

Hälle and Linda Flygare - Canadian Adventurers from Canmore, Alberta

by Robert Berdan July, 2025



Hälle and Linda Flygare in Banff National Park. Photo by Bruno Engler

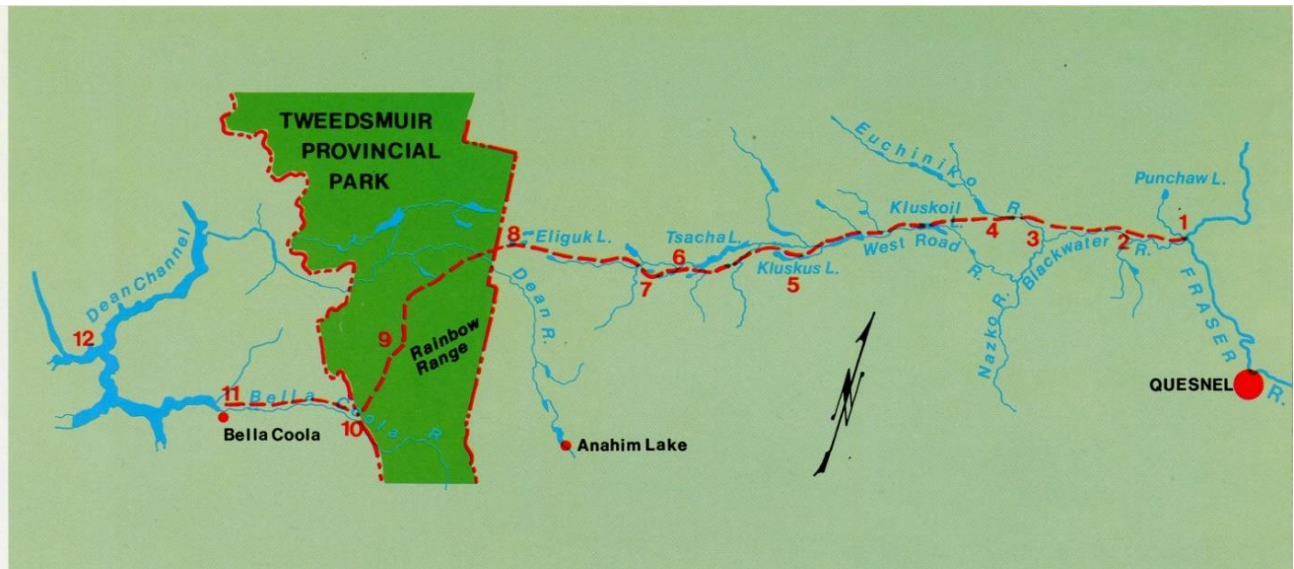
Linda and Hälle Flygare are long-time residents of Canmore, Alberta. They are outdoor enthusiasts and adventurers. Hälle's early interests and experiences as a young person growing up in Sweden shaped his future career in Canada. As a boy he enjoyed reading books about the early trappers and in his early teens he worked in the darkroom at a camera store developing film and printing pictures. His love of nature and the outdoors drew him to an opportunity to work in the forestry industry in Sweden. In order to broaden his experience in this field, he was sent to work in Canada for a period of time in 1959. He then returned to complete his studies in Sweden. After acquiring his forestry degree, he immigrated to Canada in order to seek full time work in the industry in 1962.

Hälle was born in Lund Sweden in 1939 and Linda (maiden name Powley) was from Regina Saskatchewan where she was born 1941. Hälle met Linda in Whistler BC and they were married in Edmonton in 1968. Before this time Linda travelled around the world for two and a half years working in various jobs. Linda's father, Bud Powley, was a professional hockey player in the US. Hälle and Linda first lived together in Mica, British Columbia while Hälle worked for the forestry industry and Linda served as a camp cook.

Eventually, Hälle's career path evolved into other areas. During the 1970's Hälle worked as a big game guide in the Chilcotin region where he rediscovered Alexander Mackenzie's trail. Mackenzie's route across the continent is significant because it was the last thread in the fur trade network that once

stretched Canada wide. Sir Alexander Mackenzie was a Scottish explorer known for accomplishing the first crossing of North America north of Mexico by a European in 1793. When President Jefferson of the United States learned of Mackenzie's exploration, he set forth his own expedition by Lewis and Clark in March 1806 ending six months later on September 23.

