

Issue 2 2023

The Wild Lens

magazine for photographers



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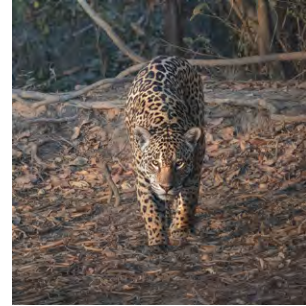
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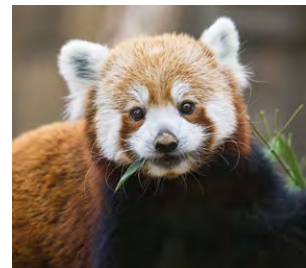
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The Wild Lens
ISSUE 2 - 2023

Publisher

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The Wild Lens is a quarterly publication for an international community of wildlife photographers and enthusiasts.

Printed by

Forum Printing, North Dakota

Cover Photo

"*Oliver*", Mark J. Schocken

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Yearly subscriptions available at
www.thewildlensmagazine.com



STEVE WINTER, "P-22"

I want to start by paying tribute to P-22, the famous Southern California mountain lion who made his way to Hollywood from the Santa Monica Mountains by crossing two of the busiest freeways in the world, then proceeded to live in Griffith Park, the smallest home range that has ever been recorded for an adult male mountain lion, for more than a decade. P-22 came to symbolize the challenges facing urban wildlife and one particularly groundbreaking effort to protect it.

P-22's story has inspired the inception of the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing, a vegetated overpass that will eventually link the Santa Monica Mountains to the Simi Hills. This pass will reconnect an ecosystem that has long been fragmented by a major freeway and potentially save the lives of many species, including lions.

Thank you to National Geographic's Steve Winter for taking the above image of one of the most well-known big cats and inspiring a generation of wildlife photographers, this publisher included.

In this issue, read Mark J. Schocken's important account of saving the lives of great horned owls by encouraging alternatives to rodenticide use in Safety Harbor, Florida. Take a look at the Publisher's Collection, some of our favorite images entered in the 2022 Wild Lens Magazine Wildlife Photography Contest. Also in this issue, we're allowed a peek inside the incredible portfolio of Marcello Gallano, after which Mark Nowak offers up some of his enigmatic black and white images. Finally, enjoy Mohit Ghatak's poignant red panda article. Only a few will view these captivating pandas in the wild.

Michelle Liles
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A great horned owl and her owlet prepare to feast

THE DEADLY MEAL

The Great Horned Owls of Safety Harbor: A Local Tragedy, a National Issue

PHOTOS AND STORY BY MARK J. SCHOCKEN

For the last seven years, great horned owls have nested in an old oak tree located in a public park in Safety Harbor, Florida. The male, affectionately named Oliver, came to “the owl tree” each year in late November or early December to breed. The most recent female was named Emily. Over the past two years, Emily produced six owlets, three each year. Spectators and wildlife photographers came regularly to the park when the owls were there, in the early morning and around sunset, to see and photograph them. By the time the owlets left the nest and began to move all over the owl tree, I would estimate that upwards of fifty people were present each evening and even more on weekends. In addition to the local folks, photographers came from all over the United States to photograph this family of owls each year.

Sadly, in March of 2022, Emily, Oliver and two of the owlets, Huey and Louie, died from eating rats poisoned with anticoagulant rodenticides. The cause of death was determined based on necropsies (the equivalent of human autopsies) and confirmed by the identification of anticoagulant rodenticides in the liver and tissues.

Two experienced wildlife rescuers tried to capture the remaining owlet to take her out of a toxic environment and place her temporarily with other great horned owl parents in captivity who would care for her and teach her how to hunt. She could then be released to another area which might be safer for her. We originally called this owlet Dewey but later changed its name to Daisy when we realized she was a female. Because she could fly at the time of her family’s

demise, it was difficult to capture her and, in the end, the rescue effort was unsuccessful. She eventually went missing and we presumed she was dead because her parents died too soon to have taught her hunting skills. However, her remains were never found. Interestingly, the rescuers thought they heard two owlets crying to each other in the distance one evening that suggested that Daisy may have found another great horned owl family where she could have been adopted, not an uncommon occurrence in these types of situations. We always held out hope that might be true.

When we realized that our owls were dying from anticoagulant rodenticide poisoning, a group of us wanted to do something to prevent this from happening again. Our “core owl team” was comprised of six concerned citizens. We formed a Facebook group (Safety Harbor Strong Owls & Nature) and later a website (SAFETY HARBOR OWLS

When we realized that our owls were dying from anticoagulant rodenticide poisoning, a group of us wanted to do something to prevent this from happening again.

