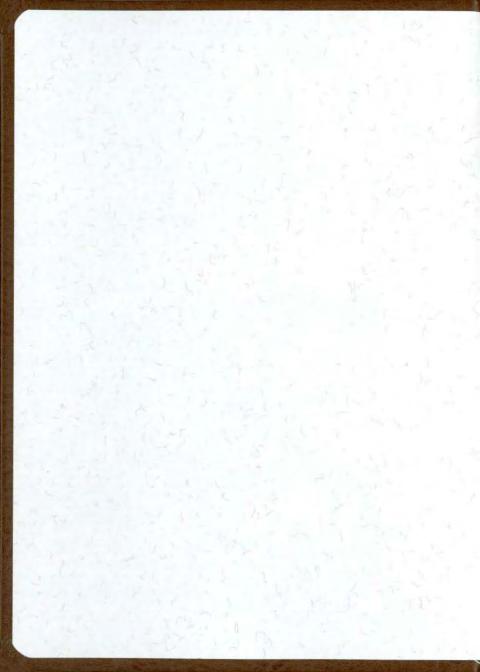
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Volume 2



D'ni Zoological Studies Volume 2

-Minia



It's the new year and I'm back at my Relto from Kadish Tolesa. According to my mental list, I've visited all the known D'ni ages; and I've done my best in these few days to document all the animals I could find. I should be tired, yet instead am feeling restless. I'm sitting here on the bench gazing out over the misty isles and find my mind is unsettled. I can't shake the feeling that I've missed something... but what??

Maybe I should go through my linking books on the bookshelf in the hut; it will help me to double-check that I haven't neglected any ages.

Cleft, check. City, check. Neighborhoods, New Kweer, Great Shaft, check, check, check. The four garden ages, check. Kadish Tolesa, Gahreesen, Teledahn, check, check, check. The four pod ages and Todelmer, all check. Er'cana and Ahnonay, check, check. Dr. Watson's journey ages, Direbo, Laki'ahn, Noloben, Tahgira (and Todelmer again), all check. The three City Library ages, Minkata, Jalak Dador, Releeshan, all check. Myst...

Hmm, I hadn't considered Atrus' old ages.
And yet Myst Island is where everything began.
For me, for all of us. The linking book has been so carefully preserved and protected, locked away behind its studded cover...

Yes, this is where I need to go. This is what I'd forgotten.

When, I'm finally able to sit down and dry off. I've found shelter and a place to rest for now.

When I linked in a short while ago, there was a ferocious storm in progress. I was instantly drenched and found myself shivering. I went first to the library to get out of the rain; but as before, there were only the bookshelves and the barren tower; not even a place to sit down except for the floor. I searched through the other buildings and found much the same situation until I looked through the star room doorway. Although the viewscreen had fallen onto the reclining chair, the chair itself remained in fairly good shape.

So after heaving the broken monitor onto the floor and shoving it up against the door, I now have a comfortable place to sit. The door is relatively firmly closed with the help of my improvised doorstop; the fierce winds kept blowing it open before.

But I wonder once again, where in the world Atrus raised his family here? I've never found anything resembling living quarters, yet there were five of them making their home here throughout the boys' childhood and adolescence.



<u>Upon arriving, the storm is intense but the light</u> show is quite impressive.



The star viewer has fallen into disrepair but the chair itself remains quite usable.

The chair is just as comfortable as J remember from way back; it should make a good cot. And suddenly I'm very tired...

I'm not sure how long I've slept, but I feel much better now. Outside, it's daylight and the sun is warm. Yes, this is the Myst Island I remember! I'm eager to head back to Channelwood, Stoneship, Mechanical, Selenitic and Rime.

I'm revisiting the entire island in the light of day. The water is now calm at the dock, the trees are swaying in the breeze and I can hear the cry of a Seagull somewhere. Down here by the clock tower, I can see the island Butterflies. They make me smile; I found them absolutely enchanting years back when I first visited this place. They are like old friends I'd forgotten and who now greet me warmly.

Yes, there are zoological studies to pursue



The outside of the star room is cheerful in the bright sunshine.



A Seagull cruises by above the trees.



A pair of Butterfies flutters about near the water's edge.



They appear to be Tiger Swallowtails.

Hmm, it's already turning to day's end here—the sky is showing the colors of the gentle Myst sunset. I guess the storm was either during the Myst day, or I slept longer than I'd realized. I think I'll sit here by the shoreline and enjoy the changing of the day.



A group of Seagulls flies overhead as the sky starts to turn.



10 forgotten how lovely the evening sky is here.



Night has now fallen and the sky is a beautiful deep purple.

Ok, I've set the clock tower and am heading over to the giant gears and the Mechanical linking book.

To be honest, Mechanical had never particularly appealed to me years back when J

first visited here; it was so barren and harsh, so lacking in flora and fauna. Yet here I am again, feeling a thrill and happiness at being here. I never noticed animals here in the past, but then never thought to look for them before. I was so enraptured with the excitement of the books and their ages...

I've already walked through the building and visited each of the small islands but can find no sign of any animal or plant life. No birds in the sky, no fish in the water, not even barnacles on the rocks. There is no sound beyond the lapping of the waves and the slight wind.

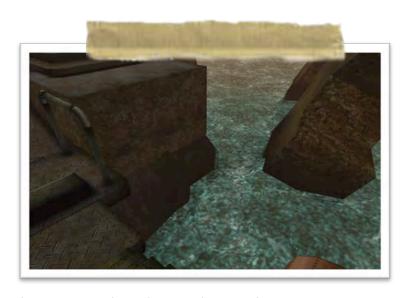
Overall, it's shockingly barren here. Did Atrus write something into this age deliberately to keep his structures pristine and safe from decay? After all, sea life in its variety of forms can take its toll...



It was early dawn when I first linked in; daylight was just beginning to glow on the horizon.



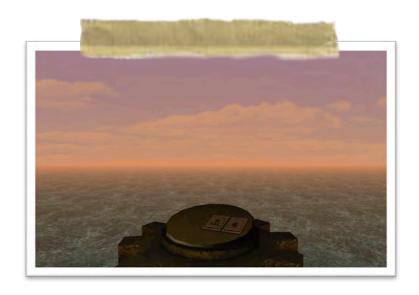
I looked carefully amongst the rocks at water's edge but could find no sign of life.



There was nothing here either at the submerged gears.

I did see the pirate flag through the telescope inside, so I suppose the age is not get completely abandoned.

It appears the sun is lowering toward the horizon already. It shouldn't do any harm to stay a bit longer and enjoy the sunset.



Sunset was beginning by the time I checked the smallest island.



The sky has turned a dark magenta.



And now a deep purple.



The stars are widely scattered in the night sky.
They are quite colorful but do not twinkle.

Altogether, day's end here is surprisingly similar to Myst Island. But I need to move on.

* * * *

My next step is to link back to Myst Island and then head toward the rocket. I've always been intrigued by Selenitic; it's such a combination

of paradoxes within such a small geographic area. I still regret that we have no pictorial records of it before the meteor impacts and its subsequent instability. Judging from Atrus' early



Heading toward the Myst rocket and its Selenitic linking book.

I arrived in Selenitic about an hour ago and have checked most of the areas without luck. Thus far, it is quite barren of zoological life, no doubt due to the ecological damage from the meteors.



My first stop was the garden as it held the most promise for animal life (and is a personal favorite location). I was disappointed to find nothing there—no hum of insects, no twittering or whisper of birds in flight.

