

# Sinharaja

'Lovely, dark and deep!'



Serpent eagle - "Now it's my turn"



**W**ay back in 1922, poet Robert Frost could not enjoy the sight of lovely woods on a snowy evening to his heart's content as he had to attend to so many social obligations! "The woods are lovely, dark and deep" ...but I have promises to keep..." thus a disheartened Frost penned his thoughts.

Social obligations were by no means a barrier to our photographer Thilak and researcher Prasanjith Caldera who spent an entire day 'rediscovering' the beauty, richness and mysteries of Sinharaja, Sri Lanka's last viable primary lowland virgin tropical rainforest. No wonder that it could make the hands of Thilak "tied" to the camera throughout the day. They entered the rainforest from Deniyaya in the wee hours of the morning to make their exit only late in the night near Kalawana! This rich treasure trove of nature stretches over an area of 11,800 hectares in the South-West wet zone of Sri Lanka within Sabaragamuwa, Southern and Western provinces- occupying parts of Kalutara, Ratnapura, Galle and Matara districts. Sinharaja is identified as one of the oldest remaining natural rain forests in the world which with its high biodiversity and ecological importance made the UNESCO to declare Sinharaja as a National World Heritage site in 1988.

It is a vast repository of the country's endemic species- Out of the 242 butterfly species in Sri Lanka, 65 are found in Sinharaja. Out of 64 fish species recorded in the country, 10 have been found in Sinharaja. Also 19 out of 38 amphibians, 73 out of 14 tetrapods, 29 out of 90 species of snakes, 141 out of 384 species of birds and 40 out of 85 mammals are found here.

Graced also by fauna, medicinal herbs, mountains, ridges, streams, springs, waterfalls, Sinharaja is the environmental scientist's laboratory, ayurvedic doctor's 'haven' nature lovers' paradise and of course photojournalist's domain!

-Samarangie

Pix:  
Thilak Perera



Sinharaja is known for its high biodiversity

Pitcher-plant awaits its prey??



Hump-nosed lizard



Butterfly adds colour to Sinharaja



Kangaroo lizard



Black rat snake



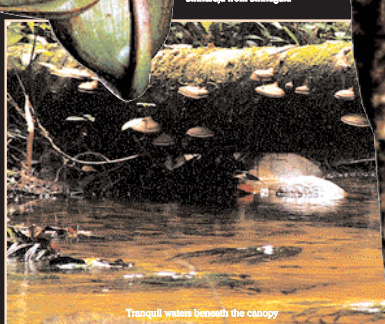
Sri Lanka Walking cat fish



Green whip snake - about to make a move?



A bird's-eye view of Sinharaja from Sinharaja



Tranquil water beneath the canopy