

Amalgamation of Nature and Wildlife - In Interiors

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Abstract

The increasing interest in nature-based tourism has created a need for hospitality spaces that provide comfort while maintaining a strong connection with their surrounding environment. Resort interiors can play an important role in creating this relationship by drawing inspiration from landscapes, flora, fauna, local culture, and ecological characteristics. This research investigates how interior design can incorporate these influences to create immersive, harmonious, and meaningful experiences for users. The study is supported by primary and secondary case studies of nature-oriented resorts and hospitality spaces. The primary case study focuses on on-site observation and documentation of spatial planning, materials, lighting, colours, textures, furniture, vegetation, and the relationship between indoor and outdoor spaces. Secondary research further examines relevant examples, literature, and existing design approaches to understand how natural and wildlife-inspired elements have been incorporated into hospitality environments. The research aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of how interior design can mediate the relationship between people, nature, and wildlife within hospitality environments. By examining the findings from both primary and secondary studies, it seeks to identify design principles that balance functionality, aesthetics, environmental sensitivity, and a strong sense of place. The study focuses on how materiality, spatial experience, sensory elements, natural forms, landscape integration, and contextual references can collectively shape an environment that feels connected to its surroundings. Rather than treating nature and wildlife as decorative themes, the research considers them as integral components of the design experience. The outcomes are intended to provide a framework for creating responsible, immersive, and context-responsive resort interiors that enhance the user's experience while fostering awareness, appreciation, and respect for the natural environment.

Keywords: Biophilic Design, Nature-Based Hospitality, Wildlife-Inspired Design, Sustainable Design, Natural Materials, Indoor–Outdoor Connection, Environmental Sensitivity, Sense of Place

1. Introduction

Communication Long before human beings began constructing walls and roofs, existence itself unfolded within forests, riverbanks, caves, and open grasslands. Shelter, in its earliest form, was simply a negotiated space within the wild rather than a structure separate from it. As settlements grew into towns and towns into dense, mechanised cities, interior environments steadily drifted away from this original condition, becoming increasingly enclosed, artificial, and visually detached from living

ecosystems. Yet the instinct to seek proximity to the natural world has never disappeared; it resurfaces repeatedly in design movements that attempt to soften the harshness of built environments through greenery, light, texture, and organic form. The amalgamation of nature and wildlife within interior spaces represents one such attempt, though it extends considerably beyond the familiar vocabulary of potted plants, timber panelling, or green feature walls. It proposes a more layered engagement with

the natural world one where interiors borrow not only the materials of nature but also its structural logic, its movement, its unpredictability, and, in the case of wildlife, its character and presence. This narrative expression relies heavily on an authentic material vocabulary, prioritizing raw elements such as fieldstone, tree bark, woven cane, and unpolished timber. Complementing these tactile surfaces is a color palette grounded in earth tones, autumn foliage, and the rich gradients of animal coats. Together with sculptural and symbolic depictions of fauna, these unrefined textures establish a physical connection to the environment, grounding the interior in a distinct ecological identity. Hospitality interiors, wellness retreats, residences, and even workplaces are increasingly adopting this philosophy, treating the wild not as a decorative afterthought but as a central design narrative. Contemporary designers are increasingly moving beyond static spatial backdrops, using animal silhouettes carved into architectural dividers and upholstery subtly patterned after organic markings to cultivate an inhabited atmosphere. By arranging spaces to reflect the fluid clustering and movement found in natural ecosystems, these environments discard rigid geometric grids in favor of intuitive, organic flow. Lighting elements modeled after avian nests or antler structures further elevate these spaces, embedding an ecological storytelling quality directly into the spatial layout.

1.1.Aim

To explore how natural and wildlife-inspired elements can be integrated into interior spaces to create immersive, nature-connected environments across residential, hospitality, and wellness design.

1.2.Objectives

The study examines the design vocabulary of nature- and wildlife-inspired interiors by identifying the specific materials (such as wood, stone, rattan, and organic textiles), forms (biomorphic shapes, curvilinear structures), colours (earth tones, forest greens, animal-print patterns), and textures (rough bark, animal hide, woven fibres) commonly used in such spaces. It investigates the psychological and experiential effects of these environments through established concepts such as biophilia and stress reduction, examining how exposure to natural and wildlife elements influences occupant mood,

cognitive performance, and sense of well-being. The study analyses selected case studies such as safari lodges, biophilic hotels, wellness retreats, and nature-themed residences to document the specific design techniques, spatial planning, and material choices used to integrate nature and wildlife into interior environments. Based on these findings, the study identifies practical design strategies and principles that can be applied by designers to create interiors that are immersive, sensorially engaging, and rooted in a genuine connection to the natural world.

