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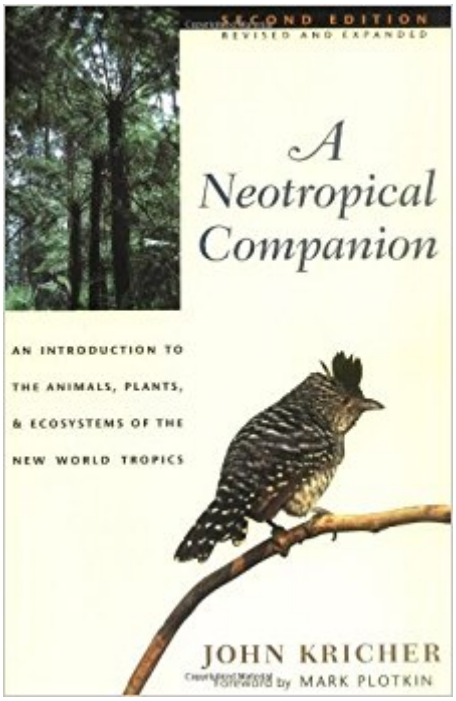
A Neotropical Companion



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Synopsis

A Neotropical Companion is an extraordinarily readable introduction to the American tropics, the lands of Central and South America, their remarkable rainforests and other ecosystems, and the creatures that live there. It is the most comprehensive one-volume guide to the Neotropics available today. Widely praised in its first edition, it remains a book of unparalleled value to tourists, students, and scientists alike. This second edition has been substantially revised and expanded to incorporate the abundance of new scientific information that has been produced since it was first published in 1989. Major additions have been made to every chapter, and new chapters have been added on Neotropical ecosystems, human ecology, and the effects of deforestation. Biodiversity and its preservation are discussed throughout the book, and Neotropical evolution is described in detail. This new edition offers all new drawings and photographs, many of them in color.As enthusiastic readers of the first edition will attest, this is a charming book. Wearing his learning lightly and writing with ease and humor, John Kricher presents the complexities of tropical ecology as accessible and nonintimidating. Kricher is so thoroughly knowledgeable and the book is so complete in its coverage that general readers and ecotourists will not need any other book to help them identify and understand the plants and animals, from birds to bugs, that they will encounter in their travels to the New World tropics. At the same time, it will fascinate armchair travelers and students who may get no closer to the Neotropics than this engagingly written book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is just about the best introduction to the natural history of the New World tropics available and is a real bargain at this price. Another good alternative is "Tropical Nature" by Forsyth and Miyata.I have been using this book since the first edition came out and now have both. It's also one of the books I try to pick up used to give to budding tropical naturalists. And to judge by the number of first-time visitors who carry this book, it is still proving extremely popular. I like the way the author has tried to give a broad overview of the important themes without compromising accuracy. Besides explanations of ecological processes and descriptions of wildlife, there is a strong emphasis on conservation with the final chapter devoted to "Deforestation and Conservation of Diversity". As a companion to the tropical naturalist this will be hard to beat.

I found Kricher's text to be an enlightening, easy read for those interested in learning a subject they're not too familiar with. His explanations are satisfactory and he provides a broad, encyclopedic insight into the Neotropics as well as references for further reading. I also found his quips to be a nice break from the dry and tiresome technicalities that the topic often entails. Overall I think his book provides exactly what it he intended: an introductory text into Neotropical ecology.

I live and work in Central America, and therefore often need information on a wide variety of topics regarding the local ecology. This book has served me very well as a resource which gives concise but engaging explanations of lots of the aspects of the ecosystems here. Perhaps the most important flaw is the lack of information on freshwater aquatic ecosystems. Similarly to other publications, this book leaves one with the impression that there is not much interesting about freshwater except in the drainage.

Kricher's NEOTROPICAL COMPANION is not the kind of 'field-guide-for-dummies' that many of us depend on to find our way around Central and South America's flora and fauna. Rather, it's the next step for people who've become familiar with that kind of guide and want to understand at a deeper and occasionally more abstract level why the natural life around them is what it is.Ours accompanied us through many years in Costa Rica.The photos are stunning, but there are not many of them. Fairly dense, instructive prose dominates.A fine book by a recognized authority. Buy the field guide and get it well-thumbed and into your mind. Then add Kricher's NEOTROPICAL COMPANION to it.

Kricher's prose is easily read and digested with fascinating details of the workings in a tropical

forest. A delightful read for both the student wishing to understand tropical ecology and the traveler who wishes to get a better feel for the environment in South America. Highly recommened.

I took this book along with me to Peru and read it during long boat rides on the river. If you have an interest in biology and ecosystems, this book is a great introduction. It covers a little bit of everything, from birds to mammals to plants. You can dip into one topic without having to read it linearly.The book greatly enhanced my trip. Guides are great but they can’t be experts in everything at once.

I’ve had to choose between 3 and 4 stars, but I’ll stick to 4 stars.It’s really a good introduction to the natural history of the Neotropics. Yet, I’ve got the feeling that Mr. Kricher wants to tell us about too many things in too few space, thus leaving much things for further explanation. Of course, it’s a heavy task to pack such a diversity in so small a book. The general introduction is thorough, but in the group description some groups remain heavily underexposed.He shouldn’t be playing on words this much only to let every pun be followed by a hypocritical "no pun intendeed". There’s nothing against making puns, though.The colour pictures do not add much to the book. I think he’d better have fewer and larger pictures than this stamp collection that give a somewhat disorderly impression.Nevertheless, I enjoyed reading it, making me wish to return to the neotropical rainforests.

This book provides a good overview of several ecosystem types within the neotropics, including information on plants, insects, birds, mammals, and inter-species interactions. It’s written in an academic but accessible style. My only criticism is the presence of numerous typographical and measurement-conversion errors in the book. Overall, I would definitely recommend this book - I brought it with me to Peru, and read it from cover to cover.

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