip

Adventurer II - Raja Ampat
18 - 29 February 2008



It is a rare opportunity that divers are able to watch a quality photographer at work underwater and perhaps it is even more unusual that divers can discuss techniques and skills in relaxed environment with an experienced and dedicated professional. The Archipelago Fleet is proud to announce that this will be possible in early 2008.

World renowned US photographer, Rod Klein will be joining the Archipelago Adventurer II as a Photo-Pro in residence, in Raja Ampat for cruise dates February 18 - February 29 2008 a total of 11 nights



aboard the vessel. With an itinerary Sorong - Sorong, the voyage will encompass the most popular dive sites in the Raja Ampat region and, in addition, also less well known sites with unique and interesting habitats.

There will be no additional charges for the photo advice tips or indeed any assistance provided by Rod during the cruise. As a result spaces are at a premium and are to be in short supply.

www.archipelago-fleet.com



DivePhotoGuide Unveils Website Overhaul!

Situated on a beautiful tropical island in the remote and peaceful Wakatobi archipelago in the Banda Sea, Wakatobi Dive Resort offers what many consider to be the best reef diving in the world.

Blessed with a house reef (considered the most lush and healthy to be found today) where you can begin your dive only 20m (60 feet) from the dive center, Wakatobi is often described as a live aboard with a built-in beach!

In addition to the spectacular house reef, there are several dozens of easily accessible dive sites offering incredible marine life diversity, color and natural splendor. With all boat dives and unlimited shore diving included in the very comprehensive resort packages, you're ensured total diving freedom!

www.dolphinscuba.com

After months of anticipation, we are incredibly proud to announce and unveil to the world, The New DivePhotoGuide.com!

Since 2005 DivePhotoGuide has provided unique resources for underwater photographers & videographers of all levels from around the world. The new website is designed to be rich in content and to provide a platform for participation - in a very unique way.

Please login and join the conversation, start by adding your comments and feedback about our new site right here at the bottom of the page.

We look forward to seeing you participate and enjoy the new DPG!

www.divephotoguide.com

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Turtle Week Bali

Report by Kurt Amsler

On the agenda was a 'Stop the Sea Turtle Killing' demonstration lead by Profauna activists at Kuta Beach, information stands and photo exhibits in the town's largest shopping centre, a meeting with the Authorities, and a media conference. Each event was vital in raising local people's awareness to the plight of the endangered sea turtle, keeping pressure on the Authorities and making a splash in the media.

Turtle Week was only able to go ahead thanks to the generous support of the firms SEEMANN-SUB, SEACAM and SCHOENER-TAUCHEN, DE / CH. But nobody could have guessed that the events in the run-up to the week were nearly as exciting as the week itself!

A phone call is all it takes!

Wayan Wiradnayana, the director of the Pro-fauna office on Bali received a call from an Austrian tourist in the early hours of the morning. Whilst walking on Sanur beach, the man had witnessed two large turtles being loaded into a boat and hidden in a nearby hut. What

happened next sounds unbelievable, but is true. Thanks to www.sos-seaturtles.ch and media publications, the man was fully informed of the plight of the sea turtle on Bali and the name PROFAUNA had stuck in his mind. The owner of a nearby restaurant helped him look up the correct telephone numbers and Wayan wasted no time in informing the Chief of Police, the Forestry Department and the Bali Marine Police.

Time was of the essence because there was a strong possibility that the sea turtles might be moved on. Indeed, when the police arrived on site the animals had already disappeared, and unfortunately so had the determined tourist. The Marine Police, not to be deterred in such situations, soon found out where the sea turtles had been taken.

Both 'green turtles' were of good size and were measured and tagged by the Forestry Department.

The release took place a little time later as the tide was going out on Kuta Beach. As ever, the events attracted the interest of many residents and tourists, and provided a great opportunity for PROFAUNA to



distribute information leaflets on the endangered sea turtles.

In the Lion's Den

The trade in sea turtles in Tanjung Benoa lies in the hands of two men, Pak Tami and Pak Hassan. One man who knows all the goings on is the Swiss-born Heinz von Holzen. He has lived on Bali for the past 12 years and owns the famous Bumbu-Bali Restaurant and Ruma-

Bali Village. Understandably his work is more behind the scenes, however he has a number of people working undercover who keep him directly informed on what is happening on the sea turtle scene. Instead of turning up at markets, as they did in the past, sea turtle eggs now come to Heinz's place, where he incubates them in his many turtle rearing plants and then releases them. Heinz literally buys the freedom of illegally caught turtles, so that they are spared the horrific end of



being cut out of their shells alive.

The news that five sea turtles were being kept for a buyer in a hiding place on Pak Kami was brought to him by an informer from Tanjung Benoa. The main priority was to liberate the turtles as soon as possible and also to photograph the proceedings in order to provide material for the media and also proof for the Balinese authorities. How the trader would react to the camera was the least of my worries at that moment.

The only thing that gave away our arrival was the BUMBU BALI Restaurant truck that was driven by Pak Madi, Heinz Von Holzen's specialist for this sort of tricky business.

