Editorial

The Wallacea island group has always fascinated biologists, naturalists and travelers. Its complicate geological history and the immense variety of its landscapes make of it an incredibly rich area in terms of biodiversity, with an impressive proportion of endemics. However, it remains poorly studied to date, and it is still an El Dorado for biologists in search of new species discoveries, and a fantastic laboratory to study evolutionary processes and insularity.

Studying this amazing biodiversity and how it evolved and lives does not only serve intellectual curiosity and scientific purposes. Like most tropical forests, those of Wallacea are increasingly threatened by human developments, and, as natural habitats degradation progresses, conservation measures are becoming urgent in a number of places and for more and more species. Explaining why these tropical forests and other biotopes should be preserved requires to know in the first place what species depend on them for their survival.

Similarly to the first two volumes of the series "Biodiversity, Biogeography and Nature Conservation in Wallacea and New Guinea", the present one demonstrates how incredibly diverse and underestimated the biodiversity of this archipelago is. Thanks to the hard work of Dmitry Telnov who dedicates a large part of his time – and personal resources – to this series, this new, third volume sees the day. It is a compilation of the efforts of numerous biologists from a large variety of countries, each of them possessing unique scientific skills, but all sharing a deep passion and respect for the natural wonders of our Planet. Their work reveals here numerous new taxa, belonging to biological groups as varied as bryophytes, snails, damselflies, pygmy grasshoppers, net-winged beetles, skinks, etc.

Many of them are relatively small, and wouldn't be noticed in the field by non-experts, but, as Dmitry likes to say, "The most beautiful things on Earth are not things": they are live beings, large or small. And each of them, to the most apparently insignificant by its size, is an opportunity of wonder, of hope and of surprise, and a good reason to peacefully battle to preserve the environment in which they live in order to ensure their future and ours.

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Beetles collected in the Malay Archipelago by A.R. Wallace. This drawer is from his private insect collection, now in London's Natural History Museum (photo © Natural History Museum, London).