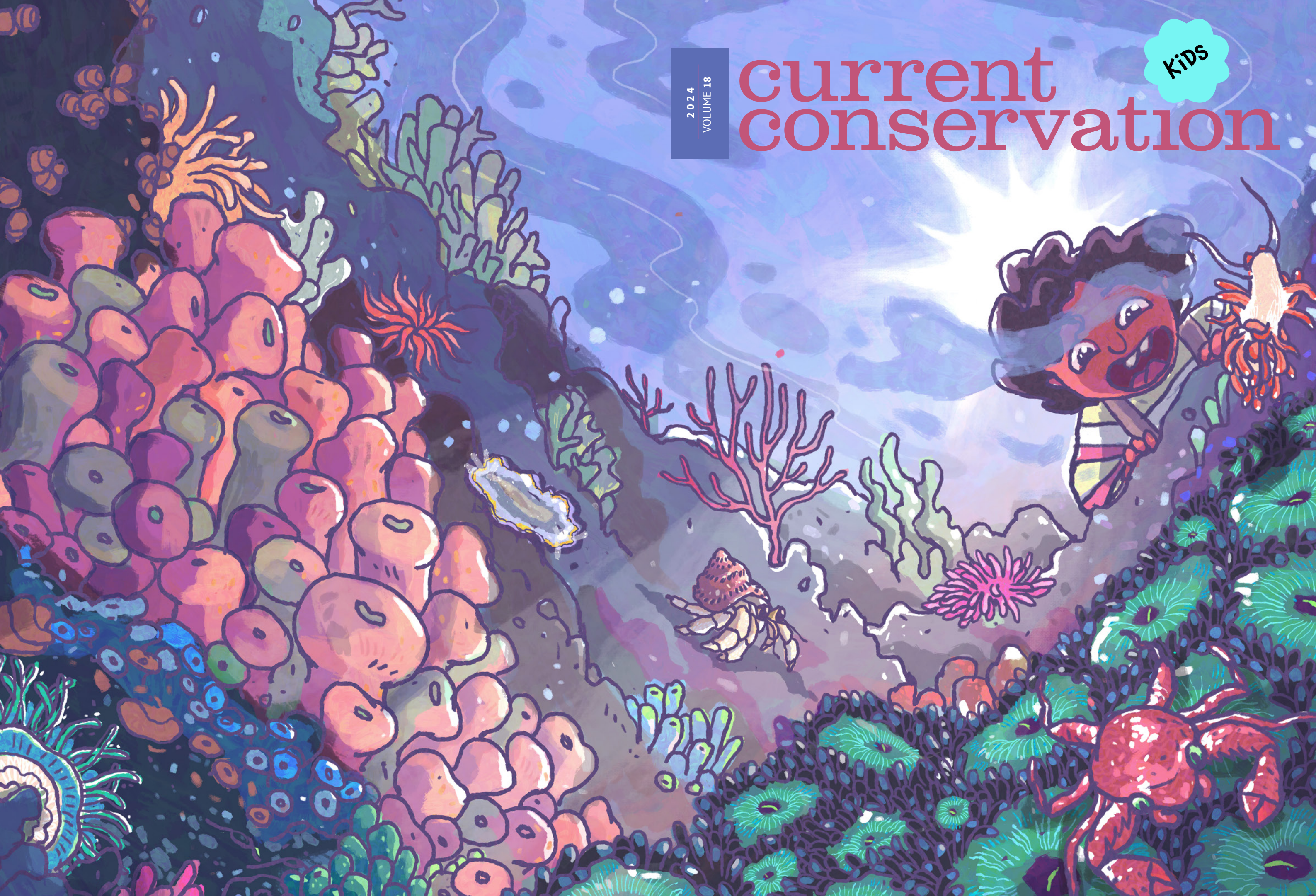


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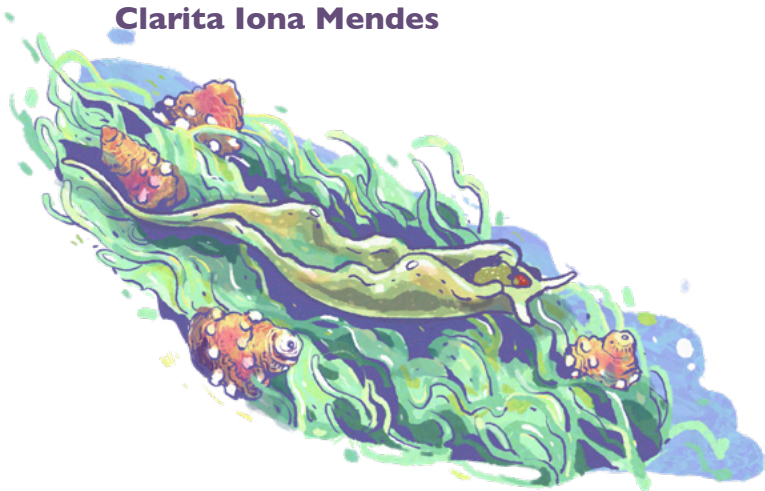
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Cover art **Siddhi Vartak**

Tamarins, birds, sea slugs, apes—like nature itself, this issue features a diversity of species from all sorts of habitats. If you’re a nature lover, no doubt you want to protect these organisms and ecosystems. This issue thinks about how you can do that. Like Elena, from Bridging the Forest, you might find ways for humans and wildlife to safely share space. Or, rather than creating physical bridges, perhaps you may be more interested in building relationships—as an ambassador for birds or other species. Roles like these require you to be inquisitive and observant, just like Nara in Sea Slugs: A Slippery Adventure—or the scientists who uncovered all the insights shared in The Great Apes.

Perhaps most important is being brave enough to dream of a better future for our planet—something explored in both Planet Dance and our review of Kungfu Aunty. Which of these best describes your curiosity? Perhaps someday this curiosity will lead you to make your own unique contribution to conserving the planet? We’d love to hear what you think—about our list and about the issue! Enjoy reading, and please do send us your thoughts and submissions.

– **Caitlin Kight and Payal Bal**

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BRIDGING THE FOREST

Authors **Tiffany Hamilton** | Illustrator **Abigael Molsee**

The Mata Atlântica is known as the Brazilian Atlantic Forest, and growing up it had always been Elena’s happy place. Mata Atlântica is a place of beauty and nature, filled with creatures of all colours and plants unlike anywhere else. In her 11 years, Elena had come to know every fern and every moss and had smelled every air plant that clung to the trees and vines. Elena had climbed each Pau-Brasil redwood tree and had made friends with nearly every animal and bug that crawled, climbed or flew across the terrain.

This morning, as she did every morning, Elena was walking along the small dirt path which led from her house to school. It was the first day back from summer break, and this year Elena would be joining Room 9 in the schoolhouse.

Skiping through the trees, Elena soaked in the sounds and smells of the forest around her. The Mata Atlântica was magical in the mornings as the birds began to chirp and the early pollinators began spreading the sweet smell of flower pollen and nectar.

Lost in her thoughts, Elena was jolted back to reality when she came across a new feature of

her forest. It was a road. A two-lane road for cars. Elena stopped and stared at the fresh-laid tar. It had not been there two months ago on the last day of school.

When she made it to her tiny schoolhouse, Elena made sure to ask about the road.

