



# Reflections of a Whale-Watcher

*Michelle A. Gilders*

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## **Reflections of a Whale-Watcher** Michelle A. Gilders

"This story about touching whales—and whales touching us—touches a cultural nerve. An important, informed, and insightful book. Powerful." —Lee Sterrenberg, Indiana University

"The first time I saw a whale, I looked into its eye and saw myself reflected." For Michelle Gilders, this moment was a revelation and becomes for us the start of a marvelous journey into the realm of the great whales. Gilders weaves a spellbinding account of her voyages through the Sea of Cortez and the Pacific Ocean in search of whales. Along the way, she takes us to the desert of Baja California to witness its diverse and remarkable wildlife. She recounts the whaling history of the area and the pressures brought to bear on this region and its wildlife. In the rough beauty of Baja, Gilders ponders ecological complexity, environmental issues, and ethical concerns, while immersing the reader in the sights and sounds of a desert awash in the whale-haunted seas.

Gilders's encounters with whales occasion reflections on such matters as speciation and evolution, the diversity of life, the role of politics and science in the treatment of animal populations, and the ethical and moral dilemmas that face us as we contemplate the possible sentience of non-human animals.

Written for a general readership, the book is an enthralling, deeply reflective, and scientifically accurate portrait of the great whales and our long and often troubled encounter with them.

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#### **Leonard Santiago:**

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