

# His lens catches wildlife

By JO ANN STEVENSON  
Times staff writer

To the wildlife kingdom, Barry Ranford is a peeping Tom but actually he is a nature photographer with a growing list of credits. Although wildlife photography is his hobby, Ranford admits it consumes his interest even beyond that of being a bachelor and single father.

In pursuit of the rare, Ranford is lured to the high Arctic, South America, across Canada, the United States and Britain. "I do try to have a market lined up — a material reason for being on site," says Ranford, although you guess he'd be there anyway.

In April, Ranford will lead a photographic safari to Baja Mexico, the breeding ground of the grey whale. The Federation of Ontario Naturalists in Don Mills still has openings for this trip.

Ranford is president of the South Peel Naturalists Club and followed birds with binoculars before taking up the camera. "A nature photographer has to know his subject well or he's just wasting his time," says Ranford, who spots the occasional wolf alongside highway 401.

About ten years ago, Ranford began travelling, building a reference library and collecting slides. After five years his work appeared in the Globe and Mail, the Star, Camera Canada and Owl magazine.

Later, a collection of his photographs was prepared for exhibition by McQueen Sales in Mississauga, and shown in the galleries of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto Dominion Center and the C.N. Tower.

Ranford takes unusual steps to assure his photographic results. When a cooper hawk built a nest in a 70-foot tree on the escarpment, Ranford



**Barry Ranford**

shot it from a blind in a neighboring tree at 75 feet. "The bird was supposed to be semi-endangered, so it was worth doing well," Ranford explains.

Another time, Ranford travelled 300 miles in an afternoon following a telephone tip that a Great Grey owl was resting in a field.

For four weeks in April, he sat at night crouched behind a blind, shooting into the nest of a Great Horned owl. The shots were fired in the dark with a strobe flash so that Ranford had to wait for processing to see the fantastic image that had filled his lens.

For those with a technical bent, Ranford uses Pentax cameras, and German nova flex lenses. He mostly shoots color using Kodachrome 25 and 64 or Ektachrome 200.

Ranford teaches short-term courses in nature photography at Sheridan College, Trafalgar Rd. and at his retreat in Albion Hills. He is art director of the Ontario Naturalist magazine and is co-partner in Clemmer and Ranford Associates Ltd., a commercial art and photography firm in Toronto.

With Ranford's growing reputation, he says he could now make a living from his hobby but prefers to keep it as pleasure. Limited editions of some of his photographs range from \$125 to \$400, framed.

"People are buying them as an investment, which reassures me that there is a future for photography as art in Canada," says Ranford.



**Ranford likes wildlife**