



AAAS NEWS AND NOTES

edited by Coimbra Sirica

PUBLICATIONS

Atlas Examines Link Between Population and Environment

At its annual meeting in February, the AAAS will announce the publication of a new atlas that the editors say may be among the first of its kind, mapping out in more than 200 pages the complex relationship between humanity and Earth's natural environment.

In the first chapter of the *AAAS Atlas of Population and Environment*, author Paul Harrison writes, "Humans are perhaps the most successful species in the history of life on Earth... But our success is showing signs of overreaching itself, of threatening the key resources on which we depend."

His message has been heard often, but the new atlas backs it up with case studies and pages of colorful graphics to illustrate the impact of human population density, consumption, rate of growth, and the use of certain technologies on the environment. The result is a publication that presents these issues "in a multidimensional fashion, demonstrating the cross connections between human and natural environmental factors in determining a particular outcome," says AAAS President-elect Peter H. Raven, in his forward to the atlas.

The atlas, which has taken about two years to produce, was the brainchild of Victoria Dompka Markham, who until late

1999 was director of the Program on Population and Sustainable Development (PSD) in AAAS's International Directorate.

"Several years ago, a number of us working on population issues found that people had a difficult time understanding the link between population dynamics and their impact on the environment," says Markham, who now works as director of the Center for Environment and Population (CEP) in Portsmouth, NH. "So we began to think about how we could use maps of natural resources overlaid with maps showing population density. We thought we might be able to use new technologies to get our point across."

Content for the atlas was not hard to find, Markham says. "We had never intended to come up with new data," she says. "There is already so much good information out there. We just wanted to package it in a way that hadn't been done before."

The atlas, parts of which were co-

authored by Fred Pearce, opens with an overview of the history of humanity's impact on the environment, the current status of the world's major ecosystems, consumption trends, and policy responses to the impact of the human presence on the environment.

The second part of the book is primarily made up of graphics and maps that quantify the issues discussed in the first section, bringing together the information that is

available about the impact of humanity on natural resources, land use, the atmosphere, waste and chemicals, ecosystems, and biodiversity. A discussion of fresh water, for example, includes a map that illustrates the Earth's freshwater resources, as well as graphics that indicate the nations that are the top per capita water consumers and how each nation allocates its water use. Data on production of meat and fish also include a map illustrating the proportion of daily calories

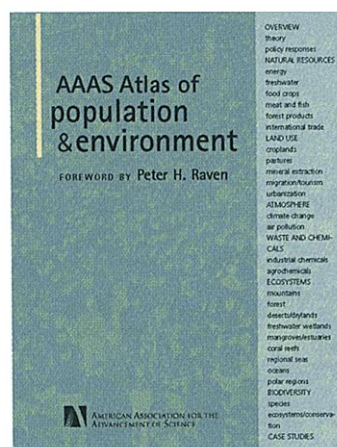
from animal products consumed by individual nations.

The last section of the atlas, produced by the World Wildlife Fund and The Nature Conservancy, consists of six case studies that examine the relationship between population and environment in areas of North and South America, Asia, and Africa.

"I think we are going to have a successful publication," says Richard W. Getzinger, director of the AAAS International Directorate. "We're using science and technology to promote human welfare and understanding of the human impact on the environment."

The atlas, which is being published by the University of California Press, was produced with funding from the Summit Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, and the Turner Foundation, and with production assistance from publishing agent, Banson.

Markham calls the atlas "an introduction to the issues of population and the environment, using text, maps, and other visuals... It could be attractive to a variety of audiences—a graduate student or a business person would find it valuable, or someone working for an NGO (nongovernmental organization) who might use it as a reference."



AAAS

Call for Nomination of Fellows

AAAS Fellows who are current members of the Association are invited to nominate members for election as Fellows. A Fellow is defined as "a Member whose efforts on behalf of the advancement of science or its applications are scientifically or socially distinguished." Each nomination must be sponsored by three AAAS Fellows, two of whom must not be affiliated with the nominee's institution. Election is by the AAAS Council.

Nominations with complete documentation must be received by 1 June 2001. Nominations received after that date will be held for the following year. Contact Linda McDaniel at the AAAS Executive Office, 1200 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005, 202-326-6635, Lmcdanie@aaas.org, to request a nomination form.

Questions regarding the Fellow status of specific members can be directed to Ms. McDaniel. In the near future, a list of Fellows will be found on the AAAS web site. The *Directory of AAAS Fellows* is currently available from the AAAS Distribution Center, P.O. Box 521, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701 (\$14.95 for members, plus \$4 for handling and shipping, prepaid).