

---

---

# Water Column

AUGUST 2018 ISSUE 11

Western Australian Underwater Photographic Society's Bi-annual Underwater Journal

**Socorro**  
**Northern Bali**



**CREATURE FEATURE:**  
**Parrotfishes**

**Bremer Bay Weekend**

## Sponsors

We sincerely thank all of the sponsors who have supported WAUPS over the years. Please remember these WAUPS sponsors when you are thinking of your next purchase.

# SCUBA *Imports*



[scubaimports.com.au](http://scubaimports.com.au)

## PERTH SCUBA

**Underwater Photo & Video Equipment  
Scuba Dive & Snorkeling Equipment  
Dive Courses - Beginner to Instructor**



**WAUPS Members receive 10% discount on scuba diving equipment purchased at Perth Scuba on presentation of their current WAUPS member card.**



Professional advice and service on all of your underwater photo and video needs. Why go to the internet when you can build your system in store, work out everything you need and pay the same price in Perth? No waiting or freight costs!

We carry a huge range of Nauticam & Aquatica housings, ports, zoom gears and accessories, Sea & Sea strobes, housings & accessories, Inon strobes & accessories, Light & Motion Photo & Video lights, GoPro & the full GoPro accessory range and Ultralight Systems.

**4/180 Bannister Rd Canning Vale WA  
08 9455 4448 [info@perthscuba.com](mailto:info@perthscuba.com)**

## WILLYABRUP DREAMING POTTERY



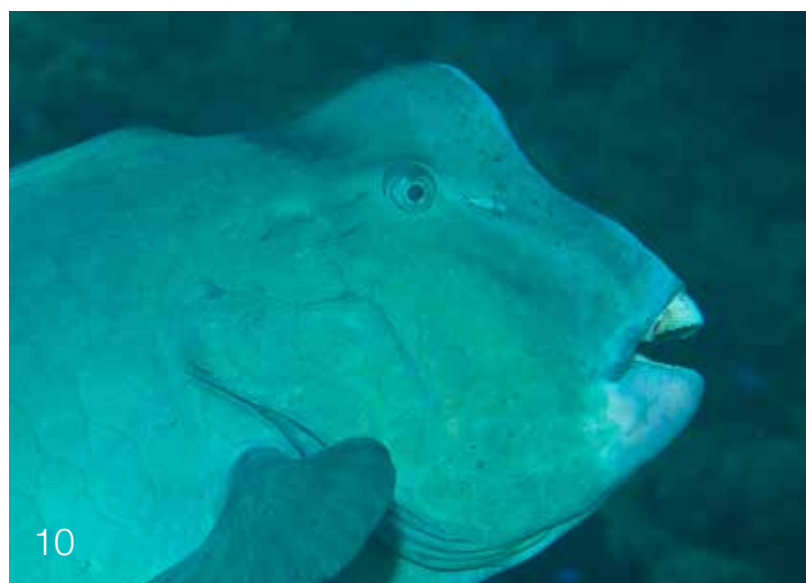
Unique, ocean inspired,  
hand made ceramics  
by Bill Meiklejohn.

49 Wilyabrup Rd, Wilyabrup  
[wildream@activ8.net.au](mailto:wildream@activ8.net.au)



# WaterColumn

AUGUST 2018 ISSUE 11



## Contents

- |    |  |    |  |
|----|--|----|--|
| 4  | Editorial<br>by Viv Matson-Larkin                              | 14 | Diving into a destination<br>Leanne Thompson takes us to Socorro |
| 5  | Pemuteran and Menjangan Island<br>Exploring Northern Bali      | 16 | WAUPS road trip<br>Bremer Bay by Janet O'Brien                   |
| 8  | Technical article<br>Exposure protection for cold water diving | 18 | Diving in AQWA<br>Rusty Geller                                   |
| 9  | WAPF: ClickWest  | 20 | WAUPS pinboard<br>Humour Award, AGM fancy dress                  |
| 10 | Creature Feature: Parrotfishes                                 | 22 | PIXELS 2018  |
| 12 | WAPF: WA Coastline   | 23 | Parting shot<br>David Cook                                       |
| 13 | Nikon Dive Portfolio of the Year                               |    |  |

Cover by Leanne Thompson - Oceanic Manta, Socorro

# EDITOR'S BUBBLES

Howdy Members,

Thank you to those who made the AGM evening such a fun-filled evening. The marine themed fancy dress competition proved a great hit – our 'blonde mermaid' Amanda Blanksby the winner. The Wayne Storrie Underwater Humour Award also provided lots of laughter – congratulations to Rusty Geller. 2018 Image of the Year Award went to, for the second year running, Leanne Thompson. Well done Leanne! On the business-side, two of the main items on the agenda that evening were the update to the WAUPS Constitution and voting in the latest committee. We welcome aboard a new committee member, and sincerely thank those who have stepped down due to other commitments.

