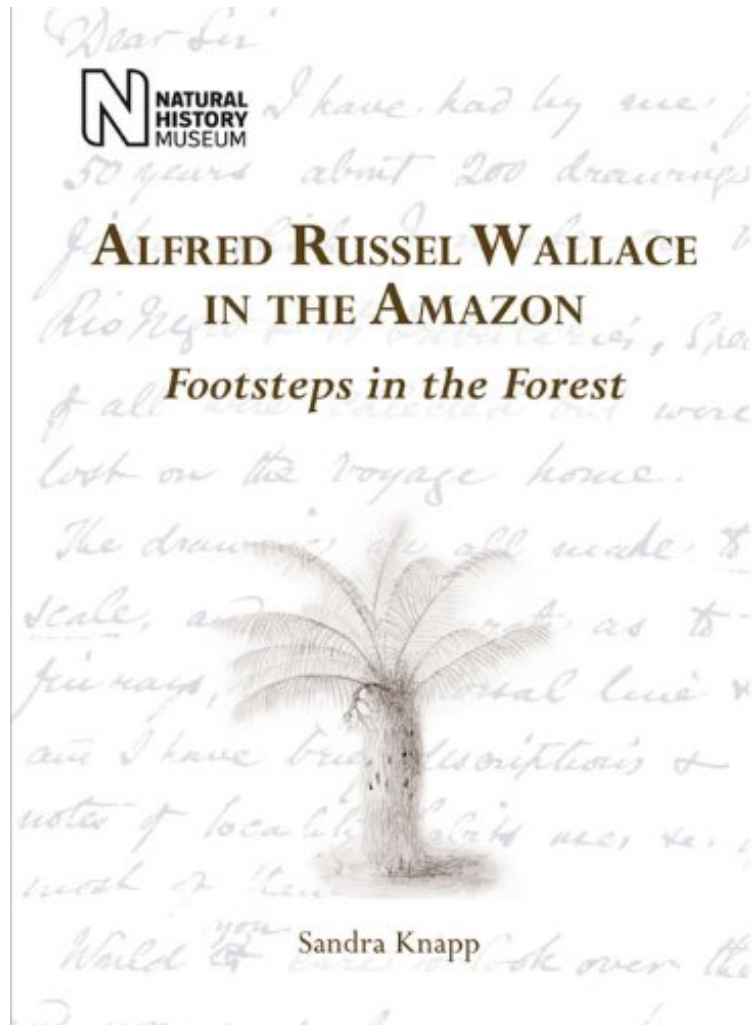


Alfred Russel Wallace in the Amazon: Footsteps in the Forest

Sandra Knapp

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Sandra Knapp : Alfred Russel Wallace in the Amazon: Footsteps in the Forest before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Alfred Russel Wallace in the Amazon: Footsteps in the Forest:

A fascinating account of naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace's 1848 expedition to the Amazon Alfred Russel Wallace spent almost two years traveling up the Rio Negro, a region few Europeans had explored, collecting natural history specimens. A fire onboard the ship during the return journey to England destroyed all of his collections, but among the possessions rescued was a collection of sketches of fish, later presented to the Natural History Museum. This book describes the naturalist in the making, the tragic loss of Wallace's collections, and how this affected his future. His

research ultimately led him (in parallel with Darwin) to one of the biggest and most controversial ideas of the 19th century: evolution by natural selection, and his understanding of this process certainly began in the Amazon. Wallace's Amazonian adventure is recounted using his own words where possible, and illustrated throughout with his delicate pencil drawings. The story is interwoven with the author's current experience of tropical field work and is told in a lively, informal style.

From Booklist: Famous for his investigations in the Malay Archipelago in the 1850s, which led him to form the theory that natural selection drives evolution (as had Charles Darwin privately), Alfred Russell Wallace was only a novice wanting to learn the rare-species collecting trade when he reached the River in 1848. In the four years that he spent exploring the humid, insect-ridden tributaries of the tropical river, he developed a talent for finding rare species and gained special insight into the order of nature. According to author and botanist Knapp, the story of Wallace's South American years has been forgotten because his specimens and journals were lost in a shipwreck, delaying his scientific publishing career. He saved only a box with drawings of fish and palm trees. Using those drawings, letters, and quotes from Wallace's 1905 autobiography, Knapp vividly recounts the adventurous fieldwork that prepared a pioneering naturalist to challenge and rewrite natural history. --Rick Roche