



SOUTHERN AFRICA'S PREMIER UNDERWATER PHOTOVIDEO COMPETITION

This Document consists of three sections.

- **Section 1: General Information**
- **Section 2: Stills Photography**
- **Section 3: Videography**

Note: Section 1 must be read by all participants as they are general rules applicable to both stills photography and videography.

SECTION 1: General Information

1. Introduction

The Sodwana Shootout Committee with the generous support of committed sponsors, are holding the 11th Underwater Photographic Shootout competition.

The competition seeks, through a visual medium to:

- Stimulate underwater photography and videography in the wider diving community and attract new entrants to both underwater photography and videography.
- Improve the general standard of underwater photography and videography in South Africa.
- Improve the understanding, type and standard of service offered by all operators to underwater photographers and videographers.
- To promote an understanding and appreciation of the diversity and beauty of underwater world and the need to preserve it.

The competition, which is the largest, oldest and most prestigious underwater competition of its kind in Southern Africa, invites entries from people of all nationalities and ages and is open to amateur and professional photographers and videographers.

The images and videos entered in the competition may be featured in various media and/or exhibitions to increase awareness of the potential of underwater photography and videography, the beauty of the underwater world and the promotion of diving/photography/safety.

2. Eligibility

The competition is open to all photographers and/or videographers.

The event is organised by a committee of volunteers who are eligible to enter the competition and are not involved in the judging of images or videos.

The panel of judges are not eligible to enter the section (stills or video) that they are judging and are comprised of various photography experts and industry professionals.

3. Format of Contest

The shootout format is unchanged from 2010 where changes were introduced to bring more in line with International Standards. These included:

- The introduction of the UWtube category in the video section.
- Unrestricted categories – Only the following photoshop filters may be used: all blur filters, dust and scratch filters and sharpening filters. Only apply affects which are possible to achieve in camera
- Contestants may enter the following combination of entries:
 - 2 still images & 1 image in the conservation images category
 - 1 still image, 1 video in the UWtube category & 1 image in the conservation category
 - 1 video in the music or documentary category

Additional images to any category can be submitted at a cost of R100 per image. A maximum of 2 additional images may be entered. The conservation category is a free entry. An additional cost of R100 will be charged to contestants who would like to enter both still and video in the music or documentary categories. If you would like to shoot on slide film, please contact us at shootout@shootout.co.za

4. Behaviour of Entrants

We are adopting the Conservation Rules established by EPIC®. Marine life should never be stressed or endangered for the sake of a photo or video. Conservation rules will apply to all entries, and decisions will be final. Entries suspected of exhibiting the following behaviour will be disqualified:

- Divers visibly damaging the environment (e.g. gear dragging or kicking up sand).
- Animals with signs of stress (e.g. puffed puffers, inking octopus).
- Animals moved to an unnatural environment or risky location.
- Animals being fed.
- Marine life being touched.
- Divers exhibiting poor buoyancy control.

Complaints from other divers about a diver exhibiting any of the above will be seriously considered and investigated and the environmental judges' decision on this is **final**.

Each participant must dive with their identification marker at all times during the competition. Failure to do so could lead to disqualification.



5. Judging

The judging will be organized on a salon style basis and applies to all digital, creative digital and video entries.

A formal judging session with individual scoring by each judge per image will then follow (See video rules for video criteria). This will be scored as follows:

- 1 point for a poor image
- 2 points for an average image
- 3 points for a good image
- 4 points an excellent image
- 5 points for an exceptional/brilliant/amazing image

These scores (per judge) will be added by the Judge Convener, to arrive at a total image/video score. The scoring allocation will be unbiased. No judge will be aware who the author of the image/video is or what score a fellow judge has allocated to the image/video.

Discrepancies in scoring between judges will be called if there is a 4 point difference in point allocation (between judges) and then subjected to re-judging. If the discrepancy repeats, it will be accepted as such. The number of judges will be uneven (3 usually) – so disputes can be settled by voting.

The judge convener will ensure the above protocols are followed and the rules are obeyed by the judges. They may not participate or be influential in the judging process itself.

Judges are allowed to dive during the competition. Due to the complexity of the competition and the number of boats, it is not possible to guarantee that judges and competitors will not end up on the same boat or reef.

The reason that the judges are not prevented from diving is that they are not remunerated for their efforts and one of the few perks they receive in return, is free dives during the competition. Judging of video and stills is handled separately, with different conveners being present at each. This has been done to allow a judge of stills to compete in the video section and visa versa.

Competitors may not address any questions related to the competition directly to the judges. These may only be addressed to the members of the committee.

