NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

2023 IMPACT SNAPSHOT

With you, the National Geographic Society achieved significant milestones in 2023 to protect and illuminate our planet. This snapshot illustrates some of the ways that our Explorers have harnessed the powers of science, storytelling, education and exploration to inform and inspire people across the globe to care for our world — and take action to protect it.

Thank you for your support.

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

DOWNLOAD FULL REPORT (PDF)

Ambient video: Hundreds of monarchs sip liquid and important minerals from the wet soil in the El Rosario Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary, Michoacán, Mexico.

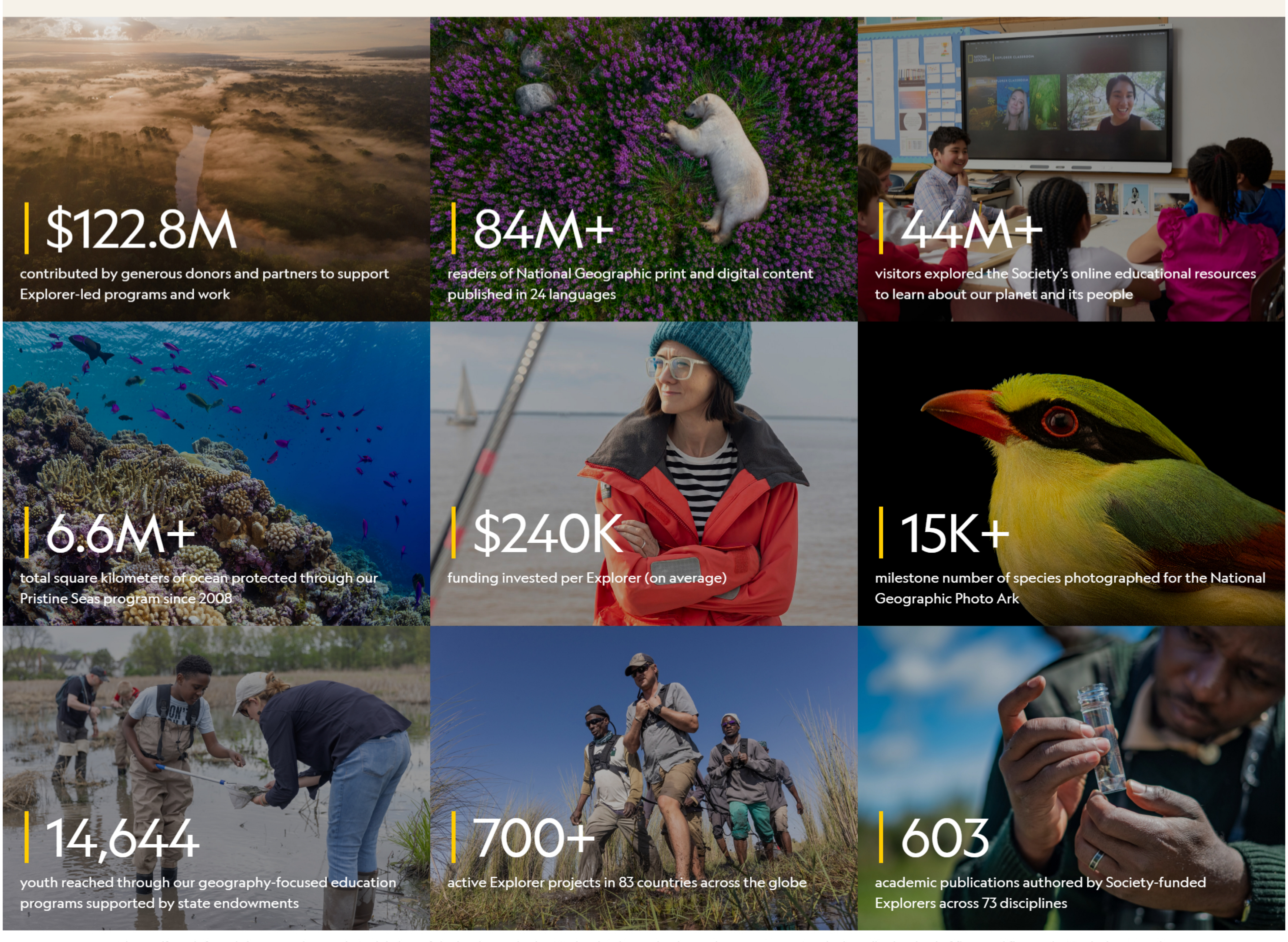
> *"Led by our team of intrepid Explorers, we advance knowledge through contributions to science, and protect our planet through leading conservation programs. Equally important, we drive impact by illuminating the wonder of our world through storytelling and education initiatives that spark our curiosity,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

Jill Tiefenthaler
Chief Executive Officer

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

Jean M. Case
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

2023 IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS



$122.8M contributed by generous donors and partners to support Explorer-led programs and work

84M+ readers of National Geographic print and digital content published in 24 languages

44M+ visitors explored the Society's online educational resources to learn about our planet and its people

6.6M+ total square kilometers of ocean protected through our Pristine Seas program since 2008

$240K funding invested per Explorer (on average)

15K+ milestone number of species photographed for the National Geographic Photo Ark

14,644 youth reached through our geography-focused education programs supported by state endowments

700+ active Explorer projects in 83 countries across the globe

603 academic publications authored by Society-funded Explorers across 73 disciplines

Photos (from left to right, top to bottom): Aerial view of the landscape in the Madre de Dios region in southeastern Peru; A polar bear lies in a bed of fireweed flowers in Manitoba, Canada; students speak with Explorers Jennifer Burgin and Issa Barte during an Explorer Classroom event at Alice Deal Middle School in Washington, D.C., USA; a shallow coral reef in Bikar Atoll, Marshall Islands — the site of a 2023 National Geographic Pristine Seas expedition; Explorer Agustina Besada aboard a sailboat as part of her work researching ocean plastics; an Indochinese green magpie (Cissa hypoleuca) at the Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens in Los Angeles, CA, USA.; a fifth-grade student participates in a National Geographic Bioblitz learning program in New Albany, OH, USA; Okavango Wilderness Project team members pull a mokoro through the Okavango Delta in Botswana; Explorer and conservationist Olivier Nsengimana observes a specimen collected during a biodiversity survey in Rwanda's Rugezi Marsh.

