DEAR TRAVELER,

Throughout my life, I’ve been enthralled by the ocean—from first snorkeling as a teenager with sea lions in Galápagos to looking a humpback whale in the eye in Polynesia. Each ocean connection builds a sense of reverence and a desire to do whatever we can to protect what is a magnificent yet fragile system.

When I hear stories like the ones you are about to discover in this report, my sense of optimism grows. Our travelers enabled the Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic Fund to grant $1.4 million to 21 unique projects around the globe in 2017. Marine ecosystems are being restored, coastal communities empowered, and precious parts of the planet protected.

We live in one giant interconnected system. When we work together to care for it, especially after seeing its wonders with our own eyes, future generations will also have the opportunity to look into a whale’s eye and be forever changed as a consequence.

All the best,

Sven

SVEN-OLOF LINDBLAD
PRESIDENT AND CEO
LINDBLAD EXPEDITIONS

“TRAVEL ALLOWS US TO EXPERIENCE THE WONDERS OF OUR WORLD FIRSTHAND. THE MORE WE LEARN ABOUT THE PLANET, THE MORE LIKELY WE ARE TO PROTECT IT.”

JONATHAN BAILLIE
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CHIEF SCIENTIST
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY
THE POWER OF
DISCOVERY +
GIVING BACK
THE LINDBLAD EXPEDITIONS-NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC (LEX-NG) FUND supports projects that address the health and viability of our world’s oceans, coastlines, and coastal communities. Together with our travelers, we are engaging and inspiring people from all backgrounds, building unprecedented capacity in a new generation of marine leaders, and furthering established conservation initiatives worldwide.

$1.4 MILLION INVESTED IN 2017

CONSERVATION / 46%
EDUCATION / 19%
RESEARCH / 10%
STORTELLING / 3%
TECHNOLOGY / 2%

The projects featured in this report are supported by the LEX-NG Fund unless otherwise noted.
CONSERVATION MATTERS. Donations from our travelers ensure that the wild places we care deeply about will be protected for future generations. We support projects that promote locally driven solutions to marine and coastal challenges, contributing to the conservation of natural and cultural resources. Together, we are helping to preserve the last wild places in the ocean through programs such as the National Geographic Pristine Seas project, controlling invasive species in Galápagos, restoring critical habitats, and fostering an ethos of environmental stewardship around the world.

THE GALÁPAGOS NATIONAL PARK’S PLASTICS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN RESULTED IN A 51% DECREASE IN DISPOSABLE BOTTLE USE AMONG STUDENTS.
EDUCATION ENLIGHTENS. Thanks to Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic travelers, people in the regions where we explore learn new skills, improve education standards, share the world’s wonders with students, and create sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their families. From rural villages in Cambodia to indigenous communities in the Amazon to classrooms across Galápagos, we are supporting initiatives designed to enrich lives through enhanced educational opportunities in order to cultivate the next generation of environmentally conscious leaders.
RESEARCH INFORMS. Scientific understanding leads to effective protection of important places and critical species. Through conservation-oriented projects such as whale surveys in Antarctica, water quality testing in Southeast Alaska, and student-led research in Galápagos, our investment allows researchers to pilot new methodology and advance marine-based and environmental knowledge worldwide. Thanks to studies like these, decision-makers have the tools they need to devise and implement the most effective management strategies.
**STORYTELLING INSPIRES.** A radio show trained a mother in the Amazon on new skills, leading to a sustainable way to feed her family. Local storytelling inspired an Alaskan logger to become a guardian of old-growth forests. Our travelers help fund projects that are empowering people in the regions we visit to forge new connections and make their voices heard—exposing the challenges they face and proposing solutions. By encouraging traveler donations, we are furthering National Geographic’s 130-year legacy of using the power of science, exploration, and storytelling to change the world.
TECHNOLOGY INNOVATES. As a species, humanity continues to reach new pinnacles of technological advancement—advancement that can be harnessed for the betterment of the world. Traveler commitments enable groundbreaking discoveries and promote innovative, creative ideas to further scientific research and conservation. Using new and existing technologies, our grantees are improving their ability to explore, protect, and tell the story of our world and its inhabitants.

