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SIGNATURE'S WILD BOOK

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TRAVEL

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THE
Wildlife
ISSUE

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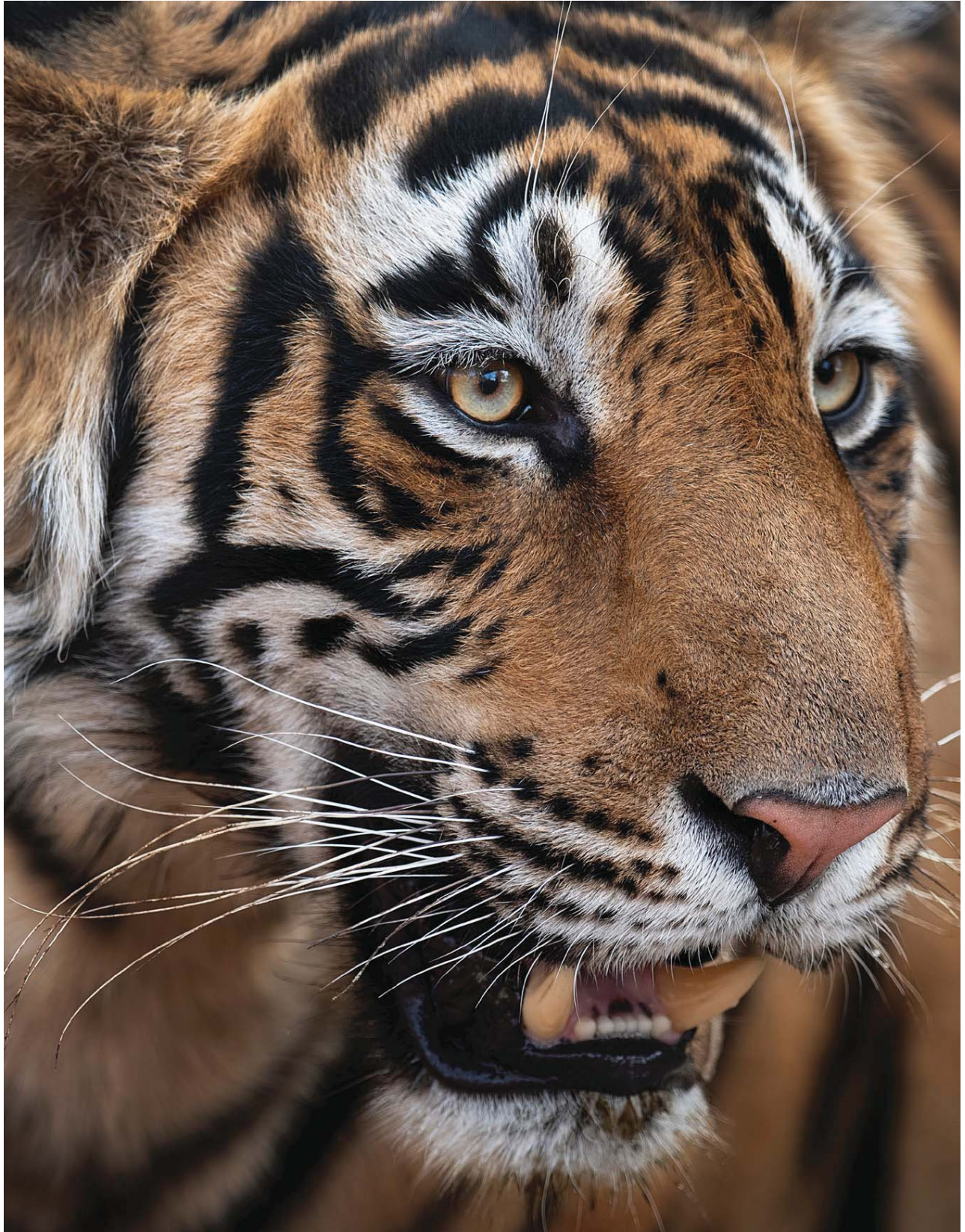
THE WILD BOOK • ENDANGERED ANIMALS • WILDERNESS LODGES
BORNEO • SAUDI ARABIA • CRUISING AUSTRALIA • ITALY



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Seeing animals in the wild heightens more than just your senses - it makes you more aware of the urgent need for animal conservation around the globe, for all creatures great and small. Here are 26 wildlife experiences that are as eye-opening as they are educational.

