



# Environmentalism (Short Histories of Big Ideas)

*David Peterson del Mar*

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## **Environmentalism (Short Histories of Big Ideas) David Peterson del Mar**

Environmental movements have produced some impressive results, including cleaner air and the preservation of selected species and places. But movements that challenged western prosperity and comfort seldom made much progress, and many radical environmentalists have been unabashed utopianists.

In this short guide, Peterson del Mar untangles this paradox by showing how prosperity is essential to environmentalism. Industrialisation made conservation sensible, but also drove people to look for meaning in nature even as they consumed its products more relentlessly. Hence England led the way in both manufacturing and preserving its countryside, and the United States created a matchless set of national parks as it became the world's pre-eminent economic and military power. *Environmentalism* considers both the conservation and preservation movements and less organized forms of nature loving (from seaside vacations to ecotourism) to argue that these activities have commonly distracted us from the hard work of creating a sustainable and sensible relationship with the environment.

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