

# tsunami on Sumatra

## in retrospect

*Now, one year after, the situation remains difficult.*

**It was a day of unbelievable violence. Sometimes Nature decides to wake up and with an unforgettable result. This was the case on 26th December 2004 when the giant earthquake struck and a day that will be remembered for long time in areas as Simeulue and Nias Island, North Sumatra, Indonesia which were the nearest points to the earthquake epicentre. From this day on life changed profoundly for the islands' inhabitants**

Text and Photos:  
Francesco Ricciardi  
[www.biodiving.it](http://www.biodiving.it)

Geography has changed, the beach has moved away. Everything that was underwater, corals, sponges and algae is now out of the water for hundreds of kilometres along the coastline. The earthquake on Dec. 26 lifted the seafloor about 2 meters both in Simeulue and Nias.

Now, one year after, the situation remains difficult. "Everything is changed in the lives of Northern Sumatra's inhabitants", says Sebastiano Gulinello—the Italian owner of the boat which carried us into the tsunami area. He has been living in Indonesia since 1999, doing surfer's cruises.



Debris brought on the uplifted coral reef after the backwashing wave



"Most of them are going away. The earth is continuously moving, and the people who remain are dependent on the international aid. The economy is stagnant, and there are no signs of recovery". Immediately after the event, the

Crab left high and dry by the earthquake. Unable to make it back to sea it now lies mummified by the sun

humanitarian aid arrived in abundance. Boats that were usually charterboats for surfers transformed themselves in hospitals, medicine cargoships, and water and food transporters. But despite of this, almost a year later, recovery is not complete and inhabitants are still completely dependant on aid to survive.

Sebastiano and his crew are experts in this area, which was seriously affected by to big earthquakes in 2004 and 2005. They took us on tour to visit both islands for a scientific expedition organized by Ancona University (Italy), whith the pur-

Table corals broken by earthquake and killed by sand and debris in the water.





Some Porites colonies left dry after the uplift of the reef are now becoming green with algae

The uplifted reef bleaching under the sun. A big dead heliopora colony is a solemn witness of the wonderful coral reef existing before December 26.

pose of evaluating the damage caused by the earthquake and tsunami on Sumatra's reefs, which are the resource that the local population is dependent upon as well as a tourist destination.

On board were specialists in different fields of coral biology, from invertebrates to fish ecology. We were witnessing a historic event, and were the first divers on the submerged reefs off Simeulue Island after the catastrophe. "All people living in this area are frightened and people with money are leaving the area or buying homes far from the sea", Sebastiano says. "The Indonesian Government is preparing some emergency plans for the eventuality of another tsunami, since experts confirm that the event of another one remains a possibility"

Our first dive, in front of Busung, one of the small villages on Simeulue, was a little surprising: There were no apparent damage to corals due to tsunami, though there were some signs of dynamite fishing. The ecosystem was healthy, with corals adapted to the strong waves that make this island a favourite among surfers. Fish community seems to be in a good condition with butterfly fish, which are corallivorous, (eat corals, ed) and therefore a good indicator of reef health, are abundant and colourful. Second dive was off the little island of Simelutjur, which is also exposed to strong waves, confirmed the previous impression. The tsunami did not have any effect on a environment that was already well adapted to a "high-energy hydrodynamic situation".

The following destination was Lakon, which were an incredible sight: The whole little island was lifted about two meters, leaving wide areas of reef exposed and out of the water. Giant massive corals of the Porites genus, table-corals known as Acropora and Pocillopora lay bleached on the reef surface. Other areas, still moist from the sea sprays and high tide, were completely green because of the colonisation of algae.

Walking on exposed reef was very impressive. It was like a stony forest where we saw reef organisms such crabs, shells, sea urchins, stranded and mummified by the sun, unable to reach the sea that was now out of reach for them. Now, the sea carried a lot of sand on the reef, transforming it in a sandy beach.

Diving in front of Lakon confirmed the impressions from the topside scenario. The earthquake shook the carbonatic shelves, provoking some big collapses. The backwash of the waves then carried mud out to sea resulting in strong siltation and unusual water turbidity

further out. In other words the water became clouded with particles and material that then settled on the corals with knock-on effects on the whole ecosystem. Surgeonfish and parrotfish which feed on algae were prevalent in the fish

community as they were the only ones able to find some food in this devastated ecosystem. Besides, the more striking feature of the fish community was the impressive proportion of juveniles relative to adults (up to 70% of the herbivorous



Fish communities appear to be in a good condition



Some corals outside of the water

fish and 80% of the butterflyfish) recorded in the sites most affected by a strong siltation. This is unusual. Many fish species appeared in their recruitment stage, while many adults have been likely killed or displaced by the tsunami.

The same impressive situation met us in the front of Langi village, where the presence of rice paddies and human activity have stolen more space from mangroves, which are plants with roots that could have retained some of the mud and detritus (dead organic matter, ed.). People living in Langi told us about the primordial terror brought down on them during seven minutes of earth tremors, so violent that they couldn't remain on feet, while witnessing how the sea was sliding away, and the corals going up for thou-

sands of meters of coast. Tradition and histories handed down from the village's elders saved many lives this day. Tales told about an old earthquake where the sea retracted following a giant wave that have destroyed the village in the early '900. The escape from the village saved hundreds of

people. Few minutes later, in 2004, the tsunami wave on Simeulue killed only 6 people. "Sumong" in the local language means "tsunami". The close tie Simeulue's people have with nature made the difference in comparison to other regions, where the wave killed thousands.

