

NZ Dolphin Underwater & Adventure Club

Newsletter May 2024

Club Meeting 6:00pm Wed 8th May 2024

What's on : Dinner at the "Rainforest" in Albany. **Not the clubrooms**

www.dolphinunderwater.co.nz



Club's Mail Address
14 Gails Drive
Okura
RD2 Albany

Club Contacts Inside
Website As Above



COMMITTEE MEMBERS: 2023/2024

President/Entertainment	Allan Dixon	021 994 593	allanandjilldixon@xtra.co.nz
Vice-President	Chris Nipper	021 991 732	akidna27@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor	Denis Adams	0278 970 922	da.triden@gmail.com
Secretary/Treasurer	Margaret Howard	0274 839 839	marg.howard@xtra.co.nz
Sec/Treasurer backup	Trish Mahon-Adams	0272 715 410	t.triden@gmail.com
All Trips Organiser	Margaret Howard	0274 839 839	marg.howard@xtra.co.nz
Committee	Dave Craig	021 557 588	dave.wave5@gmail.com
	Tom Butler	0278 931 936	trbutler@xtra.co.nz
	Peter Howard	0225 194 046	pete.howard@xtra.co.nz
Web Site	Matt Gouge	0210 777 282	mattgouge@gmail.com

Life Members Barry Barnes, Margaret Howard, Peter Howard, Brian Horton, Reg Lawson, Roberto Tonei, Denis Adams, Trish Mahon-Adams, Dave Quinlan

Honorary Members Graham Thumah, Tony Enderby, Jenny Enderby, Eileen Slark.

Cover Page Photo:– Niue’s clear waters, U/W photographer’s heaven.

WHAT’S ON?

8th May. – Wed. – 6.00pm – Albany – Dinner at the “Rainforest” Albany. **Advise Margaret for booking.**

Dive trips, NZ & Overseas – Check out the dive shop’s web sites, there is plenty available, but you do need to contact the shops in person to confirm costs & booking availabilities.

Performance Dive NZ - Ph. 489 7782. or <https://www.performancediver.co.nz/Dive+Trips++Events>

Global Dive - Ph. 920 5200. or <https://www.globaldive.net/page/trips> .

Aucklandscubadive – Ph. 478 2814 or <https://www.aucklandscubadive.co.nz/dive-trips>

Other events & suggestions please contact a committee member or organise it yourself & get the club to make up your numbers. i.e. – Dives, trips NZ & O’Seas, Events, Outings, Tramps, Dinners, Movies, etc.

Our Club’s Trip Rules (Organiser’s rules apply for overseas trips)

- A. Bookings allowed on all trips. *Two trips & club membership is a must.*
- B. **A deposit or full payment to be made at time of booking.**
- C. Full payment **MUST** be paid at least two weeks before departure date.
- D. Trip Organiser to handle trip & bookings, & Treasurer to handle finances. Cancellations due to weather will be refunded in full, or transferred to another trip.
- E. Members cancelling for any reason will lose full monies unless they find a replacement for their position on the trip.
- F. The trips Organiser will determine if there are enough people to run a trip & if not will notify cancellation two weeks prior to departure. **Non - financial members will be charged an extra \$10 on trips.**

NB: All Memberships Now Due: Single – \$40 Family- \$50.00

For the club to continue we need paid up members see Margaret or Trish next meeting or do it online.

**Club’s Internet bank account is 06 0122 0074227 00 & don’t forget to put in your name
Club Membership also includes Affiliation to the New Zealand Underwater Association**

What It's Like to Be an Underwater Photographer in Ningaloo Reef

Western Australia–based photographer and PADI Pro Brooke Pyke shares her journey as an underwater photographer

