



ORNATE WRASSE

Olympus E-330, Olympus PT-E02 housing, 50mm macro lens, ISO 100, F/9.5, 1/125th, Athena ring-flash

five minute boat ride from Ifach Rock and twenty minutes from Elephant Cave.

The dive center has an efficient and friendly staff teaching over fifteen training courses from open water to instructor in english, french, german, dutch and spanish. They have a full range of quality rental equipment which I used every day during my stay.

Diving is done from a pair of RIBs (rigid hull inflatable boats) both equipped with large outboard engines, ladders, radios and other safety equipment. Since most of the areas dive sites are within a five to ten minute boat ride of Les Basetes many dives are one tank outings with a return to the dive center for snacks and a tank exchange before heading out for a second dive. A large area

www.uwpmag.com

outside the dive shop has several covered tables, drying racks for suits and equipment a place to lounge between dives and food is within a short walking distance.

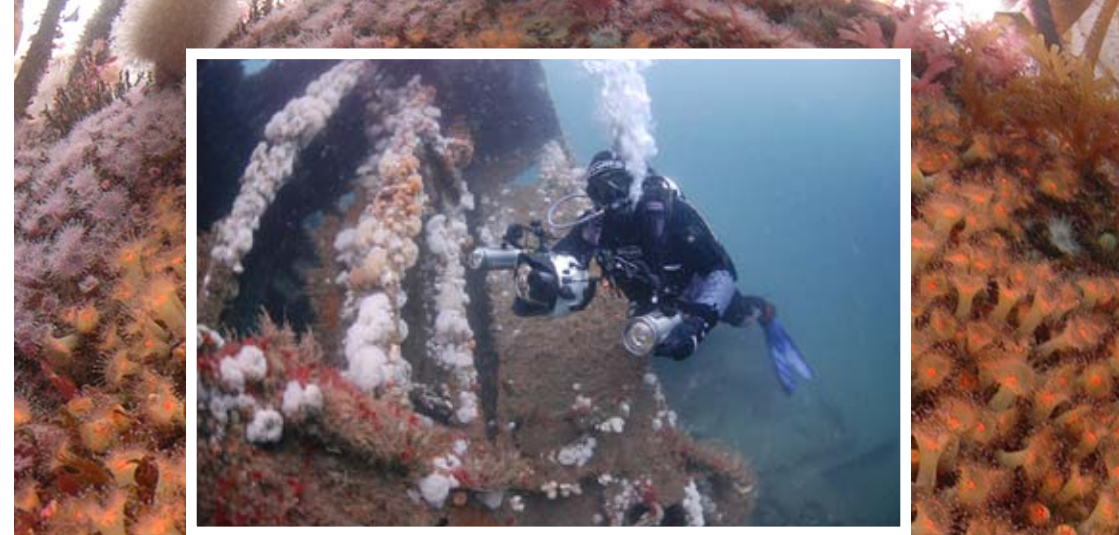
Within a few meters of the dive shop you can enter the water for a shore dive along the Benissa harbor jetty which drops to about six meters. This jetty area is loaded with macro critters of all types plus small schooling fish, ells and much more. I found a number of small subject not found during the boat dives in this secluded bay area a twenty meter walk from the dive shop.

Les Basetes Dive Center is the only dive center in the Costa Blanca area offering daily dives from Benidorm to Javea along forty kilometers of coastline. This is also the only area dive center with boats just outside the dive shop doors. A six dive package including full equipment runs around €215.00 (\$300.00) with price supplements for night dives and distant locations. Nitrox is available on site and can be included in multi day dive packages if needed.

For further information on Les Basetes Dive Centre and a variety of accommodations in the area checkout the web site.

www.buceobasetes.com/en/

Phil Rudin



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A Return To Tiger Beach

with Steve Rosenberg

In January 2012, I made a return trip to Tiger Beach with Jim Abernethy's Scuba Adventures for another one of their incredible weeklong shark adventures to the northern Bahamas. It had just been too long since my last shark adventure on the MV Shearwater. As a bonus, Andy Sallmon, who is an outstanding professional underwater photographer from southern California, was on the boat. Between Jim and Andy you can't help get but pick up some useful tips on shooting sharks. During the trip, Captain Mike mounted a Go Pro Camera on a remote controlled boat speed boat and enticed a couple of tiger sharks to try their hand at boating. Fortunately, Mike recovered the GoPro and Andy got some incredible images of the event.

