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Sommario/riassunto

This unprecedented volume presents a sweeping picture of what we know about the natural history, biology, and ecology of whales in the broad context of the dynamics of ocean ecosystems. Innovative and comprehensive, the volume encompasses multiple points of view to consider the total ecological impact of industrial whaling on the world's oceans. Combining empirical research, ecological theory and modeling, and historical data, its chapters present perspectives from ecology, population biology, physiology, genetics, evolutionary history, ocean biogeography, economics, culture, and law, among other disciplines. Throughout, contributors investigate how whaling fundamentally disrupted ocean ecosystems, examine the various roles whales play in food webs, and discuss the continuing ecological chain reactions to the depletion of these large animals. In addition to reviewing what is known of the current and historic whale populations, Whales, Whaling, and Ocean Ecosystems considers how this knowledge will bear on scientific approaches to conservation and whaling in the future and provocatively asks whether it is possible to restore ocean ecosystems to their pre-whaling condition.