



Life on Air: Memoirs of a Broadcaster

David Attenborough

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For fifty years David Attenborough has entertained, educated, and generally enchanted millions worldwide with his pursuit of the secrets of life in its many guises. For such groundbreaking television series as *Life on Earth*, *The Private Life of Plants*, and *The Life of Birds*, he has traveled to the ends of the earth to give viewers their first (and often only) close look at some of nature's wonders--from the great wildebeest migration to the blooming of desert cacti. Now Attenborough invites readers to travel with him once more, as he reflects on a life at least as interesting as any he's managed to capture on camera.

Life on Air begins when, at twenty-four, Attenborough throws over what looks to be a staid future as a "gentleman publisher" for an uncertain position in the BBC's fledgling television service. An adventure in itself (with primitive equipment and unpredictable personalities), broadcasting work involves the Cambridge-educated naturalist in hilarious attempts to improve the upstart Talks Department. Then the discovery of a coelacanth fish off the Comoro Islands offers him his first chance as a producer, and his career introducing wildlife to the public takes off in earnest.

From his first expedition--a junket to Sierra Leone to find the elusive Bald-headed Rock Crow--to his most recent, Attenborough conducts readers on a life journey as instructive as it is enthralling. Rich with insights into nature and behind-the-scenes glimpses into broadcasting history, it is also filled with adventure and humor. Attenborough's storytelling powers are legendary, and they don't fail him as he recounts how he came to stand in rat-infested caves in Venezuela, confront wrestling crocodiles, abseil down a rainforest tree in his late sixties, and wake with the lioness Elsa sitting on his chest. His story ranges from British Guinea to the Zambesi, from Borneo to Madagascar, from the darkest depths of caves to the canopies of the loftiest trees. With quiet erudition, searching curiosity, and generous wit, the world's best-known and most beloved naturalist documents a life that reflects his changing time and our natural world as well as his own irrepressible character.

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