By [Brooke Morton](#) | Updated On March 28, 2024



Brooke Pyke swimming alongside a whale shark on the Ningaloo Reef

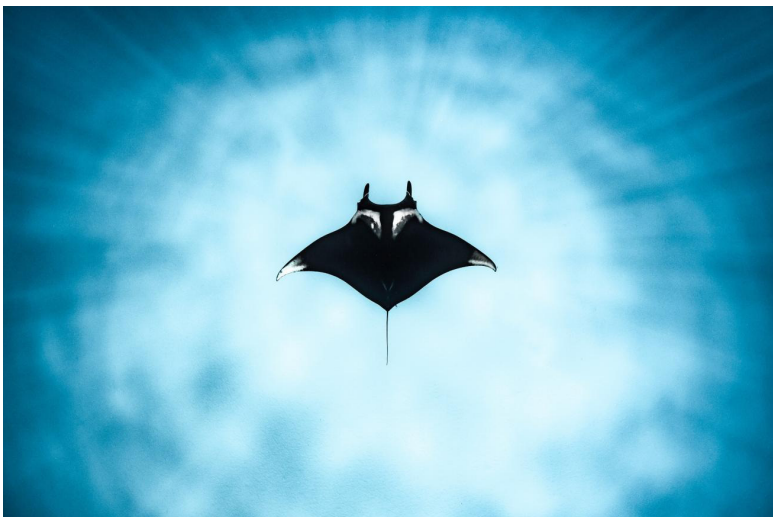
Courtesy, Oliver Clarke

A post-graduation trip in 2011 to Thailand changed Brooke Pyke’s life. She came home to Melbourne, Australia with her open water certification card in hand, and immediately started saving to complete her divemaster training.

Today, she is a self-taught photographer and photo trip leader, who shoots images of marine life as well as adventures above and below the waterline.

What was the transition like between divemaster and photography?

I started my PADI professional career as a divemaster in Thailand, then worked on the Great Barrier Reef and in Bali. On Nusa Lembongan, a small island off Bali, [I became a PADI Instructor](#). I lived and worked there for four years, and in my spare time, I picked up a point-and-shoot camera and taught myself how to use it.



A giant oceanic manta ray cruises over the white sand of the Ningaloo coast.

Courtesy Brooke Pyke

When did you start getting paid to take photos?

I was working as a dive instructor in Lembongan and the dive center asked me to start creating photos for them to use on social media. This is where I realized I wanted to turn my hobby into a professional role full time instead of teaching diving.

I moved to Ningaloo Reef in 2021 begin my new career path as it is a hotspot for photography. I found a job on a day boat that takes people snorkeling with whale sharks.

That led to working five days a week in the ocean. My job is to get a photo of each guest with a whale shark, in addition to photos of them on the boat throughout the day.

What was the hardest part of the job?

People don't realize how physical the job is. It's a lot of swimming. The guests get picked up by the boat and dropped closer to the whale sharks again and again. But the guides stay in the water the whole time, swimming 1 to 2 hours.

We also have to help people get in position alongside the whale shark to get the photo. Guests have various swimming abilities, so often I am towing someone up to the whale shark while also dragging my camera. The job keeps you very fit.

Related Reading: [Dangerous Jobs: Diving With Alligators and Crocodiles](#)

What has been your most memorable encounter?

We sometimes get krill formations off Ningaloo, especially after the coral spawn. This is one of the main reasons whale sharks gather on the reef, but I remember one day of pure chaos when seven whale sharks showed up to feast on a dense krill cloud.

It was absolute chaos. Animals darted around me so quickly, but I could only see a few meters ahead because the sea was so thick with krill.



Whale shark in a cloud of krill.

Courtesy, Brooke Pyke

More than a few times I glanced in one direction only to see a whale shark barreling toward me, and have to rush to get out of the way. I ended up with mostly blurry photos of sweeping tails and gaping mouths. I didn't get amazing photos but the experience was one I will never forget.

How did you transition to fine-art photography?

Because of where we are and what I do, I get a lot of opportunities to shoot at my day job. Most of my job consists of photographing the customers, but I do get a bit of time to take my own photos. I also have my own boat that I take out. Every day, I take about 300 to 400 photos, and end up with maybe one fine-art shot a week that I really love.



A tiger shark feeds on a whale carcass on the sea floor.

