
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
ANNUAL 2023 REPORT



OUR IMPACT, MADE POSSIBLE BY YOU

In 2023, thanks to your invaluable support, the National Geographic Society achieved significant milestones in protecting the health of our planet. Together, we expanded marine protected areas to restore the ocean, preserved precious landscapes and cultural heritage sites, safeguarded vulnerable species and inspired people across the globe to care for the world we share — and take action to protect it. Thank you for supporting the National Geographic Society.



Cover: Hundreds of monarchs sip liquid and important minerals from the wet soil in the El Rosario Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary, Michoacán, Mexico. This page: Elephants wander through a tea estate that was once part of their forest habitat in Valparai, India.

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OUR MISSION

The National Geographic Society uses the power of science, exploration, education and storytelling to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world.

OUR VISION

By 2030, the National Geographic Society will be known globally for its bold and impactful Explorer-led programs that spark curiosity in hundreds of millions of people, inspiring them to learn about, care for and protect our world.

A shallow coral reef in Bikar Atoll, Marshall Islands — the site of a 2023 National Geographic Pristine Seas expedition.



Mexican freediver Camila Jaber glides over the giant macroalgae of the Mitre Peninsula off the coast of Argentina.



CEO'S MESSAGE

DEAR FRIENDS,

Explorer in Residence and Pristine Seas founder Enric Sala recently said, "I don't see a bigger purpose than working to save life on Earth." In a few words, Enric captured the driving force behind our nonprofit mission, our community of National Geographic Explorers and all who support them. We strive to positively impact our planet and the great diversity of life we share it with.

As we grapple with unprecedented challenges, the National Geographic Society has tremendous opportunities to drive change. We hold a unique place in the world. We have a trusted brand that reaches billions, a global community of multidisciplinary experts dedicated to solving these challenges and a network of partners and supporters who share our commitment to shaping a better future.

With the strength of our community behind us, and so much at stake, how are we measuring and accelerating our impact?

Our NG Next strategic plan maps our Theory of Impact. Led by our team of intrepid Explorers, we advance knowledge through contributions to science, and protect our planet through leading conservation programs. Equally important, we drive impact by illuminating the wonder of our world through storytelling and education initiatives that spark our curiosity, and inform and connect us. This report is a testament to what we illuminated and protected in 2023 in ways that made history and moved the needle — all thanks to the unwavering generosity of our supporters.

In collaboration with the Dominican government, Explorers Enric Sala and Shane Gero supported the establishment of the world's first-ever sperm whale reserve. This action protects nearly 800 square kilometers off Dominica's coast and mitigates significant carbon emissions — equivalent to removing 5,000 cars from the road annually.

In partnership with Disney, we ignited global enthusiasm for elephant conservation. The Society created a public service announcement focused on the "Secrets of the Elephants" series, led by Explorer Paula Kahumbu, that reached more than 22 million people across our global platforms.

Our Slingshot Challenge mobilized nearly 3,000 students to share their ideas to solve environmental challenges, with support from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation.

We celebrated the 20th anniversary of Photo Camp. Led by Explorer in Residence Kirsten Elstner, this dynamic program has connected over 3,000 young people from 44 countries to the wonders of photography.

Your support made accomplishments like these possible and pushed the Society to new heights. In 2023, our supporters set a record — for the third consecutive year — with $122.8 million in new commitments, including the largest single gift in the Society's history from longtime partner, Rolex. You are playing a pivotal role in bringing our reimagined Base Camp headquarters to life, accelerating our Explorers' work and connecting millions more with our mission.

I am incredibly grateful for the generosity of the individuals, foundations and corporations that once again stepped forward to champion the National Geographic Society.

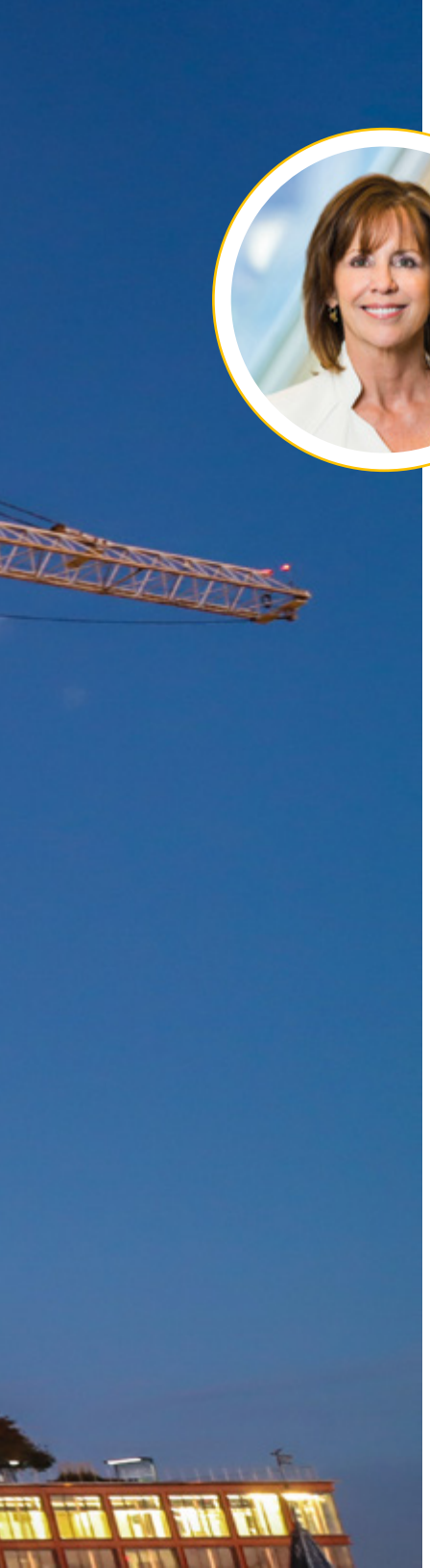
So, how do we create lasting impact? Together — with audacious goals and steadfast support from our community. Thank you for helping us meet this moment.



JILL TIEFENTHALER
Chief Executive Officer
National Geographic Society



The National Geographic yellow icon highlights a construction crane that stands above the National Geographic Society headquarters, currently undergoing the most significant expansion in its history.



BOARD CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

DEAR FRIENDS,

Of the millions of National Geographic images captured in 2023, one left a lasting impression on me — and it's different from what you might expect. It wasn't the quintessential action shot of a big cat in the wild, or the breathtaking view of an arctic glacier, or a fearless Explorer deep-sea diving on expedition. While I do admire these kinds of photos, what resonated with me was something closer to home: a photo of the yellow border shining from a construction crane, high above our Base Camp in Washington, D.C., where work continues to transform our headquarters into a global Home of the Explorer. Pointing to the horizon, the crane is a symbol of what makes the National Geographic Society so distinctive. While we are grounded in our mission and storied legacy, we are also constantly reaching forward to the future.

Throughout our 136-year history, the National Geographic Society has remained a relevant, world-class organization at the forefront of exploration and impact precisely because we have dared to dream big, embraced visionary ideas and invited changemakers around the world to join our cause. At the heart of our work are our National Geographic Explorers, passionate and purpose-driven individuals who push boundaries in pursuit of knowledge about our world — to change it for the better.

Reimagining our Base Camp is the next historic step forward. A state-of-the-art hub for exploration and collaboration presents unparalleled opportunities to amplify the work of our Explorers and our reach as an organization. Through compelling storytelling and immersive technology, we will bring our mission to life in dazzling new ways, inspiring up to a million visitors a year to feel deeply connected to our planet and each other.

Our new Base Camp will also serve as a convening space, bringing Explorers together with global leaders, policymakers and the public to drive innovative solutions that catalyze lasting impact.

As we build this dynamic accelerator for our mission, we continue to take bold steps to support our Explorers and Explorer-led programming, providing the funding they need to achieve one impactful milestone for the planet after the next.

As detailed in this report, in 2023 Explorers launched a five-year Pacific expedition to help protect a treasure trove of ocean life. They photographed the 15,000th species for the Photo Ark to raise awareness about endangered animals. They teamed up with global leaders like Esri to develop innovative technologies that empower the next generation of problem solvers. They shared evocative stories, like the award-winning documentary film, "Nkashi: Race for the Okavango," to compel people to care and act.

There's something special about what the yellow border represents. It is an instantly recognizable symbol rich with purpose and momentum. With the generous support of donors and partners like you, we are bringing its promise to life in powerful new ways — and making a lasting difference. Thank you for making our work possible and making an impact with us.



JEAN M. CASE

Chairman of the Board of Trustees
National Geographic Society



2023 IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

$122.8M

contributed by generous donors and partners to support Explorer-led projects and work

This page: Cumulus clouds over the Congo Basin in Yangambi, Democratic Republic of the Congo — home to the world's second largest rainforest. Opposite page (clockwise from top left): A polar bear lies in a bed of fireweed flowers in Manitoba, Canada. Tongareva, in the Cook Islands — the site of a Pristine Seas expedition to study the resilience of its marine ecosystem. Explorer Agustina Besada boards a sailboat while researching ocean plastics. Pilot, educator and Explorer Barrington Irving swims in a cave in Palau. Explorer and conservationist Olivier Nsengimana observes a specimen collected during a biodiversity survey in Rwanda's Rugezi Marsh. Explorer Imogen Napper looks toward the night sky in Botswana. A faithful beauty (*Composia fidelissima*) in the Pine Rocklands, FL, USA. A fifth-grade student participates in a National Geographic Bioblitz learning program in New Albany, OH, USA. Okavango Wilderness Project team members pull a *mokoro* (dugout canoe) through the Okavango Delta in Botswana.



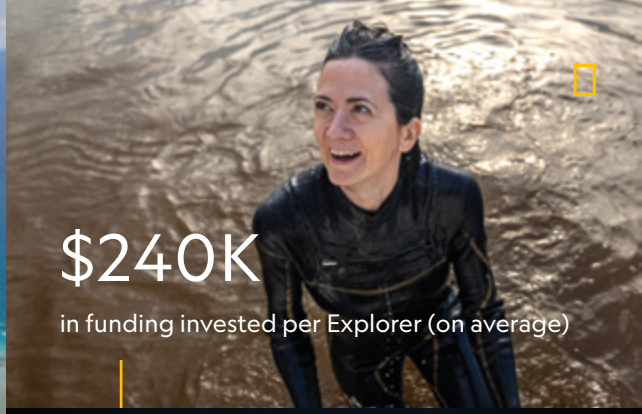
84M+

readers of National Geographic print and digital content published in 24 languages



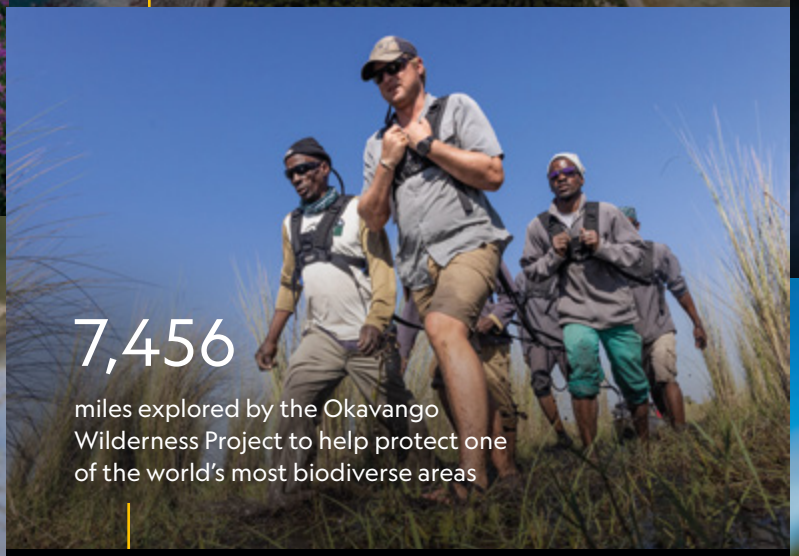
6.6M+

total square kilometers of ocean protected through our Pristine Seas program since 2008



$240K

in funding invested per Explorer (on average)



7,456

miles explored by the Okavango Wilderness Project to help protect one of the world's most biodiverse areas



700+

active Explorer projects in 83 countries



603

academic publications authored by Society-funded Explorers across 73 disciplines



14,644

youth reached through geography-focused education programs supported by state endowments



15K+

milestone number of species photographed for the National Geographic Photo Ark



44M+

people of all ages explored the Society's online educational resources to learn about the wonders of the planet and its people



The National Geographic Society's financial health continues to be strong. Thanks to the dedicated support of our donors and partners, 2023 was a record-breaking year in fundraising for us. This remarkable achievement enabled us to deepen our investment in our programs — a 14% year-over-year increase in total spending.

Looking ahead, the 2026 opening of our new Base Camp experience will be a significant milestone. This expansion represents a major enhancement of our capacity to convene explorers, educators, storytellers and scientists to build critical new programs. The sustained support of donors, paired with our strong balance sheet and this new immersive experience, will allow us to amplify our impact and share our mission with global audiences far into the future.

KEVIN J. MARONI
Chairman of the Finance Committee and Member of the Board of Trustees
National Geographic Society

100% of contributions fund our Explorers and our mission work.

Elephants play in northern Tanzania.



2023 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

National Geographic Society Consolidated Statements
(in thousands)

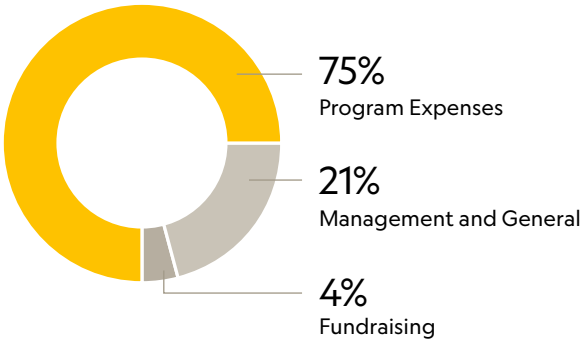
SUMMARY STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

SUPPORT AND REVENUE	
Product and other educational sales	$2,743
Licensing	24,296
Contributions and grants	91,359
Investment distribution to fund operations	114,027
Total Support and Revenue	**232,425**
EXPENSES	
Storytelling and outreach	70,768
Scientific research and exploration	66,816
Education	20,200
Program Expenses	**157,784**
Management and general	43,671
Fundraising	8,779
Total Operating Expenses	**210,234**
Operating Gain	**22,191**
Income tax benefit	2,553
Investment distribution to fund operations	(114,027)
Non-operating activities*	99,121
Change in Net Assets	**9,838**
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	**2,187,994**
Net Assets, End of Year	**$2,197,832**

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Cash and cash equivalents	$78,815
Receivables, prepaids, and other assets, net	79,144
Deferred tax assets	18,353
Investments (including endowments)	2,365,080
Property and equipment, net	120,559
Total Assets	**$2,661,951**
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	$31,184
Deferred revenue	14,177
Loan payable	250,000
Pension and postretirement benefits	14,043
Deferred tax liabilities	143,343
Other liabilities	11,372
Total Liabilities	**464,119**
Total Net Assets	**2,197,832**
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	**$2,661,951**

Total Expenses



*Non-operating activities primarily consist of net realized and unrealized investment gains and losses, building rental revenue and expenses, and pension and postretirement activities.

DRIVING IMPACT THROUGH EXPLORATION



The Ksar sailboat remains anchored while marine biologists and underwater documentalists dive to explore and investigate the giant kelp forests of the Mitre Peninsula off the coast of Argentina.



Today, our planet and its people stand at a critical juncture in history — a time when our natural world faces unprecedented challenges.

At this decisive moment, the National Geographic Society is uniquely positioned to catalyze positive, lasting change for the diversity of life on Earth. In 2023, National Geographic Explorers — some of the world's best and brightest minds — advanced projects and programs that promise to help strengthen and restore the environment's vital life-support systems in more than 83 countries. With you by our side, the Society is committed to furthering work that explores the wonders of our world, inspires people everywhere to care for the planet and takes action to build a better future for all.

This report celebrates the tangible impact of your investments, showcasing how we can make a difference together and move the needle toward a future of deeper understanding of and appreciation for the world.



This page: The sun sets over low tide in the Suncheon Bay Wetland Reserve in Suncheon, South Korea.

STRATEGIC THROUGHLINES

The National Geographic Society's bold vision for the future is guided by our strategic plan, NG Next. By unlocking the enormous potential of our collective strengths — cutting-edge science, intrepid exploration, transformative education and powerful storytelling — the Society and its global community of Explorers are charting a path forward to drive significant impact for our planet and its people. Given the depth and breadth of the Society's work, we established strategic throughlines to ensure that our mission, vision and values are woven into everything we do.





Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Diversity, equity and inclusion are at the heart of all we do. As an organization guided by science and innovation, we are committed to creating an environment where everyone benefits from opportunity, mutual respect and a sense of belonging. Research demonstrates that creativity and innovation stem from effectively engaging people from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. We also recognize that we cannot succeed with diversity alone — equity and inclusion play critical roles in the organization's ability to achieve its mission to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world.

With guidance and support from the National Geographic Society's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) team, Society staff continued to incorporate inclusive approaches into programmatic work in 2023. Alongside many specific collaborations with National Geographic Explorers that are mentioned throughout this report, the DEI team also supported Explorers by providing consultation, creating conversations, offering in-person and virtual convenings and workshops, and presenting opportunities for Explorers to probe the intersection of diversity, equity and inclusion within their disciplines.

The Society's journey to actualize its diversity, equity and inclusion throughline is ongoing, and we are proud of the collective progress made in 2023. Together, we will continue to strive for a more inclusive future in service of the Society's vision.

LEARN MORE

To learn about our diversity, equity and inclusion guiding principles, visit natgeo.org/dei.

From top: (left to right) Explorers Azu Nwagbogu, Victoria Herrmann, Prasenjeet Yadav, Markus Martinez Burman, Justin Dunnavant and Danielle Khan Da Silva with Society Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer Shannon P. Bartlett at a workshop about inclusive exploration during the 2023 Explorers Festival in Washington, D.C., USA. Explorer Clinton Johnson (left) and Society Chief Education Officer Deborah R. Grayson (right) during the 2023 NorthStar GIS Homecoming event in Washington, D.C.

