

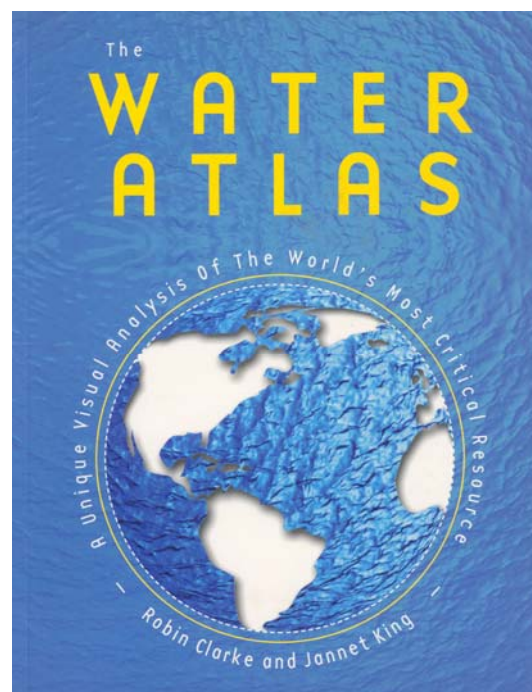
title **THE WATER ATLAS**
A Unique Visual Analysis of the World's
Most Critical Resource

author **Robin Clarke and Jannet King**
Robin Clarke is the author of many books on the environment, editor of UNEP's publications *Global Environment Outlook 2000* and *2002*, and editor of World Meteorological Organization's *World Climate News*.

Jannet King has worked for many years editing and researching environmental, political, and historical atlases.

category World water issues

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who will be interested in this book?

Anyone interested in an overview of the state of world water presented in an easy to grasp colour graphic form will find this book right on the mark. This is a good first-read of world water issues for anyone hesitant to tackle one of the more in-depth books on the subject.

why read this book?

A very easy way to grasp world water issues, thirty-one full colour two-page world maps and graphs, with some accompanying text, give the reader a quick overview of each issue. This book is a good companion to other more detailed, text-based books on world water issues.

review / outline by Lance Brown, vistadelsol@telus.net

Overview

This book is unique in its presentation of world water issues in a compact, highly illustrated format that makes it very easy to grasp the information. As the title states, it uses a world atlas format (full colour) to convey the many world water issues.

There is an index, chapter references, glossary, and useful sources.

Chapters & Points of Interest

Part 1: A Finite Resource

Fresh Out of Water

- only 2.5% of the world's water is fresh

- more than two-thirds of this is unavailable for human use

More People, Less Water

- more than one-third of the world's population is short of water

Rising Demand

- every year more fresh water is withdrawn for use in agriculture, industry, and the home

Robbing the Bank

- more than one-quarter of people worldwide rely on groundwater for drinking, but the stocks are being used faster than they are being replaced

Part 2: Uses and Abuses

Water at Home

- only 10% of all water withdrawn is intended for domestic purposes, but the amount used varies widely between countries

Water for Food

- nearly 70% of all freshwater withdrawals are used for agriculture, yet millions of people remain malnourished

Irrigation

- irrigated land is usually more productive than non-irrigated land, but poorly managed irrigation can lead to waterlogged or infertile soil

Agriculture Pollution

- farming on an industrial scale, and the use of chemicals to boost yields, is building up problems for the world's water supplies

Water for Industry

- newly industrialized countries will need an increasing amount of water over the next 25 years, but without proper controls they will further pollute their water supplies

Industrial Pollution

- as industrial pollutants make the world's waters murkier, their long-term effects on the environment and to underground aquifers are becoming ever clearer

Water for Power

- hydropower is the world's most important source of renewable energy and provides nearly one-fifth of the world's electricity

The Damned

- some 45,000 large dams worldwide affect 6 out of 10 major rivers, and have caused about 80 million people to be forcibly relocated

Part 3: Water Health

Access to Water

- over 1 billion people are still without easy access to a reliable source of water

Sanitation

- better sanitation is vital in the fight against disease, and is the starting point for improving the quality of people's lives

Dirty Water Kills

- dirty water causes 1.7 million deaths each year

- this is the equivalent of 10 jumbo jets crashing every day – 90% of passengers are children