Hälle and Linda retraced and mapped Alexander's trail from the Fraser river in BC to Bella Coola on the Pacific Coast of Canada. Their journey was photographed and documented by Peter Tasker and John Woodworth for Beautiful British Columbia in 1981. See map below showing their route.



- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Trail's start | 7 Home Ranch. |
| 2. Blackwater Crossing | 8. Ulkatcho Village |
| 3. Gillies Crossing | 9. Mackenzie Valley & Pass |
| 4. Mackenzie's Basins | 10. Friendly Village |
| 5. Kluskus Village | 11 Thorsen Creek petroglyphs |
| 6. Pan's Fish Camp. | 12. Mackenzie Rock. |

The Mackenzie trail in British Columbia is 450 miles long from the Fraser River to Bella Coola. The Flygare's retraced the trail several times and Hälle has written a number of books about the Mackenzie trail and produced maps and photographs along the route. They both hope that the trail will be restored and preserved for future generations. They also marked part the Mackenzie trail in BC. This trail is rugged and only suitable for expert hikers (map is from BC Magazine Fall 1991).



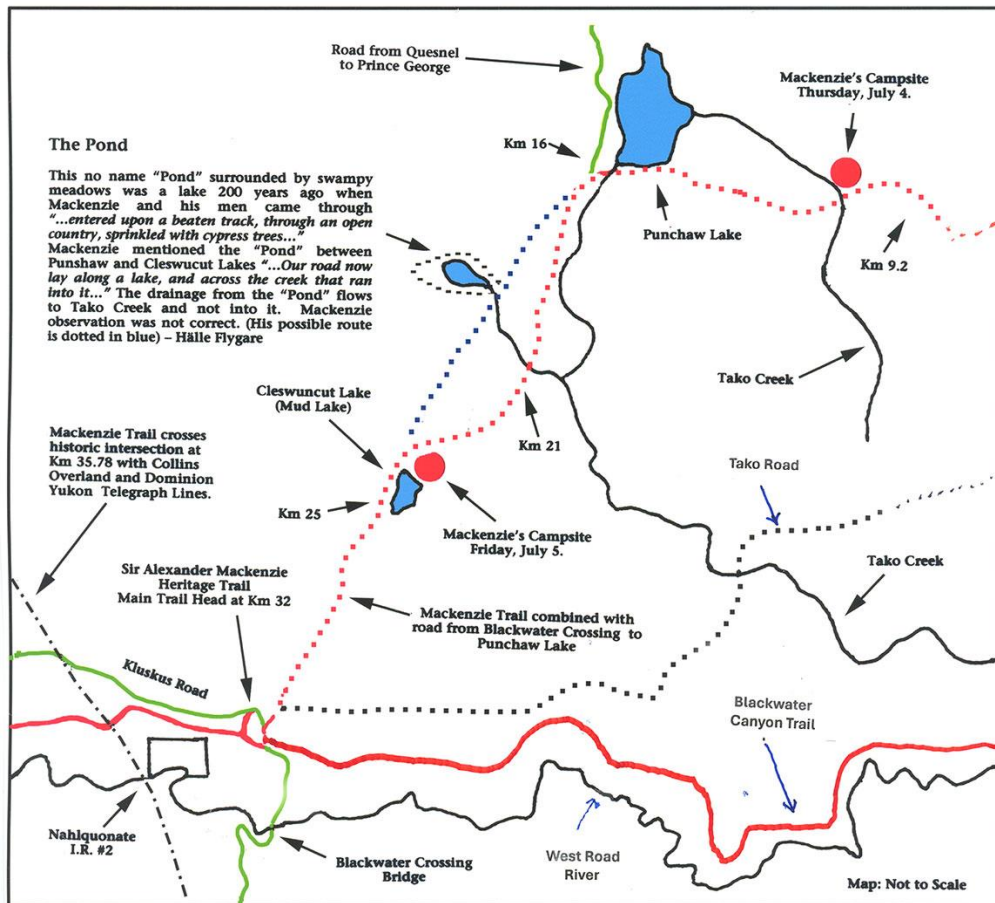
Linda and Hälle Flygare hiking the Alexander Mackenzie trail (image from Beautiful British Columbia by Peter Tasker, fall 1981).