The teacher Miss Martins explained, “That road was built over the summer, so that people do not have to drive all the way around the large forest to get between cities anymore. Unfortunately, some of the trees had to be cut down to make room for the new road.”



With her question answered, the rest of the day passed quickly. Pretty soon, Elena was waving goodbye to her friends outside.

As she made her way home after school, Elena listened to the sounds of the forest. That's when she heard a new sound. It was a high-pitched chirping, similar to that of a small bird's call. Curious, Elena followed the sound down the road and away from the schoolhouse. She walked until her little legs were nearly tired. At last, she found the source.



It was perched on a branch far above Elena's head. The critter was smaller than a cat, had a tail longer than its body and bright orange fur the colour of fire. Elena was a curious girl who was not afraid of the strange animal. She kept her distance and observed.

"Are you stuck?" she asked.

The colourful creature looked down at her from its branch. "Yes," it said, "I can't get across."

The orange ball of fur scurried down the tree branches and closer to Elena. "I'm a **golden lion tamarin**; I live in the trees. The problem is I cannot get across whatever this is," the critter gestured at the dark tar.

"That's a road," Elena said. "It was built so that humans could travel through the forest."

The golden lion tamarin looked sad. "But now I can't travel through the forest."

"Can I help?" Elena asked.

"I don't think so."

Disappointed she couldn't help, Elena continued on her way home. The golden lion tamarin behind her skittered through the trees, continuing to look for a way across the road.

The next day, as Elena was once again heading home from school, she heard the call of the golden lion tamarin in the trees. This time, she found it closer to the schoolhouse. She decided to introduce herself. "I'm Elena."

"I'm Mico," the golden lion tamarin said.

"Where did you come from?" Elena asked.

Mico replied, "I live much deeper in the forest with my family. We live in a group."

"Where are you going?"

"There are more groups of families like me that live all over the forest and in the other fragments. I'm trying to visit them, as well as my friend **Preguiça, the maned sloth**. I have not seen him in a while and wanted to visit, but

now I can't get across and have been looking for a new path."

Elena was surprised. She had never seen a golden lion tamarin before, and now to know there were more of them was surprising. This was one of the many reasons why she loved the forest, she learned something about the environment and animals each time she went outside. But she did not understand; Elena could get across the road, why couldn't Mico? "I'm arboreal," Mico explained, "and my species likes to travel through the forest using the tree branches and vines. We don't like to walk on the ground. It is slow and exposes us to predators like snakes and **ocelot cats**. Plus those big scary animals that people ride move much faster than I can. I'm afraid to cross."

Mico retreated back into the forest to continue his search for a safe place to cross the road. Over the next few days, Elena continued to think about Mico's plight, and soon she saw more creatures gathered with Mico who could not get across. **Marmosets, capuchin monkeys, opossums** and other species of **lion tamarins** all struggled to cross the road. Mico and Preguiça, still separated by the road, sat on tree branches across from each other to wave hello.

One day, Elena's kind heart could not take it any longer. When the class was looking for their yearly conservation project, she saw her chance and raised her hand.

"Miss Martins," Elena said, "I have noticed there are a lot of animals that cannot get across the new road. Perhaps we could help them."

"Great idea!" Miss Martins said. "Does anyone know how we could do this?"

One classmate suggested carrying the animals

across. Miss Martin said that wild animals like those in the forest should not be handled by humans. Another classmate suggested a crosswalk and crossing guard. Someone else suggested a miniature helicopter that could be remotely controlled from the schoolhouse. Miss Martins said that both ideas would be distracting from regular class time. The last idea came from Elena's friend Lalo. Lalo suggested stringing a rope across the road, from one tree to another, that the animals could climb across.

"That's a good start, Lalo," Miss Martins said. Lalo smiled with pride. "How can we expand on that idea?" Miss Martins wondered.

Elena raised her hand, "What if we made bridges?" she asked. "Ones that could hang from the trees above the road?" The suggestion felt wild, but Elena imagined it so clearly, she knew it would work.

And so began Room 9's yearly conservation project: building bridges across the new road. The students of Room 9 avoided using any more of the precious forest's resources by collecting twigs from the forest floor and from their backyards. They also collected rope and string from their homes and neighbourhoods that could be recycled. Very quickly the kids had collected enough recycled materials to construct the first bridge. They worked together to design a strong bridge that looked natural so that all the different animal species would feel comfortable using it. The first of Elena's forest friends to use the bridge was the primate who started it all—Mico the golden lion tamarin.



the bridge. Their next project was going to be how to improve the future bridges based on what species were using them.

Elena smiled at Mico and Preguiça. “I am so happy to be able to help,” she replied. “I did not realise before how something like a road could affect so many species. Our class is going to make a bunch more bridges to go along the whole road. Then you do not have to travel too far to a bridge. We’re going to do it using recycled materials so we don’t take away any more of the resources that you and your friends rely on.”

“Thank you, Elena,” Mico said. He was perched on a low branch, having crossed the bridge successfully. His friend, Preguiça the maned sloth, was at last sitting beside him. “Now Preguiça and I can visit each other again, all thanks to you and your classmates.”

Elena looked up at the bridge. Many animals were already flowing across in both directions. Her classmates were standing on either side of the road, studying which species were using

Just then, Elena heard a sound behind her. More of Mico’s friends had arrived, along with his family group, who had travelled from deep within the forest. They were carrying a variety of fruits and flowers from native plants within the forest. They were thank you gifts for Elena and her fellow students.

“We can never thank you enough,” Mico said, “for reuniting and bridging our forest.”



Wildlife bridge crossing the four-lane BR-101 highway in Brazil. The bridge connects the Poço das Antas Biological Reserve to the Igarapé Farm that is being reforested by Associação Mico-Leão-Dourado and their partners. (Photo: Christy Frank)

MEET THE CHARACTERS

Mico the golden lion tamarin

Mico is a golden lion tamarin (mico-leão-dourado in Portuguese). His species name is *Leontopithecus rosalia*. Other species of tamarin in Brazil include golden-headed lion tamarin black lion tamarin and black-faced lion tamarin. All are very small monkeys that are endemic to the Mata Atlântica (meaning they can only be found there). All four species of lion tamarin are critically endangered due to deforestation and habitat fragmentation.

Preguiça the maned sloth

Preguiça is a maned sloth (preguiça-de-coleira in Portuguese). His species name is *Bradypus torquatus*. Maned sloths are endemic to the Mata Atlântica and are the most threatened species of sloth in the world due to deforestation and habitat fragmentation.

Snakes of the Mata Atlântica

Many different snake species live in the Mata Atlântica, and some are known to feed on golden lion tamarins, including anacondas, rainbow boas and pit vipers. Snakes aren’t all bad though! They help disperse seeds and are part of nature’s pest control.

Ocelot cats

Ocelots, *Leopardus pardalis*, are a carnivorous species of cat that hunt at night. They are found throughout the southwestern United States, Mexico, Central and South America, and in various climates.

Marmosets

The common marmoset, *Callithrix jacchus*, also called the white-tufted or white-tufted-ear marmoset, are small monkeys that live throughout Brazil. They have become invasive in some states like Rio de Janeiro and are often targeted in the illegal pet trade.

Capuchin Monkey

Many different species of capuchin monkeys can be found throughout Brazil and in the Mata Atlântica. Capuchin monkeys are primarily arboreal primates that are omnivores, snacking on fruits, leaves and insects.

