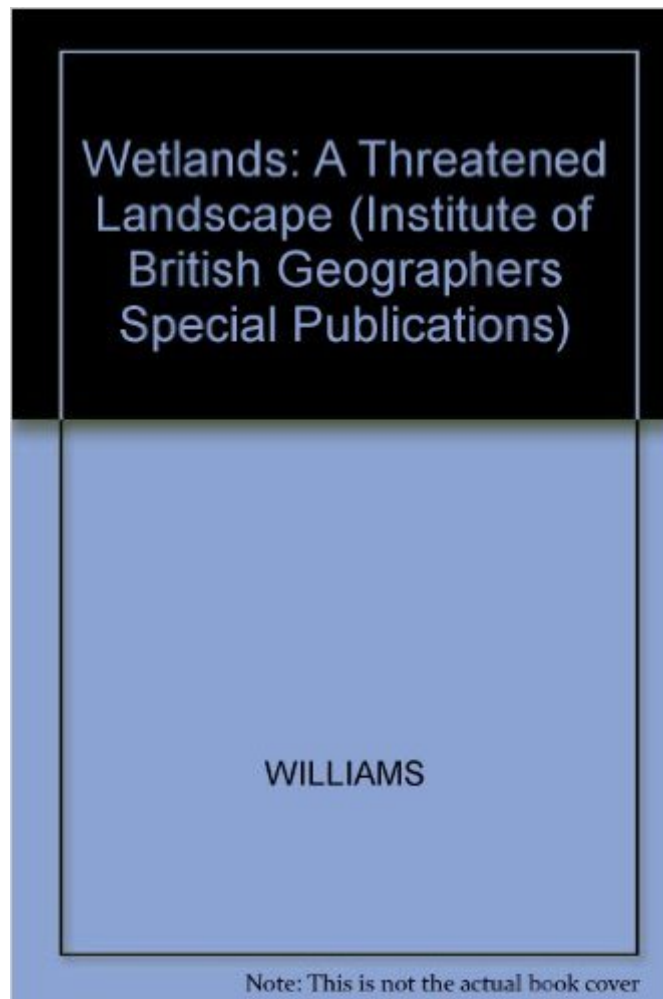


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Wetlands: A Threatened Landscape (Institute Of British Geographers Special Publications)



Synopsis

This volume is intended as a comprehensive appraisal of the world's wetlands. Illustrated with original maps and photographs, it draws together and evaluates work from a wide variety of disciplines in the natural and social sciences. Its purpose is threefold: firstly to explore and to explain the evolution, occurrence and composition of wetlands and their physical and biological dynamics; second, to consider the impact upon them of agriculture, industry, urbanization and recreation; and third, to examine what steps are being and should be taken to manage and to preserve them. Distinctive wetland landscapes occupy some six per cent of the land surface of the earth. They range from fens and freshwater marshes to tropical mangroves and tundra swamps. All, however, have a number of common characteristics and problems: they are neither sound land nor open water and have commonly been regarded as wastelands that should be infilled or "reclaimed". They are prime targets for recreation, agricultural exploitation, urbanization and for the building of port and industrial facilities. They are everywhere disappearing at a rapid rate. From the early 1970s it has become belatedly but urgently apparent that wetlands perform a number of hydrological, physical, chemical and biological functions in, for example, flood control and chemical removal and as essential breeding grounds in the marine food chain. Wetlands, furthermore, provide habitats for a unique and multifarious range of animal and plant species.

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