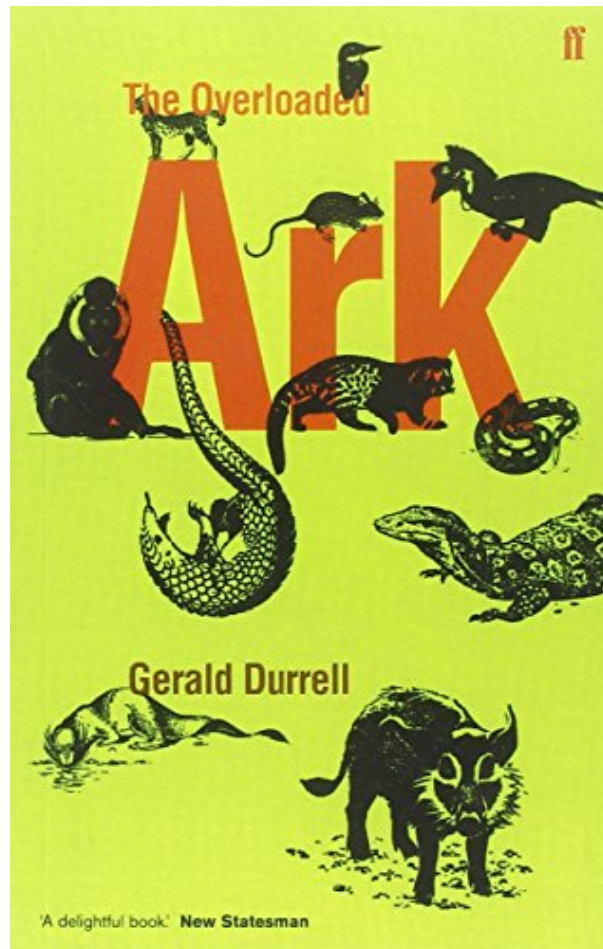
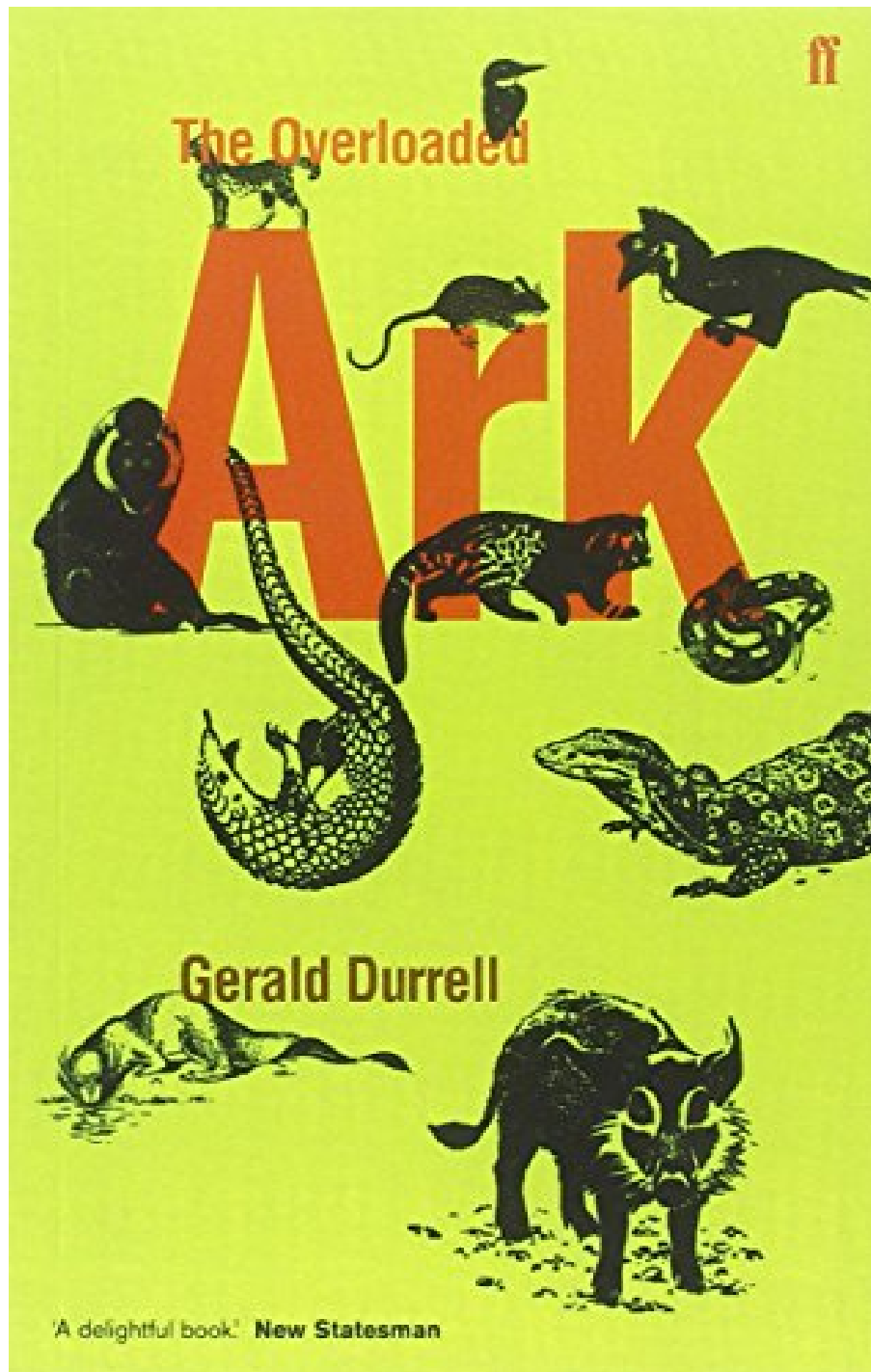


