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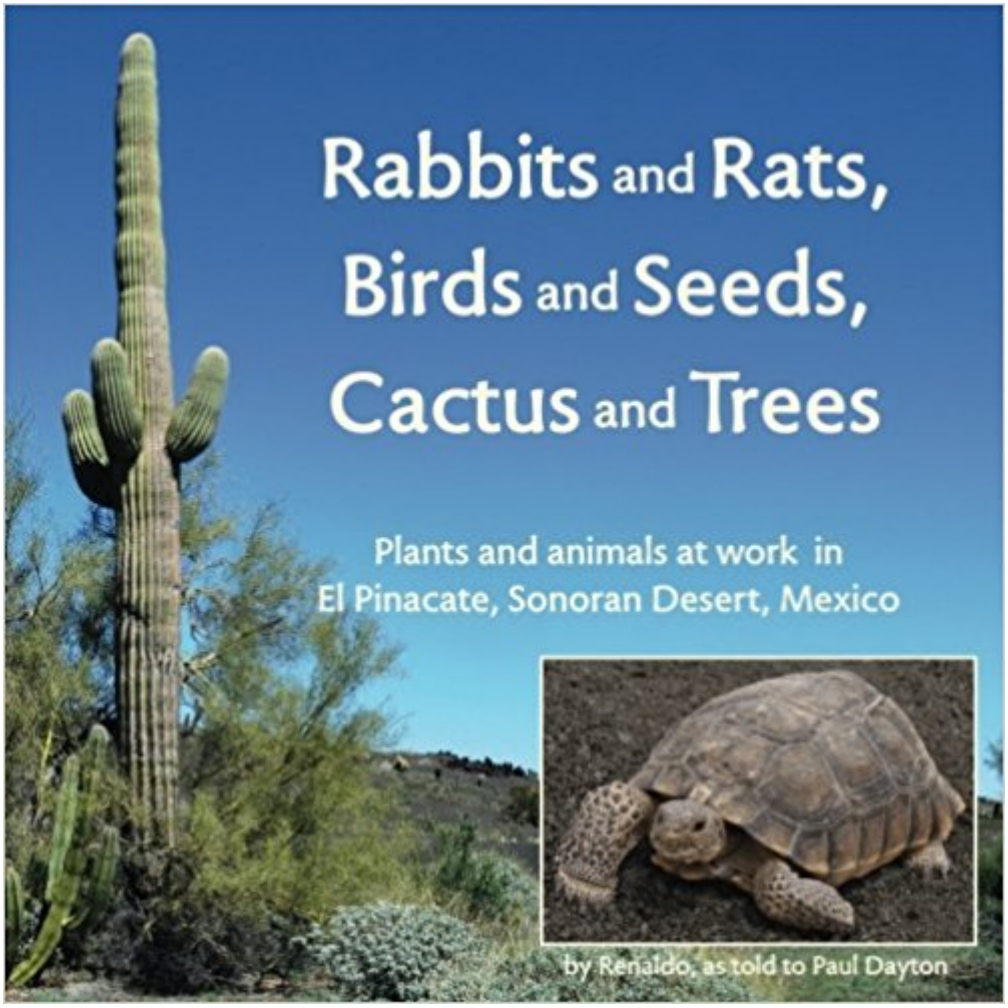

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Synopsis

Often when we look at a desert landscape, we see only todayÃ¢â ¬â„¢s "snapshot" of the plants and animals that live there. But what would we see if we took a much longer look Ã¢â ¬â • long enough to see the dramatic changes that happen over time in this dynamic ecosystem? This little book tells the fascinating story of life in the desert as seen through the eyes of Renaldo, a Sonoran desert tortoise who has observed the weather, plants and animals in the highly diverse El Pinacate (now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve) for many years. Ã¢â ¬Å“I am more than 80 years old,Ã¢â ¬Â• begins Renaldo, Ã¢â ¬Å“and IÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve lived here all my life. I want to tell you about some of the things IÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve seen.Ã¢â ¬Â• Photos, drawings and RenaldoÃ¢â ¬â„¢s clear explanations help readers of all ages and backgrounds understand this Sonoran desert and encourage them to wonder about what they see there: Ã¢â ¬Â¢ Why is that packrat nest surrounded by a mess of sharp-spined cactus "buds"? Ã¢â ¬Â¢ Why is this saguaro cactus standing all alone, while that one over there seems to be "embraced" by the branches of a mesquite tree? Ã¢â ¬Â¢ Why do some ocotillo plants have a few long stems reaching almost straight up, while other ocotillos are "bushy," with more, shorter stems? Ã¢â ¬Â¢ What killed the cactuses whose woody "skeletons" we see stretched out on the ground? Ã¢â ¬Â¢ Why are grasses and small flowering plants dotted over the landscape in patches, almost as if they were planted in small gardens? And what does that have to do with jackrabbit boxing matches? Find the fascinating answers to these and other questions in the pages of Rabbits and Rats, Birds and Seeds, Cactus and Trees, or in the Spanish-language edition: Liebres y Ratas, Aves y Semillas, Cactos y Ãƒ Â•rboles. Royalties from this book will be donated to support regional environmental education in Sonora, Mexico.

