

The background is a textured blue. It is decorated with black silhouettes of various birds and foliage. At the top, there are leaves on the left and a butterfly on the right. In the center, a hummingbird is in flight. Below the title, there are several large bird silhouettes: a parrot on the left, a large bird (possibly a toucan or similar) in the center, and a duck or waterfowl on the right. A horizontal branch runs across the lower half of the page, with a small bird perched on it. At the bottom, there are more silhouettes of birds and foliage.

Guardianes de los Farallones de Cali

Capítulo 1

Introduction

Discover the Biodiversity of Farallones de Cali National Natural Park for 37 years, the Farallones Foundation has been restoring deforested areas within the upper basin of the Pance River in the Farallones de Cali National Natural Park. In collaboration with Javeriana University, the Rufford Foundation, and Colombian National Natural Parks, the foundation has led extensive research, uncovering an extraordinary diversity of plants and animals unique to this region.

This booklet introduces 24 remarkable creatures that inhabit the park, including orchids, aroids, butterflies, birds, reptiles, mammals, and amphibians. Some of them are flagship species celebrated for their beauty, while others are umbrella species, crucial for protecting broader ecosystems. Many of them are endemic to this region in Colombia, meaning they are found nowhere else on Earth! Several of these species are also threatened and at risk of disappearing if they are not properly protected.

Together, we can take steps to ensure that the incredible species in the park continue to thrive in their natural habitat. By learning about these unique plants and animals, you are contributing to their conservation and helping to safeguard the biodiversity of Farallones de Cali. Remember, a first step in caring for something starts with knowing it/Caring begins with understanding — let this booklet inspire you to further meet the wonderful beings that live and protect this region.

Plants



Palmate anthurium

Anthurium pedatum



At the edge of the trails, it will be waiting; from the branches of the tallest trees, it will be watching, and among the largest stones, it will be hiding. This curious plant, so different from all the others, will surprise you.

Everything starts with a small red seed that germinates into a delicate little plant. At first, it has only one or two leaves that are no bigger than a coin. As it grows, its leaves change shape. Initially, the leaves are simple and oval, but then they begin to take on a plump "T" shape. When the plant matures, its leaves divide many times and come to resemble our hands, especially since the central division is longer, like our middle finger. This is how a small red seed transforms into a large plant with big hand-shaped leaves that accompanies us in the forest.



Written by: Nicolas Vallejo-Patiño
Photographed by: Mauricio Ramírez

Broken leaf

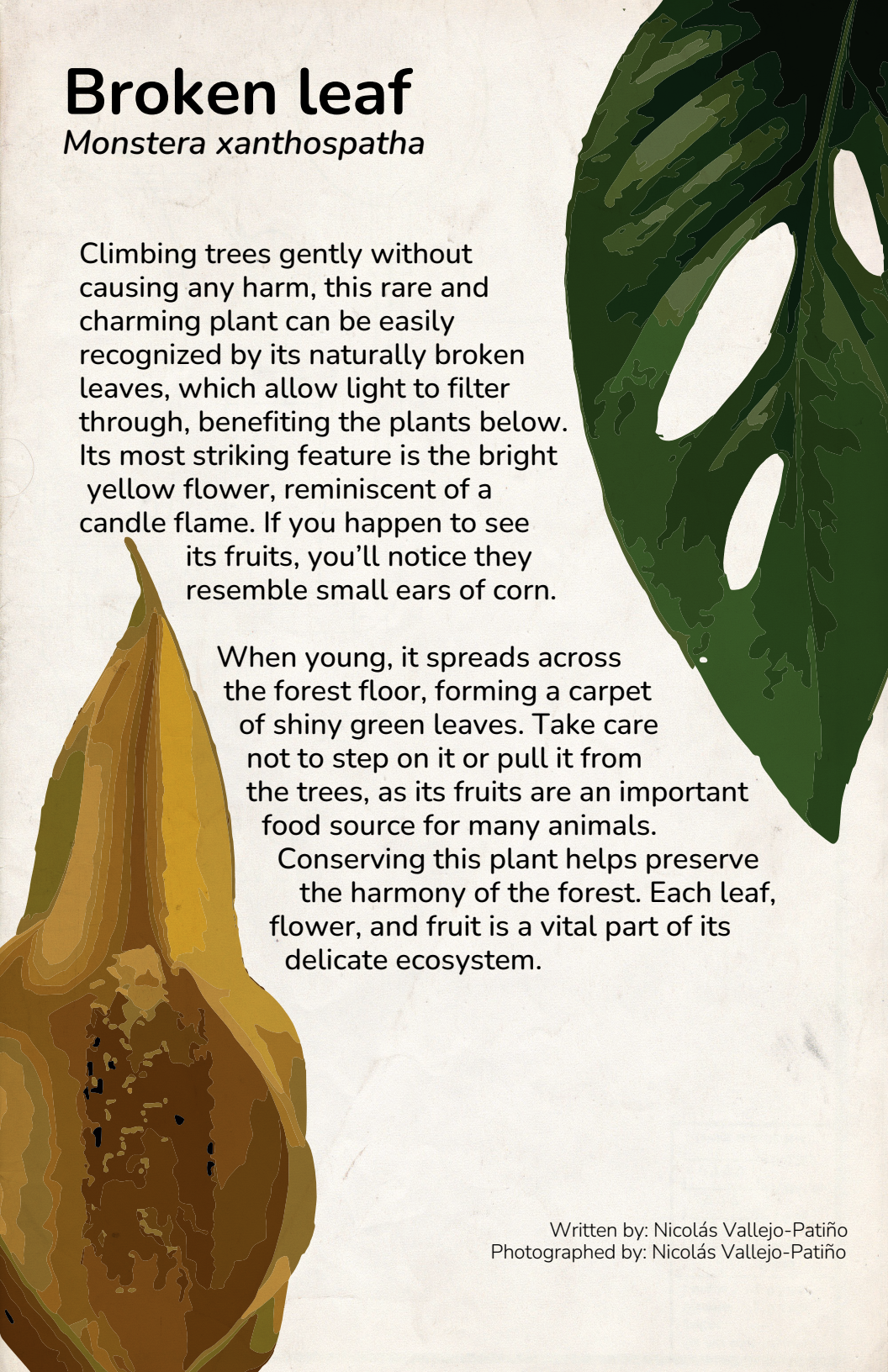
Monstera xanthospatha

Climbing trees gently without causing any harm, this rare and charming plant can be easily recognized by its naturally broken leaves, which allow light to filter through, benefiting the plants below. Its most striking feature is the bright yellow flower, reminiscent of a candle flame. If you happen to see its fruits, you'll notice they resemble small ears of corn.

