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SCUBA News (ISSN 1476-8011)  
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Welcome to this year's first issue of *SCUBA News*. I hope you enjoy it. Any questions, comments or articles for publication - contact news@scubatravel.co.uk. I look forward to hearing from you.

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

10% Off SCUBA Travel Insurance



Get 10% off travel insurance with diving with the code **BECURIOUS** at scuba.im/BECURIOUS but be quick - ends Monday.

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What's New at SCUBA Travel?



[Diving Costa Rica](#)

World class diving at the Cocos Islands where sailfish, marlin and hammerhead sharks congregate - but also some good diving on the Pacific side of the Costa Rica mainland.

[Read More](#)



[Diving with Nile Crocodiles in Botswana](#)
Botswana - that land-locked country. Not a place that readily springs to mind for a diving holiday. But you can now dive with Nile Crocodiles in the Okavango Delta.

[Read More](#)



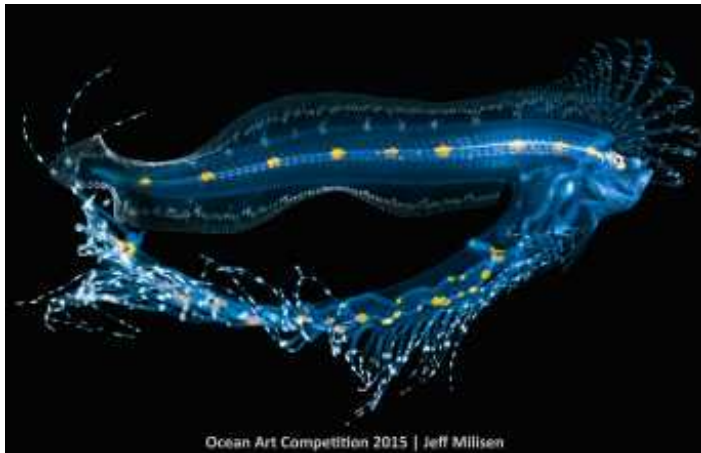
[Diving Centres in Sardinia](#)

The second largest island in the Mediterranean, Sardinia is surrounded by marine caves and cliffs shearing into the sea. You can dive here all year round

[Read More](#)

Blackwater Image wins Global Underwater Photography Contest

An extraordinary blackwater photo of an eel larva - which has been photographed only a handful of times before - has won the 2015 Ocean Art Underwater Photo contest. Organised by the [Underwater Photography Guide](#), the competition saw over \$70,000 of prizes awarded to 75 underwater photographers.

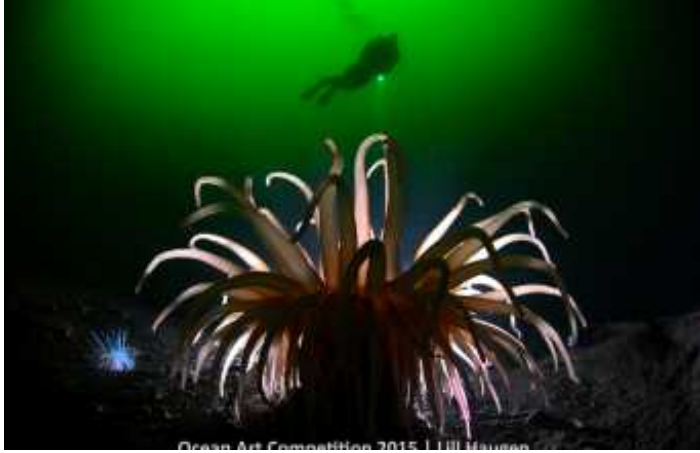


Ocean Art Competition 2015 | Jeff Milisen
1st Place Macro by Jeff Milisen. Larval cusk eel with external stomach

Jeff Milisen took the winning photo off Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. He comments "I was on a blackwater dive with a member of the Roddenberry family (of Star Trek fame) watching a parade of underwater aliens drift past when this larval cusk eel swam by. The external stomach helps the developing fish grow as fast as possible by eeking every last bit of nutrition from its every meal. Out of the four divers underwater that day, we had over 1000 blackwater dives under our belt and none of us had ever seen anything like it, whether on earth or boldly going elsewhere!"

Photographers could enter any of fifteen categories, including novice and compact camera.

Lill Haugen won the cold water category for the second year in a row with her shot of a backlit anemone taken in Norway.



