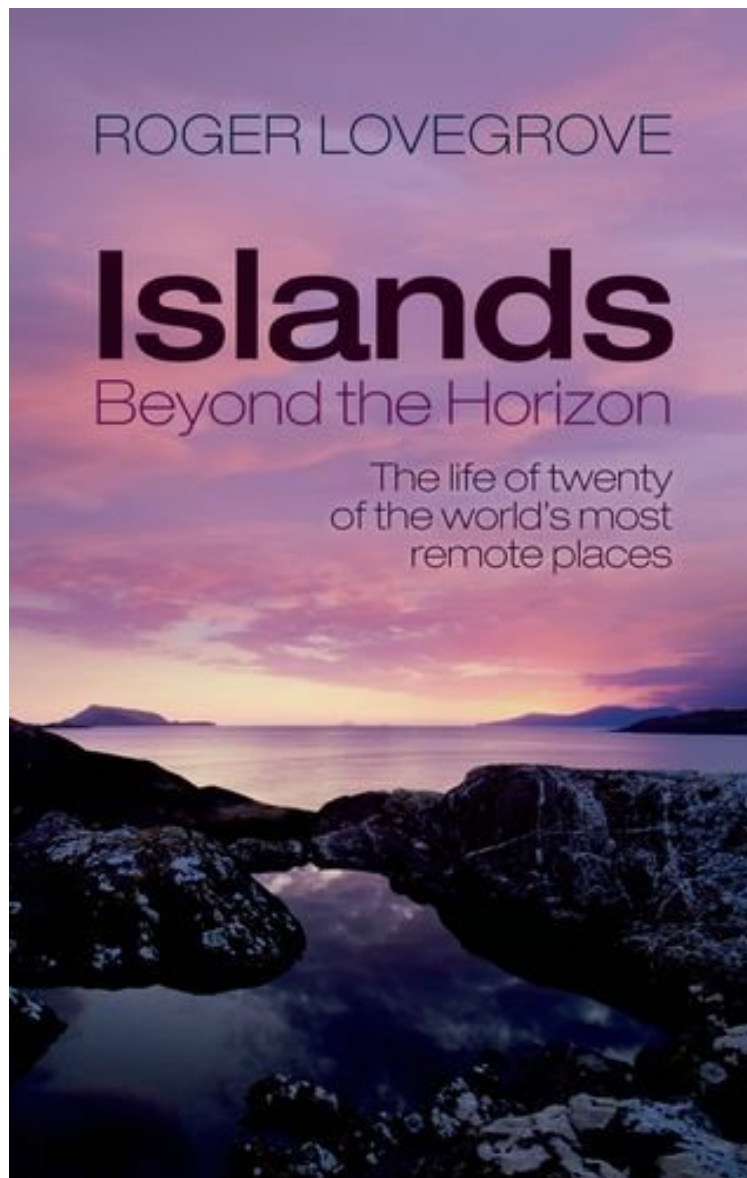


[Mobile book] Islands Beyond the Horizon: The Life of Twenty of the World's Most Remote Places

Islands Beyond the Horizon: The Life of Twenty of the World's Most Remote Places

Roger Lovegrove

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Roger Lovegrove : Islands Beyond the Horizon: The Life of Twenty of the World's Most Remote Places before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Islands Beyond the Horizon: The Life of Twenty of the World's Most Remote Places:

2 of 6 people found the following review helpful. InterestingBy Pen NameI was searching for a book on remote

