This booklet (134 pages) is a welcome addition to the Macmillan Caribbean Pocket Natural History Series of books covering different aspects of the natural history of the Eastern Caribbean.

From the island of Sombrero in the north to Grenada in the south, the Amphibians consisting of the frogs and toads, and the Reptiles, consisting of the marine turtles, terrapins, tortoises, crocodilians, lizards and snakes, are described. There are many beautiful colour photos to illustrate typical members of each group, with some habitat photos thrown in to enliven the text for those who may be a little off-put by the pictures of animals that are not usually at the top of the like-lists of readers.

The book is divided into eleven chapters, which include a good bibliography and a comprehensive index to both the common and scientific names. What is even more useful to the user is an island checklist where one can tell, at a glance, which species are found on every individual island.

The island of Dominica is singled out in a special chapter to illustrate a natural reptile and amphibian community, with less space being given to the other islands in the area covered.

The photos, mostly of the Anolis lizards, which are the most conspicuous reptiles on most islands, are so well composed and colourful that it leaves the reader wishing that every species of reptile on this fascinating chain of islands could have been illustrated in a similar manner.

In these days with the degradation of so much habitat, worldwide, the chapter on conservation is a welcome plea for islands that have lost so much of their fauna already.

A glossary leads the uninitiated through the more technical terms of study of the herpetofauna, and the book as a whole has a nice heft to it, as it can slip easily into a pocket or back pack.

To many a visitor and resident of the islands, the shrill cries in the night of the teeming tree frogs will not seem so mysterious, as we can accurately identify the hidden little singers with a quick reference to this wonderful little book.

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Reptiles and Amphibians of the Eastern Caribbean.
Anita Malhotra and Roger Thorpe

Hans E. A. Boos