



## 2024 WINTER PRINT: ORNATE GHOST PIPEFISH

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your donation during REEF's winter fundraising period! Your contribution makes REEF's ocean conservation and education work possible.

To show our thanks, we are pleased to share this image of the beguiling Ornate Ghost Pipefish, *Solenostomus paradoxus*, one of the most exotic creatures inhabiting shallow, fish-watching seas. As part of an annual tradition, this photo was selected from Paul Humann's extensive underwater photo library. Paul (1937-2024) is no longer with us, but his consequential legacy as REEF's co-founder and a pioneering underwater explorer carries on through his marine life images, REEF's programs, and the many lives he impacted.

Ornate Ghost Pipefish are found from eastern Africa to Fiji. Although only four inches long, this species has compelled many divers and underwater photographers to travel large distances to behold such amazing curiosities face-to-face.

They spend most of their lives floating in the open ocean as translucent larvae, and eventually settle in shallow, tropical waters. The youngsters, all males at this stage, immediately look for a partner. After forming a bond, one fish from each pair begins to transform into a female. This progress triggers a growth spurt, in which the females quickly grow larger than the males. The females' paired ventral fins also enlarge into hinged, fan-shaped brood pouches, able to accommodate up to 300 eggs!

Breeding pairs prefer to remain close to each other. They hover head down near the long bristling arms of colorful crinoids, also known as feather stars. They feed on tiny zooplankton, "hoovered" up through their slender, pipette-like mouths.

If you are a REEF surveyor, you may know that this iconic image graces the cover of New World Publication's *Reef Fish Identification—Tropical Pacific*. To capture this photo, Paul spent most of a lengthy dive suspended semi-patiently above the encrusted bow of a wreck resting on the mucky seafloor of Lembeh Strait, Indonesia. It brings us great joy to special photo of Paul's with you, and we are very thankful for your support.

To see a gallery of all of Paul's limited-edition prints, visit [www.REEF.org/humann-limited-edition-prints](http://www.REEF.org/humann-limited-edition-prints).

**Thank you for supporting marine conservation!**

Best Fishes,

Ned & Anna DeLoach, REEF Trustees and Marine Life Authors