



ANNUAL 2024 REPORT



A close-up photograph of an Andean bear's face. The bear's dark, shaggy fur is visible, and its eyes are looking directly at the camera. The bear is partially obscured by large, vibrant green leaves, which are in sharp focus in the foreground and background, creating a sense of being hidden in a dense forest. The lighting is soft and natural, highlighting the texture of the bear's fur and the veins on the leaves.

Cover: A group of Atlantic puffins sit on a rock in Eastern Egg Rock, ME, USA. This page: An Andean bear peeks through leaves in Wayqecha, Peru.

The National Geographic Society's 2024 Annual Report reflects on a year of extraordinary achievements made possible by unwavering commitment from our supporters, donors and partners. Your generosity fuels the passion and dedication of our global network of National Geographic Explorers, who are working tirelessly to deepen our understanding of the planet, protect its wonders and support community empowerment. Together, we have advanced groundbreaking research, inspired new generations of storytellers and changemakers, and taken bold strides toward a more sustainable future. Thank you for believing in the transformative power of exploration and for joining us in making a meaningful difference across the world.

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A photograph of a savanna landscape at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene. The sky is a mix of orange and yellow, with rays of light breaking through the trees. The foreground is a body of water, likely a river or a large watering hole, with tall grasses growing in the shallow areas. The water reflects the sun and the surrounding trees. In the lower right portion of the image, an elephant is wading through the water, its dark silhouette contrasting with the lighter water. The overall mood is peaceful and natural.

MISSION

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

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.



An adult elephant and its calf walk through the Okavango Delta, Botswana.



Explorer Christopher Keene, a cave diver, explores a massive underwater chamber located under a swamp on Florida's Gulf Coast.



CEO'S MESSAGE



Dear Friends,

I have always admired that the National Geographic Society never shies away from daring to do the impossible to change our world for the better. For 137 years, we have championed exploration and innovation – embracing novel ideas, thoughtfully evolving and expanding our reach to new audiences – to propel our mission, our National Geographic Explorers and our organization forward.

When I reflect on the milestone moments that transformed how we engage audiences globally, I see a story of continuous evolution. From early public lectures to the launch of National Geographic magazine, we consistently adapted to meet the moment. As television gained prominence, we created groundbreaking TV specials and launched our own channels across the globe. With the rise of social media, we became the largest brand across those platforms. Our partnership with The Walt Disney Company brought National Geographic to Disney+, streaming to more than 158 million subscribers in 2024. Today, we reach billions, amplifying our mission on an unrivaled scale.

The next great leap in our journey is the National Geographic Museum of Exploration (MOE). Opening in 2026, the state-of-the-art public attraction will revolutionize how we engage with new generations, both at our Base Camp headquarters in Washington, D.C., and globally. Through immersive exhibitions and experiences, the MOE will introduce thousands more to the work of our Explorers, deepening their understanding of and connection to the wonders of our world.

This moment – and the museum itself – reflects the Society's vision and bold goal to invest in truly out-of-the-box ideas to spark meaningful and lasting change. The museum embodies that commitment, creating a new platform to share

the many facets of exploration and amplifying the work of our Explorers in powerful new ways.

This report highlights the Explorers and programs that turned audacious ideas into action – and their incredible impact in 2024. You'll read about Explorers photographing every species in human care, striving to decode animal communications, embarking on decades-long quests to uncover humanity's past and leading efforts to safeguard Earth's vital ecosystems.

As global challenges shifted, so too did the ways we addressed them. In 2024, we broadened our focus areas to include Space and Planetary Health, two critical areas that are shaping the future of life on Earth and beyond. These areas demand paradigm-shifting solutions. Your generosity and support make this work possible, enabling Explorers to push boundaries, test hypotheses and develop breakthrough technologies to answer the most urgent questions of our time.

As we've done throughout our history, we continue to ask: What can we achieve by reaching people in bold and innovative ways? With the Museum of Exploration, we strive to spark curiosity, foster understanding and inspire action. It's an invitation to the next generation of Explorers to join us in daring to dream the impossible for the next 137 years and beyond.

The future of exploration is here, and we're grateful to have you by our side.

JILL TIEFENTHALER
Chief Executive Officer
National Geographic Society

BOARD CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

In 2024, we reached new heights, quite literally, laying the foundation for the next audacious chapter at the National Geographic Society. With each passing day, we moved closer to completing the transformation of our Base Camp headquarters and unveiling the National Geographic Museum of Exploration. The progress we've made is nothing short of extraordinary, and our vision is coming to life in ways that truly inspire.

Throughout this transformation, our storied legacy has remained ever-present, as has the DNA of our 33 founders who, in 1888, came together to create an institution and a public place that would change the world. But this spirit of exploration and discovery is as alive as it has ever been, a full 137 years later.

As crews prepared the new photography gallery in the Museum of Exploration, they uncovered something remarkable – the metal decking of the original reflecting pool that once cradled our iconic globe. From First Lady “Lady Bird” Johnson unveiling the 11-foot political globe in 1964 to the intricate topographical version introduced in 1989, these globes have always been more than objects; they've been iconic representations of our global mission.

We are embracing and amplifying this legacy within our reimagined headquarters. The center of our new Pavilion will feature a new globe and many new experiences that showcase our awe-inspiring planet like never before. All who visit will join our ranks of learners, dreamers and changemakers – expanding our reach by countless more.

Realizing this ambitious vision requires the collective effort of our entire National Geographic community: our Explorers, staff, donors, partners and all those who share our mission.

The contributions of this group, especially our partners, are woven into every corner of this transformed space, from immersive mapping rooms to eye-opening educational exhibits and the compelling stories of our Explorers.

Throughout this report, the impact of partnership shines through in nearly every great success we celebrated in 2024, from the reimagining of Base Camp, to the Slingshot Challenge and the National Geographic and Rolex Perpetual Planet Amazon Expedition. These achievements embody our commitment and dedication to driving global impact through collaboration. Together, we are creating positive change in ways that extend far beyond what we might achieve alone.

As we look toward the grand opening of the Museum of Exploration in 2026, we know our new headquarters stands as a vibrant testament to partnership and collaboration, as well as to the 137-year history we celebrate today. Together, we are building more than a museum – we are creating a global catalyst for inspiration and impact.

We hope you'll join us in creating this new space that will reflect how we dare to dream big, embracing visionary ideas and taking bold steps forward.



JEAN M. CASE
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
National Geographic Society





A 1964 photo of children and their caretakers viewing the old pool and globe at National Geographic's headquarters in Washington, D.C., USA. The pool and globe were removed in the following decades, and the pool's metal decking was recently uncovered.



2024

BY THE

NUMBERS

\$112.4M

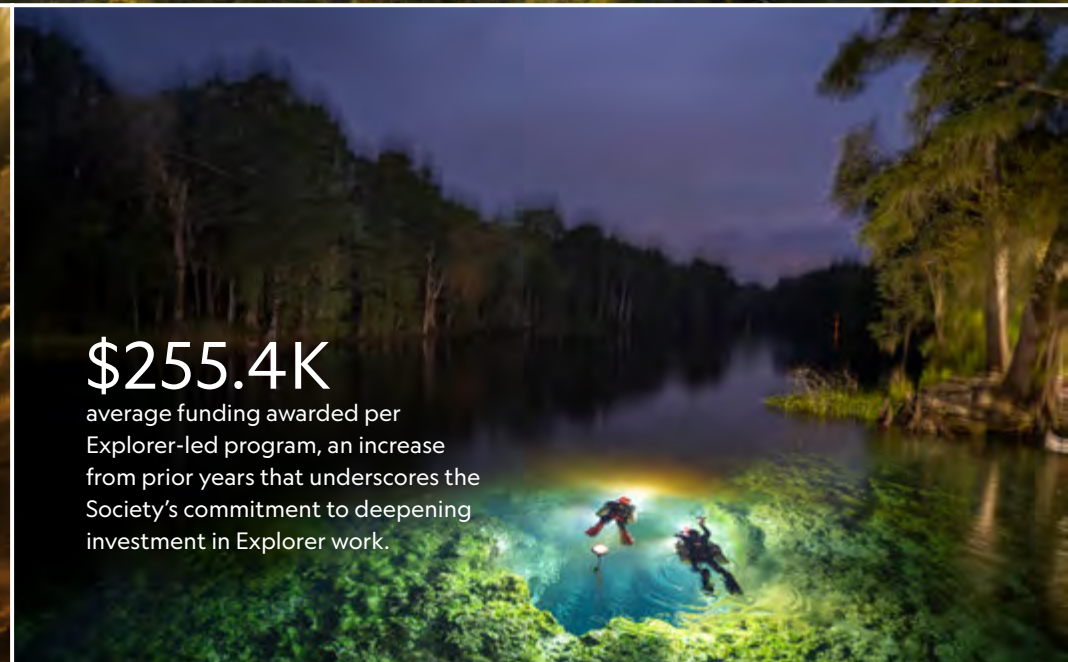
raised in new commitments from our dedicated community of donors and supporters, powering the positive impact of National Geographic Explorers.

This page, clockwise from top: Black-bellied whistling ducks fly over cypress trees in Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, FL, USA. A pair of cave divers prepare to enter Devil's Ear, a limestone rift in Florida's Santa Fe River. A school of alewives journey to spawn in Highland Lake, ME, USA. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: A degraded reef and small island in Palau. Explorer and photographer Babak Tafreshi captures images of the night sky in Sebasticook Lake, ME, USA. Young Explorer Brigitta Gunawan dives off the shore of Tulamben, Bali, Indonesia. Explorer and paleontologist Diego Pol analyzes the vertebrae of *Carnotaurus*, an abelisaurid theropod dinosaur from Patagonia. Students engage with National Geographic educational materials at Alice Deal Middle School in Washington, D.C., USA.



27.3M

unique visitors to NationalGeographic.org amplified the voices, stories and impact of our Explorers and mission programs, helping raise awareness of the Society as a global nonprofit.



\$255.4K

average funding awarded per Explorer-led program, an increase from prior years that underscores the Society's commitment to deepening investment in Explorer work.



30%

the amount of terrestrial and marine habitat around the world that our programs seek to help preserve and protect by 2030.



374

active Explorer projects spanned the Society's six focus areas – Ocean, Land, Wildlife, Human Histories & Cultures, Planetary Health and Space.



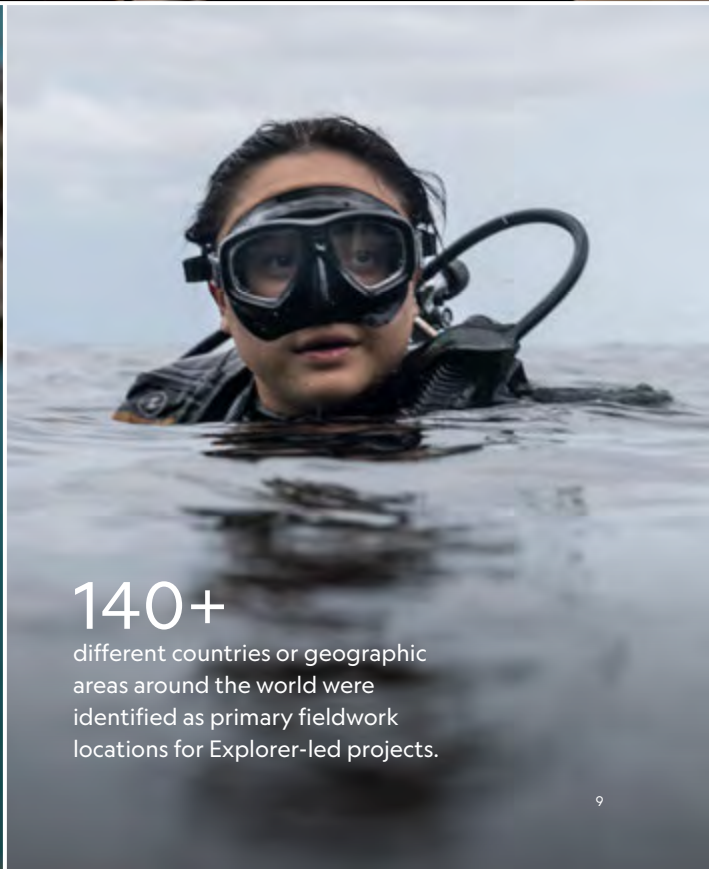
100,490

live engagements with students through Explorer Classroom sessions enriched learning experiences for the next generation of planetary stewards.



625

articles and academic publications in revealed new learnings and discoveries by Explorers across 74 disciplines.



140+

different countries or geographic areas around the world were identified as primary fieldwork locations for Explorer-led projects.

WHO WE ARE

The National Geographic Society seeks to create a healthier, more sustainable planet for people and wildlife. With our supporters, learners, collaborators and Explorers, we are pursuing ambitious goals and expanding our impact in order to bring our mission to life and share the Explorer Mindset with the world. Together, we can ensure a brighter future for generations to come.

A clownfish and anemone swim in a shallow reef in Marau, Solomon Islands.

2024 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

National Geographic Society Consolidated Statements

(in thousands)

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

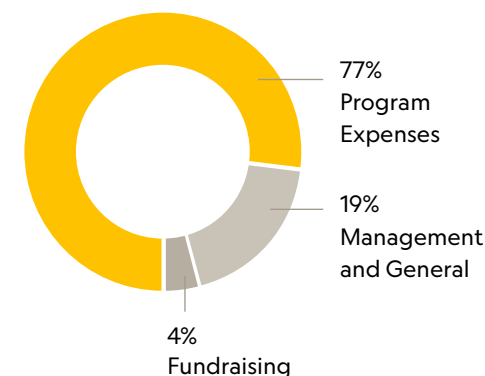
SUPPORT AND REVENUE	
Product and other educational sales	\$4,289
Licensing	23,817
Contributions and grants	87,860
Investment distribution to fund operations	116,810
Total Support and Revenue	\$232,776
EXPENSES	
Storytelling and outreach	69,499
Scientific research and exploration	66,685
Education	21,096
Program Expenses	157,280
Management and general	39,090
Fundraising	9,066
Total Operating Expenses	205,436
Operating Income	27,340
Income tax benefit	43,063
Investment distribution to fund operations	(116,810)
Non-operating activities*	(408)
Change in Net Assets	(46,815)
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	2,197,832
Net Assets, End of Year	\$2,151,017

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

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Cash and cash equivalents	\$141,329
Receivables, prepaids and other assets, net	99,283
Deferred tax assets	5,654
Investments (including endowments)	2,115,447
Property and equipment, net	210,426
Total Assets	\$2,572,139
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$46,854
Deferred revenue and refundable advances	12,096
Loan payable	248,264
Pension and postretirement benefits	14,400
Deferred tax liabilities	87,176
Other liabilities	12,332
Total Liabilities	421,122
Total Net Assets	2,151,017
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$2,572,139

TOTAL EXPENSES



100%
of contributions fund Explorers and mission-driven programs

“ The National Geographic Society’s financial stability, evidenced by a balance sheet with \$2 billion in net assets and a recent Moody’s rating upgrade, enables us to maximize our impact. 2024 marked another record-breaking year in fundraising, coupled with an 11% annualized return on our investment portfolio, and a 23% year-over-year increase in operating margin.

As we prepare for the transformative 2026 opening of the Museum of Exploration, a key chapter in amplifying our mission and further diversifying our revenue streams, we express deep appreciation to our donors and partners. Reflecting on my first year with the Society, I am inspired by your ongoing support which empowers us to invest confidently in Explorer-led science, education and storytelling programs and to navigate changes in the global economy.

DARIEN WRIGHT
Chief Financial and Operations Officer
National Geographic Society





Explorer Anand Varma analyzes images from the first trial of an egg fertilization experiment in his laboratory in Berkeley, CA, USA, as part of the National Geographic Channel series "Photographer." The National Geographic Pristine Seas media team conducts an interview with Coral Pasisi, president of Tofia Niue.

BRAND PARTNERS WITH GLOBAL REACH

Connecting Millions to National Geographic

Our historic commitment to dauntless exploration dates back to our founding in 1888 when 33 prominent scholars and scientists established an organization dedicated to the "increase and diffusion of geographic knowledge." Today, the National Geographic Society continues to push the boundaries of knowledge, uncovering new insights about the natural and cultural worlds and strengthening our connection to them and one another.

One of the ways the National Geographic Society is able to continue its 137-year legacy of exploration is through the adoption of an innovative, sustainable business model. Our joint-venture partnership with The Walt Disney Company facilitates management of National Geographic's media and editorial offerings, including National Geographic magazine. This allows the Society to invest every philanthropic dollar contributed – 100% of donations – into critical support for our National Geographic Explorers and mission-driven programs.

The Society's partnership with Disney, another iconic and world-class brand, provides unique opportunities to amplify the work of our Explorers, deepen engagement with supporters and inspire a global audience to learn about our world, care for it and take action to protect it. In 2024, National Geographic magazine published 80 print magazine articles and 224 digital articles featuring the Society-funded work of Explorers. National Geographic's print and online content reaches more than 52 million readers around the world in 25 languages. On social media, Disney-managed National Geographic accounts published 341 posts about Explorer-led projects and the Society's nonprofit mission, generating more than 383 million impressions on some of the world's most-followed social media accounts, with 779 million followers at last count.

Explorers shared their experiences and discoveries through five books published by National Geographic. These included a companion book for the Disney+ series "Secrets of the Octopus," featuring Explorer Alex Schnell, and "Photo Ark: 50 Postcards," which included curated photography from Explorer Joel Sartore's #1 best-selling book.

National Geographic Explorers also took center stage in 18 different film projects, including movies, TV series and shows on the National Geographic channel and Disney+. Supported by the Disney content studios and National Geographic global channels, we've been able to continue inspiring a deeper connection to the world and its natural wonders, reaching more than 484 million viewers in 175 countries and delivering content in 40 languages.

Highlight: Into the Amazon

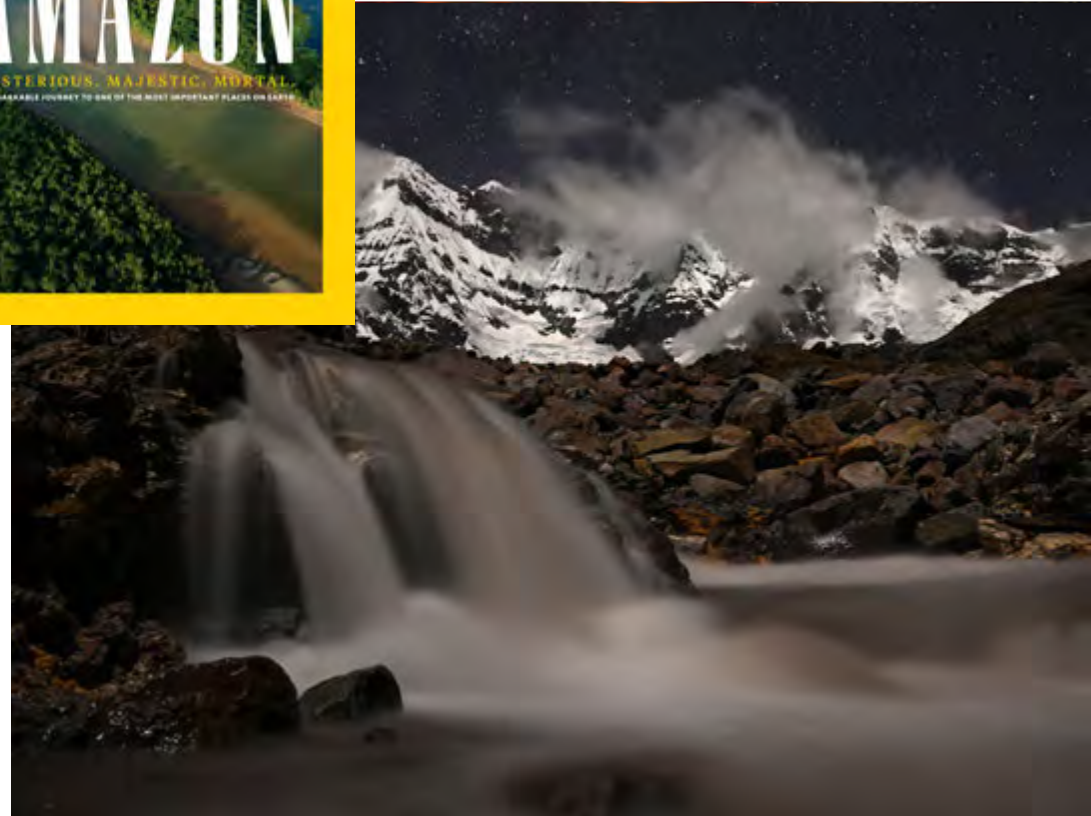
Perpetual Planet Expeditions, an expansion of the historic 70-year partnership between two iconic brands, National Geographic and Rolex, was created to examine and document the impact of climate and environmental change on the world's most critical yet fragile natural systems, and to identify solutions to protect them.