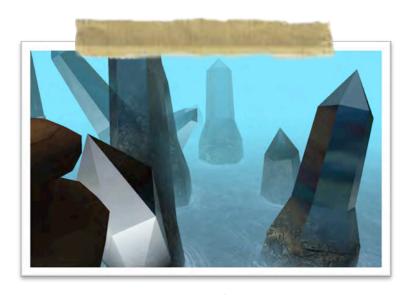


The volcanic fissure was far too hot for animals.

I could only lean over the railing for a brief
moment, the lava was so close and scorching.



The clock tower is on utterly barren ground and reminds me of the Myst Island one. There isn't even any grass anywhere along the path surrounding the crater bay.



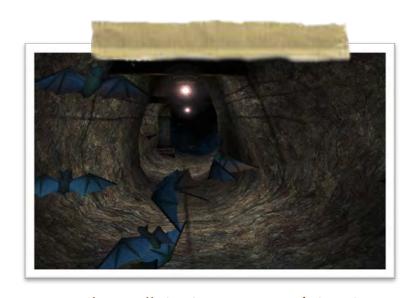
I've always loved the crystal formations with their gentle song and countless subtle colors.

Their haunting melody is both soothing and magical. But there is no sea life here.

There is only one stop left here in Selenitic, at the end of the path around the meteor crater bay. I must climb down into the tunnel there and hope that the lights still work so I don't have

to stumble my way through the dark to the other end and the tiny island in the middle of the bay.

Good lord, what a fright! As I activated the light switch and the tunnel lamps began to awaken, I found myself surrounded by dozens of panicking bats! I must be developing steadier nerves and faster reflexes, though, as I managed to capture a few good photos of them before they dispersed up the tunnel entrance. I can see that there are a few remaining here in the tunnel, flying back and forth (perhaps waiting for me to leave and turn the lights back out?). I think I will remain for a bit and see if I can get additional photos of them in better light.



Amazingly, in all the chaos, not one of them hit me.



I managed to get a fairly good shot of one of the stragglers.



This was the best photo I was able to get from the hallway. The bats tended to stay in the shadows and were very fast and unpredictable in their flight. As it turns out, their natural coloring is brown and they have delicate veins in their wings.

In scrolling through the images on my camera, I can see clearly that these are different from the bats back in the Cavern. How exciting!

I will need to return at some point and study this population more thoroughly.

It's time to return to the surface. I must remember to shut off the lights on my way out.

* * * *

Now that I've climbed back up the ladder, I can see the Selenitic sunset is in full bloom. How very beautiful it is!



I can see the clock tower across the water; the perpetual mist seems even more intense in the colorful light.



The crystals are even more mysterious now.



The garden seems all afire in the light.

In spite of its barren nature, this place has a beauty all its own. But I must get back to Myst Island and head to Channelwood. I think I'll use my Relto book rather than try to find my way through the labyrinthine mine. I've never much cared for mazes, plus it will save time.

I've just arrived at Channelwood. I hadn't realized how fond I had been of the frog and birdsong of this place. Their constant music is bringing back so many lovely memories...

* * * *

Walking along the wooden path toward the windmill, I came upon a Wood Toad sunning himself. However, he was extremely shy and jumped into the water at the first sight of my movement. Perhaps he was responding to the vibrations of my footsteps on the wooden planks.

I have been spending the last few hours sitting quietly at a discreet distance, waiting for him to return and then trying to approach him more quietly. He is the most difficult and elusive animal yet, far more challenging than

Shroomie was; I am glad for the practice I had with her in Teledahn.



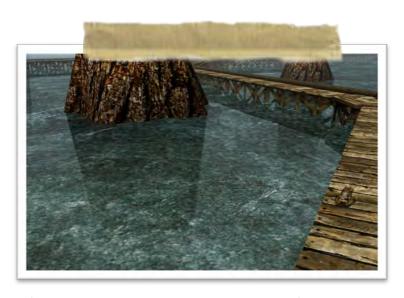
The Wood Toad is up ahead toward the right; he blends in with the wooden walkway quite well.



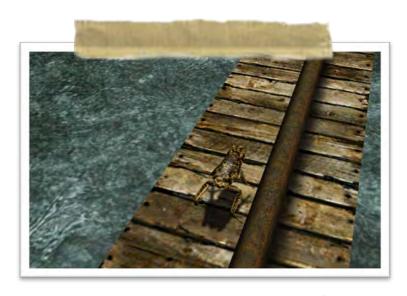
I try to approach carefully, but he feels the wood vibrations and begins hopping away.



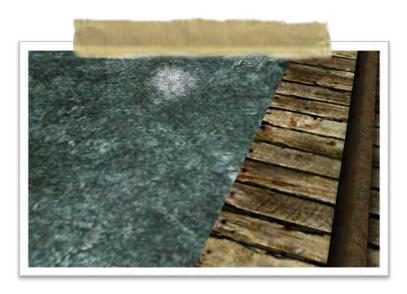
As I turn the path toward him, he's over the side and into the water.



After several more tries, I harry carefully and find myself very close before he begins hopping away.



I am rewarded with this marvelous photo of him (and barely avoid stepping on him in the process).



As before, he is off into the water with a splash.

Now that I've gotten a good photograph of the Wood Toad, I need to head up the stairs and go birdwatching.

* * * *

I've been wandering around up here for quite a while but have get to see any birds. I can hear them everywhere but the forest canopy is dense,

the light relatively dim and the birds are disinclined to fly about. However, I find myself enjoying the views and revisiting the settlement. It still is abandoned and melancholy, but also just as peaceful as the first time I visited.



The stairway to the settlement above.



Some of the settlement homes viewed from below, abandoned long ago.



Walking the wooden pathways at the top of the stairs, looking for birds.

I've ascended to the top level of the village, hoping for a closer view into the canopy. However, my luck hasn't changed; I can hear birds everywhere but still see nothing, even with my binoculars.

The view from up here is lovely, though. I can feel myself soaking in the sounds and smells, absorbing this place into my very bones.



I still see no birds, but have a good view of one of the village dwellings below.



I can see the windmill off in the distance, shronded in mist.

Although it's been a pleasant day here, I still have two ages left to visit. Stoneship is next.

It was raining steadily when I arrived here an hour ago. But it always rains here, day and night. I've always thought of this place as an

object lesson for the perils of trying to write human-made structures into an age. The split and bent ship still is intact, even after all this time and the constant damp. I started out by walking about and refamiliarizing myself with the few structures here. I also took some nice pictures of the shifting storm as the light dimmed for the brief Stoneship night.



I linked in near the lighthouse.

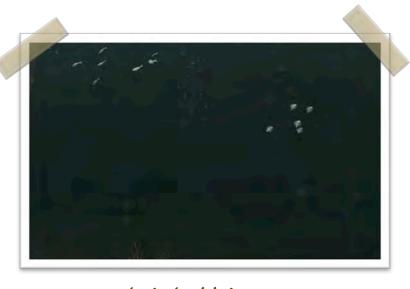


After climbing the stairway to the rocky pinnacle, I could see part of the ship down below.



Night fell quickly and the rain turned stormy.

I'm now in the hidden power room in the tunnel between Sirrus and Achenar's sleeping quarters and have just turned on the underwater lamps. There are numerous startled fish swimming about outside the windows, though the waters out there remain dim.



I can see several schools of fish swimming about..



Some Shimmerfish swim close to the window.



These fish are undocumented by the DZS and resemble Terran Tangs. How exciting to find them!

I need to head over to the ship's lower level. I remember from before that once the underwater lamps are lit, the view there is much better.

