

Issue 3 2019

The Wild Lens

magazine for photographers

CATS

Celina Chien

John Isaac

Sebastian Kennerknecht

Ranjan Ramchandani

Vicki Santello

Roy Toft

Nikhil Vatsal

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In This Issue



6
Big Cats
Roy Toft



18
Leopard Cat
Celina Chien



28
The Lions of Mara
Ranjan Ramchandani



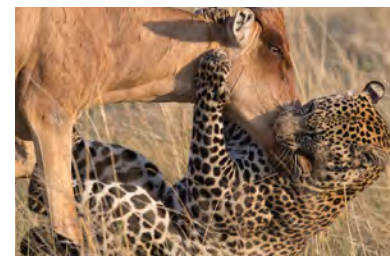
10
So They May Live
Sebastian Kennerknecht



21
Apex Predator
Andrew Schoeman



32
Rare Cat Species
Nikhil B. Vatsal



16
A Deadly Embrace
Vicki Santello



22
Photographer Feature
John Isaac



35
The Comeback Cats
Lori Lundin



Make Your Cat Expedition
Dreams Come True With a
Toft Photo Safari

Puma Quest Chile
Jaguars of Brazil
India Wildlife
Snow Leopard
Ultimate Botswana



Dedicated to documenting the wild for future generations, Roy's photographs work to advance conservation efforts globally. He does this in part through his work with the International League of Conservation Photographers (ILCP), where he is a founding fellow.



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Publisher's Note



MELANISTIC LEOPARD, KURT BERTELS

Cunning, stealthy, intelligent, beautiful are all words that can be used to describe cats. Many of us have grown up with large cats near our homes or in the hills or forests or cities near where we live. These proficient hunters fascinate us with their quiet effectiveness, strong instincts and ability to survive the harshest conditions. Not always an easy life for cat species like snow leopard, surviving and attempting to raise families in the harsh climate of the Himalayas; Siberian tigers enduring incredibly cold conditions and a brutal poaching environment; leopards living and hunting in Mumbai, as seen on the *Planet Earth* series, sagely adapting to life in a dense, urban environment. The question is, will they transform quickly enough for their greatest challenge: human encroachment. Many photographers have become "cat-centric", dedicating their wildlife photography careers to the pursuit of cat images, many of them scarce and rapidly disappearing species.

In this issue, look for photo contributions from top wildlife photographers and conservationists. We were fortunate to receive images of snow leopard, cheetah, clouded leopard, Iberian lynx, tigers, lions, leopard cat, bobcat, Arabian caracal, golden cat, pampas cat, mountain lion, Pallas's cat, jaguar and serval, amongst others. We are so grateful to present these images, as the effort and expense involved in their procurement is extraordinary. May they move you as they did us at *The Wild Lens*.

Michelle Liles
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BIG CATS

A
Photo
Essay
by
Roy
Toft





So They May Live

An
Interview
with
Sebastian
Kennerknecht

Wild Cat
Photographer
and Conservationist

Interview by Michelle Liles
Photos by Sebastian Kennerknecht



Sebastian Kennerknecht is an accomplished wildlife photographer and conservationist with a background in behavioral ecology from the University of California, Santa Cruz. His thoughtful and skilled photographs bring innumerable species of wild cats to many around the globe. Sebastian has both effectively and ethically captured photos of some of the rarest cats on the planet, and continues his quest to preserve and protect cat species through detailed research and the click of a shutter. I had the privilege to photograph with Sebastian in Torres del Paine, Patagonia, Chile. His knowledge of puma behavior greatly assisted us in both following and photographing these powerful, quick cats.



Photos: puma (left), California bobcat (above)

Sebastian, you started out photographing the beautiful species, bobcats, in the hills of the University of California, Santa Cruz. Have you been able to photograph them subsequently to that initial experience? Has your gear changed since those first frames?

Bobcats were the first wild cat species I ever photographed, cementing my love for this incredible family of carnivores. Despite my busy schedule, I make a point to photograph bobcats at least once a year in California. Sadly, the population in the hills of Santa Cruz has decreased significantly due to heavy rodenticide use, so I mostly look for the cats a bit north of there in Marin County. Every time I see a bobcat it takes me back to over a decade ago when I took those first wild cat frames. It's always a special and nostalgic experience.

In terms of gear, I have upgraded my bodies to pro-Canon bodies and use a 600mm f/4 lens now. Before, all my bobcat shots were taken with a 100-400mm lens.

You have photographed the incredible, elusive snow leopard in the Himalayan hills. How did you feel when you saw this image for the first time?

Upon seeing the image on the back of my camera trap, I immediately knew I had gotten the shot of my dreams. I was beyond elated. I couldn't contain myself and just started to dance. If anyone had seen me, it must have looked rather comical as I was jumping around, at 10,000 feet, next to a glacial, ice-cold river, in the high mountains of Kyrgyzstan. I ran back to camp, needing to download and back up the image on as many devices as possible. Part of the reason I was so excited is that snow leopards, like most wild cats, are very hard to photograph. This was my second trip to snow leopard country, while on assignment for the conservation organization Panthera. I came up empty during my first four week trip to Central Asia, which was absolutely gutting. Luckily, I had four additional camera traps and three more weeks during the second trip and ended up with five images of wild snow leopards. The frame, showing a snow leopard that had recently crossed the river below is my favorite frame, possibly my favorite photo I have ever taken.

