

Parting Shot 1

“Don’t Harass the Fish. “ I can still hear my father’s words echoing through my head some 30 years later.

I grew up in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and my father would take me and my brothers snorkeling in the various reefs off the coast. My father taught us that the reef was a fragile ecosystem and we need to respect the inhabitants.

Fort Lauderdale is one of the few places in the world where you can walk off a beach in the middle of a bustling city and swim 50 meters to a beautiful underwater “Garden of Eden”.

Today it is my turn to teach my sons what I learned and to pass down the respect that this environment deserves.

It is a bright clear day in October. The ocean is still a warm 82°F and the visibility is nearly 100 feet. I am diving with my favorite dive buddies Randy, age 14 and Brandon age 12 – my sons. The main purpose of our dive is to try out our new Cannon 20D and see if I can snap a few pictures to decorate the wall in their bedrooms.

Halfway through the dive, I am focusing on a moray eel at a cleaning station, trying to convince the eel

and the banded coral shrimp to “pose” for me. My sons hover above, getting pretty bored. All of a sudden, Randy taps me on the shoulder and points towards his little brother. Brandon has found a porcupine fish and has started to taunt the fish, causing it to swell with water, a defense mechanism to discourage any would be attackers. Its defense is useless against the 80 pound Brandon Monster.

“Don’t harass the fish” I say through my mouthpiece – repeating the words of my father some 30 years ago. But of course Brandon does not speak bubble-language and I must resort to a more sophisticated form of communication. I hand the camera rig to Randy and start my disciplinary action against The Brandon Monster. I swim over, pull him away from the besieged porcupine fish and shake my finger at him. He gives me his best “It wasn’t me Dad”. We are only diving in 20 feet of water so I bring him to



Cannon 20D in an Ikelite housing w/ single DS125 strobe. ISO 200 Shutter speed

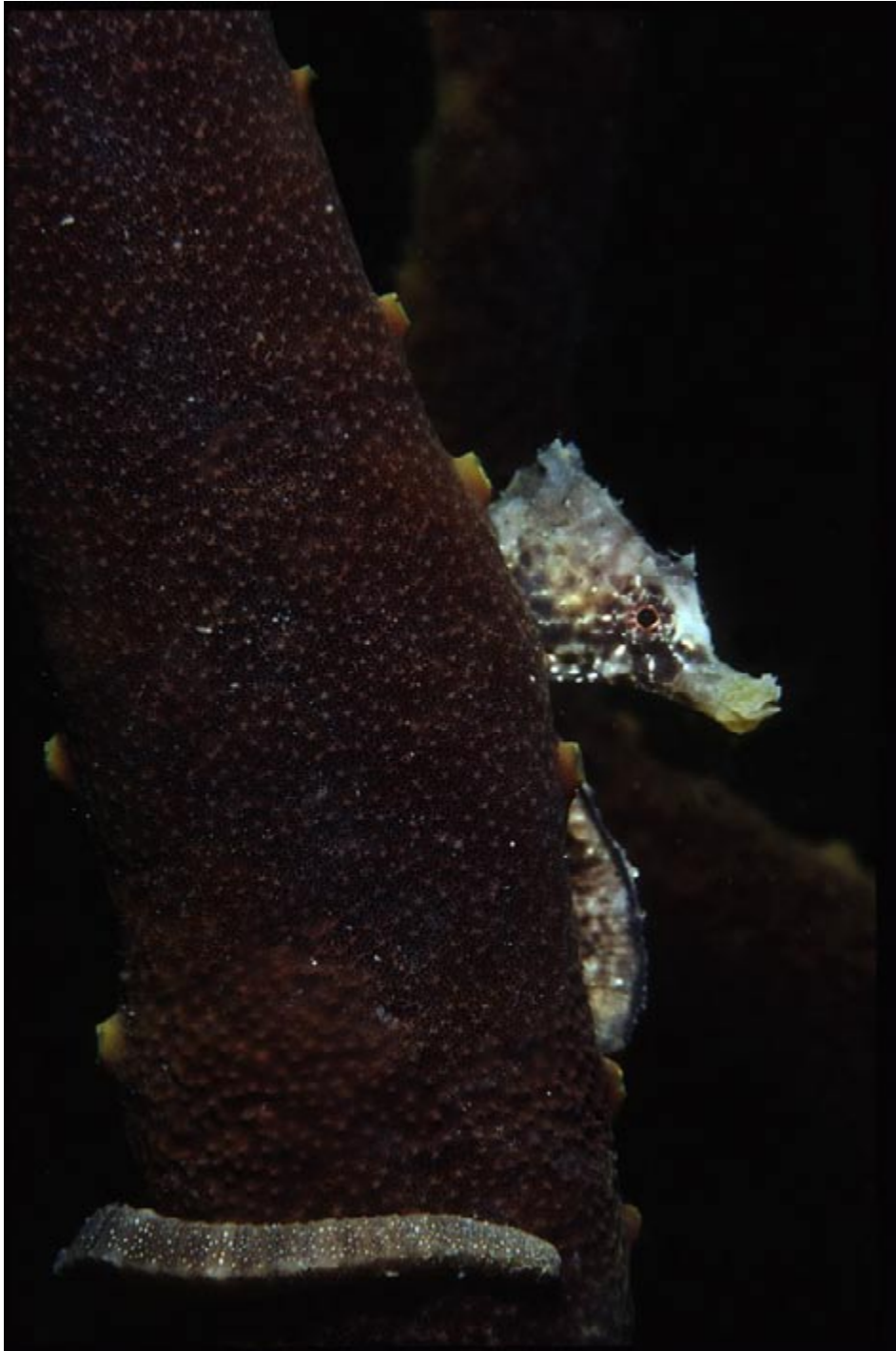
the surface to repeat the 30 year old slogan instilled in my head from my father “Don’t harass the fish”. I get the usual “Sorry Dad” and his face disappears back under the waves.

