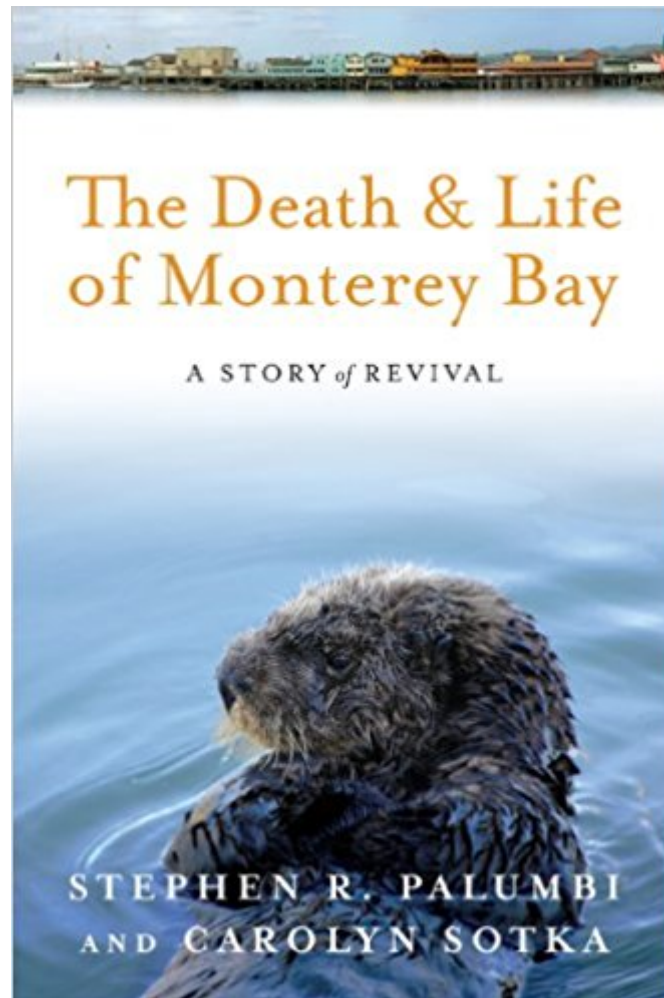


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The Death And Life Of Monterey Bay: A Story Of Revival



Synopsis

Anyone who has ever stood on the shores of Monterey Bay, watching the rolling ocean waves and frolicking otters, knows it is a unique place. But even residents on this idyllic California coast may not realize its full history. Monterey began as a natural paradise, but became the poster child for industrial devastation in John Steinbeck's Cannery Row, and is now one of the most celebrated shorelines in the world. It is a remarkable story of life, death, and revival told here for the first time in all its stunning color and bleak grays. The Death and Life of Monterey Bay begins in the eighteenth century when Spanish and French explorers encountered a rocky shoreline brimming with life—raucous sea birds, abundant sea otters, barking sea lions, halibut the size of wagon wheels, waters thick with whales. A century and a half later, many of the sea creatures had disappeared, replaced by sardine canneries that sickened residents with their stench but kept the money flowing. When the fish ran out and the climate turned, the factories emptied and the community crumbled. But today, both Monterey's economy and wildlife are resplendent. How did it happen? The answer is deceptively simple: through the extraordinary acts of ordinary people. The Death and Life of Monterey Bay is the biography of a place, but also of the residents who reclaimed it. Monterey is thriving because of an eccentric mayor who wasn't afraid to use pistols, axes, or the force of law to protect her coasts. It is because of fishermen who love their livelihood, scientists who are fascinated by the sea's mysteries, and philanthropists and community leaders willing to invest in a world-class aquarium. The shores of Monterey Bay revived because of human passion—passion that enlivens every page of this hopeful book.

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Customer Reviews

In this buoyant history of Monterey Bay, it's the humans, not the ocean life, that take center stage because, as marine biologists Palumbi and Sotka write, "no act of environmentalism is conceived or acted on by fish. It is the people who are inspired to act and whose acts inspire." The bay was long a magnet for the adventurous, quirky, and brilliant: the 18th-century New England sea captains who decimated the bay's otter population and kelp forest ecosystem; the bohemian trio of John Steinbeck, Joseph Campbell, and ecologist Ed Ricketts, who philosophized and partied together in Pacific Grove; Hewlett-Packard tycoon David Packard, funder of the Monterey Aquarium; and Julia Platt, a brilliant zoologist, "rabble rouser," and founder of the Hopkins Marine Life Refuge. But the otters are the ultimate heroes, returning to the bay in the 1960s after the collapse of the sardine fisheries and reviving the kelp forest and its inhabitants. The narration may not be the most elegant, but the happy ending, so rare in nature literature nowadays, is refreshing. (Nov.) (c) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"In this buoyant history of Monterey Bay, it's the humans, not the ocean life, that take center stage. The happy ending, so rare in nature literature nowadays, is refreshing." (Publishers Weekly)"Palumbi and Sotka bring to life a rich cast of characters from five centuries to tell the story of Monterey Bay's discovery, destruction, and redemption. A marvellous tale, beautifully told." (Callum Roberts Professor, University of York and author of *The Unnatural History of the Sea*)"In a world of too many problems and too few solutions, Monterey Bay, California bucks the trend. It's better now than a century ago, and the vision of what can happen when stubborn people set their minds to something makes this a story not just of a great place, but of inspiration that can work in many places." (Carl Safina author of *Song for the Blue Ocean* and *The View From Lazy Point*)"Just as the Monterey Bay Aquarium now exhibits the wonders of marine life in the unique environment of Monterey Bay, Palumbi and Sotka turn back the pages of time to illuminate the fall and rise of the sea otter population; the lives of the local squid and abalones; the men and women who lived and worked there; the whales that came (and still come) to visit; the collapse of the sardine canneries; and how the dilapidated Hovden cannery was transformed into the best aquarium in America." (Richard Ellis author of *The Empty Ocean* and *Tuna: A Love*

