

## Book Review

### Nature Divided: Land Degradation in South Africa

Timm Hoffman and Ally Ashwell

2001 University of Cape Town Press, PO Box 24309, Lansdowne 7779, South Africa  
158 pages, paperback  
ISBN 1-919713-54-9, price R75

Global warming, be it blamed on man's unwise burning of fossil fuels or on natural increases of temperatures during the present interglacial (Holocene), is accompanied by loss of precious farming land due to aridification. Desertification is the topic of the day, and it is more than the buzz of this word which should worry us. Desertification is a synonym for degradation of land taking various faces and is becoming a major headache, difficult to deny and still more difficult to cure.

The frontispiece of the book by Timm Hoffman and Ally Ashwell entitled 'Nature Divided: Land Degradation in South Africa' almost says it all: the fence-line effect (so well known to veld managers) carries a symbolic message of important divisions (be it frontiers or demarcation lines) imposed on nature — and on our minds. It is the political, social and ecological background of the 'culture of divide' which forms the major backdrop of the main theme of this book — degradation of land in South Africa.

South Africa is a signatory of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (1994) and as such is legally obliged to formulate and implement a National Action Programme to combat desertification. The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, therefore, has contracted a technical report to tackle the Programme, which culminated in the publication of this book.

The book is structured in 13 Chapters spanning introductory chapters setting the scene (Chapters 1–3), those tackling issues of land degradation itself (Chapters 4–11), and those contemplating the way forward (Chapters 12–13).

It is a very concise and user-friendly text including many useful statistics on all kinds of issues related to land (and veld, soil, water) degradation. One profits from overviews of

definitions of various concepts of ecology, veld management and land degradation — all of these concepts are understood in so many different ways and carry different messages when articulated by laymen, ecologists and politicians! The facts summarised in this book are often eye opening, terrifying, and at least very educative. Did you, for instance, realise that more than 70% of Africa's food is grown by women? Or can you perhaps imagine the effects the HIV/AIDS pandemic may have (and would have) on land degradation or on agricultural production in South Africa as a whole? A terrifying thought, isn't it?

For those who were not very attentive at school or otherwise, and may have got a rather disturbed view of the history of their own country, this is a book to buy and read! Putting such an important issue such as land (veld) degradation into political and social context is its major virtue.

The 'Nature Divided' is a must for anybody interested in the past, present and future of our country. An interested layman, concerned farmer, caring (or less caring) politician, and academics alike can read it with ease. If you teach ecology at any level — this is an ultimate source of data and inspiration. You can learn still more if you go to <http://www.nbi.ac/landdeg> and consult the complete technical report this book is based upon.

By the way, about technical reports and their publication: not many research reports find their way into a book publication available to everybody. Such reports usually end up on dusty shelves joining the 'grey literature' stocks. This book is an example how to do it differently. The University of Cape Town, the National Botanical Institute and last, but not least, both Timm Hoffman and Ally Ashwell should be congratulated on this contribution. For R75 it is a bargain.

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# Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa

**Food and Agriculture Organization of  
the United Nations**



## **Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa:**

*Nature Divided* Timm Hoffman, Ally Ashwell, 2001 In the same way that South Africa's people were divided along racial lines so too was its landscape into the predominantly communally farmed lands of the homelands and self governing territories and commercial farming areas These divisions reflected both in former government policy and local practice have profoundly affected land degradation in South Africa This book the product of extensive research is based on a landmark report on land degradation arising from South Africa's commitment to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification It reflects the first complete assessment of South Africa's land degradation problem taking into account not only agricultural and ecological concerns but also the socio political and historical contexts It places previously unavailable information in the hands of those who need it most politicians agricultural extension officers and communal and commercial farmers It will also be of interest to students and teachers At once sobering challenging and optimistic this book is a call to action It shows that we are all affected by the extent of land degradation in South Africa