A friendly reminder - it is membership renewal time. You need to be a financial member to continue entering WAUPS and WAPF photographic competitions during 2018/2019. A requirement of

our Constitution is that we have an up-to-date register of members - so do fill out a membership form if you have changed address, emergency phone or email details. The former is particularly important if we need to post out your copy of the Water Column magazine.

We have had some very informative presentations during the year and appreciate the time and effort the guest speakers and club members have put in for our learning and entertainment. On the photography side there have been some great competitions for WAUPS members to participate in, the majority of those count towards the end-of-year tally for the Golden Snapper Award. In a few months' time we will know who the overall winner is for PIXELS. A new competition for OZTek is the Nikon Dive Portfolio of the Year, and the winner for 2018 was our very own Tammy Gibbs. Way to go! I encourage you all to enter OZTek's

2019 Underwater Photographic Competitions.

Many of you have entered some of the WAPF Competitions – ClickWest, In My View, PrintWest, and the new WA Coastline, plus some of the interclub photographic events and workshops. It is a great way to broaden your photographic skills and showcase some of your land-based photography.

Sadly the diving opportunities of late have been few and far between due to a very gloomy, wet and windy winter. We even had to postpone our annual Shootout Competition due to inclement sea conditions. As the wildflower season is now upon us and the weather will soon warm up we can start orchid hunting, or look for unique spiders and other interesting creepy-crawlies 'til the diving season really kicks in again.

Keep blowin' bubbles,

*Viv*



## Image of the Year

While it's hard for me to make up my mind what single image of any underwater subject taken during the previous year I could have entered in this competition, other people have no problem picking a winner. Our 2017 winner hit the jackpot again! Leanne Thompson is also our 2018 Image of the Year winner. Congratulations Leanne, a great split shot image.



# My First Overseas Diving Trip

## PEMUTERAN & MENJANGAN ISLAND, BALI

by Isla Cath



Finally, after saving pennies and a couple of stops and starts (Agung!), my first overseas scuba diving trip came to fruition in May this year.

Brimming with excitement and a new understanding of the packing required for both photography and diving equipment (definitely not much room for anything else), I and fellow WAUPS member Rusty Geller took off for 6 days of diving in Pemuteran and neighbouring Menjangan Island.

The 3.5 hour flight followed by 4.5 hours of driving to the other side of Bali found us at our destination Pemuteran. This beautiful area is situated on the North West side of Bali and is a lovely small non-touristy village.

Prior to the trip, we booked our diving activities with Bali Diving Academy (Pemuteran) who had asked what type of marine species/environments we were particularly interested in seeing and plans from our information were put in motion.



TOPTO BOTTOM: Seafan and fish at Menjangan Island.  
Menjangan Island from the iPhone. First experience drift diving.



Before getting to our accommodation at Tirta Sari Bungalows (mid-range to budget – a lovely place) we had a quick look-see and chat at the dive centre and got all the ‘particulars’ completed - this ended up being a good idea as it set us up well for the following morning’s dive, able to be on our way with our guide while the new arrivals of the day started their orientation.

Bali Diving Academy is managed by Karin and Dray with local diving and boating guides who are all very experienced, professional and fun. Everyone had a great understanding of what is needed to keep underwater photographers happy and our dive guide Gede was up to speed on what we were keen to experience. We formed a wonderful bond and friendship over the six days.

First dive was a drift dive on the Outer Wall which was a 7 min boat ride from Pemuteran. I got it, the water temperature complaints I hear from my dive buddies in Perth – I now understand you all completely. While my senses thought I had rolled into a 29° bath, descending into absolute beauty and drifting along a coral wall, I was so much in awe it took me a little while to get into full photographer mode. The current on this drift dive was at a pleasant steady pace.

Another Pemuteran area we dived was the Bio-Rock artificial reef restoration project site. This is a fascinating 3-8m depth area of several man-made steel structures erected to help attract new life in the hope for a continued thriving marine sanctuary. A few species of corals have been attached to some of these structures which vary from marine subjects to a lotus flower, bicycles and a Buddha – these have attracted several species of resident fish, anemones, nudibranchs and we also encountered a free swimming seahorse in the area.

This is a shore entry snorkel and dive site situated just opposite from the Bali Diving Academy, who have actively supported the Bio-Rock project from its beginnings in the year 2000.

A blessing occurred one morning for a new structure to be added to the Bio-Rock area and positive vibes fill the place.

Other areas we dived in Pemuteran included Napoleon Reef, Temple Wall where numerous parrotfish, moray eels and mantis shrimps resided along with octopus species.

Biowreck, where a ‘field’ of soft pink corals appear on a sandy area near the mooring line, lionfish, barrel sponges and plenty of different beautiful corals.



