

08.2019

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

A woman in a brown patterned sarong and a yellow shawl carries a young child on her back. They are wading through shallow, choppy water, with splashing water visible in the foreground. The background shows a calm sea under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The entire scene is framed by a bright yellow border.

▶ **A WORLD ON THE MOVE**

Seas rise, crops wither, wars erupt.
Humankind seeks shelter in another place.

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Rohingya refugees fleeing Myanmar by boat often brave rough seas to reach the southern tip of Bangladesh. Some 20 feet from shore, a woman with a baby jumped from the boat and waded the rest of the way.

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Building Bugs With Blooms

An artist uses natural materials he finds in his yard and among florists' discards to make lively—and lifelike—portraits of insects.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RAKU INOUE

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THE BIG IDEA

We Are All Migrants

Through time and space, humans are a migratory species.

BY MOHSIN HAMID

PLANET OR PLASTIC?

Reducing Plastic Waste From Food Containers

Designers and engineers are developing new food packaging materials.

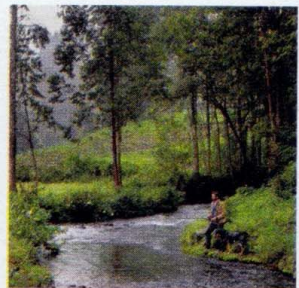
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DECODER

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Walking With Migrants

The author falls in step with people driven by circumstance “to leave a familiar world.”

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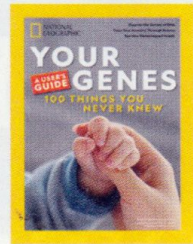
As warming shrinks wolverines’ territory, the fierce carnivores battle new threats.

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After 60 years in exile, he’s still hopeful. But his people worry: How will life be without him?

BY ANN CURRY
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ON NEWSSTANDS

A Guide to Your Genetic Mysteries

Explore advances in DNA analysis, and learn about your genetic legacy. National Geographic's *Your Genes, A User's Guide: 100 Things You Never Knew About Human Genetics* is available now on newsstands.

BOOKS

Chicken and Your Health, in Plucked

Now in paperback, this provocative narrative by investigative journalist Maryn McKenna reveals the surprising ways that antibiotic use has changed America's favorite meat. *Plucked* is available where books are sold and at shopng.com/books.

NAT GEO WILD

Enter the Kingdom of the White Wolf

Photographer Ronan Donovan travels to rugged Ellesmere Island in the high Arctic to track and observe a legendary animal. The three-hour special, *Kingdom of the White Wolf*, airs on August 25 starting at 9/8c on Nat Geo WILD.

NAT
GEO
TV

Take *Uncharted* Food Treks With Chef Gordon Ramsay

In the new series *Gordon Ramsay: Uncharted*, one of television's best known chefs leads viewers on anthropology-through-cuisine expeditions. Each episode follows Ramsay as he meets with indigenous peoples and local food legends to explore cultures, customs, and flavors from around the world, including Peru (above), New Zealand, and Morocco. See Ramsay serve up a taste of adventure when the series debuts at 10/9c on July 21 on National Geographic.

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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC (ISSN 0027-9358) PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PARTNERS, LLC, 1145 17TH ST. NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20036. \$39 PER YEAR FOR U.S. DELIVERY, \$44.00 TO CANADA, \$51.00 TO INTERNATIONAL ADDRESSES. SINGLE ISSUE: \$7.00 U.S. DELIVERY, \$10.00 CANADA, \$15.00 INTERNATIONAL. (ALL PRICES IN U.S. FUNDS; INCLUDES SHIPPING AND HANDLING.) PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT WASHINGTON, DC, AND ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, PO BOX 37545, BOONE, IA 50037. IN CANADA, AGREEMENT NUMBER 1000010298. RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ADDRESSES TO NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, PO BOX 819 STN MAIN, MARKHAM, ONTARIO L3P 9Z9. UNITED KINGDOM NEWSSTAND PRICE £6.99. REPR. EN FRANCE: EMD FRANCE SA, BP 1029, 59011 LILLE CEDEX; TEL. 320.300.302; CPPAP 0720U89037; DIRECTEUR PUBLICATION: D. TASSINARI. DIR. RESP. ITALY: RAPP IMD SRL, VIA G. DA VE-LATE 11, 20162 MILANO; AUT. TRIB. MI 258 26/5/84 POSTE ITALIANE SPA; SPED. ABB. POST. DL 353/2003 (CONV. L.27/02/2004 N.46) ART 1 C. 1 DCB MILANO STAMPA. QUAD/GRAPHICS, MARTINSBURG, WV 25401. SUBSCRIBERS: IF THE POSTAL SERVICE ALERTS US THAT YOUR MAGAZINE IS UNDELIVERABLE, WE HAVE NO FURTHER OBLIGATION UNLESS WE RECEIVE A CORRECTED ADDRESS WITHIN TWO YEARS.

