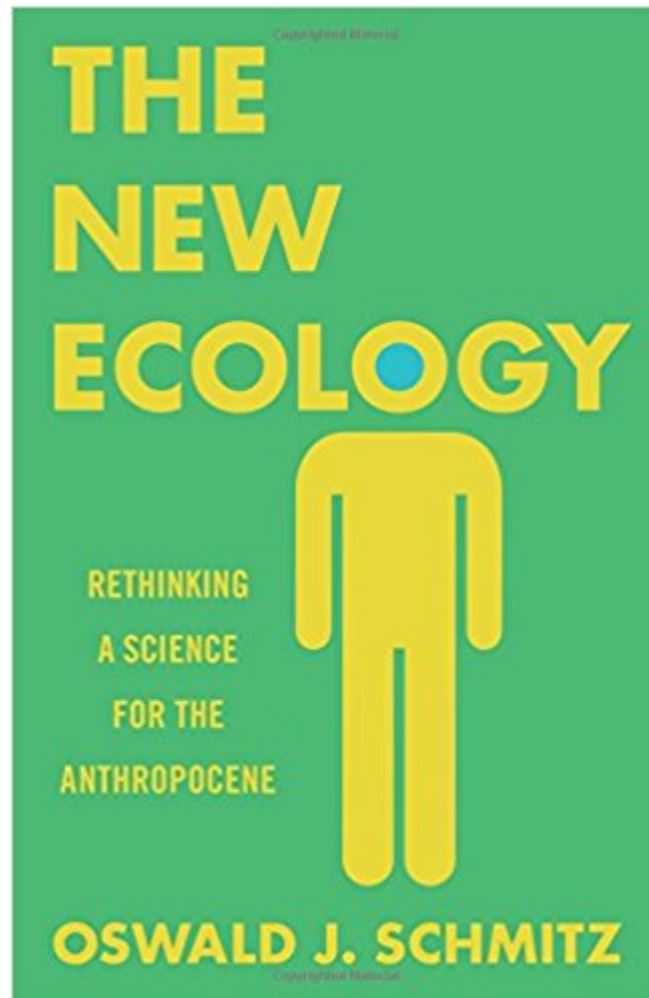




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# The New Ecology: Rethinking A Science For The Anthropocene



## Synopsis

Our species has transitioned from being one among millions on Earth to the species that is single-handedly transforming the entire planet to suit its own needs. In order to meet the daunting challenges of environmental sustainability in this epoch of human domination—known as the Anthropocene—ecologists have begun to think differently about the interdependencies between humans and the natural world. This concise and accessible book provides the best available introduction to what this new ecology is all about—and why it matters more than ever before. Oswald Schmitz describes how the science of ecology is evolving to provide a better understanding of how human agency is shaping the natural world, often in never-before-seen ways. The new ecology emphasizes the importance of conserving species diversity, because it can offer a portfolio of options to keep our ecosystems resilient in the face of environmental change. It envisions humans taking on new roles as thoughtful stewards of the environment to ensure that ecosystems have the enduring capacity to supply the environmental services on which our economic well-being—and our very existence—depend. It offers the ecological know-how to maintain and enhance our planet's environmental performance and ecosystem production for the benefit of current and future generations. Informative and engaging, *The New Ecology* shows how today's ecology can provide the insights we need to appreciate the crucial role we play in this era of unprecedented global environmental transition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Featuring novel ideas communicated clearly, this book is likely to have broad appeal. . . . The book proposes that humans integrate themselves and their activity into a natural ecological niche, striving to control their impact on the natural environment by understanding and engineering their place in it. . . . The New Ecology is persuasive in its argument that conscientious stewardship is more productive than an attempt to separate humans from the environment completely. . . .

Conversational in tone, non-ecologists will comprehend the book easily, and ecologists will be interested in the fresh concepts."--Foreword

The New Ecology underlines the essential role that humans can play in shaping what the Earth will look like in the coming century. Ecologists can no longer act alone and Schmitz acknowledges that. . . . This book is an excellent introduction to the new ecology. It helps us understand that we humans--and all of nature--are intertwined and that we have to work with nature for a sustainable world. And it offers hope that change is possible."--Arab News

"I recommend [The New Ecology] for high school students in an ecology or environmental science class, or for college students. It was easy to read, but, unlike a textbook, interwove examples through several chapters. I found it a great resource, especially for teachers."--NSTA Recommends

"An excellent introduction to the new ecology."--Lisa Kaaki, Arab News

"Schmitz uses short, fascinating case studies to explain how a science that once focused solely on nature has expanded to encompass the global socio-ecological system in which we humans and all of nature are entwined. A curative to simplistic or overly pessimistic thinking, The New Ecology explains why environmental problems are so complex--but also why that doesn't mean they are unsolvable."--Emma Marris, author of Rambunctious Garden: Saving Nature in a Post-Wild World

"In this book, Os Schmitz has succeeded in presenting a user-friendly explanation of the science of ecology as an ally to human beings striving for a more sustainable world. The new ecology helps us fully understand that we are a part of nature, and that nature provides essential life-support services. This book inspires us to work with nature to ensure that this life support will be available to us and to future generations."--Julia Marton-Lefèvre, former director general of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

"The New Ecology is an indispensable book for all those interested in the flourishing of the life systems of our planet. Os Schmitz brings together the latest ecological thinking on the interdependence of the natural and human worlds. He has illuminated these interconnections with lyrical and engaging stories. A must read!"--Mary Evelyn Tucker, coauthor of Journey of the Universe

"At last: a wonderful introduction to the new ecology and its promise and imperative to reconcile nature and humanity to mutual benefit. The New Ecology is a remarkable distillation that should be required reading for all."--Thomas E. Lovejoy, George Mason