Opossum

Opossums are members of the marsupial order, along with animals such as kangaroos and koalas. Several species of opossum can be found in the Mata Atlântica including Brazilian slender opossums, white-eared opossums and Brazilian gracile opossums.

Tiffany Hamilton has an M.A. in biology from Project Dragonfly and Miami University. They aim to raise awareness about sustainable resource use, conservation and management.

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How to become an everyday bird conservationist

Authors **Milan Büscher and Annike Eylering**

| Illustrator **Ambika Karandikar**

a day in the life

Did you know that birds are one of nature's gardeners? They spread seeds and pollinate plants wherever they go. On top of this, their great variety, different colours and melodic songs can improve our happiness and health.

However, birds face many dangers every day, which are often caused by our actions. For example, to produce lots of crops as quickly as possible, farmers often rely on spraying crops with chemicals and pesticides that are harmful not only to insects, but also to the birds that feed on these insects. Modern buildings often remove the nesting places found in older buildings, while their large glass windows can also cause bird collisions. One of the biggest threats to birds are pets, because cats and dogs can attack birds and can scare them away from their nests.

As a result, around 12 percent of bird species worldwide face extinction, which means that they are at risk of disappearing forever. This may sound a little scary—and we need to act fast to save as many species as possible—but there is something everyone can do to help protect our winged friends: become an everyday bird conservationist.

Whilst some actions to protect birds require lots of special training, there are many activities we can all easily do to help them. Depending on what you enjoy doing, there is an everyday bird conservationist role for you, such as an ambassador, a detective or a hotelier. Let us introduce you to these roles.

How can you become a bird ambassador?

A bird ambassador is someone who actively encourages bird conservation. Their main goal is to raise awareness about birds and the threats they face. Are you a sociable person who enjoys talking to others? If so, then becoming a bird ambassador could be a great way for you to help!

Talking to your family, friends and classmates about why birds are important and how we can protect them is a great starting point. You could discover interesting bird facts and share what you have learned with your friends, your school or online. You could even send this article to others! You never know, you might inspire them to become a conservationist too!

You can become an even more active ambassador by supporting an environmental organisation that helps birds. These organisations aim to educate people about the importance of birds for the environment, and they often run events and awareness campaigns for both children and adults. With lots of support, these organisations can influence important government decisions that affect birds.

Go online and find out how you can get involved. A great organisation helping birds

is BirdLife International, which has lots of information about them and provides advice on ways to help support conservation locally.

How can you become a bird detective?

A bird detective is someone who is especially curious about birds. A detective's tasks include watching and recording different bird species and their behaviours, such as feeding, mating, and nesting. Becoming a bird detective helps you learn a lot about nature while also contributing to avian conservation. If you like being outside and watching birds, this could be the right conservation role for you!

As a bird detective, you will need to learn the behaviours, markings, and sounds of various species so that you can accurately identify them. Binoculars or a spotting scope are useful tools for this. Scientists can then compare your discoveries to the findings of others from previous years, which will help them to identify changes in bird populations. If bird populations are being threatened or birds are seen in new locations, conservation actions can then be put in place to help protect them.

To be a bird detective, simply head outdoors to your nearest park, woodland or field, and count the different types of birds you see. Keep a record and report your findings to a local environmental organisation. They will also be able to provide more advice on how best to record what you see.

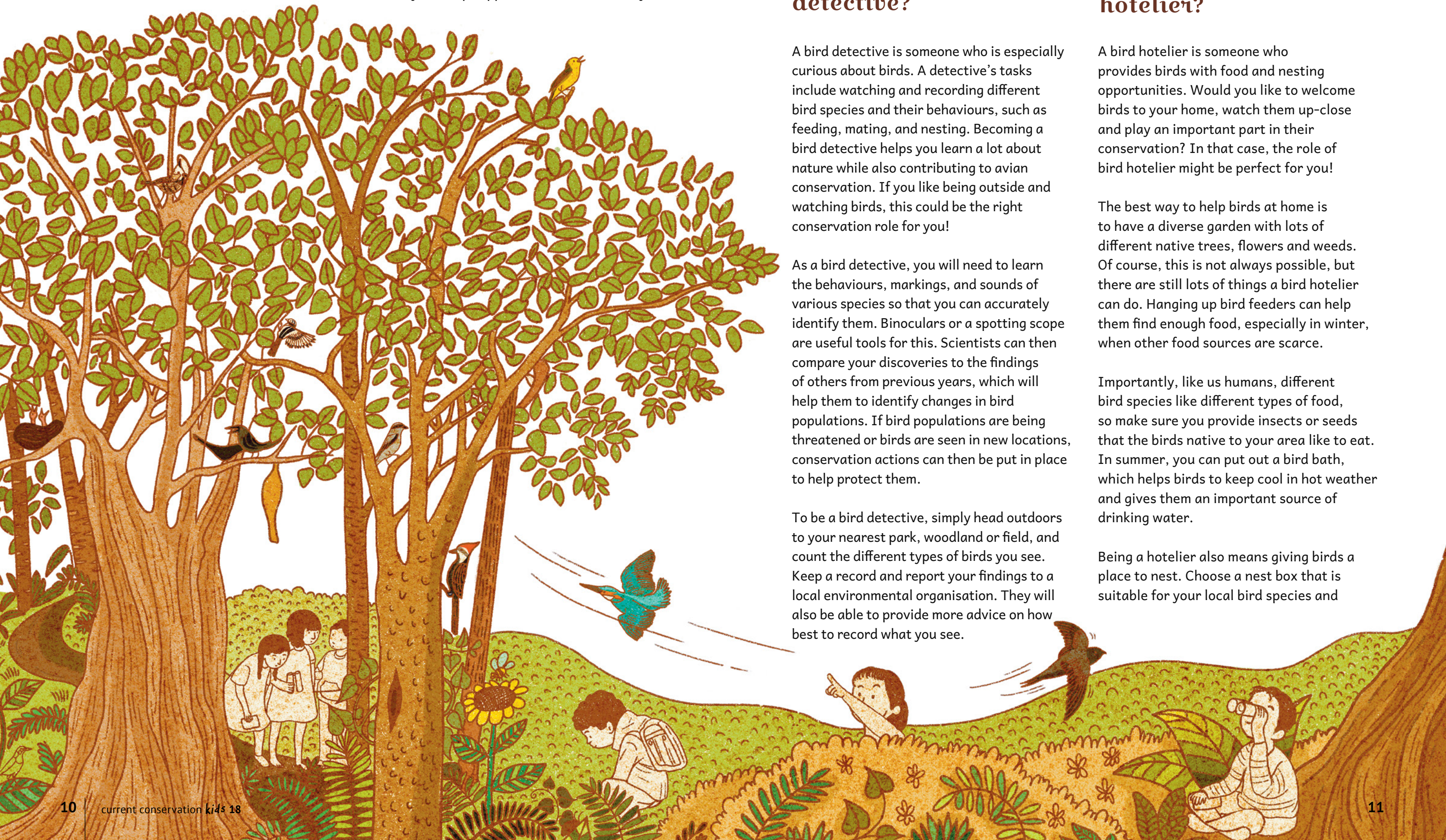
How can you become a bird hotelier?

A bird hotelier is someone who provides birds with food and nesting opportunities. Would you like to welcome birds to your home, watch them up-close and play an important part in their conservation? In that case, the role of bird hotelier might be perfect for you!

