



# 7 days in the Red Sea

By Suzy Walker

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## Introduction

*“I’m going to Egypt next week”* I say.

*“Again?!!”* My friend exclaims.

He is thinking of dusty old mummies - that we can visit in the British museum for free during a lunch break. And sandy deserts, dry and hot. And long coach rides in noisy buses with lousy air-con, chock-full of badly dressed tourists. I’m thinking of crystal blue seas with amazing clarity. Vibrant reef life stretching as far as the eye can see. I’m thinking of spooky shipwrecks with WW2 guns and old Wellington boots. That feeling of jumping into cooling water after being so hot and feeling the stress just melt away. I’m thinking of masses of huge fish swirling around and around me, eyeing me with curiosity while I take their portrait. I’m thinking of all the teeny tiny creatures that I can find in the rock and coral crevices.

I’m thinking of my absolute favourite place in the world to go diving. The Red Sea.

Since learning to dive in 2003, I have been back to the Red Sea at least once a year except for 2007, a blemish on my record. Many of those times were to the Northern Red Sea around the national marine park of Ras Mohammad where I take you now for 7 days of diving joy.... During the summer there must be at least 10,000 divers per day across some 450 boats in the northern red sea so I know I’m not the only one who feels this way! I think there must be for four main reasons, it’s cheap, it’s warm, it’s mind blowing and it’s only 5 hours from the UK.

We were staying aboard MV Whirlwind for the week, widely recognised as the nicest boat in the Tony Backhurst fleet. I asked a few of my fellow passengers, most are underwater photographers, why they loved the Red Sea so much so you’ll see a few of those quotes as you go through the book. I am hoping you will enjoy my celebration of why we all keep on coming back for more.

Let me introduce you to the Red Sea through my eyes....









*“I’ve always been mesmerized by aquariums, not being able to walk past one without pause. The Red Sea, to me at least, provides some of the most excellent and rewarding diving in the world; a real opportunity to be on the other side of the glass.”*

**Michael Toye**

[www.flickr.com/photos/michael\\_toye](http://www.flickr.com/photos/michael_toye)



