



Action

THE MAGAZINE FOR WWF MEMBERS

SPRING 2025

The lion's *share*

Finding space for lions and people in Africa's future

The great *outdoors*

Easy ideas to help the whole family get their daily dose of nature all year

Natural *wellbeing*

Fitness guru Joe Wicks on nature's boost for your mental health



Reviving *landscapes*



Beavers are often called ‘ecosystem engineers’ thanks to their remarkable ability to transform their habitat. By building dams, they create wetlands that provide a home for other wildlife, clean the

water, reduce flooding and increase water retention in the land. This is particularly important in Norfolk, a food-producing county that’s prone to both flooding and drought. So Norfolk Rivers Trust and WWF have launched an ambitious project to reintroduce beavers, revitalise the landscape and restore wildlife.

On the River Glaven, we’re working with a local landowner to show how these industrious rodents can bring landscapes back to life, with the help of beavers Winnie and Eeyore (formerly known as Robin). The transformation since they arrived has been incredible. They’ve changed the watercourse from a straight, narrow channel into a huge wet woodland, alive with birds and other wildlife.

Winnie and Eeyore are already showing how returning beavers to Norfolk can benefit both wildlife and people. We hope to move eight more beavers down from Scotland by 2026 – first to enclosures, but ultimately to the wild, where they can roam freely and continue their ecosystem engineering on a larger scale. It’s a fantastic example of how nature can restore itself – if we give it a helping hand.

Ursula

Ursula Juta
Senior project manager, Norfolk Rivers Trust

Right: The positive effects of the beavers’ landscaping are already evident in Norfolk

See the change

Watch our short film to see how beavers are restoring nature

youtu.be/itb_xwWVmQY



“THE BEAVERS HAVE CHANGED THE NARROW WATERCOURSE INTO A HUGE WET WOODLAND, ALIVE WITH BIRDS AND OTHER WILDLIFE”

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WWF *in action*



Putting Arctic whales *on the map*

A new WWF report will help keep whales safe from shipping in a warming Arctic.

The Arctic Ocean is an important life-support system for a quarter of the world's whale species. Every year, tens of thousands of whales take advantage of its food-rich waters. In addition to resident belugas, bowheads and narwhals, which move between feeding and breeding grounds in and around the Arctic, there are summer visitors such as grey whales that travel all the way from the tropics.

But with the Arctic warming faster than anywhere else on the planet, these journeys are becoming increasingly hazardous. The loss of sea ice is changing the environmental conditions, but it's also bringing more human activity to these remote waters. Over the last decade, the number of ships in the Arctic has increased by more than a third, and they're travelling much greater distances. This increases the risks of whales being struck by ships or disturbed by underwater noise.

We've now produced the first ever map of migration routes – known as blue corridors – for belugas, bowheads and narwhals across the Arctic, and highlighted where these overlap with shipping lanes. This will help Arctic countries and international organisations protect key habitats and, importantly, the routes between them. We'll also be working with the shipping industry to help them avoid these blue corridors and find ways to reduce disturbance to whales.

Right: Arctic whales are under pressure from sea-ice loss, which is opening up new areas to shipping



Sea for yourself

Read our interactive Arctic report arcticwwf.org/ABC-report

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News in *numbers*

302



Bhutan has at least **302 red pandas**, according to the first national survey in the Himalayan kingdom. WWF supported the survey, which will help efforts to **protect these endearing mammals** and their habitat.

57,685

Big thanks to all 57,685 of you who **signed our petition** calling on the UK government to **stop the destruction of nature**. We handed it to party leaders last September, and will continue advocating for them to take crucial action on nature.



1.5 million



Last summer, we **collected over 1.5 million seagrass** seeds to prepare for planting in our **restoration sites** across north Wales this spring.



Helping curb environmental crimes

We're tackling environmental crime by creating practical resources to help financial institutions better detect and monitor it.

Environmental crimes such as unauthorised deforestation and land conversion make up the third-largest illegal activity globally, according to the European Council. Financial institutions often unknowingly enable these activities through their lending and investments, or don't understand the risks related to environmental crime. As well as the environmental and social harm caused, this can damage their reputation. They could even be breaking the law, as the UK, EU, US and other countries tighten regulations to tackle deforestation and human-rights violations in supply chains.

With the help of financial crime specialist Themis, we've launched the *Environmental Crimes Financial Toolkit*. The first of its kind, it will help financial institutions to better detect and monitor illicit activities related to environmental crimes, which sometimes overlap with offences such as money laundering.



Above: By helping financial institutions recognise and tackle illegal activities, we can reduce the funding of environmental crimes

© Andre Dib / WWF-Brazil



Time to act for a *living planet*

Nature is our life-support system, but right now it's in trouble, which is why we're urgently calling for a groundbreaking new law.

Our Living Planet Act would make sure the UK government tackles the climate crisis, protects nature and ensures everyone has better access to healthy food. "Nature is on its knees and our leaders are risking catastrophic consequences for people, planet and our economy by failing to act," says our chief executive, Tanya Steele.

Extreme climate change and the destruction of nature are happening scarily fast. We've seen a 73% average decrease in wildlife populations since 1970. And it's not just about the risks to wildlife, it's about our own health, our food supply and our future.

Help us secure the cure for our world by adding your name in support of the Living Planet Act: wwf.org.uk/living-planet-act



Above and right: Species such as the jaguar and African forest elephant have declined alarmingly

© Getty | © Karine Aigner / naturpl.com / WWF

Trying a sound *idea*

A simple electronic device could prevent river dolphin deaths in the Amazon.

The 'pingers' are attached to fishing nets and emit high-frequency sounds that make the dolphins steer clear. They're already being used successfully in Asia, and trials in South America have shown promising results – while also highlighting differences between river dolphin species.

Conflicts with fishers are one of the threats facing both Amazon river dolphin species – the pink river dolphin (or boto) and the smaller tucuxi. Dolphins sometimes drown after getting entangled in nets or are killed by fishers who see them as competition.

We tested the pingers with a fishing community on Brazil's Tapajós river. During the first phase, the dolphins gave the pingers a wide berth: no dolphins got trapped and people caught three times as many fish. But while the tucuxis have stayed away, the botos seemed to adapt to the noise, so more work is needed. Encouragingly, the work helped change attitudes towards the dolphins and raise awareness of their importance to the health of the river.



© Adriano Gambarini / WWF-Brazil

“DURING THE TEST, NO DOLPHINS GOT TRAPPED IN NETS”

Above: Trials have shown that pink river dolphins (above) and the smaller tucuxi respond differently to the new sonic deterrent

Tigers roar back in Kazakhstan

The return of wild tigers to central Asia came a step closer in September, when two captive Amur tigers were moved to the Ile-Balkhash Nature Reserve in Kazakhstan. The male and female, Bodhana and Kuma, will be housed in a spacious, semi-natural enclosure. If they breed successfully, the plan is that their offspring will be released into the wild.

