Fellow Shipmates,

Welcome to the Jim Church School of Underwater Photography aboard the Aggressor Fleet. It is going to be a great trip! Learn a lot, learn a little, but above all, have a great time!! There is a sample course itinerary further on in this document. We will review additional class information once we are all together onboard.

A few house keeping points…

If you have questions regarding the photography course, please direct them to us. (See info in letterhead). If you call and get voice mail, please leave a message that includes your phone number and a good time to call you back.

Questions on the yacht, rental gear, dietary or special needs should go to Aggressor Fleet 1-800-348-2628; info@aggressor.com. Much more detailed information is available about each Aggressor by going to: http://www.aggressor.com/.

This is a trip for certified divers, please bring your c-card. We strongly recommend you bring a dive computer, one you are familiar with. Diving insurance, such as DAN (Divers Alert Network) insurance, is another strong recommendation. You can call DAN at 1-800-446-2671 or visit their website at http://www.diversalertnetwork.org/. The insurance and service they provide is well worth the minimal cost.

PLEASE ASSEMBLE YOUR CAMERA SYSTEM ENTIRELY BEFORE PACKING!

That way you can be sure you have all the parts necessary. If you accidentally leave out a special screw or other part, we might not be able to find a substitute on the boat.

Software recommendations
Adobe’s Lightroom or PhaseOne Capture One Pro can be purchased and downloaded from their websites. These are excellent tools for organizing, processing and sharing your images. There are other software programs available, but Mike and I find these two the best for now.


If you are an Aperture user, our advice is to stay with it for now. While Apple will no longer continue to develop it, you will still be able to use it. At some point a change may be necessary, but it is not immediately necessary.
EQUIPMENT INFO

Memory Cards:
Bring multiple memory cards for your camera. More (and bigger) is better. Depending on your camera and the image format you capture, consider a capacity of at least 4GB or greater per card. In this case, bigger is better. It all depends on the size of your image files. These days, 4, 8, 16 and 32GB cards are common. You may want to change cards after every dive or at the very least at the end of each day to transfer images to your computer or backup device. If you do not have a means of transferring your images while on the boat, we will be able to help you. Please let us know before the trip if you'll need help transferring and/or storing your images.

Batteries:

**Bring extra batteries for your camera.** It’s a good idea to install a freshly charged battery in your camera before each day of diving. Finding your camera battery is low or exhausted before a dive can happen to any one of us. If you have extra batteries with you, you can keep one on charge, ready to go, for just those moments.

**Bring extra batteries for your strobes.** If you use rechargeable batteries such as Nickel Metal Hydride (NiMH), bring extra sets. You can keep a set on charge while you are using a set in your strobe or camera. If you are using two strobes, bring an extra charger as well as extra batteries. We use rechargeable AA NiMH cells. Your local camera or electronics store should carry the batteries and chargers. One good source of batteries and chargers on the web is Thomas Distributing. Their web site is [http://www.thomas-distributing.com/index.htm](http://www.thomas-distributing.com/index.htm) and you will find all sorts of rechargeable batteries and chargers there. We are partial to the MAHA MH-C801D charger. It charges from 1 to 8 AA cells in 1-2 hours and it only requires one plug. It's not cheap, but it does a great job.

If your camera or strobe has a special rechargeable “battery pack”, bring an extra one if possible. If your only battery pack develops a problem and standard batteries such as AA size cannot be substituted, that strobe may not be useable for the rest of the trip. Back-up batteries are a must! **AND DON’T FORGET THE CHARGER!!!!!**

There is plenty of outlet space for everyone’s chargers on board, but it is also a good idea to bring a small power strip that will give you 4-6 additional outlets from one single plug.

If you use disposable (non-rechargeable) batteries for your strobe, the key word is alkaline. Don't buy "heavy-duty" or other batteries not marked as alkaline. You don't need to buy the long lasting brand. We only use the top third of the charge in the battery with a strobe. Why? Recycle time becomes too long after that. We'd rather buy inexpensive alkaline batteries and change them after every 100 shots (to keep recycle times short) than buy more expensive, longer-lasting batteries and try to nurse extra shots (with annoyingly long recycle times) from each set.

