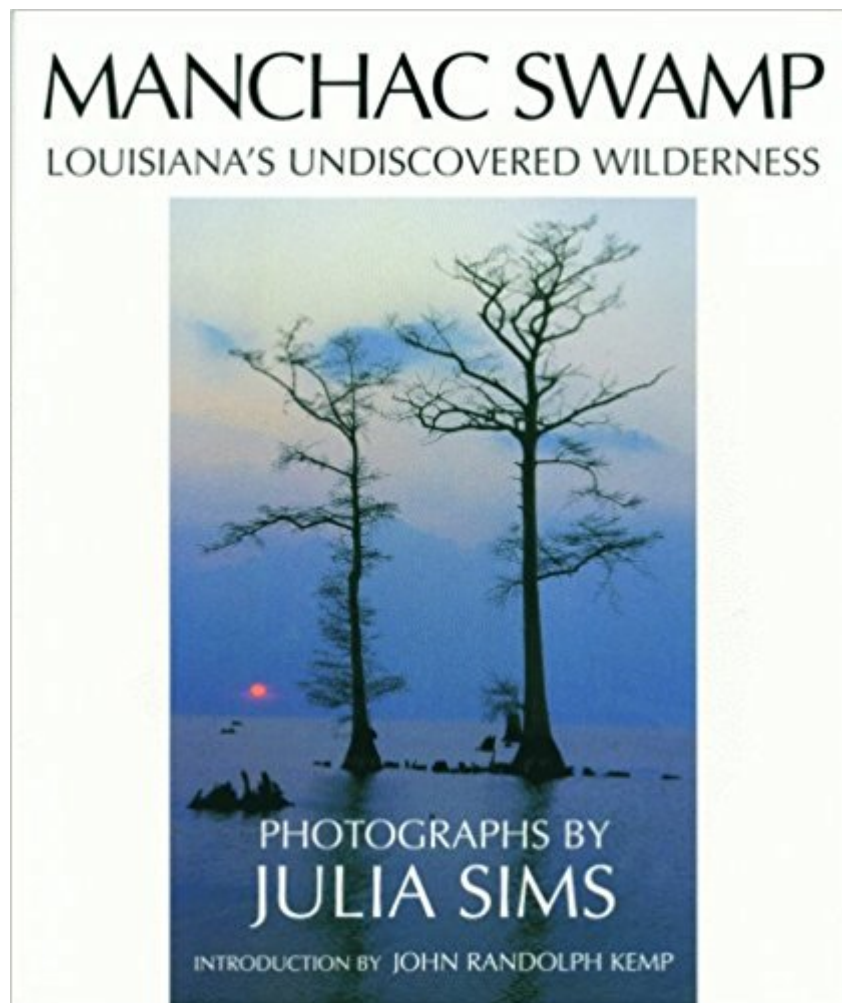




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Manchac Swamp: Louisiana's Undiscovered Wilderness



Synopsis

For Julia Sims, photography originally served as an excuse to spend time in the Manchac Swamp. She had turned to the swamp for solace after a family tragedy and visited the swamp frequently. As her concern for the vanishing wetlands grew, she was inspired to document the swamp and share her love of nature with the world. Veiled behind dense drapes of Spanish moss and walls of wondrous cypress trees, Manchac Swamp is a wilderness jewel accessible only by boat. Drawn to the swamp's mystery and eventually captivated by its peace, Sims spent 15 years patiently penetrating its secrets. The result, trapped on film, is the many moods, flora, and fauna of this hidden world. Now, in this stunning album of her photographs, a glimpse of that quintessential Louisiana place in its seasonal variations is offered to all. In an evocative introduction to the book, John Kemp draws upon his interviews with several residents. They are a rare group who are known as "guardians of the swamp" and consider their existence a study in life as they learn to coexist with the majesty that surrounds them. An enigmatic group, they make their living off of the land. As deteriorating environmental conditions reduce or eliminate wildlife, there is, in turn, a diminished harvest for them as trappers, hunters, and fishermen-and a diminished heritage for all of us.

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Customer Reviews

For Julia Sims, photography originally served as an excuse to spend time in the Manchac Swamp. She had turned to the swamp for solace after a family tragedy and visited the swamp frequently. As her concern for the vanishing wetlands grew, she was inspired to document the swamp and share

her love of nature with the world. Veiled behind dense drapes of Spanish moss and walls of wondrous cypress trees, Manchac Swamp is a wilderness jewel accessible only by boat. Drawn to the swamp's mystery and eventually captivated by its peace, Sims spent fifteen years patiently penetrating its secrets. The result, trapped on film, is the many moods, flora, and fauna of this hidden world. Now, in this stunning album of her photographs, a glimpse of that world in its seasonal variations is offered to all. In an evocative introduction to the book, John Kemp draws upon his interviews with several residents. They are a rare group who are known as "guardians of the swamp" and consider their existence a study in life as they learn to coexist with the majesty that surrounds them. They make their living off of the land. As deteriorating environmental conditions reduce or eliminate wildlife, there is, in turn, a diminished harvest for them as trappers, hunters, and fishermen--and a diminished heritage for all of us.

