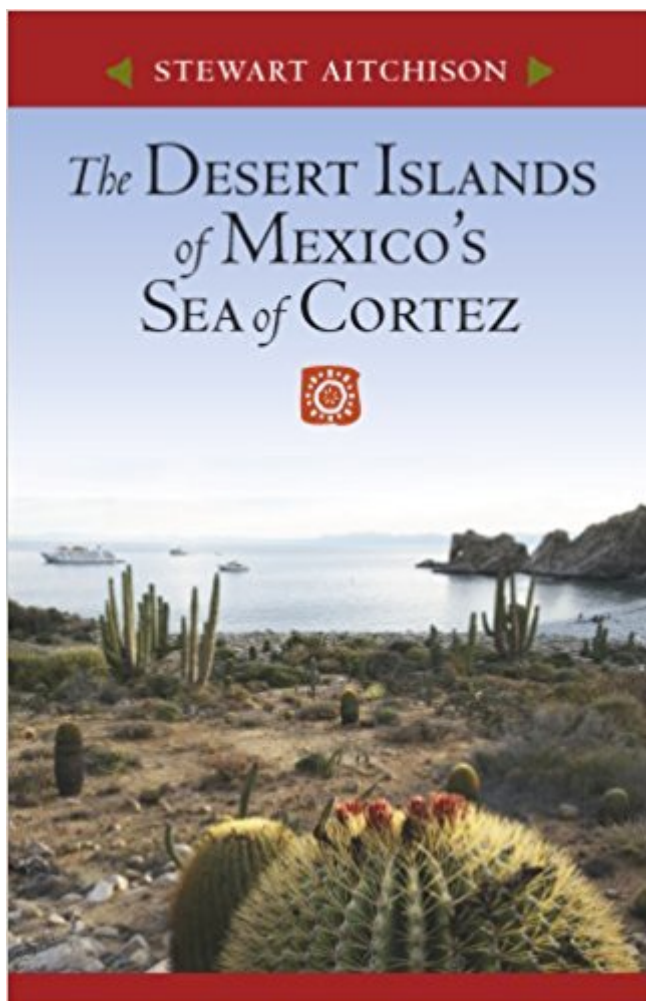


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The Desert Islands Of Mexico's Sea Of Cortez



Synopsis

The desert islands in the Sea of Cortez are little known except to a few intrepid tourists, sailors, and fishermen. Though at first glance these stark islands may appear barren, they are a refuge for an astounding variety of plants and animals. While many of the species are typical of the greater Sonoran Desert region, some are endemic or unique to one or two islands. For example, Isla Santa Catalina is home to the world's only rattlesnake that has lost its ability to grow a rattle. Other islands host nesting birds, such as Isla Rasa, a tiny, flat flow of basalt lava that attracts nearly half a million elegant and royal terns and Heermann's gulls each spring. The Desert Islands of Mexico's Sea of Cortez is one of the few books devoted to the biogeography of this remarkable part of the world. The book explores the geologic origin of the gulf and its islands, presents some of the basics of island biogeography, details insular life—including residents of the intertidal zone—and provides a brief outlook for preserving this area. More than a simple guidebook, Aitchison's writing will take both actual and armchair travelers through a gripping tale of natural history. Like the rest of our fragile planet, the Sea of Cortez and its islands are threatened by humans. Overfishing has eliminated or greatly diminished many fish stocks, and dams on rivers that once flowed into the gulf prevent certain nutrients from reaching the sea. The tenuousness of this area makes the book's extraordinary photographs and the firsthand descriptions by a well-known teacher, writer, and photographer all the more compelling.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This book is more than just a fun romp through the islands of the Sea of Cortez—it is

first-rate natural history writing about one of earth's most unique and special places. This book is a great read, whether you are a longtime Sea of Cortez traveler or simply wish you were."

•Richard Brusca, editor of *The Gulf of California: Biodiversity and Conservation*

"Visiting a breathtaking place like the Sea of Cortez is always enhanced when you have a better understanding of the natural history that makes the area so unique and majestic. Stewart Aitchison's book, with its lush and informative detail showcasing the unique geology and wealth of animal and plant life, will enhance anyone's visit to this critically important ocean ecosystem."

•Senator Mark Udall "Stewart Aitchison is as gifted a photographer as he is a writer and scientist. Thanks to this rare combination of gifts, we get a thorough, thoughtful, and visually appealing portrait of this unique region—one that deserves our attention and care."

•Bob Krist, photographer for National Geographic "With decades of experience exploring south of the border, few writers know Baja California and the Sea of Cortez better than Stewart Aitchison. And with all the interest in developing Baja's wild shores, this book is very timely indeed. The more people know about a place, the more they are likely to care. This book will certainly help make a difference."

•Ralph Lee Hopkins, Lindblad Expeditions

More than a simple guidebook, Aitchison's writing will take both actual and armchair travelers through a gripping tale of natural history. The tenuousness of this area makes the book's extraordinary photographs and the firsthand descriptions by this well-known teacher, writer, and photographer all the more compelling.

This well written, fascinating look at the geology, ecology and a bit of the history of the amazing desert islands is brief, only 99 pages, but packed with beautiful photos and explanations suitable for everyone. His discussions are not dry scientific lectures but lively explorations by someone who is passionate about this area of the world. He does cover many disturbing situations where humankind has destroyed or nearly destroyed some of these precious islands, but he concludes on a hopeful note with a discussion of restoration efforts.

Short and to the point - lovely for both the information it contains as well as for the small snippets of live as a n on-board naturalist in the area. There are particularly good chapters on the area's geology, as well as on island endemics. Short enough to read in a day - and covers many of the highlights of the area.

Excellent information about the beautiful islands on the Sea of Cortez. Talks about the plants and animals that have adapted to living on these rather inhospitable islands. Gets into history also. If you are traveling through the sea of Cortez you will want this book.

This is an easy to read, short and sweet book about the islands and the Baja peninsula. The author writes in easy to understand language and covers topics from geology to natural history. Highly recommend this if you are an outdoors enthusiast and plan on spending any time in this most amazing area of the world.

If you go to the Sea of Cortez, this is a good read.

Lovely introduction to the islands of Sea of Cortez. Provides inspiration to visit the area and read more literature on specific topics.

Very informative.

Beautiful. On time.

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