



Nautilus Scuba Club 2026 Underwater Photography Competition

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Our Entrants

Entrants

34 photographers

10 *first time* entrants

399 entries in 9 photo categories

10 entries in the Video category

- 17 dSLR or Mirrorless cameras
- 9 compact cameras
- 12 smartphone / Go Pro

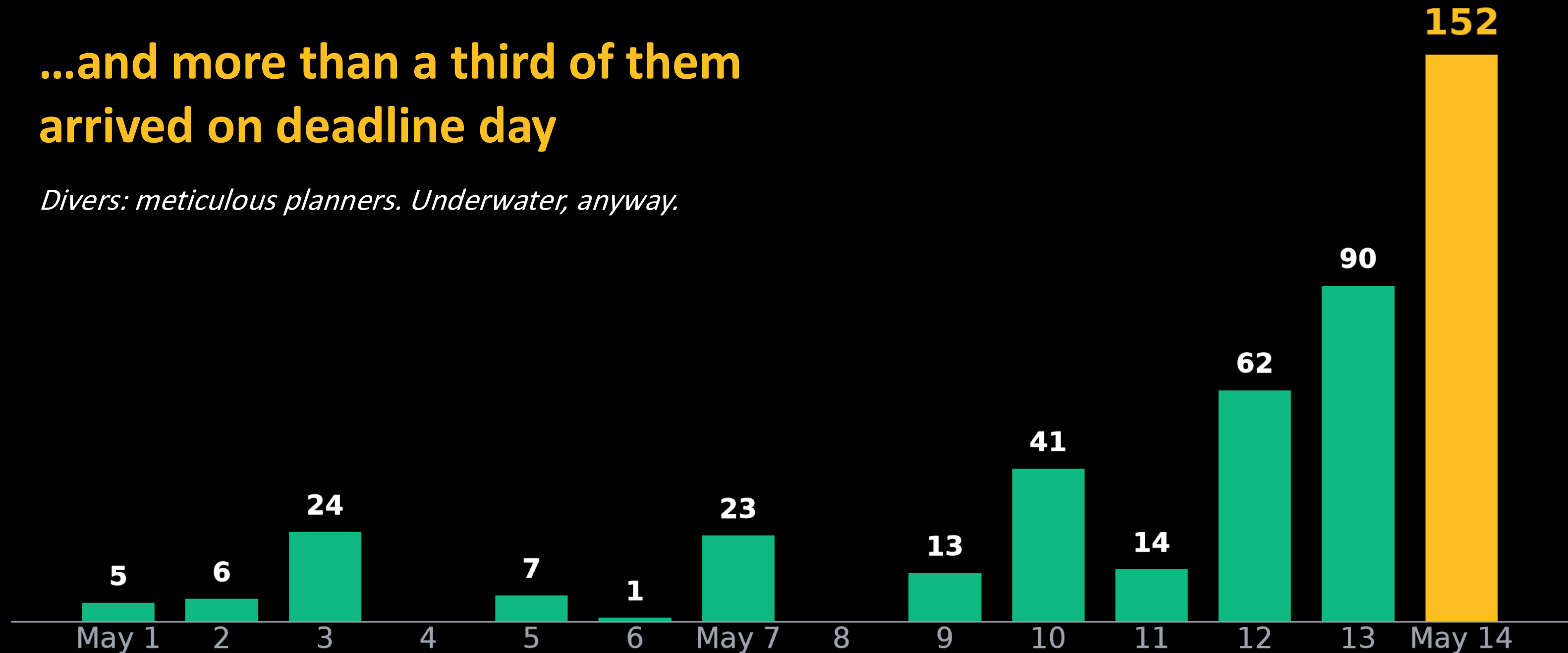
Photos taken in **15** different countries

*Almost half of all photos were taken in QLD

Two whole weeks to submit entries...

...and more than a third of them
arrived on deadline day

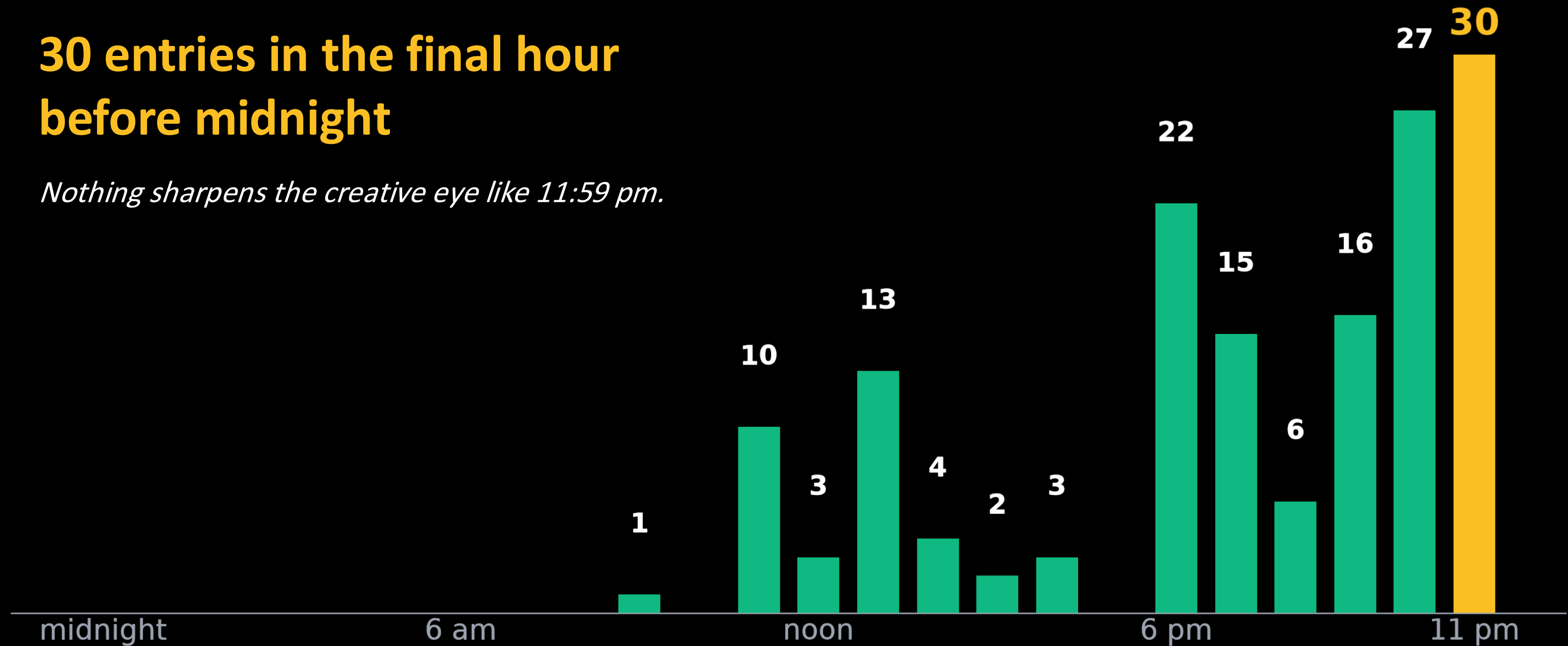
Divers: meticulous planners. Underwater, anyway.



