

Scientific and commercial diver

Eine Forschungstaucherin vermisst für Universitäten und Unternehmen die Unterwasserwelt – sowohl im Meer als auch am PC.

Von MELITA CAMERON-WOOD

MEDIUM ÜBUNGSHFT



As a scientific and commercial diver, you have to carry heavy equipment and work outdoors in cold and wet conditions. It's not for everyone. Personally, I love the physical and mental challenges of the job, both in the office and in fieldwork.

Most of our work involves underwater photogrammetry — we create 3D models of underwater objects or scenes using overlapping photos. Images can be taken either by divers or a remotely operated vehicle (ROV). We're now testing the efficiency and accuracy of divers compared with ROVs, which are increasingly common. ROVs use a combination of GPS and sonar technology. GPS alone doesn't work underwater.

Careful planning and clear objectives are key, as it's not easy to communicate underwater. My dive buddy and I use common diving signals and sometimes write on slates. Time is limited. If you spend too long underwater, your body stores too much nitrogen, which can lead to decompression illness.

Our clients are diverse. Universities ask us to measure coral erosion and marine growth. Fish farms need to see how their activities affect the seabed. Oil companies need surveys to find the best way of decommissioning rigs, depending on the amount of marine growth. Some old rigs are turned into artificial reefs to support local biodiversity. We also model piers and harbours, so engineers can check the safety of the structures.

When supporting scientists, my jobs include collecting samples of underwater plants or animals, or installing cameras on the seabed. If scientists want to collect their own data, we provide the boat. I'm a certified skipper and diving supervisor — my role changes depending on the job.

A few years ago, eggs of the endangered flapper skate were found near the Isle of Skye. Our photogrammetry models helped give this area protected status and stop the destructive practice of bottom trawling, in which fishing nets are dragged along the seabed. This was a really rewarding moment.

In the past, I thought a career in the highly competitive marine conservation sector would be impossible, but this specialized role has made this dream come true.

“Careful planning and clear objectives are key”

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diver ▶ Taucher(in)

photogrammetry
▶ Fotogrammetrie, Messbildverfahren

overlapping
▶ sich überlagernd

remotely operated vehicle ▶ ferngesteuertes Fahrzeug

objective [əb'dʒektɪv]
▶ Zielsetzung

key ▶ entscheidend

dive buddy (ifml.)
▶ Tauchpartner(in) (buddy ▶ Kumpel)

slate ▶ Schiefertafel

nitrogen [ˈnɪtrədʒən]
▶ Stickstoff

decompression illness
▶ Taucherkrankheit

seabed
▶ Meeresgrund, -boden

survey ['sʊ:veɪ]
▶ Erhebung

decommission sth.
▶ etw. stilllegen

rig ▶ Bohrinzel

reef ▶ Riff

pier [pɪə] ▶ Pier, Mole

engineer [ˌendʒɪ'nɪə]
▶ Ingenieur(in)

structure
▶ hier: Konstruktion

sample ▶ Probe

diving supervisor
▶ Tauchmeister(in)

role
▶ hier: Funktion, Position

endangered
▶ vom Aussterben bedroht

flapper skate
▶ Glattrochen

bottom trawling
▶ Grundschieppnetz-fischerei

drag sth. ▶ etw. ziehen

competitive [kəm'petətɪv]
▶ umkämpft

marine conservation [mə'ri:n]
▶ Meeresschutz

researcher [ri'sɜ:tʃə]
▶ Forscher(in), Wissenschaftler(in)