



The Balance of Nature and Human Impact

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It is clear that nature is undergoing rapid changes as a result of human activities such as industry, agriculture, travel, fisheries and urbanisation. What effects do these activities have? Are they disturbing equilibria in ecological populations and communities, thus upsetting the balance of nature, or are they enhancing naturally occurring disequilibria, perhaps with even worse consequences? It is often argued that large-scale fluctuations in climate and sea-levels have occurred over and over again in the geological past, long before human activities could possibly have had any impact, and that human effects are very small compared to those that occur naturally. Should we conclude that human activity cannot significantly affect the environment, or are these naturally occurring fluctuations actually being dangerously enhanced by humans? This book examines these questions, first by providing evidence for equilibrium and non-equilibrium conditions in relatively undisturbed ecosystems, and second by examining human-induced effects.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This book summarizes ecological responses to global environmental change; it is relevant to interested readers of different backgrounds trying to understand why scientists are worried about current environmental change."

Integrative and Comparative Biology

"Klaus Rohde's fascinating edited volume *The Balance of Nature and Human Impact* offers a snapshot of current research, exploring evidence for or against equilibrium processes from an array of systems, interspersed with reviews of literature on selected topics."

Brian Drayton, Biological Conservation

About the Author

Klaus Rohde is Professor Emeritus at the University of New England, Armidale, Australia. He is well known for his work on the ecology, biogeography and ultrastructure of parasites, particularly marine parasites, and on latitudinal gradients in biodiversity. He had published extensively on parasite ecology, nonequilibrium ecology and marine parasitology.

Users Review

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