Whatever batteries you use, rechargeable or alkaline, figure that you will be making anywhere from 3 to 5 dives per diving day. Plan on one set of batteries for each strobe for every dive or every other dive. **This should help you decide how many batteries you need.**

**Specialty Disposable Batteries** - Replace all old disposable specialty batteries and bring extras just in case.

**Dive Computer** - If the battery is user-serviceable, put a fresh one in before the trip and bring an extra along. If it is not user-serviceable, have it serviced by your authorized service center and have them install a fresh battery.

**Laptops, Portable Storage Devices & Software:**
If you are bringing a laptop, **REMEMBER TO PACK YOUR AC POWER ADAPTER!** There are plenty of outlets on board to charge your laptop battery or run from the AC adapter.
Consider bringing a small, portable hard drive that can serve as a backup device for your images on the trip. Once you download your images to your laptop, you can copy them to the portable drive so they are in two places. If you are bringing a portable storage device only, that’s ok, but it will be hard to review your images on a small screen and you won’t have them backed up in case the drive fails. A laptop and a portable drive is our suggestion.

If you have neither, Mike and I will have our laptops aboard. You can download your images to our computers and we can download them to a USB flash drive at the end of the trip. Please bring a 64 GB USB-3 drive for that purpose.

We demo photo management software on the boat. More on that when we get aboard. Please realize that you will eventually need some system of importing, cataloging and working with your digital images. We will review that with you in class and help you make a choice on what will work best for you. If you are currently using a system, terrific! We can help you if you have any questions with what you are using.

Please bring a digital copy of your software manual. It will be useful to have it available aboard.

**Instruction Manuals:**
Please be sure to bring digital copies of the instruction manuals for your camera equipment. While we have extensive experience with many different cameras, there may be some specific Custom Function or setting your equipment uses that may be different from what we are familiar with. It will be easier for us to reference it if we have your manuals available.

**BAGGAGE TIPS & OTHER TID BITS**

Fifty pounds per bag seems to be the magic number for international travel. Over 70 pounds per bag and it might have to travel as air freight. Check with your airline for their specific restrictions and overage costs as well as how many carry on bags they allow. Bring a change of clothes, toiletries, etc., in your carry-on. You never know if checked baggage will arrive late. (Follow TSA regulations for liquids in carry-on.)

**Bring Credit Card and lots of $1 and $5 bills.**
Bring a supply of small bills ($1 and $5) for traveling tips (taxis & porters) and small purchases (airport magazines, gum, etc). The Aggressor accepts VISA, MASTER CARD, & Cash. Some also accept American Express. Check the Know Before You Go for details on their website.

**Crew Tip**
A crew tip is customary at the end of the week (an industry wide custom, not just with Aggressor Fleet). This tip is for the crew--you don't tip us and we don't want a share of their tip. How much is fair? We believe that 10% of the trip cost per diving guest would be the about right. (We each leave at least $250 - $300 for a 7 day trip. More if the trip is longer.) You can make up your mind after you experience the service. You can use a credit card for your crew tip. Yes, it would be simpler if the tip were added to the package price. However, because it's optional you have the option of determining the amount based on the crew’s performance.

**Like we said earlier, do a trial packing ahead of time**
Assemble everything a few days ahead of time -- dive gear, camera gear, etc. Make sure that you have all the parts, pieces, tools and owner's manuals and make a packing check list now! If something is missing, better find out now while there is time to replace it. By the way, when you pack camera equipment, you can use clothing as cushioning material to economize on space.

**Camera and dive gear insurance**
DAN will insure your cameras and dive great at reasonable rates. The phone number for DAN information is 1-800-446-2671 [http://www.diversalertnetwork.org/](http://www.diversalertnetwork.org/)
Clothing
Don't bring too many clothes for the boat. Shorts & T-shirts are the attire for on the boat. Casual is fine for dinner on land. Bring a sunhat. In a pinch, the vessel has a boutique with plenty of T-shirts, etc.

If you wear glasses
If you have trouble reading your gauges and camera settings, consider getting a prescription dive mask. One service that does good work is: Prescription Dive Masks, 1-800-538-2878; seeunderwater@mail.com; https://prescriptiondivemasks.com.

