

# TRUE WILDLIFE

TOM D. JONES

Lannoo







# PREFACE

— By Steve McCurry

**TRUE WILDLIFE** depicts and spreads awareness for one of the most important issues our world is currently facing. As we face the harsh realities of our planet's future, we must acknowledge that we are losing species every year. Wildlife is being decimated to the point where in a few years some species will cease to exist in their natural habitats. Unless governments take these threats seriously and take urgent action, it is entirely possible that we will pass the point of no return. This is why the work of Tom D. Jones is so important, as we need to spread awareness as much as possible to help these endangered species.

As humans, we have a responsibility to build a stable ground for future generations. It is critical today to have an understanding of the times we live in, and what is happening to our wildlife. Tom's committed career has captured images that will serve as pieces of history for generations to come.







# FADING PARADISE

— Tom D. Jones

## Humanity is claiming the Earth.

Even before climate change, wildlife was facing a multitude of threats. In the 19th and 20th centuries, animals were slaughtered by the thousands in all corners of the world. Humanity's appetite for wealth culminated in the mass extinction of numerous animal species – millions of bison in North America, millions of elephants, and hundreds of thousands of big cats in Africa, whales and polar bears in the polar regions ... the list goes on. During the colonial era, hunting for 'game' was popular among the elite as a form of entertainment. Then came Asia's increasing demand for ivory and horn, which emboldened poaching, and brought about the near-destruction of elephant and rhino populations. Natural processes of evolution that had unfolded steadily over millions of years were wiped out in a mere two hundred years. Yet, ironically, humans are both wildlife's biggest threat, and only hope of survival.

Many volunteers and activists battle every day to reverse this catastrophic situation. The establishment cannot continue to deny what scientists have been telling us for years. Luckily, several countries are increasing their efforts to conserve and protect wildlife and habitat. We will see biodiversity, ecosystems and communities flourish if we can take tough action against internationally organised wildlife criminals while also creating new opportunities for local communities. Whether we like it or not, we are inextricably connected to nature. We cannot take care of ourselves if we do not take care of nature. As we steadily progress towards a world population of 10 billion, we must enter the future armed with nature as our most powerful ally.

### *My working method*

For me, everything centres around the animal's freedom. This is why my photography does not include any creature that is fed or lives in a private reserve or in any other form of captivity.

The particular approach and perspective I use in most of the images compel me to get extremely close to the animals. However, most wild creatures won't tolerate strangers in their comfort zone. This often means I'm at considerable risk but, most of all, it inspires a sense of humility because of my vulnerability. With this series, I want to highlight the uniqueness of our wildlife and teach people to give these creatures the respect they deserve.

We have become disconnected from nature. Only by seeing ourselves as a part of it again can we begin to understand that saving nature is actually saving ourselves. We must understand that we are here for a short time and are only allowed to use the planet like any other creature. It saddens me to see the way we treat this treasure that is entrusted to us so briefly before we pass it on to future generations.



















## **GIRAFFE BALLET**

For such large animals, giraffes move with extraordinary grace. They usually gather in groups, but due to their height and excellent vision they are often too far apart to be captured in one shot. For this series, I waited patiently at a forest edge where I knew they would cross the adjoining grassland. When one started walking, the others followed slowly and cautiously. Then came the most difficult part: getting them all together. Communication between me and my driver was crucial. We drove carefully around the group, herding them together as a sheepdog might. We knew full well: if one got spooked, they would scatter and our efforts would be futile. Fortunately, they all gathered together on the savannah. Then came the ultimate moment and I had just a few seconds to take this shot. After this the giraffes dispersed.















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### **Concept and photography**

Tom D. Jones

### **Texts**

Steve McCurry

Tom D. Jones

### **Translation and copy-editing**

Lisa Holden

### **Book Design**

Studio Lannoo (Mieke Verloigne)

If you have any questions or comments about the material in this book, please do not hesitate to contact our editorial team: [art@lannoo.com](mailto:art@lannoo.com)

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