



BY CHRISTOPHER EARLE

*A*though much of her work has been in Africa, Alessandra Soresina's wildlife photography captures the character and personality of wildlife worldwide. Her animal portraits capture the color and wonder of species that range from lions and elephants to amphibians and birds. Her portrait of a young elephant and its mother shows the strong bond between a mother and her offspring. Another photograph of a lioness hunting a young zebra captures the

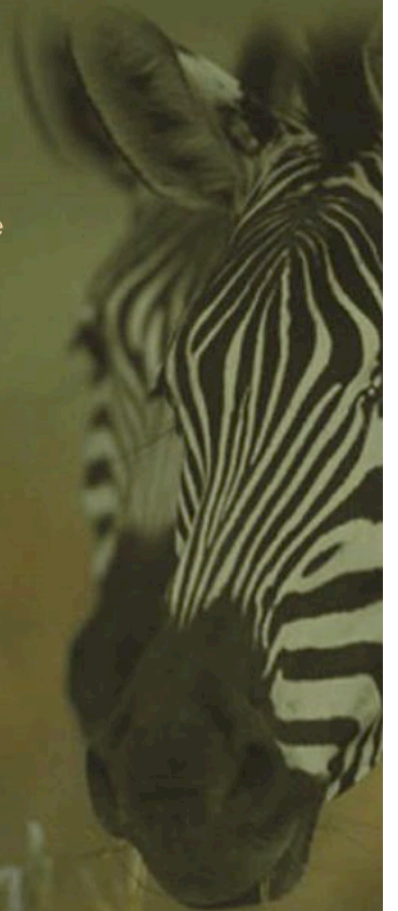
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incredible power of the predator and shows the incredible balance of the natural systems of predators and prey.

Ms. Soresina has spent her life and career studying, being a photographer, and writing about wildlife in Africa. Her passion for zoology, animal conservation, and natural systems resulted in her pursuing a graduate degree in Zoology at the Università Degli Studi di Milano, where she wrote her thesis on Space Utilization and Reproductive Strategies of the Male Fallow Deer.

