



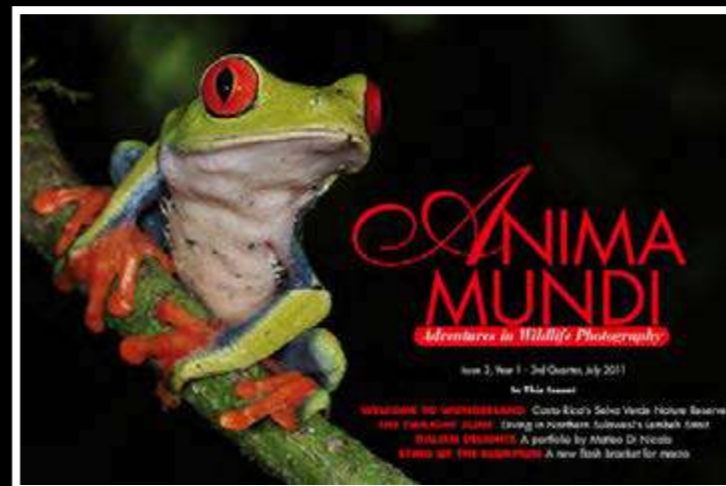
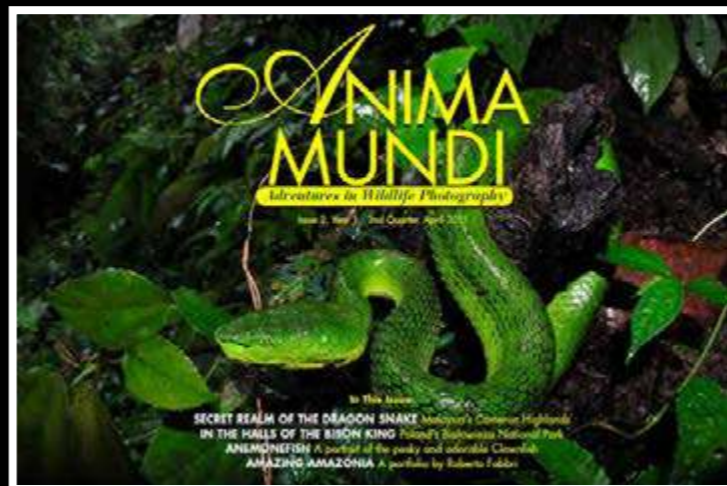
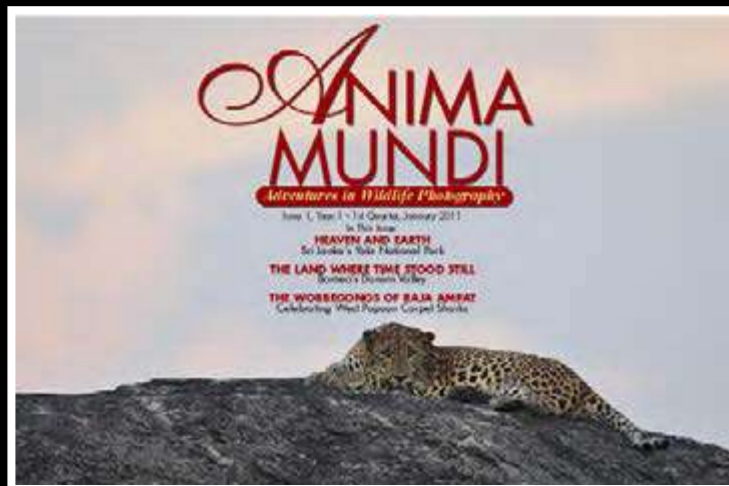
ANIMA MUNDI

Adventures in Wildlife Photography

Issue 17, Year 5 - January 2015

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- SCOOP** Snake-mimic caterpillars of India
- THE EMERALD FOREST** Peru's Tambopata Reserve
- THE GLOBAL ARCTIC AWARDS** A portfolio of the 2013 winners
- FIELDWORK** Saving Italy's vipers
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- WET SIDE STORY** A trip to Sri Lanka's Sinharaja



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With more than 15,000 downloads worldwide per issue (as per August 2012), ANIMA MUNDI has seen its readership consistently and rapidly growing in the brief span of only two years and eight published issues. Its authoritative and unbiased travel reports and wildlife articles offer a high level of scientifically-correct information - at absolutely no cost - to thousands and thousands of nature and photography enthusiasts all over the world. Each and every issue of ANIMA MUNDI - Adventures in Wildlife Photography is permanently available for FREE downloading - our mission is the dissemination and condision of information to promote nature awareness and habitat conservation, and we are proud to reach out on a quarterly basis to a world of passionate, highly motivated, seriously interested readers who all share our passion for wildlife photography and travelling. This is a sample - among many others - of what our readers say:

Dear Andrea & Antonella,

I have just finished reading your latest edition of Anima Mundi and I was inspired to write and say how much I am enjoying your publication and following your adventures. My wife and dive/photo partner Cherie and I were so inspired by your feature on Yala National Park that we booked a Safari with Eco Team and we had a fantastic time. It was exactly as portrayed in your article and we also followed your recommendations for visiting the cultural triangle in Sri Lanka. As we were leading one of our dive tours on a live aboard exploring the Maldives last June, a private side trip to Sri Lanka was clearly not to be passed up due to your information. So, I guess it's good news for you both that others are reading and responding to your work. So, we just wanted to give you some feedback, say hello and wish you all the best with your future adventures. Keep up the great work.

Kevin & Cherie Deacon
Dive 2000
Sydney, Australia.
www.dive2000.com.au



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ANIMA MUNDI

Adventures in Wildlife Photography

A big step forward

We are now successfully entering our fifth year of life, and with the coming of 2015 our free online magazine ANIMA MUNDI - *Adventures in Wildlife Photography* will see several new exciting developments.

The first surprise we have in store for our readers is that - given the success we have been enjoying in this wonderful adventure - the magazine will go bimonthly from this issue on. Yes, that is right - we shall publish six issues a year rather than the four we have offered until now. This is going to be a really huge commitment for us, as basically every issue of the magazine is painstakingly handcrafted by Andrea alone (but Antonella takes good care of him in the meantime!), and as the frequency of our trips abroad will actually intensify in the future this will basically become a round-the-clock job. But we are not complaining, quite the opposite - putting the magazine together and sharing our and our contributors' work is a joy and a pleasure for us, so we're quite happy to do it. The increased frequency of publication from quarterly to bimonthly will also mean more and more frequent postings on our blog - where many readers and visitors will be able to take a quick look at them without having to actually download the image-intensive magazine issue pdf. An increased frequency in publication will also mean that there shall be much more space available for external contributions, from one-page short articles to 20-page long extensive features on matter of importance. We are already receiving many submissions - often extremely interesting - from several external contributors worldwide on a regular basis, and increasing the frequency of publication will also enable us to avoid a bothersome building up of backlogs.

Other innovations in the near-future will see the developing a fully renewed website featuring several new user-friendly interfaces, the long-awaited introduction of the ANIMA MUNDI - *Adventures in Wildlife Photography* app for mobile devices and

the inauguration of a truly exciting new feature - the exclusive ANIMA MUNDI - *Adventures in Wildlife Photography Explorers Club*, which will offer to a very few selected friends the opportunity of joining us on unique wildlife photography expeditions to very remote, untouched locations...at no extra cost besides what we are actually paying. These trips won't involve expensive workshops or feature costly tuition courses - a maximum of two or four highly motivated wildlife photographers will however have - quite simply - the opportunity to join us for the trips of a lifetime, sharing the thrills, the adventures, the successes (and - why not? - even possibly the occasional failures) of a few really unique photo expeditions. More details on this exciting new venture to come soon!

Now that you know what to expect in the course of the next twelve months, begin the new year enjoying what we are offering in this current issue! We start with an appetizing feature on several snake-mimic caterpillars and their amazing defensive strategies (special thanks here to lepidopterist Franziska Bauer of the Museum of Zoology, Dresden), we follow up with the first part of our extensively illustrated trip report from the spectacular Tambopata Reserve in the Amazon of Peru, we continue with a fine selection of the winners images from the Global Arctic Awards of 2013, then we present the stunning work of young Italian photographer Matteo Di Nicola - extraordinarily devoted to the misunderstood vipers and adders of his own country - before continuing to a spectacular photographic tribute to the underwater wonders of West Papua's region of Raja Ampat and finally completing the issue with a short phototrip to Sinharaja, Sri Lanka's only relict rainforest. Plenty for all, as you can see, so enjoy, and...

Have a good trip!
Andrea & Antonella Ferrari
www.animamundimag.com

■ A flash flight of Scarlet Macaws *Ara macao* and Red-and-Green Macaws *Ara chloropterus* on a clay lick, Tambopata Reserve, Peru, Amazonia.

We appreciate your feedback
- constructive criticism, useful
suggestions and interesting
contributions are welcome.
Please drop us a line at
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Red-and-green Macaw
Ara chloropterus, Tambopata
Reserve, rio Tambopata,
Peru, Amazonia.



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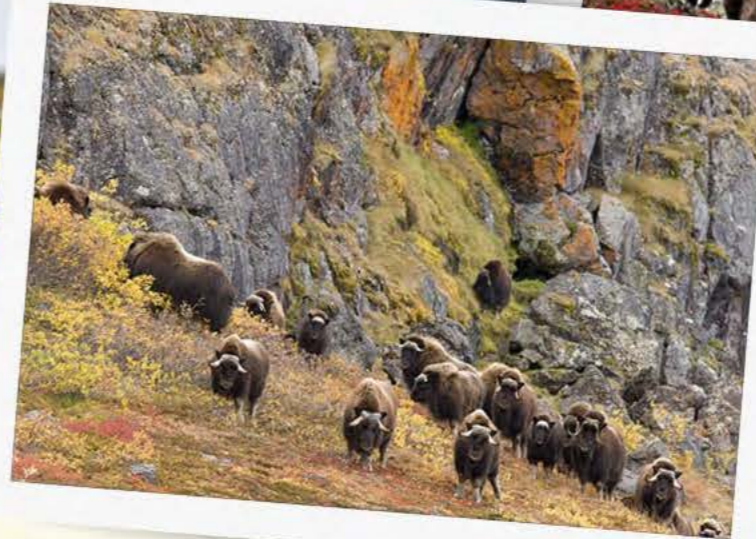
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SCOOP!

INDIA'S SNAKE-MIMIC CATERPILLARS **WORMTONGUE!**

THE PERFECT IMITATION OF A VENOMOUS SNAKE'S HEAD
- COMPLETE WITH STARING EYES AND A FLICKING TONGUE



■ A close-up of a caterpillar of the Common Mormon swallowtail butterfly *Papilio polytes* shows its stunning defensive mechanism - when threatened the caterpillar everts a tongue-like organ called osmeterium which, together with the fake "eyes" on its prothorax, complete the illusion of a venomous snake ready to bite.



A caterpillar of the Common Mormon swallowtail butterfly *Papilio polytes* is beginning to extrude the bright red, forked, snake tongue-like osmeterium from its prothorax.

TEXT BY FRANZISKA BAUER
PHOTOS BY ANDREA & ANTONELLA FERRARI

Many caterpillars appear somewhat cute to us, because they are small, soft, chubby and often colorful – like little toys. But what appears so appealing to us are key features for predators like birds. To repel these predators caterpillars have evolved various strategies. Some just draw back in hiding-places most of the time to be out of reach. Others become invisible by blending in with their host plant by imitating leaves or twigs (camouflage or mimesis), or show warning colors indicating their venomous- or poisonousness

(aposematism), or actively strike back with physical weapons like spines or toxic secretions. Again others imitate venomous or dangerous animals although being completely harmless in reality (mimicry). One such example of mimicry is displaying eyespots, that is imitating (mostly vertebrate) eyes on certain parts of the body, which is a widely used strategy in many animals in order to baffle and scare off predators. While also caterpillars of various moth and butterfly families make use of eyespots, the even more advanced imitation of a whole different animal,

namely a snake, is rare and only well-elaborated in two families: the swallowtail butterflies (*Papilionidae*) and hawk moths (*Sphingidae*). But why snakes? Snakes are often venomous and therefore treated with caution by most potential predators. The rareness of snake mimicry in caterpillars is probably due to the fact that several special features in different body parts need to be met at the same time: a thickened or inflatable part towards one end of the body in defensive posture, the already mentioned eye spots in this inflatable part, a sufficiently big body size, a snake-

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Far left and above, ■ a caterpillar of a Common Mormon butterfly *Papilio polytes* showing the defensive action. Left, a caterpillar of the swallowtail butterfly Malabar Raven *Papilio dravidarum* displaying the same behavior.



Left, a close-up portrait of a caterpillar of the Common Mormon butterfly *Papilio polytes* shows its fake "snake eyes"; right, a ventral view of a caterpillar of the Malabar Raven *Papilio dravidarum* extruding the tongue-like osmeterium from its prothorax shows the stubby forelegs and the true eyes of the larva.





Left, a latero-ventral view of a caterpillar of the butterfly Malabar Raven *Papilio dravidarum* as it protrudes the osmeterium from its prothoracic segment; right, a dorsal view of the same species.



Another view
 of a caterpillar of the
 swallowtail butterfly Malabar
 Raven *Papilio dravidarum* as
 it everts the osmeterium from
 its prothoracic segment:
 the illusion obviously works
 only when the predator is
 facing the larva head-on.

like body color and pattern, and at best a fake snake tongue. All that is featured in a couple of species in the swallowtail genus *Papilio*. If attacked these swallowtail caterpillars retract their head which inflates their thoracic segments and gives rise to the appearance of a snake's body shape. By doing so, often their eyespots "open" and thus become more conspicuous. A peculiar feature of all swallowtail caterpillars is the osmeterium, a red, orange or yellow, forked soft structure that is everted right behind the head capsule and often emitting smelly volatiles. In the snake-mimicking swallowtail caterpillars this osmeterium is reddish and as you can imagine looking like a snake's tongue that is flicking around. The eversion often goes along with raising the anterior part of the body and moving it rhythmically from one side to the other. This perfect snake mimicry enables the otherwise harmless caterpillar to rest all self-confident on the upper side of leaves where it usually finds the best growth conditions in terms of sunlight and warmth. Those species bear another interesting peculiarity which concern the larval development. The aposematic snake mimicry is not displayed from the very first instar on but is often not apparent earlier than in the final instar. In previous instars they are mimetic resembling bird droppings. Thus, the caterpillar is switching from a camouflaging to a mimicking fashion during its development. So next time you make a trip into the wild, beware and be aware of real and fake snakes!



This is how a predator - such as a small roving bird - would perceive a caterpillar of the swallowtail Malabar Raven Papilio dravidarum as it emerges from the foliage - the illusion of the head of a snake lying in ambush is almost perfect.

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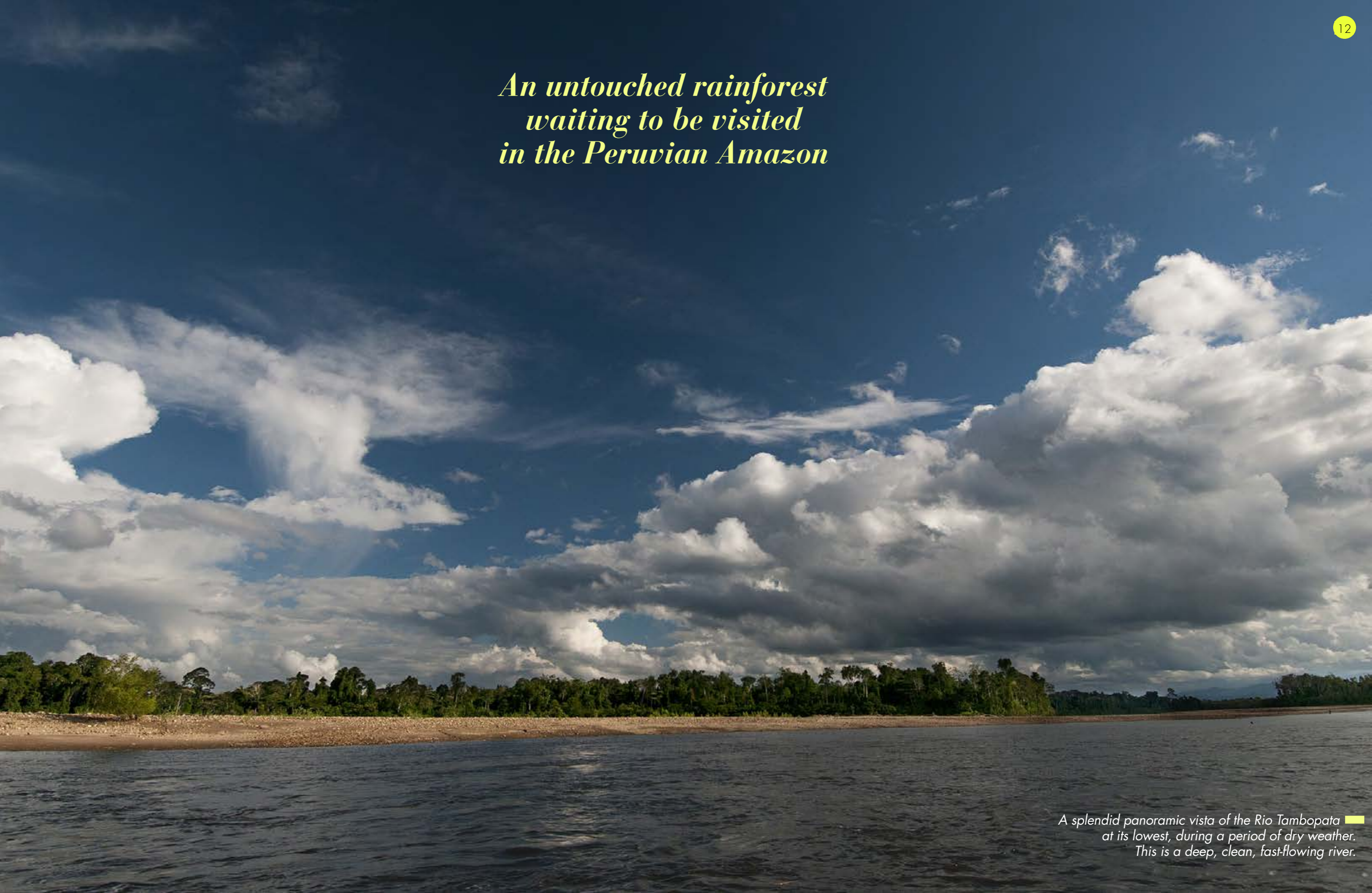
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*An untouched rainforest
waiting to be visited
in the Peruvian Amazon*



*A splendid panoramic vista of the Rio Tambopata
at its lowest, during a period of dry weather.
This is a deep, clean, fast-flowing river.*

TEXT BY ANDREA FERRARI
PHOTOS BY ANDREA & ANTONELLA FERRARI

*M*adre de Dios, Peru is a large department (or state) in the wild, southeastern part of the country. Its name means "Mother of God" and is a common Spanish synonym for "the Virgin Mary". The rather generic name given to the Madre de Dios department in Peru is a reflection of how little was known about the region during the Spanish colonial era. Whereas some departments were assigned the same name used by the Incans, neither Incan people nor Spanish colonists settled in the southeastern Amazonian lowlands so the department was simply named in honor of one of the most revered

figures in Roman Catholicism (the principle religion of the Spanish colonists). In a sense, this name befits a wild, untamed wilderness of dense rainforests, trackless swamps, and meandering rivers flanked by unforgiving jungle as it was believed that outsiders only survived in such a place by the grace of God. In modern times, the Madre de Dios department has become much more accessible while still retaining its wild character. Huge tracts of unbroken rainforest are protected in National Parks, reserves, and by several Peruvian rainforest lodges. The lack of roads and low

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Two-striped Amazon palm viper Bothriopsis bilineata. This small venomous species is often found coiled on branch forks.

