

Understanding Our Ocean Connection

European Atlas of the Sea

Dr. Easkey Britton, Ph.D, INCLUSEA

16th June 2021

@easkeysurf

@inclusea



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.

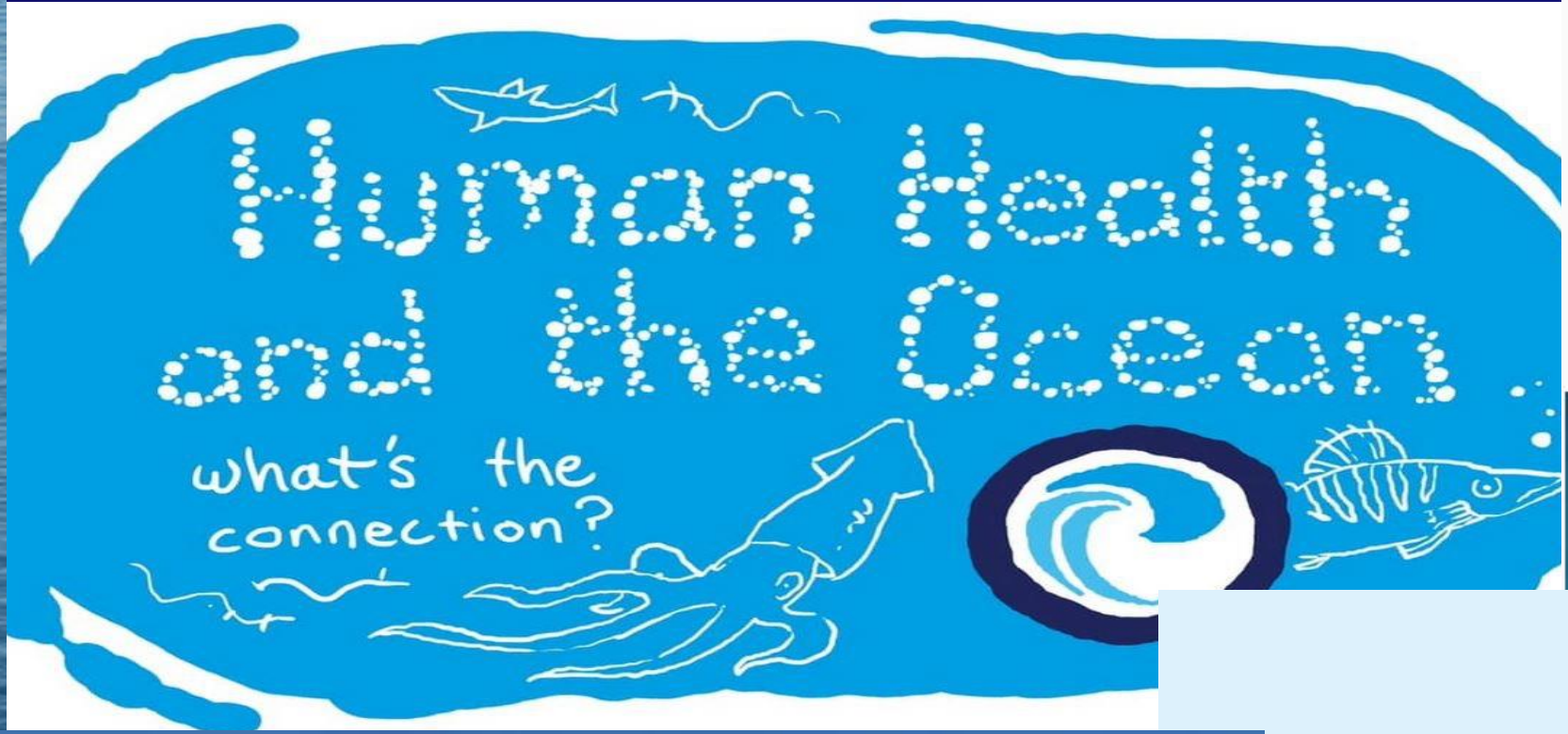
[READ MORE](#)





The BlueHealth Toolbox

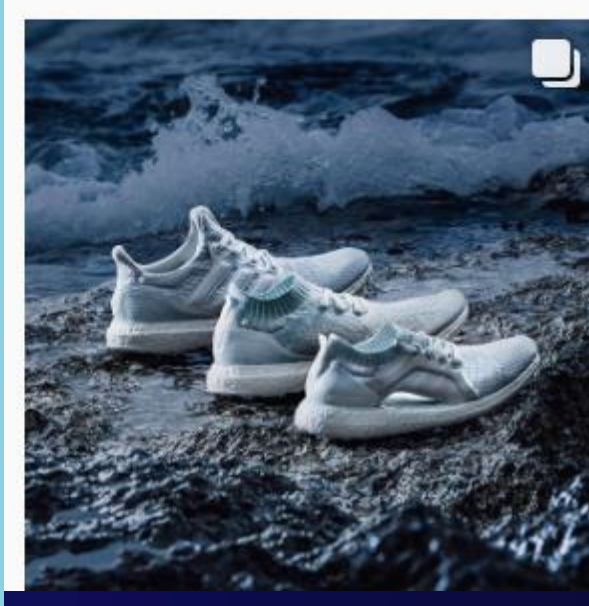
Guidance for urban planners and designers



parley.tv [Follow](#)

