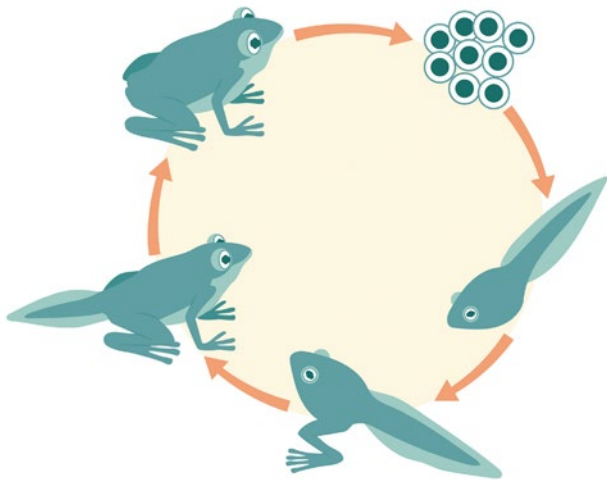


LEONORA CAMUSSO

illustration portfolio

WILDLIFE AND SCIENCE

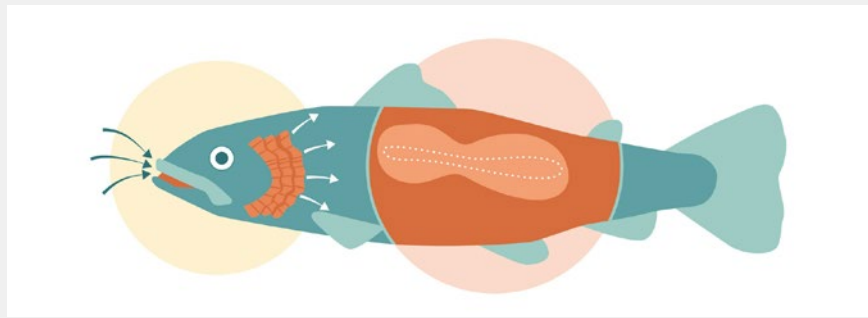
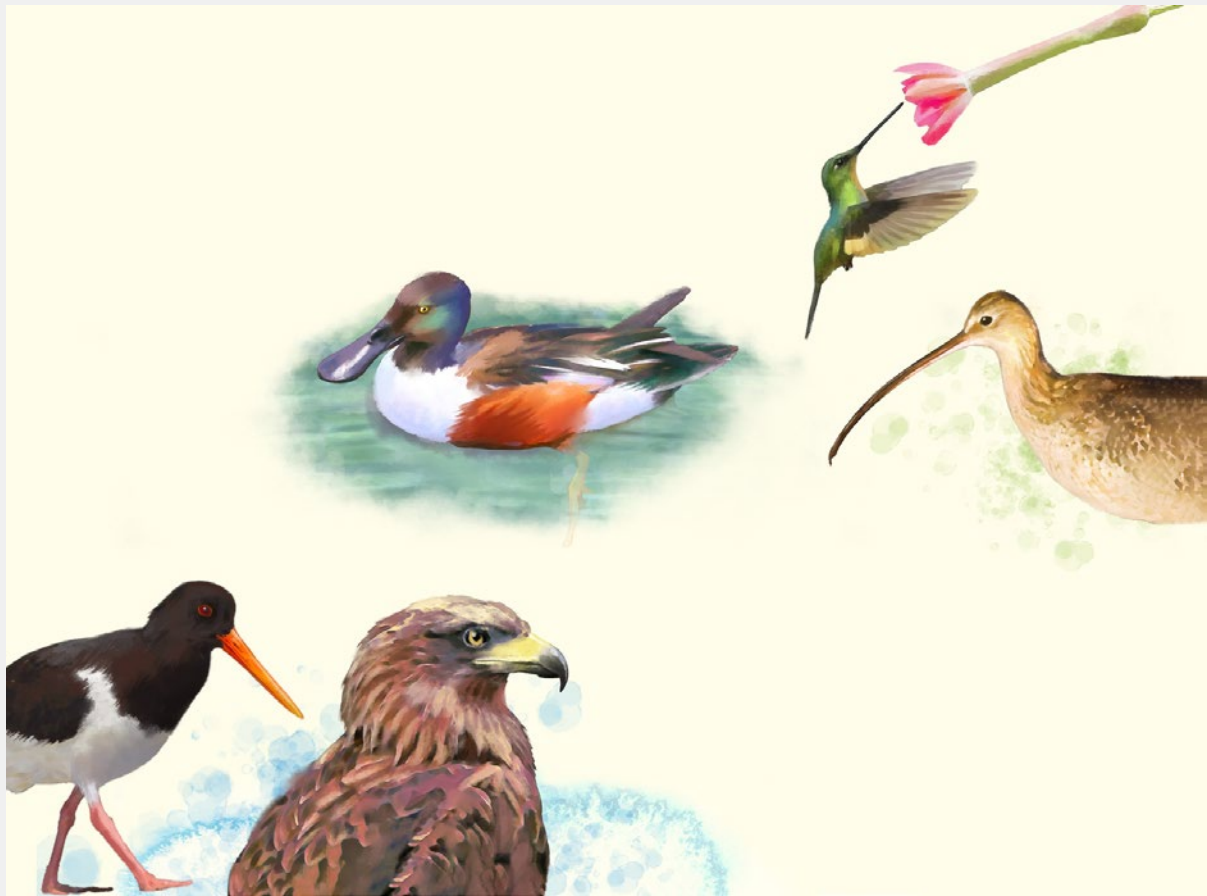


