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Secrets of the King Cobra

眼鏡王蛇的秘密



Above: A king cobra stretched out on a surgical table being prepared before the procedure.

Right: Close up of a hooded king cobra.

Right below: A king cobra being inserted with an implant.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL

上圖：一條眼鏡王蛇被拉直放在手術台上，準備接受手術。
右圖：眼鏡王蛇頸部皮褶撐大的特寫。

右下圖：一條眼鏡王蛇正在接受植入手術。 照片由國家地理頻道提供

He is the king of serpents: unblinking, **hypnotic**, deadly and hungry for his own kind. Towering over a wild, yet vulnerable kingdom, the king cobra, the largest venomous snake in the world, is powerful enough to kill a full-grown elephant, yet we know almost nothing about it. But that's about to change. Two king cobras, each surgically implanted with tracking devices, are leading researchers deep into the jungle and into a mysterious world of snake-on-snake violence, **cannibalism** and surprising tenderness. Follow these pioneering serpents into their quickly disappearing realms, revealing secret lives no human has ever seen before.

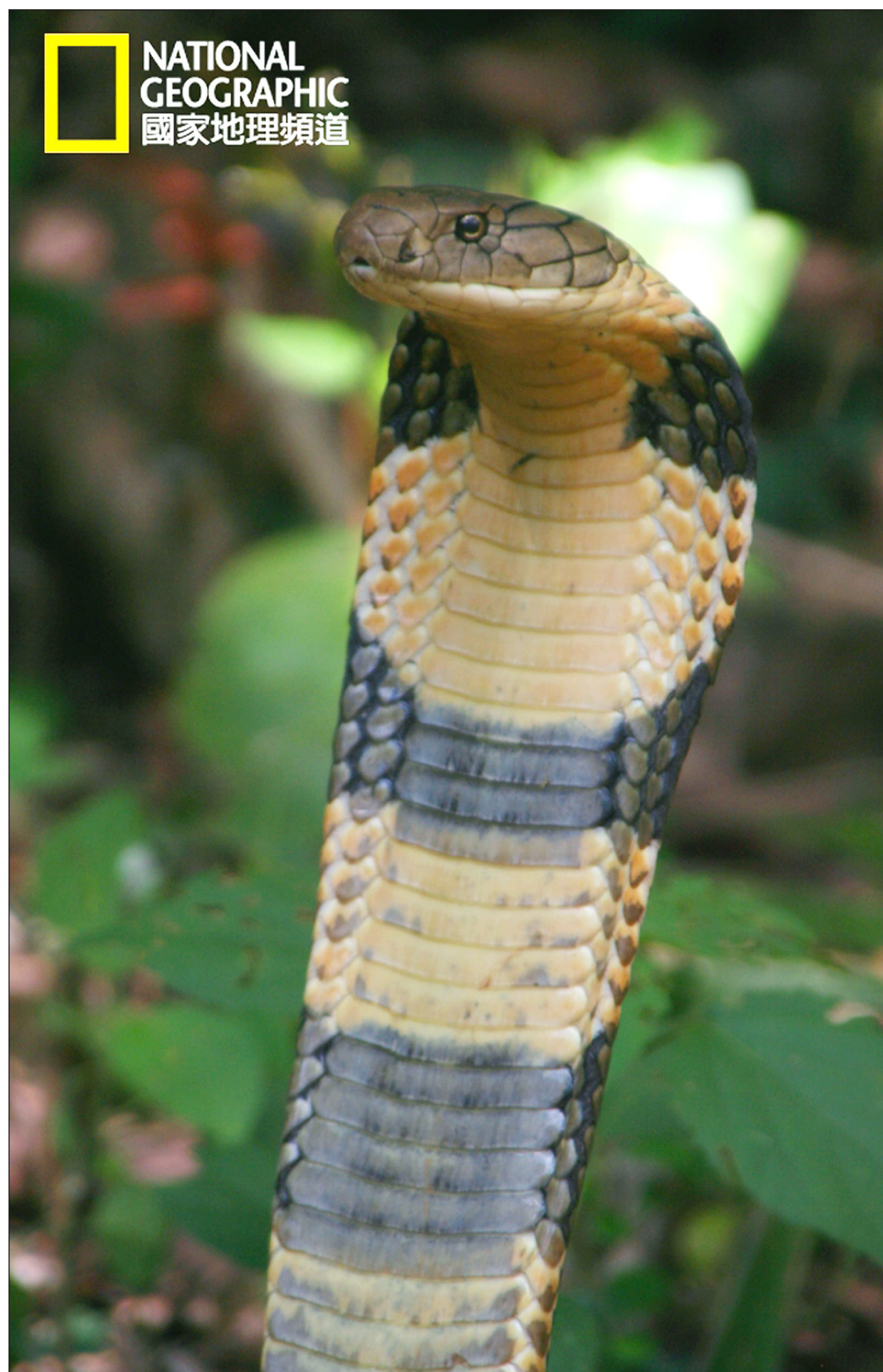
牠是蛇類之王，無畏、迷人、致命，並以同類為食。統御脆弱的野性王國，眼鏡王蛇是世上最大的毒蛇，牠有能力殺死一頭成象，而我們對牠所知無幾。不過那即將改變。兩條經手術植入追蹤裝置的眼鏡王蛇，帶領研究員挺進叢林，深入神秘世界，探索蛇對蛇的暴力、同類相殘及出乎意料的溫柔。請隨這些先鋒蛇，進入牠們迅速消失的王國，揭露人類未知的祕密生活。

