

ANIMA MUNDI

Adventures in Wildlife Photography

Issue 24, Year 6 - October 2016

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SCOOP The Black-and-Chestnut Eagle

THE TIGERS OF TADOBA Meeting India's iconic feline

THE GLOBAL ARCTIC AWARDS 2015 gallery

GEMS OF THE PACIFIC COAST Ecuador's endangered frogs

BIRTH OF A GIANT Diving with Sperm whales



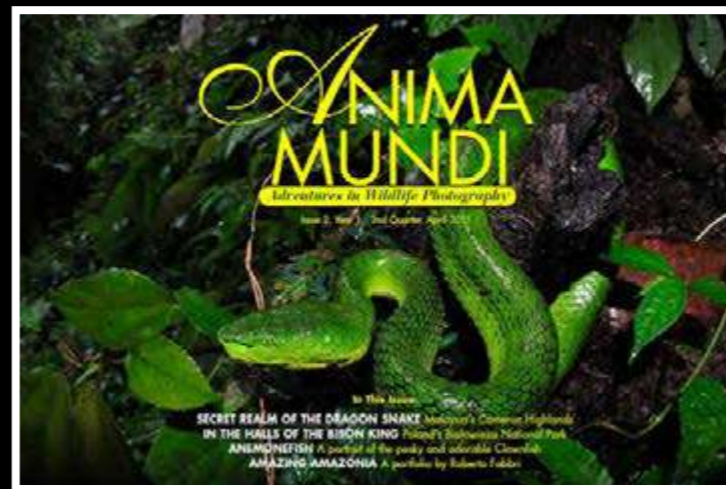
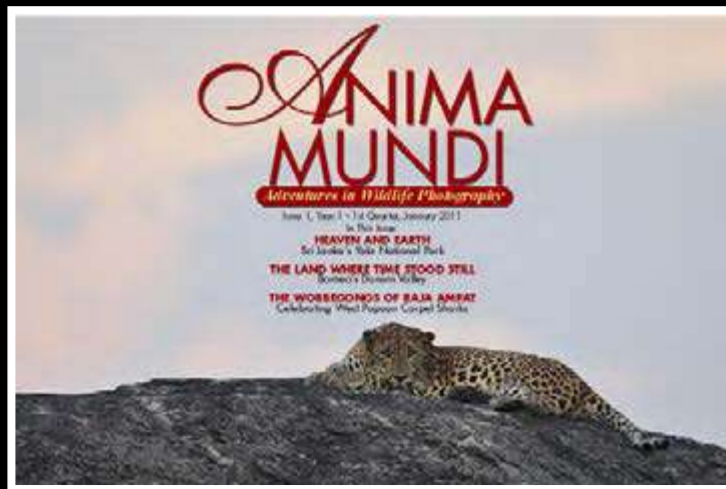


Great news!

We are happy to formally announce our collaboration with Anima Mundi Magazine.

Welcome to Andrea and Antonella Ferrari to the TH team! From now onwards, they will be Honorary Fellows and ambassadors of Tropical Herping in the ecotourism world.

So many exciting plans and deals are coming for nature, wildlife and conservation lovers. Stay tuned!

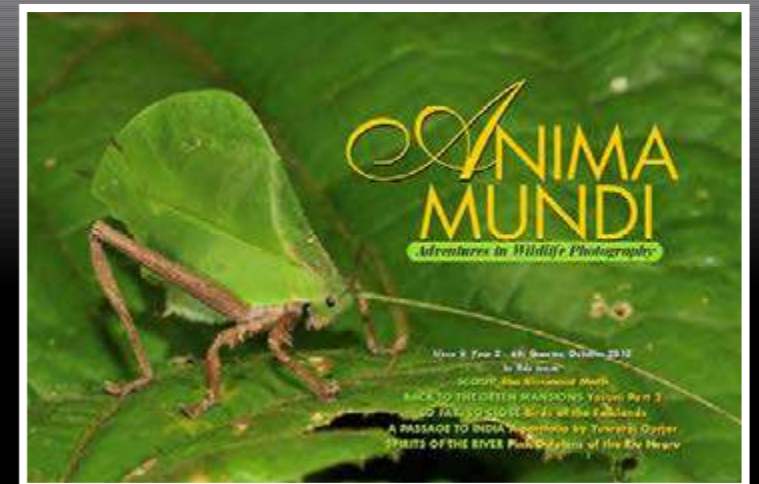
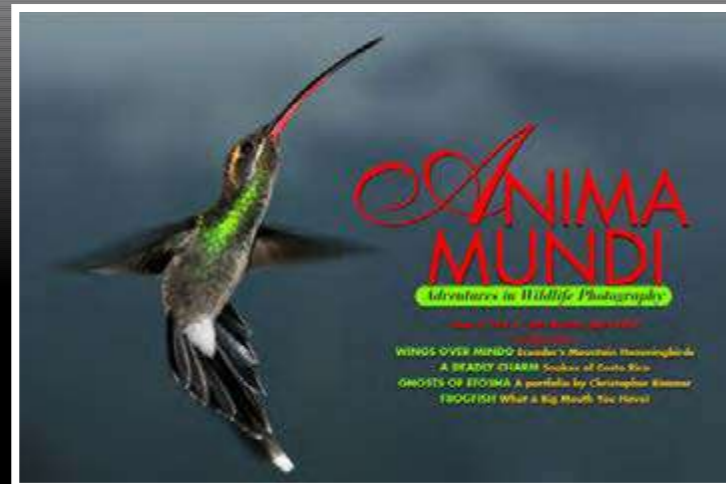
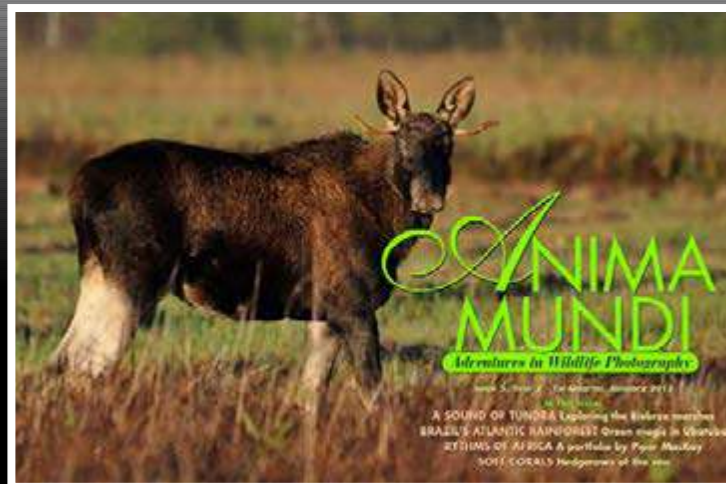


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With more than 15,000 downloads worldwide per issue (as per August 2012), ANIMA MUNDI has seen its readership consistently and rapidly growing in the brief span of only two years and eight published issues. Its authoritative and unbiased travel reports and wildlife articles offer a high level of scientifically-correct information - at absolutely no cost - to thousands and thousands of nature and photography enthusiasts all over the world. Each and every issue of ANIMA MUNDI - Adventures in Wildlife Photography is permanently available for FREE downloading - our mission is the dissemination and condision of information to promote nature awareness and habitat conservation, and we are proud to reach out on a quarterly basis to a world of passionate, highly motivated, seriously interested readers who all share our passion for wildlife photography and travelling. This is a sample - among many others - of what our readers say:

Dear Andrea & Antonella,

I have just finished reading your latest edition of Anima Mundi and I was inspired to write and say how much I am enjoying your publication and following your adventures. My wife and dive/photo partner Cherie and I were so inspired by your feature on Yala National Park that we booked a Safari with Eco Team and we had a fantastic time. It was exactly as portrayed in your article and we also followed your recommendations for visiting the cultural triangle in Sri Lanka. As we were leading one of our dive tours on a live aboard exploring the Maldives last June, a private side trip to Sri Lanka was clearly not to be passed up due to your information. So, I guess it's good news for you both that others are reading and responding to your work. So, we just wanted to give you some feedback, say hello and wish you all the best with your future adventures. Keep up the great work.

Kevin & Cherie Deacon
Dive 2000
Sydney, Australia.
www.dive2000.com.au



Advertising on ANIMA MUNDI - Adventures in Wildlife Photography means reaching out and getting in personal contact with such people - passionate travellers, dedicated wildlife and nature photographers, world-famous field researchers. All sharing a common bond, all interested in serious, reliable information on wildlife and nature travelling and photographic workshops, trips and equipment. All waiting to hear from you!

Contact us for details at nautilus@reefwonders.net

Indian tiger *Panthera tigris* in Tadoba-Andhari National Park - see page 8.



ANIMA MUNDI

Adventures in Wildlife Photography

As time goes by - we keep going!

Another year comes to a close as we now have 24 issues and six years of life behind our back! Six years which have gone by in a flash and like a dream, and 24 issues which hopefully have seen us growing and getting better and better. The icing on the cake has recently been the start of our partnership with **Tropical Herping**, the dynamic Ecuador-based wildlife photography travel company founded by our long-time friends, biologists, field researchers and very successful photographers Lucas M. Bustamante and Alejandro Arteaga. We have already seen the fruits of that in our recent issues and we'll be offering you more in this and our future ones.

In fact, our first feature of this issue is authored by Lucas M. Bustamante - see page 4 for his wonderful Scoop on encountering the rare and beautiful Black-and-Chestnut Eagle up in the Ecuadorian Andes. A lucky find indeed!

Speaking of beautiful encounters, very few can rival finding oneself face-to-face with a Royal Bengal tiger in the wild. There's just something extra special in tigers - a beauty, a majesty, a powerful dignity...it's a walking, breathing legend bathed in the aura of folklore and literature. When visiting Tadoba-Andhari NP in Maharashtra we faced the apex predator of India's forests on several occasions, and each was uniquely heart-stopping - TATR (Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve) really confirmed itself one of the top destinations in India to sight and hopefully photograph the iconic feline, and you can read all about it starting from page 8.

It's then just a short hop from India's simmering heat to the icy wastes of the Poles - on page 65 we have a short but substantial Gallery with

several of the winning images from the Global Arctic Awards of 2015.

Then it's back to the tropics with another result of our partnership with **Tropical Herping** - this time an extensive photographic tribute to the tiny, spectacularly colorful and severely threatened frogs found in Pacific coast region of Ecuador, starting from page 74. That is also an area we'll be visiting very soon, so expect more coming on these pages about one of the world's most biodiverse and endangered environments.

This issue then ends with a bang on page 90 - we are immensely proud to feature our first story by diving legend **Kurt Amsler**, who graces our pages with a beautiful and stunningly illustrated article about witnessing the first moments of life - indeed, the first breath - of a newborn Sperm whale in the open ocean of the Azores. It really is a great joy and a honor for us seeing how often celebrated professionals are willing to freely share their work with us in the name of conservation. Thank you, Kurt!

Finally, do not forget that our Parting Shot column (on this issue's page 103) is now open for publication to reader's photos. So if you would like to be featured in our coming Parting Shots and think you have clicked one or more interesting wildlife images which are worthy of publication, just email a small selection of your work to editor@animamundimag.com and we'll pick the best ones!

In the meantime...

Have a good trip!
Andrea & Antonella Ferrari
www.animamundimag.com

We appreciate your feedback
- constructive criticism, useful
suggestions and interesting
contributions are welcome.
Please drop us a line at
editor@animamundimag.com

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■ A pod of Sperm whales
Physeter catodon approaches
photographer Kurt Amsler
during the birth of one
of their own - see page 90.

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THE BLACK-AND-CHESTNUT EAGLE

A RARE BIRD INDEED

LUCAS M. BUSTAMANTE PHOTOGRAPHS A STRIKING AND VERY UNCOMMON RAPTOR OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN MOUNTAIN FOREST

*The Black-and-Chestnut Eagle *Spizaetus isidori* is a South American species of bird of prey in the Accipitridae family. Also occasionally called Isidor's eagle, it is often placed in the monotypic genus *Oroaetus*.*



TEXT AND PHOTOS
BY LUCAS M. BUSTAMANTE

It was in September 2015, as I was travelling with two companions on the road which links our capital Quito to the Amazon region of Ecuador, that I was able to photograph for the first time one of the most emblematic birds of prey in South America: the Black-and-Chestnut Eagle *Spizaetus isidori*. As we neared a little town named Baeza, sited on the eastern slopes of the Ecuadorian Andes, we were alerted by a local birdwatcher guide of the presence of a pair in the vicinity, and after spending an hour climbing a steep 70° mountain slope we could finally view it on its nest. For me, this was like a prize, after a very difficult climb without a clear trail and carrying all the photo gear (I used my Canon 100-400mm zoom to shoot the photos). But all the efforts were worth it! When one is in front of massive top-predators, it is easy to feel intimidated. The magical call and the mesmerizing eyes of this powerful raptor will be in my memory forever. In addition to being a gorgeous eagle, this is an Endangered species according the IUCN Red List, mainly because of habitat loss (i.e. logging, mining) and hunting that has dramatically decimated their populations. A sad reality faced today by many large predators worldwide!

This species is found in humid montane forests, normally at elevations between 1.800 and 2.500 meters, in the Andes from northern Argentina, through Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, to Venezuela, with isolated populations in the Venezuelan Coastal Range, Serranía del Perijá and Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. It is however generally local and considered rare.



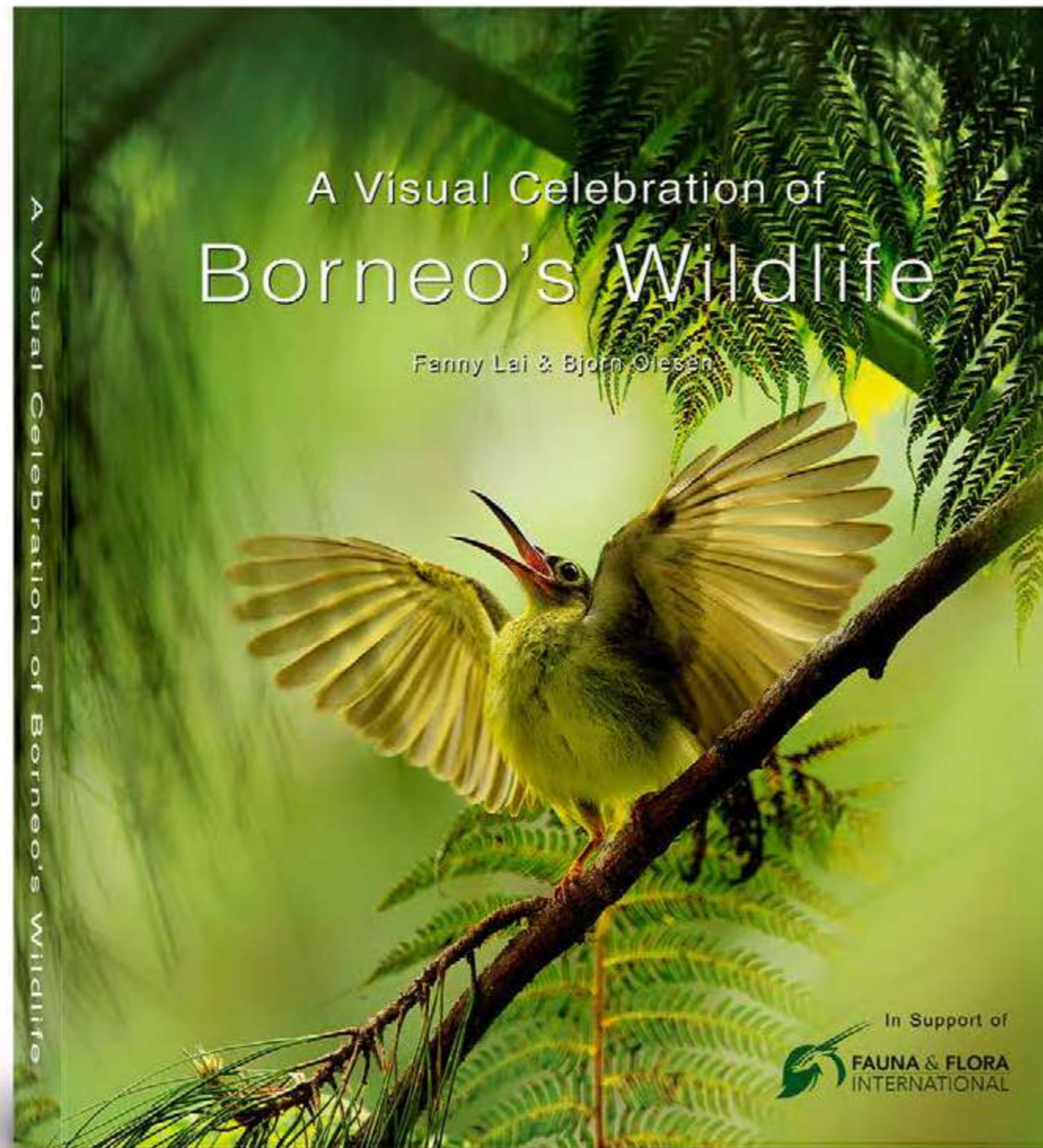


This is a fairly large eagle at 63–74 cm (25–29 in) long with a wingspan of 147–166 cm (58–66 in). As an adult, this species is glossy black on the head and the back and a streaky chestnut on the underside, the wing primaries and legs.



