

ANIMA MUNDI

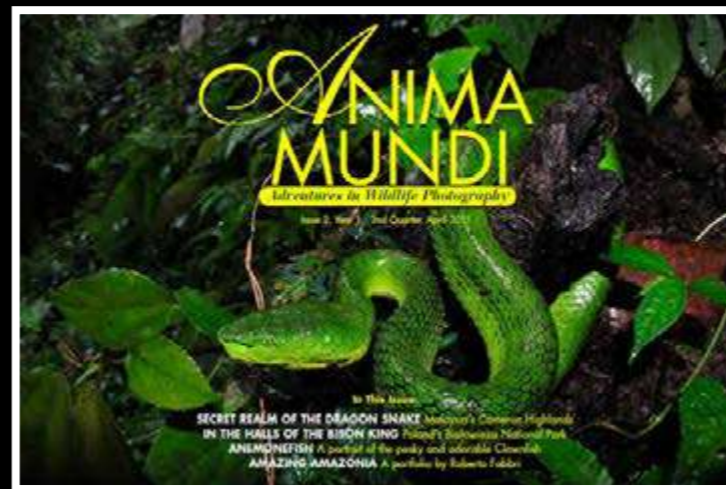
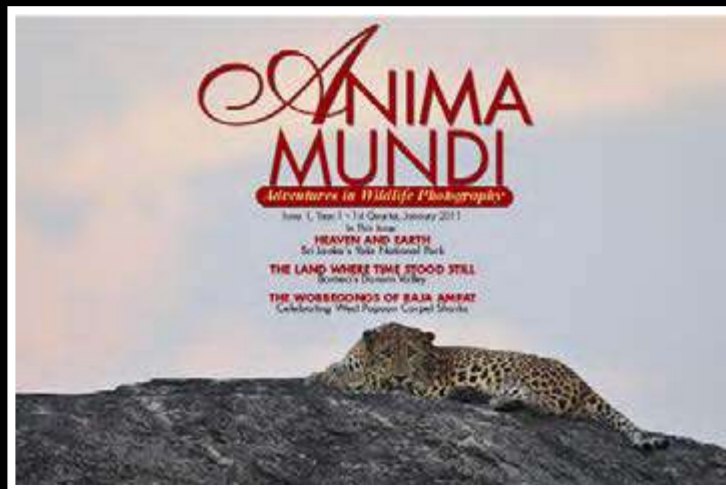
Adventures in Wildlife Photography

Issue 38, Year 10 - April 2020

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AFRICAN EDEN Masai Mara Reserve - Part Two
A CAROUSEL OF CHAMELEONS Madagascar beauties
THE CAPE ROUTE South Africa's Atlantic coast



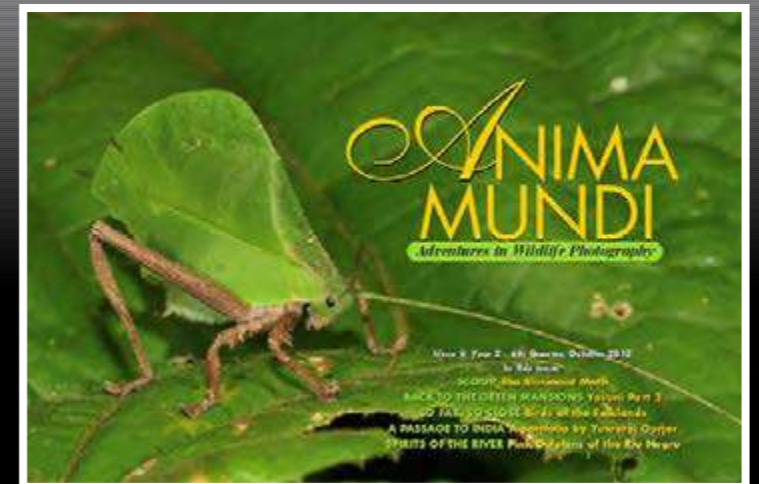
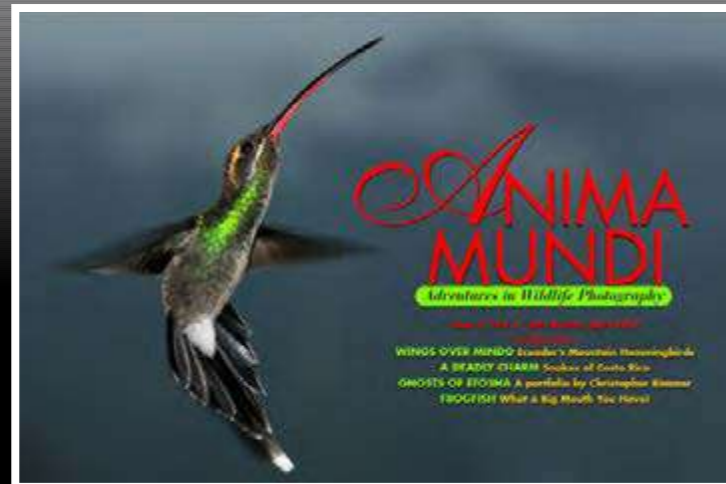
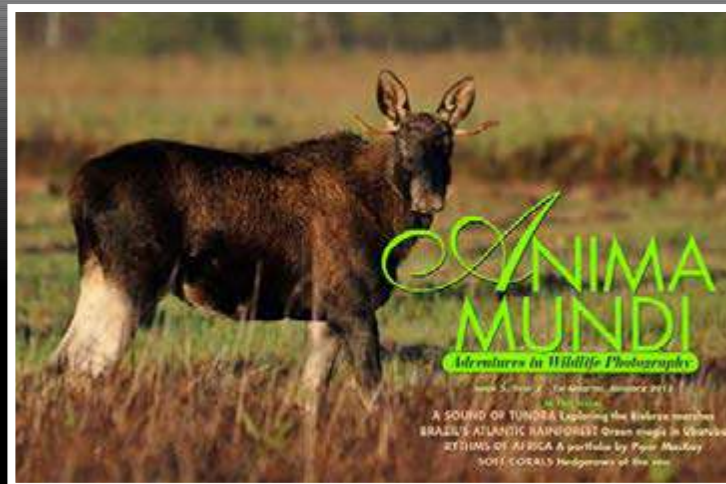


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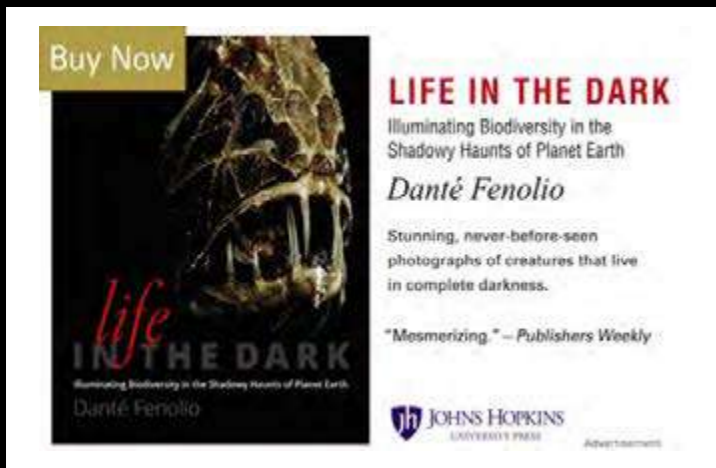
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With more than 30,000 downloads worldwide per issue (as per January 2017), ANIMA MUNDI has seen its readership consistently and rapidly growing in the span of six years of life and twenty-five published issues. Its authoritative and unbiased travel 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:

