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Thank you very much for subscribing to SCUBA News. A belated Happy New Year to you all. Some fabulous photos in this issue as we showcase the Ocean Art Competition winners.

You can [download a pdf version](#) of this newsletter [here](#).

I hope you enjoy SCUBA News but should you wish to cancel your subscription you can do so at <http://www.scubatravel.co.uk/news.html>. SCUBA News is published by SCUBA Travel Ltd.



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Contents:

- [What's new at SCUBA Travel?](#)
- [Letters](#)
- [View through a Wave wins Underwater Photo Contest](#)
- [Diving news from around the World](#)



What's New at SCUBA Travel?



[Who to dive with in Malaysia?](#)

You've been recommending more dive operators in Malaysia - see who gets the 5 fish rating at scubatravel.co.uk/malaysia/malaysia-diving.html



[Best Dive Sites of the Philippines](#)

The Philippines is in the coral triangle, which contains more marine species than anywhere else in the world. It has some amazing diving including the World Heritage site of Tubbataha, big pelagics at Panagatan and the wrecks of Subic Bay. Read more about the diving at

scubatravel.co.uk/philippines/phildive.html

Letters

Diving Tobago

Any suggestions for a dive company in Tobago?
IanInKingston via Twitter (@IanInKingston)

I suggested Ian try Tobago Dive Experience, but it is quite a few years since I dived with them. Anyone any other suggestions? E-mail news@scubatravel.co.uk.

Snorkelling in Cuba

Last month Susanne asked about snorkelling in Cuba, replies included...

I enjoyed snorkeling when not diving at a resort called Jibocaia about half way between Varadero and Havana a few years ago in January. The beach did get shut down a few times when the jelly fish got bad
Larry Flemming

View through a Wave wins Underwater Photo Contest

The Ocean Art photo competition, organized by the [Underwater Photography Guide](#), attracted some fantastic entries from photographers from 50 countries. The overall winner was Ray Collins with his shot through the arc of a wave on a Gold Coast Beach.



Underwater – Kirra Point. Best in Show and 1st Place Wide-Angle Category

Judge Martin Edge, author of the *Underwater Photographer*, said of the winning

photo "The 'Best in Show' image, in my opinion was simply incredible from the very first moment I set eyes on it. Simply loved this shot!"

If you like it check out the works of [George Karbus](#). He takes some excellent through-wave shots, as well as underwater photos.

Martin Edge was joined on the judging panel by renowned photographers Tony Wu, Marty Snyderman and Scott Gietler. There are at least four winners in each of the twelve categories: Wide-Angle, Macro, Portrait, Behaviour, Novice, Nudibranchs, Super Macro, Divers & Fashion, Cold Water, Compact Macro, Compact Wide-Angle and Compact Marine Life Behaviour. The judges also awarded honourable mentions and in some categories a fifth place.

The **macro category** winner was Ron Watkins with this fascinating shot.



1st Place, Macro by Ron Watkins "Tiny Refuge in the Dark" Shot on a black water dive in Kona, Hawaii with Nikon D800

Watkins recounted "While in Kona, I went out on a Black Water Dive with Kona Honu Divers where we were attached to a 40 foot vertical line in over a thousand feet of water at 10 pm. While suspended in the black water you observe life forms that you have never seen before or even imagined that surface in the shallows. Every dive is an adventure and full of life."

Another striking image in the macro category, awarded the 5th prize, was that of a skeleton shrimp taken with a super macro converter.



Skeleton shrimp Tulambem by Digant Desai

The **cold-water category** had winning shots and honourable mentions taken in Norway, Switzerland, Alaska, Estonia and Austria.



Winner of the cold-water category, Bigmouth by Lill Haugen.

Winner Lill Haugen commented on her photo “Divers on the north-western coast of Norway sometimes find really huge angler fish. This odd looking, well camouflaged ocean floor dweller has an enormous mouth – planning to ambush and eat anything that comes along, attracting its prey with a “lure”, which is connected to a fishing rod-like thing on top of its head. This cold water fish can get seriously large – 2 meters long and over 100 kilograms!”

Interestingly the judges chose a black and white shot for the second prize.



"Towards the Light" Shot in Ticino, Switzerland with Nikon D800E by David Salvatori

An electric spider crab won the **portrait category**, beating the manta ray and hammerhead shark.



Electric Spider Crab by Nonna Pokras



Hammerhead shark by Christine Shepard, placed fourth in the portrait category

One family of animals had a section all to itself, the beautiful **nudibranchs**.

