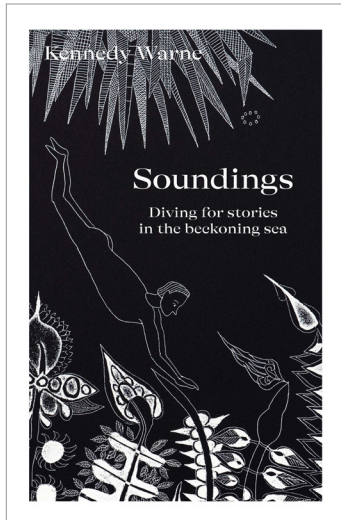


# Soundings

## *Diving for stories in the beckoning sea*

KENNEDY WARNE



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### A LOVE AFFAIR WITH THE UNDERWATER WORLD

Perhaps the closest a human being comes to visiting another planet is to descend into the sea.

In *Soundings*, Kennedy Warne connects his lifelong exploration of the underwater world with a global story of humanity's relationship with the sea.

Drawing on more than 20 years of fieldwork for *National Geographic*, he shares experiences that range from diving with harp seals under the sea ice of the Gulf of St Lawrence to following the legendary 'sardine run' along South Africa's Wild Coast; from watching turret-building ghost crabs in Arabia to witnessing the impact of dynamite fishing in the Philippines; from swimming with crocodiles in the Okavango Delta to finding seahorses on the Eastern Cape.

From myriad underwater encounters a wider conversation emerges about human engagement with the sea. One question dominates: How can we care for and reconnect with the oceans around us?

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kennedy Warne, co-founder of *New Zealand Geographic* magazine and contributor to *National Geographic*, often writes about the sea, including the book *Let Them Eat Shrimp: The Tragic Disappearance of the Rainforests of the Sea*. His most recent books, however, are land-based: *Tuhoe: Portrait of a Nation* and *View From the Road*, a collaboration with photographer Arno Gasteiger. He has also produced two children's books with Northland illustrator Heather Hunt: *Cuckoo and the Warbler* and *It's My Egg (and you can't have it!)*. Once a fortnight Warne speaks about the outdoors, nature and adventure on RNZ's morning programme, *Nine to Noon*, in a slot entitled 'Off the Beaten Track'.

### SALES POINTS

- Intimate, thoughtful and beautifully written
- Warne is a well-known New Zealand writer and commentator on the environment and the outdoors
- A perfect gift for divers, travellers, sailors and fishers, and all who love the sea
- Nature and travel writing at its very best



## A tale of two oceans

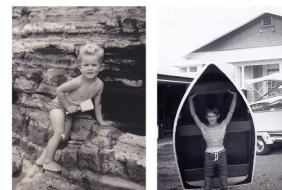
**W**E WERE 10 KILOMETRES off the east coast of South Africa, in the shipping lane, and the seas were like mountain ranges. The coal carrier *Nightharpier* was steaming south at a fast clip, enjoying a few knots of assistance from the Agulhas Current, a river of water that sweeps southward from the equator and is one of the fastest flowing currents in the ocean. Mark Addison, a local boat captain, dive master and marine guide, had brought a filmmaker and me offshore to look for dolphins and whales. Ever the adventurer, Mark couldn't resist positioning his dive boat in the path of the ship and running ahead of it. We were playing at 20 knots and maintaining our distance from the ship. There must have been half a kilometre between us, but it felt as if we were about to be crushed by its bulbous bow, which stretched almost 50 metres across and cleaved the sea like an axe. I have rarely felt more awed by a ship's formidable presence and implacable power than I did at that moment.

Yet no vessel is invincible out here in the Indian Ocean. Ships like *Nightharpier* have been snapped in two and sunk on this coast, their backs broken by waves that can reach 30 metres high. In the 30-year period between 1981 and 1991, 30 ships

41



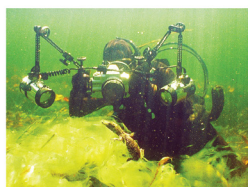
Leon, a boatbuilder as well as a game-fishing skipper, built his last launch, *Marline*, in 1994 in his homebased at St Marys Bay, Auckland. *Marline* is owned today by my father, Kenneth. He, Dad remembers helping his father build the launch when he was in his late teens.



At two, I was already keen on the seashore. At 10, I had learned to carry a dinghy the way my father did, turtle-fashion. Today, I spend summer holidays cruising on *Marline* in the Bay of Islands.



I dived with a hawksbill turtle at D'Arenas Island during a National Geographic assignment on island conservation in the Seychelles. In China, for an assignment on Arabian sea, I joined volunteer reef guardians to cut snaggled nets from coral.



National Geographic photographer David Doubilet, with whom I worked on three assignments, photographs a juvenile crocodile in the Okavango Delta. During my fieldwork I drank from the breadwaters of the Okavango River in Angola.



Dive guide Mark Addison swims with a tiger shark at Alhwal Shoal during one of my South Africa assignments. A copper shark or bronze whaler cruises through a wall of shoal during the annual sealine migration along the Wit Coast of KwaZulu-Natal.



I reported on the threats to the coral reefs of the Philippines from overfishing and coral bleaching and visited Bihok, where beachers in the seaways illustrate the perils of rising sea levels to small communities.

## An ethic for the sea

**I** WAKE TO THE SOUND of faint crackling, like electrical static. It seems to be coming from under the hull of *Marline*, which is anchored in Deep Water Cove, in the Bay of Islands. It is a calm, warm summer morning. The cove, flanked by the hills of Cape Brett peninsula, lies in shadow, but sunlight is flaring the craggy branches of pihutukawa on the ridges.

The clicking is incessant, and I want to know what's causing it. I rouse myself to go on deck and look over the side, and the mystery is solved. Schools of fish are nibbling at the creatures that have attached themselves to the hull. It is the sound of their tiny teeth pecking at barnacle, bryozoan, eelp and tubeworm that has woken me. I feel oddly pleased, as if I, a guest, am providing a breakfast snack for these residents of the bay.

More fish are shoaling near the help-fringed walls of the cove a dozen metres away. I watch them move for a few minutes in one direction, then turn as one and move back in the other. Soon I will slip into the water to join them.

This cove has become the best place to snorkel in the Bay of Islands, but it wasn't always so. When I was a teenager, this area

223

## About the author

**KENNEDY WARNE** IS THE founding editor of *New Zealand Geographic* and has written extensively for that magazine and for its American counterpart, *National Geographic*. He has written books about the world's disappearing mangrove forests (*Let Them Eat Shrimp*), on the Tūhoe iwi (*Tūhoe: Portraits of a Nation*) and on his first 20 years with *New Zealand Geographic* (*Roads Less Travelled*), as well as two children's books in collaboration with illustrator Heather Hunt (*The Cuckoo and the Warbler* and *It's My Day And You Can't Have It*). In addition to writing, for the past 13 years he has been the outdoors correspondent for Radio New Zealand's weekday *Nine to Noon* programme, with a segment called 'Off the Beaten Track'.

228



What I did and did not have (*Herds*), 2012, a collaborative titling etching on paper by Niue-based artist John Pale and Wellington-based artist, author and poet Gregory O'Brien