Tigers have been extinct in Kazakhstan for over 70 years, but we've been supporting the country's government, local communities and other partners on an ambitious project to bring them back. The goal is to build a healthy population of about 50 wild tigers by 2035.

"This tiger translocation is a critical step to not only bring back the big cat to its former homeland, but also to rewild an entire ecosystem," says Stuart Chapman, leader of WWF's Tigers Alive Initiative. "It's a monumental conservation milestone to bring wild tigers back to Kazakhstan and central Asia."



© Livingimage / WWF

Right: The Amur tigers were moved to Kazakhstan from a Dutch sanctuary. This is the moment one of them was released

NEWS IN BRIEF

Gifts for the *future*

Last autumn, we held a special event at our Living Planet Centre for supporters who are leaving us a gift in their wills. Led by our chief scientific adviser, Mike Barrett, the event focused on our conservation work with communities. Supporters heard about how we're developing solutions to human-wildlife conflict that benefit both people and wildlife, as well as our work with faith and spiritual groups to protect nature. Our youth team also revealed how we're empowering the next generation to take action. One supporter said the event "reassured me that there's hope for the planet". Find out more at wwf.org.uk/gifts-in-wills

Work for *wetlands*

An ambitious new initiative is under way to protect the Pantanal, the world's largest freshwater wetland. Launched by our colleagues in Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay, PantaNow aims to secure the future of this amazing ecosystem, which is under threat from climate change. The Pantanal covers an area larger than England and Wales, and is home to 4,700 species including jaguars and caimans. But it's lost nearly three-quarters of its surface water over the last three decades, and deforestation, forest fires and droughts have been increasing.

A new *generation*

We think it's vital that young people are supported to use their voice for our world. That's why we've recruited two under-25s to our Impact Committee – a diverse team of volunteers who'll help shape WWF-UK's strategies and programmes. Agno Kachappilly Shaiju, aged 21, and Aarushi Verma, aged 22, will listen to the views and voices of young WWF supporters across the UK, to ensure they're heard and acted upon. Both of them already have a wealth of experience in sustainability, social development, conservation and collaborative working. "I'm eager to contribute to the great work this committee is doing," says Agno.



© Getty



Above: The Cali Fund for conservation was unveiled at the latest UN biodiversity summit, COP16. The event included a range of talks, workshops and panel discussions in its Green Zone

Cash boost for conservation

A new conservation fund could raise more than £780 million a year, with payments coming from businesses that use genetic material from wild plants and animals. The Cali Fund was announced at October's UN biodiversity summit in Cali, Colombia.

Our chief executive, Tanya Steele, says the fund could be a vital boost. "It means companies profiting from nature make a small contribution to conserve biodiversity, with 50% of the funds going to Indigenous peoples and local communities," she explains. "Unfortunately, contributions to the fund will be voluntary, but we intend to push hard for companies to pay their fair share."

© Flickr / UN Biodiversity

Just over a century ago there were more than 200,000 wild lions in Africa. Today, there could be as few as 23,000. The last 30 years have seen the fastest drop in numbers – they're thought to have halved in this time



The lion's *last roar?*

Long seen as symbols of strength and nobility, Africa's lions now depend on the communities they live alongside for their survival. With your support, we're building a future where both can thrive

Imagine a lion, statuesque in golden grass, imperious gaze sweeping the savannah. Or a pride stalking prey, shoulders high, heads low, slinking silently towards unwary impalas. Or a mother lion lounging atop a termite mound, somehow serene despite the cubs clambering over her, tussling and tumbling.

This is an iconic scene in Africa: the apex predator that rules desert, grassland, bush and forest alike – fearless, indomitable, iconic. What we don't see is the other side of the story: a lion's emaciated body, his face scarred, his once-regal mane ragged and patchy.

He was Loonkiito, and he was possibly the oldest of his kind. At 19 years old, he'd survived a good five years longer than is typical for wild male lions, and had grown too frail to hunt his natural prey. In May 2023, he went looking for an easier meal in a village near Amboseli National Park in southern Kenya – and paid with his life. Speared by herders defending their livelihoods, he was one of 10 lions killed that week in retaliation for attacks on livestock.

A CARNIVORE CRISIS

The sad truth is that, if we don't act now, lions could become a distant memory in Africa. Numbers in the wild plummeted by an estimated 43% between 1993 and 2014 – that represents just three of their generations. Once widespread, today lions roam less than 8% of their former range, having gone extinct in 26 African countries. Small, fragmented populations endure in west and central Africa, but around 80% of the population is concentrated in the east and south of the continent.

With a global population estimated at just 23,000 mature individuals, lions are listed as vulnerable by the IUCN – yet in many areas the situation is even more perilous. In Kenya, where the latest comprehensive survey in 2018-20 estimated the population at only 2,489, lions are classed as endangered. The hope is that the current census, due to be completed later this year, will reveal an increase – but there's still much to be done to pull the species back from the brink.

This matters, and not just because lions make great TV subjects or enliven safari holidays. They're hugely important to Africa in many ways you might not anticipate. "In Kenya, lions have great ecological, cultural and economic importance," explains Dr Francis Lesilau, WWF's lion and elephant programme coordinator in Kenya. "First, the lion influences the abundance, behaviour and distribution of prey species, and plays a key role in balancing the ecosystem. Second, almost everyone visiting Kenya wants to see a lion, so the species brings in millions of dollars via the tourism industry. Finally, the lion is a symbol of strength or bravery, especially among pastoral communities such as the Maasai, the Samburu and the Rendille. So, culturally, it also helps shape Kenya. ▶



Below: Loonkiito, a 19-year-old male wild lion, was speared to death by Maasai warriors in Kenya after preying on livestock



That's why many communities keep on living with lions."

In other words, protecting lions is about much more than just saving one animal, such as Loonkiito. As an apex predator and a keystone species, the lion is an excellent indicator: a thriving lion population suggests a healthy, functioning ecosystem that can support wildlife and people. And because lions are such a wide-ranging species – covering up to 500 sq km – actions to protect them typically also help conserve other wildlife.

LIVING WITH LIONS

There are many reasons behind the dramatic decline in wild lion numbers. "The main threat is the loss and fragmentation of their habitat," says Kate Vannelli, leader of WWF's Living with Big Cats Initiative, based in Tanzania. With an expanding human population and large-scale cultivation of land, lions simply have less space to live in.

