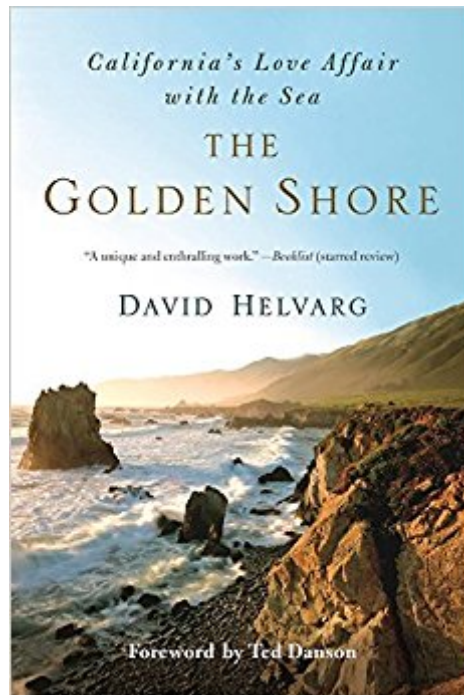




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The Golden Shore: California's Love Affair With The Sea



Synopsis

From the first human settlements to the latest marine explorations, *The Golden Shore* tells the tale of the history, culture, and changing nature of California's coasts and ocean. David Helvarg takes the reader on both a geographic and literary journey along the state's 1,100-mile Pacific coastline, from the Oregon border to the San Diego-Tijuana international border fence and out into its whale-, seal-, and shark-rich offshore seamounts, rock isles, and kelp forests. Part history, part travelogue, part love letter, *The Golden Shore* captures the spirit of the California coast and its mythic place in American culture.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review Environmental journalist and author Helvarg has pulled together a comprehensive history of California's long relationship with its shoreline, covering everything from commercial shipping to surfing to fishing to the U.S. Navy. He is adept at finding individuals, both past and present, to make this survey personal, and he portrays the motley crew of scientists, explorers, captains of industry, impoverished workers, and so many more who crafted the story of the Golden State. In truth, there are a dozen different books to be found in Helvarg's grand overview, and although the collection of people, places, and events can be dizzying, his dedication to thoroughness in his research and writing is impressive. Readers will likely not expect to see surf champion Lisa Anderson in the same book as Alfred Thayer Mahan and his treatise on sea power and a discussion of the impact of dam removal on chinook salmon runs. But Helvarg is determined to present a complete guide to a place he knows so well, and that means writing about every

individual and every subject he considers part and parcel of what has entwined California and its coastline to American culture. A unique and enthralling work. --Colleen Mondor --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“David Helvarg’s passion for the ocean is equaled only by his elegance in writing about it. Like the ocean itself, *The Golden Shore* ranges from the glimmering surface to mysterious mid-waters to far deeper realms. This book will remind everyone who reads it of one fundamental fact: we live on a water planet. No author has conveyed this with more art and meaning.” — Susan Casey, author of *The Wave* and *Voices in the Ocean*

“Helvarg dives deep into history to remind us of all the forces that have shaped California’s coastline and near-shore waters and our attitudes about them.” — Los Angeles Times

“The *Golden Shore* is a thrilling read. Join master storyteller David Helvarg on a heart-pounding journey into the tumultuous past, provocative present, and promising future of California’s wild blue frontier.” — Sylvia Earle, National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence

“A broad, insightful exploration of the Golden State’s pristine coastline and its social and ecological impact on the nation... A lush, labor-of-love appreciation of maritime California.” — Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

“A comprehensive history of California’s long relationship with its shoreline, covering everything from commercial shipping to surfing to fishing to the U.S. Navy. . . . A unique and enthralling work.” — Booklist (starred review)

“We’ve gotten used to thinking of California’s jammed freeways, or its tech riches, or its Hollywood excess. But David Helvarg’s splendid account reminds us that those are transitory. In the beginning and the end, the Golden State is the place where North America meets the mighty Pacific, a coast of unvanquishable splendor and unforgettable history.” — Bill McKibben, author of *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*

“As geography, history, and myth, the power of California as place, society, and dream is best encountered on its shoreline. In *Facing West from California Shores*, Walt Whitman bore witness to this drama. In the decades that followed, writers such as Mary Austin, J. Smeaton Chase, Robinson Jeffers, and John Steinbeck each encountered the California shore as fact and symbol. And now David Helvarg embarks upon an odyssey up the coast of dreams, asking the question: what is contemporary California telling itself about and what does this mean for the nation?” — Kevin Starr, author of *California: A History*

“Brilliant and engrossing . . . a comprehensive account of

California's coastal history. With a deft journalist's touch, Helvarg weaves a tapestry of the Golden State both past and present, mixing history, biology, adventurism and activism. The tale is woven with interviews and the author's own unique personal experiences and relationships.

• Ralph Nader, Huffington Post

“The Golden Shore is a history of California's relationship with the ocean, but it's much more than a straightforward history. It's also a travelogue with elements of geography, geology, sociology and ecology, brought to life through the people [Helvarg] interviews and his own observations and experiences as a bodysurfer, diver, writer and lifelong Californian (who lived 10 years in Ocean Beach). It should be required reading for anyone in California, whether native or newcomer, as an introduction (or reintroduction) to the diverse places and issues that hug our shore.