I've been here in the ship's belly for at least two hours now and have taken several hundred photographs, walking back and forth, up and down, capturing this hidden world. It is very active out there, filled with such a diversity of life.



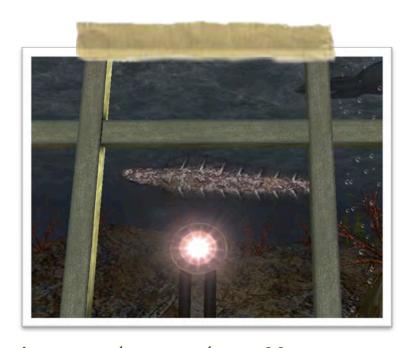
A Lantern Jelly and some Shimmerfish hanging about one of the lanterns.



Nearby, a Rock Lionfish is hovering; he remains still and does not spim about, probably as a means to attack unsuspecting prey when they spim near.



A magnificent Sea Turtle is swimming by; his elongated tail acts as a rudder.



The Spiny Eels are quite large and don't seem to have any natural enemies. This fellow and the Sea Turtle mutually ignored each other as they swam about.



Another exciting find—a Skate! This animal also is undocumented by the DZS.

Jam now simply sitting here watching all these wonderful animals and pondering. The Myst multiverse is truly teeming with life, sometimes in the most unexpected places.

Although J cannot always capture them with

my camera, animals exist throughout the ages. There is something deeply settling and reassuring to me in this.

* * * *

I'm back in Relto. My last stop is Rime. The thought of yet another frigid age is making me shiver. But I'm in the home stretch of these journeys and Rime is calling quietly but urgently. In checking their records, I see the D2S reports two known animals for this age, the Rime Whale and an unknown wolf-like creature. I will need to keep warm and be cantious. The next step is to bundle up and grab a thermos of hot coffee.

Ok, heading back to Myst Island and the Rime linking book.



The Rime journal and linking book in the Myst Island library.

The light in Rime never changes, always being the dark of night. There are faint Northern Lights illuminating the water and icebergs from a distance. The drifting snowflakes are beautiful and I find myself wandering between the two

observation landings, gazing out over the floating generator towers across the bay.

They continue to glow underwater, even after all this time, their power units spinning slowly and creating a ghostly light within the deep. But it's extremely cold and I need to find shelter in spite of the thankfully still air. I'll open up the gas tap and then head inside the research station to warm up by the stove.



One of the generator towers creates an eerie underwater glow as its power unit spins.



The research station, seen from one of the observation landings.



Thankfully, the store still works and is quickly taking the edge off this intense cold.

I'm now in the upper laboratory area, flooded with nostalgia. I'd half forgotten the inner passageways here and the different rooms. I can see Atrus' dedication to science everywhere within these walls and so feel a kinship with him across the years. This was one of his most important research facilities, the only location

where he could study and tune the crystals that powered his remote viewing machine, which in turn allowed him to maintain contact with his banished sons as well as monitor the myriad ages he was writing or researching. Perhaps some day my fellow explorers will be able to recreate this technology and apply it to the ages we cannot get explore...



Atrus's old study, midway up the tower.

Happily the elevator still works.





Atrus' work table there.



The crystal testing device and viewer.

* * * *

I've descended via the elevator to the balcong. In fiddling with the controls, I can see they still work and create an enormous power surge between the distant generator towers. What a fearful technology! How does it affect the sea life here, I wonder?



The generator towers begin their power cycle.



There is a huge power burst as the currents connect between towers.



The power flows between the towers only for a minute or two before dissipating.

My ears are still ringing as the light fades and the quiet settles back in. But I think I can hear something in the distance...

It is probably only twenty minutes or so later, but feels like a lifetime.

Back up on the balcony, I heard the sound grow gradually stronger and realized that this must be the song of the Rime Whale! I was beside myself with excitement and rushed back down the elevator and out to the observation landing toward the right, the direction of the whalesong, all the while fumbling to get my camera at the ready.

I stared into the dimness and wasn't sure if my eyes were playing tricks on me. But sure enough, there was a faint shadow beneath the waves, moving slowly toward the bay. And then I could see two more shadows, smaller and close by the first. Good heavens, a mother and twin calves! I began snapping photos furiously, praying I would capture something visible in the

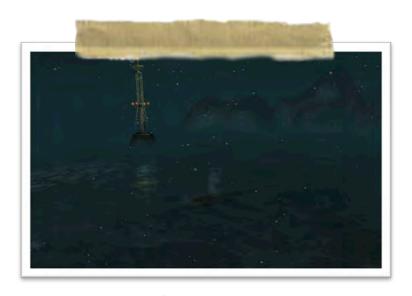
dim light, racing back and forth between the observation landings to get the best possible view.

And then the mother breached the surface and I felt the thrill of distant contact with this enormous and noble creature. I can now understand the profound experience my friends have described after a Terran Whale watch.

I must have taken hundreds of photos in the space of the few minutes it took the Whales to drift through the bay and away into the Rime night.



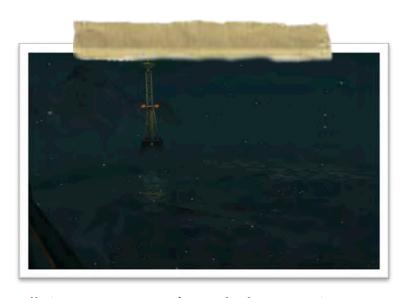
A ghostly shadow below the water approaches from the right.



She breaches the surface.



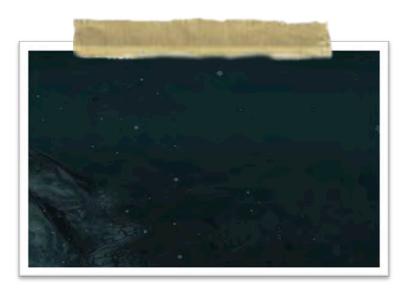
Zooming in, I can see there are two smaller shadows on her left and right.



All three continue drifting slowly across the bay.



They approach the outlying ocean.



And then they are gone.

What a perfect ending to my zoological adventures! I've not only found the Rime Whale, but have been fortunate enough to witness a family of them.

The wolf-like animals are a bit of a puzzle though. I've seen no sign of them and have heard nothing beyond whalesong and the wind.

I'm back home, going through all my field notes and photos. I have a huge amount of data to sift through and post to the thread.

* * * *

Although I've still got a long way to go, I've finished posting the first chunk of zoological data and already am getting some feedback from other explorers. semplerfi shared some amazing photos he's taken of the Flapper feeding cycle. sideshow 1 18 and Capella both liked the Urwin photos (and seem to be serious Urwin fans). The most interesting response is from New'yn. Apparently, a Professor Almaron who is affiliated with the D'ni Museum of Arts and Sciences, is thinking about sponsoring some indepth surveys and analyses of the various ages. It seems the Museum hopes to augment their records as well as replicate data that has been lost over time and from the several more recent closures of the City. Nev'yn asked whether I might be available as a consultant for this work, apparently being impressed with my zoological research documented on the thread. This is a very interesting prospect and I will need to see how it might fit into my surface schedule.

Got the next big chunk of data sorted out and posted to the thread. When, what a job!

Heard again from New'gn. The Museum is interested in using both me and larryf58 as consultants for this age survey project. I need to find out more details from him so I can give him an answer. But I think if I can figure out how to swing it with my surface schedule, I'd really enjoy doing fieldwork alongside some colleagues. Solitary research has its limits...

