

30 Days of Hope: Stories of Nature Resilience in the Sea and on Land

EVENTS

Nature has an astounding ability to persevere, thrive, and adapt when given the space to do so. This week for our #30DaysofHope recap, we're sharing stories of what happens when we protect and support nature in the sea and on the land.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



Dramatic skies over Purple and pink heather on Dorset heathland near Studland, UK. Photograph by allouphoto, Shutterstock.

May 15, 2020

Right now, people around the world are discussing the concepts of strength and resilience. How do we rebound from moments of adversity? Where can we look for inspiration? Here at the National Geographic Society, we find inspiration and hope in the tenacity of nature.

Nature has an astounding ability to persevere, thrive, and adapt when given the space to do so. That’s one reason why, together with the [Wyss Foundation’s Campaign for Nature](#), we’re sharing a hopeful, nature-based story every day as part of our 30 Days of Hope initiative. This week, we’re celebrating what happens when we protect and support nature in the sea and on land.

We encourage you to follow us on [Twitter](#) for more inspirational stories about the natural world and the people, organizations, and countries working to protect it. [Check out 30 Days of Hope Week 1 here](#), and [30 Days of Hope Week 2 here!](#)

Reintroducing Jaguars in Iberá National Park

Last Wild Places: Iberá | National Geographic



After a more than 50 year absence, jaguars are returning to Iberá National Park in northeastern Argentina. Led by the Conservation Land Trust (founded by National Geographic Last Wild Places initiative conservation partner Tompkins Conservation) and the government of Corrientes Province, Argentina, the [Jaguar Reintroduction Project](#) is returning these top predators to their native habitat.

The Jaguar Reintroduction Project is part of a broader plan to restore native species to Iberá National Park. The park's comprehensive strategy includes managing the reserve to support threatened species and the reintroduction of locally extinct mammals such as the jaguar, pampas deer, tapir, and the giant anteater.

Protecting Migratory Birds on the Rift Valley Red Sea Flyway



Great White Pelicans Lake Naivasha, Nakuru County, Great Rift Valley, Kenya. Photograph by Jason Edwards, National Geographic.

The Migratory Soaring Birds Project works to protect the estimated 1.5 million birds that use the Rift Valley Red Sea flyway to move between their wintering grounds in Africa and their breeding grounds in Asia and Europe. The flyway spans 11 countries across Africa and the Middle East.

According to the United Nations Development Programme, the Rift Valley Red Sea flyway is “the second most important flyway for migratory soaring birds (raptors, storks, pelicans and some ibis) in the world.” The [Migratory Soaring Birds Project](#) focuses on conservation in the sectors whose activities put the birds at risk, like energy, agriculture, hunting, and waste management.

So far, conservation successes include disconnecting the Port Sudan power line, which has killed hundreds of endangered Egyptian vultures, and the signing of a responsible hunting declaration by prominent hunters in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Yemen, and Ethiopia.

Conservation Through Public Health in Uganda



Young mountain gorilla sits on its mother’s back, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda. Photograph by Andrew Coleman, National Geographic.

Sixteen years ago, [National Geographic Explorer Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka](#) founded Uganda’s Conservation Through Public Health non-profit to “promote biodiversity conservation by enabling people, gorillas, and livestock to co-exist through improving their health and livelihoods in and around Africa’s protected areas.”

Kalema-Zikusoka and her team’s conservation mission is rooted in their work to alleviate poverty and promote public health in local communities near Africa’s protected areas. By improving the quality of life for local communities, [Conservation Through Public Health](#) helps to reduce land encroachment, poaching, and food competition. In turn, these efforts safeguard biodiversity while protecting the critically endangered mountain gorillas of East Africa.

Creating the First “Super” Nature Reserve in the United Kingdom



Dramatic skies over Purple and pink heather on Dorset heathland near Studland, UK. Photograph by allouphoto, Shutterstock.

Purbeck Heaths is home to thousands of species, including 450 species that are listed as rare, threatened, or protected. The newly created reserve encompasses over 8,000 acres and is the largest lowland heathland reserve in the UK. The area combines 11 types of priority wildlife habitats, which enables mammals, reptiles, birds, and insects to move easily across the landscape. This movement will be especially important as the species adapt to the challenges of climate change.