The best way to help birds at home is to have a diverse garden with lots of different native trees, flowers and weeds. Of course, this is not always possible, but there are still lots of things a bird hotelier can do. Hanging up bird feeders can help them find enough food, especially in winter, when other food sources are scarce.

Importantly, like us humans, different bird species like different types of food, so make sure you provide insects or seeds that the birds native to your area like to eat. In summer, you can put out a bird bath, which helps birds to keep cool in hot weather and gives them an important source of drinking water.

Being a hotelier also means giving birds a place to nest. Choose a nest box that is suitable for your local bird species and



install it out of reach of predators, soon you will have your first guests to stay!

There are many ways you can join the mission to protect birds. You can raise awareness of the importance of birds, study birds outside and create bird-friendly spaces. Whether you become a bird ambassador, detective, hotelier, or anything else, your actions can help support the conservation of birds. Now that you have discovered several ways to help, which role will you choose?

This Day in the Life story is based on a research project of the biology didactics lab at Osnabrück University, Germany. The aim of this study was to identify the best and most effective bird conservation behaviours. You can find the full article under the following citation: Büscher, M., Lange, F., Bröckel, M., Höfer, S., Stenberg, E., Folsche, E., Eylering, A., & Fiebelkorn, F. (submitted). *Quantifying behavioural impact and plasticity to prioritise bird conservation efforts.*

Milan Büscher is a Ph.D. student in the biology didactics lab at Osnabrück University, researching the factors influencing conservation behaviour. To relax, Milan goes on long bike rides.

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Ambika Karandikar is an illustrator and a bharatanatyam dancer. She has a deep passion for art in all its forms. She loves bringing children's books to life.



Shorelines and Sea Slugs:

A Slippery Adventure!

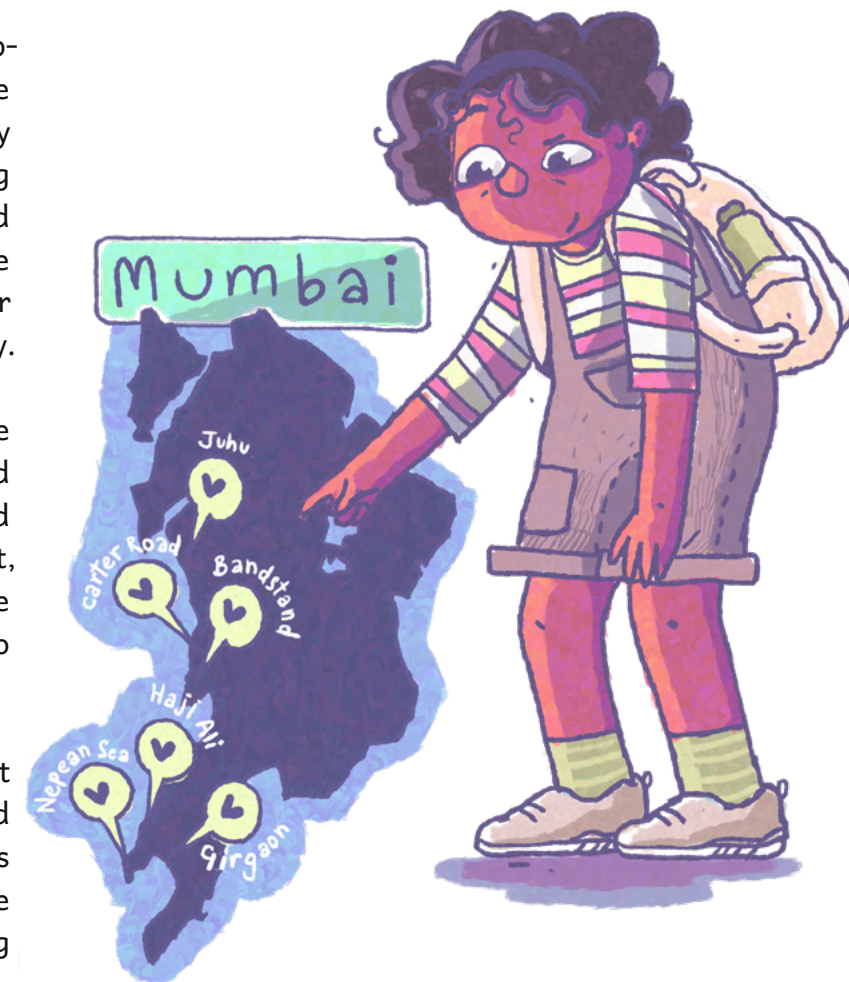
Authors **Clarita Iona Mendes** | Illustrator **Siddhi Vartak**

Armed with a flimsy macro lens and waterproof trainers, Nara was ready to take on the tide pools of Mumbai. While most kids enjoy a break from waking up early in the morning during the summer holidays, Nara delighted at the thought of trekking towards the shoreline and venturing on a search for marine creatures as dawn enveloped the city.

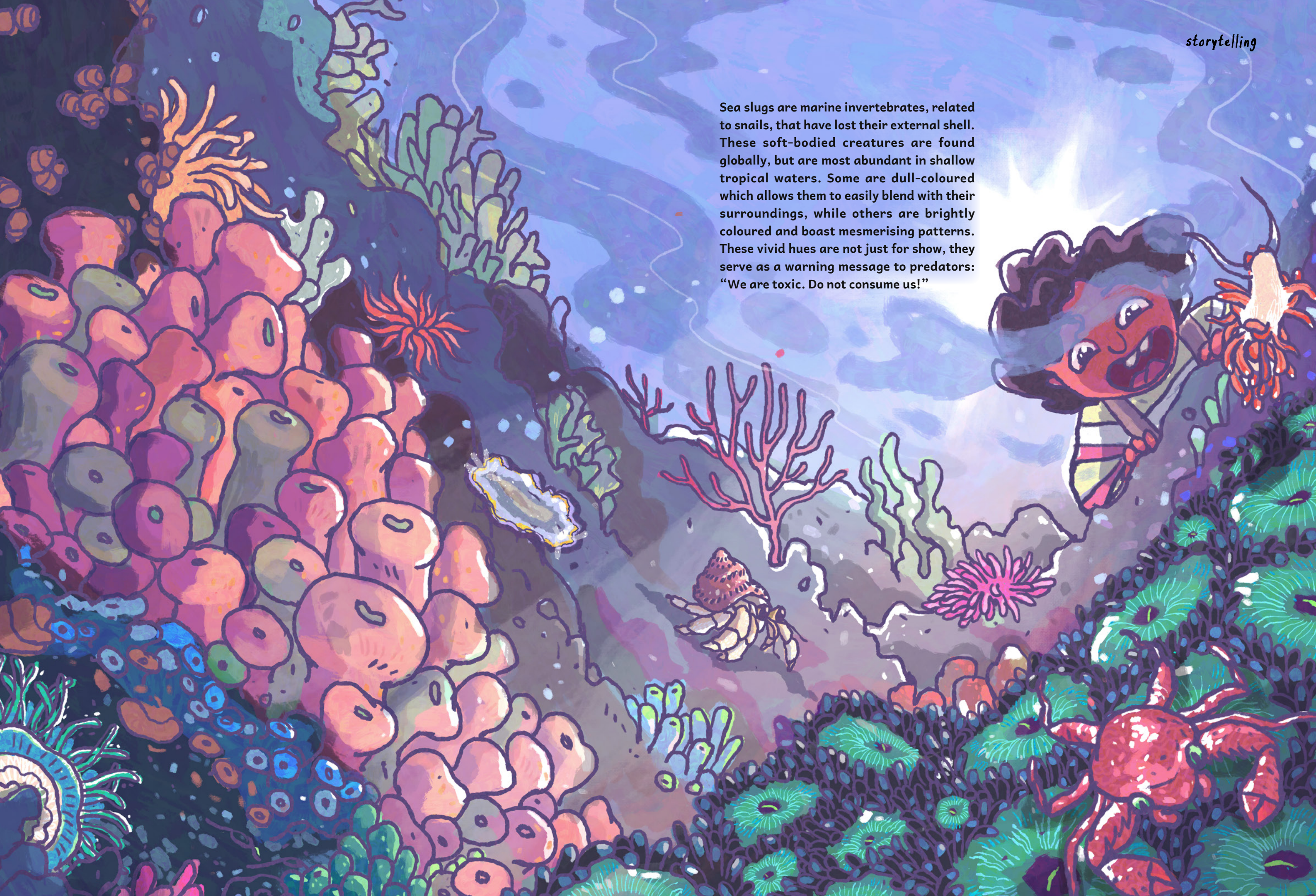
In Mumbai, people gather along the sea face from Marine Lines all the way to Bandstand Promenade to enjoy the sea breeze and watch the waves crash against the city. But, as the tide recedes, this stretch of coastline unveils patches of rocks that are home to numerous marine creatures.

