

ISSUE 1 | JUNE 2020

# FOCUS - IN THE WILD



A HOME LEARNING RESOURCE  
FOR CHILDREN AGES 7-11



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*A learning resource for Juniors  
based on amazing World Wildlife Photography  
by Philippe Ricordel*



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# Learning about world wildlife

Many people are at home at the moment but learning has to go on.

My friend Chris and I thought we could collaborate to bring you a learning from home resource that you and your parents might love to help you learn about the wildlife in this world and what we need to protect.

I have been fortunate to have been on many travels to many hidden corners of the world. In these pages you can explore, discover and learn about these places with me.

My name is Philippe and I live in Paris.  
C'mon. Let's go!

In this first edition, we will discover Polar Bears, Tigers, Gorillas, Japanese Cranes, Penguins and Elephants.

## MAP

It's always useful to have a map when exploring.

To see where I was when taking these photos, you can look at the map on page 5.



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# FOCUS - IN THE WILD

World Wildlife Photography © Philippe Ricordel

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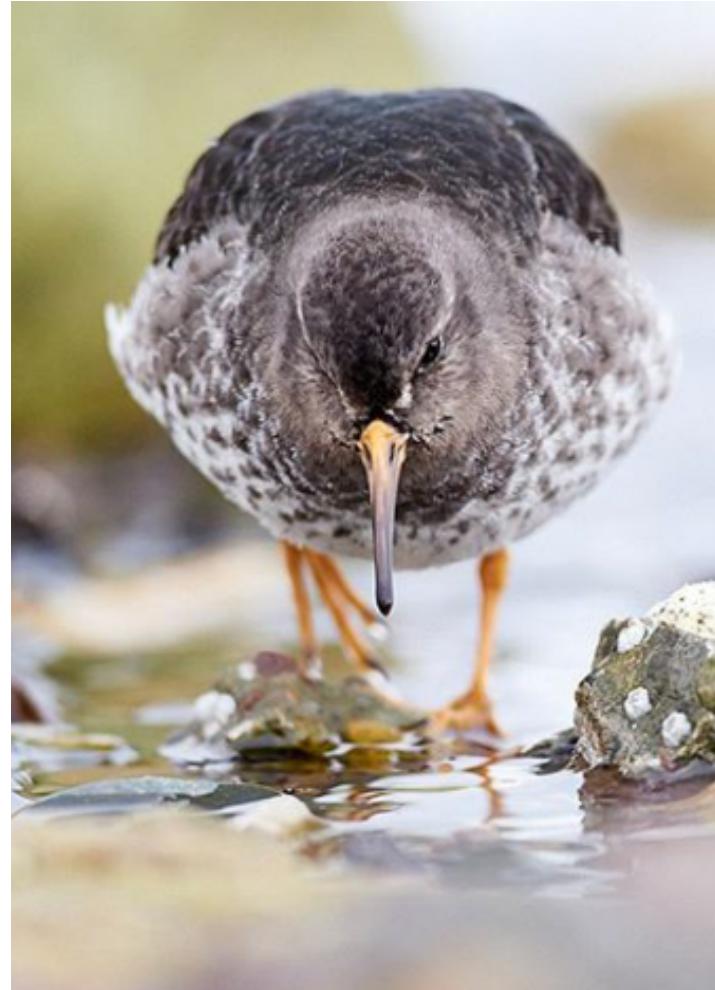
Editor Chris Swingler