■ A flock of Red-and-green Macaw *Ara chloropterus* practices a routine mass take-off from a clay lick to confuse would-be predators.



Black river waters coming alive at night



■ A Spectacled caiman *Caiman crocodilus* silently floats on the surface of the still shore waters of the Rio Tambopata at night.

population also keeps many parts of Madre de Dios intact and devoid of development. Nevertheless, a recently constructed road that connects routes to the Pacific with routes to the Atlantic Ocean has brought more colonists to the region along with associated deforestation, hunting, and mining activities that could pose a threat to the rainforests of Madre de Dios. There are three main provinces within the department of Madre de Dios. Tambopata, bordering Bolivia to the east, is the most populated of the three Madre de Dios provinces. Its capital, Puerto Maldonado, is also the capital city of Madre de Dios. It is the largest city in the department and in the Amazonian lowlands of southeastern Peru, with a population of nearly 100,000 as thousands of people from highland regions have moved to the city. Most are drawn to Puerto

Maldonado in search of jobs and a better life. Tambopata is also home to extensive areas of lowland rainforests that host some of the highest biodiversity indices in the world, and that is why we decided to visit it thanks to **Rainforest Expeditions**, an ecotourism company which owns and manages three exceedingly comfortable lodges along the steep shores of the rio Tambopata. The other two provinces are Tahuamanu and Manu. Located in the northern reaches of Madre de Dios, Tahuamanu borders Brazil to the north and Bolivia to the east. It's a wild, frontier zone of rainforests, thick bamboo groves, and has just 7,000 inhabitants. Manu is located in the westernmost Madre de Dios province and its name is associated much more with the National Park of the same name rather than the province itself. This is due to

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■ A pair of adult Red-and-green Macaw *Ara chloropterus* flies above the tree canopy of the Tambopata Reserve. This is the largest of the macaw species found here and the easiest to observe.

Manu National Park's fame as being one of the top biodiversity hotspots on Earth. A massive biosphere reserve that protects habitats ranging from treeline vegetation to lush cloud forests and dense, lowland jungles, the wildlife of Manu has been featured in many documentaries and magazines. Despite the wild, untamed nature of Manu province, around 17,000 people make their home there. These include a number of indigenous people (some of whom make very little contact with western peoples), farmers, miners, and ecotourism operators. People have been living in the Amazon rainforests of Madre de Dios for thousands of years. Due to the remote nature of southeastern Peru, most of these peoples lived in isolation from Spanish colonists until the latter part of the nineteenth century. Some indigenous cultures of Madre de Dios had occasional contact with the Incan empire but even that was very limited as the Incans primarily kept to higher elevations in the Andean mountains.

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*The forest at night
abounds with tree frogs.
This is a Gunther's
banded tree frog
Hypsiboas fasciatus.*



Tambopata is extraordinarily rich in bird species. Left, Rufous Motmot *Baryphengus ruficapillus*; top right, Bat Falcon *Falco ruficularis*; bottom right, Capped Heron *Pilherodius pileatus* in breeding livery.





The wondrous spectacle of
Scarlet Macaws *Ara macao* and
Red-and-Green Macaws *Ara chloropterus*
taking off en masse
from a clay lick.

Two-striped
Amazon palm vipers
Bothriopsis bilineata
occasionally show a
stunning blue tinge.



The Ese-Eja is the main indigenous group in Tambopata province. Living in a few communities along the Tambopata River and its tributaries, most Ese-Eja have farms near the river although there is at least one, rather isolated community in Tambopata that lives in a more traditional manner. Many Ese-Eja people also work with Rainforest Expeditions as guides, boat drivers, and cooks. Those from the community of Infierno actually own Posada Amazonas lodge. Seventeen other groups of indigenous peoples live in the rainforests of Madre de Dios - many of these people have little or no contact with non-Amazonian peoples and continue to live in the rainforest just as their ancestors did for thousands of years. There are believed to be several hundred "uncontacted persons" in Madre de Dios that belong to tribes such as the Machiguenga and Mashco Piro.

**AN UNTOUCHED
RAINFOREST HABITAT**

The Madre de Dios region is renowned for being one of the top biodiversity hotspots on Earth. The huge tracts of lowland rainforest and high-elevation cloud forests harbor more than 1,000 bird species, several thousand plant

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Left, a flight of Chestnut-fronted Macaw or Severe Macaw *Ara severus*. Right, a White-throated Toucan *Ramphastos tucanus*.



■ A Black Caiman
Melanosuchus niger in the still evening waters of the lagoon Tres Chimbas.

The largest and most dangerous of all the caiman species






Far left, a Rainbow Boa *Epicrates cenchria cenchria* coiled in ambush on a branch overhanging a forest trail. Left, a pair of Peruvian spider monkey *Ateles chamek*.

species, untold numbers of insects, and more than 100 mammal species. The incredible variety of life that occurs in southeastern Peru is explained by the environment of tropical rainforests. These complex habitats harbor the highest levels of terrestrial biodiversity on the planet and are the prominent habitat in Madre de Dios. The forests of Madre de Dios have acted as natural refuges: in the past, the Amazon rainforest has gone through dry periods where the forest was separated into "islands" of humid forest surrounded by drier grasslands. The province of Madre de Dios (and much of eastern Peru) is believed to have been one of these islands of rainforest habitat and thus acted as a natural refuge for rainforest animals and plants. Since the forests of Tambopata, Manu, and Tahuamanu remained intact for millions of years, there was more time for wildlife in Tambopata to evolve into a greater variety of species. The biodiversity of Madre de Dios has become a huge draw for tourists and people come from all over the world to experience the beautiful rainforests of Tambopata and Manu. The high number of visitors that include Peruvian jungle excursions into their itineraries has spawned a thriving ecotourism industry in Madre de Dios. Eco-lodges in Manu and Tambopata are the two main destinations. Thousands of solo travelers, tour groups, and families visit Tambopata in particular due to its

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Scarlet Macaws Ara macao and Blue-and-Yellow Macaws Ara ararauna will occasionally fly together.



Scarlet Macaws *Ara macao*,
Red-and-Green Macaws *Ara chloropterus* and Blue-and-
Yellow Macaws *Ara ararauna*
on a Tambopata clay lick.



■ A photo sequence showing - in clockwork order - a Tschudi's false coral snake *Oxyrhopus melanogenys* feeding on a forest rat.

■ The untouched, pristine Amazon rainforest fringing the Rio Tambopata shores. With some luck jaguars can occasionally be seen here.





■ A Blue-and-yellow Macaw *Ara ararauna* flies away from a clay lick. Note the chunk of clay in its powerful beak, ingested to neutralize the poisonous alkaloids lacing the seeds and nuts macaws feed on.

accessibility. Puerto Maldonado can be reached by a quick flight from Lima or Cuzco and most of the lodges are just as quickly reached by a boat trip on the Tambopata River. The award winning Posada Amazonas lodge is a frequent destination as is Refugio Amazonas. The more remote (and for wildlife photographers probably more interesting) Tambopata Research Center is also a highlight for parrot lovers and ecotourists hoping to experience the Amazonian wilderness.

THE AMAZING BIODIVERSITY OF TAMBOPATA

Tambopata is a river, a National Reserve and a province in Madre de Dios state. It harbors some of the most biodiverse rainforest in the country (and possibly the entire Amazon basin), huge protected areas, and is home to several thousand people. Remote, wild, but still easily accessible, this contrasting combination has helped it to become one of the global hotspots for ecotourism. "Tambopata" is derived from two Quechua words that mean "inn" or "place of accommodation" (*tambo*) and "high point" (*pata*). The reason why the rather flat, lowland rainforests of Tambopata received this name is not forthcoming but may reflect Andean foothill areas of Tambopata that were visited by Incan peoples. Despite its Quechua name, the region wasn't really used by the Incans for much of

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Top left, Yellow-rumped Cacique *Cacicus cela*; top right, Rufous Motmot *Baryphengus ruficapillus martii*. Bottom left, Pale-Winged Trumpeter *Psophia leucoptera*; bottom right, Orinoco Goose *Neochen jubata*.





Scarlet Macaw ■
Ara macao.
Note the leg ring
applied by researchers.

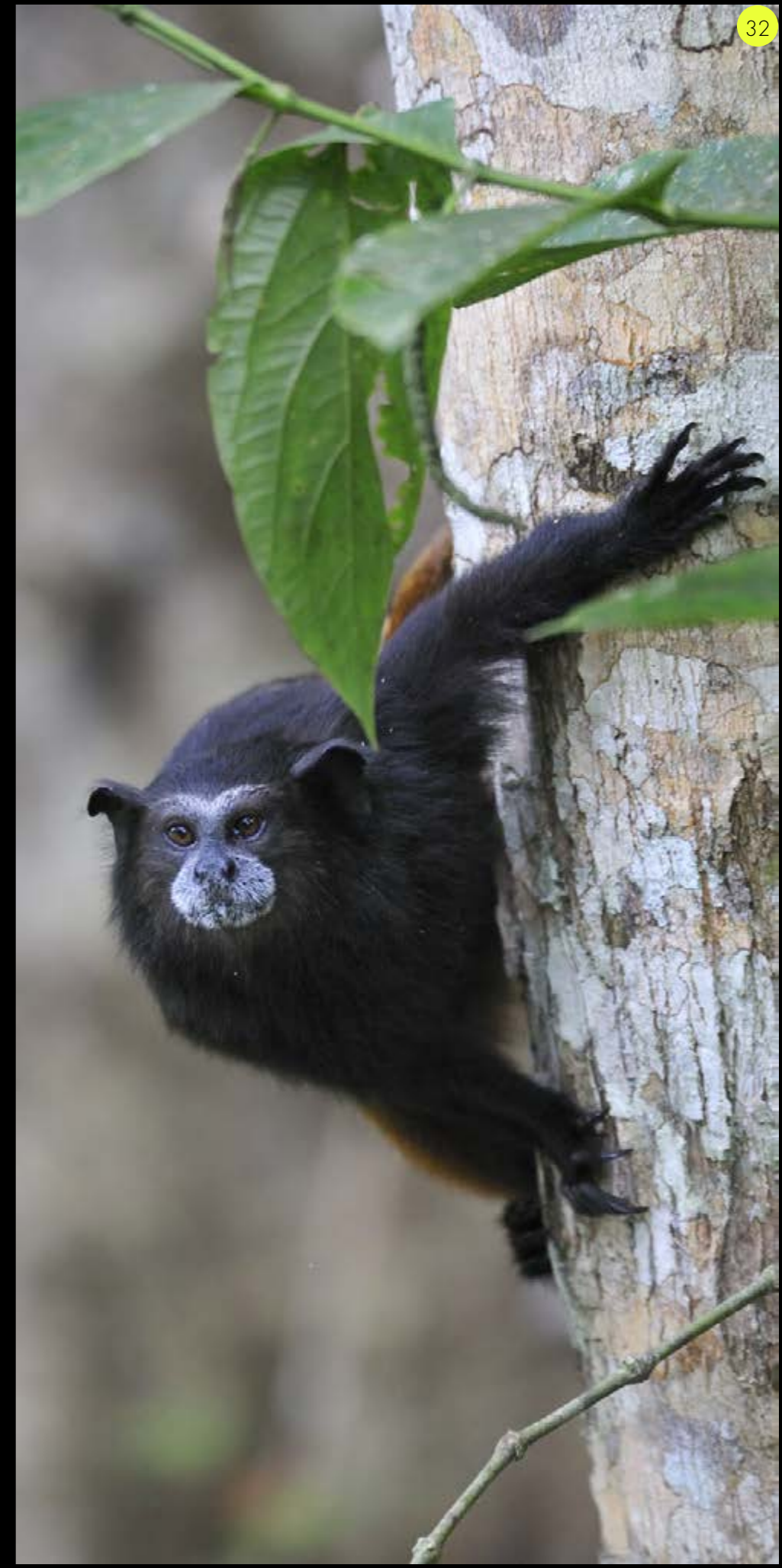
their history. Tambopata was first settled thousands of years ago by indigenous, Amazonian ethnies such as the Ese-Eja. Living in small villages, they cultivated yuca and hunted in the surrounding forests. The plants of the rainforests also provided them with building materials and a wide variety of medicine. During the Spanish colonial period, access to the Tambopata region was so difficult that it was largely ignored and left to its own devices. This changed at the beginning of the twentieth century during the Peruvian rubber boom. As people from outside the region searched Tambopata and many other areas in southeastern Peru for rubber trees, they frequently came into conflict with indigenous groups. Many locals were enslaved and perished from diseases brought by the new colonists. Although the rubber boom didn't last long, it made a big impact on indigenous groups of the Tambopata region and their populations declined as a result. Decades later, colonists to Tambopata began to arrive from the highlands in search of a better life and gold that had been found in the rivers. Shortly thereafter, the first eco-lodge was built in the area and tourists slowly began to make their way to Tambopata. As word spread about the diversity of the Tambopata region, it grew in popularity as a destination and became one of the most popular sites to visit in Peru after the year 2000. Tambopata continues to be a

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Rufescent Tiger Heron ■
Tigrisoma lineatum
 by a sluggish forest stream.


■ *Brown-mantled tamarins or Saddle-back tamarins Saguinus fuscicollis are relatively common and can occasionally be approached quite closely.*





Blue-and-Yellow Macaw
Ara ararauna, Scarlet
Macaw *Ara macao*, Red-
bellied Macaw *Ara
manilata*, Chestnut-fronted
Macaw *Ara severus* and
Mealy Parrot *Amazona
farinosa* share a clay lick.



Left,  Brown Capuchin *Cebus apella*; right, Hoffmann's two-toed sloth *Choloepus hoffmanni*.



■ A silvery rainforest butterfly *Callithomia lenea*.

destination of choice for thousands of people experiencing Peru. Increasing numbers of colonists and pressure on the rainforests from mining and a new road linking the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans have been challenges to conservation, but large protected areas and the importance of ecotourism help to buffer these threats.

A HISTORY OF CONSERVATION

The first protected area in Tambopata was the Tambopata Reserved Zone. Established in 1977, it encompassed over 5,000 hectares of lowland rainforest and palm swamps near Explorer's Inn. In 1990, this protected zone was expanded to include the watersheds of the Tambopata and Candamo Rivers and thus grew in size to a massive 271,000 hectares. Shortly thereafter, the name of this protected area was also changed to the Tambopata National Reserve. Combined with the adjacent Bahuaja Sonene National Park and the Madidi National Park in Bolivia, these sister reserves protect a scarcely inhabited tropical rain forest the size of Belgium (over 3,000,000 hectares, or 30,000 square kilometers). Situated on the southern side of the Tambopata River, this huge area of beautiful lowland rainforests harbors an equally

continued on page 40 ➤



Top left, Rainbow katydid *Poecilocloeus* cf. *lepidus*; top right, *Moncheca bisulca kuythyi* katydid. Bottom left, Monkey face Grasshopper *Eumastax* sp.; bottom right, unidentified grasshopper nymph.





A rare sighting in the rainforest canopy - the spectacular King Vulture *Sarcoramphus papa*.

