

2025

ANNUAL REPORT





Cover image: Red-billed oxpeckers create a winged dance around a giraffe in Kenya's Olare Motorogi Conservancy.

This page's image: A view of the sky above the Grand Canyon shortly after sunset with the Big Dipper, Polaris and Cassiopeia constellations visible, and the path of the International Space Station traced overhead.

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CEO'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

The magic of the National Geographic Society often begins with moments of connection. An image connects us to a fragile landscape. A fossil connects us to an ancient creature. A National Geographic Explorer connects us to ideas that challenge us to look closer.

Connection is where curiosity transforms into commitment.

In 2025, that commitment fueled a historic milestone: the highest level of philanthropic support in the Society's 138-year history. This extraordinary generosity signals something profound. At a time of accelerating global challenges, our community of supporters – individuals, foundations, partners and others worldwide – chose to invest in the enduring power of science, exploration, education and storytelling to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world.

We each come to the mission in different ways. Some are moved by evocative photography, others are drawn to rigorous field research or the spark of impact in the classroom. When our interests and passions converge, they have an incredible multiplier effect. The pages that follow tell the story of collective impact, led by Explorers working in more than 140 countries.

In 2025, another powerful engine for collective action was strategic partnerships. With The Walt Disney Company, our Explorers' work reached billions of people, turning discovery into a shared human experience. With Rolex, Explorer-led expeditions advanced our understanding of vital systems that support life on Earth. Through the Slingshot Challenge, supported by Allen Family Philanthropies, more than 5,000 young innovators across 96 countries joined a growing, global network of solution-seekers.

At the same time, historic commitments from the Chubb Charitable Foundation and Lilly Endowment Inc. are helping us protect critical ecosystems

where land meets water and open our archives to ensure the wonder of our world is not only preserved but also shared across generations.

This momentum is shaping our most visionary chapter yet, inviting millions more to participate in exploration and our mission.

In 2026, the National Geographic Museum of Exploration opens at our Washington, D.C., headquarters. The Museum is the ultimate expression of what shared belief can build. Within its walls, visitors will not only see discovery; they will feel it: the questions, research, setbacks, breakthroughs, stories and sparks that started it all. What once lived primarily in the pages of the magazine and on screens will become immediate, immersive and unforgettable.

With the incredible support of our Base Camp Founding Donors and the National Geographic community, the Museum invites us all to trace the path from curiosity to connection to action – to see ourselves as part of something larger. Because when we foster real connections, those moments change us.

And when enough of us are changed, the world changes too.

We are profoundly grateful to every one of our supporters for making history with us this year. Thank you for your connection to this mission, to our global community and to the future we are building together.

With gratitude,



Jill Tiefenthaler
Chief Executive Officer
National Geographic Society



Explorer Tiago Falótico walks in front of a rocky formation in Serra da Capivara National Park, Brazil, situated in the Caatinga biome.



A diver explores Lagoa Misteriosa, one of Brazil's deepest phreatic caves.



BOARD CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

It is an honor to write to you for the first time as Chair of the Board of Trustees of the National Geographic Society. I began my term in December of 2025 at a moment of extraordinary progress and opportunity for our organization.

National Geographic is focused on identifying the next generation of Explorers, building Explorer impact, and sharing that impact to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world. We believe inspiration is a motivation for care and action, and over the past year, that belief has translated into significant strides forward for the Society.

In 2025, the Society awarded more than 100 new grants, supporting over 560 Explorer-led projects worldwide. Our community pushed the boundaries of knowledge, authoring nearly 600 scientific publications, and celebrated historic conservation milestones — from a landmark decision to preserve vital wetlands in Angola to the protection of 6.9 million square kilometers of ocean. Through our partnership with Disney, we elevated our Explorers and mission work to hundreds of millions globally. A standout moment was the success of “Secrets of the Penguins,” featuring 2025 Rolex National Geographic Explorers of the Year Pablo (Popi) Garcia Borboroglu and Bertie Gregory, which reached audiences in more than 100 countries.

Finally, we made significant progress on our new Museum of Exploration (MOE) in Washington, D.C., opening this year, in time for America's 250th anniversary. The MOE will be more than a celebration of our past, it will be a gateway to our future: convening Explorers, connecting partners, and inspiring visitors.

We did not do this alone. Our philanthropic partners invested in our mission in countless ways: they joined a growing community, built relationships with Explorers to accelerate their work, fostered new and larger partnerships, and expanded our reach and impact. In 2025, their commitment also resulted in an unparalleled year of fundraising, propelling us to new heights as a global nonprofit. Our partners are essential to our success, and we are deeply grateful.

It is both remarkable and humbling to reflect on the National Geographic Society's 138-year journey. We have stood the test of time because we have remained true to a legacy of nonpartisan, optimistic, science-based exploration. It is a legacy stewarded by visionary leaders who shaped this organization, including my predecessor Jean Case. Through her transformational leadership, passion for National Geographic, and extraordinary imagination and resolve, Jean made invaluable, lasting contributions to our progress. A fuller tribute to her decade of service to the Society follows on page 100, but on behalf all of us: thank you, Jean.

As I begin my service as Board Chair, I do so with gratitude for the dedication and generosity exemplified by our National Geographic community. Your support enables us to find the Explorers who go first, and together, we can help them go further.

Sincerely,

Kevin J. Maroni
Chair of the Board of Trustees
National Geographic Society

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.

Our Theory of Impact

At the National Geographic Society, we often say science and exploration are our foundation, and storytelling and education are our superpowers. We deeply value the importance of planetary stewardship and the urgent need to protect our planet. Of equal importance is our belief that when people understand our world and have an emotional connection to its natural and cultural wonders, they'll take action to support and protect them.



The Mts. Iglit-Baco National Park is home to the largest remaining population of the critically-endangered tamaraw, found only on Mindoro Island in the Philippines.

OUR IMPACT

It is thanks to the generous and dedicated support of donors, partners and communities that our Explorers are able to make a positive impact for our planet and its people.

The Society's supporters fuel the actions that define exploration: those that spark curiosity, ask probing questions, launch novel projects and seek meaningful solutions. Our Society supporters spur collaborations while allowing the Society to leverage its own strengths, including telling extraordinary stories that drive change. They unleash the Explorer Mindset — the attitudes, skills and knowledge that Explorers use to find solutions to the world's most challenging problems. Above all else, those who support the Society elevate our mission, equating to tangible outcomes and lasting impact on a local, national and global scale.

Sunset in the Picos de la Luna in Chihuahua, Mexico.

INNOVATING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Throughout our history, the National Geographic Society has forged meaningful, action-oriented partnerships that enable us to push the boundaries of exploration and achieve critical impact worldwide. Across the public and private sectors, we unite around common visions for a better future and build pathways to make it possible.

First and foremost, our collaboration with The Walt Disney Company plays a crucial role in our global impact. Our joint venture ensures Explorer work reaches a wider audience and establishes a reliable revenue stream, allowing the Society to direct 100% of all philanthropic contributions to our Explorers and impact work. In 2025, we made great strides in developing our approach together with Disney colleagues, aligning on goals and messaging to engage external partners more effectively and in a more streamlined way.

As our longest-standing philanthropic partner, Rolex has helped the Society drive impact for more than 70 years, harnessing exploration and scientific discovery to protect the planet. Today, Rolex and National Geographic continue that work to safeguard the world's most fragile and essential ecosystems through Perpetual Planet Expeditions.

Partnerships are not only a critical and sustainable source of funding; they also drive the Society's broader impact through strategic connections that unlock the wealth of expertise in our ecosystem and capitalize on our convening power. With a partnership strategy focused on the "Fewer, Bigger, Better" approach, we are working to cultivate high-impact partnerships that maximize both our reach and our capacity to deliver transformational outcomes.

2025 proved to be a landmark year for partnership at the Society. We deepened our work with current partners and launched several new relationships that will shape the future of the Society and our Explorers' impact around the world. We also relied on the partnership of our trustees and volunteer leaders, who helped move the needle for our comprehensive campaign by engaging their networks and serving as champions for the Society's mission and vision.

Together, the Society and our partners are marshaling cutting-edge innovation and sharing expertise to drive positive impact that benefits both people and the planet. These relationships represent a mutual long-term commitment to advancing sustainable solutions, inspiring leadership across industries, and setting a new standard for how philanthropists, businesses, governments and nonprofits can work together to create transformative change on a global scale.

IMPACT OF PARTNERSHIPS



DISNEY

Clockwise from left: Explorer Alex Schnell surfaces after a dive observing a coconut octopus on the Lembah Strait in Indonesia for the National Geographic documentary series "Secrets of the Octopus," now streaming on Disney+. National Geographic Society Board of Trustees members Rajiv Shah and Deborah Lehr at the Society's International Explorers Festival in Lima, Peru. Explorer and Wayfinder Award recipient Badru "Mwezi" Mugerwa rigs a motion-triggered camera in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda. Society CEO Jill Tiefenthaler and Chief Explorer Engagement Officer Alex Moen stand with Wayfinder Awardee Hana Raza at 2025 Explorers Festival. Participants in the Society's leadership giving expedition to India pose for a group photo in front of the Taj Mahal. Society CEO Jill Tiefenthaler with Nancy and James Schumann during a hard hat tour at Base Camp. A research team travels aboard a Zodiac boat toward the coast of Antarctica as part of the National Geographic and Rolex Perpetual Planet Southern Ocean Expedition.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES



EXPLORERS



ROLEX



CAMPAIGN DONORS



MEMBERS OF OUR GIVING SOCIETIES

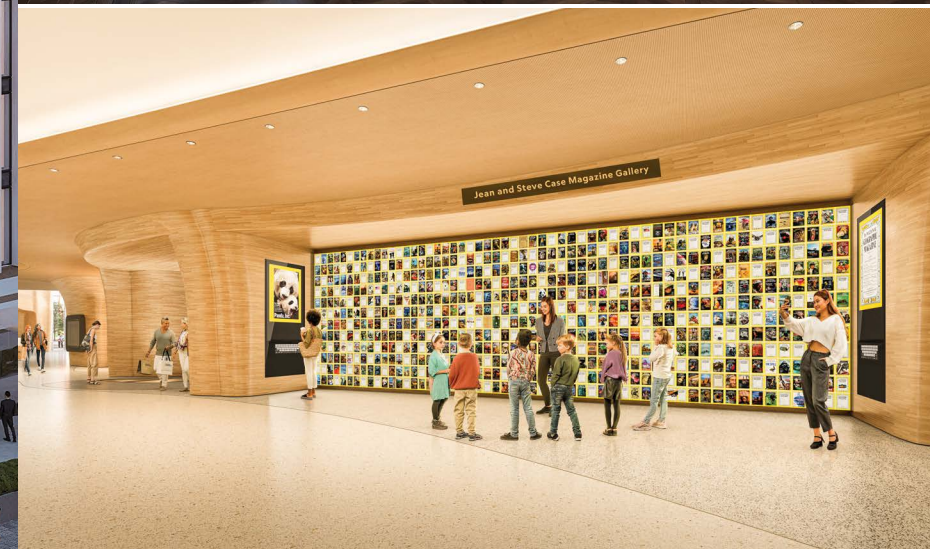


FUNDING PARTNERS

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
MUSEUM OF EXPLORATION



This page and opposite page: Artist's renderings of the National Geographic Museum of Exploration opening in 2026.



MUSEUM OF EXPLORATION



Thanks to the remarkable generosity of our donors and partners, the National Geographic Society's next chapter is nearly here. The new Museum of Exploration (MOE) leverages state-of-the-art technology and National Geographic's world-class storytelling expertise to transform our headquarters into a global hub for exploration — not only for Explorers but also for all who are curious about the world. Thanks to the meticulous planning and vision of our team, every inch of the Museum is primed to immerse visitors in the wonders of our world and the work of our Explorers, showcasing our mission in entirely new ways.

The MOE quadruples the size of our public spaces as part of the largest physical transformation in the Society's history. This year saw dramatic progress across the new building's interior and exterior, from laying the terrazzo floors to installing the curved architecture of the ash wood millwork to proudly mounting the "National Geographic" sign on top of the Pavilion. In addition, some of the extraordinary details of the Museum began to fall into place, including the arrival of large exhibit objects like the replica of Sylvia Earle's JIM suit and the filling of our courtyard planters with native plant species that will represent diverse ecosystems.

The Society also forged new partnerships and programs that will provide a foundation for the Museum's impact for decades to come. A historic gift from Lilly Endowment Inc. will support The Archives at the MOE and open access to the Society's extensive archives through digitization and community engagement. In addition, new commitments from partners like EPAM and The Bill and Donna Marriott Foundation, as well as from our community of Base Camp Founding Donors, which grew to over 20 members in 2025, helped make the vision for a reimagined Base Camp a reality. We also launched a brand new membership program, ensuring all our Museum visitors can stay engaged with the Society and join us in our mission to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world.

The MOE spotlights how our Explorers are shaping a more sustainable future — and is also its own engine to catalyze change. We aim for every visitor to leave not only informed, but also inspired and filled with a sense of possibility. Through their time at the MOE, we hope they will see themselves as part of our global community of changemakers, carrying our mission out into the world. By connecting visitors of all ages with our incredible planet and the inspiring Explorers working to protect it, we will foster a new force for good. We can't wait to welcome you inside when the doors open in 2026.

BY THE NUMBERS

\$208.1M

raised in new commitments from our incredible, growing community of supporters, elevating the work of National Geographic Explorers

568

active Explorer projects in 2025 expanded our discoveries within the six impact focus areas of Ocean, Land, Wildlife, Human Histories and Cultures, Planetary Health, and Space

9,249 MILES

furthest the National Geographic Society's flag traveled from Base Camp, demonstrating the diverse primary fieldwork locations for Explorer-led projects

600

Explorers supported by the Exploration Technology Lab in 2025, and hundreds of wild animals observed via Lab-driven, advanced tools such as bioacoustic devices and camera systems for conservation and education efforts

156,000

educators and learners of all ages reached and impacted through immersive education programs and experiences, scholarly articles, and learning design solutions

100,000

audience members engaged through 45 student matinees and 115 performances of National Geographic Live in cities across North America, a direct reflection of our vision to spark curiosity in hundreds of millions of people

3

new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) designated in 2025 with support from Pristine Seas' research and advocacy, bringing the total number of MPAs created with the program's support to 31 and highlighting our commitment to critical marine ecosystems



Shimmering golden dorados swim in the Rio da Prata in Brazil.

2025 GRANTS MAP

Since 1888, the National Geographic Society has invested in bold people and transformative ideas, providing more than 15,000 grants for work across all seven continents. In 2025, the Society continued to push the boundaries of exploration, supporting the expansive, global initiatives of Explorers as illustrated in this map.





Installing a bat box on a tree near Ranomafana National Park, Madagascar, as part of a project exploring bats' efficacy as natural pest controllers.