This eagle is known to prey on woolly monkeys, porcupines, coatis and other mid-sized arboreal mammals. Large birds such as guans are also taken. It frequently has much abraded tails by plunging after prey through the branches. It overlaps in range with several other large forest eagles, including the Solitary eagle *Buteogallus solitarius* and possibly other *Spizaetus* eagles, but no interactions have been reported and the Black-and-Chestnut Eagle is believed to be normally the top avian predator in its range.





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Paul S. Sochaczewski, leading conservationist and author of *An Inordinate Fondness for Beetles: Campfire Conversations with Alfred Russell Wallace*.

'If the great Victorian naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace could have seen this astonishingly beautiful book he would no doubt have declared it the next best thing to exploring Borneo oneself. I have never seen a book on Asian wildlife that so powerfully takes one's breath away with the turn of every page.'

Dr. John van Wyhe, National University of Singapore, historian of science and leading expert on Alfred Wallace, author of *Dispelling the Darkness: Voyage in the Malay Archipelago and the Discovery of Evolution by Wallace and Darwin*.

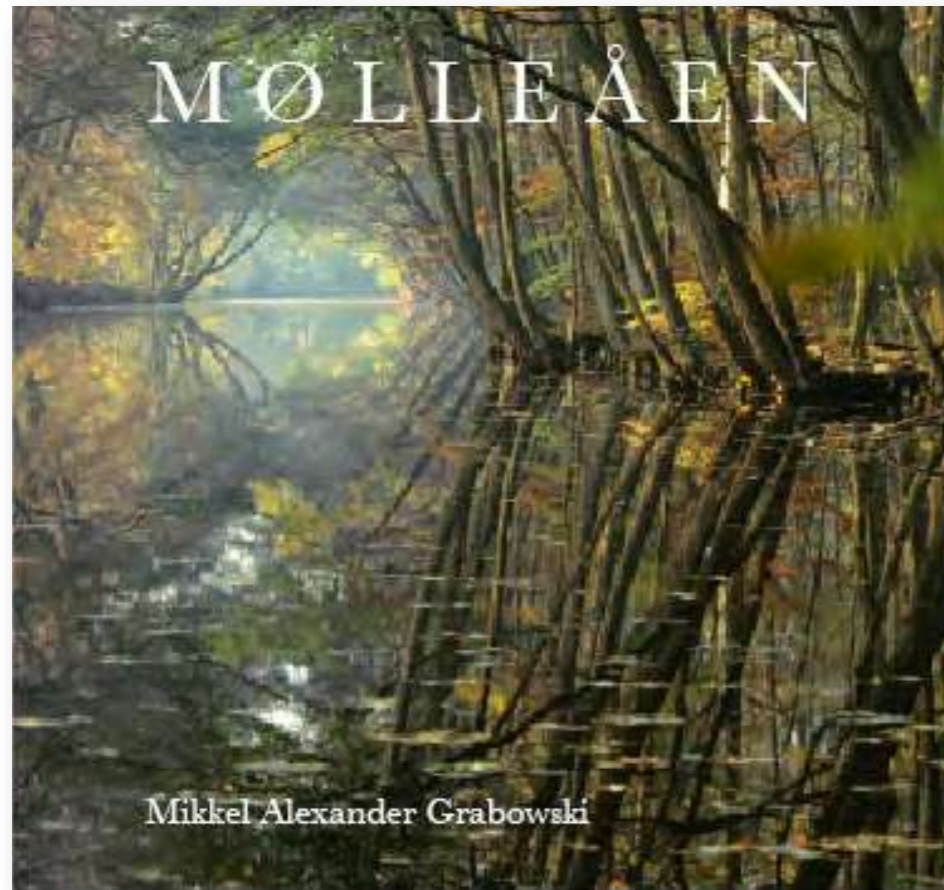
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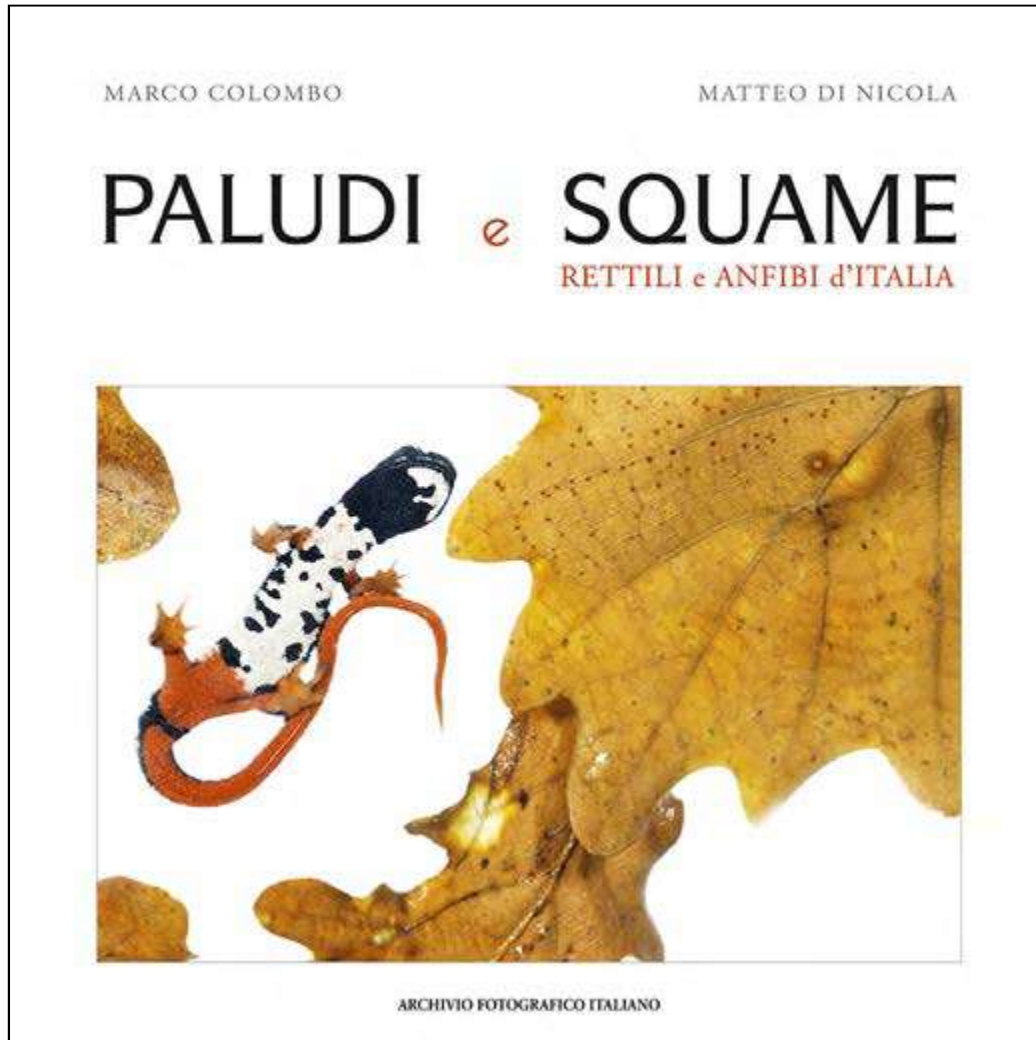
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NEW HERP BOOK

PALUDI E SQUAME: rettili e anfibi d'Italia

Published by the Italian Photographic Archive, this book comes from a great love for Italian herps, from the wish of making them known to the public in all their beauty and fascination, and last but not least their need of protection. This is the first strictly photographic book about Italian frogs, toads, newts, salamanders, turtles, lizards and snakes in their natural environments, through shots obtained over many years by the authors. This work has been published with the sponsorship of Rile-Tenore-Olona Local Park (Lombardy) and the patronage of Societas Herpetologica Italica (SHI). The book is in Italian but don't be afraid, there are much more photographs than texts!

Authors: M.Colombo & M. Di Nicola

Product details: 28x28 cm, hardcover, 112 pages

Publisher: Punto Marte

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You can watch a preview and order it at: <http://paludiesquame.wix.com/paludiesquame>

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FACE TO FACE WITH INDIA'S ICONIC FELINE

THE TIGERS OF TADOBA

A successful expedition to one of the world's best destinations to encounter and photograph the endangered Royal Bengal Tiger





Royal Bengal or Indian tiger ■
Panthera tigris, female.
On the previous page, a large male
relaxes in a nullah.



TEXT BY ANDREA FERRARI
PHOTOS BY ANDREA & ANTONELLA FERRARI

*T*adoba Andhari Tiger Reserve is a tiger reserve in the Chandrapur district of the State of Maharashtra in central India. Together with several other well-known "crown jewels" among India's National Parks - notably the celebrated and often crowded Ranthambhore, Bandhavgarh, Kanha and Corbett - it is also one of the best spots anywhere in the world to encounter and photograph the Royal Bengal (or Indian) tiger in its environment. Many jokingly say that when in Tadoba it's not a matter of "if" one will see a tiger - but "how many" tigers will be spotted during the trip.

That might be a slight exaggeration, but it is a fact that our trip there - fueled by some wild tales we had repeatedly been hearing from several Indian wildlife photographers and personal friends - has been a complete success, with many repeated sightings of the iconic and severely threatened feline at close quarters. Indeed, Tadoba has much to be recommended for, besides tigers: being located in Maharashtra, it still is relatively affordable compared to the Tiger Reserves of Rajasthan, where high fees and taxes are commonly charged; it offers excellent accomodation near the protected area,

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Male Royal Bengal or Indian tiger Panthera tigris.



Female Royal Bengal or Indian tiger Panthera tigris on the prowl.

with very good Gypsy drivers and experienced guides permanently available; it features loving, rolling Central Indian landscapes of hills and forests; and it is spectacularly rich in other species of great interest to the wildlife photographer, from mammals to birds and reptiles.

THE TADOBA ANDHARI TIGER RESERVE

Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve (commonly known among its aficionados as TATR) is the largest National Park in Maharashtra, with a total area of the reserve of 1,727 km². This includes Tadoba National Park itself, created in 1955 and notable as Maharashtra's oldest and largest National Park. It is one of India's 43 "Project Tiger" tiger reserves. There are more than 80 tigers (as of Dec 2015) in the reserve, one of the highest densities in all of India. The name "Tadoba" is the name of the God "Tadoba" or "Taru", praised by the tribal people who live in the dense forests of the Tadoba and Andhari region, while the Andhari River that meanders through the forest, gives the "Andhari" name. Legend says that Taru was a village chief who was killed in a

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*A massive male
Royal Bengal or Indian
tiger Panthera tigris
patrols its range in a dry
riverbed or nullah.*



■ The unmistakable squinting of a female Indian tiger *Panthera tigris* walking in the sun. Tigers often close or narrow their eyes when prowling in full light - to the dismay of the unaware photographer.

mythological encounter with a tiger. A shrine dedicated to the God Taru now exists beneath a huge tree, on the banks of the Tadoba Lake. The temple is frequented by *adivasis*, especially during the fair held every year in the Hindu month of Pausha, between December and January. The Gond kings once ruled these forests in the vicinity of the Chimur hills, and hunting in the area was completely banned in 1935. Two decades later, in 1955, an area of 116.55 km² (45.00 sq mi) was declared a National Park. The Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary was later created on the adjacent forests in 1986, and in 1995 both the Park and the Sanctuary were merged to establish the present tiger reserve. Tadoba Andhari Reserve is the largest national park in Maharashtra. Total area of the reserve is 625.4 square kilometres (241.5 sq mi). This includes Tadoba National

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Sloth bear *Melursus ursinus*, a relatively common sighting in Tadoba.



Left, Crested serpent eagle *Spilornis cheela* (notice the red ants cleaning its talons!); top right, Oriental Honey-buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*; bottom right, White-eyed Buzzard *Butastur teesa*.





Southern plains
Indian grey langur
Semnopithecus
dussumieri, feeding
on *Flame-of-the-forest*
Butea monosperma.

Park, created in 1955 with an area of 116.55 square kilometres (45.00 sq mi) and Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary created in 1986 with an area of 508.85 square kilometres (196.47 sq mi). The reserve also includes 32.51 square kilometres (12.55 sq mi) of protected forest and 14.93 square kilometres (5.76 sq mi) of other areas. Densely forested hills form the northern and western boundary of the tiger reserve: the elevation of the hills ranges from 200 m (660 ft) to 350 m (1,150 ft). To the southwest is the very scenic 120 ha (300 acres) Tadoba lake, which acts as a buffer between the Park's forest and the extensive farmland which extends up to the Irai water reservoir. This lake is a perennial water source which offers good habitat for Marsh crocodiles (or Muggers) to thrive. Other wetland areas within the reserve include the Kolsa lake and Andhari river. Tadoba reserve covers

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*A stunningly
beautiful mature Chital
or Spotted deer
Axis axis stag.*



■ *Left, male Nilgai or Bluebull Boselaphus tragocamelus; right, male Indian muntjac or Barking deer Muntiacus muntjak.*



*Silently prowling
the bamboo groves*

Indian or Royal
Bengal tiger
Panthera tigris
crossing
a bamboo thicket.





Far left,
Brown Fish Owl
*Ketupa
zeylonensis*;
left, Indian roller
*Coracias
benghalensis*.

the Chimur Hills, and the Andhari Sanctuary covers the Moharli and Kolsa ranges. It's bounded on the northern and the western side by densely forested hills. Thick forests are relieved by smooth meadows and deep valleys as the terrain slopes from north to south, where cliffs, talus and caves provide refuge for several animals. The southern part of the Park is less hilly.

A BEAUTIFUL TROPICAL DECIDUOUS FOREST

Tadoba reserve is a predominantly southern tropical dry deciduous forest with dense woodlands comprising about 87 per cent of the protected area. Teak is the predominant tree species, and among several other deciduous species, the unmistakable *Palas* or Flame-of-the-Forest *Butea monosperma* adds a rich tone of vibrant color to the forest during the dry season. Black plum trees grow in the riparian habitat around the lake, and at the waterhole at Panchadhara huge *arjun* trees are seen. Patches of grasses and huge bamboo thickets are found throughout the reserve. The climber *kach kujali* (velvet bean) found here is a medicinal plant used to treat Parkinson's disease. The leaves of *bheria* are used as an insect repellent; *beheda* is also an important traditional medicine found in the area.

continued on page 25 >



Indian or Royal Bengal tiger *Panthera tigris*, a large male cooling off in a pond. Notice how incredibly massive and powerful the front paws are.

*Death walks
like a shadow
in the grass*

*This is how a prey might
see its well camouflaged hunter -
an Indian tiger Panthera tigris
prowling in the tall grass.*

Top left, Common Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx varius*;
top right, Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis*;
bottom left, Grey jungle fowl *Gallus sonneratii*;
bottom right, nesting pair of Yellow-footed green pigeon *Treron phoenicoptera*.



■ A subadult Indian leopard *Panthera pardus sub.fusca*. In Tadoba leopards are commonly seen in full daylight despite the presence of tigers.



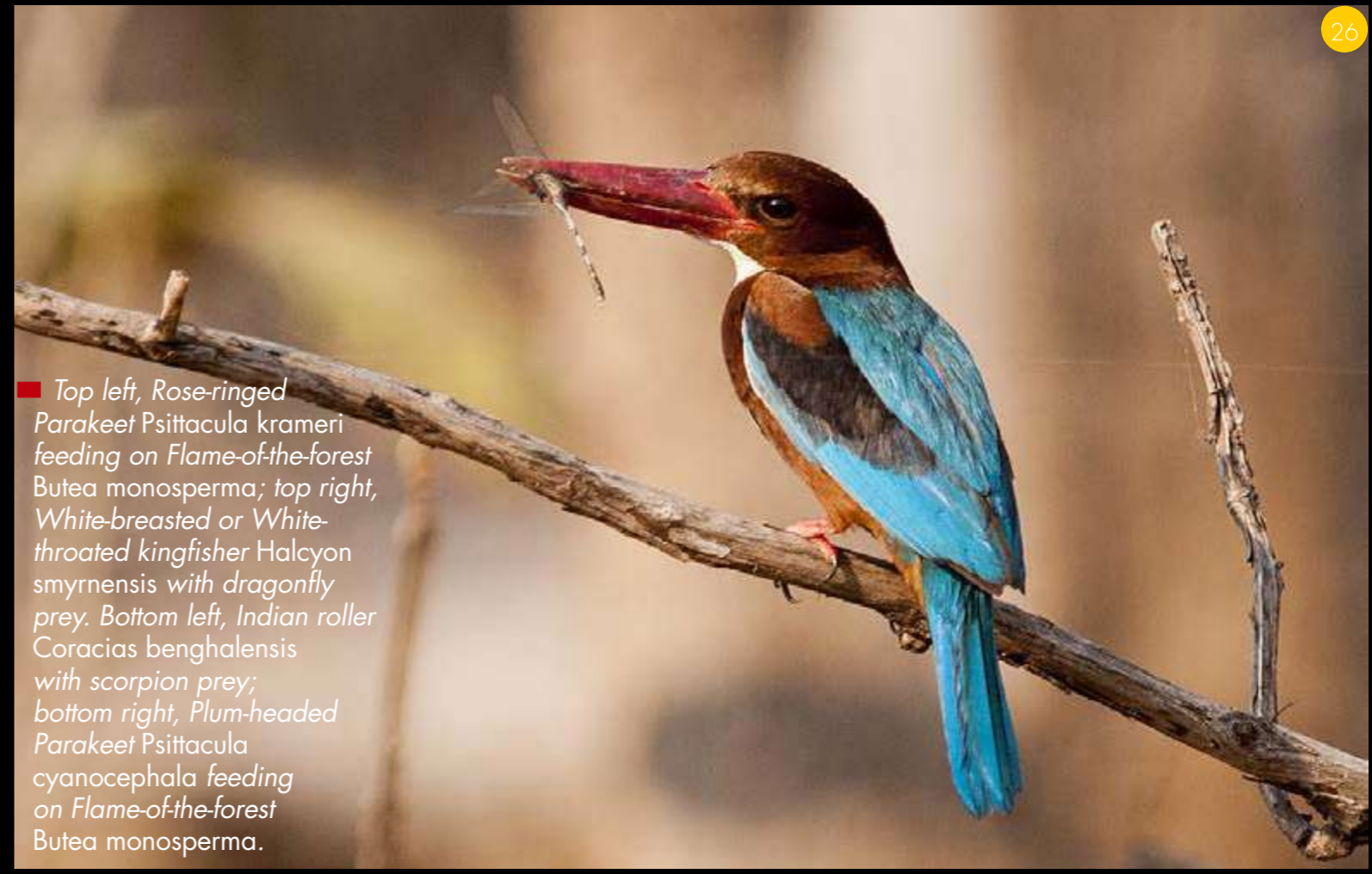


■ Male Indian Shikra
Accipiter badius
sub. dussumieri.