811 posts 48k followers 15 following

Parley for the Oceans Where creators, thinkers, and leaders raise awareness for our oceans and collaborate on projects that can end their destruction. Join: #ParleyAIR air.parley.tv



BlueHealth

Linking environment, climate & health



Psychology Today Find a Therapist Topics Get Help

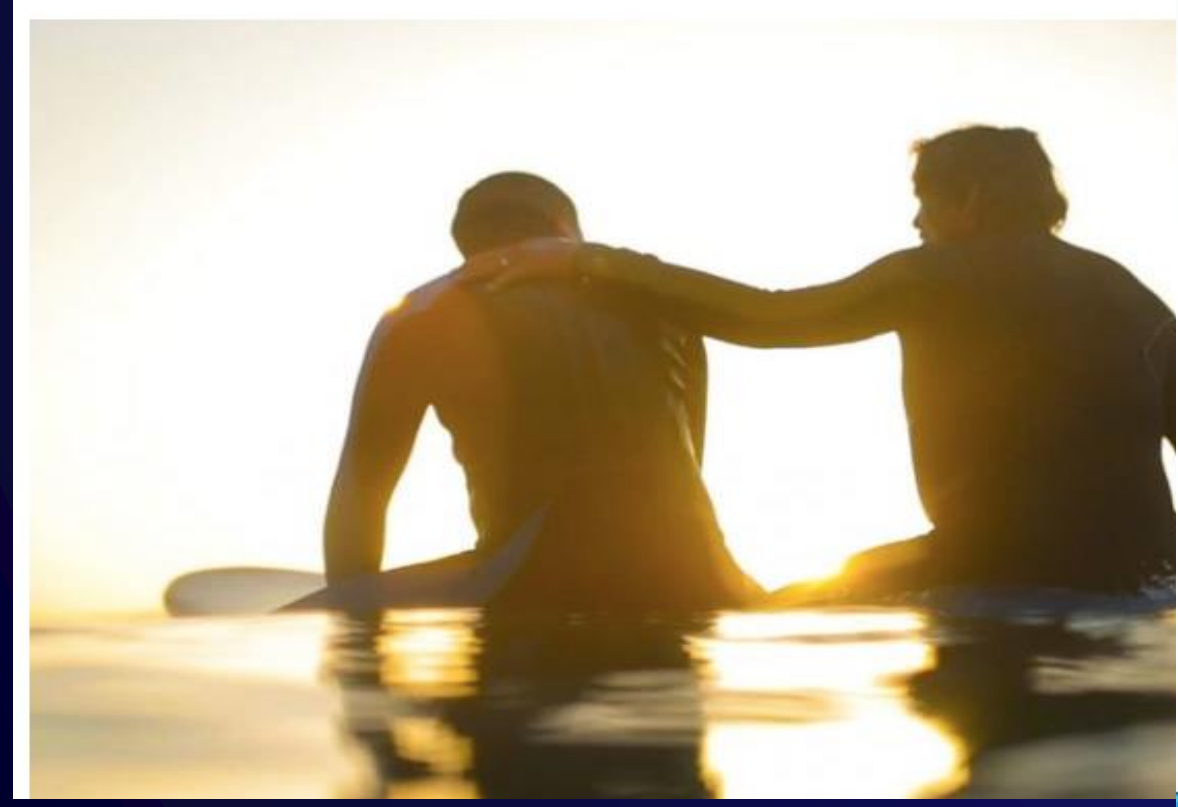
Christopher Bergland
The Athlete's Way

"Surf Therapy" and Being in the Ocean Can Alleviate PTSD

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

Posted May 28, 2015

[SHARE](#) [TWEET](#) [EMAIL](#)



NATIONAL BESTSELLER
"A persuasive case for water's healing power." —*Elle*

WALLACE J. NICHOLS
FOREWORD BY CÉLINE COUSTEAU

BLUE MIND

The Surprising Science That Shows How Being Near, In, On, or Under Water Can Make You Happier, Healthier, More Connected, and Better at What You Do

