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## FRONTLINE DISPATCHES

November 2022

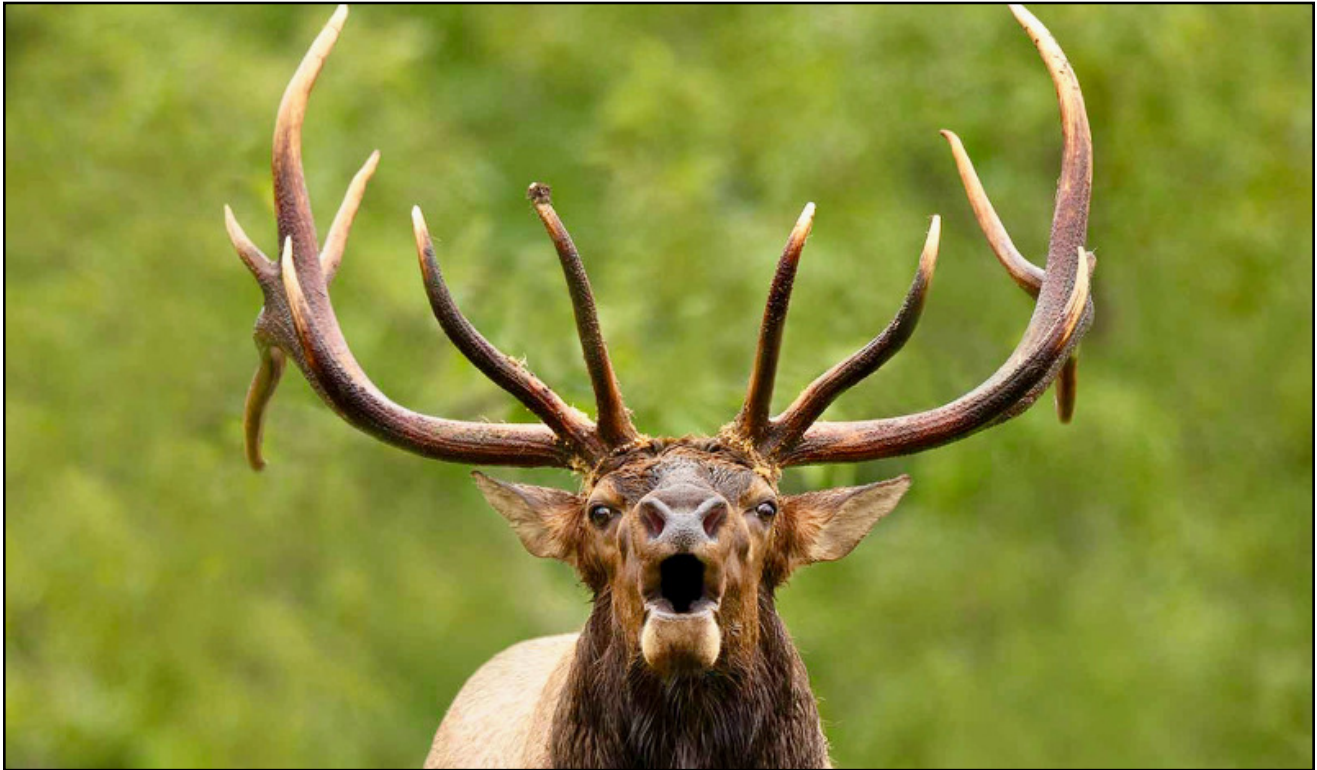
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CONSERVATION NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

### NORTH AMERICA



**Turf wars between Rocky Mountain goats and bighorn sheep** are going on as once-permanent glaciers and snowfields melt, exposing mineral deposits that the animals lick for key micronutrients. Researchers have seen dozens of these conflicts (this one in Glacier National Park), which the mountain goats usually win, forcing the sheep to seek their minerals elsewhere, [according](#) to CPR News.



**Over \$500K raised by Virginia's first-ever managed elk hunt.** It was a historic moment for the state as its first elk-hunting licenses were sold, [reports](#) *Wide Open Spaces*. A cooperative effort by the Virginia Dept. of Wildlife Resources and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation drew more than 31,000 entrants for the elk-tag lottery from across the country. The money will go to wildlife conservation.

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**Deer, elk and pronghorn antelope rely on migration corridors** in the Western US to reach food and habitat. *The Missoulian* recently [summarized](#) the major impediments to wildlife movement—urban sprawl, highways, fencing, climate change, mining and oil and gas exploration—and how new research is helping conserve these routes.



