

# SCUBA News

SCUBA News (ISSN 1476-8011)  
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Welcome to SCUBA News. Our sea creature feature this month is lovely masked pufferfish, one of the planet's most poisonous animals. We highlight diving in France and step back in time to diving the Nicaraguan Corn Islands. Plus the **liveaboard deals** specially selected for us by Divebooker.

We've also teamed up with **AquaMarine Diving Bali** to offer you 10% off published prices, free rental gear and an AquaMarine Goodie-Bundle when you use code **ScubaTravelUK2024**. They are an excellent dive company and Bali is a stunning place to dive.

Any questions, reviews or comments to [news@scubatravel.co.uk](mailto:news@scubatravel.co.uk).

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What's new at SCUBA Travel?

Creature of the Month

9 Fantastic 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?



### Wreck Diving in the South of France

The French Mediterranean is littered with wrecks sitting on sandy bottoms with clear warm water. What more could a confirmed wreck diver ask for?

[LEARN MORE...](#)



### Diving into Caribbean Yesteryear: Nicaragua

Nicaragua has many unspoilt dive spots. Journey back in time to the Caribbean's past on the secluded Corn Islands. Additionally, experience freshwater diving in



volcanic crater lakes or dive on the rocky reefs of the Pacific coast.

[READ MORE...](#)



### From Caves to Reefs: Discover the diving in the UK

With impressive wreck dives, stunning underwater landscapes and unforgettable marine life encounters, should a UK diving adventure be on your wish list?

[FIND OUT ...](#)



[www.AquaMarineDiving.com](http://www.AquaMarineDiving.com)

### AquaMarine Diving - Bali

10% off published prices, free rental gear and an AquaMarine Goodie-Bundle when you use code **ScubaTravelUK2024** at [AquaMarineDiving.com](http://AquaMarineDiving.com)

### 9 Fantastic Liveaboard Deals - Save up to 30%

We bring you news of some brilliant dive boat deals, specially selected for us by [Divebooker.com](http://Divebooker.com), the liveaboard specialists. Including some little dived destinations like Saudi Arabia's Five Corals and Seven Sisters. Divebooker will also help you with transfers and give 24/7 expert support. (We use them and on the two occasions we've needed help the support was excellent.)

1. **Almonda, Five Corals & Seven Sisters (Saudi Arabia)**, 8 - 15 June and 22 - 29 June 2024 (7 nights), **SAVE UP TO 30%**, Price from USD ~~4,850~~ 1,295 per trip per person



[More Info & Book](#)

2. **Cocos Island Aggressor**: Embark on an unforgettable Cocos

Island Adventure from June 13th to 23rd spanning 10 nights. Book now and save **\$800** per person



[More Info & Book](#)

3. **Caledonian Sky, Southern Lau Expedition (Fiji)**, 12 - 19 October (7 nights), Book in 6 months in advance and **SAVE 20%**, Price from USD 4,942 3,953 per trip per person

[More Info & Book](#)

4. **Indo Master, Komodo National Park**, 05 - 15 August 2024 (10 nights), **SAVE UP TO 20%**, Price from USD 5,250 4,462 per trip per person (Cannot be combined with any compensation voucher or loyalty discount)

[More Info & Book](#)

5. **Seadoors, Philippines**, 29 June to 5 July, **SAVE 15%** on diving Tubbataha

[More Info & Book](#)

6. **Emperor Harmoni, Best of Raja Ampat**, 21 - 30 May and 5 - 14 September 2024 (9 nights), Price from EUR 4,455 3,564 per trip per person, **SAVE Euro 891**

[More Info & Book](#)

7. **Tambora, Tranquil Sulawesi**, 24 May - 3 June 2024 (10 nights), **SAVE 30%**, Price from USD 5,500 3,850 per trip per person

[More Info & Book](#)

8. **Merdeka 3, Thailand**, 29 April - 4 May, **SAVE 15%**, Price from \$1416 **\$948** per trip per person. Small liveaboard with just 6 cabins offering South Andaman Dive 'n Chill Cruise from Phuket to Phi Phi island.





