



UK scorpion fish also yawn but this is not seen so frequently as in the tropics. Be patient with your subject and you might be rewarded but it happens quickly! Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 105 micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO 100, f16 1/200.

red colour. One of these sub tropical species was caught by a commercial fisherman in the Celtic Sea as recently as May of this year and of course many will claim that this is due to global warming which propagates warmer seas as a result. However, from personal experience that does not ring true as the winter water temperatures are much lower locally and the temperature has been slower to rise in the summer months and

indeed records of these “rare” fish in UK waters go back to the last century.

But the first thing you need to do is find your subject and only by discovering a few for yourself can you begin to develop a sense of what to look for. Sometimes I set out to specifically look for scorpion fish, but more often than not I am looking hard for something else when I realise that I am not alone. On a recent dive looking for nudibranchs I was just



Occasionally you will encounter a scorpion fish in a position to capture the reef and a touch of natural light behind with a wide angle zoom or wide macro set up. Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 10-17 FE zoom plus 2X teleconverter, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200, f11 1/30.

settling in to photograph one example when I realised it was actually beginning to crawl over the head of a scorpion fish! I have seen this before in the tropics but this was a first for me in the UK and it shows how focussed these fish are on maintaining their camouflage.

However, if you are on a specific hunt I find the best method on the reef is to look for slight irregularities

or the pattern of a fin amongst the sponges and weed and you will often spot a part of the fish before you see the head. Once spotted you can take your time to set up the camera and look for the best position and approach as these guys will rarely move unless they feel threatened or you touch them. If disturbed they will not move very far as they lack a swim bladder, but you need to watch



the move carefully so as not to lose sight and have to start the hunt again. Let your subject settle again for a few minutes and then begin another slow approach.

You can use a 105mm macro lens to good effect for tight portraits or detail shots whilst a 60mm also gives you the option of a full body image as well. I often use a wide macro set up as, if you are patient and careful, these fish will tolerate a very close approach and if they are in good position on the reef you can show the environment and perhaps some natural light behind the subject. I have found that getting close with a small dome port will produce a reflection of the subject and

Focussing in on just the eye of your scorpion fish subject will reveal the complexity of the colour and design of their camouflage. Nikon D200, Subal ND20, 105 micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO 100, f16 1/200.

Abstract compositions of the fins or patterns of these fish often make very attractive images. Nikon D200, Subal ND20, 105 micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO 100, f16 1/200.





This long spined scorpion fish is so determined to maintain his position that he is ignoring the approach of a nudibranch that thinks it is still crawling over the reef. Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 105 micro, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 100, f11 1/60.

being very bold and inquisitive the scorpion fish will often come forward to the camera port to investigate which opens yet more opportunities for candid shots.

Because these guys are so bold they make ideal subjects for practicing your lighting techniques on or trying different lens combinations to produce a slightly different image. If you are keen on snoot lighting then scorpion fish are the ideal model as long as you can control the position of the

snoot well enough not to invade their personal space. Selective lighting with a fibre optic snoot is very challenging and so you need time with a subject to be able to perfect your aim, distance of the snoot from the subject and flash power required.

A popular behavioural shot of tropical scorpion fish is the yawn which, dependant on which theory you believe, the fish will do regularly to stretch and exercise the jaw or possibly as a threat gesture to make



If you search carefully through the weed you will occasionally find an example that has recently moved from another habitat and has yet to adjust its colour and pattern which provides a greater contrast with the background. Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 105 micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO 100, f11 1/600.

themselves look bigger. I am with the exercise theory mostly as I have seen numerous scorpion fish (and other species) yawning with no visible threat close by. UK scorpion fish also yawn, although I have only seen this a handful of times, but if you spend long enough with a particular subject then you may get lucky to capture this, but you will need to be quick!

Once you have found your scorpion fish and it is behaving in front of the camera don't ignore

the opportunity to take some detail shots of the subject as well. Scorpion fish have the most exotic patterns and colouring to match their chosen habitat and a macro shot of the skin, fin or the eye will produce some very striking abstract compositions.