Fish life were prolific even after the quake



systems, continuously evolving depending on external conditions. "There are some incredible dive sites in the Mentawai Archipelago" – tSebastiano told us, a dive instructor before starting the surfer's activity - "and the Government is planning to make some little Marine Protected Areas". If not damaged by human activities (like cyanide and dynamite fishing), the coral will grow again but slowly. It will probably need at least 50 years in the impacted areas. But we will given another chance of experiencing Sumatra's underwater beauties. Let Nature take her course.

Life survived!



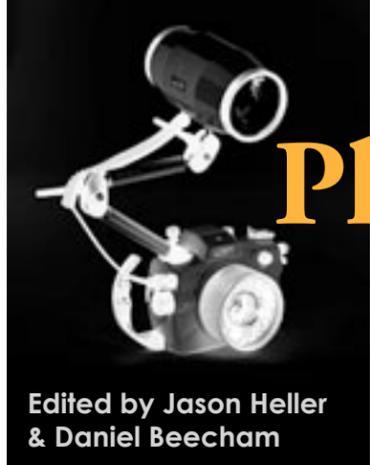
An astonishing colony of Porites massive coral broken by earthquake and shifted by tsunami wave

Last stop was the little island of Silaut Kecil, the region closest to earthquake epicentre. Some impressive breaks on the sea bottom was a testament to the incredible violence of the earthquake. Coral reefs in shallow water were completely destroyed, while the drop-off areas maintained a good overall condition, as they were apparently better

able to resist to the quake's power. Some big fish, as a manta ray and some schooling bumphead parrotfish were still present, while in the other dive sites they were completely missing.

Now, the project is to monitoring the slow recovery of the corals. Probably the reef in this area will never be the same but coral reefs are dynamic





Edited by Jason Heller & Daniel Beecham

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# Photography



By Daniel Beecham

**As any diver knows, at depth light is absorbed, and one by one the colours of the spectrum disappear.**

**Red is the first to go which disappears at around six metres, followed by orange, yellow...**

**Underwater photographers are constantly battling against the effect water has on colour and light, and use various methods to return good colours to their images.**

**In this issue we're going to look at under-**

**water flash units, or 'strobes'. We'll also look at some of the problems that digital cameras have presented with underwater flash units, and what to look out for when you want to purchase your own flash system.**



Nikonos V type connector has five connections

## Choosing & Using Underwater Flash Units

### Electrical or Optical?

Most of the principles of flash photography are the same on DSLR's (Digital Single Lens Reflex) and compact cameras. There are however some differences in the way flash units are connected to, and communicate with the cameras.

To fire an external flash unit on a DSLR, an electronic connection runs from the camera *hot shoe*, through a cable in the housing, and then to a connector called a *sync socket*. From this socket, a *sync cable* connects the housing to the external flash unit.

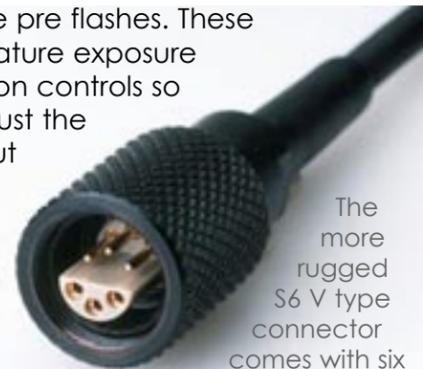
Most digital compact cameras do not have a hot-shoe connector, and even if it does, it may not be accessible through the housing. Because of this, external flash units for compacts generally work as *slaves*; they are triggered by the built in flash on

the camera-via a fibre optic cable, rather than an electronic sync cord. The cable mounts onto the housing in front of the built in flash. When the built in flash fires, light travels up the cable, hits a slave sensor on the flash unit, telling it when to start and stop firing.

When a built in flash is used on a compact, the camera will put out a series of pre-flashes before the main flash fires and the image is recorded. Because of this, when you want to fire an external flash unit, you must use one that has been designed to ignore the pre-flashes, and will wait to fire with the main flash. If you try to use an older strobe (one designed to be used with a film system) the external flash will fire early and so will not have time to recycle and fire on the main flash.

Early strobes which were designed for compact cameras used an 'auto' system to control the power output. With an auto system you set the desired aperture on the camera, and set the same aperture on a dial on the flashgun, this gives you the correct exposure.

Newer strobes such as the INON D2000 now provide a 'TTL' system. This has been achieved by building a slave sensor that actually copies everything that the built in flash does, including the pre flashes. These guns also feature exposure compensation controls so you can adjust the power output to achieve the desired result.



The more rugged S6 V type connector comes with six connections - and triple o-rings

# Let there be light



# photography



# Let there be light



## Other Compatibility Issues

Digital cameras have created a few problems with flash systems on DSLR cameras as well. Tradition film cameras used TTL systems to meter the amount of flash needed to expose the picture properly. DSLR's use different TTL systems, such as DTTL, iTTL, and E TTL. If you try and use a digital camera with a traditional TTL style strobe, the two will not communicate properly; they speak different languages.

A Tetra housing with Ultra Light arms mounted showing how brands can often be combined - there are many connectors, adaptors and clamps available. Productphoto from Light & Motion's website.



This has presented a problem for manufacturers of underwater strobes, it takes time to develop a flash unit that can properly communicate with a DSLR, and at the rate that new cameras are being released, the strobes are often out of date by the time they're available!

