





DON'T FORGET TO SUBSCRIBE TO NIMA MUNDI - ADVENTURES IN WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

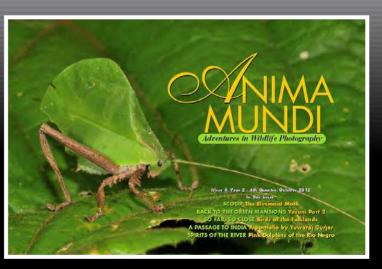
IT'S COMPLETELY FREE AND WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED! KEEP TRACK OF PUBLISHED ISSUES, RECEIVE OUR QUARTERLY FREE NEWSLETTER, BE TOLD WHEN A NEW ISSUE IS OUT - ALL VIA EMAIL AND AT NO COST!

SIMPLY CLICK AND YOU'LL NEVER MISS ANOTHER ISSUE









ALL BACK ISSUES ARE PERMANENTLY AVAILABLE FOR FREE DOWNLOAD AT WWW.ANIMAMUNDIMAG.COM

ADVERTISE ON ON MIMA MUNDI - ADVENTURES IN WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

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 condivision 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













Advertising on ANIMA MUNDI - Adventures in Wildlife Photography means reaching out and getting in personal contact with such people - passionate travellers, dedicated wildlife and nature photographers, world-famous field researchers. All sharing a common bond, all interested in serious, reliable information on wildlife and nature travelling and photographic workshops, trips and equipment. All waiting to hear from you!



Adventures in Wildlife Photography

Yes - we are bimonthly now!

At the beginning of 2015 we had made you a promise and we now have fulfilled it - the magazine has gone bimonthly! We are doing our best to keep our trademark level of high quality in the contents despite the larger amount of work involved, and we are pretty sure you'll like this new issue as much as we do. So - what do we have in store for you this time?

We start with a bang on page 4 with the gorgeous images of the rare, shy and impossibly colorful Himalayan Monal taken by our friend Amit Rane, who travelled to the remote, forbidding slopes of India's Uttarakhand region to find this amazingly iridescent mountain pheasant. Not an easy task - but we'd say it was absolutely worth it!

On page 9 our spectacular two-part illustrated feature on Tambopata Reserve, one of Peru's nature crown jewels, comes to a hopefully satisfying conclusion with a veritable avalanche of fascinating images, colorful testimony of the area's dizzying biodiversity. If you plan to take a wildlife photography to the Peruvian Amazon, we can truly and safely recommend a visit to Tambopata as an excellent destination - for the variety of its wildlife and for the comfort offered by the accomodation there.

Starting from page 62, we are then very proud to share with our readers what we cheekily baptised the "Tales of the Lone Ranger" - a personal portfolio by Italy's wildlife photographer Antonio Mancuso, who has been long exploring by himself - during long, demanding, lonely walks - the

rugged mountains and deep wooded valleys of his native region Calabria. A man of little words, Antonio shows - in our opinion - a very personal touch in his photography, a deep communion with nature which borders on poetry. Take a good look at his portfolio and see if you share our opinion - we think you will.

From Southern Italy's craggy mountains we take a long jump and dive deep in the warm tropical waters of the Central Indo-Pacific, as our personal photographic tribute to the weird and wonderful variety shown by Scorpionfish starts on page 81. Very few other fish species show the amazing variety, the fascinating evolutionary adaptations and the truly stupefying camouflage developed by these clever benthic predators - so be prepared to be surprised by their devilish charm

This issue's contents finally come to a close on page 102 with an in-depth trip report about the varied wildlife and environments of Argentina by Costa Rica-based herpetologist Cesar Barrio Amorós. Besides the unique first-hand information offered by Cesar's text, his report also presents an interesting perspective on point-and-shoot cameras wildlife photography in the field.

And now - enjoy your issue while we start working on the new one, coming in May. In the meantime...

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

We appreciate your feedback - constructive criticism, useful suggestions and interesting contributions are welcome.
Please drop us a line at editor@animamundimag.com

ANIMA MUNDI Adventures in Wildlife Photography is a Free Bimonthly Online Magazine www.animamundimag.com

Publishers
Andrea and Antonella Ferrari
nautilus@reefwonders.net

Editor-in-Chief Andrea Ferrari editor@animamundimag.com

> Original Layout Design Laura Genovese Anna Bortolini

Videographer Antonella Ferrari anto@reefwonders.net

Video Editing Leon Joubert & Claudia Pellarini-Joubert info@bittenbysharks.com

Technical Support Komodo adv mail@komodo-adv.com

All rights reserved. Material in this publication may not be reproduced, modified or transferred electronically in any form without written permission from the copyright owners.





ORYX – Worldwide Photographic Expeditions is a well-established specialist photographic safari company that explores the planet's wildest and most scenic destinations as we focus on wildlife, nature, landscape and cultural photography.

ORYX's handcrafted photographic tours cover prime destinations in 18 countries on 5 continents! Our highly skilled tour leaders are also award-winning photographers, and strive to ensure that you capture truly breath-taking, inspirational and evocative images.

Contact us at info@oryxphotography.com, or visit our website at www.oryxphotography.com for more information about our high quality tours.





Nunavik Tourism Association

+819-964-2876 www.nunavik-tourism.com

Great Canadian Wildlife Adventures

+608-370-5071 www.thelon.com





PHOTOSHOT

THE WORLD OF PHOTOGRAPHY ON THE WEB



www.photoshot.com

+44 207 421 6000

sales@photoshot.com



TEXT AND PHOTOS
BY AMIT RANE

he Himalayan Monal Lophophorus impejanus - also known as the impeyan Monal, impeyan pheasant and danphe-is a bird in the pheasant family, Phasianidae. It is the state bird of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, India, where it is known as Monal. The Monal is a high altitude bird, found at 2400-4500 meters. In winter months it moves down up to 2000 meters, and can survive in the snow. Male Monals are extremely vibrantly colored, much resembling the peacock, whereas females are dull and come in alternating shades of brown and black. The Monal is one of the most colorful and strikingly beautiful birds, it had been on my wish list for years. Despite having been in bird photography for the last 7-8 years, Monal remained un-captured. In pursuit of this bird, I planned a trip to the Himalayan state of India,

Uttarakhand, where Monal is spotted often. I planned a trip to Chopta, which falls within the Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary. The monstrous mountains and the stories of the lurking wildlife by the locals made an interesting background as I was acclimatizing myself to the high altitude reaches of the area. The Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary is spread in the Kumaon region of Uttarkhand and it is better known for the Chopta and Tungnath temple trek - Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary is a word too alien to a layman. Chopta, the Switzerland of India, offers the same salubrious climate, sweeping green pastures, rising mountains dotted by pines and rhododendrons all dressed over a backdrop of snow clad mountains. The nearest airport to Chopta is Dehradun, which lies at 243 Kms. The nearest Rail heads are Haridwar - 223 kms - and Dehradun

- 243 Kms. Besides Monal, the Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary is also home to Himalayan Thars and leopards, but it is however best known for Musk Deers. Musk Deers are found in numbers there, and the forest hosts a breeding center for the species. The Sanctuary is cordoned off for almost half a year, as it lies under a thick snow blanket and the conditions are extremely hostile. The temperatures drop below 5 degrees even in the midst of summers. I landed in Kedarnath Sanctuary after an arduous 9 hour journey from Dehradun. The winding, hilly roads take a toll on you, yet the breathtaking beauty of this place keeps you going. I camped in a modest hotel 2 kms. from the Chopta settlement. My hotel was the only patch of settlement in the radius of 2kms. Right in the heart of the forest, wild creatures moved along in close vicinity and the thrill was

building. Fresh incidents of a leopard on the prowl in the hill next to the hotel kept us on our toes. I had 6 days at hand to shoot the vibrant bird. My very first day at Kedarnath Sanctuary got me a glimpse of Monal. I did not lift my camera as I wanted to admire the much sought bird thoroughly, and it much met my expectations. Monal remained out of reach. Being a hilly region, you have less scope to move around. The hills were in fact vertical cliffs at 90 degrees dropping into the valley. The drop dead cliffs were amazing to watch, but instantly gave an idea what height I was covering. Monals would appear suddenly and then run down the valley the very next instant. They are more active towards early morning and late evening. The initial days went in just tracing their whereabouts and patterns of moving and eating. I was but keen to freeze them on my camera, yet I had to wait for my turn. Nevertheless, the forest did not disappoint me in this span; I was awarded with good sighting of a pair of red fox and a herd of Himalayan Thar dangling along the rocks at higher altitude than me. What came as a side victory to me was spotting a herd of Musk Deers in the wild. On the day before my stay was to end, I had an ultimate rendezvous with Monal. The bird kept pecking on the forest grounds, and as I went clicking my frames another dominant male came in the frame and the tug between them left the dominant one around. He stayed along the near reaches of the forest valley and hence I could photograph him to my content. Monals are easily spotted at Kedarnath yet difficult to shoot because of the habitat and their extreme shy nature. I was so appealed by Monal that I earnestly wait for my next opportunity to see this vibrant bird in the wild.







A male Monal surprised at twilight by an old road marker. The species's natural range extends from
eastern Afghanistan
through the Himalayas
in Pakistan, Kashmir
region and the Republic
of India (states of
Himachal Pradesh,
Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh), Nepal, southern Tibet, and Bhutan. There is also a report of its occurrence in Burma. The Monal occupies upper temperate oak-conifer forests interspersed with open grassy slopes, cliffs and alpine meadows between 2400 and 4500 meters, where it is most common between 2700 and 3700 meters. It may descend to 2000 meters in the winter. It tolerates snow and will dig through it to obtain plant roots and invertebrate prey.



Discover "Wild" India with expert naturalists



- Customized Jungle Safaris with or without an expert naturalist by your side
- Visit Historical & Cultural Places like Khajurao, Agra, Jabalpur, Jaipur, Nainital, Kolkata, Ahmedabad - and explore National Parks such as...
- Bandhavgarh, Kanha, Ranthambore, Corbett, Kaziranga, Tadoba, Bandipur, Sunderbans, Sasan Gir



ADVERTISEMENT



Vihang Jungle Safaris
Yuwaraj Gurjar ygurjar@gmail.com
Makarand Joshi +91 9869304053
http://www.facebook.com/g
roups/128091287228796/
www.yuwarajgurjar.com



Experience the wilderness in India's Western Ghats



















TANALAHORIZON, your tour operator for the "extraordinary".

Since 1995 we stand for top-class adventure travels, sustainable photo tours, nature travels and other tours on the fourth-largest island of the world "MADAGASCAR."

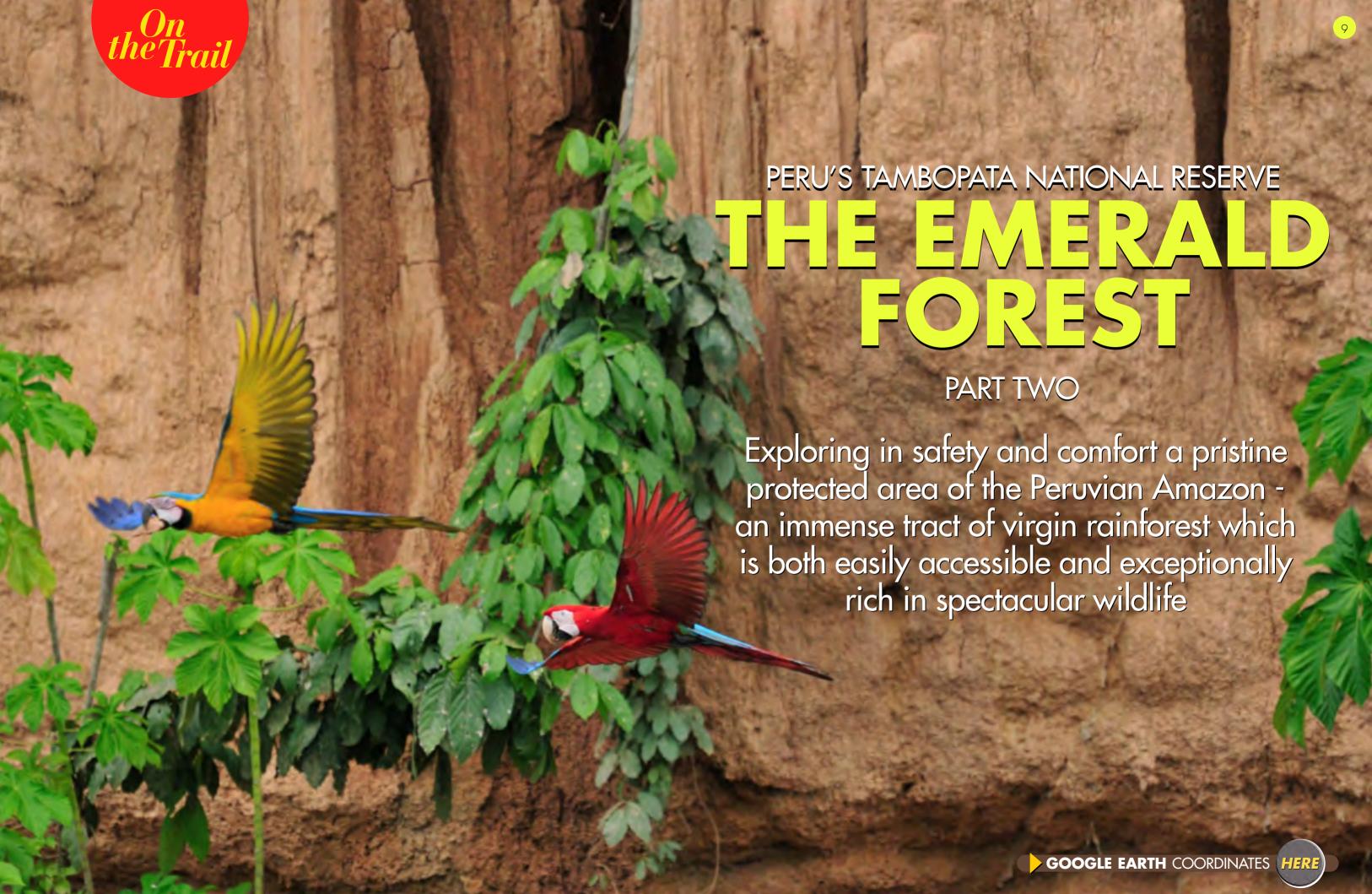
Madagascar, an island in the Indian Ocean is still a great unknown in our widely travelled world. The island has much to offer and is the Mecca of ecotourism for animal and nature lovers. As a Madagascar Tour Operator, we are specialized in traveling through the fourth largest island in the world. We give great importance to sustainable tourism, as well as traveling and photographing in harmony with nature and the environment. We also appreciate the cooperation of and contact with the locals, who in part help to give you a pleasant and sustainable holiday in Madagascar.

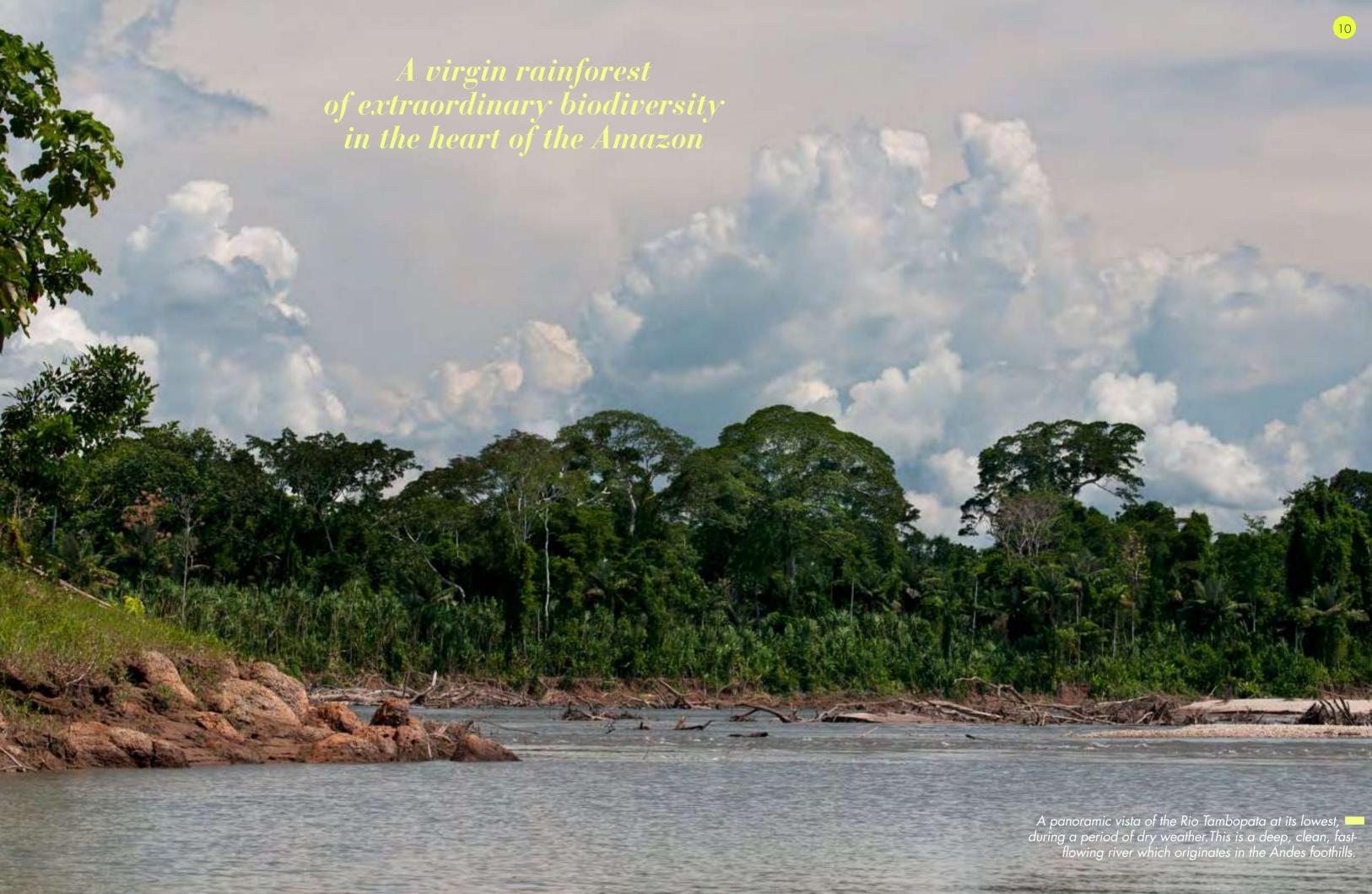






www.tanalahorizon.com









A cascade of gold sweeping over the rainforest canopy

The rainforest canopy at dawn, seen from one of the observation towers.

formed around that time in conjunction with a warm, moist climate related to widening of the Atlantic Ocean. Up until 10 to 15 millions years ago, parts of western Amazonia were located beneath water, and this may have included the area of Bahuaja-Sonene at various times during its history. The rainforests of the Amazon and Bahuaja-Sonene are also thought to have gone through dry periods associated with glaciation in other parts of the globe during the past one million years. As climate in some parts of the Amazon basin became drier and converted the rainforests into savannahs, the area encompassed by the National Park and much of southeastern Peru are believed to have

retained their forest cover. Arguments for this are supported by southeastern Peru being one of the most biodiverse areas of the entire Amazon rainforest and the existence of several species of plants and animals that are endemic to the region. During most of their history, the rainforests of Bahuaja-Sonene were untouched by people. Although it's hard to say when humans first walked through the cathedral-like rainforests of southeastern Peru, given that the first known settlement in the Amazon dates back 11,000 years, nomadic tribes may have first hunted in the forests of Bahuaja-Sonene anywhere from 10,000 to 5,000 years ago. Since that time, the main people who resided in the tropical forests and savannahs of



Mealy
Amazon or
Mealy Parrot
Amazona
farinosa on a
clay lick. Light
conditions near
deep forest licks
such as this one
can often
prove quite
challenging,
and the use
of a tripod or
beanbag is
mandatory.

