

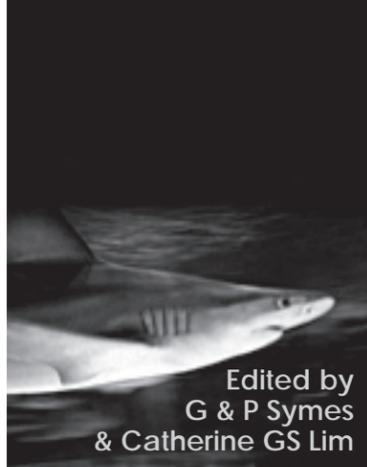
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POINT & CLICK
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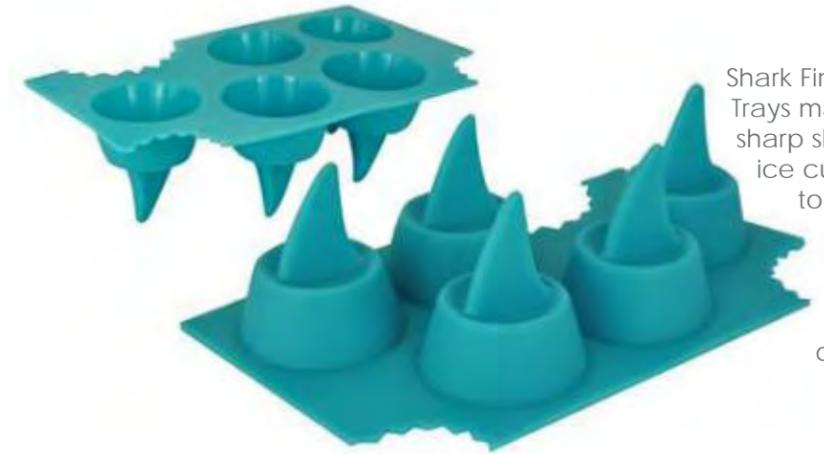
Funky Gifts

for Folks with Fins...



Edited by
G & P Symes
& Catherine GS Lim

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Shark Fin Ice
Trays make
sharp shark fin
ice cubes
to float
around
in your
next
cool
drink



Shark Fin Ice Cubes

Creep out your dive buddies with these shark fin ice cubes floating in their next cool drink topside. These ominous ice fins are made with — what else? — a shark fin ice tray (top right). Price: GB£5.99 www.play.com



SHARK is ON THE WAY
SALT
Salt Shaker

Shark Fin Salt Shakers

SHARK SHAKER is a salt shaker inspired by the form of the shark's dorsal fin. The designer, Amin Vahidian of Iran says that the shaker creates an illusion of a shark prowling under your table perhaps reminding us that using too much salt on our food is dangerous for our health. www.dot4design.com



Magic Turtle Bowl

This aquatic acrobat swims around in its watery home all day long. A constant turtle companion friend to accompany you on lazy afternoons at home, or long days at the office. No clean-up required. Bowl contains multi-coloured beads and simulated rock base. Battery-operated. www.fascinations.com

Sharky Tea Infuser

Designed by Pablo Matteoda from Argentina, this nifty gadget won third place in this year's Beyond Silver international design competition. In the designer's own words, "INFUSION means to extract certain properties from a soluble ingredient such as tea leaves, herbs or fruit by soaking in liquid (water) until it gets saturated. So, we can say that an infuser is in charge of making this happen. This is a ludic point of view about the color given off from the phenomenon, which makes more interesting the waiting on the whole process." www.designboom.com





Jellyfish Lamp

December Diamonds of North Carolina, USA, makes unique handmade ornaments and lamps in marine themes such as this jelly fish light pink and blue 16" lamp. Available at Laraine's online swim and resort shop. Price: US\$ \$59.99 laraines.com

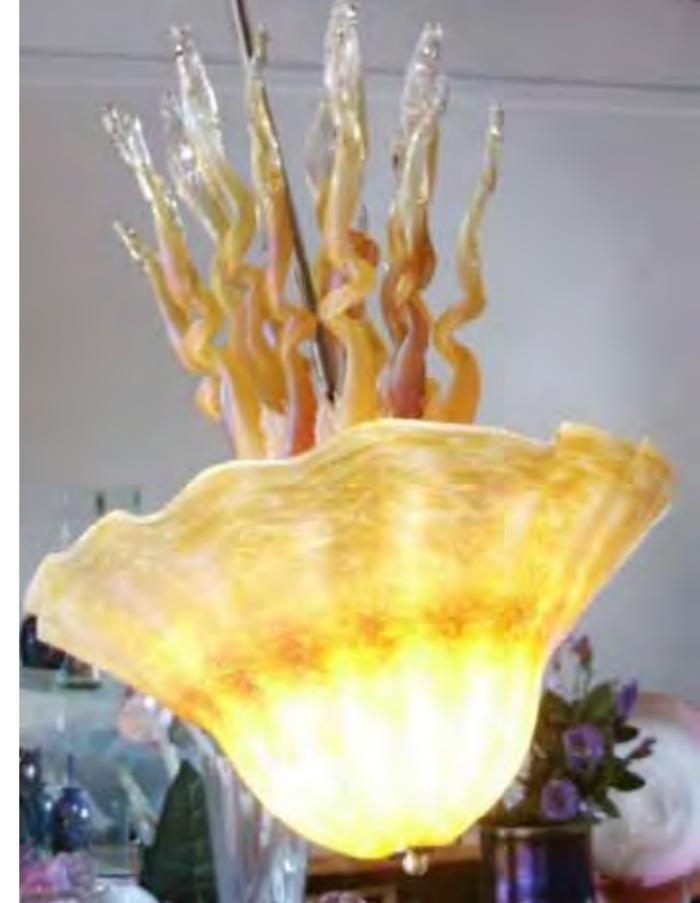


Dancing Desktop Jellies

Thanks to a gently circulating current, the three jellyfish floating around in this desktop tank "swim" through shafts of colored light streaming from six bright LEDs, which let you set the mood. You have a choice of settings: lights blending softly from one color to the next, or holding steady on one particular color. Let the gentle dance of the jellies relax your nerves. www.thinkgeek.com

