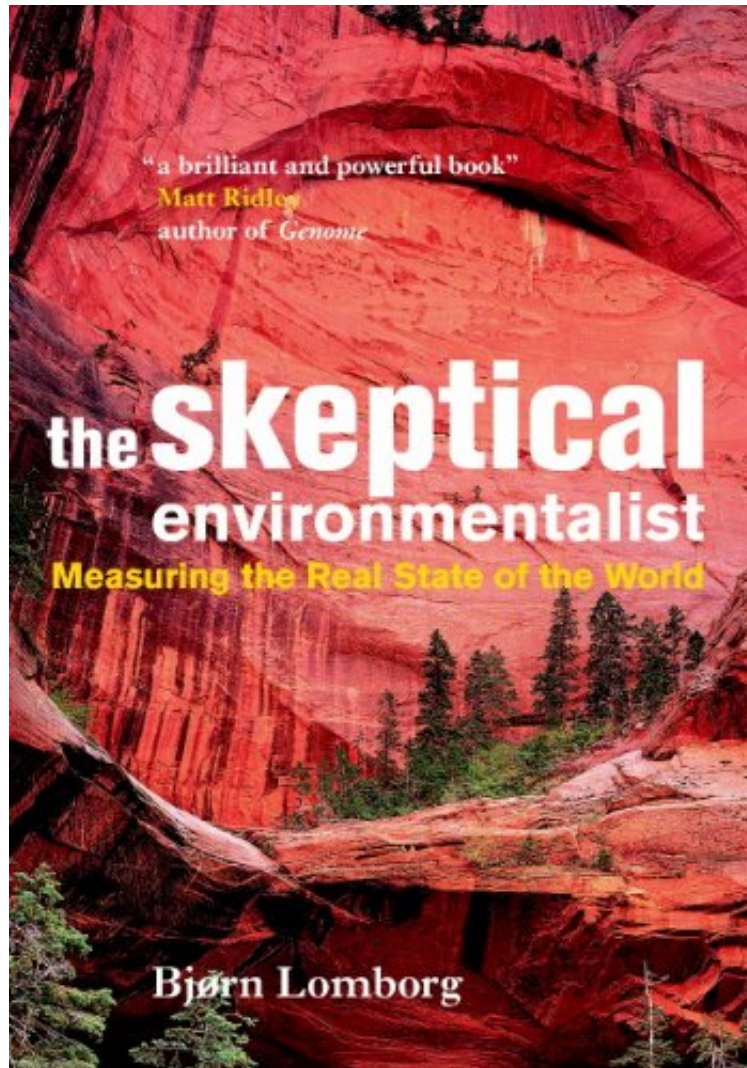


(Free) The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World

The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World

Bjorn Lomborg

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Bjorn Lomborg : The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Very Inspiring and Assuring By J. head The subtitle is "Measuring the Real State of the World" and this is what this statistician/author did. The author states that there are only a few sources accepted for worldwide statistics, mainly UN, USGS or Nasa studies. Using these studies the author shows how some studies are misused, and misquoted to portend impending environmental doom. I read this book because as one who

lived through the sixties, I have not seen the environmental disasters that were predicted, come true. The world population did not outrun the food supply of the green revolution by the mid- seventies; basic foodstuffs are not even on a rising price trend. I have not seen it with our basic metals or oil for that matter. The costs of these have not kept pace with inflation. The author attempts to show where the error lies in these environmental dire predictions. One is inclined to believe this book, the original source is cited, numerous graphs are used and the historical results seem to jive with reality. Many of the past-predicted environmental scares did not pan out. One example would be the scarcity of oil in the seventies and the beginning of a continuous oil scarcity. In reality, oil prices have not kept pace with inflation. One main point of the book is that as a country becomes richer it puts less pressure on the environment and its population levels off. The author puts much faith in this because statistics show that the percentage of the world's population considered poor is steadily diminishing. The author's research seems to be immense, and his reasoning very well thought out. He leads you through the main points of environmental crisis's, scarcity of resources, energy, food, the rainforest, global warming, etc. This book puts many things in perspective. One wants to believe this book, because it offers a future that is not going to be one of stark choices, but reasonable choices and trade-offs. The conclusions are based on the data given and seem very logical. I recommend this book as an eye-opener. The author's explanation of what is happening environmentally, certainly bears more resemblance to reality than can be shown throughout the history of the environmentalist scares of the recent past. One can only hope the future is also as consistent.

