



CAMERA: Canon 5D  
with 100mm 1:2.8  
Macro USM, Subal  
housing  
STROBE: 1 x  
Subtronic pro160  
APERTURE: f8  
SHUTTER: 1/60  
FLASH OUTPUT: TTL  
ISO: 100

World's Most  
Beautiful Reefs

# SHOOTING RED

The Red Sea is the number one dive destination for Europeans. From colorful coral reefs, to daring and numerous wreck dives, the Red Sea continues to amaze divers and challenge underwater photographers. *Scuba Diver Through the Lens* sent German photographer Udo Kefrig and British journalist Rose Jones to show us why everyone seems to be shooting red

**FOR MANY DIVERS**, entering the Red Sea is a unique experience. The marine life is bursting to the brim, and underwater photographers are inevitably attracted to the colors that erupt from all directions. But there is something alluring about one color in particular – one that challenges our cameras, and seems to bring out the best that the Red Sea has to offer. Perhaps unsurprisingly, that color is the desirable, passionate and fiery red.

Nobody had the slightest inkling of what was happening below the waves, in the small divide between Africa and Asia, until diving pioneers Hans Hass and Jacques Yves Cousteau presented the world with spectacular pictures. They showed us a secret universe we imagined only in our wildest dreams, and started a wave of interest in the Red Sea that continues to this day.



### Knowing Red

Many theories have tried to explain the origin of the strange name "Red Sea", but none has been broadly accepted to this day. The first theory was based on the name of an ancient Greek King, named Erythreos, which translates to "Red". Early Greek sailors called the unique body of water *Erythra Thalatta*, or "Sea of Erythras". The Romans similarly called it *Mare Erythraeum*, and also later *Mare Rostrum*, or "Our Sea". But this alone does not give a satisfying answer to the question of the name's origin.

A second theory links the name to the appearance of seasonal blooms of red algae. But even this hypothesis does not quite seem to fit, because the blooms occur only in certain locations and do not cover the whole Red Sea at the same time. A third theory is that it refers to the southern direction, just like the Black Sea refers to north. The basis to this theory is that some Asiatic languages use color words to refer to cardinal directions. Herodotus for example, used Red Sea and Southern Sea interchangeably.



CAMERA: Canon 5D  
with 100mm 1:2.8  
Macro USM, Subal  
housing  
STROBE: 1 x  
Subtronic pro160  
APERTURE: f22  
SHUTTER: 1/60  
FLASH OUTPUT: TTL  
ISO: 100



CAMERA: Canon 5D  
with 100mm 1:2.8  
Macro USM, Subal  
housing  
STROBE: 1 x  
Subtronic pro160  
APERTURE: f22  
SHUTTER: 1/60  
FLASH OUTPUT: TTL  
ISO: 100

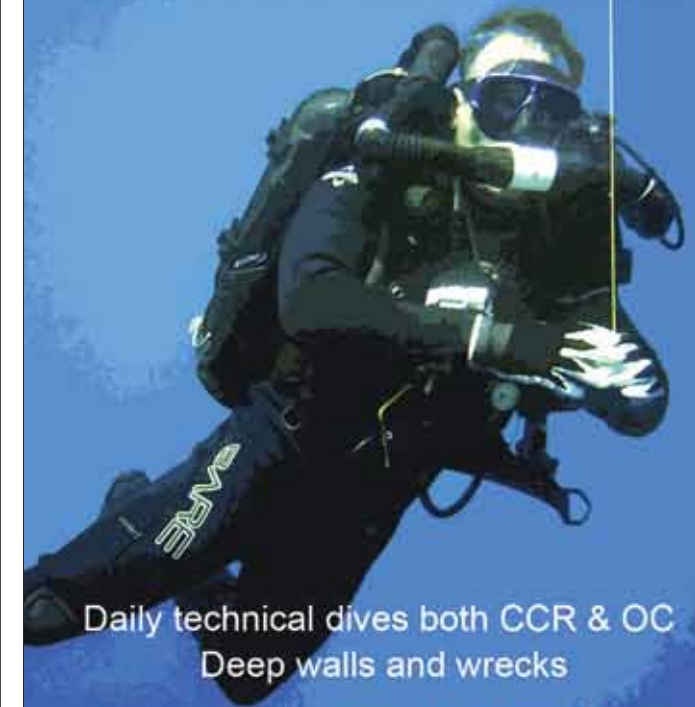
#### Red on Black

A black background is a nice artistic way to isolate the subject and bring out the color. To darken even the brightest backgrounds, use the smallest possible aperture available to you, from f22 to f32. At these tiny apertures, you will need a powerful strobe or simply focus on subjects that allow you to get close.