2025 Financial Summary

National Geographic Society Consolidated Statements (in thousands)

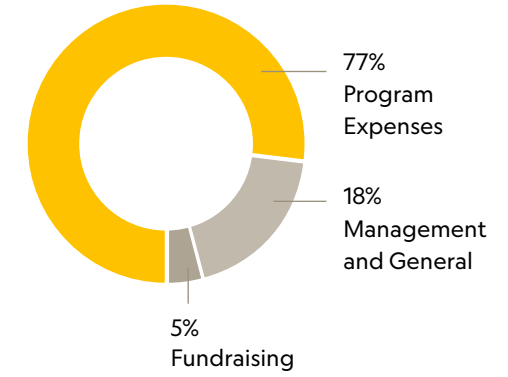
SUMMARY STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Support and Revenue	
Product and other educational sales	\$4,933
Licensing	\$23,091
Contributions and grants	\$189,719
Investment distribution to fund operations	\$117,068
Total Support and Revenue	\$334,811
Expenses	
Storytelling and outreach	\$83,948
Scientific research and exploration	\$65,405
Education	\$23,805
Program Expenses	\$173,158
Management and general	\$41,448
Fundraising	\$10,186
Total Operating Expenses	\$224,792
Operating Income	\$110,019
Income tax benefit	\$23,103
Investment distribution to fund operations	(\$117,068)
Non-operating activities*	\$313,178
Change in Net Assets	\$329,259
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$2,151,017
Net Assets, End of Year	\$2,480,276

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Cash and cash equivalents	\$235,221
Receivables, prepaids and other assets, net	\$134,203
Deferred tax assets	\$19,720
Investments (including endowments)	\$2,191,551
Property and equipment, net	\$357,178
Total Assets	\$2,937,873
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$57,263
Deferred revenue and refundable advances	\$9,925
Loan payable	\$292,431
Pension and postretirement benefits	\$11,954
Deferred tax liabilities	\$73,269
Other liabilities	\$12,755
Total Liabilities	\$457,597
Total Net Assets	\$2,480,276
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$2,937,873

TOTAL EXPENSES



100%
of contributions fund Explorers and mission-driven programs

“

The Society achieved a year of significant financial accomplishment in 2025. This success resulted from historic fundraising achievements and a robust 20% annualized return from the investment portfolio. Strategic enhancements to our capital structure further positioned the organization, providing great financial flexibility and liquidity. We concluded the fiscal year with exceptional financial strength and our commitment to advancing our mission and investing in core programs continues. This strong foundation uniquely equips the Society to expand our global impact as we open our new Museum of Exploration. We extend our deepest gratitude to our dedicated donors and partners for supporting these important efforts.”

DARIEN WRIGHT
Chief Financial and Operating Officer
National Geographic Society

*Non-operating activities primarily consist of net realized and unrealized investment gains and losses and pension and postretirement activity.

IMPACT AND FOCUS AREAS

National Geographic Explorers are bold visionaries who deepen our understanding of the Society's six focus areas of Ocean, Land, Wildlife, Human Histories and Cultures, Planetary Health, and Space. These focus areas align with our dedication to protect and restore the health of our planet, from diverse ecosystems and critical landscapes to majestic wildlife and human experiences. Explorers activated across the six areas advance knowledge, drive change, uncover mysteries and propel advocacy.

With hundreds of Explorer-led projects across the globe, the Society relies on the leadership and generosity of philanthropic partners for their continued investments in the successes of our Explorers and their innovations that boldly shape the future of life on Earth.

FOCUS AREA

OCEAN



This page: Dominica's reefs are home to various coral types, including vibrant soft corals. Opposite page: The National Geographic Pristine Seas submersible, the Argonauta, allows team members to survey an underwater dropoff in Fiji.



OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

2.7M

social media users gaining a deeper understanding of protecting the world's oceans by following Pristine Seas

26

countries where the educational programs of Unplastify have been conducted, creating change agents around the globe

3.6M

social media post impressions for World Ocean Day



My only goal here has been to learn as much as possible about how we can safely monitor and protect our oceans. Working with National Geographic scientists, local partners and the Council of Chiefs, I know the outcome of the expedition can be used to serve the people of Rotuma, the island and the ocean."

ALICIA EMBERSON-SEMISI
Scientist from Rotuma who joined Pristine Seas' expedition in 2025



Together, we can protect the world's most vibrant and diverse marine ecosystems and help communities thrive. We are proud to partner with Pristine Seas in its critical work to restore the ocean."

ANTHA WILLIAMS
Who leads the Environment Program at Bloomberg Philanthropies

Pristine Seas

National Geographic Pristine Seas is an exploration, research and filmmaking project that inspires the creation of marine protected areas (MPAs) around the world. Founded and led by National Geographic Explorer in Residence Enric Sala, the project partners with local communities and global stakeholders to create the largest marine reserves on Earth, which cover more than 6.9 million square kilometers of ocean.

In 2025, Pristine Seas helped to create three new marine protected areas, bringing the total to 31 since the project launched in 2008. These "national parks of the sea" preserve the wonders of the ocean while increasing the food supply, providing economic benefits and building resilience against global warming. The newly announced 2025 areas include the remote northern atolls of Bikar and Bokak in the Marshall Islands; two remote coral reefs in the Caribbean Sea; and the world's first sperm whale reserve in Dominica.

Pristine Seas also made waves this year by coproducing the groundbreaking film "Ocean with David Attenborough." Enric served as an executive producer and scientific advisor for the film, which features the most detailed, cinematic footage of bottom trawling ever captured. The film premiered in theaters in May and began streaming on National Geographic Channel, Disney+ and Hulu in June. While "Ocean" highlights the alarming decline of marine biodiversity over

the past century, the film also reinforces that recovery is possible, showcasing examples of marine life rebounding when left alone. The Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, the Don Quixote Foundation and Revive Our Ocean are also co-producers of the film. Moving forward, Pristine Seas will use this film as part of its work to inspire leaders around the world to ban bottom trawling in existing MPAs. Ever dedicated to the next generation of changemakers, National Geographic is providing the film free of charge to educators worldwide for classroom use.

In 2025, in partnership with Fiji's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, the Ministry of Fisheries and Forests, the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, and Blue Prosperity Fiji, Pristine Seas also dove deep into Fiji's waters to fill data gaps about marine life in the Yasawas, the Great Sea Reef and the Ringgolds. Aboard the expedition, deep sea specialists focused on revealing secrets of the planet's least studied and least known ecosystem. The team's upcoming scientific report will equip government leaders with the data they need to make informed decisions regarding ocean protection.

Another major achievement for the year is the publication of a paper about the discovery of a new species of coral by marine scientist Juan Mayorga and marine biologist Luisa Dueñas while on expedition in Colombia. *Distichopora yurupariensis* is a pale pink color with a unique skeleton structure created by tiny overlapping plates.

In 2025, Pristine Seas partnered with Rituals Cosmetics to support the team's efforts to restore ocean health and productivity, helping improve the livelihoods of coastal communities and foster climate resilience. Through their 10% Profit Pledge, Rituals commits to advancing work that improves the well-being of people and the planet, demonstrating an investment from a business leader that moves the needle on marine conservation.

The National Geographic Society acknowledges the leadership donors who have contributed to Pristine Seas and its many initiatives to safeguard the world's oceans, including Beagle Charitable Foundation, Allison Bennington, Bezos Earth Fund, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Disney Conservation Fund, Don Quixote Foundation, The Enrico Foundation, the Heinz Family Foundation, LGT Venture Philanthropy, Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic Fund, The Look and See Foundation, Oracle, Philip Stephenson Foundation, Postcode Lottery Netherlands, Rituals Cosmetics, Serventi Family Foundation, Tanka Foundation, Ted and Michele Waitt-TTMMC Fund, UBS Optimus Foundation, the Walmart Foundation and with support from Google.org.

Project CETI

As a science and conservation initiative, Project CETI (Cetacean Translation Initiative) is applying advanced machine learning and

state-of-the-art gentle robotics to listen to and decode sperm whale communication. Project CETI has engineered non-invasive, bio-inspired robotics to record sound and visual information, advancing the field's ability to connect data and study our natural world.

In 2025, Project CETI activated the CETI Glider System, which encompasses a whale recording unit, sharing information on whales and taking new commands from the team as needed. This allows specific whales, such as mothers and calf pairs, to be recorded for days, even if they travel for hundreds of kilometers.

Additional custom technologies include bio-inspired, hydrodynamic whale tags that utilize custom-designed, gentle suction cups to enable up to three days of streamed data collection. The sensors include GPS positioning to facilitate tag recovery once it detaches from the whale. A newly developed whale heart sensor embedded in the suction cups produces electrocardiogram signals that allow CETI researchers to better understand whale physiology, health and sleep, and to integrate it into sperm whale language models.

CETI drones — also activated in 2025 — utilize the whales' echolocation clicks and the data collected by underwater acoustic sensors to guide drone flight patterns, allowing the CETI field team to tag the whales gently and avoid getting close to the animals in a boat.

This groundbreaking research is taking place in Dominica in the Eastern Caribbean, and it may eventually be scaled to study sperm whale culture and language worldwide. Established goals for the future include improving CETI's custom technologies to enable greater data collection and developing global arts and youth programs to bring CETI's research and mission to a broad audience and inspire action for the ocean.

Thanks to the contributions of Tatiana Kaletsch, Chris Larsen and Lyna Lam, Lauren Hannan Shafer, Standard Industries, Emanuel Stern, and other donors, the National Geographic Society is able to support this bold effort to understand and conserve these magnificent animals.

Left to right: A clown anemonefish on a coral reef in Raja Ampat, Indonesia. Local scientist Alicia Emberson-Semisi prepares to survey the waters of Rotuma Island in Fiji with the Pristine Seas team. Pristine Seas team member Dan Beecham swims above a reef near Dravuni Island in Fiji. Explorer and Project CETI biology lead Shane Gero and graduate student Mapal Ishay collect data on sperm whales off the coast of Dominica. A group of sperm whales swim in the waters of Dominica. Explorer and Project CETI founder David Gruber with team members Odel Harve and Darren Gibbons.



Unplastify

National Geographic Explorer Agustina “Tati” Besada founded Unplastify in recognition that the key to a healthier ocean and planet isn’t just plastic recycling, but also the prevention of plastic use.

Since its launch, the Unplastify Education Integral Program - Worldwide has engaged over 250 educators directly to build awareness and develop solutions to combat plastic pollution in our ocean. This has reached over 5,000 students and 474 schools and facilitated the reduction of over 75 tons of single-use plastic in Unplastify project areas.

As an educational program, Unplastify goes beyond awareness to teach youth a framework for addressing complex issues across a variety of contexts. The program builds skills for future resiliency by teaching the process of

solutioning while also creating channels for those learners to enact ideas important to their own communities. In doing so, Unplastify creates a learning pathway that positions learners as positive change agents for the rest of their lives.

Unplastify’s work is supported by the Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic Fund, which receives support from travelers aboard National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions voyages. These contributions include grant allocations covering the full cost of expanding the program on a global scale. In 2025, the Unplastify team had the opportunity to amplify the Unplastify program and its mission while on board Lindblad vessels in the Galápagos. Also, this year, National Geographic Partners supported Unplastify through a speaker series in Mexico City that introduced hundreds of educators to the Unplastify program.

This page: Explorer Agustina “Tati” Besada, co-founder of Unplastify, pictured with winners of the Unplastify Challenge. Opposite page: Explorer Tati Besada aboard the sailboat on which she has twice crossed the Atlantic Ocean to research ocean plastics and identify scalable solutions.



FOCUS AREA

LAND



This page: Cacao farmer Noe Borase on his farm in Mutsora, South Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Opposite page: Sprinkler systems irrigate farmland in the Imperial Valley, an arid region in California that receives the most water from the Colorado River Basin.



OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

1

transformative partnership to help communities reimagine how our food system can nourish both people and the planet

16K

visitors learning more about the World Freshwater Initiative on the National Geographic Society website

100K+

social media followers witnessing the importance of the ecological services provided by the Okavango wetland ecosystem



This year, De Beers marks five years of Okavango Eternal, an ongoing effort that we are proud to be a part of. This programme forms part of a broader collaborative effort to safeguard more than 13 million acres around the headwaters of the Okavango River Basin through a combination of scientific insight and community-led conservation.

The Okavango Basin is one of Africa's most precious and biodiverse ecosystems, spanning the natural diamond-producing nations of Angola, Botswana and Namibia. Grounded in local knowledge, traditions and stewardship, Okavango Eternal contributes to the protection of this irreplaceable landscape while enabling livelihoods that exist in balance with nature.

We are particularly proud to have contributed to the case for Ramsar designation for Lisima Lya Mwono earlier this year, helping to secure the future of this remarkable environment and ensure it continues to thrive for generations to come."

SANDRINE CONSEILLER
CEO De Beers Brands
De Beers Group

Okavango Eternal Partnership

Okavango Eternal is addressing one of the most critical conservation challenges in Africa: protecting the source waters of the Okavango Delta and the lives and livelihoods they support. Okavango Eternal, a partnership between the National Geographic Society and De Beers Group and led by National Geographic Explorer Steve Boyes, accelerates the work of the National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project (NGOWP). The partnership maintained steady momentum throughout 2025, highlighted by the successful launch and full activation of the Nkashi Knowledge Center in the village of Beetsha, Botswana.

The Nkashi Knowledge Center is more than a physical building. It's a vital community resource that fosters cross-generational learning, hosts sustainable livelihood trainings, convenes the emerging scientists and conservation storytellers of the Okavango region, and celebrates the region's languages, cultures and traditions so they live on.

The Nkashi Knowledge Center was intentionally built in Beetsha — a remote community in the Okavango Delta's Eastern Panhandle. It was a critical placement to ensure education and opportunity reach deeper into the Delta.

The Center's opening in April was attended by ministerial, village, Society and De Beers leadership in a celebration of this unique space. It shed light on what is made possible by the incredible long-term partnerships of the NGOWP team comprised of National Geographic Explorers, partners at the Wild Bird Trust, and an interdisciplinary team of scientists and other experts from the region and around the world.

The first Nkashi Knowledge Center, previously opened in Maun, has already welcomed 3,000 visitors, including students, scientists and storytellers for training, workshops and community events, with the same impact expected in Beetsha.

The Society thanks De Beers Group for its support of Okavango Eternal, an impactful partnership to secure sustainable protection of the Okavango Basin.

Food for Tomorrow

In 2025, the National Geographic Society, in collaboration with PepsiCo, fully activated Food for Tomorrow, an 18-month pilot program focused on regenerative agriculture. This program supports an extraordinary set of Explorers diving into the future of food through breathtaking imagery, moving stories of farmers and researchers leading change in their communities, and applied scientific research.

The partnership unites the Society's scientific expertise and world-class storytelling with PepsiCo's expansive scale and leadership in contributing to a more sustainable food system. The program adds agriculture to our storytelling and science grant portfolios and marks the Society's first such collaboration with a global food and drink company. The pilot offers an opportunity to expand relationships with key influencers in the land-based food system at large, including environmental changemakers, agricultural researchers, other food and beverage companies actively investing in more sustainable farming and supply chains, farmer support organizations, and, importantly, farming communities themselves.

The launch resulted in significant early indicators of interest, demonstrating the early success of the initiative. The metrics include over 45,000 unique visitors to the Food for Tomorrow website and 2,200 applications received in response to the Food For Tomorrow program's Science Request for Proposals from researchers, community organizations and social enterprises across 140 countries.

Additional outcomes highlighting the program's interest include a collaboration between National Geographic and Disney that resulted in over 40 million views and 232,000 engagements with regenerative agriculture content, as well as Explorer fieldwork on more than 30 farms across nine countries and eight diverse crop

systems that spotlighted frontline farmers adopting regenerative agriculture.

The Society thanks PepsiCo for its collaboration in launching Food for Tomorrow and our shared ambition to inspire positive change throughout the global food system.

World Freshwater Initiative

The Society's World Freshwater Initiative is designed to inspire and enact sustainable freshwater action. The two central components are the World Water Map — a one-of-a-kind data-powered geovisualization of the world's freshwater supplies and demands — and complementary grants in storytelling, education and science.

Strong partnerships are the foundation of this initiative. In 2022, National Geographic collaborated with Esri and Utrecht University to create the World Water Map. Since then, the team has enhanced the Map with global freshwater scarcity hotspots, future climate scenarios and grantee projects. An enhanced map, World Water Map: Insights, also allows users to download the raw data and create their own scenarios.

The Society's Freshwater Storytelling Request for Proposals, supported by another partnership with the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, funds freshwater-based storytelling projects that

span the globe. They cover a range of topics from building community capacity and climate-resilience solutions for agriculture to empowering youth to address water insecurity and promoting sustainable, place-based freshwater solutions.

The Society received over 790 applications and awarded 10 grants in 2025 to stellar applicants. Highlights include Explorer Linh Pham's work reporting on the challenges of water scarcity in Vietnam's Mekong River Delta; Explorer Stuart Tibaweswa's photography and data visualization project addressing environmental threats to Uganda's Rwenzori mountains; and Explorer Marcos Zegers' efforts to document water catchment systems based on fog collection in the planet's driest region: the Atacama Desert.

The Society thanks the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and Kevin J. Maroni for generously supporting the World Freshwater Initiative.