TOPTO BOTTOM: Male Mandarin fish, Pemuteran. Bio-Rock Pemuteran, hard coral growth. Diving along a reef wall Bat Cave, Menjangan Island (Image by Rusty Geller). Bio-Rock Pemuteran, awaiting more life.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Nudibranch





helped me experience one of the things I wanted to see, a Mandarin fish. These were hard to photograph but with some sound advice from Dray (no white light and a lot of patience) Wayan, Rusty and I waited and we were lucky to watch one come out and jump around the corals.

Menjangan Island takes about a 35min boat crossing from the Pemuteran shoreline and is named after the deer that live on the island. It is part of the West Bali National Park Conservation Area – Taman Nasional Bali Barat Park. As this is a National Park a \$25 AUD fee is needed each day you dive here.

An Indonesian (or club sandwich) lunch is provided (you choose the day before), as well plenty of water, tea and fruits which is consumed during the surface intervals.

You can stay on the Island but we chose not to and it was made so easy with Bali Diving Academy. Besides any boat that I don't get sick in no matter how calm it is are tops in my opinion (no, I didn't get sea sick once!). Those that know me will understand my 'woohoo-ness' about this!

Like Pemuteran, the dives at Menjangan were just incredible but it's as though it has been put into overdrive teeming with so much marine life and clear visibility. Gede who took such great care of us had a natural talent for spotting creatures and I was constantly looking all around me for the next sighting. Gazing at the wonderful oceanscapes during decompression stops and safety stops was so relaxing and meditative, until seeing something else to photograph of course. We were lucky to fit in 6 dives around this Island.

Sites we went to included Coral Garden, Temple Wall, Shark Point, Pos II and Bat Cave. The waters were calm with the largest coral fans I have ever seen – my mirrorless setup with my 14-42mm lens did not do them justice and some were just too large to get them into frame.

Plenty species of different reef fish, corals, moray eels, octopus, anglerfish, frog fish and reef sharks were sighted. Incredible rock formations with caves and wall drop offs that disappeared into the deep blue abyss.

Apart from our muck dive (macro) all sites had plenty of macro and wide opportunities.

I found my single Inon S2000 strobe (thankfully assisted somewhat by my video light) struggled at deeper depths, which I knew would be the case as I struggle with lack of light at deeper depths locally on boat dives. It was a fun challenge though particularly as most dives on this trip were around 25-30m.

The Pemuteran and Menjangan areas have been effected by climate change in the past. Apparently a temperature rise a few years ago damaged areas and bleached coral, but in the last couple of years it is regaining its health.

The non-temperate waters are certainly something I want to experience again.

All underwater images were taken by my Olympus Epl7 Mirrorless, 14-42mm lens, single S2000 Inon strobe, single Sola 800 and Subsee +10 wet diopter (macro).

by Emma Burdett

Diving in the cooler months is fantastic! Often the sea is calm and the visibility is a lot better during winter. Charter boats are not as busy, and hot chocolate after a dive tastes so much sweeter when you have really worked for it. But yes, it's a little cooler! Staying warm is essential to keep you feeling comfortable and enjoy winter diving. The right exposure protection will help you to do this, and here is an overview of the options.



## WET EXPOSURE PROTECTION

The most common exposure protection for divers is a wetsuit. The neoprene fabric acts as an insulation buffer between the cold water and your skin. The water inside the suit warms up and holds the heat inside the suit. The thicker the neoprene, the more insulation you have. Some things to consider for maximum warmth from a wetsuit:

**Thickness:** Aim for as thick as possible for warmth, without losing flexibility and comfort. Quality neoprene will have more flex to it, you should be able to squat down with your suit on.

**Fit:** Is it a struggle to get your suit on? If it's not, it's too big! You need your suit to be a firm fit on the surface to keep the water from moving through it and cooling you down.

**Zip:** The majority of the water comes into a wetsuit through the zip. If the zip runs up the front or back, make sure it has a good sealing system at the top to stop water entering. A true 'Semi-Dry' suit will have a dry zip running horizontally across the back, with a neck seal similar to that on a dry suit.

**Seals:** Some suits will have extra seals in the arms and legs to keep the water out. Zips in the arms and legs can help with getting the suit on, but doesn't always favour for the cold.

**Seams:** Sealing over the stitching of the seams helps to stop water entering the suit. This could be a glue-like substance on the outside, or glued taping on the inside.

Some special little tips I have picked up over the years:

- Neoprene is not windproof. If you are on the surface you need to cover your wetsuit with a wind jacket to stay warm. Better yet, wear a thermal with a windbreak layer under your wetsuit like the Lavacore or SharkSkin range.
- Wearing lycra under a wetsuit will cool you down. The synthetic fibres in lycra draw heat away from the body. Girls - wear two piece bikinis to help keep your core warmer. If you want to wear a rashie, make it a thermal one like the Enth Degree 1mm or Radiator branded items.
- Don't fancy climbing into a wet, cold wetsuit? Take a bottle of warm water with you and pour it through the suit before you put it on to warm it up. Or when you first

get to the dive site, leave your suit in the sun to warm up while you set up your gear.

