



Two in the Bush

Gerald Durrell

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Two in the Bush follows intrepid conservationist, wildlife lover and award-winning novelist Gerald Durrell as he embarks on an extended animal collecting trip in Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand. A powerful conservation piece, Durrell and his first wife Jacquie track down a whole host of endangered species, providing an insight into these rare creatures while stressing the need to protect both them and their habitat.

Two in the Bush Details

Date : Published 1968 by Fontana (first published 1966)

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Author : Gerald Durrell

Format : Paperback 220 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Animals, Travel, Environment, Nature, Humor, Biography, Autobiography, Memoir



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From Reader Review Two in the Bush for online ebook

Holly Kenyon says

I am so pleased I finally read this book! I say finally as this book has sat quietly and unassumingly on our bookshelves for so many years. Certainly it had been there since way before my birth and I suspect has been in the house since its first publication. A cursory flick through by chance revealed to me it was set in part in New Zealand. So off the shelf it came!

What a find this book is.

It doesn't say much for New Zealand hotel standards and food in 1966, but it does say an awful lot about the work of Gerald Durrell.

What truly magical and blessed experiences Durrell and his team had on this trip.

Starting his travels in New Zealand, before moving to Australia and finally Malaya, Durrell tells the enchanting tale of meeting Wekas on Kapiti Island and the truly inspiring story of the Takahe species rescue and conservation. That bantam should have received the Order of New Zealand.

His recounting of Rotorua is so vivid that anyone who hasn't visited need only read his words! One is able to picture clearly all he is describing, along with the wonderful scent that is Rotorua.

There is the magical songs of the Bellbirds and Tuis. He even finds the perfect way to describe the New Zealand pigeon: an overdressed Dowager Duchess!

He clearly relishes and brings to life the moment he helped an Albatross chick to build his nest.

However he just as succinctly expresses his dismay at the callous attitude of Man toward the Animal Kingdom and nature, plus the careless introduction of non-indigenous species to areas.

A highlight is one very short chapter that actually does not relate to his work one bit. It is a wonderfully un-PC recounting of his meeting with Gert - a rather large and vivacious passenger on the ferry between New Zealand and Australia.

There are enchanting illustrations throughout; ink drawings that capture the personalities of the creatures described.

Although Durrell is addressing the very serious subject of struggling species, he manages to write with wit and good humour, describing a Siamang Gibbon as having crooked arms and dangling hands like a lovely pansy!

It has an ease of style that has not dated (with the exception of some PC-challenged comments!) yet it seems to be highlighted with tones of a more sophisticated era. Although, when Durrell writes that he spotted a King Cobra approaching him only when he turned to flick his cigarette into the river in a beautiful Malayan jungle, I was rather horrified! That, and lizard tossing.

However his final chapter in summing up is blunt and hard-hitting. It is a terrible truth laid bare and one that has sadly not diminished over the years since Gerald Durrell made this statement and plea. Thank Goodness for the improved awareness and conservation schemes throughout the world, in place thanks mainly to Durrell's own determination and foresight, but as he so eloquently puts it, "we have inherited an incredibly beautiful and complex garden, but we have been appallingly bad gardeners."

Anastasija Lysuk says

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Trounin says

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(c) Trounin

Erik Walker says

Very entertaining read from the 1950's about traveling the globe to film rare and endangered animals. Sobering to read about conservation efforts back then, and to realize the situation we are in now, and how Mr. Durrell would just be appalled (and, in places, proud). Some very funny bits, and clever writing.

Jennifer says

Originally written in the 60's, this book is definitely showing its age, although that's not necessarily a bad thing. I found it interesting to see how things have changed over the decades - I've never worked in wildlife documentaries, but I am a photographer, so reading about times when they had to give up because conditions were too poor to shoot (usually too dark in the forest etc), highlighted how much technology has advanced. Likewise it seemed to be commonplace to go and grab unsuspecting animals in order that they could be positioned in the 'right' place to film them (anyone fancy sneaking up on a penguin and grabbing it by the scruff of the neck?), a practice which I hope is frowned upon nowadays.

Overall an interesting, and not overly taxing, read into conservation during the mid 20th century.

Tracy says

I struggled with the approach of the 'naturalist', as he calls himself, Gerald Durrell. I understand that this was written in the 1960s but I was saddened by what I saw as a lack of respect for creatures in their natural habitat. There is a level of arrogance and superiority that is present in the writing and practises of handling wild creatures. The name of places isn't always correct Griffith in NSW is referred to as Griffiths, the Koala continues to be called a bear even after he clearly states that it is not of the bear family and this makes me question further information in the writing as to its validity.

