

KURT W. BAUMGARTNER

WILDLIFE | NATURE | CONSERVATION
PHOTOGRAPHY

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Wildlife Photographer and MINA Raise Awareness in Answer to the Micronesia Challenge

Kurt W. Baumgartner, a wildlife and conservation photographer partners with the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance (MINA) to raise awareness in answer to the Micronesia Challenge. This Challenge is a commitment by the Chief Executives of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Republic of Palau, the U.S. Territory of Guam and the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) to *effectively conserve at least 30% of the near-shore marine resources and 20% of the terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2020*. This far exceeds current goals set by international conventions and treaties, which call for countries to conserve 10% of terrestrial and marine resources by 2010 and 2012 respectively.

On Friday, April 30th, MINA will hold their annual general membership meeting with a presentation on the conservation group's annual progress and feature the wildlife photography of Kurt W. Baumgartner. The public is encouraged to attend to experience an evening of art and environment. The meeting and wildlife photography exhibit of Mariana Islands' fauna are scheduled from 6:00PM to 8:00PM at Shenanigan's Restaurant, Garapan, Saipan.

Emphasizing the unity in diversity of the Mariana Islands' fauna, the exhibition lends the observer a lens into the fragile microcosm of each species. Highlights include the elusive, IUCN category: Extinct in the Wild, Guam Rail, photographed in the wild for the first time in wilds of Rota Island since its extinct in the wild designation, as well as critically endangered endemic species such as the territorial Nightingale Reed Warbler, a nesting Golden White-eye and the minuscule Partula Gibba's world magnified.

An active proponent of long-term preservation through direct community involvement, MINA and Kurt W. Baumgartner hope that these images featuring the irreplaceable species of the Mariana Islands will help mobilized conservation awareness among the local population about the inimitability of the region's habitat. A grandnephew of the late Bishop Apollinaris William Baumgartner of Guam, who was instrumental in the development of Mariana Islands educational system, supporting the Micronesia Challenge's goal of the conservation of the Mariana Islands is a very personal mission.

Baumgartner's images have been featured internationally in leading magazines, nature books and conservation organizations, including National Geographic, ARKive and Audubon. He is a committed participant for conservation efforts in critically endangered areas and with numerous international conservation groups, which include: Friends of the California Condor Wild and Free, Madagascar's Marojejy National Park, Malaysian Nature Society, Philippines' El Nido Palawan Protected Area, Mariana Islands Nature Alliance (MINA), and Sumba Island, Indonesia.

For inquiries and details regarding the MINA Annual Progress Meeting and Photography Exhibit, e-mail: mina@minapacific.org or call : (670) 233-7333.

For more information on the Micronesia Challenge, visit www.micronesiachallenge.org.

For more information regarding Kurt W. Baumgartner's photography, log on to: www.kurtbaumgartner.com or e-mail: info@kurtbaumgartner.com.

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Nightingale Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus luscinioides*)

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