Deadline day, hour by hour...

**30 entries in the final hour
before midnight**

Nothing sharpens the creative eye like 11:59 pm.



Our Judges



Anita Verde

Anita is one half of the husband-and-wife duo behind Summits to Seas, based in Melbourne.

Anita has a keen interest in animal behaviour, wide-angle and macro photography, and is a regular speaker at the *ADEX Ocean Festival in Singapore*. She has been awarded for her work as a photographer and photojournalist and maintains a focus on the conservation of our oceans.

She is a *Field Editor* at *Dive Photo Guide*, a comprehensive underwater photography and videography resource and award-winning website for photographers.

Her work regularly features in leading publications such as: *Alert Diver Magazine*, *Asian Diver*, *Scuba Diver ANZ*, *Asian Geographic*, *BBC Travel*, *Underwater Photography Magazine* and *Oceanographic Magazine*.

Anita shoots with the Nikon Z8 in SEACAM housing.

Jake Wilton

Jake is a professional photographer specialising in underwater, wildlife, and travel imagery. Based on the Mid North Coast of New South Wales, his passion began while learning to dive at the iconic Fish Rock Cave.

Jake developed his photography skills and career at Ningaloo Reef and he has a diverse portfolio spanning underwater ecosystems, wildlife encounters on land and at sea, and travel writing.

Jake is a *Nikon Australia Creator* and his work has been widely published in both print and digital outlets. His images have gained recognition in some of the world's most prestigious photography competitions.

In 2025 Jake was awarded 1st Place in both the *Underwater Awards Australasia* and the *Ocean Geographic Pictures of the Year (Humans and Ocean)*.





Vanessa Mignon

Vanessa is an award-winning wildlife photographer, photojournalist, and experienced trip leader. She is currently a member of the *Atlantis Dive Resorts and Liveaboards team* and is their representative in Australia and New Zealand.

Vanessa received the 2015 *Humane Society International (IFAW) Animal Action Award for Marine Photographer of the Year* in recognition of her conservation efforts.

In 2024, she became an ambassador for the *Australian Marine Conservation Society* and was appointed *Marelux Conservation Liaison Officer*.

Her work has been featured in leading publications such as *Alert Diver Magazine*, *Dive*, *Ezdive*, *Australian Geographic*, and *Ocean Geographic*.

She has placed over 70 times in international photo competitions, including DPG Masters, Underwater Photographer of the Year, Ocean Geographic Pictures of the Year, and Ocean Photographer of the Year.

The Competition

Categories judged by our 3 independent judges

Members' Choice judged by Club Members

Points awarded in each category as follows:

Winner
5 points

Runner-up
3 points

Highly Commended
1 point

Points summed to give overall Competition Ranking

Prizes awarded according to Competition Ranking and pre-declared preferences

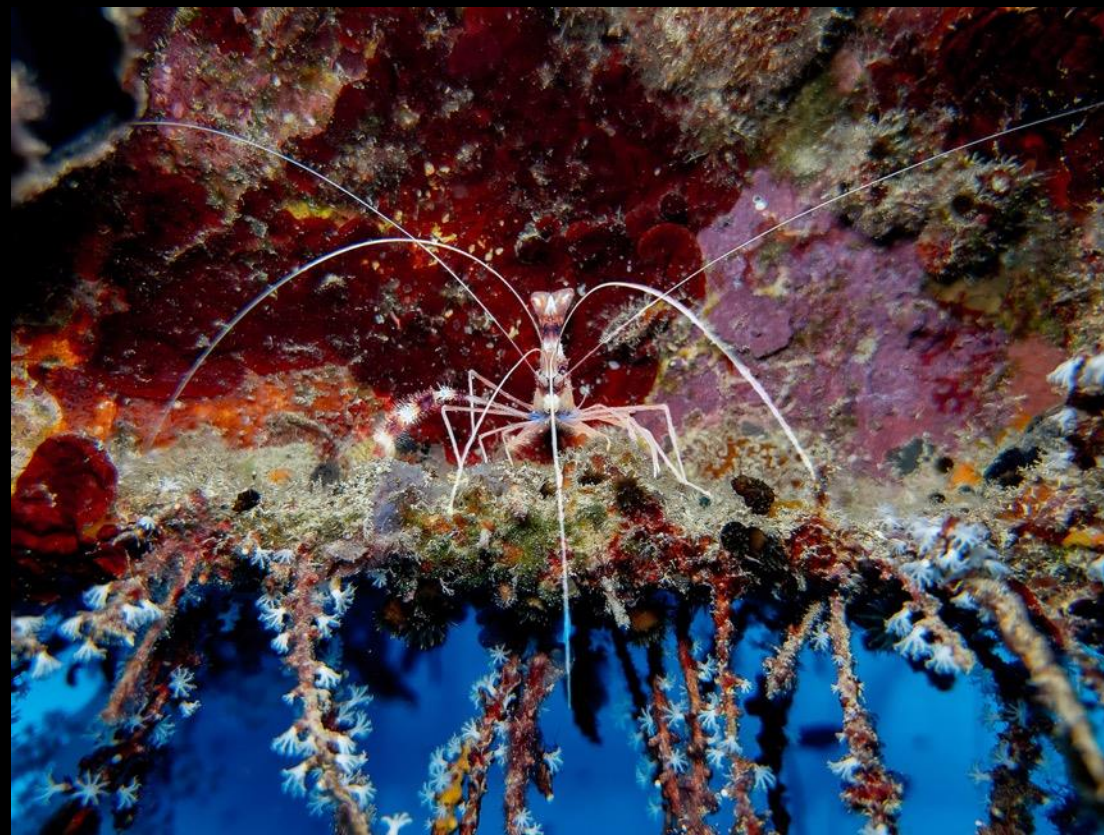
- *GBR is a Special category, sponsored by Mike Ball Dive Expeditions.
- Winner of this category receives competition points but is not eligible for an additional major prize (ie overseas trip or liveaboard)

