



PR

EXPLORERS

JUL / AUG 2025

INTO THE WILD WITH SACHIN RAI

23 YEARS LONG
RELATIONSHIP
IN THE WILD

BY ANIL T PRABHAKAR

CONTENTS



© Deepa Girish



© Ranjani Narayanan

EDITOR'S DEN

Welcome to PT Explorers
By Cynthia, Raghul & Bruno

004

FOUNDERS' NOTE

By Nisha Purushothaman
& Hermis Haridas

006

COVER STORY

Into The Wild
with Sachin Rai

008

CONSERVATION STORY

Riska and Ambo, 23 Years
Long Relationship in the Wild
By Anil T Prabhakar

060

SPECIES

Return of the Missing Lynx: A
Wild Comeback in Iberia
By Hari Kumar

090

HER VIEWS & VISUALS

By Ranjani Narayanan

114

CUB'S CORNER

My World Through the Lens
By Adam Shawn

140

TRAVELOUGE

Wild, Tender, and Unseen -
Kodiak Trails
By Nisha Purushothaman

158

THROUGH THE LENS

Whispers of the Wild: A Backyard
Macro Tale from Kerala
By Deepa Girish

206

WILD ARTS SHOWCASE

Nature's Harmony
By Andrea Vigil Schenone

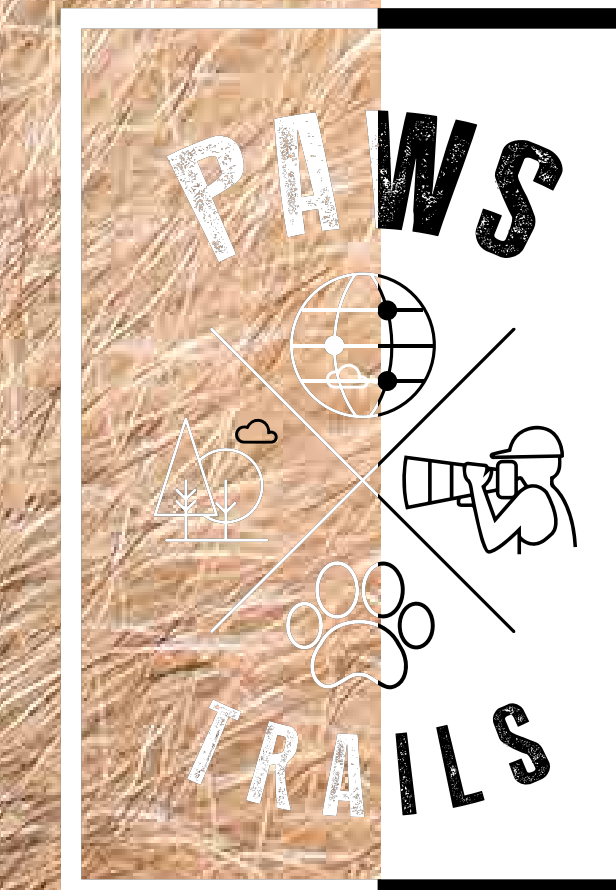
252

YOUR GALLERY

272

008

Cover Story
Sachin Rai



Publisher: Paws Trails Explorers **Editors:** Cynthia Bandurek, Ragul Patteri, & Bruno Ferreto Fiorillo
Content Director: Nisha Purushothaman, **Director Photography:** Hermis Haridas, **Design Desk :** Nithya Purushothaman
Copyright © Paws Trails Explorers



PT Explorers Editors
Ragul Patteri, Cynthia Bandurek, & Bruno Ferreto Fiorillo



Welcome to the **47th edition of PT Explorers**.

Our cover story this edition features **Sachin Rai** from India, who shares his experiences capturing rare species across the globe and his special love for amphibians.

In our **Conservation** section, **Anil Prabhakar** presents a fascinating story from Indonesia about the unique bond between a saltwater crocodile and a human.

The **Species** section highlights a heartening account of the return of the lynx in Iberia, shared by **Hari Kumar**.

In **Her Views & Visuals**, **Ranjani Narayanan** reflects on her journey in wildlife conservation and photography.

Cub’s Corner features **Adam Shawn** from the UAE, who shares his early passion for the wild.

Our **Travelogue**, by **Nisha Purushothaman**, takes you on an adventurous journey to Kodiak Island in search of the majestic Kodiak bears.

In **Through the Lens**, **Deepa Girish** recounts her experiences with macro photography in Kerala, India.

The **Wild Arts** Showcase presents **Andrea Vigil Schenone** from Peru, who shares her artistic journey, her interpretation of Peru’s natural world, and her commitment to using art for conservation.

And as always, we bring you a bouquet of inspiring images from around the world in the **Your Gallery** section.

If you’d like to be featured in *PT Explorers*, we’d love to hear from you! We are always on the lookout for inspiring stories and visuals from nature lovers across the globe.



© Nisha Purushothaman



FOUNDERS' NOTE

Dear Paws Trails Explorers Community,

Welcome to the **47th** edition of **PT Explorers**, our bi-monthly celebration of wildlife, photography, and conservation!

What began as a simple idea, to create a space for storytellers of the wild, has grown into a thriving platform that connects photographers, conservationists, scientists, and nature lovers from across the globe. We are deeply grateful for your continued support in making this a vibrant, free resource for all who care about our natural world.

In this edition, we open with an inspiring interview with a renowned wildlife photographer whose work continues to shape conservation narratives. You'll also find a compelling article on a pressing conservation issue, a species spotlight, and a powerful story from the field. We proudly feature a passionate woman wildlife photographer, a talented young photographer under 16, a travelogue from a remote wilderness, and an artist using wildlife as her muse. Don't miss our carefully curated wildlife image gallery, a visual feast from contributors around the world.

Each of these stories carries the same heartbeat: a deep respect for nature and a desire to protect it.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

For the latest & past issues, visit: www.pawstrailsmagazine.com

Hermis Haridas & Nisha Purushothaman

Founders - PT Explorers



© Sachin Rai

COVER STORY

Into The WILD
with Sachin Rai



Sachin Rai is a professional wildlife photographer from India with over two decades of experience capturing rare and elusive species across the globe. Before venturing into the world of wildlife, he worked in digital media design. His journey into nature photography began in the late 1990s with a visit to the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve. Although he didn't spot a tiger on that trip, observing birds and smaller creatures ignited a lifelong passion for the natural world.

His photography reflects the many moods of wildlife from intimate moments between mothers and their young to dramatic confrontations in the wild. At the heart of his work is a message of hope, aiming to foster deeper empathy and awareness about the need for conservation. He hopes his images inspire curiosity, respect, and action toward protecting the planet's diverse ecosystems.

He has a particular interest in amphibians and was part of the team that re-discovered the rare frog species *Ramanella anamalaiensis* in India.

In addition to his fieldwork, he leads both personalized and group photography tours around the world and has mentored numerous aspiring photographers. To date, he has conducted over 250 tours across India and to global destinations including Kenya, Tanzania, Borneo, Madagascar, Brazil, Ethiopia, and Costa Rica.

glidingfrog.com

[instagram.com/sachin_rai_photography](https://www.instagram.com/sachin_rai_photography)





Origins & Inspirations

What first drew you to wildlife photography, and how has that passion evolved over time?

I have been fascinated by wildlife pictures since childhood. I used to collect calendars and newspaper cuttings of animals, and getting a National Geographic magazine was one of my favorite gifts. Years later, after I started working, I went on a couple of wildlife tours around 2000–2001. I remember seeing someone with a film SLR camera and a 70–300mm zoom lens. Back then, you couldn't see your photos instantly because they were on film. It was amazing to watch that man photograph the birds we were spotting through our binoculars. A week after the tour, he would invite us for a slide show it was so exciting to see those bird images come to life.

Was there a defining moment that made you realize this is what you wanted to pursue professionally?

I was spending more and more time in the wild. My interest started with birds and soon grew to include mammals, frogs, and anything I could find in nature. I was always looking for reasons to be outdoors. At one point, my Human Resources team told me I had been taking more leave than was permitted. I enjoyed my job, but it became hard to stay when I felt held back.

In 2007, I won both first and second place in the well-known Sanctuary



Asia Awards. That was a big confidence boost for me. It was a turning point back then, there wasn't much social media, so the only way to get noticed was through print publications.

Around that time, digital cameras were becoming popular in India. Many people started asking if they could join me on wildlife trips or if I could teach them photography. I had taught kids how to use computers when I was younger and really enjoyed teaching. That was when I realized I could turn my passion into a career. I started leading wildlife and photography tours, and that was how it all began.

Signature Style & Approach

Your work captures a raw and intimate connection with the wild. How would you describe your photographic style?

Honestly, I don't know if I have a style. My personal interest is wildlife, ecology (behaviour) and evolution. These things really interest me a lot. So, I am excited about anything that happens in the wild. From portraits to habitat shots to showing behaviour, I am keen on anything.

Do you go into the field with a specific image in mind, or do you allow the story to unfold naturally?

I almost never go with a specific image in mind. It is nature, you can't predict nor plan. You can make the best of the situation that has been provided to you. I guess, these things are applicable when







you are using camera traps, which I don't. For me, I get into the field with an open heart and mind and go with whatever comes my way.

Wildlife Encounters

Which wildlife encounter has left the deepest impact on you, either emotionally or creatively?

Way too many. Most of the times, it is watching an animal die. Wildebeests drowning, pregnant antelopes been killed by cheetah, lions killing antelope calves, old animals dying – these are all heartbreaking moments that make it incredibly difficult to stay calm and simply capture the scene. Basically, seeing an animal in pain, or shock, is probably the most emotionally difficult to photograph.

Is there a species or subject that continues to challenge you photographically?

Yes! Frogs. It is not easy to photograph frogs. They are nocturnal, shy and quickly hop off when they realize you getting close. If you want to get a frog croaking, then you have to spend enough and more time around it for it to be comfortable with your presence and then aim to take pictures.

Technique & Tools

What gear do you currently use, and how do you decide what to carry for different terrains?

I have the Canon R5 and R5 Mark II.





Among lenses, I have a 400 2.8, a 70-200 2.8 and a 100mm macro. I carry most of them all the time because I am happy clicking any macro subject anytime.

Can you walk us through your post-processing workflow? How much do you believe in editing wildlife images?.

I work on photoshop. I don't believe the images should be made to look 'creative' through heavy processing. I only try and get them to the originality if possible. Which means, In Camera Raw, I begin with brightness and contrast, then little bit of shadow and highlights. At times, I use the graduated Neutral Density filter to get the exposure back on the sky. Once the image is opened in photoshop, I then use the dodge and burn tool at times. Then increase the saturation a bit.

Conservation & Responsibility

You are known for your conservation-oriented work. How do you balance storytelling with advocacy?

I have always been interested in conservation and have tried to stay involved in some way. For over 15 years, I have been working with an Non-Governmental Organization called Tiger Watch in Ranthambhore. I realized that just telling stories isn't enough you also need to understand what is really happening on the ground in different wildlife parks.

As human-wildlife conflicts grow, especially when animals stray out of forests, the situation is more complex



than it seems. It is easy to blame people living near the park or label an animal as a “problem.” Unless you understand both sides, the story will always seem one-sided and possibly misleading.

What are some key ethical considerations every wildlife photographer should follow in the field?

Understanding your subject is important it helps you stay ethical. Many new photographers don’t always know what is right or wrong, but most are eager to learn if you explain things politely.

Nowadays, with the pressure of social media, patience and basic manners are fading. It is easy to be rude or preachy when someone makes a mistake. But we have all made mistakes. If you share your knowledge kindly and explain the right way to do things, people are usually happy to listen and learn.

Industry & Influence

How has the landscape of wildlife photography in India changed since you started?

A lot has changed! Digital cameras have made it easier to get the exposure right and shoot at high speeds, which helps people capture some amazing images. But at the same time, many photographers today are under a lot of stress.

I think a big reason for this is social media and the chase for instant fame. Many photographers focus only on getting great shots, without really understanding their subjects or the technical side of

photography. It is rare to meet someone who is genuinely interested in simply watching and learning about wildlife.

Because of this, people end up putting too much pressure on themselves. The goal becomes all about getting “the perfect shot,” rather than enjoying the experience or connecting with nature.

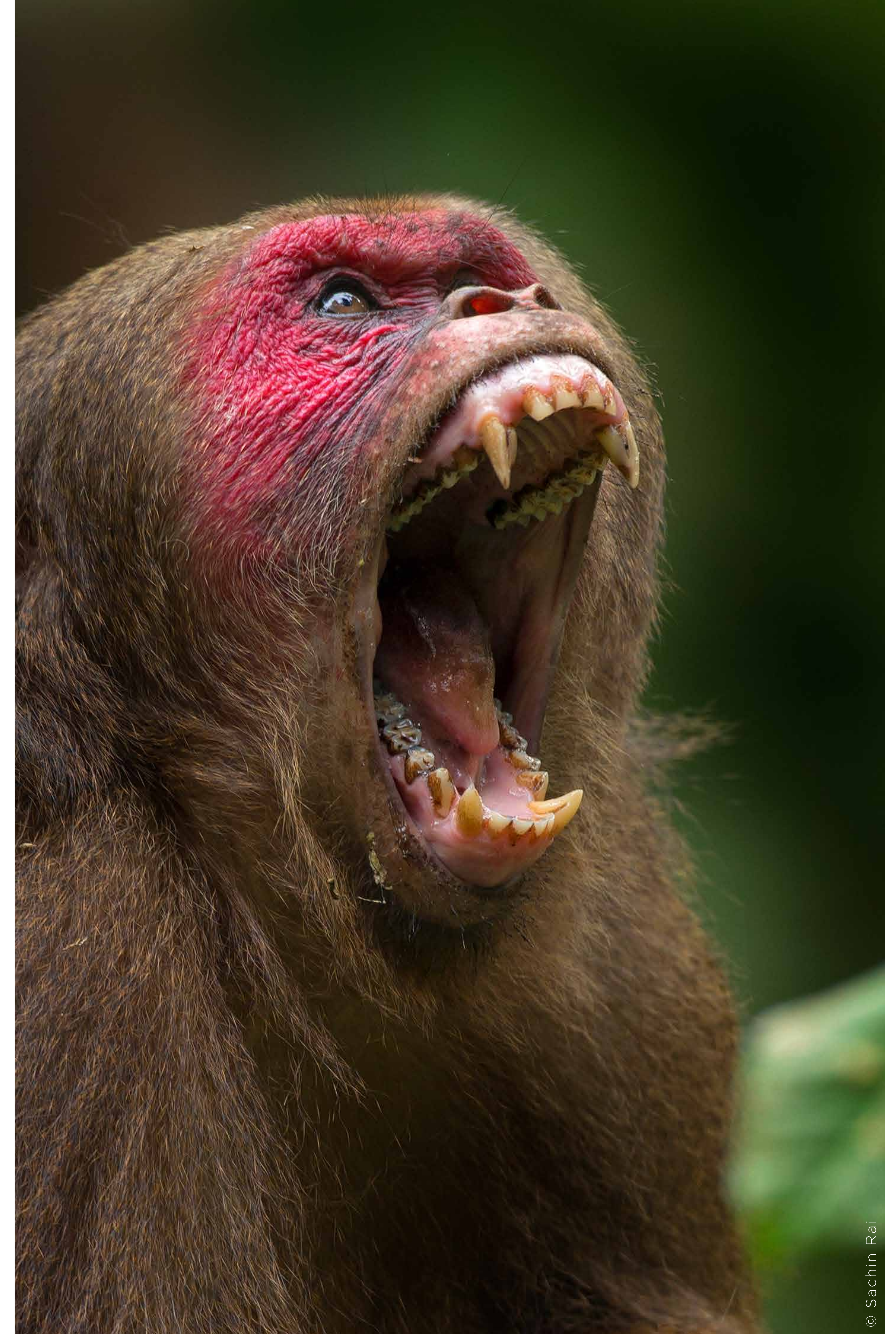
What is your take on the role of social media in shaping public perception of wildlife and conservation?

Social media can be a powerful tool for sharing meaningful discussions, asking questions, and spreading knowledge. It has also made storytelling much easier and more engaging. Today, more people are interested in wildlife safaris and photography than ever before.

But unfortunately, many of them still don’t have a real understanding of the places they visit or the basic “dos” and “don’ts” of being in the wild. For many tourists, wildlife destinations often feel like glorified zoos. Their disappointment over not getting enough “sightings” or “good photos” shows a lack of appreciation for the overall experience. It is clear that for many, the focus has shifted from connecting with nature to simply ticking off a photo checklist.

That said, things can change and they are, slowly. Those who understand wildlife better need to be more patient and willing to guide others. The growing awareness about wildlife destinations is definitely a positive sign.

What is especially encouraging is seeing young people getting inspired many are



© Sachin Rai





now interested in conservation or wildlife photography. With the right support and guidance, they have the potential to shape the future and make a real difference in how we view and protect nature.

Mentorship & Legacy

You have mentored many young photographers. What do you think is the most important quality for success in this field?

I have always believed that a true willingness to learn about science and wildlife is essential. You can only be a strong storyteller if your stories are grounded in real knowledge especially in ecology and science. Without that foundation, everything else risks becoming fiction, even if it is beautifully presented under the label of “creativity.”

If you had the chance to go back to your early days, what advice would you give to your younger self?

Go slow and learn more. Don't be in a hurry to identify animals or birds. Take your time. Ask questions.

The Journey Ahead

What is one unexplored destination or species on your bucket list?