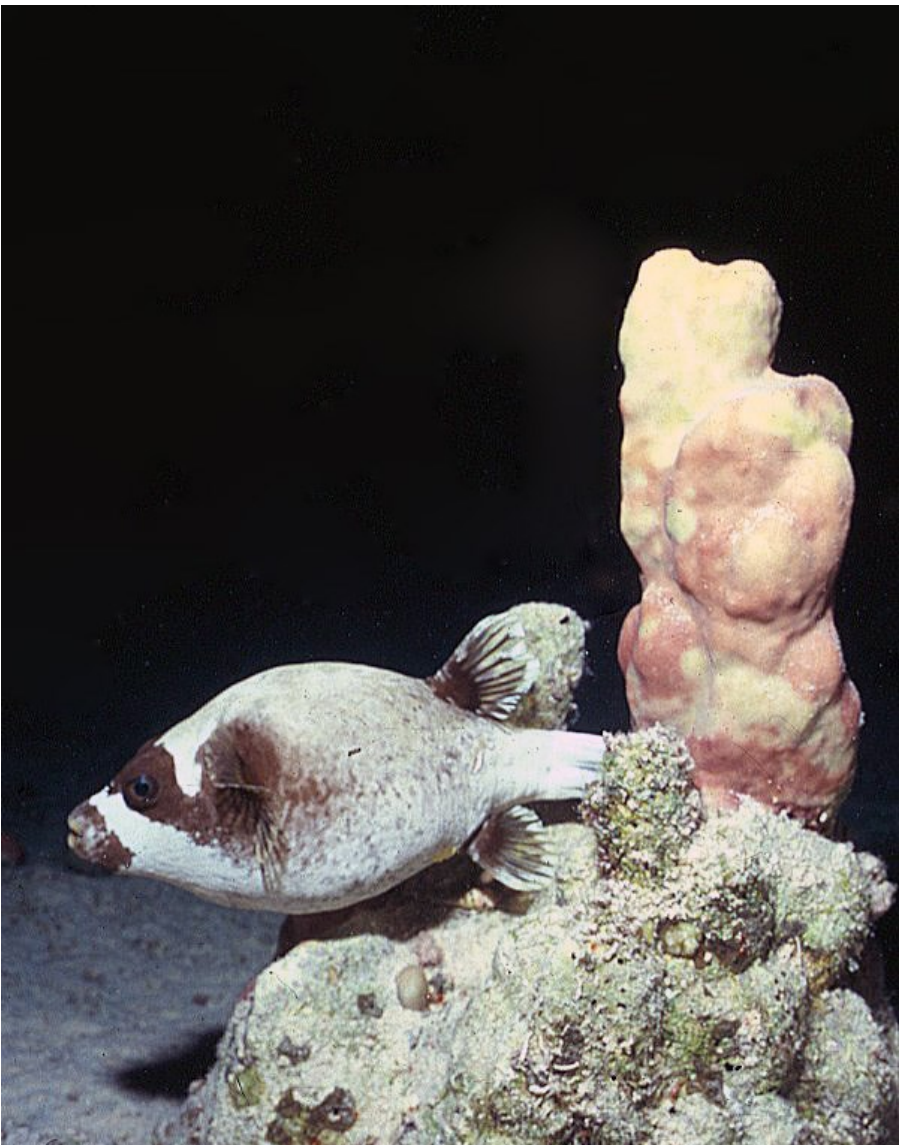
[More Info & Book](#)

9. **Bahamas Aggressor, Exuma Cays and Southwest Eleuthera**, 27 July - 03 Aug 2024 (7 nights), **SAVE \$700**, Price from USD 3,495 2,495 per trip per person \*Specials do not apply to group reservations

[More Info & Book](#)

### Masked Pufferfish - amongst the most toxic animals in the world

Our Creature of the Month today is the Masked Pufferfish, *Arothron diadematus*





Taken on Sha'ab Hassan, Egyptian Red Sea by Tim Nicholson.

Distinctive looking, this small pufferfish has a black mask over its eyes reaching back to its pectoral fins, and a black mouth. It is common on fringing coral reefs in the Red Sea. Elsewhere it is replaced by *Arothron nigropunctatus* (the Blackspotted Puffer). However, some experts believe these to be the same species.

## Masters of Self Defence

Pufferfish are bulbous fishes with a scaleless, prickly, skin. They are called pufferfish because when threatened they greatly inflate themselves with water, making themselves look much larger than they usually are. They do this by rapidly gulping water into their extending stomach. This makes them into a spiny ball three to four times their normal size. It can be stressful to the puffer fish though, so they only do this when seriously threatened. This defence mechanism is important because they move so slowly through the water.

Their second line of defence is their toxicity.

