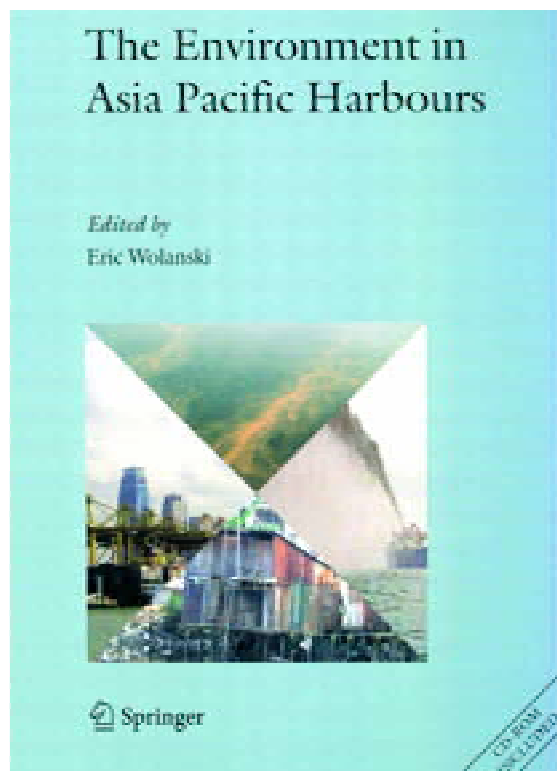


# BOOKS/PERIODICALS REVIEWED



**The Environment in Asia Pacific Harbours**  
EDITED BY ERIC WOLANSKI

Springer Publishing. 2006. 497 pp. Hardcover.  
ISBN: 1-4020-3654-X

In the last 20 years it became apparent to Dr. Wolanski, who is Leading Scientist Australian Institute of Marine Science, Queensland, Australia and other marine scientists that the footprints of harbours and urbanisation have merged and that environmental degradation is exacerbated in many mega-cities and mega-harbours in the Asian Pacific region. This degradation ranges, not only from losses of biodiversity and toxic algae blooms, but can lead to a collapse of the local ecosystem.

The book demonstrates the different solutions and pitfalls, successes and failures in a large numbers of ports in the Asian Pacific region by means of case studies. It contains 28 chapters written by 64 contributors addressing the environmental conditions of the main harbours in the Asian Pacific, including Tokyo Bay (Japan), the Pearl River Estuary, Hong Kong and Shanghai (China), Ho Chi Min City (Vietnam), Manila Bay (Philippines), Jakarta Bay (Indonesia), Bangkok (Thailand), Singapore, Klang (Malaysia), Pearl Harbor (Hawaii), and Darwin

(Australia). This is the shoreline of about 50 million people and the coastal waters of about 500 million people.

One of the main causes of environmental degradation in these areas is the rapid population growth, causing eutrophication of waters, requirements for reclamation areas, salt water intrusion, over-exploitation of fisheries and marine pollution, which in turn cause a rapid decrease of mangroves, sea grasses, planktons, benthos and irreversible coral reef disturbances. Pearl Harbor and Darwin are the exceptions. In Pearl Harbor it is the impact of non-indigenous and cryptogenic species introduced from vessel foulings, ship hulls or via ballast water that are seen as a threat and that may cause serious potential disturbances of marine ecosystems. Fortunately this is not (yet) the case in Pearl Harbor.

Besides attention to the degradation of the environment in these harbours, some successes are mentioned too. Studies have shown that the presence of tidal flats in Tokyo Bay is crucial for the health of the ecosystem. These tidal flats are spawning grounds for Asari, which are short-necked clams that inhabit these tidal flats. A research project showed that the whole Tokyo Bay ecosystem might be improved if suitable spawning grounds for Asari larvae are conserved and restored.

In addition to the environmental information, the book also gives extensive information related to the hydrographic and oceanographic processes in this area.

This book certainly is of interest for people working in a field that in some way or other is related to marine environmental issues, such as marine biologists, coastal oceanographers, coastal engineers, and those involved in sustainable development community. One negative comment must be mentioned: Some contributors use too many abbreviations in their text, which makes the text difficult to understand. With today's technologies, this can easily be remedied with word processing programmes.

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