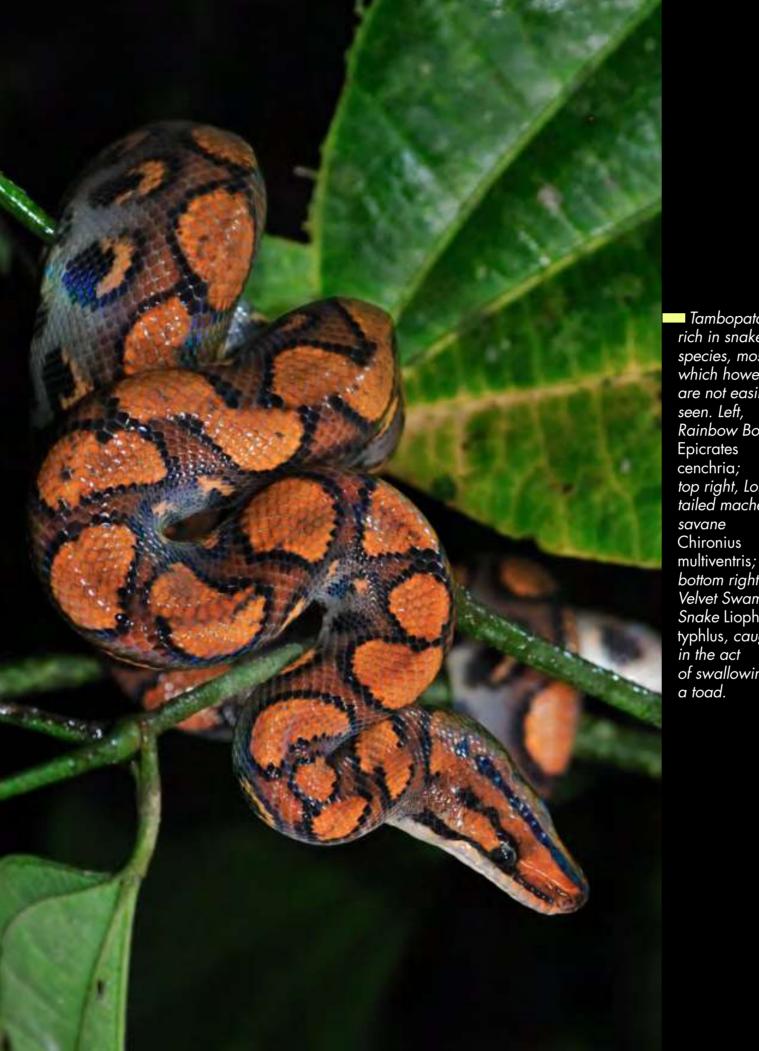
Bahuaja-Sonene belonged to the Ese-Eja culture. Living in small communities, they cultivated manioc, foraged for wild fruits and plants in the forest, and hunted for wild animals such as tapirs, deer, and gamebirds. Communities of Ese-Eja people continue to live near the boundaries of the National Park at present times. Since the creation of Bahuaja-Sonene in 1996, very few people have penetrated the heart of the park.

HABITATS OF TAMBOPATA

The grand total of 1, 091, 416 hectares of Tambopata National Reserve include such habitats as the following:

- Endless tracts of old-growth Amazonian rainforest: many of the trees are 30 meters (90 feet) or more in height and are covered in vines, moss, bromeliads, and other plants.
- Thick groves of bamboo: native species of bamboo flourish along the rivers and in some parts of the forest.
- Rainforests that grow in floodplains: these tall, beautiful forests are periodically flooded by rivers during the annual rainy season.
- Oxbow lakes: these blackwater lakes are formed by meanderings of rivers and host a huge variety of fish, aquatic birds, and animals such as Anaconda and Black Caimans.
- Palm Swamps: poorly drained areas sometimes host swamps where palm trees are the dominant vegetation. These areas act as critically important

A young Spectacled caiman Caiman crocodilus spotted at night along the river bank.



Tambopata is rich in snake species, most of which however are not easily seen. Left, Rainbow Boa Epicrates cenchria; top right, Longtailed machete sayane savane
Chironius
multiventris;
bottom right,
Velvet Swamp
Snake Liophis
typhlus, caught
in the act
of swallowing
a toad.









Left, Neotropic
Cormorant
Phalacrocorax
brasilianus.
Right, Twostriped Amazon
palm viper
Bothriopsis
bilineata,
a small, cryptic
and highly
venomous snake
which is a major
cause of snake
bites in the
region.









Far left,
a lonely Mealy
Amazon or
Mealy Parrot
Amazona
farinosa at the
crack of dawn.
Left, a quartet
of squabbling
Red-and-green
Macaws Ara
chloropterus
near a clay lick.

include the following:

- Harpy Eagle: the wild, extensive forests of the National Park hold healthy populations of this large, rare bird of prey. The largest eagle in the Americas and one of the biggest in the world, the Harpy preys on sloths, monkeys, and can even take Brocket Deer.
- Hoatzin: frequent around oxbow lakes and wetlands, the Hoatzin is a common resident in the park.
- 13 tinamou species: this represents the highest diversity of tinamou species for any area of equal size.
- 8 macaw species: In Bahuaja-Sonene National Park, four large and four small macaw species have been recorded. Big, healthy populations of macaws along with 17 species of parrots and parakeets occur in the intact, extensive forests of the National Park. Six of the macaw species from the National Park can be seen at the Tambopata Research Center clay lick.

Among the 174 species of mammals that occur in the park are healthy populations of such rare mammals as:

- Jaguar: healthy populations of this large, rare feline live in the National Park.
- Giant Anteater: although it occurs in the rainforests of the Park, it is more common in the savannahs along the Heath River.
- Giant Otter: several large families are commonly observed at the Tres Chimbadas lagoon.
- Amazonian Tapir: the forests of the Park harbor a large number of tapirs.









- Maned Wolf: this endangered canine is only common in protected savannahs such as those of Bahajua-Sonene National Park.

At least 100 species of reptiles and amphibians are known from the National Park and given the difficulty in finding them in the wild, there may be more species awaiting discovery. Species occasionally encountered include the Two-lined Palm viper, the Fer-de-lance, the Rainbow boa and the Amazon Tree boa.

An astounding 20,000 species of plants are known from the park and the Tambopata Reserve. This number is even more amazing when one considers the strong possibility that there are several plant species occurring in the canopy that have yet to be discovered.

EXPLORING THE RAINFOREST

The rainforest is mainly explored on foot, with occasional (and rather brief) boat trips along the river to spot birds, caimans and (hopefully - we had no such luck, alas!) jaguars. Trails are mostly well maintained and clearly marked, but a few routes can occasionally be slippery, muddy and confusing, so we do not recommend going around alone. Visitors are taken to the forest in small guided groups, but if one is really serious about one's photography this is the case where going the extra mile and getting a private guide might make a huge difference - not so much in sightings,







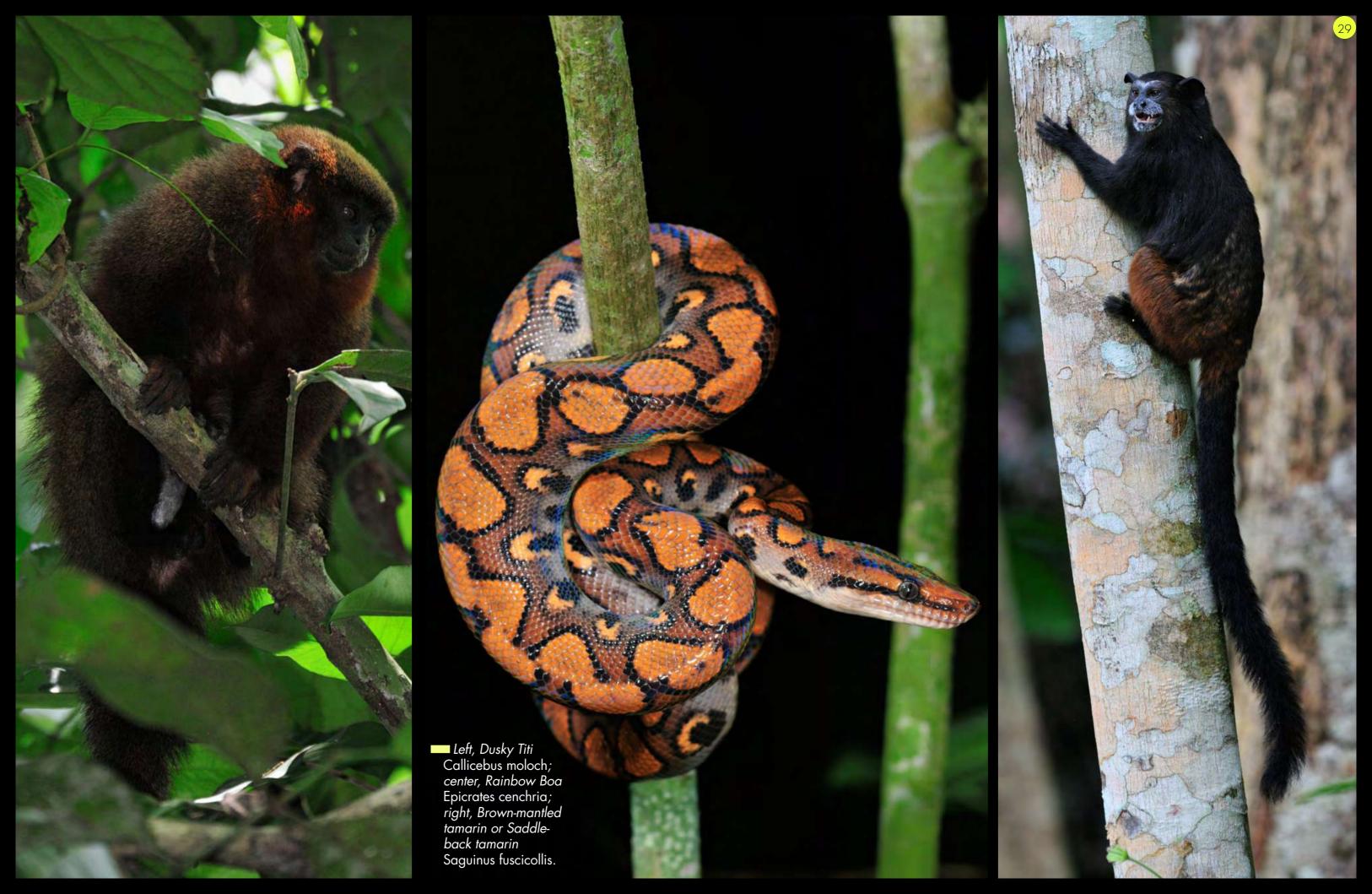


which are always dependent on a degree of luck, but rather on the amount of time one can spend with a photographic subject and the peace of mind which comes when the risk of getting lost (especially at night) is minimized. Wildlife photography in the Amazon is never easy - in Tambopata one ideally needs a long telephoto or zoom (up to 500mm at the very minimum) for monkeys, macaws and birds in general; a good macro lens for small snakes, tree frogs, spiders and insects in general; and a medium or even better wide-angle lens for the occasional panorama. A tripod, monopod or at the very least a sturdy beanbag are required for shooting at the macaw clay licks, where one has often to sit in patient wait for long stretches of time until the flocks of macaws show up. This can be a demanding task as the high humidity, the heat and the omnipresent mosquitoes can occasionally test the less experienced photographers' patience. Bird photographers do not want to miss the marvelous sights offered by climbing - before dawn - the 30 meter tall scaffolding observation tower nearby Posada Amazonas, where excellent sightings of toucans, parrots and macaws are guaranteed. Wildlife sightings may differ depending on where one is staying, so a brief overview of the three main options offered by Rainforest Expeditions is in order:

- Posada Amazonas is a 30-bedroom rainforest lodge just a 45-minute boat



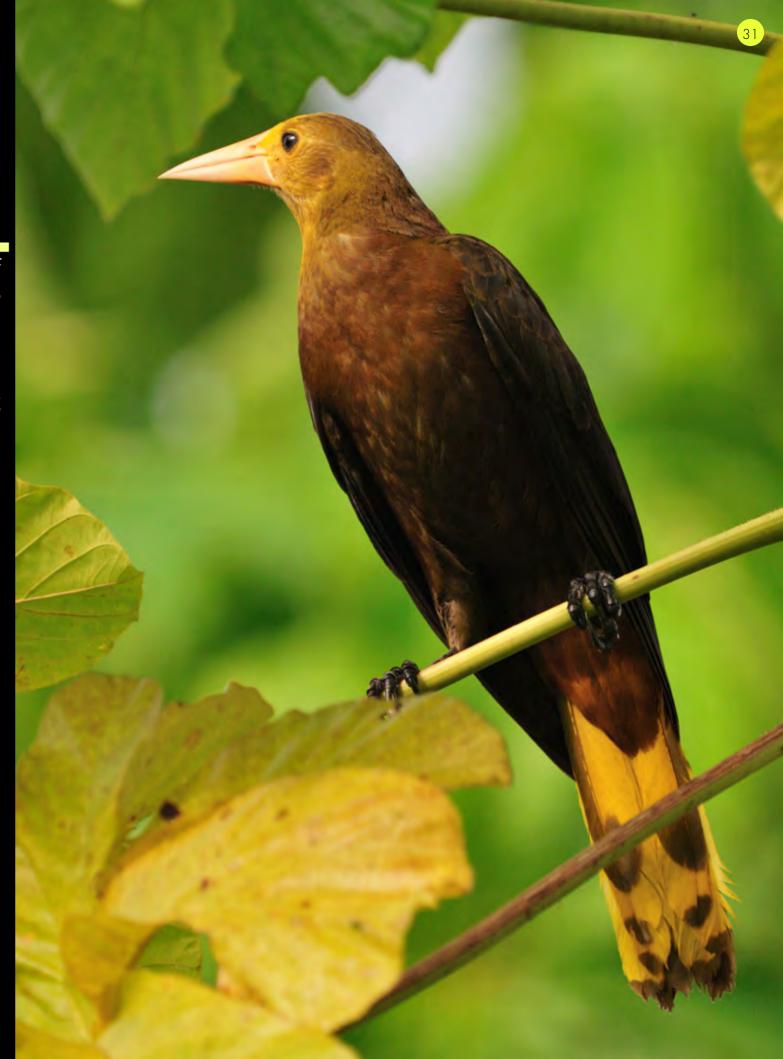
continued on page 32







Left,
a flash flight of
Scarlet Macaws
Ara macao and
Red-and-Green
Macaws Ara
chloropterus on a
clay lick,;
right, Russetbacked
Oropendola
Psarocolius
angustifrons.

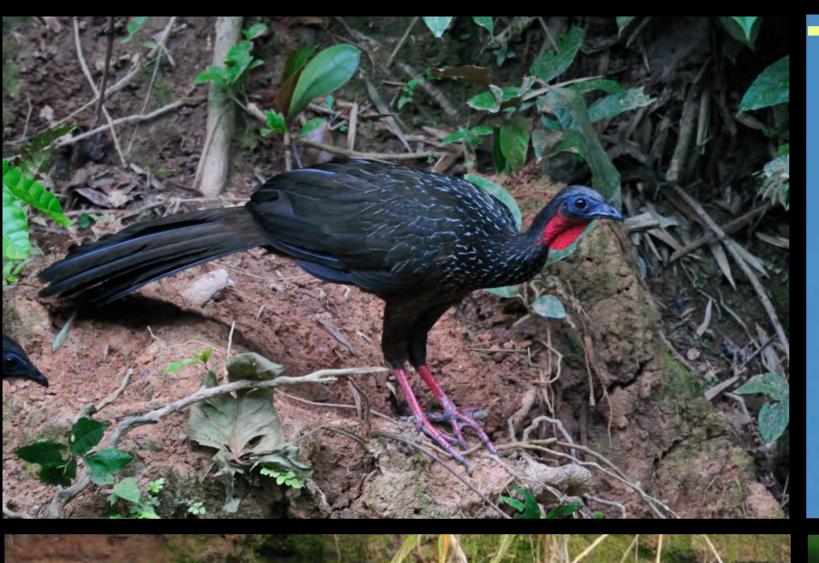


ride from the town of Puerto Maldonado. Besides its spectacular canopy tower, it offers trips to the Tres Chimbadas lagoon, with its resident family of Giant River Otters and wildlife such as hoatzins, caimans or horned screamers. Despite being relatively close to Puerto Maldonado, the Posada Amazonas offers ample opportunities to see wildlife, including Saddle Backed Tamarins, Squirrel, Brown Capuchin, Red Howler and Dusky Titi Monkeys, parrots at a clay lick, parrots from the canopy tower, Giant River Otters and caimans and capybaras on the river banks.

- Refugio Amazonas is a 32-bedroom lodge four hours from the Puerto Maldonado airport. It boasts another 30 meter scaffolding canopy tower offering good chances of spotting toucans, parrots, macaws or mixed species canopy flocks, plus boat trips to Lake Condenado and clay licks. Jungle wildlife one can observe there includes Saddle Backed Tamarins, Squirrel, Brown Capuchin, Red Howler and Dusky Titi Monkeys, parrots at a clay lick, mixed species tanager flocks, caimans and capybaras on the river banks and active harpy eagle nests.

- The Tambopata Research Center is sited several hours up the Tambopata river, within the 700,000 hectare uninhabited nucleus of the reserve. Here sightings of monkeys, macaws and other large species become more frequent, with jaguars being sometimes seen near the river bank. This is one of the most remote rainforest lodges in

A solitary Redand-green Macaw Ara chloropterus flies above the forest canopy at dawn.

