Collaboration with Disney

One of the ways the National Geographic Society is able to continue its 136-year legacy of exploration is through the adoption of an innovative, sustainable business model. Our joint-venture partnership with The Walt Disney Company combines National Geographic's media and consumer-facing products, contributing a share of revenue back into the Society's operations. This allows us to invest every philanthropic dollar contributed — 100 percent of donations — into critical support for our National Geographic Explorers and mission-driven projects.

The Society's partnership with Disney, another iconic and world-class brand, provides unique opportunities to amplify the work of our Explorers, deepen engagement with supporters and share our story with global audiences. National Geographic print and digital content reaches more than 84 million readers around the world. In 2023, 58 National Geographic print magazine articles featured the work of Explorers. Across social media platforms, Disney published 406 posts about Explorer-led projects and the Society's nonprofit mission, generating over 970 million total impressions.

This partnership has significantly accelerated the Society's efforts to be globally known for impactful Explorer-led programs. In 2023, Explorers brought their insights and experiences to life through seven books published by National Geographic. Among them were two companion books for the Disney+ series "Secrets of the Elephants," featuring Explorer Paula Kahumbu, and the documentary film "Path of the Panther," featuring Explorer Carlton Ward, Jr. In addition, Explorers took center stage in several streaming programs (on Disney+ and Hulu), including "Animals Up Close," with Explorer Bertie Gregory, and "Science Fair: The Series," featuring Explorer Serena McCalla. Inspiring a deeper connection to the world, global National Geographic channels, supported by the Disney content studio, reach more than 500 million people across 180 countries and in 33 languages.





This page, from top: Explorer and photographer Carlton Ward, Jr. paddles to set up a camera trap system in Florida's Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park. Explorer Bertie Gregory observes an adult male lion from the Mwamba pride in Zambia.





Spotlight: Elevating Explorers

In April 2023, the National Geographic Society collaborated with Disney to highlight the Explorer-led work at the heart of the "Secrets of the Elephants" television docuseries. This award-winning program delves into the rich emotional lives of elephants and elevates National Geographic Explorers Paula Kahumbu and Joyce Poole as featured storytellers and subject matter experts.

The "Secrets of the Elephants" series was part of a month-long, organization-wide Earth Month synergy with our Disney partners to amplify our mission programs focused on elephant research and conservation. Throughout the month, audiences around the world learned about some of our Explorers on the front lines of conservation for Asian and African elephants — including Kahumbu, Poole and other Explorers such as Sangita Iyer and Jyothy Karat — through meticulously researched and visually stunning storytelling. Leading up to Earth Day and the premiere of the docuseries, the Society issued its first ever public service announcement about Explorers leading elephant conservation efforts. The announcement aired across Disney networks 279 times, reaching 22.4 million people throughout the month of April. In addition, National Geographic magazine's May 2023 issue featured a cover story and two additional articles about Explorers. The digital versions of the issue's articles garnered over 112.2 thousand unique views.

These collaborative efforts demonstrate how our joint-venture partnership significantly accelerates our efforts to reach hundreds of millions of people globally about our Explorers' profound stories and the courageous work they're doing to protect the planet's most vulnerable species.

This page, from left: A forest elephant in Namibia. Explorer Paula Kahumbu in Namibia's Ugab Valley.

Reimagining our Global Headquarters

The National Geographic Society has always been the home of the Explorer. Since 1888, our Explorers have returned from their assignments and expeditions to our headquarters in Washington, D.C., to share their findings and stories with the public and each other. These in-person convenings began just one month after our founding and established a tradition of ongoing learning and exploration that continues today.

As the Society steps into a new era, we are embarking on the most significant expansion in our history to reimagine our public space and advance our commitment to exploring, protecting and illuminating the wonder of our world. When complete, our renewed Base Camp will feature imaginative and uniquely National Geographic experiences that attract and engage visitors of all backgrounds. With the steadfast support of our donor community, we will transform our campus into a vibrant attraction that celebrates exploration and wonder. Our revitalized headquarters will provide visitors with immersive exhibits showcasing the profound impact of Explorer research, awe-inspiring galleries featuring iconic photography, fascinating artifacts and archives, and a new learning center that will inspire the next generation of Explorers. The state-of-the-art, sustainably built National Geographic headquarters will be a must-see destination for exploration — convening Explorers, staff, supporters and the public to join our important mission.





From top: Artist's renderings of planned exhibits and experiences at the renovated National Geographic headquarters, opening in 2026.



Sustainability

To truly illuminate and protect the wonder of our world, the National Geographic Society is passionate about cultivating sustainable business practices across our global organization and implementing a sustainability focused mindset in all of our activities.

The Society remains steadfast in its commitment to responsible business practices, recognizing that the decisions we make have impacts not only for our financial bottom line but also for the people we employ and the environments we inhabit. Our buildings adhere to the standards set by the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), ensuring that our operations are as efficient as possible and maintain a safe and healthy atmosphere for all occupants and guests. In 2023, we proudly received our seventh LEED rating certification — retaining our headquarters' distinction as the world's longest continuously certified and most recertified buildings.

In preparation for Base Camp's renovation, Society staff offered thousands of reusable items to schools, museums, libraries and community organizations. In 2023, the Society donated over 344,000 pounds of furniture, books, equipment, building supplies and more to the local community to be reused, benefiting more than 80 organizations.

All our efforts depend on the active engagement of staff, building tenants, visitors and partners. Through ongoing communication, training, guidelines and policies, the Society cultivates a sustainability focused mindset to guide decision-making and purchasing. Our volunteer "Green Team" teaches all of our building occupants about existing initiatives — like Bike to Work Day, swap meets and on-site beekeeping — and solicits new ideas for protecting and maximizing our campus resources.

A student from the Dora Kennedy French Immersion School in Maryland participates in the Society's Dig Day in Washington, D.C., USA.



This page: 2023 Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year Shabana Basij-Rasikh addresses an audience at the 2023 Explorers Festival in Washington, D.C., USA. Opposite page: Shabana Basij-Rasikh speaks to guests at the 2023 Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year Celebration.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN EXPLORATION

"It's my dream for the future — for myself and for the girls of SOLA and every girl in Afghanistan — my dream for us is to be like everyone else. My dream is for every Afghan mom and dad to get up in the morning and prepare breakfast for their daughters and send their daughters off to school with a kiss and there is nothing exceptional about it at all. Girls going to school. Perfectly common. As normal as breathing. This will happen in my lifetime."

SHABANA BASIJ-RASIKH

National Geographic Explorer





SHABANA BASIJ-RASIKH

Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year

The Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year award recognizes an individual whose actions, achievements and spirit push the boundaries of leadership in exploration and demonstrate a commitment to sharing knowledge with the world.

In 2023, Explorer **Shabana Basij-Rasikh** was recognized for her tireless efforts to ensure Afghan girls and young women have access to education. Raised in Kabul during the Taliban's first regime, Basij-Rasikh has dedicated her entire adult life to educating Afghan women and girls. Having attended school in secret when girls were not allowed to receive an education, she later studied in the United States and co-founded the School of Leadership, Afghanistan (SOLA), with the mission of providing access to quality education for girls across her home country.

SOLA became the nation's first boarding school educating Afghan women and girls post-primary school and helping graduates prepare for and enroll in universities worldwide. SOLA has also helped girls from dozens of provinces across the country access millions in scholarship dollars.

Seeing the ongoing battle for women's rights in her lifetime, Basij-Rasikh has continued her work and mission, leading the 2021 evacuation of the SOLA community from Afghanistan to Rwanda. SOLA is now fully operational in Rwanda as the only boarding school for Afghan girls.

The National Geographic Society is grateful to Rolex for its partnership in presenting the 2023 National Geographic Explorer of the Year Celebration and the 2023 National Geographic Explorers Festival. The Society's special partnership with Rolex enables us to recognize and elevate the work of remarkable Explorers like Basij-Rasikh — who show us, and the world, what it means to empower the next generation of women leaders.



Explorer and marine biologist Alex Schnell dives in the Great Barrier Reef during production of National Geographic's "Secrets of the Octopus," now streaming on Disney+.

Wayfinder Awards

Each year, the National Geographic Society recognizes and elevates a group of extraordinary changemakers from across the globe who have proven themselves to be the next generation of influential leaders, communicators and innovators. Our 2023 cohort included 15 exemplary leaders from 12 countries with work spanning science, education, conservation, technology and storytelling.



MANU AKATSA
Kenyan documentary filmmaker, cinematographer and animator who captures the beauty and complexity of the world around us while highlighting the importance of preserving our planet's rich natural and cultural heritage.



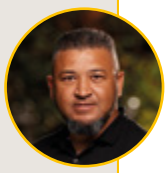
ALIAA ISMAIL
Egyptian Egyptologist who strives to employ creative methods for understanding and preserving her country's heritage as a way of strengthening her connection to her ancestry.



CLINTON JOHNSON
American geospatial architect, racial and social justice lead at Esri, and founder of North Star of GIS who is finding creative ways to implement practical solutions for real-world challenges faced by diverse communities.



NELLY LUNA
Peruvian investigative journalist in digital media who works on environmental, human rights, transparency and other issues to promote innovation and cross-border journalism in Latin America.



SHAMIER MAGMOET
South African free diver, conservationist and filmmaker who enables and educates youth to experience the ocean and become its advocates and protectors.



SERENA MCCALLA
American educator and science strategist who has dedicated her life to advancing science and science education with underserved youth in the United States.



SADA MIRE
Swedish-Somali archaeologist, art historian and presenter whose work lobbies and promotes cultural heritage as a basic human need in times of war.



PABLO MONTAÑO
Mexican climate communicator, documentary writer and producer, and founder of Conexiones Climaticas, which is focused on climate communication, network building and improving local agri-food systems.



MUHAMMED MUHEISEN
Jordanian photographer who educates, helps and empowers refugees, local communities and people displaced internally by war, natural disasters, discrimination and poverty while raising public awareness by sharing their stories with the world.



SURSHTI PATEL
British conservation social scientist who develops equitable solutions for community-based marine and freshwater conservation, integrating plastic waste management, protected area establishment, sustainable livelihood development and access to financial services.



GOABAONE JAQUELINE RAMATLAPENG
Motswana geoscientist who investigates the processes controlling the water chemistry of the Okavango Delta in semi-arid Botswana. She is also the founder of a writing platform that supports African college students and professionals in STEM.



CHRISTOPHER SCHELL
American urban ecologist who combines behavioral, physiological and genomic approaches to demonstrate the consequences of historical and contemporary inequities on organismal, population and community-level dynamics of wildlife.



THEANNE SCHIROS
American materials scientist whose research focuses on the development of advanced and bioinspired materials for a circular economy, including clean energy technology and regenerative performance textiles.



ALEX SCHNELL
Australian wildlife scientist and science communicator with expertise in marine biology, animal behavior, animal intelligence and conservation of terrestrial and aquatic species, including elephants and octopuses.



ZHENGYANG WANG
Chinese conservation biologist who studies the diversity of insects in the Himalaya and Hengduan Mountains, and uses telemetry and genetic techniques to monitor changes in insect population across the high-elevation landscape.

National Geographic Young Explorers

In 2023, the Society selected 15 audacious changemakers between the ages of 16 and 25 to join the cohort of 2023 Young Explorers. They represent 13 countries and are engaged in solution-focused ideas including scientific innovation, conservation, education, civic engagement, storytelling and more — with the aim of breaking boundaries and overcoming challenges within their individual communities. The Society identified these individuals for their exceptional courage, leadership and impact-driven solutions.



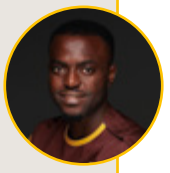
JAMES ROONEY DUKUNDANE
Rwandan filmmaker, editor, director and photographer who uses his skills to help nonprofit organizations deliver important advocacy messages.



MILES MCCAIN
American technology expert who co-founded Atlos, a nonprofit, collaborative open-source platform for visual investigations.



CÁROL SIERRA DURÁN
Colombian bat researcher who serves as an ambassador to build a network of allies for bat conservation in the global south.



TABE NJUME
Cameroonian sustainability advocate who founded and leads Greensphere Cameroon, an initiative to conserve mangrove forests by providing waste-based alternatives to fuelwood and charcoal.



BRIGITTA MARIA ANDREA GUNAWAN
Indonesian ocean conservation advocate and founder of 30×30 Indonesia who strives to connect communities through science, education and storytelling.



SHARONA SHNAYDER
Nigerian and Israeli climate justice activist who founded the now-global grassroots initiative Tuesdays for Trash.



AIITA JOSHUA APAMAKU
Ugandan wildlife biologist and digital content creator who founded the storytelling and science-telling hub NatureWILD.



BETTY JAHATEH
Gambian environmental biologist, ocean youth leader and consultant who initiated research on saltwater intrusion in The Gambia.



GABRIELA TEJEDA
American photographer, videographer and digital content creator who amplifies wildlife conservation messages through creative and immersive storytelling.



MYA-ROSE SHANTI CRAIG
British-Bangladeshi ornithologist, environmentalist and diversity activist who founded and leads Black2Nature.



TE AHO JORDAN
Ngāti Porou photographer and youth development advocate who amplifies Māori and Pasifika voices through visual storytelling.



AVERY TILLEY
American and Cherokee wildlife disease researcher who is focused on advancing wildlife health initiatives across tribal lands.



YAEL CRUPNICOFF
Argentinian founding member and educator at Tekohá, a start-up that trains Latin American youth from diverse backgrounds to be climate leaders.



THINAKONE LOUANGDY
Laotian computer scientist who uses interview-based research to analyze global health initiatives in underserved and hard-to-reach communities.



QIYUN WOO
Singaporean science communicator who founded The Weird and Wild, an educational social media account focused on illustrating complex climate issues in an engaging way.



Explorer and photographer Gabriela Tejeda rides in a helicopter over Florida's Everglades to capture images for her storytelling project "Fire & Water."

2023 National Geographic/Buffett Awards for Leadership in Conservation in Africa and Latin America

The National Geographic/Buffett Awards for Leadership in Conservation were established in partnership with the Howard G. Buffett Foundation to recognize and celebrate unsung conservation heroes. The Society presents two awards each year: one for achievement in Africa and the other for achievement in Latin America. Recipients are recognized for outstanding leadership in managing and protecting the natural resources in their respective regions and countries, and as inspirational conservation advocates, serving as role models and mentors.

2023 award recipient **Lily-Arison Rene de Roland** is a Malagasy biodiversity conservationist who has been studying Madagascar's imperiled raptors since joining The Peregrine Fund's Madagascar Program in 1992 and becoming the program's national director in 2004. He has helped discover and rediscover several species, including an endemic duck thought to be extinct and two undescribed lemur species. He also contributed to the establishment of five national protected areas and revolutionized conservation in Madagascar with the development of a community-based model addressing drivers of human-wildlife conflicts. His work has preserved some of the best remaining natural habitats in Madagascar, and he continues to pave the way for the future of conservation and preserving biological diversity in Madagascar while inspiring his community.

2023 award recipient **José Manuel Briceño Linares** is a Venezuelan biologist and environmentalist who has spent 20 years leading the nonprofit organization Provita's conservation program to protect the yellow-shouldered parrot population in the Macanao Peninsula of Margarita Island, Venezuela. As part of this work, he helped form a group of rangers called Ecoguardians — many of whom are former poachers — that work tirelessly to recover the wild population of yellow-shouldered parrots in the Macanao Peninsula. Concerned that the sustainability of the species goes beyond the population in Macanao, in 2021 he worked with colleagues from Bonaire and Aruba to develop the first conservation action plan that considers the species' entire geographic distribution. He has also worked closely with landowners and mining companies on ecological restoration projects to rehabilitate depleted mining sites by planting a wide variety of native dry forest trees.

The National Geographic Society thanks the Howard G. Buffett Foundation for its generous support of the National Geographic/Buffett Awards for Leadership in Conservation.





Top: Ian Miller (left), chief science and innovation officer at the National Geographic Society, presents Explorer and conservationist Lily-Arison Rene de Roland with the National Geographic/Buffett Award for Leadership in Conservation at the 2023 Explorers Festival in Washington, D.C., USA. Bottom: Explorer José Manuel Briceño Linares speaks before an audience at a 2023 Explorers Festival event in Washington, D.C.







Top: A banded sea krait swims toward the surface in the Rock Islands Southern Lagoon, Palau. Bottom: A hunter listens to the water for songs of nearby whales in Alaska, USA.

KILIII YÜYAN

2023 Eliza Scidmore Award for Outstanding Storytelling

The National Geographic Society's Eliza Scidmore Award for Outstanding Storytelling recognizes individuals whose work bridges immersive storytelling with scientific rigor in a relevant and accessible way to advance our understanding of the complex ideas and issues facing our world today. The award is named after Eliza Scidmore, the Society's first woman journalist, photographer and board member.

In 2023, National Geographic Explorer **Kiliii Yüyan** received this award for his work illuminating the traditions and practices that connect communities to the land and sea — and how they care for them.

Yüyan is an award-winning photographer whose work explores planetary stewardship, Indigenous perspectives and the critical importance of our relationships to the natural world.

Raised by parents who sought refuge in the U.S., Yüyan's work is informed by his ancestry, which is both Nanai/Hèzhé (East Asian Indigenous) and Chinese-American, and explores the human relationship to the natural world from different cultural perspectives.

In 2022, he received a grant from the Society and The Climate Pledge to conduct a project focused on Indigenous conservation efforts from the coastline of Greenland to the coral reefs of Palau.

His outstanding contributions to National Geographic magazine include a 2018 photo series depicting the Iñupiaq people of Alaska, exploring their collectivist culture and how climate change has threatened ancient traditional practices such as subsistence whale hunting. Yüyan's photography was featured on the cover of the July 2022 issue of the magazine, as part of a story highlighting how Native nations across North America are reclaiming their sovereignty. His photos also appeared in the December 2022 Pictures of the Year issue, where he captured the Greenland landscape in all of its beauty and starkness.

