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The Triton nudibranch only comes out to feed at night, but be careful, as they are light sensitive



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Translation by Arnold Weisz

Night diving is the ultimate for many divers. Underwater photography without light is challenging, but with a few additional pieces of camera equipment and special techniques you can master this as well.

Night underwater photography is usually restricted to plants or animals. Often it is either animals that are hunting for food under the cover of darkness, or daylight active animals that are sleeping. Worthwhile objects are, for example, sleeping fish, nudibranchs, sea stars and worms. All living creatures, and especially crustaceans, which leave their dwellings in the dark, are best captured with close-up or macro photography. Sleeping fishes can often be approached by inching closer and closer until you are just a few centimetres away. This gives you the opportunity to get close-up images of their eyes and fins, which, during daylight, are virtually impossible. Many

A slave strobe gives you additional effects to improve your images

Night Photography





photo & video



Tungsten lighting effect on stingray

UW-photographers ask me if flashing strobes will disturb a sleeping fish. Good news! It is scientifically proven that sleeping fish are not disturbed by strobes. They don't seem to notice and continue to sleep peacefully.

Close-up or macro

Fishes that are active during the night are, on the other hand, much more difficult to photograph. Even catch-

ing them with your light could scare them off. I'll give you a small tip though; the lights from a diving boat often attract predators such as barracudas and garfish. To get a good shot of these fishes, simply sneak up on them from the shadow side.

In general, photographers should always be alert at any time. Combined with luck, this will get you the best night time images, for

example, of octopuses and eels when they catch their prey.

As photo subjects during a night dive are often very small, most of your photography will be close-up or macro. On cameras with viewfinders (analog or digital), you can use close-up lenses. When using SLR cameras, it is best to use lenses with 50 to 30-degree angels.

Equipment

Skip your wide angel lenses for night diving—except if you are going to capture very close up images within the 25 to 40 cm range. You don't have any daylight to take into consideration. Instead, you need to make your strobes fill the whole frame and point exactly at

Animals that are fixed like the soft coral shown here, or slow moving animals, are particular good subjects for night photography



Night Photography

the object. The best way to do this is to attach a small pilotlight onto the strobe and use this to aim. Some strobes even have a built-in a pilot light. This shouldn't be stronger than 10W and last a minimum of one hour. Additionally, the strobe should be able to release at least 50 flashes at full power. If the strobe fails to deliver at this level, you are in danger of maybe loosing out on your shots.

Techniques

The most important prerequisite for making good underwater night photography is to be 100 percent ready. The camera settings should always be preset for the expected subject matter. Photographers who have to fumble with their settings or make tedious adjustments to the strobe arms will definitely loose their chance to capture the subject. Always have a small flashlight on

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Hermit crabs are maybe not the slowest, but often make very nice subjects

Keep your hands free by attaching small torches to a helmet



hand for easier operation of your camera settings. It might be a bit uncustomary for many, but a using a helmet with mounted lamps keeps your hands free,

Choice of subject

Although all this technology and equipment with special features solves a lot of prob-

lems, it all comes down to the choice of subject matter. I recommend that you don't venture on long swims during night dives, but concentrate your search for photo subjects on a rock wall or a coral head.

