

Vol. 34 - July 17, 2024

# IT'S ALL CONNECTED

Inspiring ↔ Informative ↔ Actionable  
presented by



## **"Lions and Tigers and Bears Invading Your House and Stealing Your Car, Oh My!"**

Large flying spiders and murder hornets are not headed your way and are not bent on attacking you. Such headlines are crafted to evoke strong emotional reactions, often using dramatic language to draw readers into clicking on articles, particularly in areas concerning the environment and animal welfare. These clicks drive advertising revenue. It is the business model of modern for-profit media sources to sell ads, and the proven method seems to be headlines full of hyperbole that are provocative and fear-inducing, known as click-bait.

While these headlines can raise awareness about critical issues, they often do so at the expense of accuracy and

depth, leading to misinformation and public misunderstanding. Worse yet, they can create a sense that individual actions are futile, leading to apathy rather than activism.

Take, for example, a headline using hyperbole like "Vacationers Warned: Shark-Infested Waters Ahead!" The term "infested" exaggerates the presence of sharks, implying that they are swarming in a way that is much more dangerous and common than it is. Or, "Wolf Pack Terrorizes Town." Also, highly misleading because wolves generally avoid human contact, and incidents are rare. The word "terrorizes" sensationalizes the situation.

Media using fear-mongering might write "Mountain Lion Stalks Neighborhood, Parents Keep Children Indoors!" Sightings of mountain lions in urban areas are uncommon, and these big cats typically avoid humans. The word "stalks" creates a sense of imminent danger. Similarly, a title stating "Alligator Terror Strikes Suburbs, Residents Fear for Their Pets and Children!" exaggerates the fact that alligators occasionally appear in suburban areas, but they usually do not pose a significant threat to humans. The use of "terror" inflates the actual risk.

To navigate the barrage of sensational headlines, readers can adopt several strategies:

- **Critical Thinking:** Approach headlines with a healthy dose of skepticism. Ask questions about the source of the information, the evidence supporting the claims, and the potential biases of the publication.
- **Verify with Reputable Sources:** Cross-check the information with trusted and reputable sources. Scientific journals, established news organizations, and official reports from environmental and wildlife organizations can provide more accurate and nuanced perspectives.
- **Look Beyond the Headline:** Often, the content of an article is more balanced and informative than its headline. Reading the full article can provide context and details that the headline omits.
- **Educate Yourself:** Having a solid understanding of environmental and wildlife issues can help in discerning the truth. Familiarize yourself with basic concepts in ecology, climate science, and conservation biology to better evaluate the information presented.
- **Support Quality Journalism:** Encourage and support media outlets that prioritize accurate, in-depth reporting over sensationalism. This can help shift the media landscape towards more responsible journalism.

Having an informed perspective is crucial for meaningful engagement and action in addressing the pressing challenges facing our planet and its inhabitants. Understanding for-profit incentives arms the reader with the skepticism needed to see through the bold attempts to grab our attention.

After seeing headlines of giant flying spiders invading New York, we decided to reach out to past podcast guest [Sarah Rose](#) to set the record straight. We re-released her episode about spiders with new information on the Joro spiders, which she described as a large and beautiful orb weaver that is not native to the United States, but is also not proven to be invasive. This spider is roughly the same size as our native female Argiope orb weaver and can look similar. Though almost all spiders do have venom, these do not pose a safety concern for humans. Most importantly, Ms. Rose encourages us to marvel at these wonderful creatures and not kill them. After all, they do provide a valuable and free ecosystem service of eating other insects, like the brown marmorated stink bug, which is invasive.

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## A Quote We're Pondering

*“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”*

Sage words from the Once-ler. In case you are not familiar with this quote and who the Once-ler is, this is taken from a timeless favorite Dr. Seuss story, [The Lorax](#). Published in 1971, The story conveys a powerful environmental message.

Set in the fictional town of Thneedville, the Once-ler cuts down all of the truffula trees to make a product called Thneeds. The Once-ler’s relentless pursuit of profits leads to the over-exploitation of natural resources, especially the truffula trees. The story’s central theme of resource exploitation continues to parallel the issue of deforestation and habitat loss due to excessive logging.



Thneeds, a silly, odd, and **unnecessary** clothing item, made by the Once-ler, contributed directly to the environmental degradation of Thneedville. In his pursuit of profits selling Thneeds, the Once-ler creates massive air and water pollution that causes all of the creatures to leave Thneedville. These actions resonate with today’s global worries about over consumption, industrial pollution, and climate change.

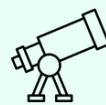
In true Dr. Seuss form, the story ends on a hopeful note. The Once-ler, a hermit alone in an empty and polluted Thneedville, relates his story to a young boy and gives him the last truffula seed to nurture and reestablish. This story serves as a timeless reminder for environmental action, individual responsibility, and collective efforts to promote sustainability and stewardship of the planet.

## Quick Connections

Books, websites, documentaries, podcasts, events, quotes, and more



[Nature’s Best Hope \(Young Reader’s Edition\)](#) by Doug Tallamy adeptly blends brevity, imagery and literary devices making it easy to understand.



These [stunning images of the night sky](#) truly entrance and serve as an excellent reminder that light pollution is an issue for everyone and everything.



Fireflies are a ubiquitous summer visitor, but are now on the decline. This article discusses easy ways to create a [healthy habitat for fireflies](#),



Attention photography enthusiasts, the Macauley library published the [best bird photos of 2024](#) and they are beautiful.

# Community Connections

We want to connect with you. I'm thinking of trees and trying to decide if I have a favorite. There is a cottonwood along Highway 395 just north of Big Pine, California which I cannot help but notice whenever I pass. It is majestic, a source of food, shelter, and much needed shade. Moreover, it is quite handsome no matter the season. **Do you have a favorite tree?**

We read each and every response and will share selected reader stories in upcoming newsletters.

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Your feedback is important. [Tell us](#) how we are doing and what you would like to see covered in future newsletters.

**Every connection counts!** Please help grow our community of everyday heroes by sharing this newsletter with a friend or colleague.

*Thank you,*

*Laura Schare, Editor*

*Michael Hawk, Founder*

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## Jumpstart Nature

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