



DEDICATED TO THE WORLD'S CUSTODIANS OF WILD SPACES & WILDLIFE



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Whitetail doe and fawn in Crockett County, Texas. ©Rita Frey/RitaFrey.com

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North & South America



All Texas wildlife are public property, according to the state supreme court. The *Houston Chronicle* recently [reported](#) the high court's reaffirmation that the state's deer herd, even those animals held by private breeders, are a public resource to be managed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The decision aligns with the [North American Model of Wildlife Conservation](#).

The Wildlife Society wants wild horse and burro populations reduced as quickly as possible. In oral [testimony](#) to the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board, TWS called out the US Bureau of Land Management, one of two federal agencies charged with managing wild horses and burros, for a lack of progress. March 2020 estimates put the wild horse and burro population at 95,000 on BLM lands in the Western US. [TWS](#) is an international group of 11,000-plus wildlife professionals devoted to conservation, policy and management.

New Jersey is seeing more human-bear conflict. A September 21 [article](#) on NorthJersey.com reported that in the past two years the state's black bear population has increased by 44% to some 2,208. The state has also seen a spike in human-bear conflict, with bear complaints increasing by 66% in 2020. NJ hunters would like to see state lands opened to hunting to help manage the bear population.

Denizen of the tropical forest, 26 scarlet macaws were released into Guatemala's Mayan Biosphere Reserve as part of a partnership between the Wildlife Conservation Society and Guatemala's National Council of Protected Areas. An October 8 WCS [article](#) reports that the release "gives hope in a time of darkness" for the species impacted by habitat loss and poaching.

America's Conservation Enhancement Act has passed in both houses of Congress. ACE reauthorizes programs such the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and creates a chronic wasting disease task force. The act is "one more success for conservation legislation," [reported](#) the Wildlife Management Institute.

Wolverines across the US Northwest were denied 'endangered' status by the US Fish and Wildlife Service because research found stable numbers and movement across the Canadian border. Conservation groups called the decision "appalling" and sent a letter of intent to sue. The *Seattle Times* published the [story](#) on October 11.

Carp tacos for conservation! Chicago-area leaders held an Asian carp BBQ, according to an October 15 [article](#) on the news site Block Club Chicago. (Masks and social distancing were required.) The goal was to raise awareness of the invasive species and share how Chicagoans can help prevent the spread of Asian carp into local waterways and the Great Lakes.

Catastrophic wildfires highlight the need for better forest management, [according](#) to Tony Schoonen, Boone and Crockett Club CEO. He called for active forest management such as thinning and harvesting trees and using prescribed and managed burns to help prevent future wildfires.

Species-rich area in Los Angeles County ravaged by fire. The Bobcat Fire burned more than 115,000 acres within the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, [reported](#) the *Los Angeles Times* on October 14. Biologists are worried about the fate of rare and endangered species that call the area home.

A 'Hunting for Conservation' course is now offered online at Purdue University. A [story](#) on the school website says the course looks at the cultural, biological, economic and policy aspects of

hunting. All wildlife majors will be required to take the course in order to learn about hunting's role in wildlife management.

Better car lighting aims to reduce deer collisions. According to a October 13 [story](#) in the *Salina Post*, nearly one in six vehicle crashes in Kansas in 2018 (a total of 10,734) involved deer. Scientists at the National Wildlife Research Center are working to modify car headlights; researchers have found that when cars were better lit, so that deer could see them sooner, interactions between cars and deer fell by 25%.

In Alaska, a novel approach to GPS-tagging has documented 200-mile foraging excursions and dives down to 430 metres (1,410 feet) by female sea lions. The state's Dept. of Fish and Game is epoxying small satellite-tracking devices to sea lions, which eventually fall off during the late-summer molt. This [technology](#) allows researchers to understand sea lion foraging and movement ecology at an unprecedented scale.

The fight over Alaska's fish & game continues. When COVID-19 caused a food shortage in the village of Kake, the Federal Subsistence Board approved an out-of-season hunt in the Tongass National Forest for two moose and five deer. Now Alaska is asking a federal court to reverse that decision as part of a battle over who controls fish and game management in the state, [reported](#) *High Country News* on October 12.

