



Global Warming: Fast Facts

Courtesy of Dr. Hari Srinivas
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- **A**t the rate our climate is changing, the world will soon be warmer than at any time in the last 10,000 years.
- **T**he world has warmed by 0.5°C over the past century and an average 2°C warming is predicted by 2100.
- **T**here is scientific consensus that air pollution from human activities is partly responsible for global warming.
- **C**limatic changes will alter natural vegetation, wildlife habitats, crop growing seasons, and distribution of pests and diseases.
- **G**lobal warming will cause a continued and accelerated rise in sea levels, threatening half of the world's most critical coastal wetlands.
- **A** one-meter rise in sea level would threaten half of the world's coastal wetlands of international importance for their biodiversity.
- **A** 3°C to 4°C warming could eliminate up to 85% of the remaining wetlands in the semi-arid regions of southern Europe.
- **T**he loss of wetlands in the flood plains of rivers in the African Sahel could make some local populations of turtles and birds extinct.
- **A** 3°C to 4°C warming could eliminate all open waters of the prairie pothole region in the US, an area where half of the wild duck population hatch out.
- **A**bout 30 new infectious diseases have emerged in the past 20 years.
- **G**lobal warming will expose millions of people to new health risks. Infectious diseases are emerging, resurging and undergoing redistribution on a global scale.
- **G**lobal sea level has risen between 10 to 25 cm in the last 100 years and will rise faster still in the coming decades.
- **B**y the year 2050, up to one million additional deaths from malaria may be occurring annually as a result of climate change.
- **T**he arctic is unusually important for migratory birds. An estimated 15% of the world's bird species are arctic specialists. In North America, 36 species breed only above 60 degN latitude.
- **R**inged seals are the principal prey of polar bears. Unseasonal warming can lead to collapses of the snow caves where female seals bear their young. The young as yet have no blubber and die of exposure when cold conditions return. Scientists suspect that declines in seal populations will occur in this manner, and will ultimately lead to declines in polar bear populations.
- **D**etailed climate models suggest that a doubling of greenhouse gas concentrations will lead to a 30% reduction in the tundra available to Arctic species.
- **M**any of the world's most distinctive mammals are found only in the Arctic, including walrus, several species of seals, arctic foxes, collared lemmings, arctic and tundra hares, muskoxen, polar bears, marwhals and bowhead whales.
- **A**s sea ice becomes thinner due to increased temperatures, animal intruders from the south, such as grizzly bears and moose, are penetrating north affecting local populations.
- **B**etween 15% and 20% of the large nature reserves in southern reserves in southern Africa would experience a change in biome or habitat type under different climate change scenarios.
- **C**limatic changes will alter natural vegetation, wildlife habitats, crop growing seasons, and the distribution of pests and diseases.

Source: WWF, *Climate Change Campaign - Protecting our Planet from Global Warming*. [World Wide Fund for Nature](http://www.worldwildlife.org/)