You have photographed some of the rarest cat species on the planet: Iberian lynx, bay cat and clouded leopard amongst others. What are the species you would most like to observe in the future?

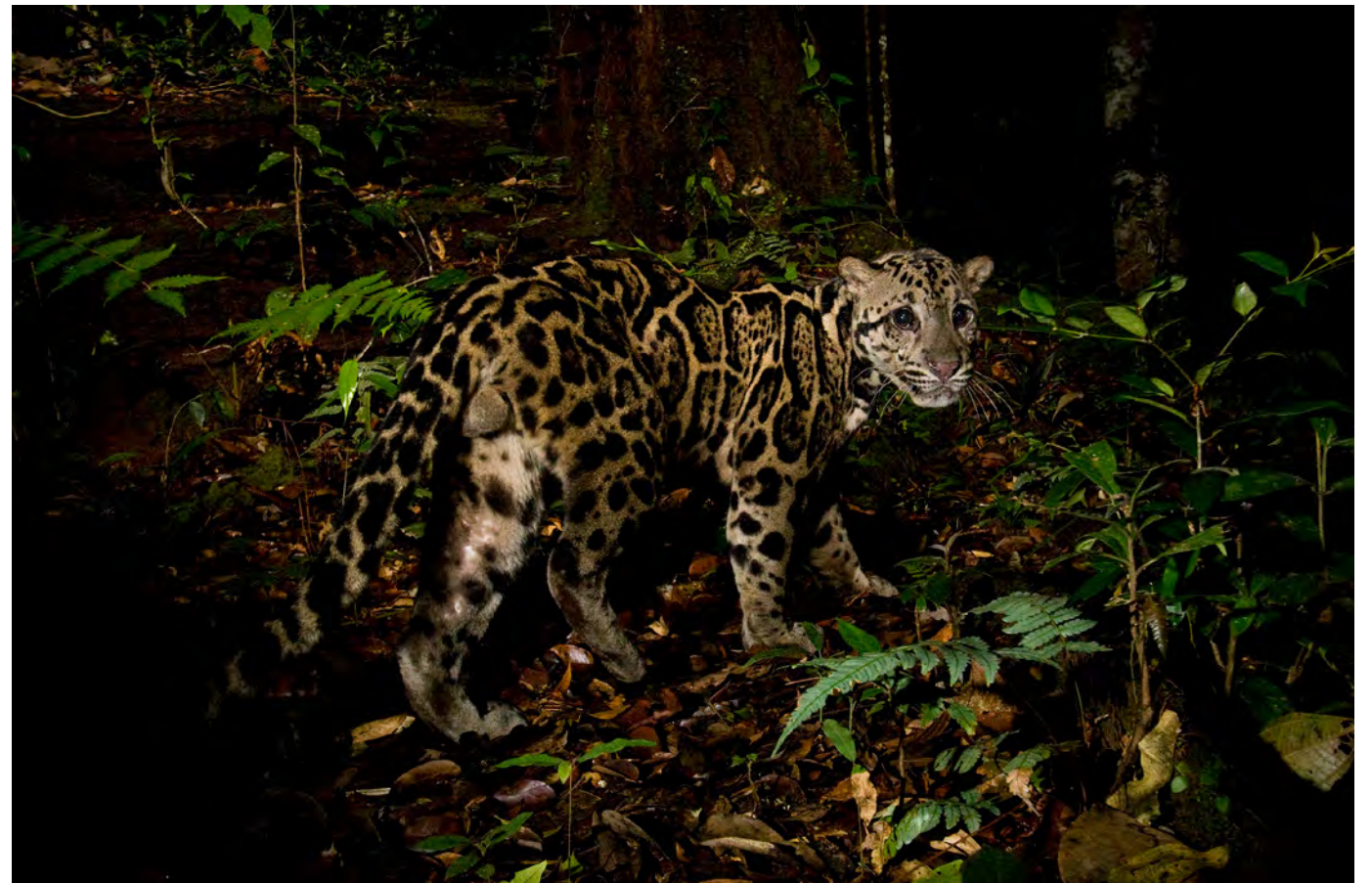
Most people have heard of the big cats like lions and tigers, which are incredible cats, but I personally have a really strong affinity towards the thirty-three, lesser-known small cat species. By taking photographs of these elusive, little known species--like the andean cat, caracal, or marbled cat--I can highlight their existence and their threats. Nothing gets me more excited than to know people are becoming more aware of the diversity of the Felidae family. In the future, I would like to photograph and showcase more small cat species including manul (Pallas's cat), Asiatic golden cat and Guiña. To the vast majority of the world, those three species are little known and I look forward to bringing them more to the forefront of people's minds.



Clockwise from top left: pampas cat, Iberian lynx, Sunda clouded leopard, Arabian caracal

What are the qualities of cats that most intrigue you?

That's a great question. I love cats so much because of their unique qualities. They are extremely powerful, stealthy, solitary (generally), and are beyond self-sufficient. When I am in the presence of a wild cat, the rest of the world drops away. Nothing else matters. It's the cat and me. It's the greatest feeling getting to share a moment and stare into each other's eyes.



