



To the keepers from
William Beebe

William Beebe

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Charles William ("Will") Beebe (July 29, 1877 – June 4, 1962) was an American naturalist, explorer, and author.

To be a Naturalist is better than to be a King
—Beebe, *Journal*, 31 December, 1893

Born in Brooklyn, New York, he went on to become Curator of Ornithology for the New York Zoological Society from 1899 to 1952. He was a self-styled naturalist and everything living seemed to hold a continuing fascination for him. In 1919 he was also made Director of the Department of Tropical Research.

He wrote many popular books of his expeditions some of which became best-sellers ("my potboilers") in the 1920s and 1930s. He was also a regular contributor to the *National Geographic Magazine*. The money from the sale of these books helped finance his later expeditions. He also wrote his magnificent *A Monograph of the Pheasants* (1918-1922), which remains the classic reference on the subject.

On September 22, 1927 he married Helen Elswyth Thane Ricker (May 16, 1900 – 1981) an American romance novelist who wrote under the name of Elswyth Thane.



Beebe (left) and Otis Barton with the bathysphere.

His interest in deep-sea exploration led to the development of the bathysphere, a spherical metal diving vessel, with Otis Barton.^{[1][2][3]} In 1930, he descended 183m (600 ft) off Nonsuch Island in Bermuda, where in 1934 he made a record descent of 923m (3,028 ft).^{[1][2]} Beebe made a total of 35 dives in the bathysphere between 1930 and 1934.^[1]

He set up a camp for jungle studies in 1942 at Caripito, Venezuela. In 1950, when he was 73 years old, he bought with his own money 228 acres (92 hectares) of land in the Arima Valley (Trinidad and Tobago) which he named "Simla". This land became the New York Zoological Society's Tropical Research Station in Trinidad. The New York

Zoological Society Simla Research Station was directed by Dr. Jocelyn Crane after Dr. Beebe's death and later donated to the Trust.

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Dr. William Beebe (left) with Dr. Ted Hill, Simla, Trinidad, 1959

Born	July 29, 1877 Brooklyn
Died	June 4, 1962
Nationality	American
Fields	naturalist inventor
Known for	bathysphere