The Tongass, continued: A new Environmental Impact Statement that includes a proposal to strip protection from the National Forest seems to indicate that the US government does plan to open 9.2 million acres of vital fisheries and wildlife habitat to development, [reported](#) the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership on September 25. The Tongass National Forest covers nearly 90% of the Alaskan Panhandle; see last month's *New York Times* photo [essay](#).

'Secret Tapes Reveal Pebble Mine Dig Could Last 200 Years' said a *Field and Stream* [article](#) on September 24. Pebble Mine executives admitted to people posing as potential investors that once they start digging their copper-and-gold mine in the headwaters of Alaska's Bristol Bay, home to the world's largest salmon runs, they have no intention to stop.

Millennials could drive a boom in hunting, [according](#) to KMOX Radio in St. Louis. Recapping stories by *The New York Times* and *Outdoor Magazine*, KMOX reported that younger Americans are taking up hunting as a way to secure ecologically conscious and healthy meat.

West Nile virus and habitat loss are killing Pennsylvania's ruffed grouse. The state has reached a 75-year low in grouse habitat; only 7% of Pennsylvania is made up of the young forest needed for courting, nesting and brood-rearing, the Johnstown *Tribune-Democrat* [reported](#) last month. And mosquito-borne West Nile virus reduces a grouse's life expectancy from about 10 years to just two.

New Mexico native communities push back against fossil fuel development, according to a recent [article](#) in *Earth Island Journal*. In May 2019 Native Americans and conservationists thought they had curbed rampant oil & gas drilling in the Greater Chaco—8,000 square miles (21,000 km sq) of New Mexico with a national park at its heart—but poor Internet connectivity on the Navajo Reservation prevented significant local input to virtual hearings. Now, the Greater Chaco Coalition of 200-plus tribal, environmental and community organizations is fighting further degradation of the high desert.

A federal judge has struck down California's ban on alligator and crocodile products. Louisiana's Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries, which manages that state's \$80 million-per-year alligator-products industry, challenged California's ban in December 2019. The [news](#) appeared on HoumaToday.com in mid-October.

US stops payments to the World Wildlife Fund and Wildlife Conservation Society. About half of the \$333 million that WWF received and at least \$19 million received by the WCS went to grants that paid security forces who allegedly murdered, raped, tortured and abused local people in Africa, according to a US Dept. of the Interior [memo](#). The [story](#) appeared on September 29 on DailyCaller.com.

BC's Tahltan Nation will pay its members to hunt more bears and wolves in order to help conserve other species that Canada's First Nations rely on, such as caribou, moose and salmon. At stake is not only conservation but also Indigenous constitutional and subsistence rights, management of the province's wildlife, maintaining "balance" among apex predators and

differences between outsider and local perspectives. For background, see “[Modern-Day Grizzly Bear Reality](#),” in the April issue of *Conservation Frontlines*. Then read this CBC News [report](#) from Sept. 16; and finally the [interview](#) with Tahltan Central Government President Chad Day in *The Narwhal* on October 13.

Asia



Vietnam has created a new nature reserve for threatened wildlife. The Dong Chau-Khe Nuoc Trong Nature Reserve is home to two species of muntjac deer, the Annamite striped rabbit, the Sunda pangolin, the southern white-cheeked gibbon, the red-shanked douc langur and the crested argus. The reserve may also shelter the saola, a mysterious antelope-like bovine so rare it has been called the “Asian unicorn.” The [news](#) appeared on Mongabay on September 29.

A rope bridge may help save—temporarily—the world's rarest primates on the southern Chinese island of Hainan. *NatGeo* [reported](#) last month that when a landslide felled trees and divided the habitat of the last 30 remaining Hainan gibbons, mountain climbers strung ropes across the gap. After six months of hesitation, the gibbons finally began using the new bridges.

Slow lorises are small, cuddly . . . and venomous. These nocturnal Asian primates have saucer eyes, button noses and plump, fuzzy bodies—but their bites are loaded with “flesh-rotting

venom,” according to an October 19 *New York Times* [article](#). The venom comes from glands on their upper arms, which the animals lick in order to transfer the poison to their teeth.