Her early field work as a wildlife biologist and researcher on the



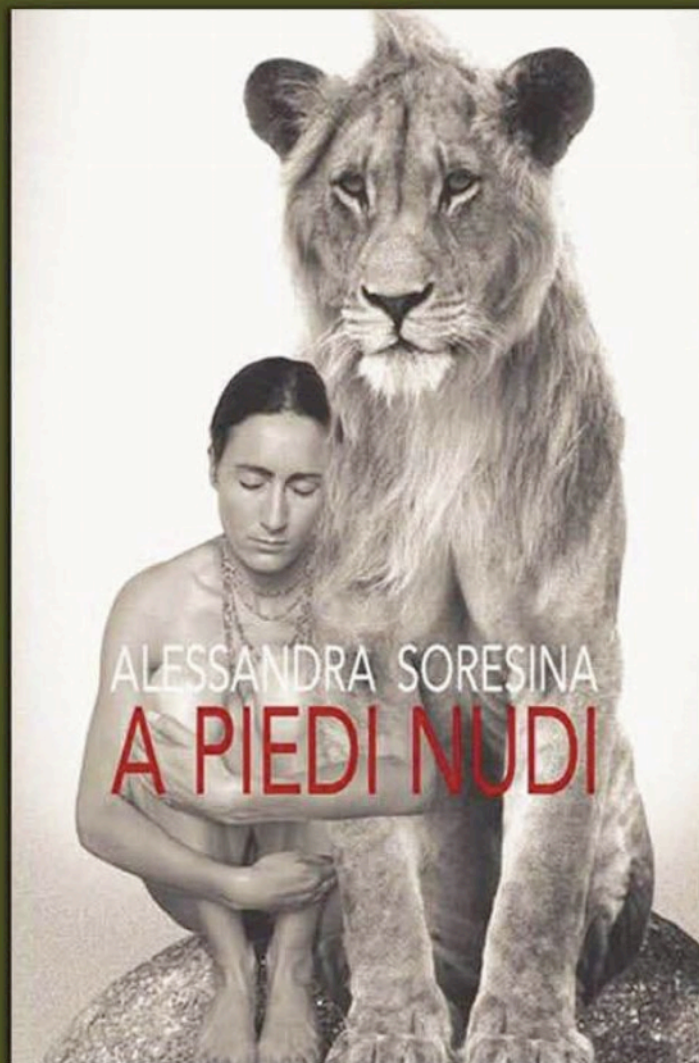
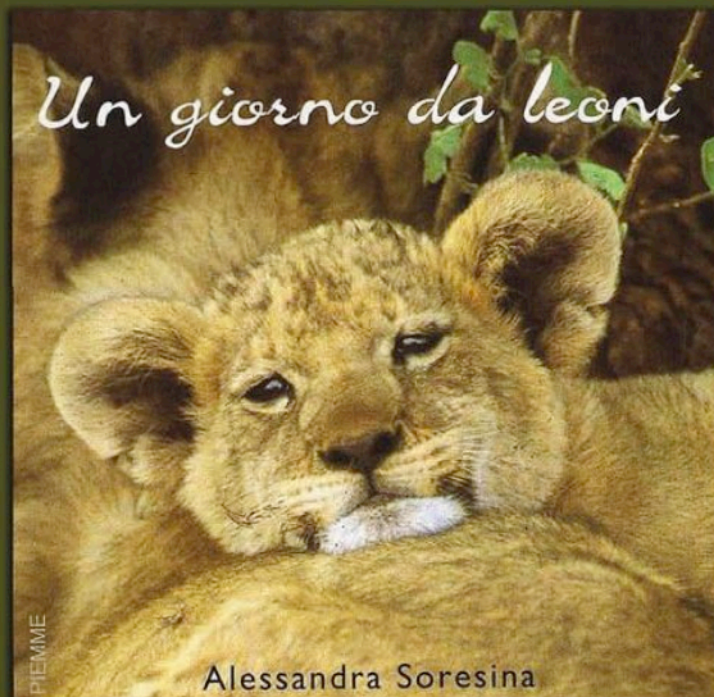
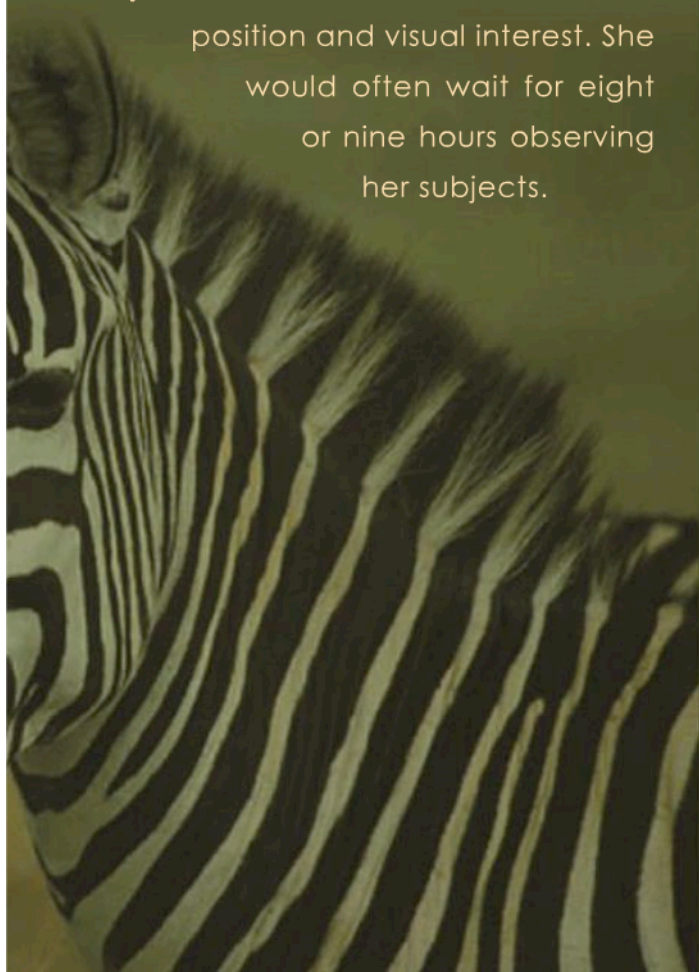
Alessandra Soresina

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Tarangire Lion Project in Tanzania, required seven to eight months of living and working in the bush. During her surveys, she began working with photographic identification techniques to help maintain an accurate count and accurate tracking of lion behavior and movement. This scientific start in photography ignited a passion for capturing the character of animals on film.

Ms. Soresina's photography draws on her intimate understanding of animal subjects and her innate sense of composition and visual interest. She would often wait for eight or nine hours observing her subjects.