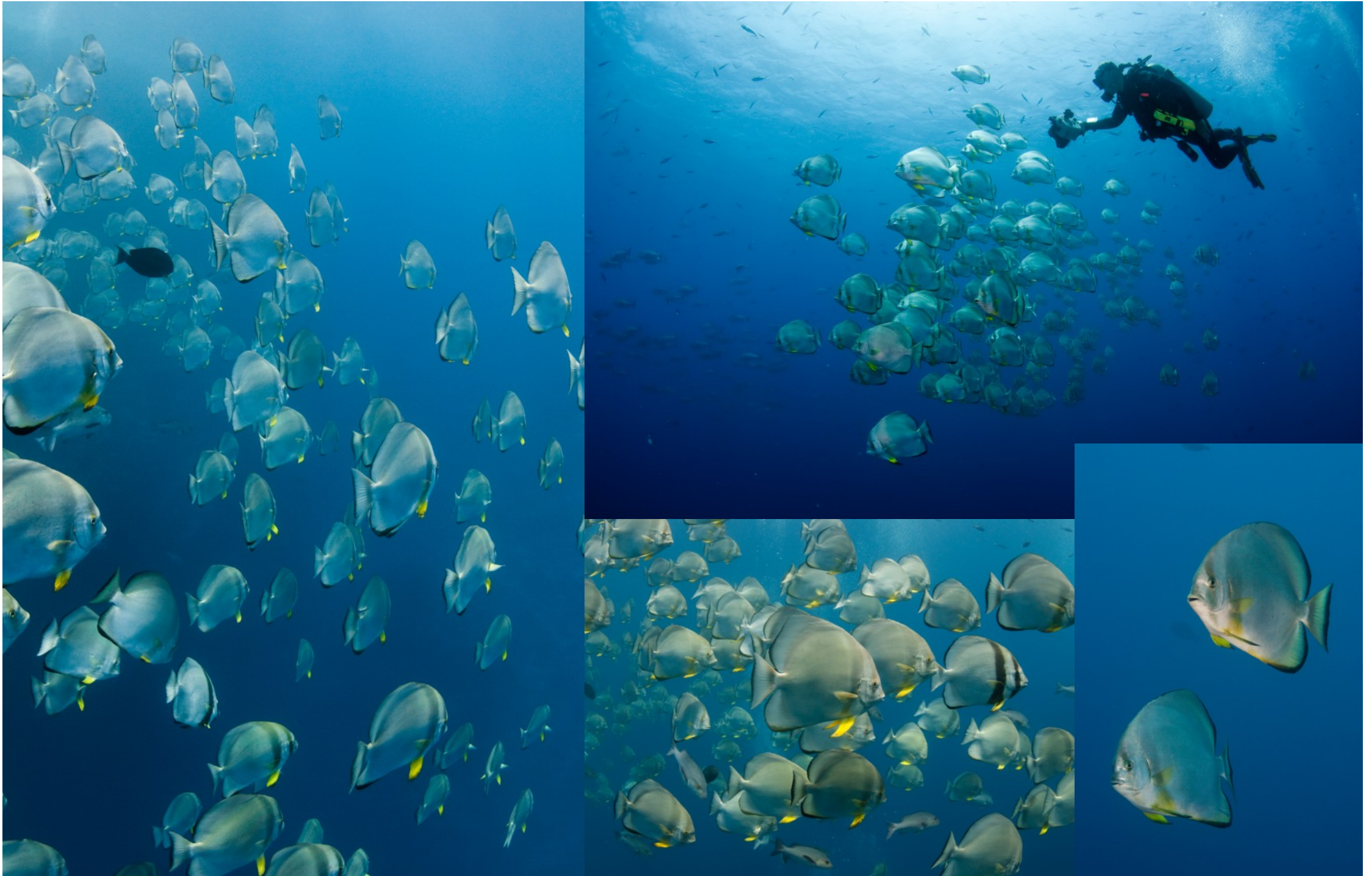




*“ This where I took my first image with DSLR. The images were not any good (just as they are now). But I love the trips with the people on board not just the guests but all the crew. I have met some great new friends. What special things I have seen from sharks, dolphins, marine life, wrecks of all types & sizes... As you know we always have a great time, a good laugh and are great mates.”*