The most likely solution to the puzzle may be simply that the scenery of the surrounding desert is rich with iron oxide minerals. At sunset, spectacular red, pink and brownish hues cover the nearby mountains, hills and their ridges above. These colors are reflected on the gentle curling waves of the Red Sea, experienced by any visiting tourist and diver alike. But no one really knows. Perhaps the name Red Sea is a historical mix of all of these theories. Regardless, today it is the ultimate destination for most European divers.

- Rose Jones

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Macro USM, Subal  
housing  
STROBE: 1 x  
Subtronic pro160  
APERTURE: f16  
SHUTTER: 1/60  
FLASH OUTPUT: TTL  
ISO: 100



#### Macro Photography

Lenses for macro photography range from 50mm to 100mm, and even 200mm. These lenses are very versatile for fish, nudibranchs, and macro subjects in general. When photographing fish or subjects 4cm or longer, using a 50mm lens, even behind a dome port, will work well.



Reefs in the Foreground

The best use of an ultra wide-angle lens is photographing a subject in the foreground very close to the lens, while ensuring other secondary subjects can be seen in the background. These elements will give your photos a greater sense of depth. For these images, you will need to meter on the ambient light around you, and use strobes to bring out the red in your subject.

CAMERA: Canon 5D  
with 17-40mm 4.0L  
USM Subal housing  
STROBE: 1 x  
Subtronic pro160  
APERTURE: f8  
SHUTTER: 1/60  
FLASH OUTPUT:  
1/8 manual  
ISO: 200



CAMERA: Canon 5D  
with 17-40mm 4.0L  
USM Subal housing  
STROBE: 1 x  
Subtronic pro160  
APERTURE: f11  
SHUTTER: 1/30  
FLASH OUTPUT: 1/8  
manual  
ISO: 200