100 PAGINE - Animali

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OCEANIA

SHORT-BEAKED ECHIDNA

Tachyglus aculeatus

I am a myth!
In the legends of Ancient Greece there was a mysterious figure whose body was half-woman and half-snake, called Echidna. Someone thought well to give that name to me, even though I am not really a monster. I am not even Greek, since I live in Australia and New Guinea.
Let's just say however that I am definitely a bit of a mythical creature, since I have **nearly unique characteristics** in all the animal world.

A thorny matter
At first glance, what immediately catches the eye are the **long quills** that cover my body, much longer than the hairs mixed in with them. I do not use them to do harm, but I need them to **protect my body** from predators, above all, my most vulnerable parts.
If the predator does not give up, then I hide in holes in the ground and it is practically impossible to rout me out.

I have five long claws.

Cold, I am not afraid of you!
When the weather turns colder I still manage to survive. I slow my pace and do not waste energy warming up but decrease my internal thermostat, which can go from a normal 33° C (your human temperature usually hovers around 36.5) to only 4° C!
At that temperature, I enter into a state of torpor that is not true hibernation, but, rather, a sort of energy conservation.

Toothless
As I get older I lose my teeth, but this does not stop me from eating. In fact, I have a sort of **very hard beak** that allows me to easily feed myself. I also have long claws, five on each leg, which I use for hunting my favourite foods: ants, termites, caterpillars and earthworms.
My **elongated nose** finds them thanks to my excellent sense of smell, while with my long, sticky tongue, I can capture them easily.

I live here!

My hind paws
Fair but sharp.

This allows me to dig holes
straight down in order
to hide.

a beak
and a long
tongue.

A brooding pouch
We are somewhat special mammals, because we **produce eggs!** These are secured inside a pouch where they hatch after about ten days.
The new-borns remain in this **protected place** until their quills harden. In this pouch, I do not have breasts but small holes which provide a nourishing milk to my young.



CURIOUS AND UNUSUAL ANIMALS

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ASIA

SUNDA SLOW LORIS

Nycticebus coucang

Primitive to whom?

Some call us **prosimians**, or 'before the monkeys', as if to say that we were a first attempt to arrive at the monkey.

In trying to classify everything, there is often discrimination, setting skills or intelligence in a certain order.

All living beings present on our planet today, however, **have evolved** and adapted to current conditions in the **same way**, so let's all put ourselves on the same level!

Sweet deceiving look

I have big, **sweet eyes and a deep gaze**. It is not that I want to charm anyone, I just need to see at my very best for **my night raids!**

At night, in fact, I go alone in **search of food**, moving among the trees. If I sense danger, I **stay very still**, crossing my fingers hoping that it will soon pass, but if this does not work, I forget my reputation as a sweet creature and draw **my secret weapon: poison**.

Mothers cover their babies with poison to protect them from predators



Desperate times call for desperate measures

In the joint of my **front legs** I have **glands** that produce **poison**.

I can choose to **accumulate it in my mouth** and then bite or I can also **sprinkle** this all over my body. In my defence, I can say that I use this substance **only for defence** and never to attack or catch prey.

A long tongue

I can claim the record for the **longest primate tongue**. I do not reveal secrets with this long tongue but **use it to gather food**: insects, nectar, **eggs** and small **vertebrates**.

Furthermore, nature has endowed me with **opposable thumbs**, just like you, and therefore I am **able to grab objects** and travel from branch to branch.

I can twist my torso completely thanks to my numerous vertebrae



I live here!



An only child

After six months in the mother's belly, a **single loris** is born to a couple, creating a special bond of close dependence.

In the first **two weeks** we **cling to the belly**, then begin to move a little, but without ever letting go of our guide.

However, **we grow very quickly** and within a year or so we have become adults, ready to face life in the forest.



CURIOUS AND UNUSUAL ANIMALS

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HONOURABLE MENTION IN
"UN LIBRO PER L'AMBIENTE" AWARD



Il rumore dell'onda
Alcune volte all'anno, quando la luna è nuova e piena, accade che, a causa di una **marea oceanica**, il fiume venga solcato da **un'onda alta parecchi metri**. Questa provoca un **rumore gurgogliante** e, spesso, distrugge che spaventa gli abitanti delle zone limitate e pochi sembran soffrire che tentano di cavalcarla! Quest'onda viene chiamata dai locali **Porooca** che tradotto significa "grande rumore distruttivo".