Octopus Ring

This authentic handmade sterling silver ring is designed from a real octopus tentacle that has been drilled, carved, shaped and cast in silver. It's unique from all angles and versatile. with a good sense of weight to it. Great as a gift for both guys and gals. The finish is light oxidation with some added texture. The inside is finished with a near mirror finish for contrast. It is also available in dark oxidation and bright finish. Sizes 4 - 7 available for US\$160. Matching sterling silver earrings also available. www.etsy.com



Jellyfish Chandelier

This large amber inverted hanging jellyfish chandelier was designed by Joel Bloomberg. Since the early 1980s, Bloomberg has created a wide range of functional sculptural works—objects that expand the vocabulary of art glass and use materials in new and unexpected ways. Each handmade piece involves a combination of blown forms, coldworking, polishing and Bloomberg's own lamination process. Throughout the day the colors of the piece can change with the intensity and direction of light. Available in more colors upon request. Crystal-fox.com



Robotic Bull Shark

This remote controlled robotic Bull Shark moves just like the real thing. It can smoothly maneuver up, down, left, right, and even backwards through water, in depths up to nine feet (3m). With a maximum distance of 40 feet from its handheld remote unit you can swim with the robotic shark since the remot is

also submersible. One-hour charging gives the unit a 15-minute run time 9-volt battery required. Great for ages 8 and up. According to the manufacturer, the item meets all U.S. Federal toy safety standards. On sale for US\$59.95 (was \$99.95). www.hammacher.com



SmartLab Shark Model

Sharks were patrolling the seas long before the dinosaurs roamed the planet! Let the kids see inside the sharks with this SmartLab model. They can snap together the pieces of the shark model from the inside out including fins, gills, muscles, and denticles and teeth Comes with instruction manual. Designed for ages 8 and up. www.discoverthis.com





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Edited by
Peter Symes



A school of cobia accompany a 30-foot whale shark at a petroleum platform in the northern Gulf of Mexico. Photo by Fred Anderson

— News from the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Laboratory

Participate in Scientific Research: Report Whale Shark Sightings in the Northern Gulf of Mexico

Scientists at the University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Laboratory in Ocean Springs, USA, are seeking help in gathering information about whale sharks, the world's largest fish species.

If you have ever been offshore and encountered a 30-foot shark, it was most likely a whale shark. The whale shark, *Rhincodon typus*, was once thought to be a rare species in the northern Gulf of Mexico.

The research of University of Southern Mississippi scientists at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, however, is showing otherwise. Large groups of whale sharks, some in excess of 100 individuals, have been reported in the northern Gulf near the Mississippi River Delta and the DeSoto Canyon.

Individuals who frequent offshore areas

of the northern Gulf and make the special effort to report their whale shark encounters are critical to GCRL studies on whale shark occurrence and distribution in the Gulf region. If you observe a whale shark in the northern Gulf of Mexico, please join us in learning more about these elusive sharks by reporting the encounter.

These sharks are easily distinguishable by their large size, broad head and a checkerboard pattern of white spots. The spot pattern of these sharks is unique to each animal, much like our thumbprint; a photograph of the left side, behind the gills, can be used to track an animal's movement worldwide. Whale sharks are often observed at or near the surface of the water feeding on plankton, small fish, squid or fish eggs. Whale sharks commonly associate with big game fish, such as yellowfin, blackfin and skipjack tunas, tripletail, dolphin and cobia.

Little is known about the biology of whale sharks, and much of what is known has been discovered only in the last two decades. There are reports of whale sharks as long as 50 feet and weighing more than 100,000 pounds. There is some evidence that whale sharks could be almost 25 years old and 30 feet long before they reach adulthood. Pregnant females carry up to 300 embryos, and the young are only about two feet long at birth. Presumably they grow more rapidly than other shark species.

Whale sharks are highly migratory, and reports show that they make transoceanic migrations in relatively short periods of time. They can also dive to depths of a mile or more. Their migratory behavior and deep-ocean habitat adds another layer of difficulty to studying whale sharks



Now you can support whale shark research by reporting your sightings online...

A 28-foot whale shark swims next to a sport fishing boat in the northern Gulf of Mexico. Photo by Gulf Coast Research Laboratory

beyond the expected challenges of offshore research related to logistical constraints, monetary limitations and weather conditions.

Gulf Coast Research Laboratory biologists are extremely grateful to all who report their sighting information and help spread the word about the Online Sightings Survey.

For more information about whale sharks, see the new whale shark website at www.usm.edu/gcrl/whaleshark.

To report a sighting:

Please complete the survey at www.usm.edu/gcrl/whaleshark.

Please include the following:

- Time and duration of encounter (sighting)
- Location (GPS coordinates)
- Approximate number and size of individuals
- Observed behavior
- Associated species
- If available, photographs of sharks observed

Reports can also be made by email, mail, phone, or fax to:

Dr Eric Hoffmayer
703 East Beach
Ocean Springs, MS 39564 USA
Tel: (228) 872-4257
Fax: (228) 872-4214
eric.hoffmayer@usm.edu ■

Great Gifts for Divers and Sea Lovers

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In Australia, scientists estimate there are just 500 to 1,000 grey nurse sharks left

Can artificial womb save grey nurse shark?

Grey nurse shark embryos have a tendency to eat each other in the womb. For millions of years, this grisly reproductive system has worked just fine and made sure that only the strongest survived. A pregnant grey nurse shark can carry up to 40 embryos in each of its two wombs. When they get large enough, they turn on each other, eating their womb-mates, until only one pup is left in each uterus. Under normal conditions, this would create a stable shark population that rarely shrinks or grows.