- Struggling to get your suit dry overnight? Rinse it in warm water under the shower after the first day. The warm water helps the salt to rinse off - and the salt is what holds moisture.
- Layer it up! Hood, gloves, socks, vests or long sleeve thermals are your friend. You lose most of your heat from your head so get a good hood!

## DRY EXPOSURE PROTECTION

Just as it sounds, a drysuit is designed to keep you dry in wet environments. Sometimes used above water for activities like sailing, sometimes used in warm water to protect your skin, and other times used in cold water to stay warm.

The suit itself keeps you dry, and the key to keeping warm is in the undergarments you wear under the suit. Neoprene drysuits have more warmth as the neoprene acts as a layer of insulation between you and the water. Membrane or trilaminate suits have no insulation and rely on the undergarments to keep you warm. There are pros and cons to the type of drysuit you choose, so it's worth having a good conversation with your local dive shop about the options.

Tips and tricks for getting the most out of your drysuit:

- **Moisture:** Make sure you have a moisture wicking base layer on! The sweat and condensation in your suit can make you feel damp and cold.
- **Fit:** It's very important a drysuit fits you well, otherwise they are cumbersome, difficult, and can be dangerous to use.
- **Layers:** You can layer up your undergarments to get optimal warmth. Something like the Fourth Element X-Core Vest is the perfect addition over the core for extra cold times of the year.
- **Safety:** Take your time to learn how to use your suit and dive it safely.

No matter what you wear underwater, you need to stay warm and dry on the surface before and between dives. After the dive you'll want to get dry as soon as possible, take a change of clothes and practice changing with modesty in a carpark!



# WAPF: CLICKWEST

ClickWest is another photographic competition you all can enter being members of the WA Photographic Federation. Only open to amateur photographers there are four categories: Landscape, Monochromatic, Close up and Portraiture. Those categories have a set topic and if you submit an image in all four categories you qualify for the Portfolio section.

This year there was over \$27,000 in prizes making this one of the more popular local competitions. One tip though, do ensure you have read the rules thoroughly to avoid disqualification. WAUPS has also adopted many of the WAPF rules to streamline our own photographic competitions in the hope it creates more diversity.

While the weather is not favourable for underwater activities for many at the moment do take the opportunity to get out and about taking above water shots for next year's ClickWest competition. The topics for 2019 have recently been announced, and are as follows.

- The Landscape category is After Sunset, Before Sunrise.
- Monochromatic category is Solitude.
- The Portraiture category is Relationships.
- And lucky last, the Close-Up category is Inorganic.

Do log on to the WAPF website for more details. If you require some inspiration check out the finalist entries for 2017 and 2018. For the latter, you will see Janet OBrien's name. She came 3rd in this year's 'Close-Up' category with her cute turtle image titled 'Dude you rock'. Congratulations Janet! ☺



# PARROT FISHES

Productive poopers & other perplexing lifestyle habits



*Bumphead parrotfish, by Sue Morrison*





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: *Ember parrotfish* (female), by Sue Morrison. *Bluebarred parrotfish* (male), by Sue Morrison. *Sleeping parrotfish*, by Viv Matson-Larkin

**Confusing Colours:** Rainbows of dazzling blue, green, yellow, pink and red fishes ‘fly’ through the coral reefs with their sturdy pectoral (front) fins. This distinctive method of swimming often helps you recognise a parrotfish (although wrasses also swim in a similar manner). The chunky tails are used more for steering or for power when extra speed is occasionally needed. Once spotted, you’d think them easy to identify, but there are so many species (around 90 worldwide, with most in the Indo-Pacific) with every permutation and combination of colour schemes that they are easily confused. They have large, attractive scales that are generally brightly coloured, but can be green and darkish making them well camouflaged. To add to the problem, male and female colour patterns are often so different that many were thought to be separate species. Juveniles may also be a different colour from the adults. Many hours spent by fish biologists stealthily watching their mating behaviour underwater has gradually helped to sort out the various species!

**Gender bender:** Parrotfishes, like the closely related wrasses, undergo sex changes during their lives. They begin life as juveniles (often with a dark brown stripe), which mature into initial phase (IP) females and males (generally dull in colour). The IP fish form aggregations that indulge in group spawning. IP males can transform into terminal phase (TP) males often with vivid colour patterns containing blue and green. The TP males generally spawn individually with a single IP female. To further complicate matters, in most species the IP females can also change into an IP male or a brighter-coloured TP male! It must be very perplexing growing up as a parrotfish! The largest parrotfish species can be over 1 metre in length, such as the distinctive Bumphead Parrotfish, but the majority of parrotfishes are under 0.5 metre.