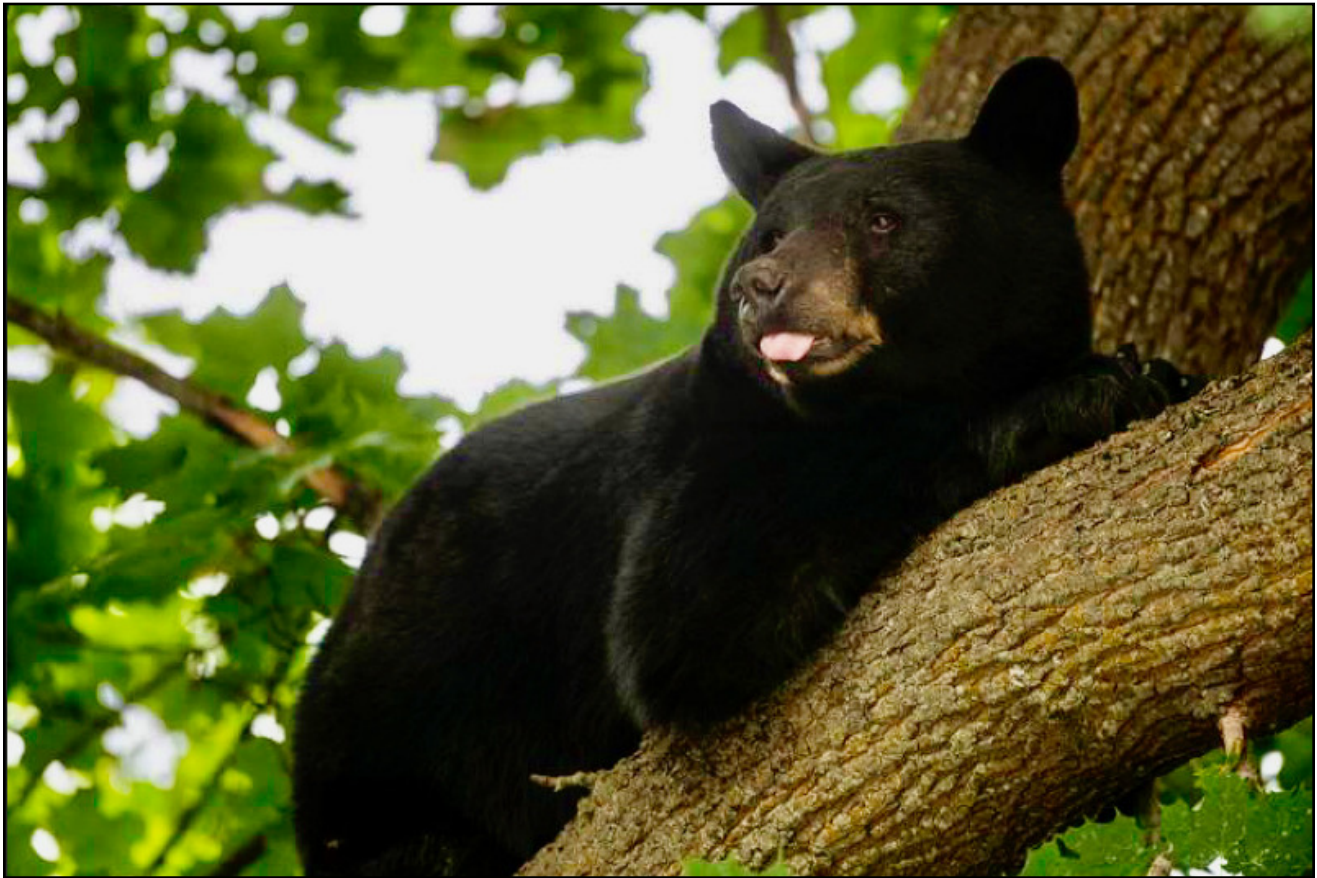


**California aims to reduce roadkill** with the Safe Roads and Wildlife Protection Act. Building roads through wildlife habitat may not only impede migrations, it can also increase traffic accidents with elk, deer and mountain lions. California state agencies are now required to include wildlife passage solutions in proposed road projects. The [story](#) is from *Bay City News*.



**370,600 acres of woodland caribou habitat in Ontario** have been acquired for \$46 million by NCC, the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Done in partnership with Constance Lake First Nation, trail-camera surveys of these 1,500 square kilometers of wilderness are now providing

crucial insight into conservation of the threatened caribou and other wildlife. The [story](#) appeared in *Bay Today* on October 16.



**Bears try to pack on calories while more people head out into the field.** You've seen the Fat Bear Challenge in Alaska; now the *Missoulian* [explores](#) why bears are having a hard time fattening up for hibernation in the Western US. From black bears in [Colorado](#) to grizzlies in [Montana](#) and [Wyoming](#), when ursids (bears) and humans overlap, conflicts often follow.

