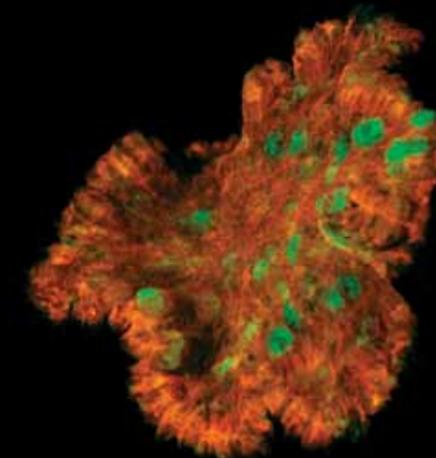


The night is full of surprises: Divers can witness coral spawning, fluorescence, mating and pelagic macro swimmers at these nine awesome sites.



9 NIGHT DIVES

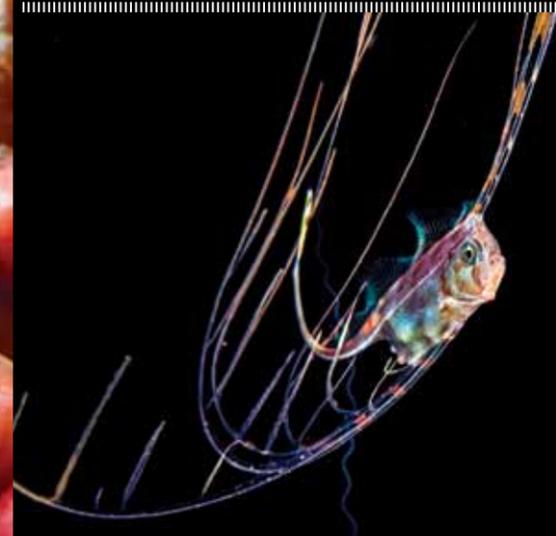
worth skipping

Happy Hour For

**AFTER THE SUN GOES DOWN, ON SOME REEFS
THE PARTY IS JUST STARTING**

Night diving with crabs and lobsters can be fun, but diving after the sun sets is even better with a marine-life experience that doesn't make you think twice about skipping happy hour — think pack-hunting sharks, black-water pelagic encounters, acrobatic mantas and more. While you might love kicking back with a cold beer or a stiff rum punch to watch the sun sink into the ocean, it's worth dragging on your clammy wetsuit and diving into the dark for these nine fantastic night dives. **BY TRAVIS MARSHALL**

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: BRANDI E. IRWIN/LIQUID FILM PHOTOGRAPHY, LLC (2); ERIC CHENG; FABIEN MICHENET; OPPOSITE: PETER HARRISON/OCEANWIDE IMAGES



1 Cocos Island PACK-HUNTING SHARKS

Cocos nights are action-packed, as the whitetip sharks come out to feed.



When evening finds you anchored over Manuelita Gardens, just off the north side of Cocos Island, do yourself a favor and forgo the sundowner drinks in favor of the nighttime party in full swing below the surface. Abstaining from the adult beverages here offers a different kind of intoxication: the heart-thumping adrenaline rush that happens when you hit the seafloor among a full-blown feeding frenzy of whitetip reef sharks. Manuelita Island's shallow, protected bay boasts congregations of hundreds of these normally placid sharks. Emboldened by the darkness, the hunters coalesce into a writhing mass that flows over and around coral heads alongside opportunistic jacks and rays.

► **MAKE IT HAPPEN** Live-aboard boats like Dancer Fleet's *Wind Dancer* (dancerfleet.com) run to Cocos Island from Puntarenas, on Costa Rica's Pacific Coast. Ten-night trips (with seven dive days) aboard the *Wind Dancer* start at \$4,465.



A coconut octopus finds shelter in a shell off North Sulawesi, Indonesia. Above, left to right: Spanish dancer and whitespace waspfish in Lembeh Strait.

2 Lembeh Strait "ALL NIGHT, ALL THE TIME"

If you come to Lembeh Strait for the weirdest, wildest critter encounters, then you owe it to yourself to turn teetotaler and hit the saltwater every night instead of the resort bar. Why? Because even an average night dive in Lembeh will blow your best day dive out of the water — so much so that some Lembeh operators have even started offering "night safari" packages that feature more than 15 night dives over the course of a week. This unorthodox schedule allows you to spot all those hard-to-find critters as they creep out of their lairs, and when the highly camouflaged ambush predators go into extreme munching mode. Dive sites like Nudi Falls boast eye-catching mollusks like cuttlefishes and nudibranchs, including Spanish dancers that undulate and flap their mantles as they dance their way through the water column.

► **MAKE IT HAPPEN** NAD Lembeh Resort (nad-lembeh.com) offers an annual night-safari week, with three dives each night, between dusk and early-morning hours. In 2013, it runs from June 8 to 15; prices start at \$1,260 per person.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CHRISTINE HAMILTON; ERIC CHENG; KIM YUSUF; OPPOSITE: SCOTT JOHNSON