

Do tiger's start wars? Do elephants drop bombs on each other? Of course not. Man is the only dangerous animal on this planet for he is the only one that destroys everything around him through his sheer greed and ignorance. To make matters worse in India, the tusks are being removed from elephants and the skins and bones of tiger are clandestinely exchanged across the border areas and migratory birds are not only captured but also even sold at astronomical prices around the world.

Yet every year with the advent of October, (October 2 to 8), Wildlife Week is celebrated in the country and elsewhere to not only create an awareness but also to accelerate the conservation of our dwindling wild species. Sadly after the week is over, the issue is

scenario, climate changes could trigger off a major catastrophe and by far the biggest threat to biodiversity that mankind has ever faced. Yet the Indian wildlife community remains largely ignorant of the impacts of a changing global climate on microhabitats within the country. Thus far, policy makers have remained blissfully unaware of the dangers and reality of climate change. But the truth is that the subcontinent will be one of the areas of the planet hardest hit by the consequences of global warming.

Yet Tiger continues to be the cynosure of the government's conservationist efforts. Is it because tiger is our national animal? If so, what happens to the peacock, our national bird? The rampant killing of this beautiful bird continues unabated

# Nature In Harmony with

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simply sidelined but thanks to the good efforts of various NGO's and wild life conservationists these hapless creatures roam freely on our planet.

Man does not own the world. He shares it with all living creatures and they too have a right to survive on this planet. The fact is that all species on this planet, including man himself depends on each other for survival. In such a prevailing

for its feather in our country. But the fact is tiger attract much attention of governmental authorities during the Wildlife Week. Then, is tiger the only species indispensable of the fragile ecosystems? Or else, is it the only species on the verge of extinction? The answer is fairly endorsed by the scientific community as well as conservationists. Besides, the tigers there are many species that



are on the verge of extinction or endangered like them for the balance of ecosystems.

One of the most critically endangered species, the plight of the Ganges river dolphin is an indication of the government's callous attitude to the wild. The river dolphin, which is one of the four fresh water dolphins in the world, is on the verge of extinction according to World Wildlife Fund India (WWF). This is

largely because of anthropogenic pressures like pollution, indiscriminate sand mining, unrestricted fishing and truncation of habitats due to the construction of dams and barrages.

At the current levels of hunting Chimpanzees and gorillas will have been eaten into extinction within the next 15 years. In fact, poachers have killed all but 20 rhinos in Zambia.

Though the killing problem is of international proportions, it is most severe in the Congo Basin where 4.9 million tonnes of wildlife are traded per year, compared to the Amazon where only 0.1 million tonnes of wildlife are traded per year. Not only are we facing an environmental catastrophe but also we are embarking on a humanitarian crisis, as local communities are deprived of essential food sources.

The illegal trafficking of wildlife products is the main reason for the endangered species happening all over the world. So much so, every hour, a species becomes extinct. Of course, it is man doing this. If we destroy our fellow species at this rate, then the day will come when finally we will destroy ourselves. This is because we cannot survive in a concrete desert, having killed everything around us. If we don't get the message today, tomorrow will be too late.

This wildlife issue is a tribute to some of the finest nature and wildlife photo artistes both in our country as well as overseas for their courage and determination in making our planet a better place.

**Dean M. Chriss**, USA

**Gehan De Silva**, Sri Lanka

**Kakubhai Kothari**, Mumbai

**Natalie Fobes**, USA

**Praveen Kumar**, Bangalore

**P. Karunakaran**, Kerala

**Sanat Shodhan**, Gujarat

**Sudhir Shivaram**, Bangalore

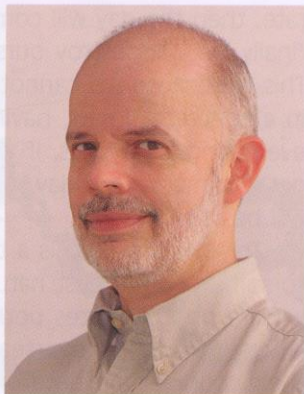
**Thakur Dalip Singh**, Bangalore

**Vijay Cavale**, Bangalore

# wildlife

S P E C I A L

DEAN M. CHRISSE  
OHIO, USA



For Dean M Chriss, (the Ohio based wildlife photographer), the love for the outdoors was a natural extension to his personality, considering his humble background. In the beginning his photography was motivated by a desire to share his outdoor experiences with others but later on his photography was motivated by the desire to showcase nature in all its manifestations. In a way it is this primary motivation that keeps him going. Although, he still enjoys landscape photography, the vast majority of his creative efforts over the last decade has to do with wildlife photography.