Beyond National Geographic, Yüyan's work has been exhibited worldwide and featured in top publications. Yüyan embodies what it means to be an Explorer, as his stunning photos truly illuminate the wonder of the world in new and creative ways. As he says: "The world is full of stories. But how many of those stories don't just tell us what we already know? How many of those stories teach us to see the world from a truly different perspective?"

SLINGSHOT CHALLENGE

In May 2023, the National Geographic Society and Paul G. Allen Family Foundation announced the 15 awardees of the first-ever global Slingshot Challenge. With the goal of unlocking ideas that "slingshot" our planet forward, the Challenge asks young people from 13-18 years old to create a one-minute video depicting a solution to an environmental problem. Participants focused on one of the challenge's five topic areas: clean the air, restore the ocean, protect nature, reduce waste and address climate change. The response was astounding: The Society received more than 1,800 submissions from individuals and groups in more than 100 countries, and millions of engagements across social media. In total, nearly 3,000 young people signed up for the Challenge to share their ideas, with support from National Geographic Explorers and educators.

VIEW THE VIDEO SUBMISSIONS OF SLINGSHOT CHALLENGE AWARDEES AT NATGEO.ORG/SLINGSHOT.



A Slingshot Challenge awardee participates in group activities on the final day of the 2023 Explorers Festival in Washington, D.C., USA.

2023 Slingshot Challenge Awardees

Foresta Vivero

Regina Gutiérrez, Jonathan Alejandro Morales, María Fernanda Rodríguez, Luis Diego Solís, Raquel Andrea Vargas I San Luis Potosí, Mexico

Foresta Vivero was created after forest fires affected the Sierra de San Miguelito in 2019. This team of students worked to help restore the damaged ecosystem, speaking with subject matter experts about their ideas to ensure that their actions would have a positive impact and would not affect the environmental balance.

These students are passionate about the environment and filmmaking, working to find small-scale solutions to affect bigger change.

#NoWasteNation

Kayla Ling I Hillsborough, California, United States

Kayla Ling is passionate about addressing social issues such as the climate crisis, racial injustice and gender inequity with hope-based solutions like film, writing and community conversations. Her latest project, #NoWasteNation, creates a platform on Instagram for innovative waste reducers to unite through social media. She hopes that by highlighting the creative actions of specific community leaders, other community members will be inspired to reduce waste themselves.

Our Environment, Our Responsibility

Nancy Nkili, Ayomide Alagbe, Oluwaseyi Aina, Mercy Ojotola, Naimat Lukman I New Bussa, Nigeria

Nancy Nkili, Ayomide Alagbe, Oluwaseyi Aina, Mercy Ojotola and Naimat Lukman are part of the MESL School Environmental Protection Club in New Bussa. The objective of the club is to teach students how to help protect the environment. Their project aims to expand their engagement and education efforts to other schools and community members, informing them about the dangers of harmful practices such as poaching and logging, and sharing ways to preserve local wildlife.

Resolving the Plight of Smog

Abdullah Shahid I Lahore, Pakistan

Abdullah Shahid is an ardent environmentalist seeking to unearth the causes of Lahore's poor air quality and educate the Pakistani public about this issue. He aims to provide an alternative to the norms of transport used by all to get to school through a community-driven cycle club. Shahid hopes the club will also help inspire a chain reaction that reduces people's carbon footprint and improves air quality.

Save the Forests

Soren Goldsmith I Lexington, Massachusetts, United States

Soren Goldsmith is an award-winning wildlife photographer and conservationist based in Lexington, Massachusetts. Inspired by the work of National Geographic Explorer Joel Sartore, he uses photography to tell stories that promote the protection of local ecosystems and wildlife. In his most recent project, he employs motion-activated camera traps to capture photos of elusive local wildlife. By placing the cameras deep in conservation properties, he reveals the unseen animals that live in his town.

2023 Finalists

CLEAN OUR OCEANS!
Tiffani Gay I Apopka, Florida, United States

CLEAN RIVERS MEXICO – RÍO SONORA
Ana Paula Villalvazo and Victor Arvizu Hermosillo I Sonora, Mexico

CLIMATE EDUCATION OVER AWARENESS
Stephanie Yan, Rinelle Francisco, Kathy Dong, Milan Dechêne, Kalashree Vyas, Michelle Zhang I Toronto, Ontario, Canada

DISHES ON DEMAND IN YARMOUTH, MAINE
Maya Faulstich I Yarmouth, Maine, United States

EVERY DROP MAKES A DIFFERENCE
Sophia Moore and Mara Lloyd I Tremonton, Utah, United States

GIVE YOUR CLOTHES A SECOND LIFE
Yonca Öztürk, Duru Pamukçu, Ata Rüştüoğlu, Ege Bilmece, Nil Koza Akarca, Öykü Çalışkan I Istanbul, Turkey

MANUAL SOBRE LA AGRICULTURA
Maricela Abigail Cháidez Beltrán I Culiacán, Sinaloa, Mexico

PAINT-O-BEANS PAINT
Jade Melendres I Sacramento, California, United States

RESTORE OUR OCEANS
Tahirah Naicker I KwaDukuza, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

THE 15-MINUTE CITY: THE NEW NORM
Mieko Armellini I Houston, Texas, United States

USING SCIENCE



This page: With support from caver Valentina Mariani (top left), Explorer Kenny Broad (center) and diver Nadir Quarta prepare to dive in Italy's Frasassi cave system. Opposite page: A Chirique-Flusse tree frog (*Boana pugnax*) in Colombia's Buritaca valley.

TO PROTECT OUR PLANET



Since 1888, the National Geographic Society's work has been rooted in scientific exploration and discovery. Science serves as the bedrock of our mission, and today, our National Geographic Explorers continue to expand the boundaries of understanding through novel approaches, cutting-edge technologies and collaboration across disciplines to address our planet's most urgent challenges. Backed by a dedicated international community of supporters, the Society funds bold and transformative Explorer projects that seek to answer the critical questions of our time. From vibrant marine ecosystems to subterranean caves that conceal the secrets of human origins, these projects reach every corner of the world to seek new knowledge, advance research-based solutions and equip the next generation of Explorers to protect our natural world.

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

27

marine protected areas covering over 6 million square kilometers of ocean established since 2008 with support from National Geographic Pristine Seas

11

nations signed a groundbreaking Global Declaration for River Dolphins, committing to protect the threatened species

10

heritage sites engaged through the Preserving Legacies program for climate adaptation training to protect these iconic cultural assets





IMPACT STORY

Preserving Ocean Life to Restore a Pristine Planet

Through his work, **National Geographic Pristine Seas** founder and Explorer in Residence Enric Sala has seen how the vitality of our ocean affects all life on Earth. In the face of urgent global threats to marine health — from plastic pollution and global warming to overfishing — coastal communities whose livelihoods depend on the ocean are grappling with how to protect their waters for future generations. Since 2008, the Pristine Seas team of scientists, policy experts and filmmakers has worked with communities, governments and other partners around the world to help protect critical ocean ecosystems through the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs) paired with local stewardship and sustainable management plans.

In 2022, Pristine Seas engaged local government officials to support a full-island survey of the waters surrounding the Commonwealth of Dominica. Significantly, Dominica's resident sperm whale population has been declining steadily over the past 20 years as a result of human activities in their habitats. The environmental consequences of this depletion could be severe, as sperm whales contribute to a significant natural carbon sink, helping mitigate the effects of global warming.

Influenced by the expedition's findings, the Honorable Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of Dominica, announced the establishment of the world's first sperm whale reserve off the western side of the island nation in November 2023. The reserve will provide critical protection for Dominica's sperm whales, and, through a thoughtful conservation-based business plan, will also provide economic advantages to local residents. National Geographic Explorer Shane Gero, founder of the Dominica Sperm Whale Project and lead biologist for the Society's **Project CETI** program, was a scientific advisor on the establishment of the reserve.

Earlier in 2023, the Pristine Seas team embarked on its 38th expedition — a five-year effort to explore and study the remote tropical Pacific region and support local efforts to protect its exceptionally diverse marine ecosystem. Through this "Global Expedition," Pristine Seas aims to double its previous impact and help catalyze a global network of partners committed to protecting 30% of the world's ocean by 2030. In the Global Expedition's first year, the team journeyed to the Southern Line Islands (Kiribati) to study the reefs' remarkable recovery from coral bleaching; Tongareva (Cook Islands) to better understand the relationships of coastal communities living alongside high-density shark populations; Niue to fill in research gaps and augment findings from a 2016 survey of the country's marine reserve; the Republic of the Marshall Islands to survey four remote island atolls; and the Federated States of Micronesia to conduct a nationwide assessment of the country's marine ecosystems.

The National Geographic Society thanks Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment, Anne Howson, LGT Venture Philanthropy Foundation, Oracle and the Philip Stephenson Foundation for their support of Pristine Seas and for their ongoing commitment to helping Explorers restore the health of the ocean.

The ocean plays a critical role in our fight against climate change by absorbing carbon from the atmosphere, protecting marine biodiversity, and supporting the livelihood of coastal and Indigenous communities. Bloomberg Philanthropies is proud to support National Geographic Pristine Seas as they explore and protect the ocean, helping to restore the health of our planet and achieve a more sustainable future for all.

ANTHA WILLIAMS
Environment Program Lead
Bloomberg Philanthropies





IMPACT STORY

Finding Solutions to Protect Critical Ecosystems

Perpetual Planet Expeditions, launched by the National Geographic Society in partnership with Rolex, explores some of the planet's most remote and iconic life-support systems in order to understand the threats they face and drive action to protect them. From the summit of mountains to the vastness of the rainforest and the depths of our ocean, National Geographic and Rolex Perpetual Planet Expeditions harness cutting-edge technology, groundbreaking research methods, and local and international expertise to find solutions to urgent ecological challenges.

Launched in 2022, the multiyear **Perpetual Planet Amazon Expedition** has continued groundbreaking solutions-focused research to fill knowledge gaps, allowing scientists, decision-makers and local communities to plan for and address the impacts of climate and environmental change throughout the Amazon River Basin. Anchored by a multidisciplinary cohort of National Geographic Explorers working alongside local communities, the team worked to understand the habitat and health of endemic species such as the Andean bear, pink river dolphin and arapaima to inform conservation and protection efforts; mapped the economic and social value of Brazilian Amazon mangroves for local communities to advocate for their increased protection; investigated novel methods to restore degraded mining landscapes; assessed the impact of near-record solar radiation in the Andes; and analyzed lidar scans obtained from Amazonian flooded forests to inform climate adaptation efforts.

Notably, in October 2023, galvanized by the deaths of over 150 freshwater dolphins from heat stress, Explorer Fernando Trujillo spearheaded a convening of 14 countries that are home to the world's six surviving species of river dolphins. At this meeting, Trujillo presented a StoryMap produced by the Society in collaboration with the Omacha Foundation about his work with the Amazonian pink river dolphins. As a result, 11 nations in attendance signed the first-of-its-kind Global Declaration for the Protection of River Dolphins and their Rivers, pledging to create transboundary research-driven solutions and recommendations to mitigate threats facing this species and the communities who depend on the rivers they live in.

Across the world, in the Himalaya mountains, Explorer Baker Perry, Tenzing Gyalzen Sherpa and Dawa Yangzum Sherpa returned to Mount Everest on a **Perpetual Planet Mountain Expedition** to conduct essential repairs to a previously installed system of high-altitude weather-monitoring stations that provide important information about real-time conditions on the mountain to communities in the region.

The Society thanks Rolex for its partnership in exploring the planet's most significant ecological systems to inform the decisive actions needed to safeguard their vitality for generations to come.

> **The support of the National Geographic Society and Rolex for scientific research expeditions to document the impacts of climate change on high alpine regions has been instrumental in improving global understanding of historical and real-time conditions on these critical water towers. The actionable data from these expeditions are invaluable to communities downstream and policymakers worldwide.**
>
> BAKER PERRY
> **National Geographic Explorer**

Opposite page, from left: Sea fan polyps in Micronesia. Explorer in Residence Enric Sala dives in the Marshall Islands. A sea anemone and clownfish pictured with its eggs in the Maldives. This page: Explorer Ruthmery Pillco Huarcaya sets a camera trap in Peru's Manú National Park. Explorer Fernando Trujillo and his team measure an Amazon river dolphin before returning the animal to the water. Dawa Yangzum Sherpa (left), Explorer Baker Perry (center), and Tenzing Gyalzen Sherpa (right) at Everest Base Camp in Nepal.



Morning mist touches down in the lowland rainforest that carpets Mount Palung National Park on the island of Borneo in West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia.



EXPLORER PROFILE

Nalini Nadkarni

Known as the "Queen of the Forest Canopy," ecologist and newly named National Geographic Explorer at Large Nalini Nadkarni pioneered the study of Costa Rican rainforest canopies and has spent nearly four decades creating new canopy-access techniques to study the plants, animals and microbes found in rainforest treetops. Nadkarni's work has revealed the canopy to be an integral part of forest ecology and has galvanized scientists to study this complex system in greater depth.

An avid science communicator, Nadkarni produced the National Geographic documentary film "Heroes of the High Frontier" about canopy studies, has published over 150 scientific papers and articles, and has written three books highlighting the importance of forest diversity and how to protect it. Working to make nature and science accessible to everyone, she has collaborated with fashion designers, pastors and religious officials, community leaders, poets and artists. Most recently, the National Geographic Society supported Nadkarni's research into the positive impacts of nature and natural imagery on people in severely nature-deprived environments, including incarcerated men. Her work has led to the creation of multiple nature-based programs in jails and prisons across the United States, and notably revealed that exposing individuals in solitary confinement to natural imagery and videos for just one hour a day contributed to a 26% drop in violent infractions compared to inmates who did not receive the same exposure.

The Society named Nadkarni an Explorer at Large in October 2023 — the highest Explorer distinction. Individuals so named are preeminent leaders in their fields and also serve as mentors to other Explorers. As an Explorer at Large, Nadkarni will continue to work closely with the Society to advance her research and improve accessibility to science and nature across all communities.

EXPLORER PROFILE

Meaghan Brosnan

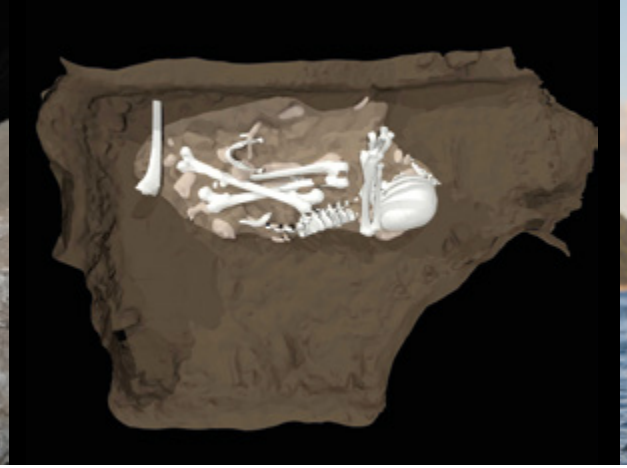
In November 2023, National Geographic Explorer Meaghan Brosnan's WildAid Marine Program, supported by the National Geographic Society's Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic (LEX-NG) Fund, won the prestigious Earthshot Prize, which aims to identify and scale innovative solutions to the world's greatest environmental challenges.

Since 2016, Brosnan has worked to help the custodians of MPAs enforce environmental regulations and deliver on their conservation goals by uniting local governments, charities, nonprofits and academics to share knowledge and tailor actions for each region. Her approach bolsters law enforcement's capacity by making sure people have the tools, technology and resources to deter illegal fishing, allow wildlife to recover and improve community livelihoods.

The effectiveness of Brosnan's project is unquestionable. When her team began working in the Galápagos Marine Reserve in Ecuador, the practice of shark finning killed 12,000 sharks a year. The reserve's rangers were limited by a lack of resources, including one small vessel ill-equipped to patrol a protected area the size of New York state. Through collaboration with Brosnan's program, the reserve now boasts the densest population of sharks in the world, and shark finning within the reserve has been functionally eliminated. The program has helped rangers expand their patrol fleet to eight vessels and a patrol plane; secure satellite vessel monitoring; and train enforcement authorities to share their expertise with partners across the region.

Brosnan's team currently works with established MPAs and fisheries management areas across 1.64 million square kilometers of ocean. With the Society's support, Brosnan aims to grow the program to include 250 priority marine areas over the next five years.







Program Spotlights

RISING STAR

Supported by funding from Lyda Hill Philanthropies, paleoanthropologist and National Geographic Explorer Lee Berger is well known for his groundbreaking discoveries at the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage site in South Africa, where he and his team unearthed two previously unknown extinct hominin species in the Rising Star cave system: *Australopithecus sediba* and *Homo naledi*.

In 2023, the Society named Berger an Explorer in Residence to support his work to establish the Rising Star program as one of the world's leading field research and exploration projects, permanently sustained in Africa. His team will receive continued support for their scientific research and exploration, as well as efforts to incorporate storytellers, artists and educators into the research process to amplify local voices, expand the boundaries of paleoanthropology and breathe new life into human history.

Berger's recent exploration of the Rising Star cave system has yielded potential evidence of engravings and burials performed by *Homo naledi*, despite the species' brain size having been not much larger than a chimpanzee's. These findings suggest the possibility of meaning-making and mortuary practices that predate the earliest known *Homo sapiens* interments by at least 100,000 years. This new evidence could fundamentally shift our understanding of humanity's origins and evolution, and upend the current scientific view that complex hominin behaviors, such as burials, were exclusive to large-brained species. Berger's work and the Rising Star program's remarkable findings received national attention in the summer of 2023 with the premiere of Netflix's "UNKNOWN: Cave of Bones" documentary, as well as the publication of Berger's book, "Cave of Bones: A True Story of Discovery, Adventure, and Human Origins."