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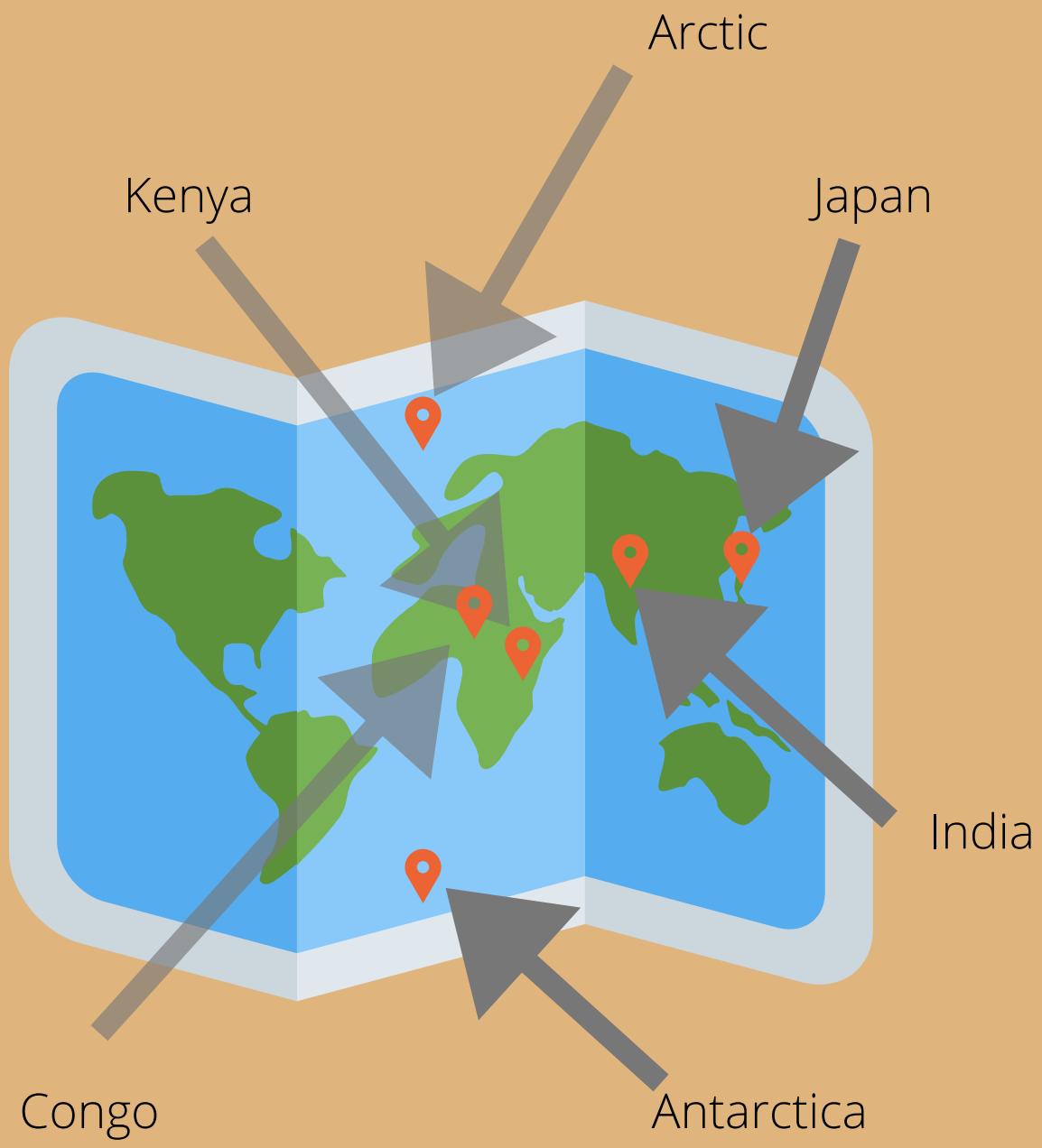
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Right: Purple Sandpiper, Norway  
Below: Steller Eider, Norway



# MAP



## Polar Bear - Arctic



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The polar bear is a mammal that lives exclusively in the arctic regions of the planet, that is to say, above the polar circle. It is a major predator (Apex) which means that it is not itself threatened by other animals, it is at the top of the pyramid.

The polar bear lives on the ice floe, when it is formed, from November to May-June and then returns to the mainland. It feeds almost exclusively on seals in winter and during summer it will be satisfied with small mammals, plants and roots, sometimes eggs of seabirds or even a corpse of a stranded whale.

## Did you know?

- There is an estimated **20 to 30,000 polar bears** around the Arctic Circle.
- The colour of polar bears may vary from pure white to a creamy white. Creamy white is the more common.
- The skin of the polar bear is black, as surprising it might appear, is is only their fur that makes them appear white.
- Scientists think polar bears are a recent divergence from brown bear which occurred 150 000 years ago (not all scientists agree).

## Philippe's story

Going to the Arctic largely depends on where in Arctic you are going. It will not be the same story if you are going to Svalbard or to the Beaufort sea.

- I have been twice to the Arctic region, first for a week and then for 2 weeks, both times were to the Beaufort sea.

To reach this place I had to take a plane from Europe to Alaska (Anchorage), then another plane to Fairbanks, then a really tiny plane to jump over the Brooks Mountains to reach a native village called Kaktovik where the polar bears gather waiting for the ice to form around November.