University" "The New Ecology brings together the many recent developments in ecological thought and provides substantial treatments of some of the major traditional underpinnings of ecology. To my knowledge, there is no other book that covers this material in such a cohesive and synthetic manner." --Harold Mooney, coeditor of *Ecosystems of California* "Timely, well written, and easy to read. Schmitz argues that the science of ecology has undergone a major change, one in which the idea that there are two separate worlds on Earth--the natural and the human--is being abandoned. The new ecology seeks to ensure that people can continue to benefit from nature without denying future generations the same opportunities." --Shahid Naeem, coeditor of *Biodiversity, Ecosystem Functioning, and Human Wellbeing: An Ecological and Economic Perspective*

This is a brilliant, well-timed, little masterpiece. Oswald Schmitz cuts right through the debate over a good anthropocene vs. a bad anthropocene, offering a new paradigm of understanding that transcends traditional ecological thinking, which, in so many respects, has become a rebuke of man. In place of this rebuke, Os presents --in simple, visceral and readable prose-- another alternative, a third way, between the quest to return to pristine nature (the rebuke of modernity) and the journey to transcend it (the celebration of modernity). This third way of thinking is the best hope we have of generating a habitable future. Oz makes clear that we needn't be afraid of transgressing natural limits nor working within them. He inspires with a call for human-directed opportunity. And by book's end, has us believing that we can do it, will do it, and that, in fact, the new era for people and planet driven by this third way of thinking has already begun. I loved this book. couldn't put it down. I recommend it highly and it will now be required reading in my classes.

Great book for anyone curious about how human and environmental prosperity are intertwined. For transparency, I know Dr. Schmitz well and am very familiar with his research and academic writing. I am thoroughly impressed by this book's ability to distill complex ecological and social issues into a narrative that anyone can read and appreciate. I enjoyed the balance of realism and optimism in furthering the human endeavor while providing for healthy ecosystems. It's definitely readable for a broad audience and provides a lot of examples I think are easily accessible for many people. Finally, Dr. Schmitz shows deep respect for interdisciplinary work in this book. He not only draws from his vast experience in community ecology and evolutionary biology but he brings important insight from religious studies, industrial ecology, and the social sciences to more holistically discuss how we work to achieve sustainability within socio-ecological systems.

Ecology is the science of the living world, and Oswald J. Schmitz is one of its most distinguished practitioners; his experimental and theoretical research over the past three decades has expanded the frontiers of the discipline and (among other things) changed our understanding of how top predators affect not just their prey, but whole ecosystems. A hallmark of Schmitz's scientific work is its broad outlook -- that all threads are somehow interwoven in the rich tapestry of life, and that tugging on one will change the picture in those that remain. In this engaging book, Schmitz presents this outlook to a much broader audience, providing an introduction to modern ecology that is both personal and authoritative. This is a great book for anybody curious about the natural world, how it works, and how scientists have made increasing sense of it. I suspect it will be especially useful for those who are just starting to explore the field, or who are searching for a scientific foundation from which to better understand the continual barrage of media reports about climate change, the 'Sixth mass extinction', and other looming environmental crises. Although Schmitz sees environmental degradation as an existential threat to both nature and humankind, the tone of his book is distinctly hopeful. In lieu of despair over the state of the world, we instead come to understand one expert's cautious optimism that the problems, though severe, can be curbed and their worst consequences averted. In Schmitz's view, enlightenment is the path to salvation: by understanding the rules that govern the assembly of any machine with a lot of moving parts (nature included), we can not only tell when it is broken, but also know better how to fix it. And as we progress through Schmitz's guided tour of what he calls the New Ecology, it becomes increasingly clear that we are on the brink of major breakthroughs in ecological understanding, as fresh concepts and new technologies combine with time-tested wisdom in a potentially explosive brew. Yet the fate of the New Ecology rests at least as much with the people as much as it does with scientists, because science can only proceed with public understanding and support. To that end, books like Schmitz's are essential, and reading this one will help any citizen, regardless of his or her scientific background, engage in an informed way with ongoing public discussions and debates about environmental issues. You might consider gifting a copy to your Mayor or Congressperson, while you're at it.

Terrific book by Dr. Schmitz that details how ecology and ecologists are adapting to break down the human/nature divide and understand humanity and ecosystems' dynamic interplay. I highly recommend the book for anyone interested in better understanding how humans are changing ecosystems and how the scientists studying ecology are beginning to form new insights into the critical services that nature provides. Dr. Schmitz writes clearly and passionately and this book is well suited for all audiences.

Professor Schmitz provides the reader with a very clear, insightful and practical understanding of our planet's finite natural resources, our worldwide interconnectedness, and the consequences of our exploitation of our natural resources. This book was enlightening, sobering and hopeful as he explains that our situation is not irreversible and that sustainability is achievable. Michael

A serious ecology book that's actually enjoyable to read! I was lucky enough to read a copy of this brilliant book before the release date. What a brilliant, timely book Mr Schmitz has produced. As humans begin taking over the natural world in unavoidable ways, we need a new way of understanding our planet - and this book breaks down the evolving science of ecology. We are moments away from not only reshaping our earth in irreversible ways, we're also on the brink of a human-propagated, mass extinction event. It's not all doom and gloom - the author also includes a suite of efforts to conserve our ecology. Extremely well-researched and well-argued. The great thing about this book is its style - the author has chosen to write in a plain English, easy to understand, accessible format. Finally a meaningful ecology book written for everyone. There's many books out there discussing the Anthropocene; if you're going to only read one book on the topic, choose this one.

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