Grande e grossa
Nelle acque del Rio ruota sinuosa la **lontra gigante**. Una **la sua lunga coda**, che può raggiungere quasi 170 cm, anche come **arma da difesa** contro i malintenzionati. Evidentemente però non l'ha potuta usare abbastanza contro gli uomini, che per lungo tempo l'hanno **cacciata** per poter sfruttare la sua pelliccia scura e impermeabile, fino a **ridurre drasticamente il numero di esemplari**. Ora è una **specie protetta** e non è difficile osservarla nuotare con altri suoi simili.

Una creatura ad alta tensione
Nelle acque del fiume vive un **pece molto particolare** che è meglio non fare arrabbiare. L'**elettrifora**, infatti, possiede un'arma molto potente per difendersi e attaccare: **le scariche elettriche** in grado di stupire e uccidere prede molto più grandi di lui. Vive nelle **acque ricche di vegetazione**, dove si può nascondere e dove prepara dei veri e propri agguati alle sue prede.

Niente veleno
A cosa potrebbe mai servire il veleno al serpente più grande del mondo? A nulla! L'**anaconda verde**, infatti, non lo possiede, ma utilizza i suoi **potentissimi muscoli** per **stritolare prede anche più grandi di lei**. Non ci sono prove, ma alcune leggende dicono che abbia divorato anche alcune persone!

L'anaconda è il serpente più grande del mondo

Lontra gigante

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Albero goloso
A chi di voi non piace il cioccolato? Buono, eh? Ebbene, in queste zone l'**albero del cacao cresce spontaneamente** e i suoi frutti, gialli e grandi come un pallone da rugby, hanno la particolarità di svilupparsi direttamente attaccati ai rami e ai tronchi. Prima di trasformarsi in una gustosa tavoletta, però, i suoi semi dovranno subire diverse lavorazioni.

Le saponi che il cacao ti riceve da un frutto?

Victoria amazica

Come una regina
Nelle aree più calme del fiume vive una pianta regale: la **minifera più grande al mondo**. Scommetto che le sue foglie galleggianti potrebbero sostenere il vostro peso! Il suo **fiume frangia** (che poi diventa nebbia, invece, è grande come un pallone da calcio). Uno splendore per la vista di chi la osserva... da lontano! Per difendersi dai morsi degli abitanti delle acque, infatti, questa pianta possiede delle specie di spine.

Come foglie
Devo riconoscerlo: in natura ci sono animali molto abili nei travestimenti e la **tartaruga mola mola** è uno di questi. I suoi colori, il guscio scaglioso e la colorazione fanno sì che riesca a **confondersi perfettamente con l'ambiente nel quale vive**: le creazioni addirittura delle alghe sul dorso, che la rendono capace di mimetizzarsi con l'ambiente acquatico. Questa sua capacità di mascherarsi le permette di essere un'**abile cacciatrice**.

Da paradiso a purgatorio
La fauna e la flora che vivono in quest'angolo di mondo sono **rare ed esclusive**, ma spesso la loro unicità viene ignorata. Troppi di frequente questi tesori vengono **minacciati dal taglio indiscriminato delle foreste e dall'inquinamento delle acque** da parte dei moderni cacciatori d'oro, che riversano nel fiume tonnellate di mercurio, un metallo liquido che ha effetti devastanti sugli esseri viventi. Se vogliamo che questi luoghi tornino a riflettere dobbiamo fare di più e non lasciarci diventare terre sterili e prive di vita.

Tartaruga mola mola

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OCEANIA

Viaggiando nel tempo
Ci troviamo in **Nuova Zelanda**, uno stato formato da due isole principali. La natura crea spesso paesaggi incredibili che lasciano senza fiato. Qui possiamo ammirarci nelle pronuncia della terra in un complesso di circa **400 grotte** scavate quasi **30 milioni di anni fa** dalla forza dell'erosione dell'Oceano Pacifico. La mia specie all'epoca era quasi sicuramente già presente sul Pianeta, mentre l'uomo è arrivato più tardi. Vi porterò a conoscere una di queste grotte, la **grotta di Waitomo**, affascinante sotto diversi punti di vista.

È ora di andare nella Terra Ma tranquilli non c'è tempo al buio!