Do you see major issues for habitat loss in many of the endangered cat species?

Habitat destruction is indeed a major issue for many of the cats. Which is why protecting them can serve more for conservation than just saving that particular species. One individual snow leopard will have a home range of over 150 square kilometers. That's a single snow leopard. Protect the area required for ten, fifty, or two hundred fifty snow leopards and you are protecting large areas of land. Wild cats can serve as an umbrella species. Save them, and you save the land that is home to thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of other species of plants and animals.

Besides habitat destruction, there are lots of other threats wild cats face, including poisoning, trophy hunting, roadkill and many others.

The most threatened species of wild cats are the Balkan lynx (less than thirty-five animals left), Asiatic Cheetah (less than forty animals left in the wild), and Arabian leopard (less than two hundred left). Without desperate intervention, these three subspecies of wild cat will go extinct in the near future.

What can others do to help keep these rare creatures alive for future generations?

The two main ways everyone can help protect wild cats is to one, donate to conservation organizations like Panthera, World Wildlife Fund, Global Wildlife Conservation or Wildlife Conservation Society. The second, more actively involved way is to go and see the wild cats for yourself on safari, if financially possible. If the locals make money off of the wild cats being seen, then there is a real incentive to keep them around. This has been proven in Africa for lions and leopards, Brazil for jaguars, and Chile for pumas.

Do you have any journeys coming up that are cat-centric?

I am lucky enough that all my photographic assignments and trips at this point center around cats. Next up for me are assignments for Balkan lynx, Flat-headed cat, and fishing cat. During these trips, my main goal is to get photos of the cats, but I also make sure to highlight their threats, as well as the research and conservation work currently being done for them.

What advice do you have for photographers for procuring the best cat photos possible?

Like any other wildlife photography, the most important thing when trying to pursue wild cats to photograph is to know your subject. Do as much reading on the wild cat species as possible. What is its preferred habitat? When is it most active? When is its mating and birthing season? What prey does it like to hunt? Having the answer to these questions will allow you to look for the cats in the right areas. After that, it's all about spending enough time in the field and being persistent. Most cats are not easy to find to photograph, so when it does occur, it's all the more exciting. Alternatively, you can always hire a guide to help you find the cats.

