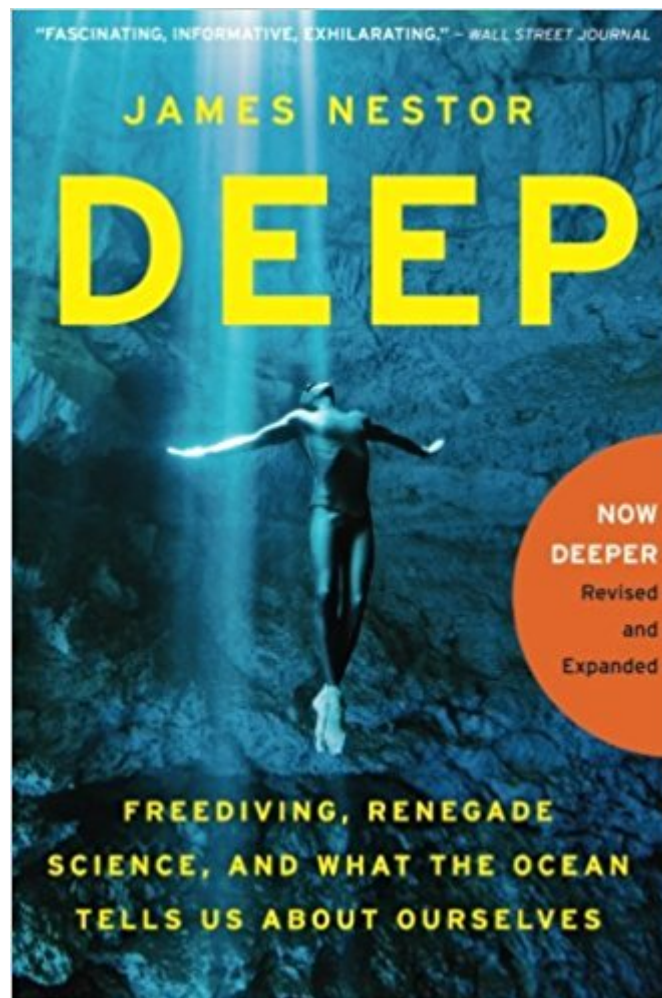




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# Deep: Freediving, Renegade Science, And What The Ocean Tells Us About Ourselves



## Synopsis

New York Times Book Review's Editors' Choice's Best Science Book of 2014's Scientific American's Recommended Read's "Fascinating, informative, exhilarating." • Wall Street Journal Deep is a voyage from the ocean's surface to its darkest trenches, the most mysterious places on Earth. Fascinated by the sport of freediving in which competitors descend to great depths on a single breath • James Nestor embeds with a gang of oceangoing extreme athletes and renegade researchers. He finds whales that communicate with other whales hundreds of miles away, sharks that swim in unerringly straight lines through pitch-black waters, and other strange phenomena. Most illuminating of all, he learns that these abilities are reflected in our own remarkable, and often hidden, potential including echolocation, directional sense, and the profound bodily changes humans undergo when underwater. Along the way, Nestor unlocks his own freediving skills as he communes with the pioneers who are expanding our definition of what is possible in the natural world, and in ourselves. "A journey well worth taking." • David Epstein, New York Times Book Review "Nestor pulls us below the surface into a world far beyond imagining and opens our eyes to these unseen places." • Dallas Morning News "This is popular science writing at its best." • Christian Science Monitor

