

A Treasure Trove Of New Species

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The Cocoa Frog

Mark areas of confusion and show evidence of a close reading.

Find the most important word or phrase (less than 5 words) and circle/highlight it. Explain why you believe it is important.

These days we seem to be hearing about animal species that is being lost to extinction. Then along comes news that scientists have discovered 60 new species of animals. This is indeed a fresh ray of hope for environmentalists and a celebration of the diversity of life on earth.

International scientists exploring the river rapids in Suriname's rainforest have stumbled on a treasure trove of new animals. In the Palumeu River watershed in the remote and unexplored areas of the rainforests of the Amazon, scientists have cataloged six frogs, eleven fish and several other new varieties of creature, during a three-week expedition.

An Exotic Animal Parade!



The Lilliputian beetle

The rate at which population of frogs are declining in the wild has been pretty high. It is heartening that six new varieties of these amphibians have been discovered in the Palumeu Rivershed. Scientists speculate that the chocolate colored frog, which they have named the 'cocoa frog', is totally new to science. A poison dart frog was another new find in the rainforests. They secrete powerful toxins that has been used by natives while hunting.

A new type of colorful tetra fish, an unusually pigmented catfish and nine other varieties of fishes have been cataloged by scientists which they discovered while dragging their nets through the river's waterways.

Several unknown varieties of insects have been discovered in these rainforests, including a dung beetle which is believed to be the second smallest in south America. Dung beetles play critical ecological roles that help support healthy ecosystems. A juvenile planthopper was a particularly interesting find.

Planthoppers, seen at right, exude waxy secretions from their abdomen to form long strands that can fool the predator into attacking the wrong part of the insect. In an attack, the wax breaks off while the insect jumps to safety.



Where is Suriname?



Suriname is a sparsely populated country of about 63,000 sq. miles on the north shoulder of South America. Slightly larger than the state of Georgia, the country shares its southeast border with Brazil, on its east lies French Guyana and Guyana is to its west. The capital of Suriname is Paramaribo.

Suriname was a Dutch colony from 1667, and became an independent nation in 1975. The country was originally inhabited by Native American Arawak and later by Caribbean tribes. Columbus was the first European to discover the coast land in 1498. And though Spain claimed the area in 1593, the Dutch were the first settlers in this country in 1616.

Suriname is a constitutional democracy. However, the country has experienced several military coups since its independence. Creditably for the country, since the 1970s, the country has made great efforts to protect its rainforests. In 1998, the government earmarked 4 million acres (10% of the country) as the Central Suriname Nature Reserve.

Circle or highlight the most important word or phrase in the text. Below, explain why you believe it is more important than anything else. Be specific and use text evidence.