6. Objections

The Objections committee will comprise of the judges and the judge convener. Should any competitor wish to lodge an objection, the following process is to be invoked:

- A cash deposit of R500 is to be paid to the judge convener by the person raising the objection.
- A written objection is to be handed to the objections committee
- The objections committee will deliberate on and decide whether or not the objection is valid and should be upheld.
- The objections committee will then inform the relevant parties and effect the decision of the committee.
- Deposits will be forfeited in favour of the competition if the objection is not upheld.
- The full deposit will be repaid to the person who submitted any upheld objection

Objections can be handed in until 8:00am on the Sunday of the competition. Objections may only relate to the misuse/abuse or disregarding of these rules and entry guidelines. The decision of the objections committee will be final and no further deliberation will be entered into.

7. Operators / Spotters

All operators will be encouraged to provide additional services and or individualised service for photography as part of contributing to photography as a whole. Photographers may hire or use their own boats and crew.

8. Copyright

In submitting an entry the owner grants The Sodwana Shootout Competition the right to use such photographs for promotion of the competition, underwater photography or diver safety in printed, slide show, video and webpage formats and non-profit educational purposes. Finalists and winning entries may be published on DVD or CD. All copyrights will be retained by the entrant and recognition will be given to the photographer / videographers. Model releases will be the responsibility of the person retaining copyright. The Sodwana Shootout cannot be held responsible for loss or damage of an entry before or after the competition.

9. General Rules

- Only paid up competitors who have registered, are allowed to enter the competition.
- All photographs, images and video footage are to be taken within a 15 km radius of Jesser point lighthouse ("the Sodwana dive area")
- All photographs and images are to be taken underwater in the Sodwana dive area, with the exception that over/under images are allowed.
- All photographs and videography must be carried out on either Thursday 27 May or Friday 28 May or both. The exception is that videographers may video on Wednesday 26 May.
- No photography of any kind may be taken for the competition outside of the above mentioned dates.
- Pool, river and lagoon images will not be accepted, this does not apply to video footage provided such footage does not exceed 20% of the footage.
- The same image may not be entered into more than one category. However two different images may be submitted in the same category.
- Photography, videography, editing and image manipulation for creative digital entries must have been performed by the entrant.



Sodwana Shootout

SOUTHERN AFRICA'S PREMIER UNDERWATER PHOTOVIDEO COMPETITION

- In the event that an award winning entry is later found to have violated any rule, the entrant will be disqualified, and officials of this competition reserve the right to recall prizes or request reimbursement of fair market value if non-returnable
- The judge's decision is final

SECTION 2: Stills Photography

1. Definitions

- **Unrestricted:**

"Unrestricted" division does not have many rules regarding digital manipulation and more freedom is allowed to manipulate. But, you should still exercise care in the decisions that you make. In the past the judges have generally complained about images that have been over processed. **Nothing** may be added to your image. This is not a creative digital category! Only the following Photoshop filters may be used: all blur filters, dust and scratches filters and sharpening filters. Only apply the effects which are possible to achieve in camera.

- **Traditional:**

The "Traditional" category allows for adjustment to brightness, contrast, colour and sharpness only. Cropping, cloning and other manipulation is not allowed. These restrictions on manipulation allow those people who are not so experienced at Photoshop, **or similar**, to compete on more-or-less even ground as those with more experience. It also highlights composition and lighting skills by not allowing cropping and cloning. On submission of entries the original RAW or JPG files will be audited.

2. Categories

Entrants may only enter one of the following categories: **Open category, Compact camera category or Novice**. In addition to the chosen main category entrants may also submit entries into the Creative and Conservation categories.

2.1 Open Categories (What about the two traditional categories)

These open categories below are accessible to all contestants and to any type of camera and lighting system.

- **Open Macro Unrestricted** – Any underwater image of an 18 x13 cm or smaller picture area. Read the above definition regarding Unrestricted.
- **Open Macro Traditional** – Any underwater image of an 18 x13 cm or smaller picture area. Read the above definition regarding Traditional.
- **Open Wide Angle Unrestricted** – Underwater images larger than an 18 x 13 cm picture area. Read the above definition regarding Unrestricted.
- **Open Wide Angle Traditional** – Underwater images larger than an 18 x 13 cm picture area. Read the above definition regarding Traditional.

2.2 Compact Digital Categories

This category has been specifically aimed at contestants using a **compact digital camera**. The camera may be equipped with external lights or strobes. Only **compact digital cameras** are allowed to enter these categories. Although many great underwater images taken by compact digital cameras exist, it is often difficult for them to compete with DSLR cameras when it comes to image quality. In this category digital manipulation is allowed, but we are not running a digital manipulation contest. Exercise care in the decisions that you make.

