

Understanding Our Ocean Connection

European Atlas of the Sea

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16th June 2021

@easkeysurf

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European consortium of 7 organizations from 5 countries

This project seeks to foster and promote greater inclusion and accessibility for people with physical and/or sensory disabilities in surfing in Europe. A wave of change towards equal opportunities in sport.

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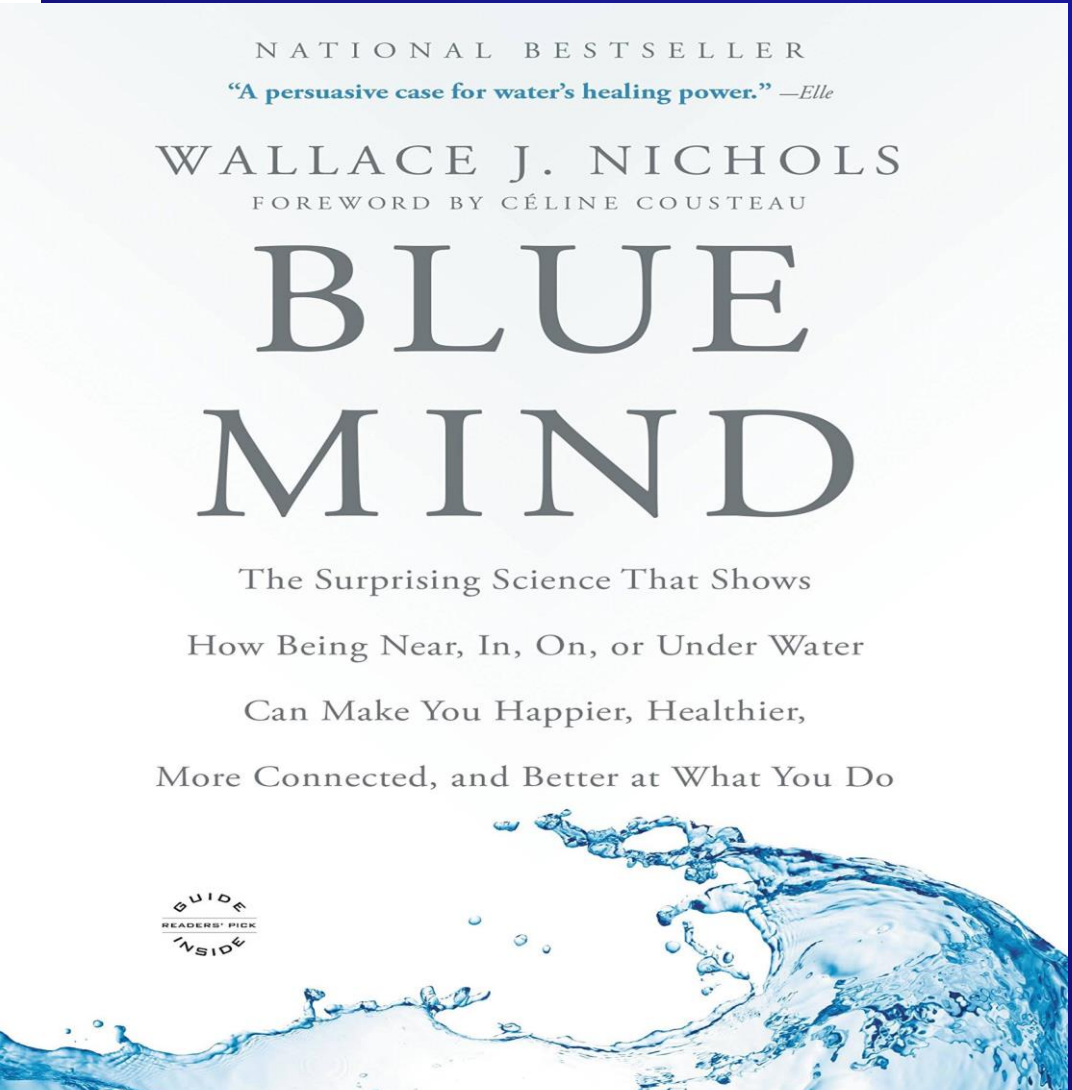
Christopher Bergland
The Athlete's Way

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An interview with Josh Izenberg about his PTSD documentary "Resurface."