AN IMMENSE VARIETY OF WILDLIFE

Aside from the flag species - the Royal Bengal tiger, which everybody wants to see and around which all tourist activity revolves - Tadoba is home to many other mammals, including Indian leopards (this is possibly the only place on Earth where leopards sharing the same environment with tigers can be regularly sighted during daytime - a unique occurrence whenever two apex predators are involved. Everywhere else leopards become strictly nocturnal whenever tigers - which are much more powerful - are present in the area), Sloth bears (another regularly sighted species), gaur, nilgai, dhole, Striped hyena, Small Indian civet, Jungle cat, sambar, Spotted deer, Barking deer, chital, chowsingha and Honey badger. Tadoba lake sustains a sizeable population of the Mugger or Marsh crocodile, which was once common all over Maharashtra. Other reptiles here include the endangered Indian python and the common Indian monitor. Terrapins, Indian star tortoise, Indian cobra and Russell's viper also to be found in Tadoba. The lake is an ornithologist's paradise with a wide diversity of water birds, and raptors. 195 species of birds have been recorded, including three endangered species. The Grey-headed fish eagle, the Crested serpent eagle, and the Changeable hawk-eagle are some of the most commonly observed raptors.

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■ Top left, Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* feeding on Flame-of-the-forest *Butea monosperma*; top right, White-breasted or White-throated kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* with dragonfly prey. Bottom left, Indian roller *Coracias benghalensis* with scorpion prey; bottom right, Plum-headed Parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala* feeding on Flame-of-the-forest *Butea monosperma*.



Other interesting species include the Orange-headed thrush, Indian pitta, Crested treeswift, Stone curlew, Crested honey buzzard, Paradise flycatcher, Bronze-winged jacana and Lesser goldenbacked woodpecker. Warblers and the Black-naped blue flycatcher live here and the call of the Indian peacock is often heard. Up to 74 species of butterflies have been recorded in the area.

TIGER AND MAN SIDE BY SIDE

We have already had occasion to write about the difficult but occasionally successful coexistence side by side of man and tiger in Tadoba (see the stunning Parting Shot at the conclusion of *Anima Mundi - Adventures in Wildlife Photography*

continued on page 32 >

A large Indian tiger
Panthera tigris male
patrolling its territory.





A splendidly camouflaged male
Indian leopard *Panthera pardus*
sub.fusca resting in a bamboo grove.


Left, Indian roller
Coracias benghalensis;
center, Savanna Nightjar
Caprimulgus affinis;
right, Asian
paradise flycatcher
Terpsiphone paradisi.

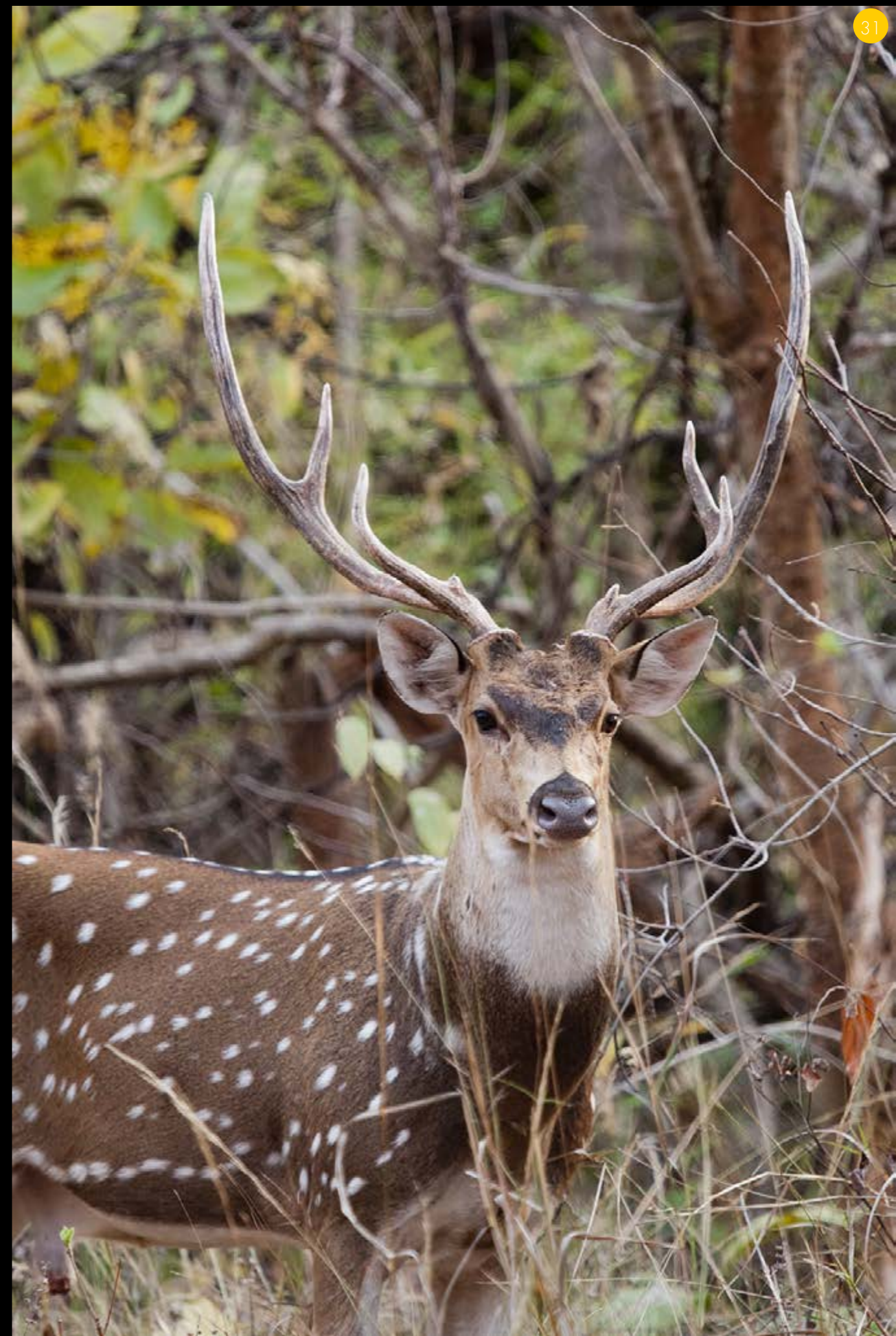




■ A small herd of Spotted deer or Chital *Axis axis*, with a lone Flame-of-the-forest *Butea monosperma* in the background.



Left,  prowling female
Indian tiger
Panthera tigris;
right,
Spotted deer
or Chital
Axis axis
stag.

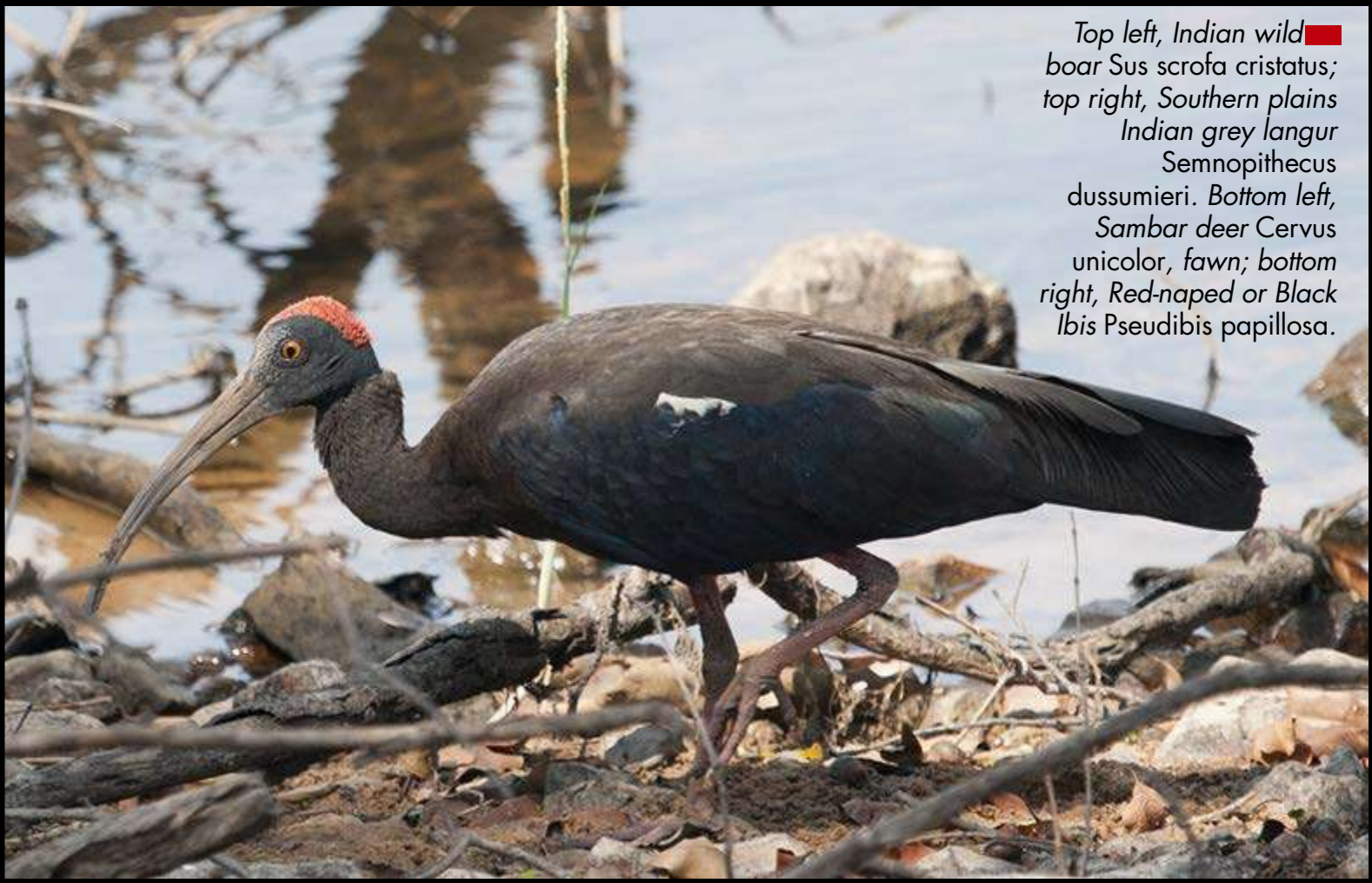


An iconic and highly symbolic image as a stunning female Indian tiger *Panthera tigris* stealthily crosses the tarmac road which bisects Tadoba, linking several villages inside the reserve.

issue 16). It is a difficult situation which most protected areas in India have to live with, given the nation's high population density and the powerful impact of many of its wild species (tigers, elephants, leopards). In 2013 there were 41,644 people living in and around the reserve in 59 villages of which 5 were inside the core zone, and these still were doing farming activity inside the core area. The process of rehabilitation is going on but the Indian bureaucracy has been at its slowest in the forest department. Recently the Navegaon village was rehabilitated and a grassland is now growing on the place where the village existed. There are 41,820 cattle with the villagers in the core and buffer zone. While cattle grazing is not allowed in the core zone, regulated grazing in the buffer zone is allowed to cattle of the village inhabitants. However, cattle of peripheral villages sometimes sneak into the reserve and

continued on page 37 ➤





Top left, Indian wild boar *Sus scrofa cristatus*; top right, Southern plains Indian grey langur *Semnopithecus dussumieri*. Bottom left, Sambar deer *Cervus unicolor*, fawn; bottom right, Red-naped or Black Ibis *Pseudibis papillosa*.



Marsh crocodile
or Mugger crocodile
Crocodylus palustris.

Left, Indian Grey
Mongoose
Herpestes edwardsii;
center,
Flame-of-the-forest
Butea monosperma;
right, Southern plains
Indian grey langur
*Semnopithecus
dussumieri*.



■ A splendid male Indian leopard *Panthera pardus sub.fusca* crosses our path in full daylight.



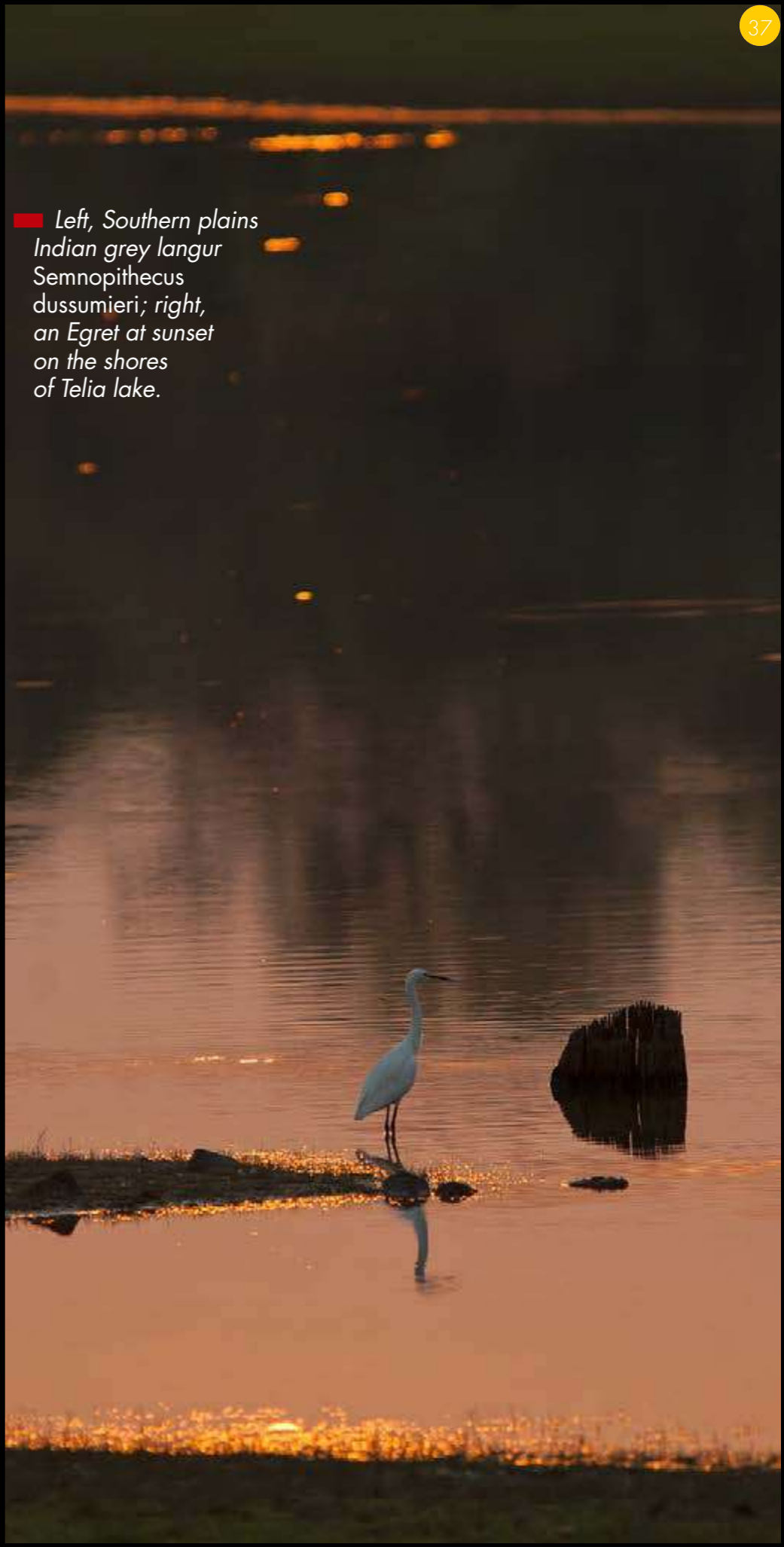


cause additional damage to the habitat. Forest fires are a constant problem in the dry season, consistently burning between 2% and 16% of the Park each year. With killing of domestic livestock by tigers and leopards as a frequent phenomenon in the neighboring villages, this has an adverse impact on the economic condition of the local people and results in antagonism towards the management. In the year 2013 - the date of last statistical information available to us - there have been up at least 4 people and 30-50 cattle heads killed by leopards, tigers or sloth bears.

