

Nikon D2x, housing Aquatica, Nikon 10.5mm, 1/100, f8, ISO 200, 2 strobes Nikon Sb 910, Patima housings, 1/2 and 1/4 power.

we entered the water and as soon as we approached a seal he disappeared immediately at full speed, and then underwater only some high speed grey missiles cruising at 3-4m from us could be seen and nothing else.

Some interesting and funny behaviors were also observed during the week they dived with us. During the first dive a pup began to scratch his body with the fins of a diver and then as soon as the guy try to remove his fins the seal went closer for more scratching. The diver decided to scratch his body with his gloves and this seemed to be a big pleasure for this pup literally jumping into the arms of the surprised diver. The same day in the afternoon a bigger seal fell in love with my fins, biting them; his head near my fins and his body along me with the hind limbs in front of my mask. But my buoyancy seemed not to be suitable for him and he stabilized me gently between his fore limbs without any pressure: this was just an unforgettable moment.

Another day I met a new underwater photographer: a white young pup turned around me, examining my left strobe, then my dome port and then my right strobe before taking a leaf of kelp and showing me how he can bite it before offering this leaf to me.

On another day quite a big sub adult was standing in front of my wife looking right at her in the eyes through the mask and opening his nostrils and blowing some bubbles as soon as the regulator of my wife released bubbles then closing his nostrils as soon as there were no more bubbles coming out of the regulator and he did that several times exactly



as if he were trying to speak with her.

How to proceed for shooting seals? During the week on a few dives the seals were shy keeping their distance and then it is not possible to photograph them, they are too fast and too far away. This happens less in October in the Farne islands, and on most of the dives and almost with every group of divers one seal or more would come extremely close to us.

Every time they meet you, they are so close that all the pictures can be taken with wide angle or fish eye lenses (I used either 10.5mm Nikon or Tokina 10-17 at 10mm on my Nikon D2x) and other lens are useless here. The pictures are most of the time shot near the surface with 2 strobes at 1/2 or 1/4 of power only for lighting the face of the seals, but it could be also done fully in natural light.

As soon as you are in the right position it is

also possible to photograph seals with sunbursts, near the rocks where the colonies use to live you are always no deeper than a few meters. Since the seals are always playing and sometimes having human behavior, they are the perfect subjects for trying to catch a little bit more than a natural biological picture of an animal but also something more in the interaction between divers and seals.

The seals offer to the photographer a lot of opportunities for emotional pictures and as soon as they are not far from the surface it is always possible to combine some photographic effects (sunburst, silhouette, Snell window...) with some seals in the pictures.

So what more is there to say? This was an unforgettable week and as a British friend of mine who dives regularly with seals used to say "as soon as the seals are diving with you then this is really an addiction for you and you have to come back for the same experience as soon as possible". This is for sure what we will do.

Jean Michel Machefert

Jean Michel began diving in caves, lakes and the oceans in 1987. He started underwater photography in 1992 using a Nikonos IV. After shooting many years with a Nikon D70 he now uses a Nikon D2x in an Aquatica housing. Pictures and some technical tips are on his website:



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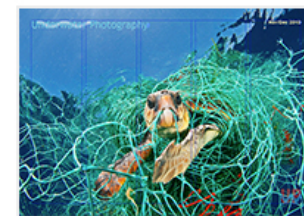
As you know, the current issue of Underwater Photography is free to download but all of the previous issues, going right back to Issue 1, are still available to download for just 99p per issue. It's a fantastic reference library chronicling all that has happened in underwater photography over the past 15 years.



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My Shot 1

by Tony Myshlyaev

There is nothing glamorous about how this photograph came to be. However, I believe that is what makes it all the more interesting.

To begin, it is important to note that working on a liveaboard has uncontested perks. We get to dive at locations that would never be possible from a resort, wake up to different sights every day and explore countless new places. On the other hand, there is the inevitable downtime between trips and maintenance time which renders diving obsolete. Our boat, the MSY Seahorse, had a two-week break for renovations in Sorong. Thus as a dive guide and assistant cruise director, my duties were diminished.