Like your first love, you never forget the time you lock eyes with a lion on safari. That heart-stopping moment your vehicle pulls up close enough so that you can hear them snoring. Then there's the first time you witness a kill and the subsequent dining experience. It is visceral. Messy. Noisy. And totally illustrates the circle of life.

Just as exciting is the surprising joy that comes with spotting birds that are all the colours of the rainbow, learning about the defensive mechanisms of trees, and waking up in the middle of the night to strange snuffling noises outside your tent on the Serengeti.

The underwater world also delivers memories that go into the vault of precious moments with nature. Snorkelling with stingrays, spotting a reef shark, swimming with turtles or surfing with dolphins.

Witnessing bears in their natural habitat tends to make the pulse race a little, whether it is a grizzly, black or polar bear. Seeing animals in snow lends a whole different feel to the experience, with the stark landscape showcasing the animals in a whole new frame. Coming across a shaggy-coated bison with a layer of snowflakes is mesmerising. Then there is the world of ice, with expedition cruises opening up the polar landscapes and the cacophony of seals and penguins and birds and sea life that surround.

In Australia, we are still secretly thrilled to spot emus, kangaroos, koalas or wombats out and about in our vast land, and we weep when their habitat is threatened by fire, flood or humans.

When it comes down to it, we love animals, and we must do what we can to appreciate them, value them and fight to conserve them. All of them.



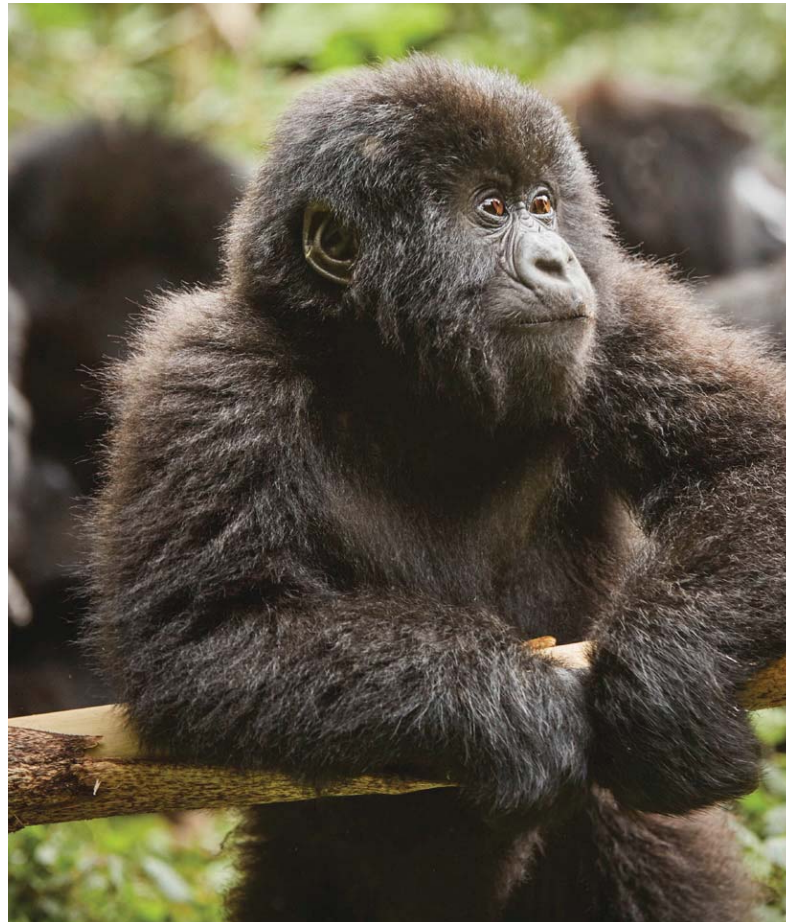
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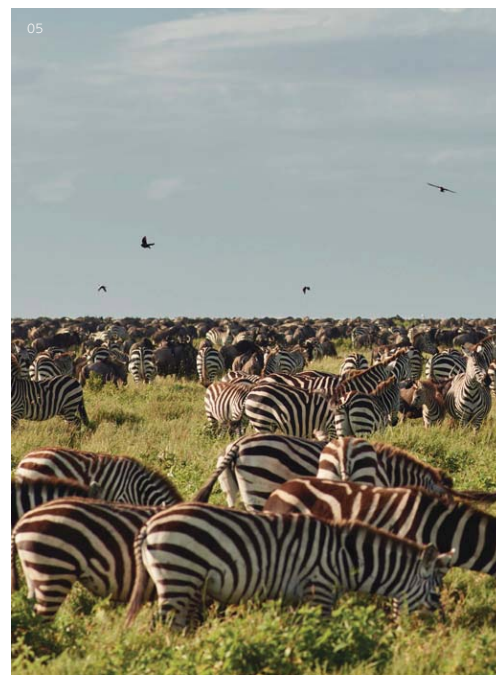
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1. PROJECT TIGER
One of the largest and most mesmerising predators on the planet, the Bengal tiger is a sight to behold. Witness these big cats up close on a limited-edition tour with andBeyond. Over the course of 16 days, you'll discover the kaleidoscopic beauty of India and its wildlife. A truly once-in-a-lifetime experience, the tour coincides with the epic milestone of the 50th anniversary of Project Tiger, one of the world's most successful conservation programs. *andbeyond.com*

