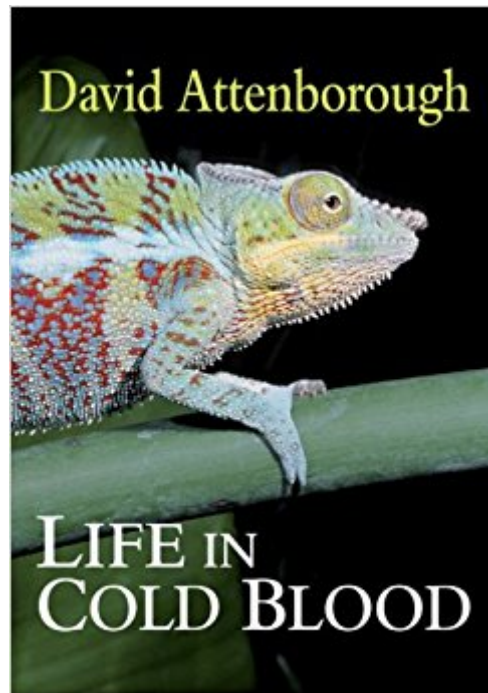




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Life In Cold Blood



Synopsis

Life in Cold Blood offers a rare glimpse into the peculiar world of amphibians and reptiles, the first vertebrate creatures to venture forth from the primeval waters millions of years ago, yet which today include species that are the most at risk of extinction. Join acclaimed naturalist Sir David Attenborough as he travels to the far corners of the Earth to tell the epic story of these animals in this companion to the television series. Discover the secrets of their astounding success--and the profound implications of their uncertain future. Amphibians and reptiles once ruled the planet, and their descendants exhibit some of the most colorful variety and astounding behavior known to the animal kingdom. What are the origins of these creatures? How have they transformed themselves into the beautiful and bizarre forms found today? In this gorgeously illustrated book, Attenborough gets up close and personal with the living descendants of the first vertebrates ever to colonize the land, and through them traces the fascinating history of their pioneering ancestors. He explains the ways amphibians and reptiles have changed little from their prehistoric forebears while also demonstrating how they have adapted and evolved into diverse new forms, some of them beyond our wildest imaginings. And Attenborough raises awareness of the threats global warming and other man-made environmental changes pose to many of these creatures. Life in Cold Blood inspires a genuine sense of wonder about amphibians and reptiles and the marvels of the natural world around us.

Book Information

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: Princeton University Press (March 10, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9780691137186

ISBN-13: 978-0691137186

ASIN: 0691137188

Product Dimensions: 7.2 x 1 x 9.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #611,267 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 in [Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Zoology > Amphibians](#) #40 in [Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Zoology > Reptiles](#) #141 in [Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Reptiles & Amphibians](#)

Customer Reviews

"Careful observation and love of nature are the hallmarks of Sir David's work. Life in Cold Blood covers far more than snakes, being an investigation of all amphibians and reptiles, and it is the latest in a series of projects that have covered almost all life on earth. Sir David is now in his early eighties, and the arduous nature of his work suggests that this may well be the last of the great ventures into nature. In Life in Cold Blood, Sir David has left the best wine for last."--Tim Flannery, New York Review of Books

"Attenborough travels to the ends of the earth to tell the story of these creatures, raising awareness of the threats of environmental destruction along the way."--Scientific American

"Even a person normally immune to the charms of amphibians and reptiles will soon be drawn in by the fascinating color photographs of Life in Cold Blood, the latest book by broadcaster and naturalist David Attenborough. The next thing you know, you're shoving the book under your friends' noses, insisting that they have a look."--Flora Taylor, American Scientist

"Life in Cold Blood adds to film naturalist and author Attenborough's rich legacy of fine books and documentaries providing vivid, concise accounts of life-forms. . . . The book offers a nice balance between large conceptual issues that define the world of ectothermic tetrapods and less well-known yet fascinating facts. Basic life history including diet, locomotion, reproductive habits, and geographical distribution are presented, with just the right amount of fossil record content tying it all together. This modest-sized, nicely bound book is generously illustrated with excellent color plates and includes explanations of the origins of numerous names and terms."--J.E. Platz, Choice

"The latest tour de force of naturalist and prolific author, David Attenborough, Life in Cold Blood takes us on a fascinating tour through the often bizarre and alien world of Tikaalik's amphibian and reptile descendants."--Explorers Journal

"Profusely illustrated and written in Sir David Attenborough's inimitable style--his writing is wonderfully effortless--this is the final book of four in a series on vertebrates by the respected 80-year-old naturalist. Experts might find much of the material here familiar, but generalists who are fascinated by the world around us will be captivated. I'll confess a weakness for books where you learn something new every page. With Attenborough you're likely to learn something new every paragraph."--Marc Horton, The Edmonton Journal

"Naturalist Attenborough uses his considerable talent to explain the world of reptiles and amphibians, the descendants of the first vertebrates of prehistoric life. He also warns of the threat of man-made environmental changes that threaten their existence. This volume includes 200 photos, some of them truly amazing."--Angelyn N. Hutchinson, Deseret Morning News

"[T]he accessibility and accuracy of the text, combined with its low price, make this an ideal choice for the amateur naturalist's introduction to the herpetological world."--Aaron M. Bauer, Quarterly Review of

Biology" This is nature writing at its best for the author is a natural born storyteller. . . . As a planning aid, this book offers a list of the best spots for seeing wildlife."--Connie Krochmal, BellaOnline

