

Wildlife WONDERS

As part of an inspirational conservation project called the New Big 5, pro wildlife photographers share their favourite animals and locations from around the world

Wildlife lovers and photographers around the world are being asked to vote for their “New Big 5” of wildlife – that is, their five favourite animals either to photograph themselves or to see in images. The idea behind the project is simple: whereas the old “Big 5” was based on the five toughest animals for colonial-era hunters to shoot and kill in Africa, this New Big 5 is all about celebrating wildlife photography, rather than hunting – shooting with a camera, not a gun.

In 2020’s difficult times, it’s a fun (and tough) question: what would your Big 5 be? But the serious aim behind the project is to raise awareness about the many threats facing wildlife around the world, from poaching to habitat loss. More than a million species of animals, insects and plants are currently at risk of extinction across the globe.

The New Big 5 was founded and launched by British wildlife pro Graeme Green after more than nine months of incredibly hard work. “As a photographer, I’ve spent so much time with wildlife,” says Graeme. “I’ve also become

more aware of the harm we’re doing to the natural world and the animals we share the planet with.”

Graeme’s international initiative has been supported by more than 50 of the biggest names in photography. Joining the photographers for the project are also some of the world’s leading conservationists and wildlife lovers, including Chris Packham, Moby, and Virginia McKenna, and wildlife charities such as Save The Elephants, WWF, Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund and Polar Bears International.

Dr Jane Goodall has also backed the initiative. “What a great project the New Big 5 is,” the conservationist says. “I wonder what the final choices will be? There are so many incredible animals... all fascinating in different ways.”

It says something positive about our world that people are now more interested in photographing wildlife than killing it. To celebrate the project’s launch, we’ve asked 10 of the New Big 5 photographers for their top wildlife photography tips, as well as their favourite locations and animals to photograph. Turn to p42 for an insightful Q&A with the project’s founder, Graeme Green.



Daisy Gilardini



Greg du Toit



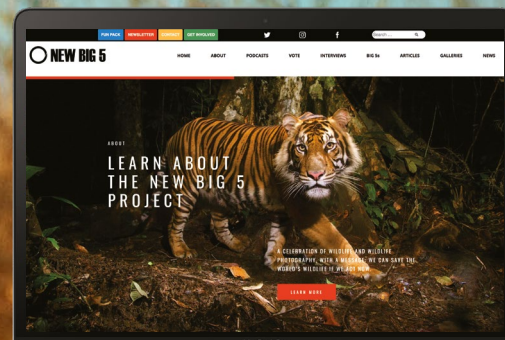
Tim Laman



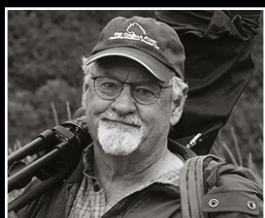
Marina Cano



Clement Wild



Remember to vote for
your Big 5 animals at
www.newbig5.com
Results will be
announced later
in 2020.



Thomas D Mangelsen



Carole Deschuymere



Marco Gaiotti



Piper Mackay



Michel Zoghzi

“Animals can’t talk to us, but we can be their ambassadors and talk for them”



Daisy Gilardini

My Big 5: Polar bear, spirit bear, grizzly bear, elephant, lion
www.daisygilardini.com

Favourite wildlife location: Wapusk, Canada

One of my favourite wildlife locations is Wapusk National Park in Manitoba, Canada. Wapusk is the southernmost polar bear denning area in the world, and one of the very few places where you can witness polar bear cubs exiting the maternity den for the first time. Being able to observe cubs playing joyfully and tirelessly for hours is a photographer’s dream. It’s one of the most amazing things I’ve ever photographed in my life.

But it’s certainly not an easy task. With temperatures that can drop below -50°C, technical and physical challenges abound. Wapusk is extremely unique, as you are not in vehicles but are on the land with the polar bears. Parks in Canada have strict rules: we can’t approach closer than 100 metres to the bears. They know that they’re in a national park and they seem to know they’re not in danger. I have been doing this for many years now, and the animals are always totally relaxed.

