

My Shot

by Colin Marshall

Coming to the end of a liveaboard trip, I spotted this pulsating Upside-down Jellyfish (Cassiopeia andromeda) around Flores in Indonesia and took a quick solitary snap.

When sorting through my images, I was pleasantly surprised to see that the jellyfish had a passenger – a Portunid Crab. I showed the image to my buddy (my wife), noting that my failure to notice this crab whilst taking the picture was a one-off lapse in my observational skills, excused by the fact this image was taken on my 30th dive of the trip, so I was a little tired.

My wife gave me her familiar “you’re an idiot” expression, and she explained that in addition to my many other failings, I am hopelessly unobservant, which I petulantly refuted.

My lesson learned was that I was lucky to get a pleasing image from a single shot, and clearly needed in the future to take more images in case something is hidden in the image which I am not immediately aware of, or the animal disappears, or my air runs out, or other photographers (and especially the dreaded videographers!) turn up and

monopolise the animal.

This “take-more-images” solution is, of course, nonsense.

Better lessons from this experience, to improve my observational skills, could include the following :

- Slow down and examine the subject before taking the picture. The extra time taken could also avoid startling the animal, encouraging it to hang around.
- Instead of looking in the open areas, search the nooks and crannies. Not many animals sit out in the light, showing off.
- Put aside your egotistical desire to find things yourself and stay close to guides. Whilst it is undoubtedly satisfying to find an unusual creature yourself, the guide is much more likely to find it.
- Research marine life and look for specific corals and sponges that specific creatures call home in the relevant diving area. If you have an idea of what to look for, its shape, behaviour and where it lives, you are more likely to find it.
- Look around continuously, including above and behind you. Don’t just focus on the immediate square metre



Subal, Nikon D200, Nikkor 60 mm f/2.8. f9 @ 1/80. ISO : 100. 2 x Sea & Sea YS 110

area under you, or your camera viewfinder.

Unsurprisingly, I don’t follow these lessons very well – I am still a “work in progress” on trying to improve my observational skills (and most of my other failings). I still follow the “take-more-images” methodology,

trying to randomly capture an extraordinary image, like a monkey on a typewriter trying to write William Shakespeare’s Hamlet...

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Do you have a favourite shot or an image/s which made a dive special?

E mail yours with some text to

peter@uwpmag.com

and yours could be the next My Shot/s

(It’s very easy. Images can be any size bigger than 20cm (horizontal or vertical) @ 150dpi saved as jpeg format and about 500 - 750 words would be fine.)