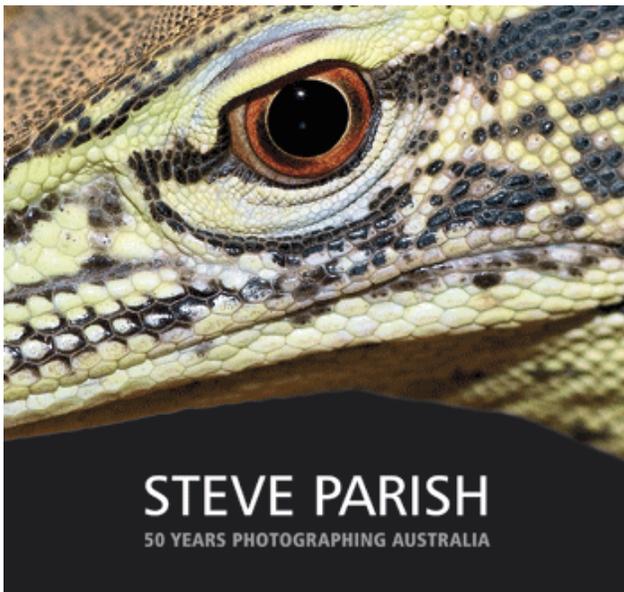


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Steve Parish celebrates a half-century

Nick Pitsas

Steve Parish ranks alongside the late Peter Dombrovskis in the upper echelons of Australian nature photographers. Nick Pitsas looks at Parish's latest book, which celebrates 50 years of image making and champions our natural heritage.



Steve Parish: 50 Years Photographing Australia

Steve Parish

Steve Parish Publishing

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I am a keen amateur photographer, but I worry that if *Steve Parish: 50 Years Photographing Australia* is confined to the photography section of bookshops, people won't discover it. In fact, this marvellous book is less about the process of photography and more about what is captured by Parish's camera: Australian nature.

Parish is an iconic name in Australian nature photography, and he has a substantial portfolio of images from which to draw. Chapters are arranged chronologically, taking the reader from Parish's days as a young navy diver photographing marine life, through his time as a photographer for the Queensland National Park and Wildlife Service, and finally to his life as a freelance photographer and publisher. Over this period, Parish has found a meaning and purpose for his photography – to foster appreciation and ultimately conservation of Australia's natural heritage.

The photos are accompanied by interpretive captions. Some include notes on how the photo was made, such as leaving a tray of water to attract birds. Others simply include the author's emotional response to the subject.

The photos were taken over a 50-year period with an array of cameras, including 35mm film, large format film and digital. Because they have been taken in widely varying light conditions, including underwater and at night, the reproduction quality of the photos varies, but overall it is of an exceptionally high standard.

Although there are some references to photographic concepts such as composition and selective focus, the value of this book is not in the technical information it contains, but as a source of inspiration. Parish's enthusiasm and love for the subject he photographs is

an infectious combination. If you're looking for f-stops and focal lengths, look elsewhere. Simply enjoy his work and be inspired.

Nick Pitsas is a freelance photographer and former head of CSIRO's Multimedia Unit.

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