A PARADISE FOR WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

We deeply love India and its spectacular wildlife, and we have travelled across the Indian sub-continent far and wide, having visited a great number of its National Parks and tiger reserves. Several of these, such as Kanha, Ranthambhore, Bandhavgarh, Corbett and Kaziranga are quite possibly some of the whole world's most beautiful protected areas - but India's wildlife can be occasionally wary, cautious, and difficult to see. In Tadoba the wildlife - even the Royal Bengal tiger itself - is easier to see and approach than in many other places: for those interested in observing and photographing India's great natural heritage, it is a destination which cannot be missed. ●

■ *Left, Southern plains Indian grey langur Semnopithecus dussumieri; right, an Egret at sunset on the shores of Telia lake.*



■ *Yawning Indian tiger
Panthera tigris - this huge
male was resting in the
middle of the dirt road as
we were forced to change
a burst tyre less then 20
meters away from it. It never
showed any signs of
aggression.*





■ Left, a huge Gaur or Indian bison *Bos gaurus* - the world's largest bovid and a truly massive animal. Right, Southern plains Indian grey langur *Semnopithecus dussumieri*.






Marsh crocodile ■
or Mugger crocodile
Crocodylus palustris.



■ Left, Indian leopard *Panthera pardus sub.fusca*; right, close-up portrait of a Dhole or Indian Wild Dog *Cuon alpinus*, one of India's most efficient and relentless predators.





Royal Bengal or Indian 
tiger *Panthera tigris*
female at dawn.

■ A large male Indian tiger *Panthera tigris* on the hunt - notice the incredibly powerful neck, shoulders and forelegs.





■ *Left, a rare sight: an exquisitely camouflaged Savanna Nightjar *Caprimulgus affinis* on the nest, protecting its chick under its chest; right, male Indian tiger *Panthera tigris* cooling off in a seasonal pool.*




Royal Bengal ■
or Indian tiger
Panthera tigris
female on the move.



India's relentless and highly sociable hunter



Dhole 
or Indian Wild Dog
Cuon alpinus.

Top left, Gaur
Bos gaurus; top right,
Spotted deer or Chital
Axis axis.
Below left, Sambar
deer *Cervus unicolor*;
below right, Gaur or
Indian bison
Bos gaurus.



*Gaur Bos gaurus
at sunset by one
of Tadoba's beautiful and
very scenic lakes.*





Very few encounters in the wild can rival meeting an Indian tiger *Panthera tigris* walking straight at you!



Left, Crested serpent eagle *Spilornis cheela*;
middle, typical TATR forest trail across bamboo groves;
right, Indian Grey Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsii*.





A beautiful and splendidly camouflaged female Indian leopard *Panthera pardus sub. fusca*.

Left, Park wardens on elephant back as they monitor a tiger's whereabouts; right, Southern plains Indian grey langur *Semnopithecus dussumieri*.

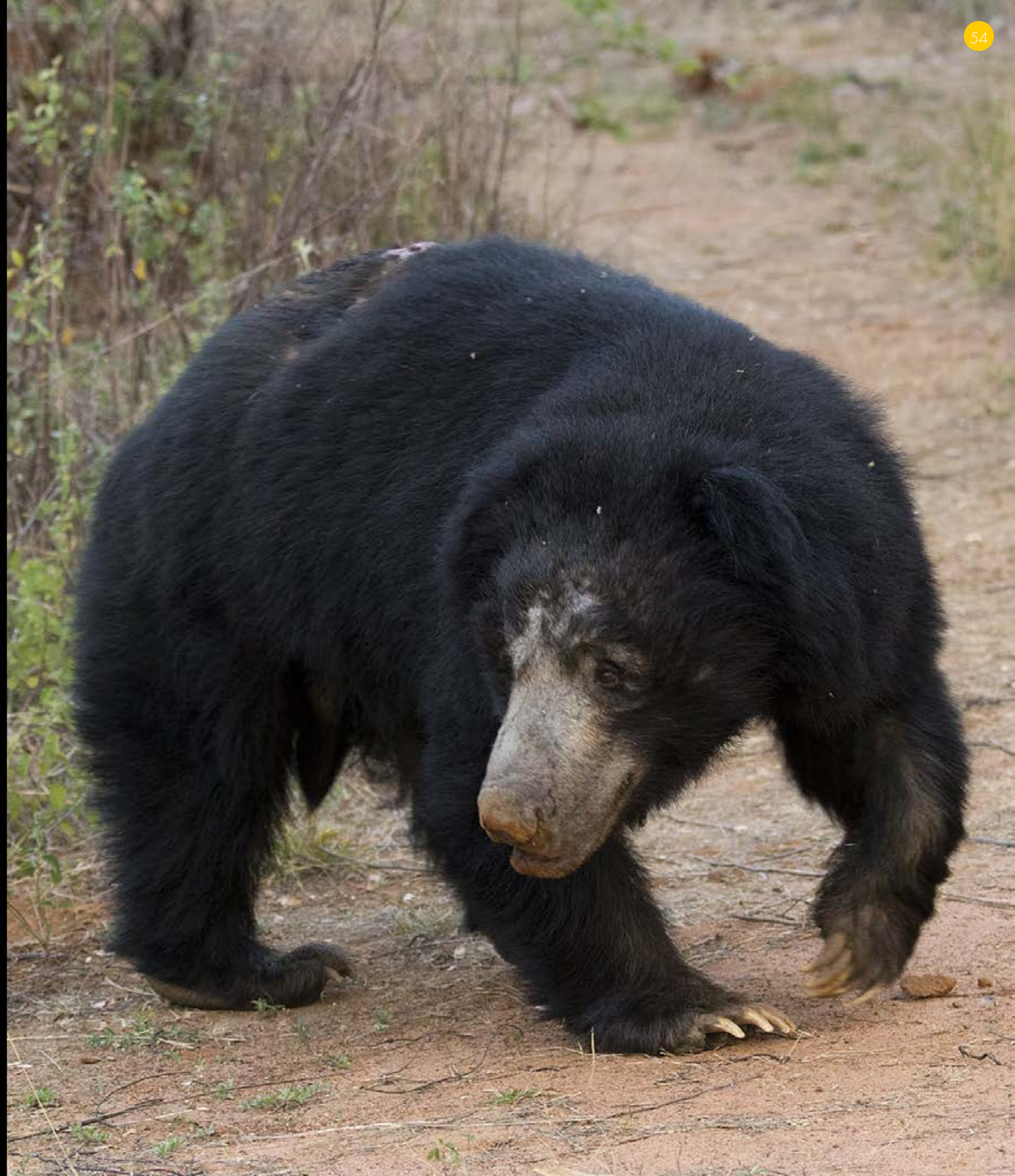




■ A very large Indian leopard *Panthera pardus sub. fusca* approaches closely. This male has a slightly crooked and drooping lower lip, probably due to an old wound.





■ Left, male Indian muntjac or Barking deer *Muntiacus muntjak*; right, Sloth bear *Melursus ursinus* - the fresh wound from an unsuccessful tiger attack is faintly visible on its back, complete with deep canine teeth punctures. Quite uniquely, the tigers of Tadoba seem to hunt Sloth bears even if usually this would not be considered a tiger prey species.



Indian leopard
Panthera pardus sub. fusca.

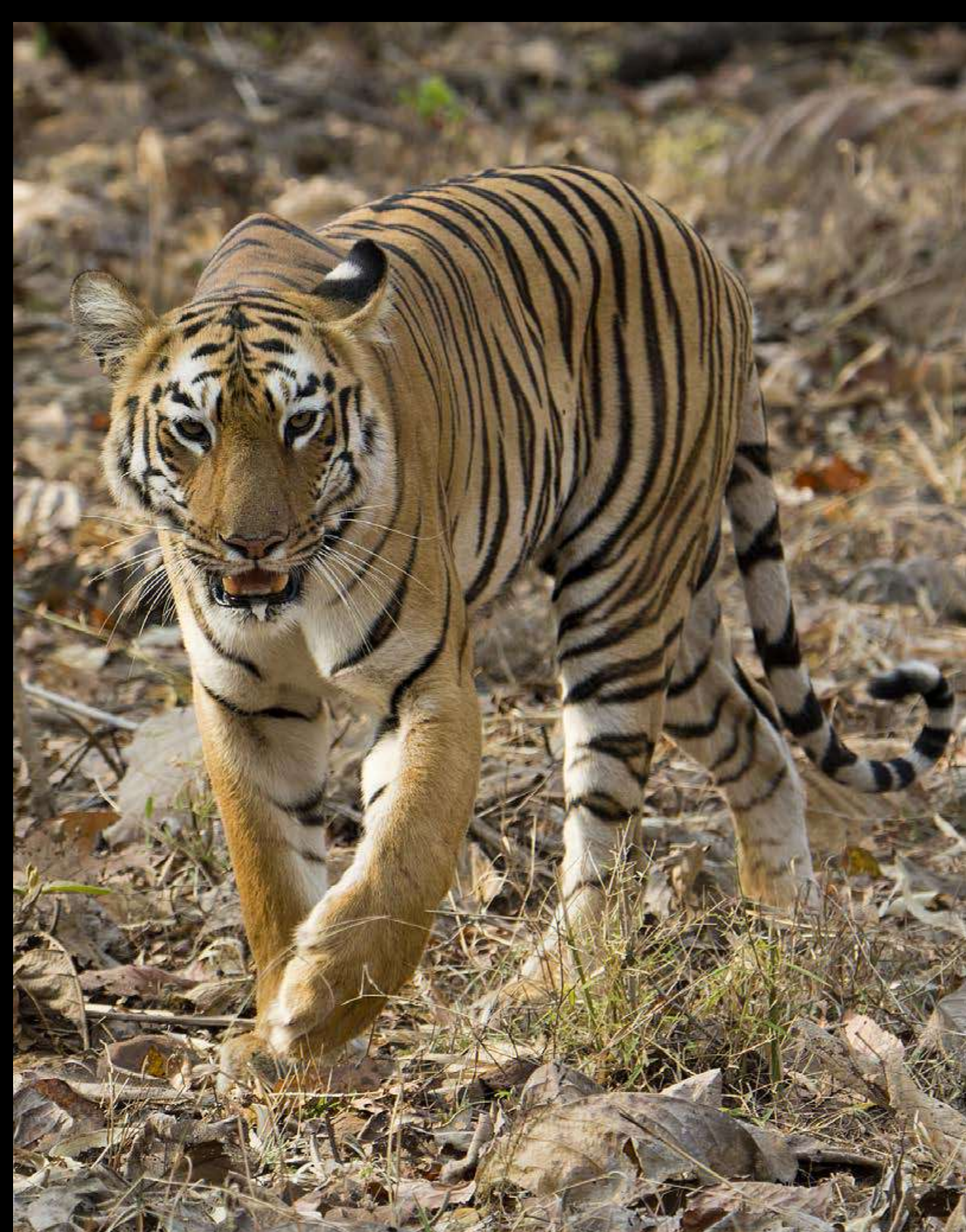


A male Indian tiger is captured in profile, walking through a dense thicket of trees and branches. The tiger's orange and black stripes are clearly visible, blending with the dappled light and shadows of the forest. The tiger is moving from left to right across the frame. The background shows a blurred landscape of trees and foliage, suggesting a natural habitat. The foreground is a dirt path with some sparse grass.

 Hunting male Indian tiger *Panthera tigris*, showing to advantage its striped camouflage.



■ A truly enormous male Gaur or Indian bison *Bos gaurus* - note the powerful musculature and the greatly developed vertebral ridge.



■ Left, Indian tiger *Panthera tigris*; right, Sloth bear *Melursus ursinus* female with two very young babies.



*Nature's masterpiece of raw power
and supreme elegance*



Male tiger *Panthera tigris* - notice the enormously powerful front legs and the massive paws.



Left, close-up ■ portrait of a stunningly beautiful female Indian tiger *Panthera tigris*; right, the same individual faces an approaching tourist vehicle. Tigers often use forest tracks and dirt roads to move around the forest.



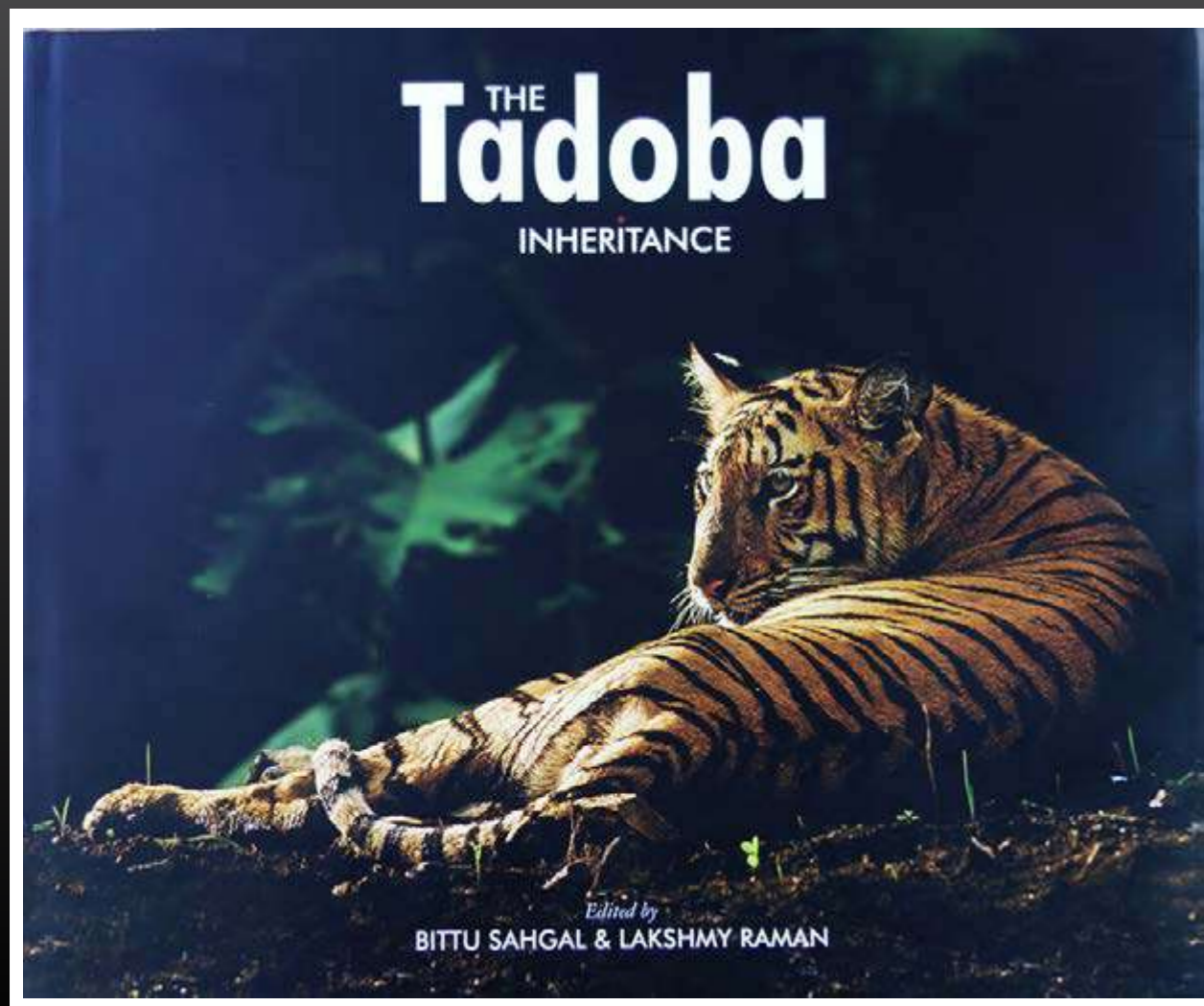


A controversial but rather typical TATR image - while some hard-liners think of it in negative terms, we like to think it actually conveys a very positive image, with a crowd of local tourists awed by India's most iconic and endangered animal.

