



been an incident where a diver has been bitten by a tiger shark. Jim requires passengers to participate in these shark dives according to a specific safety rules and guidelines, and all divers must follow these guidelines as part of the group if they want to be in the water. As a final note, these large, magnificent predators are wild animals and there is always a degree of risk involved in such activities. For me, I look at my time in the water with these creatures as a blessing and an opportunity to share my images as a way of communicating their importance on this earth.

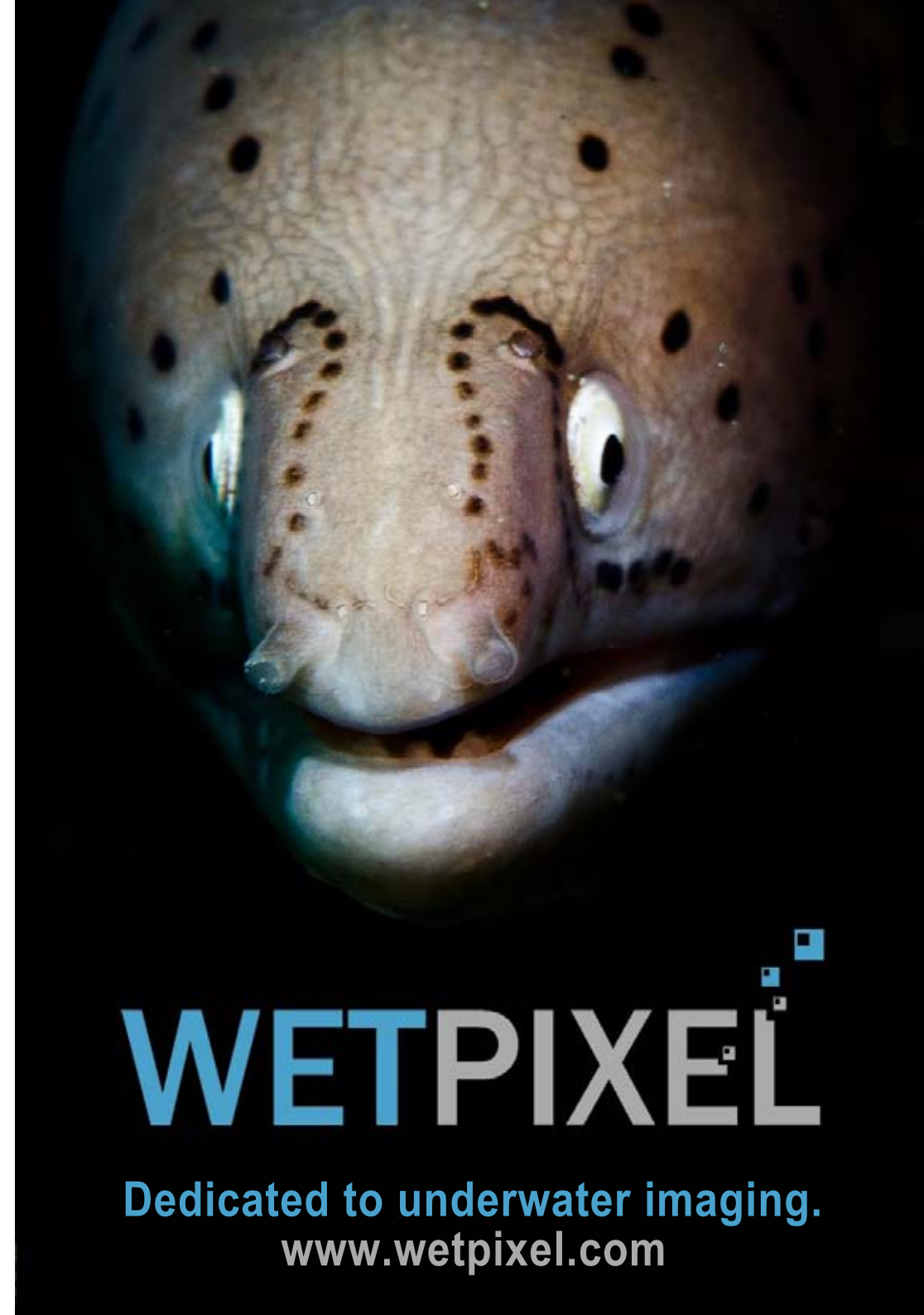
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A lemon shark at the surface near the dive platform, as we prepare for a night dive.

Subal Housing with D300 camera, Sea & Sea 250 Strobes, ISO 320, F-22, 1/200, 12-24 Nikkor lens with camera on manual focus at focal distance of less than a foot.

have some explaining to do to your significant other as to why you have so many 'hickies' on your neck.

It should be noted that Jim Abernethy has been running tiger shark trips in the northern Bahamas for well over ten years. During this entire period of time, there has never



Rubble beneath the waves

by Christopher Hamilton

Thirteen years after my first dive in the cold Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Nova Scotia I found my self about to plunge into her cold dark depths again. I've done more dives that I can count rugged up in a dry suit, but after many years of living in the tropics I have acclimatized myself to warm water and found myself a bit apprehensive. Did I do my Zipper up? With one last tug on it to make sure I took a depth breath, rolled backwards off the side of the lobster fishing boat I was on and hit the water with a bigger splash than I have made I quite some time.

The cold water hit my face and the memory of so many cold dives came flooding back. As I descended I fiddled awkwardly with my camera through thick cumbersome gloves and asked my self: why did I bother to do this all the time? Seconds later when I saw the twisted boiler of the S.S. Bohemian, a 1920s shipwreck, emerging for the dark green depths I remembered.