Winner of cold water category, Lill Haugen

Thousands of entries were viewed by the judges before the final set of images were selected.



Taken on Tulamben, Bali by So Yat Wai. The purple background is a tunicate.

Another repeat winner is Steven Kovacs, whose photos have won or been placed in every one of the 5 Ocean Art photo contests there have so far been. This year he achieved first position in the Marine Life Behavior category for his photo of Striated frogfish releasing and fertilising eggs.



When a female Striated frogfish is ready to spawn she rises towards the surface closely followed by the male. As she releases her egg mass the male fertilizes them.

Underwater Photography Guide publisher, Scott Gietler said, "The caliber of photos in Ocean Art this year was amazing, and the judges had to make some very difficult decisions when evaluating photos in the contest. The winning photos were submitted from oceans and freshwater around the world by many talented underwater photographers."

The judges helpfully give tips on how to take a winning photo, should you wish to enter next year. Marty Snyderman advises "Be very careful about "over-processing" images. Images that look great on Facebook or other social media often show processing flaws when enlarged."



*Sardine Run – taken in Port St Johns, South Africa.
Cape Gannet taking advantage of the strategy of the dolphins by Greg Lecoeur*



*Taken on the island of Wai (Raja Ampat) by Alessandro Buzzichelli. Batfish and jackfish 4th
Place Wide-Angle*

Martin Edge, judge and author of [*The Underwater Photographer*](#), adds “There were too many cluttered backgrounds in the 1st round. You have to pay attention to what is behind your main subject and in particular, try to avoid elements which merge into each other.” He continues “Aspect ratio! You are allowed to crop your image before you enter the competition, but I felt that too many from the 1st round were leaving too much empty space around your subject.”



2nd Place Wide-Angle by Matteo Visconti, Fathers Reef, Kimbe Bay, Papua New Guinea

You can see more of the winning photos on the [SCUBA News](#) site.

Letters

Diving Cuba

I'm looking to dive the NE coast (of Cuba) in my own boat. Any recommendations?

Jeff Janacek

Contact news@scubatravel.co.uk with your suggestions.

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](#)

[Tagging Seals Improves Ocean Weather Forecasts](#)

Elephant seals improve weather forecasts by up to 6%



[Sharks Use Seamounts as a Compass to Navigate Through the Ocean](#)

Sharks use the magnetic fields of lava flows around sea mounts as highways to take them directly to where they need to go

[How Much Fish are We Really Catching?](#)

30% of global fish catch may be unreported; 60% of shark catch.



[PCB chemical threat to Europe's killer whales and dolphins](#)

A pollutant is present at "dangerously high levels" in Europe's killer whales and dolphins, scientists say

[Say no to scallop dredging in Cardigan Bay](#)

The Welsh Government is considering re-opening Cardigan Bay SAC (Special Area of Conservation) to scallop dredging - dragging hooks and chains across the seabed. They have launched a consultation to find out what people think.

[Death of one of the last killer whales in Scotland](#)

And then there were eight: Death of Lulu, one of the last killer whales in British waters, could be the point of no return. Scientists say the orca was killed after becoming tangled in fishing gear Mammal was found washed up on island of Tiree, in Scotland, on Sunday Death has raised fears that Scotland's killer whales are doomed to die out. Scientists now believe there are just eight animals remaining in the pod

[Moonlight helps plankton escape predators during Arctic winters](#)

It may be dark for months at a time close to the poles, but tiny zooplankton still commute to deeper water every day to avoid being eaten

[\\$7 Million Prize for developing Ocean Explorer](#)

A global competition is challenging teams to design an underwater vehicle to explore the deep sea. It must map the seafloor, produce images of specific objects, identify archeological, biological or geological features and, for a bonus, track a chemical or biological signal to its source.



[What Are We Actually Protecting In The Ocean?](#)

Most marine species are not well represented within MPAs and several hundred species are not covered at all

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CONTACTING THE EDITOR

Please send your letters or press releases to:

[Jill Studholme](mailto:Jill.Studholme)

SCUBA News

The Cliff

Upper Mayfield

DE6 2HR

UK

news@scubatravel.co.uk

PUBLISHER

[SCUBA Travel](http://www.scubatravel.co.uk) Ltd, 5 Loxford Court, Hulme, Manchester, M15 6AF, UK