



THE

T

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Peace Emerge	4
Education	5
The Otago	6 - 7
Mitigation	8
Enabling Infrastructure	9
Creating Virtuous Circle	10

INTRODUCTION

The COP26 summit in Glasgow saw world leaders come together to battle the global environment crisis. They agreed plans aiming to reduce the planet's warming to 1.5 degrees, cut carbon emissions to net zero by 2050, adapt to save and restore ecosystems, and secure the finance to do it.

Despite disagreement, progress was made. Significantly, there is now a common understanding of the interconnected nature of climate change and biodiversity. But a key issue that is still missing is the understanding of how they relate to a third global emergency: conflict.

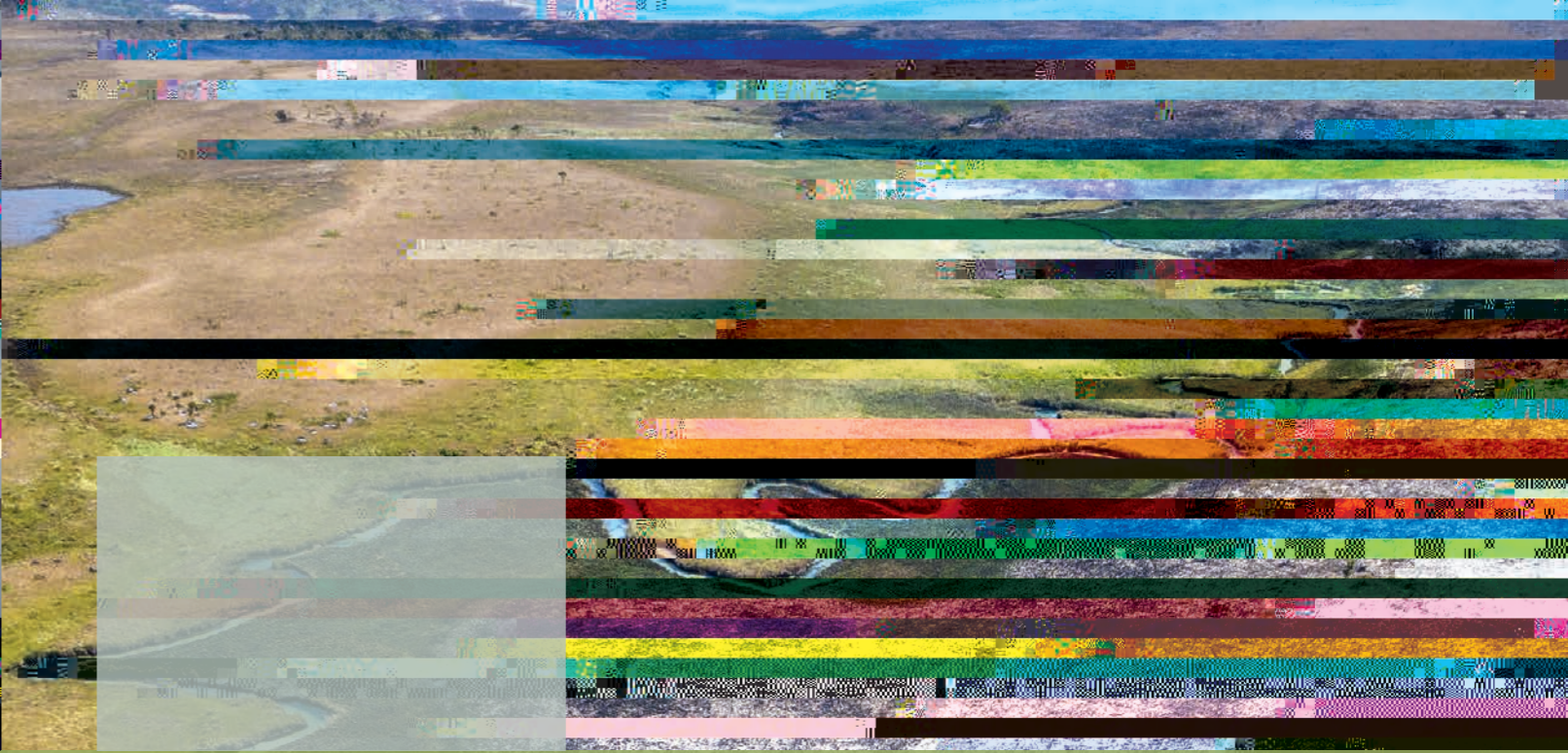
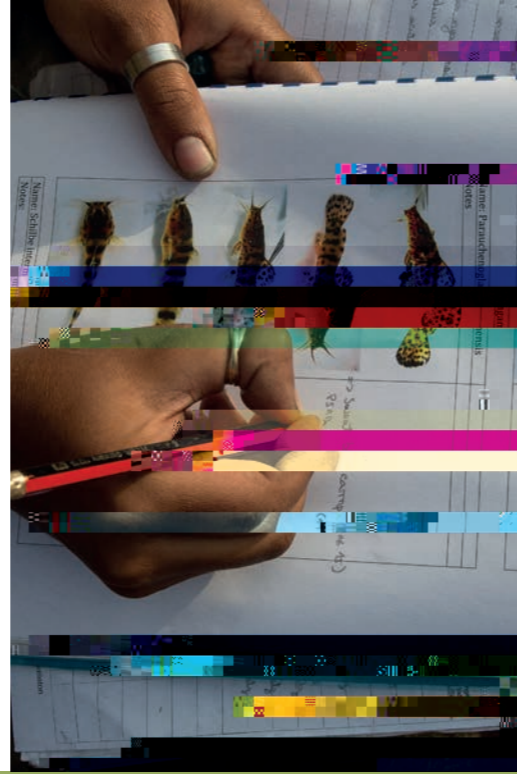
Despite COVID lockdowns, grounded aeroplanes and UN Secretary General Guterres's call for a global ceasefire, conflict, climate change and the irreversible loss of our planet's biodiversity all continued unabated during the pandemic.