Now, grey nurse sharks are dying faster than they can breed, the victims of drift nets and other commercial by-catch. In

Australia, scientists estimate there are just 500 to 1,000 grey nurse sharks left, down from several thousand in the 1980's.

Artificial uteruses

But Nick Otway of the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries has an idea to boost that population—removing the young before they get to the cannibalistic stage and raising them in artificial uteruses.

For the last three years, he's researched building an artificial womb that would keep grey nurse pups from eating each other. There, they would receive a steady food supply, so they would not need to

eat each other, and they would be released nine to 12 months later. It's not an easy process as the artificial wombs would need to mimic the environment inside the mother sharks, such as composition of fluids, bacteria, food composition and temperature, as

“If we can raise about 40 pups a year, it will start bringing up the grey nurse population.”

well as how these factors change through the course of the pregnancy. The scientists also need to master surgical techniques to remove the embryos from the mother and place them into the sterile artificial uteruses. ■

Sexual discrimination behind decline in sharks

Sexual segregation of sharks in the open ocean could be a major contributor to population declines a team of European marine scientists says.

The researchers say their study found a “striking” level of sexual segregation among the mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), in the South Pacific Ocean. The scientists used data collected from a commercial Spanish longline fishing vessel targeting swordfish in the southeast Pacific Ocean. A total of 264 male and 132 female mako sharks were captured as bycatch with males occurring predominantly in the western area of the survey region and females dominating in the east.

Sexual segregation

Based on length measurement 84 percent of the males were considered to be adult compared with 13 percent of females. The researchers say this indi-

cates size, as well as sexual, segregation.

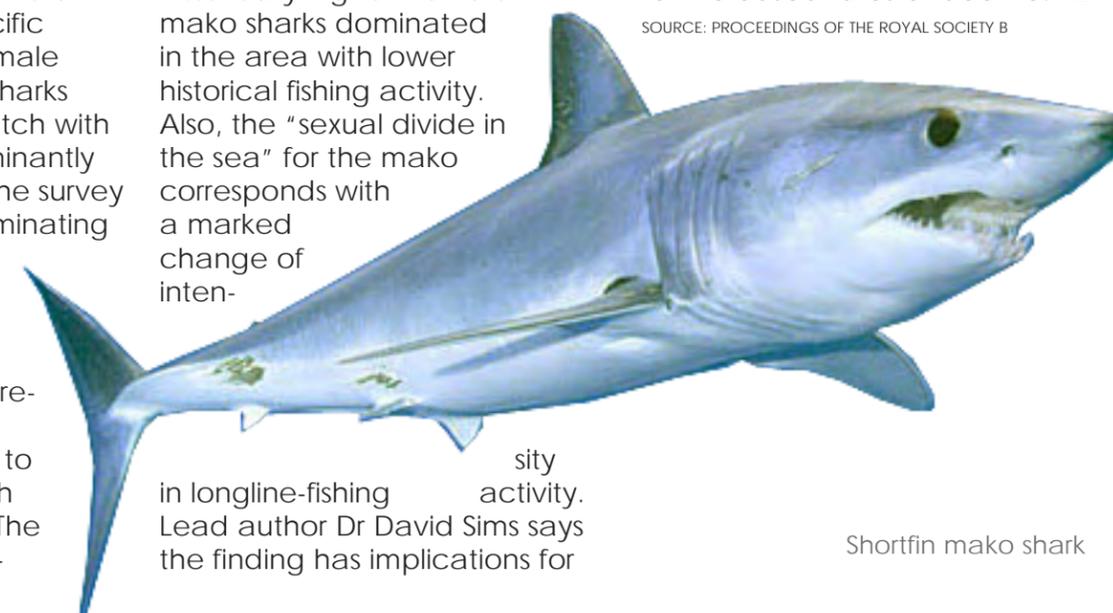
Males dominate in highly fished areas

Males were predominant in the area where longline fishing was historically higher. Female mako sharks dominated in the area with lower historical fishing activity. Also, the “sexual divide in the sea” for the mako corresponds with a marked change of inten-

assessing fisheries effects on shark populations.

“If high fishing activity occurs in key areas where, for example, the majority of a population aggregate for feeding or mating opportunities there is a potential for increased rates of decline.” ■

SOURCE: PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY B



Shortfin mako shark

ANDY MURCH

On the origins of the Great White

From which line of species did the modern great white shark evolve?

For the last 150 years, some paleontologists have concluded that the great white shark, *Carcharodon carcharias*, is a smaller relative of the line that produced *Carcharodon megalodon*, the largest carnivorous fish known.

Other paleontologists disa-

greed, arguing that the great white shark evolved instead from the broad-toothed mako shark. The second group contends megalodon, which grew to a length of 60 feet, should have its genus name switched to *Carcharocles* to reflect its different ancestry.

The verdict

The study in the March 12 issue of the *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology* falls squarely into the mako camp. It concludes megalodon and modern white sharks are much more distantly related than paleontologists initially believed. ■



Technical Diving : Why?

Practice makes perfect; basic skills in technical diving can make it seem like one is learning to dive all over again, albeit better with more streamlined trim

Text by Fredrik Isakson
Photos by Alex Dawson

To develop your diving without becoming an instructor —

Technical diving gives you the opportunity to develop your diving without becoming an instructor. But the diving becomes more difficult, and the technology is not what you are used to. Do you have what it takes to move on? Is technical diving for you? After you read this article, you'll know a little more, and maybe you will be willing to take the next step in diving. Perhaps technical diving is something for you?

For many, technical diving feels like something very strange. Most divers have taken their certificates during a trip to a warm country, and often it stops there. But some go further and take their first stumbling steps into more advanced diving. They start diving in their home country. Maybe they decide to educate themselves further. A few of them decide to evolve even further in diving. They take the next step and perhaps even a course with rescue exercises, a course

where they will learn more about the physics around the diving. A few press on and decide to become a "divemaster". They see it as an opportunity to work with diving abroad or as a way to get to learn a bit more. To become an instructor would then have been the traditional way, the only way to go on in one's diving career.

