



# 'One outstanding shot is worth more than 1,000 hurried, thoughtless snaps'

Wildlife photographer Graeme Green talks to **Andrea Moreno** about close encounters, favourite locations and the power of a picture



**Have you had any close encounters with animals you've photographed?**  
I had a silverback mountain gorilla thunder past me in the mountains of Uganda. Thresher sharks have swum right over my head. In Zambia, lions came pretty close, though they were more focused on a few warthogs nearby. Most animals aren't that interested in attacking humans, of course. The closest call I've had was in Cambodia's Cardamom mountains. I was talking to a few local guys when a huge black cobra slithered right past my foot. The locals told me: "If it bites you, you have just enough time to phone a loved one to say goodbye before you die."



**Clockwise from top left: a leopard and impala, Ruaha National Park, Tanzania; grey heron, Scotland; a mountain gorilla in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, Uganda; a lilac-breasted roller, Tanzania; a meerkat in the Makgadikgadi Pans, Botswana; photographer Graeme Green, above**

**Do you have a favourite type of environment to work in?**  
No, I'm excited to be out in all kinds of terrain, from deserts to mountains to jungle. One of the greatest pleasures of wildlife photography is getting to explore new places and find out what's there. Anytime I'm out in nature with a camera, I'm pretty happy. That said, it's hard to beat Antarctica. I also like the winter wildlife up in Hokkaido, in northern Japan. I've had good photographic experiences over the years in Malaysia. I was also in the Inner Hebrides recently, around Mull and the Treshnish Isles, and there's a lot of life there to photograph.

**You work a lot in Africa. Is there a particular country you feel attached to?**  
There are several. Uganda's very under-rated. Makgadikgadi Pans in Botswana is really interesting for desert-adapted species, like meerkats and ostriches. Kenya's Masai Mara conservancies, outside the main National Reserves, are doing great work to protect the animals, including big cats. I was recently in Ruaha National Park, a massive wilderness area in Tanzania, which is far less known than the Serengeti or Ngorongoro. The wildlife there is phenomenal. I'm always happy to go back to work in Africa, and there's plenty of the continent that I haven't explored yet.

**What makes the difference between an OK wildlife photo and an outstanding one?**  
Time. A photo where you've really taken your time, given some thought to what you want to achieve and put some work into it usually looks a lot better than something that took a second to click. Sometimes you have to wait for the right light, the right moment, or you need to shift your position. One outstanding shot is worth more than 1,000 hurried, thoughtless snaps. It also helps to learn about animal behaviour. Spending time around animals, you can start to predict what might happen and be prepared.

You always need to be ready in wildlife photography. Life moves pretty fast, and you don't get a second chance to capture a moment that passes. Ultimately, it comes down to being creative. You have to keep pushing yourself.

**Is there a particular animal you like to photograph that falls outside regular ideas of beauty?**  
Plenty. I enjoy photographing lions, gorillas and other big exciting animals. But smaller and stranger creatures are just as fascinating, especially as they're often less familiar to people.

I was working on Langkawi recently, an island off the coast of Malaysia, and spent time photographing tiny frogs, which was really satisfying. One of my favourite photographs is of a blue-eyed angle-headed lizard in Gunung Mulu National Park in Sarawak. I was there a few years ago to photograph the 'bat exodus', where thousands of bats leave the caves each evening to feed on insects. On the way there, I spotted the lizard on a tree, the kind of thing many people might not have noticed or walked by or not bothered to photograph. But I spent quite a bit of time with it, moving closer, changing angles, until I got a photo I really liked, with lots of texture and detail, beady eye and all.

**How important is the 'land-**

**scape' in your wildlife pictures?**  
It can be very important. Sometimes, photographers concentrate only on getting the animal in their frame. Setting an animal in its environment tells a different story. In The Falkland Islands a while back, I was on a beach around Volunteer Point and photographed a cluster of penguins, positioning them in the corner of the frame, facing an incoming storm. It made for a very different photo than just focusing on a group of penguins.