The most beautiful and colorful among vulture species



Left, social wasps *Polistes goeldii* feeding larvae on their paper nest; center, close-up portrait of a Stick grasshopper or Jumping stick *Paraproscopia* sp, family Proscopiidae; far right, Leaf-footed bug, family Coreidae.





Scarlet Macaws
Ara macao and Blue-
and-Yellow Macaws
Ara ararauna share
a Cecropia tree
near a clay lick.



Right, a fulgid
Lantern Bug *Phrictus*
auromaculatus,
a rare species and
the first record of it in
the field; right,
Black Caracara
Daptrius ater.

impressive array of biodiversity. The numbers of species that make their homes in these rainforests demonstrates why the Tambopata region is often referred to as the most biodiverse place on Earth. It harbors more than 10,000 species of plants, over 600 species of birds, 200 species of mammals, more than 1,000 butterfly species, literally thousands of species of insects and well over 100 species of amphibians and reptiles. Staying - as we did - at the Rainforest Expeditions lodges offers the chance to experience firsthand and on a daily basis this biodiversity because lodges such as Refugio Amazonas and Posada Amazonas are located adjacent to the Tambopata National Reserve. The wild nature of the Tambopata National Reserve is further protected by the presence of the one million hectare Bahuaja Sonene National Park that abuts the reserve to the south. This is also where the Tambopata Research Center is located. But what is it like to actually explore the Tambopata rainforest in search of photographic subjects? A day-to-day chronicle of our trip there will follow up in the second part of our trip report. ●

**DON'T MISS THE SECOND
INSTALLMENT OF OUR
TAMBOPATA STORY –
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ADVENTURES IN WILDLIFE
PHOTOGRAPHY!**





■ Spix's Guan
Penelope
jacquacu. This is
a rather shy, large
and relatively
common species
which is best
seen at or near
clay licks.



■ Left, Hoatzin *Opisthocomus hoazin* at the water's edge in Tres Chimbas; right, a pair of Red-and-green Macaw *Ara chloropterus*.





Left, Fulgorid Waxtail Lantern Bug *Pterodictya reticularis*; right, butterfly *Caeruleptychia lobelia*.



*An endless variety
of tiny, strange and
colorful insect species*



A face-on portrait of a Monkey face Grasshopper *Eumastax* sp. shows the typical position of its hind legs.



■ Top left, Black-throated Toucanet *Aulacorhynchus atrogularis*; top right, Chestnut-eared Aracari *Pteroglossus castanotis*. Bottom left, Golden-collared Toucanet *Selenidera reinwardtii*; bottom right, Olive Oropendola *Psarocolius bifasciatus*.



A family group of *Capybara Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris* takes a bath in the muddy backwaters of the Rio Tambopata.

The Tambopata Reserve offers excellent opportunities to observe and photograph the Dusky Titi *Callicebus moloch*.





A group of Giant River Otter *Pteronura brasiliensis* at the Tres Chimbas lagoon.

Left, Glasswing
Nymphalid butterfly
(family Ithomiinae);
center, Wasps
Angiopolybia pallens
colony and nest;
right, planthopper
Phyllotropis cingulata,
family Membracidae.



*Death lies quietly coiled
in the fork of a forest branch*



Close-up portrait of a  Two-striped Amazon palm viper *Bothriopsis bilineata*.



■ Left, a female Red Howler Monkey *Alouatta seniculus* with her baby; right, a noisy, fast-flying flock of Cobalt-winged Parakeet *Brotogeris cyanoptera*.





■ Left, Mealy Amazon or Mealy Parrot *Amazona farinosa* on clay lick; center, Collared Tree Runner *Tropidurus plica*; right, Brown-throated three-toed sloth *Bradypus variegatus*.



Scarlet Macaws *Ara macao*, Red-and-Green Macaws *Ara chloropterus* and Blue-and-Yellow Macaws *Ara ararauna* on clay lick.



■ Left, close-up portrait of Horned wood lizard *Enyalioides palpebralis*. Right, Rainbow Boa *Epicrates cenchria cenchria*, a stunningly iridescent species.





■ The arboreal Barred Leaf Monkey Frog *Phyllomedusa tomopterna* is relatively common and usually seen at night.



■ Three-striped Poison Dart Frog
Ameerega trivittata, carrying fully
developed tadpoles on its back.



Far left, Rainforest scorpion *Tityus* sp.; center, Spiny Lichen katydid *Championica peruana*; right, Green Leaf Mantis *Choeradodis stalii*.

An abundance of remote beautiful landscapes at the feet of the Andes

■ Tambopata Reserve, rio Tambopata backwaters. Steep cliffs such as these often offer clay licks to the local fauna.





Left, a pair of colorful Leaf-footed bugs, family Coreidae, in courtship ritual; right, a large Huntsman Spider *Olios* sp., family Sparassidae, preying on moth at night.



At-a-glance travel guide

COUNTRY OF DESTINATION: PERU



USEFUL TIPS FOR YOUR EXPEDITION

Some simple, common sense, field-tested advice and information to make the best out of your trip and avoid hassles, worries and problems

ROUTE: Your international flight will land at Jorge Chávez International Airport, in Peru's capital Lima. We strongly suggest to rest and spend the night in one of the airport's hotels as the domestic flight to Puerto Maldonado, gateway to the Rio Tambopata and the Amazon rainforest, will depart the following morning. Once in Puerto Maldonado you will be met at the airport by staff from **Rainforest Expeditions** who will take you first to their office in town and then to the river jetty, where you'll board your launch for the long river trip to your chosen lodge - **Posada Amazonas** (45 mins navigation), **Refugio Amazonas** (4 hrs navigation) or the **Tambopata Research Center** (about 4 hrs from the latter).

MEANS OF TRANSPORT: Roofed river launch for general transport and fluvial excursions, and on foot along well-maintained trails inside the National Reserve. Expect frequent, deep, sticky mud and occasional flooded forest tracts, so bring a pair of sturdy rubber boots besides your trekking shoes.

CURRENCY: Peruvian Nuevo Sol, but US dollars and Euros are commonly accepted at the lodges.

ACCOMODATION: The Tambopata National Reserve offers several choices of accomodation, but we strongly suggest to choose among those owned and managed by **Rainforest Expeditions**. These are

on their own land, employ experienced local staff and offer wonderfully comfortable accomodation and food. As every lodge offers something different the best option is to spend several days in each.

FOOD: Peruvian food is justifiably famous worldwide - try this [link](#) to find out about its tastiest recipes such as *ceviche*, *causa* and *aji de gallina*. The food at the lodges is very good and filling, with a distinct and pleasant local flavour.

LANGUAGE: Peruvian Spanish and English, but Quechua - the historical language of the Incas - is still widely spoken in the Andean countryside.

Exploring the Peruvian Amazon rainforest in unmatched comfort



WORRIES: Basically none different from any other place - Peru is extremely well geared to cater to the international tourist market and it has proven to be a very safe, perfectly organized and very hospitable Country in our experience, especially in the archaeological sites such as Cusco (or Cuzco), the Sacred Valley of the Incas and Machu Picchu. When in the rainforest always sleep under the mosquito net provided in your room (see "Health" below) and look carefully where you put your feet and hands when walking, especially at night.

HEALTH: This is the Amazon, so there's always the chance to catch an unpleasant tropical disease - especially if spending long periods in the rainforest close to water and at night. *Leishmaniosis* - a disfiguring and stubborn illness transmitted by flies - is a real risk here, so use a good mosquito repellent and - most importantly - always wear long trousers

and long-sleeved shirts. When in the Andes and visiting Cusco and the Sacred Valley of the Incas expect the occasional and possibly quite discomforting bout of altitude sickness, so take the appropriate medicaments along.

CLIMATE: Tropical, but very variable depending on altitude. In the lowlands of the Tambopata rainforest expect cool, pleasant nights and very hot, humid days; when at altitude in the Andes expect cool, sunlit days and frigid nights.

BESIDES: Peru is an ancient Country blessed with countless natural, artistic and historical riches - do not make the mistake of limiting your stay to the Rio Tambopata region and plan instead to spend several days travelling around the land to enjoy its beauty and culture. One destination deserving several days is the historical city of Cusco (Cuzco), which is rich

in beautiful baroque churches from the era of the Spanish colonization and wonderful museums, and which one can use as a comfortable, quaint, well-organized base for countless excursions in the surrounding areas. At the very minimum plan several days to visit the Inca archaeological sites at Sacsayhuamán, the mighty ruins of the indigenous settlements spread along the stunning Sacred Valley of the Incas and finally the spectacular "lost city" of Machu Picchu, which - despite having become one of the world's best known tourist spots - still has the capability to leave the visitor literally speechless. Countless travel and tour agencies offer their services in Peru, but we can safely recommend those by **Fertur Peru Travel** - our stays in Lima, Cusco and Aguas Calientes and our privately chauffeured and guided tours of the Inca archeological sites were always impeccably organized and thoughtfully planned out. ●



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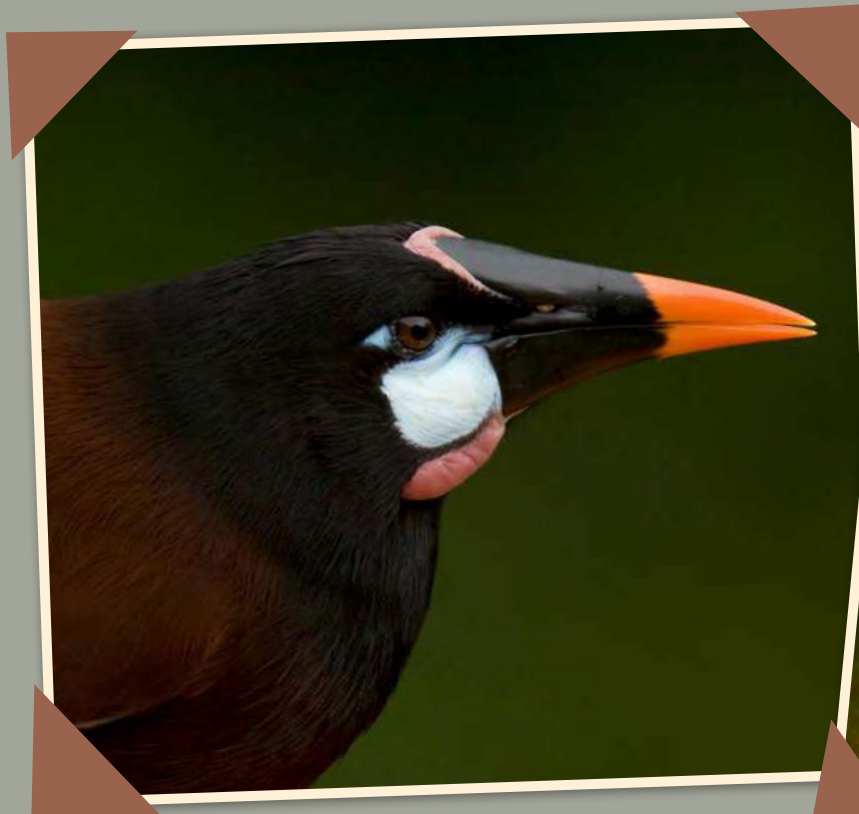
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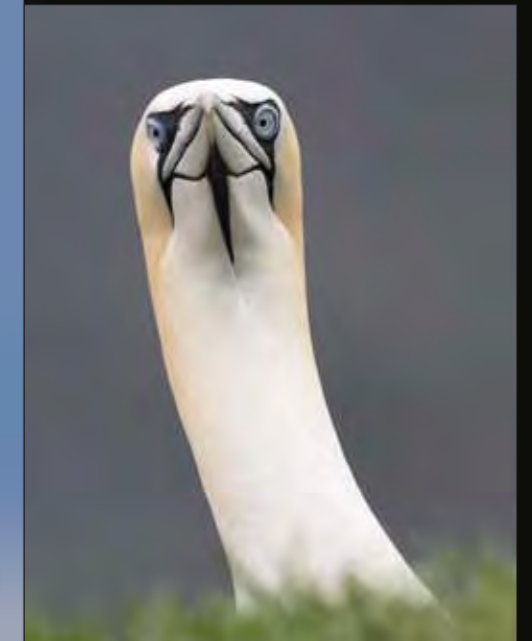
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David Hemmings - President, Nature's Photo Adventures



"My experience was EXCEPTIONAL! The trip exceeded my expectations in all areas. I hoped to get in a position to see owls and couldn't possibly have been happier. It was abundantly clear that David invested significant time and effort prior to the arrival of the group in scouting the area around Quebec and Ontario. He knew exactly where to go to find every species of owl. His knowledge and efforts were very much appreciated by the entire group. My primary objective was just getting in a position to photograph owls and was not expecting much in the way of photographic instruction. I was very pleasantly surprised and was very happy with the instruction. Prior to the trip I had a love/hate relationship with auto focus as it applies to photographing birds in flight. I've struggled with this for years. While I have a lot more to

learn, and need to work at honing my skills, the trip with NPA helped me tremendously in being able to photograph birds in flight. Photographing birds in flight was my main objective. Prior to the trip I was nearly clueless in comparison to my skills after the trip. You can also see from my bird list that I found the trip productive from a birding perspective as well".
Kevin McCarthy, USA

"I recommend NPA workshops! The level of services by workshop leaders was excellent. Quality of photographic instruction was exceptional and they

were always on hand to solve issues that arose, and I had more than my share of equipment issues. Quality of wildlife provided was good and I was amazed at how easily the subjects accepted new setups provided. Locations visited were right on for the species targeted. My most memorable moment was using the flash setups the first time and capturing an image of the Swordbill Hummingbird. I feel that my level of photography has improved with the custom functions that were set up on my camera for me and the resulting images that I obtained. Overall experience and

expectations were achieved and we were fortunate to have a very compatible group on our tour, which made it very enjoyable. This was my first workshop and I would recommend them to friends".
Rosemary Harris, Canada

"Great trip, great experience and great workshop leader. Great opportunity for capturing images of magnificent and uncommon (in southern USA) birds. Organizers contribute to great group dynamics and superb attitude. Cool techniques".
Eric Grossman, USA



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Canada: Newfoundland - Puffins & Gannets • British Columbia - Spirit Bears • Alberta - Black Bears & Elk • Churchill - Breeding Arctic Birds and Polar Bears • Ontario & Quebec - Snowy Owls and Great Gray Owls
United States: Alaska - Kodiak Bears & Bald Eagles • Florida - Raptors **Asia:** Borneo - Orangutans, Proboscis Monkey, Broadbills • India - Bengal Tigers and birds **Africa:** Botswana - Chobe River - Elephants and Hippos • Kenya & Tanzania South Africa - African Penguins and the Big 5 **Central & South America:** Peru - Machu Picchu and The Amazon • Costa Rica - Hummingbirds • Brazil - The Pantanal & Jaguars

The Global Arctic Awards 2013

A Gallery of the Winners of the Second Edition

A competition which shows the splendor of the Arctic, offering a stunning selection of images which pay tribute to a variety of landscapes and wildlife from the wastelands of the extreme North

Photographers hailing from 34 different countries have taken part in the international photography competition Global Arctic Awards. The project was fulfilled with the support of the government of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous region and the Russian Geographic Society.

The full gallery of 77 images taking part in the competition can be seen on the official web site:

<http://arcticawards.ru/winners2013>

The Global Arctic Awards contest winners were awarded the medals of several international photography associations: FIAP, PSA and UPI, as well as with prizes and gifts from Global Arctic Awards partners, among which were trips to Greenland and Yamal.

Alltogether, 10 medals were won by the Russian participants, and 24 by the photographers from Germany, USA, Canada, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Belgium, France, Italy, Finland, Denmark, Sweden and South Africa. Among all participants, Norwegian photographer Roy Mangersnes has been awarded the title of Best Arctic Photographer in 2013.

According to tradition, all the images by winners and finalists have been published in the book "Arctic - Best Photographs" (<http://www.arcticbook.com>) and have been represented in the final Moscow exhibition. The exhibition's grand opening took place in May 2014.

Global Arctic Awards organizers contest express sincere gratitude to the partners and sponsors, whose support has played a very important role. ●



Christian Schweiger/Germany

Southern Iceland, on the 115m volcanic peninsula of Dyrhólaey, known for its rich bird life.

*On the previous page, an image taken in Svalbard by **Leonie Scholtz/South Africa***





Joe Bunni/France
*Split image of a Polar bear,
Nunavut, Canada.*



Carsten Egevang/ Denmark
*Arctic fox in Northeast Greenland
at the end of May.*



Giacomo De Dona/Italy
*Moose in Sweden, during
a summer midnight walk.*



Arlid Heitmann/ Norway
*Aurora borealis dancing over a river
near Sandevannet Lake in northern Norway.*

Benoist Clouet/France
*Walruses on Moffen Island, Norway,
normally a closed bird sanctuary.*



David Allemand/France
Arctic owl in Canada.

Martin Schulz/Germany

The Kirkjufell is a wonderful shaped mountain, located on the North side of the Snæfellsnes peninsula in West Iceland.



Danil Husainov/Russia

*In the tundra in autumn 2012,
with reindeer herders. To the nearest town 40km.
No cellphones or internet, electricity is available
from gasoline generator. Only the wind and the starry sky.*



Dany Chan/Canada

*After a day's hunt, these polar bears sit on
the shore line resting and grooming each other.*



Dionys Moser/Switzerland

Tromsø, Norway. Normally a corona starts to shine right over one's head, but this one was - unusually - vertical and very close to horizon.