Left to right: A dance group performs at the opening of the Beetsha Nkashi Knowledge Center in Beetsha, Botswana. An elephant at sunset in Chobe National Park, Botswana. Explorer Pablo Albarenga with local collaborator, I Wayan Tilik Jati, photographing a rice field in Bali, Indonesia, for Food for Tomorrow. Explorer Pablo Albarenga inspects grains in a rice field in Bali, Indonesia, for Food for Tomorrow. In Indonesia, an embung reservoir conserves water supply during dry seasons. Young hibiscus plants on a community farm in Senegal, photographed for Food for Tomorrow.

FOCUS AREA

WILDLIFE



“

Cooperation between species is part of what makes life on Earth so rich.”

MAURICIO CANTOR
National Geographic Explorer

This page: The distinctive feet of a blue-footed booby photographed on Isabela Island, Galápagos Islands, Ecuador. Opposite page: Explorer and primatologist Tiago Falótico photographs monkeys in Serra da Capivara National Park, Brazil.



OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

92.7M

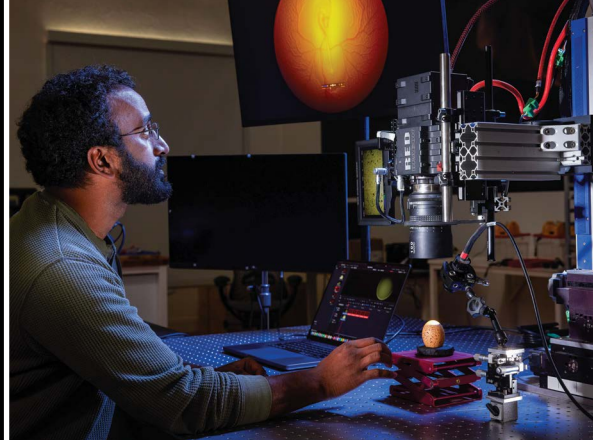
impressions of the Earth Month “Secrets of the Penguins” marketing campaign featuring National Geographic Explorers Bertie Gregory and Pablo “Popi” Garcia Borboroglu

17K+

species photographed as part of the National Geographic Photo Ark

2.7M

views of Explorer Anand Varma’s WonderLab Photo of the Year, featured on the cover of National Geographic magazine and on the Society’s social media channels



The Templeton World Charity Foundation is pleased to support the National Geographic Society’s work to deepen our understanding of animal cognition and intelligence. Inspired by Dr. Jane Goodall receiving the 2021 Templeton Prize, this important effort will advance scientific knowledge about how animals think and learn while inspiring open-minded curiosity about the diverse forms of intelligence in our interconnected world.”

NICK HIGGS
Vice President, Strategy & Programs
Templeton World Charity Foundation



Africa’s stories have always been rich – what changes when Africans tell them is the depth and authenticity they carry. It is an honor to support Africa Refocused and the remarkable work Noel and Pragna have built through NEWF, creating the conditions for local storytellers to bring their own perspective to narratives about their land, their wildlife and their communities. That shift in who holds the lens makes all the difference.”

BOLADJI AGUEH
Hubbard Council Member

Photo Ark

The National Geographic Photo Ark is a multiyear effort to document every species living in the world’s zoos, aquariums and wildlife sanctuaries; inspire action through education; and help protect wildlife by supporting on-the-ground conservation efforts.

National Geographic Explorer and photographer Joel Sartore started the Photo Ark in his hometown of Lincoln, Nebraska, in 2006. Since then, he has visited more than 60 countries and photographed more than 17,000 species – and counting – in his quest to create a photo archive of global biodiversity. Using solid black-and-white backgrounds to create unique portraits without size comparisons, the Photo Ark gives each animal equal attention, allowing people to look deeply into the eyes of each creature and see why they are important and worthy of protection.

As the twentieth anniversary of the Photo Ark nears, and with generous support from Caroline D. Gabel, Shared Earth Foundation and RBC Foundation USA, the Society continues to illuminate this project. This year, we announced “Photo Ark: Animals of Earth” as the inaugural exhibition at the Museum of Exploration, which opens in summer 2026. Utilizing large-scale projections, captivating photographs, touch interactives and sensor-driven interactives, this thoughtfully designed experience tells an incredible story and

allows visitors to interact with the species featured in the Photo Ark like never before.

WonderLab

Some of the most effective partnerships are those that model a relay race – picking up where another leaves off.

WonderLab launched in 2023 thanks to National Geographic Explorer Anand Varma. Anand has devoted years of his life to developing innovative techniques – even building some of his own equipment – to create intimate, dramatic and surprising images of nature.

Anand’s work has been shared on a massive scale, including in numerous stories for National Geographic magazine. In 2025, his visual story on the development of a chicken embryo earned the cover of National Geographic’s 2025 “Picture of the Year” issue.

A critical component of Anand’s work at WonderLab is empowering students to pursue their own sense of wonder. In 2025, he hosted 10 field trips serving 250 students and designed a camera kit for classrooms that was pilot-tested in schools across the country.

An award-winning set companion, WonderLab Learning Resources, developed with Anand and published in National Geographic’s online repository of free education resources, amplifies WonderLab to educators and learners globally.

Their biology-based subject matter ranges from the lifecycle of a jellyfish to the inside of a chicken egg. The aim is to help cultivate the mindset of an Explorer, including curiosity, empathy, empowerment, problem-solving and storytelling.

With support from endowment funds, Explorer Brittney Beck collaborated with Anand to bring WonderLab Learning Resources to students across California. Building on WonderLab’s offerings, Brittney worked with the WonderLab team, additional Explorers and educators to create a targeted curriculum for classrooms. Together, they designed, piloted and evaluated the impact of the curriculum, with plans to further disseminate this powerful learning solution more broadly.

The Society thanks the Burroughs Wellcome Fund for its generous support of WonderLab.

Wildlife Intelligence Project

The Wildlife Intelligence Project proudly supports exceptional researchers diving into animal behavior and cognition. The three Explorers supported through this program – Felicity Muth, Mauricio Cantor and Tiago Falótico – are following in the footsteps of the late Jane Goodall, whose legacy inspired this program, by revealing how animals think, learn and make decisions. Their discoveries not only strengthen our ability to protect these species with compelling, science-driven evidence, but also deepen our understanding of our own place in nature and the responsibility we share in safeguarding it.

In 2025, the Wildlife Intelligence Project collaborated with the Society’s Exploration Technology Lab, with the Lab providing bespoke technology and scientific support. The end result was engineered durable silicone bracelet-style GPS trackers for capuchin monkeys; a cutting-edge multi-sensor synchronicity system to reveal how dolphins collaborate with fishermen; and a tool – developed in partnership with Anand Varma’s WonderLab – to uncover how bumblebees construct their intricate nests.

These collaborations are accelerating discovery and pushing the boundaries of what’s possible in wildlife science.

The Society thanks the Templeton World Charity Foundation for generously supporting the Wildlife Intelligence Project.

Africa Refocused

Africa Refocused is a collaboration between the National Geographic Society and Nature, Environment & Wildlife Filmmakers (NEWF) to support a vibrant community of African and Global South storytellers across continents. Through access to cutting-edge equipment, outdoor spaces and industry mentors, Africa Refocused further trains and elevates African nature, environment and wildlife storytellers.

In 2025, NEWF added 77 new Africa Refocused fellows, bringing the total to 371 fellows representing 35 African countries and 46

countries globally. NEWF completed more than 60 labs and exchanges and finished the production of 13 short films. They also have over 10 films and series in production.

Additionally, they engaged 40 youths from the communities they work in through the YES internship programme. Other accomplishments included the production and distribution of “One Hope: Rhino Ops”; an expanded presence at global industry events, such as Jackson Wild, Santiago Wild, Sunnyside of the Doc, and the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers; strengthened South x South collaborations; and the successful rollout of a residency model that deepened skill development and peer mentorship. The program also secured critical sustainability milestones, including five-year permits within iSimangaliso Wetland Park in South Africa and expanded wildlife access agreements within iSimangaliso and Bayala.

Left to right: A lesser bird-of-paradise photographed at the Port Moresby Nature Park in Papua New Guinea. Explorer Anand Varma adjusts a specialized video camera to focus on a 2-day-old chicken embryo inside its egg. A chick, raised from an embryo by Explorer Anand Varma, looks into a glowing eggshell. Explorer Felicity Muth conducts fieldwork to decode bee intelligence at Van Norden Meadow near Soda Springs, CA, USA. Explorer Mauricio Cantor flies a drone with a LiDAR sensor to measure the size of dolphins in the coastal waters of Tramandaí, Brazil. NEWF South x South dive teams head out to film underwater sequences for the film “Khuthaza.”

FOCUS AREA

HUMAN HISTORIES & CULTURES



This page: Rising Star project team member Samuel Nkwe climbs a rope inside the cathedral chamber of Site 105 cave in South Africa. Opposite page: Explorer Eduardo Neves and expedition team members work at an archaeological excavation site in Pará, Brazil.



OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

23,712

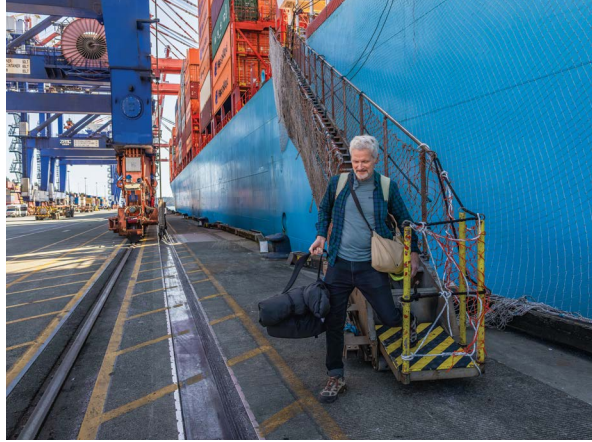
total miles traversed by Paul Salopek for the Out of Eden Walk by the end of 2025, with 28 stories published from his journey throughout the year

MANY

publications under review or in preparation for Rising Star, including groundbreaking discoveries that, once announced, will change the course of our understanding of ancient hominin behavior

886M

audience reached through media coverage of geologist Tebogo Makhubela's 2025 Wayfinder Award, highlighting his critical work with the Rising Star program to redefine what we know about our ancient relatives



“

I’m following in the footsteps of our ancient ancestors who first spread out of Africa and across the Earth. My mission is to cover, on foot, the major stories of our time through the lives of the people I meet along the way: the farmers, scientists, office workers, students and artists who knit together societies. This unique 24,000-mile walking journey would not be possible without the support of National Geographic Society donors. Even as I retrace the first migrations that mapped the world, I’m reminded of how, today, all of our lives are more interconnected than ever before – across borders, languages and continents. We’re walking together. Your generous support inspires me to keep this historic, storytelling journey moving forward. Thank you for joining the trail.”

PAUL SALOPEK
National Geographic Explorer

Out of Eden Walk

In 2025, the Out of Eden Walk – a multiyear experiment in “slow journalism” – jumped continents for the first time in more than 10 years. This storytelling odyssey follows the first human dispersal out of Africa during the Stone Age, making connections between ordinary peoples’ lives and the global headlines of our day.

After walking through Africa and Asia, National Geographic Explorer and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Paul Salopek set foot in North America in the early morning hours of June 10. Paul arrived by Maersk shipping boat at Prince Rupert, Canada, and made his way up to Anchorage, Alaska, to near Glacier Bay National Park in Alaska. Paul walked Alaska’s Lost Coast, an area of incomparable ruggedness and wilderness, eventually reaching Gustavus, Alaska (near Juneau).

Relating his experience to audience members worldwide, the Out of Eden Walk published 27 dispatches, milestones and lab talks, as well as one National Geographic magazine story, “My night with the guerrilla balloonists of South Korea.” After completing his historic walk through Asia, Paul published his final dispatch from Asia, “Goodbye to Japan,” in September 2025.

To relate these historic storytelling achievements to even broader audiences, the Society launched a new website for the Out of Eden Walk that highlights its

storytelling components and introduces a brand-new interactive map of Paul’s journey.

To see the new site and map, visit outofedenwalk.nationalgeographic.org.

Rising Star

Through a partnership with Max Planck Institute (MPI) and generous support from Lyda Hill Philanthropies and Grant Stapleton and Eva Davey, the Society advanced research in the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site. Located in South Africa, the site has been vital to the study of human origins. Explorer in Residence Lee Berger and his team are yielding incredible discoveries, locating and documenting more hominin fossils than any other exploration program in the region.

Excavations in 2025 have uncovered several hominin fossils, some possibly dating back 3.3 million years, and a newly discovered potential alternative ancient entrance to the cave. The success of the 2025 MPI x Rising Star expedition has spurred an expansion of the project in 2026 to include a tented camp that will serve as a hub for scientists, students and storytellers. Facilities for lodging, storage and analysis have also been strengthened and expanded, which will increase local scientific capacity.

The year saw continued growth for this project, which serves as a dynamic hub for the study of human origins. There are now an estimated

55 staff on the ground and more than 150 scientists and students from around the globe representing more than 40 institutions.

Work from previous years also yielded results in 2025. First Art – a team of experts in early human and hominin art, which includes cave art – concluded that engravings found during their 2024 visit are most likely cultural, meaning they were created intentionally by a hominin. The First Art team is currently working on a high-profile paper for publication, with a number of additional publications under review or in preparation.

The throughline for Rising Star is year-round excavation, groundbreaking discoveries and public engagement that will change our understanding of ancient hominin behavior.

Amazon Revealed

The Amazon Revealed (“Amazonia Revelada”) project, led by National Geographic Explorer Eduardo Neves, is revealing the impact of Indigenous and traditional communities in the management and conservation of the Amazon over millennia by embarking on the largest Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR)-driven archaeological survey to date.

LiDAR is critical for uncovering archaeological sites and hidden features concealed under the dense tree canopy and for mapping the underlying topography. Over the course of the year, the team

surveyed 1,600 km² in five regions along the Arc of Deforestation, a region highly threatened by deforestation in the southern Amazon. In doing so, Amazon Revealed is not only mapping unique archaeological sites, some potentially dating back 13,000 years, but also leveraging the Amazonian past to protect vulnerable regions.

Amazon Revealed achieved great success in 2025, bringing together communities, researchers and civil society organizations. The team uncovered at least 56 previously unknown archaeological sites, with LiDAR data analysis still underway, so additional sites may be identified. These sites – and the forest in which they are situated – receive enhanced legal protections once documented through on-the-ground archaeological assessments and registration with the Brazilian heritage authorities, creating an estimated minimum of 50 km² of new protected areas that will safeguard the Amazon’s cultural and biological diversity. In tandem, a community-centered partnership framework is engaging 10 Indigenous and traditional communities to integrate local priorities into the design and implementation of both scientific and policy activities.

The momentum generated by Amazon Revealed has catalyzed engagement with Brazilian heritage and environmental agencies, opening new avenues for archaeology and heritage legislation to protect forested areas at risk.

“

Being a partner in the work of Explorer in Residence Lee Berger and his team at the Cradle of Humankind has been incredibly rewarding, with each new discovery upending how we understand humanity’s origins. Lyda Hill Philanthropies is delighted to support this truly cooperative effort, and to be a partner in nurturing the next generation of scientists who will continue to grow exploration and scientific discovery for years to come.”

LYDA HILL
Founder, Lyda Hill Philanthropies
Principal Donors Society Member, Hubbard Council
Member and Base Camp Founding Donor

Left to right: Explorer Paul Salopek departs the Maersk San Vicente in Prince Rupert, British Columbia, Canada. Explorer Paul Salopek passes the Ogurogawa interchange in Ina, Nagano, Japan. Explorer Tebogo Makhubela explains technical elements of sampling a fossil wall to Ph.D. student Tariye Onyeogu on location near South Africa’s Rising Star cave system. Explorer in Residence Lee Berger sits in an entrance chamber of the Rising Star cave system. Explorer Eduardo Neves stands with his expedition team at an archaeological excavation site near Brazil’s Iriri River. Explorer Eduardo Neves takes notes during his expedition through the Amazon rainforest.