**Tough teeth:** Parrotfishes are so-named because of their parrot’s beak-like teeth. The teeth are fused into strong dental plates, that enable them to feed on fine algae growing on coral reefs and on coral polyps. They have a very long intestine without a true stomach which is adapted for digesting the fibrous algae. When they feed, however, they can’t help ingesting large quantities of coral rock and sand with their food. This could be a problem if it got stuck in their throats, but they have an ingenious system for dealing with the extra load. They have special teeth at the back of their throats on pharyngeal plates



that crush the coral and sand into fine powder which then easily passes through the gut. I’m sure many of you have witnessed the abundant ‘sand curtains’ these fishes poop out just when you wanted to take a lovely shot of them in the crystal clear water. It is estimated that a large Bumphead Parrotfish can excrete around 250 grams of sand per day, or approximately 90 kg per year! So next time you are lazing on a tropical beach, give a thought to where most of the sand came from 😊.

**Sleep-tight:** Parrotfishes, like many other fish species, retire for the night in the safety of a rock or coral crevice. However, the curious thing about parrotfishes is that many species make themselves a ‘sleeping bag’ or cocoon of mucus that completely envelops the body. The mucus is secreted by large glands in the gill cavity and, surprisingly, is estimated to use up only about 2.5% of the daily energy budget. It takes around 30 minutes to secrete the cocoon. It is thought that this gives them protection against parasites, especially blood-sucking isopods (controlled by cleaner fish during the day), and possibly from predators (such as moray eels) by masking their scent.

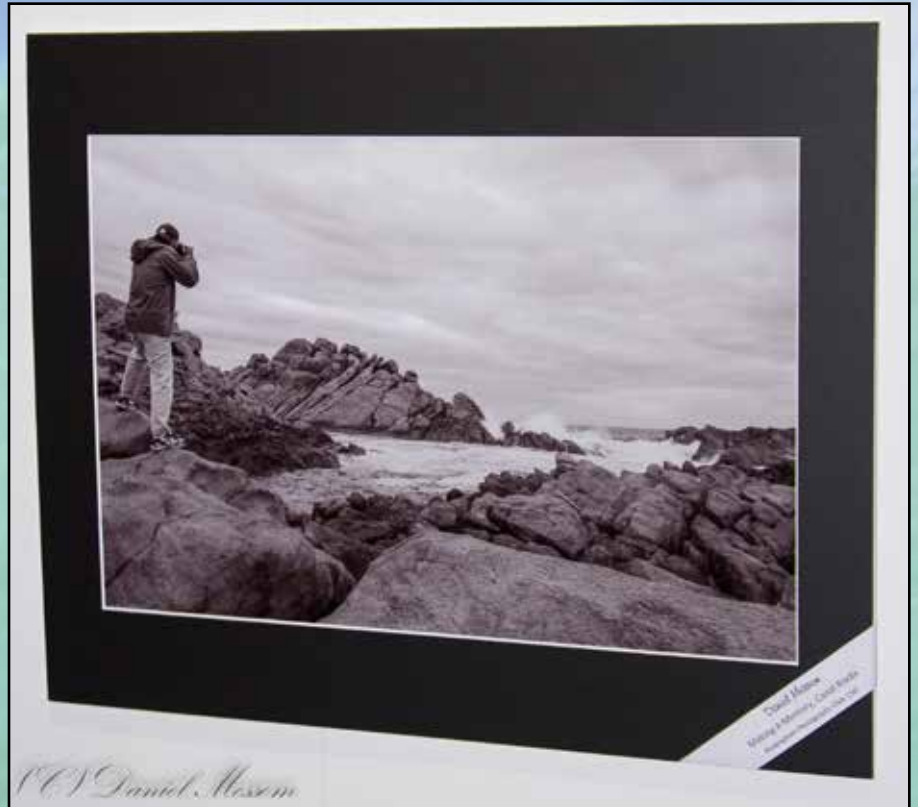
**Calling names:** Parrotfishes belong to the family Scaridae. Recently, however, their close relationship to the wrasse family (Labridae) has resulted in them being grouped together under the Labridae family. The easiest way to distinguish the two groups is in the teeth – wrasses have individual teeth, whereas the parrotfishes have fused teeth (if you can see them that closely!).

# WAPF: WA Coastline

**W**ith the theme 'Western Australian Coastline' the images in this competition needed to showcase our unique coast, plus include one or more people interacting with the coastline.

Two WAUPS members - Danny Messom and Gary Browne – made it into the final round. Congratulations guys. The finalist images were printed and exhibited at the WA Maritime Museum.

Nikon sponsored this competition with a major prize of a Nikon D610 camera and 24-85mm lens. Wendy Gibb from the Geographe Photographic Group won by popular vote the People's Choice. If you did not get the opportunity to view the prints check out Wendy's winning image 'Natures Spa, Wyadup' and other affiliated camera club member entries on the WAPF website.



