

Underwater Photographer of the Year 2015

UPY
LONDON

The Winners



You can download the full FREE 107 page Yearbook at
<http://www.upylondon.com/2015yearbook.aspx>



Underwater Photographer of the Year 2015

Underwater Photographer of the Year (UPY) is a brand new competition, founded to bring a world-leading underwater photography contest back to Britain and in doing so, to mark the 50th anniversary of the first Brighton Underwater Image Festival.

From the outset, we wanted UPY's DNA to be about doing things right. I have entered and judged many, many contests and having seen it done well and not so well. I wanted UPY to be spot on with the details – the competition that underwater photographers deserve.

Judging, for example, is particularly critical. My conditions were quality judges, who the entrants would really care about their opinions, and a small panel, so each judge took proper responsibility. I also wanted all the judges in one room. Judging is best when the jury can communicate freely (even subtly through body language), and when they are given plenty of time for judging.

Every judge saw every picture multiple times. The eventual winners, presented in this collection, were viewed, discussed and dissected many, many times over. Many continue to burn brightly in our minds. In short, I think we probably know some of the images better than the photographers who took them!



The quantity and particularly the quality of the images entered left us all astounded. It was a privilege to be part of something so special. Heart-warming to see the competition so enthusiastically embraced by the community, heart-breaking at times when we just couldn't squeeze some truly amazing images into this collection.

The UPY winners' circle includes professionals with international reputations, well-known names from competition circles and a host of new faces that clearly have a very bright future. UPY has been a truly international affair: entries from 40 countries and winning photographers in this book from 20. Underwater photography is truly global these days.

We're very grateful to our prize sponsors, donated by some of the industry's most popular brands: Scuba Travel, Nauticam, Apeks and Fourth Element. We'd also like to thank Underwater Photography Magazine, Diver Magazine, Eleonora Manca and Dan Bolt. And we're especially grateful to an individual sponsor, who wishes to remain anonymous, whose generous donation allowed UPY to reach its potential. They know who they are and they know how much it means to us.

Finally, I hope that UPY becomes an exciting new chapter in the strong tradition of underwater photography in Britain. British photographers have always played a leading role in the history of underwater photography, William Thompson, in 1856, took the world's first underwater photo off our south coast and the British Society of Underwater Photographers, founded by Peter Scoones and Colin Doeg, continues that pioneering spirit to this day.

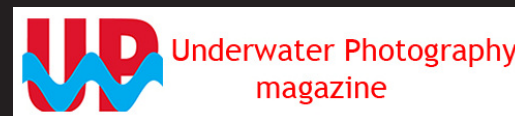
I hope that underwater photographers in Britain and around the world enjoy this inspirational collection of images.

Alex Mustard

Chair of the Jury
February 2015



UPY has been generously
sponsored by





Underwater Photographer of the Year 2015

Winner

'50 Tons Of Me'

Nuno Sá (Portugal)

The Natural reserve of Ria Formosa is home to the world's largest population of the two species of seahorses found in the Mediterranean and Atlantic seas. However the local university together with Project Seahorse has registered a 85% decline in seahorse populations between 2001 and 2009.