Many people continue to use older strobes that have been designed for film systems, and simply use the manual power settings to control the power out-put. The instant review on the LCD screen allows you to check the exposure, and adjust if necessary. If you feel this is too much like hard work, there are ways to get a TTL system working.

## Using land flash

Some photographers use a normal land flash, and place it inside a custom built housing, this means that the flash is wired directly from the camera hot shoe to the flash, and so communicates properly.

Some small companies are now producing converters that change the signal from the camera into one that the flash unit can

understand, the downside with these is that they often mean you have to retro-fit them to your housing, which can be risky.

Even though TTL is now available through various methods, many photographers still choose to work with manual flash, preferring the amount of control it offers the user. It is worth bearing in mind that you can always turn a TTL gun to manual; you can't turn a manual gun to TTL.

## Strobe Positioning

The position that strobes are placed in is critical. Suspended particulate in the water can be illuminated as it reflects light back towards the camera. This is often referred to as 'back-scatter'. To avoid backscatter place your strobes in a position where they will light the subject only, and not the water in-between the subject and the lens.

It's important to remember that the strobes generally have very wide coverage, and as such they do not need to be pointed directly at your subject.

## Flash Arms

Do not underestimate the importance of good flashgun arms; it is through them that you control your light source. Good arms will hold their position when you move them, without the need to loosen and tighten the clamps that hold the frames together. You don't want to be wasting your valuable time underwater adjusting arms, not spent taking underwater pictures.

Another option is a manual strobe controller, in this case for the Ikelite DS series strobes. The strobe must be set to TTL mode when used with the Manual Controller



FROM OCEAN OPTICS, LONDON, UK

Many highend strobes has manual settings



Call for entries

2006 - 1st Annual Wetpixel.com and DivePhotoGuide.com

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in association with Our World-Underwater

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Wetpixel.com and DivePhotoGuide.com have teamed up to celebrate the beauty and delicacy of the marine environment by developing the first instance of a new, annual, international underwater photography competition.

Photographers will compete in six categories to win more than \$25,000 in prizes, including premium dive travel, underwater photography equipment, and more! Dive packages in the prize list include trips to some of the top photo destinations in the world: the Solomon Islands, Lembeh Strait, Raja Ampat, Komodo, the Galapagos Islands, Papua New Guinea, The Bahamas and Palau! Other prizes include camera housings, strobes, lighting systems, and other valuable items (see website for complete prize list).

The contest includes a category for images that focus on conservation and the marine environment, and one specifically for entries taken by compact digital cameras.

All entrants will receive one free, digital issue of Dive Chronicles Magazine, and all entrants in the Compact Camera category will receive one free photo lesson from renowned underwater photographer, Marty Snyderman, via TheUnderwaterphotographer.com.

Winners will be announced on stage at the 2006 Our World-Underwater festival in Chicago, Illinois (February 24-26, 2006). 15% of entry proceeds will be donated to marine conservation efforts.

**Official Websites:**  
Wetpixel [www.wetpixel.com/contest](http://www.wetpixel.com/contest)  
DivePhotoGuide [www.divephotoguide.com/contest06](http://www.divephotoguide.com/contest06)



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# Let there be light

## Considerations When Purchasing Underwater Strobes

### 1) Power and Coverage

Make sure the power of the strobe you're looking at will fulfil your requirements; an underwater guide number of around 22 will be sufficient for most peoples needs. Regarding the coverage of your strobes, look for a unit that covers around 100 degrees, or preferably more. This will ensure your strobe will cover most wide-angle lenses. Often strobes also come with diffusers, which will increase the coverage of your strobes, although they will reduce the power.

### 2) Recycle Time

This is the time it takes the strobe to recharge its power cells after firing on full power. Its important to check the recycle time on a strobe you're looking to purchase, if the strobe is very slow to recycle, you may find yourself missing pictures whilst you're waiting for your strobes to recycle

### 3) Power Source

Some underwater strobes are powered by normal AA batteries, whereas others have built in cells. Both power sources have their advantages and disadvantages.

When using AA cells you can travel with a couple of large packs of disposable batteries or with a few sets of rechargeable batteries and chargers. You should have enough to keep you going for your dive trip, but if you run out or your charger gets damaged you can source AA's almost anywhere, so you should be able to keep shooting.

One of the disadvantages is that you'll have more maintenance to do on your



Subtronic strobes have built in Ni-Cad batteries

strobe, servicing o-rings on the battery compartment.

Some strobes such as 'Subtronic's' have built in Ni-Cad batteries, which can be charged through the sync socket. These batteries are generally very powerful and give the strobe a fast re-cycle time. They can also be more reliable as they have fewer o-rings because there is no battery compartment, and therefore fewer potential weak points. These batteries are generally not user replaceable, and must be carefully maintained. If the cells are allowed to drain completely, or are not recharged often enough, they may be irreparably damaged, and so you could find yourself on a dive trip with a strobe that will not hold its charge.

### 4) Size and Weight

This is an important consideration with purchasing any diving gear or underwater camera equipment. The size and weight



of strobes can differ dramatically; also take into consideration the size of the unit along with all the necessary accessories including flash arms, cables, chargers and/or batteries. Try not to get caught in the trap of having too much gear to comfortably transport your gear as hand luggage, if your system get too heavy or large it will have to be checked into the hold, and you risk paying excess luggage fines on your dive trips.