## 100 Times as deadly as the venom of the black widow spider

The Puffer is harmless, unless eaten. The liver, intestines, gonads and skin are highly poisonous and cause **death in around 60% of people who eat it**. If prepared properly the puffer (or fugu) is edible and considered a delicacy in Japan and Korea.



*Masked pufferfish. Jill Studholme*

The Puffer's toxin - tetrodotoxin - is produced within the pufferfish by bacteria. The fish acquire the bacteria by grazing on the reef and eating molluscs and other invertebrates. Weight-for-weight, tetrodotoxin and is up to 100 times as deadly as the venom of the black widow spider and one of the most poisonous natural substances.

## Pufferfish tetrodotoxin used to treat tumours

Researchers have shown that the masked pufferfish's toxin can be used to

treat breast cancer, increasing lifespan by 46% and decreasing the number of tumour cells.

## Fused teeth which never stop growing

Adult puffer fish have just four teeth, fused together into one strong beak. They can use this to open clams or mussels, and graze on coral. These teeth can regenerate indefinitely, so they never become completely ground down. The four teeth gave rise to both the name of their family - Tetraodontidae and the name for their toxin - tetrodotoxin, so named in 1894 by Dr. Yoshizumi Tahara.



*Masked pufferfish taken in Hamata, Red Sea. You can clearly see the fused teeth. Jill Studholme*

## References

Jill Studholme, 10 Fascinating facts about puffer fish - the most poisonous fish on the planet, *SCUBA News*

FM Fouda, Anti-tumor activity of tetrodotoxin extracted from the Masked Puffer fish *Arothron diadematus*, *Egyptian Journal of Biology*

Tetrodotoxin Poisoning Associated With Eating Puffer Fish Transported from Japan

Jim Johnson, Tetrodotoxin...an ancient alkaloid from the sea...



### **Dolphin Talk: Deciphering their language**

What do dolphins mean with their whistles, pops and non-verbal communications? With their large brains dolphins have many factors in common with humans.



### **The Future of the Adriatic Past from shipwrecks to archaeological seascapes: Learning about sustainable dive tourism**

With the increasing interest in maritime cultural heritage, there is a growing need for responsible and sustainable management of these precious resources.



### **One dead and 17 divers rescued in Malta**

One diver has died and 17 others have been rescued after getting into difficulty in the sea during unexpectedly strong winds in Malta, police have confirmed.



### **Tanker grounds in marine reserve: Egypt detains vessel**

Libyan registered gas carrier, sailing to Russia after offloading at Aqaba, ran aground at Ras Nasrani near Sharm el Sheikh. Vessel could be fined in the tens of millions of dollars depending on the level of damage in the marine reserve.



### **Greece Becomes 1st European Nation To Ban Bottom Trawling In Marine Parks and Protected Areas**

The country said it will invest Euro780 million to safeguard the diverse and unique marine ecosystems.



### **Diver fined for touching whale shark in Thailand**

Whilst diving at Richelieu Rock, the diver, a tourist, touched the whale shark's tail in spite of having been briefed not to. Whale sharks are protected wild animals in Thailand'.



### **A coral superhighway in the Indian Ocean**

Despite being scattered across more than



a million square kilometres, new research has revealed that remote coral reefs across the Seychelles are closely related.



### **Healthy Reef Sounds Increase Coral Settlement**

By playing healthy reef sounds on struggling reefs, scientists found were able to recruit up to seven times more coral larvae.



### **Impact of climate change on marine life much bigger than previously realised**

If ocean warming and acidification continue on the current trajectory, all of the biological processes in fish and invertebrate species could be affected.



### **Scientists create octopus survival guide to minimise impacts of fishing**

Sadly an estimated 400,000 octopus are harvested from around 90 countries annually and this number is expected to increase, putting pressure on octopus stocks worldwide.



### **Reef-World Joins Big Give Green Match Fund to Save Coral Reefs**

The Reef-World Foundation Launches "Let's Save Our Reefs!" Campaign to Protect Coral Reef Ecosystems in the Big Give Green Match Fund for the first time. As coral reefs face unprecedented threats, Reef-World aims to protect these invaluable marine ecosystems.



### **100 New Ocean Species Discovered in New Zealand**

Those identified so far include dozens of molluscs, three fish, a shrimp, a cephalopod and a new genera of coral. One find has them baffled though.



Photo credits: [Waielbi/CC BY-SA 3.0](#), [DepositPhotos](#), Tim Nicholson, Jill Studholme, Darko Kovacevic Laboratory of Maritime Archaeology

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