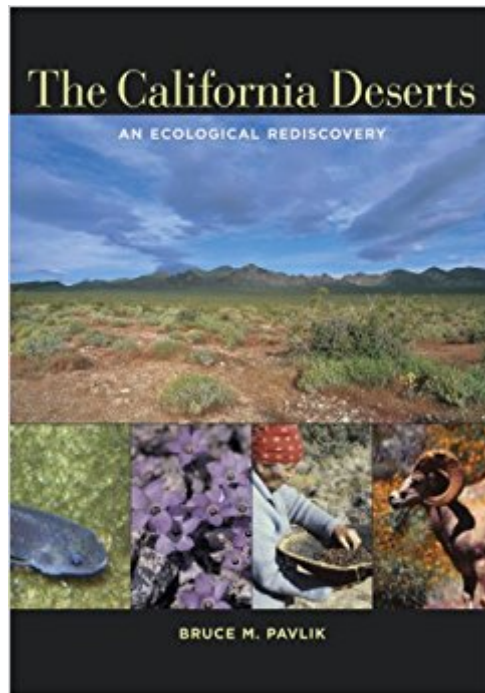


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# The California Deserts: An Ecological Rediscovery



## Synopsis

This highly readable, spectacularly illustrated compendium is an ecological journey into a wondrous land of extremes. The California Deserts explores the remarkable diversity of life in this harsh yet fragile quarter of the Golden State. In a rich narrative, it illuminates how that diversity, created by drought and heat, has evolved with climate change since the Ice Ages. Along the way, we find there is much to learn from each desert species; whether it is a cactus, pupfish, tortoise, or bighorn sheep; about adaptation to a warming, arid world. The book tells of human adaptation as well, and is underscored by a deep appreciation for the intimate knowledge acquired by native people during their 12,000-year desert experience. In this sense, the book is a journey of rediscovery, as it reflects on the ways that knowledge has been reclaimed and amplified by new discoveries. The book also takes the measure of the ecological condition of these deserts today, presenting issues of conservation, management, and restoration. With its many sidebars, photographs, and featured topics, The California Deserts provides a unique introduction to places of remarkable and often unexpected beauty.

## Book Information

Paperback: 384 pages

Publisher: University of California Press (July 2, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0520251458

ISBN-13: 978-0520251458

Product Dimensions: 7 x 1.1 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (15 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #248,178 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #17 in [Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Ecosystems > Deserts](#) #515 in [Books > Science & Math > Environment > Environmentalism](#) #620 in [Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Ecology](#)

## Customer Reviews

This is the type of book we have all been waiting for - holistic, comprehensive, current and easy to follow. It is not for those who substitute oil for knowledge riding their ATVs, but rather those who walk the land and want to get to know the desert first-hand. What are the climate, soils, hydrology, metabolism, light, perturbations and cycles that make up the Mojave & adjacent deserts within California? Find it here. Deserts are areas where evapotranspiration exceeds precipitation by a

factor of 6 to 10. It's not what you get (precipitation), but what you keep (effective moisture), that counts. Moisture is a dominant factor, but so many other things control what deserts are and how we see them. This is about seeing - what are the different types of metabolism plants and animals use to deal with extreme aridity and heat? This provides answers with easy to understand illustrations. What is desert pavement and how does it form? Find solutions and processes here. What are the ecotones (boundaries) between humid & arid ecosystems and how are they defined? This is a dynamic process book, not a "look-it-up-and-forget-it book". When I stand on the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada and look eastward into the Great Basin this book gives me a sense of understanding of colors, cryptograms, herbs, shrubs & trees. Soil fungi are important nutrient cyclers in desert soils. Ride an ATV over "barren" sand and you wipe out soils and plants for many years to come. What do soil fungi look like? Find it here. Soil fungi bacteria relationships are important in all soils and especially in desert soils. What is the role and niche of desert fish? How long have they been around (a long time). How do dunes form and what is the source of the sand that makes up dunes?

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