2. TREK WITH GORILLAS
Wander with gorillas through high-altitude cloud forests at Volcanoes National Park, Rwanda. Home to more than a third of the world's remaining mountain gorillas, the park is the ideal spot to observe these primates in their natural habitat. A visit to the reserve wouldn't be complete without a stay at the One&Only Gorilla's Nest, its lodges and suites enveloped by forest. The retreat blends seamlessly into its surrounds, and staff offer daily guided treks. *oneandonlyresorts.com*



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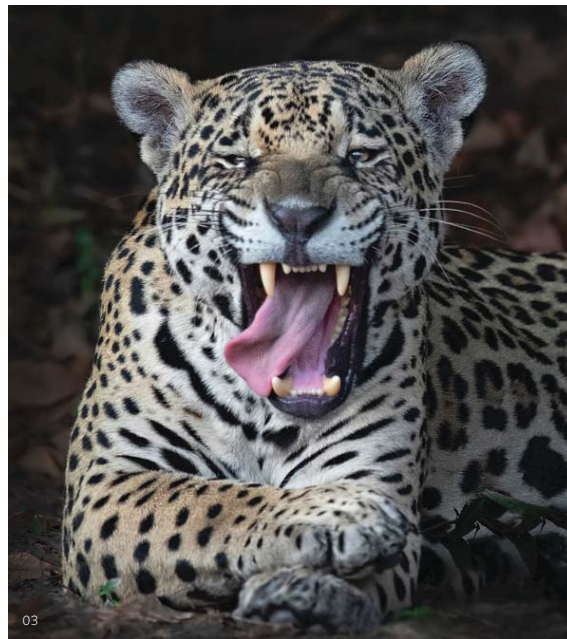


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01 Conserving India's tigers © Dale R. Morris 02 Mountain gorillas in Rwanda © Phillip Lee Harvey 03 Spotting a leopard in the wild is a life-changing experience © Dale R. Morris 04 Red panda in China © Responsible Travel 05 The Great Migration © Sanctuary Retreats

5. SEEKING JAGUARS IN THE PANTANAL

The Pantanal region of Brazil is the largest tropical wetlands on the planet, known for its abundant wildlife including the hard-to-find jaguar. Oryx Photo Tours offers a brilliant 'Wildlife of the Pantanal' expedition, led by *Signature Luxury Travel & Style* contributor, Dale R. Morris. Hopefully, under Dale's guidance, your lens will capture images of jaguars, giant river otters, hyacinth macaws, toco toucans, Brazilian tapirs, seven-banded armadillos and more. oryxphoto.com

6. AUTHENTIC MADAGASCAR

Responsible Travel's 16-day private tour is Madagascar like you've never seen it. With the help of a dedicated naturalist guide you'll visit some of Madagascar's most biodiverse regions, traversing wildlife-rich rainforest, scenic highlands and rock-strewn beaches, spotting a number of species of lemur, fossa, chameleons and more. Accommodation has been selected to give you the most intimate, immersive stay. responsibletravel.com