In September 2024, National Geographic published a groundbreaking interactive digital experience entitled "Into the Amazon," dedicated to stories and discoveries from the multidisciplinary Perpetual Planet Amazon Expedition. This experience invites audiences to explore the Amazon River Basin's diverse ecosystems firsthand, from towering mountain systems to the depths of underwater forests and beyond. Visitors virtually journey down the Amazon River, from the top of the Andes to the Atlantic, with stopping-off points where they can dive into one of the 17 individual articles, image galleries or visual essays that offer a closer look at particular topics.

"Into the Amazon," was published as a digital companion to the October 2024 issue of National Geographic magazine, which was solely dedicated to the Amazon Expedition and exclusively featured photography captured by Explorer Thomas Peschak over 396 days spent in the field.

In addition to the single-topic issue of the magazine and the interactive digital experience, National Geographic also released the documentary special "Expedition Amazon," which appeared on Disney+ in October 2024.

These materials showcase the culmination of two years of scientific fieldwork collected by 17 National Geographic Explorers during the expedition, providing an in-depth look at the mighty Amazon River's vast environment — from its icy source in the Andes to its freshwater plume off the Atlantic coast reaching as far as the Caribbean.



Clockwise from center: The cover of the October 2024 issue of National Geographic magazine. A pink river dolphin swims in the shallows of Brazil's Ariau River. Nevado Ausangate, the highest mountain in the Andes of southern Peru, looms above a waterfall fed by glacial melt.



Through our partnership with the National Geographic Society, Cengage Group provides learners of all ages with the knowledge, language and skills to foster curiosity and drive global impact. We are delighted to support the Society's mission in a new way through our investment in the Learning Launchpad, which will host thousands of students each year, providing experiential learning opportunities to inspire their inner explorer.

MICHAEL E. HANSEN
Chief Executive Officer
Cengage Group



A Renewed Commitment to Bringing the World to the Classroom

For nearly 13 years, the National Geographic Society and Cengage Group have proudly joined forces as National Geographic Learning to bring the world into the classroom for tens of millions of learners each year. Aligned with the Society's education strategy, this partnership has enabled National Geographic Learning to deliver Explorer-centered learning content to tens of millions of students in more than 133 countries.

Over 550,000 learners in more than 500 schools across the U.S. now prepare for school success with Explorer content-rich English programs. In 2024, National Geographic Learning won Puerto Rico's K-12 English enrichment contract, reaching 250,000 new learners. National Geographic Learning also works with government agencies in China, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Italy, Malta, Vietnam and Brazil to localize cross-curricular courses for five million students each year. Recently, Cengage Group and the Society extended this powerful partnership through 2040, ensuring we can continue to serve learners and educators for decades to come with exclusive, enriching content that amplifies the work of Explorers.

The National Geographic Society and National Geographic Learning continue to explore new ways to expand our collaboration. In 2024, National Geographic Learning helped amplify the Society's global Slingshot Challenge, resulting in 6,364 referrals to the Slingshot website, a 20% increase in referrals from the prior year. Additionally, the Society and National Geographic Learning collaborated with Esri to complete 12 new curriculum-aligned StoryMaps and a defined GIS module. This module was embedded in learning materials that were used by nearly 3,000 students in the 2023-2024 school year.

Further deepening our long-term partnership, Cengage Group recently made a transformative gift to power the National Geographic Learning Launchpad, a new interactive experience at the National Geographic Museum of Exploration, opening in 2026. The Learning Launchpad will inspire young people to connect with the concept of geographic thinking and to apply what they learn to their own lives.

Grosvenor Teacher Fellow Amy Trenkle and her students engage with National Geographic educational materials at Alice Deal Middle School in Washington, D.C., USA.



HOME OF THE EXPLORER

Building Base Camp

Our headquarters in Washington, D.C., has been central to our mission since our earliest days and is essential for convening our community and engaging people directly with our mission work. To build on our legacy, last year the Society embarked on the most significant expansion in our history to transform our campus into a global exploration hub and must-see destination that inspires the Explorer in everyone. Our revitalized Base Camp will be a convening space for collaboration, bringing together changemakers from around the world to share bold ideas and illuminate and protect the wonder of our world. We welcome millions of people of all ages, abilities and identities to join our mission and have a uniquely National Geographic experience.

National Geographic Museum of Exploration

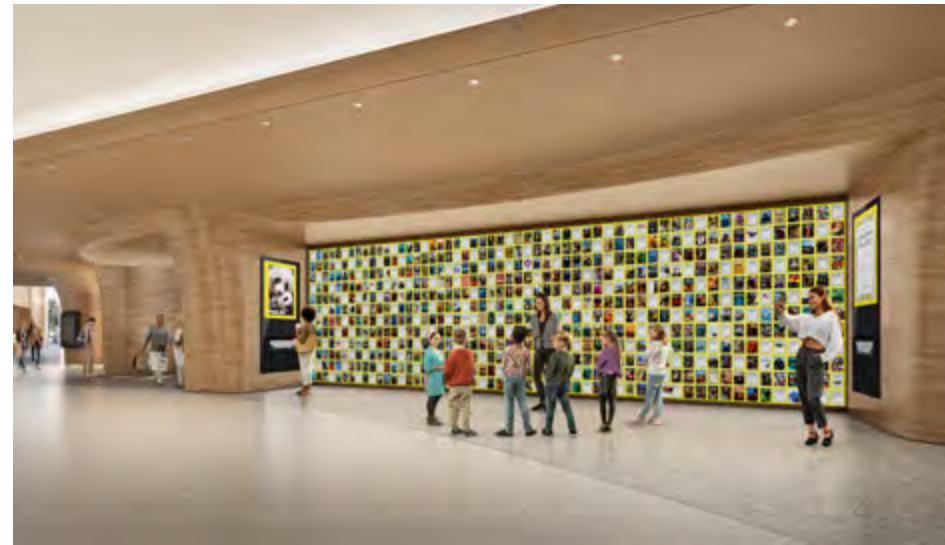
In October, the Society announced the launch of the National Geographic Museum of Exploration (MOE), a must-visit experience as part of our reimagined Base Camp in the heart of Washington, D.C. With an opening scheduled for mid-2026, this public attraction, fueled by cutting-edge technologies, will accelerate the Society's mission to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world. At the MOE, guests will discover engaging spaces and exhibits, including an immersive experience that allows visitors to explore fieldwork around the globe, Rolex Explorers Landing, the Archives, and the National Geographic Learning Launchpad powered by Cengage Group – an extraordinary interactive learning space for students.

The Society has worked to reduce waste and improve efficiency in the building of the MOE, employing Normal Weight concrete, which requires less carbon to produce; diverting nearly all construction debris and waste from landfills; and installing an underground cistern to capture rainwater and reduce our need for freshwater on campus.

More than 30 news outlets, including The Washington Post, covered the announcement of the MOE, reaching an audience of over 840 million across all news sources. Over 10,000 people visited the museum web page at www.natgeo.org in October to learn more about plans for the state-of-the-art facility. Promotional materials peppered the streets of Washington, D.C., and appeared on bus wraps and digital billboards in the District's Metro stations, bringing in over 3 million impressions from out-of-home advertising.

The new Museum of Exploration is a pivotal step forward as the Society builds on our legacy of celebrating discovery and innovation, using the power of science, storytelling and education to inspire the Explorer in everyone.

Artist's renderings of the interior of the renovated Society headquarters opening in 2026.





NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

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

ACHIEVEMENTS IN EXPLORATION

Celebrating excellence and fostering innovation are at the heart of the National Geographic Society's mission. The Society honors remarkable individuals whose groundbreaking work is shaping the future of exploration, education, conservation and storytelling. These recognitions not only highlight extraordinary achievements but also inspire the next generation of visionaries to make a difference.

A remote camera captures a Sumatran tiger hunting in Sumatra, Indonesia.



2024 ELIZA SCIDMORE AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING STORYTELLING

Steve Winter and Sharon Guynup

The National Geographic Society's Eliza Scidmore Award for Outstanding Storytelling recognizes individuals who use immersive storytelling to make complex ideas, issues and information relevant and accessible. The award is in honor of the writer and photographer Eliza Scidmore, the first woman elected to the Society's board of trustees in 1892.

National Geographic Explorers Steve Winter and Sharon Guynup received the Society's 2024 Eliza Scidmore Award for Outstanding Storytelling for their two-year investigation across 32 states to illuminate the plight of captive tigers in the United States, revealing abuse, wildlife trafficking and danger to the public. The resulting 30-page National Geographic magazine feature was shared with members of Congress, highlighting the critical need for action and helping secure the passage of the Big Cat Public Safety Act in December 2022. The team also uncovered the black market wildlife trade at the Tiger Temple tourist attraction in Thailand, shutting it down.

Winter is a photojournalist who has contributed to National Geographic magazine for 25 years. He focuses on wildlife and ecosystems, covering the threats that wildlife face and the research and conservation efforts to save them. His 2013 story about a cougar in the Hollywood Hills grew a movement in Los Angeles that led to the construction of the world's largest wildlife crossing. He's been named BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year and BBC Wildlife Photojournalist of the Year and has earned top honors from World Press Photo. He lectures globally on photography, big cats and conservation issues.

Guynup is an award-winning environmental journalist, author, photographer and contributor to National Geographic and other outlets, as well as peer-reviewed journals. She produces short films and has worked on TV and film projects, including National Geographic Channel's "TRAFFICKED" and "Dethroned." She is a Fulbright Scholar and Public Policy Fellow at the Wilson Center's Environmental Change and Security Program.

Together, Guynup and Winter have produced two books, "Tigers Forever," and the "Ultimate Book of Big Cats," with a new publication expected to be released in 2026 from National Geographic Books. They are co-founders of Big Cat Voices, a nonprofit focusing on media and film projects that spark change.

A radio-collared cougar photographed by Explorer Steve Winter in Griffith Park in Los Angeles, CA, USA. Steve Winter and Sharon Guynup receive the Eliza Scidmore Award at the 2024 Storytellers Summit.





NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
SPOTLIGHT

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC | ROLEX
COMMITTED TO A PERPETUAL PLANET

EXPLORERS FESTIVAL

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC | ROLEX
COMMITTED TO A PERPETUAL PLANET

EXPLORERS FESTIVAL

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC | ROLEX
COMMITTED TO A PERPETUAL PLANET

EXPLORERS FESTIVAL



At Kia, we believe in inspiring movement toward a better future. Partnering with National Geographic on the Wayfinder Award allows us to support those shaping a more sustainable and connected world.

RUSSELL WAGER
Vice President, Marketing
Kia America

2024 Wayfinder Awardee and wildlife photographer Tony Wu speaks at Explorers Festival 2024 in Washington, D.C., USA.

2024 WAYFINDER AWARD

Presented by Kia

The National Geographic Society's Wayfinder Award presented by Kia recognizes talented individuals who are pushing the boundaries of innovation in science, conservation, exploration, education, technology and storytelling. Each year, the Society selects 15 individuals from around the globe to receive the award and become part of the Society's Wayfinder Award program, which includes an opportunity to apply for additional funding for their next big idea.



JASON BALDES

is an Eastern Shoshone community leader and environmental management expert facilitating the restoration of the American bison on tribal lands.



LIZ BONNIN

is a U.K.-based wildlife biologist and science and environmental broadcaster who leverages television, documentary film and podcasts to highlight the need for a healthy planet.



DINA BUCHBINDER

is a social entrepreneur and play-based educator from Mexico who uses the power of play to revolutionize education around the world.



KERLLEN COSTA

is an environmental anthropologist and ethnobiologist who combines science and ancestral traditional knowledge to preserve Angola's natural and cultural heritage.



TRACY DRAIN

is a systems engineer from the U.S. who develops and operates robotic spacecraft exploring the mysteries of deep space.



SUAAD AL HARTHI

is an Emirati conservationist based in Oman advocating for the protection of Oman's marine and terrestrial biodiversity through research, education and awareness-raising initiatives.



ESTHER HORVATH

is a photographer from Hungary documenting polar climate research and scientific expeditions, with a focus on the work and lives of scientists who deliver crucial climate data for humanity.



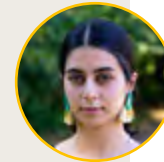
NANCY IRABA

is a marine scientist and researcher pioneering coral restoration efforts in degraded reef zones near the southern coast of Tanzania.



RINZIN PHUNJOK LAMA

is a member of the Nyinba Indigenous community in Nepal, founder of the organization UKALI and conservation biologist researching trans-Himalayan biodiversity, including snow leopards.



REYHANEH MAKTOOFI

is a D.C.-based social science researcher and communicator tackling misinformation and building trust in scientists through her training workshops, videos, comics and series.



ROWENA MOUDA

is an Aboriginal leader supporting Indigenous communities in Australia as they reclaim access to and stewardship of their ancestral marine areas.



BADRU "MWEZI" MUGERWA

is a Ugandan conservationist working with local communities to research and protect the African golden cat.



BOHDAN PROTS

is a conservation biologist and nature defender who has helped establish protected areas, restore nature and combat the illegal use of natural resources in Ukraine.



KRISTI WILLIAMS

is a descendant of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, community advocate and founder of Black History Saturdays, dedicated to preserving and teaching Black history amid growing state restrictions.



TONY WU

is a wildlife photographer from Japan who uses his art to interpret and communicate on behalf of the underwater world.

2024 ROLEX NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPLORER OF THE YEAR

Fernando Trujillo

The Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year Award recognizes a member of the Explorer community who shines a critical light on important issues, discoveries and challenges facing our planet and inspires the world to act on behalf of a more sustainable future.

In 2024, National Geographic Explorer Fernando Trujillo was recognized as the Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year for his dedication to working with local communities in South America to co-create conservation solutions that protect endangered aquatic wildlife and ecosystems. Trujillo has had a long history with the Society, receiving his first grant in 2008 to study the abundance of Amazon river dolphins in Brazil and Peru. Most recently, Trujillo led the study of river dolphins as part of the National Geographic and Rolex Perpetual Planet Amazon Expedition and has facilitated groundbreaking regional and international collaborations to protect dolphins and their rivers – including spearheading, along with other Explorers, the signing of the first-of-its-kind global declaration for the protection of river dolphins.

The National Geographic Society is grateful to Rolex for its partnership in presenting the 2024 Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year Celebration and the 2024 National Geographic Explorers Festival. The Society's special partnership with Rolex enables the Society to recognize and elevate the work of remarkable individuals like Fernando Trujillo who are helping to protect Earth's critical ecosystems.

Explorer Fernando Trujillo watches for pink dolphins in Laguna Damas de Nare, Colombia. Trujillo speaks before attendees at the 2024 Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year Celebration in Washington, D.C., USA.





2024 NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC/ BUFFETT AWARDS FOR LEADERSHIP IN CONSERVATION IN AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA

Julio César Hernández-Montoya and Peter Lalampaa

The National Geographic/Bufett Awards for Leadership in Conservation were established in partnership with the Howard G. Buffett Foundation to recognize and celebrate unsung conservation heroes who are working in the field. Two awards are presented each year: one for achievement in Africa and the other for achievement in Latin America. These outstanding individuals have demonstrated leadership in managing and protecting the natural resources in their regions and countries and are inspirational conservation advocates who serve as role models and mentors.

Julio César Hernández-Montoya has contributed to the conservation and ecological restoration of the islands of Mexico for over 20 years. As the project director of Guadalupe Island at the nonprofit organization Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas, he carries out activities related to the conservation and restoration of endemic and native species of fauna, as well as biosecurity and invasive alien species management projects. Montoya seeks to engage the local community, managers and stakeholders to create synergies to restore Guadalupe Island's ecosystem. Thanks to his commitment, Guadalupe Island hosts the most important growing Laysan albatross colony in the eastern Pacific, increasing from a few breeding pairs in 1983 to over 1,700 pairs in 2024.

Peter Lalampaa is a Kenyan conservationist and Indigenous Samburu pastoralist who, while herding, developed invaluable skills such as interpreting bird calls to detect predators and tracking Grevy's zebras to locate water sources and optimal grazing for his cattle. These experiences ignited his passion for conservation and the pursuit of formal education, leading him to earn his Master of Science in conservation biology. He was named the executive director at the Grevy's Zebra Trust, working to achieve the organization's vision of healthy, connected landscapes that support wildlife and pastoralism. Lalampaa has earned the title of Disney Conservation Hero for his outstanding contributions to Grevy's zebra conservation and was recognized as a member of the Explorer's Club Top Fifty.

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

National Geographic/Bufett Awardee for Leadership in Conservation in Latin America Julio César Hernández-Montoya addresses the audience at Explorers Festival 2024 in Washington, D.C., USA. Ian Miller presents the National Geographic/Bufett Award to Peter Lalampaa for achievement in Africa.

2024 YOUNG EXPLORERS

The National Geographic Young Explorers program highlights and awards 15 emerging leaders ranging from 18 to 25 years old who are working across areas including ocean, land, wildlife, planetary health and human histories and cultures to make lasting change in the world. Each recipient receives a monetary award, unique training, mentoring and networking opportunities and access to additional project funding. This next generation of Explorers is using their voices and talents to implement innovative solutions in their communities and beyond.

The National Geographic Society thanks Lucy, Henry and Sumner Billingsley, Diane and Hal Brierley, Inna and Mark Moore and other generous supporters for their support of the National Geographic Young Explorers program.



FLORI LÓPEZ ATZ
Guatemala | Indigenous social and environmental activist, leader and human rights defender passionate about addressing climate change and its impact on communities.



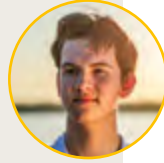
JOSHUA ANAK BELAYAN
Brunei | Climate leader advocating the essential role of Indigenous people and underrepresented groups in ecosystem conservation and climate initiatives.



ARGHADEEP DAS
India | Researcher and aspiring policymaker amplifying the stories of communities experiencing the worst impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.



ROHIT GIRI
Nepal | Photographer and herpetofauna researcher using public education to confront negative sentiment toward snakes and contribute to their conservation.



SOREN GOLDSMITH
United States | Conservation photographer and storyteller highlighting New England's elusive wildlife and urban ecosystems to promote policies that protect them.



MARIA HASHMI
Pakistan | Science communicator and founder of Little Rebels Nature Camp, a first-of-its-kind outdoor immersive experience in a region lacking access to nature education.



DAHLIA JAMOUS
Canada | Founder and community leader of an effort driving the conservation and restoration of ocean resources in the Marmara region of Turkey.



LATAMAI KATOA
New Zealand | Photographer using storytelling to foster a culture of tolerance, acceptance and empathy, particularly toward the Pasifika LGBTQIA+ youth community.



VIHAAN MATHUR
United States | Student at UC Berkeley and the co-founder of a youth-driven organization combating climate change through education, research, journalism and advocacy.



ABDUL NA-EEM MUNIRU
Ghana | Researcher and advocate helping thousands of people across West Africa understand the significance of marine conservation.



It's gratifying to know that 100% of our donation goes directly to support Explorer-led programs at National Geographic. We believe, as the Society does, that science and exploration can change the world for the better, and we're proud to support the Society's Young Explorers, the next generation of innovators and changemakers who are challenging the status quo and turning ideas into action for our planet.

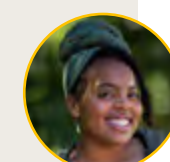
KATE AND LANE BRITAIN
 Hubbard Council Members



RAMI AL NAJADA
Jordan | Sustainable energy researcher and STEM educator promoting the use of locally produced, environmentally friendly ways to address water scarcity and energy insecurity.



FORBAH SANDRA NGWEMETO
Cameroon | Environmental educator bringing ocean literacy into schools and inspiring Cameroon's next generation of marine conservationists.



CAMERON OGLESBY
United States | Environmental justice advocate, oral historian and award-winning journalist dedicated to re-centering the voices, narratives and knowledge of historically disinvested communities.



