



identity crisis

Hi Neville,
Was diving Flinders Reef off Brisbane when I encountered this nudie. New to me, about 1 cm long and with different coloured rhinophore. Thanks and all the best, Nigel



Dear Nigel,
Can't say I know this one. I'll ask Dr. Richard Willan and see what he comes up with.
FAMILY: Chromodorididae
COMMON NAME: Purple thorunna
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Thorunna halourga*
REMARKS: Richard has got back to me and its no wonder we were stumped. He says it is a very pale form of the above species as the rhinophores make

identification certain – a purple stalk and the lamellae on the clavus are edged with orange. Good job you got it in focus! Many thanks to Richard for helping us out. This species occurs from Japan to New South Wales, feeds on sponges and grows to 18mm.

Dear Neville,
How do you do? Last December while diving found this unusual eel in North Male' Atoll, Maldives. I have referred to



several fish ID books but so far no luck. Only one individual of the species was found on a sandy slope at a very shallow depth of about 6m. Other eels living in that particular habitat included kinds of garden eels and Napoleon Eels (*Ophichthys bonaparta*). Thank you and best regards, Azim Musthag

Dear Azim,
I do not know this eel, so I have asked Rudie Kuitert to have a look at in case he knew what it was. Rudie has kindly found a genus for it.
FAMILY: Congridae
COMMON NAME: Big-eye conger eel
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Ariosoma* sp.

Hi Neville,
I was recently on a sea grass walk at Lake Macquarie as part of a Project Aware course project and found heaps of little critters, two of which started some debates.



Pictures 01 and 02 are very tiny, the white background is a plastic teaspoon. Pictures 03 and 04 are of some kind of eggs (we think) attached to some eel grass. Hope you can help. Cheers, Gina Mascord

Dear Gina,
I will do the best I can.



Pic 1 & 2
FAMILY: Polyceridae
COMMON NAME: Hedgpeth's polycera
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Polycera hedgpethi*
REMARKS: This species grows to 18 mm and is cosmopolitan in its distribution.
Pic 3 & 4
FAMILY: Styelidae
COMMON NAME: Colonial ascidian

SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Botrylloides* sp.
REMARKS: Not able to make out the exact pattern to trace it down to species.

Dear Neville,
Can you kindly ID this nudibranch for me? Among the 3 sea slugs I asked you the ID, this is the only one that I have really no idea. I got it in Maldives, 15mm. I've been through the encyclopedia but still have no idea. Maybe it's a Noumea? Thanks and best wishes, Hsn-l



Dear Hsn-l,
Thank you for the chance to see your discovery. I've never seen this species before and I am not able to find any photographic reference in any source I've searched. The closest I can come to is below.
FAMILY: Chromodorididae
COMMON NAME: Maldives thorunna
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Thorunna* sp.
REMARKS: You could certainly also be correct, and it may well be a Noumea. However, one thing does seem apparent, it appears that you have discovered an undescribed species. Congratulations!



name to it. I havent seen one since but I think I was lucky to find this one as they blend in so well to the surroundings.
Regards, Denis Riek

Dear Dennis,
Super image and if we had all our shrimp images cross referenced with specimens I would have no problems with an ID. However, we still have a long way to go and I have been trying to get my shot of your shrimp Identified for years with no luck.
FAMILY: Hippolytidae
COMMON NAME: Caulerpa shrimp
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Hippolyte* sp.
REMARKS: It lives on any number of algae species in rock pools and down to at least 12 metres.

Hi Neville,
I am hoping you can help me with an ID on this little shrimp (1.5cm). I think its in the Hippolytidae but I'm not even sure of that. It was photographed in about half a metre at low tide while snorkelling around the rock shelf at Hastings Point, Northern NSW. I took the picture several years ago using an Olympus C5060 and natural light, and have been unable to put a

wish I could have found a name for it. I did go close, but yours is different to anything I've ever seen, or could find in any literature on Aliwai Shoals or even South Africa in general.
FAMILY: Actiniidae
COMMON NAME: Purple-striped anemone
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Epiactis* sp.
REMARKS: This is the closest I can come to with an identity for your species and is only my closest guess. There sure are some fantastic species over there.

