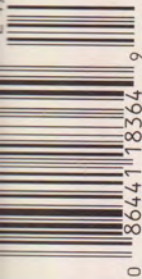


NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

100 best wildlife pictures



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JANUARY 13, 2003

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Miniature soldiers bear powerful weapons. The secretions of a two-inch-long poison-dart frog from Colombia (left) contain one of the most potent toxins known. A long-horned beetle from French Guiana (right) wields serrated jaws. Beetles, incredibly diverse, account for one fifth of all known animal species, thriving from tropical forest to frozen tundra.





Too close for comfort? For some, perhaps, but zooming in reveals the underappreciated beauty of bugs. A molting South American tarantula (right) emerges new and pale from last year's worn flesh. A *Colobopsis* ant (top) repotes on the curl of the pitcher plant that provides the ants with room and board. A leaf-cutter ant (bottom) slices and carries off

foliage to nourish the fungus on which it feeds. And in a scatological moment, waxy filaments shine and bristle from the behind of a plant hopper nymph (center).

