

## **Darwin's illustrated record of his South American travels in its first edition**

Charles Darwin (editor), *The Zoology of the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle*. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1839–1843. 13 3/4 inches x 9 1/4 inches (349 x 235 mm), 5 parts bound into 2 volumes; 164 lithographed plates (82 hand-colored).

British naturalist Charles Darwin (1809–1882) is renowned for his doctrines of natural selection and evolution, but it was the *The Zoology of the Voyage of the Beagle* that first brought him public attention. Darwin was born to a wealthy family and apprenticed as a doctor under his father, beginning medical studies at Edinburgh University. He soon became interested in natural history. After enrolling in Christ's College, Cambridge, he became fascinated by collecting beetles, which was in vogue at the time. As a result, he was introduced to John Stevens Henslow, a botany instructor who was well versed on the subject of beetles. It was Henslow who found an unpaid position for Darwin as a companion to the captain of H.M.S. *Beagle*, Robert FitzRoy. Although the hydrologic survey of the *Beagle* was originally to be completed in two years, Darwin spent five years with the crew and had much time on land for his natural history explorations; he studied a combination of geological features, fossils, and living creatures and amassed an immense collection of specimens, which included many previously unknown species. Many consider Darwin's expedition on the *Beagle* to be the the most important experience in his intellectual development. His observations of the finches unique to individual islands of the Galápagos were a catalyst in his initial musings on natural selection, and *The Origin of Species* contains numerous supporting examples from Darwin's South American travels.

*The Zoology of the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle* was published in five parts between February 1838 and October 1843, and it was an ambitious endeavor that was overseen by Darwin in the role of editor. Part I (1840?), "Fossil Mammalia," was written by Richard Owen with a geological introduction by Darwin. Owen was a paleontologist who oversaw the museum of the Royal College of surgeons and the natural history collections of the British Museum. George Waterhouse, curator of the Zoological Society of London, authored Part II on the "Mammalia" (1839) to which Darwin contributed a

geographical introduction as well as notes on the ranges and habits of the mammals covered. Ornithologist John Gould, the first curator and taxidermist for Zoological Society of London, contributed the text on birds for Part III (1841), again with notices of habits and ranges provided by Darwin. Part IV (1842), on fish was introduced by Rev. Leonard Jenyns, a respected botanist and zoologist and founder of the Bath Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club. Thomas Bell, a professor of zoology at King's College wrote the final installment on reptiles (Part V, 1843). Both the text on fish and that on reptiles include numerous notes from Darwin, most of which were derived from his labels. Gould, assisted by his wife, the natural history artist Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins, and George Waterhouse produced the plates.

This 2-volume edition of the *The Zoology of the Voyage of the Beagle* from the Warnock Library is bound in black leather with brown calf spine and tips; gold titles on spines with gold decorative rules. The edition was previously owned by the public library of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Octavo code: dwnzbg