



Environmental Science: Toward A Sustainable Future (10th Edition)

By Richard T. Wright

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As the field of environmental science continues to evolve, this highly readable guide presents a full spectrum of views and information to help readers evaluate issues and make informed decisions. Reflects the changing environmental scene worldwide, with a wide range of viewpoints and information from the latest sources. Places new emphasis on issues such as emerging diseases like avian flu; the 4th World Water Forum; the “gene revolution;” the Endangered Species Act controversy; restoration of the Everglades, and the 2005 Global Forest Resources Assessment. Strives for a balance between pure science and the political, social, and historical perspectives of environmental affairs. For those interested in learning more about environmental science.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

Environmental Science: Toward A Sustainable Future, 9/e focuses on the question, "What will it take to move our civilization toward a long-term sustainable relationship with the natural world?" Its goal is to engage and inform students so they can critically evaluate environmental issues and make informed decisions about their environment.

Three main categories define how the author works to achieve this goal:

- Critical thinking
- Applications
- Resources for instructors and students

Critical Thinking: An essential part of teaching environmental science is helping students distinguish sound science from junk science. It becomes increasingly important as students learn to evaluate scientific information and begin to make informed decisions about the environment. *Environmental Science* employs the *Strategic* themes of *sound science*, *sustainability*, and *stewardship* to help students conceptualize the task of forging a sustainable future for the environment.

Applications: Environmental science is more than just knowing information about the environment; it's about how students should act toward the environment. *Environmental Science* employs the new Global City CD-ROM, Environment on the Web Exercises, and Making a Difference Exercises to provide tangible, assignable activities that students can use to apply the information they are learning and to put their critical-thinking skills into practice.

Student Resources: To fully support students in their learning efforts, this book is accompanied by a strong set of student resources to support students' efforts to learn the material. These resources include an online study guide (www.prenhall.com/wright), a printed study guide, and the student lecture notebook note-taking guide. Please see the book's preface for more information about any of these study aids.

About the Author

Richard T. Wright is Professor Emeritus of Biology at Gordon College in Massachusetts, where he taught environmental science for 28 years. He earned a B.A. from Rutgers University and a M.A. and Ph.D. in biology from Harvard University. For many years Wright received grant support from the National Science Foundation for his work in marine microbiology, and in 1981, he was a founding faculty member of Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies in Michigan, where he also served as Academic Chairman for 11 years. He is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Au Sable Institute, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science Affiliation. In 1996, Wright was appointed a Fulbright Scholar to Daystar University in Kenya, where he taught for two months. He is a member of many environmental organizations, including The Nature Conservancy, Habitat for Humanity, the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Audubon Society, and a supporting member of the Trustees of Reservations. Wright continues to be actively involved in writing and speaking about the environment. He and his wife Ann recently moved to Byfield, Massachusetts, and they drive a Toyota Camry hybrid vehicle as a means of

reducing their environmental impact. Wright spends his spare time hiking, fishing, golfing, and enjoying his three children and seven grandchildren.

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As we plunge into a new century and a new millennium, the environment is being called on to supply the growing needs of an expanding human population in the developing countries and increasing affluence in the developed countries. In many areas, we are already taking more from Earth's systems than they can provide in a sustainable fashion. Our ecological footprint weighs heavily on Earth's natural resources—the "ecosystem capital" that provides the goods and services that sustain human life and economic well-being. Also, there are still billions of people who are not adequately housed, fed, or provided with health care or a paying job. Yet we must, as soon as possible, make a transition to a sustainable civilization, one in which a stable human population recognizes the finite limits of Earth's systems to produce resources and absorb wastes, and acts accordingly. This is hard to picture at present, but it is the only future that makes any sense. If we fail to achieve it by our deliberate actions, the natural world will impose it on us in highly undesirable ways.

Environmental science stands at the interface between humans and Earth and explores the interactions and relations between them. This relationship will need to be considered in virtually all future decision making. This text considers a full spectrum of views and information in an effort to establish a solid base of understanding and a sustainable formula for the future. What you have in your hands is a readable guide and up-to-date source of information that will help you to explore the issues in more depth. It will also help you to connect them to a framework of ideas and values that will equip you to become part of the solution to many of the environmental problems confronting us.

As the field of environmental science evolves and continues to change, so has this text. In this new edition, I hope to continue to reflect accurately the field of environmental science; in so doing, I have constantly attempted to accomplish each of the following objectives:

- To write in a style that makes learning about environmental science both interesting to read and easy to understand, without overwhelming the student with details.
- To present well-established scientific principles and concepts that form the knowledge base for an understanding of our interactions with the natural environment.
- To organize the text in a way that promotes sequential learning, yet allows individual chapters to stand on their own.
- To address all of the major environmental issues that confront our society and help to define the subject matter of environmental science.
- To present the latest information available by making full use of the resources of the Internet, books, and journals.
- To give an assessment of options or progress in solving environmental problems.
- To support the text with excellent supplements for the instructor and the student that strongly enhance the teaching and learning processes.

Because I believe that learning how to live in the environment is one of the most important subjects in any student's educational experience, I have made every effort to put in your hands a book that will help the study of environmental science come alive.