**Andy Baker**





Schooling Batfish, Shark Reef, Ras Mohammed





Snappers, Shark Reef, Ras Mohammed

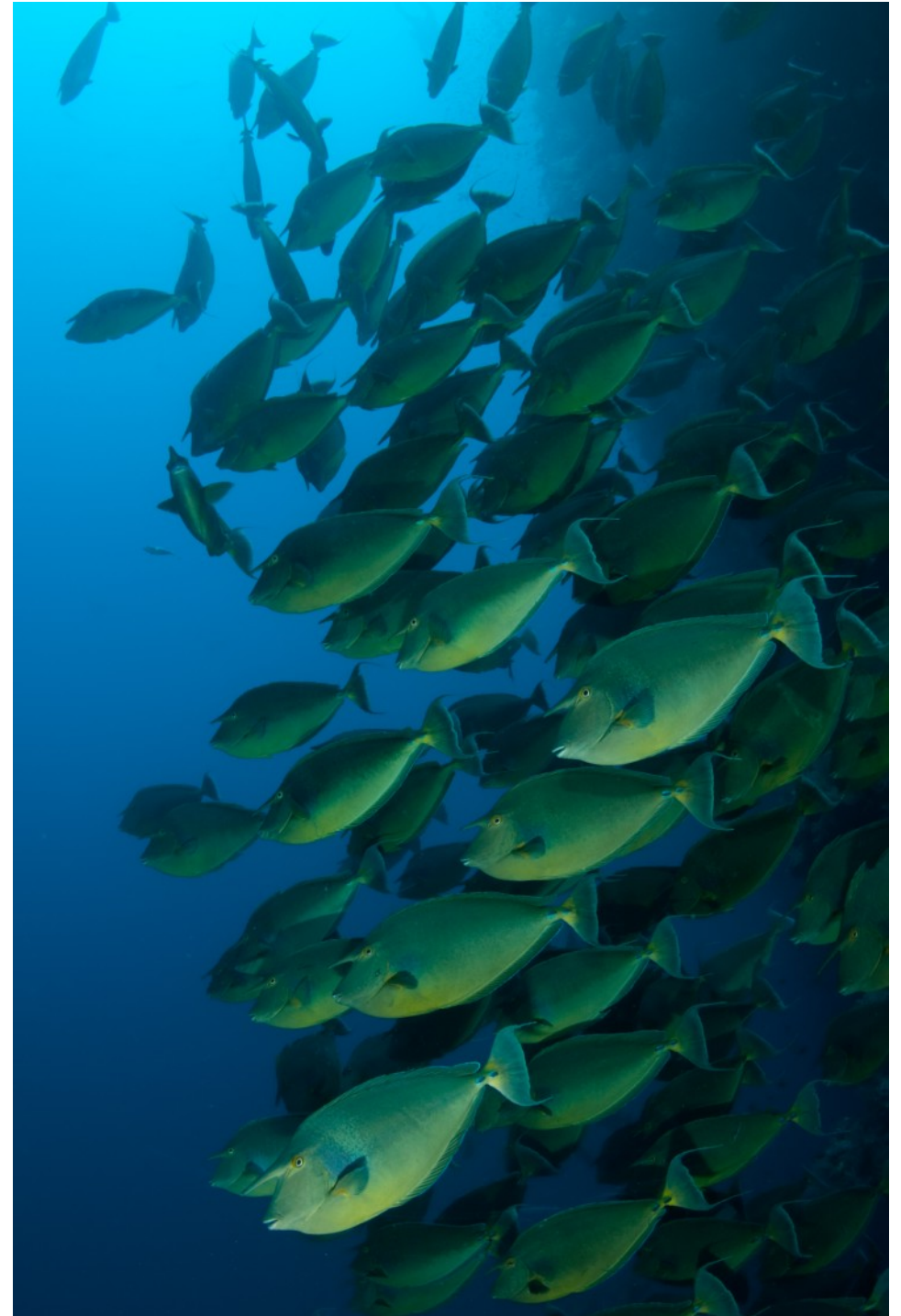


Batfish being cleaned by wrasse at Shark Reef, Ras Mohammed

*“The northern Red Sea around Sharm el Sheikh in June and July offers a unique combination of wrecks and fish aggregation which make it one of the best dive sites in the world.”*

**Peter Rowlands**

[www.pr-productions.co.uk](http://www.pr-productions.co.uk)