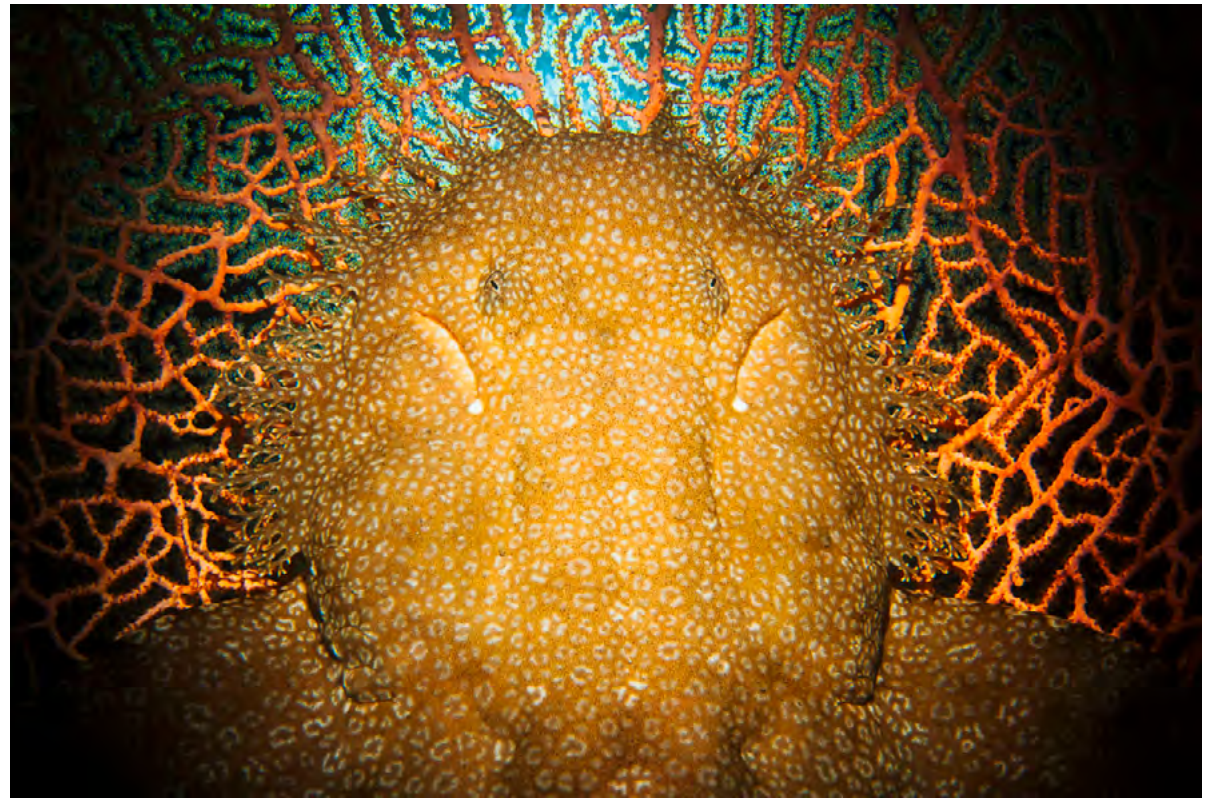
For anyone who hasn't been to the city of Sorong in West Papua province of Indonesia, let it be known that it is a bleak city at best. Despite being the gateway to Raja Ampat, nobody has any interest in diving there. And why would they? The heart of the Coral Triangle is around the corner. With two weeks to spare and some full tanks on board curiosity got the best of me. I scouted a slope near depth, a fresh water source and a bit of altitude: some of the key ingredients for a muck dive. So I grabbed my 105mm and decided to

give it a try.

After a few evenings of exploration, the results surprised me. Amongst a lot of rubbish, I had come across patches of Halimeda, lush bommies, Estuarine Stonefish, Randall's Frogfish, symbiotic crustaceans, many species of cephalopods and nudibranchs amongst many other critters.

The most surprising find was a juvenile Tasseled Wobbegong. They are common in northern Raja Ampat but who knew they would be so close to the city in some dirty muck?

The 105mm is the wrong lens for this subject but it was worth getting some shots just as proof I had seen one. Slowly the idea came to photograph it from the top, which is often a boring composition in underwater photography. In this case two wrongs did make a right. Using a snoot as a spotlight to compliment the shape of the shark's head and a torch for backlighting to create a bit of "pop" produced the result seen here.



*Juvenile Tasseled Wobbegong (Eucrossorhinos dasyopogon) on a Verucella fan.
Nikon D700/105mm f/2.8D, ISO 800, f/16, 1/160 sec*

It remains my favorite image from the dives because it is unlike the common close-focus fisheye compositions I have seen repeatedly with Wobbegongs.

Everything about this endeavor was quite odd and a number of people remain unconvinced that this image is in fact from the slopes of Sorong or that I went diving there at all. To me it is a testament of how productive a two-week maintenance break can be.

Whether I will ever return is to be determined however it seems fitting to name the location "Beggars Can't Be Choosers."

