

"This is excellent. I especially like the history of each location, the elegant and epical descriptions of various tropical settings, the personal experiences, and the occasional voyages to the edge of reality. Readers who enjoy tales based in science, as I do, will find it greatly satisfying. Plus, it has very important conservation implications."

—PETER PYLE, *The Institute for Bird Populations*

"In addition to numerous colorful anecdotes about his ecological work, Rauzon has written about the human history of these islands. His frequent digressions, which are deliberate, provide a wealth of information on the natural history of the islands—everything from evolution to ecology to geology to environmental chemistry. His stories raise important ethical issues related to humane treatment of animals that must be eradicated to allow seabirds and other native species to survive. This is an important social controversy today."

—SHEILA CONANT, *department of biology, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa*

For over a quarter century, biologist Mark J. Rauzon has worked in the field of island restoration, traveling throughout the American Insular Pacific to eradicate invasive plants and animals introduced by humans. The region spans from Hawai'i to Samoa to Guam, and their neighbors—small, obscure tropical islands that are hundreds, if not thousands, of nautical miles from each other. These little-known US possessions and territories include various islands and atolls: Jarvis, Howland, Baker, the Northern Marianas, Wake, Palmyra, Johnston, and Rose Atoll, among others. They anchor a vast National Marine Monument program created in 2009, and expanded in 2014, to protect the largest area in the world from exploitation.

In *Isles of Amnesia*, Rauzon chronicles the ecological and human history of these islands, enlivened with his first-hand experiences of eradication efforts to restore atoll ecosystems and maximize native biodiversity. Each chapter focuses on an individual island or island group, revealing how each location has its own particular story, secret past, or ecological lesson to be shared. Taken as a whole, the region has played a unique role in American history, with the remoteness of the islands having served the needs of whalers and guano miners in the 1800s and, in later years, that of military secret projects, missile launching, chemical weapon incinerations, and air bases. Rauzon further explores the creation of the National Marine Monuments and what their protection means to a changing ocean, and presents original research about the US military's Pacific Project and germ warfare testing. Illustrated with over seventy historical photographs and original drawings, this much-needed work tells the fascinating story of America's forgotten Pacific islands.

MARK J. RAUZON is professor of geography at Laney College in Oakland, California, and a seabird biologist specializing in the effects of invasive animals on tropical islands.

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COVER ILLUSTRATION: Airplane engine with two masked boobies on Howland Island.

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