



Kane's toy boat ...  
the perfect launch  
pad for the drone

# views of the sea

WORDS David Trim  
PHOTOS Supplied by Kane Grundy

When a videographer and adventurer casually talks of personal encounters with sharks, explaining that fear at such times is simply a choice between survival and being a solid single-course meal, it's pretty captivating.

**H**awke's Bay local Kane Grundy is world famous for his daring, creative and passionate approach to adventure filming and documentaries that are mostly about people with similar attributes. He is one of the camera operators for the successful TV programme *The Fishing Show*, with Matt Watson. Kane also has a string of successful local filming pieces and documentaries.

Filming underwater captured Kane's attention when he was conducting diving tours. Through this, he

began compiling film coverage of his clients, providing them with a keepsake of their mostly tropical diving tours, and he since has travelled the world exploring and experiencing adventures way beyond the dreams of the regular Hawke's Bay seafarer.

**We look into Kane's world – a day in the life of a passionate, cool, calm and collected camera operator who lives in the midst of creativity and adventure.**





**Dogtooth Tuna on a guided tour in Vanuatu**

### **What sort of camera gear do you use?**

I use drones, main cameras for underwater or on land, and GoPros to capture life on the run. The rest of my equipment is based on lighting and sound gear. About 40% of my time is spent shooting footage with my main cameras, only about 10% with the drones, and the rest is spent editing and planning. As new technology develops I am continually investigating and experimenting.

### **How many years have you been professionally diving?**

Fifteen years of adventure filming. While I have filmed all sorts of outdoor adventures most of my time has been spent filming underwater projects.

### **Why an underwater camera operator?**

I love the concept of bringing underwater-life footage showing a diverse environment not often observed, to the screen – especially in hard-to-get-to places. I like unique, creative and interesting filming, turning even a simple fish into a fascinating subject. Matt Watson pioneered a lot of underwater filming and interesting camera angles; for example, he would place a GoPro camera in a touch case, attach it to a fishing lure, and film marlin taking a bite. His creativity inspires me.

### **What's it like working for Matt Watson on the TV series *The Fishing Show*?**

He's great. A high-energy dude who enjoys a good laugh. His philosophy is we need to be having fun while filming, as it shows on the screen. He is very direct and knows what he wants.

My best projects with Matt have been visiting exotic locations. We've been fortunate to film at places like Cape Verdi, off the coast of Africa, and Bom Bom Island – one of the islands in the Gulf of Guinea. And closer to home, the amazing Fiordland and seamounts way off shore.

### **What's it like watching your filming played on TV?**

I enjoy watching, but do so with a very critical eye. It's always interesting to see if what I saw through the lens while being in that space is conveyed in the same way on screen. Sometimes the lens view can be quite different and can change the whole perspective of what I was filming.



Kane and Matt Watson with the spoils of their diving adventure in Fiordland



Kane on the job





Kane and his wife, Nicky,  
review film footage



Kane and Matt reviewing  
their work



Guided tours in the islands



Taking a break on film set in  
Malaysia with Matt Watson

### What has been the most memorable filming expedition for you?

In Hawke's Bay I did an off-the-cuff shoot. My client was arriving from Germany with his cargo on board a ship and wanted me to capture the ship, client, cargo and backdrop of the distinct Hawke's Bay coastline simultaneously. As we were out looking for the ship, our communication failed and the day was fast running out of daylight. We finally found it 25 miles off the Hawke's Bay coast.

To film the scene, I flew my drone backwards, with my client standing on the bow. It looked like the ship was chasing the drone. A ton of planning, frantic searching in fading light out at sea to capture five minutes of real content ... very satisfying. It all happened in a short time and we could have so easily missed the opportunity.

### What part of your work do you enjoy the most?

Adventure filming mostly, which is largely underwater filming and chasing boats and fishes. Documentary filming and telling a story about an adventurer is a very close second.

### What is it really like to be facing a shark in the water?

Something that I have never been totally relaxed about. It doesn't frighten anymore, but it does make my heart pound. It's a strangely enjoyable feeling of excitement. I think it's because it pulls me way out of my comfort zone, and if you are going to stay in the water then you need to find a way to enjoy it. Sharks can pick up on fear, so you can't show them any signs of fright.

### What does a typical filming day look like for you?

It starts with a lot of planning; days and days are needed for just a few hours' filming. Fully understanding what a client wants, then setting up the cameras with the appropriate equipment. Checking the batteries! Then I go onsite and reconnect with the client to be sure we are both on the same page. It's important to make sure everyone is relaxed and having fun, as the camera can pick up on tense situations.

Then I film, concentrating on the camera's capturing the actual scene as well as the unspoken aspects of the content. I have to be aware of things like neighbouring lawnmowers and changing light as the day progresses, as well as the people I'm focused on. Around 80% of my filming work is outside, and I like that as I am an outside sort of guy, I guess.

**What advice would you give an enthusiast who would like to do what you do?**

Practise, practise, practise. Refine your skill and know your environment, and try to pre-empt what could happen next, staying one step ahead. Especially when filming animals; you need to be prepared for any sudden change and anticipate their next move, so you can have your camera in the right place for the best angles. You get to know this after a while and your guesswork gets better and better. People gravitate to your work as your creativity shows your passion.

**What do you find is the hardest thing about your job?**

Software and editing. So many updates, and you have to keep relearning to keep up! This can be intense and take time. I'd rather be out shooting film than stuck in front of the editing screen.



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**ABOVE:** Shark feeding frenzy caught up close!

**LEFT:** Kane received the Balls of Steel Trophy at the NZ Media Fishing Awards 2016 for his filming of a mako shark that approached him and bit the camera he was holding

**FAR LEFT:** William Trubridge with Kane doing the Cook Strait crossing



Kane getting up close and personal with a mako shark

Kane with free diver  
and good friend  
William Trubridge



**Tell me about a diving experience that made you question your safety?** One time I had a bunch of sharks wanting to eat a fish that was stuck on my wetsuit. We were filming in Tahiti and a trevally was hooked on a guest's fishing line. I was in the water filming as he was reeling in the fish. It was getting close to me and I realised that the trevally was running away from a school of sharks that had chased it up from the deeper water.

As the fish was being reeled in, along with running away from its enemy, it came straight towards me and the hook got caught on the front of my wetsuit. Next thing I see the sharks all coming towards me thinking the chase is over. I reacted quickly and abruptly gestured to the sharks that they should back off. Luckily they understood my body language!

Funny thing was, the trevally got off and swam down past the sharks and I was then in the right position to film the fish becoming a dinner to the hungry chasers.

**Any other interesting events?** I once had William Trubridge on one of my conducted boat tours out to the Hen and Chicken Islands off the coast of Whangarei. William was still in his infancy of freediving, and I didn't know he was in any way heading towards a unique career in that world. I anchored in a little bay and told him to stay close to the boat. He said he wanted to go to a place with 50 metres depth of water to test his dive skills. I told him there is no way anyone on this boat could dive to 50 metres in a free dive and we didn't have the safety gear on board to assist if he got into trouble.

William said he would look after himself – so we moved to deeper water. Sure enough, to my astonishment, William did his dive. That's how I met him. Since then we have been on many joint trips; he taught me some skills in holding my breath and I taught him how to spear fish. He recently swam the Cook Strait underwater, diving down and swimming beneath the surface for 20–30 metres at a time. I got to film this and made a documentary that has now been screened worldwide.