

Thomas Peschak





Photos by Thomas P. Peschak
Text edited by Gunild Pak Symes

Thomas P. Peschak is a marine biologist based at the University of Cape Town's Marine Biology Research Institute, where he conducts scientific research on kelp forests, illegal fishing and the ecology of sea otters. He is an experienced field biologist and professional diver who has worked extensively in Africa, Central America, the Middle East and the South Pacific.

With a snout equipped with an arsenal of sophisticated sensors, this curious great white shark is about to lightly bump the dome port of my camera to learn more about the strange object that has invaded its realm

RIGHT: Sunlight struggling through the canopy of a flooded forest

PREVIOUS PAGE: During the austral winter southern right whales congregate in great numbers along South Africa's coast. They frequent shallow and sheltered bays to mate and give birth



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In marine protected areas along South Africa's sub-tropical east coast large predatory fish like potato bass are still common and often show little fear of divers

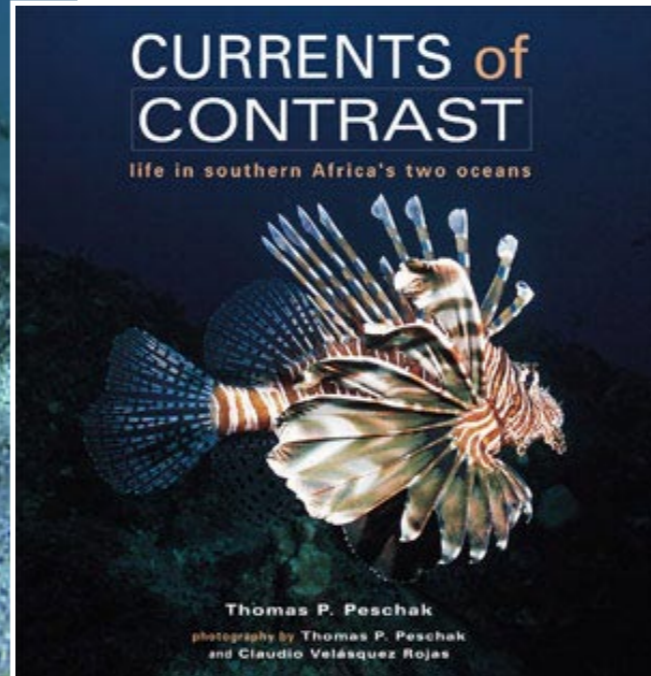


ABOVE & BOTTOM RIGHT: *Indigenous spear fisherman.* Along a remote stretch of the South African east coast live the Tembe-Thonga tribe, some of last true marine hunter gatherer people left on earth. To survive they glean food from the sea by spear fishing and harvesting marine invertebrates from the rocky reefs

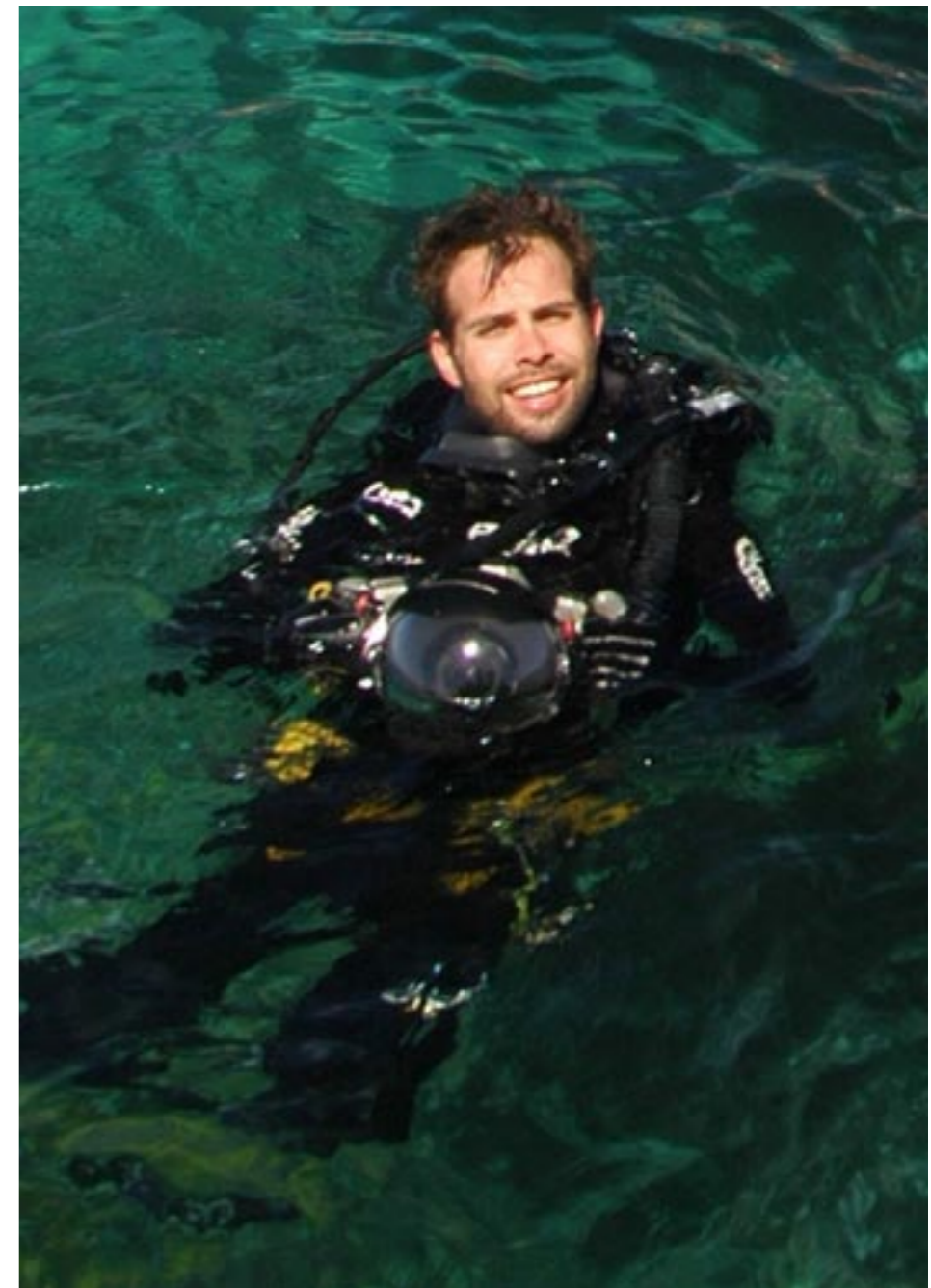
In addition he is also an award winning underwater photographer and author dedicated to telling stories and capturing images of Africa's oceans and coastline and these days spends at least half his year in pursuit of elusive uniquely African marine subjects.