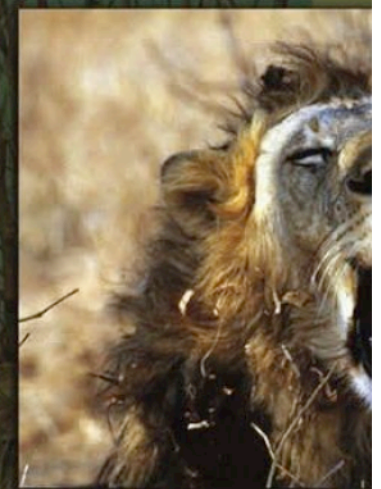
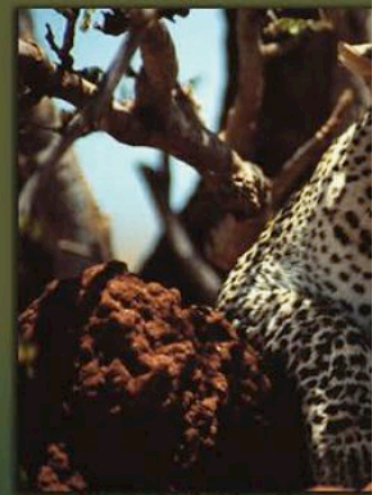
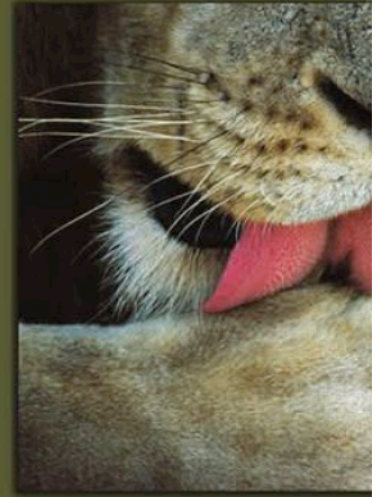


Her patience, perseverance, and understanding of animal behavior create incredibly compelling photographs. The natural, relaxed state of the animals makes it seem as if she is not present behind the camera.

In addition to being a recognized expert in the field of zoology, she has been recognized for her photographic excellence and has published both fiction and non-fiction books. She has exhibited her photographs in both Africa and Italy. She was a finalist in the Shell Wildlife Photography competition in both 2006 and

2007. Her novel, *A piedi nudi*, received honors in the Edoardo Kihlgren Opera Prima. Her book of photographs, *Un giorno da leoni*, is a visual exploration that considers what humans can learn from lion society. Her novel, *A piedi nudi*, is an exploration of her love of lions and her love of Africa and considers the effects of bureaucratic inefficiency and a lack of funding for wildlife conservation.

In her many years in Africa, Ms. Soresina has seen a decline in wildlife populations because of poaching, mismanagement, and habitat destruction. Financial interests of governments and private hunting companies have made scientific management of wildlife populations difficult. Hunting quotas often are not adjusted for differing habitat requirements and have resulted in over-hunting in some areas and habitat destruction from overpopulation in others. In some cases, monitored



wildlife preserves have been placed, according to human convenience rather than natural migration patterns. In one case, wildebeests spend seven months of the year in a wildlife preserve, only to move into unprotected areas for five months of the year. However, she is very quick to appreciate the protection that the wildlife areas offer the biological wealth of Africa. Without the preserves, the problem of wildlife decline would be much worse.

Ms. Soresina sees well managed hunting as a potential benefit to wildlife levels. In some cases, overpopulation of a particular species can cause irreparable damage to the animals' habitat. Through managed hunting, populations can maintain healthy levels that don't cause permanent habitat damage that can result in the disappearance of a species in a particular area.

No conservation effort, according to her, can be successful unless it works very closely with local communities. Conservation efforts must work to build economies and lessen the draw to poaching. Without economic opportunities, the probability of poaching as a livelihood, or hunting endangered species to fill basic food needs increase. Most current wildlife protection and preservation efforts are now tied closely to economic development plans that help lower the economic tension between people and wildlife. Ensuring that people living with the animals have a healthy, viable economy, helps reduce economic factors in both habitat and animal destruction.

Although Alessandra Soresina's initial project studying lions was eventually taken over by the University of Minnesota, she continues her work through writing, photography exhibitions, organizing wildlife photography tours, and consulting on zoology and wildlife conservation. In addition to research, writing and photography, she has collaborated with a number of television companies and producers, including the National Geographic Channel, Canale 5, LA7 and many other Italian television networks and producers. She has recently worked on snow leopard studies in Nepal and has consulted on a recent initial wildlife survey of the Machangulo Peninsula and Maputo Special Reserve in Mozambique. Links to her photographs and writing is available on her web site at www.alessandrasoresina.com.

