



PHOTOGRAPHY SCHOOL

AGGRESSOR
ADVENTURES

Jim Church School of Underwater Photography

Mike Haber & Mike Mesgleski

21912 SW 95 Place

Cutler Bay, FL 33190

(305) 773-7169

mikem@jimchurchphoto.com

Fellow Shipmates,

Welcome to the *Jim Church School of Underwater Photography* photo course aboard the Aggressor Adventures yachts. 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.



Questions regarding the photography course should be directed to us. (See info in letterhead). If you call and get voice mail, please leave a message that includes your name, phone number and a good time to call you back.

Questions about an Aggressor, rental gear, dietary restrictions or special needs should go to Aggressor Adventures, 1-800-348-2628; +1-706-993-2531; info@aggressor.com. Much more detailed information is available about each Aggressor by going to 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 or Diveassure, can be purchased through Aggressor by going to <https://www.aggressor.com/pages/insurance>.

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 onboard.

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 onboard, 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. 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 Maha Energy. Their web site is: <https://mahaenergy.com/> 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. It's cousin, the MAHA MH-C800S does the same thing, just a little slower. It costs less and it still gets the charging done.

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!**



EQUIPMENT INFO (continued)

There is plenty of outlet space for everyone's chargers onboard, 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. Whatever batteries you use, 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, BACKUP DEVICES & SOFTWARE:

You must bring a laptop! In the digital age, a computer is as important as a camera body or a lens, especially for our class. We will be reviewing your photos throughout the week and we need to see them on your laptop. Tablets and smartphones will not do it for the purposes of the class.

REMEMBER TO PACK YOUR AC POWER ADAPTER!

There are plenty of outlets onboard 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. That way you can erase and reuse your memory cards on the trip. Or, you could bring multiple memory cards so each dive or each day you can use a new card eliminating the need to erase and re-use your cards on the trip. The cards will be your back-up once you transfer the images to your laptop.

Please bring digital copies of the instruction manuals for your camera equipment. While we have 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.



DIVE AND FOCUS LIGHTS

If you plan to do night dives with your camera, and your strobe doesn't have a built-in spotting light, bring a small dive light that can be attached (brackets, clamps or duct tape) to your camera system. Remove or disable the battery before packing the light in a checked bag!

We like the **Sola Photo 1200 by Light & Motion**. It is small (about as big as a large pear) and mounts easily on a housing. It functions as a focus aid light during the day and a night dive light. The Sola Photo 1200 emits white light or red light. The red light is helpful at night to keep from spooking some types of critters. You can still see, even in the red light and your camera will focus with the red light. If you are using a strobe to light your pictures, the strobe will overpower the red light so you will not see red light in your photo. If you are using a weaker light source, like a video light, you will have to turn the red light off before shooting.



SOFTWARE RECOMMENDATIONS

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 in case we are not familiar with the software you are using.

Lightroom Classic or **Capture One Pro** offer free trials of their software which can be downloaded from their websites.

Adobe Lightroom Classic: (one week free trial)

www.adobe.com/products/photoshop-lightroom.html

CaptureOne Pro: (thirty day free trial)

www.captureone.com/

These are excellent tools for organizing, processing and sharing your images. They work on Mac or Windows computers. Be sure to activate your software before leaving! An internet connection is not always possible and some software requires logging in and activating at least once before you can use it remotely.

PLEASE NOTE: the **Lightroom Classic** trial period is only one week so please do not activate it until the day before you leave your home.

If you are a Mac user, you can also start with **Photos**, the software that comes free with all Mac computers. It provides good organization features, RAW processing, image editing tools and image sharing capabilities. We can discuss additional software options during the trip

BAGGAGE TIPS & OTHER TID BITS

Fifty pounds per bag seems to be the magic number for most international travel. Between 50 and 70 pounds, you will probably incur overweight fees. Bags more than 70 pounds 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, medication, toiletries, etc., in your carry-on. You never know if checked baggage will arrive late. (Follow TSA regulations for liquids in your carry-on.)

Bring a 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. Check the Know Before You Go for details on that particular destination on the Aggressor website prior to traveling.