PROGRAMS WITH IMPACT

The Society is committed to furthering work that explores the wonders of our world, inspires people everywhere to care for the planet and takes action to build a better future for us all. Together, we can make real progress towards a deeper understanding and appreciation for our world. With you, we are:

USING SCIENCE TO PROTECT OUR PLANET

Preserving Ocean Life to Restore a Pristine Planet

In the face of global threats to marine health, coastal communities whose livelihoods depend on the ocean are grappling with how to protect their waters. The **National Geographic Pristine Seas** team, led by Explorer Enric Sala, works with communities, governments and other partners around the world to help protect critical ocean ecosystems by establishing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) paired with local stewardship and sustainable management plans.

In 2023, the Pristine Seas team embarked on a five-year "Global Expedition" to explore and study the remote tropical Pacific region and support local efforts to protect its exceptionally diverse marine ecosystems. Also in 2023, the Pristine Seas team partnered with the Society-funded Project CETI program and the government of the Commonwealth of Dominica to help establish the world's first Sperm Whale Reserve, protecting local whale populations and their valuable contributions to the area's ecological health.

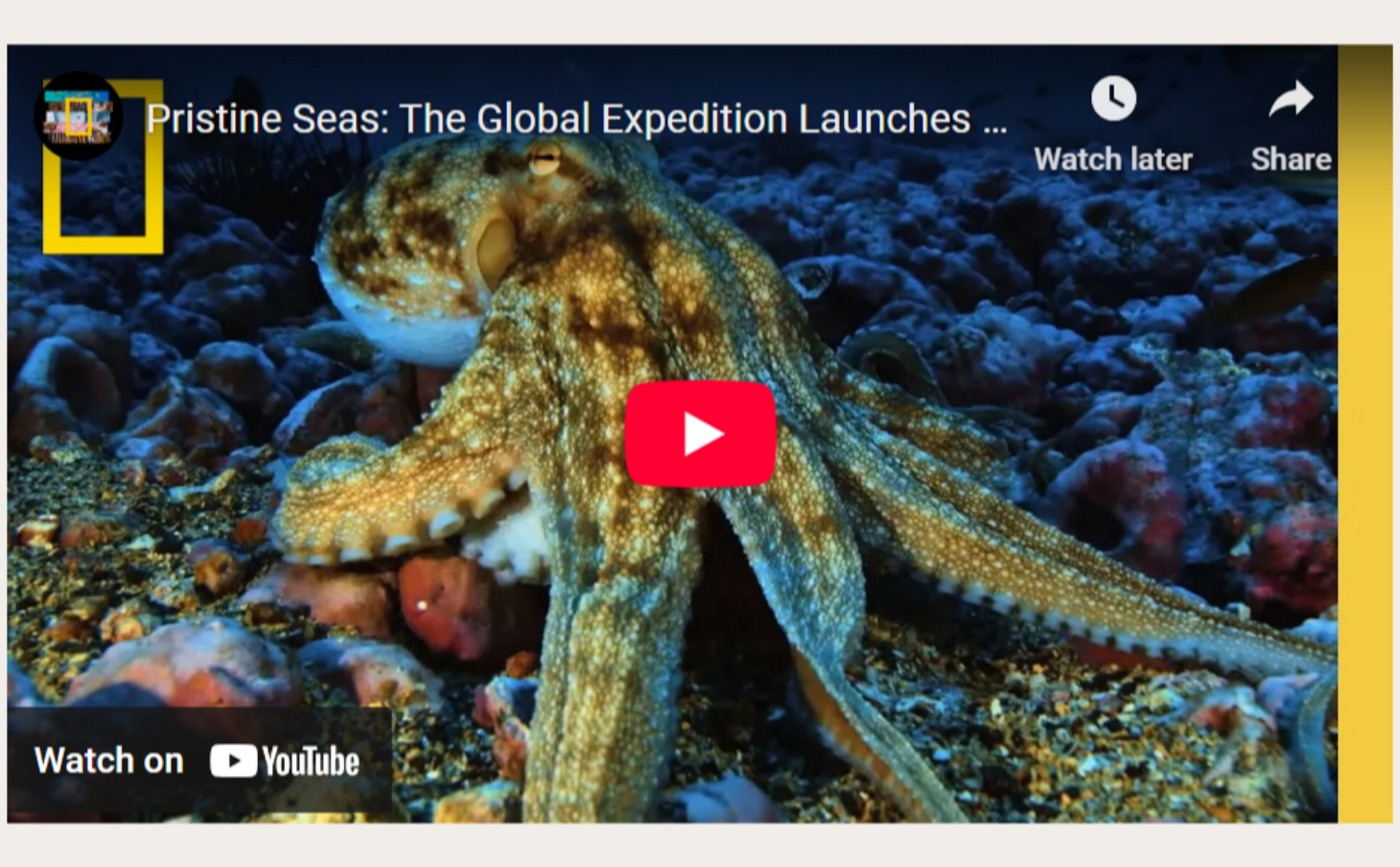


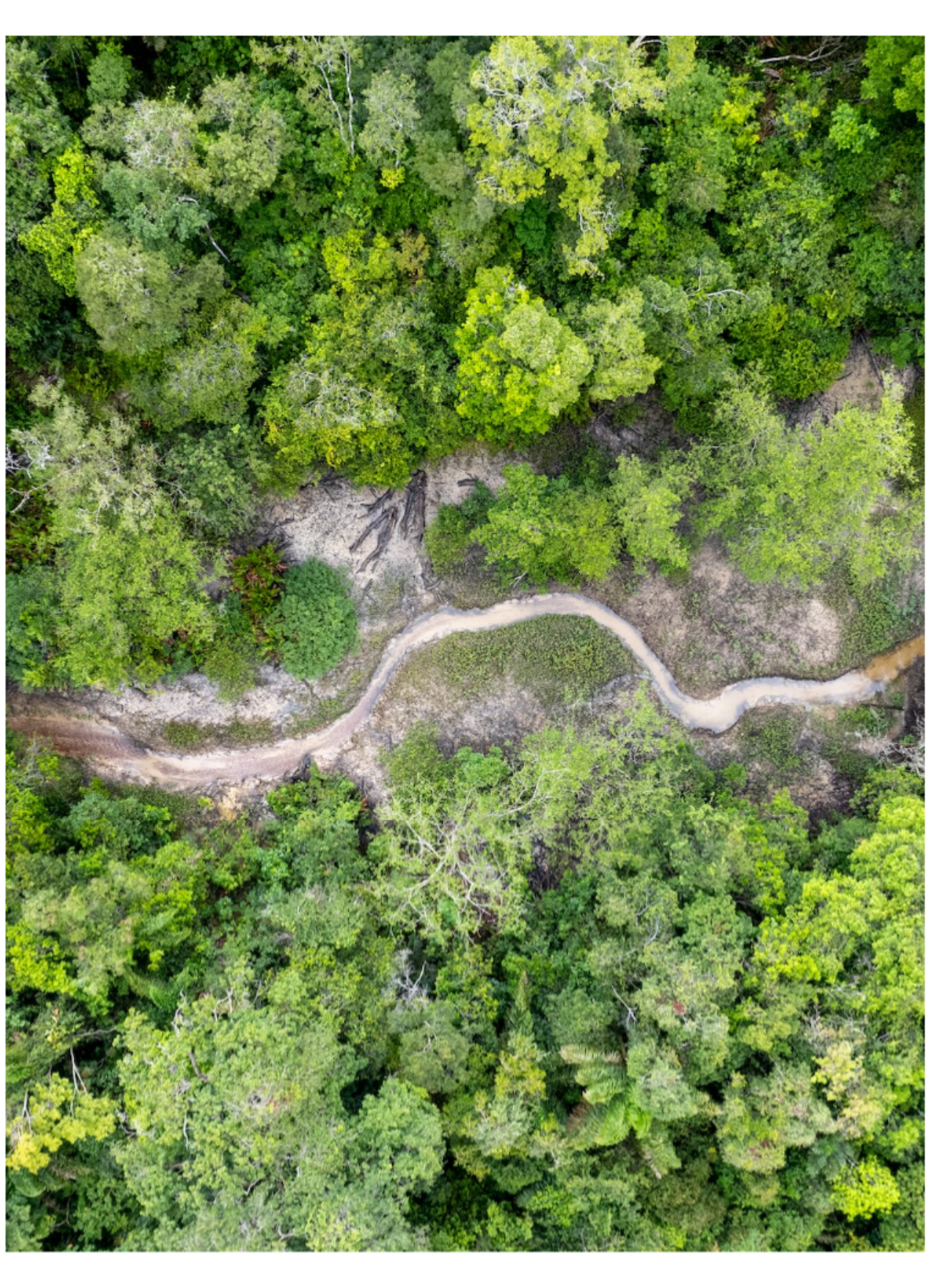
Photo: The clear waters of the Tongareva atoll in the Cook Islands, photographed as part of the Pristine Seas' Global Expedition.