- **Compact Digital Wide Unrestricted** – Underwater images larger than an 18 x 13 cm picture area. Read the above definition regarding Unrestricted. The use of internal or external lights and strobes **is** allowed.
- **Compact Digital Macro Unrestricted** – Any underwater image of an 18 x13 cm or smaller picture area. Read the above definition regarding Unrestricted. The use of internal or external lights and strobes **is** allowed

2.3 Special Categories

- **Novice** – The photographer in this category must be a novice. The definition of 'Novice' is somebody who has been taking underwater photos for less than 12 months, is entering their first Sodwana Shootout and has not been placed in any photographic competition including local magazine competitions. The photos must be taken with a **compact digital camera** with no external lighting. This category has been designed to introduce new photographers into the competition. No digital manipulation is allowed. No external lights or strobes are allowed. The photographer may use the internal flash of the camera.
- **Creative digital** – These entries must clearly demonstrate a high degree of digital manipulation and creativity. This category is for all entrants who want to submit heavily manipulated digital images as well as creative and artistic interpretations. The image submitted must be recognisable as having been taken at Sodwana during the competition. The original source material must be from this competition.
- **The PADI Project Aware Conservation Category** - Subject matter that addresses a marine environmental concern will receive added points. Entries in this category need not be as "pretty" as they are thought provoking. Entrants are encouraged to express their message. This category is thus open to all types of cameras and all skills levels. The judges will be looking for a good sound photo that expresses an opinion or concern rather than for a beautiful image. No reduction in points will be given if an image is thought provoking and conveys a conservation message but is not as crisp or colorful as one taken with a SLR- digital or otherwise.



3. Registration

Registration will be conducted at the competition marquee which will be situated near Leatherback's restaurant at the Sodwana Bay lodge. Registration packs can be collected from 4 pm of Wednesday 25 May. A briefing will be held at the competition marquee at 6pm on Wednesday 25 May. It is strongly recommended the entrants attend this briefing as misinterpreting the format will lead to disqualification.

Entrants will be informed of the date to which the camera's clock must be set. Images entered in the competition that do not conform to this date will not be eligible for a prize.

4. Entry Submission

Digital Image Format and Filenames for submission

Entries must be saved in **jpeg format** and should be sized to **1500 pixels or more in the longest dimension**. Images should be in the sRGB colour space. Both the original image at the size it was taken and the enhanced image (the actual entry) must be submitted.

Naming your Images

Name your **original** files according to the following template, or see below for your customized file name list.

ORG.CategoryAbbreviation_contestant #_Entry#.xxx

Name your **entry** files according to the following template, or see below for your customized file name list.

CategoryAbbreviation_contestant #_Entry#.jpg

Categories are abbreviated as follows:

Macro Traditional (**MT**) Macro Unrestricted (**MU**) Wide Angle Traditional (**WT**) Wide Angle Unrestricted (**WU**)
 Compact Cameras Macro Unrestricted (**CM**) Compact Cameras Wide Unrestricted (**CW**) Novice (**NV**)
 Conservation (**CON**) Creative (**CD**)

Examples of Macro Unrestricted would be for two entries

MU_1234_1.jpg MU_1234_2.jpg

ORG.MU_1234_1.jpg ORG.MU_1234_2.jpg

Examples of Wide Angle unrestricted would be for two entries

WU_1234_1.jpg WU_1234_2.jpg

ORG.WU_1234_1.jpg ORG.WU_1234_2.jpg

Competitors should copy these files to a CD or flash disc/USB drive for submission. It is the responsibility of the competitor to ensure that the images are retrievable from their media. More than one person can put their images on a single CD, as long as the files are appropriately named. Once entries have been handed to the administrators, competitors must sign the register as evidence that they have checked that the images submitted are correctly named and submitted in accordance with the rules.

5. Prize Allocation

ALL CATEGORY WINNERS WILL RECEIVE FLOATING TROPHIES CARRYING THE NAMES OF ALL PREVIOUS WINNERS OF THAT CATEGORY.

Prizes will be allocated as follows.

| OVERALL SHOOTOUT WINNER (from any of the categories) | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Open Category | | | |
| Macro Unrestricted | Wide Unrestricted | Macro Traditional | Wide Traditional |
| 1 st | 1 st | 1 st | 1 st |
| 2 nd | 2 nd | 2 nd | 2 nd |
| 3 rd | 3 rd | 3 rd | 3 rd |
| Compact Camera | | | |
| Macro Unrestricted | Wide Unrestricted | | |
| 1 st | 1 st | | |
| 2 nd | 2 nd | | |
| 3 rd | 3 rd | | |
| Novice Compact Digital Category | | | |
| 1 st | 2 nd | 3 rd | |
| Creative Digital Category | | | |
| 1 st | 2 nd | 3rd | |
| Conservation Category | | | |
| 1 st | 2 nd | | |



6. Additional Rules

- Professional photographers may not submit entries into the Compact Digital Camera or Novice categories. The definition of “professional photographer” shall be determined subjectively on a case-by-case basis by the judges but is in essence anyone who receives income from underwater photography.
- With exception of the Compact Digital Camera and Novice Categories, entries into the other categories may have been taken by any type of camera as long as the final jpeg image meets the submission requirements.
- Should there not be enough entries in a specific category the shootout committee has the right to merge similar categories.
- Ambassadors are permitted to enter and submit entries into any category.

