

PATHS OF LIFE

American Indians of the Southwest

The Seri 6th Grade and Up Discovery Hunt



The Seri call themselves Comcáac, meaning People. They live along the Sea of Cortez just south of Arizona in Mexico. Look at the map at the start of the Seri exhibit and learn more about the Seri homeland.

In this hunt, you will learn about the Seri's traditional mobile lifestyle and about their use of the sea and desert environments. You will also learn about the Seri's struggle to maintain control over their homeland.



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Living with the Sea and the Desert

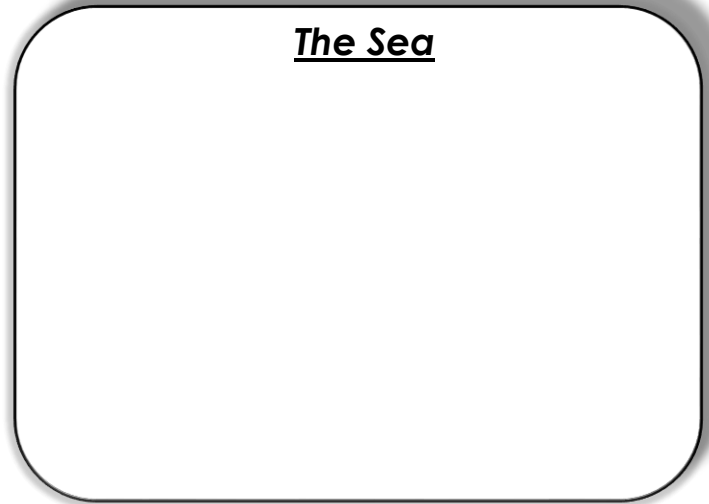
Find the cases titled “Living with the Sea” and “Living with the Desert.”

The Seri moved all across the desert and sea to gather and hunt different plants and animals they used to survive – they lived a mobile lifestyle. Study the different things that the Seri created using resources (things like plants and animals) from both the land and the sea.

The Seri’s knowledge of their environment is truly incredible. For example, the Seri knew more than 400 names of plants and of those 400 plants, 25% of them were edible! The rest were used for tools and medicinal purposes. The Seri also knew where to collect water in the desert. Such knowledge of where to get water helped the Seri avoid (for a time) conflict with the encroaching Spanish.

Pick one object that the Seri made from sea resources and one object that they made from desert resources. Use the boxes and lines below to draw a picture of each object and provide a description of each object: tell what it is, what it was used for, and what resources were used to make it.

