

My Shot 1

Living on the tiny island of Koh Tao is a scuba diver's dream. Within minutes you can be at the pier, on a dive boat and descending at countless sites within the hour. One would be foolish to think that the only sights are where a boat will take you. Nature is everywhere and every nook and cranny is worth a peak for a chance at many rarities. Even if it ends up being an empty handed endeavor, you may find quite the contrary on another day.

In the midst of monsoon season, when work was minimal, it was either time to get creative or sink into a catatonic boredom. Even closer than the dive sites aforementioned were the cliffs of my front yard. There was a growing obligation to explore the area. It was the nearest part of the ocean to my home and seemingly the least known. A snorkel, mask and fins were all that was needed.

Scouting in the rain led to a small pier in front of a resort. It sheltered a large school of slender silversides. An idea for a split-level photograph came to mind. The only issue was bleak colours caused by the grey clouds amidst the torrential rains. It would be blasphemous to shoot a pier that faced westward without exploiting a golden sunset. So the waiting game began.

Every day felt more discouraging as I gazed out onto choppy seas. After the fifth day came a calm afternoon with big puffy clouds and glass-like

water flattened by a recent downpour. The sun had briefly returned. Everything that had been in my mind's eye had aligned. I cancelled my evening plans and happily went to get ready with a half hour to spare. It was important to be ready before the sun had set.

The fish were right where I had left them and after an hour and a half of shooting, every idea that came to mind had been exploited. All the boats were moored up for the night and all was quiet.

Ephemeral colours danced in and out of the warm clouds, slowly fading below horizon. Once the sun had set it seemed that the best opportunities had now passed when suddenly a few trevally arrived for their evening meal. The silversides had quickly forgotten about the camera and focused their attention onto the predators. They started towards the camera closer than before. A curious man stood on the pier with arms akimbo. The trevally darted in and out of the school, bringing the silversides ever closer. The LCD showed the man in the top right corner of the frame. He had photo-bombed the shot yet it seemed he added a new element with great potential.



Schooling slender silversides (Hypoatherina barnes) at sunset.

Subal + Nikon D700 + 16mm f/2.8D . 1/80th, f/11, ISO 800 Two Inon Z240 strobes

"Please don't move! You are in the perfect place!" I screamed. There was no time to explain my logic, nor would he truly understand what I was getting at. The sun was long gone and the last rays of light remained on the horizon. I knew I had only a few minutes left. I adjusted the composition to include the tourist above just as the school glided within range once again.

The next frame was the one. "Thank you so much! You just made my week." I told him.

He just smirked as if everything was so simple and walked away into the night. There was no chance introduce myself or show him the image he had partaken in. I floated in silence catching my breath. In the distance, the island lit up with small twinkling lights. A smile stuck to my face as I made my way back home for a well-earned dinner.

My Shot 2

For the last 18 months we've been experimenting with pelagic black water diving. Essentially this is night diving above incredibly deep water using big lights to attract potential abyssal plankton or larger nocturnal feeding species as subjects!

My understanding is that this type of diving and underwater photography started, or perhaps is best known in Hawaii out in the Pacific. We started our own methods using 25000 lumen British made Orcalight technology, where we hang this light source from the boat in the deep trenches off the Scottish west coast. The hydrography here is perfect with the plummeting seabed carved out from glacial action and the nearby Atlantic powering a vast food web. This ranges from tiny plankton to pelagic fish and megafauna such as whales and sharks. So we have a potentially wide ranging target list including the possibilities of attracting some interesting stuff out of the inky depths!

Diving whilst tethered to the boat and drifting in the blackness isn't for the faint hearted, we all know that there are very few marine predators here but it doesn't stop your mind racing about what lies out in the darkness. Although we have been hoping for larger creatures, it's been mainly plankton that has been the target so far. However like everything else, we're always limited by the amount time and opportunity to spend on these

