

## UNDER WATER FILMING WORKSHOP

24 November 2005

2:30 pm – 5:30 pm, Amaltas Hall, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

A ‘*master class*’ for young and aspiring filmmakers by Doug Allan a freelancer wildlife filmmakers and photographers



*A presentation by Doug Allan, Director and Cameraman*

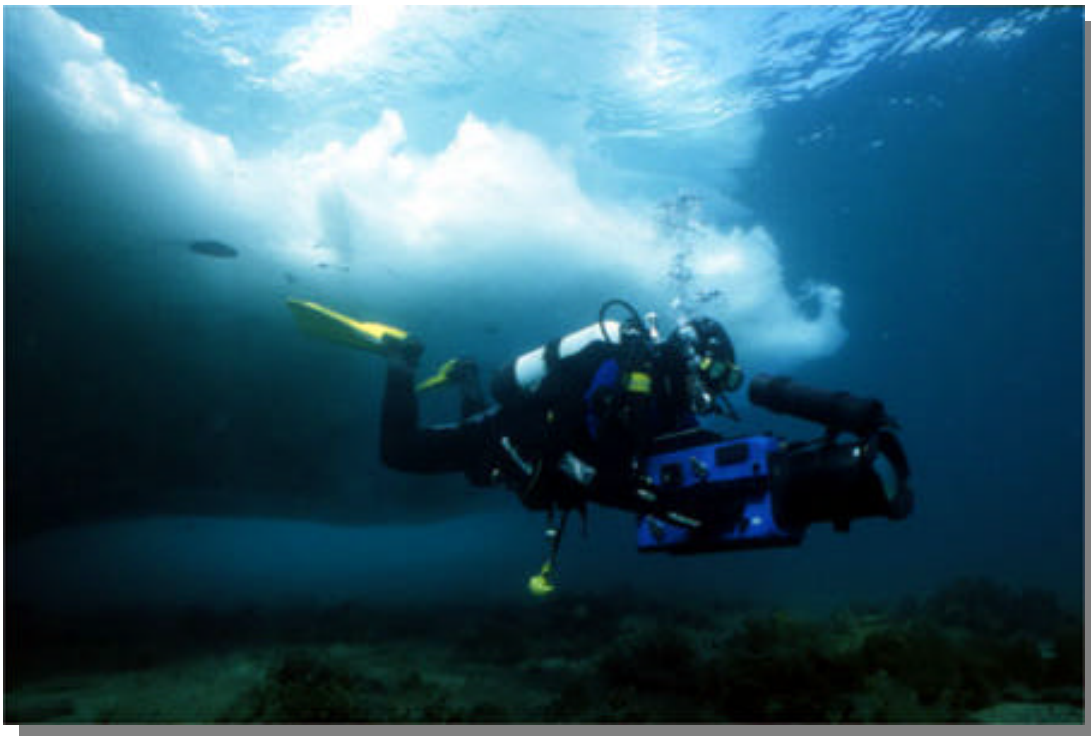
Doug Allan specializes in wildlife and documentary work in extremes –particularly underwater and in the poles. Doug has worked for a number of broadcasters including the BBC, Discovery, National Geographic, Granada and others. Doug spent almost 5 years working on the BBC National History Unit series “The Blue Planet – A National History of the Oceans” which took them all over the world – from the tropics to the poles. He had some amazing adventures during the series – filming killer whales hunting gray whales in California, filming bioluminescent squid in Japan and swimming with beluga whales under the Arctic ice.

## Background and Purpose

The workshop is specially designed for filmmakers and students of filmmaking interested in learning about underwater filming. It gave students an opportunity to interact with filmmakers who have filmed in diverse terrains and extreme climates. Handling the camera, tricks of underwater filming, catching the best shots, along with some exciting clippings from their productions will all be a part of this workshop.

## Session

Mr. Allan explained the role of key people for making films are of producer, editor and cameraperson. A cameraperson takes first step for capturing good pictures therefore, a picture has to be stylish and keep editors in mind to make attractive film. Good camera techniques must be treated as basic to every movie such as feature film, environment documentary or wildlife film. The great thing about Under Water Filming is to get closure to animals or subject hence, the first thing for under water photographer is to get familiar and enjoy with water for capturing appropriate image.



He showed his favorite sequence that has combination of music and visuals with less commentary. He cited that setting tripod in under water is troublesome task. Dolly crane could give three dimensions of movement. Sometimes, diving on different days could build relationship with animals such as your way of looking animals, breathing, and so on – all these needs continuous practices. He said that cameraperson spends time with animals, which facilitate good story and good pictures always goes hand in hand. Before going for shooting, planning of storyline is very important and you can make storyboard for designing sequences however you cannot believe it, as it is only an imagination. He added that a person who has been aware of animals must plan storyboard. On the location, you must develop relationship with local community so that they can help in needy situation.



He discussed camera movement in under water shoot that while capturing pictures your head would move in panning or tilting camera whereas, you don't have to move in zooming and allow to take wide shot to close up towards subject. He explained that slow motions make dramatic effects for animals and must avoid wide shots in slow motion for example, wide shot establishes body of whales and gradually, camera can move to mid close up and therefore to extreme close up of head, eye, nose etc.

## **Discussion**

Discussion held on importance of tripod that he used it only for taking semi micro shots otherwise it is a hassle to operate in under water shooting. He explained duration of traveling in cold water that if you are shooting in the condition of  $-1.8^{\circ}\text{c}$  for 15 minutes and not too deep, you would need three hours to again heat up your body. Therefore, if you spent three hours in cold water is exceptional and two hours are average. He highlighted that it depends upon your living conditions as your body gets physiological adaptation in cold water. He talked about features of lightweight camera that shutter speed and white balances could be changed manually and automatically. Wide angles are always better and crucial and close shots bring out clarity and colours. The issue of using flash was raised that he would prefer to use flash in still photographs. When he goes under water with lights, the amount of light changed with distance from subject because lights get absorbed. When lights get closed to your subject, they appeared differently and he preferred to shoot with available lights with color balance.

Camera movements, lightings and different shots were the main concern in under water shooting. The shooting conditions of cold water were very important for divers and capturing perfect images.