Favourite animal to photograph: Polar bear

The polar bear is the king of the Arctic, and my number one animal to capture in its natural habitat. It’s at the top of the food chain. Polar bears are amazing creatures that can survive extreme temperatures. The mums are super-tender with the cubs, and I’m just in love with them.



x4 © Daisy Gilardini

Daisy’s top tip

Respect the animals: The animals come first. We are guests in their habitats. If you really want to catch the personality of an animal with wildlife photography, you have to be accepted by the animal and work in their environment, which means letting them be themselves.





Greg du Toit

My Big 5: Lion, leopard, wild dog, cheetah, elephant
www.gregdutoit.com

Favourite wildlife location: Tuli Block, Botswana

All wildlife photographers have their favourite haunts, places we go back to time and again. One of mine is Botswana's Tuli Block. This little-known corner of southeastern Botswana is, both literally and figuratively, hundreds of kilometres away from the more popular Okavango Delta. In fact, it resembles no other ecosystem in Africa, and when you arrive at the Pont Drift border post and drive into the area for the first time, you wouldn't be blamed for thinking the landscape was lunar and utterly devoid of any life. But stick around and soon you'll realize that the Tuli Block is full of surprises. That's why I like it here: you never know what's around the corner.

Favourite animal to photograph: Lion

I unashamedly admit that the majestic lion is undoubtedly my favourite photographic subject. They exude a confident type of supreme power that still, after all these years, excites me. Lions are both powerful and goofy; they are an intoxicating combination of regality and stupidity, as they play the role of both king and jester.

Greg's top tip

Be prepared: Lots of photographers wait until they get to a sighting and then take their camera out of their bag and set their dials. My advice is roll out of camp ready to shoot. Have your camera out the bag, switched on and with settings ready to shoot action. Try f/8, 1/1600th sec and auto ISO.



x4 © Greg du Toit





Marina Cano

My Big 5: Elephant, zebra, hippo, lynx, baboon
www.marinacano.com

Favourite wildlife location: Etosha, Namibia

Namibia is an amazing, beautiful country with landscapes that are really different. Every place has its own beauty and its own character, but Etosha National Park in the north is spectacular. It's a unique place where the white salty earth from the pan gives a special character to all the animals who live there. The landscapes are full of intense, warm colours and contain many different waterholes that make it possible to take fantastic images with big herds of elephants drinking, or other animals, like giraffes, rhinos, leopards. I can look at a photo, and even if I wasn't told it was taken in Etosha, I'd recognise it's Etosha because the light and the land are so distinct. For me, it's a paradise.

Favourite animal to photograph: Elephant

I love to photograph elephants. I get super-connected to them. I love seeing them with their babies, with their families. I feel they're so much like humans in their behaviour. This beautiful, huge animal can be so tender, so gentle and emotional. From a photographic point of view, they're awesome. I love their faces, their skin, the beauty of their bodies, and when they do their dust bath. The young ones are playful all the time. I could spend all my life with elephants.

Marina's top tip

Make a connection: I'm really attached to emotions. Some people travel to Africa or other places just to tick the box or take a selfie. Those people, for me, are not photographers. Photographers look for special moments, waiting and spending time with animals, even if we're not shooting. There is a connection between real photographers and the wildlife – it's about much more than achieving whatever picture.



x3 © Marina Cano



© Fergus Kennedy

“Together we can do a lot. Every single person can really do a lot”





Tim's top tip

Go the extra mile: I want to get images of species that haven't been well-photographed, to try to tell stories about the lesser-known creatures. It often involves going to pretty tough places and putting in a lot of effort and time in the field to capture unique moments. It takes a lot of work, but it usually pays off.



Tim Laman

My Big 5: Orangutan, elephant, mountain gorilla, cheetah, polar bear
www.timlaman.com / www.savewildorangutans.com

Favourite wildlife location: Borneo

Borneo's wildlife has incredible diversity. It's one of the oldest rainforest areas in the world. In Gunung Palung National Park, where I've spent a lot of time, there are 240 species of bird, including eight different types of hornbill, and thousands of species of plant. There are five species of cat, including the little leopard cat, clouded leopard, and marbled cat.