Posted May 28, 2015

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The body uses ultraviolet rays from the sun to manufacture vitamin D in the inner layers of the skin. With too little sun exposure, a person can become vitamin-D deficient, which has been linked with



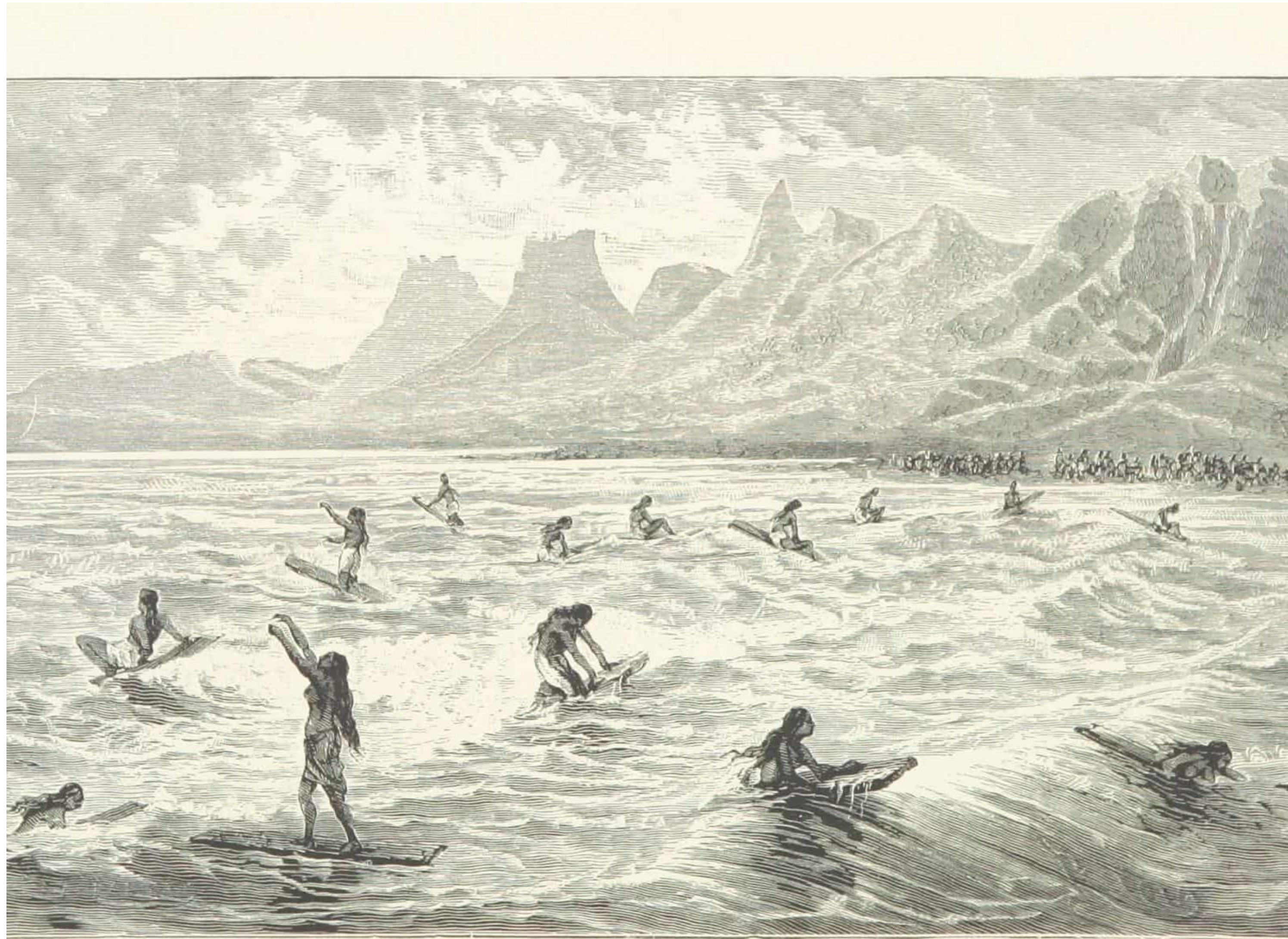
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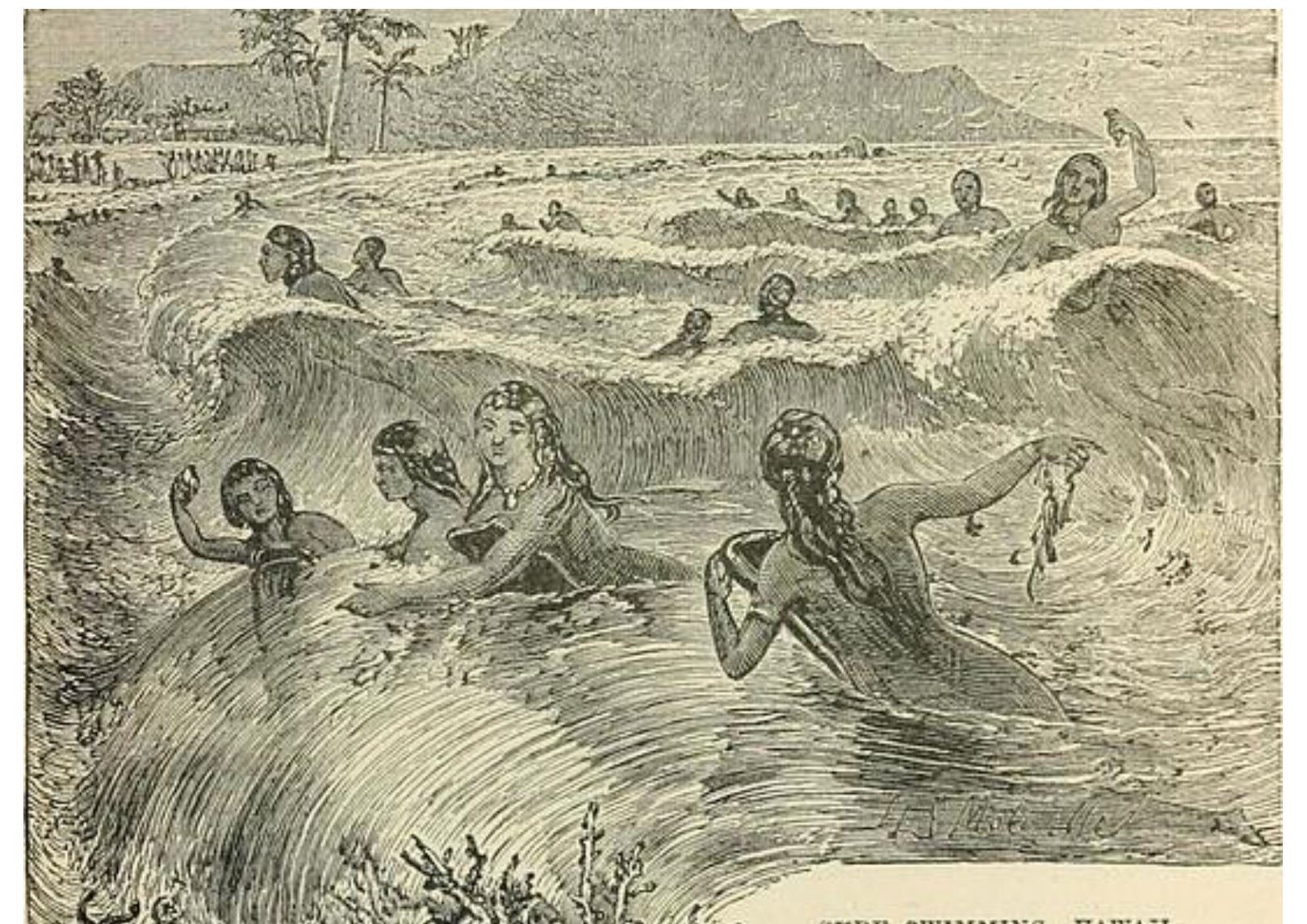
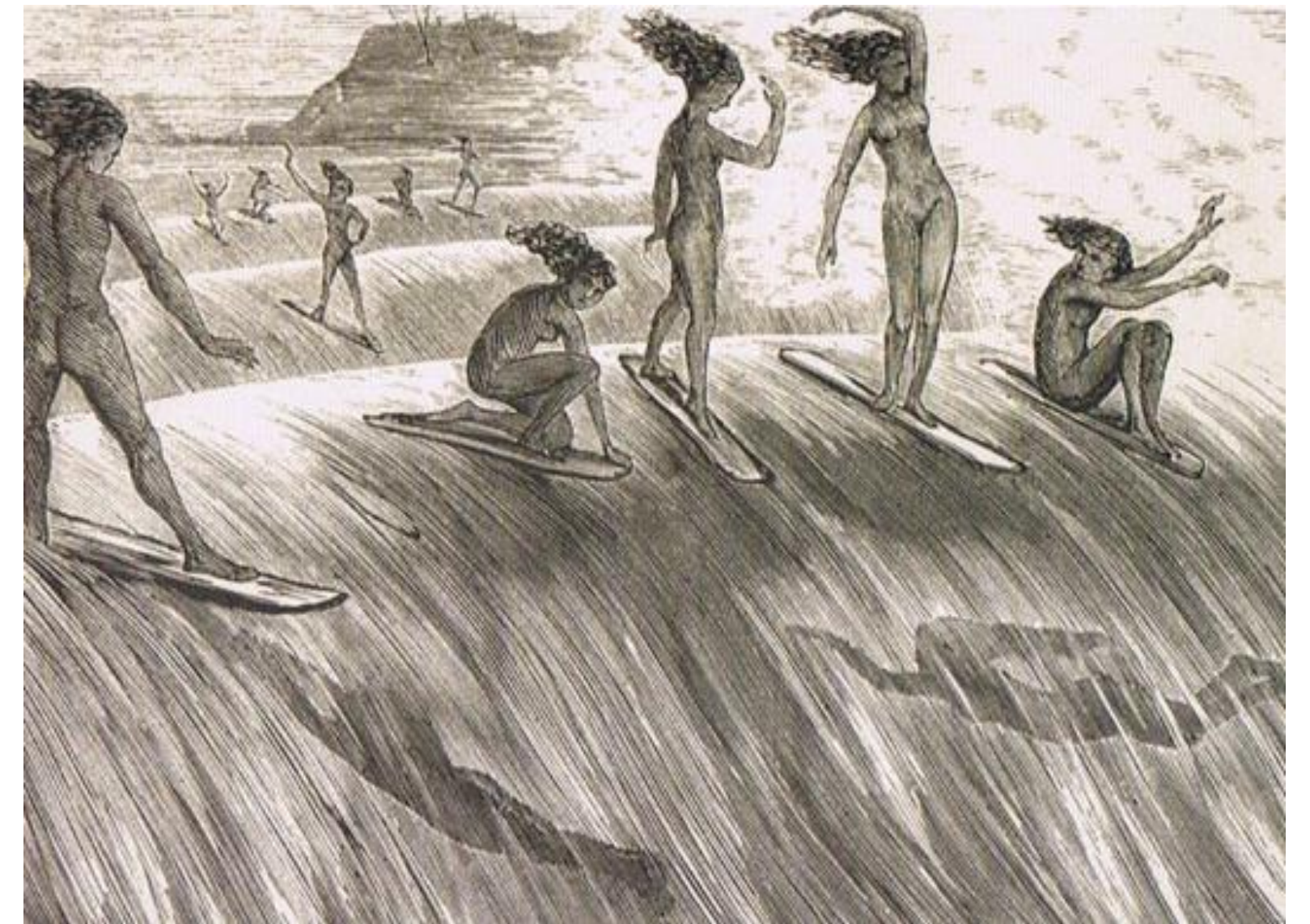
Using urban blue spaces to benefit health and wellbeing