1.3.Need of the Study

Urban interiors often feel repetitive and disconnected from nature, leading to increased stress for occupants. While biophilic design is popular, it is usually limited to simple potted plants, missing out on deeper, narrative-driven wildlife influences. This study addresses that gap by exploring how wildlife-inspired elements can shape spatial identity, cultural storytelling, and emotional well-being. Additionally, it offers a practical framework for designers working with hospitality and residential clients who want authentic, immersive natural spaces rather than superficial themes. Beyond aesthetics, this approach holds commercial value by helping spaces stand out in a market crowded with generic, minimalist designs. As shown in Figure 1 Source-AI Design concept: A seamless connection between architecture, interior and nature.



Figure 1 Source-AI Design concept: A seamless connection between architecture, interior and nature

1.4.Scope and Limitations

Scope: The study focuses on interior environments within hospitality and wellness typologies, examining how nature- and wildlife-inspired design elements are intentionally integrated into spatial

design. The investigation analyzes material selection, spatial planning, color and texture strategies, and the resulting emotional and experiential outcomes. The research employs a qualitative methodology combining a primary on-site case study (Sterling Bagh, Ranthambore) with secondary analysis of global hospitality precedents and theoretical literature to evaluate design approaches across different regional contexts.

Limitations: While the study incorporates primary site observation and visual documentation, it does not include quantitative occupant surveys or post-occupancy evaluations (POE) due to time and access constraints. The scope is strictly confined to interior spatial environments and immediate transitional zones, excluding external landscape architecture, zoological design, and urban master planning. Additionally, while regional material choices are considered across case studies, specific local climatic and structural engineering variations are addressed at a foundational level rather than through exhaustive technical testing.

2. Research Methodology

The research adopts a qualitative and exploratory approach, structured around secondary data collection and case study analysis. Information has been gathered from published books, academic journals, design magazines, and credible online design archives that document interiors incorporating natural and wildlife-inspired themes. The methodology proceeds in three broad stages. The first stage involves a literature review to understand existing design theories related to biophilic design, organic architecture, and nature-integrated interiors. The second stage involves the selection and analysis of relevant case studies, chosen for their clear and deliberate use of [1] nature or wildlife as a design narrative, examined through their material choices, spatial layout, colour schemes, and overall design intent. The third stage involves synthesising observations from the literature and case studies into a set of design considerations and strategies that can guide future [2] application of this concept in interior projects. As shown in Figure 2 Source-Pinterest Nature through abstract forms (Voisin Organique Restaurant & Lounge Shenzhen, China) [3].



Figure 2 Source-Pinterest
Nature through abstract forms (Voisin
Organique Restaurant & Lounge
Shenzhen, China)

3. Literature review

Reconnecting with Nature: Reflections of the Concepts of Biophilia and Biomimicry in Interior Design — Aksoy Dolu & Burkut (Budownictwo i architektura, 2025)

This research examines biophilia and biomimicry as nature-inspired approaches in interior architecture. Biophilic design is discussed through direct and indirect connections with nature, while biomimicry focuses on learning from the forms, functions and processes of nature. The paper connects these approaches with sustainability and human well-being. It provides a theoretical basis for bringing natural characteristics and nature-inspired forms into interior spaces.

Loving Nature From the Inside Out: A Biophilia Matrix Identification Strategy for Designers — McGee & Marshall-Baker (HERD, 2025)

The study develops a Biophilic Design Matrix (BDM) to help designers identify and evaluate biophilic elements within interior spaces. It adapts Stephen Kellert's biophilic attributes specifically for interior environments and initially applies the framework to children's healthcare spaces. The research demonstrates a systematic way of recognizing nature-related features inside interiors [4].

Light and Nature in Spiritual Interiors — Raj Gaurav, Gauravi Fatehpuria, Harsh Gupta,

Nitesh & Sunakshi Shokeen, (IRJAEH 2025)

This research explores how natural light and ecological elements influence the experience of Indian spiritual interiors. Through case studies including Jawalamukhi Temple, Anandpur Sahib Gurudwara and Nizamuddin Dargah, it examines courtyards, trees, water, landscape, sunlight, shadows and natural flames. The study uses site observation, visual documentation, interviews and experiential analysis. Nature can become an integral part of spatial atmosphere and experience, rather than simply being an added decorative feature[5].