islands and this was just what was looking for. I really liked it 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Brief histories of man's destruction of twenty insular environments By Craig Rowland I love islands and insular cultures, so I was drawn to this new book in my library's collection. *Islands Beyond the Horizon: The Life of Twenty of the World's Most Remote Places* by Roger Lovegrove is right up my island alley in that it covers places that I have been to (Tristan da Cunha), places I want to visit (Jan Mayen) and places that I had never heard of and am altogether fascinated by (St. Kilda). Lovegrove talks about the islands' history yet his main focus is on the environmental destruction that man has wrought on these islands. In every case man has destroyed these fragile environments either through active exploitation, such as whaling on the island of South Georgia, or through the supposedly noble and innocent action of establishing human settlement. In the case of Guam, as with most of the other islands covered in this book, man razed the native vegetation and alien plants were introduced. Native animals and birds perished under the new human invaders or under the foreign species they brought with them, such as rats, mice and cats. Late last year I wrote a review for another book about islands, *Island: How Islands Transform the World* by J. Edward Chamberlin, but the subject matter differs from *Islands Beyond the Horizon*, where the former deals specifically with the social and psychological aspects of insular cultures while Lovegrove's focus is on island ecology. They are therefore found in completely different subject areas. Lovegrove visited all the islands in his book except the St. Peter and St. Paul Rocks off Brazil. They can't even be called "islands"; they're more like islets or, rather, just lumps of rock in the mid-Atlantic. So while he did in fact visit Tristan da Cunha, he made a couple of errors about the place. The island's only settlement is formally known as Edinburgh of the Seven Seas, yet Lovegrove added annoying hyphens within the name. Gough Island lies 350 km outside the Tristan archipelago, not 180. I also found the metric conversions in parentheses to be a distraction, where every imperial measurement was immediately followed by its equivalent in metric. This destroyed the flow of the read every time, like coming across a roadblock immediately after starting to learn about somewhere new and exciting. Islands which may have seemed to outsiders as providing an idyllic, castaway lifestyle had this reputation ruined once modern civilization stomped its way in. It doesn't matter if life on these islands was in reality entirely opposite to this castaway myth, as outsiders' impressions often trump local reality in the matters of worldwide reputation. This is perhaps most evident on Tristan da Cunha when the islanders returned from their two-year exile in England following the volcanic eruption: "On Tristan da Cunha the same seven family names occur as they did before the enforced evacuation when the volcano unexpectedly exploded in 1961, but their life style now is dramatically different. Every cottage has electricity, the hospital is modernized, visitor accommodation has been built, and a policeman appointed. All these developments are clearly beneficial but reliance on a cash economy, increasing numbers of motor vehicles (with almost nowhere to drive) and the introduction of income tax make me wonder if any of the older inhabitants hanker for the days of slower life, bullock carts as transport, oil lamps for lighting, and a community where everybody helped with whatever tasks were needed and payment was not part of the equation?" Life on Tristan before the 1961 eruption was anything but easy, as research into Tristanian history will clearly show. However once the islanders were exposed to the modern conveniences of 1960's Britain, upon their return to Tristan in 1963 they carried many of these mod cons back with them, and changed Tristanian resettlement history forever. I was pleased to read of the successful programs to eradicate invasive species and to reestablish both native flora and fauna to some of these islands. The biggest success story is that of Ile aux Aigrettes, which lies less than a kilometre off the southeast coast of Mauritius. This islet of only 26 hectares had been overrun with introduced species of plants and animals, yet has been restored to its former glory of being rat-free. Any kind of eradication project of foreign species is a massive effort, yet the smaller the island, as in Ile aux Aigrettes, the better. Lovegrove wrote about the difficulties experienced on larger islands such as South Georgia, where, at 3528 km², eradicating the rats over this vast area is compounded by the retreating glaciers, which gives the rats new opportunities to escape. How people could have even established settlements on some of these faraway locations seems to defy belief, however if I seem to have no trouble getting my head around the colonization of Tristan--the most isolated inhabited island on the planet--then living anyplace else shouldn't seem so outlandish in comparison. My intimate acquaintance with Tristan seems to make me lose perspective on how isolated it really is. Yet islands such as the St. Kilda archipelago, located 64 km northwest of the Scottish Outer Hebrides, supported very small communities, clinging to the sides of cliffs it seems, scourging for birds and their eggs. It was quite sad to read of the evacuation of the St. Kildan community to Scotland in 1930. The island community, numbering no more than 36, could not sustain itself and had to retreat to the bustle of Scotland in order to survive. I consider the loss of the St. Kildan community as tragic as the loss of a language or a bird species through extinction. Other island communities profiled in *Islands Beyond the Horizon* were abandoned many centuries before St. Kilda, often for reasons lost to time. My curiosity has been piqued by many of these islands that I had heretofore barely known anything about. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Brief histories of man's destruction of twenty insular environments By Craig Rowland I love islands and insular cultures, so I was drawn to this new book in my library's collection. *Islands Beyond the Horizon: The Life of Twenty of the World's Most Remote Places* by Roger Lovegrove is right up my island alley in that it covers places that I have been to (Tristan da Cunha), places I want to visit (Jan Mayen) and places that I had never heard of and am altogether fascinated by (St. Kilda). Lovegrove talks about the islands' history yet his main focus is on the environmental destruction that man has wrought

