

Naturalists and Their Backyards

Persons who are interested in nature, or naturalists, often discover unexpected things or phenomena even in their usual surrounding environments in the course of their daily lives. We who live in man-made environments such as the middle of cities often forget that actually we are still part of “nature” which includes living things around us which we may not even notice. Nature still exists in our heavily anthropogenic environments. We go about our daily lives in routine circles, day after day, and do not “stop” and see what is happening even in our own backyards or along our roadways. A prominent French natural historian and entomologist, Jean-Henri Casimir Fabre, observed the behavior and lives of many insects in the environments surrounding his house, and wrote his famous work “*Souvenirs entomologiques* (Fabre’s Book of Insects)” (10 volumes, published in 1878–1907) which contains many original findings on insects. The important thing is “observation” and an “unbiased mind to think” about what you notice, not special equipment (other than a simple tool such as magnifying glass like Fabre had!). In a tropical country such as Thailand there is still much unexplored nature, even around our own houses and gardens, awaiting to be discovered and enjoyed.

The NHBSS is happy to serve as a medium in which both non-professional and professional naturalists can publish interesting findings and observations. We hope that this will better satisfy our readers, many of whom are not technical scientists. We therefore encourage naturalists to submit articles which are both scientifically interesting and can be understood by non-scientists. To this end, we have started a new section called “Spotlight on Nature,” consisting of short articles written in an informal or essay style with attractive photographs (for details, please see “instructions for contributors” at the end of this issue). The first Spotlight on Nature article, written by Dr. Warren Y. Brockelman, appears in this issue. We hope that readers of NHBSS will enjoy this new section, and your contributions as well as suggestions are very welcome!

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