WALKING WITH MIGRANTS

TRACING HUMANKIND'S JOURNEY
FROM AFRICA, PAUL SALOPEK IS CHRONICLING
A STORY FOR THE AGES:
THE MASS MIGRATIONS IN WHICH
MILLIONS OF PEOPLE ARE SEARCHING
FOR A BETTER PLACE.



BY PAUL SALOPEK
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN STANMEYER

WALKING WITH



F

FOR NEARLY SEVEN YEARS I have been walking with migrants. ¶ In the winter of 2013 I set out from an ancient *Homo sapiens* fossil site called Herto Bouri, in the north of Ethiopia, and began retracing, on foot, the defining journey of humankind: our first colonization of the Earth during the Stone Age. ¶ My long walk is about storytelling. I report what I see at boot level along the pathways of our original discovery of the planet. From the start, I knew my route would be vague. Anthropologists suggest that our species first stepped out of Africa 600 centuries ago and eventually wandered, more or less aimlessly, to the tip of South America—the last unknown edge of the continents and my own journey’s finish line. We were roving hunters and foragers. We lacked writing, the wheel, domesticated animals, and agriculture. Advancing along empty beaches, we sampled shellfish. We took our bearings off the rippling arrows of migrating cranes. Destinations had yet to be invented. I have trailed these forgotten adventurers for more than 10,000 miles so far.

DJIBOUTI 2013

Search for a signal

Migrants in the Horn of Africa gather in darkness on Djibouti city’s Khorley Beach. Using black-market data cards for their phones, they hope to capture a cell signal from neighboring Somalia to keep in touch with loved ones they’ve left behind.





Today I am traversing India.

Our modern lives, housebound as they are, have changed almost beyond recognition since that golden age of footloose exploration.


Or have they?

The United Nations estimates that more than a billion people—one in seven humans alive today—are voting with their feet, migrating within their countries or across international borders. Millions are fleeing violence: war, persecution, criminality, political chaos. Many more, suffocated by poverty, are seeking economic relief beyond their horizons. The roots

of this colossal new exodus include a globalized market system that tears apart social safety nets, a pollutant-warped climate, and human yearnings supercharged by instant media. In sheer numbers, this is the largest diaspora in the long history of our species.

I pace off the world at 15 miles a day. I mingle often among the uprooted.

In Djibouti I have sipped chai with migrants in bleak truck stops. I have slept alongside them in dusty UN refugee tents in Jordan. I have accepted their stories of pain. I have repaid their laughter. I am not one of them, of course: I am a privileged walker. I carry inside my rucksack an ATM card and a passport. But I have shared the misery of dysentery with

 The nonprofit National Geographic Society, working to conserve Earth's resources, helped fund this article.



JORDAN 2013

Escaping civil war

Refugees who fled their homes in Syria when fighting started in 2011 travel around Jordan to find work wherever they can—here picking tomatoes in Gowera village, just north of Aqaba.



them and have been detained many times by their nemesis—police. (Eritrea, Sudan, Iran, and Turkmenistan have denied me visas; Pakistan ejected me, then allowed me back in.)

What can be said about these exiled brothers and sisters? About the immense shadowlands they inhabit, paradoxically, in plain sight?