In 2023, the Rising Star program significantly expanded its research scope, running concurrent projects at different cave systems in the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage site that involved over 140 academics and yielded 53 major scientific outputs, as well as numerous smaller discoveries. Rising Star also more than doubled its staff, investing in local exploration and technical expertise and strengthening the program's commitment to local, meaningful impact. The Society thanks Lyda Hill for supporting Berger's work to deepen our understanding of human history.

PROJECT CETI

Can humans learn to translate whales' communications? This is the question National Geographic Explorer David Gruber is hoping to answer through Project CETI (Cetacean Translation Initiative) in collaboration with Explorers Shane Gero and Robert Wood. With the goal of applying technology to amplify the natural world, Project CETI aims to use technology to bring humans closer to nature and ignite a global movement to protect our ocean and planet. Their work combines scientific research with linguistics, cryptography, robotics, underwater acoustics and machine learning to decode the communication patterns of sperm whales — the species with the largest brains on Earth. The program's initial research has focused on whale populations in Dominica, in the Eastern Caribbean, and the program has worked with local communities and other experts to cultivate stewardship of their marine neighbors.

In 2023, Project CETI partnered with the National Geographic Society's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team to offer a grant writing workshop for participants in the program's Marine Conservation Fellowship. Project CETI also collaborated with the National Geographic Photo Camp program to host a weeklong opportunity for Dominican youth to learn about the power of photographic





storytelling. Students explored the island, learned photography techniques, and shared their connections to the ocean and marine life.

In July 2023, the Project CETI team had the remarkable opportunity to witness the birth of a sperm whale calf off the coast of Dominica, and were able to capture high-quality video and audio recordings of the event. Such an occurence has not been scientifically observed since 1986, and has never included recordings, making the new footage captured by Project CETI a rare and valuable resource for scientists to learn more about the species than we've ever known. The birth involved a coordinated effort by 11 sperm whales (eight adult females and three calves) working together to lift the new calf to the surface to breathe for its first few moments and continuing to support the newborn until it was able to swim on its own. This may be evidence of the most participatory birth ever witnessed within the animal kingdom. Project CETI is currently working on analyzing audio recordings of the whales' vocalizations during the birth. Made possible through the support of the Society's generous donors, these groundbreaking findings will likely yield important new information about this keystone marine species.

PRESERVING LEGACIES: A FUTURE FOR OUR PAST

Climate change impacts — from flooding and heat waves to rising sea levels — are the fastest-growing causes of cultural heritage erosion. Preserving Legacies: A Future for our Past led by National Geographic Explorer Victoria Herrmann and supported by Manulife, is leading the effort to anticipate the effects of climate change on cultural heritage sites by helping local communities develop and implement place- and people-based climate adaptation plans to safeguard these sites and the values they represent. The project supports local leaders in creating hyperlocal climate models, developing a peer-to-peer mentoring program for site managers, and creating educational and storytelling materials that inform and inspire future generations. The initial scope of the project comprises 10 heritage sites around the world, including the Angkor Archaeological Park in Cambodia, which is home to Angkor Wat; Cartagena, Colombia; Sceilg Mhichíl in Ireland; Petra, Jordan; and the Rice Terraces of the Philippines Cordilleras.

In 2023, the program's pilot year, the Preserving Legacies team trained 25 site custodians in understanding climate change models, conducting community vulnerability assessments and evaluating approaches for how to effectively safeguard each heritage site from climate impacts. In a comparative pre- and post-course survey, 100% of participants polled said the experience increased their understanding of climate science. Site custodians also indicated the importance of opportunities to connect with peers working at sites that face similar climate hazards.

Preserving Legacies led seven focus groups about community values and two climate vulnerability assessment workshops in Petra, as well as the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras in 2023. These assessments reached more than 75 community leaders in Jordan and 100 more in the Philippines, providing an inclusive platform for heritage adaptation planning and bolstering community agency to help build a climate-resilient future. It also created a strong foundation for the Preserving Legacies team to build upon as they work to create sustainable action plans with the other eight heritage sites. Eventually, Herrmann hopes to provide support for up to 50 additional target sites.

Opposite page, from left: Explorer in Residence Lee Berger holds a photographic scale next to an engraving in South Africa's Rising Star cave system. Artist's reconstruction of the burial of an adult *Homo naledi* found in the Rising Star system. Explorer David Gruber is a marine biologist and founder of Project CETI. This page: Sperm whales photographed off the coast of Dominica. Explorer Victoria Herrmann leads a workshop for the Preserving Legacies program in Petra, Jordan. Explorer Victoria Herrmann in the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras.

TELLING STORIES



This page: Okavango Wilderness Project team members are silhouetted with "nkashis" at sunrise in the Okavango Delta, Botswana. Opposite page: Explorer Anand Varma employs ingenious photography techniques to reveal new perspectives on science and nature.

THAT SPARK CHANGE

The National Geographic Society recognizes the transformative power of storytelling to shape our understanding of the world. Storytelling is at the heart of our work, and generous donor support enables the Society to invest in National Geographic Explorers who chronicle human experiences, reveal the mysteries of nature and spark curiosity. These storytellers are employing new platforms and multimedia techniques — from photography to digital storytelling and podcasting — to elevate important narratives and amplify voices that have been historically overlooked. Storytelling is the thread that weaves together the fabric of our global community. With your support, Explorers can continue to tell the vital stories that inspire us all to be better stewards of our Earth.

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

1,902

animal portraits added to the National Geographic Photo Ark, raising awareness about at-risk species

30+

stories published through the Society's Wildlife Watch program, exposing wildlife exploitation issues around the world

9

awards earned by the Society-produced film "Nkashi: Race for the Okavango" about the land, communities and culture of Botswana





IMPACT STORY

Culture and Conservation in the Okavango Basin

Since 2015, National Geographic Explorers have been working with the communities and governments of Botswana, Angola and Namibia to secure permanent protection for the wetland ecosystems of the region's Okavango Basin as part of the **National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project** (NGOWP). In 2023, the NGOWP scientifically defined the boundaries of the Angola Highlands Water Tower, a critical step toward the preservation of some of the most biodiverse areas in the world, including the Okavango Delta.

To expand and accelerate this research and conservation work, the Society partnered with De Beers in 2021 to launch Okavango Eternal. This five-year, multinational initiative works to deepen connections with local communities, raise awareness of the basin and its benefits, and support livelihood opportunities that contribute to the region's conservation.

In 2023, Okavango Eternal helped fund the feature-length documentary "Nkashi: Race for the Okavango," produced by the **National Geographic Impact Story Lab** in partnership with Motswana storyteller and Explorer Thalefang Charles. The film follows the journeys of three *mokoro* (dugout canoe) polers — including Explorer Gobonamang "GB" Kgetho — to celebrate the region's cultural heritage, highlight the NGOWP's work, and illuminate the community practices that help protect the basin's unique wetlands.

"Nkashi: Race for the Okavango" was filmed in the Setswana language, in collaboration with Batswana filmmakers and sound engineers. The film score includes tracks created by Motswana musician Thato Kavinja and the Nature Environment and Wildlife Filmmakers (NEWF) Composers Lab.

The documentary premiered for an audience that included His Excellency Dr. Mokgweetsi E.K. Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana, as well as the local Delta community. Thirteen additional community screenings attracted more than 4,000 viewers. "Nkashi: Race for the Okavango" was distributed in more than 100 countries and has earned nine festival awards, including the 2023 Jackson Wild Media Award for Best Original Musical Score.

Post-film-screening surveys of attendees showed the film's positive impact on people's perceptions of the Okavango Delta, as well as increased understanding of the connections between local traditions, sustainable livelihoods and conservation. In particular, 68% of women surveyed were inspired by the film's female characters who demonstrated that women could also access opportunities to build sustainable livelihoods. Following the documentary's release, the annual Nkashi Classic race in 2023 saw a 157 percent increase in attendees, demonstrating increased awareness about the mokoro and other traditional practices and strengthened community pride.

The critical work of the NGOWP and the success of Okavango Eternal's community engagement initiatives highlight the interconnectedness of people, culture and conservation. This work, pivotal in safeguarding the Okavango Basin's future, is made possible by the support of Society donors, whose generosity fuels these vital efforts.

The Society is grateful for the partnership of De Beers in helping make a lasting, positive impact on the protection of the Okavango Basin.

"We are committed to helping preserve and protect the natural beauty of the Okavango Basin, and that came to life through our Okavango Eternal partnership in many ways in 2023: maintaining a robust river-monitoring system, supporting education for future conservation leaders, and working with communities on job creation and sustainable livelihood opportunities. We were also delighted to support National Geographic Society and local Batswana filmmakers in the making of "Nkashi: Race for the Okavango." The communities of the Basin are well-known locally for their love and respect for their natural environment. Bringing stories of the Okavango to the world is absolutely vital to our work to protect this natural wonder, and promote sustainable livelihoods that honor communities' knowledge and traditions."

SANDRINE CONSEILLER
CEO De Beers Brands
De Beers Group



IMPACT STORY

Protecting Species Through the Power of Photography

In December 2023, the Miami Dade Board of County Commissioners convened to vote on whether to move forward with the proposed development of a Miami Wilds water park in the pine rocklands ecosystem of southern Florida — home to one of the highest concentrations of endangered species in the United States. Hinging on their decision was the fate of the Miami tiger beetle — an iridescent green beetle the size of a sunflower seed that cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

In November, National Geographic Explorer and photographer Joel Sartore chose the extremely rare and elusive beetle as the 15,000th species photographed for the **National Geographic Photo Ark** project. Supported by the Livingston Family, the National Geographic Photo Ark is an endeavor to document every species living in the world's zoos, aquariums and wildlife sanctuaries around the world, with a goal of driving public awareness about extinction crises and support for conservation. "Little bitty animals count as much as the big ones," Sartore says. "Ants and bees really do allow our world to be habitable."

Explorer and conservationist George Gann agrees. His habitat restoration project in southern Florida's pine rocklands ecosystem is funded in part by the newly launched **National Geographic Photo Ark Species Impact Initiative**, which supports science-based, on-the-ground conservation projects and elevates the profile of conservationists, their work and their focal species through the Photo Ark. As an Explorer, Gann's project is working to protect and recover the habitat of the federally endangered Miami tiger beetle and the Bartram's scrub-hairstreak butterfly while benefiting many other rare and endangered species of plants that share this ecosystem. He has championed saving the area from further development — including the controversial Miami Wilds water park — and hopes that increasing public awareness of species like the Miami tiger beetle can help inspire people to take action before it's too late.

Five days before the pivotal vote in Miami, investigative reporter Rachel Fobar published an article about the proposed development and the threats it would pose to endangered species as part of the **National Geographic Wildlife Watch** program. Gann says that the public attention garnered by this article, combined with national attention on the Miami tiger beetle as the Photo Ark's latest milestone species, helped generate the support and advocacy necessary to influence the vote's final result: 9-1 in favor of withdrawing the development proposal.

The victory in Miami serves as a compelling testament to the profound impact that your support can wield. By enabling the Society's unique ability to illuminate the plight of threatened species and amplify the work of individuals hoping to protect them, you help mobilize public support and advocacy in critical moments of decision-making. It is through the generosity and vision of its donors that the Society can continue to foster such dynamic partnerships, driving tangible positive outcomes for conservation. As the story of the Miami tiger beetle vividly illustrates, every species, no matter how small, has an invaluable role in our world's ecological tapestry, and it is through collective action and support that we can ensure their survival for generations to come.

Our family is proud to support Joel Sartore's work and the work of the Society. Only if people care will they take action to protect the planet's biodiversity, and Photo Ark is educating people and inspiring them to take action, one photo at a time.

ANNA AND ROBERT LIVINGSTON
Principal Donors Society and Hubbard Council Members

Opposite page, from left: The sun sets over the Okavango Delta in Botswana. Filmmaker Mmoloki Sejo (left) records Explorer Gobonamang Kgetho (right) in Seronga, Botswana. This page: An endangered Miami tiger beetle (*Cicindelidia florida*) in the Pine Rocklands, FL, USA. A western red panda (*Ailurus fulgens fulgens*) at the Lincoln Children's Zoo in Lincoln, NE, USA. An Indochinese green magpie (*Cissa hypoleuca*) at the Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens in Los Angeles, CA, USA.







EXPLORER PROFILE

Paula Kahumbu

Paula Kahumbu is a National Geographic Explorer, renowned Kenyan conservationist and the CEO of WildlifeDirect, a prominent conservation organization dedicated to protecting Africa's wildlife. She leads WildlifeDirect's Hands Off Our Elephants campaign with the support of Her Excellency Margaret Kenyatta, the first lady of the Republic of Kenya. The campaign is widely recognized for its successes in advocacy and the engagement of people in Kenya to support the protection of elephants. Her work has been pivotal in driving conservation efforts across Kenya, particularly in the protection of elephants, which face critical threats from poaching and habitat loss.

Kahumbu has been at the forefront of innovative conservation strategies, including community-based projects that engage local people as active participants in wildlife protection. Her efforts have contributed to the reduction of poaching in Kenya, showcasing the power of community involvement and education to effect meaningful change. In addition, Kahumbu has leveraged compelling storytelling to raise public awareness about conservation issues. She played a key role in the 2023 National Geographic documentary "Secrets of the Elephants," which unveils the complex social structures and emotional intelligence of elephants and highlights the urgent need for their protection.

Kahumbu's work has earned international recognition, including prestigious awards and honors for her contributions to wildlife conservation. She received a special commendation from the United Nations for her critical role in creating awareness and mobilizing action around the crisis facing elephants in Kenya. She is also recognized as a Kenyan conservation ambassador by Brand Kenya and has received the presidential award and title of Order of the Grand Warrior. Through her leadership, advocacy and educational efforts, she continues to inspire a new generation of conservationists, driving forward the mission to create a better future for Africa's wildlife.

Top: An African elephant calf in the Chitabe Concession area of Botswana's Okavango Delta. Bottom: Explorer Paula Kahumbu interviews a local elder about the significance of the Great Rift Valley in Kenya.

EXPLORER PROFILES

The Climate Pledge Global Storytellers Cohort

In January 2023, the National Geographic Society and The Climate Pledge announced the new group of five National Geographic Explorers who will document the global climate crisis, funded by the Society's Global Storytellers Fund. This initiative, backed by The Climate Pledge's commitment to net-zero carbon by 2040, supports a global community of storytellers including photographers, filmmakers and artists. The 2023 cohort will focus on different aspects of climate impact and adaptation.

- **Lynsey Addario** — A U.S. photojournalist recording experiences of climate migration.
- **Pablo Albarenga** — An Uruguayan visual storyteller documenting Brazil's food production and its connection to climate change.
- **Malin Fezehai** — An Eritrean and Swedish photographer and filmmaker documenting human adaptations to sea-level rise through the experiences of people living on water.
- **Gab Mejia** — A Filipino photographer and engineer illuminating the lives of environmental forest defenders.
- **Davide Monteleone** — An Italian artist and researcher examining rising demand for the minerals necessary to achieve renewable energy goals.

The Society is collaborating with The Climate Pledge to expand the fund, supporting 15 Explorers by 2024 to document the global climate crisis through authentic storytelling, illuminate the world's most critical challenges and identify long-lasting solutions that can protect the wonder of our world. This collaboration with The Climate Pledge will advance early-career and established storytellers with the funding, training and exposure necessary to bring their stories about the global climate crisis to the forefront. This collaboration will also support up to 45 mentees as part of the Society's Second Assistant program, which empowers early-career women and storytellers of color by providing training and placing them in the field alongside more experienced Explorers. Through the Global Storytellers Fund, powerful storytellers are underscoring the urgency of climate action and inspiring audiences around the world.










Top: Fisherman Jose Moreira da Silva eats dinner at his camp in Curuça, Pará, Brazil, photographed during the multiyear Perpetual Planet Amazon Expedition. Bottom: The Agusan Marshlands is the largest inland wetland in the Philippines — home to six municipalities and an Indigenous floating community called the Manobos.





Program Spotlights

WILDLIFE WATCH

The National Geographic Society's Wildlife Watch program is an investigative reporting project dedicated to shining a light on issues of wildlife conservation and exploitation around the globe. By leveraging National Geographic's vast network of scientists, conservationists and journalists, Wildlife Watch provides in-depth coverage on illegal wildlife trade, habitat loss and the myriad threats facing the planet's biodiversity. Through compelling storytelling and rigorous investigation, the program not only raises public awareness about these critical issues but also drives discourse and policy change.

- Wildlife Watch reporting in 2023 included more than 30 stories that elevated or exposed wildlife crime and animal exploitation issues in the U.S., Africa, Latin America and elsewhere. Several articles have already made a tangible difference for wildlife by triggering concrete actions from companies and policymakers.
- Clothing retailer Boot Barn halted the sale of elephant-skin boots in response to a January Wildlife Watch investigation into the legality of selling such items.
- Wildlife Watch's exclusive ongoing series on drilling in Botswana's Okavango Delta by Canadian oil company ReconAfrica helped push the company to pause drilling in Namibia in June.

Less than a week after the December digital feature on the critical threats the Miami Wilds water park would pose to Florida pine rocklands was published, the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners voted 9-1 to withdraw the lease proposal.

Made possible by support from generous donors to the Society, the Wildlife Watch program's impact is evident in its ability to inspire action, leading to stronger wildlife protection laws, enhanced conservation efforts and a more informed and engaged public committed to safeguarding the natural world for future generations.

WONDERLAB

In 2023, with support from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, the National Geographic Society officially launched WonderLab, a cutting-edge storytelling studio in Berkeley, California, that is also part classroom and science lab, created by National Geographic Explorer and photographer Anand Varma. With a degree in integrative biology, he has devoted years of his life to developing innovative techniques — even building complex new technology — to create intimate, dramatic and surprising images of nature. Within WonderLab, Varma is engineering new photography and videography techniques and capturing stunning visuals of creatures of all sizes — pushing audiences to challenge how they perceive the world.