LUIS PALADINES
Ecuador | Marine conservationist building partnerships between artisanal fishermen and scientists to expand what is known about threatened marine species in the Pacific Ocean.



JOYCE MOLLY TEKO
Uganda | Entomologist working with her local community to establish a sustainable honey beekeeping project that benefits people and pollinators.



2024 FULBRIGHT-NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC AWARD PROGRAM

The Fulbright-National Geographic Award program, now in its 11th year, provides select Fulbright recipients with additional funding and resources in recognition and support of their efforts to examine a globally relevant issue. Through their work in their respective host countries, each recipient sets out to communicate powerful narratives that mobilize global communities, create mutual understanding and build a more peaceful world. Chosen through a merit-based and highly competitive process, recipients receive support and mentorship from the Fulbright Program and fellow Explorers.



SATEESH VENKATESH

A conservation biologist who studies human-wildlife conflict, Sateesh Venkatesh aims to understand the complex relationship between elephants and farmers in Sri Lanka. Through camera traps, audio recordings and drone mapping, he will demonstrate how a greater understanding of both human and wildlife experiences is essential to developing mutually beneficial sustainable solutions. As populations expand and human and wild spaces mix, Venkatesh believes it is essential we focus on de-escalation and coexistence instead of separation.



ARTIS HENDERSON

Conservation journalist Artis Henderson is studying the effects of climate change and sea-level rise on the world's oldest living microorganisms – the marine stromatolites of Shark Bay in Western Australia – which are essential to our understanding of both early conditions on Earth and the potential for life on Mars. Henderson's project will include the perspectives of the Malgana people, the traditional custodians of Gatharragudu (the Malgana name for Shark Bay).



KONSTANTINE VLASIS

Environmental composer and audio-based researcher Konstantine Vlasits will produce an immersive audio story called "When Glaciers Sing," which traces the human ecology of glaciers in Iceland through natural sounds and cultural songs. Vlasits aims to uncover the unheard and unheeded lessons that sound can teach us about glaciers and how music can be a means of climate communication. Against a waning world of ice, "When Glaciers Sing," is a timely story about the meaning of sound, the power of song and the urgency of listening to glaciers today.



CHELSEA MCMASTER

Ceramic artist Chelsea McMaster will work alongside the last remaining traditional potters in Antigua and Barbuda to learn and preserve their techniques and oral histories. While conducting research in Seaview Farm, a village with a 200-year-old history of ceramic arts, her project will conclude with a series of workshops to teach interested students and teachers about the craft in an effort to mitigate its decline.



JAMIL WILSON

Marine biology educator and researcher Jamil Wilson will evaluate how a Marine Environmental Education Program in Papua New Guinea (PNG) effectively encourages students to participate in ocean advocacy through educational, cultural, technological and personal experiences. His research aims to get more students involved in ocean advocacy and science, influence better educational design and execution in marine programs, and foster international connections with local PNG students and communities.



IMPACT IN THE FIELD

Made possible through the support of donors, partners and communities across the globe, National Geographic Explorer-led programs expand knowledge, spark curiosity and drive action to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world. From large-scale, multidisciplinary signature programs that are deeply integrated with all aspects of the Society's mission to concentrated projects that seek meaningful solutions in one of the Society's six focus areas – Ocean, Land, Wildlife, Human Histories and Cultures, Planetary Health and Space – the work of our Explorers is driving global impact.



Opposite page: Sea fan polyps in Palau. This page: Explorer and biologist Ruthmery Pilco Huarcaya holds a flowering bromeliad in Wayqecha, Peru.

A close-up photograph of a clownfish swimming in a sea anemone. The clownfish is bright orange with white stripes and a white patch on its face. The sea anemone has long, green, tentacle-like structures. The background is dark, making the colors of the fish and anemone stand out.

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

The National Geographic Society's signature programs mark the height of our efforts to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world. These programs, led by visionary Explorers, are characterized by the development of comprehensive solutions that combine science, exploration, education and storytelling.

This page: Clownfish swim in a sea anemone in Papua New Guinea. Opposite page: Members of the National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project traverse a river in mekoro, or dugout canoes, in the Okavango Delta, Botswana.



AT A GLANCE

6.9M

square kilometers of ocean have attained protected status with support from Pristine Seas' research and advocacy efforts since 2008.

396

days spent in the Amazon by Explorer Thomas Peschak documenting critical conservation research and storytelling efforts taking place as part of the Perpetual Planet Amazon Expedition.

54+

species new to science have been discovered to date through biodiversity surveys conducted by the Okavango Wilderness Project.



Pristine Seas

In 2024, the National Geographic Society’s Pristine Seas program, led by Explorer in Residence Enric Sala, achieved a series of groundbreaking accomplishments, propelling the global movement toward safeguarding our oceans. Since 2008, Pristine Seas has worked with Indigenous and local communities, governments and other partners to help protect vital places in the ocean using a unique combination of scientific research, filmmaking, community engagement and policy. To date, the Pristine Seas team has carried out more than 45 scientific expeditions around the world and helped inspire the protection of more than 6.9 million square kilometers of ocean.

One of Pristine Seas’ most significant achievements came in 2024 with the creation of a new Marine Protected Area (MPA) around Isla de Lobos in Uruguay. This vibrant ecosystem, home to one of South America’s largest sea lion colonies, was declared a protected zone in August 2024 by President Luis Lacalle Pou. The declaration, built on Pristine Seas’ scientific groundwork dating back to 2021, ensures fishing and other harmful activities will be strictly regulated, preserving this vital habitat for future generations.

Furthering the program’s impact, in October 2024, the Azores designated the largest MPA network in the North Atlantic – spanning an extraordinary 287,000 square kilometers. The result of more than six years of collaboration between Pristine Seas, the local government, communities and scientists, this newly protected area marks the 28th MPA that Pristine Seas has helped create.

Pristine Seas also tackled the issue of bottom trawling, a practice that damages marine ecosystems and releases up to 370 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually.

In April 2024, Greece pledged to ban bottom trawling across all national MPAs by 2030, inspired by a landmark study from Pristine Seas researchers that highlighted the practice’s dire environmental impact.

Beyond conservation policies, the program ventured into the depths of the Solomon Islands, documenting a “mega coral” estimated to be 300-500 years old. This colossal coral, visible from space and now recognized as the largest known coral, garnered widespread media attention, topping headlines on CNN, the Guardian, The Wall Street Journal, BBC and Solomon Star, and even making the late-night comedy circuit. The overwhelming response highlights Pristine Seas’ emphasis on scientific exploration, which not only enriches our understanding of ocean ecosystems but also plays a pivotal role in driving marine conservation efforts globally.

The National Geographic Society thanks the following leadership donors who contributed \$100,000 or more in 2024 to support Pristine Seas and its dedication to a healthy ocean: Beagle Charitable Foundation, Allison Bennington, Bezos Earth Fund, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Disney Conservation Fund, Don Quixote Foundation, Anne K. Howson, LGT Venture Philanthropy Foundation, Oracle, Rituals, Serventi Family Foundation, The Farlight Foundation, The Heinz Family Foundation, The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment, the Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic Fund, The Look and See Foundation, The Nationale Postcode Lottery, The Philip Stephenson Foundation, UBS Optimus Foundation, The Waitt Foundation and the Walmart Foundation.



Rituals is supporting National Geographic Pristine Seas to restore ocean health and productivity, which can improve the livelihoods of coastal communities and foster climate resilience. We’re proud to join National Geographic in supporting the global goal of conserving 30 percent of the planet by 2030 by helping to protect the ocean’s most vital places through research, exploration, filmmaking, policy and education.

NIKI SCHILLING
Chief Impact Officer
Rituals

Sea lions in Uruguay’s Isla de Lobos. A Portuguese man o’ war swims in the waters of the Azores. Two divers inspect the world’s largest coral in the Solomon Islands.



Aerial view of the newly discovered world's largest coral in the Solomon Islands, just behind the National Geographic Pristine Seas boat and divers.



Okavango Wilderness Project

The Okavango Wilderness Project (OWP), led by National Geographic Explorer Steve Boyes, is on a mission to protect one of Africa's most vital and biodiverse ecosystems. From groundbreaking biodiversity surveys to community-centered initiatives, the project's 2024 efforts underscored the interconnectedness of environmental preservation and cultural heritage.

A landmark achievement was the opening of Fundação Lisima in Angola. Officially launched in February, this local institution, part of the Wild Bird Trust family of organizations, solidifies OWP's long-term presence in the region. The event celebrated the Angolan government's renewed commitment to the project, extending its protocol of cooperation and cementing collaborative conservation efforts.

The Lisima Biodiversity Survey of 2024 revealed astonishing findings. Over three weeks, a team of Angolan and international scientists documented an array of species, including approximately 1,000 species of moths, 120 species of spiders, and countless other insects and plants. Many of these records are new to academic science, illustrating the richness of Angola's wilderness. These discoveries emphasize the need to protect this region as a haven of biodiversity and a source of scientific discovery.

Storytelling remained central to the project's mission with the release of "Mokoro wa Okavango." This short film, crafted in collaboration with Botswana filmmakers and the National Geographic

Impact Story Lab, celebrates the traditional crafting of mekoro (dugout canoes) while promoting sustainable practices. Released in September 2024, the film reached global audiences on YouTube, spotlighting local communities' role in conserving the Okavango Basin.

In Botswana, the team built on prior successes in Maun to introduce education and sustainable livelihood opportunities in Beetsha, reaching more people and communities in the eastern Okavango Delta Panhandle. The project is engaging the Beetsha community through smart farming projects and traditional knowledge trails, marking a significant milestone for community-led conservation.

The project also made strides in research advocacy, presenting critical findings on the Angolan Highlands Water Tower to delegates at the Southern African Development Community Summit. This research underscores the highlands' role as a water source for southern Africa's major river systems, emphasizing the need for transboundary conservation efforts.

Through science, storytelling and community engagement, the OWP has demonstrated how collaborative conservation can create ripples of positive change – protecting not only landscapes but also the people and cultures intertwined with them.

The Society is grateful to De Beers for its support of Okavango Eternal, an impactful partnership that works to secure sustainable protection of the Okavango Basin.



I had the fantastic opportunity to spend time exploring Botswana's Okavango Delta in 2024 to witness firsthand the work we are doing through Okavango Eternal, a partnership between De Beers Group, the National Geographic Society and local communities, to help protect its waters. It's a true biodiversity hotspot – home to the world's largest remaining elephant population, alongside lions, cheetahs and hundreds of species of birds. Since August 2021, Okavango Eternal has been working with local communities to protect the source waters of the Okavango Delta and the lives and biodiversity it supports. It is an enormous privilege to be able to play a role in helping to protect the Delta's life-giving waters.

SANDRINE CONSEILLER

CEO De Beers Brands
De Beers Group

Poler Kgalalelo "KG" Mpitsang navigates a mokoro in the Okavango Delta, Botswana. A great egret takes flight over the Okavango Delta. Ethnobiologist Isilda Cavaleca meets with the Samununga village community in Tempué, Angola.



A lion walks through the Okavango Delta in Botswana.



Perpetual Planet Expeditions

Perpetual Planet Expeditions, a groundbreaking program supported through a long-standing partnership between the National Geographic Society and Rolex's Perpetual Planet Initiative, reached new heights in 2024. Employing cutting-edge science, community engagement and storytelling, Perpetual Planet Expeditions delves into the planet's vital ecosystems to address environmental challenges.

This year marked the culmination of the National Geographic and Rolex Perpetual Planet Amazon Expedition. The multiyear expedition spanned the Amazon River Basin from the Andes to the Atlantic, involving a multidisciplinary cohort of 17 Explorers to create a photographic and scientific archive of one of our world's most biodiverse ecosystems.

To bring the Amazon's splendor to life, Explorer and photographer Thomas Peschak spent 396 days in the field documenting the expedition for a dedicated issue of National Geographic magazine. In addition, Perpetual Planet Expeditions collaborated with Disney to help create the innovative digital experience "Into the Amazon," and the documentary film "Expedition Amazon." These multimedia projects provided an incredible platform to share the impact of Explorers' work with audiences around the world.

As part of the Amazon Expedition's scientific and conservation efforts, Explorers published breakthrough findings that reveal never-before-documented behaviors of the Andean bear and illuminate the vital role mangroves play in carbon

sequestration as well as the ecosystem services they provide to communities along the Brazilian coast. Explorers also advanced novel landscape restoration solutions, expanded fishing agreements leading to multifold increases in arapaima populations, and planted thousands of trees in collaboration with local communities. These science, storytelling and conservation outcomes were shared at convenings including COP16, the American Geophysical Union annual meeting and at film screenings worldwide.

Perpetual Planet Expeditions is now in its third phase, embarking on ocean expeditions around the world to identify urgent challenges and develop conservation solutions. In December 2024, the team launched a remarkable sea ice to seafloor transect of the Weddell Sea in the Southern Ocean aboard the Schmidt Ocean Institute's *R/V Falkor (too)*. A cohort of scientists, educators and storytellers, including nine Explorers, spent three weeks documenting never-before-seen habitats, otherworldly life forms and new-to-science animal behaviors. Over the next year, Explorers will work in partnership with coastal communities in the Arctic, Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Ocean Basins to revive, restore and protect our ocean.

These accomplishments would not be possible without the visionary partnership between the National Geographic Society and Rolex. The Society expresses its deepest gratitude for Rolex's extraordinary support of Perpetual Planet Expeditions, which has enabled transformative exploration, research and storytelling efforts across the globe.



The Rolex and National Geographic Perpetual Planet Amazon Expedition has made remarkable inroads towards protecting the Amazon River Basin – the largest freshwater ecosystem on Earth. Through cutting-edge science, collaboration with local communities, compelling storytelling, and bold, innovative solutions, this Expedition has guided approaches to the conservation and restoration of one of the world's most iconic places. Our longstanding partnership with the National Geographic Society, which also includes our support to the expansion of its global Base Camp, has catalysed enduring positive impact, inspiring future generations to strive for a perpetual planet.

ARNAUD BOETSCH

Director of Communication & Image
Rolex

A cholita escaladora prepares to install a weather station on the Nevado Ausangate in the Peruvian Andes. A brown-throated sloth swims in Lake Acajatuba in the Brazilian Amazon. A fisherman transports arapaimas through a lake in the Lago Serrado community near Carauari, Brazil.



Aerial view of the Maracá-Jipoca Ecological Station near Amapá, Brazil.



FOCUS AREA:
OCEAN

With the support of our philanthropic community, the National Geographic Society is accelerating efforts to protect and restore the world's ocean. Our Explorers are safeguarding critical ecosystems and championing biodiversity by advancing cutting-edge research, sharing compelling stories and engaging communities to inspire global action that secures the health of our ocean.



AT A GLANCE

1,417

unique coral formations on the Mediterranean seafloor are a scientific curiosity that Explorer Laurent Ballesta works to illuminate through the 2024 documentary film "Cap Corse: The Mystery of the Rings."

2,500+

students in classrooms around the world have been reached through the Unplastify program's workshops and activities aimed at addressing plastic pollution.

156

distinct patterns have been identified in recorded sperm whale click sequences by Explorer-led Project CETI, allowing researchers to attempt to decode the whales' communications.



“ It’s incredible to know we are developing the tools to understand what other animals, like sperm whales, are saying. It’s our responsibility to care for and protect the extraordinary creatures that share our planet, and I’m proud to support Project CETI’s efforts to bring us closer to a future where we can listen to other species with the same appreciation and empathy that we do our own.

RUTH O. MUTCH
Hubbard Council Member

Project CETI

Led by National Geographic Explorers David Gruber, Shane Gero and Robert Wood, Project CETI (Cetacean Translation Initiative) achieved remarkable progress in 2024. Combining marine biology, artificial intelligence and cutting-edge technology, the initiative is advancing humanity’s understanding of sperm whale communication.

A significant milestone this year was the publication of a study in *Nature Communications* revealing a “sperm whale phonetic alphabet.” By analyzing nearly 9,000 recordings of rhythmic click sequences, known as codas, researchers identified 156 distinct patterns and foundational elements of the whales’ language. This discovery marks a crucial step toward unlocking the meaning behind these sounds and understanding how whales share information.

Technological tools enhanced the team’s fieldwork, particularly in Dominica, where custom baited remote underwater video systems and the Lab’s Deep Sea Camera System provided unprecedented insights into the whales’ habitat. These systems, developed by the National Geographic Exploration Technology Lab, collected 19 hours of video data from depths of 300 to 1,500 meters, shedding light on Dominica’s deep-sea biodiversity and sperm whales’ prey, including squid.

In addition to scientific achievements, the project expanded its reach through public engagement. In September, Gruber participated in National Geographic’s Explorer Classroom program, presenting “Decoding the Deep Sea” to more than 7,800 students worldwide. Meanwhile, the October issue of *National Geographic* magazine featured Project CETI in a story about using artificial intelligence to decode animal communication, amplifying awareness of the initiative’s groundbreaking work.

Through innovative research and global outreach, Project CETI is revealing the intricate world of sperm whales while inspiring deeper appreciation for marine ecosystems and the urgent need to protect them. The Society thanks Allison Bennington, Ruth O. Mutch, Standard Industries and other dedicated contributors for their support of Project CETI.

Mystery of the Rings

Photographer, marine biologist, technical diver and National Geographic Explorer Laurent Ballesta’s project *Mystery of the Rings* is a pioneering marine research and storytelling initiative centered on the Mediterranean’s enigmatic Cape Corsica rings. The project blends cutting-edge technology with interdisciplinary collaboration to reveal new insights into some of the ocean’s most inaccessible places.

A sperm whale displays its distinctive flukes off the coast of Dominica. Explorers and Project CETI scientists David Gruber, Shane Gero and Rob Wood with the CETI drone at their lab in Roseau, Dominica. CETI team members perform buoyancy measurements on a new SeaExplorer glider.



Initially focused on studying the biological phenomena of these deep-sea formations, the project outcomes have contributed to a larger investigation of sea-level changes from the last ice age to the present. In 2023, Ballesta and his team led an expedition accompanied by two submarines to allow ocean and climate experts to make extended voyages into the ecosystem to study exactly how the circles emerged. Through their work, a hypothesis emerged that the fluctuations in temperature and seawater level for more than 21,000 years have dictated the growth and collapse of algae formations that created the rings.

This research has had a tangible impact on conservation, with insights from the project being used to advocate for the establishment of a reinforced protection zone for the Cape Corsica rings. Though only one-third of the algae formations currently lie within a Marine Protected Area, Ballesta is optimistic that what they represent – revealing indicators of our planet's ancient history – will inspire people to support their protection.

To increase awareness about the project and drive support for the area's increased protection, Ballesta's team has worked to capture public interest through stunning visuals and storytelling. A 90-minute documentary about the Cape Corsica rings and the research into their origins was co-produced with Arte in 2024. The film premiered at the Régent cinema in Bastia, Corsica, on October 13, and is set for global release in 2025.

Unplastify

With the support of the Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic Fund, National Geographic Explorer Agustina "Tati" Besada and her team at Unplastify continued to redefine the fight against plastic pollution in 2024. Through a combination of education, innovation and local action, the initiative is empowering youth worldwide to spearhead systemic change in their communities to transition away from single-use plastics and toward more sustainable practices.

Unplastify's efforts this year focused on fostering meaningful behavioral change through a blend of storytelling and hands-on engagement. In classrooms across the globe, Unplastify reached thousands of students with educational workshops and creative activities designed to spark curiosity and encourage sustainable habits. By integrating art, science and civic responsibility, these programs helped participants envision and implement actionable systemic solutions to address the plastic crisis.

Collaboration remained a cornerstone of Unplastify's mission in 2024. The team worked closely with regional governments, businesses and local organizations to amplify impact. Some highlights from Unplastify student projects included a team in Chile that made a biodegradable glitter for use in their school, avoiding the use of more than four kilograms of plastic glitter; a team in Argentina that

revolutionized their town's relationship with plastics by engaging with local stores, legislators and local media; a team in Ukraine that promoted the use of wax napkins and expanded their impact from the school to the city level; and an in-person celebration in Istanbul that gathered more than 45 students and educators to share learnings from their participation in the Unplastify programs. The students' projects not only have an impact on their education but also have a real impact on the systemic reduction of tons of single-use plastics.

To broaden its global reach, Unplastify leveraged digital platforms, sharing compelling stories and practical tools for change. Social media campaigns, webinars and short films highlighted the human stories behind the plastic crisis while offering tangible steps individuals and communities can take to reduce reliance on single-use plastics.