Got some supportive feedback from Rils, a member of the long inactive D'ni Zoological Society. He's interested in getting their wiki records updated with all this new/updated information. I'd like to help but am not sure what the DZS protocols are. And, as always, surface scheduling is a consideration.

Also had an interesting conversation with Rils regarding my theories on Noloben and the Bahro settlement there. Understandably, he's of the suspicion that the settlement was built by Esher when he first came to the age. I'd actually considered this possibility when exploring and documenting the settlement, but decided it didn't really make sense in the end considering what we

know about Esher's personality and behavior.

As I pointed out to Rils, Esher's disdain for all things Bahro runs so deep and his arrogance about all things D'ni is so thick, that I truly can't imagine him deliberately building something in the Bahro style; or letting such a structure of his remain standing if he did build one at one time.

We know little to nothing about Bahro history, culture and customs so I can only guess whether they use such things as boats and shelters. But we do know that they have a written language of some sort; or at least a numbering system, which implies enough sophistication to use written communication, calculation, and record-keeping. Esher spoke of the linking bubbles as "useful abominations" in the same

breath that he spoke so disdainfully of the Bahro, so I've always thought he knows the bubbles to be of Bahro construction.

I still find the Bahro use of the tusks an interesting puzzle. It's as if they must always make use of them in anything they build; perhaps it's even unthinkable to build anything without them. Such apparent deep ties must mean something important, must tell us something profound about who they are, their identity as a race...

On the other hand, we can see that Yeesha has gone more or less native (Bahro style) and has a close relationship with the Bahro. This would most certainly earn her an even deeper disdain from Esher. He most likely sees her as a traitor

to her own race and so would hate her with far more venom than he does the Bahro...

Hmm, the longer I think about all this and write about it here, the more blurry it becomes trying to distinguish between Yeesha and the Bahro. I think I will need to study this in much greater depth. Happily, this is right up my alley since my background is in anthropology (though I've moved on to other things in the intervening years).

* * * *

Oops, just noticed that I failed to include the Kamkenta when transcribing my Dereno field notes for the forum thread. Better fix it right away.

Back to surface life. I think it will prove restful in comparison to all my recent explorer activity.

Posted another chunk of my field notes to the forum-I'm now in the home stretch, with only the Myst ages left.

Got some interesting feedback from janaba1 regarding one of my Payiferen photos. She posted a highlighted version and sure enough, it does look like there's a body lying there alongside one of the hills. I need to head back to Payiferen right away to check this more closely.

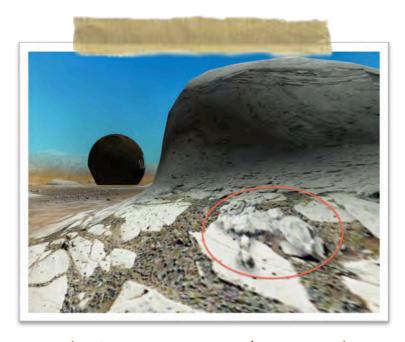
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I'm back in Paziferen and by a happy coincidence, it is almost the exact same time of day here that the photo was originally taken.

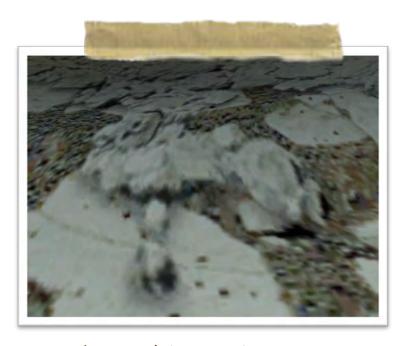
Particularly since the photo shows the pod in the

background, it should be fairly easy to find the right location again.

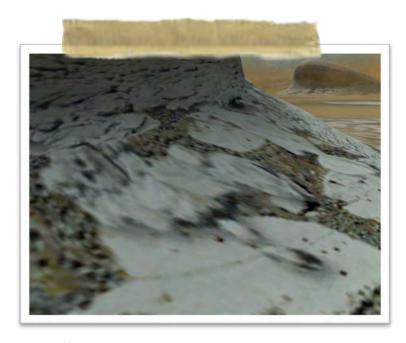
Yes, here it is, a fairly short walk from the pod. I need to take photos from multiple angles to understand this better. But at first glance, I find myself wondering if this is merely a trick of the light...



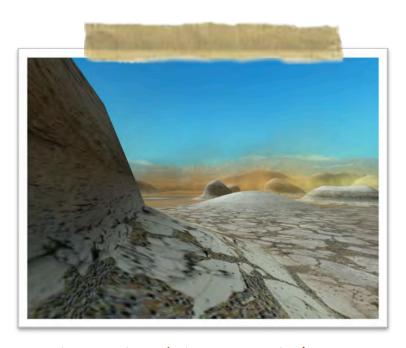
I've circled the "body" on a copy of my original photograph.



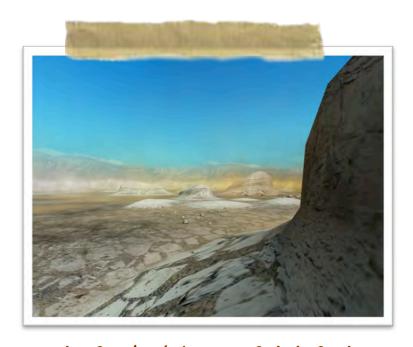
Here's a close-up of the same phenomenon today, though it's a bit more shady right now than it was before.



Taken from an angle, near the body's chest.



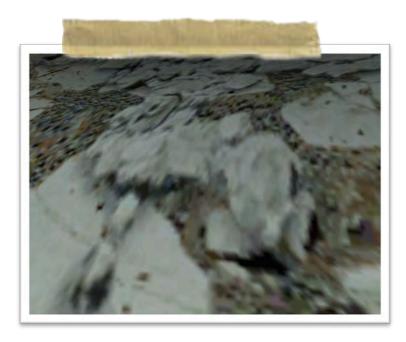
From the body's head, looking toward the feet.



From the body's feet looking toward the head. The body from this angle is particularly difficult to make out.



Taken from a different angle, looking from the body's feet toward the head.



Another close-up, with the arm pointing Jounnard.

The longer I look at this, the more I think it really is a genuine phenomenon of some sort rather than a trick of the light or coincidental rock formation. Whatever this is, it's become more or less fused with the rock face; it's almost

completely flat, with only surface marks remaining to distinguish its former shape and appearance.

I really need to come back later when I have more time and can photograph it in multiple light settings. Right now, it's in the shadow of the hill; I'd like to get pictures in full daylight as well as at night (assuming that it won't be too dark to see anything at all). This will have to wait until I finish posting my field journal transcriptions, though. Maybe some time this weekend...

In the meanwhile, I can post today's photos and see what janaba1 thinks.

Already getting feedback about my latest photos of the Paziferen phenomenon. DLordof Time suggests that it might be an impression fossil and janaba 1 agrees with him. I think this is a very strong possibility too. And janaba1 wonders if there is any significance to the outstretched arm, if it is pointing to something in particular, something important. An interesting question that will have to wait for investigation until I go back for the rest of the photos.

Friday 6 Jan 2012

Got the first chunk of the Myst ages transcribed and posted. I should be able to finish this up in another day or so. Finally finished posting my transcribed field notes. Geez, what a huge job that was; far more work than the exploration and original journal work. But I think also worth the time and effort now that other explorers can learn from my experiences.

I'm off to Payiferen to finish photographing the body in the desert.