Mornings spent tide-pooling along the coast of Mumbai had introduced Nara to a myriad of creatures—corals, sea anemones, crabs and barnacles, to name a few—but today she was on a mission to find the most intriguing of all: the sea slug.

Rocky coastlines give rise to unique microhabitats, such as tide pools. Tide pools are formed as seawater gets trapped between the rocks, once the tide recedes. Contrary to popular belief, these pools brim with life, inhabited by curious creatures that have adapted to live in a continuously changing environment.



Sea slugs are marine invertebrates, related to snails, that have lost their external shell. These soft-bodied creatures are found globally, but are most abundant in shallow tropical waters. Some are dull-coloured which allows them to easily blend with their surroundings, while others are brightly coloured and boast mesmerising patterns. These vivid hues are not just for show, they serve as a warning message to predators: "We are toxic. Do not consume us!"



Skipping from one rock pool to another, Nara observed hermit crabs scrambling across the surface. Zoanthids—a type of soft coral—clumped together, forming irregularly shaped carpets on the rocks. Peering into tide pools, she occasionally spotted a sea anemone, its tentacles resembling the petals of a flower. As she skipped and hopped and quite regularly slipped in a hurry to reach the next pool, her trainers protected her feet from both the rocky surface and the sharp protective shells of barnacles. Nara knew that she would have to spend a long time scanning each tide pool in search of any movement that indicated a sea slug's presence. Given its small size and ability to conceal itself, finding a sea slug was nearly impossible.

Her first spotting came in the form of a tiny leaf-like slug: *Elysia hirasei*. A closer look at a patch of rock covered with marine algae revealed a large group of *Elysia* chomping through the algae. They obtain their green colour from feeding on the algae, which helps them camouflage effortlessly with their feeding grounds. The mildest of water currents would cause their frills to gently ripple. To Nara, they looked like cattle grazing across a lush green field while she, a giant, peered at them from above. Although to any passerby, Nara too would look weird, laying on her belly atop a rock, gazing into a shallow stretch of water.

After spending a long while watching the sea slugs go on with their business, Nara dusted herself off and continued on her search

for more sea slugs. Time flew by as she scuttled from one pool to another. Nara knew that she would soon have to give up her search and return home. But her determination to find more sea slugs drove her across the expanse of the rocky shoreline.

And then, she spotted something that stole her breath away: nestled between a sea sponge and a rock lay the splendid *Goniobranchus bombayanus*. The Bombay sea slug gets its name from the city. First described in 1949, it remained hidden from the residents of its namesake for decades due to the relative lack of interest in sea slugs among people. Only recently has the slug come back into the spotlight. What started as a motley group of naturalists exploring Mumbai's coastal flora and fauna, slowly budded into gatherings of nature enthusiasts and city dwellers seeking a break from their daily mundane routine. The subsequent excitement surrounding these largely unknown marine animals brought the city's shoreline to the forefront, and along with it the 'rediscovery' of the Bombay sea slug, its vivid colours and name catching the attention of everyone.

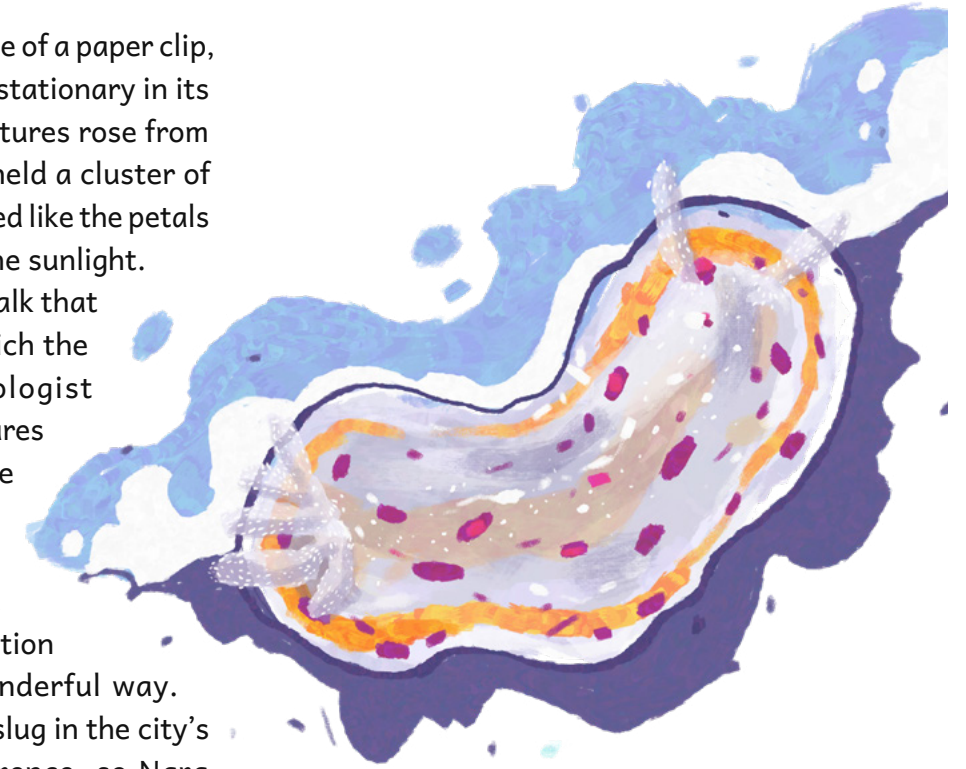
The bright yellow border and dots of rich purple scattered across its milky-white body instantly caught Nara's attention and

wonder. Approximately the size of a paper clip, the mostly flat slug remained stationary in its little nook. Two rod-like structures rose from its head while the other end held a cluster of feather-like structures arranged like the petals of a flower that glistened in the sunlight. She recalled a guided shore walk that she had attended, during which the accompanying marine biologist informed her that these structures allowed the animal to breathe and sense its surroundings. At present, she watched the sea slug with delight in her heart. Her hard work and determination had paid off in the most wonderful way. Coming across a Bombay sea slug in the city's tide pools was a rare occurrence, so Nara couldn't believe her luck with sighting one.

