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A Rising Tide of Species and Literature: A Review of Some Recent Books on Biological Invasions FREE

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Biological invasions have recently caught the public's attention, as demonstrated by occasional television and radio reports, almost daily newspaper articles, and a presidential executive order in 1999 that established the National Invasive Species Council. The subject captures the imagination for several reasons. Introduced species cause, in whole or in part, the endangerment and extinction of more species than any other factor except habitat destruction. They cause enormous economic losses. Introduced pathogens are a scourge of human health (e.g., West Nile virus), wildlife (e.g., whirling disease), agriculture (e.g., hoof-and-mouth disease), and forests (e.g., sudden oak death). And the idiosyncratic, baroque, and apparently unpredictable nature of some invasions intrigues scientists and lay citizens alike. The recent exponential increase in books on invasions is thus unsurprising, though it is noteworthy that this surge is actually outpacing that of invasions themselves (figure 1). These works,...

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