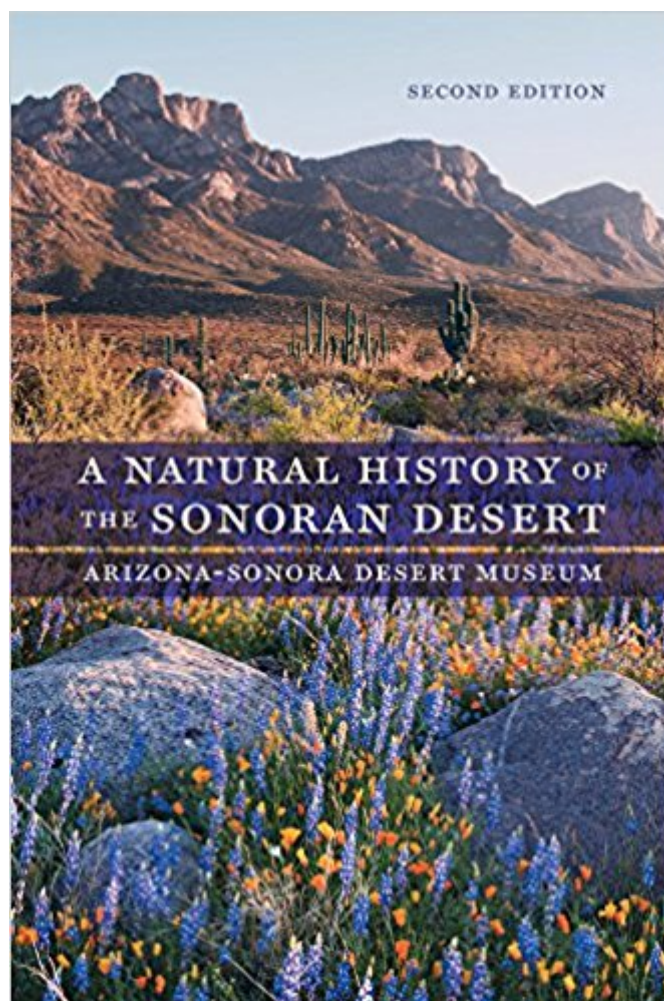


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A Natural History Of The Sonoran Desert



Synopsis

The landscape of the Sonoran Desert Region varies dramatically from parched desert lowlands to semiarid tropical forests and frigid subalpine meadows. Covering southeasternmost California, much of southern and central Arizona, most of Baja California, and much of the state of Sonora, Mexico, it is home to an extraordinary variety of plants and animals. *A Natural History of the Sonoran Desert* takes readers deep into its vast expanse, looking closely at the relationships of plants and animals with the land and people, through time and across landscapes. In accessible language, more than forty scientists and/or naturalists examine the region's biodiversity, geology, weather, plants, and animals (from invertebrates to fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals), as well as potential threats to the species and habitats. The text is supplemented throughout with anecdotes, essays, photographs, maps, diagrams, and 450 finely rendered drawings. This new edition adds chapters on the Sky Islands, Sea of Cortez, desert pollinators, and conservation issues. Taxonomic nomenclature has been updated and new color plates and figures have been added. This comprehensive natural history, like the original edition, will surely become an invaluable companion for nature enthusiasts, birdwatchers, hikers, students, naturalists, and anyone interested in the desert Southwest. Published in association with the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum.

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Customer Reviews

"If I were forced to limit my southwestern library to one book, this would be it. In just under 600 pages, handsomely illustrated with color and black-and-white photographs, and precise pen-and-ink