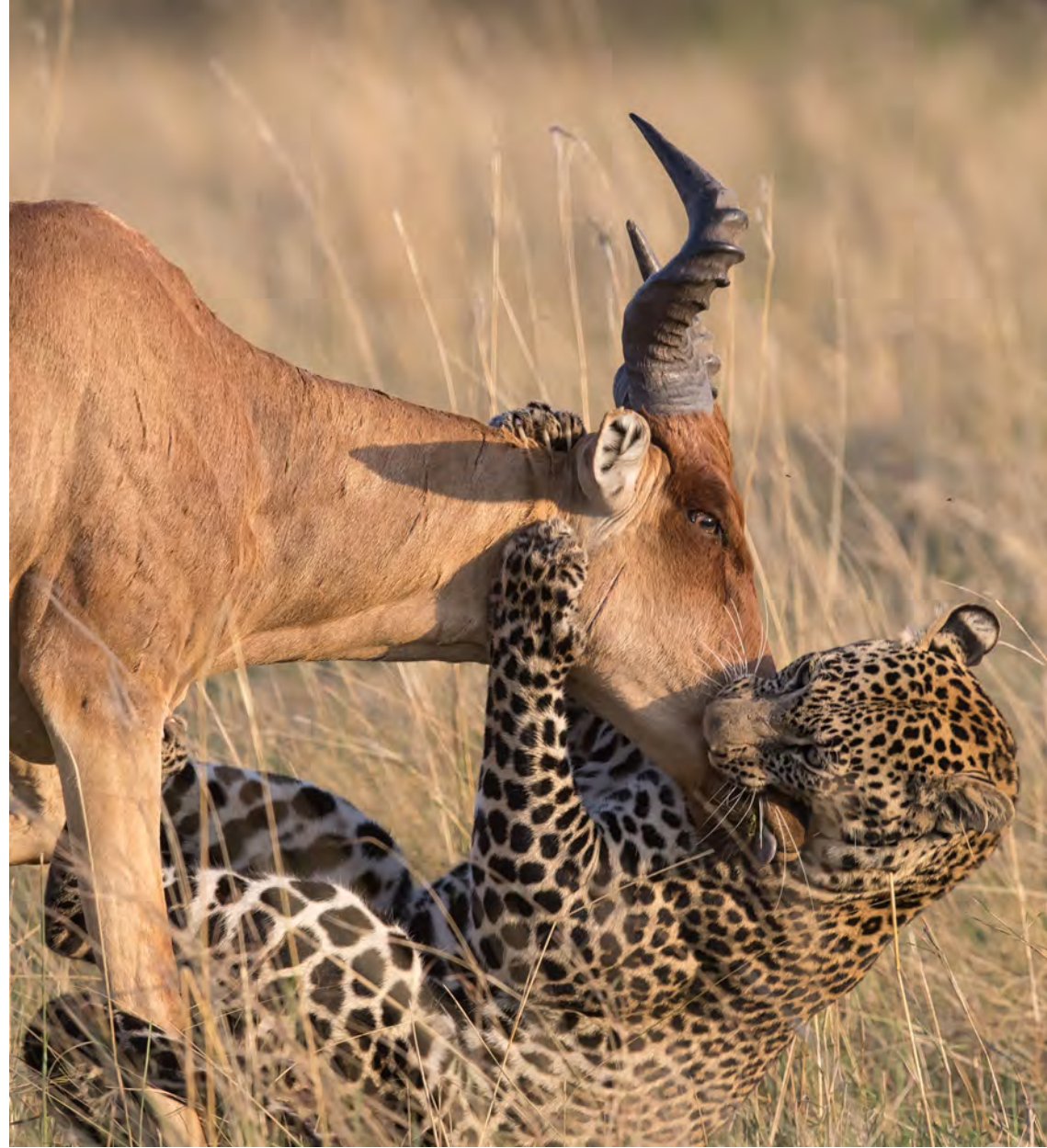


Snow leopard

What trips do you offer that can bring the mystique and beauty of wild cats to mainstream photographers?

I am now offering very unique and exclusive wild cat tours for specific, lesser photographed wild cat species including pumas, bobcats, Sunda leopard cats, and Iberian lynx. The detailed description for all of these tours can be found on my website at www.pumapix.com/wild-cat-photography-tours. The

tours are very small, intimate tours that are adventures in finding and photographing these incredible animals. Despite the rarity and elusiveness of these felines, I have never run a tour where we didn't see and photograph the species we were looking for.



A Deadly Embrace

Award-Winning Photo in Nature's Best Photography Africa, 2018, for African Wild Cat - Behavioral

STORY AND PHOTO BY VICKI SANTELLO

I woke up in the Masai Mara energized and excited about what the day might hold. Photography in nature, especially in Africa, enlivens me and heightens my appreciation for every moment of the day. These are the moments when I can truly be present and cleanse my mind of all the modern day clutter and noise that otherwise surrounds me. I dressed, grabbed my gear and drank a quick cup of tea. No time to waste! Photography adventure was waiting! I headed to my vehicle with my driver-guide, Ju-

lius, and my photography guide, Ruth, both of whom are dear friends. There were also two other vehicles with us from C4 Photo Safaris, the tour operator. Each vehicle carried 1 or 2 people. I was solo in mine. Just before dawn, the three vehicles took off in a direction where a male leopard had been frequenting in recent days. It was unknown if he was still in the area.

When we arrived we were treated to a glorious site: a beautiful male leopard on a termite mound. He was

“As heartless as it may seem, I always hope for a successful kill for the predator. They live a precarious existence trying to survive from one kill to the next.”

concentrating on a small herd of impala and clearly in hunting mode. We stopped the vehicles at a good distance away so as not to create any disturbance. As we waited the sun began to rise and golden light washed over both the whole scene: the leopard, the impala and the waves of grass. I felt my hopes rising that this might be a truly special day in the field. No sooner that I felt this rush of anticipation than it was shattered. One of the impala sensed the presence of the leopard, gave an alarm call and they all scattered. The hunt was off. The leopard stood up and began a new search for prey. He disappeared into a large area of dense thickets and all of our vehicles whisked around to the other side hoping he might reappear. I was anxious if we would see him again or if he would give up the hunt and remain in the thickets as leopards so often do.

Our good luck held. We could see him laying low in the grass on the border of the thickets and positioned the vehicle for the best sun angle. Another small herd of impala was nearby. I prepared myself for the possibility of a fast burst of speed from the leopard and braced my gear and myself in case our vehicle needed to reposition. Alas, it was not meant to be. Once again, one of the impala in this new group sensed the presence of the leopard and gave an alarm call. The herd scattered and the leopard was left empty handed a second time.

I've been to Africa 17 times and hope to visit many more times before my traveling days end. I've seen many successful hunts and many more failed attempts. As much as I don't like to see the death of any animal, I embrace the cycle of life in the wild. As heartless as it may seem, I always hope for a successful kill for the predator. They live a precarious existence trying to survive from one kill to the next. I was disappointed for the leopard and wondered if he'd try again. Clearly, he was in hunting mode but would he hunt – and be successful – in my presence?

Back into the thickets he went and back around the other side our vehicles went in the hopes of seeing him a third time. He was spotted again laying low at the edge of the grass line where the thickets ended and the tall yel-

low grass began. He was well camouflaged and fully poised for the right moment to launch a burst of speed. Just like his two prior attempts, there was a small herd of impala nearby so we naturally assumed they were his targets. This time the herd was an all male bachelor group. I made the decision to focus on the herd since one of these males was likely to be the leopard's objective. I started taking some images as they grazed expecting the leopard to be in their midst any moment. Then, suddenly, all heads were UP.

UP meant action! But where was it happening? The leopard wasn't among the impala. They were looking to the right. I quickly swung my camera rig to the right to follow the collective stare. The leopard was locked onto the muzzle of a fully-grown male Coke hartebeest. The impala were spared that day. Instead, an unsuspecting Coke's hartebeest walked closer to the leopard's hiding spot and became his victim. It's unusual for a leopard to take down an antelope of this size but it was an irresistible opportunity for the hunter.