When young, it spreads across the forest floor, forming a carpet of shiny green leaves. Take care not to step on it or pull it from the trees, as its fruits are an important food source for many animals.

Conserving this plant helps preserve the harmony of the forest. Each leaf, flower, and fruit is a vital part of its delicate ecosystem.

Written by: Nicolás Vallejo-Patiño
Photographed by: Nicolás Vallejo-Patiño



Miniature Orchid of the Andes

*Andinia
pseudocaulescens*

Often referred to as the “necklace of Mother Earth,” the Miniature Orchid of the Andes is a hidden gem of the forest. Though it may not stand out due to its size or color, its beauty lies in its intricate details. The orchid features small, round green and purple leaves arranged in a chain-like formation, resembling a delicate necklace of fine pearls.

Between each pearl-shaped leaf, you’ll discover small, pointed red flowers that gracefully adorn this necklace. If you are fortunate enough to encounter this natural jewel, it is essential to protect and care for its habitat, as it plays a vital role in maintaining the peace and harmony of the forest ecosystem. Interestingly, mosquitoes are particularly attracted to this orchid’s jewelry, often seeking it out.



Written by: Nicolás Vallejo-Patiño
Photographed by: Juan A. Medina-Gallo

Lluvia de oro

Oncidium obryzatum

Nestled among the lush foliage of the forest, we encounter one of nature's fairies—the Golden Rain orchid, affectionately known as the “dancing lady.” With its striking yellow petals swaying gracefully in the gentle breeze on sunny days, this orchid evokes the image of a delicate ballerina in motion. Its sweet fragrance, reminiscent of fresh honey, adds to its allure. When you ask locals about this orchid, they will likely tell you it is the plant from which it “rains gold,” owing to its abundance of vivid flowers that create dazzling displays.

Let us preserve the magic of the forest and its “dancing ladies” by

preventing the removal of these orchids from the trees where

they thrive, for without them, their greatest

admirers—the

bees—might abandon the forest as well.



Written by: Nicolas Vallejo-Patiño
Photographed by: Juan A. Medina-Gallo

Butterflies



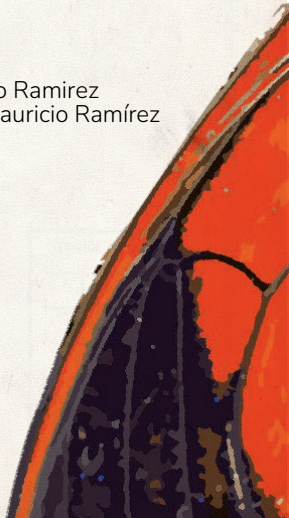
Red Mountain Prepona

Prepona praeneste

If you spot this stunning butterfly between February and April, or in August—when it is most likely to be seen—consider yourself fortunate! The inside of its wings features a striking border of orange spots surrounding a brilliant blue center, making it one of the most beautiful butterflies of the Andes. This butterfly is quite large, approximately the size of an adult hand, and it flies with remarkable skill and agility above the treetops. Occasionally, it descends to feed on the sap that seeps from certain tree barks or to indulge in fallen fruit.

Unfortunately, its existence is threatened. The caterpillar feeds exclusively on the Comino Crespo tree, which has been extensively cut down over the years and is now on the verge of extinction. As a result, encountering this butterfly is a true privilege. It is our responsibility to help protect its habitat and ensure that it does not disappear from our world.

Written by: Mauricio Ramirez
Photographed by: Mauricio Ramírez

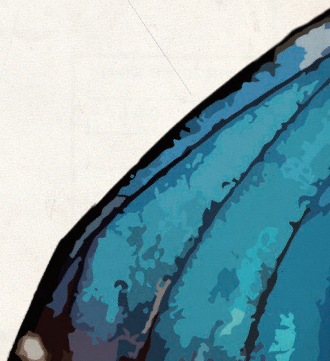


Blue morpho

Morpho helenor

Imagine a butterfly as large as your hand, with wings so intensely blue that they rival the sky. This is the Morpho, a breathtaking inhabitant of the tropical forests in Central and South America. Its wings are covered in tiny scales that reflect light, creating a mesmerizing shimmer of blue that shifts with your perspective. Beyond their stunning appearance, Morphos are exceptional flyers, gliding gracefully through their forest homes. These butterflies are hidden treasures of nature, serving as reminders of our planet's beauty and fragility. Inviting us to care for the environment, ensuring that these magnificent blue butterflies can continue to soar freely for generations to come.

Written by: Daniela Espinosa-Salazar
Photographed by: Mauricio Ramírez



Giant Swallowtail Butterfly

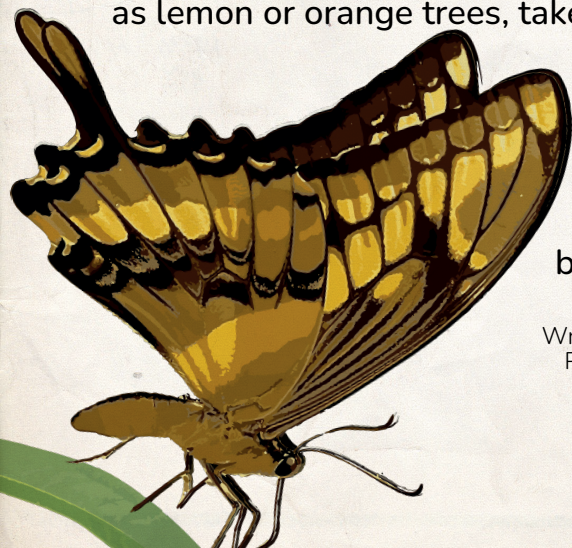
Heraclides thoas

High up in the forest, where sunlight kisses the flowers on the trees, a butterfly glides with remarkable elegance. As it spreads its large wings, which shine a brilliant yellow and are adorned with black spots that resemble hidden treasures, it seems as if the sun itself accompanies it in flight, illuminating everything around.