The Sea



The Desert

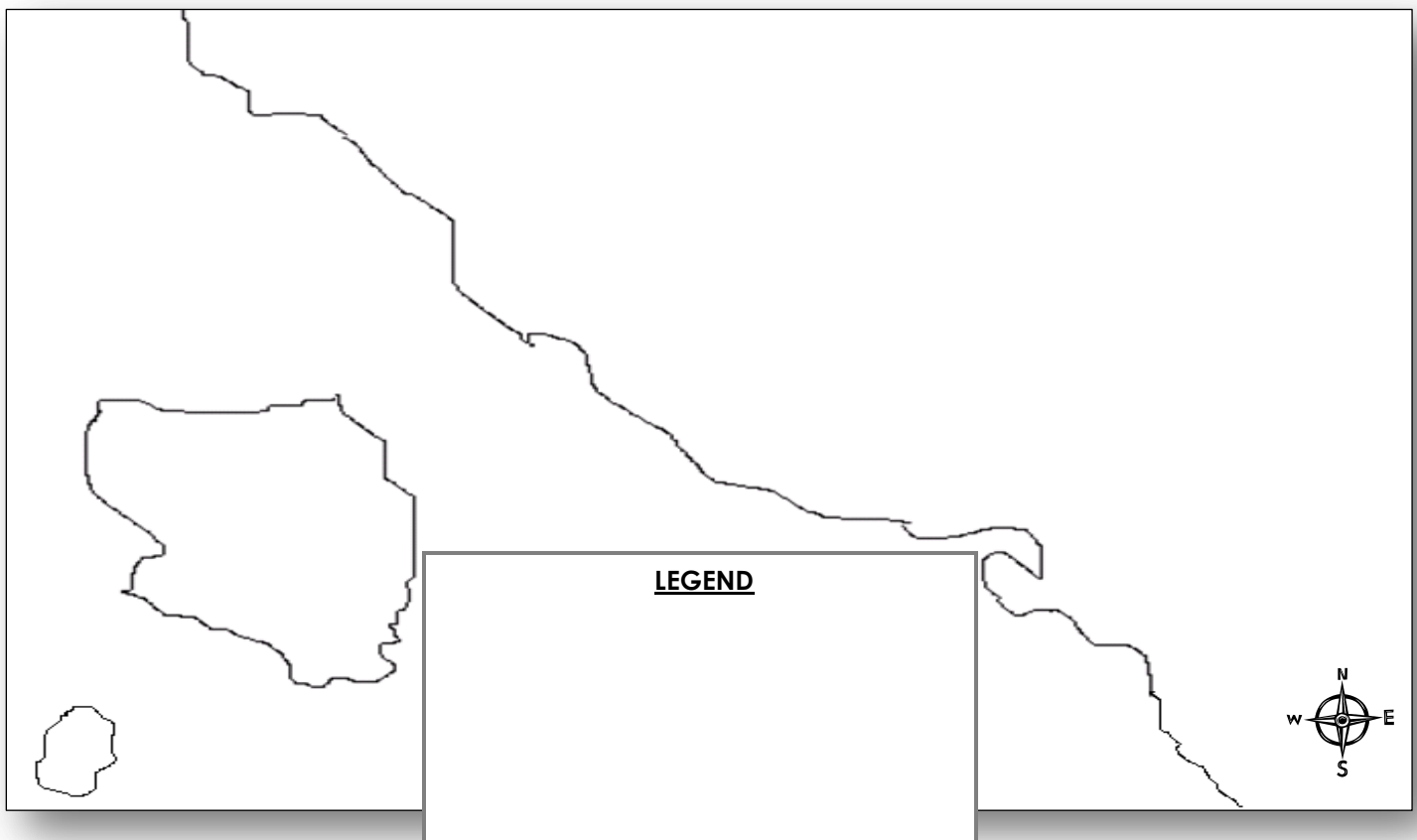
The Seri Lands

Beginning in the 1600s, the Seri encountered new people in and around their homeland. The Jesuit missionaries came to the Seri; they wanted to make the Seri Christians and they also wanted to make the Seri live in the same place all year round and not move about the desert and sea.

The Seri also encountered Spanish and Mexican ranchers and farmers. These ranchers and farmers wanted the Seri homeland for their ranches and farms. Unfortunately, because of competition over the land, fighting broke out between the Seri and the ranchers and farmers.

Study the panel titled "Centuries of Conflict" to learn more about the interactions between the Seri and the missionaries, ranchers, and farmers. Then, complete the map and questions found below and on the following page.

1. Label the following: Isla Tiburón, Isla San Esteban, and the Sea of Cortez.
2. Draw a cross to locate the 2 missions and label them.
3. Draw a square to locate Presidio de San Miguel de Horcasitas and label it.
4. Outline with a solid line the Seri territory (or range) as it was in 1700.
5. Outline with a dotted line the Seri territory as it was in 1880.
6. Outline and shade in the Seri territory as it was in 1990.
7. Locate with a dot the following cities and label them: Hermosillo, El Desemboque, Punta Cheuca, and Bahia Kino.
8. Create the legend using the symbols you used to create the map.
For example: - - - - - = Seri territory in 1880



The Seri Lands (continued)

In what year did the Jesuit missionaries establish their missions? _____

Were the Jesuit missionaries able to change the way the Seri lived? Explain your answer.

The Seri raided Spanish ranches for what? _____

In what year was Presidio de San Miguel de Horcasitas established? _____

What is a presidio? _____

After Spanish soldiers began taking over Seri lands in the 1740s, what did they make some Seri do? _____

What type of weapon did the Spanish use when fighting with the Seri? _____

To where did the Seri go in order to escape the Spanish soldiers who were attacking them?

Imagine that you are a Seri person living in the late 1600s and new people have come onto your land. How do you feel? How will you behave?

A Changing Way of Life

In the mid-1800s, Mexican rancher Pascual Encinas and his cowboys sought to kill the Seri because the Seri were raiding his livestock. The effort of Pascual Encinas, along with years and years of fighting with Spanish and Mexican soldiers, reduced the Seri population to about 200 in the year 1920.

Find the case containing a Seri bow and arrows. Closely look at the photos in the case and read the information provided to learn more about Pascual Encinas and the Seri's struggle to survive.

When the Seri and their land came under the control of the Mexican government, their mobile lifestyle came to an end. The Seri were forced to establish permanent homes and to find ways to make money in order to feed, shelter, and clothe themselves. Using plants and animals of the desert and sea, the Seri make necklaces and wood carvings that they then sell for money.

Find the cases containing Seri necklaces and wood carvings. Study what's inside each case so that you can complete the activities below.

Choose your 3 favorite necklaces. Using the table below, record the date when each necklace was made and record what materials were used to make each necklace.

	<u>DATE</u>	<u>MATERIALS</u>
1		
2		
3		

What kind of wood do the Seri use to make their carvings? _____

What kind of figures do the Seri carve?

When did the Seri start to make ironwood carvings? _____