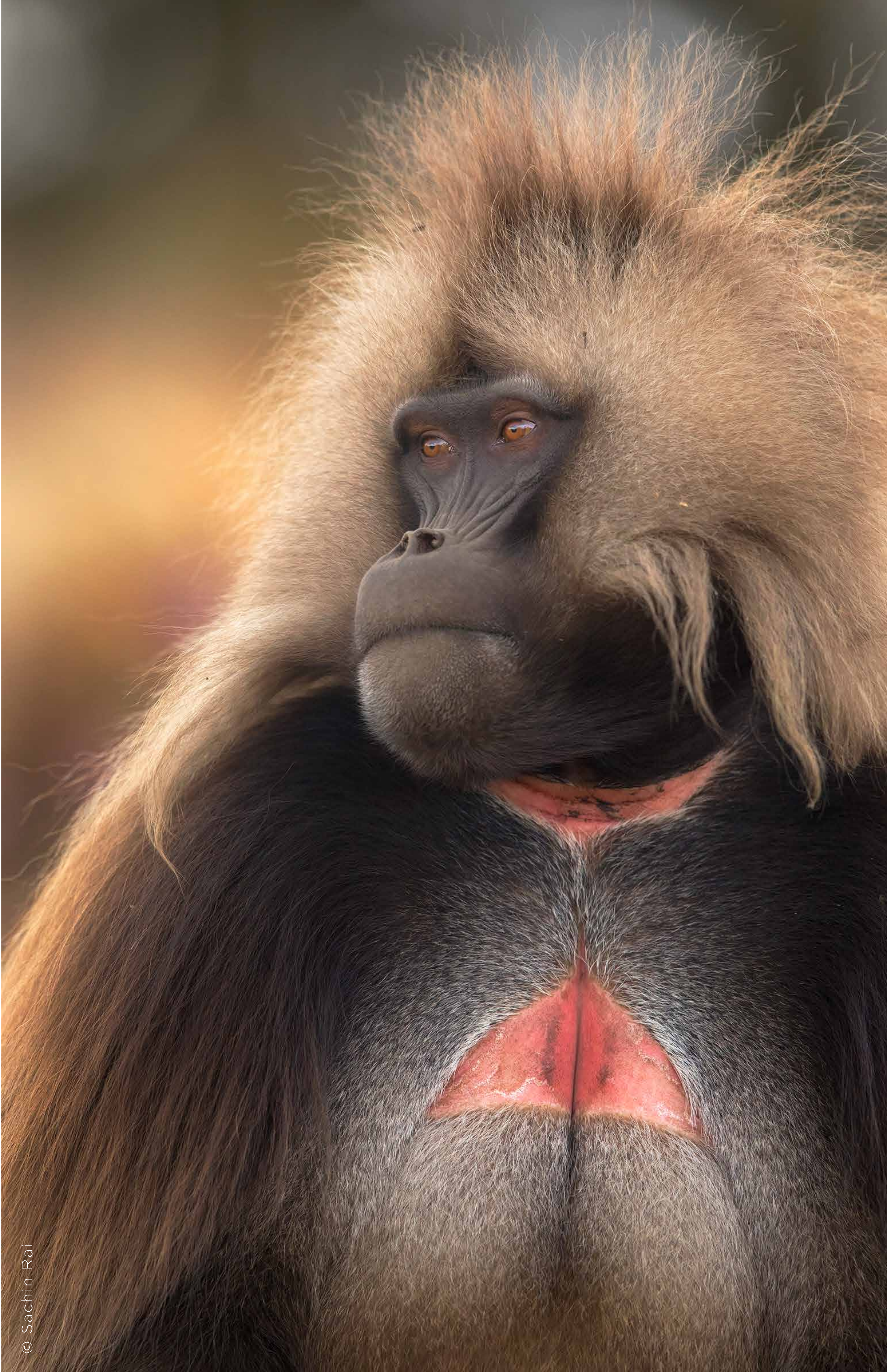
There are many places in Northeast India that I'd love to visit for the frogs.

How would you like your body of work to be remembered in the broader narrative of wildlife conservation?



This is a tricky topic. I don't believe that simply being a wildlife photographer automatically means you are contributing to conservation. A photographer's impact is often limited unless they actively engage with real-world issues and use their work to tell meaningful, story-driven narratives rooted in those concerns. For example, taking a beautiful photo of an elephant or a frog and calling it "conservation" might not be enough. Does the image raise awareness? Maybe. But it could do so much more if the photographer also takes time to learn about the species, its habitat, and the challenges it faces. That deeper understanding allows for more powerful storytelling—something I have always stood by.





© Sachin Rai

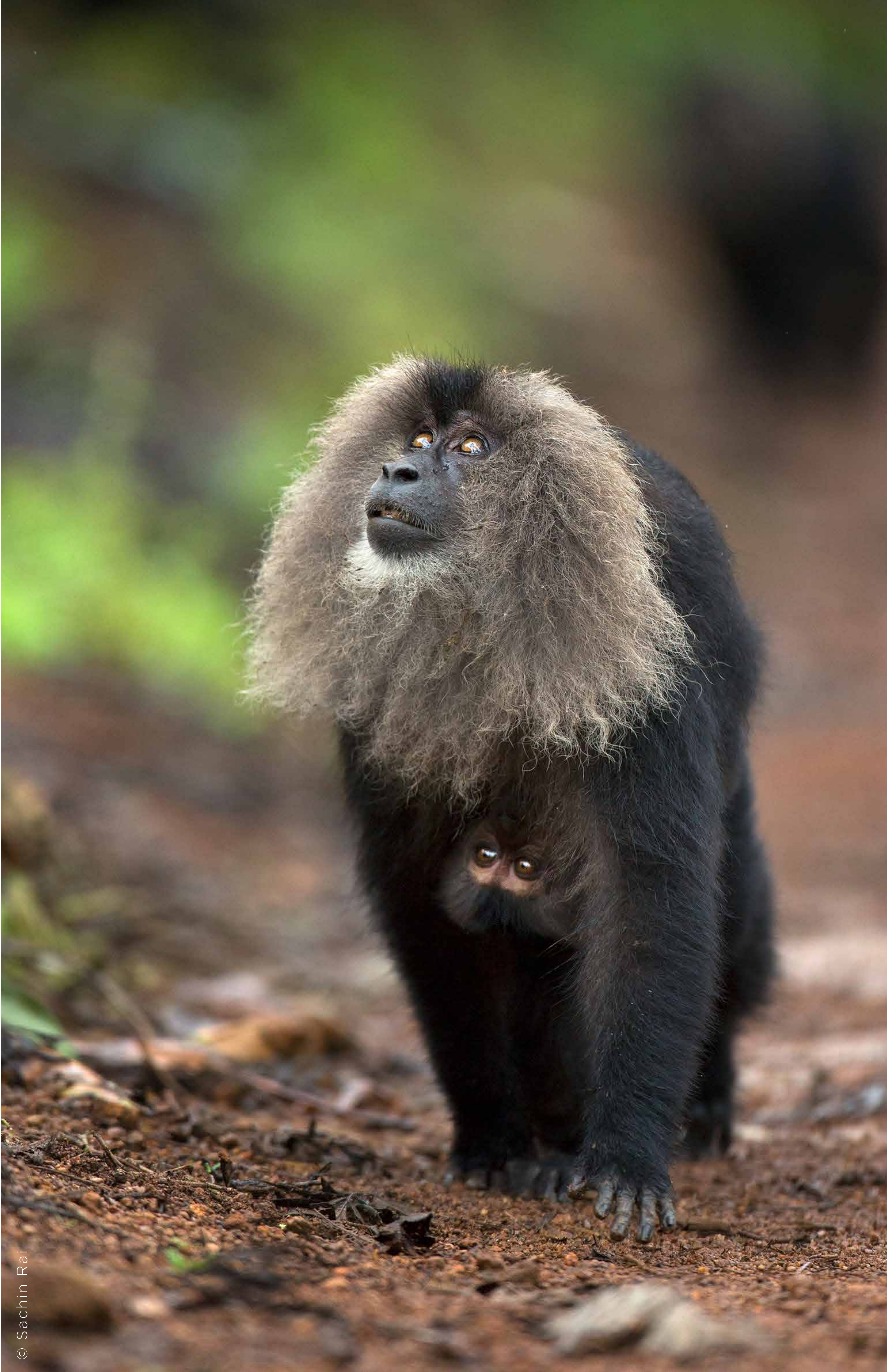


© Sachin Rai















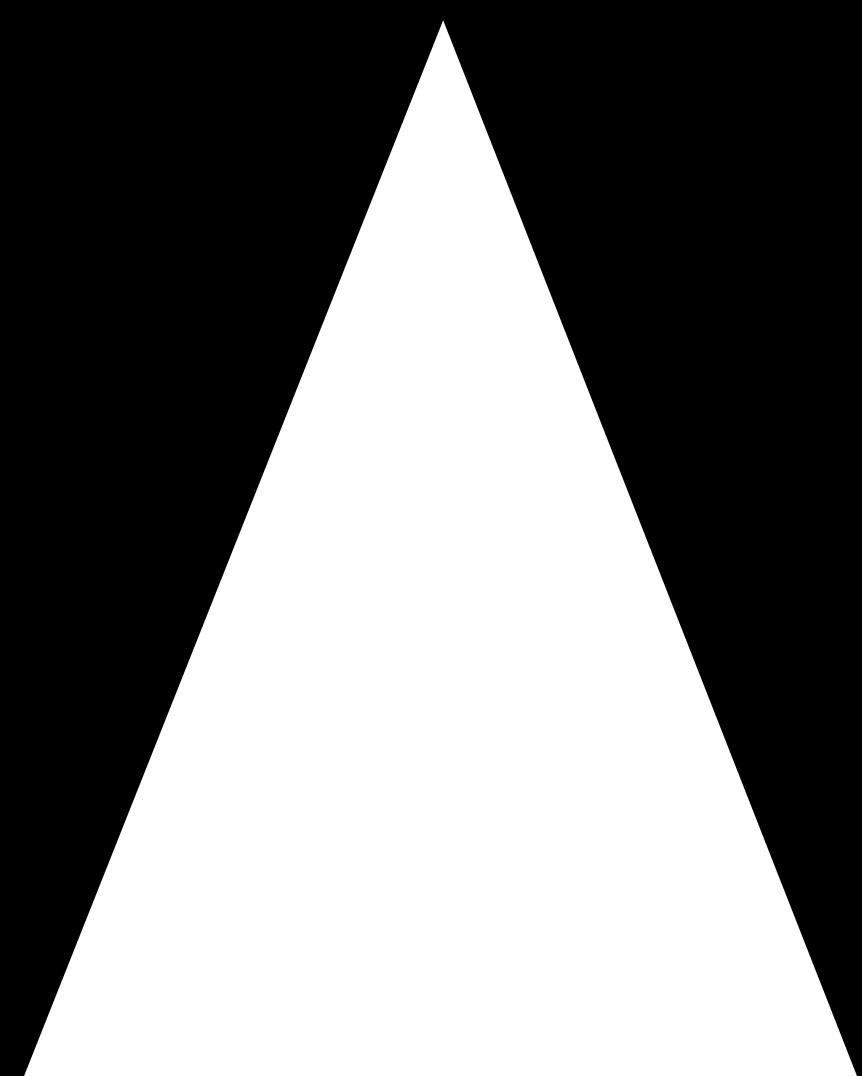




CONSERVATION

Riska and Ambo,

23 Years Long Relationship in the Wild
By **Anil T Prabhakar**

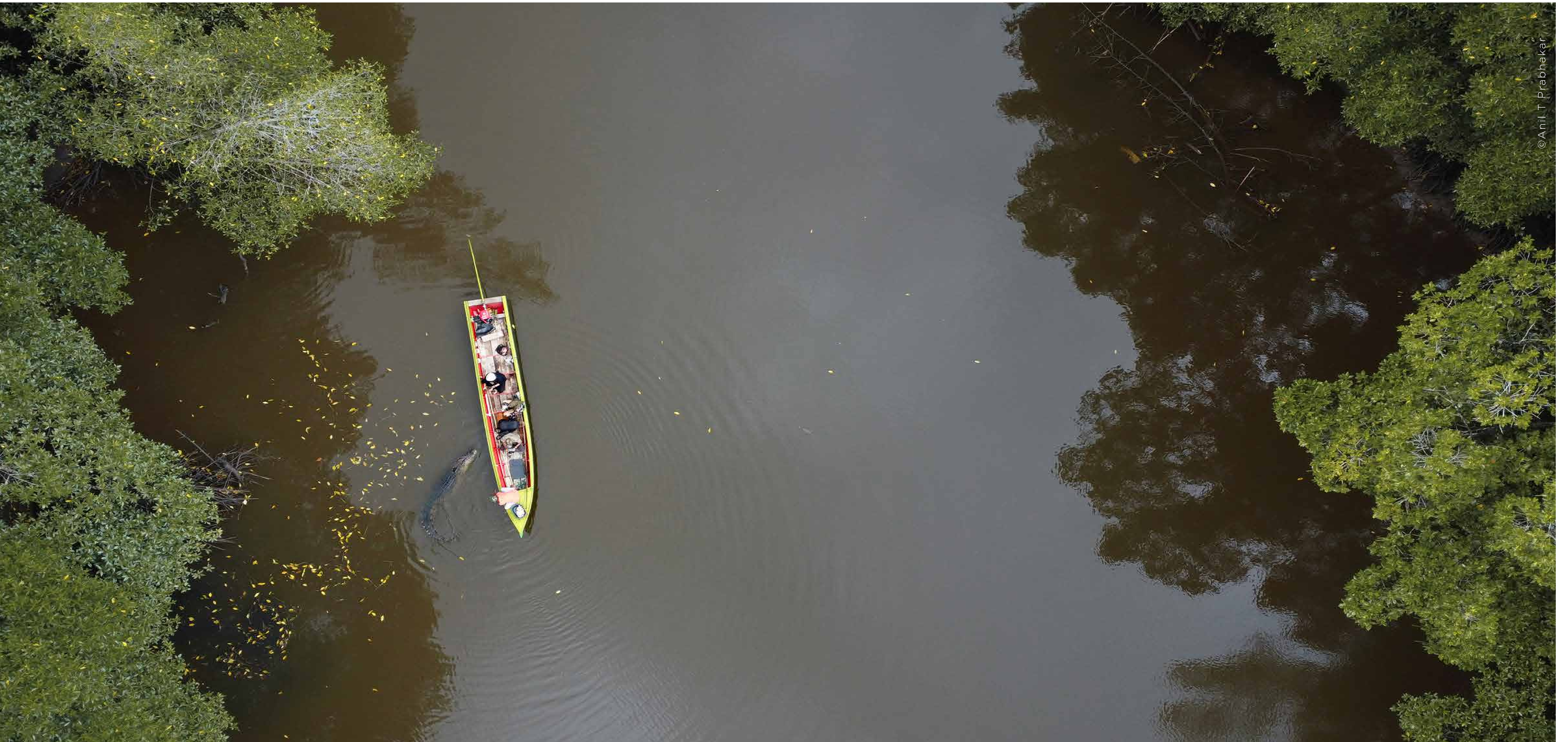


Anil T Prabhakar - a renowned photographer, has been an active advocate and activist for orangutan protection and conservation. He is also associated with Konservasi Alam Nusantara, an NGO committed to the protection of mangroves. With over 40 international photo exhibitions to his credit, Anil has also published a photobook titled *The Beauty and Bleakness of Mount Bromo*. He has won several prestigious international awards and accolades in his photography journey, namely the Annual Photography Award '20 (APA), Global SinoPhoto Awards, and the Green Cap Award.

[instagram.com/anil_t_prabhakar/](https://www.instagram.com/anil_t_prabhakar/)
[x.com/Aniltprabhakar](https://www.x.com/Aniltprabhakar)

A majestic Saltwater Crocodile from East Kalimantan, a symbol of Indonesia's rich biodiversity. Found in lush mangroves and coastal waters, these apex predators play a vital role in the region's delicate ecosystem. As guardians of this incredible habitat, let's work together to protect these ancient reptiles and the environment they call home. East Kalimantan's wildlife is a testimony to the beauty and resilience of nature.





©Anil T. Prabhakar

An aerial shot captures a crocodile named Riska in her natural habitat within the Bontang Mangrove Forest. The photograph frames Riska as she approaches Mr. Ambo's boat. Known for his regular visits to this habitat, Mr. Ambo has formed a unique connection with the crocodile, often feeding her during his visits to the mangrove forest.

Indonesia, renowned for its rich biodiversity, faces challenges in preserving its unique and rare species, including the Sumatran tigers, Javan rhinoceros, Sumatran elephant, Proboscis monkey, and critically endangered Orangutans. Recently, the crocodile population has come under threat due to habitat loss, illegal wildlife trade, and human invasions. A notable incident occurred in Sorong, Papua, Indonesia, where a mass massacre of 292 crocodiles sparked significant debate surrounding human-wildlife conflicts. These conflicts arise when human activities and requirements encroach upon the habitats and resources of wildlife populations, resulting in potential harm to both humans and wild animals. Crocodilians, as apex predators in inland waters, are frequently involved in such conflicts in multiple countries.

Human-Crocodile Relationship

Here, I present the other side of the conflict—the story of a human-wildlife relationship. Pak Ambo, a fisherman from East Kalimantan, became famous in Indonesia because of his unique relationship with a wild crocodile named Riska. Riska inhabits the mangrove forest about two kilometers away from his home in Guntung Village, Bontang in East Kalimantan.

I have been working in conservation photography for quite some time now. When I read about this wonderful story of Ambo and Riska, I decided to visit Pak Ambo to understand what exactly was happening in the wild. Pak Ambo



A close-up shot of a saltwater crocodile highlights the beauty and power of this apex predator. However, human-wildlife conflict often puts these creatures at risk. In Indonesia, it is not uncommon to hear news of crocodile attacks, followed by villagers retaliating by killing the crocodiles. This ongoing conflict stems from overlapping habitats and the struggle for resources, leading to tragic consequences for both humans and wildlife. Addressing this issue requires greater awareness, coexistence strategies, and conservation efforts to protect these ancient reptiles while ensuring the safety and livelihood of local communities.



Mr. Ambo's story is quite famous in Kalimantan. It was a heartwarming experience interacting with Mr. Ambo at his house as he shared the fascinating story of Riska, the crocodile. He told how their unique relationship began, the reason behind naming her Riska, and how their bond has grown over an incredible 23 years. Listening to him talk about their journey was both touching and inspiring, showcasing a rare connection between a human and a wild animal.