FOCUS AREA

PLANETARY HEALTH



This page: Specimens collected from Arctic waters are examined under a microscope as part of National Geographic and Rolex Perpetual Planet Ocean Expeditions. Opposite page: A seal rests on Antarctic ice in the Weddell Sea.



OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

5.1M

social media followers learning about programs making a positive impact on planetary health

20+

National Geographic Explorers, seven expeditions across all five ocean basins, and 100+ local community collaborators featured through Perpetual Planet Ocean Expeditions

2.5B

gained audience for the announcement of first-ever live sighting of rare squid species *Gonatus antarcticus*



Urgent action is needed now more than ever to preserve the world's most fragile environments, and Rolex and National Geographic are deeply committed to supporting trailblazing Explorers working to better understand and protect our planet. Perpetual Planet Expeditions led groundbreaking scientific research in mountain and rainforest ecosystems. Now, our Ocean Expeditions are studying how global environmental changes are affecting the largest and most vital ecosystem on Earth using cutting-edge science and crucial local knowledge from coastal communities. Together, Rolex and National Geographic will help our Explorers design innovative solutions to revive, restore and protect our one ocean."

ARNAUD BOETSCH
Director of Communication & Image, Rolex



National Geographic and Rolex have brought together a team of Explorers from around the world that share the same passion for the ocean. That's really powerful. It's a global effort that's supporting me to bring back technology to the Seychelles and to be able to lead research — not just me, but for people at home too, to showcase why the deep sea is important."

SHEENA TALMA
National Geographic Explorer

Perpetual Planet Expeditions

Guided by a shared vision for protecting our planet's vital life-support systems, National Geographic and Rolex have created, and continuously expanded, a longstanding partnership. One result of this partnership is Perpetual Planet Expeditions — a series of trailblazing scientific research expeditions to address environmental changes in the planet's vital ecosystems: mountains, the Amazon and ocean. With the support of Rolex, the Perpetual Planet Expeditions are enabling essential scientific research expeditions to critical ecosystems around the planet, helping us understand how much and how rapidly these ecosystems are changing.

Since the launch of the first Perpetual Planet Expedition in 2019, the program has engaged collaborative Explorer teams and distilled and illuminated scientific insights gained through the expeditions for a diverse range of audiences worldwide, including local communities, scientists, academics, educators and policymakers.

Launched this year, the first Perpetual Planet Ocean Expeditions integrate cutting-edge science with local ecological knowledge to examine the causes and impacts of marine systems change throughout the largest and most vital ecosystem on Earth — the ocean. The Ocean Expeditions feature more than 20 National Geographic Explorers across all five ocean basins (Arctic, Atlantic, Indian, Pacific, Southern) and over 100 local community collaborators.

Highlights from 2025 include Explorer Anya Brown and her local collaborators, including the nonprofit Kōrero O Te Ōrau, continuing their field research on Rarotonga's coral reefs to investigate how corals remain resilient to heat stress and may work together to boost overall heat tolerance in the reef system. Explorer Sheena Talma and two team members from the Seychelles participated in a successful deep-sea Baited Remote Underwater Vehicle (BRUV) lander system deployment, retrieval and data analysis training in East London off the east coast of South Africa. Sheena's team will deploy the BRUVs in her home country of Seychelles next year in an expedition to illuminate and protect life in Seychelles' deep ocean.

In the Canadian Arctic, Explorer Kristina Brown returned to the community of Gjoa Haven to present preliminary findings from her three oceanographic expeditions in the Canadian Arctic's Sherman Basin conducted on board the Arctic Research Foundation's vessel, the R/V Martin Bergmann. She has been collaborating closely with the community of Gjoa Haven in an effort to inform best practices for sustaining food security in the face of a rapidly changing and warming Arctic.

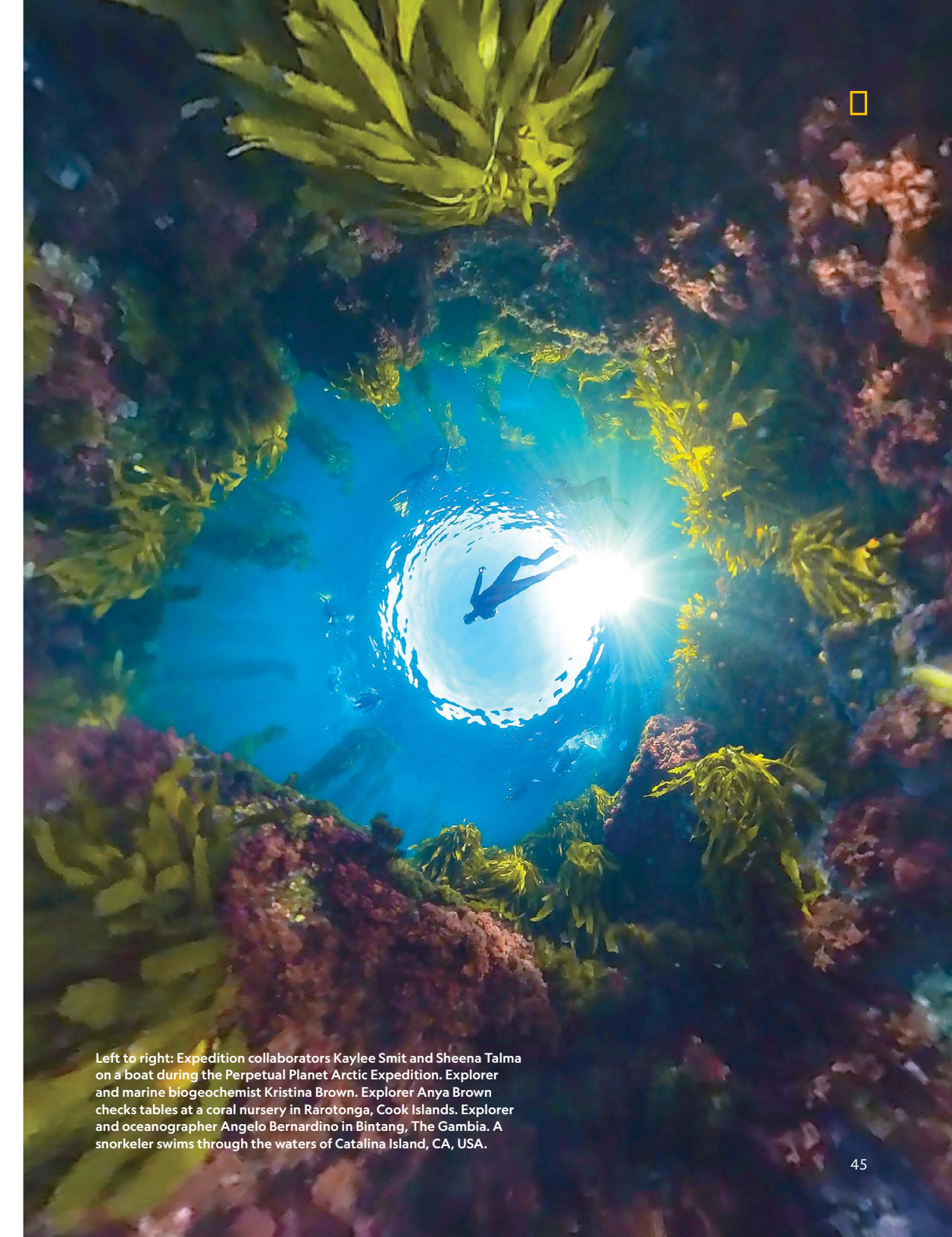
Other successes for 2025 include Explorer Katy Croff Bell leading research on a study titled "How Little We've Seen: A Visual Coverage Estimate of the Deep Seafloor." The paper, supported by the Perpetual Planet Expeditions program and published to enormous and immediate worldwide

attention in Science Advances, reveals that in decades of deep-sea exploration, humans have observed less than 0.001% of the deep seafloor — an area roughly the size of Rhode Island. It makes the case for accelerating and expanding access to deep-sea exploration and provides an important foundation for Perpetual Planet Expeditions' multiyear, scientific exploration of the global ocean.

Another highlight of this year is the central role Explorer Fernando Trujillo played in negotiating a landmark resolution on river dolphins. Fernando, one of the lead Explorers on the Amazon Expedition and the 2024 Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year, was a key participant supporting the Colombian delegation in the negotiation and successful adoption of a landmark resolution recognizing river dolphins and other wetland species as key to the conservation of rivers in South America and Asia.

In 2025, the Society and Disney also announced the first-ever live sighting of a rare squid species, *Gonatus antarcticus*, during a National Geographic and Rolex Perpetual Planet Ocean Expedition in the Southern Ocean, conducted in collaboration with Schmidt Ocean Institute.

The Society thanks Rolex for the opportunity to support collaborative Explorer-led research expeditions in Earth's critical ecosystems.



Left to right: Expedition collaborators Kaylee Smit and Sheena Talma on a boat during the Perpetual Planet Arctic Expedition. Explorer and marine biogeochemist Kristina Brown. Explorer Anya Brown checks tables at a coral nursery in Rarotonga, Cook Islands. Explorer and oceanographer Angelo Bernardino in Bintang, The Gambia. A snorkeler swims through the waters of Catalina Island, CA, USA.



This deeply inspiring collaboration has the potential to leave a lasting legacy – positively impacting millions of people and species who depend on these ecosystems for survival and prosperity. Blue Boundaries will be a catalyst for groundbreaking research and exploration of vital ecosystems, helping us do what we do best at Chubb: protecting what matters most.”

EVAN G. GREENBERG
Chairman and CEO of Chubb Limited and
Chairman, Chubb Charitable Foundation

Blue Boundaries

In the fall of 2025, the Society and the Chubb Charitable Foundation announced the launch of Blue Boundaries, a groundbreaking, global initiative aimed at driving transformational change for critical ecosystems at the intersection of land and water.

Through a seven-year, multimillion-dollar grant from the Chubb Charitable Foundation, Blue Boundaries combines on-the-ground and on-the-water research, compelling storytelling, and experiential education.

“Blue Boundary” environments – freshwater wetlands, coastal systems and reefs – form a web of deeply connected ecosystems. They provide vital habitat for nearly half of all species on Earth, including iconic wildlife like jaguars, sea otters, beavers, grizzly bears, sharks and penguins. These ecosystems support fisheries, clean water and shoreline integrity that nourish and protect billions of people, while also playing a crucial role in absorbing and storing carbon to regulate the climate.

In launching Blue Boundaries, the Society and Chubb will illuminate and elevate the instrumental role these ecosystems play for people and the environment, shift public perception toward a deeper appreciation of nature’s intrinsic value, and advance strategies essential for habitat restoration and global resilience.

Led by a cohort of National Geographic Explorers, the Blue Boundaries program will encompass scientific research, conservation work, educational initiatives and impact storytelling. Working in partnership with local communities, these Explorers will help co-create innovative and scalable solutions that are informed by science and grounded in local knowledge.

The Society thanks the Chubb Charitable Foundation for its generous support of Blue Boundaries, a partnership that focuses on the health and preservation of ecosystems where land and water converge.

To learn more, view the Blue Boundaries video at natgeo.org/blueboundaries

This page: Photographed under USFWS Permit 37058D — a sea otter swims near its raft in Halibut Cove, AK, USA. Opposite page: Aerial view of Isabela Island in the Galápagos Islands.



FOCUS AREA

SPACE



This page: Commander Rym Chaid and crew engineer Ricardo J. Gonzalez simulate an EVA at Mars Desert Research Station outside of Hanksville, UT, USA. Opposite page: Long exposure image of star trails around the south celestial pole in Los Glaciares National Park, Patagonia.



OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

1,500

audience members at the 2025 Explorers Festival, where space was discussed onstage

718.5K

views of space videos on social media channels

7

days of World Space Week, with National Geographic promoting space education and exploration through articles, documentaries and coverage of missions



ICARUS

Led by National Geographic Explorer Martin Wikelski, the International Cooperation for Animal Research Using Space project, or ICARUS, advanced in 2025 to launch a new chapter in the science of animal observation. ICARUS consists of a constellation of six cubesats, which once launched into the low Earth orbit, will provide pinpointed and live biological and location data of animals on the ground and in the air through a network of minuscule tags, as part of an “internet of animals.” One of these cubesats, nicknamed RAVEN, is partially funded through the generosity of donors Allison Bennington and B Wu.

Scientists use ICARUS to find out more about the lives of animals on Earth, including their migratory routes and living conditions. These findings will aid behavioral and infectious disease research as well as conservation efforts. They can even help to predict ecological changes and natural disasters.

ICARUS is a global and multipartner project, which is demonstrated through the complexity of its 2025 milestones: completion of the design of the RAVEN cubesat in March; assembly and integration tests of RAVEN in Sofia, Bulgaria, in October; and the launch of the Gena-OT satellite on the tip of a SpaceX Transporter 15 from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California in November. The Gena-OT satellite is a pathfinder or prototype satellite, which tests the communications and power systems that the ICARUS cubesats will use. The launch was successful, with Gena-OT reporting all

systems nominal, opening the path for the launch of RAVEN in May 2026, the first ICARUS cubesat.

This year’s activities proved instrumental in the official launch of the ICARUS cubesat constellation. They will form the basis for opportunities for Explorers interested in monitoring animals on Earth from space, as part of the Exploration Technology Lab’s initiative in summer 2026. ICARUS represents a giant step forward for the Society in space.

The Society thanks donors Allison Bennington and B Wu for their generosity. Additional partners and stakeholders include the Max Planck Society for Animal Behavior, TALOS, EnduroSat, Exolaunch and Space X.

Exploration Technology Lab: Send Your Science to Space

In 2025, the Exploration Technology Lab expanded its support for the Society’s space programs. Through a partnership between the Society and Caltech University, the Exploration Technology Lab is sending three Explorers’ biological experiments to the International Space Station (ISS).

The Explorers and their projects include Suchana “Apple” Chavanich, a marine biologist sending coral-associated bacterial strains from Thailand known for supporting coral health and reef restoration; Gabrielle Corradino, an ecologist and oceanographer sending cultures of phytoplankton from the Atlantic Ocean to study how microgravity and radiation influence their growth, behavior and

nutrient use; and Moola Mutondo, a geneticist and astrobiologist sending cyanobacteria from Zambia to study how its growth and resilience respond to microgravity, radiation, and nutrient-limited conditions for potential use to enrich nutrient-poor soils in Zambia, helping improve food security for local urban and rural subsistence farmers.

This opportunity gave Explorers the chance to extend their Earth-based work into an entirely new environment in space. By sending experiments to the ISS, Explorers can observe how space conditions such as microgravity and radiation impact biological systems.

Over the course of next year, the Lab will work with Caltech University to engineer sensors to measure the experiments. At the end of the year, the experiments will go to the ISS for 30 days before returning to Earth for analysis – using space to unlock bold new insights for life on Earth. This collaboration represents something none of us could achieve alone. By uniting Explorers, the Exploration Technology Lab and strategic partners, we are expanding the limits of exploration itself.

Explorers Festival: Space Ecology

As part of its commitment to Space as a focus area, the Society invited space ecologist Lola Fatoyinbo to the stage at the 2025 Explorers Festival.

Awed by her first glance at satellite imagery, Lola developed an appreciation for data and its collection from space. While working at NASA,

she supported satellites that use lasers to transmit data from spacecraft to Earth and back. This allows us to measure mangrove height and the carbon dioxide levels stored in trees’ trunks and branches. The satellite data also capture changes in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels over time.

Lola dove into the specifics of the data collection, inspiring the audience with the logistics of the Shuttle Radar Topography Mission installed on the spaceship Endeavor. The first data set, produced over 12 days, resulted in unprecedented calculations and topography mapping opportunities. The end result of this work, as well as additional initiatives on the International Space Station, is a deeper understanding of the forests, wetlands and mangroves of our planet.

Lola is using her space-centric missions and the maps they generate to educate conservationists and lawmakers – all to protect the wonder of a world as seen from space.