Unplastify's innovative approach demonstrates that solving the plastic problem requires more than policy changes – it demands a cultural shift. By inspiring individuals, especially younger generations, to imagine a world beyond plastic, the initiative is lighting a path toward a cleaner, more sustainable future.

Explorer and biologist Laurent Ballesta and a team of divers investigate unexplained seabed formations off the coast of Cap Corse, Corsica: 1,417 perfectly circular rings, 20 meters in diameter. A diver drills a hole through a mysterious circular formations located more than 100 meters below sea level. Explorer Agustina Besada on her sailboat, which she used to cross the Atlantic Ocean twice to study ocean plastic solutions.



FOCUS AREA:
LAND

National Geographic Explorers have achieved remarkable breakthroughs in protecting and restoring the planet's most critical landscapes. These visionary individuals are leading efforts to safeguard biodiversity, promote sustainable practices and collaborate with local communities to nurture the lands they cherish. This impactful work is made possible through the support of people like you.



AT A GLANCE

200%

increase in the number of fossil records from Patagonia cataloged in the global Paleobiology Database through the efforts of Diego Pol's research team in 2024, advancing understanding of Late Cretaceous biodiversity.

1,293

endangered grey crowned cranes were recorded in Rwanda's Rugezi Marsh in 2024, marking a record high and reflecting the success of habitat preservation efforts.

21

global water scarcity hotspots were classified into seven clusters by the World Freshwater Initiative through its World Water Map, offering region-specific insights into drivers like climate change and agricultural water use.



“ Esri is committed to using science and technology to help build a sustainable world. We’re proud to partner with the National Geographic Society on the World Water Map to harness the power of geography and mapping to visualize global freshwater supply and demand and inform solutions that address water scarcity – benefiting the health of people, wildlife and ecosystems across the globe.

JACK DANGERMOND
President
Esri

World Freshwater Initiative

The World Freshwater Initiative (WFI), led by National Geographic Explorers and supported by a global network of collaborators, works to combat water scarcity and promote innovative water management practices worldwide.

In 2024, the Initiative announced four new grantees who are tackling water scarcity “hotspots” in Chile, Japan, Türkiye and Indonesia. These Explorers are working with local communities to develop custom solutions for regions where water demand exceeds supply. Their efforts highlight the impact of regional conservation approaches informed by local expertise.

With the support of the WFI, in 2024, Utrecht University published a study that classifies 21 global water scarcity hotspots into seven clusters based on key drivers such as climate change, population growth and agricultural water use. This research equips policymakers with region-specific insights to help address their most pressing challenges.

Additionally, new tools and enhancements to the Society’s World Water Map – an innovative geovisualization resource that is central to the Initiative’s work – have helped advance global understanding of water scarcity.

In partnership with Esri, the Society relaunched the digital mapping tool National Geographic MapMaker at the end

of 2023. The tool is designed with educators and students in mind. Nearly 400,000 unique users visited MapMaker last year to explore Earth’s interconnected systems through curated basemaps, data layers and tutorials. In 2024, two new, student-friendly versions of the World Water Map were published to this resource. These maps are designed to help educators and students explore how freshwater is used across the world and analyze locations where humans use water faster than it is naturally replenished.

In addition, the Society, Esri and Utrecht University introduced an enhanced version of the World Water Map, called World Water Map: Insights. Building upon the original, this upgraded resource allows users to analyze “water gaps” and explore future scenarios of water demand and supply under varying socioeconomic and climate conditions. The enhanced functionality will help inform decision-making, support storytelling and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the science and geography of water.

Through a combination of research, targeted education and conservation interventions, and storytelling, the WFI has deepened understanding of freshwater challenges and contributed tools to help address them on a local and global scale.

The World Freshwater Initiative and World Water Map are made possible thanks to the generous contributions of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and Esri.

The McPhee Reservoir in the Colorado River Basin, where another dry season is causing significant economic impacts across the region. The Buna Canals in Bosnia and Herzegovina are an important passageway for migratory fish species.



Transforming Rugezi Marsh

Under the leadership of National Geographic Explorer Olivier Nsengimana, in 2024, his project to transform Rugezi Marsh into a national park advanced efforts to protect one of Rwanda’s most ecologically significant wetlands. By combining research, conservation initiatives and community engagement, the program is enhancing biodiversity while addressing local development needs.

Ongoing biodiversity research yielded new findings from two comprehensive biodiversity surveys conducted in the marsh. The team of Rwandan and East African scientists shared preliminary results in 2024 that cataloged 438 species of birds, amphibians, reptiles, mammals and fish within the marsh. These findings, presented at the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation Conference in July, are contributing to several scientific publications in development.

Community-led conservation efforts also expanded significantly. The number of community rangers grew to 75 by recruiting 25 new members. These rangers conduct wildlife monitoring and engage with residents to promote sustainable practices. Public outreach events, including football matches and bicycle races, reached hundreds of community members and provided opportunities to share information about the importance of protecting the marsh.

The program also celebrated a rise in the endangered grey crowned cranes, with numbers reaching a record high of 1,293 individuals. This success highlights the benefits of habitat preservation and local stewardship.

Nsengimana’s work is helping strengthen Rwanda’s ecological resilience by integrating rigorous research with innovative conservation approaches that place local communities at the heart of environmental protection.

Biodiversity at the End of the Dinosaur Era in Patagonia

Paleontologist and National Geographic Explorer Diego Pol and his team are unraveling the ecological tapestry of Patagonia during the Late Cretaceous, a time just before the mass extinction event that ended the dinosaur era. Through meticulous fieldwork and innovative analysis, the project has expanded our understanding of the region’s prehistoric biodiversity.

In 2024, Pol’s research team focused their efforts on highly productive fossil beds, which have already yielded discoveries that are reshaping how scientists view the diversity of life during the Late Cretaceous.

Among the year’s highlights were the identification of two new dinosaur species: *Koleken inakayali*, a carnivorous theropod with

comically short arms, and *Titanomachya gimenezi*, a small herbivorous titanosaur. These discoveries challenge long-held assumptions about dinosaur morphology and ecological roles in South America. Fossilized remains of *Titanomachya* were uncovered at the La Colonia Formation, offering valuable insights into the evolution of titanosaurs, which were predominantly known for their enormous size. Beyond these discoveries, Pol and his research team made numerous important additions to the global Paleobiology Database, more than doubling the number of cataloged fossils from the Patagonia region.

The project’s focus on public engagement and education further amplified its impact. Pol’s team hosted workshops, trainings and site visits for local tour guides and schools, bringing the science of paleontology into the community. By involving local stakeholders, the initiative fosters a sense of shared stewardship over the region’s rich paleontological heritage.

A pair of grey crowned cranes in Rugezi Marsh, Rwanda. Explorer and paleontologist Diego Pol analyzes a freshly extracted dinosaur fossil with a magnifying glass in General Roca, Argentina. Explorers José Luis Carballido and Diego Pol work with dinosaur remains in General Roca, Argentina.



FOCUS AREA:
WILDLIFE

National Geographic Explorers continue to lead transformative efforts to protect and restore the world's most vulnerable species and ecosystems. Thanks to the generous support of the Society's philanthropic contributors, these dedicated individuals are applying cutting-edge science, innovative storytelling and community-driven solutions to safeguard wildlife across the globe.

This page: A gorilla in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, Uganda. Opposite page: A green tree frog at the Audubon Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary in Florida.



AT A GLANCE

1,190

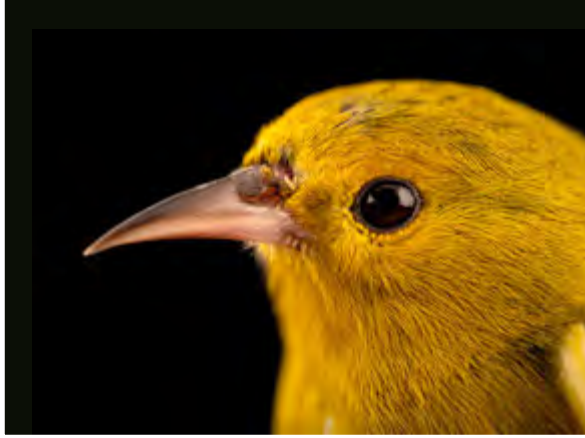
new species were photographed in 2024 for the National Geographic Photo Ark, bringing the project's total number of documented species to over 16,000.

8

Explorers from five countries participated in an immersive WonderLab workshop led by Explorer Anand Varma, receiving instruction and guidance in science storytelling techniques to help illuminate our planet's biodiversity.

3

Explorers were supported by the Society's Wildlife Intelligence Project in 2024, conducting research into animal cognition and behavior in dolphins, capuchin monkeys and bees.



“ I support the National Geographic Photo Ark because I know powerful photography has the power to inspire people to take action. Joel Sartore’s portraits are helping people learn about the wonderful diversity of life on Earth and inspiring them to help save it.

CAROLINE GABEL

Hubbard Council Member
Alexander Graham Bell Legacy Society Member

Photo Ark

Now in its 18th year, the National Geographic Photo Ark, led by Explorer Joel Sartore, continues to build one of the most comprehensive visual records of life on Earth. In 2024, Sartore traveled to eight countries and 15 U.S. states, photographing 1,190 new species for the collection, bringing the total to over 16,000 documented species.

The addition of the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander, a critically endangered amphibian with a tiny 15-mile habitat range in California, marked the Photo Ark’s 16,000th species. Its inclusion underscores the program’s mission to raise awareness about at-risk species and inspire conservation action.

Beyond photography, Sartore’s work received recognition in the scientific community when a new beetle species, *Bothynus sartorei*, was named in his honor. This connection between storytelling and discovery highlights the ongoing impact of the Photo Ark on science and conservation.

In December 2024, the second recipient of the Photo Ark Species Impact Initiative grant was named. National Geographic Explorer David Sischo’s Snail Ark project focuses on the conservation of three critically endangered snail species endemic to the island of Oahu, Hawaii. These rare snails, once integral to Hawaiian ecosystems and culture, have suffered immense declines due to invasive predators and habitat loss. The project combines captive breeding efforts and

the installation of predator-proof enclosures in Oahu’s remote mountains to provide safe habitats for reintroducing these delicate species to the wild.

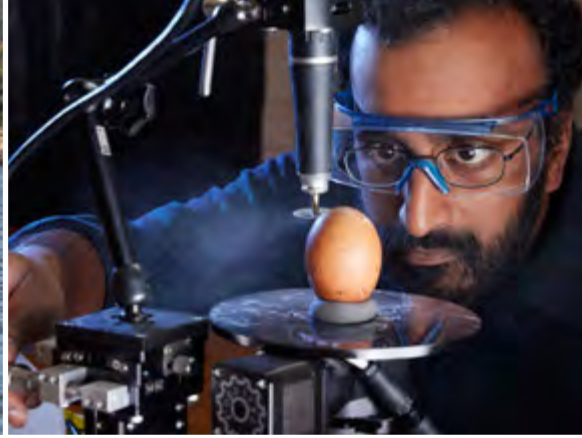
By highlighting the unique beauty of all species, big and small, common and rare, and partnering with scientists to implement impactful conservation initiatives, the Photo Ark continues to illuminate the urgent need to protect biodiversity around the globe.

Wildlife Intelligence Project

Launched in early 2024, the Wildlife Intelligence Project supports three National Geographic Explorers in their groundbreaking research into animal behavior and cognition. Inspired by Dr. Jane Goodall and The Templeton Prize and funded through support from the Templeton World Charity Foundation, the initiative seeks to deepen our understanding of animal minds and their complex relationships with their environments.

The project features three innovative researchers. Mauricio Cantor focuses on cooperative behavior between dolphins and humans in Brazil, India and Myanmar. By studying fishing communities where this rare interaction persists, Cantor explores the ecological conditions that have shaped human-dolphin cooperation. Tiago Falótico, a primatologist, investigates tool use among wild capuchin monkeys in Brazil’s Serra da Capivara and Ubajara National Parks. His work

A Santa Cruz long-toed salamander at the Southwest Fisheries Science Center in Santa Cruz, CA, USA. An 'Anianiau at the Maui Bird Conservation Center in Makawao, HI, USA. A juvenile capuchin monkey in Brazil.



dives into primate cognition and cultural behaviors, contributing insights into the evolution of tool use. Felicity Muth's research centers on wild bees in rural Nevada and California, examining how ecology influences learning and decision-making processes.

The initiative also equips the scientists with tools and support from the National Geographic Exploration Technology Lab, enabling them to collect and analyze data in innovative ways.

The Wildlife Intelligence Project exemplifies the power of research to foster empathy and understanding of the natural world. By uncovering the cognitive and social intricacies of species as diverse as bees, monkeys and dolphins, the project illuminates the interconnectedness of life on Earth.

WonderLab

Led by National Geographic Explorer and photographer Anand Varma, the WonderLab project pushes the boundaries of storytelling and science through visual exploration. In 2024, WonderLab challenged audiences to experience the natural world in new ways, fostering a sense of curiosity and awe.

In March, Varma's WonderLab was featured in an episode of "Photographer," a documentary series on the National Geographic channel. Viewers went behind the scenes to explore his innovative approach to capturing phenomena that often go unnoticed, including the transformation of an

egg into a baby chick. The episode highlighted his ability to connect science with art, using photography to make the invisible, visible.

Education and mentorship played a central role in WonderLab's efforts. In 2024, the project hosted two major workshops. The first convened educators at WonderLab's headquarters in California to engage with instructive photography and "slow looking" techniques to inspire their students. Another workshop welcomed eight Explorers from the National Geographic Second Assistant program, providing professional development and guidance on lighting, storytelling and science-based photography skills.

WonderLab also hosted three field trips for students and educators from local schools, offering young learners a close look at Varma's work and encouraging them to explore science through a creative lens. By combining cutting-edge photography with education and mentorship, WonderLab continues to uncover the hidden beauty of our world while inspiring future explorers to experience the wonders that surround us.

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

Wild Shaale

The Wild Shaale program, now celebrating its sixth year, continues to bridge the gap between rural communities and nature in India's Western Ghats.

Designed for children ages 10-13 living near wildlife reserves, this conservation and education initiative, created by National Geographic Explorers Krithi Karanth and Gabby Salazar, has seen remarkable growth since its inception in 2018. As of August 2024, Wild Shaale had reached over 1,000 schools and impacted more than 50,000 students.

The program fosters positive attitudes toward nature by offering engaging lessons on local wildlife and safe human-animal interactions, creating a ripple effect of environmental stewardship among young learners. A recent study published in Conservation Science and Practice highlighted the program's effectiveness, noting improvements in students' environmental knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. With a low cost per student to implement, Wild Shaale's curriculum offers a scalable model for environmental education worldwide.

The program shows the value of cross-disciplinary collaboration between Explorers to boost impact, harnessing the expertise of Karanth, a conservation scientist, and Salazar, a photographer and social scientist, to enrich the educational experience and conservation outcomes. By nurturing environmental consciousness in the next generation, Wild Shaale contributes to a future where people and nature thrive in harmony.

A dolphin swims in Laguna, Brazil. Explorer Anand Varma uses a micromotor with diamond-tipped cutting wheel to cut a precise window into a chicken egg. School students play an elephant foraging game in Bharathawadi, India.

A photograph of two explorers in a cave. They are wearing headlamps and are crouching on the ground. The cave walls are made of layered rock. The lighting is dim, with the primary light source being the headlamps.

FOCUS AREA:
**HUMAN HISTORIES
AND CULTURES**

National Geographic Explorers work to illuminate the rich tapestry of human histories and cultures, uncovering stories that deepen our understanding of humanity and connect people across time and place. Thanks to generous support from our donors, these trailblazing individuals employ innovative research methods and creative storytelling to celebrate human experiences.

This page: Samuel Nkwe and Teaghan Stoop emerge from a small passage in Rising Star Cave in the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage site near Krugersdorp, South Africa. Opposite page: Explorer Paul Salopek, his walking partner Lee Jun-seok and guide Kim Gwi-nam at the first gate of Joryeong Path in Mungyeong Saejae Provincial Park, South Korea.



AT A GLANCE

6,700

kilometers were traversed by Explorer Paul Salopek as part of the Out of Eden Walk in 2024, producing 44 text stories, 18,971 videos and images, and 13 multimedia dispatches.

500

young people and over 100 educators across 12 U.S. communities participated in the 2892 Miles to Go program's 2024 workshops, mapping activities and storytelling sessions.

2

key excavation sites in South Africa's Cradle of Humankind World Heritage site yielded significant anthropological discoveries for the Rising Star program in 2024.



“ It is easy to travel by airplane to explore new destinations, but we miss the people and stories in our rush to explore. Paul Salopek’s journey to walk around the world invites us to connect to global issues through the very personal, relatable stories of the people he meets and walks with. Paul reminds us that despite our many differences, we are all connected. We share the same problems, preoccupations and aspirations. It’s an honor to support his work and the work of the Society, to help people understand our shared humanity.

CHRIS KIPLE
Hubbard Council Member

Out of Eden Walk

In 2024, National Geographic Explorer Paul Salopek’s multiyear experiment in “slow journalism,” a project known as the Out of Eden Walk, continued its remarkable journey, documenting humanity’s shared stories along the ancient walking pathways of human migration. This year, Salopek completed his historic trek across China and South Korea, offering readers a window into the landscapes, cultures and histories of these regions.

After walking 6,700 kilometers across China, a journey equivalent to the distance from Chicago to Paris, Salopek produced a wealth of content, including 44 text stories, 18,971 videos and still images and 13 multimedia dispatches created in collaboration with local partners. His storytelling provides nuanced insights into China’s vast and diverse terrain, including often overlooked regions. A highlight of this phase was Salopek’s retracing of Mao Zedong’s historic Long March, a journey that was featured in the September 2024 issue of National Geographic magazine.

The Out of Eden Walk also journeyed across South Korea, where Salopek traversed the country over the course of three months. He published 11 dispatches from the road, which explored themes of identity, heritage and rapid modernization. Each step reveals a delicate balance between history and progress, offering readers a unique perspective on the Korean Peninsula.

Salopek’s work reached new audiences in

2024 through a media partnership with The World (GBH Boston Public Radio). Biweekly interviews with Salopek aired on radio and were accompanied by digital features, allowing listeners to follow his journey and engage with the people and stories he encounters.

Through Salopek’s immersive, slow-paced reporting, the Out of Eden Walk continues to weave a global narrative that connects distant places and cultures, reminding us of our collective humanity in an increasingly fragmented world.

Preserving Legacies

The Preserving Legacies program, led by National Geographic Explorer Victoria Herrmann, continues to expand its work to safeguard cultural heritage sites threatened by climate change. Through collaborations with local communities, the initiative is equipping people around the world with crucial skills and knowledge to assess risks, develop solutions and preserve the stories embedded in these iconic places.

In 2024, the program expanded its reach to 12 new sites across 13 countries, spanning landscapes as diverse as the Himalayas, the Pantanal and the coast of Ireland. At each site, Preserving Legacies trained a network of 30 local leaders in climate knowledge, risk assessment and community-driven adaptation strategies. This effort ensures that communities worldwide will be

Explorer Paul Salopek and Lee Jun-seok walk toward Gyogwijeong, a restored pavilion, in Saejae Provincial Park, South Korea. Explorer Victoria Herrmann climbs a set of stairs in the rice terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras. Students walk across a tree trunk as part of a 2892 Miles to Go project in California’s Sequoia National Park.



able and ready to take action to protect their heritage from the impacts of climate change.

Two sites – Petra in Jordan and the Ifugao Rice Terraces in the Philippines – advanced from risk assessment to on-the-ground solutions. In Petra, the program supported the creation of a detailed mapping and action plan to restore the ancient Nabatean water management system, a critical feature of the UNESCO World Heritage site. In Ifugao, the program worked with local partners to integrate traditional knowledge into national climate policy, ensuring that the rice terraces continue to thrive as a living cultural landscape.

In addition to site-specific work, Preserving Legacies launched the Heritage Adapts to Climate Alliance (HACA), a coalition uniting heritage professionals, policymakers and practitioners to engage in the UN Global Goal on Adaptation process. By amplifying collective action, HACA aims to position cultural heritage as a cornerstone of climate resilience.

Through locally led solutions, global collaboration and targeted advocacy, Preserving Legacies demonstrates that cultural heritage can serve as both a witness to climate change and a resource for adapting to its impacts.

