

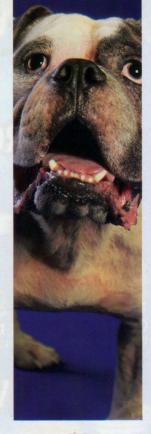
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Tagalo Manilensis

by WALLY SUAREZ

antids, some would argue, represent the highest pinnacle of insect predatory body plan. With extremely good eyesight perched on a rotating head and a pronotum held diagonally that is armed with a pair of raptorial claws that can deliver lightning-fast strikes, it's easy to see why the belief is almost universal. Add to that an acute killing instinct and you have a predator that so few in the animal kingdom can match, at least in the matters of behavior and morphology.

Some mantids take the body plan to extremes, where features appear to take on plant parts to better provide concealment both from prey and predators. Some employ disruptive outlines, such as those seen in the dead leaf mantis (*Deroplatys*), violin mantis (*Gongylus*),

orchid mantis (*Hymenopus*), and the devil's flower (*Idolomantis*). Some smaller species have patterns and demeanor that allow them to merge with mossy and lichenous tree bark such as bark mantis (*Amorphoscelis*) and the mossy mantis (*Haaniella*).

And then there are the twig mimics like the alien head (*Idolomorpha*), branch mantis (*Neodanouria*), the twig imitator (*Popa*), and our very own stick mantis (*Tagalomantis*), the subject of our inquiry. However, body morphology is only one of two ways that a mantis can be successful in its niche. Defensive behaviors such as threat displays and crypsis, wherein an animal assumes the appearance of an inanimate object to avoid detection, has become widespread in the Order *Mantodea* which conveys its role in the attainment of these insects as top predators.

Inchordate

"TAGALOG MANTIS"

Tagalomantis was erected as a genus by Morgan Hebard in 1920 for Euchomena manillensis, which was described by Swiss mineralogist and entomologist Henri Louis Frédéric de Saussure in 1870; it was based on a single male specimen said to have originated in "Manilla". The following year, Saussure provided more detailed description using the same male specimen.

In 1916, Ermanno Giglio-Tos united all Oriental Euchomena-E. manillensis included - under the genus Euchomenella which he established that same year. Four years later, Hebard acquired a second specimen from Los Baños, Laguna which allowed him to provide a much detailed description, resulting in his creation of the genus Tagalomantis, with the name

bearing an obvious allusion to the Tagalogs.

The genus remained in obscurity due to the general preference among mantid entomologists to uphold Euchomenella, until Tagalomantis was resurrected in 2001 by R. Roy. Tagalomantis is included in subfamily Deroplatyinae, which includes the very popular Deroplatys. The genus contains two species, the other being T. brevis from northern Sulawesi. Tagalomantis manillensis is known from the province of Laguna and the island of Panay, although I have also encountered these in the province of Quezon, right at the Laguna-Quezon border. The Luzon-Panay distribution may be disjunct, but populations still unknown may reside on the intervening islands.



PREDATOR AND PREY

Tagalomantis is a forest-dwelling species that is encountered in a variety of forest types, from old growth forests, secondary forests, and even in stands of fruit and lumber trees. However, they seem to avoid heavy shade, preferring slightly open and drier situations with dappled light. In the wild I often see this species on shrubs, thin vines, rattan, trees, Pandanus, and ferns including tree ferns. As noted by Schwarz (2017), a mixture of both living and dead plant matter is essential for T. manillensis, with living plant matter attracting potential prey items, while dead and decaying ones providing camouflage.

It is usually not easy to spot these mantids, as they often perch in a disorder of vegetation, although usually close to the ground. Like many mantid species, *T. manillensis* are always seen on the look-out for prey, with raptorial claws ready to snatch anything that comes nearby. But when approached by what it perceives to be a potential

threat, they fold their forelegs and press the body against the substrate and the hind legs are stretched out in line with the body, perhaps as a means to get rid of incriminating shadows.

