

# Outlook ENTERTAINMENT

## New book examines wildlife of Rocky Mountain region

ROB ALEXANDER ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Wildlife photographer Wayne Lynch has been at it for more than 30 years now. In that time, he has become one of Canada's pre-eminent wildlife photographers, with over 50 wildlife-related books to his name.

And now the Calgary resident has added a new book to his list with *Wildlife of the Canadian Rockies*, published by Banff-based Summerthought Publishing.

Lynch, who is perhaps best known for his work with grizzly, black and polar bears, said recently he sees the books and his photography as a way to share his fascination with wildlife and to do his part to keep the animals he photographs from disappearing.

"My mission is 'gee whiz science,'" he said. "It's to get people excited about natural history and then hopefully that will translate into concern."

"The science keeps me doing it. First and foremost, I'm a writer who photographs. It is the natural history that keeps me going. I'm endlessly fascinated with critters. I just keep moving from one to the next," he said, adding he draws from the work of scientists, jokingly referring to himself as a parasite.

"I read all the technical papers and say, 'wow, that is really interesting' and then I rehash it and give it back to people."

As part of that process, Lynch has travelled the world gathering the stunning photographs that are featured in numerous children's books, pictorial books on animals and the landscapes they inhabit.

Many of his photographs fall into that 'how the heck did he do that?' category and the simple answer is patience and a willingness to ensure he and his readers adhere to stringent ethical practices.

As a professional photographer with 30 years in the field who is still very much in love with what he does for a living, the ethics are an integral part of his practice.

"Because I like wildlife so much I'm very careful with it. First of all, I learn something about the animal. It is shocking that many wildlife photographers don't know anything about the animals they shoot and it is quite irrelevant to them that it is a living thing; it is just a subject to them."

"But first and foremost, I never photograph anything



that I don't know something about and therefore the impact I might have and how to minimize that and the danger I might be in. That is how I avoid it," he said.

Even though he regularly photographs large and potentially dangerous mammals from wolves and bears to elephants and lions, Lynch said with a laugh the most dangerous activity he has undertaken is riding the subway in New York City.

Even though Lynch is only able to present a small selection of his work in the 96-page *Wildlife of the Canadian Rockies*, many of those photographs are unique, such as the

nocturnal flying squirrel hanging from a branch, the beautiful harlequin duck, a cougar kitten in a tree branch, an unwary northern saw-whet owl, a goofy trio of muskrats and a rare woodland caribou surrounded by fall colours.

Other images, meanwhile, are more straightforward and in appearance relatively common, but technically, they are bang on so that even the most mundane critters, such as the ground squirrels, are given their due, making *Wildlife of the Canadian Rockies* ideal for animal lovers.

*Wildlife of the Canadian Rockies*, published by Summerthought, retails for \$19.95.

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