



## LETTER FROM GARY E. KNELL



Dear Friends,

What does it mean to change the world? What can we do today to ensure a healthier and more sustainable future? There's a critical need to act now and to act boldly. You have given generously to the National Geographic Society because you share

our commitment to world-changing science, exploration, and education, and we are so grateful for your support.

Here's how you're helping us make a difference. Together we're helping to protect our changing planet by preserving the last wild places before they disappear. We're making sure critical species can thrive and the communities that live alongside them have the resources to be part of the solution. And we're searching for clues to the mysteries of our human story.

We couldn't do it without you. Your support sends the explorers, scientists, and conservationists with the best ideas into the field. Your investment advances a greater understanding of the challenges we face and enables us to seek answers to the most pressing scientific questions of our time. Your contributions allow us to inspire young people to become the next generation of explorers, scientists, and global storytellers.

For more than 128 years, the National Geographic Society has been exploring the planet, making new discoveries, and inspiring people around the world with our images and stories. There's something even more special about sharing our work with the people who have been with us on the journey. You've given us your support. You've stuck by us and our explorers and scientists as we've taken chances on groundbreaking ideas, and you were there when we made great discoveries. All of us at here at National Geographic thank you for supporting our work.

What does it mean to change the world? Let's find out together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Knell'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light blue background.

GARY E. KNELL President and CEO, National Geographic Society



# YOUR IMPACT

Because of you, we are **UNCOVERING CRIMINAL NETWORKS**,  
that threaten endangered species like rhinos; we are  
**EXPLORING AND HELPING TO PROTECT THE OKAVANGO WATERSHED**,  
an irreplaceable African wilderness; we are  
**PRESERVING THE OCEAN** through marine protected areas; and we are  
**INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF EXPLORERS**  
through innovative programs like Photo Camp.

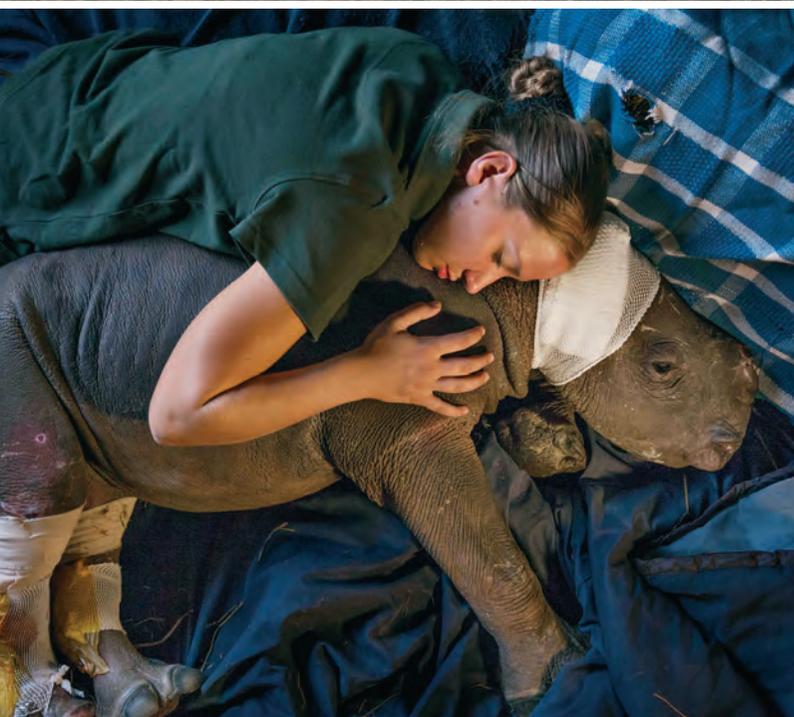
Donors like you make it possible for us to invest in bold people and  
transformative ideas to make a difference in the world.

*On the cover: An African elephant at the water's edge in the Okavango Delta in Botswana. Above: An image from National Geographic's Photo Camp at the Crow Reservation in Montana, where students participated in a five-day photography program to explore their native heritage from behind a camera lens.*

“Bryan is changing environmental journalism by focusing on the people and organizations that drive the illegal wildlife trade. Shining a light on these criminal networks will help protect animals like rhinos and elephants. That’s why I give to National Geographic.”

— EDITH McBEAN  
National Geographic Donor

YOU'RE UNCOVERING THE RHINO H





➤ **SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT REPORT**

Rhinos are in danger of being hunted to extinction because of the demand for rhino horn in Asia. With the support of donors like you, National Geographic Fellow and chief correspondent of National Geographic's **SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT** Bryan Christy is working to expose the networks of traders that threaten rhinos.

Prized for its supposed medicinal powers, rhino horn has been shaved or ground into a powder and used to treat illnesses from cancer to food poisoning for more than 2,000 years. Its price rivals that of gold on the black market.

South Africa is home to nearly 70 percent of the world's rhinos, which are heavily targeted by traders—more than 1,200 were killed last year alone. Infiltrating the world of South Africa's top rhino ranchers, Christy shows that their actions, connections, and ambitions may determine whether or not rhinos vanish from the wild.

On September 13, the National Geographic Society and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service co-sponsored a forum on wildlife trafficking and the challenges of enforcement. Attendees included field officers engaged in the fight against wildlife crime, policy experts, stakeholders, and representatives from communities around the world struggling to protect endangered animals and help those involved in the trade find jobs in wildlife protection.