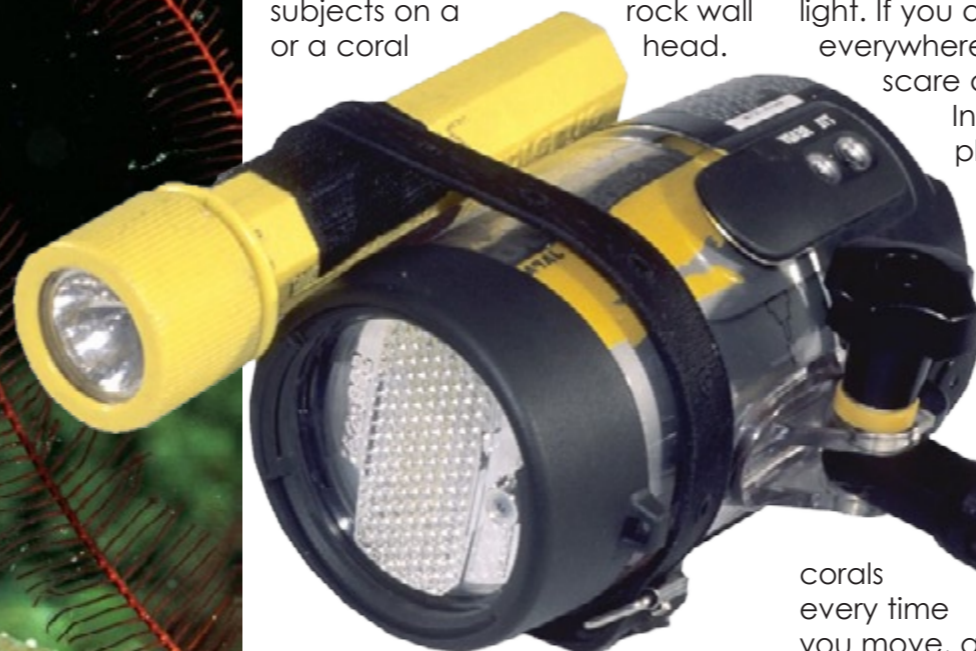


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Take a really close look in all the nooks and crannies, and even on flat sandy bottoms.

Just keep in mind that most nocturnal animals will stay out of the light. If you are shining your lamps everywhere, you will certainly scare away a lot of animals.

In addition, in order to plan your night dive carefully, you must also take care of the environment. In the dark, it is even more difficult to see where you put your hands or fins. Position yourself in a way that you don't bump into the



corals every time you move, and move slowly and deliberately.

ABOVE: Mounting a pilot lamp onto your strobe makes aiming much easier. LEFT: Muray eels are nocturnal animals that start to hunt a few hours after sunset

DivePhotoGuide.com



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Feeding Triton snail

BELOW: Sleeping Parrotfish



Seacam—Amsler
Edition with built in
target lamp

Practical tips for night time underwater photography:

- Eighty percent of all images taken during night dives are either macro or close-ups. Keep your search for subjects within a small area, such as a coral head.
- Always prepare the correct camera settings before you enter the water. This helps you avoid unnecessary movements with lamps under water.
- Most nocturnal animals get scared by light. Try to dim your lamps. A pilot light on the strobe

doesn't need to have more than 5-10W.

If you need to use your flashlight during the dive, cover it with some of your fingers to dim the light.

- Night dives are often done too early. Many nocturnal animals are most often active and come out of their dwellings 2-4 hours after sun down.
- Operating camera equipment in the dark is much more difficult than during a day time dive. Keep your equipment down to a minimum to avoid fumbling, to get better images.
- Mount your external lamp directly on the strobe with, for example, duck tape or rubber

bands. This allows you to more easily adjust sharpness and aim your strobe.

- At night, it's even more important than during day time dives to have good buoyancy and know where you put your fins.
- Flashes from strobes don't disturb fishes. But long exposures with dive lamps do. While searching for your subjects, don't point your lamps too long at fish.
- Night time underwater photography requires careful planning. Often photographers forget to pay attention to their air supply, depth, or surroundings when concentrating intensely on the photography. ■



"Canikon—watch your rear mirror" With its 24.6 MP 35mm format full-frame CMOS sensor, the **Sony α900** has the highest resolution in its class. The Alpha 900 body will be available in November for about US\$3,000 along with related accessories



The clash of the Titans begins

The megapixel race has gone to the next level



Canon's update to the hugely popular full-frame EOS 5D is here, the **EOS 5D Mark II** has a stunning 21.1-megapixel full-frame CMOS sensor with DIGIC 4 image processor and a vast ISO range of 100-6400. It can shoot up to 3.9 fps



Aquatica is now shipping its housing for the **Canon 1Ds Mk III**, featuring the best that technologies and ergonomics can offer and in addition to the classic Nikonos type and Ikelite type manual connectors, the S6 type connector is being offered as well



Leica has once again revolutionized the world of photography with a digital S-System that's perfect for professional use. The **Leica S2**, with its premium AF objectives including everything from ultra-wide to super-telephoto, is an absolute photographic highlight. The digital SLR camera has a special new sensor with 30 x 45 mm and 37.5 megapixels. The S2's metal body is appreciably smaller and easier to carry than similar models from other camera brands, and yet it's also nearly twice as fast thanks to ultra-modern processor technology

35^e FESTIVAL MONDIAL

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ET DE CHRISTIAN ESTROSI,
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Relaunch of UnderwaterCompetition.com

The renovated website, *UnderwaterCompetition.com*, is home to the organization's series of international photo competitions, hosted collaboratively between their two popular underwater photo and video websites.

