



## The living reservoir

### Alessandro Gruzza

Wetlands - The Bigger Picture

Communicating the vital role of freshwater ecosystems, from mountain-tops-bogs and peat uplands, rivers and lakes to deltas, floodplains, marshes and mangroves. Images can be powerful through their impact or beauty or illustrate an environmental or conservation story that reveals the importance of wetlands for nature and/or for people.

Highly Commended

Rush family

Adult Wildlife Photographer of the Year

South America

Highly commended

Americas

Latin America and the Caribbean

Chile

Monocots

2022

Wetlands: The Bigger Picture

Distichia muscoides

Grasses, sedges, and allies

## ALESSANDRO GRUZZA'S IMAGE

Alessandro Gruzza (Italy) highlights the beauty and value of cushion plants in the Andean peat wetlands.

Struggling with low oxygen levels, Alessandro used a graduated camera filter to balance the light near the snow-capped volcanic cone of Parinacota in the Andes.

Cushion plants, the predominant flora in this environment, slow water run-off and therefore soil loss. Studies have also shown that they also help to form peat and that they store carbon at a higher rate than almost any other plant found at high elevations.

Known as bofedal, this type of Andean peat wetland is found at very cold and dry altitudes and is dependent on meltwater from glaciers.


Rising global temperatures mean that glaciers are diminishing, threatening the survival of these fragile wetlands, as well as the species that depend on them.

## BEHIND THE LENS




## Alessandro Gruzza

Italy


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Alessandro was raised in the foothills of Italy's Dolomites and even from an early age appreciated nature. He became a professional photographer in 2013 and in 2018 founded Munay Publishing. In addition to publishing several books, Alessandro has also won many awards in photography competitions and staged multiple exhibitions. His photographs are permanently displayed at the Centrum Jana Pawla II in Krakow, Poland.

## Image details

 Chungarà Lake, Lauca National Park, Chile



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