Acqua che trasforma
Questa grotta deve il suo nome a due termini della lingua locale, "wai" che significa "acqua" e "tomo" ossia "caverna". Questo luogo, scavato dalle acque oceaniche, è strettamente legato all'acqua anche perché al suo interno scorre un **torrente di acqua dolce** che percorre buona parte delle sue stanze. Questo scorrere lento nel corso del tempo continua a **trasformare la grotta** giorno dopo giorno. Nell'incredibile storia del nostro Pianeta non c'è niente di **distruttivo!**

Temperature dell'aria: 12-15 °C
Temperatura dell'acqua: 10-14 °C

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WAITOMO

Strane figure di roccia
Il lento e continuo gocciolio dell'acqua all'interno delle grotte forma delle **strutture davvero speciali**. L'acqua porta con sé anche dei **minerali** che si depositano nel corso del tempo e creano **sculture** che possono **scendere dall'alto**, rivestendo la volta delle caverna, oppure **salire dal basso**. Può anche succedere che si uniscano a formare delle vere e proprie **colonne di roccia**. È molto importante **non toccare mai** le pareti delle grotte o queste sculture, perché trasferisce alla roccia una sostanza oleosa presente sulle mani, impermeabile, che non farebbe più depositare il materiale da costruzione, **impedendo alla scultura di continuare a prendere forma** sotto l'azione dei minerali e del tempo.

Le sculture con le formazioni rocciose che pendono dall'alto, mentre le stalattiti si formano dal basso

Mondi sconosciuti
Queste grotte sono rimaste **sconosciute fino alla fine dell'Ottocento**, quando per la prima volta un capo Maori e un inglese decisero di andare alla scoperta degli intricati labirinti sotterranei. Intrapresero il viaggio a bordo di una **zattera**, per poi proseguire a **pedi** nei livelli più bassi. Rimasero affascinati da quanto videro, e ancora oggi **numerosi turisti** vengono appositamente a visitare questo **mondo sotterraneo** anche da molto lontano.

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ECOSYSTEMS TO PROTECT

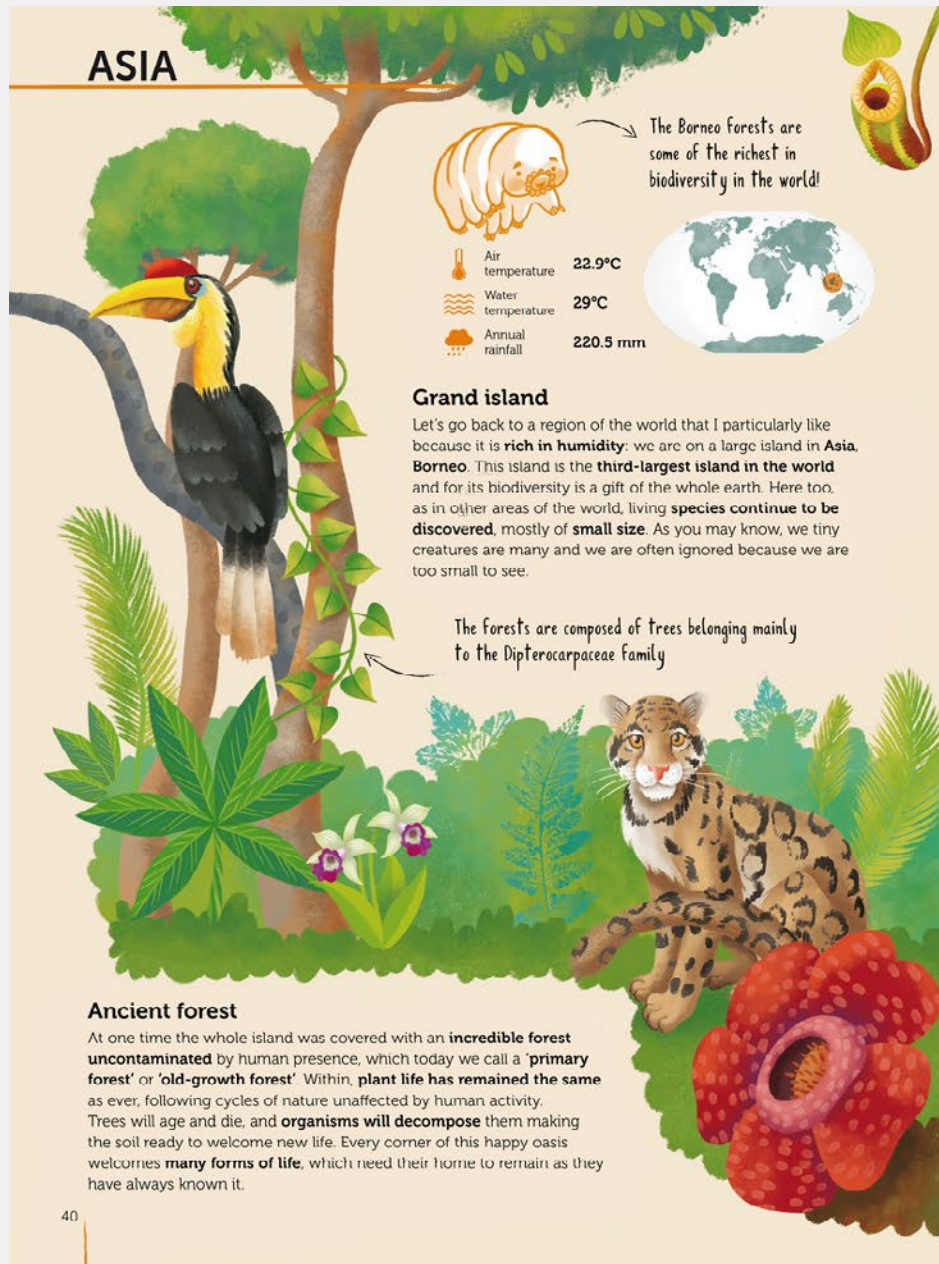
Illustrations for the book "Atlas of biodiversity, ecosystems to protect" - published by Sassi Junior 2021

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ASIA



The Borneo forests are some of the richest in biodiversity in the world!