"14 of the 25 countries most vulnerable to climate change are in conflict"

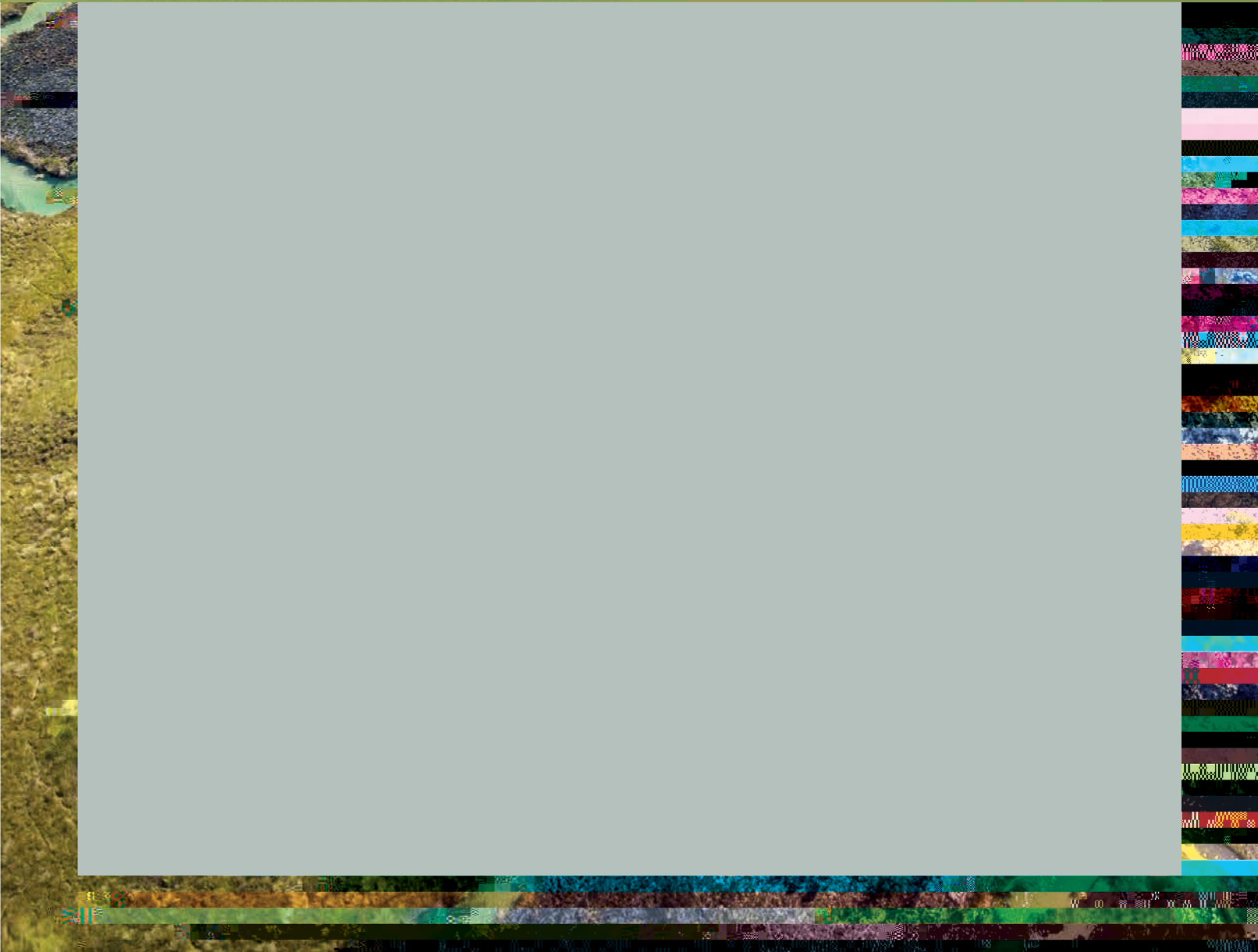
Resource scarcity has long been recognised as a threat multiplier of conflict and fragility. In all, 40 per cent of internal armed conflicts in the last 60 years have been related to natural resources. That is set to increase as the impacts of climate change are seen in water scarcity, desertification, population movements and food insecurity.

