



For sixteen months Jimmy the Bicolored Antbird accompanied the author on his walks, scurrying after the insects turned up by boots scuffing the forest floor.  
Below: A male three-wattled bellbird. Illustrations by Dana Gardner, from the book



A large tract of tropical forest, still intact on the farm Alexander F. Skutch bought in southern Costa Rica forty years ago, has been the observation ground of this Johns Hopkins-trained botanist and ornithologist. In the most recent of his fourteen books, *A Naturalist on a Tropical Farm* (University of California, Berkeley), he shares his knowledge of the living world around him, the touch of the seasons on the land, and the rarely seen habits of the birds, for whom he has an unusual affinity. His amazing friendship—for that it certainly was—with Jimmy the antbird was a reward of his sensitivity to nature. For him, "simply to be trusted by a shy wild creature enhances one's self-respect." The book takes its place among the best examples of nature writing, and provides enjoyable insight into a major ecological community that is being damaged today faster than it is being understood.

—F.L.P.