

Parting Shot

Capturing images of animal behaviour is one of the hardest things to do underwater. Some you can plan with a lot of research and being in the right spot at the right time, but the great majority of these shots are pure luck. On a recent trip to Loloata Island, off Port Moresby, I had one of those lucky moments, but didn't even know it!

I was on my second trip to Loloata Island to explore its many wonderful reefs and wrecks, which most divers miss when they by-pass the capital to dive more exotic parts of Papua New Guinea. One of my favourite sites is very close to the island, a muck diving site at Lion Island.

Located at the northern end of the island is a sloping sandy bottom which is home to a great range of critters. But the best concentration of marine life at this site is found on a scuttled yacht called the Lady Jules. Covered in corals and home to numerous small reef fish, this yacht is also occupied by hundreds of cleaner shrimps and also groups of ghost pipefish.

Locating a group of three ornate ghost pipefish hiding in the soft black corals under the bow I proceeded to shoot numerous images of these cute fish. I shot group photos when they aligned, but spent most of my time focusing on the largest female of the group.

When changing camera positions I noticed out of the corner of my eye the female suddenly yawn. I was annoyed to have missed the photo opportunity of the yawn and proceeded to shoot several more images of this lovely creature and then moved onto other subjects.

Later that day I downloaded the images and



while reviewing the ghost pipefish shots I noticed that the large female appeared to have grown some extra chin whiskers from one image to the next. I then arrived at this close up and realised that when I had seen her yawn she had actually captured a tiny shrimp - that was hanging out of her mouth!

A wonderful behaviour image captured completely by accident.

Nikon D90, Ikelite housing, 60mm lens, 1/100, f16, ISO 200, single Inon Z240 strobe

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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