Hi Neville,
Took this shot at New Year (03/01/2010) at Aliwal Shoal at in South Africa – nobody was able to fill me in on it's identity!
Taken with Sony Cybershot W300 with wide angle lens and Sea & Sea YS-17 strobe.
Depth: 14 metres; Size; 100 mm
ISO 400; 1/80 sec; f/5.5
Thanks for your help, Simon Mead, Dubai

Dear Simon,
What an absolutely brilliant critter. I just



Hi Neville,
I imagine you're snowed under with ID requests, but if you have a spare moment, could you please take a look at this little crab, photographed at Tulamben, Bali, last October. Seems it's eating a little fish. But I can't ID it, in spite of scouring books/websites.



Take care Neville.
Cheers, Carol

Dear Carol,
Nice to hear from you and get the chance to look at another of your amazing shots. It certainly is a brilliant species. I've no doubt you could not find a

name for this little 'guy': there's very few visual references for Indo-Pacific hermit crabs. I've never seen this species before and though it appears to be a Pagurid I'm only guessing. There are many thousands of marine creature species still waiting for some taxonomist to describe, BUT we are short on taxonomists for most groups. There are still around 1,000,000 land creatures not described yet, its amazing we're as advanced as we are. Your image should be shared with our readers to show how amazing even the small creatures are!

Dear Mr Neville Coleman,
On 20th March 2010, on the house reef of Hotel Sedona, Kalasei, Malayang, Manado; North of Sulawesi. I found a hairy shrimp, and I do not know the real name of this creature. It size approx. 3-4 mm, the Shrimp is sitting on the sand. Time 19:17 Manado time. Depth: around 7 metres.

I hope you can give an information of that Shrimp. Thank you for your kind attention, your help is greatly appreciated.
Regards,
Jerry Djajasaputra



Dear Jerry,
I think that your discovery and certainly your imagery of such a small critter is absolutely brilliant! Congratulations! It is a very worthwhile species to share with our readers. I have no idea of its real name and have never seen one like it before. However, "Hairy Shrimp" certainly describes it. Perhaps one of our readers may know it?

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Hi Neville,
I was snorkeling around a natural blue hole in the reef flat in front of our resort in Kosrae, Micronesia, and came across this in about 1.5 metres of water. At first I thought it was something like a scrunchie to put around a ponytail, as it didn't look



natural. The width of the ribbon was approximately 3 to 4cm wide. They look too big for nudibranch eggs, I thought they might be eggs from a Forskal's Pleurobranchus, as I saw a juvenile nearby a few nights prior. I'm looking forward to finding out what it is.
Kind regards, Doug Beitz, Kosrae Nautilus Resort

Dear Doug,
Your first guess was very close, it certainly is an opisthobranch egg ribbon.
FAMILY: Hexabranthidae
COMMON NAME: Spanish dancer
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Hexabranthus sanguineus*
REMARKS: For some reason some of the really

big Spanish dancers are nocturnal and only come out at night. This is a typical egg ribbon of that species.



Hi Neville,
This little guy was living in a beer bottle on the bottom of Lembah Strait. I am guessing it is a kind of blenny but don't know his name....
Cheers, Frances Schlingemann

Dear Frances,
Yes, these little guys make houses out of throw-aways.
FAMILY: Blenniidae
COMMON NAME: Variable fang blenny
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Petroscites variabilis*

REMARKS: Distributed across the Indo/Pacific in areas of muddy, weedy bottom and lagoonal habitats, it grows to 75mm and lives in holes – or bottles?



Dear Mr. Coleman,
I would like to request an ID of this species of nudibranch found at around 23 metres on a mixed coral reef. My best guess is a roboastra or tambja. House reef, Mantangale, Philippines.
Thanks in advance, Stan de la Cruz

Dear Stan,
Your guess is a good one. I have two images from Puerto Galera in *Nudibranchs Encyclopedia*.
FAMILY: Polyceridae
COMMON NAME: Olive tambja

SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Tambja olivaria*
REMARKS: At present this species is known from the Philippines and Papua New Guinea. It grows to 50mm and feeds on blue bryozoans.