To catch a glimpse of this stunning creature, you must stay alert, for it flies at great speed, searching for the most captivating flowers. You might see it delicately sipping nectar with its long tongue, known as a proboscis, before it continues its journey through the sky. When you spot caterpillars on citrus trees, such as lemon or orange trees, take notice. After some

time, and once they've fed enough, these caterpillars will transform into a beautiful, bright yellow butterfly.

Written by: Sebastián Viveros Zapata
Photographed by: Mauricio Ramírez



Blue Doctor

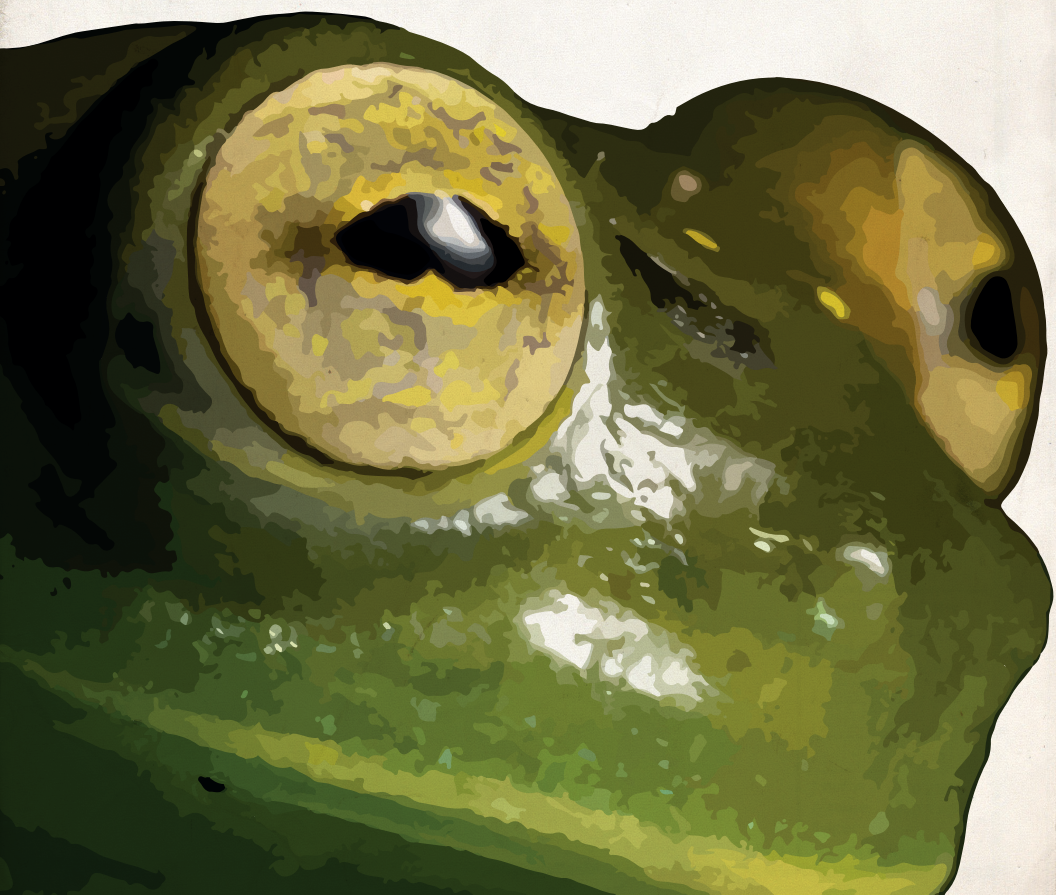
Rhetus dysonii

This butterfly, with its incredible and very striking colors, seems almost magical. You might spot it in places like rivers, paths, clearings, and both small and large forests. You have to be alert not to miss its unexpected visits, because it is delicate and silent. Its colorful and unique wings have hundreds of blue, orange, fuchsia, black, and white scales. It often shows off its colors when it lands on moist ground, where it feeds on minerals found in the soil, on rocks, or in decaying matter.

Written by: Laura I. Giraldo-Herreño
Photographed by: Mauricio Ramírez
& Sebastián Viveros Zapata



Amphibians



Ruiz's robber frog

Strabomantis ruizi

Among the forest floor's leaves, a small and elusive frog can be found hiding. This species primarily exhibits a brown coloration, complemented by gray patches. Characterized by broad heads and granular skin, they also display numerous wart-like formations on their backs and above their eyes. Little is known about their life cycle due to their rarity. These frogs are heavily reliant on humidity and inhabit only the Valle del Cauca region. Their presence in our forests is a precious gift, as they are critically endangered. Unfortunately, habitat loss has significantly reduced their population, pushing them closer to extinction. It is our duty to protect their home and ensure their survival.

Written by: Mauricio Ramírez
Photographed by: Mauricio Ramírez



Pijao Glass Frog

Nymphargus pijao

To gaze upon the Pijao Glass Frog is a treasure for those who explore the Andes. This frog, a living gem, lights up the forests with its presence. Its green skin sprinkled with gold evokes the richness of nature. Although it is small, its impressive character is revealed in every leap. It moves with grace among the vegetation, eating insects and resting by the streams. Human expansion threatens their home. It is crucial to protect its habitat and remember our responsibility as guardians of nature, preserving its beauty for future generations.