Tony Myshlyaev
www.tonymyshlyaev.com

My Shot 2

by Martin Sczyrba

Last year we spent our summer vacation on Bornholm, the Danish Island in the Baltic Sea. My son had finished his scuba training the year before and I started taking pictures underwater at about the same time. So we took our gear and looked forward for some nice dives. And we were not disappointed...

One dive we did at the lighthouse in Hullehavn near Svaneke. There you enter the water in a narrow bay surrounded by reefs of granite which fall straight to the ground forming like a canyon to swim through. When we surfaced from the dive I saw the sun shining directly at the lighthouse and coastline and being high enough in the sky to also illuminate the reef in the shallow part of the tunnel.

As one of my goals for this vacation was to try my first split-level shots it looked like a great chance for this.

So I started snorkeling with my Canon Powershot S120 in an Ikelite Housing

and a Fantasea BigEye Lens attached to it. It became quite a nice experience and training to do these shots in the wavy water: it took me some trials to get the exposure ok, meaning to not overexpose the bright sky or to not underexpose the reef. Here I really started to appreciate the benefits of digital photography. I have to admit that still some graduation filtering later on helped to further improve the images.

Once the exposure was set, the next task was to get the split as I wanted it. Floating on the surface following the movement of each wave this turned out to be interesting too. Always trying to get the right split and avoid any splash on the lens. The later being a challenge which was hardly achievable for me at the time.

However, by the end I got a few nice shots of which one is shown here.

I truly like the combination of the lighthouse with blue sky in the



Canon Powershot S120, Ikelite Housing, FantaSea BigEye Lens M67 MarkII, 1/250s at f/8 with exposure compensation -1 and ISO400, no strobe

background, the reef full of seaweed below and its rocks extending above the surface and all of this nicely sunlit. Above all, I really enjoyed the work to get these shots.

What could be more relaxing during a vacation than to be in the water trying to get a good picture?

My fascination for split-level shots was only increased

by this and I think this day was a good start into it.

Martin Sczyrba

"My Shot" can be a particular favourite of yours or one which brings back special memories and deserves to be appreciated by a wider audience.

Images need to be 150dpi, longest length (horizontal or vertical) 20cm saved as medium compression jpeg format. and sent with around 300 words of explanation together with camera details and settings. E mail them and you could be in the next issue of UWP.

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.

Parting Shot

During the winter period near Paris one of the closest places for sea diving is the port of Le Havre where each month dives to discover the local fauna are organized by the association "Port Vivant". Authorizations for diving are required since the dives in such big port are strongly supervised by the administration

To most divers the big industrial sea port of Le Havre is not supposed to be very rich in fauna and flora but this is not completely true and now almost 450 different species have been seen in the port of Le Havre. Among these species around 10% are non native coming on commercial boats (under the hull or in water ballast) from countries as far away as Japan.

Underwater pictures from such areas are interesting a lot the marine biologists and also nice pictures of numerous uncommon species can be taken .

During such dives the photographers have plenty of time with others studying biology as they are swimming at least at the same low speed as photographer in macro or close up mode, and the biologists are perfect companions for showing you unusual underwater inhabitants.

So on Saturday January 28th under a blue sky I entered the

water off the Basin de La Barre at a temperature of 3°C and a visibility of more than 6m what is exceptional here since most of the time the visibility is quite poor (less than 1 meter) because of the blooming concentration of plankton as soon as the temperature rises.

For this dive, I was going for close up pictures with my 60mm micro Nikon on my Nikon D2X with 2 strobes Nikon SB 910 in Patima housings. I did not add any pink filter in front of the strobes and so the emitted light is quite cold (white bluish) and some ultra violet light is also emitted by the strobes.

For such dives I arrange my strobes in an inward orientation to have dark backgrounds, in the port the scenery is most of the time not so interesting and spoils the pictures.

During this dive I had the opportunity to shoot a snake pipe fish (for the scientists, *Entelurus aequoreus*, the last one was seen in 2007 in Le Havre) and also a more common but beautiful daisy anemone (*Cereus pedunculatus*).

Because of the blue and ultra violet enriched light of the strobe the anemone exhibits some bluish-light green fluorescence as can be seen on this picture. The origin of



Nikon D2X in Aquatica housing. 100 ISO, 1/60, F16, Nikkor 60mm, 2 strobes Nikon SB910 in Patima housing 1/2 power & 1/4 power, all in manual mode.

the fluorescent glow is due to the blue light of the strobes that excites pigments within the anemone.

During this dive the same fluorescing glow was also seen on some sponges (*Halichondria bowerbanki*) and also sea skirts (*Ciona intestinalis*).

Jean Michel Machefert
www.jmfrog.com

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