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Coniff, Richard. The Species Seekers: heroes, fools, and the mad pursuit of life on Earth

Until the 1830s, the word "scientist" didn't exist and biology, botany, and related sciences were not professional fields of study for which practitioners studied at universities, but were the purview of dedicated amateurs. The late 1700s and the 1800s saw the rise of the naturalist, beginning with Carolus Linnaeus's creation of a methodical and organized classification system for species. Naturalists traveled the world, braving the most adverse and sometimes fatal of weather and geography, all for the pure joy of discovery and the lesser joy of monetary remuneration from museums and collectors back home. Coniff profiles these pioneers and their discoveries, while simultaneously discussing the importance of the naturalists' findings on our understanding of our own place in nature.

Compelling, meticulously researched, and yet accessible to scientific amateurs, *The Species Seekers* is fascinating reading.

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