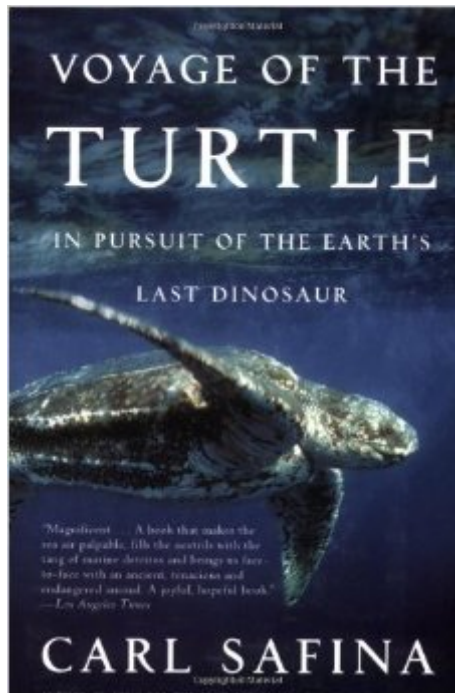


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Voyage Of The Turtle: In Pursuit Of The Earth's Last Dinosaur



Synopsis

The story of an ancient sea turtle and what its survival says about our future, from the award-winning writer and naturalist. Though nature is indifferent to the struggles of her creatures, the human effect on them is often premeditated. The distressing decline of sea turtles in Pacific waters and their surprising recovery in the Atlantic illuminate what can go both wrong and right from our interventions, and teach us the lessons that can be applied to restore health to the world's oceans and its creatures. As *Voyage of the Turtle*, Carl Safina's compelling natural history adventure makes clear, the fate of the astonishing leatherback turtle, whose ancestry can be traced back 125 million years, is in our hands. Writing with verve and color, Safina describes how he and his colleagues track giant pelagic turtles across the world's oceans and onto remote beaches of every continent. As scientists apply lessons learned in the Atlantic and Caribbean to other endangered seas, Safina follows leatherback migrations, including a thrilling journey from Monterey, California, to nesting grounds on the most remote beaches of Papua, New Guinea. The only surviving species of its genus, family, and suborder, the leatherback is an evolutionary marvel: a "reptile" that behaves like a warm-blooded dinosaur, an ocean animal able to withstand colder water than most fishes and dive deeper than any whale. In his peerless prose, Safina captures the delicate interaction between these gentle giants and the humans who are finally playing a significant role in their survival. "Magnificent . . . A joyful, hopeful book. Safina gives us ample reasons to be enthralled by this astonishing ancient animal and ample reasons to care." -- The Los Angeles Times

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Customer Reviews

This book is very well-written and entertaining. Mr. Safina knows some interesting people doing interesting work on leatherbacks. He provides a good account of leatherback biology and population statistics (his description of how they stay warm in cold water is particularly good). He covers all of the sea turtle species to some degree, but keeps his focus on leatherbacks. However, if you are looking just for a few facts and figures on sea turtles, you are missing much of what this book has to offer. Mr. Safina spends much time showing readers the insides of the industries, fishermen, coastal villages, and other people who affect sea turtles. For someone who does not live near the sea, having a narrator sailing with real American fishermen in the 21st century, giving voice to their views, was a real eye-opener. Furthermore, Mr. Safina touched upon the role of other institutions, from law to religion, that affect the sea turtles. Fortunately, Mr. Safina understands these people and various aspects of society, something that makes him a better conservationist and better author. If you want to learn a lot and be awed by the leatherbacks, read this book.

For those of you interested in learning more about life on our planet this book is MUST read. As in his previous books, Dr. Safina is able to once again meld science and natural history in understandable layman's terms. The journey of the Leatherback Turtle will both astound and mystify the reader. Many sea turtle species are on the verge of extinction including the Pacific Leatherback. Reading this book will open your eyes to the many facets of how scientists around the globe are trying to prevent this from happening. So, prepare to travel along with Dr. Safina & these magnificent creatures to far away places that most of us can only dream about!

When I first opened Carl Safina's new book, "Voyage of the Turtle : In Pursuit of the Earth's Last Dinosaur," I felt a sense of being with him on the beach at Matura, Trinidad. This was not just because of his description of the area, which was quite accurate and very well done, but because I was with a group of biologists on this same beach seven years ago at night under a waning gibbous moon and in view of the Atlantic waves. We, like Safina and his group, were waiting for the signal that would indicate that one of the Nature Seeker scouts had discovered a female leatherback turtle coming ashore. We were drenched by two tropical rainstorms before the light down the beach brought us to our feet and, following our guide, to the sight of the boulder-like turtle maneuvering on the beach sand until she found the right spot to settle in and lay her eggs. What followed is well described by Safina. It was a night and early morning I'll never forget. I even got to touch the 800 lb monster! To add to the tropical atmosphere, the fireflies in the forest that edged the beach were

mirrored in the sky by Alpha and Beta Centauri and the Southern Cross, the latter just visible in the moonlight during the early part of the night. Finally, as we walked back along the beach, we nearly stumbled over a second female. Safina has captured the magic of that Trinidadian beach, and he goes on to describe further wonders relating to this largest of all living turtles and the other sea turtles. The leatherback is a huge turtle (males are even larger than females) that ranges whole oceans and is found in virtually all of the Atlantic and Pacific. Only recently have the movements of individual turtles been well documented and this has revealed an astonishing fact- they can easily cross the Pacific or travel from Trinidad to the North Atlantic off Canada and then to Africa! Once more these giant leatherbacks feed on jellyfish! Thus the very solid turtles are sustained by the most unsubstantial seeming large organisms on the planet! Safina has written a wonderful book on the leatherback and other sea turtles. All of these giants have suffered at man's hands- directly and indirectly. Yet in some areas conservation efforts have paid off. Leatherback numbers are increasing along Florida and on Trinidad beaches. Still, the battle is far from won, for this and the other sea turtles. If you would taste the wonders of these fascinating sea creatures and understand why they should be protected, this great book is a good place to start.

This third book of Carl Safina's is every bit as magical and enthralling as his first two. Once again we are taken on a journey throughout the world, with stop-overs in places that I thought I understood (Florida, Trinidad, Costa Rica, New Guinea) but that are clearly filled with fascinating persons and practices that are strikingly new -- and uplifting -- to me. I was moved by the plight of turtles, such glorious beings, and saddened to realize how their only real danger are human practices ... and yet Safina probes each situation deeply enough to find the wildly varied knots of dedicated people who are succeeding in helping to bring these deserving creatures back from the edge of extinction. I was thrilled to find that Safina had written another book -- his other two are amongst my favorites of all time -- and this one was just as intriguing and poetic and important as I could have hoped.

I finally had the chance to meet the author in person, after reading this and some of his other publications. I don't think there is anyone who is more serious yet also more full of hope than Carl about protecting our world's oceans and all beings dependent on them. Read this book and you will learn why it is important that we pay attention to the plight of animals that are endangered or which we humans are taking to the brink of extinction because we do not know all the facts. We have only one Earth and we need to preserve it for the generations to come. This book will bring you close

enough to the life of these amazing relics from the dinosaur age to imagine you are right there on the beach, witnessing a clutch of eggs hatching, observing the hatchlings' attempts at survival. Learn about the migration of these animals, and follow their path with the help of state-of-the-art tools or old-fashioned hands-on research. The book focuses mainly on leatherbacks, but also deals with the greater picture of ocean conservation. An interesting read, a mixture of story-telling and scientific report which will keep any conservation-minded reader entertained as well as informed.

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