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David A. McKee, Henry Compton
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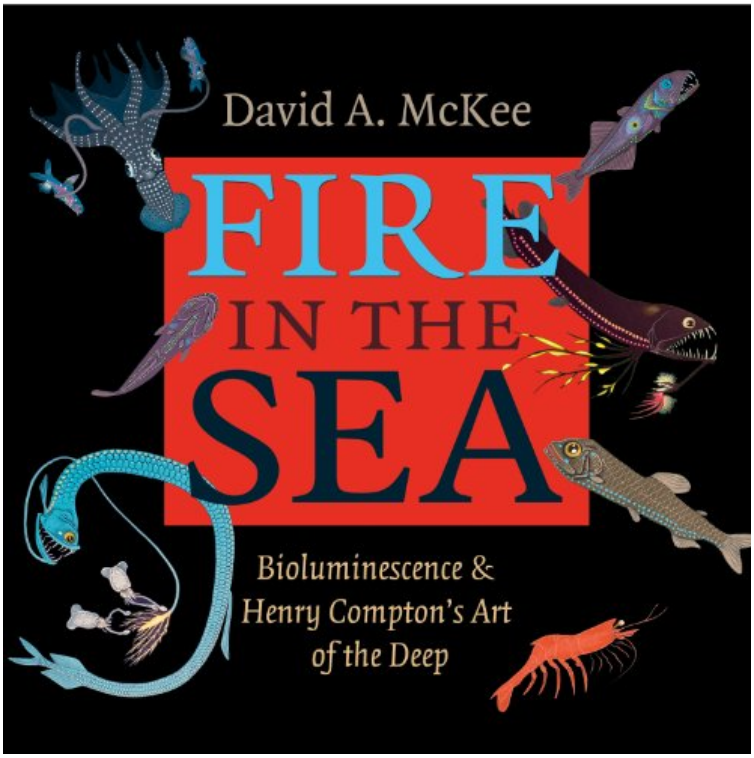

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David A. McKee, Henry Compton : Fire in the Sea: Bioluminescence and Henry Compton's Art of the Deep (Gulf Coast Books, sponsored by Texas AM University-Corpus Christi) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fire in the Sea: Bioluminescence and Henry Compton's Art of the Deep (Gulf Coast Books, sponsored by Texas AM University-Corpus Christi):

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. InformationalBy tobilynneInformation-wise, this is an absolute treasure trove, and for deep sea enthusiasts: go buy this book.The illustrations, while remarkable unto themselves (and they are gorgeous) were a surprise and disappointment. I understand that while the majority of the deep sea remains unexplored, photographs abound for many of the creatures in the book. A sketch or computer generated image is fine here and there, but for such a hefty book, I was really sad that it was nothing but illustrations.

The cold, stygian dark of the extreme sea depths is home to some of our planetrsquo;s strangest creatures. Even their names evoke a science fiction adventure: dragonfishes, greeneyes, viperfishes, mirrorbellies, lanternfishes. Marine biologist Henry ldquo;Hankrdquo; Compton (1928ndash;2005) of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Departmentrsquo;s Rockport Marine Lab was present on some of the earliest Gulf of Mexico cruises on which these fishes were collected

for the first time in Texas waters.Upon returning, Compton would retire to the darkroom he had constructed beneath a stairwell at the lab and photograph the specimens. A talented artist, Compton then painted watercolors based on his photographs. He allowed free rein to both his scientific judgment and his artistic vision as he constructed representations of how the specimens might have appeared in the crushing pressure of their alien environment.Compton dubbed the series of deep-water paintings ldquo;Fire in the Seardquo; because of the shimmering bioluminescence common to these deep-water species. Then, along with taxonomic descriptions, he drafted fanciful narratives to accompany the paintings: quirky, humorous, and sometimes cryptic stories of the fishes in their unreachable habitat. Professor, researcher, and author David A. McKee has taken Comptonrsquo;s work, discovered in cardboard boxes following his death, and, along with others, provided chapters on bioluminescence, life in the deep, taxonomic arrangement, and life history information.

About the AuthorDAVID A. MCKEE is a retired professor of biology at Texas AM University–Corpus Christi, where he taught marine biology courses for nearly 30 years. HENRY “HANKrdquo; COMPTON was a marine biologist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in Rockport. He died in 2005.