

My Shot

by David Fleetham

Suspended in the inky depths of the Pacific Ocean, with 3,000 feet of water between us and the seafloor, we hovered in the blackness off the coast of Guam. The current held us in a slow drift as our lights revealed a rare spectacle — dozens of *Manokia stiasnyi*, a jellyfish so elusive it's considered a prize sighting among blackwater divers. Their translucent bells pulsed gently, trailing delicate tentacles that glowed faintly in the beam of our strobes.

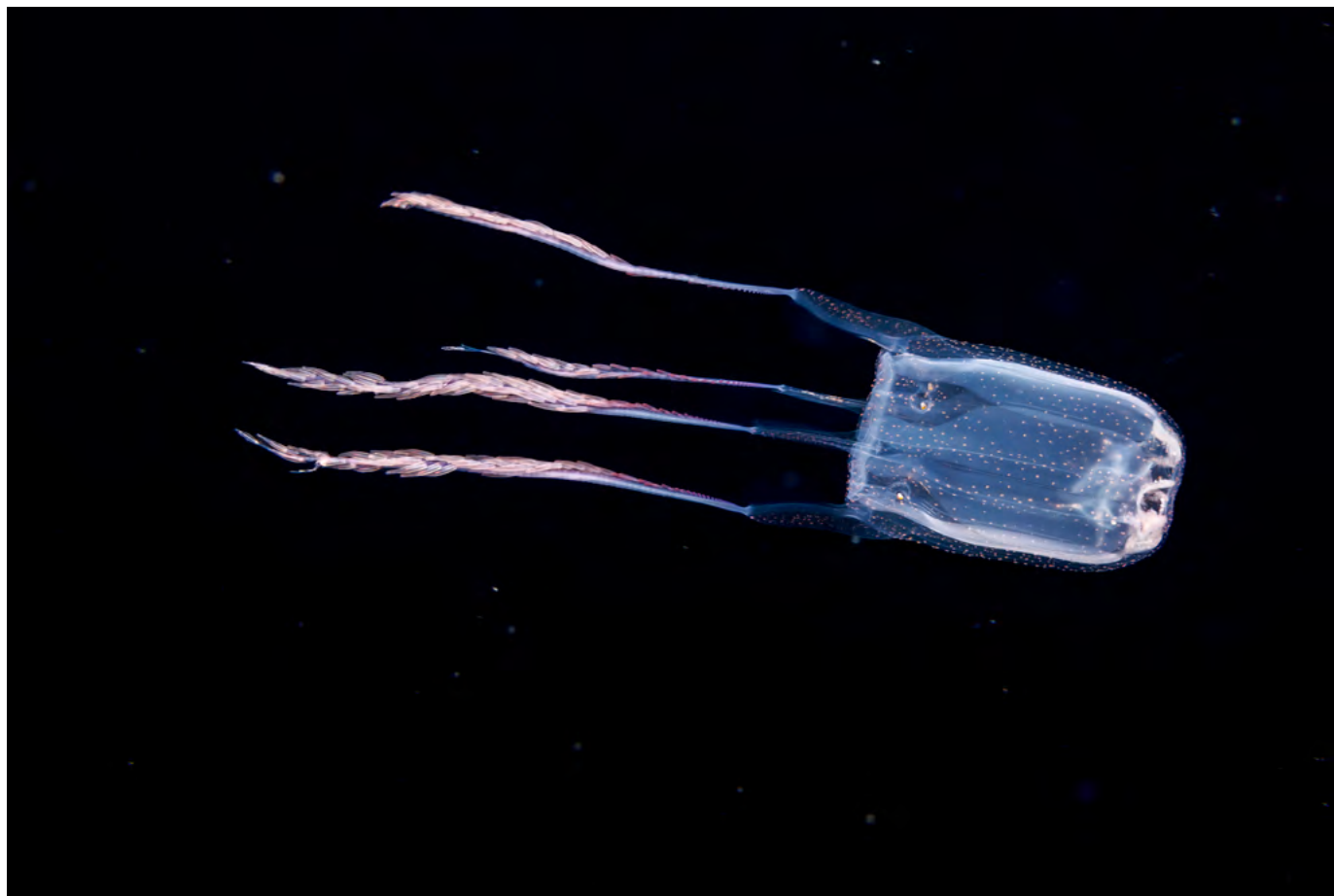
It was the kind of night we live for — a dance of rare creatures rising from the deep. Ctenophores, siphonophores, larval fish, and the ethereal *Manokia* surrounded us in a living constellation.

Most of us were sealed inside full wetsuits with hoods and gloves, cautious of the stinging tentacles drifting invisibly in the dark. But one diver, confident in shorts and a T-shirt, weaved his way through the maze.

By the end of the dive, he didn't look so confident. On the ride back he vomited and complained of breathing. An ambulance met us at the dock. The medics eased his symptoms, but later that night he checked himself into the emergency room.

The ocean is beautiful — and unforgiving. That night was a reminder that when you dive into a realm few have seen, you enter on nature's terms, not your own.

Moral of the story? Cover up. Protect yourself. And when you're among rare, fragile creatures like *Manokia stiasnyi*, admire them with your eyes — not your skin.



Canon EOS R5 mirrorless in an Ikelite dry-lock housing with a Canon 100mm macro lens, 1/125 sec, F22, ISO 200, with two Ikelite 230 strobes set to overexpose by 2 stops on TTL.

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.)

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