- Our Story (weebly.com) intended to inform and educate our Facebook members and website visitors to the dangers of anticoagulant rodenticides and alternatives to controlling rodents. We also met with the mayor of Safety Harbor and the city commissioners and told them about the demise of our beloved great horned owl family who lived in the park. Within 24 hours, all bait stations containing anticoagulant rodenticides were removed from town property.

Our core owl team made the strategic decision to recommend chemical rodenticides which are currently not known to result in fatal secondary poisoning* to birds of prey and other non-target wildlife. We refer to them as “safer alternatives”.



Daisy, Huey and Louie

We consider them an option of last resort and recommend first trying to prevent a rodent problem by employing better sanitation practices and by excluding rodent entry to homes and buildings through cracks and cervices. When faced with an immediate problem, we recommend the use of repellents or snap traps, zap traps and A24 units to instantly and humanely kill rodents. If these non-chemical approaches don't solve the problem, we recommend the safer alternatives although cautioning that these chemicals are highly toxic to young children, pets and non-targeted wildlife on accidental direct exposure.

We also have a team of volunteers who contact pest control companies directly and ask them to stop using anticoagulant

rodenticides. If they agree, and are willing to switch to the safer alternatives, they are recognized as "Community Heroes" and are presented with a certificate of recognition and we put them on our "good list". We then recommend them to our Facebook members and others who ask us.

On a national level, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) is required to review all registered pesticides every 15 years. The process is called Registration Review. Its purpose is to determine if the pesticide can perform its intended function without unreasonable adverse effects on human health and the environment. The EPA has been reviewing the entire group of anticoagulant rodenticides for a number of years now and has recently published

their Proposed Registration Review Interim Decision. While still recommending they remain on the market, the EPA has proposed restrictions intended to reduce accidental exposure to children and pets and to minimize secondary poisoning to wildlife. We believe the agency's proposals are helpful but don't go far enough. We believe the EPA should cancel the federal registrations of the anticoagulant rodenticides because of their devastating impacts to wildlife or, at least, to severely restrict their use. As previously mentioned, there are chemical alternatives to the anticoagulant rodenticides that are not known to result in fatal secondary poisoning to wildlife.

Our group in Safety Harbor, Florida is working hard to eliminate the use of anticoagulant rodenticides on a local, state and national level. We believe we are making progress and hope we can be successful with a grassroots campaign educating homeowners, renters, businesses and other organizations who need to control rodents. We are also submitting public comments to the EPA to object to the need for anticoagulant rodenticides since there are chemical alternatives for rodent control that don't cause major collateral damage to wildlife.

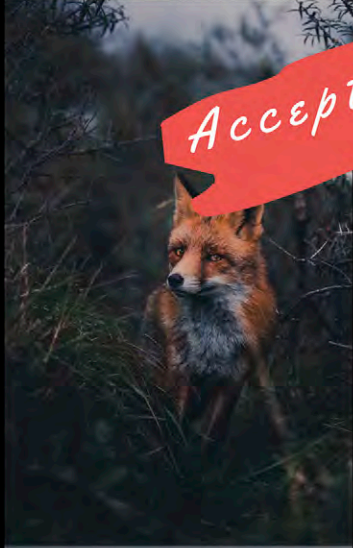
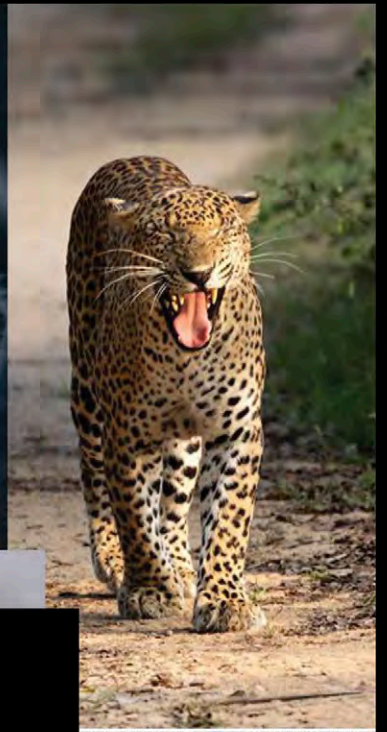
In mid-January 2023, people began to hear great horned owls hooting in the park in Safety Harbor and later saw two owls, a male and female, perched in an oak tree somewhat close to the owl tree. (Note: female great horned owls are around one-third larger than males making it relatively easy to determine owl gender as long as they are sitting close together to allow comparison). While we'll never know for sure, it's possible that the new female is our Daisy and has come back to the park with her partner to eventually breed. We are thrilled that we have great horned owls in the park again so soon after the poisoning deaths of the others and we pray that they stay safe, breed and help us preserve the memories of Oliver and his owl families.

