



Community Ecology

By Gary G. Mittelbach

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Community Ecology is a book for graduate students, researchers, and advanced undergraduates seeking a broad, up-to-date coverage of ecological concepts at the community level. Community ecology has undergone a transformation in recent years, from a discipline largely focused on processes occurring within a local area to a discipline encompassing a much richer domain of study, including the linkages between communities separated in space (metacommunity dynamics), niche and neutral theory, the interplay between ecology and evolution (eco-evolutionary dynamics), and the influence of historical and regional processes in shaping patterns of biodiversity. To fully understand these new developments, however, students need a strong foundation in the study of species interactions and how these interactions are assembled into food webs and other ecological networks.

Both "new" and "traditional" aspects of community ecology are covered in the book's five sections:

- *The Big Picture: Patterns, Causes, and Consequences of Biodiversity
- *The Nitty-Gritty: Species Interactions in Simple Modules
- *Putting the Pieces Together: Food Webs and Ecological Networks
- *Spatial Ecology: Metapopulations and Metacommunities
- *Species in Changing Environments: Ecology and Evolution

Applied aspects of community ecology (e.g., resource harvesting, invasive species, community restoration) are treated throughout the book as natural extensions of basic theoretical and empirical work. Theoretical concepts are developed using simple equations, and there is an emphasis on the graphical presentation of ideas. Each chapter concludes with a summary.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Mittelbach covers all the major topics in community ecology from a broad prospective and provides a text that is easily usable for an advanced ecology course. I particularly like the use of the pictures and graphics throughout the text, as they provide the crucial visuals that students need to visualize advanced concepts."

-Deanna Soper, *University of Dallas*

"I particularly like the reflective tone, the engaging voice, the emphasis on the evolution of ideas, and that, when appropriate, the book highlights competing perspectives on as-yet-unresolved issues without attempting to codify them. I found that very helpful in getting students to appreciate that the field is dynamic, exciting, and constantly evolving, and that there is plenty of room left for people like them to make novel and important contributions."

--Robert M. Pringle, *Princeton University*

"This book is a much-needed up-to-date general-purpose text on community ecology. Community ecology went through a near-death experience in the late '80s and then a rebirth in a totally new direction in the '90s. This book is exciting primarily because it promises to be the first that bridges this divide and covers the new material at the same level of emphasis as the old. Author Mittelbach is one of only a handful of people who can claim to be a leading researcher in both the earlier and later paradigms of community ecology. The deep expertise and, more importantly, the sense of having been part of 'it' for both of the 'its' (early and late) exude through the pages of this manuscript. The perspective and excitement this brings set this book apart."

--Brian McGill, *University of Maine*

"The detail and review of the literature to support the concepts is excellent. It is clear that this textbook is driven by the research. I really like that the author makes clear the past and current arguments with regard to the theory. Further, identifying the important questions that are still to be answered is very helpful in getting students to consider that there is still work they can accomplish to contribute to our knowledge."

--Stephen Burton, *Grand Valley State University*

"I appreciate how Mittelbach brings a reasoned and balanced approach to presenting some issues that were once controversial, and emphasizing positive contributions to current understanding. The author takes good advantage of recent theoretical advances and presents a more rigorous synthesis of general patterns and questions."

--James P. Grover, *University of Texas at Arlington*

"This is an important book which fills an empty niche as a community ecology textbook that covers much of

the recent literature at a fairly high level. Gary Mittelbach is one of the most influential ecologists in the US, and he has played a particularly important role in using meta-analyses to help understand large-scale patterns. As a whole, I think it is an excellent work that will introduce state-of-the-art community ecology to large numbers of students."

--Peter A. Abrams, *University of Toronto*

"The author does an excellent job of distilling the information and making it all clear and easy to follow, without losing the fun complexity of the topic."

--Dov F. Sax, *Brown University*

"I really like the ordering of topics from the Table of Contents, which follows my own thinking about a logical sequence to teach community ecology."

--Nancy E. McIntyre, *Texas Tech University*

About the Author

Gary G. Mittelbach is Professor at the Kellogg Biological Station and the Department of Integrative Biology at Michigan State University. He graduated with a B.A. from the University of Iowa (1974) and earned his Ph.D. at Michigan State University (1980) working under Dr. Earl Werner. Dr. Mittelbach is recognized as a Highly Cited Researcher by ISI® and is a Fellow of the Ecological Society of America. His research interests include community ecology, biogeography, aquatic ecology, biodiversity, and species interactions.

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From reader reviews:

James Johnson:

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Joshua Yoshida:

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Harvey Lee:

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