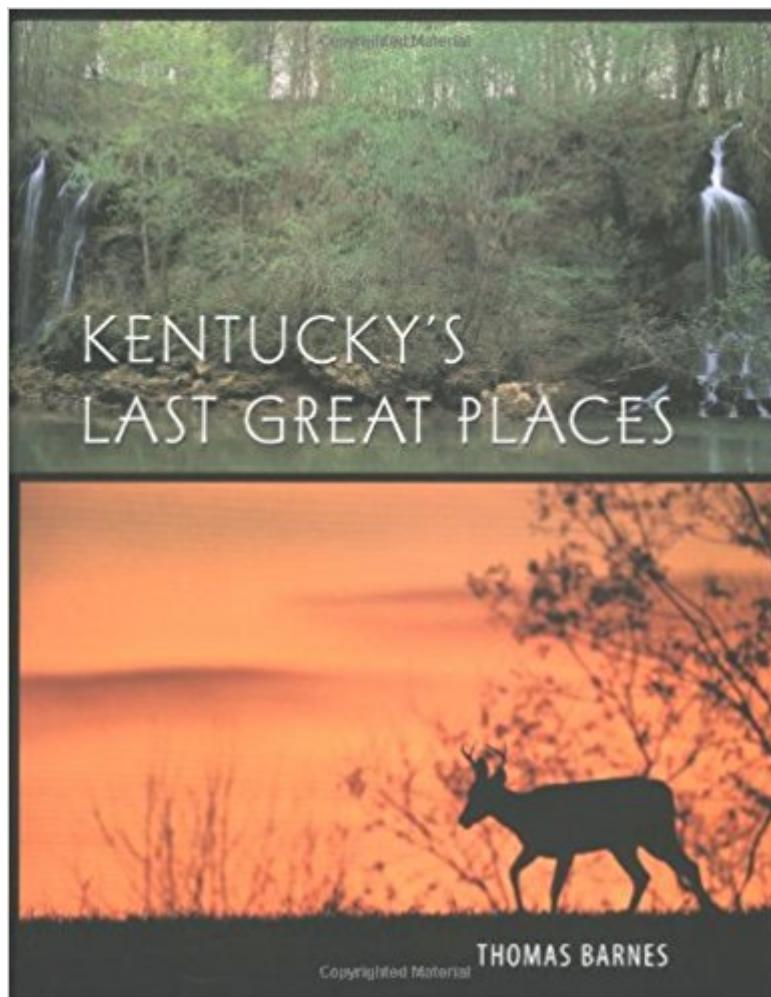


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# Kentucky's Last Great Places



## Synopsis

" With over 100 glorious full-color photographs and insightful text, Kentucky's Last Great Places highlights the incredible natural beauty found in the Commonwealth's old-growth forests, prairies, wetlands, and other distinctive biological habitats. Many typesâ •more than 3,000 vascular plants, 230 fish, 105 amphibians and reptiles, 350 birds, 75 mammals, and 12,000 insectsâ •make Kentucky their home. Many of these species and their habitats are considered rare, threatened, or endangered. Overall, less than one percent of Kentucky is classified ecologically as being in a "pre-European" condition that deserves significant protection. Award-winning photographer and author Thomas G. Barnes combines his striking photographs with essays describing the splendor found in more than forty of Kentucky's diverse natural preserves or ecological areas, including the old-growth Blanton Forest near Pine Mountain in Harlan County, Axe Lake Swamp in Ballard County near the Mississippi River, Red River Gorge, the Kentucky River Palisades, Mammoth Cave, and many others. This spectacular oversized book explores the biodiversity of Kentucky, the challenges to protecting its biological heritage, and the ways that organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, Kentucky Nature Preserves Commission, the National Park Service, and others are continuing to protect the state's unique biological legacy. Thomas G. Barnes, an associate extension professor of forestry at the University of Kentucky, is the author of Gardening for the Birds.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"One cannot leaf through the pages of this book without feeling a strong urge to see these wild

