

**Parikh, Jyoti and Hemant Datye (eds.). 2003. Sustainable Management of Wetlands: Biodiversity and Beyond. Sage Publications. New Delhi, India/Thousand Oaks, California. Cloth. Price: US \$64.95. 428 pp. + index**

The editors of this volume have assembled a multidisciplinary team to address the subject of wetland management. This delicate zone which lies between land and water systems and carry out important ecological role of immense environmental and economic significance must be protected and conserved in perpetuity.

Haphazard development, especially in the developing countries, has posed a monumental threat to the conservation of wetlands. Land use demands for housing, transportation commercial and industrial activities have accelerated in developing countries and the conversion of wetlands to accommodate the demand by developers have escalated and thus the rise in the demise of wetlands and all the ecological resources it contains.

The problem of wetland disappearance is worldwide. The common culprit for their disappearance is unwise development. The demise of the wetlands is a serious problem because these ecological habitats contain enormous biodiversity of great importance for the survival of the human race. Nowhere are they more at risk than in the developing areas of the world where they serve as sources of food for the poor. Development, which is carried out by the private and public sectors, threatens the existence of wetlands, as we know it. They also serve the purpose of cleansing the impurities of our world due to human activities and when they are properly and adequately managed, they can be great places for ecological research and thus provide revenue for communities and people. The protection and conservation of wetlands are essential components of the sustainability of the human race. This book, focuses on that very point by emphasizing the significance wetlands, their ecological linkages, their demises through development efforts, how to monitor their health through planning and policy, their economic significance, management and assessment, citizen participation in wetlands management, valuation of biodiversity in protected areas and strategy for protecting wetlands.

The editors have managed to pull off a monumental task of putting together an important volume which addresses a timely issue of wetlands protection and conservation. The sustainability of wetlands must be tackled by making sure that the public and government officials understand the role wetlands play in the world. Although this book focuses on India, there is no doubt that other parts of the world can learn from the approaches of the case studies and the excellent work presented in this volume. India, like the rest of Asia has two faces. The first is that its economic progress and its democratic institutions are envied by the rest of the developing world. The

second face of India is that of deep and massive poverty and environmental destruction. African countries are often compared with Asian countries as basket cases of poor and bad economic development. But it must be emphasized that 675 million Asians live in absolute poverty and this number is more than twice the 325 million absolute poor in Sub-Saharan Africa. Asia's agricultural lands are being converted at a great pace and its wetlands are being destroyed. This book exposes India's problems. African countries can certainly learn from India's experience.

This book is recommended as a resource book for university libraries that have programs in environmental studies, the biological sciences and third world development.

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