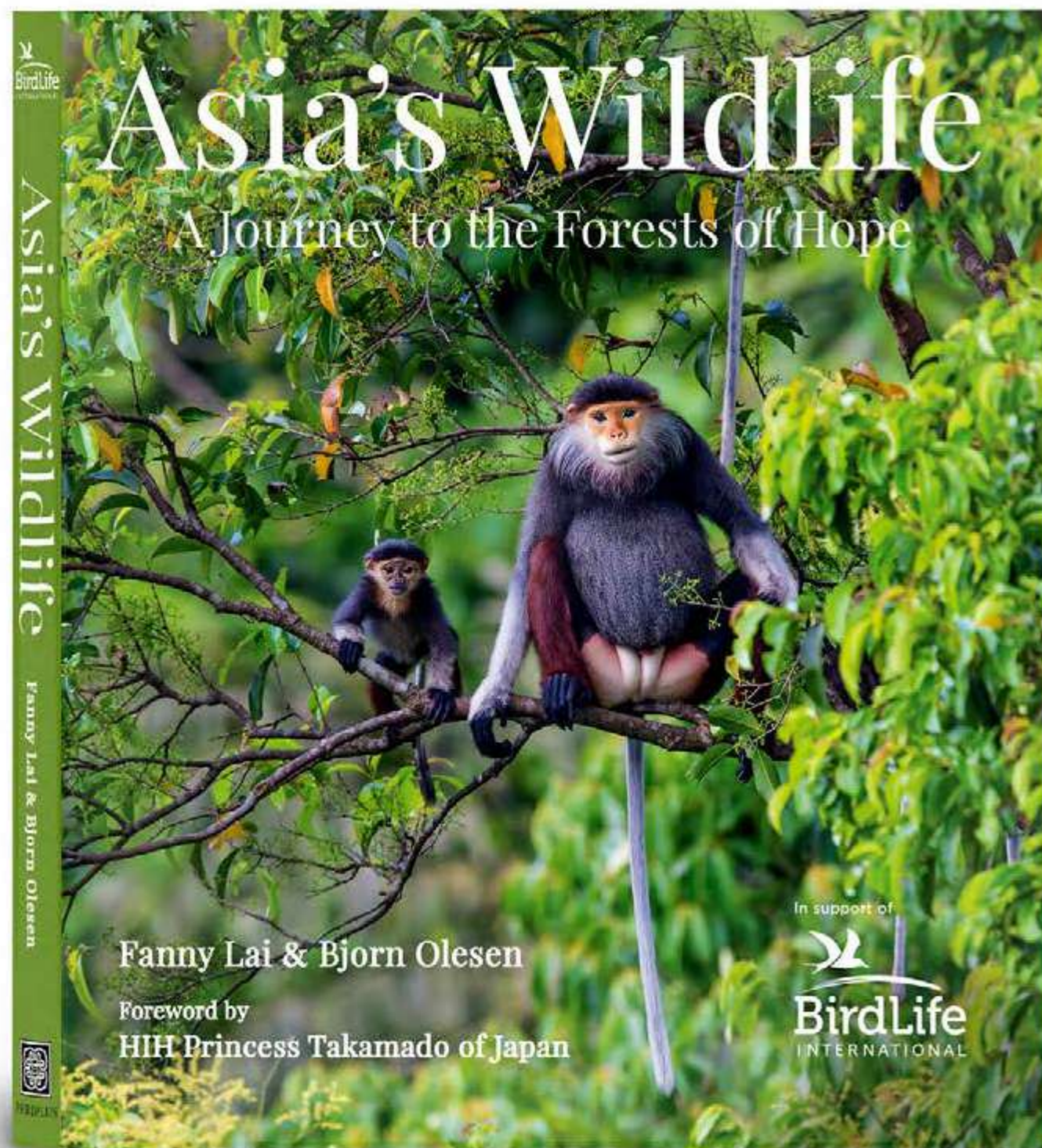
Dear Andrea & Antonella,

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 editor@animamundimag.com



Asia's Wildlife: A Journey to the Forests of Hope

'In these pages, we can read about eight forests in eight countries of Asia that we call forests of hope because of the love and commitment we have for them. The powerful photographs evoke feelings in me, and I suddenly realise that that is because Asia is my homeland. That we are blessed with such beautiful forests is a joy and a responsibility. But they are, of course, just examples of the miraculous riches that forests possess, and on this tiny planet we want all forests to be forests of hope.'

'Hope is the life force we all share. Hope is the thing with feathers. It perches in our souls.'

HIH Princess Takamado of Japan. Honorary President of BirdLife International.

'The surprising range and breathtaking beauty of the animals so miraculously photographed in this excellent book are a powerful reminder of the need to protect these treasures before they are lost forever.'

Dr. John van Wyhe, historian of science and one of the world's leading experts on Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace.

'Close-up views of Endangered fauna in their natural habitats are difficult enough to obtain, but the breathtaking quality of the photography in this valuable documentation of Asia's forests makes this book highly recommended for both scientists and nature lovers alike.'

Robert Stuebing, The Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.

'These arresting portraits of living creatures from eight Asian forests remind us all that forests have value beyond our capacity to measure. Without forests we cannot dream. Without forests we cannot breathe. Without forests we cannot hope. Forests are forever, and their conservation is the human endeavour that represents the best hope of our own survival as a species. Forests of hope indeed!'

Dr. Nigel Collar, Leventis Fellow in Conservation Biology, BirdLife International.

This book features some of the world's least known species like Vietnam's Saola and the Sumatran Tiger in their natural environment. It weaves high quality photography of these species and inspiring conservation stories from forest sites across Asia together through the lenses of lead photographer, Bjorn Olesen. I recommend it highly to anyone interested in saving Earth's biodiversity.'

Prof. Paul R. Ehrlich, President, Center for Conservation Biology, Stanford University.

Wildlife of Asia's Forests of Hope has been produced to raise funds in support of BirdLife International, and to increase awareness of nature conservation and their Forests of Hope programme in Asia. The authors have contributed their time and resources on a pro bono basis for the production, research and travelling for this one-of-a-kind publication.

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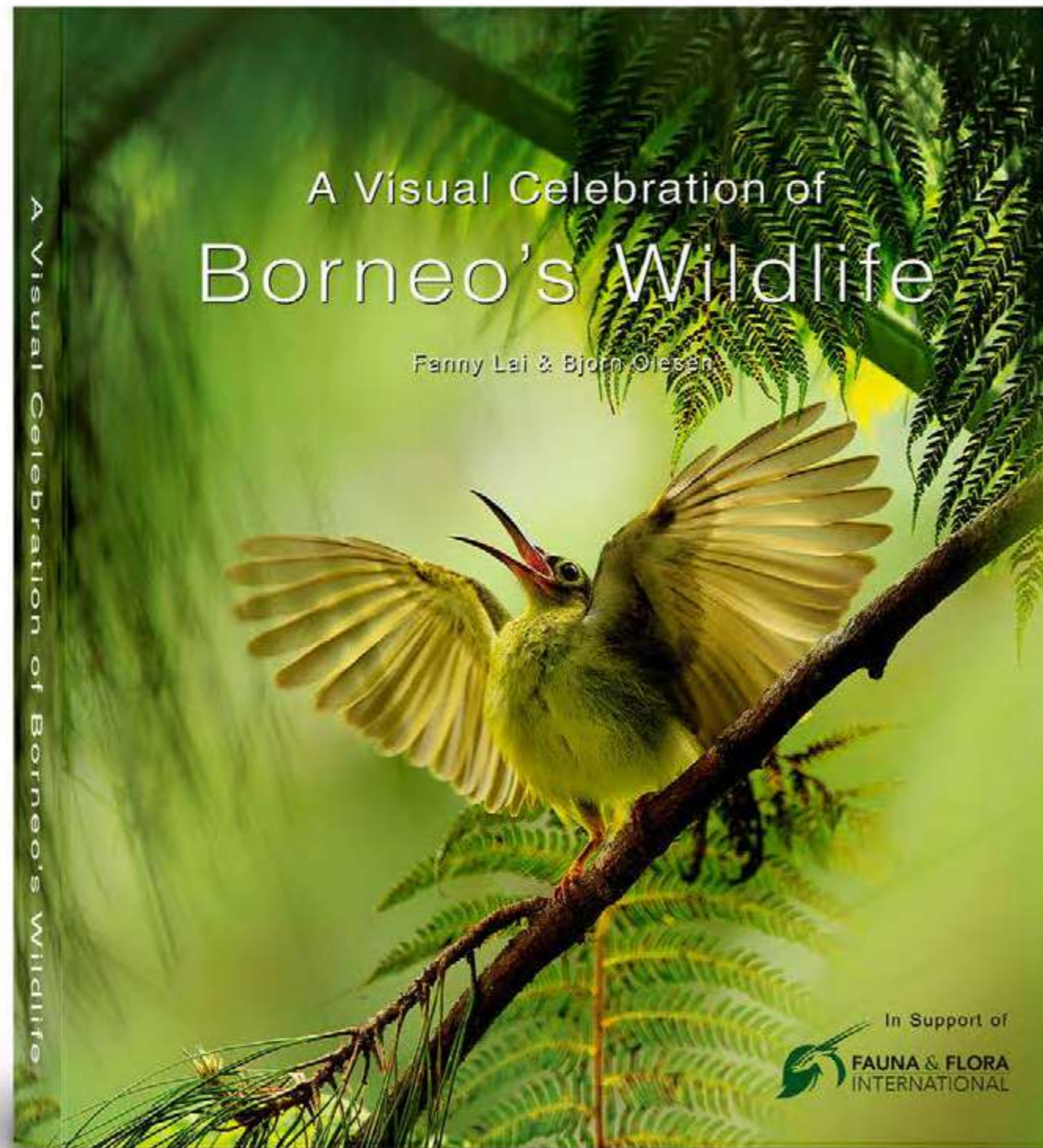
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'In A Visual Celebration of Borneo's Wildlife the authors have documented the natural wonders of Borneo through stunning photographs and informative text, and illustrated that these marvels of nature are still alive and well in Borneo, at least in certain areas....'

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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*.

All of the authors' royalties will be donated to [Fauna & Flora International](#)

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ANIMA MUNDI

Adventures in Wildlife Photography

Another brick in the wall

We are writing these words in self-imposed quarantine, as Italy and the world painfully grapple with a raging new epidemic. City life has come to a standstill, schools, theaters and museums are closed, shops and once vibrant roads are empty. Once more, man's ignorance and stupidity are unleashing a plague on Earth - this time rising like a dark phoenix from the wild animal markets of China, where the eating of endangered species continues unabated. Will things change, will new laws be enforced if we shall survive this deadly new disease? Alas, we have our doubts - the human race seems to mindlessly heading to a path of self-destruction, as if our species had been genetically programmed to self-destruct.

And yet, whatever will be of us, nature will survive - adapting, changing, evolving. As it has been doing since time immemorial on the endless grassy plains of Africa, where we are once more taking you starting on page 4 with the second part of our own trip report from a legendary wildlife photography destination which even the most seasoned nature traveller cannot afford to miss - the Masai Mara Nature Reserve in Kenya. If you have to choose one destination

ever, this is it - the sightings and photographic opportunities we experienced there are unique.

From page 57 we pay an extensive photographic tribute to one of nature's most wonderful creations - the colorful chameleons of Madagascar, a miracle of evolution which is once more threatened with extinction in today's world. Truly unique animals, these amazing and ageless lizards are severely endangered by the usual culprits - above all, deforestation and loss of habitat.



To finally wrap our issue up, on page 73 we take a wonderful drive along South Africa's Cape route - a brief trip by the Atlantic coastline which is full of stunning panoramic views and spectacular wildlife encounters. From cobras to fur seals and from unique antelopes to penguins, South Africa apparently has it all!

And that is all for now - until July with a new issue. In the meantime...

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

■ A beautiful but dangerous Cape cobra *Naja nivea* rears up defensively by South Africa's Atlantic coast - see our story starting on page 73.



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

ANIMA MUNDI
Adventures in Wildlife Photography
is a Free Quarterly Online Magazine
www.animamundimag.com

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— Masai Mara lioness -
see our story on page 4.



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KENYA'S MASAI MARA RESERVE

AFRICAN EDEN

Part Two

Nothing compares to this legendary,
easily visited and truly unique wildlife
photography destination



Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* ■
surveying their range from
a vantage point.
On the previous page, African
lioness *Panthera leo* with baby
warthog prey.



Male Impalas ■
Aepyceros melampus
at dawn.

