



# The Natural History of Selborne (Oxford World's Classics)

*Gilbert White*

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'I was much entertained last summer with a tame bat, which would take flies out of a person's hand.'

Gilbert White's *Natural History of Selborne* (1789) reveals a world of wonders in nature. Over a period of twenty years White describes in minute detail the behaviour of animals through the changing seasons in the rural Hampshire parish of Selborne. He notes everything from the habits of an eccentric tortoise to the mysteries of bird migration and animal reproduction, with the purpose of inspiring others to observe their own surroundings with the same pleasure and attention.

Written as a series of letters, White's book has all the immediacy of an exchange with friends, yet it is crafted with compelling literary skill. His gossipy correspondence has delighted readers from Charles Darwin to Virginia Woolf, and it has been read as a nostalgic evocation of a pastoral vision, a model for local studies of plants and animals, and a precursor to modern ecology. This new edition includes contemporary illustrations, a contextualizing introduction, and an appendix of literary responses to the book.

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