Courtesy, Brooke Pyke

What has been your most surprising encounter?

Last year, some friends got word that a whale had died in the bay. They found the body on the sand at 32 feet and shared the GPS coordinates with us. By the time we got there, tiger sharks were taking turns stripping flesh from bones, and not much more than a skeleton remained.

It was very sad and felt profoundly real, but it's just nature doing its thing. It was scary because of the tiger sharks feeding, but also incredibly beautiful.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

I love teaching others how to shoot on the photography trips that I offer. I clearly remember my own struggles early on, so it's rewarding to help people conquer these skills.

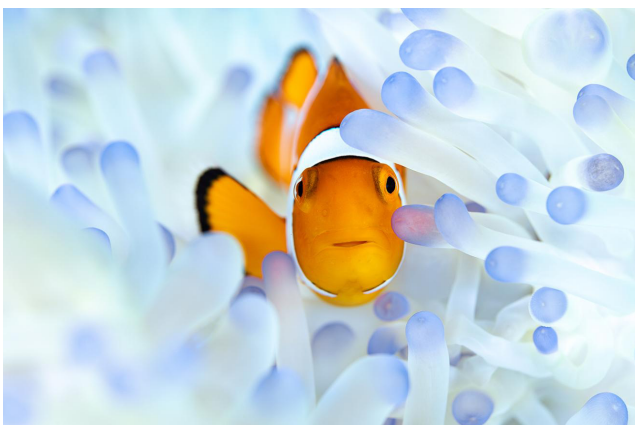
In my experience, diving is such a male-dominated sport. I guide many women on my trips, and I hope their experience with me inspires more to assume roles in this industry.

Related Reading: [World's Best Destinations for Underwater Photography](#)

How has your work supported conservation?

When I first started underwater photography, I encountered a lot of marine debris off Bali, right where manta rays would often feed. I took several images of mantas surrounded by dense plastic, and one eventually got picked up by newspapers.

I received countless emails and messages on social media from people who insisted the photo was fake, which opened my eyes to how many people were unaware of the devastating human impact on the environment. I learned then that photography can be a bridge that brings people front and center to these issues.



A clown fish living amongst the tentacles of its bleached anemone home.

Courtesy, Brooke Pyke

To Check or Carry-On?

Let's get this one out of the way first. I used to carry almost everything on, but as your gear list grows this quickly becomes difficult. For the past 5 years, I've been using a mix of carry-on and checked luggage. I have an [Atlas Packs Athlete backpack](#) that I absolutely love for carry-on. I like to always have my camera bodies, primary lenses and laptop with me at all times for a little peace of mind.

The Athlete pack easily carries two full-frame Sony Alpha camera bodies, four lenses, a DJI Mavic Pro drone, a 16" MacBook Pro and all those pesky batteries the airlines don't want in your checked luggage. (Pro tip: make sure to check the airline's policy on batteries and have the policy printed out in case of questioning.)

Best of all, bags like Atlas Packs don't look gigantic. Even better, their backpacks are actually designed to distribute weight similar to hiking packs—something I find most camera backpacks are lacking. So even when filled to the brim, Atlas Packs feel like you're barely carrying anything, which is great for days spent traveling or hiking out to get some epic shots.



Atlas Pack's Athlete backpack easily carries two full frame camera bodies (Sony Alpha 1 and A7S III), four lenses (24-70mm, 100-400mm, 28-60mm and 16-35mm), two extra batteries, DJI Mavic 3 Pro drone (inside the gray zipped area with controller and two batteries) and a 16 inch Apple Macbook Pro (in the laptop sleeve on the other side of pack).

Jay Clue

Let me share a secret. Call me crazy, but when I travel my camera housing, dome ports, strobes and video lights all go in my checked luggage. Think Tank makes an incredible [Airport Security roller bag](#) designed specifically for camera gear. These bags boast top-notch padding and safety features, ensuring the protection of my valuables as they brave the gauntlet of air travel. While Think Tank does offer smaller carry-on versions, the bulk of their roller bags are designed to be checked. Despite enduring its fair share of beating from countless air miles, my trusty roller bag remains unparalleled in durability compared to any other luggage I've owned.