Left to right: The RAVEN satellite, the new standard tag for the ICARUS satellite telemetry system. Commander Rym Chaïd prepares for a simulated EVA at Mars Desert Research Station outside of Hanksville, UT, USA. Explorer Gabrielle Corradino examines a petri dish at the Society’s Exploration Technology Lab. Explorer and space ecologist Lola Fatoyinbo presents at the 2025 Explorers Festival. The Milky Way and bright star Antares are visible above the dark sky sanctuary in Pinnacles National Park, CA, USA.



CULTURE OF CONNECTIONS

The National Geographic Explorer community is underscored by connections: connections with each other, with the planet, with local communities amidst their field work, with like-minded changemakers, with passionate partners, with future generations, and with audiences around the globe.

The Society proudly invests in the programs, initiatives and opportunities that fuel these connections and the transformative power of exploration.



This page: A mushroom growing on the island of Tierra del Fuego in southern Chile. Opposite page: Explorer Daniela Cafaggi and Young Explorer Ana Lucía Arévalo sit at the base of a Ceiba tree in the Tirimbina Biological Reserve, Costa Rica.





This page: Jane Goodall sits on a high peak in Gombe, Tanzania, with a telescope, searching the forest below for chimpanzees. Opposite page: Jane Goodall writing in her home in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Guests visit the “Becoming Jane” exhibition at National Geographic headquarters in Washington, D.C., USA.



REMEMBERING DR. JANE GOODALL, DBE



On October 1, 2025, the world lost Valerie Jane Morris Goodall, best known simply as Jane Goodall.

As an ethologist, conservationist and trailblazer, Jane redefined what it means to be human and set the standard for how wildlife behavior studies are conducted. Jane dedicated her life to raising awareness and funds for the protection of the natural world she loved, including inspiring future generations to take action through her youth program, Jane Goodall’s Roots & Shoots. Up until her passing at age 91, Jane continued to deliver speeches, give high-profile interviews, and meet with government officials and businesses around the world to encourage support of wildlife and habitat conservation, as well as youth-led initiatives.

The National Geographic Society is proud to have partnered with Jane throughout her illustrious career, supporting her groundbreaking chimpanzee research in Tanzania in the 1960s; featuring her in a 1963 magazine cover story and first television documentary in 1965; opening the National Geographic archives for over 100 hours of never-before-seen footage for the 2017 film “Jane”; and curating the award-winning traveling exhibition “Becoming Jane” in partnership with the Jane Goodall Institute.

Her passion and legacy will continue to live on – both within and beyond the yellow border.



I’d like to be remembered as someone who really helped people to have a little humility and realize that we are part of the animal kingdom, not separated from it.”

DR. JANE GOODALL, DBE
 Founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and UN Messenger of Peace



CHANGEMAKERS OF TOMORROW

“

It is our honor to provide young people with the knowledge and skills they will need to develop creative solutions to the challenges we face. It is rewarding to support the Externship program and help young people build their knowledge and skills, while they also become leaders in their communities.”

GREGORY J. GOFF
Principal Donors Society, Cartographer's Circle
and Hubbard Council Member

Externships

The Externship program, a collaboration between the National Geographic Society and The Nature Conservancy, provides young leaders between the ages of 18 and 25 from across the globe with the knowledge, skills and tools to address environmental challenges through immersive learning and interactive projects. The program's goal is to intentionally create more opportunities for young people to build knowledge and form relationships to seek solutions and take action. Through its combination of virtual engagement, real-world application and targeted support, the Externship program helps young changemakers turn knowledge into tangible environmental solutions for their communities and beyond.

To date, the Externship program has engaged 1,600 participants representing more than 130 countries. Externs have received \$450K in seed funding to enact 230 community projects to continue the impact started in the program. Examples of projects include protecting the habitat of mountain gorillas in Rwanda, community-led monitoring of sea turtle nests in the Dominican Republic, and reducing human-elephant conflict in Zambia. Participants have reported significant gains in conservation

knowledge and a greater desire to pursue conservation-related and informed careers.

In 2025, the program engaged 400 externs from 85 countries, preparing them to tackle critical issues in freshwater and marine conservation through community-driven solutions while building their mapping and data visualization skills. In addition, three extern alumni — Rebecca Ruga Gima, Seth Aqui, and Silia Hazel Mapepa — were named National Geographic Young Explorers in 2025.

The Society thanks the G. Goff Foundation for its generous support of the Externship program.

Photo Camp

National Geographic Photo Camp, led by National Geographic Explorer in Residence Kirsten Elstner, introduces the power of photography to youth around the world.

Now in its third decade, Photo Camp continues to amplify local voices through storytelling. In 2025, the program expanded its international reach further than ever before, hosting intensive five-day experiences in 18 locations across 11 countries. This year was marked by collaborations with mission-aligned global institutions such

as the World Health Organization, as well as partnerships within the Society's broader network, including Pristine Seas, the Okavango Wilderness Project, Perpetual Planet Expeditions, the Out of Eden Walk and the Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic Fund.

Parallel to this global growth, endowment funds powered a domestic expansion into six U.S. states: Tennessee, Mississippi, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Indiana and Colorado. Reaching 120 young people — including those in the Menominee community (Wisconsin) and the Wind River Reservation (Wyoming) — these geography education experiences fostered place-based storytelling and built lasting community trust through multiyear engagements.

Photo Camp offers more than just technical training; to date, the program has provided a platform for over 3,500 alumni to tell their own stories under the guidance of Explorers. By investing in these new locations, we continue to build a global network of storytellers equipped to highlight the issues that matter most to their communities.

The Society thanks Allen Family Philanthropies, the Ford Foundation, the Robert R. McCormick Foundation and the World Health Organization for their generous support of Photo Camp.

MapMaker

The National Geographic Society and Esri have partnered in the development of the National Geographic MapMaker, a simplified interactive GIS tool that introduces learners to maps and data and equips them to perform geographic inquiry. It provides a one-of-a-kind digital atlas that invites users to explore the world and how it works.

As such, MapMaker is a powerful tool for learners of all ages.

In 2025, the Society and Esri focused on creating resources to support educators and other users in integrating MapMaker into various kinds of learning. This included publishing 14 guided lessons on Earth science topics for middle and high school educators, as well as an additional nine lessons focused on world cultures and geography. The Society also developed a set of simplified MapMaker activities that will be built into a Learning Launchpad kiosk in the Museum of Exploration to showcase the unparalleled resource to all school groups who visit.

MapMaker received nearly 2 million visitors in 2025, and we continued to increase its global reach by launching country-specific versions in the United Kingdom and Colombia.

“

The Robert R. McCormick Foundation is proud to collaborate with the National Geographic Society to empower youth in Chicago to share the unique stories of their communities through the powerful lens of photography.”

TIMOTHY P. KNIGHT
President and CEO
Robert R. McCormick Foundation

Left to right: Young Explorer, Externship alumna, and American Shark Conservancy research assistant Deborah Santos de Azevedo Menna. Explorer in Residence Kirsten Elstner and National Geographic Photo Camp participants in the Galápagos Islands. A Photo Camp participant looks down at their camera. A student photograph from a Photo Camp in San Cristóbal Island, Galápagos. Explorer in Residence Kirsten Elstner with students at a Photo Camp in New Zealand.



CHANGEMAKERS OF TOMORROW



Through the Slingshot Challenge, youth apply their passion to innovative solutions to environmental issues worldwide. We are proud to elevate their vision and support their journey as they pursue a better future for the planet.”

LARA LITTLEFIELD
Executive Director
Allen Family Philanthropies



Through the tools provided to me by the Society during the Slingshot Challenge, my work restoring the oyster reef population in Mississippi has been amplified to audiences all throughout the world. I'm in awe of the knowledge and passions of other young environmental advocates, and I hope to inspire people to do their part in their community as we work toward a more sustainable future.”

DEMI JOHNSON
Slingshot Challenge Award Recipient

Slingshot Challenge

The Slingshot Challenge provides a powerful platform to foster global engagement and transformative change. The initiative encourages young people between the ages of 13 and 18 to develop innovative solutions to pressing environmental issues and support the next generation of problem solvers and stewards of the planet.

The Slingshot Challenge continues to gain momentum, and in 2025, it reached its highest participation to date, receiving more than 2,700 environmental solutions from nearly 5,200 young people across 96 countries. Slingshot Challenge participants also reported significant gains in their knowledge and attitudes, including a 15% gain in their experience level taking action to contribute to positive change, a 25% gain in their belief they can make a difference, and a 22% increase in their confidence in knowing how to protect nature.

The challenge calls on youth to submit a one-minute video describing their ideas for solving an environmental issue in their community. The Society selects a small number of solutions each year to receive funding. This year's award recipients showcased their creative ideas for tackling climate change, conservation and sustainability challenges, from combating deforestation with

artificial intelligence in Nigeria to protecting the monarch butterfly by raising awareness through community workshops in the United States.

Slingshot participants join a global community of alumni who are engaging with the Society to continue learning and building their leadership skills, as well as connecting with other changemakers. Through their participation in the challenge, young people are prompted to be curious, ask questions and seek answers to problems directly impacting their local communities. By validating young people's ideas, the program serves as a catalyst that supports brilliant young innovators who will lead the next generation.

In 2025, two former Slingshot Challenge award recipients – Tiffani Gay (2023) and Marta Bernardino (2024) – were named National Geographic Young Explorers for demonstrating courage, leadership and a commitment to making a positive impact in their communities and beyond.

The Slingshot Challenge is the result of generous support from Allen Family Philanthropies, which shares the Society's vision of a world where youth are supported and recognized for their work as changemakers. In 2025, Allen Family Philanthropies renewed its

multimillion-dollar support of the Slingshot Challenge, helping to ensure the challenge continues to grow over the next three years.

Grosvenor Teacher Fellows

Thanks to a collaboration between National Geographic and Lindblad Expeditions, as well as support from The Farlight Foundation and the Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation, the Grosvenor Teacher Fellowship program was able to advance several key initiatives for participants and alumni in 2025. These fellowships provide selected educators with a once-in-a-lifetime, firsthand exploration and field-based experience to inspire discovery among their students. The program receives additional support from contributions to the LEX-NG Fund made by travelers aboard National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions voyages.

This year, the provision of essential seed funding was directed to second-year Fellows and alumni, enabling them to implement student action projects that integrate the Explorer Mindset into learning for students in the Fellows' communities.

Our partners and collaborators also supported the Educator Convening at National Geographic's 2025 Explorers Festival. This gathering of educators and collaborators was an opportunity to build on existing work, foster collaboration

with Explorers and actively include Grosvenor Teacher Fellows in the Society's mission.

In addition, an Alumni and Fellows Gathering at a professional conference hosted in Washington, D.C. was attended by National Geographic staff and designed as a platform for participants to engage in lightning talks and community-building. This enhanced networking and shared learning among the Grosvenor Teacher Fellowship community.

Our collaboration with Lindblad Expeditions makes the transformative experiences that Fellows embark on aboard National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions ships possible. 35 Fellows traveled on 13 departures across seven different regions between June and December 2025. Once they return from their expeditions, the investment from The Farlight Foundation and the Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation ensures that Fellows receive the necessary tools and ongoing support to enact genuine community action and implement impactful projects in their local communities, connecting the global learning experience directly to local student benefits and community engagement.



Being a part of the Grosvenor Teacher Fellowship has allowed me to share an experience with my students, fellow teachers, friends and family, and bring awareness to a fascinating part of the world that most people will never visit. My students have been genuinely excited about discussing my expedition to Patagonia and making connections to what we are doing in the classroom. It is refreshing to inspire the next generation of changemakers. This is the type of professional development that makes education deeply meaningful for teachers and students.”

DAVE EISENBERG
2025 Grosvenor Teacher Fellow

Left to right: 2025 Slingshot Challenge Award recipients pose for a group photo. Externship alum and Young Explorer Forbah Sandra Ngwemetoh supports Externship alum Emmanuel Bilson and Slingshot awardee Uswat Ahmed during an alumni convening in November 2025. Slingshot Challenge awardees Evelyn Pinot-Campos and Marta Bernardino (also a National Geographic Young Explorer) speak on a panel. Three Grosvenor Teacher Fellows participate in a hands-on field experience aboard a National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions vessel. A group of Adélie penguins on a rocky shore in Antarctica. A 2025 Grosvenor Teacher Fellow stands between two boulders during an expedition to Iceland's Westman Islands.



EQUIPPING EXPLORERS TO GO FURTHER



Our industry has needed something like this for so long, and it's amazing that National Geographic has taken the initiative to actually make this program. I totally bleed yellow now."

CAITLIN BAILEY
Field Ready Cohort Member

Exploration Technology Lab

The Exploration Technology Lab connects National Geographic Explorers with advanced tools and resources to better understand and protect our planet. Thanks to invaluable support from Iridium, Adobe and other donors, the Lab continues to combine engineering innovation with hands-on support to push the boundaries of exploration, storytelling and conservation efforts.

In 2025, the Lab served over 600 Explorers, 10 joint expeditions and signature programs, including Pristine Seas, Wildlife Intelligence Project and Food for Tomorrow.

This year, the Lab also launched a new generation of marine Crittercams to yield unique insights into aquatic life behavior. This animal-worn system, which records video and audio, was deployed on humpback whales in Alaska and manta rays in Indonesia and the Philippines.

Additionally, five ocean-focused Explorers used custom deep-sea camera systems to document life forms and environments close to 3,500 meters below the surface, from marine life on forgotten reefs in West Africa to coral reef conservation in Japan.

The Exploration Technology Lab also supported the growing field of bioacoustics by providing Explorers with the technology, training and

technical assistance needed to collect, process and analyze acoustic data. The Lab's Explorer support spans the globe, from capturing great ape sounds in Cameroon to recording pink river dolphin clicks in the Amazon rainforest.

Meridian Grants

Meridian grants support two or more Explorers — individuals who have previously received funding from the Society — who combine their expertise, ingenuity and commitment to influence lasting change. This year, the Leaf Architects project exemplified how the Meridian grant program expands the impact of Explorers who implement innovative, multidisciplinary work by enabling them to collaborate with one another and with local communities.

The team brought together Latin American bat biologists, photographers, illustrators and filmmakers to document tent-making bat species in the subcanopies of Costa Rica, Brazil, Peru and Guatemala. The project explores the relationship between bats and the plants they use and estimates the impact of seed dispersal throughout their Neotropical distribution.

Advancing education alongside their research and storytelling, the team plans to teach at least 40 local young scientists in Guatemala and Brazil the skills and knowledge to contribute to bat

biology and conservation. This includes publishing scientific findings and creating an educational, conservation-inspiring field guide and video to help society recognize them as the rainforest gardeners and forest regenerators they are.

The Leaf Architects Meridian Project team includes an Explorer at Large, a recipient of the National Geographic/Bufett Award for Leadership in Conservation, a Young Explorer, and Explorer storytellers and scientists across disciplines. Together, they are yielding results that could not be accomplished individually.

Impact Story Lab

The National Geographic Impact Story Lab brings together world-class storytelling with social and behavioral science, supporting Explorers through custom projects that shine a light on their initiatives.

In 2025, the Impact Story Lab turned its attention to the Museum of Exploration, producing over 200 pieces of new media for the Museum. These include Explorer stories and documentaries, audioscapes, and immersive and interactive experiences for visitors. The team filmed on location in Botswana, Ghana and Peru, captured dozens of Explorer interviews, and sifted through thousands of hours of archive footage. The Impact Story Lab also developed and produced innovative studio shoots for cutting-edge Learning Launch Pad exhibits featured in the Museum.

This year also saw continued focus on Explorer Giuliana Furci's short film, "Flora, Fauna, Funga," to encourage conservation communities to recognize fungi as its own distinct kingdom within the natural world. The film illuminates how fungi underpin every ecosystem on Earth through nutrient cycling and the essential relationships they form with plants. It also outlines a strategy for greater fungal inclusion in conservation policy, which has resulted in 13 countries signing onto a resolution protecting fungi alongside plants and animals following a screening of the film at the UN Biodiversity Conference.

Field Ready

Now in its sixth year, Field Ready is a joint program of the National Geographic Society and National Geographic Content (Disney) that offers emerging filmmakers one-on-one mentorship by some of the most seasoned filmmakers. Alongside this mentorship opportunity, the program includes trainings, a week-long bootcamp, a discussion series to connect industry leaders, and specialized workshops that help navigate the unique world of factual production.

