

# Global warming may bring mass species loss

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A study by U.S. and Canadian scientists confirms earlier dire predictions of species loss, concluding global warming could spark mass species extinctions.

The study by scientists from the University of Toronto, the University of New England, the U.S. Forest Service, the Worldwide Fund for Nature, and Conservation International expands on a 2004 paper that suggested a quarter of the world's species would be committed to extinction by 2050 as a result of global warming.

The new study confirms that conclusion.

"Climate change is rapidly becoming the most serious (threat) to the planet's biodiversity," said lead author Jay Malcolm, an assistant forestry professor at the University of Toronto. "This study provides even stronger scientific evidence that global warming will result in catastrophic species loss across the planet."

The research is one of the first attempts to assess the potential effects of climate change on terrestrial biodiversity on a global scale. Scientists looked specifically at the effect climate change would have on 25 of the 34 globally outstanding "biodiversity hotspots" -- areas containing a large number of species unique to those regions alone, yet facing enormous threats.

The study appears in the journal *Conservation Biology*.

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