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Gives New Meaning to Lies, Damned Lies, and Statistics
By Robert David STEELE Vivas
UPDATED 6 Oct 09 to upgrade to five stars and add links that comprise an apology of sorts. The more I read the less I know, and the more I appreciate the absolute essentiality of getting all points of view face to face before a citizen's wisdom council. New links that complement this book:
The Resilient Earth: Science, Global Warming and the Fate of Humanity
Acts of God: The Unnatural History of Natural Disaster in America
The Next Catastrophe: Reducing Our Vulnerabilities to Natural, Industrial, and Terrorist Disasters
Eco-Imperialism: Green Power, Black Death
The Real Environmental Crisis: Why Poverty, Not Affluence, Is the Environment's Number One Enemy
I rate this book a 5 for effort, a 3 for half-truths, and a 4 over-all. I am updating this review to note that my basic points were recently validated when the Danish committee for scientific integrity slammed this book for dishonesty. It is never-the-less a tour de force for Lomborg and his students (the latter appear to have done most of the tedious data gathering and basic analysis)--at its best, it provides a severe spanking for environmentalists who get careless with their data and their assertions. At its worst, it provides a semblance of cover for corporate carpet-baggers intent on liquidating what any child can understand is a closed system with limits. At root, Lomborg is a disciple and blind follower of the paradigm best articulated by Julian Simon, who has himself been discredited here and there by well-educated environmentalists. Lomborg's professionalism and devotion to data are not questioned here--one either shares his paradigm or one does not. It merits comment that there are now several web sites, one of them in Denmark founded by his own colleagues, dedicated to exposing the flawed assumptions and analysis that went into this corporately attractive politically-biased treatise. This is indeed a brilliant and powerful book, just as a nuclear explosion is brilliant and powerful--and very destructive. However well-intentioned--and I do not question, even applaud, the author's intentions, what we have here is a rather scary combination of fragmentary analysis in depth, combined with a strong belief system that accepts as a starting point the concept that the earth is infinitely renewable and no matter what happens, that is a "natural" turn of events.... Just as 9-11 was necessary before a paradigm shift in national security concepts could be achieved (now we know that individuals without weapons can turn our own civilian instruments against us in really damaging ways), I fear that a major environmental--perhaps even a terrorist-environmental event, such as exploding train cars full of chlorine, will be required before citizens as a whole experience the paradigm shift and understand that a) we live in the closed system and b) the burden of proof must be precautionary rather than exploitative. We are soiling our seed corn and the earth it grows in. Lomborg would have us believe that what we grow within such a paradigm is natural and good--no doubt he has an explanation for the dramatic drops in sperm counts around the world, the troubling increases in asthma across Canada and the East Coast and other nations reeling from antiquated coal-fueled power plants (most of them in the mid-West), and other documented demographic costs to uncontrolled liquidation of the earth. I will end with one very significant concession to Lomborg and his adherents: this book, compelling in isolation, makes it clear that nothing less than the full application of the distributed intelligence of the citizenry on a 24/7 basis, will be sufficient to monitor, evaluate, and comprehend the breadth and depth of our attacks on the earth. It is now clear to me that until we have a global web-based community of citizen observers able to enter data at the neighborhood level, using peer-to-peer computing power to analyze distributed data, that the citizens will continue to be at the mercy of corporate computers and political manipulation. I strongly recommend this book, and Czech's book, as companion volumes framing a much higher level of data and debate that is now beginning.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Very Inspiring and Assuring
By J. head
The subtitle is "Measuring the Real State of the World" and this is what this statistician/author did. The author states that there are only a few sources accepted for worldwide statistics, mainly UN, USGS or Nasal studies. Using these studies the author shows how some studies are misused, and misquoted to portend impending environmental doom. I read this book because as one who lived through the sixties, I have not seen the environmental