## ABOUT GARY'S IMAGES (right)

The two photos from the WA Coastline comp are Skinny Dip Hopetoun and Lucky Bay Esperance.

About an hour before I took the Lucky Bay photo, I was diving with a young couple in 18 metres out behind the sloping rock on the right. I was taking photos of a Weedy sea dragon when we were buzzed by a white pointer about 3.5 metres long so didn't hang around. What made it worse was I had a perfectly good shark shield in my car. My wife banned me from diving for the rest of our time in Esperance.





# NIKON DIVE PORTFOLIO OF THE YEAR

Celebrating 100 years in the business, Nikon teamed up with OZTek creating a new section in their 2017 Photographic Competition - the inaugural 2017 Nikon Dive Portfolio of the Year. While the OZTek Advanced Dive Conference and Dive Show Exhibition is held bi-annually this newly sponsored Nikon Photographic Competition will run annually.

A huge congratulations to the winner of the 2018 Nikon Dive Portfolio of the Year - our very own Tammy Gibbs, who won a Nikon D850 camera body worth over \$5,000. Her stunning cross section of images captured the very essence of this particular competition. The top winning portfolios from this year's competition were then displayed in our capital cities as part of the Ocean Film Festival, and will also be on display in Sydney next March at OZTek2019 in their Photographic Exhibition.

Do consider entering the OZTek Photographic Competitions, in particular the Nikon Dive Portfolio of the Year. While it has specific criteria you must comply with you only need three out of the five categories (Wreck, Cave, Marine images with diver, Marine life/Wide angle, Macro & Super macro marine life) to create your portfolio. A bonus is that this specific competition is only open to Australian and New Zealand entrants, so get clicking. ☺



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Western Australian seahorses mating, Ammo jetty. Freediver in Swallow's Cave, Tonga. Brown jellyfish, Ammo Jetty. Soft coral bommie, Fiji. Humpback whale calf and mum, Tonga. Cardinalfish brooding eggs, Kwinana Grain Terminal.

All images taken with a Nikon D7100 in Nauticam housing.

# Diving INTO A destination

by Leanne Thompson



## WHERE

Isla de Revillagigedos – aka Socorro Islands, Mexico. This tiny group of four islands is, like Galapagos, located on the edge of the tectonic plates. San Benedicto is still an active volcano, last erupting in 1953.

## HOW

There are 2.5 hr direct flights from Los Angeles to San Jose del Cabo, at the tip of the Baja Peninsula. From there it's a 22 – 24 hour boat ride to the islands. As you would expect, it's a liveaboard only trip.

## WHY

Oceanic animals. Oceanic mantas (not the usual reef manta rays found in Indonesia) are almost guaranteed. These mantas are very curious and not put off by the divers. They often come so close they don't fit in your fish eye lens. It's also a great place for bottlenose dolphins and sharks – silkys, Galapagos, tigers and white-tips so numerous they literally form a pile. It's also a great opportunity for big schools of fish, and BIG fish. Humpbacks and whale sharks are not uncommon.

## WHAT (GEAR)

The trip is about wide angle, and predominately with a rectilinear lens. However, you can also shoot fish eye. The water is a bit cooler at 25-27 degrees so it's a 5 – 7mm wetsuit.

## HOW MUCH

Flights from Los Angeles to San Jose del Cabo are around \$400. There are a few liveaboards that do the trip, and all trips are at least 9 days. Average price is US\$3600. While you are in California, dive the Channel Islands and the giant kelp forests. It's a great way to break up the trip and the kelp is stunning.







CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:  
*Dolphins. Manta and fish.*  
*Silky shark. Trevally school.*

OPPOSITE PAGE:  
*Tuna. San Benedicto.*

A detailed photograph of a leafy seadragon (Phyllopteryx) camouflaged among brown seaweed. The seadragon's body is covered in leaf-like appendages, and its large, orange eyes are visible. The background is dark, making the seadragon and the seaweed stand out.

# WAUPS Road Trip Report

by Janet O'Brien

On the March 2018 long weekend, WAUPS arranged a road trip to Bremer Bay to hunt for leafy seadragons.





We all arrived at varying times over the Friday and set up home for the weekend in a fine cabin at the Bremer Bay Beaches Resort and Tourist Park. The cabin was great with plenty of room for washing and storing gear and cameras.

On both dive days the weather was a little windy and grey but Craig of Bremer Bay Dive & Sports had arranged the charter of a large fishing boat that sat nicely on the water and meant plenty of space for dive gear and cameras.