• San Diego Union-Tribune

“Really, a joy. Helvarg literally takes you on walking tours of the places he talks about; get ready to want to discover parts of California you've either never been to or have completely forgotten even existed.

• Surfer magazine

“Having lived in California for forty-four years I was surprised by how much I learned from David Helvarg's book *The Golden Shore*. It blew my mind. If you have the same love affair for the beautiful California coast and ocean as I do, this marvelous and compelling book is a must-read.

• Jean-Michel Cousteau, explorer and founder and president of the Ocean Futures Society

“In this ambitious work, journalist and conservationist Helvarg successfully relates the myriad ways in which Californians engage with their beloved Pacific.

• Publishers Weekly

“Helvarg is particularly gifted at profiling individuals who are doing their part on behalf of the environment. . . . Whether he's giving us the play-by-play of a local campaign to stop a casino development on long-neglected Point Molate in the San Francisco Bay or explaining how the unique bathymetry and ocean currents off our coast result in a rich marine environment that some call the Serengeti of the ocean, Helvarg just might make you feel optimistic about the future.

• San Francisco Chronicle

“Helvarg deftly evokes that spirit of exploration that drove the earliest inhabitants to populate California. In *The Golden Shore*, Mr. Helvarg shows how that adventuresome spirit is the perfect fuel to propel such an illuminating book about the world around us Californians, one golden mile at a time.

• Santa Barbara News Press

“An informative, beautifully written trip along California's coastline from the Oregon border to Tijuana. Helvarg artfully combines history, travelogue and interviews with his experiences on the coast and in the ocean in an enthralling book.

• The Oregonian

“The Golden Shore is about more than one man's love affair with

California's iconic coast. It's the history of an environmental consciousness that has been impressed upon people around the globe. This is a vital story that will help inform future generations of how and why we work so diligently to protect and preserve California's majestic coast. I applaud David Helvarg for this great work.

— John Laird, chair of the California Ocean Protection Council

"For all its mountains and forests, farms and deserts, California would not be California without its iconic shores. But, turns out, there's much more to it than the Beach Boys' surfing coast. This book dives deep, literally and figuratively, from deep history to deep waters to where it's all headed. Find a comfortable chair, preferably with a view of the sea, because you've got your hands on a good read, told by one of our nation's most passionate journalists who, thankfully, happens to be a devoted coast-lover.

— Carl Safina, author of *Song for the Blue Ocean* and *The View from Lazy Point*

This book read like a surfing magazine article. It was filled with poetic descriptions of the beaches, the waves and the zen like experience of being one with ocean. It discussed the history of California and how the ocean has been a major part of the state development. The writer focuses on how unique California ocean coastline is. But I found this a bit arrogant as the main reason it is so diverse is its length. In the US, take the east coast or the gulf coast and over a five hundred mile stretch you will find just as much diversity, fishing, oceanography, beautiful coves... although the surfing may not be as good and this length will encompass more than one state. California had the unique luck for the coast to be settled later than other parts of the US coastline and thus much of the seashore remained undeveloped pristine as the nature movement groundswell changed our culture and view towards exploitation of natural resources. There is a balance and California moved to enhance access to their coastline for all. But the individuals, the surfers and environmentalists clearly dominate against commercial development (in politics and in this book). California also benefited from the growth in trade with far the far east as its ports are the major gateway to US for China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan... At the same time WWII made obvious the need for a large Pacific fleet which logically had to be placed in the expansive California ports. The book read more like a travelogue than a deep insightful look at technical and historical background on our Pacific coast. But it was an easy read.

And if you are from California, it is a **MUST** read. The rich history of the human interaction with the sea along the long length of California's coast is captured eloquently in David Helvarg's book. In the

wake of decades-long efforts to ensure that the interaction benefited both man and the sea in the future, the book helps us understand where we've been and where we can be. So much of the story of the sea is about loss-- so many species and livelihoods are no longer possible, with a devastating effect on communities-- and yet the book tells us that there are solutions, and we can deploy them if we're willing. Recovery from excess isn't easy, but the story of California's coast tells us that we can do it and we must continue to do so. Like another reviewer, I loved all the details about the different activities California's coast has harbored-- from surfing to Navy Seals; from sailing to abalone.

Loved the book and passed it on to the rest of the family. The author wrote an excellent history of the California. Well worth buying.

A beautiful mixture of California coastal history and a deep appreciation for preserving and protecting our coastal sea creatures.

This book is a joyride of love along the coast of California. It includes travel, history, politics, environmentalism, wars and rescues. Every page is a testament to how rich our coastline is. The density, passion and excitement in the writing reaches the reader on many fronts, and everyone is bound to find gems of interest - from oil spills and coast guard chases to scientific studies of strange animals in the deep water off the coast.

David Helvarg draws together the many facets of California coast and details the inter-relationship of natural history, sport and recreational use by human, impact of heavy shipping facilities at major CA ports both good and harmful, , sea and shore life and environmental protection. Obviously, each of these deserves--and probably has--books on their own but it was a eye-opening general tour.

I'm learning many, many things about the coastline of the state I grew up in. Really well researched, the Helvarg covers a huge range of topics, from history and fishing to ports and marine labs, and much more. It helps any California understand this wonderful part of the state.

Excellent blend of history and current environmental challenges. Lots of interesting facts presented in an easy reading non-academic way. Especially interesting for those of us familiar with the CA coastline.

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