As the sun began beating down its harsh rays, Nara gathered her things and began her walk back home. A part of her understood that the city's shoreline would drastically change over time due to construction projects that were slowly reclaiming land from the sea, climate change and rising sea levels. Her grandfather had once shown her black-and-white pictures of Mumbai's shoreline, but it looked nothing like the seafront today. For now, she couldn't wait to share her exciting sea slug adventure with anyone who would care to listen and show them the countless blurry pictures she had taken of these fascinating creatures.

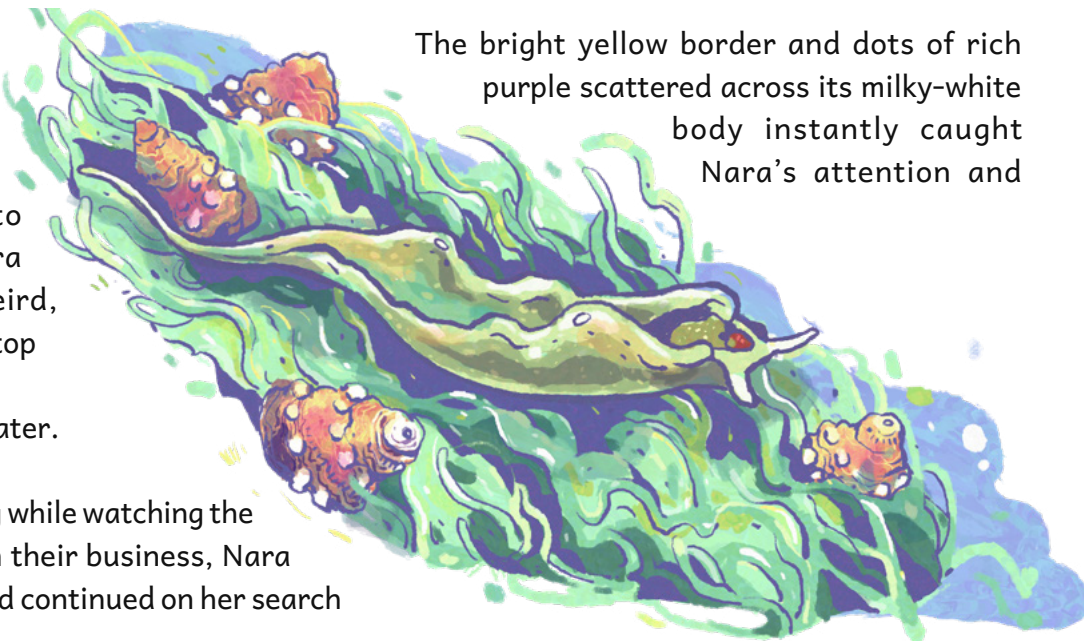
For more information on Mumbai's marine life, visit www.inaturalist.org/projects/marine-life-of-mumbai.

If you're in Mumbai, you can join a guided shore walk with Marine Life of Mumbai (MLOM). See www.coastalconservation.in/marine-life-of-mumbai or follow @marinelifeofmumbai on Instagram for updates.



Clarita Iona Mendes is a post-graduate student at the Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz. Her interest is in understanding animal behaviour and she often creates wildlife-inspired content.

Siddhi Vartak is a storyteller and visual designer. She works in the world of visual art, films and animation.



Kungfu Aunty vs. The Garbage Monsters

Author **Karunya Baskar**

I sit on my balcony each morning to soak in some sun and do a little reading. It overlooks a street corner inhabited by generous piles of rotting waste from almost every house in the neighbourhood. I'm routinely greeted by the stench. Flies, mosquitoes, rats and cockroaches are mundane.

Actually, that's just what I'm reading about in Shweta Taneja's new book—but it's beginning to feel all too real to be called fiction. *Kungfu Aunty vs. The Garbage Monsters* is the story of Kabir and his sister Leela, who battle the tyrannical rule of Trash Rajah, with the help of their mother's crazy invention—a fantastical cleaning bot named Kungfu Aunty.

Kabir and Leela live in what's called a dystopian society. A dystopia is an imaginary world marked with great suffering and injustice, a setting that science fiction writers absolutely love. 'Pretty city' is under the control of an all-powerful garbage-eating monster, Trash Rajah, who forces its inhabitants to produce



enormous amounts of trash to satisfy his insatiable appetite. Living in filth is now the norm, and everyone has to pretend they love it all. What's a tiny bit frightening about most dystopian literature is that it doesn't seem that far off from reality. Just like Kabir and Leela, we live in a world ruled by powerful businesses that encourage us to keep buying more, hence we produce more waste. They're the Trash Rajahs of our Pretty Cities.

This book falls into an interesting genre called eco-punk fiction, which explores environmental themes and ecological issues in a dystopian future. These stories also feature a lot of fun, imaginative tech, such as holograms, hoverboards and, of course, robots like Kungfu Aunty.

Most dystopian tales are quite grim, but thanks to the author's wacky sense of humour, this one's too entertaining to ruin your mood. I especially enjoyed the fun names she's given the places and people. Trash Rajah is only one of many. As you move through the story, you'll meet Mayor Junkfan, discover Lethal Lake and scale Puke Peak!

Even the 'pests' that we're familiar with in our world—flies, rats and cockroaches—have undergone a fictional reincarnation to have mutated into monstrously large creatures: fatflies, bloat-rats, monsterquitoes and dog-roaches—the Trash Rajah's minions who enforce his rule over Pretty City. Similar to the little minions in our cities, they thrive on improperly disposed rubbish. They are his loyal disease-carrying army, his garbage monsters. Though their portraits are quite frightening to imagine, they're hilariously

dim-witted, which makes most of their appearances in the story a comical delight. When it comes to action for change, there are the doers who are ready to light the way, and then there are those of us who need a little nudge (or sometimes even a shove) from the doer folks.

Kabir, like many of us, is frozen in inaction. He sticks to the Rajah's tyrannical rules and avoids upsetting anybody. Who'd blame him? Taking on an army of garbage monsters can be a tad overwhelming. Sometimes, doing the right thing for the planet can mean standing up to our leaders, our schools, and sometimes, even our parents—which can feel just as difficult as fighting an army.

It takes unbridled, unafraid spirits like Leela and her mother to inspire the Kabir in all of us to come together and fight to protect what we love.

Is there someone out there who inspires you? Or makes you wonder about things you'd never thought about before? They could be your favourite writer, artist, or even a loved one—the Leela to your Kabir.

Karunya Baskar is a visual designer and artist who loves to travel. Whether it's scuba diving, surfing or trekking through the hills, she's always up for an outdoor adventure.

Planet Dance

Author **Evan Radivoyevitch** | Illustrator **Princy Rawat**

Planet Dance is a short children's poetry story about pollution and the impact it has on the balance of the world. As the Earth loses its rhythm, the children take on the responsibility of restoring the natural balance and bringing back order once more.

Section 1: Joy

In a world so rich, where oceans meet the shore,
Lived lives galore, whom we couldn't ignore.
The sun-kissed sky, as it set and it rose,
A rhythmic dance, full of ebbs and flows.