This is one of my closest shots of Riska, and it was a bit intimidating as this giant crocodile approached us after Mr. Ambo called her by name, accompanied by clapping his hands. Upon reaching the crocodile habitat, it was fascinating to witness how she responded to his familiar call. Her immense size, larger than Ambo's speedboat, left me in awe. Seeing such a healthy and magnificent crocodile up close in the wild was both thrilling and nerve-wracking. It was my first time experiencing a wild crocodile at such proximity, making it an unforgettable encounter.

is a migrant from another province in Indonesia called Sulawesi. He moved to East Kalimantan when he was young. About 23 years ago while fishing in the mangrove forest river, he came across a tiny crocodile hatchling. This crocodile hatchling would always follow him as he fished in the backwaters of Bontang Inlet. He began feeding the crocodile hatchling by tossing it fish while he fished.

This connection grew stronger over the past 23 years. Pak Ambo would go fishing every other day. If he ever took a week-long break, the crocodile would begin searching for him. This became a routine for the crocodile. If Ambo did not go for fishing, it would come through the small creek and wait in front of his house. This behaviour surprised most of the villagers, and from these sightings, people began to learn about Ambo's story. As a result, people started visiting him to witness this heartwarming bond between a human and a crocodile.

Pak Ambo is not a crocodile handler, but his connection with the 14-foot crocodile amazed me during my visit to the mangrove forest. Pak Ambo named the crocodile Riska. According to him, he dreamed about this crocodile, and in that dream, he called her 'Riska.' Later, he named the crocodile 'Riska' and considered her one of his daughters. From Ambo's house to this mangrove forest, it is about 15 to 20 minutes' sailing distance and it can only be done by a small wooden boat. My friends and I travelled to the mangrove forest. At the first moment we reached Riska's habitat, we couldn't find her for about five minutes. Only after Pak Ambo started




Guntung, a small village in Bontang, East Kalimantan, is home to Mr. Ambo. The saltwater crocodile habitat lies about 2 kilometers from his house. His home is located near a narrow water canal that flows toward an inlet. This channel serves as the only water route to reach the mangrove forest, where Riska, the crocodile, can be sighted. The villagers of Guntung primarily depend on fishing as their main livelihood.



©Anil T Prabhakar

Our journey to the mangrove forest was made in a small wooden boat, which can accommodate a maximum of four people. I was accompanied by two crew members who assisted me with my project. It proved to be a challenging experience, as they were not familiarized with wildlife adventures. There were several instances where I needed to visit this location multiple times to complete the conservation project. Despite the challenges, each trip brought valuable insights and progress toward the project's goal, making it a rewarding and transformative experience for all involved.

A large saltwater crocodile, Riska, is seen swimming in a mangrove swamp. The crocodile's head and back are visible above the water, showing its textured, scaly skin. The water is calm and reflects the surrounding mangrove trees and roots. The scene is captured from a boat, with the edge of the boat visible in the foreground.

My closest encounter with Riska, a saltwater crocodile, was truly unforgettable. At nearly 14 feet long, she is larger than our boat. Her textured skin is a clear sign of her health and vitality. Riska has been living in the same location for almost 23 years, becoming a remarkable part of the local ecosystem. Observing her in such close proximity was a humbling experience, reminding me of the strength and resilience of these ancient creatures.



Crocodiles, often referred to as “beasts,” possess remarkable skin textures, with rough, patterned scales that give them a prehistoric, armoured appearance. These ancient reptiles spend the majority of their time in the water, where they are most at home. However, they frequently come onto land for specific purposes such as basking in the sun to regulate their body temperature, nesting to lay their eggs, or moving between different water bodies in search of food or shelter. Their ability to adapt to both aquatic and terrestrial environments highlights their incredible survival skills over millions of years.

calling her name and clapping his hands, I noticed her lying on the riverbank. Suddenly, she plunged into the river and swam closer to our small wooden boat. She spent almost 20 minutes around the boat before moving away towards the banks of the river. For the first time in my life, I had a close encounter of a crocodile in the wild, There was hardly a 20-centimeter distance between the crocodile and my boat.

Riska, a healthy crocodile, is almost 24 years old and holds an impressive in body size, measuring over 14 feet in length. Crocodiles of this size are often apex predators, indicating Riska’s strength and maturity. At over 1,000 pounds, she likely has a significant presence, with her body being built for both power and survival. Crocodiles generally live in freshwater habitats, such as rivers, lakes, and wetlands, and have evolved to be incredibly resilient creatures. With a lifespan that can exceed 70 years in captivity, Riska, at 24, is still in her prime. Her large size, especially in terms of weight, suggests that she enjoys ample nutrition and a stable environment. Crocodiles are carnivorous, feeding on fish, birds, and mammals, and they rely on their powerful jaws and ambush tactics to hunt. As a crocodile, Riska has likely mastered her environment demonstrated by her sharp reflexes while hunting and her ability to regulate body temperature by basking in the sun or cooling off in the water.

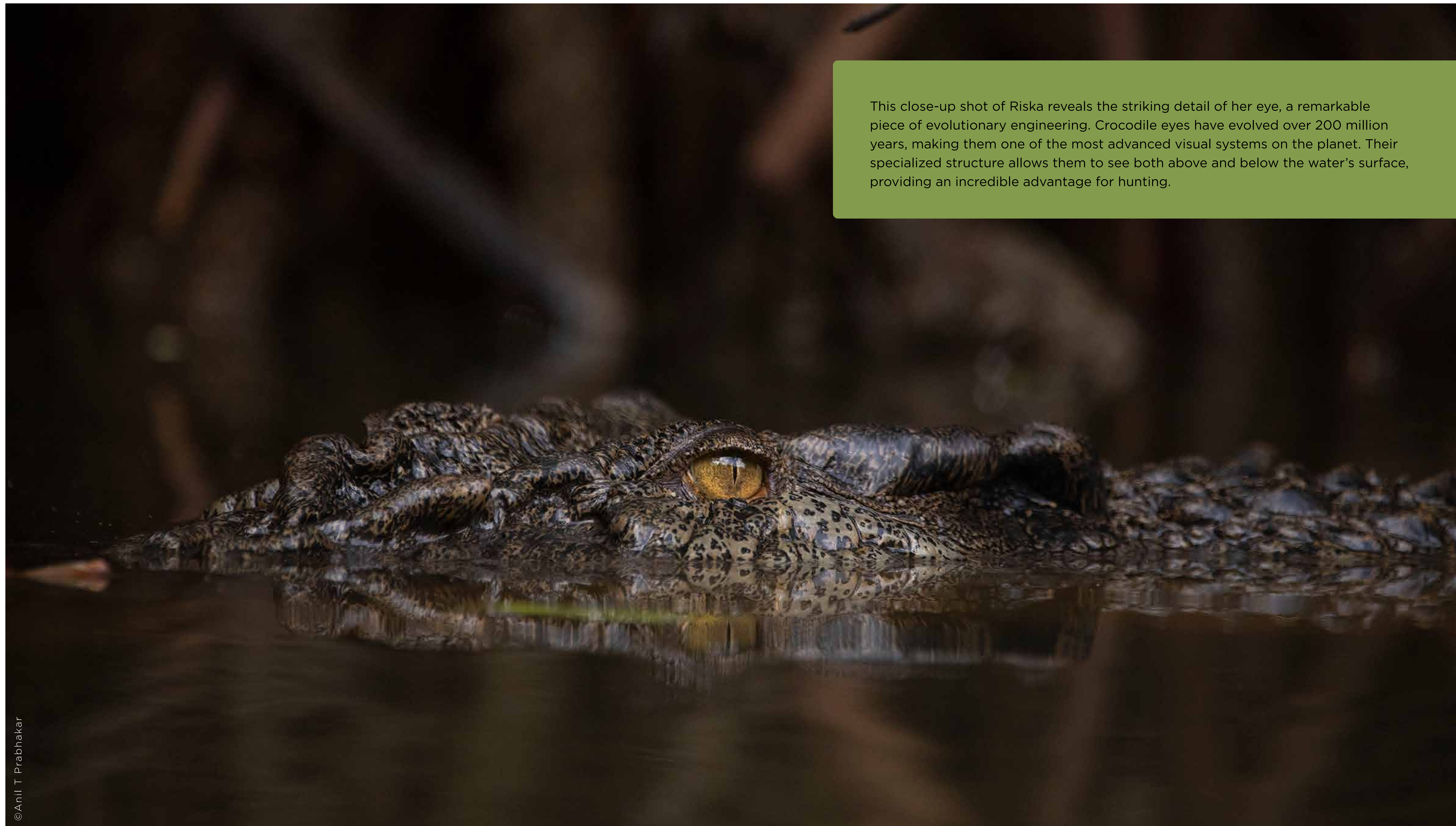
Over the last 23 years, there have never been any attacks on people reported involving Riska. She has now become a darling of the entire village. Sometimes she visits the village through the narrow creek during high tides. Even though Mr. Ambo is confident that Riska won’t attack him, he has never displayed any great adventurism by swimming with Riska or entering her habitat to impress his visitors. He respects her habitat and her wildness and has never given any chance for any intrusive activities during his visits, as he does remember they are still part of the unknown, wild, and also ferocious predators and anything can happen at any time beyond human predictions. The relationship between humans and animals always provides heartwarming stories, and I’ve heard many similar tales from different parts of the world.



In this photograph, Mr. Ambo is seen with Riska, the giant saltwater crocodile, who is basking in the sun. The image captures her immense size, with an approximate weight of 1,000 pounds and a length of about 14 feet. Her ventral side is well-scaled, featuring a subtle yellowish tint, while her deep yellow eyes stand out against her rugged appearance. The dorsal skin is heavily textured, a clear sign of her healthy state. Riska's impressive size and remarkable features serve as a testament to the strength and resilience of these ancient creatures in their natural habitat.



Ambo has been feeding Riska, the crocodile, fish and chicken for years, forming a unique bond through their shared routine. Whenever Mr. Ambo visits the habitat, he brings chicken to feed her, a habit that Riska has come to expect. If Ambo doesn't visit, she often comes to find him, traveling through the creek. This connection between them reflects the deep, unusual relationship they've built over time.



This close-up shot of Riska reveals the striking detail of her eye, a remarkable piece of evolutionary engineering. Crocodile eyes have evolved over 200 million years, making them one of the most advanced visual systems on the planet. Their specialized structure allows them to see both above and below the water's surface, providing an incredible advantage for hunting.

The coloration of a crocodile's skin is a brilliant adaptation, allowing it to blend into its surroundings and providing effective camouflage from other creatures. This natural camouflage plays a vital role in both hunting and staying safe from potential threats. Mangroves, with their thick vegetation and muddy waters, are the best habitat for saltwater crocodiles. The unique environment of the mangrove forest offers these reptiles the perfect conditions for survival, with ample food, shelter, and a secure space for nesting and breeding.



A heartwarming moment captured with Riska and Mr. Ambo in front of his house, when Riska, the crocodile, would often visit through the creek. During high tide, she would make her way to Ambo's house, showcasing a rare and unique bond between a wild crocodile and a human. This extraordinary connection drew attention and became the talk of Indonesia, making the story go viral. It's a beautiful example of how mutual trust and respect can form between humans and wildlife, challenging conventional views and highlighting the potential for harmonious coexistence in nature



SPECIES

Return of the Missing Lynx: A Wild Comeback in Iberia

By Hari Kumar



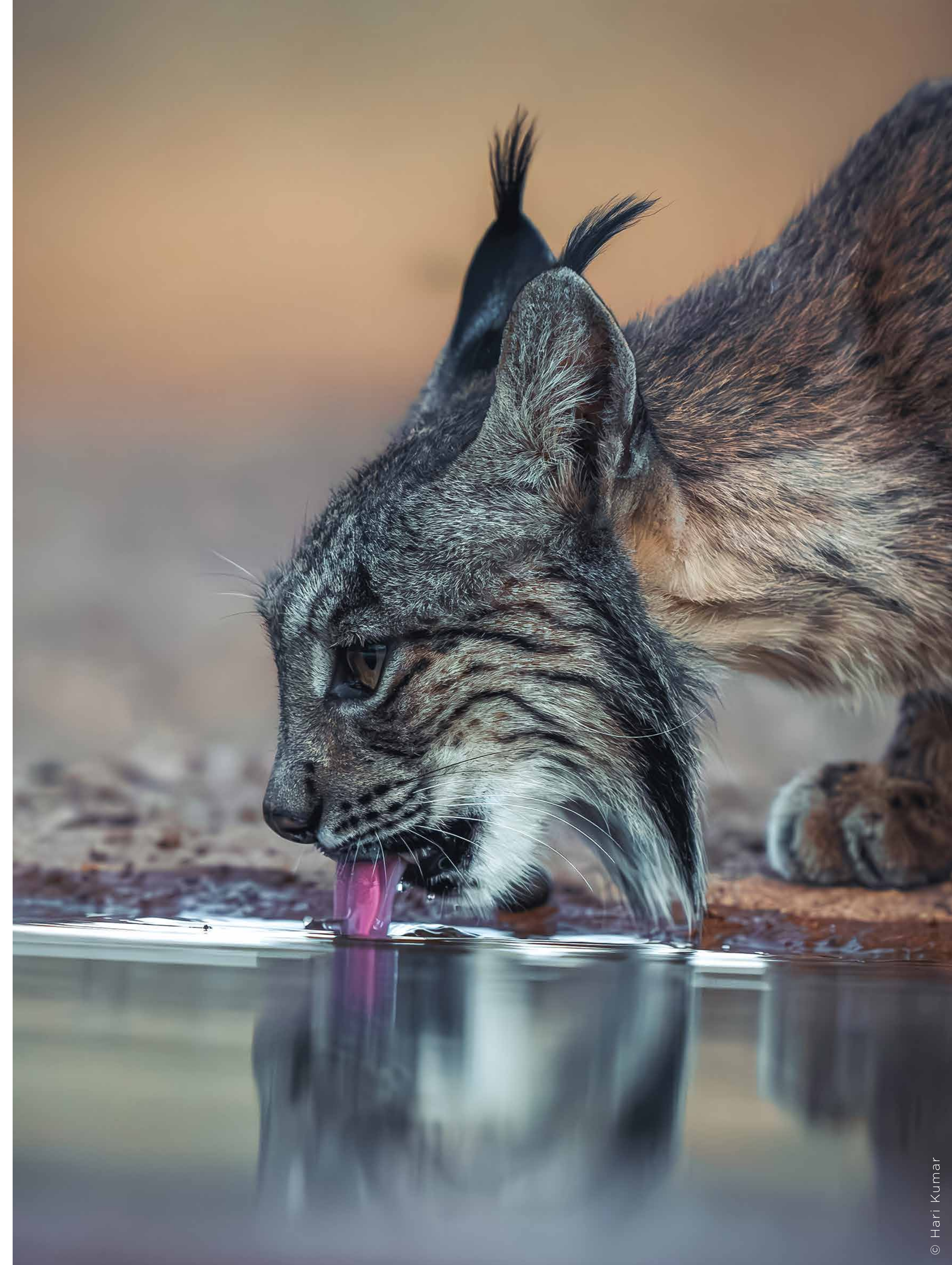


Hari Kumar is an Indian wildlife photographer based in Scotland, known for his evocative imagery that celebrates the beauty, fragility, and freedom of the natural world. From tracking Lions in Kenya to photographing Polar bears in the Arctic and Red deer in the Scottish Highlands, his work spans continents, capturing wildlife in their natural habitats with emotional depth and authenticity.

With a special focus on big cats, Hari's photography is driven by a passion for conservation and storytelling. His images aim to spark curiosity, foster empathy, and inspire action to protect our planet's most vulnerable species.

A two-time runner-up in the National Geographic Traveller India Photo Contest (Wildlife category), Hari has received multiple national and international awards, with his work featured in major publications and news channels across India and the UK.

**[instagram.com/just4hari](https://www.instagram.com/just4hari)
hariphotography.co.uk**







In the arid scrublands and sun-dappled forests of Spain and Portugal, a silent predator once vanished from much of its ancestral domain. The **Iberian lynx** (*Lynx pardinus*), Europe's most endangered wild cat, once stood at the very brink of extinction. But today, it's staging one of the most extraordinary wildlife recoveries of modern times. A striking creature, the Iberian lynx is unmistakable. With its tufted ears, short bobbed tail, and dappled golden coat, it is both beautiful and elusive. Once widespread across the Iberian Peninsula, this medium-sized feline became a ghost of its former range by the early 2000s. In 2002, the global wild population was estimated at just **94 individuals**, confined to two shrinking pockets in **Andalusia**, southern Spain. Conservationists feared the worst. The IUCN listed the species as **Critically Endangered**, and it was dubbed the rarest cat on Earth. Yet less than a quarter-century later, the story has dramatically changed. Thanks to a broad coalition of scientists, conservationists, governments, landowners, and the public, the Iberian lynx is clawing its way back literally and figuratively.

From Crisis to Comeback

The **2023 census** recorded over **2,000 wild Iberian lynxes**, and by early **2025**, the number had surpassed **2,400**, prompting the IUCN to downlist the species from "Critically Endangered" to "**Vulnerable**." The lynx now occupies around **1,500 square kilometres**, reclaiming historic territory and forming new breeding populations in **Toledo**, **Badajoz**, **Ciudad Real**, and across the border in **Portugal's Guadiana Valley**.

Key to this revival has been the **captive breeding and reintroduction programme**, launched in the early 2000s under initiatives such as **LIFE Iberlince** and **LynxConnect**. These EU-funded efforts established multiple breeding centers, where lynxes are raised in semi-wild conditions before being released into carefully restored habitats. Spain alone now holds over **85%** of the global Iberian lynx population. Regions like **Andalusia**, **Extremadura**, **Castilla-La Mancha**, and **Murcia** have become strongholds for the species, supported by rigorous habitat management, scientific monitoring, and growing public awareness.

Rabbit at the Heart of the Recovery

While the lynx's dramatic recovery is a headline-grabber, it's a story intricately tied to a far less glamorous animal: the **European rabbit** (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*). The lynx is a **dietary specialist**, relying on rabbits for up to **99%** of its food. Without them, the lynx simply cannot survive.