My wife Cheryl Knott is a primatologist, and she's been studying orangutans in Borneo for over 25 years. I've also been researching and photographing projects there, along with Cheryl's orangutan project. It has been the biggest long-term project of my career.

Favourite animal to photograph: Orangutan

It's been one of my life-long passion projects to document orangutans. We are one of their closest relatives, and share 97 per cent of our DNA. I like the challenge of photographing orangutans; there is so much interesting behaviour that they do, but they don't do it that often, so it's really hard to get a good shot of them doing things like building a nest or using a leaf umbrella.

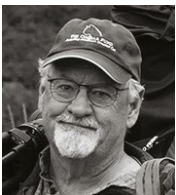
x3 © Tim Laman

“Things aren't looking great, but I have hope for the future”





“Climate change is changing everything. Climate change is the big one. If we don’t solve that, we can’t solve anything”



Thomas D Mangelsen

My Big 5: Polar bear, elephant, rhino, tiger, grizzly bear
mangelsen.com

Favourite wildlife location: Yellowstone, USA

Yellowstone in the United States is one of my favourite locations for photographing wildlife. I moved to Jackson Hole and the Yellowstone area because there is so much wildlife here. It’s where I’ve been probably for 40 years, and probably I will die here. Hopefully I still have a few years left. I had deer walking across my yard last night, and we get so many birds coming to the bird feeder. Yesterday, I saw otters, and I am looking right now at the Tetons in the snow, and it’s pretty hard to beat. If I couldn’t live in this place, I don’t know where I would go. I am very fortunate.

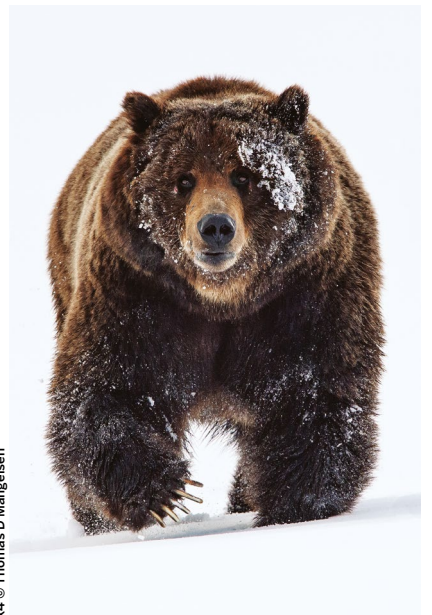
Favourite animal to photograph: Polar bear

Polar bears are so beautiful, and they live in a really challenging place. They’re difficult to photograph, animated... they do the play fighting. They could be very dangerous in a situation if you are alone on the ice because they are total carnivores, unlike grizzly bears who eat berries and grasses. Polar bears are the most powerful creatures in the north, the top of the food chain.

Their behaviour is also very interesting, such as the way they treat their young. The Inuits have made beautiful carvings of polar bears because their silhouettes and their shapes are themselves beautiful. The history of the Inuit with polar bears is important, as polar bears are in their legends.

Thomas’s top tip

Be inquisitive: There’s always something special in the wild that surprises me, and I learn something all the time about animals. Learning new behaviours is interesting to me. It’s about observing and learning from your observations and being patient, taking time and then calculating all that you’ve learned for another time. The things you figure out will make the difference between people who go out and capture images that are worthwhile, as opposed to someone who just maybe gets a one-off picture. Learning about behaviour gives me a slight advantage.



x4 © Thomas D Mangelsen





Clement Wild

My Big 5: Lion, caracal, wild dog, gorilla, cheetah
www.clementwild.com

Favourite wildlife location: Maasai Mara, Kenya

I have been to many parks in Africa and India. They all offer different scenery and subjects, but there is just something magical about my favourite park: the Maasai Mara in Kenya. I have been there countless times, and every day it's different.

The vast landscape provides such a fantastic canvas for wildlife photography, and the diversity gives photographers opportunities to create many scenes in just one day. I have had days that started with a beautiful sunrise in the morning, followed by rain and beautiful rainbows covering the sky, and then that same day ending with a very beautiful sunset.

