
MEDIA FACT SHEET

Underwater Atlas

Everything you need to write about us: facts, boilerplate, quotes, and sources. Use freely.

AT A GLANCE

What: A free, independent, science-grounded scuba dive-planning platform.

Coverage: More than 10,300 dive sites across 133 countries.

Core tool: The Dive Site Finder, which ranks sites by what a diver is actually there for.

Editorial: An original write-up on every site: what the dive is, depth and certification, how you reach it, when it's best, and what you'll realistically see.

Guides: In-depth pieces on gear, training, conservation, culture and destinations, including a neutral guide to the training agencies and a guide to the first fifty dives after certification.

Data: Satellite records from NASA and NOAA, climate data from the ECMWF, the leading marine-life databases (GBIF, OBIS, WoRMS, IUCN Red List), plus U.S. State Department and UK Foreign Office travel advisories.

Model: Free to divers. Sells no trips; takes no payment for placement.

Public launch: July 2026 (soft-launched May 2026).

Based in: Tampa, Florida.

Online: underwateratlas.com · press: underwateratlas.com/press

BOILERPLATE: COPY FREELY

One sentence: Underwater Atlas is a free, independent dive-planning platform that grades more than 10,300 dive sites across 133 countries on conditions and marine life, using scientific data, so divers know what to expect before they book.

One paragraph: Underwater Atlas is a free, independent scuba diving reference and dive-planning platform, built by divers, covering more than 10,300 dive sites across 133 countries. Its data engine draws on satellite records from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), climate data from the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), and the world's leading marine-life databases: the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS), the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, alongside U.S. State Department and UK Foreign Office travel advisories. It helps divers plan trips with accurate, evidence-based expectations of conditions, marine life, and travel safety. The platform sells no dive trips and takes no payment for placement. Its mission is to grow the sport by helping divers have better experiences that bring them back.

THE STORY IN BRIEF

Diving has a retention problem, not a growth problem: the sport trains close to a million new divers a year, yet the active-diver population has stalled near six million. Most who leave do so because a trip failed to meet the expectation they arrived with. That is an information failure. Underwater Atlas closes that gap, grading every site month by month on conditions and marine life from scientific data, and ranking sites by what a diver is actually there for.

FOUNDERS

Tommy Nolen. Co-founder, Underwater Atlas. Available for interview.

Bio: Tommy Nolen is a co-founder of Underwater Atlas. A PADI-certified diver, he has spent his career building marketing and media strategy for some of the world's largest brands, including Coca-Cola, Nissan, Visa, and Kellogg's. He built Underwater Atlas on a conviction drawn from both halves of that experience: friction quietly costs a business its customers, and diving's friction sits in the planning. He speaks on diver retention, the data behind the platform, and the future of honest dive-trip planning.

John Kennerty. Co-founder, Underwater Atlas. Available for interview.

Bio: John Kennerty is a co-founder of Underwater Atlas. A NAUI-certified diver, he has spent his career at the other end of the marketing business, in direct marketing and search (SEO/SEM). It is the craft of connecting people with exactly what they're looking for. Removing the friction between a diver's question and a trustworthy answer is the problem Underwater Atlas was built to solve. He speaks on how divers discover and plan trips, the platform's data, and building an independent resource for the sport.

Headshots: Hi-res color and black-and-white portraits of both founders are included in the download kit.

IN THEIR WORDS: APPROVED QUOTES

"Diving doesn't have a growth problem. It has a retention problem, and the cause is friction. We say that as divers who've felt it, and as marketing and media executives who spend our working lives removing it. Good, current information about specific dive sites is hard to find. So people get frustrated and book a different trip, or they make an expensive guess and come home underwhelmed. Either way, the sport loses them."

— Tommy Nolen, co-founder of Underwater Atlas

"We built Underwater Atlas to take the friction out of planning. Divers can dig deeper into real data, plan smarter, and have better dives. They get back in the water excited for the next one. And the best part is, it's free."

— John Kennerty, co-founder of Underwater Atlas

Short cut (for tighter placements): "Diving doesn't have a growth problem. It has a retention problem, and the cause is friction. We say that as divers who've felt it, and as marketing and media executives who spend our working lives removing it. We built Underwater Atlas to take that friction out of planning, so divers plan smarter, dive better, and can't wait to get back in the water. And the best part is, it's free."

THE DATA BEHIND UNDERWATER ATLAS

Underwater Atlas draws on satellite records from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), climate data from the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), and the world's leading marine-life databases, alongside official travel advisories. Every judgment is traceable to its source:

Water clarity / visibility: NASA satellite ocean-color data (MODIS-Aqua chlorophyll-a, ~19-year climatology).

Water temperature: NOAA sea-surface temperature (Optimum Interpolation SST).

Sea state, wind and rainfall: European weather & climate records (ECMWF ERA5).

Storm-season risk: NOAA hurricane & cyclone records (IBTrACS).

Reef health: NOAA Coral Reef Watch (weekly bleaching alerts).

Marine life: the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS), iNaturalist, the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.

Travel safety: U.S. State Department travel advisories (primary, daily) and UK Foreign Office (FCDO) travel advice.

Visa & practical trip info: editorially maintained and periodically reviewed (not a live feed).

FACTS & SOURCES (NOTES TO EDITORS)

“Roughly a million learn to dive each year” is an Underwater Atlas estimate, not a published figure. It is derived from DEMA's US entry-level count (~128,000 in 2023) and an estimated ~13% US share of global certifications (~985,000 worldwide). PADI issues ~80% of the world's certifications, at a record 1,317,383 across all levels in 2024; that total counts all levels, so it is not itself a count of new divers. We'll share the working with any editor.

Supporting it: PADI's 2024 regional data puts the Americas at 28.4% of worldwide certifications (Asia Pacific 42.5%, EMEA 29.1%). The USA is the largest single certification destination but only part of the Americas, so the US share sits materially below 28.4%, consistent with ~13%. Not directly comparable: PADI's split is all levels by regional HQ; the 128,000 is US entry-level across all agencies.

Where diving is growing: the Americas fell from 41.4% of PADI certifications in 2021 to 28.4% in 2024, while Asia Pacific rose from 22.8% to 42.5%. That reflects the post-pandemic dive-travel recovery. Top five 2024 certification destinations: USA, Thailand, Malaysia, Egypt, Philippines.

Active divers worldwide: ~6 million (DEMA, drawing on SFIA data).

Entry-level trend: US entry-level certifications fell from ~198,000 (2001) to ~128,000 (2023); in 2023 they declined for 32% of training agencies and rose for only 7% (DEMA / Business of Diving Institute).

BRAND BASICS

Colors: Abyss #04101E · White #F0F6FB · Teal #06D6A0 · Cyan #00B4D8 · Coral #EF476F · Gold #FFD166

Type: Playfair Display (headings) · DM Sans (body) · JetBrains Mono (labels & data)

Voice: One diver talking to another: warm, specific, honest; never brochure-speak.

Logo usage: Keep clear space around the mark; don't recolor, stretch, or add effects; use the light logo on dark backgrounds and the dark logo on light.

MEDIA CONTACT

Tommy Nolen or John Kennerty, Co-founders

press@underwateratlas.com · underwateratlas.com/press

IN THE DOWNLOAD KIT

This media fact sheet (PDF).

Launch press release (PDF).

Brand & media guidelines (PDF).

Logo files: light- and dark-background PNG.

Founder headshots: hi-res color, black-and-white, and illustration (both founders).

Screenshots: the homepage and the Dive Site Finder (PNG).

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