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Review: Invasive Species in the Pacific Northwest By P.D. Boersma, S.H. Reichard & A.N. Van Buren (Eds.)

Reviewed by Elery Hamilton-Smith
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P.D. Boersma, S.H. Reichard & A.N. Van Buren (Eds.). *Invasive Species in the Pacific Northwest*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2006. 285pp. ISBN 0-295-98596-8 (pbk) \$US29.95.

This is a very professionally compiled reference book and is beautifully produced and printed. There is a strange sense of ambiguity in the sheer beauty of the presentation alongside of the appalling problem being discussed. Regrettably, its utility inevitably diminishes in inverse proportion to the reader's distance from Seattle. But it provides an excellent model for a comparable book dealing with any other region of the world and hence is worthy of attention. .

The book opens with several very clear contextual chapters on invasive problems and ends with several useful appendices, including the IUCN list of the 100 worst invasive species of the world. The damage wrought by many of the species discussed is indeed frightening. The Nile Perch, introduced to Africa in order to improve fishing, exterminated over 200 endemic species. The water hyacinth clogs wetlands all over the world; a snake has virtually eliminated the birds of Guam. These are only three examples of hundreds that might be cited. Worst of all, most such species were introduced deliberately by well-meaning people.

The major part of the book is a catalogue of the endangered species of the Pacific Northwest. Each species is dealt with under the headings of species description and current range, impact upon communities and native species, control methods and management, life history and species overview and history of invasiveness, together with a photograph and a map of distribution within the region. The appendices include a comprehensive bibliography.

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