

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910819212903321
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Titolo	A brief history of pollution // Adam Markham
Pubbl/distr/stampa	London, : Routledge, 2019
ISBN	1-000-69270-1 1-000-69224-8 0-429-34487-2
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (179 pages)
Disciplina	363.7309
Soggetti	Pollution - History
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di contenuto	Cover; Half Title; Title Page; Copyright Page; Original Title Page; Original Copyright Page; Dedication; Contents; Acknowledgements; Preface; 1. A Brief History of Pollution; Soiling the Garden of Eden; Unsanitary Conditions; Pollution and the Plague; Dealing with Waste; Something in the Air; 2. The City as Source of Pollution; Spawning Cities; The Industrial Revolution; The Spread of Squalor; Taming North America; The Birth of Smog; 3. Why Care? Pollution, Nature and Ethics; Should the Polluter Pay?; Science, Environment and Romanticism; Reactions to Reality; 4. The First Consumer Revolution Climbing the Ladder of Consumption Creating the Demand; From Bike to Buick; Consumption and Population; 5. Water Pollution and Chemical Contamination; Not so Pure; From the River to the Sea; Oil and Plastics; Toxic Chemicals; 6. The Poisoned Atmosphere; Acid Rain and Air Pollution; A Climate of Change; Climate Change and Biodiversity; Radioactivity: The Unseen Killer; 7. An all Consuming Passion; The Consumer Class; The Death of Food; Packaging the Dream; The Dark Side of Suburbia; 8. Energy and Survival; Clean Energy?; A History of Excess; Transports of Delight; Dominion of the Air Energy and Equity9. Pollution in the Making: The Example of Asia; The March of Progress; Acid Rain in Asia; Dirty Water; The Chinese Dragon Breathes Fire; 10. The Politics of Pollution; Citizen Power; There Ought to be a Law Against it!; Towards the next Millenium; Notes and references; Index

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## Sommario/riassunto

Originally published in 1994, this book links the distant past with the urgent problems of today, taking the reader on a literary and scientific tour of global pollution from pre-history to the post-industrial age. Ancient problems such as lead poisoning in Rome and water pollution in Mesopotamia provide the background to a discussion of modern catastrophes including the hole in the ozone layer, climate change and the global drinking water crisis. The book chronicles 800 years of pollution in London, charts the growth of environmental activism and spotlights the rise of the consumer society as the driving force behind today's malaise.

The story of how we have polluted our planet is told here for the first time in a way that links the distant past with the urgent problems of today. Adam Markham takes the reader on a literary and scientific tour of the world of pollution from pre-history to the post-industrial age. Ancient problems such as lead poisoning in Rome and water pollution in Mesopotamia provide the background to a discussion of modern catastrophes including the hole in the ozone layer, climate change and the global drinking water crisis. Along with consumerism, the development of cities, global population growth and untrammelled industrial expansion have taken their toll. Adam Markham brings together these seemingly disparate strands of history into a highly readable account, that tells us as much about the future of pollution as it does about the past.

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