

August Assignment - Aquatic Life Photography

To be shown at September general meeting

by Bernd Steinebrunner

Aquatic life photography encompasses a diverse range of techniques and challenges, presenting photographers with an exciting yet demanding realm to explore. From the depths of the ocean to the tranquil waters of freshwater lakes, each aquatic environment offers unique opportunities for photographers to capture the beauty and diversity of marine and freshwater life.

Types of Aquatic Life Photography:

Underwater Photography:

Underwater photography involves capturing images of marine life and habitats beneath the water's surface. It encompasses various subcategories, including:

Macro Photography: Focusing on small subjects such as fish, invertebrates, and corals. Macro underwater photography requires specialized lenses and lighting equipment to capture intricate details.

Wide-angle Photography: Capturing expansive underwater landscapes, coral reefs, and large marine animals such as sharks and whales. Wide-angle photography requires careful composition and lighting to convey the sense of scale and depth.

Close-up Photography: Highlighting the textures, patterns, and behaviors of individual aquatic organisms. Close-up photography allows photographers to reveal the often-overlooked beauty of underwater life.

Underwater photography is not for everyone, but an aquarium is a location where one can find underwater life without having to own scuba-diving or snorkeling equipment.

Above-Water Photography:

Above-water aquatic photography focuses on capturing images of marine and freshwater life from the surface or shoreline. It includes:

Wildlife Photography: Documenting seabirds, marine mammals, and other aquatic creatures in their natural habitats. Wildlife photography requires patience and skill to capture fleeting moments and behaviors.

Landscape Photography: Capturing the scenic beauty of coastal landscapes, estuaries, and wetlands. Landscape photography showcases the interconnectedness between land and water ecosystems.

Environmental Photography: Highlighting environmental issues such as pollution, habitat destruction, and climate change. Environmental photography raises awareness and advocates for the conservation of aquatic environments.

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Technical Challenges in Aquatic Life Photography:

Visibility and Water Clarity:

Poor visibility and water clarity can hinder image quality, requiring photographers to adapt their techniques and equipment to prevailing conditions. Techniques such as adjusting aperture settings and using artificial lighting can help mitigate the effects of low visibility.

Lighting and Color Correction:

Light behaves differently underwater, with colors becoming muted or distorted at depth. Photographers must use artificial lighting, color correction filters, and white balance adjustments to restore natural colors and enhance the visual appeal of underwater images.

Above water, challenges include exposure of a subject against the bright sky or reflections from the water that need to be compensated for, or shutter-speed and autofocus considerations when photographing flying seabirds.

Environmental Factors:

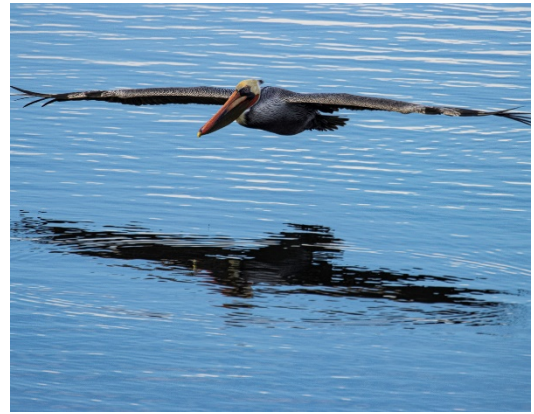
Weather conditions, water currents, and environmental disturbances such as boat traffic can impact above-water aquatic photography, requiring photographers to adapt their shooting strategies and anticipate changes in the environment.

Reflections:

Reflections from the water surface, or in an aquarium setting where the glass can be challenging. In an aquarium, it is always good to be close to the glass to avoid reflections and to get any soiling on the glass out of focus. Watch out for your background so no other visitor is visible on the other side of the tank. Note: You can eliminate reflections by using a rubber lens adapter which allows you to put your camera lens up against the glass.

Locations:

There are plenty of opportunities to find aquatic life in Southern California. If you are a scuba diver, you can visit the shores of California or Catalina Island. Or you can visit the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, the Bolsa Chica wetlands, the San Joaquin Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary, go whale watching, or visit many more places.



Top left: A Turtle in Costa Rica
Top right: Pelican in flight – Bolsa Chica Wetlands
Bottom left: Whale tail in front of Antarctic Icebergs
Bottom right: close up of a Humpback Whale tail, Antarctica





Top and right: A clumsy Giant Petrel
in Antarctica

Bottom: Black-browed Albatross,
Drake passage, Antarctica





Top and right: swimming Gentoo Penguins, Antarctica

Bottom: Crocodile at the Sierpe River, Costa Rica





Top and right: Aquarium photography

Bottom: “Human” aquatic life 😊 – My son at water polo

