

SCUBA News

SCUBA News (ISSN 1476-8011)

Issue 280 – November 2023

<https://www.scubatravel.co.uk>

Welcome to SCUBA News for top destinations, liveaboard discounts and under-the-sea news from around the world. Plus, our creature of the month is the fascinating Cherry Tunicate. I hope you enjoy this month's issue.

Contents:

What's new at SCUBA Travel?

Creature of the Month is the Cherry Synascidia

8 Liveaboard Deals -- Save up to 30%

Diving news from around the World

You can download this SCUBA News issue as a pdf.



What's New at SCUBA Travel?



Special Soma Bay

Soma Bay, in the Red Sea, is a superb place to dive. Beautiful corals, wild drift dives and very scenic.

[READ MORE...](#)



5 Best French Polynesia Dive Sites

Sharks, sharks and more sharks. But also turtles, barracuda, dolphins and manta rays. Discover the best dives in French Polynesia.

[READ MORE...](#)



BSAC Release Diving Incident Report

Sadly there were slightly more incidents than the year before, and six fatalities. The report details each incident in an attempt to learn from them.

8 Last Minute Liveboard Deals - Save up to to 30%

We bring you news of the latest dive boat deals, specially selected for us by Divebooker.com, the liveboard specialists. Including 7, and 10 night trips.

1. **Raja Ampat Aggressor**, 05 - 12 Jan 2024 & 04 - 11 Feb 2024 (7 nights), SAVE \$1000, Price from USD ~~3,815~~ 2,815 per trip per person
*Book until Dec 6, 2023, 1,200
2. **Scubaspa Yin**, Best of Maldives, 30 Dec - 06 Jan 2024 (7 nights), SAVE 20%, Price from USD ~~3,565~~ 2,852 per trip per person
3. **Blue Storm, St. Johns, Red Sea**, 11 - 18 Apr 2024 & 25 Apr - 02 May 2024 (7 nights), SAVE 10%, Price from EUR ~~4,350~~ 1,215 per trip per person
4. **Blue, Brother - Daedalus - Elphinstone** 11 - 18 Apr 2024 & 25 Apr - 02 May 2024 (7 nights), SAVE 10%, Price from EUR ~~4,515~~ 1,363 per trip per person
5. **Philippine Siren, Malapascua and The Visayas**, 217 - 27 July 2024 (10 nights), SAVE UP TO 30%, Price from USD ~~4,400~~ 2,870 per trip per person
6. **Alia, Djibouti Wonders**, 06 - 13 Jan and 27 Jan - 03 Feb 2024 (7 nights), **SAVE Euro 400**, Price from EUR ~~4,800~~ 1,400 per trip per person
7. **Palau Aggressor II, The Best of Palau**, 17 - 24 March 2024 (7 nights), SAVE \$1000, Price from USD ~~3,735~~ 2,735 per trip per person
*Booking Dates: Nov 7 - Dec 7, 2023
8. **Sunseeker, Best of Central Atolls** 16 - 23 Dec 2023 (7 nights), SAVE \$250, Price from USD ~~2,063~~ 1,813 per trip per person

Creature of the Month is the Cherry Synascidia, *Metandrocarpa manina*

A creature I'd never seen in many years of diving, but came across a few weeks ago. The cherry synascidia is a sea squirt or tunicate. Although they don't look like it, these are the same phylum as vertebrates.

When larvae, they swim about looking for a surface one which to settle. Once they have stuck to somewhere they lose their tails and much of their nervous system. Some people have described it as "*eating its own brain*".





Cherry synascidia on a small column of coral. Together with two tiny gobies.

This cherry tunicate is colonial. The members of the colony, the zooids, are 4-5 mm across and linked by fine strands of tunic.

They are called tunicates because their bodies are covered in a protective coat or tunic. There are two openings in this tunic for the entry and exit of water. Food particles in the water are digested in an intestine.

The scientific name is *Metandrocarpa manina*. They live in the Indo-Pacific.

Although they look like very simple animals, these fascinating creatures belong to the chordates along with mammals and reptiles. Some scientists think that every animal with a backbone evolved from the tiny tunicate. Researchers have found parallels between genes involved in the breakdown of the tunicate's nervous system and human neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer's disease, offering valuable insights into understanding these disorders.

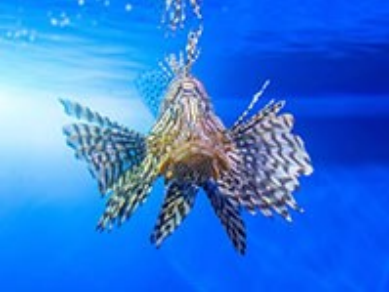
References

Lieske and Myers, Coral Reef Guide Red Sea. Collins.

Claude Monniot, [Stolidobranch ascidians from the tropical western Indian Ocean](#). Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society, Volume 135, Issue 1, May 2002, Pages 65-120.

Christopher Vaughan, [What can sea squirts tell us about neurodegeneration?](#) Stanford Medicine. July 20, 2022.

Diving news from around the World



Lionfish invasion threatens the Mediterranean

The warming Mediterranean exacerbates the problem of invasive lionfish. What can divers do?



Dominica creates world's first area for sperm whales

The tiny Caribbean island of Dominica is creating the world's first marine protected area for one of earth's largest animals: the endangered sperm whale



Dolphins Are Being Poisoned by Their Mother's Milk, Scientists Warn

The toxic pollutants, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), DDT and flame retardants, end up in the baby dolphins in higher concentrations than in their mothers



Warming waters of the Arctic pose a threat to Pacific right whales

Their food is moving north, but so are industrial fishing fleets



Crust-forming algae are displacing corals in tropical waters worldwide

Over the past few decades, algae have been slowly edging corals out of their native reefs across the globe by blocking sunlight, wearing the corals down physically, and producing harmful chemicals.



The crucial role of herbivorous fishes and sea urchins in restoring Caribbean coral reefs

Sea urchins and fish eat different algae smothering the reefs: both are needed to keep the coral reefs healthy



Is ocean iron fertilization back from the



dead as a CO2 removal tool?

The idea is that dumping iron into parts of the ocean where it's scarce could spark massive blooms of phytoplankton, which, when they die, can sink to the bottom of the sea, carrying CO2 to be seabed for decades to millennia. Questions about its potential ecological impacts while proof remains elusive



Underwater Photography: Crafting Murky Images into Vivid Narratives

What to do when underwater photos are less than perfect?

SCUBA News is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Unported License. This means we are happy for you to reuse our material for both commercial and non-commercial use as long as you: credit the name of the author, link back to the SCUBA Travel website and say if you have made any changes. Most photos though, are copyright the photographer. Please get in touch for details.

Photo credits: S. Kerkhofs, Andrea Izzotti/DepositPhotos, Tim Nicholson, Jill Studholme

UNSUBSCRIBING

Visit [{?}\\$optout_link?}](#) to remove yourself from the mailing list. Any problems contact news@scubatravel.co.uk.

ADVERTISING

Should you wish to advertise in SCUBA News, please see the special offers at

<https://www.scubatravel.co.uk/newsad.html>

Other advertising opportunities are at

<https://www.scubatravel.co.uk/diving-advertising.html>

CONTACTING THE EDITOR

Please send your letters or press releases to:

Jill Studholme

SCUBA News

The Cliff

DE6 2HR

UK

news@scubatravel.co.uk