Photographing Glassfish at the Carnatic wreck

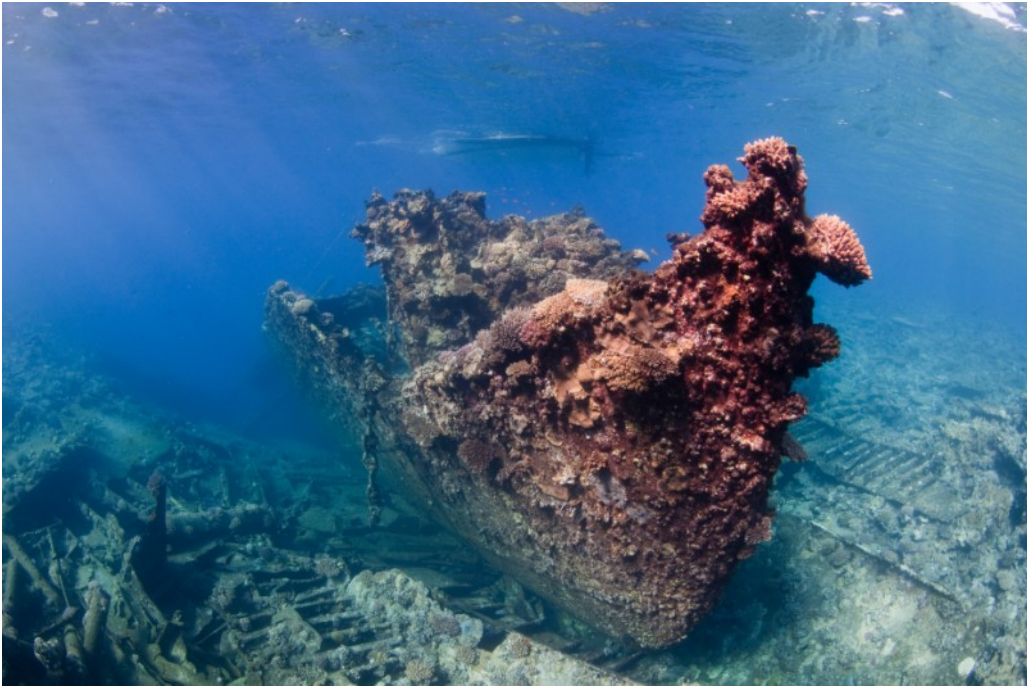


Carnatic wreck

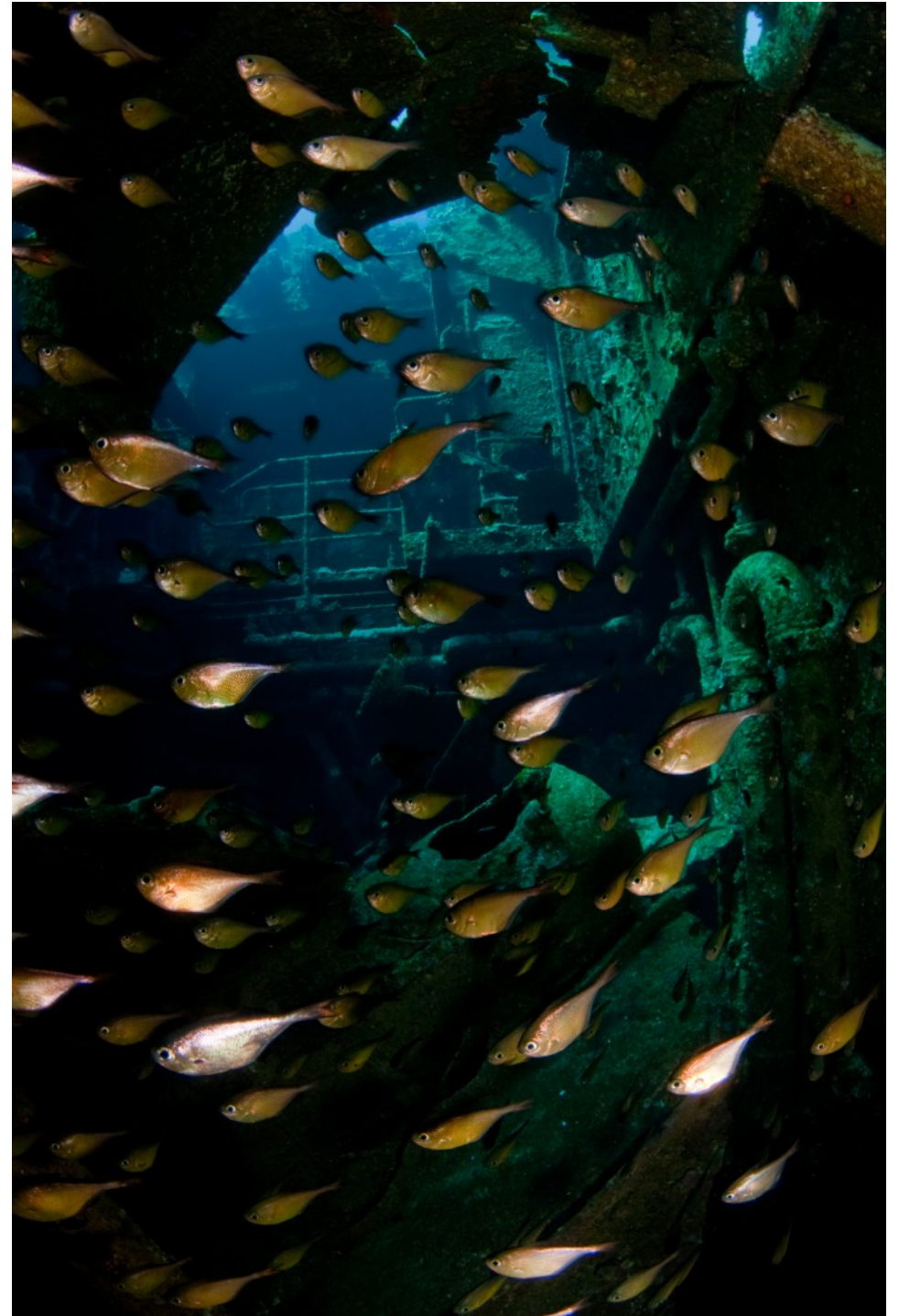








Wrecks... Top: Chrisoula K, Bottom: Inside the Ghannis D



Inside the Chrisoula K engine room

*“I go to The Red Sea to dive in clear blue waters with great wrecks and colourful reefs. The hospitality of the Egyptian people is an added bonus.”*