TEXT BY ANDREA FERRARI
PHOTOS BY ANDREA & ANTONELLA FERRARI

In the first part of our Masai (or Maasai) Mara story we have focused on the technical details of Kenya's legendary Nature Reserve - how large it is, how it came into being, which animal species inhabit it and so on. But what about the Masai Mara experience? Well, let us just start by saying that in a lifetime of exotic travels in search of wildlife photography opportunities we have never experienced something like the Mara. This place is just special - the open landscape, sprawling forever under the unmistakable dome of the African sky, is home to a truly surprising variety and number of animals, and the ridiculous

ease with which the Reserve and its lodges can be reached from Europe almost tempts one to think of it as an extended weekend destination. The great variety in accomodation - from luxury camps to basic lodges - and the wide variation in the price ranges will suit any taste (but do remember that this remains a luxury destination, as most famous National Parks and Nature Reserves in Africa), and the wonderful proficiency in game tracking and spotting shown by the local Masai drivers and guides guarantees excellent sightings and formidable photo opportunities in most instances.

continued on page 8 ➤



African leopard
Panthera pardus
pardus.



Male African lion
Panthera leo.

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

In fact, the only problem one could have in the Mara is a feeling of complacency - hardly a day passes without a great sighting, a good photo opportunity or both. As most experienced wildlife photographers know all too well from bitter experience, this is a rare if not unique feeling - in most areas it is not uncommon to spend day after day hoping in a decent encounter only to be sorely disappointed and go back to camp at sunset empty-handed, bitterly disappointed and worried for the success of the trip. It has happened to us so many times - time is tyrant on such expensive, demanding trips, and every day counts - lack of success can easily transform what was supposed to be a wonderful, joyous adventure into a depressing nightmare with long faces, gloomy expectations and flaring tempers - both among clients and guides themselves. Wildlife photography is usually far from being a relaxing, satisfying experience - rather, it usually means long hours of frustration and physical effort with big

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■ *Superb starling*
Lamprotornis
superbus, one of
the Mara's most
colorful and
most commonly
observed bird
species.

■ Male
Waterbuck
Kobus
ellipsiprymnus.

expenditures of time and money but little results to be shown in return. Many times we have been tempted to say "Never again!" when a lovely , lomg-planned and expected holiday turned into a nightmare of frustration and disappointment. Not so in the Masai Mara - expect quite the opposite instead!

A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS

For the uninitiated, driving across the Mara can even be somewhat disconcerting - the number of animals artfully positioned in the scenic landscapes, their apparent indifference to vehicles and the ease with which they can be approached can easily give rise to feelings of complacency and even boredom in the casual visitor (of which in the Mara, sadly, there are many). In fact, it is quite surprising seeing how many people come to visit the place without having the slightest idea about its dynamics and what to expect - we heard tourists asking their amused Masai guides what the animals feeding hours were, for example. The price of success, alas! But if one steers clear of the crowds, satisfaction in the Mara is

continued on page 13 >





Left, Saddle-billed stork or saddlebill *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*; top right, Purple Grenadier *Uraeginthus ianthinogaster*; bottom right, Rosy-throated Longclaw *Macronyx ameliae*.






Coke's Hartbeest or ■
Kongoni *Alcelaphus*
buselaphus cokii.

African leopard ■
Panthera pardus pardus.



guaranteed - even with species rarely observed elsewhere as cheetas or notoriously secretive as leopards. In fact, we have taken some of our best leopard portraits ever right here in the Mara! Part of this is due to the fact that single animals or families and their ranges are well known to guides, being constantly monitored in their daily activities with information being shared in real time among drivers by mobile phone or radio - most of the predators, for example, even have their own individual or collective name, like the famous "Marsh pride" of lions. To be fully honest, this is not a practice we are fond of - knowing a leopard or a lion or any other big predator by a fancy name takes a lot of its mystique away, creating a false sense of familiarity shared by countless armchair "experts" worldwide sitting in front of their keyboard and enquiring about the daily whereabouts of their favourite kitten. We'd rather go with specific identifications only for scientific and field research purposes, but that's just us apparently. In any case, the welcome familiarity with wild animals living in the Mara shown by the Masai guides who share their land with them is a winning factor when it comes to locating one's camera subjects. It is a very comforting thought to the time-pressed wildlife photographer knowing that his guide knows exactly where to locate a specific animal, and that there are always excellent chances of finding it at any given location.

continued on page 24 ➤

 African lioness
Panthera leo.





■ Left, Cardinal woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens*. Right, Grey kestrel *Falco ardosiaceus*.



■ *Pride of African lion Panthera leo feeding on a wildebeest.*





Far left, Bateleur eagle *Terathopius ecaudatus*. Left, Secretary bird *Sagittarius serpentarius*.

African lion Panthera leo cubs - adorable and inquisitive.





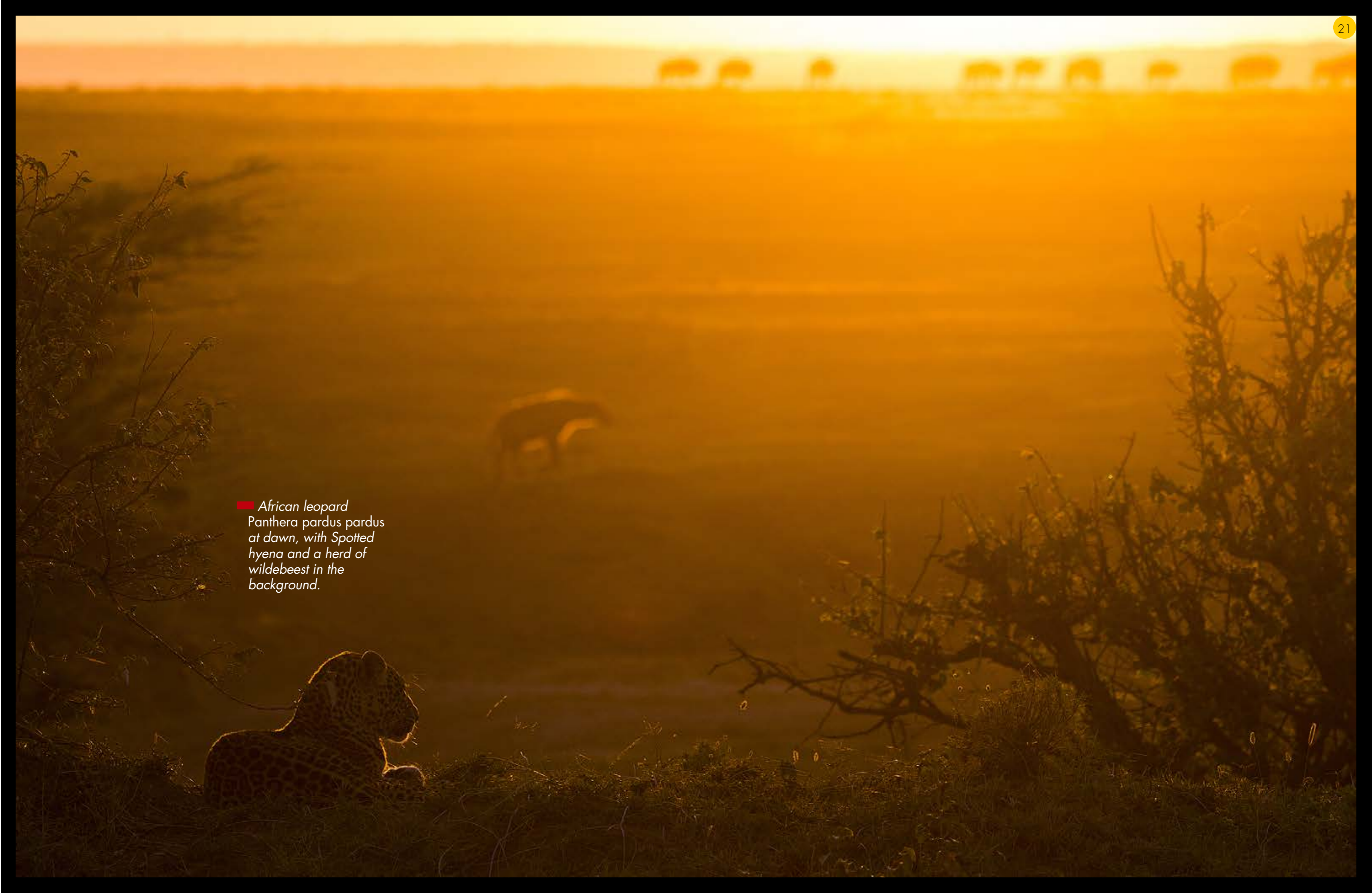
■ Top left, Superb starling
Lamprotornis superbus;
top right, Lappet-faced
vulture or Nubian vulture
Torgos tracheliotos.
Bottom left, Coqui francolin
Peliperdix coqui; bottom
right, Rüppell's Glossy-
Starling *Lamprotornis*
purpuroptera.



African leopard ■
Panthera pardus pardus.



■ African leopard
Panthera pardus pardus
at dawn, with Spotted
hyena and a herd of
wildebeest in the
background.





■ Top left, Greater Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chalybaeus*; top right, Ostrich *Struthio camelus*. Bottom left, Southern ground hornbill *Bucorvus leadbeateri*; bottom right, Lappet-faced vulture or Nubian vulture *Torgos tracheliotos*.



■ *Black rhino*
Diceros bicornis.




THE WINNING FACTORS

As usual, time is of paramount importance in the Mara too, as anywhere else - one cannot and should not expect miracles, and nothing is ever to be taken as granted in nature. But the reader should turn these pages and judge by himself - the images illustrating Part 1 and Part 2 of our Masai Mara story were taken over a two-week period, which may sound a long time for a holiday trip but which is next to a very short stay by wildlife photography standards anywhere else. Regardless of the artistic quality of our images - which one might like or not - the number of species and the variety of behavior illustrated here speak volumes. Much of this is due to the open nature of the Mara's environment, which generally facilitates encounters and long-distance sightings, and above all to the extraordinary proficiency and experience demonstrated by the young Masai who work in the lodges as trackers, guides and vehicle drivers. These young but usually very experienced professionals are incredibly proud to show the beauty of their land to visitors, and very focused in helping out wildlife photographers in getting the best shots. This makes the difference - our Masai guides in the Mara are hands-down the best we have ever had anywhere...with a very few exceptions represented by personal friends.