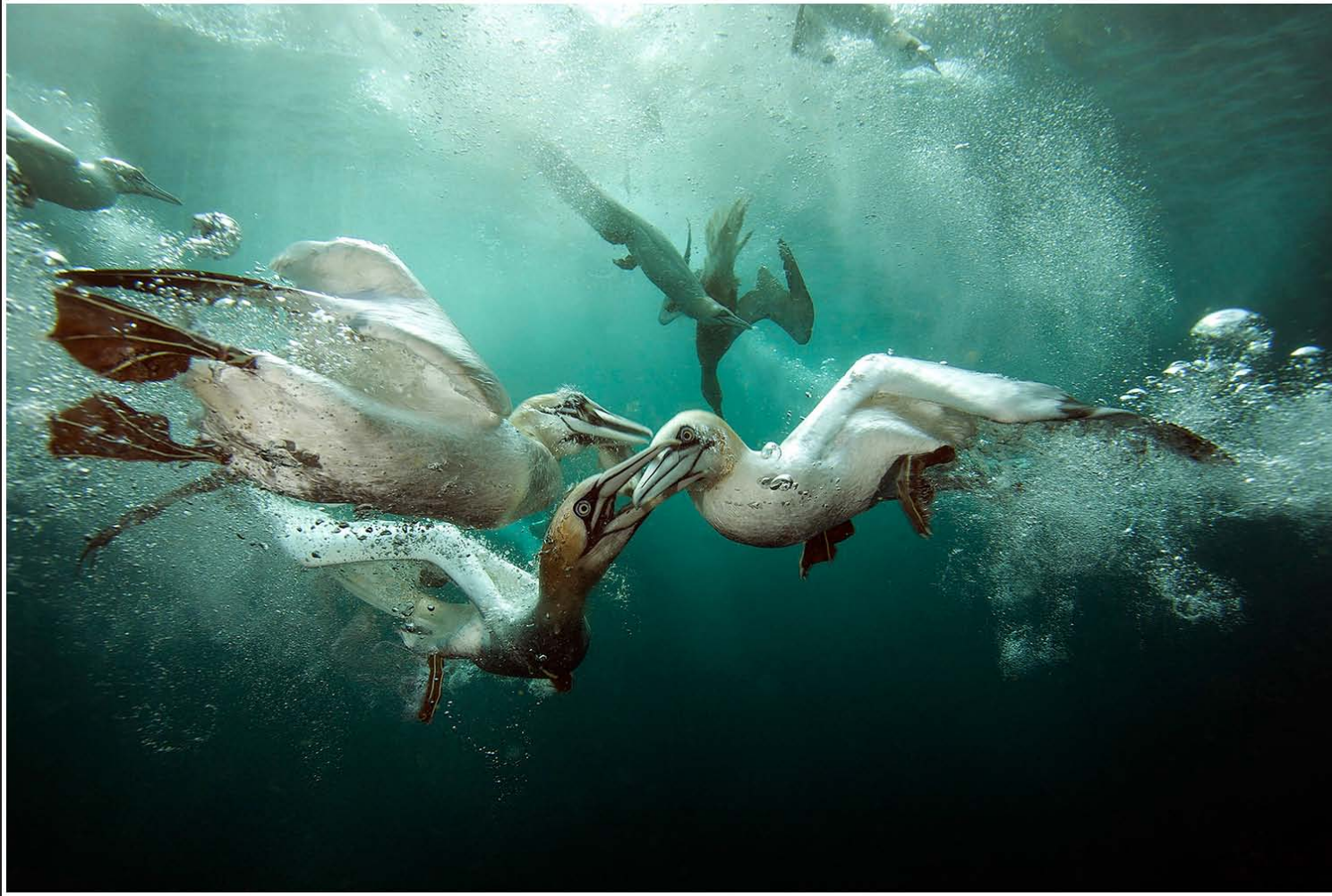
I spent 10 days diving in this natural reserve for National Geographic Portugal, following a pioneering project between the University of Algarve with Project Seahorse that has been breeding seahorses in captivity. The goal is reducing the demand of wild seahorses and also re-populate areas where seahorses populations have been reduced or extinct by fishing. Over 50 tons of seahorses are captures every year for ornamental purposes and use in traditional oriental medicine.

To light this photo, I had the unusual accessories of two scientists, who were holding my strobes, 1 strobe behind and 1 over the seahorse.

Canon EOS 5D, 100mm. Aquatica housing, Ikelite DS125 strobes. 1/200th @ f/13, ISO 50.

You can download the full FREE 107 page Yearbook at
<http://www.upylondon.com/2015yearbook.aspx>

British Underwater Photographer of the Year 2015



Winner
'Gannets Feast'
Matt Doggett (UK)

With my good friend Richard Shucksmith, I hatched the plan of trying to photograph gannets diving underwater. It was early in the season and their main food source, mackerel, was close inshore. To attract them close enough to my lens, we threw in some dead mackerel from a local supplier, which is commonly done on birding trips to get diving photos above the surface.

The gannets went crazy and we were surrounded within minutes. They hit the water at 50-60mph and I had to be fast to get the shots. I was shooting from the hip and rarely looked through the viewfinder. Sometimes the gannets were right on the front of the lens! It was utterly amazing. You could hear them hitting the surface one after another.

This shot shows three birds just as the race to reach the fish was over. The lucky bird with the fish would have swallowed it whilst still underwater to avoid being harassed by hungry skuas waiting at the surface.

Canon EOS 5D MkII, 17-40mm.
Ikelite housing, Inon Z240 strobes. 1/250th
@ f/8, ISO 200.

You can download the full FREE 107 page Yearbook at
<http://www.upylondon.com/2015yearbook.aspx>

Most Promising British Underwater Photographer of the Year 2015

Winner
'Glowing Goby'
Mario Vitalini (UK)

I love backlighting for the contrast it brings and I really like the translucent effect it has on many subjects. Even with all the other critters in Lembeh, I could not resist this ordinary goby and had a bit of a competition with my dive buddy to get a backlit shot."

