



# **The Great Sperm Whale: A Natural History of the Ocean's Most Magnificent and Mysterious Creature**

*Richard Ellis*

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Over the past several decades, Richard Ellis has produced a remarkable body of work that has been called "magnificent" (*Washington Post Book World*), "masterful" (*Scientific American*), "magical" (*Men's Journal*), and a "dazzling tour de force" (*Christian Science Monitor*). Ellis's new book—a fascinating tour through the world of the sperm whale—will surely inspire more such praise for the author heralded by *Publisher Weekly* as "America's foremost writer on marine research."

Written with Ellis's deep knowledge and trademark passion, verve, and wit—and illustrated with a wide array of images including his own signature artwork—his study covers the full spectrum of the sperm whale's existence from its prehistoric past to its current endangered existence. Ellis, as no one else can, illuminates the iconic impact of *Physeter macrocephalus* ("big-headed blower") on our history, environment, and culture, with a substantial nod to Herman Melville and *Moby-Dick*, the great novel that put the sperm whale (and whaling) on the literary map.

Ranging far and wide, Ellis covers the sperm whale's evolution, ecology, biology, anatomy, behavior, social organization, intelligence, communications, migrations, diet, and breeding. He also devotes considerable space to the whale's hunting prowess, including its clashes with the giant squid, and to the history of the whaling industry that decimated its numbers during the last two centuries. He even includes a story about a beached juvenile he helped rescue, an event that provided scientists with one of their first opportunities to observe a sperm whale in the water and up close.

Offering a rich tapestry for anyone with an interest in the marvels of ocean life, Ellis's book provides an indispensable guide to the life and times of one of the planet's most intelligent, elusive, and endangered species.

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