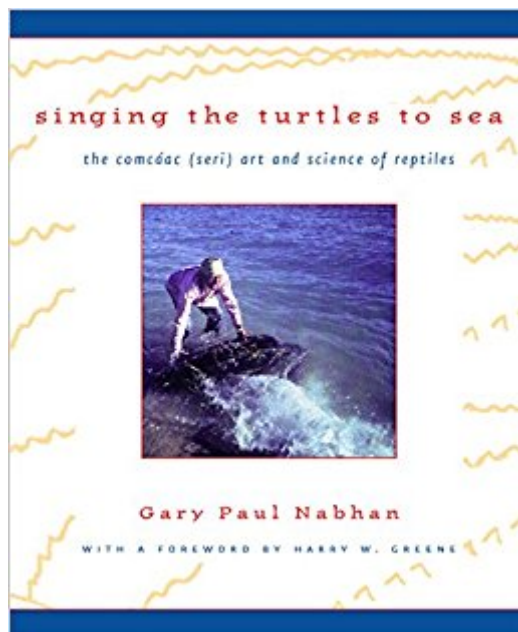




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# Singing The Turtles To Sea: The ComcÄiac (Seri) Art And Science Of Reptiles



## Synopsis

The Comc̃jac, or Seri Indians, are a native people living in the starkly beautiful and biologically rich desert of Sonora, Mexico. Reptiles of all kinds—lizards, crocodiles, snakes, and turtles—play a large role in Seri culture. Unfortunately, the long-term survival of the Comc̃jac and the future of many of these animals are uncertain. This book, written with Gary Nabhan's characteristic combination of lyricism and scientific insight, describes and preserves the richness of Seri knowledge about reptiles. Through stories, songs, photographs, illustrations of Seri arts, and discussions of Sonoran ecology, Nabhan demonstrates the irreplaceable value of this knowledge for us today. *Singing the Turtles to Sea* vividly describes the desert, its phantasmagoric landforms, and its equally fantastic animals. This book contains important new information on the origins, biogeography, and conservation status of marine and desert reptiles in this region. Nabhan also discusses the significance of reptiles in Seri folklore, natural history, language, medicine, and art. Winner of a MacArthur "genius" grant and the Burroughs Medal for nature writing, Gary Nabhan has had a long collaboration with the Comc̃jac and is uniquely placed to bring together the many voices that tell this story. The text is interspersed with his own lively adventures getting to know these indigenous people and with the insights of many individuals in their community. This book is a magnificent ethnobiology that also succeeds in linking the importance of preserving ecological diversity with issues such as endangered languages and human rights. *Singing the Turtles to Sea* ultimately points the way toward a more hopeful future for the native cultures and animals of the Sonoran desert and for the preservation of indigenous cultures and species around the world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"An excellent read, almost impossible to put down."--Dave Hyatt, "Sonoran Herpatologist"

"A wonderful mixture of natural history, culture, marine biology, and herpetology&#151;Nabhan at his best!"&#151;Mark Plotkin, President, Conservation Team"Nabhan masterfully moves us to cross-cultural perspectives on the world's ecological issues. In addition to being a unique ethnozoological treatise, this book is about how 'native' cultures engage their natural worlds, of which they see themselves a part. "&#151;Wade C. Sherbrooke, author of Horned Lizards of North America "Nabhan has devoted his career to charting times and places that are tragically disappearing, where people and nature lived in intimate ecologies. In this fine book he eloquently documents the rich, complicated ties between the ComcÃ¡ac (Seri) people and the snakes, turtles, and lizards with which they share a common place. But the book is more than an elegy, it is a vibrant plea to save these people and animals and the stories, myths, and harsh realities that bind them."&#151;Kent H. Redford, Director, Wildlife Conservation Society Institute

This is sort of a technical/factual book. There is a lot of data, charts, maps, etc. It is not a fast read due to you have to digest a lot of new information. Have dictionary on hand as most people will need it. Charming stories of animals and people. I have always suspected that indigenous people brought species of plants and animals where they could use them and that is how isolated populations came into existence. I know I did it, so I thought they would do it too. Now validation for my suspicions from numerous recognized authorities. The part about how they use turtles was clear and interesting. I never suspected rattlesnakes and turtles would hibernate together. But it stands to reason a limited number of burrow sites would result in some sharing. I would hate to think the Comcaac culture would dwindle and not pass on the wonderful knowledge and traditions that make them one with the environment. Language is hard to keep alive with few native speakers. Without the language, it is hard to keep alive relationships with the land and animals, because the language enables them to transmit the nuances that are the key to traditional knowledge and survival. If something has ten plus names, it needs them all to express it's meaning in different circumstances.

Very interesting book. Reader will do better with some science background.

dear sir,i love gr paul nabhan. he speaks of turtles and other reptiles living in baja,californnia. the book looks brand new thanks caroline

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