

Parting Shot 1

Do arrow crabs have ears? If so, is this one waving a pincer around his right ear as some kind of warning?

Full credit to my partner and buddy Laura Storm for finding this one embedded in an azure sponge, 18m down at Pink Beach, Bonaire. Laura had finished her own capturing with this individual, and although it was my turn, I decided to grab just a couple of frames.

Conscious that this crab had already been strobed a few times, there was also my dive computer nudging me that bottom time was ticking away. I sincerely hope that being angled downward at about 120 degrees wasn't a contributory factor to what happened next.

I started ascending and then stopped. Expanding air in my right middle ear wasn't manoeuvring out via its normal exit route, i.e. my Eustachian tube. In fact it wasn't exiting at all. Strange, as it had found its way in there quite happily on my earlier descent.

Over the years I have logged hundreds of dives involving ear equalisation, not to mention the rapid pressure changes I experienced as a competitive freediver. They haven't all been trouble-free, but they have at least been rupture-free. That is, until now. I swallowed and wiggled my jaw and inched a little further upward.

The pain level wasn't excruciating: fairly tolerable actually, but when it suddenly eased and I felt bubbles coming out of my ear, my heart sank. This was day 3 of a two week dive trip that had been delayed for over two years due to Covid. For the uninitiated, ruptured eardrum=no diving until healed.

Captures for the rest of the trip were thus all topside - iguanas, butterflies and kite surfers. For my long-awaited trip to Bonaire, this image became my



*Olympus OM-D E-M1 mkii, Olympus 60mm macro, INON Z240 + S2000 strobes, 1/125s, F14, ISO200
Nauticam NA-EM1ii housing, INON Z240 + S2000 strobes*

own personal underwater parting shot. I just now need a positive ENT diagnosis to tell me it won't be a final one.

Mark Harris

www.subscenic.co.uk/info.html

**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.**

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Parting Shot 2

I was with a long time group of dive buddies, who had been dry too long due to the pandemic. We were in Cozumel to work off the rust. Cozumel was relatively close, had warm, clear water, and what's not to like about Mexican cuisine?

Cozumel is also noted for its strong currents. They keep the reefs healthy by bringing nutrients, and offer divers a free ride as long as they are headed in the right direction. Sometimes the current will reveal hidden critters, but sometimes it can sweep us past before we can get off a good shot.

The current was ripping that morning. As I drifted, I spotted a turtle and a French Angelfish ahead of me, together, in a small coral head. I'd never seen this sort of symbiosis and was curious, but my primary interest was getting a shot and figuring things out later. Camera and strobe settings were for closeup, with no time to adjust anything except focus. Flying with the current, I got off two shots. The first, from about 4 feet, was just to get an image in case all else failed. The second, from about half the distance, was the money shot. No chance for a third; by this time I was too far down current. I dug into the sand, looking back, thinking about crawling back and trying again. But by this time another photographer had staked it out, so I chimped (American photographers' slang for checking out an image on the camera's rear screen while possibly missing further action happening in front of the lens) just to make sure I'd nailed exposure and focus.

Once I downloaded the image and examined it, the relationship between the critters became obvious. The turtle was munching on a sponge or a coral, while the angelfish was scarfing up the residue. You can see



Panasonic GH5 in a Nauticam housing, manual setting, Lumix 14-42mm lens at 42mm (84mm full frame equivalent), Nauticam WWL-1 wet lens, two Inon Z240 strobes set on TTL. 1/200th second, f8, 400 iso

the scraps coming out of the turtle's mouth.

So sometimes, as with CSI cases, the camera is a great way of gathering evidence for later study.

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Eric Hanauer

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