

Prospectus for

LAGOON TIME: A Guide to the Gray Whales, the History and Natural History of Laguna San Ignacio, Baja California Sur, Mexico

By Steven Swartz



A Project of the Ocean Foundation

Publication date: January 2014

It was a seminal event in the arena of whale research, conservation, adventure travel, and the future of a large, environmentally sensitive area of Mexico. In 1977 two young graduate students, Steven Swartz from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and Mary Lou Jones from California State University's Moss Landing Marine Laboratory, embarked on a project to study gray whales in the remote, little known, but historic Laguna San Ignacio, in Baja California Sur, Mexico. Among the hundreds of whales they saw that first of five winters was a juvenile whale the visitors named "Amazing Grace." This whale exhibited what could be best described as "friendly" behavior towards them and their small boat. The study went on to document the life history of the lagoon's gray whales, wildlife, and the community of people that made this unique marine environment their home. These initial surveys and descriptions of the lagoon and its use by gray whales were instrumental in the development of regulations and guidelines to protect this area as a winter breeding ground for gray whales, and for sustainable ecotourism in the future.

As is often said, the rest is history . . . but that history has not yet been told.

Now, more than three decades later, it's time to tell the story of how it all began, the Nineteenth century Yankee whalers that came before, the struggle to protect the lagoon's delicate environment and sensitive ecosystem, the establishment of sustainable eco-tourism, and the



important events that followed. The story is told by the one who was there and who continues as a leader in the research and conservation of Laguna San Ignacio.

Lagoon Time will be a popular, first-hand account of the experiences and amazing discoveries made by Dr. Swartz and his colleagues regarding the life history of gray whales, the international conservation efforts that halted the development of a destructive salt works on the shores of the lagoon by a large

multinational corporation, and the local community's efforts to ensure that this unique marine ecosystem will survive the inevitable tide of development.

Six years following the Swartz–Jones field seasons, Laguna San Ignacio was made part of the El Vizcaino Biosphere Reserve in 1988 — the largest wildlife sanctuary in Latin America. That protection was enhanced when the region was designated in 1993 as the UNESCO World Heritage Site “Whale Sanctuary of El Vizcaino.” Subsequently, Dr. Swartz, working with his colleague Jorge Urban R., established the Laguna San Ignacio Ecosystem Science Program to continue the important scientific research and informed conservation efforts on behalf of the Lagoon ecosystem.

The book will provide the Lagoon visitor and adventure traveler an accurate look into the human and natural history of San Ignacio, as well as a handy field guide to gray whale behavior and the diverse botanical and avian wildlife in the area. It will also find an eager audience in the thousands of previous visitors and whale watching enthusiasts around the world who have been asking for such a book since the late 1970s.

The proceeds from the sales of this book will provide on-going financial support for the research and conservation efforts of the Laguna San Ignacio Ecosystem Science Program, A Project of the Ocean Foundation. From the enthusiastic reception already shown by the mere suggestion that it will be published, Lagoon Time is destined to be a classic in the realm of natural history books.

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By Steven Swartz

Design by Pieter Folkens
A Higher Porpoise Design Group

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PHYSICAL DISCRIPTION

6" x 9" trim size (to fit easily in a backpack)
~120 pages with color figures
Lay-flat binding, soft cover
Cover 4/0, Aqueous/Markote
Special limited edition, hard bound copies
with slipcase.

Design and Production by A Higher Porpoise
Design Group.

To be printed and bound in the USA
English and Spanish language versions

To maintain complete editorial and creative
control, as well as maximize support for on-
going research, the production will be kept
close with special prepublication discounts to supporters and key outlets,
with additional wholesale fulfillment through independent book
distributors.

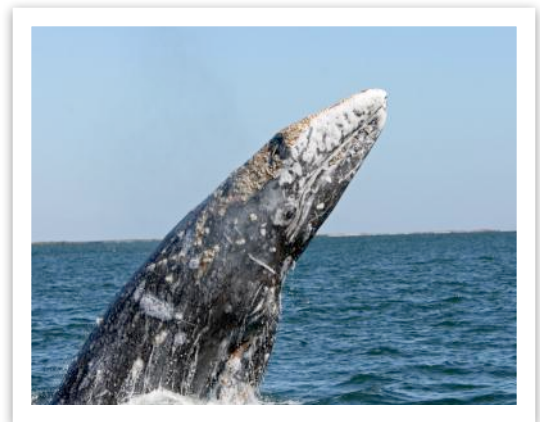


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Who are these guys?

Brief Biographies of the primary Lagoon Time Contributors

AUTHOR

Steven L. Swartz, Ph.D.: Along with his wife and research partner, Mary Lou Jones, Steven conducted the first systematic studies of gray whales in Laguna San Ignacio from 1977 to 1982. He earned his Ph.D. in marine science in 1986 from the University of California at Santa Cruz. He has researched and published widely on gray whales and their breeding lagoons in Baja California throughout his career. Steven edited and contributed to the classic Academic Press treatise "The Gray Whale" with Mary Lou Jones and J. Stephen Leatherwood. He has been active in the Society for Marine Mammalogy as a Charter Member and elected officer. Steven has served as a consultant to the Mexican government's Ministry for the Environment, Natural Resources, and Fisheries (SEMARNAP), and worked for the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission and the National Marine Fisheries Service. He continues to work with non-government organizations (NGOs) on various marine protected area conservation projects. With his colleague, Jorge Urban R., they established and co-direct the Laguna San Ignacio Ecosystem Science Program in Baja California, Sur, Mexico, to ensure that science based information

continues to be available to those responsible for conserving these unique marine protected areas, and to train future generations of marine wildlife scientists.

PUBLISHER/DESIGNER

Pieter Arend Folkens established **A Higher Porpoise Design Group** in 1992, building on a reputation that began in 1978 as one of the finest marine mammal illustrators in the world. He has contributed to, illustrated, designed, and published many works, including field guides, posters, and academic books distributed in 28 countries and 19 languages on topics ranging from marine mammals to human osteology. He has created content and produced books for large publishers such as Knopf, Elsevier Science/Academic Press, Cambridge University Press, and Alaska Sea Grant, and others. He is presently working on *Mammals of Mexico*, edited by Gerardo Ceballos for Johns Hopkins University Press. In-house publishing-for-conservation projects have included more than a dozen multi-language waterproof guides to marine mammals (Russia, Madagascar, Japan, Latin America, Pacific Islands, and others) for Whale and Dolphin Conservation (UK), Wildlife Conservation Society, IFAW, and others. His work has included building a life-sized bowhead whale for the Iñupiat Heritage Center, Barrow, AK, and sculpting the animatronic cinematic cetaceans appearing in more than a dozen feature films including *Star Trek IV*, *Free Willy*, *Flipper*, and *White Squall*. He is a founding board member of the Alaska Whale foundation, a whale dis-entangler for the National Marine Fisheries Service, and a certified mission ready Search Aand Ready K9 handler for Napa Sheriff's Office and CalEMA.

Steven and Pieter cannot recall when they first met, but it was probably around the time they were both at the University of California, Santa Cruz, Division of Natural Sciences — Steven as a PhD candidate and Pieter as an assistant professor of Science Communication. They are also both charter members of the Society for Marine Mammalogy where the topic of Lagoon Times came up between them at nearly every Society Biennial Conference. Following a couple of meetings in Washington, DC, Lagoon Time has finally come together as a viable project with a manuscript and publication plan.