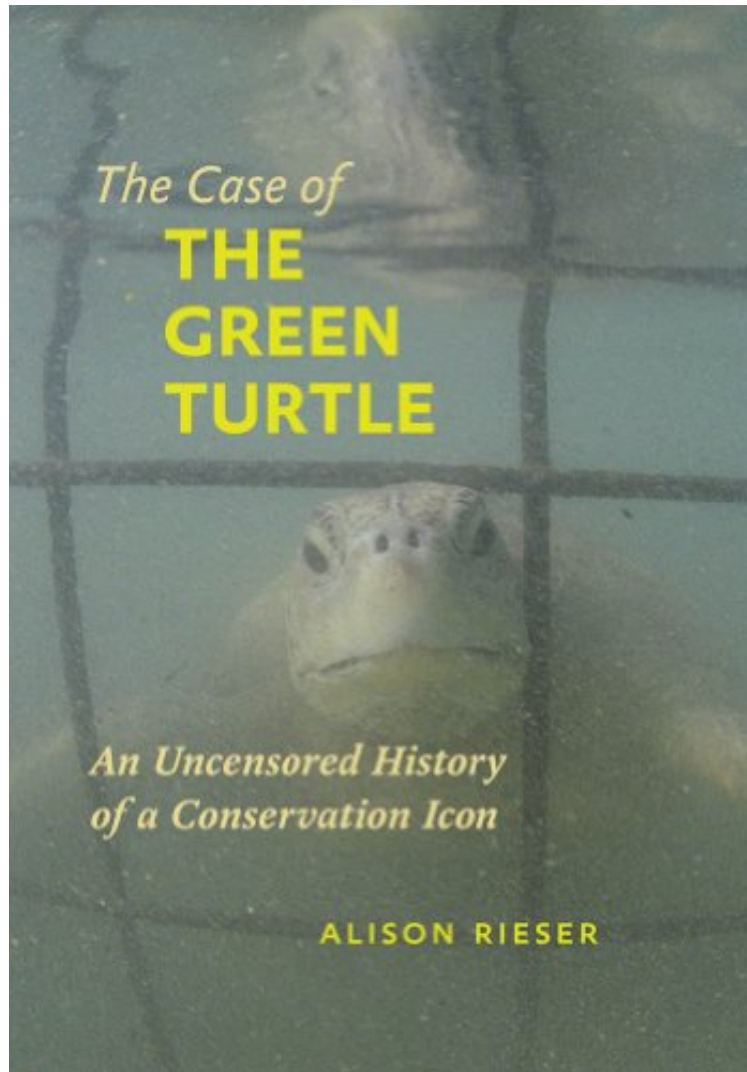


(Free read ebook) The Case of the Green Turtle: An Uncensored History of a Conservation Icon

## The Case of the Green Turtle: An Uncensored History of a Conservation Icon

*Alison Rieser*

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**Alison Rieser : The Case of the Green Turtle: An Uncensored History of a Conservation Icon** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Case of the Green Turtle: An Uncensored History of a Conservation Icon:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A well-done history of the exploitation and conservation of the green sea turtle. By ARHOK, I'm a sucker for pretty much anything that has to do with the ocean. With that being said, I jumped at the chance to give this book a read. To begin with, this is NOT a book that describes the natural history or biology of the green sea turtle. What it IS, is an account of the exploitation and conservation history of this iconic