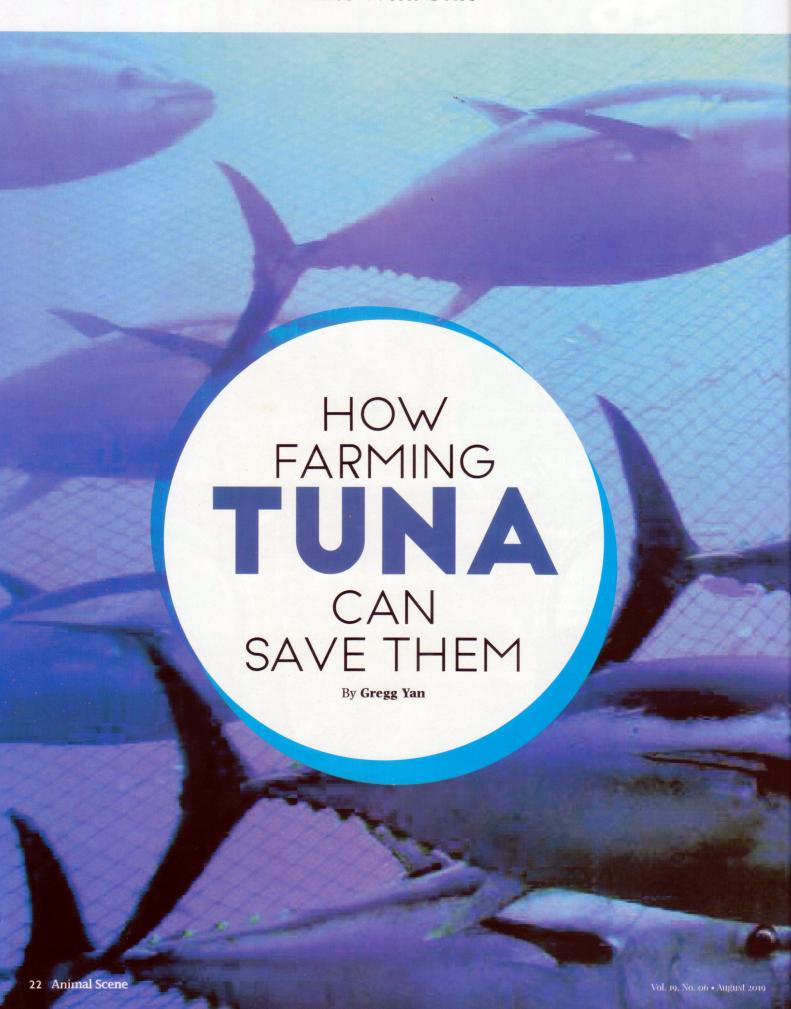
Another concealment behavior is typical of many mantids wherein they will move to the side opposite to the perceived menace. If this fails or if the substrate won't allow them to maneuver to the reverse side, they present their slim flanks to the hypothetical threat, apparently to avoid exposing the dorsal outline. In instances when If sufficiently agitated, they have the habit of dropping to the ground in a similar fashion to what some truly cryptic phasmids does, such as in the genus Mnesilochus. In these instances, they run but if held or momentarily stopped, will fold their forelegs and assume a twig-like appearance.

The defensive repertoire of *T. manillensis* is among the most varied among the mantids, although threat displays such as those seen in *Idolomantis* or

even the use of the forelegs to grasp attackers such as that frequently employed by *Hierodula*, have so far not been observed. While they can certainly fly, they do so only in short and low bursts. These insects rely heavily on crypsis to dissuade would-be threats.

Grasshoppers and crickets figure prominently in their diet, although they will feed on any suitably-sized arthropod even in captivity. Nocturnal activity begins at dusk and in the early evening hours, when these mantids begin to climb to more exposed locations, lending the idea that during the day, T. manillensis balances its activity between hunting for prey and hiding from visually-oriented predators such as birds. Still, tackling large prey during the day lends the mantids vulnerable to detection by predators and so the preferred prey items are typically small. This changes by nighttime when no such pressure exists and they are more predisposed to hunt down suitably larger prey.

