

Mahipala, The Wildlife Lover

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Bamunu Arachchige Mahipala's journey in chronicling the wonders of wildlife began at a young age. Born in September 6, 1947, as the youngest of six siblings, Mahipala was not able to get better acquainted with his father due to his father's early demise.

Mahipala gained his primary and secondary education at St Thomas' Preparatory School – Kollupitiya, St Thomas' College – Gurutalawa and St Thomas' College – Mt Lavinia respectively. After which he went onto graduate as a Mechanical Engineer from the University of Peradeniya. After graduation he invested his time and energy to build a successful business of his own-BAM Holdings. Though he is semi-retired now, Mahipala still acts as the Chairman of his company, which under his guidance continues to thrive in local as well as international markets. He has been serving as the Honorary Consul for the Republic of Madagascar in Sri Lanka since 2001, an appointment from the Government of Madagascar in recognition of the contribution of Mahipala to build goodwill between the two nations.

Through the years of a wide and varied business career and personal accomplishments, his love for wildlife and photography has remained the same. "My eldest brother Dharmasena was a lover of wildlife and in my younger days, he used to travel to Yala and Wilpattu frequently," said Mahipala reminiscing his introduction to wildlife photography. "He invited me to join him on these trips on most occasions. So when I was on vacation, I used to go with him and became a keen wildlife photographer. When he bought a Hasselblad camera, he gave me his old Exakta. I started practicing with that. That was my start in photography."

He ventured not only to the wilderness of Sri Lanka but to other parts of the world such as India, Africa, Canada, Brazil, the North and the South Pole and much more. In his encounters with wildlife, he has photographed many rare and hard to capture moments, showcasing his dedication and flair for the craft.

As such 'Odyssey into the Wild', penned and illustrated by Mahipala will be a revelation of his journeys ranging from popular tourist destinations to remote corners of the planet earth. A 208-page coffee table book, 'Odyssey into the Wild'

includes not only photographs but also a step-by-step narrative tracing the steps taken by Mahipala during each voyage, including tips on best times to travel and the best paths to take.

‘Odyssey into the Wild’ will be ceremonially launched on May 8, 2014 at the Cinnamon Grand Hotel. The launch will be followed by a Photo Exhibition from May 29 to June 1, 2014 at the National Art Gallery featuring a collection of Mahipala’s photographs taken at numerous destinations, where an auction will also take place.

The entire proceeds from the exhibition as well as the sale of the book will go to build a new operating theatre complex for the Homagama Base Hospital and to purchase equipment for the hospital under the Bamunu Arachchi Foundation, headed by B A Mahipala.

During his travels to the wild, Mahipala has supported various wildlife conservation efforts in different parts of the world.