In recent years, a new path has opened up for those who do not want to become an instructor and yet want to

develop with his or her diving; that path is technical diving.

Tougher requirements

If you selects this route, it opens up a window of opportunity to learn more advanced techniques, albeit a little harder and deeper than most can handle. So far, there are few who choose this path, yet a small but steady stream of divers have begun to become interested. More and more divers are learning to

dive with mixed gases and decompression. Technical diving makes it possible to get to places that ordinary holiday divers do not even dream of.

"Personally, I think that most divers seem to get a new start when they begin a course in technical diving. It provides them with new skills to practice, and they will practice a lot on things that they previously only learned the basics of," said Stefan Hogeborn, a NAUI instructor in Sweden and my instructor in technical

diving.

Today, there are a number of organizations that provide courses in technical diving. They all have one thing in common in that they teach a different approach to diving.

"Now, we leave the diving that fits all, and hence, the techniques taught at recreational courses. Now, rules apply all the time, and one must follow them; instead of one teammate, you now have two," said Hogeborn.



It's a good idea to get used to using twin tanks before you start a technical diving course

During deco stops at the end of a technical dive, divers switch to 100 percent oxygen

'intro to tech' type course. It's an orientation course for technical diving," said Hogeborn. Most educational organizations have one.

Solid course

People starting with technical diving will probably have to learn to dive all over again. Everything is different, and yet, the same. Technical Diver, a NAUI course, includes 12 practice dives and a larger number of theory lessons. Technical Diver combines smaller classes into one larger course. It is a solid start to learning more about technical diving.

If the instructor awards you with your certification, which is not a given, the instructor believes that your skill set in diving makes it possible for you to start doing technical dives. It does not mean that you are a complete technical diver—a mistake young tough boys often make.

"After the course, you're still a beginner, but with more skills than before. It is after your education that the real training begins," said Hogeborn.

For me, the course gave me an opportunity for a new start in diving, new equipment, new gear and a different attitude to the "team"—your diving buddies. Suddenly, there are lots of new things to practice and new things to see, previously impossible to reach.

What is this?

The first few days, I just sucked in information. I kept my distance and studied my fellow students in the course; I was, after all, there to describe technical diving as a reporter as well. But slowly, I was sucked into actually learning, because it was so fun.

The team—my fellow students—consisted of Frida Drakling, Janne Henriksson and me. We were to become the team,

or three group, of which a technical dive team consists.

It became quite clear to me that, even before the course, the other two students had been training on the principles and procedures that we were supposed to learn. In the beginning, it was to my disadvantage since I hadn't been practicing them at all; everything was totally new for me. But as the days passed, I caught up more and more.

Some things were easy for me to understand, others—mostly practical stuff—took a little bit more time to understand. But we complemented one another well and learned from each other. It was something we would benefit from over the days to come.

The course was structured in modules, skills in the water were mixed with theoretical lessons. In order to have time for our normal lives, we concentrated on our lessons in the evenings and on weekends. It would take us a few weeks before we had had time to do all the exercises and learn the theory.

A lot of theory

The first lectures of the course were mostly theoretical. Hogeborn told and showed us how to configure our equipment and what kind of equipment we had to use to be able to do the dives we were about to learn to do. It became clear to me that we were now leaving common recreational diving and moving into diving with higher complexity. What one brings under water was now on a large degree about redundancy.

This was also fun—much more fun than I first thought. I had always believed that technical divers were a little too interested in technology, that they had a tendency to talk a lot and mostly tinker with



their gear, and that they found little or no pleasure from diving for its own sake. But I have found out that this is not so.

Most of the technical divers I meet nowadays have a more pragmatic approach to their diving than I first thought. Things are used, or sit where they sit, because they have a purpose, and there is always a proper reason for everything these divers bring under the surface; if there's no reason for bringing it, they leave it behind.

Tinkering with your diving gear

The organization and care of a diver's equipment is the foundation for good trim and correct technique. Hogeborn shows us how to adjust and correct our backplates and webbing, bottles and steel twinning bands. Each step leads to the next, and after a while, you wonder why you didn't set up your diving gear

Come prepared

I was offered an opportunity to test out what technical diving could be for me, but I was extremely hesitant and refused at first, thinking that technical diving wasn't for me. But after some persuasion, I decided to take the chance to see what it was.

I had never used twin bottles and hadn't learned the techniques used for them. It was time to become a beginner again.

"I think that anyone who wants to try out technical diving should dive with twin bottles for a while before taking the next step. A short cut could be to enroll in an



A diver on the team, or three group, which is used in technical diving, prepares for an exercise to practice new skills

A tip: buy a pair of dry gloves with five fingers before the course. These three-finger gloves can pose a problem in drills handling and tying air tanks

because when you are back above water, you can ask questions, be corrected and rapidly be shown the right way to do it.

Later, when we tried it in the water, the techniques were there, not perfect but reasonably good. Reverse kicks were simply not easy, but I was beginning to get it right (several weeks later).

We went through the usual frog kicks, modified frog kicks, flutter kicks, reverse kicks and helicopter turns in both directions with one or two legs. It turned out to be a lesson that I think most divers, even those who don't intend to become technical divers, could benefit from. For me, it felt like basic skills that I really wondered why I and other divers did not go through in basic training.

Time to get wet

The first day of diving. It felt

good to soon be getting into the water, but before we did, we had to practice our S- and V-drills dry. S-drill stands for Safety drill, and V-drill stands for Valve drill. This is something we would do before every dive, during and after the course, from now on.

An S-drill simulates a situation where one diver runs out of gas and must receive gas from the other diver. The drill teaches us how to act in a situation like that. In a V-drill, you close and open all three valves on the cylinder package while sequentially switching the regulator so that you always have air.

