

BOOK REVIEW

NATURAL HISTORY PHOTOGRAPHY. D. M. Turner Ettliger (Ed). 1974. Academic Press, New York, 395 p. illus. \$23.25 (73-19024). This book, with its broad coverage taxonomically and technically, is the last word in nature photography, instruction, and guidance. While it is too heavy and not appropriate for a guide while in the field, many of its thumb rules and techniques are worth copying into a pocket memorandum. Several problems and techniques of laboratory and controlled field photography are discussed. Chapters: Big game, Small vertebrates, Bats, Birds at the nest, Birds away from the nest, The uses of playback tape, Birds in flight, Flight photography with electronic flash, Insects and other invertebrates, Aquaria and vivaria, Plant photography, Underwater photography, Photography in caves, Stereo photography, Tropical conditions, and, under "Some technical points", camera choice, shutters, lenses, focusing, depth of field, exposure, and other topics fundamental to all specialty areas. All photographers, including the consummate connoisseur, will find something of value here!

Were you aware that taking pictures from the back of an elephant is not as easy as it looks, and not the same as shooting from a motor vehicle? This is mainly because they have a different sort of air intake system and the pumping rocks the rider. How then, from a howdah? Use a faster film and shutter, and it's worth it because with an elephant you move much closer to some subjects than you can with more prosaic perches. When working in a damp, cool cave take your photos early because the moisture you will add to the atmosphere with your breathing will flatten and wash out your images. The cave chapter also has instructions for making a stove to cook your camera to keep its optics, workings, and film dry. The text is adequately but not profusely complemented with quality illustrations. These include B&W photographs (I especially like a thistle and flying owl with prey), and line drawings (electronic circuits, camera-subject-light positioning for various situations, hide (blind) plans). Each chapter has a short, and inadequate bibliography. Among minor criticisms: through a typo error insects are considered to be vertebrates (table of contents); grasshoppers are inferred to be Lepidoptera, or leps to sing (p 153); it is hinted that natural selection works at the community level (p 310); and the political view of one contributor (p 344) would be better at Hyde Park.

As a general criticism this volume, like other recent photography guides, fails the practising biologist because it is directed at nonbiologists and devotes much space to fundamentals of nature study. For entomologists, a more serious shortcoming is that the chapter on insects is the weakest and its photos are not especially inspirational, or 'emulatable'. Its text is mostly nature-study, ethics, and conservation, and barely gets around to photography.

If you are interested in nature photography you must study this book. If you are responsible for library purchases in any field of basic, applied or hobby natural history, put this book on your list—if your institution is still buying books.

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