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Kasper: *Skeletal Identification of California Sea Lions and Harbor Seals for Archaeologists*

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Author

Hildebrandt, William R

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My Luiseño Neighbors: Excerpts from a Journal Kept in Pauma Valley, Northern San Diego County, 1934 to 1974. Eleanor Beemer. Ramona: Acoma Books, 1980, 67 pp., map and many illustrations, \$9.95 (paper).

Reviewed by D. L. TRUE
Dept. of Anthropology
Univ. of California
Davis, CA 95616

Eleanor Beemer's excellent treatise, *My Luiseño Neighbors* is exactly what she says it is, a selection of excerpts from her personal journal. It is not intended to be a professionally oriented assessment of any particular aspect of the Luiseño lifeway, and she does not propose any "scientific" treatment of the data she has collected.

Mrs. Beemer describes ritual activities, artifacts, important places, local folklore, and perhaps most importantly, *people* in a back-country reservation setting over a time span covering a substantial portion of the mid-20th century. She presents her material in an easy to read, literate style.

Many of the *kinds* of activities reported here are not altogether new and much of the general behavior described has been reported or at least alluded to by earlier ethnographers working the larger Luiseño area, so one should not read this book expecting a breakthrough in terms of large amounts of new and exciting ethnographic information. On the other hand, Beemer approaches the data and, more importantly, the contextual setting from which the data were derived from a perspective not possible under more typical anthropological data-collecting processes. The data presented here were collected over a long period of time so that many of her observations have meaningful temporal significance, and they were collected with a very special personal touch that suggests a level of authenticity not often seen in these kinds of reports.

In the opinion of this reviewer, the Beemer book is a valuable presentation of an important segment of a local history, and a gold mine of potentially useful and important ethnographic tidbits. Eleanor Beemer is an astute, sensitive observer, and the information she presents should be given careful and serious consideration. In short, this is not just another collection of interesting little local stories to be read once and set aside. It is a source book that will almost certainly be consulted again and again by scholars interested in the Luiseño as a people.



Skeletal Identification of California Sea Lions and Harbor Seals for Archaeologists. Jan C. Kasper. San Diego Museum of Man Ethnic Technology Notes No. 17, 1980, 34 pp.

Reviewed by WILLIAM R. HILDEBRANDT
Dept. of Anthropology
Univ. of California
Davis, CA 95616

The goal of this publication is to provide the information necessary to distinguish between archaeological remains of the California Sea Lion (*Zalophus californianus*) and the Harbor Seal (*Phoca vitulina*). The author states that it is an essential document because complete reference skeletons of these animals are not available in southern California (the skeletons used in the study were obtained by loan from the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.).

The paper begins with a brief discussion of the taxonomy, anatomy, diet, range, and reproduction of the two species. It then

provides beautifully accurate photographs and drawings of the major skeletal elements including a short description of the morphological features that best distinguish one species from the other.

Although these illustrations may be useful in some contexts, there are several problems with this publication and with the general kind of analysis it may be encouraging. First of all, *at least* three additional economically important species could have been exploited by native hunters in southern California: the Stellar Sea Lion (*Eumetopias jubata*), the Southern Fur Seal (*Arctocephalus townsendi*), and the Northern Elephant Seal (*Miro-unga angustirostris*).

The Stellar Sea Lion is of particular interest. Unlike the Harbor Seal which is easily distinguished from the California Sea Lion, the Stellar Sea Lion skeletal morphology is quite similar to that of the California Sea Lion and could be very easily misidentified. However, even if the Stellar Sea Lion were included, it is doubtful that accurate identifications could be achieved solely with the use of illustrations. It has been my experience, when identifying similar taxa, that photographs and drawings do not provide the

necessary accuracy that is available from reference skeletons. As a result, it is my opinion that the publication *should not* be used without complete reference skeletons.

Reference skeletons are not impossible to come by in California. All the animals mentioned above live along its shores and periodically wash up dead. I have, with the help of my friends, collected good reference skeletons from beached individuals. In addition, the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California, Berkeley, and the California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, both have many individuals of all the species present in California. As a matter of fact, contrary to the information provided by the author, numerous reference skeletons are also available in southern California at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

In conclusion, the illustrations provided in this publication should not be used to identify archaeological faunal remains without the use of complete reference skeletons from all species that may have been present. On the other hand, the publication would be quite useful to students attempting to learn the names and the general form of the major skeletal elements of the pinniped skeleton.