Rising Star

Led by National Geographic Explorer in Residence Lee Berger, with critical support from Lyda Hill Philanthropies, the Rising Star program continues to revolutionize paleoanthropology through its groundbreaking discoveries and innovative approaches. Based in South Africa's Cradle of Humankind World Heritage site, the program integrates year-round excavation and research with public engagement and education, creating a dynamic hub for the study of human origins.

In 2024, the team broke new ground with excavations at the Malapa site, where Berger first discovered *Australopithecus sediba* in 2008. Concurrently, research at the Rising Star cave system advanced our understanding of *Homo naledi*, an extinct hominin species. Recent findings include evidence of hearths and tools, potentially linked to *Homo naledi*, which could reshape scientific theories about the use of fire and cultural behaviors in non-*Homo sapiens* species.

The program also stands out for its commitment to inclusivity and innovation. It is among the first paleoanthropology initiatives to incorporate artists, educators and storytellers into its work, fostering fresh perspectives on ancient hominins. Additionally, Rising Star prioritizes local leadership, with African researchers leading numerous projects and mentoring the next generation of scientists.

To deepen its impact, Rising Star engages global audiences through collaborations with media and educational platforms. Upcoming projects include the release of the first comprehensive map of the Rising Star cave system and continued exploration of Site 105, which may yield a new hominin species. These efforts ensure that the program remains at the forefront of scientific discovery and public outreach.

With a steady stream of research and an emphasis on collaboration and storytelling, Rising Star not only uncovers ancient history but also redefines how it is shared with the world.

2892 Miles to Go

2892 Miles to Go, led by National Geographic Explorer Ashley Lamb-Sinclair, is a place-based education program that connects young people with educators and other leaders to co-create solutions to address environmental, social and cultural issues impacting their communities. By developing a more inclusive understanding of our

past histories of resilience and innovation, the program fosters a deeper understanding of the past to inspire action for a better future.

Through additional funding afforded by Society-managed state endowments, 2892 Miles to Go expanded its reach to 12 communities across the United States, extending the program's total impact to 500 young people and over 100 educators. Through workshops, mapping activities and storytelling sessions, participants explored local histories, co-created solutions, developed leadership skills and built connections within their communities. The program embraced collaborations with Explorers, including Alicia Odewale, Kristi Williams and Brittney Beck, and partnered with the National Geographic Photo Camp program in Colorado. Through this partnership, 20 members of the Young African American and Latinx Leaders student group from Denver Public Schools had the opportunity to document their community's stories through photography, writing and geospatial mapping. These young people went on to develop and share solutions to issues that mattered to them and their communities.

2892 Miles to Go's innovative approach to using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to bring untold stories to life was recognized at the 2024 Esri User Conference with the Special Achievement in GIS Award. Esri also collaborated with program leaders to host a "Mapping a New Path: Women of Color in GIS" panel discussion event in November 2024, which showcased the potential of geospatial tools to amplify underrepresented voices.

2892 Miles to Go equips young people to lead positive change in their communities by starting with place – where we live, who we live alongside, and how understanding our shared history helps us create better solutions for the future. By 2031, the program hopes to co-create and catalyze impact with 28 new communities.

An aerial photograph showing a river winding through a lush, green forest. The river is surrounded by dense vegetation and rocky banks. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a clear blue sky.

FOCUS AREA:

PLANETARY HEALTH

National Geographic Explorers investigate the intricate connections between human well-being and the environment through innovative research, compelling storytelling and community engagement. These Explorer-led initiatives address critical environmental challenges, fostering solutions that benefit humanity and the planet. Their vital work is made possible by the generous support of our donors and funding partners who enable us to safeguard Earth's future.



AT A GLANCE

30%

reduction in infectious diseases and parasites among mountain gorillas, livestock and communities near Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is the goal of Explorer Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka's Model Households program.

30

years of battery-powered Safa Tempos have been supported through the Bijuli Power financing program, which empowers micro-entrepreneurs, particularly women, to maintain and upgrade electric vehicles for sustainable urban transport.

1

photograph by Explorer Davide Monteleone, depicting a renewable synthetic fuel created from sunlight, water and carbon dioxide, was featured in National Geographic magazine's "Pictures of the Year" issue alongside the work of other Explorers.



“ With support from the National Geographic Society and its generous donors, we’re working to bridge the financing gap for women entrepreneurs to help them grow the green transportation economy in Nepal and make a difference for our country and the planet. Thank you for supporting Explorers like me who are working to create a fair and sustainable future.

SONIKA MANANDHAR
National Geographic Explorer

Conserving Gorillas Through Model Households

National Geographic Explorer and wildlife veterinarian Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka works to protect endangered mountain gorillas by improving the health and livelihoods of the communities surrounding Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP) in Uganda.

The Model Households project stems from Kalema-Zikusoka’s work addressing a fatal scabies outbreak in Bwindi’s gorilla population, which was traced back to human contact. Recognizing the interconnectedness of human, wildlife and environmental health, Kalema-Zikusoka and her team at the Conservation Through Public Health (CTPH) organization launched the Model Household program using a “One Health” approach to reduce disease transmission between people, livestock and gorillas.

In 2024, the program reached thousands of households with resources to improve hygiene, sanitation, family planning, nutrition and sustainable agriculture practices. This holistic approach empowers communities to adopt healthier behaviors while reducing harmful human activity in gorilla habitats. Key outcomes include reduced intestinal parasites in gorillas, cleaner water sources and expanded use of pit latrines, which collectively lower the risk of cross-species disease transmission.

The program also monitors mountain gorilla health through regular assessments, providing crucial data on the impacts of human behavior on gorilla populations. By 2026, the team aims to see a 30% reduction in infectious diseases and parasites among gorillas, livestock and people living near BINP.

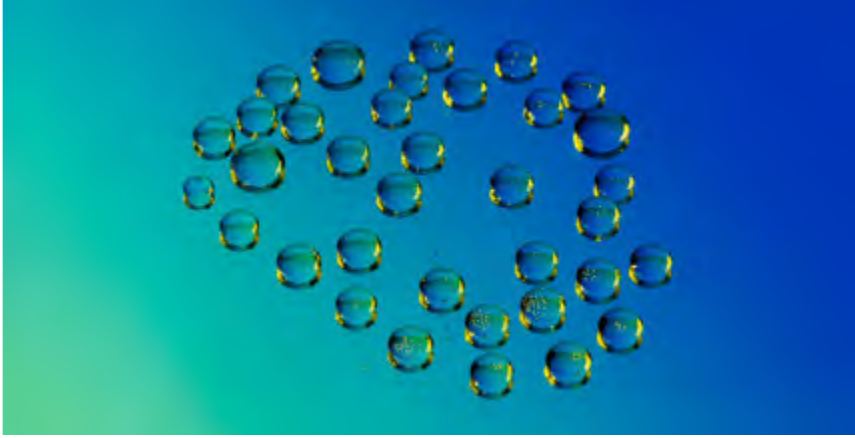
In addition to health initiatives, the program fosters inclusive conservation. CTPH works with marginalized groups, such as the Batwa Indigenous people and reformed poachers, ensuring that conservation efforts are equitable and community-driven. Kalema-Zikusoka amplifies local voices and promotes shared stewardship of natural resources.

Through her project, Kalema-Zikusoka works to demonstrate how human and wildlife health are deeply connected, creating a sustainable path forward for both communities and the endangered mountain gorilla.

Critical Minerals

Photographer and National Geographic Explorer Davide Monteleone’s project investigates the complex intersection of renewable energy and resource extraction. Through photography, storytelling and data visualization, his work highlights the geopolitical, social and environmental implications of the global demand for critical minerals like cobalt, lithium, nickel and copper.

Explorer and conservationist Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka interacts with pupils at the Buhoma Community Primary School in Kanungu District, Uganda. A gorilla chews on a bamboo stick in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, Uganda. A view of the Shabara artisanal copper and cobalt mine near Kolwezi, Democratic Republic of the Congo.



In 2024, Monteleone released an interactive StoryMap that visualizes the journey of critical minerals from extraction sites to global markets. The platform offers a comprehensive view of the supply chain, revealing the trade-offs and challenges associated with powering the energy transition. His work has been featured in international exhibitions and recognized for its impact, including being named a recipient of the prestigious Leica Oskar Barnack Award. His photos have also appeared in the 2023 and 2024 “Photos of the Year” special issues of National Geographic magazine.

Through compelling imagery and rigorous research, Monteleone’s work prompts crucial conversations about sustainability and accessibility in the pursuit of renewable energy. By bridging science and storytelling, the Critical Minerals project encourages audiences to consider the broader impacts of the resources shaping our future.

Monteleone’s project is supported by the National Geographic Global Storytellers Fund, a collaboration with The Climate Pledge that amplifies efforts to bring attention to pressing environmental issues. The Society thanks The Climate Pledge for its generous support of the National Geographic Global Storytellers Fund and the Critical Minerals project.

Bijuli Power

National Geographic Explorer and computer engineer Sonika Manandhar is revolutionizing Nepal’s transportation through her innovative initiative Bijuli Power. This fintech company provides accessible financing for electric vehicle mobility, targeting micro-entrepreneurs in Nepal’s informal sector. By facilitating affordable loans, Bijuli Power enables drivers to upgrade to or maintain electric vehicles, promoting sustainable urban transport and reducing air pollution.

Manandhar’s inspiration stems from her childhood experiences accompanying her father, a minibus driver in Kathmandu. Witnessing his journey from driver to co-owner of larger buses highlighted for her the pivotal role of finance in entrepreneurship and economic advancement. This realization motivated her to co-found Bijuli Power, aiming to bridge the financing gap for micro-entrepreneurs, particularly women, in the green energy sector.

A significant focus of Bijuli Power is supporting operators of Safa Tempos – battery-powered three-wheelers that have been providing public transportation in Kathmandu for around 30 years, with the majority owned and operated by women

Despite their environmental benefits, many Safa Tempo drivers face challenges in accessing the financing to maintain or upgrade their vehicles. Bijuli Power addresses this issue by facilitating bank loans for women micro-entrepreneurs and offering financial guidance for those who want to use these electric vehicles to earn a better livelihood, providing upskilling training and credit profile building through its technology platform. It is also harnessing emerging technologies to track carbon emissions and aims to attract voluntary carbon credits to the sector.

Through Bijuli Power, Manandhar is not only transforming Nepal’s public transportation system but also paving the way for a cleaner, greener future. Her commitment to combining technology with social impact serves as an inspiring model for sustainable development worldwide.

Made using sunlight, water and carbon dioxide, this solar synthetic fluid has the potential to replace fossil fuels. Explorer Sonika Manandhar.



FOCUS AREA:
SPACE

The National Geographic Society invests in innovative research, technology and storytelling that seeks to illuminate what lies beyond our planet. In 2024, the Society added Space as an official focus area, supporting groundbreaking Explorer-led projects, from better understanding the moon's surface to unraveling the ancient history of the cosmos. Our Explorers' work underscores the vital connection between exploration and responsibility.

This page: International Space Station view of Western Europe at night. Opposite page: Explorer Cynthia Chiang examines an ALBATROS (Array of Long Baseline Antennas for Taking Radio Observations from the Sub-antarctic/79th parallel) antenna in Quebec, Canada.



AT A GLANCE

~90%

of human-made objects in space are defunct, highlighting the critical need for Explorer Moriba Jah's work tracking orbital debris through tools like the Glint Evader app.

21cm

hydrogen signals from the universe's first billion years are being targeted by the PRIZM instrument deployed by Explorer Cynthia Chiang in remote and radio-quiet locations.

6

small satellites will make up Explorer Martin Wikelski's ICARUS satellite system, which will launch in 2025 and aim to monitor global animal movements over a five-year period.



Mapping the Lunar Surface

In 2024, geologist and National Geographic Explorer Cody Paige led trailblazing work in high-resolution 3D mapping of the moon's surface. By capturing data from terrestrial planetary analogs in Lanzarote, Spain, Paige tested advanced technologies for reconstructing lunar lava tubes. These technologies allow technologists to create detailed virtual environments, which will help expand access to the lunar surface to more scientists, train astronauts and enable audiences to experience the moon.

With additional support from the Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic (LEX-NG) Fund and Lindblad Expeditions, Paige also tested 3D scanning technologies in Antarctica as part of her "Capturing the Moon" project, which combines polar conditions with cutting-edge tools to simulate lunar exploration.

A Glimpse into the Cosmos

National Geographic Explorer and cosmologist Cynthia Chiang is dedicated to probing the universe's earliest epochs by detecting signals from the cosmic "dark ages" before the first stars illuminated the cosmos.

Chiang's work focuses on developing novel radio technology to peer into the universe's distant past, engineering and deploying custom radio telescopes in Earth's most remote and

radio-quiet locations, including the Canadian High Arctic and subantarctic regions. These environments are essential for minimizing noise, allowing the detection of the faintest cosmic signals. One installation on subantarctic Marion Island is home to the Probing Radio Intensity at high-Z from Marion (PRIZM) instrument, which seeks to pinpoint a 21-centimeter signal emitted by hydrogen during the universe's first billion years. Despite harsh weather and isolation, PRIZM has been collecting valuable data since 2018.

Chiang and her team are working to create a three-dimensional scan of the universe during its formative years, providing insights into how it evolved into the cosmos we inhabit today. Her research aims to transform our understanding of the universe's infancy and shed light on the factors that have influenced its growth and development.

Protecting the Night Skies

National Geographic Explorer and astrodynamist Moriba Jah is at the forefront of sustainable space exploration, addressing the growing issue of space debris. With 90% of human-made objects in space now defunct, Jah emphasizes the urgent need for collaborative solutions to manage orbital pollution. His work advocates for responsible stewardship of the space environment.

In 2024, Jah launched the Glint Evader app, a pioneering tool that predicts light reflections from

anthropogenic space objects. This application helps astronomers mitigate disruptions caused by satellite light pollution, ensuring clearer observations of the night sky. By integrating ancient wisdom with modern technology, Jah aims to safeguard the dark and quiet skies essential for both astronomical research and the well-being of Earth's ecosystems.

Satellites for Biodiversity

In 2024, National Geographic Explorer Martin Wikelski secured funding to complete the ICARUS satellite tracking system, a constellation of six small satellites, that will monitor the global movement of animal species. The ICARUS constellation will launch in 2025 and operate for five years, contributing valuable data to global animal tracking databases such as the Max Planck Institute of Animal Behavior's Movebank. Near real-time GPS and behavioral data on over 1,400 species are being recorded in these databases, which are used to support efforts to protect biodiversity, predict pandemics and enhance food security.

Explorer Cynthia Chiang examines ALBATROS readout electronics to record calibration data from a drone flight in Quebec, Canada. Moonrise view taken from the Khumbu Icefall during the National Geographic and Rolex Perpetual Planet Everest Expedition.



The sun rising over Earth from the International Space Station.

BEHIND THE YELLOW BORDER

In addition to a robust portfolio of Explorer-led work, the National Geographic Society invests in valuable programs that support our mission, inspire future leaders, equip Explorers with resources that enhance their impact, and help people learn about, care for and want to protect the planet.



A photographer dives off the coast of Limbe, Cameroon, to capture images of the underwater seascape as part of deploying the Society's Drop Camera system in collaboration with Explorer Aristide Takoukam Kamla.



Photo Camp Botswana students inspect their cameras at sunset.

INSPIRING THE CHANGEMAKERS OF TOMORROW

For nearly 40 years, National Geographic's education programs have brought the discoveries of Explorers into classrooms and communities, igniting a passion for protecting the planet. At the heart of this mission is fostering an Explorer Mindset in learners of all ages – the attitudes, skills and knowledge that fuel solutions to our planet's biggest challenges. In 2024 alone, over 24.9 million people accessed the Society's educational resources online, while nearly 17.4 million students engaged with Explorer-inspired books and media created through the Society's partnership with Cengage. This work amplifies the efforts of Explorers using local, community-based strategies to inspire tangible, lasting changes worldwide. With steadfast support from our community of partners and advocates across the globe, the National Geographic Society continues to cultivate the creativity and resilience of learners and leaders striving to protect Earth's wonders for generations to come.

A fifth-grade student participates in a school district-wide Bioblitz in Ohio.

AT A GLANCE

100,490

student engagements with National Geographic Explorer Classroom live virtual events in 2024, which showcased 35 Explorers across 66 sessions.

3,600

young people from 87 countries submitted 2,100 innovative solutions to pressing environmental issues as a part of the Society's Slingshot Challenge in 2024.

20

new Explorer-centered resources were added to EduHub in 2024, amplifying the impact of National Geographic Explorers and addressing topics such as environmental conservation, cultural heritage and scientific discovery.



Explorer Classroom

In 2024, Explorer Classroom continued to connect students around the world with National Geographic Explorers, fostering curiosity, critical thinking and a sense of global responsibility. Through live interactive broadcasts and on-demand content, the program reached thousands of students and educators, bringing the spirit of exploration to classrooms worldwide.

This year, Explorer Classroom hosted 66 virtual events featuring 35 Explorers. These sessions engaged over 100,000 live participants and garnered an additional 58,000 views of event recordings. Topics ranged from ocean conservation and wildlife protection to storytelling and cultural heritage, giving learners firsthand insights into the real-world impact of Explorers. Each Explorer featured receives personalized support in crafting their content and story, increasing their skills in communicating their work to young learners.

New initiatives and series expanded the program's depth and impact. The Explorer Classroom Storytelling Series, inspired by Explorers like Noel Kok, Pragna Parsotam-Kok and Paul Salopek, as well as Paul Salopek, encouraged students to uncover and share meaningful stories from their own communities. Meanwhile, the Ocean Expedition Series, co-developed with Pristine Seas and the Palau Ministry of Education, immersed students in marine ecosystems through live interactions with scientists conducting fieldwork. Notably, this series reached 40% of Palau's student population and provided educators with learning resources for future use. The popular Wildlife Series was offered again in the fall, seeing a 50% increase in registration – reaching 900 educators and their classrooms. These sessions inspired students with stories from Explorers doing groundbreaking wildlife research and conservation work while also encouraging students to take action for wildlife in their own communities. Through the program, 1,369 students created wildlife campaigns to address challenges wildlife face locally and globally, with

95% of participating educators reporting that their students now believe they have the skills and knowledge to take action for wildlife.

Explorer Classroom also supported Latin American students through a collaboration with Enseña por México. The program reached classrooms from underserved schools in Mexico, Peru and Colombia, supporting 45 teachers and engaging over 1,200 students. The program featured nine Explorers from across the region through live virtual events and guided classrooms to participate in interactive projects centered on environmental stewardship and plastics pollution.

By connecting students and global Explorers, Explorer Classroom not only ignites a passion for learning but also inspires young people to take action for their planet and communities.

Grosvenor Teacher Fellowship

Made possible through a collaboration between National Geographic and Lindblad Expeditions, the Grosvenor Teacher Fellowship (GTF) program connects educators with once-in-a-lifetime, firsthand exploration and field research experiences aboard a National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions vessel. These opportunities allow teachers to bring real-world lessons about geography, science and environmental stewardship into their classrooms.

Since the program's inception in 2006, 399 Grosvenor Teacher Fellows have been selected from 49 U.S. states and Puerto Rico, one Department of Defense Educational Activity school, and five Canadian provinces, representing a variety of grade levels, subject areas and school types. In 2024, 35 educators were selected for the new cohort. Participants attended a workshop in Washington, D.C., where they collaborated with Lindblad and National Geographic staff across multiple areas of impact, including science, storytelling and education. The workshop focused on integrating the Explorer Mindset into teaching

practices and provided tools to inspire discovery among their students.

The GTF program also distributed \$24,860 in seed funding to 13 alumni, supporting community outreach and student-driven action projects. These initiatives encouraged students to examine local environmental challenges and explore solutions. For example, one student project in Delaware partnered with local organizations to investigate oyster farming. The students toured an oyster hatchery at the University of Delaware and an aquaponics facility at Delaware State University. Then they developed an action plan and educational video to revitalize the oyster farming industry, gaining insights into sustainable aquaculture practices.

GTF alumni further collaborated with the Visiting Scientist Program, participating in field-based research alongside National Geographic Explorers. These experiences enriched their teaching practices, offering new ways to connect students with authentic scientific inquiry.

The Society thanks The Farlight Foundation and the Maxwell Hanrahan Foundation for their support of the Grosvenor Teacher Fellowship program.

