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PHOTOS AND GRAPHICS: PETER SYMES

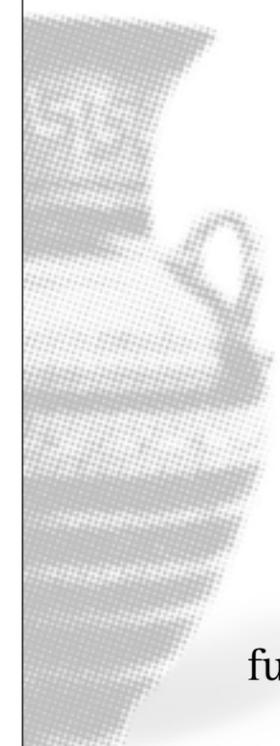
# Photography

## Tips of the trade

*Travelling with cameras, selecting a photo-friendly operator*



*It's important to remember that only when you are relaxed, happy, and comfortable can you shoot well*



Over the next few issues we will be taking you through some tips of the trade for making your dive travel easier, cheaper, and less stressful.

In this first article we're going to look at how to go about choosing a dive resort that will properly help you facilitate your photography.

*Have Camera... Will Travel*

Through trial and error, as well as a significant investment in time and money, we feel we have found how to improve your underwater photography through travelling a certain way and properly configuring your dive equipment. These simple tips could prove to make your diving and dive travel more enjoyable, as well as more productive photographically.

The needs of an underwater photographer or cameraman are different from those of a normal diver. With extra equipment to transport, space needed for the preparation of cameras and additional time underwater needed to get good

images, it's important to travel to the right resorts and dive from the right boats with the right people.

### Relax

Once you descend into the water with the purpose of more than just getting wet, equipment configuration and ergonomics become more vital due to the extra physical and mental work you are undertaking.

An everyday topside task can be very challenging underwater. Using a stills or video camera underwater is an example of this.

It's important to remember that only when you are

relaxed, happy, and comfortable can you shoot well.

For those veterans out there, who may no longer be able to remember what it was like to be a novice diver or photographer, you may already have your regular dive destinations mapped out and your optimum equipment configuration set, but you may still be able to pick up a few pointers here.

Planning a dive trip can be exciting and motivating. But for photographers and videographers, it can also be frustrating and time consuming. Where to go, what gear to bring, how to pack with no extra baggage charges and of course who to dive with...

Ultimately, dive trips are incredibly rewarding and some of the most memorable times of our lives when planned properly.

*But what should you be looking out for in a photo-friendly dive operator?*

### On-Board Facilities

Let's face it... electronics and water don't mix! When the difference between a great dive trip with memorable photos and a ruined trip due to a flooded camera can be something as simple as a few grains of dried sea salt or a piece of hair, the importance of the right facilities must not be overlooked.

Freshwater, camera-only rinse tanks should be available to rinse the salt-water off of your camera housing, strobes and connections. It is important that the boat crew informs the non-photographers on the boat that these tanks are for cameras and computers only. Chemicals and residues from mask cleaning solutions can help to break o-ring seals!

Camera tables, or at least a dry, flat and relatively stable area to organize, wipe off, modify and clean your photo gear will help to prevent costly mishaps caused by hastily opening and closing housings in inadequate spaces. Of course, sometimes you 'gotta do what you gotta do',

