



IPSAC project: Underwater Camera for Swanage Pier

Following the success of IPSAC diving projects in previous years, one of the club projects for 2026 will be to fit an underwater camera to a pile (pier leg) on Swanage Pier and make the live feed visible on the Member Area of the IPSAC website.

We have found that having a project goal can encourage club members to join dives, provide a sense of achievement and give an opportunity to learn additional skills.

Why do we need an Underwater Camera?

Installing an underwater camera at our local club dive site will provide benefits for IPSAC members as well as the Swanage Pier Trust as they will be able to see what visibility is like and monitor the marine life in the area immediately around the camera, without having to get wet!

The depth (4-6m) means that dives to install the cameras and keep the lens clean will be accessible to all members of the club and will give members a reason to join a Wednesday night club dive.

It is hoped that having the camera feed available on the IPSAC website Member Area will encourage members to visit the website regularly.

Which Underwater Camera?

Swanage Pier Trust have kindly purchased a Barluis Wide Angle Under Water Camera for us to install.

It comes with 10m of cable, so plenty to get from the camera location to the pier deck. From there, we would need to install a junction box so we can then run additional cable from the junction box to the network box which is on the lower landing stage. This has the additional benefit of making it easy to connect and disconnect the camera at each end of the dive season, while leaving the main cabling in situ.

Removing it for the rough winter weather is a precaution against avoidable damage and it is hoped will allow the camera to remain in use for a number of years.



Barlus Wide Angle Camera

How Can Club Members Get Involved?

The plan includes a range of activities:

- Choose an appropriate location for the camera
- Install cabling along the pier to connect the camera to the Swanage Pier network
- Install the camera at the beginning of the dive season
- Make the feed available through the IPSAC website Member Dashboard
- Ensure the orientation of the camera provides the best view of marine life
- Keep the lens clean during the dive season
- Monitor the conditions and marine life via the web feed
- Remove the camera at the end of the dive season

Swanage Pier is a shore dive accessible from stone steps in the Pier car park, or a giant stride entry from one of the landing stages along the Pier. It is a shallow and sheltered site (4-6m deep) which does not experience strong currents and is safe to dive at all states of tide.

The seabed is relatively flat and it is easy to navigate thanks to the piles (pier legs) which lie in lines about 4-5m apart the full length of the pier. It is known for the huge amount of marine life in the area, so the hope is that the combination of a local, familiar site, the opportunity to try out some new technology and the expectation to be able to view marine life via a web browser will make this a project which appeals to all members of the club.

The project will also provide opportunities to extend member skills beyond our usual interests; using tools underwater, learning about the technology involved, monitoring marine life and we could run workshops and presentations to bring all members along on the journey.



Will the project take over all our diving?

The short answer is NO.

We hope the project will provide a focus for club divers and an additional reason to dive under Swanage Pier but we plan to continue our usual club night (Wednesday) dives from our club boat (Arawak) and under the Pier, plus weekend diving and monthly subsidised hard-boat diving.

What's the project timetable?

We will be launching the project in mid to late March with a familiarisation session on a Wednesday night to explain the plan and request volunteers.

The first dive of the project will be in April (once the weather settles) and will be to install the camera on the selected pile.

During May, we plan to get the feed embedded on the club website and monitor the footage. We would like to gather feedback from all members on the quality across various times of day and whether there is sufficient marine life visible from the selected camera location.

Based on the monitoring and feedback, we may need to move the camera and plan regular dives to keep the camera lens clean of marine growth.

If the camera and feed proves to be popular, we may fit additional cameras; this would require further dives for each additional camera to install a bracket on a selected pile, run cabling from the camera to a network box and fit the camera, then remove it at the end of the season. The additional feeds would also need to be made available on the website.

How will you keep people informed?

We'll have regular updates on the website.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please drop a note to the committee (email, WhatsApp or in person).

We see this very much as a club project and hope that everyone will feel part of it.