"Spending time doing photography in the wilderness is absolutely wonderful. Next to my dear wife, nature photography is the love of my life for I enjoy the

obvious creative challenges involved. In addition, the experiences gained as a consequence of spending large amounts of time in the wild are priceless and rare, and consider it my true privilege. I love doing wildlife photography, but serious photography requires serious work and all of the sacrifices that go along with it. There are much easier ways to make money, and no one does wildlife photography unless they love doing it", outlined Dean M.Chriss, the Ohio (US) based wildlife photographer.

However, doing wildlife photography is not like going on vacation. Animals are usually most active in the first and last several hours of daylight. This is because at this point of time it provides the best lighting conditions for photography. In fact, in order to take advantage of these situa-



**Title:** Borneo Anglehead Agamid,  
Sarawak, Borneo.  
We came upon this lizard  
while photographing an orangutan.  
The orangutan's presence prevented  
the use of flash to take the  
photograph.

**Equipment used:**  
Canon EOS 10D camera, at 1/100  
second, f 5.6, ISO 1600,  
effective focal length of 672mm.

tions, it is important to wake up well before sunrise and travel back to the accommodations for the night only after the light fades in the late evenings. "But the fact is that during the late spring season in North America's latitudes this can mean waking up at about 4:00 am and getting back to my lodging after 10:00 pm. Then I still need to take care of exposed film or download digital images, clean up my equipment and also catch up with a small nap. The best solution is to sleep in the middle of the day when there is not much animal activity and the quality of the light is at its worst. Conversely, daylight lasts only from about 8:00 am to 5:00 pm in the middle of the northern winter. This is the only season when wildlife photographers get to work banker's hours".

Knowing the location topography, the animals, their behaviour and mating habits all play an important role in obtaining good wildlife photographs. First, it is impossible to do wildlife photography if you do not know where to look for and find animals. If the topography of an animal's habitat is challenging, you must be prepared to deal with it or you must find something else to photograph. During their mating seasons, some birds develop very colourful and elaborate plumage while some larger animals become especially aggressive and danger-

#### Hanging Around, Orangutans.

Orangutan mothers are very watchful and protective of their young. They are a formidable presence, able to protect their young against all predators except armed humans. It is impossible to remove a young orangutan from its mother without killing the mother - which is how orangutans are obtained for the pet trade.

#### Equipment used:

Canon EOS 1V-HS camera, Canon 300mm f/4.0 IS L lens, Fuji Provia 400 film.



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ous. Knowledge of an animal and its behaviour can give you a few seconds advance notice when interesting or photogenic behaviour is likely to occur. Without that notice you often miss the shot. Such knowledge also tells you if you are disturbing an animal. With larger animals it tells you when to leave for your own safety. Some of this knowledge can be gained from books and the Internet, and

some of it can come only from time spent in the field observing wildlife and listening to the advice of experienced wildlife experts and photographers.

Photographing primates is always an incredible experience. Each has a distinctly different personality, but all are more intelligent than you might think. For instance, macaques are very bold and aggressive, and they travel in

large troops. When you are in their territory, you have to be careful to avoid eye contact. They take it as a sign of aggression and can attack in numbers. Orangutans on the other hand are much more reserved, but they are not timid either. They are very curious and inquisitive. With size and strength on their side, photographers should move quietly and slowly and not use flash to avoid drawing their attention. Without a



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**(LEFT)** Comforting Baby, Long-Tailed Macaque, Malaysia. This mother and son were among the most photogenic and cooperative in a troop of long-tailed macaques that we came across.

**Equipment used:**

Canon EOS 1V-HS camera, Canon 300mm f/4.0 IS L lens, Fuji Provia 400 film.

