



| SAVING BIG CATS IN THE WILD |

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BIG CATS INITIATIVE REPORT TO DONORS



LETTER FROM GARY E. KNELL



Dear Friends,

With your help, we've made measurable progress in the fight to save big cats. As you read through this report, you'll see how many of these iconic animals we've saved with your support and the number of grants we've made to fund projects that help cats and communities thrive together. You'll also learn how our investments in local scientists and conservationists are providing a sustainable long-term future for big cats.

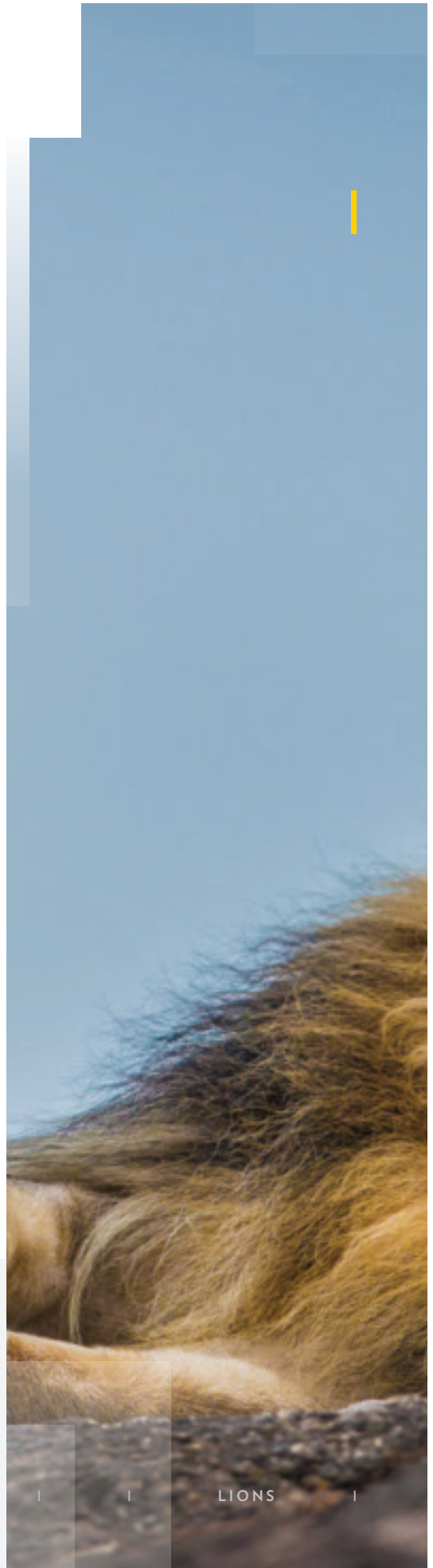
We moved the needle by listening to the right people—starting with National Geographic Explorers-in-Residence Beverly and Dereck Joubert. In 2009, they turned to National Geographic with a challenge: protect big cats in the wild before it's too late. They had seen firsthand, through their work in Africa and around the world, the threats lions, cheetahs, leopards, and other cats were facing in the wild and the resulting population decline. They came to us from the field with a sense of urgency and a passion to engage in the fight.

What did we do? We co-founded the Big Cats Initiative with Dereck and Beverly. We invested in scientists and conservationists who were early in their careers and trying new on-the-ground solutions to help communities coexist with big cats. When we saw that our support was making a difference in a specific project or community, we increased our commitment, expanding the impact of our work year after year. As a result, we're saving more big cats and we're doing it in ways that are sustainable and benefit the communities where big cats live.

We still have a lot of work to do. As human populations grow, threats to big cats continue, making what we're accomplishing together that much more important. Thank you for all that you're doing to help save big cats. You're making a difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Knell', written in a cursive style.

GARY E. KNELL President and CEO, National Geographic Society



LIONS

YOUR IMPACT |

With your support, National Geographic's Big Cats Initiative has helped prevent more than 2,600 big cat mortalities since 2010.



| LEOPARDS

| CHEETAHS

| TIGERS



Africa's lion population has declined 90% in the last 75 years. Cheetahs have disappeared from more than 75% of their historic range. As big cats continue to lose habitat, suffer the loss of prey due to poaching, and struggle to live in harmony with human populations, our investment in scientists and conservationists who can help save big cats is more important than ever.

Since 2010, the National Geographic Society's Big Cats Initiative (BCI) has awarded more than 100 grants to support more than 70 on-the-ground projects in 27 countries. Here are a few examples of what we're doing, thanks to your support.



ANDREW STEIN, BOTSWANA

Three-time BCI grantee Andrew Stein is working in northern Botswana where conflicts between villagers and lions are increasing. Andrew and his team are collaring lions with GPS/satellite technology that monitors the cats and sends an alert if cats venture too close to people and livestock. Teams move in to ensure livestock are safe and work with villagers to help them find ways to coexist with big cats.

YOUR IMPACT

You're helping communities and big cats thrive together.



THANDIWE MWEETWA, ZAMBIA

Two-time BCI grantee Thandiwe Mweetwa, a native of Zambia, is working to protect big cats and other wildlife in Zambia's Luangwa Valley—one of the last remaining strongholds for lions in Africa. Since 2009, Thandiwe and her team, supported by BCI, have been working to find ways to integrate local communities in the fight to help cats thrive in the face of increasing threats from human encroachment, poaching, and wire snaring.



