

As a passionate underwater photographer with over a decade of experience, I understand the thrill of capturing marine life and mesmerizing seascapes during my diving trips. With countless shots taken from day boats to liveaboards, the next exciting step is sharing those images with a wider audience. One effective way to do this is by entering your photos into underwater photo contests.

In this blog post, I'll walk you through some fantastic monthly and annual underwater photography contests you can enter with your trip shots, and share expert advice on handling your gear to keep it safe and your images secure. I'll specifically cover the importance of proper maintenance of your underwater camera housing, buttons, dials, hinges, and electrical connections. These tips will ensure your prized camera system stays functional and corrosion-free, so you can keep shooting and competing at your best.

Why Enter Underwater Photo Contests?

Entering underwater photography contests presents many benefits, especially for travel and dive photographers like you and me:

- **Exposure:** Your work gets seen by experts, marine enthusiasts, and potential clients or publishers.
- **Feedback:** Judging panels often include professionals who can offer valuable critiques.
- **Networking:** Opportunities to connect with fellow photographers and marine conservationists.
- **Prizes:** Many contests offer cash, gear, or dive trips.
- **Motivation:** Pushing your creative boundaries and improving your skills.

Top Underwater Photography Contests You Can Enter

1. Monthly Underwater Photography Contest

This is an ongoing competition that updates monthly, making it perfect for anyone who loves sharing timely images from recent trips. The contest features categories such as macro, wide-angle, black & white, and behavior shots. Since the theme changes slightly every month, it's a fun way to challenge different aspects of your portfolio.

Be sure to review their submission guidelines carefully to check for restrictions on editing, size, and metadata.

2. World Oceans Day Photography Competition

Held annually around June 8th to celebrate World Oceans Day, this highly respected competition highlights the beauty and importance of our oceans. Photos submitted often focus on conservation, biodiversity, and human interaction with marine ecosystems.

This contest is ideal for meaningful shots taken during eco-friendly dive trips or any images that tell a story about ocean health and protection.

3. UnderwaterCompetition.com

This is a dedicated platform for underwater photography contests across various themes and skill levels. They host multiple events throughout the year, including themed contests, species specific challenges, and prizes for both amateurs and professionals.

Submissions typically require metadata verification and endorse originality, which means proper handling of your files and backup is crucial before submitting.

Handling Your Underwater Camera Housing Like a Pro

Entering photo contests demands not only stunning images but also a well-maintained camera system. From my experience, neglecting proper care of your underwater camera housing—and its intricate components like buttons, dials, hinges, and electrical connections—can lead to costly and frustrating failures that may ruin future trips and your contest chances.

Saltwater Removal Before Opening the Housing

Never underestimate the corrosive power of saltwater residues. After a dive, before you open your underwater housing, it's crucial to rinse it thoroughly with fresh water to flush out salt deposits.



- **Rinse Immediate & Gentle:** Use a hose or bucket of fresh water to gently rinse the housing, focusing on buttons, dials, and hinges where salt can hide.
- **Do Not Tap the Unit:** Avoid pounding on the housing to dislodge salt; fresh water soak and gentle swirling is better.
- **Dry Externally:** Use a microfiber cloth or lint-free towel to wipe down the housing exterior carefully before opening.

Opening your housing with salt deposits inside can cause accelerated corrosion on electrical connections and the intricate sealing surfaces.



Safe Handling in Shared Rinse Tanks

When diving with groups, housings often share rinse tanks onboard boats or liveaboard vessels. This can be hazardous if housings bang into each other, damaging buttons or breaking seals.

- **Use Separation:** Bring your own soft protective sleeves or mesh bags to keep your housing isolated inside the rinse tank.
- **Label Your Gear:** Use masking tape labels to mark chargers, cables, and housing parts to prevent mixups.
- **Constant Monitoring:** Don't leave housings unattended; always check periodically that they remain separated and safe.

This simple habit prevents costly damage and maintains your equipment's peak operating condition.

Dry Workspace Habits to Avoid Corrosion

After rinsing, it's tempting to spread out your gear and start unloading memory cards—but stay disciplined and keep your workspace dry and clean.

- **Dedicated Dry Area:** Choose a dry, shaded spot with absorbent mats for your gear maintenance.
- **Minimize Moisture:** Avoid placing wet housings on damp surfaces; use trays or towels to isolate.
- **Inspect O-Rings Dry:** Always use your tiny dedicated flashlight to closely check O-rings for salt, sand, or debris before re-lubricating with grease.

Pro tip: calling the lubricant “grease” is often misleading, since that's only part of the sealing process. Clean, undamaged O-rings and proper seating are just as critical.

Backup Your Photos Like a Pro Before Contest Submission

Nothing pains me more than hearing about photographers who lost all their beautiful photos because they formatted their cards on day one without checking for backups. Trust me—I flooded exactly one housing in my second year underwater shooting career, and it taught me invaluable lessons in data security and gear care.

Two-Device Backups and Verification

Before submitting your trip shots to any contest, always follow this proven workflow:

1. **Primary Backup:** Immediately copy your files from the memory card to your laptop or external drive after the dive.
2. **Secondary Backup:** Use a second separate external drive or cloud storage to create a duplicate backup.
3. **Verification Check:** Open a random sample of files on the backup device to verify readability and integrity. Never skip this step.
4. **Label Cards:** Use masking tape to label each card after backup with date and card ID to track content.
5. **Lock Cards:** Physically lock memory cards or place them in labeled, padded containers until you finalize your editing.

This disciplined backup protocol ensures your images are safe no matter what mechanical mishaps or data errors arise.

Summary Table: Essential Gear Care and Backup Tips for Contest Entrants

Aspect Best Practice Reason Saltwater Removal Rinse thoroughly with fresh water before opening housing Prevents corrosion on electrical connections and sealing surfaces Shared Rinse Tanks Use protective sleeves or mesh bags and label gear Prevents housing damage from collisions and mixups Workspace Dryness Maintain dry, shaded workspace and use flashlight for O-ring inspection Avoids corrosion and ensures proper housing sealing Photo Backup Implement two-device backups with verification and label memory cards Safeguards images against data loss before contest submission

Final Thoughts

Participating in underwater photo contests like the **monthly underwater photography contest**, the **World Oceans Day Photography Competition**, and contests hosted by **UnderwaterCompetition.com** can be an enriching experience that motivates you to sharpen your skills and share your amazing trip shots with the world.

Maintaining your gear's health through proper cleaning, safe handling, and dry workspace habits—and adopting rigorous photo backup protocols—will help you keep producing stunning imagery while avoiding technical disasters. I hope these tips help you protect your investment and elevate your underwater photography journey!

Happy diving, shooting, and submitting!