

Part and parcel of publishing a diving magazine is the fact that we get to see a lot of incredible images from our long list of talented contributors around the world. In fact, it's something akin to torture to ogle pretty pictures from so many amazing places while we're stuck in the office spending quality time with our computer screens...sigh.

Recently, we asked some of our regular contributors to send in a few favourite images from recent trips, mostly because we wanted to see great photos, but also to look for interesting story ideas. A flood of world-class photographs came our way.

The result is this first-ever FiNS FotoFeature, an awe-inspiring collection of underwater images presenting a wide range of aquatic treasures from around the planet — everything from dramatic reef scenes and close encounters with sharks to magnificent marine mammal images and funny fish face close-ups.

Bored with the same old, standard ho-hum Q&A that diving magazines around the world ask, we also plugged our contributors with a series of offbeat queries...and in return, got a bunch of offbeat answers.

We hope the humorous Q&A helps put a spotlight on our contributors' personalities. Their answers speak volumes — whether that's a good thing or not, we'll let you decide.

Enjoy the photos and short stories. We certainly did! ☺

WHAT IS THE STUPIDEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE WITH YOUR UNDERWATER CAMERA GEAR?

Fly through Puerto Rico with it.



echeng.com

Eric Cheng used to be an Asian mother's dream son-in-law. A computer scientist, accomplished musician, and martial arts enthusiast, Eric fell out of favour with Asian mothers everywhere when he gave up his stable, high-paying job and fell overboard into the water with a camera. At least he has some interesting photos and stories to show for it.

Eric's photographs can be found on his personal website. Eric also owns and runs Wetpixel.com, a community website dedicated to underwater photography and videography. Featuring news, articles, reviews, photo contests, and a community forum with thousands of underwater photographers, Wetpixel is the perfect place to hang out when you're not in the water.

p.22

Taking pictures of dogs in a canine hydrotherapy pool for a pet magazine! The water was full of dog hairs and was very disgusting.



www.amustard.com

Dr. Alexander Mustard, 32 years old from the UK, worked as a marine biologist until 2004, but now works full time as an underwater photographer. His photographs are widely published in magazines and newspapers and have won many awards, including being a multiple winner in both the BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year and World Festival of Underwater Photography in Antibes, France. He has even personally presented his photographs to Queen Elizabeth.

Alex was an early adopter of digital cameras and has pioneered several techniques of digital underwater photography. He is the brains behind Magic Filters — filters designed specifically for available-light underwater photography with digital cameras. He is the Digital Officer for the British Society of Underwater Photographers and a Co-Administrator of Wetpixel.com.

p.28

Dropped a strobe set into the deep, deep ocean.



www.takakouno.com
www.stephenwong.com

Husband-and-wife team Stephen and Takako have been full-time marine photojournalists since 1997. Their works have been featured in a variety of publications and exhibitions, and their photos have received dozens of awards in photo contests worldwide.

Takako has discovered three new species of nudibranchs, including one that now bears her name. The couple's love of the big blue comes across in their book *An Ocean Odyssey*, which has received broad international acclaim. They have also contributed to and co-authored a number of other photography books.

p.34

Drowned a Nikonos V in 1995 and tried to repair it myself ...still trying.



www.tonywublog.com
www.tony-wu.com

Although Tony has been spending more time with big animals and wide-angle subjects in recent years, he has clearly devoted far too much of his adult life to stalking poor, defenceless little fish throughout the world. His singular obsession with coming face-to-face with diminutive reef residents means he often stays in one position for extraordinary lengths of time, reflecting his patented technique of boring fish into submission.

Tony is the author and principal photographer for *Silent Symphony*, which received the International Grand Prize for Books at the Festival of Underwater Images in Antibes. Check out his blog for recent images and up-to-date ramblings.

p.40

Some years ago, I took what would have been some amazing in-water photos of frolicking bottlenose dolphins... had I only remembered to load film.



www.takaji-ochi.com
www.web-lue.com

Born and raised in Japan, Takaji was graduated from the literature department of Keio University, one of the most prestigious schools in Japan, and worked as a press photographer for many years with Sankei Shimbun, winning a number of press awards during his career.

Takaji remained a normal, respectable member of society until 1999, when he inexplicably left his prestigious job to become a full-time marine photographer, concentrating on charismatic subjects such as dolphins, seals, manatees and whales.

Subsequent to his abrupt career shift, Takaji has travelled the world and continues to do so, documenting many wonders of the marine world. He is a regular contributor to a number of publications, and he has also published several books about the sea.

p.46

I closed my housing with small insects on the O-ring and my housing leaked. I also went down to 50 metres to shoot a special fish (*Pseudanthias ventralis ventralis*) with my 105 mm macro lens. I left the lens cover on.



**GREAT HAMMERHEAD**

In all my hours in the water with great hammerhead sharks, this moment remains with me the most vividly. This beautiful, unmarked male came within a metre of me, and I could see all the colours in its eye tracking back and forth as the large anvil passed in front of me.

