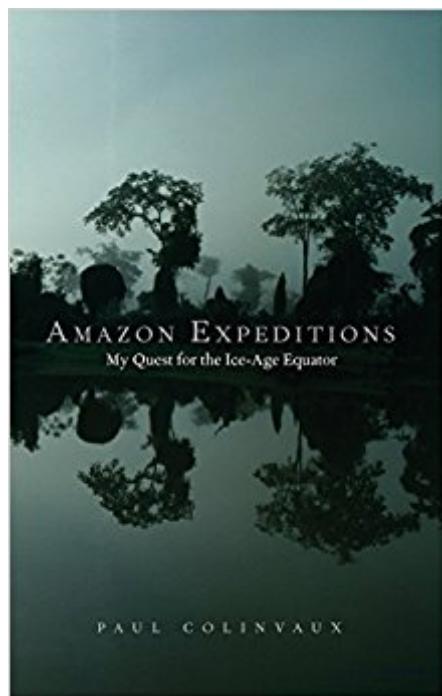


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Expeditions: My Quest For The Ice-Age Equator



Synopsis

In this vivid memoir of a life in science, ecologist Paul Colinvaux takes his readers from the Alaskan tundra to steamy jungles, from the Galapagos Islands (before tourists had arrived) to the high Andes and the Darien Gap in Panama. He recounts an adventurous tale of exploration in the days before GPS and satellite mapping, and a tale no less exhilarating of his battle to disprove a hypothesis endorsed by most of the scientific community. Colinvaux's grand endeavor, begun in the 1960s, was to find fossil evidence of the ice-age climate and vegetation of the entire American equator, from Pacific to Atlantic. The accomplishment of the task by the author and his colleagues involved finding unknown ancient lakes, lugging drilling equipment through uncharted jungle, operating hand drills from rubber boats in water 40 meters deep, and inventing a pollen analysis for a land with 80,000 species of plants. Colinvaux's years of arduous travel and research ultimately disproved a hotly defended hypothesis explaining bird distribution peculiarities in the forest. The story of how he arrived at a new understanding of the is at once an adventurous saga, an account of science as it is conducted in the field, and a cautionary tale about the temptation to treat a favored hypothesis with a reverence that subverts unbiased research.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Colinvaux, an ecologist at the forefront of pollen research for the past 40 years, has turned his path breaking career into a scientific detective story, from his days as a graduate student drilling glaciers in the Alaskan tundra, to his explorations of lake beds in the steamy forest. The narrative follows his efforts to untangle "one of the knottiest problems of ecological theory," why the is the most

biodiverse region in the world, with a unique population of birds and 80,000 plant species. Could this be explained by catastrophic changes in the climate during the ice age? Colinvaux's research takes him across South America, and his conclusions turn on its head the hypothesis endorsed by most of the scientific community, that the equatorial temperature was constant but arid, so that life could only exist in enclaves (his findings indicates a moist climate and a temperature drop of four degrees). An exciting account of field work under challenging and sometimes dangerous circumstances, this is a rewarding read for anyone with an interest in environmental and biological history. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Colinvaux captures very well both the excitement and frustration that comes from long-term scientific endeavor." •Susanna Hecht, University of California, Los Angeles (Susanna Hecht 2007-02-21)" Expeditions combines an autobiographical account of a distinguished ecologist's career with a charting of the course of an important debate about the relationship between biodiversity and climate change in ia." •Stephen Nugent, Goldsmiths College, University of London (Stephen Nugent 2007-02-21) "Expeditions is a tour-de-force, presenting the development of an interpretation of major importance for both theory and conservation. I find the evidence compelling." •Emily Southgate, Rutgers University (Emily Southgate) "There is a touch of Tolkien in Paul Colinvaux's engaging, masterly, story of his research career. A paradigm is destroyed and hypotheses are killed, ruthlessly or ruefully, as he seeks evidence of tropical climates in the Ice Age." •Peter Grant, Princeton University (Peter Grant) "An absorbing tale of scientific detection" •a saga of muddy boots, microscopes and geology revealing the secret of ia's ice-age climate •revealing combined portrait of field and laboratory science at work. •Thomas E. Lovejoy, author of Climate Change and Biodiversity (Tom Lovejoy) "The author skillfully weaves in grueling experiences and hardships in the field with the excitement of obtaining good samples. . . . He makes a strong case that the essentially remained unchanged throughout the Pleistocene." •William E. Duellman, Quarterly Review of Biology (William E. Duellman Quarterly Review of Biology 2008-09-01) "The story is part picaresque and part polemic, at once a tale of adventure and a firsthand account of the deconstruction of a 'beautiful' theory. . . . Colvinaux has given us a most entertaining behind-the-scenes account of his challenging quest and worthy accomplishments." •Paul Barker, American Scientist (Paul Barker American Scientist 2008-11-01) "An interesting book that aims at a wide readership, particularly...anyone interested in

tales of explorations and the scientific search of the ice-age climatic history."--Sonia L. Fontana, *Geographical Journal* (Sonia L. Fontana *Geographical Journal* 2009-12-01)

I enjoy reading books by scientists who can write well and who talk about how they do their research. But I'm not just interested in the highlights and awards and accolades they've received - I like to read about the nitty gritty details of how a particular brand of science is done - whether it's in the field or in the lab (or both, as in this case), the logistical problems of field work in far flung locations, how sometimes a whole year of work ends up as a dead end. Paul Colinvaux's book gives all that in a setting of field work in the Galapagos and the . I like how he makes the topic of researching the ancient climate of the like a mystery to be slowly worked out over several decades of work. I never thought I'd be fascinated by how one cores lake sediments to get at their fossil pollen record, but Colinvaux did it for me.

the top quality The seller answered my questions very patiently, excellent service. starsproduct is perfect it's exactly what was described these lights are amazing and it's worth the money. love them of course this is a nice product for the money.

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