The Field Ready program advances the Society's strategic priority to drive impact through collaboration and leverage brand partnerships. By creating cohorts of 10 storytelling Explorers, the program cultivates fresh voices and diverse new talent, allowing National Geographic to stay on the cutting edge of this highly competitive

field of impact and entertainment storytelling.

This year, the Field Ready program expanded beyond the natural history genre to include large-scale unscripted filmmaking and a pitch fest to National Geographic executives at Disney's London headquarters, where Explorer Carolina Sosa was awarded funding in recognition of her excellent project pitch.

The Society thanks National Geographic Content (Disney) for its operational support in sourcing mentors and instructors for the Explorer training and enrichment curriculum. In doing so, the program highlights the importance of collaboration and the deep connections between mission-aligned teams to provide elevation opportunities for the wide network of Explorers.

Left to right: Explorer Heidi Pearson extends a carbon-fiber pole used to deploy a Crittercam onto humpback whales near Juneau, AK, USA. An underwater Crittercam is prepared for deployment onto humpback whales in Alaska's Statter Harbor. Explorers Daniela Cafaggi, Ana Lucía Arévalo and Giuliana Appel collaborate to identify and conserve bats in the Costa Rican rainforest. A group of Honduran white bats are pictured in their leaf "tent" in the Tirimbina Biological Reserve, Costa Rica. Explorer and mycologist Giuliana Furci searches for new mushroom species on the main island of Tierra del Fuego in southern Chile. Wild mushrooms in Tierra del Fuego.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN EXPLORATION

Each year, the Society honors remarkable individuals who activate exploration, education, conservation and storytelling to protect the wonders of the planet. These recognitions — a tradition at National Geographic — celebrate groundbreaking research, extraordinary achievements, creative solution finding and bold strides toward a more sustainable future.



Opposite page: Explorer and Eliza Scidmore Award winner Thomas Peschak shares a retrospective on his work as a photographer and storyteller. This page: A sailboat glides by the coast of the Antarctic Peninsula.



2025 Eliza Scidmore Award for Outstanding Storytelling

Thomas Peschak

“The goal and hope with my work has always been to photograph places I love in order to help save them, so it is a true honor to receive this award and get to continue to work on important stories of conservation,” says National Geographic Explorer and photographer Thomas Peschak. Peschak received the Eliza Scidmore Award for Outstanding Storytelling during the Society’s 2025 Storytellers Summit.

The award — named for the writer and photographer Eliza Scidmore, the first woman elected to the Society’s Board of Trustees in 1892 — recognizes individuals who use immersive storytelling to make complex ideas, issues, and information relevant and accessible.

While Peschak began his career training as a marine biologist specializing in human-wildlife interactions, he moved to photojournalism after realizing his impact on conservation could be greater through storytelling to inspire change. Over the years, Peschak has received 18 Wildlife Photographer of the Year wins, seven World Press Photo Awards, and, most recently, the 2024 Wildlife Photojournalist Story Award — all for his significant work documenting some of the most crucial conservation stories of our time.

As the lead storyteller for the National Geographic and Rolex Perpetual Planet Amazon Expedition, Peschak worked with fellow Explorers and local communities to immerse himself in the Amazon Basin for 396 days to reveal its aquatic and wetland habitats. The single-topic October 2024 issue of National Geographic magazine was devoted entirely to Peschak’s stunning images of the Amazon Expedition.

A cornerstone of storytelling work at the Society, Peschak has photographed 21 National Geographic magazine features and has written and photographed for eight books. He is the director of storytelling for the Save Our Seas Foundation, a founding director of the Manta Trust, and a senior fellow of the International League of Conservation Photographers.

2025 Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year

Pablo (Popi) Garcia Borboroglu and Bertie Gregory

In recognition of their powerful partnership in fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for penguins and their conservation through impactful research and storytelling, the National Geographic Society awarded the Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year Award to two recipients in 2025: Pablo (Popi) Garcia Borboroglu and Bertie Gregory.

The award recognizes members of the Society’s Explorer community who shine a light on important issues, discoveries, and challenges facing our planet and inspire the world to act on behalf of a more sustainable future. Through a combination of research-driven conservation science with inspirational storytelling, the work of Borboroglu and Gregory exemplifies the power of partnership in exploration and furthers the Society’s mission of supporting impactful, collaborative Explorer work.

Borboroglu, an award-winning marine biologist, researcher, educator and conservationist, and Gregory, a BAFTA and Emmy Award-winning wildlife filmmaker, photographer and presenter, worked together on the National Geographic series “Secrets of the Penguins.”

With 36 years of experience in marine conservation, Borboroglu is pioneering innovative approaches to protect declining penguin populations in Patagonia and around the world. He is founder and president of the Global Penguin Society and has helped create multiple protected areas encompassing more than 32 million acres of ocean and coastal habitat, benefiting at least 2.5 million penguins. His scientific evidence and testimony was integral in securing protection for one of the world’s largest Magellanic penguin colonies.

Soon after earning a degree in zoology, Gregory assisted Explorer and magazine photographer Steve Winter in attempting to photograph the urban leopards of Mumbai and the jungle leopards of Sri Lanka. He went on to film for the BBC David Attenborough documentary series “Seven Worlds, One Planet” and received a 2019 Jackson Wild Media Award for his work on the National Geographic project “Resurrection Island.” In the past decade, he has worked on many other National Geographic projects, including “Epic Adventures” and his multiple Emmy Award-winning series “Animals Up Close.”

The National Geographic Society is grateful to Rolex for its partnership in presenting the 2025 Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year Celebration at the 2025 National Geographic Explorers Festival.

2025 National Geographic/Bufnett Awards for Leadership in Conservation in Latin America and Africa

Micaela Camino and Jackson Kabuyaya Mbeke

The National Geographic/Bufnett Awards for Leadership in Conservation were established in partnership with the Howard G. Bufnett Foundation to recognize and celebrate unsung conservation heroes who are working in the field. Two awards are presented each year: one

for achievement in Latin America and the other for achievement in Africa. These outstanding individuals have demonstrated leadership in managing and protecting the natural resources in their regions and countries, and they are inspirational conservation advocates who serve as role models and mentors.

Micaela Camino is a conservationist who has worked for 15 years in the threatened and often overlooked Dry Chaco ecosystem of Argentina. She has focused her work on protecting the Chacoan peccary and its habitat while fostering sustainable and inclusive conservation practices through her work with the Proyecto Quimilero. Her work with communities has highlighted the importance of Indigenous and local communities in conservation. Working with different groups in the region to nurture community-led conservation in Chaco, she is helping them create protected areas and legal bans on deforestation.

Jackson Kabuyaya Mbeke is a conservationist from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who has spent more than 20 years working to conserve and protect the Grauer’s gorilla, helping to develop the Gorilla Rehabilitation and Conservation Education Center (GRACE). Under his leadership, GRACE has grown from a rehabilitation center for orphaned gorillas to a leader in conservation education, community engagement and forest protection. He has brought local communities together to garner

support and build consensus for conservation plans and has implemented conservation education programming inside and around the Tayna Nature Reserve to combat poaching. He has also coordinated support for the creation of a forest corridor connecting Tayna with Maiko National Park, securing traditional land rights for communities and allowing movement of Grauer’s gorillas between these two forests.

Left to right: 2025 Eliza Scidmore Award recipient and conservation photographer Thomas Peschak with National Geographic Society Chief Storytelling Officer Kaitlin Yarnall. 2025 Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year Bertie Gregory speaks during the 2025 Explorers Festival. Rolex Perpetual Planet Initiative Manager Francesco Raeli and Explorer Pablo “Popi” Garcia Borboroglu at the 2025 Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year Celebration. Explorer Jackson Kabuyaya Mbeke accepts the 2025 National Geographic/Bufnett Award for Leadership in Conservation in Africa. Society Chief Science & Innovation Officer Ian Miller stands with recipients of the 2025 National Geographic/Bufnett Award for Leadership in Conservation: Jackson Kabuyaya Mbeke (Africa) and Micaela Camino (Latin America). Explorer Micaela Camino accepts the 2025 National Geographic/Bufnett Award for Leadership in Conservation in Latin America.



Kia is proud to support the National Geographic Society’s Wayfinder Award, recognizing changemakers who are reimagining what’s possible for our planet and using bold ideas to drive meaningful change. These Explorers embody the spirit of innovation and purpose behind our Accelerate the Good initiative, and we’re honored to amplify their impact.”

RUSSELL WAGER
Vice President, Marketing
Kia America, Inc.

2025 Wayfinder Award Presented by Kia

The National Geographic Wayfinder Award recognizes talented individuals who are pushing the boundaries of innovation in science, conservation, education, technology and storytelling. The Wayfinder Award welcomes new individuals into the National Geographic Explorer community and includes a \$50,000 award to support their work, as well as the opportunity to apply for additional funding. It is presented annually to a cohort of 15 individuals.

In June 2024, the National Geographic Society announced a collaboration with Kia to support 45 award recipients over the next three years who will drive global impact through science, exploration, education and storytelling. With the support of Kia, the Society is able to accelerate its support for these Explorers and further the impact they are making across the globe.

“Receiving the Wayfinder Award affirmed the long hours our small team has poured into democratizing deep-sea research in the Philippines and inspires us to keep going,” says 2025 awardee Titus Cañete. A marine biologist and deep-sea ecologist, Titus is committed to making deep-sea research more accessible through local innovation, inclusive science and the development of low-cost ocean technologies. Titus has partnered with multiple Explorers to build community capacity for

deep-sea research and development of deep-sea technology. His Wayfinder Award is helping his team finish and field-test affordable deep-sea cameras and RUV/BRUV systems and equip local communities to use them. “Most of all,” he says, “it will expand safe, equitable access to the deep sea and provide data for us to better understand and protect these environments and the life it shelters.”

To learn more about our 2025 Wayfinder Award recipients, visit natgeo.org/2025-wayfinder-award.

2025 Young Explorers

Each year, the Society recognizes and invests in 15 inspiring young changemakers aged 18 to 25 who demonstrate bold leadership, creativity and a deep commitment to making a difference in their communities and beyond. Through the Young Explorer program, each recipient receives a monetary award, along with training, mentorship and access to a global network of Explorers. They also gain an opportunity to apply for continued project support to scale their ideas and deepen their impact.

In 2025, the Society recognized a cohort of Young Explorers who are leading community-rooted work across ocean conservation, wildlife protection, climate resilience, cultural preservation and more. They are united in their

commitment to working together with their communities to raise awareness, find solutions and build movements for a sustainable future.

Among these passionate young leaders is 2025 Young Explorer Christopher Vargas Quispe from Peru, who is preserving the Quechua language through media. Since 2020, Christopher has led a community-driven Quechua dubbing initiative that adapts film and digital content for Andean communities and global audiences. He works alongside actors, sound engineers, educators, cultural leaders and local youth to ensure translations carry cultural nuance, humor and regional identity.

To learn more about the Young Explorer Program and Explorers like Christopher, visit natgeo.org/youngexplorers.

2025 Fulbright-National Geographic Award Program

In August, the Society and the Fulbright Program named the recipients of the 2025 Fulbright-National Geographic Award. As new Fulbrighters and Explorers, these five individuals embarked on projects around the world, including fieldwork in Nepal, Malaysia, Canada, Portugal and Tanzania, that will engage local communities and support the conservation of our planet’s lands and oceans. Their endeavors

range from studying the Arctic soundscapes to assessing vital aquatic and terrestrial habitats with the goal of building a better future.

The Fulbright-National Geographic Award Program, now in its 12th year, provides additional funding and resources to enhance Fulbright projects in science, education and storytelling.

Annually, the program selects up to five individuals whose projects communicate powerful narratives that foster global understanding and peace, amplified through the networks of both the Fulbright Program and the Society.

To learn more, visit natgeo.org/2025-fulbright-national-geographic-award.

Left to right: 2025 National Geographic Wayfinder Awardees pose with the National Geographic Society flag. Recipients of the 2025 Wayfinder Award are celebrated at the 2025 Explorers Festival. Young Explorer Soren Goldsmith at the edge of a tidal salt marsh pool in Wellfleet, MA, USA. Young Explorer Ahmed Muhammad, who is the founder and executive director of Kits Cubed, a nonprofit that aims to connect youth to science through fun and affordable means.

OUR GLOBAL AUDIENCE

To be a global nonprofit is to maintain a global presence. For the Society, this includes bringing together unique audiences and activating the community of Explorers working, researching, discovering and collaborating around the world. Our convening and celebrating of exploration demonstrate the ability – and commitment – to engage around the world; to increase accessibility to our mission for partners and others; to strengthen connections and spark change across the globe; and to deepen the Society's impact.



Opposite page: Explorer Jaime Rojo stands in front of a crowd at a National Geographic Live show in Toronto, Canada. This page: Explorers and attendees at International Explorers Festival 2025 in Johannesburg, South Africa.



Thank you National Geographic for your support of the storytellers and images that MATTER.”

JEANNE SLEEPER
Virtual Attendee



What makes Explorers Festival such a powerful tradition? It’s unifying. It’s collaborative. It’s hopeful. It’s impactful. It’s a celebration of what we do best.”

JILL TIEFENTHALER
Chief Executive Officer
National Geographic Society

Signature Events

Convening is a longstanding tradition of the National Geographic Society. Coming together allows Explorers to celebrate recent discoveries, create unexpected connections, practice knowledge sharing and revel in their role as a changemaker.

The National Geographic Signature Event series, presented in partnership with Rolex, carries forward this tradition with a global community of Explorers — leading scientists and storytellers, visionary conservationists, and inspiring educators — gathering to share their work, findings and experiences with each other and the public.

In 2025, the series presented three signature events: Storytellers Summit, Explorer’s Festival and International Explorer’s Festival. These events were held to spark innovative ideas, inspire powerful collaborations, and strengthen the Society’s mission as a global nonprofit to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world.

We are grateful to Rolex for its partnership in presenting these signature events.

Storytellers Summit

In February, the 2025 Storytellers Summit served as a celebration of storytelling at its most profound: evocative, deeply human and wildly creative.

With more than 1,500 attendees joining both virtually and in person, the event demonstrated the Society’s ever-important role as one of the largest funders and greatest resources of independent storytellers worldwide. The two-day event in Washington, D.C., brought 17 Explorers to the mainstage, including Explorer Manu Akatsa, who uses animation to celebrate the songs of his home, ensuring cultural heritage lives on for future generations; Explorer Giorgia Lupi, who turns raw data into striking visual creations; and Explorer Mackenzie Calle, who reimagined the 1960s space race to inspire a more inclusive future.

The Society also celebrated some of our most dedicated supporters — individuals, corporations and foundations that have contributed \$1 million or more. At a special induction ceremony at the National Portrait Gallery, we welcomed eight new members into our Principal Donors Society, including vice chair of the board Katherine Bradley and former vice chair and current board chair Kevin Maroni. Donors and partners of the Society experienced additional unique events and opportunities, including a Donor Lounge Lunch with Storytellers and a private Donor Film Screening of “Flora, Fauna, Funga,” which follows Chilean mycologist and Explorer Giuliana Furci on her search for new mushrooms in far southern Chile.

A closing reception sponsored by MPB wrapped up the incredible Symposium by bringing together storytelling Explorer grantees;

National Geographic magazine contributors; Society and Disney staff; and selected invitees including photographers, editors and other influencers in the storytelling space.

Explorers Festival

In June, the Society continued its annual tradition of Explorers Festival — an event showcasing and celebrating the power of exploration and the global impact of National Geographic Explorers worldwide. This gathering is also an opportunity for our Explorers to connect, build community, collaborate and inspire others to care for and protect our planet.

Standout moments included Explorer Mauricio Cantor sharing rare insights into human-dolphin collaboration and Explorer Prasenjeet Yadav reminding us that patience, passion and persistence remain a storyteller’s greatest tools.

