



## Into the Great Wide Ocean: Life in the Least Known Habitat on Earth

**Sönke Johnsen**

**Marlin Peterson, Illustrator**

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Biology professor Sönke Johnsen's *Into the Great Wide Ocean* is a compelling work of oceanography that reveals the greatest unexplored areas on Earth.

Covering the open ocean—the most abundant source of life on the planet—and species ranging from fantastical jellyfish to rare, elusive deep-sea fish, this is an erudite guide to unexplored depths. The ocean's diverse life is vivified in part by the book's illustrations, as of an underwater worm creeping downward, of tentacled pteropods, and of alien-esque blue sea dragons; these reflect the diversity of water-based lifeforms.

Thanks to Johnsen's clear prose and enchanting imagery, the open ocean is brought to life. Divided into sections reflecting how underwater life exists and thrives, as in relation to gravity and under pressure, the book demystifies, even humanizes, sea life. An exploration of bioluminescent animals who “hoard their light, and will only glow when touched” is juxtaposed to one of coral who never move from one place, “sending their potential young up and off into the world” despite the dangers. And the prose is intelligent and filled with wonder: it both employs complex scientific terms with context, as where it explains organismal transparency in water animals, and is delightful, as where it meditates on “the final wonderful thing about larvae.” In areas where it becomes more scientific and its illustrations are more sparse, the book is drier, but each time a new animal appears, the pace picks back up.

*Into the Great Wide Ocean* is a wonderful science text that's focused on unseen areas of the world, honoring the ocean and the fascinating creatures who populate it.

CHLOE CLARK (September / October 2024)

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