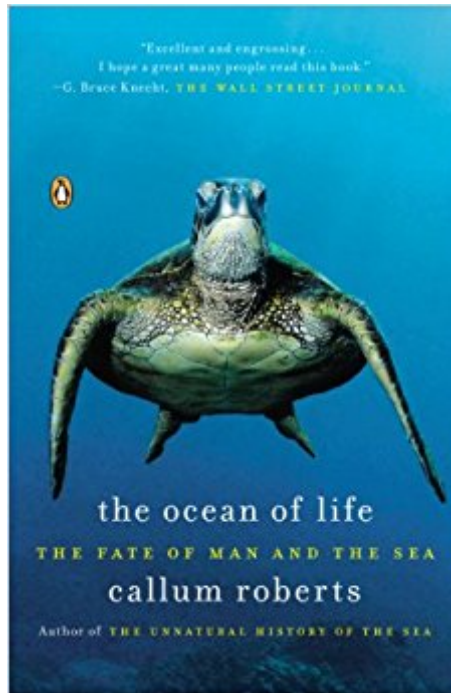




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The Ocean Of Life: The Fate Of Man And The Sea



Synopsis

Economist Book of the Year --Audubon Book of the Year --American Library Association Award winner -- Royal Society Winton prize Finalist -- Winner of the Rachel Carson award -- A Silent Spring for oceans by -- "the Rachel Carson of the fish world" (The New York Times) -- who appeared on the Imax film Wild Ocean and provided the scientific basis for the creation of the first high seas marine protected areas. For fans of Carl Safina and Elizabeth Kolbert. -- "Immensely entertaining, although it chronicles a tragedy" | No account of the cataclysm is more engaging. -- •Mark Kurlansky, The Washington Post The sea feeds and sustains us, but everywhere we look marine life is under threat, from Caribbean reefs to arctic fisheries to the deepest regions of the sea. In this passionate paean to the sea and its creatures one of the world's foremost marine conservation biologists tells the story of man and the sea, from the earliest traces of life on earth to the oceans as we know them today. -- He considers the impact of fishing and ocean acidification, rising tides and warming seas, plastics and shifting currents, and reveals what we must do now to preserve our precious oceans. The struggles of Turtles, Dolphins, Whales and Tuna are relatively well known, but few people appreciate just how much our seas have changed in the last fifty years and how many species are now under acute stress. At once passionate and persuasive, The Ocean of Life will appeal to readers of Four Fish and The Sixth Extinction -- to those who care about environmental sustainability, and to anyone who loves the sea and its creatures. -- "Excellent and engrossing" | I hope a great many people read this book. -- •G. Bruce Knecht, Wall Street Journal "Authoritative and furious, urgent and persuasive" -- •Sunday Times

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“One of the world’s most prominent and articulate marine scientists, Callum Roberts gives us an updated, comprehensive, and engaging account of the ongoing crisis beneath the waves, and how we humans can turn the situation around. Despite the frightening litany of problems facing the seas, Roberts is optimistic that we can and will mend our ways so that marine resources will be there to help support planet Earth.”
—Christian Science Monitor

“Told with both scientific accuracy and narrative skill. . . . I know of no other volume that treats such divergent ocean issues as overfishing, decreasing pH, plastic pollution and biogeographic shifts with this much accuracy and acumen. Each chapter is edged with fascinating details about the life of the sea. At the heart of this book is a deep love of the ocean and a profound concern for its viability as a resource for us all.”
—Stephen Palumbi, *Nature*

“Roberts is that precious pearl: a practicing scientist who not only knows his field inside out, but also understands how to write compelling, persuasive non-fiction. . . . To use the vernacular of his book, he has trawled and plundered these experiences to craft the nearest thing we are ever likely to get to an all-encompassing manifesto for sustainable marine management.”
—The Guardian

“Callum Roberts has done it again. From showing us the past with the wisdom of a Dickens character in his earlier book, he now leads us toward the future in *The Ocean of Life*. It’s a book so fine, I wish I’d written it!”
—Carl Safina, author of *Song for the Blue Ocean*

“The urgency of Callum Roberts’ message - that we have very little time to save the oceanic environment on which our existence depends - is in no way undermined by the entertaining and brilliantly-written nature of his writing. This is simply a fascinating book, taking in everything from the elemental formations of the oceans to the denizens that inhabit them; from minute plankton to the great whales - and everything that threatens them, and us. Roberts imparts his vast knowledge with a consummate talent for colorful narrative and devastating facts. His book will be required reading for anyone who cares about the oceans - not least because, as well as underlining the scale of the problems, he offers us the hope of real solutions.”
—Philip Hoare, author of *Leviathan*, or *The Whale*

“The enormity of the sea’s troubles, and their implications for mankind, are mind-boggling. Yet it is remarkable how little this is recognised. . . . There is a dearth of good and comprehensive books on a subject that can seem too complicated and depressing for

any single tome. Callum Roberts, a conservation biologist, has now provided one. •The Economist •“The eminent marine biologist Callum Roberts weaves his personal passion for the oceans through the enchanting story of the evolution of the planet’s water. | Blending science and observation, he issues a compelling call to move from the catastrophic path we are on. Like Rachel Carson’s seminal book *Silent Spring*, which catalyzed the environmental movement, *The Ocean of Life* is eloquent and authoritative. -- David Suzuki, host of “The Nature of Things” • “Those of us who worry about the future of our oceans could do a lot worse than take up this single refrain, “Listen to Callum Roberts!”. Shouted in the ears of the world’s leaders, it might just make a difference. Meanwhile we should all read *Ocean of Life*, a thrilling narrative of oceanic natural history and a vital call to action. --Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, chef, broadcaster and author of *The River Cottage Cookbook* • “An engrossing survey of the relationship between man and the sea for readers living through the greatest environmental changes in 65 million years. . . . Roberts’s meditation will have readers gasping aloud with wonder, even as the sobering truth of humans’ profound interdependence with the sea provokes concern. • Publishers Weekly (starred review) ‘For anyone who loves the sea, *Ocean of Life* is a wake-up call, an urgent alert’ --Daily Mail ‘At the heart of this book is a deep love of the ocean and a profound concern for its viability as a resource for us all’ --Nature ‘An impressive history ... one of this book’s strengths is the many solutions Roberts outlines.’ -- Financial Times