**Secondary poisoning is when an animal consumes another animal that has been poisoned. The poison, in this case an anticoagulant rodenticide, is transferred to the consuming animal and that animal gets poisoned as well.*



Emily

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RANJAN RAMCHANDANI PHOTOGRAPHY

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A vibrant clownfish with orange and white stripes is nestled within the tentacles of a sea anemone. The anemone's tentacles are a mix of light purple and pale blue, creating a textured, almost ethereal background. The clownfish is positioned slightly to the right of the center, facing forward. The overall scene is brightly lit, highlighting the colors of the fish and the delicate structure of the anemone.

THE 2022
WILD LENS MAGAZINE
PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Publisher's Collection



MARK J. SCHOCKEN, USA | *"Bull Elk Crossing River"*



JAY DICKMAN, USA | *"At the Wrong Party"*



AVANKA FERNANDO, Sri Lanka | *"Flamingo Portrait"*



MARCIN LYSZKIEWICZ, Poland | *"Leopard Patrol"*



LAWRENCE WORCESTER, USA | *"Magnificent Frigatebird"*



BILL KLIPP, USA | *"Hippo Mud Bath"*



MOHIT GHATAK, Singapore | *"Longtail Broadbill Pair"*



S. S. SURESH, Oman | *"Making a Meal of a Belenois Aurota"*



JENNY POWELL, USA | *"Cold Morning Song"*



PHOTOGRAPHER FEATURE

Marcello Galleano

Italy's Marcello Galleano has traveled to more than 86 countries in quest of the perfect image. He has placed in or won many contests including: Mono, One Eye Land, New York Photography, Refocus, Tifta, Chromatic Photo and Society for Photographers and has been a Wild Lens Magazine Wildlife Photographer of the Year finalist two years running.

Marcello collaborates with non-profit associations in Africa and South America to promote conservation and wildlife preservation, using his stunning images for this purpose.

Instagram: [@marcellogalleano](#)

Facebook and Flickr: [Marcello Galleano](#)





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White-bellied pangolins like Juba have been reclassified as endangered due to poaching.

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A black and white photograph of a desert landscape featuring rolling sand dunes. The sky is filled with dramatic, textured clouds. The foreground shows the fine, rippled texture of the sand.

SEEING THE WORLD

in Black & White

ROBERT NOWAK



When I take a picture, I am trying to convey what it feels like to be in that place, at that time – what was the light like, how did the sky look, how did the air feel, what were the textures and shapes in the surrounding environment.

My photographic process involves taking my time to frame the environment and eliminate anything that detracts from the feeling of the moment. When approaching any scene, I feel there are times that the image lends itself better to a black and white photograph because of the way the light, shadows and textures come together.

I use a combination of Lightroom and Silver Efex Pro 2 when editing and converting my color images to black and white.

In my more than 40 years of taking photos, my process isn't about chasing a specific picture but rather staying in the moment and taking a picture because of how it makes me feel, so I personally have a record of that time and place. I want others to see something of that in the image and perhaps, by sharing my work, I inspire them to have their own 'in the moment' experiences.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROBERT NOWAK www.robertnowakphotography.com



Article cover photo: *"Patterns in the Sand"*, Great Sand Dunes National Park, Colorado

Above: *"Early Morning Fog on Combers Beach"*, Pacific Rim National Park, British Columbia

Right (top to bottom): *"Whitebark Pines"*, Three Sisters Wilderness, Oregon, *"Lupin Falls"*, Strathcona Provincial Park, British Columbia, *"Ice on Lake Twenty Two"*, Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Washington



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Singalila National Park

The Himalayan red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*), also known as the lesser panda, is a small mammal native to the Eastern Himalayas. It has been listed as endangered on the IUCN Red List since 2008. The Himalayan red panda inhabits Nepal, Bhutan and the states of Sikkim, West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh in India, i.e. the Eastern Himalayan landscape. In west Bengal, it is found in Singalila National Park, adjoining areas of Darjeeling Forest Division and is also found in Neora Valley National Park.

Red pandas have dense reddish-brown fur with a black belly and legs, white-lined ears, a mostly white muzzle and a ringed tail. They are well adapted to climbing due to flexible joints and curved, semi-retractile claws.

This unique species inhabits temperate coniferous forests as well as sub-temperate broadleaf and mixed forests, favouring steep slopes with dense bamboo cover close to water sources. It is a solitary animal and largely arboreal. Fallen logs and tree stumps are important habitat features, as they facilitate access to bamboo leaves.

The primary threats to the Himalayan red panda in Singalila National Park are destruction and fragmentation of habitat, as their territory extends into the Nepal side. Livestock trampling, which depresses bamboo growth, and the presence of feral dogs in the vicinity, are also threats. Disturbance by rampant tourism can be a significant barrier to the species' movement between habitat corridors of Singalila National Park and Nepal.

- MOHIT GHATAK



ONDREJ PROSICKY



MOHIT GHATAK



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