**What role do you think wildlife photography can play in a world that often disrespects or destroys nature?**  
Threats to wildlife and ecosystems often feel very distant and remote. I think wildlife photography can get people's attention and hopefully make them care and get involved. Too many animals face extinction or threats like poaching or loss of habitat. We've all become too good at flicking past or ignoring urgent stories that we should pay attention to. Without photography, I think we'd find people cared less about the natural world. It's a powerful reminder of what we've got to lose.

● **Graeme Green is a wildlife photographer and journalist, visit [www.graeme-green.com](http://www.graeme-green.com); follow him on Instagram @graeme.green**

## 'It's only when a change starts that you realise how unbalanced it was'

Women are finally getting bigger roles on television, Angela Scanlon, host of new makeover show *Your Home Made Perfect*, tells **Gemma Dunn**

**A**ngela Scanlon is having quite the moment. Whether it's fronting her own documentary series, standing in for Alex Jones on *The One Show*, co-hosting cult hit *Robot Wars* with Dara O'Briain – or even landing her own BBC Radio 2 slot, the one-time journalist has proved she's got what it takes to make it to the top of the TV ladder. And her latest appointment as the presenter of BBC 2's brand new offering, *Your Home Made Perfect*, continues to demonstrate it.

A property makeover series like no other, the show offers up cutting-edge virtual reality and visual effects to enable people to see what their future home could look like, before building it in reality. In each episode, a family will be presented with two radically different designs by architects Laura Jane Clark and Robert Jamison. It's then up to them, the home-owners, which ambitious renovation idea they choose. "The VR aspect of it just makes it feel so fresh and new and different – and I love that," says Scanlon, 35.

"But also what's important is at the moment tech is getting an absolute hammering," notes the Irish star. "We're down on social media for ruining our lives and [the fact] AI and robots are taking our jobs, so I think the idea that you can use technology in a really positive way is a good thing." Of her passion for property, she adds: "I spend a lot of time peering creepily through the windows of estate agents, so it's something that's a massive interest to me." So, what else do we need to know?

**On... how the show works**  
"We have a couple of home owners per show and they hate their house – or a part of their house – and there's quite a lot of disagreement between them. So, enter our two architects, who have a brief, and after looking at the home, come up with two different designs."



↑ **Angela Scanlon: 'We all have that tendency to be a bit nosy'**

**On... the virtual reality concept**  
"The designers create a virtual reality (VR) using visual effect or photo real effects. Sometimes it can take up to three months to make these models, in consultation with the architects [Laura and Robert], and then the home-owners put on the VR goggles and get to explore their newly imagined home. They then decide whether they want to go with Laura's or with Robert's design."

**On... the home-owners' experience**  
"I suppose on a practical level what the [VR] does is allows the couples to really experience it and, as a result, they can be so much braver and bolder with the choices that they make. To wrap your head around how something will look on paper is very difficult and probably prohibits us from taking risks."

**On... future series**  
"You just never know. We all have that tendency to be a bit nosy and want to rummage around people's homes, so you can be totally voyeuristic but then you can be in three homes at once, which is nice. Property and interior shows tend to be popular and this just feels like a fresh approach, so hopefully it will go down well."

**On... her own rise to success**  
"There are moments when I go, 'Oh my God, when are they

gonna sack me?' But no, it's great, and I feel really lucky that I get to do these kinds of shows. I'm quite conscious to do things that I feel passionate about, and that's for selfish reasons, but also my face doesn't lie. But even with *The One Show* and *Radio 2*, it's just been so lovely and I'm having a ball."

**On... being a new mother**  
"[Ruby] will be one next month and it's bonkers, it's life-changing, it's exhausting, it's overwhelming and it's magical. So quite a heady mix. I mean everyone talks about getting the balance right, so I don't know if I still manage that or if it's just an endless thing that you try to do and you play around with, but she's great and she's cool and she's got a filthy little laugh."

**On... the changing role of women in TV**  
"It's only when a change starts that you realise just how unbalanced it was, so it's brilliant that that's being addressed and that it's changing. When you look across TV, a lot of the bigger shows are fronted by women now; and radio, with Zoe and Sara [on *Radio 2*]. Now the next thing that needs to happen is for a woman to have a big, fat, prime-time chat show, because that's the one thing that is missing."

● **Your Home Made Perfect begins on BBC2 tonight at 8pm.**