The Awards

Smartphone/
Action camera

Smartphone / Action Camera

Peter Schleifer



Coral Banded Shrimp
Moore Reef Pontoon
iPhone 17 Pro / Weefine / Torch

Highly Commended

Lidia del Pozo Ramos



Coral trout
Ribbon Reefs
GoPro Hero5 Black



Smartphone / Action Camera

Lidia del Pozo Ramos



From the Judges: The judges were impressed that this image was captured on a smartphone or action camera. It is beautifully lit and thoughtfully composed, with the lionfish appearing fully engaged with the camera, resulting in a beautiful image with an unexpected level of quality.

Runner-up



Lionfish
Ribbon Reefs
GoPro Hero5 Black

Smartphone / Action Camera

Lidia del Pozo Ramos



From the Judges: This image had immediate impact on the judges. It stood out in particular for the photographer's ability to capture the character of the Napoleon wrasse, conveying both its scale and personality.

Winner



Napoleon Wrasse
GBR
GoPro Hero5 Black

Behaviour

Behaviour

David George



Barramundi cod cleaning station
Misool, Raja Ampat, Indonesia
Panasonic GH5 / Nauticam /
Inon Z330 strobes

Highly Commended

Libby Sterling



Peacock mantis shrimp guarding eggs
Anilao Batangas, Philippines
Canon EOS R / Nauticam Housing / dual
Backscatter strobes

Kevin Coombs



Moray eel cleaning station
Bali
Olympus TG6



Behaviour

Glenn Abbot



From the Judges: While there were a number of other images of mating mandarin fish in this category, and despite being a familiar subject among underwater photographers, this entry excelled. It was not only beautifully framed and processed, but it also captured the precise moment the eggs were released, distinctly setting it apart from others in its category.

Runner-up



The Love Dance
Lembah Strait
Sony RX100 5VA, Fantasea
Housing, Kraken strobes

Behaviour

Alexander Gorham



From the Judges: The judges were immediately struck by the rarity and intimacy of this moment, capturing two mating blue-ringed octopuses in a fleeting and seldom-seen behaviour. Both subjects are also clearly visible and engaged and well positioned within the frame.

Winner



Mating blue-ringed octopuses
(LHS female / RHS male)
Lembeh, Indonesia
OM1 MkII / AOI Housing / YS-D3 Strobes

Compact Macro

Compact Macro

Highly Commended

Kirsty Whitman



"When you haven't shaved in 3 months" Shrimp
Coral Sea
Olympus TG 6 + standard housing,
No strobes

Glenn Abbot



Slow Shutter
Lembah Strait
Sony RX100 5VA, Fantasea
Housing, Kraken strobes



Compact Macro

Alejandro Navarro Otero



From the Judges: The judges appreciated the technical challenge of capturing the clingfish, noting the difficulty of working at such close range in a feather star. They were particularly drawn to the feather star's form, which subtly resembles a human eye and naturally pulls the viewer into the frame.

Runner-up



Clingfish inside feather star
Saxon Reef, GBR
Olympus TG7 / Seafrogs /
Backscatter Hybrid Flash

Compact Macro Glenn Abbot

Winner



From the Judges: A striking portrait of a much-loved macro subject, this image stood out to the judges for its precise technical execution. The eye is rendered with great sharpness, while the depth of field gave a delicate, weightless quality that elevates the mood.



Gone Fishing
Lembeh Strait
Sony RX100 5VA, Fantasea
Housing, Kraken strobes

dSLR/Mirrorless Macro

dSLR/Mirrorless Macro

John Ditria



Anemone & shrimp a symbiotic relationship
Tulamben Bali
Sony A6700 / Nauticam / Inon

Phil Woodhead



Algae Shrimp carrying eggs
Indonesia
Nikon D7200/ INON Strobes

Highly Commended

Rhett Milbourne



Starry Blenny
Norman Reef
Olympus EM10 Mark IV,
AOI Housing. AOI-UCS-Q2



dSLR/Mirrorless Macro

Alexander Gorham



From the Judges: The judges were drawn to this image for the strong behavioural moment it captures. While it is a familiar species and an often photographed behaviour, the framing of this image was clean and purposeful, with both the fish and the eggs clearly in view; creating intimacy.