Finding Solutions to Protect Critical Ecosystems

National Geographic and Rolex Perpetual Planet Expeditions explore the planet's most remote and iconic life support systems in order to understand the threats they face and drive action to protect them.

In 2023, the multi-year Perpetual Planet Amazon Expedition continued their research in Brazil's Amazon River basin, including studying endemic species such as the Andean bear and arapaima to inform conservation efforts, mapping the local economic and social value of the basin's mangroves, and assessing the environmental impact of record solar radiation in the Andes. In addition, Perpetual Planet Explorer Fernando Trujillo convened representatives from 14 countries that are home to the planet's last remaining river dolphins. Trujillo's StoryMap about his work with Amazonian pink river dolphins helped inspire 11 nations to sign a Global Declaration for the Protection of River Dolphins and their Rivers.

Photo: Aerial view of the mangrove forest located in front of the Vila Ponta de Ramos community in Curuça, Pará, Brazil.



TELLING STORIES THAT SPARK CHANGE

Culture and Conservation in the Okavango Basin

Since 2015, the **National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project** (NGOWP) has worked alongside the communities and governments of Botswana, Angola and Namibia to secure permanent protection for Africa's Okavango Basin. In 2023, the NGOWP scientifically defined the Angola Highlands Water Tower, a critical step towards preserving an area that provides water to millions of people and some of the world's most biodiverse places, including the Okavango Delta.