Written by: Valentina Vélez-Franco
Photographed by: Mauricio Ramírez



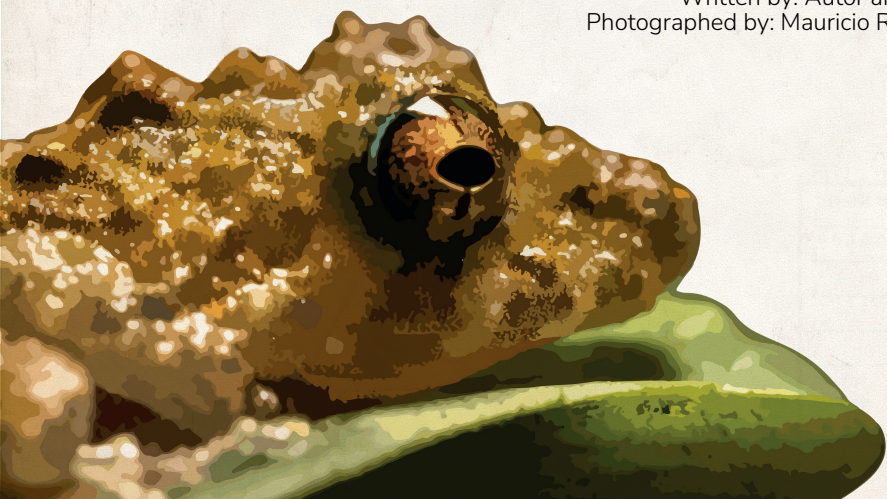
San Antonio Robber Frog

Pristimantis calcaratus



This small frog, often disguised among the moss, inhabits cold, humid forests. Its coloration varies, though it is predominantly yellow. You can identify it by its unique skin texture, which mirrors the rugged mountain ranges of the Farallones. It becomes easier to spot at night when its call takes center stage as it ventures out in search of food and a mate. However, these mountains—its home—face significant threats, including deforestation and pollution, which have pushed this species to the brink of extinction. It is our responsibility to protect this amphibian, just as we must for all species.

Written by: Autor anónimo
Photographed by: Mauricio Ramírez





Cali robber frog

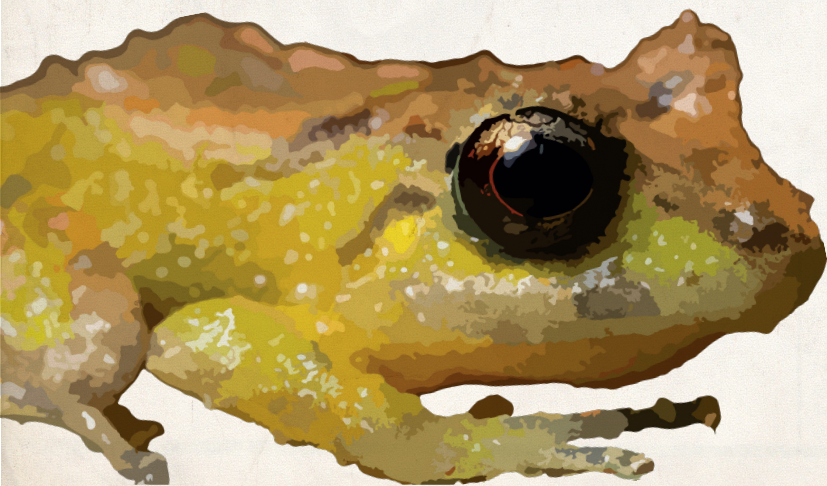
Pristimantis brevifrons

At the tops of trees, one can often hear the sharp, dry chirp of this tiny frog, produced by the males. Their coloration typically ranges from yellow to bright yellow, and during their song, the males display a swollen bubble in their throats known as a vocal sac, which emits a distinctive “pip.”

What makes this frog truly unique is its entirely transparent underside, allowing observers to see its internal organs. However, this remarkable species is currently threatened by habitat destruction.

It is essential to protect their environment to ensure we can continue to enjoy their nocturnal serenade.

Written by: Mauricio Ramírez
Photographed by: Mauricio Ramírez

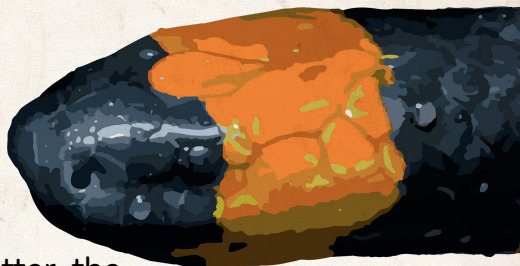


Reptiles



Red-Tailed Coral Snake

Micrurus mipartitus

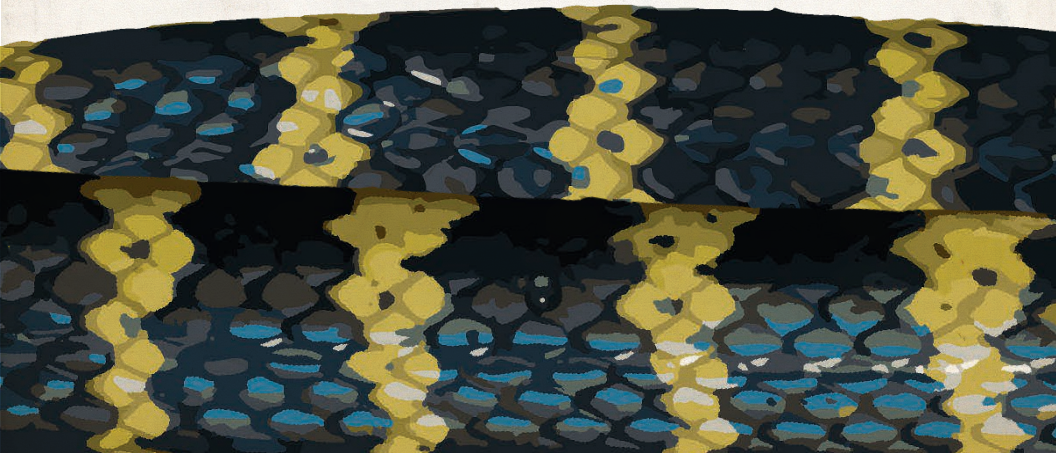


Hidden among logs and leaf litter, the red-tailed coral snake can be challenging to spot, but its distinctive appearance makes it easily identifiable. This snake has a long, cable-like body featuring alternating black and white or yellow rings, along with a striking red or orange ring on its head and three red rings on its tail. The resemblance between its head and tail creates the illusion of having two heads, effectively confusing both its prey and predators. While the red-tailed coral snake is highly venomous, it is not aggressive. It possesses a sharp, non-venomous “nail” on its tail that can poke but does not sting. Protecting this species is crucial for maintaining the health of forest ecosystems, as it plays an important role as a predator. Any harm to this snake could disrupt the delicate balance of the forest environment.

