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Bushmaster: Raymond Ditmars And The Hunt For The World's Largest Viper



Synopsis

An intriguing story that's also packed with details. Library Journal, starred review Raymond Ditmars (1876-1942), the first curator of reptiles at New York's famous Bronx Zoo, brought cold-blooded animals to public attention as never before. Through wildly successful books and movies, he inspired a generation of zoologists with his fascination with snakes, insects, and other misunderstood creatures. His reptile-collecting trips for the zoo spawned newspaper headlines across the world. Although a serpent lover, he was all too aware of the devastating effects of snakebites and was instrumental in the development of antivenom. His films and writings brought him fame, but he remained a devoted zoo employee, doing what he loved most: caring for animals. Bushmaster tells the story of this remarkable man and what became an obsession with the mysterious bushmaster of the South American rainforest. Measuring up to thirteen feet in length, this is the world's largest viper, and its scientific name, *Lachesis muta*, translates as 'silent fate.' Despite numerous expeditions to jungles from Honduras to Brazil, Ditmars could never capture a bushmaster for himself. Now, British author Dan Eatherley follows in Ditmars's footsteps, revisiting his early haunts in the United States and South America. He attempts to do what Ditmars himself failed to achieve: to find a bushmaster in the wild. But eighty years later, will Dan have any more luck? Through the author's own quest, Bushmaster reveals the life of a pioneer herpetologist, wildlife filmmaker, and zoo curator.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Well researched. Interesting for the ophidophile and casual reader of an era of zoological history

that began almost exactly 100 years ago. Who was it that said you can't go back? I was reading Stevens' Snakemaster at the same time and their teenage years closely mirrored each other. Go figure.

I just finished Dan Eatherley's fascinating telling of the life of the founder of the Bronx Zoo's Reptile House, the self-educated Raymond Ditmars. Starting with snakes found in New York City's central park in 1880's, Mr. Ditmars' passion for snakes (particularly venomous ones) made he (and many of his deadly objects of interest) famous with the general public. The Author attempts to retrace Mr. Ditmar's snake-hunting path... from the central park rock outcroppings that still host non-venomous serpents, to the rocky hills surrounding the New York City Metropolitan area, and, ultimately, to the tropical environs of the "Big Daddy" of deadly serpents, the Bushmaster. The writing is totally engaging, at times funny, at times frightening.

I have read all of Ditmar's books so there wasn't too much new information for me in this book. However there was enough new information in it that I was glad I bought the book. It is very interesting and about a very great man whom I have admired since childhood. If you are interested in snakes I think you will find this a good book to buy.

If you're a fan of nonfiction adventure, this book is for you. Very engaging and informative for those interested in snakes but lacking a scientific background, clearly very well researched. I learned a lot and loved every minute of it!

Good book about Ditmars but poorly proofed, many grammatical errors.

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