*The Politics of Nature and Science in Southern Africa* Maano Ramutsindela, Giorgio Miescher, Melanie Boehi, 2016-09-12 This book brings together recent and ongoing empirical studies to examine two relational kinds of politics namely the politics of nature i.e. how nature conservation projects are sites on which power relations play out and the politics of the scientific study of nature These are discussed in their historical and present contexts and at specific sites on which particular human environment relations are forged or contested This spatio temporal juxtaposition is lacking in current research on political ecology while the politics of science appears marginal to critical scholarship on social nature Specifically the book examines power relations in nature related activities demonstrates conditions under which nature and science are politicised and also accounts for political interests and struggles over nature in its various forms The ecological socio political and economic dimensions of nature cannot be ignored when dealing with present day environmental issues Nature conservation regulations are concerned with the management of flora and fauna as much as with humans Various chapters in the book pay attention to the ways in which nature science and politics are interrelated and also co constitutive of each other They highlight that power relations are naturalised through science and science related institutions and projects such as museums botanical gardens wetlands parks and nature reserves

*Land Degradation and Desertification: Assessment, Mitigation and Remediation* Pandi Zdruli, Marcello Pagliai, Selim Kapur, Angel Faz Cano, 2010-07-20 Land Degradation and Desertification Assessment Mitigation and Remediation reports research results in sustainable land management and land degradation status and mitigation in 36 countries around the world It includes background papers with continental and international perspectives dealing with land degradation and desertification studies The book assembles various topics of interest for a large audience They include carbon sequestration and stocks modern techniques to trace the trends of land degradation traditional and modern approaches of resource base conservation soil fertility management reforestation rangeland rehabilitation land use planning GIS techniques in

desertification risk cartography participatory ecosystem management policy analyses and possible plans for action Various climatic domains in Africa Asia Europe and The Americas are covered The book will be of interest to a variety of environmental scientists agronomists national and international policy makers and a number of organizations dealing with sustainable management of natural resources Southern African Landscapes and Environmental Change Peter J. Holmes, John Boardman, 2018-07-04 This volume provides a textbook and reference work on the physical and biotic landscapes of Southern Africa It examines the links between these environments and the ways in which they have been and will likely be subject to change It covers the geomorphology soils vegetation and land use across a range of landscapes including mountains coasts savannah drylands and wetlands and identifies the impacts of current and potential climate change and other factors on these environments The geographical focus is on the region defined by Namibia South Africa Botswana Mozambique Zimbabwe Lesotho and Swaziland Illustrated throughout in full colour the book will serve as a reference volume for researchers and environmental professionals internationally as well as a textbook for senior undergraduate and graduate level students of geography ecology and environmental studies in Southern Africa

**Sustainability of Southern African Ecosystems under Global Change** Graham P. von Maltitz, Guy F. Midgley, Jennifer Veitch, Christian Brümmer, Reimund P. Rötter, Finn A. Viehberg, Maik Veste, 2024-01-05 This open access book about the sustainability of marine and terrestrial ecosystems in southern Africa provides a synthesis of the research program Science Partnerships for the Adaptation to Complex Earth System Processes SPACES II 2018 2022 It addresses the scientific social and economic issues related to climate change its potential impacts on the various ecosystems adaptations and management interventions for enhancing systems resilience in Southern Africa It is written by numerous scientists from African states and Germany and summarizes the latest research findings which are of great relevance for a better understanding of climate change impacts adaptations and vulnerabilities as well as for developing management options and policy options to reduce the associated risks This is crucial considering that the projected African population increase is exceptional Furthermore climate change is assumed to hit southern Africa extremely hard with a significant increase in extreme events and the frequency of severe droughts heat waves and flooding Southern Africa hosts a high variety of ecosystems which belongs to important biodiversity hotspots for unique flora and fauna The surrounding oceans form in turn a bottle neck within the ocean's global thermohaline circulation act as a still poorly understood carbon sink and source and play an important role for fisheries as they are highly productive Considering these important aspects the book is an important interdisciplinary contribution to the scientific literature and will find a wide readership The book is aimed at students teachers and scientists in the fields of terrestrial and marine ecology environmental nature and landscape planning agriculture environmental and resource management biodiversity and nature conservation as well as scientists and representatives in specialised authorities and associations nature conservationists and policy makers of related disciplines