Chris Gale/Canada

A moose being rescued at Muncho Lake in Northern British Columbia, Canada.

Dmitriy Arkhipov/Russia

In July, female humpback whales depart from cold polar latitudes to more temperate waters, where in secluded and warm bays they will give birth. Their partners go with them, sometimes showing a touching concern for their pregnant girlfriends.





**Raymond
Hoffman/Iceland**
*Landscape in the
South East of Iceland.*



Paul Zizka/Canada

A lone skier heads towards Mount Thor, in a remote part of Baffin Island.



Felix Inden/Germany

A little village on the Lofoten islands in northern Norway lies under an arc of Aurora borealis.



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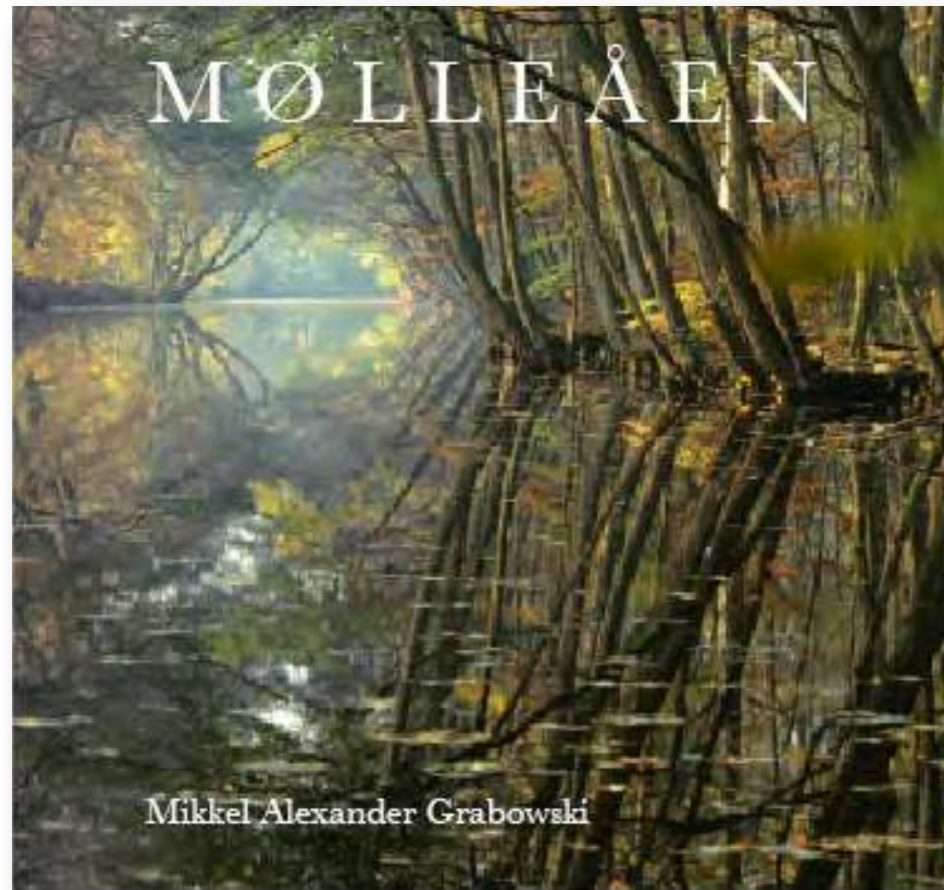
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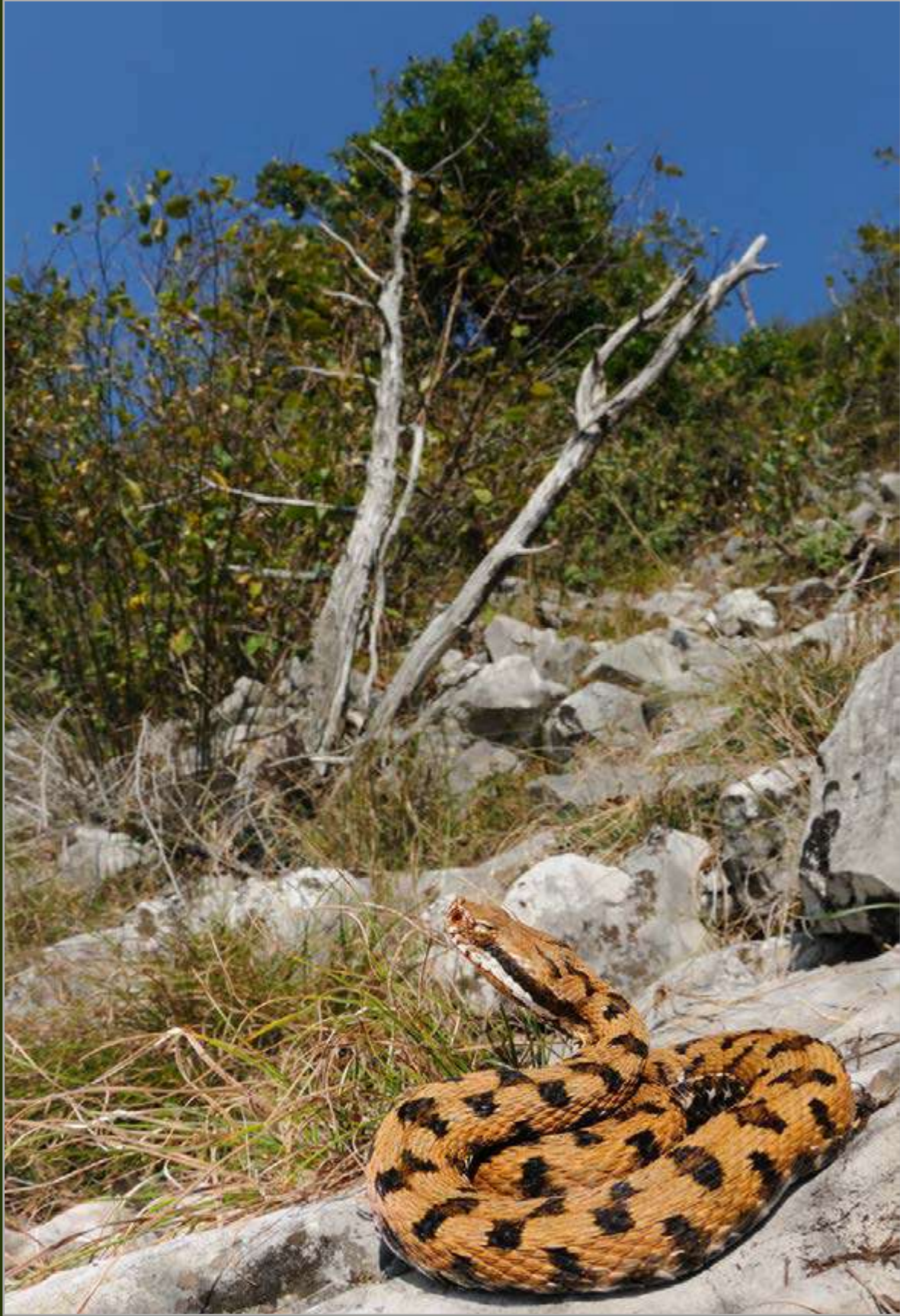


A HOT NEW LOOK FOR ADDERS

How can a young man save his own country's most maligned, feared and persecuted animal? Matteo Di Nicola has chosen - successfully - to highlight its unique beauty



The small Meadow viper *Vipera ursinii* inhabits mountain meadows in a few areas of Umbria, Lazio, Marche and Abruzzo. This specimen was sunbathing at the base of a sunny calcareous hillside. On the title page, a striking close-up portrait of a melanistic *Vipera aspis atra*.



Redi's asp *Vipera aspis francisciredi* can be observed in different sunny environments, like this showy male in a xeric stony ground of Lombardy.

TEXT AND PHOTOS
BY MATTEO DI NICOLA

Regarding its wildlife aspects, one could safely say that Italy is a country of huge contradictions. On one hand the territorial and climatic characteristics confer a value of biodiversity among the highest in Europe (ranging from the Mediterranean xeric coasts to the alpine habitats, passing by lowland forests, lakes and hills), on the other hand human pressure and urbanization make wild animals increasingly rarefied and even harder to find. There is another conflict to be considered in the specific topic of this article - snakes. The bulk of the population hates and fears them, basing its attitude on ridiculous myths and legends, but there exists a minority of "herp lovers" who morbidly look for reptiles in every corner. However few succeed in the enterprise, because it is not easy to systematically find certain species in Italy, such as vipers - excluding casual encounters, of course. To achieve the goal you need to have good knowledge of the behaviour and habits of these animals and you need to learn about the places where to search. Elusiveness and difficulty of discovery are two of the reasons that made me excited about vipers, which are my preferred photographic and naturalistic subjects. Other reasons are the charm of their shape and patterns, their ecology

and their venom. This, combined with the shameful ignorance shown by most people towards certain animals, encourages me to raise awareness about these snakes through both photography and popularization. More than 3300 living species of snakes are currently known in the world and about 220 belong to the *Viperidae* family, for which Italy, with its bare four species - all belonging to the genus *Vipera* - does not bear any special record. Nevertheless, one could write several pages about why they are so fascinating. This group of venomous snakes, widespread in the Palearctic region, includes only viviparous species. They have terrestrial habits and most of the species prefer a cool environment, in fact at low latitudes they generally colonize areas at higher altitudes. It would be impossible not mentioning what makes vipers so discussed: their venom. Used to kill their prey (also helping the digestion due to specific enzymes) and possibly for defense, the venom is produced by a specialized triangular shaped gland, located in the postero-lateral position in the head. The venom varies in composition and injected quantity depending on the species. In general, it contains a mixture of many substances including water, metallic and non-metallic ions,

continued on page 79 >



Differences in skin color occur even between the sexes. This is not an absolute rule, but usually males have more vivid colors and a more contrasted pattern than females. In the first column: males of *Vipera aspis francisciredi* and *Vipera berus*; in the second column, two females belonging to the same species.



Not only the back differs in coloration. Some individuals have unusual colors even on the belly, as this striking “salmon-throat” specimen clearly shows.



Skin before molting appears faded and less contrasty than normal and eyes are bluish: this is due to the presence of a thin layer of fluid that helps the old skin to separate from the underlying new one.

aminoacids and enzymatic proteins such as phospholipase, protease, esterase and thrombin-like enzymes. The effects are mainly haemotoxic, neurotoxic, cytotoxic and cardiotoxic.

The vipers of Italy commonly share a small to medium sized body and a shy behavior: when confronted by humans they prefer to escape rather than attack, which only happens if they have no alternative. In case of an envenomating bite the effects depend on several factors such as the species involved, the amount of injected venom, the age and physical condition of the animal as well as the age and physical condition of the affected person. Generally the four Italian species do not cause very serious effects and they are not considered deadly for an adult in good health.

The four species living in Italy are the Common asp *Vipera aspis*, widespread all over the territory except Sardinia; the European adder *Vipera berus* present in the central and eastern Alps; the Horned or Sand viper *Vipera ammodytes* - the largest of them all - present in South Tyrol and Friuli Venezia Giulia, and the Meadow viper *Vipera ursinii* present in the central Apennines.

With regard to the Common asp, there are three subspecies in our country: *V. aspis atra* (recently ascribed to *V. aspis aspis*), in Piedmont, Val d'Aosta and Western Liguria; *V. aspis francisciredi* in the rest of the peninsula except Calabria and Sicily; *V. aspis hugyi* in the southern regions and in Sicily.

Although to an untrained eye these species may appear quite similar in

overall shape, size and behavior, the distinguishing features are many, including differences in ecological, ethological and morphological characteristics.

An amazing feature is that each specimen, even of the same subspecies, is never the same as another: the colors and the dorsal pattern are always slightly different, as if they were fingerprints. This is what pushes me to continue photographing the same species even after having seen dozens of specimens. I am always very puzzled by those who fear these animals more than they need to, without really knowing them. How can one not be captured by their fierce eyes, their elegant posture and their movements - so accurate and calibrated as to never waste more energy than necessary. As an example, their capacity to annihilate the prey, or even their would-be predators, thanks to the use of an extraordinarily complex chemical, the result of millions of years of evolution, should be considered an added value and not an element of contempt! And turning to snake lovers from all over the world, I think that Italian Vipers have nothing to envy to several far more popular species. In fact, this is already well-known to many people, especially those involved in the illegal trade of our species, the collection (and killing) of which is strictly prohibited by specific laws. This is why one should never disclose sites of observation of these snakes to unknown people or even on Internet forums.



Males of the Common European adder *Vipera berus* are usually found in shades of grey with a more or less but usually strongly contrasting black pattern. This species can be observed in different alpine environments, such as pastures, rocks, moors or - as the specimen in the picture on the following page - close to bogs.



The European adder *Vipera berus* is found in the central and eastern Alps. This species reaches the highest altitude, up to 3000 meters above sea level.



Vipera aspis atra can rarely be seen in a rare monochromatic coloration without any ornamentation. This variety is called "concolor".



The horned viper *Vipera ammodytes* lives in sunlit calcareous environments in South Tyrol and Friuli Venezia Giulia, like the female in this picture.



In Italy *Vipera ammodytes* typically shows a greyish coloration, but in some areas of Friuli VG females can be reddish, like specimens from Albania.



The chromatic variability is very high, not only between different species but even within the same subspecies, as in these *Vipera aspis atra* specimens.



A comprehensive view of the different patterns of the six species/subspecies.
 In the left column, from the top: *V. aspis atra*; *V. aspis francisciredi* and *V. aspis hugyi*.
 In the right column, from the top: *V. ammodytes*, *V. berus*, *V. ursinii*.



Now a view of the different heads. Same as the previous picture:
 in the left column, from the top: *V. aspis atra*; *V. aspis francisciredi* and *V. aspis hugyi*.
 In the right column, from the top: *V. ammodytes*, *V. berus*, *V. ursinii*.



Melanism (dark pigmentation excess in the skin) is a quite common chromatic variation in *Vipera aspis atra*, *V. aspis francisciredi* and *V. berus* but it was recorded just one time for *Vipera aspis hugyi*, more than 25 years ago. In 2012 I was lucky enough, together with my friend G. Meier, to find in nature another melanistic specimen.

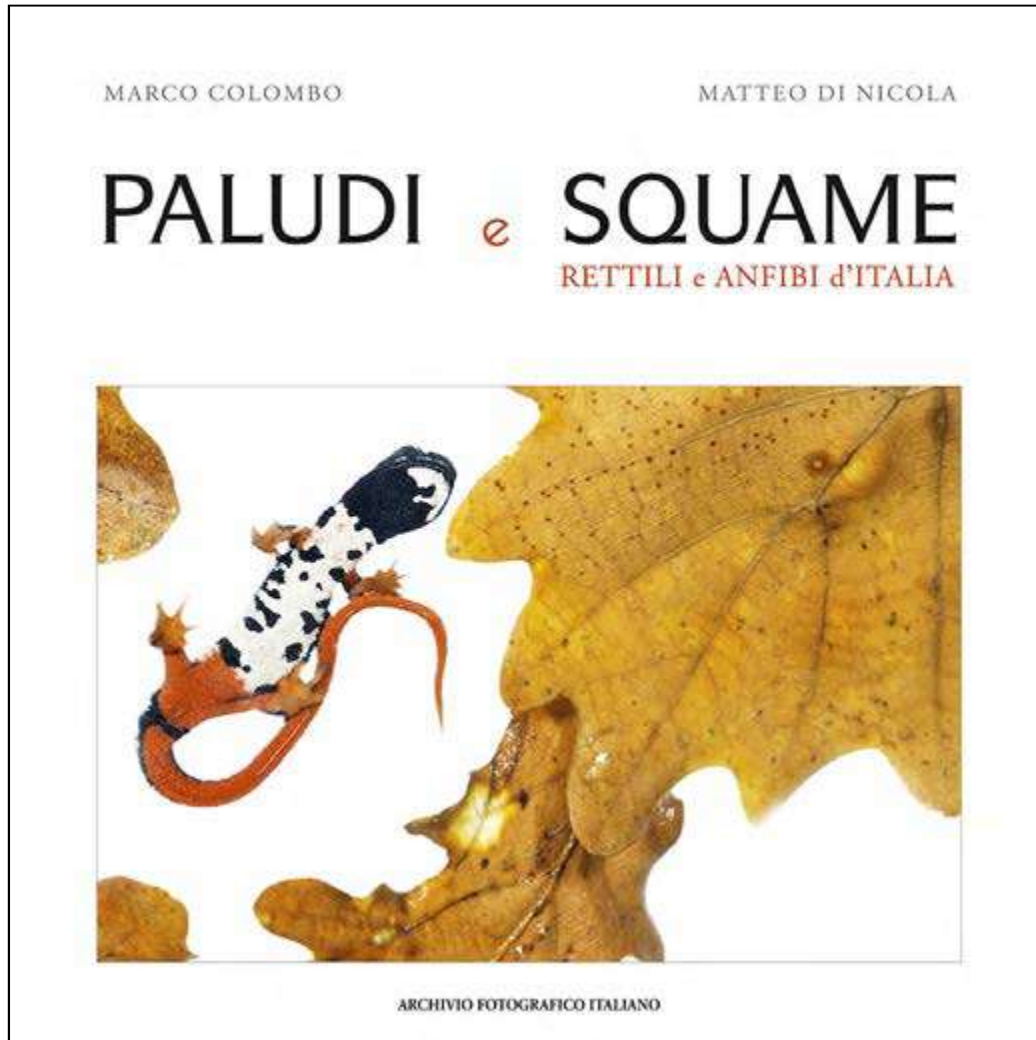
Not rare but really cool, the "infernalis" variety of *Vipera aspis atra*: a melanistic subject with red eyes and venter.