SR3, SEALIFE RESPONSE, REHABILITATION AND RESEARCH USED A DRONE TO COLLECT BLOW SAMPLES FROM 11 HUMPBACK WHALES IN ANTARCTICA TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE HEALTH OF THIS SPECIES THROUGH RESPIRATORY PATHOGENS.
Traveler donations matter! 100% of LEX-NG Fund contributions made by expedition guests in 2017 is working to benefit marine ecosystems and coastal communities. This map shows active project locations and grantees in 2017 and the allocation of grant dollars within each focus area of our fund.
THE LEX-NG FUND brings together all kinds of heroes: travelers who leave a positive footprint on the places they explore, and local practitioners—scientists, educators, and storytellers—who are making a difference around the world. Our travelers’ choice to support these changemakers—and to be one themselves—is making the planet a better place.

VOICE FROM THE FIELD: CONSERVATION HEROES

“Our Galápagos expedition with our children and grandchildren helped us focus on the importance of preserving the irreplaceable wonders of nature and educating successive generations to become responsible guardians when they are adults. We believe Lindblad and National Geographic serve both goals with diligence and passion.”

MADELAINE PF AU AND CHARLES JONES, DALLAS, TX
Donations from our generous travelers in Southeast Alaska help fund conservation-oriented research and inspiring storytelling projects spearheaded by three regional organizations.

With traveler support, researchers from ALASKA WHALE FOUNDATION conducted an intensive whale survey to estimate the abundance and distribution of whales in Southeast Alaska, and deployed passive acoustic devices to record and study thousands of hours of migratory songbird and bat vocalizations.

SITKA CONSERVATION SOCIETY published 21 stories and newsletters to inspire the protection of the Tongass National Forest and promote the development of economically, socially, and environmentaly sustainable communities in the region. These outreach efforts include mentoring 12 up-and-coming storytellers, two of whom are young indigenous women.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA CONSERVATION COUNCIL is inspiring Alaskan residents and visitors to care about clean water by advancing water quality research around Hawk Inlet and connecting people to places through the power of photography and social media.

Support from our guests helps bring the power of the radio to remote regions of the Peruvian Amazon, reaching more than 120,000 listeners with critical health, human rights, and environmental topics. In 2017, MINGA PERU expanded its radio programming to include episodes on artisanal handcraft production, an important income source for many people in the region. The generosity of our travelers also enables Minga to offer leadership training to women. These promotoras educate community members on a number of issues, including how to use agroforestry and fish ponds to achieve food security while reducing pressure on the natural resources of the Amazon.

MINGA PERU TRAINED 21 STUDENTS FROM SEVEN SECONDARY SCHOOLS AS RADIO CORRESPONDENTS
**ANTARCTICA**

Antarctica’s marine ecosystem supports large numbers of whales and is threatened by the effects of climate change. Scientists from SR3: SEALIFE RESPONSE, REHABILITATION AND RESEARCH and their NOAA collaborators traveled aboard National Geographic Explorer to study the health and abundance of humpback, killer, and minke whales. Using an unmanned drone to collect nearly 7,000 aerial images of whales and blow samples from 18 individuals—including the first-ever from Antarctic minke whales—the researchers studied body size and condition, and gained a deeper understanding of microorganisms living in whale respiratory tracts.

**BAJA CALIFORNIA**

The GULF OF CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION FUND (GCCF), which has contributed $4.3 million to projects carried out by local organizations since 2004, addresses the region’s most pressing conservation priorities. Thanks to traveler generosity, the GCCF issued seven multiyear grants to conserve wetlands in the Peñasco-Lobos Corridor, protect whale sharks in the Bay of La Paz, study seabirds on Rasa Island, and much more. All donations are matched by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature, and are strengthening the fabric of coastal communities, empowering local people to adopt sustainable tourism practices.