Jyv says

I like Gerald Durrell's style of writing. He gives you a sense of being there. It made me wonder how those animals have fared since this book was written - not well, I imagine. I felt sorry for the flying lizard made to fly all day just for a couple of seconds of film. The poor thing! It must've been exhausted and hungry. I would hope, in this day and age, that less stressful means would be used in order to film them.

Irene Lazlo says

Otro encantador librito de Gerald Durrell. En este caso Gerry y su mujer junto a los cámaras Chris y Jim, viajan a Australia, Nueva Zelanda y Malasia para rodar un documental sobre la conservación de las especies autóctonas. Como siempre, las descripciones son muy vívidas y Durrell da mucha importancia a transmitir la personalidad de los animales. El sentido del humor sutil pero mordaz le da más salsa al libro.

Lesley says

I have a soft spot for Gerald Durrell's books. As a kid, he was by far my favorite author. I even shyly once I wrote a letter to him at the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust, pledging to do all I could to help his conservation efforts.

I saved all of the books I owned then, but haven't touched many of them for years. Recently, when I went on my honeymoon to New Zealand, I thought rereading *Two In The Bush* might give me some insights into places to go and things to see.

It did succeed in that - because of Mr. Durrell, I was reminded of the Takahe's wonderful history. (Thought extinct, then brought back to breed more in captivity by the curious practice of training bantams to sit on eggs no matter what the obstacle, then carrying Takahe eggs down the mountain on foot with the intrepid bantams in backpacks on the eggs. The bantam of choice was one that stayed on its nest despite falling out of the back of a pickup truck and rolling several feet.) And in New Zealand, I was rewarded by being able to meet several Takahe up close and have a good understanding of what it took to bring those birds there.

As always, the book was well written, light and fun to read. It was not impressive all the way through - some parts were more absorbing than others, though and parts were definitely underwhelming. Still, there were plenty of interesting facts, and reading a book on the state of various animals in the world in the 60s gave me a great opportunity to review versus those same species' current status today. I intend to reread the rest of his books on my shelf, and I hope they are all as entertaining as this one.

Stephen Hamilton says

Told with Durrell's customary good humour, this is an entertaining account of a wildlife filming expedition to New Zealand, Australia and Malaysia, but with a stronger than usual emphasis on conservation and its

importance, a message that is, if anything, even more meaningful today. ?

Josephine Draper says

No doubt out of print now but fascinating to read the state of conservation in 1966, particularly in NZ, as Mr Durrell visits NZ (where his observations of people are more telling than those of hard to spot birds), Australia and "Malaya" as it was then.

In some ways conservation in NZ has changed so much - plagues of black swans don't seem to be a problem any more - but the pest problem is the same, the kakapo and takahe are still clinging on for dear life and still attitudes to conservation are that it's someone else's problem. However, we have seen significantly greater awareness in conservation issues in the intervening years, and it is shocking to read about a renowned conservationist grabbing a hoiho to get better pictures with it! DOC would have a fit.

Amusingly written and observant but mainly because it's now so old it's fascinating - especially for those who have even a passing interest in conservation. I did feel, too that Mr Durrell masked his superficial interrogation of the state of conservation in 1966 with amusing anecdotes, presumably to make the book more readable. There are however some lovely line drawings of the creatures he meets on his travels.

Guru says

This was first Durrell. This is about shooting of a documentary with the same title that led Durrell and his team across New Zealand, Australia and Malaysia, covering some 45000+ miles. There are of course, wondrous descriptions of placid platypuses, belligerent emus, mimetic lyrebirds, playful kakas, shy tahakes, singing siamangs, 3-eyed tuataras and dozens of other exotic creatures in their natural habitats. But the real fun lies in the description of the people and situations - a group of Sikhs on a fishing trip who are fond of drink, an extremely energetic young guide who believe in perfectly Organizing (with a capital O) a trip, passionate naturalists who live a secluded life in the most remote corners of the world with the animals they love and protect, a wildlife photographer who is unbelievably squeamish and so on. Durrell's writing adds so much colour and humour in every chapter that you cannot help but be completely drawn into the experience.

