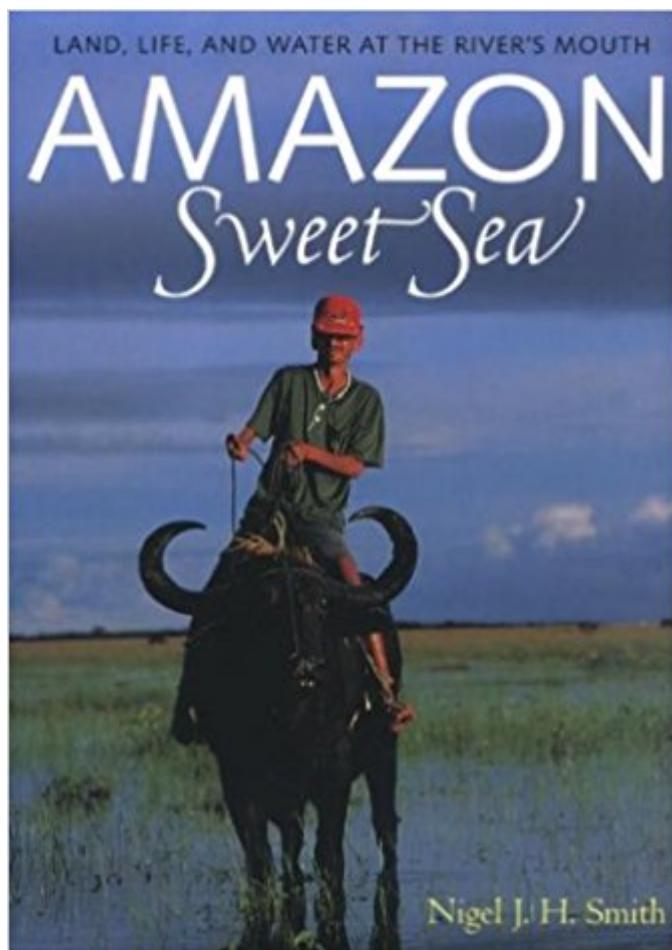


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Sweet Sea: Land, Life, And Water At The River's Mouth



Synopsis

Far into the Atlantic Ocean, the outflow from the River creates a "sweet sea" of fresh water. At the river's mouth, a vast delta of river channels and marshes, floodplain and upland forests, open and scrub savannas, floating meadows, and mangrove swamps hosts an astonishingly diverse assemblage of plant and animal life. So rich is this biological treasure house that early European explorers deemed it inexhaustible. In this highly readable book, Nigel Smith explores how human use of the estuary's natural resources has been affected by technological change, rapid urban growth, and accelerated market integration. Avoiding alarmist rhetoric, he shows how human intervention in the estuary has actually diversified agriculture and helped save floodplain forests from wanton destruction. His findings underscore the importance of understanding the history of land use and the ecological knowledge of local people when formulating development and conservation policies. The book will be of interest to everyone concerned with the fate of tropical forests, conserving biodiversity, and developing natural resources in a sustainable manner.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars See all reviews (2 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Nigel Smith is a longtime student of the Brazilian . In this illustrated book, he attempts to capture the social, economic and environmental reality of the estuary region of the river, where it meets the Atlantic Ocean. This is a wonderfully illustrated book, with the pictures going a long way in capturing the reality of the region. The region is quite peculiar even within the in that it suffers the influence of the Ocean, with ingredients such as daily tides and beaches that are not common elsewhere in the . The social and economic contrasts are vast: on the one hand, there is the city of Belem, with over 1

million people and a cosmopolitan feel to it; on the other hand, you have the people who live in the banks of the thousands of rivers that crisscross each other on the way to the Ocean, living very simple lives, often without electricity. The book depicts, with few words and many images, the distinct local living conditions. The environmental aspect, which makes the region all the more interesting, is present throughout. Despite an economy heavily dependent on natural resources, especially in the Marajo island, the author presents an ecosystem that is often well integrated with man. For example, he demonstrates how people survive off gathering acai (a local plant), crab or eels, in such a way that the resources are naturally replenished. The sweet sea is clearly a distinct region from the rest of the , and hence deserves unique attention. The books gives one a full view of life there (human or not), which is quite amazing. I highly recommend this book for the armchair voyageur, or to someone considering visiting Belem and surroundings. It will definitely give you a perspective that most of the locals don't even have.

Author's field works and photographs document changes in the way people and their environment interact. Book design: Heidi Haeuser.

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