* * * *

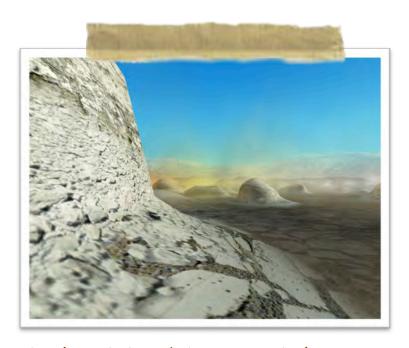
It's mid-day here and the sun is shining full on the body-perfect, I can get started right away then.



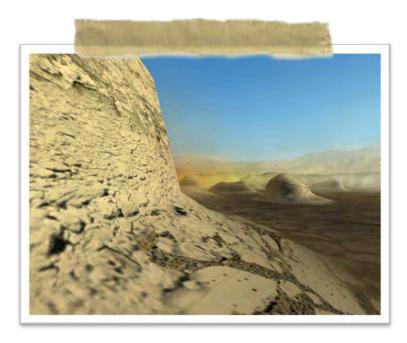
It's shortly after mid-day and I am standing in roughly the same position where the other arm-downward photos were taken.



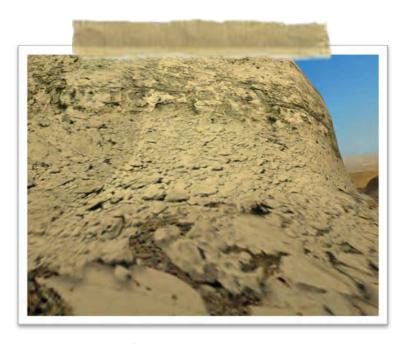
Taken from the feet, looking toward the head. The body is much harder to make out in the full sunlight.



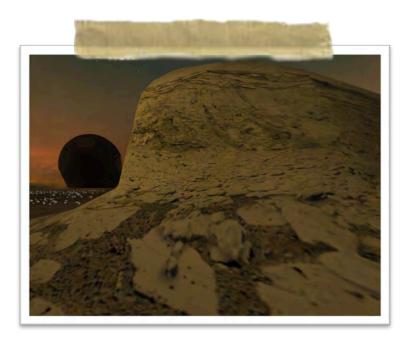
Taken from the head, looking toward the feet.



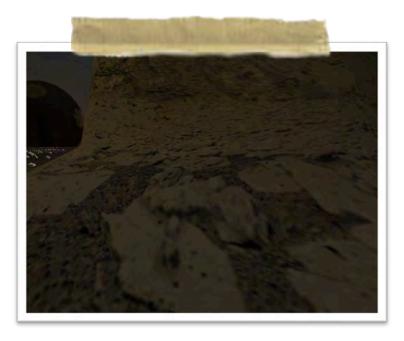
The same position later in the day; the sun is nearing the horizon and the light is beginning to fade.



The same time of day, looking toward the hillside; the arm is pointing down again.



The sun has just set and suddenly the body is much easier to see again.



Darkness has settled in; the photo is quite dim yet the body still is easy to see.

This is all very strange and very interesting!

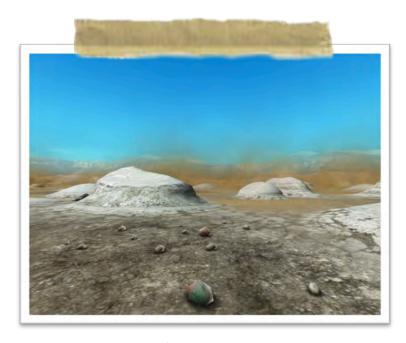
The body consistently is much easier to see when it is in shadow. Perhaps because it's so flat that the bright sunlight washes out the subtle shadows that we can see at other times? But there also is

a change in coloring for certain areas of the body in direct sunlight versus in shadows. The entire chest and forearm seem to fade away in sunlight, making the body far more difficult to distinguish at those times.

I hadn't intended to write this part up here (being non-zoological in nature), but it now occurs to me that this may bear some relationship to this odd phenomenon of lighting and shadows with the body.

Earlier while waiting for time to pass between photographs of the body, I wandered around the nearby hills and happened to notice something really interesting about all the scattered rocks on the ground. Many of them glow red, green or yellow. And even more interesting

is how they continue to glow after the sun has set. The colored ones continue glowing in color, the rest glow white. Strangely enough, even though these rocks appear similar to the hills in color and texture, the hills never glow at all. So the rocks must be something else entirely from the hills here.



Approaching some of the colored rocks.

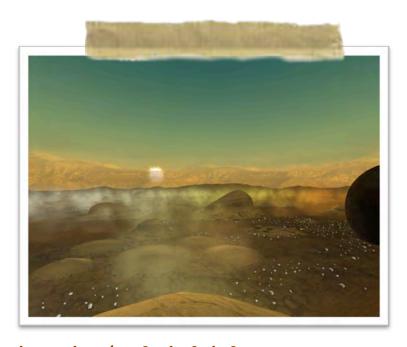


A closer look at the rocks (the yellow is harder to see, being fairly pale in comparison).

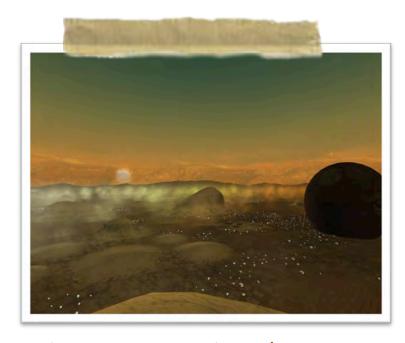


The rocks continue glowing throughout the night.

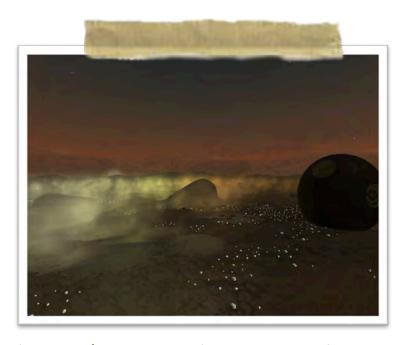
In addition to the glowing rocks, another mystery of the Payiferen light is regarding the sun. Both at dawn and sunset, the sun can be viewed shining through the surrounding mountains!



The sun has slipped behind the distant
mountains with only its top edge still showing
above the skyline, yet the entire orb still is visible
to the naked eye.



As the sunset progresses, the Payiferen sun continues to be visible THROUGH the far mountains. This same phenomenon can be observed at Japa phile the sun rises.



The sun only disappears when it descends behind the sand dunes; the top edge of the sun is all that can now be seen.

Overall, there seems to be something very odd going on here with light and shadow. What in the world does this mean?

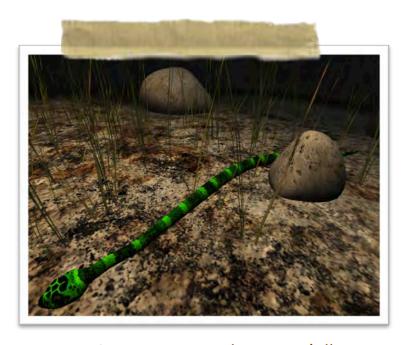
I've been reviewing all my notes thus far and see that I've neglected the Noloben Tunnel Snake (and still am missing the elusive Pirahna Bird). Out of all the well-documented animals of the D'ni ages, these seem to be the only two now missing from my photographic inventory. I will need to return to Noloben and get some photos.

* * * *

I'm back in Noloben propling around in the tunnels. I have found a particularly nice spot for Snake documentation. It is well-lit and in a location where the Snakes seem to be especially active.