3. SEEING RED

Embark on a 10-day trek in the Himalayan foothills of Nepal tracking one of the world's most elusive and endangered species: the red panda. Guides use the latest equipment, so the chance of a sighting is high. Discover village life in Dobate, where you'll relax in rustic guest houses. What's more, your trip with Responsible Travel contributes to vital conservation work to save these remarkable creatures. responsibletravel.com

7. A DEVIL OF A TIME

María Island is the ideal base to spot Tasmanian devils, relocated to help their population stay free of the deadly facial tumours endangering the species. Led by Premier Travel Tasmania - a member of Australian Wildlife Journeys - the five-day 'Tasmanian Wildlife and Wilderness' encounter also takes in the ancient rainforests, mountains and highland lakes around Cradle Mountain and Mt Field National Park. australianwildlifejourneys.com

4. THE GREAT MIGRATION

The sheer scale of the Great Migration of wildebeest and zebras across the Serengeti and into the Maasai Mara must be seen to be believed. Abercrombie & Kent's 'Signature Great Migration Tour' will take you to the heartlands of the frenetic movement of wildlife, as well as other spectacular parks that are part of the Great Migration circle, such as the Ngorongoro Crater and Tarangire National Park. abercrombiekent.com.au

8. MONKEY AROUND

Watching snow monkeys lounging around in Japan's natural hot springs is certainly out of the ordinary, and the blissful look on their faces shows just how much they enjoy the soak. The troop of macaques warm up in the hot pool at Jigokudani Monkey Park near Yudanaka Onsen, and while it is open year-round, it is particularly picturesque in winter, with visitors bracing a snow-covered forest to reach the water. Tie in a visit with a ski holiday at a Nagano resort.





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9. GALÁPAGOS CALLING

The sheer volume of rare and endemic Galápagos creatures threw Charles Darwin into a spin. A visit here will also rock your world, giving you the chance to get up close and personal with animals that show absolutely no regard for humans – permitted on land under very strict conditions. The best way to explore this Ecuadorian archipelago is by boat, and Abercrombie & Kent has a 12-day tour offering four nights cruising the islands on the luxury vessel *La Pinta*. See blue-footed boobies, curious iguanas, playful seals and a host of seabirds. The icing on the cake is a week in Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley of the Incas. abercrombiekent.com.au

10. HURTIGRUTEN'S SEAL OF APPROVAL

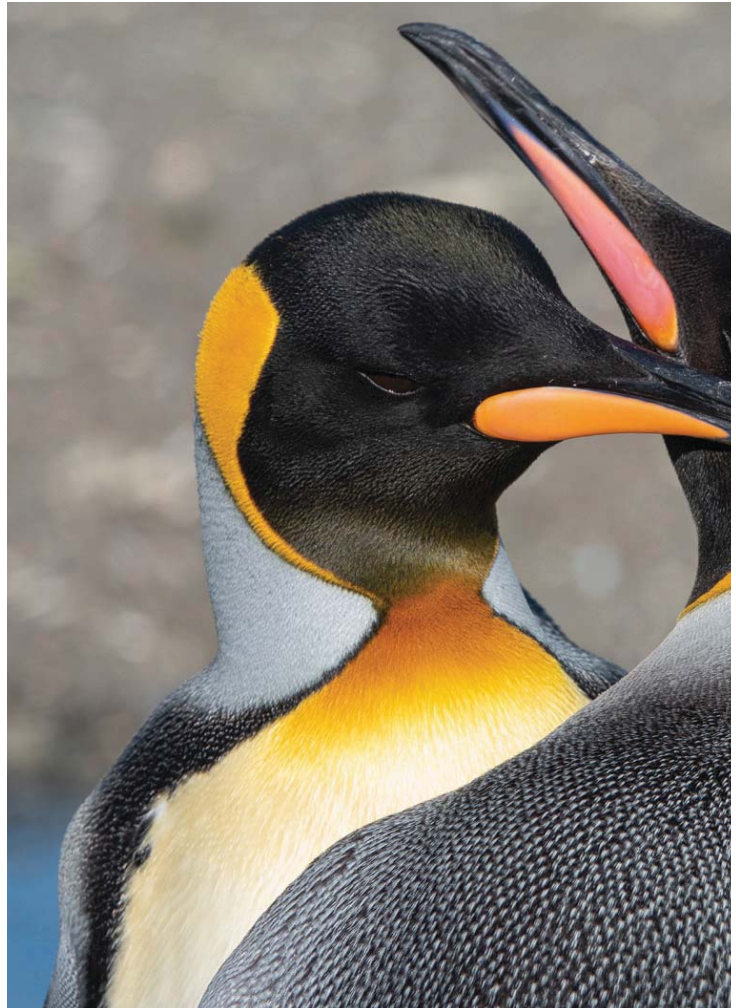
This trusted and pioneering Norwegian company has a history that dates back to 1893, when it started a steamship service in Norway. Board the recently refurbished *MS Fram* for a 23-day adventure exploring the Falklands, South Georgia and Antarctica. South Georgia is known as the 'Serengeti of the Southern Ocean', with the sheer numbers of seals, penguins and seabirds marching around land sure to set your heart racing. hurtigruten.com