Olympus OMD-EM5, 60mm. Nauticam housing, Sea & Sea D1 strobes. 1/250th @ f/16, ISO 400.

You can download the full FREE 107 page Yearbook at
<http://www.upylondon.com/2015yearbook.aspx>





1) International Wide Angle

Winner

'From the Below'

Raffaele Livornese (Italy)

I took this image under the boat during a safari trip in the Maldives last October, using only the spot light coming from the boat. I had to wait about 40 minutes to get this shot, while the manta ray did many turns, but it was always too far from the surface and I was only with the snorkel. But finally I did get the shot and I was very happy.

Nikon D90, Tokina 10-17. Hugyfot HFN-D90, natural light. 1/60 sec., f/5.6, ISO 320

Judges notes:

Manta rays are one of the most beautiful creatures in the ocean, and this is a particularly stunning picture. Such graphically powerful images are a rare treat in wide angle photography. The single light source from above the surface has revealed the three dimensional form of the ray, I especially like how the light and dark define the gill slits. The shot is also precisely timed capturing perfect symmetry in the subject. It works so well in black and white.

You can download the full FREE 107 page Yearbook at
<http://www.upylondon.com/2015yearbook.aspx>

Alex Mustard

2) International Macro

Winner
'50 Tons Of Me'
Nuno Sá (Portugal)

The natural reserve of Ria Formosa is home to the world's largest population of the two species of seahorses found in the Mediterranean and Atlantic seas.

I spent 10 days diving there for National Geographic Portugal, following a pioneering project between the University of Algarve with Project Seahorse that has been breeding seahorses in captivity. In the wild over 50 tons of seahorses are captured every year for ornamental purposes and use in traditional oriental medicine. To light this photo, I had two scientists who were holding my strobes, one strobe behind and one over the seahorse.

Canon EOS 5D, 100mm. Aquatica housing, Ikelite DS125 strobes. 1/200th @ f/13, ISO 50.

Judges notes:

In the opinion of the judges, the best in show! The composition is simple but so effective. What attracts me to this particular image is quality of light and shade made possible by the subtle use of flash. It's though it is lit from within. It is also a fine example of what I refer to as delicate post processing.

You can download the full
FREE 107 page Yearbook at
<http://www.upylondon.com/2015yearbook.aspx>

Martin Edge



3) International Wrecks

Winner
'Elastic'
Tobias Friedrich (Germany)

Sometimes encounters just happen which can never be planned better and never repeated. One of these rare situations took place inside of the wreck of the Chrisoula K in the northern Red Sea. I was waiting for the other photographer in a small doorframe, when suddenly this giant moray eel (*Gymnothorax javanicus*) swam from behind my back and winded itself through the small space between the door and me.

Canon 5D Mk2, Canon 8-15mm Fisheye. Seacam 5D Mk2 housing, 1x Seacam Seaflash 150D. 1/60s, f/8, ISO 800



Judges notes:

I can really feel the excitement which must have been building in the photographer who took this shot. More often than not, marine life doesn't behave on cue but this moray must have delighted the shooter as it emerged from the inside of the wreck to pose perfectly for both photographers. The peak of the action has been captured to sublime effect.

You can download the full FREE 107 page Yearbook at
<http://www.upylondon.com/2015yearbook.aspx>



4) International Behaviour

Winner
'Survival'
Montse Grillo (Spain)

It was a seemingly calm day. Like other times I went on the boat with my friends. We wore several hours browsing, When suddenly we saw in the distance many birds were diving into the water. And we went to see the show. Five miles off the coast of Tenerife I saw this show. Sardines trying to flee the birds and dolphins without success. In a few minutes this fish ball disappeared. For me it will be an unforgettable experience.

Canon 7D, Canon 8-15mm Housing.
Subal CD7 housing, 2x Subtronic pro 270
strobes. 1/100th @ f/14. ISO 250

Judges notes:

This was a particularly visual favourite of mine which also captures the category's purpose to perfection – behaviour. It freezes the very essence of life underwater with great lighting and perfect composition right down to the bit part players in the background preparing to circle again to have another lunge into the unfortunate shoal.