Hälle and Linda erecting a directional cairn near Mackenzie pass in BC. Photo by Peter Tasker for Beautiful British Columbia fall 1981.

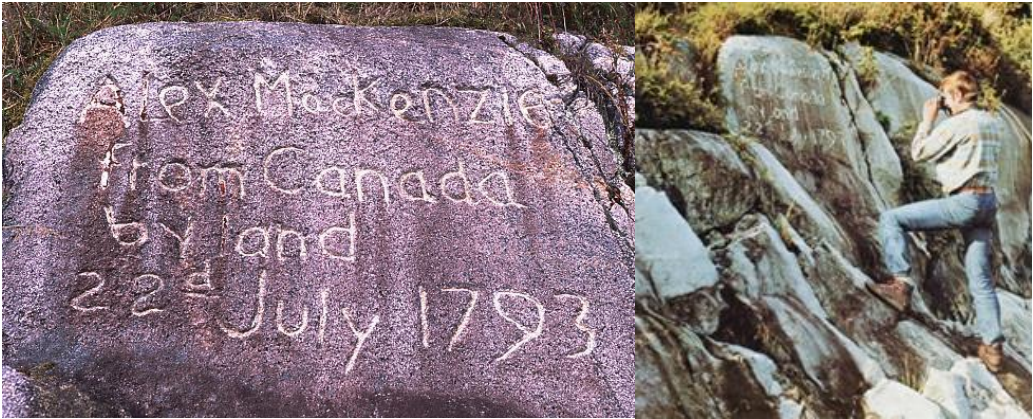


Linda Flygare wading Sundryman Ford in 120 cm deep water August, 1975, of the Euchiniko lakes, km 136.54 km on the Alexander Heritage Trail. Photo by Hälle Flygare.



One of the many maps Hälle produced of the Mackenzie trails for his books.

Hälle is shown photographing the message at the end of the Mackenzie trail on the right. The Message reads: "Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada, by land, the twenty-second of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three". This message was carved into a rock on a small island west of Bella Coola, BC.



End of the Mackenzie trail is marked on a small island west of Bella Coola.



Hälle standing next to a Mackenzie Heritage trail sign.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie Historic Waterways in Alberta

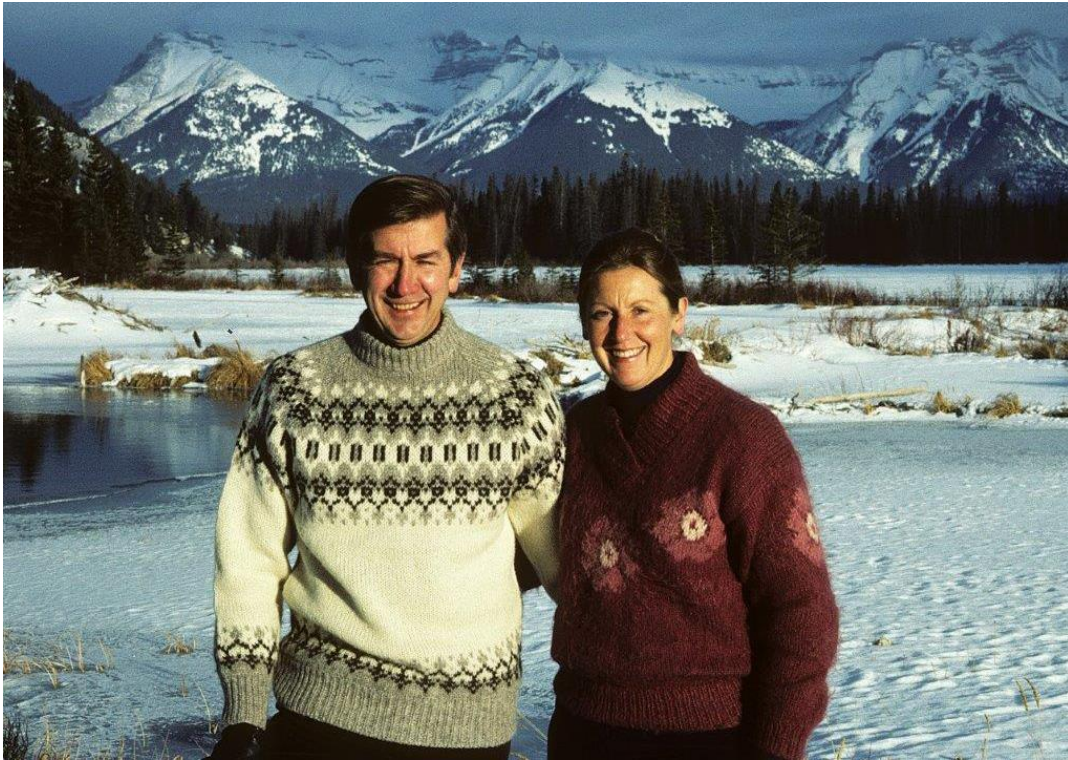
A map/guide for
river travel on
the Clearwater,
Athabasca, Slave
and Peace Rivers
by
Hälle Flygare