LIVESCIENCE

NEWS TECH HEALTH PLANET EARTH

Live Science > Health

People Living Near the Sea May Be Healthier

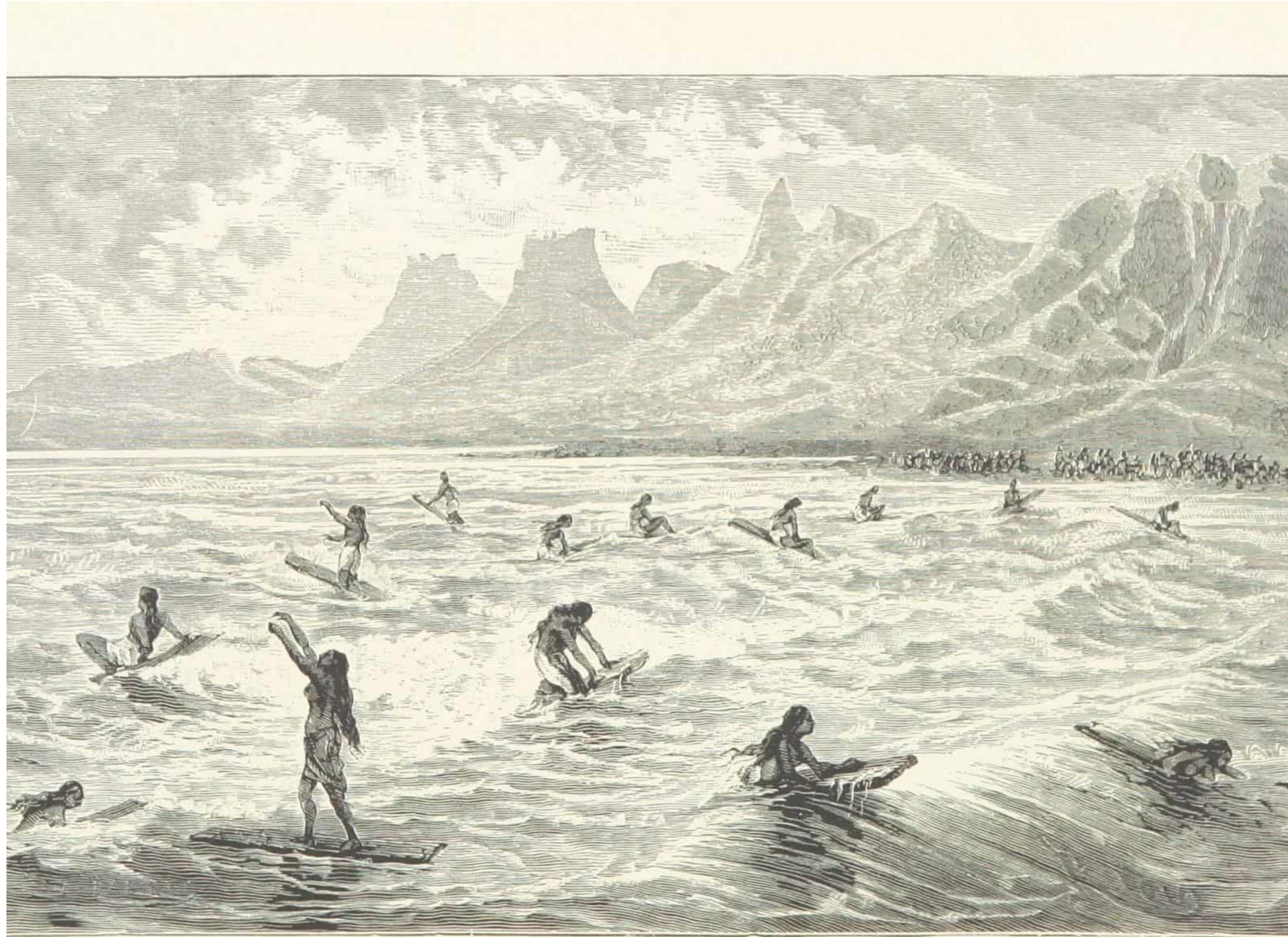
By Rachael Rettner, Senior Writer | July 17, 2012 12:36am ET

[f](#) 79 [t](#) 3 [g+](#) 1 [d](#) 5 [s](#) 5 [MORE](#)