Runner-up



Female anemonefish with
its well protected eggs
Lembah, Indonesia
OM1 MkII / AOI Housing /
2 x YS-D3 Strobes

dSLR/Mirrorless Macro

Alexander Gorham

Winner



From the Judges: The judges were captivated by the intensity of this image. The image has extraordinary texture and detail, while the open mouth created a powerful focal point.



Burping weedy scorpionfish
in soft coral garden
Lembeh, Indonesia
OM1 MkII / AOI Housing /
2 x YS-D3 Strobes

Black & White



Black & White

Highly Commended

Mignon Prinsloo



WWII Hellcat Fighter Plane Wreck
Solomon Islands
GoPro HERO 12, Standard Housing,
X Adventurer Video Light

Libby Sterling



Thresher shark approaches a
cleaning station
Kimud Shoal, Philippines
Canon EOS R / Nauticam / Natural light



Black & White Rhett Milbourne



From the Judges: This image was recognised for its creative interpretation of a simple and often overlooked subject. The judges particularly valued the photographer's ability to elevate a familiar reef detail into something fresh and engaging.

Runner-up



Christmas Tree Worm
Norman Reef
Olympus EM10 Mark IV, AOI
Housing. AOI - UCS - Q1

Black & White Glenn Abbot

Winner



From the Judges: The judges awarded this image for its striking use of monochrome to elevate an already charismatic subject. The choice of lighting angle was perfect to reveal texture and detail in the frogfish.



Hairy Frog fish back lit
Lembeh Strait
Sony RX100 5VA

Compact Wide Angle

Compact Wide Angle

Cameron Shields



Huge potato cod staring at the camera
The Cod Hole, GBR
DJI Osmo Action 5 Pro / DJI Housing

Highly Commended

Glenn Abbot



Soft Corals of Fiji
Fiji
Sony RX100 5VA, Fantasea Housing, Kraken strobes

Alejandro Navarro Otero



Coral trout surrounded by bait
Ribbon Reefs, GBR
Olympus TG7 / Seafrogs /
Backscatter Hybrid Flash



Compact Wide Angle

Alejandro Navarro Otero



From the Judges: This image impressed the judges with its vibrant depiction of reef life. The low perspective and layered composition create depth, while the abundance of colour made us want to look at this image for longer.

Runner-up



Coral trout surrounded by lyretail anthias
Elphinstone Reef, Egypt
Olympus TG7 / Seafrogs / Backscatter
Hybrid Flash

Compact Wide Angle

Alejandro Navarro Otero

Winner



From the Judges: The judges were immediately drawn to the fact the turtle is beautifully positioned against the textured surface, creating a feeling of movement and freedom.



Turtle cruising over the reef
Norman Reef, GBR
Olympus TG7 / Seafrogs /
Backscatter Hybrid Flash

dSLR/Mirrorless Wide Angle

dSLR/Mirrorless Wide Angle

David George



Under the mangroves
Russell Islands, Solomons
Panasonic GH5 / Nauticam / Inon Z330 strobes

Highly Commended

Libby Sterling



Green Turtle chilling on the reef
Haunted Island Philippines
Canon EOS R / Nauticam Housing /
dual Backscatter strobes

Phil Woodhead



Pufferfish in swirling baitfish
GBR
Nikon D7200/ INON Strobes



dSLR/Mirrorless Wide Angle

David George



From the Judges: The judges were drawn to the beauty of the scene - the balance of soft coral, the wreck structure and blue water. The image has a real sense of place, while the passing rays add movement and interest without overwhelming the scene.

Runner-up



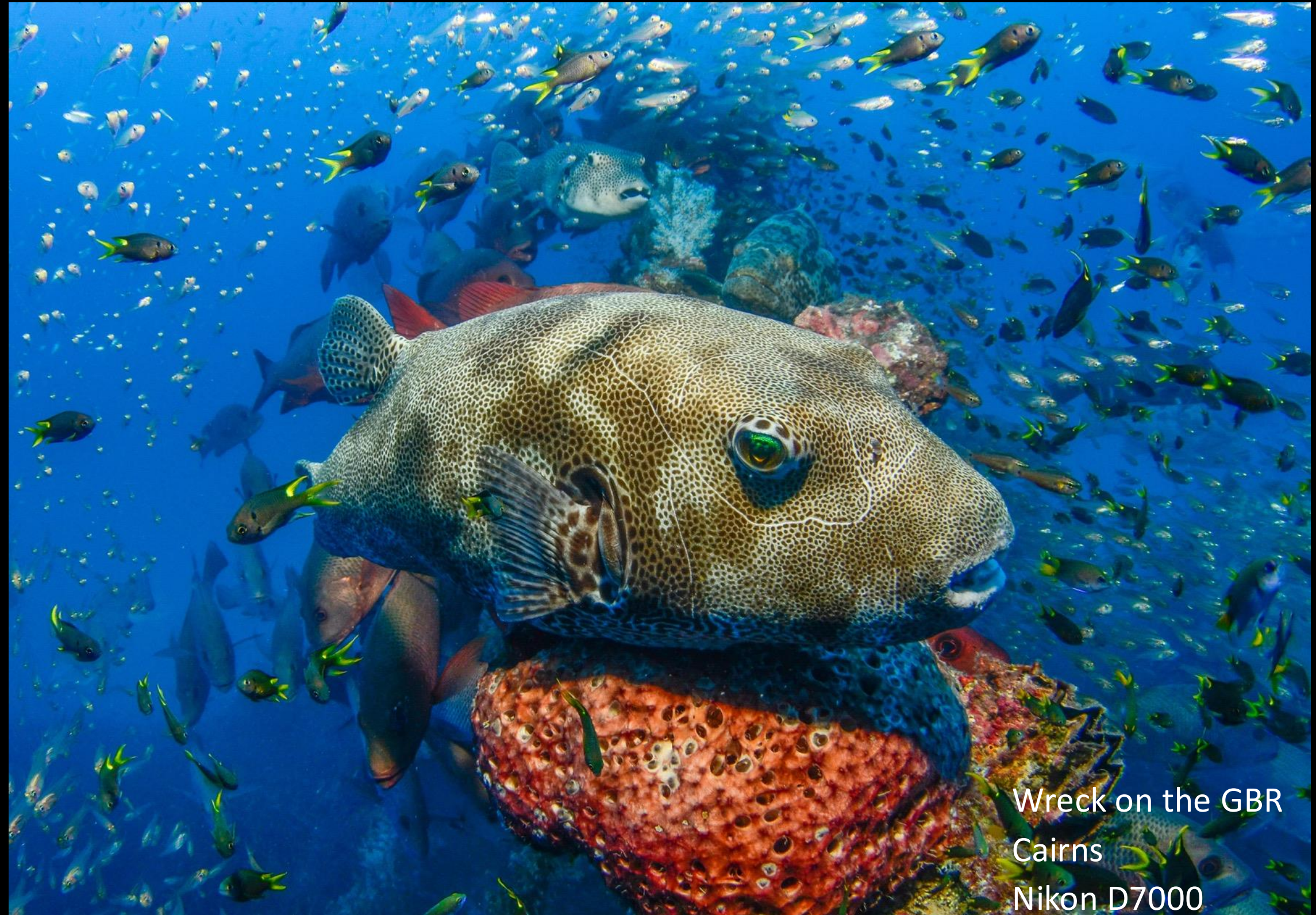
Marble Rays cruising over the soft coral
SS Yongala Wreck
Panasonic GH5 / Nauticam / Inon Z330 strobes