In just four years, these competitions have become some of the most prestigious and widely supported international underwater photography and video competitions in the world.

As their readers already know, the primary competitions are unique in the fact that they are held in association with two dive expos on opposite sides of the world simultaneously. Our World Underwater in Chicago, USA, and DEEP Indonesia in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Not only did the staff give UnderwaterCompetition.com a facelift, including highlighting and ranking winning photographers, but they also automated the entire competition. As a participant, you can now sign up for your own UnderwaterCompetition account, upload your submissions, and pay for your entries through this website. ■



Aquatica Nikon D700 Housing

The new 90m (300ft) depth rated Aquatica Digital Pro housing for Nikon D700 features a bold new design machined from solid aluminum, it is treated and anodized to military specification, then painted with a robust weather and wear resistant finish. Positive bayonet mounting offers the fastest access to lenses for rapid changing without having to remove the SLR from the housing. Allows the use of lenses from 180 degrees fisheye to the longest of macro lenses. Tele-converter port extensions are also available. The line of standard accessories such as the Aqua View finder, remote control cord, and TLC line of strobe arms are also fully compatible with it. The suggested retail price is 2,949.00 USD www.aquatica.ca

Sealux Nikon D3 Housing

The sturdy aluminium construction is hard anodized and additionally passivated in a special process to make it seawater-resistant. A combination of large O-rings, double seal shafts and fourfold-sealed keys ensures maximum safety. The GD-Viewfinder is a high-quality optical system features several layers of coating and provides a brilliant image, which is 150%, enlarged compared to that of the camera viewfinder. www.sealux.de



Ikelite Housing for Sony HDR-CX11 & CX12

This "Clearly Superior" design provides full view of the camcorder, control functions, and back "O" ring seal for assurance the system is safe. Maximum operating depth is 60m (200ft). Weight above water is less than 8lbs (3.6kg) for easy packing, and very slightly negative in saltwater for stability and comfortable handling. Controls for the LCD Screen Touch Pad provide full access to setting white balance and white balance shift. An included removable UR/Pro filter enhances red tones in tropical blue water settings with available sunlight at depths up to 80 feet (24m)



Ikelite Nikon D90 Housing

With the exception of the focus selector lock and diopter adjustment, controls for all camera functions are provided including D-Movie and Live View. As an added bonus, both the media card and battery can be replaced without the removal of the camera from the housing tray. Also included is TTL conversion circuitry that functions perfectly with current model Ikelite DS digital SubStrobes. Complete creative control is enabled with seven manual power settings in half-stop increments, with all choices obtainable with a simple twist of a knob on the housing's back. Although Non-Ikelite strobes can be utilized with the system, TTL capability is not available. www.ikelite.com



Photoshop CS4

The 64-bit edition of the new Photoshop will allow PCs with lots of RAM to work on very large images with less hard disk swapping, thus speeding up operations. With the diminishing amount of RAM available to modern PCs (due to a 4GB limit on 32-bit Windows versions such as the still popular XP that's an update of extreme significance. While Photoshop users may take a while to move to the new 64-bit version, CS4 offers plenty of other features and upgrades to keep 32-bit users happy.

The new Canvas Rotation tool makes it effortless to rotate and work on an image from any angle. New path-bar navigation and workspace selection buttons across the top of the Bridge window let you instantly go to just the right display for every task. Also included are new Camera Import controls, visual folder navigation, and a Carousel View for larger image-group selections. The software also provides a smooth pan and zoom experience, allowing users to edit images effortlessly at the highest magnification. ■