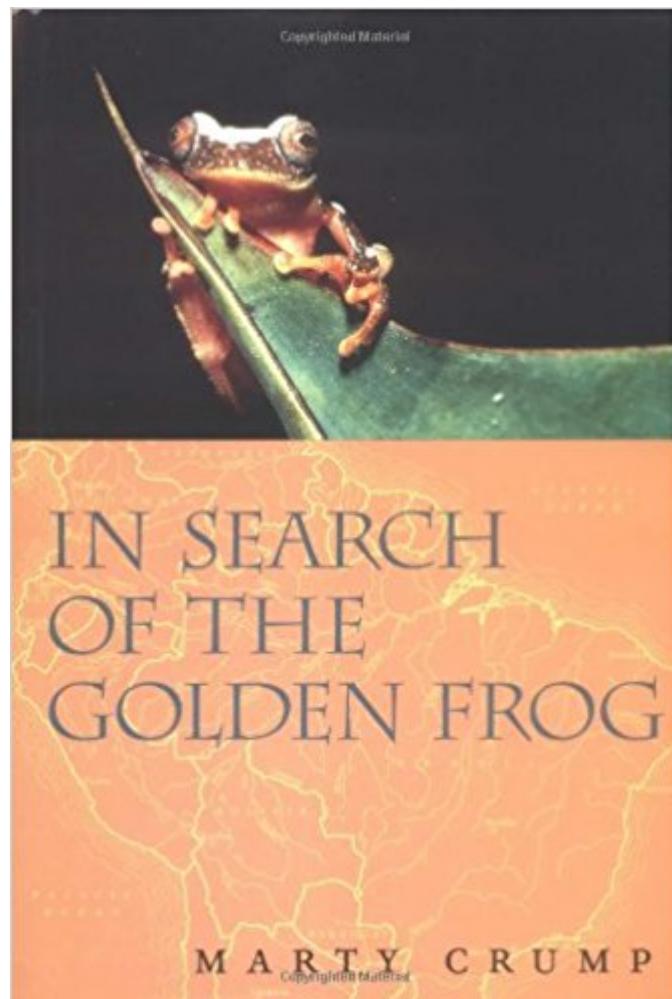


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# In Search Of The Golden Frog



## Synopsis

Marty Crump has searched for salamanders along the River; she has surveyed amphibians and reptiles in hostile Huaorani Indian territory; she has been stung by a conga ant and had run-ins with an electric eel, a boa constrictor, and a bushmaster viper. In the course of her travels she has dined, not always eagerly, on wild rat, parrot, guinea pig, and chicken foot soup. And for those among us who prefer our experiences to be vicarious and far away from biting insects, venomous snakes, and inhospitable surroundings, she has written *In Search of the Golden Frog*. The book is a detailed and fascinating chronicle of Crump's adventures as a field biologist—and as a wife and mother—in South and Central America. Following Crump on her research trips through Costa Rica, Ecuador, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, we learn of amazingly diverse landscapes, equally diverse national traditions and customs, and the natural history of her subject of study, the frog. In leading us through rain forests and onto windswept coasts, Crump introduces us to such compelling creatures as female harlequin frogs, who pounce on males and pound their heads against the ground, and also sounds an alarm about the precipitous decline in amphibian populations around the globe. Crump's perspectives as both a scientist and a mother, juggling the demands of family and professional life, make this highly readable account of fieldwork simultaneously close to home and wildly exotic. A combination of nature writing and travel writing, the richly illustrated *In Search of the Golden Frog* will whet travelers' appetites, affirm the experiences of seasoned field biologists, and offer the armchair naturalist vivid descriptions of amphibians and their habitats.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Marty Crump, adjunct professor of biology at Northern Arizona University and conservation fellow of the Wildlife Conservation Society, has tromped through many a rain forest and hunkered in many a swamp during her 31 years of herpetological field research. In her travels through Ecuador, Argentina, Costa Rica, and Brazil, she's studied harlequin frogs, golden toads, and predaceous tadpoles; encountered conga ants, electric eels, and bushmaster vipers; and dined on rat, parrot, and guinea pig. Her memoir, begun as a gift for her children, is now a treat for anyone with a taste for travel, nature, and a story well told. Crump's tone is always friendly, never pompous, and the vivid details provide for the best sort of armchair travel, where you can almost (but happily, not quite) feel the oppressive humidity, taste the decayed banana wine, and smell the fetid vegetation, while picturing the astonishing glories of "over one hundred Day-Glo golden orange toads poised like statues, dazzling jewels against the dark brown mud." She juggled the rigors of fieldwork with the demands of motherhood, learning to express milk for her 6-week-old infant Karen while hiking in the rain to study frogs in the lush mountains of Costa Rica. Her field experience has certainly contributed to her herpetological expertise (not for nothing was she honored with the Distinguished Herpetologist Award), but it has also created a bountiful supply of exceptional travel stories. Crump has combined her choicest stories with ample herpetological annotation, creating a unique collection of travel tales liberally spiced with naturalist lore. --Stephanie Gold

