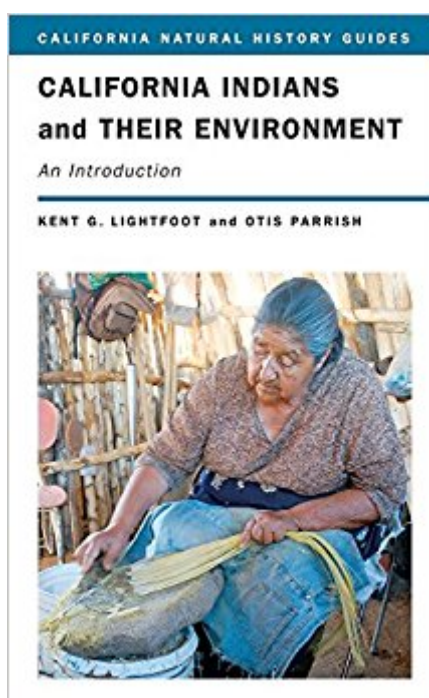


The book was found

California Indians And Their Environment: An Introduction (California Natural History Guides)



Synopsis

Capturing the vitality of California's unique indigenous cultures, this major new introduction incorporates the extensive research of the past thirty years into an illuminating, comprehensive synthesis for a wide audience. Based in part on new archaeological findings, it tells how the California Indians lived in vibrant polities, each boasting a rich village life including chiefs, religious specialists, master craftspeople, dances, feasts, and ceremonies. Throughout, the book emphasizes how these diverse communities interacted with the state's varied landscape, enhancing its already bountiful natural resources through various practices centered around prescribed burning. A handy reference section, illustrated with more than one hundred color photographs, describes the plants, animals, and minerals the California Indians used for food, basketry and cordage, medicine, and more. At a time when we are grappling with the problems of maintaining habitat diversity and sustainable economies, we find that these native peoples and their traditions have much to teach us about the future, as well as the past, of California.

Book Information

Series: California Natural History Guides (Book 96)

Paperback: 512 pages

Publisher: University of California Press; 1 edition (April 24, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0520256905

ISBN-13: 978-0520256903

Product Dimensions: 4.5 x 1.3 x 7.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #251,975 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #145 in [Books > History > Historical Study & Educational Resources > Historical Geography](#) #263 in [Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Natural History](#) #565 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Specific Demographics > Native American Studies](#)

Customer Reviews

“One of the best books of its nature to ever cross the trail is the scholarly yet accessible *California Indians and Their Environment*.” (Press Democrat 2009-06-22)
“Anyone seriously interested in the cultural history and daily lives of California's Indians will want to check out a copy of this reference book.” (Salinas Californian 2009-08-07)
“Indispensable for

anyone interested in Native cultures and in human interactions with the California environment. . . .
Essential. (Choice 2010-07-08) "A valuable resource for all Californians who wish to learn more about the tremendous biological and cultural diversity that surrounds us. (News From Native California 2010-07-12) "[A] pivotal work. . . . I recommend this book to anyone interested in California Indians and their interactions with their environment. (Susannah B. Johnson Fulton, Shasta College Economic Botany 2013-01-20)

"Relevant, timely, and approachable, California Indians and Their Environment is an instant classic that should be invaluable for anyone interested in California's diverse natural and cultural landscapes and the future sustainability of the state."#151;Torben Rick, author of Human Impacts on Ancient Marine Ecosystems: A Global Perspective"California Indians and Their Environment stands respectfully on the shoulders of scholarly giants and demonstrates the cumulative power of cultural, historical, and scientific research. It is a remarkably inclusive and relevant text that is both highly informative of past indigenous life ways and identities and strikingly insightful into current environmental crises that confront us all."#151;Seth Mallios, author of The Deadly Politics of Giving: Exchange and Violence at Ajacan, Roanoke, and Jamestown"In this highly readable and insightful book, Lightfoot and Parrish show how the natural diversity of California not only influenced the contours of Indian lifeways, but was indeed augmented by burning and other practices, that were used to sustain indigenous economies. The ingenuity and skill with which California Indians managed and used natural resources underscores the need to infuse modern land-use policy with the knowledge of people whose ecological experiences in North America eclipse those of Euroamericans by a factor of forty."#151;Kenneth E. Sassaman, author of People of the Shoals: Stallings Culture of the Savannah River Valley"This book is a deeply informative and fascinating examination of California Indians' rich and complex relationship with the ecological landscape. Lightfoot and Parrish have thoroughly updated the classic book, The Natural World of the California Indians, with critical analysis of anthropological theory and methods and incorporation of indigenous knowledge and practices. It is a lucid, accessible book that tells an intriguing story for our modern times."#151;Melissa K. Nelson, San Francisco State University and President of The Cultural Conservancy"At once scholarly and accessible, this book is destined to be a classic. Framed around pressing environmental issues of concern to a broad range of Californians today, Lightfoot and Parrish provide an historical ecology of California's amazingly diverse environments, its biological resources, and the Native peoples who both adapted to and actively managed them."#151;Jon M. Erlandson, author of Early Hunter-Gatherers of the California Coast"California