Manchac Swamp marks the book-length debut of a little-known but superbly talented nature photographer as she reveals an equally undiscovered exotic locale in south Louisiana. Veiled behind dense drapes of Spanish moss and walls of cypresses, and accessible only by water, Manchac Swamp is a wilderness jewel known mainly to those who for generations have dwelled in and around it, arduously earning their sustenance from its waters and wildlife. Drawn to the swamp's mystery and eventually captivated by its peace, photographer Julia Sims spent fifteen years determinedly, patiently penetrating its secrets. What she has hunted from boat and blind, and skillfully trapped on film, are the many moods, flora, and fauna of this hidden world. Now, in this stunning album of her photographs, a glimpse of that quintessential Louisiana place in its seasonal variations is offered to all. Sims's artistry is grounded in photographic technique as well as in her skill as a wildlife observer. Even in the uncontrolled setting of nature she creates images of masterly composition, and breathtaking uses of light and color are hallmarks of her work. In an evocative introduction to the book, John Kemp draws upon his interviews with several of the swamp's residents to describe how they make their living there, trapping and hunting every variety of animal--turtle, muskrat, nutria, lizard, snake, frog, alligator, rabbit, squirrel, duck, mink, otter, crawfish. But the locals, who have befriended Sims and lead her to choice spots for photographing, say that Manchac is not the same as it once was. Land subsidence and the influx of salt water are among several factors that are causing what some predict will be the swamp's inevitable death. As deteriorating environmental conditions reduce or eliminate wildlife, there is, in turn, a diminished harvest for trappers, hunters, and fishermen--and a diminished heritage for all of us. In some respects, Sims's Manchac Swamp is a heartbreakingly beautiful collection of photographs. It heralds

a marvel of secluded wilderness even as it documents the area's accelerating decline. In her expert capture of the ephemeral, Sims has made timeless the people and place of Manchac Swamp. Julia Sims is one of the premier photographers of Louisiana's wildlife. Her work has appeared in virtually every nature magazine including National Geographic, National Wildlife, Nature Conservancy, Sierra, Birder's World, and Ducks Unlimited. She lives in Ponchatoula, Louisiana, about fifty miles north of New Orleans. John Randolph Kemp, a native New Orleanian, is the New Orleans correspondent for Art & Antiques and ARTnews magazines and a frequent contributor to American Artist magazine. In addition, he has written about art, history, and New Orleans for many other national and regional magazines and publications. His numerous books include Rolland Golden: The Journeys of a Southern Artist, Alan Flattmann's French Quarter Impressions, and Vanishing Paradise: Duck Hunting in the Louisiana Marsh, all published by Pelican. He covers the New Orleans art scene for WYES New Orleans public television. He is deputy director of the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities.

beautifully composed. wonderful pictures of an intriguing area. one which is generally overlooked in discussions of great american natural areas. in addition to its natural beauty, manchac has a long history, and julia sims does it credit.

i asked her what she thought of book . she says it is totally awesome . one of the best book she has. plus the price was very reasonable. thank you very much

My husband and I are natives of the area Julia Sims photographs! We've been gone 34 years! This book lets us relive the beautiful wilderness we grew up in and also to hopefully, preserve it! We have never seen such gorgeous photographs of the Manchac Swamp, except maybe in her gallery in Ponchatoula, LA. ANY nature lover will enjoy this book, even if not from LA!

As a first time viewer of wildlife/landscape photography, I expected this book to be little more than a book of pretty pictures. However, Julia Sims managed, with vertiginous purity, to bring the swamps of Louisiana to my very living room over a thousand miles away. Her lyrical use of brilliant colors and vivid backdrops enabled me, and many others with whom I have shared this book, to feel the majestic and natural beauty of Manchac Swamp. Nearly ever picture tells a story that enables the reader to feel a part of this American treasure. Mr. Kemp's ability to illuminate the personalities of those who call the swamp home is equally impressive. These "guardians of the swamp" have

coexisted beautifully for decades with this as their wallpaper and any reader of this book will understand their fortune for having been able to do so. This is more than just a coffee table book to be shared during polite conversation; these 144 pages are a visual love letter to the flora, fauna and wildlife of a dying swamp. Ms. Sims and Mr. Kemp will be thanked for many years to come.

Manchac Swamp: Louisiana's Undiscovered Wilderness is a true work of art and a source of inspiration.

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