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Male Impala 
Aepyceros melampus.

Nile crocodile
Crocodylus niloticus.





■ *Left, Yellow-billed
oxpecker
Buphagus
africanus feeding
on ticks on a Cape
buffalo; right,
African wattled
lapwing Vanellus
senegallus.*



■ African leopard
Panthera pardus
pardus using a
vehicle as cover
during a hunt.






Left, Black-
chested snake
eagle or Black-
breasted snake
eagle *Circaetus*
pectoralis;
right, Steppe
eagle *Aquila*
nipalensis.





Nile crocodile 
Crocodylus niloticus.



Top, African lioness *Panthera leo* charging a herd of wildebeest; Bottom, Spotted hyena *Crocuta crocuta*.



STUPENDOUS GAME VIEWING

Make no mistake, enjoying wildlife photography in the Mara is a rather demanding job, and choosing to stay in a comfortable, luxurious and very expensive lodge can be rather disappointing after all, since one will be frustratingly spending so little time in it. Forget enjoying the well-appointed premises, the comfortable safari library by that inviting fireplace and having a cocktail by that refreshing turquoise swimming pool - if you are serious about your wildlife photography as we are, your trip will be probably better described as a boot camp. Wake-up at 4.00 at the latest (possibly earlier), a quick coffee or tea and you're off for a pre-sunrise, bumpy, dusty and usually freezing ride on an open 4-wheel drive
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Cheetah
Acinonyx jubatus.





■ Male African lion
Panthera leo.



Left, Topi ■
Damaliscus
lunatus jimela;
right, Thomson's
gazelle Eudorcas
thomsonii.





■ *A lone African elephant*
Loxodonta africana on
the endless, rolling plains
of the Masai Mara.

vehicle which is ideal for photography but not really the best to keep out the elements. Woe to those with a weak back! A short picnic breakfast in the middle of the bush at mid-morning - possibly among a herd of peacefully grazing herbivores - will bring some welcome and much-needed respite, but then it'll be non-stop driving again until lunch time (if you opt to go back to camp, that is - sometimes we don't). A short pause to grab a bite at the lodge's restaurant and download the morning's photos (presumably hundreds) in your tent, and then it's on the car again until sunset and dinner. Those stronger than us will stay up late by the fire (and usually be a wreck by the following morning) , but we normally crawl to bed, download the afternoon's work (more hundreds of photos!) and fall fast asleep by 20.00...And then the morning after we start all over again. Not everybody's idea of a relaxing holiday - believe us, two full weeks working at this beat can break one's back. But what makes the difference in this case is that the Masai Mara makes every single moment of the experience worth it. ●



■ African leopard
*Panthera pardus
pardus with zebra
foal prey.*



■ Nile crocodile
Crocodylus niloticus feeding on a wildebeest carcass.





African White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* and Rüppell's Vulture *Gyps rueppellii* at carcass site.



■ *Marabou stork*
Leptoptilos
crumenifer.



■ African lion
Panthera leo - a
dominant male
and two females
from its pride -
feeding on a
wildebeest.



African leopard
Panthera pardus pardus.



Black rhino
Diceros bicornis.



*Male African lion
Panthera leo - a truly majestic
and impressive sight.*



■ *Left, male African lion *Panthera leo* with the remains of an impala; right, Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* mother and young.*



*African leopard
Panthera pardus pardus
emerging from a wooded
grove at dawn.*





■ African lion
Panthera leo.





Left, soaring
Rüppell's Vulture
Gyps rueppellii;
right, African
paradise
flycatcher
*Terpsiphone
viridis*.





Left, African lioness *Panthera leo* charging after fleeing Wildebeest *Connochaetes taurinus*; right, African leopard *Panthera pardus pardus* feeding on zebra foal prey.





Coke's ■
Hartebeest or Kongoni
Alcelaphus buselaphus
cokii.





■ A rare sight -
Serval *Leptailurus*
serval with a bush
rat it has just caught
in the tall grass.

■ *Wildebeest*
Connochaetes
taurinus crossing a
dry riverbed and
Nile crocodile
Crocodylus niloticus.






African White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* and Rüppell's Vulture *Gyps rueppellii* at carcass site.



■ African leopard
Panthera pardus pardus
on the hunt and
migrating Wildebeest
Connochaetes taurinus.



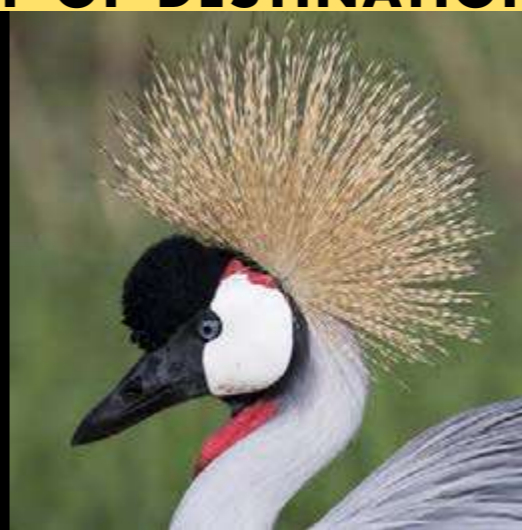
Mwanza
Flat-headed
Rock Agama
Agama mwanzae.



■ African leopard
Panthera pardus
pardus.

At-a-glance travel guide

COUNTRY OF DESTINATION: **KENYA**



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: Your international flight will land at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya - depending on your arrival time, you may opt to spend the rest of the day in Nairobi or go directly to the domestic landing strip to get on your bush plane to the Mara. Most flights to the Reserve depart in the morning, so plan accordingly.

MEANS OF TRANSPORT: Getting around in the Reserve can only be done by jeep. 4x4 Safari vehicles - often custom modified for wildlife photography - are driven by Masai guides, usually very experienced trackers and spotters who will give their best to guarantee good daily sightings. Many

Masai guides are also very familiar with the specific needs of wildlife photo/videographers, and are exceedingly proficient at positioning the vehicle to get the best camera or video opportunities. Your Masai driver (ours was **Benson Loigero**) will be your best friend during your safari - they are very proud of their land and its wildlife, and rightly so!

CURRENCY: Kenyan Shillings, US dollars and Euros are commonly accepted in most camps and lodges.

ACCOMODATION: The Masai Mara Reserve offers a huge choice of lodges and tented camps, from very expensive and luxurious ones to relatively

affordable ones. For our trip there we opted to stay at the lovely **Mara Eden Safari Camp**, whose simple but very comfortable tents are placed in a strategic point at the very heart of the Reserve, right on the banks of the Mara River. The area is great for wildlife! Staying there means that to get to and from your tent at night you'll have to be escorted by a Masai, as wildlife - including dangerous species - roams the camp when it's dark. The tents are comfortable, spacious, very clean and provided with attached bathroom and shower. We booked our trip through our friend **Jason Fernandes** of **Wilderness Uncut** and we can safely recommend their services - the organization and the bookings were faultless.

A legendary, exceptionally rewarding destination which cannot be missed



FOOD: Food in the hotels in Nairobi and at the camps is safe, abundant and filling. Meats take the pride of place, often with an exotic touch, and luxury hotels in Nairobi offer some truly tempting fare.

LANGUAGE: Bantu Swahili and English are spoken everywhere, and most Masai guides are often more or less basically multilingual.

WORRIES: Nairobi is a big city, so it presents the good and the bad of all other capitals in the world - common sense applies and it is advisable to avoid unsavoury neighbourhoods. While in the Mara one always has to keep in mind this is wild, untamed country - and if a Masai is seen walking nonchalantly in the grasslands where lions lurk, it does not mean the common tourist can do the same. Always follow the rules regarding wildlife, even when safely sitting inside an open vehicle.

HEALTH: Relatively safe as malaria has been eradicated from most of the Parks, being however still present along the coast and on the highlands. There are no mandatory vaccinations required but Yellow fever is recommended if visiting certain areas. For more detailed information you may want to visit the [Tropical Medical Bureau](#).

CLIMATE: The climate of Kenya varies by location, from mostly cool every day, to always warm/hot. The climate along the coast is tropical. This means rainfall and temperatures are higher throughout the year. At the coastal cities, Mombasa, Lamu and Malindi, the air changes from cool to hot, almost every day. The further inside Kenya, the more arid the climate becomes. For many areas of Kenya, the daytime temperature rises about 12 °C (corresponding to a rise of about 22 °F), almost every day. At night, heavy clothes or blankets are

needed in the highlands, when the temperature drops to about 10–12 °C (50–54 °F) every night. Although Kenya is centred at the equator, it shares the seasons of the southern hemisphere: with the warmest summer months in December–March and the coolest winter months in June–August.

BESIDES: Kenya is a stunningly beautiful and varied Country, boasting a number of Parks and a lovely coastline on the Indian Ocean where the stunning beaches of Mombasa, Malindi and Lamu lie. For those interested in the annual Great Migration taking place from the Serengeti to the Mara, the summer months are the time to go, even if the Reserve gets very crowded with tourists visiting it from all over the world. This is an amazing time to witness spectacular predator-prey interactions but the hundreds of vehicles milling around the river crossings spoil somewhat the atmosphere. We prefer to go there off-season! ●

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Beauty of the Beast

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A CAROUSEL OF CHAMELEONS

A photographic tribute to the weird and wonderful, color-changing - and tragically endangered - lizards of the Red Island



Furcifer pardalis

Panther Chameleon *Furcifer pardalis*, adult male, Ambilobe color morph, near Ambilobe village, Madagascar. On the previous page, Montagne d'Ambre Chameleon *Furcifer* sp. "Montagne d'Ambre", female, Montagne d'Ambre National Park, Madagascar.

TEXT BY ANDREA FERRARI
PHOTOS BY ANDREA & ANTONELLA FERRARI



Furcifer pardalis

Tail detail of Panther Chameleon *Furcifer pardalis*, adult male, Djangoa color morph, Ankaramy-Ambanja route, Madagascar.

