

Recent Books about Climate & Renewables

I set out assembling this list with a final target of reasonable books on renewable energy, and these are below. But it occurred to me, that without understanding Climate Change, one really cannot understand renewable energy. Ask yourself: why is the world transitioning from petroleum- and coal- based energy to renewables? It is to avoid the worst effects of climate change, so I started with three good books on climate change and one “bridge-book” to get you from the first subject to the second.

“Losing Earth. A recent History” by Nathaniel Rich:

I have read this, and like one other book (by James Hansen, below) it sets in a place of honor on my short book-shelf on my desk. The author’s brief description from his website is below. It is quite short (a bit over 200 pages) and is a good read. The author has also written fiction, so he knows how to craft words to tell an engaging story.

By 1979, we knew nearly everything we understand today about climate change—including how to stop it. Over the next decade, a handful of scientists, politicians, and strategists, led by two unlikely heroes, risked their careers in a desperate, escalating campaign to convince the world to act before it was too late. Losing Earth is their story, and ours.

<https://nathanielrich.com/books/>

If you buy this book, as you read the first chapter, keep reminding yourself that this story happened over four decades ago, not recently.

https://www.amazon.com/s?k=losing+earth+a+recent+history+by+nathaniel+rich&adgrpid=1346902347161791&hvadid=84181473144245&hvbmt=be&hvdev=c&hvlocphy=86839&hvnetw=o&hvqmt=e&hvtarqid=kwd-84181792602852%3Aloc-190&hydadcr=3269_10749764&tag=mh0b-20&ref=pd_sl_15j1x1i7f2_e

"Climate Change: The Science of Global Warming and Our Energy Future second edition" by Mathez and Smerdon,

<https://www.amazon.com/Climate-Change-Science-Global-Warming/dp/0231172826>

<https://cup.columbia.edu/book/climate-change/9780231547871>

<https://smerdon.ideo.columbia.edu/content/climate-change-science-global-warming-and-our-energy-future>

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/math14642>

Note that the last link above has a table of contents with some excerpts, which should be useful.

“Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth About the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity,” by

<https://www.amazon.com/Storms-My-Grandchildren-Catastrophe-Humanity/dp/1608192008>

Note that I have owned a copy of this book for many years. It (and the first book on this list) is one of the few books that I keep on a small shelf in my desk. I also have a great amount of respect for Dr, Hansen.

“Not the End of the World, How We Can Be the First Generation to Build a Sustainable Planet,” by Hannah Ritchie

I recently read this book, and it is very good, and very well written. Hannah is from the UK, as are many writers on these subjects (below). This book is well illustrated with many charts, and its subjects set between climate change and renewables, so it makes a good bridge between the other books above and below. It is also very positive in its theme.

<https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/hannah-ritchie/not-the-end-of-the-world/9780316536752/>

<https://www.amazon.com/Not-End-World-Generation-Sustainable/dp/031653675X>

"Renewable Energy Resources, Fourth Edition" by John Twidell

<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780429452161/renewable-energy-resources-john-twidell>

<https://www.amazon.com/Renewable-Energy-Resources-John-Twidell/dp/0415633583>

This looks like really comprehensive deep dive into everything about this subject. The first link above is the publisher's Page and has a TOC – look at this. Note that this is published in the UK.

“The Changing Energy Mix: A Systematic Comparison of Renewable and Nonrenewable Energy,” by Paul F. Meier

<https://academic.oup.com/book/39760>

<https://www.amazon.com/Changing-Energy-Mix-Systematic-Nonrenewable/dp/0190098392>

This is another comprehensive deep dive, with a different focus. It is also from the UK.

“Renewable Energy in Non-technical Language,” by Ann Chambers

<https://www.pennwellbooks.com/renewable-energy/>

<https://www.amazon.com/Renewable-Energy-Nontechnical-Language-Chambers/dp/1593700059>

This is not a monster comprehensive book like some of those above, but it is reasonable size (250 pg) and written by an author with a wide range of energy-writing experience.

“The Political Economy of Sustainable Energy,” by Catherine Mitchel

<https://www.amazon.com/Political-Economy-Sustainable-Climate-Environment/dp/0230241727>

Again, the above is a reasonable length (250 pg). It has a broad, but interesting subject-matter and is well-reviewed. The author is from the UK.

“Renewable Energy: A Nontechnical Guide,” by David Wagman: This is also a reasonable size at a bit over 200 pages. It is also very recent (2024), since many of the above volumes about renewables are anywhere from a few years to over a decade old, this might represent a good starting-point.

<https://www.amazon.com/Renewable-Energy-Nontechnical-David-Wagman/dp/1955578168>

https://www.pennwellbooks.com/renewable-energy-a-nontechnical-guide-book-wagman-9781955578165/?utm_source=Author#additional-info