Harbouring Disease

- water is still a breeding ground for some of the world's deadliest killers

Insidious Contamination

- microscopic amounts of chemicals in drinking water can build up in the body and have a devastating effect on health

Part 4: Re-shaping the Natural World

Diverting the Flow

- few of the world's major rivers flow freely – most have been harnessed to provide energy and irrigation
- some are being diverted hundreds of kilometers from their natural course, with devastating environmental and human costs

Draining the Wetlands

- wetlands help keep the world's fresh water resources healthy
- have been seen as wastelands that can be drained and developed

Groundwater Mining

- the world's aquifers are being mined
- although immense, they are not bottomless, and in many areas water levels are sinking

Expanding Cities

- rapid growth of cities is putting an increasing strain on already over-stretched water resources

Desperate Measures

- transforming salt water into fresh water
- transporting fresh water to where it is needed

Floods

- floods kill thousands every year and ruin the lives of millions more
- floods are becoming more frequent

Droughts

- lives and livelihood of one billion people, a sixth of the world's population, are threatened by droughts and desertification

Part 5: Water Conflicts

The Need for Co-operation

- sharing water supplies requires interaction between countries
- water can cement friendships or broadens rifts

Pressure Points

- some water resources are increasing political tensions between and within countries

Weapon of War

- deliberate destruction of dams and pipelines, and the contamination of drinking water

Part 6: Ways Forward

The Water Business

- getting water to those who need it is a problem for governments
- for commercial enterprises it is a major opportunity

Conserving Supplies

- fresh water should be used in the most effective way possible

Setting Priorities

- water resources need to be managed in an integrated way

Vision of the Future

- predicted future water use scenarios

Part 7: Tables

Needs and Resources

Uses and Abuses

other review **From Publishers Weekly**

Water, water everywhere? Yes, but...as the authors of this atlas graphically demonstrate, even in water-rich areas of the world, clean water is a finite resource. And for one billion people—one-sixth of the world's population—fresh, clean water is virtually unavailable. Plentiful maps, graphs and tables illustrate the cycle of precipitation and condensation, the percentage of cropland watered by irrigation around the world and the way increasing use of chemicals in agriculture is destroying freshwater sources. A section called "Re-Shaping the Natural World" examines the destructive role of dams and other water systems, while another section looks at the potential for international conflict over scarce water resources in regions such as the already volatile Middle East. But, looking to the future, the authors (Clarke is an editor for the World Meteorological Organization and King has worked on many environmental atlases) don't see privatization and the market as offering more equitable water distribution. Water is a human right, not a commodity, they argue; they recommend "integrated water management and public participation" as the keys to solving the world's water problems. This concise atlas is a useful guide for students or anyone who wants to visualize the world's water supplies and their use and abuse.

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Book Description: A comprehensive charting of the global water industry.

In the next ten minutes, forty children around the world will have died because they didn't have enough clean water or sanitation facilities.

In the world today, over a billion people lack safe drinking water. As tension mounts between states competing for diminished supplies of "blue gold," the global water industry is expected to become a trillion-dollar-a-year operation within a decade.

Up until now, no single publication has given shape and meaning to statistics about water use, re-use, and control. With a range of maps of startling clarity and richness of detail, *The Water Atlas* brings together the latest findings to show water distribution worldwide, the real cost of use in water-rich countries, and the dangers of a future where privatization and profit dictate availability. The atlas covers a wide range of topics, from consumption and scarcity to areas of political tension and looming catastrophes. Including detailed profiles of vulnerable regions—such as California, the Middle East, and India—as well as bold summaries of the global picture, *The Water Atlas* will be a unique resource for general readers as well as health professionals, advocates, and students.

“Water, water, everywhere, And all the boards did shrink; Water, water, everywhere, Nor any drop to drink.” • Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Water, that is to say freshwater, is arguably the most important resource of the ATLAS world. Without water to cook, our meals consist only of berries and charred meat. Without water to make Dyes, our sails and clothing remain drab and dull. Without water, we cannot explore beyond our home islands. The Water Atlas currently has information for over 7,700 waterbodies, including data from more than 36,000 unique sampling stations provided by over 300 data sources. The amount of information available within the Water Atlas is too vast to list in its entirety. Data is imported directly from many of the federal and state agencies that