The new facility allows Varma to draw upon his knowledge of biology, photography and engineering to capture images and video of rarely- or never-before-seen natural processes. From a precision microdrill that allows for unobtrusive observation of the development of a chick embryo to a desk-size film studio that isolates outside movement in order to enable the recording of near-microscopic jellyfish polyps, Varma has pioneered many new methods of photographing the most intricate details of nature throughout his career. The images produced through these specialized techniques have advanced scientific understanding of species such as honeybees, bats, hummingbirds and jellyfish, and inspired awe in audiences around the world.

Standing at the intersection of art, science and education, Varma's WonderLab serves as an incubator for ideas and talent, offering mentorship and education opportunities for aspiring scientists and storytellers to cultivate their skills in visual communication. In September 2023, Varma led a technical storytelling training with the Society's Second Assistant program, demonstrating his methodology for capturing fascinating visuals and inviting participants to experiment with different photography techniques. The Society also launched two new online educational resources: WonderLab





Learning Resources — a digital collection of online educational resources inspired by Varma's work that invites educators and youth to "find the mystery of things that hide in plain sight and take the time to explore the wonder of our world" — and a video series entitled "I Wonder," which follows Varma's journey to develop new ways to document scientific phenomena.

In September 2023, National Geographic published "Invisible Wonders: Photographs of the Hidden World," in which Varma guides readers through an eye-popping collection of images — his own and those of other Explorers, scientists and photographers — that reveal patterns and details within nature that cannot be seen with the naked eye.

WORLD FRESHWATER INITIATIVE

The National Geographic Society publicly launched the World Freshwater Initiative on March 23, 2023, at a United Nations Water Conference event that was attended by more than 80 freshwater sustainability experts and leaders in science, policy, conservation and journalism.

As part of the Initiative, the Society unveiled a new World Water Map — created in cooperation with Utrecht University and Esri — to tell the story of how people use water and what's left for nature and people. Harnessing cutting-edge GIS technology, the map tracks every drop of water in the world to help answer questions about water supply and identify solutions for people, wildlife and ecosystems that depend on water.

Led by National Geographic Explorer Marc Bierkens and supported by data visualization expert and Explorer Xaquín G.V., the World Water Map is a unique geovisualization tool that contains multiple layers to illustrate the gap between water supply and demand and indicate areas where demand outpaces renewable water resources — a water gap. Based on 40 years of hydrological data, the map has identified 22 "hot spots" around the world including California, Indonesia, Egypt and Pakistan. These places face crisis-level water scarcity exacerbated by several factors including climate change, increased consumption and economic development. With over 50,000 unique visitors in 2023, the World Water Map is serving as a critical resource to help people around the world understand these challenges and take action to protect local and global freshwater resources.

Through the World Freshwater Initiative, the Society is also supporting storytellers, scientists and educators working to analyze, document and alert audiences to emerging water scarcity issues — and show how shortages affect people, communities, wildlife and nature. Their work will be incorporated into the map to help bring the data to life, promote water literacy, inspire sustainable practices, and tell stories of hope and community-based solutions.

The Society is grateful to the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for its support of this critically important work to understand and protect our freshwater.

National Geographic Explorer Anand Varma and his WonderLab sit at the intersection of art and science, inspiring a sense of awe and wonder about the natural world. The Burroughs Wellcome Fund is delighted to support the WonderLab and enable people of all ages to engage with science and discovery in a whole new way.

LOUIS MUGLIA
President and CEO
Burroughs Wellcome Fund

Safe, sustainable water sources are crucial for public health, well-being and economic growth. The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation is pleased to support the National Geographic Society's World Freshwater Initiative, which is providing critical data on the state of freshwater globally and highlighting stories of communities around the globe affected by freshwater challenges. Together we can find solutions to this pressing problem.

BRETT GLEITSMANN
Program Officer, Safe Water Initiative
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

Opposite page, from left: African elephants in Botswana's Okavango Delta. Explorer Anand Varma vacuums the sand in aquariums housing flamboyant cuttlefish in his WonderLab studio in Berkeley, CA, USA. Tiny water droplets surround an Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) in flight. This page: A student inspects a sample gathered during a National Geographic Bioblitz learning program in New Albany, OH, USA. Men cast fishnets from a boat on a river that flows into Lake Tanganyika in Tanzania.

INSPIRING



This page: A National Geographic Photo Camp participant takes a photo on a morning game drive in Moremi Game Reserve in Botswana. Opposite page: School students in Bharathawadi, Karnataka, India, participate in a Wild Shaale presentation to raise awareness of India's incredible biodiversity.

THE CHANGEMAKERS OF TOMORROW

The National Geographic Society is extending the work of our Explorers into classrooms and communities — equipping people with the tools to better understand the world around them and take action in its preservation. Reaching more than 44 million people in 2023 through online educational resources, and nearly 18 million students through books and media published in partnership with Cengage, the Society is inspiring a new generation of changemakers to tackle global environmental challenges.

Our education grants strategy allows us to expand the impact of Explorers like Ndimuh Bertrand Shancho and Hilario Poot Cahun, who are using local, community-based learning strategies to catalyze real, long-term behavior change in people around the globe, transforming science- and storytelling-based solutions into positive action.

With the support and generosity of our global community, the Society can continue to nurture the innovation, passion and resilience of planetary stewards of all ages.

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

2,907

young people submitted solution videos for the inaugural Slingshot Challenge

400

young people participated in the Externship program, with three alumni awarded the title of National Geographic Young Explorer

16

Photo Camps hosted in six countries, introducing students to the basics of photography







IMPACT STORY

Aiming For a Better Future

In partnership with the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, the National Geographic Society created the **Slingshot Challenge** in 2022 to inspire the next generation of problem-solvers, advocates and stewards of the planet. Challenge participants are asked to create a one-minute video outlining an innovative solution to an environmental issue in their community that they are passionate about. The Society provides the opportunity to engage with workshops and resources that help participants leverage their voice, creativity, innovation and ingenuity to identify solutions. Selected by a panel of experts including National Geographic Explorers Ved Chirayath, Manar Elkebir, Sandra Turner and Diana Zendejo, as well as a popular vote, awardees are eligible to receive up to $10,000 in funding.

In its inaugural year, the challenge generated nearly four million social media engagements and received 1,838 submissions from nearly 3,000 youth in 80 countries. In May 2023, the Society announced 10 finalists who would receive funding of $1,000 and five submissions to receive $10,000 each. Slingshot award recipients were also invited to attend the Society's annual Explorers Festival in Washington, D.C., in June 2023.

Year two of the global video challenge launched in September 2023. The Slingshot Challenge connects participants with a global network of Explorers, equipping them with solution-finding skills and inspiring them to improve their communities and beyond. Through an exciting new collaboration with the prestigious Earthshot Prize, Slingshot Challenge alumni will have the opportunity to connect with Earthshot Prize finalists to receive mentoring and guidance to support the next steps for implementing their solutions. In 2024, Slingshot Challenge participants will also continue to learn from members of the Explorer community, including Markus Martinez Burman and Andrea Villarreal Rodríguez. About their experience, Rodríguez said, "As a mentor during the inaugural Slingshot Challenge, I witnessed firsthand the incredible impact it had on inspiring youth to connect with the world around them. These brilliant students are not only profoundly aware of the challenges their communities face but are determined to find real solutions."

Thanks to the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and National Geographic's global community of passionate supporters, we believe that no problem is unsolvable, and that together, our ideas can lead to taking action to protect our planet and improve our future.

The passion, ingenuity and drive of young people are critical to finding sustainable solutions for the environmental challenges we face. The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation is inspired by the fresh perspectives of youth participating in the Slingshot Challenge, and proud to partner with the National Geographic Society to harness the enthusiasm and energy that will help create lasting change for the planet.

LARA LITTLEFIELD
Executive Director,
Partnerships and Programs
Paul G. Allen Family Foundation







IMPACT STORY

Engaging New Perspectives

In 2023, the National Geographic Society celebrated the 20th anniversary of **National Geographic Photo Camp**, a program founded by National Geographic Explorer in Residence Kirsten Elstner in 2003 to provide a meaningful introduction to photography for young people from communities around the world. Since its founding, the program has reached over 3,000 students from more than 40 countries, providing them with the opportunity to build confidence, explore different perspectives and tell their stories through photography. Elstner, alongside other Explorers and photographers, has served as a mentor, fostering a sense of community and encouraging youth to share their personal viewpoints.

Photo Camp offers a unique, immersive learning environment that goes beyond teaching technical skills, allowing participants to connect with world-class Explorers and photographers while learning about the importance of empathy and authentic storytelling. The program has not only impacted participants during the camps but has also paved the way for continued engagement with the Society, with some alumni going on to become Young Explorers or teaching assistants at subsequent camps. Over 2.5 million photographs taken by Photo Camp students have been shared with more than 30 million people around the world, illustrating themes such as identity, hope and growth.

To celebrate the program's 20th anniversary, 20 Photo Camp alumni participated in a November 2023 master class in Washington, D.C., with their work showcased through social media and a presentation of alumni stories hosted at National Geographic headquarters. Also in November, National Geographic published "Photo Camp Stories: Our World Through the Lens of Young Photographers," a compilation of over 200 images from the camps that represent the perspectives of youth from 35 countries.

Thanks to the generosity of the William Randolph Hearst Foundation and other donors, in 2023 the Society was able to connect more than 300 Photo Camp participants with 35 Explorer mentors (including eight Photo Camp alumni) across six countries, which gave access to other Society programs such as **Project CETI**, the **Okavango Wilderness Project** and **Africa Refocused**. In collaboration with the Society's Education division, a series of Photo Camps were conducted in six marginalized communities in the United States, reaching 120 young people. Working with local partners ensured continued training and growth opportunities. With the backing of National Geographic's dedicated supporters, Elstner aims to expand the program's impact in under-resourced communities — paving the way for youth from every corner of the world to find their voices and have them be heard.

> **Being part of the Photo Camp story since we began this work 20 years ago has changed my life. Our mission has always been to mentor and inspire youth to see the power of their own voice through photography. I have had the honor of understanding and sharing the stories of so many incredible communities around the world through their eyes.**

KIRSTEN ELSTNER
Explorer in Residence

Opposite page, from left: Slingshot Challenge winner Kayla Ling meets with Explorer Agustina Besada at the 2023 Explorers Festival in Washington, D.C., USA. Slingshot Challenge awardees at National Geographic Society headquarters. Explorer and Photo Ark founder Joel Sartore meets with Slingshot Challenge winner Soren Goldsmith. This page: National Geographic Photo Camp participants visit Botswana's Moremi Game reserve. A Photo Camp New Zealand participant reviews images with a member of the Auckland community. A Photo Camp participant takes a photo of ducklings in Moldova.





Program Spotlights

2892 MILES TO GO

There are 2,892 miles between the two furthest points across the contiguous United States. Within each of these miles, narratives of place, people and histories are often mistold, misrepresented or simply unacknowledged. These missing stories become gaps in our collective knowledge and serve as barriers to creating more informed, empathetic and united communities. To address these gaps, National Geographic Explorer Ashley Lamb-Sinclair founded 2892 Miles To Go, a community-based education program. It engages intergenerational community groups with innovative geography education experiences that demonstrate the power of geospatial technology, data and mapping to illuminate unknown or unacknowledged stories around environmental, social and cultural issues across the United States.

This program's uniquely geographic approach to educational storytelling has yielded a growing archive of community narratives that spark authentic learning and community-led solutions. It has also supported the development of a geographic mindset and skills that open doors to new careers for the next generation.

In each community site, the program team engages local young people, educators, changemakers and other leaders in a process of place-based narrative inquiry to investigate the stories of a community and its people. The team employs advanced ArcGIS StoryMaps, GIS and MapMaker platforms — built with support from the National Geographic Society's partnership with Esri — to combine custom StoryMaps of each place with multimedia content to create collections of interactive digital narratives that represent the voices and experiences of many. Each StoryMap is supported by educational resources to inspire and equip educators within and outside traditional classrooms to integrate these perspectives into their lessons. This helps rebalance the kinds of stories that dominate the education landscape and impact future generations through exposure to geographic inquiry and leading-edge technology.

In a conversation with Tulsa-based community educator Kristi Williams at the plenary session of the 2023 Esri Education Summit, Lamb-Sinclair highlighted how the 2892 Miles to Go program has harnessed geospatial technology to shift the learning experiences of young people. Additionally, Lamb-Sinclair joined 2892 Community Leader Jaraux Washington and fellow Explorer Alicia Odewale at the Society's annual Explorers Festival in June 2023, where each spoke about the importance of authentic storytelling in their work. As the 2892 Miles to Go program expands to represent a nationwide collective of educators, organizers, storytellers, researchers and leaders, Lamb-Sinclair hopes audiences will feel inspired to "own your mile" and work to advance positive change in their own communities.

EXPLORER CLASSROOM

Explorer Classroom is a live, virtual, interactive session that connects learners ages 7-18 directly with National Geographic Explorers for short lessons and Q&A, bringing science, exploration, conservation and storytelling to life. It's an opportunity for Explorers to interact with and inspire the next generation of Explorers, share behind-the-scenes stories about their work and answer student questions in real time. Events are free, open to any classroom, and include an interactive guide to accompany students on a learning journey that sparks curiosity, builds empathy and empowers learners to take action. Explorer Classroom sessions are also available in Spanish. In 2023, Explorer Classroom sessions featured 48 Explorers across 90 events with an estimated 213,214 student views.





In 2023, the Explorer Classroom program introduced a new series model; each series follows a specific theme through a set of live events and associated activities over the course of five weeks. The pilot series focused on wildlife, aligning with the 50th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act in December 2023. These sessions offered an unparalleled opportunity for students to interact directly with leading scientists, conservationists and storytellers. They delved into topics from tracking hyenas in Kenya to documenting the biodiversity of tide pools in California, all while practicing what it takes to be an Explorer and taking action on behalf of wildlife locally. For educators, Explorer Classroom offers supporting materials to continue learning beyond the session, including engaging experiential lesson plans and guides.

National Geographic supporters are committed to transforming the learning experience for young people and the educators who guide them. With contributions from passionate individuals and institutions like the TAWANI Foundation that share the Society's vision for a better future for our planet, Explorer Classroom aims to engage more Explorers and reach more students across the globe, sparking curiosity and wonder about the world around us.

EXTERNSHIPS

In 2021, the National Geographic Society joined forces with The Nature Conservancy to create an externship program for young leaders, equipping them with the knowledge and resources to seek solutions and drive impact in their communities. For each eight-week externship, a cohort of participants from around the world convene online to explore areas of conservation, collaborate with experts and generate local solutions around a topic such as marine and freshwater conservation. In 2023, the Society and The Nature Conservancy received nearly 19,000 applications, and 400 people were selected to participate in the program.

In each cohort, externs learn from the expertise of conservation professionals from the Society and The Nature Conservancy, including National Geographic Explorers. Externs also have the opportunity to form connections, network and take part in workshops on storytelling and research techniques. Every extern is tasked to identify and evaluate an environmental issue in their community, understand current work happening to address the issue and find gaps in action. They then propose solutions to improve the situation. Across this inquiry process, externs develop an Esri ArcGIS StoryMap — a geospatial visualization and storytelling tool — to communicate solutions they have identified. Externs who are ready to actualize their visions can apply for up to $2,000 in seed funding to help implement their ideas within their communities, and build on the knowledge and skills gained during the program.

Since the externship program's establishment, the Society has received over 30,000 applications, with more than 800 individuals representing over 100 countries and 35 U.S. states ultimately enrolled. Over $200,000 in seed funding has been awarded to 110 graduates to support a wide range of community projects developed during their externships. In 2023, three extern alumni — Gabriela Tejeda, Betty Jahateh and Brigitta Gunawan — were awarded the title of National Geographic Young Explorer, becoming official members of our Explorer community and supporting a dynamic pipeline of talented and conservation-minded individuals developed through the Society's educational programs. Through this program, and with the support of our donor community, the Society is investing in the people who will lead conservation into the future.

Opposite page, from left: Explorer Ashley Lamb-Sinclair (left) and 2892 Miles to Go educator Jaraux Washington during the 2023 Explorers Festival in Washington, D.C., USA. Educator Andres Chavez speaks to students from Arvin High School in Arvin, CA, USA. Explorers Jennifer Burgin and Issa Barte speak to students during an Explorer Classroom event at Alice Deal Middle School in Washington, D.C. This page: Young Explorer Gabriela Tejeda is pictured in the field. National Geographic Society and The Nature Conservancy externs at Araromi beach in Ondo State, Nigeria.







UNPLASTIFY

National Geographic Explorer Agustina "Tati" Besada is on a mission to change the human relationship with plastic — reducing single-use plastic by finding innovative ways to design it out of day-to-day life through her Unplastify Worldwide Education program. This free, three-month educational program targets students ages 15-16 and works with them to create and implement their own solutions to the issue of plastic pollution, both globally and in their communities.

To date, Unplastify Worldwide has reached more than 23 countries and over 158 educational institutions, engaging the next generation of leaders in sustainability. In 2023, the program saw a surge of engagement from around the world. In Ukraine, educator Iryna Kharchenko shared: "I believe the Unplastify challenge is the best thing that could have happened to my students. It's not just a project; it's more like a transformative journey that helps young people not only to break free from plastic but also makes them real game-changers capable of creating a sustainable future."

With support from the Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic Fund, Unplastify is scaling its reach to more than 2,500 new young people and 250 educators worldwide. It aims to build awareness and develop solutions to the impact of plastics in our ocean — ultimately seeking to reduce plastic use by three tons.

WILD SHAALE

Wild Shaale is a conservation education program created by Explorer and conservation biologist Krithi Karanth in collaboration with the Centre for Wildlife Studies and fellow Explorer and educator Gabby Salazar. In 2023, the National Geographic Society expanded its support for Wild Shaale by providing learning design expertise through National Geographic's EduLab, a team dedicated to building creative education products and solutions to amplify and extend our National Geographic Explorers' impact.