Hunger, ambition, fear, political defiance—the reasons for movement are not truly the

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question. More important is knowing how the journey itself shapes a different class of human being: people whose ideas of “home” now incorporate an open road—a vast and risky tangent of possibility that begins somewhere far away and ends at your doorsill. How you accept this tiding, with open arms or crouched behind high walls, isn’t at issue either. Because however you react, with compassion or fear, humankind’s reawakened mobility has changed you already.

THE FIRST MIGRANTS I encountered were dead. They lay under small piles of stones in the Great Rift Valley of Africa.

Who were these unfortunates?

It was difficult to know. The world’s poorest people travel from many distant lands to perish in the Afar Triangle of Ethiopia, one of the hottest deserts on Earth. They walk into these terrible barrens in order to reach the Gulf of Aden. There the sea is the doorway to a new (though not always better) life beyond Africa: slave-wage jobs in the cities and date plantations of the Arabian Peninsula. Some of the migrants’ graves doubtless contained Somalis: war refugees. Others likely held deserters from Eritrea. Or drought-weakened Oromos from Ethiopia. All had hoped to sneak across the unmarked borders of Djibouti. They became lost. They collapsed under a molten sun. Sometimes they dropped from thirst within sight of the sea. The columns of exhausted travelers walking behind hastily buried the bodies.

How long have we been depositing our bones like this on the desolate trails of the African Horn? For a long time. From the very beginning. After all, this is the same corridor used by the first modern humans to exit Africa during the Pleistocene.

One day I stumbled across a group of scarecrows hiding in the scant shade of some boulders—15 lean Ethiopian men who seemed to pretend that if they didn’t move a muscle, they would be invisible. Some were manual laborers. Most were farmers from the Ethiopian highlands. The annual rains, the farmers said, had become impossibly erratic. Sticking it out on their sun-cracked fields meant slow starvation. Better to chance the ocean of white light that is the Afar Triangle, even if you never returned. They were pioneers of sorts, new climate change refugees.

A recent World Bank study calculates that by 2050 more than 140 million people in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America could be tumbled into motion by the catastrophic effects of climate change. Ten million climate refugees could swell the trails of East Africa alone. In Ethiopia the tide may reach 1.5 million people—more than 15 times the emigrants now straggling annually through the Afar Triangle to reach the Middle East.

Inching north up the Rift, I was forced to consider the urge to leave a familiar world that was falling apart, a home where the sky itself was against you. All around me snaked the invisible battle lines of an intensifying range war between the Afar and Issa pastoralists—two competing herder groups whose shallow wells were drying up, whose pastures were thinning from a relentless cycle of droughts. They shot at each other over the ownership of a papery blade of grass, over a cup of sandy water. In other words, over survival. Here was the source of our oldest travel story. Drastic climate change and murderous famines, experts say, likely helped drive the first pulses of humans out of Africa.

How strong is the push to leave? To abandon what you love? To walk into the unknown with all your possessions stuffed into a pocket? It is more powerful than fear of death.

In the Afar Triangle I stumbled across seven unburied bodies. They were women and men clustered together. *(Continued on page 60)*

AMONG THE UPROOTED

Since starting his trek out of Africa in 2013, Paul Salopek has traversed 16 countries (shown below), all marked by large-scale movements of people. Millions of them are international migrants, traveling from one country to another, mostly to find work and improve their lives. Many others, though, are refugees, forced to leave homelands ravaged by war or environmental disaster.

