

A Wild Journey



Michael Snedic describes how he became a nature photographer and what it took to get enough material collected to finally get a book of his images published.

I've always loved nature and in 1997 I began working as a rainforest guide in Lamington National Park in Queensland. One of my fellow guides was Glen Threlfo, an accomplished nature documentary maker and photographer. When I showed a strong interest in his photographic work he asked if I'd considered taking up nature photography.

With Glen's encouragement and guidance I gave it a go. It took a lot of trial and error, and plenty of perseverance. I had many failures and frustrations, but I kept at it, and it soon became a passion. The setbacks only made me more determined to succeed.

If I failed to get the shot I was after in the time available I came back and tried again, even if that meant long drives, lugging heavy equipment through the bush, and waiting patiently for countless hours. I learned to anticipate an animal's movements and reactions by observing its behaviour. More often than not I ended up with at least a few photos I was pleased with!

Over time I amassed a library of images from across the country. My photos have now been published for a number of years in various magazines and calendars. It was the recent publication of my own book, however, that's given me the biggest sense of satisfaction and personal achievement. I had already contributed to a small book on Australian wildlife with two other photographers. It was on the strength of these photos that I was offered a contract with the same publisher to release my own book, a 200-page coffee-table volume titled *Wildlife of Australia – a nature photographer's journey*.

I decided to divide the book into four different sections - birds, mammals, reptiles and frogs. Apart from typical portraits of wildlife, I also wanted to include behavioural studies, detailed close-ups and some experimental shots. I already had a large number of suitable photos in my



LEFT & BELOW
Shooting images like the owls at left and the prickly character below have become Michael Snedic's life's work and passion.

library, but in order to fill out and balance the four categories I needed to go out and take many more shots.

I spent several months on and off taking new photographs. I then painstakingly went through thousands of images, selecting those which stood out, all the while trying to balance images of the more common 'iconic' species with those of rarer and more elusive creatures. Eventually I whittled these down to the number required for the book. Rather than giving the publisher a series of images and text, I chose to work with an experienced professional and have the photos prepared and laid out on every page exactly as I wanted. I checked the common name of each species to make sure it was the accepted name used today. Then there were the introductions and acknowledgements to be written, and of course all the spelling to be triple-checked.

Working on my book was a long and tiring process, involving not only long stints in the field, but often nights in front of the computer as well. But it's all been worth it; the book has ended up exactly as I'd envisaged from the beginning. It's been an incredible journey so far and I'm happy to be able to share it with the public. ✨



Michael Snedic is a professional nature photographer, writer and presenter of photography workshops in south-east Queensland. For more information, please visit the sites www.michaelsnedic.com or www.trekaboutphotography.com