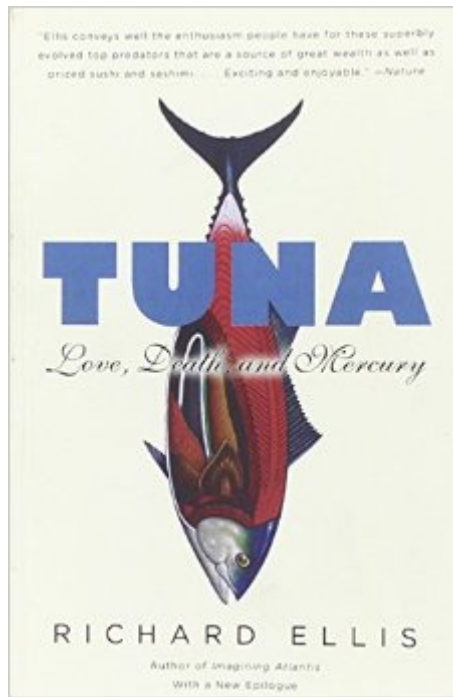


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Tuna: Love, Death, And Mercury



Synopsis

Famed marine researcher and illustrator Richard Ellis brings us a work of scientific achievement that will forever change the way we think about fish, fishing, and the dangers inherent in the seafood we eat. The bluefin tuna is one of the world's biggest, fastest, and most highly evolved marine animals, as well as one of its most popular delicacies. Now, however, it hovers on the brink of extinction. Here Ellis explains how a fish that was once able to thrive has become a commodity—and how the natural world and the global economy converge on our plates. With updated information on mercury levels in tuna, this is at once an astounding ode to one of nature's greatest marvels and a serious examination of a creature and world at risk.

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Customer Reviews

Meet the biggest, fastest, warmest-blooded fish in the world. Richard Ellis' fact-packed, meticulously-researched book astonishes on every page. For openers: tuna hunt in packs like wolves. They see in color. They combine the streamlining and speed of sharks with many of the warm-blooded traits of mammals. And when they are being "harvested," confined in small places to be hauled out and killed, they show panic that is visible when you look in their eyes. Everything you learn in this wonderful book about tuna will increase your respect, admiration and affection. But everything you learn about the rapacious tuna industry and its cowardly so-called "regulators" will incite your disgust. The worldwide mania for Japanese toro is a recipe for extinction. Tuna farms, rather than relieve commercial fishing pressure, instead increase it. (Bad enough it takes 3 kg of

wild fish to produce 1 kg of farmed salmon--but it takes an appalling 20:1 ratio to produce farmed tuna!) Canned albacore--the kind so many parents pack for their kids' school lunches--is so full of mercury no child (or pregnant woman) should EVER eat it--but the tuna industry is so powerful you'll never find a warning on a can. That's the sort of mafia-like pressure those who make the most money from driving this beautiful wild creature to extinction bring to bear on the leaders who are supposed to protect our food and environment. Happily, in his shocking and thrilling book, Richard Ellis also tells us there is much we can do to change the picture for tuna--from pressuring our lawmakers to boycotting the most endangered tuna, the bluefin. The Western Atlantic bluefin population is 90 percent depleted and this particular tuna fishery should be closed. Those who continue to fish for, sell and purchase this fish on the eve of its extinction deserve to choke on their toro.

Another ocean classic by Peters, this one on Tuna, mostly the Bluefin tuna. Contains history, biological, economics and environmental info. Many interesting factoids- one of the most interesting is not about Tuna at all- seems like most of the "whalemeat" sold in Japan is actually Dolphin! This is a great read that is hampered a bit by poor editing. The author states certain facts- over and over and over. Good editing would have caught this. There's also 3 drawings of various species of Bluefin Tunas- each labeled as a different species or subspecies. However, the drawings are the same in all three cases, except one is reversed left to right. However, it is informative, current, powerful and well written.

BOOK REVIEW: Tuna: Love, Death and Mercury (also known as Tuna, A Love Story) by Richard Ellis (2008 Alfred Knopf, 334 pages). By Mark J. Palmer Associate Director International Marine Mammal Project Earth Island Institute Berkeley, CA The bluefin tuna, a truly amazing fish, is threatened with extinction because we love it so much - as sushi, as a game fish, and as an economic engine. We once thought, not so long ago, that the world oceans were so large that fishing activity could not possibly endanger a species of wide-ranging fish like the bluefin. We were wrong. Richard Ellis has combined his talent as an artist of marine life with a book-writing career about all kinds of marine subjects. He has some excellent coffee-table books out with color reproductions of his paintings of whales, dolphins, and sharks, along with interesting text and observations. Two of my favorite marine animals, the great white shark and the giant squid, have been the subjects of two of his books (Great White Shark with Dr. John McCosker of the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, and The Search for the Giant Squid). Ellis also served for

several years on the US delegation to the International Whaling Commission, helping push the moratorium on commercial whaling in the 1980's. Tuna: Love, Death and Mercury focuses on the biology and history of the bluefin tuna, and Ellis investigates such things as past game fishing for bluefin (with some astonishing photographs of monster tuna caught by rod and reel), tuna fishing methods, and recent tuna "farms", which are not farms at all, but fattening operations for wild bluefin tuna and other species. The bulk of the book is dedicated to the decline of the bluefin in the Atlantic Ocean and probable extinction of this species, pointing out the links between bluefin fishing, the refusal of countries (in Europe and in North Africa) to reduce their catch in the face of scientific recommendations, and the consumers of Japan, especially, who buy most of the bluefin tuna that is for sale around the world, often at incredible prices. I recommend the book as a primer on tuna and for its writer, as Ellis is a very good writer. This book jumps around a bit more than some of his other works, but still keeps up interest throughout. He does describe other species of tuna, but mostly sticks to the bluefin story. It is not a scientific treatise, but he does do a good job of documenting most of his work. It has a very large bibliography on tuna, both books and articles. Hard to believe that one can write such a great book about a species of fish, but Ellis has done it!

Any interested in the natural history and cultural impact of the tuna will find TUNA: A LOVE STORY to be an excellent survey of the fish and its lore. Chapters cover everything from fishing lore to the tuna's environment and historic interactions with humans, surveying everything from sport fishing to the tuna's natural cousins and the food industries relying upon tuna products. A wonderful guide for any general-interest library specializing either in fish cookery or natural history.

The author appeared on one of the most amazing NPR Science Friday radio shows I've heard. These fish are compelling and the author is very engaging, knowledgeable and passionate. Scientists are studying them via computer "tags" that can track them, then pop off, float to the surface and phone home. Listen to the show and see tagging in action at [...]

Great subject with very interesting parts/info but but extremely poorly edited, if edited at all, resulting in endless repeats and no clear 'storyline'. Could have been so much better if only....

My husband - a tuna fisherman - really likes this book!

Richard Ellis at his usual best!

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