

Into the Wild

Humankind seems to be getting progressively more comfortable with our stewardship over the welfare of Mother Earth. We've even begun to admit that our species might actually be at fault for many—maybe even most—of the environmental perils that threaten our planet. (Though the proverbial “lion's share” doesn't apply to these threats. Lions, after all, don't use plastic bottles or spew industrial effluents by the metric ton.) The notions of salvaging clean air and water, and the conservation of open spaces and

endangered wildlife, are now mainstream themes in civilized discourse. These days, to be a “tree hugger” is no longer disreputable. What is disreputable is using that phrase to describe someone else.

No surprise then, amid all this eco-euphoria, that bookstore shelves now strain under the weight of photography collections brimming with images of the natural world. Since the hard-wrought wetplates of William Henry Jackson first delivered Old Faithful and a score of other eye-popping

natural wonders to 19th century parlors, many of the world's most dedicated and creative photographers have made their reputations under open skies. They wait for daybreak to tickle a mountaintop with first light, or for a predator to bound through high grass, or for a drop of dew to slide down the veins of a leaf. Today, the countless volumes of nature imagery that fill publishers' inventories are an embarrassment of riches. I've selected a tiny smattering of personal favorites from among these.

The Natural World
Thomas D. Mangelsen
Images of Nature
www.mangelsen.com
256 pp.

With dozens of professional honors and accolades, and with thousands of his internationally published scenic and wildlife images in constant circulation, Tom Mangelsen is easily the reigning monarch of this genre. *The Natural World*, capstoned with a foreword by renowned naturalist Jane Goodall, is Mangelsen's third large-format collection. It's a dazzling visual tribute to 10 different worldwide ecosystems, from the peaks of Alaska's Denali National Park to the windswept spectacle of the Serengeti Plain and Ngorongoro reserve of East Africa. The images are all shot in panoramic format, each one a 6x19-inch, meticulously reproduced and slavishly press-checked gallery quality print. The entire collection, punctuated by Mangelsen's excerpted field notes, is a formidable physical package, bound checkbook-style, opening from bottom to top, and worthy of the ecstatic praise it's received since the release of preview copies. It's a reminder that Tom Mangelsen continues, in the words of renowned commercial shooter Jay Maisel, to make us “see... as we have never seen before.”

