



The Parting Shot

Underwater photographer from Argentina **Aldo Gustavo Galante** shares his exceptional encounter with us: "The Psychedelic frogfish *Histiophryne psychedelica* was recently described (2009) for the first time by Pietsch, Arnold, and Hall in the scientific journal *Copeia*, in which they described it as having "a remarkable pigment pattern of white swirling stripes", hence their use of the term psychedelic. The psychedelic frogfish has been known to reach a length of 15 centimetres (5.9 in) and the combination of camouflage and tight cavities in which it usually hides makes it virtually impossible to find one without overturning

rocks and coral. According to Andy Shorten, co-owner of the Maluku Divers diving facility where the fish was discovered, "Seeking out these fish is probably going to be like the Holy Grail of divers for a while." The psychedelic frogfish has so far been positively identified only at Ambon Island, Maluku province, Indonesia. It has been found in coral rubble, where it may be camouflaged from predators, though the location is primarily considered a "muck" dive with few corals in the area. The fish have so far been found in locations where the water is 5 to 7 metres (16 to 23 ft) deep, about 20 metres (66 ft) away from the shoreline. I

had the opportunity to observe it during a trip with some friends to the remote island of Ambon, also known as the Island of Spices, which was purposely organized to photograph this strange fish. It really is very difficult to see, it is endemic to the place and very few specimens that have been observed, so observations have been quite intermittent. We found it just in front of a villa, 10 meters from the beach and 3 meters deep, hidden in some rocks where it usually lives and camouflaged with its surroundings. Above our heads floated some small fishing boats and some garbage coming from the small village nearby". ●