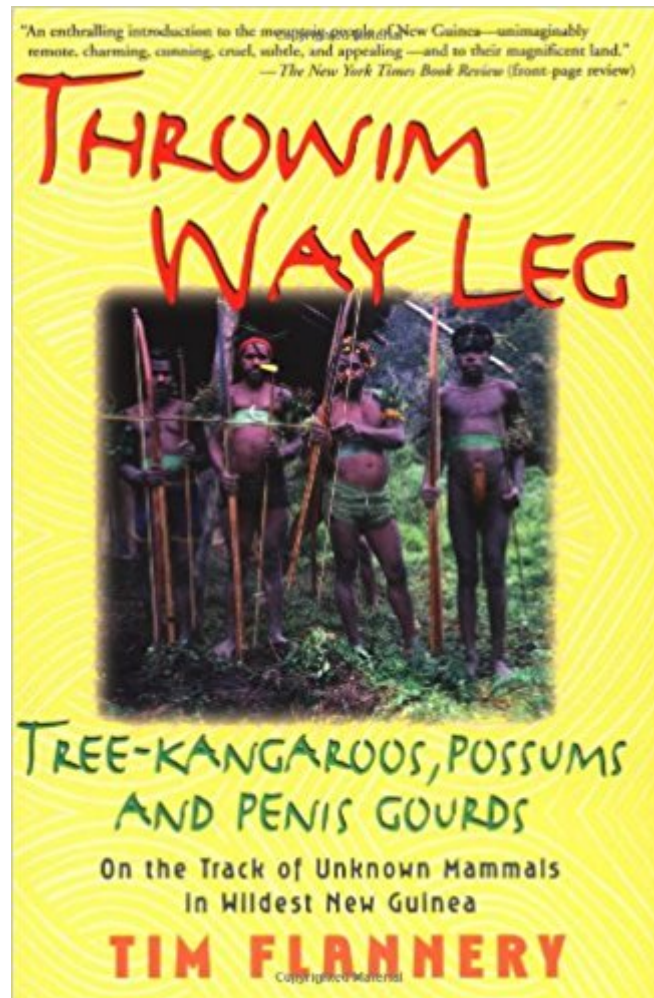




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Throwim' Way Leg: Tree-Kangaroos, Possums, And Penis Gourds



Synopsis

Flannery travels to the unexplored regions of New Guinea in search of species that science has yet to discover or classify. He finds many -- from a community of giant cave bats that were supposedly extinct to the elusive black-and-white tree-kangaroo -- and along the way has a wealth of unforgettable adventures. Flannery scales cliffs, descends into caverns, and cheats death, both from disease and at the hands of the local cannibals, who wish to take revenge on his "clan" of wildlife scientists. He eventually befriends the tribespeople, who become companions in his quest and whose contributions to his research prove invaluable. In New Guinea pidgin, throwim way leg means to take the first step of a long journey. The journey in this book is a wild ride full of natural wonders and Flannery's trademark wit, a tour de force of travelogue, anthropology, and natural history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In *Throwim Way Leg*, Australia-based mammologist-raconteur Tim Flannery recalls scientific expeditions in the wilds of New Guinea that convey both the thrill of discovery and the negotiations necessary to bridge huge clashes of cultures. A world expert on New Guinea's fauna, Flannery has discovered 20 new species during his two decades of research. Yet his ability to convey unalloyed adventure in his storytelling makes these scientific expeditions read more like hair-raising, funky Redmond O'Hanlon-style travels than disciplined, scholarly field trips. Energy and danger run high. Terrific thunderstorms and aircraft mishaps rattle Flannery during his travels. Yet the most memorable quality of *Throwim Way Leg* is Flannery's incorporation of humans into the natural world