Canon D60, 15mm fisheye, 1/125, f10
Sea & Sea housing, 2 x Ikelite DS-125 strobes
Little Bahama Banks, Bahamas

WHAT'S THE STUPIDEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE? [Lock myself out of a running car.](#) ARE YOU A MAC OR PC PERSON? [I will rant at length about either platform.](#) (Editors' Note: We can vouch for this.) DO YOU PREFER RED OR WHITE WINE? [Red. It matches my face when I drink.](#) ON AN AVERAGE DIVE, HOW MANY TIMES DO YOU PEE IN YOUR WETSUIT? [Either 0, or 2-3.](#)

**BLACKTIP REEF SHARKS AT THE SURFACE**

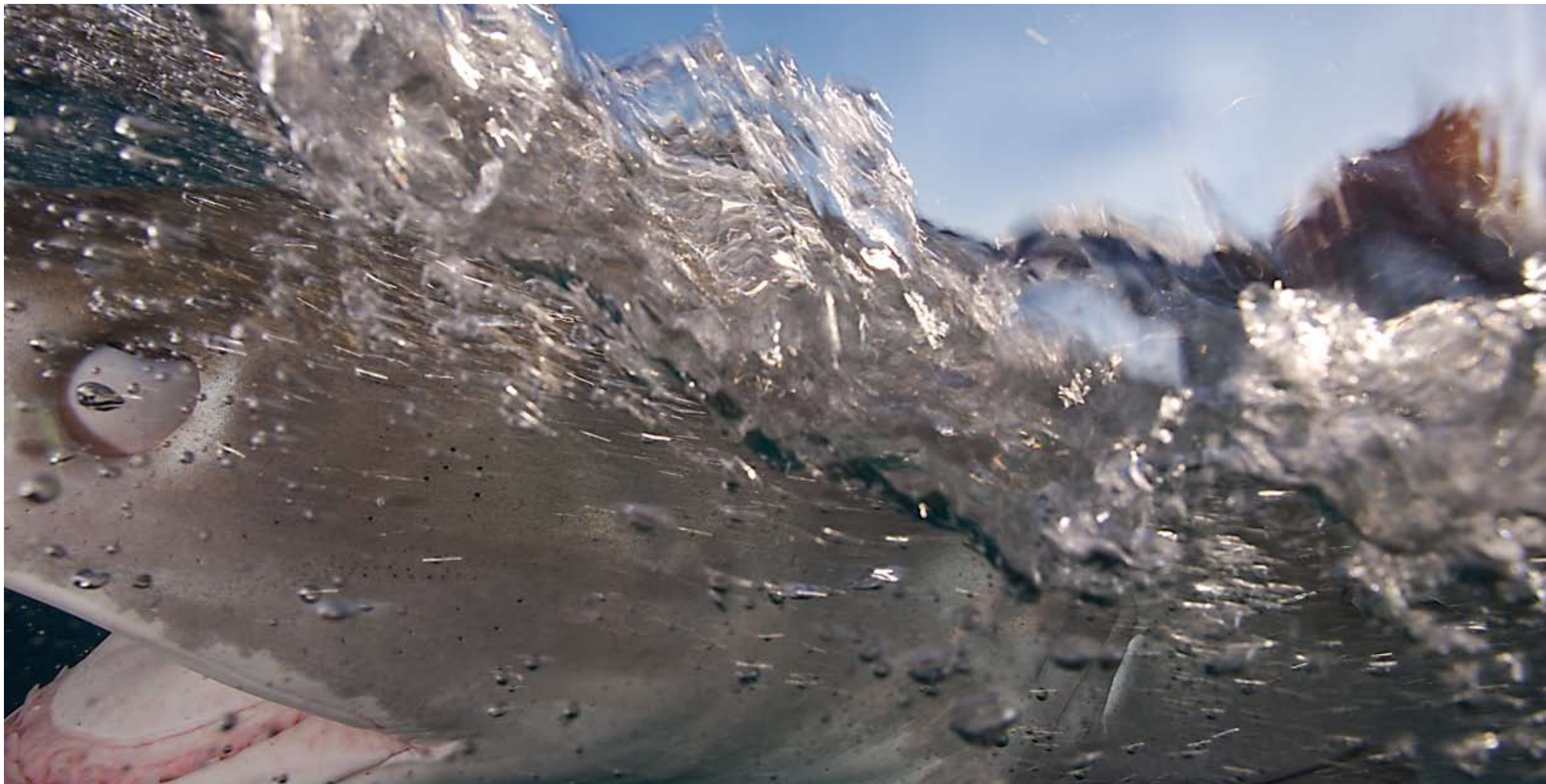
I spent a couple of weeks with Douglas Seifert playing with sharks in French Polynesia, one of the last known locations with huge schools of reef sharks. I took this photo while leaning out of a small boat with my hands and camera in the water. Those of you who have handled heavy housings know that I risked back injury to get a shot like this.

Canon 1Ds Mk II, 24mm, 1/200, f9
Seacam housing
Moorea, French Polynesia

ERIC CHENG

Unlike most underwater photographers I know, the vast majority of my time in the ocean has been spent shooting wide-angle, and although I enjoy crouching in the muck, sipping air for 60 minutes at a time while stalking an elusive little critter, I feel most at home in the open blue. I particularly enjoy photographing sharks, and lament the fact that I was born into an ethnicity and an era whose goal seems to be the destruction of these magnificent creatures. I feel pressure to get out and capture images of them before they're gone, so that I may one day show my children what once roamed the ocean.