If you encounter a red-tailed coral snake, please observe it from a safe distance. Do not touch or harm it; instead, allow it to continue on its way. If the snake is spotted near people or pets, please contact DAGMA for safe relocation. The red-tailed coral snake is a valuable ally in our Farallones ecosystem—let’s work together to ensure its survival!

Written by: Sofía M. Alfonso-Velasco

Photographed: Mauricio Ramírez



Eyelash viper

Bothriechis schlegelii

The eyelash viper is often elusive and not easily spotted. Named for the tiny scales above its eyes that resemble eyelashes, this remarkable snake displays a range of colors. In the Pance area, it features a striking yellowish-green with black accents, allowing it to blend seamlessly with moss-covered trunks. Primarily nocturnal, it has a wide, triangular head, which has earned it the nickname “lockhead.”

Although venomous, the eyelash viper poses no threat to humans. Instead, it plays a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance by preying on various animals, helping to control their populations and supporting the health of the ecosystem.

If you encounter an eyelash viper, please do not harm it. Keep a safe distance and allow it to continue on its journey. If you find it resting, do not disturb it. Habitat loss and irresponsible tourism pose significant threats to this species, making it essential for us to understand its importance, protect its habitat, and raise awareness about its role in our ecosystem.

Written by: Sofía M. Alfonso-Velasco
Photographed: Mauricio Ramírez

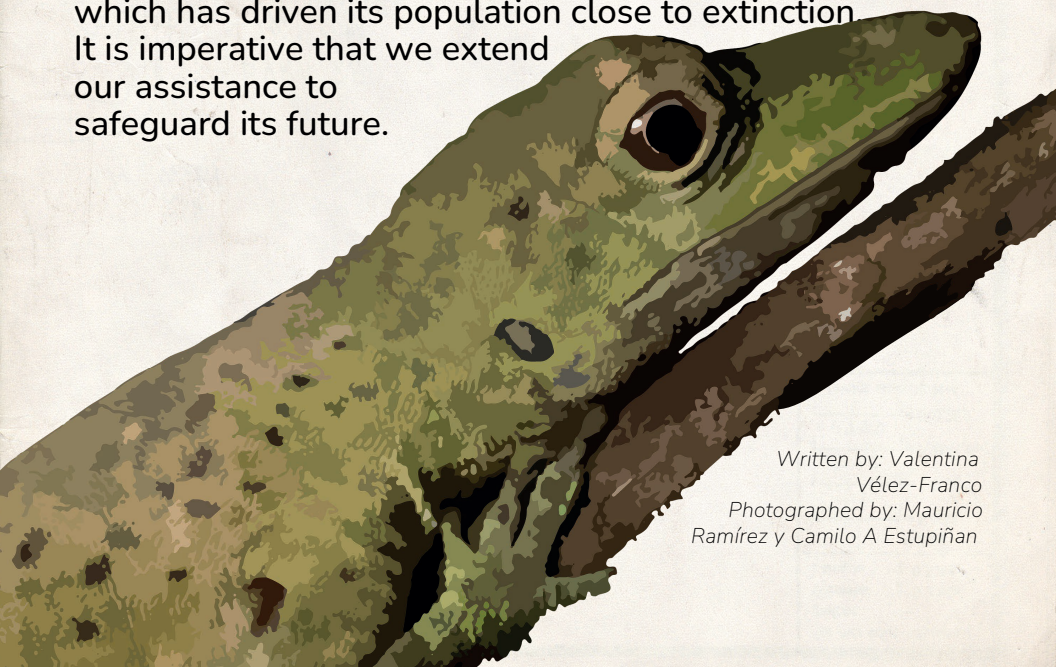


Calima Anole

Anolis calimae

In the tropical jungles, the Calima Anole, a small and agile lizard, thrives among the mysteries and complexity of its habitat. With strong legs and quick-gripping toes, this colorful creature is often found running on trees during the day or resting on leaves at night. The Calima Anole possesses a remarkable ability to subtly change its skin color, allowing it to mimic its surroundings. Although it is not a chameleon, this lizard has also become a camouflage expert—what a skill! Unfortunately, the Calima Anole faces significant threats, primarily due to habitat destruction, which has pushed its population to the brink of extinction. It urgently needs our help to ensure its survival.

Regrettably, the Calima Anole encounters serious challenges, primarily stemming from habitat destruction, which has driven its population close to extinction. It is imperative that we extend our assistance to safeguard its future.



Written by: Valentina
Vélez-Franco

Photographed by: Mauricio
Ramírez y Camilo A Estupiñan



Mountain Chameleon

Anolis quimbaya

In the high forests of the Farallones, hidden among the branches and leaves, resides the Mountain Chameleon—a relatively large green lizard distinguished by its V-shaped head. At night, it can be found sleeping on branches or leaves, while during the day, it is harder to spot as it moves quickly through its habitat. Although it is not a true chameleon, it has earned this name due to its unique eye shape, which bears a resemblance to that of true chameleons, as well as its prehensile tail, which it skillfully uses to navigate among the branches. Sadly, like many other species in the region, the Mountain Chameleon has experienced significant population declines due to deforestation. It is time that we prioritize the conservation of this species and the protection of the Farallones' unique ecosystems.

