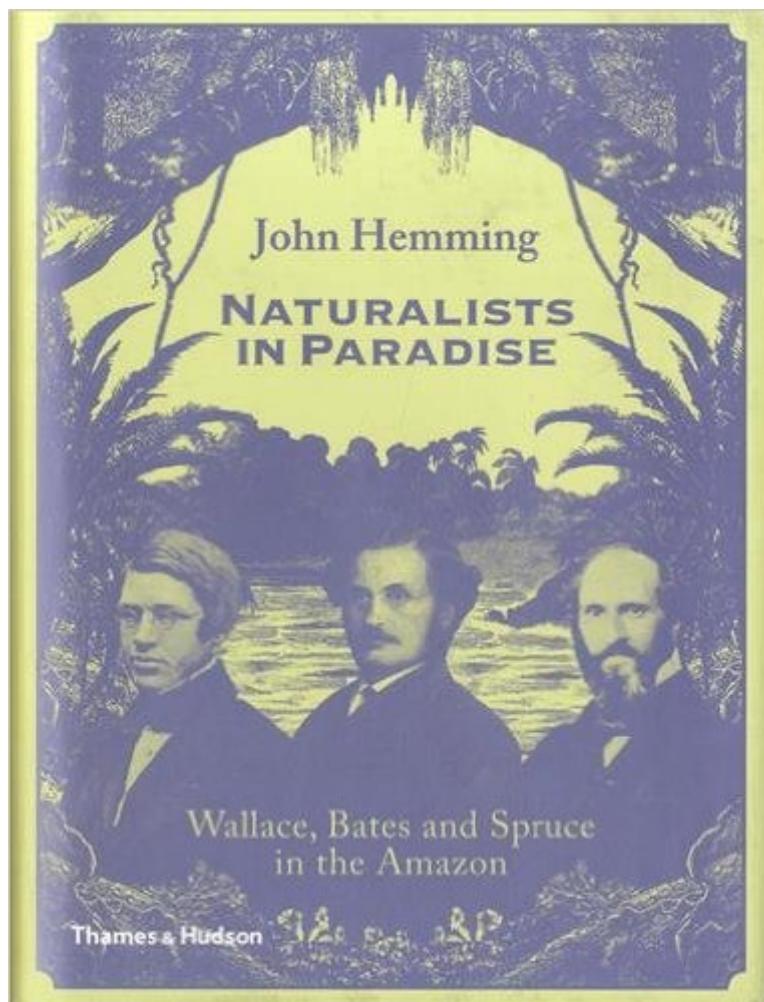


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# Naturalists In Paradise: Wallace, Bates And Spruce In The



## Synopsis

The thrilling stories of the three pioneering English naturalists' explorations and discoveries in the world's richest ecosystem. One hundred and fifty years ago, the young naturalists Alfred Wallace, Henry Walter Bates, and Richard Spruce were on a journey. Their destination, the world's largest tropical forest with the greatest river system and richest ecosystem, was then an almost-undiscovered environment to Western explorers and scientists. In *Naturalists in Paradise*, expert John Hemming weaves the riveting stories of these three men's experiences in the and assesses their valuable research that drastically changed our conception of the natural world. Each of the three naturalists is famous for a particular discovery: Wallace is credited, along with Charles Darwin, for developing the theory of evolution; Bates uncovered the phenomenon of protective mimicry among insects; and Spruce transported the quinine-bearing Cinchona tree to India, saving countless lives from malaria. Drawing on the letters and books of the three naturalists, Hemming reaches beyond the well-known narratives, offering unrivaled insight into the often lawless frontier life in South America as seen through the lives of the great pioneers of modern disciplines: anthropology, tribal linguistics, archaeology, and every branch of natural science. 70 illustrations, 20 in color

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If any book is going to take you down a river of discovery, it's "Naturalists in Paradise; Wallace, Bates and Spruce in the , " by explorer John Hemming, former director of the Royal Geographical

Society. When I first opened this book, I felt a little trepidation. I was intrigued by the topic of Victorian naturalists on the , but at first glance, the book seemed as dense as jungle undergrowth. But like an explorer on the , I plunged forward on this journey and ended up pleasantly surprised. I didnâ™t need a machete to get through it after all. Yes, an editorâ™s red pen should have split a few hundred paragraphs into shorter ones, but I found the writing quite good. Hemming, a world authority on the , clearly loves these three naturalists, Alfred Russel Wallace, Henry Walter Bates and Richard Spruce. As I got into the book, I began to understand each as human beings with distinct personalities, strengths and foibles. As the men explored the and some of its many tributaries, I followed them on the bookâ™s map. The book describes their adventures and discoveries without bogging the lay reader down with scientific data. Hemming is very good at looking at the broader picture and the context of the time they lived in. If you are interested in this topic, you will finish this book with new insight. I had to come to terms with the fact that collecting and studying specimens during that time usually meant killing the creature or cutting down the magnificent tree. I think the book could have addressed this issue better for most readers who do not have the scientistâ™s pragmatic perspective.

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