The Tadoba Inheritance

by Bittu Sahgal and Lakshmy Raman

For those interested in reading and finding out more about Tadoba and its wildlife-rich environment, we can safely recommend *Sanctuary Asia Magazine's* stunning coffee-table book *The Tadoba Inheritance*, edited by Sanctuary's own legendary creator (and staunch activist) Bittu Sahgal and by Lakshmy Raman. The volume is illustrated with hundreds of truly beautiful images of the Reserve's wildlife and habitats and is packed to the brim of its well laid-out 160+ pages with in-depth, accurate, up-to-date information about TATR, its present, its future and the problems it has to face. *The Tadoba Inheritance* is the latest volume in a series wholly dedicated to India's spectacular and threatened natural heritage - other titles in the series are devoted to Kaziranga, Bharatpur, Corbett, Bandhavgarh, Periyar and the Sundarbans National Parks. *The Tadoba Inheritance* and its companion volumes in the series (some sadly out of print) can be ordered online from www.sanctuaryasia.com, the website of India's premier wildlife and natural history magazine.

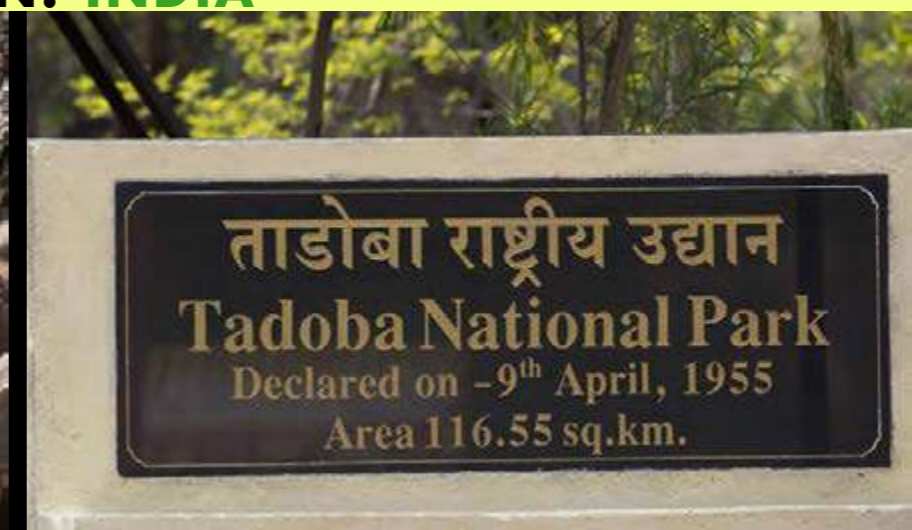


■ Sloth bear *Melursus ursinus*; below, left, the cover of *Sanctuary Asia Magazine's* beautiful coffee-table book *The Tadoba Inheritance*.



At-a-glance travel guide

COUNTRY OF DESTINATION: INDIA



USEFUL TIPS FOR YOUR EXPEDITION

Some simple, common sense, field-tested advice and information to make the best out of your trip and avoid hassles, worries and problems

ROUTE: The nearest International Airport is Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport, Nagpur (140 km via Umrer, Bhis and Chimur), the nearest railway station is Chandrapur (on the Delhi-Chennai main line) 45 km away and the nearest main bus stand is Chandrapur and Chimur (32 km). We suggest getting to Chandrapur by train and having a vehicle from your resort pick you up at the station.

MEANS OF TRANSPORT: Tadoba can be explored by 4-wheel drive vehicle only, as no walking inside the reserve is allowed. The Gypsies used by the local drivers (Indian jeeps made by Maruti) are sturdy and reliable, if a bit hard on the

suspensions, and being without a roof are ideal for wildlife photography. Normally one has a long game drive in the morning and one in the afternoon, but expect changes in the Park's opening times and in the ranges of the reserve which are open to visitors. Tadoba is closed to visitors one day a week, but on closure days one can drive in the buffer zone, which is equally productive for wildlife sightings.

CURRENCY: Indian Rupee, with Euros and USD being commonly accepted in upscale lodges. Remember however to change a sizeable amount of cash on arrival in India as you will not have many opportunities to do so later on in the countryside.

ACCOMODATION: The success of Tadoba has resulted in a veritable sprouting of hotels, lodges and camps around it. Every level of accomodation is available - from our personal experience we can safely recommend the beautiful and very comfortable *Irai Safari Retreat*, which offers great food and service and is very close to the Moharli gate.

FOOD: Indian cuisine is one of the world's best, rivalling only with Italian or French for its richness of recipes and variety of ingredients. Do not be afraid to experiment - Indian food (which is quite safe in upscale lodges) can vary from very mild to fiery hot, but it is always a fascinating sensorial experience.

Quite possibly the best place in the world to see a tiger in the wild



LANGUAGE: Hindi and English (in the main cities).

WORRIES: None as long as you follow the lodge's and Park's rules. Always keep in mind Tadoba and your lodge are in an unfenced wilderness, so avoid walking barefooted in high grass at night.

HEALTH: We never suffered any problems in India, but it is always better avoid street food and unbottled water, especially during transfers.

CLIMATE: The best times of the year to visit Tadoba are the pre-monsoon months from February to June, when temperatures range from 25°C in the night to 35°C (and more) during the day. At this time of the year Tadoba's environment can be extremely dusty, and the sun is merciless on open vehicles - when on a jeep safari always remember to wear a scarf and a hat and to carry dust bags for camera and lenses.

BESIDES: This is India, so expect things to work in their own very specific way. You will be picked up by your own vehicle and driver at dawn, and then you'll have to queue up for an hour or so at the Park's gate to have your entry documents done - every morning - before it opens. It can be annoying, but it can also be highly enjoyable if you take it in stride - as everything else in India. When going through the gate you'll be joined by a Game warden, usually armed - a very important figure to guarantee good sightings, as wardens know their Park inside out. A nice tip when the drive has been successful is very important here to guarantee a future good rate of sightings! People flock to Tadoba to see tigers, and tiger sightings are the focus around which all activity here obsessively revolves - "tiger fever". Try to avoid falling into this dangerous routine, which can bring tears of frustration and rage at failure, and enjoy Tadoba's stunning scenery and

wonderful wildlife - you won't be lacking great photographic opportunities even when tigers are nowhere to be seen, as our article has hopefully demonstrated: the frequency of daytime leopard sightings and sloth bears encounters is nothing short of amazing (in fact, Tadoba tigers have apparently taken a taste is Sloth bear meat and are actively hunting them - another unique fact). Tadoba also offers frequent sightings of several tigers together (which we missed), with fantastic opportunities to document the family and social behavior of this predator, once mistakenly believed to be exclusively solitary. Vehicle traffic can look alarming when tigers are sighted - drivers alert each other by mobile phone - but despite the controversy going on we found drivers to be very disciplined (little or no jostling to secure a good spot) and most local tourists to be wonderfully enthusiastic about the sighting - which bodes well for the future of India's tigers. ●

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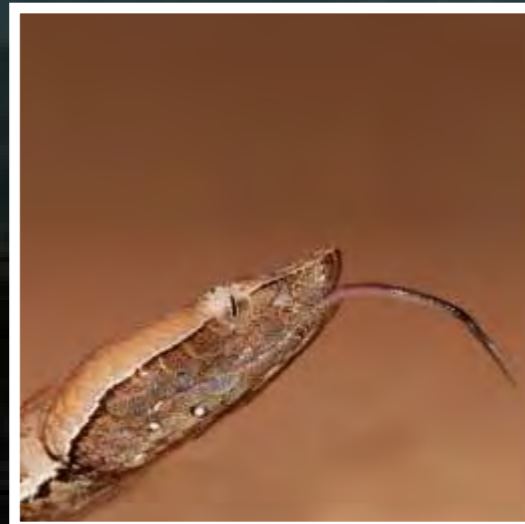
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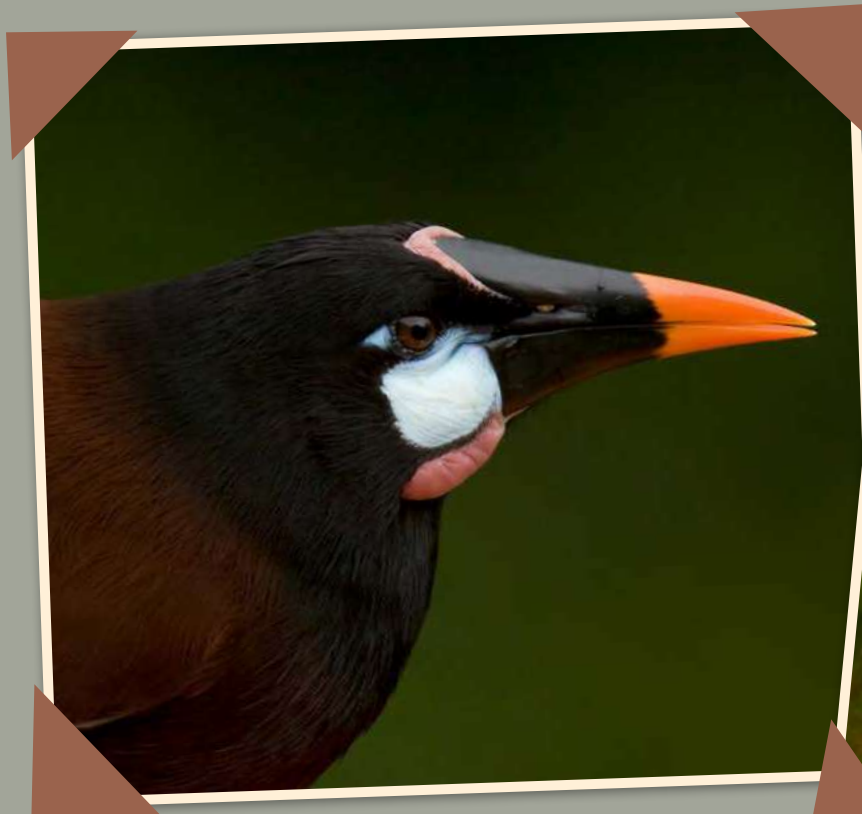


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A competition which strives to show the splendor of the Arctic, offering a selection of images which successfully pay homage to the landscapes and wildlife from the frozen wastelands of the extreme North

A Gallery of the Winners of 2015

The purpose of the Global Arctic Awards contest - which is open to participants from all over the globe - is to show the magnificence of the North and Arctic world through the photo art. The contestants works represent the beautiful variety of the Northern environment nature and wildlife, depict the unique, fragile peculiarities of the icy world of the Arctic, and narrate unforgettable photo stories about the culture, life and centuries-old customs of the North minorities. Denoising, slight correction of brightness, contrast and levels are permitted, and cropping is acceptable up to 30% . Any techniques that add to, relocate, replace or remove pictorial elements of the original image are however forbidden. Through the camera lenses the coldest, deeply frozen Earth regions, covered with ice and snow, appear in a new, fascinating perspective. ●



On the Top of the World
(Dana Allen - Zimbabwe)
Somewhere above the Arctic Circle, Svalbard.

Previous page:
Protecting the Kill under the Polar Sunset
(Joshua Holko - Australia)
Svalbard.

Beach Season
(*Andrey Sidorov*
- *Russia*)
Bering Island.



**Polar Bear
family**

(Daisy Gilardini
- Svizzera)
Wapusk
National Park,
Manitoba,
Canada.





Leopard Seal
(Roy Mangersnes - Norway)
South Shetland Islands, Antarctica.



**Shag in
Blizzard**
(*Espen Lie Dahl*
- Norway)
Hornøya,
Norway.



Penguin Love
(Joshua Holko
- Australia)
Antarctica.

**Under the
Surface**

(Roy Mangersnes
- Norway)
Spitsbergen,
Svalbard,
Norway.





**Penguins
Paradise**

*(Oleg Gaponyuk -
Russia)*
Port Lockroy,
Antarctica.



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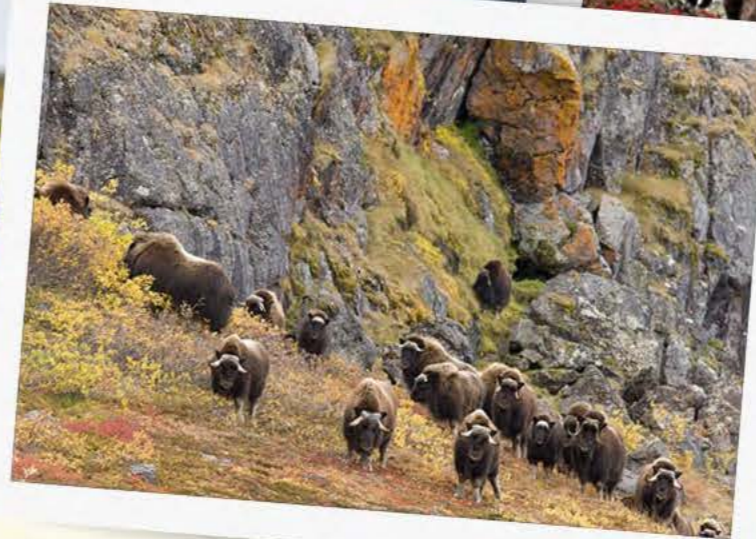
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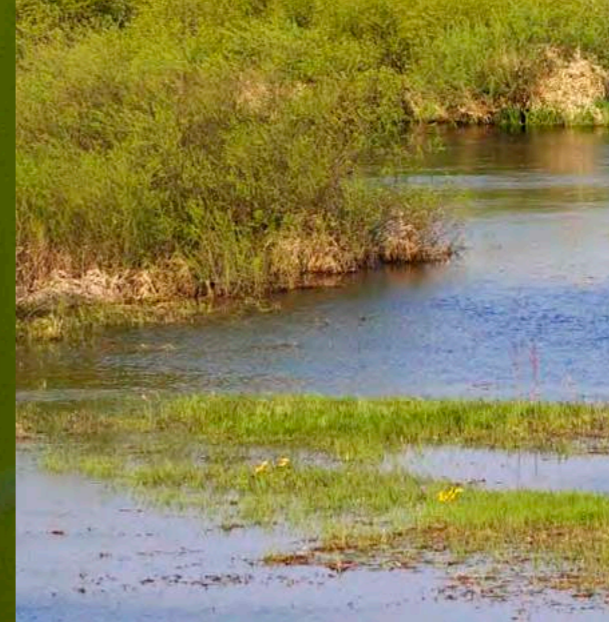


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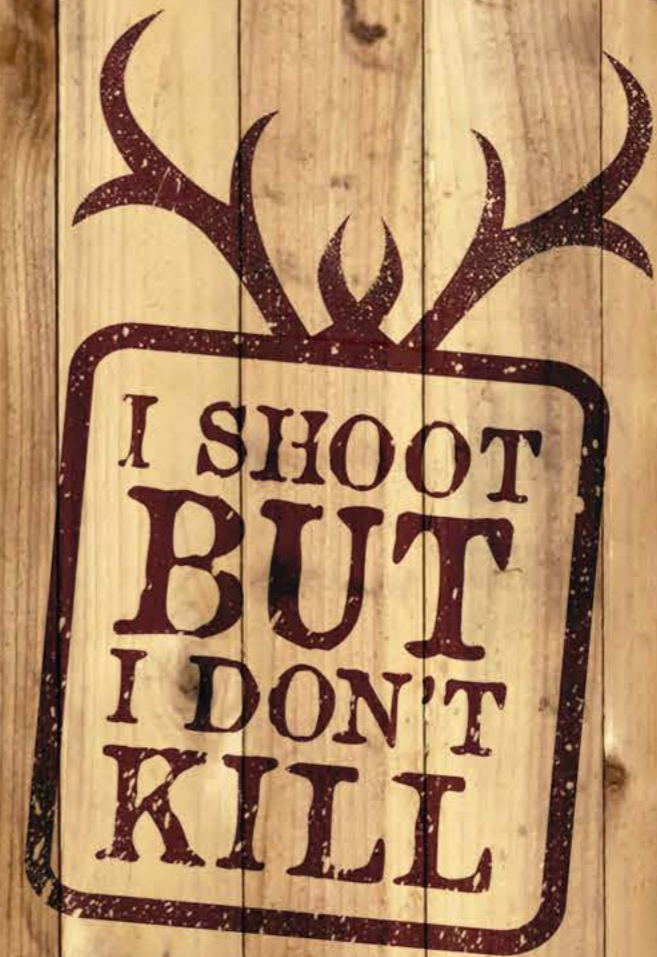