October 22 marked 1,002 days since eight researchers were imprisoned in Iran on charges stemming from studying the rare Asiatic cheetah. The scientists, all from the Persian Heritage Wildlife Foundation, were accused of spying on military installations on behalf of “enemy countries.” Their spy gear were camera traps—automated cameras with a limited field of view—used to photograph wildlife. Last year, the eight men were sentenced to four to 10 years in prison; so far, attempts to free them have failed. This recent [update](#) from *NatGeo* reports that a ninth researcher died in custody several weeks after the group was arrested, in January 2018.

Remote northern Siberia is one of the most polluted regions on Earth, according to an October 23 on-line [article](#) in *Science*, because of heavy metals production and sulfur dioxide emissions since the 1930s that have killed entire forests. “These effects fit into a wider picture of increasing pollution from multiple sources across the wider boreal and arctic region.”

Surfers discovered an ecological disaster on the Kamchatka Peninsula in Far Eastern Russia after they became sick themselves when dead fish, octopus, sea urchins and crabs washed ashore around Avacha Bay in the southeast of the peninsula. What caused the die-off is still unclear, [reported](#) the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on October 5.

Africa



The extinction of Madagascar’s unique giant animals, 500 to 1,500 years ago, was likely due to a “double whammy” of human activity plus severe drought. A team from the University of Innsbruck, [writing](#) in *Science Advances* in October, based this conclusion on an examination of 8,000 years of the island’s climate set against the fact that Madagascar was one of the last islands on earth to be settled by humans. Species that were wiped out include the dodo, giant tortoises, lemurs as big as gorillas and the half-ton elephant bird.

Zimbabwean conservationist, guide and photographer Ivan Carter tackles “Modern Day Conservation and Realities” in a 30-minute [talk](#) followed by an hour of discussion. The presentation, recorded on October 17 as part of the series “Unlocking Nature,” is offered by Leadership for Conservation in Africa as part of its virtual talks by some of “Africa’s most fascinating conservationists.”

CBNRM under attack in Namibia. Some outsiders don’t like Community Based Natural Resource Management, writes John Kasaona. He is Executive Director of IRDNC, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation, one of Namibia’s leading conservation NGOs, but he grew up a village herd boy. His [commentary](#) (*Conservation Namibia*, Oct. 9) describes his country’s progress from abused colony to conservation nation. Namibia’s rural communities

are creating a sustainable wildlife-based economy that reaches international markets with photo tourism, conservation hunting and harvesting plants for the cosmetic and medical industries. “we cannot let the critics destroy our past success or interfere with our plans for the future—conservation is a journey for us that will not end, even when we die, we will pass it on to the next generation.”

[Video](#) in Uganda: the world’s biggest pig emerges from the forest for *NatGeo* explorer and wildlife ecologist Rafael Reyna-Hurtado, whose camera traps finally “captured” the eastern subspecies of the rare giant forest hog in Kibale National Park and Toro-Semliky Wildlife Reserve.

Private companies may now get into wildlife conservation in Rwanda under a new law meant to help achieve the country’s conservation goals, said Eugene Mutangana at the Rwanda Development Board, according to an October 1 [article](#) in the *New Times*. Rwanda has invested “significant resources” in wildlife conservation—the country is now home to the [Big Five](#) and is [restoring](#) 2 million hectares (5 million acres) of deforested land.

‘The People Beyond the Poaching’ is a 32-page [report](#) on the illegal trade in wildlife based on interviews with 73 convicted offenders in South Africa. The producer of the report—and this 9:22 [film](#)—is [TRAFFIC](#), the wildlife trade monitoring network.

South Africa has 1,300 of the world’s 7,100 cheetahs, of which the Cheetah Metapopulation Project in South Africa protects 419 animals spread across 60 game reserves, according to this September 28 [report](#) (“Spots of Hope”) on Mongabay. Swapping individual animals between reserves reduces inbreeding; other animals are translocated to areas where cheetah have been wiped out.

Barbary sheep, aka aoudad, in Niger are being poached, [reported](#) the Sahara Conservation Fund in October. Aoudad numbers for the Aïr & Ténéré National Nature Reserve are unknown, and there are just 100 to 150 of them in the Termit & Tin-Toumnomia National Nature Reserve.