I'm often asked which is my favourite species of shark, but I never have an answer. The portfolio here shows six species of large sharks: great hammerhead, tiger, blacktip reef, oceanic whitetip, lemon, and great white. These are but six of the many shark species I've been in the water with, but I love them all!



BREACHING GREAT WHITE SHARK

I spent four days in False Bay photographing great white sharks on the surface as they hunted seals at Seal Island. On the afternoon of the last day, we finally had a single, spectacular breach. I was lucky enough to capture nine full frames of a white shark as it flew completely out of the water with the decoy seal in its mouth.

Canon 1D Mk II, 70-200, 1/1000, f6.3
False Bay, Capetown, South Africa

TIGER SHARK SPLIT

This photo of a tiger shark with its nictitating membrane rolled up was taken a split second after she bounced off of my glass dome port. One of the most exciting things in life is to be slapped in the chest by a tiger shark after she has just gave you a hard bump with her head!

Canon 1Ds Mk II, Sigma 20mm, 1/200, f13
Seacam housing, 2 x Ikelite DS-125 strobes
Tiger Beach, Bahamas

WHICH MARINE ANIMAL DO YOU HATE THE MOST AND WHY? If poodles were a marine animal, I'd hate them. DO YOU PREFER CHUNKY OR SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER? Chunky!! IS YOUR BELLY BUTTON AN "INNY" OR AN "OUTY"? Inny.



WWW.SCUBACAM.COM.SG

e-mail: info@scubacam.com.sg



PATIMA NIKON D80



SEATOOL CANON 400D



SUBAL NIKON D200



AQUATICA NIKON D80



SEACAM CANON 1DS MII

Tel: (65) 63366186

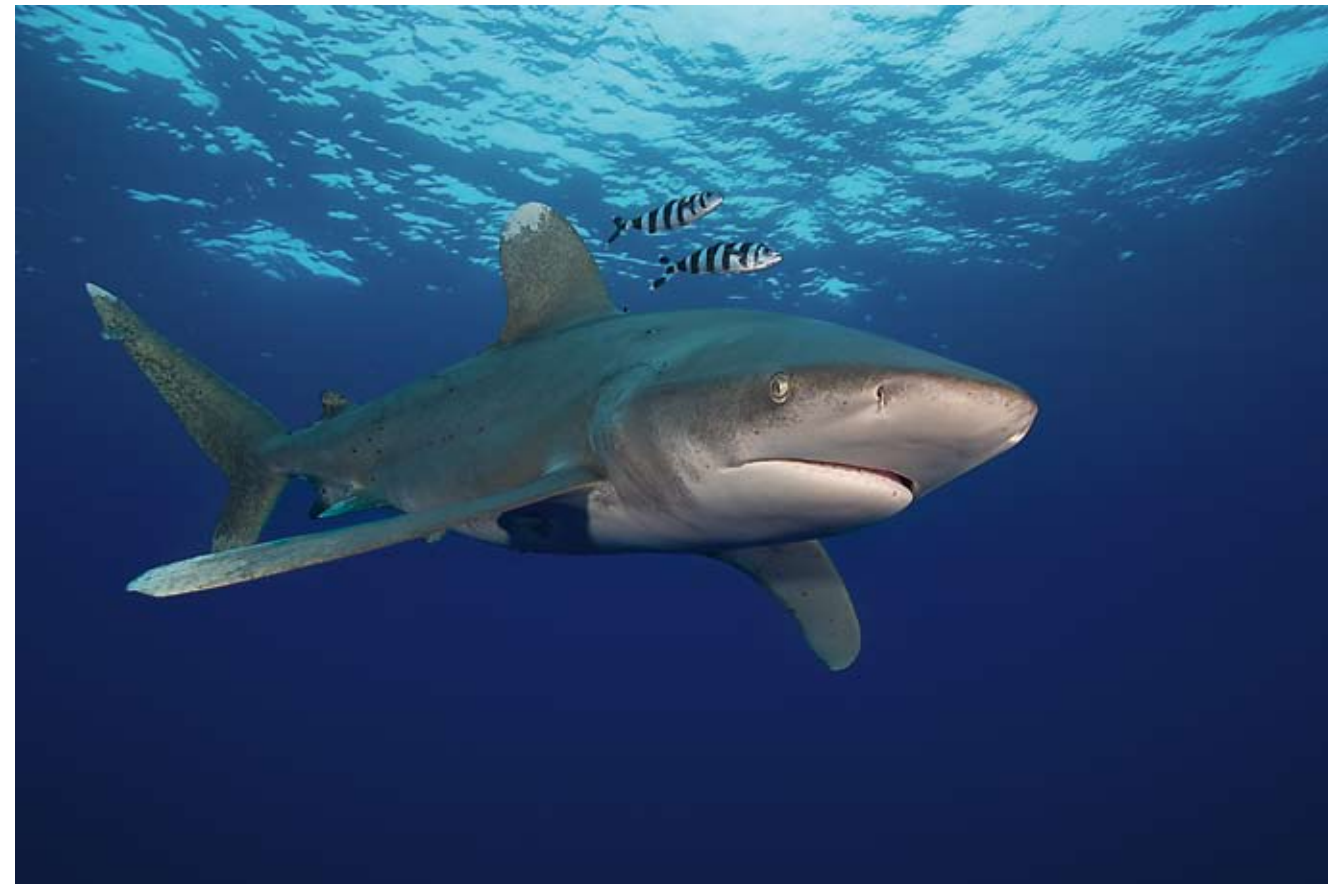


TIGERS, LEMONS, AND DIVER

I love that the tiger shark in the foreground looks like a submarine. On our way back from an expedition to photograph oceanic whitetip sharks, we stopped by Tiger Beach for a few hours. Within minutes, we had tiger sharks and dozens of lemon sharks around us.