The struggle was real. Claw marks over the body of the hartebeest attest to the leopard's attempts to get a grip on its prey. But it was the leopard's death grip on the muzzle of the hartebeest that was the key to the success of the hunt. In my winning image, the leopard has his front legs wrapped around the neck of the hartebeest in a deadly embrace. His claws are dug deeply into the neck and his hind legs are braced against the hartebeest's chest for traction. The Coke's hartebeest was locked in a death grip and unable to breathe. His strength drained as he lost oxygen and his legs buckled. The male leopard kept his death grip on the muzzle of his prey long after the hartebeest succumbed. When the leopard finally let go, he panted over his prey inhaling large gulps of air with ragged breathing before dragging it to nearby underbrush.

The moment had ended. It was time to leave the leopard with his prize and to hope that the nourishment he had earned would sustain him until the next kill. It was also time to honor the Coke's hartebeest; he had given his life energy and physical body to sustain another's. The goal of my image is to do justice to them both.



LEOPARD CAT | PHOTO BY CELINA CHIEN

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APEX PREDATOR

LIONS HUNTING HIPPO IN
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PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW SCHOEMAN



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PHOTOGRAPHER FEATURE

John Isaac

Interview by Ranjan Ramchandani
Photos courtesy of John Isaac



JERRY GOFF PHOTO

John Isaac is an Indian-born, award-winning photographer and author who has lived in New York City for most of his career. In addition to being known for his work as a photojournalist for the United Nations, he is also known for his independent freelance work photographing celebrities, including Audrey Hepburn and Michael Jackson. More recently he has been working on wildlife and travel photography. His UN work is brilliant and evokes tremendous emotion while viewing the astounding images. Go to his website www.johnisaac.com for an incredible journey through his UN, cultural, portrait and landscape work.

I know you began your career at the UN as a messenger. How did you work your way into the darkroom then to move on to eventually become a photojournalist?

I entered a photography contest and won a Leica M-5 camera as the grand prize.

The Photo Section of the United Nations then asked me to join them as a darkroom technician, which I ended up doing for 14 years until I was promoted to photographer, Photo Editor and eventually Chief of the Photo Section.



As a photojournalist did you have any moments in your career when you were photographing during volatile situations or conflict?

Yes, I had many dangerous moments while covering wars, famine and refugee crises. In particular, during the Israel/Lebanon crisis in 1978 and also while covering the Bosnia conflict starting in 1992. Crossing the border to Sarajevo from Pale a Serbian soldier mistook me for a Muslim because of my beard and actually he threatened to kill me.

I believe you have a very interesting story on how photographing a sunflower changed you. Can you tell me about it?

After I completed my assignment in Bosnia I was immediately asked to go to Rwanda to document what was happening between two main tribes, the Hutus and Tutsis. There was massive slaughtering going on and bodies were lying everywhere. On the last day I met a little boy who had lost his parents and was living in a refugee camp. We started talking, and he told me how much I looked like his father. I told him, "I wish I had a son like you", to which he replied, "Will you take me home with you?" I told him it was impossible, but he did not understand why I couldn't take him. That really bothered me.



When I got back to my home in New York, I completely collapsed and had a nervous breakdown. The UN put me on medical leave. I packed up my cameras and put them in the closet. Then one day, I was sitting outside and spotted a beautiful sunflower with a butterfly on it. That triggered something in me and I ran to get my camera. I was back to taking photographs.

You were heralded by many, including Outdoor Photographer for your work in your book, The Vale of Kashmir, about the people and landscape of the Kashmir Valley. What inspired you to endeavor the project? Did ongoing political conflict between India and Pakistan over the area have any influence on your work while completing The Vale of Kashmir?

After I retired from the UN in 1998, I decided to take a trip to Kashmir because I had heard how beautiful it was. Then I made a plan to document the people and landscapes of Kashmir.

I also wanted to show how the majority Muslims in Kashmir made their living and lived their lives while being caught as pawns between India and Pakistan. I found them hardworking and peaceful. I ended up making about 12 trips to Kashmir in four years. *The Vale of Kashmir* was published in 2008. I really wasn't looking for wildlife at that time, except one time while traveling through the marshlands I saw migrating ducks.

What inspired you to make your more recent journey into wildlife and travel photography?

I have always been interested in travel. Seeing a new place is always exciting and it is educational. I also started to take groups and do workshops on location. That's what prompted me to do travel photography.

Wildlife has been a part of my DNA right from the beginning. My interest in saving the tiger population in India is what had made me go to India and document the plight of the tigers over the past few years.





It seems there is a real love of India in both your tiger images. Do you still have a special attachment to the people and wildlife of India?

I have always been interested in the tigers of India, my home country, and even while I was employed, I took many trips to the wildlife sanctuaries to photograph the majestic tigers of India. Just as much as I was passionate about my photojournalism and the people I was documenting, I am also passionate about the tigers and their survival. I am 76 now, but I am still traveling to places like Ranthambore and Bandavgarh.

What is the message you would like to give world on responsible tiger tourism ?

The message I would like to give the world about responsible tiger tourism is for everyone to respect the animals in their environment. There are too many jeeps entering the parks. I think this should be controlled and visitors limited. I've noticed litter thrown everywhere and people make noise and tease the animals. This has got to stop.

Do you think climate change has played a role in the world of wildlife? If yes, what ?