“ After having an unforgettable experience traveling with National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions – visiting incredible places and realizing that we must do all we can to preserve them – we decided to support the Grosvenor Teacher Fellowship program. We love knowing that our contributions support educators and Explorers who are leading the way in empowering the next generation to protect our planet.

THE FARLIGHT FOUNDATION
Supporters of the Grosvenor Teacher Fellowship program

EduHub

EduHub, the National Geographic Society's dynamic online resource library, provides educators, learners and Explorers with free digital content designed to inspire curiosity and deepen understanding of our world. Through collections, videos, articles, interactive maps and lessons, EduHub bridges the gap between field research and classrooms, bringing Explorers' groundbreaking work directly to learning audiences.

In 2024, EduHub added 20 new Explorer-centered resources, amplifying the voices and stories of Explorers. These materials highlight critical topics, including environmental conservation, cultural heritage and the latest discoveries in science and exploration. The platform now hosts a diverse array of resources that encourage learners to think critically and act on behalf of their communities and the planet.

In alignment with the Society's commitment to inclusive practices, EduHub developed resources informed by a globally inclusive learning design framework. This framework helps guide the creation of accessible and culturally relevant educational content, addressing the needs of learning communities. Numerous reviews and updates of older resources to improve their adherence to this framework demonstrate the platform's dedication to continuous improvement.

EduHub also collaborated with the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education to create a National Geographic Society hub on the Open Educational Resources (OER) Commons platform. This effort supports the co-creation of OER, enhancing the platform's ability to share learning materials widely. EduHub plans to pilot its first round of resources co-created with educators and Explorers, laying the foundation for a robust library of expert user-driven content.

To increase engagement with Explorers and other National Geographic education programs, in 2024, the EduHub team began embedding instructional links to Explorer Classroom and the

Slingshot Challenge within EduHub resources. This integrated approach directed over 1,000 new users to these initiatives, not only expanding EduHub's reach but also fostering connections across National Geographic's education ecosystem.

Looking ahead, EduHub remains focused on making innovative learning solutions informed by the work of National Geographic Explorers accessible to classrooms and communities worldwide.

Externships

The Externship program, a collaboration between the National Geographic Society and The Nature Conservancy, provides young leaders ages 18-25 from across the globe with the knowledge, skills and tools to address environmental challenges through immersive learning and interactive projects. In 2024, the program engaged 400 externs from 88 countries, preparing them to tackle critical issues in freshwater and marine conservation through community-driven solutions while building their mapping and data visualization skills.

This year, with support from Esri, the program introduced a new Externship topic focused on community conservation and mapping for 100 externs. Participants explored data visualization techniques and developed innovative approaches to environmental challenges in their communities. The Externship program also received funding from The Coca-Cola Foundation, allowing us to reach youth in Atlanta and feature an in-person career development event showcasing local solutions to global conservation problems. These experiences helped participants strengthen their understanding of environmental degradation and develop actionable strategies to mitigate its impacts.

Extern alumni have continued to demonstrate the program's lasting influence. Since the program began in 2021, more than 160 alumni have received over \$330,000 in seed funding through the program to expand conservation work initiated during their

Externships. Projects have included addressing freshwater scarcity, reforesting degraded lands and implementing community-based awareness campaigns. Externs have received awards and fellowships to continue building on their work. In 2024, alumni Abdul Na-eem Muniru, Arghadeep Das and Forbah Sandra Ngwemetoh were named National Geographic Young Explorers, and alumni Astrid Peraza Juárez and Seth Aqui were awarded the Planet Reimagined New Futures Fellowship, which was sponsored by the Society.

The program's focus on skills development, career readiness and mentorship uniquely equips participants to drive change locally and globally. Through a 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.

Photo Camp

Photo Camp, led by National Geographic Explorer in Residence Kirsten Elstner, inspires young people worldwide by teaching them to tell stories through photography. In 2024, the program held 13 camps in seven countries, providing opportunities for participants to explore their communities and share their unique perspectives.

This year, Photo Camp collaborated with the National Geographic Education division and regional partners to host six camps throughout the United States, including in Tennessee, Colorado, Wyoming and Washington, D.C. Participants in these camps received world-class instruction and personal support from numerous Explorers, including Erika Larsen, Obayomi Anthony, Sofia Jaramillo, George McKenzie Jr., Victor Zea, Shireen Rahimi, Kiki Cheptoo Ng'ok, Hannah Yoon, Nova West and more.

Explorers such as Víctor Zea and other Explorers like Tailyr Irvine, Nick St. Oegger, Dominic Bracco and Florence Goupil led additional Photo Camps



Photo Camp Angola students capture photos on a game drive in a safari in Kissama National Park, Angola.

in locations like Washington state, Peru and Northern Ireland, while a collaboration with the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation focused on freshwater access across West Africa made a Photo Camp in Ghana possible.

In a special two-part series, Photo Camp collaborated with the Okavango Wilderness Project and the Wild Bird Trust to host camps in Botswana and Angola. Participants captured images highlighting the region's cultural heritage and the importance of conservation. These sessions were particularly impactful in Angola, where the program introduced many young people to National Geographic for the first time and garnered significant local media attention.

In October, Photo Camp launched an exhibit titled "My Community Means Home" at the National Museum of Wildlife Art in Jackson, Wyoming. The exhibit featured photographs and writings from Photo Camp students near Wyoming's Wind River Reservation, bringing their stories to a broader audience.

Photo Camp also reached a milestone on social media, growing its Instagram audience to over 70,000 followers. By sharing and elevating students' work online, the program amplifies their voices and brings attention to pressing global issues through the perspectives of the next generation.

Slingshot Challenge

Since the Slingshot Challenge launched in 2022 with support from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, the program has encouraged young people ages 13-18 around the world to develop innovative solutions to critical environmental issues in their communities. In 2024, the challenge received over 2,100 submissions from nearly 3,600 young people across 87 countries, showcasing

creative ideas for tackling climate change, conservation and sustainability challenges.

This year's award recipients, whose proposed solutions included an app to minimize household food waste, a tree-planting robot, and programs to save a rare bird and bees, prove that the Explorer Mindset is alive and well in the next generation of changemakers. Five submissions received the Top Honors Award, standing out for the students' inquisitive drive to seek knowledge and think critically. Award recipients receive support to further develop their ideas, with many gaining national and international recognition. Notably, 2023 Slingshot Challenge Award recipient Soren Goldsmith, whose project highlighted New England's urban ecosystems, was named a 2024 National Geographic Young Explorer.

Surveys revealed that youth who participated in the challenge experienced growth in their problem-solving skills and confidence in addressing environmental issues. Participants expressed a deeper belief in their ability to make a difference, with many developing community-driven campaigns to support their ideas. To expand this impact, the Society's Education division worked with local organizations to help remove barriers to participation in the Slingshot Challenge for young people from historically and currently under-resourced communities in the United States and Canada.

The Slingshot Challenge also gained visibility at the 2024 Earthshot Prize in Cape Town, South Africa, where alumni participated in a workshop aimed at equipping local youth with the skills and knowledge to tackle sustainability challenges.

In addition to the critical support of the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, the Society is grateful to The Gaia Earth Initiative and T. J. Stern for their commitment to the Slingshot Challenge and the changemakers of tomorrow.



It's rewarding to see that young people do care about the planet. They will have to solve the problems their predecessors unwittingly created. By supporting the Slingshot Challenge, I am putting my hope in the next generation to be the problem solvers and planetary stewards we need, to create a brighter future for all.

T. J. STERN

Hubbard Council Member

Alexander Graham Bell Legacy Society Member



Students participate in a Slingshot Challenge youth workshop during Earthshot Week in Cape Town, South Africa.

EQUIPPING EXPLORERS TO GO FURTHER

The unwavering commitment of supporters like you has enabled the National Geographic Society to push the boundaries of exploration, discovery and impact. In 2024, your contributions made it possible to equip our global community of Explorers with the skills, tools and resources they need to tackle some of the most pressing challenges of our time. Through Society-led programs that provide access to state-of-the-art technology, specialized training, expert mentorship and vital resources to facilitate collaboration, we help Explorers transform innovative ideas into tangible solutions and expand their impact beyond what an individual can achieve alone.

The Society's Impact Story Lab films Explorer Anand Varma analyzing images of a photographic egg fertilization experiment.

AT A GLANCE

14,000

learners worldwide accessed SOLA_x, the online academy launched by EduLab and Explorer Shabana Basij-Rasikh in 2024, providing microlearning opportunities through WhatsApp for Afghan girls and young women.

600+

Explorers were supported by the Exploration Technology Lab in 2024, including 200 who received access to advanced tools such as 360-degree VR cameras and media traps.

15

Explorers and 30 educators from 16 countries collaborated through the Explorer-Educator Exchange program in 2024 to co-create innovative learning solutions addressing topics like environmental challenges and cultural heritage.



EduLab

EduLab, the National Geographic Society Education division’s learning incubator, serves as a hub for developing and testing innovative educational solutions in collaboration with National Geographic Explorers. In 2024, the program focused on developing its approach to globally inclusive learning design, emphasizing learner-centered approaches to create impactful educational resources and programs.

The methodology was developed with coaching from Explorer Ariam Mogos, integrating elements from frameworks such as participatory design and community-based design to create something unique to National Geographic’s education offerings. This work informed the development of new tools and workshops designed to support learning initiatives and allowed EduLab to support the creation of new and impactful learning solutions. A key success was prototype development and support of the launch of SOLAx, an online academy developed with 2023 Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year Shabana Basij-Rasikh, founder of the School of Leadership Afghanistan (SOLA). SOLAx uses microlearning strategies to deliver education via WhatsApp, ensuring Afghan girls and young women have access to learning opportunities despite restrictive conditions. Within six months, SOLAx reached over 14,000 learners in Afghanistan and worldwide.

EduLab also supported a range of other Explorer-led and Society-wide projects, including new learning models for programs like WonderLab, Photo Ark and Explorer Classroom, as well as collaborations with MIT Media Lab and Society partners such as Cengage and Esri to produce innovative mapping modules. Additionally, EduLab supported four new project maps developed and published in MapMaker, including two new versions of the World Water Map, a map depicting

the Perpetual Planet Mount Logan Expedition, and one new map illustrating the Florida Wildlife Corridor. These efforts highlighted EduLab’s ability to bridge field-based research and community learning, creating tools that resonate across a range of educational settings.

Through its inclusive methodology and commitment to Explorer-led innovation, EduLab continues to create pathways for education that inspire learners to engage deeply with science, exploration and storytelling.

Impact Story Lab

The National Geographic Impact Story Lab merges world-class storytelling with social and behavioral science, driving meaningful change. As a creative hub within the National Geographic Society, the Lab collaborates with Explorers and staff to produce impactful media experiences that amplify important work and inspire global audiences.

The Impact Story Lab supports Explorers through custom storytelling projects tailored to their initiatives. Explorers with active grants or programs can apply for the Lab’s expertise, from producing documentaries and VR experiences to digital campaigns. Notably, all of the Society’s signature programs receive dedicated Lab involvement, ensuring strategic storytelling support for high-impact initiatives. In 2024, the Impact Story Lab produced 63 media products, reached more than 7,000 people through targeted screenings and earned 30 notable awards.

Beyond production, the Lab’s research division advances the field of impact media by developing methods to evaluate how storytelling drives change. Collaborations with leading academics and experts yield research

published in scientific journals and shared at industry events like the Media Impact Forum.

The Lab’s impact is evident in standout productions that elevate Explorers and programs. Notable examples include the widely celebrated “Nkashi: Race for the Okavango” film, created in collaboration with the Okavango Wilderness Project; a short film and audio series entitled “To Someone Like Me,” produced in collaboration with Explorer Shabana Basij-Rasikh to raise global awareness of the challenges faced by Afghan girls and women under Taliban rule; and “I Wonder,” an educational video series that follows Explorer Anand Varma on his journey to document the life cycle of cephalopods.

The Society thanks Focused on Nature, Chris and Lauren Renaud, Shari Sant, David Evans Shaw, Kris Tompkins, Union Alliance and the Impact Story Lab Advisory Council for supporting inspiring and impactful storytelling that spurs people to take action for our planet.



Stories have the power to change minds and inspire action. The Society’s Impact Story Lab is helping to drive positive change for the planet by amplifying the voices and stories of National Geographic Explorers who are on the front lines of conservation and changemaking. It is incredibly gratifying to be a part of that work.

CHRIS AND LAUREN RENAUD
Hubbard Council Members

“National Geographic Explorers are doing critically important work to study our oceans and the species that inhabit them. It’s rewarding to know that our support for the Exploration Technology Lab directly supports Explorers in the field like David Gruber and others who are deepening our knowledge of marine ecosystems so we can preserve and protect them.

**LAUREN HANNAN SHAFER
AND TOM SHAFER**

Hubbard Council Members
Alexander Graham Bell Legacy
Society Members

Exploration Technology Lab

The Exploration Technology Lab connects National Geographic Explorers with advanced tools and support to enhance their research, storytelling and conservation efforts. In 2024, the Lab served over 600 Explorers across 11 signature programs.

In 2024, the Exploration Technology Lab introduced a new marine Crittercam, an upgraded system designed to capture video and audio data from marine wildlife. The system, piloted on humpback whales in Monterey Bay, California, with Explorer Ari Friedlander, aims to provide Explorers with new insights into underwater behavior. Additionally, custom Deep Sea Camera Systems were deployed in collaboration with five ocean-focused Explorers, documenting life forms and environments up to 3,500 meters below the surface.

To support visual storytelling, the Lab provided over 200 Explorers access to advanced equipment, including 360-degree VR cameras and media traps, while also hosting tutorials on leveraging storytelling technologies. These tools enabled Explorers to bring their work to life and engage audiences in new, immersive ways.

The Lab also played a critical role in supporting scientific projects. In Dominica, the Lab collaborated with Project CETI, deploying a custom baited remote underwater video system (BRUVS) and the Lab’s Deep Sea Camera System to study sperm whale prey. The Lab’s contributions extended to Pristine Seas expeditions in Palau, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, facilitating research in some of the ocean’s least-explored regions.

Thanks to invaluable support from Iridium and other donors, the Lab continues to combine engineering innovation with hands-on support to push the boundaries of exploration and equip Explorers with the resources to better understand and protect our planet.

Explorer-Educator Exchange

The Explorer-Educator Exchange program facilitates meaningful collaborations between National Geographic Explorers and innovative educators to co-create unique learning solutions that bring the Explorer Mindset into communities and classrooms worldwide.

Relaunched in 2024, the program supports 15 Explorers and 30 educators from 16 countries who collaborate to design learning solutions tailored to their unique contexts. The resulting projects range from addressing environmental challenges to exploring cultural heritage through interactive and participatory methods.

Explorer Santiago Ramirez Said, based in Colombia, and educator Daniel Kinzer from Hawaii are collaborating with Mexico City-based educator Rosangela Viera to gamify learning about sargassum blooms. Their project encourages students to empathize with affected communities and design creative solutions.

Explorer Sugandhi Gadadhar partnered with educator Allison Amavisca to create an immersive educational field experience for university students in India with skills to study smooth-coated otters along the Cauvery and Kabini Rivers to aid in conservation monitoring. Together with educator Helen Taylor, they also led a workshop for wildlife and social science specialists around the globe focused on approaches to mitigating local human-wildlife conflict.

As part of the program redesign, these teams were provided with professional learning and virtual community-building opportunities to help foster innovative ideas, as well as increased staff support and stipends to ensure successful partnerships. The Esri StoryMaps platform was also integrated to help teams share their work with broader audiences, amplifying the reach of their efforts.

Through these projects, the Explorer-Educator Exchange demonstrates the power of collaboration in fostering innovative educational experiences for learners and communities worldwide



An oceanic manta ray outfitted with the Exploration Technology Lab's animal-borne camera system is seen off the coast of Mexico's San Benedicto Island.



Explorers at a collaboration workshop are pictured with the Society's flag in Boulder, CO, USA.



Field Ready

The National Geographic Field Ready program supports early-career visual storytellers in advancing their careers and increasing the perspectives behind the lens of natural history, science, adventure and exploration filmmaking. Field Ready participants are all National Geographic Explorers with experience and talent in photography or film. Through the program, they are matched up with a single mentor for direction and advice on their career trajectory, as well as specific storytelling projects.

The 2024 National Geographic Field Ready cohort featured nine early-career storytellers from five countries: India, Mexico, Peru, South Africa and the United States. This group of emerging filmmakers and photographers reflects the program's commitment to fostering a media landscape that is authentic and impactful. Among the cohort are creators working on stories that address critical global issues such as climate change, cultural heritage and human-wildlife interactions.

Guided by Explorers and seasoned media professionals, each mentee receives personalized instruction in areas such as visual storytelling, ethical journalism and effective project development. The program also provides opportunities to connect with a global network of peers and mentors, fostering a collaborative environment that encourages creative exchange.

Benefiting from a partnership with National Geographic Content, the program has been widely successful, with storytellers from 19 countries focused on filmmaking having completed the program to date and 60% of alumni currently working on National

Geographic productions around the globe.

By highlighting the stories and talents of this year's cohort, the Field Ready program continues to build a foundation for a variety of voices to thrive in the media landscape. The 2024 mentees are poised to make an impact, bringing fresh perspectives to the forefront of global storytelling.

Storytellers Collective

Storytellers Collective, a revenue-generating unit of the National Geographic Society, grew significantly in 2024 by empowering impact-driven leaders and organizations to create stories that inspire positive change. By equipping participants with research-backed storytelling tools and techniques, the Collective aims to amplify the impact of their missions through narratives that resonate globally.

In 2024, the program's first marketing campaign led to a significant increase in bookings and revenue. Expanding its reach internationally, Storytellers Collective established partnerships in Asia and collaborated with top-tier clients across sectors, including Nike, the Cleveland Clinic and Google. With a strong commitment to quality, the program achieved an 80% satisfaction rate among participants.

A notable highlight of the year was the inaugural National Geographic Society regional Explorer workshop held in Shanghai, delivered entirely in Mandarin by expert workshop leaders. Additionally, a workshop in Spanish was conducted for Latin American Explorers presenting Spotlight sessions at the Society's International Explorers Festival in Lima, Peru. These initiatives not only fostered cross-cultural engagement but also generated

\$250,000 in additional funding for Explorers who contributed as workshop trainers, subject matter experts and developers. The Collective secured three multiyear partnerships in Asia, creating a sustainable ecosystem that boosts revenue, diversifies audiences and enhances creative networks. Collaborations with The Swire Trust (Hong Kong), The Mind Museum (Manila) and CASEAN with the Sustainability Expo (Bangkok) advanced the Collective's reach and influence.

NEW WORKSHOPS

Storytellers Collective launched a new workshop content development process that includes deeper consultation with Explorers, internal partners and outside experts, with particular attention to incorporating global perspectives. New curricula for one- and three-day workshops in 2025 include:

- Storytelling for Impact
- Social Media Storytelling
- Visual Storytelling
- Digital Storytelling with StoryMaps
- Immersive Storytelling
- Science Storytelling
- Filmmaking
- Data Storytelling

The Society is grateful to Lyda Hill Philanthropies for its support of Storytellers Collective. Through its generosity, we are giving global leaders in science the tools to create compelling content that inspires action for the planet.

ENGAGING GLOBAL AUDIENCES

Bringing people together is essential to amplifying the National Geographic Society's mission to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world. In 2024, the National Geographic Society held several convenings, bringing together some of the world's most brilliant minds and attracting international audiences to celebrate the power of exploration. By fostering connections within the Society's global community, we create opportunities to share ideas, inspire action and strengthen our ability to tackle the world's most pressing challenges together.



This page: Explorer and photographer Thomas Peschak presents at the 2024 International Explorers Festival in Lima, Peru. Opposite page: Explorer and photographer Jaime Rojo presents at the 2024 Storytellers Summit in Los Angeles, CA, USA.



AT A GLANCE

4.7M

people experienced one of National Geographic's 18 traveling exhibitions in 2024, hosted in 20 countries around the world.

85,000

audience members and 21,000 students attended a National Geographic Live public performance or student matinee event in 2024.

2,000+

virtual and in-person attendees participated in the National Geographic Society's 2024 Explorers Festival and International Explorers Festival, presented in partnership with Rolex.