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**Stay safe by watching bear safety training** produced by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. A recorded presentation on bear safety tips is available on YouTube, [reports](#) NBC Montana. The training is geared towards hunters, but the recommendations apply to anyone spending time in bear country—or, left, simply living in bear country.





Florida wildlife were badly hit by Hurricane Ian in late September despite their natural adaptations to hurricanes, [according](#) to the Wildlife Management Institute. Alligators, sharks and other animals appeared in unusual places and the effects of the storm on wildlife and their habitat will be assessed at length. Also check out this almost surreal [video](#) of devastation caused by Hurricane Ian, in *USA Today*'s discussion of the storm's impact on wildlife.



**WATCH: Be smart, the rut is here!** Male big-game animals are on the move and competing for breeding opportunities. A man in Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park was caught on [video](#) being charged by a bull elk while attempting an NPCTP (National Park Clueless Tourist Pic). Less deliberate but equally dangerous, the *Jackson Hole News and*

*Guide* shared this [video](#) of an offside bull moose as it sent young football players scrambling.





**California's tule elk could use a drink.** Drought in Point Reyes National Seashore, California, has forced the National Park Service to deploy emergency water supplies for Tule elk for the second year in a row, [says](#) the *National Park Traveler*. The area is home to nearly 600 tule elk, and January-August 2022 was the driest season in 128 years.

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**All American bison have some domestic cattle DNA.** Some bison herds, such as the one in Yellowstone National Park, left, were thought still to be genetically pure, but now *National Geographic* [reports](#) that in an effort to save the “American buffalo” from going extinct, ranchers long ago cross-bred survivors with cattle. Government restrictions on breeding bison to preserve their genetic “purity” might be unnecessary. Note also the embedded video explaining how bison can save the American prairie.

## AFRICA



**The okapi, a forest-dwelling relative of the giraffe** so rare that it's called Africa's unicorn, is not only endangered but now the target of wildlife trafficking, too. The distinctive skins are sold as decoration and the meat, bones and fat bring huge sums in Southeast Asia and the Middle East for their alleged (false) medicinal value. Wildnet.org [reports](#) on moves to combat okapi poaching.



**The great KAZA TFCA elephant survey is underway** across the five countries—Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe—of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area. The TFCA's 200,000 square miles (520,000 sq km) are about 70% of Africa's remaining savanna-elephant habitat. The *Zim Morning Post* [reports](#) that the survey, using high-resolution oblique digital cameras on



aircraft, should refine the current estimate of 220,000 elephants and will contribute significantly towards their sustainable management.

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**Too cute for words is this rare polka-dotted zebra foal “spotted” in Kenya in 2019.** *Newsweek* [noted](#) that the photo recently surfaced on the Internet again. The unusual coloring is due to a rare genetic abnormality called pseudomelanism. [Video](#): Why do zebras have stripes in the first place?



## EUROPE



Also “spotted” last month—a rare leopard in Turkey, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry immediately posted the trail-camera photos on social media. Istanbul’s *Daily Sabah* broke the [news](#) on October 10. Leopards were thought to be extinct in Turkey until one was seen by a similar camera in 2019 (above) but, based on new evidence, biologists are now certain leopards are living in at least four areas of the country. A research unit and a conservation action plan have been created.



**Some European wildlife are bouncing back.** Numbers of all five of the region’s large carnivores—brown bears (like this one in Finland), wolves, lynxes and wolverines—have increased by 44% to 1,871% in the past 50 years. *The Guardian* [reports](#) that while in parts of

Europe predators were eradicated long ago, the return of large carnivores is good for biodiversity and ecological health. Still, after centuries of habitat degradation, one in nine wildlife species in Europe is [threatened with extinction](#).