It was much harder than one would think. I had obvious problems, and it took

a while before I succeeded. I felt like I was put together in the wrong way to implement a "valve drill."

It's not only a problem in reaching the valves but also a balance problem. If you only concentrate on the Valve drill, you will slip and lose your trim, probably even float up and down in the beginning. It is a good exercise that makes you manage multiple operations simultaneously. I have gotten accustomed to always practicing these operations to get them to flow like running water. But I still have to work a bit to reach the valves.

To see yourself on film

The exercise was to swim along a line that the instructor had tied off on the bottom. We were now supposed to show the fin techniques we had practiced on land. This first dive also gave the instructor, and us, an opportunity to study how our trim was with, for us, new equipment.

This was the first time I swam with a decompression bottle under my arm.

The instructor showed us how it was done, and then it was our turn. Every move we did was filmed, and when we got back to the classroom our techniques were analyzed.

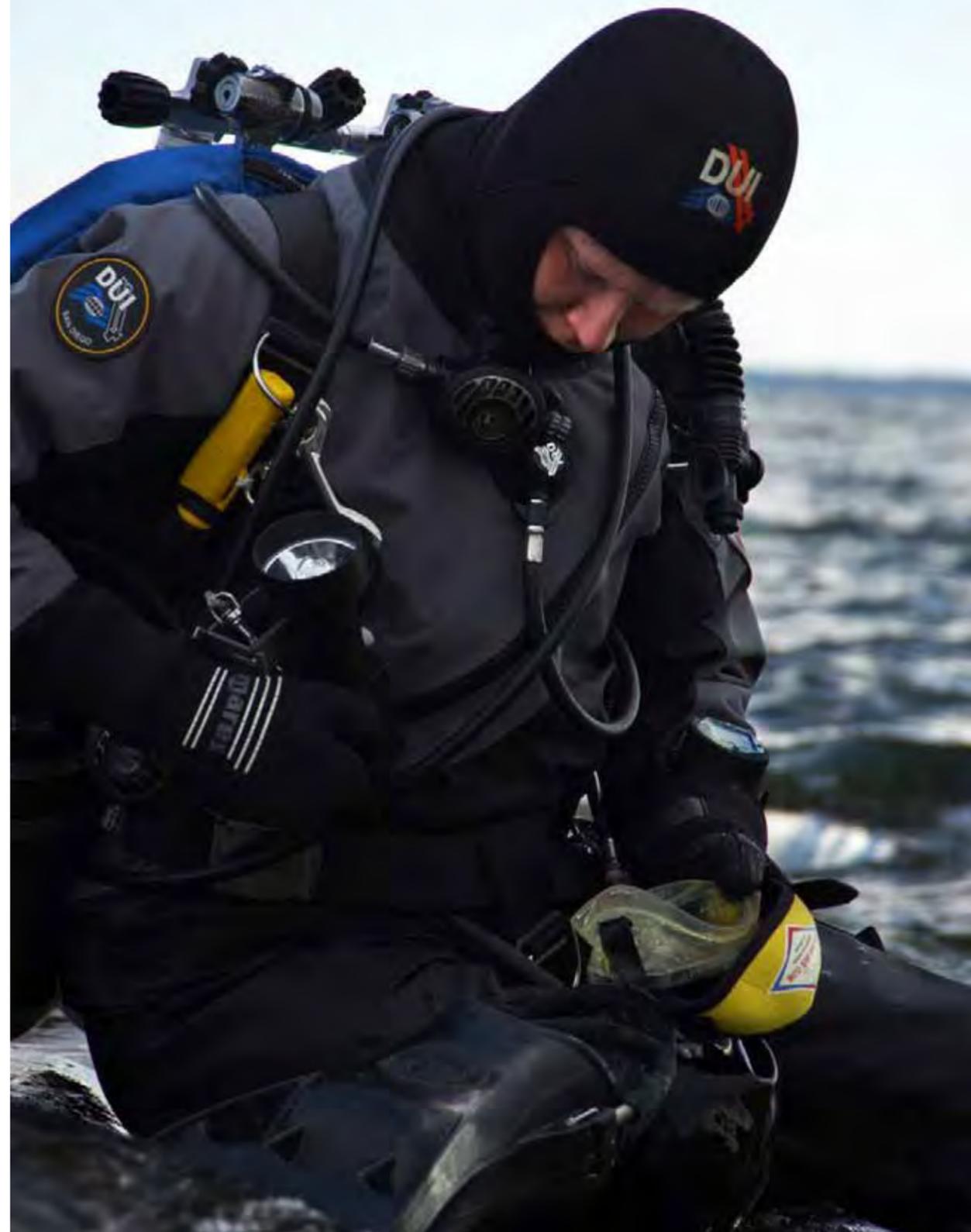
The camera was merciless; all errors could

be clearly seen, and while we viewed it, comments on our technique rained down on us, sometimes to big laughs. It was clearly visible when someone did something good, and it was equally clear when someone did something bad. Having a video camera in a training situation was a very good idea, as it turned out.

To have the right gloves

On the next practice dive, we brought our decompression bottles, but did not use them. We brought them to practice

Technical diving is about being able to solve most problems you can think of and then some. You must solve the problems without panicking or the need to surface. To surface is not the solution when diving technically.



removing and attaching them to our harness. We practiced the procedure to leave the bottles at a tie off on the line. That sounds kind of easy, but each new operation is a new difficulty to sort out.

I, myself, just couldn't handle it and didn't, for the life of me, understand why. I tried and tried and just got more and

more pissed off because it seemed much less difficult for my team mates, Frida and Janne. What was I doing wrong, and what were they doing right? It took a while before I realized that it had something to do with the gloves I had on. To do it properly required more fingers than I had available in my three-finger gloves.



Divers meet at the descent line to talk through their dive before commencing the technical dive

the rescue course or equivalent.

What happens if things go wrong? What symptoms are there with different types of gas poisoning? It's good to learn again, and it gives you a fresh look at old skills.

