

O ring maintenance

by Peter Rowlands

There can be fewer, more hostile environments in which to take photographs than underwater. The combined elements of water and pressure impose considerable limitations on us both physically and photographically in a way that should make most sensible people give it a very wide berth. And yet we are still here, pretending to enjoy it, spurred on by the occasional good shot which makes us forget the aggro, both financial and physical.

O rings are the most ingenious, yet simple devices without whose existence we would certainly not be where we are today. These small cross sections of moulded compressed neoprene are the key to our survival and deserve more attention than they often get.

In order to do its job properly, an O ring must be lightly lubricated



Don't use any sharp tools to lift the O ring out of its groove. Most O rings can be removed without the need for any tools. Stretch the O ring slightly to cause a loop which can then be lifted out of the groove. This can be done on Nikonos cameras (above right) or housings (above left)



With the O ring removed, the groove can be inspected and cleaned if necessary. The most effective tool to do this is a stiff bristled toothbrush. Cotton buds are also useful but may leave fine hairs if you are not careful. Perhaps the best combination would be to run a cotton bud along the groove to remove any excess grease and then use the toothbrush for a final clean.



Only a small amount of silicone grease is needed to lubricate the Nikonos V O ring. Just enough to make it shine. The grease is being applied from an Ocean Optics silicone grease applicator/syringe and it contains enough grease to last a long time.

There are still quite a few underwater photographers who believe that the more grease you apply, the better the seal. This is far from correct as it could migrate into the camera and affect the shutter performance.

The easiest way to spread the grease onto the O ring is to pull it through your fingers a few times until it is evenly coated and the surface should shine without there being any excess grease.



to keep it supple. Silicone grease is used for its inert properties and continuing viscosity under heat and must be applied to all black user serviceable O rings such as rear doors, battery compartments and flash plugs. (A new generation of blue silicone O rings are used by some manufacturers such as Sea &

Sea and these must be greased with the special grease they supply).

The O ring surfaces are just as important as the O ring itself and must be kept clean. This is done by removing the O ring with a soft edged tool or, if it is the large rear door O ring on a Nikonos V or main O ring on a housing, stretching it

slightly to cause a loop which can then be lifted out of the groove. A firm bristled toothbrush is very good for cleaning these grooves as it leaves no fine hairs as cotton buds can do.

The cleaning and regreasing of an O ring takes just a few seconds. What takes a lot longer is the debate as to how often you need to do this. Some look upon this operation as a form of therapy during dives, the gentle pulling of an O ring through lightly greased fingers could be likened to the holding of one's childhood blanket to one's ear while sucking one's thumb. Others leave their O rings alone for days at a time and still don't have problems.

What level of perfection you choose is up to you and if it has worked for you thus far I would be foolish to encourage you to change. All I can say is that there is less need to maintain O rings on a liveaboard boat as opposed to a shore diving trip as there is far less chance of sand bridging an O ring groove.

If there is one main reason why underwater photographers have problems it can usually be put down to lack of preparation.

I've seen it so many times when a dive plan is changed at the last minute resulting in a hasty change of lens or film. The sudden urgency nearly always ends up with an O ring dislodged, a control left off or a film not wound on properly. It is better to either stick with the rig you've got or not take it at all rather than risk thousands of pounds and the rest of your holiday ruined.

Underwater photography is worth it when everything goes well and you can help yourself with careful preparation. It doesn't take long and it will increase your success rate.

Peter Rowlands
Ocean Optics Repair Dept

repairs@oceanoptics.co.uk

For Sale

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WANTED

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Photo courses

Martin Edge, author of the
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The Nikonos V

A Statement From Ocean Optics

It is now official that the Nikonos V camera is to be discontinued following a final production run of 3000 cameras.

As users of the Nikonos system ourselves, and as dealers whose name has been synonymous with the Nikonos line since 1976, we very much regret Nikons decision.

However, once Nikon confirmed the news we immediately made a significant investment in Nikonos V bodies, lenses and strobes.

Ocean Optics Ltd, our sister company which has provided servicing of the Nikonos for a quarter century has also stocked up heavily on spares to ensure continued aftersales to existing and new owners. We will continue to manufacture our close up lenses and macro tubes as we have done for over two decades.

We hope this makes our continued commitment to the finest underwater camera ever produced unambiguous!



