

One of the most interesting and vexing problems in ecology is how distinctly different communities of plants and animals can occur in the same ecosystem. The theory of these systems, known as multiple stable states, is well understood, but whether multiple stable states actually exist in nature has remained a hotly debated subject.

*Multiple Stable States in Natural Ecosystems* provides a broad and synthetic critique of recent advances in theory and new experimental evidence. Modern models of systems with multiple stable states are placed in historical context. Current theories are covered in a rigorous fashion with the specific goal of identifying testable predictions about multiple stable states. The book provides a more synthetic, more critical, and broader analysis of multiple stable states in natural ecosystems than any previous review. By making the theory more transparent and the analysis of the evidence more comparative, the book broadens the discussion about multiple stable states, leading to a more general consideration of the interplay between theory and experiment in community ecology and environmental management.

This accessible research monograph will be suitable for graduate students taking courses in community ecology, theoretical ecology, and restoration ecology. It will also be a valuable reference for professional ecologists and environmental managers requiring a concise overview of the topic.

Cover photograph: The cover image of a rockweed (*Ascophyllum nodosum*) stand was taken by the author at one of his study sites near Hockamock Head on Swan's Island, Maine, USA.

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