dSLR/Mirrorless Wide Angle Kevin Coombs

Winner



From the Judges: The judges loved the immediate impact of this image. The pufferfish fills the frame with personality and presence, while the other fish in the background add scale and context. It is unique and engaging and that tells a story.



Wreck on the GBR
Cairns
Nikon D7000

Video



Video

David George



One dive on Steve's Bommie

Highly Commended

Jan Pope



Night Shift on the Reef



Video

Alejandro Navarro Otero



From the Judges: The judges were impressed by this macro video focusing on shrimp behaviour, which turns a sometimes overlooked subject into something more engaging. There is a strong sense of patience in the filming, with the behaviour unfolding naturally. Also a nice choice of music.

Runner-up



Shrimp Fest

Video

Libby Sterling



From the Judges: The judges felt this was the clear standout among the entries, distinguished by its strong narrative and cohesive storytelling. The video is thoughtfully edited, with a natural pace that allows the story to develop while keeping the viewer engaged throughout. The choice of music worked seamlessly with the visuals to further support the narrative.

Winner



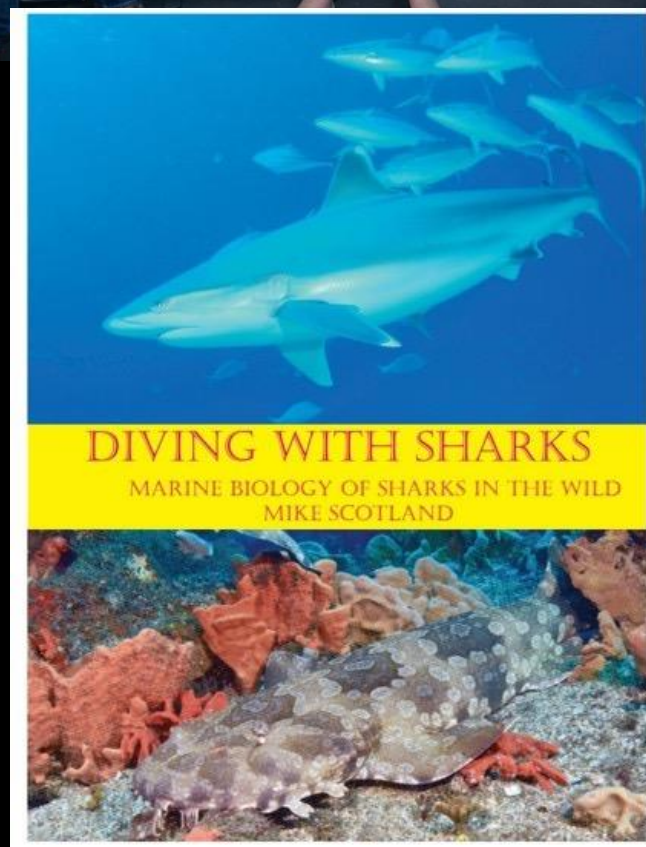
Living Colour | Great Barrier Reef

Encouragement Award



Kirby Abbot

Encouragement Award



Diving with Sharks by Mike Scotland

Portrait



Portrait

Glenn Abbot



Back lit Sea horse
Lembeh Strait
Sony RX100 5VA, Fantasea
Housing, Kraken strobes

Highly Commended

Glenn Abbot



Back Lit Froggy
Lembeh Strait
Sony RX100 5VA, Fantasea
Housing, Kraken strobes

Alexander Gorham



Portrait of Denise's seahorse on Muricella gorgonian
Lembeh, Indonesia
OM1 MkII
AOI Housing
YS-D3 Strobe + Snoot



Portrait

Kevin Coombs



From the Judges: The Rhinopias in this image really stood out to judges for its vibrant colour. The Rhinopias itself is shot at a lovely angle, revealing its character.

Runner-up



Rhinopias frondosa
Bali
Olympus TG6

Portrait

Alexander Gorham

Winner



From the Judges: This was a challenging category to judge, but this Bargibanti pygmy seahorse really stood out. The judges commended the photographer's patience in capturing the moment, with the subject clearly relaxed and engaged with the camera; and the sea fan undisturbed, its polyps fully open. The vibrant colours also gave the image immediate visual impact.