A full underwater camera system represents a significant investment for most people, and a flash system may represent a large portion of that investment. Be sure that the system you're getting into will fulfil your needs now, and in the future. Visit a reputable dealer who knows the equipment before you buy, and if possible get in the water with the equipment you're going to be using before you hand over your credit card!

## About The photoevent calendar

In an effort to keep our readers informed and involved, each issue will feature upcoming competitions, film festivals and general event announcements. We hope we can help you stay up-to-date and further fuel your passion for underwater imagery.

December is a big month for underwater photo and video competitions. There are 9 international competitions with deadlines in December. Some competitions are open to all photographers, while others are only open to amateurs. Remember, always make sure that you note the specific usage rights secured by the competition before submitting any images or videos.

Good luck!



**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.

### Dec. 1

British Society of Underwater Photographers Annual Open Portfolio Competition (UK)

► [www.bsoup.org/Open\\_Portfolio/intro.php](http://www.bsoup.org/Open_Portfolio/intro.php)

### Dec. 25

Moscow International Diving Festival "Golden Dolphin" (Russia)

► [www.mosfest.ru](http://www.mosfest.ru)

### Dec. 31

Underwater Photography.com Annual Contest (USA - Online)

► [www.underwaterphotography.com](http://www.underwaterphotography.com)

2nd Annual Manta Network Photo Competition (USA)

► [http://mantas.somebox.com/html/documents/Contest\\_Desc.pdf](http://mantas.somebox.com/html/documents/Contest_Desc.pdf)

Beneath The Sea 2006 Photo and Video Competition (USA)

► [www.beneaththesea.org/v2005/contest.html](http://www.beneaththesea.org/v2005/contest.html)

The North Carolina Aquariums Photo Competition (USA)

► [www.ncaquariums.com/newsite/press-releases/photocontest05.htm](http://www.ncaquariums.com/newsite/press-releases/photocontest05.htm)

2006 Scuba Diving Magazine Photo Contest (USA)

► [www.scubadiving.com/photocontest](http://www.scubadiving.com/photocontest)

British Underwater Image Festival (UK)

► [www.divemagazine.co.uk/news/article.asp?UAN=2108&v=1&sp=](http://www.divemagazine.co.uk/news/article.asp?UAN=2108&v=1&sp=)

International Photoshop Competition (USA)

► [www.digitalcanvasawards.com](http://www.digitalcanvasawards.com)

# shark tales



Text and photo  
by Edwin Marcow

**The surf pounded and broke upon the shoreline pushing the diver backwards. As the surge swept back into the ocean, it pulled on the diver's aching feet and legs.**

The "heroic" diver hauled in his twelfth kill of the day, another man-eating shark, the ragged tooth one, now disposed of. With its huge bulk and protruding fangs, people would be in awe of the diver's bravery. Girls would flock to be by his side. Guys would wish they could be "just like him."

That was the mid 70's, the time of *Jaws*, where the only good shark was a dead shark. With the exception of a few, mass hysteria, mis-placed fear and above all, ignorance, played out on our all our parts.

It is hard to believe that this could have taken place, but it did, time after time, in particular Australia and South Africa. How things have changed...

## Old Raggie

The Ragged Tooth shark, *Carcharias taurus*, is also known as the Sand Tiger shark, Grey Nurse shark or fondly called "Raggies" in South Africa. It has a robust size and girth, brown skin often commonly seen with large dark spots on each flank, pointed snout and numerous fang like teeth.

What a formidable killer this shark must be! Well nothing could be further from the truth, although a large shark like this is made all the more lethal with the equal size of its dorsal and anal fins. Measuring in at an average length of three metres and about 300 kg, this large shark is slow, sluggish and docile.

For the un-initiated, it is hard to believe that



the formidable large shark feeds only on small fishes. This rather shy and almost timid shark will only attack if provoked, most often when disturbed from a restful slumber.

Though "common" in South Africa in particular off the coastline of KwaZulu Natal where they mate or reproduce in summer bearing two pups nine months later, this is a species on the endangered list due to the actions of a few all those years ago.

## Getting there

If you should travel to South Africa to dive with the Raggies. Please see *The Best Dive Sight's in South Africa*. Look under The South Coast chapter where there are numerous listings for dive locations to see and observe these magnificent fish.

Do please treat these wonderful sharks with the respect, the kind of respect you would show to a wealthy relative who you hoped would leave

you "something in their will".

The Ragged Tooth shark, for all it's imposing size and protruding fangs, is a passive animal. With their unique ability among sharks to be able to pump water over their gills, they Raggies can sleep and rest in caves and gullies, which seems to be their favourite pastime.

Although not aggressive, once the personal space of a Raggie has been breached, they can become quite a

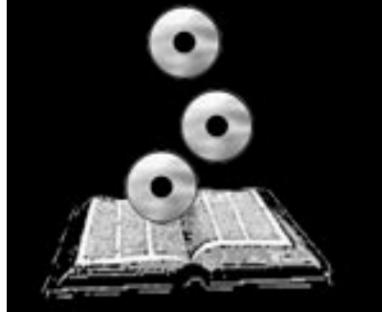
handful. It has been witnessed when an over-friendly diver ventures too close. The diver will be literally chased out of the ocean.