Chameleons or chamaeleons (family *Chamaeleonidae*) are a distinctive and highly specialized clade of Old World lizards with 202 species described as of June 2015. These fascinating, strange-looking species come in a range of colors, and many species have the ability to change color. Chameleons are distinguished by their zygodactylous feet (like those of birds, having the toes of each foot arranged in pairs, with two toes in front and two behind); their very extensive, highly modified, rapidly extrudable tongues; their swaying gait; and crests or horns on their brow and snout. Most species, the larger ones in particular, also have a prehensile tail. Surprisingly, chameleons' eyes are independently mobile, but in aiming at a prey item, they focus forward in coordination, affording the animal stereoscopic vision.

Chameleons are splendidly adapted for climbing and visual hunting. They live in warm habitats that range from rain forest to desert conditions, with various species occurring in the mainland of sub-Saharan Africa and on the island of Madagascar, although a few species live in northern Africa, southern Europe, the Middle East, southern India, Sri Lanka, and several smaller islands in the western Indian Ocean. There are introduced, feral populations of veiled and Jackson's chameleons in Hawaii, and isolated pockets of feral Jackson's

chameleons have been reported in California and Florida. All the specimens appearing on these pages, representing a remarkable variety of species, were encountered and photographed on the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar, which we visited extensively thanks to our friends of TanalaHorizon - Madagascar, also known as the Red Island, is hands-down the best possible destination to admire these incredible animals in the wild.

Chameleons inhabit all kinds of tropical and mountain rain forests, savannas, and sometimes deserts and steppes. The typical chameleons from the subfamily *Chamaeleoninae* are arboreal, usually living in trees or bushes, although a few (notably the Namaqua chameleon) are partially or largely terrestrial. Most species from the subfamily *Brookesiinae*, which includes the genera *Brookesia*, *Rieppeleon*, and *Rhampholeon*, live low in vegetation or on the ground among leaf litter. In a sad, tragic repetition of countless other creatures, all species of chameleons are currently threatened by extinction. Declining chameleon numbers are due to rampant deforestation and consequent habitat loss, particularly in Madagascar.

Most chameleon species are able to change their skin colouration, very often in a truly spectacular way. Different chameleon species are able to vary



Panther Chameleon *Furcifer pardalis*, Nosy Faly color morph, male in breeding livery, Nosy Faly, Madagascar.

their colouration and pattern through combinations of pink, blue, red, orange, green, black, brown, light blue, yellow, turquoise, and purple. Chameleon skin has a superficial layer which contains pigments, and under the layer are cells with guanine crystals. Chameleons change colour by changing the space between the guanine crystals, which changes the wavelength of light reflected off the crystals which changes the colour of the skin. Colour change in chameleons has functions in camouflage, but most commonly in social signaling and in reactions to temperature and other conditions. The relative importance of these functions varies with the circumstances, as well as the species. Colour change signals a chameleon's physiological condition and intentions to other chameleons. Chameleons tend to show brighter colours during their mating season (in Madagascar from May to October - that is when chances to find them in the wild are at their best) and when displaying territorial aggression to other chameleons. ●



Left, Parson's chameleon *Calumma parsonii*, female, head detail, Andasibe-Mantadia National Park, Madagascar; right, Panther Chameleon *Furcifer pardalis*, adult male, Djangoa color morph, Ankaramy-Ambanja route, Madagascar - both images showing independent vision in chameleons.



Furcifer pardalis

Panther Chameleon *Furcifer pardalis*, Andasibe color morph, male in breeding livery, Andasibe-Mantadia National Park, Madagascar.



Furcifer pardalis



Left, Panther Chameleon *Furcifer pardalis*, adult male, Ankaramy "Pink Panther" color morph, near Ankaramy, Madagascar; right, Panther Chameleon *Furcifer pardalis*, adult male, Montagne d'Ambre color morph, Montagne d'Ambre National Park, Madagascar.



Furcifer oustaleti

Oustalet's or Giant Chameleon *Furcifer oustaleti*, adult male, near Ankify, Madagascar.



Left, Panther Chameleon *Furcifer pardalis*, adult male, Ankify color morph, near Ankify, Madagascar; top, Montagne d'Ambre Chameleon *Furcifer* sp. "Montagne d'Ambre", female, Montagne d'Ambre National Park, Madagascar.



Panther Chameleon *Furcifer pardalis*, adult male, Ambilobe color morph, near Ambilobe village, Madagascar.



Calumma parsonii

Andasibe Parson's Chameleon *Calumma parsonii* sub. *cristifer*, adult male, Andasibe-Mantadia National Park, Madagascar. This is one of the largest chameleon species - if not *the* largest.



Left, Short-horned Chameleon *Calumma brevicorne*, male, Andasibe-Matadia National Park, Madagascar; right, Panther Chameleon *Furcifer pardalis*, adult male, Ambilobe color morph, near Ambilobe village, Madagascar.



Furcifer lateralis

Carpet Chameleon *Furcifer lateralis*, female, Mandraka, Madagascar.



Left, Panther Chameleon *Furcifer pardalis*, adult male, Ambilobe color morph, near Ambilobe village, Madagascar; right, another Panther Chameleon *Furcifer pardalis*, adult male, Ambilobe color morph, again near Ambilobe village.



Furcifer rhinocerotus

Rhinoceros Chameleon *Furcifer rhinocerotus*, female, Ankarafantsika National Park, Madagascar.



Montagne d'Ambre Chameleon *Calumma amber*, female feeding on grasshopper, Montagne d'Ambre National Park; in the circle, Dwarf Chameleon *Brookesia tuberculata*, Montagne d'Ambre National Park, one of the world's smallest chameleons, perched on a fingertip.



Calumma parsonii

Antonella with a large Parson's chameleon *Calumma parsonii*, a male in breeding livery, Andasibe-Mantadia National Park, Madagascar.



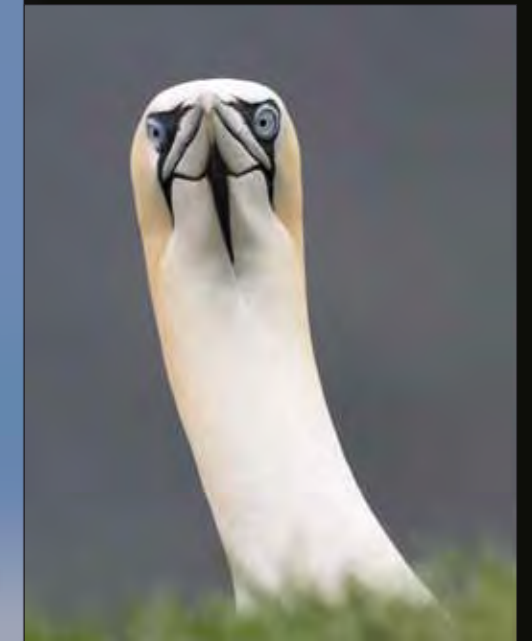
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"My experience was EXCEPTIONAL! The trip exceeded my expectations in all areas. I hoped to get in a position to see owls and couldn't possibly have been happier. It was abundantly clear that David invested significant time and effort prior to the arrival 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 species 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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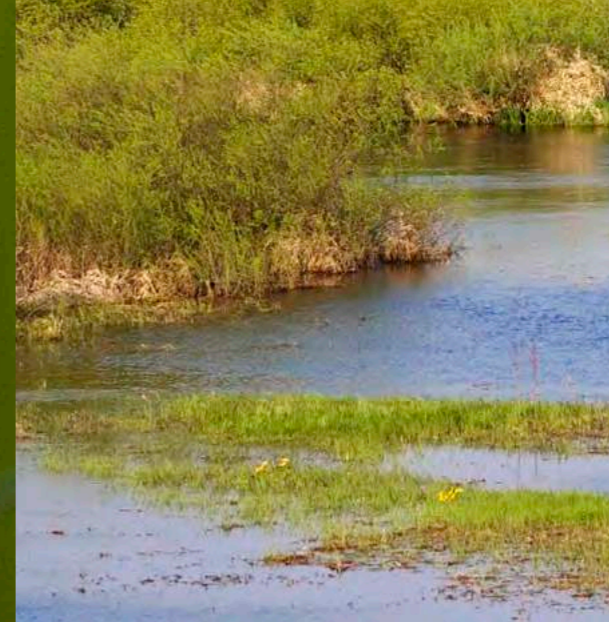