Bargibanti's seahorse on Muricella gorgonian
Lembeh, Indonesia
OM1 MkII / AOI Housing /
YS-D3 Strobe + Snoot

Beauty of the Great Barrier Reef



Beauty of the GBR

Alejandro
Navarro Otero



Yellow-banded Sweetlips
Saxon Reef, GBR
Olympus TG7 / Seafrogs / Backscatter
Hybrid Flash

Glenn Abbot



Cod Hole Magic
Ribbon Reefs
Sony RX100 5VA, Fantasea Housing,
Kraken strobes

Highly Commended

Catherine Cummins



Top of the Bommie
Ribbon Reef GBR
Nikon Z50 / Nauticam
AOI PI Strobes



Beauty of the GBR

Glenn Abbot



From the Judges: As photographers, the judges appreciated the difficulty in achieving this moment, with sweetlips often challenging to capture in perfect alignment. The image is further strengthened by its sense of context, with the surrounding reef environment clearly visible and the diver in the background adding scale and narrative interest, drawing the viewer more deeply into the scene.

Runner-up



Spawning Sweetlips
Ribbon Reefs
Sony RX100 5VA, Fantasea
Housing, Kraken strobes

Beauty of the Great Barrier Reef Winner



5 Night Ribbon Reefs trip – May 2027

Beauty of the GBR

Winner

Libby Sterling

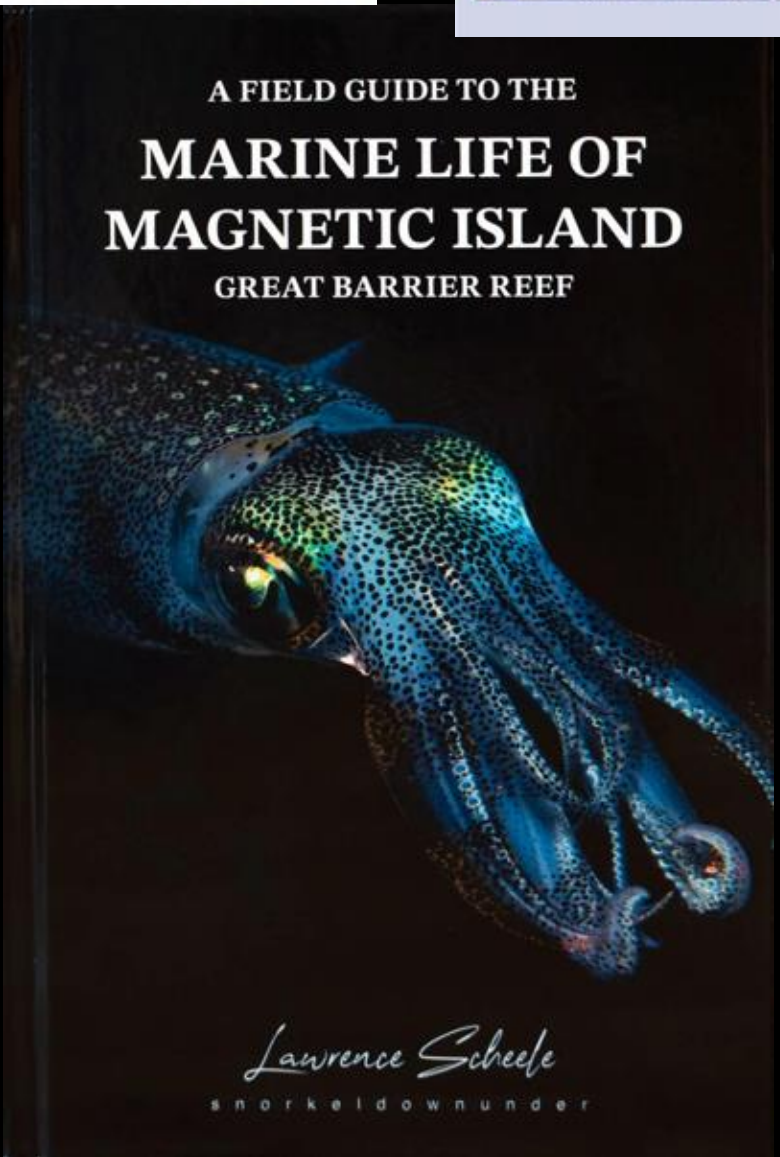
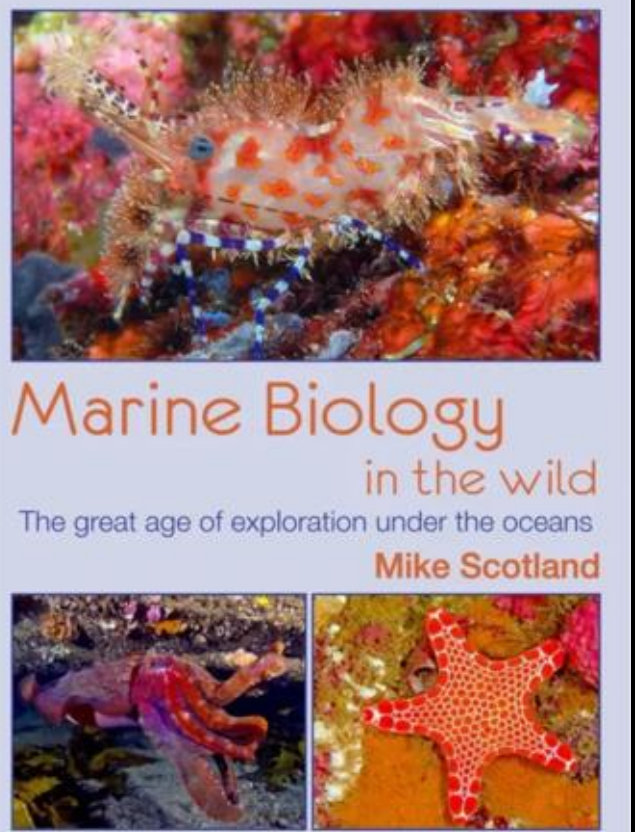
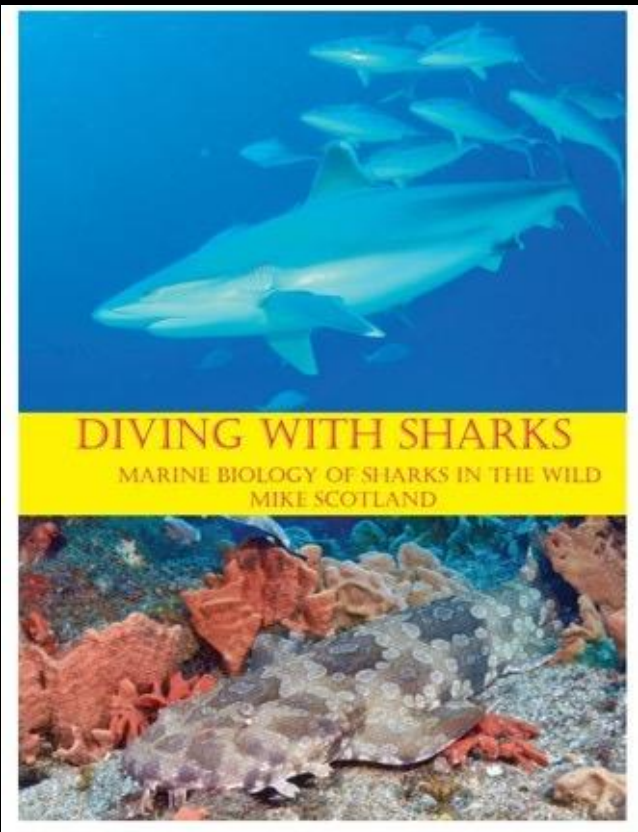