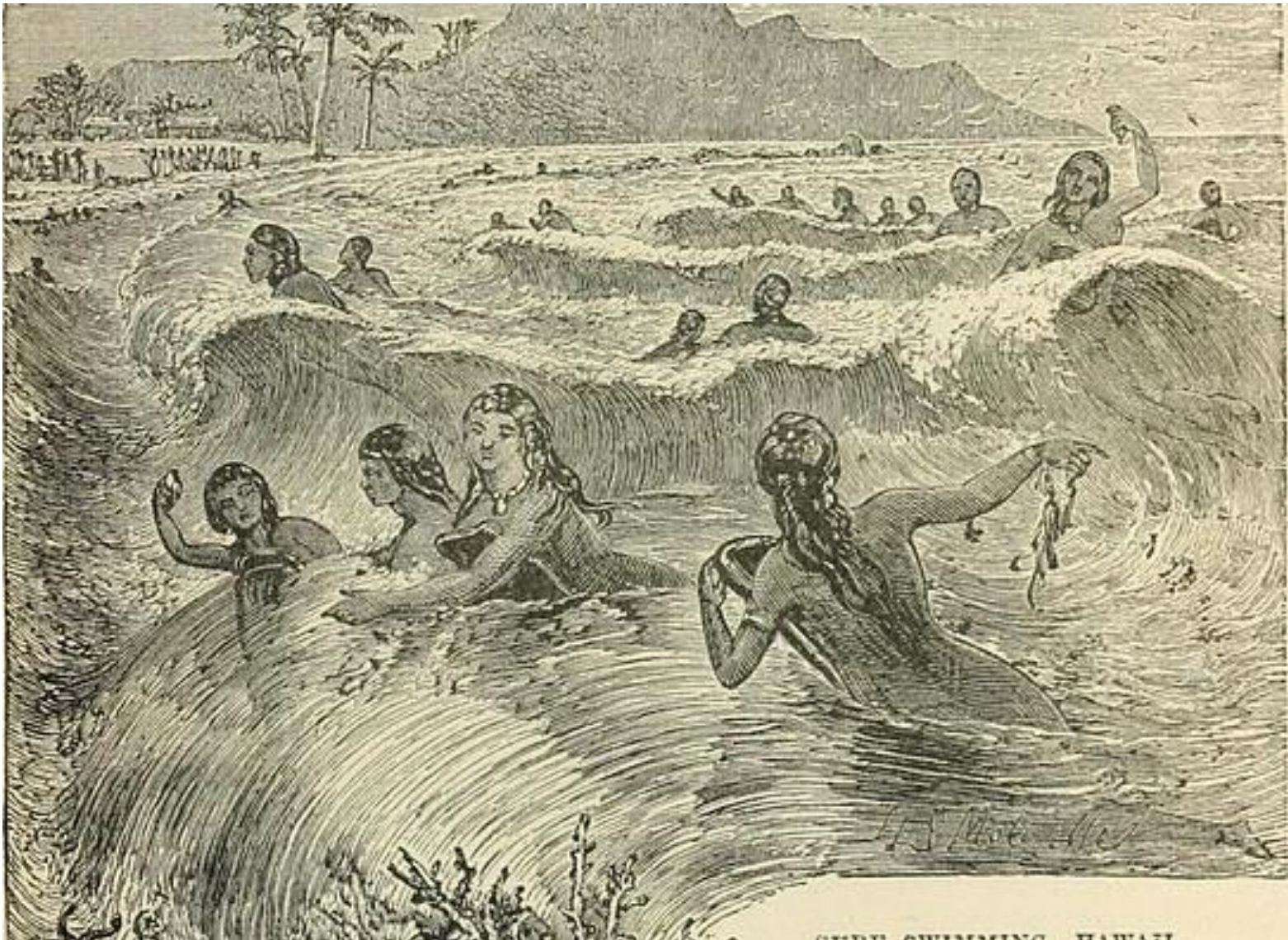
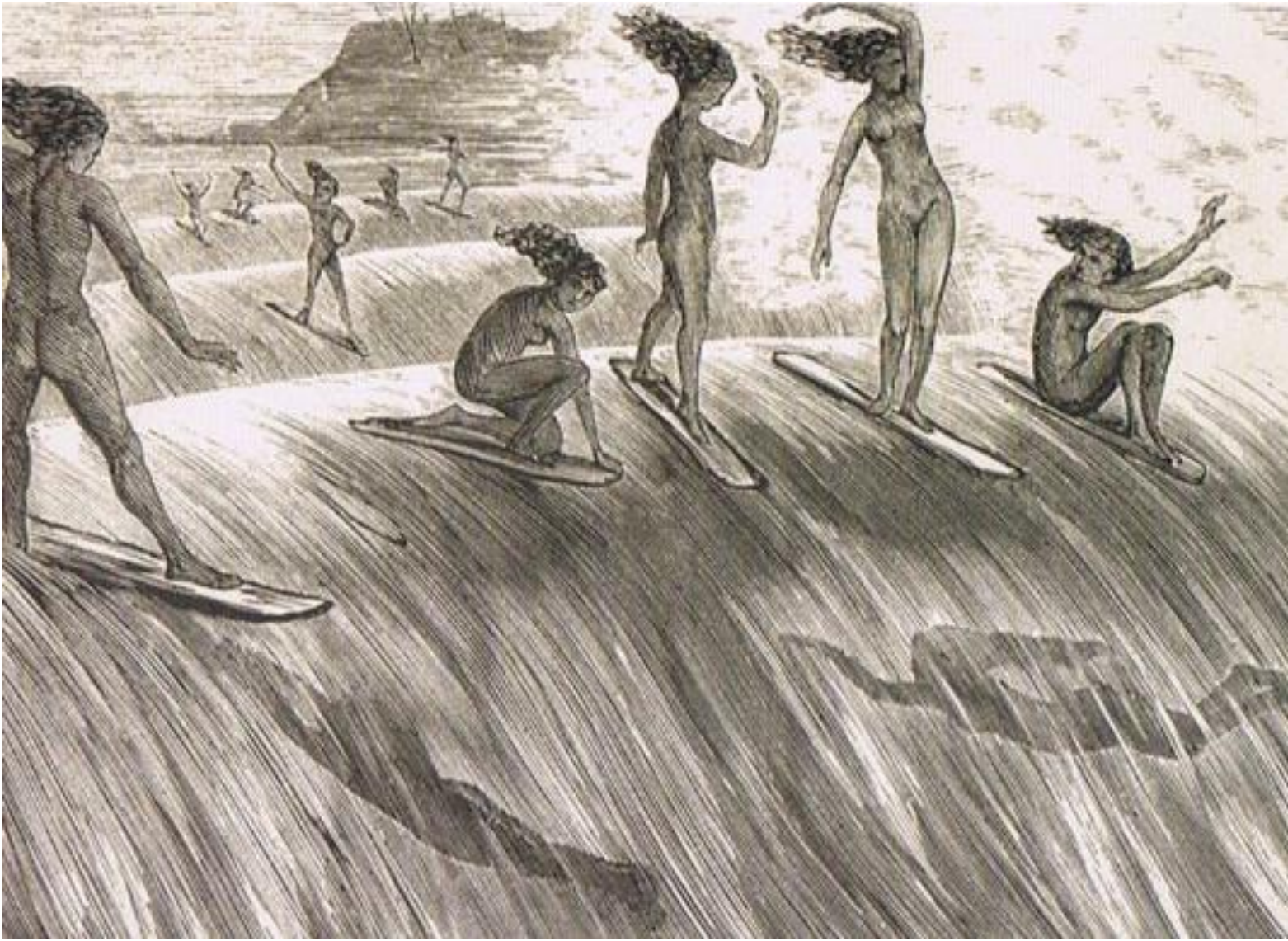
The body uses ultraviolet rays from the sun to manufacture vitamin D in the inner layers of the skin. With too little sun exposure, a person can become vitamin-D deficient, which has been linked with