Air temperature	22.9°C
Water temperature	29°C
Annual rainfall	220.5 mm

Grand island

Let's go back to a region of the world that I particularly like because it is **rich in humidity**: we are on a large island in **Asia**, **Borneo**. This island is the **third-largest island in the world** and for its biodiversity is a gift of the whole earth. Here too, as in other areas of the world, living **species continue to be discovered**, mostly of **small size**. As you may know, we tiny creatures are many and we are often ignored because we are too small to see.

The forests are composed of trees belonging mainly to the Dipterocarpaceae Family

Ancient forest

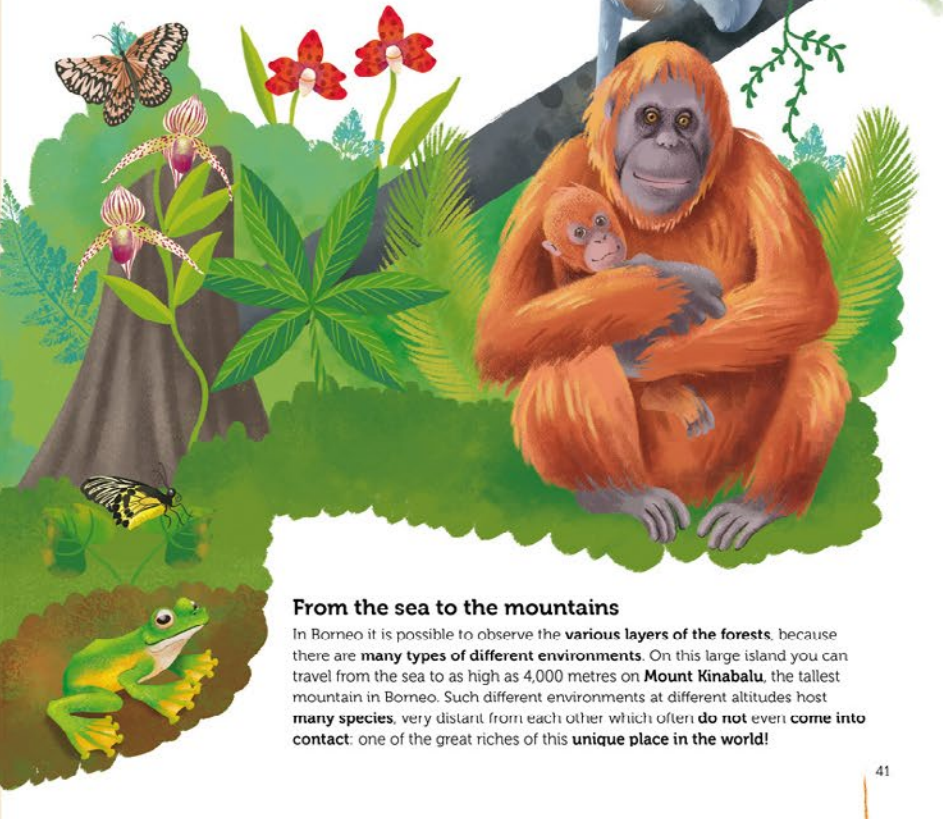
At one time the whole island was covered with an **incredible forest uncontaminated** by human presence, which today we call a '**primary forest**' or '**old-growth forest**'. Within, **plant life has remained the same** as ever, following cycles of nature unaffected by human activity. Trees will age and die, and **organisms will decompose** them making the soil ready to welcome new life. Every corner of this happy oasis welcomes **many forms of life**, which need their home to remain as they have always known it.