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The remote island has held an enduring place in our collect imaginations, as a spur to our wanderlust and as the inspiration for such classic tales as *Robinson Crusoe*. Now, in this attractively illustrated volume--filled with numerous photographs and an eight-page color section--Roger Lovegrove has gathered, for the first time, the stories of twenty of the most remote islands in the world. Wandering over a wide geographical area, from the Arctic and the Antarctic to the Atlantic and Pacific, Lovegrove takes us to islands familiar and unknown, ranging from the storm-bound island of South Georgia and the ice-locked island of Wrangel to the wind-swept, wave-lashed islands of Mykines and St Kilda. We travel to Halfmoon Island, a haven for penguins near the Antarctic, to tropical Tuamotu in French Polynesia, to the beautiful volcanic island of Pico, and to Tristan da Cunha, perhaps the most remote place on earth. Lovegrove set us down on each of these far-off exotic places, describing the diverse wildlife and vegetation to be found there, and highlighting the impact humans have had on their fragile ecosystems. He shows how the presence

of humans has been felt in a variety of ways, from the exploitation of birds for food to the elimination of native vegetation for crops, and he points to Guam as an extreme example--perhaps the extreme example--of the dreadful effects that we can have on an oceanic island. Once a tropical paradise, modern Guam is, he writes, "defined by the silence of the birds." Throughout, Lovegrove reveals that whatever the nature of islands--distant, offshore, inhabited, uninhabited, tropical, or polar--their mystique and magnetism is irresistible. His *Islands Beyond the Horizon* will be the perfect escape for armchair travelers who yearn to visit far-flung exotic locales.

From Booklist Over the centuries, exotic, faraway islands have inspired dozens of fanciful literary and cinematic escapades, from *Robinson Crusoe* to TV's recent sci-fi series *Lost*. For the genesis of this captivating travelogue profiling 20 of the world's most remote islands, author and birding enthusiast Lovegrove credits a blissful week spent at a bird sanctuary on Skokholm Island, near Wales, when he was only 16. Not all the islands chronicled here are quite so idyllic, however, and few have the tropical climate depicted in the Defoe classic. Halfmoon Island, located in the Arctic Ocean, for example, is the definition of desolation and soullessness, according to Lovegrove. Some islands are well known, such as Guam, where the author witnesses the environmental devastation caused by military installations, whereas others are not, such as the lush mid-Atlantic outpost Tristan da Cunha, where a tiny society flourishes despite its extreme distance from the mainland. Together with maps and eight pages of color plates, Lovegrove's vividly written essays will provide hours of vicarious enjoyment for housebound island hoppers and geography lovers everywhere. --Carl Hays This book is a pleasure to read. The author's style is crisp, vivid and clear. * Tony Marr, *Ibis* * Lovegrove manages to capture each island's identity and mystery and transmits his affection for these faraway places. * Northern Echo * you will find the island hopping a fascinating journey of discovery. * Mike Cowton, *Eco Travel Guide* * About the Author Roger Lovegrove was Director of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in Wales for 27 years and since retirement has been a member of the board of The Countryside Council for Wales. He is the author of some ten books, including *Birds of Wales*, *The Red Kite's Tale*, and most recently, *Silent Fields*.