A Guide to the Ninth Edition of Environmental Science

Overview

The **ninth edition** is more than just an update. The main new feature of this edition is the extensive use of **six unifying themes** that help the reader to focus on the significance of the many issues that are presented. The themes of **sustainability**, **sound science**, and **stewardship** are retained from the eighth edition and now identified as **strategic themes**. To these I have added three more themes, which I call **integrative themes**: **ecosystem capital**, **policy and politics**, and **globalization**. These six themes provide important threads linking the different subjects and chapters of the text. To make the connections clear, I have added at the end of each chapter a section called **Revisiting the Themes**, where each theme is discussed and connected to the chapter matter. In this edition, I continue to provide a balance between pure science and the political, social, and historical perspectives of environmental affairs. I am also careful to reflect differences in interpretation of environmental concerns where they exist, while maintaining the standard of sound science for judging those concerns.

Most important, the ninth edition reflects the changing environmental scene in the United States, as well as in the rest of the world. Information from new books, journal articles, and Internet-based reports from governmental and nongovernmental organizations has been incorporated into every chapter. New illustrations have been introduced—69 new photos and 49 new diagrams.

Each chapter opens with a case study or an illustrative story to catch the reader's interest and lead into the chapter's subject. A new feature in this edition is the **Guest Essays**; these provide challenging insights from the perspective of professionals in their fields. Another new feature is the companion CD, **Global City**. This is a set of 9 exercises built around I* concept of a large city struggling with many of the environmental problems presented in the book: soil erosion, water pollution, energy use, urban sprawl, and municipal waste, among others. Those familiar with the eighth edition will see a new, crisp layout, with the use of many more **subheads**. These enable students to read the text in clearly identified bite-sized segments.

Introduction

After taking a look at the plight of Easter Island, **Chapter 1 (Introduction: Toward a Sustainable Future)** presents a global environmental picture, starting with the concept of the ecological footprint. In discussing ecosystem decline, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment is presented as a new effort to understand the links between human well-being and the goods and services provided by ecosystems. The chapter then introduces the three **strategic themes**: **sustainability**—the practical goal that our interactions with the natural world should be working toward; **stewardship**—the ethical and moral framework that should inform our public and private actions; and **sound science**—the basis for our understanding of how the world works and how human systems interact with it. Each theme is thoroughly defined and explored. Following this, the three **integrative themes** are introduced in depth: **ecosystem capital**—the natural and managed ecosystems that provide essential goods and services to human enterprises; **policy and politics**—the human decisions that determine what happens to the natural world and the political processes that lead to those decisions; and **globalization**—the accelerating interconnectedness of human activities, ideas, and cultures. A new Earth Watch essay critiques Bjorn Lomborg's controversial book, *The Skeptical Environmentalist*.

Part One. Ecosystems: Basic Units of the Natural World

Part One (Chapters 2-4) explores natural ecosystems—what they are, how they function, and how they change. I no longer employ the five Sustainability Principles (an approach that has outlived its usefulness), although the actual processes they drew attention to are still very much in place. Chapter 5 (Ecosystems and

Evolutionary Change) from the older editions has been removed, but material on natural selection and speciation has been kept in **Chapter 4 (Ecosystems: How They Change)**. Some of the new material that appears in these chapters includes the work of the Heinz Center on the State of the Nation's Ecosystems, the concepts of top-down and bottom-up regulation of populations, and a guest essay by biologist David Lahti on the village weaverbird. The end of Chapter 4 returns to the idea of the ecological footprint to address the issue of human carrying capacity.

Part Two. The Human Population

Chapter 5 (The Human Population: Dimensions) first looks at the dynamics of the human population. The pressures on natural systems as a result of the growth of that population are examined, with a focus on the differences between the developed and developing countries. The chapter ends with the **demographic transition**—the shift from high birth and death rates to low birth and death rates that has brought stable populations to the industrialized world. **Chapter 6 (Population and Development)** describes the developing countries' difficulties in moving through this transition. A major new focus in the material on development is the **Millennium Development Goals**, presented in the context of the Human Development Report of 2002. Development aid and the World Bank are explored in detail, and the political controversy over the so-called "gag rule" is detailed. A guest essay by economist Chris Barren discusses his concept of the "poverty trap" in the context of Kenyan subsistence farmers and natural resource management.

Part Three. Renewable Resources

Part Three (Chapters 7-11) addresses the science and policies surrounding our use of the natural resources of water, soil, agriculture, and wildlife. Issues concerning the use of such resources in food production, forest growth, and fisheries management are examined in light of increasing population growth and increasing pressure on those resources: again, we all-the-while keep our eyes on sustainability. Some examples of issues receiving a **new emphasis** are: the Aral Sea as a major environmental disaster, the "water wars" of the Western United States, a challenge to the conventional approach to measuring erosion (GLASOD), a detailed look at genetically modified food and the controversies it has generated, the Klamath River controversy, restoration of the Everglades ecosystem, the Bush administration's "Healthy Forests initiative," and a -new Glo...

Users Review

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