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BOOK REVIEW

REQUISITE FOR LONG TERM STUDIES IN ECOLOGY

S. Suresh Ramanan

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REQUISITE FOR LONG TERM STUDIES IN ECOLOGY

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Scientists emphasize the need for long term research especially in the field of ecology. In a book titled 'Long term ecological research - theory and applications' the authors justify the need for long term studies (Muller et al. 2010). Similarly, Arne Jernelov does deserve an appreciation for bringing out this book—'The *Long-Term Fate of Invasive Species - Aliens forever or integrated immigrants with time?*' This book has 19 chapters with no formal introductory chapter. And each chapter is more or less a case study pertinent to important invasive species across different landscapes. The concept of alien as well as invasive species is dealt with elaborately in the preface, so one can consider it as an introductory chapter. I would strongly recommend the readers to go through the preface. Relevant pictures and photographs in the book have been carefully chosen and added. Some readers may be aware of trees like *Pongamia pinnata*, *Melia azedarach* which are known for their wide occurrence and utility in India. However, these species are considered as invasive species in other parts of the world (Low et al. 2011). The author specifically brings in such controversial examples to help us in understanding the concept of invasive and alien vs. native species. This ideological mess is related to the famous precautionary principle of the Rio summit.

Totally, there are 18 case studies comprising two parasitic fungi (Crayfish plague and Dutch elm disease), three plants (Water Hyacinth, Himalayan Balsam, Canadian Water Weed), six invertebrates (out of which three are insects) (Earthworm, Colorado Beetle, Zebra Mussels, Warty Comb Jelly, African Killer Bees and Argentina Ant), one amphibian (Marine toad), two birds (House sparrow and Starling) and four mammals (American Mink, Raccoon, Rabbits and Canadian Beavers) that invaded Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, Pacific Islands, and South America. This makes the book, much more holistic. The author does share his personal experiences in a few statements in every chapter which makes this book different from other books. To explain the highlights of the book, I would quote the

chapters on the invasive nature of the house sparrow in North America and the chapter on the invasive nature of water hyacinth in Asia and Africa. The former chapter starts with an anecdote which does reveal the crux of the problem. The House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* is widely distributed in many parts of the globe but it was considered as an invasive species in North America. However, the conditions have changed now. The author briefs the phenomenal changes that happened to modification on the tag of house sparrow from invasive to immigrant (as the author frequently uses in his book). Similarly, the water hyacinth is seen as an invasive species in many parts of the world. However, it has a glorious picture from the Inthas of Myanmar. Rather than revealing the

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The Long-Term Fate of Invasive Species Aliens Forever or Integrated Immigrants with Time?

Arne Jernelov

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tale in this review, I would let the readers unravel the surprise for themselves.

I do have personal experience on managing the water hyacinth menace. After reading through the chapter I felt that the management strategies we had adopted were not sound. While reading through the content, I frequently told myself: 'this is correct and better'. During a seminar in 2016 on invasive species several questions arose in me. This books had better answers to the questions in me. I guess readers can also find their own answers to their questions on invasive species. Equally, the contextual richness of each chapter would result in our understanding of invasive species as prejudicial. This is a dynamic subject area and this necessitates long term

studies. The book aptly justifies the former statement.

I would strongly recommend this book as a reference book rather than as a textbook. If one explores the references, it does provide enough literature for further study. Still, the book put out by the former director of the International Institute for Applied System Analysis (IIASA) is worthwhile to keep in the libraries and book shelves of ecologists, foresters and conservationists.

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