The Wild Shaale program ("shaale" translates to "school" in Kannada) is designed to engage children living near wildlife and nurture their interest in and inspire empathy toward wildlife and the environment. It uses a mixture of art, visual media and games to build students' knowledge of and sense of connection to their local wildlife, and promotes self-efficacy by giving them practical actions they can take to share space with wildlife and support local conservation efforts. The Wild Shaale curriculum is available in seven languages and offers human-wildlife coexistence strategies that empower students around the world to take personal responsibility and action to protect wildlife and wild places.

Since connecting for the first time at the Society's 2017 Explorers Festival, Karanth and Salazar have worked to bring Wild Shaale to hundreds of schools around the Western Ghats in India — a biodiversity hot spot where residents commonly face challenges to their livelihoods from interactions with wildlife. In 2023, Karanth and Salazar brought the Wild Shaale curriculum to more than 15,000 students across over 300 schools, inspiring lasting connections with nature and the animals we coexist with.

GROSVENOR TEACHER FELLOWSHIP

In April 2023, through a highly competitive selection process from 419 applications, 50 educators became the National Geographic Society's 15th cohort of Grosvenor Teacher Fellows in recognition of their commitment to geographic education. The Grosvenor Teacher Fellowship is a unique professional learning opportunity for pre-K-12 educators, made possible by a longstanding partnership between the Society and Lindblad Expeditions. The 2023 cohort of Grosvenor Teacher Fellows — consisting of educators from 24 U.S. states, five Canadian provinces and the first ever Fellow from Puerto Rico — featured a diverse

From left: Explorer Agustina "Tati" Besada and the Unplastify team speak with students in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Explorer and conservation scientist Krithi Karanth reads and distributes illustrated storybooks about wildlife to students in Bharathawadi, Karnataka, India. The 2023 cohort of National Geographic Grosvenor Teacher Fellows.

group representing an array of grade levels and subject areas including social studies, STEM, second-language programs, art and more.

In 2023, Fellows took part in eight- to 24-day expeditions aboard several Lindblad Expeditions and National Geographic vessels to destinations in six continents, including four regions new to the program: Australia and New Zealand, Indonesia, Japan and Patagonia. While on board, Fellows experienced landscapes, cultures and wildlife endemic to some of the world's most remote areas. On each voyage, Fellows were accompanied by Lindblad Expeditions and National Geographic experts, including knowledgeable naturalists, undersea specialists and photographers.

As part of their Fellowship, members of the 2023 cohort take on a two-year leadership commitment with the Society, serving as program ambassadors to foster collaboration with other educators in the National Geographic community and beyond. In their own communities, these educators will provide leadership, employ innovative teaching practices and share powerful narratives to help weave the values of exploration, conservation and cultural understanding into the fabric of education around the globe. The Grosvenor Teacher Fellowship is funded in part by a generous donation by the I See A Foundation.

MAPMAKER

In November 2023, the National Geographic Society celebrated Geography Awareness Week, encouraging people across the country to embrace a greater understanding of geography and build their geo-literacy. As part of this effort, the Society partnered with Esri — the global leader in geographic information system (GIS) technology — to launch the reimagined National Geographic MapMaker tool.

MapMaker is National Geographic's online mapping resource, an easy-to-use learning solution that provides an entry point to GIS technology, connecting learners with essential geographic information for exploration and education. With the new web-based app, anyone can visually experience and interact with geospatial information about Earth's interconnected human and natural systems while exploring the art of mapmaking. MapMaker allows users to analyze patterns and relationships by layering maps to reveal, for example, population differences across biomes or how the impacts of climate change will affect various communities. Within two months, the valuable tool was accessed by more than 650,000 people.

The Society's Geography Awareness Week celebration also included the NorthStar GIS Homecoming program at Howard University in Washington, D.C. Here, Explorer Clinton Johnson moderated a panel discussion featuring Chief Communications, Marketing and Brand Officer Crystal Brown; Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer Shannon P. Bartlett; Chief Education Officer Deborah R. Grayson; and Disney's Senior Vice President of Inclusive Content & Engagement Karen Greenfield. Topics included the importance of geography and geographic approaches to build strong and resilient communities of color; the diversity, equity and inclusion work underway at the Society and at Disney; and ways the Society has implemented its strategic diversity, equity and inclusion throughline.

The Society, alongside partners like Esri, is committed to reinforcing the vital role that geographic literacy plays in today's interconnected world. Innovative tools such as the National Geographic MapMaker empower individuals and communities to tackle global challenges in new ways, paving the way for a more inclusive future.

STUDENT TRAVEL

National Geographic Student Travel is a two-year special pilot program offering immersive travel experiences for high school students. These fee-based experiences are designed to connect youth with the National Geographic Society, our mission and National Geographic Explorers, with the goal of building an Explorer Mindset in participants through authentic, experiential travel and exploration.

In 2023, 220 high school students from around the globe traveled on 12 trips across 10 locations including Ecuador and the Galápagos, Iceland, the Canadian Arctic, Tokyo and Namibia. The Society awarded 15 fully funded scholarships to increase access to these experiences, with special contributions from Cigna and the Society's community of supporters.

Each itinerary featured an Explorer who helped students delve deeper into their surroundings and explore themes such as photography, climate and geology, and wildlife conservation. Students were offered a range of experiential learning opportunities customized to their location and interests, such as learning about cutting-edge technology used to combat climate change, researching threats to wildlife alongside scientists and crafting a photography portfolio as they learned how to take images that tell a story. These experiences were designed to encourage participants to deepen current interests, discover new passions and leverage the Explorer Mindset they developed throughout the program to care for and act on behalf of our planet and its people upon returning home.

EQUIPPING EXPLORERS



This page: National Geographic Explorer and mycologist Giuliana Furci searches for mushrooms in Chile's Tierra del Fuego. Opposite page: Explorer, marine biologist and Project CETI founder David Gruber dives off the coast of Dominica.

TO GO FURTHER

In a year marked by unprecedented challenges and remarkable discoveries, the steadfast support of the National Geographic Society's global community of donors has played a crucial role in furthering our mission. In 2023, your contributions enabled us to equip a diverse group of National Geographic Explorers with the essential tools, training and resources they need to expand our collective understanding of the world. Through programs that offer Explorers access to cutting-edge technology, enriching learning opportunities and the guidance of subject-matter experts, the Society aims to enhance their ability to achieve project goals and expand their impact beyond what could be achieved alone.

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

600+

Explorers served by the Society's Exploration Technology Lab

14

multimedia projects produced by the Society's Impact Story Lab to amplify Explorer-led work

10

individuals received mentorship and training as part of the 2022-23 cohort of the Society's Field Ready program







IMPACT STORY

Exploring the Edge of Ingenuity

Technology and innovation have been part of the National Geographic Society's DNA since 1888. Today, the **National Geographic Exploration Technology Lab** (ExTech Lab) continues this legacy by developing and expanding access to cutting-edge technologies and tools that accelerate the work of National Geographic Explorers.

In 2023, the ExTech Lab served more than 600 Explorers, building and deploying breakthrough systems to facilitate learnings about the planet, nature and the cultural makeup of our world. The Lab's team of engineers and biologists employs advanced imaging sensors, cutting-edge technologies, machine learning algorithms and data analysis platforms to provide insights into extreme and inaccessible environments and enable the exploration of sensitive natural and cultural systems. The team also develops groundbreaking imaging and storytelling tools that enable photographers, filmmakers and science communicators to create transformative stories that inspire people to care about our world. In addition, the ExTech Lab provides free access to off-the-shelf hardware and software that helps Explorers scale their impact.

The ExTech Lab has built and deployed bespoke tools including an animal-borne Crittercam in Dominica to help Explorers capture unique data on the behavior of sperm whales and squid; created media-quality camera traps that autonomously capture footage of rarely seen natural behaviors of animals in the wild; and provided bioacoustic analysis to help Explorers measure the health and biodiversity of a specific geographic area. Thanks to generous support from Iridium, including the donation of satellite communications equipment, data plans and other resources, the ExTech Lab is also able to ensure Explorers stay connected during field-based research expeditions and storytelling endeavors in remote locations worldwide.

In 2023, the ExTech Lab collaborated with five ocean-focused Explorers, providing them with access to custom-built deep sea cameras, as well as mentorship and technology support. David Obura, Sheena Talma, Laura Rodriguez, Arzucan Askin, Giovanni Chimienti and Aristide Kamla used the deep sea camera system to augment their fieldwork across the Asia-Pacific, Latin American and African regions. Since their development, these autonomous robotic camera systems have enabled Explorers to probe the least explored locations in the ocean, documenting life-forms and environments in the Tonga Trench, the Puerto Rico Trench and the Mariana Trench.

In September 2023, the ExTech Lab deployed a custom AI camera trap network in California's Jack and Laura Dangermond Preserve as part of Explorer Rae Wynn-Grant's work observing mountain lion feeding ecology. The camera trap network has helped Wynn-Grant's team reveal the challenges facing mountain lions and large carnivores forced to shift their habitats as a result of climate change. The custom-built array can also transmit AI-classified imagery from the traps via Iridium satellites, enabling near real-time notification of events.

From tropical rainforests to the Arctic tundra to subterranean caves that reveal our human history, Explorers are on the front lines of research and conservation of some of the world's most precious places. Thanks to support from Iridium and other donors, the Society's ExTech Lab is committed to equipping these changemakers with tools and training that will help accelerate their impact.

> **With shared-beliefs and a like-minded vision of how to help protect and tell the story of the wonders of our world, we are proud to support the very important work done by the National Geographic Society and its Explorers. We look forward to seeing the innovative applications of Iridium® connectivity integrated into the Exploration Technology Lab's latest creations and supporting their engineers with our own expertise.**
>
> MATT DESCH
> Chief Executive Officer
> Iridium







IMPACT STORY

Harnessing the Science of Story

The **National Geographic Society Impact Story Lab** is an award-winning creative unit within the Society that combines world-class storytelling with social and behavioral science to drive positive change. This interdisciplinary team collaborates with National Geographic Explorers to produce film, video, audio, photography, VR/AR experiences and other media to advance the goals of their programs.

In 2023, with support from Christopher and Lauren Renaud, David E. Shaw and other contributors, the Impact Story Lab produced 14 multimedia products to support Explorer-led programs and led 12 workshops to provide in-depth instruction in storytelling techniques for more than 400 Explorers and industry professionals. Films and videos produced by the lab earned 14 major awards, most notably from Jackson Wild, the Webby Awards, the Telly Awards, the Pridelands Wildlife Film Festival, and the Hispanic International Film Festival.

In 2023, the Impact Story Lab's multimedia projects included a digital education series produced in collaboration with the Society's EduLab entitled "I Wonder," which follows Explorer Anand Varma's work to document the life cycle of cephalopods; a short film entitled "Flora, Fauna, Funga" that documents Explorer and mycologist Giuliana Furci's search for new mushrooms in Chile; and an audio series developed to expand on Explorer Shabana Basij-Rasikh's work to support displaced Afghan girls with education opportunities and stories of hope.

The Impact Story Lab feature film, "Nkashi: Race for the Okavango," premiered in Botswana in March 2023. The Society-funded **Okavango Wilderness Project** and **Africa Refocused** programs collaborated on the project to depict the journeys of three Batswana *mokoro* polers, celebrate the country's cultural heritage, and illuminate the importance of the Okavango Delta — one of the most unique wetlands in the world. The Okavango Wilderness Project's critical conservation work is highlighted throughout the film, and Explorer Koketso "Koki" Mookodi is prominently featured. The film was supported through the Okavango Eternal partnership with De Beers and won the 2023 Jackson Wild Media Award for Best Original Musical Score.

The Society's Impact Story Lab is able to leverage the power of storytelling to amplify Explorer-led projects across conservation, cultural heritage and education. Through innovative collaborations and compelling content, the Impact Story Lab demonstrates the transformative potential of storytelling, proving that when art and science converge, they can help drive change and inspire meaningful positive impact.

> **The National Geographic Impact Story Lab helps Explorers harness the power of strategic storytelling to supercharge the impact of their work and drive positive change. I am so proud to be part of this work through the Impact Story Lab Advisory Council and help combine the power of storytelling and science for meaningful impact in the world.**
>
> DAVID E. SHAW
> **National Geographic Society Impact Story Lab Advisory Council and Hubbard Council Member**

Opposite page, from left: A Crittercam on a manta ray off the coast of Mexico. The Exploration Technology Lab at the Society's headquarters in Washington, D.C., USA. Explorer Aristide Takoukam Kamla deploys an ocean drop camera near Limbe, Cameroon. This page: A mushroom in Chile's Tierra del Fuego. Impact Story Lab producer Sam Sheline filming in southern Chile. A mokoro poler featured in the Society-produced documentary "Nkashi: Race for the Okavango."







IMPACT STORY

Learning Innovation for Impact

Now in its second year, **EduLab** is an innovation team within the National Geographic Society's Education division dedicated to building creative education products and solutions. EduLab works with and through our National Geographic Explorers to create innovative learning solutions that amplify their impact, expand our understanding, and inspire educators and learners to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world.

EduLab provides inclusive, human-centered methods, tools and other resources that focus on the goals of our Explorers and the needs of the audiences they wish to engage. The team collaborates with the Society's **Impact Story Lab**, **Exploration Technology Lab**, and various internal and external experts to conceive and deliver multifaceted solutions to address Explorer needs while advancing the Society's education initiatives. Through these projects, they also identify useful, transferable educational elements to share with the broader Explorer community and invite educators and learners to practice and develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge of the Explorer Mindset.

In 2023, EduLab saw success piloting this collaborative process with, among others, Explorer Anand Varma in the development of WonderLab Learning Resources, Explorer Krithi Karanth in testing and on-location evaluation of learning resources developed for **Wild Shaale**, and Explorer Joel Sartore in the creation of the **National Geographic Photo Ark**: Protect Species resource collection. The team also rolled out a new — and continually expanding — Education Toolkit of resources for Explorers, including several as Open Educational Resources released under a Creative Commons license to permit the use and repurposing by users.

With your support, EduLab will continue to serve as a vital incubator, laboratory and catalyst to advance critical Explorer-led projects that benefit the planet and inspire others to learn about and care for our world.

Our partnership with EduLab has truly transformed our Storytelling for Impact content, which we deliver on our SOLAx platform. The addition of the team's globally inclusive design principles has demonstrably enriched our offerings for the Afghan girls we educate, and we're grateful that our partnership is so strong moving forward.

SHABANA BASIJ-RASIKH
2023 Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year

From left: Explorer David Sengeh in his office in Boston, MA, USA, prior to his appointment as chief minister of Sierra Leone. A student of the Wild Shaale education program, which helps foster peaceful coexistence between humans and wildlife. Explorer Anand Varma demonstrates scientific and storytelling techniques.







Program Spotlights

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The National Geographic Society's learning and development offerings support the growth and development of National Geographic Explorers, beginning with their onboarding into the Explorer community and continuing throughout their relationship with the Society. Onboarding courses set the stage for new grantees and cohort members, helping them to access key Society resources and facilitate interactions and communication with points of contact on Society staff. Following onboarding, Explorers can pursue a wealth of continued learning opportunities to support their growth as leaders, cross-cultural collaborators and science communicators.

As a key strategic throughline that is fundamental to the Society's mission, an intentional effort is made to connect Explorers to learning opportunities related to diversity, equity and inclusion. The Society's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) team facilitates these opportunities and serves as a valuable thought partner and collaborator for Explorers to help reflect the Society's guiding principles within their work. Explorers are also invited to connect with the DEI team individually to discuss strategies for embedding diversity, equity and inclusion principles into their projects.

In 2023, the DEI team supported Explorers through consultation, panels, in-person and virtual convenings, and other collaborations that explored the intersection of diversity, equity and inclusion, their specific disciplines and sharing best practices among the global Explorer community.

For example, in Dominica, the team partnered with Explorer-led Project CETI to offer a grant-writing workshop for participants of the program's Marine Conservation Fellowship.

The DEI team also facilitated interactive workshops for Explorers during Explorers Festival in Washington, D.C.; the London Explorers Festival; and Explorer Spotlights in Hong Kong and northern North America. These workshops, hosted in partnership with the Society's Explorer Engagement team, focused on a variety of topics such as cross-cultural collaborations; methodologies for actualizing diversity, equity and inclusion principles in project design; impostor phenomenon; working effectively on diverse teams; inclusive community engagement; participatory methods and more.

The Society's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is a fundamental cornerstone of our mission to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world. This commitment is actualized in the Society's multifaceted approach to providing opportunities, support and a platform for Explorers to integrate these principles into their work, helping to foster a culture of inclusivity, understanding and respect across the global Explorer community.

FIELD READY

To increase diversity and inclusion in the global television and filmmaking industries, the National Geographic Society has partnered with National Geographic Content to create Field Ready, a cohort-based mentorship and training program that supports early-career filmmakers around the world in advancing their careers in natural history, science, exploration and documentary filmmaking. The program draws participants from among the Society's storytelling Explorers, meaning each individual in a cohort will have received grant funding from the Society to pursue their own project, which often complements their Field Ready mentorship.

For each cohort, 10 filmmakers are selected to be mentored by leaders in the documentary filmmaking and television industries. Throughout the program, participants receive one-on-one

From left: A National Geographic Society panel during the NorthStar GIS Homecoming event in Washington, D.C., USA. National Geographic Society Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer Shannon P. Bartlett speaks at Explorers Festival London in London, UK. Participants in the Society's Field Ready program gather at Society headquarters in Washington, D.C.





mentorship with some of the most seasoned filmmakers; participate in technical skills training; engage in networking sessions; and work with their mentors to refine their personal projects, develop their portfolios, and build and strengthen the skills necessary to advance their work in the field.

To complete their program, the Field Ready class of mentees engage in a field experience hosted by their mentors and National Geographic production partners. Each mentee's unique experience depends on the area of growth they are interested in. Some go into the field to work on productions, while others may join production partners in the office to apply their skills in development or production management. After graduating from the program, Field Ready mentees are announced to the wider production community as qualified candidates for natural history film productions around the world. The program has become a reliable resource to National Geographic's production partners for hiring and mentoring emerging talent.