Forest elephants in the Congo Basin have built an extensive network of trails that have become highways for other animals as well as the BaAka people. *Smithsonian Magazine*

[reported](#) last month on these trails and their impact on villagers and the regional ecology. Ivory poaching is decimating these elephants and sending significant negative effects cascading through the ecosystem.

The 18th African Wildlife Consultative [Forum](#), hosted by the Safari Club International Foundation, will take place virtually on November 10-12. The agenda includes discussions of the impact of COVID-19 on conservation, livelihoods and hunting tourism, an address by the Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service and a session featuring community leaders.

Get to know SAWC, the Southern African Wildlife College, through its 83-page [2019 Annual Review](#), published recently. Its mission is “To inspire every person we train and engage with to conserve our natural world. To equip people with the necessary knowledge and applied skills to conserve and protect Africa’s natural resources and biodiversity in viable, inclusive and economically successful ways.” Its Responsible Resource Use dept. is the only institution in South Africa offering a qualification in professional hunting.

Pacific



In Borneo, health care is linked to a 70% decrease in deforestation in a national park.

Communities identified lack of access to affordable healthcare as a driver of illegal logging, which helped pay for basic health needs. In response, a new clinic was established outside the park in 2007, and most communities bordering the park agreed to clinic discounts based on reductions in illegal logging. The [report](#) was issued on October 26 by the US National Academy of Sciences.

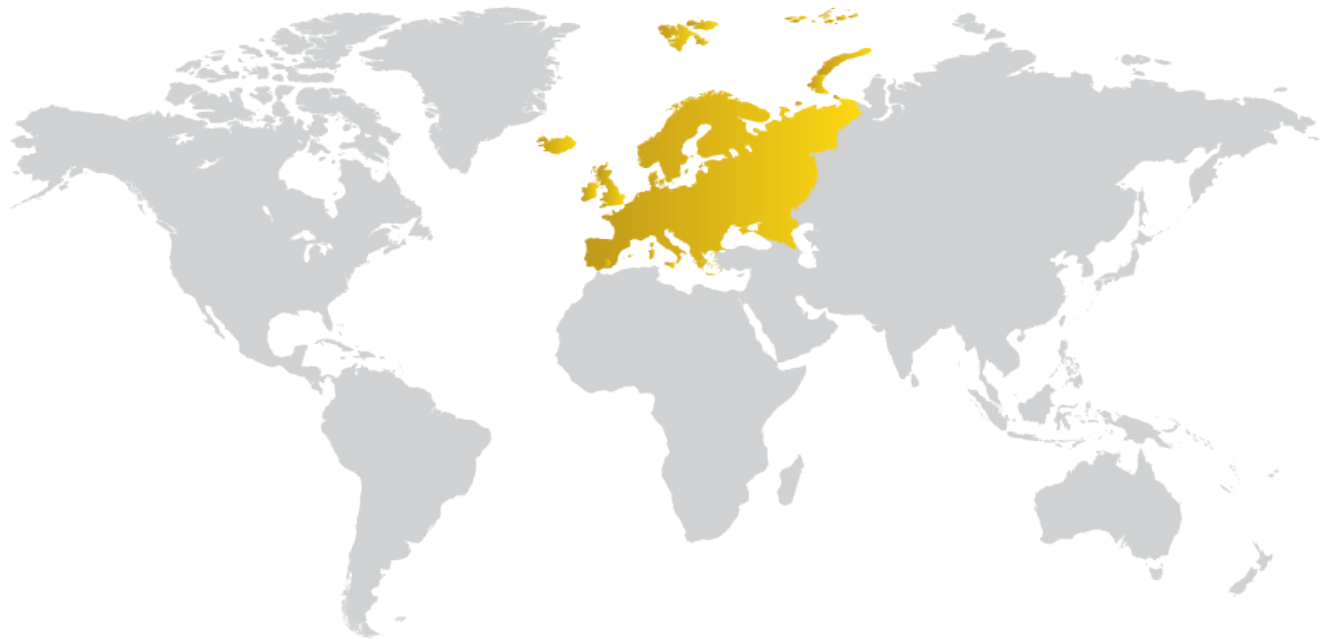
Selling cars, scaring away dingoes—all in a day’s work for “wacky tube men,” according to Australian and Canadian wildlife biologists who discovered that the inflatable figures’ jerky movements can keep the wild dogs out of farmers’ livestock herds. The [story](#)—and a [video](#)—appeared on ScienceMag.org on October 20.