One of Hälle's publications about the Mackenzie trail 1983.



Hälle packing out camping supplies in 1960 for BC Forest service in Prince George, he was 24 yrs. old in the picture.



Hälle and Linda Flygare photographed at the Vermilion Lakes outside Banff (date – photo credit)

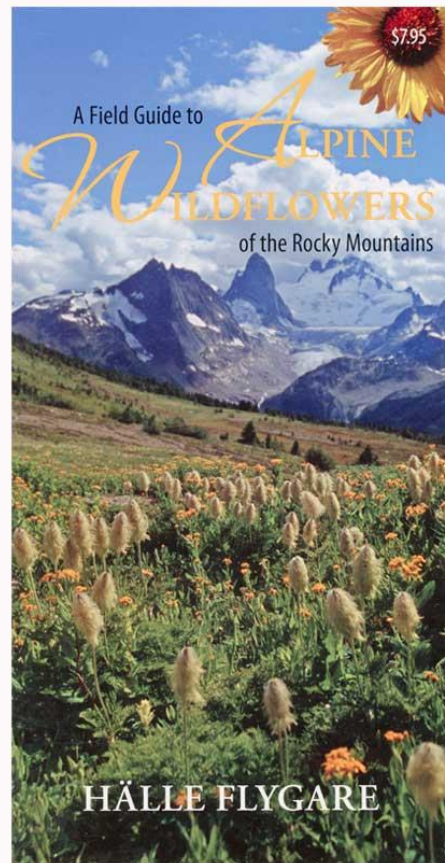
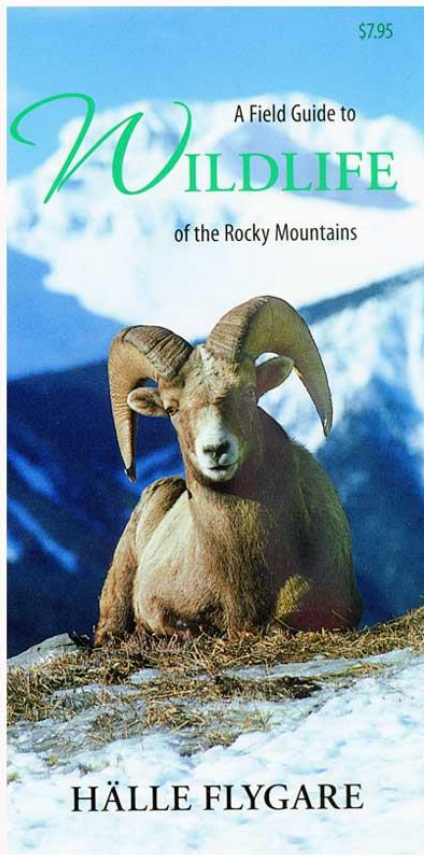
In 1972, Hälle and Linda moved to Banff. Hälle was hired as a Park Warden for Banff National Park where he worked for the next 17 years. While working in the Park he noticed a significant loss of wildlife that had crossed the TransCanada highway. Hälle knew that in Sweden the highways were fenced to reduce wildlife collisions and he proposed that they should do the same in Banff and provide underpasses for the animals to cross. At first his suggestion was ignored, but after a semi-trailer truck killed a large number of elk the establishment acknowledged Hälle was on to something and the park began fencing parts of the highway and building underpasses. Today the TransCanada highway has fencing, underpasses and overpasses. Research studies have shown this has significantly reduced wildlife-vehicle collisions by more than 80%, and in some cases, over 96% for elk and deer.