South America, offering travelers an outstanding chance to engage with the natural wonders of the Amazon. The TRC's isolated location, inside an uninhabited area of the Tambopata National Reserve and next to the Bahajua-Sonene National Park, means that the rainforest ecosystem around it remains pristine, while the populations of wild animals are all at carrying capacity. Much groundbreaking macaw conservation research has also been carried out from the TRC. Species one can very probably spot there include macaws - (the largest known macaw clay lick in the Amazon is 500 yards from the lodge), Dusky titi, Squirrel, Brown capuchin, Howler and Spider Monkeys, capybara, caiman, agouti and White lipped peccary Although very difficult to see, jaguars, tapirs and harpy eagle are also occasionally glimpsed by visitors.

THE FUTURE OF TAMBOPATA

The future of this National Park along with the thousands of plant and animal species that live there seems to be secure. Access to the National Park is controlled and few people actually enter it, there are no roads that approach its boundaries, and it is buffered by the Tambopata National Reserve. Although people use the forests in the reserve, attempts are made to control activities and ecotourism is one of the main economic activities in the area. The economic activity generated by such lodges as Refugio Amazonas and the Tambopata Research Center (the closest lodge to the National Park) provide incentives to protect the rich forests of Tambopata and Bahuaja-Sonene National Park.







Huntsman Spider
Olios sp., family
Sparassidae. The
brassy, metallic
shine of this spider
was quite stunning.



Left, Tailless
whip scorpion
or Amblypigid
Heterophrynus
longicornis; right,
a Neotropical
arboreal spider
Syntrechalea sp.,
carrying newly
hatched babies
on its back.











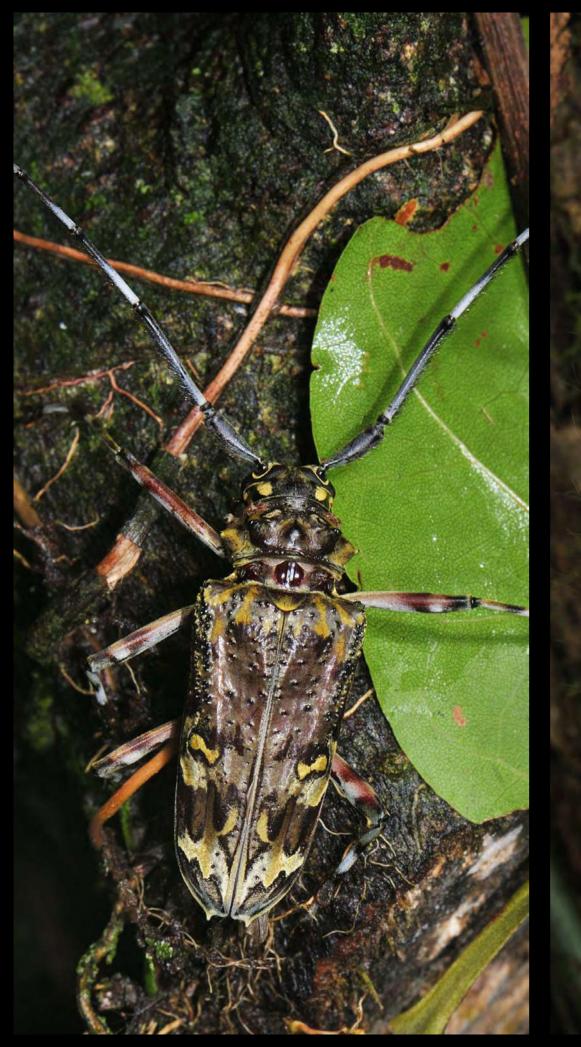
















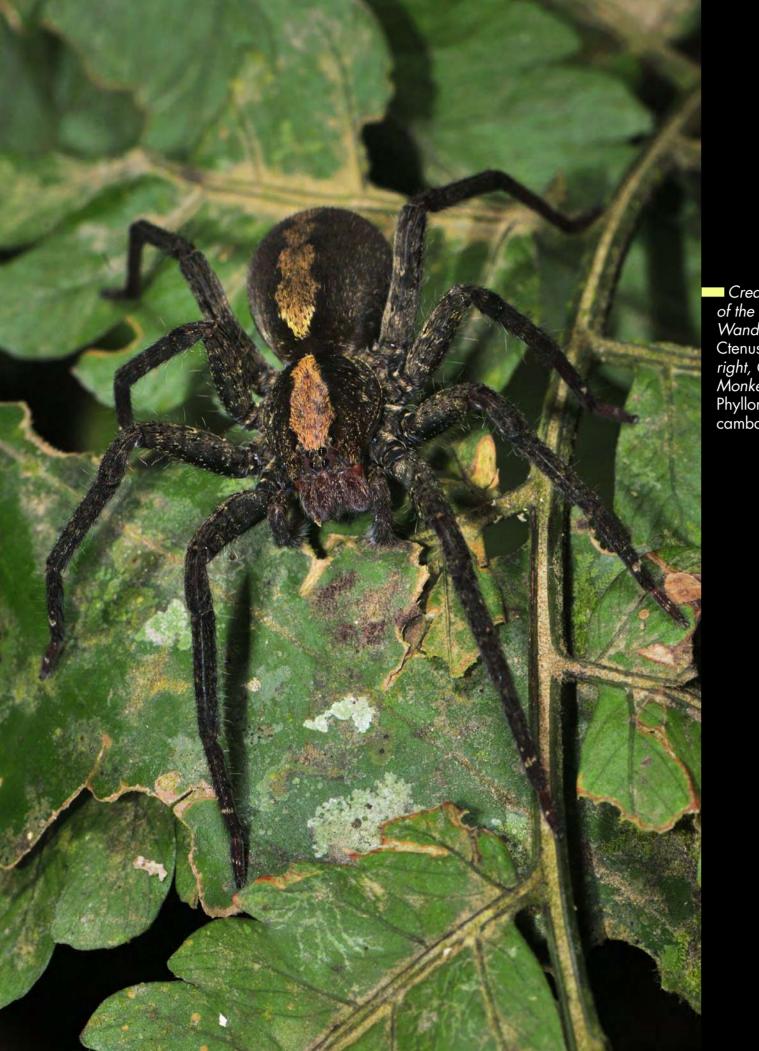




Left, Scarlet
Macaws Ara
macao, Red-andGreen Macaws
Ara chloropterus
and Blue-andYellow Macaws
Ara ararauna
on a well-lit
riverbank clay
lick; right, Redand-green Macaw
Ara chloropterus
on another
riverside clay lick.







Creatures
of the night! Left,
Wandering Spider
Ctenus ornatus;
right, Giant Waxy
Monkey Frog
Phyllomedusa
camba.

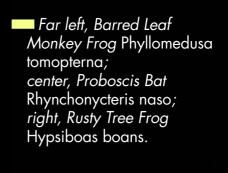


















At-a-glance travel gui







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

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 and Euros are commonly accepted at the lodges. 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).

ROUTE: Your international flight will land at Jorge MEANS OF TRANSPORT: Roofed river launch for on their own land, employ experienced local staff Chávez International Airport, in Peru's capital Lima. general transport and fluvial excursions, and on foot and offer wonderfully comfortable accomodation We strongly suggest to rest and spend the night in along well-maintained trails inside the National one of the airport's hotels as the domestic flight to 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

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 still widely spoken in the Andean countryside.

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

Exploring the Peruvian Amazon rainforest in unmatched comfort









WORRIES: Basically none different from any other and long-sleeved shirts. When in the Andes and in beautiful baroque churches from the era of the place - Peru is extremely well geared to cater to the visiting Cusco and the Sacred Valley of the Incas Spanish colonization and wonderful museums, and international tourist market and it has proven to be expect the occasional and possibly quite which one can use as a comfortable, quaint, wella very safe, perfectly organized and very hospitable discomforting bout of altitude sickness, so take the organized base for countless excursions in the Country in our experience, especially in the appropriate medicaments along. archaelogical sites such as Cusco (or Cuzco), the Sacred Valley of the Incas and Machu Picchu. When CLIMATE: Tropical, but very variable depending on Sacsayhuamán, the mighty ruins of the indigenous in the rainforest always sleep under the mosquito net altitude. In the lowlands of the Tambopata rainforest settlements spread along the stunning Sacred Valley provided in your room (see "Health" below) and expect cool, pleasant nights and very hot, humid of the Incas and finally the spectacular "lost city" of look carefully where you put your feet and hands days; when at altitude in the Andes expect cool, Machu Picchu, which - despite having become one when walking, especially at night.

sunlit days and frigid nights.

HEALTH: This is the Amazon, so there's always the **BESIDES:** Peru is an ancient Country blessed with Countless travel and tour agencies offer their chance to catch an upleasant tropical disease - countless natural, artistic and historical riches - do especially if spending long periods in the rainforest not make the mistake of limiting your stay to the Rio by Fertur Peru Travel - our stays in Lima, Cusco and close to water and at night. Leishmaniosis - a Tambopata region and plan instead to spend several Aguas Calientes and our privately chaffeured and disfiguring and stubborn illness transmitted by flies - days travelling around the land to enjoy its beauty guided tours of the Inca archeological sites were is a real risk here, so use a good mosquito repellant and culture. One destination deserving several days always impeccably organized and thoughtfully and - most importantly - always wear long trousers is the historical city of Cusco (Cuzco), which is rich planned out.

surrounding areas. At the very minimum plan several days to visit the Inca archaeological sites at of the world's best known tourist spots - still has the capability to leave the visitor literally speechless. services in Peru, but we can safely recommend those





Amphibians and reptiles are awesome... we show it!



An opportunity to escape from the routine and join us on an exciting adventure to experience tropical wildlife at its best!



Selva Verde Lodge & Rainforest Reserve



Sarapiquí, Costa Rica



Somewhere in the middle of a 500-acre tropical rainforest reserve is a place where you can get away from the world and be surrounded by it at the same time. That place is <u>Selva Verde</u> <u>Lodge & Rainforest Reserve</u>.

As one of Costa Rica's legendary eco lodges, we are committed to a sustainable future — not only for Selva Verde, but for the people and wildlife that call the Sarapiquí home. We proudly carry and support Costa Rica's Certification for Sustainable Tourism. We actively work with conservation partners, including the Sarapiquí Conservation Learning Center, to promote conservation and environmental education throughout the local community. Learn more about our efforts when you visit Selva Verde!











"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

NATURES PHOTO ADVENTURES

Photographic Learning Travel as yentures

"Our goal at Nature's Photo Adventures
is to lead instructional photographic workshops
to the some of the world's most beautiful and unspoiled destinations
while providing a rewarding and educational learning experience".

"We strive to exceed your expectations, taking you on an adventure and a once in a lifetime experience. Explore nature, share, learn and develop new levels of photographic skills and leave with fantastic photographs and

wonderful memories and new found friends."

David Hemmings - President, Nature's Photo Adventures

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 spices 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

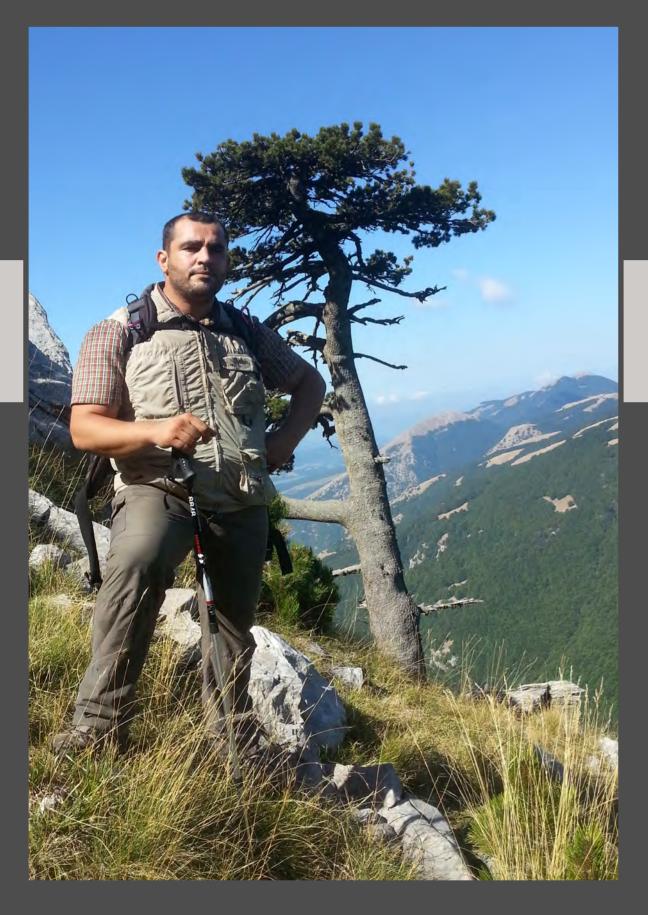
expectations were achieved and we were fortunate to have a very compatible group on our tour, which made it very enjoyable. This was my first workshop and I would recommend them to friends".

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*

info@naturesphotoadventures.com http://www.naturesphotoadventures.com





Tales of The Lone Ranger

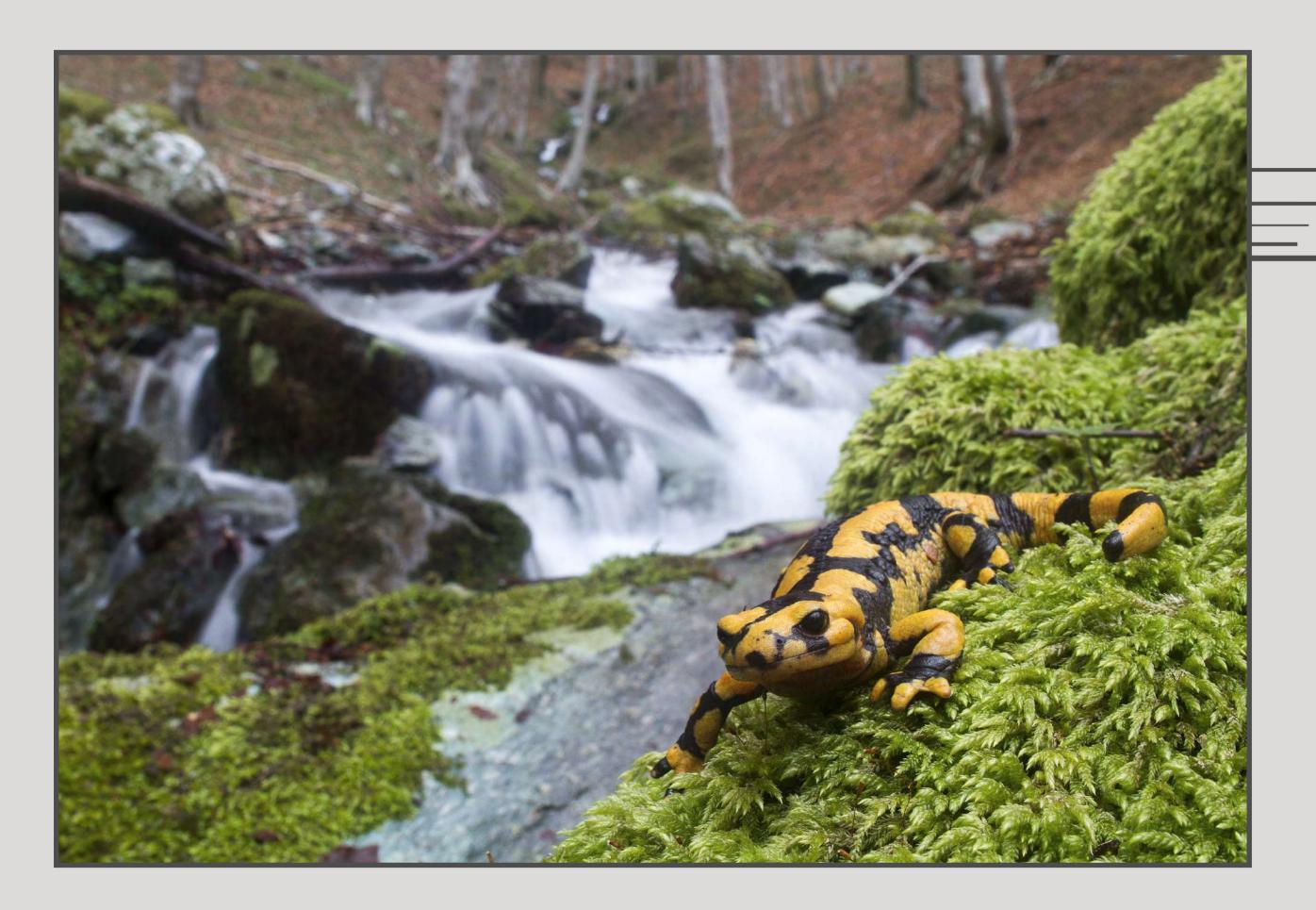
Tirelessly exploring the craggy peaks of his native Calabria in Southern Italy, a devoted naturalist brings back stunning, poetic images of the local fauna. Portrayed in a uniquely personal and deeply sensitive style

Antonio Mancuso - A Wildlife Photographer in His Own Words

I am no big talker, even less so when I have to tell something about myself....I was born in 1978 in Cosenza, a town in Southern Italy's rugged region of Calabria. Passionate and deeply interested in the hidden workings and balancing rules of Nature since I was very young, in 2001 I started taking short videos of the wilderness around me and the small creatures living in it. My beginnings in true photography came during the digital era - this has made it much easier for me to explore this branch of the art, which is for me a never-ending search, an endless source of new experiences, learnings and emotions, and above all a medium through which I can attempt to get closer and closer to Nature, in my continuous attempt to understand it better and more

intimately. Among the many styles of photography one can adopt in the field, I tend to prefer what is commonly called wide-macro (or close-focus wide-angle) for habitat shots, as I am convinced it is the best one for telling a story, to involve the viewer of the image (and the photographer taking it) - possibly because it is the least obvious. Besides photography, I spend a lot of my spare time as a volunteer with several environmental associations, as I am firmly convinced something can and should still be done to preserve Nature - and consequently ourselves - from the current malaise. My website is borne out of my desire, then, to share this deep passion of mine and - in my own modest way - to sensibilize the public at large towards Nature and the need to respect it.