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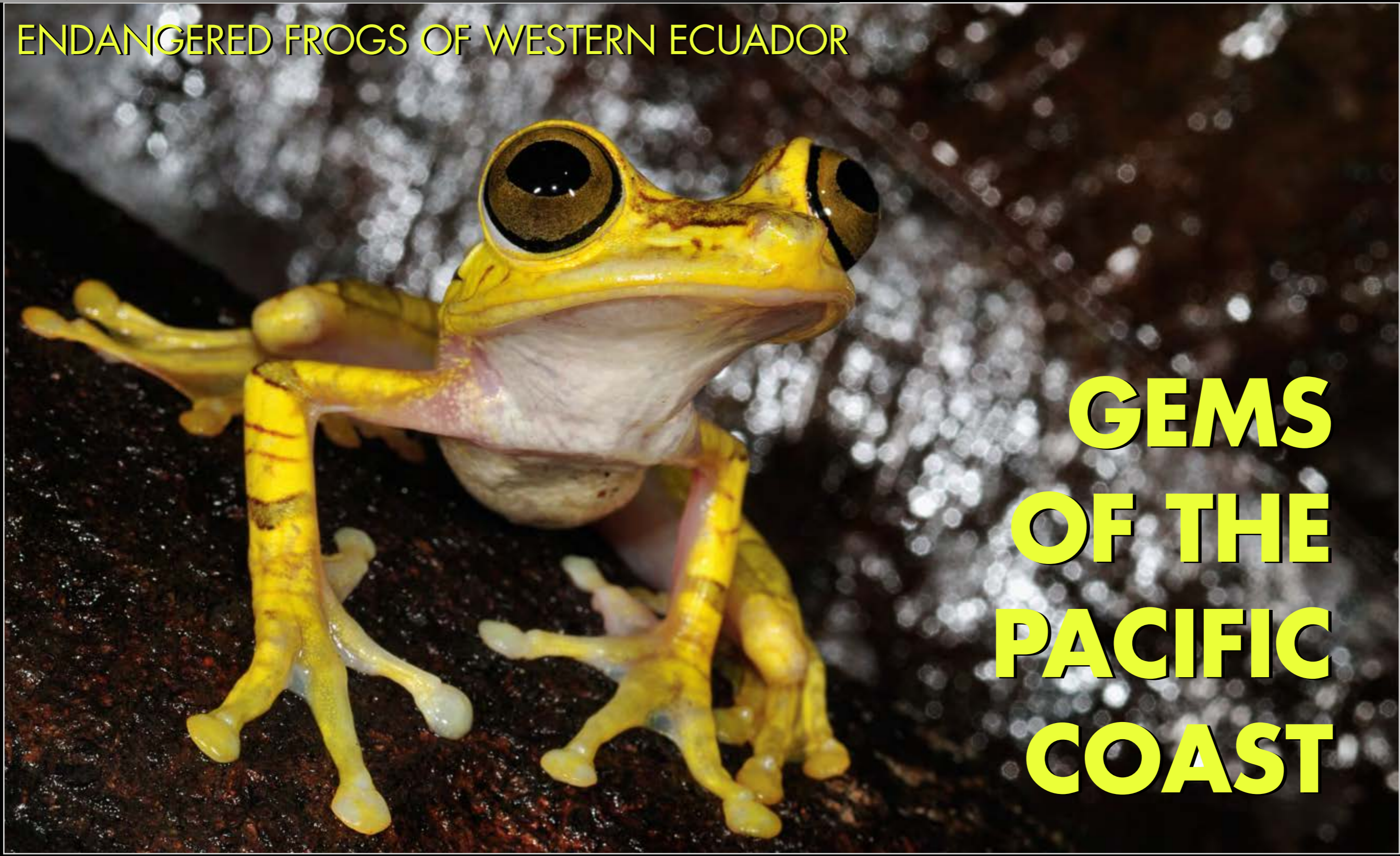


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Beauty of the Beast

ENDANGERED FROGS OF WESTERN ECUADOR



**GEMS
OF THE
PACIFIC
COAST**

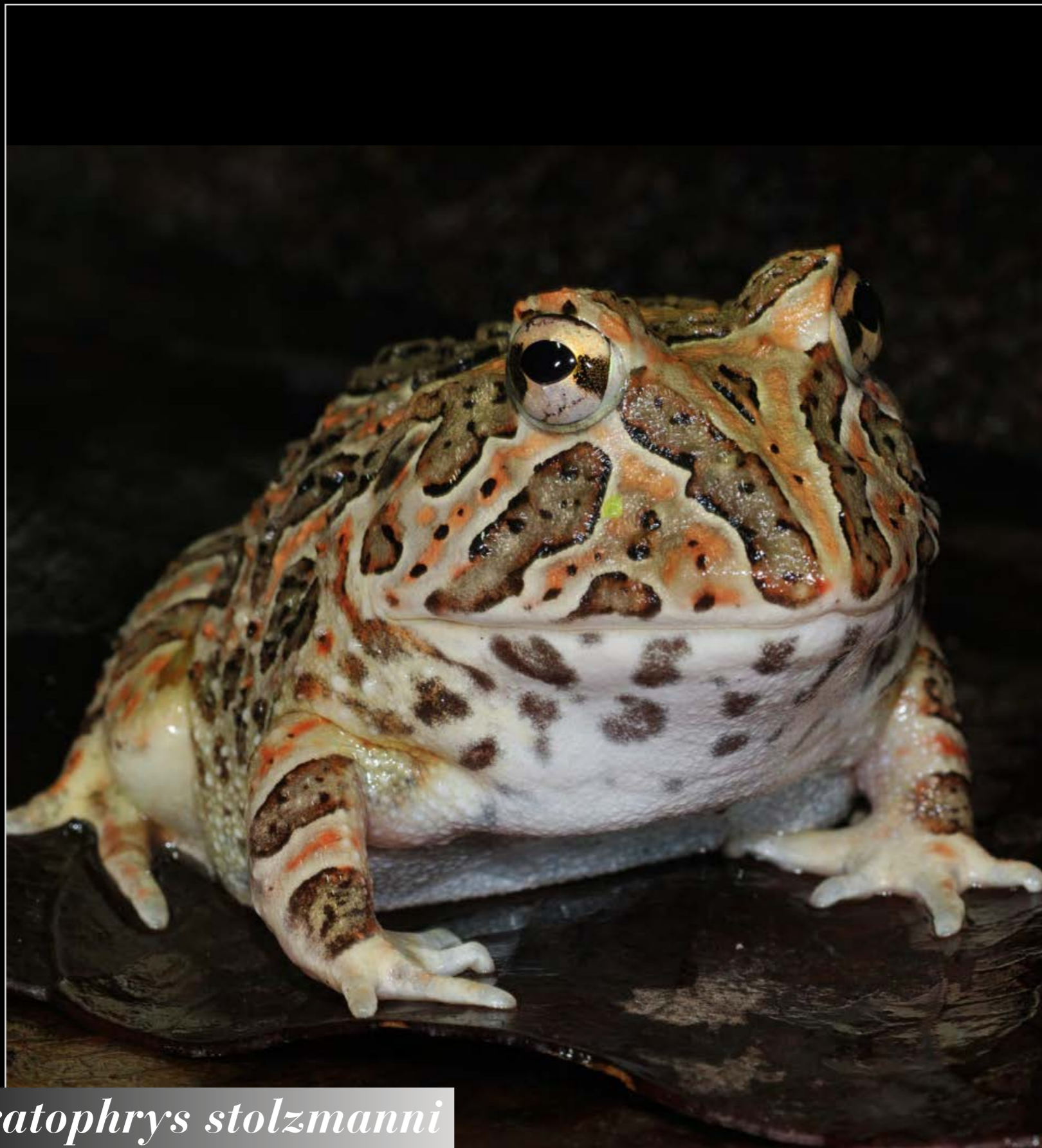
Often dangerously poisonous, usually very tiny, almost always exceptionally colorful, the frogs of the Ecuadorian Pacific Coast are all severely threatened



Agalychnis spurrelli

The Gliding tree frog *Agalychnis spurrelli* is a species of frog in Hylidae family. It is found in Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Panama. Other common names are the Gliding leaf frog and Spurrell's leaf frog. On the title page, Imbabura tree frog *Hypsiboas picturatus*, a species in the Hylidae family found in the Pacific lowlands of western Colombia and northwestern Ecuador.

TEXT BY LUCAS M. BUSTAMANTE - TROPICAL HERPING
PHOTOS BY ANDREA & ANTONELLA FERRARI



Ceratophrys stolzmanni

The Pacific horned frog is a highly cryptic species in the *Ceratophryidae* family found in Ecuador and Peru.

The tropical regions hold the vast majority of biodiversity on Earth. Among all tropical countries, one of the jewels is Ecuador. Smaller than Arizona state, this tiny country holds the main ecosystems that we can find in South America, such as the Amazon, Andes, Pacific Coast, Galápagos. This, in addition with its eternal spring weather, makes easy to find tons of animal species all over the country. Among vertebrates, the most threatened group is the amphibians: climate change, emerging diseases, pollution, habitat loss are the most important factors for their decline. Inside Ecuador, we have two of the best places in the world to find the best of the best in amphibian diversity. One of them is the famous Yasuni National Park, arguably the most biodiverse area on Earth, and the other is Ecuadorian Pacific Coast, with the Chocó-Magdalena region, one of 25 global hotspots. This means that in addition to the massive number of species (many of them endemics), we have almost the same number of threats: in this case, oil palm crops, logging and deforestation. Yasuni also has its threats for this insane biodiversity: oil exploitation, wildlife trafficking, deforestation and colonization. It is easy to recognize the richness and biodiversity in tropical countries, but it is not as common to associate this biodiversity with their threats. If we don't do this, people will think that all is perfect with conservation and we don't need to care or raise awareness about its problems. Ecuador not only boasts almost 8% of all amphibian diversity, but is also number 1 in the list of countries with most endangered species, the vast majority of them, amphibians. Ironically! With this quick intro, I want to introduce you to some of the magical frogs of the Ecuadorian pacific coast forests, of which less than 5% remain intact. Can you imagine those forests without all these colorful critters jumping all over? I really cannot. It would not be a loss for Ecuadorians only, but for all mankind. But we can always find a light at the end of the tunnel: some conservation organizations, universities, and NGOs, are doing their best to preserve what we left. www.savethechoco.org, www.fjocotoco.org, www.otonga.org, www.anfibioswebecuador.ec are the most renowned in the fight by now. But conservation is not just an organizations deal, it can start with each of us: taking a look where the wood for our furniture came from, not purchasing exotic animals coming from the pet trade, trying to avoid products with palm oil, educating the new generations about the importance of these forests, are some of the ideas that come to my mind now. Small things that can create huge differences, making us actors of the conservation of tropical areas. We have to act now; we are already late... but still with just enough time to change the course of what we have left!



Oophaga sylvatica

Oophaga sylvatica, sometimes known by its Spanish name *diablito*, is a species of frog in the Dendrobatidae family found in southwestern Colombia and northwestern Ecuador. Its natural habitat is lowland and submontane rainforest; however, it can survive in moderately degraded areas, at least in the more humid parts of its range.



Agalychnis spurelli

The natural habitats of this species are subtropical or tropical moist lowland forests and intermittent freshwater marshes. It is threatened by habitat loss.



Hypsiboas picturatus

The natural habitats of this stunning species are humid tropical and premontane forests, including secondary forests with a closed canopy. It lives on vegetation close to streams.



Oophaga sylvatica

Like many dendrobatid frogs, *Oophaga sylvatica* is toxic, and this toxicity is advertised by bright warning coloration. Populations of this tiny but visually striking frog are highly polymorphic in coloration, ranging from dull brown to bright red to orange with spots of yellow.



Epipedobates sp.

Epipedobates is a genus of poison dart frogs native to northern South America (Colombia and Ecuador) west of the Andes, including the western slopes.



Oophaga sylvatica

A very common frog in Colombia but has disappeared from much of its Ecuadorian range. It is threatened by habitat loss (deforestation) and agricultural pollution.



Oophaga sylvatica

This is a large poison frog, with some adults reaching 35mm in length. Like many *Oophaga*, it exhibits a high variability of color and pattern phenotypes among populations. Patterns of spotting, marbling, and reticulation, as well as solid body color, are all present. These patterns are seen in combinations of white, yellow, orange, red, bronze, black and light blue.



Ceratophrys stolzmanni

The habitat where some individuals of the Pacific horned frog have been collected can be described as tropical scrub, which is usually fairly open with a few trees, but remains green for about half the year. Other specimens have been collected in an open and sandy desert, with scattered, low, desert vegetation, and trees that are absent except in or near temporary streambeds.



Agalychnis spurelli

The Gliding tree frog grows to a snout to vent length of 48 to 56 mm (1.9 to 2.2 in) for males and 60 to 72 mm (2.4 to 2.8 in) for females. The head is broad and the eyes are large, with reticulated lower eyelids. The body is slim with smooth skin on the dorsal surface and limbs and granular skin on the belly. The limbs are slim and the fingers and toes have adhesive discs.



Oophaga sylvatica

Oophaga, Greek for "egg eater", describes the tadpoles' diet. The tadpoles feed on unfertilized eggs supplied as food by the mother. After a parent transports newly-hatched tadpoles to a tiny water reservoir (often a bromeliad), the mother returns periodically and lays unfertilized eggs, on which the tadpoles feed until they are ready to metamorphose and leave the water.



Oophaga sylvatica

Because of their rearing behavior, some of the *Oophaga* species are among the most difficult poison dart frogs to breed successfully in captivity. As a result, they are not widely available, and those which are available may be of questionable origins. Captive bred froglets are occasionally available to very experienced keepers.



Hypsiboas picturatus

An uncommon species. Threats to it likely include habitat loss from agricultural development (including illegal crops, logging, and human settlement) and pollution.



Oophaga sylvatica

Illegal collection & exportation of these frogs has decimated the wild population. *O. sylvatica* is listed on the IUCN redlist as NT Near Threatened due to deforestation.



Ceratophrys stolzmanni

The beautiful green morph of the Pacific horned frog. This is a very rare species, but it has been recorded in the last few years in Ecuador. There is no information on its population status in Peru. The major threat is habitat loss due to agriculture (especially cattle ranching), logging, and human settlement. Soil pollution, due to agrochemicals, also represents a threat.



Oophaga sylvatica

O. sylvatica is primarily found in very humid rainforest habitats and mostly encountered on the forest floor in thick leaf litter. It needs water-containing plants such as bromeliads for successful breeding and these are sometimes found meters above the forest floor. They regularly hunt in between the large fallen leaves where they find ants, termites, small beetles and other small arthropods.



Hypsiboas picturatus

Males measure 46–53 mm (1.8–2.1 in) and females 62–69 mm (2.4–2.7 in). Eyes are extremely large with yellow iris. Snout is truncated. The skin on the back is smooth and belly is slightly granular. Dorsal colouration is variable but generally with a reddish brown background with round yellow marks. Some individuals have dark brown back with brown markings.



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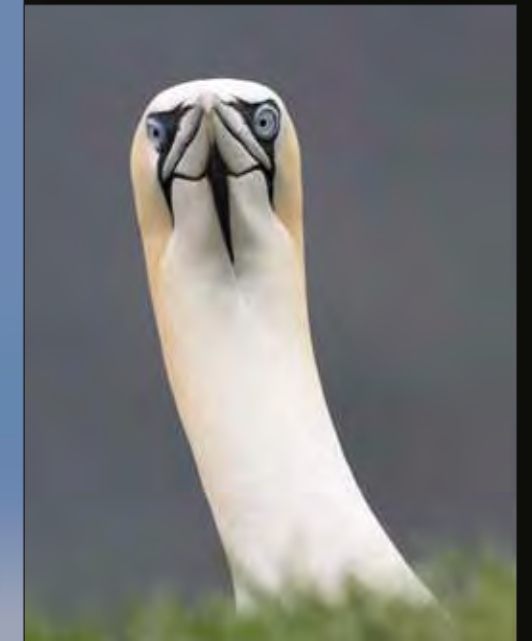
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David Hemmings - President, Nature's Photo Adventures



"My experience was EXCEPTIONAL! The trip exceeded my expectations in all areas. I hoped to get in a position to see owls and couldn't possibly have been happier. It was abundantly clear that David invested significant time and effort prior to the arrival of the group in scouting the area around Quebec and Ontario. He knew exactly where to go to find every species of owl. His knowledge and efforts were very much appreciated by the entire group. My primary objective was just getting in a position to photograph owls and was not expecting much in the way of photographic instruction. I was very pleasantly surprised and was very happy with the instruction. Prior to the trip I had a love/hate relationship with auto focus as it applies to photographing birds in flight. I've struggled with this for years. While I have a lot more to

learn, and need to work at honing my skills, the trip with NPA helped me tremendously in being able to photograph birds in flight. Photographing birds in flight was my main objective. Prior to the trip I was nearly clueless in comparison to my skills after the trip. You can also see from my bird list that I found the trip productive from a birding perspective as well".
Kevin McCarthy, USA

"I recommend NPA workshops! The level of services by workshop leaders was excellent. Quality of photographic instruction was exceptional and they

were always on hand to solve issues that arose, and I had more than my share of equipment issues. Quality of wildlife provided was good and I was amazed at how easily the subjects accepted new setups provided. Locations visited were right on for the spices targeted. My most memorable moment was using the flash setups the first time and capturing an image of the Swordbill Hummingbird. I feel that my level of photography has improved with the custom functions that were set up on my camera for me and the resulting images that I obtained. Overall experience and

expectations were achieved and we were fortunate to have a very compatible group on our tour, which made it very enjoyable. This was my first workshop and I would recommend them to friends".
Rosemary Harris, Canada

"Great trip, great experience and great workshop leader. Great opportunity for capturing images of magnificent and uncommon (in southern USA) birds. Organizers contribute to great group dynamics and superb attitude. Cool techniques".
Eric Grossman, USA