- Temperatures by the end of September are around zero during the day and can be as low as -20C at night and the wind can arise and make it feel even chillier.

- In order to approach the Polar bears we took a boat which give us some comfort and security. Polar bears swim very well but they are not as powerful when in water and cannot get in a boat in the middle of water.

Making sure that

we lower carbon

emissions is the way to

ensure the habitat for

polar bears

Tiger- India (Rajasthan)



© Philippe Ricordel - Limited Edition Wildlife Art Photography

Tigers live in Asia, between Siberia (the most eastern part of Russia) and Sumatra Island (Indonesia). The largest population is resident in large reserves in India. At the beginning of the 20th century, Tigers had a much larger habitat in the whole of Asia, but human activities like cropping and hunting drastically reduced its territory.

The Tiger is also an Apex animal, no other animal in its natural territory can be a danger. The only animal that may represent a danger is the elephant. But in nature they avoid each other and confrontation is the exception. The Tiger is a hunter, it will hunt mainly sambar deer, Manchurian wapiti, barasingha and wild boar. Monkeys can be part of the diet as well as ground based birds, hares and fish.

## Did you know?

The estimated number of tigers in the wild is **less than 4000**.

There are more tigers living in captivity around the world than in the wild (mainly in the USA and China).

Tigers can be completely white instead of yellow-orange, their stripes remain black.

Tigers love water, when the temperature rises too much, they can spend most of the day in a natural pool to cool themselves.

## Philippe's story

To observe tigers in the wild, the best places are the National Parks located in India. Observation is also possible in Russia (very difficult) and Sumatra (very difficult too).

I went to Ranthambore National Park in Rajasthan in India where you can get access to different zones with a chance to see tigers.

You have to wake up very early as the gate of the park opens at 5:30am and the best conditions for observation are between 5:30am and 9:30am. After that it is too hot and the tigers will hide. Late afternoon is also a good moment to go (3:30pm to sunset).

Depending on the season, temperatures can be very high, as high as 45C during the day, thus the early morning and late afternoon trips into the National Park.



**The estimated  
number of tigers  
in the wild is less  
than 4000**

## *Gorilla*



© Philippe Ricordel - Limited Edition Wildlife Art Photography

Gorillas live in a variety of habitats and elevations. The mountain gorilla lives in the Albertine Rift mountain cloud forests of the Virunga

Volcanoes (Rwanda , Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo). Western gorillas live in west central Africa and eastern gorillas live in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Gorillas live in groups called

troops. Troops tend to be made of one adult male or silverback, multiple adult females and their offspring. Mountain gorillas mostly eat foliage, such as leaves, stems, pith and shoots. Eastern and western

lowland gorillas have more diverse diets. Leaves and pith are commonly eaten but fruits can make up 25% of their diets. Gorillas are peaceful animals even if they are impressive and the largest of the apes!

## Did you know?

- The Estimated number of mountain gorillas is as small as less than 1000 in the wild. Eastern lowland gorillas are more numerous around 100 000.
- Gorillas construct nests for daytime and night use.
- Gorillas rarely drink water "because they consume succulent vegetation that is comprised of almost half water as well as morning dew. Although both mountain and lowland gorillas have been observed drinking.

## Philippe's story

For the observation of mountain gorillas in the wild, you will have to walk after them into the mountains. It can be easy or extremely difficult depending on the location the gorillas have set their place for the night. You will have to pay for a permit to be allowed to go there.

I went to Uganda and Rwanda to be able to observe the mountain gorillas. I was lucky not to have too long a walk into the forest (2h30 one way- it can be far more like 5 - 6 hours)

Time for observation is strictly limited to 1 hour, you will have to leave after one hour. This is the rule to protect the animals.

It is hot and very humid into the forest, walking inside such forest is not as easy as you may think, so be prepared.



Gorillas are  
peaceful animals  
even if they are  
impressive by  
their size

## *Japanese Crane - Japan*



© Philippe Ricordel - Limited Edition Wildlife Art Photography

Japanese cranes live in Japan, there are some in Korea and China too.

The main population is resident in Japan, but not everywhere in

Japan, they can be found only on Hokkaido Island, the most northern island of the Japanese archipelago. Japanese cranes are a

large bird; some can be as tall as 1.60m and weigh around 8kg average with a wingspan around 2.20m. Also known as red-crowned

cranes they eat rice, parsley, carrots, redbuds, buckwheat and a

variety of water plants. They also like fish, amphibians, small reptiles, shrimp and small mammals like rodents and small birds like ducklings. When adults they do not have real predators, it is when they have chicks that eagles and foxes can consider them as prey.