Portfolio



Fire salamander
Salamandra
salamandra gigliolii
Canon 7D
Sigma 24mm
F/16 - 0.4 sec
ISO 100
2 flash

Himantopus himantopus Canon 7D Sigma120/400 F/8 - 1/800 ISO 1000





Conehead mantis

Empusa pennata Canon 40D Canon 100mm F/5 - 1/160 ISO 400

Wild orchid

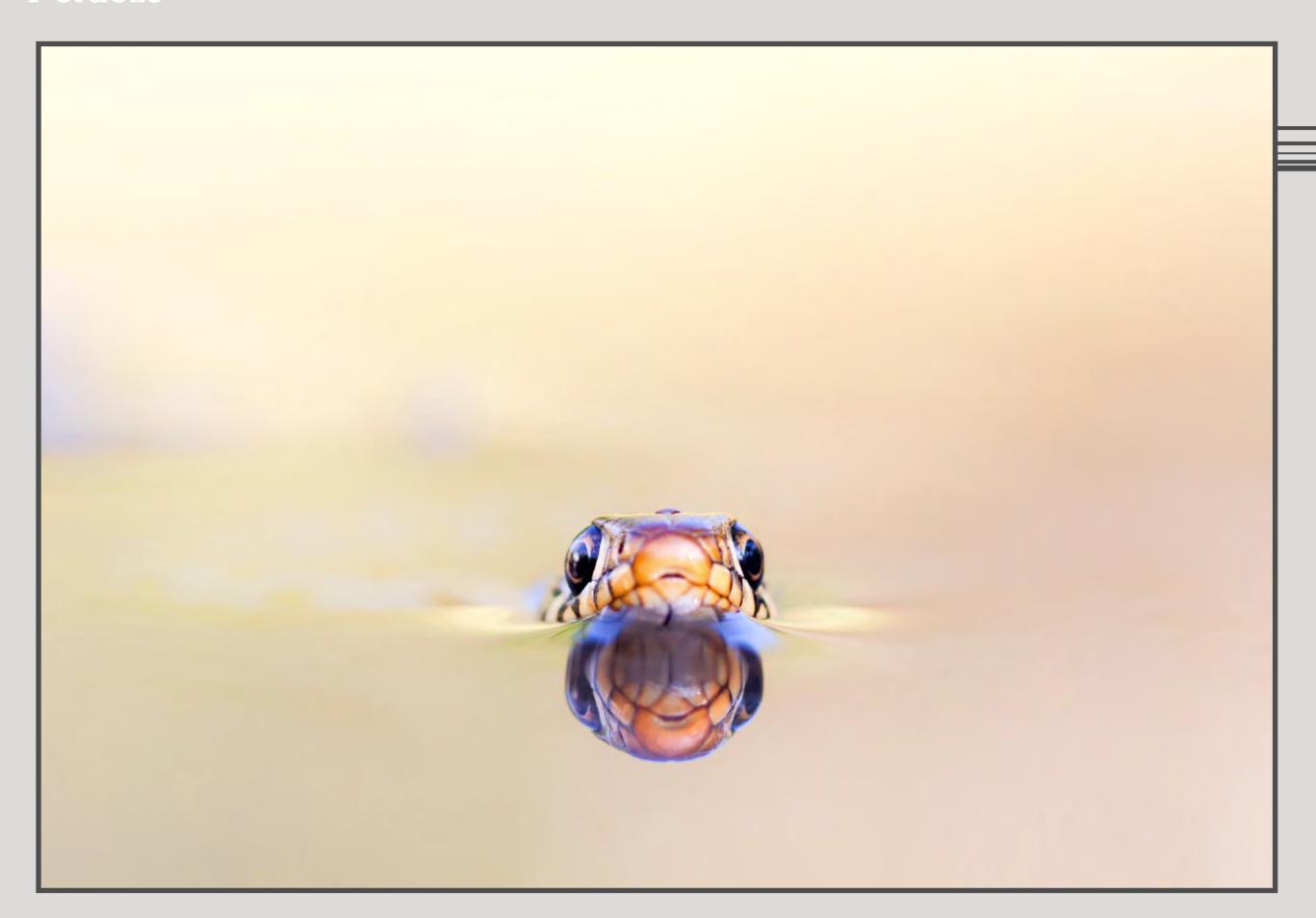
Ophris thendrenifera = Canon 7D
Canon 100mm
F/4 - 1/250
ISO 200



River crab

Potamon
fluviatile
Canon 7D
Sigma 15mm
F/18 - 1/60
ISO 640
2 flash





Grass snake

Natrix natrix
Canon 7D
Canon 100mm
F/3,5 - 1/500
ISO 500

Portfolio

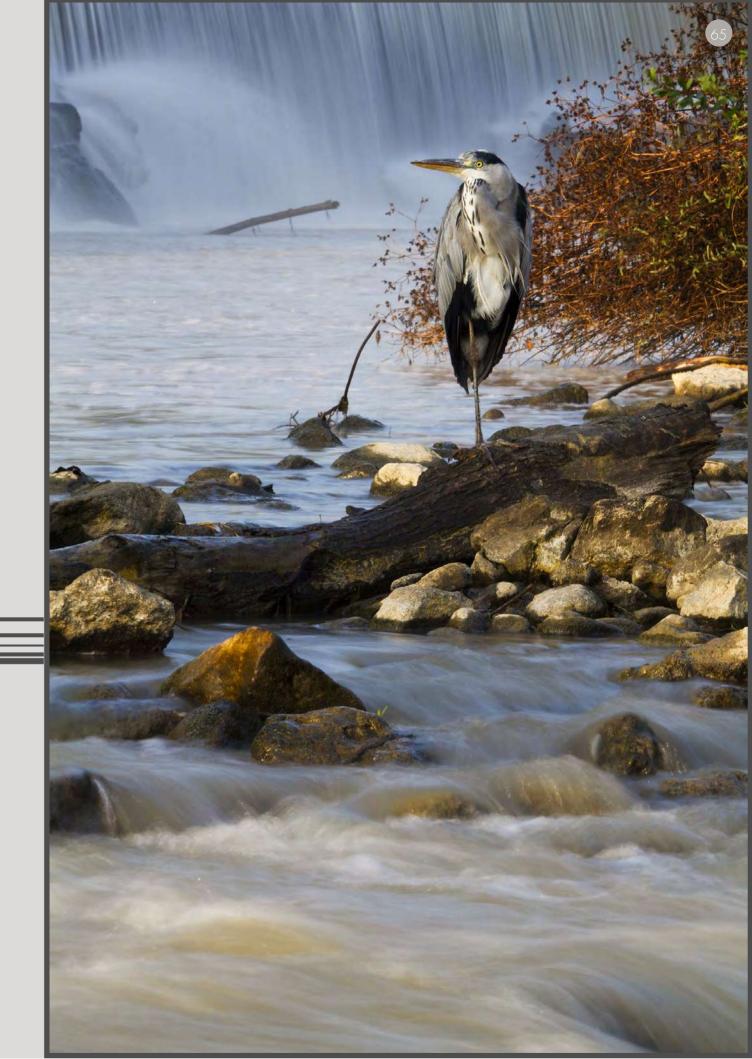


Conehead mantis

Canon 7D
Canon 100mm
F/6,3 - 1/200
ISO 250

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea Canon 40D
Sigma 120/400
F/23 - 0.3 sec
ISO 100
polarizer



- Portfolio



Predatory
bush cricket
Saga pedo
Canon 7D
Sigma 15mm
F/22 - 1/100
ISO 400
2 flash



Italian
Italia

European Bee-eater

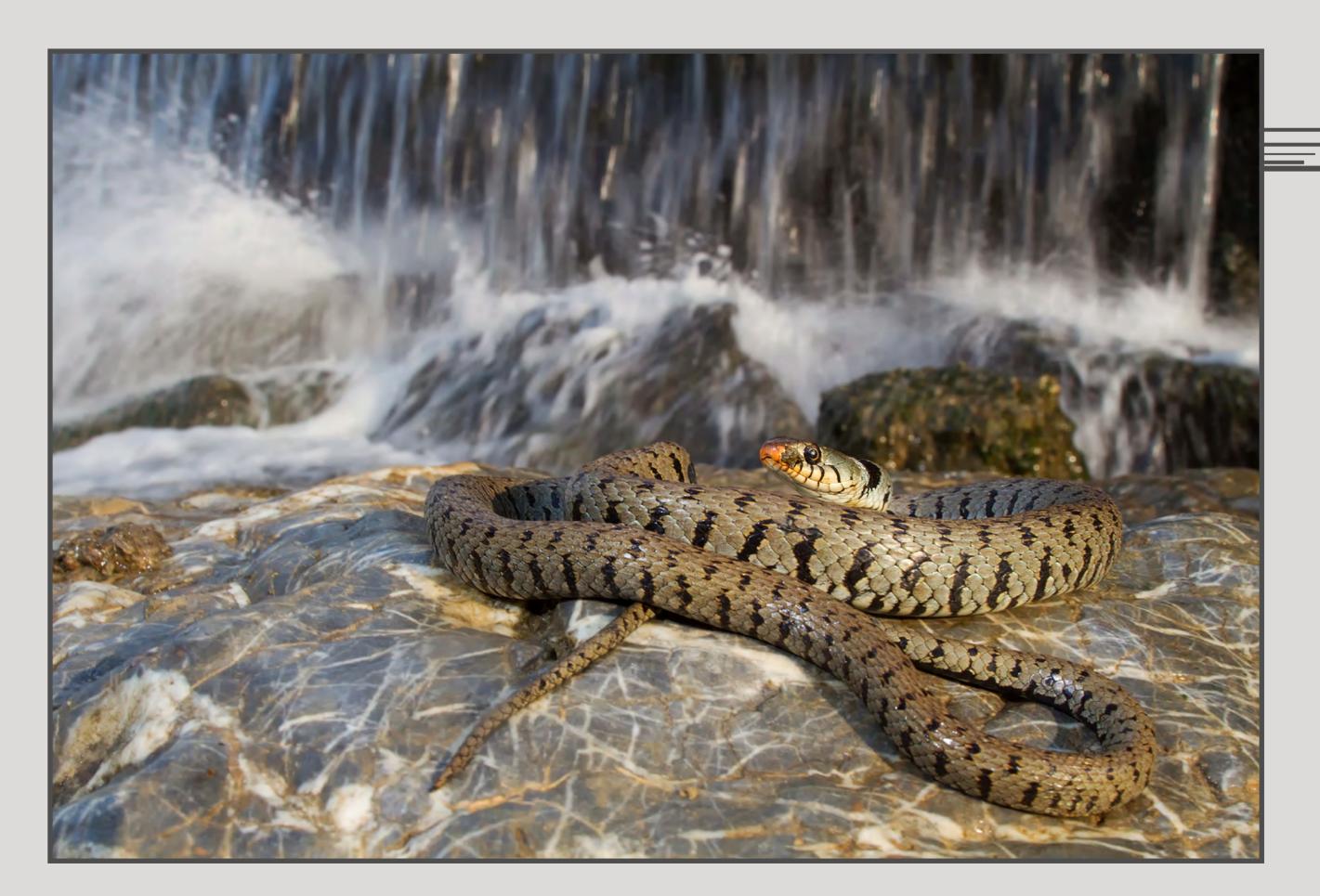
Merops apiaster Canon 40D
Sigma 120/400mm
F/8 - 1/400
ISO 500





Dice Snake

Natrix tassellata
Canon 7D
Canon 100mm
F/2,8 - 1/320
ISO 160



Grass snake

Natrix natrix
Canon 7D
Sigma 24mm
F/16 - 1/40
ISO 100
1 flash

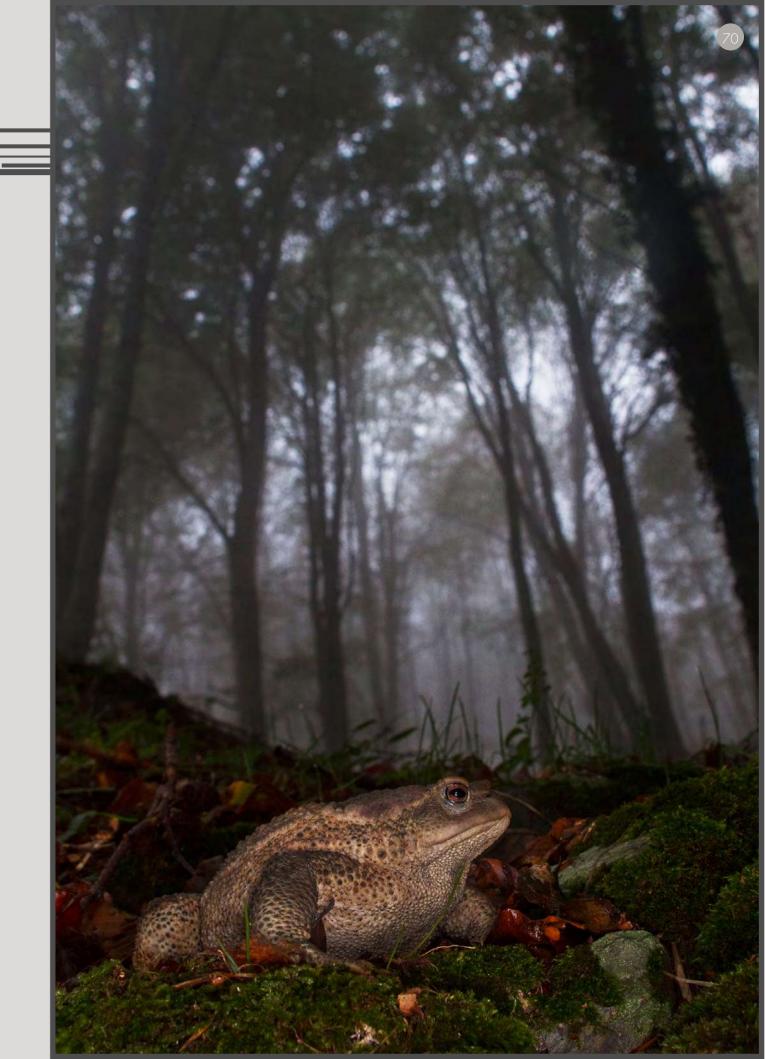
Portfolio

Common toad =

Bufo bufo Canon 7D Sigma 24mm F/10 - 1/50 ISO 1600 1 flash

Agile frog Rana dalmatina Canon 7D Canon 100mm F/10 - 1/125 ISO 1250





Portfolio

Green lizard

Lacerta bilineata Canon 7D
Canon 18/55mm
F/16 - 1/60
ISO 400







Praying mantis =

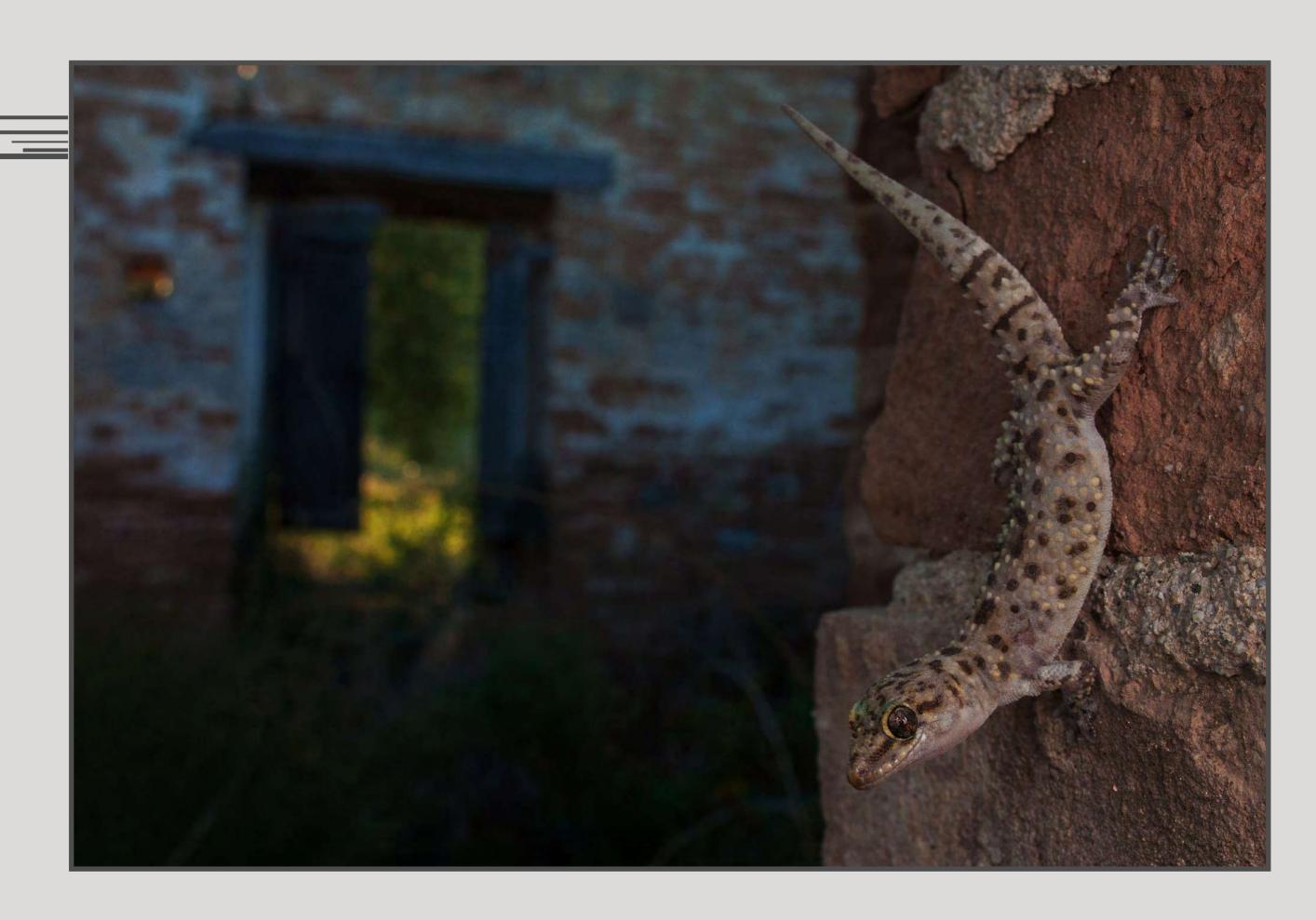
Mantis religiosa Canon 7D Canon 100mm F/4 - 1/100 ISO 100

Great White Egret

Ardea alba
Canon 40D
Sigma 120/400mm
F/18 - 1/4
ISO 100



Turkish Gecko
Hemidactylus
turcicus
Canon 7D Sigma 24mm F/13 - 1/60 ISO 500 2 flash





