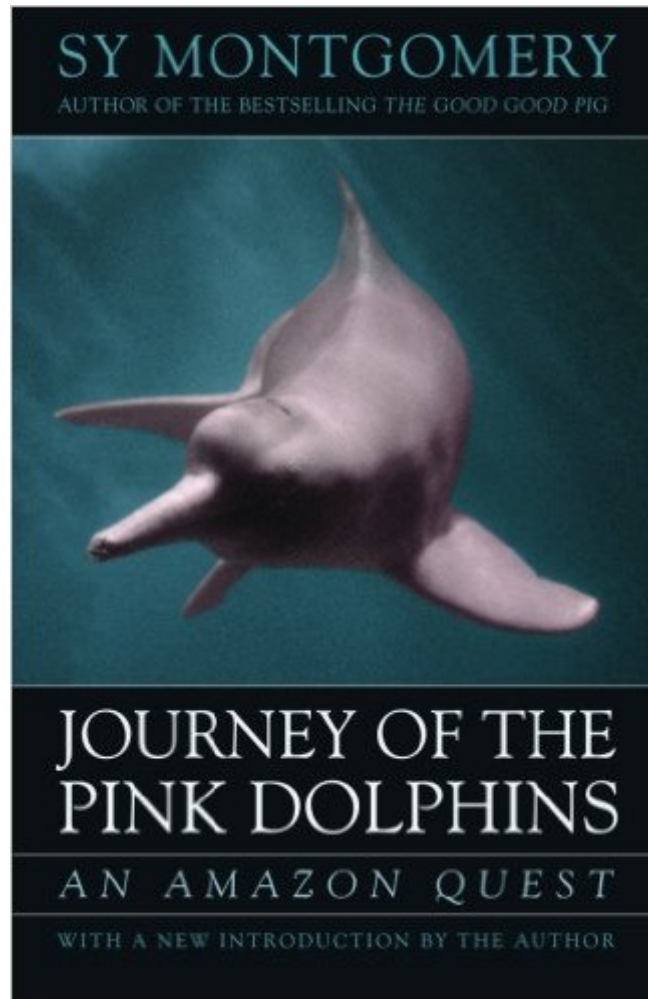


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Journey Of The Pink Dolphins: An Quest



Synopsis

By the acclaimed author of *The Soul of an Octopus* and the bestselling memoir *The Good Good Pig*. When Sy Montgomery ventured into the to unlock the mysteries of the littleknown pink dolphins, she found ancient whales that plied the River at dawn and dusk, swam through treetops in flooded forests, and performed underwater ballets with their flexible bodies. But she soon found out that to know the botos, as the dolphins are locally called, you must also know the people who live among them. And so in *Journey of the Pink Dolphins*, Montgomeryâ•part naturalist, part poet, part Indiana Jonesâ•pwinds her way through watery tributaries and riverside villages, searching for botos and hearing the tales of locals who believe these ethereal dolphins are shape-shiftersâ•pcreatures that emerge from the water as splendidly dressed men or women only to enchant their human onlookers, capture their souls, and then carry them away to the Encante, an underwater world. Montgomery takes readers on four separate journeys, exploring the river-dwelling dolphinsâ•p™ natural history, chronicling their conservation pressures, unraveling their prehistoric roots, and visiting with shamans who delve into the Encante.

Book Information

Paperback: 253 pages

Publisher: Chelsea Green Publishing; Reprint edition (February 15, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1603580603

ISBN-13: 978-1603580601

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 15 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 starsÂ•Â• See all reviewsÂ• (31 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #551,233 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #12 inÂ• Books > Travel > South America > Brazil > #228 inÂ• Books > Travel > South America > General #259 inÂ• Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Marine Life

Customer Reviews

It's not that I learned a lot about pink dolphins; there actually isn't a lot of info about them here. But I loved this book. Sy writes so poetically and describes the areas where she worked so vividly, that I imagined her every move and drop of sweat in this hot tropical adventure. She does inform us in great detail of many natural creatures and events around the , and I learned a lot about that part of the world. It was so delightful I never wanted the book to end. Her writing style is memorable and

beautiful. I especially liked the description of "man rain" and "woman rain" and have used this concept in my conversations with people.

In reading this book, I feel as though I learned as much about the and its people and culture as I did about pink river dolphins. Mythology, botany, entomology, anthropology, zoology...it's all there, along with doses of history and present-day conservation and environmentalism. I love Montgomery's style of writing (and thinking). There were times which were poetic, educational, reflective, and others in which I found myself laughing out loud. A long-time dolphin lover, I appreciate Montgomery's enormous effort she undertook to connect with pink river dolphins. I'm happy to have found and read this book so she could share them with me...This was the next best thing to being there.