To date, the program has mentored early-career filmmakers from 20 countries, with 75% of its participants working on National Geographic productions around the globe. In 2022-2023, the Society supported a cohort of 10 individuals working in Colombia, India, Kenya, Nigeria, South Korea and the United States.

The Field Ready program is made possible by the contributions of dedicated supporters who believe in the power of storytelling and want to help the Society continue to support new cohorts of filmmakers, helping them expand their skills and networks.

SECOND ASSISTANT

The Second Assistant program is a six-month, cohort-based program that provides training, mentorship, connections and pathways for early-career photographers representing a diversity of perspectives. This competitive program draws participants from among the Society's storytelling Explorers, meaning participants will have received grant funding to pursue their own project. It also provides technical training and mentorship that may come at a critical time for their work.

At its core, the program is tailored to offer technical training and mentorship at potentially pivotal moments in participants' careers. It pairs each participant with an accomplished Explorer or National Geographic photographer to give them the opportunity to learn technical skills in real-world scenarios. This includes acting as an assistant on editorial assignments for National Geographic magazine or working on broader storytelling endeavors under the Society's umbrella.

The Second Assistant program collaborates with National Geographic magazine on a specialized curriculum, providing editorial assignment opportunities for participants to join, and matching Second Assistants to mentors based on their skill sets and interests to ensure impactful learning experiences.

The 2023 cohort of the Second Assistant program included 10 talented photographers from nine countries, a testament to its global reach and impact.

Thanks to the generous contributions of our supporters, the Society can offer these budding storytellers invaluable on-the-ground experiences, significantly aiding in their professional development. The initiative nurtures a diverse group of talented photographers, positioning them as future leaders in the realm of visual storytelling. By embracing a multitude of perspectives and voices, the Second Assistant program is instrumental in enriching National Geographic's storytelling legacy with even deeper, more varied insights and viewpoints.

From left: Participants in the Society's Field Ready program. Explorer Ulannaq Ingemann photographs husky puppies in Qaanaaq, Greenland. Explorer Luján Agusti reviews photographs of Finland's peatlands.







STORYTELLERS COLLECTIVE

The National Geographic Storytellers Collective, a B2B entity, offers live, in-person, small-group, Explorer-led "Storytelling for Impact" workshops to nonprofits, universities and affinity corporate clients worldwide. Our workshops leverage National Geographic's 136-year legacy of storytelling excellence, as well as a robust network of storytelling Explorers, and expertise in the fields of storytelling and education.

In addition to generating revenue to support the National Geographic Society's mission and grant programs, our workshops provide learning opportunities for values-aligned organizations and individuals that can help them advance their work and maximize their impact. The Storytellers Collective also provides capacity-building opportunities to hundreds of Explorers each year.

Our team gives changemakers the tools and confidence to shape and share their stories through oral and visual storytelling, with training delivered in one- and three-day workshop formats. The workshops are designed to give participants an insider's perspective on the National Geographic approach to storytelling, from the broad sweep of narrative arc to the finer details of technique.

Participants receive customized guidance and personalized feedback as they craft a dynamic narrative designed to move their intended audience to action. Storytelling coaches lead participants through a series of expert presentations, lively discussions and interactive exercises that put learning into practice. Over the course of their experience, participants learn how to tell a compelling fact-based story; engage an audience using empathy and authenticity; craft visual stories that connect with intended audiences to move them to action; and create engaging short-form storytelling that can be used for any social media platform. By the end of their experience, participants will understand the science of why storytelling is an effective tool to move audiences to action.

The Storytellers Collective program engaged more than 800 participants in 2023, including 12 workshops in eight countries designed to help our Explorer community refine and enhance their storytelling skills.

From left: National Geographic Society staff participate in a Storytellers Collective photography workshop. Society Executive Director, Europe and Middle East (Western Asia) Dr. Claire McNulty speaks during Storytellers Collective training at the Oasi Dynamo Nature Reserve in Tuscany, Italy. A Storytellers Collective group training session held at the Oasi Dynamo Nature Reserve.

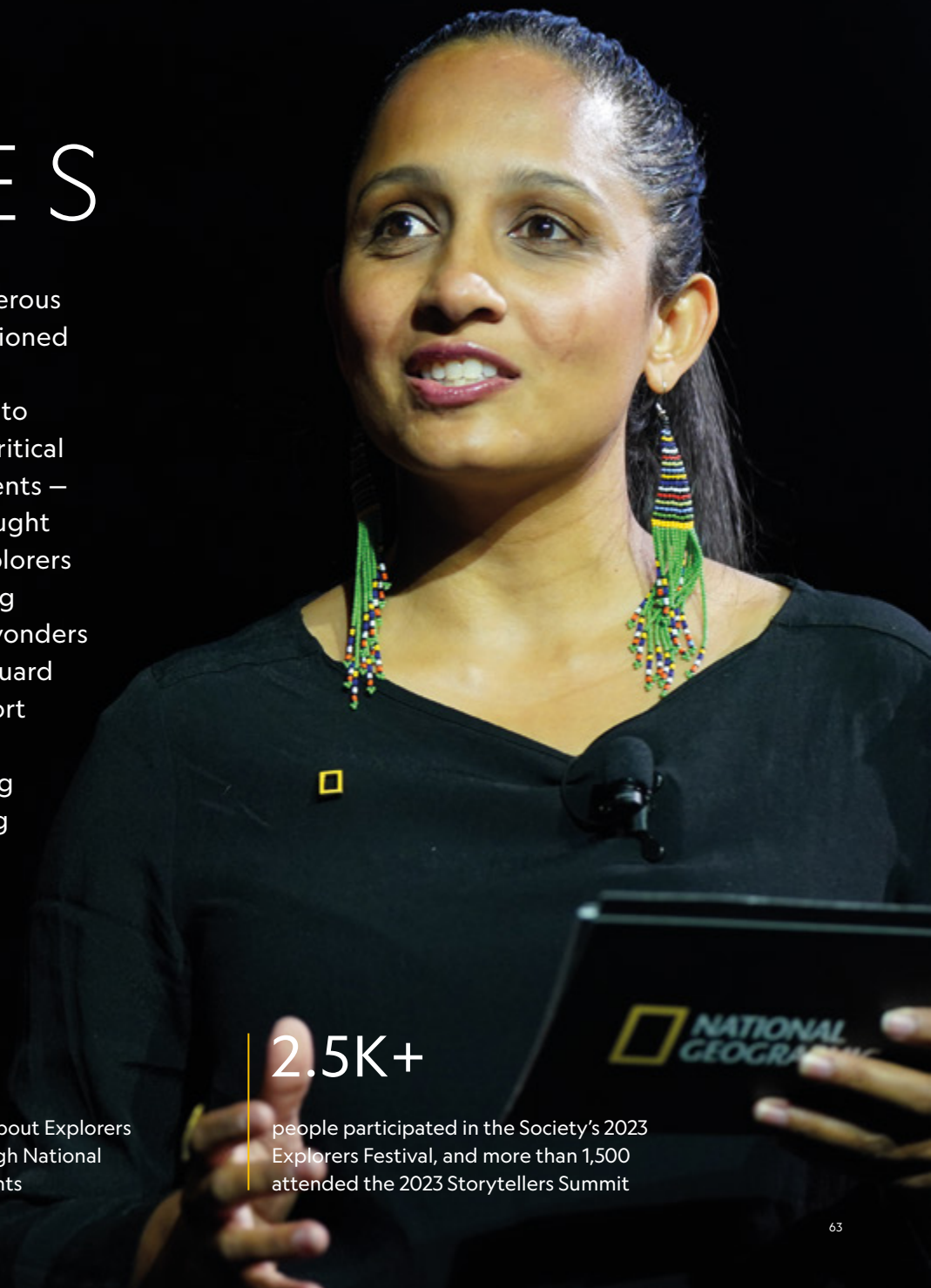
ENGAGING



This page: Perpetual Planet Amazon Expedition biologist and Explorer Fernando Trujillo speaks about pink river dolphins at the 2023 Explorers Festival in Washington, D.C., USA. Opposite page: Explorer Pragna Parsotam-Kok speaks at the 2023 Storytellers Summit in Washington, D.C.

GLOBAL AUDIENCES

In 2023, the National Geographic Society hosted numerous convenings of the world's brightest minds and impassioned communicators, captivating international audiences through an array of events and experiences designed to celebrate our planet and its people and address the critical challenges we face. The Society's signature annual events — our Explorers Festivals and Storytellers Summit — brought together a diverse cohort of National Geographic Explorers to share their groundbreaking projects and compelling narratives. As a community, we aim to illuminate the wonders of our world and ignite a global commitment to safeguard its future. Made possible through the generous support of sponsors and partners, the Society's transformative events showcase the power of exploration, storytelling and collaboration in fostering a deeper understanding of our planet and inspiring action to protect it.



2023 BY THE NUMBERS

6.3M

people visited National Geographic traveling exhibitions in over 80 cities around the world

17,000

individuals learned about Explorers and their work through National Geographic Live events

2.5K+

people participated in the Society's 2023 Explorers Festival, and more than 1,500 attended the 2023 Storytellers Summit



IMPACT STORY

Celebrating Stories With Impact

STORYTELLERS SUMMIT

In January 2023, over 1,500 total participants joined the National Geographic Society — both in person and virtually — for our annual **Storytellers Summit**. The event brought together photographers, filmmakers, illustrators and journalists to celebrate the power that stories have to shift perspectives, discover a deeper purpose and inspire change.

The multiday event highlighted the incredible impact of our storytelling community through sessions that captured the breadth and depth of our National Geographic Explorers sparking positive change across the globe:

- The Nature, Environment and Wildlife Filmmakers (NEWF) Composers Lab, offered with support from the Society-funded Africa Refocused program and led by Explorers Pragna Parsotam-Kok and Noel Kok, delivered an exhilarating musical performance featuring musicians from eight African countries.
- Explorer Yazan Kopty shared details of his quest to identify the long-lost name of one woman, now known to be Hilweh Abu Tayr, photographed for National Geographic magazine in Jerusalem nearly 100 years ago.
- The Society welcomed a new Explorer at Large, Azu Nwagbogu. Nwagbogu is a curator and visionary from Nigeria who has spent more than two decades creating and cultivating spaces to elevate African art, stories and the African diaspora.
- The second cohort of storytellers supported by the Society's Global Storytellers Fund in collaboration with The Climate Pledge was named. These storytellers are documenting the climate crisis and its myriad impacts on ecosystems and communities around the world. The cohort comprises Lynsey Addario, Pablo Albarenga, Malin Fezehai, Gab Mejia and Davide Monteleone.
- The Society honored Kiliii Yüyan as the 2023 Eliza Scidmore Award winner for his work illuminating human communities and their connections to land and sea.

The Society thanks The Climate Pledge for its sponsorship of the 2023 Storytellers Summit.

From left: Explorer Yazan Kopty, a writer and community archivist, presents at the 2023 National Geographic Storytellers Summit. Musicians from the NEWF Composers Lab perform at the 2023 Storytellers Summit. Explorer and conservation filmmaker Gunjan Menon speaks to an audience at the 2023 Storytellers Summit.







IMPACT STORY

Convening our Global Explorer Community

EXPLORERS FESTIVAL

In June 2023, the **National Geographic Society's Explorers Festival** convened in Washington, D.C., and welcomed over 1,100 in-person attendees to our headquarters. In an incredible week filled with connections, inspiration and curiosity, our global community of National Geographic Explorers shared their diverse perspectives, the sense of purpose they bring to their work and the incredible impact they are making on the planet.

Some of the most powerful moments from the event included:

- Litstening to Explorer and educator Serena McCalla's touching story of how one of her high school STEM students encouraged her to continue teaching.
- Hearing from Perpetual Planet Amazon Expedition team member and Explorer Ruthmery Pillco Huarcaya about the ecological importance of the iconic Andean bear — the only bear species in South America.
- Learning about Explorer and paleontologist Bolosetseg Minjin's work repatriating dinosaur fossils in Mongolia.
- Honoring our amazing cohort of Wayfinder Awardees and recognizing the inspiring work of Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year Shabana Basij-Rasikh, as well as National Geographic/Buffett Award for Leadership in Conservation recipients Explorer Lily-Arison Rene de Roland and Explorer José Manuel Briceño Linares.

We are grateful to Rolex for its partnership in presenting the 2023 National Geographic Explorers Festival and making these unforgettable moments possible.

INTERNATIONAL EXPLORERS FESTIVAL

In April 2023, the National Geographic Society hosted its annual **International Explorers Festival** in London. The festival brought together over 350 National Geographic Explorers from Europe, the Middle East and Africa to share knowledge, deepen global partnerships and highlight the Society's programmatic priorities.

The event, also supported by our partner Rolex, lasted four days and included networking opportunities, speaker talks spotlighting Explorers and their work, and workshops focused on community building and the power of storytelling. Explorers also took part in an "Evening of Exploration" where they reminded the audience of the transformational power of storytelling to create positive change for our planet.

- Explorer at Large Sylvia Earle and Explorer Giovanni Chimienti illuminated the stage as they discussed ocean exploration and protection.
- Explorer at Large Louise Leakey transported the audience to archaeological excavations as Explorer Keneiloe Molopyane talked about their paleoanthropological findings, mentorship and the evolution of the field.
- Explorer Paula Kahumbu and "Secrets of the Elephants" director and cinematographer Toby Strong shared never-before-seen videos of miraculous moments with Africa's critically endangered elephants, inspiring us to expand the protection of this keystone species.

From left: An Andean bear wearing an attached crittercam in the tropical Andes. Explorer and astrodynamicist Moribah Jah makes a case for space environmentalism at the 2023 National Geographic Explorers Festival. Explorer and educator Serena McCalla speaks about breaking boundaries at the 2023 Explorers Festival.







Traveling Exhibitions

In February 2023, the National Geographic Museum temporarily closed its doors to the public as part of our plans to reimagine our Base Camp experience. As the National Geographic Society steps into a new era of exploration and transforms its public space, our traveling exhibitions brought the work of the Society's world-class National Geographic Explorers to audiences around the world. Twenty-one unique exhibitions traveled across 21 countries and 81 cities, welcoming 6.3 million visitors. Proceeds from the Society traveling exhibitions provide critical support for mission programs and Explorer-led projects.

BECOMING JANE

The latest launch of the three-time award-winning exhibition "Becoming Jane: The Evolution of Dr. Jane Goodall" opened in December 2023 at the beautiful Natural History Museum of Utah in Salt Lake City. It was a lovely evening with more than 300 visitors in attendance, including Gilbert M. Grosvenor, former president and chairman of the National Geographic Society, and his daughter, former Society Trustee Lexi Grosvenor Eller. This interactive, transportive, multimedia exhibition was developed through a successful multiyear collaboration with the Jane Goodall Institute and celebrates Dr. Goodall's extraordinary life and work.

COLORS OF THE WORLD

As part of a multiyear collaboration between National Geographic and "la Caixa" Foundation, the traveling exhibition "Colors of the World" began touring in 2023. Opening at CosmoCaixa in Barcelona, the exhibition leads visitors on a breathtaking visual journey through a rainbow of stunning photographs. Each year, the exhibition travels to roughly 15 cities across Spain and Portugal as part of "la Caixa" Foundation's "Art in the Streets" initiative, which brings educational and cultural experiences within reach of new audiences.

PRISTINE SEAS: BRINGING THE OCEAN BACK

In 2023, the National Geographic Society launched the first international tour of "Pristine Seas: Bringing the Ocean Back" at Museon-Omniversum in The Hague, Netherlands. The engaging marine conservation-focused exhibition has seen tremendous success in international venues — in addition to the Museon-Omniversum, it has traveled to multiple venues including the IMPAC5 conference in Vancouver, Canada; the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, Canada; and The National Aquarium of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates.

National Geographic Live

In June 2023, management of the popular National Geographic Live event series returned to the National Geographic Society from our partners at Disney. Using the power of immersive storytelling, National Geographic Live events amplify the critical work of National Geographic Explorers illuminating and protecting the wonder of our world. From June to December 2023, the Society presented 21 live performances in two countries, seven U.S. states and 11 cities, reaching more than 17,000 attendees. Performances have elevated the work of Explorers like Jasper Doest, an award-winning photographer who creates visual stories that investigate the relationship between humans and nature; Andrés Ruzo, a geothermal scientist whose work reveals how volcanic activity has shaped civilizations across the globe; and Jess Cramp, a shark researcher searching the waters of the South Pacific for elusive shark breeding grounds and working with coastal communities on sustainable marine management.

Learn more about National Geographic Live and search for upcoming events near you at natgeo.org/natgeolive.



Opposite page, from left: A visitor examines replica casts of a human and a chimpanzee skull at the "Becoming Jane" exhibit at Society headquarters in Washington, D.C., USA. A parrot fish photographed on a National Geographic Pristine Seas expedition to the Federated States of Micronesia. Explorer and paleontologist Lindsay Zanno speaks at a National Geographic Live event at the Lincoln Theater in Washington, D.C. This page: National Geographic photographer Paul Nicklen speaks to the audience at a National Geographic Live event.

Rolex is deeply committed to enabling exploration as a means to preserving the natural world and inspiring future generations to protect Earth and all its wonders. As a long-time partner, we've seen firsthand how critical the Society's global headquarters have been as a collaboration hub, convening place, and idea incubator. By investing in Base Camp, we will help preserve that rich legacy of knowledge sharing and storytelling for generations to come.

ARNAUD BOETSCH

Director of Communication & Image
Rolex



Artist's rendering of the exterior front courtyard of the renovated National Geographic Society headquarters, opening in 2026.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

BASE CAMP

HOME *of* THE EXPLORER

Base Camp: Home of the Explorer

As we look to the future of the National Geographic Society, we are taking steps to expand our global impact with a reimagining of Base Camp. The most significant expansion in our history will transform our headquarters into a dynamic hub for collaboration and a powerful platform to amplify our Explorers' work. At its core, Base Camp is and will always be the Home of the Explorer — a place for changemakers to return from the field, share what they have learned, and connect with each other and the wider public. Our new campus will supercharge their ability to create meaningful impact and build a stronger Explorer community.