**Ecology, conservation, and restoration of grazing ecosystems in the anthropocene** Steve Monfort, Jane

Addison, Karsten Wesche, Yun Jäschke, Peter Leimgruber, 2023-06-06      **The Green Economy in the Global South** Stefano Ponte, Daniel Brockington, 2018-10-11 The idea and practice of the green economy is gaining momentum coinciding with financial instability and continued economic woe in the Global North but generally more positive economic circumstances in the Global South Green economic initiatives in the Global South are multiplying and include carbon payments ecotourism community based wildlife management sustainability certification initiatives and offsets by mining companies exploiting new resources These initiatives are reallocating resources redefining inequalities and redistributing the fortune and misfortune of participants of the green economy and those excluded from it They have also led to resistance locally nationally and transnationally and to demands for alternatives to market driven instruments and solutions which are generally gaining strength and coherence The articles included in this volume bring together a multi disciplinary team of scholars from North and South to provide nuanced analyses of green economy experiences in the Global South analysing the opportunities they provide but also the redistributions they entail and the kinds of resistances they face The ultimate aim of the collection is to provide a critical but balanced overview of the emerging green economy in the Global South and point the way to possible adjustments alternatives or radical resistance depending on different situations This book was originally published as a special issue of Third World Quarterly      *Sustainable Livelihoods in Kalahari Environments* Deborah Sporton, David S. G. Thomas, 2002 This edited collection provides a comprehensive overview of the dynamics of contemporary natural resource based livelihoods and implications for their sustainability in the context of the Kalahari environment of southern Africa a region subject to marked spatial and temporal natural variability Each chapter is written by an active Kalahari researcher and addresses from an environmental or a social perspective the implications of different policies for rural livelihoods and coping strategies In each chapter one or more of the key tenets of environment policy and structural land use change provides the central element around which the sustainable livelihoods theme is considered Although the focus of the book is the Kalahari introductory and concluding chapters in turn contextualise the research and discuss key enviro development issues which resonate across the individual chapters with relevance for wider global debates      *Geomorphological Hazards and Disaster Prevention* Irasema Alcántara-Ayala, Andrew S. Goudie, 2010-03-04 Human activities have had a huge impact on the environment and landscape through industrialisation and land use change leading to climate change deforestation desertification land degradation and air and water pollution These impacts are strongly linked to the occurrence of geomorphological hazards such as floods landslides snow avalanches soil erosion and others Geomorphological work includes not only the understanding but the mapping and modelling of Earth s surface processes many of which directly affect human societies In addition geomorphologists are becoming increasingly involved with the dimensions of societal problem solving through vulnerability analysis hazard and risk assessment and management The work of geomorphologists is therefore of

prime importance for disaster prevention An international team of geomorphologists have contributed their expertise to this volume making this a scientifically rigorous work for a wide audience of geomorphologists and other Earth scientists including those involved in environmental science hazard and risk assessment management and policy

**The Future of Drylands** Cathy Lee, Thomas Schaaf, 2008-11-14 Drylands have been cradles to some of the world's greatest civilizations and contemporary dryland communities feature rich and unique cultures Dryland ecosystems support a surprising amount of biodiversity Desertification however is a significant land degradation problem in the arid semi arid and dry sub humid regions of the world Deterioration of soil and plant cover has adversely affected 70% of the world's drylands as a result of extended droughts as well as mismanagement of range and cultivated lands The situation is likely to worsen with high population growth rates and accompanying land use conflicts The contributions to The Future of Drylands an international scientific conference held under the leadership of UNESCO address these issues and offer practical solutions for combating desertification along with conserving and sustainably managing dryland ecosystems Major themes include the conservation of dryland biological and cultural diversity and the human dryland interface This volume documents how our improved understanding of drylands provides insight into the health and future prospects of these precious ecosystems that should help ensure that dryland communities enjoy a sustainable future

*Kirstenbosch - the most beautiful garden in Africa* Brian J Huntley, 2012-12-06 Kirstenbosch is a name that resonates round the world as the home of a uniquely rich flora in a setting of unsurpassed beauty and in 2013 Kirstenbosch celebrates its 100th anniversary This centenary publication tells the story of its establishment its setbacks and triumphs its benefactors and heroes It outlines the Garden's scientific eminence as the repository of knowledge on our prized flora and details the many attractions that make it a favourite destination for Capetonians and visitors alike With a finely crafted text by acclaimed ecologist Brian Huntley and lavishly illustrated with photographs and artworks that tell the history and reflect the beauty of the Garden this will be a sought after volume a quality memento for visitors to Kirstenbosch and a keepsake for the many thousands of locals who flock there annually Beautifully presented in a colourful dustjacket this book will be a tasteful all occasions gift and one to cherish