11. THERE'S A BEAR OUT THERE

Sleep won't come easy when you know there are polar bears outside, but the opportunity to see them is worth a bit of tossing and turning in bed. Frontiers North hosts a range of polar bear experiences out of Churchill, Canada, with one of the most popular being a stay overnight in the Tundra Buggy Lodge, with daily excursions to see these endangered and much-loved animals in their habitat. You might even glimpse the Northern Lights. frontiersnorth.com

12. ALL ABOUT MANATEES

So you've swum with fish, dolphins, whales and seals, but have you potted about with manatees? You can do just that at Crystal River in Florida, America, around 150 kilometres west of Orlando. Seeing these 'cows of the sea' up close in the crystal-clear water is unforgettable. If you prefer to not get wet, you can also spot them from an underwater observatory at the Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park. visitflorida.com/snorkelwithmanatees.com



06 Blue-footed boobies © Don Mammoser/Shutterstock 07 Penguins at South Georgia © Gemma Roland 08 Swimming with seals in Mexico



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13. TRACKING PUMAS IN PATAGONIA

One for the wish list, Quasar Expeditions' 'Patagonia Untamed Safaris' will set your heart racing. Track elusive pumas with your professional team of naturalists in Chile's Torres Del Paine National Park, catching them with nothing but your camera lens. You'll also encounter Andean condors and other wildlife from your private jeep on this guided adventure, as well as marvelling at the majestic landscape. quasarex.com

14. ELEPHANT OUTSIDE YOUR ROOM

Spend an unforgettable night watching Thailand's majestic elephants from the comfort of your deluxe 'jungle bubble' – transparent bubble-shaped tents at Anantara Golden Triangle Elephant Camp & Resort in the north of the country. They offer uninterrupted views of the gentle giants, as well as the starlit sky above. By day, journey into the jungle with the elephants and their mahouts and watch as they splash in the river, snack on leaves from nearby branches and socialise with one another. Then sleep soundly knowing your stay is helping protect Thailand's pachyderms from mistreatment. anantara.com

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15. CATCH SOME RAYS

Tahiti boasts impossibly white beaches, world-class diving and a host of wildlife encounters. Discover the archipelago's underwater world gliding alongside manta rays in the gin-clear waters of Moorea. The private guided snorkelling tour by Moorea Ocean Adventures offers the chance to interact with these intelligent marine animals, as well as spot dolphins and whales. Be still my heart. moorea-ocean-adventures.com

16. PADDLING WITH HIPPOS

Sitting in a *mokoro* (canoe) on the Okavango Delta in Botswana is a little daunting, especially when you come upon a bloot of hippos. But, you are in very good hands with the guides from Duba Explorers Camp. The opulent tents and impeccable service replicate the golden age of safari, and the wildlife sightings will amaze, with everything from tiny kingfishers to magnificent elephants on your doorstep. greatplainsconservation.com

17. TURTLE ENCOUNTERS

Come mask-to-fin with a turtle or two around the idyllic Lord Howe Island, off the coast of New South Wales. With views over the world's southernmost coral reef, Capella Lodge offers a range of wildlife experiences, from snorkelling to glass-bottom boat tours. For dedicated birdwatchers, a private tour with naturalist Ian Hutton is a must. Capella guests can meet Ian at his sunset drinks at the lodge on Saturday evenings. capellalodge.com.au

