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In the 1980s Arctic sea ice extended across nearly three million square miles at the end of summer. Since then more than a third of that ice has been lost.

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On the Cover Today one in eight bird species is threatened with global extinction, BirdLife International reports. Vulnerable species include the secretary bird, *Sagittarius serpentarius*; this one lives at the Toronto Zoo. Photo by Joel Sartore

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Wild birds connect us to a nature that's rapidly receding. They live in a spectacular variety of habitats and signal each one's ecological health. Birds—with their brilliant plumage, their trills, and their flight—nurture our souls.

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PHOTO: PAUL NICKLEN