*Climate Vulnerability, Volume 1*, 2013-06-14 Climate Vulnerability Volume 1

**Globalization, Environmental Change, and Social History** Peter Boomgaard, Marjolein 't Hart, 2011-02-24 Throughout all ages the activities of mankind have weighed heavily upon the environment In turn changes in that environment have favoured the rise of certain social groups and limited the actions of others Despite this environmental history has remained a blind spot for most social and economic historians This is to be regretted as the various and unequal effects of environmental change often explain the strengths and weaknesses of certain social groups irrespective of their being defined along the lines of class gender and ethnicity This volume brings together the expertise of social and environmental historians in an effort to assess the extent to which transnational agents changed socioecological space as a consequence of globalization since the Late Middle Ages

**East of**

**the Cape** Richard Cowling, 2015-06-12 The story of East of the Cape Conserving Eden is a story about nature and people The drama takes place in a region located on the south eastern coast of Africa where nature s diversity is manifest rainforest karoo fynbos grassland and savanna are juxtaposed in complex and intriguing ways Aptly called Eden this region is also home to thicket a Lilliputian forest of great antiquity that harbours the ancient stock of many plant lineages found in southern Africa s contemporary ecosystems Eden is also home to a diversity of human cultures each of which has left its mark on nature From the birth of humankind to the present day the footprint of Eden s inhabitants has become progressively heavier For the past 150 years since the onset of South Africa s industrial age a growing population and increasing demands on nature have ravaged Eden especially its thicket But just as people have been the cause of Eden s degradation so too can they provide the solution In East of the Cape authors Richard Cowling and Shirley Pierce present a blueprint for conservation that seeks to engender a culture of managing natural resources wisely and safeguarding nature and its services for a sustainable Eden

**Grasslands of the World** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2005-01-01 This book brings together information on the contrasting characteristics condition present use and problems of the world s main natural grasslands Since grassland is commercialized through the grazing animal particular attention is paid to the livestock production systems associated with each main type Grazing resources are more than simply edible herbage many other factors have to be taken into account notably water in all areas and shelter in winter cold climates Seasonality of forage supply is a characteristic of almost all grazing lands so the strategies for dealing with lean seasons are described The main problems of each type are mentioned and possible strategies for their sustainable management discussed taking into account their multiple functions not only livestock production The book is primarily aimed at agricultural scientists educationalists extensionists and decision makers with interests in responsible use of extensive grasslands

*Restoring Natural Capital* James Aronson, Suzanne J. Milton, James N. Blignaut, 2012-09-26 How can environmental degradation be stopped How can it be reversed And how can the damage already done be repaired The authors of this volume argue that a two pronged approach is needed reducing demand for ecosystem goods and services and better management of them coupled with an increase in supply through environmental restoration Restoring Natural Capital brings together economists and ecologists theoreticians practitioners policy makers and scientists from the developed and developing worlds to consider the costs and benefits of repairing ecosystem goods and services in natural and socioecological systems It examines the business and practice of restoring natural capital and seeks to establish common ground between economists and ecologists with respect to the restoration of degraded ecosystems and landscapes and the still broader task of restoring natural capital The book focuses on developing strategies that can achieve the best outcomes in the shortest amount of time as it considers conceptual and theoretical issues from both an economic and ecological perspective examines specific strategies to foster the restoration of natural capital and offers a synthesis and a vision of the way forward Nineteen case studies from around the world

illustrate challenges and achievements in setting targets refining approaches to finding and implementing restoration projects and using restoration of natural capital as an economic opportunity Throughout contributors make the case that the restoration of natural capital requires close collaboration among scientists from across disciplines as well as local people and when successfully executed represents a practical realistic and essential tool for achieving lasting sustainable development