Peter Rowlands

You can download the full FREE 107 page Yearbook at
<http://www.upylondon.com/2015yearbook.aspx>

5) Up & Coming Worldwide

Winner

Fabrice Guerin (France)

In the middle of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula there is a natural cave called cenote Angelita. When you dive this cenote, the light is very special going from blue to green. At about 30 meters there is a one meter layer of hydrogen sulphide. When you go through this cloud you go from fresh water to salt water down to 60 meters. This atmosphere is similar to a lunar landscape

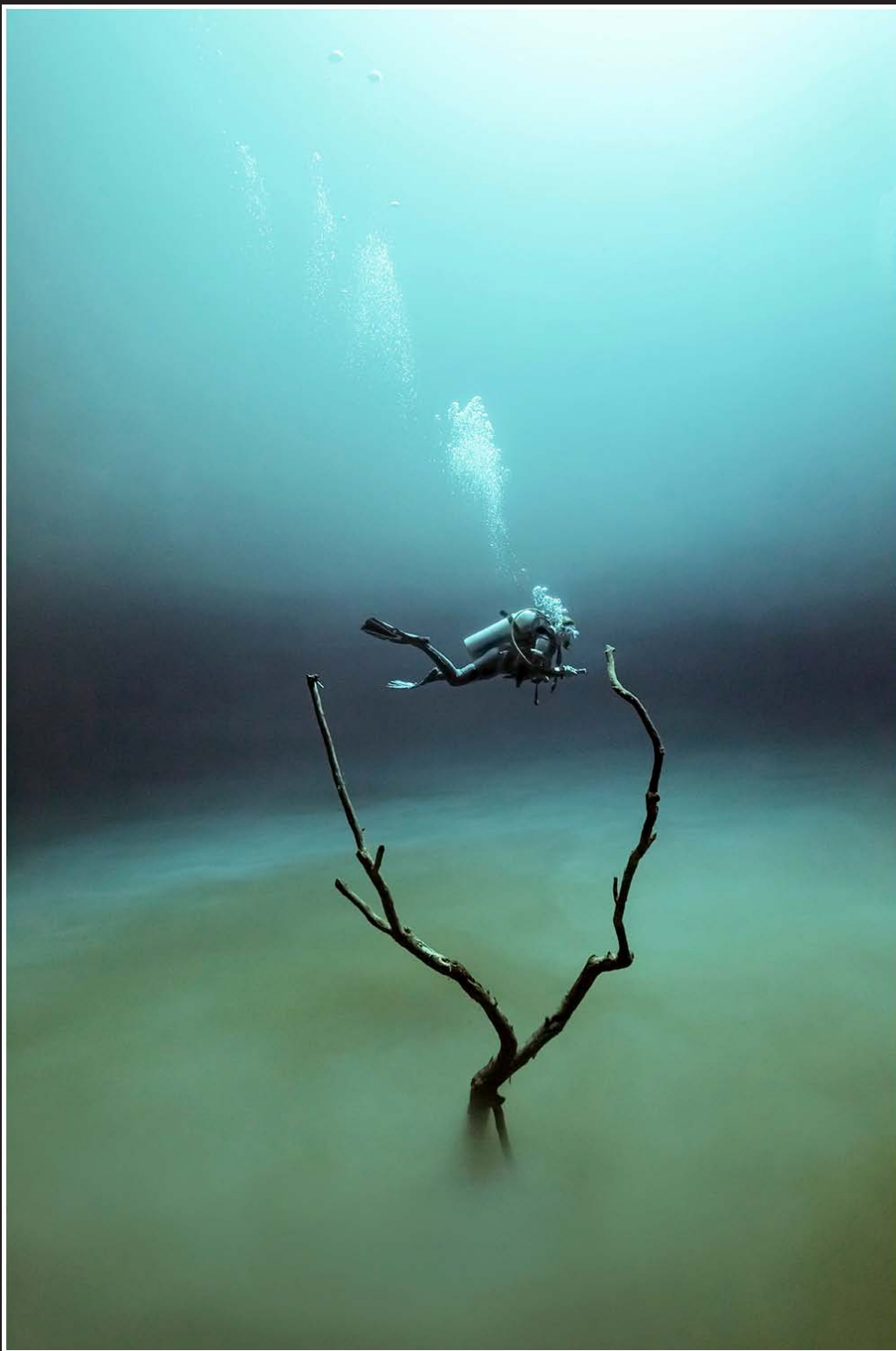
When I saw the diver between the branches of a tree, all the elements were there to shoot a surreal image.

Canon 5D Mk3, 20 mm lens, Aquatica 5D Mark III housing, Inon Z240 strobes, 1/250th, f/5,6, ISO 2500

Judges notes:

Such a unique image! It's particularly atmospheric and the understated use of post processing has provided a soft, surreal dream-like image. Composition is subtle and effective with the 'peak of the action' capturing the diver between the dominant foreground. My eye is glued within the frame. The extra touch of air bubbles connecting to the surface is also strong. I love this shot and it's fair to say that it was one of my favourites of the competition. I should also mention that we strongly debated the diver looking out of the picture. I think it works well.

