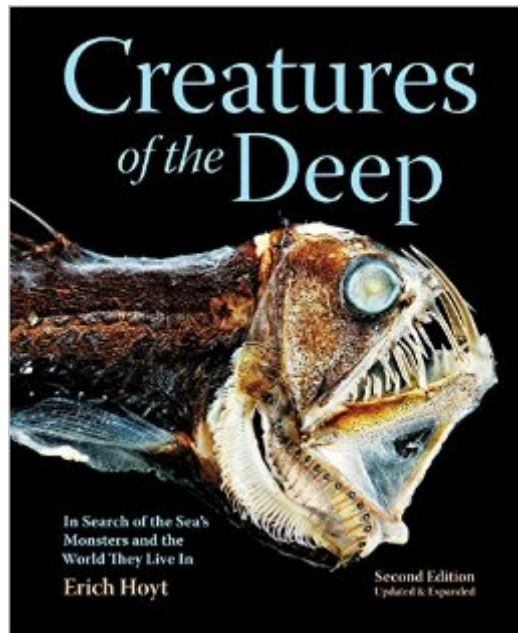


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Creatures Of The Deep: In Search Of The Sea's Monsters And The World They Live In



Synopsis

Praise for the first edition: "More than a picture book ... Hoyt's elegant writing provides both the historical background for deep-sea exploration and an ecological perspective on life in the ocean's depths." -- American Scientist "A magnificent bestiary ... and a reminder of how little we actually know about the seas surrounding us." -- Popular Science Winner, Outstanding Nonfiction Book of the Year -- American Society of Journalists and Authors, Inc., New York In this updated and expanded edition of *Creatures of the Deep*, award-winning nature and science writer Erich Hoyt gives readers a glimpse of the amazing variety of creatures found in the deepest parts of the ocean. Weaving together details from the latest scientific research about sharks, giant squid, dragonfish, huge tube worms, clams and tiny microbes of the deep-sea vents, Hoyt embarks on a magical journey roaming across the abyssal plains and descending into deep-sea trenches more than 20,000 feet down. Hoyt unravels the complex predator-prey relationships, from "killer" copepods to battles between giant squid and sperm whales, presenting compelling portraits of animals that are superbly adapted denizens of a dark high-pressure world. There are life forms, independent of sunlight and photosynthesis, which flourish around the hot, sulfurous deep-sea vents in the magnificent rift valley of the mid-ocean ridge, the world's longest mountain range. Surviving in conditions that appear to be close to the very soup of primordial Earth, these microbes have become the basis for the latest research into Earth's origins. Fully illustrated with fantastic underwater imagery.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This full-color coffee table book is filled with gorgeous photographs of deep and not-so-deep sea life. Whether it's a humpback whale, a great white shark, or a ray dramatically leaping into the air above the water's surface or nightmarish looking creatures like the dragon fish that emit waves of light to hunt along the pitch black deepest depths, the photography does not disappoint. The accompanying text is full of information about the ocean, the specific zones of depth, sea life in general and ecological conditions and factors affecting sea life. It's not meant to be a crash course on oceanography but you will definitely come away with a healthy dose of extra knowledge regarding the oceans and the life within them. It's a wonderful book to share with your children as well to introduce them to the wonders of the sea.

The title and cover photo are a bit misleading; this isn't just a picture about 'deep-sea creatures,' it's about the 'sea's monsters' whether they live near the surface or at its greatest depths. It discusses the weird toothy fish like the one on the cover that live in darkness and use bioluminescence, but also the devilfish (ray) that flings itself above the waves. Sharks are discussed (but not overly so) along with whales, jellyfish, squid, the crustaceans that live around deep thermal vents, and even tiny phytoplankton. It's not a complete encyclopedia of ocean life, but does a pretty good job of covering the subjective term "monsters." It's also a beautiful book. Because of its size and amount of beautiful photos, you might be tempted to think of it as a coffee table book, but it's actually very well-written (although I must admit, I find myself constantly drawn to those great pictures). The author is obviously passionate and knowledgeable about the ocean and it's nice to find a book that discusses it in an intelligent way but doesn't become too textbook-ish. I found the organization rather confusing, however, and the breakdown of the parts isn't apparent or explained. As near as I could tell, part 1 explains the different zones of the ocean, from the surface waters down to the deepest trenches, and some of the animals that are found in each. Part 2 focuses more on the individual creatures themselves and the food chains, and part 3 is about the geography of the ocean floor, its mountains and the role of tectonic plates - while once again, discussing many of the creatures that live there, such as those worms etc. that live around thermal vents. Part 4 explains conservation efforts and the history of our study of the ocean - or at least that's how I saw it. Nonetheless, a very beautiful and well-written book that will appeal to kids and parents alike.

Excellent photography, and eminently readable, each of which is remarkable, but in combination, they make this book truly excellent. I have recently been disappointed by several similar "coffee

table"/reference books; the photo or printing quality was poor, the writing was simplistic, dry, and/or focused so deeply on one aspect on the subject that all else was neglected. None of those problems are present here. The photography is fantastic, and the printing and paper quality are high. The writing is accessible without being facile. The text discusses different aspects of oceanography- including animals, ecosystems, geography, etc. It also discusses them from a variety of different subject perspectives- including biology, history, ecology/conservation, etc.

When I first looked at Erich Hoyt's book *Creatures of the Deep: In Search of the Sea's Monsters and the World They Live In*, I mistakenly thought it would only be about the creatures at the greatest depths of the ocean. I wasn't sure that I wanted to read about just these rather odd and gruesome looking creatures. In fact, this is a book about the diversity of the ocean life. Erich Hoyt writes from personal experience and discovery. He writes with a passion which grabs hold of the reader and makes one want to hear and see more. This book does not read like an old textbook, but rather like an exciting story told by a master storyteller. Hoyt not only describes the life in the ocean, but also the early myths/history, media coverage (such as the movie *Jaws*, among others) and even the most recent ocean exploration by James Cameron (*Titanic*, *Avatar*). Hoyt, in the first chapters of "Creatures", takes the reader on a trip from the ocean surface to the greatest depth using his "iMonstercam". This is a great introduction to the various ocean layers and what is found at the different levels and the characteristics of each. In the second part of the book, chapters are devoted to various creatures and how they are perceived by the public as well as the reality of each. An example is the chapter titled "Big Sharks". All of the descriptive writing is interspersed with anecdotes, history, public misconceptions and new information. Throughout "Creatures", the photos are amazing. The photography is of the highest quality and brings the various creatures into beautiful clarity. I really love good writing and great photos, this is a book filled with both. I highly recommend *Creatures of the Deep* for those who love good non-fiction writing and enjoy learning more about the amazing oceans. This is a very easy read and is hard to put down.

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