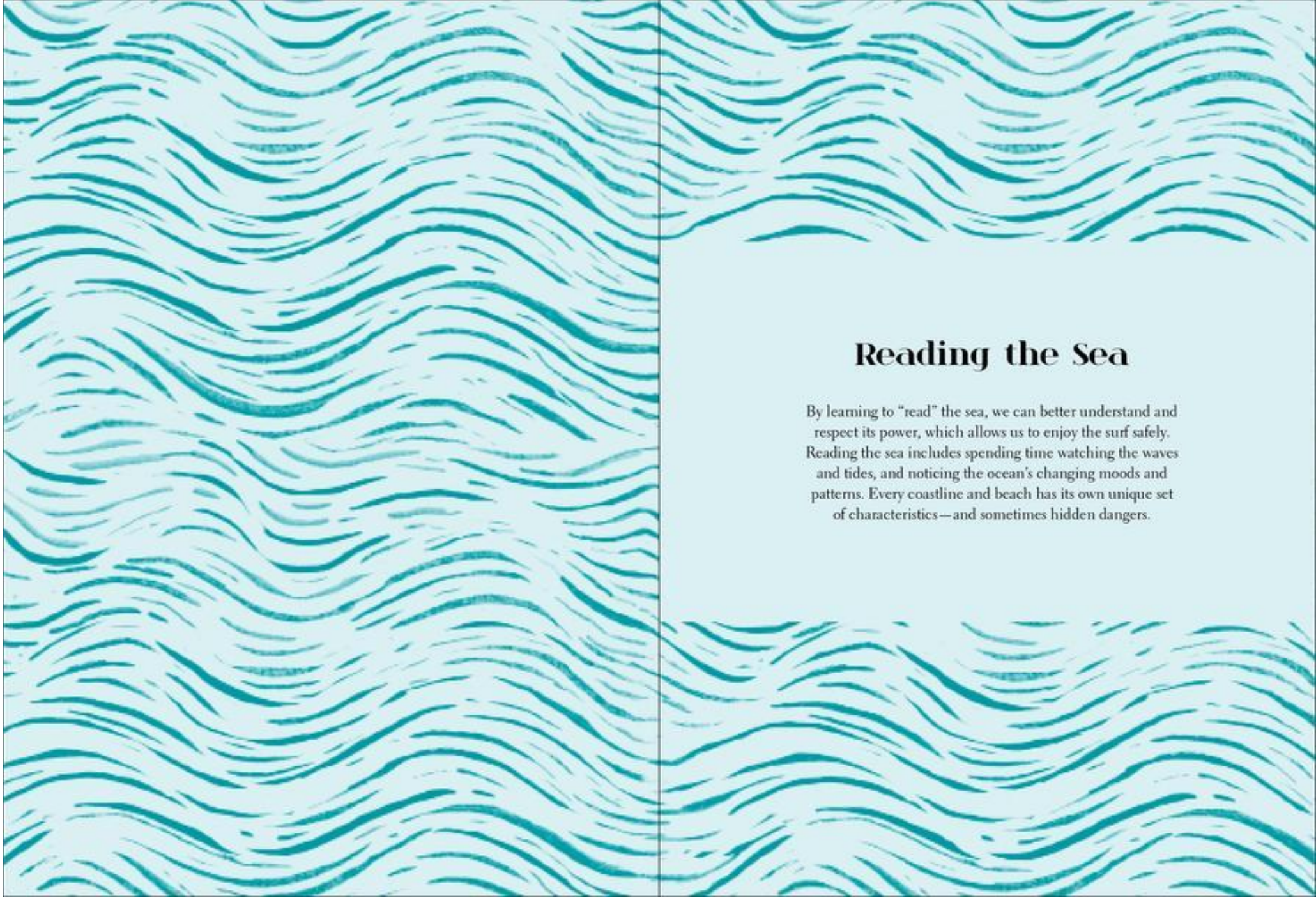




SURF-SWIMMING, SANDWICH