Upon our return to the bottom, I see that Randy has focused the camera on the over-stuffed porcupine fish and is snapping away with the Cannon.

Well, the photo now hangs on the wall in Brandon’s room with the caption:

‘Don’t Harass the Fish’

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Parting Shot 2

About three years ago, I was testing my film camera and housing for the first time. I had started my dive and began to look for a colourful subject to photograph.

I could see some divers observing something among the tubular sponges. When they realized that I was holding a camera they backed away and one of them pointed out the subject for me. It was a little seahorse, a grey one. I tried to photograph it, but it was hiding from my camera. I only managed one shot and continued my dive.

A week later, I viewed my roll of slides and cut off the uncolourful ones and put them in the wastebasket. My wife saw the seahorse picture and kept it.

Imagine my surprise when I found out I had won a prize in a contest with this little grey-uncolourful-seahorse!

Nowadays, I take the pictures, but my wife chooses them for me...

Nikon F100 film camera+ Hugyfot Arius Housing.

Lens Sigma 28-80mm @ 80mm macro mode. F22@1/250th -0.7 compensation Sea & Sea Flash YS120 TTL

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Do you have a nice shot with a
short story behind it?
If so e mail me and yours could be
the next "Parting shot".

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Parting Shot 3

I can count on one hand the number of times I've felt like something was "stalking" me underwater. When diving off the Channel Islands of Southern California you always keep thoughts of the "Landlord" (Great Whitey) in the back of your mind, especially hanging out doing green water deco. One time I actually might have seen one, just at the limit of visibility and for only a split second. More than likely it was my own brain making up stuff. In any case, there has never been solid evidence for a peeping "fish" following me until a particularly dark and cold dive at a place called Ship Rock a mile-and-a-half off Catalina Island in California.

The Rock is an exceptional dive site and you can do everything from a shallow kelp sojourn to a full on sub 200 foot technical dive on a vertical face in open water. It's definitely one of my favorite places. There also have been more than a few credible sightings of big critters with lots of teeth; including a killer whale standing on his head watching a diver take lobster out of a hole. Dolphin, barracuda, and gigantic schools of mackerel are no strangers here either.

It was with much excitement that we loaded up the gear and began our channel crossing. The overcast sky did not do the usual thinning, and in fact, it got darker as the morning wore on. The temperature dropped as well and we hardly saw any marine life, not even birds, on the trip over. There were no other boats at The Rock and the dark water was about as inviting as a tax audit.

Even in my dry suit the water felt c-c-cold and

the visibility was a dark 15 feet. Despite the conditions and my subdued mood I had elected to bring my camera. Once we hit our target depth of 80 feet we started a clockwise swim along the kelp perimeter. To the left was near black open-ocean and to the right was a dark foreboding looking fairy tale forest.

Within a couple of minutes a very strong emotion came over me and I began to make rapid spins looking behind me as we moved along. After a few more minutes I was sure I caught a glimpse of something fairly large darting in and out of the limits of visibility constantly following us. My imagination took hold full force and considering my frame of mind we decided to head up into shallower water and head back.

Once we got into lighter waters I started feeling kind of silly and actually began to enjoy the dive when I noticed a movement just ahead and below me. I started laughing because immediately I knew who my predatory stalker was. Shooting downward is rarely productive in u/w photography but as I drifted over my nemesis he peered up at me



Nikon D100, LMI Titan Housing, Nikkor 16mm, ISO 200, 1/100 @ f8, Raw

through the kelp and suddenly the whole day was worth it.

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