



Lembbeh Resort

News Letter – October / November 2008

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What Our Dive Guides Are Showing Guests



Martin Heyn

It may be impossible to believe, but critter diversity has increased these past few months in Lembbeh Strait. Ghost pipefish are the talk of the Straits! Andy counted 11 ornate ghost pipefish on one dive at Hair Ball II. At Angel's Window we saw a yellow pair on a crynoid, (the female was very pregnant), a black one on the next crynoid and a purple velvet ghost pipefish near the cave. While ascending, we also found a pair of robust ghost pipefish!

Velvet ghost pipefish are not very common, but currently we have a brown one on Nudi Falls, a purple one at Aer Prang 3 and Gayus found a very unusual black velvet ghost pipe fish at California Dreaming. At Nudi Retreat we had a pair of Halimeda ghost pipefish in the shallows and another pair on Serena Besar. Photographers are having a field day as robust ghost

Cooking Competition

Lembbeh Resort Head Chef and Vice Chairman of Indonesia Chef Association (ICA) – North Sulawesi, Dedy Wuy, coordinated the first ever Bakurebe (cooking competition) in August. Forty-five cooks from different resorts, hotels and restaurants throughout the province participated in preparing a tasty main course using corn and noodle as compulsory ingredients.

Lembbeh Resort Assistant Cook Arifin took 4th place, exceeding expectations because most participants had higher positions and more years of experience than Arifin. Dedy said, "actually he placed higher but points were deducted because I was one of the judges."

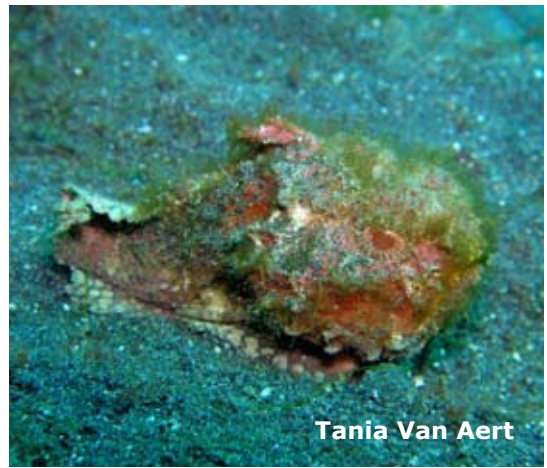
The mission of ICA is to enhance culinary human resources throughout the country.



pipefish are abundant throughout the Strait. Ambon scorpionfish sightings have increased dramatically as well! There are two brown pairs resident at Jahir, and at TK 3 we regularly see one brown pair and another green pair. Once we had 5 sitting together. At one of our new dive sites, Air Bajo, we've been seeing a black version of the Ambon.

Gayus found 3 Denise pygmies at Batu Sandar, the first sightings after a long period of absence. Bargibanti pygmies can be seen at different dive sites in yellow and pink colorations. Common and thorny seahorses are found regularly – some of which have been carrying eggs. We're hoping our customers get lucky and catch the moment of hatching! Also after a period of near absence, hairy frogfish have returned to Air Bajo and Rojos. Opo found an orange one with white hair in Jahir 1 and the Lembeh hairy frogfish has been seen several times at various sites. Painted, warty and giant frog fish in all colors and sizes are regularly found and enjoyed by all.

Cephalopod sightings are always relatively high, but they still have increased in the last 2 months! Last month, Opo was at Pantai Parigi looking at a cockatoo flounder when a blue-ring octopus popped into view. Last week he was lucky again, while showing a stick pipefish to guests, a blue-ring scampered past in hunting mode. The usually skittish blue-ring stayed with the group for 45 minutes. Two other groups tried the same place in the days after and found him again. They're even showing up close to home. During a pre-



Tania Van Aert



Robin Dyleski



Tania Van Aert



Paul Papadopoulos

dawn House Reef dive Joni found a blue-ring right off Lembeh Resort's beach. Not being a morning person, this made Joni's day.

On a recent dive, Abner and Gayus found 2 mimic octopus next to each other and then, at the end of the dive, they and their guests spent 10 minutes watching another mimic octopus` behaviour. Three on one dive – not a bad day.

The white "V" octopus has been sighted several times, as has the elusive hairy octopus. And there continue to be regular sightings of flamboyant cuttlefish and eggs! Some of the weirdest "homes" for flambo eggs we've seen recently include a glass bottle and a soup plate! Marc Norman is currently at Lembeh Resort on a mission to find the broad club and flamboyant cuttlefish. We think he'll be very happy.

