


# Photography of Natural Things: A Nature and Environment Workshop for Film and Digital Photography

*By Freeman Patterson*

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**Photography of Natural Things: A Nature and Environment Workshop for Film and Digital Photography** By Freeman Patterson

*The definitive guide from a master.*

**Photography of Natural Things** explains how to photograph a full spectrum of natural subjects, including:

- Sun and moon, day and night sky
- Water, snow and ice
- Plants, soil, natural landscapes
- Marine and aquatic life
- Mammals, amphibians, reptiles and insects
- Birds in flight.

Clear, non-technical text demystifies the techniques of photographing nature, guiding readers to explore their relationship to the natural world and to make fine images of their own.

Extended captions include valuable technical information and personal commentary reflective of the superb craftsmanship and stunning photography from one of the most celebrated photographers worldwide. The third edition is updated to include technical guidelines adapted for both digital and film photographers.

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## Editorial Review

Review
This book provides instruction on techniques and offers guidelines for photographing nature in a personal and interpretive approach. (Garry Black *Garry Black Photography (GarryBlack.com)*)

About the Author

**Freeman Patterson** began to work in photography in 1965. He co-founded the Namaqualand Photographic Workshops in southern Africa and has given numerous workshops in the United States, Israel, England, New Zealand, and Australia. He has published eleven books and has written for many national magazines. In 2001, Patterson received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the North American Nature Photography Association.

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Preface to the third edition

In nature, nothing exists in isolation. Whether photographing the striking patterns of light and shade in the drifting snow, documenting the nesting habits of a cedar waxwing, or capturing the soft movement of grasses tossing in the breeze, we can sense the interactions between all natural things. When we learn to focus not only on individual organisms, but also on whole communities and how they are linked together in ecological systems, we begin to develop a better understanding of natural things and bow to photograph them.

The photography of natural things includes all forms of plants and animals and the air, water, and soil habitats where they live and interact. The possibilities for making nature pictures are almost endless. We can photograph natural things almost anywhere -- even in the cracks of a city sidewalk, We can start at home with, say, a pot of African violets, or a freshly sliced tomato, an insect on a leaf of lettuce, frost patterns on the windowpane, the cat, or a bowl of goldfish. As we observe and photograph what is near at hand, our experience will prepare us to take better advantage of other photographic opportunities that may arise farther afield.

When we photograph nature we want to observe our subject matter carefully and sometimes to record exactly what we see -- a cluster of red mushrooms, a colorful sunset, or a frog catching a fly. In trying to document plant and animal life like this, we must first look for and try to understand the functions and behavior of our subjects. We should try to show not only what certain plants and animals look like, but also the natural relationships between them.

At other times, we may want to express the impact nature has on us by conveying a mood or a feeling through photography, or by singling out a natural design. The finest images -- the images that stir our souls -- combine documentation of natural things with a sense of what they mean to us. They use both documentary and interpretive approaches. Sometimes we should forget a strictly realistic approach, and use our cameras to portray intangible qualities -- the freedom of a bird in flight, the gentleness of an early morning mist, the struggle for survival of a lone seedling. We should try to clarify our personal response, then use natural designs and colors, and selected photographic techniques, to express these feelings through our pictures. Through the photography of natural things, we can explore freely our interests in, and our relationship to, the natural world, the vast system in which each of us is a tiny part.

Today the natural environments of our planet are under severe stress. All ecosystems are being negatively affected -- some completely destroyed -- by the activities of our own species. The fate of our natural world lies in our hands. Nature photographers have a unique opportunity -- and, in my view a responsibility -- to heighten public awareness and concern for the crisis that we must all confront. Through our images of natural things, our slide shows, print exhibitions, and talks about nature and environmental photography, we can contribute to the understanding, appreciation, and caring for natural habitats and stimulate positive action to preserve them. No issue is more fundamental to the survival of our planet than this one; no challenge is more worthwhile.

Because I feel strongly about this challenge, I have donated all my property on Shamper's Bluff to the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Combined with a smaller adjoining property, the land has become an ecological reserve -- the several natural zones or habitats becoming a permanent home for 253 species of plants, flocks of migratory and non-migratory birds, a variety of large and small mammals, as well as amphibians, reptiles, fish, innumerable insect species, and me. For me, it is a place of awe and wonder -- biologically, aesthetically and, most of all, spiritually Several images in this book were made here.

I am grateful for the contributions of several persons to this book -- to Mary Ferguson, Bill Haney, Mary Majka, Mark Majka, and Michael Clugston for valuable information and specific suggestions; to my editor, Susan Kiil, whose professional expertise and commitment I appreciate more than I can ever express; and to Liz and Keith Scott for providing me a home-away-from-home for many weeks of writing and editing.

Freeman Patterson Shamper's Bluff New Brunswick July 2004

## Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

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