To expand and accelerate the program's research and conservation work, the National Geographic Society and De Beers partnered to create Okavango Eternal. In 2023, this partnership helped fund "Nkashi: Race for the Okavango," a documentary produced by the Society's Impact Story Lab. The film celebrates the region's cultural heritage and traditional practices, and highlights the NGOWP's work to preserve its unique wetlands. The film's success demonstrates the important interplay of community, culture and conservation in protecting the Okavango Basin's future.

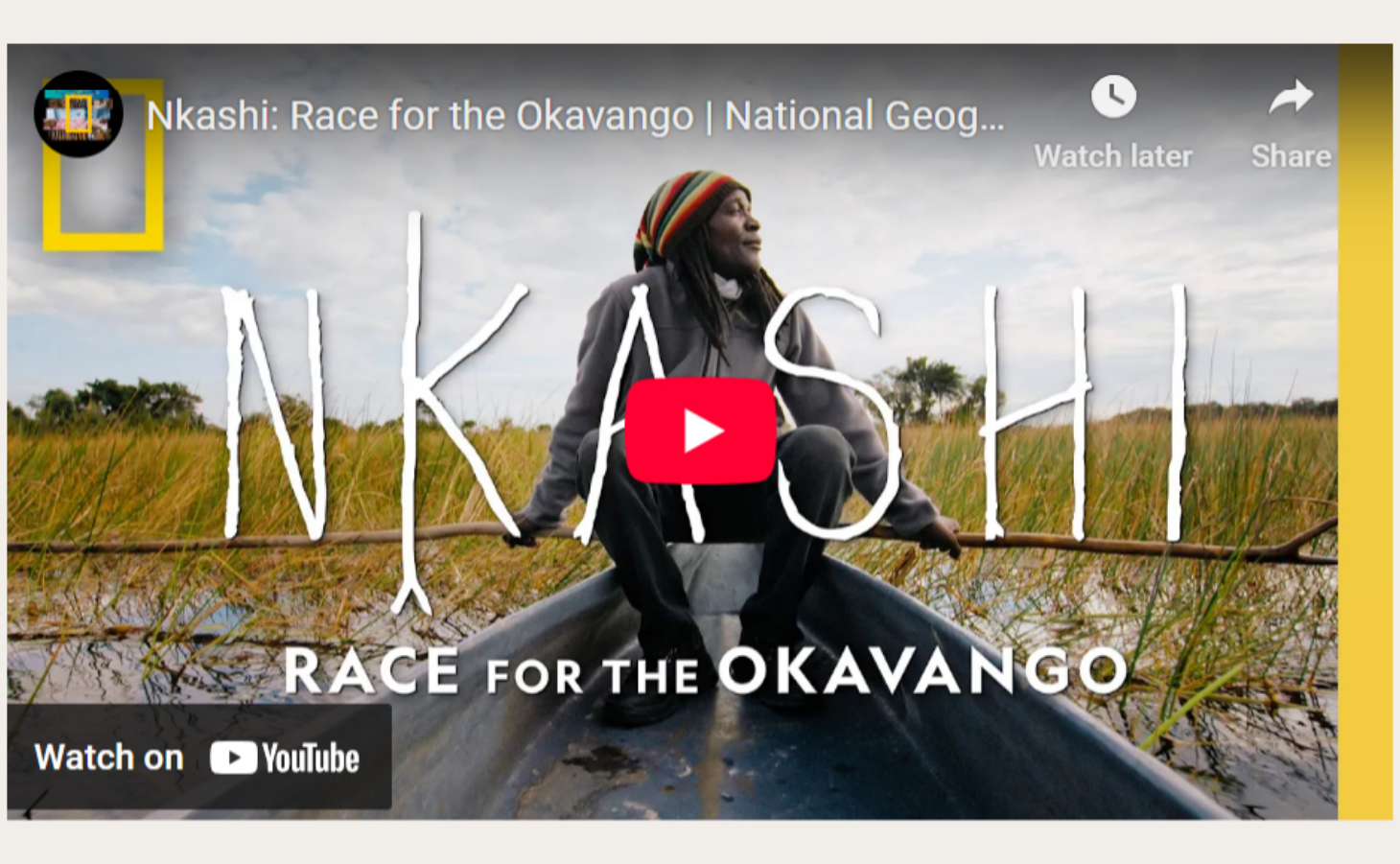


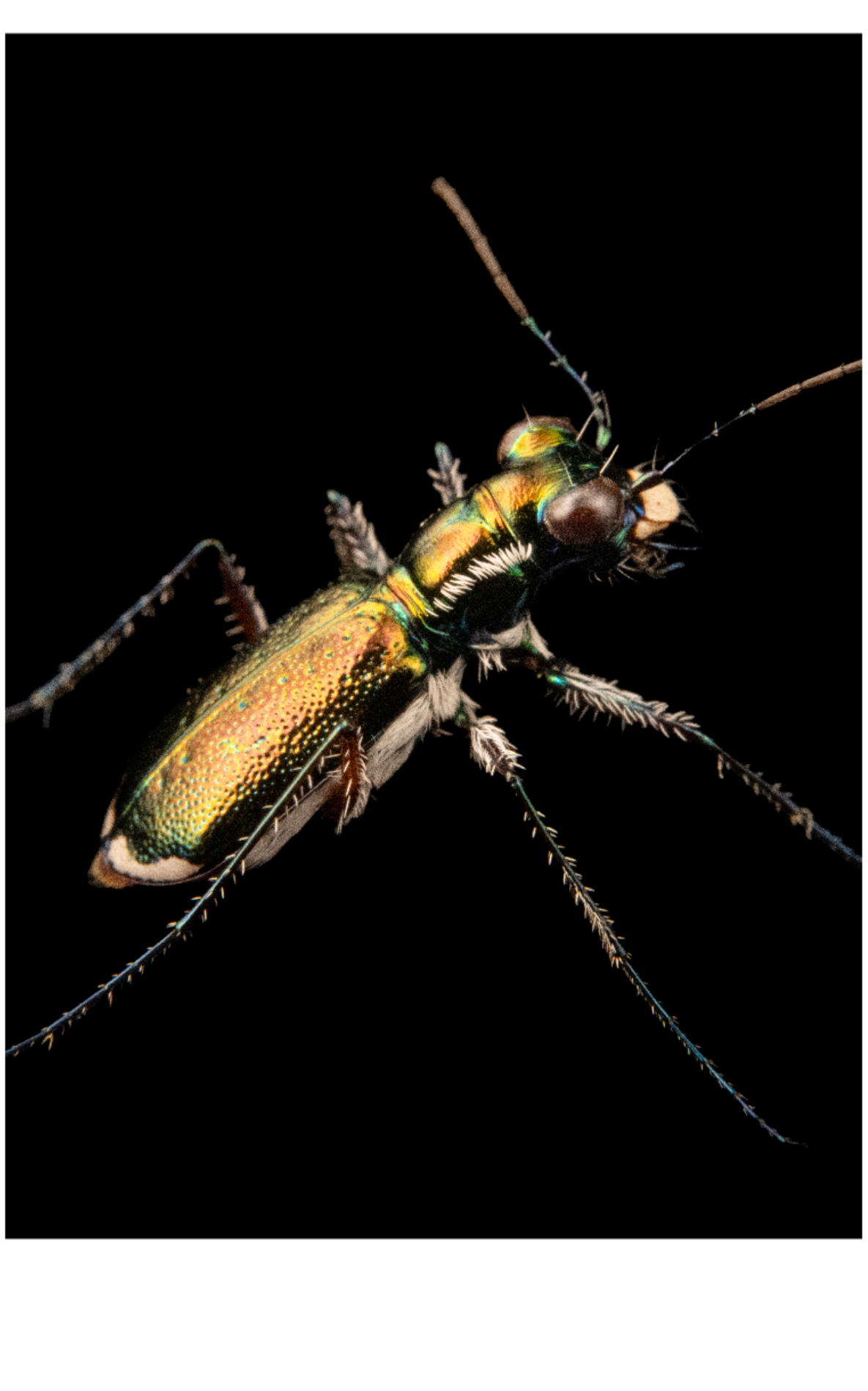
Photo: Aerial view of the Cuando River.

Protecting Species Through the Power of Photography

In November 2023, Explorer Joel Sartore's photograph of the endangered Miami tiger beetle marked the 15,000th species added to the **National Geographic Photo Ark** project. The Photo Ark seeks to document every species living in the world's zoos, aquariums and wildlife sanctuaries around the world, with a goal of driving awareness about extinction crises and support for conservation.

Funded by the Photo Ark Species Impact Initiative, Explorer George Gann is working to protect Florida's pine rocklands — the Miami tiger beetle's sole remaining habitat — from threats including the proposed development of a nearby water park. In December 2023, National Geographic Wildlife Watch investigative reporter Rachel Fobar also published an article about the danger the park would pose to the rocklands' endangered species. The national attention generated from this article, Gann's work and the Photo Ark's milestone species announcement helped influence county commissioners to withdraw the development proposal.

Photo: An endangered Miami tiger beetle (Cicindelidia florida) in the Pine Rocklands, FL, USA.



INSPIRING THE CHANGEMAKERS OF TOMORROW

Aiming for a Better Future

In 2022, the National Geographic Society joined forces with the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation to launch the **Slingshot Challenge** to inspire the next generation of planetary stewards. Challenge participants create a one-minute video outlining a solution to an environmental issue in their community, and selected awardees can receive up to $10,000 in funding. To support entrants throughout the challenge, the Society provides workshops and resources to help them leverage their creativity and ingenuity to identify solutions.