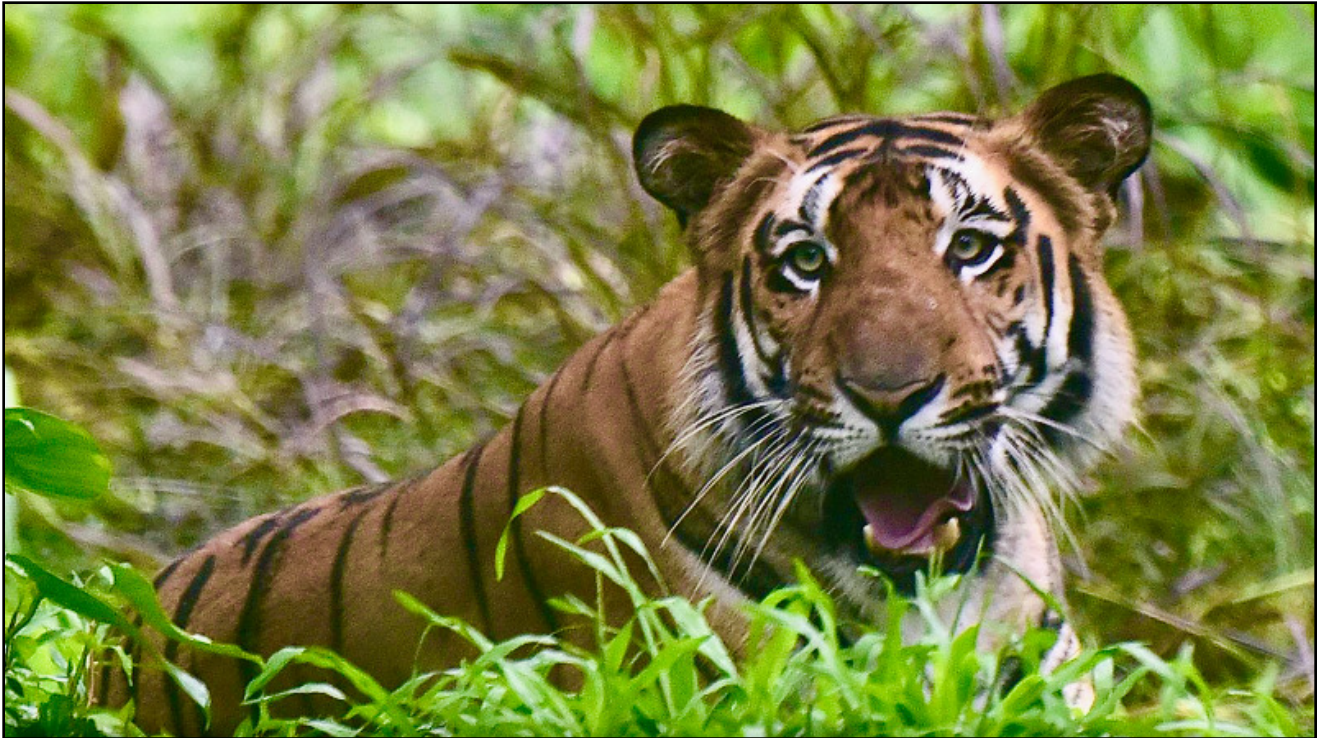
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**Another victim of Russia's invasion is the saiga**, an ancient antelope found in the Kherson region of Ukraine. The Askania-Nova Biosphere Reserve, the “Ukrainian Serengeti,” is the oldest steppe reserve in the world and a UNESCO site since 1985, but it has been devastated by combat. The Wildlife Conservation Network reported the [plight](#) of the saiga; read also the BBC News’ report on the horrific [damage](#) to Ukraine’s Drevlyansky Nature Reserve caused by the Russian invasion; and our report on the [threat](#) to Ukraine’s wildlife in general.



## WORLD



Police shot a tiger that killed nine people in India, BBC News [reported](#) last month. The “man-eater of Champaran,” a 3-year-old male, was surrounded in a sugarcane field near a tiger reserve by about 200 officers, some on elephantback. Attempts to tranquilize it were unsuccessful. The day before, the tiger had killed a mother and child, causing “a sleepless night for the whole village.” Between 40 and 50 people are killed by tigers every year in India (where elephants kill about 350 people annually). The image is from the embedded “Project Tiger” video.

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**India also has the world’s deadliest bears,** mauling thousands of people and killing hundreds in the past 20 years. (Brown bears kill an average of 6.3 humans annually over a range of more than 40 countries.) Ironically, sloth bears aren’t even predators—they dig up ants and termites. But when surprised by, for example, villagers collecting firewood, a sloth bear often attacks in self-defense. The image is from a video in the [story](#) on NatGeo.com.





**Sumatran rhinos now number fewer than 50.** The Indonesian government and Sumatran Rhino Rescue thought there were 73 animals, but IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, says the real number is just 34 to 47. The estimate is based on interviews with rangers who use trail cameras and observe footprints, wallows and feeding activity. These are the smallest rhinos, known for their shaggy coats and tendency to whistle, squeak and grunt. The [story](#) is on Mongabay.

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**Click thru the Wildlife Photographer of the Year [awards](#),** courtesy of CNN Travel. The arresting images range from a gorilla dying in the arms of her human keeper in the Congo to Bolivian flamingos to, left, the “House of Bears” in a ghost town in northern Russia.





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