

Gulf Stream Chronicles: A Naturalist Explores Life in an Ocean River

David S. Lee

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Off the shore of Hatteras Island, where the inner edge of the Gulf Stream flows northward over the outer continental shelf, the marine life is unlike that of any other area in the Atlantic. Here the powerful ocean river helps foster an extraordinarily rich diversity of life, including Sargassum mats concealing strange creatures and exotic sea beans, whales and sea turtles, sunfish and flying fish, and shearwaters and Bermuda petrels. During his long career as a research scientist, David S. Lee made more than 300 visits to this area off the North Carolina coast, documenting its extraordinary biodiversity. In this collection of twenty linked essays, Lee draws on his personal observations and knowledge of the North Atlantic marine environment to introduce us to the natural wonders of an offshore treasure.

Lee guides readers on adventures miles offshore and leagues under the sea, blending personal anecdotes with richly detailed natural history, local culture, and seafaring lore. These journeys provide entertaining and informative connections between the land and the diverse organisms that live in the Gulf Stream off the coast of North Carolina. Lee also reminds us that ocean environments are fragile and vulnerable to threats such as pollution, offshore energy development, and climate change, challenging those of us on land to consider carefully the costs of ignoring sea life that thrives just beyond our view.



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