**Julian Cohen**

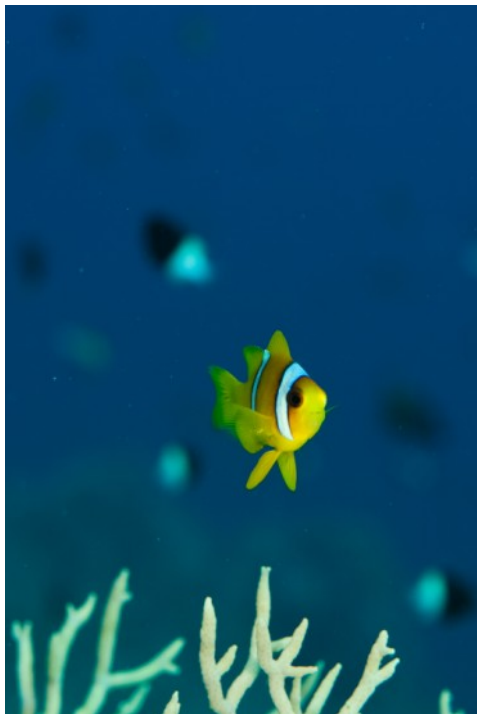
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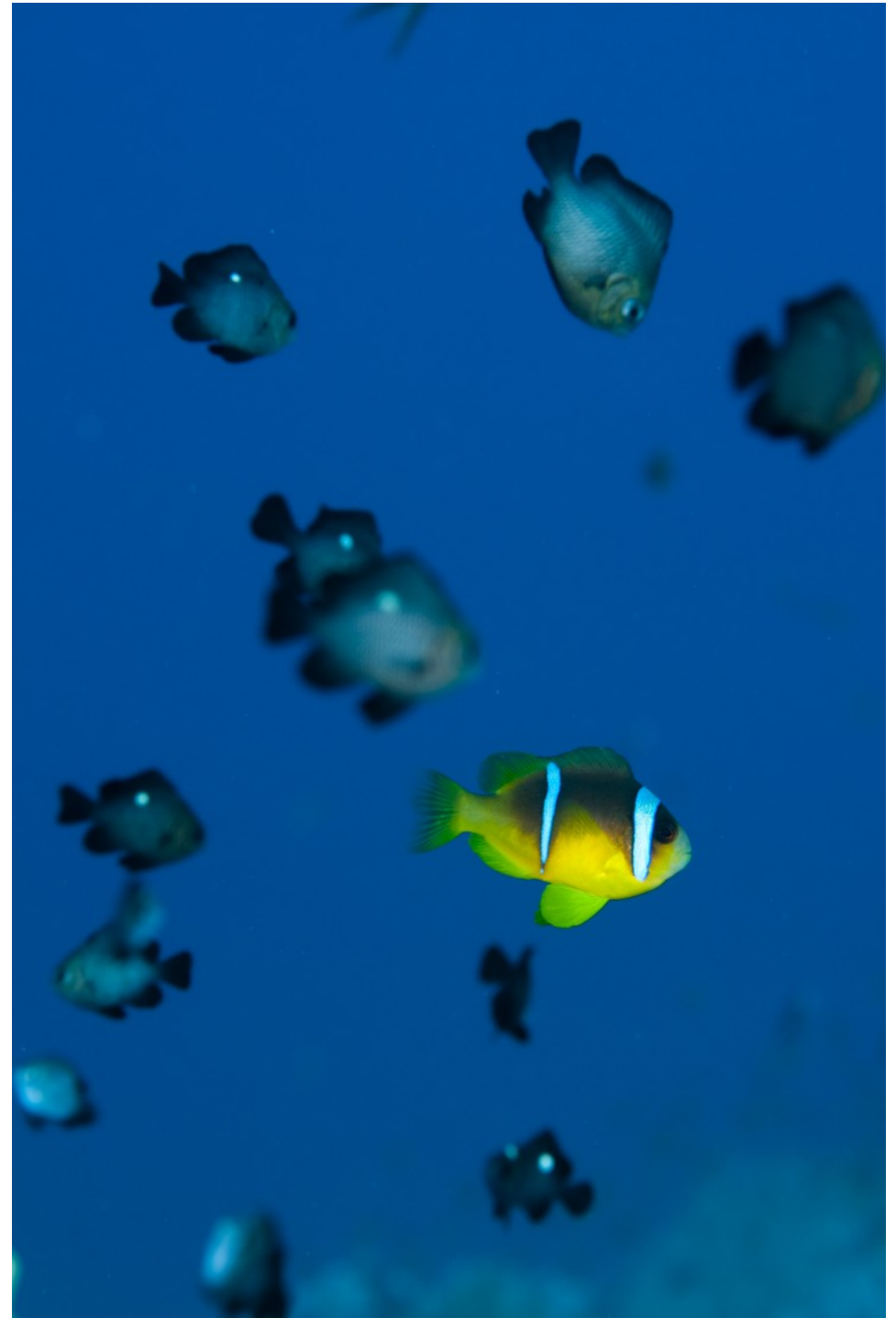