"Climate-related issues, such as drought in east Africa, also reduce viable lion habitat," Kate continues. "Habitat loss is a problem for several reasons, but mainly



because it reduces populations of the lions' natural prey. And this increases the risk of these predators coming into conflict with people when they kill livestock. There's also a growing problem with poaching and the illegal trade in lion parts."

"Another threat comes from infrastructure development, such as highways built through national parks," adds Francis. "As well as reducing and dividing the lions' habitat, this increases the risk of collisions with vehicles."

These issues are all interconnected. When the growth of settlements, farming and infrastructure around protected areas reaches levels where lions can no longer disperse, groups become isolated. Then their long-term genetic health is compromised by inbreeding. And as human populations expand and come

Above: Lions target livestock, such as cows, when their wild prey becomes harder to find. These attacks bring them into conflict with local people – a situation that's becoming more intense

Right: Ranger Clemence Karera Kendrick is a key part of the lion survey team



into contact with lion territory, the availability of prey reduces. It declines even further when people hunt those animals for wild meat. With prey more scarce, carnivores become increasingly likely to attack livestock – and might be killed in retaliation or to prevent further losses.

Such conflict comes at a great cost to both people and lions. In Tanzania alone, an average of 60 people and 150 lions lose their lives each year due to conflict, which often occurs at night. "I've seen the aftermath when a lioness broke into a boma [livestock

“OUR LONG-TERM VISION IS TO DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF AFRICAN LIONS IN THE WILD TO 40,000 BY 2050”

enclosure] and killed around 50 sheep," recalls Francis. "The next morning, their owner found her feeding on the carcasses and killed her. I saw the pain it caused the farmer and his family to lose so much of their livelihood. But the lioness was feeding young cubs and they would have starved without her – that knowledge caused me pain as a conservationist."

Clearly, lions face major challenges, but we know they can be overcome.

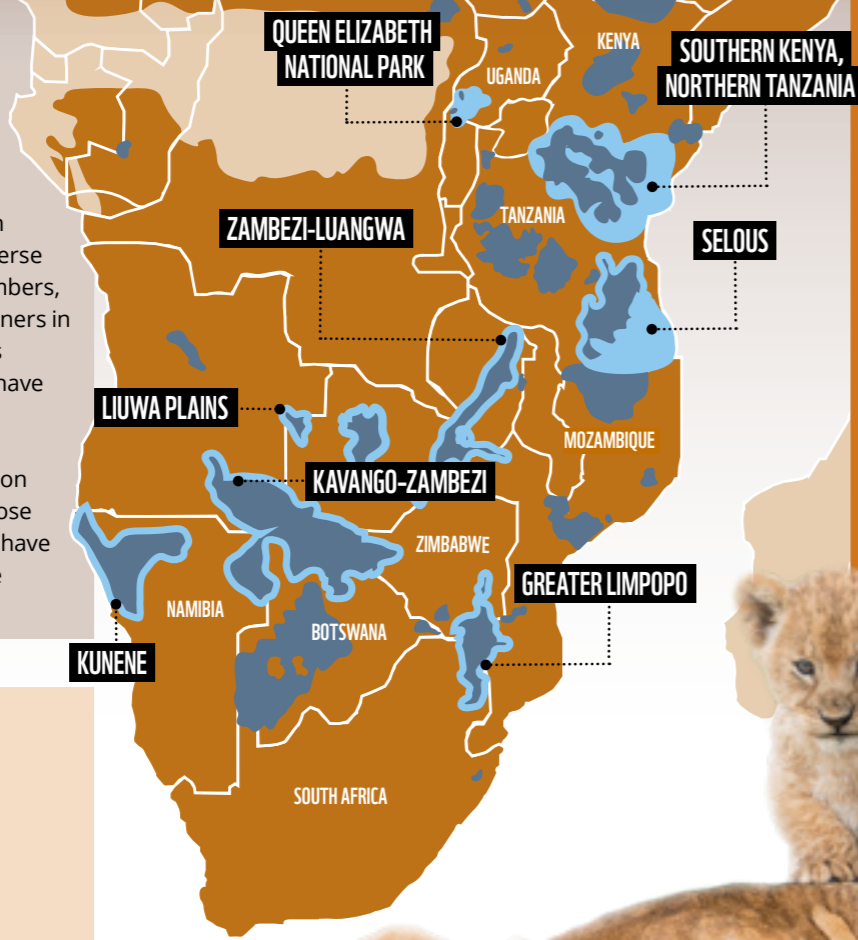
In other parts of the world, tiger and snow leopard populations are recovering – and so can lions. Under the right conditions, lions reproduce relatively rapidly, so numbers could grow swiftly. With the help of you and our partners, our long-term vision is to reverse the current decline and double the population of wild African lions to 40,000 by 2050.

But we need to get those conditions right, and that means addressing the ▶

Space to roam

Once widespread, lions are extinct in 26 African countries and have vanished from over 90% of their former range.

Many lion populations are expected to disappear within the next few decades. To reverse the rapid decline in their numbers, we're working with local partners in eight priority lion landscapes (named on this map). These have been selected based on the importance of the individual populations, their conservation needs and our capacity in those countries. These landscapes have the potential to kick-start the recovery of Africa's lions.



Key:

- WWF'S PRIORITY LANDSCAPES
- FORMER RANGE
- CURRENT RANGE*

* Not including reintroduced populations

“WE’RE PUTTING PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF CONSERVATION, INCLUDING SHARING BENEFITS FROM TOURISM”



Below: Many existing protected areas are too small to support large lion populations. It's vital that smaller, isolated populations can mingle to prevent inbreeding

Above: Lions are wide-ranging animals and often move outside protected areas. This roaming brings them into contact with people and their livestock



issues. To that end, we're undertaking and supporting specific conservation efforts. This includes maintaining and restoring core lion habitat and corridors that enable the cats to travel between protected areas, and reducing conflict with communities. We're putting people at the heart of this work, including sharing benefits from tourism.

“We're working closely with Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) to implement the National Action Plan for lions, a key aspect of which is to reduce human-wildlife conflict,” explains Francis. “We're helping farmers install more secure bomas for their livestock, and giving them solar-powered flashing LED lights that deter predators from raiding enclosures.

“Through our partners, we're training livestock herders to detect the signs of lions in the landscape. And we're recruiting young people to act as lion guardians, monitoring areas around their communities so they can warn herders of the presence of predators. Crucially, we're supporting efforts by organisations such as the Mara Predator Conservation Programme to undertake wide-reaching research into these animals.”

