



Wildlife of the World Newsletter

April 2026



Boomslang eating a frog in Queen Elizabeth National Park

Hi ,

I hope you're well. The weather's starting to warm up here in Wales after a long cold winter. Flowers are opening, butterflies emerging and birds nesting ... my favourite time of year!

And talking of warm weather, I've now sorted through the photos from my visit to the tropical savanna of Queen Elizabeth National Park in Uganda. It's a superb reserve teeming with wildlife, and I managed to photograph twenty species of mammal including lions, leopard, hyena, hippos, elephants and mongooses as well as dozens of different birds.

You might have noticed though that the theme of this edition is reptiles and my favourite animal from the whole trip was the beautiful boomslang snake above. As you can see, it had just caught a large frog

which looked much too big to swallow... but it did eventually manage, and [you can see how in this video](#). There's also a full report on my visit to the National Park with photos and videos [which you can see here](#).

For this month's featured site I've chosen another National Park where many of the photos in my latest book were taken, Yanbaru on the Japanese island of Okinawa...

Wildlife-watching Sites

Yanbaru National Park, Okinawa, Japan

About as different as you could possibly get from the Shiritoko Peninsula I featured last month, Yanbaru consists of dense tropical rainforest on the southern island of Okinawa.

Most famous for the American air base and fighting that took place there during the Second World War, Okinawa is actually a very special place for wildlife... with an impressive range of insects, amphibians, reptiles and birds. Many species like the extremely rare Okinawa Rail and Okinawa Woodpecker are found nowhere else in the world.



Ryukyu Japalure eating a caterpillar

Again though, my favourites were a couple of reptiles, named after the Ryukyu island chain Okinawa belongs to... the cute Ryukyu Leaf Turtle below and Ryukyu Japalure lizard above.

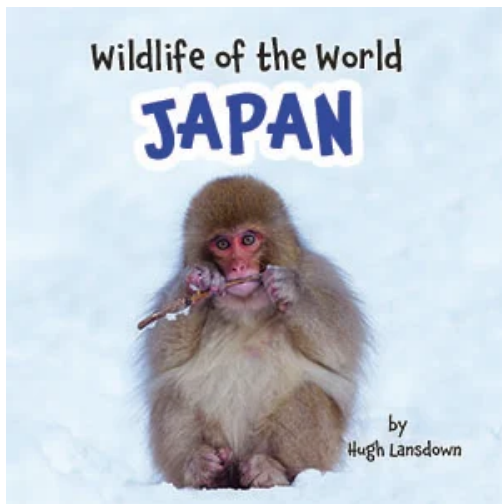
I spotted the lizard resting on a tree trunk while I was exploring the forest and started to slowly edge towards it, trying to get close enough for a good photo. Suddenly, it ran down the tree, leapt onto the ground between my feet and grabbed a huge caterpillar I hadn't even noticed was there. It then ran back up the tree to calmly consume it's prey... giving me a great opportunity for a much better photo!

I'd definitely recommend trying to visit Yanbaru if you get the chance. There are lots of flights to Okinawa, where you can easily hire a car, drive a couple of hours north to the National Park, and encounter a whole host of animals you'll never see anywhere else in the world.



Ryukyu Leaf Turtle (Geoemyda japonica)

Events and Books



The fifth book in the series, 'Wildlife of the World - Japan' has finally been published, much later than I'd intended... but better late than never!

You can see [details and some sample pages here](#) and I also have a few free review copies. Reply to this email if you're interested in receiving one.

I'll be heading out into some of the beautiful nature reserves we have here in Wales over the next few weeks, so hopefully I'll have some photos to share next month.

I should also have organised the photos from the final stage of my Uganda trip by then, including a memorable encounter with a family of gorillas! Until then...

Best Wishes

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