future  
meets  
classic



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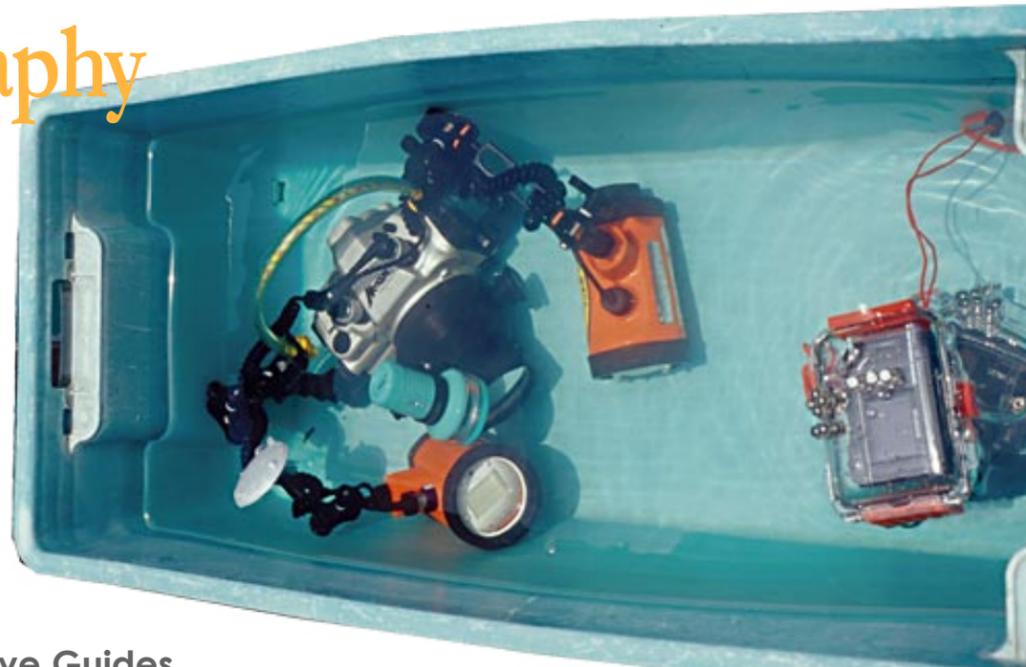
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Freshwater, camera-only rinse tanks should be available to rinse the saltwater off of your camera housing, strobes and connections



to dive when and where you want, and sometimes the facilities just aren't available. Keep in mind that leaving your camera in saltwater, or even wrapped in a wet towel, is better than allowing it to dry prior to a freshwater rinse.

### On-Resort Facilities

Many land-based and live-aboard operators offer dedicated camera charging areas, digital workstations, accessories for sale, rentals and photo processing. Having a library of marine life ID books also helps to identify the creatures and corals that you have shot and may want to shoot during a trip. Photographers who understand the habitats in which they are diving and the behaviour of the inhabitants, will usually come home with better and more varied images.

### Dive Guides

An experienced dive guide with local experience is invaluable. They know the reefs and the tides, and understand the behavioural patterns of the local marine life sometimes with impeccable accuracy. Four eyes are always better than two, especially when two of the eyes watch these reefs day in and day out. Having dive guides who are also photographers or videographers can be an additional plus. Beyond pointing out great photo opportunities, on-staff photo pros sometimes offer workshops and lessons.

### Environmental Responsibility

As divers, we are all ambassadors of the

sea. We should support dive operators who demonstrate environmental responsibility and support local conservation efforts, and patronize resorts and live-aboards who use biodegradable soap and detergents. Dive operators can also help support the local economies by employing locals and even training them as dive guides, which in some regions results in less fishing pressure on the reefs. Long term, as a community of travelling divers, we must support the local communities, directly or indirectly, who we need in order to support the reefs that we love (and as a world, need) so much. By diving with operators who are environmen-



**Yam Magazine and [www.idive.co.il](http://www.idive.co.il)** announce the second international underwater photography competition. The competition is open to all photographers, amateurs and professionals alike, shooting either film or digital images.

**\$10,000 - First Prize for the best 5 images**

**1,000 bottles of beer for the best singular entry**

**\$3000 - First prize for the best color print**

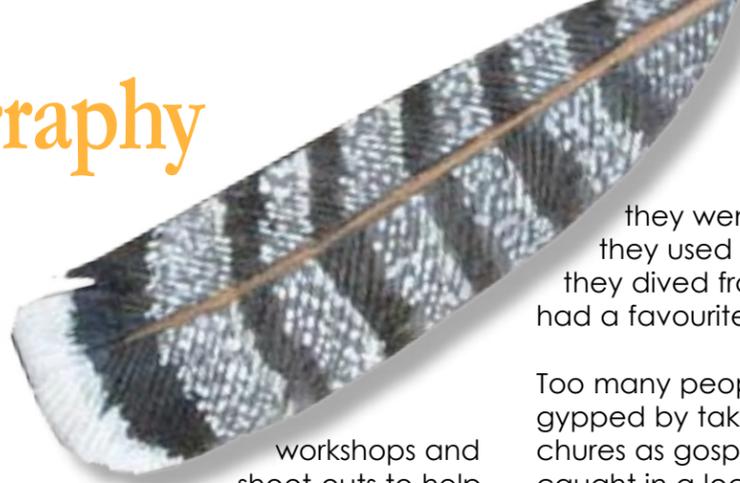
**\$3000 - First prize for the best 5 slides**

For more information  
[www.sandiskredsea.com](http://www.sandiskredsea.com)





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tally responsible and better yet, involved in conservation efforts, you are supporting these communities and the reefs.

