

S. Newman*

In this recent edition of Wetland Ecology, Keddy continues to provide a broad view of wetland ecology that is of interest to students and managers alike. The book is filled with examples of activities and properties of wetlands throughout the world, thus highlighting the global importance of these declining resources. Following a brief overview of wetlands in Chapter 1, which describes everything from wetland classification to plant adaptations to flooding, Chapters 2 to 7 detail the six factors that Keddy defines as the primary controls over the structure and function of wetlands: flooding, fertility, disturbance, competition, herbivory, and burial. With Keddy’s considerable expertise in wetland plant ecology, the emphasis and strength of these chapters and those that follow are the link to the vegetative community. References and information on wetland fauna are also abundant, ranging in scale from the effects of snails in salt marshes to rhinoceros in tropical floodplains. However, it is the intricate detail of the plant responses that will draw in and hold the reader’s attention.

New to this edition are two chapters, “Services and Functions” and “Restoration.” In the chapter on services and functions, Keddy describes key roles that wetlands play and then provides examples of different monetary metrics that could be used to value them. This may seem counterintuitive in a text that is geared toward protecting and conserving wetlands. However, if we are to conserve wetlands, we need some valuation tools. This chapter provides background on different approaches to use. As Keddy points out, “As knowledge of services increases, the value is likely to increase.” What is unique about this book compared with other wetland texts is its personal nature, ranging from experiences with managing the wetland within the author’s property to his own research experiences.

An overwhelming theme throughout the book is the important role that humans play in wetland ecology, and the text concludes with a call to action. Keddy takes on the role of wetland advocate, emphasizing how change will not be made if ecologists do not take the responsibility to protect this environment, whether through information presentation or action. Such strong advocacy may not be a message that scientists should not be advocates. But equally, it is hard to argue that it is not needed.

Overall, this text is a good resource and excellent textbook for wetland ecology classes. It is written in a way that will allow the less technical reader to learn about the importance of wetlands and the issues surrounding them.