Beyond the mainstage programming, donors took part in special Society events, such as hard hat tours showcasing the incredible progress on the Museum of Exploration and receptions for the prestigious Wayfinder Award and Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year award. It was also a meaningful connection point for partners and Explorers, with dedicated luncheons and master classes to build relationships and for funders to learn firsthand about the exciting, boundary-pushing work within the Explorer community.

In addition to Rolex, the Society thanks Kia, Burt and Mary Sugarman, and PATH Water for their generous donations in support of the 2025 Explorers Festival.

International Explorers Festival

The International Explorers Festival travels to different regions every year and is uniquely crafted to support the needs of our Explorers in those regions. In November, we hosted the 2025 event with a global community of changemakers in Johannesburg, South Africa. More than 75 Explorers working across the African continent came together to share knowledge, deepen relationships, spark new collaborations and celebrate each other’s work.

The program included exceptional speakers, such as Explorer and 2025 Wayfinder Award recipient Tebogo Makhubela, who reflected on his work with Rising Star and, specifically, Homo naledi in the Cradle of Humankind. Tebogo explained that fossils represent more than the past — they connect us to the lives of beings who came before us.

He was followed by Explorer and filmmaker Ntokozi Mbuli, who demonstrated how language is deeply intertwined with landscapes and nature, a sentiment she beautifully conveyed in both English and her native language, Xhosa. Explorer Kerllen Costa, a 2024 Wayfinder Award recipient and member of the Okavango Wilderness Project team, presented beautiful images of his

work along the iconic rivers of his homeland in Angola. He wove those photographs into a core message: our understanding of the world around us is made so much richer when it is grounded in local Indigenous knowledge. Finally, Explorer and elephant ecologist Dominique Gonçalves offered us hope that we can preserve our world by inspiring the next generation of conservationists.

As part of the International Explorers Festival, the Society hosted a three-day Storytellers Collective workshop, which culminated in a Spotlight session. We welcomed Explorers from 12 countries for lightning talks, ranging from species conservation to educational access for women and girls. We also used this opportunity to host community workshops, including a visioning exercise to map shared hopes and goals for Africa’s future. This was led by Kimberleigh Ashley Tommy, the Society’s Executive Director of Africa on the International team, and Explorer Pragna Parsotam-Kok, the Africa Refocused co-lead and co-founder of Nature, Environment and Wildlife Filmmakers.

Left to right: Explorer and science communicator Prasenjeet Yadav presents at the 2025 Explorers Festival. National Geographic Society CEO Jill Tiefenthaler stands in front of a crowd at the 2025 Explorers Festival, holding the Society’s flag. Explorer and biologist Mauricio Cantor speaks about his work at the 2025 Explorers Festival. Explorers and Symposium speakers stand with event host Malaika Vaz at the 2025 Explorers Festival. 2025 Explorers Festival attendees at a “Big Ideas” workshop hosted by the Society’s Education and Community Engagement division. Explorer and ethnobiologist Kerllen Costa presents at the International Explorers Festival 2025 Spotlight event in Johannesburg, South Africa.



Traveling Exhibitions

One of the most powerful ways to expand impact — and engage the next generation of changemakers — is by bringing stories of adventure, world cultures and wild places to life. For the Society, this is accomplished through the expansive Traveling Exhibitions program.

In 2025, the Society presented 15 unique traveling exhibitions to audiences in 12 countries and 46 cities worldwide, reaching more than 3.7 million visitors.

This year elevated National Geographic's presence within the museum community by showcasing "Wolves: Photographs by Ronan Donovan" at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and "Greatest Wildlife Photographs" at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art — a successful debut at a premier contemporary art space that paved the way for future projects at the intersection of art, nature and conservation.

Traveling exhibitions also reached an unprecedented scale in Europe as we celebrated a milestone year in our longstanding alliance with the "la Caixa" Foundation. In 2025, "Colors of the World" toured 10 cities across Spain, bringing the total to over 40 cities reached since the exhibition's 2023 launch. This serves as a testament to the enduring power of multiyear international alliances.

Through a continued collaboration with our National Geographic magazine publishing

partners in Italy, GEDI Gruppo Editoriale, we launched "Oceans" in 2025. Curated by Editor-in-Chief Marco Cattaneo and featuring the legendary photography of David Doubilet, this project exemplifies a unified approach between international editorial divisions and the Society.

Beyond their educational component, the traveling exhibitions serve a significant role in advancing the Society's investments in the global Explorer community. They amplify a range of voices and stories, engaging a broad community of Explorers that represent the diversity of our world. They also allow for increased fund allocations to Explorers, as 100% of the revenue from exhibitions supports the Society's nonprofit educational, conservation and scientific work — including grants to Explorers.

National Geographic Live

National Geographic Live is a beloved series in which Explorers, scientists, photographers and performing artists deliver thought-provoking presentations to audiences across North America.

This year, we launched the new National Geographic Live and Speakers Bureau website, creating a digital hub for both venues and customers alike. The Speakers Bureau saw a massive 450% increase in engagements from 2024 to 2025.

The year also saw production of six new programs and 115 performances for audiences in 43 cities (up from 30 the previous year) across North America.

An educational highlight of Nat Geo Live is student matinees, with 45 presented to an audience of future changemakers. In total, Nat Geo Live reached more than 100,000 audience members in 2025.

Additionally, the Speakers Bureau partnered with National Geographic Books to produce our first book tour for Explorer in Residence Tara Roberts. Roberts spoke about her book "Written in the Waters" across a 16-city tour, exceeding all expectations for this engagement.

Storytellers Collective

Storytellers Collective harnesses National Geographic's long legacy of storytelling excellence to offer unique workshops that empower organizations with diverse missions and platforms to tell better stories. The Storytellers Collective focuses on the practice of storytelling and storytelling as an effective tool, with a range of applicability for organizations varying in mission, outreach and platform.

These hands-on, in-person workshops are led by a growing group of over 30 Explorers — National Geographic storytelling grantees who provide expert coaching in narrative nonfiction techniques. Using real-world content from attendees, Explorers work with each participant to craft authentic, compelling stories designed to maximize impact. Through this valuable one-on-one feedback, the Storytellers Collective can

impart the National Geographic perspective on ethically and effectively crafting impactful stories.

In 2025, participants in Storytellers Collective workshops included large nonprofits, higher education institutions and corporations — all of whom partnered with the Society to tell their story. The Society also expanded these revenue-generating offerings, launching a campaign introducing Storytellers Collective to new B2B audiences. The campaign won 11 industry awards, demonstrating the capacity of powerful storytelling to move the needle.

This year, the Society also engaged Explorers Reyhaneh Maktoufi, Federico Pardo, Prakash Matada, Martin Edström and Babak Tafreshi to create new workshop curricula and meet the growing demand for workshops that elevate storytelling from an art to a core, strategic competency critical for day-to-day business success.

Since the onset of the Storytellers Collective initiative, half a million dollars has been generated and invested back into the Explorer community.

To learn more about Storytellers Collective, visit natgeo.org/storytellerscollective.

Left to right: Visitors experience "Som Natura," an immersive traveling exhibition. Visitors at the "Oceans" exhibition at Villa Bardini in Florence, Italy. Young visitors to The Momentary in Bentonville, AR, enjoy the "Greatest Wildlife Photographs" exhibition. Explorer Sara Hylton leads a Storytellers Collective workshop. A visitor experiences the immersive "Som Natura" exhibition.



THE POWER OF PHILANTHROPY



“

I am overwhelmed by the generous support of our global community of donors. The unprecedented fundraising results of 2025 equate to a transformative impact. By uniting in support of the Society, our donors are ensuring that our Explorers have the resources to continue their critical work toward the vibrancy and resiliency of our planet. Thank you for standing with us and for supporting the National Geographic Society’s mission to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world.”

KARA RAMIREZ MULLINS
Chief Advancement Officer
National Geographic Society

In 2025, thanks to the generous contributions of our global community of donors, the National Geographic Society raised more than \$200 million to support Explorers working around the world to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world through science, innovation, conservation, education and storytelling. Together, we achieved the strongest-ever fundraising year in the Society’s history, giving us the resources to expand and scale the impact of our work to create a brighter future for people and the planet.

We are deeply grateful for your partnership in supporting changemakers making a positive impact in the world and for enabling the largest expansion in the Society’s history: the 2026 opening of the Museum of Exploration, a 21st century convening space where global scientists, experts, policymakers and world leaders will join with the public to celebrate the power of fearless exploration and bold innovation to drive positive change.

Thank you for helping to protect our oceans and landscapes, safeguard threatened species, and preserve our natural and cultural heritage. We couldn’t do it without you.

2025 BY THE NUMBERS

\$208.1M

raised to support Explorers and mission programs

100%

of philanthropic contributions invested into programmatic priorities

136

new commitments of \$100K or more

100%

philanthropic participation from the Society's Board of Trustees and senior leadership team

\$15.1M

raised in Annual Giving & Membership

21

new gifts of \$1M or more, including nine at \$3M and above

4

consecutive years raising over \$100M for the Society



A colony of eastern Steller sea lions gather on rocks in the McRae Islet of the Malaspina Strait near Vancouver, Canada.

BASE CAMP HOME OF THE EXPLORER

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/building-our-future.

“

The National Geographic Society has always been the Home of the Explorer — a place where scientists and innovators from around the world would return from the field to share their important work and develop solutions to the greatest challenges we face. The Museum of Exploration will inspire people from across the globe to join this community of changemakers in experiencing the wonders of our world, creating connections with each other, and by working together — building a healthier future for us all.”

MARGARET JACOBS
Principal Donors Society Member, Hubbard Council Member
and Base Camp Founding Donor

This page: A striking millwork ceiling feature in the National Geographic Museum of Exploration, constructed from sustainably-sourced ash wood.



Base Camp: Home of the Explorer

Since our groundbreaking in 2022, the National Geographic Society's generous donor community has played an integral role in the creation of the National Museum of Exploration (MOE), supporting our vision of a global hub for collaboration, a powerful platform to amplify our Explorers' work, and a must-see destination that inspires the Explorer in everyone.

With the opening of the Museum of Exploration, visitors of all ages will be transported from the nation's capital to ecosystems, field sites and investigations around the globe — walking in the boots of Explorers like Sandesh Kadur, diving into the depths with Sylvia Earle, and going on assignment with photographers Thomas Peschak and KM Reyes. The MOE will open its doors to everything the Society has to offer, from our legendary library and map archives, to an expanded exhibit gallery showcasing the work of our Explorers, iconic photography and world-famous artifacts, to new exhibitions that spark curiosity and inspire wonder in visitors old and young.

Throughout the year, our partners and donors witnessed the Museum of Exploration construction project. This included invitations

to insider previews and hard hat tours, as well as presentations by Explorer Victoria Herrmann and 2024 Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year Fernando Trujillo, who shared insights on how the Base Camp renovation will connect the public more intimately with their work and inspire them to take action for our planet.

In the fall, we introduced a unique Base Camp giving circle that focuses on National Geographic's iconic legacy of geography and mapmaking and celebrates the physical space and location of our reimagined Washington, D.C. campus. The Cartographer's Circle comprises donors who have made special one-time gifts to Base Camp in the amount of \$38,000 or \$77,000, reflecting the coordinates of the Society's headquarters, 38° 54' 19" N, 77° 02' 16" W. We thank the members of our Cartographer's Circle for their critical support of our Base Camp project.

With the help of our donors and partners, we are creating an innovative experience that welcomes Explorers, learners and dreamers from around the globe, deepening their understanding of and connection to the wonders of our world.

We are grateful to our Base Camp Founding Donors*:

Cornerstone Gifts

- Rolex
- Lilly Endowment Inc.

Base Camp Founding Donors

- Anonymous
- The Bill and Donna Marriott Foundation
- Katherine and David Bradley, Spencer, Carter and Adam Bradley
- The Brendan & Helen Bechtel Foundation
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- Nancy E. Pfund and Phillip L. Polakoff
- Josh and Danyelle Resnick
- Rolex
- The Roski Family
- Jill Tiefenthaler and Kevin Rask
- Trebek Family Foundation

*as of December 31, 2025



Clockwise from left: Floral display in Jaipur welcomed visitors from the Society's Leadership Giving expedition to India. Petros Dermetzis and Mar Cano stand near the Taj Mahal during the Society's 2025 Leadership Giving expedition to India. Explorer Sandesh Kadur holds a camera in India's Ranthambore National Park during the Society's 2025 Leadership Giving expedition to India. Participants in the Society's 2025 Leadership Giving expedition to India gather in Jaipur for a group photo with the Society's flag.



Explorer-Centric Opportunities

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Standing in the Costa Rican night beside Explorer at Large Rodrigo Medellín watching bats take flight changed how we think about these extraordinary animals and deepened our sense of connection to the natural world. What began as curiosity transformed into admiration for these fascinating creatures that play such a vital role in healthy ecosystems. Experiences like this are why we proudly support National Geographic Explorers, like Rodrigo, who open our eyes to the wonder of our planet.”

RO AND MARTIN KING
Principal Donors Society, Hubbard Council and
Alexander Graham Bell Legacy Society Members

“

We are honored to have hosted two events for the Society, most recently featuring the incredible National Geographic Explorer Alex R. Hearn. Our guests were thrilled to have dedicated time with Alex discussing whale shark migrations in the Galápagos Islands and how new technologies help protect these majestic creatures. It was an engaging afternoon and a wonderful reminder of the power of science and exploration to effect meaningful and lasting change in our world.”

LAVINIA TOUCHTON AND JEFF ADBERG
Hubbard Council Members

Leadership Donor Expeditions

Leadership Donor Expeditions provide exclusive, personal and deep engagement with our mission, leadership and critical initiatives around the world. These one-of-a-kind, invitation-only travel experiences for dedicated supporters and leaders of the Society bring together a select group to witness the people and places fueled through our grants and additional philanthropic investments.

Leadership Expeditions create a stronger future for the Society as meaningful stories, the wonder of our natural and cultural world, and the unparalleled results of our Explorer-led work come to life.

In March, we experienced India alongside Explorers native to the country: Sandesh Kadur, Arati Kumar-Rao, Malaika Vaz, Krithi Karanth, Prakash Matada, Prasenjeet Yadav and Eshika Fyzee. We explored Indian biodiversity and rich cultural landscapes, giving our donors an up-close look at the extraordinary work of our Explorers, including a tour of New Delhi, a tiger safari in Ranthambore, and a leopard safari in Jaipur.

Also this year, the Society selected the destinations for the next two years: Thailand in 2026 and Egypt in 2027. The itineraries for both Leadership Donor Expeditions include Explorers in action, from experiencing natural beauty and conservation efforts to enjoying exclusive cultural tours and interactive sessions with Explorers. They will highlight both Thailand and Egypt in an unforgettable way, with participants witnessing firsthand the profound impact of the generous contributions of Society donors.

Regional Donor Events

As a global nonprofit organization, the Society has successfully built – and continues to grow – a culture of philanthropy.

The support of our donors over the past 138 years makes our work possible and strengthens our team and Explorers. One successful area of this direct support is Regional Donor Events, in which members of our giving societies, trustees and other distinguished members of the National Geographic community offer to host an event to connect an audience with the work of our Explorers.

In 2025, the Society held Regional Donor Events in cities nationwide, with a purpose-driven and passionate Explorer speaking at each event. Highlights include Explorer and Founder of Photo Ark, Joel Sartore, at the University Club of Chicago, bringing his animal photographs and conservation efforts to life, and Explorer David Gruber of Project CETI at a private home in Dallas, showcasing video technology from Exploration Technology Lab, which makes it possible to collect video and audio at extreme ocean depths where sperm whales hunt.

Through these and other Regional Donor Events, our philanthropic community steps forward to showcase the Society's mission and our grant-supported Explorers to a broader audience.

For more information about these amazing opportunities, please contact Kara Ramirez Mullins, the Society's chief advancement officer, at (800) 373-1717 or kmullins@ngs.org.

