

\$5.95 US/CAN

scubah2omag.com

February 2015 | Vol 19 • Issue 2

SCUBA & H₂O

A D V E N T U R E

TODAY
YOU ARE
FREE



**Marvelous
Mission Bay**
San Diego, CA



**Exploring
River to Bay**
Diving Delaware



**Experience
Deep Passions**
Panama City, FL

SE	Hotnews	6
	Artificial Reef	8
	Lionfish Workshop	9
	Panama City, Florida	11
NE	Hotnews	14
	LIDA Annual Film Festival	16
	Diving Delaware	17
MW	Hotnews	20
	Marlin's Scuba Seeks Divers	21
	OW-U Shares Blue Show	22
	Republic of Kinmount, Ontario	23
NW	Hotnews	26
	SCUBA & H2O Adventure Show	28
	Port Townsend, Washington	29
	Race to Alaska	32
	Port Townsend Learning Center	33
SW	Hotnews	34
	Dive Pirates Set Sail	36
	Mission Bay, San Diego, California	37
	Call of the Wild, UW Photography	40
	Commercial Diving, <i>Ragin' Cajun</i>	42
	Verde Island, Philippines	44
	Remembering Ella Jean Morgan	48
	Heart Health, DAN	49
	Orca - Today You Are Free	50
	Air Specialties, Instructor Series	52
	Fit & Healthy Diver, Coach Izzy	54
	Andy's Critter Corner	55
	Gear Check	56
	Directories	57



Cover by Amos Nachoum

Amos is a photographer and explorer, his work has been published around the globe. He operates a cutting edge adventure travel company and works tirelessly to bring attention to the preservation of fragile underwater life.

Publisher: Rick Stratton

rick@divenewsnetwork.com

Managing Editor: John Tapley

editor@divenewsnetwork.com

Editorial Assistant: Jennifer Wilkins

webeditor@divenewsnetwork.com

Graphic Designer: Katie Myers

graphics@divenewsnetwork.com

Show Manager: Selene Muldowney

selene@divenewsnetwork.com

Advertising Sales: Roosevelt Rumble

nwsales@divenewsnetwork.com

Circulation/Subscriptions:

360.240.1874

For more info, please visit

www.scubah2omag.com

What do you value?

As the calendar page changes we move on from January and its New Year promises. Those who made resolutions may have already broken them or are still working on them. As we welcome February those of us in the business are already busy preparing for spring - we are heading out to the trade show circuit going to connect with new customers and reconnect with others. In this process I always find myself meeting new people who do not know our brand. They may have heard of our individual magazines but have not connected them to the Dive News Network. When I tell them we publish one magazine - The Scuba & H2O Adventure Magazine - they are always interested.

The conversation always turns to values - what we do sometimes changes and depends on the circumstances - what we value remains constant. At DNN we value local diving and local water sports adventures. We are all about the local community - helping produce our own events or promoting local community events. Those events run the gamut from small open houses and tent sales to larger tournaments and competitions of all kinds. We have sponsored events like spearfishing, lionfish harvesting, and photo contests - all designed to help the community grow and be more active.

We are launching a new website - one that better reflects the magazine and orientation to the magazine itself. Our new landing page better explains who we are as a company and easily connects the readers with the magazine and ultimately the community. It allows them to read the magazine quickly and easily. We congratulate Katie Myers and Selene Muldowney for the new designs and thank them for all their hard work.

Check out the new website and read the magazine. Let us know what you think and see you on the water!

Rick



Puerto Galera and Verde Island: The Jewels of the Philippines



Author Christopher Weaver examines a large barrel sponge

Article & Photos by Michael Salvatore & Christopher P. Weaver, Eco-Photo Explorers

The movement was barely perceptible. Did we see it or were we mistaken?

One of the first indicators of middle age is diminished eyesight but even with the best vision this was becoming a real challenge! Sitting on a sandy bottom in an increasing current at about 90 feet (30 meters), we were scouring a large purple sea fan. Carefully examining every inch of the contorted branches, we looked for the slightest movement... and there it was! After an excruciating search, we now locked in on our quarry: a pregnant Pygmy Sea Horse perfectly camouflaged to match the host sea fan. The wait was worth it as we composed several images before leaving this diminutive creature in peace to continue our dive along the reefs near Sabang in the Philippines.

The Philippines, and its 7000 islands, is the world's second largest archipelago and is located in the heart of the coral triangle, the epicenter of biodiversity in the world's oceans. We were here to explore the vibrant reefs of Puerto Galera in the Oriental Mindoro region, and to visit one of the most special dive spots in the area, Verde Island.

