

## BOOK REVIEW

M.J. BRUSH AND ALAN H. BRUSH. 2015. **Mark Catesby's Legacy: Natural History Then and Now.** (ISBN-13: 978-0-692-10419-4, pbk). The Catesby Commemorative Trust, 102 Marsh Elder Ct, Johns Island, South Carolina 29455, U.S.A. (**Orders:** [www.catesbytrust.org](http://www.catesbytrust.org)). \$29.95 US, 191 pp., 32 color plates, 7" × 10".

*From the Publisher:* In *Mark Catesby's Legacy, Natural History Then and Now* Alan Brush, Emeritus Professor of Physiology & Neurobiology at the University of Connecticut, provides an important historical perspective on the scientific discoveries made by the Englishman Mark Catesby 1683–1749, who traveled in the Carolinas, Florida and the Bahamas three centuries ago. Professor Brush's observations are complemented by the delicate, contemporary paintings (inspired by Catesby's own beautiful drawings of fauna and flora) by his wife, M.J. Brush, a professional illustrator.

Mark Catesby's Legacy answers a question every Mark Catesby enthusiast must at some point ask: What has become of the natural world Catesby so uniquely chronicled in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century? This is a question the Brushes are qualified to address. Like Catesby, they have traveled throughout the Carolinas, Florida and Bahamas—primarily by sailboat—and described and painted many of the plants and animals featured in Catesby's magisterial two volume folio *The Natural History of the Carolinas, Florida and the Bahamas* first published in London in 1731. It was so popular that it went through several editions in 1754 and 1771 and remaining in print at least until 1815. It influenced the works of Edwards, Linnaeus, Gould, Audubon and even Charles Darwin. It was used by President Jefferson and also by Lewis and Clark in planning their exploration to the West Coast.

While many of the species Catesby illustrated and described are still here in abundance, others face serious challenges to their survival, or are now extinct: sadly, for example, the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, the Carolina Parakeet and the Passenger Pigeon are no longer with us. Mark Catesby's Legacy, Natural History Then and Now provides a fresh look at the rich diversity of life in a complex and enchanting part of the world in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century and a must read for all naturalists and admirers of the work of Mark Catesby worldwide.

The first time I saw *Mark Catesby's Legacy, Natural History Then and Now* book, my eyes went directly to the beautiful ivory-billed woodpecker painting on the cover which demonstrates the white space, color, fonts, and graphics are excellent on the cover. As our society becomes more cognizant of global warming and climate change, one wonders what has become of the natural world Mark Catesby chronicled in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Mark Catesby was a truly remarkable collector, artist, and author.

The Brush's book, *Mark Catesby's Legacy, Natural History Then and Now*, provides a fresh look at the rich diversity of life in a complex and ever-changing part of the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For all naturalists interested in art and science of our environment, plus the choices we face for the future, the Brush's comprehensive book is bound to appeal to a wide audience.

This is an unusual but very engaging book by the illustrator M.J. Brush and her husband, Alan. It's unusual because rather than just write about Catesby and his work, the Brushes traced Catesby's travels, explored his writings, and assessed how the world that Catesby saw has changed in the past 250 years. While based upon and inspired by Catesby's work, the Brushes have made his book their own way that makes a unique connection between the art and science of our environment and the choices we face for the future.

—Kay Stansbery, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.