Indians and Their Environment fills a significant gap in our understanding of the first peoples of California. Lightfoot and Parrish take on the daunting task of synthesizing and expanding on our knowledge of indigenous land-management practices, sustainable economies, and the use of natural resources for food, medicine, and technological needs. This innovative and thought-provoking book is highly recommended to anyone who wants to learn more about the diverse traditions of California Indians."#151;Lynn Gamble, author of *The Chumash World at European Contact*"This innovative book moves understanding of the Native Peoples of California from the past to the future. The authors' insight into Native Californians as fire managers is an eye-opener to interpreting the ecological and cultural uniqueness of the region. Lightfoot and Parrish have provided the best introduction to Native California while at the same time advancing the best scholarship with an original synthesis. A rare feat!"#151;William Simmons, Brown University

I read the first half of this book in part of a day and quite enjoyed the whole thing. The authors make a strong case that the California coastal Native Americans made intensive use of fire to clear shrub lands and promote the growth of plants and animals that they used. Native peoples were not the only source of fire, of course, but it is striking that the parts of the state where natural sources of ignition are common from lightning strikes (the Sierra Nevada and Sonoran deserts) are not the places (namely the coast) where low intensity fires like those set by native people were most common. The book has extensive discussion of fire as a tool of native people and also discusses coastal peoples at some length and their archaeological record. In contrast, interior Indian populations are not discussed in much depth. There is little discussion of genetic diversity of California Indians or their likely points of origin outside California. However, the book is well referenced and is a great source of recent academic literature in archaeology, environmental history and cultural anthropology. The second half of the book is a series of annotated lists of native plants (and some animals) used by Native people. These native uses are discussed for major geographic regions in the state and often have rather extensive entries on major food plants or those used in tool manufacture. The second half of the book is not introduced with much in the way of an overview and so is better as a reference work than as something to read straight through. On the whole, I find the California Natural History Guides to be really excellent stand-alone books. They are not field guides in the usual sense (the one on California Water has extensive discussions of how the State water system works, for example) but rather are written as fact-filled books that carry a distinct point of view and are fairly complete in their treatment. The California Indians volume clearly has an agenda--namely to demonstrate that the native people of the State were actively modifying the

landscape and managing resources. I highly recommend the book for anyone interested in native uses of resources, California pre-history, and a sense of what our state was like before Europeans turned up.

Current Berkeley Professor Kent Lightfoot makes valid, innovative claims that early Native Americans in California cultivated -and in some cases thinned- the land via pyrodiversity (or the burning of land to maintain potential growth). Drawing on the knowledge of his fellow author and Berkeley graduate Otis Parrish (a Pomono tribe member), Lightfoot dashes many common stereotypes to the winds while maintaining California's rich diversity of both groups and geography. Though repetitive at times, most of the text is easy to read and should be attractive to both scholars and casual readers alike. There is a vast wealth of pictures regarding native plants and various flora and fauna to add relevance and data. A well compromised, informative research tool.

this was a great read! its a must, the history and concepts in this book go into detail. I had to read this for a class and after reading it i knew i wasn't going to sell it back because its a book i want to keep. Lightfoot really does a great job.

Good reference book. I still keep finding interesting information in it.

An outstanding little softcover book! Very detailed information concerning the Native Californians and their ways of life. Highly recommended for those who's interests lie in Native plants, technology, and their uses!

Great resource

Not only do you learn a lot about the Indians but the different plants, in California, listed next to their picture and then it will tell you how the Indians used them. Easy to use.

Interesting book. Not very usable for my research project, though.

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