The Wild Side





By ROXANNE LIBATIQUE

hether or not on vacation, there will be times when you have to leave home for a long time, which leaves you worrying about your companion animals.

Some people can't even leave their homes for more than a day, fearing they won't find someone responsible enough to take care of their fur babies while they are gone.

No worries though, as Buwi Comia, animal rights activist and founder of Clowder Bay Cat Boarding, sat down with Animal Scene and talk about the pros and cons of pet boarding to help you manage your expectations.

Cover Story TAXONOMIC **INFORMATION** Kingdom - Animalia Phylum - Chordata Class - Mammalia Order - Carnivora Family - Canidae Genus - Canis Species - Canis lupus familiaris Animal Scene Vol. 19, No. 06 • August 2019

American Bulldog

Bad Bully or Best Buddy?

By JURICA BUENVIAJE Photos by JEFFREY C. LIM

t's easy to become intimidated by the American Bulldog – their stocky and muscular build, fierce look, and badas's reputation are enough reasons for anyone to feel cautious around them. Couple those characteristics with their strength and agility, and indeed, they can be quite threatening.

American Bulldogs are the tallest and biggest among all bulldog breeds. According to DogTime. com, they could grow as tall as 20

to 28 inches and weigh up to 60 to 120 pounds by the time they become adults, with males being generally larger than females.

Beyond their intimidating appearance, American bulldogs are sweet, protective, and are as loyal as much as the next pooch. Caring for these intelligent and strong-willed dogs can be quite challenging at first, but with proper training, they can be the most affectionate and loving family companions: gentle giants in their own right.

Cover Story

A SUCKER FOR BIG CANINES

We interviewed Marvin S. Feliciano, fur dad to five-year old American bulldog Demon, to talk about what life is like living with this beautiful breed.

Marvin's affinity for dogs started when he was a little kid. However, he did not meet his first dog, an aspin (asong Pinoy), until he was in high school. He eventually discovered that he liked bigger dogs, which led him to choose a Pit Bull as an animal companion when he was in college.

Since then, he has taken care of other big dogs and has had the opportunity to live with a Rottweiler, a Bull Mastiff, and a Siberian Husky. In 2012, Marvin took care of his first American Bulldog and the rest, as they say, is history. "Sa lahat nang naalagaan ko, iba yung character nila. Iba yung nakita ko sa kanila kaya nag-concentrate talaga ako sa American Bulldog."

DOGS ARE "PEOPLE". TOO

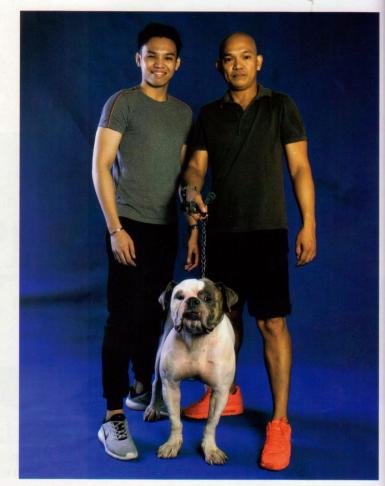
When we asked Marvin if he had any special memories that he wanted to share with us, he recalled one particular story when one of their American Bulldogs, Lebron, passed away.

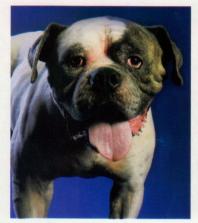
"Meron kasi akong isang aso na na-stroke. Nag-iyakan kami eh. Tapos lahat sila, lalo na si Demon, kinomfort nila. Kaya doon ko siguro nakita yung para silang tao, hindi lang sila nakakapagsalita eh. Tapos kahit samin, nakikinig sila tapos alam nila kapag sila

yung pinag-uusapan. Naiiyak tuloy ako."

He goes on to say, "Kahit mga anak ko. Kunwari uuwi ako from work, sila from school, alam nila kung nasaan ako. Andun lang ako sa mga aso eh. Iisa-isahin naming batiin yun bago kami pumasok nang bahay."

