

**UC Merced**

**Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology**

**Title**

Fowler: *In the Shadow of Fox Peak: An Ethnography of the Cattail-Eater Northern Paiute People of Stillwater Marsh*

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8tw590vt>

**Journal**

Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology, 17(2)

**ISSN**

0191-3557

**Author**

Hammett, Julia E

**Publication Date**

1995-07-01

Peer reviewed

*In the Shadow of Fox Peak: An Ethnography of the Cattail-Eater Northern Paiute People of Stillwater Marsh.* Catherine S. Fowler. Cultural Resource Series No. 5, U. S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 1, Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge. Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1992, xiv + 264 pp., 128 figs., 16 tables, 2 appendices, \$24.00 (hard cover).

Reviewed by:

**JULIA E. HAMMETT**

Campus Archaeology, 855 Serra Street, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-6115.

This is a useful compilation of ethnobiological information for the northern Great Basin. Under the guise of a government contract report for the Stillwater Marsh area, Catherine Fowler has achieved an excellent regional ethnobiology. The product is well balanced, stressing both botanical and faunal aspects of the traditional Northern Paiute resource base.

Fowler begins by introducing several Native American residents of the Stillwater area and notable anthropologists who have worked in the vicinity. She then establishes a historical landscape, invoking traditional districts, camps, and place names for the *Toidikadi*, or Cattail-eater Northern Paiute people. Throughout the book, Fowler incorporates historical and contemporary ethnographic information with ecological data, including historical evidence of habitat changes and concomitant resource impacts. Where relevant, resources are considered in light of current human foraging models. At the same time, crucial spiritual elements of the human equation are given their due.

The subsistence chapter is organized by natural physiographic zones, detailing traditional knowledge of how plants and animals are interrelated in their habitats. Fowler notes that des-

ert, marsh, and upland zones were utilized as part of a seasonal round that tracked the movements and life cycles of economically important organisms. This is an effective and practical approach, allowing the reader access to the dynamic and holistic pattern of resource management that accompanied traditional *Toidikadi* subsistence practices. Plant and animal lists are provided for each physiographic zone and several additional tables detail nutritional components of important foods.

Several chapters are devoted to careful, meaningful descriptions of shelter, clothing, and other elements of *Toidikadi* material culture. Chapters on social and political organization, religion and world view, medicines, and games, music, and dance emphasize the ethnobiological components of their sociocultural system. Two brief appendices on sacred traditions and Cattail-eater archaeology complete the volume, again with special attention to ethnobiology.

The book is generously illustrated with historical and recent maps, photographs and drawings of habitats and resource patches, and depictions of *Toidikadi* collecting and processing key food resources, as well as constructing and using their material culture. Overall, Fowler has collected strands of information from a variety of sources and woven an accurate and concordant ethnobiology. My sole criticism is that an index would have allowed the reader to optimize use of this extremely rich resource.

It is heartening to see the publication of such a comprehensive environmental anthropology, particularly when so many recent attempts have fallen short of their mark, or remain buried in contract obscurity. Through Fowler's efforts, we get to know the Northern Paiute people and their extremely diverse environment. Fowler and the Fish and Wildlife Service are to be commended for this useful, high quality, affordable volume. The layperson and the professional, the student and the expert, will all find this a valuable contribution. *In the Shadow of Fox Peak* is

destined to be a standard reference in the anthropology of the Great Basin and in North American ethnobiology.



***Archaeological Investigations at Cantil, Fremont Valley, Western Mojave Desert, California.*** Mark Q. Sutton, with contributions by Paul D. Bouey, John D. Goodman II, Margaret M. Lyneis, Karen K. Swope, and Robert M. Yohe II. Museum of Anthropology, California State University, Bakersfield, Occasional Papers in Anthropology No. 1, 1991, x + 225 pp., 74 figs., 67 tables, \$10.00 (paper).

***Archaeological Studies in the Goose Lake Area, Southern San Joaquin Valley, California.*** Mark Q. Sutton, ed. Museum of Anthropology, California State University, Bakersfield, Occasional Papers in Anthropology No. 2, 1992, vi + 117 pp., 24 figs., 38 tables, \$6.00 (paper).

*Reviewed by:*

**MICHAEL J. MORATTO**

INFOTEC Research, Inc., 502 E. Mariner's Pointe, Fresno, CA 93720, and Dept. of Anthropology, California State Univ., Fresno, CA 93740.

The *Occasional Papers in Anthropology* (OPA) of the Museum of Anthropology, California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB), provide a welcome new publication outlet for scholarly work. The editorial policy for this series calls for monograph-length papers "in any of the subfields in Anthropology dealing with subjects from anywhere in the world (California materi-

als are especially desired)." The first two numbers of this new series are reviewed here. Both deal with archaeological research in Kern County, California.

OPA No. 1 is the final report of archaeological investigations at the Cantil automobile test facility site in the Fremont Valley, western Mojave Desert. It presents the results of CSUB's 1987 survey of the 3,840-acre project area and 1988 testing and documentation, respectively, of eight prehistoric sites and one historic homestead.

A very brief history of project work (Chapter 1) is followed by an informative summary of the environmental setting of the Fremont Valley (Chapter 2). Of special interest are Sutton's account of ancient Lake Thompson and his discovery of two shorelines (582 m. and 586 m. amsl) above the current playa of Koehn Lake (575.4 m.). Geomorphic features of these shorelines indicate not ephemeral filling but a lake stand "present for a considerable, but unknown, amount of time" (p. 8). Completing the background is Chapter 3, providing overviews of Kawaiisu and Kitanemuk ethnography, a sketch of local history, and a generalized prehistory of the study area. For the latter, Sutton draws mainly on extant chronologies for the western Mojave Desert and southeastern Sierra Nevada, since no local sequence has yet been defined specifically for the Fremont Valley.

Chapter 4, "Research Design," explicates the rationale for CSUB's archaeological work. Common objectives at each of the eight tested prehistoric sites were to ascertain depositional integrity (all but one of the sites had been plowed), identify any cultural remains below the plow zone, and define site content (i.e., the nature of assemblages). Site-specific research aims focused on temporal control, reconstructing subsistence practices, and relating site function to settlement pattern models derived from ethnohistoric data. More broadly, the Cantil project sought to probe the time depth of Kawaiisu pre-