



CONSERVATION SCIENCE IN MEXICO'S NORTHWEST

ECOSYSTEM STATUS AND TRENDS IN THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA



Elisabet V. Wehncke, José Rubén Lara-Lara,
Saúl Álvarez-Borrego, and Exequiel Ezcurra
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UC MEXUS

*The University of California
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and the United States*

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This book is dedicated to the memory of
Laura Arriaga Cabrera, Salvador Contreras-Balderas,
and Daniel Lluch Belda, caring colleagues,
great scientists, and exceptional human beings
to whom Baja California and the Gulf of California
owe so much.

Dedicamos este libro a la memoria
Laura Arriaga Cabrera, Salvador Contreras-Balderas y
Daniel Lluch Belda, colegas comprometidos,
grandes científicos, y seres humanos excepcionales,
a quienes Baja California y el Golfo de California
tanto les deben.

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Exploring Mexico's northwest, the Baja California Peninsula, its surrounding oceans, its islands, its rugged mountains, and rich seamounds, one feels diminished by the vastness and the greatness of the landscape while consumed by a sense of curiosity and awe. In a great natural paradox, we see the region's harsh arid nature molded by water through deep time, and we feel that its unique lifeforms have been linked to this desert and sea for thousands of years, as they are now.

These landscapes of fantasy and adventure, this territory of surprising, often bizarre growth-forms and of immense natural beauty, has inspired a wide array of research for over two centuries and continues to inspire the search for a deeper knowledge on the functioning, trends, and conservation status of these ecosystems in both land and ocean.

This book offers a compilation of research efforts aimed at understanding this extraordinary region and preserving its complex richness. It is a synthesis of work done by some exceptional researchers, mostly from Mexico, who indefatigably explore, record, and analyze these deserts and these seas to understand their ecological processes and the role of humans in their ever-changing dynamics.

Elisabet V. Wehncke



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