So, if you should go down to ocean today, please, please observe only, or you too, could be chased out of the sea. ■

ABOVE: A Raggie or Ragged Tooth shark emerges from the deep. They can grow up to three meters (10 ft) in length and weigh up to 300 kilograms (662 pounds)



# media



## Books • Film • DVDs • CDs

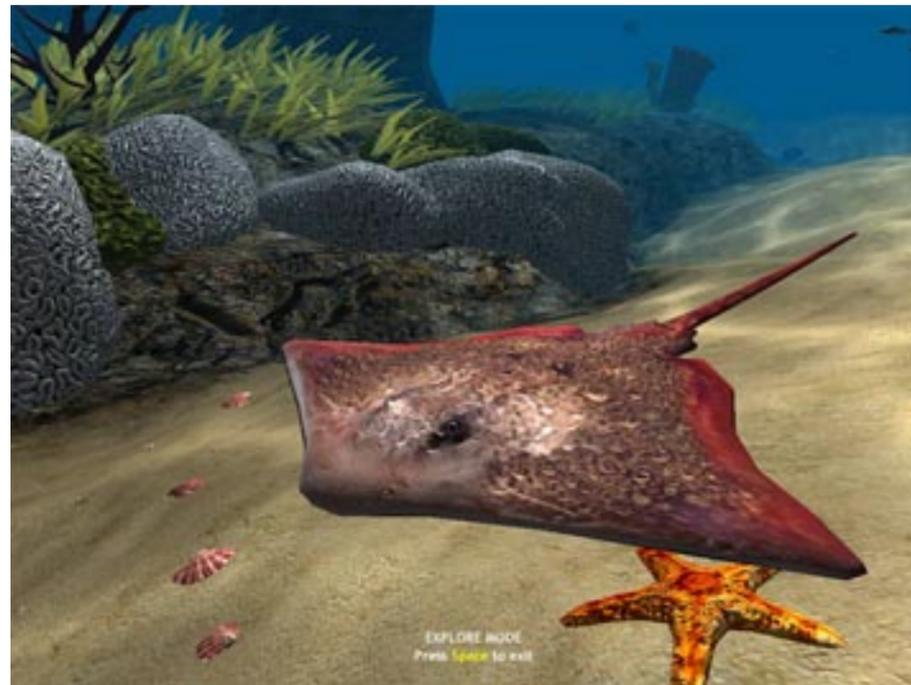
Edited by Peter Symes  
& Gunild Pak Symes

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OceanDive is a fun combination of an exploration game and 3D scuba diving screensaver. Now, you can enjoy realistic scuba diving vistas of the underwater world when you are not diving beneath the waves. No gear to don, no getting wet. Journey through shoals of fish, undersea caves, coral reefs and stunning submarine views. OceanDive will take you far away from your desk. Check out the scuba diving exploration game or upgrade your older version. Guaranteed with no spyware and no adware. Free screensavers and free trial of the game are available for download at the website. Price for Ocean Dive Adventure game with free upgrades: US\$19.99 [www.oceandive.com](http://www.oceandive.com)



## Movies



DIRECTOR: John Stockwell  
STUDIO: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer  
and Columbia Pictures  
RATING: PG-13  
LENGTH: 110 minutes  
RELEASED: 30 September 2005

STORY: Into the Blue is a deep sea thriller set in the shark-infested waters of the Bahamas. Four young divers enter a game of high stakes when they discover a legendary shipwreck thought to hold millions of dollars worth of gold. They cannot believe their luck. But the plot thickens when nearby, they discover a sunken plane on the ocean floor. It is full of illegal cargo. The four friends make a pact to keep silent about both finds until they can extract the shipwreck's treasure before a rival team uncovers their secret stash and beats them to the treasure. But things turn for the worse when the divers find out that dangerous smugglers are already on their way to the missing plane and a fatal decision by one of the young friends changes the role of the treasure hunters into the hunted...

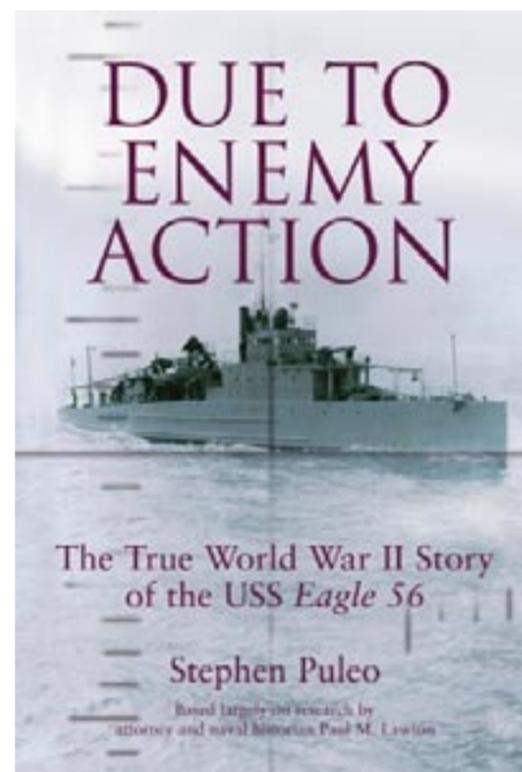
[www.IntoTheBlue-Movie.com](http://www.IntoTheBlue-Movie.com)