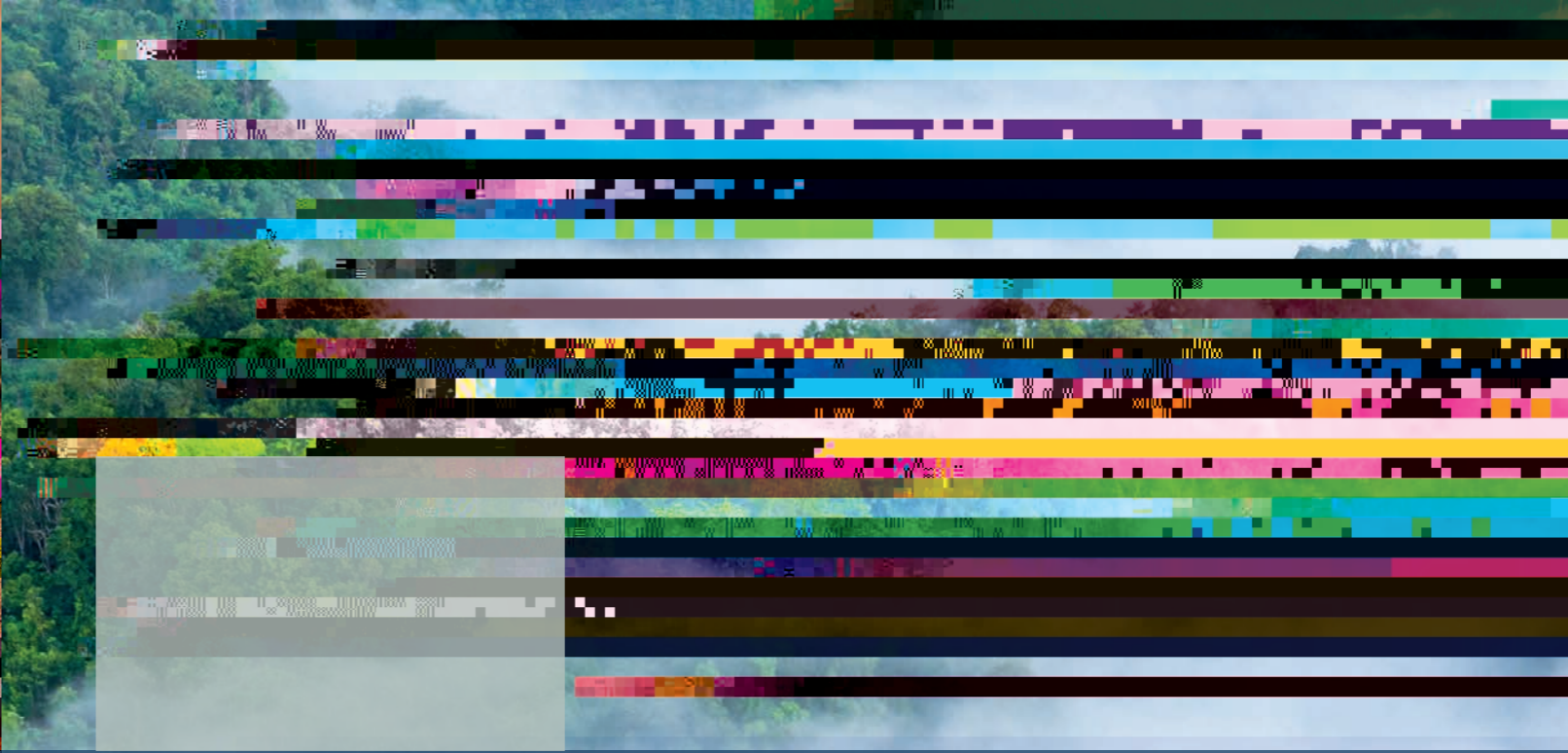
Meanwhile, the cost of conflict is also felt through its environmental impact. As many as 80 per cent of all major armed conflicts in the second half of the 20th Century took place directly in biodiversity hotspots that sustain around