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

**\*Starred Review\*** The ocean, journalist Nestor reminds us, is "the final unseen, untouched,

and undiscovered wilderness. It is also a frontier extremely difficult to explore. The pressure is so intense, at 30 feet down our "lungs collapse to half their normal size. Yet Nestor watches divers descend to 300 feet without scuba gear at a freediving competition. Alarmed (the consequences can be dire) and intrigued, Nestor sets out to learn about the allure and best purpose of freediving as "a tool to help crack the ocean's mysteries," thus launching an exceptionally dramatic and revelatory inquiry. As he begins training as a freediver, in spite of his fears, Nestor learns about our body's remarkable "amphibious reflexes," instantaneous physical transformations used for centuries by pearl divers. Now innovative and daring marine explorers use freediving to swim among sharks, dolphins, and whales. Their mind-blowing discoveries about how these denizens of the deep navigate and communicate in the watery dark are matched by findings that prove that we, too, can practice echolocation and orient ourselves via our innate magnetic sense of direction, natural abilities our ancestors used long before maps and GPS. With a "wow" on every page, and brimming with vivid portraits, lucid scientific explanations, gripping (and funny) first-person accounts, and urgent facts about the ocean's endangerment, Nestor's Deep is galvanizing, enlightening, and invaluable. --Donna Seaman

A New York Times Book Review Editor's Choice An Best Book of the Month Scientific American Recommended Read iTunes Top 20 Books of the Month Christian Science Monitor Editors' Pick: 10 Best Books of July BBC Book of the Week The Week Book of the Week "The deeper the book ventures into the ocean, the more dramatic and unusual the organisms therein and the people who observe them. Through [Nestor's] eyes and his stories, it's a journey well worth taking." • David Epstein, New York Times Book Review "Fascinating, informative, exhilarating book, and, I wager, it will at the very least have you testing how long you can hold your breath." • Wall Street Journal "An engaging exploration of the depths of the world's oceans and the human connection to the rapidly changing world below. This is popular science writing at its best." • Christian Science Monitor "Rich and illuminating ... A passionate celebration of the possible and the unproven ... [Deep] will certainly enrich the thinking of anyone planning to spend time at the beach." • Independent (UK) "Truly breathtaking ... Nestor gets right in with the competitors and rogue scientists who are unearthing mysteries of the deep and its inhabitants that we can't even imagine, in a book that's engaging and eye-popping." • Esquire "Nestor is crisp with his fun, seafaring facts; he is sober with his sprinkling of environmental bulletins. The book never

preaches, and it's a zippy read." • Los Angeles Times "Freediving, the sport that harnesses the mammalian dive reflex to survive deep plunges, can be a boon for marine researchers, avers James Nestor. We meet a salty cast of them, such as the 'aquanauts' of Aquarius, a marine analogue of the International Space Station submerged off the Florida Keys. Equally mesmerizing are Nestor's own adventures, whether spotting bioluminescent species from a submarine in the bathypelagic zone, or freediving himself and voyaging into humanity's amphibious origins in the process." • Nature (UK) "Put Deep at the top of your reading list. This book will do for the oceans what Cosmos did for space. It's mind-bending, intrepid, and inspiring." • Po Bronson "With verve and humor, the author describes his own risk-taking attempts to understand the ocean's ancient secrets and future potential and the daring and brilliant people who have dedicated their lives to probing deeper ... [Nestor's] writing is sharp, colorful, and thrilling ... Bring[s] the ocean to life from a research perspective as well as a human one. An adventurous and frequently dazzling look at our planet's most massive habitat." • Kirkus "A thrilling account, made timely by the rapidly changing state of earth's most expansive environment." • Publishers Weekly

I first heard about this book when the author James Nestor was a guest on the Ben Greenfield Fitness Podcast however I had already been intrigued by the sport of Freediving since I read an article in ESPN the magazine back in the late 90's. I remember reading about it and being so fascinated by the ability of these seemingly normal human beings diving down to unfathomable depths on a single breath of air. My best friend and I were out in my pool literally 30 minutes after reading the article seeing who could hold their breath the longest and the following day we went to the lake in our community to attempt to reach the bottom near the dock. It was very surprising to me to hear on that podcast episode that most people still had never heard of Freediving. Hopefully this book will bring the sport into the light because it is truly amazing. The book starts out with the author who works for Outdoor Magazine being sent half way around the world for a competition that he had never heard of before. After witnessing the event he began a quest to understand how this was possible. Along the way he discovered many intriguing things about human physiology, the ocean and the organisms that live in it. His adventure brought him from Freediving competitions to taking a Freediving course to diving with a research team studying sperm whales...he even took a ride in a homemade submarine! I love the way the book is presented, the chapters are arranged brilliantly and it was very hard to put down. The author puts a spotlight on cultures that have used this ability to activate the Mammalian Dive Reflex for centuries. I extremely enjoyed reading this book as it has