I can't believe how many people (including myself) had never heard of freshwater dolphins before seeing this book. Why isn't there any information out there about these intriguing cousins of the saltwater dolphins that we all know and love? Well, now there is! And Sy Montgomery takes us deep into the habitat of the freshwater dolphins --- the (where, as she explains, there are trees and ants that can kill you, among many other things). She not only explores the life and biology of these dolphins, but she also explores some of the myths that surround them. She learns that many native peoples believe that these creatures can take the form of humans in their efforts to seduce women into their underwater world. She relates first hand accounts of these stories and myths. But the author doesn't stop there, she writes extensively about the atmosphere of the , the people, the ecosystem, the cultures, the tourists, the industries, etc... She provides a lot of interesting information about a very unique subject. As I read the book, I felt as if I was being pulled into the . Her writing is clear and approachable, sometimes poetic, but other times drawn-out. There are some very insightful passages as well. And fascinating photographs are scattered throughout. I recommend this book to anyone interested in animals, conservation, adventure travel, aboriginal/native cultures and all those intrigued by the idea of a freshwater dolphin!

I loved this book! Sy Montgomery is a talented writer, able to put you in exotic places with vivid descriptions, I almost felt I was in the . She really brought it to life, I look forward to reading another book of hers I have purchased, "Search for the Golden Moon Bear." The book focuses on the author's quest for the pink dolphin, but really it is a journey to find not one but two dolphins. I don't refer to the other species of dolphin that lives in the , the tucuxis (one which she also covers in the

book), but for two sides of the same animal. On the one hand she searches for the pink dolphin, the bufeo in Spanish or boto in Portuguese, a living animal of which little is known about in comparison with many other dolphin species. Living in the most massive river system on earth, one connected to innumerable lakes in the rainy season, in waters often black as coffee and infested with caimans, piranha, stingrays, and electric eels, in often very remote regions to which there is no reliable transportation to, it is a difficult subject to study. An example of cetaceans from an earlier geologic era, primitive when compared to modern oceanic dolphins, the pink dolphins preserve something from an earlier era, a holdover in the modern world. Montgomery and her various companions in the book struggle to get good observations of the dolphins, to try and track them, to identify individuals, to observe their behavior. The author finds that even experts who have studied the bufeo for years are often perplexed by them. She has many successes, providing much interesting information on them and a fine series of color photographs of the often startlingly pink dolphins. Montgomery though is also questing for the Encante, the mystical shape-shifting dolphin that is very real to many of the peoples who live along the mighty . Believed to exist in fabulous cities beneath the surface of the river, the locals speak in conspiratorial tones about the dolphins' magic powers and often lust for attractive humans. The natives often worry that their wives, husbands, sons, and daughters will be stolen about by the fabulous Encante, and speak with awe and reverence about the dolphins. Montgomery continually quests for the natives' views of the Encante, for their "true" tales, and for how they protect themselves against their fantastic attention. Montgomery doesn't exclusively focus on dolphins though. Her book in part is a vivid travelogue of *Ia*, bringing us to many exotic locations. We visit Manaus, the impossible Paris of the , home to an opera house right out of a fairy tale. Built upon the backs of native jungle peoples by rubber barons, today it is a squalid city trying to embrace change. She takes us to amazing Meeting of the Waters, where for miles two tributaries of the , the black River Negro and the white Solimoes, flow side by side before forming the true River. We are taken to two different nature reserves, both with differing strategies, Tamshiyacu-Tahuayo and Mamiraua, where some of the rich life and deadly beauty of *Ia* is preserved against an uncertain future. Montgomery takes us to the impossibly clear waters and white sandy beaches of the Tapajos and Arapiuns Rivers, where she actually swims with the dolphins, something not possible elsewhere in the dark and piranha-infested rivers elsewhere. She undertakes a vision quest by taking the hallucigenic Ayahuasca or "Mother of the Vine," something few Westerners have done (and for good reason). Further, while the bufeo or boto is the star of the book, many other animals form a rich supporting cast. The odd hoatzin, a bird with claws, seemingly something out of the Mesozoic. Electric eels, extremely common and surprisingly complex. Caimans, another seemingly prehistoric

species. I mean manatees, gentle vegetarians that are much more intelligent than often given credit for. The weird side-necked turtle. All manner of insects, including ants. And more are given space. Some have said that she rhapsodizes too much in the book, but I disagree. She has done her research, the book is filled with interviews with experts, and there is a nice bibliography at the end. She has skillfully combined hard science with poetry, and the effort is very worthwhile. I highly recommend it.

As someone who's interested in the , its people, culture, geography, fauna, flora and other subjects, I read this book for its fascinating topic. However, this is a very mixed bag. There are moving sections, as when she describes the genocide perpetrated against the native peoples by Europeans (you would not believe the atrocities and torture they visited the Indians, whom they considered lower than animals - much worse in its ferocity than the Holocaust of WWII). The writing can be quite bad at times (at one point, her powers of description comes up with a fruit she tried, "bitter as semen"). But the worse is, she seems to be a very bad science writer and researcher. Who edited this book? Certainly not people versed in science or Portuguese. She gets everything in Portuguese wrong. The scientific names and terms are often misspelled. Proceed with caution.

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