places." •Indiana Magazine of History" With over 100 glorious full-color photographs and insightful text, Kentucky's Last Great Places highlights the incredible natural beauty found in the Commonwealth's old-growth forests, prairies, wetlands, and other distinctive biological habitats. Kentucky's Last Great Places is both a stunning collection of nature photographs and a means for increasing our understanding of the fragile beauty of Kentucky." •Kentucky Books Blogspot" Does substantial justice to the beauty and biodiversity of our commonwealth." •David Hawpe, Louisville Courier Journal" This isn't a memorial to lost places; it's a call to action, a reminder to readers of what exactly there is to lose if economic development continues to take precedence over the environment in both social and political arenas." •Back Home in Kentucky" Whether [Barnes is] describing a hike with his young son, or his delight in spotting an unexpected cluster of wildflowers, his joy in Kentucky's natural beauty is contagious." •Madelynn Coldiron, Kentucky Monthly" The beauty of this book is not only chronicling the rich history but also providing an outstanding photo essay of Kentucky's fauna and flora." •Jeff Hohman, Kentucky Living" Thomas Barnes' love of this land shines clearly through his lens and pen." •Virginia Quarterly Review

Thomas G. Barnes, an associate extension professor of forestry at the University of Kentucky, is the author of *Gardening for the Birds*.

This author's photographic work is gorgeous but this is not only a "picture book". It is a book of nature, ecology and environment and is worth exploring. I love Kentucky and grieve for the assaults and damages it has suffered for so long. It is my hope that if Kentuckians can see their home state as this book shows it, they will be more protective of it. Greed and exploitation have harmed Kentucky as have poverty and ignorance. The state and the nation need to protect Kentucky's natural environment. One complaint about the book: it needs a state map showing the regions the author writes about! There was no way to refer to the regions because there was no map of that sort. (There was a very limited map but not cross-referenced to the regions covered in the book.) This was an annoying omission from the book, but the book still merits high ratings for its beauty and information.

Although perhaps some of the grand Kentucky scenery is missing, there are some wonderful pictures in this book. Barnes best photographs are perhaps in the subtle colors of the prairie, the Pennyrile and Barren. flowers and insects. Some of the snow dusted scenery, such as Rock Bridge in Daniel Boone National Forest is also well done. Sometimes the writing tries to be too antidotal; for

example he writes that he forgot the price that a five pound mussel would fetch in the commercial market; but I would have preferred knowing the price rather than his forgetting of it. The chapter on biodiversity provides an introduction to each of the regions, but a good map of each each of the regions would have helped me relate to the preserves he discusses.

With the great natural places of Kentucky and especially Eastern Kentucky disappearing and the forests, mountains and streams given no value, it is nice to see that a few photos of the beauty of Kentucky. I gave this book to a mountain man who still appreciates mountains, clean streams and the wildlife that inhabits the few unspoiled lands of Kentucky. GREAT BOOK!

I bought this book to show friends here in Germany how lovely my home state is, since so few of them even know it exists. I was very disappointed. The photography is okay, but far from inspiring, and does not really capture the "great" places of Kentucky, nor why they can be so lovely. The response from people who have looked at the book at my house is just a shrug -- no "ooohs" or "aaaahs". It really doesn't do Kentucky justice.

Loved it so much I bought one for my daughter and son in law too!!

The book is reasonably well written. The photographs are of good quality but not stunning. It is heavy on plants and the discussion of plant species. Photographs are almost all of very tight small areas, a few inches to a few feet across. Ultimately, one comes away with the sense that there is very little of Kentucky that is unspoiled enough to photograph and that the author had to resort to closeups to crop out the freeway next to the flower, etc. This may not be the case, but it is the sense you get. It is not so much "Last Great Places" as "Last Great Natural Places" - you won't find any pictures of rolling fields, board fences, and stone walls. One great failing is that there is discussion of places, and regions and areas of the state, and it never seems to have occurred to the author to include a single map showing where these places are. Overall, this is a so-so coffee table book-- not much wow factor. Didn't make me want to get in the car and go.

This book was my treat for myself when I moved away from Kentucky to go to grad school in the Washington area. The photography is spectacular and shows many areas most Kentuckians had no idea existed. There's more there than Mammoth Cave and the Red River Gorge! Along with photography of animals and plants goes the story of the people who have tried to preserve some

areas for generations to come. The book begins with the numbers how much habitat and ecosystems in the state has been lost, but continues with the story of how much richness remains. I really enjoyed it.

This is a book any biologist will not be able to put down. The author has a way with words that make you feel like you are sitting around a round table talking with him personally. The book makes you want to hop up and travel all over Kentucky looking at these neat natural places. Too bad, Tennessee does not have a similar volume of natural history. This guy is on a roll with wild places. Catch him if you can!

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