18. BUBBLE TO THE SURFACE

The World Heritage-listed Sea of Cortez has been called the 'aquarium of the world', for the fact it nurtures a mind-boggling menagerie of marine life. Including sea lions – in fact, the waterway between the mainland and the Baja peninsula is home to one of Mexico's largest populations of sea lions. Bring your stamina for the 10-hour Cabo Adventures expedition that drops you into crystal-clear water. Dip your head under the surface and you'll have sea lion pups blowing bubbles in your face in no time. cabo-adventures.com



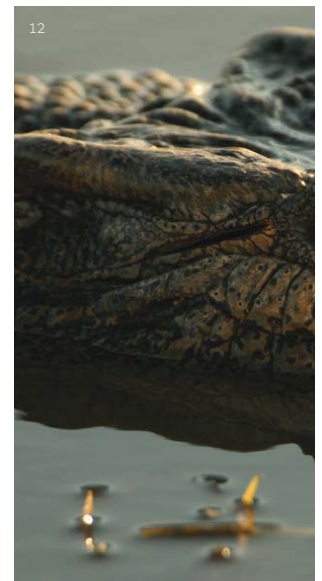
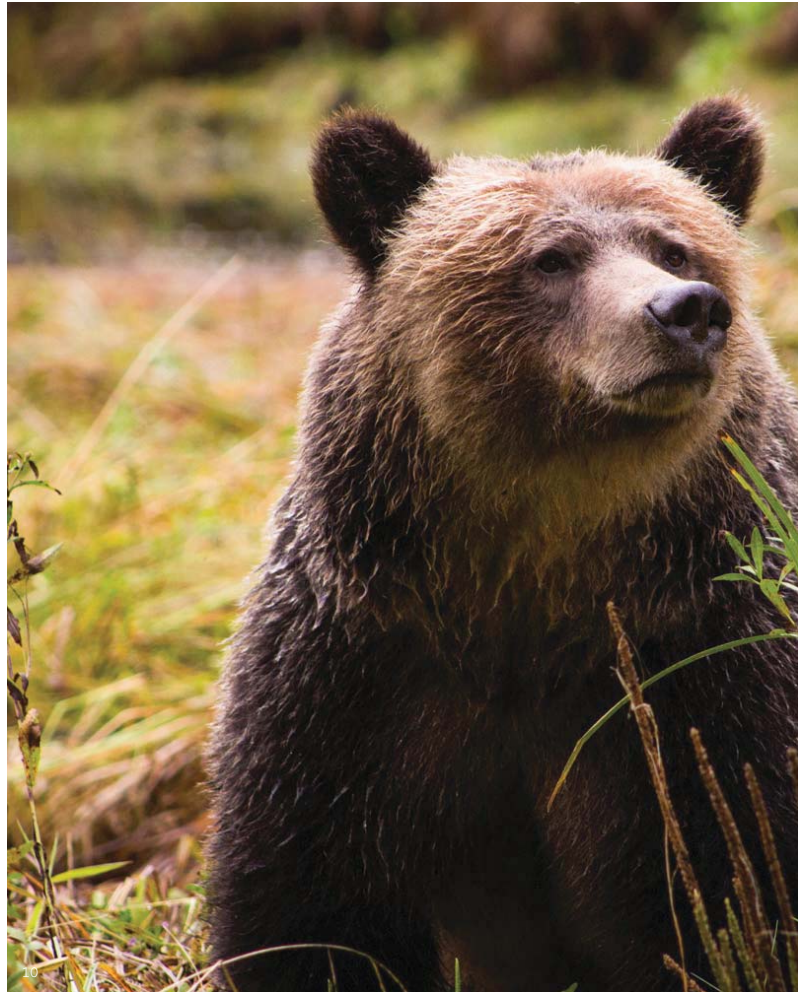


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09 Yellowstone bison 10 A bear spotted outside Spirit Bay Lodge in Canada 11 Rhino protection at andBeyond's Phinda lodge © Howard Cleland 12 What lurks beneath the surface © Kakadu Tourism



