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SKUTCH, Alexander F.

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A naturalist on a tropical farm. Illus. by Dana Gardner. Univ. of California Press CAL461. 397p. illus. index. 18cm. 78-64474. c1980. \$7.95.

In this work the reader is introduced to a tropical farm situated in Costa Rica, called "Los Cusingos." Here is a naturalist's dream -- a rain forest with wildlife so plentiful that it seems more a natural game preserve than a farm.

What is really fascinating about this work is Skutch's pioneering spirit. He went to Costa Rica in 1940 and developed a farm and game preserve where there was nothing like it. Conservation and ecology are two words which came into vogue in the last twenty years, but Skutch put them into practice over forty years ago. Another intriguing part of this book are the personalities of the animals which the author describes. His chapter on chickens is delightful as he describes how *Cercomacra* would almost court the author in a dance and then go into a follow-up routine when she had laid her egg.

A striking feature which one cannot get over is the poverty that the author describes in the area around Los Cusingos, a poverty typical of Central America.

This work is highly recommended, and it covers an unusual topic. Students will be fascinated to read about the many different types of wildlife. J.M.B.

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