We can think of ourselves as eco-hunters and good proportion of an underwater photography dive is devoted to the hunt for the perfect subject and quite often you may find nothing at all. So there can be great



Scorpion fish love to hide amongst weed and this one is watching me through almost translucent red weed which it has matched the camouflage pattern to perfectly. Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 105 micro, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 100, f11 1/60

satisfaction in seeking a particular species, finding it and then applying technique to bring back a good image. We rarely capture the perfect image and that of course is what keeps us coming back for more and to perhaps experiment with new techniques in the quest for that elusive state of perfection!

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Underwater Photography Workshops with Mark Webster
 Red Sea 13-20 October 2013
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Guidelines for contributors

The response to UwP has been nothing short of fantastic. We are looking for interesting, well illustrated articles about underwater photography. We are looking for work from existing names but would also like to discover some of the new talent out there and that could be you! UwP is the perfect publication for you to increase your profile in the underwater photography community.

The type of articles we're looking for fall into five main categories:

Uw photo techniques - Balanced light, composition, etc

Locations - Photo friendly dive sites, countries or liveaboards

Subjects - Anything from whale sharks to nudibranchs in full detail

Equipment reviews - Detailed appraisals of the latest equipment

Personalities - Interviews/features about leading underwater photographers

**If you have an idea for an article,
contact me first before putting pen to paper.
E mail peter@uwpmag.com**

How to submit articles

To keep UwP simple and financially viable, we can only accept submissions by e mail and they need to be done in the following way:

1. The text should be saved as a TEXT file and attached to the e mail

2. Images must be attached to the e mail and they need to be 144dpi

Size - Maximum length 15cm i.e. horizontal pictures would be 15 cm wide and verticals would be 15cm.

File type - Save your image as a JPG file and set the compression to "Medium" quality. This should result in images no larger than about 120k which can be transmitted quickly. If we want larger sizes we will contact you.

3. Captions - **Each and every image MUST have full photographic details** including camera, housing, lens, lighting, film, aperture, shutter speed and exposure mode. These must also be copied and pasted into the body of the e mail.

Parting Shots 1

One of the many “lucky “ and “exciting” finds diving around the Blue Heron Bridge (West Palm Beach FL.) is without a doubt a Southern Stargazer (*Astroscopus y-graecum*).

These elusive fish bury themselves in the substrate and ambush unsuspecting prey as they swim by. They are difficult to find when they are buried because all that is visible is the mouth and eyes. Most divers will just swim right over top of them without ever knowing what to look for.

On this particular dive I came upon a free swimming Stargazer perched on the sand under the East span of the bridge in 12 feet (4 meters) of water. Although I dive the bridge often and have seen them buried before, this free swimmer was indeed treat to observe and photograph.

As I set up to take a few shots with my Canon S90 I was very impressed with its size, shape and coloration. Feeling vulnerable the fish started to dig itself down into the sand. Using its fins like little shovels it shook itself from side to side displacing the sand creating a small dust cloud. Deeper and deeper it went and after a few minutes of digging only its head was visible.

To many people the image of a Southern Stargazer is simply its unique face which has the image of a “star” (follow the points from its eyes down to its mouth corners and you will see it).

Never failing to impress, again today, the Blue Heron Bridge delivered more of its aquatic magic.



Free swimming Stargazer under the East span of the Blue Heron Bridge. Canon S90 in Fisheye Fix housing, ISO 200 F2.5 1/40 sec (no strobe)

Stargazer smile. Canon S90 in Fisheye Fix housing, ISO 200 F3.5 1/320 sec (no strobe)

Stargazer body. Canon S90 in Fisheye Fix housing, ISO 200 F3.5 1/250 sec (no strobe)

Stargazer burying itself in sand. Canon S90 in Fisheye Fix housing, ISO 200 F3.5 1/250 sec (no strobe)

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Parting Shots 2

If you do not dive in the temperate waters of the UK you might imagine life below the surface to be dull and grey and visibility limited to a couple of meters. Whilst there are stormy days that produce these conditions there are others when the conditions will challenge some tropical destinations for colour and diversity.

One fish species we have which looks like it should be on a tropical reef is the cuckoo wrasse. Like most wrasse these fish start life as a female only graduating to male when the dominant male within a territory expires. Becoming the dominant male means developing a very striking blue and orange livery and responsibility for a harem of female cuckoo wrasse.