Although quite hardened to these sorts of things, I still did not find it easy to remain cool when confronted with this man who has in his lifetime been responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of sea turtles and to haggle with him over their price as if they were bananas or coconuts! Better to see him in a different light, such as through the viewfinder of my Nikon!

The noise of the camera produced no reaction from him whatsoever, but the same could not be said for his side-kick, a stocky, sly looking man who



was evidently Chinese.

One word from Pak Madi put him in his place. Evidently he was keen not to bungle the sale over a small disagreement.

He encouraged us to follow with exaggerated politeness and after 15 minutes of insane driving we arrived at the shed where the creatures were being kept.

Both concrete basins measured around 5 by 5 metres and were filled with around 40cm of water. Here, our four adult greenturtles were to be found, each one weighing more than 100 kilos, alongside a small and genuine hawksbill turtle.

The transporting and preparation for the release carried out by Heinz's men is a procedure that has seen many years of practice.

Late afternoon, as the tide was going out, the turtles were taken to the Holiday Inn Hotel beach and released back into the sea – a very moving moment! Back to their own surroundings where up until their capture, they had been living for the past 30-40 years! It is highly possible that the turtles could live to double this age...



Kuta Beach Demonstration

The backdrop was like the set of a TV commercial.

White sand, blue sea, and in the foreground, dressed in white, the PROFAUNA activists holding their banner. Rigid expressions, motionless and a straight faced – picketing for the endangered sea turtles.

Young women with the same look distributed leaflets amongst inhabitants and tourists alike here on the most famous of the Bali beaches.

PROFAUNA demonstrations always cause a big stir in the media. This occasion was no different. Cameras flashed, tv cameras filmed, and even an ARD cameraman used the opportunity to build the demonstration into a production he was already filming. Naturally the place was also teeming with uniforms: the Chief of Police, the Forestry Department and other officials were omnipresent.

In Indonesia demonstrations and information campaigns are closely watched and taken very seriously. PROFAUNA builds on this, for it is the only way in this country to get a strong grip animal



Visiting the Governor

The meeting with the Governor was scheduled for 10am. On our way to the Government buildings we noticed a giant cloud of smoke. Fire engines with flashing lights and sirens blaring headed

for the town centre. A large fire had broken out in Denpasar city centre. Therefore it was understandable that the Governor had to be excused from our meeting and that instead we were to meet with a Minister for

and species protection. This is why the organisation also works closely alongside schools and universities. PROFAUNA is however not only concerned with the protection of sea turtles, but with all endangered species throughout Indonesia.

www.uwpmag.com



the Environment, named Ir.Ni Wayan Sudjj. Even knowing the extent of the Governor's influence, we were not disappointed by the way things turned out. It soon became clear that the Environment Minister was fully informed of the sea turtle plight and spoke perfect English. Our statement was clear: according to Indonesian Law, article 764-98 / April 1997 the killing of sea turtles is forbidden, and trade over the border is seen as a violation of CITES regulations, the international Commission for the protection of endangered species.

This is where image is vital: and there is no clearer language than more than 20,000 letters of protest from all over the world and even more

signatures. Hundreds of publications and the world-wide link www.sos-seaturtles.ch has drawn people's attention to the murder of sea turtles on Bali, and as Bali is currently fighting to keep every tourist it can, such things are taken very seriously.

When we began the first sea turtle campaign shortly after the fall of the Suharto regime just before the year 2000 around 25 thousand creatures were being massacred in the slaughter houses of Tanjung Benoa. Currently around 3 thousand are being killed in secret.

Of course, we referred to this positive outcome, and put across our fervent desire that consistent police action be continued and even

increased so that an end is brought to all killings. Once this happens, we can show the more beautiful side of the dream island of Bali in the media, and no more bloody images from Tanjung Benoa.

Alibi-Island

This turtle island' is not far off the south coast of Tanjung Benoa. Tourists are herded out there on little boats to gawp and paw at the 30 sea turtles eking out their miserable existence in the dirty waters of the lagoon and a concrete basin. Alongside them are cages containing birds, giant lezars and a large python with tape wrapped round its mouth, the front part of which, incidentally, is missing, as it was crudely removed along with its fangs. The icing on the cake is that souvenirs made out of turtle shells are being sold there. An exhibition that would take the joy out of the day of any normal person – the few visitors present were nearly exclusively tourists from Asian countries.

By researching and closely watching the island, PROFAUNA members and the journalist Daniel Peterlunger could gather clear evidence that ,turtle island' was being used as a cover-up for the trade in sea turtles. Through the back doors of the compound we were able to get

some pictures creatures stored on a small boat were transferred to a hut lying directly opposite with a water basin. The shells and bones lying in the waste outside were further proof that slaughter was taking place here. The photos taken of these wheelings and dealings are lying on the desk of the Environment Minister as we speak and are being channelled through at all government levels by the PROFAUNA team.

In Summary

Everything that has taken place on Bali since the beginning of our campaign in March 2006 shows very clearly that our ,public relation' strategy in the media and on the internet is working. However in order to be at the front line and in order to support the actions of our comrades-in-arms on Bali, we are heavily dependent on sponsorship and donations. In the end, putting an end to the murder and trade of sea turtles on Bali comes down to who is the most determined to succeed!

Kurt Amsler
www.sos-seaturtles.ch



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