Murnau says

Gerald Durrell pertenece a esa estirpe de aventureros modernos, cuya única misión y legado ha sido el acercar su fascinación por la naturaleza y la fauna de nuestro planeta a la humanidad. Muy pocos son los que han sacrificado así hasta el punto dedicar su vida a la divulgación y la conservación del medio ambiente, como Felix Rodriguez de la Fuente, por desgracia fallecido en acción, Jacques Cocteau, o David Attenborough. Cada uno de ellos han marcado mi vida y la de muchos otros, nos han acercado la parte más hermosa de nuestro planeta y el daño que nuestro egoísmo está causando en ella. Pero entremos en situación antes de que empiece a embestir con lanchas al grito de Tibet libre. Como dije en otra entrada, Gerald Durrell fue un naturalista autodidacta muy famoso, que se dedicó a viajar por todo el mundo en busca de animales en peligro de extinción para el Zoo de Nueva Jersey, fundado para proteger a estas especies. Cada expedición posteriormente era convertida en un ameno libro de viajes, en que

Durrell, con su ocurrente sentido del humor, describía cada pormenor del trayecto, apuntaba a cada una de las especies y todo aquello que le sorprendiera de aquel exótico paraje a descubrir. En esta ocasión, Gerry, junto a su por aquel entonces mujer y su equipo, ponen rumbo a las antípodas, regiones casi desconocidas, reductos cuyo aislamiento han provocado la aparición de una fauna extraña y llamativa, y lugar donde cualquier cosa te puede matar: Cualquier cosa.

La habilidad descriptiva de Gerald Durrell es suprema, siendo capaz de hacernos ver parajes, ciudades, arboles y animales de una forma tan gráfica y sencilla que nunca se hace pesado. Junto a el descubriremos animales como los famosos canguros, los simpáticos wombats y los extrañísimos clamidosaurios; las aves neozelandesas, cada cual mas pintoresca que la anterior, como los kea, los weka y los takahe, especie no voladora casi extinta. Si bien Australia y Nueva Zelanda son los lugares protagonistas, los que mas se quedan en la memoria, las descripciones de la selva malaya son igual de sugerentes y acertadas, pero cuesta mucho competir contra la fauna casi desconocida de cualquiera de las dos anteriores. No obstante, no todo son descripciones de animales y lugares exóticos, no, Durrell también nos deleita con divertidas y absurdas anécdotas tal y como hace en su trilogía de Corfu, aunque en este caso la parte cómica no opaca a la parte mas naturalista de la obra.

El libro cierra con un precioso epílogo acerca de la conservación de estas especies. Son tan evocadoras y sinceras las palabras que usa Durrell para concienciarnos sobre lo importantes que pueden llegar a ser nuestras acciones que le creemos, le creemos sin dudar en ningún momento, tal es el amor que transmite por estos indefensos seres. Solo este mensaje ha hecho mas por la conservación del medio ambiente que cien o mil soflamas pro-ecologistas y Al Gore juntos.

Nandakishore Varma says

Reading Gerald Durrell is a pleasure - always.

He has combined his passion for the animal kingdom with the naturalist's eye for detail; and with classic wry British humour added to the mix, it is a potent combination few book lovers can resist. This book, detailing his travels in New Zealand, Australia and Malaysia on a trip to film the conservation efforts of those countries is also in the same vein: readable and informative at the same time.

I had read this book long back in my teens - it slowly resurfaced in my memory as I started going through it. But no problem. Like Wodehouse, Durrell is also infinitely re-readable. I especially love the way he sketches out a person with a few deft strokes of his pen, and also the way he anthropomorphises animals.

Lark says

This is not the edition I have; mine is a 1981 reprint with a cartoon koala being roped down from a tree on the cover. Can't find an ISBN though no doubt it has one.

I'm a long-time fan of Gerald Durrell's books with early favourites being *My Family and Other Animals*, *Birds, Beasts and Relatives*, *Menagerie Manor* and *Encounters with Animals*. I've read most of the others, but less frequently, so they've made less impression on me. Nevertheless, I remember certain scenes, such as the arrowheads Durrell found in Patagonia.

Two in the Bush is the story of how GD and his first wife, Jacquie, made the series of the same name while

travelling across New Zealand, Australia and Malaya and investigating conservation measures in those countries. As ever, the descriptions are funny and there's a lot of colourful writing. The weird beasts make me (nowadays) rush to the computer to google for images. Considering the book reflects the state of conservation as it was in 1966, it is interesting to follow up some of the then-endangered creatures from the perspective of 44 years later.

Two in the Bush is an enjoyable book which one can read in snatches or in one or two sittings. It is one of GD's middle-time books in feel; that is, it is a bit more serious than the early ones and a lot less serious than the later ones. For the record, The Stationary Ark was the book that made me stop buying each new GD book as it appeared in the shops. It depressed me and I do not read to be depressed. I regard reading as an enjoyable experience so to me, reading a book that makes me unhappy is like eating a mango that has gone mouldy. I just don't.