These fish are very bold and guard their territory jealously and will immediately and fearlessly approach a diver to investigate and perhaps try to chase you off. This particular fish was giving me a hard time during a dive on a reef named Hands Deep some nine miles offshore from Plymouth. We had arrived here on a perfect summer day with flat calm seas as if by magic.....(for the uninitiated this is an extremely subtle but effective plug for our revered editor's charter boat and his exemplary seamanship.....)

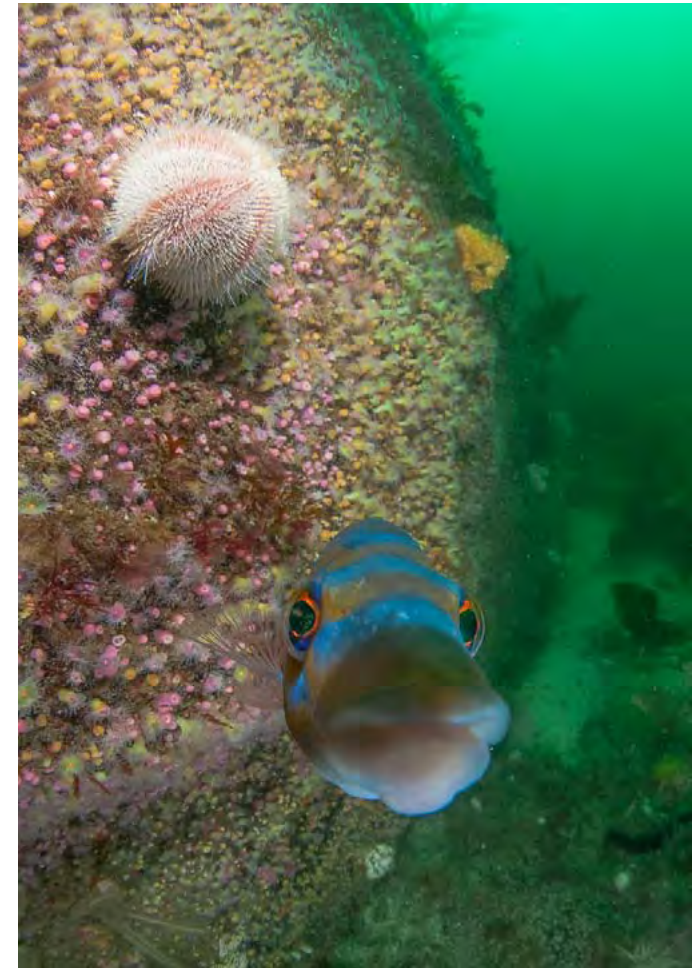
From the moment I arrived in a gully and began to set up for some wide angle shots this male cuckoo was with me peering into my mask, following my every move, nibbling my gloves and generally making a nuisance of himself!

I was literally having to gently push this fish out of the way as I set up a shot, but he kept



Nikon D300, Subal ND2, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f16 1/30.

persisting with his investigation of my every move. Eventually I gave up for a few minutes and let him come towards the dome port to investigate his own reflection which he obviously thought was a challenger to his harem. He came closer and closer and finally put his nose on the port and pushed several times to see off this impertinent intruder to his domain.



So I ended up with a series of images which includes the cuckoo with his snout squashed against the dome, a real example of voluntary interaction!

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Parting Shots 3

Diving in the early morning hours is a favorite of mine. It is a peaceful time when the nocturnal sea life retreat and the day-time foragers begin their search for food. During a recent vacation, when the dive operator offered a 5:45 a.m. dive, I jumped at the chance.

Awaking in time to splash before dawn was a bit of a challenge even for an early riser like myself. My dive buddy is not an early riser by nature, but he took one for the team, so that I could enjoy the underwater sunrise. The sun was barely breaking the horizon as we did a giant stride from the back of the boat.

Up in the distance, we could see the outline of a turtle. Upon approach, it became clear there were two turtles in a turf war over a sponge destined to be breakfast. I observed as the smaller yet fiercer turtle aggressively pushed the larger turtle away. At one point, the smaller turtle resorted to biting the front flipper of the larger turtle. This was the winning maneuver in the war and allowed breakfast to begin.

