

The last few days, having seen so many new and interesting animals, I decided to use the macro lens, the 105mm VR mostly. The technique used in tropical waters was very similar in temperate waters, AF-C 3D focusing mode with back button focus on the thumb lever. I stuck to the settings with which I am comfortable to give me enough depth of field as a buffer and went to work.

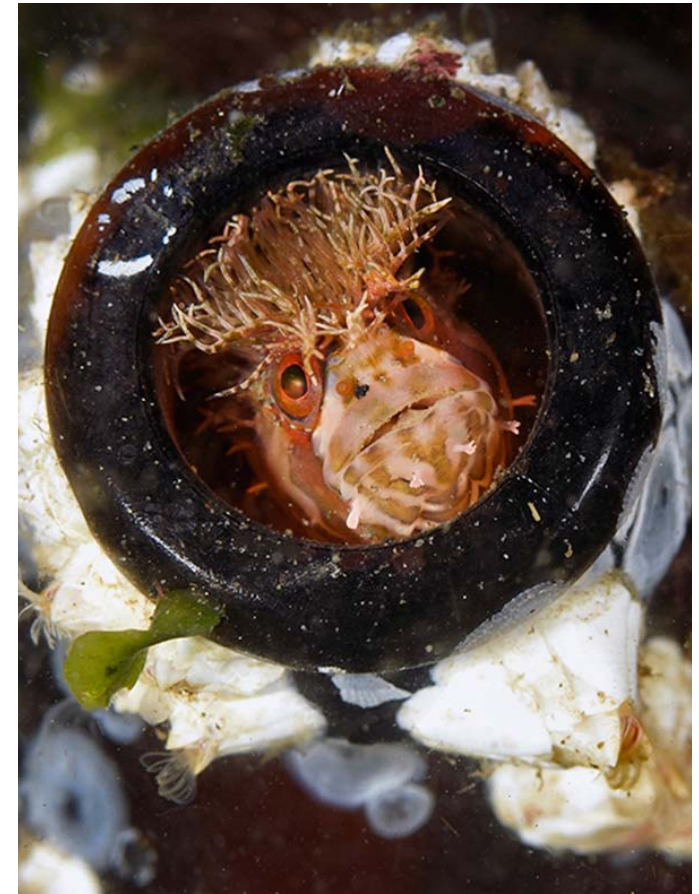
The first subject on the hit-list was the Grunt Sculpin, a unique little fish similar to a devilfish in that it uses its spiny pectoral fins to crawl over the sandy bottom. It has an odd appearance and anyone interested in marine life should read up on its very idiosyncratic defensive behaviour of using its transparent tail to mimic a feeding barnacle.

I had the amazing Decorated Warbonnet high on my critter hit list as our UK offerings, the Tompot and Yarrell's blennies are distinctly less glamorous. I'm sad to say that I left without seeing one of these charismatic critters, as good an excuse as any to return. However, Bill and Annie told us about the Mosshead Warbonnets living in numerous discarded glass bottles directly under the God's Pocket pier. A couple of night dives and we had discovered them and made the most of photographing them whilst trying not to kick up the fine silty bottom.

Macro subjects were just falling over themselves to be photographed, the real challenge was to limit oneself to three or four per dive. A favourite site by far was the world famous Browning Wall, just 5 minutes from God's Pocket resort. This is a long wall forming part of the Browning Pass but one particular length some 100m



in length undulates vertically creating current eddies and feeding some of the richest and most colourful soft coral and sponge life I have seen. At either end of this 100m section of the wall, the colourful life suddenly falls off into white, orange and pink plumose anemones but the Browning Wall stretch is an absolute treat to the senses. Photographically though it is an advanced site with a near vertical drop heading to the depths below but every single



Nauticam NA-D7200, 105mm VR, F22, 1/200, ISO 320

inch of wall is covered and encrusted with life.

My final love affair in our brief trip to this Canadian wonderland was with the plentiful medusae, and in particular, the amphipod life living symbiotically on their surfaces. They have this fascinating behaviour of burrowing a small dent in the jellyfish's surface and then sitting in there with their legs in the air, wiggling them about presumably to catch passing plankton for



Nauticam NA-D7200, 105mm VR, F22, 1/200, ISO 320

their lunch. Some of the jellyfish had many of these little bug visitors, very fascinating to watch. If only I'd had more time!!

As I'm sure you can tell, I fell in love with Vancouver Island's underwater paradise. Having not done much cold water diving, I fear the chilly depths may have a lot to live up to in the future to equal or surpass what we saw during these 10 days. Photographically, you can also see from my settings that I curbed any real creative experimentation, in part because these were all new subjects to

me, in part because we were limited to short dives, quite quickly because cold and somewhat demotivated, and perhaps I was already task laden with the strenuous nature of the diving. I also cannot stress the importance of knowing your camera and housing system inside out before taking on serious cold water photography. In my position now, I'm fortunate to test and play with many different cameras, lighting options, and underwater 'toys', each with different menu systems and ergonomics peculiarities. The temptation was there to try and



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test new products but

I'm pleased that I limited myself to the very familiar. I feel the results may have been very different had I not.

A final word which seems appropriate is that you need to put God's Pocket on your bucket list, I am still in awe just reliving the experience in writing this article and reediting the images. Oh, and the beer and the people are great too!

Alex Tattersall
www.uwvisions.com



Small ads



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Ikelite housing for a Canon 5D MKII, Ikelite 8" dome port (no scratches) for a Canon fish eye lens, Ikelite ports Canon 17-40mm and a macro 100mm IS lens. I am based in Scarborough, U.K. £1100 ovnoroaminrobin@hotmail.com

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Subtronic Nova analog version no ttl converter

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