

Lembeh Workshop

by Paul Macdonald

It was with great excitement that we boarded the boat to head off on the first dive of our Lembeh Strait adventure. Before we knew it we had rolled into the warm 27 degree water and critter hunting amongst the black volcanic sand. The macro life here is simply amazing with some of the strangest creatures.

We had arrived at Eco Divers the day before coming from Adelaide, Elizabeth and I leading a group of 4 other underwater photographers. Eco Divers Lembeh offers a very unique resort and dive experience. Nights are spent in the comfort of a resort and the day is spent diving from a day liveaboard.

They provided us a personalized service that was without equal. The resort caters for a maximum of just 16 divers. The rooms, all with air conditioning and ensuite bathrooms were immaculately presented and very comfortable. And close to every room was an indoor camera room with charging points, desktop computer and ample workspace. We also had free WiFi connection throughout the resort.

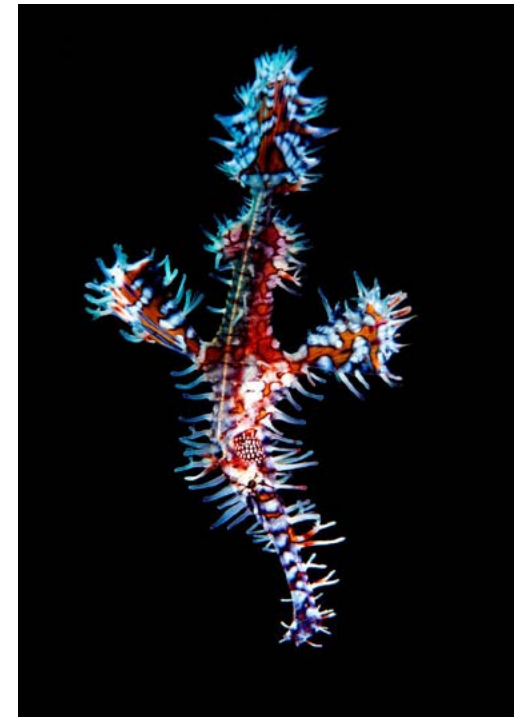
The meals at Eco Divers Lembeh were divine with numerous choices

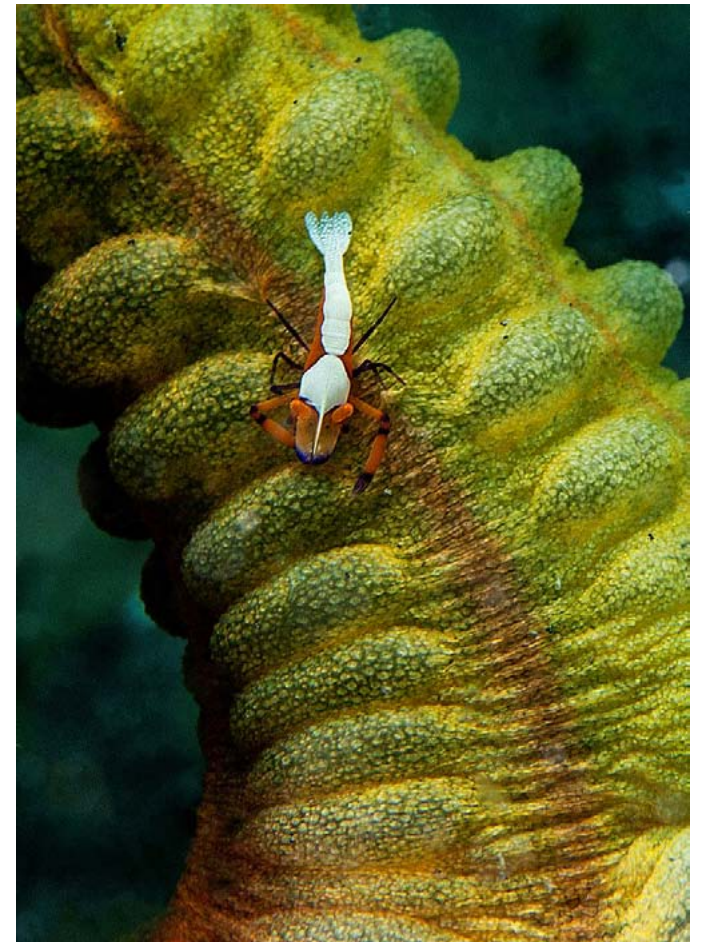
on the menu that catered for all tastes. Breakfast and dinner was served in the open air restaurant where we would gather with others to discuss all things diving and underwater photography.