Apprehension arose as I thought about staging my photos. Should I approach while the turtle is eating? Will I receive the same treatment as the larger turtle? Will I just scare the turtle away? I started taking photos

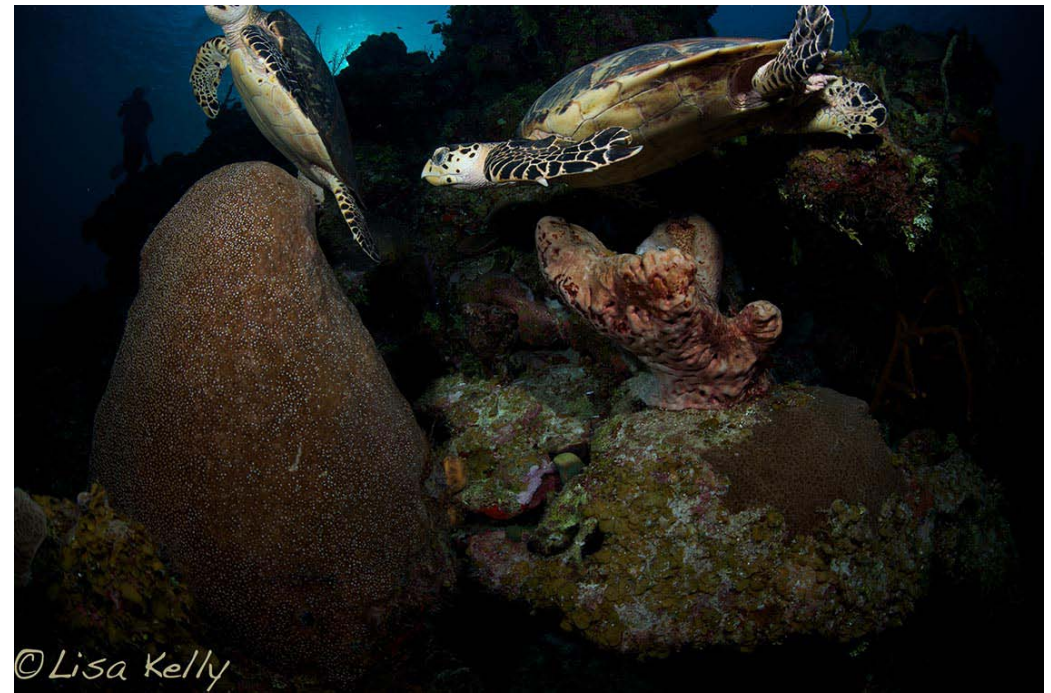
from a distance and slowly began inching my way closer.

The turtle had absolutely no concerns about me, and knew that I would not impede breakfast. Breaking off pieces of sponge proved to be difficult for the turtle. He would often latch onto the sponge with his mouth and brace his front flippers to begin the game of tug-o-war (as shown in the picture). When the opponent finally let loose, the turtle would fall back in victory, munching on mouthful of sponge as his prize. Meanwhile, a nearby French Angelfish would swoop in and quickly grab up the sponge shrapnel suspended in the water then dart away awaiting the next opportunity.

For twenty minutes, we watched as the turtle devoured the sponge, oblivious to our presence. The turtle headed to the surface, but soon returned to the sponge buffet. We watched for another twenty minutes, and then had to head back to the boat. It was an up-close experience I cherish, and reaffirmed my conviction that early morning dives do not disappoint.