"Admirably illustrated, this book completes David Attenborough's great exploration of the world's main animal groups. He shows us the lives of amphibians and reptiles in all the fascinating detail we have come to expect from him. A treasure trove for everyone--from the child seeing flying dragons or man-eating crocodiles for the first time to the professional zoologist realizing that there is still much to learn."--Philip Rainbow, Natural History Museum, London

"Quite delightful to read. There are many popular books on amphibians and reptiles, but most are aimed more at a younger audience or are intended as field guides, while others are primarily picture books with little or very poor text. Life in Cold Blood is a popular, well-illustrated book that introduces some scientific rigor. The scholarship is excellent. The illustrations are outstanding and are both informative and beautiful."--Kurt Schwenk, University of Connecticut

Great

Ever since I started studying herpetology for Science Olympiad, I have looked all over for books that have facts that no one else will know. This book does that. With interesting pictures and facts about some of the coolest herps out there, this book is great for acquiring knowledge.

Sir David Attenborough travels the globe to find an array of experts who introduce him (and us) to the world of reptiles and all other cold-blooded creatures. Not surprisingly, the lives of all of these animals are fascinatingly varied and will pique your interest to see this fauna in a whole new light.

I did not approach this book as an expert in the field, nor did I expect it to be an exhaustive, in-depth study. The mistakes other reviewers have mentioned do not dampen my liking of this book - I am not going to remember the scientific name of a poison dart frog, nor is it going to bother me if someone else gets it wrong. And, while it is true that a few of the photos are older, they are all crisp and clear. More importantly, they visually illustrate the written descriptions. They are well chosen for the text - not necessarily to impress or awe, although almost all of the photos are striking and beautiful. It is not a coffee table book meant for decoration. It is not a text book. On the other hand, it does not claim to be either of those. Although any factual errors are regrettable, this is still a very engaging read, wonderfully interesting, and you do not get the sense that the author has no clue

what he's talking about. Even the foremost expert on any given subject will make a few mistakes. I got the sense that the author was as careful and thorough as humanly possible to make sure that the vast store of facts in this book was engagingly presented, logically arranged - and accurate - while still managing to publish a book. I'm the type of person who loves learning, reading, watching documentaries, etc., and just *knowing* things. I enjoyed this book immensely and have read it twice.

Life in Cold BloodMy admiration for this book stems from a mix of my ignorance of taxonomy and my perspective as a neurologist. This explains my inability to comment on any of the misspellings and errors detected by some of the other reviewers. With every book I read on comparative anatomy or evolutionary physiology, my erstwhile enthusiasm, rigid and fixed, for the human nervous system relents. It admits graciously a greater pervasive wonder for life across the spectra of all animal forms. This is the promontory from which I approach this work. This book of 281 pages and 6 chapters is aglow with vivid pictures of animal grandeur. Frogs, salamanders, lizards, iguanas, crocodiles, turtles or snakes greet you page after page. We learn about the anatomy, behavior and evolution of amphibians, reptiles and other cold-blooded animals. There are exquisite descriptions, whether it is of snakes calibrating their predatory strikes or of frogs producing internal anti-freeze to survive the arctic chill. Elaborate mating rituals of frogs and eating patterns of pythons would fascinate the reader. It is likely that other books in this area have covered as much ground or even more. That possibility need not reduce the merit of this volume. The comparative biology that underpins this volume is a riveting reading experience in itself. There are numerous utterly captivating mechanisms that the cold blooded animals use to protect and evolve. They may suppress one lung, right or left, from fully developing, secrete, shoot or spit various venoms, protrude and circumduct their fangs, hibernate in extreme cold and even carry their own radiators and solar panels. Preservation and reproduction call for such grand and complex acts. Across all living organisms, including humans, the overriding emphasis is on self-preservation and procreation. We might be relying on precision bombing and in-vitro fertilization, and they may use their toxins and gastric pregnancy with regurgitation of their young. Even herding and social structuring apparently existed from prehistoric to contemporary times. Regardless of our own sophistication, we still share many basics with the cold-blooded animals. If nothing else, this is a beautiful lesson that I learn and relearn from works such as this. My only quarrel with this delicious book is the absence of scholarly citations or references to primary research that would have enabled further reading.

I bought this book as soon as it came out, as i am greatly interested in reptiles and in general like the books/films the BBC/Attenborough makes. This book is for me dissapointing. Why you are asking ? The photos first of all, i always expect something new, beautiful or rare on the photos from somebody as Attenborough and the BBC, the photos are not. A lot of older, already published photos and grade B photos, not the best of the best anyway. The quality of the paper is dull and not glossy this makes it even worse for the photos to come to life and is something i am not used to for books in this price range (i bought it in the Netherlands for around 40 euros). The text is general, heard it and seen it before.... Conclusion, the book is for someone that wants some general information about reptiles. But they can get that a lot better with other reptilian books on the market. The photos do not stand out, so no point there for buying the book either. A missed chance by the BBC and the Attenborough franchise, they could and should have done a lot better.

What can we say about David Attenborough's series that hasn't already been said. They are absolutely awesome. 'Life in Cold Blood' is about cold blooded animals and lizards. Get close up with your favorite lizard. My son loves these DVD's. I find him watching them by himself sometimes. These have been watched by our whole family many times already, and I'm sure they aren't done yet! Any one of the DVD's by David Attenborough is a great pleasure to watch. With his total detail to each animal, he is wonderful to watch. You won't be sorry if you invest in this DVD I can tell you that. The photography is gorgeous!

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