Callum Roberts is the author of *The Unnatural History of the Sea*, a Washington Post Book of the Year and winner of the Rachel Carson Environment Book Award. A professor of marine conservation at the University of York, he consulted on the Blue Planet series and the IMAX film *The Wild Ocean* and is a frequent keynote speaker at environmental conferences (including Mission Blue, TED and the Skoll foundation). He advised and was featured in *The End of the Line*, a documentary on the global fishing crisis and appeared in the National Geographic documentary *America Before Columbus*. He is on the board of Seaweb and provided the scientific basis for the creation of the world’s first high seas protected network.

An exhaustive look at the pressures that human civilization are placing on the oceans. An important read. Covers many different topics. With that said, I found the tone of the writing to be quite apocalyptic (one could debate whether that is appropriate or not based on the circumstances) and the author seems to reject most proposed solutions without really putting too much forward as

alternatives. As such, I found the book a little difficult to get through, and a bit depressing (again, that presentation may be justified given the circumstances). If you are looking for a lighter read on the same subject with proposed solutions, take a look at Sylvia Earle's "The World Is Blue." Although I'd recommend reading both books in tandem.

It is one of the scariest books I've ever read and one of the saddest. But his descriptions of the problems facing the ocean conform to what I've read in other sources and to things I've seen for myself, so I think it's probably not exaggerated. It's also contains some grains of optimism, in that he describes some reasonable courses that people can take to reduce human impact on the oceans and restore sea life. Whether we will be able to get our acts together to at least partially restore sea life and save some of the world's coral reefs is another matter. If Dr. Roberts is right that's still at least a possibility.

The book is excellent. I checked out the book from our public library and found "The Ocean of Life" was such a good resource that I ordered a reference copy for myself from . Callum has another book titled: "The Unnatural History of the Sea" which describes the changes witnessed in the ocean over time and our 'Shifting Baselines' which we rate the ocean environment by what we see today. Unfortunately we underestimate the wealth of species and abundance due to our present viewpoint. When we can see what the ocean HAD to offer in the past and realize the extent of what we have lost, we can attempt to bring back some of the conditions and wealth of organisms seen in the past. We have been grossly underestimating and over exploiting the resources within our ocean environments for hundreds of years. It is imperative that we create replenishment zones in our world's oceans for the health of our planet and a resource for our use. The goal would be somewhere between 30-40 percent of our oceans closed to fishing and the allowance of the rebuilding of these environments from the bottom up. Trawl fishing should not be allowed in all environments due to the destruction of the bottom crusts that other animals and plants depend on. The great quantities of waste in the form of discarded dead by-catch needs to be greatly reduced. The ocean has been viewed as too large to be harmed, but we are finding this to be incorrect. We continue to over fish and degrade the ocean environment because it has been done this way in the past. We have the opportunity to allow recovery if areas are protected .

Seeing that oceans cover about two-thirds of the globe, and the sea is an important source of world protein, and is a relatively unknown area for most people, it would be wise if all read this book. It

appears to be set up as an introductory text. I read the text as a retired agronomist with a primary interest of increasing my knowledge of the oceans as a source of food for the world. It added much to my growing knowledge while confirming the serious question as to whether the oceans will be able to continue being a major supplier of protein. Roberts appears to be more optimistic than Carl Safina, another writer of the oceans, and I. The fisherman of the world have scrapped the bottoms for almost all that is edible. The mud stirred up by the trawlers can be seen from space discoloring the ocean for days. The bycatch often exceeds the sea food sought. Most all the bycatch dies and is tossed back into the sea. As the population of the world increases the catch from the sea decreases, especially on a per person basis. The fishermen and their families will starve to death if they stop fishing but in many places they are starving slowly by fishing. Most importantly they are interrupting the cycle of life. The politicians of the world listen to the fisherman not the scientist. The politicians are very, very reluctant to stop all fishing in 30% of the oceans so that they may recover and assist in the recovery of those portions of the ocean still being fished. The author is not the only scientist to point out the need for this drastic step.

I teach a class on ecology, half of which is about marine ecology and the impact that humans have on the ecosystems that they depend on. I will be using this book as part of my class this year. I think it gives a really good overview of the biggest issues threatening the ocean today. As others have said, it is not a quick and easy read, but it is a good balance between the scientist who wants to put in every detail and citation and the writer who wants to make it accessible to people who are not experts. It is full of good and important information and I hope it will be widely read.

Was cheaper than my university bookstore and in hardcover. The actual book was also pretty interesting, it was a required textbook for an ocean GE class.

This is by far one of my favorite books. It was extremely informative and very interesting to read. It is backed by a vast amount of scientific research and the author is obviously well informed and knowledgeable. I absolutely loved this.

Callum Roberts explains the multifaceted effects of climate change as only an oceanographer can, with amazing clarity and detail. This book is not old in 2017. It's a classic of climate change understanding.

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