## General von Steuben



## General von Steuben DVD

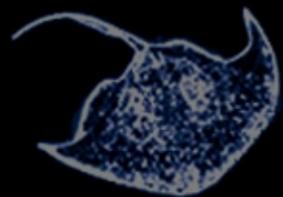
This DVD takes us to the German Ocean Liner *General von Steuben*, which was employed as a transport vessel for wounded soldiers by the the Nazi navy during the Second World War. The ship carried both civilians and soldiers out of East Prussia to avoid the advancing Soviet army. In February 1945, she was sunk in the Baltic Sea by the Soviet submarine S-13. The ship now rests at a depth of 72 meters, the last resting place for several thousand people who perished in the freezing cold waters. Price: €49.00. [www.divedvd.com](http://www.divedvd.com)



## Due to Enemy Action

Author: Stephen Puleo  
Hardcover: 352 pages  
Publisher: The Lyons Press; 1st edition  
Date: June 1, 2005  
Language: English  
ISBN: 1592287395  
Price: US\$ 22.95

Author Stephen Puleo brings us an account of the USS Eagle-56 sunk by a German U-boat near the end of World War II. At the time, the ship's sinking was wrongly blamed on a boiler-room explosion by the US naval court most likely to avoid embarrassment that the Navy had allowed an enemy warship to operate so closely to the mainland towards the end of the war. But in March 1988, two sons of one of the Eagle's crew members and their persistent lawyer, Paul Lawton, a naval historian, revived the case and persuaded the Navy to recant, thereby clearing the names of the crew and setting the record straight. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)



X-ray mag

Classifieds



Edwin Marcow



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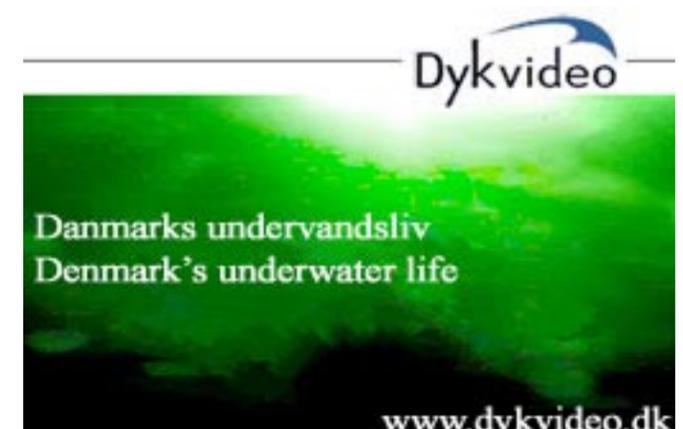


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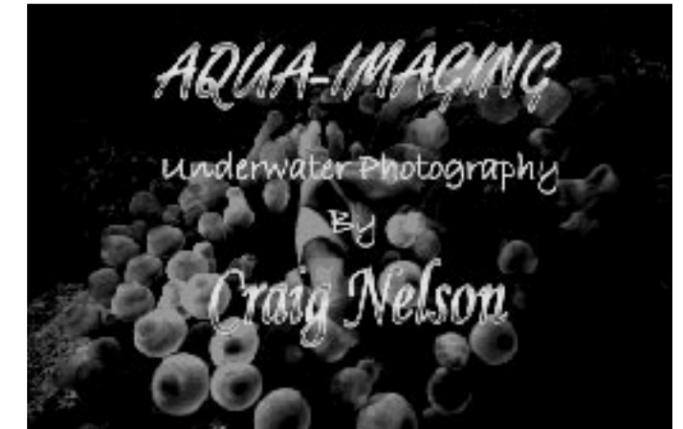


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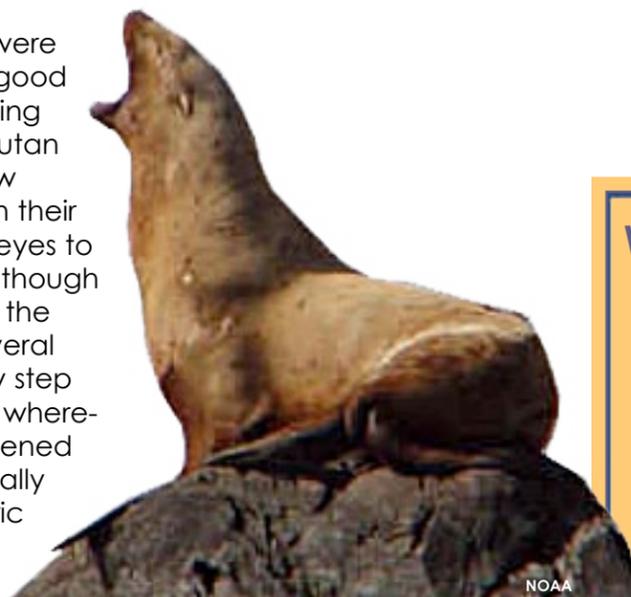
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## Even sea lions have to brush their teeth

Captive sea lions living in an ocean park in China have to brush their teeth before bed just like humans do. In the wild, marine animals such as sea lions find that seaweed makes a perfect dental floss. But in captivity, these animals need a bit of help from the electric toothbrush, which trainers and keepers use to clean the sea lions' teeth at least twice a week. Like humans, leftover food stuck in between the sea lions' teeth will cause tartar and stains as well as oral diseases if not cleaned. Sea lions in the wild usually use their teeth for hunting, but captive sea lions feed on food that is

dropped to them.

At first, the sea lions were reluctant to receive a good tooth brushing, according to keepers at the Laohutan Pole Aquarium, but now many of them will open their mouth and close their eyes to enjoy the treatment. Although some did not adapt to the electric toothbrush, several went through a step by step desensitisation process whereby they looked at it, listened to it, touched it and finally brushed with the electric toothbrush.