In its inaugural year, the challenge received 1,838 entries from nearly 3,000 youth in 80 countries. In May 2023, the Society awarded $1,000 in funding to 10 finalist

submissions, and $10,000 each to five Top Honors submissions. Award recipients were also recognized at the Society's Explorers Festival in Washington, D.C. Year two of the challenge launched in September 2023, featuring a new collaboration with the Earthshot Prize to connect challenge alumni with expert mentorship and guidance to help bring their ideas to life.

Photo: 2023 Slingshot Challenge awardees at the National Geographic Society headquarters.

Engaging New Perspectives

In 2023, the **National Geographic Photo Camp** celebrated its 20th anniversary. Created and directed by National Geographic Explorer in Residence Kirsten Elstner in 2003, the program provides a meaningful introduction to photography for young people from communities around the world. Since its founding, the program has engaged over 3,000 students from more than 40 countries, providing the opportunity to explore their unique perspectives and tell stories through photography.

Photo Camp offers a unique, immersive learning environment that allows young people to connect with world-class Explorers and photographers. In 2023, more than 300 student participants learned from 35 Explorer mentors (including eight Photo Camp alumni) in six countries. In addition, a collaboration with the Society's Education division brought Photo Camps to six marginalized communities within the United States, emphasizing geography education and working with local partners to ensure continued learning opportunities for participants.

Photo: Photo Camp Botswana student Prince Tembo Sokologang takes photos of the Okavango Delta in Moremi Game Reserve.

EQUIPPING EXPLORERS TO GO FURTHER

Exploring the Edge of Innovation

The National Geographic Society's in-house **Exploration Technology Lab** (Ex Tech Lab) develops and expands access to cutting-edge technologies and tools that accelerate the science, storytelling and education projects of National Geographic Explorers.