Research is key: to secure a future for lions, we need to assess how many there are and

where they roam. But that's not easy with an animal that can blend invisibly into its habitat, is most active at night, travels long distances, and crosses national borders. So we're helping to improve the accuracy of survey techniques and to share knowledge between lion range countries.

A SCIENCE-BASED SOLUTION

“Historically, different methods have been used to survey lions, but Kenya has adopted the ‘spatially explicit capture-recapture’ method,” says Francis (see overleaf). “Now we're working with KWS and the Wildlife Research & Training Institute (WRTI) to train ecologists and roll out this technique.”

“WRTI's counterparts in Tanzania also adopted this method, so it's a great transboundary effort,” adds Kate. “We've just completed the first lion census in Mkomazi National Park in north-east Tanzania, supported by UK players of People's Postcode Lottery. By continuing the work in the south we'll gain a similarly accurate estimate for lion numbers in Tanzania.”

Lions don't respect borders, of course. So thanks to you, we help fund work in the wider region spanning southern Kenya and northern Tanzania. This encompasses a ▶

© Juozas Cernius / WWF-UK | © Richard Barrett / WWF-UK

Below: By using a robust scientific method that identifies individual lions by their whisker spot patterns, we can generate a reliable estimate of lion populations



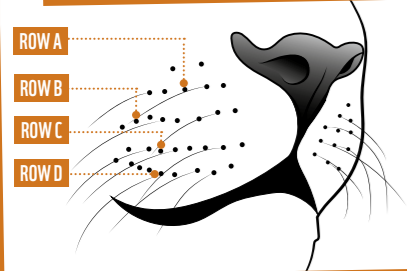
How to count lions

To plan effective conservation, it's vital to get regular, accurate assessments of lion abundance and distribution. But identifying and counting individual lions is easier said than done.

The 'spatially explicit capture-recapture' method uses photos, taken by camera traps or people, to identify individual lions. Then a statistical model estimates the number of lions in an area.

But how do you identify a lion? You look for distinguishing features, such as scars, torn ears or broken teeth. You can also use the pattern of each lion's whisker spots, which

COUNTING LION WHISKER SPOTS



is unique, like a fingerprint. A clear photo of each side of a lion's face enables researchers to note the number and position of the spots – and identify every lion.



Main: Taking clear photos of lions' distinguishing features creates a catalogue of known individuals. We can then use this to identify them from their whisker spots and other unique features

Left: WWF's Emanuel Michael Kivuyo sets up a camera trap in Tanzania. These gadgets help the team identify individual lions and monitor populations and movements

“TO SECURE A FUTURE FOR LIONS WE NEED TO ASSESS HOW MANY THERE ARE AND WHERE THEY ROAM”

number of protected areas in both countries, including the Maasai Mara, Amboseli and Tsavo National Parks in Kenya, and Kilimanjaro and Mkomazi in Tanzania, as well as areas in between.

We also support conservation efforts in the Ruvuma Transboundary Landscape straddling southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique, and in and around Queen Elizabeth National Park in Uganda.

CREATING CONNECTIVITY

This work takes various forms. Many existing protected areas are too small to support large lion populations, so it's vital that they're connected, enabling the cats to move safely to find new territories, food and mates. We're working with local rural communities to protect wildlife corridors and dispersal areas between Kenya and Tanzania, and ensure these people benefit financially from wildlife-friendly land uses.

In an important wildlife corridor that cuts through a swathe of community-owned lands, the Land for Life programme is helping to reduce lion conflict with communities and associated retaliatory killings of predators, thanks to backing from the UK government via UK Aid Match (see page 18).

“Land for Life focuses on the human wellbeing aspects of conservation in carnivore landscapes,” explains Kate. “Actions such as supporting locally led,

rapid-response teams to deal with conflict and improving rangeland health give a boost to people's livelihoods. And the results speak for themselves – increasing tolerance of predators shows that tangible benefits can increase coexistence and make it safer for lions to move across the area.

“In a wildlife-management area between Amboseli in Kenya and West Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, we're also piloting a wildlife credits model, backed by funding from

Left: Christine Mwende from Tsavo Trust was a key part of the lion survey team in Kenya. We work with a number of partners to carry out surveys and other conservation work

the UK government through its Darwin Initiative,” she adds. “The idea is that we support communities who monitor and leave space for wildlife, while directly benefiting the people involved, so they can see a way to coexist with lions and other wildlife.”

Coexistence: that's the crucial word, and it informs our efforts to protect wildlife in Africa and globally. “Lions are champions for greater biodiversity,” says Kate. “They play an important role in their ecosystems and the services those ecosystems provide to local communities. But not everyone realises these icons are under threat. We need to focus on increasing the value, and decreasing the costs, for people who share space with them.”

“Predators have nowhere else to go,” concludes Francis. “Fortunately, there are many communities who have been guardians of the landscape for generations and are willing to try to coexist with them – we just need to give them a hand.” ■

Last chance for lions

Will you help secure a future for Africa's noble big cats and support coexistence with people? Here's how your gift could help:

£10 could help pay for lights that deter predators from raiding livestock pens

£20 could help provide more secure enclosures to protect farmers' livestock

£50 could go towards a smartphone or GPS unit to record lion movements, poaching incidents or human-wildlife conflict

£100 could help fund training for community rangers who can respond to lion conflict incidents

You can donate using the enclosed freepost envelope or by scanning this QR code



Donate today at wwf.org.uk/lion-last-roar

Deadly *bite*

The Pantanal wetlands in Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay are home to jaguars, the most aquatic of the big cats. Living near water, these large and powerful cats thrive on a diet of capybaras, fish and caimans. Their bite is so strong they can crunch through the crocodilians' tough armour. Photographer Ian Ford captured that fatal moment in this image, which was commended in the Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2024 competition. Sadly, the Pantanal is being devastated by wildfires, made worse by climate change. With your support, we're providing training and equipment for firefighters and community fire crews in Brazil to help them tackle the blazes.

Discover more amazing wildlife photos at nhm.ac.uk/wpy



READ TIME
10
MINS

Leading the *way*

Wildlife and people in Tanzania are facing big challenges, but the Land for Life project is here to help

The Maasai elders have noticed the wet seasons getting wetter, and the dry seasons parching the land as never before. They've watched the grasslands where they graze their livestock becoming less nutritious, and seen elephants, lions and leopards draw closer, driven by hunger. Their culture is steeped in ancient traditions and yet, as they observe their changing world, they're embracing new ways of living. This generation and the next will need to withstand the effects of climate change as well as the increased competition for resources and conflict this can cause. The most effective way to do this is to combine modern know-how with the wisdom of generations that have come before.

