



# Global Environments through the Quaternary: Exploring Environmental Change

*David Anderson, Andrew Goudie, Adrian Parker*

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We are in the grip of global warming: sea levels are rising; glaciers are melting, Arctic sea ice is thinning, meteorological events are becoming more extreme. But how do these changes compare with the environmental changes that have occurred in the past? How can they be put into perspective? What can we learn from the past to help us better understand how natural and human factors may interact to change our climate and environment in the future?

Global Environments through the Quaternary delves into the environmental changes that have taken place during the Quaternary: the last 2.6 million years of geological history and time during which humans have evolved and spread across the Earth. Taking the reader through the Pleistocene and the Holocene, the book describes the evidence that has helped us to characterize environmental changes during these two epochs; it then explores the changes captured by more recent meteorological records in the period up to the present day. Throughout, it aims to convey the relevance of palaeoenvironmental and palaeoclimatic studies to current environmental and climatic concerns. Climate change research foretells of potentially catastrophic consequences in the future and, even now, early indicators of those changes are evident in the retreating Greenland ice sheet, melting permafrost, changes in fish distributions in northern waters, and more besides. The book examines changes to the physical environment throughout the Quaternary, putting current concerns into perspective, and closes with a discussion of the causes of climatic and environmental change over different timescales - and the complex interactions between human impacts and natural processes.

With climate change - itself but part of the perpetual process of environmental change - as important a topic of debate now as at any other time, Global Environments through the Quaternary is essential reading for any student seeking a balanced, objective overview of this truly interdisciplinary subject.

Online Resource Centre

The Online Resource Centre to accompany Global Environments through the Quaternary features:

For students:

- Links to external sources of useful information

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