DIY Biophilia: Development of the Biophilic Interior Design Matrix as a Design Tool– (McGee et al. Journal of Interior Design, 2019)

This research further develops the Biophilic Design Matrix specifically for interior design. The researchers tested and refined the matrix with interior design practitioners, resulting in the Biophilic Interior Design Matrix (BID-M) containing six elements and 54 attributes. The matrix provides designers with a structured vocabulary for incorporating different forms of nature into interiors. As shown in Figure 3 Source- Pinterest Resort Lobby with organic architectural forms (Ananta spa and Resorts, Ajabgarh, India)



**Figure 3 Source- Pinterest
Resort Lobby with organic architectural forms
(Ananta spa and Resorts, Ajabgarh, India)**

Collectively, the reviewed studies establish that nature in interior design is not limited to the use of plants or natural materials, but can be integrated through spatial planning, natural light, forms, textures, landscape connections and sensory experiences. The studies by Aksoy Dolu & Burkut

and McGee et al. provide theoretical and systematic frameworks for understanding biophilia and nature-inspired design, while Gaurav et al. demonstrate how natural elements can shape spatial atmosphere and experience. However, the literature focuses mainly on biophilia and general nature integration, with comparatively less emphasis on the specific relationship between wildlife and interior spaces. This gap supports the present research on “Amalgamation of Nature and Wildlife in Interior,” which further examines how wildlife, natural surroundings and interior design can be integrated to create meaningful and immersive spaces[6].

4. Case Study

4.1. Primary Case Study – Ranthambore, Rajasthan

Hospitality Setting – Sterling Bagh Ranthambore
Sterling Bagh is located close to Ranthambore National Park and is spread across 2 acres, with 36 rooms and suites, a swimming pool and an approximately 11,000 sq. ft. landscaped lawn. The property also offers nature treks, bird-watching and wildlife experiences with an in-house naturalist. During the visit, the resort was studied as a hospitality environment where accommodation, common areas and landscaped spaces work together to create a connection with the surrounding destination.

4.2. Relationship Between Built Space and Landscape

The resort incorporates landscaped outdoor areas, a courtyard and pool, while its accommodation is positioned within the larger green setting. From the site visit, the relationship between the built environment and landscape was observed through the movement between enclosed interiors, semi-open areas and outdoor spaces. This transition makes the surrounding landscape an important visual component of the hospitality experience rather than treating it as a separate exterior element[7].

4.3. Wildlife as an Experiential Element

Wildlife forms an important part of Sterling Bagh's documented identity. The Sawai Restobar incorporates imagery of Ranthambore's wildlife, while Discovery Central presents stories related to Ranthambore Fort and Trinetra Ganesh Temple. Safari assistance and wildlife-oriented experiences are also provided. During the site study, these

elements were analysed as ways of communicating the destination's wildlife identity through visual storytelling and experiences rather than relying only on decorative animal motifs[8].

4.4. Materiality, Colour and Regional Character

The documented interiors include wooden elements, vintage detailing and nature-inspired accommodation, particularly within the restaurant and bar areas. The property also incorporates Rajasthani food and cultural experiences. During the visit, materials, colours and detailing were considered in relation to the regional and wildlife character of Ranthambore, helping analyse how interior elements contribute to a sense of place. Ranthambore was selected as the primary case study because it directly represents the relationship between nature, wildlife and hospitality interiors. The site was personally visited, allowing first-hand documentation through photographs and spatial observations. Its combination of wildlife, natural landscape, heritage and hospitality provides a relevant context for analysing how these elements influence interior and transitional spaces. As shown in Figure 4 Source <https://www.sterlingholidays.com/resortshotels/bagh-ranthambore>[9].



Figure 4 Source

<https://www.sterlingholidays.com/resortshotels/bagh-ranthambore>

4.5.Secondary Case Study – Jim's Jungle Retreat, Corbett

Jim's Jungle Retreat is located on the edge of Jim Corbett National Park, Uttarakhand. The retreat consists of 18 cottages and lodges spread across

approximately 15 acres of replanted forest. Its architecture and interiors draw from Raj-era bungalows, traditional forest lodges and regional building traditions. The accommodation is distributed across the landscape, allowing the surrounding vegetation, pathways and open areas to remain visually connected with the built environment. The interiors use wood, cane, wicker, traditional furniture forms, textured surfaces and warm tones, creating a visual connection with the forest setting. Published documentation also mentions locally produced elements, including light fixtures made from bark of fallen Rohini trees. These choices show how the character of nature can be incorporated through materiality and craftsmanship rather than relying only on wildlife-themed decoration. Jim's Jungle Retreat documents a long-term rewilding programme that began with Tree Planting in 2002, followed by efforts to increase plant diversity and restore the site's ecological character. The retreat also connects conservation activities with local communities and environmental education. As shown in Figure 5 Source - <https://www.corbett-national-park.com/jim-jungle-retreat.html>.