CULTIVATING COEXISTENCE

WWF's Noah Sitati leads a team that supports communities on the Kenya-Tanzania border to develop positive solutions to these problems. An ecologist with three degrees, he defers to local knowledge. "When we start projects, we consult the community," he explains. "We say what we think should be done, then ask for their advice. We accommodate their traditional knowledge. Without the goodwill and support of communities, we can't really achieve anything."

The need for action is clear. The Maasai have always lived alongside wild animals, sharing communal spaces, but the balance has shifted. Age-old wildlife migration routes are obstructed by settlements, roads and fences. And disruptive new patterns of climate change render areas uninhabitable because of drought. Deprived of wild prey, big cats seek easier pickings in the form of domestic livestock, while herds of elephants compete with people for scarce water.

Neovitus Sianga of African People & Wildlife (APW) leads a team of coexistence officers whose job is to minimise and solve issues with wildlife in the communities. "Local officers play a crucial role, patrolling villages to look for big cats ►

The Land for Life project was made possible by the support of the British public, with every donation matched by the UK government. Thank you to those of you who supported the appeal. Together we raised £4.76 million.

wwf.org.uk/land-for-life



Protecting livelihoods

The living wall is a modern twist on a traditional structure in Tanzania. Maasai families have long lived inside bomas – rings of acacia thorns that encircle and protect their community. But acacia dries out and weakens in the sun. The Living Walls project fortifies bomas by planting termite-resistant trees such as commiphora (African myrrh) and adding chain-link wire, making it impossible for predators to squeeze through. Almost 30,000 trees have been planted.



Empowering women

"When my husband was alive, he would go out at night with a torch to scare predators away from our livestock enclosure," says Jopha Kakanyi. But after he died, leopards and hyenas got into their boma with devastating results. "I couldn't leave the house to protect my goats because I was too scared," she says. The living wall changed her life by keeping her livestock and livelihood safe. She hopes other women can benefit in the same way.

Supporting peace of mind

Saroni Olekuru (overleaf) can relax knowing his goats are safe inside his living wall. "My friends are crying," he says. "Every day, someone says that their goat has been eaten. But I sleep well at night, because even when I hear a hyena bark I don't worry at all. I know my goats are safe. The hyena can't get through the fence. Since I got the living wall, I haven't experienced any problems with wild animals attacking my livestock."

Building relationships

“Look, a leopard print!” says coexistence officer Ladamuni Lazaro. “It passed by not long ago!” His colleague, Jackson Shuaka, sends a text to local herders, warning them to be vigilant because a leopard is nearby. Born and raised in local villages, coexistence officers work in their communities to share knowledge, develop solutions, recover lost livestock and reduce wildlife crime.



and advising communities where they can graze their livestock,” he says. “Whenever a cow or goat has been attacked, they talk to people and gather information that helps us develop actions to prevent future conflicts.”

On the basis that prevention is better than cure, one of the most successful initiatives has been the Living Walls project, whereby livestock are kept safe at night inside environmentally friendly bomas (enclosures) formed from trees and fences. A recent study showed that people who own living walls are more likely to feel positive about coexisting with large carnivores.

Living walls are less effective at protecting crops, as they won't deter an elephant. These giants can easily trample a fence – yet live in fear of something tiny. They always give bees a wide berth, so strategically placed hives keep them at bay. The herds' insatiable thirst is met by communities who help safeguard springs, protect river areas and make dams, so there's water for all.

NURTURING THE LAND

More than nine-tenths of northern Tanzania's open grassland is shared by wild grazers and Maasai livestock, and Neovitus has helped set up the Sustainable Rangelands Initiative to restore these lands to good health for everyone. Overgrazing and the arrival of invasive plant species have both been a problem.



Sharing experience

Jackson and Ladamuni are out every day at dawn checking for animal tracks. “Seeing footprints is exciting,” says Ladamuni. Both men understand the unique challenges faced by local people and, as a former pastoralist, Ladamuni has intimate knowledge of what it takes to raise livestock. Their lifelong understanding of wildlife enables them to act as ambassadors and detect the presence of large carnivores in the landscape.



Working with nature

The living wall that surrounds Saroni Olekuru (left) and his family in his boma has special properties. Just like UK willows, African esilalei trees grow roots and shoots from bare branches pushed into the earth. “Strong trees, deeply rooted in the ground, make my boma more sturdy,” says Saroni. And once they come fully into leaf, their foliage will provide welcome shade for people and animals.

The former creates bare patches of soil, which are washed away by the rains. Vigorous invasive species then move in to swamp the grassland. The result is a reduction in good-quality grazing pasture.

Together with APW we're supporting local communities to become scientists and decision-makers. Teams of volunteer monitors are trained as field workers, assessing plots for grass height, bare ground and the presence of invasive plants. This information is used by community grazing committees to decide which areas should be grazed and when – a system of rotational grazing that gives exhausted pasture time to recover.

Community teams also root out invasive plants, helping grass on the rangelands to grow thicker and taller than before. To ease the pressure on the soil, communities are also exploring the potential of rearing fewer cattle but from more productive breeds. Meanwhile, around Lake Natron, we're supporting communities to try growing sunflowers – nutritious to us but unpalatable to wild animals – instead of traditional maize, which is often raided by wildlife.

In their timeless search for a way of life that's good for people and wildlife, some Maasai herders are exploring new horizons, guided by tradition and the hope for a balanced future. ■



Merging science and wisdom

Rangelands are vital for pastoralist communities and wildlife. Our partner, African People & Wildlife, is working with local communities to restore, improve and maintain this vital ecosystem's health. “Merging traditional knowledge and modern technology” is a mantra for Neovitus Sianga (right), who oversees work to manage grazing pasture – for livestock and wildlife – in the face of climate change.



Regenerating rangelands

A community member from the village of Kimokouwa grasps the initiative in pulling out invasive *Ipomoea hildebrandtii*. This species of bindweed, which livestock won't eat, quickly smothers sparse grass with its dense foliage. Areas cleared of this plant have increased their grass biomass by almost 50%, which is a real boost to herders, who rely on grass to feed their animals, and to wild herbivores such as zebras.



Healing in *nature*

WWF supporter **Joe Wicks** has always celebrated the benefits of keeping fit, and now he's championing nature's role in our mental health

You've often spoken about how connection is vital to healing. Is a connection to nature an important part of this?

Our connections in life are key, whether they're to nature or to people. I believe that nature is a healer and helps recharge and ground us, but also plays a crucial role in our mental health. We need a sense of connection to love and nature to thrive.

How can people boost their wellbeing with nature if they don't find it easy to get outside?

Not everyone can get outside all the time, but you can still feel a connection to nature from your living room. Practise some mindfulness exercises listening to the sounds of nature, watch a nature documentary or care for some houseplants.