Marvin explains that although the breed has a reputation for aggression, in reality, they are really sweet and obedient dogs. He sees to it that the dogs have enough bonding time with the family and includes them in their family activities at home together with his wife and children.







LOVING A BULLY

In 2015, Marvin was already living with American Bulldogs when a friend of his came to ask for his help about one, whom they could no longer provide for.

Marvin recalls, "Bale nakuha ko siya nasa one year na siya halos. Sobrang mahal na mahal rin hasi yan nung mismong may-ari kaya lang parang mangailangan sila. Bale nagkaron ng problema, malang mag-aalaga."

Since he already had experience taking care of the breed, his friend knew that Marvin was the right person to adopt then-one-year-old Demon: "So ako yung [pinagtanungan] kasi alam miya na [nag-aalaga ako ng AmBull]. Sakin siya [nagtanong] na baka pwedeng [ako na ang mag alaga]." Including Demon, Marvin now has five American Bulldogs under his care.

Having an American Bulldog as a companion animal is not for the inexperienced. Although they are a docile and affectionate breed – that is, when they are socialized from a very young age – they could become destructive, aggressive, or out of control when left without exercise and training.

Ideally, someone who has extensive knowledge about the breed and extra patience is the kind of person who could be an ideal companion.

Marvin says, "Sobrang nag-research at inaral ko kasi talaga yan eh. Minsan kasi may mga taong mahilig lang, 'yun lang, pero hindi naman nila ganon kamahal."

Unfortunately, many people are still attracted to dogs only because of the physical aspect, bypassing research of behavior and special needs that specific breeds might have. Often, this results in abandonment. According to ClearTheShelters.com, the American Bulldog is among the most common dog breeds often found in animal shelters in the U.S. Marvin says, "Kailangan ng sobrang tiyaga at sobrang pagmamahal para sa kanila."



Cover Story



Cover Story

Challenge ACCEPTED

swith any other companion mimals, it's normal to encounter mallenges while living with them. In the case of American Bulldogs, Marvin shares, "Wala talaga. Siguro as sakin simula noong bata sila matrain ko na]. Nakuha ko naman Demon almost mag-one year so mang puppy pa lang siya." Because Marvin was firm and consistent training them as puppies, they med out to be well-mannered as a adults.

Be adds, "Kaya medyo nasanay ma siguro 'pag nagagalit ako, wakita nila, kaya alam nila. Lalo kapag magpapakain ako, maingay pag kakain [na], pero 'pag sinabi wag maingay, medyo nakatingin sila tapos hihintayin nila ako. was una syempre lalo [na] habang amalaki, 'pag bibigyan mo sila nang mekain, medyo sinusunggaban. Seayon hindi na. Hihintayin nilang mo, hangga't di mo binababa, makatingin lang sila sayo." Indeed, matience in dealing with them and understanding their unique needs ma long way!

hen it comes to their attitude wards other dogs, Marvin said they are generally calm wards them. "Pag nilapitan sila, ganun tapos attakbuhan [na 'yung mga ibang Pero hindi sila yung aggressive. Any experience kasi ako noon Bull Mastiff at Rottweiler, gwawala. Pero sa kanila hindi ko page-experience yun eh."



BIG THINGS COME in small packages

A family dog with handsome looks and a great personality, the American Bulldog is the total package. As Marvin confirms, "Nasa kanila na kasi ang lahat. Siguro kung isa-isahin mo yung mga taong may ibang mga breeds, tapos pagsama-samahin mo yung German Shepherd, Rottweiler, Bull

Mastiff, nandun lahat sa American Bulldog."

Marvin advises, "Sa American Bulldog kasi, hindi pwedeng breed lover ka lang, kailangan dog lover ka talaga eh. Kasi may mga taong nagfofocus lang sa breed mismo. Sobrang hindi [pwede] yung mag-aalaga [lang] sila, hindi pwedeng gusto lang nila, kailangan 'yung mamahalin talaga nila."

The American Bulldog is a perfect example of why one should never

judge an individual based on their physical appearance alone. They may look tough on the outside but they are big softies on the inside, and these characteristics are what make so many people fall in love with them, not just in America but all over the world.

