



Journey to the Ants: A Story of Scientific Exploration

By Bert Hölldobler, Edward O. Wilson

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Richly illustrated and delightfully written, *Journey to the Ants* combines autobiography and scientific lore to convey the excitement and pleasure the study of ants can offer. Bert Hölldobler and E. O. Wilson interweave their personal adventures with the social lives of ants, building, from the first minute observations of childhood, a remarkable account of these abundant insects' evolutionary achievement.

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Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

"Look to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise," says the proverb. Bert Hölldobler and E.O. Wilson have joined together to tell how they took this advice and to share the fruits of their wisdom. As *Nature* said, they "have done for ants what Levi's did for denim." Not just a good-parts version of their magisterial, Pulitzer-winning *The Ants*, *Journey* is also a double autobiography--the history of how early enthusiasm developed into an enormously fruitful scientific collaboration. "We, having entered our bug period as children, were blessed by never being required to abandon it," the authors write. Their devotion to their chosen field shines through.

Journey to the Ants gives an outstanding overview of the enormous variety and fascination of myrmecology, from the primitive bulldog ants of Australia to the complexities of weaver ant societies, slave-making ants and agriculture, army ants, and the social parasites concealed within anthills. There is an appendix with practical instructions for collecting individual ants or whole colonies, dead or alive. Hölldobler and Wilson clearly want other children to follow in their footsteps, growing from simple bug love to insights into evolution and society. --*Mary Ellen Curtin*

From Publishers Weekly

In 1990, the authors won a Pulitzer Prize (science) for their monumental *The Ants*. Holldobler (Univ. of Wurzburg) and Wilson (Harvard), longtime collaborators, offer lay readers a fascinating glimpse into the world of ants as well as their own personal adventures in the study of these insects. We see weaver ants that live in tropical forest canopies, their nests made of leaves bound with silk. A colony of leafcutter ants raising fungi on pieces of fresh leaves consumes as much vegetation as a cow. Harvester ants alter the abundance and local distribution of flowering plants. The authors describe cooperation and communication; they found that ant species use 10 to 20 chemicals to convey attraction, alarm and other messages. They discuss ants' relations with butterflies, aphids and mealybugs (symbiosis), warfare (over food and territory) and exploitation. We learn that ants do not live at temperatures below 50 F. and that the greatest threat to them is drought. After reading *Journey*, we can only admire these insects and their remarkable social organization. Illustrations.

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From Library Journal

This intriguing account of inquiry into the realm of ants is written by two giants in the arena of ant research whose own studies have helped mold our views of ant communication and social structure. Authors of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Ants* (Belknap Pr: Harvard Univ. Pr., 1990), Holldobler and Wilson present ants and those who study them in a skillful blend of natural lore, autobiography, and history. It's all here: their earliest encounters with ants; the excitement of scientific pursuit; the chance discovery, by a couple in New Jersey, of *Sphecomyrma*, the fossil form linking ants and wasps; the race to rediscover the long-lost *Nothomyrmecia*, the most primitive living ant; the intricacy of ant societies and their regulation by complex chemical and tactile communication; and army ants, weaver ants, snapping ants, and slave-making ants. For millions of years ant activities have guided the evolution of other living things, and they remain an omnipresent force. For all natural history collections. [See also Wilson's *Naturalist*, reviewed on p. 192, and the profile of Wilson on p. 210.-Ed.]-Annette Aiello, Smithsonian Tropical Research Inst., Panam.

--*Annette Aiello, Smithsonian Tropical Research Inst., Panama*

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