INSPIRED BY NATURE

Celebrating Biodiversity with Haikus
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This book has been prepared to help celebrate the International Day for Biological Diversity on May 22, 2017, and this year’s theme of Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism.

Biodiversity provides the essential foundations for our very existence, livelihoods, and prosperity. It provides us with clean water, air, soil, food, medicine, and resources for jobs and growth. It underpins global tourism – one of the world’s fastest growing industries with tremendous potential for contributing to sustainable, inclusive, and equitable development. Biodiversity enriches our lives and culture with its many surprises and breathtaking wildlife, instilling in us a sense of wonder, excitement, peace, and happiness. We, of course, are a part of biodiversity, too, sharing this finite and astonishingly beautiful planet with all other species, great and small.

“The pen is mightier than the sword.” By expressing our affinity for nature through the haiku and images of this publication, we hope to contribute to broader efforts to conserve our natural gems and shared heritage.

Once in a lifetime
Let nature inspire us all
We’ll rise up and act
- Naoko Ishii
Chief Executive Officer
Global Environment Facility

It’s the web of life
Makes biodiversity
A tourism delight
- Cristiana Pašca Palmer
Executive Secretary
Convention of Biological Diversity

Showing off turquoise blue feet
Darwin in my soul
- Adriana Dinu
Executive Coordinator
UNDP Global Environmental Finance Unit

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Poetry, like literature, philosophy, music, design, and all the creative arts, is often inspired by nature – landscapes, wildlife, and the natural world we live in.

Haiku is a traditional form of Japanese poetry that also takes nature as its focus. It is based on a system of three lines and a set syllable pattern. The first and last lines of a haiku have five syllables and the middle line has seven syllables. This 5-7-5 pattern provides a simple structure around which moving images can be woven together to reflect a common respect, admiration, and love for all living things on our shared planet. This simplicity of haiku helps convey the profound beauty of the world around us.

In this book, we celebrate the diversity of life on Earth with a collection of 82 haikus, contributed by 66 friends, family and colleagues from UNDP and partners. Through this art and poetry, we renew our shared commitment to protecting and preserving the environment, and to leaving an equally diverse world for generations to come.

A Haiku is a thought often written down in one inspired moment that lingers on in the mind and imagination of the author and all who read it. Sharing such collective forms of expression and appreciation are essential to conserving our natural treasures.

We hope you enjoy these haikus – and perhaps they will inspire a new collection!

Tim Scott and Midori Paxton
Awe-struck eyes take in
Nature’s generous landscapes
I remain spellbound
- Alexandra Fischer

Flaps from frostless pane
Red breast, white ground, no other sound
Like late snow, soon gone
- Yuqiong Zhou
Sunrise, dawn chorus.
Awake. Listen to the birds
Don’t check your phone yet.
- Paul Harrison

Blue jay flairs its grace
Just swift visit at a time
How it stays surprise
- Midori Paxton

Scarlet tanager
Blood-red flash, bright green foliage
Spring migration awe
- Lucas Black
Desert Flower
Small, so beautiful
Fierce desert heat spares no living soul
Yet, there you stand. Bold

- Inela Weeks

Wind soil water air
So much life everywhere
We barely know it

- Amy Fraenkel

As the sun sets down
Lone wild bird calls upon friends
A moment to share!!

- Sofie Flensborg
Stony plains expanse
Nature providing pasture
On which all depend

- Lisa Farroway

Nochtli
Thick skinned prickly pear
Ready to take offense, but
Soft and sweet inside.

- Ciara Daniels
New Guinea
Sing sing. Kina shells
Flowers, feathers, fur adorn
Bilums draped. Wantoks.
- Penny Stock

Mud up to my knees
Lake ice melted to land edge
Spring is here up north
- Colleen Corrigan

Elephants
Gigantic beauty
Roam dusty plains, lush forests
Still they pursue me
- Phemo Karen Kgomotso
Path in the mountains
The sky and the shapes are blurred
Looking for Fuji

- Jean-Marc Sinassamy

Ice Mountain
Mighty I may seem
Heat weakens me everyday
Will I see you still?

- Annabelle Trinidad
The Red Panda
A forest clearing
High on a misty mountain
A white mask stares back
- John Farrington

Ballad of the birds
They fly free, traversing peaks
Winter migration
- Doley Tshering

These lakes clear throughout
My footsteps echo on tall walls
And secrets pass on.
- Jesse Chapman-Bruschini
Cool Andean breeze
Her traditional knowledge
With nature in tune

- Blerina Gjeka

Waking with first light
Falling asleep to clear skies
Breathing in thin air.

- Claire Jones
Hidden in the bush
Far away in Sumatra
A graceful Pitta

- Jean-Marc Sinnassamy
Scarlet Ibis
Your precious presence
Marvelous delight
Your color, your home and flight
- Maria Gabriela Pinto

Forest softly sings
Rays of light turn into gold
Vibrant life surrounds
- Mari Matsumoto
Trees growing more green
Happiness breathing fresh air
No chainsaws, but birds
- Saskia Marijnissen

Light as an idea
Magnificent spatuletail
You do not seem real
- Jean-Marc Sinnassamy

Welcome to the bees
Pollinating free of cost
As precious as gold
- Doley Tshering
MAGNIFICENT ANIMALS
Liquid gold beats down
Tawny tigress bathes herself
In puddles of light
- Erin Charles

Glowing in the night,
Tigers in Bhutan’s forests,
Roar with happiness
- Tashi Dorji