disasters that were predicted, come true. The world population did not outrun the food supply of the green revolution by the mid- seventies; basic foodstuffs are not even on a rising price trend. I have not seen it with our basic metals or oil for that matter. The costs of these have not kept pace with inflation. The author attempts to show where the error lies in these environmental dire predictions. One is inclined to believe this book, the original source is cited, numerous graphs are used and the historical results seem to jive with reality. Many of the past-predicted environmental scares did not pan out. One example would be the scarcity of oil in the seventies and the beginning of a continuous oil scarcity. In reality, oil prices have not kept pace with inflation. One main point of the book is that as a country becomes richer it puts less pressure on the environment and its population levels off. The author puts much faith in this because statistics show that the percentage of the world's population considered poor is steadily diminishing. The author's research seems to be immense, and his reasoning very well thought out. He leads you through the main points of environmental crisis's, scarcity of resources, energy, food, the rainforest, global warming, etc. This book puts many things in perspective. One wants to believe this book, because it offers a future that is not going to be one of stark choices, but reasonable choices and trade-offs. The conclusions are based on the data given and seem very logical. I recommend this book as an eye-opener. The author's explanation of what is happening environmentally, certainly bears more resemblance to reality than can be shown throughout the history of the environmentalist scares of the recent past. One can only hope the future is also as consistent.

The Skeptical Environmentalist challenges widely held beliefs that the environmental situation is getting worse and worse. The author, himself a former member of Greenpeace, is critical of the way in which many environmental organisations make selective and misleading use of the scientific evidence. Using the best available statistical information from internationally recognised research institutes, Bjorslash;rn Lomborg systematically examines a range of major environmental problems that feature prominently in headline news across the world. His arguments are presented in non-technical, accessible language and are carefully backed up by over 2500 footnotes allowing readers to check sources for themselves. Concluding that there are more reasons for optimism than pessimism, Bjorslash;rn Lomborg stresses the need for clear-headed prioritisation of resources to tackle real, not imagined problems. The Skeptical Environmentalist offers readers a non-partisan stocktaking exercise that serves as a useful corrective to the more alarmist accounts favoured by campaign groups and the media.

"This is one of the most valuable books on public policy - not merely on environmental policy - to have been written for the intelligent general reader in the past ten years. The Skeptical Environmentalist is a triumph." The Economist "... a superbly documented and readable book." The Wall Street Journal "... it is a surprise to meet someone who calls himself an environmentalist but who asserts that things are getting better ... Strange to say, the author of this happy thesis is not a steely-eyed economist at a conservative Washington think tank but a vegetarian, backpack-toting academic who was a member of Greenpeace for four years ... The primary target of the books, a substantial work of analysis with almost 3000 footnotes, are statements made by environmental organizations like the Worldwatch Institute, the World Wildlife Fund and Greenpeace. He refers to the persistently gloomy fate from these groups as the Litany, a collection of statements that he argues are exaggerations or outright myths." The New York Times "The Skeptical Environmentalist should be read by every environmentalist, so that the appalling errors of fact the environmental movement has made in the past are not repeated. A brilliant and powerful book." Matt Ridley, author of Genome "Lomborg pulls off the remarkable feat of welding the techno-optimism of the Internet age with a lefty's concern for the fate of the planet." Rolling Stone "Bjorslash;rn Lomborg is an outstanding representative of the 'new breed' of political scientists - mathematically-skilled and computer-adept. In this book he shows himself also to be a hardheaded, empirically oriented analyst. Surveying a vast amount of data and taking account of a wide range of more and less informed opinion about environmental threats facing the planet, he comes to a balanced assessment of which ones are real and which are over-hyped. In vigorous and what needs not to be done about those turning out to be pseudo-problems." Jack Hirshleifer, University of California, Los Angeles "Bjorslash;rn Lomborg raises the important question whether the costs of remedying the damage caused by environmental pollution are higher than the costs of the pollution itself. The answer is by no means straightforward. He has written a pioneering book." Richard Rosecrance, University of California, Los Angeles "When Lomborg concludes that 'the loss of the world's rainforests, of fertile agricultural land, the ozone layer and of the climate balance are terrible' I agree. But we also need debate, and this book provides us with that in generous amounts, incl 2428 footnotes. If you, like I do, belong to the people who dare to think the world is making some progress, but always with mistakes to be corrected, this book makes important reading." Lars Kristoferson, Secretary General, WWF Sweden "... probably the most important book on the environment ever written." booksonline "Lomborg is right on his points, that his critique of much green activism and its reporting in the media is just, and, above all, that where there is room for disagreement, Mr Lomborg invites and facilitates discussion, rather than seeking to silence it." The Economist About the Author Bjorslash;rn Lomborg is an Associate Professor of Statistics in the Department of Political Science, University of Aarhus, Denmark. He has published in international journals in the fields of game theory and computer simulations. He has given invited lectures

on the subjects discussed in *The Skeptical Environmentalist* in leading universities in North America and Europe following the success of the original Danish edition which has had a significant impact on the terms of the environmental debate within Scandinavia.