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### On the Cover

A plastic shopping bag has a "working life" of about 15 minutes, and we're using a trillion of them a year. That's one highly visible source of plastic trash-but it's only the tip of the iceberg in an ocean saturated with plastics. PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JORGE GAMBOA

PROOF

EMBARK

EXPLORE



To Conserve or **Hog Resources** 

If society depended on it, would you share-or would you be selfish? BY DYLAN SELTERMAN



GENIUS

Trash to Treasure Engineer Arthur Huang is finding new uses for garbage-and revolutionizing recycling in

the process. BY CHRISTINA NUNEZ

Pollution on a Stick Mushroom Cleaner Glass Octopus



THROUGH THE LENS

A Chance Meeting They were studying marine life-at closer range than planned. BY DAVID DOUBILET AND JENNIFER HAYES

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**Talking Trees** 

In a Canadian forest fungi and trees have developed a hidden intelligence. BY DAISY CHUNG AND RYAN T. WILLIAMS

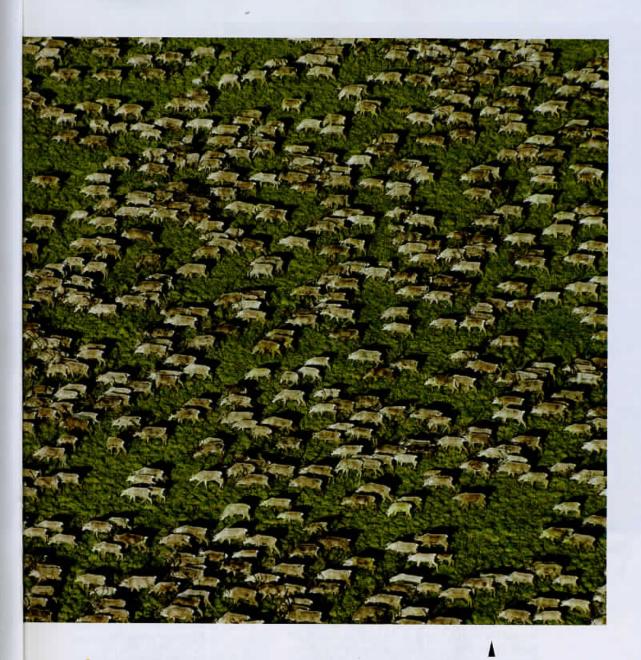
**Desert Dunes** Future Earth Sex and the Queen



In a nation that doesn't emphasize individuality, portraits of ordinary citizens may look like propaganda. Viewed as a group, they're unsettling.

**North Korea Portraits** 

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STÉPHAN GLADIEU FEATURES



### FEATURES

#### Plastics

We make them. We depend on them. We're filling the ocean with them. Beyond what we've incinerated or recycled, a staggering 5.5 billion tons remain, taking centuries, or more, to break down. Can we enjoy this miracle material and have a clean environment too? BY LAURA PARKER PHOTOGRAPHS BY RANDY OLSON

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## **Humanlike Birds**

Parrots may be too popular for their own good. BY CHRISTINE DELL'AMORE PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOEL SARTORE

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Blinded in Kashmir

 A Refuge at Risk

The stakes are high if oil exploration comes to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
BY JOEL K. BOURNE, JR. PHOTOGRAPHS
BY FLORIAN SCHULZ

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**Lost Colony** 

What happened on Roanoke Island? BY ANDREW LAWLER PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK THIESSEN