Very large grouper down at 30 meters, Shark Reef, Ras Mohammed

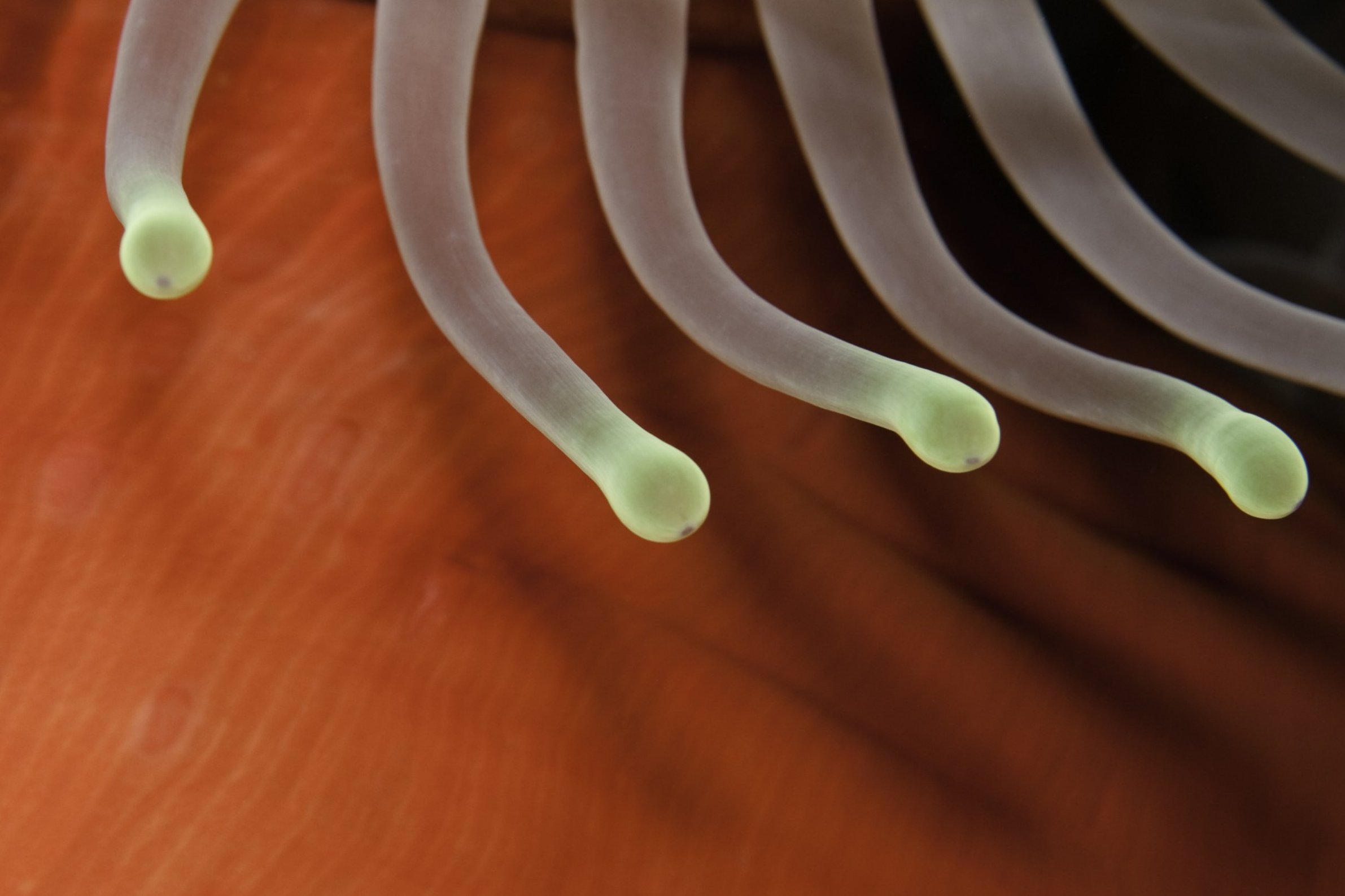


Nemo! Clown fish at Anemone City, Ras Mohammed



Next page: Anemone Skirt Detail, Anemone City, Ras Mohammed









*“I am a regular to the Red Sea, more than 10 times in the last 15 years. It is simply the best underwater scenery and life within reasonable reach from central Europe.”*

