



dent was in a remote area of Mount Tongariro where I was photographing thermal activity. The ground was so fragile and spongy that it was like walking on freshly baked bread. Each additional step left an imprint, and I didn't know how long it would take for the ground to recover. Therefore I withdrew.

So what does it matter, you may ask, who would know? It's a matter of conscience, and I hope that readers will share my respect for the wild areas and the species that live there.

Today photography is a popular way of recording our interests, actions and surroundings. It is available to everybody. It is also a superb medium for recording natural history, whether we are photographing landscapes or the minute flowers of many of our native plants. Everybody can take photographs and many do. Even though I

have a studio and a variety of photographic gear I try to keep things simple. Obviously difficult subjects demand more complex approaches, but many subjects can be approached with very simple equipment.

Basic equipment

The most versatile and accessible modern camera is the 35mm SLR with interchangeable lenses. There are many good brands to choose from. 90 percent of the photographs that I take are with three lenses: 55mm (micro Nikkor), 20mm wide angle, 200mm telephoto. For those starting out, the basic camera and a standard lens are fine, and allow plenty of scope. A tripod and cable release are essential for many shots, especially close ups and telephoto shots. Remember that your feet can take the place of lenses on many occasions.

Simply get closer to, or further away from your subject.

Good photographs must first be recognised before they can be captured. This highlights the difference between looking and seeing. Everybody looks, but not everyone sees. Many times I have been in the field with people and been fascinated by the difference in people's powers of observation. I have heard people say "There is nothing to photograph here", when they've almost been standing on an exquisite lichen or flower. Taking photographs, like many other pastimes, requires practise and warming up. A sportsman wouldn't dream of competing without a practise or warm up. Photography is no different. Unfortunately our education seldom teaches us to really observe, so many of us have been left to teach ourselves. There are plenty of good books on photography and photo-