Our new, sustainably built headquarters will also be a state-of-the-art destination for learning and engagement — welcoming the public to connect with our Explorers and ignite their own spirit of exploration. In 2026, the revitalized campus will open its doors to everything National Geographic has to offer, including selections from our legendary archives, to cutting-edge exhibitions that showcase Explorer research, iconic photography and world-famous artifacts. A new education center will spark curiosity in the next generation. Base Camp will be a global convening space for changemakers of our time, attracting and engaging people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities to rally around our mission and take action to protect our world.

In 2023 the Society secured the largest gift in National Geographic's history from our longtime partner, Rolex, to support this project. Significant progress was also made on the construction site. As of March 2024, the project is 25% complete, and the team has erected 560 tons of structural steel. As part of our commitment to sustainability, the team removed 3,900 tons of demolition debris and diverted 95% of these materials, ensuring that the majority does not end up in landfills. The reimagined campus and the next chapter of global impact are beginning to take shape.

With the help of our donors and partners, the Society is committed to building a brighter future for the planet and its people. Base Camp will be the convening space where scientists, experts, policymakers and leaders from around the world will come together with the public to find solutions to the challenges we face and ensure the diversity of life on Earth continues to thrive.

We are grateful to our Base Camp Founding Donors:

Rolex

Jean and Steve Case

Brendan and Helen Bechtel

Jack and Laura Dangermond

Inna and Mark Moore

Katherine and David Bradley

Panasonic Connect

Nancy E. Pfund and Phillip L. Polakoff

The Roski Family

*as of December 31, 2023

Let's Build It Together

To learn more about Base Camp or to support the project, please contact Kara Ramirez Mullins, the Society's chief advancement officer, at kmullins@ngs.org or visit natgeo.org/basecamp.

THE POWER OF PHILANTHROPY

When we come together as a National Geographic community, the impact is extraordinary. For the third year in a row, the National Geographic Society had the largest fundraising year in our history — thanks to the leadership and generosity of donors like you. In 2023, our supporters accelerated our National Geographic Explorers' impact with $122.8 million in new commitments — including the largest single gift in the history of the Society.

These remarkable and consistent results demonstrate the Society's strong position as we look to the next chapter in our story. Our mission to illuminate and protect is a powerful call to action, and we are united in a shared purpose with thousands of passionate people like you, around the world.

Your support drives our expanded reach and catalyzes positive change. You stand alongside our Explorers, calling attention to the world's most urgent problems and pushing the boundaries of science and technology to find their solutions. Thank you for helping build the path to a better future and inspiring others to do the same.

This page: A spiraling school of jacks at Heron Island in Australia's southern Great Barrier Reef. Opposite page: An archival photo shows the wetlands of the Paraná Delta region in Argentina before a historic drought caused by climate change devastated the ecosystem.

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Our global community of supporters is our greatest strength. Thanks to thoughtful and generous people like you, 2023 was another record-breaking fundraising year for the National Geographic Society — including the largest philanthropic gift ever in support of our reimagined Base Camp. We are tremendously grateful for your generosity and commitment to our shared values. With your help, we will build momentum for increased impact and empower our Explorers to drive lasting, positive change around the globe.

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Jack and Laura Dangermond

"It is an honor to be members of the Principal Donors Society at National Geographic, helping to inspire the next generation to better understand and care for our world. Mapping is a powerful tool for learning, communication and change. By partnering with the Society to bring together the strength of Esri's technology and the power of National Geographic's storytelling and exploration, we can have incredible impact, fostering a sense of wonder and curiosity about our world and spurring learners to take action."

This page: Principal Donors Society members Jack and Laura Dangermond. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Explorer Bertie Gregory speaks at the Society's inaugural Principal Donors Society Induction Ceremony and Celebration in Washington, D.C., USA. Principal Donors Society member Patricia Thomas and Arlene Reiniger at the Principal Donors Society Induction Ceremony. (left to right) Chris Kiple, National Geographic Society Board Chairman Jean Case, Lyda Hill, and Barbara Barrett at the National Geographic Live event "An Evening with National Geographic Explorer Lindsay Zanno" in Washington, D.C. Explorer Ronan Donovan speaks with Trustee and Hubbard Council Chair Mark Moore and members of the Principal Donors Society. (left to right) Isabella Lindblad, Sven Lindblad, National Geographic Society Chief Executive Officer Jill Tiefenthaler, and Explorer Bertie Gregory at the inaugural Principal Donors Society Celebration.

For more information, please contact Lisa Herzog, deputy to the chief advancement officer and campaign director, at (800) 373-1717 or lherzog@ngs.org.


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HUBBARD COUNCIL

The Hubbard Council is a group of supporters who share the National Geographic Society's mission to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world. Members contribute an annual gift of $50,000 or more and receive exclusive benefits like special access to National Geographic Explorers and members of the senior leadership team, as well as invitations to travel with the Society and see our Explorers in action. Hubbard Council members are leaders among our donor community, and as such, are invited to participate in advisory roles for our priority programs along with other volunteer leadership opportunities.

Each year, Hubbard Council members are invited to convene for an annual meeting with the Society's senior leadership, take part in quarterly Explorer webinars, go on a Hubbard Council Expedition, and attend signature National Geographic events such as the Explorers Festival and Storytellers Summit. The Society would like to thank members of the Hubbard Council for their extraordinary generosity, forward commitments and longtime support.

The National Geographic Society has always been a source of inspiration for us, and the mission is close to our hearts. As magazine subscribers since 1935 and current Hubbard Council members, it is incredibly rewarding to support the visionary Explorers who are in the field, working to protect our oceans, creating on-the-ground conservation strategies to protect wildlife, and inspiring students and educators around the globe.

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From top: Hubbard Council members Ro King, George Estey, and Ned and Jean Brockenbrough explore Costa Rica's cloud forest. Hubbard Council members Justin Daab and Lois Morrison hosted "An Evening with the National Geographic Society" photographed here with Society Chief Executive Officer Jill Tiefenthaler and Explorer in Residence Lee Berger. Artist Carlos Hiller, musician and composer Manuel Obregón and Hubbard Council members Diane and Hal Brierley surround one of Hiller's original works celebrating the natural wonders of Costa Rica.

For more information, please contact Megan Kimmins, vice president of leadership giving, at (800) 373-1717 or mkimmins@ngs.org.

CLARK COUNCIL

The Clark Council is a group of supporters deeply committed to helping the National Geographic Society remain at the forefront of exploration and the diffusion of knowledge. Members make an annual contribution of $25,000 to $49,999 and receive exclusive benefits and special access to the places and work that make up the Society. The Clark Council convenes through webinars with National Geographic Explorers and senior leadership, and members are invited to the Society's signature annual events and events around the country.

Clark Council members support programs and Explorers who are utilizing cutting-edge science and extraordinary storytellers who are working to provide solutions to the world's most pressing challenges. The Society would like to thank members of the Clark Council for their meaningful generosity and support.

As a Clark Council member, I support National Geographic Explorers working all over the world to help protect the wonders of our planet and ensure that both people and wildlife thrive in the face of today's most urgent challenges. I am proud to know that my gift empowers these extraordinary individuals to find bold and innovative ways to create a brighter future, for all of us.

VALERIE S.
Clark Council Member

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From top: National Geographic Society Trustee Ángel Cabrera, National Geographic Society Board Chairman Jean Case and Kathy Muñoz attend an event at the Society's headquarters in Washington, D.C., USA. Michael and Sandra Ruddick attend a private tour of the National Geographic Exploration Technology Lab. Gail Loveman, Explorer Ronan Donovan and Bob Loveman photographed at "An Evening with Ronan Donovan" — an event and reception in Boulder, CO, USA.

For more information, please contact Megan Kimmins, vice president of leadership giving, at (800) 373-1717 or mkimmins@ngs.org.







ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL LEGACY SOCIETY

The Alexander Graham Bell Legacy Society, named after the famed inventor and the National Geographic Society's second president, honors those who have included the Society in their estate plans through a will, trust or charitable gift annuity, or by beneficiary designation of a retirement plan such as an IRA or a 401(k). Legacy gifts from the dedicated members of this group fund the Society's science, exploration, education and storytelling efforts around the world, helping to advance meaningful, lasting change for generations to come.

In addition to the satisfaction of knowing they are making a difference, Legacy Society members have the chance to come even closer to our work and get to know our National Geographic Explorers and leadership through exclusive invitations to webinars, exhibitions and events in Washington, D.C., and across the United States.

We have spent our lives traveling around the world together, learning about different cultures and exploring amazing landscapes. It is an honor to be members of the Alexander Graham Bell Legacy Society at National Geographic — we know our contribution is supporting not only exploration that helps to illuminate the wonders of our beautiful world but critical conservation projects that will help protect the planet for generations to come.

MARGOT AND CLEMENT IP
Alexander Graham Bell Legacy Society Members

From top: Alexander Graham Bell Society members Dorothy Earnest and Jean Chen pictured in front of the "Beyond King Tut: An Immersive Experience" exhibit at the National Geographic Museum in Washington, D.C., USA. Members of the Alexander Graham Bell Legacy Society attend a private tour of the "Beyond King Tut" exhibit at the National Geographic Museum. Society supporter Jere Broh-Kahn and Explorer at Large Beverly Joubert at the 2023 National Geographic Explorers Festival Party for the Planet.

For more information, please contact Megan Kimmins, vice president of leadership giving, at (800) 373-1717 or mkimmins@ngs.org.

GROSVENOR COUNCIL

Thank you to our National Geographic Society Grosvenor Council members who create a solid foundation for the Society's work at the cutting edge of science, exploration, education and storytelling by donating $1,000 to $24,999 annually.

Our community's namesake is Gilbert Hovey Grosvenor. The first, lone employee of the Society who became president and editor in chief, Grosvenor is described as the principal architect of what we have become today.

Grosvenor Council members enjoy a complimentary subscription to National Geographic magazine, special virtual invitations to Explorers Festival and Storytellers Summit, and exclusive Grosvenor Council Insider events with National Geographic Explorers.

When asked about the proper area of study for the National Geographic Society, Alexander Graham Bell replied, "The world and all that is in it." As members of the Grosvenor Council for almost three decades, we have been honored to support the exploration of our planet and its cultures. Not only have we read about explorations we helped fund, but through the Grosvenor Council we have been thrilled to meet dozens of National Geographic Explorers who are leading a new age of exploration toward a healthier planet and a brighter future.

HEIDI E. MORGAN AND RICHARD T. KENNEDY
Grosvenor Council Members







From top: Grosvenor Council members Lavinia Touchton and Jeff Adberg, pictured with Society Chief Storytelling Officer Kaitlin Yarnall and Explorer Kiliii Yüyan, hosted "An Evening with National Geographic Explorer and Storyteller Kiliii Yüyan" in Seattle, WA, USA. Grosvenor Council members Leighton Tsai and Stacy Fong at a reception honoring Explorer Joel Sartore in Los Angeles, CA. Explorer Jennie Warmouth speaks with Grosvenor Council member Debra Fouts at a reception event.

For more information, please contact Renee Clark, senior director of annual giving, at (800) 373-1717 or rclark@ngs.org.







CORPORATIONS

Corporate Partnerships at the National Geographic Society engage leading corporations and their key stakeholders to advance our mission to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world. Leveraging the clear mission focus of NG Next, the Society invites companies to become strategic partners in our science, exploration, education and storytelling efforts to drive transformational change for people and the planet. With the support of our corporate partners, we can scale our science-based solutions to advance meaningful, lasting change.

As a global leader in information management services, Iron Mountain is proud to support the National Geographic Society, working together to digitize much of the Society's archive. This collaboration will allow the Society to truly unlock its special collections, creating an open searchable resource for the public and sharing with the world not only the history of the Society but a global history created through the lens of National Geographic.

BILL MEANEY
Chief Executive Officer
Iron Mountain

From top: A pair of monarchs on a goldenrod plant in Iowa, USA. Explorer Kiliii Yüyan photogaphs a giant clam (*Tridacna gigas*) in the reefs of Rock Islands Southern Lagoon, Palau. Brown boobies (*Sula leucogaster*) fly near the Saint Peter and Saint Paul Archipelago. Opposite page, top right: Fringing corals on the island of Niue, photographed as part of the Pristine Seas' Global Expedition.

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* This list reflects active corporate partnerships as of December 31, 2023, including multiyear commitments.

For more information about the Society's partnerships with corporations, foundations, and federal agencies, please contact Caroline Tippett, vice president of institutional partnerships, at (800) 373-1717 or ctippett@ngs.org.

FOUNDATIONS AND FEDERAL AGENCIES

The generous support of foundations, institutional philanthropies and U.S. federal agencies enables National Geographic Explorers to deliver global impact with their work in science, exploration, education and storytelling in the six focus areas of Ocean, Land, Wildlife, Human Histories and Cultures, Space, and Planetary Health. Pivotal foundation funding in 2023 was received from the following:

- The **Bezos Earth Fund, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Inclusive Capital Partners Foundation, The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment, LGT Venture Philanthropy Foundation** and **Dutch Postcode Lottery** provided funding to propel the Pristine Seas initiative toward its goal to help protect 30% of the ocean by 2030.
- With an investment from the **Templeton World Charity Foundation, Inc.**, National Geographic launched a global search to identify and support three stellar researchers working with uncaged creatures on land, in the sea and in the air to learn more about the natural world and ourselves.
- The **Conrad N. Hilton Foundation** committed funding to advance storytelling, engage and empower youth and provide storytelling training — with the combined desired impact to communicate the vital and compelling stories of global water challenges.
- Funding from the **Burroughs Wellcome Fund** helped Explorer Anand Varma establish the WonderLab in Berkeley, California, a space to experiment with new ways to present science with a sense of awe and wonder.
- **Lyda Hill Philanthropies** provided inaugural funding for the Lee Berger Human Origins Endowment, helping to support the next chapter of paleoanthropology in South Africa and beyond in perpetuity.
- After a successful launch, the Slingshot Challenge, a competition to encourage 13-18-year-olds to submit solutions to solve environmental problems and create a better world, embarked on its second year with continued support from the **Paul G. Allen Family Foundation**.
- The **William Randolph Hearst Foundation** funded Photo Camps in the United States, providing support for the inaugural Photo Camp alumni class, which celebrated the program's 20-year history by bringing together a community of youth peers from around the world.
- With support from the **John Templeton Foundation**, the National Geographic Society will identify and support storytellers as they investigate the deepest questions of our humanity and universe, aiming to inspire awe, spark wonder and cultivate curiosity.

> **Our mission at the Dutch Postcode Lottery is to provide resources needed for organizations to create a fair, greener and healthier world. We are pleased to support National Geographic Pristine Seas because it aligns so well with our mission. Pristine Seas supports communities and governments around the world to establish marine protected areas, a mission that is vitally important to us. The work of Pristine Seas enables marine life to thrive, supporting coastal communities and the health of the ocean for generations to come.**
>
> MARIEKE RODENHUIS
> **Head of Charities**
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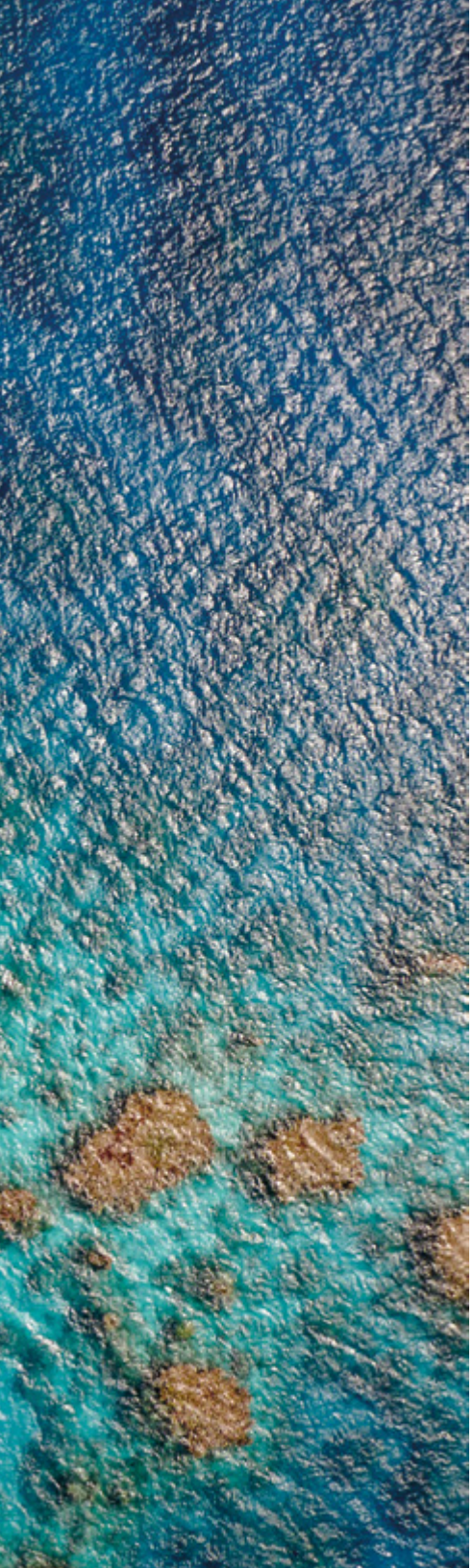


The clear waters of the Tongareva atoll in the Cook Islands, photographed as part of the Pristine Seas' Global Expedition.

"

It has been a tremendous privilege to serve on the National Geographic Society's Board of Trustees. Every day I am inspired by the Explorers who are in the field working to create a healthier planet, the storytellers who are illuminating the critical issues of our times, and the educators who are instilling curiosity about the world and the drive to find solutions in their students. The donors and partners who generously support our work are truly helping to change the world, creating a brighter future for this planet we call home.

DEBORAH LEHR
National Geographic Society Trustee
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Monarchs gather by the millions in a high-elevation fir forest in El Rosario Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary, Michoacán, Mexico.



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