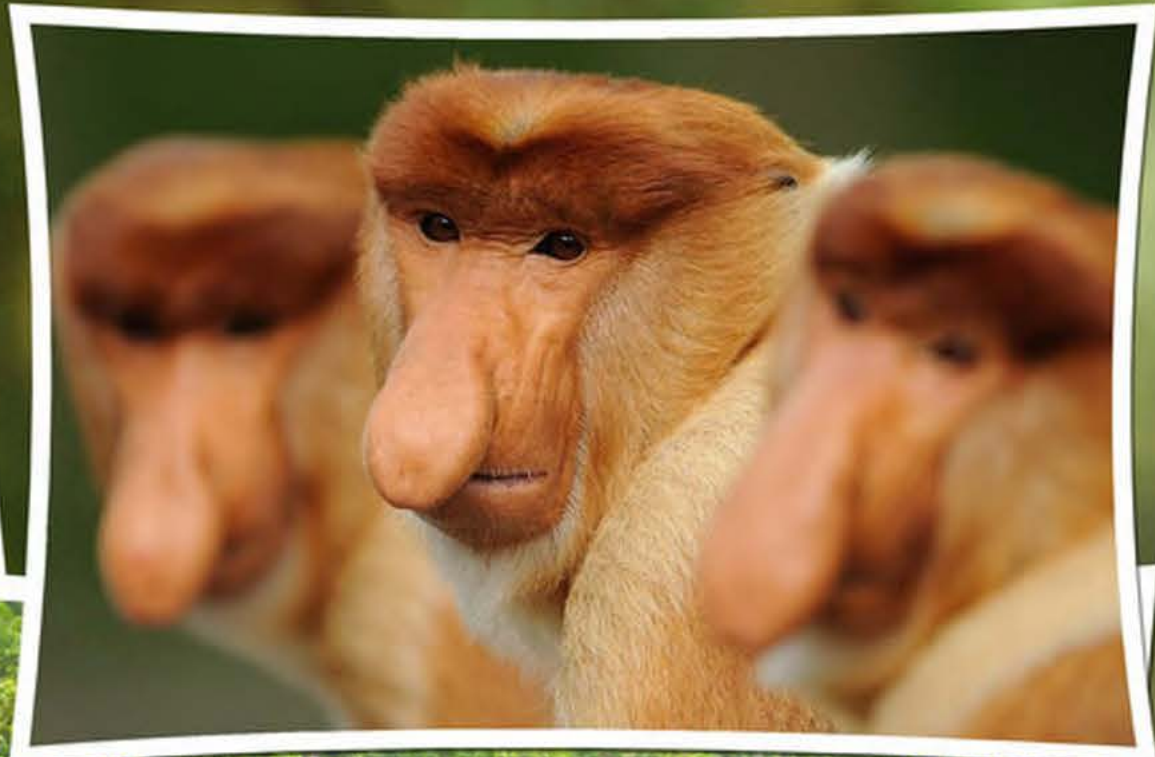


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A UNIQUE ENCOUNTER WITH SPERM WHALES
BIRTH OF A GIANT



An adult Sperm whale
Physeter catodon
freely swimming
in its element - the open sea.

Diving and underwater photography legend Kurt Amsler experiences the encounter of a lifetime when he meets a Sperm whale giving birth to its baby



TEXT AND PHOTOS
BY KURT AMSLER

American whalers came to the Azores, off the coast of Portugal, in the early 19th century. Although they didn't initially operate in these waters, the islands were used for provisioning and supplementing crews with energetic young men from the archipelago. In time, Azoreans took up whaling themselves, establishing their own whaling stations along the coast.

Whaling in the Azores significantly declined in the 1970s and officially ceased with the International Whaling Commission (IWC) ban in 1986. In its stead, a lucrative new business has arisen: now visitors hunt whales with photo and video cameras rather than harpoons. This is what brought me to the Azores.

For five days we cruised the islands of Faial and Pico. Nine hours a day in a small boat gets long and tiresome, but it's necessary for close encounters with the giant sperm whales of the Atlantic.

A beautiful image of the mother Sperm whale introducing her newborn child to the other whales and to the photographer.

continued on page 95 >



The newborn baby can not yet swim properly and is kept at the surface by the mother and the midwives.



■ A truly unique photographic sequence showing the mother giving birth - surrounded by midwives - and the first breath of the baby, again with the help of the midwives.





■ The enormous mother arrives to carefully check out the photographer.

Photographer Kurt Amsler dives with a Sperm whale in the Azores (photo by Fred Buyle). Right, the mother introduces her child to the other whales and to the snorkelling photographer.



Both technically and physically, sperm whale photography poses some of the greatest challenges to the underwater photographer. In addition to being extremely shy, sperm whales use echolocation to detect sound and movement for up to several miles. To avoid scaring them away with engine noise and scuba bubbles, boats must remain far from the whales, and freediving is the only practical way to approach them.

The day started promisingly with three sightings and an underwater encounter to within about 65 feet. From a small boat like the one we used, it is not possible to see whales from the surface. Therefore, we worked with *vigias da baleia* — people who watch for whales

from hillside observation towers, remnants from when commercial whaling was still practiced in the Azores.

Centuries ago Azoreans constructed lookouts high above sea level on several of the islands. From these vantage points they used binoculars to spot their quarry and communicated the locations to the whalers with smoke signals, rockets and eventually radios. These observers were the most important men in the Azorean whaling trade, as only they could direct whalers to their targets. The local whalers were generally fishermen, craftsmen or farmers who dropped what they were doing when a whale was spotted. The cry "*Baleia! Baleia!*" would send them

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The gigantic Sperm whale mother approaches on the surface, checking out the photographer.

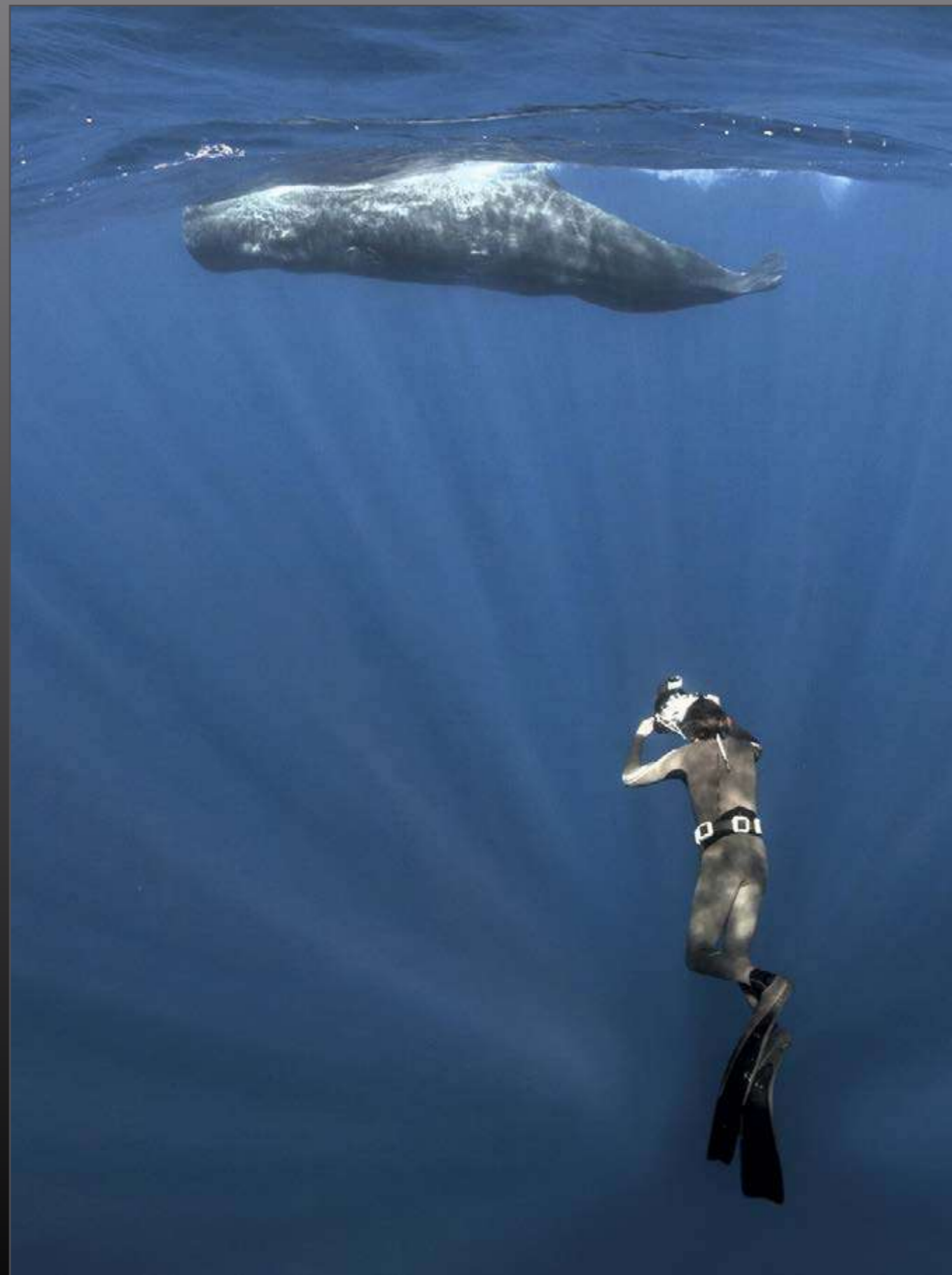


running to the harbor, where their boats — at first slender rowing boats called canoas, evolving to motor boats by the second half of the 20th century — were always ready to set out.

Our boat's radio suddenly crackled, and from the driver's reaction I could tell it was a good message. A group of about six animals had been spotted about one nautical mile to the south. Courtesy of twin 150-horsepower motors, we reached the spot quickly and saw our quarry. The pod was swimming in circles very slowly — a decidedly strange behavior. We cut the motors to avoid scaring them away, and we kept to a safe distance of about 100 yards. With a last look at the pod's position, I gently slid into the water.

For the first 60 yards I swam as fast as possible, scanning the blue to try to glimpse the animals, but there was nothing but a big murky cloud. I soon realized that the cloud suspended in the water was actually blood, which appeared greenish because of the loss of red light underwater. This explained the pod's strange behavior. I thought they must be watching over a wounded member.

Female sperm whales are famously social. They form networks with their young and live in groups of 15 to 20 animals. Sexually mature males leave the pod and form associations with older males but travel alone. I assumed (correctly, as it turned out later) that this was a pod of females.



Photographer Kurt Amsler dives with a Sperm whale (photo by Fred Buyle). Left, after 20 minutes the baby can swim independently and is able to dive by itself.



Once the process of birth had begun more Sperm whales arrived to share the event.

As the whales' communication sounds intensified, I could make out the group about 20 yards away, huddled just below the surface. But with the sun directly in front of me it was difficult to see exactly what was going on.

I descended to 50 feet to carefully pass beneath them. My descent revealed that my initial assessment was wrong: there was no wounded animal; it was a mother giving birth. The placenta and bits of skin were floating in the water around the calf, which had left the womb only seconds earlier.

Even at birth, sperm whales break all records for toothed whales: A baby can weigh more than a ton. Bulls can reach a length of 60 feet and weigh more than 40 tons; they are the biggest toothed predator and have the largest brain of any animal. Despite these impressive statistics, newborn sperm whales remain relatively helpless. Unable to swim in the first minutes of life, an infant sperm whale relies on a group of females to help it enter the world.

Photographer Kurt Amsler prepares to dive. Top right, a tentacle of a giant squid, the usual prey of Sperm whales. Below, more Sperm whales join the event.



Five midwives floated the still-immobile newborn to the surface to take its first breath, while the mother, still weak from birthing, watched from below. With every passing minute the calf became increasingly mobile until it could swim independently for short distances. I heard its communication, which had a higher pitch than the others — like the voice of a child.

To avoid disturbing the animals I moved carefully and maintained a distance of about 30 feet. Up to this point the whales had not noticed my presence, but suddenly the mother wanted to identify the stranger in their midst.

Quietly but directly, the 30-foot-long giant turned in my direction and swam right up to me. Her massive head got bigger and bigger as the displaced water pushed me away. Water churned around me as the noise of her exhalations thundered in my

ears. I saw her eye looking at me, and I discerned no aggression at all.

Sperm whales are stocky, and their characteristic bulbous heads can account for up to a third of their total length. Researchers believe that the whales' heads serve as "acoustic lenses," focusing sound waves sent out during echolocation. Emitting high-frequency clicking sounds, the animals scan the surrounding environment and are able to image a large area.

Whales communicate perpetually and are audible to others over great distances. As the birth was communicated, more and more animals arrived for the event. As the giants congregated, I realized that I was fully accepted.

The mother swam to the other groups of whales to present her child. Incredibly, she even did the same for me, stopping and allowing the baby to swim toward me. After





■ The child checks out the photographer. Right, one of the original whale watch outposts. Below, the expedition team: Andreas Gruber, Kurt Amsler and Bea Metzger.



about 20 minutes, the baby was already stronger and faster — and eager to venture away on its own, which the mother did not like at all. Using her immense, toothy mouth, she brought her little runaway back to the surface.

As the event came to its conclusion, the whales disappeared into the blue of the Atlantic, while the mother descended with her child into the depths.

Sperm whales swim in all oceans. They're most commonly found in the tropics and subtropics, but they also explore colder seas. In 2004 a sperm whale was even spotted in the Baltic Sea for the first time.

The average dive time for a sperm whale is 45 minutes, but some may extend up to 120 minutes. How it's possible for sperm whales to hold their breath for such extended periods has not yet been fully explained, but it is

known that they are able to restrict and slow their metabolism to a minimum while diving, during which time blood is directed only toward essential organs such as the heart, brain and spinal cord.

Unfortunately, these hearty and majestic animals are still in danger. Commercial whaling continues by some countries — notably Japan, Norway, Iceland and the Faroe Islands — that found loopholes or declared an objection to the IWC's ban, resulting in the death of thousands of whales each year.

In my 45 years of underwater photography, I have documented many spectacular and unique situations, but this experience provided the single most powerful encounter of my life. I'm sure my images will spread awareness and encourage people to support the protection of these intelligent and endangered marine mammals.

THE SPERM WHALE

Physeter macrocephalus or
Physeter catodon

Even at birth the sperm whale breaks all records for toothed whales; a baby whale can weigh over a ton. But it is their diving capabilities that really stand out. One specimen which was equipped with sensors and transmitters dove to a depth of 2,270 meters. The bulls can reach a length of 18 meters and a weight of 40 tons. As such they are the biggest predators on the planet. The body is stocky and the characteristic bulbous head can account for a third of the total length. The dorsal fin is small and it has short and stubby pectoral fins. The tail fluke is shaped like two equilateral triangles and is slightly rounded at the top and deeply notched in the middle. The one blowhole is located at the upper tip of the head. The huge head of a sperm whale is to a large part filled with an oily substance, also called spermaceti. It is believed that the head also serves as an "acoustic lens" focusing sound waves sent out during echo location. Emitting high-frequency clicking sounds the animals scan the surrounding environment and are able to image a large area. The sperm whale is found in all oceans. It is most common in the tropics and subtropics, but is also found in colder seas. In 2004, a sperm whale was even spotted in the Baltic Sea for the first time. On average, the males dive deeper than females. The duration of a dive can be from 20 to 120 minutes. How it's possible for sperm whales to hold their breath for such extended periods of time has not yet been fully explained. It is known that they are able to restrict and slow down their metabolism to a minimum while diving, during which time, blood is directed only towards essential organs such as the heart, brain and spinal cord. In addition, sperm whales have 50 percent more hemoglobin in their blood than humans do, enabling them to store large supplies of oxygen. Sperm whales' preferred prey is squid, and parts of the fabled giant squid has regularly been found in their stomachs. Females form social networks with their young and live in groups of about 15 to 20 animals. Sexually mature males then leave and later form associations or groups with older males but travel alone.