Using urban blue spaces to benefit health and wellbeing





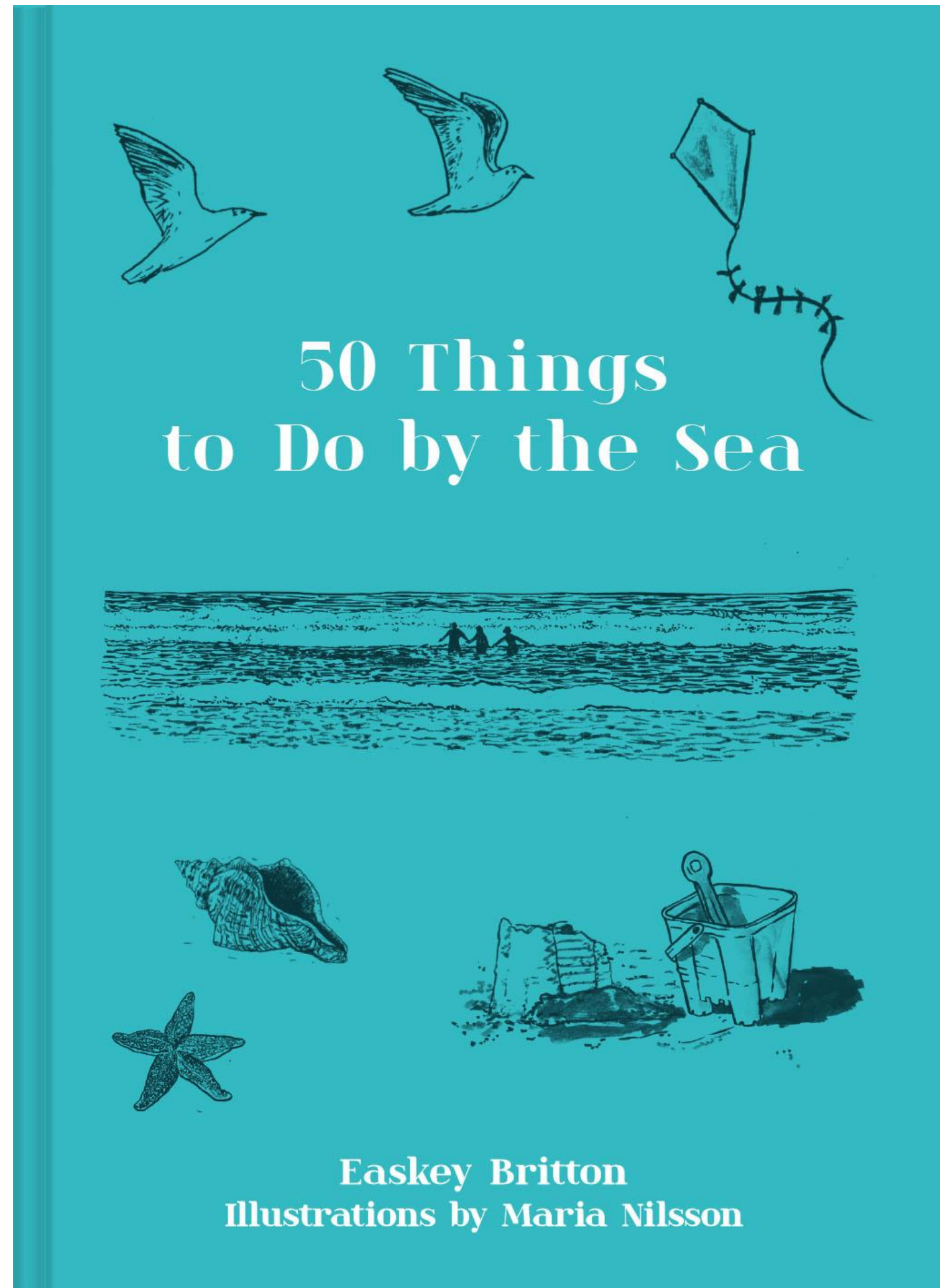
SURF-SWIMMING, SANDWICH ISLANDS.