species, including policy proposals, implications, legal battles, and national and international players, including nations around the world where sea turtles live, and where their products were consumed (e.g., turtle soup, wax, tortoise shell-products, leather, etc.). Rieser, a professor of marine policy at the University of Hawaii, is well-trained and well placed to write this history. Her credentials and experience greatly increase the value of her book. The story of the green sea turtle and almost all sea turtle species has a happier ending (at least so far) than that of just about any other exploited marine resource. If the topic of marine conservation interests you, you might consider reading *The Unnatural History of the Sea* for more examples of humanity's exploitation of the sea. Anyway, the general pattern of human exploitation of wild populations of commercially marketable marine species (whales to seaweeds) goes something like this: 1) Discover a resource 2) Create a new market or exploit an existing market for/with the resource 3) Develop luxury status for resource if possible to drive prices up 4) Continue to exploit the resource as quickly and with the largest possible harvest possible so you get as much of the resource as possible before it falls below levels that can be harvested profitably 5) Having decimated the resource...move on and start exploiting a similar resource or exploit the same resource, but in a different location 6) Repeat. Rieser tells the story of the exploitation history of the green sea turtle, a species with a world-wide tropical and subtropical distribution. It was exploited for its meat and its eggs. You will be amazed at how many eggs have been harvested annually when you read the book. You will also be amazed at how oblivious we (humans) were to the impacts our hunting of adult turtles and collecting eggs their eggs, together with coastal development and destruction of nesting beaches, were having on the populations of sea turtles worldwide. I have to admit that I found the first chapter or two a little dry, but once I got rolling, I really enjoyed the book. Rieser's writing does not get in the way of the story being told. She also does not editorialize or act the pundit as the story unfolds. She simply lets the story and related events unfold and tell the story on their own. This is not a bleeding-heart tree-hugger book. It is, instead, a meaningful account of the exploitation, then overexploitation, and then conservation efforts made to protect the green sea turtle. 5 stars, even though it has a slow start. I'll be adding this to the book list I provide to my marine biology students.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. *A History of Conservationists Themselves* By Bruce Trinque "The Case of the Green Sea Turtle: An Uncensored History of a Conservation Icon" is far less about green sea turtles as about the people who over the decades have championed efforts to protect and preserve sea turtles. As far back as the latter Nineteenth century, it has been recognized that certain populations of these turtles were in danger. Various species and breeding populations were found scattered across the entire tropical world: Florida and the Caribbean, South America and Mexico, Africa, Australia, and the East Indies. The particular details of its life cycle make it particularly vulnerable to exploitation: when females emerge from the sea to lay eggs, they are very easy to capture and kill; juveniles feeding on shallow beds of sea weed are nearly as easily captured; the eggs themselves are readily dug up before hatching. The migratory nature of these animals expose them to dangers at locations hundreds or even thousands of miles apart. And there were a range of human hungers that placed the turtles in danger. During the age of sail, the green sea turtles provided a readily transported food supply. Later, turtle soup became a desirable luxury food and, then, a fashionable commodity. Some native peoples enthusiastically consumed the eggs. Sea turtle leather was made into shoes and belts and handbags. Eyeglass frames and jewelry was fashioned from turtles shells. Many details of the green sea turtles' natural history were hidden from human study, and agreement as to how best protect the animals was difficult to achieve. This book focuses in on the 1970s when a fierce debate was waged between those who believed that fostering commercial farming of the turtles was a viable way to take pressure from hunting the animals in the wild by providing an abundant quantity of superior product. Other scientists argued that commercial farming would only cause a greater threat to the wild population by increasing demand for the sea turtles and thus making poaching more profitable. Leaders on both sides of the debate were sincere in their beliefs, working from the same available information (and handicapped by the lack of more detailed information). In the end, conservation decisions were more the product of ideology than science.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. *A Case Study in the Conservation of a Species* By Frederick S. Goethel This book covers the history of the hunting and use of the green turtle for food and other products to the time when it was no longer used and the attempts by scientists to restore populations and have it listed as endangered. It is an amazing story and demonstrates well that the conservation movement started well before the early 1960s. I found it quite amazing that the green sea turtle was used for soup and was considered quite a delicacy. At one time, there were thousands of these turtles roaming the seas in various colonies. Hunting of them for the use in soup, as well as for "tortoise shell" products dwindled the numbers greatly until some populations were on the verge of being wiped out completely. Making the situation worse was that the turtles migrated from mating grounds to feeding grounds and crossed into various jurisdictions, which had varying degrees of interest in protecting the turtles. Finally, there was a group that attempted to farm the turtles to supply the products that were made from the animals, which stirred up quite a controversy within the scientific community. This book is a very good look into the difficulties that scientists have trying to protect species that range across wide swaths of the planet and how governments interfere in conservation efforts for what they believe is in the best interest of their nations and not what is best for the species in question. In some ways, the lessons learned from this book could be applied to the issue of climate change and to species that are affected by that issue. The writing is a little dense, and it is a scientifically based book that I suspect will be used in

college classes as a textbook. It is still very readable if you take your time. The history of the turtle industry alone is worth the read.

The journals of early maritime explorers traversing the Atlantic Ocean often describe swarms of sea turtles, once a plentiful source of food. Many populations had been decimated by the 1950s, when Archie Carr and others raised public awareness of their plight. One species, the green turtle, has been the most heavily exploited due to international demand for turtle products, especially green turtle soup. The species has achieved some measure of recovery due to thirty years of conservation efforts, but remains endangered. In *The Case of the Green Turtle*, Alison Rieser provides an unparalleled look into the way science and conservation interact by focusing on the most controversial aspect of green turtle conservation—farming. While proponents argued that farming green sea turtles would help save them, opponents countered that it encouraged a taste for turtle flesh that would lead to the slaughter of wild stocks. The clash of these viewpoints once riveted the world. Rieser relies on her expertise in ocean ecology, policy, and law to reveal how the efforts to preserve sea turtles changed marine conservation and the way we view our role in the environment. Her study of this early conservation controversy will fascinate anyone who cares about sea turtles or the oceans in which they live.

"While I recommend this book for readers interested in sea turtle and herpetological history, it will also give readers with no knowledge outside of academia a glimpse into the world of policy and politics in the conservation of amphibians and reptiles." (C. Kenneth Dodd, Jr. *Herpetological*) "Holds many lessons for those interested in the conservation of marine creatures and of biodiversity in general." (Choice) "The story of efforts to save green sea turtles, including by farming them, illustrates conflicts common to conservation work." (Science News) "The science, economics, and policies in this case are central to all conservation issues that the world faces today. The lessons learned from this story are applicable by all those interested in saving what little is left of our natural world. It is one of the most important books of its kind in the last 30 years." (James R. Spotila, author of *Sea Turtles: A Complete Guide to Their Biology, Behavior, and Conservation*) "A marvelous study of the history of global efforts to conserve the wide-ranging green turtle... Rieser's tour-de-force makes compelling reading because it is packed with intrigue, almost like a spy novel. It is a page turner and a must-read for all those engaged in trying to stem the illicit trade in wildlife products." (Nigel Smith *AAG of Books*) "Rieser shares with us an exhaustive, rich and mind-blowing historical narrative supported by crucial evidence and resources. [ *The Case of the Green Turtle* ] is an extremely valuable contribution to understanding Latin America's wildlife conservation and an important story for all those concerned with saving our natural world." (Rikke Schmidt Kjaeligaard *Journal of Latin American Geography*) About the Author Alison Rieser is the Dai Ho Chun Distinguished Professor of ocean policy in the Department of Geography at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, and a Pew Fellow in Marine Conservation.