

Flies swarm the head and mat the chest of this Rüppell's vulture, photographed in the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania.



70 **Bloody Good**

Vultures seem vile, dining on the dead. But Earth desperately needs these birds.

By Elizabeth Royte Photographs by Charlie Hamilton James

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This Land Is Your Land

As America's national park system turns 100, we celebrate and reflect with a yearlong series.

*By David Quammen
Photographs by Stephen Wilkes*

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This Is Your Brain on Nature

Spending time in the natural world benefits human brains.

*By Florence Williams
Photographs by Lucas Foglia*

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Into Thin Ice

Earth cools when sunlight reflects off Arctic sea ice—which is melting away. Where does that leave us?

*By Andy Isaacson
Photographs by Nick Cobbing*

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Riding Rubber's Boom

The rising global demand for car tires may pay off for Southeast Asia's poor, but at a cost to the planet.

*By Charles C. Mann
Photographs by Richard Barnes*

138 **Proof | Kingdom of Girls**

Young women in a matrilineal society preserve an old tradition.

By Jeremy Berlin Photographs by Karolin Klüppel

On the Cover By digitally combining some of the 2,260 images he took over 30 hours, Stephen Wilkes created this scene of a watering hole in Tanzania's Serengeti National Park. *Composite photo by Stephen Wilkes*

Corrections and Clarifications Go to ngm.com/more.