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About the Author

Gerald Durrell was a world-famous naturalist, animal-collector and conservationist. Born in India in 1925, and having lived in Jamshedpur, Corfu and Crystal Palace, he eventually founded Jersey Zoo in 1959. He was a lifelong lover of animals, and after taking numerous trips to collect exotic wildlife for the zoo, he founded the Jersey Wildlife Conversation Trust in 1963. He also wrote numerous well-loved books about his glamorous and not-so glamorous experiences, his most famous works being *My Family and other Animals* and *The Overloaded Ark*.

From AudioFile

This account of Gerald Durrell's 1953 trip to the Cameroons to collect live reptiles, birds and mammals for British zoos is filled with hair-raising and hysterical adventures. It was the first professional collecting trip to the region and was also Durrell's first visit to Africa. Nigel Davenport captures all of Durrell's enthusiasm and naïveté--as well as the pain of being stung by wasps and the fear that results from almost falling on top of a very large monitor lizard. Davenport also renders pidgin (the lingua franca of European-African communication) both credible and comprehensible. The reading is so persuasive that the listener becomes a member of the expedition. Leopards, anyone? R.E.K. (c) AudioFile, Portland, Maine

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Gerald Durrell, director and owner of Jersey Zoo, was internationally famous for his amusing books about collecting wild animals, in particular *My Family and Other Animals*. But *The Overloaded Ark*, his first, remains his funniest book. It describes an expedition to the remote territory of the Cameroons in West Africa, before independence. "A delightful book...You can feel his bush-shirt sticking to his back...Bagging a monitor, smoking out a Pangolin (scaly anteater), celebrating the capture of the rare Angwantibo (small lemur), bird liming for Giant Kingfishers on the warm, milky waters of Lake Soden: he communicates every detail of his experiences with just the right degree of zest." (New Statesman).

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Most helpful customer reviews

15 of 15 people found the following review helpful.

Where da beef? In this book, that's where

By Samuel Krikorian

Gerald Durrell spent most of his life collecting interesting animal specimens and Durrell is an interesting human specimen himself. His well chronicled life (mostly chronicled by Durrell) begins with the hilarious, and very successful, "My family and Other Animals". It is ably followed up with the equally hilarious "Birds, Beasts and Relatives". Both books are full of tales from the Durrell family's years on the Greek Island of Corfu, pre WWII. Little Gerry dives right into the flora and fauna of the island, including its human fauna. I own very few nonfiction books with such a plethora of memorable characters. Now, of course, we get to the volume in question. It is plenty good, and worth multiple readings over years, as is "A Zoo In My Luggage" and several other books detailing trips to collect animals. A word of warning, don't go nuts and buy all the zillion Durrell titles. Some of them are out of print for a reason and were most likely dashed off by Durrell to finance a collecting trip or two. If you read a sampling of Amazon.com reviews you will sniff these out and avoid wasting your hard earned lucre. And please, get "My Family and Other Animals" and "Birds, Beasts and Relatives" right now, if you don't have them already.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Still enjoyable nearly forty years on

By Peter Durward Harris

This book is about a business that, for the most part, no longer exists - the business of collecting animals for display in zoos. Wildlife conservation has changed a lot since then so the kind of expedition that Gerald Durrell and his companion, John, undertook in 1953, described in this book, just could not happen now.

Gerald describes how he and John spent several months in Cameroon collecting a variety of animals, birds and reptiles and some of the adventures they had, including the triumphs and disappointments. He acknowledges right at the beginning that the expedition may seem more exciting than it really was, because all the boring aspects have been omitted. Even so, there were enough exciting moments to fill this book.

He describes some of the local people, who he mostly got on well with - but of course he did have some problems and we are told about these. He describes some of the creatures he collected, and the disappointment when some died or escaped.

My favorite (both at school and now) was a chimpanzee that had already been domesticated. Gerald was asked to look after him before he could be shipped to London. This was no ordinary chimpanzee, as he not only enjoyed smoking cigarettes but was able to light his own using either matches or lighter, and also displayed other characteristics more normally associated with people than with chimpanzees. Always remember that this was 1953.

This is a highly entertaining book, which I first read at school, where it was compulsory reading - and it was the only such book that I enjoyed. I still enjoyed it when I read it again recently, after discovering (to my surprise) that it is still available in the UK.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

A Lovable and descriptive novel.

By A Customer

Durrell's descriptions are so enthralling, I actually read the entire book in one night. If you like books about animals, such as the All Creatures series, you must read this book. I first read this book when I was 10, and this was probably the first adult book I read. The way Durrell describes the catching of animals and the way he captures each character's essence is incredible. You will fall in love with this book. I strongly recommend it.

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