

Parting Shot

by John Collins

I was browsing through a set of images from a Red Sea trip earlier in the year, zeroing in on a run of macro sequences from Elba Reef. At the time, I'd been trialling the MFO-1—Nauticam's Mid-Range Focus Optimiser—paired with the Olympus 60mm macro on my OM-1 Mark II. Now, with no dives to be had and a large screen in front of me, I had a chance to study the results properly. UWP had carried a full review of the lens in Issue 144, but this was my first real look at how it behaved on the few macro dives of that trip—it had been mostly wide-angle.

One frame gave me pause. My culling finger hovered over Lightroom's reject key, but there was something odd—a shadowy mark on the flank of the anemonefish that didn't belong. I hit the space bar to toggle the loupe, then once more to zoom in. And there it was: the silhouette of an anthias, perfectly placed, frozen mid-glide as it passed through the strobe beam. Not something I'd seen on the dive. A brief collision of timing and light. A shadow caught.

The frame with the anthias shadow was one of those familiar moments in underwater macro photography: something you didn't see on the dive but found later in post. It reminded me of spotting a commensal shrimp tucked inside a crinoid after the fact, or noticing a tiny blenny peering from a crevice at the edge of the frame, just out of focus, but unmistakably there.

It's one of the quiet pleasures of the medium, where luck, light, and timing sometimes conspire behind your back.

John Collins

John Collins is an underwater photographer and writer based in Kinsale, Ireland. His recent work explores the intersection of light, time, and the ocean through photography and narrative nonfiction. His books include Cool Waters Emerald Seas and Kinsale Light and Time.

www.johncollinsphoto.com



Issue 146/71



OM System OM-1 Mark II + OM 60 mm macro + Nauticam MFO-1 Mid-Range Focus Optimiser. Nauticam housing. Dual Retra Prime strobes. 1/200s, f/7.1, ISO 200. Taken at ~15 m, Elba Reef, April 2025.

Do you have a shot which has a story within a story? If so e mail it with up to 750 words of text and yours could be the next Parting Shot.

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

peter@uwpmag.com

www.uwpmag.com

UwP147
Nov/Dec 2025
will be available on 1st Nov 2025

www.uwpmag.com