Hi Kevin/Neville,
I am pleasantly surprised that such guru as Neville praised my picture. It really makes me work harder to know marine life better and to take better images of marine creatures. Meanwhile I have attached the original size image with backscatter removed and light and colour balance adjusted. I hope it is good enough now for publication.

Best regards, Andrei
(As originally submitted by Kevin Deacon DIVE 2000, Sydney).



Dear Kev,
Many thanks for sending me this critter on behalf of Andrei, it is an excellent shot of this creature and I certainly did not find it at Fairy Bower 40 years ago!
FAMILY: ZOANTHIDAE

COMMON NAME: Clifton's zoanthid
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Isaurus cliftoni*
REMARKS: There are a number of species of these 'sausage zoanthids' (as we used to call them) which inhabit tropical Australia on both coasts and and one or more species which inhabits southern Australia. In the past the species were confused, but as marine life knowledge has increased over the last 40 years, so has our understanding of many of the creatures. Whereas they were once thought to all be colour variations of the one species, science now acknowledges that there are several species.

This is one communal species which has a typical colour pattern and contains symbiotic zooxanthellae. During the day the tentacles are generally retracted and the sausage-like bodies are curved over to expose the maximum area of the column to the sun. At night the tentacles are expanded to catch plankton. Sometimes small sundial shells may be found feeding on them.

Hello Neville,
I don't know if you are very busy and maybe you don't have time for the e-mails. But if you have, I would thank you very much your help with these fishes:

N1. It seems to me a soapfish.
N2. Maybe it's a juvenile of the Lyretail Hawkfish?
N3. It must be a grouper, but I have not found it in my books. It was very large.
N4. I don't know if it's a juvenile (I think it would be of a grouper, in this case) or an adult.
Thanks you very much.
Greetings, Esperanza,

Dear Esperanza,
Your images have came up nicely and I am familiar with some of them.

N1 FAMILY: Serranidae
COMMON NAME: Double-bar soapfish
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Diploprion bifasciatum*



REMARKS: This is an Indo-Pacific species that grows to around 38cm.

N2 FAMILY: Cirrhitidae
COMMON NAME: Lyre-tail hawkfish
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Cyprinocirrhites polyactis*

SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Epinephelus maculatus*
REMARKS: Juveniles of rock cods are often unlike the adults and until they are photographed, matched and published it is difficult to identify them.



Dear Neville,
I have a few nudibranchs I'm having trouble identifying.

Image 1: I found this nudibranch at Davin in Negros, Philippines this past February. It was on volcanic sand at a depth of 3m. I'm guessing it's a species of gymnodoris, but am not sure.

Image 2: This was on a rock wall around 18m at Apo Island, Negros, Philippines.

Image 3: This one was also on a rock wall at around 21m in Southern Mindoro, Philippines.

Images 2 and 3 look similar to Anna's Chromodoris, although 2 has only a sliver of the yellow fringe at the front and back, while the specimen in image #3 is missing it entirely. Are these just colour variations of that species or something else entirely?

Image 4: This specimen was in Pemba, Tanzania under a rocky overhang at a

depth around 12m. I've never seen this one before.
Best regards, Scott Bennett

Dear Scott,
Your images are excellent, and you have some interesting species here. Very tricky beginning with image 4 and text 1.

Image 4:
FAMILY: Discodorididae
COMMON NAME: Beautiful halgerda
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Halgerda formosa*
REMARKS: Generally an Indian Ocean species, yours has more black dots than the ones displayed in *Nudibranchs Encyclopedia*. Very rarely seen species which grows to 30 mm.

Image 2:
FAMILY: Chromodorididae
COMMON NAME: Anne's Chromodoris

SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Chromodoris annae*

REMARKS: Like every other creature in nature (nudibranchs more than most) species are individuals in populations and subject to extreme colour variations and we have a long way to go to get all the variations from all the localities they exist in.