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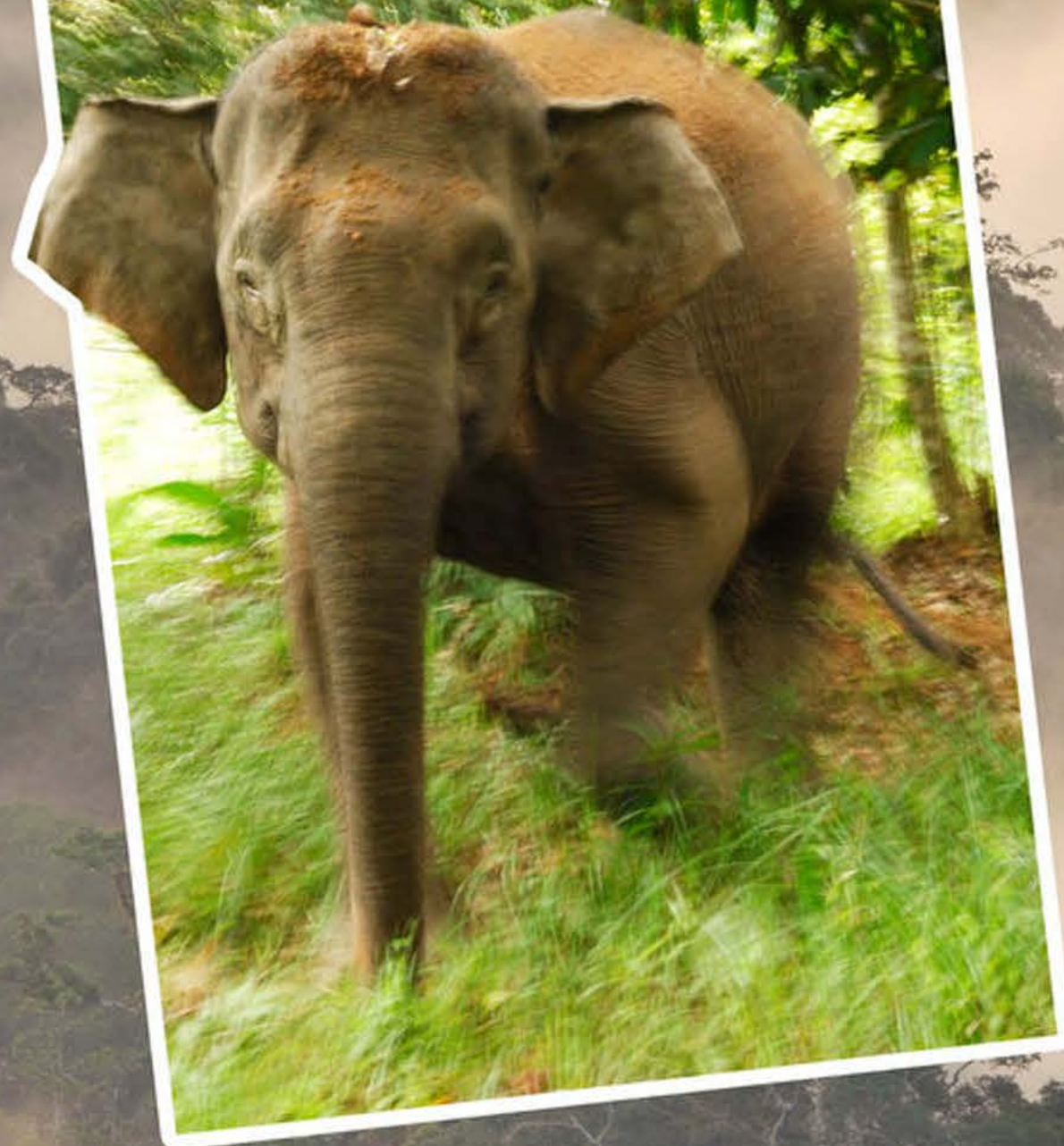
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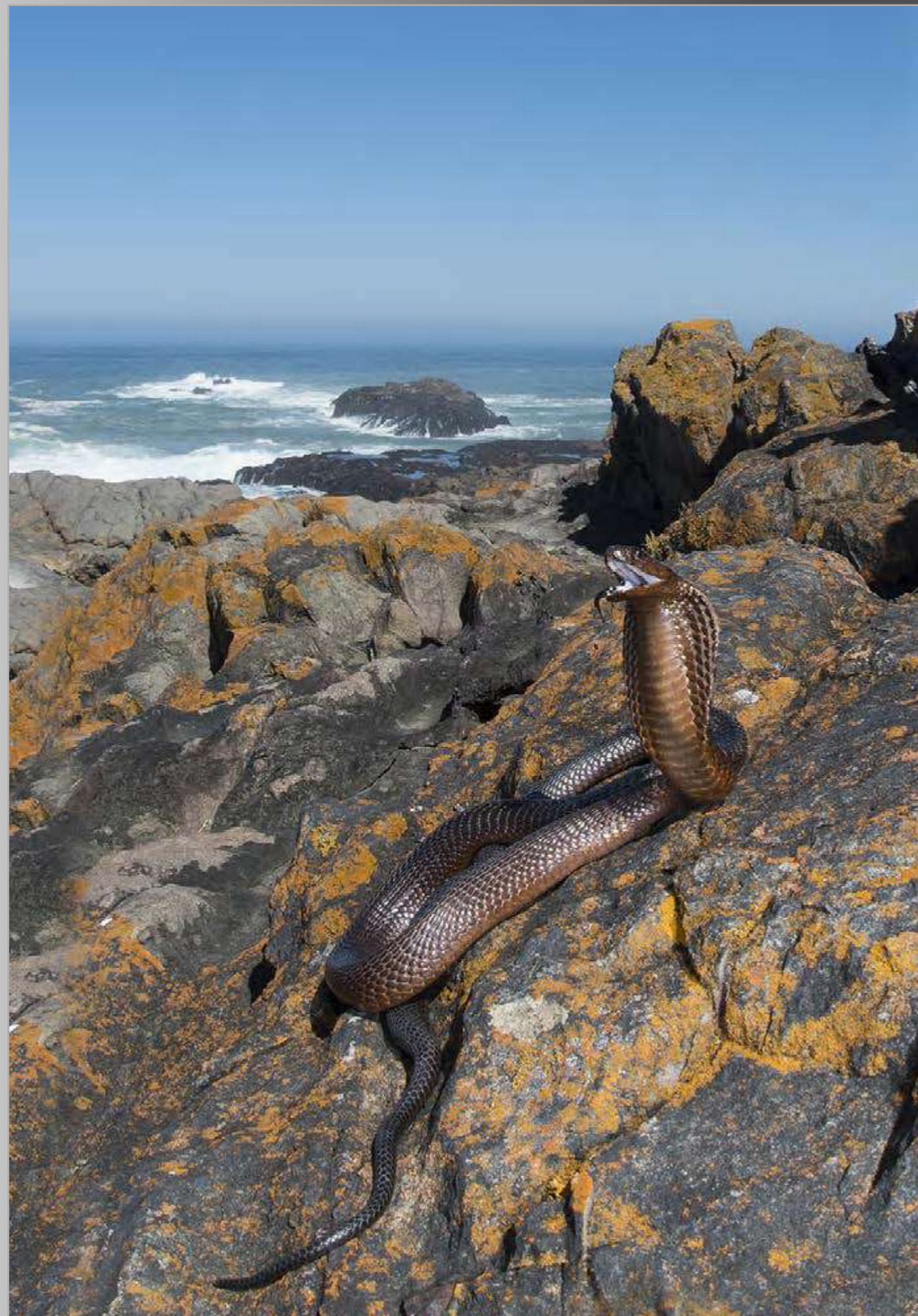
SOUTH AFRICA

THE CAPE ROUTE

A two-day drive along the Atlantic from the West Coast National Park to the Cape of Good Hope reveals a bounty of stunning panoramas and wildlife



Bontebok *Damaliscus pygargus pygargus*. This beautiful, medium-sized antelope species was hunted so severely by colonists that in 1830 only 22 remained. Today they are protected in the Bontebok National Park, which was proclaimed in 1931. In 1992 this population grew to 2000. In 1961 a second reserve near Swellendam was proclaimed, which today carries 200-300 bontebok. Historically, the distribution of the bontebok was confined to the southwestern Cape.



TEXT BY ANDREA FERRARI
PHOTOS BY ANDREA AND ANTONELLA FERRARI

During our latest trip to South Africa we decided to do something we seldom do when abroad - indulge ourselves for a couple of days, and do the tourist thing. After all, South Africa is so breathtakingly beautiful that one can't go wrong if straying from the usual bush safari routine, right? So - together with our friend and guide Phillip Conradie of African Wildlife Photo Safaries - we left the quaint little coastal town of Yzerfontein where we were staying with two beloved friends of ours and first drove north to the little-visited West Coast National Park and Protected Marine Area. We really hoped to see some bontebok there - this is a very strange and pretty uncommon antelope I'd dreamt about for almost all my life and which in the past has been brought to the brink of extinction by hunting, and we finally did sight some late in the day. Stunning animal! We also explored some spectacular and pretty wild coastal areas and we were lucky enough to find a few snakes which were basking or foraging among the dunes and the boulders facing the Atlantic Ocean. After our day-long visit to the West Coast National Park we then retraced our steps and proceeded south - first

to Cape Town and its trademark viewpoint, the very scenic (and touristy) Table Mountain, and then driving along the Atlantic coast to the Cape of Good Hope and Hout Bay. Sightings of animals large and small along the road alternated with stunning beach views and larger-than-life landscapes, all bathed in a crisp sea air and an impossibly bright sun. This is South Africa at its glorious scenic best - after all, where else in the world can one take a rocky boat trip among sea lions, walk among penguins on a sunlit beach, bump into a puff adder quietly basking by the ocean, drive by ostriches strutting in the bush, watch pink flamingos by the hundreds and see literally millions of seabirds in just two days? Beautiful, really - this is a two-day trip we can really safely suggest doing. Driving is easy and comfortable, along the coastal road there are lots of viewpoints for great landscape photography, and very pleasant seafood restaurants abound in every little holiday town and village. The local flora is also quite spectacular, with impressive Proteas (South Africa's national flower) and interesting succulents everywhere. ●

A beautiful - and very dangerous - Cape cobra *Naja nivea* in an unusual purple coloration rears up defensively by the rocky shore in the vicinity of Yzerfontein.



Cape Fur seals *Arctocephalus pusillus* can weigh up to 350kg - the largest of all fur seals. The males have a rough mane on their powerfully developed necks and are much larger than the females, which only attain a weight of around 90kg. Both males and females are covered in thick, dark-brown to olive fur. The pups are born black and moult for the first time at 4 months. When on land, fur seals are skilled climbers and may be sighted in surprisingly high places. At sea they are known to travel large distances – as much as 80km a day – and may spend months offshore where they are able to dive to over 200m in search of food.



South Africa's Atlantic coast beaches offer unsurpassed opportunities for dramatic landscape photography - the choice is endless.



Boulders Beach, on the Cape peninsula, hosts a protected and quite spectacular African penguin *Spheniscus demersus* breeding colony. Also known as the Cape penguin and South African penguin, this is a species of penguin confined to southern African waters. Like all extant penguins, it is flightless, with a streamlined body, and wings stiffened and flattened into flippers for a marine habitat. Adults weigh on average 2.2–3.5 kg (4.9–7.7 lb) and are 60–70 cm (24–28 in) tall.



Ostrich *Struthio camelus* are commonly observed along the Cape route.



Many vantage observation points along the road afford stunning views.



The Cape cormorant *Phalacrocorax capensis* is endemic to the southwestern coasts of Africa. It breeds from Namibia south to southern Western Cape. In the nonbreeding season, it may be found as far north as the mouth of the Congo, and as far as Mozambique. In the 1970s, the breeding population was estimated as over 1 million. However, the IUCN now classifies it as "Endangered" due to a very rapid decline in the population over the last three generations.



Enormous numbers of mixed-species seabirds flocks - mostly terns and gulls - populate the apparently endless and unpopulated beaches of the Cape route.



