

The Parting Shot



Mexican herpetologist and photographer **Juan Manuel Gonzalez Villa** tells us the story behind this spectacular image: "This is a beautiful *Agkistrodon bilineatus*, which is encountered in the tropical areas of Michoacán, in México. This snake belongs to the family Viperidae, meaning it has a solenoglyph dentition and a potent venom it uses to hunt, being of extreme medical relevance as it can put to high risk a person if bitten. It shows a wonderful

camouflage which allows it to blend with dead leaves and the surrounding forest substrate - these are terrestrial snakes with mainly nocturnal life habits which mostly feed on small mammals, birds and even other reptiles such as iguanas. The photo was taken on a cloudy day and in the shadows of the forest's thick vegetation, using a Laowa 15mm f/4 and a separate flash positioned vertically; a long exposure was obtained with settings of 5secs, ISO

100 and f/32, using a Nikon D5600. The flicking of the tongue was frozen by the strobe at the beginning of the exposure, all in a single click. It is very important mentioning that handling of such specimens must be left to experienced persons, as an accident can be extremely dangerous. At the same time, the appreciation of such beautiful and imposing creatures can lead to sensibilizing people towards the environment and the species living in it". ●