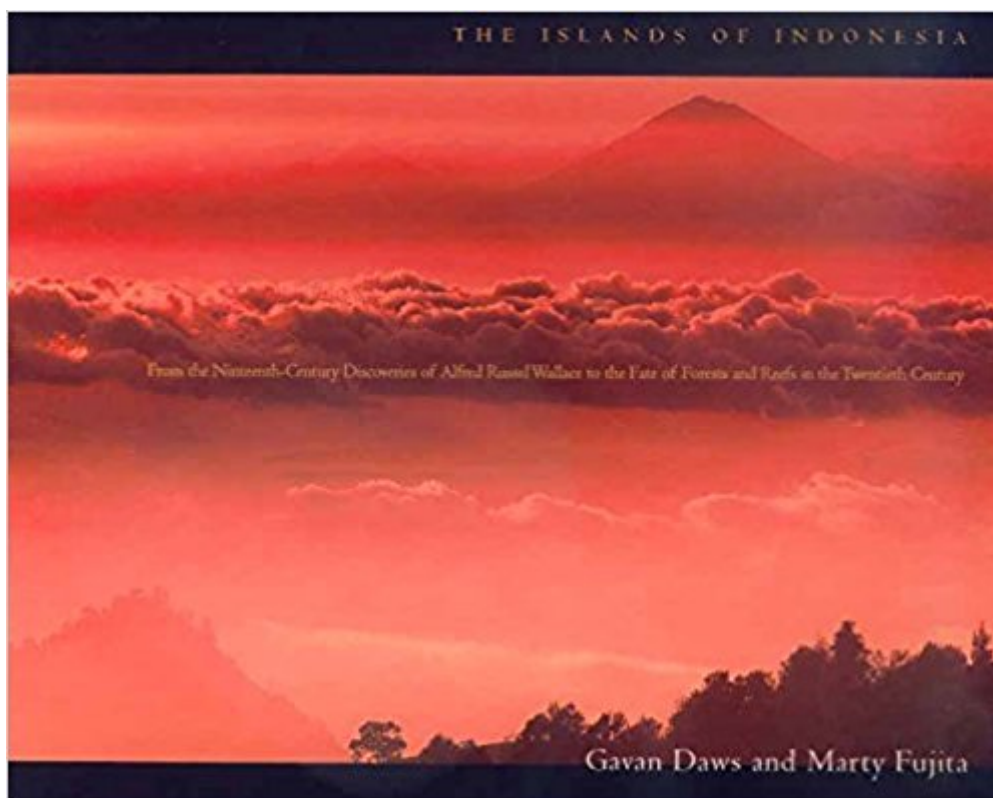


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Archipelago : Islands Of Indonesia



Synopsis

The Indonesian archipelago is a land of timeless natural beauty that in the twenty-first century faces unprecedented environmental degradation. It was also the biological laboratory of Alfred Russel Wallace, who, working independently of Charles Darwin, discovered the theory of evolution by natural selection. Wallace, who traveled for eight years in the archipelago, was one of the greatest field naturalists and nature writers of his century. No one was more skilled in observing and describing living things. A prodigious collector, he was the first to bring living birds of paradise to the West. And he was a great thinker, a theorist as formidable as any on earth. This magnificent account of a true explorer sweeps from the time of Wallace's nineteenth-century discoveries in biogeography to the looming biodiversity crisis of the twenty-first century; from the exploration of natural wonders to the exploitation of natural resources. The result is a history that powerfully portrays the intricate connections of human life and natural life. This unique story, published by the University of California Press in cooperation with The Nature Conservancy, is resplendently presented with maps, archival materials, and more than 200 color photographs. A portion of the proceeds from this book will go toward conservation efforts in Indonesia.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In the mid-1850s, a young English naturalist named Alfred Russel Wallace journeyed to the Malay Archipelago, where he would spend eight years in what he later called "the central and controlling incident" of his life. Collecting data on the plant and animal life of the then-remote islands, Wallace slowly formulated ideas of the origins and divergence of species. In 1858, he sent a manuscript

containing some of those ideas to Charles Darwin, who incorporated Wallace's work in his theory of natural selection--and who, some critics have charged, appropriated many of Wallace's discoveries as his own. In this richly illustrated book, historian Gavan Daws and biologist Marty Fujita follow Wallace's trail through the islands of Indonesia, visiting the Moluccas, Bali, Irian Jaya, and other extraordinary treasuries of biological diversity--for, as they point out, although Indonesia comprises only 1.3 percent of the world's surface, it harbors nearly a quarter of the world's species. Their naturalistic travelogue includes a careful discussion of Wallace's ideas and of how he came to hold them through the course of his remarkable body of fieldwork. In doing so, they emphasize the importance of Wallace's contributions to demographics, the theory of island biodiversity, and other tenets of modern biological thought. The result is an unusually instructive, and unusually handsome, book of scientific adventure. --Gregory McNamee

