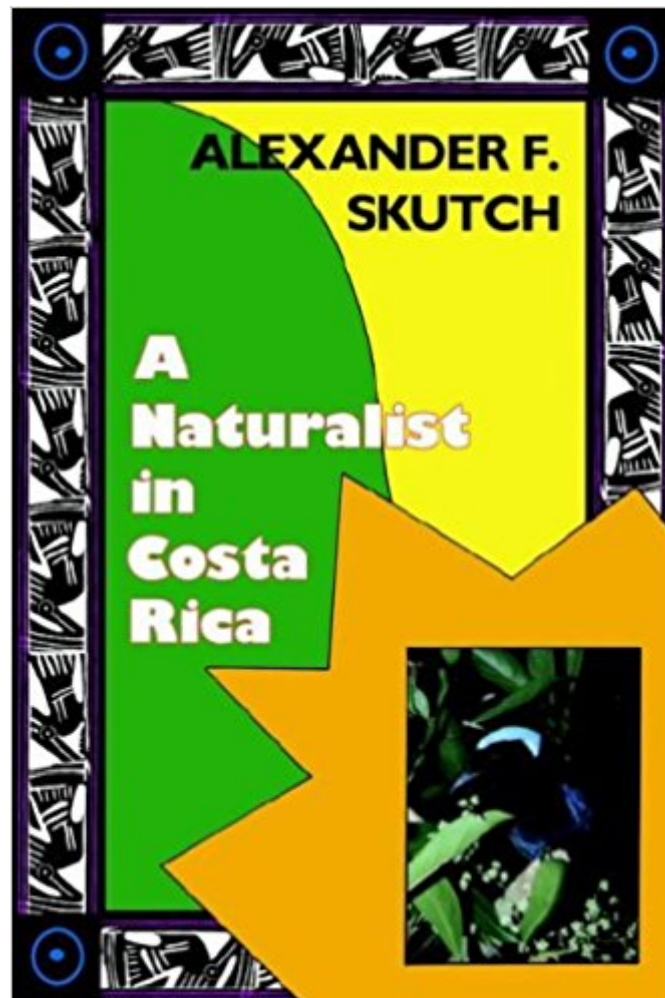




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A Naturalist In Costa Rica: How Movement Shapes Identity



Synopsis

A Naturalist in Costa Rica picks up Alexander F. Skutch's story in 1935, the year his memoir The Imperative Call ends. In it he records his life, work, observations, and reflections during thirty-five years in the southeastern Pacific section of Costa Rica.

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Customer Reviews

A Naturalist in Costa Rica picks up Alexander F. Skutch's story in 1935, the year his memoir The Imperative Call ends. In it he records his life, work, observations, and reflections during thirty-five years in the southern Pacific section of Costa Rica.

This is a wonderful read. The author is both a fine writer and naturalist who pioneered much ornithological study in Costa Rica starting in the 1930's. A great taste of one man's experiences in a time and place long gone.

If you have an interest in Costa Rica, this book offers a good read. It was an enjoyable journey into history.

Dr. Alexander Skutch passed away in 2004 just short of his 100th birthday. He was an acclaimed biologist and had published a multitude of studies, articles and books on tropical botany, nature and ornithology. In this book he describes his early days in Costa Rica just after concluding his work with the banana producing companies in the 1930's. In 1941 he purchased a farm in the rich San Isidro

Valley in the South Central part of the country and named it Los Cosingos after the Fiery-billed Aracari, a species of Toucan that was common in the area. Skutch then devoted his time to studying the birds and plants of the area and worked to save some of the forests and preserves of the country. He along with Dan Janzen were two of the most influential biologists that helped Costa Rica shape a system of national parks that may be the best of any country in the world. In this book Skutch writes of the early days on the farm, what the area was like before the main rush of settlers and how it changed into an agricultural center. His farm, or better called his sanctuary is the last forest left in the area and still shelters many of the birds, animals and plants once found in the valley before it changed to cropland. He describes journeys across the Cerro Muerte before the road was built when there was just a horse trail, and travelers would sometimes freeze on its heights here in the tropics. He describes fantastic natural phenomena such as migrations of iridescent winged butterflies that stretched from horizon to horizon that sadly dwindled with time and are no more. I had noticed that no one had reviewed this book which I imagine is an indicator of the present interest in this book. This is very unfortunate as it is an excellent read and will illuminate aspects of tropical life that have all but disappeared in Central America.

I am reading it now. It is fascinating.

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