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Customer Reviews

This is a delightful book that engages and teaches about life in the desert. I initially bought it to read with my ten year old daughter, but when I started to skim through it, I quickly found myself taken with the stories of desert life, and before I knew it had finished the slim volume myself! I was happy to learn that this book is as fun and educational for adults as it is for kids. -- Drew Talley, Professor of Environmental Studies, University of San DiegoWhile it appears to be for kids ... I was amazed to find it chock full of interesting info, just as the title suggests. What I appreciate the most is seeing the interconnectedness in the environment--how plants and animals depend on each other. -- Neva G. Sullaway, Editor, Swift Boats at War in Viet Nam --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Renaldo, a Sonoran desert tortoise, lives on the top of Mount Salvatierra, where he has a good view of the changes and processes that happen in his El Pinacate desert ecosystem over several decades. Lacking fingers, a camera and a computer, he recruited Paul Dayton, a visiting biologist, to tell his story. Paul Dayton grew up in the Sonoran Desert, in Tucson, Arizona. He received his B.S. degree from the University of Arizona and his Ph.D. in Zoology from University of Washington. He is a biological oceanographer and ecologist at Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, California. Dayton has worked in Benthic Ecology, Marine Conservation & Policy, Evolution & Natural History, and General Ecology. During his 45-year career at Scripps, Dayton has researched coastal Antarctic habitats and rocky-shore and kelp habitats worldwide in order to better understand marine ecosystems. He has also documented the environmental impacts of overfishing, water reclamation, and phenomena such as El NiÃƒÂ o on coastal ecology. Among other honors, Dayton is the only person to win both the George Mercer Award (1974) and the WS Cooper Award (2000) from the Ecological Society of America. In 2002 he received the Scientific Diving Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy of Underwater Sciences. In 2004 he was honored with the Edward O. Wilson Naturalist Award from the American Society of Naturalists, and in 2006 he was the first recipient of the Ramon Margalef Prize in Ecology, awarded by a jury of scientists representing Catalonia, the European Union, and the international ecology community. Rabbits and Rats, Birds and Seeds, Cactus and Trees, for children and adults, is also published in Spanish: "Liebres y Ratas, Aves y Semillas, Cactos y ÃƒÂ•rboles," translated by Barbara Ilizaliturri and Exequiel Ezcurra.) Dayton’s earlier publications have been in peer-reviewed scientific journals and

books. He has authored or co-authored about 150 scientific papers. .

This is a delightful book that engages and teaches about life in the desert. I initially bought it to read with my ten year old daughter, but when I started to skim through it, I quickly found myself taken with the stories of desert life, and before I knew it had finished the slim volume myself! I was happy to learn that this book is as fun and educational for adults as it is for kids.The "narrator", Renaldo (an aged desert tortoise), presents a series of neat stories about, for example, how packrats use cactus to protect themselves from predators, and how "nurse trees" protect giant saguaro cactus when they are young. And the structure of the book not only makes it fun to read, but enhances learning, by asking questions along the way, and encouraging exploration. This little book will definitely be with us on our next visit to the desert.And since all proceeds go the support the Pinacate Biosphere Reserve, that means I get a great book *and* I get to help the environment! I bought the Spanish version as well, since I am trying to improve my awful Spanish!

I came across this new release while doing some research for a client. As a hiker, from sea to desert, and avid gardener, I thought it looked fun. While it appears to be for kids, because it has 28 pages, I was amazed to find it chock full of interesting info, just as the title suggests. What I appreciate the most is seeing the interconnectedness in the environment--how plants and animals depend on each other. It sure made me want to visit El Pinacate...I didn’t know about this World Heritage site. And when I get there, I’m going to look for Renaldo.

This is a great book for all ages. What I love most is that it isn’t just about plants and animals and the desert environment, but rather the very interesting interactions among them. After reading this book, or having it read to you, a small child or an adult will be able to see things in the desert they never saw before. It made me want to explore!

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