Section 3: Video

Both SD (Standard Definition 4:3 aspect) and HD (High Definition 16:9 aspect) entries will be accepted.

CATEGORIES

- **UwTube Category** – this is the novice category as well as for entrants with video-clip capable stills cameras. While not required, basic editing is permitted and original sound and/or music maybe added to the clip. Anything shot underwater at the Shootout goes. Duration: 20 to 90 seconds.
- **Music Video Category** – this is a more advanced section where entrants may produce a music video making use of underwater footage shot at the Shootout. Entrants may use any music, but use of copyrighted music is done so at own risk and these entries will not be added to the Shootout Youtube Channel. Duration: Maximum 3 minutes.
- **Mini Documentary Category** – this category will remain the same as before. Entrants are to produce a professional-look short documentary using footage shot at the Shootout with a minimum of 70% shot underwater. A high standard of production skill which includes concept; camerawork; editing; scripting; and use of sound is expected from entrants to this category. Duration: 2,5 to 3 minutes.

SHOOTING & EDITING RESTRICTIONS

- Shooting will take place in the sea and on land only in the Sodwana region on Wednesday & Thursday of the Shootout week during May 2010.
- Friday is allocated as the editing day however for the UW Tube category shooting is still allowable on the Friday.
- A minimum of 70% of your entry must be shot while diving on scuba or free diving underwater in the sea at Sodwana Bay. You may therefore include above water and land shots in your entry.
- No fresh water or swimming pool shots will be permitted.
- **USE OF MUSIC** - the Shootout Video Rules do not restrict the choice of music that you wish to use. However, please be sure to understand copyright laws with regard to the use of commercial music. The Shootout accepts NO responsibility for the use of music or any material that carries a copyright.
- In the Music Video and Mini Documentary categories entrants must insert a title at or near the beginning of the video. Should entrants wish to place end credits in their video, their names or any reference to their names may not appear in these credits.

REGISTRATION

- As from 18:00 on Tuesday during the Shootout week at the Shootout Marquee.
- Date Stamp will be announced at registration. Bring your camera to registration in order to set and have this verified.

VIDEO TAPES & ENTRY SUBMISSION

- Entrants must provide their own video tapes or alternative recording media.
- Entries must be submitted between 17:30 and 18:30 on the Friday evening of the Shootout at the Shootout Marquee.
- Entries may be submitted on MiniDV video tape, USB Memory Stick, CD or DVD.
- When submitting on Stick or Disc, please submit in MPEG2 or MPEG4 file format. Do not create a playable DVD of your entry. Specify SD or HD.
- **More info on file formats to follow closer to the Shootout.**
- **Submitting more than two entries** – additional payment is required per entry – refer to general Shootout rules.
- **Protests** – refer to general Shootout rules.

PRIZES

The winner of each category will receive a floating trophy carrying the names of all previous winners. 1st and 2nd placed entries will also receive sponsored prizes. Smaller random prizes may be awarded to commendable entries should the entry numbers in a category be suitably substantial. This will be at the discretion of the organizing committee.



JUDGING

All entries will be judged according to all round production value. Judging will be made on the entrants' application to all skills involved in video production. This includes the technical and creative areas of shooting, editing, scripting, selection and use of music and sound and relevance to title. In the case of a music video entry, creative license in all areas will be allowed and assessed. Entries that do not comply with the minimum and maximum time limits, and the 70% minimum underwater content will be penalized on a pro rata basis accordingly.

JUDGES

A panel of three judges will determine the winners. Entries will be judged by entry number and not by entrant's name. Judges will not have access to entry lists.

VIDEO GUIDELINES

The overall idea is to encourage entrants to understand the principles of video production and to include these elements in their entries. It is up to the individual entrant to determine what makes a suitable video capable of winning an award.

Some Suggestions

Entry Level: Pay attention to:

- White Balance settings
- Focus – try to avoid using auto focus by selecting manual focus and shooting everything on a wide angle shot with the focus set at about 1-1,5m
- Composition or framing of your shots
- Smooth camera operation
- Clean editing and a conclusive ending to your edit

Music and Open: As with Entry Level as well as

- Choose a theme and a title and use it either in the beginning or in an appropriate place in your video.
- Take the trouble to ensure a high level of attention to focus, white balance, framing, camera operation, etc. Entries will be marked up or down according to the standard of these elements.
- The same will apply to editing. Be sure to familiarize yourself with your editing program in both visual and sound elements and make use of it in a constructive way. A skilled "pro" look to the edit will attract higher attention from the judges.

Please direct any questions by email on info@shootout.co.za

SODWANA SHOOTOUT COMMITTEE