



The Earth's Fever

When greenhouse gases are released into the atmosphere, global warming creates a worldwide environmental issue. Global warming is the result of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other air pollutants built up in the atmosphere that has absorbed the excess sunlight that has already reflected on Earth, trapping it in the atmosphere and thus causing the Earth to heat up. Hotter temperatures, powerful storms, rising sea levels, droughts and other effects are possible consequences of global warming for our world. The one effect I will specifically be talking about in this article is the risks towards native species as a result of our planet inevitably heating up. I spoke with [REDACTED], a science teacher at my school, about the effect caused by global warming and her thoughts on what it will ultimately mean for our planet. We see a risk for species in many different environments around the world due to global warming, some primary examples include: The Arctic, rainforests, and coral reefs.

The Rapid Melting Threat:

A primary effect of global warming is the glaciers melting in the Arctic. The land mass in the Arctic has been warming up 2 times faster than the rest of the world, which has caused the arctic ice to melt quickly. Polar bears are only one of the numerous creatures in the area that are at risk. With the ice melting at unimaginable speeds, polar bears are struggling to survive as the ice is their main source of food and way of life. This decrease in arctic ice has a major impact on polar bears as the species is starting to become endangered which could ultimately lead to them going extinct. As a result of this, polar bears may consume more energy, have less success hunting, and be more at risk of famine during extended ice-free periods.

Another implication global warming has on polar bears is the reproduction challenges they may have. To give birth and care for their cubs, female polar bears build

dens on the sea ice. The denning process, however, can be delayed by the loss of sea ice and the changing timing of its production. Polar bears who are pregnant could have trouble locating den locations or navigating through the shifting ice conditions. Reproduction rates could consequently drop, which could have long-term effects on polar bear populations. I asked [REDACTED] how she feels about how the world is approaching these rising temperatures that are causing these issues and she said "The Paris Agreement 2015 and the COP 26 two years ago were international meetings to work together to try to reduce the increase in rising temperatures around the globe. I really like to think that the changes these countries are making will make a difference before it is too late."

Mother Nature's Fiery Tantrum:

The tropical evergreen forest, known as the rainforest, is a vital habitat for both plants and animals. This key ecosystem to our planet is facing grave danger as the temperatures rise, coming face to face with deforestation, un-balanced rainfall and decreased water availability. With the earth heating up, particularly in rainforests, plants are finding it difficult to hold onto moisture, which increases the risk of forest fires and makes it difficult to control them. Due to how much easier it is for flames to ignite and spread quickly thanks to this newfound dry enforcement, an environment that grabs onto forest fires is created. As rainforests are typically moist, and humid places, they have not been able to prepare and modify to forest fires as they are not a common thing you would see in such a wet environment.



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Corals Under Stress: 4

Water stress is one of the main factors that rainforest terrains faces drastically. Global warming is the cause of more extreme and frequent water droughts due to water evaporation and decreased rainfall, leading to animals and plants not having sufficient water to survive. As plants have adapted to a consistent flow of rain, these droughts place heavy stress on reduced photosynthesis for millions of different plants, decreasing growth rate, seed production and flowering. This can disrupt the delicate balance of the Rainforest ecosystem and flow on to a decrease in food availability for animals.

In my interview with [REDACTED], I asked her what species she thought had been mainly affected by global warming, she says: "The warming of the oceans has affected the coral a lot. Coral bleaching has occurred at the Great Barrier Reef, often in correlation with the rising temperatures of the ocean." So, I looked into this and found that Coral bleaching is a huge hazard due to these rising temperatures,

which significantly impacts Coral reefs such as the Great Barrier Reef. But what is coral bleaching? Coral bleaching is the circumstance where corals get rid of the symbiotic algae, also known as zooxanthellae living in their tissue, helping them survive. This algae makes the coral lively, giving them their colours and energy. The National Ocean Service states that when coral is stressed by constantly changing conditions and temperatures, they will release these algae and go completely white. In 2005, the Caribbean faced a massive coral bleaching event, with over 90% of the Virgin Island's Coral reefs being bleached. Out of this, 60% of these corals died from the disease.

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Closing Thoughts: The Road Ahead:

In conclusion, natural species worldwide are being permanently altered by global warming. Ecosystems are being dramatically impacted by rising temperatures and altering climate trends, from the Arctic ice sheets melting to the rainforests and the coral reefs. Many species are now experiencing problems with their survival due to the severe effects of global warming.



6 We can each do our part to help find a solution. We can all contribute to decreasing the negative effects of global warming on natural species by making deliberate choices in our daily lives, such as lowering our carbon footprint, promoting conservation efforts, and fighting for tougher environmental regulations.



**"Men Argue.
Nature
Acts." -Voltaire**