Related Reading: [World's Best Destinations for Underwater Photography](#)

When purchasing baggage for your gear, I recommend getting one that has various-sized dividers. This allows you to customize your bag to the specific gear you are carrying to fit safely and securely. For this week's PADI shoot I've packed my Think Tank with a Nauticam NA-A1 housing, Nauticam WACP-1, Nauticam 180mm optical glass dome, three Sea & Sea YS-D3 MKII strobes, two Keldan 8XR video lights, a Sony 16-35mm f2.8 G Master lens, six Hoya lens filters, as well as a mix of clamps, hardware and parts. All of this is in a roller bag that is only slightly bigger than most domestic carry-on luggage limits.

The Think Tank Airport Security is technically carry-on size yet holds a ton of gear safely. As pictured it holds a Nauticam NA-A1 housing, a Nauticam WACP-1, a Nauticam 180mm glass dome, two Keldan 8XR video lights, two Sea & Sea YS-D3 Mk II strobes, a set of Apeks MTX-R regs plus some miscellaneous clamps and hardware.

Jay Clue

The Must-Have Item

To help ease your travel anxiety, I recommend purchasing a tracking device such as an Apple AirTag, Samsung SmartTags or Tile. These little pieces of tech are a godsend for reducing travel-related stress. Easily tucked away in your bags, they sync with an app, allowing you to monitor their whereabouts. Think of them as tiny tracking devices that you can keep an eye on in real time.

On a recent shoot in Dominica, one of my bags failed to arrive. Instead of being super stressed out while waiting hours for the airline to find it, I opened Apple's Find My app. In two seconds, I saw my bag sitting at the gate in Miami and informed the airline, ensuring its swift transfer onto the next available flight.

Moreover, they offer an added layer of protection if one of your bags gets stolen or misplaced. I now have them everywhere—including my car, laptop sleeve and keys. I've even been told they are great for tracking kids and pets.

Stay Discreet

Fly under the radar and use luggage and bags with a more discreet appearance. Traveling with bulky, hard-shell cases can inadvertently signal that you're carrying valuable gear, inviting unnecessary scrutiny at check-in, airport security and international customs.

That's one reason I appreciate brands like Atlas Packs and Think Tank. Their bags blend in seamlessly and are designed to resemble a normal hiking backpack and a standard black roller bag. This subtle design not only helps you fly under the radar but also reduces the likelihood of becoming a target for theft or unwarranted attention.

Related Reading: [World's Best Destinations for Underwater Photography](#)

Be Prepared

Lastly, I highly recommend looking into camera-specific insurance to protect your gear. This not only protects your gear during travel but also while on a shoot or in storage. Most policies will include coverage for theft, damage and even housing flooding. I personally use Athos' equipment floater coverage, which means your coverage 'floats' to follow your gear wherever it may go. Although some homeowners or renter policies may cover camera gear, they often do not provide floating coverage like this—making it a must have for travelers.

Big thanks to @christine.with.a.sea and @brittanylee for submitting this month's questions. Don't forget to check us out on the last Wednesday of every month on the @jayclue and @scubadivingmag Instagram to submit your questions. See you next month!



Ask a Pro Photographer is a monthly column where Jay Clue answers your questions about underwater photography, cinematography and conservation storytelling. Topics are chosen from our audience. If you have a question you'd like answered in a future Ask a Pro Photographer column, join us on Instagram at @scubadivingmag the last week of each month.

Jay Clue
Cecilia Mar Ruiz

Jay Clue is an accomplished photographer, educator and conservationist who uses captivating photography combined with passionate storytelling to inspire people around the world to cherish and preserve the natural beauty of our planet. His photos have appeared in a multitude of both print and digital media platforms, including *Newsweek*, *National Geographic Traveller*, *Oceanographic Magazine* and many more as well as for major brands such as PADI, Sony, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) and more. When not working on commercial projects, he shares his passion for photography and conservation by teaching workshops and leading unforgettable experiences with wildlife around the world. Follow him at @jayclue on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), where he's always happy to answer questions and chat about photography.