While working in Banff, Hälle was periodically excused from park duties in order to retrace Mackenzie's steps across Alberta. Hälle with Linda followed the Peace, Athabasca, Clearwater and Slave rivers from BC to Saskatchewan and from Fort McMurray to the Arctic Ocean. They also measured the trail distance in BC using an odometer attached to a bicycle wheel. Hälle continues to write about and advocate for the protection of the Alexander Mackenzie trail.



Hälle as a Park Warden in Banff, a Photographer in 1998, Hälle and Linda in Banff in 2016.

While Hälle worked as a park warden in Banff National Park he also worked with “problem bears” and he often educated visitors in a friendly manner. He did not support the idea of Wardens being supplied with guns. Guns he felt should only be offered to those specially trained in using them. Hälle had traded in his own guns for cameras and became a highly respected photographer. As an entrepreneur he established a successful business selling wildlife photos, wildflower cards and books. He produced a popular book on wildflowers that used colour coded pages to facilitate flower identification. Linda suggested the use of a colour coding to facilitate the quick identification of wild flowers. His book “Wildflowers of the Canadian Rockies” sold over 45, 000 copies and is still available today on Amazon. In addition, he produced a number of plasticized pamphlets for identifying birds, animals and wild flowers that is sold locally. Hälle also served as a photo guide for other professional photographers from around the world. He has even published some of his books in Swedish. Hälle and Linda have since travelled to numerous locations around the world to take photographs from Antarctica to the Arctic.



▲ ALPINE POPPY
Papaver pygmaeum
6-12 cm • Alberta and Montana



▲ ALPINE GROUNDSEL
Packera pauciflora
Up to 40 cm • Throughout Rockies
except Oregon, Utah and New Mexico



▲ DWARF FIREWEED
Chamerion latifolium
Up to 40 cm • Throughout Rockies
except New Mexico



▲ FIREWEED
Chamerion angustifolium
Up to 2 m • Alberta, BC, Wash.,
Montana, Wyoming and Colorado



▲ SCARLET GILIA
Ipomopsis aggregata
20-100 cm • Throughout Rockies
except Alberta



▲ WOOD LILY
Lilium philadelphicum
30-90 cm • Alberta, BC, Montana,
Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico



▲ LANGSDORF'S LOUSEWORT
Podicularis langsdorfii
5-20 cm • Alberta and BC



▲ SHOWY MILKWEED
Asclepias speciosa
Up to 120 cm • Throughout Rockies



▲ BLITE GOOSEFOOT
Chenopodium capitatum
Up to 60 cm • Throughout Rockies



▲ RUSTY MENZIESIA
Menziesia ferruginea
Up to 2 m • Throughout Rockies
except Utah, Colorado and New Mexico