This fellow pansed, apparently sensing I was standing nearby.



I moved to the side and was able to get a fuller shot of his body.



A very nice portrait, courtesy of my zoom lense.

* * * *

I had expected this to be a quick trip.

However, as I left the tunnel and began walking back toward the linking bubble, I was very surprised to hear a splash nearby and see a

Bluff Pelican flying straight toward me with a fish in its mouth. I was so surprised, that by the time I grabbed my camera from around my neck, the bird was too far away to capture.

I'm very excited and determined to investigate this further!

* * * *

I've spent the last several hours watching the soaring Bluff Pelicans through my binoculars and watching their hunting behavior.

Interestingly enough, the most prolific hunter among them is a female, one of the only females I've ever observed in flight. And she's quite a prolific huntress; I have yet to see her fail in landing her quarry.

Now to figure out how to photograph all this. I think that between the different islands and my zoom lens, I can get started.



While soaring with the males, she has begun a rapid vertical dive toward the water.



She is almost at the water surface now.



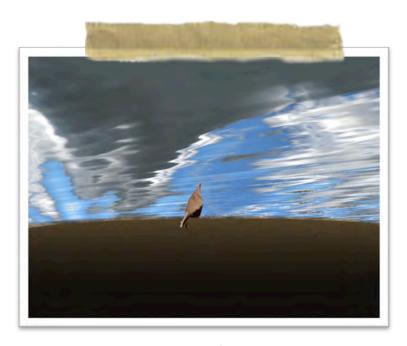
She is just starting to enter the water.



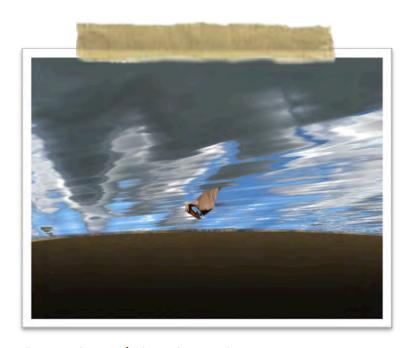
She is now completely under.



The ripples continue to widen.



Underwater, she is reaching for something.



She now has a fish in her beak.



She is wrestling the fish.



She now has a firm grip.



A closer view; she is now ready to take off.



Above water, she is beginning to take flight.



She starts to rise from the water.



Continuing to rise.



She is now in the air.



She is gaining altitude.



Going higher.



She is off with her catch.



Seen from behind, she is flying away.



Seen higher up, she is approaching with her fish.



<u>She flies past.</u>

Wow, what a day I've had! Capturing the hunting behavior of the Bluff Pelican was <u>such</u> an unexpected treat! Additionally, I now have another documented animal to add to the Noloben list. Unfortunately, I didn't get a close enough photo of the fish to make a reliable identification,

but I can say they appear to be trout-like animals. So what II inferred earlier I now have Iocumented with certainty. Marvelons!

I need to head back to the surface and post these findings on the thread. I'm sure my colleagues will be just as thrilled as I. I took a quick peek at the forum thread this morning and saw that DLordof Time and janaba1 are just as excited about the Bluff Pelican photos as I am. It really is gratifying to know that others find this work interesting and even inspiring.

I'm now back in Noloben. After a night's sleep and some further thought, I realized that I'd only captured part of the Bluff Pelican hunting cycle. So I've returned hoping to document the rest.

* * * *

After climbing to the top of Esher's laboratory tower—the highest place I can find

here—and making generous use of my zoom, I've been able to get a nice series of photos of the same female as she hunted again.



Here is the female Bluff Pelican at her nest.



She is starting to launch.



Her wings are fully spread.



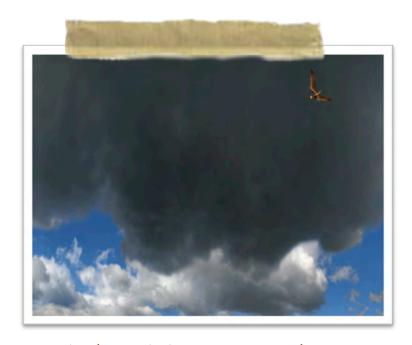
She begins flying away.



She continues to rise.



She is gaining altitude to join the soaring males.



Up in the clouds, she has started to circle.



She is watching the water far below.



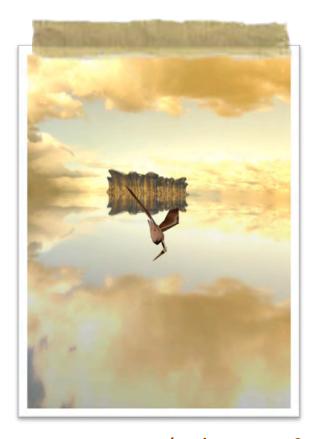
She cocks her head, seeing something of interest.



She is watching it carefully.



She begins a dive.



She is starting to streamline her wings and point her head.



She is nearly vertical now.



She dives with her head and beak horizontal for a good distance.



Then she begins to straighten her head.



She soon will be in an aerodynamic position.



Her body straightened, she can enter the water with minimal sound and impact.

I have not been able to discover where she flies with her prey. She must feed in private

somewhere, for she only returns to her nest once she is done. Perhaps she must guard against maranding Gulls and fellow Pelicans? Such birds on Terra are certainly known to steal a meal readily enough.

I'm trying to decide what to do about my journal records thus far regarding the hunting behavior; things are a bit out of order with the photographs and descriptions. In the bigger picture, I think it makes the most sense to create a slideshow of the cycle and post it on the forums rather than try to change things here.

Checking in at the forum in readzing to post my completed documentation of the Bluff Pelican hunting cycle, I see there are some interesting discussions afoot. DLordof Time and janaba 1 have speculated that the Paziferen rocks have luminescent qualities, perhaps in the form of embedded crystals.

larryf58 says he found some blue fireflies by a lake in Kadish Tolesa, which puzzles me. I don't recall ever seeing a lake there, just the puddles along the forest path and at the big lock mechanisms. I'll have to ask him what I missed seeing there. I wonder if he's seeing the same blue fireflies I found or if he's discovered some other ones.

He also documented the Wahrk remains found at The Cleft and there is some animated discussion going on about how the skeleton got there. Here's another animal J've failed to include in my photographic library. J'll need to add it to my list.

Along with some of the others participating in the discussion, I've always thought the Wahrk fell through the rift when Riven was destroyed. We now know that in general, when things fall into the rift, they land at The Cleft unharmed as the Myst linking book III back in the early 1800s. So my assumption is that the Wahrk landed safely enough but died of exposure in the desert. Its skeleton remains intact and fully articulated to this day, so the Wahrk clearly wasn't torn apart by the collapsing process the way the rift

telescope was. The telescope still lies out in the desert as a twisted pile of metal, just as we observed in the records of Riven's collapse.

DLordof Time remarks that there is a theoretical connection between the rift and The Cleft, though no one understands why; we simply see the connection as we land there after leaping into our Relto fissure. And the Riven fissure leads to The Cleft as witnessed by the various Riven artifacts we see there (the Wahrk skeleton, the telescope remnants, the Moiety dagger).

I've been wondering whether there is a Bahro connection with the rift. Whenever we end up in a Bahro cave, our Relto books won't work and we must leap into a starry expanse in order to leave. So would the rift be something of a

linking nexus for the Bahro? Rather the way we think of hyperspace working for space travel? A hub from which all destinations can be reached?