Tell us about your own journey with nature.

I've always loved being active, but my connection with nature has grown over the years. When I was younger I didn't think too much about it – I'd spend time outdoors or ride my bike to stay fit. But then I realised how much better I felt when I was outdoors, especially when I was surrounded by nature. It's not just the exercise – I like the fresh air, the sunlight and the sounds of wildlife. I started to notice that I felt better mentally after being outside, and now it's become a way for me to recharge and stay grounded.

Have you experienced the wellbeing benefits of connecting with nature?

Nature has benefited my wellbeing 100%! I have four young children and spending time outdoors either with them or on my own helps clear my head and makes me feel happier and more energised. Stepping out in nature even for just a few minutes works wonders. It's such a simple yet amazing way to recharge and I always come back feeling inspired.

Do your surroundings affect your mood and energy levels?

Yes, I love exploring different natural spots through exercise but also with my family. From beaches to forests, I love exploring. Each habitat has a unique feeling and helps you create beautiful memories.

Why is it important for children to enjoy nature?

Getting children outside and into nature is vital. Nature has an amazing way of boosting your mood and sparking creativity. When children are active in nature it doesn't just help their physical health but also improves their wellbeing and social skills.

Have you got any tips for encouraging kids to get outside?

If your children aren't into the outdoors, the best thing to do is make it fun. Take a picnic to the park, make a game of some wildlife spotting or just play in the rain. The options are endless and parents should try to lead by example – this will help children associate the outdoors with fun and adventure.

Is nature important to nutrition?

Nutrition and nature go hand in hand. Nature gives us fresh fruit, vegetables and other foods that fuel our bodies. Eating seasonal produce nourishes us and connects us to nature and our communities. It's so important for staying healthy.

Capturing nature

Joe is one of eight WWF supporters featured in the Nature Restores Us portrait series by WWF ambassador and photographer Conor McDonnell.



See the photos at www.wwf.org.uk/portrait-series

Let nature restore you

Turn to **page 28** for easy ideas to help the whole family get a daily dose of nature – whatever the weather!

Joe's favourite local nature spot is Virginia Water in Windsor Great Park

How to...

Amazing ideas for bringing our world back to life

Find out more about Earth Hour and how you can get involved at:

wwwf.org.uk/earth-hour



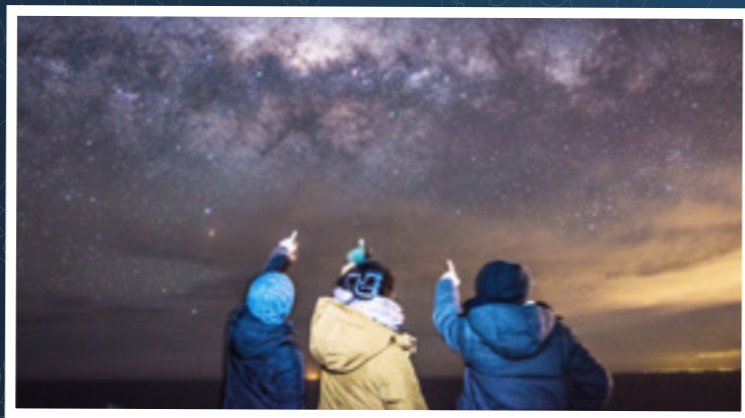
Spot spring stars

This Earth Hour on Saturday 22 March we'll be encouraging everyone to get their daily dose of nature. One way you can do this is to simply look up and take in starry spring skies.

You don't need any special equipment for stargazing as there's plenty you can see with the naked eye. Wrap up warm and head outside on a clear evening, ideally when the moon is a crescent so the sky is darker.

Turn south to spot some animal-themed constellations:

- 1 Just above the horizon look for Sirius, the bright 'dog star' that's part of **Canis Major** (the great dog).
- 2 Forming the top-left corner of a triangle with Sirius and Betelgeuse (the shoulder of Orion) is Procyon, a bright star that's part of **Canis Minor** (the lesser or little dog).
- 3 Binoculars will help you make out **Taurus** (the bull) and **Cancer** (the crab), also to the south but higher in the sky.
- 4 To the south-east you might spot **Leo** (the lion) and, higher up, **Leo Minor** (the lesser or little lion).



Below: Try to find a spot away from artificial light but take a torch and watch your step

Keep a nature journal

With signs of spring appearing, now's a great time to start a nature diary. Journaling can reduce stress, improve your mood and enhance your observation skills – and it's a great way to feel closer to nature. Find a notebook you can take outdoors (if you like sketching, consider one with unlined paper). Then go somewhere you love, take your time and look around. What makes you feel inspired? Use all your senses to describe what you see, and don't forget to jot down your thoughts and feelings as well as the date, time and weather. Over time, your journal will become a unique record of your personal connection with the natural world.



Above: Look around you for inspiration. You might look closely at tiny lichen, or feel the breeze on your face



Relocate black rhinos

Africa's black rhinos need space, food and mates, and relocation to areas where they once roamed is a vital tool in the species' recovery.

- 1 Identify a suitable landscape that covers a large area, provides food and water, and can be protected against poaching.
- 2 Involve everyone in the plan, from landowners and communities to officials and conservationists.
- 3 Carefully choose which rhinos to move. Select healthy young bulls and experienced mothers as they're most likely to have calves in their new home.
- 4 Work with vets to find and safely capture the target rhinos. Sedate the rhinos for their journey, with their eyes and ears covered to minimise stress.
- 5 Transport each rhino in a crate by road (or by air for longer distances, such as between countries). On arrival, keep them in an enclosure to acclimatise.
- 6 After their release, monitor the rhinos closely, and maybe fit them with tracking devices. Look for them, their tracks and dung to ensure they're thriving.

Grow vegetables in any space

Growing your own vegetables is a great way to feel in touch with the earth and reduce food miles. You don't need an allotment or even a big garden. In fact, you don't need a garden at all! There are plenty of vegetables and salad

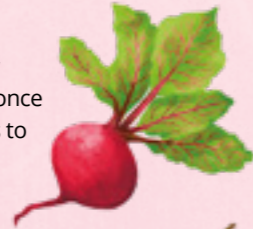
plants that grow happily in pots – or you can repurpose old buckets, bowls or sacks. We've picked six veggies you can sow now, and the companion plants that will help keep your crops free of unwanted insects.

Top tip

Make sure that all your repurposed containers have holes in the bottom for drainage, and use a good, peat-free compost.

1 BEETROOT

Beetroot is well suited to containers. Sow seeds in March in a 20cm-deep pot, and once they've sprouted pick out some seedlings to create space for the remaining plants. They'll take about three months to grow.



