

# 2008 Stewardship Report



For more than 120 years National Geographic has experienced the world's highs and lows, and has continued to fund the important projects that enable us to understand and inspire people to care about the planet. In this time of economic uncertainty, we remain committed to the critical work needed in research, conservation, exploration, and education. Because of the generous support of dedicated partners like you, our work is possible. **Thank you.**

## Ancient Afghan Treasures Tour United States

A traveling exhibition of extraordinary archaeological treasures from the National Museum of Afghanistan, Kabul, began a 17-month tour of the United States in May 2008. "Afghanistan:

Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul" explores the rich cultural heritage of ancient Afghanistan from the Bronze Age (2500 b.c.) through the rise of trade along the Silk Road in the first century a.d. National Geographic fellow Fredrik T. Hiebert assisted the team of Afghan archaeologists who verified and

*A folding gold crown dating from the first century a.d.*

inventoried the recovered objects, and is a curator for the U.S. exhibition.

Among the nearly 230 works on view are artifacts dating back more than 4,000 years, as well as gold objects from the

famed Bactrian hoard, a 2,000-year-old treasure cache discovered in 1978 but hidden from view until 2003 when Afghan president Hamid Karzai announced to the world that these treasured gold artifacts had been located intact in the presidential palace bank vault in Kabul.

The exhibit is on display at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco until January 25, 2009, and will then travel to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The exhibition is supported by National Geographic and an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

➤ Explore the exhibit online at [nationalgeographic.org/afghanistan-treasures](http://nationalgeographic.org/afghanistan-treasures).

## Emergency Fund Launched to Help Lions in Africa

In June 2008 National Geographic launched the Maasailand Emergency Fund to help avert a conservation crisis: Lion populations in and around Kenya's Amboseli National Park have dropped so low that conservationists fear the animals could become locally extinct in just a few years. Fewer than 100 lions are estimated to live in Kenya's Amboseli-Tsavo



*Orgululi Group Ranch members with project equipment funded by NGS.*

ecosystem, a 2,200-square-mile area that includes Amboseli National Park and the Maasai grazing lands up to the border of Tsavo National Park. Although there are no reliable data on exact numbers of lions from earlier years, researchers agree that current numbers represent a dramatic decline in populations for this region.

National Geographic provided an emergency grant of \$150,000 to the Maasailand Preservation Trust in support of the Trust's Predator Compensation Fund (PCF), which provides compensation to local Maasai herdsman for livestock kills by lions in and around Amboseli National Park. Past compensation programs have been a success, since the financial burden of the herdsman is alleviated, and any rational

justification for retaliatory killing of predators is removed. Education through videos, meetings, and training is also provided as part of the program to ensure the compensation agreement is clearly understood by the Maasai community.

The effort to raise funds has been led by Richard Bonham and Tom Hill, co-directors of the Maasailand Preservation Trust and longtime advocates for lions in Kenya, with the help of National Geographic Society Explorers-in-Residence Dereck

and Beverly Joubert, filmmakers and conservationists who have worked in some of Africa's most remote wildlife areas for more than 25 years.

According to Dereck Joubert, "Maasai depend on cattle to survive. They view themselves as stewards of the cattle. When their animals are killed, their solution is to get rid of the lions. We need to be able to immediately compensate the Maasai for cattle losses in order to stop the killings."

National Geographic is also in the process of working on a larger big cat's initiative, which will help raise awareness of and support conservation efforts to stave off dramatically declining numbers of other cat populations including leopards, cheetahs, and tigers.

➤ To learn more visit [nationalgeographic.org/bigcats](http://nationalgeographic.org/bigcats).

## MISSION PROGRAMS PROJECT UPDATE

### Now Live! WildCam Belize Reef

The newest National Geographic WildCam is one of the first open-ocean, live video streams available to the public on the Internet. WildCam Belize Reef conveys sights from the second largest barrier reef system in the world, including hawksbill turtles, spotted eagle rays, and even reef sharks! The Belize barrier Reef is also the site of a seasonal whale shark migration.

In early October 2008, the Society presented its newest WildCam at the World Conservation Congress in Barcelona, Spain, to promote an important partnership with the United Nations Foundation and the International Union for Conservation of Nature. National Geographic has joined these two organizations to help promote and celebrate World Heritage areas, unique geographic locations that have been set aside to protect their natural or cultural importance.



*Reef life teeming with various fish species.*

➤ To learn more about the association and watch the action from the WildCam Belize Reef, visit [nationalgeographic.org/wildcam](http://nationalgeographic.org/wildcam).

## Enduring Voices Update

About every two weeks another language dies, taking millennia of human knowledge and history with it. In 2007, National Geographic partnered with the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages to launch the Enduring Voices Project, a multiyear joint effort to document and revitalize the world's most critically endangered languages. The Enduring Voices Project team is led by Dr. Greg Anderson, Dr. David Harrison, and NG Fellow Chris Rainier.



Greg (left) and David recorded and interviewed Anna and Alexkei Baydashev, the last husband/wife pair to speak Chulym at home.

In the summer of 2008, members of the Enduring Voices Project team completed a field expedition to Siberia's Chulym River region, where fewer than ten fluent speakers of Chulym live. The Chulym people were traditionally hunter-gatherers and fishers. Their livelihood, and also their name for themselves, derives from the Chulym River.