Ask a Pro Photographer: How to Achieve Awesome Color in Your Underwater Photos

Capture vibrant colors in your underwater photos with Jay Clue's tips on custom white balance, lighting, and photo editing. By [Jay Clue](#) | Created On December 27, 2023

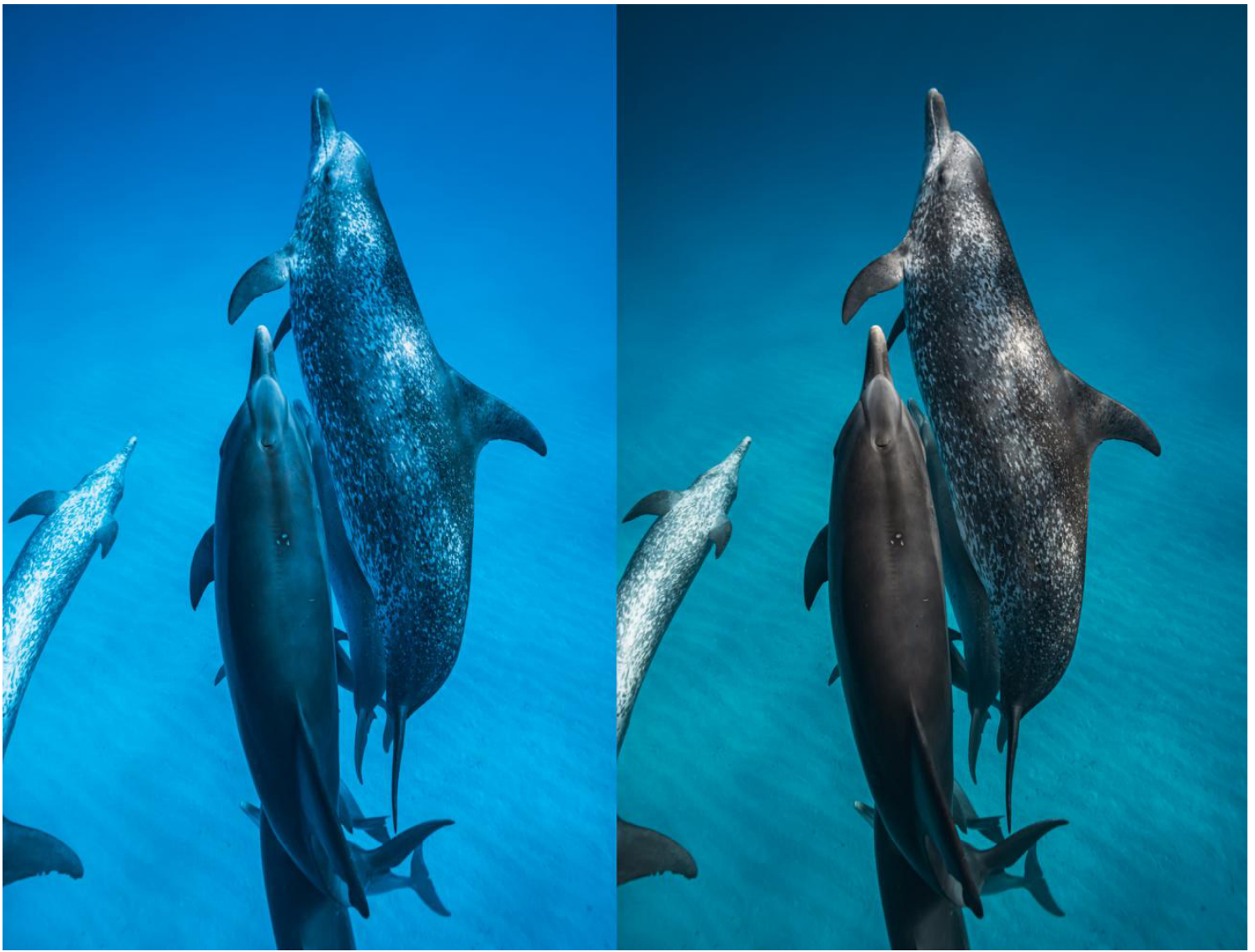
So you've got your shiny new camera and are super stoked to take it for its first dive. You hit the water, living out your Nat Geo dreams, then rush home to upload your images. Quickly, you notice something strange is happening—your shots are missing those vibrant colors we see so often on social media and in magazines. Instead, everything looks blue and faded. Is the camera broken? Or are those underwater photo pros using some kind of secret wizardry?