Your contributions are helping Christy reveal how the illicit rhino horn trade is pushing rhinos toward extinction. By taking steps now to shine a light on wildlife crime and inspire communities and stakeholders to take action, we can ensure rhinos and other endangered species thrive for generations to come.

*A rhino and her baby (top) at dusk in Lake Nakuru National Park in Kenya. A baby rhino (bottom left) is comforted following surgery to repair wounds from a hyena attack after her mother was killed by poachers. A security team member, tattooed with the symbol of his anti-poaching unit, holds a rhino horn at the ranch of the world's top rhino farmer in South Africa (bottom right).*





*Traveling by way of a dugout canoe propelled by a pole, the Okavango Wilderness Project team studies the biodiversity of the river basin. Steve Boyes and Adjany Costa, an Angolan scientist and project team member, talk with community members who rely on the river and its water supply (inset).*

## NOTES FROM THE OKAVANGO

### *Protecting a Rare Wilderness Before It's Too Late*

There are few places left on our planet that allow us to experience the beauty, the solitude, and the dangerous and wonderful thrill of a true wilderness area. Africa's Okavango Delta is one of them. This enormous, pristine wetland basin is home to the largest remaining population of elephants, along with some of world's most endangered animals, including cheetahs, white rhinos, black rhinos, African wild dogs, and lions.

While the Okavango Delta in Botswana is protected as a UNESCO World Heritage site, the river's source waters in Angola remain largely unprotected, relatively unstudied, and vulnerable to encroaching development. Without protection, the Delta, the "Jewel of the Kalahari," could soon disappear, a victim of agriculture, logging, irrigation, and other human activities upstream.

It is my privilege to be part of the Okavango Wilderness Project, a multiyear effort to explore, understand, and preserve the source rivers in Angola that feed into the Delta, so that we can protect the incredible wildlife and biodiversity found there.

This is one of those last chances to save a wild place and the animals that live there, one of the last chances to save a great wetland wilderness in Africa. I look forward to keeping you updated on our progress and thank you for supporting the National Geographic Society.



STEVE BOYES Conservation Biologist, National Geographic Fellow



The Okavango Wilderness Project is a multiyear endeavor to safeguard the future of one of the planet's last wetland wildernesses. Partnering with local communities and regional stakeholders, conservationist and National Geographic Fellow Steve Boyes and an international team of researchers and scientists are exploring the headwaters of the Okavango River, providing data to help create one of the largest wildlife reserves in sub-Saharan Africa.

> **A GOOD YEAR FOR THE OCEAN**

A Pacific ocean reserve twice the size of Texas. The largest marine reserve in the Arctic. These victories for the ocean were made possible in part by the continued support of donors like you.

In August, President Obama quadrupled the size of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument off northwestern Hawaii, creating a 583,000-square-mile “no-take” zone. The expansion was supported by many individuals and organizations, including Sylvia Earle, National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence and Rosemary and Roger Enrico Chair for Ocean Exploration, who is working with National Geographic photographer Brian Skerry to explore coastal waters and promote new marine national monuments in the United States.

Soon after, the Russian government announced the expansion of the Russian Arctic National Park following a National Geographic Pristine Seas research expedition to Franz Josef Land with the Russian Geographical Society and representatives of the Russian Arctic National Park. At 34,000 square miles, the newly expanded park will protect habitat for Atlantic walrus, bowhead whales, polar bears, narwhals, and ivory gulls. Led by Explorer-in-Residence Enric Sala, **PRISTINE SEAS** explores and documents the last wild places in the ocean, and works with governments and stakeholders to protect them.

Most recently, Pristine Seas contributed to the expansion of the Malpelo Flora and Fauna Sanctuary off the coast of Colombia and the creation of a marine protected area around Clipperton Island in the eastern Pacific. This brings the total area Pristine Seas has helped protect to more than 1.2 million square miles of ocean habitat.

*A Hawaiian monk seal (top) swims over a reef. A scientist (bottom left) in the Arctic waters off the coast of Franz Josef Land collects biological samples. A colorful and diverse marine ecosystem is found in Franz Josef Land's frigid waters (bottom right).*



YOUR SUPP





“To me, it’s clear—a healthy ocean is critical to the future of our planet. I believe that what National Geographic has done to protect more than 1.2 million square miles of ocean is making a difference. So it is with appreciation and honor that I support Pristine Seas.”

—SARAH ARGYROPOULOS  
National Geographic Donor

PORT IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE



“National Geographic is out there in the field working with the best scientists to protect the environment, save endangered wildlife, and address the global challenges we face. We invest in this work because we want to contribute to a healthier planet.”

—WESLEY PATTERSON AND  
LINDA PRITCHARD PATTERSON  
Alexander Graham Bell Legacy  
Society Members

*An image from the National Geographic Museum exhibition “Invisible Boundaries: Exploring Yellowstone’s Great Animal Migrations.” Here, pronghorn headed to Grand Teton National Park for the summer ford the Green River.*



# THANK YOU

Because of you, we're going further than ever before—supporting bold explorers, seeking clues to the mysteries of the planet, protecting threatened animals and habitats, rewriting the story of our evolution, and inspiring learners of all ages. Together, we're taking action to make a lasting impact on our changing world.

We couldn't do it without you.

The National Geographic Society is committed to reducing our environmental footprint by seeking local, organic, and sustainably sourced resources, using recycled and recyclable content when possible, and minimizing waste of energy, water, food, and other resources. For more information on our Corporate Sustainability Policy, visit [nationalgeographic.org/sustainability-policy](http://nationalgeographic.org/sustainability-policy).

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