You can download the full
FREE 107 page Yearbook at
[http://www.upylondon.
com/2015yearbook.aspx](http://www.upylondon.com/2015yearbook.aspx)





6) British Waters Wide Angle

Winner
'Gannets Feast'
Matt Doggett (UK)

I travelled to Shetland to try and photograph gannets underwater with my good friend Richard Shucksmith. It was early in the season and their main food source, mackerel, was close inshore.

They hit the water at 50-60mph and I had to be fast to get the shots. I was shooting from the hip and rarely looked through the viewfinder. Sometimes the gannets were right on the front of the lens! It was utterly amazing. You could hear them hitting the surface one after another.

This shot shows three birds just as the race to reach the fish was over.

Canon EOS 5D MkII, 17-40mm.
Ikelite housing, Inon Z240 strobes. 1/250th
@ f/8, ISO 200.

Judges notes:

There are some images which are, quite literally, breathtaking and this is up there with the best. Timed to perfection and precisely focused, it captures the peak of the action, which must have been extremely frantic. I think I'd have worn a crash helmet with such fast moving and sharp beaks plunging down so fast! Stunning.

Peter Rowlands

You can download the full FREE 107 page Yearbook at
<http://www.upylondon.com/2015yearbook.aspx>

7) British Waters Macro

Winner

'The amphipod has landed'

Trevor Rees (UK)



I was in Loch Carron in Scotland at one of my favourite shore diving sites. This amphipod (*Iphimedia obesa*) was a subject I had not photographed before or really been aware of before. Conditions were such that the water at the time was alive with them - like little fleas darting about all over the reef. I settled down with a macro lens fitted with a dry diopter and just kept searching until I found a cooperative individual that would stay still for long enough. I aimed for a low angle, side on composition at the maximum magnification that minimum focus would allow. As with many tiny creatures most divers are probably unaware of the beauty and amazing colours of these creatures, so a photo is particularly valued.

Nikon D600, Nikkor 105 VR micro with Marumi +5 dry dioptre. Sea & Sea MDX-D600, single Sea & Sea YS110 fitted with snoot. f32 @ 1/250sec. ISO 400

Judge's notes:

In some categories there is sometimes a shot which is head and shoulders of the others and this is it. Graphically simple, perfectly composed with pin sharp focus and beautifully lit, it has a delicacy which is both beautiful and strange in equal measures.

You can download the full FREE 107 page Yearbook at
<http://www.upylondon.com/2015yearbook.aspx>

Peter Rowlands



8) British Waters Compact

1st Place

'Cuttlefish in a blur'

Trevor Rees (UK)

This common cuttlefish (*Sepia officinalis*) was photographed off Babbacombe beach in Devon. The location is a well known spot where cuttlefish come in to the shallows in late spring to early summer to breed and lay their eggs. This one was found in 5 metres depth and is a large male about 1 foot long. They are popular subjects that have been frequently photographed by many divers in recent years. To add a different look and feel I have used a zoom blur filter in photoshop to give the effect of movement, which I felt complimented their tendency to often shoot off backward at great speed if alarmed. It was a pleasing capture from a simple 4 MP compact camera.

Canon A80 compact, + Inon 105 wet lens. Canon housing, single Sea & Sea YS 90 strobe. F5.6 @ 1/50sec. ISO 100

Judge's notes:

A fantastic portrait of one of the wonders of British Seas. And image that succeeds not because of a rare species, most divers in the south of England will regularly see cuttlefish, but because of excellent technique, both in the water and in processing the image to produce a stunning result.

You can download the full FREE 107 page Yearbook at
<http://www.upylondon.com/2015yearbook.aspx>

Don't settle for 2nd best



Film - No Filter
No White Balance



Digital - No Filter
Manual White Balance



Magic Filter
Manual White Balance

Digital cameras have opened up new possibilities to underwater photographers. For available light photography manual white balance is an invaluable tool for restoring colours. But when you use it without a filter you are not making the most of the technique. You're doing all the hard work without reaping the full rewards. These three photos are all taken of the same wreck in the Red Sea. The left hand image was taken on slide film, which rendered the scene completely blue. The middle image is taken with a digital SLR without a filter, using manual white balance. The white balance has brought out some of the colour of the wreck, but it has also sucked all the blue out of the water behind the wreck, making it almost grey. The right hand image is taken with the same digital camera and lens, but this time using an original Magic Filter. The filter attenuates blue light meaning that the colours of the wreck are brought out and it stands out from the background water, which is recorded as an accurate blue.

www.magic-filters.com