The leafy seadragons get their common name from the leaf-like appendages on their bodies and they resemble floating pieces of seaweed which makes them really difficult for divers to see. Luckily we had the eagle eyes of Craig, Leanne, Tammy, Amanda, Wendy and Chris on-board and I am happy to report that the trip was a great success with both leafy and weedy seadragons spotted and then photographed over the course of each of the 4 boat dives.



On the Saturday afternoon after washing the gear and having a post dive rest we drove around some of the many beaches of Bremer Bay and saw some amazing pristine sands with aqua blue waters. Dinner was a BBQ and salads back at the cabin with cheese and savoury snacks following. On Sunday after diving we took a trip around the Pink Lake near Bremer Bay and then back out to the beautiful beaches for a few photos before heading to the Bremer Bay Resort for a great dinner.

Everyone parted ways on Monday morning for the drive home to Perth. Leanne and I detoured for a few hours through the Fitzgerald River National Park and saw some spectacular scenery before heading home to Perth.

It was a great weekend and I hope to go back there again to see those amazingly magical seadragons.



# DIVING IN AQWA

by Rusty Geller

The WA Seniors Card is supposed to give old punters like me a free ride on the trains and discounts on movie tickets, but believe it or not, my card got me a free dive in AQWA.

I answered a general email from Mike Buchanan, president of UEC looking for a Seniors Card holder to make an exhibition dive during a sundowner at AQWA at Hillarys Boat Harbour celebrating the 30th birthday of the Seniors Card. I was originally supposed to be diving with the Minister for Ageing but apparently he had second thoughts, so it would be just me and Courtney Wood, marine scientist and dive instructor who was my guide for the thirty-minute dive. This would actually be my second dive in the tank. In 1994, I'd taken the plunge as a Christmas gift from my family.

The AQWA aquarium was, coincidentally, celebrating its 30th birthday. The tank is forty meters long, twenty meters wide and four meters deep. It holds three million litres of fresh sea water that is constantly pumped from outside Hillarys and filtered through layers of sand before being circulated through the tank and exhausted out. The tank is quite sterile, there is absolutely no bottom life, no algae, no corals, no sponges, no nudis, nothing! The cement reef and white gravel inside is as clean and bare as a hospital floor. But the viz is great, it's like diving in a backyard pool at night, only it's full of sharks, rays, schools of fish and one lone turtle. And all the while, people are walking under you through the clear Perspex tube, staring and waving. Weird!



TOP: Ed (Edna?) the loggerhead. Courtney and Rusty entering the tank (Photo: Courtney Wood for AQWA). The curious leopard shark is a recent arrival.  
BOTTOM: Rusty in the AQWA tank.



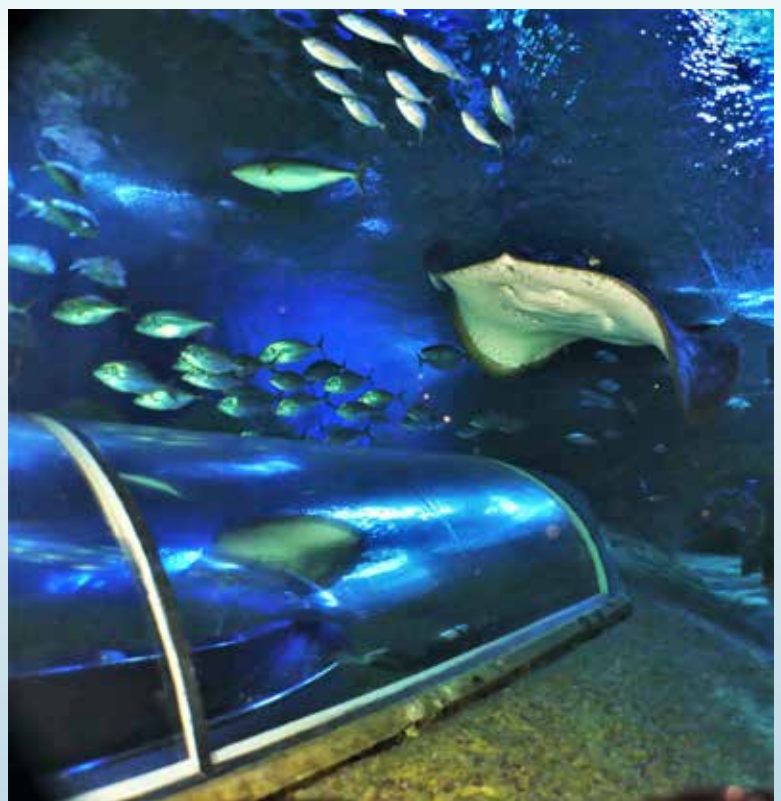


I don't like wild animals being used as entertainment or decorations, but I could only rationalize that AQWA could provide people who would otherwise have no exposure to undersea wildlife, an experience that might create a regard for preservation of the oceans. And who knows, maybe kids who experience it might be inspired to someday become divers, underwater photographers and marine scientists.

