



Chasing the Dragon's Tail

By Alan Rabinowitz

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In 1987, zoologist Alan Rabinowitz was invited by the Thai government to study leopards, tigers, and other wildlife in the Huai Kha Khaeng valley, one of Southeast Asia's largest and most prized forests. It was hoped his research would help protect the many species that live in that fragile reserve, which was being slowly depleted by poachers, drug traffickers, and even the native tribes of the area. Chasing the Dragon's Tail is the remarkable story of Rabinowitz's life and adventures in the forest as well as the streets of Bangkok, as he works to protect Thailand's threatened wildlife. Based on Rabinowitz's field journals, the book offers an intimate and moving look at a modern zoologist's life in the field. As he fights floods, fire-ant infestations, elephant stampedes, and a request to marry the daughter of a tribal chief, the difficulties that come with the demanding job of species conservation are dramatically brought to life. First published in 1991, this edition of Chasing the Dragon's Tail includes a new afterword by the author that brings the story up to date, describing the surprising strides Thailand has made recently in conservation. Other titles by Alan Rabinowitz include Beyond the Last Village and Jaguar.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In 1987 the author, a research zoologist with Wildlife Conservation International, was invited by the Thai government to study endangered animals in the Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary. For two years he tracked leopards, tigers and other big cats in the 1000-square-mile area, capturing and collaring them in order to monitor their movements by radio. Rabinowitz seems to crave risk and adventure, and the story of his hazardous years "chasing the dragon's tail" in the Thai forest--which includes encounters with angry poachers, a narrow escape from his own leopard trap, the aftermath of his participation in an opium council--makes engrossing reading. He also reveals much about Thai life and its contradictions, especially the Buddhist philosophy that reveres wild animals and at the same time justifies killing them. His assessment of the prospects for saving the Thai forest and its wildlife is disheartening. Photos not seen by PW.

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From Library Journal

Rabinowitz is a field biologist and the author of *Jaguar* (LJ 12/86), an account of his effort to set up a jaguar preserve in Belize. In 1987, he agreed to survey the wild cats in Thailand's Huai Kha Haeng valley. During his study of leopards, leopard cats, and civets, he befriended monks, forest workers, and other Thais in an effort to understand why practicing Buddhists frequently abused animals and ransacked the forest. He found that Western attitudes about the beauty and value of wildlife ultimately clash with a pragmatic view of nature as commodity in countries where poverty and human suffering is widespread. Walking away with a bleak view of the future for Thailand's forests, Rabinowitz records here the beauty of another natural paradise that may soon be lost. Recommended for general collections in public and academic libraries.

- *Beth Clewis, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community Coll. Lib., Richmond, Va.*

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Review

"...one of the best recent books on Thailand. Although essentially the record of a zoologist conserving wild cats in the Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary, the book also offers a penetrating account of author Alan Rabinowitz's struggle to come to terms with Thailand and the Thai people."

(*Far Eastern Economic Review*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Noemi Burns:

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Linda Thomas:

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Helen Hanson:

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