In 2004, Peschak was given the title of official marine photographer for the World Wide Fund for Nature - South Africa for whom he continues to cover a diverse range of marine conservation issues. Thomas is a regular contributor to BBC Wildlife and Africa Geographic magazine and his images and words have also appeared in many international travel, natural history and

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RIGHT: Thomas Peschak
ABOVE: His new book



A territorial west coast rock lobster attacks its own reflection in the dome port of my housing

dive publications as well as in over ten books. His recent book, *Currents of Contrast: Life in Southern Africa's Two Oceans*, was published in June 2005 by New Holland. It has received critical acclaim and favorable reviews.

Mark Carwardine of BBC Wildlife Magazine's Book of the Month Club said, "How I wish I had written this book! It is a joy to read and the breadth and depth of coverage is very impressive.... the hundreds of spectacular colour photographs form one of the best image collections I've seen from the region."

The editor of Getaway Magazine, David Bristow, wrote about the book, "It is the next great work on southern Africa's oceans, with world-

class photography both above and underwater. You're going to have to get this one!!!"

Professor of Marine Biology, Dr. George M. Branch, of the University of Cape Town said, "Above and beyond the stunning photography, the book is filled with authoritative accounts of the key topics that capture the imagination: sharks, whales, kelp beds, sardines and coral splendour are all dealt with in satisfying detail but in an accessible style that makes the book a pleasure to read."

Peschak is currently working on three new major projects. The first is a definitive natural history book on the shark fauna of southern Africa to be published in early 2007 by

New Holland. He is also developing a guide to marine wildlife tourism and underwater photography in southern Africa for the same publisher. The guide is due out in 2007.

Thomas P. Peschak's book *Currents of Contrast: Life in Southern Africa's Two Oceans* can be ordered from www.amazon.co.uk or is available from most good bookshops. Limited edition posters of some of his images are also available from www.africageographic.com.

For more information or to order images directly from Thomas Peschak, please visit: www.currentsofcontrast.com ■

A cape clawless otter, Africa's very own version of the more well known North American sea otter, forages for lobsters, crabs and benthic fishes on rocky reefs



South Africa's Wild Coast is home to a rock formation know as the Hole in the Wall. Over millions of years the ocean and river have carved a massive opening into a sea cliff and during calm seas one can swim through the hole from the river into the ocean

For most of the year, the waters off Dyer island, the region's white shark hotspots are murky and green, but on a few rare occasions, oceanic water moves inshore and bathes great white sharks in near crystal clear water



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Wherever divers encounter Cape fur seals, these agile and graceful swimmers are bound to put on a impromptu undersea ballet performance



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At the edge of a kelp forest a cape fur seal hunts fish by herding them into a bait ball and pushing them to the surface



LEFT: Vast kelp forests thrive in the cold waters off southern Africa's west coast, taking advantage of the bountiful nutrients driven to the surface by coastal upwelling

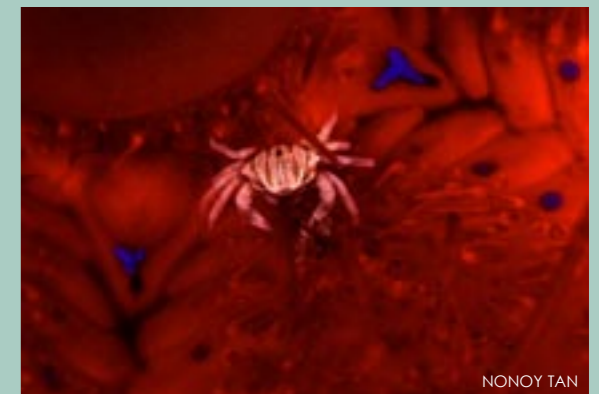
ABOVE: South Africa is a true shark hotspot and many species, like this spotted gully shark are endemic to the region and occur nowhere else on earth

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Diving in The Philippines



NONNOY TAN



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SCOTT BENNETT

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