ISLANDS.

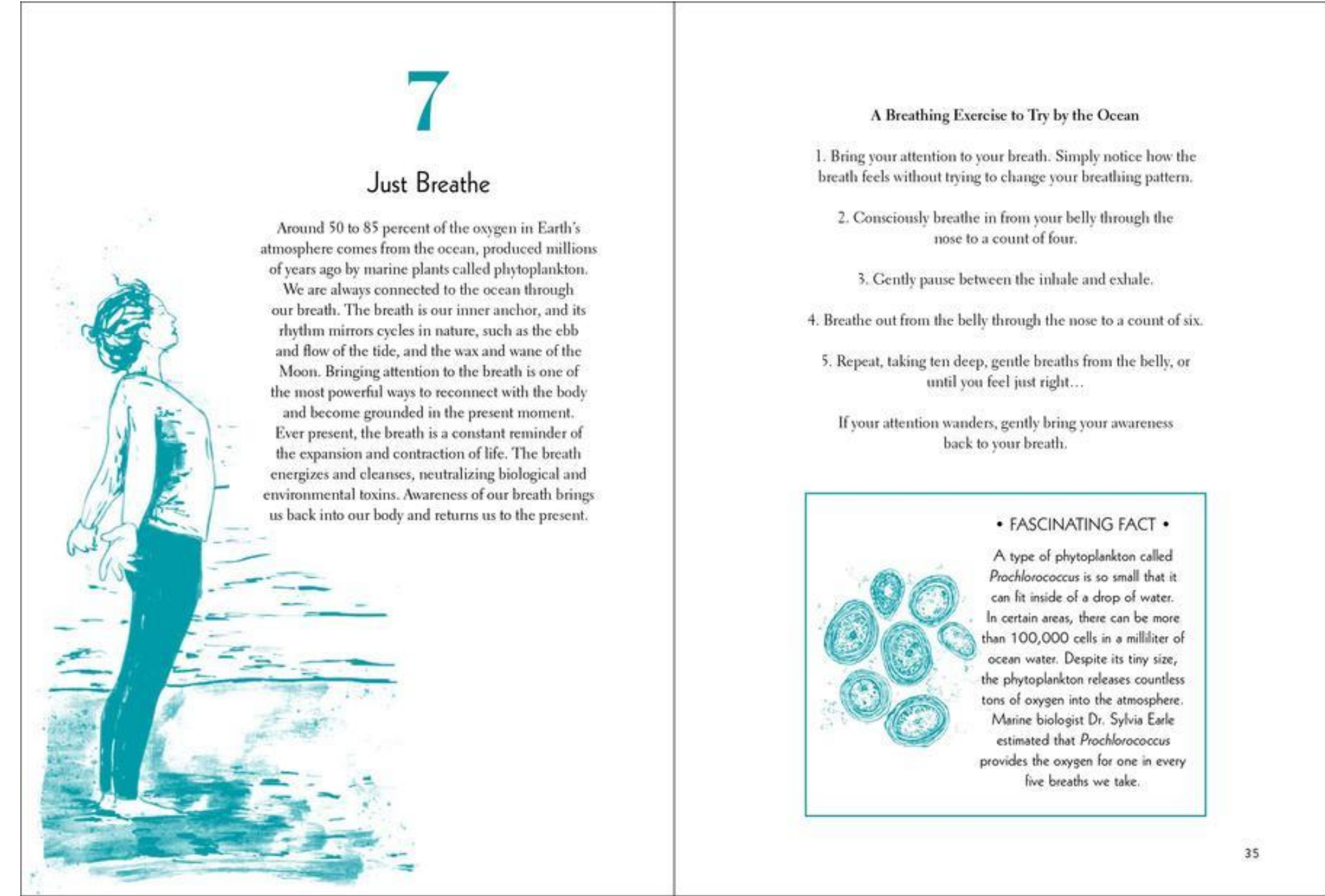
Page 419.