The Great Barrier Reef has lost half its corals to climate change in the past 30 years. The [findings](#) of Australian researchers were published by The Royal Society on October 14.

Australia has the worst rate of mammal extinction in the world—a crisis accelerated by the recent extreme bushfires that destroyed more than 12 million hectares (30 million acres) of natural habitat and impacted three billion animals—including 143 million mammals, 2.46

billion reptiles, 180 million birds and 51 million frogs. WWF-Australia posted this rallying [cry](#) on YouTube.

Europe



From ‘king of the forest’ to ‘bark eater’—how Germany’s view of the red deer has changed over the past 50 years has led to a “radical reduction” in red deer numbers, especially in the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg. The [German Wildlife Foundation](#) has submitted a [petition](#) to the state government to recognize the deer as a critical part of the landscape and to set proper management guidelines. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* also [reported](#) on September 19 on the plight of Germany’s 220,000 red deer.

A British farm became a biodiversity hotspot by letting animals rule. The owners of a 3,500-acre (1,400 ha) property in the south of England transformed it from a traditional farm into a place of astonishing biodiversity through the process of “rewilding”—letting large mammals, including pigs, cattle, ponies and deer, roam free. The Knepp Estate has become a conservation success story in the UK and a refuge for many rare species, [reported](#) CNN on October 2.

In the UK, 14 indicators of ecological health out of 24 show long-term decline. *The Guardian* [reported](#) on October 15 that the country is failing to reach its long-term biodiversity targets

and is seeing “relentless” declines in wildlife. According to government [data](#), British public-sector investment in conservation has dropped by 33% over five years. (*Dispatches* noted in September that Britain is “among the most nature-depleted countries in the world,” according to the National Biodiversity Network’s latest State of Nature [report](#).)

The [2020 EuroNatur Award](#) went to Mals, in Italy’s South Tyrol, for eco-friendly agriculture. European agriculture is characterized by monocultures and heavy use of pesticides. Against significant opposition from farmers, the Italian mountain commune of Mals is sticking to its ban on the use of pesticides throughout its territory.

Interbreeding with domestic cats will wipe out Swiss wildcats. A University of Geneva [study](#) modelled the interactions between the two species and predicted that this hybridization in the mountains of the Jura will have dire consequences for wildcats. This is already happening in Scotland and Hungary.

A honey buzzard fitted with a satellite tracker in Finland spent the austral summer around the town of Reitz in the Free State of South Africa. Then, on April 20, she started north again and on June 2 reached Finland for the northern summer. In 42 days, she flew more than 10,000 kilometres (6,200 mi). Her tracker [plot](#), on WildAware’s Facebook page, shows an almost straight route north.

Brown bears, wolves and lynxes are thriving again in Sweden and driving a new eco-tourism industry. Policies such as hunting restrictions and compensation for livestock lost to predation have allowed these top carnivores to recover. However, their growing numbers—in particular of wolves—are creating controversy, especially among farmers and hunters. Mongabay explored the [issues](#) on October 2.

World



Do ‘good fences make good neighbors’? *Anthropocene* recently [reported](#) that scientists (writing in *BioScience*) propose a new field of study called “fence ecology.” Conservationists, they say, must begin to investigate the many ways in which fences shape ecosystems by changing wildlife behaviors. Strung end to end, the world’s fences would already reach to the sun—much farther than the world’s combined roads—and new fences are added much more frequently than old ones disappear. (Continuing Robert Frost’s poem, they add, “Something there is that doesn’t love a wall.”)

Fashion industry executives were put on notice by the IUCN’s Species Survival Commission about their decision to stop using the skins of crocodiles, alligators, snakes, lizards and other animals in their products. International Union for the Conservation of Nature committee chairs and specialists pointed out that the trade in those skins is sustainable, contributes to wildlife conservation and recovery, and supports local communities ([SSC Quarterly Report October 2020](#), page 9).