**CAMBODIA**

With our support, ORGANIZATION FOR BASIC TRAINING launched a skills-development program for young adults seeking employment in the hospitality sector in Cambodia. Donations helped facilitate the ground-up construction of a training restaurant where students practice guest service, food industry, and housekeeping skills. Participants are then able to continue their studies at professional hotel schools or secure well-paying employment—reducing poverty in Kampong Cham province.

Traveler contributions also support WILDLIFE ALLIANCE’s Kouprey Express, the only mobile environmental education program of its kind in Cambodia. The Kouprey Express travels to urban and remote rural communities, providing hands-on lessons and activities to increase knowledge about the environment and what people can do to protect it. Thanks to our travelers, Wildlife Alliance reached more than 1,000 students with an environmentally conscious curriculum and spread awareness about their wildlife trafficking hotline.
Central America

Panama’s Coiba National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is home to whales, sea turtles, sharks, vibrant coral reefs, and a priceless array of biodiversity. In 2017, authorities reported that markers at two-thirds of the park’s diving and snorkeling sites were missing, increasing pressure on the marked sites. Regional nonprofit MARVIVA—with support from LEX-NG travelers—installed high-durability mooring buoys at 12 previously unmarked tourist sites. Thanks to traveler support, the problem has been fixed and human pressure on the most popular sites has been reduced.

Galápagos

Through the generosity of LEX-NG travelers, five regional conservation partners are undertaking broad-based efforts to protect Galápagos. The CHARLES DARWIN FOUNDATION conducted 18 field trials to better understand how to control an invasive fly species currently threatening Darwin’s finches, collected 1,920 marine organisms from docks in mainland Ecuador and San Cristóbal Island to compare the presence of invasive species, and monitored the success of invasive blackberry removal from the highlands of Santa Cruz Island. The GALÁPAGOS NATIONAL PARK enhanced fisheries management and conducted a successful plastics-reduction awareness campaign. ISLAND CONSERVATION worked with local residents on Floreana Island to eradicate harmful invasive species so extirpated endemic species can return.

Guest donations also funded ECOSYSTEM PROJECT INTERNATIONAL’s efforts in bringing local students and scientists together to study giant tortoise diet and ecology in the highlands of Santa Cruz, and helped the TOMÁS DE BERLANGA SCHOOL provide need-based scholarships for students and lead training workshops with the goal of reaching 100% of teachers in Galápagos.

Voice from the Field: Scientist

As part of a community-focused vision, Island Conservation is helping Floreana residents learn to produce eco-friendly artisanal handcrafts, diversifying income streams, and deepening capacity for environmental stewardship. “Our approach to the project is holistic and locally driven,” said Karl Campbell, South American Director for Island Conservation. “We’re incorporating conservation and community development to restore Floreana.”
PACIFIC NORTHWEST

The mighty Columbia River and its tributaries are home to iconic salmon species in the Pacific Northwest. With donations from LEX-NG guests, COLUMBIA LAND TRUST carried out restoration efforts in this important watershed.

Along the Upper Elochoman River, the Land Trust improved critical freshwater fish and salmon habitats by installing 15 engineered structures and restoring a natural floodplain, which had been compromised over the last century by logging, agriculture, and other human activity. The impact was immediate: Since the project’s completion, volunteers have witnessed summer steelhead feeding in and around the new in-water habitats.

GLOBAL

The National Geographic PRISTINE SEAS project seeks to protect 20 of the ocean’s wildest places by 2020. In 2017, the team embarked on expeditions to four unique marine ecosystems: Cape Horn, Tristan da Cunha, the Juan Fernández Archipelago, and Ascension Island. Two of these expeditions have already yielded new ocean protections. With scientific support from Pristine Seas, the government of Chile created two marine reserves surrounding Cape Horn and the Juan Fernández Archipelago, preserving 406,000 square kilometers of ocean—a combined area roughly the size of Italy.