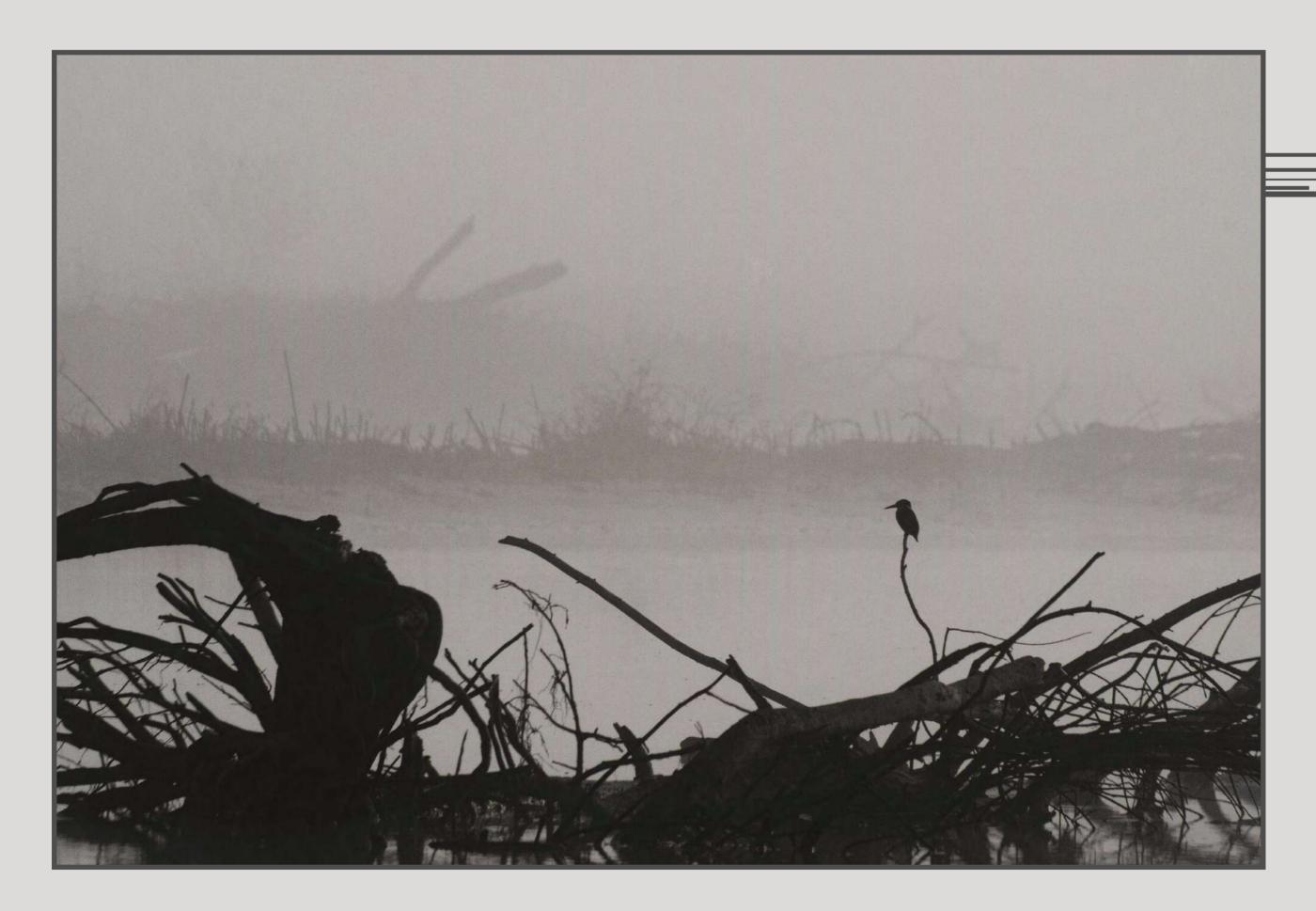
Banded demoiselle

Calopteryx splendens
Canon 7D
Canon 100mm
F/11 - 1/10
ISO 320

Common toad =

Bufo bufo Canon 7D Sigma 15mm F/18 - 1/50 ISO 250 1 flash





Common
Kingfisher
Alcedo atthis
Canon 40D
Sigma 120/400mm
F/14 - 1/800
ISO 640





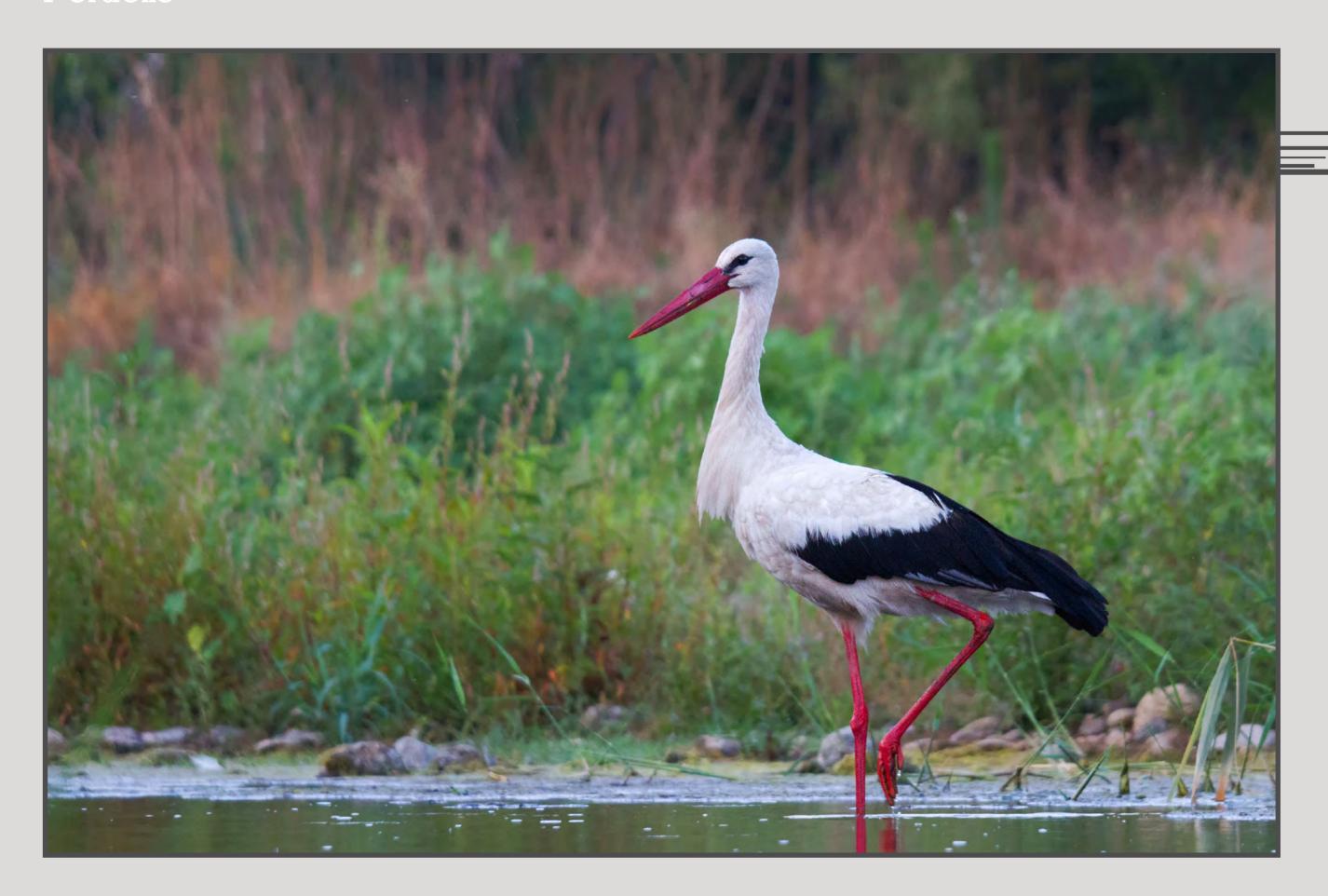




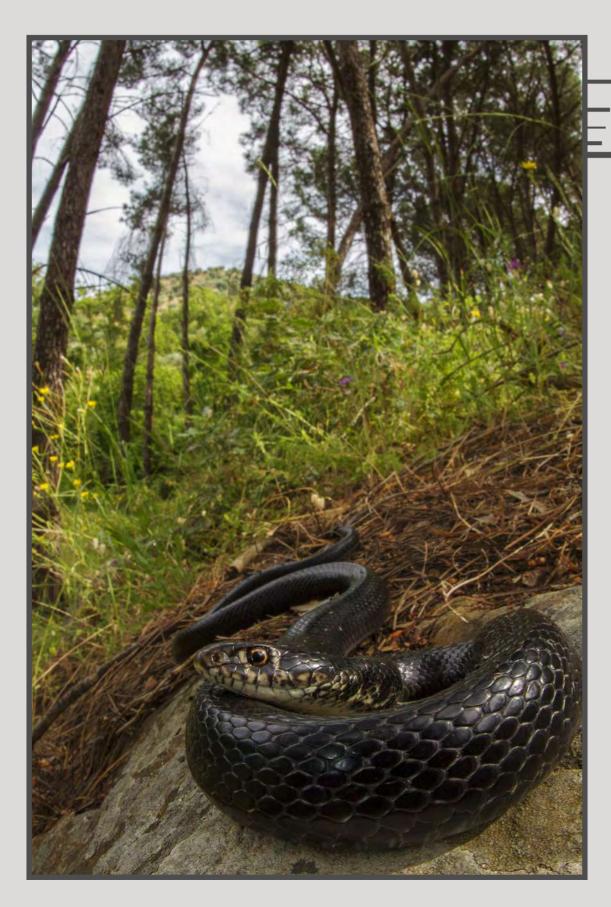
Green lizard
Lacerta bilineata
Canon 7D
Sigma 15mm
F/18 - 1/200
ISO 320
2 flash

Western whip snake Hierophis viridiflavus Canon 7D Canon 100mm F/8 - 1/250 ISO 160





White Stork
Ciconia ciconia
Canon 7D
Sigma 120/400
F/7,1 - 1/320
ISO 1600



Western whip snake
Hierophis viridiflavus
Canon 7D Sigma 15mm F/22 - 1/60 ISO 800 2 flash

> Southern Italian asp = Vipera aspis hugyi Canon 7D Canon 100mm F/16 - 1/125 ISO 400

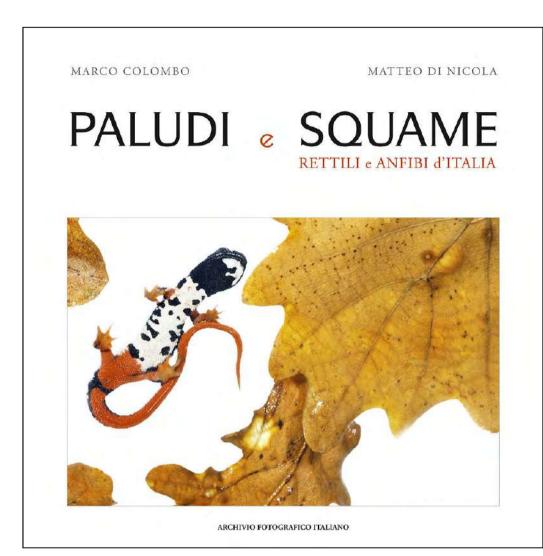


- Portfolio

Southern darter

Sympetrum meridionale
Canon 7D
Canon 100mm
F/4 - 1/500
ISO 500





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)

You can watch a preview and order it at: http://paludiesquame.wix.com/paludiesquame

ADVERTISEMENT













Become the Best Arctic Photographer

Details on our web-site www.arcticawards.ru

Global Arctic Awards International Photography
Competition
of the North and Arctic pictures

GLENN BARTLEY'S PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

UNFORGETTABLE BIRD AND NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS FROM AROUND THE WORLD







ECUADOR COSTA RICA VANCOUVER ISLAND







CHURCHILL PERU PHOTOSHOP & PRIVATE LESSONS

For More Information:

www.glennbartley.com ~ rgbartley@gmail.com ~ 250-412-2904

CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP FOR GLENN'S FREE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Beauty of the Beast



Masters of camouflage and cunning ambush hunters, Scorpionfish and their allies are an endless source of amazement to the discerning underwater photographer



The Weedy scorpionfish *Rhinopias frondosa* is a relatively rare cryptic, venomous, benthic scorpaenid restricted to Indo-Pacific silty, mucky sand bottoms. This is a very variable species which can be observed in several chromatic phases - a bright orange specimen is featured on the opening spread.

Rhinopias frondos

Another example of Weedy scorpionfish variability - this is a coral pink individual from Northern Sulawesi.

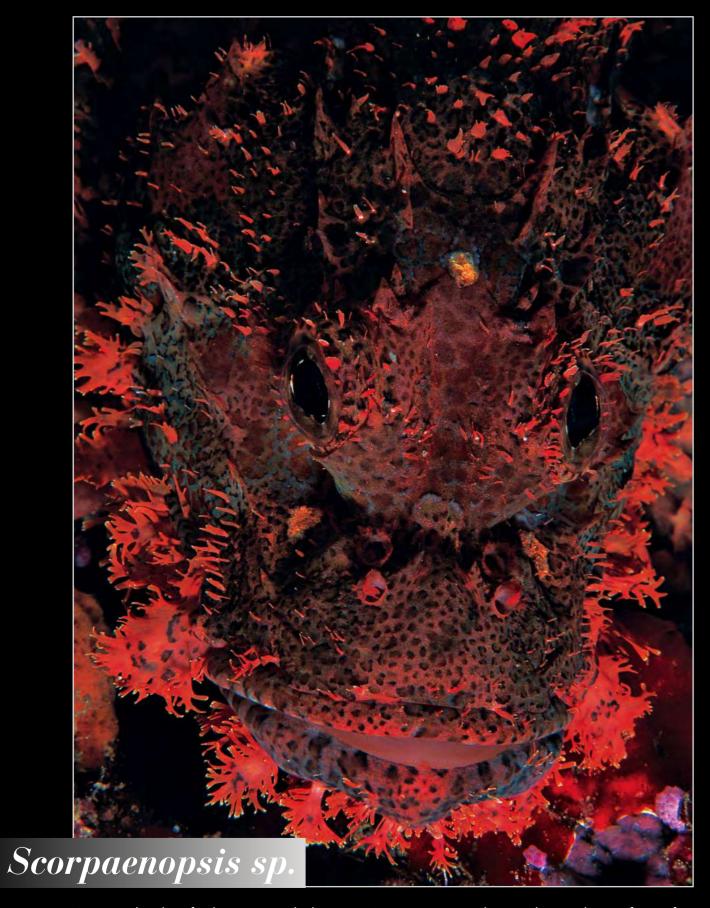
TEXTS BY ANDREA FERRARI PHOTOS BY ANDREA & ANTONELLA FERRARI

have always been in love with pretending to be coral chunks or drifting the quirky, the outrageous, the bizarre vegetable matter; and surely very few and the downright ugly. There's other animal species - marine or terrestrial something so much more interesting in - can compete with the extraordinary the deformed features and contorted camouflage of that great (and extremely bodies of horrendous gargoyles in venomous) pretender, the Stonefish comparison to the boring perfection of Synanceia verrucosa. Woe to the noble knights in shining armour! And unfortunate soul who might happen to step when one goes diving, the great and on one while wading in shallow waters! varied family of Scorpionfishes (family Scorpaenidae) and their allies certainly needle-like rays of the dorsal fin, capable fits the bill regarding that. There are of penetrating a rubber shoe-is said to be many excellent reasons to admire this of such atrocious intensity that most victims group of predatory fish, and indeed fall die of heart failure from the pain of the in love with such fascinating subjects! The shameless right-in-your-face ugliness themselves via their sharp, venomous of their features goes hand in hand (or dorsal and pectoral fin rays is common to rather fin-in-fin) with some of the all scorpionfish, and one has to be very gaudiest, laciest, most elegant liveries to careful not to touch or even brush against be seen in the marine world, and yet one when photographing it, especially such stupefyingly extravagant colors when leaning against dead coral or lying and patterns blend seamlessly in what on the sand bottom in silty, mucky surely are the best examples of environments. But once seen, they are sure camouflage in the underwater to delight - with their grotesque features environment. Indeed, such is the absolute and shapes, by the complex, Oriental rugperfection and efficiency of their disruptive shapes and liveries - rivalling that of some the fascinating evolutionary adaptations other equally static masters of visual trickery, Frogfish (Antennaridae) - that hunting techniques. Why, in so many several Scorpionfish species stand out as years of finding and photographing them some of the most difficult creatures to ferret we have even discovered and out of the coral reef environment for the documented the presence of a false mouth underwater photographer to portray. on the nuchal area of several similar Some gaudily ornamented species pose Scorpaenopsis species - surely evolved to as crinoids, some other partially emerge trick their unwary prey before the fatal from the silty bottom as muck- or algaeincrusted pieces of debris; others then...and try to spot the lurking shamelessly sit out in the open, silently Scorpionfish before they swallow you!

The effect of its venom - injected via the sting itself. Indeed the ability to defend like patterns and colors of their liveries, by shown by their benthic habits and ambush gulp. Not convinced yet? Turn the page



The tiny Ambon scorpionfish can occasionally be encountered on silty, sandy bottoms - it usually sits in the open, pretending to be a bunch of vegetable matter thanks to its outrageous pectoral fins and leaf-like appendages growing above the eyes.



Commonly identified as *oxycephala*, most *Scorpaenopsis* observed on Indo-Pacific reefs actually belong to a complex of very similar species. Correct identification is difficult.



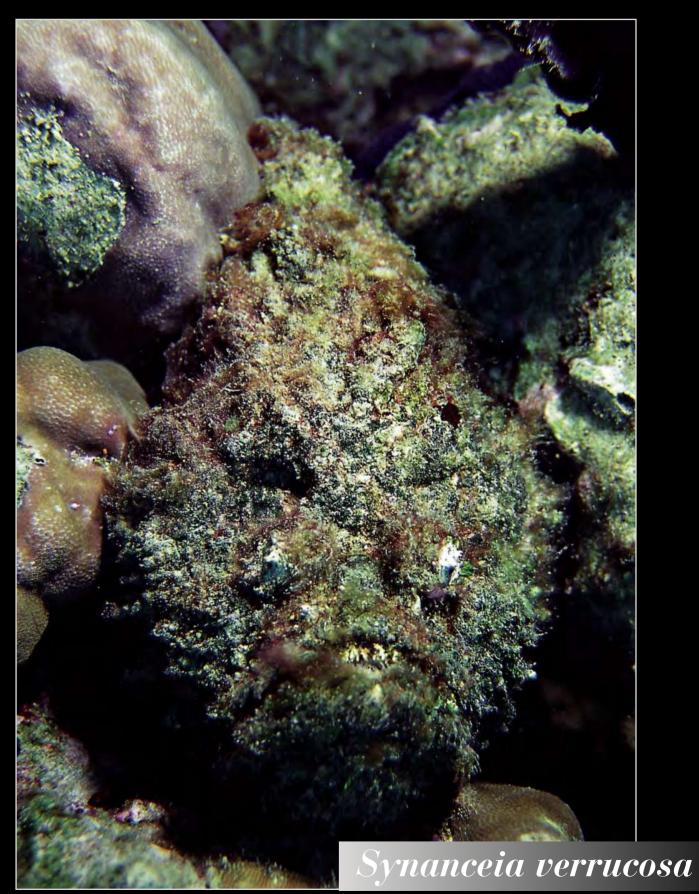
The Paddle-flap scorpionfish is a *Rhinopias* species which shows slightly less dermal extravagance when compared to others. This Indonesian specimen is in a lilac phase.



Most Scorpaenopsis belong to the oxycephala complex tend to brashly perch out in the open, often on coral heads, confiding in their exquisite and extremely efficient somatolitic (ie disruptive) camouflage. A daring combination of colors and patterns makes them almost invisible to the casual observer.



The Devil scorpionfish has the habit of half-digging and hiding in soft silty and sandy bottoms, becoming a liability to careless photographers lying on the sea floor.



