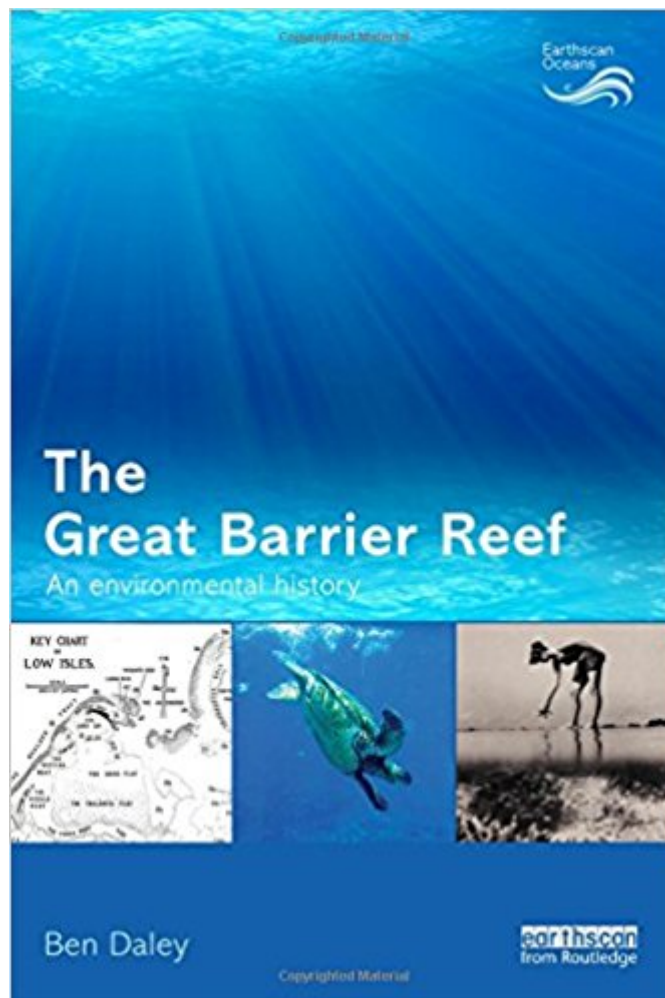




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The Great Barrier Reef: An Environmental History (Earthscan Oceans)



Synopsis

The Great Barrier Reef is located along the coast of Queensland in north-east Australia and is the world's largest coral reef ecosystem. Designated a World Heritage Area, it has been subject to increasing pressures from tourism, fishing, pollution and climate change, and is now protected as a marine park. This book provides an original account of the environmental history of the Great Barrier Reef, based on extensive archival and oral history research. It documents and explains the main human impacts on the Great Barrier Reef since European settlement in the region, focusing particularly on the century from 1860 to 1960 which has not previously been fully documented, yet which was a period of unprecedented exploitation of the ecosystem and its resources. The book describes the main changes in coral reefs, islands and marine wildlife that resulted from those impacts. In more recent decades, human impacts on the Great Barrier Reef have spread, accelerated and intensified, with implications for current management and conservation practices. There is now better scientific understanding of the threats faced by the ecosystem. Yet these modern challenges occur against a background of historical levels of exploitation that is little-known, and that has reduced the ecosystem's resilience. The author provides a compelling narrative of how one of the world's most iconic and vulnerable ecosystems has been exploited and degraded, but also how some early conservation practices emerged.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Through a meticulous analysis of archival materials, official sources, publications, photographs and oral history evidence, this book documents for the first time how the colonisation of Queensland and the resultant growth of primary industries have contributed to the decline of the Great Barrier Reef. It provides important historical evidence that demonstrates that the detrimental impacts of increased human population, urban development and agricultural expansion in the Great Barrier Reef catchment area will have to be ameliorated to increase the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area to the ravages of climate change." From the Foreword by Professor Helene Marsh, Distinguished Professor of Environmental Science, James Cook University, Townsville, Australia "The well-written text is the result of his doctoral dissertation work. It will speak to anyone interested in the potential impact of human land use, climate change, and environmental degradation on one of Earth's remaining treasured ecosystems. Part of the "Earthscan Oceans" series. Summing Up: Highly recommended. All academic, general, and professional library collections." CHOICE, L. S. Rigg, Northern Illinois University

Ben Daley is Lecturer in Environmental Management in the Centre for Development, Environment and Policy at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, UK. He was previously a researcher at the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, James Cook University, Australia.

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