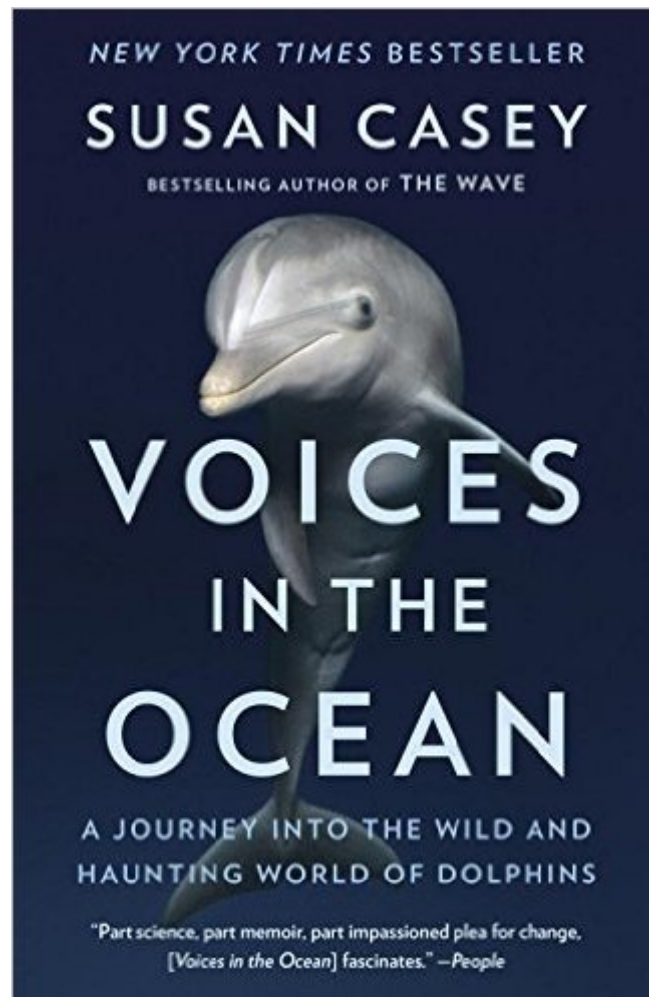


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Voices In The Ocean: A Journey Into The Wild And Haunting World Of Dolphins



Synopsis

A New York Times Bestseller Inspired by a profound experience swimming with wild dolphins off the coast of Maui, Susan Casey set out on a quest to learn everything she could about these creatures. Her journey takes her from a community in Hawaii known as "Dolphinville," where the animals are seen as the key to spiritual enlightenment, to the dark side of the human-cetacean relationship at marine parks and dolphin-hunting grounds in Japan and the Solomon Islands, to the island of Crete, where the Minoan civilization lived in harmony with dolphins, providing a millennia-old example of a more enlightened coexistence with the natural world. Along the way, Casey recounts the history of dolphin research and introduces us to the leading marine scientists and activists who have made it their life's work to increase humans' understanding and appreciation of the wonder of dolphins—the other intelligent life on the planet.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The title of this book is a little misleading. The author does indeed go swimming with wild dolphins in the book, but the book is more about the atrocities people commit against them. There are sections of the book dealing with the intelligence, social aspects, and communication of dolphins. For most of the book though the author is tracing various abuses, from early research to Japan's dolphin slaughter, to the Solomon Islands dolphin slaughter, to dolphin captures, and captive animals. I admire the authors' willingness to travel to these places and report on these things first hand, she is providing a valuable service in doing so. I had a hard time reading this book, growing up I enjoyed

watching Flipper, and visiting Seaworld as a child. Realizing I was aiding in the abuses discussed in the book really struck home. I would strongly recommend reading this book if you are an animal lover, or would like to learn more about the human impact on dolphins.

I am a bit of an amateur naturalist, as well as a life long student of the biological sciences, and I requested this book thinking it was a scientific discussion of dolphins and their relationship to humankind. While there is a fair bit of science presented, most of it is not particularly new; the focus here is not so much on the science of dolphins, or their relationship to humans, but rather the author's personal journey, discovering how dolphins are treated and mistreated, her personal reactions to these stories, and her experiences swimming with dolphins. When Casey does touch on the science she tends to get it wrong; she makes much of the fact that humans and dolphins share in common a type of neuron called a spindle neuron, though she refers to them by a much less common name, von Economo neurons. She cites this commonality as evidence of the intelligence of dolphins, probably as she is unaware that they're also found in many whales and in elephants. Spindle neurons are not, by themselves, a sign of high intelligence, but rather an evolutionary adaptation to large brains. If you enjoy books detailing personal stories of growth and spiritual connections with animals and nature, this may be a good book for you. The reader looking for science and new discoveries about our cetacean relatives would be well advised to look elsewhere.

I really enjoyed Casey's previous two books "The Devils Teeth" and "The Wave" and would offer a 4-star or 5-star review of these two books. For me, this book felt like several independent stories that never flowed into a book and overall, the writing felt disjointed - the author wrote about what she found to be most interesting or experienced herself. The stories in this book about dolphin killing and captivity really need to be told and sections were interesting. However, the author's presence over-dominated sections of the book and took away from the characters and animals she encountered. If you have the time and energy to read only one book about whales and the ocean, this is not the book I would recommend. For those who found this book interesting, I suggest reading "War of the Whales" where the personalities of the scientists and lawyers trying to save the whales really shone through in their amazing efforts and sacrifices to defend our oceans against the US navy's careless use of sonar. I also learned more about whales/dolphins in "War of the Whales" compared to the Casey book. Other books that are really excellent about the ocean and high profile ocean animals are Carl Safina's "Song for the Blue Ocean" (first choice recommendation), "Eye of the Albatross" and "Voyage of the Turtle" (to read if you enjoyed Song of the Blue Ocean). Any book

that gets people to care more our oceans and the animals that live in them is very worthwhile.

I'm saying four stars because of the lack of pictures. This is a well-written book from the author's research on dolphins down through the ages and around the world. It gives the facts as to how they have been treated during all the years since 1500 BC or before. While some cultures revered the dolphins, other saw them only as a food source or a commodity to be sold to marine parks. Casey is not preachy - this was a fact-finding experience for her. For the reader, it is difficult to come away from all this information and not want to pick up a sign and protest dolphins' and whales' captivity, however. When Casey describes the fun-loving dolphins in the wild versus those confined to a tank performing like robots, this reader was ready to build an army and free all dolphins in captivity! Surprising for me, was our Navy's role in the capture of dolphins. I'm all for their interest in the dolphin's and whales' sonar, but to create underwater sounds which nearly blast them out of the water, or kill them, isn't right. We've got lots of ocean - surely the military can gain the knowledge they need somewhere without wounding or killing these compassionate animals. Pictures would have been a huge help - photographs or drawings - so we could see the differences between a spinner. bottlenose, etc. - and the many species of whales. The terms "whale" and "dolphin" are used almost interchangeably, which left me confused. It's encouraging to know that there are some folks trying to build dolphin sanctuaries, and create parks that allow the animals to swim free, with opportunities for the public to have safe, unchoreographed interaction. I think I'll pass on marine parks from now on.

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