

Shane Basks In Scottish Waters



As an underwater photographer and operator of Basking Shark Scotland, Shane Wasik is in the enviable position of living out his passions in life. Here, he tells us about the diversity of Scottish diving and the biggest fish in its waters ...

● **WHO IS SHANE WASIK?**

Passionate diver, ocean enthusiast, marine biologist and underwater photographer. I currently run Basking Shark Scotland, a shark tour and diving business based from Oban.

● **FIRST SPLASH?** Like many, it was at Conger Alley in Loch Long. I'd spent many years snorkelling but this was the first proper sea dive. Being a bean sprout teenager in an 8mm neoprene suit and 40lbs of lead wasn't going to be a great combination. Having not much in the rear department to hold the lead on, my weight belt slipped off and I ejected like a Polaris missile!

● **PASSION FOR PHOTOGRAPHY?** I first started underwater photography at commercial diving school using Nik3 and Nik5's. I love to document the ocean; with so many issues globally it's a great way to get people interested.

● **PHOTOGRAPHY IN SCOTLAND?** The public perception that Scotland's oceans are cold, murky and beige is a total misconception - photography proves this. With there currently being a large network of Marine Protected Areas proposed, showcasing our marine environment through underwater photography helps to engage the public.

● **LATEST PROJECT?** Hmm, a bit early to let the cat out of the bag! For a non-competitive sport, divers are terrible. There are a number of exciting things happening this year and **SCOTTISH DIVER** will hear about them soon!

● **DIVING IN SCOTLAND IS?** Diverse, colourful, unique! From the (2nd) biggest fish to the tiniest Nudibranch! Living here is such a gift from a diver's perspective with such a range of diving opportunities: reefs, wrecks, walls, drifts, sharks and critters. With access to a range of coasts (and fresh water) you can dive 365 days a year! Where else in the world can boast this? For a small country we pack a large punch.

● **DIVING IN THE KERMADEC ISLANDS ...** Was amazing. Very few people have heard of them. They lie between New Zealand and Fiji/Tonga and can only be reached by boat. It took us 2.5 days to get there. Ecosystem wise, they are a melting pot of tropical and sub-tropical species. With only a few resident rangers and its most untouched environments you can find.

● **TELL US ABOUT BASKING SHARKS?** The biggest fish in Scotland! A migratory ocean giant and to see them in large numbers in our own waters is spectacular. It's an incredibly exciting area and something fairly unknown to the Scottish diving fraternity. I would bet more divers had seen sharks abroad than they had basking sharks at home. I find it amazing that most people would enthuse about seeing whale sharks or mantas abroad but we have the same level of wildlife experience here.

● **WHAT'S NEXT ON THE HORIZON?** I'm preparing to visit Norway to swim with killer whales so depending how that goes will dictate what happens afterwards! There are a few overseas trips planned, including a full-on diving and shark programme in the Hebrides later this year. I can't wait for summer already!

● **ADVICE FOR POTENTIAL DIVERS?** What's stopping you! You don't even have to dive in Scotland to enjoy the sea, there are just as good snorkelling opportunities. Gaining an underwater perspective opens a whole new world. There are so many amazing opportunities both at home and abroad. Be warned, it will change your life (for the better!).