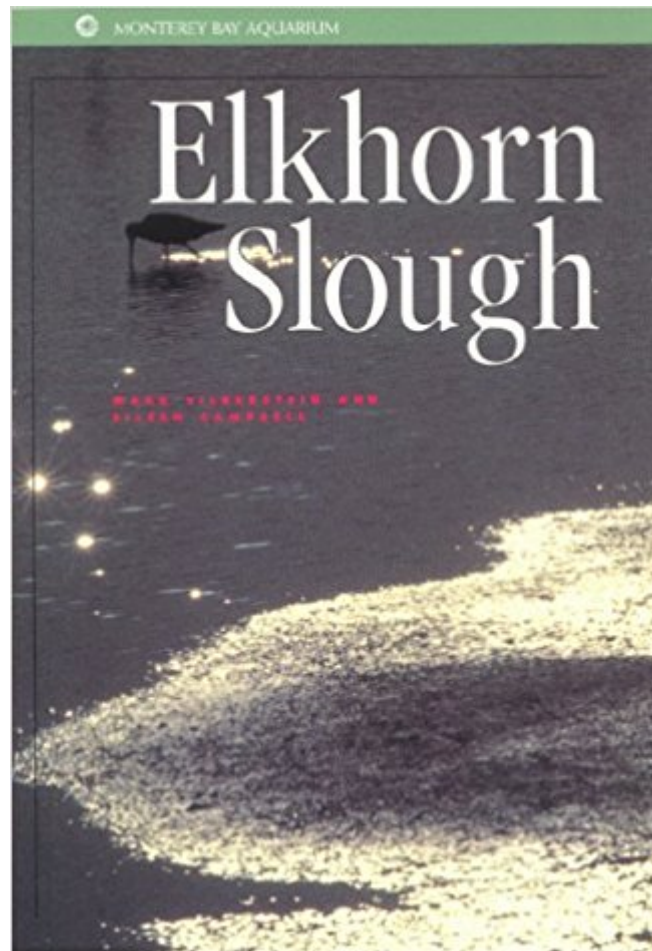




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Elkhorn Slough (Monterey Bay Aquarium Natural History Series)



Synopsis

Discover one of California's few remaining wetlands. In these beautifully illustrated pages, you'll explore a narrow, winding waterway edged with marshy and muddy ground where plants and wildlife find a rich home. Birds, fishes and others gather here in numbers matched by few other habitats. People, too, are drawn to Elkhorn Slough (pronounced slew), where mists rise off the tide flats as the sun peeks over coastal hills, and the sound of wind through beating wings is punctuated by a curlew's call. Monterey Bay Aquarium's Natural History Series brings you closer to the living marine and coastal communities of the nation's largest marine sanctuary, where you'll come face to face with some of the more interesting residents. Produced by the Monterey Bay Aquarium Press, these books will stimulate your curiosity and understanding of the natural world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Any visitor to the area can enjoy the 64-page guidebook. It contains much information about estuarine inhabitants. -- Sunset Magazine

Listed by the California Department of Education in Recommended Reading Science-Related Literature: Grades Kindergarten through Grade 12.

An evocatively written short book about a beautiful recreation area and important ecosystem. It was

written some years ago, so the photographic images, while beautiful, are not the sharp quality one might typically expect today. Still, a gorgeous introduction to a great place to experience.

This is an enticing little book about a glorious place. Elkhorn Slough is a seasonal brackish-water estuary which drains into Monterey Bay, about 100 miles south of the Golden Gate. It's a National Research Reserve, managed by Cal Fish & Game, not a pristine wilderness by any means, but a "rescued" and partly restored coastal wetlands. The initial efforts to rescue it came from The Nature Conservancy, an organization to which I contribute more willingly than to any political campaign. More than 75% of California's coastal wetlands have been ravaged by development, and the efforts to destroy the remainder for short-term profit have been assisted by the current Republican administrations in DC and in Sacramento. The little book gives a history of the salvation of Elkhorn, and an eloquent description of the ecological value of sloughs and marshes. It also includes descriptions of the flora and fauna, including life habits and significance to the hills above and sea below the slough. There are wonderful pictures of the estuary and its fauna, particularly of the birds and marine mammals. One is certain to see large numbers of birds there, even in the months between migrations, as well as seals, sea lions, and sea otters. Elkhorn is probably the finest place to observe otters in all of California. Bird-watchers, take note: on a single day, from my kayak, I've seen pelicans, two species of grebes, loons, four species of gulls, cormorants, mergansers, pintails, buffleheads, shovelers, ruddy ducks, all manner of common ducks, geese, dowitchers, stilts, avocets, willets, curlews, clapper rails, night herons, blue herons, two species of egrets, three species of hawks, and a rabble of songbirds. The best way to visit Elkhorn Slough is by kayak or canoe, although there are a few walking paths also. Boat launches are maintained at the mouth and at two places toward the source, but most visitors rent a kayak at Moss Landing, a hamlet by the bridge of Highway 1 which crosses the mouth of the estuary. No freeway has been allowed to ruin the coast of the Bay Area from SF to Monterey, and I suspect that if bulldozers arrived to build one, I'd be among hundreds or thousands of protestors throwing our bodies in their path. There are glorious state park beaches north and south of Moss Landing. The rugged hills along this coast include huge tracts of park and nature preserve, with glorious hiking trails, and Monterey, with its research aquarium, is well worth a visit. The whole area is a year-round wonderland for outdoorsy tourists, and a vivid living sermon on the importance of conservation and preservation. Off-shore oil drilling would potentially doom this fragile national treasure; any politician who advocates it should hasten to kayak up Elkhorn Slough, to see first-hand what he/she risks destroying. Later: as the comments that follow reveal, there are current and ongoing threats to the viable ecology of Elkhorn

Slough. Agricultural run-off of pesticides and fertilizers, a nation-wide crisis. Biological hazards to the sea mammals, especially the otters, from rain drainage that carries feline disease organisms. A desalinization plant at Moss Landing. Etc. I focused above on the issue of oil drilling because that issue has become a political smokescreen, an attempt by Sen. McCain and his party to use the current high gasoline prices to scare their way into power again. The alignment of the bulk of Republicans with oil interests and against environmental protections and regulations, in my opinion, should be a central issue of the upcoming presidential election.

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