▲ KINNIKINNICK
Aretostaphylos uva-ursi
Up to 20 cm • Throughout Rockies

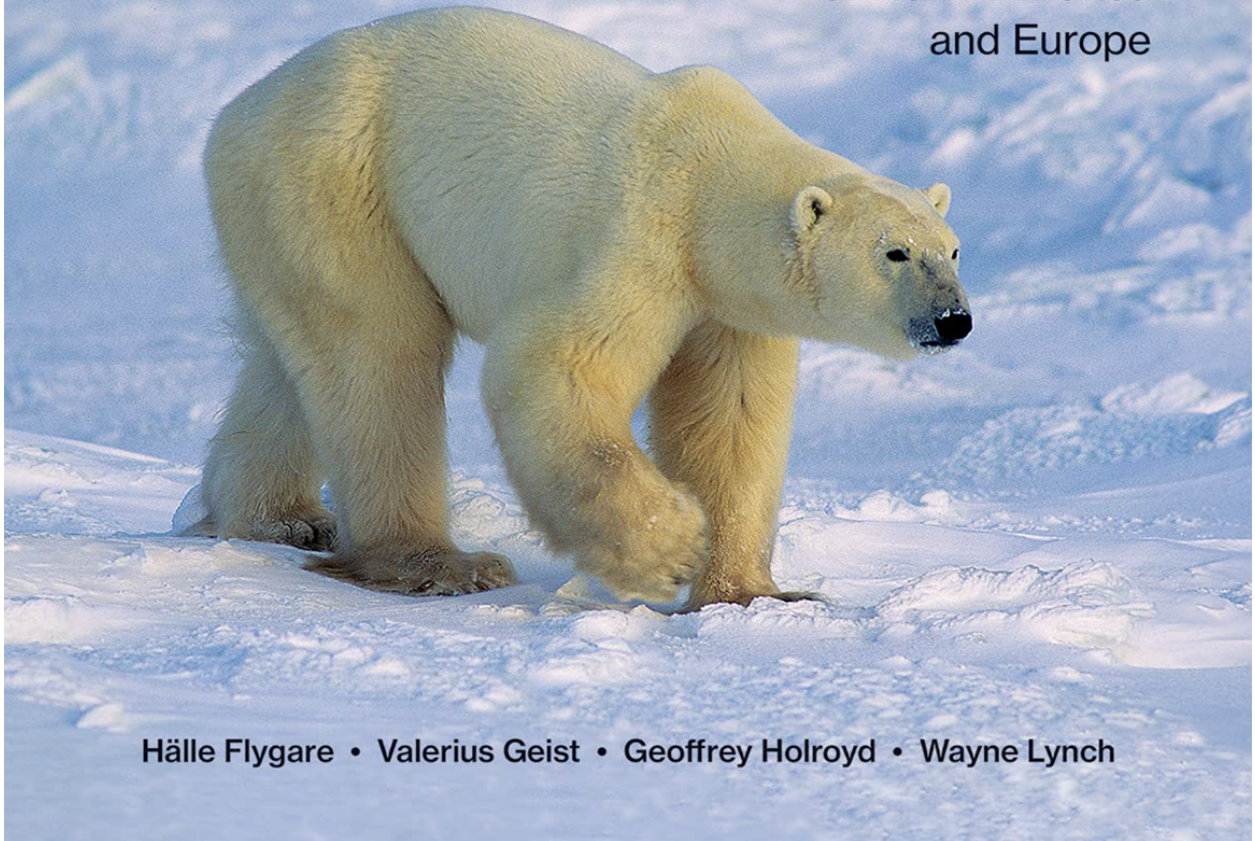


▲ PINK MOUNTAINHEATH
Phyllodoce empetrifolia
10-40 cm • Throughout Rockies
except Utah, Colorado and New Mexico

Some of Hälle's Plasticized Field Pamphlets

Wildlife of the North

Animals of the High Latitudes
of North America
and Europe



Hälle Flygare • Valerius Geist • Geoffrey Holroyd • Wayne Lynch

Book available on Amazon published by Firefly 2023 <https://www.amazon.ca/Wildlife-North-Animals-Latitudes-America/dp/0228104556>

