

EMBRACING EARTH—NEW VIEWS OF OUR CHANGING PLANET. By Stevens, P. R. and Kelley K. W., Thomas and Hudson, 30 Bloomsbury St., London. WC1B 3QP. 1992, 176 p. Over 120 colour illustrations. £ 24.00.

This excellent Atlas-like publication with breathtaking views of sections of the earth is a testimony to the new capabilities of the artificial satellites in communicating very vividly features of the earth and also bring home to us the nature and degree of degradation that is taking place around and on the surface of the planet earth. The colourful illustrations of Nature as on date seems to forewarn that we, as one of the natural inhabitants of the earth, have tested too much the carrying capacity of the earth. While technology has helped us in various ways to usher in better living, occasional misguided uses of its potential has equally thrown up hazards we are finding difficult to mitigate.

The illustrations are divided into those pertaining to **LAND** (relief, volcano, soil erosion), **AIR** (cloud cover, atmospheric layering, wind circulation—desertification, hurricane, trade winds, circulation of volcanic gas in the stratosphere), **WATER** (thermostat-like ocean, moving ocean currents, flooding), **ICE** (cover, patterns of freezing and melting, icebergs, winter storms, moving glaciers), **LIFE** (vegetation and its decay, coral reefs, phytoplankton, forest fires) and lastly the devastating effect on the environment caused by man under **HUMAN IMPACTS** (ozone hole, smog, acid rain, deforestation, salinisation of water and land, depletion of ground water, effects of war).

Lest one should be disheartened perusing through the above, a few spectacular pictures are given at the end of some natural scenes, pure and simple, indicating the variety that exists on this planet. It ends up with a short write-up on the principles and tools that have aided our ability now to have a global view of many phenomena. Perhaps humanity can survive only if it can take such a view and respond unitedly for self preservation.

This is a book which should be in the shelves of all libraries and must be perused through by all those interested in having a global perspective of what is happening around us and what is in store for us in the near future.

R. V.