Historically abundant, wild rabbits have suffered repeated population crashes due to **myxomatosis** and **rabbit hemorrhagic disease**, two virulent and highly contagious diseases introduced in the 20th century. These epidemics devastated not only rabbit numbers but also entire ecosystems, affecting predators like the lynx and the **Spanish imperial eagle**.

Whenever rabbit numbers begin to recover, another viral outbreak often follows. This boom-and-bust cycle has forced conservationists to get creative. **Rabbit restocking programmes**, habitat enhancement, and even the development



of **disease-resistant rabbit strains** are now cornerstones of lynx conservation strategy. On the ground, efforts include planting native vegetation to support rabbit burrows, restricting hunting in core lynx zones, and setting up breeding facilities for rabbits, too.

Land of the Lynx

The Iberian lynx thrives in **Mediterranean scrubland** a patchwork of bushy thickets, open clearings, and oak woodlands that offer cover for stalking and denning, and plenty of prey. But this habitat has been under pressure for decades due to **agriculture, urban development, and wildfires**, exacerbated by **climate change**. To ensure the species' long-term viability, conservationists are working to **restore and reconnect fragmented habitats**. Wildlife corridors both natural and manmade are being built to link isolated populations. **Underpasses and fencing** are helping reduce road mortalities, one of the leading causes of lynx deaths. In fact, vehicle collisions account for a significant number of fatalities each year, highlighting the importance of "lynx-friendly infrastructure."

Peñalajo: A Conservation Model

One standout example of local commitment is **Peñalajo**, a 2,260-hectare private estate nestled between **Santa Cruz de Mudela** and **Almuradiel** in **Ciudad Real** province. Since **2016**, Peñalajo has been at the forefront of lynx conservation. Partnering with **WWF**, local authorities, and EU LIFE programmes, the estate has successfully restored rabbit populations, revitalised native vegetation, and built

wildlife corridors. The results have been spectacular. Peñalajo now boasts **two active breeding nuclei** and one of Spain's highest lynx densities. Its achievements were recognised with the **Iberlince Prize**, serving as a model for public-private conservation collaboration.

Engaging Communities and Changing Minds

One of the most significant shifts over the past two decades has been in **public perception**. Once seen as a pest or even a threat to livestock and game species, the lynx is now viewed as a **national treasure**. **Ecotourism** has flourished in lynx territory, especially in places like Doñana National Park, where visitors now have a chance albeit a rare one to glimpse the shy predator in the wild.

Local communities are increasingly engaged, with many landowners embracing **lynx-friendly practices**. EU-funded programmes provide financial incentives to farmers who maintain suitable habitat, and educational campaigns target schools and hunting groups alike. It's a powerful reminder that species conservation doesn't happen in isolation it thrives in partnership with people.

Still on the Brink

Despite the progress, the Iberian lynx remains **at risk**. Its dependence on a single prey species, combined with its fragmented range and susceptibility to disease and road accidents, means the species could still face setbacks without continued support. **Climate change**



© Hari Kumar





presents an emerging threat, with rising temperatures and prolonged droughts altering habitat composition and increasing wildfire risk. Conservationists are already working to make lynx habitats more **climate-resilient**, with firebreaks, sustainable grazing practices, and long-term ecological monitoring.

Genetic diversity is another concern. Although population numbers have grown, many lynx descend from a small pool of individuals, raising concerns about **inbreeding**. Genetic management through captive breeding, translocations, and careful population mixing will be essential in maintaining a healthy gene pool.

Quick Facts: Iberian Lynx at a Glance

- **Scientific name:** *Lynx pardinus*
- **Current status (2025):** Vulnerable (IUCN)
- **Historic low (2002):** < 100 individuals
- **2025 population estimate:** ~2,400
- **Primary prey:** European rabbit (up to 99% of diet)
- **Habitat:** Mediterranean scrub and woodlands
- **Key threats:** Road mortality, rabbit disease, habitat loss, wildfires
- **Distinctive features:** Tufted ears, spotted coat, bobbed tail
- **Reproductive cycle:** Mating Jan–Mar; 1–3 cubs/year
- **Range:** Spain (85% of population), Portugal
- **Best places to see them:** Doñana National Park, Peñalajo Estate

How to Help

Conservation success depends not only on governments and NGOs, but on public will. Here’s how individuals can contribute to the ongoing survival of the Iberian lynx:

- **Support habitat restoration** by donating to conservation organisations.
- **Avoid contributing to habitat loss** by supporting sustainable agriculture and tourism.
- **Report wildlife sightings** and roadkill to local authorities to help with data collection.
- **Promote awareness** by sharing lynx stories and advocating for their protection.
- **Encourage responsible ecotourism** that prioritises the lynx’s well-being.

A Symbol of Hope

The Iberian lynx is more than a conservation success it’s a living symbol of what is possible when science, policy, and people come together. Its journey from near-extinction to a growing population has not only restored an iconic predator but also revitalised ecosystems and inspired a new generation of conservationists. But the story is not over. The lynx is still vulnerable. Its habitat, food source, and genetic future remain delicately balanced. Continued vigilance, funding, and innovation are essential to ensure that the Iberian lynx doesn’t just survive but thrives.

From the shadows of extinction to the frontlines of hope, the return of the missing lynx shows us that nature, when given a chance, can make an astonishing comeback.



© Hari Kumar



© Hari Kumar





© Hari Kumar



© Hari Kumar



Her Views & Visuals

By Ranjani Narayanan

HER VIEWS & VISUALS

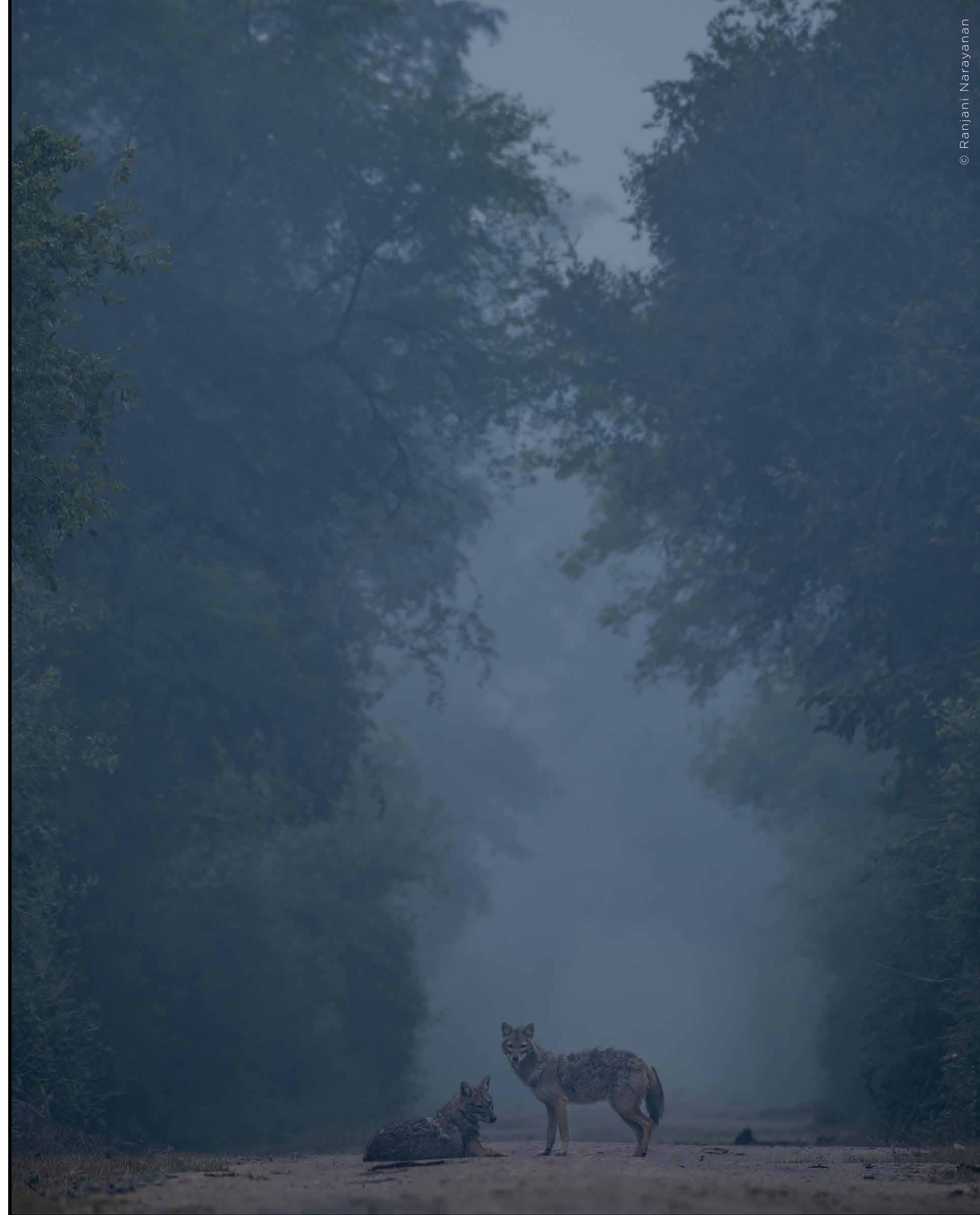


Ranjani is an IT professional and entrepreneur whose passion for wildlife conservation led her to photography. With a background in animal rescue and rehabilitation, her years of working with injured and displaced animals deeply shaped her perspective and inspired her to document the natural world through the lens.

Her photography is both artistic and purposeful - capturing the beauty, vulnerability, and resilience of wildlife. Through her images, Ranjani aims to raise awareness, spark meaningful conversations, and promote coexistence with nature. Her unique journey bridges technology, entrepreneurship, and conservation, driving her mission to create lasting impact through visual storytelling.

[instagram.com/ranjaninarayanan](https://www.instagram.com/ranjaninarayanan)
[facebook.com/itsmeranjanin](https://www.facebook.com/itsmeranjanin)

Her Views and Visuals





How did your interest in wildlife arise?

My love for animals and photography has been rooted in me since childhood. The first gift I ever bought for myself was a digital camera though I wasn't very knowledgeable at the time, it marked the beginning of a deep passion. Over time, I honed my skills and understanding of wildlife photography, drawing immense inspiration and learning from mentors like Balaji Narayanan and Ratish Nair. Their guidance shaped my journey, turning a childhood fascination into a lifelong pursuit.

How do you describe your journey as a photographer and a person?

My journey as a photographer has been one of constant evolution what began as a simple curiosity turned into a deep-rooted passion. Every frame taught me something new, not just about wildlife, but about patience, empathy, and resilience. As a person, photography has grounded me. It has made me more observant, more mindful, and more connected to the natural world. The wild has a way of humbling you, and through every sighting and silence, I've grown, not just as an artist, but as a human being.

What is your view on Wildlife Conservation? How can we, as wildlife photographers, help to protect our Mother Nature?

Wildlife conservation is not a choice it is a responsibility. As habitats shrink and human-wildlife conflict increases,







it is more important than ever to respect and protect the natural world. As wildlife photographers, we have a powerful voice. Through our lenses, we document beauty, behavior, and sometimes, the harsh realities animals face. Our work can raise awareness, spark conversations, and inspire action. But with that power comes responsibility to shoot ethically, never disturb wildlife, and always prioritize the well-being of the subject over the photograph. If our images can evoke emotion, educate, or encourage even one person to care, then we have already made a difference.

Can you give our readers the best wildlife photography tips?

Wildlife photography is all about patience, respect, and timing. Here are a few tips that have helped me over the years:

- **Know Your Subject** – The more you understand animal behavior, the better you can anticipate action. Spend time observing before reaching for the camera.
- **Respect the Wild** – Never chase or provoke an animal for a shot. Ethical practices come before the perfect frame.
- **Light is Everything** – Early mornings and late evenings offer the best natural light and active wildlife. Use light to tell a story.
- **Be Ready, Always** – Wildlife is unpredictable. Keep your settings right and gear ready you often get just one chance.
- **Focus on the Eyes** – Eyes bring emotion and connection into the frame. If the eyes are sharp, the image speaks.
- **Stay Curious, Keep Learning** – Gear is important, but your vision matters more. Learn from mentors, field experiences, and your own mistakes.



Most importantly, fall in love with the process not just the outcome.

What plans do you have in the future related to Wildlife Photography?

Wildlife photography is not just a passion it's a lifelong journey for me. Going forward, I hope to explore lesser-known habitats and document species that are rarely seen, with a focus on conservation storytelling. I want to create visual narratives that go beyond just beauty ones that highlight the challenges wildlife faces and the urgency to protect them.

I also aim to mentor aspiring photographers, especially those who come from non-wildlife backgrounds, just like I did. And eventually, I hope to publish a photo book that blends art, emotion, and awareness something that leaves a lasting impact on the viewer and gives back to the wild spaces that shaped me.

Tell us something about the gear you use and how it helped in your photographic journey.

My gear journey has grown alongside my passion for wildlife photography. I started with the Nikon D90, which helped me understand the basics of light, composition, and patience. From there, I moved to the D500 and D850, paired with the Nikkor 200-500mm lens a setup that gave me the reach and speed needed for serious wildlife work and helped me capture some of my early breakthrough images.

As my skills and needs evolved, I upgraded to the Nikon Z8 and Z9, along with the Nikkor 400mm prime and 180 - 600mm lenses. This mirrorless system has taken my photography to the next level offering blazing-fast autofocus, excellent low-light performance, and the ability to shoot silently and responsively in sensitive wildlife environments.

That said, while gear can elevate your craft, it is ultimately your vision, patience, and understanding of animal behavior that bring a photograph to life.



