

## Magazine Highlights May 2020

### [WHERE HAVE ALL THE INSECTS GONE?](#) By [Elizabeth Kolbert](#) ; photos by [David Liittschwager](#)

- **INSECT APOCALYPSE:** Insects are the largest and most diverse group of organisms on Earth. A million species have been described; estimates of how many remain to be identified run as high as 8 million. Insects are pollinators, predators, decomposers and parasites. They form the basis of countless food chains. In 2017, researchers discovered insect biomass in the reserves had dropped by three-quarters over 30 years. Although they couldn't identify a clear cause for the decline, their conclusions were grim. This feature explores these dramatic rates of decline and explains the phenomenon known as "insect apocalypse."
- **AVAILABLE:**
  - **Interviews** with National Geographic contributing writer Elizabeth Kolbert
  - **Colorful images** showcasing the variety of insects from all around the world

### [BODIES IN MOTION](#) By Jason Treat, Brad Scriber and Patricia Healy; illustrations by Bryan Christie Design

- **ANIMAL LOCOMOTION:** How do animals move? Scientists are still asking this basic question and discovering fascinating answers. New research has linked the neural pathway of the pectoral fins of the little skate to the same pathways used by animals on land, providing genetic evidence for how animals might have first walked on land. This graphic feature explores animal locomotion through anatomically correct models that look at how the motions of lizards retain the lateral vestiges of swimming, how ungulates sacrifice stability for speed by running on their fingernails and how bipedalism has evolved at least twice.
- **AVAILABLE:**
  - **Fascinating, one-of-a-kind animated GIFs** of a variety of animals in motion

### [COMING OF AGE WITH AUTISM](#) By [Judith Newman](#) ; photos by [Lynn Johnson](#)

- **AUTISM:** Finding work, love and independence can be especially difficult for those on the spectrum. Autism is a rapidly growing diagnosis – up 600% in the past 20 years. A great deal has been written about why, but this feature focuses on who autism affects .
- **AVAILABLE:**
  - **Interviews** with bestselling author Judith Newman

### [EARLY AUTISM SIGNS](#) By [Yudhijit Bhattacharjee](#) ; photos by [Lynn Johnson](#)

- **AUTISM SCIENCE:** Twenty years ago, autism was such a confounding mystery that the vacuum in the public's understanding of the disorder was filled, in part, by a fraudulent study blaming it on vaccines. Despite being convincingly disproved, that false claim stuck around for years because of the lack of answers that researchers could provide about autism. Today,

scientists have resolved the riddle of autism to a considerable extent. Through findings enabled by advances in neuro-imaging and other technologies, they have illuminated some of the characteristics and causes of the disorder. This feature explores some of the new understandings that have led to therapies that can mitigate the consequences of autism.

- **AVAILABLE:**

- **Interviews** with award-winning writer and National Geographic contributor Yudhijit Bhattacharjee

[A WILD IDEA](#) By [David Quammen](#) ; photos by [Tomas Munita](#)

- **GAINING GROUND:** Kris Tompkins, former CEO of Patagonia, spent the past several years buying and conserving millions of acres of land throughout South America with her now-deceased husband Doug Tompkins, the founder of The North Face. Among other places, they created Pumalín Park, a public-access 800,000-acre nature reserve, and Iberá Park, a protected swath of pristine Argentinian landscapes. This feature explores how these actions have inspired citizens to take pride in their country's stunning landscapes and motivated the governments to protect this land.

- **AVAILABLE:**

- **Interviews** with travel writer David Quammen
- **Stunning landscape imagery** by Tomas Munita

[ITALY'S TIMELESS TRAILS](#) By [Alexis Marie Adams](#) ; photos by [Giuseppe Nucci](#)

- **SEASONAL MIGRATION:** In central Italy, the transhumance—the age-old practice of moving livestock from summer to winter pastures, is connected by a network of *tratturi*, or ancient trade routes. Along with livestock, knowledge and traditions traveled the *tratturi*. This feature highlights the inscription of transhumance in the UNESCO Intangible Heritage List and how this inclusion has impacted the preservation and rediscovery of the region's historical and cultural heritage.

- **AVAILABLE:**

- **Interviews** with culture and environment writer Alexis Marie Adams
- **Breathtaking images** from Italy's countryside by Giuseppe Nucci

MEDIA CONTACTS Anna Kukelhaus Dynan, [Anna.Kukelhaus@natgeo.com](mailto:Anna.Kukelhaus@natgeo.com), 202-912-6724 Kelsey Taylor, [Kelsey.Taylor@natgeo.com](mailto:Kelsey.Taylor@natgeo.com), 202-912-6776