Ten seconds of stripes
Gaur, langur led me to you
Forest shaking roar
- Midori Paxton

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Snow leopard travels
Beyond political fence
The Mountain Envoys!
- Koustubh Sharma

Penetrating eyes
Ravishing, elusive ghost
Silent roar of snow
- Adriana Dinu

Grandeur of peaks
Mountain ghost, so called great cat
Complement, perfect!
- Doley Tshering
White-laced evergreens
Overlook fresh-made paw tracks
Heading out for dinner

- Tim Scott
Who will love the snails?
Slimming slowly beautiful
Come out of your shell
- Tony Whitten

Chameleon vision
One eye on what is to come
The other looks back
- Julie Larsen Maher

Coat of rust, white, black,
Feeding all, their young and old.
Teach us, wild dog.
- Jessie Mee
Harpy Eagle
Majesty in gray
In a sea of green and blue
Nothing else like you
- Edwin Chipsen

Crocodillo
No one touches me
Calm respect but sudden fear
And I touch many
- Santiago Carrizosa
Tent, sleeping, tremble
Breaking night calm, oh, it is Hippopotamus!
- Sakhile Koketso

Only steppe tulips
Singing the sad saiga song
The horns white powder
- Adriana Dinu

Hushed silence. Dry heat.
Bush breaks into life ahead.
Rhino! Take cover!
- Paul Harrison

Tent, sleeping, tremble
Breaking night calm, oh, it is Hippopotamus!
- Sakhile Koketso
Swim with the whale sharks
Kick as she glides effortless
How long will she stay?

- David Meyers

Kaikoura
Dancing in the sun
Free spirit of the waters
We laugh, enchanted.

- Mahtab Haider
Shimmering parade
Angelfish dart through corals
Voyeur’s wonderland
- Cathy Maize

In cold spring shivers
Rainbow trout does dance divine
Time stands, water freeze
- Doley Tshering

Head underwater
Fish dancing in sunshine rays
Life is colourful
- Saskia Marijnissen
Blue of unseen whale
Ocean of knowing you there
Glory in the Indian sea
- Jose Troya

Blind by destiny
Leaping in their joyous course
Indus dolphins swim
- Tehmina Akhtar

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AT RISK
A flash, here and gone,
Can you run any faster
Against extinction?

- Jamison Ervin

An empty forest
Silent trees, no sound of life
A poacher’s forest

- Hugh Paxton

Musk, valued in gold
Times four. Five snares per hectare
Seals your scent, Oh deer.

- Michael Green
Shoebill
Pre historic bird
Gazing over troubled seas
Not alone just yet
- Onno van den Heuvel
Beating hearts, beating
Wings silenced. Silence now where
Earth's green lung collapsed
- Erin Charles

Sad is the silent monkey
Plucked from its tree for profit
Nature is screaming loud
- Saskia Marijnissen

Excuse me sir, but,
To what particular end
Will you use my hands?
- Jamison Ervin
Chernobyl Wolves

Furry paws racing
Through no man’s land draped in white
Where man lives no more

- Maxim Vergeichik

Old is the tortoise
He has seen the world change fast
While people act slow

- Saskia Marijnissen

Twittering of birds
Tweeting of Bumble bees
Now bygone scenes

- Sarat Babu Gidda
Savage death, stolen horn
So that some man, somewhere, can
Muster arousal

- Jamison Ervin

Forests to ashes
Hard wood furniture, pine not
Soft leaves will return

- Terence Hay-Edie
The mighty jumbo
Denuded and depleted
Stop illegal trade
- Christine Lippai & Nik Sekhram
Fins slicing water
Fins sliced out of water
Who is the real killer?
- Tim Scott

Water planet’s soul
Humans harmed it to risk
Allow to renew
- Sarat Babu Gidda

White are the corals
Gone are the reds, greens, yellows
Awake and change now
- David Meyers
Jigsaw puzzle spots
Kilimanjaro giraffe
Declining. Protect!
- Penny Stock

Mudslide
Disaster has come
But tree roots stand long and strong
Sadly there’s just one
- Oscar Huertas
Mother Nature’s love,
With snow-capped-peaks and water,
Brings peace and happiness.

- Tashi Dorji

If you start looking,
You will always be amazed,
Life worth investment.

- Marco Arlaud

Sun on the water
And yes life renewed again
The gift of Heaven

- Martin Palmer
Nature we love it
Nature we can destroy it
Nature we will save!
- Gillian Warltier

Planet out of synch
Forests and Oceans restore
Sustainable future
- Sarah Sekhran
Community springs
Harmony with nature
Win win for all

- Yoko Watanabe
I love the Earth
Grass, reeds, bushes are gorgeous
I love my planet

- Kylie Stuart, 10 years old
Love is in the air  
As beautiful leaves move  
I love it so much

- Valeria Garcia, 10 years old

Pretty white flowers  
Growing on the light green grass  
A delicious smell

- Amanda Da Re, 10 years old

Majestueux tigres  
Nés féroces et magnifiques  
Toujours camouflés

- Lou-Anh Sinnassamy, 10 years old
Oh! Pink, blue, yellow
The colors of the nature,
Grass, lilacs, jasmine.
- Daphne Lapierre, 9 years old

In the forest breeze
It smells like spring here
Wind swishing over top
- Ellie Stevens, 10 years old

Trees are amazing
Colours are in different leaves
Thoughts are in nature
- Alexandra Russoniello, 9 years old