The Alpine viper *V. aspis atra* lives in the northwest (Piedmont, Aosta Valley and Western Liguria), in alpine stony ground and meadows, also over 2000 meters above sea level.



The Southern Italian asp *V. aspis hugyi* is endemic in Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicily and Montecristo isle, where it has been introduced. Here a female in a *Pinus nigra laricio* forest in Calabria.



NEW HERP BOOK

PALUDI E SQUAME: rettili e anfibi d'Italia

Published by the Italian Photographic Archive, this book comes from a great love for Italian herps, from the wish of making them known to the public in all their beauty and fascination, and last but not least their need of protection. This is the first strictly photographic book about Italian frogs, toads, newts, salamanders, turtles, lizards and snakes in their natural environments, through shots obtained over many years by the authors. This work has been published with the sponsorship of Rile-Tenore-Olona Local Park (Lombardy) and the patronage of Societas Herpetologica Italica (SHI). The book is in Italian but don't be afraid, there are much more photographs than texts!

Authors: M.Colombo & M. Di Nicola

Product details: 28x28 cm, hardcover, 112 pages

Publisher: Punto Marte

Price: 25 euro (shipping costs excluded)

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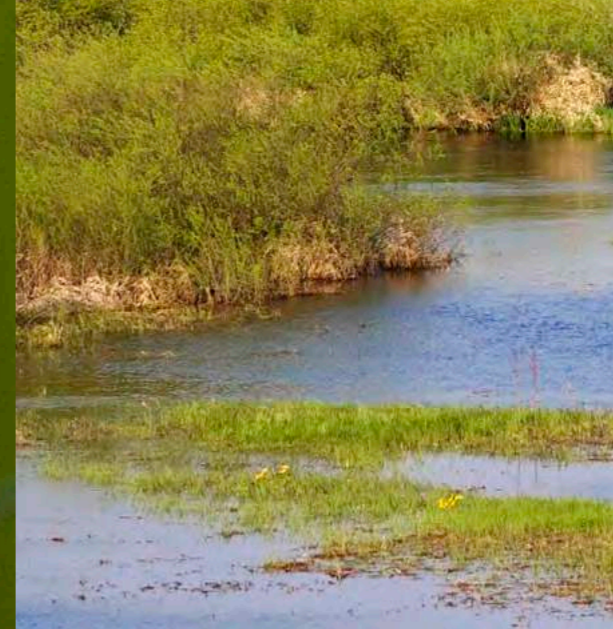
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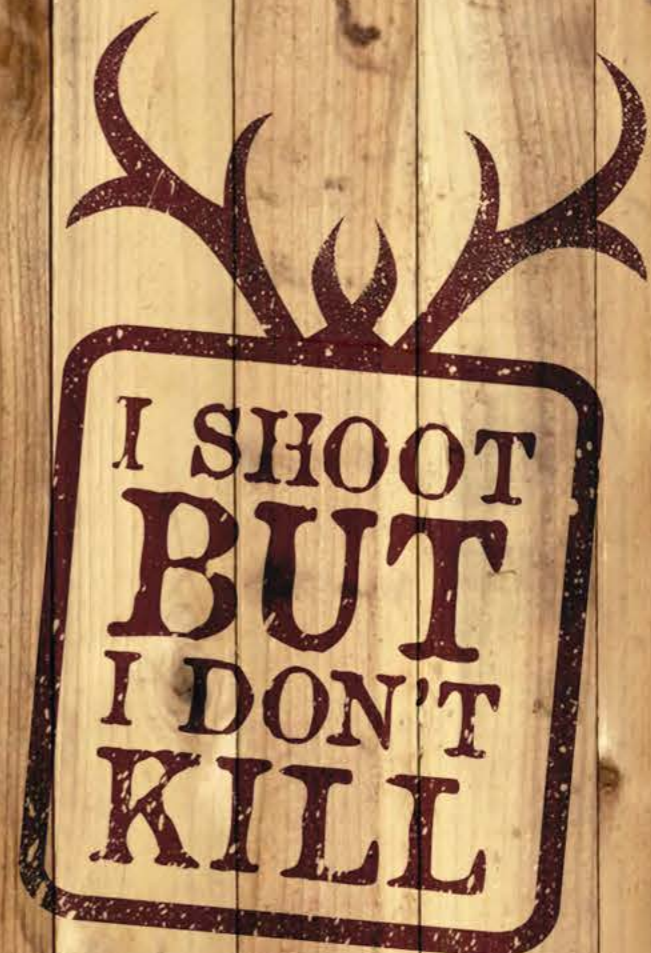
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A PHOTOGRAPHIC TRIBUTE TO WEST PAPUA'S RAJA AMPAT

UNDERWATER KINGDOM

“The Four Kings”: a mighty Indo-Pacific archipelago with unsurpassed diving and untouched coral reefs



Between sea and land

A split image of Antonella diving on a pristine reef. In the previous page, Antonella again at Five Rocks, one the most scenic dive spots of Raja Ampat.



Ribbon sweetlips *Plectorhynchus polytaenia*
A common species of Raja Ampat, often seen shoaling in enormous numbers.

TEXT BY ANDREA FERRARI
PHOTOS BY ANDREA & ANTONELLA FERRARI

The name Raja Ampat (“The Four Kings” in Bahasa Indonesia) refers to four large jungle-clad islands (Batanta, Waigeo, Misool and Salawati) which are part of a large archipelago west of the coast of the Vogelskop or Bird’s Head Peninsula in West Papua, formerly known as Irian Jaya (the half of the island of Papua New Guinea politically belonging to Indonesia today). Culturally and historically rather similar to the Maluku (or Moluccas), the islands of Raja Ampat were ruled in the 15th Century by the Sultanate of Tidore, originating from Halmahera in the Maluku, and offer today unsurpassed topside scenic beauty, crystal-clear water and an unbelievable richness of marine life. The archipelago itself comprises about 600 limestone islands and islets, the great majority of which are unpopulated and shrouded in virgin lowland forest, often with impenetrable blue-water mangrove belts surrounding them. The karst nature of the rock – covered by a remarkably thin layer of fertile soil originated by decaying organic matter – is responsible for the very dry nature of the place, with abundant seasonal rainfall disappearing almost immediately in the crevices of the rocky substrate. Fresh water is a premium, and at the same time its scarcity is a blessing in disguise – as it makes development of most islands impossible. As an exotic dive and nature travel destination, Raja Ampat has few equals – spectacular marine life (including carpet sharks, mantas, dolphins, rare flasher wrasses and four different

species of pygmy seahorses), incredibly scenic topside views, unique land wildlife, colorful, spirited and very friendly local people, and finally a good all-year round tropical climate (cerebral malaria is however a serious risk). Occasionally, currents can be strong and visibility less than optimal, but these are – however bothersome to the underwater photographer – guarantees of a healthy, vital environment. Raja Ampat also offers exceptional opportunities for bird watching and WWII wreck hunting. Spectacular bird species encountered in the area include Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, the large flightless Cassowary, Sea Eagles, colorful *Eclectus* parrots and both Wilson’s and Red Bird of Paradise *Paradisea rubra*, endemic to Waigeo and Batanta. Those interested in history will love the exceptionally well-preserved P-47 D Thunderbolt “Razorback” lying on its back in 20 meters of water off Wai island. This US Army Air Force single-engine fighter-bomber was one of seven (“Tubby Flight” of 311th Fighter Squadron) which had taken off from Noemfoor Island on a bombing and strafing mission to Ambon Harbor and had subsequently ditched in the area on 21 October 1944 after having run out of fuel. The plane is in perfect shape with only a nicked propeller blade and all dashboard instruments and wing armament intact – a moving testimony to the young pilots, both American and Japanese, who bravely flew, fought and often died above the sea of this area during the Second World War. ●



Gorgonian gardens
Antonella diving among the enormous gorgonian fans at Mike's Point, another celebrated dive site of Raja Ampat.



Manta Manta birostris

Diving with a huge black Manta at a cleaning station in the middle of the Dampier Strait, Antonella offers a good size comparison.



Common lionfish *Pterois volitans*

One of the most common reef predator species found in the central Indo-Pacific waters, often seen as it hovers near corals and sponges waiting in ambush for its prey.



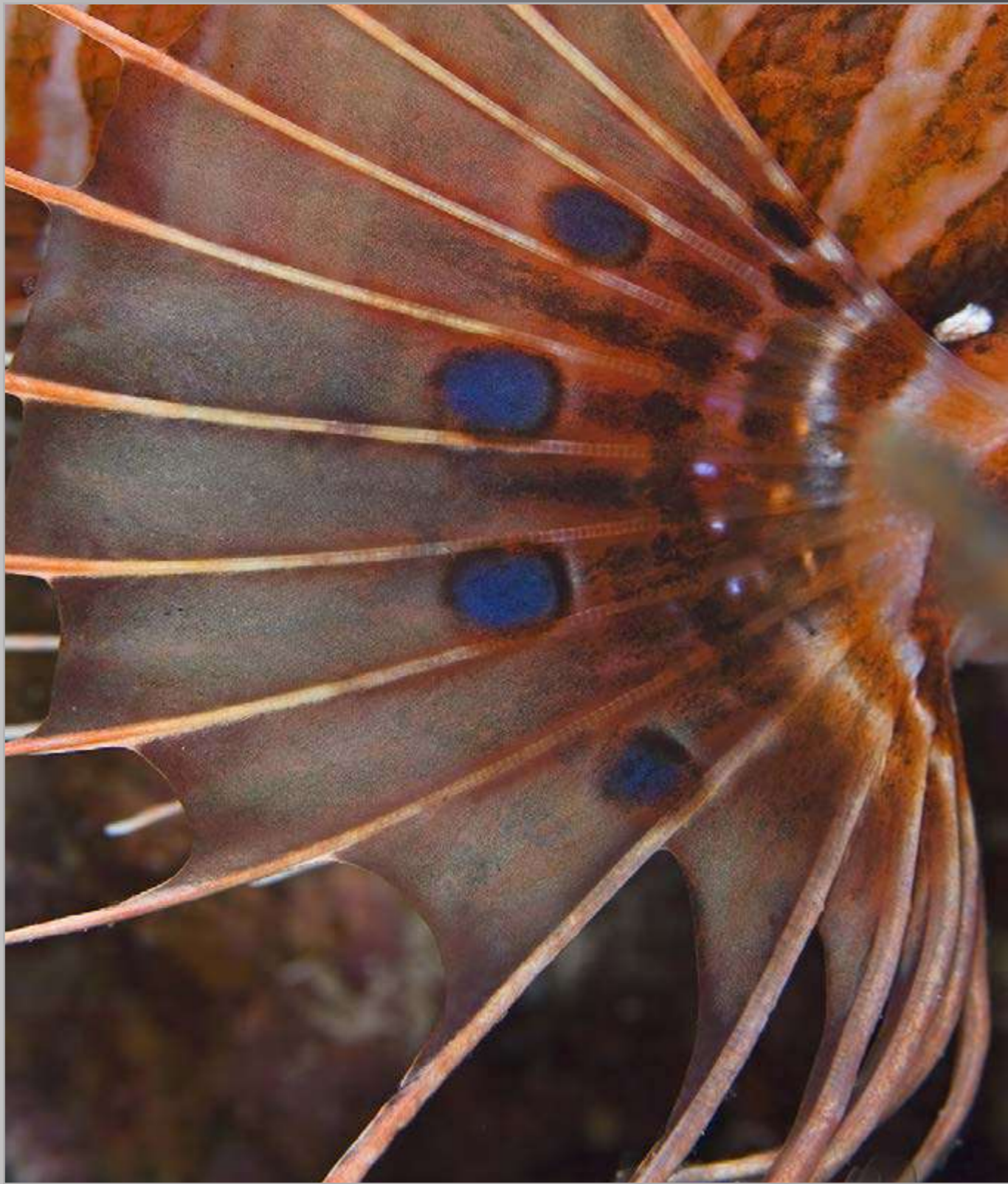
Sulphur-crested cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*

Asian and Australian species meet in the Raja Ampat area, known as Wallacea in biogeographical terms.



Waterscape at Sardines

The lush, current-swept dive site known as Sardines offers wonderful encounters with pelagic species and colorful reef vistas.



Spotted lionfish *Pterois antennata*
 Raja Ampat offers unique opportunities for macrophotography. This is a detail of the webbed pectoral fins of the relatively common Spotted lionfish.



Magenta dottyback *Pseudochromis porphyreus*
 A stunning, diminutive, extremely wary species which is sadly often collected for the aquarium trade.



Mangroves

Several locations in Raja Ampat offer the possibility of shallow diving and/or snorkelling in clear water mangrove habitats.



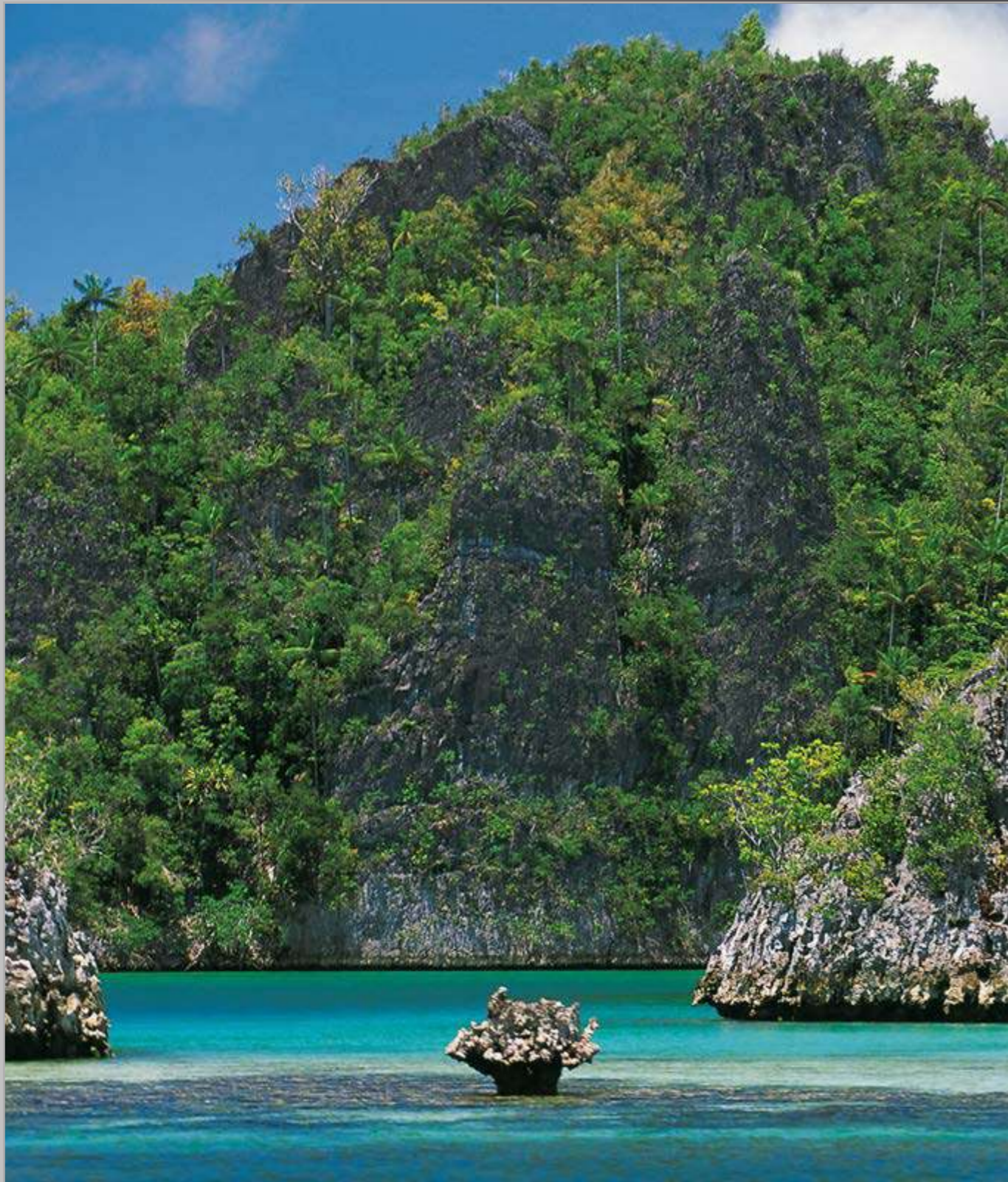
The Passage

One of Raja Ampat's most famous dive sites, The Passage is a narrow, shallow, river-like sea channel meandering among forest-clad limestone cliffs.



Tasselled Wobbegong *Eucrossorhinus dasypogon*

Antonella poses with a large Tasselled wobbegong *Eucrossorhinus dasypogon* - a common Carpet shark of Raja Ampat - and a cloud of glassfish hovering above it.