It turned out several of the critters in the tank were the same ones I'd dived with 24 years earlier as they have been in AQWA since it opened. Dopey the nurse shark is about forty years old, Ed the loggerhead turtle is about fifty and the pink snappers are estimated to be over sixty. I recall there had been three nurses in 1994, now only Dopey remains. AQWA aren't allowed to capture replacements as they are endangered, so instead they've added several bronze whalers. There were originally two loggerhead turtles, Big Ed died so only Little Ed remains. She followed me around like a puppy! I'd be shooting something and I'd look down and her head was right under my elbow. Morticia the big smooth ray loves to cruise right over your head - you'd be looking through the camera and suddenly she'd fill your finder. There was a lovely curious leopard shark, and occasionally the bronze whalers flashed by, giving me something to think about.

Photography wasn't great. To avoid disturbing the critters, I had to turn my strobes all the way down with the dome diffusers on and I was shooting wide open on the lens and shutter, so focus and motion blur made sharpness dodgy.

I enjoyed the dive and would have loved to stay longer, but soon Courtney was leading me back to the entrance. It was sad to think all the animals would live their lives out in that tank, but hopefully their role is now to inspire a new generation of ocean lovers.



TOPTO BOTTOM: Dopey the nurse shark and friends. Fish cruise over the tunnel. The bronze whalers are a thrill.





## AGM fancy dress

What a hoot! Thanks to everyone who dressed up on the night and made it so much fun!



# PINBOARD



Humour winner Rusty with Ann



Humour runner-up Pat with Ann

## Wayne Storrie Underwater World of Humour Award

As you can tell by the smiles, this award certainly provides a unique opportunity to showcase some quite hilarious images. No holds barred, members can Photoshop away to their heart's content, the opposite to most photographic competitions.

Well done, and congratulations to Rusty Geller, our winner for 2018 with his very clever and colourful entry titled 'Googly Eyes'. Rusty and runner-up Patricia Swallow received some beautiful handcrafted creations from sponsor Willyabrup Dreaming Gallery.

We sincerely thank Ann Storrie who came up from Busselton especially for the June AGM. A Life Member, Ann's ongoing support of this competition created in honour of her late husband, himself one of WAUPS founding members, is truly appreciated. Bless Wayne's quirky sense of humour. ☺

# Pixels 2018

Congratulations to our Gold award winners for the first half of 2018. Shannon Earnshaw was awarded Gold for January's theme of Colour. Daniel Barker was awarded Gold for his image for March's theme of S is for....

Well done Shannon and Daniel!



Shannon Earnshaw



Daniel Barker





# PARTING SHOT



by David Cook

Gnarloo Bay is on the southern end of Ningaloo reef and just south of the Marine Park.

150kms north of Carnarvon the road (track) in is rough. I watched the boat trailer ahead slowly disintegrating. Honking the horn and flashing lights didn't seem to get the message across for a while. When a mudguard fell off I stopped to pick it up, and they finally realised they had a problem.

For a full week, the weather wasn't good enough to get outside the reef for scuba diving. Inside the bay, we spent a lot of time snorkelling over the nice coral in 3-5 metres. I spotted a Northern baler shell laying an egg mass in about 4 metres of water and free-dived down many times taking shots at all angles trying to get the optimal picture of the whole scene - with the shell, the pattern on the foot and the translucent sponge like egg cases, perhaps containing up to 100 new developing shell life.

Laying the first layer of eggs onto something solid, then stacking the egg cases, with a hollow through the middle so the water can flow through to circulate around the eggs, it will lie there until the live baby baler shells hatch and crawl off.

Amazing to think that the emerging babies will have to fend for themselves!

Photo taken in natural light with a Fuji Fine Pix F50.








## WESTERN AUSTRALIAN UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

waupsnews@gmail.com

The Western Australian Underwater Photographic Society (WAUPS) is a non-profit organisation, which was established in January 1984.

The aims of the Society are:

-  To promote an improvement of underwater photography amongst its members.
-  To promote underwater photography in the community.
-  To encourage an understanding and preservation of the marine environment.
-  To promote an exchange of skills and ideas from within the society and from external bodies.
-  To have fun and enjoy socialising, diving and photography.

WAUPS holds monthly meetings which include guest presenters on a range of photography and diving topics along with a digital show-and-tell of images from members.

We hold regular competitions including an annual day dive shootout, annual open and novice portfolios and image of the year competition, and a range of trips and social events during the year including monthly photo dives.

WAUPS members also get membership to the WA Photographic Federation and can participate in their events and trips.

Anyone interested in underwater photography is welcome any time including all levels of experience.

**WAUPS meetings are conducted at 7:30pm  
on the FOURTH TUESDAY of every month.**



**Find us on Facebook**

**[www.waups.org.au](http://www.waups.org.au)**