Written by: Mauricio Ramírez
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Birds



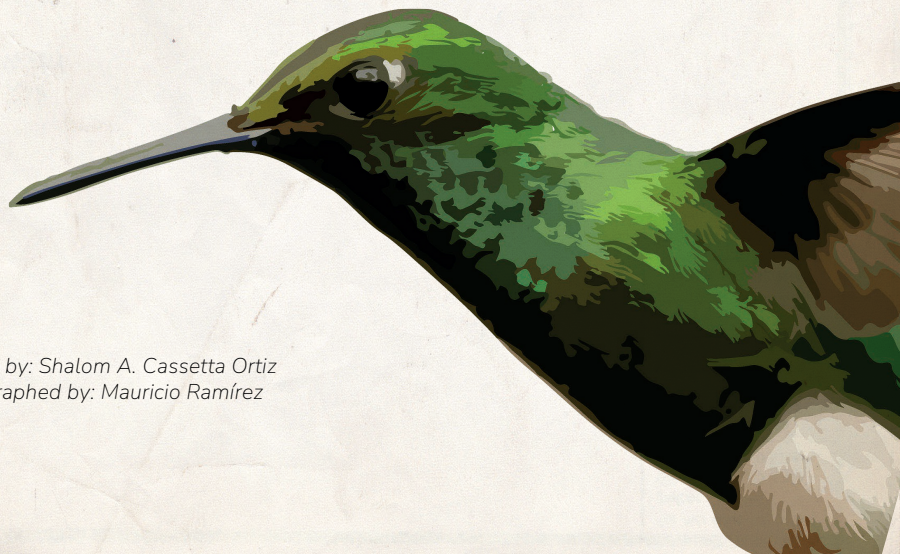
White booted racket tail

Ocreatus underwoodi



Imagine a tiny hummingbird with metallic green feathers, black wings, and white “boot-like” tufts around its legs that resemble small pompoms. The females are characterized by their speckled chests, which are filled with white feathers, and their short tails that feature a distinctive white tip. In contrast, the males are particularly striking, showcasing long, racket-shaped tails nearly twice the length of their bodies and slightly darker than the rest of their plumage.

This hummingbird inhabits the Andean mountains, where it is often seen hovering near the edges of humid forests in search of nectar and small insects. Although it is easy to spot, its beauty makes each encounter feel special.



Written by: Shalom A. Cassetta Ortiz
Photographed by: Mauricio Ramírez

Andean Cock-of-the-Rock

Rupicola peruvianus

The Andean cock-of-the-rock is an iconic bird of the Andes, easily distinguished by its remarkable features. Males display vibrant red plumage, a prominent crest, and black wings with silver lines, complemented by their orange legs. In

contrast, females exhibit maroon feathers, a smaller crest, and pale eyes.

These birds are known for their elaborate courtship displays, performed in specific areas called leks. Males engage in a captivating routine of jumping, dancing, and singing to attract females. Spotting the Andean cock-of-the-rock outside of lekking areas can be challenging, however, with some luck, you might catch a glimpse of them feeding on large fruiting trees in the forest, hopping from branch to branch, or discovering one of their fascinating nests, typically constructed on large rocks near rivers or cliffside rock walls.



Written by: Shalom A. Cassetta Ortiz

Photographed by: Mauricio Ramírez

Torrent duck

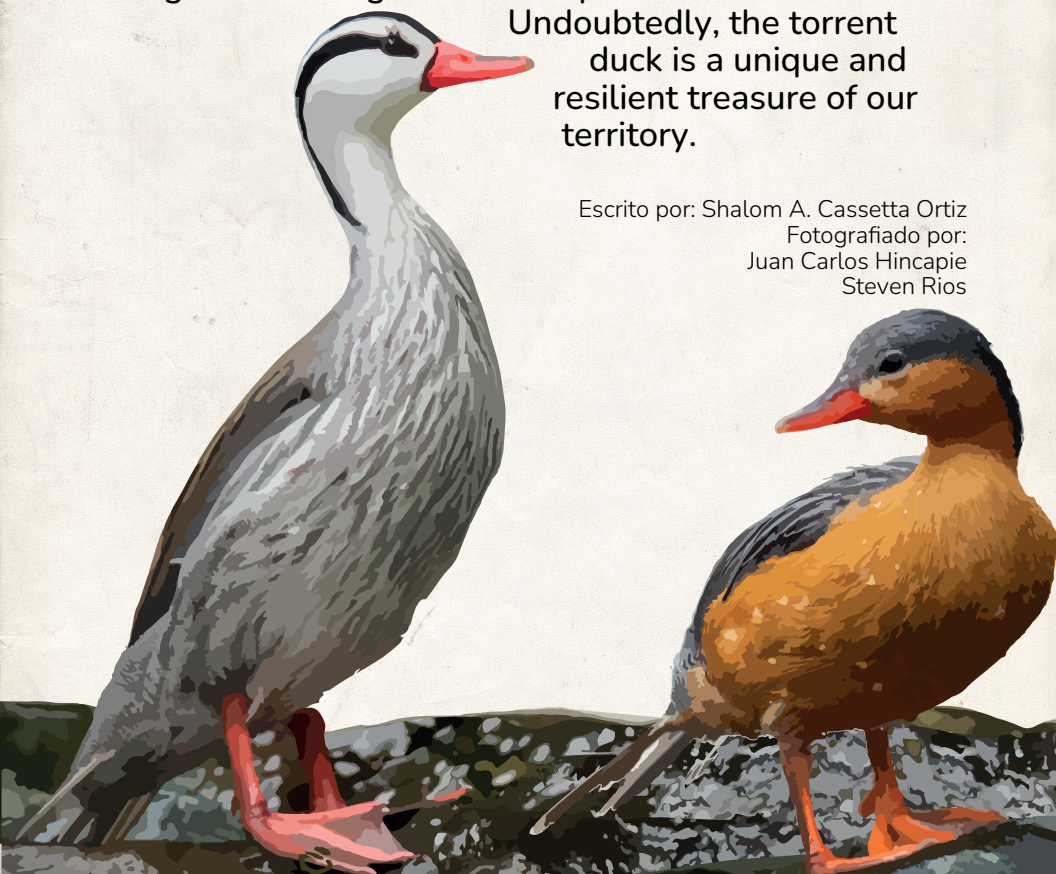
Merganetta armata

Can you believe there's a duck that thrives in the fastest, coldest mountain air currents? Meet the torrent duck, a remarkable species native to the Andes, expertly adapted to life in rushing mountain streams.