The trip was the project's third to the region since 2003. All cultural, story, and speech traditions of the Chulym people are in drastic decline and have been only scantily documented. Six speakers interviewed in 2003 and 2005 have passed away. On this trip the Enduring Voices group collected, recorded, and translated a dozen new texts (stories, songs, and personal narratives) produced by V. M. Gabov, the youngest fluent speaker (age 57), and the only person who can write the language.

In 2009 the project team plans to publish a collection of the stories and wordlists collected on the Siberia expedition and previous expeditions, making them available both to scientists and to the Chulym community. Selected sound files, video recordings, and texts on the project website will also be archived on the Enduring Voices website.

➤ To see which parts of the world have high numbers of languages in danger of extinction, view the language hotspots at [nationalgeographic.org/enduringvoices](http://nationalgeographic.org/enduringvoices).

## GRANTEE HIGHLIGHTS

The Society has awarded more than 9,000 grants for exploration, research, education, and conservation efforts. Grantees and explorers make incredible finds, and often the funded discoveries and projects are what make the pages of *National Geographic*. A few highlights from recent grant-supported work include:

- Archaeologists have located and excavated the remains of the long-sought house where George Washington was raised. The site was the setting of some of the best known stories related to his youth. The project was led by archaeologist Philip Levy and funded in part by the National Geographic Society's Committee for Research and Exploration (CRE).

- A study of gentoo penguin chicks in Antarctica revealed that increasing temperatures are affecting penguin populations by breaking up ice, changing precipitation patterns, and altering nesting habits. Warmer temperatures may lead to increased rain in penguin habitats, and unlike adult penguins, chicks lack water-repellent feathers, so they become soaked and susceptible to freezing to death during nighttime's below-freezing temperatures. Conservation biologist Dee Boersma, who authored the paper on the topic, was funded by the Society's CRE.
- National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence Paul Sereno and a team of scientists have discovered the largest

Stone Age graveyard found in the Sahara. Dating back nearly 10,000 years, it provides an unparalleled



Archaeologists unearth the bones of a woman and two children.

record of life when the region was green, brimming with large fish and crocodiles. The find was reported in the Sept. 2008 issue of the magazine.

## MISSION PROGRAMS CORPORATE PARTNER PROFILE

In July 2008, National Geographic and Fairmont Hotels & Resorts announced a new partnership through which Fairmont is offering its guests access to a number of exclusive events and enriching experiences. The events, known as the Global Explorer Series, provide guests with an exclusive opportunity to engage with National Geographic experts in a range of activities, from guided tours of cultural landmarks to safari excursions showcasing habitat conservation efforts.

As a Mission Programs corporate partner, Fairmont provides an important source of support for the Society's cause-related programs. Corporate partners extend the impact of Mission Programs in a variety of ways, including funding, products and services, shared expertise, and communication of National Geographic's initiatives to new audiences.

➤ **To learn about the Global Explorer Series, visit [www.fairmont.com/ngs](http://www.fairmont.com/ngs).**

### MISSION PROGRAMS PROJECT UPDATE



*A volunteer for Rocking the Boat, a Bronx youth workshop (top). Preparing for a dancing competition at the Oglala Powwow (bottom).*

## Photo Camp Inspires Students

National Geographic's Photo Camp does more than give a lesson in photography to students in underserved communities both in and outside the United States. It inspires young people to explore their neighborhoods through the camera's lens. In July 2008 Photo Camp traveled to South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation and asked students to show through pictures how the reservation is reconnecting with the natural environment. In May, students in the Bronx were asked to create a portrait of environmental justice and conservation in their New York community.

➤ **Read more about Photo Camp and see students' pictures at [nationalgeographic.org/photocamp](http://nationalgeographic.org/photocamp).**

## GROSVENOR COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

As a new era of challenges and opportunities face the world, National Geographic and the Grosvenor Council (GC) are providing the critical support that is launching a new generation of explorers and researchers into action. The Grosvenor Council is an international group of supporters who demonstrate their commitment to the Society through gifts of \$1,000 or more annually. Grosvenor Council members also enjoy benefits that allow them to experience the projects and people they support, including special behind-the-scenes access and travel opportunities. We are grateful to our GC members, and encourage others to join this special group.

➤ **Learn more at [nationalgeographic.org/grosvenorcouncil](http://nationalgeographic.org/grosvenorcouncil) and join today!**

**PHOTO CREDITS** (ALL TOP TO BOTTOM) PAGE 1: RALPH LEE HOPKINS, RICHARD BARNES; PAGE 2: MIKE RAINY, MPHOTOI; PAGE 3: LIVING TONGUES INSTITUTE, MIKE HETTWER; PAGE 4: PATRICIA PERSAUD, KATIE ZACHER.

All of us at National Geographic thank you for your interest, and hope you enjoyed reading these brief highlights from 2008. If you have questions, or would like to contribute to any of the featured projects or other Society programs, please contact us at 800-373-1717, or visit [nationalgeographic.org/donate](http://nationalgeographic.org/donate). To learn more about Mission Programs, visit [nationalgeographic.org/mission](http://nationalgeographic.org/mission).