Beneath the waves, where the corals sway,
Schools of fish play, and practice ballet.
The rhythm of the tides, the song upbeat,
A watery waltz, sweet and complete.

On land so wide, the meadows our guide,
Animals glide, in a joyous stride
Hooves and paws in a lively prance,
Nature's rhythm, a harmonious dance.

Streams full of frogs, get in for a soak
starting to croak and rhythm awoke
Mountain deserts the cool airs bring
Shadows dance swing, and lizards sing

In the skies and the light, where the birds take flight,
Feathers dance till night, a spectacular sight.
With melodies sung by the feathery choir,
A dance in the air, that never would tire.

Section 2: Struggle

But, alas, change was spreading in the air,
A whisper of worry, the need for care.
The rhythm of nature began to wane,
The world faced a challenge, a growing pain.

Pollution caused by humans alone
Infecting the world with a new tone
Once beautiful now tied in a knot
Coated in smog the Earth got hot

The oceans wept, as the tide lost its song,
The coral ballet, a memory so strong.
Animals hesitated in their lively race,
As pollution spread, leaving a gloomy trace.

Amphibians, sit in their puddles dry,
Earth is shy and begins to cry.
Life in the desert begins to erase,
Pollution's touch a strong embrace.

Birds in the sky, their chorus grew weak,
A silent dance, a world turned bleak.
The trees stood still, leaves barely swayed,
The once vibrant colours started to fade.



Evan Radivoyevitch is a school teacher pursuing his masters in Teaching Biology. Evan is from Cleveland Ohio, and is a Hufflepuff at heart. He loves the outdoors, sports, and spending time with friends and family.

Section 3: Hope

But hope wasn't lost, for the children arose,
With dreams of a planet where nature still glows.
They joined hands together, a determined band,
To bring back the rhythm, their beloved land.

They planted new trees, in the meadows they played,
Picked up the litter that humans had laid.
Reduced, reused, recycled with glee,
A pledge to the planet, a dance for the free.

With each green step, the rhythm returned,
The sun brightly burned, and lessons were learned.
The beat as one, through changes so drastic
Life more fantastic with each piece of plastic

Waltz, ballet, a croak, and a choir
Rekindled fire, the world a supplier
The beat now in a new kind of song
Of how it went wrong and came back so strong

Singing with swing, tap and the tide
Humans in stride, nature allied
New kinds of dance a future so bright
Where beats unite, a perfect light

And so, in this tale of a planet's chance,
A reminder to all in a rhythmic trance.
To cherish the Earth with every glance,
For together we sway, in the planet's dance.

Princy Rawat is an illustrator from New Delhi, India. Going by the name, Square Of Pants, she loves to translate visions into vivid visuals with the brightest splash of colours.

The Great Apes

Author **Lorraine Miller** | Illustrator **Boski Jain**

Gorillas

Crash!!! The sound of breaking branches and rustling bushes can be heard throughout this national park in Uganda. The source of the noise is a 200-kg silverback gorilla and his family. They call this mountain forest their home. A gorilla troop like this one usually has around 10 members, but the largest troop ever recorded, in Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, had a staggering 65 individuals. That's a pretty big family!

An adult male mountain gorilla can grow to be over five feet tall when standing on all fours, not quite the size of King Kong but still pretty impressive. They have thick black hair covering their bodies and as they mature the hair on their backs acquires a silver sheen, earning them their names as silverbacks.

Gorillas eat leaves, shoots, roots and bark from a variety of plants. As their food is fairly low in nutrients, they need to consume up to 45 pounds or



20 kg of food, equivalent to eating 125 apples every day! Adult gorillas usually will need to rest for the better part of the day, after eating all that food, while younger gorillas spend the day playing and exploring.

Gorillas are a peaceful, social ape. But occasionally, silverbacks are known to show aggression when defending their families. At these times, silverbacks will beat their chests, bare their impressive set of canine teeth to threaten rival male gorillas or even charge at intruders when

sensing danger. A fully grown gorilla can be six times as strong as a human.

Apart from the mountain gorilla (*Gorilla beringei beringei*), there are three other subspecies of gorilla, including the eastern (*Gorilla beringei graueri*) and western lowland gorillas (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*) and the extremely rare cross river gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*). Researchers say there are fewer than 300 cross river gorillas left in the wild due to loss of habitat and hunting.

Did you know? A gorilla will sing when eating their favourite food. A combination of hums and groans to show they have found a treat too good to share.

Chimpanzees

In the same forests as the gorillas, are an even larger and noisier family of apes: the chimpanzees. This family contains many males, females and young ones of all ages.

These apes are percussive in their communication. Chimpanzees drum on tree roots to grab the attention of other chimpanzees, and perform impressive displays of their strength by ripping up plants and breaking branches to show their neighbours who's in charge. One can often hear this display as distant drumming echoing through the forest.

Chimpanzees are loud, energetic and mischievous. The dominant male in a troop of chimpanzees forms a close bond with his brothers, uncles, cousins and sons and protects this family fiercely as this band of brothers will remain in the group for the rest of their lives. The females are much freer—they often leave their natal group after reaching sexual maturity and find a new community when they are ready to start their own families.

Chimpanzees eat fruits, nuts and seeds like the gorillas, but also seek out ants, termites, lizards and even hunt a monkey occasionally as a tasty treat. These apes are extremely intelligent and are known to use tools for a variety of reasons, such as using sticks for extractive foraging in termite mounds and rivers and using rocks for weapons during disputes with other chimpanzees.

Did you know? Chimpanzees cannot swim but love to splash around in shallow water and fish for water plants and algae to eat in the dry season.

Bonobos

Further east in the Congo River basin lives the smallest of the great apes: the bonobos. Bonobos were once known as pygmy chimpanzees because they look very similar to chimpanzees, but ancestors of this species actually split from the chimpanzee line around two million years ago. Bonobos were only discovered as a separate species in 1928 and it is thought that the

natural formation of the Congo river separated them from chimpanzees. This separation was so long that they are now a distinct species.

Even though chimpanzees and bonobos look alike, their behaviour could not be more different. Unlike the chimpanzees or the gorillas, the bonobos do not show off their size and strength to intimidate others but instead use alliances and affiliations to settle disputes. Here, the females are in charge of the family, deciding where the group will sleep, travel and forage for food.

A bonobo group will often befriend neighbouring troops and individuals will move more freely between groups than the gorillas and chimpanzees. Multiple groups may also come together to form large gatherings of up to 70 animals and will talk to each other using hoots, barks, screeches and screams.

These apes have a tell-tale feature: a rather impressive hairdo. Bonobos characteristic centre parting is one of the easiest ways to distinguish them from their chimpanzee cousins.

Did you know? Chimpanzees and bonobos share over 98 percent of their DNA with humans.



Orangutans

In Asia, in the dwindling forests of Borneo and Sumatra, we find the only ape who prefers to live alone: the orangutan. Known as the red ape for their orange hair, these apes are long-armed tree dwellers who spend much of their time high up in the treetop canopy rather than on lower branches or on the forest floor like their African cousins. They spend their days feeding on fruit, seeds and leaves, and make nests out of branches to rest in throughout the day.

Even though orangutans are the least social of all the great apes, they regularly interact with each other. Young ones engage in play, adolescent males often follow other adults to learn the ways of the forest, young females may travel together or feed in the same tree as other females, and mothers will remain with their infants for up to 10 years, teaching them what they need to know to survive in the wild. Even after young females have reached

maturity, they will visit their mothers often and may even share the same area of forest for many years after.