In the sun-dappled forests of India, a rat snake tastes the air for the scent of his prey. So intent is the rat snake on his victim, he fails to notice the king. This is his **domain** and the king cobra's favorite meal is rat snake. So a second hunt begins. The rat snake sees his mistake — but it's too late. The hooded hunter looms and the rat snake **cowers**. The king seems to contemplate his move — a mistake. There's an intruder in the kingdom. The rat snake uses the distraction to make his escape and the king's dinner will have to wait.

印度森林中點點陽光灑落，有條錦蛇尋找著空氣中獵物的氣味。錦蛇一心想著獵物，因此沒注意到眼鏡王蛇。這是牠的國度，而眼鏡王蛇最愛吃錦蛇。第二場狩獵展開。錦蛇發現自己的錯誤，但為時已晚。頸部皮褶撐大的獵者漸漸逼近，錦蛇畏縮害怕。眼鏡王蛇似乎在盤算著牠的下一步，這是個錯誤。王國又有人入侵，錦蛇趁牠分心逃之夭夭，眼鏡王蛇的晚餐沒了著落。

The king cobra grows up to almost five and a half meters and has ruled the forests of India for millions of years. But this ancient creature lives in an increasingly human world and its kingdom grows smaller every year.

King cobras reside throughout Indonesia, Malaysia and much of Southeast Asia. But a mountain range along India's southwest coast, known as the Western Ghats, has perhaps the highest density of king cobras in the world. The Ghats are one of the wettest places on earth. Vast quantities of India's water runs through its **labyrinth** of rivers and waterways, endless water providing for limitless life and countless species. All this life ensures a chain of never-ending death.



眼鏡王蛇身長可達近五公尺半，且已統治印度森林數百萬年。但這種古老生物活在人類逐漸增加的世界，王國領地年年縮減。牠分布於印尼、馬來西亞與東南亞各地，而在印度西南岸的西高止山，牠的密度或許是全球之冠。西高止山是全球最溼的地方之一，印度有大量的水流經河流、水道所組成的迷宮，無盡的水造就無盡的生命及數不盡的物種。這些生命確保一連串永不停歇的死亡。

But it's the king cobra that rules these forests. It can live up to 30 years of age and never stops growing. To accommodate this endless growth the king must **shed** its skin four to six times a year. The first sign is when its eyes become cloudy from a milky secretion released to help separate old skin from new. When its eyes clear it begins shedding. It can take up to 10 days to scrape the used flakes of itchy, irritable skin free. It's an anxious time in the life of a snake and a bad time to seek out the company of humans. But houses offer warmth, shelter and a choice of hiding places. It seeks only solitude, but packs enough venom to kill a human many times over. And if disturbed it will defend itself with fatal consequences.

不過森林的統治者是眼鏡王蛇，牠的壽命可長達三十年，而且牠從不停止成長。為配合這無止盡的成長，牠一年必須脫皮四到六次。最初的徵兆是眼睛變得混濁，因為一種乳狀分泌物會協助舊皮脫離新皮。當眼睛變得清澈時，牠就開始脫皮，最多需要十天才能磨光



搔癢又敏感的皮膚上的舊鱗片。這是蛇生命中的焦慮時光，也是尋求人類陪伴的壞時機。可是房屋提供溫暖、遮蔽與各種藏身地點。牠只想獨自躲藏，但牠的毒液足以讓人死許多次。若遭侵擾牠會自我防衛，導致致命後果。

Tune in tomorrow at 8pm to learn more about this magnificent yet deadly creature.

明晚八點敬請鎖定本節目，一同深入了解這了不起的致命生物。

TODAY'S WORDS 今日單字

- hypnotic** /hɪpˈnɒtɪk/ adj.
催眠的 (cuī1 mian2 de5)
- cannibalism** /ˈkænəblɪzəm/ n.
同類相食 (tong2 lei4 xiang1 shi2)
- domain** /doˈmen/ n.
領土 (ling2 tu3)
- cower** /ˈkaʊə/ v.
畏縮 (wei4 suo1)
- labyrinth** /ˈlæbəˌrɪnθ/ n.
迷宮 (mi2 gong1)
- shed** /ʃed/ n.
脫落 (tuo1 luo4) · 蛻皮 (tui4 pi2)