## Did you know?

Japanese cranes almost disappeared at the beginning of the 20th century. There were only 34 individuals remaining on Hokkaido, and it is only by efforts of conservation that this number had grown to more than 1000 now.

Total population of Red-crowned cranes is around 3000 individuals where half are residing in Japan and 1000 in Korea and the remaining in China (some birds in Russia) The Japanese crane is monogamous. Pairs usually form year-round, but many partners prefer to stay together until one of them dies.

## Philippe's story

The best period to observe Japanese cranes is winter on Hokkaido as they are numerous and attracted to specific spots where they will be fed.

Temperatures can be very low on Hokkaido during winter, as low as -20C (even less early morning) and if there is wind it would be almost impossible to stand outside a very long time without freezing.

I have been to Hokkaido in winter more than 10 times by now and still love to be there as at this time of year, there is a kind of magic there with special light, atmosphere and so on ...



Japanese cranes almost disappeared at the beginning of the 20th century. There were only 34 individuals remaining on Hokkaido

## Penguin



Penguins live almost exclusively in the Southern Hemisphere, with only one species, the Galápagos penguin, found north of the equator. There is about 18 species of penguins living around the world, much more than you may think. Some are on the edge of disappearing (classified as critically endangered), like the yellow eyed penguins living in New Zealand (estimated population 3500 at most and decreasing). On the other hand, the Gentoo penguin population is estimated around 800,000. Penguins eat fish and krill and the diminution of both is the main cause for decreasing population. Penguins are mainly chased by leopard seals and Killer Whales.

## Did you know?

The smallest of the penguins is the little blue penguin which stands around 33 cm (13 in) tall and weighs 1 kg, while the tallest is the Emperor penguin where adults are about 1.1 m (3 ft 7 in) tall and weigh 35 kg.

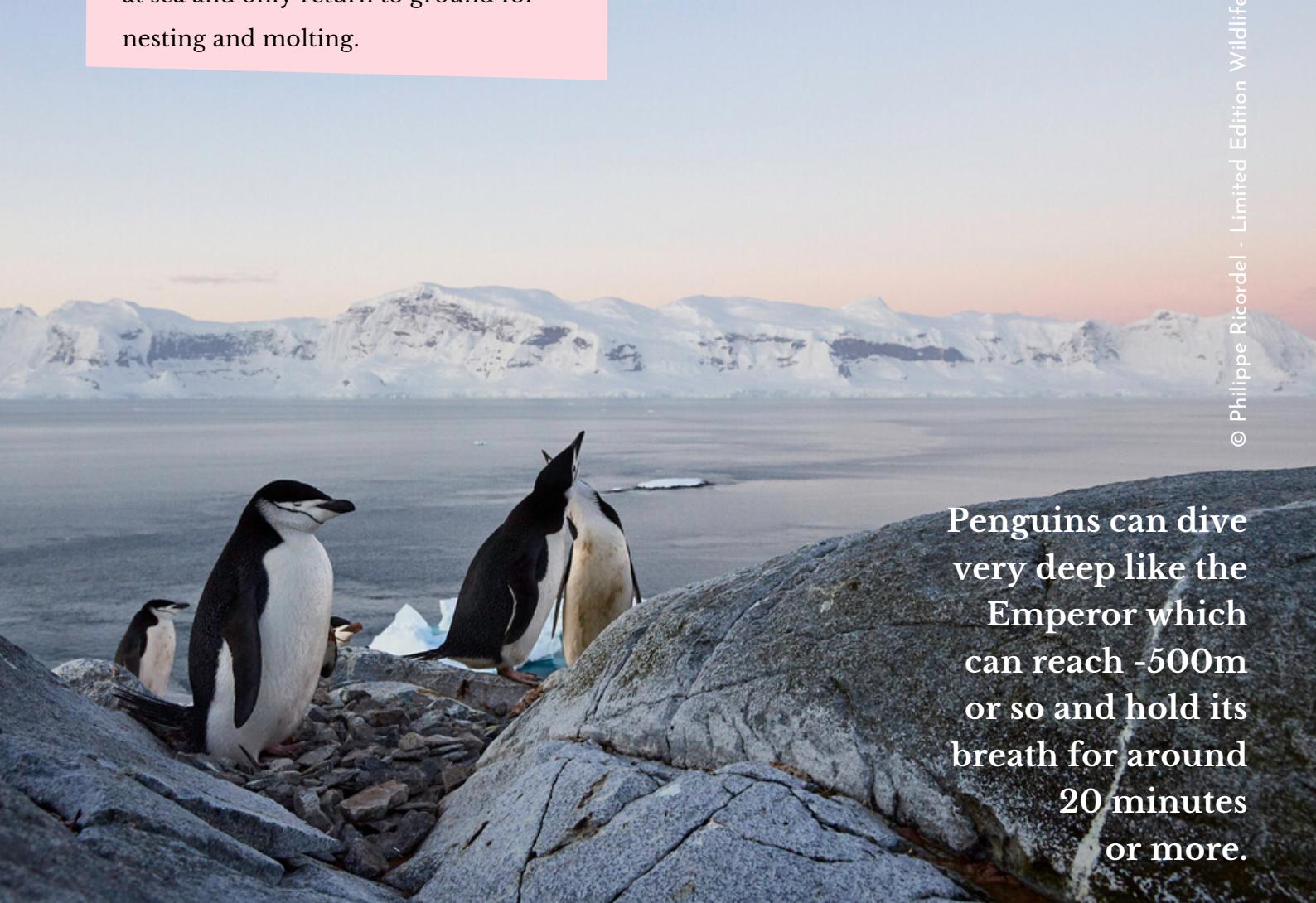
Penguins can dive very deep like the Emperor which can reach -500m or so and hold its breath for around 20 minutes or more. Penguins are pelagic animals, this means they spend most of their time at sea and only return to ground for nesting and molting.