SIGNATURE EVENTS

In 2024, the National Geographic Society's signature events brought together changemakers from around the world. With renovations underway for Base Camp, the National Geographic Explorers Festival and Storytellers Summit were hosted away from campus but still maintained their rich tradition of connecting Explorers and trailblazers to exchange bold ideas, share stories of their incredible discoveries and inspire wonder in us all. As an organization founded on exploration, the Society maintains our global commitment to bringing innovative thinkers together to illuminate the wonder of our world and ignite change. We are grateful for the generous support of our sponsors and partners who have made the Society's transformative events possible, showcasing the power of community and collaboration in helping to safeguard the planet.



Storytellers Summit

In February, the National Geographic Society hosted the 2024 Storytellers Summit in Los Angeles, California, a multiday convening that brought together 1,274 participants in person and online. This was the first time that the event was held outside of Washington, D.C. A testament to the power of authentic narratives and the lived experiences that ignite changemakers across the world, the Summit brought together storytellers and creators around the globe to share their unique perspectives into their worlds. Sixteen of the 17 mainstage speakers were National Geographic Explorers; they included world-class photographers, filmmakers, illustrators and journalists, representing India, Congo, the Philippines, Spain, Ecuador, Japan, Nigeria and the United States.

Veteran photographer Vince Musi hosted the Summit. The first day opened with a rousing presentation by the Reverend Lennox Yearwood, founder and president of the Hip Hop Caucus, who shared how his organization uses the power of storytelling to promote environmental, political and social change.

Filmmaker Pooja Rathod took the audience on an underwater journey with her creative story of the square-tailed grouper and its unique behavior.

Photographer Guerchom Ndebo shared the story of how communities navigated environmental challenges in his home country, the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Noriko Hayashi moved the audience with her powerful images of Japanese women who married North Korean men and were never able to return to their home country.

The National Geographic Society proudly honored photographer Steve Winter and his storytelling and life partner Sharon Guynup with the 2024 Eliza Scidmore Award for Outstanding Storytelling.

We are grateful to Rolex for its partnership in presenting the 2024 National Geographic Storytellers Summit.

Attendees at a storytelling grant writing workshop during the 2024 Storytellers Summit in Los Angeles, CA, USA. The Society's Chief Storytelling Officer, Kaitlin Yarnall, shares remarks on stage for the Welcome Dinner during the 2024 Storytellers Summit in Los Angeles, CA.

Explorers Festival

In June, the Society hosted the 2024 National Geographic Explorers Festival, presented in partnership with Rolex. The convening joined more than 1,700 guests in person and virtually to share discoveries, insights and forward-thinking solutions to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world. Explorer and filmmaker Malaika Vaz served as emcee during the two-day symposium, where we heard from 17 Explorers spanning five regions and six disciplines sharing insights about their amazing work.

During the Festival, the Society held a staff showcase featuring 27 departments from the Society and our Disney partners to engage with Explorers and demonstrate different ways we continue to support them and their projects.

A special group of donors received hard-hat tours, providing them with a behind-the-scenes look at renovations for the Museum of Exploration, and members of our donor community were invited to join master classes to learn more about our Explorers' work. With partners at Cengage Group, National Geographic Learning also hosted a networking event for Explorers and Society staff to connect with each other, build relationships and share experiences across different fields.

Some incredible stories were shared by Explorers throughout the multiday event:

Biologist and filmmaker Laurent Ballesta explained his experiences with saturation diving and how it propelled him to solve the mystery of the rings off Corsica and uncover new learnings about our ocean's ancient past.

Penguin researcher and conservationist Pablo (Popi) García Borboroglu shared the incredible abilities of penguins and his work in Argentina to ensure their protection by safeguarding 32 million acres of ocean and coastal habitat.

Conservationist Richard Turere took us through the evolution of Lion Lights, from its initial creation from old radio parts to the

pocket-size, game-changing invention it is today, helping landowners better understand predator behaviors and avoid human-wildlife conflict.

We are grateful to Rolex for its partnership in presenting the 2024 National Geographic Explorers Festival.

International Explorers Festival

In September, the National Geographic Society, in partnership with Rolex, hosted the 2024 International Explorers Festival in Lima, Peru, convening over 300 participants. This marked the first time the Society held its International Explorers Festival in South America. The event focused on the Amazon, and we were proud to offer the programming largely in Spanish, with English translation provided. Explorers highlighted their work in the region and the groundbreaking National Geographic and Rolex Perpetual Planet Amazon Expedition. The Festival also overlapped with a unique Amazon-focused retreat for the Society's board of trustees, offering fantastic opportunities to celebrate and activate our closest supporters and advocates, including the Festival's presenting partner, Rolex, and our trustees.

The event included a three-day Storytellers Collective training for a select cohort of Explorers from the Latin American region. The training culminated in a Spotlight event, attended by over 200 people, where the Explorers presented their work in lightning talks they had workshopped.

In addition to the training, program coordinators representing the Society's regional Explorer hubs gathered for a learning session focused on better understanding the region's local context, learning about National Geographic Education programs and sharing ideas for scaling projects.

This session was attended by Explorers Dina Buchbinder, Jo Reyes, Nicolas Villaume, Rodolfo Salas and Denise Pozzi, along with local partners like Enseña por Peru and local teachers from Lima. There was a strong emphasis on community

engagement woven into the week, anchored by the photo exhibition "Perú in Images," curated by Claudi Carreras. This exhibit celebrated the relationship between National Geographic and Peru with archival photographs, works by visual creators that we support through grants to tell stories in the country, and content curated from National Geographic Photo Camp in the Sacred Valley of Cusco. The Festival culminated with an elevated Evening of Exploration, showcasing luminary Explorers from the region talking about their work, its impact and their careers.

For the final day of programming, local students from across the Lima area, teachers, partners and Explorers joined audiences for a community-focused screening of the documentary film "Expedition Amazon," followed by a discussion panel with Explorers.

Some additional highlights from this impactful event:

Ruthmery Pillco Huarcaya took us on a journey through the Andean mountains of Peru with her story about the real-life Paddington – the Andean bear – and the species' significance to the Amazon rainforest ecosystem.

Nelly Luna Amancio and Eduardo Neves took us through the Brazilian Amazon, where we learned how the rainforest has evolved over time.

2024 Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year Fernando Trujillo ended the program with a hopeful note about the power of collaboration and why it's more crucial than ever that researchers unite to preserve the unique biodiversity and ecology of the Amazon.

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Explorer and penguin researcher Pablo (Popi) García Borboroglu speaks at Explorers Festival 2024 in Washington, D.C., USA. Attendees at the Party for the Planet event during Explorers Festival 2024 in Washington, D.C. (Left to right) The Society's Chief Science & Innovation Officer Ian Miller and Explorers Tom Matthews, Jimena Valderrama Avella and Angelo Bernardino participate in a panel discussion at the 2024 International Explorers Festival in Lima, Peru. Explorer and marine biologist Fernando Trujillo presents at the 2024 International Explorers Festival in Lima, Peru.





EXHIBITIONS

In 2024, the National Geographic Museum remained closed as we continued to transform our public space into the state-of-the-art National Geographic Museum of Exploration, which will open in 2026. Demonstrating our commitment to amplifying storytelling globally, the National Geographic Society brought 18 unique traveling exhibitions to audiences in 20 countries and 66 cities worldwide, reaching more than 4.7 million visitors. Guests were able to experience the world through the lens and perspective of our incredible community of National Geographic Explorers and provide critical support for mission programs and Explorer-led projects by purchasing an exhibition ticket.

This page: Visitors enjoy the National Geographic gallery of the Root for Nature immersive exhibition at Palais des congrès in Montreal, Canada. Sea turtle image by National Geographic Pristine Seas. Opposite page: An African leopard at the Houston Zoo in Houston, TX, USA. Visitors enjoy the National Geographic gallery of the Root for Nature immersive exhibition at Palais des congrès in Montreal, Canada. Hummingbird image by Anand Varma. Gray Mane, a white wolf of the Polygon pack, stands by a muskox carcass in Ellesmere Island, Canada. Title panel and opening art installation of the "One World, One Chance" experience, created by artist Jerónimo Gaxiala, at the Natural History Museum in Mexico City, Mexico.



Photo Ark

The compelling “Photo Ark” photography exhibition featuring the work of National Geographic Explorer Joel Sartore, continued traveling to venues around the world in 2024. “Photo Ark” raises awareness for many species in need of greater conservation and highlights the world’s astonishing biodiversity. The exhibition features large-format prints, as well as a grid of many more images to highlight the range of species documented. In concert with the American Embassy in Thailand, and with the support of many internal teams at the National Geographic Society, an exhibition opened at Siam Paragon Mall in Bangkok with an event featuring Joel Sartore and the U.S. ambassador. The event highlighted the need to curb biodiversity loss, while showcasing the beauty of incredible wildlife in the exhibition.

Wolves by Ronan Donovan

National Geographic Explorer and photographer Ronan Donovan examines the relationship between wild wolves and humans to better understand the animals, our shared history and what drives the persistent human-wolf conflict.

Following a successful showing at the University of Oregon in early 2024, this exhibition was further bolstered by a speaker series by Donovan, which was conducted in concert with National Geographic Live.

The “Wolves” exhibition and companion talks highlighted the contrast between wolves living in perceived competition with humans in the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem and wolves that live in environments without human intervention in Ellesmere Island in the high Canadian Arctic. As wolves in North America are increasingly under threat due to extreme wolf-control laws and humans continue to impinge on the land and food sources

that these animals need to survive, Donovan’s evocative photographs and videos inspire a better understanding of these often misunderstood animals.

The exhibition debuted in Los Angeles in September 2024, and will be on view until June 2025 at the prestigious Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. This exhibition showing was generously supported through the patronage of Jacques Marie Mage.

Root for Nature

Inspired by historic COP15 agreements which led 188 countries to agree to protect 30% of the planet’s land and water by 2030 (30×30), the National Geographic Society and OASIS Immersive Studios developed a new immersive experience, “Root for Nature.” The innovative show aims to empower audiences to contribute to reaching these 30×30 goals. With 70 minutes of awe-inspiring content, including stunning National Geographic videos and imagery, the informational and artistic experience invites guests to be these catalysts for positive change. The exhibition is showing at the Palais de congrès in Montreal, Canada, with other global destinations in 2025.

One World, One Chance

Working with OASIS Immersive Studios and the Fideicomiso Todos Juntos por el Museo de Historia Natural, National Geographic opened “One World, One Chance,” a beautiful immersive exhibition at the Museo de Historia Natural in Mexico City. With an estimated visitor rate of more than 500 people daily, this exhibition transports viewers to scenes and landscapes worldwide through bold imagery from National Geographic photographers and grantees and audio mapping of nature sounds. The goal is to create an inspiring space where visitors can be reminded of the beauty and regenerative power of nature, emphasizing the importance of protecting these rich biodiversities and ecosystems.



A large outdoor amphitheatre at dusk. The left side of the image is dominated by a massive, layered rock wall illuminated with a vibrant green light. The sky is a deep twilight blue. In the foreground and middle ground, a vast crowd of people is seated, many holding up glowing purple light sticks. On the right, a stage is lit up, with a large screen displaying a colorful scene. The overall atmosphere is one of a large-scale outdoor event.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC LIVE

National Geographic Live brings thought-provoking presentations by today's leading Explorers, scientists, photographers and performing artists to audiences across North America.



Building on the momentum of last year's successful transition in management from Disney to the National Geographic Society, National Geographic Live saw an incredible year of achievement. In 2024, the beloved series held 89 public performances and 31 student matinees, increasing public performances by 300% from 2023. Additionally, we increased the number of cities represented by 275% from 2023, reaching 30 total cities in 2024. Overall, we reached about 85,000 public and 21,000 student audience members by December 31, 2024. The Society also premiered seven new National Geographic Live shows that brought more Explorers to more stages. These performances reached about 85,000 public audience members and 21,000 student audience members by December 31, 2024.

Shows featured 15 National Geographic Explorers, including National Geographic Explorer at Large Nalini Nadkarni, who premiered her National Geographic Live show, "From Roots to Canopy," which brought audiences on a climb through the forest canopy to experience the magnificent wildlife and incredible science of the vast, hidden worlds above our heads. To connect with people from an array of backgrounds and communities, Nadkarni held events for audiences including tattoo artists, senior citizens, members of the unhoused community, students and Indigenous groups across North America.

In May, we created a unique National Geographic Live and exhibition pairing experience for select audiences. Hosted by National Geographic Explorer and photographer Ronan Donovan at the Whatcom Museum in Bellingham, Washington. It included our "Greatest Wildlife Photography" exhibition and featured our "Social by Nature" National Geographic Live show. Audiences were able to be immersed in the hidden wonders of nature through the combination of stunning imagery and an incredible performance.

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

Explorer Kiliii Yüyan takes a selfie with the audience at his National Geographic Live presentation at Benaroya Hall in Seattle, WA, USA. Explorer Sandesh Kadur shares his passion for the small wild cats of the world during a National Geographic Live show in Seattle, WA.



An aerial photograph of a winding river through a dense, green forest. The river meanders through the landscape, creating several large loops and oxbow-like shapes. The forest is thick and vibrant green, with the river's water appearing a calm, greyish-brown. The sky above is filled with soft, white and grey clouds, suggesting a hazy or overcast day. The overall scene is serene and natural.

OUR COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

This page: Aerial view of Congaree National Park and the Congaree River, South Carolina, USA. Opposite page: A pregnant manatee glides above eelgrass in Florida's spring-fed Silver River.



Each year, I am amazed and deeply grateful to see how our global community of supporters has grown, and to reflect on all we have accomplished together over the past year. For the third year in a row, your passion and generosity have resulted in more than \$100 million in new commitments. This sustained support from our dedicated community strengthens the Society, enabling us to make bold investments in solutions that will lead to a healthier planet and a brighter future. I also want to thank our longtime partners Cengage Group and Esri for their transformative commitments to the Museum of Exploration, which will connect new audiences to our mission and our Explorers, inspiring thousands to take action for change. Together, we are helping Explorers push forward each day, and I am so grateful to you – our donors and friends – for your support.



KARA RAMIREZ MULLINS
Chief Advancement Officer
National Geographic Society



2024 BY THE NUMBERS

\$112.4M

raised through donor contributions.

\$100K+

105 donors of \$100K+ helped advance our important work.

108K+

donors and partners supported the Society's Explorers and mission work.

\$438

average gift amount donated to the Society.

100%

philanthropic participation by the Society's board of trustees and senior leadership team.

24

gifts of \$1M+ provided vital resources to support Explorers.

A large school of jackfish swimming in clear blue water, filling the entire frame. The fish are densely packed and appear to be moving in a coordinated pattern.

THE POWER OF PHILANTHROPY

In 2024, the Society's community of donors and partners supported groundbreaking work around the world to protect the health of our planet, advance knowledge about human histories and cultures, and inspire a new generation of changemakers. The work you make possible — trailblazing scientific research, visionary education and powerful storytelling — has never been more important. With your support, we are making an impact, helping to restore balance between people and the natural world and inspiring even more planetary stewards.

Thank you for your commitment to the National Geographic Society, our Explorers and our shared vision for a brighter future as we build an exciting new home for innovation and discovery. Your generosity is helping to protect our land, water and wildlife, advance understanding of our human histories and cultures, and inspire youth around the globe. We are tremendously grateful for your generosity and dedication to our mission.



Leadership Donor Expeditions

Leadership Donor Expeditions provide our leadership supporters (\$25,000+ annual donors) with an exclusive, personal opportunity to engage deeply with our mission, leadership and critical initiatives around the world. Guided by a remarkable team of National Geographic Explorers on one of National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions' state-of-the-art vessels, the expeditions immerse participants in the field, bringing the work of Explorers to life. These expeditions embody the Society's commitment to using science, exploration, education and storytelling to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world.

In 2024, we embarked on an unforgettable journey to the Galápagos Islands with Explorer at Large Sylvia Earle and Explorers Brian Skerry and Salome Buglass aboard the *National Geographic Islander II*. We spent hours snorkeling and diving alongside sea lions, turtles, rays and sharks. At the Charles Darwin Research Station, we gained invaluable insights into the vital role of sea kelp in the Galápagos ecosystem. We also had the incredible opportunity to spend time with the islands' legendary tortoises, some over 100 years old.

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.



Attendees of the 2024 Society Leadership Donor Expedition to the Galápagos Islands hold the Society flag on a beach. Attendees of the 2024 Society Leadership Donor Expedition to the Galápagos Islands view dolphins from a boat.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

OUR COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

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



Base Camp – A Hub for Exploration and Collaboration

The most significant expansion in our history is transforming the Society’s Washington, D.C. headquarters – Base Camp – into a hub for collaboration and inspiration. At the center of this project will be the new National Geographic Museum of Exploration, set to open in mid-2026.

In 2024, Base Camp’s new Pavilion took shape, progressing from steel framing to a towering glass facade that will mark the “Home of the Explorer.” Inside, the Archives, the National Geographic Learning Launchpad and the immersive mapping room are being constructed, providing the setting for transformative and educational experiences for visitors of all ages. We can now look down over the Pavilion from Rolex Explorers Landing, and exciting artifacts – like a Suzuki vehicle custom-fitted with camera mounts and other specialized equipment to accompany Explorer Sandesh Kadur in his fieldwork around the world – are already being installed in their new home.

As construction continues, excitement is growing across our global community. In 2024, our longtime education partner Cengage Group generously expanded its commitment to the Society by pledging \$15 million in support of Base Camp and the Museum of Exploration. We’re thrilled to honor Cengage Group as a Base Camp Founding Donor in our Learning Launchpad – a fitting tribute to an integral education partner.

At this decisive moment for our planet and its people, our supporters are advancing our mission exponentially by bringing Base Camp to life.

We are grateful to our Base Camp Founding Donors*:

- Rolex
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- Cengage Group
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- Deborah M. Lehr and John F. W. Rogers
- Strive and Tsitsi Masiyiwa
- Nancy E. Pfund and Phillip L. Polakoff
- The Roski Family

*as of December 31, 2024



The National Geographic Society's Base Camp will be a 21st-century convening space where global scientists, experts, policymakers and leaders will convene with the public to find solutions to the greatest challenges we face. It's more important than ever that we come together to protect the planet and inspire a new generation to lead the way in building a better future. I'm honored to be a founding donor to this exciting and important project.

LYDA HILL
Base Camp Founding Donor
Principal Donors Society Member

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.

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 National Geographic 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.

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

“Through our involvement at National Geographic, Polly and I have seen firsthand how thoughtful exploration and conservation in collaboration with communities, combined with powerful storytelling, can change the world. The Principal Donors Society allows us to come together with people who are passionate about creating a healthier future for people and the natural world. We're proud to be part of this remarkable group of leaders and planetary stewards.”

KEVIN MARONI

Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees
Alexander Graham Bell Legacy Society Member

Clockwise from top: National Geographic Society Board Member Mark C. Moore and National Geographic Society Board Vice Chairman Katherine Bradley at the 2024 National Geographic Explorers Festival with Explorers in Residence Lee Berger and Kirsten Elstner. Principal Donors Society and Hubbard Council members Bob and Anna Livingston with Alexander Graham Bell Legacy Society Member Kristy Cohan at the 2024 Principal Donors Society Induction Ceremony and Celebration. Patricia Thomas and her guest at the 2024 Explorers Festival. Chief Executive Officer Jill Tiefenthaler, Principal Donors Society and Hubbard Council member Jean Trebek, National Geographic Society Board Chairman Jean Case, and Chief Advancement Officer Kara Ramirez Mullins at the 2024 Principal Donors Society Induction Ceremony and Celebration. Principal Donors Society member Safia Mirabell and Colleen Cassity of Oracle with Explorer in Residence Kirsten Elstner at the 2024 Principal Donors Society Induction Ceremony and Celebration. National Geographic Society Board Chairman Jean Case and Board Member Nancy E. Pfund at a reception hosted by Jean Trebek during the 2024 Storytellers Summit.