© Ranjani Narayanan





© Ranjani Narayanan

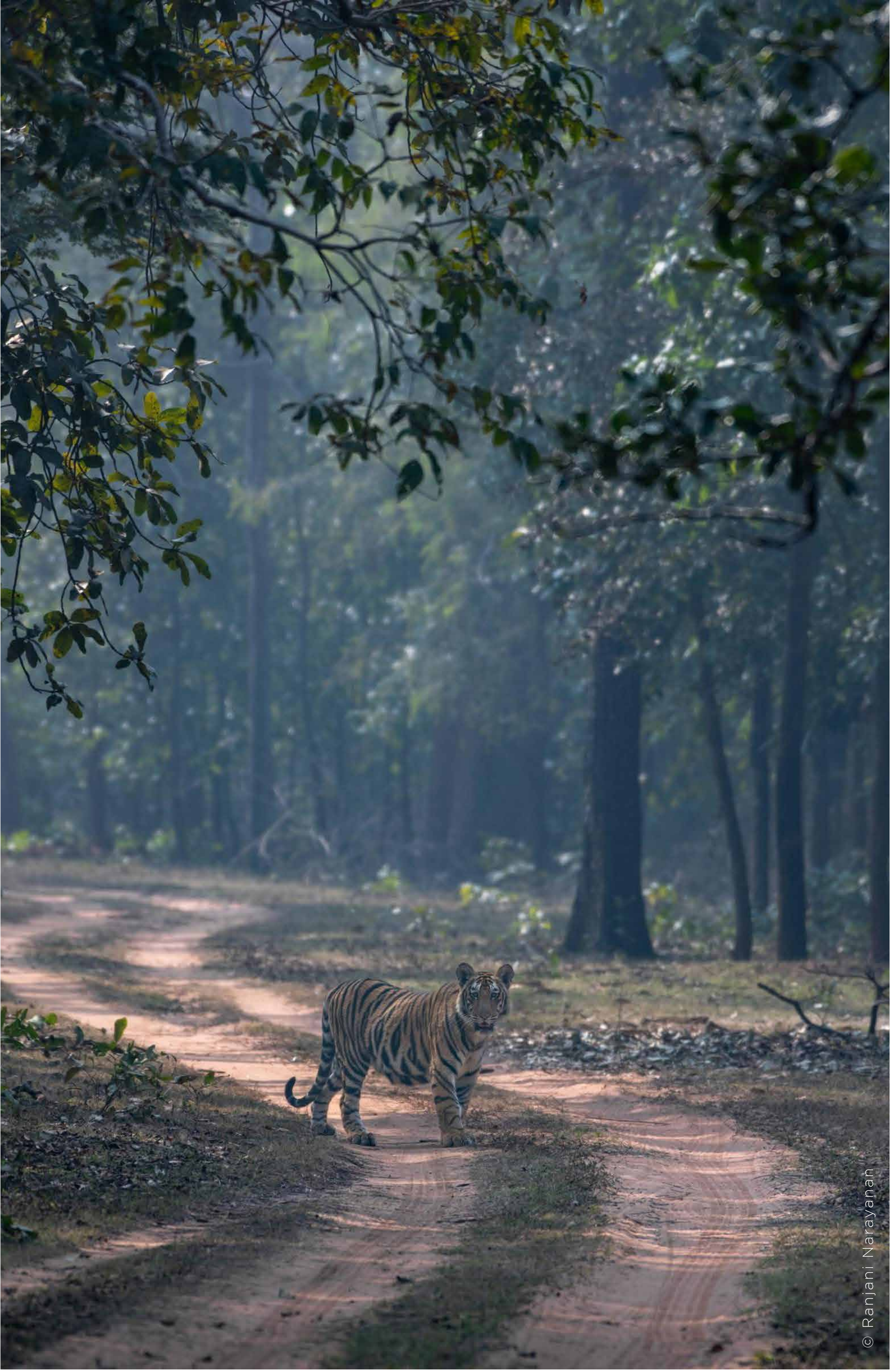


© Ranjani Narayanan



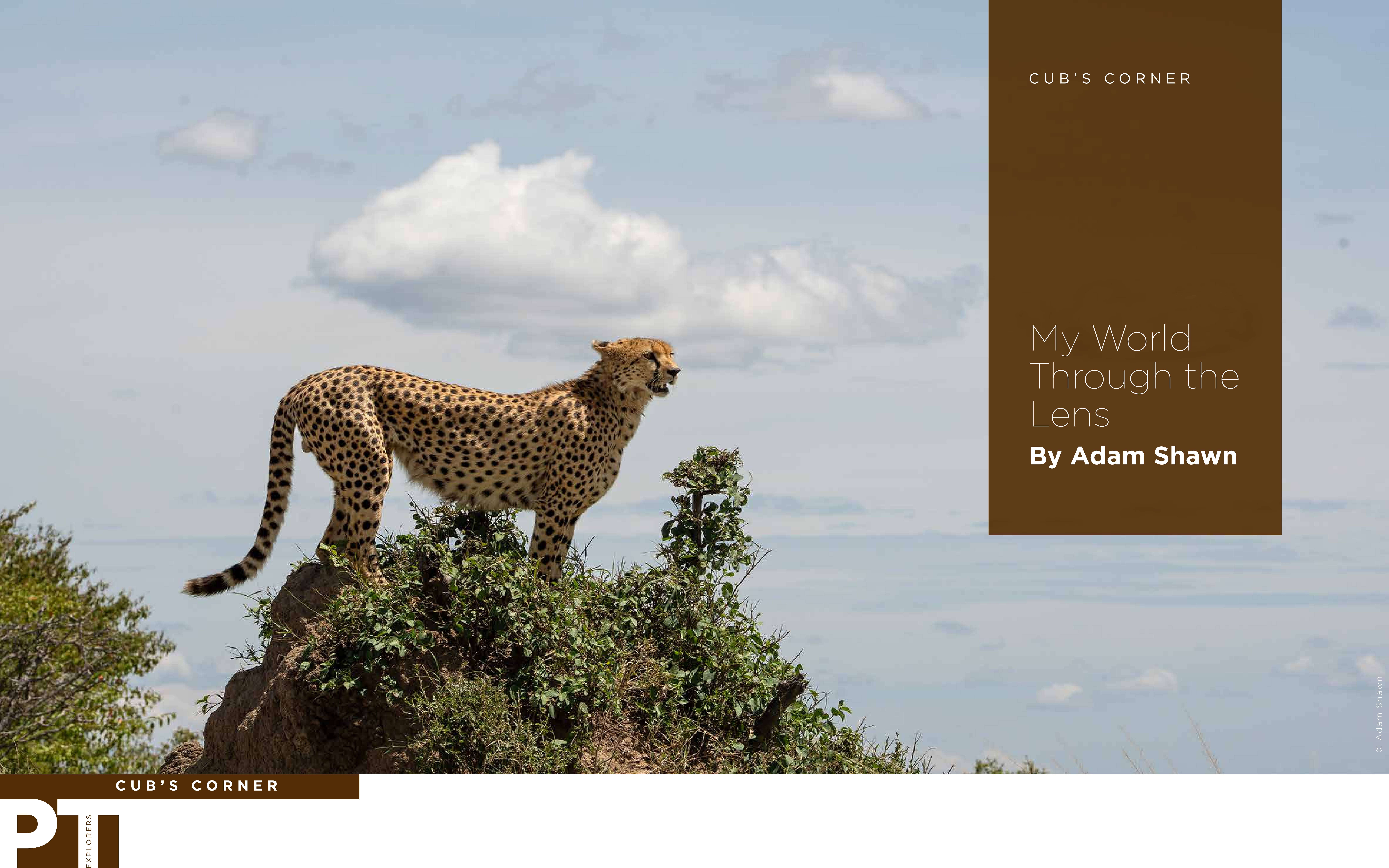


© Ranjani Narayanan



© Ranjani Narayanan





CUB'S CORNER

My World Through the Lens

By Adam Shawn

CUB'S CORNER

CUB'S CORNER



Adam Shawn is a passionate 9-year-old photographer with a big love for nature, animals, and storytelling through the lens. What began with playful snapshots of family and pets has grown into a remarkable journey from photo walks and workshops to exhibiting images and capturing wildlife in the Masai Mara. Inspired by The Lion King, Mowgli, and David Attenborough documentaries, photography is their way of seeing the world and sharing its beauty, one frame at a time.

[instagram.com/adamshawnansn](https://www.instagram.com/adamshawnansn)



I love photography! It's like seeing the world in a special way. When I look through my camera lens, it is just me and the thing I am taking a picture of. I see beauty that nobody else might notice, and I want to show it to the world. I remember the first time I used a real camera. It was in 2023, and my dad took me on a photo walk to Al Qudra Lake. The sunlight was perfect, and I took lots of pictures of swans, birds, and the beautiful sunset. I had so much fun that day! I started playing with cameras when I was 5 years old. My dad gave me small cameras to play with. I took pictures of



© Adam Shawn





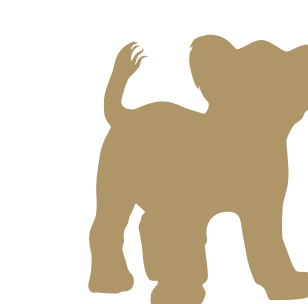


my cat, my mom, and my friends. I loved capturing their smiles and funny moments. Then, I went to a photography workshop with Gulf Photo Plus, and it was amazing! We learned about lighting, composition, and all the technical stuff. After that, I had an exhibition in Dubai, and it was so cool to see my pictures on the wall.

The most amazing experience I had, was when my parents took me to Maasai Mara in Kenya. As a fan of Lion King, Mowgli, and David Attenborough videos, I couldn't believe my eyes. It was like living inside one of those movies. I saw so many incredible animals like lions, elephants, and giraffes. I took lots of pictures with the guidance of Nisha aunty, Hermis uncle, and my dad. It was amazing, like being in a wildlife documentary!

What I love most about photography is that it is my way of seeing the world. When I take pictures, I feel happy and special. I like to think that I am showing the world a new perspective, a way of seeing things that might be different from what others see. But photography isn't just about animals for me. I love taking portraits, especially in black and white. There is something so beautiful and special about it.

I want to keep taking pictures and sharing my adventures with the world. Photography is my passion, and I'm excited to see where it takes me. Who knows what amazing things I will capture next?













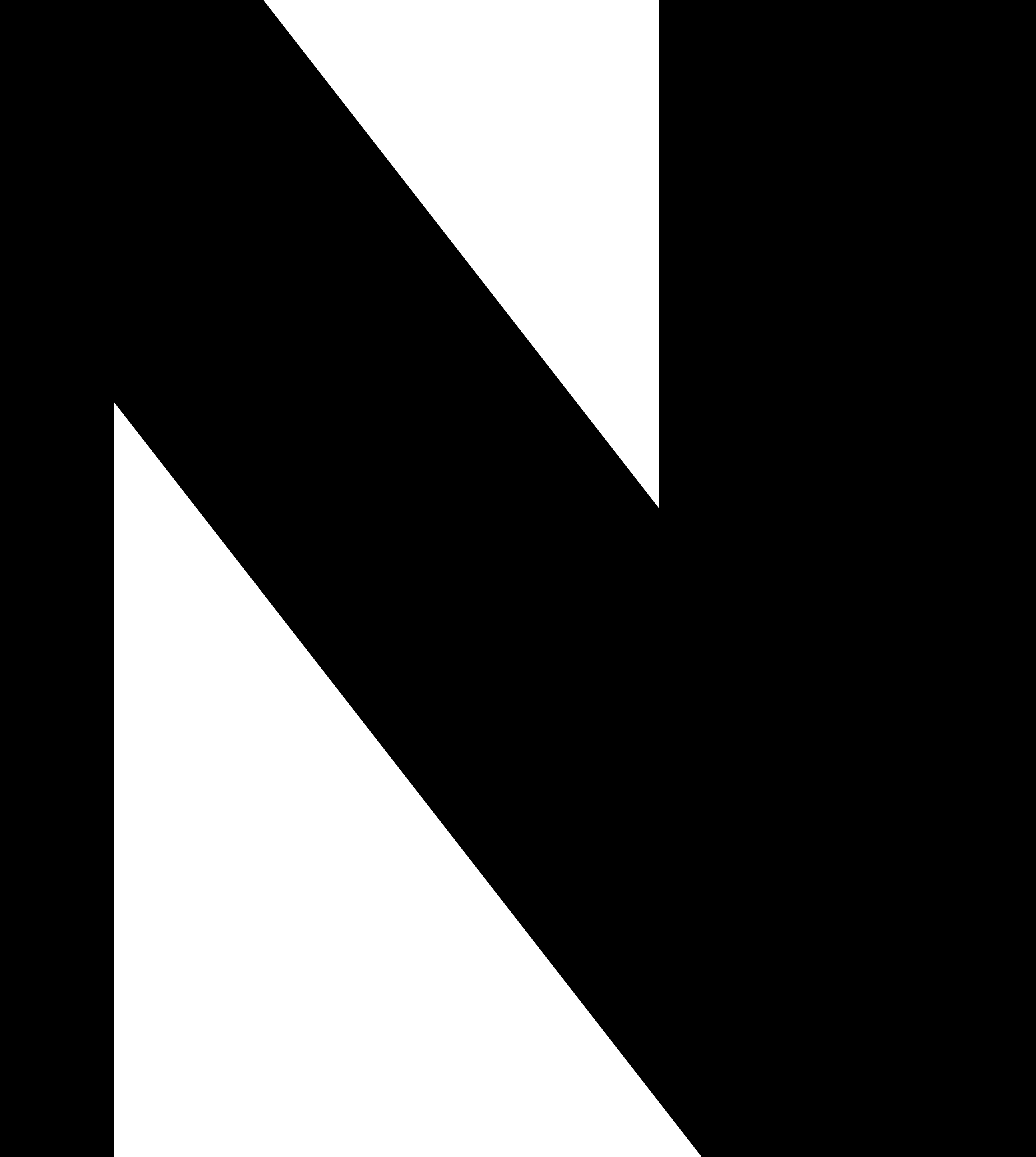


TRAVELOGUE

Wild, Tender, and Unseen - Kodiak Trails

By Nisha Purushothaman

TRAVELOGUE



Nisha Purushothaman, a wildlife photographer and co-founder of PAWS TRAILS EXPLORERS & MARA TRAILS, is a prominent conservationist inspiring the next generation. An avid traveler, she uses her photography to raise awareness about the planet's fragility and advocates for exploring and conserving our delicate ecosystems.

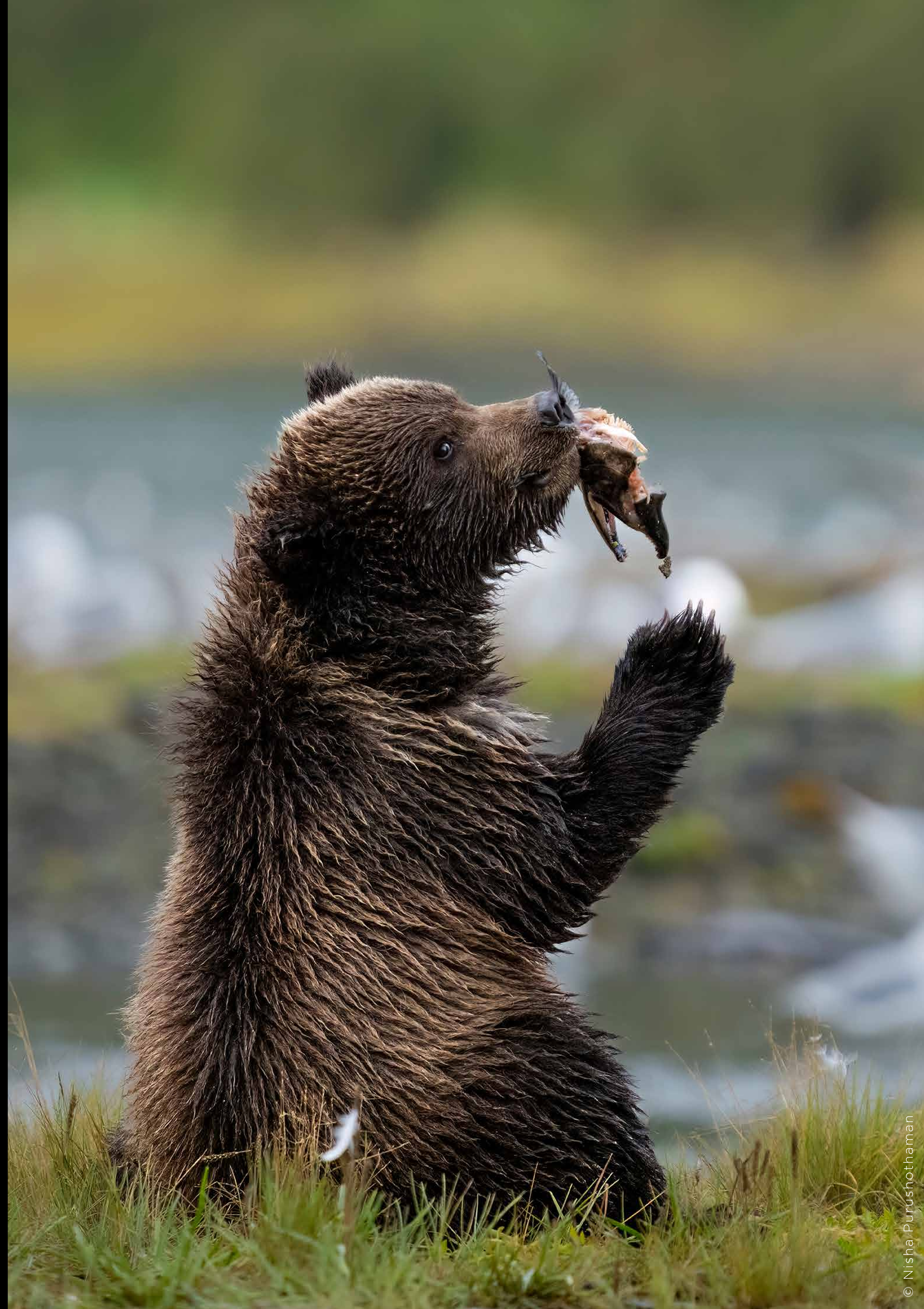
Nisha's journey spans the backwaters of India, Masai Mara's plains, Ngorongoro Crater, North America, and the Middle East. With 14 years of experience, she has passionately tracked wildlife and conducted workshops worldwide.

As co-founder of Paws Trails Explorers, Nisha promotes global conservation awareness. Through Mara Trails in Masai Mara, she trains storytellers and supports the Maasai community. With a fine arts degree in applied arts and photography, Nisha's work champions the beauty and preservation of nature.

[instagram.com/nisha.purushothaman](https://www.instagram.com/nisha.purushothaman)
[facebook.com/NishasPhotography](https://www.facebook.com/NishasPhotography)
nishas.info

A Photo Expedition in Search of Kodiak Bears

Living in Canada, sightings of black bears had become a familiar part of my summers, often right in my backyard. But my fascination with larger brown bears









began a few years ago during a trip to Kuril Lake in Kamchatka, Russia. That expedition planted a seed that would eventually grow into a full-blown passion for exploring the lives of the world’s most iconic bears.

This Alaskan adventure came together at the last minute, thanks to my dear friend Kamali, who invited me to join their group on a four-day expedition focused entirely on photographing Kodiak bears one of the largest terrestrial carnivores on Earth.

Arrival & First Encounters

Day one began with us renting a vehicle and driving around the Kodiak Island region. To our surprise, we encountered six to eight different bears, most of them mothers with playful cubs or subadults. These initial sightings set the tone for what was to come a deep dive into a world where wild instincts, ancient rhythms, and family bonds coexist in the rugged beauty of the Alaskan wilderness.

The expedition was entirely dependent on weather conditions. If the skies didn’t cooperate, our seaplanes would remain grounded. Fortunately, the weather across all three expedition days remained in our favor, calm, clear, and full of promise.

The Flight & the Landscape

Each morning began with an early seaplane departure. These flights were a breathtaking experience on their own: soaring above snow-capped mountains, tracing the coastlines of deep fjords, and watching as whales breached in icy





blue waters below. It felt less like travel and more like gliding through a nature documentary. Once a bear sighting was confirmed from the air, our pilot would land us in a nearby water body. We disembarked directly into the shallows, geared up in waterproof clothing and camera equipment. At just 5 feet 2 inches tall, I was the shortest in the group, and wading through the cold water was a true adventure in itself.

Into Bear Country

Once ashore, we would hike moderate distances to reach observation points. The real magic began once we settled and let the bears acclimate to our presence. Bears are naturally curious, and when they don't feel threatened, they continue their routines even approaching for a closer look. Capturing those moments through a long lens was both exhilarating and deeply humbling.

Each of the three main days brought us to different locations with unique dynamics. On the second and third days, bear activity increased as the weather warmed. They emerged from the woods and made their way to the rivers for salmon runs. What followed was a stunning display of agility and strength: bears charging through the water, catching fish with precision, and tearing into them with purpose. The first bite, often aimed at the belly, revealed rich streaks of salmon roe nature's delicacy.

A Day of Wonders

The third day was beyond extraordinary. At one point, more than **40 Kodiak**

bears were visible in the area, including four mothers with very young cubs. We witnessed a full range of behaviors from nurturing tenderness to fierce territorial disputes. A dramatic clash between a large female and an encroaching male showcased the intense protective instincts of Kodiak mothers. Thankfully, neither bear was seriously injured, but the display of power was unforgettable.

Just as memorable were the tender moments: cubs mimicking their mothers' fishing techniques, playful interactions between siblings, and quiet pauses when a bear would simply rest along the riverbank, undisturbed by our presence.

Each field outing lasted around 8 hours. We wrapped up the days with light packed lunches by the riverside, soaking in the serenity of the wilderness.

Life Cycle of Kodiak Bears

Kodiak bears (*Ursus arctos middendorffi*) are a unique subspecies of the brown bear, found exclusively on the Kodiak Archipelago in Alaska. Having evolved in geographic isolation for over 12,000 years, they are among the largest bears on Earth, males can weigh up to 1,500 pounds (680 kg), and females typically range from 600 to 800 pounds.

Their life cycle is closely tied to seasonal rhythms:

- **Spring:** Bears emerge from hibernation, often with cubs born during the winter. This is a crucial time when mothers teach their young how to forage.
- **Summer:** Focus shifts to feeding,



© Nisha Purushothaman





berries, grasses, and small mammals form part of their diet. Salmon runs in midsummer are vital for weight gain.

