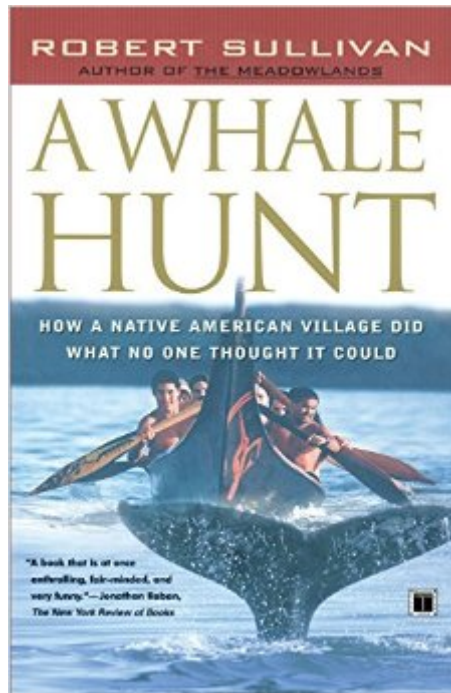


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# A Whale Hunt: How A Native-American Village Did What No One Thought It Could



## Synopsis

For centuries the hunting of the whale was what defined the Makah, a Native American tribe in Neah Bay, but when commercial whaling drove the gray whale to near extinction in the 1920s, the Makah voluntarily discontinued their tradition and hung up their harpoons. In 1994, after the gray whale was taken off the endangered species list, the Makah decided to hunt again. The problem was that all the old whalers were dead -- no one knew how to go about hunting a whale. *A Whale Hunt* chronicles the two years Robert Sullivan spends with the Makah as they prepare for and stage the first hunt. Combating tribal infighting and inexperience, they must also face passionate, furious animal rights activists and swarming reporters. Before the ragtag group of hunters even pursues a whale, there are clashes, disappointments, and defeats, small triumphs and unexpected heroes. A book of many layers and revelations, *A Whale Hunt* is the story of the demise and attempted resurrection of a Native American nation and of the individuals on the reservation whose lives are forever changed.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is one of those books that I do not quite know how to rate. The book is a first person account of a outsider observing the Makah Indian hunt for a gray whale off the Olympic peninsula in Northwestern Washington state. The book is the greatest memoir I have ever read. The book gets a little wordy, but the writing is full of vivid details. I think the author provides thoughtful insight into the whale hunt through numerous conversations and interactions with local Makah Indians. I do agree

with a previous reviewer that the author's viewpoint did seem slightly biased toward the Makah, but not enough to ruin the book. Some previous reviewers commented on the accuracy of the book. To be honest, I do not know enough about the topic to note whether the author's story is inaccurate or not. I purchased the book as I wanted to find out more about the Makah whale hunt, as I did not realize the significance of the hunt to the Northwest Indians at the time it happened. Judging by the title of the book and the previous reviews, this did not seem like a bad choice. However, while the book is an excellent memoir, in the end it is a memoir of some journalist I have never heard of. I admire the author's dedication to the story as he followed it for well over a year while other reporters only seemed to appear when they thought something would happen. In the end, I really did not care if the author slept in a tent or a plywood shack and I really did not find the type of car he rented to be especially relevant. While I am sure the trip to see the gray whales in the Baja Peninsula in Mexico was a moving experience, I really did not feel it fit into the overall storyline of the book. Also, I personally found the whole Moby Dick parallel to be incredibly irritating.

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