Restoring Europe’s Danube Delta

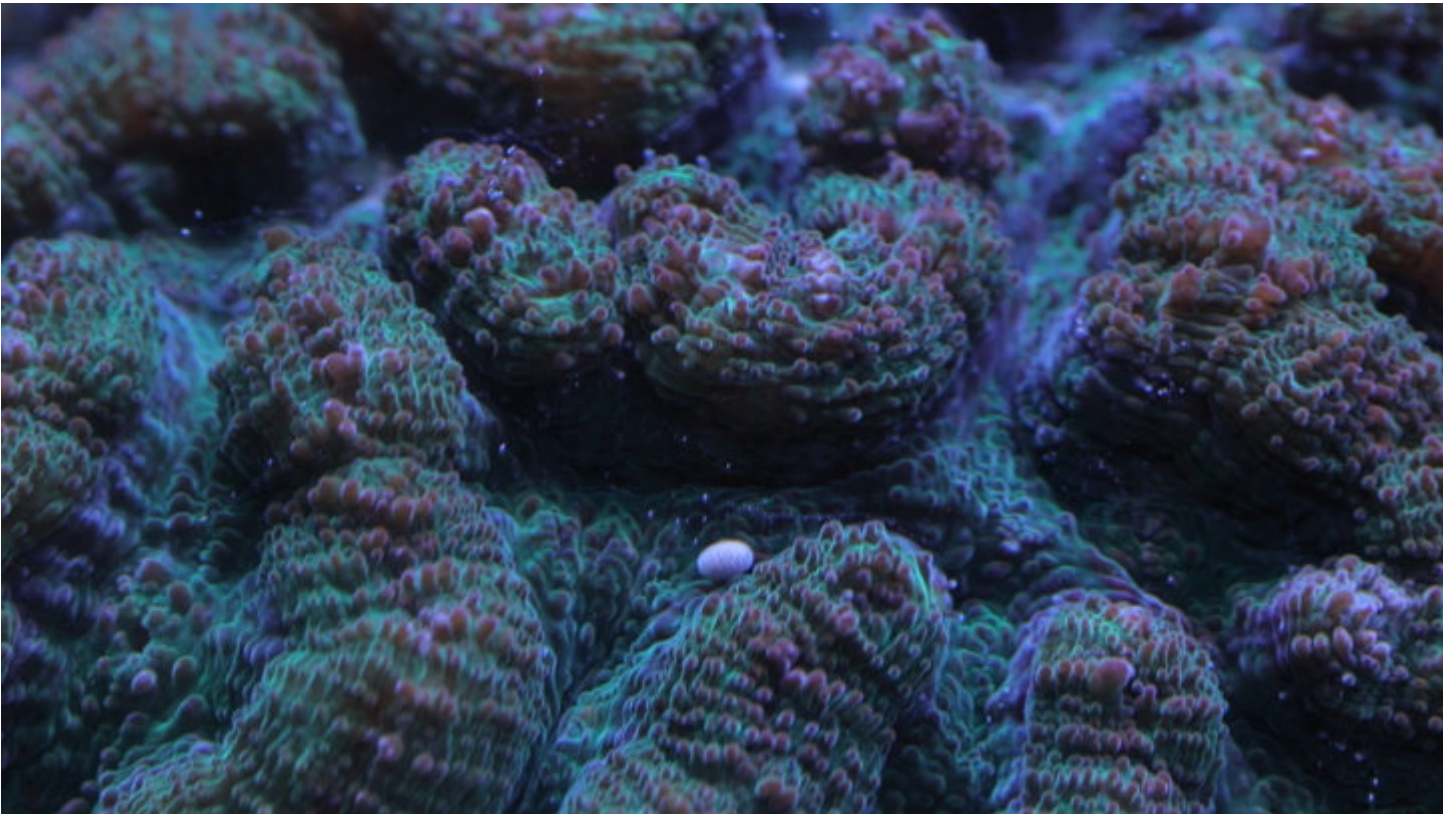


Danube Delta (Romania) Aerial View over Unique Nature. Photograph by Iliuta Goean, Shutterstock.

The water through Europe’s Danube Delta is flowing a little freer these days, thanks to the removal of 10 obsolete dams on the Kohyl’nyk and Sarata Rivers in Ukraine. The dams were taken out as part of a rewilding effort in the Danube Delta, which at over 1,400,000 acres, is Europe’s second largest wetland area, and the best preserved.

The Danube Delta is home to some of the few remaining grazed mosaic forest landscapes in Europe and is known for its abundance of birds and diversity of fish species. One goal of the rewilding efforts is to encourage the comeback of native wildlife species that once populated the delta. Reintroductions are planned for red deer, beaver, water buffalo, konik and hutsul horses, and eagle owls.

Reproducing Ridged Cactus Coral at the Florida Aquarium



Last month, [the Florida Aquarium](#) announced that it was able to [successfully reproduce ridged cactus coral for the first time in human care](#). Working in collaboration with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, the aquarium's study of coral reef reproduction is part of an effort to save the Florida Reef Tract from extinction.

Known as "America's 'Great' Barrier Reef," the Florida Reef Tract is suffering from an outbreak of Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease, which is affecting almost half of the stony coral species found in the reef. If the coral can breed and reproduce successfully in captivity, that coral may be able to help restore the Florida Reef Tract—which is the world's third-largest barrier reef—once it is free from disease.

The Amazing Comeback of the Juan Fernández Fur Seal



Juan Fernández sea lions investigate the Pristine Seas divers during an expedition in the Desventuradas Islands off the coast of Chile. Photograph by Enric Sala, National Geographic.

Are you loving these comeback stories? We sure are. Let's head even further south to the Juan Fernández Archipelago in Chile. Located over 300 miles from the mainland, these remote islands are home to a high percentage of rare and endemic plants and animals.

When the [National Geographic Pristine Seas](#) team traveled to the region in 2017, they were thrilled to find Juan Fernández fur seal pups swimming in the shallows of the Bahía del Padre. The seal species was first discovered in the 1500s and hunted extensively for pelt, blubber, and meat. They were presumed extinct until a small group was rediscovered in 1965.

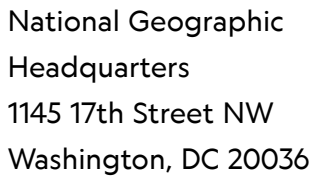
Thanks to community and government efforts to protect the seals' habitat in a marine park, the adult population of the Juan Fernández fur seal is now estimated to be around 16,000.

Stay tuned!

We hope that you can find inspiration in the strength and resilience of nature, and in work being done around the world to preserve it. Please like and share these stories—and your own—with the hashtag #30DaysofHope. For more information about this campaign, visit campaignfornature.org/30-days-of-hope.

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