## Philippe's story

The best period to observe penguins is of course when they come ashore for the reproduction period when they make their nest with little rocks in Antarctica (Gentoo penguins) or invest a burrow in New Zealand (little blue penguin).

I have travelled twice to Antarctica where I had the chance to observe 3 species of penguins (Gentoo, Chinstrap and Adelie).

I also went to New Zealand for the observation of 2 rare species, namely the Yellow-eyed and the Fjordland penguins which both reside exclusively in New Zealand. I had to go there twice as the nesting period is not the same for both species.



**Penguins can dive very deep like the Emperor which can reach -500m or so and hold its breath for around 20 minutes or more.**

## *Elephant*



© Philippe Ricordel - Limited Edition Wildlife Art Photography

**Elephants** are very much endangered. There are 3 species: the African bush elephant, the African forest elephant and the Asian elephant. The

bush elephant is endangered due to poaching for ivory. The others due to the reduction of their habitat. They are the largest land animals.

They are herbivorous and stay near water when it is accessible. Other animals tend to keep their distance from elephants. The exceptions are their predators such as lions (tigers in Asia) which usually target only

young elephants. Elephants have a fission–fusion society, in which multiple family groups come together to socialize. Females tend to live in family groups which can consist of one female with her young or several related females with offspring. The groups, which do not include bulls, are led by the eldest, known as the matriarch.

