

# **Dive Into Romblon**

*Best Scuba Diving Destinations*

**PHILIPPINES**



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Chapter 1

# Join macro world exploration

Join macro world exploration on Paradise Island between Verde Island Passage and the Visayas. Romblon is famous not only due to empty white beaches and crystal clear waters.

The island is gaining popularity as a top-class macro destination.

It is continuing to impress UW photographers with new findings including extremely rare creatures.







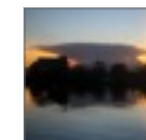
For years Romblon was known as a place to go, if you yearn for a tranquil stay with pristine secluded beaches, beautiful mountain views and virgin tropical forests. The island's relative isolation worked in its favor. It is still rich with clean streams and waterfalls, marine sanctuaries and dense jungles. With its hospitable, friendly people Romblon even now looks like the Philippines 20 years ago, unspoiled and authentic.





You do not need to spend a lot of time choosing between different dive resorts, if you are planning to visit Romblon Island. In fact, you can find more than one dive resort on the Island. But if you are a macro enthusiast or underwater photographer, your choice is limited to only one place. It's full name is "The Three P Holiday & Dive Resort and Ducks Diving Romblon".

But you can just call them "3P". It is a team of excellent macro dive guides (in spare time they are also resort owners), whose passion is in finding rare beautiful creatures underwater and showing them to resort guests.





# No Bones - Sea Slugs and Snails



Romblon is all about sea slugs. Local reefs are incredibly rich in amazing and rare species. Exploration continues and new species are found every day, often on every dive.





**The Phantom nudibranch (*Melibe colemani*)** is the number one on the wish lists of many underwater photographers due to its striking appearance and extreme rarity. It was first found in Romblon in May 2015.  
**Photo: Jerome Kim**





*Cyerce bourbonica* - another gem in the collection of Romblon sea slugs. **Photo: Irina Khlopunova**





The **Yellow dotted butterfly sea slug (*Cyerce* sp.)** is still undescribed. Its cerata show a network of thin black lines (honeycomb pattern) as well as yellow and blue dots.



**Tiger butterfly sea slug (*Cyerce nigra*)** on its host algae. It is amazing that in Romblon all of this four species of *Cyerce* can be found at the same dive site.





Like other members of this genus, **Koehler's phyllodesmium (*Phyllodesmium koehleri*)** perfectly mimics its host coral.



**Yellow-tipped phyllodesmium (*Phyllodesmium briareum*)** is always found near its host - (and source of food) - the soft coral ***Briareum violaceum***. Photo: I.Khlopunova





This tiny head-shield slug, *Colpodaspis thompsoni*, "Sunny side-up slug" reaches no more than 3 mm in length



Doublehorned batwing slug (*Gastropteron bicornutum*) is a small predator, hunting for prey. Like other head-shield slugs, it has a reduced internal shell.





Like other *Gymnodoris* species, this big (up to 12 cm) **Strawberry nudibranch** (*Gymnodoris aurita*) is a predator feeding on soft coral eating *Marionia* slugs.



This undescribed species of ***Gymnodoris*** (*Gymnodoris sp.*) is easily noticeable due to its bright red coloration





Quite common nudibranchs, *Chromodoris elisabethina* (left) and *Chromodoris willani* (right) are difficult to miss as they are brightly colored and never hiding. Perfectly posing, they tempt underwater photographers to shoot them again and again





The **Netted miamira** (*Miamira sinuata*) is very popular among photographers due to its unusual form and striking colors.






Egg cowries are no less beautiful than nudibranchs. These two egg cowries, *Diminovula concinna* (left) and *Diminovula margarita* are difficult to find because they are always hiding among branches of soft coral.



# Beautiful and rare fish

An underwater photograph showing several sea anemones with pale, multi-petaled heads. A prominent red starfish with a white tip is visible in the center. The background is a dark, textured seabed.

Diving in Romblon you will find not only small brightly colored slugs, snails and crustaceans, but also interesting fish species. The local fish community is unique and found nowhere else. Have a look at the “must see” fish in this chapter.



## Beautiful and rare fish



**Severn's pygmy seahorse (*Hippocampus severnsi*)**



**Pontoh's pygmy seahorse (*Pontoh's pygmy seahorse*)**

## Pigmy seahorses and pipefish



**Denise's pygmy seahorse (*Hippocampus denise*)**



**Bargibanti pygmy seahorse (*Hippocampus bargibanti*)**

Pygmy seahorses are tremendously popular among underwater photographers. They are always on the top of many wish lists. Very rare and very small, less than 2 cm, they can be found only by the best guides, in the best places within the coral triangle, which is the world center of marine biodiversity. Lembah boasts 3 species of pygmy seahorses, Anilao only one. In Romblon you can see the Quadriga of these famous horses. So far it is the world record.