Dive and video lights
If you plan to do night dives with your camera, and your strobe doesn't have a built-in spotting light, bring a dive light that can be attached (brackets, clamps or duct tape) to your camera system. Do not pack lights with the batteries inserted!

That's it for now. If you have any questions about the class, please email or call us.

See you all soon!!!
Sample Course Itinerary

Day 1 – Welcome Aboard!

The crew will help you & your luggage aboard then show you to your cabin. They are there to help and will take your luggage to your cabin for you. PLEASE let them! After settling in, take this time to unpack your camera equipment and assemble everything. (You should have experience with this assembly part, right?) Mike & I will be there to help, answer questions and generally assist in conducting traffic. After dinner and the Captain's briefing, we will tell you about what we will be doing in the course throughout the week. This is a long day for some folks, so we try not to pack it with too much information.

Day 2 - And so it begins...

After Breakfast, there is usually a boat briefing given by the crew followed by the first dive. This first dive is a check-out dive, so we suggest you leave your cameras behind just this once. Our assignment to you is to get your buoyancy right! Arrange your weights so you are neutral or slightly negative at around 30 feet. Also, make sure your dive gear works, your computer functions and your mask does not fog or leak. It’s a good idea to scrub the inside glass of your mask with toothpaste or a soft abrasive cleaner then rinse it out thoroughly. This, along with mask de-fog, will help keep your mask from fogging.

Topics for today’s class will be Photo & Digital Basics.
Throughout every day, we are there for individual help and photo review.

Daily Topics for classes:
- Ambient Metering – The Beginnings Of A Good Photo
- Basic Strobe exposure
- Balancing Sunlight & Strobe exposures
- Photo Composition
- Lens Selection.
- Digital Workflow

Day 7 - It’s Graduation Day!

You pick 10 of your best photos of the trip and we will assemble them into a show for tonight’s graduation ceremony.

With the exception of Day 1, we are pretty flexible with the class presentations. Depending on the group, we can repeat presentations, shuffle the order or focus more on a specific topic. If there is something you personally want reviewed, we can work with you on that individually.

We generally have our formal presentations in the morning between the first & second dives. Because of the diving schedule at a few Aggressor locations some of our presentations move to the evenings. We’ll let you know what the schedule is on the boat.

We also invite you to submit an image or two on the boat for us to process with the group. We learn better from a wide example of images.
Throughout every day, we are there for individual help and photo review.
TRIP PREPARATION LIST (MODIFY AS NEEDED)

THINGS TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

___ Make course reservation with Aggressor Fleet (1-800-348-2628)
___ Make airline reservations--don't delay
___ Get passport (if required) several weeks ahead of time
___ Purchase memory cards and batteries

___ Order any new equipment--anticipate delays
___ Test all equipment
___ Label everything with your name
___ Get prescription mask if you need it
___ Have regulator and dive computer overhauled

THINGS TO BRING WITH YOU

Diving gear
___ Certification card
___ DAN card (for insurance)
___ Dive Computer
___ Dive mask
___ B.C. and related gear
___ Fins (& booties if you use them)
___ U/W light
___ Thin wetsuit, or dive skin if you chill easily
___ Extra fin and mask straps
___ Small dive light

Camera gear
___ Assemble entire system before packing to be sure you have it all
___ Owner's manuals for all new or complicated equipment
___ Spare parts and necessary tools
___ All new batteries for cameras, meters, etc.
___ O-ring grease & small wiping cloth

Traveling items (hand carry)
___ Passport (if out of U.S)
___ Credit cards and cash
___ Bunch of one-dollar bills for small tips while traveling
___ Tickets, flight schedule, phone numbers
___ Toilet kit, change of underwear, etc., in case baggage is a day late.
   (Follow TSA regulations for liquids in carry-on.)