Image 3: Same species as Image 2.



Image 1: FAMILY: Gymnodorididae
COMMON NAME: Negros Gymnodoris
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Gymnodoris* sp.
REMARKS: Absolutely brilliant species, I have never seen anything like it and can find no visual reference. At this point I would have to assume it is an undescribed species. Congratulations!

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Hi Neville,
I found these nudis on pylons around various sites of temperate Perth water. All seemed to be in 10m or less – I can't seem to find them in your books. Can you help with the ID please? Thanks, David Baxter

Dear Dave,
Yes, I can help with all these. Not sure which of my books you might be referring to? Most books show species in a lateral and a dorsal aspect. If you take shots head on, its very difficult to identify them. All the nudibranchs you've sent in are in *Nudibranchs Encyclopedia*, except one.

Pic 1
FAMILY: Polyceridae
COMMON NAME: Ceylon plocamopherus
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Plocamopherus celonicus*
REMARKS: See page 355/7 *Nudibranchs Encyclopedia*.

Pic 2
FAMILY: Chromodorididae
COMMON NAME: Verco's verconia
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Verconia verconis*
REMARKS: See page 197/1,2,3 *Nudibranchs Encyclopedia*.

Pic 3
FAMILY: Velutinidae
COMMON NAME: Southern lamellarid
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Lamellaria australis*



Pic 3
REMARKS: This image aspect makes identification somewhat easier. Although this critter may appear as an opisthobranch, it is a Lamellarid mollusc, which occurs all the way along the south coast of Australian and has a number of colour variations. They feed on ascidians and have an internal shell.

Pic 4
FAMILY: Pseudocerotidae
COMMON NAME: Glorius pseudobiceros
SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Pseudobiceros gloriosus*
REMARKS: Excellent image. I discovered this flatworm on my original expedition around Australia in 1971. Brilliant little species, it grows to 90mm and was described in 1994. Now known to occur from Melanesia to the Fiji Islands.

Pic 5
FAMILY: Dorididae
COMMON NAME: South-west aphelodoris
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Aphelodoris* sp.
REMARKS: See page 246/4,5 *Nudibranchs Encyclopedia*.

Pic 6
FAMILY: Dorididae
COMMON NAME: Western aldisa
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Aldisa* sp.
REMARKS: Congratulations! To my knowledge you are the first one to photographically record a member of this genus in south Western Australia. Many of this group are undescribed. It would appear that yours is also.

Dear Neville,
Here is the Spanish Dancer. There have been plenty of them around on the rocky reef and in the shallows which I saw while snorkeling and muck diving. The pic IMG 046 is taken at about 5 m depth with a Canon Powershot 520. I'm not sure again about the ID but would say it's a Cooraburra Phyllidiella.
Cheers, Doris Teufel



Dear Doris,
Many thanks for sharing your excellent images and adventures with us. (DSC 0152) - (0156)
FAMILY: Hexabranchidae
COMMON NAME: Spanish dancer
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Hexabranchus*

sanguineus
REMARKS: These are just exquisite, and to think they are in such shallow water. It always seemed to me that the Indian Ocean forms were much more colourful than the forms found on the east coast of Australia. (IMG 0046)
FAMILY: Phyllidiidae
COMMON NAME: Cooraburra Phyllidiella
SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Phyllidiella cooraburrama*
REMARKS: Yes, I think you have this one, spot on. This species

appears to be fairly easy to determine, being as it is quite characteristic in its pattern and colour. Once thought to be restricted to northern Australia, it is now known to inhabit Fiji and Indonesia.

Neville Coleman's discoveries include over 450 new species of sea creatures and thousands of new records. His Australasian marine photographic index contains over 100,000 images and he's published 65 marine natural history books.

Submissions and enquiries:
Send scanned or digital images to **Identity Crisis, Attention Neville Coleman** worldofwater@nevillecoleman.com.au
Image details should include locality, date, depth, habitat, size, type of camera system and name of photographer and/or discoverer. All published images will be credited to each copyright holder. Your submission advises permission for publication.



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