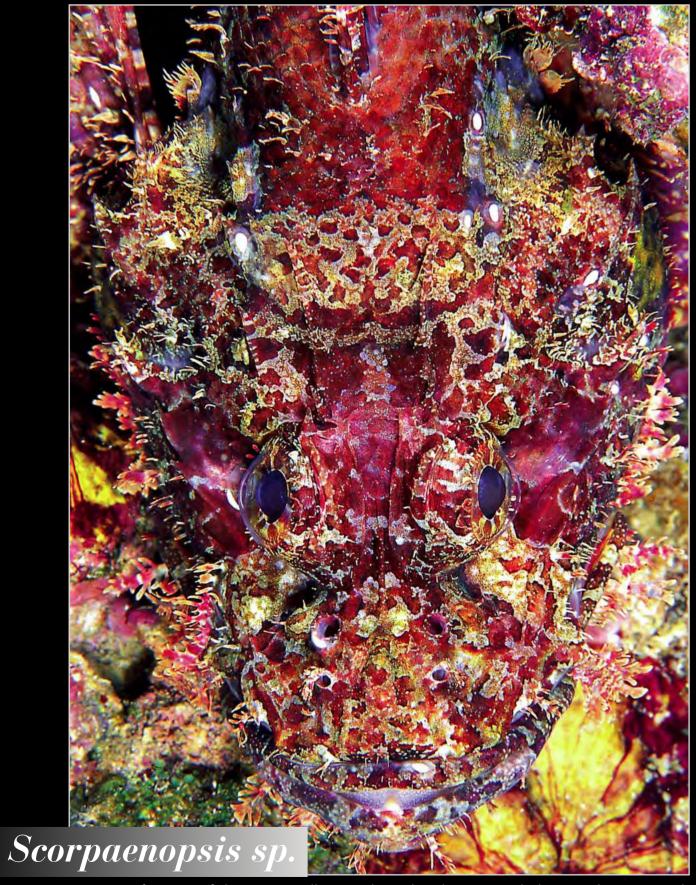
Extremely dangerous to waders, the highly venomous Stonefish lies immobile in very shallow water, confident in its extraordinary, algae-encrusted camouflage.



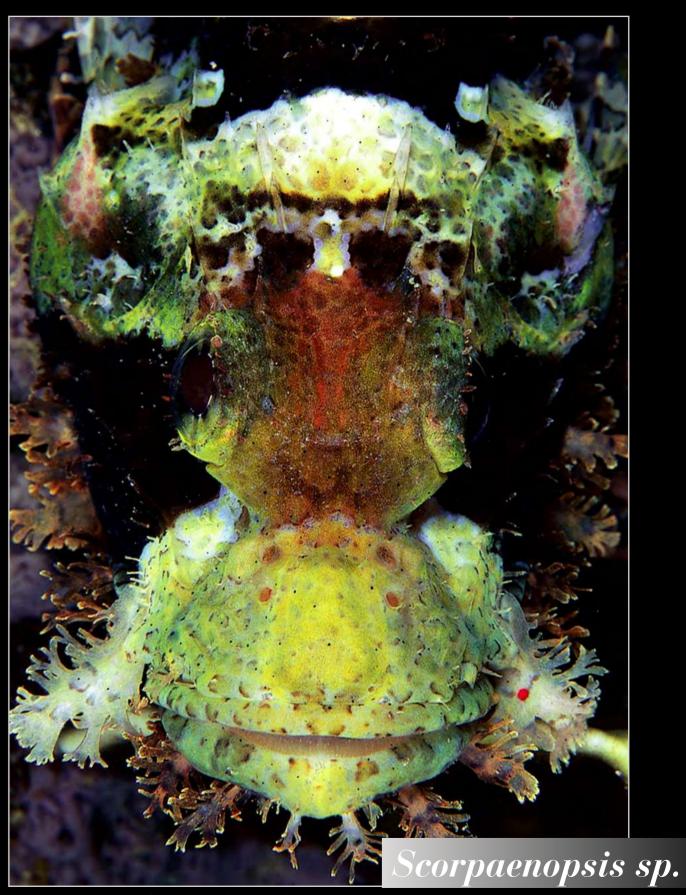
One of the gaudiest and most delicate among the Scorpionfish allies, the paper-thin Leaf fish can occasionally be observed in the open on Indo-Pacific coral reefs, swaying slightly from side to side in the current. Leaf fish can usually be seen in mottled brown, lemon yellow, pure white and even bright fuchsia color phases - as this one.



The Lacy scorpionfish is believed to mimic crinoids, as it is often found sitting out in the open close to them, and it probably is the most showy (and sought after) of the Rhinopias genus. These are benthic, stationary ambush predators which will occupy the same position on the reef for relatively long periods.



Proper reef scorpionfish species - all somewhat related to *oxycephala* - are characterized by minute, colorful ornamentations and dermal frills fringing the lower jaw.



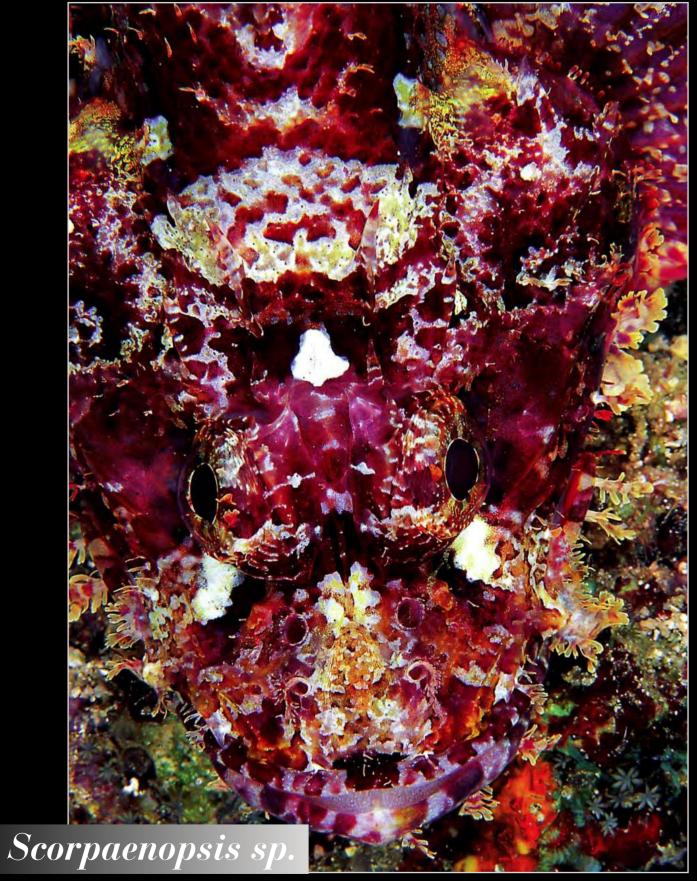
Shape, position of the eyes, fringing frill ornamentation and the disruptive color pattern are typical of the reef scorpionfish *Scorpaenopsis oxycephala* and its allied species.



The highly venomous Devil scorpionfish can be occasionally observed - especially when flushed - as it "walks" on the substrate, using the loose pectoral fin rays as "fingers" and dragging it half-bent body behind. It can be a rather grotesque and unsettling sight for the uninitiated! Some Devil scorpionfish can be exceptionally colorful, especially those living on black volcanic sand.



A side view of a small Ambon scorpionfish - here seen in a typical orange color phase - shows very well the efficacy of the disruptive effect offered by its frayed fins and various dermal appendages.



Another portrait of a reef scorpionfish showing both the riotous colors of its livery and the highly disruptive, camouflaging effect obtained by its patterns.



Common reef scorpionfish belonging to the *oxycephala* complex can quickly become highly collectable subjects - they all look similar and yet they are all different.



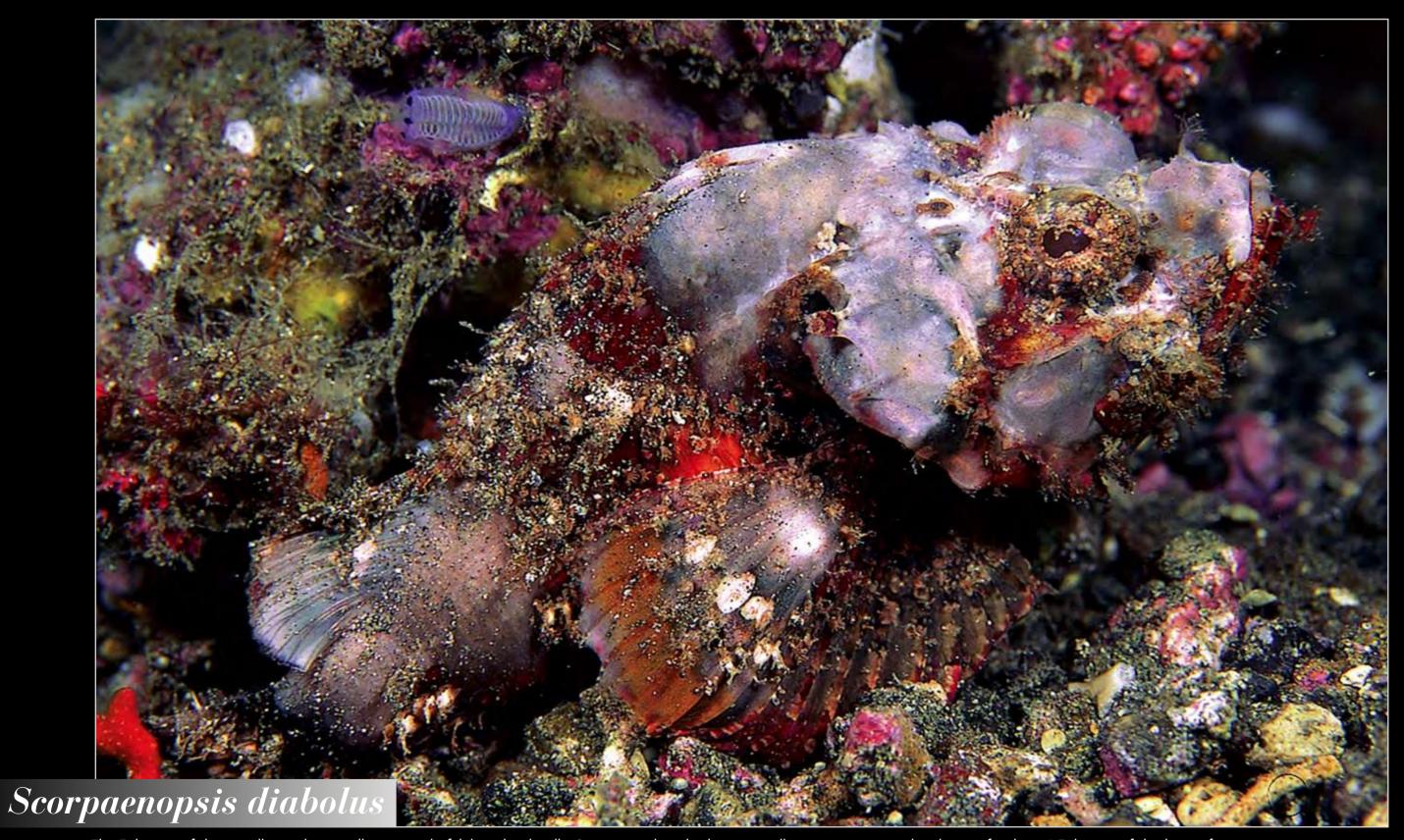
Weedy scorpionfish are relatively common on silty bottoms, especially in Indonesia. This frontal portrait of a sulphur-yellow individual shows to perfection its upturned snout, the fake bright white "eyespots" to confuse quick-biting predators such as triggerfish and the curiously glazed, transparent "windows" in its fan-like pectoral fins.



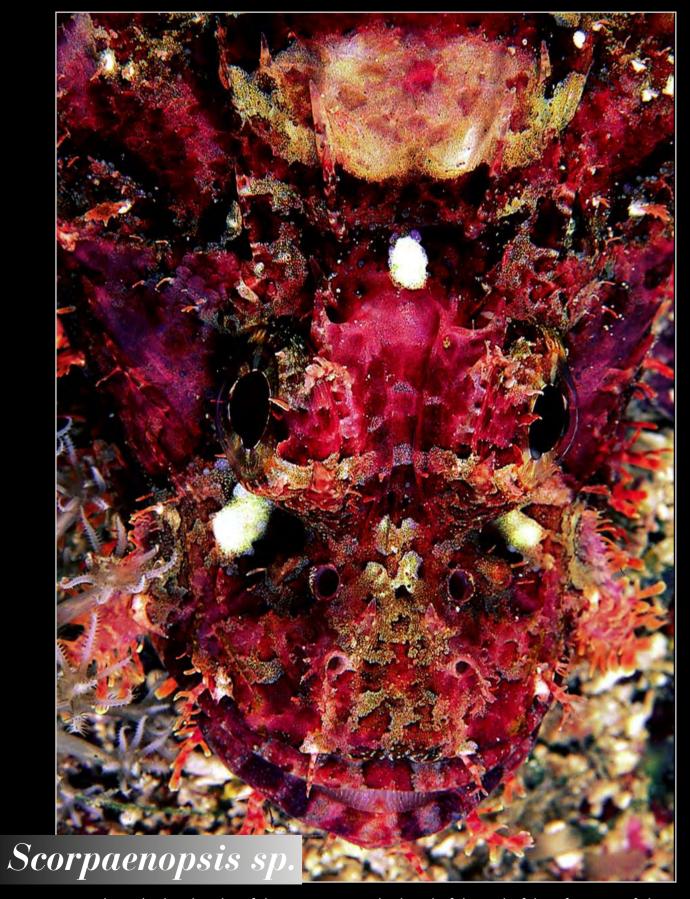
A three-quarter portrait of a Paddle-flap *Rhinopias* shows well its exaggerated upturned snout and the dermal flaps and bumps typical of the genus.



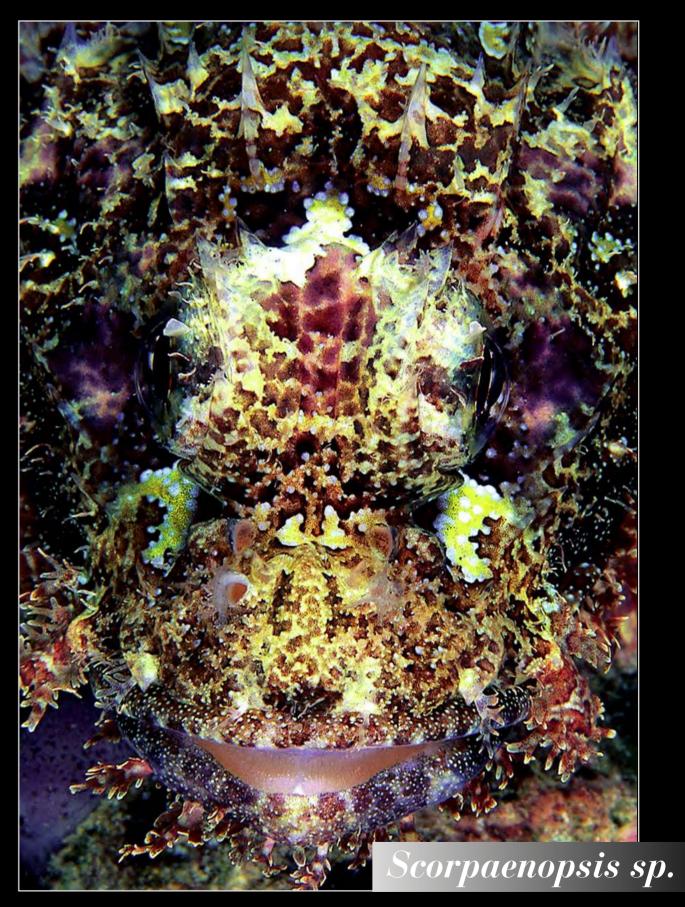
Scorpionfish can lie in ambush in the open without fearing of being discovered - the color tones and patterns of their livery make them literally disappear in the reef environment.



The False stonefish is smaller and generally more colorful than the deadly *Synanceia* - besides being usually more creative in the choice of its livery! False stonefish also prefer different habitats, being usually found among coral rubble in healthy reefs rather than on sandy or pebbled bottoms in very shallow water like Stonefish proper.



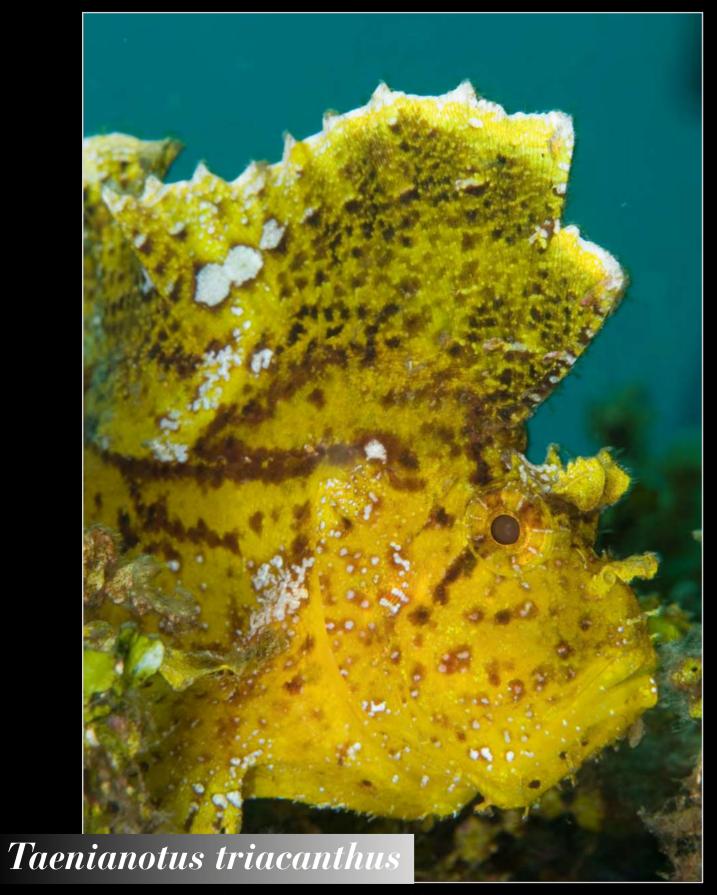
Notice how the bright white false eyespots on the head of this colorful reef scorpionfish distract pecking predators such as triggerfish from targeting the real eyes of the animal.



The liveries of some top-notch specimens rival in beauty and complexity the best Oriental rugs from Iran. Notice the sharp bony projections at the top of the head.



