



Island Environments in a Changing World

By Lawrence R. Walker, Peter Bellingham

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Islands represent unique opportunities to examine human interaction with the natural environment. They capture the human imagination as remote, vulnerable and exotic, yet there is comparatively little understanding of their basic geology, geography, or the impact of island colonization by plants, animals and humans. This detailed study of island environments focuses on nine island groups, including Hawaii, New Zealand and the British Isles, exploring their differing geology, geography, climate and soils, as well as the varying effects of human actions. It illustrates the natural and anthropogenic disturbances common to island groups, all of which face an uncertain future clouded by extinctions of endemic flora and fauna, growing populations of invasive species, and burgeoning resident and tourist populations. Examining the natural and human history of each island group from early settlement onwards, the book provides a critique of the concept of sustainable growth and offers realistic guidelines for future island management.

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Review

"This is definitely a book that can reach the lay reader, decision-makers and administrative bodies, offering a clear view of the major problems that need to be amended without delay. The professional ecologist and the island biogeographer also have much to gain ... The authors have accomplished a great achievement, explaining such a broad range of concepts, processes, patterns and problems in an easy-to-follow text ... Their work will become standard suggested reading for students of islands in all respective fields."

Frontiers of Biogeography

"Island Environments in a Changing World provides a handy summary of the natural history and environmental impacts of the development of each of the nine groups of islands discussed therein ... [contains] useful, descriptive comparisons and an impressive list of facts about these islands."

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"... Island Environments [in a Changing World] is both a textbook, providing a foundation of knowledge and information on island environmental science, and a personal exploration ... it provides a fascinating journey through time and space."

Island Studies Journal

"An ample glossary ... and helpful index (nearly 1,400 entries) make this work accessible to even the most inexperienced mainlander. Recommended."

G. C. Stevens, Choice

About the Author

Lawrence R. Walker is a professor of plant ecology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. His research focuses on the mechanisms that drive plant succession, particularly primary succession on volcanoes, landslides, glacial moraines, floodplains, dunes, mine tailings and abandoned roads. Much of his work has been conducted on islands.

Peter Bellingham is a research scientist and plant ecologist at Landcare Research, Lincoln, New Zealand. He has worked extensively in island ecosystems on consequences of natural disturbances, such as hurricanes and typhoons, earthquakes, floods and landslides, and on the interactions between these natural disturbances and invasions by alien plants and animals.

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