

When Cloning is OK

The clone tool can eliminate backscatter and fix a host of other problems.

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Underwater photography has a problem unique to itself — backscatter. This involves particulate in the water that is illuminated by the camera's strobes, resulting in photos with bright white spots.

Until recently, most images with backscatter were destined for the trash. Now there is hope, thanks to an anti-backscatter device called a clone tool in sophisticated computer software programs like Adobe Photoshop or Elements.

The clone tool uses a circular pointer to select data that is then copied to wherever you move the cursor. The key to this process is selecting a pickup point that best matches the area where you will be moving the new data.

In order for your modification to blend



SEE THE DIFFERENCE The clone tool can enhance images by removing backscatter and other flaws.

in, the clone tool is usually feathered. Feathering means that the data picked up by the clone tool is diffused at the edges. A range of numerical assignments control the amount of feathering.

Adjusting the opacity also can help

your corrections blend in better. When set to 100 percent, all the data is dropped onto the new location. At a 50-percent opacity setting, half of the selected data is mixed with the area being modified. It's vital to use the opacity adjustment to remove backscatter from images where the background has graduating levels of water color.

The clone tool can help solve all sorts of other problems. It's the tool you would select to cover up scratches, dust spots and even processing errors. The key is learning how to use it effectively through repetition and trial-and-error.

Send editing questions to us at digitalduo@jackandsuedrafaahl.com and we'll try to answer them directly or in an upcoming column.