We have had a few very rare sightings of the *erosa erosa* (see picture), a member of the stonefish family that is doesn't normally make its home in the area. Regular sightings of devil fishes, humpback scorpion fish and stonefish spice up our dives. All kinds of wasp fish are common: cockatoo, spiny, lots of juveniles of the long-spine, and white face waspfish. Furthermore fingered dragonets (orange-black and lots of tiny juveniles), flying gurnards, pegasus seamoths appear regularly. Yesterday we found a giant flounder, at least 50cm long. A bright red scorpion leaf fish is an interesting change when compared to the typical yellow, green, white, brown ones. On Nudi Retreat, Samuel found a bam-

boo shark and a cat shark. Ronald found a pair of tiger shrimp on Aer Prang while he was waiting for a guest to finish his video of a coconut octopus. It pays to keep your eyes open as just about every square meter of the Strait has something amazing on offer.

Nudi News

Marli Wakeling, who visited us in July, took a picture of a tiny nudibranch which has been identified as a new species of which the radula just has been examined and it will be classified as a *Hermaea* sp! The June workshops put on by Dave Behrens, a nudibranch



Marli Wakeling



Tania Van Aert

specialist, were very successful. We hope to offer this unique seminar again in the future. On Dave's last dive at Makawidey III, while in the shallows during his safety stop, Ronald swam up to us, shaking his shaker like crazy. If Ronald gets that excited it must be something really special; without question one follows. He showed us a blue sponge upon which sat an incredibly beautiful ceratosoma nudibranch the same color as the sponge. Dave had never before seen the species in this color.

House Reef News

Diving on our House Reef is always interesting but lately has been even better than ever. Early morning dives continue to impress even the sleepest of divers. Recently Joni hit the jackpot while on the way up from the wreck. He found a blue-ring octopus! That's surely reason enough to get up at the crack of dawn! Just the other day, while returning from our mating mandarin fish dive, Gayus found three pygmy pipehorse, four tiger shrimp and a harlequin shrimp mother and her tiny juvenile! Squid, ribbon eels (blue/yellow & black/yellow) common octopus, juvenile pinnate batfish and finger dragonet are regular residents. We've had several different sightings of bobtail squid and juvenile painted frog fish (pink and orange) on the dusk dive.

Recently we saw 12 juvenile squid near the house reef wreck; a school of sweetlips on the wreck; and in one of the reef balls a giant moray eel. Olga, our volunteer marine biologist, encountered a school of big trevally during her work on the biorock. Nudis including *hypselodoris bullockii*, *halgerda batangas*, *risbecia tryoni*, juvenile *lorunna* fu-



nebris and many more spice up every House Reef dive.

Excitement erupted one day last month while a couple of crew were cleaning the beach. "Frog fish, frog fish". One of them scooped up a sargassum frog fish (*Histrio histrio*) in a bucket. Later that day they found three more in the sea grass. All have been safely rehabilitated onto the House Reef.

Please check our web site for additional news about our House Reef Project. www.lembehresort.com

Cephalopod Behaviour

It is always fun diving with Dive Guide Ronald. Recently at Magic Crack at 8m, Ronald found a coconut octopus and put two big shells next to his burrow. One by one, the octopus slowly stretched his arms to explore the shells. He then put the shells between his legs and started to run. The shells were difficult to carry and he continuously needed stop and readjust his cargo. Once at a distance from his home, he threw away the shells. Incredibly intelligent, he eroded the threat of attention from predators to his burrow.

On that same dive we saw two other coconut octopi at 12m; a bit further along we also spotted a mimic. Then Ronald found a hunting flamboyant cuttlefish eating every small fish or shrimp that crossed its path. It passed very close to a humpback scorpionfish, which he didn't seem to notice. Then he arrived at a half coconut shell with three holes. He thoroughly examined the shell and explored inside with a tentacle. He then walked around it

and again probed with a tentacle, repeating this behaviour several times before losing interest and departing – all the while a small fish had been hiding for dear life inside the shell! The flambo continued his hunt until startled by a small mantis shrimp. It was like a Western movie – “Standoff at the Black Sand Coral.” Baby mantis refuses to back off; flambo wanting to fill his tummy. Email us for the conclusion – divecenter@lembehresort.com.



New Flights

Now you have more options for visiting Lembeh Strait. In September 2008, AirAsia commenced flights to Manado direct from Kuala Lumpur. Flights arrive and depart Tuesday, Friday & Sunday. Baggage allowance is limited.

And starting October, Express Air will service Manado – Sorong – Fak Fak. Final schedule pending at time

of newsletter printing but please ask us for assistance (info@lembehresort.com). This new service is a great enhancement – now you'll be able to combine a Lembeh Strait trip with some of the great dive destination in Eastern Indonesia without the former hassle of flying back to a major airport hub to get there!



House Reef Project Update

Since our last publication, we have had two volunteer Marine Biologists from James Cook University in Australia. Recently installed coral colonies show 95% survival. Reef Balls, Biorock and fish houses all have different rates of coral growth.

Most of the corals planted on Biorocks adapted well with overall mortality less than 10%. More than 300 coral colonies were saved and re-planted on the concrete fish houses.

For complete information, please visit our web site and follow the link Environment Programs.