## Safety

The number one consideration on any dive trip should always be safety. In order to come home with great pictures, you need to come home in one piece!

Some of the basics include oxygen and first aid on board, a working radio and an able crew with local experience. If you're diving in a more remote destination, you will want to inquire about the closest recompression chamber and emergency procedures. You may even want to inquire about back-up engines and boat maintenance.

## Birds of a Feather...

Some photographers choose to dive only on special photography-oriented group trips often guided by a professional photographer. Many of these trips include

workshops and shoot-outs to help participants learn new techniques and approaches to their photography. Other trips simply offer the luxury of diving freedom for photographers with very specific interests. Usually the resorts or live-aboards that host these trips are very photo friendly.

## And Finally...

Lets face it, we've all been caught out once or twice by wise talking sales people; don't believe everything you read about the destination in the brochure or everything you are told by the travel agent. Do your homework and travel to the right locations at the right time.

If you can, speak to photographers who are familiar with the destination you are planning to visit, find out what time of year

they went, what operator they used and what boat they dived from—find out if they had a favourite guide there too.

Too many people have been gypped by taking travel brochures as gospel. Don't get caught in a location during monsoon season after the reef has been plundered by local fishermen, when you were told you were visiting somewhere with year round sunshine and prolific marine life!

It's also worth bearing in mind that you can quickly build a rapport with a dive operator or guide with whom you could get discounts on future trips for diving frequently with one operator, or you could get special treatment from your guide and crew.

In most popular destinations, there is a dive operator to suit everybody's needs. However, we don't always get to plan the exact

trip we want. You may need to combine your photo dive trip with a family dive trip, or a business trip.

Next time you're planning a trip, use this as a list of criteria alongside any other special requirements you have, and you'll soon be able to narrow your options down to the most photo-friendly operators.

*Good luck and happy shooting!*



## Divers & Photographers —Ambassadors of the Sea

By Jason Heller

The inhabitants of the sea are unable to protect themselves—unable to cry for help—unable to call attention to the atrocities of man. They need representatives who can share the evidence of the silent destruction that is occurring daily in the world's oceans.

While recently diving on world famous Wolf Island in the Galapagos, home of schooling Hammerheads, White Tips, Galapagos Sharks, Turtles, Mantas, Eagle Rays and more, we found this long line fishing hook. A little research and help from photographer, Michael Aw, confirmed that this was indeed a long line tuna hook.

([www.tunahook.com/products/longline/accessories1.php3](http://www.tunahook.com/products/longline/accessories1.php3))

Enforcement in these remote areas is difficult, and from the apparent lack of sharks at Darwin's Arch, ineffective. We as divers and photographers can do our part to help. Document your findings, report any evidence of illegal fishing or reef destruction to the proper local authorities and to international groups who may be able to help.

In the interim, anyone with images of long lining, illegal fishing, shark finning or sea cucumber harvesting in the Galapagos, please contact me directly at [Jason@divephotoguide.com](mailto:Jason@divephotoguide.com).



DivePhotoGuide.com

## Photoevent Calendar by Jason Heller

Welcome to another great new X Ray feature - our Dive Photo & Video Event Calendar, provided by DivePhotoGuide.com.

- Feb. 1**  
Subios – (Seychelles)  
▶ [www.subios.com/en/competitions](http://www.subios.com/en/competitions)
- Feb. 1**  
UW Images 2006 (USA)  
▶ [www.uwimages.org/2006/index.htm](http://www.uwimages.org/2006/index.htm)
- Feb. 3**  
First Annual Wetpixel.com & DivePhotoGuide.com International Photo Competition (USA)  
▶ [www.divephotoguide.com/contest06](http://www.divephotoguide.com/contest06)
- Feb. 15th**  
EPIC Photo Contest (USA)  
▶ [www.epicphotocontest.org](http://www.epicphotocontest.org)
- Feb. 25th**  
Fete De L'Image.Sous Marine (France)  
▶ <http://fete.image.s.marine.free.fr>
- March 31st**  
Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition (UK)  
▶ [www.nhm.ac.uk/visit-us/whats-on/temporary-exhibitions/wpy/comp-index.html](http://www.nhm.ac.uk/visit-us/whats-on/temporary-exhibitions/wpy/comp-index.html)
- March 31st**  
Asian Diver & ADEX 2006 Ocean Odyssey II (Singapore)  
▶ [www.asiandiver.com/contest/ocean\\_odyssey\\_2.pdf](http://www.asiandiver.com/contest/ocean_odyssey_2.pdf)