Line handling

A good environment for scenario exercises is one that can be altered to your needs. We did them in an old sand take, the Husby pit. It was perfect because if you put a fin or a hand in the bottom you lose visibility in seconds. But before we got into the water, it was time for a dry exercise in line handling.

After yet another review of line signs and how to follow and interpret the line, we covered our eyes while Hogeborn, together with his assistant, drew a path in the forest. The team's task was to orient the line without seeing anything. It was fun, difficult and instructive.

A tip: buy a pair of dry gloves with five fingers before the course. It's probably possible with three finger gloves, but oh so much simpler if you have five fingers to work with.

Task loading

This course was designed to teach you how to solve problems. New problems keep on coming up, and you must come up with the solutions. When you have solved the first problem, there is always another. Slowly the instructor's demands on you increase. It's called "task loading"—the problem load is ever increasing.

Technical diving is about being able to solve most problems you can think of and then some. You must solve the problems without panicking or the need to surface. To surface is not the solution when diving technically. You have left the type of diving where you can make a direct ascent to the surface. A technical diver must be able to solve the problems on the spot, in an orderly fashion and with the help of

your team mates.

The team is a unit, helping is a given if something is wrong for any of the divers in the team. If you can solve the problem, do, if not, support for your team member when he or she tries to solve the problem.

Physics and gas laws

The subsequent days, we carefully learned about physics and gas laws and how to calculate END, MOD, SCR, best mix, oxygen exposure, and more. The abbreviations stand for a lot of things you should know if you want to dive technical dives. Instead of telling you how to calculate stuff like this in this article, you should take a course. With an instructor, you will learn all the calculations that you need to do to a technical dive safely.

Today, there is software that calculates all these values for you, but you should know how to do it without the programs, said Hogeborn.

Much of what we learned during this course, we recognized from exercises that we had done in previous courses such as

Zero visibility

The bottom of Husby pit was highly mobile and impaired visibility quickly—a perfect place for our scenario exercises. The exercise was to deploy line, unload decompression bottles, or keep them on, swim out over the bottom and tie off the line at proper places.

It all sounded pretty simple and straight forward. It's just that at this point our instructor turned out to be the devil. Suddenly, regulators were free flowing, lights stopped working, valves were turned off, the masks disappeared, and with silt outs, the visibility turned to zero; quickly, we had to start communicating through body contact.

Troubleshooting

The task loading exercise is constructed to teach the team how to handle any difficulties and problems. They should also learn to prioritize between what needs to be solved first and what can wait. The instructor's task is to keep the problems at



Divers practice new skills at Husby pit where visibility can quickly disappear due to silt





THIS PAGE: Divers form a small trident star around the ascent line as they begin their journey to the surface

divers located and paddling in Björkvik (a beginner's dive site in Sweden with a maximum depth of 15 meters) and other "easy" dive sites. They practice routines over and over again. In a crisis situation, the routines must work.

You practice over and over again so that there can be no doubt. In a real situation, it just has to work, said Hogeborn.

20 minutes at 45 meters depth

Our first steep dive was at a depth of 45 meters with a bottom time of 20 minutes. It started to get dark when we swam out into the lime quarry in Vagnhärad. Darkness settled and became dense. We did our V-trills and S-Drills—safety and valve exercises that you always do before a dive.

We swam over to the descent line, talked through our dive plan and began our dive, a journey into the darkness. Temperatures dropped as we descended. We landed on the bottom in an orderly fashion. Once down, we tied off our line, which we would follow in the dark and murky water to start the dive.

As the one responsible for checking our dive time, I watched the dive from a time perspective and tried to plan the dive so we would return to the ascent line in time for our ascent. Everything worked fine except that I got a bad cramp in one leg and had to call the attention of the other team members.

We solved the problem and continued the dive. After ten minutes, we swung around and returned to the ascent line. The lights shined like laser beams in the dense darkness — it was pretty cool.

Trident star

When we returned to the ascent line, we formed a small trident star around the ascent line and began our journey to the surface. The instructor was hovering outside our view, but he was there all the time. We were all a little worried about whether he would try to give us some new tasks to solve, but he didn't.

All of us had responsibilities; mine was to check the ascent rate and clock our stops. Our deep stops ended up being a little longer than I planned, but things were going well, and when we reached six meters, we switched over to our decompression gas, 100 percent oxygen, and made our remaining stops.

Star Light

When we broke the surface, stellar light shined from above. As we paddled towards the place where we would climb up, I looked up to the heavens and the stars and thought about life. It's fun and exciting and sometimes rewarding.

The next few days, we did some similar dives, tried different roles in the team and had the opportunity to test different gas mixes to see how helium affected us. My personal experience was that the difference between a gas mixture with high helium content and a mix with low or no helium content, is very large. Helium strengthens and improves your awareness substantially or rather, the absence of nitrogen does. Suddenly, the dive is totally clear to you and you remember more.

A new beginning

Those of you who have been diving for a while will find that technical diving gives you a chance to re-ignite your diving passion, and that it gives you new knowledge. All of a sudden, there is a possibility to dive where you previously didn't have the knowledge or technology to go. You will become a better diver. I can also promise that if you haven't previously suffered from the idea that you are never fully developed as a diver, you will suffer that prospect now. So go ahead and practice. ■

a manageable but challenging level and bring the whole team to work together to solve the problems.

During the course, you learn that things will happen. Your readiness for unexpected events increases, and the ability to solve problems when they arise gets better and better. The stress threshold is shifted to increasingly difficult problems. Most can be solved if you take it easy.

Each diving day began and ended with theory and a briefing of the dives of the day. All exercises were filmed, and my shortcomings often became painfully clear.

