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Text & Images by Aaron "Bertie" Gekoski

WHEN TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

Reporting on a unique find from the location of new online TV series, *Borneo From Below*

I've always been a fan of big things: big hamburgers, big gestures of affection, big bangs. Even the occasional big woman. Most of the time this sentiment applies to the ocean. What greater thrill than connecting with a superpod of dolphins or witnessing a manta mating train?

However, sometimes it's the smaller things in life that can provide the biggest surprises. Recently, whilst enjoying a cold beer (large, of course) after a day's filming off Mabul Island, a rather intriguing story emerged. One of Scuba Junkie's divemasters, Nas, had found a *Nembrotha kubaryana* with not one, but two heads.

Staff cameraman Will, and I clamoured to see the photographic evidence on a customer's laptop. There it was: blurry, yet undeniable proof of a double-domed sea slug. Much Googling ensued: "two-headed nudibranch/nembrotha/sea slug" yielded no results of note. This was a truly a unique find, potentially a world-first. Will and I had to see it for ourselves.

With full filming schedules we couldn't get to dive site Kapalai (a sandbar with a posh resort on top) for another 72 hours. Whilst nudibranchs don't exactly move quickly, the chances of finding this two-centimetre-long freak of Nature seemed slim at best.

1 & 2. Polycephalys is the term given to creatures with more than one head. This rare nudibranch, with two heads, is "bicephalic", and is likely to have two separate brains. These mutations normally occur as a result of the fusion of twin embryos

Sceptically we dropped in, only for Nas to immediately find the tiny critter in almost exactly the same place as before. Perhaps its two heads pulled it in different directions, bringing it to an eternal standstill? Following some underwater fist pumps, I spent a good 45 minutes waiting for it to move into position for a decent head(s) shot which showed off its three rhinophores and twin set of bright orange oral lappets.

Afterwards, we even had time to check out a solar powered nudibranch and a fingernail-sized painted frogfish. It was one of the best macro dives of my life, proof indeed that sometimes the best things do indeed come in the smallest packages.

To see the incredible encounter with this mutant nudibranch, and for more marine stories from around Borneo, check out the new online series *Borneo From Below*. [SDAA](#)

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