Favourite animal to photograph: Lion

I love big cats. Their behaviour never gets boring. I can sit with a leopard all day, observing its behaviour, seeing how many times it will try to hunt for its cubs. And there's one animal that ever since I started photographing wildlife I have always desired to photograph: the caracal. It's a beautiful cat, but it's disappearing. I also love cheetahs and lions. The lion is so powerful, so majestic, and so beautiful to photograph.



x4 © Clement Wild

Clement's top tip

Avoid clichés: Photographers always want that classic image of wildebeests crossing the Mara River in their thousands. You can still get that, but also start looking for things like hunts. When the wildebeests are crossing the river, there's a lot of movement and confusion. That's the perfect time for predators like lions to hunt. Here, you can try other techniques, like panning, to give you an image with motion.

"These are the creatures we share the planet with, and they deserve to be here as much as we do"



x5 © Carole Deschuymere

“Know your camera so well that you can operate it blindly without thinking”



Carole Deschuymere

My Big 5: Leopard, lion, wild dog, cheetah, elephant
caroledeschuymere.com

Favourite wildlife location: Mana Pools, Zimbabwe

The freedom you have as a wildlife photographer in Mana Pools in Zimbabwe is unparalleled. I walk with lions, wild dogs, elephants, hyenas... and when you are not stuck in a car, you can get a much better perspective. You can choose your background, the angle of the light, and especially get a low angle.

There is magic in Mana Pools, which I've witnessed many times. The amazing blue light that we see, between the trees of the acacia albida forest and the blue hue of the Zambezi escarpment across the Zambezi River, form a wonderful background for animal pictures. The feeling you get when an elephant allows you to be close to him makes you feel more alive than ever. I've even witnessed the birth of a baby elephant here and seen him take his first steps and have his first drink of milk. This is where you can truly feel at one with nature.

Favourite animal to photograph: Leopard

I love to photograph all wild cats and dogs, but I have to say the leopard is the one I love the most. It's such an elusive cat, and that makes me want to find it even more. Of course, you can see a lot of leopard pictures when they're sleeping in trees. But when I find one, I stay with him all day – you never know what will happen.

Carole's top tip

Know your camera: Make sure you know your settings and camera buttons so well that you can operate it blindly and without thinking. Especially in those once-in-a-lifetime sightings, you don't want to be looking at your camera to change your settings. Always be prepared to fire the shutter, and anticipate what could happen in your habitat.



Marco Gaiotti

My Big 5: Polar bear, orangutan, gelada monkey, brown bear, lion
500px.com/marcogaiotti

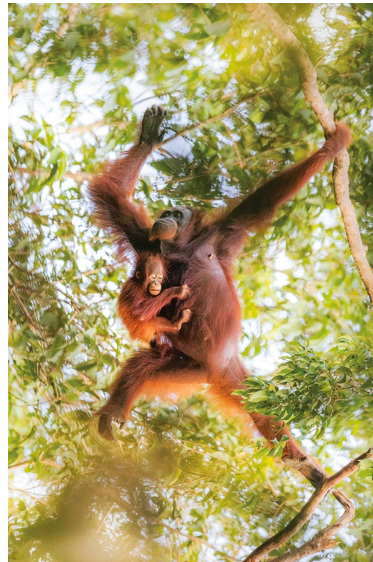
Favourite wildlife location: Norway

I like travelling to Norway as the season is changing – the low light creates stunning warm tones on snowy slopes. In spring time, frozen fjords turn into pink colours just before sunset.

Arctic foxes and reindeer often provide fantastic opportunities, and with some luck polar bears can also be spotted on the frozen Arctic Ocean. In late August through to September we usually sail towards the far edge of the pack ice, away from the islands, in search of polar bears who have been following the ice retreat in the summer. This is also a sad time for many bears stranded on the islands, with no food available. Many of them starve to death, as climate change delays the return of the sea ice year after year.

