

Photography for conservation

by Javier Murcia

Planet Earth is made up mostly of water. Many times you have heard that we really should have called our planet Water, and not Earth, because almost three quarters of it are oceans, seas and other masses of water (70% of the total surface).

Each body of water, whether fresh or salty, has characteristics that define it in one way or another. A river presents a different fauna depending on the section where we are. Its fish fauna, for example, is adapted to the intermittent flow of river water, depending on the season of the year. The same thing happens with the seas and oceans or any body of water.

Seas and oceans, rivers and lakes have been suffering devastating anthropogenic pressure in recent years. Seas of plastic cover thousands of square kilometers of our oceans; Drifting nets are annihilating, like death traps, countless marine creatures such as fish, birds and sea turtles or cetaceans. Most of our rivers, lakes, and lagoons are



Death: A young seagull died because he mistook a fishing hook in the shape of a fish, tried to eat it, and died.

Nikon Z7II, 20mm, Marelux, Inon flash. ISO 80, f9, 1/125

My taxi: A seahorse clings firmly to a piece of plastic during a storm.

Nikon Z7II, 20mm, Marelux, Inon flash. ISO 80, f9, 1/125





Deadly nets: A black-necked grebe has been the victim of illegal fishing nets in southern Spain.
 Nikon Z7II, 35mm, Marelux, Inon flash. ISO125, f9, 1/320



Help!!!: A Mediterranean wrasse has gotten trapped inside the packaging of some buckets and shovels from children's games in summer. You have to throw those tights in the trash.
 Nikon Z7II, 20mm, Marelux, Inon flash. ISO100, f8, 1/200



My Piercing: A Salaria turkey blenny bites into the remains of a soda can, stopping marine litter.
 Nikon Z7II, 60mm, Marelux, Inon flash. ISO200, f8, 1/250

contaminated; there is not a square meter of our water that does not suffer the devastating pressure of man.

There are many problems that the planet's water masses suffer, from the appearance of invasive species, the accumulation of marine garbage (especially plastics and the worst, micro-plastics), different ecological disasters (eutrophication, and anoxia as is currently happening in many places in the world), accidental fishing, loss of biodiversity, etc.

Unfortunately, more and more bodies of water are polluted on our planet. The masses of

continental waters such as rivers are mostly lifeless, dried lakes, lagoons with eutrophication processes.

Photography is a fantastic tool to publicize and highlight the landscape, habitats and species that are intended to be conserved. The use of images and video as documentation and identification is essential for scientists, ecologists and administration.

It may be a fundamental tool for the conservation of our aquatic ecosystems.

The nature photographer focuses his work in favor of conservation and defense of the Environment. Man's relationship with nature is



Deadly plastics: The plastic rings that join beverage cans can be real death traps for birds, cetaceans, fish, etc. Nikon Z7II, 15mm, Marelux, Inon flash. ISO 125, f9, 1/320

increasingly decadent. The wonderful natural heritage of the planet is at imminent risk of disappearance and only by becoming aware of it can something be done about it. For this, photography plays a vital role today. A good photographic document is the most universal of languages and, when used correctly, is capable of communicating, denouncing and raising awareness more than any other medium and without the limitations of language.

However, to achieve this purpose, various considerations must be taken into account since not all images serve to contribute to conservation nor can all do so in the same way or with the same intensity.

The maximum conservation impact must always be shown in a photographic work and the images must serve this purpose and achieve the maximum possible impact with them.

Therefore, there is no doubt that

nature and conservation photography is an essential tool for raising citizen awareness, and therefore for disseminating the environmental problems that we are suffering over the years in our country. wonderful and unique planet, increasingly damaged and punished. Our aquatic and marine ecosystems need our help.

Environmental education is one of the pillars of conservation. We cannot expect society to be interested in nature if it knows nothing about it. However, with photography we can make this information much more accessible, easy to understand and entertaining.

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Javier Murcia was born in Cartagena. From a very young age he dived with goggles, a tube and fins, which led to a great interest in diving and very soon he began to feel the urge to capture marine species in the form of images.

His work, as a naturalist and photographer, focuses on marine and freshwater fauna.

He currently collaborates with various national and international magazines on nature and marine biology topics.

Author of 9 books, including the "Guide to the underwater flora and fauna of the Mar Menor", "Life under the Mediterranean",

"An underwater journey through the port of Cartagena", "The Mar Menor, A magical lagoon", "The green forest, Posidonia oceanica", "Break: between land and water", "Posidonia oceanica: meadows of life", etc. He has collaborated in the book "Marine Ichthyofauna of the Mediterranean", in the "Atlas of phanerogams of Spain" or the Oceanografic Guide (Valencia).

He is an ambassador for big brands such as Aqualung, Marelux, Oceanografic de Valencia and collaborates with Kanau, Orcatorch, Balkysub.