he writes about, often contrasting the jungled New Guinea denizens with stark modern technologies. He writes rich profiles of those he has met, and his images are memorable and meaningful: crowds of people gaping at a single television set; the remote landscape of Mt. Albert Edward dotted with cattle, Swiss chalets, and the smoky fires of the Gailala people; the malnourished Yapsiei greeting him reeking of the "sweet, sickly smell" of grile, a form of ringworm. Ultimately, Flannery looks ahead and sees that the age of discovery is not at all complete in New Guinea, as so much remains unknown. But, in an often-told tale, modern political forces are at work, reshaping those unique natural and cultural environments that Throwim Way Leg explores with such vigor. --Byron Ricks
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This energetic fusion of natural science and anthropology caused the Times Literary Supplement to declare that in Flannery "Australia has found its own Stephen Jay Gould." Indeed, Flannery's book is, like Gould's work, erudite and informing. But Flannery (The Future Eaters, 1994), an Australian biologist who specializes in mammalogy, gives us a much more personal take in this memoir of his scientific and cross-cultural adventures during 15 expeditions to New Guinea?undertaken in order to research the many species of mammals that exist on this large island, which he refers to as "one of the world's last frontiers." His accounts of crossing the rugged island terrain and enduring onslaughts from snakes, bees, flies and mosquitoes are vivid yet understated. During his explorations, Flannery documented many new species of mammals and discovered the presence of a bat that had previously been considered extinct. The best parts of the book are those in which Flannery tells of his forays into remote villages. His descriptions of the indigenous peoples he met and worked with are sympathetic and often very funny (with the humor frequently at his own expense), particularly the tales of the cannibals of Yominbip and Betavip. Flannery accepted funding from the Indonesian PT Freeport mining company, which operates in Irian Jaya, but that doesn't stop him from voicing his concern that the presence of Freeport has led to civil unrest, violence, racial tensions and environmental havoc. The title comes from New Guinea Pidgin; referring to a first step, it means "to go on a journey." Readers would do well to follow Flannery on this one. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is a great read--almost a page turner--about Tim Flannery's adventures as a biologist looking for new species and documenting others in New Guinea. He is an excellent writer and has made his subject exciting and accessible for most readers. Few of us could have endured the

difficulties Flannery put himself through but I found them wonderful to experience vicariously.

Flannery is one of a kind. He is to New Guinea what Perry and Amundson are to the poles, a first-comer one of the first to explore and document the stone age peoples of the mysterious island wilderness in the last days of its age of innocence. Yes, there are cannibals, with bones in their noses and gourds worn on their penis, yet Flannery somehow manages to get the reader to empathize with these people, to understand their foibles and traditions, and to feel regret that their ancient ways are going, going, gone ... forever. Take the chapter where he goes in pursuit of the Bulmer's Fruit Fly Bat -- you suffer with him the agonies of failure and the desperations of the search, and the exhilaration of success. Or follow along with his learning experiences among the native tribes and come to actually understand the hows and whys of the way they led their lives, even to discovering there were (to the natives) valid reasons for their rare acts of cannibalism. Although he describes some of the most spectacular natural wonders of the world, the reader comes to know that Papua New Guinea will never rate very highly as a tourist destination, but you'll have to read this book to appreciate the reasons why. Think you couldn't possibly be interested in such things? Try twenty pages of this charming book; the images will live in your memory forever. Hooroo, Tim! Bonzer yarn, mate!

A really good book written by a courageous scientist.

I'd like to add my vote to those that reviewed this favorably. This is one of those books you read that cause other family members to comment "can you put that book down for a second and look at this". And you will respond by "Wait a second, listen to this!". Flannery as mentioned in above reviews is no James Mitchner but his travels and discoveries are more novel and less attainable to those that would not put up with malaria, scrub typhus, parasites, hunger, miserable weather and a hundred other obstacles that exist in exotic Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya. If you get this book arrange for some blocks of free time as you won't want to be interrupted. You also may want to have a map available as you journey along with Flannery.

A great book. Flannery visited very remote areas in New Guinea in the 1980's and 1990's, and yet he finds cultures only beginning to change from the days of tribal wars and cannibals. He has a great sense of humor. Well worth a read to get a sense of a disappearing New Guinea culture.

Great book; wonderful price. The pictures alone are worth the price of the book. Good delivery

I just returned from Papua New Guinea while reading this book, which was recommended by the Lonely Planet. It was helpful for understanding the culture & local animals, and was an engaging story.

I had never heard of this book, but I thoroughly enjoyed it. It is about a biologist's experiences over years in New Guinea. The animals were interesting, but the stars of the show were the people. Flannery has the ability to see beyond the obvious in people and recognize intelligence, kindness, leadership where they exist not where you expect them to exist. It is also a good primer to today's New Guinea, its culture, geography, and politics.

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