

Dragon Songs: Love and Adventure among Crocodiles, Alligators, and Other Dinosaur Relations

Vladimir Dinets



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A born naturalist and a fearless traveler, Vladimir Dinets wrote travel guides, conducted field research, and lived a couple of lives before he was accepted into the PhD program in zoology at the University of Miami. He thought crocodiles were a dead-end research topic—survivors from the age of the dinosaurs but not much else—until he witnessed groups of up to seventy alligators performing mating choruses that included infrasound vibrations—a form of communication extremely rare in nature—and a "dance" unknown in the scientific literature but that resembled a scene from *Jurassic Park*. To prove his thesis about the language of crocodiles, he spent the next six years traveling around the world on shoestring budgets and in extreme circumstances, studying almost every living species. At the same time, as a man desiring companionship in life, he sought love.

With adventures on five continents, *Dragon Songs* is his account of this quest. It includes an escape from a boiling lava lake in the Afar Desert, being chased up a tree by a tiger in India, hitching a ride with a cocaine smuggler in Bolivia, and diving with giant Greenland sharks—all in the name of studying crocodiles, among which he routinely paddled in his inflatable kayak. Of course, not everything went according to plan. But, in the end, his ground-breaking research helped change the field. And during the course of his adventures, he met and courted his future wife.



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