



The Snakes of Trinidad and Tobago (W. L. Moody Jr. Natural History Series)

Hans Boos

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Scientific fact meets island folklore as Hans Boos presents more than sixty species of snakes found in the twin-island independent Caribbean nation of Trinidad and Tobago. The culmination of thirty years of collecting and observing the snakes of these islands, *The Snakes of Trinidad and Tobago* engagingly informs readers about these often feared and misunderstood creatures.

Tracing the contributions of scientists to the evolving taxonomy of the islands' reptiles, Boos describes each unique species of snake found on the two islands, including local names from two centuries back. Species accounts come complete with tales—both documented and apocryphal—of human encounters with the more dangerous island snakes. Forty-eight color photographs and fifty black-and-white photographs and pieces of line art, most by the author, illustrate the text and aid in identification.

While tiny Tobago is mercifully devoid of poisonous snakes, Trinidad hosts four venomous species, including coral snakes and the notorious bushmaster. Boos refutes many of the myths about these deadly but usually nonaggressive snakes with information about their habits and behavior. He also writes about the giant anaconda and the boa constrictor, about which many half-truths and fictions abound.

All snakes bite, but only a few species are venomous. Boos gives information about what to do—and what not to do—in the event of a bite and discusses intriguing folk medicine cures, such as the Belgian Black Stone, sure to work only if a bite was harmless to begin with.

The Snakes of Trinidad and Tobago will find an enthusiastic audience among herpetologists, ecologists, and other scientists concerned about the snakes and wildlife of Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean, and South America. It will also appeal to general readers interested in snakes and in Caribbean folklore.

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