- **Fall:** Bears enter hyperphagia, consuming enormous amounts of food to prepare for hibernation.
- **Winter:** Pregnant females den and give birth during hibernation; others remain dormant to conserve energy.

Kodiak bears generally live 20 -25 years in the wild, and females reproduce every 4 -5 years, giving birth to 1- 3 cubs.

Threats to Survival

While Kodiak bear populations are currently stable, estimated at around 3,500 individuals, they face multiple threats:

- **Anthropic encroachment** due to tourism, housing development, and commercial activities
- **Climate change**, which affects salmon spawning patterns and disrupts food availability
- **Human-wildlife conflict**, especially as bears venture closer to human settlements for easy food
- **Trophy hunting**, which although regulated, remains controversial

Effective conservation relies on managing these threats through scientific monitoring, community engagement, and education.

Conservation Efforts & How You Can Help

The Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge plays

a key role in preserving bear habitat. It protects over 2 million acres of critical ecosystems, supporting not just bears but also salmon, bald eagles, and more.

Here's how individuals can contribute:

- **Support ethical ecotourism** operators who follow Leave No Trace principles.
- **Donate** to conservation groups like the Kodiak Brown Bear Trust or Wildlife Conservation Society.
- **Educate** others about living responsibly in bear country.
- **Advocate** for climate action, as stable ecosystems support the bears' food sources.
- **Practice ethical photography**, keeping a respectful distance and never bait or interfere.

Final Reflections

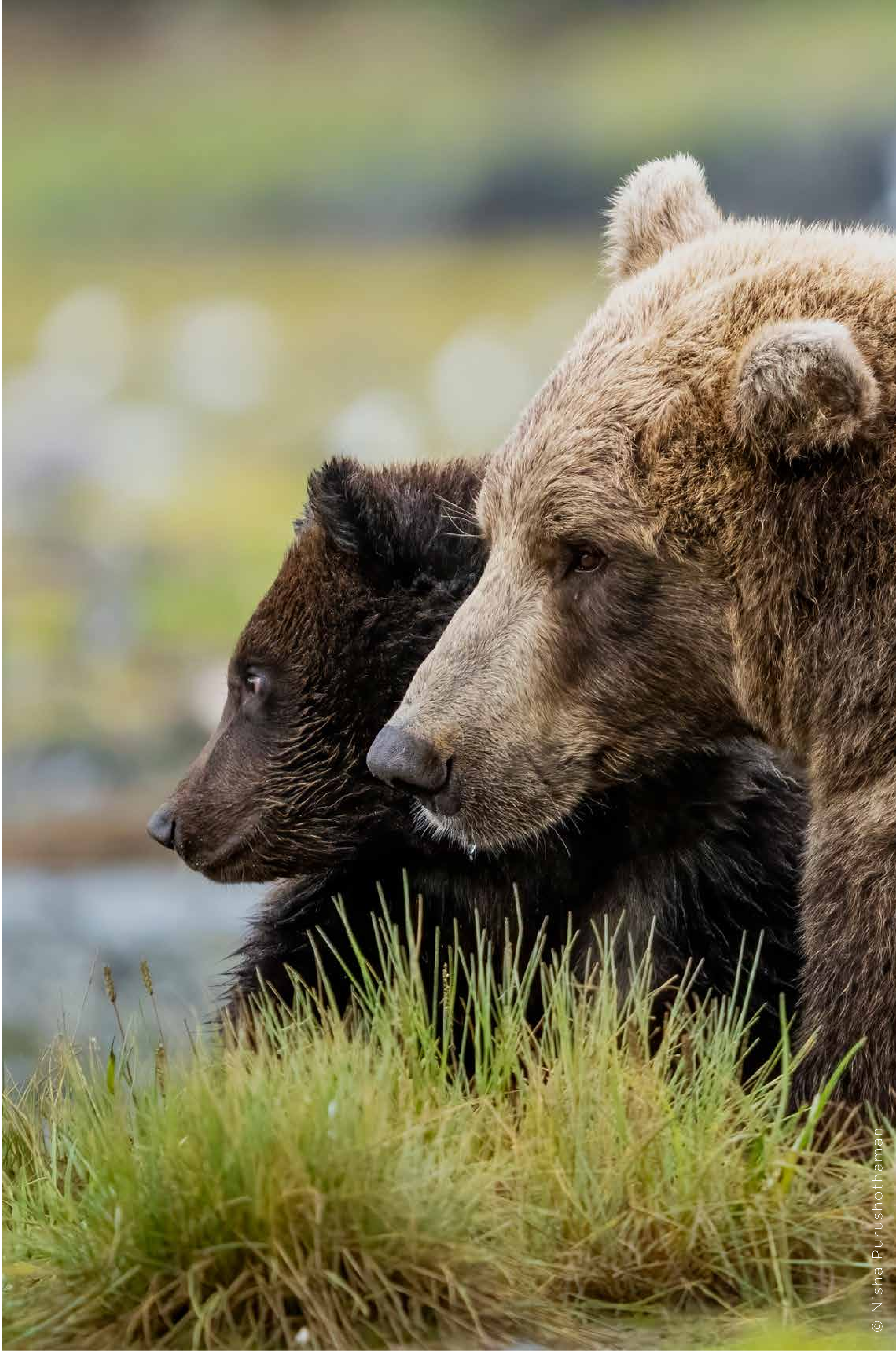
This expedition was more than a photography trip it was an immersion into a world few get to witness up close. Through every roar, splash, and silent stare, the bears taught us something about strength, vulnerability, and the balance of wild places.

I left with memory cards full of images but more importantly, with a heart full of awe and a renewed commitment to telling their story. Because when you stand a few feet away from one of the planet's most powerful creatures and see tenderness in her eyes, you understand exactly what's at stake.

Let us preserve it not just for the bears, but for all that they represent.

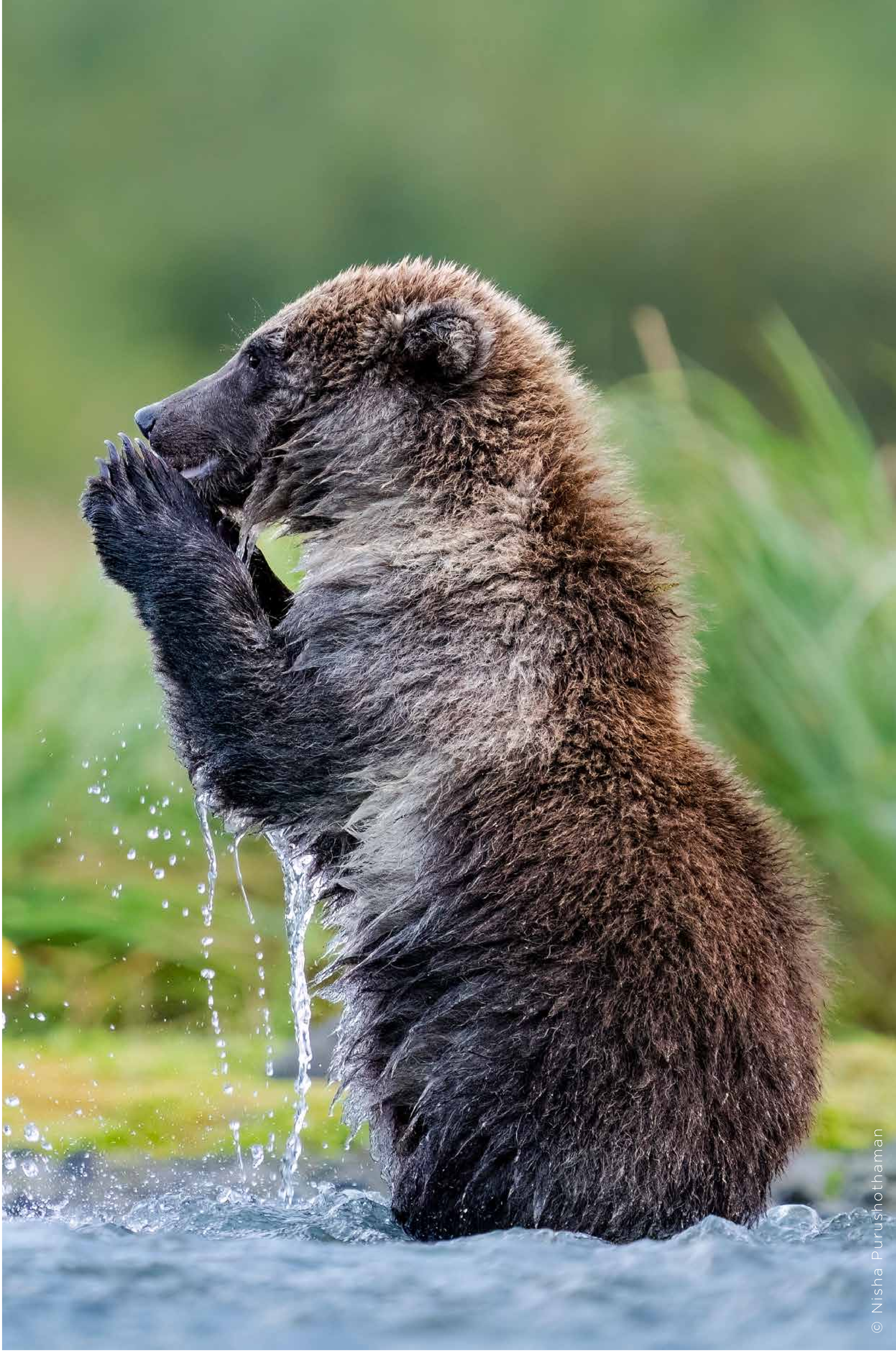






© Nisha Purushothaman

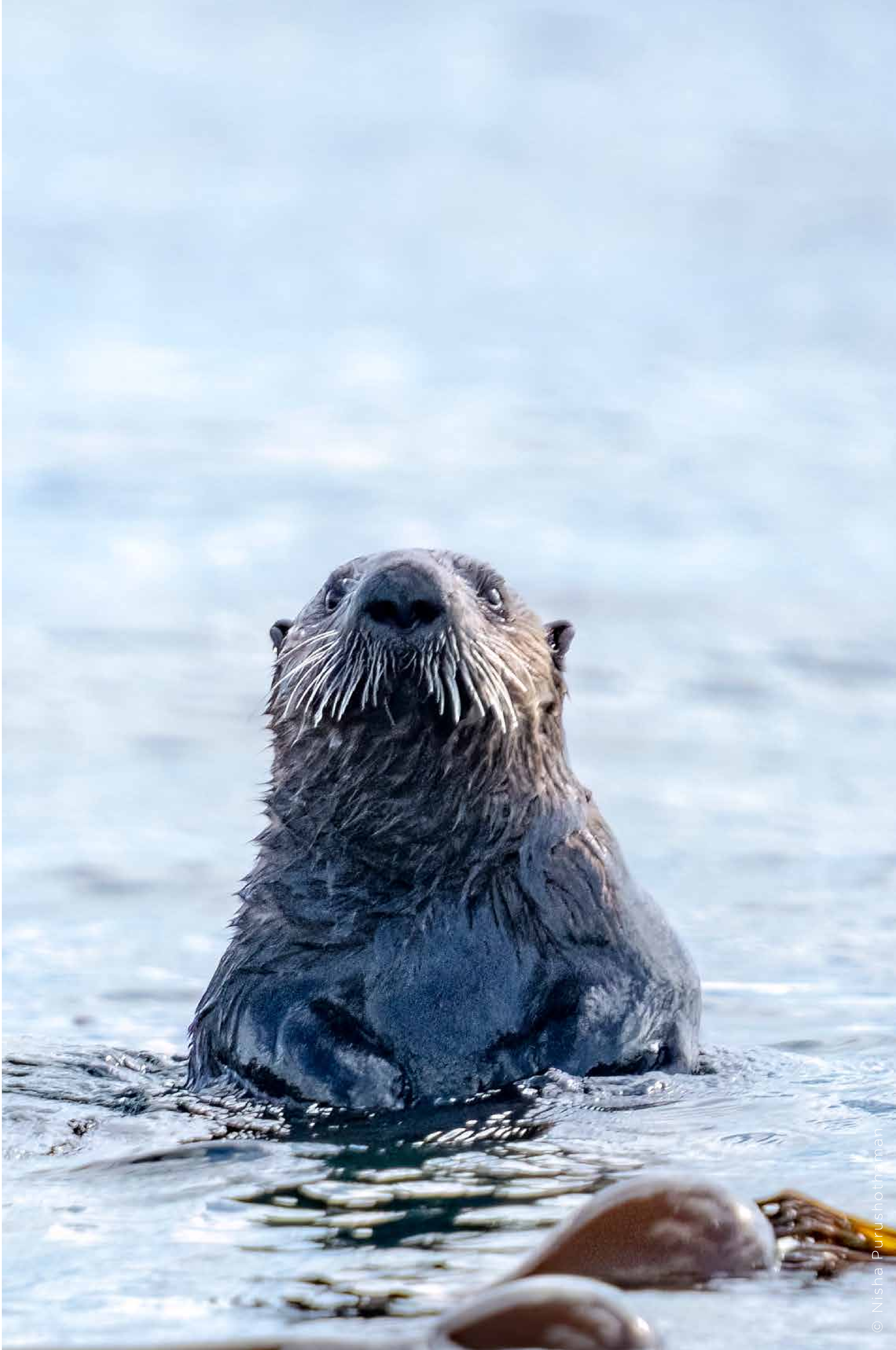
© Nisha Purushothaman











© Nisha Purushothaman



© Nisha Purushothaman















THROUGH THE LENS

Whispers of the Wild: A Backyard Macro Tale from Kerala

By Deepa Girish



THROUGH THE LENS



Deepa Girish is an award-winning and internationally published photographer based in Dubai. Her diverse portfolio spans travel, events, portraiture, wildlife, macro, minimalism, street, and fashion photography. Known for her artistic finesse, Deepa captures the essence of her subjects with elegance and depth.

Her work has been showcased in exhibitions across the UAE and India. A passionate mentor, she has guided young talents through Nikon workshops and has served as a judge for several photography contests.

**[instagram.com/DeepaaGirish](https://www.instagram.com/DeepaaGirish)
[facebook.com/girideepadg](https://www.facebook.com/girideepadg)**

Each year, I return home to Kerala from the bustling city life of Dubai. Every time, no matter how many years pass, there is one ritual that remains unchanged: my early morning walks around our home, camera in hand, eyes scanning the green corners of the garden for movement, color, life.

For me, these aren't just photography sessions. They are personal, sacred moments, a way of connecting with my roots, my memories, and the quiet little beings that live around us, unnoticed by most.

And it all began with my father.

My Father, My First Nature Teacher

My deep love for nature was not







something I discovered. It was something I inherited. My father was the first person who showed me the joy of being in nature, the magic of planting a tree and watching it grow, the stillness of observing a bird without disturbing it. Our life in Kerala was always surrounded by nature, and I was raised with the understanding that this world was not just ours, it belonged to all beings, even the smallest ones.

He taught me that planting a tree is an act of hope, that every butterfly in the garden has its own story, and that we must live in harmony with the land, not above it. These lessons were never preached; they were shown, lived, and passed down gently.

Because of him, I developed the habit of planting trees and small plants every year around our house. It brings me joy. And over the years, I've become fiercely protective of them. Even today, I tell my mother very strictly not to cut trees or remove any plants unless it's absolutely necessary. Every leaf, every flower, every bit of wild growth holds life, and to remove it carelessly is to disturb something sacred.

A Disappearing World

But something has changed. What once felt like a garden bursting with life now feels quiet. Butterflies that used to dance freely from flower to flower now appear in fewer numbers. The vibrant beetles, dragonflies, and curious little insects I used to photograph in abundance are now rare sightings. It is as if the magic is slowly fading.

At first, I thought it was just me. Maybe I was missing the timings. Maybe the weather wasn't right. But year after year, the pattern continued. The decline is real.

It breaks my heart as a photographer but even more as someone who has loved these creatures since childhood.

The Global Crisis in My Backyard

What I have witnessed around my house in Kerala is not unique. Around the world, insects populations, especially pollinators like butterflies, bees, and beetles are dropping at alarming rates. A 2019 global study found that over 40% of insect species are declining. And the loss of these tiny creatures has massive consequences for our ecosystems, agriculture, and food systems.

Locally, the expansion of concrete buildings, pesticide-heavy farming, deforestation, and lack of awareness have all contributed to this decline. We have cleared out the wild edges, replaced native plants with ornamental ones, and sprayed away the very creatures that pollinate our food, and yet, the solution doesn't always need to be grand. It starts right at home.

What I'm Doing - and What We All Can Do

Despite the heartbreaking changes, I haven't given up. I have adapted my photography to become more than just art now, it is also my documentation, my memory, my advocacy.

Here are the steps I have been taking and





hope others will too to protect the macro world around us:

1. Plant Native and Flowering Species

Every time I visit, I plant more.

Native flowering plants like hibiscus, tulsi, ixora, and wild jasmine attract butterflies, bees, and other insects. These plants not only beautify the space but restore food sources for pollinators.

2. Say No to Pesticides

I avoid all chemical sprays and insecticides. Let nature balance itself. A spider on your wall or a beetle in your garden is not a nuisance, it is a resident. Every insect plays a role in the ecosystem.

3. Leave Wild Spaces Alone

A messy patch of leaves, a rotting log, or a wild corner in your yard is a haven for life. We don't always need manicured gardens. A little wilderness goes a long way.

4. Use Less Light at Night

Bright lights at night disturb insect navigation and reproduction. I use warm, soft lighting outdoors and switch off unnecessary lights after dark. Let nature rest.

5. Teach, Show, Share

Photography is my way of storytelling. Through my lens, I capture the intricate beauty of the macro world and share it to raise awareness. If even one person starts noticing the small wonders in their garden, it is a step in the right direction.

Memory in Every Frame

Today, each macro photo I take feels more important than ever. A single shot of a butterfly feels like a memory preserved proof that it was here. Proof that our garden once held magic. Proof that it still can.