The African oystercatcher or African black oystercatcher *Haematopus moquini* is a large wader resident of the mainland coasts and offshore islands of southern Africa. This near-threatened but locally common bird species has a population of over 6,000 adults, which breed between November and April.



A beautiful adult Boomslang *Dispholidus typus* female. This species is a notable exception among Colubrids in that it has a highly potent venom, delivered through large fangs located in the back of the jaw. The venom of the boomslang is primarily a hemotoxin; it disables the coagulation process and the victim may die as a result of internal and external bleeding. The venom has been observed to cause hemorrhage into tissues such as muscle and brain. Other signs and symptoms include headache, nausea, sleepiness, and mental disorders.



The common eland *Taurotragus oryx*, also known as the southern eland or eland antelope, is a savanna and plains antelope found in East and Southern Africa. An adult male is around 1.6 metres (5') tall at the shoulder and can weigh up to 942 kg (2,077 lb) with an average of 500–600 kg (1,100–1,300 lb).



A stunning cream-colored Cape cobra *Naja nivea* rears up defensively by the Atlantic ocean rocky shore near Yzerfontein. This commonly observed species is regarded as one of the most dangerous species of cobra in all of Africa, by virtue of its potent venom and frequent occurrence around houses. Its venom is made up of potent postsynaptic neurotoxins and might also contain cardiotoxins that affect the respiratory system, nervous system and the heart.



The quaint little town of Yzerfontein is bathed in the moist morning mist rising from the Atlantic ocean.



Cape cormorant colonies by the Cape of Good Hope craggy, surf-pounded shores.



Other spots offer peaceful, emerald waters and more accessible beaches.



Large colonies of Lesser flamingos *Phoeniconaias minor* can be observed in the salt pans nearby St.Helena and several other coastal towns along the Cape route.



The vegetation along the Cape route is nothing short of spectacular.



The Cape coral snake *Aspidelaps lubricus* is a venomous species related to cobras.



The panorama from the top of Cape Town's celebrated Table Mountain is quite spectacular. This is a significant tourist attraction, with many visitors using the cableway or hiking to the top. The mountain forms part of the Table Mountain National Park, and it is home to a large array of fauna and flora, most of which is endemic.



The craggy, surf-pounded, towering cliffs of Cape of Good Hope.



Dramatic lighting and stormy skies offer great landscape photo opportunities.



About twenty-five Fur seal *Arctocephalus pusillus* colonies are found between Algoa Bay (near Port Elizabeth) and Cape Frio (in Northern Namibia), and sightings by tourist boat trip are guaranteed the year round. These freezing, churning waters are also home to many Great White sharks *Carcharodon carcharias*, which prey on the seals.



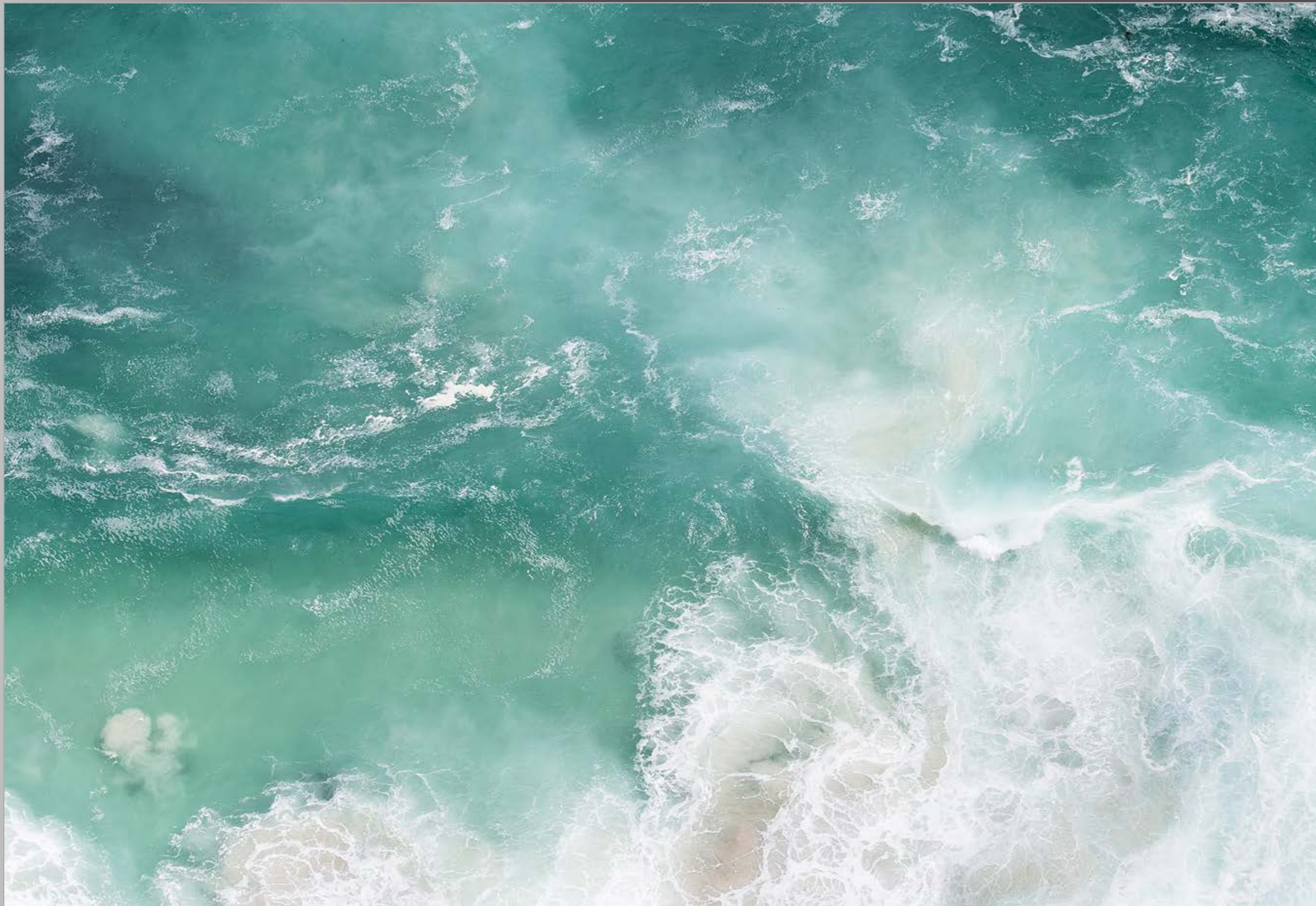
The rock kestrel *Falco rupicolus* is a bird of prey species belonging to the family *Falconidae*. This species is commonly encountered in the West Coast NP.



Fast, agile and very inquisitive - the Black mamba *Dendroaspis polylepis* is a very venomous species which can reach a size of 4 meters and move at 20 km/h.



The rock hyrax *Procavia capensis*, also called Cape hyrax, is a medium-sized terrestrial mammal native to Africa and the Middle East. Commonly referred to in South Africa as the dassie, it is one of the five living species of the order *Hyracoidea*, and the only one in the genus *Procavia*. Rock hyraxes weigh between 4 kilograms (9 lb) and 5 kilograms (11 lb), and have short ears and tail. Surprisingly related to elephants, the rock hyrax is found at elevations up to 4,200 metres (13,800 ft).



Endlessly churning and foaming in oceanic fury, the Atlantic waters in front of the Cape of Good Hope towering cliffs offer a dramatic, hypnotic view.



Dramatic skies, verdant cliffs and eye-catching vegetation along the Cape route.



African penguin *Spheniscus demersus* at the colony of Boulders near Cape Town.



The Chacma baboon *Papio ursinus*, also known as the Cape baboon, is, like all other baboons, from the Old World monkey family. It is one of the largest of all monkeys. Located primarily in southern Africa, the Chacma baboon has a wide variety of social behaviors, including a dominance hierarchy, collective foraging, adoption of young by females, and friendship pairings. These behaviors form parts of a complex evolutionary ecology. In general, the species is not threatened, but human population pressure has increased contact between humans and baboons. Hunting, trapping, and accidents kill or remove many baboons from the wild.



Cape cormorant or Cape shags *Phalacrocorax capensis* commonly forage in flocks, taking schooling fish from mid-water, such as pilchards, anchovies, and sand eels. Its prey are typically much smaller than those of the sympatric bank cormorant. Their major predators are black-backed jackals, which take the occasional adult while it is roosting, and nest-site predators such as great cormorants, eastern great white pelicans, and kelp gulls.



A basking and beautifully marked Puff adder *Bitis arietans* surprised by the shore.



Baboon spiders are a subfamily of tarantulas which are native to Africa.



A living, paperlike carpet of the stunningly beautiful Cape snow *Syncarpha vestita* (*Helichrysum vestitum*) at the Cape of Good Hope National Park. *Syncarpha* is a genus of herbaceous flowering plants in the sunflower family endemic to the fynbos environment of the Eastern and Western Cape in South Africa.