expanded my knowledge of ocean biology and the possibilities of human physiology.

I began reading this book because I am a water enthusiast, scuba dive master and novice freediver (looking to get certified here soon) and I was recommended to read this book. I honestly can't tell you the last time I read a book for fun that wasn't assigned to me for classes at University, and yet, I couldn't put this book down. It's a short and easy read but it is so fascinating and wonderfully written. I thought it would be more of a personal story and account of Mr. Nestor's freediving experience but it turned out to be so much more. Tons of well developed research, in depth interviews and ideas come to play to make this book come to life (not to mention the countless money and hours of flying involved to make the experiences possible). I would highly recommend this to ANYONE who has even the slightest liking to the water, the oceans and the marine life inside of it. It's an inspiring book that changes your perspective about many things once you have finished, and I certainly feel like it's made an impressionable impact on my life. James Nestor- I want to freedive with you one day. It would be an honor.

Absolutely fascinating book. Remember, though, do not attempt to do these experiments at home. Especially the man-eating shark ones. Everything in the book, including the echo-location experiments, have the potential to go unpleasantly wrong and were described as being done under some sort of supervision, often expert. Having said that, everything in the book is achievable and experts are out there. Occasionally way out there, but out there nonetheless. That fact, the fact that abilities normally relegated to the superhero comics are entirely achievable, would be worthy of a book in its own right. Now apply those abilities to experimental, predictive science. (If it's not experimental AND predictive, it's not really science at all.) The range of possibilities is fantastic. Yes, I know, it's controversial, but either those using the techniques are doing good science (ie: predictive and experimental) or they are not. Either they are applying the Scientific Method or they are not. The techniques determine the impact of the observer and limit the valid experiments possible, but everything that is valid IS valid, end of story. Argue the experiments on grounds of merit all you like, but no other complaint has any standing worthy of the name.

Being a scuba diving instructor and long distance sailor, it was easy for a friend to recommend that I read this book. Now that I just finished reading it, I would recommend it to anyone who likes to read about adventure and discovery. There are just so many more unknowns down there that I'm excited to learn about.

I didn't know anything about free diving until I googled how water makes you feel for one of my projects and came to an article by James Nestor. His descriptions of the physiological and physical changes that happen to the human body when its subjected to water captivated me. Excellent references to history, science, and biology do not disappoint.

I'm not quite sure how to peg how this book made me feel. I was both in awe of the world that freedivers visit so often, and appalled at how careless they were with their abilities and the world that those abilities let them visit. James Nestor himself seems to take a dim view of some of the practices he saw, but never takes a firm stance one way of the other. The book was repetitive in sections, but that gave it a trance-like quality I rather liked. At times I felt very peaceful reading this book. Other times, not so much. It's a very interesting look into the ocean, quite unlike any other marine biology book I've read. I went into this with no expectations or ideas of what it would be.

Vivid and disturbing scenes of competitive freediving, luminous descriptions of swimming with whales, and generous offerings of insights into deep cradle of our origins. Loved it!

Who knew that people are capable of holding their breaths for minutes at a time and diving without equipment to hundreds of feet below the surface of the water? I knew nothing about freediving before reading this book, but came away amazed at what the human body is capable of. In this book, the author talks about the science of freediving, along with the perils of freediving competitions, and many positive uses of freediving. The whole book feels like you are communing with the sea and learning a whole lot in the process.

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