Our first dives were near the town of Sabang and we were delighted to find healthy coral outcroppings, and a dizzying array of dazzling reef fish. For example, at a dive site known as Monkey Beach we were instantly enraptured by the playful antics of the numerous species of anemonefish we found there. A little further to the east, Sinandigan Wall introduced us to a large Hawksbill Turtle and a robust Cuttlefish, as well as a plethora of vividly colored nudibranchs

and other tiny macro subjects. The reefs of this area are also home to countless numbers of Crinoids, and they come in seemingly endless varieties and color patterns. Be careful as you swim near these critters...they love to hitchhike on unsuspecting divers who accidentally brush against them!

Speaking of things to look out for, we wondered if there were any real marine dangers in the Philippines. Divers will undoubtedly spot the venomous Lionfish on any number of dives, as well as the poisonous Stonefish lying in wait on the reefs. Occasionally, a Banded Sea Snake will slither its way between divers, a well-known marine predator that can kill a man with its bite. None of these creatures has any interest in harming human beings and if they are given the right measure of respect, divers have nothing to fear.

But the most fearsome creature on the reefs is an unlikely one: Get too close to the lair of the resident Damselfish and divers risk an attack. This small reef dweller, measuring no more than three inches in length, backs down for no one! You might think that a six-foot diver blowing noisy bubbles and flashing a bright strobe would intimidate this fish, but you would be mistaken. Indeed, linger too long and this fish will actually rush you and, if necessary, bite! Perhaps there is a horror movie to be made about giant mutant Damselfish in the future!

A night dive at a site known as La Laguna Point brought an encounter with the flamboyantly colored, but incredibly shy, Mandarinfish. Descending to about 25 feet (eight meters), we settled on the bottom near a pile of coral rubble



It takes a sharp eye, or a good guide, to find the expertly camouflaged Pygmy Sea Horse (Hippocampus bargibanti)

as the sun was setting and began a long vigil, waiting patiently for the amorous Mandarinfish to begin their mating ritual. It took a while, but after about 45 minutes of stoic observation, the urge to mate took precedence over the reticence of the fish and we were witness to the dénouement of their proceedings. The trick, of course, is to compose, focus and properly expose an image in the dark of night of an event between two fish no longer than an inch in length that lasts no longer than two seconds!

Besides reefs swirling with marine life, divers visiting this area can also explore several interesting and photogenic shipwrecks. In March of 2003, a Philippine cargo vessel named the *Almajane* was intentionally sunk in about 90 feet (30 meters) of water. This 90 foot (30 meter) steel hulled ship sits perfectly upright and is now resting quietly on a sandy bottom near La Laguna. Prior to its sinking, the ship was cleaned of debris and dangerous objects, and is very safe to penetrate for divers with the right experience. Here, divers will find resident sweetlips, as well as schools of batfish, snapper and jacks, making the *Almajane* their home.

About an hour's boat ride from Puerto Galera is Verde Island. This is a special place and we knew it the moment we dipped our facemasks under the water here. At Verde Island Dropoff, one of the premier dive sites in the entire region, we were immediately transfixed by the clouds of brilliantly colored Basslets that swarm over the coral heads, and by numerous Red Anthias thrown in for good measure. Indeed, Verde island is where the biodiversity of the coral triangle is on full display. Everywhere we looked, we encountered

The mating of the Mandarinfish (Synchiropus splendidus) is a highlight



ATLANTIS
Philippines
DIVE RESORTS & LIVEABOARDS

PUERTO GALERA • DUMAGUETE • TUBBATAHA • BOHOL • MALAPASCUA

ATLANTIS AZORES

*Arrive as a guest,
leave as a friend*

Atlantis Puerto Galera "The Grand Dame of Puerto Galera Dive Resorts"
Lonely Planet

Centrally located within minutes from all Puerto Galera dive sites.

Telephone: +63 (0)43 287-3066 or 3067 or 3069
Mobile Phone: +63 (0)917 895-2920

www.atlantishotel.com reservations@atlantishotel.com



The Striped Catfish (*Plotosus lineatus*) often form tightly packed schools containing hundreds of fish foraging for food in the sandy bottom



The "flashes" of the Electric Fileclam (*Ctenoides ales*) are mesmerizing

different varieties of fish too numerous to list here. Along the sloping reefs, squadrons of surgeonfish fluttered in the current, while hawkfish, cardinalfish, blennies and gobies peeked out from every nook and cranny of the reef. Butterflyfish flitted around the coral heads searching for food, but it takes a sharp eye to find some of the tiny frogfish and expertly catalogued reef critters that make this area their home. Indeed, we were thrilled to photograph many species of beguiling shrimp, crabs and other invertebrate life.

