



often a lot of seals (most often the yearlings who are whiter and smaller than the adults who are darker with grey or brown dots) are queuing to enter the sea and to observe the boat and divers even before they jump into water.

As soon as you are in the water your only preoccupation is to approach the first seal looking at you like a bottle on the surface. Even if you try to look friendly with your camera, your tanks and dry suit, most of the time the “bottling” seal disappears quickly under the surface. This is time for you to dive... The bottom near the shores of the rocky islands is often covered with kelp and shows quite numerous canyons and small cliffs sometimes covered

with dead mens fingers, some urchins and also lobsters and crabs hidden in the gaps between boulders. This is interesting but you are sure to be in the middle of hundreds of seals looking at you... you are here to meet them, but nothing visible as yet.

You can decide to go under the kelp, maybe they could be here for fishing? Most of the time, nothing and if by chance you meet a sleeping seal he will disappear immediately at full speed. So what to do? Swimming slowly over the kelp, this is the answer. As soon as you stay still between the kelp forest and the surface sometimes for several long minutes it will pay you. The seals and most of the time the sub-adults are too curious and they cannot avoid



*Nikon D2x, housing Aquatica, Nikon 10.5mm, 1/ 200, f9 , ISO 200 , 2 strobes nikon Sb 910, Patima housings, 1/2 and 1/4 power.*

circling around you. Sometimes one or several seals will pass in front of you like missiles, too fast and too far away for a shot, sometimes they will turn around you and disappear but also quite often they will circle around you coming close to you as if they were smelling you and often biting your fins.

Look at the fin biting seal: he will act all innocent circling around you as if nothing happened. You have really the feeling that they are playing with you trying to communicate with you. When you realize their ability to move rapidly in all the directions

then you understand that you are not diving or playing with the seals but that the seals are playing with you, when they want and as long as they want. Nobody can predict what they will do, and even the number of seals around the boat is not a guarantee of interesting observations This is perfect because in my opinion, and this is always good to remember in animal observation or photography, divers have to remain humble and never forget that they are invited in the sea.

As an example, on the last dive of the week there were plenty of seals around the boat looking at us. Then