The Indonesian archipelago was the natural laboratory of 19th-century naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace who developed the theory of evolution at the same time as and independently of Charles Darwin. This lavishly illustrated book traces his explorations and comments on the biodiversity crisis that will affect the 21st century. The authors (Daws is a historian and Fujita is founding director of The Nature Conservancy's Indonesia program) do a fine job of interspersing excerpts from Wallace's journals and papers, along with their narrative of his exploits, with modern descriptions of flora, fauna, and conservation needs. Chapters dealing with individual islands, or groups of islands, begin with Wallace's experiences there and continue to current descriptions of conditions and concerns. The magnificent color photographs work well to support the text. This book serves as an urgent call for awareness and conservation of these unique and important islands. Useful in many subject collections, including evolution, biodiversity, natural history, and travel, and suitable for all public libraries.-Nancy J. Moeckel, Miami Univ. Libs., Oxford, OH Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

now i want to go

This was a fascinating and informative book. It was recommended to me and I am delighted that I purchased it.

The greatest variety of living things in the world inhabits the 17,500 islands and million square miles of ocean in the East Indies. In "Archipelago," Effendy Sumardja, Indonesia's hard-pressed minister

of environment, claims 15 to 25% of all the species in the world. That includes 7,000 kinds of fish -- about 10 times as many as in Hawaii. More than 6,000 plant and animal species are "used on a daily basis." And in danger of being used up, which is why the Nature Conservancy sponsored this book, written by historian Gavan Daws, who wrote the Nature Conservancy's "Hawaii: The Islands of Life

Archipelago is an excellent book on several levels. First, as a photo essay of the biota of the Indonesian islands it must be beyond compare. The photos are simply awesome, leaf through it and see for yourself. Second, it tells the story of one of the world's least known but greatest scientists, Alfred Wallace. Wallace was just as responsible for developing the theory of evolution through natural selection as Charles Darwin. If you are interested in the history of science or a biology student at any level you should be aware of Wallace's work. This is as good a book to learn about it as any. One slight complaint, in reading this book I felt that the authors felt that Wallace received a raw deal from Darwin and the rest of the scientific community. I don't know if it's true or if the truth will ever be known. I know that Wallace didn't feel that way so why include it here? Third, this book is so much a trip through time. Each chapter on Wallace in the islands is mixed with modern essays on life in the islands and what is happening to the environment there. As an environmentalist "call to arms" it is great, because it is backed by better science through a broader range of disciplines than any I have seen. I'm not a big fan of the "Coffee Table Book" but this is an exception. While it might be tempting to only look at the pictures, the text is in such an interesting format that reading it turns out to be such a breeze that you will be done before you notice.

The book goes through all the major parts of Indonesia and shows plenty of well-selected pictures of amazing flora and fauna of the archipelago. Pictures are 70% of the book, but it also provides a good scientific description of how the archipelago formed (10% of the book), explaining how so unique species developed and survived untouched. Around 10% of the book is devoted to the explorers, like Wallace, who first discovered the uniqueness of the islands and tried scientifically describe what they found - some early maps of the region and pictures of explorers are presented. Last 10% expresses the concerns about the impact of the modern Indonesia on the nature of the region. Book is published by UC Berkeley/LA, which can only be a further recommendation.

This is a beautiful, beautiful, caring book about an astonishingly rich part of the world. Great pictures, amazing animals, elegant text. Everyone associated with this should be proud. Much of it

is about Wallace (been reading it in conjunction with Sloten's biography), but that is just fine, Wallace is about the best travel companion to the region you could find. The chapters on the contemporary environmental situation are heartbreaking -- such beauty, such wanton destruction.

This beautiful coffee table book goes far beyond presenting the tropical and exotic beauty of this complex archipelago. True, outstanding photos highlight the natural splendor, rich culture and exotic architecture. But the authors also explore its historical significance, beginning with Wallace's 19th century discoveries in biogeography, continuing through the current, looming ecological crisis wrought by exploitation of the islands' natural resources. For those who have traveled to Indonesia, or have ever wished to, this book is a must.

this is a great book. It covers in detail the journeys of that great explorer/naturalist/thinker Alfred E. Wallace through Indonesia and addresses the current state of affairs and threats to its natural treasures.

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