Staff Tip A staff tip is customary at the end of the week (an industry wide custom, not just with Aggressor Adventures). This tip is for the staff--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. You can make

up your mind after you experience the service. You can use a credit card for your staff tip. Yes, it would be simpler if it was added to the package price. However, because it's optional you have the choice of determining the amount based on the staff's performance.

Camera and dive gear insurance DAN will insure your camera and dive gear at reasonable rates. The phone number for DAN information is 1-800-446-2671.

www.diversalernetnetwork.org/

Clothing Don't pack too many clothes for onboard. Shorts & T-shirts is the attire for on the Aggressor. Bring more than one bathing suit. It is a good idea to bring a sweatshirt and a sturdy windbreaker just in case. We also highly recommend a sunhat. Casual is fine for dinner on land. In a pinch, the vessel has a boutique with plenty of T-shirts. Remember, you are on vacation. Relax!

If you wear glasses or have trouble reading your gauges and camera settings, consider getting a prescription dive mask. One service that does good work is Prescription Dive Masks in La Mesa, CA www.prescriptiondivemasks.com.

Things To Do Ahead Of Time

- ___ Make Reservations with Aggressor Adventures (1-800-348-2628 or +1-706-993-2531)
- ___ Make Airline Reservations
- ___ Get Passport (if required) at least 6 months prior
- ___ Purchase Dive Insurance & Equipment Insurance
- ___ Get a prescription mask if you need one
- ___ Purchase Memory Cards & Batteries
- ___ Have your regulator and dive computer serviced

- ___ Order Any New Equipment (anticipate delays)
- ___ Test All Equipment
- ___ Mark Your Gear
- ___ Get small bills at the bank
- ___ Print or download Aggressor Packing Guide
- ___ Activate Software (if necessary)
- ___ Continue to check the Aggressor Travel Updates web page

You might also consider taking photos of your Passport ID Page, Driver's License, Credit Card, C-Card, Health Visa, QR Code and any other important document you need for traveling and store those photos on your phone.

Sample Course Itinerary

Day 1 – Welcome Aboard!:

The staff will help you & your luggage aboard and then they will show you to your stateroom. 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 staff followed by the first dive. This 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 slightly negative at around 10 feet. We will explain more about that well before the first dive. 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. Throughout every day, we are there for individual help and photo review.

Daily Topics for classes:

- Photo and Digital Basics
- Ambient Metering – The Beginning Of A Good Photo
- Basic Strobe Techniques and Exposure
- Balancing Sunlight & Strobe Lighting
- Photo Composition
- Lens Selection.
- Digital Workflow

Day 7 - It's Graduation Day!

You pick 10 of your favorite photos from 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 dive. Because of the diving schedule at some Aggressor destinations we may move our presentations to the afternoon or evening. We'll let you know what the schedule is each day. Throughout every day, we are there for individual help and photo review.

CAMERA TABLE BOX

We use a Sterilite medium size clear box on the camera table to store our lenses. That way they are outside out of the air conditioning and are protected from any salt water spray. The box can also hold smaller objects like lens caps, memory cards or extra batteries. When it is not on the camera table, it can hold other items, packed away in your camera case. This particular box measures 11" L x 6 5/8" W x 5 3/8" H. You can find them in office supply stores or on Amazon.



MARK YOUR GEAR

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 EXAMPLES

We all pack a bag differently. No matter how you pack, you want to make sure you bring everything you need with you on the trip and bring it all back home. One way is to take a photo of your completely packed bag and label everything in it. Print it out and/or bring that photo with you on your laptop. You can also use a printed checklist to account for everything. Mike & I do both. Following is an example of how I pack and an example of a packing checklist. Your mileage may vary.

Sample Checked Bag #1

This is a photo of my checked case with my housing, ports, strobes and other bits & pieces. Both Mike & I use a **Pelican #1610** with the padded divider option. We do not recommend the click foam option. The padded dividers will not break down as click foam can.



Checked Bag #2

My other checked bag contains my dive gear, toolbox, clothes, toiletries and a few other doo-dads. Don't look for a photo of this bag. I did not include one. Do you really want to see my Spiderman underwear?

