

Parting Shot 1

You would think it was easy to take the perfect shot of a nudibranch. They don't move very fast after all.

This nudibranch and many of its kind are generally abundant towards the end of summer in Scotland where they love to forage along the fronds of sugar kelps (*Saccharina latissima*) looking for their favorite prey the hydroid *Turbularia*.

This species is known to be the largest in the United Kingdom reaching a whopping size of 5.5 cm! They are easy to spot and in Loch Creran, Scotland at least, when you see one, there are usually many more in the area.

Their size means that you do not always need to have the latest macro lens and they are often shallow enough that a good torch will provide enough light for a decent shot.

Facelina bostoniensis are common throughout Europe and you can probably tell from the name that they can also be found on the North-East coast of the United States.

My partner and I dive regularly in Loch Creran and because we were expecting the return of these nudibranchs this year, we planned this shot in advance.

Lighting, composition and timing are quite often key. But with this particular shot, buoyancy was the most important skill to have mastered.

Sugar kelp is usually quite shallow, and the freshwater layer can be enough to throw off even the most skilled divers sometimes, so we had to be particularly careful not to disturb the nudibranch.

I made sure to tune my exposure on another piece of seaweed before taking this shot and then

asked my partner to slowly move towards the nudibranch, tilting her head so the bubbles would not disturb it.

I usually count down from three with my fingers so she can breathe in while I'm taking a shot to avoid excess bubbles in the image and get nice and close, so the background (her eye) wasn't too blurry. I'm lucky to have a partner with such patience and skill in the water, it is not always fun to be a photographer's better half!

We are very lucky to have such wonderful diving on our doorstep in Scotland. There always seems to be something different in Loch Creran every time we go. With the multiple lockdowns and restrictions of 2020, we were really glad to get back in the water after summer and take a few shots, and even more happy when we saw the nudibranchs were back!

Many different species of nudibranchs are common in Loch Creran all year round, but it does seem that this particular species has a population explosion once a year and September-October are the right months to find them in Loch Creran.

And they are always happy to pose for a photo.



*Olympus OMD E M5 Mark ii, 1/125 seconds F- 3.5, ISO 200.
Strobe: INON S-2000 Lens: Micro 4:3, 30mm Macro F3.5*

**Do you have a shot
which has a story within a story?
If so e mail it with up to 500 words of text
and yours could be the next Parting Shot.
peter@uwpmag.com**

Alasdair O'Dell
alasdairodell@hotmail.com
www.instagram.com/alasdairodell

Parting Shot 2

It's funny, as Australians you would have thought we would have at least dived our own backyard - the Great Barrier Reef, but no. Instead, for as long as we can remember we've scoured all four corners of the earth in search of incredible diving adventures.

International travel restrictions due to Covid now meant we were finally here on the largest living organism on the planet, and to be honest, we couldn't have been happier.

We've always loved night diving, normally we've got our noses in the muck somewhere searching for rare macro critters, but as we arrive at 'Gotham City' on the Great Barrier Reef's Ribbon Reefs, our cruise director tells us to leave our macro lens behind.

This is our first ever night dive on the Great Barrier Reef and we had no idea what to expect. As we descend onto an incredibly rich sloping reef with hard and soft coral, congregations of; hunting sharks, red bass and trevally shadow our every move - hunting aggressively using our torch light. One by one, an unsuspecting little fish is annihilated. We can't even begin to describe the sound.

Not really knowing where to look, we fire our strobes at random hoping to get that impressive hunting action shot. With so much light and huge numbers of fish darting across the reef we feel almost dizzy, and instantly know that we need to slow the action down. With a quick switch to our red lights, the scene instantly calms. Not only do we save a few little fish from becoming dinner, but we can now move somewhat unnoticed about the reef.

With the inability to see the red light underwater, it's not long until the hunting fish are drawn closer. It's amazing how effective the red lights were in calming the scene, and to be honest, we much prefer it to the bright disco of a night dive.



Nauticam Panasonic GH5 housing, Panasonic Lumix G X Vario Power Zoom 14-42mm f/3.5-5.6 + the Nauticam WWL - 1 Wet lens. 1/125, f:8, ISO 200

There's definitely something magical about moving about the reef peacefully in the dark, and it created the perfect mood to capture a portrait of this gorgeous hunting red bass.

Anita Verde and
Peter Marshall

www.summitstoseasphotography.com

Do you have a shot which has a story within a story?

If so e mail it with up to 500 words of text and yours could be the next Parting Shot.

peter@uwpmag.com