Yes, of course. The Greenland and Atlantic ice sheets are

melting at an alarming rate. Greenland lost an average of 286 billion tons of ice between 1993 and 2016, while Antarctica lost 127 billion tons of ice during the same period. The sea levels are rising at an alarming rate and fairly soon cities and towns along the coasts will be in danger. This in turn will damage the entire ecosystem.

Tell us about your work as an instructor.

I have been giving presentations and lessons on photography and how to capture the best shot to tell a story. I especially love instructing young students who I have found have lots of questions and are full of enthusiasm. Both my parents were educators so I am happy to be following in their footsteps.

Do you still photograph in New York City?

Yes. It's an amazing city to walk around in, between the people and the buildings.

Any upcoming projects or awards you would like to mention?

A project on photographing workers around the U.S. is in the works. The focus would be on the Dignity of Work.

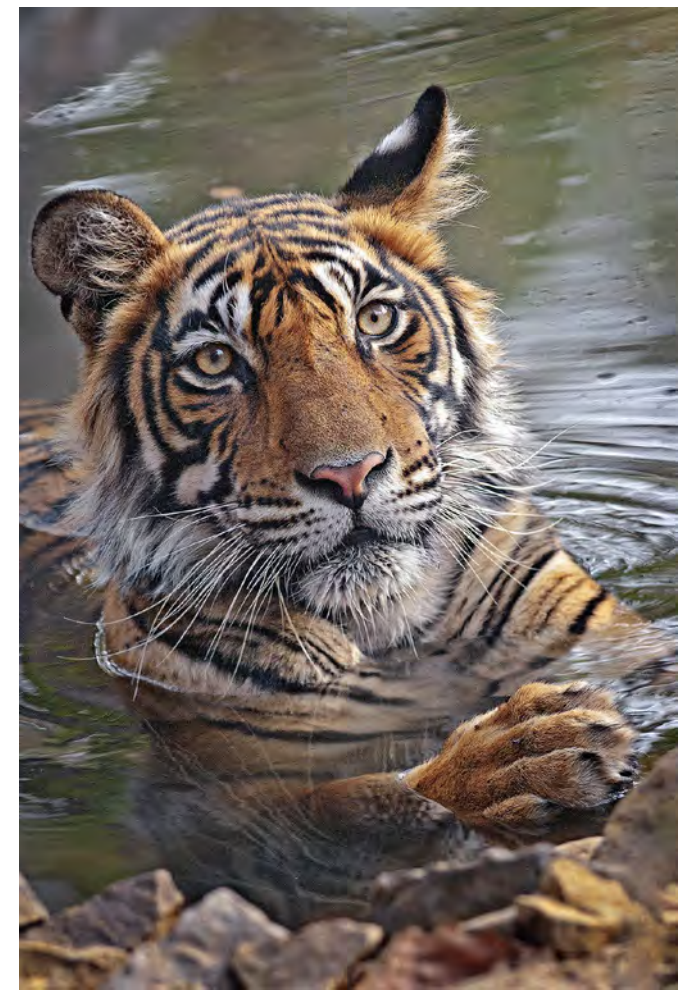
A few past awards: I received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Photographic Council in 2000;

in 1993 I received the Professional Photographer of the Year from PMA (the Photographic Manufacturers Association); in 1985, I received the Picture of the Year (Ethiopian famine) from the Missouri School of Journalism, in 1993, I received the Best Outdoor Photograph of the Year from Graphis Magazine (of the Fantasia horseman in Morocco)

And finally, what camera system are you using today and why?

I have used a few systems in the early days and also for specific assignments many years ago but I have spent the last twenty years with my Olympus system. I like the fact that their system has always been light and very mobile, giving me a very professional output. Today I use the latest technology provided by them and it is second to none.

You can find Mr. Isaac's book,
The Vale of Kashmir,
on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).





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THE LIONS OF *Mara*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RANJAN RAMCHANDANI

When thinking about the wilderness of Africa, given that most of us have grown up in the incredible Disney era, I have found that it's not uncommon to conjure up images of Simba, play "The Circle of Life" in our heads and mentally transport ourselves to the wonderful world of *The Lion King*. For this reason, and many others I'm sure, I can safely say that the creature I get the most questions about is the lion. "Are you guaranteed to spot one every day?" "How do you get close enough and stay safe?" "How did you react to finding one asleep outside of your tent?" Sitting atop the food chain of the Masai Mara is a truly fascinating animal, one that is commonly referred to as the king of the jungle whilst still falling under the category of the most harmless sounding "cat family".

The Mara lions have resided in these plains for hundreds of years, for the most part in peace with the surrounding human communities, largely keeping to themselves and the wilderness. They exist both in prides and as nomads; the

prides are a little bit easier to track and study as the direct correlation between number of generations and healthiness of the pride is quite self-explanatory, and their larger numbers make for more patterned and traceable movement; it is for these reasons the information surrounding them is quite abundant. Interestingly, they are the only members of the cat family to exist in such groups. The older males of these prides can hold territories of hundreds of square kilometres, and although it's safe to say that they are extremely protective of that space, it is actually the older females that are generally feistier when it comes to the "invasion" of their area, as their maternal instincts kick in and motivate them to go to great lengths to protect their cubs. Although prides typically consist of several older females, their cubs and one mature male leader, I've been spotting male lions in groups of two to six walking together of late (possibly nomads), and the resultant photography has included some of my personal favourites.

