



Sorting Amazonian Fish

The NY Times has a nice [series](#) on a field expedition studying biodiversity in the Amazon. Here's a sample paragraph to go with the picture above:

As they pick through the specimens, bent over the table with their heads close together, they're carrying on one of those scientific conversations that are conducted so entirely in shorthand that they sound disappointingly primitive to a non-specialist . . .

Any doubts about the sophistication of the enterprise are cleared up later on with a glance at their field book, where most of what they collected at yesterday's river, in the most diverse fish community on Earth, is identified to species. . . . These guys have been splashing around with Amazonian fish for years and years, and when they say they've never seen something before it probably means that someone's going to have to describe it as new. They're saying that about two of their specimens this afternoon.