The Ex Tech Lab served more than 600 Explorers in 2023, building and deploying breakthrough systems to facilitate learnings about the planet, nature and the cultural makeup of our world. In September 2023, the Lab installed a custom, edge-based AI camera trap network in the Jack and Laura Dangermond Preserve in California as part of Explorer Rae Wynn-Grant's work observing mountain lion feeding ecology. The Ex Tech Lab camera trap network has helped Wynn-Grant's team reveal the challenges facing mountain lions and large carnivores forced to shift their habitats due to climate change. The custom-built camera trap network incorporates the capacity to transmit AI-classified imagery from the traps via Iridium satellites, enabling near real-time notification of events.

Photo: The African Marine Mammal Conservation Organization (AMMCO) the National Geographic Society deploy a drop camera in Limbe, Cameroon.

Harnessing the Science of Story

The National Geographic Society's **Impact Story Lab** is an award-winning creative unit that combines world-class storytelling with social and behavioral science — collaborating with Explorers to produce multimedia experiences that drive positive change and advance the goals of their programs.

In 2023, the Impact Story Lab produced 14 projects to support Explorer work and led 12 workshops about storytelling techniques for more than 400 Explorers and industry professionals. These projects included the acclaimed feature-length documentary "Nkashi: Race for the Okavango," celebrating the rich natural and cultural makeup of the Okavango Delta; a digital education series produced with the Society's EduLab entitled "I Wonder," which follows Explorer Anand Varma's work to record the life cycle of cephalopods; a short film entitled "Flora, Fauna, Funga" that documents Explorer Giuliana Furci's search for new mushrooms in Chile; and an audio series that expands on Explorer Shabana Basij-Rasikh's work to support displaced Afghan girls with education opportunities and stories of hope.

Photo: Impact Story Lab producer Sam Sheline filming in southern Chile.

ENGAGING GLOBAL AUDIENCES

Celebrating Stories with Impact

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

Photo: Musicians from the NEWF Composers Lab perform at the 2023 Storytellers Summit.

Convening Our Global Explorer Community

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

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

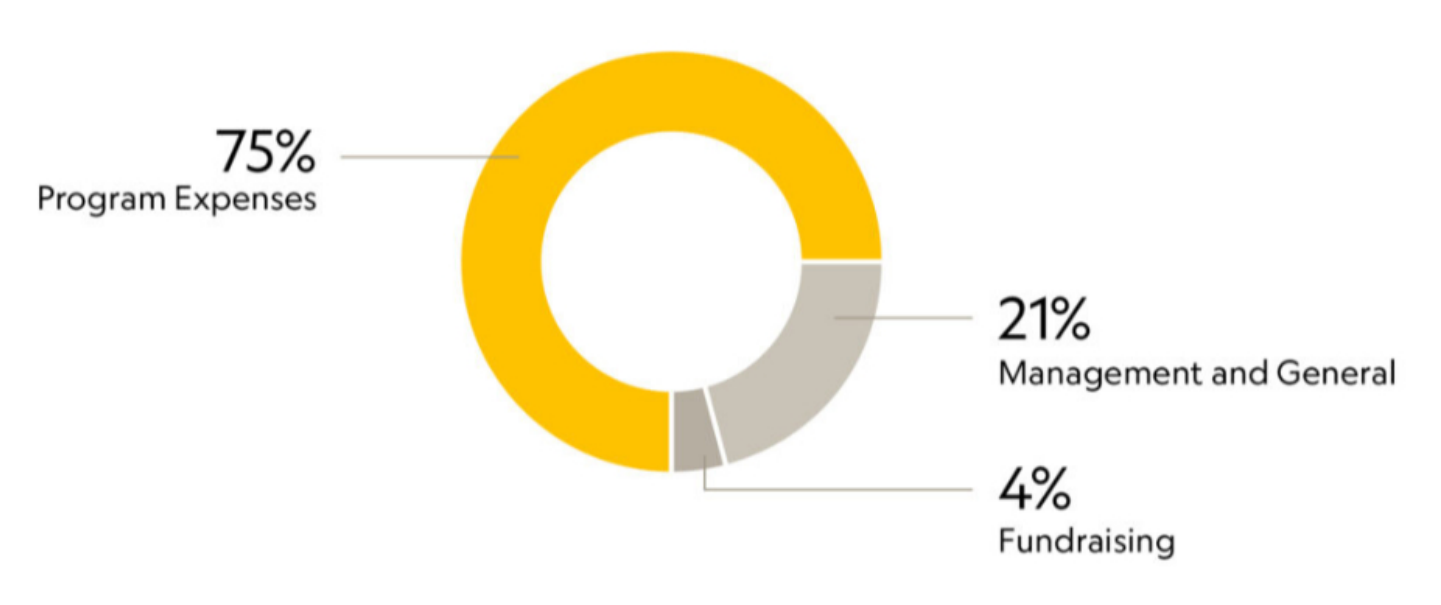
Photo: 2023 Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year Shabana Basij-Rasikh addresses an audience at the 2023 Explorers Festival in Washington, D.C., USA.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

100 percent of donor contributions go to support Explorers and our mission work.