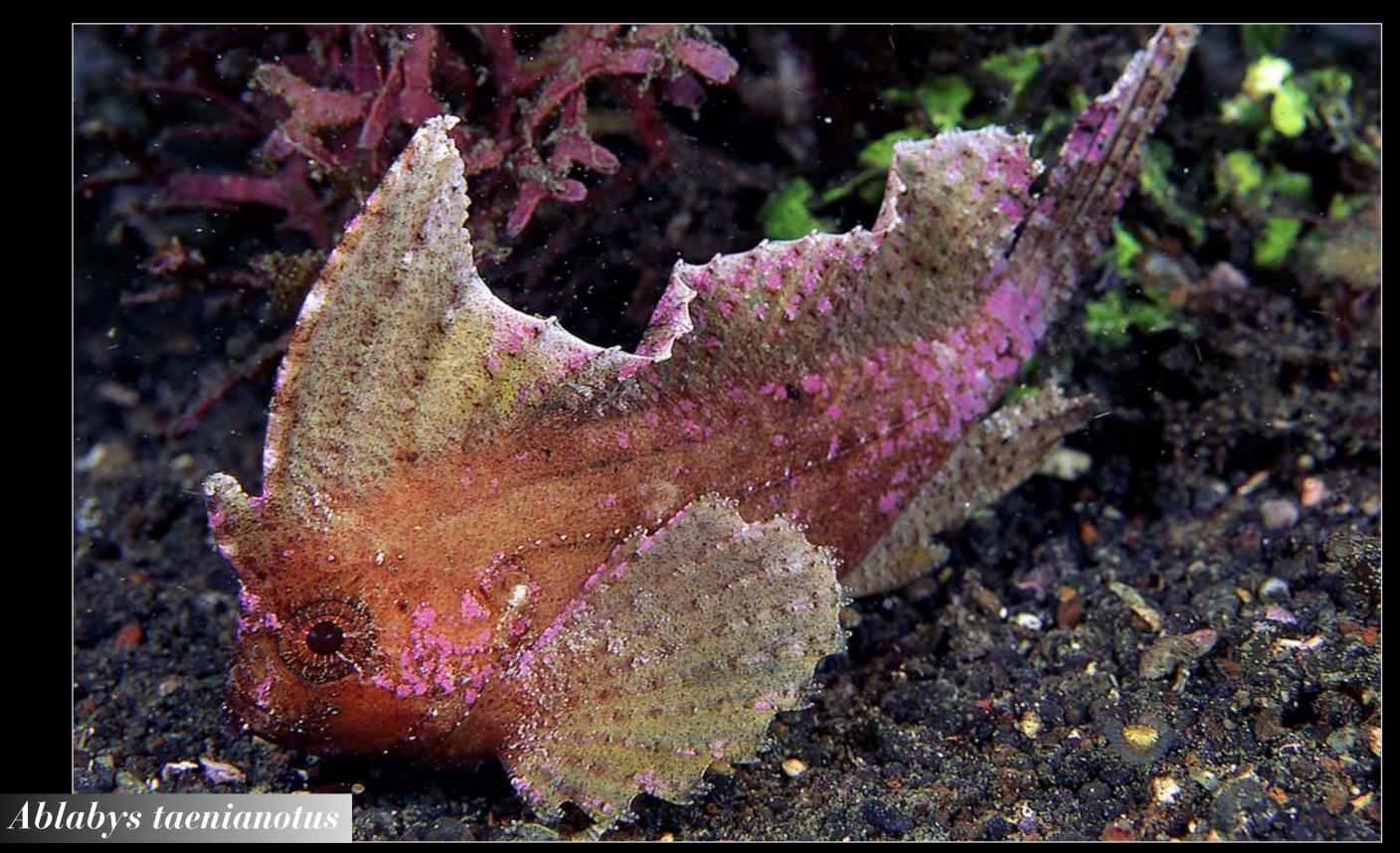
Several small, sand-bottom dwelling scorpionfish species are very difficult to identify properly, as color and pattern obviously are of little importance here. This exquisitely camouflaged and tiny species from the Sulu Sea has been reliably identified as a Shortsnout scorpionfish. Notice how the livery mimics coral and sponge encrustations on a piece of dead coral!



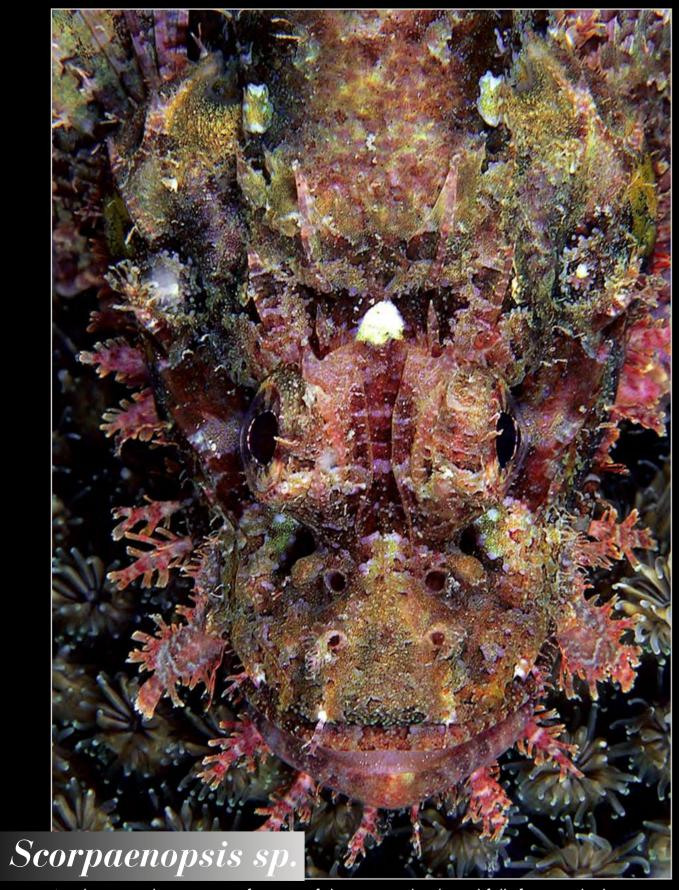
A close-up portrait of a lemon-yellow phase Leaf fish from Borneo. This species can be very closely approached as it won't try to swim away, confiding in its camouflage.



A splendid example of the somatolitic effect offered by the complex, colorful, carpet-like livery of reef scorpionfish species. Under natural light the fish would be almost invisible.



Closely allied to Scorpionfish proper, Cuckatoo waspfish are equally well camouflaged and perfectly capable of inflicting painful wounds through their needle-like dorsal fin rays. Members of the *Ablabys* genus are excellent dead leaf mimics, commonly found lying on the sandy substrate and gently swaying from side to side.



Another typical common reef scorpionfish portrait - the dermal frills fringing the lower jaw are exceptionally well developed in this beautiful specimen.



Reds and yellows disappear at low depth with the gradual absorption of sunlight - what appears very colorful when lit by flashes is in fact almost invisible in natural light.

PELAGIC EXPEDITIONS RHODE ISLAND



Specializing in Blue & Mako shark Encounters PelagicExpeditions@gmail.com

IMAGE: BILL FISHER - WWW.333PRODUCTIONS.COM





102

Trip Report



Herpetologist Cesar Barrio Amorós travels across a wonderful variety of habitats and environments while searching for South America's fascinating wildlife





Hillary sideneck turtle Phrynops hilarii
Argentina is home of several interesting turtles. One of the most common in the field and also introduced in many parks and gardens is Hillary sideneck turtle Phrynops hilarii, a large Chelidae with a nice smile.



Mara Mara mara
Maras look very peculiar, like no other rodent. They somewhat seem to be convergent with gazelles, as they have long legs and run to escape.

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY CESAR BARRIO AMORÓS

fgentina...a beautiful name for a beautiful Country! It means that it shines like silver, and it does...From its tropical north to its Antarctic south, the landscape of Argentina is one of the most diverse in South America. With 2.780.400 square kms, it is the second largest Country in the continent, after Brazil, and travel across it can take a long time by road (good buses actually), or quite a lot of money if you fly. I stayed one month and had the time to hit the roads. I came from Chile, entering the Country in Salta (in the NW part), a marvelous province with many different bioregions. I arrived in early spring and the Chaco region was completely dry. I did not see a single lizard! But the Chaco is one of the most interesting areas in South America, home of many awesome reptiles and amphibians, such as the colorful and quite toxic Leptodactylus laticeps, the Chaco monkey frog *Phyllomedusa sauvagii* and its little relative P. azurea. In a short visit to one of the most famous herpetological centers in South America, the Fundación Miguel Lillo in Tucuman, I met Esteban Lavilla, Gustavo Scrochi and Ricardo Montero, some of the most productive herpetologists in Argentina. With Scrochi we saw two very interesting species - Phylodryas baroni, a green and semi-arboreal snake with a pointy nose, and the southern subspecies of the Boa constrictor, B.c. occidentalis. There also was possible to watch several Phrynops hillari and some interesting

aquatic birds, such as a grebe I had never seen before (Podilimbus podiceps). After that, I decided to move to the NE to see the amazing and famous Iguazu falls. I arrived after 24 hours in bus from Tucuman to the small town of Puerto Iguazú. From there you can take a taxi or a bus to the Parque Nacional Iguazú, which covers an area of 67.620 ha. There are many very well marked paths and a little train that takes tourists to the different viewpoints of the waterfalls. Though the Iguazú falls are indeed one of the most magnificent falls in the world - and I really enjoyed the views, forest and fauna - I was quite disappointed by the thousands of tourists that were at the same point with me. It was completely impossible to be alone and enjoy the magnificence of the scenario. Always there were family groups, school groups, couples, or even huge lines of Japanese tourists taking thousands of pictures with cameras far better than mine. One of the questions I was asking myself all the time was if I could take a better and different picture from the thousands around me. But I saw that no one was taking care of the fauna. Especially I was very impressed by the local and endemic great dusky swifts Cypseloides senex, which were flying so close to the waterfalls, and sometimes, diving into the water curtains, where their nests were sited. I discovered a spot, a small creek with a hanging bridge, where I could stay for a long time spying the swifts,



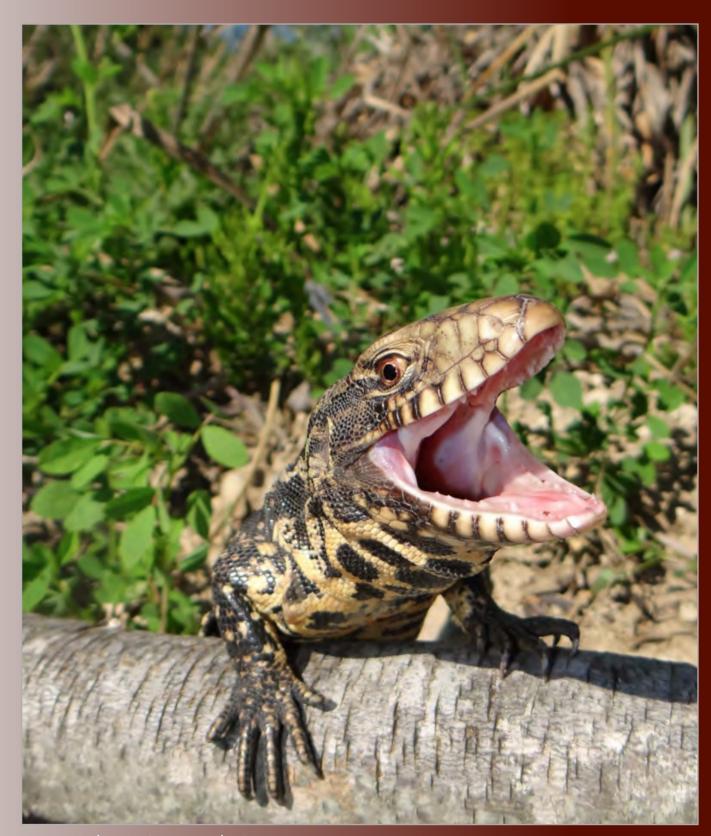


Southern Elephant seal *Mirounga leonina*Females and calves of elephant seals are mostly resting all day long on stony beaches. They can be wary or just curious. In any case a great experience to be close by!





Baron's Green racer *Philodryas baroni*Possibly the most bizarre snake of Argentina, the beautiful and fast *Philodryas baroni* is a rear-fanged, semi-arboreal and diurnal predator. Its relatively weak venom is not considered dangerous to humans.



Tegu Salvator (Tupinambis) merianae
The South American Tegu is fearless and will readily bite an unprotected hand.

with almost no people disturbing me. I spend many hours photographing the swifts in the nest, taking care of the chicks, resting while hanging in the walls, some sleeping, some vigilant, and capable to turn their necks as much as 180 degrees, like an owl, to see over their backs. Incredibly fast birds. At the human-modified paths and gardens around the falls, one could imagine being at any of the entertainment parks in the USA, with so many small shops selling all kind of fast food. There the coatimundis were kings. So abundant that they were asking for food to any tourist with cookies or empanadas. Even being forbidden to give food to animals, all tourists were enchanted by the cute faces and kind animals. That could end with some nasty bites, as these carnivores have large teeth. Another animal I was eager to find was the monitor-like South American Tegu, Salvator merianae. A large lizard, with powerful jaws and no fear to humans. They also were attracted to the fast food shops and waited around for their bit. I pursued one of them to take some pictures, and when it was bothered by me, it charged towards the camera, almost crashing the cover. I had later another encounter with a wild Salvator merianae in Buenos Aires, in a river park, the Reserva Ecológica Costanera Sur, where with my friend Fernando Licitra we caught two specimens resting under a log, and photographed one after tiring it a little.

In Buenos Aires, I spent some time visiting museums and giving a couple of lectures in the Museo Argentino de Ciencias

Naturales Bernardino Rivadavia, and at the Palermo Zoo. With Fernando and Emiliano Lértora, we went to the city of la Plata for a frog night lead by the beautiful and gentle herpetologist Gabriela Agostini. That night was quite awesome, as we could find several interesting species, as Hypsiboas pulchella, Dendropsophus sanborni, Pseudis minuta, Scinax squalirostris and S. granulosus. At dusk and night, I never experienced so many mosquitoes in my life, and that place stands out along with Palo Verde in Costa Rica and the Casiquiare River in Venezuela, as the most uncomfortable places to walk around at dusk and night! From Buenos Aires, and after a short visit to Pepe Langone and other herpetologists at the Museo de Ciencias Naturales de Montevideo in Uruguay, where I presented two lectures, I continued my trip southwards to the famous Peninsula Valdes in Patagonia.

PATAGONIA

Since I was little I have been amazed by nature in all its wonders. After exploring entomology and ichtiology, I decided to devote my main interest to herpetology. However, this does not mean that I am far from other kind of animals, and as a photographer, I like to capture all expressions of beauty and reality in the animal kingdom. One of the most renowned places on Earth to watch a high variety of animals, in large concentrations, and see them in action, is the famous Peninsula Valdés, in the Patagonia region





Santa Fe frog Leptodactylus laticeps
This species - the most prominent and beautiful of this South American genus of land frogs - is also the most toxic, as its coloration announces.
After touching it for a while, its mucus affects the skin (especially if one has open wounds) and provokes heavi sneezing. Do not touch!



Southern Right Whale Eubalena australis
Calves of Southern Right Whales like to play, sometimes jumping or just splashing their tails against the water surface.

of Argentina. It is known especially for the famous Killer whales attacking sea lions at the shore, and of course this was my first interest. But I also knew that was a great location to see many South American large mammals like guanacos, maras, sea lions, elephant seals, and different kind of whales; and birds, like penguins and rheas, as well as some mostly unknown reptiles. I arrived to Puerto Madryn, where I had three contacts that proved to make the difference in my trip. The first was my now friend Diego Barraso, herpetologist, who gave me shelter and introduced me to many investigators at the CENPAT (Centro Nacional Patagónico). There also I meet Dario Podestá, renowned photographer, and he took me out for a little ride. That ride was amazing, as we were deep inside wild Patagonia. This region is quite boring scenically, all plain, covered by small shrubs and bushes, the tallest being no more than three meters high. But it was so full of life. Many maras, those strange and graceful rodents with long legs and convergent with some small gazellas or antelopes in other continents, crossed the road, as well as European hares Lepus europaeus and some terrestrial birds Eudromia elegans. The tallest bush had a nest of a Red-backed Hawk Buteo polyosoma, and we stopped nearby to watch the couple closely. And indeed they arrived to check out who were those skinny critters. They never were aggressive, but quite inquisitive, coming and going, and never abandoning their nest, where at least we saw one chicken. We took advantage

of their proximity and several great pictures were taken.

But the real paradise was waiting for our arrival. On a windy cliff, we leaned out and saw a magnificent panorama. Clear waters in low tide, and many elephant seals Mirounga leonina on the beach, some just lying, others on the shore, others swimming (mostly the calves). Just to be there, watching from a long distance (approached by our tele zooms) was a delight... Many cormorants and giant petrels Macronectes giganteus flew around us, as we observed the incredible scenario. We found a difficult, steep and very risky way down, we tried going very carefully, and finally we reached the beach, surrounded by those huge elephant seals. I expected to see the adult males, those monsters I was so terrified as a child when watching Cousteau's and Attenborough's documentaries. But we saw only two young males, four meters long though. We did not want to disturb them... and walked the stony beach very carefully, slowly and in silence. Many female and young elephant seals were motionless... sleeping and ignoring us. Some others though, especially young females on the beach, were quite scared and aggressive at the same time, escaping us crawling to the sea. At the end, with patience, we could approach without scaring them, and take phenomenal photos from very close. At another interesting cliff, much closer to Puerto Madryn, a colony of sea lions Arctocephalus australis could also be observed from a mirador. Contrary to elephant seals (and seals in general of the





Darwin Rhea Rhea pennata
One of the large animals of the plains, and one of the heaviest birds in the world, the Darwin Rhea. It used to be hunted with boleadoras, but currently the species is protected.



Sunset at the plain wilderness of the Patagonia.



Guanaco Lama guanicoe
Families or groups of Guanacos are often seen among the bushes. This peculiar camelids constitute the main prey item for pumas.

family *Phocidae*), which have their hind limbs directed posteriorly, helping the tail in water propulsion, sea lions of the family *Otariidae* have their hind limbs directed anteriorly and thus functional for walking or even climbing. Males are very aggressive and massive. They have harems and defend them continuously from other younger males that try to mate with the females.

The interior of Peninsula Valdés was a complete wilderness. A windy and inhospitable land where a few families settled in the last century to breed sheep. Now, however, it is one of the most attractive destinations for wildlife tourists. In a few hours it is possible to see so many interesting animals that it is only comparable in South America with the Pantanal in Brazil and the Venezuelan Llanos. I was invited by my friends Ricardo Fabian Acquaroli and Leticia Benítez, who run a tour operator in Puerto Madryn. I was first on a whale watching tour starting in Puerto Piramides. I am used to go in this kind of tours as I myself used to be a whale guide in Costa Rica. But there, in the best day, you can maybe see 5 whales and their calves, and with a lot of luck, a male jump out of the water. In Valdés, close to the end of the whale season, which goes from June to November, we saw not less than 20 whales around the boat, mostly females with calves, and some showing their tails, splashing around us, and spying us, just emerging with their eyes to see us better. It is such a great sensation to look into a whale eye directly, so placid, so peaceful.