Reading the Sea

By learning to “read” the sea, we can better understand and respect its power, which allows us to enjoy the surf safely. Reading the sea includes spending time watching the waves and tides, and noticing the ocean’s changing moods and patterns. Every coastline and beach has its own unique set of characteristics—and sometimes hidden dangers.



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Just Breathe

Around 50 to 85 percent of the oxygen in Earth’s atmosphere comes from the ocean, produced millions of years ago by marine plants called phytoplankton. We are always connected to the ocean through our breath. The breath is our inner anchor, and its rhythm mirrors cycles in nature, such as the ebb and flow of the tide, and the wax and wane of the Moon. Bringing attention to the breath is one of the most powerful ways to reconnect with the body and become grounded in the present moment. Ever present, the breath is a constant reminder of the expansion and contraction of life. The breath energizes and cleanses, neutralizing biological and environmental toxins. Awareness of our breath brings us back into our body and returns us to the present.

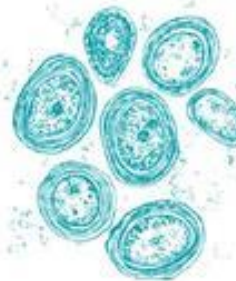


A Breathing Exercise to Try by the Ocean

1. Bring your attention to your breath. Simply notice how the breath feels without trying to change your breathing pattern.
2. Consciously breathe in from your belly through the nose to a count of four.
3. Gently pause between the inhale and exhale.
4. Breathe out from the belly through the nose to a count of six.
5. Repeat, taking ten deep, gentle breaths from the belly, or until you feel just right...

If your attention wanders, gently bring your awareness back to your breath.

• FASCINATING FACT •



A type of phytoplankton called *Prochlorococcus* is so small that it can fit inside of a drop of water. In certain areas, there can be more than 100,000 cells in a milliliter of ocean water. Despite its tiny size, the phytoplankton releases countless tons of oxygen into the atmosphere. Marine biologist Dr. Sylvia Earle estimated that *Prochlorococcus* provides the oxygen for one in every five breaths we take.

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Mammalian Dive Response

Like our mammalian cousins – dolphins and seals – we too have evolutionary aquatic markers.

Our mammalian dive response causes our heart rate to slow when we are in water, calming our fight or flight response. This is called bradycardia (which translates as 'heart slowing') and is triggered when our face first comes into contact with water. Nerve receptors in our face respond to the sensation of water to help prepare our bodies to hold our breath so that we can dive under water.



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The mammalian dive response activates what free-diving champion and founder of the I Am Water foundation, Hanli Prinsloo, calls our 'inner seal', and triggers a whole set of physiological responses and changes in our body that allow us to relax when in water. These include diverting oxygen to essential organs like the heart and brain, and the 'spleen effect', where the spleen releases more red blood cells filled with oxygen into the body. Our bodies remember our watery connection with the ancient sea from which all life evolved, and the beginnings of our own lives in our mother's watery womb.



Tips to connect with your body and breath in the sea

On a calm day, enter the water and bring your focus to your breath. When you are about knee deep (or less), lower yourself into the water and lie back – you can gently rest on your arms if you are not comfortable with floating. Let your body relax by taking a slow, deep breath in. Notice how your lungs expand, like a balloon inflating, causing your body to feel a little lighter and float more easily in the water. Gently exhale and notice how your body begins to sink a little into the water. With each breath allow your body to soften and relax and be held by the sea.

To get used to putting your face into the water, lower yourself into the water, take a breath in and as you breathe out lower your face to the surface of the water and blow bubbles with your exhalation. After you get used to the sensation of water on your face, lower your face into the water so that the water just covers your ears. Notice the difference in sound. Life below water has its own music and everyday sounds appear different, travelling much faster underwater (see page 49).

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We Are Ocean

We experience the world, and comprehend it, through our senses. Oceans, seas and coasts are fluid and dynamic, always changing moment by moment, offering very different multi-sensory experiences to land-based environments, with important benefits for our health.

Multi-sensory environments engage a variety of our senses all at once. This is important for memory because the brain is stimulated in different ways. Essential, higher functioning of the different sensory systems in the brain is improved, such as listening skills (the mix of seabirds calling and crashing waves) and tactile recognition (the feeling of the texture of sand beneath our bare feet).

The colour, movement and smell of the sea all have an effect on our sense of wellbeing. The stimulation of all of these senses in our bodies helps us to more fully experience the world around us, helping us to feel more present and engaged in the moment. We are able to more vividly recall the memory of that experience, which is why early memories of water are some of our most powerful. And this is all before we even dip a toe into the sea.