PRINCIPAL DONORS SOCIETY

The Principal Donors Society is the National Geographic Society's highest designation for lifetime giving, recognizing individual, corporate and foundation donors who have supported the Society through cumulative philanthropic support of \$1 million or more. Principal Donors have distinguished themselves as some of the Society's most loyal stewards, investing generously in scientific research, exploration, education, storytelling and Base Camp. Each year, new members are inducted and celebrated at a special event held in conjunction with the Storytellers Summit. In 2025, we inducted eight new Principal Donors into the Society: Jeffrey and Darlene Anderson, Allison Bennington, Katherine and David Bradley, Disney Conservation Fund, IBM Corporation, John Templeton Foundation, Look and See Foundation, and Polly and Kevin Maroni.

For more information regarding the Principal Donors Society, please contact Kara Ramirez Mullins, chief advancement officer, at (800) 373-1717 or kmullins@ngs.org.



Whether discussing whale communication with David Gruber, ocean conservation with Eric Sala, or leveraging cutting-edge satellite technology to enable conservation on a planetary scale with Martin Wikelski, I feel embedded in the work. As a volunteer leader, my greatest joy is bringing others into this inner circle and introducing them to the Society's leadership team and Explorers. Seeing the spark of inspiration when others connect personally with the organization's mission is a reminder that our collective support is a crucial driver behind landmark discoveries."

ALLISON BENNINGTON
Principal Donors Society and Hubbard Council Member

Clockwise from left: Explorer Pete Muller speaking at the 2025 Principal Donors Society Induction Ceremony and Celebration. Society Chief Advancement Officer Kara Ramirez Mullins, Leslie Huetter, Dr. Mark Penning and Society Chief Executive Officer Jill Tiefenthaler at the 2025 Principal Donors Society Celebration. Society Chief Executive Officer Jill Tiefenthaler speaking at the 2025 Principal Donors Society Celebration. Vice chair of the Society Board of Trustees Katherine Bradley and David Bradley at the 2025 Principal Donors Society Celebration.

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*In memoriam



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My dad was a bit of a collector of National Geographic magazines. I grew up surrounded by those vibrant photos and fascinating stories about people and cultures around the world. Like my dad, I've always loved nature and science – and that connection continues now with my own children, who share his same spirit of curiosity. When reviewing charitable organizations to include in my plans, I made a list of those that truly reflect my values. At the very top was the National Geographic Society.”

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Explorer and photographer Armando Vega holds the National Geographic Society flag while collaborating with Explorers from Latin America on the Meridian project "Leaf Architects" at Tirimbina Biological Station, Costa Rica.



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The Hubbard Council is a group of dedicated 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 Society's senior leadership team, as well as invitations to travel with National Geographic and see our Explorers in action. Hubbard Council members are leaders in 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, participate in periodic Explorer Insider Calls, go on a Leadership Giving Expedition, and attend signature National Geographic events such as Explorers Festival and Storytellers Summit. In 2025, the Council embarked on a once-in-a-lifetime journey with Explorers to gain a unique perspective and a deeper understanding of India's spectacular Golden Triangle. Indian wildlife filmmaker and photographer Explorer Sandesh Kadur led the expedition through New Delhi, Agra, Ranthambore and Jaipur so that Council members and donors could witness their support of our work in action.

The Society would like to thank members of the Hubbard Council for their extraordinary generosity, forward commitments and long-time support.

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It is up to us to help secure a brighter future for our planet and all the extraordinary biodiversity it supports. As a member of the National Geographic Society's Hubbard Council I am part of a dedicated group of global citizens committed to protecting the Earth's majestic landscapes, oceans and wildlife. I want to ensure future generations can experience the wonders of our world as I have."

MARGARET DAWSON
 Hubbard Council Member

Top to bottom: Hubbard Council members Burt and Mary Hart Sugarman at "An Evening with Explorer David Gruber" in Los Angeles, CA, USA. Hubbard Council members George Kalogridis and Andy Hardy with Society CEO Jill Tiefenthaler in Agra during the 2025 Leadership Expedition to India. Joy and Frank Albi at the 2025 Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year Celebration.

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 Society's places and work. Clark Council members are invited to our Leadership Giving Expedition, periodic Explorer Insider Calls, and the Society's signature annual events and gatherings around the country.

In 2025 – the 20th anniversary year of Education at National Geographic – Clark Council members heard from Chief Education and Community Engagement Officer Deborah Grayson and Explorer Brittney Beck about the "Explorer Mindset in Action." Council members learned about the impact of our Education division and the extraordinary reach of their efforts to help educators, students and families.

The Clark Council supports programs and Explorers who are using cutting-edge science, innovative technology and inspiring storytelling to find 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.

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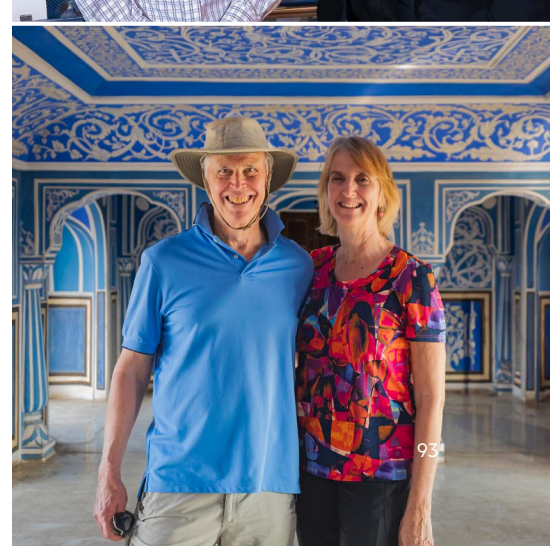
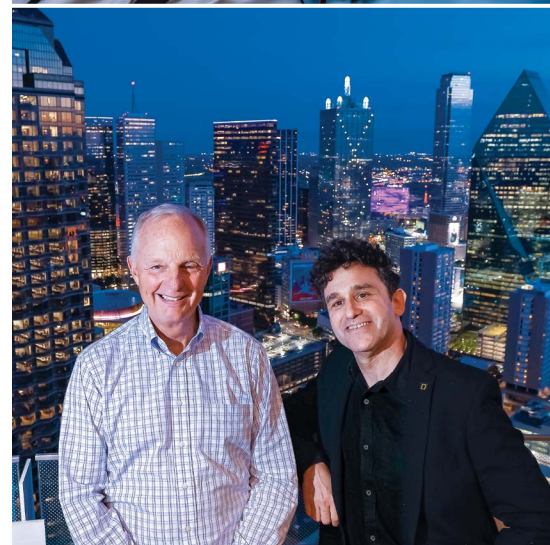
Top to bottom: Beth Siegel and Scott Weiner in Ranthambore during the 2025 Leadership Expedition to India. Clark Council member Jim Thompson with Explorer David Gruber in Dallas, TX, USA. Clark Council member Michael and Sandra Ruddick in Jaipur during the 2025 Leadership Expedition to India.

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



We appreciate the Society's unparalleled legacy of excellence in storytelling – how a compelling image can inspire action. It is an honor to support this work as members of the Clark Council, to help storytellers connect us with the natural world and our shared humanity."

MICHAEL AND DANA COHEN
 Clark Council Members





HENSON COUNCIL

Launched this year, the Henson Council acknowledges donors who contribute between \$10,000 to \$24,999 annually to support the critical work of National Geographic Explorers. Our community's namesake is Matthew Henson, a pioneering Explorer who embarked on multiple polar expeditions supported by the National Geographic Society and was posthumously awarded the National Geographic Society's Hubbard Medal in 2000. Following in his legacy, the support of generous Henson Council members helps the Society expand our bold vision and fund passionate, purpose-driven Explorers around the globe.

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



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 Martin Zinn

*Deceased



Membership in the National Geographic Society's Henson Council gives me the opportunity to support innovators with groundbreaking ideas about how we advance knowledge and preserve the planet's amazing species, landscapes and traditions. It is a privilege to be a part of carrying on the Society's legacy of exploring and documenting the beauty and mystery of the world we share."

ZENIA E. CORTES, M.D.
 Henson Council Member

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 \$9,999 to the Society annually.

Grosvenor Council members enjoy a complimentary subscription to National Geographic magazine, exclusive Grosvenor Council Insider Call events and virtual invitations to the Society's Explorers Festival and Storytellers Summit.

Grosvenor Council Insider Calls are a special opportunity for members to hear stories and updates directly from National Geographic Explorers about their impact on the world. In 2025, we heard from Explorer Pablo "Popi" Garcia Borboroglu about studying and protecting penguins around the world, Explorer Prasenjeet Yadav about his journey photographing the black tiger of India, and Explorer Victoria Herrmann about bringing communities together to protect heritage sites.



Inquiry and discovery are among the most human of instincts. They are what pull us forward – whether across oceans, into distant cultures or inward toward deeper understanding. Through the National Geographic lens, we are reminded how vast and intricate the world truly is, and how much there still is to learn. That steady exposure to wonder has a way of loosening even the most settled mind, unsticking assumptions and reigniting the quiet thrill of asking, what lies just beyond the horizon of our understanding? Could it possibly be my future? It is in that spirit – of lifelong curiosity and shared exploration – that communities like the Grosvenor Council become not just valuable, but essential."

DR. RICHARD SCHROTH
 Grosvenor Council Member

Top to bottom: Grosvenor Council members Stephen Fisher and Lucia Berte at a Regional Donor Event in Boulder, CO, USA. Grosvenor Council member Gaither Kyhos with Ronal Butler and Martha Lloyd at Base Camp in Washington, D.C., for a VIP Screening of the National Geographic documentary special "Cleopatra's Final Secret." Society members enjoy an event featuring Explorer Alex Hearn at the Musicquarium Lounge at The Triple Door in Seattle, WA, USA.

For more information, please contact David Glass, vice president of membership, at (800) 373-1717 or dglass@ngs.org.



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COLLABORATIVE



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. The Society invites companies to become strategic collaborators in our science, exploration, education and storytelling efforts to drive transformational change for people and the planet. With the support of corporate partnerships, we can scale our science-based solutions to achieve meaningful, lasting impact.



We're committed to supporting the National Geographic Society's next phase of its historic legacy by creating AI experiences that illuminate the wonder of our world and strengthen how audiences connect with nature. Together, using new forms of AI-powered storytelling, we can inspire the next generation of Explorers."

ELAINA SHEKHTER
 Chief Strategy & Transformation Officer, SVP
 EPAM

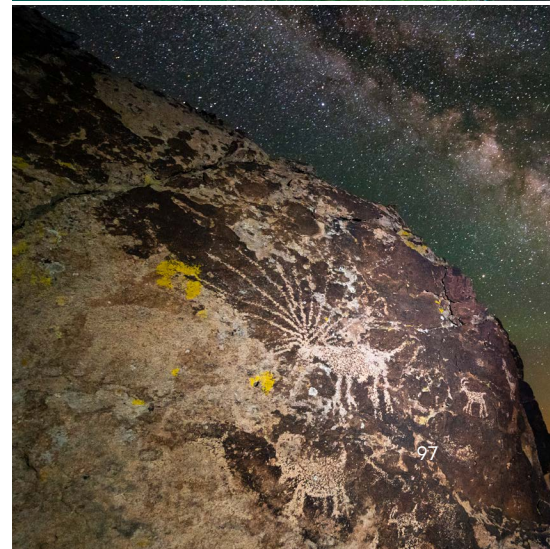
FOUNDATIONS & GOVERNMENTS

The generous support of foundations and governments enables National Geographic Explorers to deliver global impact in the six focus areas of Ocean, Land, Wildlife, Human Histories and Cultures, Planetary Health, and Space. We collaborate with global, national, regional and family foundations; government agencies; multilaterals; and bilaterals to design, fund and implement transformational initiatives toward solutions that transcend borders. These partnerships ensure our initiatives are not only ambitious in vision but also coordinated, sustainable and positioned to create lasting global change.



We share the National Geographic Society's commitment to supporting visionary individuals who demonstrate extraordinary potential within their fields to tackle our planet's most pressing challenges. Together we launched For Nature, a National Geographic Society program supporting Explorer Callie Veelenturf in her groundbreaking work to use ecological science to inform and inspire rights-based protections for Nature. This effort represents the largest commitment in the Alfred Kobacker and Elizabeth Trimbach Fund's history and is a bold step toward driving action to illuminate and protect our planet's rich biodiversity."

ALFRED KOBACKER AND ELIZABETH TRIMBACH
 The Alfred Kobacker and Elizabeth Trimbach Fund



Top to bottom: A Gentoo penguin is photographed on an ice shelf as part of the National Geographic and Rolex Perpetual Planet Southern Ocean Expedition. A juvenile sea otter searches kelp for food in Monterey Bay, CA, USA. The Electric Deer petroglyph in the Basin and Range National Monument in Nevada, USA.



Portrait of a 10-year-old African lion, Yerga, at Al Ma'wa wildlife sanctuary in Jerash, Jordan.

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*Leadership list as of May 2026



JEAN M. CASE

In 2025, the Society honored Jean Case for her leadership as a trustee and chairman of the board. Jean is credited with challenging the Society – challenging us as a global nonprofit to stretch further, dream bigger and find audacious solutions in service of our mission.

Jean became the first woman in the Society's history to hold the position of chairman, stepping into this role in May 2016. During her decade-long tenure, Jean guided the organization through major, transformative chapters. Highlights include growing our portfolio of grants and programs to be stronger and more impactful than ever before, as well as internationalizing our community. She also shepherded the creation of our new business model. The joint venture with 21st Century Fox – and later, Disney – proved a monumental shift for the Society. Her leadership was invaluable during this time, placing the Society on a sustainable path for generations to come.

Jean also raised our sights for philanthropy within the Society. During her leadership, she inspired her peers – her fellow trustees – to give with 100% participation. And she led by example, aligning her passions with her generosity. We are thrilled that in the forthcoming Museum of Exploration, the doors to the Jean and Steve Case Magazine Gallery will open, elevating the publication Jean loves so dearly.

These are just a few examples of how Jean's service moved the Society forward. Through her many, countless contributions to the Society and the Explorer community, she has set the stage for future successes and for the continued excellence of our organization.

Clockwise from left: Jean M. Case, former chairman of the National Geographic Society board of trustees, speaks at the 2025 Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year Celebration. Society CEO Jill Tiefenthaler and former Society board chairman Jean M. Case. Former Society board chairman Jean M. Case participates in the first-ever Hubbard Council expedition in Costa Rica.



Explorer Tiago Falótico illuminates the Pedra Furada rock formation in Serra da Capivara National Park, Brazil.

NEW TRUSTEES

The National Geographic Society Board of Trustees welcomed three new members in 2025: Henry Ellenbogen, David S. Marriott and Dambisa Moyo.



Henry Ellenbogen is the founder, managing partner and chief investment officer of Durable Capital Partners LP, which invests in early-stage and durable growth companies across private and public markets globally. Prior to founding Durable, Henry spent 18 years at T. Rowe Price. He currently serves as chairman of the board of The Posse Foundation and is a member of Barron's Roundtable. Henry holds a bachelor's degree in history and science from Harvard College, a juris doctor degree from Harvard Law School, and a Master of Business Administration from Harvard Business School.



During his decade of senior leadership at Marriott International Inc., David S. Marriott has built on a multigenerational legacy while guiding the company through global transformation. He assumed the position of chairman of the board in May 2022, becoming only the third chairman in the company's 97-year history, following his father, J.W. Marriott, Jr., and grandfather, J.W. Marriott. David joined Marriott International in 1999 and has held a number of operational roles during his 25-year career with the company. He is a graduate of the University of Utah.



Baroness Dambisa Moyo is a member of the United Kingdom's House of Lords. She is a principal of Versaca Investments, a family office focused on growth investing globally. She serves on a number of global corporate boards, including Chevron and the Oxford University Endowment Investment Committee. Dambisa is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and has authored five bestselling books on the global macroeconomy and geopolitics. She holds a doctorate degree in economics from Oxford University and a master's degree from Harvard University.

Thank You

The power of partnership is extraordinary.

The National Geographic Society and our partners ensure the Explorer Mindset continues to drive transformative change. We acknowledge the partners, funders and advocates who are aligned in our mission and invested in our collective vision of empowering changemakers.

Together, we are driving — and achieving — incredible impact.



A juvenile manatee takes center stage among an aggregation of manatees swimming in Florida's Homosassa Springs.



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