Keystone Nations
Indigenous Peoples and Salmon across the North Pacific
Edited by Benedict J. Colombi and James F. Brooks

2012. 336 pp., 11 color plates, 5 maps, 4 tables, notes, references, index, 6 x 9
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The histories and futures of Indigenous peoples and salmon are inextricably bound across the vast ocean expanse and rugged coastlines of the North Pacific. Keystone Nations addresses this entanglement and the marriage of the biological and social sciences that have led to the research discussed in this book. Salmon stocks and Indigenous peoples across the northern Pacific region represent a significance beyond their size in maintaining the viability and legitimacy of ecological and political systems. Both species’ futures are simultaneously a matter of the conservation concerns of natural scientists and the political agenda of Indigenous sovereignty movements that arc across the northern hemisphere. If wild salmon vanish in the North Pacific, as they largely have in the North Atlantic, their absence will herald the cascading failure of a complete marine system. If Indigenous peoples vanish from the North Pacific, as they largely have in the North Atlantic, their absence will sound the failure of the world’s dominant political powers to recognize the human right to cultural expression and survival.

Advance praise for Keystone Nations
“Keystone Nations examines unique coastal cultures that have managed fisheries for several millennia. The Itelmen, Koryak, Aleut, Sugpiaq, and Nimiipuu peoples have all made their lives from our oceans. This book warns of what can happen if we don’t change how we manage our harvesting of fish from the ocean. Ask yourself, how can we change our fisheries’ policies so they are sustainable for our global community? Do you want your children’s children to have fish to eat too?”—Sven Haakanson, Executive Director Alutiiq Museum

“Few truly wild species are as closely interwoven with human culture as Pacific salmon. They are the foundation of both sustenance and cultural identity for hundreds of local communities from California to the Korean Peninsula. Salmon are the ultimate keystone species. Keystone Nations describes for the first time the ancient and complex relationship between wild salmon and the human communities that depend on them across the vast North Pacific arc.”—Guido Rahr, President, Wild Salmon Center


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