*Canon 1Ds Mk II, 15mm fisheye, 1/160, f10
Seacam housing, 2 x Ikelite DS-125 strobes
Tiger Beach, Bahamas*

WHAT IS THE QUESTION YOU MOST HATE BEING ASKED BY MAGAZINES, DIVERS, ETC. AND WHY? "What camera do you use?" "Where's your favorite place?" "How did you get started?" "How do you make your living?" HOW LONG CAN YOU BALANCE ON ONE LEG WITHOUT LETTING THE OTHER LEG TOUCH THE GROUND (TRY IT AND LET US KNOW)? I got bored after a minute and gave up.



OCEANIC WHITE-TIP SHARK IN THE BLUE

On an exploratory trip to the southern Bahamas, we came across four beautiful oceanic whitetip sharks. Every single one of them gave us love taps with their long pectoral fins (can you say, "longimanus"?) as they coasted by repeatedly to investigate.

*Canon 1Ds Mk II, Sigma 20mm, 1/100, f7.1
Seacam housing, 2 x Ikelite DS-125 strobes
Southern Bahamas*

WE SAW ON YOUR BLOG THAT YOU'VE RECENTLY EATEN A COCKROACH, AND ALSO FISH SPERM. HOW DO YOUR UNIQUE CULINARY PREFERENCES AFFECT YOUR SOCIAL LIFE, TO THE EXTENT THAT YOU HAVE ONE NOW? Women think I'll eat anything. But seriously — I like people who are adventurous, and if you're willing to eat a cockroach and uh...sperm, I'll totally hang out with you. ...and don't call it a blog!



**MIRROR IMAGE**

There are now so many excellent photographs of pygmy seahorses, I decided to create a composite image from two photos of the same seahorse just to do something different. I like the symmetry in the result. This seahorse was at six metres, and I photographed it on my safety stop!

Nikon D2x, 105mm, 1/30, f4.6
Subal housing, 2 x Subtronic Alpha strobes
 Misool Island, Raja Ampat, Indonesia

ALEXANDER MUSTARD

The theme of this portfolio is the world's coral reefs, and all these images are taken from my forthcoming book *Reefs Revealed*, which is scheduled for release in the autumn.

I am very excited by this new book because it combines the knowledge I gained while working as a marine biologist with my love of underwater photography. I'm particularly proud of the text in this book, which is filled with information from up-to-date research rather than the same old facts that have been printed for years.

Photographically, the book contains many award-winning and also previously unreleased images from my portfolio of reef images from the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans.

WHAT'S THE STUPIDEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE? **Me? Do something stupid?** DO YOU PREFER RED OR WHITE WINE? **Beer.** DO YOU FIND IT EASIER TO REMOVE RED OR WHITE WINE STAINS FROM CLOTHING? **Since I work as an underwater photographer I am poor. And when I drink I really can't afford to spill a single drop!**

**DIVER DUET**

An important theme for *Reefs Revealed* is the relationship between humanity and the reef — both when we experience reefs first hand, and also the effect our daily decisions have on reefs worldwide. Therefore, I was keen to include some diver photographs, and this image of a couple exploring the reef was ideal.

Nikon F100, 16mm lens, 1/125, f13
Subal housing
 Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands



WHICH MARINE ANIMAL DO YOU HATE THE MOST AND WHY?

Photographers who damage the reef. There really is no excuse. In fact, referring to them as animals may be too good for these guys. DO YOU PREFER CHUNKY OR SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER? I like both. I never buy peanut butter, but I often eat it in resorts. IS YOUR BELLY BUTTON AN "INNY" OR AN "OUTY"? In. But my stomach sticks out. Too much beer (see previous question about choice of beverage), I'm afraid.

HOW MANY TIMES CAN YOU SAY "SUCH A SILLY SHELLFISH" IN A ROW WITHOUT MAKING A MISTAKE (TRY IT AND LET US KNOW)?

Coming from the south of England, I speak English with received pronunciation, so such tasks are easy for me. Unless of course beer (see previous question about choice of beverage) is involved, and then even once would be rather tricky.

WHAT IS THE QUESTION YOU MOST HATE BEING ASKED BY MAGAZINES, DIVERS, ETC. AND WHY? Favourite place to dive. I bet all the other photographers feel the same way about this question.

ANEMONEFISH WAVES

Anemonefish are common and familiar subjects. The challenge for underwater photographers is to look for unique ways of photographing them.