**The Handbook of Natural Resources, Second Edition, Six Volume Set** Yeqiao Wang, 2022-05-29 Authored by world class scientists and scholars the Handbook of Natural Resources Second Edition is an excellent reference for understanding the consequences of changing natural resources to the degradation of ecological integrity and the sustainability of life Based on the content of the bestselling and CHOICE awarded Encyclopedia of Natural Resources this new edition demonstrates the major challenges that the society is facing for the sustainability of all wellbeing on planet Earth The experience evidence methods and models used in studying natural resources are presented in six stand alone volumes arranged along the main systems land water and air It reviews state of the art knowledge highlights advances made in different areas and provides guidance for the appropriate use of remote sensing data in the study of natural resources on a global scale The six volumes in this set cover Terrestrial Ecosystems and Biodiversity Landscape and Land Capacity Wetlands and Habitats Fresh Water and Watersheds Coastal and Marine Environments and finally Atmosphere and Climate Written in an easy to reference manner the Handbook of Natural Resources Second Edition as a complete set is essential for anyone looking for a deeper understanding of the science and management of natural resources Public and private libraries educational and research institutions scientists scholars and resource managers will benefit enormously from this set Individual volumes and chapters can also be used in a wide variety of both graduate and undergraduate courses in environmental science and natural science courses at different levels and disciplines such as biology geography Earth system science ecology etc [Climate Vulnerability](#) , 2013-03-15 Climate change has been the subject of thousands of books and magazines scientific journals and newspaper articles daily It s a subject that can be very political and emotional often blurring the lines between fact and fiction The vast majority of research studies projections and recommendations tend to focus on the human influence on climate change and global warming as the result of CO2 emissions often to the exclusion of other threats that include population growth and the stress placed on energy sources due to emerging global affluence Climate Vulnerability Five Volume Set seeks to strip away the politics and emotion that surround climate change and will assess the broad range of threats using the bottom up approach including CO2 emissions population growth emerging affluence and many others to our five most critical resources water food ecosystems energy and human health Inclusively determining what these threats are while seeking preventive measures and adaptations is at the heart of this unique reference work Takes a Bottom Up approach addressing climate change and the threat to our key resources at the local level first and globally second providing a more accurate and inclusive approach Includes extensive cross referencing which is key to readers as new connections

between factors can be discovered Cuts across a number of disciplines and will appeal to Biological Science Earth Environmental Science Ecology and Social Science comprehensively addressing climate change and other threats to our key resources from multiple perspectives *The Biology of Deserts* David Ward,2009 This accessible text is suitable for both senior undergraduate and graduate students taking courses in desert ecology It will also appeal to researchers new to the field and to the many professional ecologists and conservation practitioners requiring a concise but authoritative overview of this fascinating habitat BOOK JACKET Kirstenbosch Brian J. Huntley,2024-09-09 Kirstenbosch is a name that resonates around the world as the home of a uniquely rich flora in a setting of unsurpassed beauty Established soon after the unification of South Africa in 1910 the Garden continues to draw both tourists and locals to its enchanting spaces and botanical riches This book tells of how the Garden came to be its setbacks and triumphs its benefactors and heroes It outlines the Garden s scientific eminence as the repository of knowledge on our prized flora and presents its many attractions In this new edition the story is brought up to date with details of new developments and attractions making it a quality memento for visitors and the thousands of locals who flock there annually Sales points New edition of a lavishly illustrated book A fascinating account of the Garden over more than 100 years Finely crafted text by Brian Huntley former CEO of SANBI Excellent all occasions gift and keepsake

This book delves into Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa. Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa is a crucial topic that must be grasped by everyone, from students and scholars to the general public. The book will furnish comprehensive and in-depth insights into Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa, encompassing both the fundamentals and more intricate discussions.

1. This book is structured into several chapters, namely:
    - Chapter 1: Introduction to Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa
    - Chapter 2: Essential Elements of Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa
    - Chapter 3: Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa in Everyday Life
    - Chapter 4: Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa in Specific Contexts
    - Chapter 5: Conclusion
  2. In chapter 1, the author will provide an overview of Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa. This chapter will explore what Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa is, why Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa is vital, and how to effectively learn about Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa.
  3. In chapter 2, the author will delve into the foundational concepts of Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa. The second chapter will elucidate the essential principles that need to be understood to grasp Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa in its entirety.
  4. In chapter 3, the author will examine the practical applications of Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa in daily life. The third chapter will showcase real-world examples of how Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa can be effectively utilized in everyday scenarios.
  5. In chapter 4, the author will scrutinize the relevance of Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa in specific contexts. The fourth chapter will explore how Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa is applied in specialized fields, such as education, business, and technology.
  6. In chapter 5, this book will draw a conclusion about Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa. This chapter will summarize the key points that have been discussed throughout the book.
- This book is crafted in an easy-to-understand language and is complemented by engaging illustrations. This book is highly recommended for anyone seeking to gain a comprehensive understanding of Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa.

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## **Nature Divided Land Degradation In South Africa Introduction**

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