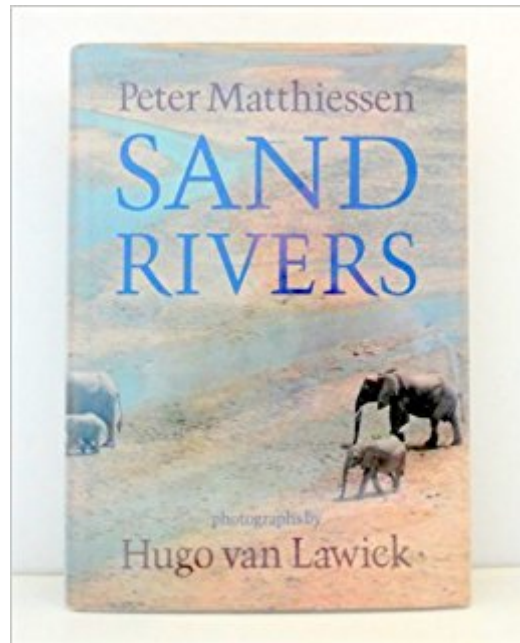




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Sand Rivers



Synopsis

In late 1979, the writer and naturalist Peter Matthiessen and the wildlife photographer Hugo van Lawick joined a safari into the Selous Game Reserve in southern Tanzania, one of the largest yet least-known strongholds of wild animals left on earth. *Sand Rivers* is their beautiful account of a remarkable trip into this quintessential East African wilderness.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In late 1979, the writer and naturalist Peter Matthiessen and the wildlife photographer Hugo van Lawick joined a safari into the Selous Game Reserve in southern Tanzania, one of the largest yet least-known strongholds of wild animals left on earth. *Sand Rivers* is their beautiful account of a remarkable trip into this quintessential East African wilderness.

Excellent. Exactly what I wanted.

I was expecting more of a biological and geographical account than a rather mundane travel book. What we have is a description of animals and people as the safari progresses, interspersed with impressions of the porters and others on the trip. And some historical background, often relating to dangerous animals in Africa, and the depredations of poachers. Occasional tidbits of biology are thrown in, but this is not like a John McPhee book on the area at all. I found it only mildly interesting. The photographs are by a famous and experienced photographer, and I suppose in their day they were excellent, and probably much better if we could see them as proper scans at high definition.

But as prints they leave a lot to be desired. The resolution is not good, nor are the colors for the most part. They seem grainy and insufficiently saturated. So, the book is a disappointment.

Matthiessen writes of this wilderness as clearly as Van Lawick photographs it. The crack of the dry grass, the intense heat, the startling beauty of the birds, the fleeting glimpse of wary wildlife as well as the personalities of all from the game wardens to the porters are beautifully described in scholarly detail. This book is a trip into the last savannah wilderness in Africa and thanks to Matthiessen's talent as a writer as well as his knowledge and ability to find the richest detail from those he interviews you benefit as if you too had traveled with him. This book was hard to put down as the author reveals the history and founding of the Selous Game Preserve. The Selous is captured and preserved well within the pages. This book will make you hope that it is preserved well in Tanzania and that all those that have struggled for it will have succeeded.

Peter Matthiessen ("The Tree Where Man was born," "At Play in the Fields of the Lord," "The Snow Leopard") takes the reader on a safari into the Selous, the grandest piece of truly wild real estate left in Africa. Along for the ride in western Tanzania is the last great warden of this famous park, a direct descendant, in a way, of Frederick Cortenay Selous himself, for whom the park is named.

Matthiessen is low key, unpretentious, straightforward and fresh in his descriptions. Yet, as the safari moves deeper and deeper into the bush, one wonders, as one found in Matthiessen's classic "The Snow Leopard", whether we're really going to see any big animals after all. And whether or not Matthiessen and the crusty old game warden are going to resolve their apprehensions about each other. Suffice it to say that at no level is this fine book a disappointment, including the excellent photography of Hugo Van Lawick, who accompanied the private safari, driving his own Land Rover down from the Serengeti. If you ever thought you might like to take a walk in Africa, the old Africa, this is your book.

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