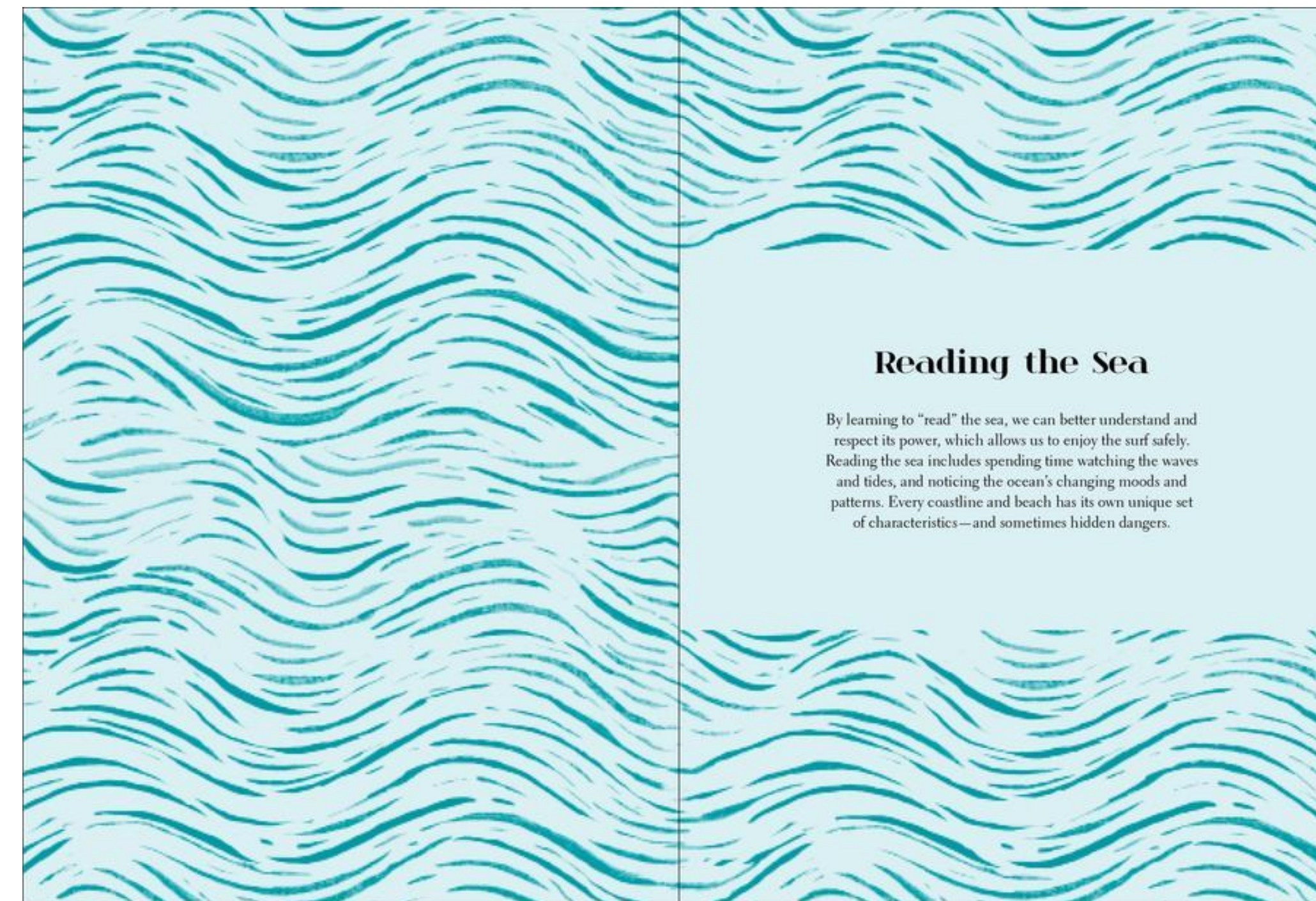
SURF-SWIMMING, HAWAII



Image credit: Tamsin mcVean

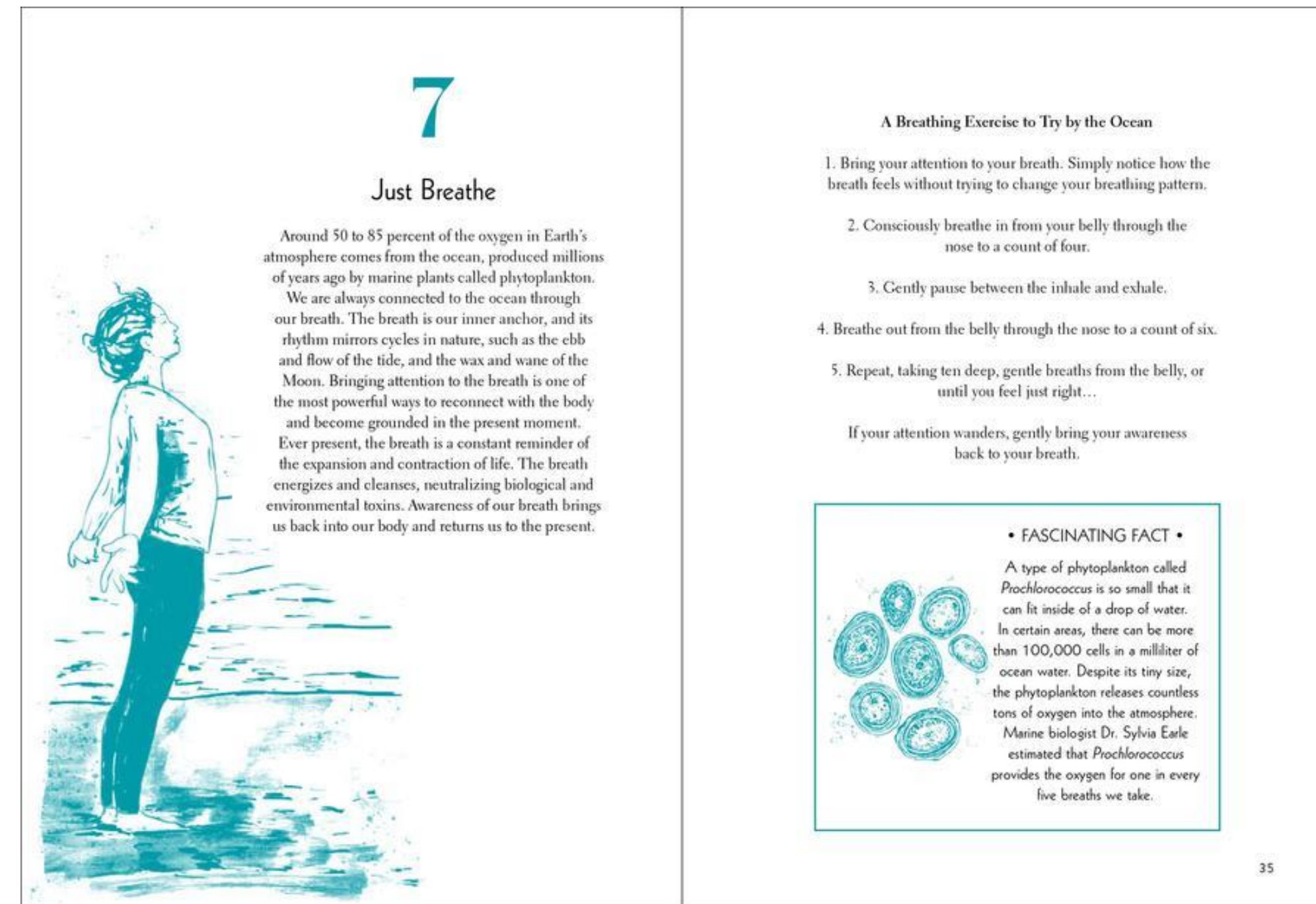


@easkeysurf



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.



15

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.



52

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).

53

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...



