

Book Review: Hank Schyma, Storm: Chasing Nature's Wildest Weather by KI5LNM

So after having waited what seemed like forever the fated day finally arrived and Hank Schyma's book found its way to my home.

So is this book perfect? Well, no to be sure. It has one big negative for me. Now don't laugh. But I hate the color yellow. You know that bright just as yellow as yellow can be in your face yellow. Want to guess what color the end sheets are or the background of a few pages at the beginning and at the end? Yep, that yellow that makes me gag. But all in all if that is my only negative, we are really good with this book.

I have followed Pecos Hank on YouTube for I don't know how long, but it has been a few years. If you haven't seen any of his videos, you should rush out to catch some. He is a storm chaser but in the really good sense. He's not a crazy screamer in his videos. Or rushing all around just being stupid. He has a pretty level head and as he'll admit, after getting married he is much more careful out there chasing the weather. And yes I said weather. So many channels just are out for the perfect tornado. You will find on his channel lightening, thunderstorms, transient luminous events, and how many chasers do you know have a collection of mammatus clouds? They aren't on the side of the storm where many are hoping for excitement.

So what is his book like? You know ahead of time that every picture is going to be glorious as they are all his own and you've seen what he gets in his videos. The book is published by DK Publishing which just that name tells me that I am in for a quality treat with lots of photos. You could just use it for a coffee table book, and it would be worth the price. It is larger than an average book. The paper is thick and slick. Better to give you those brilliant pictures in all their glory.

But no, it is not just a coffee table picture book. If you watch many of his videos you will find out he loves the science of weather and has been a part of many scientific surveys and experiments in weather. In fact, in reference to TLEs, he is the discoverer of Green Ghost. The first to catch what happens above the red sprites. If you don't know what I'm talking about, you better buy his book and look them up. They are quite amazing way up in the atmosphere above storms. And that first photographed green ghost is in the book. May not look like much but when you learn what it is - it can quite beyond amaze you. And side note he does have a video on them as well.

The chapters of the book are The Heart of the Storm which is his story in relation to storms. Followed by Thunderstorms, Lightning, Transient Luminous Events, Supercells, Tornadoes, Tropical Cyclones, and Storm Chasing. These chapters go into the science of each of these with personal stories of events where he interacted with them. Examples are such as at the end of tropical cyclones and their science, he tells his story of Hurricane Ike as he is from Houston. At the end of tornadoes, he talks about seeing the Pilger Twins. Which were a first in recorded tornado history and are still studied. I recommend Pecos Hank, Skip Talbot, June First, and Convective Chronicles as favorite channels that cover Pilger and Wakefield. Also included is his bit on El Reno 2013, the largest tornado and why he doesn't have much video of it. Yep, in situations like that day was, you may think you turned your camera on but find out afterwards that while you were mostly focused on getting out of Dodge you never actually hit that video button.

Do you want to learn about the 8 types of lightning, the 7 types of tornadoes, 3 types of supercells, why do some storms look green - this was something completely new to me about color, do you want to see amazing supercell photographs that look like the mothership of all motherships is about to land on earth.

I do enjoy his section in *Why Storm Chase?* where he talks about Soul Surfing. He is a surfer and loves to catch that perfect wave. But what if it doesn't happen this particular day. Cherish the moment with nature anyway. Maybe you missed out on good waves but you can absolutely enjoy the pod of dolphins that are passing by. It's when everyone calls the day over because there aren't any more chances of tornadoes, but you stay out and catch one amazing lightning storm. One story I love (I do love personal stories about more than anything in books) He tells of trying to take Emilie to see a tornado. Because of circumstances they were unable to make Wyoming in time for what was an amazing tornado. In northern Colorado they could see the top of the supercell a hundred miles away but were too late to get there. The amazing tornado came and went. Emilie never got to see her tornado live, but where they were in Colorado? A storm to the west with anvil crawling lightning with the setting sun and mammatus clouds, to the east another storm with a rainbow and lightning through the bow. His own words are: "The storms seemed to communicate back and forth with some electric sign language." Emilie's response was not one of missing out on a tornado but the excited exclamation of "I don't have enough eyes."

This may seem a disjointed review for a book but it is what strikes me at this moment. I haven't read every word yet. But I take it with us when we are traveling some distance and thumb through reading. I find amazing facts that I read to Mark, and he informs me he knows that fact because I read it to him the last time we were out. Yep, some things are too amazing in nature to not see as amazing every time you come across them.

But one last quote here. I don't know how many people will read the Acknowledgments page or just scan. But there is a paragraph under Author's note that I find fun and very Hank-ish.

"I should disclose that most tornadoes are not photogenic. They are often ill-defined, nebulous, and wrapped in rain, and many are very difficult to even see. After including the best tornadoes from my portfolio in this book, I realize that I have misrepresented the average ugly tornado."

I just find that so Pecos Hank and funny.