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Peer reviewed

Review: Rainforest

By Sara Oldfield

Reviewed by [Alan L. Chan](#)

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Sara Oldfield. *Rainforest*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 2002. 160 pp. ISBN 0-262-15106-5. US\$29.95 (cloth).

Rainforest is a document of colorful pictures and persuasive description. It is a record of endangered species in assorted rainforests across our planet earth, from up in Alaska in North America to down under by Australia in Tasmania, from Jamaica among the many islands in the Caribbean to Madagascar next to Africa in the Indian Ocean. Sara Oldfield, the author, is global program director with the wildlife conservation charity Fauna & Flora International.

In the first chapter Oldfield begins to introduce the facts and arguments that the rainforests are vanishing habitats with endangered species because of human, industrial, and natural causes. Consequently, she comes to the conclusion that aggressive conservation and effective management should be implemented for the future of the rainforests. Then the following nine chapters classify the rainforests in the world into nine regions/countries/groups with the following titles: Africa; Madagascar; India and South East Asia; Indonesia and the Philippines; Central America; The Caribbean; The Amazon; Brazil; and Temperate Rainforest. For reference, there is a list of rainforest species of concern (threatened) and a directory of organizations working to save the world's rainforests at the end of the book.

As a format, each chapter consists of a brief description of the region. Then there is a discussion of the uniqueness in that area in relation to the indigenous people, plants, mammals, inserts, and/or birds, etc. Finally, in some instances, a case study is presented for in-depth knowledge of some of the critical issues in relation to that particular region. All these are supplemented by a collection of vivid pictures.

By no means is this a comprehensive report of all the rainforests in the world. However, through Oldfield's passionate writing with the help of two hundred striking pictures, we can conceptualize what her passion and the urgent concerns are. First of all, she enjoys herself visiting rainforests. Second, the well being of all the living things in the rainforest and the rainforests themselves is important to her. Third, as a result, she commits herself to act as an advocate for the rainforests as habitats for living

creatures. In other words, Oldfield believes in what she preaches.

Rainforest is a concise but excellent introduction to the understanding of the rainforests as habitats for many endangered species and other related issues. With the enrichment of beautiful pictures, it is recommended to all who are interested in learning more about our rainforests, especially those who are currently without sufficient financial means to do eco-touring and/or under the constraint of time to read at length.

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