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FOREST OF BORNEO

Human greed

Humans have destroyed the balance of this idyllic and perfectly functional place. The discovery of **precious resources in the subsoil**, such as coal, oil, gold and diamonds, have attracted many people. **The island has never been the same since**. The forest has changed drastically. Many old-growth trees have been cut down to make way for large areas to be exploited. The **favourable climate** has attracted the interest of large industrial groups that have removed trees to make space for other **species to be cultivated**, especially for **palm oil**, used all over the world. Within a few years, this island has suffered **serious losses** that can never be recovered. Just think, one-half of the old-growth forest has already been **lost forever!**



From the sea to the mountains

In Borneo it is possible to observe the **various layers of the forests**, because there are **many types of different environments**. On this large island you can travel from the sea to as high as 4,000 metres on **Mount Kinabalu**, the tallest mountain in Borneo. Such different environments at different altitudes host **many species**, very distant from each other which often **do not even come into contact**: one of the great riches of this **unique place in the world!**

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BORNEO FOREST

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Inhabitant in peril
The "foliage" of the algae spread over the surface forming an intricate network that acts as a **mat** for a species permanently located here: the **sea otter**. Although the sea otter has become **rare**, it remains critical to the **good health** of the forest. The otter feeds mainly on **sea urchins**, one of the main culprits in the disappearance of the kelp expanses. A **docile** creature, it loves to bask **tummy up** on the surface of the water, turning over several times to collect air in its fur to float even better.

Sea wolf
Another species that counteracts the proliferation of sea urchins is the **wolfish**. The name suggests its importance at the **top of the food chain**, in fact, the wolfish is essential for regulating the equilibrium of the forest. It moves stealthily on the seabed and, thanks to the structure of its mouth, is able to feed on sea urchins **without suffering the stings** of their spines. Its numerous **sharp teeth**, which would scare anyone, allow it to successfully consume its meal.

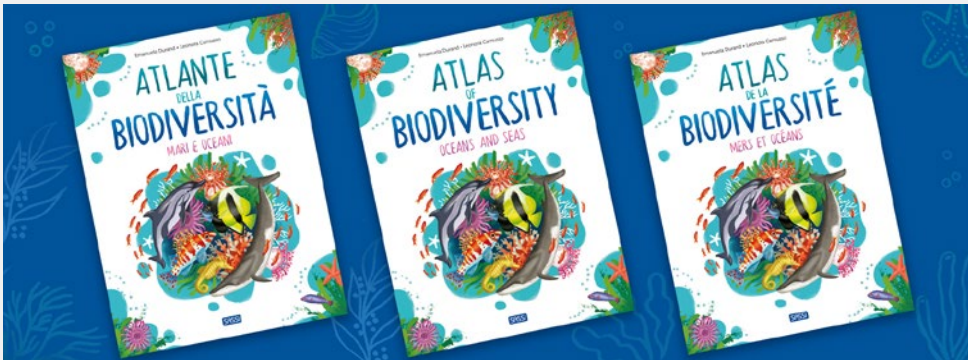
A good father
The most colorful fish found in the fucus is the **Gambelli fish**, so called because its **orange colour**, which makes it very easy to spot, reveals the strands of the sorders and by Giuseppe Garibaldi. During the reproductive phase, the male turns into a **good gardener**, preparing a **red algae** refuge for spawning. If the female judges him good enough, she will **choose the nest** he built to lay the future offspring. Once the eggs have been set, the **male will take care of them**, keeping predators away and constantly regenerating them.

The Gambelli fish guards the eggs in the nest for 20 days, until they hatch

Raids from the open sea
It is not uncommon to encounter **unusual animals** in the forest, which arrive here driven by hunger or pass through during their migration. It is possible that, attracted by the **krill**, numerous **anchovies** approach in hopes of catching some. In turn these creatures attract larger animals, such as **sharks**, creating a recurring cycle of three in the food chain. In these zones in winter, you can spot the **grey whales** as they migrate a little farther south.

Effects of the moon
At certain times of the year, the **moon** plays an important role in the dynamics of the sea. By the full moon, the high tide brings from the ocean depths many **squid**, which usually show up at night to feed, and also in this specific case to **reproduce**. Such an influx of prey on the surface attracts several **other fish**, including **sele**, squid, intoxicated by love, are unable to defend themselves and fall victim to the predators.

Hold on to your seaweed!
Near the surface lives the **mudbranch**, small and transparent like a ghost, a shell-less mollusc, also known as a **lion mudbranch**. During the day it lives **anchored to kelp fronds**, allowing itself to be carried by the waves together with the algae. It travels only by **night**, from one branch to another. To keep predators away, it produces a **smelly substance** that sends many fish on their way.