Nikon D100, 60mm, 1/180, f22
Subal housing, 2 x Subtronic Alpha strobes
Lembeh Strait, Indonesia

PAPUA DIVING

ULTIMATE DIVING ON THE WORLD'S RICHEST REEFS
WEST PAPUA - INDONESIA

Kri Eco Resort & Sorido Bay Resort
RAJA AMPAT'S UNSURPASSED DIVE RESORTS
16 YEARS EXPERIENCE

PH: +621-(411) 401660
FAX: +621-(951) 325274
Info@papua-diving.com
www.papua-diving.com

Two Fish Divers
Bunaken, Manado and Lembeh

Tropical Island Resorts
Bunaken Island, Manado
Lembeh Island, Lembeh Straits
info@twofishdivers.com
www.twofishdivers.com

**ALIEN INVADER**

I like the extraterrestrial feel in this photo of a reef squid hovering over the reef at night. It reminds me of a UFO, with the specs of backscatter adding to the outer-space feel.

*Nikon D2x, 60mm, 1/250, f16
Subal housing, 2 x Subtronic Alpha strobes
Kaimana, South Bird's Head Peninsula,
West Papua, Indonesia*

**LIONFISH DELIGHT**

Lionfish are an archetypal reef fish, and for me there is nowhere better to photograph them than in the North Red Sea. Here, the lionfish are big and active, and they will regularly charge divers who wander into their territories. This makes them ideal for portraits. This one was just centimetres away from my fisheye lens.

*Nikon D2x, 10.5mm, 1/125, f13
Subal housing, 2 x Subtronic Alpha strobes
Ras Mohammed, Egypt*

**GREEN TURTLE PORTRAIT**

I'm a marine biologist, but I try to take non-scientific images to capture the character of a subject. Green turtles, for example, have wonderfully expressive and memorable faces, as reflected in this portrait featuring an unbalanced composition.

*Nikon D2x, 28-70mm, 1/60, f10
Subal housing, 2 x Sea and Sea strobes
Sipadan, Malaysia*

WHICH DO YOU THINK CAME FIRST AND WHY: THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG? Eggs of course. (Editor's Note: Note that the only scientist among the bunch declined to answer the "why" part of this question.) **HOW LONG CAN YOU BALANCE ON ONE LEG WITHOUT LETTING THE OTHER LEG TOUCH THE GROUND (TRY IT AND LET US KNOW)?** I have a good sense of balance. It's more of a challenge with your eyes shut.

DR. MUSTARD, DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING AGAINST THE USE OF KETCHUP? Love it. Although I like to cut my tomato ketchup with a half portion of chilli sauce.



COMMON DOLPHINS

While I was floating next to a baitball, a pod of common dolphins stormed by. They corralled the fish and consumed everything right in front of my eyes.

*Nikonos RS: 20-35 Zoom, Ambient Light
Azores, Portugal*

WHAT'S THE STUPIDEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE? Stephen: Too many things to mention, but one example: jumped into murky 15°C bait-filled water with no torchlight and a hungry mako shark Takako: Standing on one leg now (per your question below)!!! **DO YOU PREFER RED OR WHITE WINE?** Stephen: Any alcohol, as long as it gets me tipsy fast with no headache the next day Takako: In summer white, in winter red. **DO YOU FIND IT EASIER TO REMOVE RED OR WHITE WINE STAINS FROM CLOTHING?** Stephen: Haven't a clue. Takako: What kind of irrelevant non-diving-related question is this?! But white wine is easier to get out. **ON AN AVERAGE DIVE, HOW MANY TIMES DO YOU PEE IN YOUR WETSUIT?** Stephen: ZERO... hate the smell. Takoka: Zero...that I'll admit.



TAKAKO'S TRAPANIA NUDI & PEA CRAB

About four millimetres long, this looked like a baby harlequin shrimp to me. It turned out to be a new nudibranch species, which is now known as "Takako's Trapania".

*Nikonos RS, 50mm + 105X wetlens,
Nikon SB104 + Sea&Sea YS90
Bali, Indonesia*

TAKAKO UNO & STEPHEN WONG

We have an affinity with the ocean. Finding and spending time with the inhabitants of the marine environment are what we love.

Japanese people often refer to nudibranchs as marine jewels. Being female, I (Takako) love jewels. Hence, finding nudibranchs in the ocean is like going window-shopping in nature's jewellery shops.

Whales and dolphins all possess a few characteristics in common. They're curious, smart, (often) playful and always protective of their young. I (Stephen) consider myself highly privileged to have had many chances to interact with them in the big blue.



KALINGA ORNATA NUDI

I knew this was a special nudibranch when I first saw it at six metres — simply strange and beautiful. I later found out it's a *Kalinga* nudibranch, and it normally lives at much greater depths (hundreds of metres).

Nikonos RS, 50mm Nikon SB104+Sea&Sea YS30
Lembeh Strait, Indonesia

WHICH MARINE ANIMAL DO YOU HATE THE MOST AND WHY? Stephen: I should like all marine creatures, but simply don't like long-spine sea urchins, due to an unfortunate incident involving my butt. Takako: I love all marine animals. DO YOU PREFER CHUNKY OR SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER? Stephen: Both, plus powdered sugar at the same time. Takako: I have braces now, so no peanut butter. IS YOUR BELLY BUTTON AN "INNY" OR AN "OUTY"? Stephen: Inny, but I gained too much weight lately, so might be an outy now. Takako: Deep innny! HOW MANY TIMES CAN YOU SAY "SUCH A SILLY SHELLFISH" IN A ROW WITHOUT MAKING A MISTAKE (TRY IT AND LET US KNOW)? Stephen: Fouled up on the first time. How about you try this: "How many cans can a canner can, if a canner can can cans? A canner can can as many cans as any canner can can cans." Takako: Goofed the first time too.



