



Cultures of Habitat: On Nature, Culture, and Story

By Gary Paul Nabhan

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One day while studying population maps with a colleague at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Nabhan recognized a surprising correlation between upheavals in human communities and the incidence of endangered species. Where massive in-migrations and exodeses were taking place, more plants and animals had become endangered. Locations with stable human populations sustained native wildlife more easily over the long term. This revelation prompted Nabhan to spend the next three years studying relationships among cultural diversity, community stability, and conservation of biological diversity in natural habitats. He concentrated on "cultures of habitat," human communities with long histories of interacting with one particular kind of terrain and its wildlife. Here the author of *The Desert Smells Like Rain* has combined the eye of an ethnobiologist with chronicles from "the Far Outside," that realm in which diverse natural habitats and indigenous cultures coexist. The result is a mosaic of essays that celebrates the vital connections between soul and space.

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