Personal items
___ Shorts, light shirts, blouses. Optional sunhat and walking shoes
___ Two swim suits--much of day spent in these
___ Lightweight, fold-up nylon jacket if you return to cold climate
___ Sunscreen--at least #15 for fair skin
___ Decongestant, seasick pills. Antihistamine if you are allergic to coral, bee stings, etc
SPECIFIC EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR AGGRESSOR FLEET
Aggressor Fleet Destinations

Bahamas Aggressor
bahamas@aggressor.com

Belize Aggressor III & IV
belize@aggressor.com

Cayman Aggressor IV
cayman@aggressor.com

Okeanos Aggressor I & II
okeanos@aggressor.com

Fiji Aggressor
fiji@aggressor.com

Galapagos Aggressor
galapagos@aggressor.com

Indo Aggressor
indo@aggressor.com

Kona Aggressor II
kona@aggressor.com

Maldives Aggressor II
maldives@aggressor.com

Oman Aggressor
oman@aggressor.com

Palau Aggressor II & Rock Islands Aggressor
palau@aggressor.com

Raja Ampat Aggressor
rajaampat@aggressor.com

Red Sea Aggressor
redsea@aggressor.com

Red Sea Aggressor II
redseaaggressorii@aggressor.com

Roatan Aggressor
roatan@aggressor.com

Thailand Aggressor
thailand@aggressor.com

Turks & Caicos Aggressor II
turkscaicos@aggressor.com

General

General Information
info@aggressor.com

Tell Aggressor about your trip
wecare@aggressor.com

Travel Planning:
Aggressor Adventure Travel
info@aggressortravel.com
MARK YOUR GEAR

Pretty self explanatory here.
We use Sharpie markers a lot! The silver Sharpie marker works great for writing on black items.
We also use a vinyl tape made by Scotch for items we don’t want to write on directly.
Whatever you use, mark your gear so you can clearly identify what is yours.
PACKING & CHECKLIST SAMPLE

We all pack a bag differently. No matter how you pack, you want to make sure you bring everything with you on the trip and also bring it all back home. One way to check things off is to take a photo of your completely packed bag and label everything in it. Print it out and bring that photo with you on your laptop. You can also use a printed checklist to account for everything. Mike & I do both. Here is a sample:

Pack to a list

- Housing & dual cord inside
- Toolkit & extra o-rings
- Marking tape, pens, single strobe cord, misc.
- Dome Port & Handles
- Macro Port
- 2 Strobes
- Viewfinder
- Battery Charger & Batteries
- Lights & Power Strip
- Strobe Arms
SAMPLE packing and check list

Nikon D7100 system (for example)

LV RETURN

( ) ( ) Nikon D7100 Body (s/n xxxxxx)
( ) ( ) Nikon D7100 Body (s/n xxxxxx)
( ) ( ) Nikon 60mm lens (s/n xxxxxx)
( ) ( ) Nikon 105mm lens (s/n xxxxxx)
( ) ( ) Sigma 17-70mm lens (s/n xxxxxx) with Zoom Gear for housing
( ) ( ) Tokina 10-17mm lens (s/n xxxxxx) with Zoom Gear for housing
( ) ( ) 2 Batteries for D7100
( ) ( ) Battery Charger for D7100 Battery
( ) ( ) Instruction manual D7100
( ) ( ) Aquatica Housing for D7100
( ) ( ) Aquatica Macro Port
( ) ( ) Aquatica Dome Port
( ) ( ) Inon Z-240 Strobe Head #1 (s/n xxxxxx) with battery chamber caps
( ) ( ) Diffuser for Inon Z-240 (store on front of strobe)
( ) ( ) Inon Z-240 Strobe Head #2 (s/n xxxxxx) with battery chamber caps
( ) ( ) Diffuser for Inon Z-240 (store on front of strobe)
( ) ( ) Sync cord #1 for Inon Z-240 strobe
( ) ( ) Sync cord #2 for Inon Z-240 strobe
( ) ( ) Sync cord spare for Inon Z-240 strobe
( ) ( ) 6 Ultralight Ball Joints
( ) ( ) 2 Ultralight 8" arm sections
( ) ( ) 2 Ultralight 5" arm section
( ) ( ) 2 Ultralight Strobe Adapter for Inon Z-240
( ) ( ) Chargers for AA Batteries (8 slots)
( ) ( ) 16 AA rechargeable batteries (4 sets of 4)
( ) ( ) Sola Photo Light for housing
( ) ( ) Sola charger
( ) ( ) Mount for housing dive light
( ) ( ) Tool Box with extra o-rings & grease
( ) ( ) Small backup dive light
( ) ( ) 4 sets AA Alkaline batteries for backup dive light
( ) ( ) Zip-lock bags
( ) ( ) Sharpie pens

( ) ( )