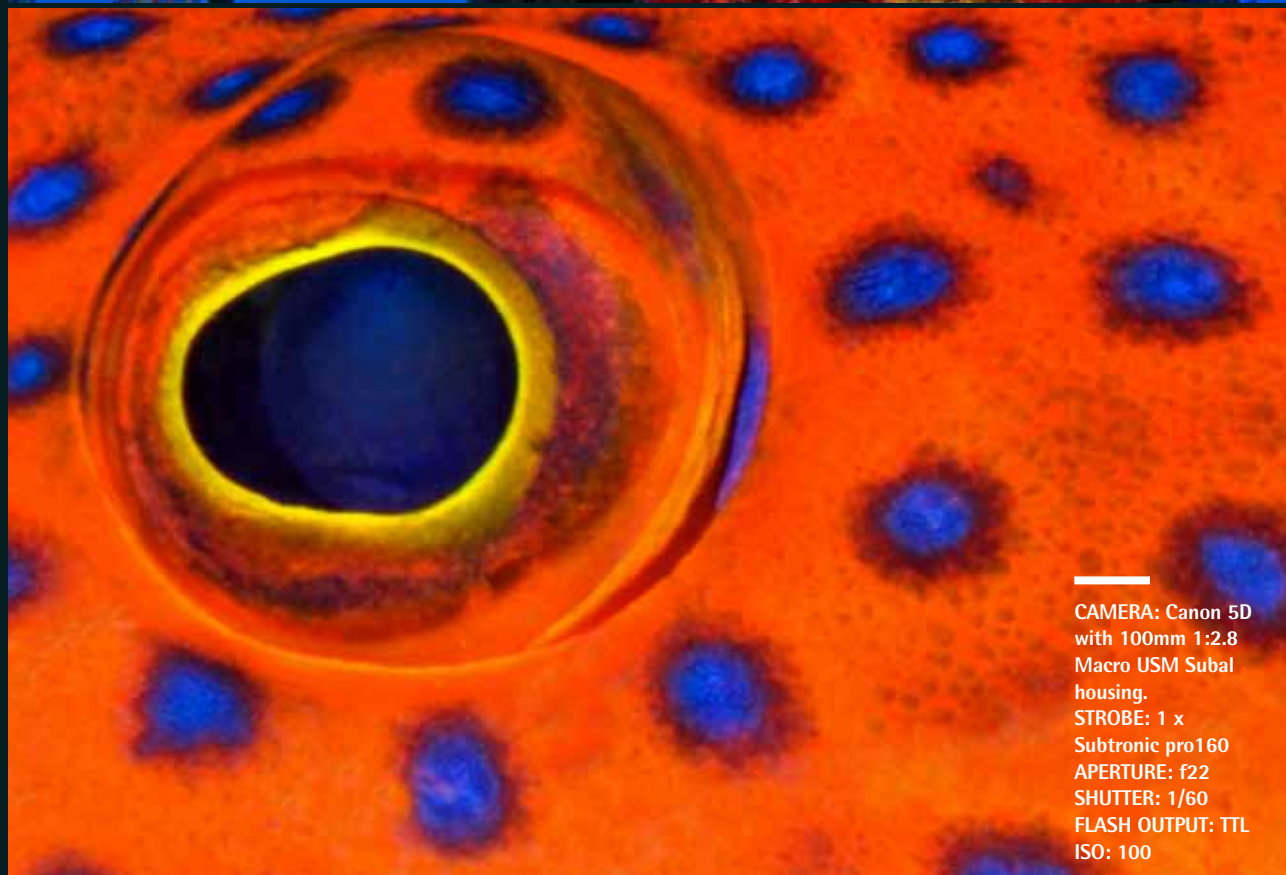


CAMERA: Canon 5D  
with 17-40mm 4.0L  
USM Subal housing  
STROBE: 1 x  
Subtronic pro160  
APERTURE: f11  
SHUTTER: 1/30  
FLASH OUTPUT:  
1/8 manual  
ISO: 200





CAMERA: Canon 5D with 17-40mm 4.0L USM Subal housing.  
STROBE: 1 x Subtronic pro160  
APERTURE: f11  
SHUTTER: 1/60  
FLASH OUTPUT: TTL  
ISO: 100



CAMERA: Canon 5D with 100mm 1:2.8 Macro USM Subal housing.  
STROBE: 1 x Subtronic pro160  
APERTURE: f22  
SHUTTER: 1/60  
FLASH OUTPUT: TTL  
ISO: 100

### Fish Portraits

Here it is important to be close as possible to your subject without scaring it away to bring out the intensity of the color. A small aperture with strobes on TTL works well. The ideal focal length for fish portraits is a 100mm macro, but many prefer a 60mm.

### Exposing Red

Here in the Red Sea, shooting the color red seems so appropriate. I always use natural mixed with artificial light. I use reflections to capture and bring out the full color. Make sure you position yourself closely to your subjects and always use a strobe, because the color red loses its intensity by 30 percent after just one meter (3.3 feet) of depth.

**“WHEREVER YOU FIND IT, RED ALWAYS DOMINATES. TO EXPERIENCE THIS EROTIC COLOR OF DESIRE, THE RED SEA HAS A CERTAIN POETIC RESONANCE THAT NO OTHER DIVE DESTINATION CAN RIVAL.”**

In an apparent contradiction, red dominates wherever artificial light and flashes from cameras land, illuminating the red highlights of corals and fish, secret caves, tunnels, steep drop-offs and overhangs. When you've got your settings right, the intense red of underwater photography is breathtaking. Small coral heads, beautifully overgrown with sponges, algae and anemones all light up. This is especially true for tiny critters like the famous Spanish dancers that pop up here and there, auditioning for the lens, with their amazing red skirts.

Red also dazzles in the subtle and small parts of other animals, like on the scales of a fish, or a fiery, eye-catching patch on a crustacean. Wherever you find it, red always dominates. To experience this erotic color of desire, the Red Sea has a certain poetic resonance that no other dive destination can rival.

– Udo Kefrig



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