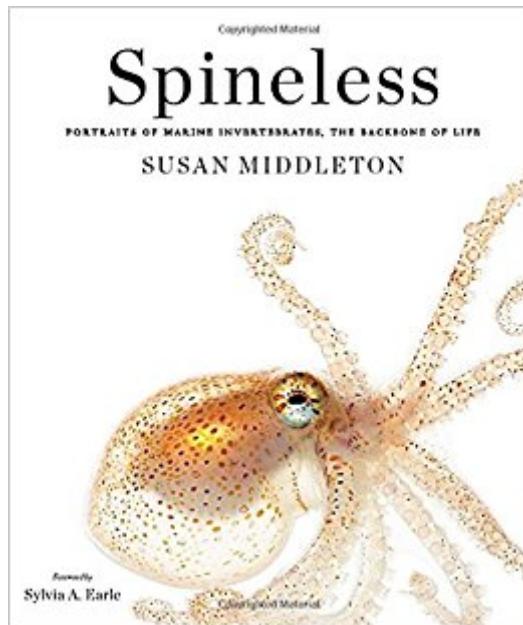


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# Spineless



## Synopsis

In *Spineless*, acclaimed photographer Susan Middleton explores the mysterious and surprising world of marine invertebrates, which represent more than 98 percent of the known animal species in the ocean. They are also astonishingly diverse in their shapes, patterns, textures, and colors—“in nature’s fashion show, they are the haute couture of marine life. This collection of more than 250 remarkable images is the result of seven years of painstaking fieldwork across the Pacific Ocean, using photographic techniques that Middleton developed to capture these extremely fragile creatures on camera. She also provides short essays that examine the place these invertebrates occupy on the tree of life, their vast array of forms, and their lives in the ocean. Scientist Bernadette Holthuis contributes profiles describing each species, many of them for the first time. Middleton’s book is a stunning new view of nature that harmoniously combines art and science.

## Book Information

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Shipping Weight: 4.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars—See all reviews (45 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #126,842 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #55 in Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Marine Life #59 in Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > Individual Photographers > Monographs #125 in Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > Nature & Wildlife > Plants & Animals

## Customer Reviews

This is essentially a photo book; while there are a few pages of written information here and there, the vast majority of the book is dedicated to gorgeous, full-page color photographs of marine invertebrates. It's truly beautiful and inspiring collection

A weighty, very high-quality compendium of hundreds of jaw-droppingly beautiful close-ups of marine creatures. Other-worldly, fascinating, worth every penny. Recommended.

Wood worker's magazines have advertisements for "woodworkers' porn sights" web sites that feature pictures of the highly figured woods they offer for sale (at highly figured prices) "Whooo boy, look at the grain on that tiger maple." "Spineless Portraits of Marine Invertebrates, the Backbone of Life" has page after page of equally exquisite pictures of luscious, naked marine invertebrates. The portraits are gorgeous, truly gorgeous. At first glance I thought they were drawings not photographs. They are photographs and at the end of the book Susan Middleton the author and photographer describes how she took the pictures. Her subjects were collected, put in small glass tanks which were placed on a white or black background and photographed. This method is not new .I used a roughly 6' by 6'by2 inch chamber to photograph invertebrates 45 years ago on the Sea Isle Shores off New Hampshire's minuscule Atlantic coastline. She has refined the system to perfection. Even small amounts of silt scatters light, a finger smear blurs, an off-angle shot distorts. Nothing like that is in her pictures; they are clear, undistorted and beautiful.The animals are labeled both as Genus specie as well as their frequently amusing common names-Minor Venus's girdle Velamen parallelum or Curly Head Spaghetti Worm *Thelepus crispus*.Sylvia Earl has written an introduction and the book includes four essays by the author. She discusses the ongoing and probably never ending (even with DNA typing) taxonomic augment over which creature belongs where. Her comment on the effect of evolution on taxonomy is pithy "After the theory of evolution took hold, classifications became genealogies. "She describes basic animal symmetry spherical, radial and bilateral and its effect on classification. Then too there is an ecological undercurrent of climate change and over utilization flowing through the essays. Spineless is lucid and illuminating and, did I mention, gorgeous.

A big, beautiful coffee table book with gorgeous pictures and intriguing text. With so much damage being done to our oceans -- and environment overall -- this book shows us what is almost invisibly beautiful, and important, about life under the surface of the sea. The book is a heavy, substantial one, with good quality paper and high-quality reproductions. Spineless is an odd title, but it fits all the strange, unique, and rare "animals" that are featured throughout the book. Readers won't be disappointed with the phenomenal sights.

Beautiful pictures. I bought this as a gift for my daughter who teaches biology. We were more interested in the pictures than the text, to be honest. The one complaint I would have is that the captions for the pictures were confusing as to exactly which picture the caption went with--especially for overlays. This would be a great book for a budding marine biologist.

Beautiful photography! Text is scant; we would enjoy knowing a bit more about each of the featured animals.

I had the opportunity to see Susan Middleton's gorgeous photographs in an exhibition on San Juan Island, Washington (which runs through August 2015) and to hear the author speak about her incredible journey in collecting them. She has a true love for these critters, and in her photography has captured their fun and engaging personalities. These are portraits, which Middleton takes by isolating each animal in a carefully and gently tended, condition-controlled aquarium for the few hours it takes for her to get these amazing shots. They are then released happily, exactly where she found them. Susan's dedication to the preservation of endangered marine fauna is inspiring as she spreads the message of their unique and precarious beauty under the sea. These animals are truly the backbone of life. I highly recommend this book - for kids, for scientists, for artists, photographers and ocean lovers. Absolutely astounding.

Wow, this is really, really, an incredible book. The best part: the catalog at the end with thumbnail photos of every entry in the book and then an essay regarding each entry. Sometimes the entries are short; sometimes very, very long. I bought this for my 11-y/o granddaughter who wants to be a marine biologist -- she loves it, as I expected she would.

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