drawings, 35 experts share their considerable knowledge of man and nature in the Sonoran Desert." (Southwest Books of the Year 2000-01-01)"An indispensable guide for any desert visitor. . . . It offers a complete look at Sonoran Desert ecology, with details on individual species and essays that bring the desert alive." (Sunset Magazine 2001-01-01)"The award-winning text includes a calendar of natural events highlighting animal migrations, full moons, and the Sonoran Desert's awesome spring flower show." (Outside Magazine 2002-01-01)"A Natural History of the Sonoran Desert is a monumental work, accessible to amateurs and professionals alike; it is a must for anyone planning to visit the deserts of southwestern United States." (Environmental Practice 2001-09-01)". . . immaculately produced. . . . Put together by the museum's exceptional academic and curatorial staff, Natural History is a storybook, a field guide, a lay geology, paleontology, and human ecology textbook, and a handy encyclopedia - and it reads as enjoyable as fiction." (The Americus Journal 2002-09-01)"If I am exiled to a desert isle, I now have that proverbial one book to take along: A Natural History of the Sonoran Desert. . . . It's all here. It's like sitting on the patio with the best experts and having a private tutorial." (The Journal of Arizona History 2001-09-01)"Never before has a book appeared that so deserved a place on the bookshelf of every desert aficionado. . . . This book is destined to become the bible of Sonoran Desert nature literature." (Jim Cornett, Plam Springs Desert Museum The Desert Sun 2000-08-13)"This compendium [is] destined to become the mandatory reference for the Sonoran Desert for years to come." (New Mexico Magazine)". . . an authoritative introduction to the Sonoran Desert. . . . remarkably thorough . . . the one book on the Sonoran Desert I'd recommend to both novice and experienced naturalists." (George Middendorf, Howard University Audubon Naturalist News 2000-07-01)"This book is the next best thing to going there. . . . Thought the emphasis is on the well-known and often-seen organisms of the region, the depth of coverage of those organisms is remarkable for its completeness." (G. Stevens, University of New Mexico CHOICE 2000-09-01)"Everything the traveler, birdwatcher, hiker, student, desert-dweller and desert-lover will ever need to know about this region . . . is painstakingly presented in clear prose, maps and pictures." (Rocky Mountain News 2000-08-06)"This book is a long, long, love letter. . . . [It] tells you just about all you can think to ask about this lush and most beautiful of America's four deserts." (The Sonoran Quarterly 2000-06-01)"A Natural History of the Sonoran Desert provides a collection of Sonoran Desert natural history information and is a perfect introduction to the most biologically rich desert in North America." (AZA Communique 2000-03-01)"It is heartening to read a no-nonsense and comprehensive description of the natural history of the Sonoran Desert. . . . There is little missing in this book and much to recommend it." (Julio Betancourt, Desert Laboratory

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I can't say too many good things about this excellent, and comprehensive field guide to an entire region. If you are interested in the American Southwest, and the ecology of deserts generally, this book is exactly what you are looking for. If you have an interest in the Sonoran Desert specifically, this book is a must have for your reference library. It is well written, informative and useful to just about everyone. It covers all the areas of natural history you would expect, but also covers geology, and cultural history of the region as well. The second edition also has the advantage of being quite packable, whereas the original was a very blocky book, more suited to the bookcase than the field, the slimmer profile of the second edition makes easy to put in a backpack to carry with you on day hikes through the desert or to the coffee shop to read about the desert if you are, like me, stuck far away from the wonderful Sonoran Desert.

This book is very reminiscent of Carstensen and Armstrong's "Natural History of Southeast Alaska," with lots of text, black-and-white illustrations of common or representative species, and interesting

"sidebars." However, unlike the SEAK book, instead of a collaboration between 2 eminent biologists and their circle of friends, this one has something like 40 authors. It is immediately obvious that the authors are talking about a place they love and know well, and I found it pleasant to read about everything from the formation of desert pavement to saguaro population dynamics (don't overlook that part - it gave me a new perspective on population age structures, and even though I am a casual naturalist, I find that relevant even at home in Alaska, with low-success species like yellow cedar). The only part that was a little bit of a let-down was the chapter on birds, even though it is written by Ken Kaufman, who is something of a publishing phenomenon in the ornithology world. Honestly, text description of birds and traditional species accounts are not an effective use of space. The more in-depth sidebars, however, were nice even in that chapter, and the line drawings good. I bought the book for a bike trip from San Diego to Phoenix, and now I want to go to Tucson again, just to visit the Arizona-Sonora desert museum. Their mission is great. They did a good job, and so did the University of California Press (If you are reading this, UC Press, thanks also for the last edition of the Light and Smith Manual).

This is a great book about the most wonderful piece of nature in the country (in my humble opinion). I learned a lot about the spectacular place I live.

One of the most interesting of the Natural History publications of the UC Press. A very informative and easily read book on the plants and processes of the Sonoran Desert.

This is the second edition of a great reference book made even better. It is not a field guide or a textbook as such, but for reference it is great, and includes many illustrations and line drawings that help to make the Sonoran Desert experience more enjoyable. It is too big to be carried around, however, but that does not detract from its usefulness.

This was a gift for my husband, and he absolutely loves it.

very factual

An excellent overview of all the natural environment (flora, fauna, geology, etc.) of the Sonoran Desert. Extensive reference list for the reader who wants to deep dive any of the chapter topics.

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