

## **Review: Macmillan Encyclopedia of the Environment**

Edited by Kellert, Stephen R.

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Kellert, Stephen R., ed. *Macmillan Encyclopedia of the Environment*. New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1997. 6 vol., individually paged, bibliography, indexes. U.S.\$300 hardbound ISBN: 0-02-897381-X (set).

Ahhh. I DO like encyclopedias.

A year or so ago, I reviewed *Conservation and Environmentalism: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Robert Paheke, a one-volume encyclopedia of the environment, for [EGJ](#). Now, I get to review the even more enjoyable *Macmillan Encyclopedia of the Environment*.

Heaven.

This six-volume set is intended for "young readers" (middle school, I assume), but high schoolers, college students, and many "older readers" will find it useful as well if all they need is the basics of an environmental topic presented clearly and concisely.

"The (encyclopedia) offers almost 600 useful and informative articles about how the environment works and how people relate to the natural world." (Introduction, pg. ix.) Also included are: brief biographies of environmental thinkers and doers (although one of my favorite thinkers, Edward Abbey, is omitted); an end-of-the set listing of environmental organizations (North American, although some of them operate world wide) and agencies (United States agencies only, although U.N. environmental agencies and activities are covered in the body of the encyclopedia); a so-so bibliography; excellent subject and general indexes; and a detailed chronology of environmental events and legislation in the United States.

I make no claim to have read every one of the 600 articles, but I sampled a dozen or so from every volume (on topics I am familiar with and those I am not). While coverage of some was a bit simpler than I might have preferred, I saw none that omitted the basic details. (However, for those who might want to know more on a topic, I could

wish for a "Suggestions for Further Reading" section at the end of at least the major entries. Articles were well cross-referenced to other entries in the encyclopedia, but that is not the same.)

Unlike *Conservation and Environmentalism: An Encyclopedia*, which was intended for adult readers, I did not feel that these entries had been heavily edited and squeezed to fit the space. Topics were discussed clearly (if briefly), with smooth transitions from one sub topic to the next.

Under the heading "Everglades National Park," (vol.2, p. 86), is a brief description of the park and the Everglades as a whole, followed by an accurate description of the "Threats to the Everglades" (p.87). "Everglades Flora and Fauna" (p. 88), "Agricultural Effects," and "Saving the Everglades" round out a brief, but satisfactory presentation on the plight of Florida's Everglades. (However, many readers, wanting to know more about the fascinating Everglades, might have liked a reference at least to Marjorie Stoneman Douglas' River of Grass.)

The article (and the encyclopedia as a whole) is well and amply illustrated with photos and maps. A nice touch, scattered through the six volumes, is "The Language of the Environment" -- small boxes with glossary entries defining terms used on those pages (the "Language" entries are all indexed in the excellent general index found at the end of vol. 6).

All in all -- from "Abiotic Factors" (should have been "Edward Abbey") to "Zooplankton" -- the Macmillan Encyclopedia of the Environment would be an excellent addition to any school's library (especially in North America), and a good buy for anyone with children who are environmentally curious.

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