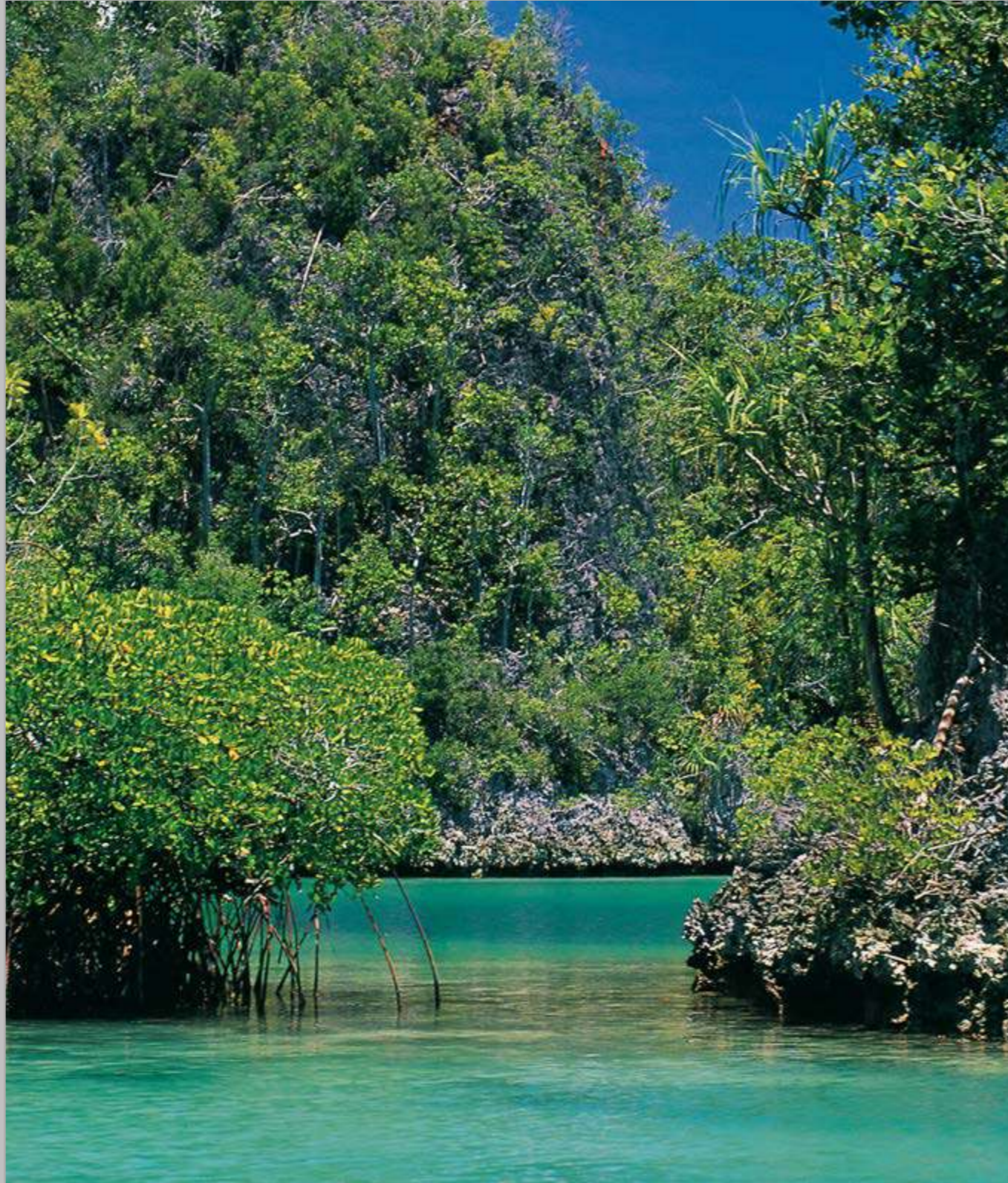
Karst islands
Topside panoramas of Raja Ampat consist of steep, forest clad limestone islets.



Five Rocks
Antonella exploring the shallow sunlit waters of Five Rocks.

**Mike's Point**

This is one of Raja Ampat's most scenic dive sites - an amphitheatre-like waterscape of broken boulders graced by a multitude of enormous, colorful gorgonians and sea fans.



Mangroves and karst

The jagged, sharp limestone of the islets is circled by impenetrable mangrove forests.



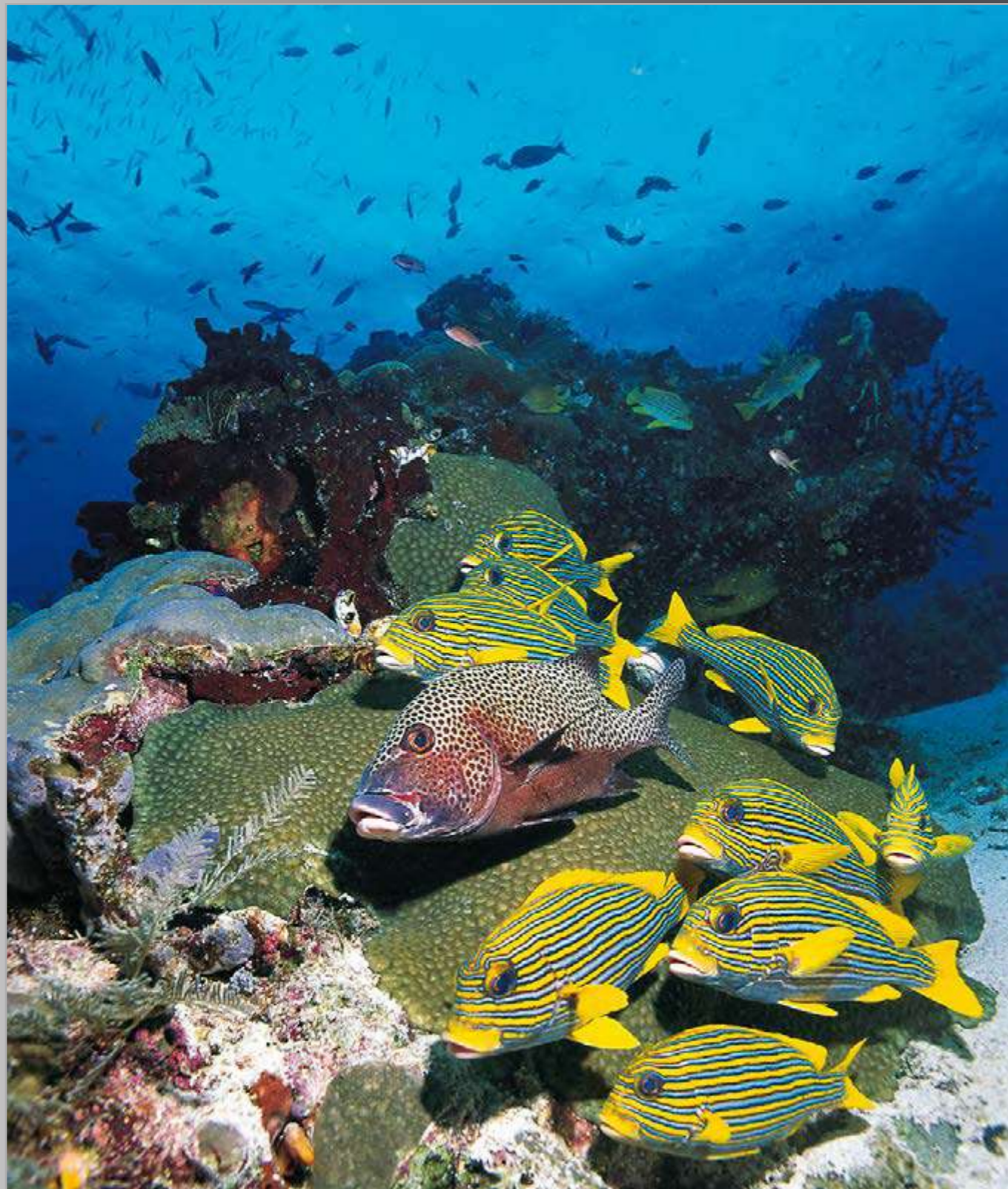
The Passage

Divers here are suspended between sea and forest.



Manta Manta birostris

The deep, blue waters of the Dampier Strait are home to dozens of enormous Mantas - here one is surrounded by a living cloud of swirling Fusiliers *Caesio* sp.



Ribbon sweetlips *Plectorhynchus polytaenia*
Sweetlips of different species - such as these at Cape Kri - often congregate near submerged rocks, usually facing the current.



Arborek jetty
The small wooden jetty of Arborek island is a favorite dive and photography spot sited in the Dampier Strait.



Manta Manta birostris

Mantas encountered in Raja Ampat are often unusually dark, strongly patterned or even wholly black. Here Antonella gives a good idea of their large size.

**Sorido Bay**

Antonella snorkelling in the shallow waters of Sorido Bay, just in front of Max Ammer's pioneering luxury resort sited on Kri island.



Sponges

The panoramas of The Passage blend underwater vistas with glimpses of the forest canopy directly above.



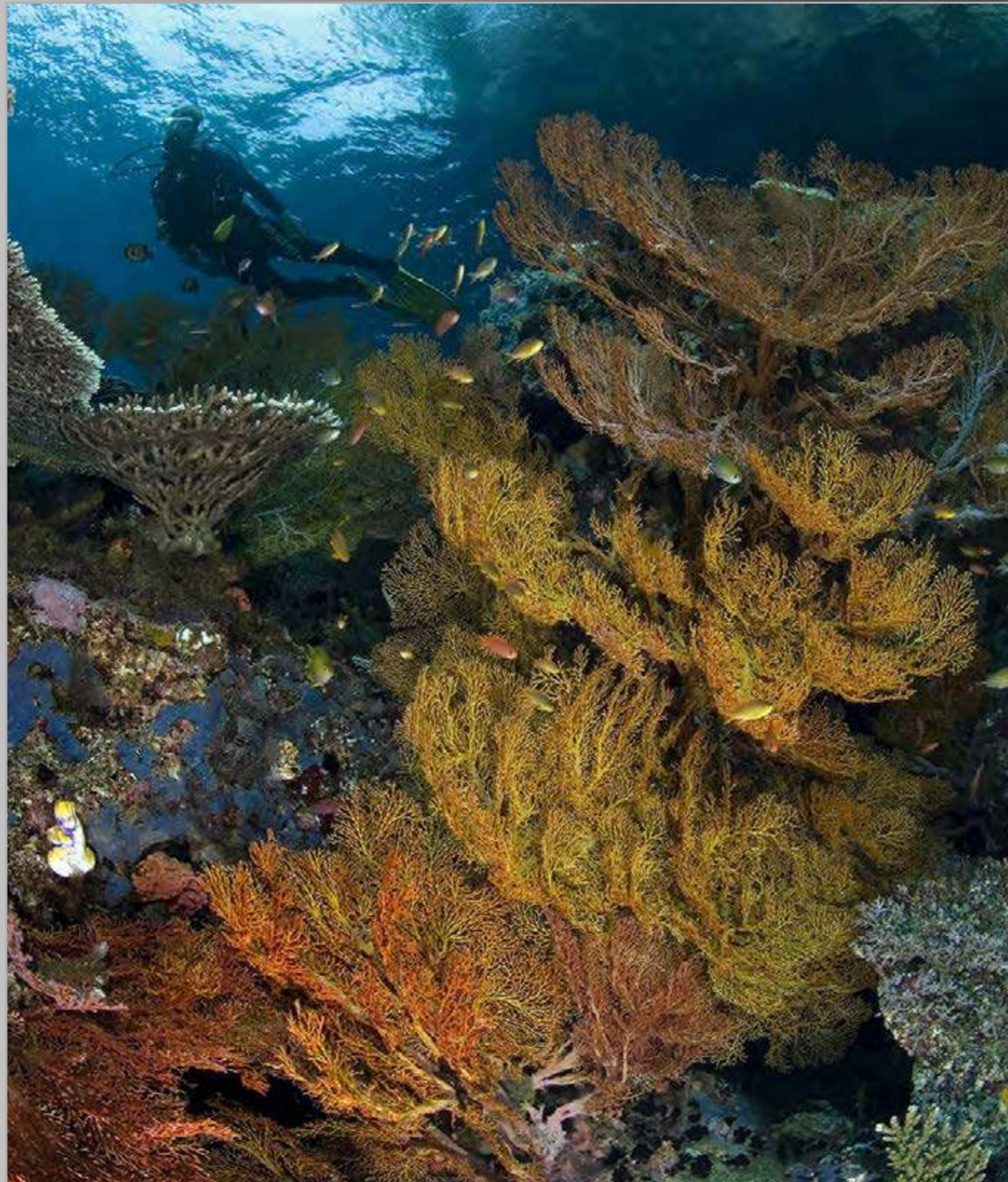
Mike's Point

Steep pinnacles, shallow waters and exceptionally well-developed sea fans define the esthetics of Mike's Point, a Raja Ampat dive site not to be missed.



Wai island

A few meters in front of Antonella, the perfectly preserved wreck of a Thunderbolt fighter-bomber from WWII rests untouched at a few meters' depth.



Mike's Point

A good example of Mike's Point dizzying underwater beauty. Gorgonians here grow in extraordinarily colorful layers and in relatively shallow water.



Raja Ampat dottyback *Cypho purpurascens*

A recently described, tiny and spectacularly colorful Raja Ampat endemic dottyback species.

**Sunset**

Given its latitude, the area of Raja Ampat often presents visitors with stunning sunsets - especially during the rainy season.



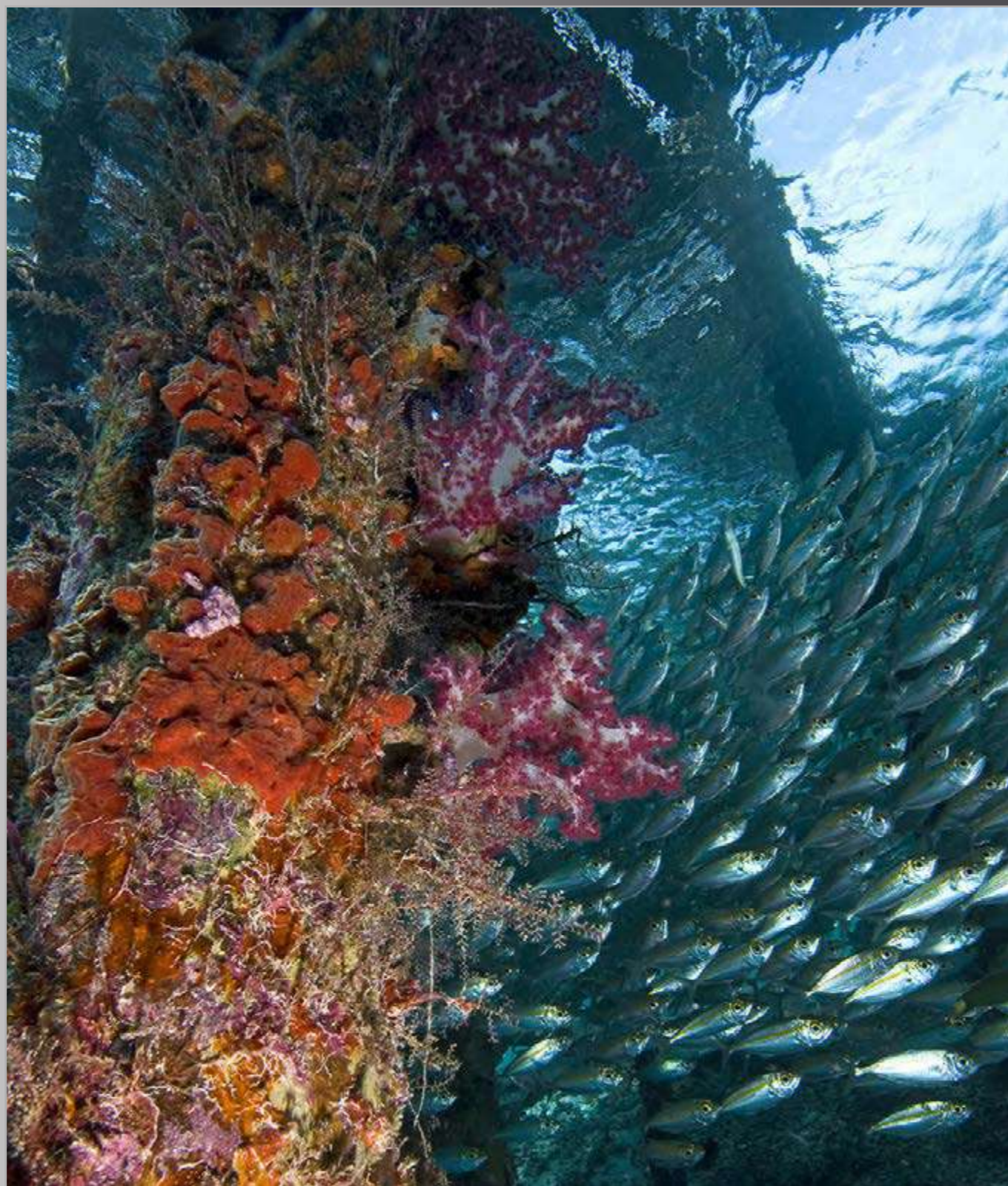
Anemonefish colony

This endemic and - according to some - yet undescribed *Amphiprion* subspecies is often observed in huge colonies, covering several square meters at shallow depth.



Water monitor *Varanus salvator*

Besides this common and widespread semi-aquatic species, which is often seen as it scavenges food on beaches, Raja Ampat is home to the spectacular Tree crocodile *Varanus salvadori*, a much rarer and fully arboreal monitor lizard gifted with a prehensile tail and restricted to the forest canopy.

**Arborek jetty**

The jetty pylons - encrusted with sponges and soft corals - offer an exquisite variety of opportunities for creative underwater photography, from macro to wide angle.