Don't worry, it's something underwater photographers of all levels struggle with. Last month, Alan asked, "The colors in my photos often don't look quite right. How can I set up my camera to overcome this?" Well, get comfortable and grab your favorite snack. This month in Ask a Pro Photographer, we're going to take a look at some tips for mastering color underwater and using custom white balance.

How Water Affects Light

To achieve color-perfect photos we first need to understand how water and depth affect light. To start, water is 800 times denser than air—causing light to slow down as it moves through water. It's actually a bit more complicated than this, but if you're like me and love nerding out on the science check out this video by [Fermilab](#).

The visible spectrum of light is heavily affected when interacting with water, including being essentially absorbed pretty quickly. Within the first 33 feet/10 meters of depth, roughly 50% of visible light is absorbed. But different color wavelengths are absorbed at different rates. Red, being the longest wavelength with the lowest energy, is filtered out first. The loss of the color red is dramatic and can be seen as shallow as only 20 inches/50 centimeters underwater!



The only difference between these two panels is the white balance setting. The left panel shows what the dolphins look like using auto white balance at roughly 20 feet/6 meters underwater, the right panel shows the same shot using custom white balance. *Jay Clue*

At 15 feet/5 meters of depth, we've already lost 90% of the reds. On the other end of the rainbow, blue and violet have shorter wavelengths with more energy, so they are able to penetrate much deeper into the water.

These effects on light underwater have strong implications for our photos and videos. We lose color, contrast and dynamic range as we go deeper. So, how do we fix this? Well, I'm glad you asked!

Get Familiar with Custom White Balance

If you are shooting with natural light, you'll want to take advantage of your camera's custom white balance settings. This is essentially telling the camera what white looks like in the current environment so that it can adjust and correct its colors. You'll want to use custom white balance when you are *not* using any other light source, such as strobes or video lights.

Almost all cameras these days have a custom white balance feature, with the exception of some action cams and smartphones (although you can tweak the temperature on some). Usually, the process will involve going into your camera's white balance settings, choosing a custom white balance slot and then "capturing" white balance by pointing the camera at something white, gray or neutral colored. Some cameras require you to pull it from a previously shot photo; others, such as Sony Alpha cameras, allow you to do it live.

Keep in mind that custom white balance might work great on shallower dives but not as well on deep dives. Since the light changes with depth, you'll also want to adjust the white balance whenever you shift about 10 to 15 feet/3 to 5 meters. For example, if you set your custom white balance at 40 feet/12 meters and head up to your safety

stop at 15 feet/5 meters, the images will start to look pink since more reds are coming back as you go shallower. The opposite is also true; the images will look more blue when going deeper.

It is important to point the camera at roughly the same angle you will be shooting when setting the custom white balance. For example, if you aim straight down towards a depth with less light to set white balance, then shots captured horizontally will be off a bit.

You'll also want the neutral color to be of a similar distance from the camera as your subject. If the subject is further, the light must move through more water, causing more color absorption. Some photographers like to carry white slates or gray cards, but you can use other objects such as your buddy's gray tank, the palm of your hand or a white fin.

Once you've gotten comfortable with this, you can take it one step further and manually adjust that custom white balance to really tweak it to how you want it. Not all cameras have this option, but for me, it's something I find helps to dial in the style I'm looking for.



