

## Worlds of Natural History

From Aztec accounts of hibernating hummingbirds to contemporary television spectacles, human encounters with nature have long sparked wonder, curiosity and delight. Written by leading scholars, this richly illustrated volume offers a lively introduction to the history of natural history, from the sixteenth century to the present day. Covering an extraordinary range of topics, from curiosity cabinets and travelling menageries to modern seed banks and radio-tracked wildlife, this volume draws together the work of historians of science, of environment and of art, museum curators and literary scholars. The chapters are framed by an introduction charting recent trends in the field and an epilogue outlining the prospects for the future. Accessible to newcomers and established specialists alike, *Worlds of Natural History* provides a much-needed perspective on current discussions of biodiversity and an enticing overview of an increasingly vital aspect of human history.

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### **Advance praise for *Worlds of Natural History***

This massive, comprehensive and extremely rich collection of chapters features a stellar cast of contributors who have created a worthy sequel to *Cultures of Natural History*. From its elegant introduction to its colourful chapters and provocative afterword on the continuing vitality of natural history in the twenty-first century, this book fascinates and instructs. Dazzled by its contents, readers will have a difficult time deciding which compartment in this cabinet of curiosities to open first. This is scholarship in the history of science at its finest.

Bernard Lightman, York University

This volume offers a cornucopia of new approaches to writing the history of natural history from the Renaissance to today. With attention to shifting epistemologies and material cultures, it situates ancient traditions of collecting, classifying and preserving nature in relation to the modern biological and Earth sciences. In our present era of vanishing biological diversity, the authors consider the lessons of the past for the future of both elite and popular scientific institutions, from seed banks to museums and zoos.

Deborah R. Coen, Yale University

*Worlds of Natural History* comes as close as is humanly possible to living up to its title. The chapters illuminate almost every aspect of the vast enterprise of natural history, from collecting, networking and voyaging to preserving, image-making and classifying. Its sites are as various as the Renaissance apothecary's shop and the contemporary genetics lab; its locales criss-cross the globe. This book crystallises decades of historical scholarship, and is the single best introduction to the topic.

Lorraine Daston, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin

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Edited by Helen Anne Curry, Nicholas Jardine, James Andrew Secord, Emma C. Spary

Frontmatter

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# Worlds of Natural History

*EDITED BY*

*H. A. CURRY, N. JARDINE, J. A. SECORD  
and E. C. SPARY*



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SADIAH QURESHI is a Senior Lecturer in Modern History at the University of Birmingham. She is interested in modern histories of race, science and empire. Her first book, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (2011), was joint winner of the Sonya Rudikoff Award for best first book published in Victorian Studies in 2011 (awarded 2013). In 2012, the Leverhulme Trust awarded her a Philip Leverhulme Prize for Medieval, Early Modern and Modern History in recognition of her outstanding and internationally recognised research. She is currently working on her next book on extinction in the modern world.

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ANNE SECORD is an editor of *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin* and an Affiliated Research Scholar in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge. Her research has focused on popular, particularly working-class, natural history in nineteenth-century Britain, and on horticulture, medicine and consumption in the eighteenth century. She has produced a new edition of Gilbert White's *Natural History of Selborne* (2016), and is completing a book that explores social class, observation and skill in nineteenth-century natural history.

JIM SECORD is Professor of History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Cambridge, Director of the Darwin Correspondence Project, and a professorial fellow at Christ's College, Cambridge. He has published many books and articles on the history of the sciences during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including *Visions of Science: Books and Readers at the Dawn of the Victorian Age* (2014) and *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (2000). He is writing a short book on current issues facing history of science.

SUJIT SIVASUNDARAM is Reader in World History at the University of Cambridge and Fellow at Gonville and Caius College. His work on

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natural history includes *Nature and the Godly Empire: Science and Evangelical Mission in the Pacific, 1795–1850* (2005) and the study of animal-human relations in colonial contexts, for instance in a special issue on ‘Non-human empires’ in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* (2015). His research also focuses on island history, as in his book *Islanded: Britain, Sri Lanka and the Bounds of an Indian Ocean Colony* (2013) and a current project on the age of revolutions in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

EMMA SPARY is Reader in the History of Modern European Knowledge at the Faculty of History, University of Cambridge. Her research concerns the history of natural history, medicine, chemistry and food in the ‘long eighteenth century’ in Europe, particularly France and its colonies. Her monograph *Utopia’s Garden* (2000) concerned the formation of the national museum of natural history in Paris, the Muséum national d’Histoire naturelle. She has also published numerous articles on French natural history and two further monographs on the history of diet, *Eating the Enlightenment* (2012) and *Feeding France* (2014). Her current project investigates drug taking in the reign of Louis XIV.

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ANNA TOLEDANO studies natural history collecting in eighteenth-century Spain and Spanish America. She is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at Stanford University, where her current research investigates the processes by which natural things become objects of material culture. She is also a museum professional and has developed content for exhibitions and collections at the New York Botanical Garden from 2012 to 2015.

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