**(RIGHT)** Silvered Leaf Monkey, Borneo. This photograph was taken in the late afternoon in mangroves just a few hundred feet from the South China Sea. The dappled forest light in this scene was difficult to deal with, but for a few seconds the monkey's face was in a spot of light that filtered through an opening in the canopy, adding drama to the image.

**Equipment used:**

Canon EOS 10D camera, Canon 300mm f/4.0 IS L lens, Canon 1.4X teleconverter, ISO 800, f/5.6, at 1/320 sec.

doubt, orangutans are the most intelligent primates that he has encountered. Orangutans, along with proboscis monkeys, are also the most endangered. Proboscis and silvered leaf monkeys are very timid, making them quite difficult to photograph. They vanish into the forest at the slightest provocation.



There is perfect harmony in nature but not in the case with humans? Says Dean that "we humans are certainly a part of nature, as is everything else in the universe. Unfortunately, as a group we behave so destructively toward everything else that many regard humans as separate from nature. We show callous disregard for anything we cannot immediately profit by. What we can profit by we quickly use up before moving on to something else. As time goes on we turn ever-increasing amounts of the world's resources toward ourselves and away from all other life forms, making it impossible for them to survive".

"If you follow this logic to its conclusion, we will end up in a

world where there is nothing alive except what we need to exist. Assuming we can still breathe the air, drink the water, and feed ourselves, the quality of such a life is clearly horrible beyond words. In the long term, we are not only destroying other species, but are robbing the futures of our own children, grandchildren, and countless future generations. Preserving the beauty and diversity of nature for the future is simply the right thing for us to do. The question is whether we will do it soon enough to prevent massive extinctions around the globe".

He reveals that "I have been as far north as the Arctic Circle, and as far south as Malaysia, but there are many other places I would

love to visit. Among the top ones on my list are the national parks of India, especially Ranthambore National Park, Africa's Serengeti, and the outback in Australia. Each of these places is unique, with rare or unusual wildlife".

Of course a person could spend an entire lifetime exploring only a small portion of one of these places. The vastness of the world always amazes me. Photographic backgrounds are extremely important in all types of photography, including wildlife photography. A cluttered background can easily pull the viewer's eyes away from the subject and ruin an otherwise good photograph. In the wild you cannot tell an animal where to stand, but there are several other techniques

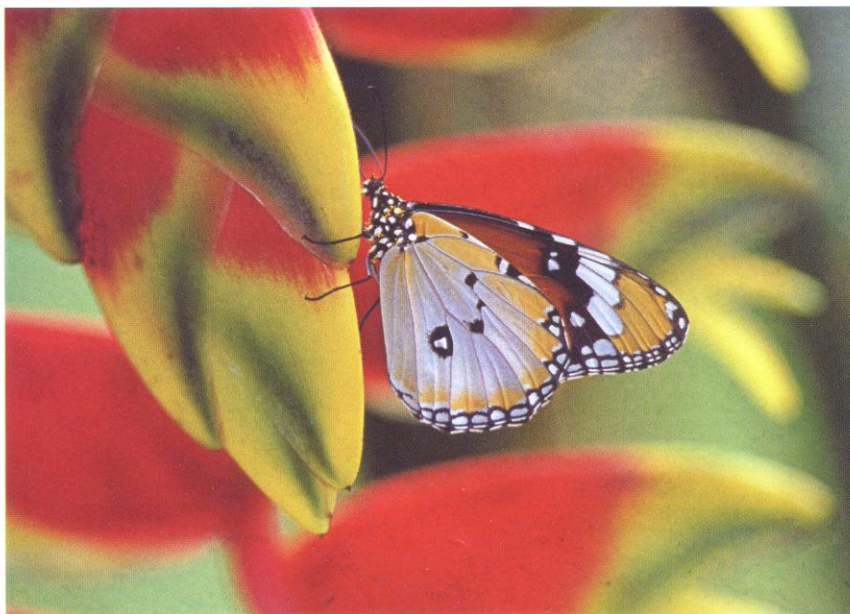
**My biggest concern is whether my subjects are well represented in my photographs. I am troubled by any manipulations that add objects to an image.**



at the photographer's disposal. A very often overlooked but incredibly simple and effective technique is simply moving so the background is more pleasant. A small move on the part of the photographer can often produce a dramatic change of background when viewed through a telephoto lens. Remember too that you can move up and down in addition to the other directions.