Using strobes not only helps bring colors back but also allows us to get shots that aren't possible when using solely natural light. Without strobes, the subjects would have been in silhouette. *Jay Clue*

Using Artificial Lights

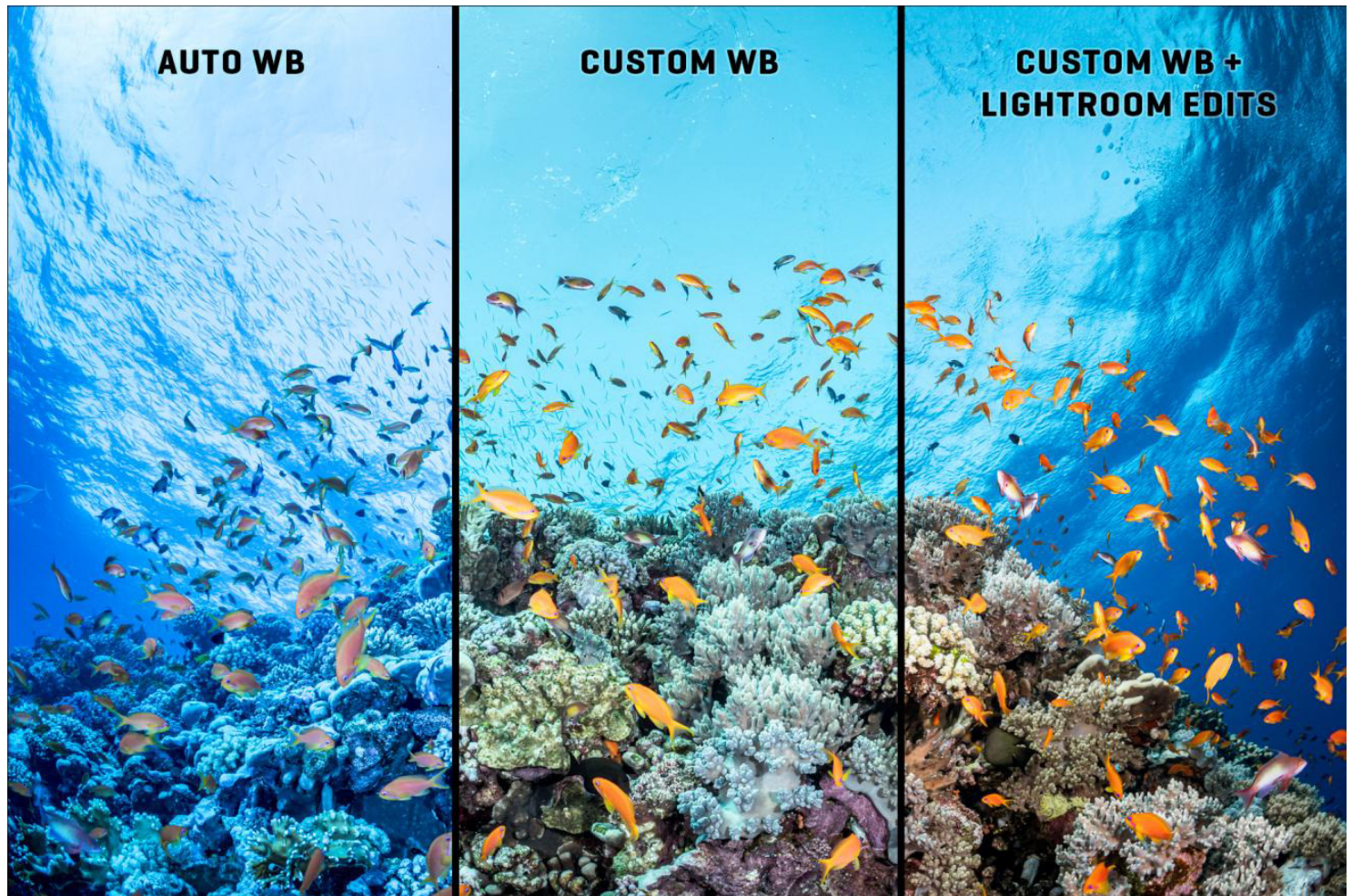
You can utilize [strobes or video lights](#) to help get the most vibrant colors—especially when in deeper water. Essentially, whenever we shoot underwater, we are working in a low-light environment due to how much light is lost just by dipping a few feet below the surface.