2024 Members

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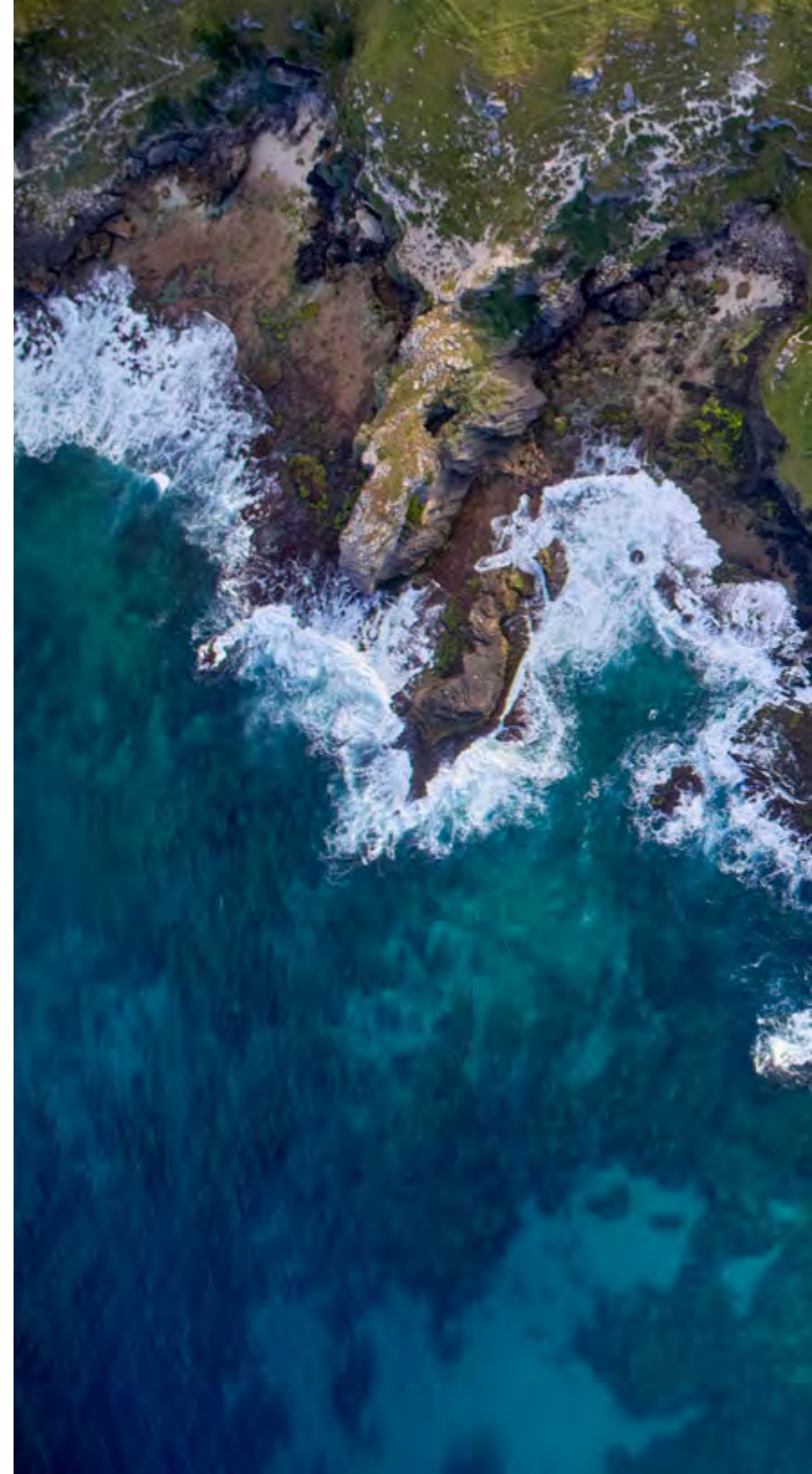
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*Deceased





Waves crash onto Lord Howe Island's coastline in New South Wales, Australia.



HUBBARD COUNCIL

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

2024 Members

- Anonymous (5)
- Hussain Aga Khan and Focused on Nature
- Boladji Agueh
- Andrew and Melora Balson
- Brendan and Helen Bechtel
- Allison Bennington
- Zee Berl
- Nancy and Randy Best
- Sumner and Lucy Billingsley
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- Diane and Hal Brierley
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- Bob and Betty Geltz
- Erika and Philip Giampietro
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- Mr. and Mrs. Michael Keiser
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- Chris Kiple
- Ruth Lievano and Anand Krishnamurthy
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- The Farlight Foundation
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- Lavinia Touchton and Jeff Adberg
- Trebek Family Foundation
- Robin and Liselotte Vince
- B Wu and Eric Larson

*Deceased

Hubbard Council member George Kalogridis, Explorer Sylvia Earle and Hubbard Council member Andrew Hardy during the 2024 Society Leadership Donor Expedition to the Galápagos Islands. Hubbard Council member Boladji Agueh with Explorer Azu Nwagbogu at the 2024 National Geographic Explorer of the Year Celebration in Washington, D.C., USA. Society Chief Advancement Officer Kara Ramirez Mullins, Hubbard Council member Allison Bennington, Society CEO Jill Tiefenthaler and Explorer Steve Boyes attend “An Evening with Steven Boyes” in London, UK.

“ Last year we had the honor of traveling to the Galápagos as part of a Leadership Giving Expedition with the Society. It was amazing to see National Geographic Explorers in action and to experience the wonder and beauty of such a storied place alongside them. We are proud to support the community of National Geographic Explorers and to ensure that these thought leaders continue to challenge us to do better for the planet.

**GEORGE KALOGRIDIS
AND ANDY HARDY**
Hubbard Council Members

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

CLARK COUNCIL

The Clark Council is a group of supporters deeply committed to helping the National Geographic Society remain at the forefront of exploration and the diffusion of knowledge. Members make an annual contribution of \$25,000 to \$49,999 and receive exclusive benefits and special access to the places and work that make up the Society. 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.

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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Ms. Andrea Wallack
Mr. Thomas K. Washburn and
Mrs. Eileen Washburn
Garry Weber



As a passionate advocate for ocean protection and climate resilience, I am inspired by National Geographic's unparalleled legacy of exploration, scientific integrity and innovative storytelling. The Society's tireless work has led to the protection of countless wonders of the natural world.

It is truly an honor to support the Society as a member of the Impact Story Lab Advisory Council and Clark Council.

Together, we are working to empower innovative Explorers whose dedication to the ethics of conservation is a galvanizing force in connecting people to nature through outstanding photography, poignant filmmaking and outspoken journalism.

SHARI SANT
Clark Council Member

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

Clark Council members Rob and Nancy Chimsky at the 2024 National Geographic Explorer of the Year Celebration. Clark Council member Janet Wall at a 2024 National Geographic Explorers Festival Master Class. Clark Council members Sandra and Roger Deromedi with National Geographic Explorer Victoria Herrmann and Chief Executive Officer Jill Tiefenthaler.





ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL LEGACY SOCIETY

The Alexander Graham Bell Legacy Society honors those who have included the Society in their estate plans through a will, trust or beneficiary designation or who have made a charitable gift annuity. Legacy gifts from the dedicated members of this group fund the Society's science, exploration, education and storytelling efforts around the world, helping to advance meaningful, lasting change for generations to come.

In addition to the satisfaction of knowing their gift will make a long-term impact, Legacy Society members also have the chance to come even closer to our work and get to know our National Geographic Explorers and leadership through exclusive invitations to webinars and events in Washington, D.C., and across the United States.

“ I have tremendous admiration for those who take the extra step to go above and beyond, to show and teach us a little more about our planet. The National Geographic Society does just that and so much more. I am in awe of the work the Society does to help educate and protect our beautiful planet Earth.

PAMELA BRANDON
Alexander Graham Bell Legacy Society Member

Explorer in Residence Enric Sala and Alexander Graham Bell Legacy Society (AGBLS) member Jere Broh-Kahn at Explorers Festival 2024 in Washington, D.C., USA. AGBLS member Cynthia Fisher with Explorer Sylvia Earle during the 2024 Society Leadership Donor Expedition to the Galápagos Islands. Explorer Anand Varma and AGBLS member Karen Smith-Yoshimura in Berkeley, CA, USA. AGBLS members Richard Kennedy, Explorer in Residence Lee Berger, and AGBLS member Heidi Morgan at Explorers Festival 2024.

For more information, please contact Emma Miller, senior director of planned giving, at (800) 373-1717 or emiller@ngs.org.

GROSVENOR COUNCIL

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

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

Grosvenor Council Insider Calls are a special opportunity for members of the Grosvenor Council to hear directly from Explorers about their impact on the world. In 2024, we heard from Rwandan veterinarian and Explorer Olivier Nsengimana about his work protecting grey crowned cranes and from biologist and Explorer Carlos Velazco, who shared his passion for citizen science with iNaturalist. One Insider Call participant shared: "I recently became a donor and enjoyed the Insider Call experience of feeling I had a special relationship with National Geographic. I liked that the two Explorers focused on very different aspects of what they might receive funding for – citizen science and conservation efforts for a particular endangered species."



As a member of the Grosvenor Council, I am in awe of the work the Society is doing around the world to safeguard the natural world, protect wildlife and preserve cultural treasures. I love learning directly from National Geographic Explorers working to better understand the mysteries of our planet. I feel so proud to be a part of the Society's incredible legacy and to support the Society's mission and vision.

DONNA NAPPEN KIMMEL
Grosvenor Council Member

For more information, please contact Colleen Ryan, senior manager of annual giving, at (800) 373-1717 or cryan@ngs.org.

Grosvenor Council member Helen Schmitz at the 2024 National Geographic Explorers Festival. Explorer Anand Varma with Grosvenor Council members Mark and Jamie Zukowski at WonderLab in Berkeley, CA. Grosvenor Council and AGBLS members at a behind-the-scenes presentation at WonderLab.





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 advance meaningful, lasting change.

“ National Geographic storytellers help shed light on some of the most important stories of our time – including how climate change is affecting different aspects of life in all corners of the planet. We’re delighted to support Explorers who are bringing a new lens to climate storytelling and inspiring audiences worldwide to learn and take action to help restore and protect our environment while improving the living conditions for people everywhere.

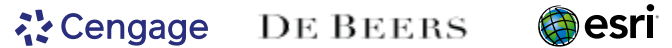
SALLY FOUTS
Director
The Climate Pledge

A herd of elephants cross the Okavango Delta in Botswana. Aerial view of the landscape in the Madre de Dios region in southeastern Peru. The vibrant Nautilus reef in Papua New Guinea.

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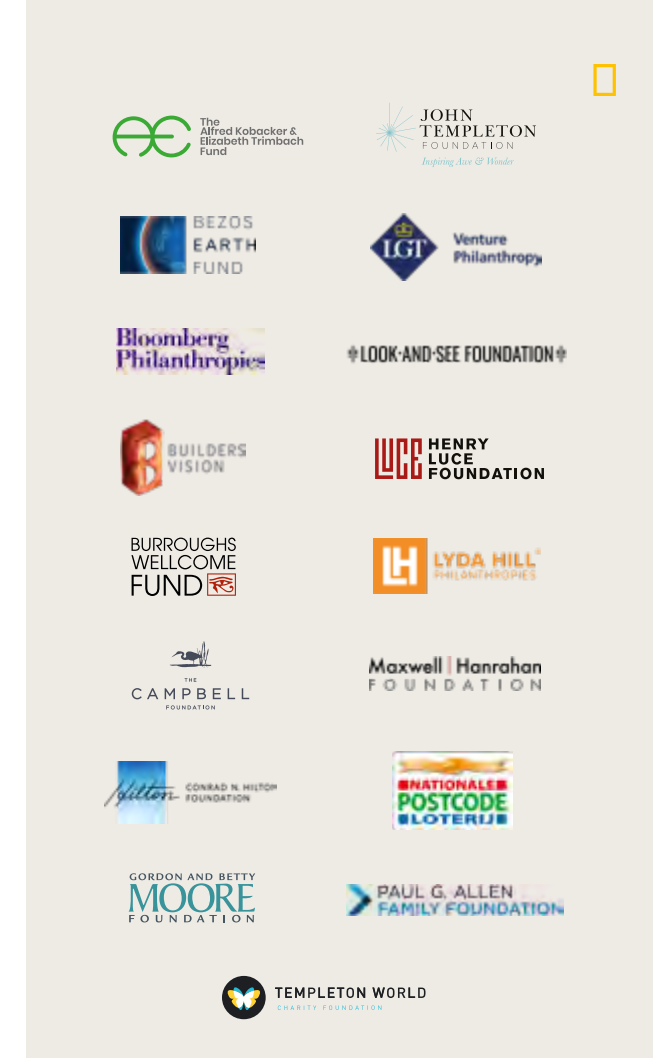
*This list reflects active corporate partnerships as of December 31, 2024, including multiyear commitments.

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

FOUNDATIONS

The generous support of foundations enables National Geographic Explorers to deliver global impact with their work in science, exploration, education and storytelling in the six focus areas of Ocean, Land, Wildlife, Human Histories and Cultures, Space, and Planetary Health. Pivotal foundation funding in 2024 was received from the following:

- **The Bezos Earth Fund, Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Look and See Foundation, The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment, LGT Venture Philanthropy Foundation, and the Nationale Postcode Lottery** provided funding to propel the Pristine Seas initiative toward the global goal of protecting 30% of the ocean by 2030.
- With an investment from the **Templeton World Charity Foundation, Inc.**, the National Geographic Society launched the Wildlife Intelligence Project and conducted a rigorous global search to find three of the best emerging early-career scientists whose work seeks to answer questions and provide us with better insights into the minds and behaviors of animals – and what drives their decisions.
- **Builders Vision** committed funding to advance ocean storytelling, provide storytelling training to innovators in ocean conservation, and engage audiences around the world through strategic events, with the overarching goal of building support for ocean conservation.
- The **Conrad N. Hilton Foundation** supported storytelling grants, Photo Camps and Storytellers Collective trainings with the goal of communicating the vital and compelling stories of global water challenges.
- Funding from the **Burroughs Wellcome Fund** supported Explorer Anand Varma and the WonderLab in Berkeley, California, a space to experiment with new ways to present science with a sense of awe and wonder.
- **Lyda Hill Philanthropies** provided support for the Global Explorers Fund, which supports empowerment and community efforts and provides training and amplification opportunities to the Society's Explorer community. Lyda Hill Philanthropies also generously supported our Base Camp project – our headquarters and the home of our Explorers.
- After a successful launch, the Slingshot Challenge, a competition encouraging 13-18-year-olds to submit solutions to solve environmental problems and create a better world, embarked on its third year with continued support from the **Paul G. Allen Family Foundation**.
- With support from the **John Templeton Foundation**, the National Geographic Society will identify and support storytellers as they investigate the deepest questions of our humanity and universe, aiming to inspire awe, spark wonder and cultivate curiosity.
- Thanks to funding from **The Alfred Kobacker and Elizabeth Trimbach Fund**, the Society will launch the “For Nature” program, led by Explorer Callie Veelenturf, which will focus on gathering scientific data to support the legal protection of threatened species, oceanscapes and landscapes.
- Continuing its past support, the **Maxwell Hanrahan Foundation** underwrote several Explorer Field Biology grants and provided funding to the Grosvenor Teacher Fellowship initiative, which provides unique professional learning opportunities for pre-K-12 educators in partnership with Lindblad Expeditions.
- An innovative cross-cultural storytelling initiative, Building Bridges, was made possible with funding from the **Henry Luce Foundation**. The project is a U.S.-China people-to-people exchange involving young visual storytellers partnering to photograph national parks in both countries.
- The **Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation** provided funding for the pilot of the Urban Exploration Project, which will track animal behavior and human-wildlife interaction to help guide policy as people and creatures increasingly share diverse landscapes.



“Builders Vision believes in the transformative power of storytelling to shed light on pressing challenges, uncover solutions and inspire action. Working with the National Geographic Society, we’re elevating stories as a catalyst for systems change, empowering others to invest alongside us in creating a more resilient future.”

LUKAS WALTON
 Founder and CEO
 Builders Vision



A herd of dugongs in Palau.



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NEW TRUSTEES

The National Geographic Society board of trustees welcomed four new members in 2024: Kate E. Brandt, John K. Delaney, Evan G. Greenberg and Sandesh V. Kadur. Sandesh joins the board as the Society's second National Geographic Explorer trustee.



Kate E. Brandt

Kate E. Brandt serves as Google's chief sustainability officer and leads sustainability across Google's worldwide operations, products and supply chains. In this role, Kate partners with Google's data centers, real estate, supply chain and product teams to ensure the company is capitalizing on opportunities to strategically advance sustainability. Previously, Kate served as the United States' first federal chief sustainability officer. In this capacity, she was responsible for promoting sustainability across federal government operations, including 360,000 buildings, 650,000 vehicles and \$445 billion annually in purchased goods and services. Prior to this, Kate held several senior roles in the U.S. federal government including senior advisor at the Department of Energy, director for energy and environment in the White House Office of Presidential Personnel, and energy advisor to the secretary of the Navy. Kate is the recipient of the Distinguished Public Service Award, the highest award the U.S. Navy can give to a civilian, for her work helping the Navy go green. Fortune magazine named Kate to its 40 Under 40 list in 2021, and Outside magazine named her one of 40 women who have made the biggest impact on our world in honor of the magazine's 40th anniversary. Kate was named #1 chief sustainability officer by Sustainability Magazine in 2022 and 2023. She serves on the boards of BSR, Restor and Corporate Eco Forum.



John K. Delaney

John Delaney is an entrepreneur, business leader and public servant. In 2017, John was named one of the World's 50 Greatest Leaders by Fortune magazine. John served six years in the U.S. Congress and earned praise for his bipartisan approach to economic, foreign and climate policy. While in Congress, he was co-president of his freshman class and served on the Financial Services and Joint Economic Committees. He also co-founded the Artificial Intelligence and Climate Solutions Caucuses. In 2019, John stepped down from Congress to pursue the Democratic nomination for president of the United States. Before Congress and by the age of 40, John had founded and led two New York Stock Exchange-listed companies. In 1993, John founded HealthCare Financial Partners Inc., which provided loans to small to midsize healthcare service companies. In 2000, he founded CapitalSource Inc., which provided loans to a wide range of midsize businesses. More recently, John is the founder and chairman of Forbright Bank, with a mission aligned around decarbonization.

John is a member of the Young Presidents' Organization and was named Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of the Year. He has been a board member of numerous private and nonprofit entities, including the board of directors of Georgetown University.



Evan G. Greenberg

Evan G. Greenberg is chairman and chief executive officer of Chubb Limited. Over the course of 48 years in the insurance industry, he has held various underwriting and leadership positions in the global property, casualty and life insurance sectors. Evan was elected president and CEO in May 2004 and chairman of the board of directors in May 2007. Under his leadership, Chubb has grown to become one of the largest insurance companies in the world. Evan joined the company, then named ACE Limited, in 2001 as vice chairman. Evan is engaged in international economic and foreign affairs through his service on the boards of several institutions, including the board of trustees of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the board of directors of the Peterson Institute for International Economics and as chairman of the National Committee on United States-China Relations. He also serves on the board of trustees of the Asia Society and the advisory board of Tsinghua University School of Economics and Management (Tsinghua SEM) in Beijing.



Sandesh V. Kadur

Sandesh V. Kadur is a BAFTA Award-winning filmmaker and National Geographic Explorer who creates documentary films that have aired worldwide on prominent networks such as National Geographic, BBC, Netflix, Discovery Channel and Animal Planet. Most recently, he worked on “Our Planet” by Netflix; “The Okavango Experience,” a 360-degree virtual reality series that follows the National Geographic Society’s Okavango Wilderness Project; and BBC’s “Seven Worlds One Planet,” and “Planet Earth II.” Sandesh is the producer of a three-part docuseries for National Geographic titled “Wild Cats of India,” and a two-part series titled “India’s Wild Leopards.” He is also the co-author of two books: “Sahyadris: India’s Western Ghats – A Vanishing Heritage” (2005) and “Himalaya – Mountains of Life” (2013). His first documentary, accompanied by his first book, earned critical acclaim while drawing attention to one of the world’s top biodiversity hotspots and helped convince UNESCO to name the Western Ghats a World Heritage site in 2012. Sandesh has won a slew of prestigious international awards, including a 2017 Emmy nomination and the 2017 BAFTA Award for his work on BBC’s “Planet Earth II,” as well as numerous awards for his photography. Sandesh is the founder and director of Felis Creations, a Bangalore-based company focusing on creating content that inspires conservation.



A herd of elephants in the Okavango Delta, Botswana.



THANK YOU

Contributions from donors like you help us to expand our bold vision and fund purpose-driven and passionate Explorers around the globe. As we embark on our next era of exploration, it is critically important to have dedicated supporters like you helping us continue making bold moves into the future.



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