

Check out Nick's photos of the mysteries of the deep at www.frogfishphotography.com

NICK ROBERTSON-BROWN UNDERWATER WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER

Getting up close and personal with big sharks and whales is all part of the job for a pro scuba photographer

1 NIKON D800 (£2100, \$3000)

■ **What's it for?** I use it underwater in a watertight, aluminium housing, and it has to be able to capture images in dark conditions where the visibility can be less than one metre.

■ **Plus points** It's incredible in low light conditions, even at high ISO.

■ **Minus marks** It needs an enormous and expensive memory card for some underwater work, such as when I shoot the South African sardine run.

2 NIKON AF 16mm f/2.8D (£630, \$900)

■ **What's it for?** Able to capture whole reefs or schools of fish, this lens also allows me to get in close with some of the exciting creatures I shoot, such as whales and sharks.

■ **Plus points** When used in conjunction with an optical glass dome port, it gives me a nearly 180° view, and the images give the viewer a feeling of being underwater.

■ **Minus marks** It can struggle to focus on objects that are very close up.

3 SEALUX CAMERA HOUSING (FROM £2185, \$3495)

■ **What's it for?** It seals my D800 in a watertight surrounding and works even if the water pressure is extreme. It has connections for all my lighting and has ports for different lenses.

■ **Plus points** It's tough, reliable and relatively small. Its German engineering makes me feel confident.

■ **Minus marks** It's model-specific, so you have to buy a new one if you change SLR – and they're not cheap.

4 INON Z-240 STROBES (£675, \$800 EACH)

■ **What's it for?** These are underwater flashguns. Constant light sources scare the wildlife away, and without light everything is blue underwater.

■ **Plus points** These strobes are really reliable, and fire every time. They recycle in 0.7 sec so are great for shooting in continuous drive mode.

■ **Minus marks** Sharks like to try and steal them, as they seem to be attracted to the charging sound!

5 FOURTH ELEMENT CORE BODY WARMER (€120, \$199)

■ **What's it for?** This is part of a range of warm clothing that I wear underneath my dry suit. I can be in near-freezing water for hours at a time and this keeps me toasty, even if I get wet.

■ **Plus points** It's lightweight for travelling and allows me freedom to move my arms in the water when lifting my camera and housing into position.

■ **Minus marks** It's very expensive for underwear!