ATLAS OF BIODIVERSITY - Oceans and seas

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Sargassumfish

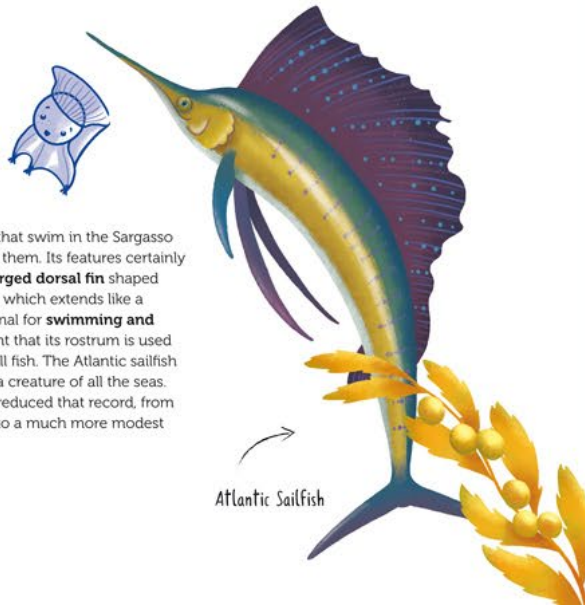
Harlequin of the Sargassum

The **Sargassumfish sneaks** around in the intricate intertwine of algae. It is a perfect actor and plays its part by **camouflaging** itself among the Sargassum seaweed. Its body is mottled or spotted and covered in weed-like **protrusions** that make it even more elusive. When hunting for food, it releases a type of **bait** that dangles from its upper lip to lure the unwary fish that fall into its ambush. Thanks to its **prehensile fins**, it can climb and even rise to the surface to find shelter on the 'mat' created by the algae, **avoiding ambushes** from the sea.

On the safe side

There is another creature that chooses the tangle of algae to live and hide in: a sargassum **swimming crab** whose fourth pair of legs are flattened, similar to **paddles**, which it uses to glide over the algal mat. It swims by moving **sideways** instead of forward, travelling at amazing speed. Through **chemical signals**, it can easily identify the sargassum, where it will then settle into shelter.

Sargassum swimming crab
Its hind legs are flat!



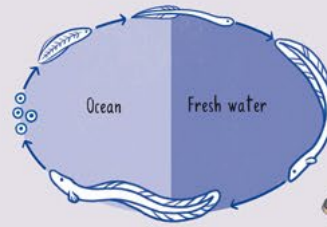
Atlantic Sailfish

Built for swimming

There are many fish, even large ones, that swim in the Sargasso Sea, and the **Atlantic sailfish** is one of them. Its features certainly do not go unnoticed: its crest, an **enlarged dorsal fin** shaped like a sail, and its elongated upper jaw, which extends like a **sword**. These distinct traits seem optimal for **swimming and slicing through the water**. It is thought that its rostrum is used for hunting to **confuse** schools of small fish. The Atlantic sailfish was once believed to be the fastest sea creature of all the seas. However, recent measurements have reduced that record, from an estimated 110 kilometres per hour to a much more modest **36 kilometres per hour!**

Incredible journeys

There are fish, such as salmon, that **breed in fresh water** and spend the rest of their lives in salt water. **Eels** do exactly the opposite: they reproduce in the sea and then return to the rivers. These strange creatures, which resemble **aquatic snakes**, meet **annually** in the Sargasso Sea to perform a great collective wedding, out of sight from any possible observation so that this intimate moment has never been documented. About **twenty million eggs** are laid which, when hatched, release creatures, similar to **small transparent leaves**, to be carried by the currents to North America or Europe, depending on the species. They arrive at fresh water, **transform in shape and colour**, and become adults. Once grown, they feel the **powerful call** to return to the Sargasso Sea, where they were born.



The migration of eels is one of the most important in the animal Kingdom: some travel up to 6,000 km to reach rivers and then return to the sea

Peril at sea

Another species that often passes through these waters is the **sea turtle**, which finds a good **hiding** place among the algae and with temperatures suitable to it. As a **reptile**, therefore a cold-blooded animal, it needs to live and move in temperate waters. It boasts excellent **lungs**, which allow it to hold its breath for a long time in the sea depths, returning only occasionally to the surface to breathe. It is an **omnivorous animal**, and this eating habit often leads it to feed, unfortunately, on **'unconventional' foods**, which should not be found in the sea: plastic bags, probably mistaken for jellyfish, caps and many, too many, other plastic objects.



MEDITERRANEAN SEA: SARGASSUM SEA

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10 IN SCIENZE

Illustrations for the book "10 in scienze, storia della vita sulla terra", published by Centro Studi Erickson 2020