*Bulbonaricus davaoensis*, the **Galaxea pipefish** is a real challenge for underwater photographers. Beautiful and extremely rare, it slides between polyps of its host Galaxea coral as if unaware of a desperate photographer close by. Do not wait too long at this deep place. It would not lift up its head, no great poses, no smiles. Just tiny bright red creature sliding between tall polyps, defending the pipefish from closer approach. Just enjoy the moment and the rare opportunity to look at this special fish.







**Magnificent shrimpgoby (*Tomiyamichthys* sp.)** is considered the most beautiful and rare among all shrimp gobies





*A Pink-eye goby (Bryaninops natans) is slowly hovering over Acropora polyps*





This tiny sole, *Aseraggodes spp.*, mimics a flatworm



# Romblon's crustaceans



Romblon is famous among divers and underwater photographers as a place, where you can find a lot of unique crustaceans. Some of the shrimps are local endemics, some are extremely rare everywhere else. A lot of them are still undescribed.





This tiny (10-12 mm) **Humpback soft coral shrimp** (*Alcyonohippolyte dossena*) perfectly mimics soft coral polyps.





The **Xenia shrimp** (*Alcyonohippolyte commensalis*) is closely related to the previous shrimp, but inhabits different corals.



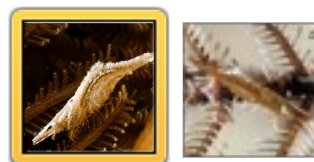


This unusual chocolate-colored commensal shrimp appears to be a still undescribed representative of the **Phycomenes** genus.





So far undescribed, this **Hydroid shrimp**, *Hippolyte* sp., was observed in Romblon and Anilao.







**The Dragon shrimp (*Miropandalus hardingi*)** is a very special find, needless to say finding a pair of them!





To finish the short introduction to Romblon's rare shrimps, here are two Broken-back shrimps, family Hippolytidae. The first one (left) is still undescribed **Zoanthid shrimp (*Alcyonohippolyte* sp.)**. The second one is ***Thorella cobourgi*** on a soft coral





The **Tubastrea coral crab** (*Quadrella boopsis*) is rarer than its close relatives - other coral crabs from the Trapeziidae family



# Worms



**Romblon has several superb muck-diving sites. It is common to encounter some of these alien-looking worms**





The **Bobbit worm** (*Eunice aphroditois*) is always ready to plunge its sinister-looking jaws into prey.