Sample Carry-on Bag



Both Mike and I use **ThinkTank roller bags** for our carry-on camera gear and laptops. We chose ThinkTank, but there are other manufacturers like LowePro and Tamrac that also produce a good, sturdy roller bag. Pictured above is my ThinkTank Advantage roller bag. **It contains:**

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2 Camera Bodies | Topside Strobe |
| 10-17mm Wide Angle Lens | Laptop Power Supply |
| 60mm Micro Lens | 4 Outlet Power Strip |
| 105mm Micro Lens | Dive Computer |
| Diopter for 105mm | Focus Light for the housing |
| 2 Cases of Memory Cards | Small Flashlight |
| 2 Addl. Camera Batteries | Portable Hard Drive |
| Camera Battery Charger | Memory Card Reader |
| 18-300mm Topside Lens | Cable Ties, Velcro, Duct Tape |

The outside storage pocket on the roller bag's lid holds my laptop in its protective sleeve. Sometimes I leave my laptop in the pocket when the bag is in the overhead on the airplane and sometimes I keep the laptop in the protective sleeve under the seat in front of me while the roller bag is in the overhead. It's nice to have a choice.

Sample Travel Checklist

LV RETURN

Traveling items (hand carry)

- () () Passport
- () () Credit cards and cash
- () () Dollar bills for small tips enroute
- () () Tickets, schedule, phone numbers
- () () Phone charger & cable
- () () Toiletries (Per TSA Regs)
- () () Change of underwear, etc
- () () Printout of Health Visa, QR Code, Test Results, etc
- () () Vaccination Card
- () () Medication
- () ()

Personal items

- () () Shorts, light shirts
- () () Sunhat
- () () Two swim suits
- () () Lightweight, fold-up nylon jacket or windbreak
- () () Ocean Safe Sunscreen
- () () Decongestant, seasick pills. Antihistamine
- () ()
- () ()

Diving Gear

- () () Certification cards
- () () DAN card (for dive insurance)
- () () Dive Computer & User Manual
- () () Dive mask
- () () B.C. and related gear
- () () Fins (& booties if you use them)
- () () Wetsuit, or dive skin
- () () U/W light & Small Dive Light for backup
- () () Safety Sausage/Dive Alert
- () () Extra fin and mask straps & parts
- () ()
- () ()

Sample Camera System Checklist

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) & Zoom Gear
- () () Tokina 10-17mm lens (s/n xxxxxx) & Zoom Gear
- () () 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)
- () () Diffuser for Inon Z-240 (attached to strobe)
- () () Inon Z-240 Strobe Head #2 (s/n xxxxxx)
- () () Diffuser for Inon Z-240 (attached to 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 Photo 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

AGGRESSOR EMAIL ADDRESSES

Aggressor Adventures® Destinations

Bahamas Aggressor	bahamas@aggressor.com
Belize Aggressor III & IV	belize@aggressor.com
BVI Aggressor	bvi@aggressor.com
Cayman Aggressor IV	cayman@aggressor.com
Coco Island Aggressor	cia@aggressor.com
Dominican Republic	turkscaicos@aggressor.com
Okeanos Aggressor I & II	okeanos@aggressor.com
Galapagos Aggressor III	galapagos@aggressor.com
Indo Aggressor	indo@aggressor.com
Maldives Aggressor II	maldives@aggressor.com
Palau Aggressor II	palau@aggressor.com
Rock Islands Aggressor	palau@aggressor.com
Philippines Aggressor	pha@aggressor.com
Raja Ampat Aggressor II	rajaampat@aggressor.com
Red Sea Aggressor II	rsa2@aggressor.com

Red Sea Aggressor III	rsa3@aggressor.com
Red Sea RE Aggressor	redseare@aggressor.com
Roatan Aggressor	roatan@aggressor.com
Socorro Aggressor	socorro@aggressor.com
Turks & Caicos Aggressor II	turkscaicos@aggressor.com

Non-Diving

Nile Queen	nile@aggressor.com
Sri Lanka Safari Lodge	slsafari@aggressor.com

General Information	info@aggressor.com
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Tell Aggressor about your trip	wecare@aggressor.com
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Travel Planning:

Aggressor Adventure Travel	travel@aggressor.com
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