Deck 15 reminds us that Katran wrote how Gehn would throw rebellions Rivenese through the rift in order to see what happened to them, to see if they survived. Fortunately for us, his experiments were inconclusive. Nevertheless, J must assume that the Rivenese arrived safely just as the Myst linking book did (and just as we To from Relto). Perhaps they were taken in by some kind-hearted locals; at least Id like to think so. If they survived, then perhaps there are living Jescendants somewhere here in New Mexico even now. II love to track some Jown and interview them. Surely there would be some family lore regarding their Rivenese ancestry.

Perhaps they would even have preserved the Rivenese language, history, artifacts... It would be an amazing find and some fascinating lost history to add to our records.

Well, enough of this for now. I need to post the rest of the Bluff Pelican hunting cycle records.

I've created the slideshow too and am posting a link in the thread.

Checking in at the forums again today. I see that janaba1 is continuing to capture the thread and its images for posterity and is most enthusiastic about the slideshow I posted. The Payiferen rocks mystery has moved into its own thread for more discussion. And larryf58 seems to have found the blue fireflies in the same place that I found them, mistaking the misty expanse at the forest exit for a lake.

He's begun a very interesting new project documenting the Bahro in the Cavern. It would be marvelous to map them out and perhaps learn more about the particular individuals that visit the City and neighborhood rooftops. Thus

far, larryf58 seems to have a remarkable knack for being in the right place at the right time.

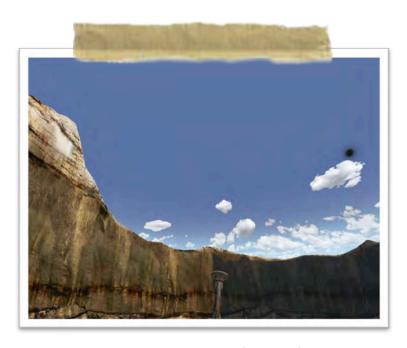
Today, I'm starting on a new research expedition, documenting all the Bahro structures and glyphs throughout the ages. I think I'll include the D'ni/Yeesha glyphs as well since I have a suspicion there will be some important correlations between them.

I'll keep this journal active, though, since I still have at least two animals to Jocument before my photo library will be complete. And, of course, there is always the possibility that I will finally spot the Cavern fish at some point.

It's later and I'm back from my trip to The Cleft caldera. While I was there photographing all the Bahro glyphs on the boulders, I made a most unexpected discovery of a third insect there! I happened to look upward and saw a single black insect buzzing about up above. I was able to get a couple good photographs, though they are a bit blurry.



He is flying all alone in the sunshine.



<u>Moing my 200m, I get a better shot but he moves</u>

<u>so fast, it's still just a blur.</u>

Other than his color, this insect is remarkably similar in size, shape and behavior to the Direbo white Firefly. Rils' theory about the Direbo insects linking here to the caldera is looking to be almost proved. I will need to return to the

caldera and look carefully for a Dragonfly. Finding one would be remarkable indeed and pretty much clinch the matter.

Regarding the differences in color of these insects, so far each one has appeared lighter in the dim light of Direbo and darker in the bright light at The Cleft. I've never been at The Cleft during the night, so cannot get tell if these two insects glow.

In any event, I need to update my Firefly data grid and replace the printout in my other zoological journal.

* * * *

While searching the City earlier for glyphs to photograph, I happened to stumble across a stray

kitty wandering about. He has taken quite a liking to me and followed me back to my Relto. Already being a hopeless cat person, I am pleased to let him stay. He's already followed me to a couple of ages as I continue my Bahro glyph and structure hunt. I must admit, it's fun having a traveling companion, though he does tend to stay so close to me that I have to be careful not to trip over him. I nearly sat on him couple of times, too!



In Relto, he likes it best in the hut.



He sits near the canen and seems to enjoy the music.



He has such a sweet face.



I took a family portrait using my camera's timer.



He followed me to Eder Tsogal.



He's very affectionate and likes to twine around my legs kitty-style.



He enjoys a good romp outdoors.



He sat in my lap and together we enjoyed the Tsogal fountain.

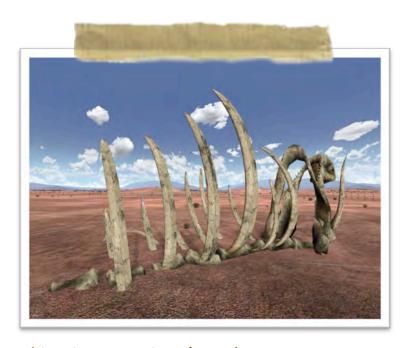
I have named him Max. I will need to see about stocking the Relto pond with fish so Max can eat while I am back at the surface. It will be interesting to see how my kitty crew at home reacts to this; I'm sure they will smell Max on my hands and clothes when I get home.

I have some unexpected free time today and so think I will take advantage of this and head back to The Cleft and look for Dragonflies. I'll go ahead and try to fill out the missing animals here too, while I'm out and about.

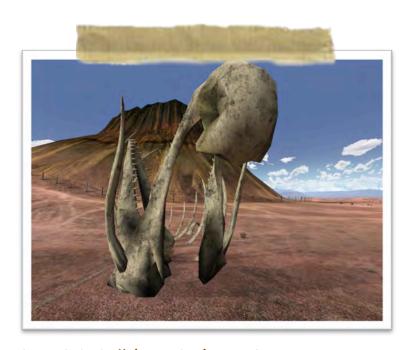
* * * *

I've been here for about a half-hour and have yet to find any sign of Dragonflies. The caldera is relatively small, so I'm sure I've covered all the territory several times over; and I did my best to be thorough. So for now, my conclusion is that there are not any Dragonflies here.

But I'll go ahead and scale the walls so I can get some photos of the Wahrk skeleton.



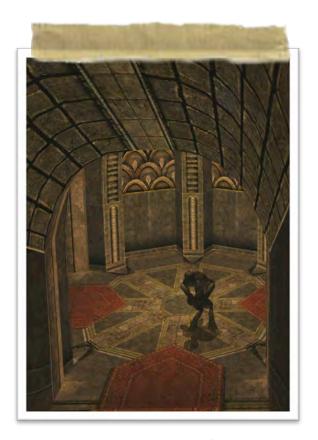
Although it's been here for at least two centuries, the bones remain fully articulated.



The Wahrk skull from the front; the entire skeleton is enormous and I can walk through the gap ahead quite easily.

Now that I've gotten some Wahrk photos, the only animal that remains missing is the Piranha Bird. I will head to Laki'ahn next.

After some thought, I decided to go to the extra effort of walking down the Great Shaft to the Eder Tomahn containing the Direbo linking book for the Laki'ahn linking bubble. Although I'm sure this will make no meaningful difference, a part of me wonders if using this particular linking book will somehow help miticate my failures thus far in sighting a Piranha Bird. As it won't do any harm to try this (save the extra time and effort of walking to the deepest Eder Tomahn), I will proceed and see what happens...



Approaching the very bottom of the Great
Shaft, I happened across a Bahro wandering the
hallways.

I'm back in Laki'ahn yet again and am both gratified and puzzled to find a couple different Piranha Birds about. It doesn't make any sense that using that particular Direbo linking book would have made any difference to things here in Laki'ahn. This surely must be a simple coincidence; yet I am always suspicions of apparent coincidences...

But at any rate, I can now hunt around for a nest or colony.