Figure 5 Source - <https://www.corbett-national-park.com/jim-jungle-retreat.html>

4.6.Little Vumbura Camp, Botswana

Little Vumbura is a tented safari camp in Botswana's Okavango Delta, situated on a small tree-covered island within the Delta landscape. The camp currently consists of six tented rooms, each with an en-suite bathroom, private deck and views towards the surrounding floodplains. The accommodation is designed as a lightweight hospitality environment within a sensitive natural setting rather than as a permanent conventional resort structure.

4.6.1. Tented Interiors and Connection with

Nature

The tented rooms use soft neutral colours with indigo accents and include large openings and decks that maintain visual contact with the surrounding landscape. The interiors provide enclosed accommodation while allowing guests to remain visually connected with the bush and floodplains. This creates a clear transition between the protected interior, semi-open deck and surrounding wildlife environment. From an interior-design perspective, the tent structure itself becomes part of the nature-integrated concept. Instead of separating the guest completely from the environment through solid walls, the design uses openings, decks and lightweight accommodation to maintain a continuous relationship with the landscape.

4.6.2. Wildlife as Part of the Spatial Experience

Wildlife is directly associated with the camp's location and guest experience. Published information documents opportunities to observe elephants, buffalo, lions, hippos, birds and other wildlife around the Okavango Delta. The camp also provides activities such as boat excursions and wildlife-focused experiences. Therefore, wildlife is not represented only through interior decoration; it becomes part of the visual and experiential context of the accommodation. The decks, common spaces and surrounding landscape allow the natural environment to remain present within the hospitality experience. As shown in Figure 6 Source - <https://www.tripadvisor.in/Hotel>.



Figure 6 Source -
<https://www.tripadvisor.in/Hotel>

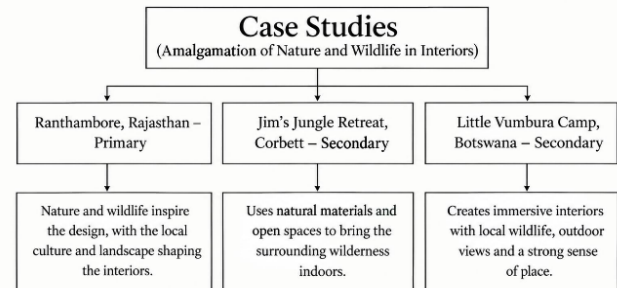


Figure 7 Case studies

5. Research Gap

Existing literature on biophilic interior design primarily focuses on plant integration, natural light, and organic forms to enhance human well-being. While frameworks like the Biophilic Interior Design Matrix (BID-M) categorize nature-related elements, there is a significant lack of research on wildlife-inspired spatial narratives such as animal fauna abstractions, structural biomimicry of wildlife, and animal-inspired material textures within interior architecture. Current industry practice often reduces wildlife themes to superficial decoration (e.g., animal prints, trophy art, or literal themed decor) rather than integrating them into spatial flow, materiality, and experiential storytelling. Furthermore, while outdoor safari architecture is widely documented, few studies systematically analyze how luxury hospitality interiors can bridge authentic wildlife identity with interior spatial planning, natural material palettes, and transitional indoor-outdoor zones without resorting to superficial themes. As shown in Figure 7 Source – AI.

6. Comparative analysis

Parameter	Literature Review	Ranthambore	Jim's Jungle Retreat	Little Vumbura
 Nature Integration	Biophilia, biomimicry and natural elements.	Landscape, vegetation and water integrated with hospitality.	Rewilded forest integrated with accommodation.	Tents directly connected to Delta landscape.
 Wildlife Integration	Wildlife is less specifically addressed.	Wildlife forms part of destination experience.	Safaris, birding and biodiversity experiences.	Wildlife viewing and safari experiences.
 Indoor-Outdoor	Supports visual and physical nature connections.	Outdoor and transitional spaces connect interiors.	Verandas and pathways connect cottages with landscape.	Private decks connect tents with surroundings.
 Materiality	Natural materials, textures and forms.	Regional and heritage-inspired materials.	Wood, cane, wicker and local elements.	Lightweight tented structures and restrained interiors.
 Regional Identity	Context-responsive nature-based design.	Rajasthani heritage and wildlife context.	Raj-era and forest-lodge influences.	Okavango Delta safari-camp character.

Figure 7 Source – AI

Overarching inference: Across all three cases, successful nature-integrated hospitality design converges on a common logic minimal architectural intervention, maximum experiential immersion where materiality, spatial transitions, wildlife visibility and regional character are treated as interdependent design decisions rather than separate design categories.

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systematically incorporated into interior environments.