> *"The National Geographic Society's financial health continues to be strong. Thanks to the dedicated support of our donors and partners, 2023 was a record-breaking year in fundraising for us. This remarkable achievement enabled us to deepen our investment in our programs — a 14% year-over-year increase in total spending. Looking ahead, the 2026 opening of our new Base Camp experience will be a significant milestone. This expansion represents a major enhancement of our capacity to convene Explorers, educators, storytellers and scientists to build critical new programs. The sustained support of donors, paired with our strong balance sheet and this new immersive experience, will allow us to amplify our impact and share our mission with global audiences far into the future."*

Kevin J. Maroni
Chairman of the Finance Committee and Member of the Board of Trustees



In compliance with standard disclosure requirements for tax-exempt public benefit organizations in the Netherlands, the Society's Standard Form Publication Requirement is available to view **here**.

Photos: Renderings of planned exhibits and experiences at the renovated National Geographic Society headquarters, opening in 2026.

BREAKING NEW GROUND

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

We are grateful to our Base Camp Founding Donors. You can **find the full list here**.

LEARN MORE AND SUPPORT

THE POWER OF PHILANTHROPY

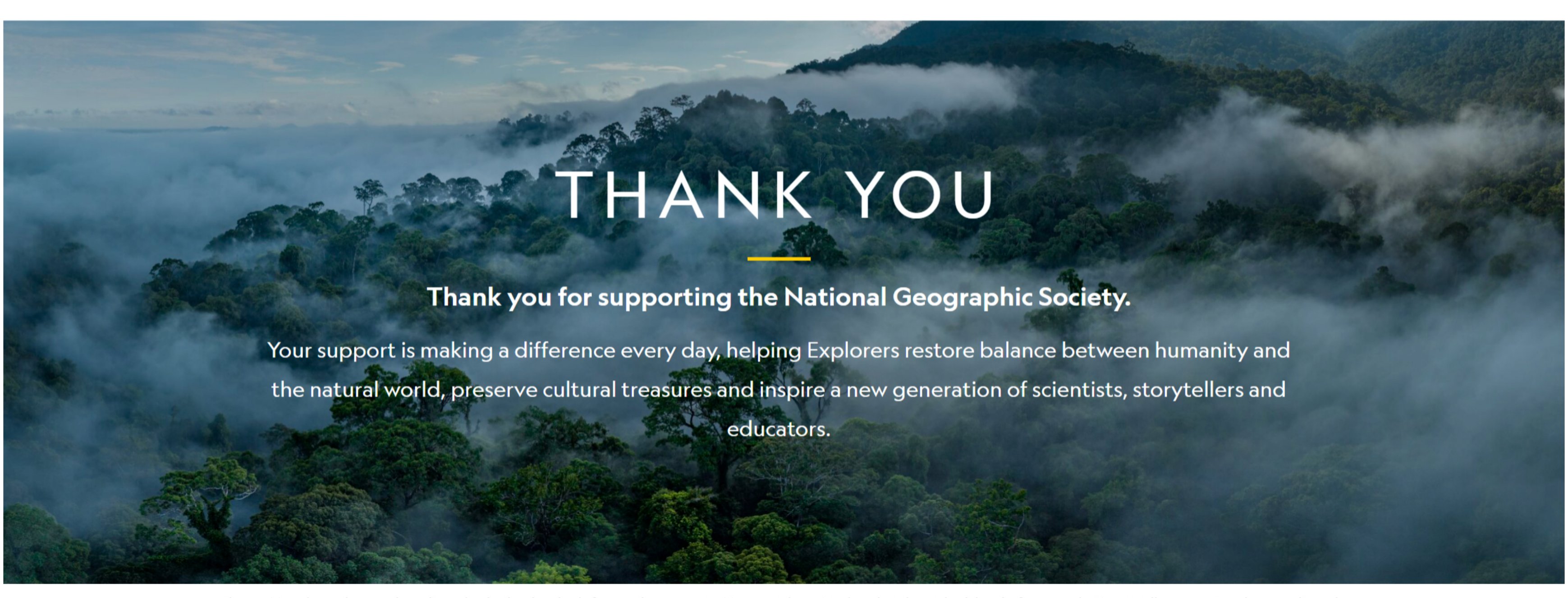
Photo: Archival photos show the wetlands of the Paraná Delta region in Argentina before a historic drought caused by climate change devastated the ecosystem.

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

$122.8M raised through donor contributions	$1M+ 16 gifts of $1M+ provided vital resources to support Explorers	$100K+ 81 gifts of $100K+ helped advance our important work
$404 The average gift amount donated to the Society	100% Philanthropic participation by the Society's Board of Trustees and senior leadership team	112K+ donors and partners supported the Society's Explorers and mission work

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

Kara Ramirez Mullins
Chief Advancement Officer



THANK YOU

Thank you for supporting the National Geographic Society.

Your support is making a difference every day, helping Explorers restore balance between humanity and the natural world, preserve cultural treasures and inspire a new generation of scientists, storytellers and educators.

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

DOWNLOAD FULL REPORT (PDF)

Your contributions are critically important to helping us continue making bold moves into the future. We pride ourselves on financial transparency and accountability. Learn more by **reading last year's report**.

