

Atkins

The Naturalist

The remarkable life of Allan Riverstone McCulloch

Allan Riverstone McCulloch (1885–1925) was a leading scientist and talented illustrator, the Australian Museum's most senior curator and its star exhibition designer. Yet history has ignored his many contributions. A free spirit and an expert on Australia's fish species, McCulloch was happiest on field trips collecting specimens on the Great Barrier Reef, Lord Howe Island and beyond. He escaped office politics at the museum to accompany cinematographer Frank Hurley on an expedition to tropical Papua in 1922, but controversy erupted when officials accused them of stealing secret, sacred artefacts for the museum's collection. The trip also left McCulloch with dysentery and malaria, and his mental health declined. In *The Naturalist*, Brendan Atkins explores McCulloch's scientific genius and artistic talents, and his crucial role in the development of the Australian Museum. It's a fascinating and unflinching look at the remarkable life of a brilliant yet troubled Australian.



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