

Parting Shot

After a 16-day live aboard cruise, my husband and I decided to forgo the last dive on the last day of what had been a wonderful 50th Wedding Anniversary celebration for us. Our crew had been avoiding typhoon-impacted weather that had challenged everyone as we traveled from Ambon to Banda and back. We had already seen wonderful creatures, including a purple weedy rhinopias (scorpionfish), a paddle-flap rhinopias and a most cooperative juvenile batfish. What more could a dive trip offer?

We sent our BCDs and wetsuits to the engine room to dry. I cleaned and dried my DSLR camera, housing, and strobes, and removed O-rings and batteries and packed them away. While most of the guests had already left the boat, two professional photographers, Stephen Wong and Takako Uno, along with my husband, Jim, and I were the only two guests still aboard. Jim and I decided the dusk dive was not one we really wanted to make, so we settled in while Stephen and Takako boarded the dinghy for a last shallow dive in Ambon Bay before flying out the following day.

As we rested on deck, we heard the dingy returning and those on board shouting at the top of their lungs, "We found it! We found it!" Tears of joy streamed down Takako's cheeks as she and Stephen came on deck and described what they had found - the rarely seen Psychedelic Frog Fish!

We congratulated them heartily and felt our diving was over for that trip. But Stephen insisted that we must go see it for ourselves. I explained that we were tired and that our gear was all cleaned and packed. He grabbed me by the shoulders and said, "You must go!" How could we refuse? Everyone helped as I reassembled and tested my camera gear while our dive master retrieved and set up our dive gear on the dingy. In a short 20 minutes, we were on the dingy heading out to the site where another diver master waited to show us his find. Then, with a back roll off the dingy, we were down to 8 meters, where we saw it - the amazing fish. This was a muck dive and, by this time, it was a night dive with visibility that was not great. But there it was! Camera in hand, I was thrilled to photograph what few divers ever get a chance to see. Although I was excited, I was able to capture several shots of - the Holy Grail for divers - the Psychedelic Frog Fish! Lesson learned - don't ever forgo the last dive, last day! You never know when you will be treated to an amazing Parting Shot.

Barbara Hinton

DSLR Nikon 200 in Seacam Housing, 60mm macro lens, 2 Inon Z-240 strobes, camera (raw) manual settings with f/32, 1/250 s, ISO 250.



Do you have an image which has a 'story within a story'?
If so we'd love to hear from you.

**E mail us and yours could be
the next "Parting shot".**

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