

# IMAGES

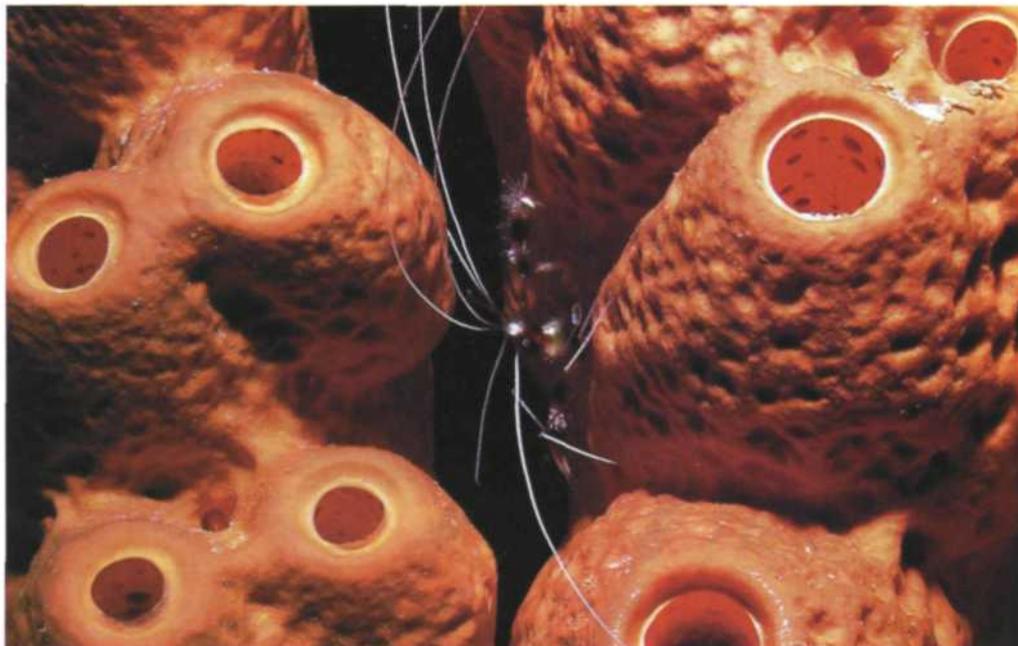
Making Your **STILL, VIDEO** and **DIGITAL** Underwater Images Better

**DIGITAL**

## Learning to Shoot

*The ability to provide immediate feedback makes digital cameras an excellent learning tool for underwater photographers.*

BY JACK AND SUE DRAFAHL



**W**hen the digital-camera revolution hit, many experts assumed that it would not impact the underwater world for years. It's true that there was a slight delay, but it was not nearly as long as expected. Today, camera and housing manufacturers are amazed at the growing enthusiasm for digital photography, and they are scrambling to accommodate divers.

Digital cameras can shorten the learn-

ing curve for the budding underwater photographer by providing immediate results. You can see what you shot within a second of pressing the shutter, not a few days or weeks later. Each image gives you almost instantaneous feedback about what you did right or wrong. If it isn't perfect and you want to improve it, simply make the appropriate corrections and shoot again. Best of all, you'll know how your underwater pho-

tography is going as the dive trip progresses, not when it's over.

Film photographers are restricted to 36 exposures. Depending on the capacity of the digital card, digital photographers can shoot more images than bottom time will allow. The larger digital cards enable you to save both the good and the bad. After surfacing, simply delete those that you don't want. If you have a smaller digital card, you can still maximize your dive by deleting unsatisfactory shots while underwater.

We don't advocate that you discontinue shooting film. Instead, use the digital camera as a learning tool. Schedule a couple of dives with a rental camera, and test some images on corals, sponges or a couple of friendly fish.

Remove the flash from the bracket and hold it to the side of the subject. Then move it to the top, close to the camera and back. By reviewing each shot on the viewer, you will see how flash placement determines the amount of backscatter in the picture. Next, play with the shutter speed and f-stop to see how the two balance each other.

Each scenario will offer you immediate feedback. When you find equipment combinations that work well, it is easy to transfer those techniques to your underwater film photography.

Send your questions to [digitalduo@jackandsuedraahl.com](mailto:digitalduo@jackandsuedraahl.com).