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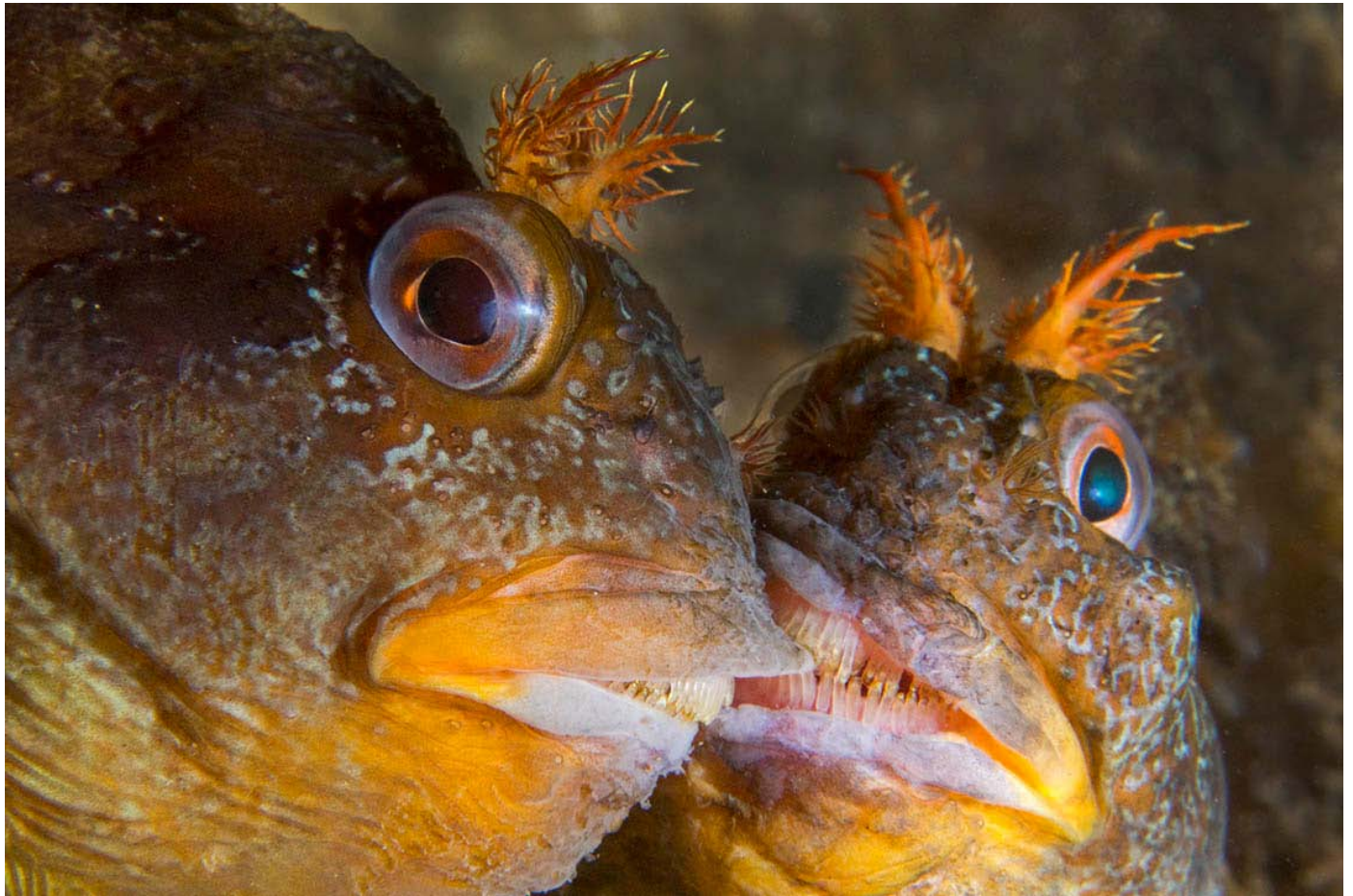
Parting Shots 4

Tompot blennies look cute. I watch them every year scooting around under Swanage Pier, UK as they become increasingly bold throughout the diving season.

I laugh as they sometimes nibble my gloves while I'm lining up to take a photo of them. Make no mistake though, if these little critters were the size of labradors, Swanage Pier would not have nearly the diver footfall that it enjoys.

The crazy independently-rotating eyeballs, adorable unkempt eyebrows and precocious behaviour would not be nearly so cute. These two bruisers were taking no prisoners in their battle for territory, their razor sharp little teeth digging into each other's (misplaced?) scarred face.

Taken with the Olympus OMD-EM5, 12-50mm lens, Nauticam NA-EM5 housing, F18, 1/100, ISO 200.



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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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