Tegu Salvator (Tupinambis) merianae Tegus are common at the Iguazú Falls, especially around food stalls.





D'Orbigny's Banded Anole *Pristidactylus fasciatus*Patagonia is also home for some intriguing reptiles. This is a male *Pristidactylus fasciatus*, which preys on other lizards and large insects.

They are really gentle giants, with no intention to harm us in any way. It is uncomprehensible how humans almost drove such beautiful creatures to extinction.

Something that was very intriguing and also painful to watch was how sea gulls in that area learned to attack quickly the whale dorsum to make a hole to extract the fat. This is an increasing problem as every year there are many more sea gulls (due to the growing of Puerto Madryn and its huge garbage storage), and they learn from others how to take this tasteful and energy-rich piece of fat.

Of course the main goal that day was to see how the orcas attack sea lions at the shore of the beach. But my aims were diminishing at each minute. I talked about that with several friends, including photographers, investigators, and the famous Roberto Bubas, who is the person that knows best the orcas. They frequent those waters year long, but there are many families - some are residents, and others visitors. Only one family consisting of seven orcas learned how to attack pinnipeds out of the water. But such action is not often seen... To have the opportunity to watch that, one should camp or stay at some of the Estancias in the area (which are prohibitively expensive) and devote many days awaiting the action. I just had one day, and that was at the end of my trip of one month in Argentina. I hated myself for not having foreseen such a

circumstance. I saw orcas, a family following a sea channel in front of my sight, very close to an elephant seal colony. But no attacks, only greetings!

Other animals I saw quite easily from the safari tour were the omnipresent guanacos Lama guanicoe, proud animals, with their high neck watching the surroundings. Many were with calves. Also the second largest bird in South America, the Darwin rhea Pterocnemia pennata, ready to escape together with its own chicks. Maras, those strange looking long legged rodents, were in breeding season, and females were full of milk waiting to feed their offspring.

Few reptiles are known in the area, among them several *Liolaemus*, and one of the snakes I was more interested in finding, the only and southernmost viper in the Americas, *Bothrops amnodytoides*. During a short walk surrounding an elephant seal colony, I saw two - one juvenile coiled on the main path for tourists, which I photographed and removed, and another under a bridge.

A last encounter that day was also one of the most looked for. I always loved penguins, but I am too lazy to go deep into the cold. So the opportunity to see a colony of Magellan penguins Spheniscus magellanicus where they were swimming in the sea, walking around, and some females were guarding their newly born chicks, from a few meters away, was a really satisfying end to my trip.





Argentine horned frog Ceratophrys ornata
The large and colorful Argentine horned frog Ceratophrys ornata starts to be active around November, at the beginning of the austral spring. At night, surrounded by millions of mosquitoes at the Pampa, one can also see species like Hypsiboas pulchellus, Pseudis minuta and more.





Chacoan waxy leaf frog *Phyllomedusa sauvagii*One of the most interesting species in its genus. It estivates during the dry season producing a wax with which it covers its body completely, preventing dessication.



Magellan penguin Spheniscus magellanicus There are many breeding colonies of Magellan penguins in Patagonia - some small, some of more than a million individuals.





Elephant seal Mirounga leonina
Females and calves of elephant seals are mostly resting all day long on stony beaches. They can be wary or just curious. Some calves will allow you to approach slowly, almost to the point of touching them (even if I do not recommend that). This calf is changing winter skin for a summer thinner one.





Baron's Green Racer Philodryas baroni
A green, very active and quite large serpent which is semi
arboreal and which feeds on birds and rodents.



Lesser Swimming frog Pseudis minutus
A small aquatic frog, which can be seen at night waiting
for small insects resting on floating vegetation.

117

Pied-billed grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*One of the smaller grebes, quite common in the NW part of the country.





Southern Orange-legged leaf frog Phyllomedusa azurea Another species in the intriguing group of monkey, leaf or poster frogs. Smaller than the waxy frog, it can be found in high grass around pools.

Coatimundi Nasua nasua Coatimundis - common and friendly at Iguazú falls - can however bite severely.





Patagonian lancehead Bothrops ammodytoides
The only venomous snake in the area is the pit viper Bothrops ammodytoides.
This specimen is going to shed its old skin soon - notice the clouded bluish eye.





Montevideo tree frog Hypsiboas pulchellus
A juvenile and unlucky Hypsiboas pulchellus is being preyed upon by a large fishing spider at a small pond's edge.

Notes about photography

119

In the past I used Sony Alpha 200, 350 and 550, each with several lenses. I was carrying a heavy backpack up to 12 kg at least for many years. In two occasions my equipment was stolen, once in Venezuela, another in Costa Rica, losing more than 10.000 US \$ in gear. I decided then to buy a simple compact camera. My choice was the super zoom Sony HX100 and I never missed any of heavy stuff. First, I could travel light! And this is an important plus when you have a lumbar hernia. Further, I need no more to change lenses - the Carl Zeiss 24-800 mm (x30 optical) was enough to take 95% of the photographs I needed.

Travelling around Argentina

Route Argentina is one of the safest countries in South America. Of course some extra caution is needed to travel with an expensive photographic equipment. The buses are comfortable if you chose bus cama, which is the equivalent of a plane First class. You can also take domestic planes from Buenos Aires to the main cities and areas of the country.

Weather Argentina lies in a temperate zone, with the four season we know in the northern hemisphere (but inverse: when is summer in the North, is winter in the South!!). (all the northernmost part of Argentina, from Salta in the West to Misiones on the East, is tropical, and then, it is never cold, but can be extremely hot and dry in summer. In the South, it is cold always, even in summer.

Accomodation The Iguazú area is well covered by hotels of all kinds, from backpacker to the highest level. There are a few paths where you can really explore the forest and see wild creatures, including (aside coatimundis) monkeys, tapirs, snakes, deers, or even jaguars! Also I did not expect to find the largest ant in the world, Dinoponera gigantea. Most of the trails are cemented or are hanging bridges over the falls. Bring comfortable shoes (not necessary heavy boots), and a raincoat or something to protect the camera from the water! Peninsula Valdés is prepared for tourism, and also offers a great variety of hotels. There many tour operators will offer you the typical safaris in a van, which is the most comfortable and quick option to have an overlook of the area. I personally recommend Ricardo and Leticia at Forastero Tours (www.forasterotour.com.ar).

Currency Currency is the Argentinean Peso, which is quite devaluated, and compared with the US dollar, comes cheaper and cheaper.

Food One of the most renowned items related to Argentina is the food, especially related to meat. Beef and sheep are prepared everywhere in the country in different manners, but all tasteful, and comparatively cheap. Pastas and Pizza are also great, due to the deep Italian inheritance.

Language Argentinean Spanish is so different from all other Spanish dialects that could be taken for a language for its own. Unfortunately, out of the touristic areas, not much English is spoken. Health. No much worries. In the tropical area in wet season can be some tropical deseases like dengue fever. Tap water is good in general to drink.

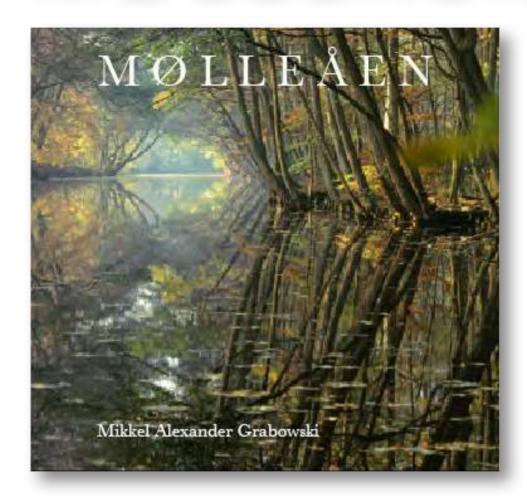


Iguazú falls, some of the largest of the world. Several miradores are strategically located to offer the best views, but it is, however, difficult to enjoy the spectacle in solitude.

A magical journey through Denmarks Mill Brook Dale...

MØLLEÅEN

- a protected wetland habitat of river, big lakes, deep forests and extensive swamps supporting an amazing variety of flora and fauna - just 10 km from the country's capital Copenhagen!





Fine art photography Coffee table book!!

ALL IMAGES SHOT ON FILM!

- Hard back 180 pages
- 170g silk coated paper
- Detailed maps with old local names
- Text in both Danish and English
- Flora and fauna in Latin names
- High quality offset printing
- Signed by the artist









Photographed by

Mikkel Alexander Grabowski







Wild Poland.com

Wildlife watching and photography in unscathed Eastern Europe



Huge resources on where to watch wildlife in Eastern Poland







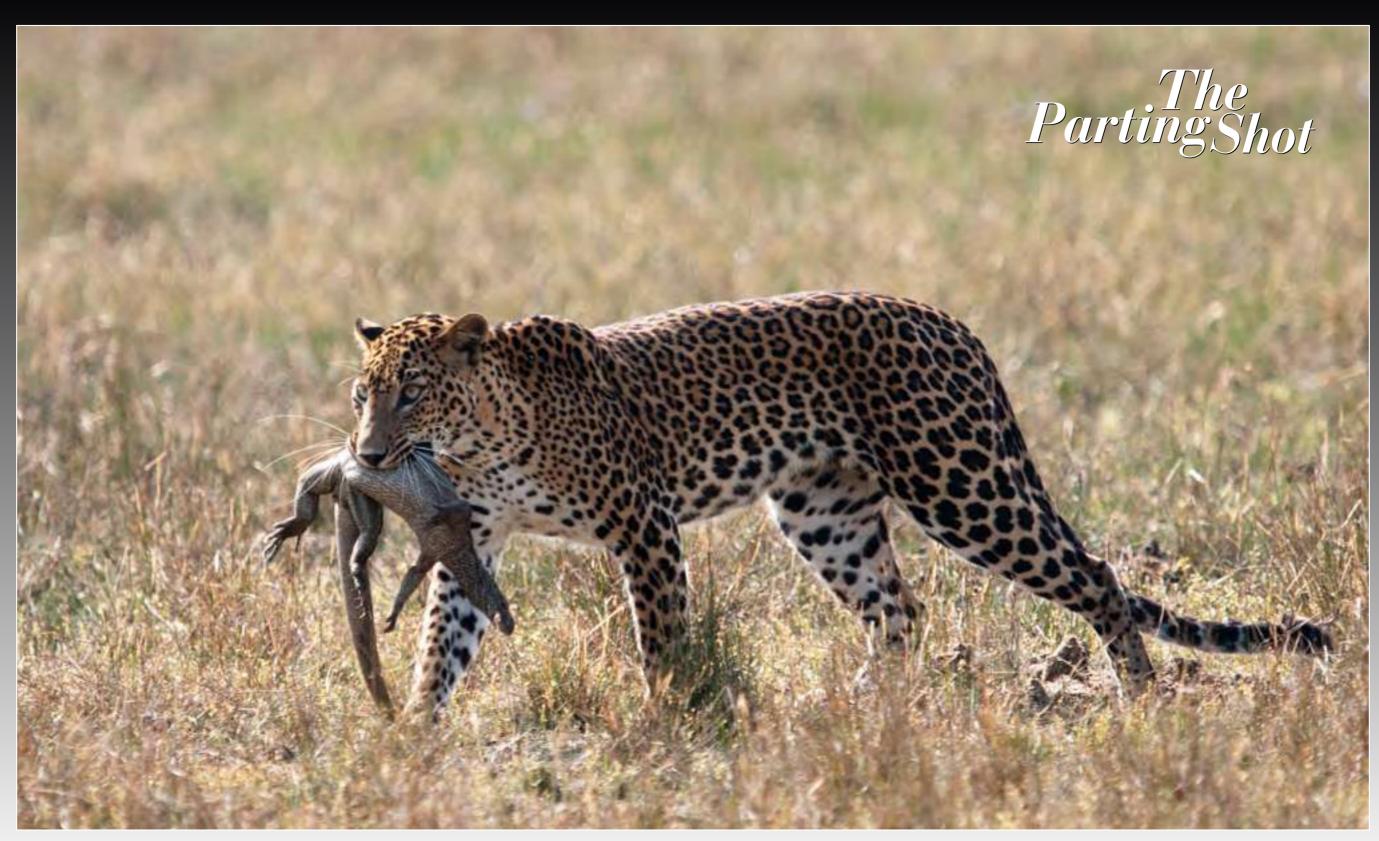






IF YOU ONLY SAW WHAT YOU WANTED, YOU PROBABLY MISSED A LOT - www.wildpoland.com





We have a deep passion for the island of Sri Lanka - its Buddhist culture, its peaceful folk, its beautiful archaeological sites, its mouth-watering food...and of course its amazing and plentiful wildlife, which includes the most easily observed and photographed wild populations of the Asian leopard *Panthera pardus* (here represented by the endemic subspecies *kotiya*) in the whole world. Two locations to photograph this sublimely elegant predator immediately come to mind - Yala National Park (about

which we reported on issue 1 of Anima Mundi here, and which we are going to visit again in a few weeks) and the equally legendary Wilpattu National Park further up north (about which we'll report soon in a future issue). We had a most amazing observation there during our latest visit on a few instances we were lucky enough to witness an adult male - which was bearing the fresh wounds from an unlucky fight at the raw tip of its tail - stalk and catch several adult Savannah monitors Varanus bengalensis, which

are plentiful along the shores of the many lakes (villus) which give Wilpattu its name. We still speculate about this peculiarly opportunistic behavior - had the recent encounter which had left such wounds on the cat also left it insecure in its capability to take down its usually larger prey? Or was it just a matter of laziness and opportunism - even if monitors musn't make a particularly tasty meal? Whatever the reason, the first of these encounters presented us with a unique photographic opportunity!

IN ONIMA MUNDI'S NEXT ISSUE No.19, May 2015

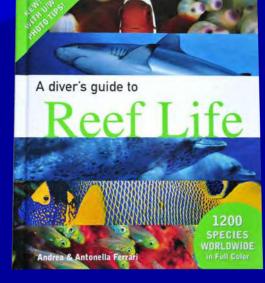


A Diver's Guide to Reef Life

1200 TROPICAL MARINE SPECIES WORLDWIDE in Full Color featuring 1300 spectacular color photos with full details on distribution, habitat, size, life habits and underwater photography tips

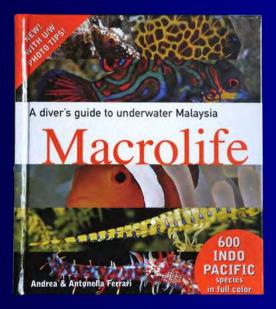
THIS IS WHAT THE DIVING COMMUNITY SAYS

JANE MORGAN, DIVE MAGAZINE: A stunning tropical marine life reference guide which is bursting at the seams with outstanding photographs. • WILLY VOLK, WETPIXEL.COM: No marine guide in the world will excite you with this much color, thrill you with this much variety, and fascinate you with this much information. This is an absolute must-have for any diver who has eyes and plans on using them while diving. • TIM ECOTT, author of Neutral Buoyancy: With 1200 tropical species, ranging from coral polyps, gorgonians, sea squirts, sponges, nudibranchs and all of the main fish groups, this is a truly comprehensive work, and probably the only reef guide most divers will need to take with them on a trip. The Ferraris also produced A Diver's Guide to Underwater Malaysia Macrolife, in my opinion the best of its kind. Now they have created an indispensable companion volume



that will serve every diver well. • BOB GOEMANS, SALTCORNER.COM: This work is truly a must for all that are interested in the underwater creatures that inhabit ourtropical waters. • CLAUDIA PELLARINI, SUBMERGE MAGAZINE: As essential as your passport on every dive trip from the Red Sea to the Caribbean and Indo Pacific.

DIVE INTO DISCOVERY WITH NAUTILUS PUBLISHING



A Diver's Guide to Underwater Malaysia Macrolife

600 INDO-PACIFIC MACRO marine species featuring 800 SPECTACULAR COLOR PHOTOS with full details on distribution, habitat, size, life habits and underwater photography tips

THIS IS WHAT THE DIVING COMMUNITY SAYS

DIVERNET: Not only does it help identify the critters, but it also gives useful tips on how to photograph them. • BACKSCATTER: Best work I've yet seen. For Mabul or Kunkungan, this book should be as necessary as a passport. • FAMA MAGAZINE: Well written, quite informative, beautifully illustrated... a priced right, quality publication. Get a copy, you'll be happy you did! • TAUCHEN MAGAZINE: 600 marine species illustrated with spectacular photos and a compact text for a very useful and much needed underwater guide. • ASIAN DIVER: Illustrated with more than 800

extraordinary colour photos, this is the field guide of choice for all serious macro divers. • NORTHERN CALIFORNIA UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY: The photography is impressive - if you need to identify any species from this area, this guide is a gem. • UNDERCURRENT: We just discovered the ultimate guide to Indo-Pacific macro life - this book is a must for traveling divers. BBC WILDLIFE MAGAZINE: Identifies and describes 600 small marine species from the Indo-Pacific. Clear, concise, informative... packed with more than 800 colour photos. • FOUR LAKES SCUBA CLUB: Both a macro and a fish field guide for all serious divers from the Maldives to Australia. A must! • DIVER MAGAZINE: Colour photographs of the highest quality make it easy to identify what you have seen...An essential tool for anyone.

A Diver's Guide to the Art of Underwater Photography

Creative Techniques and Camera Systems for Digital and Film

A highly-readable, technically-accessible, step-by-step guide in eight chapters to the secrets and wonders of underwater photography - featuring dozens of stunning, inspiring images by several of the world's most brilliant authors

THIS IS WHAT THE DIVING COMMUNITY SAYS

ALEX MUSTARD, WETPIXEL.COM: This book gives us a rare insight into the mindset, dedication and imagination involved in creating magnificent underwater images. I sat down and read this enjoyable book from cover to cover. The lack of techno-talk makes it a very accessible method to improve your photography. The images are some of the finest you will see in a guide to underwater photography. All the images are very well reproduced, which will not come as a surprise to anyone who owns any of the other books by the authors. A large format 360 page feast of fabulous images and thought provoking and enjoyable writing on taking pictures in the ocean. • UNDERCURRENT: This book is filled with spectacular images, designed not only to offer great technical guidance, but also help the underwater photographer discover and develop the artist within. Clearly the best and most beautiful "how-to" book ever produced. • JOHN BANTIN, DIVER MAGAZINE: With an enviable reputation for authoring fine books on underwater photography, the Ferraris have laced the pages of their new book with juicy pictures.

There is none of the pseudo-art talk that often ruins otherwise beautiful books of photographs. I read it from cover to cover, and it's a great read. The pictures do the talking, and need no talking-up. This 360page volume doesn't have a weak page in it. • MIKE SEVERNS DIVING: This book is less about the technical aspects of the craft and more about the art and the "eye." This is a big, fat, beautiful, coffee-table-type book that includes 400 photographs illustrating techniques to achieve such effects as artistic lighting and framing. Inspirational as well as educational.