Favourite animal to photograph: Arctic fox

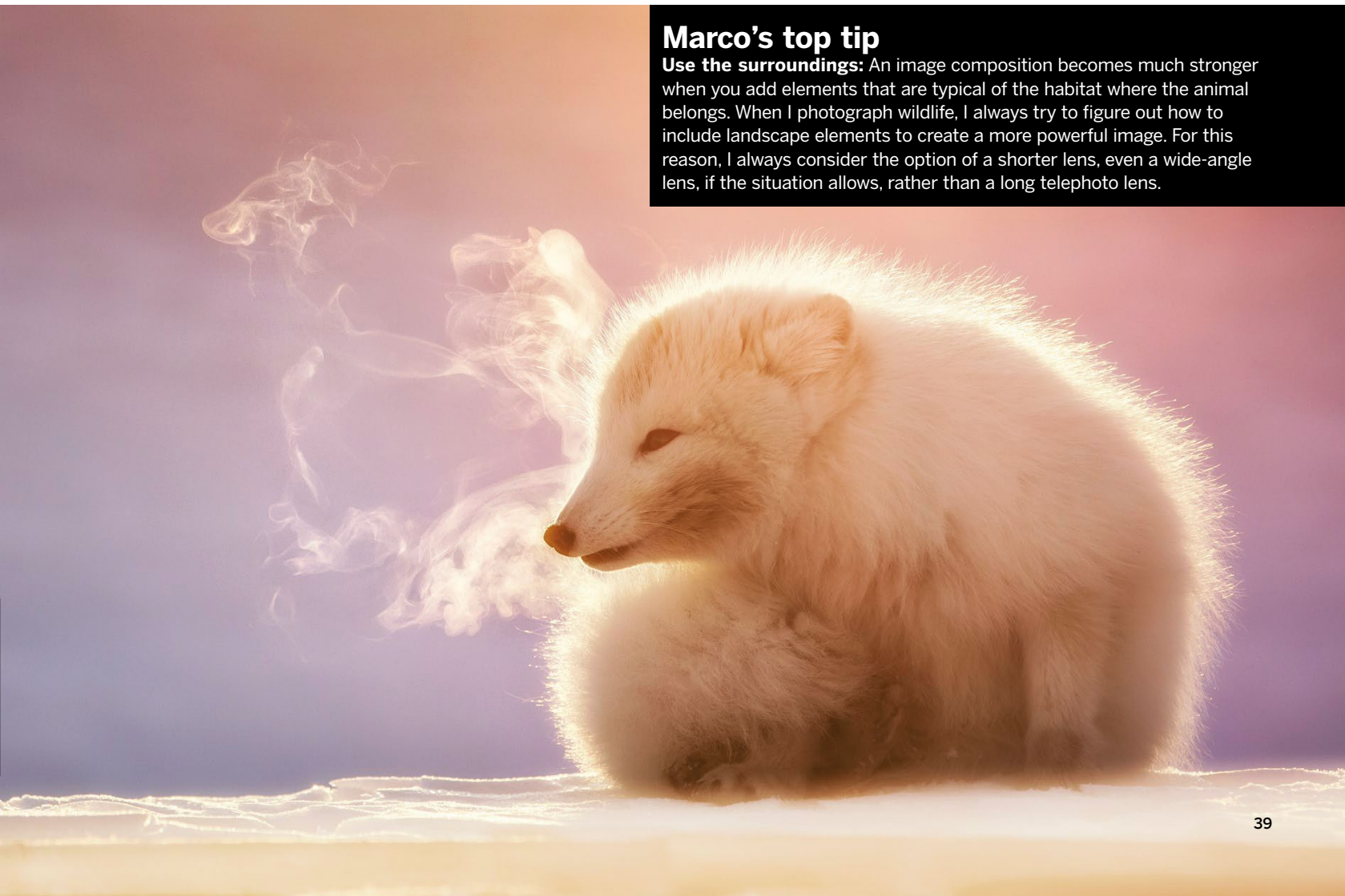
The Arctic fox is my favourite animal to photograph, especially in the high Arctic in winter. They're the only land mammals that can survive at these latitudes, as polar bears are technically considered marine mammals. Photographing Arctic foxes is sometimes challenging, as they are often very active and keep running around in search of food. It is a beautiful animal that perfectly recalls the Arctic habitat with its long white hair.