AMY DICKMAN, TANZANIA

Four-time BCI grantee Amy Dickman is working in Tanzania's Ruaha region, home to the world's second largest lion population. Amy and her team, with the support of BCI, are fortifying bomas—simple livestock enclosures—and working with communities to train local dogs to safeguard livestock. National Geographic is increasing its investment in Amy's work, allowing her to scale up efforts to reduce human-lion conflict and improve the lives of communities living with big cats.



| YOUR IMPACT |

You're supporting de-snaring efforts to save big cats like Rosa.

| TANZANIA

| ZAMBIA

| MOZAMBIQUE

IN THE FIELD WITH PAOLA BOULEY

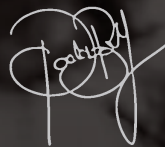
We found our lioness Rosa on the edge of a lake inside Gorongosa National Park. She had been missing for several weeks. Finally a signal from the radio collar we fitted on her allowed us to track her down.

She was hidden deep in a palm thicket. Something was wrong; she wasn't moving. We could hear her shallow breathing. Three of us opened a small window in the scrub. One well-placed dart made it. Relief. Once we were sure she was safely sedated, we moved in and found that her left paw was snared and her body had been severely mauled by other lions. We removed the wire snare, treated her wounds, and left her a small amount of food. None of us thought she'd pull through the night.

The next day we witnessed a small miracle. Surprising us all, Rosa had begun to eat. We treated her wounds again and within a couple of weeks, she could find her own food, her scars began to heal, and she began walking on her paw again.

Rosa was a victim of the illegal bushmeat trade, a little known but widespread threat to lion populations across Africa. Poverty, conflict, escalating demand, and a strong traditional culture of hunting for wild meat are all contributors. Teams like ours are on the ground to intervene and try to save lives. Rapid-response vet units and anti-poaching patrols—all synchronized—help stem the losses while larger human development programs take root.

Thank you for helping us save big cats like Rosa, who is living strong today. Soon we hope to welcome her new cubs to the Gorongosa family.



PAOLA BOULEY
BCI Grantee, Mozambique





Fortified bomas are saving big cats. These simple livestock corrals, made of local, living trees or chain-link fencing, are keeping cows and goats away from big cats and other predators, which in turn prevents retaliatory big cat deaths at the hands of herders seeking to keep their animals safe from harm. Each costing only \$500 to build and \$25 per year to maintain, bomas are an easy, inexpensive way to protect big cats and the communities that live alongside them. Here are a few examples of how bomas are protecting big cats, with your support.



SHIVANI BHALLA, KENYA

Six-time BCI grantee and fourth-generation Kenyan, Shivani Bhalla is protecting big cats and other large carnivores in northern Kenya using community-based solutions, like bomas, to help big cats and people coexist. Recently, drought has displaced human populations in the area leading to increased conflict with lions. Shivani and her team are helping communities build steel boma systems that keep livestock in and big cats out and safe from harm. Strong and portable, these bomas are ensuring a sustainable future for local communities and big cats.



YOUR IMPACT |

Your support has helped BCI build and improve more than 1,600 bomas.



LALY LICHTENFELD, TANZANIA

Eight-time BCI grantee Laly Lichtenfeld has worked on the ground to protect big cats for more than 20 years. Living and working in northern Tanzania, where human population growth is threatening the natural habitat of big cats, Laly works with local communities to construct Living Walls to keep livestock in and big cats safe from harm. In 2016, National Geographic increased its investment in her work, expanding her efforts to more project sites and ensuring that big cats and the people of Tanzania will live peacefully together.



ANNE KENT TAYLOR, KENYA

Native Kenyan and five-time BCI grantee Anne Kent Taylor has spent more than four decades working to protect big cats and other wildlife. Since 1999, Anne and her team have helped fortify more than 750 predator-proof bomas, removed more than 5,000 poaching snares, and built or contributed to the construction of five local schools that promote sustainable conservation practices. Because of you, Anne is helping big cats and communities thrive.



| THANK YOU |

RWANDA

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|

BOTSWANA

|

|

SOUTH AFRICA

|

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LETTER FROM OUR BCI CO-FOUNDERS

When we first dreamed up the idea of an initiative to tackle big cats as an emergency intervention, we could not have imagined we would receive support for the idea from National Geographic at this scale. With your help, we've supported the best scientists and conservationists in the field and scaled up their work to make an even greater impact for big cats.

We're learning the best strategies to protect big cats from the world's experts in the field, some of which are highlighted in this report. Now the challenge is different. We have identified what works and now we must scale up these successes. We live by the Edmund Burke quote, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." So we are dedicating our lives to BCI as the most significant driver in big cat conservation that straddles good science and hands-on conservation, the kind we have been doing all our lives.

You are helping us increase our support for the ideas that are truly saving big cats on the ground. We thank you all for that support. With your help, we can make a difference for big cats. Exciting times ahead.

Kind regards,



BEVERLY AND DERECK JOUBERT
National Geographic Explorers-in Residence



BIG CATS INITIATIVE LEADERSHIP

Award-winning filmmakers, conservationists, and National Geographic Explorers-in-Residence Dereck and Beverly Joubert are co-founders of the Big Cats Initiative with the National Geographic Society.

BCI STEERING COMMITTEE

Dereck Joubert, *National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence (Chair)*
Thomas E. Lovejoy, *National Geographic Fellow and Professor of Environmental Science and Policy, George Mason University*
Alan Rabinowitz, *CEO, Panthera*

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Luke Hunter, *President, Panthera*
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Tico McNutt, *Founder and Director, Botswana Predator Conservation Trust*
Stuart Pimm, *Doris Duke Professor of Conservation Ecology, Duke University*
George Rabb, *former President, Chicago Zoological Society*
Rudi van Aarde, *Chair of the Conservation Ecology Research Unit, University of Pretoria*

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Colby Bishop
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To learn more about what the National Geographic Society is doing to save big cats in the wild and what you can do to help, please visit nationalgeographic.org/bigcats.