NOAA

## A Singing Iceberg?

Scientists recording seismic signals in Antarctica to measure tectonic movements and earthquakes picked up a low but clear tune under the waves. Upon investigation, they found that the sounds, which were around 0.5 hertz and too low to be heard by humans but when sped up sounded like an orchestra warming up or a swarm of bees, were actually coming

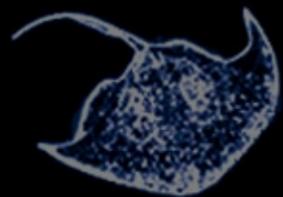
from an iceberg stuck on the seabed floor. The 50 by 20km iceberg had collided with an underwater peninsula. The scientists found that when water pushed through the iceberg's tunnels and crevasses at high pressure, the big lump of ice would start to sing. Located on the South Atlantic coast of Antarctica, the melodious iceberg was discovered and studied by researchers from the German Alfred Wegener institute for polar and marine research.

### Wet & Weird



News edited by  
Gunild Symes





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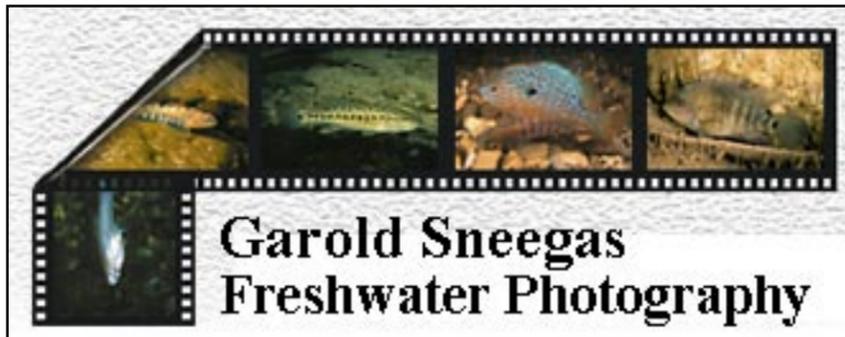
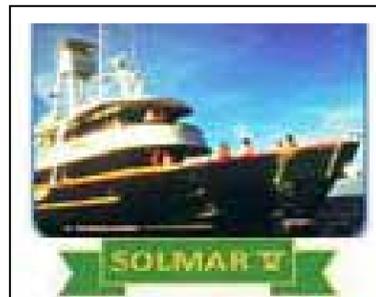
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Artificial Reef Society of British Columbia —Pressrelease

## Boeing 737 Gets Go Ahead To Be New Artificial Reef

The Artificial Reef Society of British Columbia has announced that all impediments appear to have been removed in preparation for the sinking of a Boeing 737 airframe that will serve as an artificial reef near Chemainus, on Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

The regulatory requirements included a final inspection by Environment Canada, and completion of consultations with the Hlu'qumi'num Musti'muhw in what is a landmark agreement with First Nations insofar as their participating in the review and permitting of an artificial reef project.

January 14th 2006 has been set for sinking the airframe. This sink date will enable the society to meet the deadline for inclusion in the upcoming Discovery Channel series "Mega Builders". Discovery has suggested that this program will reach 100 million viewers world wide.

By virtue of her being only 40 feet high, even sitting fifteen feet above the ocean bottom, she will be able to offer divers the opportunity to do penetration dives shallower than 70 feet. This makes for an ideal training environment.

The 6 ships the ARSBC have sunk are somewhat deeper, with main decks at over 80 feet in most cases and the bulk of the artificial reef below that.

geous depth. It will be an excellent and safe place to learn basic wreck diving and overhead environment skills.

Howard Robins, President of the ARSBC, who has also led the cleaning and preparation of the airframe for sinking, said, "A large number local divers, as well as divers from Washington State, worked very hard as volunteers to prepare the airplane for sinking. We expect that with this announcement many of them will plan to return for the sinking event January 14th 2006.

*January 14th 2006 has been set for sinking the airframe*

For more information, go to [www.artificialreef.bc.ca](http://www.artificialreef.bc.ca), or [www.divemaster.ca/boeing](http://www.divemaster.ca/boeing), or contact Howard Robins at 604-733-1122, or Peter Luckham at 250-252-0758



# Thomas Peschak





Photos by Thomas P. Peschak  
Text edited by Gunild Pak Symes

**Thomas P. Peschak is a marine biologist based at the University of Cape Town's Marine Biology Research Institute, where he conducts scientific research on kelp forests, illegal fishing and the ecology of sea otters. He is an experienced field biologist and professional diver who has worked extensively in Africa, Central America, the Middle East and the South Pacific.**

With a snout equipped with an arsenal of sophisticated sensors, this curious great white shark is about to lightly bump the dome port of my camera to learn more about the strange object that has invaded its realm

RIGHT: Sunlight struggling through the canopy of a flooded forest

PREVIOUS PAGE: During the austral winter southern right whales congregate in great numbers along South Africa's coast. They frequent shallow and sheltered bays to mate and give birth



## Thomas Peschak

In marine protected areas along South Africa's sub-tropical east coast large predatory fish like potato bass are still common and often show little fear of divers