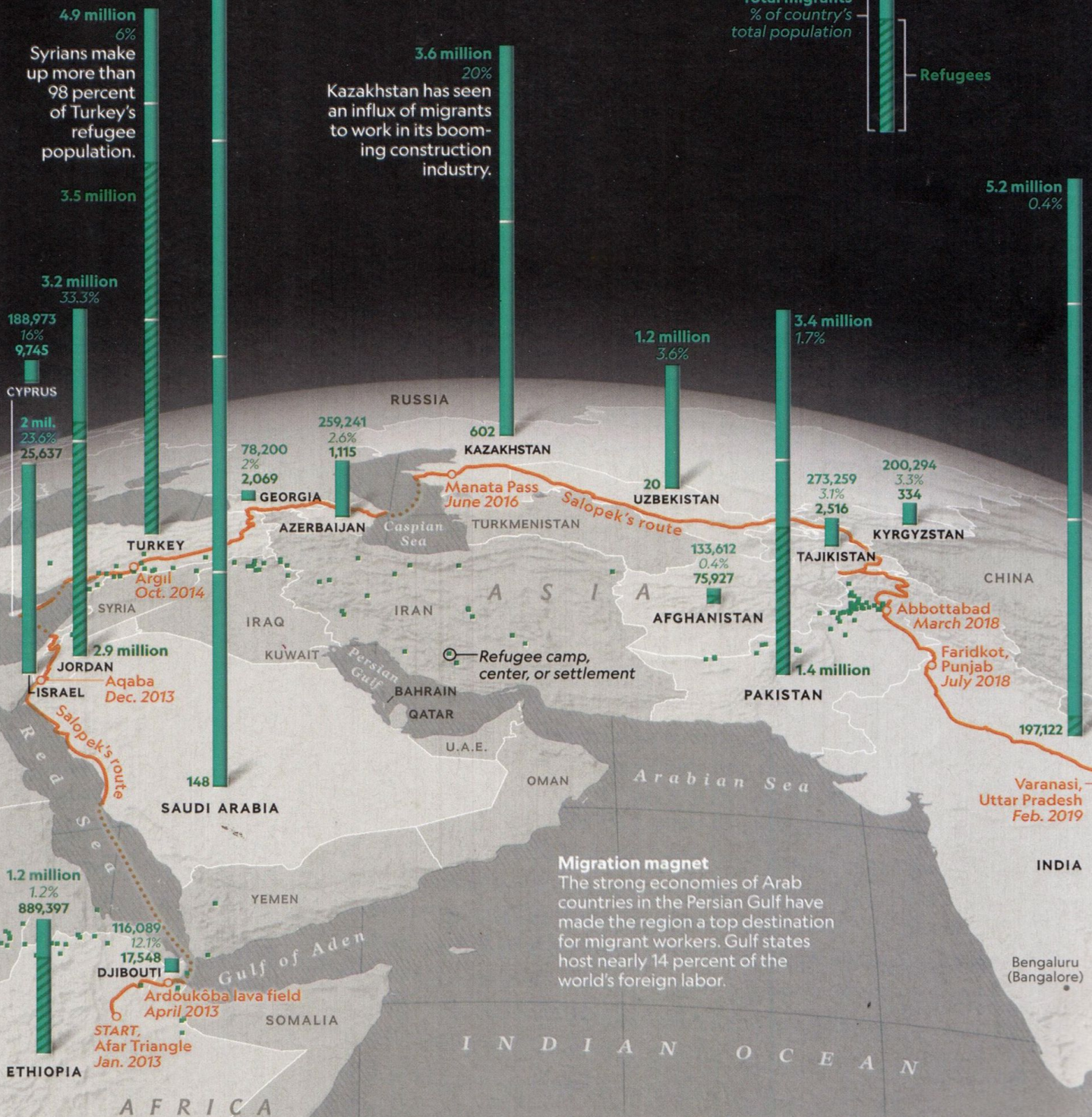
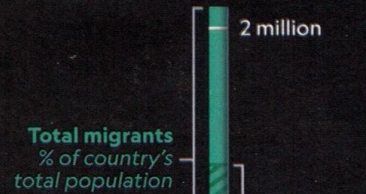
Saudi Arabia
12.2 million
37%

Saudi Arabia doesn't accept refugees, but migrant workers drawn to domestic service and construction jobs make up nearly 40 percent of the population.

Avoiding catastrophe

War has driven millions from their homes into neighboring countries. Syrians have fled to Turkey and Jordan, Afghans to Pakistan and Iran, and South Sudanese and others to Ethiopia.

Number of migrants, 2017



Migration magnet

The strong economies of Arab countries in the Persian Gulf have made the region a top destination for migrant workers. Gulf states host nearly 14 percent of the world's foreign labor.