**The Ocean Optics Team
London**

Underwater Photography

a web magazine

Guidelines for contributors

The response to UwP has been nothing short of fantastic. We are looking for 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 - 144dpi
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 about 120k 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.





GOLDEN DOLPHIN

VIDEO CD MAGAZINE

of diving and underwater photography



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Nothing else can match it for presenting the beauty and adventure of diving. Even the pros are raving about it. Like diving itself, it's one of those things you really have to experience to appreciate.

Check out a single issue for only £6 including air postage to anywhere in the world or subscribe for only £26.50 per year (6 issues). Nothing else in diving can equal it in quality or value for money.

Covers the World

Golden Dolphin covers the world of diving, from great white sharks in South Africa (without a cage), to the caves of Yucatan, to the fiords of Norway.

From the coast of England to the Great Lakes in the heart of North America, to remotest Ontong Java. From the latest advances in decompression physiology to exploring the abyss with Remotely Operated Vehicles.

The first five issues have included features from South Africa, Burma, the Solomon Islands, UK, Coral Sea, Gulf of Mexico, Western Australia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Bahamas, Mexico, Belize, Bonaire, Norway, Brazil, Maldives, Philippines, Bali, Sulawesi, West Irian, Red Sea, Tasmania, Madeira, Truk, and Ontong Java.

Golden Dolphin features the work of some of the world's leading professionals as well as enthusiastic newcomers neither of whom you are likely to find in any other dive publication.



and...from micro...to...**mega**

What the Pros are saying about **GOLDEN DOLPHIN**

"...watched the slide show last night. You did a fantastic job. We were amazed how well this all came together. The images and music are really impressive." -**Dr. Gerald R. Allen, Conservation International**

"I just received and viewed the 2nd Issue of Golden Dolphin and I am quite frankly speechless. I have never been able to enjoy sitting at my computer reading and enjoying stories and photographs of such impressive quality." -**Don Townsend, USA**

The best thing that's happened in dive publishing. At last, an international showcase for underwater photography which does justice to the subject matter." -**Roger Steene, Australia**

"I have received your CD last week and it is astonishing. The video runs very well in my computer even at full screen." -**Marcelo Krause, Brazil**

"I have just received the first copy of Golden Dolphin - it looks great! I am amazed at the video quality...." -**Mark Webster, UK**

The part I liked best was the video : hopefully more people will realize it is an absolute bargain to get quality u/w footage at this price." -**Edward Snijders, Netherlands**



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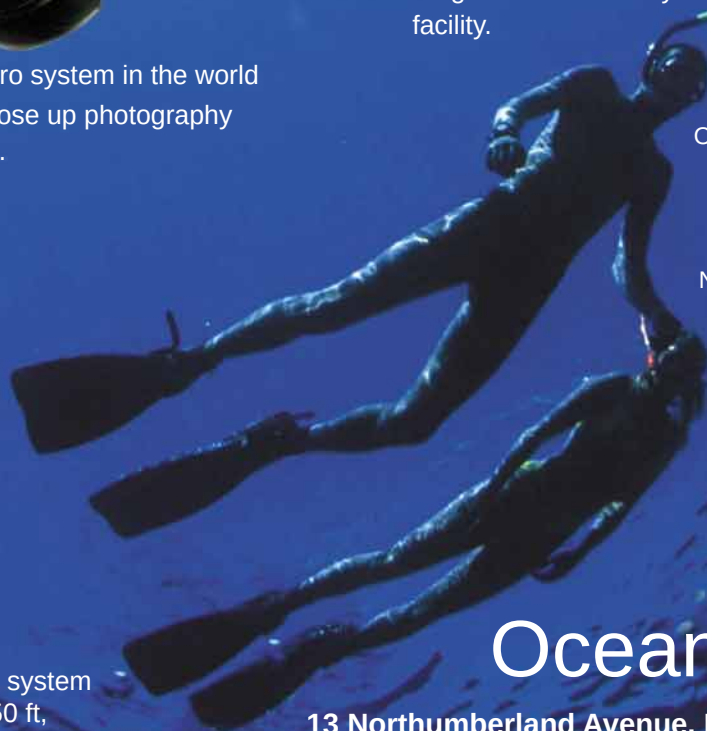


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