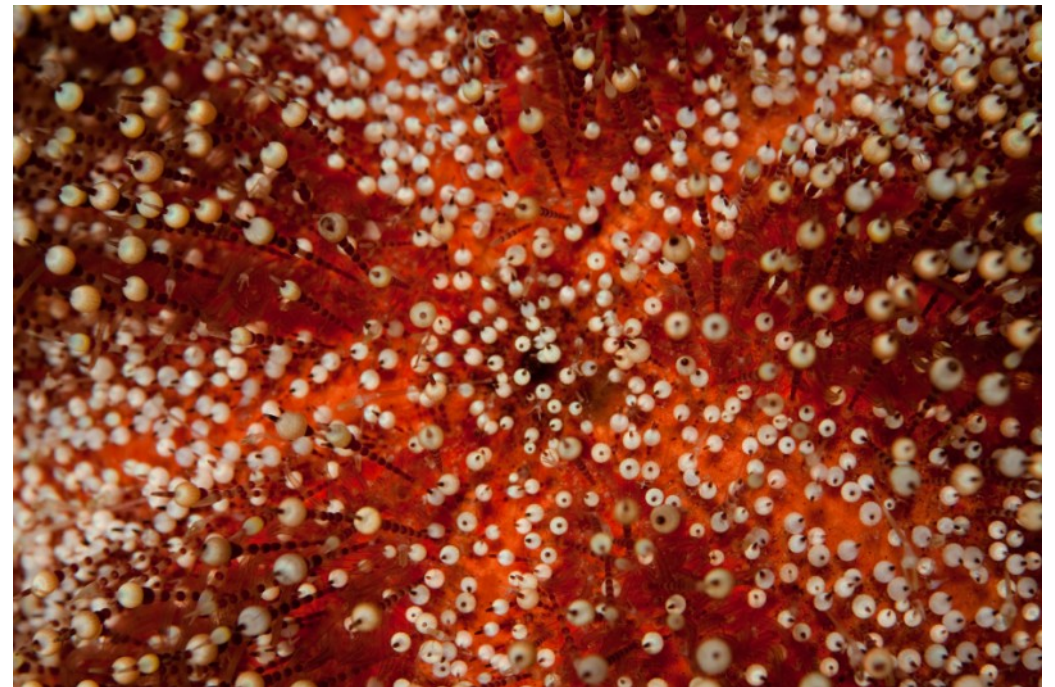
**Christian Fries**

[www.belowthesurface.de](http://www.belowthesurface.de)









Whip Goby, Sting Ray Station, Alternatives

Top: Coral crab hiding in hard coral, Bottom: Urchin, both Night dive at the Barge









Fish face



*“Bang for your buck it is the best diving on the planet if you are based in Europe.”*