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PETRICORE

odore della pioggia sulla terra asciutta



MICORRIZA

associazione simbiotica tra un fungo
e una pianta superiore



TERRARIUM SELVATICO

Series of illustrations inspired by Italian words related to nature



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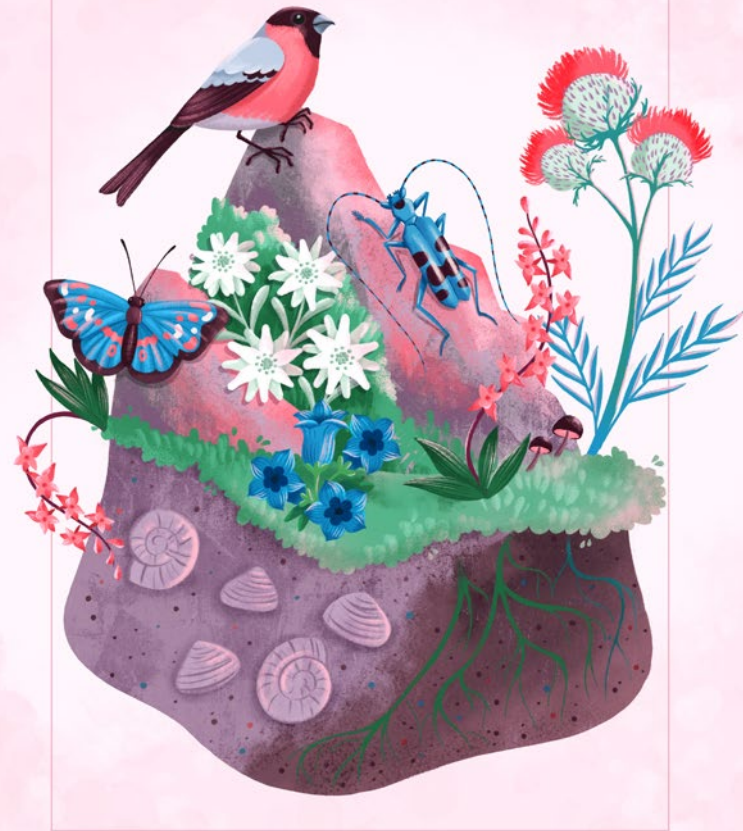
ESUVIA

struttura esterna di protezione che in alcuni animali viene eliminata con la muta



ENROSADIRA

fenomeno ottico per cui le cime delle Dolomiti assumono un colore rossastro all'alba e al tramonto



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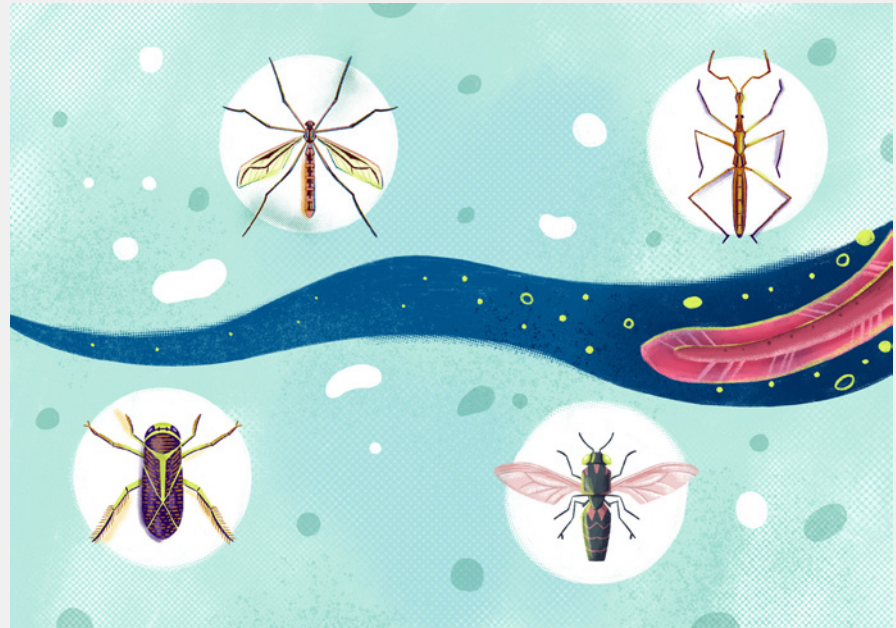


THE PERFECT POLLINATOR

Book project on pollinator animals



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A JOURNEY TO THE SEA: EEL MIGRATION

Illustrations inspired by 'Under the sea wind' by Rachel Carson



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LEONORA CAMUSSO



I'm Leonora Camusso, and I am an **illustrator** based in Italy.

I was born and raised in the mountains between Italy and France. When I was little, I spent my days wandering through meadows and woods with a few pencils and a sketchbook in my hand. It was then that I became deeply passionate about the natural world and drawing. Growing up, I studied illustration and animation at IED in Turin for four years. Later I explored other creative fields and worked in graphic design as well as illustration.

Now I live at the foot of the mountains, focusing on my career as an illustrator.

I work mainly for children's books, but I also create characters, infographics, and editorial illustrations for national and international clients.

I can't stop drawing and creating even for a minute. I'm always excited to work on new projects that allow her to use different skills, from my beloved watercolour to digital illustration and paper toys design.

My biggest passion is still animals and nature: that's why I try to learn every curiosity about it. I also love to discover and pass on folk tales and legends, so I founded a project to collect the stories of Alpine folklore.

If you can't find me in my studio, it's because I'm wandering through meadows and woods with my sketchbook in hand.

Essential things never change!

List of clients I enjoyed working with:

Milan Presse, Erickson, Mondadori, Giunti Scuola, Editrice La Scuola, Sassi Junior, SEI Editrice, Il Capitello, Fabbri Editori, Rusconi-Theoria, Circonflexe-Rue des enfants.

Awards

Honorable mention "Un libro per l'ambiente" Legambiente Award 2022
Shortlisted Green Book Award 2022

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