
Henderson's book is a historical account of the discovery, exploration, and exploitation of Scammon's Lagoon, from the earliest Spanish exploration to the present time. As implied in the title, the focus of the book is on whaling in Scammon's Lagoon, although whaling for gray whales in all parts of the Pacific is considered, as are nonwhaling endeavors in the lagoon.

The information presented in the book is derived from what appears to have been an exhaustive search of both published and unpublished records. This is reflected in the detailed annotation and references to log-books, port records, etc., found in the text, and in an extensive bibliography.

This book is important not only as a thorough historical treatment of exploitation of both an area and a species, but also as a compilation of data necessary for an estimation of the original population size of the California gray whale stock. Henderson points out that Scammon's estimate of 30 to 40,000 is too high, and suggests that the original population was closer to 15 to 20,000. His documentation of catch and effort data for gray whaling in all areas should be sufficient to allow someone more versed in population dynamics to make a closer estimate. This is particularly important to considerations of the present status of this species.

The illustrations are few, but sufficient for this work. The tables in appendix are particularly useful, and the text in general might have been improved had more material been tabularized. Fortunately there is a good index allowing one to locate material scattered through the text.
The principal defect of the book lies not in its content, but in the organization of the text. There is a bewildering abundance of data within the text, tending to obscure some of the generalities presented and to generally confuse the reader. In several places it appears to have confused the author as well and he repeats material presented earlier. All things considered, however, the book is extremely valuable, both from a historic and a scientific standpoint.—James Mead, Division of Mammals, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.
Arriving at the destination, Scammon managed to sail in the lagoon though the narrow pass and send in the first whaleboat. At first, the gray whales defended themselves furiously. Since they were attacked directly in their nursing lagoon, they could not dive deep enough to escape the harpoons. Scammon realized he was at a pinch point. Either he had to find a way to hunt the gray whales without losing whaleboats and men, or it would be the end of his career. From that point onward, whale hunting became a ruthless slaughter, and Scammon became like Captain Ahab, the fictional whale hunter of the novel Moby Dick. Instead of pursuing the mothers and pregnant whales, he began to ambush them with firearms and even bombed them, leaving the bay full of floating carcasses. Inside Baja California: Scammon's Lagoon - Before you visit Baja California, visit Tripadvisor for the latest info and advice, written for travelers by travelers. Scammon's Lagoon. Baja California Tourism. Baja California Hotels. Vacation Rentals. Baja California Vacation Packages. Flights to Baja California. Baja California Hotel Deals. Ojo de Liebre Lagoon (formerly known as Scammon's Lagoon), translated into English as "hare eye lagoon", is a coastal lagoon located in Mulegâ© Municipality near the town of Guerrero Negro in the northwestern Baja California Sur state of Mexico. It lies approximately halfway between the southern tip of the Baja California Peninsula and the U.S.-Mexico border, opening onto the Pacific Ocean. Gray whales are arriving in Scammonâ€™s Lagoon and other lagoons along the Baja California peninsula, after a nearly 6,000-mile journey from Arctic home waters. They give birth during the southbound journey, or in the lagoons, and nurse their calves for several weeks before embarking on their northbound journey back to the Bering and Chukchi seas.