If you are looking for an animal companion who can intimidate bad guys while still be affectionate and loving at the end of the day, buddying up with a Bully might just be what you need.





BODY: The chest is and moderately wide, with ample room for heart and lungs. The ribs are well sorung from the spine and then flatten to form a deep body, extending at least to the elbows or lower in adult The topline inclines wery slightly downward from -developed withers to a broad, muscular back. The him is short, broad, and wightly arched, blending into a slightly sloping croup. The lank is moderately tucked up and firm.

TAIL: The natural tail werv thick at the base, set and tapers to a point. It should reach to the hock joint.

COAT: The coat is short, and varies from soft to to the touch. It is one or less in length.

HINDQUARTERS:

The hindquarters are well muscled and broad. The width and angulation of the hindquarters is in balance with the width and angulation of the foreguarters.

HIND LEGS:

The thighs are well developed with thick, easily discerned muscles. The lower thighs are muscular and short.

FEET: The feet are round, medium in size, well arched, and tight.

COLOR: Any color, color pattern, or combination of colors is acceptable, except for solid black, solid blue, merle, and tricolor (white with patches of black and tan).

HEIGHT AND WEIGHT: The American buildog must be sufficiently powerful and agile. Males are applically larger with heavier bone and more muscle than females. sexes, however, should have a well-balanced overall arrance and all dogs should be well conditioned, neither over underweight.

BREED INFORMATION

APPEARANCE

"Yung malalaki ulo, malalaki buto, malalaki katawan, malalapad at maskulado. Kumbaga 'yung maangas at matikas ang dating. Sa Am Bull ko nakita 'yun.'

PERSONALITY

"Sa akin kasi sobrang sweet nila at family dog sila para sakin. Magaling din silang guard dog kasi 'pag meron ibang dumating na tao nagwawala talaga sila, pero 'pag nakita nila na kinausap ko mga ibang tao kakalma na sila. Lalo na pag nilabas sila sobrang bait nila sa ibang tao. 'Pag nakita ka niyan, mahihiga na 'yan o kaya makikipaglaro na 'yan. Sobrang nakikipaglaro 'yan sa bunso ko."

GROOMING NEEDS

"Okay naman siya kasi shorthair lang siya. Dikit lang sa balat nila eh. Madali lang naman sila paliguan eh. Meron lang silang shampoo [na] talagang para sa kanila and soap. Ginagamit ko lang kasi sa kanila Perla lang eh. Kasi 'yung Perla, may VCO siya, tapos saka ko siya lalagyan ng shampoo para mabango. 'Yung Perla kasi maganda sa balahibo nila. Tapos Bearing yung shampoo niya."

SPECIAL CARE

"Samin kasi, family dog lang talaga eh. Siguro basic obedience lang. Yun lang nagwo-walk kami every morning, or every other day. Mga 2 hours. Siguro 5:00 [am] alis kami bago kami putukan ng araw kasi mainit na eh. O kaya naman minsan sa gabi pagdating ko nang bahay galing work, pinapasingaw ko muna yung lupa. Minsan 9 or 10 ng gabi na. Kailangan [din] meron maayos na source of income. Kasi kailangan nila ng mga vitamins, vaccines, at iba pang medical needs."

DIET

"Raw food ang pinapakain ko eh. Bale sa umaga, chicken head at chicken neck. Bale 2 kilos sa umaga siya, tapos sa hapon dog food naman. Kailangan super linis niya na ubod nang puti. Chicken head at neck kasi yun rin ang nirerekomenda sakin nang ibang nag [aalaga ng] AmBull. Medyo mas less yung pupu nila. Mas buo tapos walang amoy. Tapos sa hapon, dati one kilo siya ng dog food, pero [ngayon] 'di na, hina-half ko nalang. Malakas sila kumain non. Ang ganda pa sakanila di ganon kabaho yung dumi nila pati ihi. Sa gabi, dog food din. Medyo nahiyang sila sa Bow Wow."