* * * *

Well, I've spent most of the day here and have come to the conclusion that my hope of finding a nest or colony is an impossible one. Observing the natural behavior of the Piranha Bird, I can see that they are highly territorial and quite

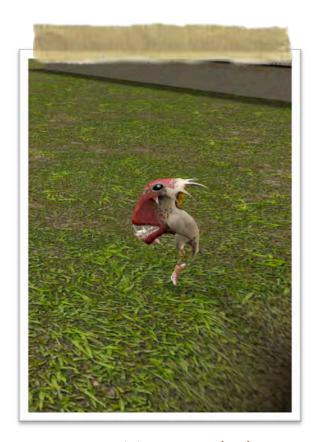
anti-social, not only with their own kind, but with all other animals as well. I wonder how in the world they breed and raise their young, then. From everything I've seen so far, they are unalterably hostile to all other creatures...



Watching this fellow from a discreet distance, he ignores me and continues in his odd circling behavior.



The point of perpetually running in circles eludes me; this fellow would apparently continue his behavior ceaselessly.



However, Japproach him more closely and interrupt him. He responds with the typical warning behavior of the species.



The Piranha Bird reacts first by stopping and staring at the intruder.



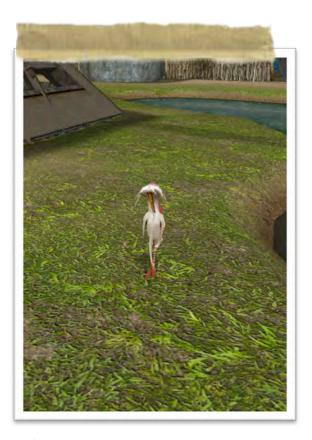
He then begins vocalizing a warning call, which sounds like a wheezing croak.



As I step nearer, he responds by running to a safe distance and then resuming his warning call.



The Piranha Bird head is disproportionately large compared to the body, and is extremely tall and narrow.



Viewed from the rear, there is a yellow mass of muscle protruding from the back of the skull, which allows the Piranha Bird to balance its enormous head with its spindly body.

The disproportionate size of this animal's head to its body is something of a mystery. I haven't encountered a skeleton of one, so can only hypothesize that, as with Terran birds, this species has hollow bones as a means to lighten the body weight. Though these birds clearly are flightless, they quite probably have evolved from an ancestor that did indeed fly. Hollow bones would allow the evolution of such an oversized head.

Overall, to call this bird stupid is to put the matter kindly... Their defensive behavior is useless against any sort of serious predator and their fondness for running in circles makes them unusually vulnerable to a stealthy attack. Though they are quite proficient at avoiding it once they spot an intruder, I imagine a cornered

Piranha Bird would deliver quite a nasty bite (and they do indeed bite, as attested by Rils).

There are so few of these birds here, I must assume they are endangered or at least a threatened species. There are many mysteries about them that would bear further study.

* * * *

I will retire this journal for now, as I've reached my goal of documenting all the known animals of the D'ni ages. There still remain a handful of rarely seen or rumored animals that may be added in the future if I am fortunate enough to encounter them. But for now, this endeavor has come to a satisfactory end.

I will continue working through my lists of further research activities as time and inclination allow and will use this journal for the zoological projects on the lists.

Future Zoological Research Projects

- 1. Photograph the Laki'ahn Piranha Bird; find a nest or colony of them. Learn more about their habits and routine. DONE 1/17/2012
- 2. Study the bonding between Laki mothers and calves; how long do they remain close? Is there a point when the calf must separate from the mother or the pod?
- 3. Are Laki naturally aggressive? Are they relatively Jocile?
- Research whether the Crimson Kadish can link like the Kemo Fireflies.
- 5. Does the Direbo white firefly need the coolness or humidity of the water for survival? Is it territorial?
- 6. Dentify the species names for the Direbo firefly, butterfly and dragonfly.

- 7. Study Shroomie's use of her forelegs; are they sensory organs?
- 8. Are the Negilahn Piranha Flowers parasitic?
 Do they actually move up the sides of the
 Stilt Trees? If not, how do they get there?
- 9. Does the Dereno Arctic Coral grow through the ice surface naturally during its life cycle? If so, what purpose does this serve?
- 10. Dentify the Dereno flat green coral.
- Study the Kemo Keanulint colony behavior, social relationships, life cycle, etc.
- 12. Look into a Kemo breeding program.
- 13. Find out if there's a way to study the Quab's former natural habitat (probably not but it's worth looking into)

- 14. Is there any genetic relationship between the Cavern Firefly and the Direbo white Firefly?
- 15. Are the Todelmer Fireflies native only at the great heights of the column tops? Do they exist in the forests below and if so, is their social behavior different? Are there more of them there? What other animal species exist at the Todelmer surface?
- 16. Study the Selenitic Bats more thoroughly. What do they eat? Have they adapted to a vegetarian diet? The garden appears to be the only place with a viable food source.
- 17. Does the presence of the generator towers and their energy bursts have an adverse

- affect on the Rime sea life, in particular the Rime Whale?
- 18. Document the Noloben Tunnel Snakes. DONE 1/7/2012
- 19. Document the Wahrk at The Cleft.

 DONE 1/17/2012
- 20. Study the new bug found at The Cleft caldera; look for a Dragonfly there. IN PROGRESS
- 21. Find out if the caldera Flies and newly discovered bug glow at night/in the dark.
- 22. Study the Laki'ahn Piranha Bird breeding patterns and adaptive behaviors. Being so deeply anti-social, how do they raise their young? How does their defensive style serve them? What purpose does their exaggerated body shape serve?

Other Questions/Issues to Research

- 1. Did the Buggaro have an important role to the D'ni in Teledahn? Does it have a relationship with the mushrooms and spores? Why are the spore machine paddles modeled after Buggaro wings?
- 2. Was Kadish responsible for the butterflies migrating to the vault? Did this happen during the event of his death?
- 3. Was Kadish wounded by angry age natives? Is this why he retreated to his vault to die with his treasures?
- 4. Why does the butterfly color appear a deeper blue at The Cleft from Direbo? (suspect it's a light wavelength thing—need to consult a proper scientist)

- 5. Where do all the doorways in the New K'veer link-in room lead? Is it a nexus? For what or for where?
- 6. Is the writing in the future vault Katran's or Yeesha's? Or both? What is it saying about them both? And what do their words really mean?
- 7. Where are the Myst Island living quarters?
- 8. Did Atrus write something into Mechanical age to prevent life/decay from attaching to the islands and building?
- 9. Why do the Bahro structures make such constant use of the tusks? What does this tell us about them? And what creature are the tusks and bones from? Which is its native age?

- 10. See if there are any fellow explorers working on replicating Atrus' remote viewing machine.
- 11. What exactly is Yeesha's connection with the linking bubbles? The Bahro caves and other Bahro constructions?
- 12. Do an in-depth age survey of all things
 Bahro, especially structures and glyphs. JN
 PROGRESS
- 13. What is the fossil-like phenomenon in the Payiferen desert? Is its arm pointing to anything? If so, what; is it something important? IN PROGRESS (being researched by DLordof Time)
- 14. Investigate the odd qualities of light and shadow in Payiferen. Why can we see the sun through the mountains (but not the sand

dunes) at dawn and sunset? Why do the rocks glow colors? Why do they glow at night? Why do parts of the Payiferen body seem to disappear in direct sunlight? IN PROGRESS (being researched by DLordof Time)

- 15. Is the rift/starry expanse a Bahro nexus (or linking hub)? Why is it always associated with the Bahro journey quest caves?
- 16. Research whether there were any reports circa 1800s New Mexico of some strangers appearing in the desert. If so, try to find out what happened to them. If they have living descendants, see if they can be tracked down and interviewed.