This lively and noisy environment suits them perfectly. Both male and female torrent ducks are striking, yet they showcase distinct color variations. Both possess bright red beaks and legs, but the male sports a white head adorned with black lines and a whitish body with stripes. In contrast, the female features a gray head and a warm brownish-orange body. Typically seen in pairs, these ducks swim or perch on rocks together, maintaining a strong bond throughout their reproductive lives.

Undoubtedly, the torrent duck is a unique and resilient treasure of our territory.

Escrito por: Shalom A. Cassetta Ortiz
Fotografiado por:
Juan Carlos Hincapié
Steven Ríos



Black and chesnut eagle

Spizaetus isidori

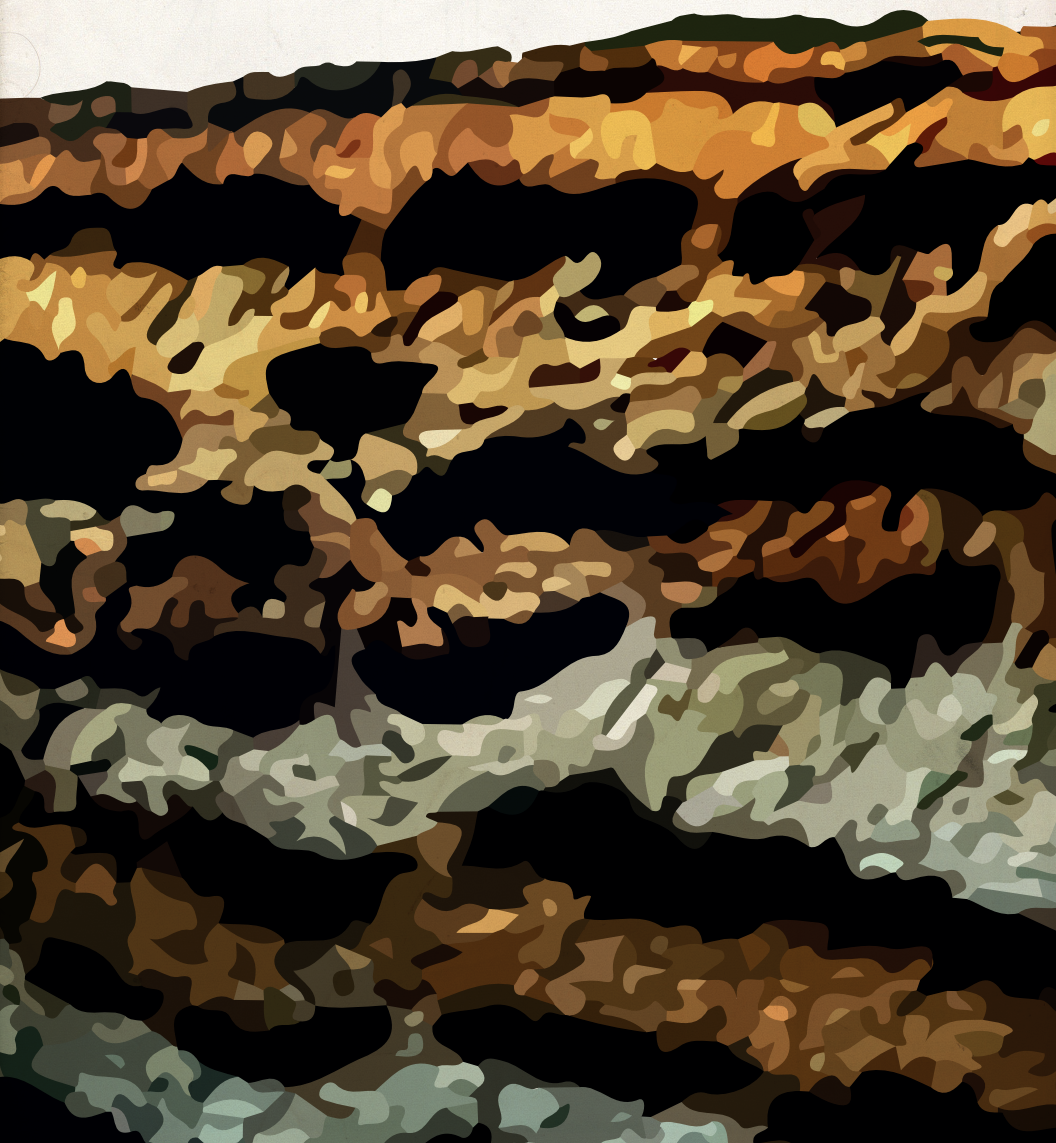
The crested eagle is a large and powerful bird that majestically soars through the skies of the Andean mountain forests. As a supreme hunter, it has captivated ancient civilizations, rural communities, and bird watchers alike with its stunning beauty. Its enormous wingspan, striking black and brown plumage, bright yellow eyes, and distinctive feathered crest enhance its allure. Sightings of this magnificent bird are rare and considered a true privilege.



Adapted to life in the humid mountain forests, the crested eagle primarily feeds on medium-sized birds like guans and pigeons, as well as small mammals that inhabit the forest floor and trees. Unfortunately, this majestic species faces significant threats from human persecution and rapid habitat loss. Therefore, protecting the crested eagle and conserving the forests that sustain its existence is crucial to ensuring its continued presence in our ecosystems.

