

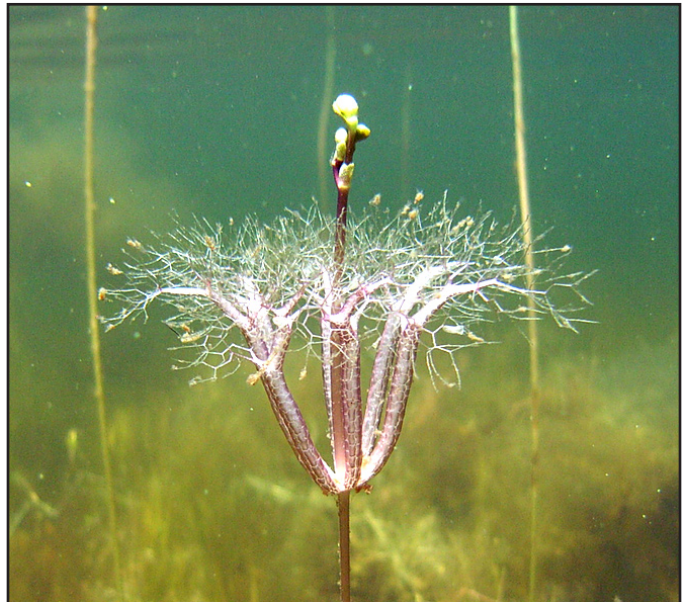
Tips for Taking Underwater Photographs

When we wrote to Dennis Roberge to ask if he would be willing to share some of his tips for taking great underwater photographs, he replied, with characteristic humility, that he did not object to the idea in the least, but would have to pass as he did not really have much to say on subject other than he uses a good camera and takes lots of photos. Later, when we met to select the photos for an article featuring Dennis' work, Dennis began to elaborate upon his new-found passion, and tips began to emerge. We have presented Dennis' tips here in the hope of inspiring others to discover and capture similarly wonderful sights below the surface of their own favorite watery places.

1. **Use a good quality camera.** Dennis uses a Sea and Sea DX-8000/8000G housing and digital camera with a 0.6x wide-angle conversion lens (28mm – 80mm macro zoom). The camera takes very high resolution (8.2 mega pixel) images, and comes with lots of bells and whistles including settings to adjust light input, and the ability to take 30 minute videos.
2. **Take lots and lots of photos.** With digital photography, there is no reason to hold back. Each summer Dennis typically shoots several thousand photos, deleting those he is not happy with.
3. **If you are not a SCUBA diver and/or don't have a good flash system, stick to depths of less than six feet** where natural light is sufficient to get excellent photographs and the subject matter is easily accessed with snorkeling equipment. All of the shots you see here were taken while snorkeling.
4. **Be safe! Let boaters know where you are.** Dennis swims with a six-foot-long, day-glow orange, inflatable raft in tow. The 50-foot tether provides a convenient place to lash a mesh bag for collecting plant samples.
5. **Don't think you have to have special training or an artist's eye to get good photos.** When asked about this, Dennis casually revealed that in fact he really can't see much of anything when he is in the water. He can't wear his glasses under his mask and until next year when he gets his prescription dive mask "every thing is pretty much a blur." (We can hardly wait to see what Dennis will do with his craft when he can actually see what he is doing!)
6. **Feed two fish with one worm.** In the process of scouring the shallows for new subjects to photograph, Dennis, a Certified Plant Patroller, conducts screening surveys on many Maine waterbodies.



Curly-leaf pondweed on West Pond



Little floating bladderwort getting ready to flower.
Mousam Lake



A school of sunfish in Horn Pond