2 BROAD BEANS

For containers, look for dwarf varieties that won't get too tall. Plant seeds from February but protect them from the cold. Sow marigolds nearby to repel blackfly, and nasturtiums to entice aphids away.



3 PEAS

Peas need support to grow, so choose a wide container that can accommodate sticks around the plants. Mangetout varieties are best suited to pots. Sow seeds in full sun, and water the seedlings well.



4 SALAD LEAVES

Lettuces and salad leaves grow well in pots and window boxes. Buy seed mixes or focus on your favourites. Include coriander to lure aphids off potatoes and carrots if you're growing them.



5 POTATOES

One seed potato can produce a big crop, so plant each one in a wide, deep container – a bucket is ideal. Plant the potato with the 'eye' facing up and cover with soil. Water well once the leaves appear.



6 CARROTS

Carrots need deep, sandy soil, so choose a high-sided container with plenty of drainage. Look for varieties that can be sown in February and you'll have a crop in June. Grow chives nearby to keep carrot flies away.



NASTURTIUMS

MARIGOLDS

Illustrations: Esther Curtis



Listen out for birdsong

As the first light of day breaks over the UK, nature's symphony begins – the dawn chorus. March to July is the time to enjoy it. Birds sing to defend their territory and attract mates while the dim light makes it hard to forage. These are some of the songsters you can listen out for.



Song thrush

The song thrush sings a distinctive pattern of complex tunes, often repeated several times.

Blackbird

The blackbird's song is rich and melodious, often described as fluty. It starts with a few clear notes followed by a varied and complex series of phrases.



Chiffchaff

Usually arriving in the UK in spring, the chiffchaff sings a repetitive 'chiff-chaff, chiff-chaff' that's easy to recognise.



Robin

One of the first songs you'll hear in the morning, the robin's song is a series of short, high-pitched notes, often ending with a flourish.



Great tit

One of the first birds to sing in spring, the great tit's most often heard song is a simple, two-note call said to sound like 'teacher teacher'.

Make your money greener

Three ways to save and invest for a better world

1 Switch to a pension that invests ethically. If you have a private pension, ask your provider how your money is invested, or check Make My Money Matter (see below). For workplace pensions, ask your employer to ensure the provider acts sustainably.

2 Choose a bank that finances nature-positive activities and limits its exposure to activities that harm the natural world.

3 Buy from companies with strong ethical policies. Beware of greenwashing, where firms claim to be more eco-friendly than they are.

To find out more, visit [makemymoneymatter.co.uk](https://www.makemymoneymatter.co.uk)



Nature's playground

Getting outdoors can help kids feel happier and healthier. These activities will give the whole family a wellbeing boost

In our fast-paced lives, it's easy to lose touch with the natural world. But connecting with nature isn't just a pastime – it's a tonic for our mental wellbeing, helping to reduce stress, lift our mood and give our minds a much-needed rest. For many young people, school may be the only place they can connect with nature.

But our *Schools for Nature* report reveals that only a quarter of UK schools offer daily opportunities to do so.

With young people today increasingly facing mental health struggles, finding ways for them to engage with the natural world is more important than ever. Fortunately, there are lots of quick, simple and fun ways to bring nature into kids' lives – in fact, just 20 minutes a day can work wonders. From games and crafts to helping local wildlife, these easy ideas can help children get their daily dose of nature. Why not challenge the whole family to do one thing every day and track your progress together?



1. Get crafty with nature

Nature has long been an artistic muse, but why not go a step further and get creative with nature? Whether you arrange natural objects into pleasing patterns, try leaf printing or press fallen flowers, it's a fun and rewarding way to express yourself while connecting with nature.



2. Discover sensory surprises

Fill a basket, box or bag with natural treasures such as pine cones, leaves, shells, pebbles and twigs. Then let little ones dive in, feeling the different textures, shapes and sizes – it's like a wild lucky dip! These sensory boxes are a great way to introduce kids to the outdoor world through touch and play.



3. Grow a sunflower

Surely the happiest flowers of all, these cheery giants are easy to grow. Sow your seeds inside in March, then move them outdoors in April or May when they're established. Why not turn it into a competition by writing your names on the pots and seeing whose bloom towers above the rest?



4. Help feathered families

As spring unfolds, support busy bird parents by offering energy-rich treats such as sunflower hearts and peanuts. You could also give them a spot to splash about and have a drink by setting up a simple bird bath – a shallow dish, pot or pan works perfectly. Just add fresh water every day.



5. Pick up a little litter

Litter-picking is a fantastic, hands-on way to show children the importance of looking after our environment and 'doing our bit', even if it's just for five minutes. Check for local clean-ups – it's a great way to get to know your neighbours and boost your sense of community spirit.



6. Play nature's games

Transform nature into a playground! Create a noughts-and-crosses grid out of sticks (using pebbles and leaves as markers), challenge each other to 'I Spy' using only natural objects, or craft a tiny leaf boat and sail it across a puddle. Who knew sticks and stones could be so much fun?



7. Build a bug hotel

Channel your inner architect and create a cosy home for minibeasts: build a log pile in a quiet corner of your garden, then stuff the gaps with twigs, bamboo canes, leaves and pine cones for insects and other invertebrates to move in. Watch as your bug hotel attracts a range of tiny guests.



8. Search for natural treasure

In the woods, at the beach or in your garden, a treasure hunt is an exciting way to explore and discover nature through fresh eyes. Look for patterned stones, vibrant flowers, oddly shaped sticks and pretty shells. Photograph your finds, and note the sounds and scents you encounter along the way.

A Prescription For Nature

WHEN WE RESTORE NATURE,
NATURE RESTORES US.



Explore more!
Find more ideas for getting your daily dose of nature at wwf.org.uk/prescription-for-nature

GIFTS & GIVEAWAYS

Cool *comfort*

Win sustainable luxe loungewear

We've teamed up with Pangaia, the premium brand that fuses science and slow fashion, to create a range of luxury loungewear. Sustainable innovation is at the heart of Pangaia's mission to develop ethically sourced fabrics from plants, waste and surplus materials.

Crafted from materials including organic cotton and recycled fibres, their loungewear collection includes hoodies, T-shirts and track pants featuring our iconic panda logo. They're comfortable, stylish and good for the planet. Explore the full Pangaia x WWF range at shop.wwf.org.uk.

We've got one adult Pangaia x WWF unisex sweatshirt to give away to a lucky winner in the size and colour of your choice – pick from black, foliage or moss green in sizes ranging from XXS to XXL. For your chance to win, check the 'How to enter' section below.



New in the shop!



