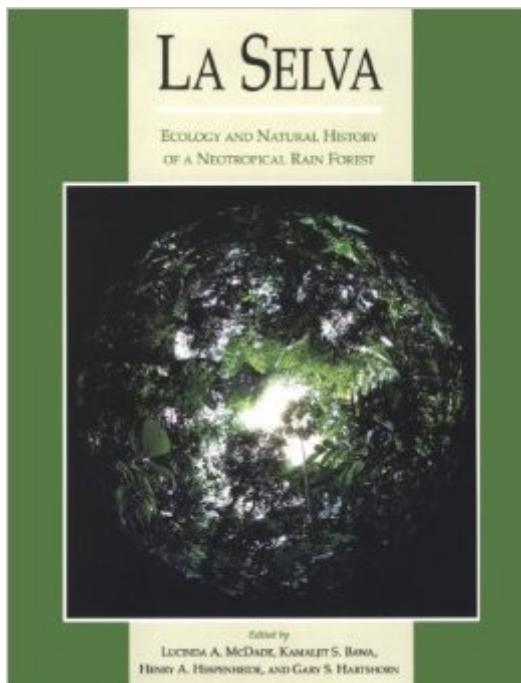


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La Selva: Ecology And Natural History Of A Neotropical Rain Forest



Synopsis

La Selva, a nature reserve and field station in Costa Rica, is one of the most intensively studied and best-understood tropical field sites in the world. For over thirty years, La Selva has been a major focus of research on rainforest ecology, flora, and fauna. This volume provides the first comprehensive review of this research, covering La Selva's geographical history and physical setting, its plant and animal life, and agricultural development and land use. Drawing together a wealth of information never before available in a single volume, La Selva offers a substantive treatment of the ecology of a rainforest. Part 1 summarizes research on the physical setting and environment of the rainforest, as well as the history of the research station. Some chapters in this part focus on climate, geomorphology, and aquatic systems, while others look at soils, nutrient acquisition, and cycles of energy. Part 2 synthesizes what is known about the plant community. It begins with chapters on vegetation types and plant diversity, and also explores plant demography, spatial patterns of trees, and the impact of treefall gaps on forest structure and dynamics. Other chapters address plant physiological ecology, as well as plant reproductive systems. Part 3 covers the animal community, summarizing information on the six best-known animal taxa of the region: fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, and butterflies. This part includes an overview of faunal studies at La Selva and a chapter on animal population biology, which examines animal demography and abundance, and interactions between predators and prey. Part 4 addresses interactions between plants and animals and the effects of these interactions on species diversity. Part 5 considers the impact of land use and agricultural development on La Selva and other areas of Costa Rica. One chapter examines land colonization and conservation in Sarapiquí, another covers subsistence and commercial agricultural development in the Atlantic lowlands region, and a third looks at the forest industry in northeastern Costa Rica. This part also assesses the role and research priorities of La Selva. La Selva provides an introduction to tropical ecology for students and researchers at La Selva, a major source of comparative information for biologists working in other tropical areas, and a valuable resource for conservationists.

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A very detailed description of a mighty research station I visited about 20 years ago. This book will stimulate the interest in tropica studies for studens otherwise not infformed about.

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