GYMNODORIS NUDIBRANCH LAYING EGGS

We came upon over 500 of this species of *Gymnodoris* nudibranch mating, laying eggs and even feeding on other species of nudibranchs. When we came back two days later, only a handful remained.

Nikonos RS: 50mm, Nikon SB104+Sea&Sea YS30
Lembeh Strait, Indonesia

WHAT IS THE QUESTION YOU MOST HATE BEING ASKED BY MAGAZINES, DIVERS, ETC. AND WHY? Stephen: "Do you have another shot of...?" Takako: Questions about removing white and red wine stains...ha ha. WHICH IS MORE DIFFICULT FOR YOU: JUGGLING 3 TENNIS BALLS, OR JUGGLING 3 SIMPLE TASKS ASSIGNED TO YOU BY YOUR SPOUSE? Stephen: What kind of question is this? Everyone would reply with the latter case, and then for only 2 tasks. Forget 3! Takako: Anything asked by my husband. HOW LONG CAN YOU BALANCE ON ONE LEG WITHOUT LETTING THE OTHER LEG TOUCH THE GROUND (TRY IT AND LET US KNOW)? Stephen: Back hurts, bag it. Takako: Verrrrrrrrrry long, trust me.



ATLANTIC SPOTTED DOLPHINS

Seeing hundreds of these Atlantic spotted dolphins playing in the sea, I eased myself into the water and discovered that these dolphins were quite vocal and loud. There were so many of them, I wished I had a fisheye lens.

*Nikonos RS; 20-35 Zoom, Ambient Light
Azores, Portugal*



PILOT WHALES MOM & CALF

As with all cetaceans, female short-finned pilot whales are loving and protective mothers and usually do not come to boats or people. This mama, however, came and showed off her little one.

*Nikonos RS; Zoom 20-35mm, Ambient Light
Hawaii*

WHICH LANGUAGE DO YOU MOST OFTEN ARGUE IN: ENGLISH, JAPANESE OR CHINESE? *Only in English. But when Takako would like to say something Stephen doesn't understand, of course, she goes into Japanese mode (this is still during arguments). And Stephen swears in Chinese (pretty terrible) when he loses, but unfortunately (for Stephen) Takako understands all the swearing. AND WHO USUALLY WINS? Usually Stephen wins in public (as Takako gives face to Stephen), but he always loses at home or when in private...Oh, but even if Stephen wins in public, Takako always wins when we get back home.*

Mermaid
LIVEABOARDS

Asia's Premier
Liveaboard Fleet



June - October
Bali - Komodo

November - April
Thailand - Burma
Similans - Richelieu
Mergui Archipelago



October - May
Similans - Richelieu
Phi Phi - Hin Daeng



Visit us at

www.mermaid-liveaboards.com
info@mermaid-liveaboards.com

Booking Hotline
+ 66 (0) 76 8727 48348

Mermaid Liveaboards is
part of Andaman Diving Group

For more information, please visit us at
<http://www.andaman-diving-group.com>

Andaman
DIVING GROUP

**SHRIMP GOBY**

Occasionally, I come across a fish that seems utterly fearless, to the point of having an apparent attitude problem. This goby never once backed down...a contrast to normally skittish behaviour of these sand dwellers. Indeed, it seemed as if the defiant fish were saying "What are you looking at?"

*F90x, 105mm + teleconverter, 1/200, f16, RVP
Nexus housing, Inon Z220s + Sea & Sea YS30 x 2
Vitu Islands, Papua New Guinea*

TONY WU

I love watching fish, and being watched by them. Getting so close you can literally see the expression on their tiny faces is a challenge, and it's also highly rewarding — when you succeed. And when I'm able to spend an extended period of time getting to know a particular fish, I inevitably learn a lot.

When fish become comfortable enough, they often let me approach to within a few centimetres, so that we have a unique opportunity to assess one another, and eventually see eye-to-eye, both literally and figuratively. I'm not really sure whether the fish share my appreciation for our quality time together, or just wonder what the heck I'm doing.

WHAT'S THE STUPIDEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE? Taken up underwater photography. **ARE YOU A MAC OR PC PERSON?** Diehard Mac, but I can use a PC when there's absolutely no choice. **DO YOU PREFER RED OR WHITE WINE?** Copious quantities of whiskey, after which it doesn't matter. **DO YOU FIND IT EASIER TO REMOVE RED OR WHITE WINE STAINS FROM CLOTHING?** I prefer to think laterally. It's far easier to remove clothes and continue with the wine. **ON AN AVERAGE DIVE, HOW MANY TIMES DO YOU PEE IN YOUR WETSUIT?** Whatever feels good. **WHICH MARINE ANIMAL DO YOU HATE THE MOST AND WHY?** Sea lice. I see no constructive purpose for sea lice. **DO YOU PREFER CHUNKY OR SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER?** Chunky is more satisfying, though my dog seems to prefer smooth.