From the Judges: Anemonefish are one of the Great Barrier Reef's most recognisable subjects. Despite this familiarity, this portrait stood out to the judges for its clean, well-controlled execution.



Anemone fish
Milln Reef, GBR
Canon EOS R / Nauticam Housing
/ Sea & Sea YS-D3mkii strobes

Lucky Door Prizes



Members' Choice



Members' Choice

Highly Commended

Glenn Abbot



The Love Dance
Lembeh Strait
Sony RX100 5VA, Fantasea Housing,
Kraken strobes

Kevin Coombs



Thresher Shark
Malapascua
Nikon D7000



Members' Choice

Alexander Gorham



Runner-up



Grey reef shark silhouette
framed within cave
Lady Elliot Island, QLD
OM-D E-M1 MkII / Olympus
Housing / 2 x YS-D3 Strobes

Members' Choice

Winner

Richard Banks



Turtle crossing the barracuda highway
Father's Reef, Bismarck Sea
Olympus OMD 10, AOI, natural light

Overall Scores

Overall Ranking is based on points across all the categories
(**Winner – 5 points, Runner-up – 3 points, HC – 1 point**)

17 entrants were awarded points
(All 17 received at least one of their **top-10 ranked prizes**)

Ties were resolved “Olympic style”: **most wins first**,
then runner-up placings, then HCs

Remaining ties were resolved based on the prize
preferences of the entrants.

11th Place
(7 entrants tied)



Day trip for 2



Cressi mask and snorkel

Kirsty Whitman



Olympus Tough TG-6

Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
Kirsty Whitman	11	1	-	-	1



11th Place
(7 entrants tied)



2D/1N trip for one



DAN World pack
(Dry bag, SMB,
Bottle, hat, shirt)

Cameron Shields



Olympus Tough TG-6

Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
Cameron Shields	11	1	-	-	1
Kirsty Whitman	11	1	-	-	1



11th Place
(7 entrants tied)



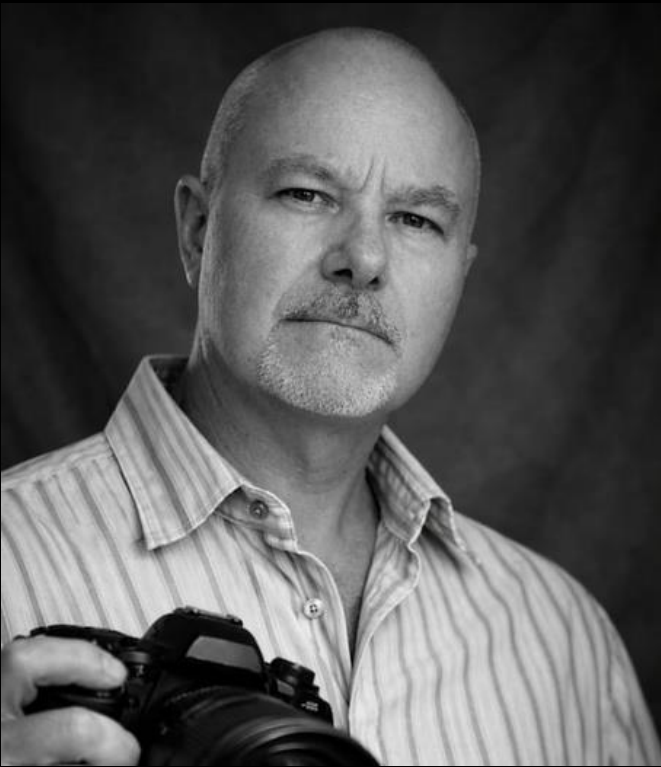
AquaQuest

Day trip for 1



\$50 USD voucher

Peter Schleifer



iPhone

Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
Peter Schleifer	11	1	-	-	1
Cameron Shields	11	1	-	-	1
Kirsty Whitman	11	1	-	-	1



11th Place
(7 entrants tied)



2D/1N trip for one



Annual subscription

Mignon Prinsloo



GoPro HERO 12

Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
Mignon Prinsloo	11	1	-	-	1
Peter Schleifer	11	1	-	-	1
Cameron Shields	11	1	-	-	1
Kirsty Whitman	11	1	-	-	1