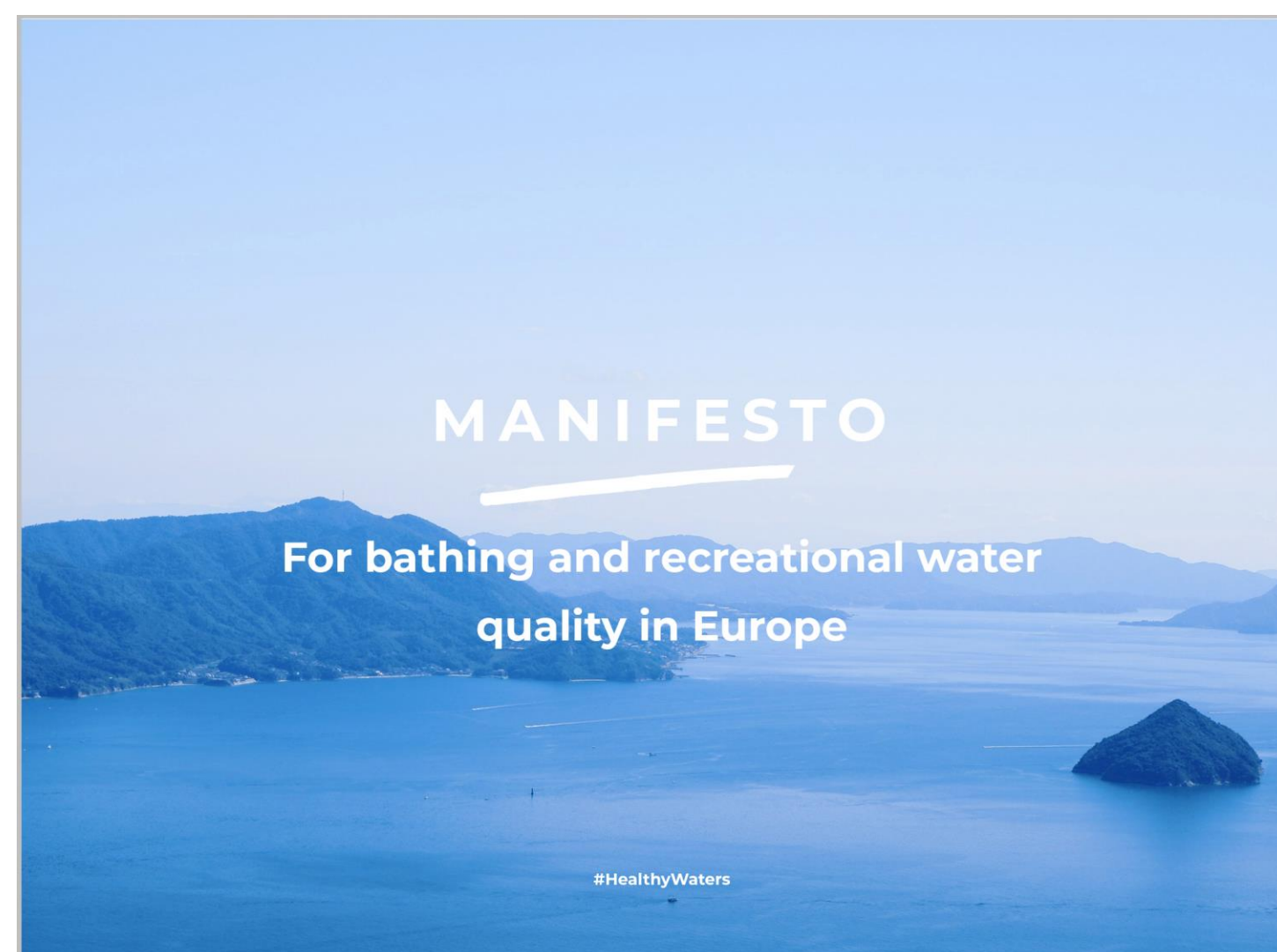
Ocean Activist Camp, UK



Citizen science x Marine tourism, Europe



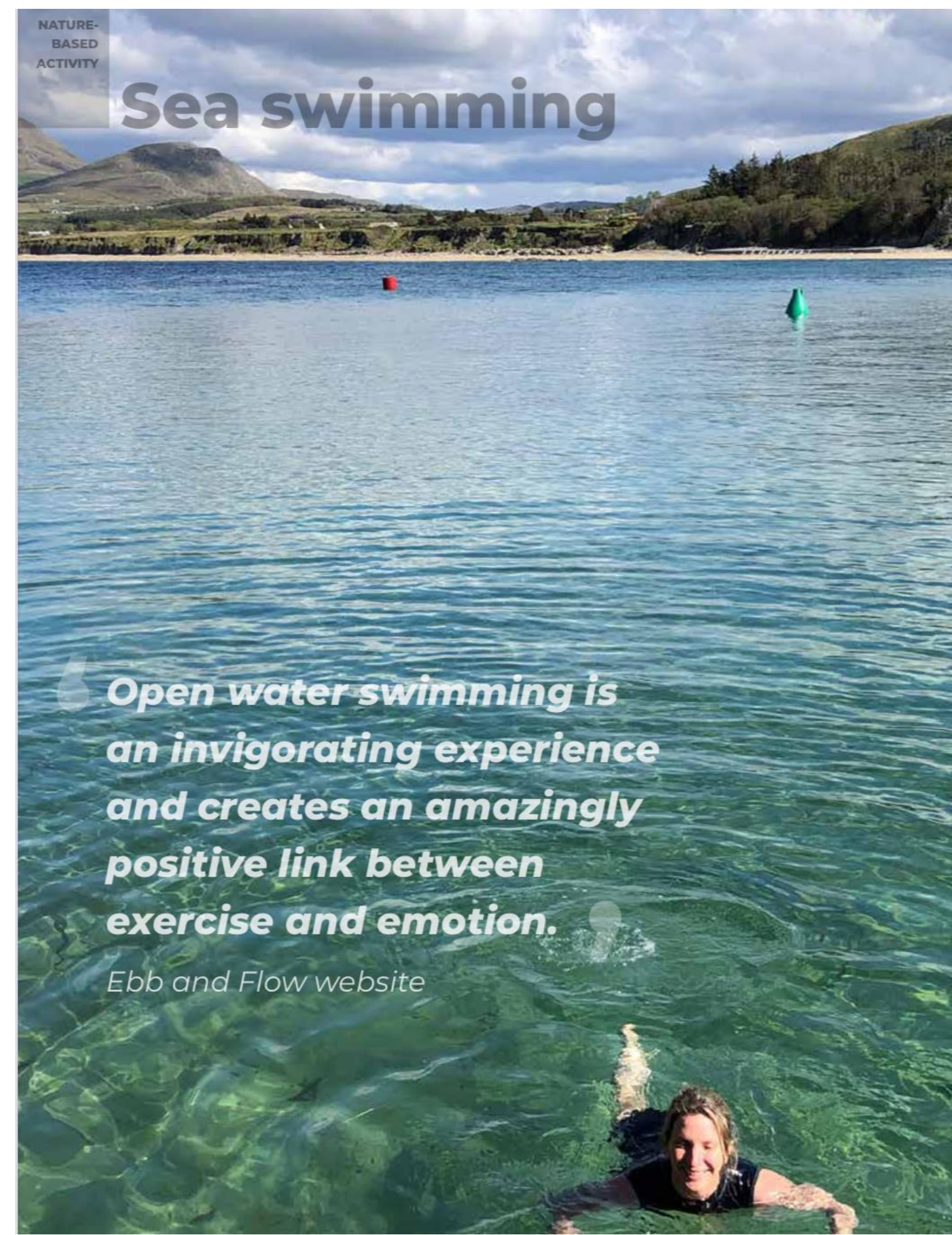
'Healthy Waters' Manifesto




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 close-up photograph of a person wearing a purple swim cap and red goggles, adjusting the straps on their forehead. The person's eyes are closed, and their skin is wet with water droplets. The background is a blurred, greenish-blue ocean surface.

“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)

A group of approximately ten people, mostly wearing dark blue or black wetsuits, are playing in the ocean surf. They are splashing water and laughing. One person on the right is wearing a bright blue hooded wetsuit. The background shows a vast ocean with white-capped waves under a clear sky.

*“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!

Hello@easkeybritton.com

@easkeysurf

