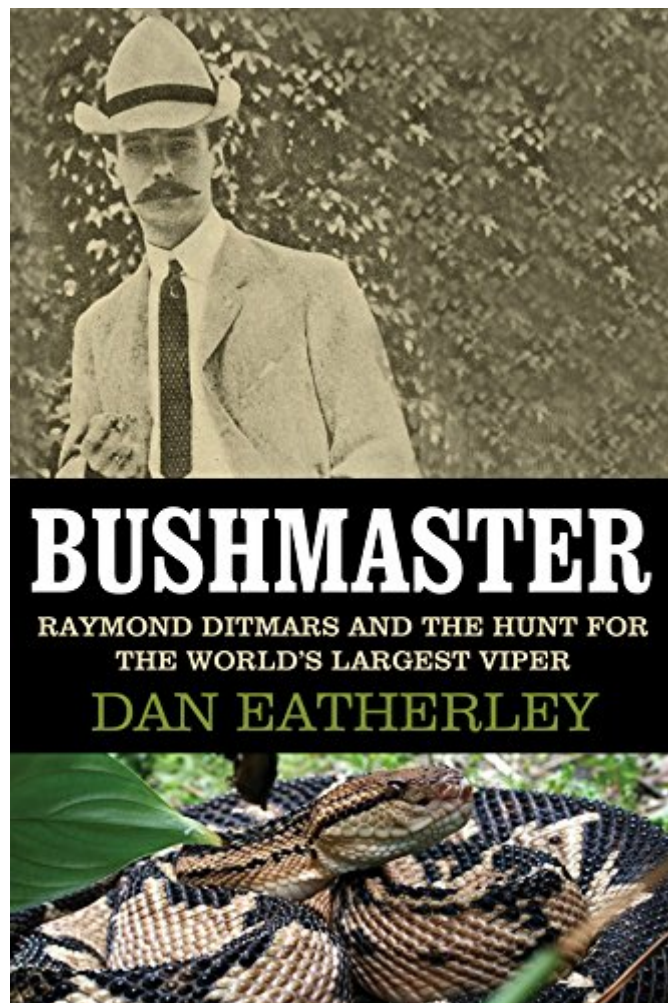




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Bushmaster: Raymond Ditmars And The Hunt For The World's Largest Viper



Synopsis

The amazing story of one man's obsession with an enigmatic and deadly reptile. Raymond Ditmars (1876-1942), the first curator of reptiles at New York's famous Bronx Zoo, brought cold-blooded animals to public attention as never before. Through wildly successful books and movies, he inspired a generation of zoologists with his fascination for snakes, insects, and other misunderstood creatures. Ditmars was among the most celebrated naturalists in America. His reptile-collecting trips for the zoo spawned newspaper headlines across the world. Although a serpent lover, he was all too aware of the devastating effects of snakebites and was instrumental in the development of antivenom. His films and writings brought him fame, but he remained a devoted zoo employee, doing what he loved most: caring for animals. *Bushmaster* tells the story of this remarkable man and what became an obsession with the mysterious bushmaster of the South American rainforest. Measuring up to thirteen feet in length, this is the world's largest viper, and its scientific name, *Lachesis muta*, translates as 'silent fate'. Despite numerous expeditions to jungles from Honduras to Brazil, Ditmars could never capture a bushmaster for himself. Now, British author Dan Eatherley follows in Ditmars's footsteps, revisiting his early haunts in the United States and South America. He attempts to do what Ditmars himself failed to achieve: to find a bushmaster in the wild. But eighty years later, will Dan have any more luck? Through the author's own quest, *Bushmaster* reveals the life of a pioneer herpetologist, wildlife filmmaker, and zoo curator.

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Customer Reviews

I have read all of Ditmar's books so there wasn't too much new information for me in this book. However there was enough new information in it that I was glad I bought the book. It is very interesting and about a very great man whom I have admired since childhood. If you are interested in snakes I think you will find this a good book to buy.

Well researched. Interesting for the ophidophile and casual reader of an era of zoological history that began almost exactly 100 years ago. Who was it that said you can't go back? I was reading Stevens' Snakemaster at the same time and their teenage years closely mirrored each other. Go figure.

Ditmars was a childhood hero of mine, and this book captures the man behind the hero very well. Anyone interested in herpetology and the people who made it a valued field will enjoy this work.

Interesting and well written in a lovely laconic style

Very well written book. Enjoyed every line

Author Dan Eatherley does an excellent job of reconstructing the life and times of reptile expert Raymond Ditmars, a subject almost as elusive as the Bushmaster snake he hunted. Because Ditmars' family tossed away virtually all of his photos, records and other memorabilia upon his death in the 1940s, it's amazing how much the author has been able to discover about Ditmars, the first curator of reptiles at New York's Bronx Zoo. Anyone with even a mild interest in natural history and the animal kingdom will enjoy this recounting of Ditmar's unwavering fascination with snakes, insects and reptiles, and how his life-long passion inspired others to pursue careers in zoology and natural conservation.

I just finished Dan Eatherley's fascinating telling of the life of the founder of the Bronx Zoo's Reptile House, the self-educated Raymond Ditmars. Starting with snakes found in New York City's central park in 1880's, Mr. Ditmars' passion for snakes (particularly venomous ones) made he (and many of his deadly objects of interest) famous with the general public. The Author attempts to retrace Mr. Ditmar's snake-hunting path... from the central park rock outcroppings that still host non-venomous serpents, to the rocky hills surrounding the New York City Metropolitan area, and, ultimately, to the tropical environs of the "Big Daddy" of deadly serpents, the Bushmaster. The writing is totally engaging, at times funny, at times frightening.

Good book about Ditmars but poorly proofed, many grammatical errors.

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