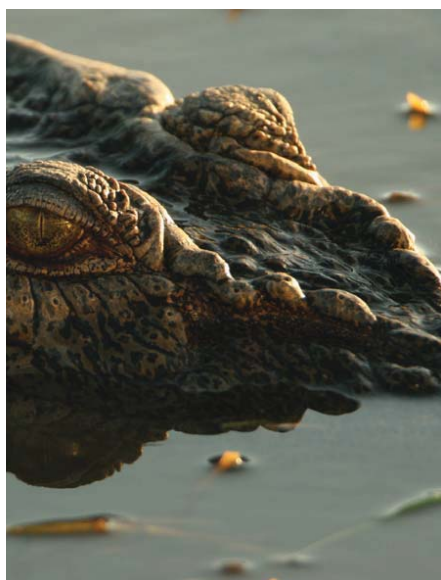


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19. YELLOWSTONE IN WINTER

The world's first national park, Yellowstone turns 150 in 2022, and the wild landscapes prove just as alluring today as they were back in 1872. In summer, it can be crowded, but in winter, animals outnumber humans. Sign up for a wildlife tour and spot wolves in the Lamar Valley, snow-topped bison, elk, moose, eagles and more. Then there are the geysers and the ruggedly beautiful vistas. yellowstoneguidelines.com; greatamericanwest.com.au

20. GO WILD IN SRI LANKA

A stay at Sri Lanka's Wild Coast Tented Lodge provides the perfect balance between luxury and wildlife. The retreat sits adjacent to Yala National Park, with safaris sure to deliver highlight sightings of leopards and elephants. When not on safari, relax at the stunning camp with its 28 tents seamlessly integrated into the environment. resplendenceceylon.com

21. FIND YOUR SPIRIT BEAR IN CANADA

The Great Bear Rainforest in Canada's British Columbia is the largest coastal temperate rainforest on Earth, and stuns with its beauty. Stay at Spirit Bear Lodge for a host of experiences to warm your heart. The Indigenous-owned retreat offers wildlife tours to see grizzly bears, black bears and the elusive spirit – or Kermode – bear, as well as visits to cultural sites in the Kitasoo Xai'xais Territory. A stay here will be good for your soul. spiritbear.com

22. KAKADU CALLING

A sacred Indigenous site, the Yellow Water billabong is best experienced on an eco-cruise. This is your chance to (safely) see enormous saltwater crocodiles in the wild, along with the menagerie of wetland birds – brolgas, whistling ducks, white-bellied sea eagles, jabirus and egrets – that call this part of Kakadu National Park home. This is the Northern Territory in a nutshell, and an eye-opening entree to the Top End's fascinating wildlife. kakadutourism.com

23. THERE BE DRAGONS

Indonesia's Komodo National Park is a spectacular place to discover from the comfort of a luxury yacht. On a three-night private charter, explore the underwater world at Menjerite, see the bats of Kalong Island, snorkel with manta rays at Taka Makassar, marvel at the Pink Beach on Padar Island and track Komodo dragons on Komodo Island. Your floating home is *Ayana Lako di'a*, a 54-metre beauty with nine luxe cabins. ayana.com

24. STRETCH YOUR NECK

Jamala Wildlife Lodge at Canberra's National Zoo and Aquarium may be the closest you'll ever get to wild animals being carefully protected and nurtured in ethical environments by passionate teams of zoologists. Check in to the lodge's treehouses, bungalows and suites to come whisker close to giraffes, and bathe next to bears. jamalawildlodge.com.au

25. BIRDWATCHING IN CUBA

Cuba is a twitcher's dream. Simply Cuba Tours offers a birding photography itinerary visiting Pinar del Rio's Biosphere Reserve of Sierra del Rosario, home to 100-plus bird species, as well as the Zapata Peninsula, where more than 200 avian species reside in the wetlands, mangroves and forests. The 10-day tours are led by Nils Navarro, scientist, artist, conservationist and author of the acclaimed *Endemic Birds of Cuba*. simplycubatours.com

26. CAPTURE AND CONSERVE

Make a difference to the fate of Africa's critically endangered rhino population with andBeyond's hands-on conservation tour at Phinda Private Game Reserve. Travel to South Africa to assist the veterinary team in notching a rhino's ear for research and monitoring, before releasing it back into the wild. Or, bear witness to a rhino dehorning, designed to end poaching of these immense creatures. andbeyond.com ♦