**Overhangs**

Overhanging limestone rocky shores, eroded by wave action, offer uniquely evocative, atmospheric diving in shallow water.

**Mike's Point**

The archetypal image of Mike's Point, with Antonella hovering in the background, sea fans in front and the forest-clad rocky shore which can be glimpsed behind her.



Soft corals

The current-swept, nutrient-rich waters of the Raja Ampat countless channels offer a perfect environment to *Dendronephthya* soft corals.



Mangroves

A split image of a mangrove clump. One has to be wary of Estuarine crocodiles *Crocodylus porosus* when diving here.



Shoaling Sweetlips

Schooling Ribbon sweetlips *Plectorhynchus polytaenia* among hard and soft corals at Cape Kri, a deep, current-swept dive site which is among the world's best.



The Passage

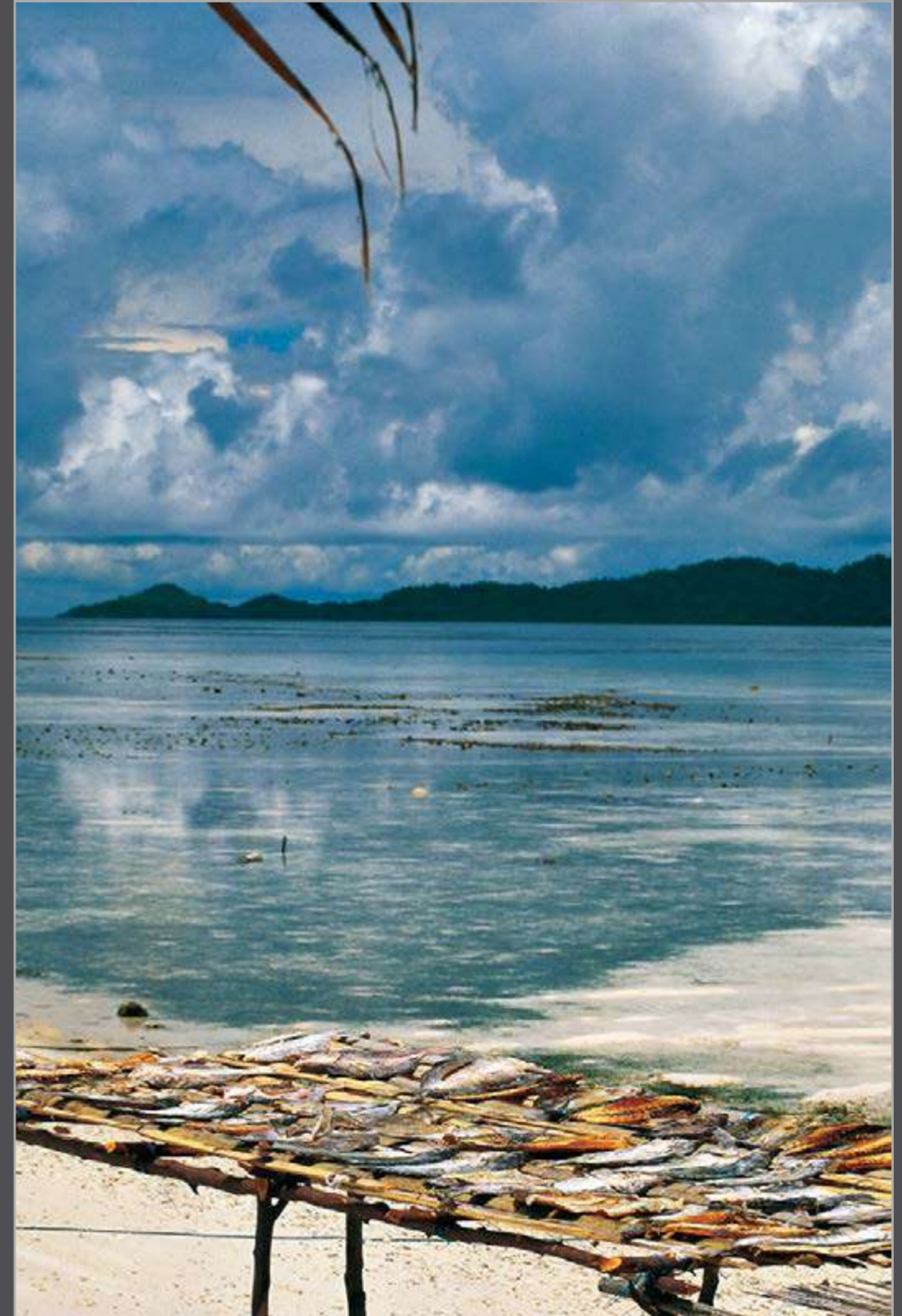
Often swept by reasonably strong currents, the shallow waters of the narrow sea channel known as The Passage offer uniquely atmospheric diving.

**Five Rocks**

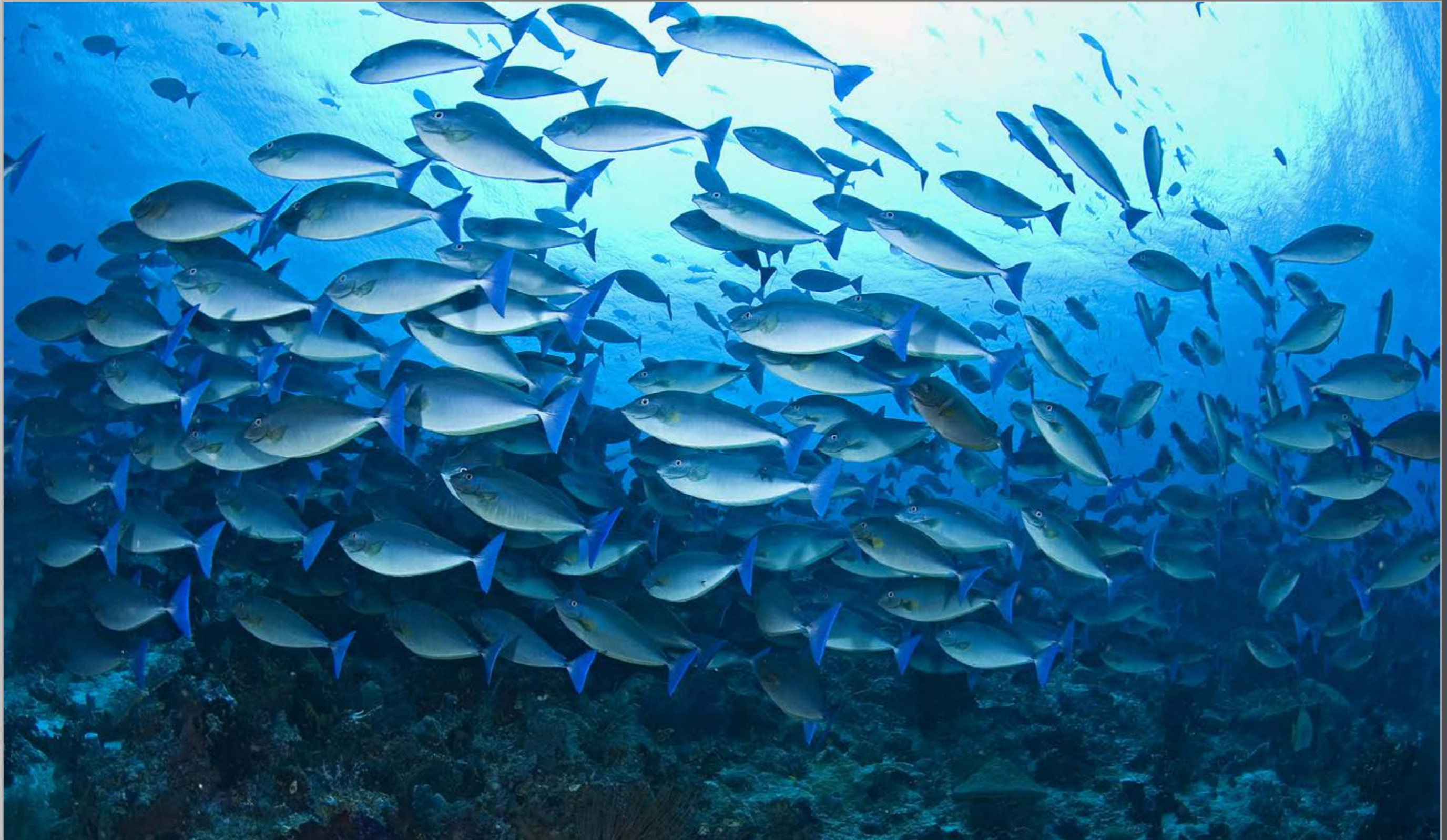
A tribal site with limited access, Five Rocks is a shallow, brightly lit, truly unique dive site offering a labyrinth of coral- and sponge-encrusted rock corridors.



Mike's Point
Antonella hovering the breathtaking gorgonian gardens of Mike's Point.



Drying fish
Fish drying in the sun on the beach at Arborek island.



Sleek Surgeonfish *Naso hexacanthus*

Raja Ampat is one of the very few places left on Earth where one can admire enormous quantities of fish in a single glance. These are schooling Sleek Surgeonfish *Naso hexacanthus* at Sardines.



Ribbon sweetlips *Plectorhynchus polytaenia*

Seascape with Ribbon sweetlips *Plectorhynchus polytaenia*. The waterscapes of Raja Ampat can be extraordinarily rich in life and exceedingly colorful.



The Passage

A large gorgonian sea fan with the overhanging rainforest visible above in what - in photography terms - is called Snell's window.

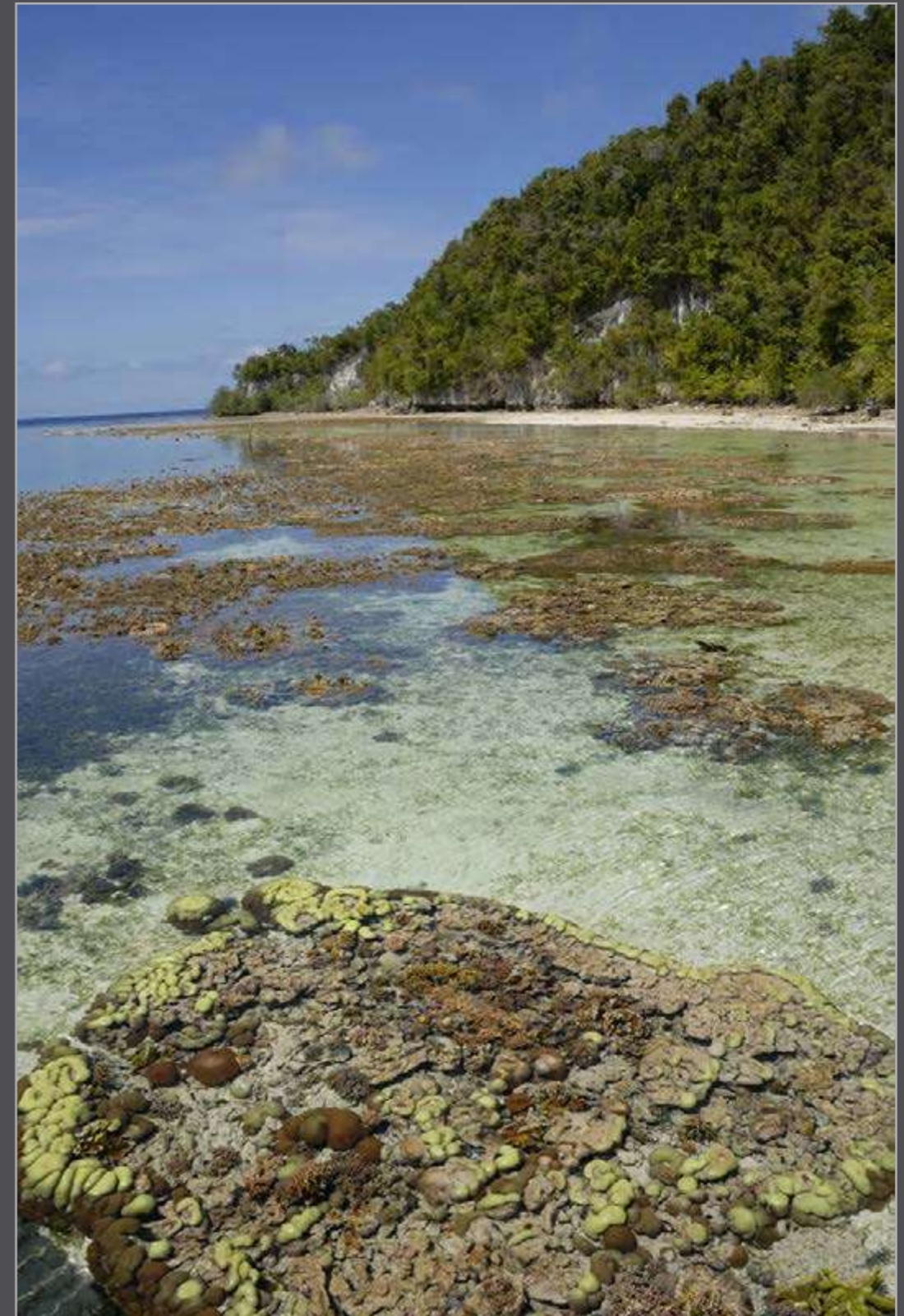


Manta Manta birostris

More Mantas - the one in the foreground wholly black and escorted by a cobia *Rachycentron canadum* - as they approach a cleaning station in the Dampier Straits.

**West Papuan fisherman**

A local fisherman sails on his outrigger canoe, a dog his sole companion. Despite being occupied by Indonesia, West Papuans strive to defend their cultural identity.

**Low tide**

The untouched coral reef at Sorido Bay - in front of Max Ammer's luxury dive resort - exposed at low tide.



Karst panorama

The porous limestone rock of Raja Ampat quickly lets rainwater filter underground, giving rise to a karst, semi-dry, sharply edged and rugged environment with little topsoil.



West Papuan family

Often desperately poor but still clinging to traditional values and their way of life, many West Papuan families of Raja Ampat spend their entire existence on a small boat.



Soft coral *Dendronephthya*

Soft corals colonies can reach unusually large dimensions in the shallow, nutrient-rich waters of Raja Ampat.



Pontoh's pygmy seahorse *Hippocampus pontohi*

Much-loved and sought after by underwater photographers worldwide, this diminutive species is no bigger than a grain of rice and found with great difficulty.



Mantas extravaganza

Divers willing to wait at one of the Dampiers Strait cleaning stations are often awarded the sight of several enormous Mantas queuing up and waiting for their turn.



Denise's pygmy seahorse *Hippocampus denise*

Another extremely minute and much sought after seahorse species of Raja Ampat. Most pygmy seahorses can be found among gorgonians branching colonies.



Damsel fish *Pomacentrus auriventris*

Exceedingly common but stunningly beautiful, another small species which is being overcollected for the aquarium trade.



Five Rocks

A truly unique dive site with very shallow, brightly-lit water which however can only be accessed with the approval of the local West Papuan tribal council.

An aerial photograph of the Raja Ampat archipelago in Indonesia. The image shows numerous small, forested islands of various shapes and sizes scattered across a vast expanse of clear, turquoise water. The islands are densely covered in green vegetation, and the water's clarity reveals the sandy and rocky seabed. The sky is a deep blue with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is a stunning natural landscape.

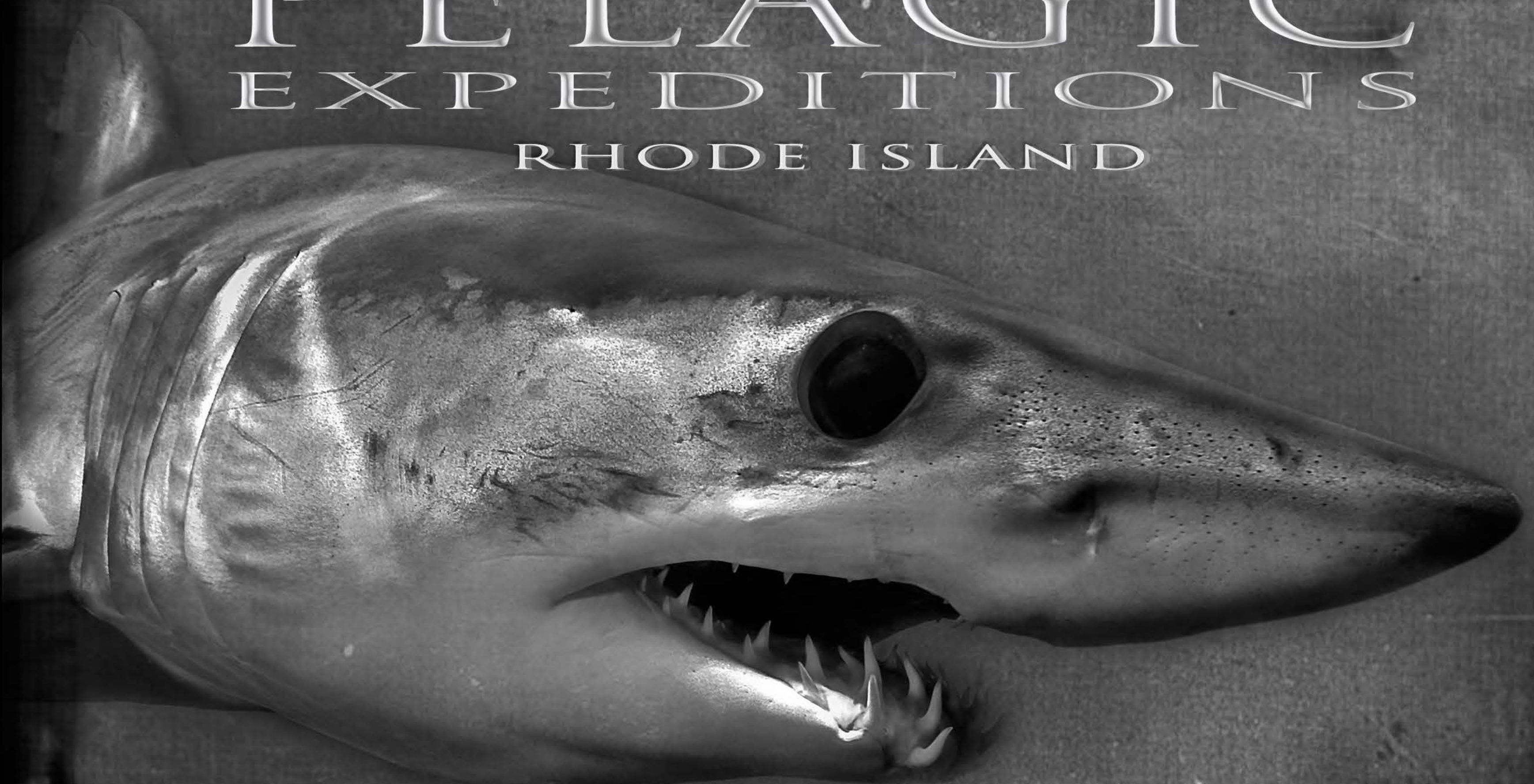
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Trip Report

A VISIT TO SRI LANKA'S SINHARAJA FOREST

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WET SIDE STORY

A brief look at Sri Lanka's only remaining patch of rainforest - a humid habitat rich in fascinating endemisms



Common Green Forest lizard *Calotes calotes*

With its extraordinary palette of colors, this lizard seems constantly dressed in his finest regalia. On the title page, Sri Lanka blue Magpie *Urocissa ornata*, a social bird found in small groups of up to six or seven birds. Endemic to Sri Lanka, where it has a fragmented distribution in the wet zone in the centre and south-west of the country.