THE OKAVANGO





MOUNTING PRESSURES

Over the next thirty years, the global population is projected to reach ten billion, with 80 per cent of the world's population living in countries ranking in the bottom half of the Global Peace Index.¹⁵ Meanwhile, 12 of the 20 countries which, according to the ND-GAIN Country Index, are the most vulnerable and least ready to adapt to climate change are also sites of armed conflict.

Candlelight

In Somaliland, an autonomous region of Somalia, trees have been cut for firewood on an unprecedented scale, accelerating soil loss and land degradation. The system of managed reserves of range-land for animals to graze in times of drought has collapsed, leaving families vulnerable to climatic shocks.

HALO is working with Candlelight, a local environmental NGO, to train local people on proven climate risk mitigation techniques on land HALO has cleared of landmines. This includes digging soil bunds to catch rainwater to allow for the re-greening of cleared land and reseeded the safe land with native grasses to reduce soil degradation.

Candlelight also works with communities to establish school and community tree nurseries and trains women in beekeeping and honey production.

EQUATORIAL RAINFORESTS

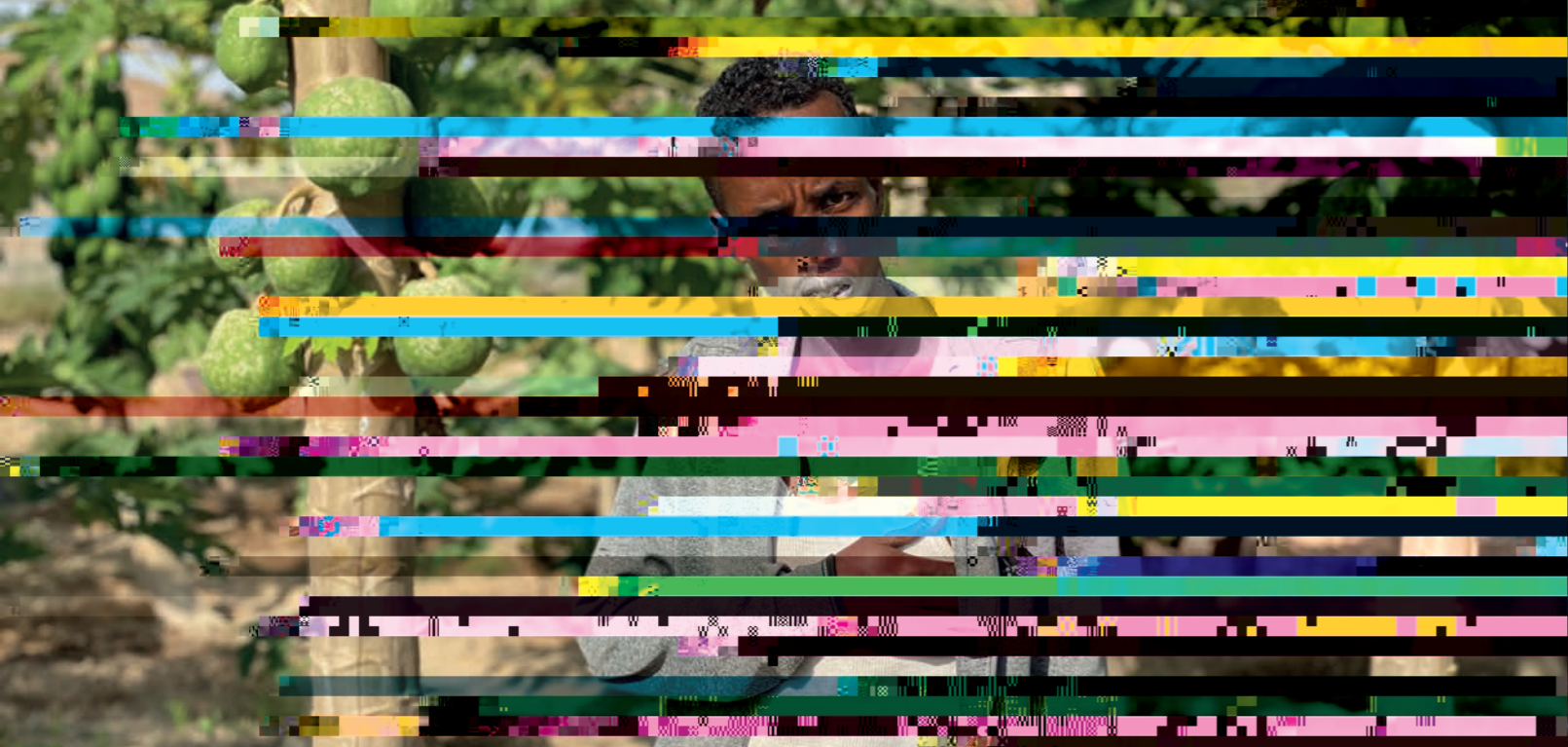
Tropical forests have the highest carbon density of all forest types due to their capacity for vast carbon sequestration. Deforestation releases as much carbon into the atmosphere as the global transport sector, contributing to more than 12 per cent of all CO₂ emissions and destroys the best carbon capture and storage technology we have. There is a significant overlap between deforestation and countries that are fragile, in conflict, or recovering from war.