European Citizen's top priorities for Ocean & Human Health



Britton, E., McHugh, P., Domegan, C. (2021). Blue care: a systematic review of blue space interventions for health and wellbeing. *Health promotion international*, 35(1), 50-69.

CREATING A CULTURE OF CARE...

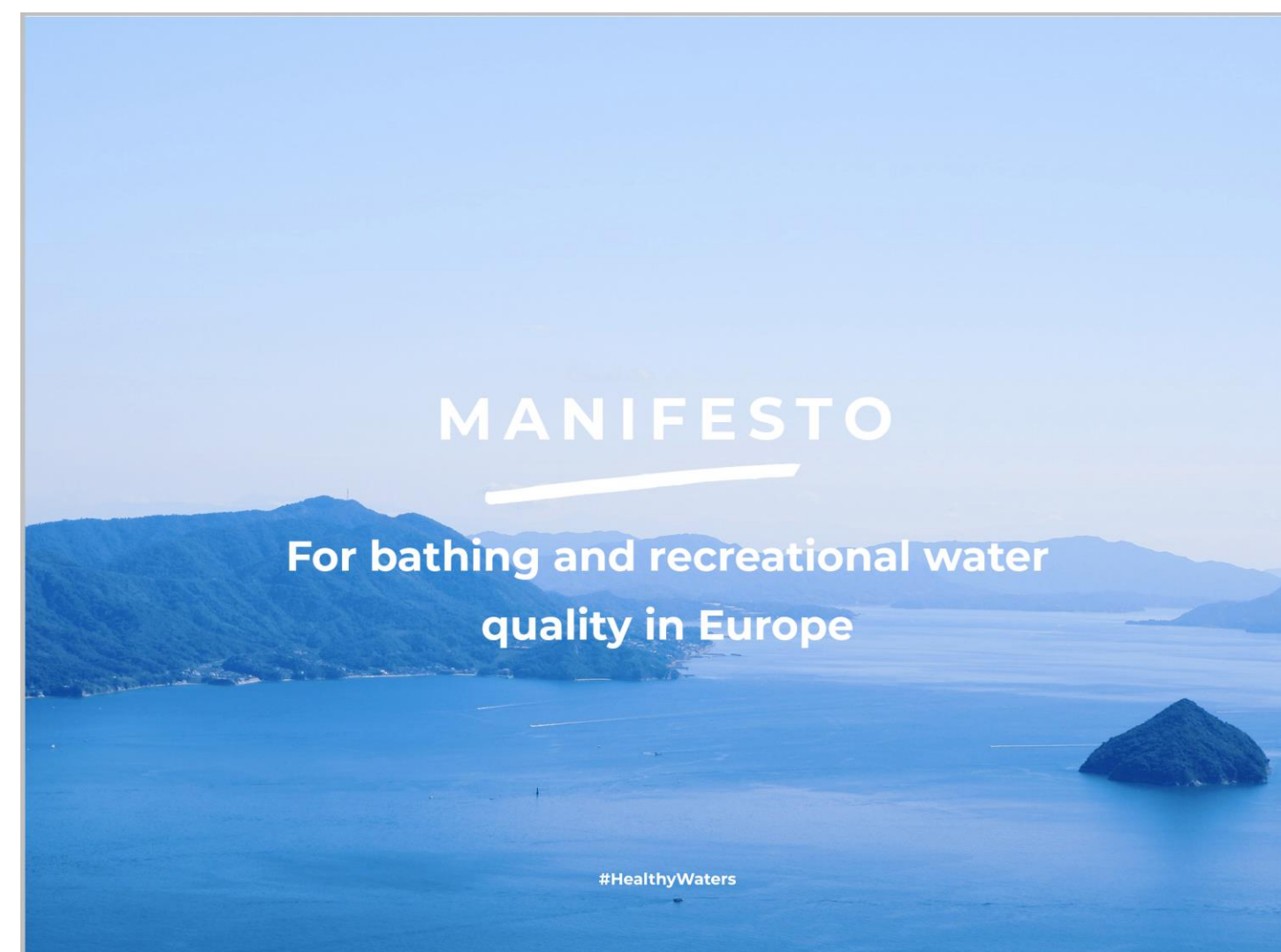
Tenaka, CSR for Oceans...