When I photograph a tiny insect on a leaf or a spider in the morning dew, I often think of my father. I think of how he used to smile at the flowers blooming in our backyard. I think of how he would gently pick up a caterpillar and show it to me, saying, “This too is life.”

Those words live in me. And they echo every time I press the shutter.

A Personal Mission

As I prepare to leave Kerala each time, my camera card is filled with moments, but my heart often carries a quiet sadness. Will this butterfly be here next year? Will the green bee-eater still visit this tree? Will the spiders weave their webs again on the boundary wall?

We don't need to be scientists or activists to protect the natural world. Sometimes, the simplest things matter most: planting a tree, saving a wild flower, letting a caterpillar finish its journey.

Because when we care for the smallest lives, we are caring for the future of our own.

Final Words

I may live in Dubai, and travel across the world as a photographer, but my roots will always run deep into the soil of our Kerala home where my love for nature was planted by my father's gentle hands. That love lives on, in the garden we grew together, in every butterfly wing, and in every photo I take.

The world may be changing, but in my backyard, I still choose to notice, to nurture, and to remember.









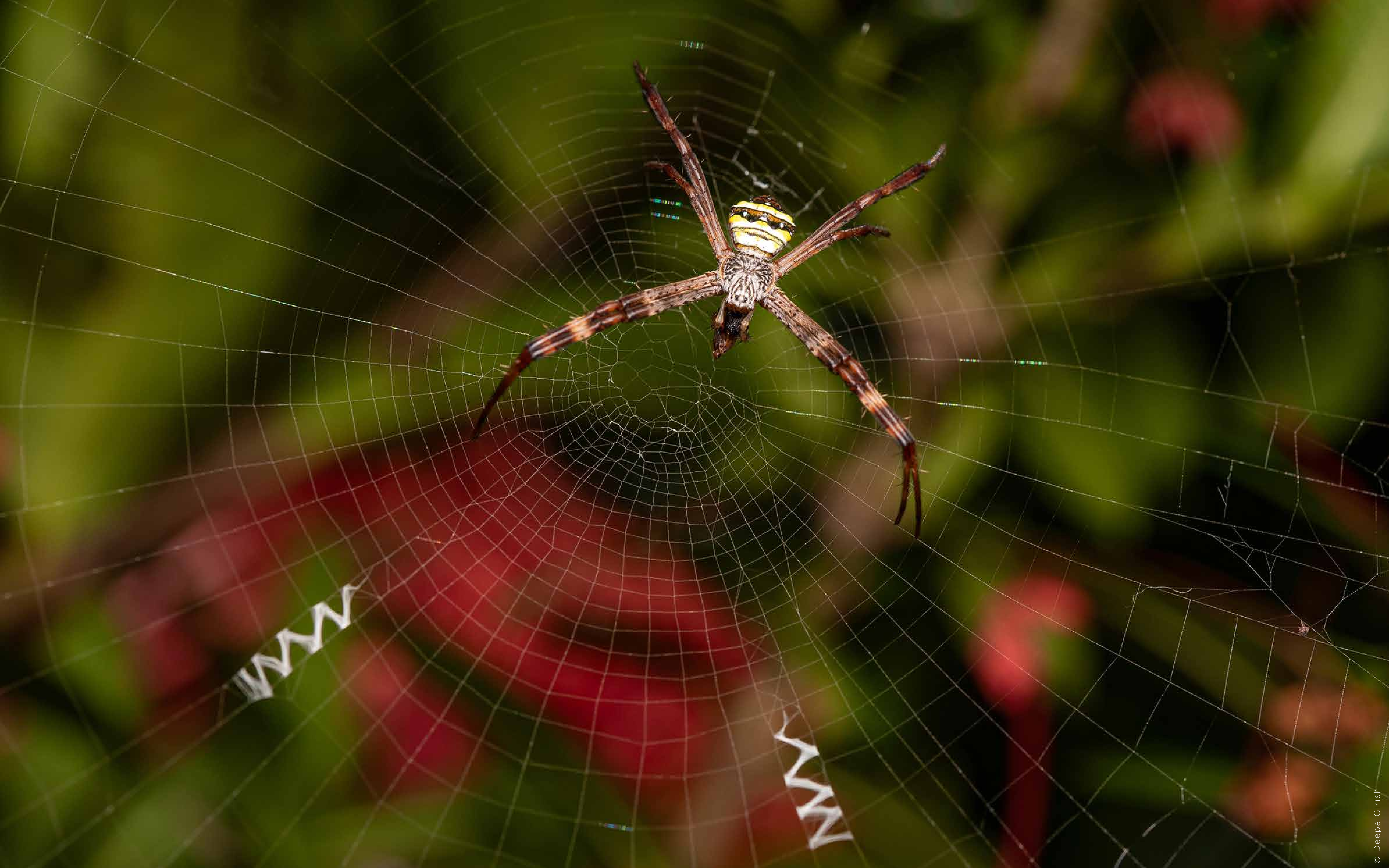




























WILD ART SHOWCASE

Nature's Harmony
By Andrea Vigil Schenone

WILD ARTS SHOWCASE



Andrea Vigil Schenone is a passionate eco-educator and artist dedicated to inspiring environmental awareness through creative expression. With a vision of designing educational programs, painting nature-inspired murals, and conserving wild spaces, they aim to build deeper connections between people and the planet.

**facebook.com/avschenone
instagram.com/psy.conscious**



© Andrea Vigil Schenone

Born in Lima, Peru, I spent my childhood in the Miraflores district, living in a large house with my maternal grandparents. They played a significant role in nurturing my love for nature. My grandfather, an avid traveler and animal lover, introduced me at a very young age to wildlife encyclopedias and National Geographic documentaries. I spent countless hours playing in our garden, which was full of different species of heliconias, flowers, and even a fruit orchard. Watching birds and butterflies and picking fresh fruit from the trees was my favorite pastime.

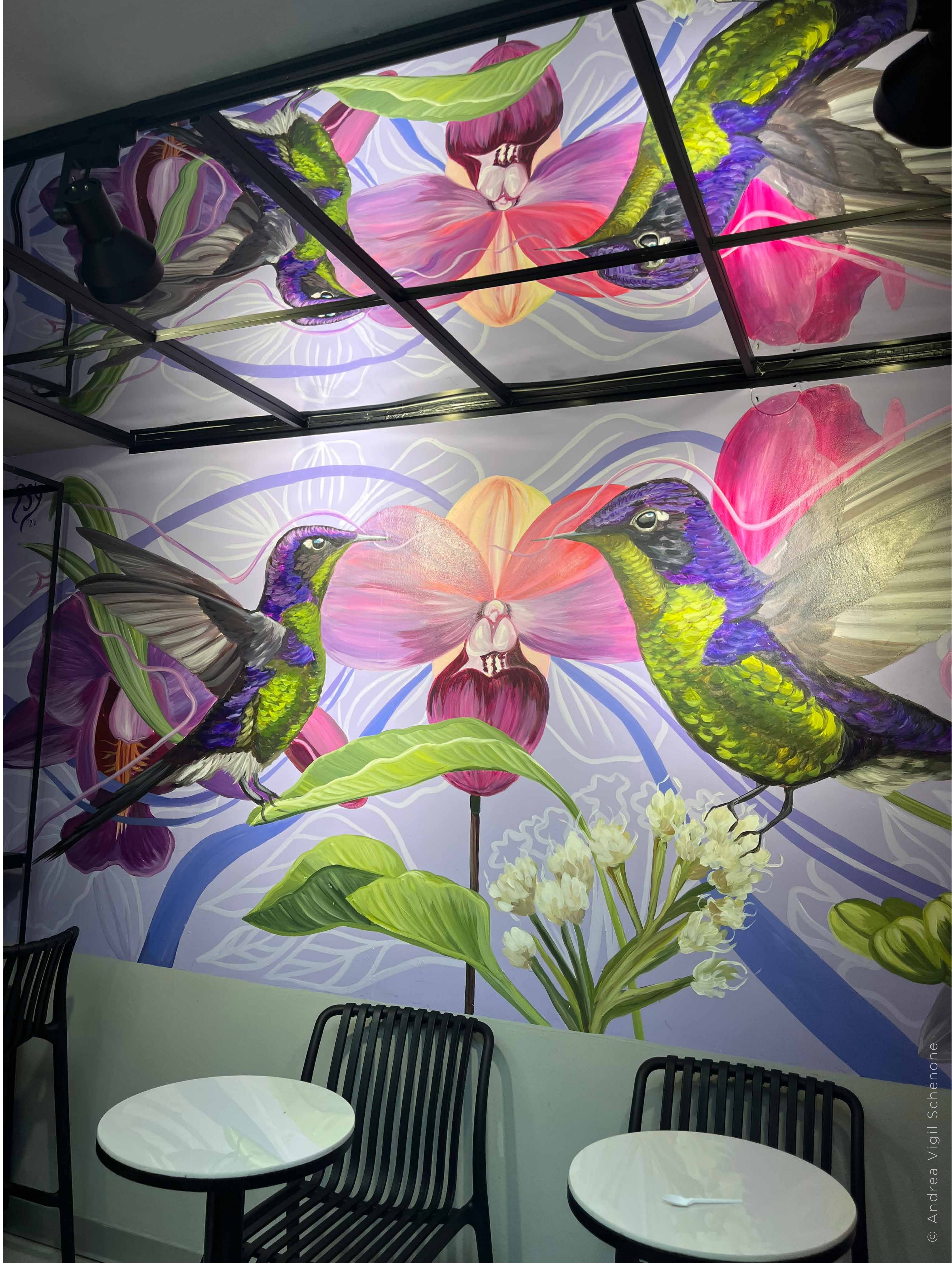
Television was limited, my grandfather allowed only nature or educational programs. My brother and I often pretended we were in the jungle, building ecosystems filled with bugs and even dinosaurs. My maternal grandmother, originally from Huánuco, a province in the high jungle of northern Peru, cared for the garden as if it were a member of the family. She talked to the roses and flowers, saying it helped them grow more beautifully. My father, a sea lover, introduced me to the coastal ecosystems, showing me seabirds and mollusks during our summers at the beach house.

Art has been a part of me for as long as I can remember. My paternal grandmother once showed me a photo of myself at a year and a half old, scribbling on a sheet of paper with a marker. She kept it to this day. Later, in school, I loved biology and leaned toward music. Although I wasn't allowed to pursue a formal artistic career, I chose psychology as a profession because I have always had a strong desire to contribute to the world on a deeper, more conscious level. At 18, I painted on canvas for the first time without any formal training. That moment revealed an unexpected talent, and from then on, I never stopped.

While studying at the University of Lima, I continued painting both canvases and flowerpots. At 21, I started a business selling hand-painted pots, which became a stepping stone to seeing myself as an artist. In 2015, I traveled solo for the first time to Europe and took an art therapy course in Florence, Italy. That experience made me realize I could indeed be both an artist and a psychologist.



© Andrea Vigil Schenone



© Andrea Vigil Schenone



© Andrea Vigil Schenone



Two life-changing events significantly shaped my perspective and artistic style. The first was taking part in an Ayahuasca ceremony at the age of 20, a path I continued exploring for four more years. I had the privilege of learning from Maestro Pedro Pérez, a member of the Shipibo-Conibo people from the Vencedor community in Pucallpa, Peru. He carried and shared ancestral wisdom about medicinal plants as a service to humanity. With psychological guidance alongside, this experience led me to deep self-awareness and frequent travels to remote jungle communities. These journeys transformed the way I see life, fostering an understanding of coexistence and a deep appreciation for all beings as part of the larger whole we call nature.

This was the beginning of my mission to protect, value, and make visible the countless species and ecosystems around us. I began incorporating science as the foundation of my artistic research, studying the biodiversity of the Peruvian territory and changing my signature to my current artistic name: PSY.

In the following years, my fascination with Peru's biological richness deepened—many species were unknown even to locals. I began birdwatching, observing flowers and fungi, doing real fieldwork, and painting the species I encountered firsthand. I soon realized that many of them were endemic and

endangered, which became a powerful motivation to paint, speak about, and study them. In early 2024, I bought land near the Cordillera Escalera Reserve in Tarapoto. I felt—and still feel—a strong need to protect the beings that inhabit this part of the world. This step strengthened my life’s purpose and brought me closer to the species I deeply value.

The ocean is another ecosystem I hold dear. Through surfing, I have developed a profound connection with the sea and its creatures—a relationship that began in childhood and continues today, as I still live by the coast.

All of this has fueled my artistic evolution and led conservation projects, businesses, hotels, and NGOs to support my work. I took it further by organizing cultural initiatives with conservation NGOs and creating educational workshops that help children connect with and value their environment. I have designed emotionally impactful educational programs throughout Peru, beginning with workshops for artisan mothers at Muyuna Lodge in Iquitos. I have also collaborated with Lades Perú, which protects the endangered Marvelous Spatuletail hummingbird, as well as with Conservamos por Naturaleza in programs focused on the Amazilia hummingbird, among others.

Painting large-scale murals allows for social impact—it invites interaction



© Andiea Vigil Schenone

© Mora Starck





and makes art more accessible. I have participated in various festivals and art exhibitions around Perú, even in different parts of the Peruvian jungle where mural art is an accessible tool to value the biodiversity. Also, I had the opportunity to exhibit and paint across the world. My first solo exhibition was in Dublin, Ireland. In 2023, I painted live and exhibited at the Banksy Museum in Barcelona, where I connected with many fellow artists. That same year, I participated in the international bird fair in Mindo, Ecuador. In 2024, I was invited to the Global Birdfair in the UK, where I painted live and presented my work to a passionate naturalist audience. That year I also traveled to Munich, Florence, and Barcelona to continue painting and exhibiting.

Alongside my visual art, I began designing my own nature-inspired clothing brand. To date, I have released four swimwear collections (one each summer), and throughout the year I design various pieces inspired by my encounters with Peruvian butterflies and my relationship with the sea. I have also created eco-friendly journals and sticker sheets inspired by Peruvian birds. Design truly excites me, and this year I developed my first brand book for a company that supports Peruvian artisans. Since 2021, I also worked as a tattoo artist, creating and inking

designs inspired by native species and nature.

I have continued traveling throughout Peru, creating murals in eco-tourist lodges and businesses that value the natural world. So far, I've painted in nine different regions. This year, I was also invited to Costa Rica, where I completed murals at three eco-tourism-focused hotels. I believe there is still a long road ahead in environmental education and the integration of art into this effort. My life's mission is to inspire new generations to value and understand their biological heritage so they will want to learn more about it. I dream of a future where eco-tourism becomes a key economic driver in my country, and where art and artistic careers are viable and accessible paths. I see art as a powerful tool for awareness, emotional impact, and communication—one that can converge with science to make knowledge accessible beyond academic circles. We are at a critical turning point for the future of our species and the planet's health. I hope more people take action and realize that we are not separate from nature—we are nature.

In the future, I envision myself designing more eco-educational programs, painting murals around the world, exploring diverse ecosystems, conserving land, and creating spaces that foster environmental connection and education.



© Andrea Vigil Schenone



© Andrea Vigil Schenone



© Andrea Vigil Schenone



PT EXPLORERS

YOUR GALLERY

WHERE EVERY FRAME TELLS A WILD STORY

EDITION 47

WITNESS.
INSPIRE.
CONSERVE.



YOUR GALLERY



Tom Bretschneider
Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*)
Masai Mara, Kenya



YOUR GALLERY



Hermis Haridas
Lion (*Panthera leo*)
Masai Mara, Kenya



YOUR GALLERY



Dr Jishnu R
Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgens*)
Singalila National Park, India



YOUR GALLERY



Amith Krish
Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*)
Masai Mara, Kenya



YOUR GALLERY



Aminlal Basheer

Anamala Pit Viper (*Craspedocephalus anamallensis*)

Thattekkad, Kerala, India



YOUR GALLERY



Sadikk Palakkatt

Great Eared Nightjar (*Lyncornis macrotis*)

Thattekkad, Kerala, India



YOUR GALLERY



Arindam Saha

Striped Coral Snake (*Calliophis nigrescens*)

Munnar, India



YOUR GALLERY



Anil Thankappan Nair Vasanthakumari
Spiny-tailed Lizards (*Uromastyx ornata*)
Irkaya Farm, Qatar



YOUR GALLERY



Noura Ali Ramahi

Arabian Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes arabica*)

Abu Dhabi, UAE



YOUR GALLERY



Avijit Ghorai
Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*)
Bandhavgarh National Park, India



YOUR GALLERY



Anik Raghubanshi
Lion (*Panthera leo*)
Masai Mara, Kenya



YOUR GALLERY



Aslam Muhammad

Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)
Salalah, Oman



YOUR GALLERY



Dr Sreejith Karimbil
Eurasian Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*)
Salalah, Oman



YOUR GALLERY



Akhil Radhakrishnan
Spotted Owlet (*Athene brama*)
Punchakkari, Trivandrum, India