Like most lions, these ferocious African cats tend to sleep around 20 hours a day which does mean that there are often lulls in terms of lion spotting (if you've spent enough time there to know where to go specifically and when, that's not a problem), but when they awaken they make for extremely interesting subjects. As morbid as it may sound, their kills are elegant and graceful, and although they most often take place at night, I have been privileged enough to witness several in broad daylight; there is something to be said about watching the circle of life unfold right before your eyes. I have been on safari with many people who enjoy watching and photographing these kills, as well as with several others who are put off by them, and even a couple who can't stand to watch at first. After many conversations I have realised that they

aren't averse to the sight itself, but the idea of watching a creature die. This is usually when I urge them to look at it from the perspective of the lioness. Although male lions can also hunt, often we witness their female counterparts doing the heavy lifting simply because they have more mouths to feed. She is trying to provide for and take care of her family. What I find myself reminding them is that if the lions and their cubs don't kill, they don't eat and then, just as the creatures they would have consumed, they will die out, resulting in mass imbalance from the overpopulation of another species, and then overkilling of another species. Understandably, some people don't want to sit through the process regardless, and of course I tailor my safaris to the preferences of the group, so no one would have to see anything they didn't want to.





Although it is inevitable that the number of lions residing in the Mara fluctuates from time to time (it is in the hundreds just on the Mara/Kenya side), what breaks my heart is the approximate 95% population decrease in African lions in the last century alone. Especially considering that it can in part be blamed on human interference. Between poaching and the illegal wildlife trade, climate change and the rapid modernisation of surrounding cities, humans are guilty of encroaching on lions' space (they now inhabit less than 10% of the land they once had access to) and inhibiting their ability to live freely, as well as of murder. As visitors, photographers and avid lovers of wildlife, it is our responsibility to protect and aid the mighty creatures of the Masai as well as the communities that surround the area. As of now they have been given "vulnerable" status, and I only hope that never escalates. There are several ways we can each help: As always, the World Wildlife Fund has some great initiatives (including

Adopt a Lion) and there are many other incredible initiatives and groups working in the area that I urge you to explore, but the simplest thing each of us can do is spread the word. All it takes is a little galvanisation, and we will hopefully never have to see their status become "endangered".

I can't stress how important conservation is in the present day, moreover I can't imagine a world without our beloved jungle kings. To me, the African lion symbolises resilience, tenacity and majesty. These beautiful creatures, hailing from such a gentle family of animals, are extremely loving, protective and graceful. In anyone who is lucky enough to witness them in their natural habitat, they can evoke a range of emotions from fear to comfort with a simple roar or paw draped over a newborn cub. Being in the presence of an African lion is truly an experience like no other. Their hearts beat strong enough to encapsulate yours, and make you feel right at home in the wild. If you don't believe me, come with me. I'd love to show you.

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Nikhil B. Vatsal

Nikhil B. Vatsal is an ardent wildlife photographer from Bangalore, India who is particularly interested in rare cat species.

Clockwise, from top left: Iberian lynx kitten, Iberian lynx, Pallas's kittens, Iberian lynx kitten, serval, leopard





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There's nothing that compares to photographing wildlife, often in extreme conditions, but always worth it to capture a unique moment in natural history. For years, I have been working hard to avoid exposure to the elements. Whether it's in a hot, open vehicle in the African bush, on a sailboat in the Antarctic, high-elevation in the Himalayas or simply photographing around my home in the hot Nevada desert searching for coyote, birds or bighorn sheep. Outdoor photographers experience hazards such as sun exposure, cold temperatures with wind-chill and elevation, breeze and dust of open-air vehicles and even being in boats. Most of us passionate wildlife and landscape photographers would never dream of giving up this passion of ours and have devised ways to protect ourselves from skin damage with tools like clothing that will cover, hats and, sunscreen.

Sometimes, even with good apparel, multiple applications of sunscreen and good moisturizers, it's easy to get a sunburn, brown spots and damage facial and body skin. My solution has been utilizing Mary Bryan and her incredible staff at Advanced Aesthetics. With both treatment and products, I have been able to enjoy photographing in all types of terrain with fewer concerns skin cancer, aesthetic damage, and premature aging.

I start by using excellent sunscreens of high SPF that are element-proof and will stay on during difficult conditions. Skinceuticals Physical Fusion and Tizo3 are my favorites. Both protect against UVA/UVB rays and are chemical-free. Skinceuticals Physical Fusion is water-resistant, has an SPF of 50 against UVA and UVB rays, and helps boost skins natural defenses to environmental stress. Tizo3 is a favorite that also has UVA and UVB protection and is gentle enough for all skin types. It is also photostable, which means it does not degrade in sunlight. Utilizing good skincare products is also crucial. I cleanse

the dirt and dust off my skin with Advanced Aesthetics gentle foaming cleanser. I protect and soothe with their Vitamin CE Ferulic product (I love this one after time photographing in the bush), AA's retinol product to remove dead layers of skin and an effective hydrating product like The Essential Serum to top it off. Next, TNS Essential Serum, a product that has growth factors and antioxidants to soften fine lines and wrinkles, and Lumiere by Neocutis, an eye cream that lightens and brightens the under-eye area.