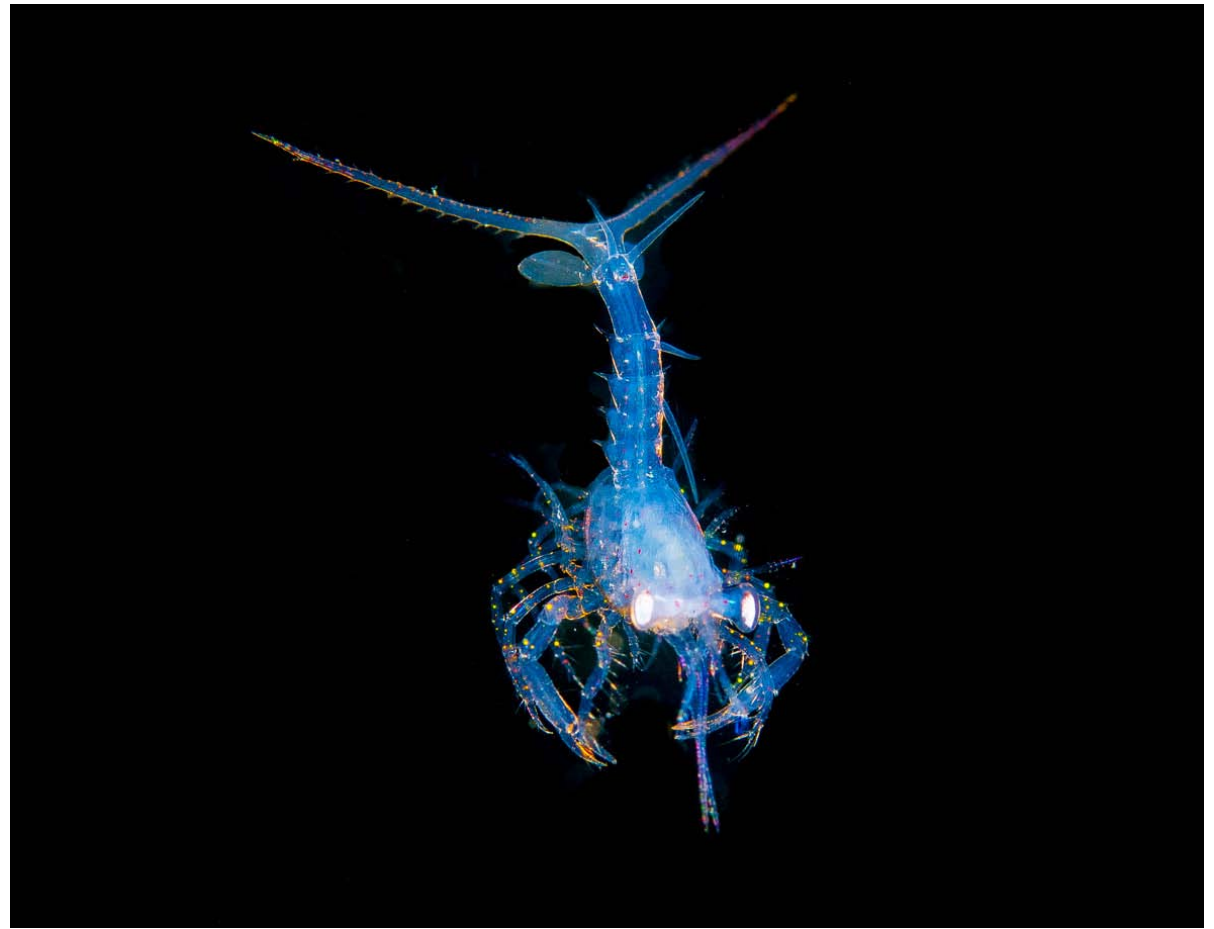
projects!

My image was taken on one such scouting evening when conditions were really great, a cool and crisp evening with very little wind which makes rigging up the tethers much easier. There was a decent amount of tide so we could cover a bit of ground and the water was warming up for the spring plankton bloom.

Focussing in on subjects is much harder than traditional photography diving as you have very little scope for reference such as the bottom, so you are just hanging there trying to keep buoyancy as best as possible.

Using a focus light on wide angle beam I could headlight into the distance scanning for subjects then once closer I could move with the camera. This particular subject which is a juvenile langoustine was probably around a finger nail in size. However it was moving around and along with it's iridescent reflective carapace which made it an easier subject to 'spot'.

Using fairly standard macro kit and settings, I had to work hard with the subject moving around, the drag of the tether and little visual reference for buoyancy. I was able to shoot for around



Nikon D7100 Aquatica Housing , 2 x Sea&Sea DS1 Strobes. 60mm Nikkor Lens. f/14,1/125 ISO400.

a minute or so and I managed to capture one that was relatively sharp with a pleasing composition facing the lens.

Although this type of diving is more well known in the tropics, we have equally as good opportunities on our own doorstep in the UK/Europe. It just takes

some thinking outside the box and some motivation to try different things!

Shane Wasik

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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! UwP is the perfect publication for you to increase your profile in the underwater photography community.

The type of articles we're looking for fall into five main categories:

Uw photo techniques - Balanced light, composition, 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/features about leading underwater photographers

**If you have an idea for an article,
contact me first before putting pen to paper.
E mail peter@uwpmag.com**

How to submit articles

To keep UwP simple and financially viable, we can only accept submissions by e mail and they need to be done in the following way:

1. The text should be saved as a TEXT file and attached to the e mail

2. Images must be attached to the e mail and they need to be 150dpi

Size - Maximum length 20cm i.e. horizontal pictures would be 20 cm wide and verticals would be 20cm high.

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.