Since 1968, biologist Crump has trekked through forests, across ponds and into the treetops of Ecuador, Brazil, Costa Rica, Colombia and Chile looking for all sorts of reptiles and amphibians, and especially for frogs and toads. Apop-eyed and poisonous, quizzical or questionable, rambunctious or round-bellied, sinuous, triangular or unfortunately extinct. Crump's colloquial and quite readable book about her adventures and discoveries belongs to a rapidly growing subgenre of popular science writing: she has simply adapted her field notes and diaries, giving a day-by-day, blow-by-blow, sloth-by-snake-by-toad account of her life in the tropical wild. Crump, who teaches herpetology at Northern Arizona University, attempts neither a grand story about the progress of bioscience, nor an autobiography, nor an analysis of developing nations' eco-policies, though material for all three can be extracted from her journals: instead, she simply explains what it's like to be her. We readers learn, as she does, astonishing data about frog reproduction; we meet beauteous bromeliads, scary scorpions and "mama llamas." We encounter the government and corporate employees who escort her teams to wild regions, and the native peoples who live there. Aon one 1993 jaunt, these include friendly Quechua groups (with rifles) and "Huaorani" who

refuse contact with outsiders and spear anyone who enters their territory." And we hear, with pleasant frequency, how Crump, a mother of two, balances work and family. At one point, partner Peter, young Karen and an even-younger Rob accompany the narrator to Argentina, and their domestic worlds give Crump an enticingAif exhaustingAcounterpoint to her professional endeavors. Armchair, aspiring or actual field biologists will certainly sympathize with Crump as she manages her panoply of little disasters, delights and real discoveries. (June) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Not finished. So far so good. Very personal and an honest depiction of the life of a tropical biologist.

A must read for any aspiring tropical biologist!

After having finished reading "In Search of the Golden Frog" by Martha Crump one will realize the opportunities that arise from extensive field work and hard work. This well written journal like story covering a period of 30 or so years of Martha's life describes her early experiences as a young undergrad student working in the tropics to a highly recognized researcher with a family. Martha's great interest and enjoyment in field work and discovery is so apparent in her tales, I couldn't put the book down until I found out what she was doing to this present day. One who has shared similar field experiences will find the detailed descriptions uniquely parallel to that of their own stories. Martha tells of a journey that has lead her to many interesting discoveries but only through time, patience and the desire to handle the difficulties of field work. Martha tells of the troubles and treasurable memories of travelling throughout both Central and South America in search of the creatures she finds most fascinating. Fortunately, in her journey she has also unfolded the nessesity to concentrate on the declining numbers of certain amphibian species. I recommend the book to any individual interested in field work and conservation. The book shares true experiences any field biologist will someday fall upon, preparing those willing to follow in Martha's footsteps.

This book was great if you are interested in exploring the tropics through the eye of an academic. It was interesting to see how the world of academia has changed since Crump was a graduate student.I liked this book because Crump teaches interested tidbits about the life of amphibians and tropical ecology interwoven with her stories of fieldwork. It was great to learn how Crump deals with the challenges of motherhood and fieldwork at the same time.I thought everything about this book was great, but could see how some might think this book is a little dry if you aren't into biology.

Other than that, the only reason this book did not receive 5 stars is because the ending just sorta leaves the reader with a giant question mark.

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This is my pick for favorite nature/travelogue of the year. As a cube dwelling computer jockey who enjoys getting out in the field whenever possible, I was able to savor the excitement of field herpetology in the verdant green and brown neotropics with Dr. Crump. After reading "In Search of the Golden Frog", I want to go a froggin', I want to lift a log, I want to wallow in a bog, and most of all, I want to help conserve the wonders of the amphibian world. Dr. Crump's autobiography supplies the reader with an entertaining account of adventures in the field while encouraging involvement in preserving both local and global eco-systems which sustain these veritable princes of herpetofauna. Read it, enjoy it, and help preserve it !!

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