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Wonders of the Indian Wilderness

Erach Bharucha
Abbeville Press (Oct 21, 2008)
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Wonders of the Indian Wilderness (Abbeville Press, 978-0-7892-0999-3), photo-ecologist Erach Bharucha's labor of love, was decades in the making. It's so thick that readers are advised to check the weight ratings of their coffee tables. This book presents immensely variable parklands and forests of the endlessly faceted India which aren't often discussed in the West.

Part one deals with biodiversity, from the development of ecology to the science of taxonomy, to the politics behind preservation efforts. Part two, claiming the bulk of the page count, is a stop-by-stop tour of several dozen of India's six hundred National Parks and Preserves. Images of flora and fauna alternate with descriptions, a little history, and accounts of the author's pesonal experiences. A physician by trade, Bharucha gets away from his town whenever he can. "The wilderness is like an addiction," he says. "The more you see of it the more you love it and yearn for it. In time the grandeur overpowers you."

This book features a quantity of text and images equal to three average books, but suffers from one major over-sight—there are no maps. The author laments that India is setting aside a lesser percentage of territory for conservation than other countries. Given the burgeoning population, this presents a serious challenge for the future. (August 18, 2009)

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