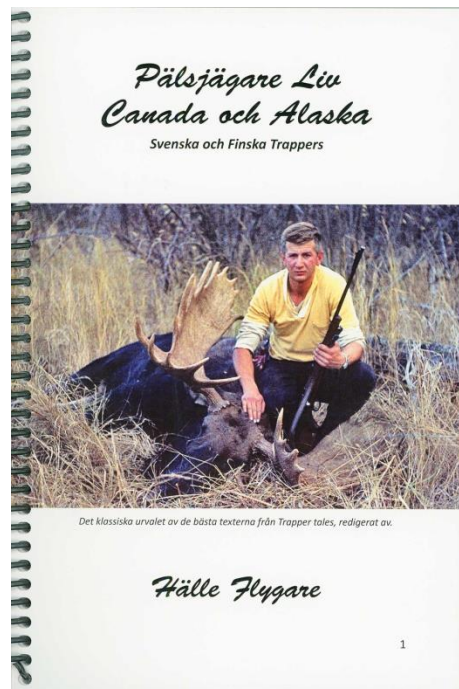
WILD ARCTIC

The Polar World of the Northern Hemisphere



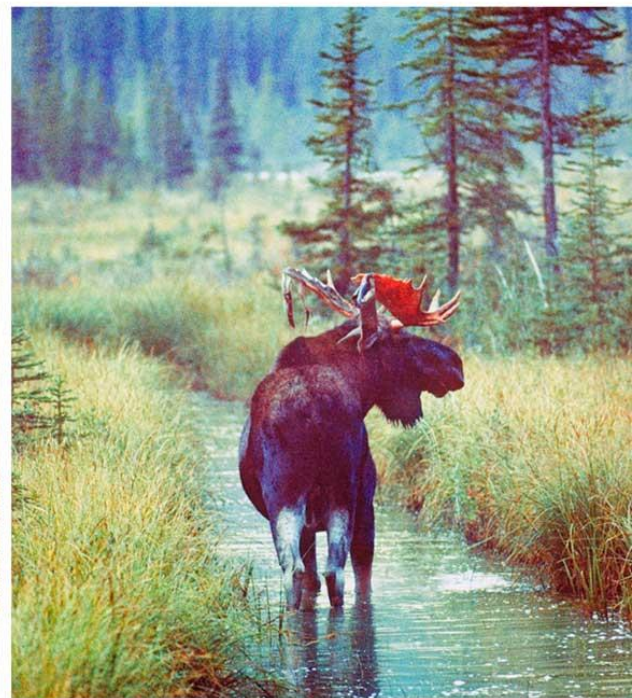
Hälle Flygare Valerius Geist Geoffrey Holroyd Wayne Lynch

Self-Published book



One of Halle's books in Swedish

Hälle has captured a wide selection of animals and plants that can only be appreciated by viewing some of his books. In this short article I have only shown a small selection of Hälle's images including grizzly bears, birds, flowers, and landscapes. Hälle photographed with 35 mm film and the latest digital photography cameras from Nikon. I have had the privilege of photographing with Hälle in parts of Alberta, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories. His knowledge about wildlife is extensive.



Wildlife photographs by Hälle: Top Grizzly bear, puffins, bottom Capercaillie and a bull moose.

I met Hälle in Calgary some 30 years ago at a color printing workshop in Calgary. Since then we have been close friends. We have driven through parts of Alberta and Saskatchewan in search of wildlife and even photographed rattle snakes at Red Rock Coulee. I encourage those interested in Halle's photography to visit his web site natureinwildplaces.com. We have also driven from Calgary to Yellowknife a couple of times. North of Yellowknife we photographed Caribou and the Aurora borealis at Peterson's point lake lodge. The lodge is situated close to the Bathurst Caribou herd. In Yellowknife we camped at Prelude Territorial park. I also accompanied Hälle on a boat from Bella Coola to Mackenzie rock a few years ago while I was leading a photo tour in "The Great Bear Rainforest". Halle successfully captured beautiful pictures of the Spirit Bear while I only managed a few photographs of black bears and some West coast wolves. Below I have is one of my favorite photographs of Hälle resting on an esker on the Tundra. This article is only a brief synopsis of two lives well spent, Hälle and Linada Flygare contributed to the historic, artistic and natural tapestry of this beautiful corner of the world which we call home. My wife Donna and I feel lucky to know both Hälle and Linda, we only wished they lived closer to Calgary. July, 2025.



Hälle Flygare resting on an Esker near Point Lake, Northwest Territories. Photo by R. Berdan

Acknowledgements: I thank my wife Donna for proofing, suggestions and comments.