The Electric Fileclam is one of the more unique denizens of these coral recesses. Tucked underneath a ledge, we found several of these mesmerizing bivalves. With blazing red mantles and long flowing tendrils these clams are striking... but it is their flashing white pattern that draws our attention. Research has shown that the clam uses a thin strip of highly

reflective soft tissue along the outer edge of its mantle to create the flashing pattern. By briefly exposing this strip the bivalve creates the appearance of a flashing light.

Our final dive was at a site known as Secret Bay. While much of our diving in this region found us exploring lush coral gardens, riotous reef walls and shipwrecks, Secret Bay is a true muck diving experience and one not to be missed. Swimming along a nondescript sandy bottom, the treasures of the Philippines slowly reveal themselves. Nudibranchs with ridiculous color schemes are the first to appear. Next, we spot upside down jellyfish pulsating on the bottom. An Orangutan Crab lies in wait in a small pile of coral rubble. There, under a small pile of rubble is a Mantis Shrimp, ready to clobber its next prey. A tiny shrimp is perfectly hidden along a whip coral frond. Other species of delicate shrimps



Hawaii

Land of Aloha

Seasport Divers
800.685.5889
www.seasportdivers.com



 **Kauai**

Ed Robinson's Diving Adventures
808.879.3584
www.mauiscuba.com



 **Maui**

Jack's Diving Locker
800.345.4807
www.jacksdivinglocker.com



 **Hawaii**

Dolphins and Manta Rays and Reefs - Oh my!



Author Christopher Weaver exploring the reefs near Puerto Galera



These brilliantly colored blue Tunicates stand out on the reef

can be found on the undersides of tube worms and small anemones. Starfish, sea urchins and flatworms are the welcoming committee to a fascinating encounter with an Ornate Ghost Pipefish.

Sadly, our tanks eventually run low on air and we must leave this special spot. Our diving in the Philippines has only whetted our appetite for more. We are certain that we have only scratched the surface of what this special corner of the world has to offer and we know that we will return, armed with a camera and an open mind. Who knows what treasures we will encounter next time?

SPOTLIGHT ON MARCO VINCENT DIVE RESORT

Located on White Beach in Puerto Galera is the Marco Vincent Dive Resort. This Mediterranean inspired property boasts 38 tastefully furnished rooms that are the most spacious in the Puerto Galera Area. The resort features three restaurants (two onsite and one beach front), an indoor pool and Jacuzzi as well as a full service dive shop located adjacent to the property.

Guests of Marco Vincent Dive Resort are taken care of the moment they arrive into the country. Representatives will meet guests at the airport, take them to the port at Batangas and arrange for ferry transport to Puerto Galera. Throughout their stay, a very cheerful, capable and helpful staff tends to the needs of resort guests.

Marco Vincent Divers currently features two dive boats: *Lady Merci* is a 40-foot single hull dive boat fully equipped to comfortably support the needs of divers. *Big Beth* is an impressive 82 foot custom equipped dive boat that can accommodate up to 28 divers on dives to Verde Island, Puerto Galera and remote locations such as Anilao. The dive center has a full complement of rental gear and offers a variety of PADI training options. It is complete with a swimming pool, classroom facilities and Nitrox capabilities.

Visitors to any area, including Puerto Galera, should take some time to experience more than just the sites under the water. The staff at Marco Vincent can arrange for zip line tours, treks to nearby volcanoes and waterfalls, and visits to World War II sites, including Corrigedor Island, home to a fascinating war memorial and museum. ■



The Reef Lizardfish (*Synodus variegates*) strikes an intimidating pose

MARCO VINCENT DIVE RESORT
White Beach, Puerto Galera, Philippines

Puerto Galera • Verde Island
Anilao • Wreck Diving • Night Diving

Marco Vincent Dive Center 1 is located on White Beach, Puerto Galera, Philippines. Rinse tubs, showers and other facilities for your comfort are just a few steps away from the crystal clear waters of the cove. Experienced and hard core divers will appreciate our state of the art scuba dive boats and cruisers. Our seasoned scuba dive pros will ensure your hassle free and safe scuba diving holiday.

1(866) 819-6165 • mvdive.com