Keeping rainforest standing is an immediate action that provides a simple solution to reduce carbon emissions. It provides safe, long-term carbon storage, while also providing an invaluable source of water, oxygen, medicinal plants, biodiversity and culture for the planet. Therefore, protecting rainforest is one of the most effective and economical actions we can take to tackle climate breakdown.

Research shows that rainforest lands held by indigenous peoples and local communities are healthier, store more carbon and have higher levels of biodiversity. But these communities live in a dynamic environment increasingly experiencing social inequality, economic, political marginalisation and environmental threats to themselves and their forested lands. They are also disproportionately affected by climate change.

Cool Earth's mission is to radically reduce the contribution rainforest destruction makes to the climate crisis. Our work with rainforest communities isn't dictated by us but led by people that live there: village leaders, local organisations and indigenous led NGOs.

Providing support and cash directly to people that have lived in rainforests for generations gives choice and greater opportunity for those people to survive and thrive. In this way, working with people allows them to stay living in their forested lands, maintain their relationship with the forest, and contribute to conserving rainforests and their role as a critical carbon sink.



CREATING VIRTUOUS CIRCLES

When it comes to climate change, people usually think of CO₂ and melting ice caps. Meanwhile, conflict is typically associated with destruction, displacement and human suffering. But the planetary emergency affects us all, and 20 per cent of the planet's countries are in conflict. We can no longer view conflict and the planetary emergency as separate threats with separate policy responses. Bold leadership is needed in four areas:

New Economics: Conventional economics frames approaches to climate, conservation or conflict as a financial cost. This negative narrative around financial burden ignores the fact that the cost of the status quo is greater. Cost needs to be considered not just as fiscal expenditure, but in terms of social and environmental return and the opportunity cost of inaction.

Cultural Change: Large swathes of the extractive energy sector have embraced adaptation, recognising their own existential crisis as well as the planet's. Leaders and policy makers must embrace a similar transformation culture. Economic models and foreign policy can no longer be based on exponential growth, but must instead be framed through investment in, and return on, sustainable value creation. This means embracing and promoting sustainable finance models that respect our planetary boundaries.

Strategy: Government policy makers must achieve greater levels of integration in their response to interconnected global crises. All international capability must be combined, from development partnerships to defence, diplomacy, trade, engaging the private sector and incentivising change in capital markets to promote sustainability.

Policy: Conflict response must ensure it doesn't exacerbate the planetary emergency. Environment response must also prioritise areas that are at higher risk of violence and conflict. And states need to breakdown age-old silos between development aid, trade and the private sector, embracing more equitable, sustainable and shared partnerships.

When it comes to addressing conflict and the planetary crisis, the cost of inaction is far greater than the cost of action. There is, literally, everything to lose.

Image credit

Pg.2 - Elephant - Kyle Gordon: National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project | www.natgeo.org/okavango
Pg.6 - Elephant bones - Chris Boyes: National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project | www.natgeo.org/okavango
Pg.6 - Notebook - James Kydd: National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project | www.natgeo.org/okavango