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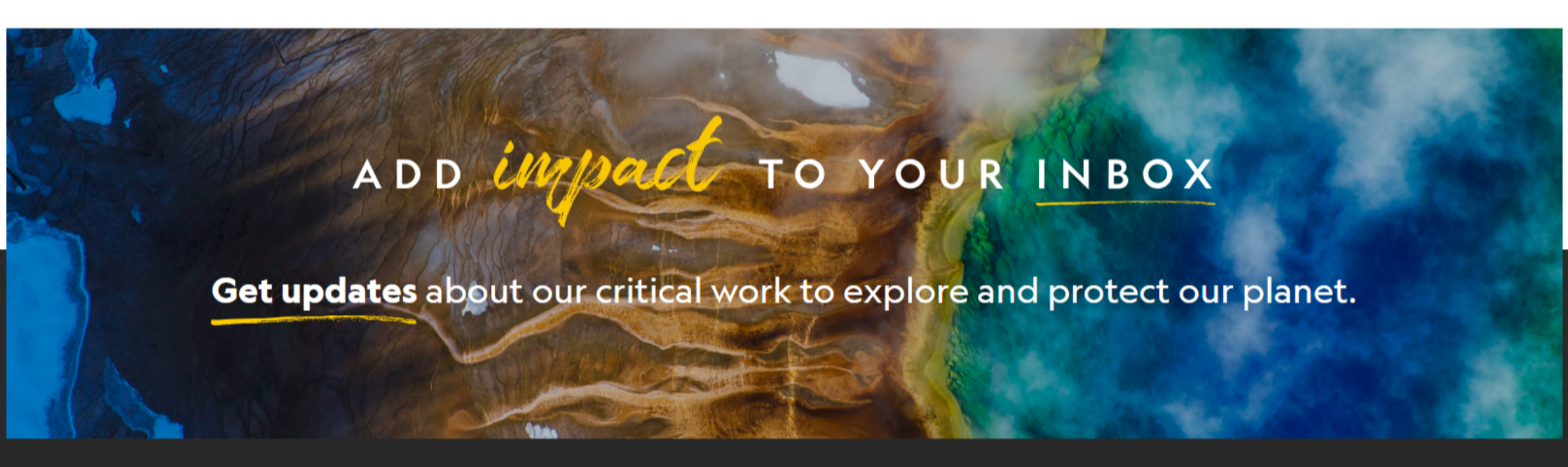
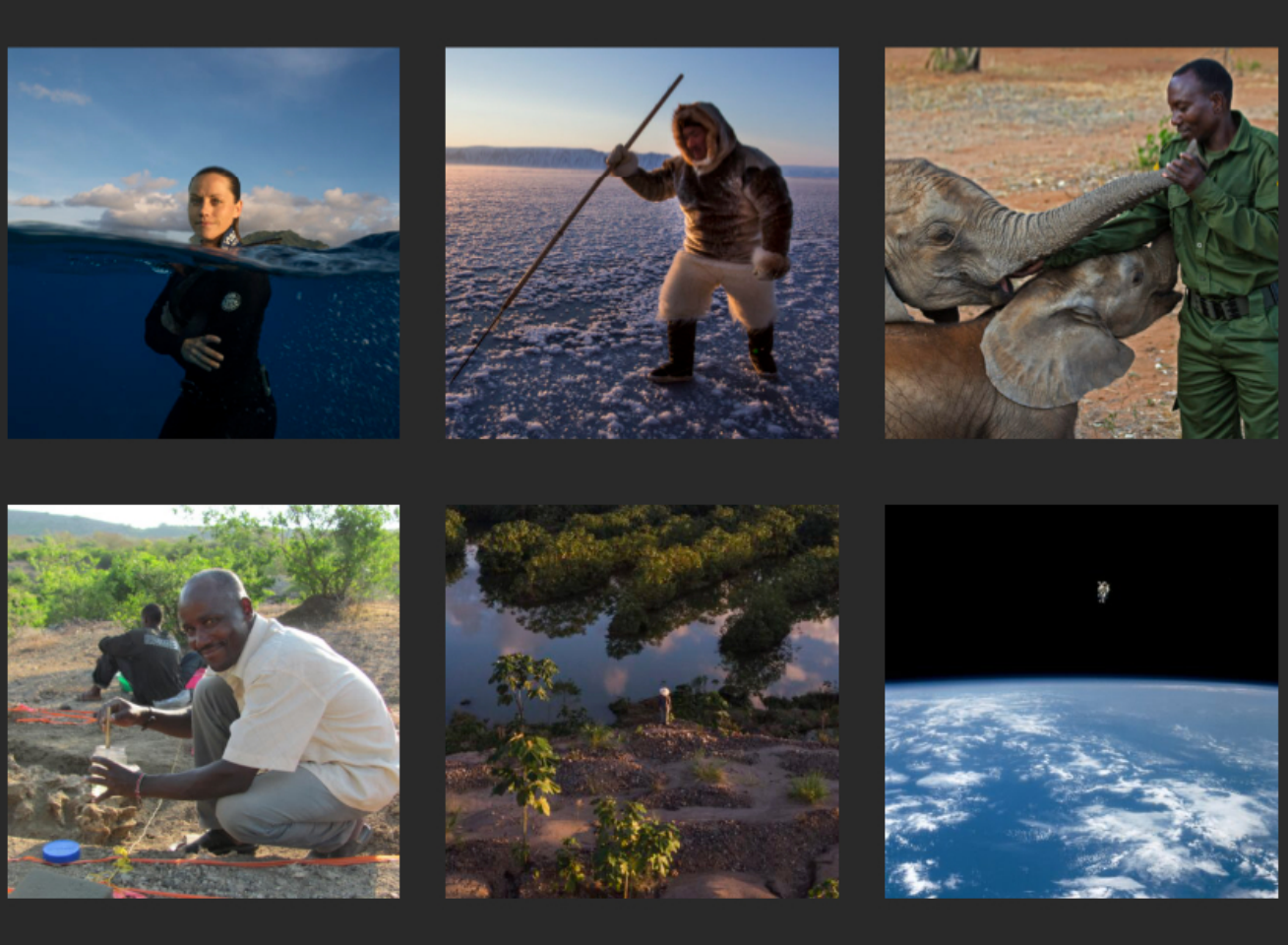

ADD impact TO YOUR INBOX
Get updates about our critical work to explore and protect our planet.



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