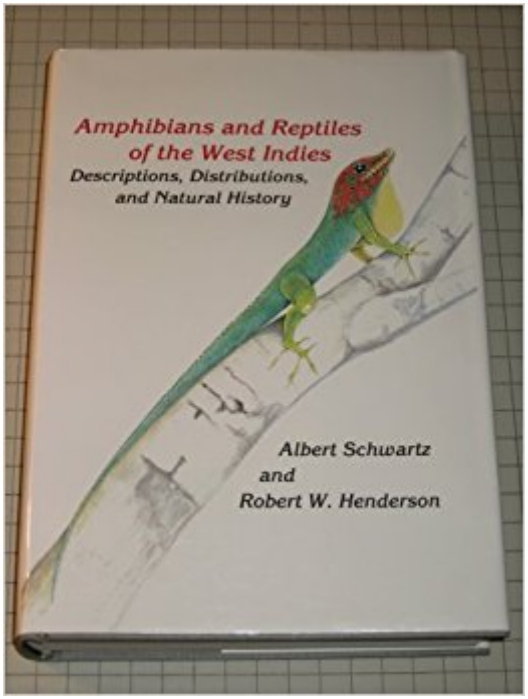
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Amphibians And Reptiles Of The West Indies: Descriptions, Distributions, And Natural History



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Synopsis

Ã Â This meticulous book summarizes all available information on West Indian herpetofauna. Using data from more than 6,000 pages of field notes and 1,000 literature sources, Schwartz and Henderson present a detailed account of every known reptile and amphibian species existing on the numerous islands of the West Indies. For each (almost 600), they offer a complete synopsis, including description, holotype, source of illustrations, and range map. Ã Â A section on natural history summarizes what is known about the habitat, microhabitat, economic bearing, food habits, and reproduction of each animal, and in some cases it shows how these traits change from island to island. In opening remarks, the authors plead eloquently for awareness of the rampant environmental degradation taking place on the islands. For every herpetologist, biologist, ecologist, or biogeographer with an interest in the Antillean biota, Amphibians and Reptiles will become the source from which all future research proceeds. Ã Â

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“A definitive synopsis of West Indian herpetofauna providing the novice of experienced biologist with a concise introduction into the natural history and natural history literature of every species of amphibian and reptileÃ¢â ¬Â¦. Biologists doing fieldwork in the West Indies will find themselves constantly referring to this synopsis whether they are in the field or at home in their research lab.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œGeorge R. Zug, curator-in-charge, division of Amphibians and Reptiles, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution Ã¢â ¬Å“The most

authoritative and complete work on this important herpetofauna, well organized in a readable and interesting text.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œHenry S. Fitch, retired, University of Kansas This meticulous book summarizes all available information on West Indian herpetofauna. Using data from more than 6,000 pages of field notes and 1,000 literature sources, Schwartz and Henderson present a detailed account of every known reptile and amphibian species existing on the numerous islands of the West Indies. For each (almost 600), they offer a complete synopsis, including description, holotype, source of illustrations, and range map. A section on natural history summarizes what is known about the habitat, microhabitat, economic bearing, food habits, and reproduction of each animal, and in some cases it shows how these traits change from island to island. In opening remarks, the authors plead eloquently for awareness of the rampant environmental degradation taking place on the islands. For every herpetologist, biologist, ecologist, or biogeographer with an interest in the Antillean biota, Amphibians and Reptiles will become the source from which all future research proceeds.

Ã Â Albert Schwartz is professor emieritus of biology at Miami-Dade Community College and the author of The Butterflies of Hispaniola (University of Florida Press, 1989). Robert W. Henderson is curator of herpetology at the Milaukee Public Museum. They are coauthors of Guide to the Identification of the Amphibians and Reptiles of the West Indies Exclusive of Hispaniola and West Indian Amphibians and Reptiles: A Check-List. From the envoi: Ã¢â ¬Å“our adventures have equaled or exceeded boyhood dreams of exotic lands and peoples. We have searched in rain forests, on mountaintops, and in desert oases for frogs, lizards, and snakes that no scientist has ever seen before and learned things about these animals that no one else has ever before recordedÃ¢â ¬Â¦. We would be remiss, therefore, if we did not address the persistent issues of threats to the West Indian herpetofauna and the opportunities for its conservation.Ã¢â ¬Â•

This book will be extremely useful for those with a serious interest in the West Indian amphibian and reptile fauna -- i. e., beyond nice pictures and easy identification, two things it does NOT have. It gives details of distribution for each of the nearly 600 species known to 1991 (a number of species have been described since), including maps with locality dots. For each species there is a also a technical description (size, scale counts, etc.), a list of subspecies, if any, published references where illustrations can be found, and notes on the natural history. The distributional information and the notes on natural history are probably the most useful aspects of this book. It would have been much more useful to have a means of identifying the species. The technical descriptions will help

some, but there is no way to know, if you have a specimen in the hand and read a description that seems to fit, whether there might not be a description that is a closer fit a few pages away; and often, with similar species the descriptions will not discriminate them, anyway. Based on distributions, you may be able to eliminate some species, and arrive at a tentative identification. You will also have to have a good background knowledge of what the genera are like. So, this book is not a field guide for the novice but an excellent reference for those with deeper interests.

This book is a classic and a must for all who are interested in the herpetological fauna of the west indies.

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