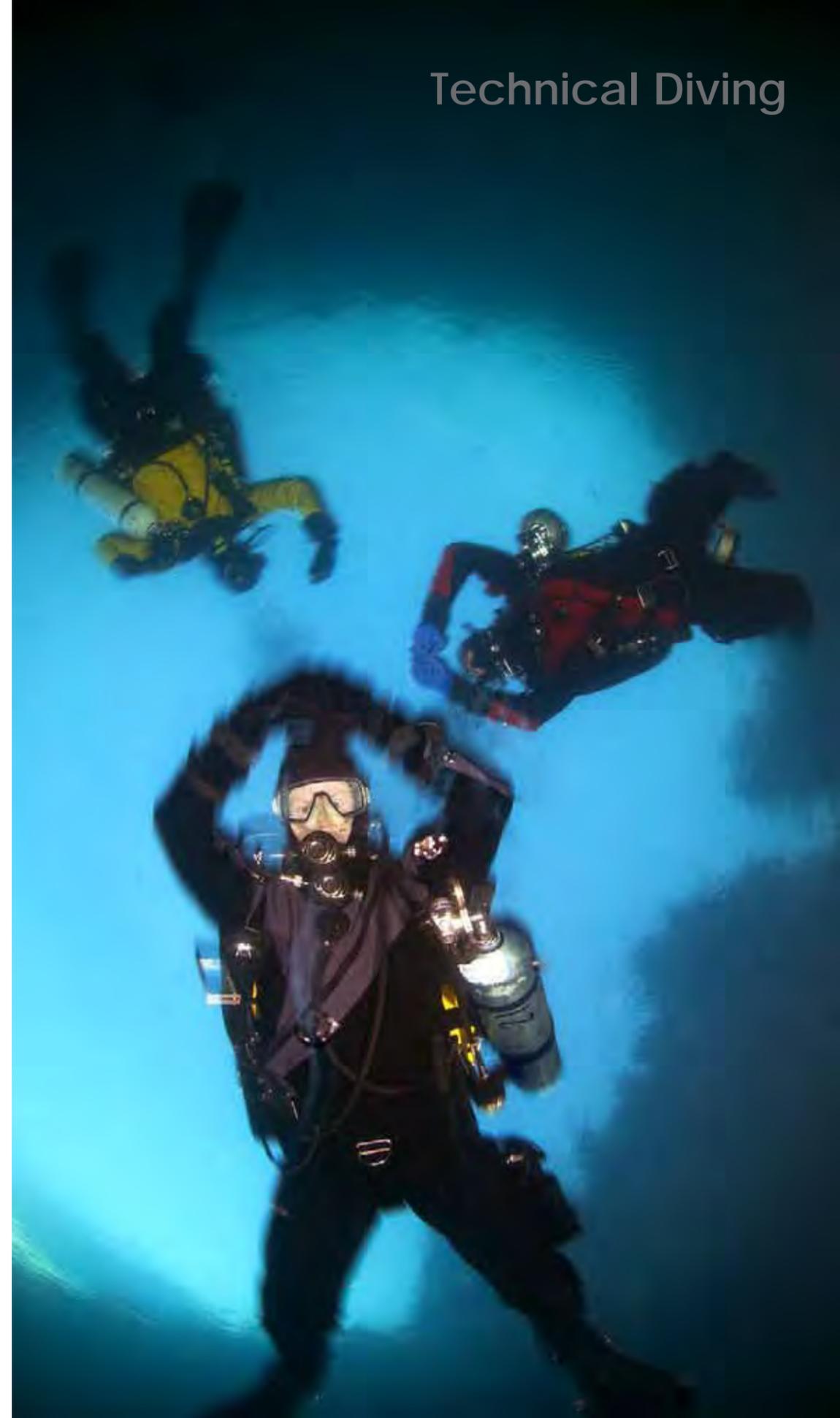
The launch of decompression

We developed as divers more and more over the following days. Our instructor decided it was time to start practicing ascents with decompression.

The difficulties in ascents with decompression are keeping the depth and time, performing the gas changes, and keeping an eye on your team mates. It is more difficult than you might think and requires a lot of exercise.

A fact of technical diving is that you learn a lot of stuff that you will keep training on for a long time—hence, all the technical

During the course, you learn that things will happen. Your readiness for unexpected events increases, and the ability to solve problems when they arise gets better and better.





Books & DVDs

Edited by Catherine GS Lim

POINT & CLICK
ON BOLD LINKS



Summer of the Sharks DVD

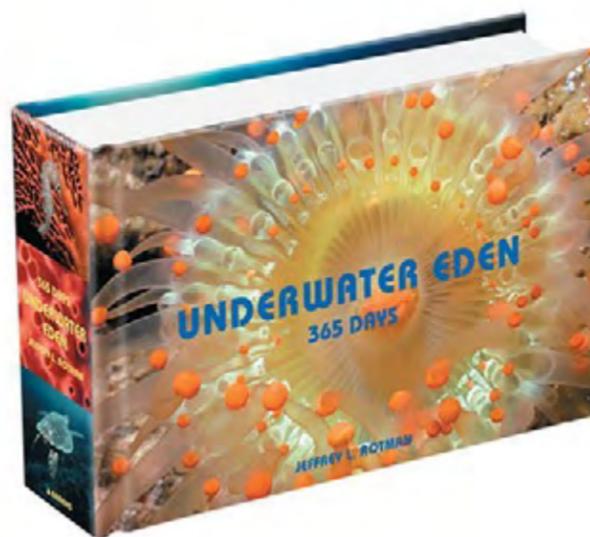
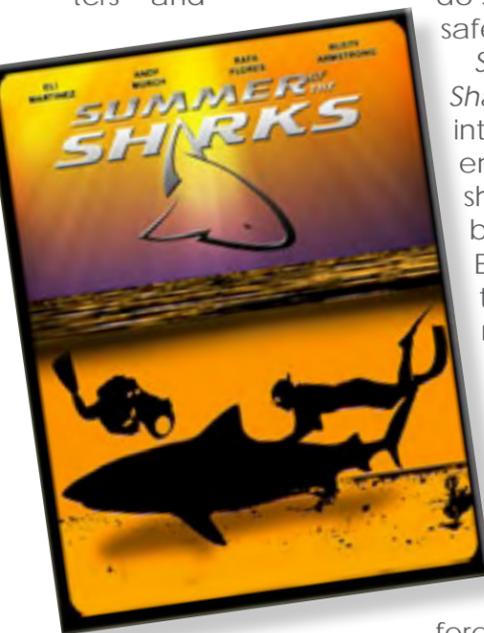
Imagine diving into the ocean in the hope of swimming alongside sharks. While most folks swim the other way when they see the flash of the sleek torpedo-shaped creature, professional shark divers actually seek out such encounters – and

do so without the safety of a cage.