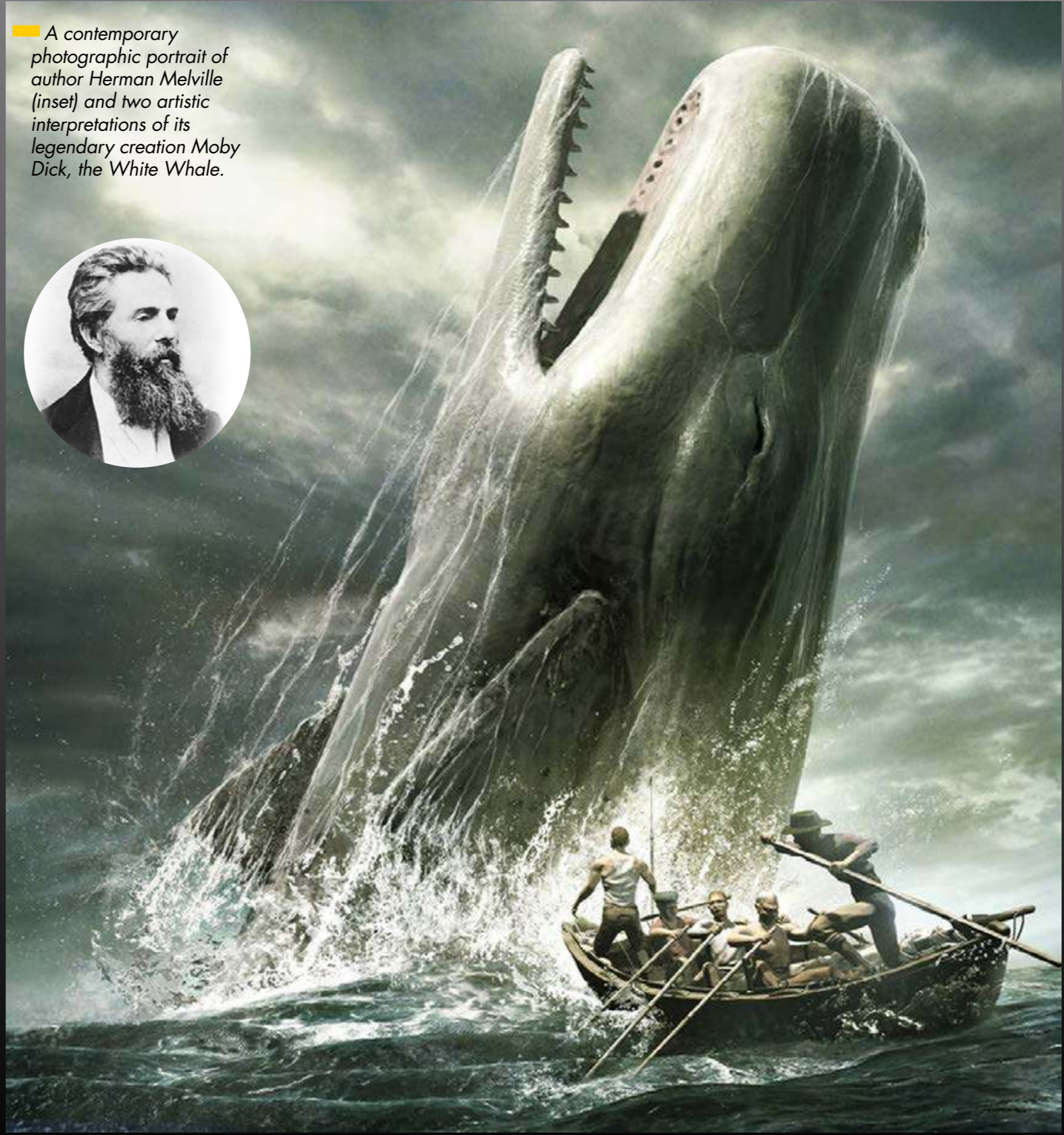


Above, an image of the preserved whale factory at Horta Island of Fial. Right, two archive photographs of whale hunting at the Azores as it took place until 1984.

Bookshelf

Moby Dick by Herman Melville

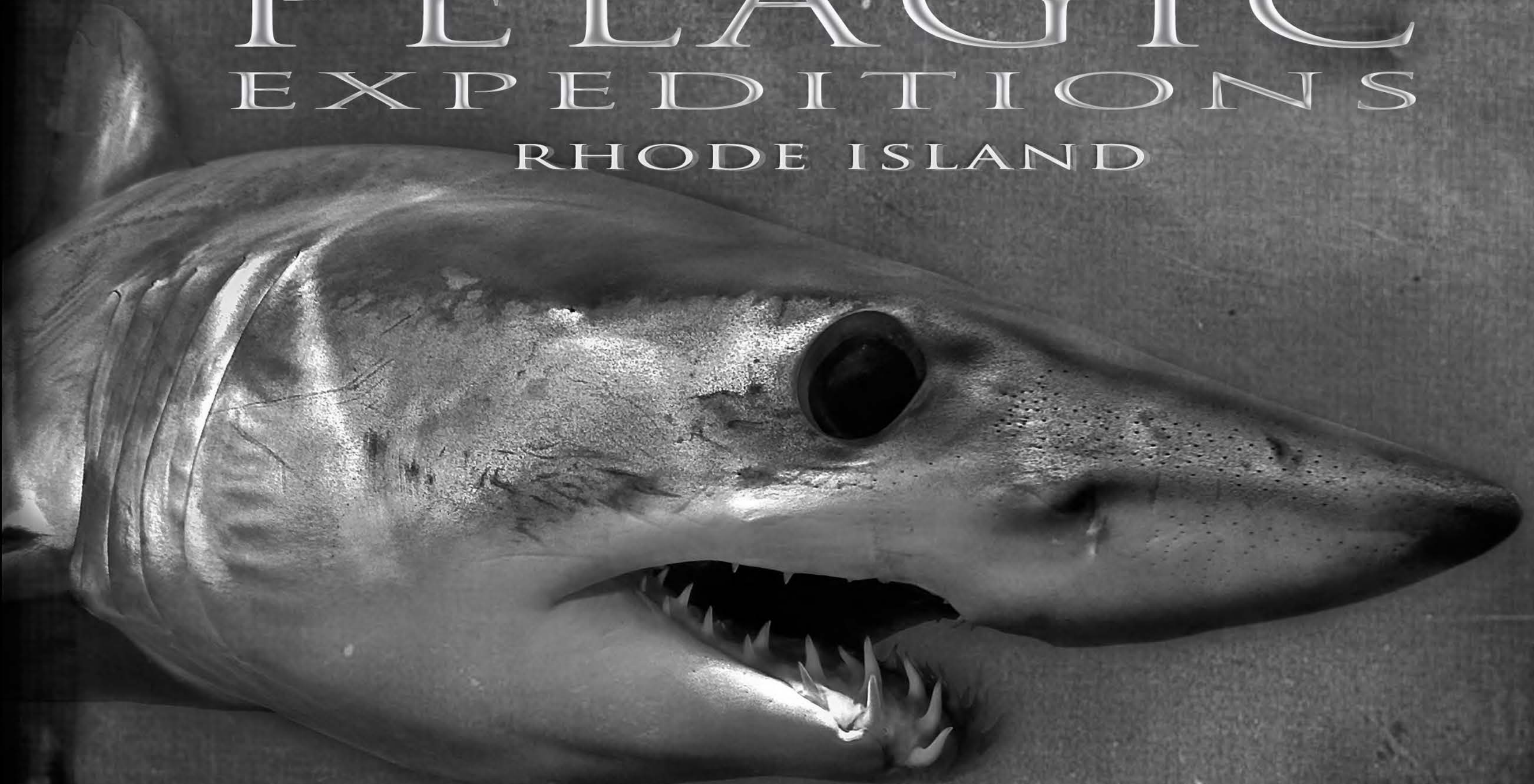
This novel, which is now a literary classic, was, incredibly, a commercial failure when it was first published in London and New York in 1851. And it was only a long time after the author's death in 1891, when the book was well out of print, that its reputation rose during the 20th century. One of the most distinctive features of the book is the variety of genres that appear. Melville uses a wide range of styles and literary devices to blend the complexity of the fascinating whale, the ethical ambivalence of hunting these magnificent creatures, and the incredibly diverse appreciation of whales and whaling across the world's cultures. *Moby Dick* is based on Melville's actual experience on a whaling vessel. He described the whale in either florid mythical terms or in the language of the early marine biologists; some passages are written using the old jargon of the New England Quakers, others like the preaching tales of old Bible translations. In any case, he moved with ease from the language of a sailor to the dry prose of expedition reports, and described exotic cultures in the style of the somewhat racially-biased adventure literature of the day in order to fit right into the prevailing tone of the establishment. Whoever is interested in whales (and great literature) must read *Moby Dick*. This extraordinary novel has been brought to the big screen at least seven times in several faithful (or not so faithful) versions, notably in *Moby Dick*, directed in 1956 by John Huston from a screenplay by Ray Bradbury and starring Gregory Peck as the obsessed captain Ahab.



A contemporary photographic portrait of author Herman Melville (inset) and two artistic interpretations of its legendary creation Moby Dick, the White Whale.



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The Parting Shot



For the second time in a row, our Parting Shot is an image provided by promising young Indian photographer Arghya Adhikary. Here's his story: "Native to the Indian subcontinent as well as southern China, western and northern Thailand and north and east Myanmar, the small *Niltava Niltava macgrigorae* is a little passerine bird magnificently colored by mother nature. Fast and flitting, it is one very difficult bird to capture on camera. With patience, however, it is possible to get

a glimpse of the beauty of this naturally bashful avifauna species. On average, this little Himalayan bird reaches a length of 11-15 cm and a weight of 11-14 gm. It is a miniature version of the large *Niltava Niltava grandis* from which it differs by its bluish grey belly and lower breast. It looks black from a distance and in poor lighting conditions, but in good light, the blue crown and the neck-band shine stunningly. Females are greyish brown in color with pale underparts and a blue stripe is present

on the side of the neck. Being shy as well as arboreal in nature, the small *Niltava* dwells both on the ground and in the trees, where it forages for flies, small invertebrates and berries. This beautiful species is native to the Indian subcontinent (mainly in the eastern Himalayas, east to northeast India) but can also be found in southern China, western and northern Thailand and north and east of Myanmar. In India, it is most commonly observed in the evergreen forest understorey".

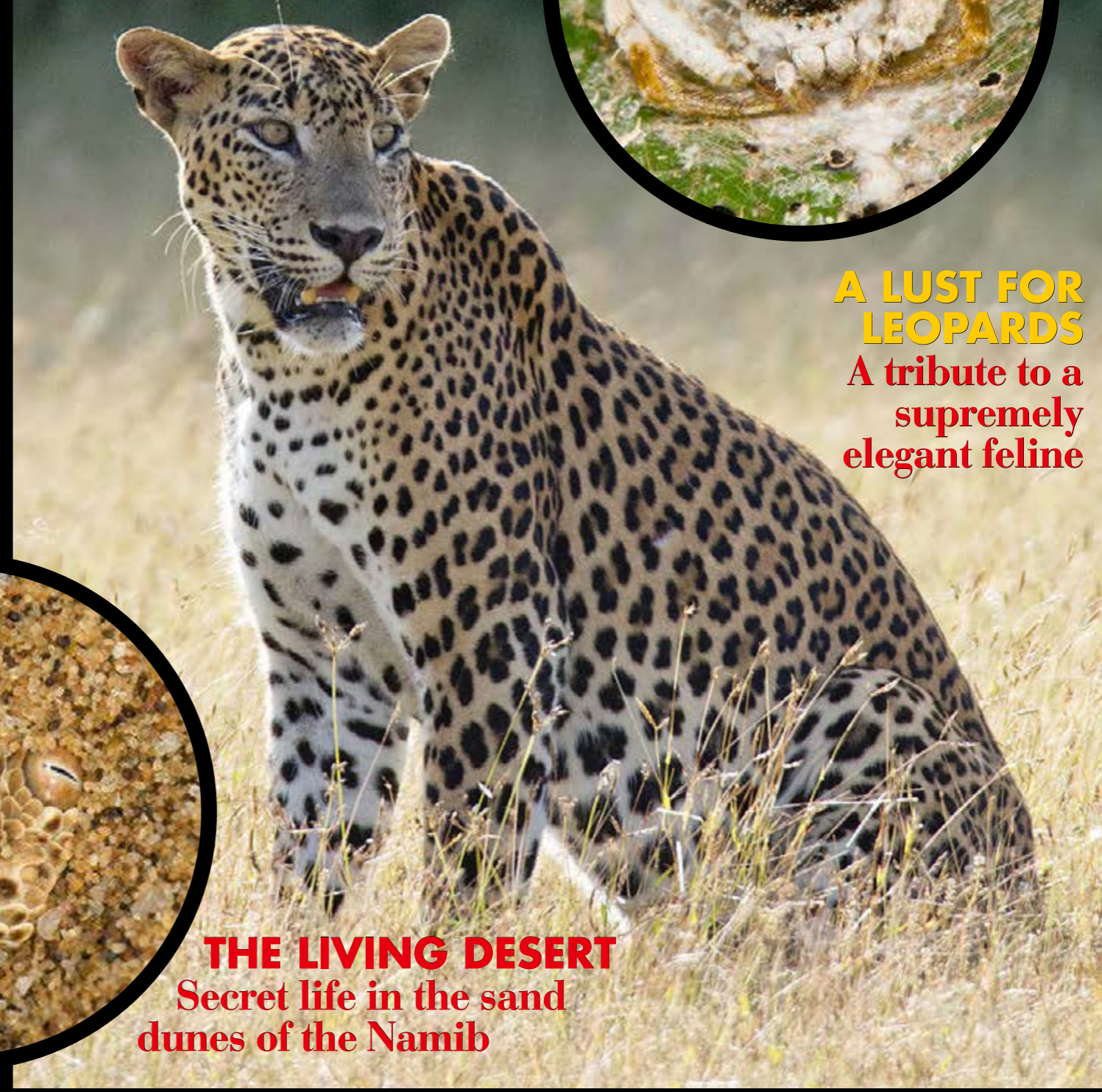
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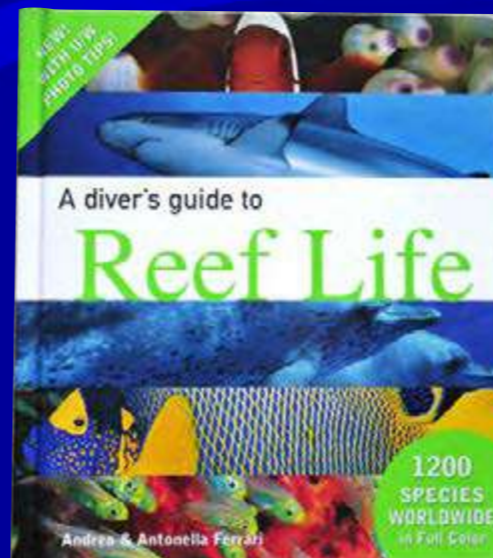
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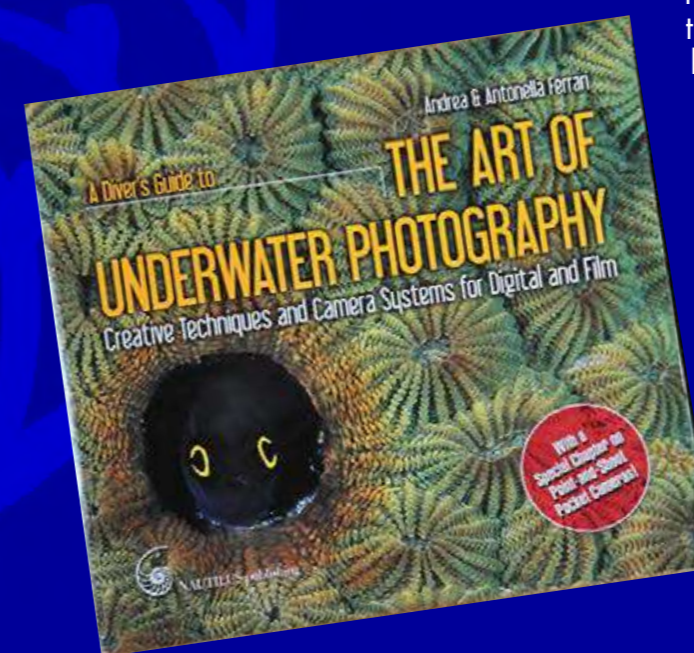
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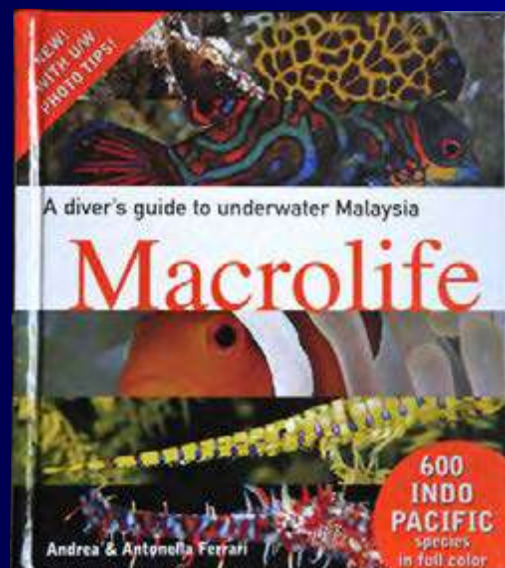
ALEX MUSTARD, WETPIXEL.COM: This book gives us a rare insight into the mindset, dedication and imagination involved in creating magnificent underwater images. I sat down and read this enjoyable book from cover to cover. The lack of techno-talk makes it a very accessible method to improve your photography. The images are some of the finest you will see in a guide to underwater photography. All the images are very well reproduced, which will not come as a surprise to anyone who owns any of the other books by the authors. A large format 360 page feast of fabulous images and thought provoking and enjoyable writing on taking pictures in the ocean. • UNDERCURRENT: This book is filled with spectacular images, designed not only to offer great technical guidance, but also help the underwater photographer discover and develop the artist within. Clearly the best and most beautiful "how-to" book ever produced. • JOHN BANTIN, DIVER MAGAZINE: With an enviable reputation for authoring fine books on underwater photography, the Ferraris have laced the pages of their new book with juicy pictures.

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