Orangutans are very clever, just like the other apes, but unlike gorillas, chimpanzees and bonobos, orangutans also have a lot of patience. They spend a long time figuring out solutions to problems and have been known to use a variety of homemade tools to collect food and water, extend their reach and make themselves more comfortable. Orangutans have been reported to have used leaves to make umbrellas to keep dry and cups which they fold and fill with water. They have been observed using sticks for fishing rods, stones for hammers and branches as weapons.

Did you know? Researchers recently discovered that orangutans use herbal remedies that they find in the forest to treat illnesses and injuries.

Humans

This brings us to our fifth and final ape: humans. These apes are far less hairy and can be found all over the world. Humans are just as diverse in shape, colour, preference and foraging and mating behaviours as seen in the other great apes. Some are short and some are tall, some are large and some are small. Some are shy and quiet, while others are loud and bold. Some have black hair and some have red hair and some may not have any hair at all! Some eat meat and some only eat vegetables. Some have large extended families and some live alone.

As a species, humans are biologically very similar to other great apes in our broader anatomy and physiology, but what makes us

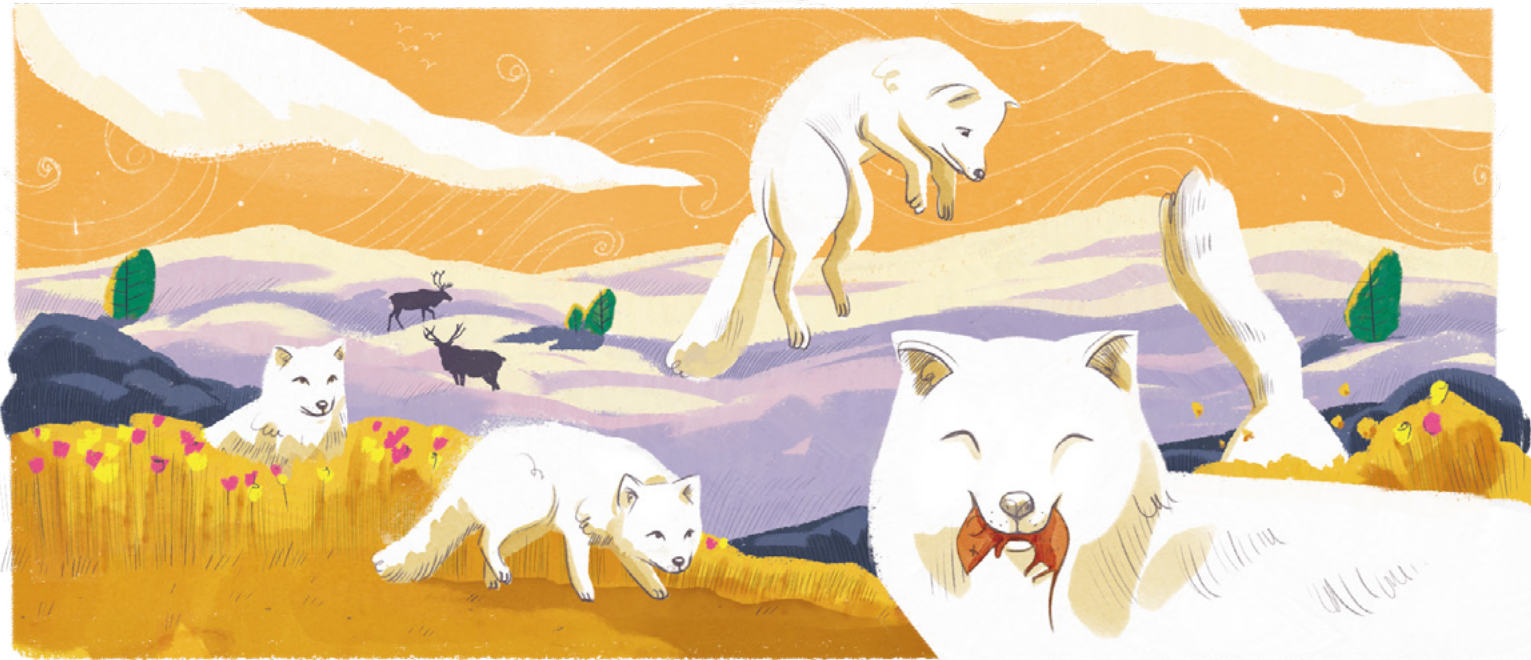
unique are the individual differences between us in appearance, behaviour and lifestyle, which can be largely attributed to culture.

Like other great apes, different populations of our species found in different geographical locations often have distinct cultures. The products of cultures, such as what we eat, how we communicate, our behaviours, our priorities and how we spend our time are passed down from generation to generation. All of the great apes exhibit some form of varying cultures which makes us all connected but wonderfully unique.

Lorraine Miller is a zoologist of 17 years and the founder/director of Great Ape Consultancy. She advises on the best practice management of great apes in human care to maximise their welfare including zoos, sanctuaries and conservation organisations.

Boski Jain is a visual designer and illustrator. Her artistic endeavors are influenced by the captivating essence of Indian folk art, as she weaves together characters and patterns in her work. Hailing from Bhopal, her current creative haven is the bustling city of Delhi.





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EXPLORING THE ARCTIC TUNDRA WITH LUMI

Author **Viviana Moreno** | Illustrator **Reechik Banerjee**

Hello! My name is Lumi, and I'm an Arctic fox. My name means snow in Finnish, or at least that's what some humans said. I don't think we've met. I cannot wait to tell you all about where I live and what I do every day.

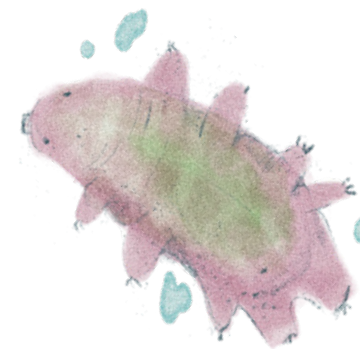
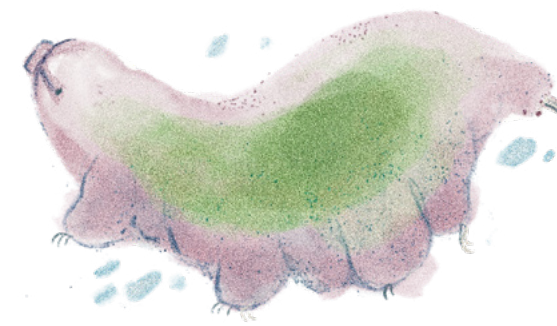
Life with Lumi

I live in the frigid Arctic tundra. This habitat stretches across countries like Russia and Canada. You might be wondering, what's a tundra? The humans call this area a tundra because of its freezing temperatures and for the lack of trees. There aren't many forests around here! When I look out of my den, the land is flat practically everywhere.

It is cold for most of the year, but I don't worry much about it. I have thick white fur for the winter months. It keeps me warm and helps me blend into the snow. I also have extra layers of fat under my skin that keep me nice and toasty in my coat. When it is warmer out, I shed my thick white coat and grow thinner brown fur. That helps me blend in better with the dirt on the ground and around my den.

Read the whole story on our website:

<https://www.currentconservation.org/exploring-the-arctic-tundra-with-lumi/>



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