x5 © Marco Gaiotti

Marco's top tip

Use the surroundings: An image composition becomes much stronger when you add elements that are typical of the habitat where the animal belongs. When I photograph wildlife, I always try to figure out how to include landscape elements to create a more powerful image. For this reason, I always consider the option of a shorter lens, even a wide-angle lens, if the situation allows, rather than a long telephoto lens.





Piper Mackay

My Big 5: Elephant, cheetah, zebra, lion, mountain gorilla
www.pipermackayphotography.com



Favourite wildlife location: Maasai Mara, Kenya

Like many African wildlife photographers, the renowned Maasai Mara is the reserve where I spend the majority of my time. However, I treasure the unique highland locations, such as the Simien Mountains in Ethiopia, for the gelada monkeys. The scenery is beyond stunning. The geladas are extraordinarily exotic and unique to this region, and you can easily be surrounded by groups of more than 500. There is no time limit, and in many situations I am there by myself.

The spectacular landscape, lack of time restrictions, and on-foot close encounters gives you the ultimate freedom of creativity, from wild-angle shots to tight portraits and action shots.

Favourite animal to photograph: Elephant

Elephants go to my soul. Captivated by their behaviour, I could sit silently and peacefully watching them for hours without a camera in my hands. Everything about them, including the low rumbles, the alarming trumpeting, the disciplinary nudges of a mother with her young, the dusting after a mud bath, the practices for territorial battles, and the single-file marches across the open plains, is fascinating. These strong and vital creatures can also seem fragile when you realise they're faced with extinction. Capturing their essence in the wild is beyond exciting.

Piper's top tip

Stay calm: Resist the urge to yell "stop" as soon as you spot an exciting subject. Take just a few seconds to evaluate your background and light, before positioning the vehicle (or yourself) and choosing your settings. Reactionary spraying-and-praying rarely produces an impactful image.

x4 © Piper Mackay





Michel Zoghzoghi

My Big 5: Jaguar, lion, polar bear, Arctic fox, cheetah
www.mz-images.com

Favourite wildlife location: the Pantanal, Brazil

My top wildlife photography spot is the Pantanal, a tropical wetland area in South America. Days are spent in small boats on the water looking for the elusive jaguar, between August and October, before the rains start. Jaguars spend their days walking along the river looking for prey – usually caimans or capybaras.

What makes the Pantanal my favourite photography location is the variety of wildlife, from colourful birds to caimans and anacondas and, of course, jaguars. It is also the landscape. An early morning on the river just before sunrise, with fog surrounding ancient trees, ideally with a jaguar on a branch, is magical.

Favourite animal to photograph: Jaguar

I'm fascinated by the strength and elegance of jaguars. Their hunting abilities are second to none, and they possess a strength, speed and stealthiness that makes them the ultimate hunter. The landscapes that jaguars live in are also among the most beautiful I have seen, with a mix of rivers, lush vegetation and giant exposed roots.



x4 © Michel Zoghzoghi

“I focus on capturing the beauty that the planet has to offer”

Michel's top tip

Study animal behaviour: It takes a lot of time and patience to capture animal behaviour. It is very important to know enough about the animal you're photographing to be able to predict its behaviour, its next move. It would be a total waste of time, for example, to try to get interesting photos of a male lion during the day, in the middle of the heat.



Q&A

with Graeme Green, British wildlife photographer and founder of the New Big 5 project

After nine months of toil and passion, Graeme's project has finally been launched. Where did the idea come from and where is it headed next?

Tell us more about your personal work and approach to wildlife photography.

I've been travelling the world with cameras and a notepad for about 15 years. I don't just cover wildlife, but also landscapes, people, cultures and global issues.

With my wildlife photos, I want to do justice to how incredible the creatures we share the planet with are: not just lions and gorillas, but tiny lizards, frogs, colourful birds...