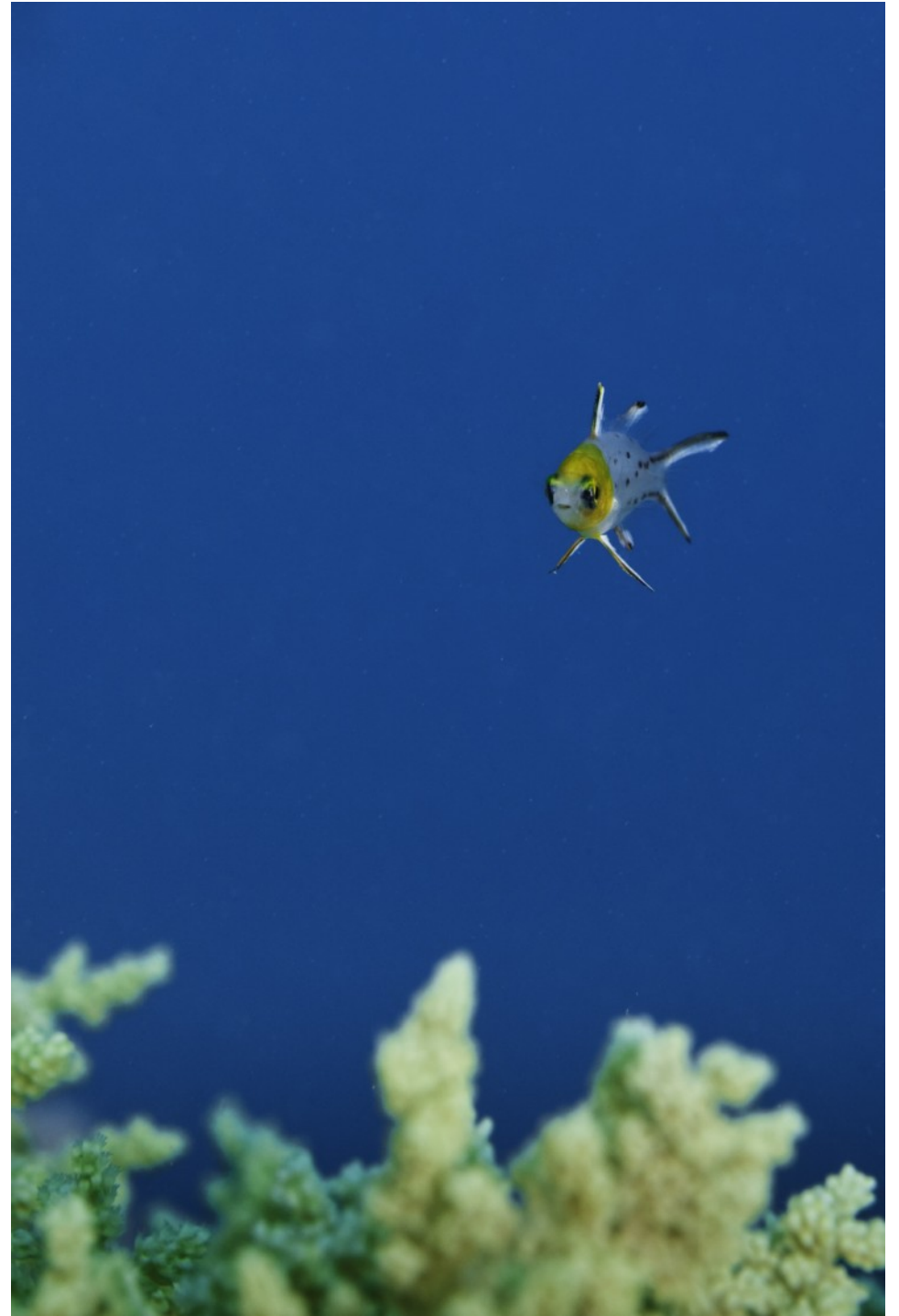
**Paul Carre**

[www.GuernseyBiscuit.com](http://www.GuernseyBiscuit.com)





Brittle star, Night dive at The Barge



Tiny fish on the wreck of Chrisoula K



*“For me, the Red Sea ticks all the boxes: wonderful marine life, good visibility, great weather and friendly people.”*

**Ralph Mortimore**







Compressors & Gauges on Whirlwind



Drying dive kit on Whirlwind









Military Port at sunset

### ***About this book - SoFoBoMo?***

SoFoBoMo is short for Solo Photo Book Month. Photographers from all over the world commit to producing an online photography book within one month. All images have to be taken within 31 contiguous days, and to complete the project, a PDF of the book must be uploaded to the SoFoBoMo website (at [www.sofobomo.org](http://www.sofobomo.org)) within the allotted month. The window of opportunity to take the pictures and make the book this year is between June 1, 2010 to July 31, 2010. SoFoBoMo limits the PDF size for this ebook so it is optimised for screen viewing and not really intended for print. All images copyright Suzy Walker, please do not use without permission. I'm thinking of making this into a "real" book on blurb (with photos from more than just this one week) so stay tuned to my [web-site](#) for details coming soon.

My images were all taken in the last week of June when I happened to be travelling to the Red Sea – again. I didn't see any underwater themed books in last years SoFoBoMo and I wanted to showcase our Earth's natural beauty before it disappears through massive overfishing and pollution. Sadly even in Ras Mohammad fish populations are dwindling and I saw many, many more fish with hooks and line attached to them in the schools this year. These schooling fish aggregate to mate once a year. Undisturbed, they can live up to 50 years! The fishermen don't seem to realise that perpetually fishing these schools during this pivotal time means fish numbers are reducing in size each year. Ras Mohammad is a marine reserve where no fishing is allowed but the fishing boats sneak in at sunset, fish all night and sneak away just as the dive boats are arriving. Hopefully the Egyptian authorities will stop this unforgivable practice before it's too late.

See you all there next year!

### ***About Me***

I have a website full of photos so come over and have a look:  
<http://www.reefbeaties.com>

If you want to keep in touch on Facebook I have a page at  
<http://www.facebook.com/SuzyWalkerPhotography>

### ***Acknowledgements***

I'd like to thank my wonderful partner Mike. I would also like to thank Alex Mustard, the crew and guests on Whirlwind who made these 7 days so interesting.