

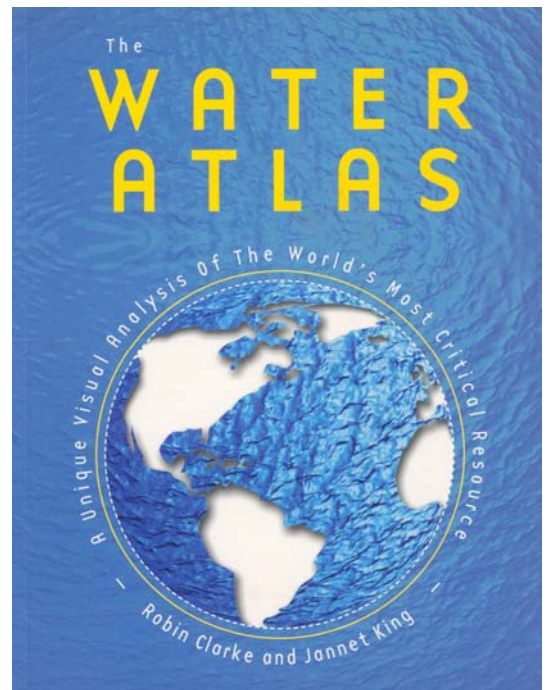
**title**            **THE WATER ATLAS**  
**A Unique Visual Analysis of the World's**  
**Most Critical Resource**

**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](mailto: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- every year more fresh water is withdrawn for use in agriculture, industry, and the home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.