The Obagi skincare line offers a way to lighten the dark spots from sun damage. Some products can be prescribed to correct skin texture, tone, and smooth fine lines, like Retin-A, which speeds up skin cell turnover and Hydroquinone which lightens pigmentation and damage. When all else fails and the sun damage begins to take its toll, you can consider laser therapy to remove hyperpigmentation and sunspots. Fotofacial, also called IPL, is a great treatment for removing sun spots and evening out skin tone, while the Clear and Brilliant laser smooths out skin texture, and minimizes the appearance of fine lines and pores.

Why not take a Vegas vacation and have a treatment done? There are some great spots for photographing wildlife on the outskirts of town like bighorn sheep at Valley of Fire, coyotes, and osprey at the Las Vegas Wash and beautiful landscapes at Mount Charleston.

For more information and to purchase sunscreen and skincare products online, go to www.advancedaestheticslv.com.



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PHOTO COURTESY OF TRIKANSH SHARMA

BY LORI LUNDIN

A hundred years ago there were an estimated 100,000 tigers roaming parts of Asia. About four thousand remain in the wild, mostly in India. In its just-released 2018 Tiger Census, India counted close to three thousand tigers, a 30 percent increase since its last report four years ago. This did not happen by chance.

"India is truly a leader in tiger conservation", says Dr. John Goodrich, Chief Scientist and Tiger Program Director with Panthera, an organization devoted exclusively to protecting the world's wild cats. Since its inception in the 1970s, India's Tiger Protection Force has taken monumental steps to bring back its most iconic species. "They now have over fifty reserves (with rangers patrolling) that are protected specifically for tigers. They have a very active and successful tourism program and they're actively dealing with human-tiger conflicts that can occur when tigers wander out of the protected areas". When he announced the latest census figures in July, Prime Minister Narendra Modi noted that India is ahead of schedule on a 2022 goal of doubling tiger numbers from the baseline year of 2010. Goodrich says tigers are also doing well in Bhutan and Nepal as they follow India's lead.

But in stark contrast, the situation in other places is dire. "In Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia tigers are really struggling. Malaysia is probably in the most desperate shape right now. Poaching is so bad (in those countries) it is putting tremendous pressure on the tiger populations." The World Wildlife Fund believes they will cease to exist in Malaysia within the next three years if the rate of loss continues.

While habitat loss threatens many animal species, Goodrich says that is not the case with tigers. "There are by some estimates about a million square kilometers of vacant tiger habitat out there. Much of it is in Southeast Asia. It is vacant because tigers have been poached out. We have lost tigers in Laos and Cambodia. Gone. Extricated."

Like elephants for ivory, tigers are mostly killed for their body parts which are used to create medicinal remedies primarily in China and Vietnam. As economic conditions have improved in Asia, the demand for these products has risen. "The traditional Asian medicine trade, which is largely a black market, is driving the extinction of a number of species", says Goodrich. India has also been working to stop the international trade of wildlife and the

Dr. John Goodrich, Chief Scientist and Tiger Program Director of Panthera fitting an adult male tiger with a radio collar as part of a 20-year-long research project he led in the Russian Far East with the Wildlife Conservation Society project.

PHOTO COURTESY OF
ALEXANDER RYBIN, WCS



even tougher issue of demand in user countries. Chinese medicine is rooted in thousands of years of its cultural history. There is no scientific evidence that tiger parts work as a cure for anything.

But there can be a place for animal medicine. In a spiritual sense. Nature is a master teacher and the metaphor of individual species can be a guide for our own healing. Tigers symbolize courage, independence, and strength. They move slowly and carefully with a quiet mystique. They love water. *The Wild Lens* publisher, Michelle Liles saw her first tiger in Ranthambore National Park in India. "Our first sighting was a beautiful female called Arrowhead, a stunning, massive cat with gorgeous markings. Her emerald green eyes pierced my soul. There was something ethereal and remarkable about the tiger. Of all the cats, I have seen in the wild, gazing at these beautiful creatures, I knew I would be forever changed".

With growing concern for many endangered wild animals, it is hard to imagine living in a world without an iconic species like tigers. "If we can't protect them, what can we protect? And we have to ask questions about our

own viability on this planet", adds Goodrich. At the top of the food chain, tigers are integral to the health of their environment. Goodrich says "You can think of them as an umbrella species because they require a lot of area. If we are protecting tigers, we are probably protecting most of the other species in that ecosystem".

But their rebound in India is a testament to what can happen with diligent conservation efforts. With not a minute to spare, the world may finally be waking up. Members of the UK Parliament recently called for urgent action to end the killing of tigers and other big cats by finding ways to stop the trade of their parts and products. Goodrich says (for tigers) the solution is pretty simple.

"There are a million square kilometers of habitat out there. There is a lot of space left for tigers. All we need to do is stop the poaching. Conceptually, it is a simple recipe for tigers. We just need to leave them alone. We need to stop killing them and they will flourish".

Panthera, founded in 2006, is devoted exclusively to preserving wild cats and their critical role in the world's ecosystems. For more on their efforts, visit panthera.org



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