WHITELINED CORAL GOBY (*Gobiodon albofasciatus*)
Coral gobies move as quickly and erratically as lightning strikes in a thunderstorm, so while making eye contact isn't necessarily too difficult, persuading this fish to stay in one place long enough to get a portrait that shows off its cute pink dimples was an exercise in frustration.

F90x, 105mm, 1/125, f11, RVP
Nexus housing, Inon 220s x 2
Loloata, Papua New Guinea

YELLOWFIN SHRIMP GOBY (*Tomiyamichthys* sp.)

The most memorable thing about this photo is what's not pictured here. During the nearly three hours I spent with this little goby, I constantly sensed that someone was watching me. I couldn't take my eye off the viewfinder, so I ignored the nagging feeling until I finished. Only upon looking up did I notice a mother and adorable baby dugong lying in the sand next to me...watching me watch the goby watch me. With a super-macro lens in hand, I had no hope of photographing the curious sirenians, so I just enjoyed their company, and showed them the interesting little fish I had found.

Canon 1Ds MkII, 100mm + teleconverter + diopter, 1/250, f7.1
Zillion housing, Inon Z220s x 2
Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea



IS YOUR BELLY BUTTON AN “INNY” OR AN “OUTY”? In my people rule! HOW MANY TIMES CAN YOU SAY “SUCH A SILLY SHELLFISH” IN A ROW WITHOUT MAKING A MISTAKE (TRY IT AND LET US KNOW)? 0.3 WHAT IS THE QUESTION YOU MOST HATE BEING ASKED BY MAGAZINES, DIVERS, ETC. AND WHY? Where is your favourite dive spot? There’s something interesting everywhere, so it’s impossible to answer, and it’s just a mind-numbingly boring question. WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE DIVE SPOT? Aiyah. WHICH IS MORE DIFFICULT FOR YOU: JUGGLING 3 TENNIS BALLS, OR JUGGLING 3 SIMPLE TASKS ASSIGNED TO YOU BY YOUR SPOUSE/PARTNER? Fear of self incrimination and potential consequences prevents me from responding. HOW LONG CAN YOU BALANCE ON ONE LEG WITHOUT LETTING THE OTHER LEG TOUCH THE GROUND (TRY IT AND LET US KNOW)? Balance?

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE OTHER PHOTOGRAPHERS IN THIS FEATURE? I used to have a lot of respect for them, until I read some of their answers...



HAIRCHIN GOBY (*Sagamia geneionema*)

As soon as I saw this fish, I knew what I had to do — get eye-to-eye, snap a nice image emphasising the whiskers on its chin, and email a copy to good friend of mine in Japan who has a roundish face and a full beard of scruffy, grey hair. In this case, a picture was definitely worth a thousand words.

Canon 5D, 100mm + teleconverter + extension tubes, 1/200, f6.3
Zillion housing, Inon Z20s x 2
Koganezaki, Japan

HARLEQUIN SANDSMELT (*Parapercis pulchella*)

The great thing about diving someplace for the first time, as I did recently at the Izu Peninsula in Japan, is that you notice a lot of things that people who have been diving there for a long time don’t. For example, this fish is really common, but few frequent divers in the area bother taking photos of it, precisely because it’s so common. With proper strobe lighting, the fish’s colouration borders on psychedelic, and its natural curiosity makes eye contact a shoe-in.

Canon 5D, 100mm + teleconverter + extension tubes, 1/200, f5
Zillion housing, Inon Z220s x 2
Koganezaki, Japan

SOME SORT OF PIPEFISH

I was less intent on trying to take a photograph of this pipefish than I was interested in seeing if I could make it go cross-eyed while attempting to look at me. It didn’t. And as it turned out, I was the one who went cross-eyed trying to focus on the foreshortened fish face.

Canon 5D, 100mm + teleconverter, 1/200, f7.1
Zillion housing, Inon Z220s x 2
Lembeh Strait, Indonesia

DIVE
Papua New Guinea

Kimbe Bay, New Britain. Voted the best diving from a resort anywhere in the world.

Walindi Resort

Witu Island, North & South New Britain
Dive easy, 36 metres of spacious luxury for a maximum 16 divers.

mv
FeBrina

Witu Islands, New Britain, New Ireland.
Luxurious intimate charters with only 12 divers.

mv
Star Dancer

Tel +675 983 5441
Fax +675 983 5638
Email: walindi@online.net.pg
www.walindi.com • www.febrina.com

World class PNG diving
at your doorstep

Photographs © Peter Lange

Loloata Island Resort
Tel: +675 325 8590
Fax: +675 325 8933
Email: loloata@daltron.com.pg
www.loloata.com

TAKAJI OCHI

When I interact with marine animals, my goal is to tell a short story about them with each photograph I make. It's not easy, but it makes me happy when I succeed. The most effective way for me to tell a story with an image is to make friends with the animal, and the best way to do that for most large residents of the sea is to free dive, instead of using scuba.

I prefer to use natural light, and I do my best to get to know the animals and let them get to know me, so we can have quality time together, perhaps even play a few games and enjoy one another's company. This is what I love to do, and I hope it comes through in my photos.