Get organised in style with this **jungle jaguar everyday pouch (£32)**. Perfect for handbag essentials, or use it as an eye-catching clutch.



Inspire young explorers with the **garden insects pop-out and build playset (£11.99)**. They'll love getting creative with this insect scene.

You can find more gifts and treats in our online shop: shop.wwf.org.uk

Earn your *stripes*

Win one of three copies of *Remembering Tigers*

Fans of big cats will love this spectacular photo book. *Remembering Tigers* is the ultimate collection of beautiful tiger photography.

More than 80 stunning images have been donated by the world's leading photographers. From cubs to adults, and snow-clad forests to shimmering grasslands, the pictures offer a visual feast – and a poignant reminder of the challenges facing wild tigers.

We have three copies of *Remembering Tigers* to give away, one each to three winners. For your chance to win, follow the instructions in the 'How to enter' section (right).

This is the ninth book in the Remembering Wildlife series, which has so far raised over £1.1 million for conservation projects. To find out more, visit rememberingwildlife.com.



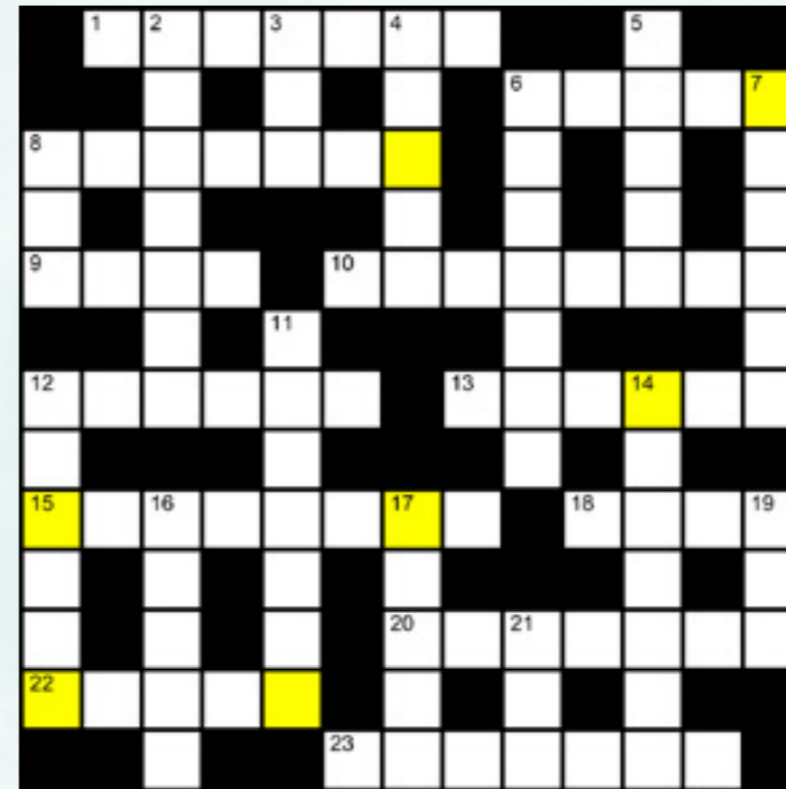
How to enter Action giveaways

Send an email with your name, address and phone number, along with Pangaia or Remembering Tigers in the subject line, to competition@wwf.org.uk

Alternatively, post your entry to **Action Magazine, WWF-UK, Living Planet Centre, Rufford House, Brewery Road, Woking, Surrey GU21 4LL.**

Closing date: Friday 28 March 2025. For full terms and conditions, visit: www.wwf.org.uk/compterm

Crossword



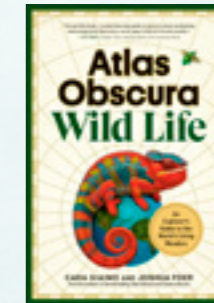
WWF ACTION CROSSWORD 59: Spring 2025 issue. Compiled by Aleric Linden

Clues across

- 1 The largest cats in the Americas (7)
- 6 Sea _ , endangered weasel family member (5)
- 8 Prevailing weather – it's subject to 'change' (7)
- 9 Water _ , rainwater collector (4)
- 10 Destructive waves caused by underwater earthquakes and volcanic eruptions (8)
- 12 A packed lunch that's ideal on a family day trip to the countryside (6)
- 13 Heavyweight African mammals often found bathing in mud or water (6)
- 15 As well as Kenya, where else is the 'Land for Life' project helping both wildlife and people thrive? (8)
- 18 Magnificent big cat – the king! (4)
- 20 It describes volcanoes that are neither extinct nor active (7)
- 22 A metric measure of water (5)
- 23 A source of acorns (3,4)

Clues down

- 2 A lion native to India (7)
- 3 Ultraviolet radiation that's harmful to the skin (3)
- 4 Coral _ , they're home to about 25% of Earth's marine life (5)
- 5 The main source of power for transportation, once upon a time (5)
- 6 The outdoors (4,3)
- 7 Resting spots for birds (6)
- 8 Young lion (3)
- 11 The world's tallest living terrestrial animal (7)
- 12 Fuel for road vehicles (6)
- 14 Man or ape (7)
- 16 _ Sea, it lies off the east coast of Britain (5)
- 17 It's overtaken China as the country with the largest population in the world (5)
- 19 Something to put in a bird feeder (3)
- 21 Common rodent (3)



Solve our crossword and you could win a copy of *Atlas Obscura: Wild Life*, by Cara Giaimo and Joshua Foer (*Workman*, RRP £30.00)

After solving the crossword, take each letter from the shaded squares (going from left to right and top to bottom) to spell the **prize word**. To be in with a **chance to win**, just send a postcard with the prize word to the address on this page, or email it to competition@wwf.org.uk The closing date is **Friday 28 March 2025**.

Autumn 2024 answers

Prize word: DOLPHINS
Across 1. Gardens 5. Storm 9. Snow leopards 10. Range 11. Sei 12. Peak 13. Scut 15. Gate 16. Bush 17. Cat 19. Parks 22. Conservation 23. Welsh 24. Andreas

Down 2. At sea 3. Drought 4. Nile 6. Trams 7. Red List 8. Towpath 12. Poultry 14. Cyclone 15. Glacier 18. Tusks 20. Kenya 21. Rain

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MAKE YOUR WILL FOR FREE

Writing a will is a simple way to plan for your future, and by leaving a gift to WWF you can protect the planet's future too.

You can make or amend your will, often for free, through WWF's membership of special will-writing schemes. Although there's no obligation to include a gift to WWF, we're incredibly grateful to everyone who does.

To find out more about writing a free will, just call Ella on 01483 412153 or email ella@wwf.org.uk



For a future where people and nature thrive | wwf.org.uk

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