



Talking Conservation

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CLIMATE CHANGE IS A HOAX ... OR IS IT?

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Some people claim climate change is a hoax invented for political or financial gain, and even though scientific evidence shows otherwise, scientific, and political debates rage around this topic.

The trouble is that no one can accurately predict what the outcome of climate change will be, but a measurable scientific fact is that the Earth's climate is warming, and human activities are the main cause. Surface temperatures have been recorded since the late 19th century, and reveal an undeniable upward trend. The science is clear. The last decade has been the warmest on record, according to the World Meteorological Organization. Current scientific data comes from satellite measurements, ocean buoys, and land-based weather stations across the globe. Denying this overwhelming evidence, and peer review research, indicates a total ignorance of the urgent need for action and caution for any future planning for development, especially in coastal regions.

People argue that climate change is part of the Earth's natural cycle. It is true that the climate has changed over millions of years, but today's changes are happening much faster than in the past. This has been well studied and recorded. Natural factors like volcanic activity and solar cycles cannot account for the

current pace of change. Past climate shifts happened over thousands or even millions of years, allowing ecosystems and species to adapt gradually. Today, the rate of change is so rapid that animals, plants, and human societies are under pressure to adapt. Species are already on the move and some on the brink of extinction due to climate change.

Deniers of global warming do not believe that the Earth's average surface temperature has risen by about 1.2 degrees Celsius since 1880 and that glaciers and Arctic Sea ice are melting at record rates causing sea levels to rise at a steady rate. Also, the last seven years have been the warmest since record-keeping began, according to NASA. Heatwaves, wildfires, and droughts across the globe are now daily news. These are not isolated events but part of a global pattern of warming.

People think climate change is something for future generations to worry about, but its effects are already visible today. Rising sea levels are flooding coastal cities, while heatwaves and wildfires are causing destruction and loss of life. Crop failures and water shortages are threatening communities now. Diseases like malaria and dengue fever are spreading into new regions because of warmer temperatures. Droughts, floods, and famine are daily news. An important indicator is insurance companies reporting rising costs due to more frequent natural disasters.

Another common and misleading view is that thousands of scientists are colluding to deceive the public about climate change. This is highly unlikely, given the

diversity and independence of the global scientific community. Climate science involves researchers from universities, governments, and private organisations worldwide, all reviewing each other's work. False claims are quickly challenged by other scientists, and if there are major flaws, they will be exposed. The idea that it is a distant problem is contradicted by daily news of climate-related disasters.

Deniers are quick to point to local cold spells, or snowstorms as proof that global warming is simulation. But weather and climate are not the same. Weather refers to short-term local conditions, while climate is the long-term average of weather patterns. In fact, climate change led to more extreme and unpredictable weather, including cold spells. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) a United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change, explains that climate change disrupts established weather patterns, making extremes more likely.

Global warming does not mean it gets hotter everywhere. It means the average temperature of the Earth is rising, even if some places still experience chilly days. There are arguments for adaptation by building sea walls, changing crops, or moving communities. While adaptation is important, the IPCC warns it cannot protect everyone from all impacts. Some climate changes will be too severe or too rapid for adaptation to work.

The only adaptations that will succeed are the reduction of our emissions and no development in sensitive areas, natural barriers, and flood plains. In nature there are neither rewards nor punishments, there are only consequences. (Robert Ingersoll)