Citizen science x Marine tourism, Europe



'Healthy Waters' Manifesto

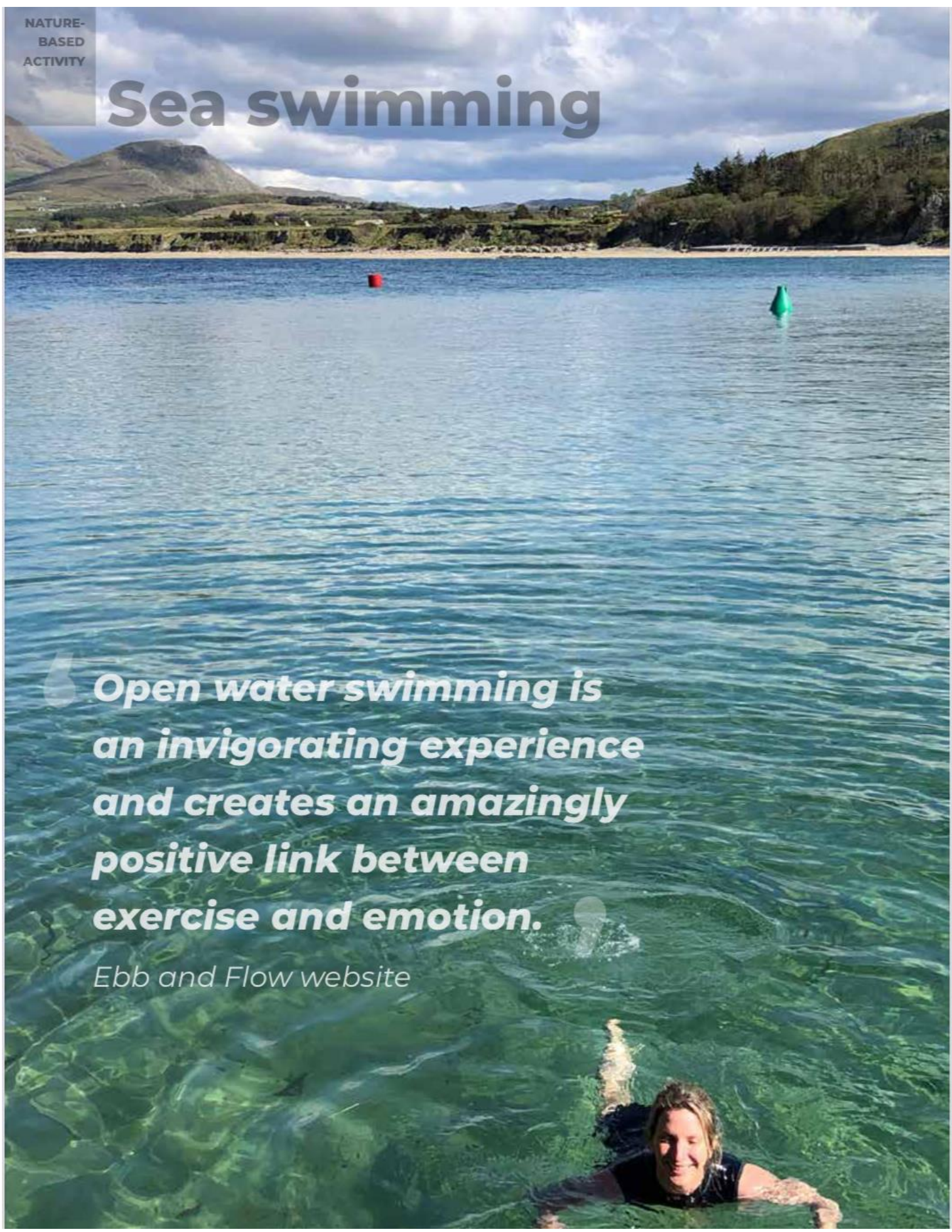


Ocean Activist Camp, UK



Visual storytelling, Ireland

Restore the ocean, restore ourselves



Britton, E., Kindermann, G., Domegan, C., & Carlin, C. (2020). Blue care: a systematic review of blue space interventions for health and wellbeing. *Health promotion international*, 35(1), 50-69.

A person wearing a purple swim cap and red-rimmed goggles is shown from the chest up, submerged in water. Their hands are raised to their head, adjusting the swim cap. The background is a soft, out-of-focus view of the ocean surface with gentle waves. The lighting is natural, suggesting daylight.

“Surfing can showcase the beauty of our differences
by allowing us to be truly who we are when we
surrender to the playfulness of waves and wave-riding.”

- Shirin Gerami





Image credit: Amanda Prifti



Image credit: Amanda Prifti



Image credit: Marion Poizeau



Image credit: Abbi Hughes

Welcome Wave

“I sometimes wonder how did god make the water, I love it so much”

- 9 year female asylum seeker and participant, 2019



Britton et al., (in press) Welcome Wave: Surf therapy in an unfamiliar sea for young asylum seekers. In: Smith et al., (eds) *Introducing young people to 'unfamiliar landscapes.'* Palgrave Macmillan)

*“We need people to have intimate contact with the sea if they are to really care for and value it.” - **Dr. Eddie Allison**
(The Human Relationship with our Ocean Planet Report, 2020)*



Thank You!

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