Our hosts at Eco Divers were Tarkan Sever and Kathrin Heussner. Both were very amiable and made our stay extremely comfortable. They did everything with a smile and nothing was too much trouble.

Dives were organised in a very unique way. In the morning around 8 am we left the resort and travelled by air conditioned vehicle to a wharf about 15 minutes away. Here we boarded a speed boat which took us out to the Eco Divers day liveaboard. For the length of our trip our dive gear remained on the liveaboard and was set up for us by the friendly staff prior to each dive. All diving in the Lembeh

All images shot with a Nikon D700 in a Sea & Sea housing with Sea & Sea strobes and a 105mm macro lens.





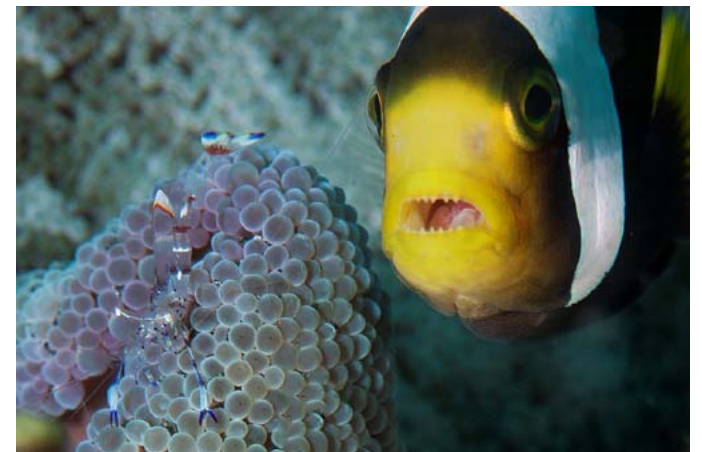
Strait emanated from the liveaboard which would moor only a few minutes by speed boat away from the days dive sites. The purpose built liveaboard had WiFi, battery charging points, large freshwater tubs for soaking cameras after dives, toilets and showers, a sunbathing deck, a spacious dive deck and a comfortable saloon where one could sit and relax between dives. We had 3 dives per day with the option of a night dive also.

Prior to each dive a briefing was provided by the very knowledgeable divemasters. Then it was off in the boats to the various dive sites to enjoy the Lembeh underwater world. Diving is over gently

sloping black volcanic sand or on reef walls. The black sand makes an excellent backdrop to allow underwater photographers to isolate their subjects.

When I first descended to the bottom and saw nothing but black sand I thought myself “what am I doing here”. Then with the help of the guide a whole new world opened up. The sand isn’t as barren as it first appeared and there were all sorts of fantastic things to see. Soon you are overwhelmed by the macro life that presents in front of your camera lens.

Our divemasters Horine, Man and Lorens were amazing, they could spot the tiniest and most well





camouflaged creatures easily. And with a maximum of only 4 divers per guide, there was plenty of time for all of us photographers to work with our subjects. It really is a macro photographer's paradise and over the course of the trip I didn't once consider using a wide angle lens.

Whilst we were there, I conducted a number of underwater photography workshop sessions for our participants to help them get the most out of the photographic opportunities that presented

www.uwpmag.com

themselves whilst they were there.

So if you are into weird and strange marine creatures and / or nudibranchs then Lembeh Strait is for you. In fact it was so good that we are going back there again in June / July 2015. Again the trip will be limited to 6 divers including Elizabeth and myself. If you would like to join us for more information email me.

Paul Macdonald
paul@downunderpix.com
www.downunderpix.com