

The Parting Shot



Back in the 1980s, Flamboyant cuttlefish *Metasepia pfefferi* were quite an unknown quantity - in fact, semi-legendary creatures. I cannot remember having seen more than a couple of bad, blurry photographs of one, not to mention videos. Yet, its existence was well known to divers, and those visiting the sand and silt bottoms of the Coral Triangle between Indonesia, Borneo and the Philippines were constantly on the lookout for it. I still remember with great cla-

rity our first encounter with one in Borneo - Kapalai didn't exist yet as it was just a few wooden pillars stuck in the sand, and we were having lunch at Mabul when our dive guide ran excitedly to us, announcing that a Flamboyant had just been sighted at Kapalai reef. Spitting boiled rice all over the place, we left our table in a frenzy, running to our boat and our dive equipment - without forgetting our camera, obviously! A brief speed boat ride and down we went,

but it took us quite a few minutes to spot that incredible little fellow ambling on the sand, as it had decided to look like a rock at the moment. And yet, as our guide pointed to it with his stick, lo and behold!, it magically transformed itself into a glowing, pulsating Christmas neon light, flashing waves of blinding white, yellow and purple all over its tiny body as it slowly ambled on the muck. What an incredible sight it was, and what an unforgettable dive! ●