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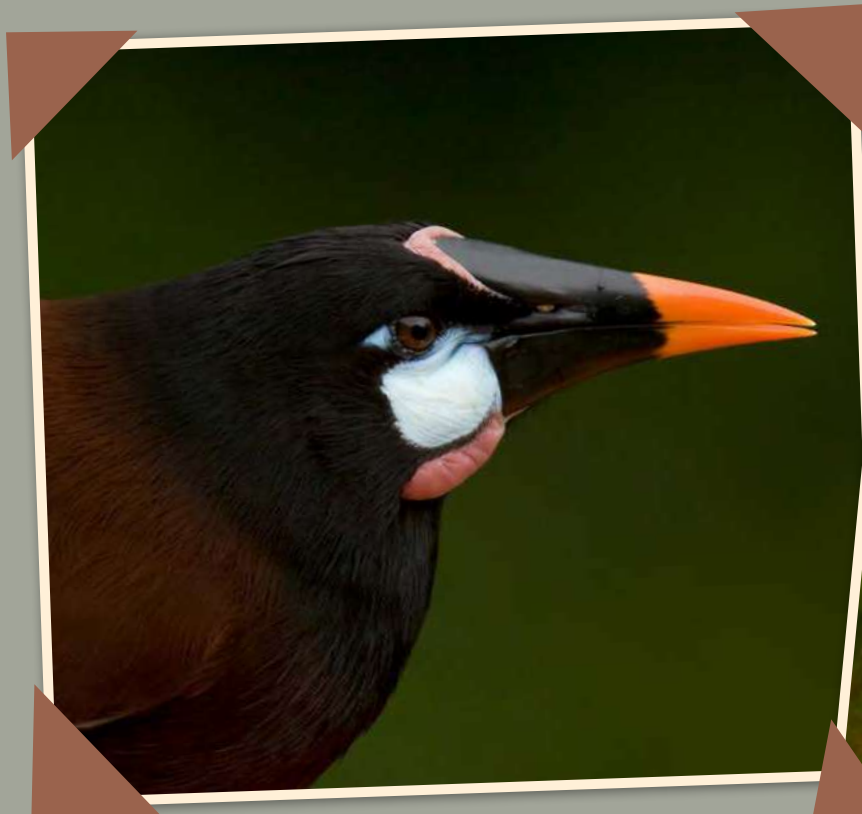
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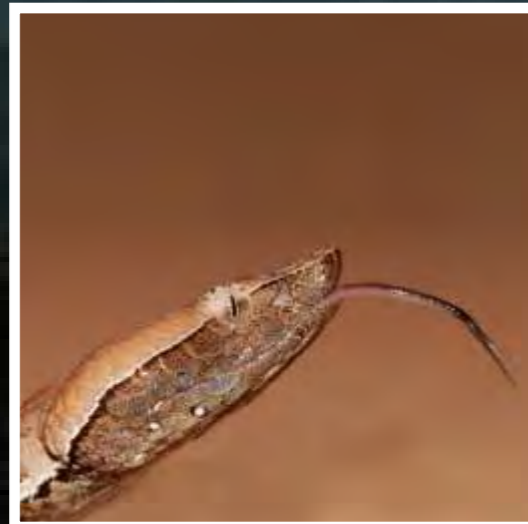
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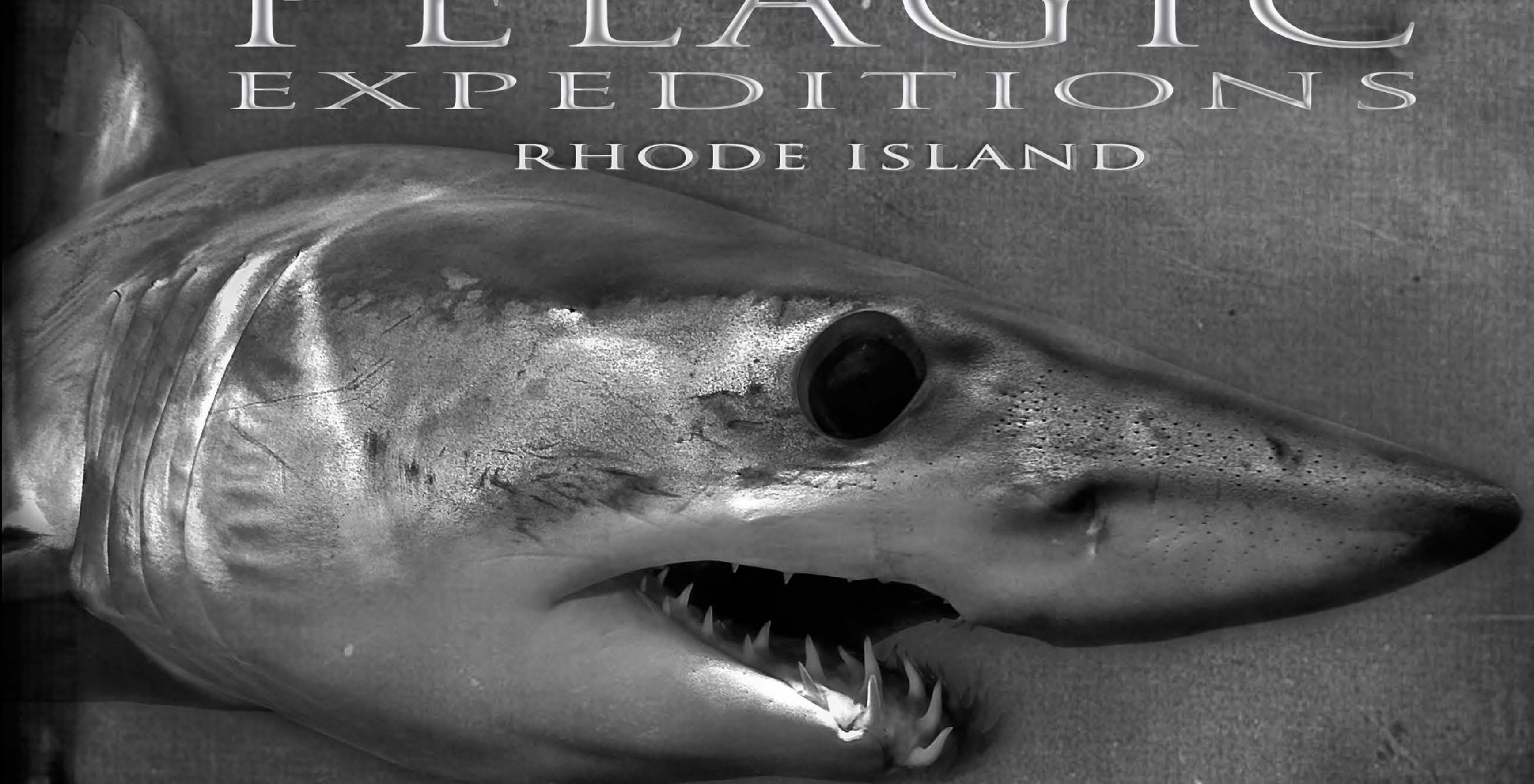
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The Parting Shot



This rather striking image of Antonella pretending to photograph a Giant Rhino beetle *Chalcosoma caucasus* was taken exactly ten years ago in the Cameron Highlands of West Malaysia. Back then shooting in wide-macro mode (ie utilizing a close-up wide-angle lens combination to obtain a macro portrait of a small subject while maintaining a pano-

ramic habitat in the background) was still practiced by just a handful of photographers worldwide, usually assembling imaginative contraptions to get this effect. There were no dedicated close-focus wide-angle lenses on the market, and one had to improvise - for this (and many other similar shots) we utilized a Nikon 10.5mm + 1.5 Kenko TC combo, a

solution which we still find unsurpassed today. Now - thanks to the progress in technology and especially the advent of social media - wide-macro images are everywhere, *ad nauseam*, and everybody is suddenly a master of this abused tricky technique. I suppose that was to be expected - but a decade ago this was still a pioneering shot. ●



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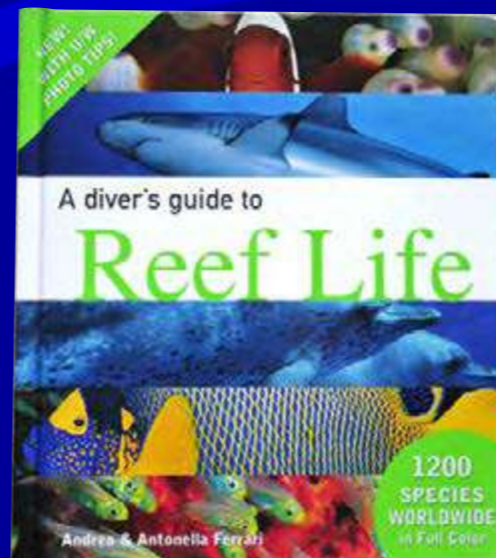
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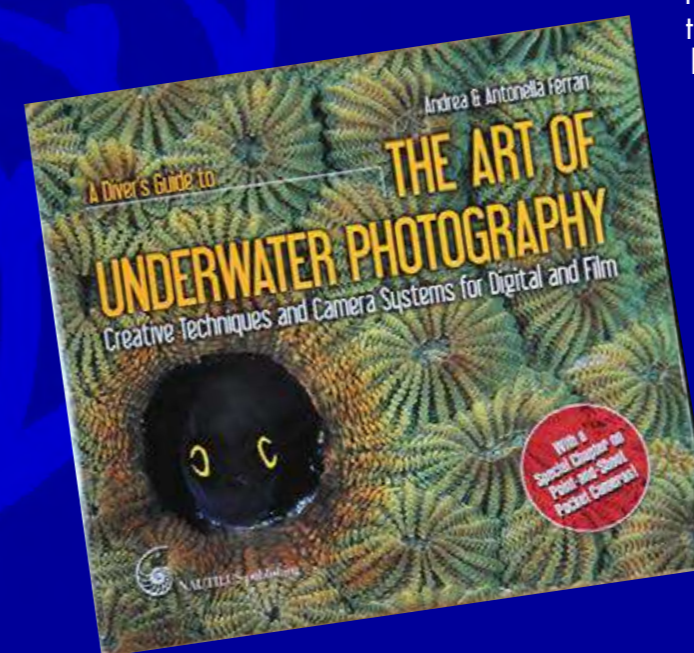
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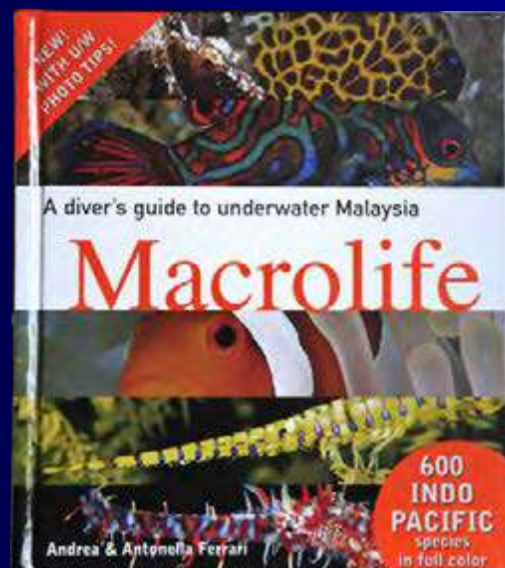
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