Escrito por: Shalom A. Cassetta Ortiz
Fotografiado por: Ozman Lopez

Mammals



Andean bear

Tremarctos ornatus

Imposing and formidable, Andean bears roam the vast forests and páramos of Colombia, crafting their homes on the ground or high in the treetops, aided by their powerful claws. These magnificent animals, which can reach up to two meters in height, are primarily active during the day and tend to lead solitary lives. Despite being omnivorous (eating both plants and animals) and occasionally consuming eggs, rabbits, and deer, they prefer certain fruits and plants, such as bromeliads.

Encountering an Andean bear is an impressive experience. Despite their large size, they are timid and tends to avoid humans.

Unfortunately, these bear populations are declining due to hunting and the loss of natural forests and páramos, which provide them with food and shelter. If we want to continue admiring the majesty of the Andean bear, we must develop agricultural practices that do not encroach upon environmentally significant areas, such as the natural forests and páramos where these bears thrive



Written by: Angelin Loaiza
Photographed by: Alejandro Grajales

Cougar

Puma concolor

The puma is a large cat with light brown fur that helps it blend in with trees and rocks. You can think of it as a jungle superhero! Pumas are powerful jumpers, able to leap up to six meters in a single bound. They are also excellent climbers and swimmers, which allows them to move swiftly through their territory. With large paws and sharp claws, pumas are skilled hunters, preying on deer, rabbits, and other small animals. Though elusive and rarely seen, pumas are highly active, living solitary lives and claiming vast territories that span many hectares of forest. Puma mothers care deeply for their cubs, teaching them how to hunt and survive in the forest. It is important to protect pumas because they help keep ecosystems in balance. By caring for the environment, preventing poaching, and avoiding deforestation, we can ensure these magnificent cats continue to thrive. Every small action counts in protecting our wild friends!



Written by: Samuel Morales-Romero
Photographed by: Mauricio Ramírez

Oncilla

Leopardus tigrinus

The Oncilla, an agile feline, moves stealthily through the forest with its fur that blends into the surrounding vegetation.

Despite its smaller size, this remarkably brave hunter uses its sharp sight and hearing to find its food, primarily consisting of rodents, birds, and small reptiles. As excellent climbers, they skillfully move among branches to surprise their prey.

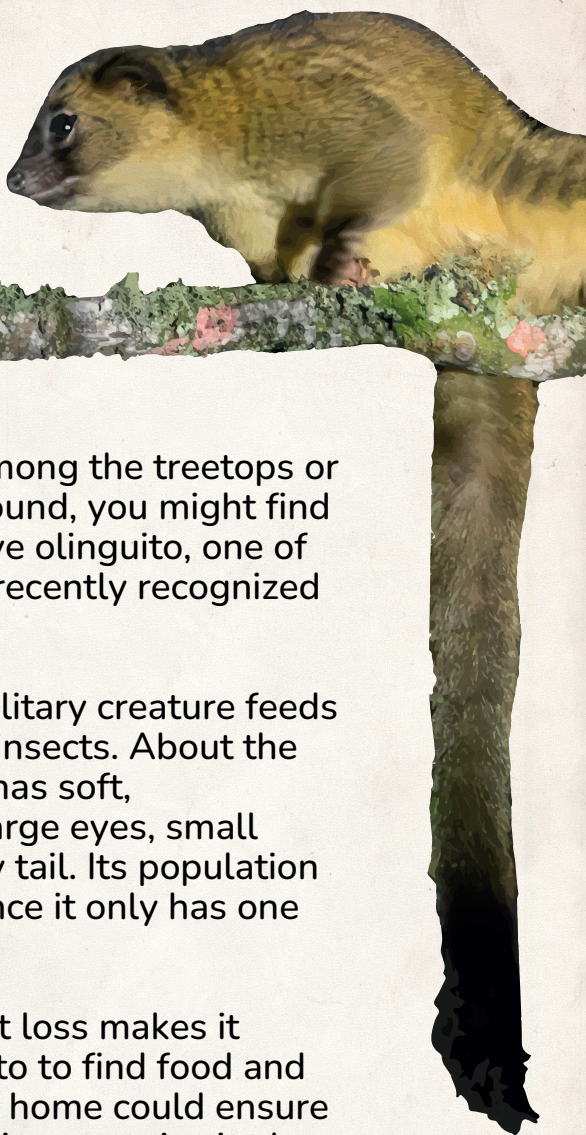
The Oncilla leads a solitary and nocturnal life, resting in trees during the day and coming out at night to explore and hunt. These felines are essential to the ecosystem, keeping small animal populations in check. By respecting their habitat, avoiding hunting, and limiting human expansion, we can help them continue living in freedom.



Written by: Samuel Morales-Romero
Photographed by: Alejandro Grajales

Olinguito

Bassaricyon neblina



In the cloud forest, among the treetops or sometimes on the ground, you might find the curious and elusive olinguito, one of the continent's most recently recognized mammals.

This nocturnal and solitary creature feeds on fruits, nectar, and insects. About the size of a small cat, it has soft, reddish-orange fur, large eyes, small ears, and a long, furry tail. Its population grows very slowly since it only has one offspring a year.

Unfortunately, habitat loss makes it harder for the olinguito to find food and shelter. Protecting its home could ensure the survival of this unique species in the wild.

Escrito por: Angelin Loaiza Pulido
Fotografiado por: Mauricio Ramirez

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As you have seen, the Guardians of the Farallones de Cali, are the species inhabiting this small but significant region of the natural world. Among us are amphibians, orchids, aroids, butterflies, birds, reptiles, and mammals, all playing a vital role in maintaining the balance and health of our ecosystems. From the tiny frogs that serenade the night to the majestic birds that glide through the sky, we unite to ensure that the Farallones de Cali National Natural Park and the Pance River remain biodiversity sanctuaries thriving with life and hope for future generations. Unfortunately, some of us are in danger of disappearing. This is why we need your help to protect our home.

These booklets are part of the Farallones Foundation's environmental education program. You can access these materials and other resources on our website: www.fundacionfarallones.org/publications.



**Fundación
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