The South Pacific nation of Niue also instituted new marine protections after a 2016 Pristine Seas expedition to the island. In preserving 127,000 square kilometers of ocean, including shark-rich Beveridge Reef, Niue converted 40% of its exclusive economic zone into a marine park that prohibits fishing and other extractive activities.

VOICE FROM THE FIELD: EDUCATOR

For more than 20 years, Kavita Gupta, a 2017 Grosvenor Teacher Fellow, has worked tirelessly to promote access to science education nationwide.

“My expedition to Galápagos has allowed me to engage students contextually in climate change education,” she said.

GROSVENOR TEACHER FELLOW PROGRAM

Currently in its 12th year, the GROSVENOR TEACHER FELLOW PROGRAM provides exceptional pre-K–12 educators with a field-based professional development experience. In 2017, 35 Fellows traveled on expeditions worldwide. Through this program, Fellows are able to instill a spirit of exploration and stewardship in their students, schools, and local communities.
With generous support from our travelers, the **ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND** (EDF) continues its critical work advancing food security for the Cuban people while protecting the country’s world-class marine resources. In April 2018, EDF organized an official exchange between Cuba and Belize to identify areas where the two countries could collaborate to make fisheries more sustainable and protect marine ecosystems.

EDF also launched its first Sustainable Fisheries Management course at the University of Havana. Thirty scientists, seafood enterprise leaders, and conservation practitioners from around the country participated in interactive sessions on fisheries management, marine science, and community engagement. Teams of students worked together to develop fishery management plans for vulnerable species, applying the skills they learned in class. Officials are now using these draft plans to develop new conservation measures for three commercially important species.

The **HEBRIDEAN WHALE AND DOLPHIN TRUST** (HWDT) works directly with local communities on Scotland’s west coast to ensure whales, dolphins, and porpoises are protected throughout the region. Conservation efforts reach over 30,000 people, cultivating an ethos of marine stewardship.

In August 2017, with support from Lindblad-National Geographic travelers, HWDT launched a citizen science app, Whale Track, that allows anyone with a smartphone to submit marine mammal sightings. Since its launch, the app has logged more than 650 users and recorded nearly 4,000 sightings. This data informs HWDT’s research aboard *Silurian* and contributes to species population surveys.

*The National Geographic Society did not participate in these projects.*
We are excited to announce that, starting in 2018, the LEX-NG Fund is supporting National Geographic’s Early Career Grant program. Through these $5,000–$10,000 grants, aspiring conservation heroes are leading important field-based marine and coastal projects that can make a meaningful contribution to the world.

Salomé Buglass is working with the Charles Darwin Foundation to lead the first exploration and assessment of deep (more than 100 meters), low-light seamount ecosystems around the Galápagos Islands that support diverse and economically important fish communities.

VOICE FROM THE FIELD: EARLY CAREER GRANTEE

“It’s a privilege to study the Galápagos marine environment, not only because of its beauty and uniqueness, but because the islands are a natural laboratory for marine and oceanographic sciences,” said Salomé. “With support from my Early Career Grant, I am leading a pioneer exploration of an understudied marine environment, using state-of-the-art ROV technology.”
We are grateful for the many travelers who play a critical role in the LEX-NG Fund’s efforts to restore marine ecosystems, empower coastal communities, and care for our planet. To support projects like the ones in this report—plus exciting new ones like National Geographic’s Early Career Grant program (see opposite)—please visit donate.ngs.org/LEXimpact.
The Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic Fund supports projects that address the health and viability of our world’s oceans, coastlines, and coastal communities in the regions visited by our fleet, and beyond. Our grants—$9.5M since 2008—are funded by shipboard travelers inspired by our shared mission.

To give online and increase the positive impact we make together, please visit donate.ngs.org/LEXimpact.

For more information about the LEX-NG Fund or the projects we support around the world, contact Amy Berquist (Lindblad Expeditions) and Dr. Aurora Elmore (National Geographic Society) at ocean@ngs.org.

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