What a sight. In the days of steam this giant was a marvel of engineering, and a powerful instrument of commerce. Now she

lies broken and half gone to rust and storms. This can be said of the scores of ships that were lost in or near Halifax harbor and all along the coast of Nova Scotia. Treacherous water, even with modern navigation equipment, but when a fog set in on a dark moonless night it is a wonder any of the old ships made it at all.

Many did not. In fact if you plot the position of all the known shipwrecks along Nova Scotia's coast on a blank piece of paper you are left with more or less a perfect map of her cost. The most intact wrecks lie in deeper water past sixty meters where the storm surge has had less affect on them. Such wrecks like the British Freedom, a tanker torpedoed by a German U-boat in 1944, are quite intact and have only been mildly affected by a recent hurricane and some salvage attempts. The relentless pounding of the sea has made short work of the majority of ships however. Most are little more than a debris field of twisted metal with the odd boiler or bollard.

Shipwrecks in Nova Scotia are protected under the "Special Places Protection Act" (1989)." Which,

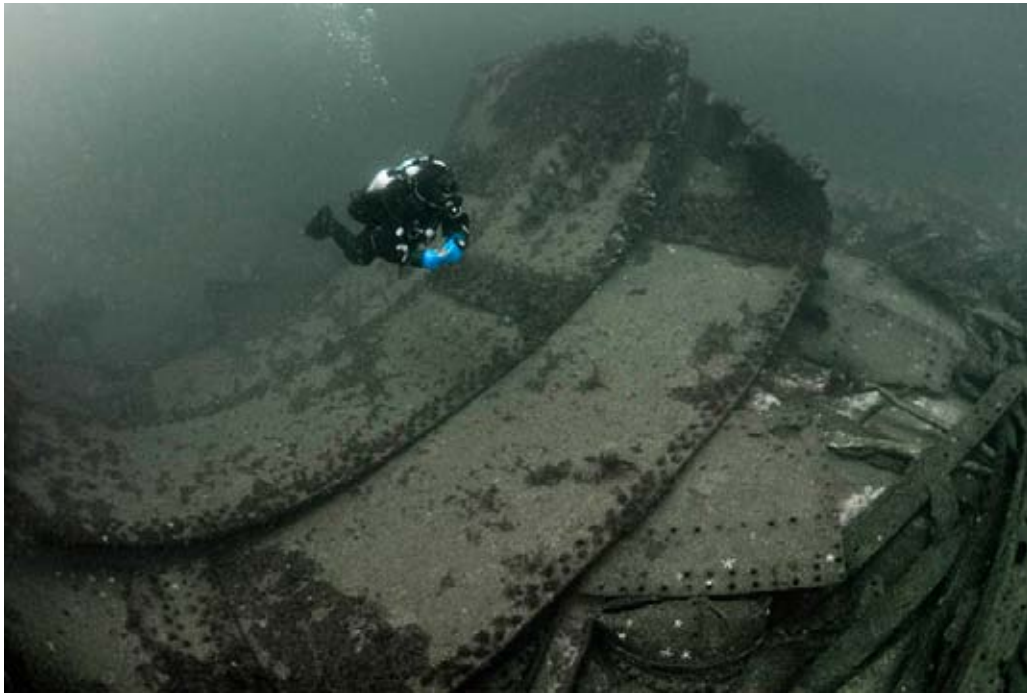


Five hundred and twelve feet of iron, and displacing over five thousand tons, The S.S. Bohemian of the Leyland Line as been reduced to rubble over the last ninety years. D200, subal, f5.6, 1/60, ISO 320.

simply put, requires people to have special permits before collecting anything from a place where historical artifacts are found—i.e. a shipwreck. Like spear fishing or film making in the early days of SCUBA, little regard was given to the underwater environment, keen divers got lost in the moment by so much to dazzle their senses. It is certainly true that the majority of the historic maritime artifacts adorning rec rooms and dooryards in Nova Scotia were plundered in the early day

NSshipwrecks: A scatter plot of shipwrecks around Nova Scotia





(Above & right) The S.S. Bohemain. Sunk only twenty years after construction on her way from Boston to Liverpool, UK. D200, subal, f5.6, 1/60, ISO 320

of SCUBA when we were cavalier and uninformed about the damage we were doing. Sadly however that attitude is still present. When I was learning to dive in the nineties it was just part of diving to bring up a brass door knob, some old buttons, or spend the whole summer with a crow bar and a sledge hammer prying a port hole from the hull of a ship that was not ready to give it up. Today we are left with ship wrecks that have been stripped of their most interesting parts, and lie forgotten by most, battered by storms each winter, and defiled by divers each weekend all summer long.

Of course it is unfair to say all diver are to blame, the majority are quite respectful. Unfortunately it only takes a few to spoil things.

For now however, there are still many ships wrecks that are still very worth braving the cold to go and see, and I encourage those who dive to get in and have a look while they can.

Photographing these wrecks presents many challenges. Firstly there is the act of swimming and shooting wrapped in 7mm of rubber, with 200 cubic feet of gas on your back and more hanging at your side. Add to this green water, heavy surge

Railing still intact on the British Freedom, almost 70 years later. Nikonos II, drugstore film, digitized with a Sony point and shoot and a slide duplication kit

when you are above 100 feet, and almost no light when you are below — you have to be committed to the premise of underwater photography if you are to get past the frustration and onto getting some good footage. Depending on what you shoot, the first thing I do is get my ISO off 100 and take it up as high as I dare. With the d200 that is about 400. Large

