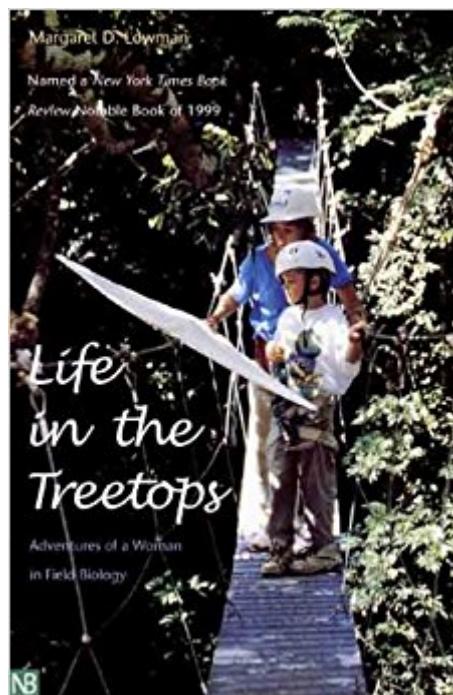




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Life In The Treetops: Adventures Of A Woman In Field Biology (Yale Nota Bene S)



Synopsis

Forest canopies have been characterized as one of the last biotic frontiers on Earth: tree crowns have been difficult to study scientifically because access to them has been so challenging. During the past two decades, however, methods for canopy access have greatly improved. In this book a pioneer canopy scientist describes the mysteries of the treetops—their inhabitants, flowers and fruits, growth and mortality, patterns of diversity, and plant and animal interactions. Margaret Lowman writes about different canopy access techniques in conjunction with the scientific hypotheses she was addressing while using each one. She also portrays the life of a field biologist from a woman's perspective: what it was like to juggle a demanding career with marriage, housewifery, motherhood, and single parenthood. The chapters are organized chronologically, starting with Lowman's early days with ropes in Australia and progressing to the use of a cherry picker to access the canopies of eucalypt trees while she was pregnant, research by hot-air balloon in Africa, and building treetop walkways in the temperate forests of Massachusetts and in the tropical rain forests of Belize. The book also includes a lovely array of line drawings and halftones.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Margaret D. Lowman is director of research and conservation at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, where she also holds the Jessie B. Cox Chair in Tropical Botany. Robert Ballard is discoverer of the Titanic and director of The Jason Project.

Margaret Lowman is a gifted biologist with a knack for finding ways to teach others the importance of her field and the need for conservation. Her adventures range from the humorous to the frightening and are guaranteed to hold the reader's interest. I held off a five-star rating only because I would have liked a little more information on some of the animals she's studied. Her impressions of Nature's little-known and often-overlooked creatures are valuable and fascinating, and I wish more space had been devoted to them. That's a minor quibble, though. As a writer on nature myself, I came away from reading this book with an improved understanding of how complex the "web of life" is, not to mention a determination to get my own children out into the forests more often.

This unique book is about Margaret Lowman's life as a self-described field biologist who studies the mysteries of forest canopies, one of the last biotic frontiers on Earth. In *Life in the Treetops*, Lowman is a pioneer canopy scientist she describes the little known worlds of the treetops, their inhabitants, flowers and fruits, growth and mortality, patterns of diversity, and plant and animal interactions. Lowman writes about how, in order with the scientific hypothesis she was focusing on, a different canopy access technique was used. She's particularly good at exposing the life of a field biologist from a woman's perspective, what it was like to cope: with the demands of a challenging career; with marriage to an Australian sheep farmer; with housewifery; with motherhood to two young sons; with conflicting cultural differences about gender roles; and with divorce and single parenthood. Lowman's descriptions of her various arboreal ecological projects were fascinating. She emphasized the pleasures and intellectual rewards of studying the natural world without ignoring the projected vicissitudes of researching in wilderness settings. In the end Lowman is the director of research and conservation at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota, Florida. This is an inspiring story for everyone, not just for women or those interested in careers in science, but for everyone.

Life in the Treetops is an absolutely wonderful book. Please take a look at the customer and press reviews for the hardcover edition of this book. They are far more eloquent reviewers than I. This book was on the cover of the New York Times Book Review. It was an Editors Selection in *Scientific American* and in *New Scientist*(UK. Because of the book, Dr. Lowman has been featured in German *GEO*, in *Sydney Morning Herald*, in Italian *Elle* and in Seoul Korea's daily, all in their own languages. She has been interviewed on NPR's *Fresh Air* *Living on Earth* and the BBC. You are wondering if all of this is important? It is when the book is a memoir. I found Dr. Lowman to be a role

model for me and for my child. Please read it. It will be important to you.

Margaret Lowman has undertaken some fascinating research on rain forest canopies, and she's also an excellent writer. So what's the problem? Well, she just can't stop using the phrase, "As a woman in field biology..." followed by some hardship that she endured in her career that she's certain was due to her gender. As a result, despite the fact that she is an accomplished scientist, this book is more about what she couldn't do than what she could.

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