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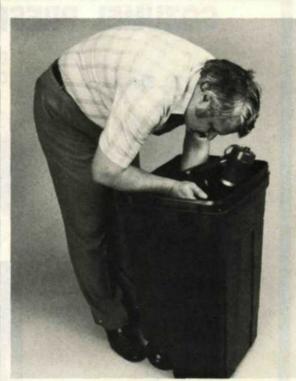
It's In The Barrel!

... if you use the barrel to test your macro before the dive trip

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JACK AND SUE DRAFAHL

If you've ever had a photo dive safari turn into a disaster because your processed rolls of film show overexposures, flash failure, poor framing or focus problems; if you're weary and feel as if you've reached the bottom of the barrel, give this idea some thought. Pull yourself out of that barrel and put your camera system in it instead!

There are several reasons why you should test your camera system in water before leaving on a dive trip. First, there

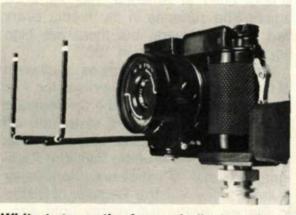


Your macro photography system can be tested at home in a water-filled trash can.

are a variety of different types of extension tubes and framers available for macro work. Some have different subject size ratios and therefore require different exposures and framing. Secondly, there are still quite a few divers who own manual flashes and each setup requires testing. Even the owners of the newer TTL strobes need to test their flashes to verify correct operation and to fine tune final exposures. Some photographers have a the accuracy of the manufacturer's prefocused alignment. We have talked to a few divers who were doing poorly with macro, only to discover their framers were misfocused at the factory. 8

You can use the same grid ruler to perform the final framing test. Put the ruler at the bottom of the framer and position the zero point in the middle of the frame. Take a photo using each of your framers. If you have a framer larger than your ruler, you must take two photos to perform an accurate test. Take one exposure, then take a second exposure with the ruler against the left or right side of the framer. When you review the photos, compare the actual image area in the framer and put small pieces of tape on the framer to indicate exactly where this is. This will help eliminate chopped-off pictures in the future.

You can also test the recycle time of your flash by taking an exposure when the ready light illuminates and one sever-



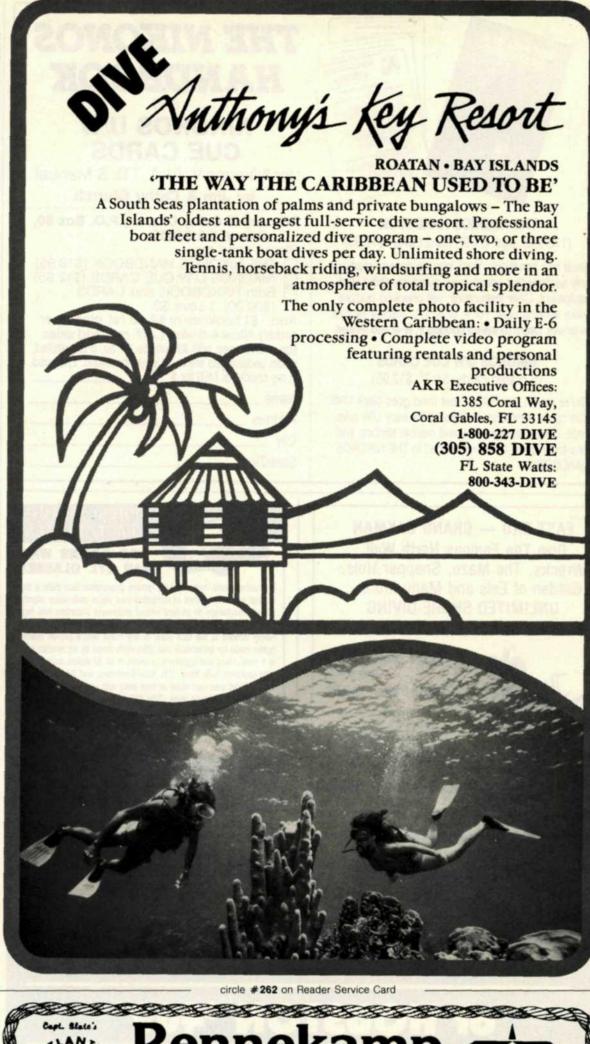
White tape on the framer indicates where the actual limits of the picture area occur.

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This is the image of the ruler that will be recorded on film. Note that the area is smaller than what the photographer sees.

al seconds after the ready light has come on. Several of the flashes on the market are only at about 80 percent power when the recycle light comes on, so it makes a definite difference in your exposures. Another test might be using alkaline batteries vs. ni-cads.

We hope you can see merit in testing your camera system *before* leaving for a distant dive trip. Get in the habit of using the trashcan to test your camera system beforehand and, hopefully, you won't be using it for discarded photos afterward!





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