A **Feathered tube worm (*Diopatra* sp.)** is attacking its prey



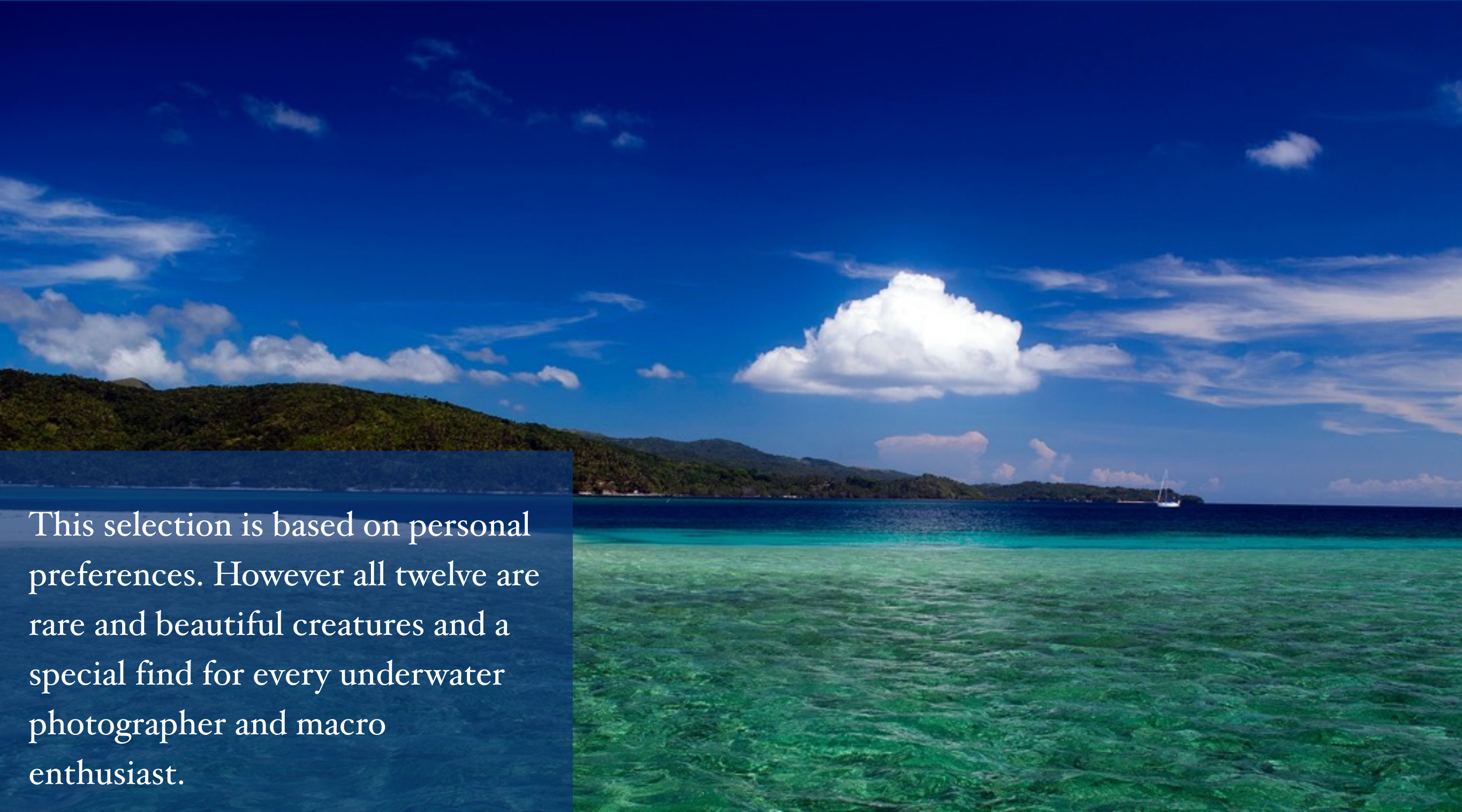


**Drinking straw worms (*Hyalinoecia* sp.)** are building protective tubes out of secreted mucus.



# Top 12 Romblon creatures

This selection is based on personal preferences. However all twelve are rare and beautiful creatures and a special find for every underwater photographer and macro enthusiast.







**Phantom nudibranch**



**Bourbon butterfly slug**



**Magnificent shrimp goby**



**Denise's pygmy seahorse**



**Severn's pygmy seahorse**



**Humpback soft coral shrimp**





**Yellow dotted butterfly slug**



**Black lined butterfly slug**



**Bobbit worm**



**Pontoh's pygmy seahorse**



**Bargibanti pygmy seahorse**



**Dragon shrimp**



# Romblon Travel



Traveling by plane to Tugdan Airport or by 2GO Travel overnight ferry from Batangas pier are two recommended options. The island is situated in the middle of the Philippine archipelago and allows combining a trip to Romblon with other first-rate dive destinations like Anilao.





A good time for diving is October to June. July and August can get monsoon rains, but could also have sunny days. August to October is the peak season for typhoon season in the Philippines. The Critters and rich marine life can be found all year-round with different critters appearing as seasons and moon cycles change. Visibility differs from site to site and season, but is usually in the range of 10 to 20 m. We recommend diving in a 3 to 5 mm full wetsuit with booties. Many divers choose to wear a hood after several days of repetitive diving. Be sure to bring sun protection.



## How to reach Romblon Island.

1) Domestic flight to Tugdan Airport (TBH), Tablas Island. Private transfer from Tugdan Airport to Romblon Island takes only 1.5 to 2 hours. Philippine Airlines offers flights on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.

2) 2GO Travel (ferry) leaves Batangas every Tuesday and Friday at 22:00 for Romblon, arriving in

Romblon Island at 06:00 on the next morning. The 2GO Travel boat leaves Romblon Pier every Saturday and Wednesday 22:00 and arrives in Batangas around 6:00 on the next morning..

### **More details.**

The Three P Holiday & Dive Resort is located seven kilometers out of Romblon Town.



**Ferry maneuvering in the harbor of Romblon**



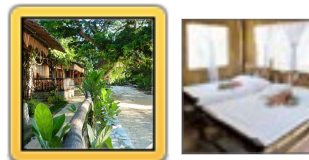


The Three P Holiday & Dive Resort has 5 spacious (25 square meters) wooden local style cottages, equipped with hot shower, electric fan and refrigerator. The terraces all face the sea and tall trees make it a perfect place to relax and enjoy the colorful sunsets of Romblon.