The week started off a bit rough and windy. Jim elected to visit two shallow reefs before heading out to Tiger Beach. After one day of bad weather, the winds eased and the seas calmed down, making the entries and exits a piece of cake and the surface intervals between dives very comfortable. We spent a day with amazing shark interactions at Hammertime reef and Ginormous reef. There were plenty of opportunities to set up unusual photographs at the end of swim-throughs and atop indentations in the coral reef with sharks continually making fly-bys and swim-overs. We took advantage of the opportunity to allow some of the Caribbean reef sharks to pose with splashes of colorful



The MV Shearwater at anchor in the shallows at Tiger Beach, Northern Bahamas.

sponges and lionfish. Despite a persistent wind and somewhat spotty visibility we had awesome close-up encounters with Caribbean reef sharks, lemon sharks, a tiger shark and a friendly Goliath Grouper.

Later when we parked at Tiger Beach and after the wind had died down a bit, we were treated to more incredible photographic opportunities. The various sections of Tiger beach are only about 20 feet deep, but feature swarming lemon sharks, intermixed with visits from tigers measuring up to 18 feet in length. It's always an exhilarating experience to grab your camera at the swim step, duck your mask into the water and roll forward with 20 or 30 lemon sharks milling about the dive platform. The lemon sharks, measuring up to 10 feet in length, sport a toothy sinister smile and their sleek 'fighter jet' profiles make for awe-inspiring portraits. However, the tigers are the real "super



Volitan lionfish poses for a picture unaware of the potential danger from predatory Caribbean Reef sharks.

Subal Housing with D300 camera, Sea & Sea 250 Strobes Tokina 10-17, ISO 200, F/11, 1/250

models,” measuring up to an incredible 18 feet in length. The tiger sharks deserve, and require, your constant attention. On this trip we were underwater with as many as 8 tigers at a time.

As an underwater photographer I have had the good fortune to work on assignments shooting sharks all over the globe. Jim Abernethy runs a very professional “stick to the rules” operation that allows photographers and videographers one-of-a-kind encounters with a variety of large predators that are available nowhere else in the world. Passengers on his live-aboard boat, the Shearwater, are treated to Jim’s hands on expertise in dealing with sharks and his awesome knowledge of photographing large predators. I can’t wait to go again for another unique shark adventure, always looking for those one of a kind images.

A few basic photo tips.

The photo opportunities on one of Jim’s shark trips are so plentiful that you don’t have to rush and just take snap shots. The best advice that I can give you is to listen to Jim Abernethy. He is the kind of person who is genuinely excited about helping his passengers get extraordinary shots. That said, when you get underwater, take your time and try to visualize what a shot will look like. Anticipate the angle of your subject and what is going on in the negative space around your subject. Try to isolate the subject(s) and get them swimming toward the lens at an angle. This will emphasize that the shark is entering the picture.

Keep in mind that the scent from the bait will flow from the bait boxes down current. The tiger sharks will follow this scent and will normally approach the area from down current. When tiger sharks are present, it is important to face down current, keep a safe distance from the bait and



Portrait of a tiger shark at Shark Tooth Ridge. Subal Housing with D300 camera, Sea & Sea 250 Strobes, ISO 400, F/13, 1/160, Nikkor 12-24 Automatic focus

constantly communicate with other divers, pointing out the location of the tigers. In the shallow sandy areas of ‘Tiger Beach,’ divers should also position themselves closely, in a straight line to form a barrier for the sharks. You should ‘over-weight’ yourself to make it easier to stay on the bottom. If the group of divers spreads out in a haphazard arrangement, that is when you lose track of the big sharks and the situation can get out of hand.

When you are diving reefs, the bait is normally placed in crates attached to floats. This will keep the bait off the bottom. On the deeper reefs you will usually be diving with Caribbean reef sharks, lemon sharks and nurse sharks. Here, divers will normally spread out more. After the bait boxes are placed on the reef, spend some time observing the behavior of the sharks and look for patterns, so you may be able to predict direction and locations where they will be swimming over the reef. Then look for possible



Jim Abernethy, bait box in one hand and camera in the other, plays matador with his supermodel tiger shark Emma.

Subal Housing with D300 camera, Sea & Sea 250 Strobes, F/13, T 10-17, ISO 320, 1/200 Automatic focus

interesting compositions, tying in colorful sponges or corals.

Try to get as close as possible to your subjects and work on getting upward angle to add drama and separation from the background. You will discover that the first part (getting close) isn’t that difficult. Of course, you don’t have the luxury of burying your face in the viewfinder. You really need to keep track of where the sharks are at all times, especially the tigers. Learn to anticipate when a picture is about to happen, pre-positioning your camera in front of you as the picture unfolds. Look into the viewfinder at the last moment, take the shot and then get back to looking around you to keep track of your models. The constant turning from side to side will cause chaffing from the collar of your wet-suit. When you get home from these trips, you may