



This jade funerary mask, with matching earrings, comes from Calakmul, the Snake dynasty's capital.

OPINACULTA, YUAT  
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PALACE, MEXICO CITY

## 76 Lost Empire of the Maya

The Snake kings ruled a large and powerful kingdom—and then they lost it.

By Erik Vance Photographs by David Coventry

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### A Cure in Sight

Medical advances offer an end to blindness for some, yet many still suffer from preventable loss of sight.

By David Dobbs  
Photographs by Brent Stirton

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### Heat Wave

Was the Pacific's deadly warm water just part of a natural cycle or a sign of a bigger change?

By Craig Welch  
Photographs by Paul Nicklen

**Special Poster: Pacific Coast, British Columbia**

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### Back in Fashion

Fur is popular again, but humane treatment of the animals remains a challenge.

By Richard Conniff  
Photographs by Paolo Marchetti

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### Losing the Canyon

An attempt to hike the length of the Grand Canyon reveals the commercial interests threatening it.

By Kevin Fedarko  
Photographs by Pete McBride

### 140 Proof | Backstage at the Big Top

For Vietnamese circus performers, daily life means focus, hard work, and dedication.

Story and Photographs by Christian Rodriguez

**On the Cover** Thirty-nine million people—about one in 200—are blind, but scientists are working to help them see. Photo by David Littschwager

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