Green vine snake *Ahaetulla nasuta*
Common, except on high hill sides. Often perched on a branch, motionless, relying on camouflage. If disturbed it deploys its neck scales, revealing white and black stripes.



TEXT AND PHOTOS
BY MAXIME BRIOLA

France is far behind me now. At the descent of the aircraft, on the tarmac of the Colombo International Airport, on the island of Sri Lanka, the heat of the tropics flows over me. I think of all the species that are now within reach. In a few hours, I may have the chance to contemplate some of the animals that filled my childhood and my naturalist dreams. I established a long list of photographic target carefully sorted from the internet and paper bibliography that I could find. The reason for my photographic report is to illustrate the concept of insularity and how it manifests itself at the level of local biodiversity. My notebook is filled with endemic species, which are the most obvious example of insularity, but also invasive species or subspecies with more or less marked characteristics in relation to their cousins of the continent. Although the nature of the island is quite resembling that

of the Indian continent, the “little sister” of India holds many treasures of its own. After a short briefing with my naturalist guide Uditha, which will be of a great help throughout this report, the priority is to go to the first reliefs of the southwest of the island. If there is one place where the insularity is marked, it is here. The area concentrates the last humid primary forests and is home to the majority of the endemic species in the country. This wealth is linked to the mountains that occupy the center of the southern half of the island. They play an essential role in capturing the monsoon winds. Dozens of rivers born on their sides and irrigate the remaining tropical forests. Only 5% of the primary zone are still present and are fragmented in hundred of pieces which measure less than 10 km². The most important of these remains is the Sinharaja rainforest.

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Small stream near Kitulgala

The atmospheres of Sri Lanka rainforests are truly fantastic. Many small streams flow into a lush undergrowth. This wealth of sites offer a huge potential for encounters with wildlife...and at every turn all hopes are usually granted.



Sri Lankan Green pit-viper *Trimeresurus trigonocephalus*

This species is endemic to Sri Lanka. A beautiful arboreal snake which is usually encountered on low shrubs waiting in ambush for its prey: frogs, lizards, small birds. It is widely distributed in most Sri Lankan rainforest areas except at the higher hills, above an altitude of 1000 metres.



Sri Lankan Frogmouth *Batrachostomus moniliger*
 A lovely couple of Sri Lankan Frogmouth *Batrachostomus moniliger*, with the grey male on the right and the brown female on the left.



Small forest stream
 The Sinharaja environment currently represents the only relict rainforest in all of Sri Lanka.



Sri Lanka Red Junglefowl *Gallus lafayetii*
 As it resembles the French national emblem, naturalist Renée Lesson named it the "Coq de Lafayette" in honour of his contemporary.



Sri Lanka Cat snake *Boiga ceylonensis*

Common in the lowlands evergreen forests, on shrubs as well as on the ground close to roots and tree hollows. Also near human habitations. The best chance to see it is during the night, when it searches for frogs and geckos. Contrary to what its name suggests, it is not endemic to Sri Lanka and it is also found in India's Western Ghats.



Blue Mormon *Papilio polymnestor*

Most of the time this large butterfly is fleetingly spotted as it is flying through the foliage. It is only in the morning, when the first warm rays of the sun spread on its cool rainforest environment, that one can approach it and photograph with its large wings wide open.



Sri Lankan hump-nosed viper *Hypnale nepa*

I had the chance of a rare encounter with the rather uncommon Sri Lankan hump-nosed viper as I found a group of three males going around one big female. Unfortunately my sudden arrival cooled the ardor of each and further action was postponed.



Purple-faced Leaf Monkey *Trachypithecus vetulus vetulus*
An endemic monkey of Sri Lanka, considered as an endangered species by the IUCN. It counts 4 subspecies on the island.



Hump nose lizard *Lyriocephalus scutatus*
This Sri Lankan endemic and rather spectacular lizard is the only representative of its genus.

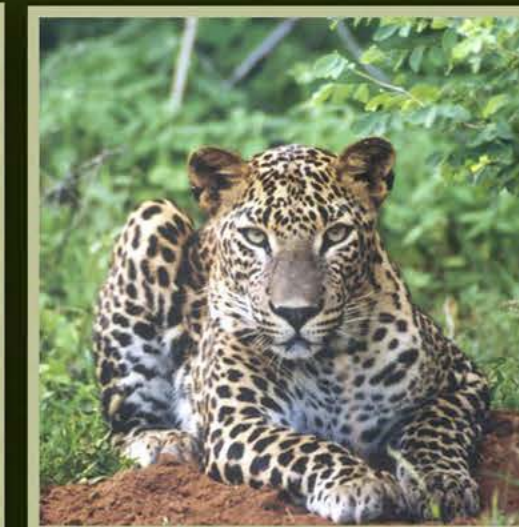


Hump nose lizard *Lyriocephalus scutatus*

This endemic lizard, the only representative of its genus, stood impassively on its branch as I approached it. However, the proximity of the lens awoke its defensive instincts, and it offered me a remarkable - if fleeting - intimidation pose. There was just the time to capture it - and then goodbye.



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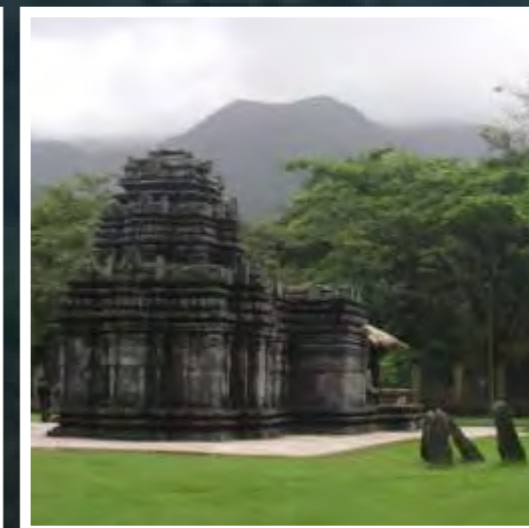
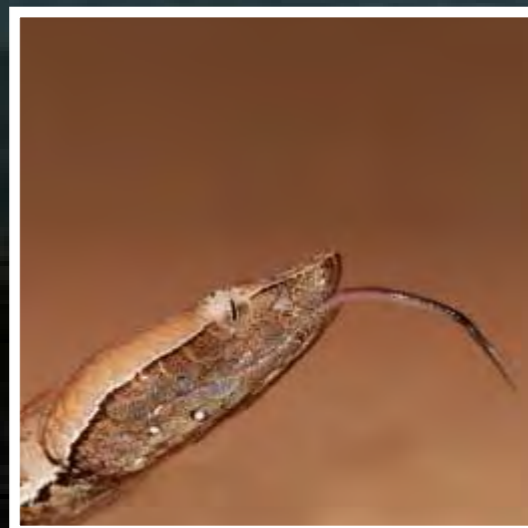
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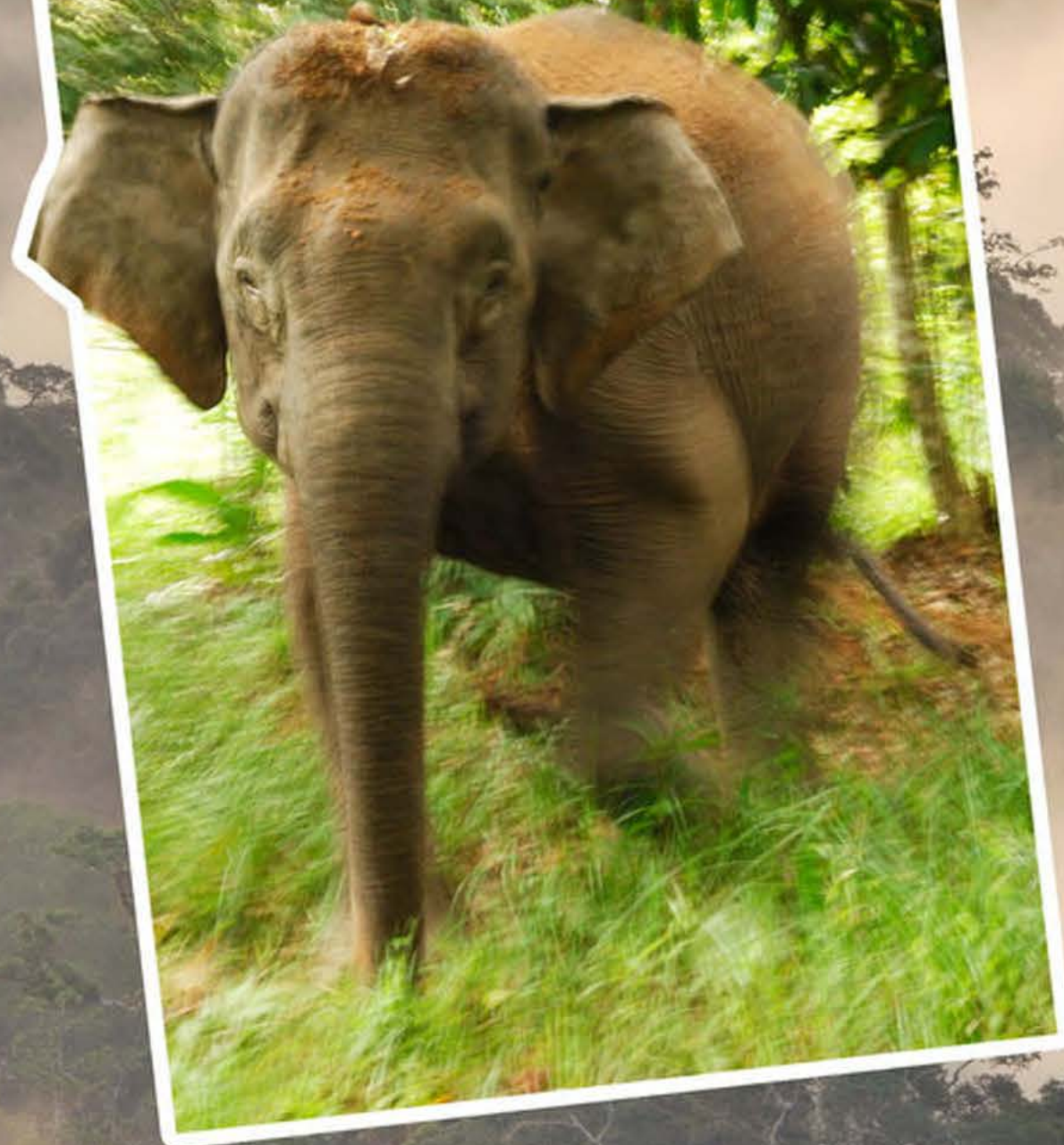
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The Parting Shot

As we have already written very explicitly in a rather controversial post which you can read [here](#), we feel very strongly about a “purity” in wildlife photography, a deep, personal, demanding and even - occasionally - risky connection with untamed nature. In this age of tweets and superficial digital consent, where the count of pixels per inch, the camera model and the number of “likes” on Facebook seem to be more important than anything else, we still feel the most important aspect of wildlife photo-

graphy should instead be the actual joy and thrill of the moment, that magical, deeply moving instant - long searched - in which one’s ego dissolves in the surrounding wilderness, a jump in time and space which takes us forcibly away - albeit momentarily - from our daily mundane existence. Nothing can provide such unique exhilaration as approaching a wild animal on foot - stalking it for long, attempting to remain unseen and unheard, until breath comes in short gasps and legs are shaking. If only

modern-day hunters could feel the thrill of having such a magnificent beast in a camera viewfinder, rather than in their crosshairs! Such was this encounter - as Andrea creeps close to a huge Musk-ox bull in the remote, far-north Canadian tundra of the Nunavik province. Antonella - safely behind - took this image of the photographer and his wild subject from a faraway hill-top: not a competition image by any means, but a great reminder of how this should be done - even in today’s sanitized world. ●



THE MYSTERIOUS MONAL

Resplendent pheasant
from the Himalayas



**BACK TO THE
EMERALD
FOREST**

Peru's
Tambopata
- Part 2



ACROSS ARGENTINA

A Trip Report by biologist
Cesar Barrio Amorós

**SOUTHERN
SPLENDORS**

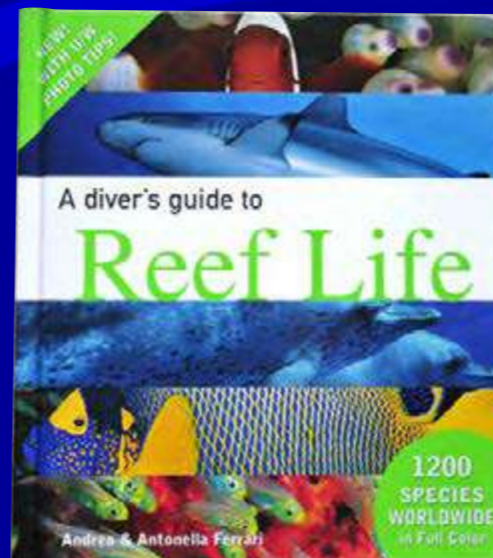
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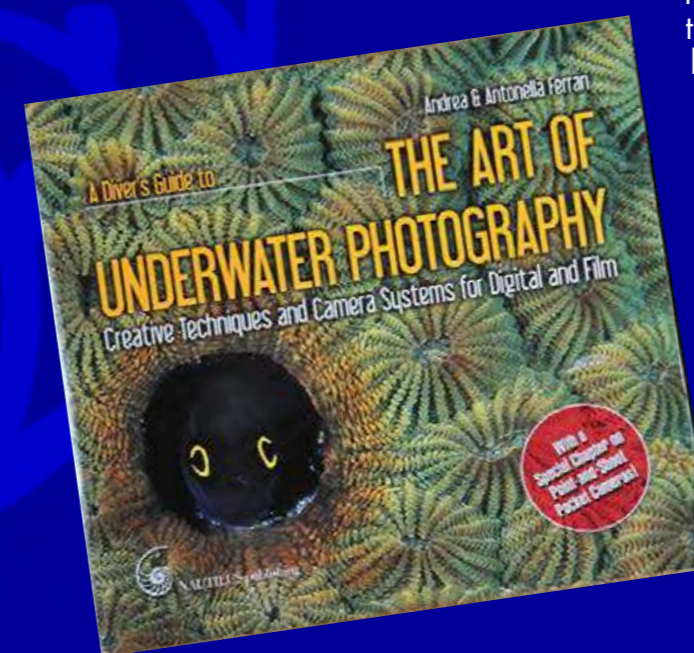
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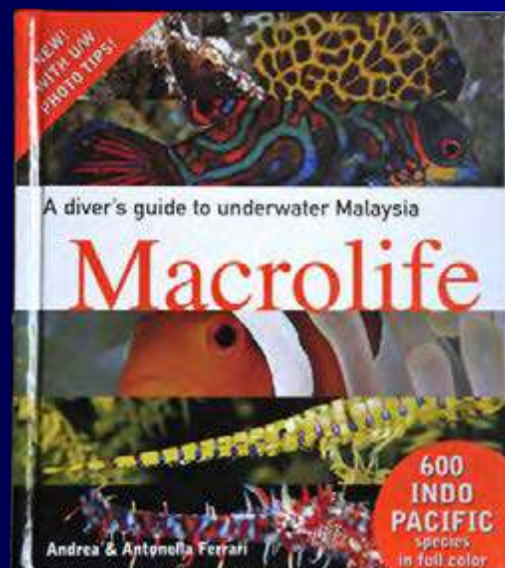
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