Story)"[Explains] the incredible comeback of one of the most important locales for marine biodiversity [and details the] entertaining lessons on species interdependence and the quirky characters who helped the recovery happen." (Treehugger)"Fascinating" (Santa Cruz Sentinel)"Palumbi and Sotka have taken the legacy Monterey Bay and created a model for successful ocean conservation: understand the ecology of the area, commit to marine protected areas, educate the public, be patient and persevere. Individual contributions might only be apparent in hindsight, but that does not make the many less significant. The story of Monterey Bay is not only a story of exploitation and collapse, but also one of resilience and hope." (Trends in Ecology and Evolution)"The death and life of Monterey Bay: a story of revival should be the top candidate as a narrative for the next seminar you teach on socio-ecological systems." (Ecology)"[A] colorful history of times long gone, of environments degraded, of an intricate web of life threatened – and how it has finally begun to recover through the hopeful work of communities and their leaders – [A] fascinating book, filled with anecdote and history, they explore the complex environment of the region, its fabulous sea life, and its colorful cast of humans." (The San Francisco Chronicle)

A wonderful, informative, and even fun read. Explores the comeback of the life of the Bay as well as the colorful characters of the times. Steinbeck, etc.

First of all, you need to know that I am a sucker for just about anything having to do with the sea in general, and of Monterey Bay in particular. With that said, this is not the first tale of changing tides and broadscale changes in Earth's history, e.g., *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Penguin Classics), *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany*, but this tale is different. This is a tale of the history of the decline and recovery of one of the world's premier places of natural beauty and biological diversity. And, Palumbi (The Director of Hopkins Marine Station) and Sotka manage it in less than 200 pages! By comparison, I read Shirer's "Rise and Fall of the Third Reich" and it took about a year of chipping away at that tome to get through it. This tale, however, was one I was able to polish off in less than a week. Palumbi and Sotka have done a masterful job of telling the story of the Monterey Bay's unnatural history...that is, its interactions with humans. They start by telling of early French voyages to the Bay during the age of Spanish control of California, of the vast diversity of sealife there, including all manner of marine mammals, fishes, kelp, and etc. While the Spanish looked landward, the French and those who followed them recognized the bounty of the sea in the Bay. Soon thereafter follows the sad tale of the commercial

overexploitation of one marine species after another until the Bay's original ecosystem was hammered. First it was sea otters hunted for their pelts (if you are interested in reading more about this you may want to try *A Morning of Fire: John Kendrick's Daring American Odyssey in the Pacific*). Then came whalers who found abundant gray and humpback whales in the Bay. Then it was fish, especially sardines, and the boom of sardine canneries in Monterey in the early 1900s. If these kinds of accounts of over-exploitation are of interest to you, I recommend *The Unnatural History of the Sea*. Anyway, the offal and waste from Monterey's cannery row eventually polluted the Bay, and ecologically Monterey Bay had hit close to rock bottom, literally, since even the giant kelp could no longer exist there. Then things started to change...the otters weren't extinct after all...and to hear about the rest you will have to read the book. I have spent a good deal of time in Monterey and Pacific Grove, and I know a bit about its history, especially the part connected to marine biology (Ed Ricketts and John Steinbeck, Hopkins Marine Station, and the Monterey Bat Aquarium), but this book tells the tales of earlier times, and amazing people, like Julia Platt. She sounds amazing. Be advised that this book does not provide a comprehensive history of the towns of Monterey and Pacific Grove, CA, or of the natural history of the Bay. But, enough of both are included to provide the essential framework needed to understand what happened to the Bay in the past, and what is happening there now. This story is, nevertheless, dear to me since I did my PhD field work at the Hopkins Marine Station when I was a student at UC Santa Cruz in the late 1980s and early 1990s. I, of course, also spent time at other locations around the Bay, including a LOT of time in Santa Cruz. What is the future of the Bay? Well, as of right now it actually looks brighter than its recent past. You will have to read the book to find out why. This is a solid telling, thanks Steve! I enjoyed it. 4 solid stars.

I was required to read this book for a class at my university, and I actually enjoyed it! It's a short and easy read. Great for the beach! If you are interested in the history of the Monterey Bay Area or California history in general I highly recommend it.

I loved this book! It was easy and enjoyable to read, but was packed with tons of interesting information and insight into things I would never have imagined (Steinbeck's inspiration for Cannery Row comes to mind). I picked this up because of an interest in trophic cascades, and was pleasantly surprised that, although informative, it didn't read like a text book.

I've traveled to Monterey twice before for vacations and was planning a 3rd trip and wanted to find

out more about this place I love so dearly. Reading this book before going made me appreciate the area even more than I already did. I highly recommend it to anyone planning on visiting Monterey Bay. It was great to see the areas talked about in the book first hand and to know the history behind what the bay has gone through to get to where it is today. Hopefully it can also be used as an eye opener in so many of today's environmental challenges.

After growing up on the CA coasts, believing myself to be fairly environmentally aware, I was surprised how much I learned from this book. I hope many more will read and respond with support for the work of Monterey Bay Aquarium!

This is a well documented history of the bay. How man can change the environment is told in an entertaining way. A must read for anyone interested in not only the health of the ocean but man's impact upon and within it.

I thought it was similar to AWOL on the Appalachian Trail. What a good explanation of the incredible work involved to understand the dynamics of our plant and the ocean near California. I think everyone should read it to understand that EVERYTHING is connected and everything we do has an effect on other systems. What a triumph for us and our planet with the works accomplished by the teams of scientists.

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