Winner by Eduardo Acevedo Fernandez. "Glaucus Atlanticus" Shot in the Canary Islands.



Doto sp. with Eggs Shot in Tulamben, Indonesia with Canon 5D Mark III by So Yat Wai

If you fancy entering next year here are some **tips from the judges**

1. Don't enter an almost identical image you did last year. We remember!
2. Look out for unwanted distractions along the edge of the image. There's nothing worse to hinder your primary subject!
3. Some potential contenders lost out from both over processing and over sharpening. Resist the temptation to "Give it a little bit more".
4. 99.9 % of the time, eyes (if visible) have to be sharp.
5. And finally, basic photo techniques matter: focus, lighting, composition, and such. There was one image in particular of which the judges were very fond. Tony Wu comments "The sad thing was that it was not in focus. Though we agonized about it, there is no way I can endorse an out-of-focus image as a selection for a photo contest (unless of course being out of focus is intentional and part of the overall composition and style)."

Thousands of entries were viewed by the judges before the final set of images were selected and deemed some of the best underwater photos in the world.

See more winning photos at [the Underwater Photography Guide](#)

Diving News From Around the World

Our round up of the more interesting underwater news stories of the past month. For breaking news see our [Twitter page](#) or [RSS feed](#)



[Warming seas stop turtles basking](#)

Green turtles may stop basking on beaches around the world within a century due to rising sea temperatures, a new study suggests.

[Lottie Hass dies aged 86](#)

Lottie Hass, the 'First Lady of diving' and wife of Austrian diving pioneer Hans, has died, aged 86.

[Mama turtle uses magnetic map to find nesting home](#)

Mother turtles find their way back to nesting beaches by looking for unique magnetic signatures along the coast.

Save Scottish Seas

Amazingly, Scottish Government proposals could allow scallop dredging and bottom trawling to continue largely unchanged in many areas of Scotland's inshore MPAs.



US Senate fails to accept humanity's role in climate change, again

Senators accept global warming is not a hoax but fail to recognise human activity is to blame, nearly 27 years after scientists laid out man's role



Wildlife photographer of the year contest now open

Harness the power of photography to inspire greater understanding of the underwater environment, challenge perceptions and encourage change to preserve the beauty and diversity of the Earth.

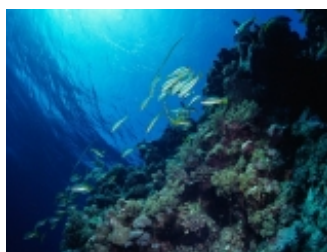
Cunning cone shells drug fish with insulin then

eat them

It's a murder plot played out both in fiction and real life. But now the first known case of murder using insulin has been seen in the natural world, and in a humble mollusc no less.

Coral Reefs Threatened by a Deadly Combination of Changing Ocean Conditions

Acidic reefs are more heavily eroded than their higher-pH counterparts. In waters with a combination of high nutrient levels and acidity, erosion is ten times higher than in lower-pH waters without high nutrient levels.



Where Have All the Cod Gone?

At every step of the way, decisions could have been made to exploit fish stocks more sustainably.

Reef fish can even smell like coral as they seek to evade predators

Study reveals that a small colourful fish, the harlequin filefish, can change its odour to hide from hungry predators.

W Australia's 'serious threat' shark policy could kill more than drumlines did

The revised policy was introduced late last year but the changes were never formally announced. It became public knowledge after the Department of Fisheries used it to justify the deployment of capture gear to cull a tagged great white shark that repeatedly pinged an acoustic receiver.



Multitalented giant clams keep corals reefs healthy

The molluscs provide homes, safety, privacy and food to many creatures, which makes it all the more important to stop their decline

Supertrawlers to be banned permanently from

Australian waters

The parliamentary secretary for agriculture, Richard Colbeck, said the government would stop vessels longer than 130m from fishing in Australian waters. This definition of supertrawler does not take into account the processing capacity of a vessel, which proponents of the ban say is just as critical as the size of the vessel.

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CONTACTING THE EDITOR

Please send your letters or press releases to:

[Jill Studholme](#)

SCUBA News

The Cliff

Upper Mayfield

DE6 2HR

UK

news@scubatravel.co.uk

PUBLISHER

[SCUBA Travel](#) Ltd, 5 Loxford Court, Hulme, Manchester, M15 6AF, UK