I work for a lot of magazines and newspapers, so photos need to tell a story or communicate something. But it's also important to push my creativity. I'm looking for something unique, which might be the character of an animal, interesting behaviour, or a moment of drama, humour or tenderness. I want an emotional response. I want people to care about the pictures and animals.

Conservation issues have been part of my wildlife photography for years, but seeing the threats currently facing the world's wildlife, it's become increasingly important to me. I hope to make it more central to my work.

What inspired you to create the New Big 5?

I had the idea years ago, on assignment in Botswana. It felt to me like something that should exist. A Big 5 based on the animals hunters used to kill felt totally meaningless today – especially when so many people, like me, think it's crazy to want to kill and cause suffering to animals, whereas photography is more popular and relevant to people than ever. So you've got the old Big 5, which is about death, and the New Big 5, which is about life.

Photos are a brilliant way to celebrate the world's wildlife, but they're also a powerful tool to raise awareness. I wanted to take the idea of a New Big 5 of wildlife photography and turn it into a force for good, to hopefully highlight the need to protect the world's animals.

The project must have been a massive undertaking. Did you have any help getting it off the ground?

A good friend of mine helped build the website. Other than that, I've done most of the work myself: bringing the photographers and charities on board, recording the podcasts, writing articles and interviews. It's been nine months of incredibly hard work, long days, late nights, working through weekends, all without any funding at all. So it's been tough-going.

How did you approach the photographers and organisations that are now involved?

It took a lot of time. One thing that was really important to me, and that I'm really proud of, is that it really is a global project. There are photographers not just from the UK and the US, but from Mexico, Lebanon, Kenya, China, France, Australia, South Africa, Peru... it took a lot of work to find and talk to all those photographers, but the project's better for it.



Once I managed to reach people, though, it wasn't too difficult to get them on board. The idea behind the project is so simple. Most photographers are passionate about wildlife and want to see these animals protected, so they were happy to help.

What do you hope people take away from the New Big 5?

The main message is just how serious the situation is for many of the world's animals. I think a lot of people are kind of aware that there are some issues but maybe don't know that we stand to lose so many of the world's animals if we don't act now. Ethiopian wolves are down to less than 500. Cheetahs are down to just 7,100. Lions have dropped from 200,000 to 20,000 in just 50 years. Elephants, rhinos and tigers are still being slaughtered for their tusks, horns and skins. Pangolins are being wiped out for traditional "medicine" in Asia. Orangutans are losing their habitat.

I don't want to live in a world where elephants, lions, cheetahs, orangutans and giraffes have been wiped out. And the project isn't just about the big iconic animals, but all wildlife, including lesser known creatures. We stand to lose species of frog, bird, fish, bat, lizard – all these are far too valuable to lose. We need them for ourselves and for the planet.

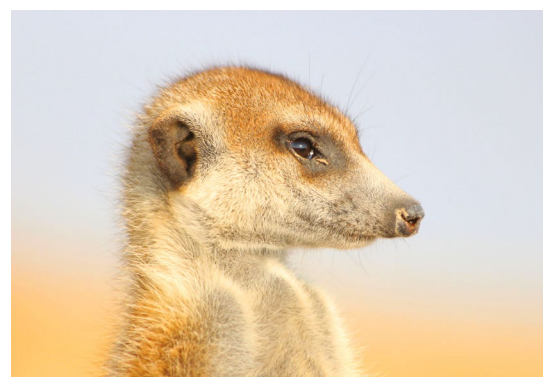
The other message is that change is possible. We can solve these problems and stop these animals from disappearing.



x 8 © Graeme Green



© Andrea Moreno



What's next for the project, and for you?

We're going to run the project for six months, before announcing the results later this year. From there, I've got ideas for next steps, but I need to keep them under wraps for now. I'd also like to run future projects focusing on birds, on marine life, and on the UK's wildlife.

I've learned so much from working on the project. I've had nine months of thinking about photography and talking to some of the world's best photographer, and I'd like to start putting those ideas into action. And I've got a load of ideas for stories I'd like to work on.

