



Critical Transitions in Nature and Society: (Princeton Studies in Complexity)

Marten Scheffer

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How do we explain the remarkably abrupt changes that sometimes occur in nature and society--and can we predict why and when they happen? This book offers a comprehensive introduction to critical transitions in complex systems--the radical changes that happen at tipping points when thresholds are passed.

Marten Scheffer accessibly describes the dynamical systems theory behind critical transitions, covering catastrophe theory, bifurcations, chaos, and more. He gives examples of critical transitions in lakes, oceans, terrestrial ecosystems, climate, evolution, and human societies. And he demonstrates how to deal with these transitions, offering practical guidance on how to predict tipping points, how to prevent "bad" transitions, and how to promote critical transitions that work for us and not against us. Scheffer shows the time is ripe for understanding and managing critical transitions in the vast and complex systems in which we live. This book can also serve as a textbook and includes a detailed appendix with equations.

- Provides an accessible introduction to dynamical systems theory
- Covers critical transitions in lakes, oceans, terrestrial ecosystems, the climate, evolution, and human societies
- Explains how to predict tipping points
- Offers strategies for preventing "bad" transitions and triggering "good" ones
- Features an appendix with equations

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