Summer of the Sharks offers a peek into the experiences of four shark divers (led by Shark Divers' Eli Martinez) as they get on the road to pursue their passion. Although essentially a road trip, expect rough seas, aggressive sharks and much intimate footage of different shark species.

The documentary celebrates the beauty of sharks, and the ultimate experience of swimming with them in the open ocean. Perfect for shark lovers at all levels. Contains some coverage of shark hunting.

LENGTH: About 75 minutes
DATE: 2008
DIRECTOR: Rusty Armstrong
PRODUCER: Eli Martinez



Underwater Eden: 365 Days

If you want to create the next big thing in science fiction, perhaps this book is a handy tool in your arsenal. With photos comprising literally half the book (on all the right-hand pages), it is an intriguing glimpse into the fascinating (sometimes bizarre) creatures of the underwater world.

A pufferfish that resembles a lemon, a goosefish that looks like an ancient Mars Rover that had been stepped on, a creepy-looking scallop with its many beady eyes, a sand tiger shark with what looks like a bad nose job — just some of the characters you can spend a lazy afternoon with. There are also close-up photos, offering new perspectives to familiar animals.

Accompanying every photo is some commentary about the photo, often giving information about the photographed animal. Such bite-size snippets of knowledge are non-technical, and allow the reader a deeper insight into the lives of the animal. Although the book is entitled *Underwater Eden 365 Days*, I am sure that many readers would continue to savour the photos in this book way beyond 365 days.

AUTHOR: Jeffrey L Rotman
PUBLISHER: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.
DATE: 2007
HARDBACK: 744 pages
ISBN-10: 0810993112
ISBN-13: 978-0810993112

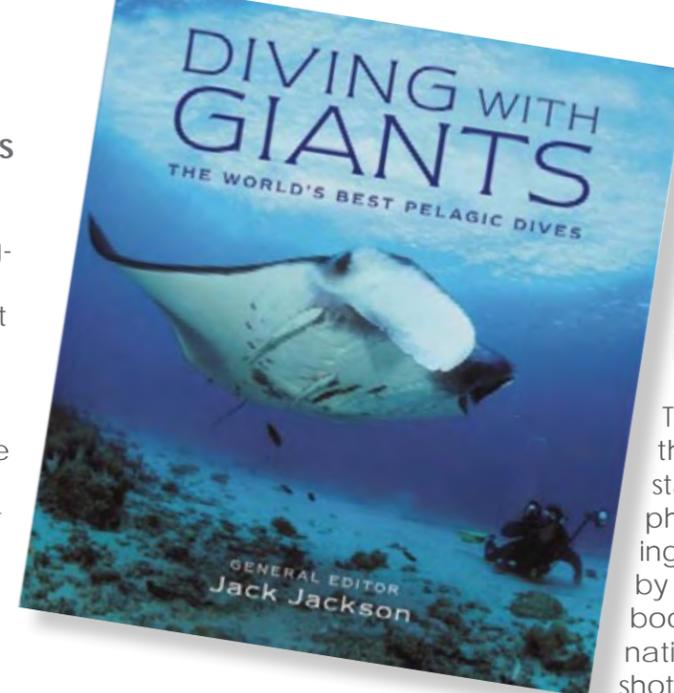
Diving with Giants

There is a certain thrill when you swim alongside animals larger than you. There is that moment when the thrill turns to wonder as you discover the gentle nature of these massive creatures. Indeed, many a diver have been left in awe in the middle of a dive when confronted with these gentle giants.

Diving with Giants is yet another book that showcases the best diving destinations, but this time, it is targeted at divers keen on swimming with the world's pelagic marine animals – the sharks, dolphins, whales, barracudas, manta rays, etc. Destinations listed in the contents page are the Caribbean and Atlantic, the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, Indo-Pacific, and the Greater Pacific.

The book contains a balanced mix of text and photos, so that even non-divers can experience this ultimate adventure. Chapters have been penned by a panel of experienced divers, but written such that beginner divers (or even non-divers) would find it engaging and informative. Although many photos in the book tend to be rather bluish, chances you might find yourself reaching for the phone to call your travel agent as you flip through the pages.

EDITOR: Jack Jackson
PUBLISHER: New Holland Publishers Ltd.
PAPERBACK: 160 pages
ISBN-10: 1845371801
ISBN-13: 978-1845371807



Master Guide for Underwater Digital Photography

This book contains everything you would need to get started in underwater digital photography, short of providing you with a camera. Written by Jack and Sue Drafahl, this book is filled with clear explanations of how to get a good shot, applicable to underwater photographers at all levels.

Right from the cover photo (which depicts every underwater photographer's dream of getting up close and personal with his subject), readers are taken on a comprehensive course in taking good underwater photos.

However, rather than plunging immediately into the topic, the book starts by pointing out how the underwater environment affects photography, as well as the different aspects about film and digital cameras. A logical and necessary starting point!

The contents of the book run the gamut of available light, flash, close-up and super-macro photography. There is also information about backscatter, photo composition and obtaining good exposure. Then, with all this knowledge under your weight belt, it's time to take the plunge and dive in with camera in hand!

AUTHORS: Jack and Sue Drafahl
PAPERBACK: 128pages, 250 full-colour photos
ISBN: 1-58428-166-9