YOUR GALLERY



Amith Krish
Lion (*Panthera leo*)
Masai Mara, Kenya

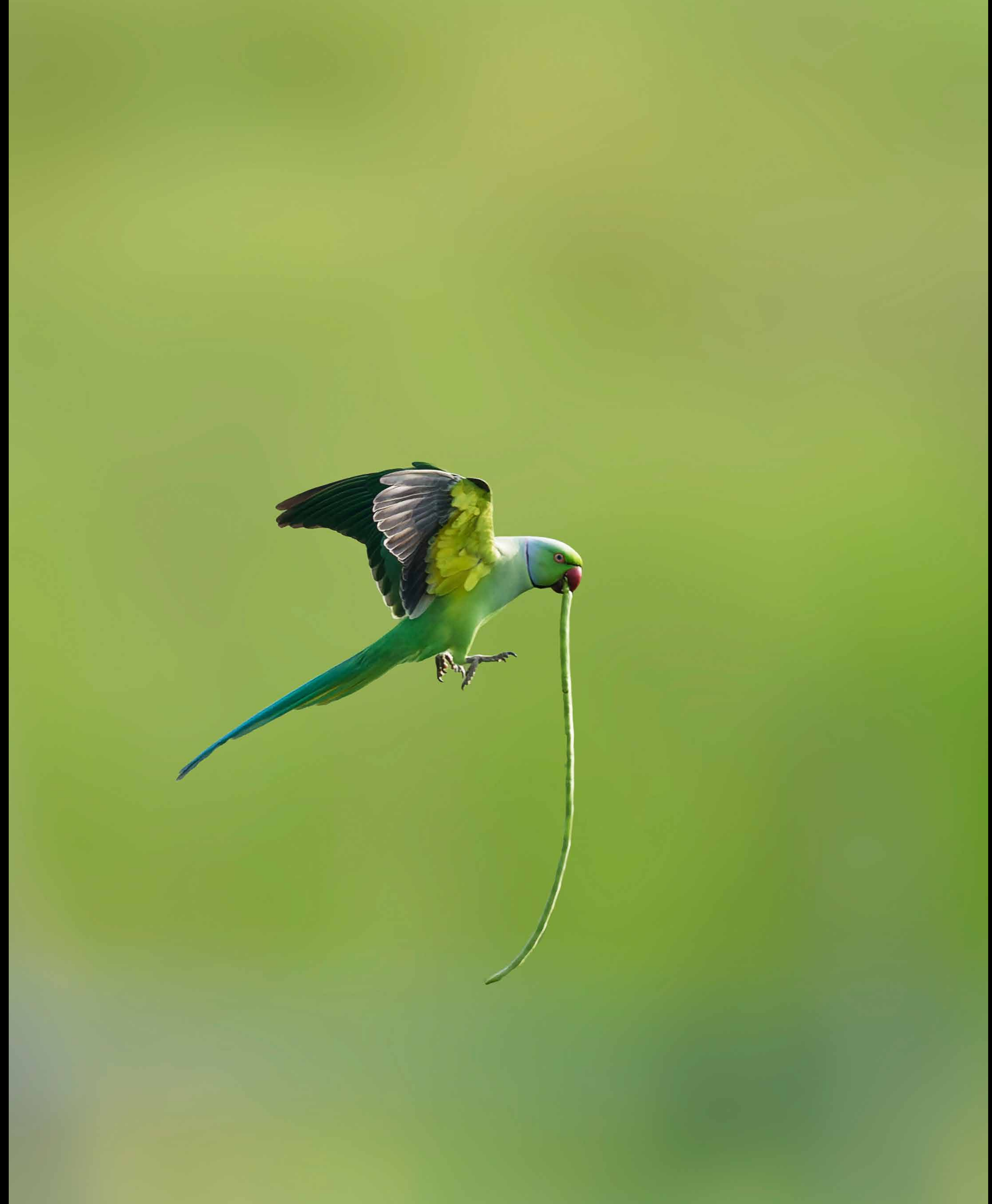


YOUR GALLERY



Dr Sreejith Karimbil

Grey-headed Kingfisher (*Halcyon leucocephala*)
Salalah, Oman



YOUR GALLERY



Akhil Radhakrishnan

Rose-ringed Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*)
Punchakkari, Trivandrum, India



YOUR GALLERY



Aslam Muhammad
Arabian eagle-owl (*Bubo miles*)
Salalah, Oman



YOUR GALLERY



Tom Bretschneider
Lion (*Panthera leo*)
Masai Mara, Kenya



YOUR GALLERY



Amith Krish
Serval (*Leptailurus serval*)
Masai Mara, Kenya



YOUR GALLERY



Hermis Haridas
Lion (*Panthera leo*)
Masai Mara, Kenya



YOUR GALLERY



Aslam Muhammad
Rüppell's Weaver (*Ploceus galbula*)
Salalah, Oman



YOUR GALLERY



Dr Sreejith Karimbil
Eastern Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus coromandus*)
Salalah, Oman



YOUR GALLERY



Anil Thankappan Nair Vasanthakumari
Arabian Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes arabica*)
Irkaya Farm, Qatar



YOUR GALLERY



Akhil Radhakrishnan
White Throated Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*)
Karakulam, Trivandrum, India



YOUR GALLERY



Aminlal Basheer
Isabelline Vine Snake (*Ahaetulla isabellina*)
Thattekkad, Kerala, India



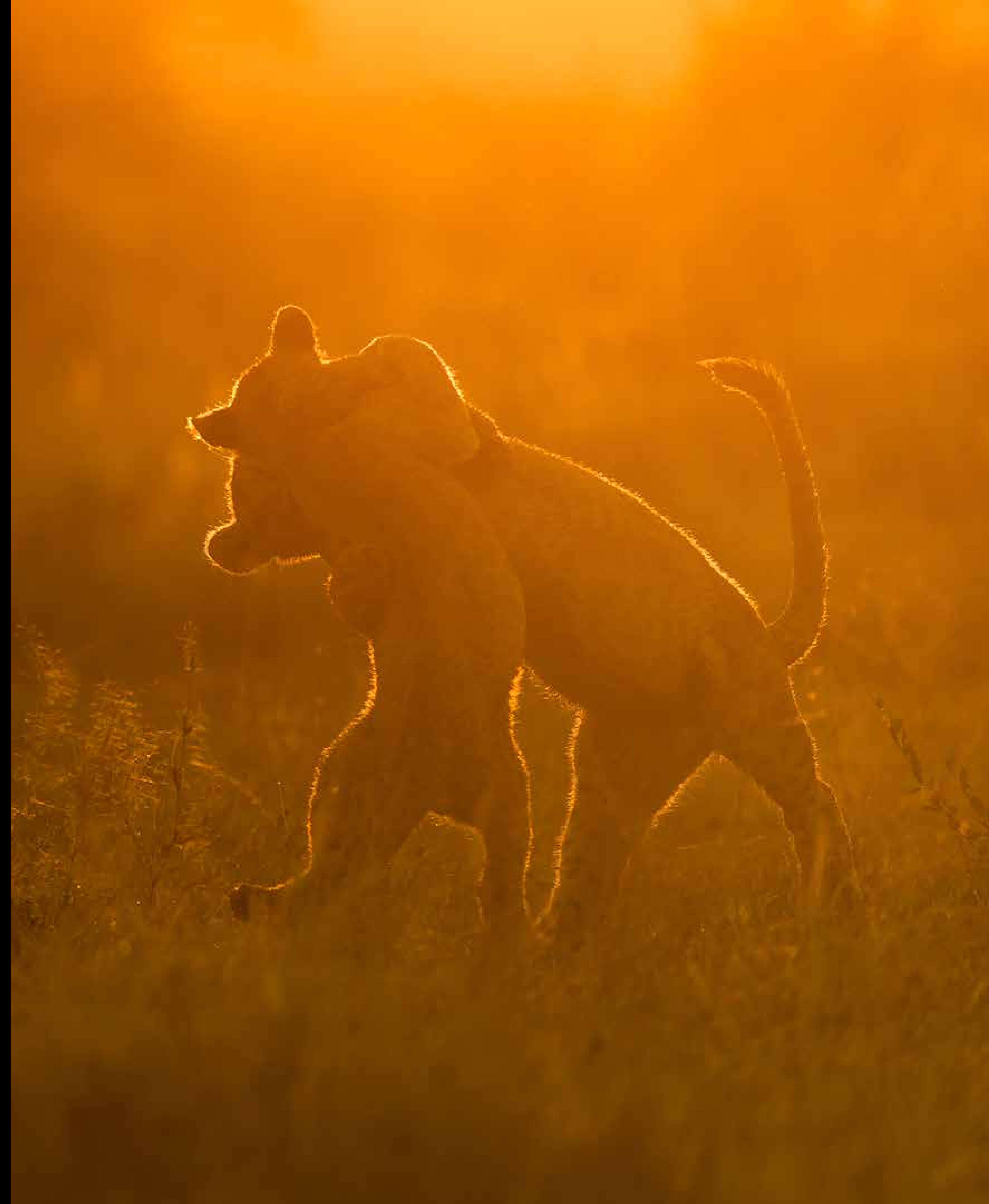
YOUR GALLERY



Dr Sreejith Karimbil

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater (*Merops persicus*)

Salalah, Oman



YOUR GALLERY



Tom Bretschneider

Lion (*Panthera leo*)

Masai Mara, Kenya



YOUR GALLERY



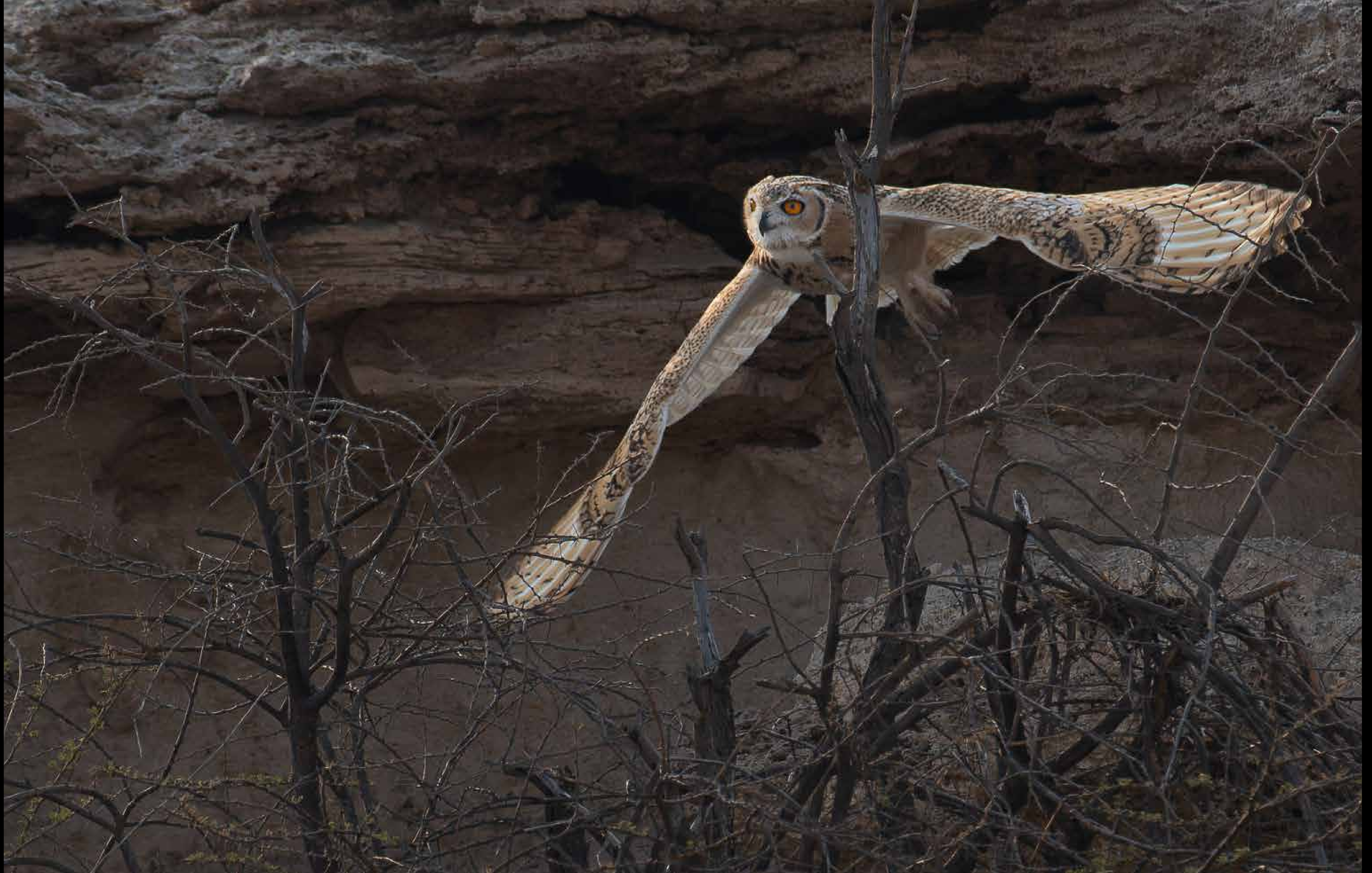
Dr Sreejith Karimbil
Arabian Eagle-owl (*Bubo milesi*)
Salalah, Oman



YOUR GALLERY



Akhil Radhakrishnan
Vernal Hanging Parrot (*Loriculus vernalis*)
Aryankvu, kollam, India



YOUR GALLERY



Anil Thankappan Nair Vasanthakumari
Pharaoh Eagle-owl (*Bubo ascalaphusa*)
Irkaya Farm, Qatar



YOUR GALLERY



Amith Krish

White-browed Coucal (*Centropus superciliosus*)

Masai Mara, Kenya



YOUR GALLERY



Dr Sreejith Karimbil
Eastern Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*)
Salalah, Oman



YOUR GALLERY



Tom Bretschneider
Topi (*Damaliscus lunatus*)
Masai Mara, Kenya



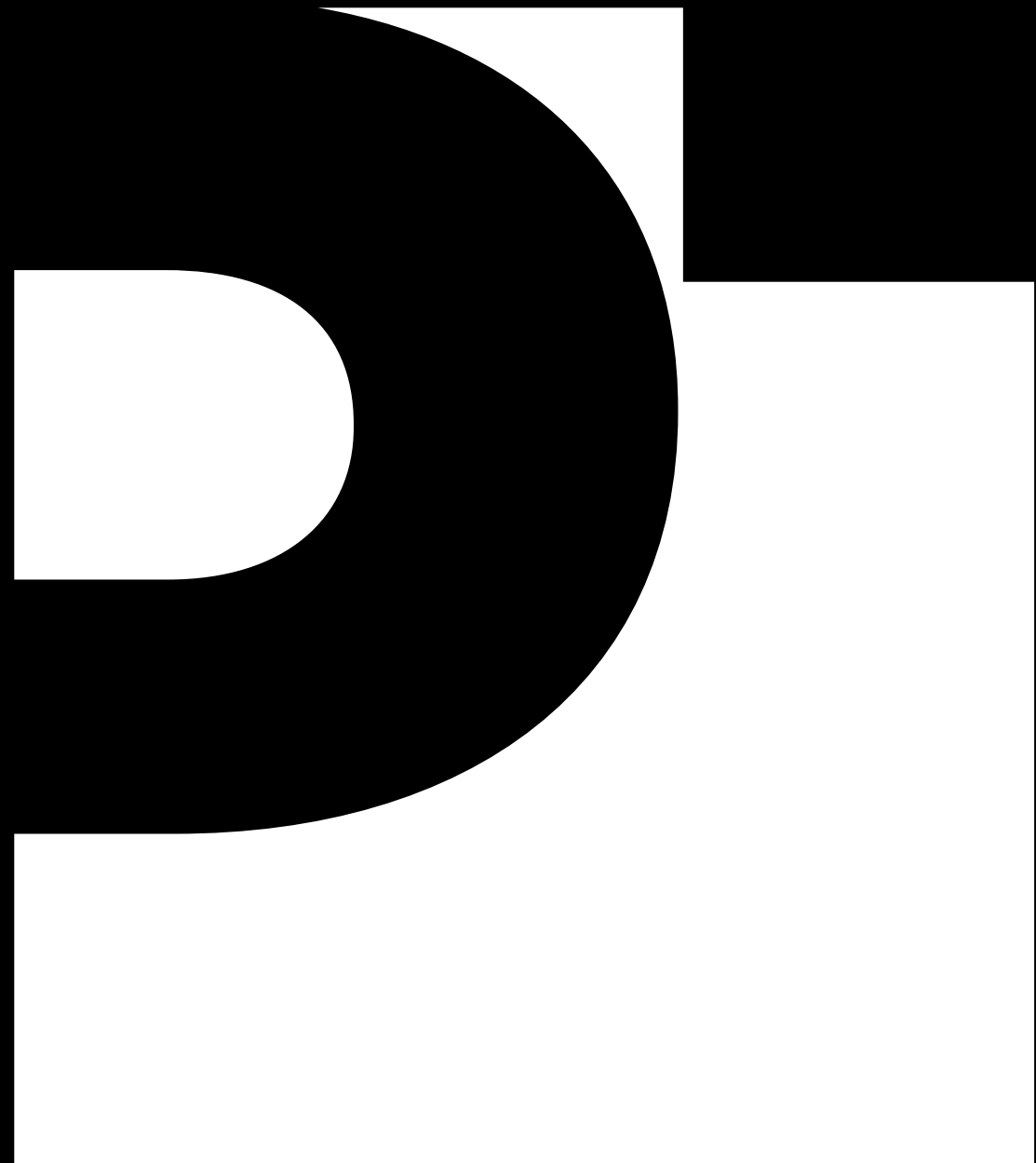
YOUR GALLERY



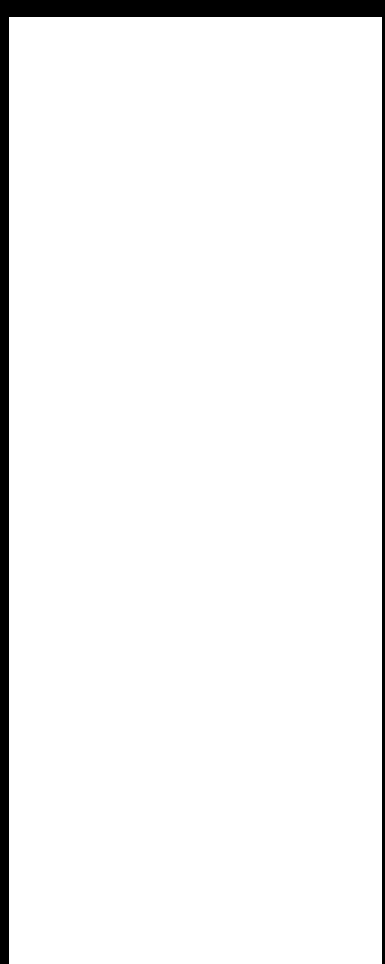
Avijit Ghorai

Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*)

Bandhavgarh National Park, India



EXPLORERS



UPCOMING
FEATURES



© Dunya Rajasekara

HER VIEWS & VISUALS

By Dunya Rajasekara



© Arko Saha

CUB'S CORNER

By Arko Saha



© Nisha Purushothaman

BALD BEAUTY

By Nisha Purushothaman