## Did you know?

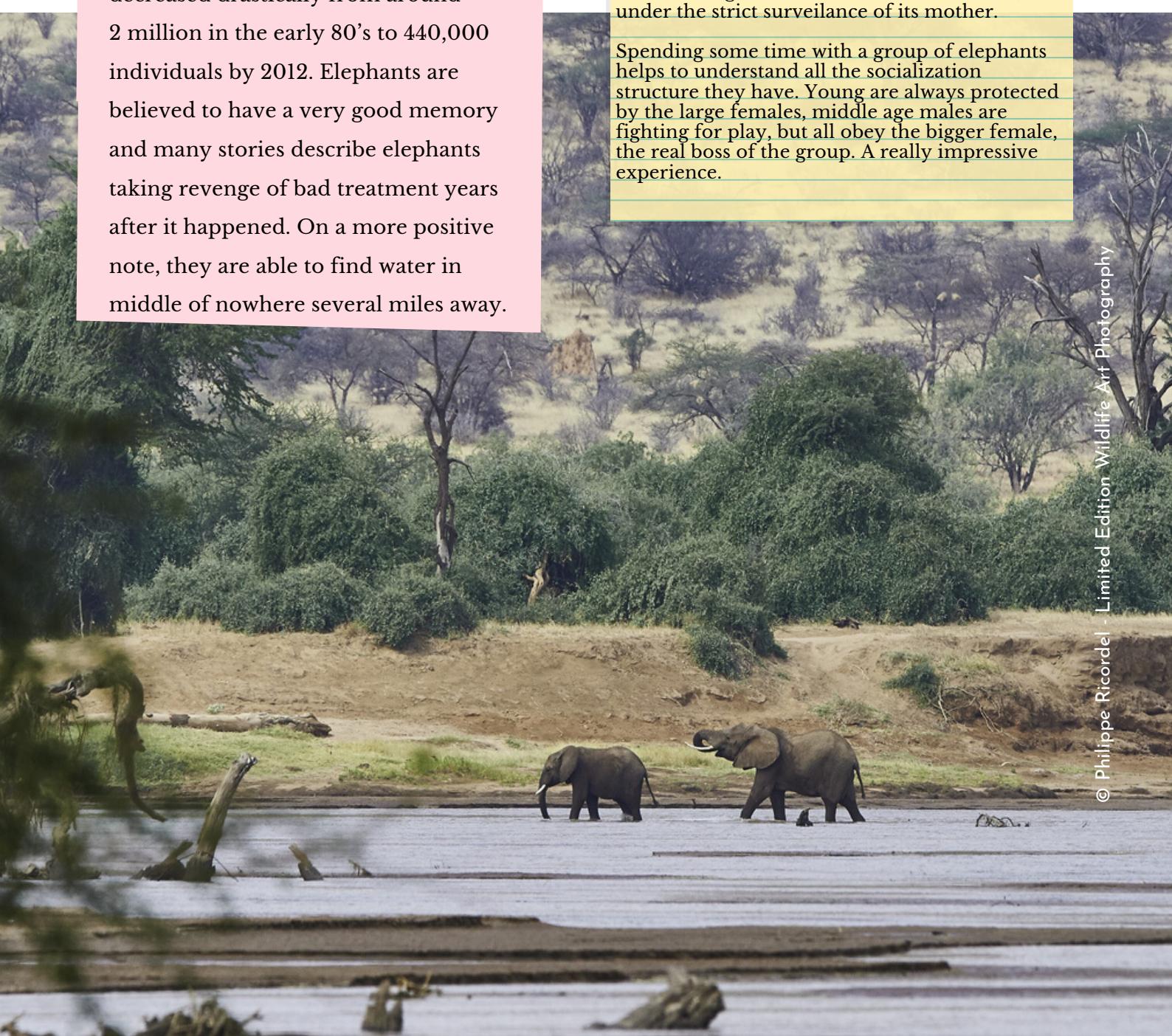
Elephants can live until 70 years old. This is mainly driven by the use of their teeth. They will replace them 7 times during their life and it is said that teeth of elephant last an average of 10 years. Total population of elephant has decreased drastically from around 2 million in the early 80's to 440,000 individuals by 2012. Elephants are believed to have a very good memory and many stories describe elephants taking revenge of bad treatment years after it happened. On a more positive note, they are able to find water in middle of nowhere several miles away.

## Philippe's story

I met elephants in Africa several times, mainly in Kenya (Masai Mara National Park) and also in South Africa (Kruger National Park). It is always impressive to be near such animals, since they are very massive and exude a feeling of force.

I have happy and sad stories to tell with the young elephant. I saw one aged of maybe 3 weeks eaten by a lion. More on the funny side, I saw one trying to chase its own shadow and thus running here and there with no reason, but under the strict surveillance of its mother.

Spending some time with a group of elephants helps to understand all the socialization structure they have. Young are always protected by the large females, middle age males are fighting for play, but all obey the bigger female, the real boss of the group. A really impressive experience.



World Wildlife Limited Edition  
Art Photography for Decor  
by Philippe Ricordel

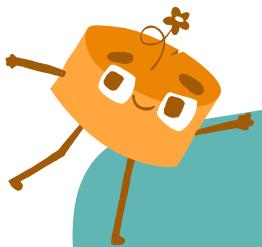
INTEREST SPARKS

# UPLIFTING PERSPECTIVE

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World Wildlife Art Photography for Interior Decoration,  
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# EXERCISES



What can you remember about Philippe's stories?  
(Continue on your own paper if you need more space)

- Write about your favourite story

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- Why was this your favourite story?

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- What animal would you like to see in the wild one day?

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- What is the main new thing that you have learnt?

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# EXERCISES

## DRAWING

Now try to draw the animals that you have read about and then draw yourself with a camera!