Another way to clean up backgrounds when using telephoto lenses is to shoot at the maximum aperture of the lens. The resulting very shallow depth of field can turn a busy and distracting background into a beautiful soft blur and leave your subject standing out in sharp relief against it. Of course you must focus very precisely and use a relatively fast lens for optimal effect.

"I do not think that digital manipulation is philosophically any different than image manipulations performed in a camera or darkroom. In all cases the basic issue being debated is truth. At the same time we need to remember that photographs are only a representation of reality, and each



**(TOP)** Burrowing Owl in Clover, Cape Coral, Florida. The burrowing owl is only about 9 inches tall, has very long legs, a short tail, weighs about 4 ounces and is one of the smallest species of owls.

**Equipment used:**

Canon EOS 10D camera, Canon EF 600 mm f/4.0 IS L lens, Gitzo 500R tripod, 1/160 second, f/4.5, ISO 400.

**(BOTTOM)** Butterfly on Lobster Claw Blossom, Selangor, Malaysia. In this image a plain tiger butterfly (*danaus chrysippus*) is perched on a colourful lobster claw (*heliconia rostrata*) blossom.

This photograph was made with a combination of available light and fill-flash using a Canon EOS 1V-HS camera, Canon 540EZ flash, Canon 300mm f/4.0 IS L lens and Canon 2X teleconverter on Provia 400 film.





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photographer shapes his own representation in one way or another. Without any digital tricks we expand or compress perspective through our choice of lens focal length. We represent a world full of colour in shades of gray by choosing black and white films, or exaggerate colours by using highly saturated colour films and lens mounted filters. Even the simple act of representing a three dimensional world on a flat piece of paper is a distortion of reality in the purest sense".

"My biggest concern is whether my subjects are well represented in my photographs. I am troubled by any manipulations that add objects to an image. I am not as concerned about small subtractive manipulations that remove distracting objects that are unrelated to the subject. Neither am I concerned about manipulations that fix defects such as scratched film and dust spots, or manipulations that digitally perform common dark-

This mountain goat is resting on a rocky mountainside in the late afternoon.

**Equipment used:**

Canon EOS 1V-HS camera, Canon 300mm f/4.0 IS L lens, Canon 1.4X teleconverter, Gitzo G1325 Mk2 tripod, Fuji Provia 100 film.

room processes such as colour correction, exposure adjustment, contrast management, or burning and dodging. These manipulation processes are as old as photography itself. Doing them digitally only makes them easier and more consistent", the US based visual artist recalls".

For a man who has been closely following wildlife photography the most, there are a couple of peers like Dr. Leonard Lee Rue III along with the late Irwin and Peggy Bower who were the first and foremost wildlife photographers of this genre who have had a profound influence on him. They took the first color photographs ever taken of many wild animals, using the fastest color film available at the time, ISO 10 Kodachrome. Although these

artists began their careers in wildlife photography before my birth, but he had the pleasure of meeting and photographing with all three renowned people in Alaska in 1998. It is still a pleasure to occasionally run into Dr. Rue, who now shoots professional video. He has a wealth of knowledge that is beyond measure, and he shares it freely with others.

Dean shares some of his photographic moments with the readers: I once witnessed a female orangutan making and using primitive tools to dig for ants. I knew orangutans were smart, but until then I did not realize the extent of their intelligence. Although this sort of behaviour is well documented, not many people get to witness it first hand. I will never forget that experience.

On another occasion, while waiting hours for a bird to return to its nest, a black bear wandered by. It was close enough that I could watch it pull the bark from a dead log looking for insects. A little later several different birds came within close range to feed on insects too. I got photographs of them all, and learned a few things about their behaviours in the process.

On a different occasion I spent 10 full days in often terrible weather photographing badgers at their den. There were other photographers there with whom I made lasting friendships. I saw how mother badgers teach their babies to hunt, and witnessed the young and timid badger explore the countryside around the den for the first time.

"The more I learn about and experience wildlife, the more I hope my work can help the world remember and preserve these creatures".

**-Mathew Thottungal**