### **Dive trip planning.**

Romblon and Anilao can easily be combined into one trip.

Anilao is just a one hour drive from Batangas pier. 2Go Travel ferries are perfectly clean and a convenient way to travel. A overnight trip in a private cabin on this ferry to/from Romblon allows you to do 3 dives on the arrival/departure day.





# ROMBLON ON THE MAP

## Philippines and Romblon on S-E Asia



## Romblon in the middle of Philippine archipelago





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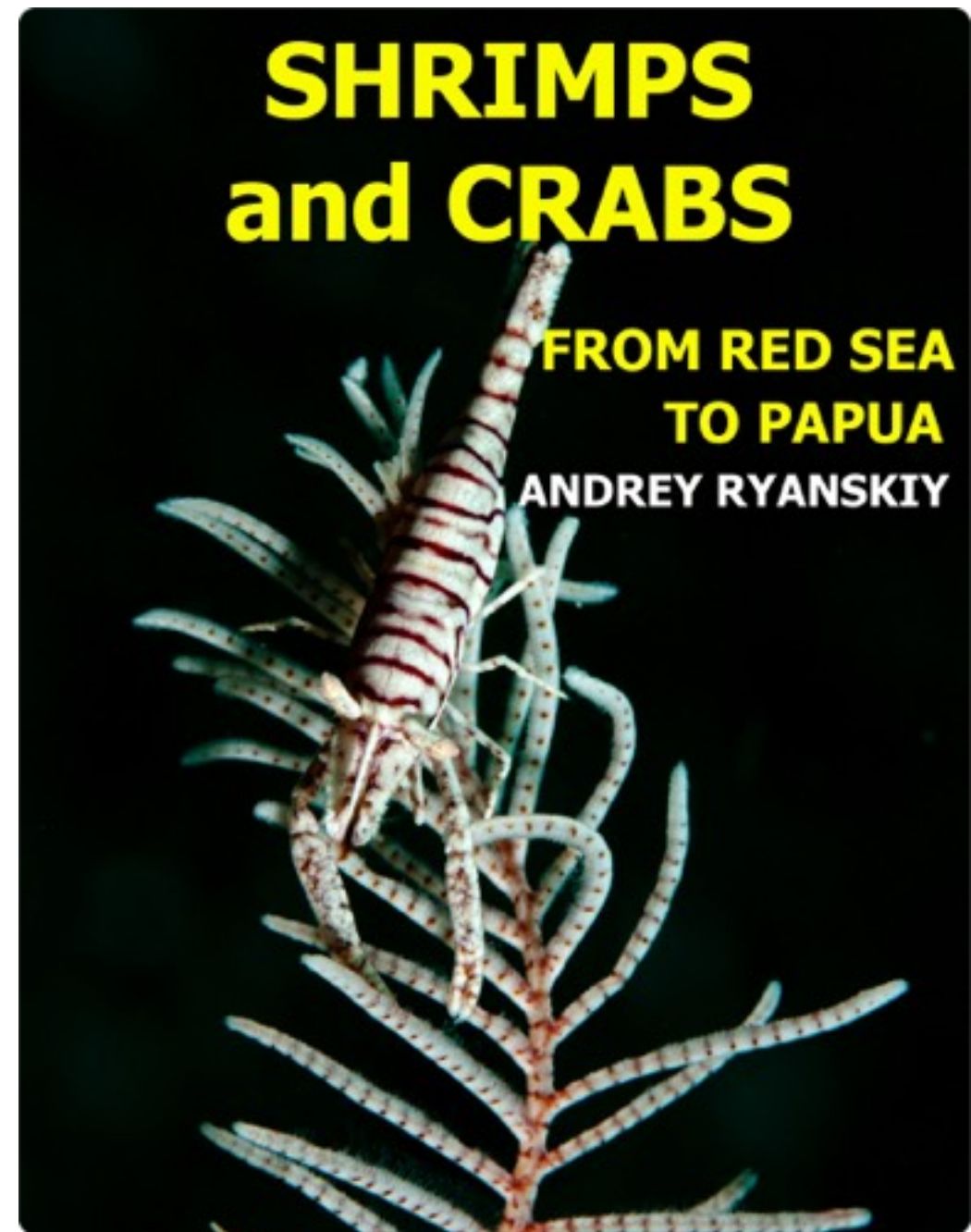
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