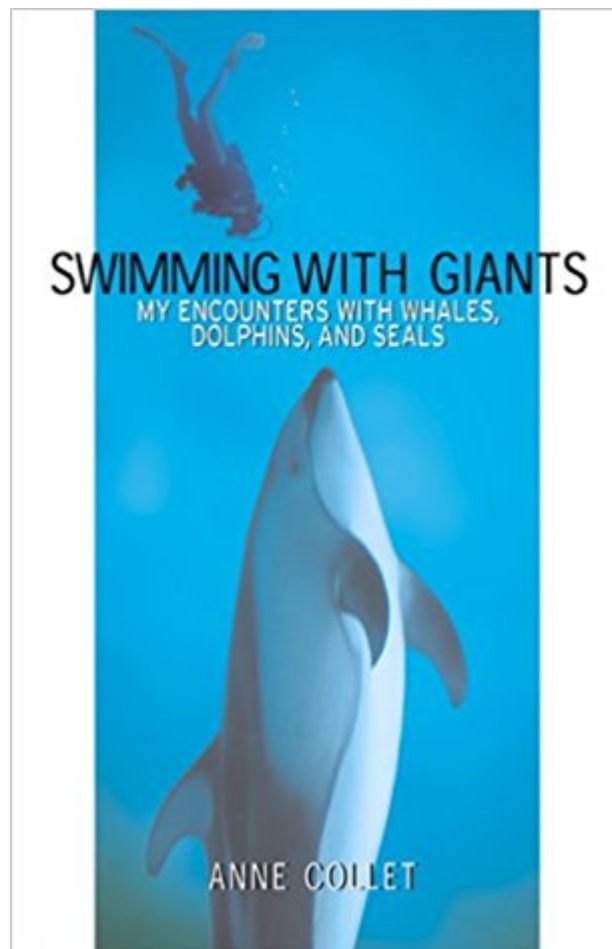




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Swimming With Giants: My Encounters With Whales, Dolphins And Seals



Synopsis

Anne Collet has ridden the tail of a white whale - for ten seconds off the coast of Argentina. She has taken children diving in the Azores to see dolphins and led teenagers on ocean voyages. And she has heard the song of beluga whales in the Arctic Ocean. In *Swimming with Giants*, Collet describes the power and majesty of being close to some of nature's most magnificent creatures. Combining science with a sense of adventure, she conveys the sheer excitement of her work with marine mammals, from the sublime gaze of a whale's eye to the race to save animals harmed by pelagic drift nets or toxic spills. A contemporary ecohero in the tradition of Jacques Cousteau, Collet is an inspiration not only for the many who have accompanied her on her research trips, but also for those who will see in her journey a call to follow their own dreams.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Like her late compatriot Jacques Cousteau, French marine biologist Anne Collet has traveled the world in search of exotic denizens of the deep. Unlike the apparently imperturbable Cousteau, Collet has no difficulty admitting that her encounters with some of these creatures have terrified her. "Make no sudden movements, and stick together," she instructs her companions while swimming after a female right whale. "She must not think she is surrounded. Animals detest that. As long as she feels safe, we have nothing to fear." Adds Collet, wryly, "I don't know if I managed to persuade them; it was hard enough to convince myself." In this memoir, a scuba-mask view of the world below the waves, Collet recounts her adventures in studying whales, dolphins, and other marine mammals

under a variety of conditions, some of them full of peril. That peril, however, concerns all: most of the species she has studied, she warns, are in grave danger, not least because of the all-but-unimpeded use of pelagic trawl nets by commercial deep-sea fishing fleets, which kill five to ten thousand dolphins a year in the Bay of Biscay alone. With their steady disappearance, marine ecosystems begin to unravel, and Collet warns urgently that action must be taken now if the sea--and, by extension, the planet--is to be brought back to health, its terrifying residents included.

--Gregory McNamee

Few zoologists have expressed their enthusiasm for their work more charmingly than Collet in this loosely organized collection of personal essays. Founder and director of the Marine Mammal Research Institute in La Rochelle, France, Collet is a leading expert on cetaceans (the order of mammals that includes baleen and tooth whales, dolphins and several other creatures) and a passionate foe of the pollution and overfishing that is threatening the health of the world's oceans. In the latest addition to Milkweed's World as a Home series of literary testaments to living in harmony with nature, she describes the thrill and the occasional frustration of searching for whales; the awe of encountering them; the sometimes comic, sometimes terrifying snafus that can arise on ocean expeditions. She also describes her love for the rich marine ecosystem that is increasingly imperiled by human activities she insists can and must be changed. Collet sprinkles her essays with fascinating facts about cetacean biology (among them, that whales evolved from land animals resembling large hoofed wolves) and includes a helpful species list and glossary, but the book's nonchronological organization and personal approach make it less effective as a reference than as an inspirational work. Collet's first piece, especially, in which she explains how she discovered her vocation despite several false starts and a formidable struggle with academics, will convince young readers, particularly girls, that they can achieve similar goals. And that makes this title a good bet to succeed as a gift item aimed at the young women in bookbuyers' lives. (Nov.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

great book, just loved it

This book is captivating and fun to read. The stories are exciting and educational. I have a new respect for the creatures of the sea. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is amazed by the creatures of the sea and wants to learn more. Anne Collet is a very inspirational person. She has a great desire to further the world's knowledge of the species and inspire others to follow their heart

and pursue dreams of research or scientific study.

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