11th Place
(7 entrants tied)



\$750 Travel Voucher

Jan Pope



GoPro HERO 13 & Olympus TG-6

Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
Jan Pope	11	1	-	-	1
Mignon Prinsloo	11	1	-	-	1
Peter Schleifer	11	1	-	-	1
Cameron Shields	11	1	-	-	1
Kirsty Whitman	11	1	-	-	1



11th Place
(7 entrants tied)



\$350 voucher for a course



Annual subscription

John Ditria



Sony A6700

Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
John Ditria	11	1	-	-	1
Jan Pope	11	1	-	-	1
Mignon Prinsloo	11	1	-	-	1
Peter Schleifer	11	1	-	-	1
Cameron Shields	11	1	-	-	1
Kirsty Whitman	11	1	-	-	1



11th Place
(7 entrants tied)



MOUA day trip for 1



\$50 USD voucher

Catherine
Cummins



Nikon Z50

Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
Catherine Cummins	11	1	-	-	1
John Ditria	11	1	-	-	1
Jan Pope	11	1	-	-	1
Mignon Prinsloo	11	1	-	-	1
Peter Schleifer	11	1	-	-	1
Cameron Shields	11	1	-	-	1
Kirsty Whitman	11	1	-	-	1



10th Place

Phil Woodhead



Julian Rocks day trip for 1



Nikon D7200 & D610

Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
	7				
	8				
	9				
Phil Woodhead	10	2	-	-	2



9th Place



one-night stay at
a partner resort



PADI pack
(backpack, cap
and bottle)



Rhett Milbourne



Olympus E-M10 Mark IV



Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
	7				
	8				
Rhett Milbourne	9	4	-	1	1
Phil Woodhead	10	2	-	-	2

8th Place



\$500 Travel Voucher



Annual subscription

Richard Banks



Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
	7				
Richard Banks	8	5	1	-	-
Rhett Milbourne	9	4	-	1	1
Phil Woodhead	10	2	-	-	2

7th Place

David George



3D/2N trip for 1



Annual subscription



Panasonic GH5



Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
David George	7	6	-	1	3
Richard Banks	8	5	1	-	-
Rhett Milbourne	9	4	-	1	1
Phil Woodhead	10	2	-	-	2

6th Place

Lidia del Pozo Ramos

diversden
THE GREAT BARRIER REEF



3D/2N trip for one

Baruna Silver
Jewellery of the Seven Seas



Silver pendant



Gopro Hero 5 Black



Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
Lidia del Pozo Ramos	6	9	1	1	1
David George	7	6	-	1	3
Richard Banks	8	5	1	-	-
Rhett Milbourne	9	4	-	1	1
Phil Woodhead	10	2	-	-	2

5th Place



Day trip for 2



\$199 First aid kit

Kevin Coombs



Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
Kevin Coombs	5	10	1	1	2
Lidia del Pozo Ramos	6	9	1	1	1
David George	7	6	-	1	3
Richard Banks	8	5	1	-	-
Rhett Milbourne	9	4	-	1	1
Phil Woodhead	10	2	-	-	2

4th Place



5-Night GBR & Ribbon Reefs trip - May 2027



Day trip for 1

Libby Sterling



Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
	1				
	2				
	3				
Libby Sterling	4	13	2	-	3
Kevin Coombs	5	10	1	1	2
Lidia del Pozo Ramos	6	9	1	1	1
David George	7	6	-	1	3
Richard Banks	8	5	1	-	-
Rhett Milbourne	9	4	-	1	1
Phil Woodhead	10	2	-	-	2

3rd Place



7 nights / 3 meals / 10 dives
for one person



Annual subscription

Alejandro
Navarro Otero



Olympus TG7



Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
	1				
	2				
Alejandro Navarro Otero	3	16	1	3	2
Libby Sterling	4	13	2	-	3
Kevin Coombs	5	10	1	1	2
Lidia del Pozo Ramos	6	9	1	1	1
David George	7	6	-	1	3
Richard Banks	8	5	1	-	-
Rhett Milbourne	9	4	-	1	1
Phil Woodhead	10	2	-	-	2

2nd Place



4 nights / 10 dives
for one person



1-month free membership &
mentoring/portfolio appraisal

Glenn Abbot



Sony RX100 VA & OM-1 Mark II



Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
	1				
Glenn Abbot	2	22	2	2	6
Alejandro Navarro Otero	3	16	1	3	2
Libby Sterling	4	13	2	-	3
Kevin Coombs	5	10	1	1	2
Lidia del Pozo Ramos	6	9	1	1	1
David George	7	6	-	1	3
Richard Banks	8	5	1	-	-
Rhett Milbourne	9	4	-	1	1
Phil Woodhead	10	2	-	-	2

1st Place

Alexander Gorham



OM-1 Mark II

Entrant	Place	Total points	Win	RU	HC
Alexander Gorham	1	22	3	2	1
Glenn Abbot	2	22	2	2	6
Alejandro Navarro Otero	3	16	1	3	2
Libby Sterling	4	13	2	-	3
Kevin Coombs	5	10	1	1	2
Lidia del Pozo Ramos	6	9	1	1	1
David George	7	6	-	1	3
Richard Banks	8	5	1	-	-
Rhett Milbourne	9	4	-	1	1
Phil Woodhead	10	2	-	-	2



5 nights / 3 meals / 10 dives
for one person



\$200 voucher



Thanks to:

Our 34 talented photographers and videographers who made this competition such an amazing visual event.

Our Judges for their commitment, skill and time spent judging the entries.

Our generous Sponsors who make this competition and event such a success.

The Nautilus Committee who volunteered their time and skills to deliver another successful event.

The club members who set up the exhibition and everyone else who came along to help.

The online gallery is now live!

Browse all the entries and this year's results



admin.nautilus-scuba.net/photocomp/gallery