Does a decent standard of living mean doom? A fresh [analysis](#) in *Global Environmental Change* suggests that it may be possible to “decouple the apparent relationship between human [growth] and ecological disaster” and that the predicted 2050 population of 10 billion people

could achieve a decent standard of living with global energy use that is just 60% of today's levels. The study is based on a DLE, Decent Living Energy, figure of 15.3 gigajoules per person per year based on one laptop with Internet access per household, one phone per person age 10 and older, and home temperatures set to a constant 20° C (68° F) and universal healthcare and education.

Solar + hydro could supply 40% of the world's power needs, suggests a recent [study](#) in *Renewable Energy*. It seems almost too simple: Float rafts of photovoltaic panels on hydroelectric reservoirs. This avoids land-use conflicts and taps into the existing infrastructure and transmission lines of the hydropower facility. The two technologies also complement each other since solar has the most potential during dry seasons while rainy seasons are best for hydropower. Operators could store excess solar power by pumping water to a higher elevation to be run through the turbines later.

New truck engines promise reductions in tailpipe emissions.

Scientists at the Polytechnic University of Valencia (Spain) and Volvo Group Trucks and Aramco Overseas, both in France, say that by combining electric and dual-fuel drive technologies, new CMT-Thermal engines reduce the levels of NO_x and soot by 92% and 88%, respectively, and CO₂ tailpipe emissions by 15% over current diesel engines. The new technology is [reported](#) to be cost-effective and able to meet tightening EU emissions standards.

We're mostly wrong about the evils of single-use plastics. That's what University of Michigan researchers concluded after they compared consumer attitudes to the real environmental costs of plastics. The product inside usually has a greater impact than its plastic container, and plastic generally has fewer overall environmental impacts than single-use glass or metal. For more plastic misperceptions, see the latest [issue](#) of *Environmental Science & Technology* or watch the [video](#).

There may now be a solution to the plastic plague, too. According to an October 22 [news](#) release from the American Association for the Advancement of Science, researchers have finally found a way to deconstruct polyethylene and transform it into higher-value chemical

compounds that are widely used. “These developments will pave the way toward a circular plastics economy, in which plastic is not considered waste but rather a valuable raw material.”

Bushmeat as a source of zoonotic disease? Yeah, we know. That’s the attitude of several hundred preparers and providers of bushmeat in Uganda who were surveyed by researchers from Tennessee’s Institute of Agriculture. Handling and eating bushmeat can spread diseases such COVID-19 and Ebola or infections from E. coli, salmonella or staphylococcus. Both hunters and the women who buy and cook the meat believe that stomach aches, diarrhea and “monkeypox” can be transmitted by wildlife; all consider primates to be most likely to carry such diseases, but few take precautions while handling bushmeat. The researchers also found that women prefer not to buy primate meat and believe that hunters rarely disguise primate meat as other animals. Hunters, however, reported that they in fact usually do disguise primate meat as something else. The [findings](#) were published on-line on September 28 in the journal *PLOS ONE*.

The Collaborative [Partnership](#) on Sustainable Wildlife Management has released a COVID-19 statement [outlining](#) four guidelines to reducing risk from zoonotic diseases and strengthening human health and wildlife management: 1) Recognize the importance of the use of wildlife to indigenous peoples and local communities. 2) Maintain and restore healthy and resilient ecosystems to reduce risks of zoonotic spillovers and future pandemics. 3) Killing wild animals suspected of transmitting diseases will not address the emergence or spread of zoonotic diseases. 4) Regulate, manage and monitor harvesting, trade and use of wildlife to ensure it is safe, sustainable and legal. The CPW also offers this 3:40 [video](#).

TV nature programs have real therapeutic value. Researchers at the UK’s University of Exeter, [writing](#) in the *Journal of Environmental Psychology* in October, found that people who watched the BBC’s Blue Planet II nature series enjoyed a boost in wellbeing and connection to the natural world. “With people around the world facing limited access to outdoor environments because of COVID-19 quarantines, this study suggests that nature programs might offer an accessible way for populations to benefit from a dose of digital nature.”



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