

Illustrated talks by wildlife author and
photographer

Michael Leach



Michael Leach has been a full-time wildlife photographer and author since 1977, he is now one of Europe's top professionals. He has travelled to some of the wildest and most remote places on Earth. His photographs have been used in more than 800 books, appearing in over 60 countries. He has filmed TV documentaries for both the BBC and Independent Television.

He is a frequent broadcaster and widely published author. Michael has written 24 books on subjects ranging from big cats and owls to great apes and bears. These books have been translated into 11 languages. His illustrated articles have been used in a long list of magazines including Country Life, the Observer, Geographical and Amateur Photographer. His photographs have been used in every major wildlife and environmental magazine in Europe and the USA.

Lectures

Michael sets aside part of each year for lectures. Giving illustrated talks has become a major part of his work, to date he has presented lectures in 11 countries. Michael has been described as 'a unique wildlife humorist' and has spoken at Arts Festivals, Theatres, Schools, Universities, Rotary Clubs and Lecture Societies. He is a recommended speaker for the RSPB and National Trust. In 1996 Michael gave his 1500th lecture, since then there have been simply too many to keep close count.

The talks are illustrated with original images taken during his expeditions. The exact length and content of each talk can be tailored to individual requirements. If desired, a question-time can be offered after the talk.

The most popular current talks:

In The Blink of an Eye. Michael's trademark photographs capture high-speed action in a way that is beyond the capabilities of human perception. In total all of the images in this talk encompass a time-span of less than 1/500th of a second and they reveal aspects of animals' lives that are invisible without the use of his unique and highly specialised technology.



Snow Monkeys. Winter in the Japanese Alps is harsh and numbingly cold. Thick snow blankets the ground for months. Yet this is home to macaques, monkeys that normally live in warmer climates. To thrive at this altitude 'snow monkeys' have developed interesting survival techniques. One is unique, they spend the coldest days chin-deep in outdoor hot-tubs. This is the story of Michael's time with one group.

Madagascar's Ghosts. Sacred to the island's people, lemurs are found in just one place – Madagascar. Once they were the most advanced mammal on Earth. There are around 86 species, some are almost unknown to science while others, like the ring-tailed lemur, are amongst the most studied of all animals. Lemurs are clever and inventive, they are also believed by the Malagasay people to embody the souls of their ancestors. This talk explores lemur behaviour and their unique habitat – a habitat threatened by accelerating climate change.

Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf? Wolves of myth are murderous and vicious or seductive and cunning - the real animals are very different but equally compelling. Michael takes us into the Great Northern Forest - the realm of the timber wolf. He explores their complex social world, subtle behaviour and powerful family bonds. They are timid, intelligent and kill only to survive. In our shared history the most violent behaviour, by far, comes from humans. This talk unravels murky and misleading legend from fact.



In the Steps of the Ice Bear. Polar bears, the super-predators of the frozen North, may vanish in our lifetime. The ice that supports them, in every sense, is becoming thinner. This talk explores the life of the giant white bears that roam the Arctic wilderness, the seals upon which they depend and their turbulent relationship with humans. We discover the ancestors of the bear, the myths that surround it and consider its specialisation for the uncompromising environment of the North.

Men of the Forest. Orang-utans are found only on the distant Indonesian islands of Borneo and Sumatra. Every day, loggers cut down more of the rainforest home that is critical to their survival. Michael followed these solitary animals into the challenging igapo forest when researching his Ape book. This is the story of the one of the world's most elusive primates and of our hunger for the palm oil that threatens their world.

It's a Funny Way to Make a Living [Part One]. Michael explains the basics of his art in this revealing and humorous introduction to the realities of professional wildlife photography. This is definitely NOT a technical talk, rather, Michael looks at the superlative highs and painful lows of the job. He explains how to coax animals into the right spot



and convince them that no human is watching. He uncovers some of the cunning, underhand tricks-of-the-trade that produce some unlikely photographs. Be prepared to have some illusions shattered!

It's a Funny Way to Make a Living [Part Two]. Further confessions of a wildlife photographer featuring advice on how to make a wild cat look more menacing and the story of working with hen harriers on a storm-swept Scottish mountain. Michael reveals how cameramen look into the secret world of underground dens and how to build a motorway in your garden shed.



Enchanted Islands. Little was known about the Galapagos Islands when Charles Darwin visited in 1835. But his discoveries there produced ideas that completely changed the way we view ourselves and the world around us. Today these iconic islands are home to some of the world's most extraordinary wildlife. Michael has visited Galapagos many times and, here, he tells their story.

Beneath the Dark Canopy. A tropical rainforest is the richest habitat on Earth. It contains more than half of all known animal species. But what exactly is a rainforest? Using his experiences in Indonesia, the Amazon Basin, West Africa and Central America, Michael explains how a forest works and shows some of the highly specialised animals that have evolved to live in this fragile and intricate environment.

The Children's Eternal Forest. *Bosque Eterno de los Ninos* is vast, one of the largest wildlife reserves in Central America. This cloud forest is home to howler monkeys, sloths, sabre-winged hummingbirds and species still undiscovered by science. It was saved by children - from around the world. They raised funds and contributed pocket money, until there was enough to buy the forest. The children rescued a hugely important habitat and gave it, for ever, to the wildlife it supports. This talk tells the story of the forest and its salvation.



The Natural History of Christmas. Every winter we stir puddings, send cards and decorate our homes for Christmas but just where do these customs come from? Michael explains the natural history of the holly and the ivy, the pre-Christian roots of hanging mistletoe and that turkeys never did come from Turkey! This illustrated talk shows how our love of Christmas trees helps conserve owls. It uncovers the true character of our favourite Christmas bird - the robin and looks at the origin of the Yule log. But, most interesting of all, it reveals how it might be that reindeer can fly.

Faces in the Mirror. Based on Michael's best-selling book, this talk looks at the great apes, our closest relatives. After living with gorillas, orang-utans, bonobos and chimpanzees in the wild, Michael tells how he got close enough to be groomed by these fascinating animals. He explores some of the apes' behaviour and shows the dangers that may destroy them before the end of this century.



Poles Apart. The worlds of the Arctic and the Antarctic become blurred in our popular culture