WHAT'S UP?

This mother and calf humpback whale pair stayed in same place more than three hours, resting and allowing me to take many photographs. At one point, they floated into this symmetrical position, which I found very funny, and it almost seemed as if they were greeting me.

Canon 5D, 17-40mm, 1/125, f5.6

Sea & Sea housing

Vava'u, Tonga



RAINBOW EYE

This is one of my favourite images. At first, I thought all the images on this roll of film were underexposed and almost threw them out...until I spotted the rainbow in the dolphin's eye. Clearly, I didn't plan for this to happen, but the gods of photography smiled upon me that day to give me this unusual photo of a dolphin with a multi-coloured twinkle in its eye.

Nikonos RS, 13mm fisheye, 1/250, f11

Bahamas

**FLYING**

At the right time of year, schools of eagle rays gather at this point and stay still, hovering in the current at a relatively shallow depth of about 10 metres. I've been to this site many times, where I lie on the white sand bottom and look up and the magnificent animals above.

Nikonos RS, 13mm fisheye, 1/250, f8
Eagle Ray City, Saipan

ARE YOU A MAC OR PC PERSON? I am talented. I use both Mac and PC. DO YOU PREFER RED OR WHITE WINE? Haha, I prefer white wine. But I like beer more than wine. DO YOU FIND IT EASIER TO REMOVE RED OR WHITE WINE STAINS FROM CLOTHING? I don't know. Do you want to know how to fix this problem? The best way is to put on black colour clothing. ON AN AVERAGE DIVE, HOW MANY TIMES DO YOU PEE IN YOUR WETSUIT? Depends on the water temperature. Normally I'm patient and wait to pee. But I guess four times on one dive was my best record. I stayed underwater two-and-a-half hours. WHICH MARINE ANIMAL DO YOU HATE THE MOST AND WHY? I can't think of any animals...Ah! I guess the bluefin triggerfish. A few times, I was attacked by them, and once, one broke my housing.

WHAT'S THE STUPIDEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE? For diving only ? I've left my fins on the boat when I did back roll entry. And because my fins are too big for my feet, sometimes my fins come off underwater, especially when I find something special like a whale shark, so sometimes I lose the best chance for shooting photos.

I once had an experience where I was allowed to collect abalone underwater, and I was so happy that I kept finding abalone in the kelp forest, and I left my camera housing somewhere...and lost it.

SLEEPING IN HIS FAVOURITE PLACE.

This lovely manatee was perfectly content to sleep in his favourite resting place, even when I approached and shot off two rolls of film. Others noticed too and took lots of photos, but he never seemed to mind. It was probably too much effort for him to move.

Nikon F100, 16mm fisheye, 1/125, f5.6
Sea & Sea housing
Crystal River, Florida

**WELCOME TO MY HOME.**

A male Australian sea lion inviting me to play in the green carpet of his house, which looked really comfortable — perfect for taking a nap. When I tried to leave to play with other sea lions, he held my fins to keep me from going away.

Canon 5D, 17-40mm, 1/250, f5.6
Sea & Sea housing
Carnac Island, Western Australia





DO YOU PREFER CHUNKY OR SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER? *If anything, I like smooth peanut butter. But I don't eat it so often.* IS YOUR BELLY BUTTON AN "INNY" OR AN "OUTY"? *Depends on the pants size.* WHAT IS THE QUESTION YOU MOST HATE BEING ASKED BY MAGAZINES, DIVERS, ETC. AND WHY? *Why do Japanese eat whales? Because I don't know, and I don't want to eat them.*

WHICH DO YOU THINK CAME FIRST AND WHY: THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG? *Personally, I like sunny-side up and chicken teriyaki burger.* HOW LONG CAN YOU BALANCE ON ONE LEG WITHOUT LETTING THE OTHER LEG TOUCH THE GROUND (TRY IT AND LET US KNOW)? *Should I close my eyes? Please let me know.*

WHY DO YOU THINK JAPANESE PEOPLE OFTEN CONFUSE THE LETTERS "R" AND "L"? *Yes, rearning Engrish is leally difficult. We don't have a plonunciation of "R" in Japanese words. So "R" is velly difficult to use and undelstand for us.*

LET'S DANCE!

The baby humpback whale swam around me, inviting me to dance with her every time she came up to the surface to breathe while her mom waited patiently below at about 15 metres.

*Canon 5D, 17-40mm, 1/250, f5.6
Sea & Sea housing
Vava'u, Tonga*

Diving in Japan!!!

- One of the best and most exciting areas to dive with large schools of hammerhead sharks, just five minutes from the pier to Mikomoto Island.



- Enjoy the stunning underwater topography and many special critters at Kumomi.
- Make yourself at home in our friendly accommodations, and enjoy our world-famous Japanese "onsen" hot springs.

**MIKOMOTO
HAMMERS**

**SHIMODA
DIVERS**



**Thailand Authorized Sales Agent
& Professional Diving Service
Water World Bangkok**

Asoke Court, GF1
16 Sukhumvit 21, Klongtoey-nua,
Wattana, Bangkok, Thailand

Mobile: +66 81 8117560

Fax: +662 8955996

Email: waterworld_bkk@yahoo.com