

Central America: A Natural and Cultural History



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As a bridge between North and South America, Central America has a natural history and a singular geographic and geopolitical position. It separates two different continental faunas and two tropical oceans. It has also linked two contrasting groups of pre-Columbian cultures and witnessed the mingling of the American and European civilizations after Spanish colonization, developments that have led to an array of political and social patterns among the seven nations in the region. This book provides an investigation of both the natural and human history of Central America. The book is one outcome of the Paseo Pantera project, an international conservation effort dedicated to fostering a system of interconnected and protected natural corridors throughout the Central American isthmus. Written by authorities in the field, it discusses the geological origins of the isthmus; the mosaic of landscapes that make it such a diverse and complex region; the differences that contrast the Pacific and Caribbean; the importance of Central American corridors and barriers for terrestrial organisms (including humans) and marine life; native people and cultures during pre-Columbian and colonial times; colonization; the postcolonial period and independence; the status of the native Indian peoples and their lands; and regional conservation issues for the 21st century.



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