The beloved photographer Ansel Adams was once challenged with the question: Why were there no people in his photos? His simple answer: There were always at least two people in every photograph he made—himself and the person viewing it. In Ed Henry’s bird and nature photography we might add that the living creatures, mostly birds, that inhabit his photos are also present, not only as subjects to compose in an attractive image but participants in the grand journeys that make up the fullness of life.

The seven spreads in this simple book are a brief glimpse into the many such journeys Ed undertook. These are global journeys, spanning four continents and decades of his life. Each image seeks to capture something of the mystery of life as revealed in that split second of exposure. Ed’s life was filled with explorations of this mystery, whether as a cultural anthropologist, musicologist, naturalist, or husband and father.

His long participation in the work of the board of directors of San Diego Audubon led to full terms as both vice president and president, and subsequently the important role of former president. He brought grace and dignity to each task, and faced every challenge with calm purpose. For that we are grateful. But his passion for the living creatures of this planet, human and animal, in all their splendid diversity, was the driving force, I believe, behind his disciplined efforts.

Making the selections shown here, out of hundreds of images (and those having already been chosen out of thousands), was not an easy process. The goal was to integrate the experiences of Ed’s journeys, unique to him, into an assemblage that could be shared by many, with special meaning to those who were closest to him and have important memories of their own.

The photo below shows Ed, back to the camera of a fellow traveler, standing alone in a dry field in Gujarat, India. The sun is sliding toward a hazy horizon. What are his thoughts? We will leave those to Ed, and find ourselves, as he did, savoring the moment of reflection.

San Diego Audubon Board of Directors and staff, January 2023
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
Clockwise from top left: Brandt’s Cormorant, Marbled Godwit, Rufous Hummingbird, Forster’s Tern, Clark’s Grebe (inset), Greater Roadrunner, Hooded Oriole, Prairie Falcon, Blue Grosbeak, Yellow-breasted Chat, Heerman’s Gull, Spotted Sandpiper.
NEBRASKA & MIDWEST

Caribbean and Mexico

Central and South America

South Africa

Bhutan and Thailand