



A Kansas Year

Mike Blair

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Ask most folks to depict a year, and they'll show you a calendar. Ask veteran naturalist Mike Blair, and he'll show you the wonders to be found in Kansas, season by season.

Mike Blair has spent a lifetime outdoors, venturing beyond fences to closely observe "natural things" while recording his observations in both words and images. In this sumptuous book he presents some of those observations as the cycle of a year, beginning with a hike through January's deep snowdrifts that "gets you down to business" only to later encounter the white driftings of summer as cottonwood seeds take to the air.

A Kansas Year is a breathtaking journey through the seasons. In dazzling color photographs, Blair illuminates the magic of Kansas through 120 journal entries—ten per month—that capture the beauty of the Sunflower State's wild places. Through his lens, we watch the land "green from the bottom up" in Spring, then later witness colors glowing in Autumn's soft and muted light. And through his contemplations, we learn much about the natural world and our connections to it.

In text that is both personal and inspiring, Blair shares his knowledge of plants and insects, wildlife behavior and weather. From the tomato hornworms found in most gardens to the seldom-noticed migration of monarch butterflies, he shows us things we may overlook every day—and what we might hope to see if we only look a little harder. His entries on cedar rust and bark beetles will inform the curious, just as his images of fox kits and birds of prey will enthrall anyone who treasures such sightings.

Covering the breadth of the state, Blair's captivating book appeals equally to the emotions and intellect, to the seasoned naturalist as well as the casual observer. It opens our eyes to genuine joy and allows us to see time in a new way. It is a book to be savored throughout the year—and one sure to lure readers out of doors to discover and rediscover these wild places and wildlife on their own.

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