

# “UPON THE FACE OF WATER”

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters... And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth.”

Genesis 1: 2 & 7:18

# Marc Stickler Upon the Face of Water



MARC STICKLER IS A MARINE AND WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST. His research focusses mainly on lemon sharks, mountain gorillas in Uganda and the social behavior of female chacma baboons in the Okavango Delta, Botswana. Through his research and explorations, he found joy in photography, and he has been a full-time photographer since 2014. Aside from surveying wildlife on land and underwater, he is also a successful wedding photographer. His passion however, still lies in wildlife photography.

MARC'S FUNDAMENTAL AMBITION is to use his camera as an instrument of conversation and be able to showcase the beauty that lies above and below the water's surface to create awareness of our planet's fragile environment.

MARC IS ALSO ACTIVELY ENGAGED in school development in Africa, helping them raise funds through calendar sales and multimedia talks about his adventures. He happily offers his expertise to volunteers from all over the globe, in particular those who wish to learn about photography. Marc's work is generously supported by SEACAM, Mares, Nikon and Siren Fleet. [marcstickler.at](http://marcstickler.at)



## FLY (title page) German Channel, Palau

Big boats cannot operate in German Channel at low tide, but smaller ones can. Luckily, I was on a speedboat from Sam's Tours. Out of the blue, a manta ray glided gracefully beneath us. The skipper carefully followed the manta through the shallow waters.

I chose the composition carefully: three-quarters water and the rest upcoming storm, to get some extra context in the image

### Tech info

Nikon D800, Nikon 24-70 f/14, s 1/200, ISO 250, 2x Seaflash 150D



### WAVE JUMPERS

Port St. Johns, South Africa

Dolphins (*Delphinus tropicalis*) are widespread along the south African coastline. Evolution has made dolphins successful hunters. Dolphins also have a unique social system and are often used to study interactive behaviour in marine mammals. This picture was taken during the Sardine Run in 2013, off Port St. Johns. On this day, poor weather conditions and high waves forced us to stay on the boat. We came across a pod of dolphins that seemed to enjoy playing in the waves — they rode and jumped almost every wave. I took this image while holding onto the rail of the boat while two other people held onto me. The task was to estimate where the dolphins would jump and then press the shutter.

#### Tech info

Nikon D4, Nikon 70-200 f/4, s 1/2500, ISO 400



**i** **VACUUM CLEANER**  
**Marsa Alam, Egypt**

Dugongs belong to the animal order of Sirena which also includes three species of manatees. Dugongs are herbivores and they rely on seagrass habitats. They are spread throughout the oceans, and their current IUCN status is Vulnerable.

This image was taken during a dive assignment in Egypt on board the Seven7Seas. The captain spotted the dugong some 300-400 metres away. Since it was a dive break and tanks were still empty, I grabbed my camera and snorkel gear, and raced towards the dugong. After 200 metres, I was gasping for air and had to pause. Finally, I saw the dugong just 30 metres in front of me. I swam to the side of the dugong so as not to scare it. I quickly adjusted the camera settings and just in time too; I had about three seconds to get a nice shot before it decided to take off.

**Tech info:**

Nikon D4, Seacam Housing, Nikon 14-24 f/9, s 1/80, ISO 100, Seafash 150D



## **EVOLUTION** **Jellyfish Lake, Palau**

The Jellyfish Lake in Palau is proof of how fast nature responds to environmental changes. These jellies trapped in a lake lost their ability to sting over time. Recent studies have revealed how fragile freshwater lakes are; we cannot pollute them with sunscreen or other inorganic substances.

In this picture, you see the Jellyfish Lake above and below the water. The idea was to capture the lake with its surroundings. So I chose a half-and-half shot using the SEACAM super dome.

Note: Jellyfish Lake is now closed to the public due to widespread death of the jellies.

### **Tech info:**

Nikon D4, Seacam Housing, Nikon 14-24 f/8, s 1/160.





**ONE PERCENT**  
North Island, Seychelles

Due to poaching, shrinking habitats and polluted oceans, turtles face many threats. Given that in an entire nest, only one hatchling may become sexually mature, and if it is female, she will return to the same beach where she was born to lay her eggs and start a new cycle, the odds are definitely not in their favour.

Thankfully, conservation and educational programs have been put in place to shift the dark history of sea turtles into the light again.

This image was taken at North Island, Seychelles. Every year, green and hawksbill turtles come to lay their eggs. Scientists in the conservation program of North Island note the time and location whenever a female turtle lays her eggs. Armed with this information, I got up at 2 a.m. to check on the overdue nests, patrolling all 6.6 kilometres of beaches. No luck. I came across some plants and roots right next to the beach and noticed a hatchling stuck in the roots. I gently pulled away the roots and the baby turtle was set free. After hours of struggling, it still had enough energy to race down into the ocean where the real challenge would begin. May the odds be with the baby turtle.

**Tech info:**

Nikon D4, Nikon 24-70 f/2.8, s 1/4000, ISO 100



**i** **FACING GRACE**  
Cebu, Philippines

Whale sharks are stunning animals. Their graceful movement and majestic size send a shiver of excitement down my spine every time I come across them.

This image was photographed while snorkelling with the whale sharks in Cebu, Philippines. The sun was out and I tried to position myself so I could capture the streaks of sunlight breaking through the rippling surface, acting like a spotlight over the whale shark, making it look even more majestic.

**Tech info:**

Nikon D4, Seacam Housing, Nikon 14-24 f/4.5, s 1/200, ISO 500, ambient light



## LURKING

Xaxaba, Okavango Delta, Botswana

Hippopotamus are one of the most common residents of the Okavango Delta. Despite their friendly looks, they are extremely dangerous, and one must not annoy the hippopotamus at any time. I took this image from a small boat with an outboard engine while going upstream the Boro River. I stopped the engine and waited for a good moment to take an image. Once I took the image, I started the engine to avoid any confrontation with the bull. And just in the nick of time too, for he started charging at me. After viewing the image on my computer, I realized that this would make a perfect black-and-white photo. For a more dramatic effect, I removed all black in the background.

### Tech info:

D300s, Sigma 120.0-400.0 mm f/4.5-5.6 at 400mm, 1/200 sec;

f/7,1; ISO 250







### **COLOURS** Jellyfish Lake, Palau

The underwater kingdom is full of stunning and colourful creatures.

Photographing against the light takes a little bit of practice and it has to be done at the right time of the day. I like this particular image because of the different shades of the sun's rays.

**Tech info:**

Nikon D4, Seacam Housing, Nikon 14-24 f/14, 1/160s, ISO 100, ambient light



**i** **DUM SPIRO SPERO**  
**Isabella, Galapagos**

This picture was taken next to Isabella Island, Galapagos. During a dive break, I noticed a relaxed sea turtle hanging out a few hundred metres away from the boat. I grabbed my camera and snorkel gear, and swam to the turtle. I waited a bit to let the turtle adapt to my presence before shooting.

I decided to shoot half-and-half in order to include the volcano and the beautiful blue of the steep drop-off.

**Tech info:**

Nikon D4, Seacam Housing, Nikon 14-24 f/9, 1/160s, Iso 200, 2xSeaflash 150D