



Humanity's Footprint: Momentum, Impact, and Our Global Environment

Walter K Dodds

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For the first time in history, humans have exceeded the sustaining capacity of Earth's global ecosystems. Our expanding footprint has tremendous momentum, and the insidious explosion of human impact creates a shockwave that threatens ecosystems worldwide for decades-possibly centuries.

Walter K. Dodds depicts in clear, nontechnical terms the root causes and global environmental effects of human behavior. He describes trends in population growth, resource use, and global environmental impacts of the past two centuries, such as greenhouse effects, ozone depletion, water pollution, and species extinctions and introductions. Dodds also addresses less familiar developments, such as the spread of antibiotic resistant genes in bacteria and the concentration of pesticides in the Arctic and other remote ecosystems. He identifies fundamental human activities that have irreversible effects on the environment and draws on recent social science and game theory results to explain why people use more than their share. Past behavior indicates that as resources grow scarce, humans will escalate their use of what remains instead of managing their consumption. *Humanity's Footprint* paints a lively but ultimately sobering picture of our environmental predicament. Dodds calls for a consilient approach to socioenvironmental restoration that draws on new thinking from across disciplines to develop sustainable solutions to global environmental problems.

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