Strobes and video lights allow us to add light back to the subject—helping not only with color but also with contrast, dynamic range and sharpness. When using lights, we want to set our camera's white balance to either auto (AWB) or to match the color temperature of your lights (in Kelvin). You'll want to play around with your camera to see which works better for you. On my Sony Alpha 1, the auto white balance works remarkably well underwater and easily matches up with whatever lights I use.

Keep in mind that water also absorbs your light, so your strobes or lights will not illuminate very far from their source. Imagine if you could touch the subject you're trying to light with the tip of your fin. If your fin wouldn't

reach it, then the chances are your lights are probably not illuminating it the way you'd really want. Now, I shouldn't have to say this, but don't actually reach out your fin to try to touch them.

Related Reading: [How To Position Strobes: Tips for Underwater Photographers](#)



Using custom white balance and Lightroom together can help restore and enhance the colors for a more vibrant result. *Jay Clue*

Enhancing with Software and Apps

If you shoot [RAW files, instead of JPEG](#), you will have much more room to correct your colors in post-processing apps such as Adobe Lightroom. The specific process will depend on which software you are using, but in general, there will be two sliders to adjust the temperature and tint. Temperature will primarily affect your blues and ambers, or in other words, how warm or cool the image appears. This can also be used to match the temperature of your scene or lights. The tint slider will work more with green and magenta color casts in your images.

Additionally, an eyedropper tool allows you to select a target neutral color in the image for the software to correct the white balance automatically, similar to how we did it underwater. When using the dropper, select a neutral color on the part of the subject that is closest to the camera.

Now I can already hear you asking, why would I mess around with custom white balance on my camera if I can just shoot RAW and adjust it later? Well, if you correct in camera, you're going to have a much easier and faster editing session later—especially when shooting silvery or gray subjects or in the open ocean. Why? Because if everything in the image is similar shades of blue, then when you set a target neutral in the software, *everything* changes, including the water.

Related Reading: [Ask a Pro Photographer: How to Capture the Perfect Shot](#)

Setting your custom white balance in the camera so that the subject's colors are separated from the background will help make your editing session much easier later. I personally also feel that it gives you better colors overall when shooting with natural light.

In regards to color, you'll also have a few other tools in Lightroom that can help you get those colors looking awesome. The color mixer panel allows you to target specific colors and edit their hue, saturation and luminance. The calibration panel allows you to tweak the Camera Raw's RGB color interpretation for the entire image. You can also utilize the Color Grading panel which allows you to make color adjustments by adjusting the tint of the pixels based on their tone or brightness. For example, adding warmth to the shadows of an image or making the highlights feel colder. Hollywood is a great example of using color grading to create a unique mood and feeling throughout a film.

A simple tweak in color can transform the mood of an entire image. Take this tiger shark photo, for instance. Despite being captured in the bright blue waters of the Caribbean, the photo gives off a dark and moody feeling.

Jay Clue



Putting it All Together

I know, it's a lot of information to digest! And we have only touched the tip of the iceberg. So, let's recap. First, make sure your camera is set to RAW for photos. Then, if you are shooting using only ambient light, utilize the camera's custom white balance settings to correct color underwater. If you are using lights, then stick with auto white balance or match your white balance temperature to the Kelvin of your lights. Then, in post-processing software, tweak the colors to get them perfect! Big thanks to Alan for sending in this month's question! I can't wait to see what questions everyone sends in this month. In the meantime, keep rocking those shots, and I'll see you next month, ninjas!

Practice being safe & staying safe for you & your buddies & we will see you all at the club meeting

The MAF regulations vary in particular when it comes to your catch size/limits & locations

NB: Especially in the Hauraki Gulf area, things have changed.