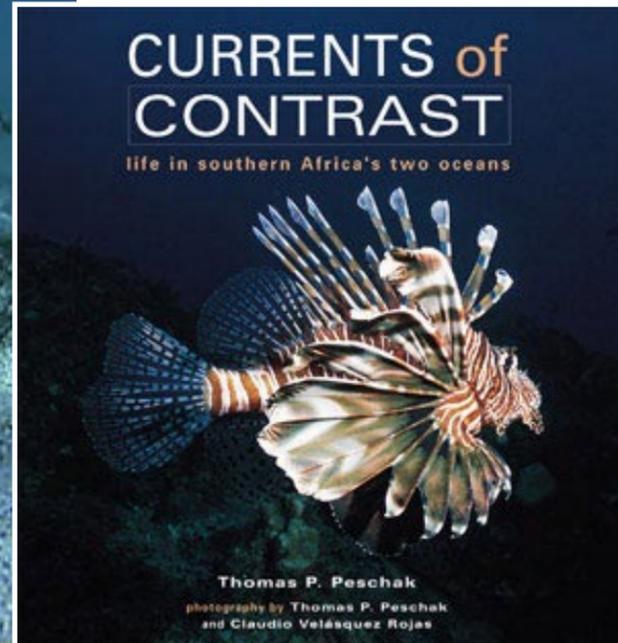


ABOVE & BOTTOM RIGHT: *Indigenous spear fisherman.* Along a remote stretch of the South African east coast live the Tembe-Thonga tribe, some of last true marine hunter gatherer people left on earth. To survive they glean food from the sea by spear fishing and harvesting marine invertebrates from the rocky reefs

In addition he is also an award winning underwater photographer and author dedicated to telling stories and capturing images of Africa's oceans and coastline and these days spends at least half his year in pursuit of elusive uniquely African marine subjects.

In 2004, Peschak was given the title of official marine photographer for the World Wide Fund for Nature - South Africa for whom he continues to cover a diverse range of marine conservation issues. Thomas is a regular contributor to BBC Wildlife and Africa Geographic magazine and his images and words have also appeared in many international travel, natural history and

Thomas Peschak



RIGHT: Thomas Peschak  
ABOVE: His new book



A territorial west coast rock lobster attacks its own reflection in the dome port of my housing

dive publications as well as in over ten books. His recent book, *Currents of Contrast: Life in Southern Africa's Two Oceans*, was published in June 2005 by New Holland. It has received critical acclaim and favorable reviews.

Mark Carwardine of BBC Wildlife Magazine's Book of the Month Club said, "How I wish I had written this book! It is a joy to read and the breadth and depth of coverage is very impressive.... the hundreds of spectacular colour photographs form one of the best image collections I've seen from the region."

The editor of Getaway Magazine, David Bristow, wrote about the book, "It is the next great work on southern Africa's oceans, with world-

class photography both above and underwater. You're going to have to get this one!!!"

Professor of Marine Biology, Dr. George M. Branch, of the University of Cape Town said, "Above and beyond the stunning photography, the book is filled with authoritative accounts of the key topics that capture the imagination: sharks, whales, kelp beds, sardines and coral splendour are all dealt with in satisfying detail but in an accessible style that makes the book a pleasure to read."

Peschak is currently working on three new major projects. The first is a definitive natural history book on the shark fauna of southern Africa to be published in early 2007 by

New Holland. He is also developing a guide to marine wildlife tourism and underwater photography in southern Africa for the same publisher. The guide is due out in 2007.

Thomas P. Peschak's book *Currents of Contrast: Life in Southern Africa's Two Oceans* can be ordered from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) or is available from most good bookshops. Limited edition posters of some of his images are also available from [www.africageographic.com](http://www.africageographic.com).

For more information or to order images directly from Thomas Peschak, please visit: [www.currentsofcontrast.com](http://www.currentsofcontrast.com) ■

A cape clawless otter, Africa's very own version of the more well known North American sea otter, forages for lobsters, crabs and benthic fishes on rocky reefs





South Africa's Wild Coast is home to a rock formation know as the Hole in the Wall. Over millions of years the ocean and river have carved a massive opening into a sea cliff and during calm seas one can swim through the hole from the river into the ocean

For most of the year, the waters off Dyer island, the region's white shark hotspots are murky and green, but on a few rare occasions, oceanic water moves inshore and bathes great white sharks in near crystal clear water



Thomas Peschak

Wherever divers encounter Cape fur seals, these agile and graceful swimmers are bound to put on a impromptu undersea ballet performance



Thomas Peschak



At the edge of a kelp forest a cape fur seal hunts fish by herding them into a bait ball and pushing them to the surface



LEFT: Vast kelp forests thrive in the cold waters off southern Africa's west coast, taking advantage of the bountiful nutrients driven to the surface by coastal upwelling

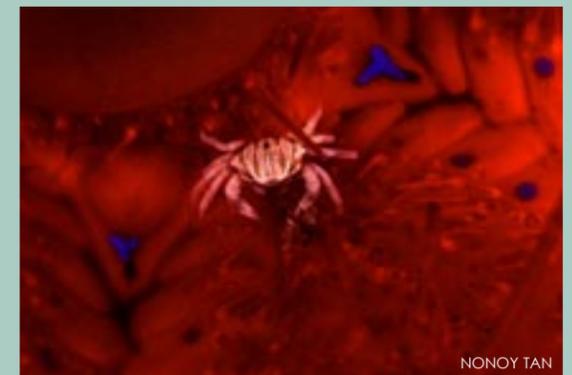
ABOVE: South Africa is a true shark hotspot and many species, like this spotted gully shark are endemic to the region and occur nowhere else on earth

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Diving in The Philippines



NONNOY TAN



NONNOY TAN



SCOTT BENNETT

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